

Can AI-Attributed News Challenge Partisan News Selection? Evidence from a Conjoint Experiment

The International Journal of Press/Politics

1–26

© The Author(s) 2025



Article reuse guidelines:

sagepub.com/journals-permissions

DOI: 10.1177/19401612251342679

journals.sagepub.com/home/hij

Alon Zoizner¹ , Jörg Matthes²,
Nicoleta Corbu³, Claes H. de Vreese⁴,
Frank Esser⁵, Karolina Koc-Michalska^{6,7},
Christian Schemer⁸, Yannis Theocharis⁹ ,
and Jan Zilinsky⁹ 

Abstract

With artificial intelligence (AI) increasingly shaping newsroom practices, scholars debate how citizens perceive news attributed to algorithms versus human journalists. Yet, little is known about these preferences in today's polarized media environment, where partisan news consumption has surged. The current study explores this issue by providing a comprehensive and systematic examination of how citizens evaluate AI-attributed news compared to human-based news from like-minded and cross-cutting partisan sources. Using a preregistered conjoint experiment in the United States ($N=2,011$) that mimics a high-choice media environment, we find that citizens

¹Department of Communication, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Haifa, Haifa, Israel

²Department of Communication, University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria

³Faculty of Communication and Public Relations, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration (SNSPA), Bucharest, Romania

⁴University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands

⁵Department of Communication and Media Research, University of Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland

⁶Audencia Business School, Nantes, France

⁷Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Silesia, Katowice, Poland

⁸Department of Communication, Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz, Mainz, Germany

⁹Department of Governance, TUM School of Social Sciences and Technology, Technical University of Munich, Munich, Germany

Corresponding Author:

Alon Zoizner, Department of Communication, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Haifa, Mt. Carmel, Haifa 3498838, Israel.

Email: zoizner@com.haifa.ac.il

evaluate AI-attributed news as negatively as cross-cutting news sources, both in terms of attitudes (perceived trustworthiness) and behavior (willingness to read the news story), while strongly preferring like-minded sources. These patterns remain stable across polarizing and non-polarizing issues and persist regardless of citizens' preexisting attitudes toward AI, political extremity, and media trust. Our findings thus challenge more optimistic views about AI's potential to facilitate exposure to diverse viewpoints. Moreover, they suggest that increased automation of news production faces both public mistrust and substantial reader resistance, raising concerns about the future viability of AI in journalism.

Keywords

AI-generated news, AI-labeled news, AI-attributed news, automated journalism, algorithmic aversion, polarization, attitudes toward AI, conjoint experiments

Newsrooms have increasingly adopted artificial intelligence (AI) tools for content production over the past decade, reshaping traditional practices (Marconi 2020; Van Dalen 2024). Such “algorithmic journalism,” “AI-driven journalism,” or “automated journalism” integrates data technology and algorithms into journalistic routines in order to automatically generate news content (Graefe and Bohlken 2020; Tandoc et al. 2020). The level of automation can vary significantly, ranging from AI systems that assist human journalists with tasks like transcription, information gathering, and fact-checking, to highly automated processes that can independently generate headlines and other written content, automate narrations, and add visual elements with minimal human oversight (Jones et al. 2022; Munoriyarwa et al. 2023; Rinehart and Kung 2022). Full automation of news stories has already been implemented by some news organizations in specific domains—particularly sports, financial markets, and weather reports—where standardized templates are used to combine common phrases with relevant statistics and data (Pavlik 2023; Van Dalen 2012, 2024).

While much debate has focused on the supply side—that is, how AI affects news production—the rise of automated journalism has also sparked interest in the demand side, that is, how the public evaluates AI-attributed news compared to news produced by humans. The literature so far has provided conflicting theoretical expectations regarding this question. On the one hand, the “algorithmic appreciation” approach suggests that citizens prefer decisions made by algorithms over humans across a variety of topics due to perceived accuracy and impartiality of the former (e.g., Araujo et al. 2020; Logg et al. 2019). On the other hand, empirical evidence also points to “algorithmic aversion.” This approach, supported by two meta-analyses (Graefe and Bohlken 2020; Wang and Huang 2024), suggests that individuals perceive AI-attributed news as less credible than human-created journalistic content due to a preference for human communicators and concerns about AI's potential role in spreading disinformation (Epstein et al. 2023; Graefe and Bohlken 2020; Waddell 2019; Wang and Huang 2024).

Despite this ongoing debate, little is known about how citizens perceive AI-attributed news in today's polarized and fragmented media environment. Partisan-biased sources play an increasing role in news consumption nowadays, a trend that is especially dominant in the United States but also evident, albeit to a lesser degree, in other countries (Castro et al. 2021; Dvir-Gvirsman et al. 2016; Garrett 2009; Tóth et al. 2023; Van Aelst et al. 2017). Our understanding of how citizens evaluate AI news in today's polarized media environment is particularly significant given two different dynamics simultaneously at play: on the one hand, citizens value the perceived neutrality and objectivity of AI compared to human journalists (Cloudy et al. 2023; Hong et al. 2024; Sundar 2008; Waddell 2019). On the other hand, citizens tend to consume like-minded over cross-cutting news sources particularly due to their political bias, which affects perceived accuracy and credibility (Gentzkow and Shapiro 2006; Metzger et al. 2020). Exploring how these dynamics shape news preferences is important for two reasons. First, it reveals whether political disagreement poses a greater barrier to news consumption than algorithmic authorship. Second, it allows us to understand whether AI-attributed news could potentially serve as a neutral alternative in hyperpartisan environments, facilitating exposure to diverse viewpoints and perspectives (Argyle et al. 2023; Moon et al. 2023).

The current study explores these questions by providing a comprehensive and systematic examination of how citizens evaluate AI-attributed news compared to human-based news from like-minded and cross-cutting partisan sources. Using a preregistered conjoint experiment in the United States ($N=2,011$), we simulate real-world news selection processes where citizens can navigate multiple trade-offs such as source cues, topic characteristics, and social endorsements. Importantly, our conjoint experiment used identical news content across conditions while systematically manipulating news source labels (right-wing Fox News, left-wing MSNBC, neutral CBS News, and a fictitious "AI News" source) and authorship attribution (human author, AI, or no author disclosed). The experiment also manipulated the political slant of the news stories, the issue they dealt with (polarized vs. non-polarized), and the levels of apparent social engagement. This multifaceted design allows us to examine citizens' preferences regarding AI-attributed news across different contexts and content types.

Our results show that citizens not only overwhelmingly prefer like-minded news but also view AI-attributed news just as negatively as cross-cutting news, both in terms of attitudes (perceived trustworthiness) and behavior (willingness to read the news story). These patterns persist across polarizing and non-polarizing issues and generally remain stable regardless of citizens' preexisting attitudes toward AI, political extremity, partisanship strength, age, and prior levels of media trust.

This study makes several important contributions. First, while recent research suggests that AI could help bridge partisan divides by enhancing exposure to alternative viewpoints (Argyle et al. 2023; Moon et al. 2023), our findings demonstrate that in the context of news selection, partisan motivations remain dominant and challenge the potential of AI to promote political diversity. Second, we highlight the potential negative consequences of AI adoption in the news production process: rather than leveraging AIs perceived neutrality to rebuild trust in media (Cloudy et al. 2023), increased

news automation might face reader backlash, especially if AI becomes more autonomous in the news production process (Altay and Gilardi 2024; Smith 2024). Finally, this study advances the application of visual conjoint experiments in communication research. This approach enhances ecological validity by presenting political information in its natural context while allowing researchers to simultaneously manipulate multiple factors that influence how people select news in the complex information environment.

Do Citizens Prefer AI-Attributed News?

Research on citizens' perceptions of AI in journalism has followed two distinct approaches. The first approach compares two different versions of content—one created by human journalists and another independently generated by AI systems (e.g., Altay and Gilardi 2024; Graefe et al. 2018). This research finds that AI-generated content tends to be more logical and less narrative-focused (Bai et al. 2023; Nah et al. 2024) and often emphasizes citizens' ability to distinguish between human and machine-generated news content (Diel et al. 2024; Frank et al. 2024; Jakesch et al. 2023; Kreps et al. 2022). While this approach provides valuable insights, it also faces methodological challenges as it cannot separate attitudes toward AI involvement in journalism from reactions to the inherently different content produced by humans versus machines. Our study therefore aligns with a second complementary research strand that examines perceptions of AI-attributed journalistic content—that is, using identical content but varying only who is labeled as its creator, either a human journalist or an AI (Cloudy et al. 2023; Lermann Henestrosa et al. 2023; Longoni et al. 2022). This research isolates the effect of the source from content characteristics.

Studies examining citizens' attitudes toward AI-attributed content in general offer two competing perspectives. The first is the "algorithmic appreciation" approach, referring to citizens' tendency to prefer decisions and recommendations made by algorithms over humans across various topics (e.g., Araujo et al. 2020; Logg et al. 2019; Thurman et al. 2019). However, there has been growing empirical evidence in recent years emphasizing "algorithmic aversion," that is, individuals' hesitancy toward algorithmic decision-making across political and non-political issues (Burton et al. 2020; Dietvorst et al. 2015; Wojcieszak, Thakur, Ferreira Gonçalves, et al. 2021).

In the context of news consumption, empirical evidence generally supports the "algorithmic aversion" approach. For example, meta analyses have demonstrated a significant but small preference of news consumers for human-generated news, compared to AI-based news (Graefe and Bohlken 2020; Wang and Huang 2024). Accordingly, AI news is perceived less readable and less credible compared to human-generated news, which also makes it less likely to be shared online (Altay and Gilardi 2024; Graefe and Bohlken 2020; Longoni et al. 2022; Toff and Simon 2024; Wang and Huang 2024).

These lower evaluations of AI-attributed news are attributed to several reasons. First, individuals may prefer human content due to the principle of similarity attraction, where people are drawn to others who seem similar to them, and thus feel a stronger connection to human-like communicators (Montoya and Horton 2013; Waddell 2019). Indeed, recent studies show that people's levels of concern by AI-attributed news

depend on the level of AI autonomy. AI with full autonomy, which independently selects topics and generates complete articles with no human involvement, is perceived as less credible than AI with limited autonomy that merely assists in improving text clarity (Altay and Gilardi 2024; Smith 2024). Second, individuals are less emotionally engaged with AI-attributed news due to the highly descriptive and logic-focused nature of the content (Bai et al. 2023; Liu and Wei 2019; Nah et al. 2024). Moreover, individuals' perception of AI-attributed political content is connected to fears of manipulation and spreading harmful content (Epstein et al. 2023).

Navigating Partisan Media: AI as a Neutral Alternative?

Citizens' evaluations of AI-attributed versus human-produced news take on additional complexity in today's fragmented media environment. While research generally finds that citizens perceive human-generated news as more credible compared to AI content, not all human news sources are perceived the same. Increasing polarization in Western democracies—characterized by mistrust and hostility between rival political groups (Gidron et al. 2020; Iyengar et al. 2019)—has created polarized media environments saturated with partisan outlets (Van Aelst et al. 2017). These outlets present one-sided news favoring one political group over another (Druckman et al. 2019; Gentzkow and Shapiro 2010). A plethora of studies find that citizens increasingly rely on like-minded partisan media in their daily news diets (e.g., Garrett 2009; Stroud 2008). Cross-cutting exposure, in contrast, is less frequent, with citizens perceiving counter-attitudinal sources as less trustworthy and less accurate (Gentzkow and Shapiro 2006; Metzger et al. 2020). This raises a crucial question: do citizens still prefer human-based news over AI-attributed news when the human content comes from cross-cutting sources?

While the empirical evidence presented above points to algorithmic aversion in the context of news consumption, we suggest that in the current polarized media environment, algorithmic appreciation may prevail for two reasons. First, citizens in today's information environment are constantly primed with their political identities (Druckman et al. 2013; Settle 2019), which heightens their awareness of potential political motivations among human journalists (Arceneaux et al. 2012; Cloudy et al. 2023). Compared to human gatekeepers such as editors or journalists—who are often perceived as ideologically biased (Perloff 2015; Vallone et al. 1985)—algorithm-based content triggers heuristics of objectivity, neutrality, and fairness, thus making algorithms potentially more favorable for consuming political news (Sundar 2008). Second, due to eroding levels of media trust globally (Hanitzsch et al. 2018), individuals who perceive that traditional news sources do not adequately represent them may be more inclined to consider the possible benefits of non-human creators of political news content. This erosion of media trust could make some audiences more receptive to AI-attributed news, as they may believe it offers a fact-based, less-opinionated alternative to human journalism.

Existing studies support these perceptions of AI neutrality, particularly in the domain of political news. In the eyes of citizens, automated news is associated with

less personal prejudice and a greater perception of such content as free from political biases (Cloudy et al. 2023; Hong et al. 2024; Sundar 2008; Waddell 2019). This perceived neutrality manifests both in the creation and selection of news stories. For example, AI-generated news is generally perceived as more descriptive and even boring compared to human-written news (Bai et al. 2023; Clerwall 2014; Nah et al. 2024; Salvi et al. 2024), and algorithms are preferred over human journalists for creating personalized news feeds online (Gil de Zúñiga et al. 2022; Thurman et al. 2019). Such perceived neutrality can also make AI useful for combating misinformation that may circulate in traditional and social media (Chae and Tewksbury 2024; Moon et al. 2023).

It is important to note that our focus is on citizens' *perceptions* of AI as neutral rather than on its actual neutrality. In reality, growing evidence indicates that algorithms exhibit biases, as AI systems learn systematic social patterns from historical data that contain human biases. AI outputs have been shown to reflect gender and racial biases, and often present politically left-leaning orientations (e.g., Abid et al. 2021; Garg et al. 2018; Rozado 2020, 2023; Rutinowski et al. 2024; Santurkar et al. 2023). Despite these documented biases, studies have pointed to citizens' tendency to overlook these machine-based biases (Alon-Barkat and Busuioc 2023; Jakesch et al. 2023; Rosenthal-von Der Pütten and Sach 2024).

We argue that citizens' perceived neutrality of AI can fundamentally alter their news consumption patterns in polarized media environments, as two competing forces shape how they evaluate news sources: while partisan selective exposure makes them particularly receptive to like-minded sources, perceptions of AI neutrality may lead citizens to favor political news by AI over cross-cutting sources. Therefore, we expect that in terms of both trustworthiness and willingness to read, citizens will prefer like-minded over AI-attributed news (H1), and AI-attributed over cross-cutting news (H2).

We also examine how these preferences might vary by the issue covered in the news. Studies have shown that selective exposure is not uniform but varies according to the issues addressed in news stories. When exposed to polarized and divisive issues (e.g., abortion, immigration, gun policy), citizens' partisan identity is strongly primed, leading them to seek and evaluate information primarily through their partisan loyalties (Dias and Lelkes 2021; Druckman et al. 2013). This likely results in stronger preferences for like-minded over cross-cutting content. In contrast, non-polarizing topics tend to attenuate partisan-motivated behavior in news consumption (Johnson et al. 2020; Mummolo 2016). We expect that machine heuristics of neutrality will be particularly salient for polarized issues, where the contrast between biased partisan outlets and neutral AI becomes more pronounced. We hypothesize that the tendency to prefer AI-attributed news less than like-minded sources and more than cross-cutting sources will be stronger when the news articles deal with polarized issues compared to non-polarized news topics (H3).

Method

To examine citizens' preferences and perceptions of AI-attributed and partisan news, we conducted a well-powered conjoint experiment in the United States. Conjoint

designs possess distinct features that make them particularly suitable for examining media choices, as reflected in their increasing adoption in communication research (e.g., Arugute et al. 2023; Johannesson and Knudsen 2021; Kim and Lu 2020; Knudsen and Johannesson 2019; Mukerjee and Yang 2021; Mummolo 2016; Trilling and Knudsen 2023). Unlike traditional experiments that typically test one or two treatments (e.g., source, content features, social endorsements), conjoint experiments enable the variation of multiple attributes simultaneously. This enhances external validity and reflects the complex information environment where various cues may influence individuals' news choices (Bansak et al. 2021b; Hainmueller et al. 2014), even if some citizens primarily rely on a single cue while ignoring others. Aside from their advantages, conjoint experiments also have limitations, such as the difficulty of identifying the mechanisms behind the main effects. We address these limitations in the "Discussion" section below.

The conjoint experiment was conducted among 2,011 American respondents recruited from the survey platform *Prolific Academic* (Douglas et al. 2023; Peer et al. 2021).¹ We present the sample composition in Supplemental Material Section A. Due to increasing levels of political polarization and rising popularity of partisan news outlets in the United States (Garrett et al. 2014; Iyengar et al. 2019), the American case study is ideal to examine citizens' preferences for like-minded and cross-cutting news compared to AI-attributed news.

Procedure and Stimulus Material

After giving their consent to participate in the study, respondents answered a pre-treatment questionnaire, which measured demographics, political affiliation and interest, ideology, policy positions, media trust and news consumption habits, as well as general attitudes toward AI. We then showed respondents the following introductory text: "We will now show you five pairs of news items on various topics that have recently appeared in a typical social media feed." Respondents were informed that "each news item may be written by a human or generated by AI, and it comes from various media sources in the US. Some items may also come from a source called 'AI News,' which publishes news items generated entirely by AI, without any human intervention" (see also Longoni et al. 2022; Toff and Simon 2024). While "AI News" was a fictitious source, respondents were not informed of this to ensure that their evaluations reflected their natural perceptions of AI-attributed news rather than being influenced by the knowledge that the source was fictitious. Respondents were then exposed to five successive pairs of fictitious social media posts presenting a news headline from a given news source. For each pair of headlines, respondents indicated which one they perceived as more trustworthy and which they would prefer to read in more detail. The headlines were created by the researchers and were based on real news stories published in the months leading up to the experiment to enhance realism.

In each choice task, we manipulated five attributes, which are presented in Table 1. First, we manipulated the news source. We used Fox News and MSNBC as

Table 1. Attributes and Attribute Levels for News Posts.

Attribute	Attribute Levels
Source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Republican (Fox News) • Neutral (CBS News) • Democrat (MSNBC) • AI source (“AI News”)
Author	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human journalist • AI • No author mentioned
Political bias of the headline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pro-Republican • Neutral • Pro-Democrat
Issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abortion • Immigration • Veterans • Infrastructure
Social engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High (e.g., 1.2K likes, 932 comments, 907 shares) • Medium (e.g., 324 likes, 303 comments, 311 shares) • Low (e.g., 9 likes, 7 comments, 8 shares)

pro-Republican and pro-Democrat partisan outlets, respectively. CBS News was used as a neutral source since it is widely perceived in the middle of the left-right ideological continuum (Wojcieszak, de Leeuw, Menchen-Trevino, et al. 2021). We also used a fictitious source called “AI News” as a news source without any human intervention. Second, we manipulated the author of the news article in the post: (1) If the author was a human journalist, the beginning of the post mentioned the following: “Article written by Frank Wright” (the name was randomly chosen out of a list of twelve common names in the United States); (2) for the non-human author condition, the post included the following: “Article generated by AI”; (3) as a third option, posts without any disclosure of the article author were included. The separate manipulation of both the source and the author serves two purposes. First, it helps isolate the effects of AI attribution in news production without confounding them with citizens’ preexisting attitudes toward known news sources (see also Cloudy et al. 2023; Lermann Henestrosa et al. 2023; Toff and Simon 2024). Second, it reflects the emerging media ecosystem where AI is being increasingly incorporated by existing outlets (Marconi 2020; Van Dalen 2024), thus enabling us to examine how people react when their familiar sources publish content that is labeled as generated by AI.

We also manipulated the political bias of the news headlines (pro-Republican, pro-Democrat, neutral) and the issue the headline deals with. We chose two polarized issues (abortion and immigration) and two less-polarized issues (veterans and infrastructure). We pretested the levels of perceived polarization of several policy issues. Results, elaborated in Supplemental Material Section D, show that abortion and immigration are perceived as far more polarizing compared to veterans and infrastructure

issues. We created four possible headlines per political slant and issue, resulting in 48 available headlines for the experiment.

We performed several pretests to ensure that the political bias of the headlines used in the experiment aligned with our expectations (e.g., that pro-Democratic headlines would be perceived as such; see Supplemental Material Section D). To ensure our findings reflect perceptions of sources and are not confounded by content-based differences, we used identical headlines across different sources and authors. That is, any given headline could appear as either written by AI or journalists, instead of creating separate headlines for AI and humans. In the final analyses, we determined whether the news sources and the headlines were in line with or opposite to respondents' viewpoints based on pretreatment measures of partisan affiliation (see the descriptive statistics and full question wording in Supplemental Material Sections B and C, respectively).²


Finally, since previous studies emphasized the importance of social endorsements on citizens' news consumption habits (Kim and Lu 2020; Messing and Westwood 2014), we manipulated the level of social engagement ranging between low, medium, and high. In each level, we randomly manipulated the number of likes, comments, and shares.³

To increase external validity and respondents' sense of realism, we created images of fictitious Facebook posts that randomly varied as a function of the five attributes described above (see also Kim and Lu 2020; Mukerjee and Yang 2021). Figure 1 presents an example choice task respondents were shown. Article 1 and Article 2 in this particular example vary in terms of news source (MSNBC and AI News, respectively), author (human and AI, respectively), political bias (pro-Democrat and neutral, respectively), issue (immigration and veterans, respectively), and social engagement levels (medium and high, respectively).

To better reflect real-world news posts, we created a pool of five distinct photos per issue that were randomly assigned to posts. As detailed in Supplemental Material Section D, we pretested all photos to ensure neutrality across three dimensions (see also Kurdi et al. 2017; Mukerjee and Yang 2021): political slant (1=Strongly Pro-Democrat; 7=Strongly Pro-Republican), emotional intensity (1=Strongly Emotional; 5=Strongly Unemotional), and valence (1=Strongly Positive; 5=Strongly Negative). We selected a total of twenty photos that scored near the midpoint of each dimension's scale, ensuring they were relatively neutral across all three dimensions.

To avoid unrealistic combinations of attribute levels, we implemented restricted randomization as recommended in the literature (Bansak et al. 2021b; Hainmueller et al. 2014). This approach prevented implausible combinations while preserving the validity of causal inferences. Specifically, we excluded two types of impossible combinations: partisan news outlets presenting headlines in favor of the political outgroup (e.g., Fox News presenting pro-Democratic headlines or MSNBC presenting pro-Republican headlines), and AI news sources disclosing a human journalist as the author. After these exclusions, our randomization pool contained 6,480 possible unique news posts. Our final dataset comprised evaluations of 20,110 news posts (2,011 respondents \times 5 choice tasks \times 2 news posts per task), with individual posts potentially appearing multiple times across different respondents and choice tasks.


Article 1:



MSNBC
8 hours ago

*Article written by Frank Wright


Neither villains nor victims: Why immigration is good for our economy



MSNBC.COM
Neither villains nor victims: Why immigration is good for our economy

319 301 Comments 313 Shares


Article 2:



AI NEWS
8 hours ago

*Article generated by AI

Private companies charge hefty fees to help veterans with disability claims



AI-NEWS.COM
Private companies charge hefty fees to help veterans with disability claims

1.3K 938 Comments 910 Shares

Which article do you think is more trustworthy?

Article 1 (upper article)

Article 2 (lower article)

Figure 1. Example of a choice task shown to respondents.
Note. The figure illustrates one of two randomly assigned outcome variables. While this example shows the perceived trustworthiness outcome, the other half of the sample was asked about reading preferences.

Analysis Strategy

We measured two dependent variables that were randomly assigned between respondents. Half of the sample was asked about perceived trustworthiness: “Which article do you think is more trustworthy?” The other half was asked about their reading preferences: “If you had to decide, which article would you choose to read in more detail?” This separation of dependent variables across the entire sample mitigated potential consistency bias, preventing respondents from aligning their trustworthiness evaluations with their stated reading preferences (or vice versa) as might occur if both questions were asked sequentially (Podsakoff et al. 2003). Both dependent variables were measured as binary choices, with respondents selecting one news post from each presented pair. This binary operationalization has several advantages. First, it reflects real-world news selection decisions where people typically choose between available alternatives rather than evaluating multiple news items simultaneously. Second, forced-choice decisions compel respondents to weigh alternatives thoughtfully and consider their relative merits (Bansak et al. 2021b).

We tested our hypotheses using the Average Marginal Component Effect (AMCE) to estimate the main effects of each attribute. The AMCE quantifies the overall effect of a given attribute, averaged across all other attributes in the conjoint design (Bansak et al. 2022). To illustrate, it represents the average change in the probability of selecting a given news post when it includes a specific attribute level (e.g., a like-minded source) compared to the attribute’s baseline level (e.g., an AI source), while controlling for all other attributes (e.g., social engagement). Additionally, we calculated marginal means, which serve three main purposes (Leeper et al. 2020): (1) they indicate the likelihood of a news post being chosen when it includes a particular attribute level, above and beyond the likelihood across all other attributes; (2) they provide descriptive information about how favorable specific attributes are; and (3) they enable comparisons between different subgroups (e.g., strong vs. weak partisans). To test H3, we compared the conditional AMCEs and marginal means for the source attribute across polarized and non-polarized subgroups (Hainmueller et al. 2014; Leeper et al. 2020).⁴

We also performed several exploratory analyses (three of them were preregistered) to test for interaction effects. This was conducted by analyzing the study’s main effects, broken down by several potential moderators, and comparing marginal means across different subgroups of each moderator (Kirkland and Coppock 2018; Leeper et al. 2020). The first exploratory analyses tested whether the effect of the news source was moderated by the author’s identity. For example, are citizens more inclined for news from like-minded sources, even if the article is labeled as generated by AI?

In a second exploratory analysis, we examined whether respondents’ general attitudes toward AI moderated the main effects (Araujo et al. 2023). The full question wording is detailed in Supplemental Material Section C. We also tested for possible interaction with respondents’ ideological extremity, measured by their self-placement on an 11-point scale (0 = Extremely liberal; 10 = Extremely conservative). Respondents were considered extreme if their self-placement was 0, 1, 9, or 10.

We also conducted several non-pre-registered exploratory analyses, testing for moderation by partisanship strength, media trust, age, respondents' familiarity with the use of AI in news production, and the issue the article deals with (see full question wording in Supplemental Material Section C).

Results

Comparing Citizens' Preferences: AI Versus Partisan News Sources

We present the main results in Figure 2, which shows the manipulated attributes on the y -axis. The x -axis shows the AMCE of each attribute level (compared to a baseline category). As we randomly assigned respondents to one outcome variable, gray circles show AMCEs for perceived trustworthiness, while black triangles show AMCEs for willingness to read the news article in more detail. Figure 3 complements the interpretation of the results by presenting the marginal means for each manipulated attribute.

Our main analysis focuses on the effects of different news sources (the "Source" upper panel). Compared to the baseline category of an AI news source with no human involvement, citizens perceive news items from like-minded sources as more trustworthy, with a 15 percentage point increase in perceived trustworthiness compared to an AI source ($p < .001$; 95% CI [12–19]). Likewise, citizens show a greater willingness to read news from like-minded compared to AI sources, with an estimated 8 percentage point increase ($p < .001$; 95% CI [5–11]).

Figure 3 further facilitates the interpretation of these results by presenting marginal means. These values represent the predicted probability of each attribute level being perceived as trustworthy (gray circles) or being read (black triangles), with .5 serving as the threshold (plotted as the middle vertical line): values above .5 indicate higher probability of trust or readership, while values below .5 indicate lower probability. According to the marginal means presented in Figure 3, the probability of trusting articles from like-minded sources is 64 percent, compared to 41 percent for articles from an AI source. Similarly, the probability of reading articles from like-minded sources is 58 percent, compared to 45 percent for articles from an AI source. Thus, we confirm H1, according to which citizens prefer like-minded over AI-attributed news.

In contrast, we find no evidence that citizens trust or prefer to read AI news sources more than cross-cutting sources, thus rejecting H2. Figure 2 shows that the difference in trust levels between these two sources is practically zero ($p = .6$; 95% CI [(-4)–2]). Moreover, the 3 percent decrease in citizens' willingness to read articles from cross-cutting compared to AI news sources is not significant ($p = .1$; 95% CI, [(-6)–0]). As shown by the marginal means in Figure 3, trust levels for cross-cutting and AI sources are nearly identical (40 and 41 percent, respectively), as are reading probabilities (42 and 45 percent, respectively). Notably, Figures 2 and 3 suggest that neutral news sources are perceived more trustworthy and are preferred more compared to an AI news source.

We now examine the effects of other attributes which were manipulated in the joint experiment. First, focusing on the author disclosed in the news post, one can

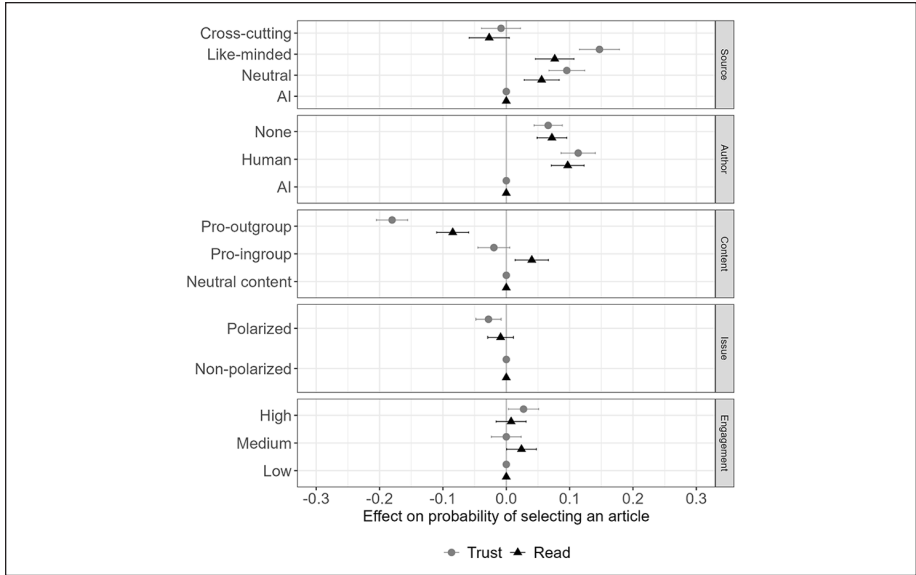


Figure 2. Average Marginal Component Effect (AMCE).

Note. Horizontal lines represent 95% confidence intervals. Gray circles indicate the effects on perceiving a news headline as trustworthy, while black triangles indicate the effects on willingness to read a news headline in more detail. Point estimates located on the vertical zero line indicate the reference category (e.g., “AI” in the first “Source” attribute), serving as the baseline against which all other attribute levels are estimated and thus having no confidence intervals.

observe that respondents largely prefer human authors who write news stories. Figure 2 indicates that compared to the baseline category of an AI author, respondents show greater willingness to read news from human authors and perceive them as more trustworthy, with an estimated 10 and 11 percentage point increase, respectively ($p < .001$ for both outcomes; see Figure 2). Citizens also trust and prefer to read news in which the author’s identity is not disclosed over an AI author. The marginal means in Figure 3 clearly suggest that respondents hold negative perceptions of news items attributed to an AI author, regardless of the source (e.g., a neutral or a like-minded source; see also the “Additional Tests” section).

Second, focusing on content-based attributes, respondents clearly favor headlines that align with their political ingroup, while showing both negative trust perceptions of and lower readership for headlines that favor the outgroup. Interestingly, Figure 2 shows no significant difference between perceptions of trustworthiness between neutral and like-minded headlines. Moreover, while news about polarized issues is perceived slightly less trustworthy compared to news about non-polarizing topics (a 3 percentage points change; $p < .01$), we do not find any evidence for varying reading preferences between these issue types. Finally, Figure 2 shows that social engagement levels have a small and significant, albeit less consistent, effect on news preferences.

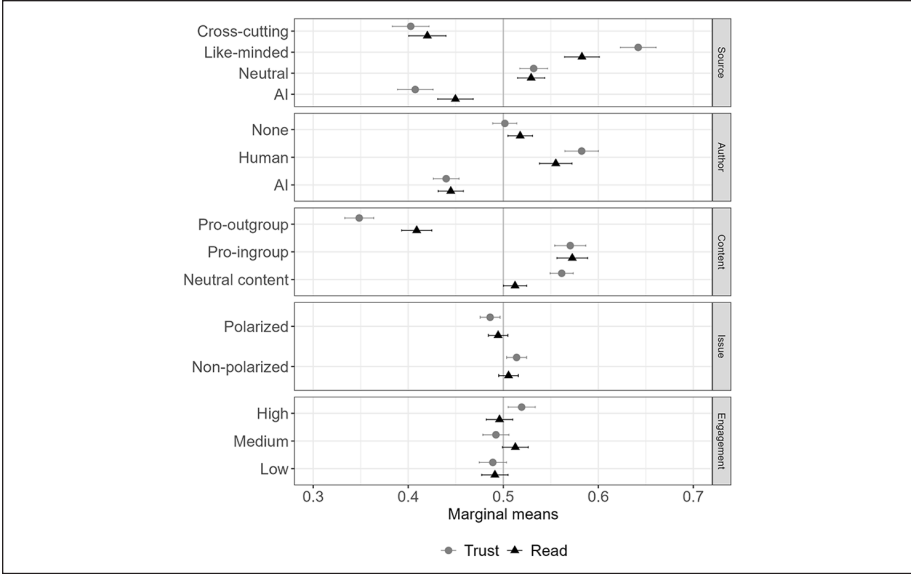


Figure 3. Marginal means for the manipulated attributes. Note. Horizontal lines represent 95 percent confidence intervals. Gray circles indicate the predicted probability of perceiving a news headline as trustworthy, while black triangles indicate the predicted probability of willingness to read a news headline in more detail.

News items with high engagement levels are perceived as more trustworthy than those with low engagement (a 3 percentage points increase). Similarly, respondents are more likely to read items with medium engagement compared to low engagement (a 2 percentage points increase).

News Preferences Across Polarized and Non-Polarized Issues

Following H3, we now examine whether citizens' preferences for AI, like-minded, and cross-cutting news sources vary when the news content focuses on polarized (abortion and immigration) and non-polarized issues (veterans and infrastructure). Figure 4 presents the marginal means for each issue type separately. It shows that the pattern of preferences remains consistent across both polarized and non-polarized issues: respondents consistently prefer like-minded over AI sources, while evaluating AI-attributed news as negatively as cross-cutting sources. Formal tests comparing conditional AMCEs and marginal means between subgroups lead to the same conclusions (see Supplemental Material Section E); therefore, we cannot confirm H3. Notably, Figure 4 suggests that while respondents prefer to read neutral sources on polarized issues, they perceive these sources as more trustworthy only in the context of non-polarized topics.

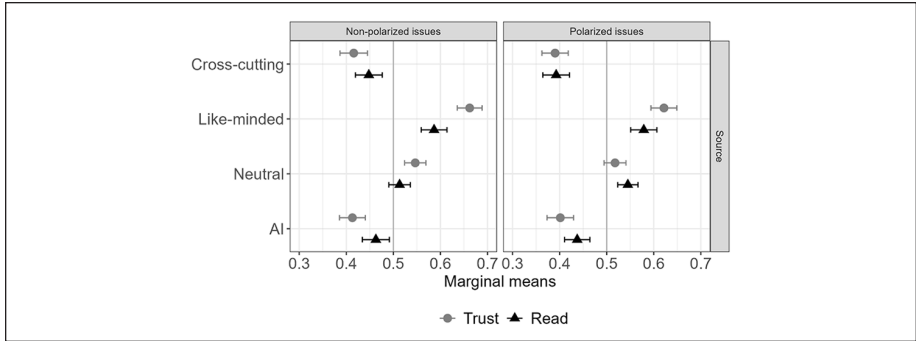


Figure 4. The effects of news sources broken down by issue polarization. Note. Subgroup marginal means for the other attributes are shown in Supplemental Material Section E.

Additional Tests

We performed several exploratory analyses, testing whether the effects of news sources are conditional on several moderators, the results of which are presented in Supplemental Material Section F. First, we tested the effects separately for each author type (i.e., a human author, AI, or no author disclosed in the post). Our main findings hold across all conditions, with one exception: respondents do not show a preference for reading articles from like-minded sources when the news story explicitly mentions AI authorship. For example, Democrats exposed to a post by MSNBC that explicitly mentions the news item was created by AI still perceive the item as more trustworthy, but this does not translate into a greater likelihood of reading it. In two additional analyses, we examined whether the effects are conditional on respondents’ general trust in AI and their ideological extremity. As before, the original conclusions remain unchanged. Notably, even respondents who trust AI technologies in general evaluate AI-attributed news and cross-cutting news equally negatively.

Additional exploratory analyses (see Supplemental Material Section G) tested whether the effects are conditional by partisanship strength, media trust, age, and respondents’ familiarity with the use of AI in news production. We also performed separate analyses for each issue the news article deals with and repeated the analyses treating photos as an additional conjoint attribute. The results of these exploratory analyses generally lead to the same substantive conclusions. We also examined whether the effects are conditional on the political bias presented in the news headline. Findings show that AI news sources are perceived as very similar to cross-cutting sources regardless of the headline bias.

Discussion

This study examined citizens’ preferences and attitudes toward AI-attributed news compared to partisan news sources. While growing empirical evidence shows that

citizens prefer human-produced over AI-attributed news—a phenomenon known as algorithm aversion—little is known about how these preferences manifest in today’s polarized and fragmented media environment. The increasing dominance of partisan media, coupled with citizens’ strong preference for like-minded over cross-cutting news, creates a potential clash between algorithm aversion and partisan motivations in news consumption. This raises the question of whether citizens still prefer human-based over AI-attributed news when the former comes from cross-cutting sources.

Using a conjoint experiment in the United States that mimics a high-choice media environment, we provide a rigorous assessment of citizens’ preferences between like-minded, cross-cutting, and AI news sources across various contexts. Our findings reveal a clear and consistent hierarchy in citizens’ news choices: while strongly favoring like-minded sources, citizens evaluate AI-attributed news as negatively as cross-cutting news sources. These tendencies hold across both polarizing and non-polarizing issues and remain robust regardless of citizens’ general attitudes toward AI, ideological extremity, partisanship strength, age, levels of media trust, and previous familiarity with the use of AI in news production.

Our results align with the “algorithm aversion” approach in news consumption, while also extending previous research. First, although individuals often perceive AI-attributed content as neutral or accurate (Sundar 2008, 2020; Waddell 2019), our findings suggest that such positive machine heuristics do not translate into more positive preferences toward AI when citizens consume news (Hong et al. 2024; Toff and Simon 2024). Our additional tests indicate that the negative impact of AI involvement can persist even when citizens’ like-minded sources explicitly publish that the news story was generated by AI: while this does not diminish high trust levels, respondents do not show any significant preference for reading the article compared to a story created by a human reporter. This may indicate that when consuming political information, citizens may be particularly sensitive to concerns about AI’s potential for inaccuracy and manipulation (Dietvorst et al. 2015; Epstein et al. 2023; Wojcieszak, Thakur, Ferreira Gonçalves, et al. 2021). Second, while prior studies have primarily focused on attitudinal measures such as perceived credibility or journalistic expertise (e.g., Cloudy et al. 2023; Liu and Wei 2019; Sundar 2008; Toff and Simon 2024), we demonstrate that algorithm aversion manifests in both attitudes and behaviors (see also Altay and Gilardi 2024). Specifically, citizens not only consider AI-attributed news as untrustworthy as cross-cutting sources but are also less willing to read news from both sources. As we discuss below, this widespread avoidance of AI-attributed news may have significant implications for the future of journalism.

This study makes several contributions to the literature. First, recent studies have highlighted AI’s potential benefits in polarized societies by increasing exposure to diverse viewpoints in a civil manner (Argyle et al. 2023; Hohenstein et al. 2023), reducing attitude polarization (Velez and Liu 2024), fostering intergroup tolerance (Govers et al. 2024), and mitigating conspiracy beliefs (Costello et al. 2024) and biased information processing (Moon et al. 2023). These benefits are particularly important in fragmented media environments where citizens are less inclined to consume and be persuaded by counter-attitudinal information. However, our findings

challenge these optimistic expectations in the context of political news consumption, suggesting that citizens' motivations to consume AI-attributed political information are limited, thus constraining AI's potential benefits. We find that AI-attributed news fails to serve as a neutral and objective alternative in current information environments, regardless of whether it presents neutral, left- or right-leaning content. Instead, our results clearly demonstrate that partisan motivations override any potential advantages of AI in news consumption: citizens not only avoid AI-attributed news as much as cross-cutting sources but actively value ideological biases in news reporting (see also Wojcieszak, Thakur, Ferreira Gonçalves, et al. 2021).

Second, this study contributes to the growing literature on the impact of automated journalism on democratic societies by highlighting the potential negative consequences of the adoption of AI in the news production process. While some scholars suggest that AI's perceived neutrality in covering controversial issues might help "repairing the damaged trust between media and the public" (Cloudy et al. 2023: 1590), our findings indicate the opposite: frequent exposure to AI-attributed news may erode trust both in digital content broadly (Capraro et al. 2024) and in news media specifically (Toff and Simon 2024; Wang and Huang 2024), exacerbating the already declining levels of media trust (Hanitzsch et al. 2018). Moreover, this mistrust in AI-attributed news translates into behavioral outcomes, keeping news consumers away from AI content. While news organizations increasingly leverage AI's capacity to process vast amounts of information and produce coherent news stories (Marconi 2020; Rinehart and Kung 2022), such increased automation might face reader backlash, particularly if AI gets greater autonomy in the news production process (Altay and Gilardi 2024; Smith 2024).

Additionally, our study advances the application of visual conjoint experiments in communication research. While conjoint experiments have been more widely used in communication research over recent years (e.g., Arugute et al. 2023; Johannesson and Knudsen 2021; Kim and Lu 2020; Knudsen and Johannesson 2019; Mukerjee and Yang 2021; Mummolo 2016; Trilling and Knudsen 2023), their prevalence remains relatively limited compared to related fields such as political science and marketing (e.g., Amsalem and Zoizner 2024; Bansak et al. 2021b; De La Cuesta et al. 2022). More significantly, among existing studies, few utilize visual designs that simulate authentic social media posts that people frequently encounter. Our visual conjoint approach enhances ecological validity by encouraging the holistic evaluation of political information in a more natural context (Vecchiato and Munger 2025), making it particularly valuable for examining responses to AI-attributed news within the complex matrix of cues that influence real-world news selection.

This study has several limitations. First, by keeping the news content constant across AI and human conditions, our conjoint experiment was unable to examine the effects of real-world AI-generated content—such as that produced by ChatGPT or other large language models—compared to human-written texts (Kreps et al. 2022). Some studies suggest that human-produced news tends to use more narrative-driven language and incorporates stronger news values, whereas AI-generated content is often more analytical in structure (Bai et al. 2023; Nah et al. 2024), which may affect citizens' preferences. However, recent empirical evidence indicates that citizens

struggle to distinguish AI- from human-generated texts, often perceiving the former as created by humans (Diel et al. 2024; Frank et al. 2024; Jakesch et al. 2023). Therefore, we believe our focus on the impact of the source (AI vs. human) is particularly valuable because in real-world settings, source attribution is likely an important mechanism through which audiences become aware of AI's involvement in content creation. We encourage future research to further examine how news content directly generated by AI influences audience choices.

Second, our use of a conjoint experiment possesses several shortcomings. Although we find that AI-attributed news is perceived similarly to cross-cutting news, the conjoint design does not allow us to speak directly about the mechanisms underlying these effects. For example, while partisan motivated reasoning is an important explanation underlying avoidance of cross-cutting news (Garrett 2009; Knobloch-Westerwick and Meng 2009), it may be less applicable to understanding algorithmic aversion. We encourage future studies to explore other potential mechanisms, such as concerns about AI inaccuracy or manipulation, that may influence citizens' news choices (Epstein et al. 2023; Kreps et al. 2022). Our use of a conjoint design may have also led to higher levels of cognitive burden for respondents, who had to assess multiple attributes across five choice tasks. This could have affected the quality of their evaluations, making them rely more on various effort-saving heuristics than in real life (Bansak et al. 2021a; Berinsky et al. 2014). Moreover, our conjoint design presented participants with forced choices between news options. In real-world settings, citizens often have the option to avoid news altogether or may encounter news through passive exposure rather than active selection (Matthes et al. 2020; Skovsgaard and Andersen 2020). This may limit the generalization of our findings to real-world behavior.

Another limitation of this study is our general description of the role the AI had in the news items presented to respondents, without disclosing the specific role of AI in the production of each news item. Specifying the exact task performed by the AI (e.g., generating visual illustrations or collecting information) can influence citizens' preferences for AI-attributed news (Wang and Huang 2024). We note though that the majority of news organizations nowadays do not have a specific policy on AI transparency, with many news outlets not providing full disclosures on the specific task AI tools fill in their newsrooms (Simon et al. 2023). We encourage future studies to explore how citizens approve or disapprove a wide range of functions AI tools can do in the news production process. Despite these limitations, we believe the results of this study shed light on citizens' negative perceptions of AI-attributed news in modern polarized media environments.

Authors' Note

Jan Zilinsky is also affiliated to Institute of Experimental Psychology, Centre of Social and Psychological Sciences, Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava, Slovakia.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests


The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.


Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

ORCID iDs

Alon Zoizner  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5574-3475>

Yannis Theocharis  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7209-9669>

Jan Zilinsky  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7208-8759>

Supplemental Material

Supplemental material for this article is available online.

Notes

1. The experiment was pre-registered in September 2024 (<https://aspredicted.org/yqn9-6dhp.pdf>). Data collection was between September 24 and 26, 2024. We provide details of the sampling procedure, attention checks, and power analysis in Supplemental Material Section B.
2. Leaning independents were considered weak partisans, and pure independents were excluded from the study as they could not be classified as supporters of a political party (Druckman et al. 2013).
3. To enhance the realism of posts, we randomized the exact numbers of likes, comments, and shares within each engagement level. For example, posts with medium engagement might display 324, 318, or 320 likes (all within the defined range for medium engagement). This approach was applied consistently across all engagement levels.
4. We used the *cregg* package in R (Leeper 2018) to estimate AMCEs and marginal means. While differences-in-AMCEs represent differences in effect sizes across subgroups, we also report the conditional marginal means, as they provide clear descriptive interpretations of respondents' preferences across subgroups (Leeper et al. 2020).

References

- Abid, A., M. Farooqi, and J. Zou. 2021. "Persistent Anti-Muslim Bias in Large Language Models." Proceedings of the 2021 AAAI/ACM Conference on AI, Ethics, and Society, 298–306, Virtual Event, USA, May 19–21.
- Alon-Barkat, S., and M. Busuioc. 2023. "Human–AI Interactions in Public Sector Decision Making: "Automation Bias" and "Selective Adherence" to Algorithmic Advice." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 33(1):153–69. doi:10.1093/jopart/muac007.
- Altay, S., and F. Gilardi. 2024. "People Are Skeptical of Headlines Labeled as AI-Generated, Even if True or Human-Made, Because They Assume Full AI Automation." *PNAS Nexus* 3(10):403. doi:10.1093/pnasnexus/pgae403.
- Amsalem, E., and A. Zoizner. 2024. "The Causal Effect of Candidate Extremity on Citizens' Preferences: Evidence from Conjoint Experiments." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 88(3): 859–85. doi:10.1093/poq/nfae041.
- Araujo, T., A. Brosius, A. C. Goldberg, J. Möller, and C. de Vreese. 2023. "Humans vs. AI: The Role of Trust, Political Attitudes, and Individual Characteristics on Perceptions About Automated Decision Making Across Europe." *International Journal of Communication* 17:6222–49.

- Araujo, T., N. Helberger, S. Kruike-meier, and C. H. de Vreese. 2020. "In AI We Trust? Perceptions About Automated Decision-Making by Artificial Intelligence." *AI & Society* 35(3):611–23. doi:10.1007/s00146-019-00931-w.
- Arceneaux, K., M. Johnson, and C. Murphy. 2012. "Polarized Political Communication, Oppositional Media Hostility, and Selective Exposure." *The Journal of Politics* 74(1): 174–86. doi:10.1017/S002238161100123X.
- Argyle, L. P., C. A. Bail, E. C. Busby, J. R. Gubler, T. Howe, C. Rytting, T. Sorensen, and D. Wingate. 2023. "Leveraging AI for Democratic Discourse: Chat Interventions Can Improve Online Political Conversations at Scale." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 120(41):e2311627120. doi:10.1073/pnas.2311627120.
- Arugute, N., E. Calvo, and T. Ventura. 2023. "Network activated frames: Content sharing and perceived polarization in social media." *Journal of Communication* 73(1):14–24. doi:10.1093/joc/jqac035.
- Bai, H., J. Voelkel, J. Eichstaedt, and R. Willer. 2023. *Artificial intelligence can persuade humans on political issues*. <https://www.researchsquare.com/article/rs-3238396/latest>
- Bansak, K., J. Hainmueller, D. J. Hopkins, and T. Yamamoto. 2021a. "Beyond the breaking point? Survey satisficing in conjoint experiments." *Political Science Research and Methods* 9(1):53–71. doi:10.1017/psrm.2019.13.
- Bansak, K., J. Hainmueller, D. J. Hopkins, and T. Yamamoto. 2021b. "Conjoint survey experiments. In *Advances in Experimental Political Science*, eds. J. N. Druckman and D. Green, 19–41. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bansak, K., J. Hainmueller, D. J. Hopkins, and T. Yamamoto. 2022. "Using Conjoint Experiments to Analyze Election Outcomes: The Essential Role of the Average Marginal Component Effect." *Political Analysis* 31(4):500–18. doi:10.1017/pan.2022.16.
- Berinsky, A. J., M. F. Margolis, and M. W. Sances. 2014. "Separating the Shirkers from the Workers? Making Sure Respondents Pay Attention on Self-Administered Surveys." *American Journal of Political Science* 58(3):739–53. doi:10.1111/ajps.12081.
- Burton, J. W., M. Stein, and T. B. Jensen. 2020. "A systematic review of algorithm aversion in augmented decision making." *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making* 33(2):220–39. doi:10.1002/bdm.2155.
- Capraro, V., A. Lentsch, D. Acemoglu, S. Akgun, A. Akhmedova, E. Bilancini, J.-F. Bonnefon, P. Brañas-Garza, L. Butera, and K. M. Douglas. 2024. "The Impact of Generative Artificial Intelligence on Socioeconomic Inequalities and Policy Making." *PNAS Nexus* 3(6):7689236.
- Castro, L., J. Strömbäck, F. Esser, P. Van Aelst, C. de Vreese, T. Aalberg, A. S. Cardenal, N. Corbu, D. N. Hopmann, K. Koc-Michalska, J. Matthes, C. Schemer, T. Sheaffer, S. Splendore, J. Stanyer, A. Stepińska, V. Štětka, and Y. Theocharis. 2021. "Navigating High-choice European Political Information Environments: A Comparative Analysis of News User Profiles and Political Knowledge." *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 27(4):827–59. doi:10.1177/19401612211012572.
- Chae, J. H., and D. Tewksbury. 2024. "Perceiving AI Intervention Does Not Compromise the Persuasive Effect of Fact-Checking." *New Media & Society* Published online October 21. doi:10.1177/14614448241286881.
- Clerwall, C. 2014. "Enter the Robot Journalist: Users' Perceptions of Automated Content." *Journalism Practice* 8(5):519–31. doi:10.1080/17512786.2014.883116.
- Cloudy, J., J. Banks, and N. D. Bowman. 2023. "The Str(AI)ght Scoop: Artificial Intelligence Cues Reduce Perceptions of Hostile Media Bias." *Digital Journalism* 11(9):1577–96. doi: 10.1080/21670811.2021.1969974.
- Costello, T. H., G. Pennycook, and D. G. Rand. 2024. "Durably Reducing Conspiracy Beliefs Through Dialogues with AI." *Science* 385(6714):eadq1814. doi:10.1126/science.adq1814.

- De La Cuesta, B., N. Egami, and K. Imai. 2022. "Improving the External Validity of Conjoint Analysis: The Essential Role of Profile Distribution." *Political Analysis* 30(1):19–45. doi:10.1017/pan.2020.40.
- Dias, N., and Y. Lelkes. 2021. "The Nature of Affective Polarization: Disentangling Policy Disagreement from Partisan Identity." *American Journal of Political Science*. doi:10.1111/ajps.12628.
- Diel, A., T. Lalgı, I. C. Schröter, K. F. MacDorman, M. Teufel, and A. Bäuerle. 2024. "Human Performance in Detecting Deepfakes: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Of 56 Papers." *Computers in Human Behavior Reports* 16:100538.
- Dietvorst, B. J., J. P. Simmons, and C. Massey. 2015. "Algorithm Aversion: People Erroneously Avoid Algorithms After Seeing Them Err." *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General* 144(1):114.
- Douglas, B. D., P. J. Ewell, and M. Brauer. 2023. "Data Quality in Online Human-Subjects Research: Comparisons Between MTurk, Prolific, CloudResearch, Qualtrics, and SONA." *PLoS One* 18(3):e0279720. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0279720.
- Druckman, J. N., E. Peterson, and R. Slothuus. 2013. "How Elite Partisan Polarization Affects Public Opinion Formation." *American Political Science Review* 107(1):57–79.
- Druckman, J. N., S. R. Gubitz, M. S. Levendusky, and A. M. Lloyd. 2019. "How Incivility on Partisan Media (De)Polarizes the Electorate." *The Journal of Politics* 81(1):291–95.
- Dvir-Gvirsman, S., Y. Tsifti, and E. Menchen-Trevino. 2016. "The Extent and Nature of Ideological Selective Exposure Online: Combining Survey Responses with Actual Web Log Data from the 2013 Israeli Elections." *New Media & Society* 18(5):857–77. doi:10.1177/1461444814549041.
- Epstein, Z., A. A. Arechar, and D. Rand. 2023. *What Label Should Be Applied to Content Produced by Generative AI?* <https://files.osf.io/v1/resources/v4mfz/providers/osfstorage/64c4088ea2be6b001d31469e?action=download&direct&version=1>
- Frank, J., F. Herbert, J. Ricker, L. Schönherr, T. Eisenhofer, A. Fischer, M. Dürmuth, and T. Holz. 2024. "A Representative Study on Human Detection of Artificially Generated Media Across Countries." 2024 IEEE Symposium on Security and Privacy (SP), 55–73, San Francisco, CA, USA.
- Garg, N., L. Schiebinger, D. Jurafsky, and J. Zou. 2018. "Word Embeddings Quantify 100 Years of Gender and Ethnic Stereotypes." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 115(16):E3635–44. doi:10.1073/pnas.1720347115.
- Garrett, R. K. 2009. "Politically Motivated Reinforcement Seeking: Reframing the Selective Exposure Debate." *Journal of Communication* 59(4):676–99.
- Garrett, R. K., S. D. Gvirsman, B. K. Johnson, Y. Tsifti, R. Neo, and A. Dal. 2014. "Implications of Pro- and Counterattitudinal Information Exposure for Affective Polarization: Partisan Media Exposure and Affective Polarization." *Human Communication Research* 40(3):309–32. doi:10.1111/hcre.12028.
- Gentzkow, M., and J. M. Shapiro. 2006. "Media Bias and Reputation." *Journal of Political Economy* 114(2):280–316. doi:10.1086/499414.
- Gentzkow, M., and J. M. Shapiro. 2010. "What Drives Media Slant? Evidence from US Daily Newspapers." *Econometrica* 78(1):35–71.
- Gidron, N., J. Adams, and W. Horne. 2020. *American Affective Polarization in Comparative Perspective*. 1st Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gil de Zúñiga, H., Z. Cheng, and P. González-González. 2022. "Effects of the News Finds Me Perception on Algorithmic News Attitudes and Social Media Political Homophily." *Journal of Communication* 72(5):578–91.

- Govers, J., E. Velloso, V. Kostakos, and J. Goncalves. 2024. "AI-Driven Mediation Strategies for Audience Depolarisation in Online Debates." Proceedings of the CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems, 1–18, Honolulu, HI, USA, May 11–16.
- Graefe, A., and N. Bohlken. 2020. "Automated Journalism: A Meta-Analysis of Readers' Perceptions of Human-Written in Comparison to Automated News." *Media and Communication* 8(3):50–9. doi:10.17645/mac.v8i3.3019.
- Graefe, A., M. Haim, B. Haarmann, and H.-B. Brosius. 2018. "Readers' Perception of Computer-Generated News: Credibility, Expertise, and Readability." *Journalism* 19(5):595–610. doi:10.1177/1464884916641269. doi:
- Hainmueller, J., D. J. Hopkins, and T. Yamamoto. 2014. "Causal Inference in Conjoint Analysis: Understanding Multidimensional Choices via Stated Preference Experiments." *Political Analysis* 22(1):1–30.
- Hanitzsch, T., A. Van Dalen, and N. Steindl. 2018. "Caught in the Nexus: A Comparative and Longitudinal Analysis of Public Trust in the Press." *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 23(1):3–23. doi:10.1177/1940161217740695.
- Hohenstein, J., R. F. Kizilcec, D. DiFranzo, Z. Aghajari, H. Mieczkowski, K. Levy, M. Naaman, J. Hancock, and M. F. Jung. 2023. "Artificial Intelligence in Communication Impacts Language and Social Relationships." *Scientific Reports* 13(1):5487. doi:10.1038/s41598-023-30938-9.
- Hong, J.-W., H.-C.-H. Chang, and D. Tewksbury. 2024. "Can AI Become Walter Cronkite? Testing the Machine Heuristic, the Hostile Media Effect, and Political News Written by Artificial Intelligence." *Digital Journalism* 1–24. Published online March 22. doi:10.1080/21670811.2024.2323000.
- Iyengar, S., Y. Lelkes, M. Levendusky, N. Malhotra, and S. J. Westwood. 2019. "The Origins and Consequences of Affective Polarization in the United States." *Annual Review of Political Science* 22(1):129–46.
- Jakesch, M., J. T. Hancock, and M. Naaman. 2023. "Human Heuristics for AI-Generated Language Are Flawed." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 120(11):e2208839120. doi:10.1073/pnas.2208839120.
- Johannesson, M. P., and E. Knudsen. 2021. "Disentangling the Influence of Recommender Attributes and News-Story Attributes: A Conjoint Experiment on Exposure and Sharing Decisions on Social Networking Sites." *Digital Journalism* 9(8):1141–61. doi:10.1080/21670811.2020.1805780.
- Johnson, B. K., R. L. Neo, M. E. M. Heijnen, L. Smits, and C. Van Veen. 2020. "Issues, Involvement, and Influence: Effects of Selective Exposure and Sharing on Polarization and Participation." *Computers in Human Behavior* 104:106155. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2019.09.031.
- Jones, B., R. Jones, and E. Luger. 2022. "AI 'Everywhere and Nowhere': Addressing the AI Intelligibility Problem in Public Service Journalism." *Digital Journalism* 10(10):1731–55. doi:10.1080/21670811.2022.2145328.
- Kim, M., and Y. Lu. 2020. "Testing Partisan Selective Exposure in a Multidimensional Choice Context: Evidence from a Conjoint Experiment." *Mass Communication and Society* 23(1):107–27. doi:10.1080/15205436.2019.1636283.
- Kirkland, P. A., and A. Coppock. 2018. "Candidate Choice Without Party Labels: New Insights from Conjoint Survey Experiments." *Political Behavior* 40(3):571–91. doi:10.1007/s11109-017-9414-8.
- Knobloch-Westerwick, S., and J. Meng. 2009. "Looking the Other Way: Selective Exposure to Attitude-Consistent and Counterattitudinal Political Information." *Communication Research* 36(3):426–48. doi:10.1177/0093650209333030.

- Knudsen, E., and M. P. Johannesson. 2019. "Beyond the Limits of Survey Experiments: How Conjoint Designs Advance Causal Inference in Political Communication Research." *Political Communication* 36(2):259–71. doi:10.1080/10584609.2018.1493009. doi:
- Kreps, S., R. M. McCain, and M. Brundage. 2022. "All the News That's Fit to Fabricate: AI-Generated Text as a Tool of Media Misinformation." *Journal of Experimental Political Science* 9(1):104–17. doi:10.1017/XPS.2020.37.
- Kurdi, B., S. Lozano, and M. R. Banaji. 2017. "Introducing the Open Affective Standardized Image Set (OASIS)." *Behavior Research Methods* 49(2):457–70. doi:10.3758/s13428-016-0715-3.
- Leeper, T. J. 2018. *Cregg: Simple Conjoint Analyses and Visualization*. R package version 0.2.1.
- Leeper, T. J., S. B. Hobolt, and J. Tilley. 2020. "Measuring Subgroup Preferences in Conjoint Experiments." *Political Analysis* 28(2):207–21. doi:10.1017/pan.2019.30.
- Lermann Henestroza, A., H. Greving, and J. Kimmerle. 2023. "Automated Journalism: The Effects of AI Authorship and Evaluative Information on the Perception of a Science Journalism Article." *Computers in Human Behavior* 138:107445. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2022.107445.
- Liu, B., and L. Wei. 2019. "Machine Authorship *In Situ*: Effect of News Organization and News Genre on News Credibility." *Digital Journalism* 7(5):635–57. doi:10.1080/21670811.2018.1510740.
- Logg, J. M., J. A. Minson, and D. A. Moore. 2019. "Algorithm Appreciation: People Prefer Algorithmic to Human Judgment." *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 151:90–103. doi:10.1016/j.obhdp.2018.12.005.
- Longoni, C., A. Fradkin, L. Cian, and G. Pennycook. 2022. "News from Generative Artificial Intelligence Is Believed Less." *2022 ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency*, 97–106, Seoul Republic of Korea, June 21–4.
- Marconi, F. 2020. *Newsmakers: Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Journalism*. Columbia University Press.
- Matthes, J., A. Nanz, M. Stubenvoll, and R. Heiss. 2020. "Processing News on Social Media. The Political Incidental News Exposure Model (PINE)." *Journalism* 21(8):1031–48. doi:10.1177/1464884920915371.
- Messing, S., and S. J. Westwood. 2014. "Selective Exposure in the Age of Social Media: Endorsements Trump Partisan Source Affiliation When Selecting News Online." *Communication Research* 41(8):1042–63. doi:10.1177/0093650212466406.
- Metzger, M. J., E. H. Hartsell, and A. J. Flanagin. 2020. "Cognitive Dissonance or Credibility? A Comparison of Two Theoretical Explanations for Selective Exposure to Partisan News." *Communication Research* 47(1):3–28. doi:10.1177/0093650215613136.
- Montoya, R. M., and R. S. Horton. 2013. "A Meta-Analytic Investigation of the Processes Underlying the Similarity-Attraction Effect." *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 30(1):64–94. doi:10.1177/0265407512452989.
- Moon, W.-K., M. Chung, and S. Mo. Jones-Jang. 2023. "How Can We Fight Partisan Biases in the COVID-19 Pandemic? AI Source Labels on Fact-checking Messages Reduce Motivated Reasoning." *Mass Communication and Society* 26(4):646–70. doi:10.1080/15205436.2022.2097926.
- Mukerjee, S., and T. Yang. 2021. "Choosing to Avoid? A Conjoint Experimental Study to Understand Selective Exposure and Avoidance on Social Media." *Political Communication* 38(3):222–40. doi:10.1080/10584609.2020.1763531.
- Mummolo, J. 2016. "News from the Other Side: How Topic Relevance Limits the Prevalence of Partisan Selective Exposure." *The Journal of Politics* 78(3):763–73. doi:10.1086/685584.

- Munoriyarwa, A., S. Chiumbu, and G. Motsaathebe. 2023. "Artificial Intelligence Practices in Everyday News Production: The Case of South Africa's Mainstream Newsrooms." *Journalism Practice* 17(7):1374–92. doi:10.1080/17512786.2021.1984976.
- Nah, S., J. Luo, S. Kim, M. Chen, R. Mitson, and J. Joo. 2024. "Algorithmic Bias or Algorithmic Reconstruction? A Comparative Analysis Between AI News and Human News." *International Journal of Communication (Online)* 18, 700–730.
- Pavlik, J. V. 2023. "Collaborating With ChatGPT: Considering the Implications of Generative Artificial Intelligence for Journalism and Media Education." *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator* 78(1):84–93. doi:10.1177/10776958221149577.
- Peer, E., D. Rothschild, A. Gordon, Z. Evernden, and E. Damer. 2021. "Data Quality of Platforms and Panels for Online Behavioral Research." *Behavior Research Methods* 54(4):1643–62. doi:10.3758/s13428-021-01694-3.
- Perloff, R. M. 2015. "A Three-Decade Retrospective on the Hostile Media Effect." *Mass Communication and Society* 18(6):701–29. doi:10.1080/15205436.2015.1051234.
- Podsakoff, P. M., S. B. MacKenzie, J.-Y. Lee, and N. P. Podsakoff. 2003. "Common Method Biases in Behavioral Research: A Critical Review of the Literature and Recommended Remedies." *Journal of Applied Psychology* 88(5):879–903. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.88.5.879.
- Rinehart, A., and E. Kung. 2022. *Artificial Intelligence in Local News: A survey of US newsrooms' AI readiness*. The Associated Press. doi:10.13140/RG.2.2.16926.82246
- Rosenthal-von Der Pütten, A. M., and A. Sach. 2024. "Michael Is Better Than Mehmet: Exploring the Perils of Algorithmic Biases and Selective Adherence to Advice from Automated Decision Support Systems in Hiring." *Frontiers in Psychology* 15:1416504. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1416504.
- Rozado, D. 2020. "Wide Range Screening of Algorithmic Bias in Word Embedding Models Using Large Sentiment Lexicons Reveals Underreported Bias Types." *PLoS One* 15(4): e0231189. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0231189.
- Rozado, D. 2023. "The Political Biases of ChatGPT." *Social Sciences* 12(3):148. doi:10.3390/socsci12030148.
- Rutinowski, J., S. Franke, J. Endendyk, I. Dormuth, M. Roidl, and M. Pauly. 2024. "The Self-Perception and Political Biases of ChatGPT." *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies* 2024:1–9. doi:10.1155/2024/7115633.
- Salvi, F., M. H. Ribeiro, R. Gallotti, and R. West. 2024. *On the Conversational Persuasiveness of Large Language Models: A Randomized Controlled Trial*. <https://www.researchsquare.com/article/rs-4429707/latest>
- Santurkar, S., E. Durmus, F. Ladhak, C. Lee, P. Liang, and T. Hashimoto. 2023. "Whose Opinions Do Language Models Reflect?" *International Conference on Machine Learning*, 29971–30004. <https://proceedings.mlr.press/v202/santurkar23a.html>
- Settle, J. E. 2019. *Frenemies: How social media polarizes America*. First Paperback Edition. Cambridge University Press.
- Simon, F. M., K. B. Becker, and C. Crum. 2023. *Policies in Parallel? A Comparative Study of Journalistic AI Policies in 52 Global News Organisations*. <https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:b527b298-a12b-4f0d-bf77-543e3375cdf7>
- Skovsgaard, M., and K. Andersen. 2020. "Conceptualizing News Avoidance: Towards a Shared Understanding of Different Causes and Potential Solutions." *Journalism Studies* 21(4):459–76. doi:10.1080/1461670X.2019.1686410.
- Smith, M. 2024. *AI in Journalism: How Would Public Trust in the news be affected?* | YouGov. YouGov. <https://yougov.co.uk/technology/articles/49105-ai-in-journalism-how-would-public-trust-in-the-news-be-affected>

- Stroud, N. J. 2008. "Media Use and Political Predispositions: Revisiting the Concept of Selective Exposure." *Political Behavior* 30:341–66.
- Sundar, S. S. 2008. "The MAIN Model: A Heuristic Approach to Understanding Technology Effects on Credibility." In *Digital Media, Youth, and Credibility*, eds. M. J. Metzger and A. J. Flanagin, 73–100. Cambridge: The MIT Press.
- Sundar, S. S. 2020. "Rise of Machine Agency: A Framework for Studying the Psychology of Human–AI Interaction (HAI)." *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 25(1): 74–88. doi:10.1093/jcmc/zmz026.
- Tandoc, E. C., L. J. Yao, and S. Wu. 2020. "Man vs. Machine? The Impact of Algorithm Authorship on News Credibility." *Digital Journalism* 8(4):548–62. doi:10.1080/21670811.2020.1762102.
- Thurman, N., J. Moeller, N. Helberger, and D. Trilling. 2019. "My Friends, Editors, Algorithms, and I: Examining Audience Attitudes to News Selection." *Digital Journalism* 7(4):447–69. doi:10.1080/21670811.2018.1493936.
- Toff, B., and F. M. Simon. 2024. "'Or They Could Just Not Use It?': The Dilemma of AI Disclosure for Audience Trust in News." *The International Journal of Press/Politics*. Published online December 30. doi:10.1177/19401612241308697.
- Tóth, F., S. Mihelj, V. Štětka, and K. Kondor. 2023. "A Media Repertoires Approach to Selective Exposure: News Consumption and Political Polarization in Eastern Europe." *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 28(4):884–908. doi:10.1177/19401612211072552.
- Trilling, D., and E. Knudsen. 2023. "Drivers of News Sharing: How Context, Content, and User Features Shape Sharing Decisions on Facebook." *Digital Journalism* 1–22. Published September 22. doi:10.1080/21670811.2023.2255224.
- Vallone, R. P., L. Ross, and M. R. Lepper. 1985. "The Hostile Media Phenomenon: Biased Perception and Perceptions of Media Bias in Coverage of the Beirut massacre." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 49(3), 577.
- Van Aelst, P., J. Strömbäck, T. Aalberg, F. Esser, C. de Vreese, J. Matthes, D. Hopmann, S. Salgado, N. Hubé, A. Stepińska, S. Papatthanassopoulos, R. Berganza, G. Legnante, C. Reinemann, T. Sheafer, and J. Stanyer. 2017. "Political Communication in a High-Choice Media Environment: A Challenge for Democracy?" *Annals of the International Communication Association* 41(1):3–27.
- Van Dalen, A. 2012. "The Algorithms Behind the Headlines: How Machine-Written News Redefines the Core Skills of Human Journalists." *Journalism Practice* 6(5–6):648–58. doi:10.1080/17512786.2012.667268.
- Van Dalen, A. 2024. "Revisiting the Algorithms Behind the Headlines. How Journalists Respond to Professional Competition of Generative AI." *Journalism Practice* 1–18. Published online November 26. doi:10.1080/17512786.2024.2389209.
- Vecchiato, A., and K. Munger. 2025. "Introducing the Visual Conjoint, with an Application to Candidate Evaluation on Social Media." *Journal of Experimental Political Science* 12(1):57–71. doi:10.1017/XPS.2024.15.
- Velez, Y. R., and P. Liu. 2024. "Confronting Core Issues: A Critical Assessment of Attitude Polarization Using Tailored Experiments." *American Political Science Review* 119(2): 1–18. doi:10.1017/S0003055424000819.
- Waddell, T. F. 2019. "Can an Algorithm Reduce the Perceived Bias of News? Testing the Effect of Machine Attribution on News Readers' Evaluations of Bias, Anthropomorphism, and Credibility." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 96(1):82–100. doi:10.1177/1077699018815891.

- Wang, S., and G. Huang. 2024. "The Impact of Machine Authorship on News Audience Perceptions: A Meta-Analysis of Experimental Studies." *Communication Research* 51(7): 815–42. doi:10.1177/00936502241229794.
- Wojcieszak, M., A. Thakur, J. F. Ferreira Gonçalves, A. Casas, E. Menchen-Trevino, and M. Boon. 2021. "Can AI Enhance People's Support for Online Moderation and Their Openness to Dissimilar Political Views?" *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 26(4): 223–43. doi:10.1093/jcmc/zmab006.
- Wojcieszak, M., S. de Leeuw, E. Menchen-Trevino, S. Lee, K. M. Huang-Isherwood, and B. Weeks. 2021. "No Polarization From Partisan News: Over-Time Evidence From Trace Data." *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 28(3):601–26. doi:10.1177/19401612211047194.

Author Biographies

Alon Zoizner is an assistant professor in the Department of Communication at the University of Haifa. His research spans digital technologies, modern information environments, and current political developments, utilizing computational content analysis, experiments, survey analysis, and elite interviews.

Jörg Matthes is a professor of communication science at the University of Vienna. His research interests include political communication, digital media use, media effects, and advertising.

Nicoleta Corbu is a professor of communication at the National University of Political Studies and Public Administration (SNSPA) in Bucharest, Romania, where she coordinates the Center for Research in Communication. Her research interests focus on political communication, media effects, and education policies.

Claes H. de Vreese is a Distinguished University Professor of AI and Society, with a special emphasis on Media and democracy. He co-directs the AI, Media and Democracy Lab and is the Director of the Digital Democracy Centre (DDC) at SDU.

Frank Esser is a professor of international and comparative media research in the Department of Communication and Media Research at the University of Zurich. He currently serves as co-director of the department and previously served as director. His research focuses on political communication from a comparative, cross-national perspective.

Karolina Koc-Michalska is a professor at the Audencia Business School and has affiliations with CEVIPOF Sciences Po Paris, France, and University of Silesia, Faculty of Social Sciences, Poland. Her research focuses on the strategies of political actors in the online environment and citizens' political engagement. She employs a comparative approach focusing on the United States and European countries.

Christian Schemer is a professor of Communication at the Department of Communication of the Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz, Germany. His research is focused on political communication use and effects.

Yannis Theocharis is a professor and chair of Digital Governance at the Department of Governance, School of Social Science and Technology, Technical University of Munich. His work focuses on political behavior, political communication, content moderation, and computational social science.

Jan Zilinsky is a postdoctoral research fellow at the TUM School of Social Sciences and Technology. His research areas are public opinion, political communication, and the political effects of AI.