NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Supplementary Materials

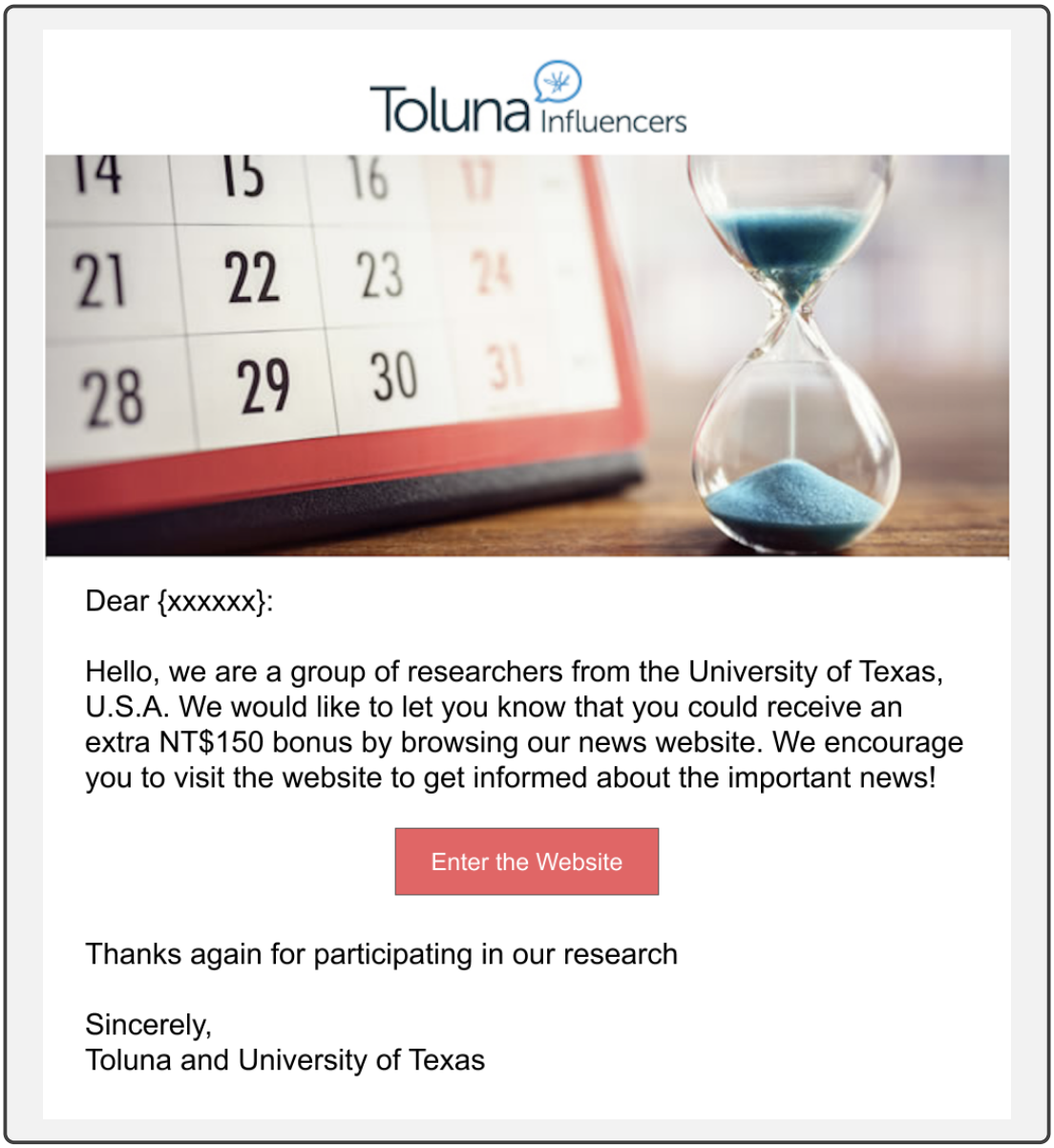
"How the Pro-Beijing Media Influences Voters: Evidence from a Randomized Field Experiment"

American Political Science Review

A Treatment Website

A.1 Daily Reminder

Figure SI-1: Screenshot of Translated Daily Reminder



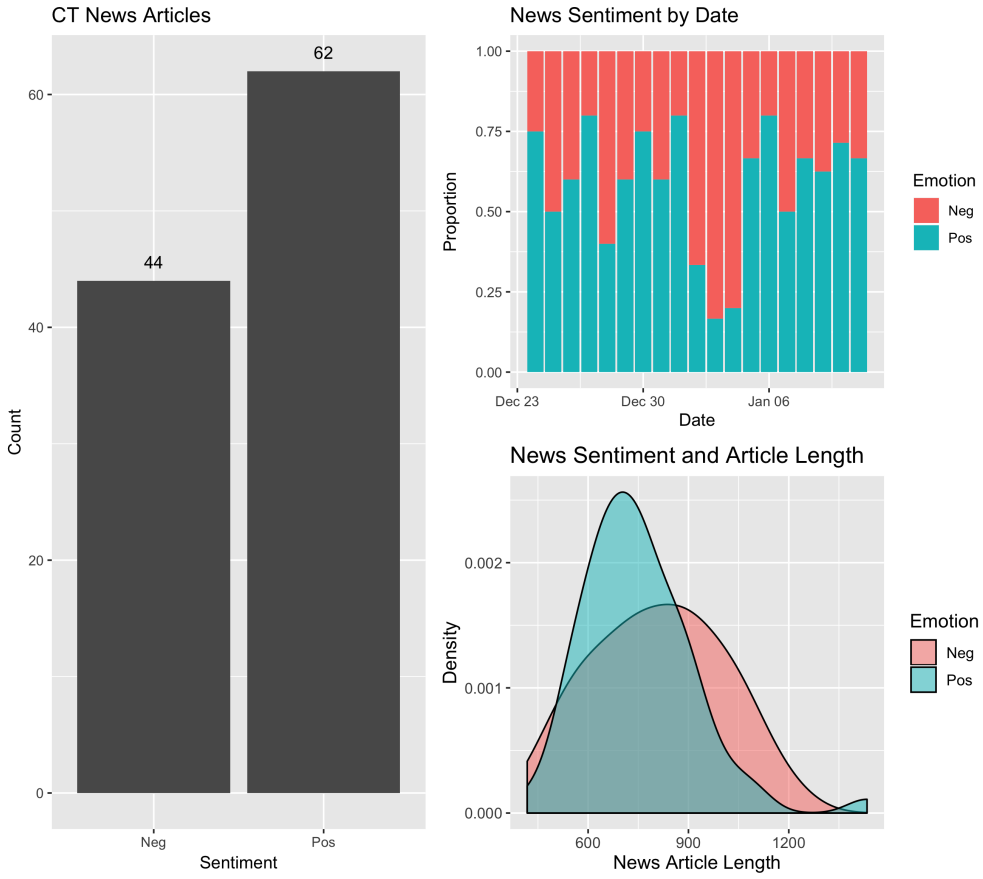
A.2 News Articles on Treatment Website

Full Articles During the incentivized period, CT published 106 news articles on the front page and in the cross-strait relations news section. The headline and full text of each article are available here and are archived in Harvard Dataverse.

Text Analysis Based on the National Taiwan University Sentiment Dictionary, I conduct a sentiment analysis of the 106 news articles on the treatment website . Sixty-two of these articles exhibit a more positive sentiment, and forty-four show a more negative tone. In addition, these positive articles tend to be shorter in length compared to negative ones.

The majority of positive articles focus on PRC-related issues, such as the Belt and Road Initiative, cross-strait relations, Xi Jinping's 2020 New Year speech, the China-Japan-South Korea free trade agreement, the restoration of Hong Kong's stability, and Han's political campaign. In contrast, negative news articles cover topics related to the incumbent president Tsai Ing-wen and her party DPP, the Anti-Infiltration Act (a law aimed at regulating foreign/PRC influence on Taiwan's political processes), the Hong Kong protesters, and conflicts between Iran and the United States.

Figure SI-2: Sentiment Analysis



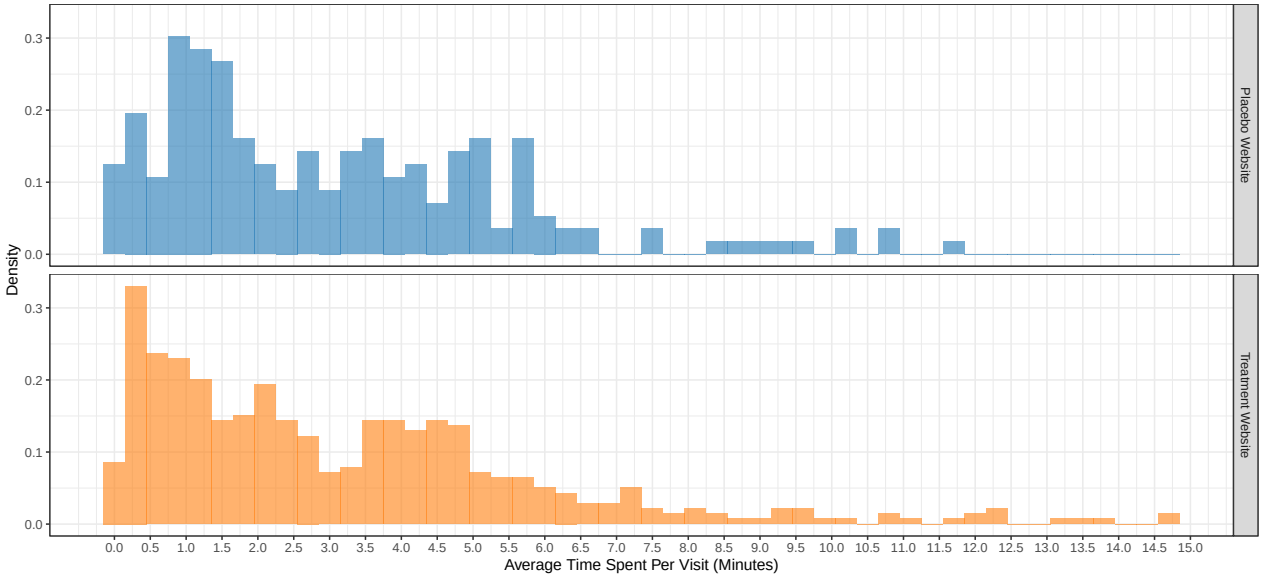
Most-viewed Articles As outlined in the main text, each webpage on the treatment website housed multiple news articles published by CT on a specific date. Since Google Analytics tracks webpage views rather than individual article visits within each webpage, I infer which articles received most views based on webpage popularity metrics. The most frequently accessed webpage contained six news articles published on January 2, 2020. The thematic content of these articles includes:

- Government surveillance allegations (two articles) suggesting intelligence resources were used to benefit the ruling DPP while disadvantaging the PRC-favored candidate Han.
- An analysis downplaying direct Chinese influence on Taiwan's election while emphasizing the DPP's domestic political maneuvering (specifically the Anti-Infiltration Act).
- Coverage of Hong Kong protests (two articles) detailing escalating protester-government confrontations and official responses to international criticism of police actions.
- A cultural piece examining Taiwan's religious New Year traditions related to prosperity.

This pattern of engagement suggests participants were particularly exposed to content addressing surveillance allegations, cross-strait relations, and Hong Kong protests. Notably, the thematic content described above is by no means unique to January 2 but consistent with the editorial patterns observed throughout the incentivized period. These key topics appeared with similar frequency and framing across multiple days of coverage.

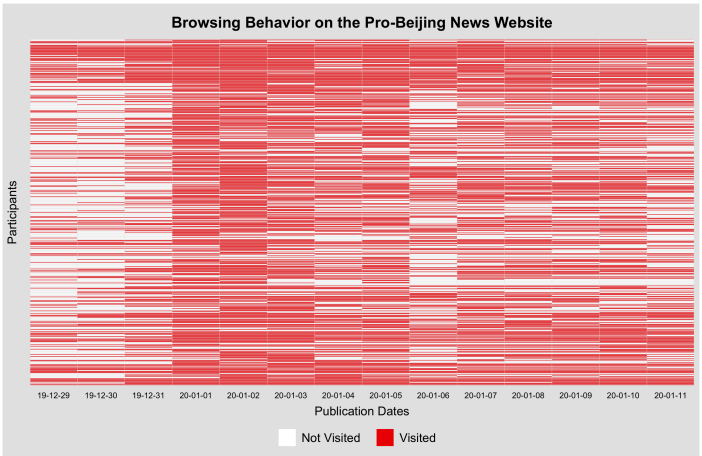
A.3 Browsing Activities

Figure SI-3: Distribution of Average Browsing Time Per Visit



Note: The figure excludes participants who never visited the assigned site and those who averaged more than 15 minutes per visit, leaving 651 participants (471 treatment, 190 placebo). Average browsing time spent on the site is 3.426 minutes for the treatment group and 3.386 minutes for the placebo group, a difference that is not statistically significant (coef. = 0.04 seconds, s.e. = 0.30; p-value = .891, two-tailed).

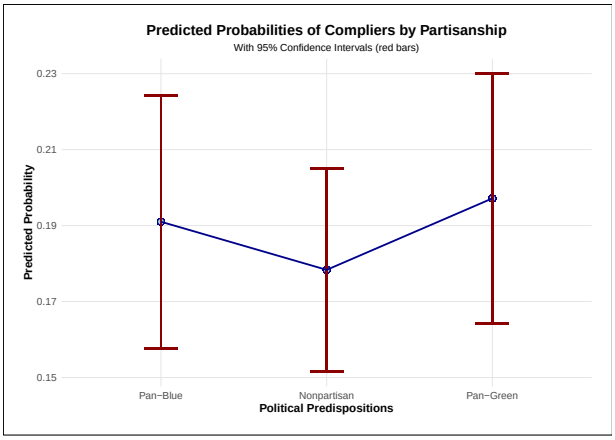
Figure SI-4: Panel View of Browsing Pattern across Individual and Time



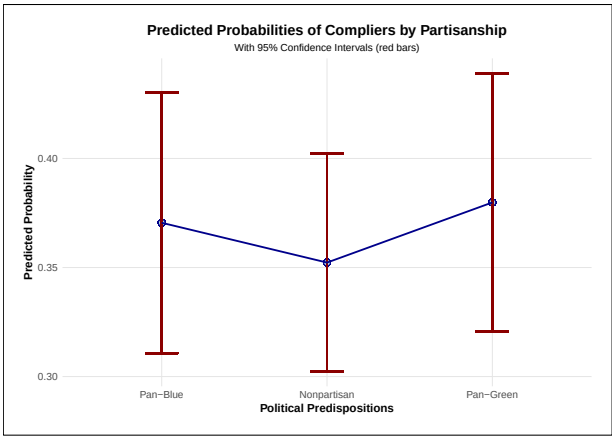
Note: A panel view of a random set of participants' browsing activities over time. A red rectangle indicates when a participant visited the site on a specific day. Those who never visited the site are excluded.

A.4 Predicted Probability of Compliance by Political Predisposition

Figure SI-5: Minimum Treatment Compliance
(Average Daily Browsing Time $\geq$ 1 Minutes)

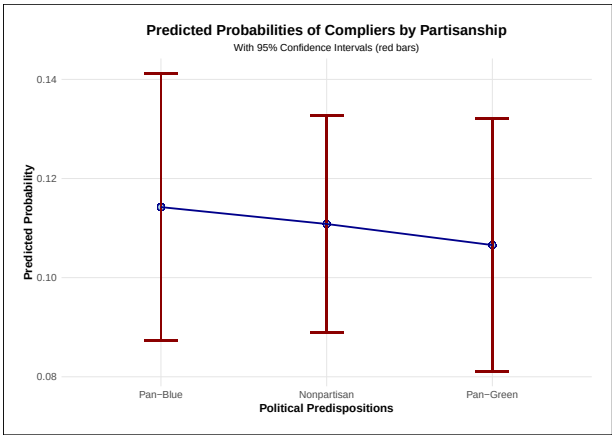


(a) Results for Participants Completing Only the First Survey Wave

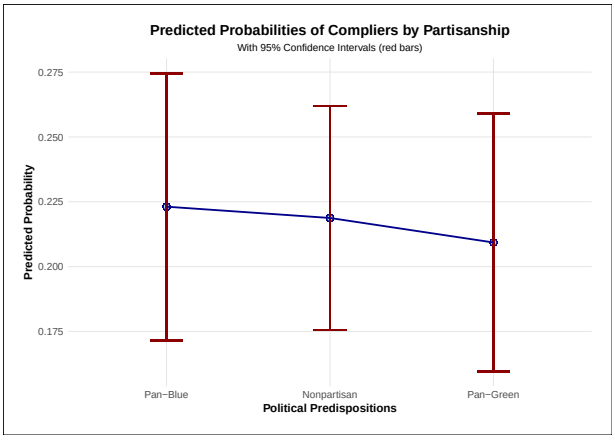


(b) Results for Participants Completing Both Survey Waves

Figure SI-6: Full Treatment Compliance
(Average Daily Browsing Time $\geq$ 3 Minutes)



(a) Results for Participants Completing Only the First Survey Wave



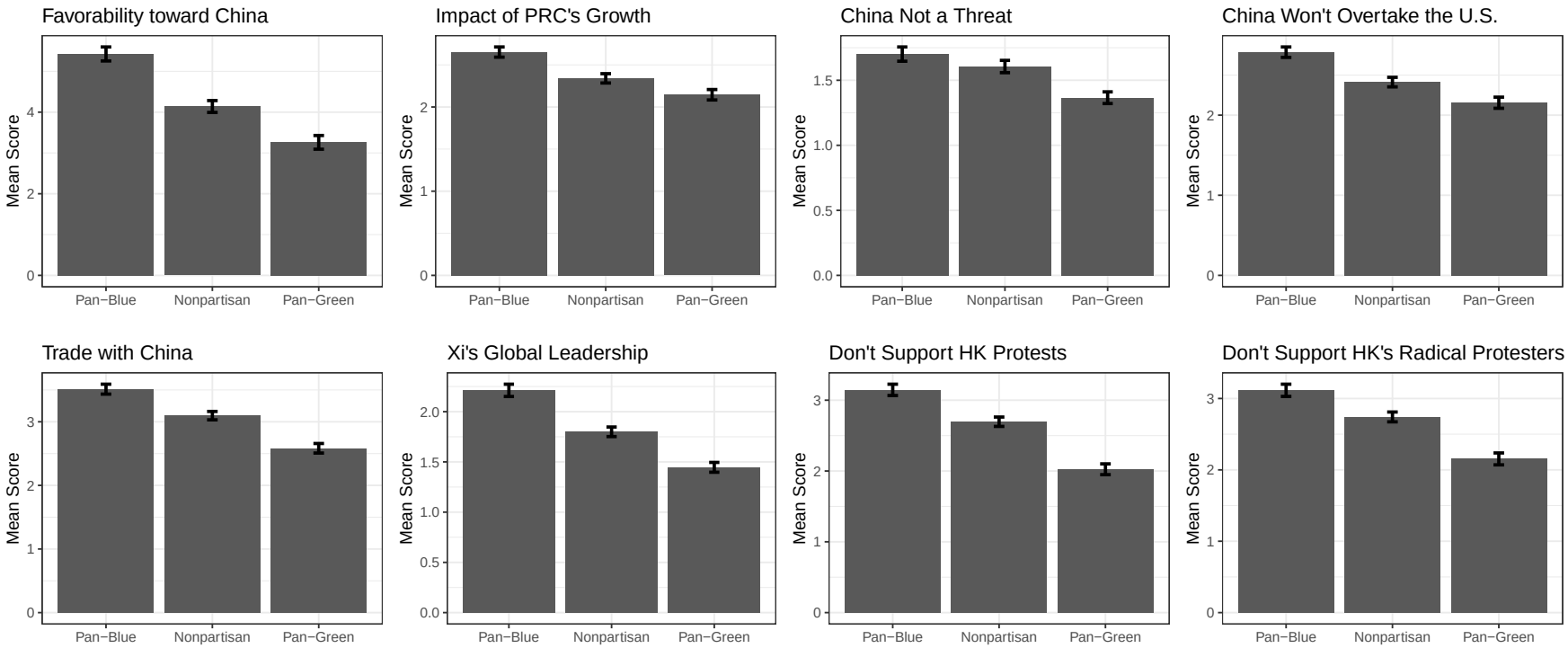
(b) Results for Participants Completing Both Survey Waves

B Pro-PRC Index and Partisanship

B.1 Baseline China-related Opinions by Partisan Groups

Bar in the figure below represents 95% confidence interval. I reorder the responses, if necessary, to make higher value represent more favorable attitudes toward the PRC. The items wording can be found in Section K of the Supplementary Material.

Figure SI-7: Baseline Opinions about the PRC by Political Predispositions



B.2 Regression of Pro-PRC Index on Personal Characteristics

I regress individuals' baseline pro-PRC index scores on their background characteristics, including political predispositions, age, gender (1 = Female), residence (1 = Special Municipality), education, employment status, marital status, income, voting histories, ethnic origin (1 = Minnan Taiwanese), religion (1 = Taoism), newspaper preference for Apple Daily (1 = Yes), and TV program preference for SET News (1 = least-preferred; 4 = most-preferred). Political predispositions—using nonpartisans as the reference category—are the strongest predictor of baseline opinions on the PRC among all demographics.

Table SI-1: Regression of Baseline Pro-PRC Index Scores on Personal Characteristics

Variable	Coefficient	Robust S.E.
Pan Blue/PRC-Friendly	0.39***	(0.04)
Pan Green/PRC-Skeptical	-0.36***	(0.04)
Age	0.00	(0.00)
Female	0.01	(0.03)
Urban Residence	0.01	(0.03)
Education	-0.05***	(0.01)
Full-Time Job	-0.01	(0.03)
Married	0.11**	(0.03)
Income	-0.01	(0.00)
Vote in 2016	-0.05	(0.03)
Vote in 2012	0.05	(0.03)
Ethnicity	-0.14***	(0.03)
Taoism	0.02	(0.04)
Apple Daily	-0.14***	(0.03)
SET News Program	-0.08***	(0.02)
R^2	0.28	
Adj. R^2	0.28	
Num. Observations	2077	

$^{***}p < 0.001$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$

C Sample

C.1 Descriptive Statistics

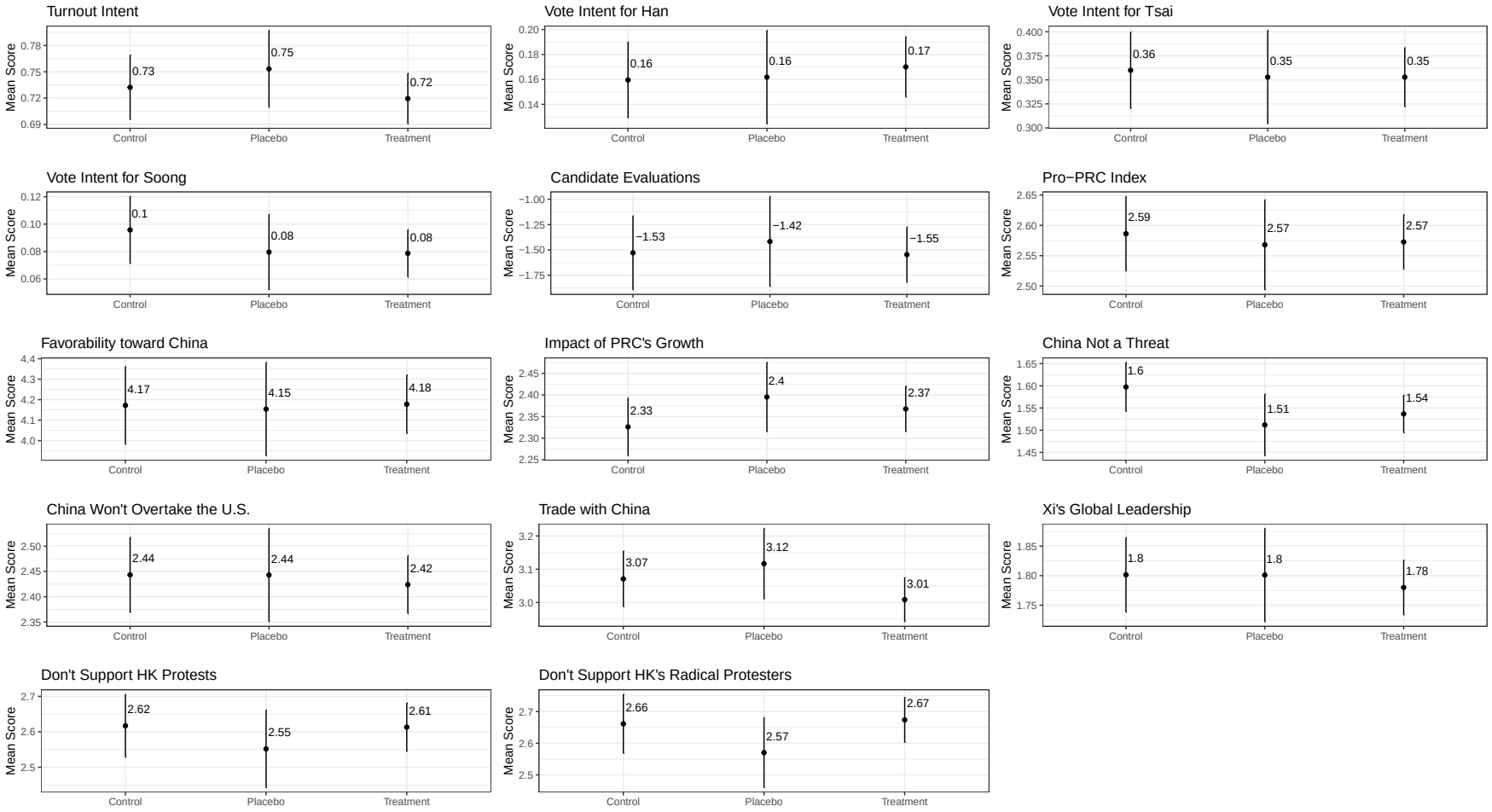
Table SI-2: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Panel A: All Participants					
Vote for Han					
Baseline	2,077	0.18	0.39	0	1
Endline	815	0.34	0.48	0	1
Change Score	815	0.14	0.44	-1	1
Candidate Evaluation					
Baseline	2,077	-1.32	4.42	-9	9
Endline	949	-1.19	5.06	-9	9
Change Score	949	0.04	3.39	-18	18
Pro-PRC Index					
Baseline	2,077	2.61	0.73	1	5
Endline	949	2.71	0.78	1	5
Change Score	949	0.09	0.6	-3	3.12
Political Predispositions					
PRC-friendly	2,077	0.31	0.46	0	1
Nonpartisan	2,077	0.4	0.49	0	1
PRC-skeptical	2,077	0.29	0.46	0	1
Panel B: Experimental Participants					
Vote for Han					
Baseline	1882	0.17	0.37	0	1
Endline	738	0.33	0.47	0	1
Change Score	738	0.14	0.43	-1	1
Candidate Evaluation					
Baseline	1882	-1.51	4.32	-9	9
Endline	861	-1.35	5.07	-9	9
Change Score	861	0.06	3.35	-12	18
Pro-PRC Index					
Baseline	1882	2.58	0.72	1	5
Endline	861	2.69	0.78	1	5
Change Score	861	0.09	0.61	-3	3.12
Political Predisposition					
PRC-friendly	1882	0.28	0.45	0	1
Nonpartisan	1882	0.42	0.49	0	1
PRC-skeptical	1882	0.3	0.46	0	1
Panel C: Nonexperimental Participants					
Vote for Han					
Baseline	195	0.34	0.47	0	1
Endline	77	0.45	0.5	0	1
Change Score	77	0.08	0.53	-1	1
Candidate Evaluation					
Baseline	195	0.57	4.9	-9	9
Endline	88	0.44	4.66	-9	9
Change Score	88	-0.1	3.76	-18	11
Pro-PRC Index					
Baseline	195	2.94	0.8	1	5
Endline	88	2.88	0.77	1	4.75
Change Score	88	0.1	0.56	-1.62	2.25
Political Predisposition					
PRC-friendly	195	0.52	0.5	0	1
Nonpartisan	195	0.23	0.42	0	1
PRC-skeptical	195	0.25	0.43	0	1

C.2 Baseline Outcome Scores by Experimental Conditions

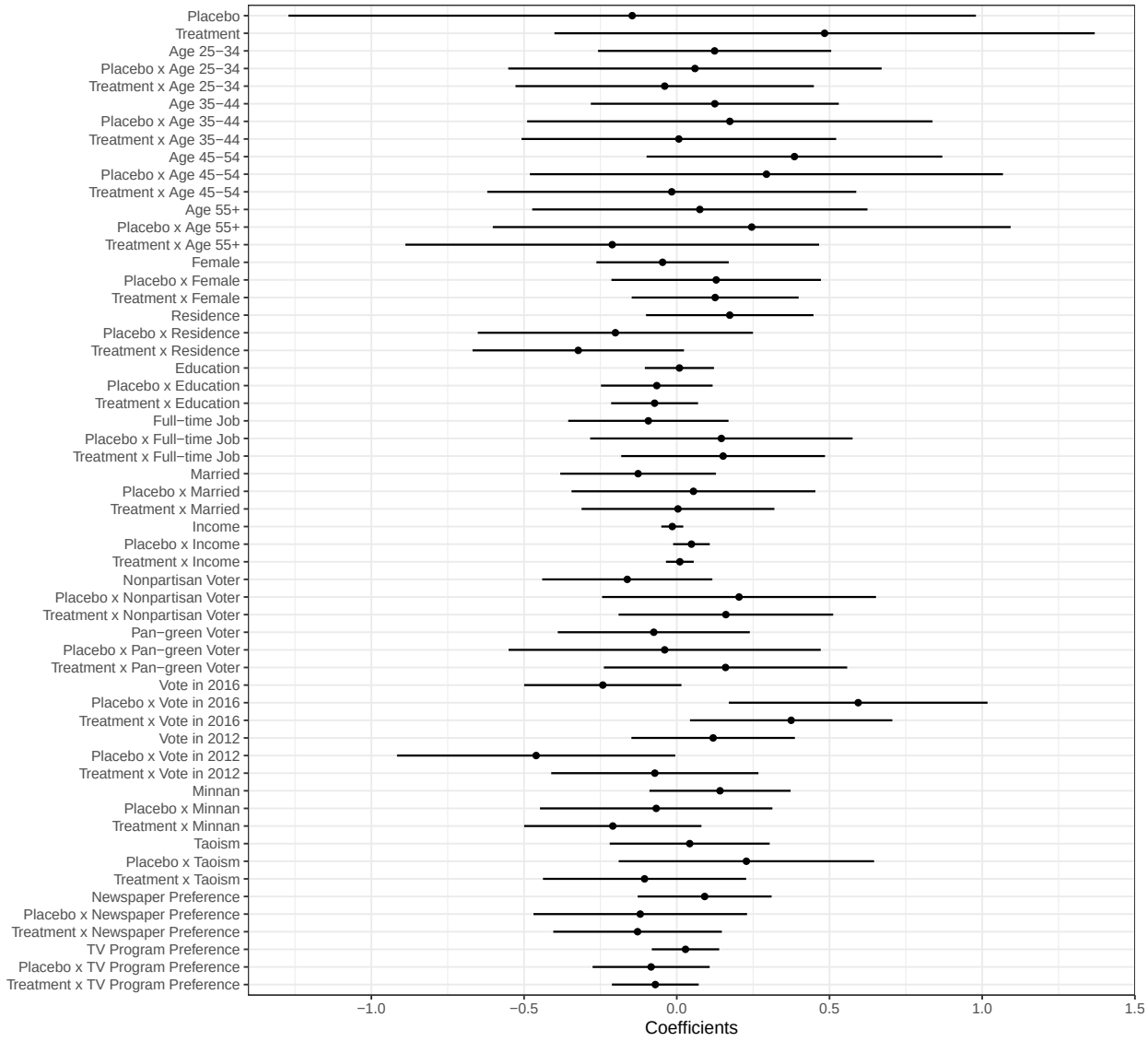
The figure below displays the mean baseline outcomes across experimental conditions (experimental sample only, N=1,882). The bars represent 95% confidence intervals. The results indicate that baseline scores are balanced across conditions, suggesting successful randomization.

Figure SI-8: Baseline Outcome Scores by Experimental Conditions



C.3 Attrition

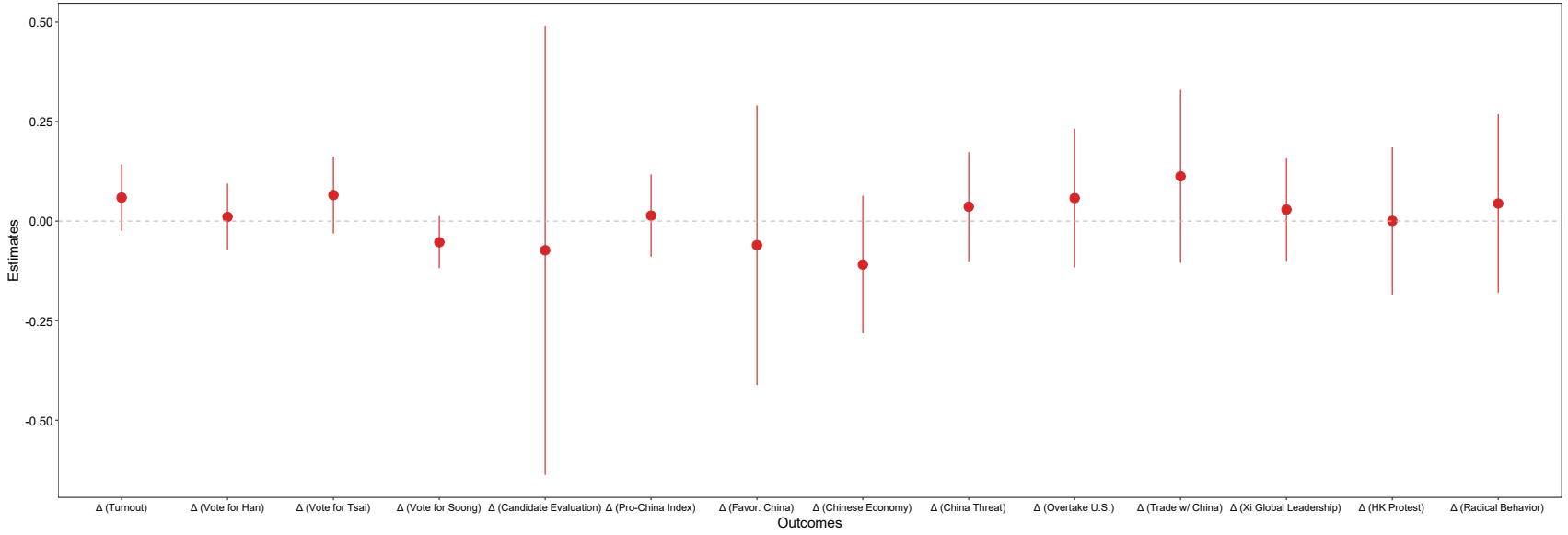
Figure SI-9: Probit Estimates of Endline Survey Participation (N=1,882)



C.4 Placebo and Control Groups

Following my preregistration, the main analysis pools control and placebo groups to enhance statistical power. The figure below presents estimates comparing the placebo and control groups across various outcome variables. The results consistently indicate no significant differences between the two groups, regardless of how the outcomes are coded. The outcome variables presented here include all survey items used to construct candidate evaluation and the pro-PRC index.

Figure SI-10: Placebo-Control Comparison



D Research Ethics

D.1 Translated Consent Script

Hello! We are a group of academic researchers. We are conducting a study to understand public opinion of citizens. We would like to ask you some questions about what you think about politics and society in general and this presidential election in particular. We use random sampling and you are being chosen as respondents to our survey. Your opinions and input are extremely valuable to our research. This survey will last around 10-12 minutes.

The data will be used for academic purposes only. All of your responses will remain secret. We will not share your individual information with anybody. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law.

There is no pressure to answer this survey. If you want to stop taking the survey, you may do so at any time without penalty.

If you feel you have been treated unfairly, or you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, you may contact our Institutional Review Board by phone at REDACTED or email at REDACTED

Please acknowledge that you understand the procedures described above, that you are over the age of 18, and that you agree to participate in this study.

☐ I agree.

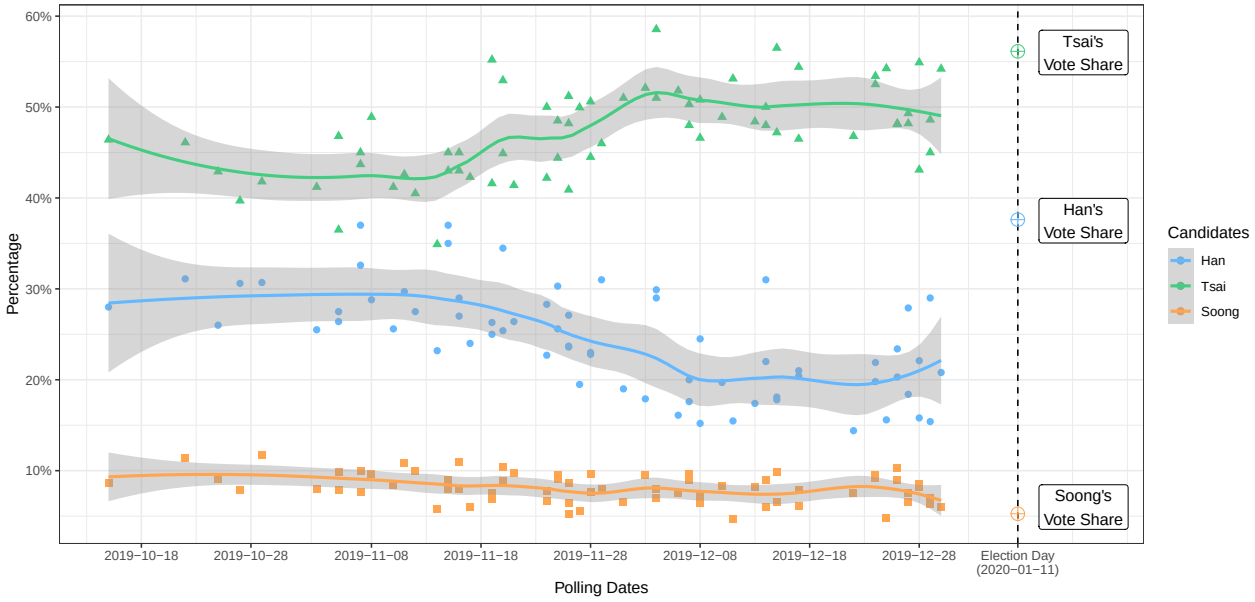
☐ I disagree.

D.2 Ex-Ante Risk Assessment

In designing this field experiment, I conducted an ex-ante assessment of the 2020 Taiwanese general election using publicly available polling data. Figure SI-11 displays trends from 67 independent, nationwide polls conducted between October 15 and December 30, 2019. Each point reflects the reported vote share for one of the three candidates, with smooth lines showing loess estimates of their trajectories over time. Throughout this period, Tsai Ing-wen maintained a clear and widening lead over her main challenger, Han Kuo-yu—averaging double digits for most of the campaign—suggesting the election was unlikely to be closely contested.

This prediction informed a key ethical consideration: the risk that experimental intervention might meaningfully alter the outcome. Because the study exposed participants to politically relevant content in favor of Han during the campaign, it was essential to ensure the intervention would not unduly influence the electoral process. The substantial and consistent polling lead suggests the study was unlikely to shift the final vote tally in any consequential way, justifying its ethical permissibility.

Figure SI-11: Preelection Polling of the 2020 Taiwanese General Election



Note: The data are drawn from 67 independent, nationwide public opinion polls conducted between October 15 and December 30, 2019, in the lead-up to Taiwan's 2020 general election. In Taiwan, the publication of polling results is prohibited within ten days of an election. Each point represents the polling result for an individual candidate, while the smooth lines depict loess estimates of polling trends over time. "Han" refers to Han Kuo-yu, "Tsai" to Tsai Ing-wen, and "Soong" to James Soong.

E Tabular Results

Table SI-3: Treatment Effects on Outcome Variables

VARIABLES	(1) Vote for Han	(2) Candidate Evaluation	(3) Pro-PRC Index
Panel A: Reduced Form			
Intent-to-treat	0.122***	0.805***	0.127***
	(0.031)	(0.226)	(0.041)
Panel B: Two-stage estimates			
Treatment-on-treated	0.168***	1.116***	0.176***
(Minimum Complier)	(0.043)	(0.310)	(0.056)
Treatment-on-treated	0.280***	1.880***	0.297***
(Full Complier)	(0.073)	(0.521)	(0.095)
Observations	738	861	861
	Robust standard errors in parentheses		
	*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1		
Panel C: Mean (SD)			
Non-CT consumers	0.145	0.057	0.090
(Experimental Sample)	(0.432)	(3.352)	(0.607)
Control Group	0.077	-0.323	0.02
	(0.411)	(2.756)	(0.486)
Placebo Group	0.088	-0.396	0.034
	(0.386)	(2.953)	(0.552)
Treatment Group	0.204	0.453	0.152
	(0.452)	(3.751)	(0.681)
Existing CT consumers	0.078	-0.102	0.101
(Nonexperimental Sample)	(0.532)	(3.760)	(0.561)

Note: This table presents estimates with robust standard errors for the outcome variables. Panel A reports ITT estimates, based on regressions of the outcome variables on treatment assignment. Panel B provides TOT estimates, derived from two-stage regressions where treatment assignment serves as an instrument for treatment compliance. Panel C reports the means and standard deviations of the three outcome variables for both the experimental and non-experimental samples. The experimental sample includes participants from control, placebo, and treatment groups. All statistics are based on participants who completed both surveys.

Table SI-4: Treatment Effects on Vote Choices by Political Attentiveness Using Linear Estimator ($n = 738$)

Moderator	Marginal Effect	Robust SE	Lower CI	Upper CI
1	0.309	0.078	0.156	0.461
1.082	0.302	0.076	0.153	0.450
1.163	0.294	0.074	0.150	0.439
1.245	0.287	0.072	0.147	0.428
1.327	0.280	0.070	0.143	0.417
1.408	0.273	0.068	0.140	0.406
1.490	0.266	0.066	0.137	0.395
1.571	0.259	0.064	0.134	0.384
1.653	0.252	0.062	0.130	0.373
1.735	0.245	0.060	0.127	0.362
1.816	0.238	0.058	0.123	0.352
1.898	0.230	0.056	0.120	0.341
1.980	0.223	0.054	0.117	0.330
2.061	0.216	0.053	0.113	0.319
2.143	0.209	0.051	0.109	0.309
2.224	0.202	0.049	0.106	0.298
2.306	0.195	0.047	0.102	0.288
2.388	0.188	0.046	0.098	0.277
2.469	0.181	0.044	0.095	0.267
2.551	0.173	0.042	0.091	0.256
2.633	0.166	0.041	0.087	0.246
2.714	0.159	0.039	0.082	0.236
2.796	0.152	0.038	0.078	0.226
2.878	0.145	0.036	0.074	0.216
2.959	0.138	0.035	0.069	0.207
3.041	0.131	0.034	0.064	0.197
3.122	0.124	0.033	0.059	0.188
3.204	0.117	0.032	0.054	0.179
3.286	0.109	0.031	0.049	0.170
3.367	0.102	0.030	0.043	0.161
3.449	0.095	0.029	0.037	0.153
3.531	0.088	0.029	0.031	0.145
3.612	0.081	0.029	0.025	0.137
3.694	0.074	0.029	0.018	0.130
3.776	0.067	0.029	0.011	0.123
3.857	0.060	0.029	0.003	0.116
3.939	0.052	0.029	-0.005	0.110
4.020	0.045	0.030	-0.013	0.103
4.102	0.038	0.030	-0.021	0.098
4.184	0.031	0.031	-0.030	0.092
4.265	0.024	0.032	-0.039	0.087
4.347	0.017	0.033	-0.048	0.082
4.429	0.010	0.034	-0.057	0.077
4.510	0.003	0.035	-0.067	0.072
4.592	-0.004	0.037	-0.076	0.067
4.673	-0.012	0.038	-0.086	0.063
4.755	-0.019	0.039	-0.096	0.059
4.837	-0.026	0.041	-0.106	0.055
4.918	-0.033	0.043	-0.117	0.051
5	-0.040	0.044	-0.127	0.047

Table SI-5: Treatment Effects on Candidate Evaluations by Political Attentiveness Using Linear Estimator ($n = 861$)

Moderator	Marginal Effect	Robust SE	Lower CI	Upper CI
1	2.101	0.517	1.086	3.117
1.082	2.053	0.503	1.065	3.040
1.163	2.004	0.489	1.044	2.963
1.245	1.955	0.475	1.023	2.887
1.327	1.906	0.461	1.001	2.811
1.408	1.857	0.447	0.979	2.735
1.490	1.808	0.434	0.957	2.659
1.571	1.759	0.420	0.935	2.584
1.653	1.710	0.407	0.912	2.509
1.735	1.661	0.394	0.889	2.434
1.816	1.613	0.381	0.866	2.360
1.898	1.564	0.368	0.842	2.286
1.980	1.515	0.355	0.817	2.212
2.061	1.466	0.343	0.793	2.139
2.143	1.417	0.331	0.767	2.067
2.224	1.368	0.319	0.741	1.995
2.306	1.319	0.308	0.715	1.924
2.388	1.270	0.297	0.687	1.853
2.469	1.221	0.287	0.659	1.784
2.551	1.173	0.277	0.630	1.715
2.633	1.124	0.267	0.600	1.648
2.714	1.075	0.258	0.568	1.582
2.796	1.026	0.250	0.535	1.517
2.878	0.977	0.243	0.501	1.453
2.959	0.928	0.236	0.465	1.391
3.041	0.879	0.230	0.427	1.331
3.122	0.830	0.225	0.388	1.273
3.204	0.781	0.222	0.347	1.216
3.286	0.733	0.219	0.303	1.162
3.367	0.684	0.217	0.257	1.110
3.449	0.635	0.217	0.209	1.060
3.531	0.586	0.217	0.159	1.012
3.612	0.537	0.219	0.107	0.967
3.694	0.488	0.222	0.053	0.924
3.776	0.439	0.226	-0.004	0.882
3.857	0.390	0.231	-0.062	0.843
3.939	0.341	0.237	-0.123	0.806
4.020	0.293	0.243	-0.185	0.770
4.102	0.244	0.251	-0.249	0.736
4.184	0.195	0.259	-0.314	0.703
4.265	0.146	0.268	-0.380	0.672
4.347	0.097	0.277	-0.448	0.641
4.429	0.048	0.287	-0.516	0.612
4.510	-0.001	0.298	-0.586	0.584
4.592	-0.050	0.309	-0.656	0.557
4.673	-0.099	0.320	-0.727	0.530
4.755	-0.147	0.332	-0.799	0.504
4.837	-0.196	0.344	-0.872	0.479
4.918	-0.245	0.356	-0.945	0.454
5	-0.294	0.369	-1.018	0.430

Table SI-6: Treatment Effects on Pro-PRC Index by Political Attentiveness Using Linear Estimator ($n = 861$)

Moderator	**Marginal Effect**	**Robust SE**	**Lower CI**	**Upper CI**
1	0.330	0.097	0.139	0.522
1.082	0.323	0.095	0.137	0.508
1.163	0.315	0.092	0.135	0.495
1.245	0.307	0.089	0.132	0.482
1.327	0.299	0.086	0.130	0.469
1.408	0.292	0.084	0.127	0.456
1.490	0.284	0.081	0.125	0.443
1.571	0.276	0.078	0.122	0.430
1.653	0.268	0.076	0.120	0.417
1.735	0.261	0.073	0.117	0.404
1.816	0.253	0.071	0.114	0.392
1.898	0.245	0.068	0.111	0.379
1.980	0.237	0.066	0.108	0.366
2.061	0.230	0.063	0.105	0.354
2.143	0.222	0.061	0.102	0.342
2.224	0.214	0.059	0.099	0.329
2.306	0.206	0.056	0.095	0.317
2.388	0.199	0.054	0.092	0.305
2.469	0.191	0.052	0.088	0.294
2.551	0.183	0.050	0.084	0.282
2.633	0.175	0.049	0.080	0.271
2.714	0.168	0.047	0.076	0.259
2.796	0.160	0.045	0.071	0.249
2.878	0.152	0.044	0.066	0.238
2.959	0.144	0.043	0.061	0.228
3.041	0.137	0.041	0.055	0.218
3.122	0.129	0.041	0.049	0.208
3.204	0.121	0.040	0.043	0.199
3.286	0.113	0.039	0.036	0.191
3.367	0.106	0.039	0.028	0.183
3.449	0.098	0.039	0.021	0.175
3.531	0.090	0.040	0.012	0.168
3.612	0.082	0.040	0.004	0.161
3.694	0.075	0.041	-0.005	0.155
3.776	0.067	0.042	-0.015	0.149
3.857	0.059	0.043	-0.025	0.143
3.939	0.051	0.044	-0.035	0.138
4.020	0.044	0.046	-0.046	0.133
4.102	0.036	0.047	-0.057	0.128
4.184	0.028	0.049	-0.068	0.124
4.265	0.020	0.051	-0.079	0.120
4.347	0.013	0.053	-0.091	0.116
4.429	0.005	0.055	-0.103	0.112
4.510	-0.003	0.057	-0.115	0.109
4.592	-0.011	0.059	-0.127	0.105
4.673	-0.019	0.061	-0.139	0.102
4.755	-0.026	0.064	-0.152	0.099
4.837	-0.034	0.066	-0.164	0.096
4.918	-0.042	0.069	-0.177	0.093
5	-0.050	0.071	-0.189	0.090

Table SI-7: Treatment Effects by Political Predispositions

PRC-Friendly Participants

	Vote for Han	Candidate Eval.	Pro-PRC Index
ITT	0.160	1.431	0.304
	(0.077)	(0.471)	(0.080)
TOT	0.348	3.221	0.684
	(0.168)	(1.040)	(0.173)
Obs.	218	251	251

Nonpartisan Participants

	Vote for Han	Candidate Eval.	Pro-PRC Index
ITT	0.192	1.552	0.277
	(0.052)	(0.357)	(0.063)
TOT	0.437	3.587	0.641
	(0.121)	(0.806)	(0.140)
Obs.	282	352	352

PRC-Skeptical Participants

	Vote for Han	Candidate Eval.	Pro-PRC Index
ITT	-0.001	-0.787	-0.246
	(0.017)	(0.309)	(0.067)
TOT	-0.002	-1.940	-0.606
	(0.041)	(0.780)	(0.163)
Obs.	238	258	258

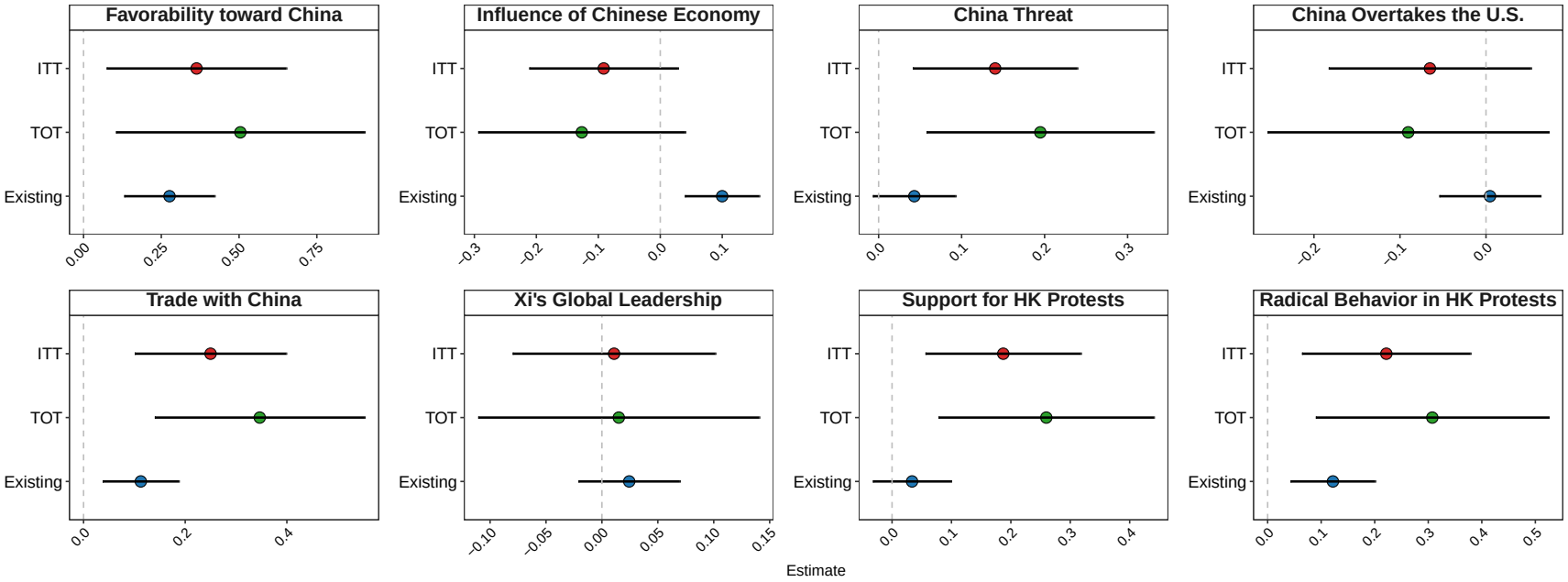
Robust standard errors in parentheses

Note: This table reports estimates of ITT and TOT effect on outcomes by participants' political predispositions.

F Treatment Effects on Separate PRC-Index Items

The figures below present estimates of intent-to-treat and treatment-on-treated effects (minimum compliance) with 95% confidence intervals for each survey item used in constructing the PRC index variable.

Figure SI-12: Separate Estimates of Treatment Effects on PRC Index Items



G Mechanisms for Partisan Effect Heterogeneity

This study explores three possible mechanisms underlying the effect heterogeneity between PRC-friendly and PRC-skeptical participants, including motivated reasoning, unconventional candidate, and selective tolerance of PRC-backed media.

G.1 Motivated Reasoning

My discussion of H3 suggests motivated reasoning may produce partisan effect heterogeneity. In my pre-analysis plan, I preregistered exploratory analyses to evaluate observable implications of motivated reasoning. According to Taber and Lodge (2006), upon content reception, motivated reasoning operates through two mechanisms: prior attitude effect (individuals' tendency to uncritically accept attitude-congruent content as compelling) and disconfirmation bias (active scrutiny and counterarguing when encountering challenging information, potentially producing backfire effects).

To test the prior-attitude-effect mechanism, I included endline survey questions assessing how participants in website conditions evaluated content quality and argument strength on their assigned websites. These questions—rating overall quality (1=extremely poor, 7=extremely good) and argument strength (1=very weak, 7=very strong)—were presented only to treatment and placebo participants who reported browsing their assigned website. These questions test whether participants evaluate congruent content as stronger and more compelling than incongruent one. The prior attitude effect would predict PRC-friendly participants rating the treatment site's content quality and argument strength more favorably than PRC-skeptical participants.

To examine disconfirmation bias, I compare average browsing duration (in seconds) between PRC-friendly and PRC-skeptical participants.[1] This mechanism predicts PRC-skeptical participants spending more time on the treatment site than their PRC-friendly counterparts, suggesting greater scrutiny or counterarguing. Results show no discernible difference between these groups (95% CI: [-66.4, 23.4], p =0.35), meaning that PRC-skeptical participants did not spend more time scrutinizing or counterarguing CT's political news. This finding offers no support that backfire effects stemmed from increased cognitive effort toward incongruent content.

As unpreregistered exploratory analysis, I also examine emotional reactions to CT's content. Research indicates that anger strongly motivates biased information processing (Hasell and Weeks, 2016; Suhay and Erisen, 2018), particularly when individuals feel their values threatened (Mullen and Skitka, 2006; Redlawsk, 2002). Irritation causes people to rely on prior beliefs and respond hostilely toward challenging information (Lazarus, 1991). The endline survey asked participants to rate how news articles made them feel using four emotion items (1=no emotion, 7=very strong emotion). I construct a Positive Emotion index (averaging "hope" and "enthusiasm") and a Negative Emotion index (averaging "anger" and "disgust"), expecting PRC-friendly participants to exhibit more positive emotions than PRC-skeptical counterparts.

Similarly, when individuals perceive restrictions on their choices or limitations of alter-

[1] I also preregistered a survey experiment comparing reading times of pro-Han and anti-Han news articles between PRC-skeptical and PRC-friendly participants, but omitted it from the endline survey due to length constraints.

natives, they often exhibit "reactance" by adopting contrary views (i.e., backfire) (Brehm et al., 1966). I measure participants' reactance using the following questions developed by Dillard and Shen (2005). Participants rated their agreement with these statements on a 5-point scale (1=strong disagreement, 5=strong agreement). I create a Reactance index by averaging responses across the four items, with higher values indicating stronger reactance.

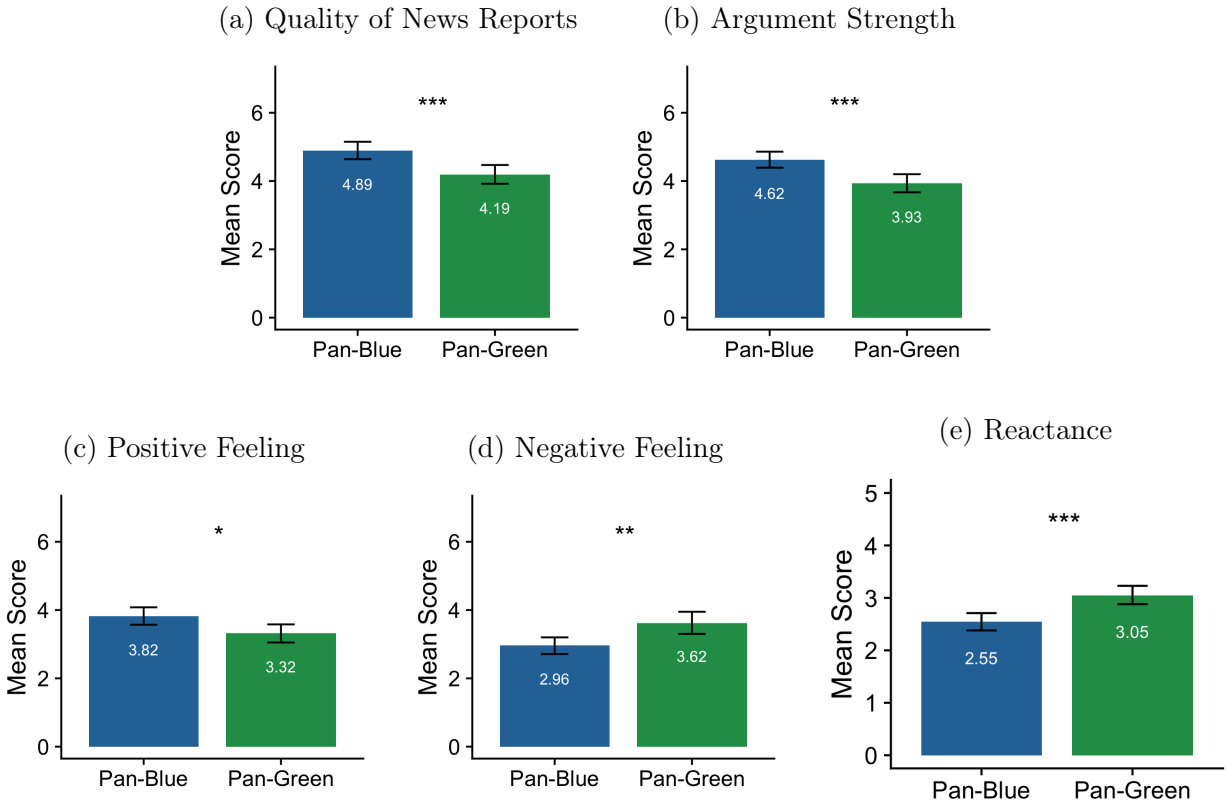
- The news reports threatened my freedom to choose candidates.
- The news reports tried to make a decision for me.
- The news reports tried to manipulate me.
- The news reports tried to pressure me.

Figure SI-13 reports the full results with mean scores with 95% confidence intervals. The results indicate that, despite exposure to identical news content, PRC-friendly participants demonstrated more positive cognitive responses and emotions compared to PRC-skeptical participants. These findings suggest that backfire effects among PRC-skeptical participants may primarily stem from emotional, autonomy-based resistance (reactance) rather than cognitive biases (disconfirmation bias). As the emotional mechanisms were not preregistered, further confirmatory analysis is warranted.

One might argue that partisan differences in reactions stem from the news source rather than content, as participants may recognize CT's political stance. PRC-skeptical (PRC-friendly) participants might react negatively (positively) simply because the news comes from CT, regardless of its alignment with their prior beliefs (see Baum and Gussin (2008) for a similar argument in the U.S. context). To test this alternative explanation, I utilize the placebo group. If source recognition alone drives reactions, PRC-friendly and PRC-skeptical participants in the placebo group should similarly show partisan response patterns. However, Figure SI-14 shows that the partisan differences observed in the treatment group does not hold in the placebo group: cognitive and emotional reactions remain largely similar between partisan groups in the placebo condition. Since the source remains constant, this absence of partisan difference suggests the news source itself does not drive the observed biased information processing.

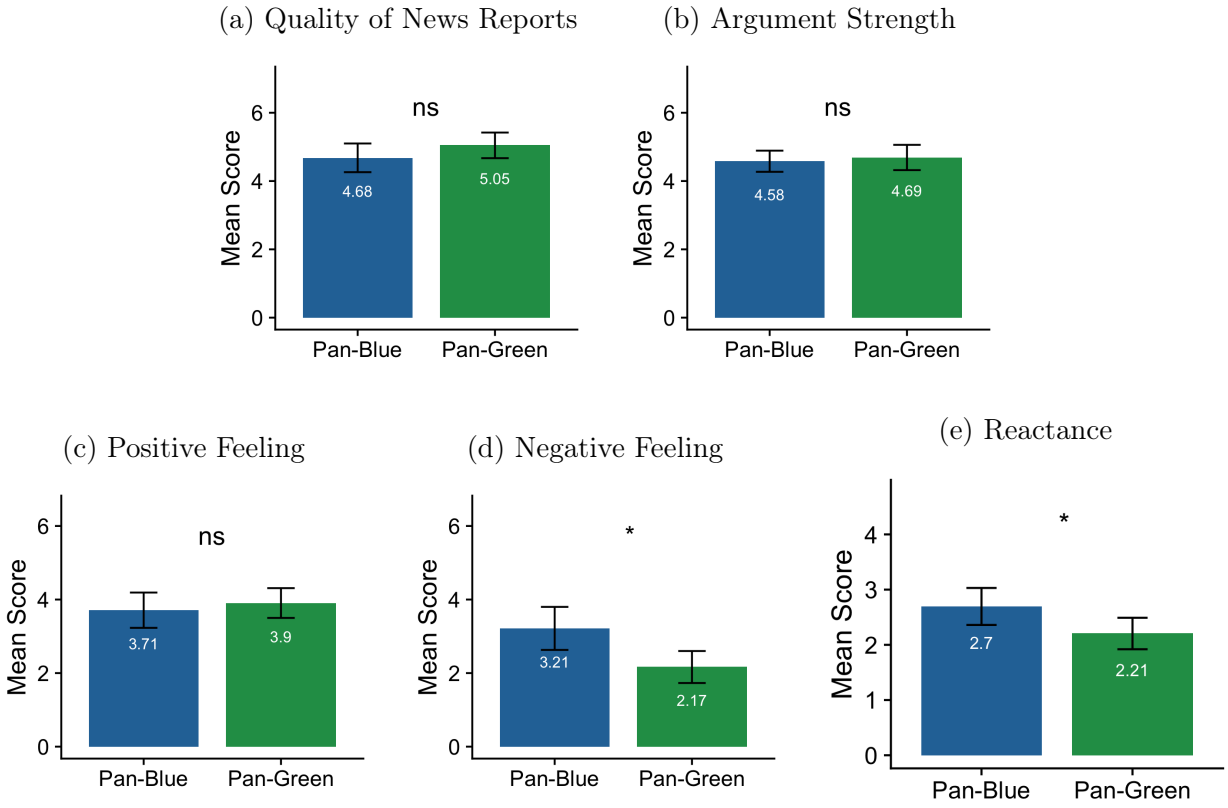
This finding requires careful interpretation, however. The absence of partisan differences in the placebo condition suggests that news source alone does not drive biased information processing, but this does not imply participants were unaware of news source. Rather, the placebo's nonpolitical content prevented the activation of partisan biases typically triggered by politically slanted content. Furthermore, Peterson and Kagalwala (2021) demonstrate that cross-cutting exposure to nonpolitical coverage (e.g., PRC-skeptics viewing CT's entertainment news) can actually reduce people's negative views of the out-party source providing it. This framework may explain why PRC-skeptical participants exhibited evaluation patterns indistinguishable from their PRC-friendly counterparts despite maintaining source awareness.

Figure SI-13: Cognitive and Emotional Reactions to Treatment News



Note: The plots show differences in mean scores between PRC-friendly and PRC-skeptical respondents in treatment condition for their cognitive and emotional reactions to the political news articles. The bars indicate 95% CI. The plots also report results of Wilcoxon test that compares group means. *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Figure SI-14: Cognitive and Emotional Reactions to Placebo News



Note: The plots show differences in mean scores between PRC-friendly and PRC-skeptical respondents in placebo condition for their cognitive and emotional reactions to the pure entertainment news articles. The bars indicate 95% CI. The plots also report results of Wilcoxon test comparing group means. *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, ns p>0.05

G.2 Unfamiliar Candidate

Table SI-8: Baseline vote intent among experimental participants

	Han	Tsai	Soong	Undecided	Obs.
PRC-friendly	N=264	N=48	N=60	N=162	534
	(49.44%)	(8.99%)	(11.24%)	(30.34%)	
Nonpartisan	N=42	N=178	N=77	N=488	785
	(5.35%)	(22.68%)	(9.81%)	(62.17%)	
PRC-skeptical	N=5	N=442	N=21	N=95	563
	(0.89%)	(78.51%)	(3.73%)	(16.87%)	

Note: Participants in the baseline survey were asked which presidential candidate they would vote for if the 2020 election were held today. The table presents the responses of experimental participants (N=1882).

Table SI-9: Baseline vote intent among experimental participants completing both waves

	Han	Tsai	Soong	Undecided	Obs.
PRC-friendly	N=133	N=21	N=28	N=69	251
	(52.99%)	(8.37%)	(11.16%)	(27.49%)	
Nonpartisan	N=22	N=84	N=38	N=208	352
	(6.25%)	(23.86%)	(10.80%)	(59.09%)	
PRC-skeptical	N=1	N=208	N=9	N=40	258
	(0.39%)	(80.62%)	(3.49%)	(15.50%)	

Note: Participants in the baseline survey were asked which presidential candidate they would vote for if the 2020 election were held today. The table presents the responses of experimental participants who completed both baseline and endline surveys (N=861).

G.3 Selective Tolerance of Foreign Intervention

Table SI-10: Multivariate regression of perceptions of CT as Beijing's external proxy on personal characteristics

Variable	Coefficient	Robust SE
Pan Blue	0.937***	(0.092)
Age	0.010*	(0.005)
Female	0.150+	(0.080)
Urban Residence	-0.067	(0.109)
Education	0.031	(0.045)
Full-Time Job	0.011	(0.092)
Married	0.102	(0.092)
Income	-0.024+	(0.015)
Vote in 2016	-0.066	(0.098)
Vote in 2012	0.075	(0.099)
Ethnicity	-0.139	(0.090)
Taoism	-0.013	(0.101)
Apple Daily	-0.148+	(0.081)
Sanlih Show	-0.105*	(0.043)
Obs.	579	

+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

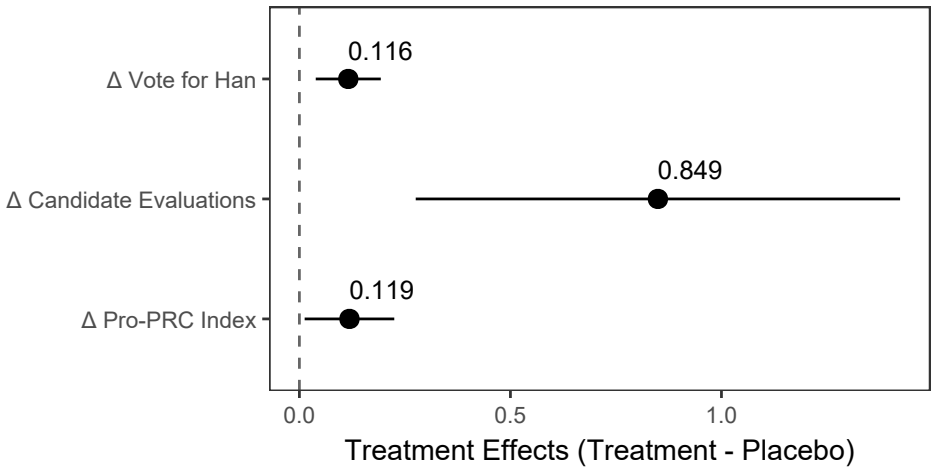
Note: The table reports a regression of perceptions of CT as Beijing's proxy on personal characteristics. This dependent variable is measured by the following question asked the endline survey: "How much do you agree that `Want Want China Times Media Group` is a red media outlet?" 1 = strongly agree; 2 = somewhat agree; 3 = neither agree nor disagree; 4 = somewhat disagree; 5 = strongly disagree. Personal characteristics include political predispositions (1 = PRC-friendly; 0 = PRC-skepticall; nonpartisans are removed in this analysis), age, gender (1 = Female), residence (1 = Special Municipality), education, employment status, marital status, income, voting histories, ethnic origin (1 = Minnan Taiwanese), religion (1 = Taoism), newspaper preference for Apple Daily (1 = Yes), and TV program preference for SET News (1 = least-preferred; 4 = most-preferred). Results show that pan-blue/PRC-friendly participants are more inclined to disagree the claim that CT is Beijing's proxy compared to their pan-green/PRC-skeptical counterparts (reference group).

H Competing Explanations

H.1 News Source or News Content?

To account for the effect of news source, I compare the treatment and placebo groups across the primary outcome variables. In placebo, the entertainment news stories also include the information about their source (i.e., CT).

Figure SI-15: Treatment Effects (Treatment vs. Placebo Group)



Note: ITT estimates with 95% confidence intervals. Votes for Han is calculated by subtracting the baseline intention from the endline outcome, capturing shift in support for Han (range from -1 to 1). Candidate Evaluations represents changes in relative favorability between Han and Tsai, with positive values reflecting increased favorability toward Han (range from -18 to 18). Pro-PRC Index represents changes in index scores from baseline to endline; positive values indicate improved attitudes toward the PRC (range from -3 to 3.125).

H.2 Increased Overall News Consumption?

To assess whether the treatment increases overall news consumption, I use two self-reported measures from the endline survey. The first measure captures general news-watching habits by asking participants how often they obtained news from television, newspapers, social media, and news websites over the past week. I averaged their responses to create an overall news consumption index. The second measure focuses specifically on election news, asking participants how much time they spent each day last week following election news. Results show no evidence of a treatment effect on self-reported news consumption.

Table SI-11: Regression of News Consumption on Treatment Conditions

Variable	(1) Overall News Consumption	(2) Following Election News
Treatment	−0.056	0.030
	(0.038)	(0.079)
Age	0.000	0.006
	(0.002)	(0.005)
Female	−0.059	−0.128
	(0.040)	(0.082)
Urban Residence	0.011	0.120
	(0.046)	(0.087)
Education	0.004	0.025
	(0.021)	(0.045)
Full-Time Job	−0.018	0.044
	(0.048)	(0.093)
Married	0.078	−0.032
	(0.045)	(0.095)
Income	0.010	0.025
	(0.007)	(0.015)
Pan-Blue	0.137**	0.382***
	(0.051)	(0.105)
Pan-Green	0.053	0.333**
	(0.051)	(0.107)
Vote in 2016	0.128**	0.140
	(0.048)	(0.090)
Vote in 2012	−0.000	−0.096
	(0.048)	(0.093)
Ethnicity (Minnan)	0.082*	0.043
	(0.041)	(0.088)
Taoism	0.089*	0.045
	(0.042)	(0.096)
Apple Daily	0.058	0.072
	(0.039)	(0.083)
SET News Program	0.059**	0.143**
	(0.021)	(0.044)
Obs.	861	861

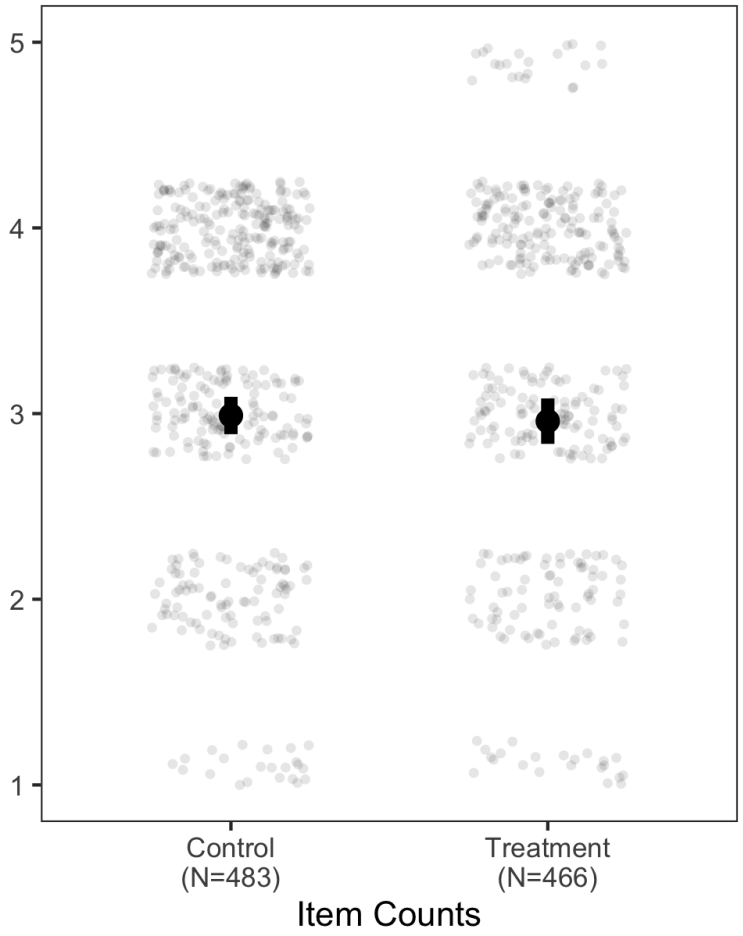
Robust Standard errors in parentheses. + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001.

H.3 Misreporting and List Experiment

The list experiment is structured as follows: participants in the endline survey were randomly divided into two groups and presented with a list of actions they may have taken. The control group saw a list of four baseline items (watched a movie in a theater, bought Taiwan Lottery tickets, donated to a charity, and traveled abroad). The treatment group was given the same list but with an additional sensitive item: "After the election results, I hid my true vote choice when asked whom I voted for." All participants were asked to report how many, rather than which, of the listed actions they took.

Results show no significant difference in item counts between the two groups (β = -0.030 [-0.188, 0.128]; n=949). Additionally, I conducted a subgroup analysis of pan-blue/PRC-friendly participants, the most likely subgroup to misreport their vote given the election outcome (Wright, 1993), and find no indication of dishonesty in their voting responses (β = -0.069 [-0.355, 0.217]; n=300).

Figure SI-16: List Experiment in the Endline Survey (N=949)



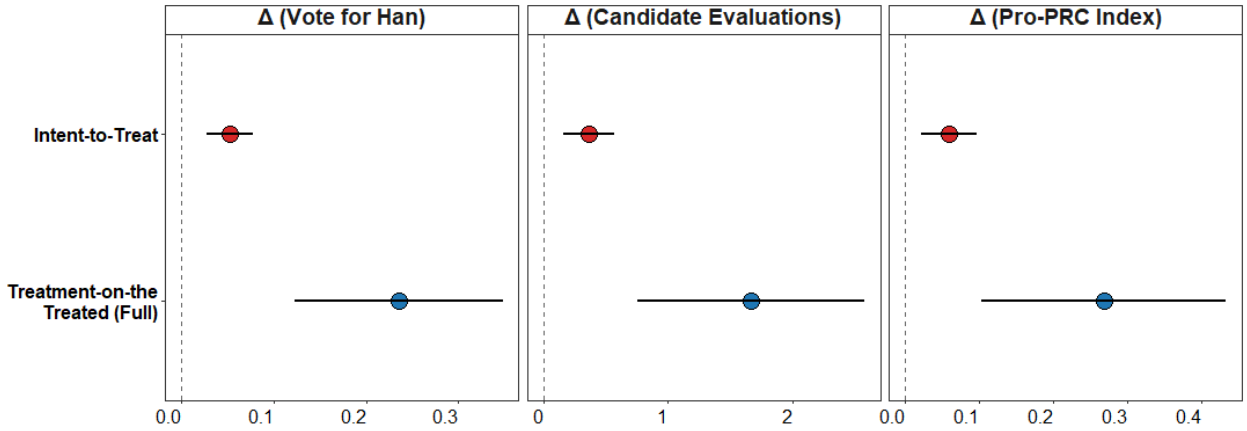
Note: The experiment evaluates whether participants provided deceived self-reports of their vote decision at the aggregate level. The dots represent point estimates and bars the corresponding confidence interval at .05 level. The figure plots the model and data (distribution of observations) together.

I Robustness

I.1 Bounded Treatment effect

While attrition rates do not significantly differ between treatment and control groups, participants who engaged more with the treatment (compliers) were indeed less likely to attrite than noncompliers. This post-treatment pattern could inflate treatment effects if the effects primarily reflect outcomes for a selected, more persuadable subgroup. As a robustness check, I bound the treatment effects by including all participants in the analysis, imputing no change in outcomes from baseline for those who did not complete the endline survey. This conservative approach assumes attriters were unaffected by treatment during the incentivized period, providing a reasonable lower bound for treatment effects.

Figure SI-17: Bounded Estimates of Treatment Effects



The bounded ITT estimates shown in Figure SI-17 remain positive and statistically significant, though predictably smaller in magnitude (e.g., the estimate of Vote for Han decreases from 12 to 5 percentage points). Similarly, the bounded TOT estimates using the same imputation method decrease modestly and remain distinguishable from zero (e.g., the estimate of Vote for Han decreases from 28 to 24 percentage points). These robust results increase my confidence that the treatment effects are not solely driven by selective attrition.

Correction for Attrition Bias I further probe robustness using inverse probability weighting based on pre-treatment covariates predicting endline completion, adjusting for observable differences between participants who completed the study and those who attrited. Figure SI-18 shows that the IPW-adjusted results remain robust, with a well-behaved weight distribution, as illustrated in Figure SI-19. The maximum weight is 5.08, which is below the problematic threshold of 10 (Austin and Stuart, 2015).

Figure SI-18: Average Treatment Effect Using Inverse Probability Weighting

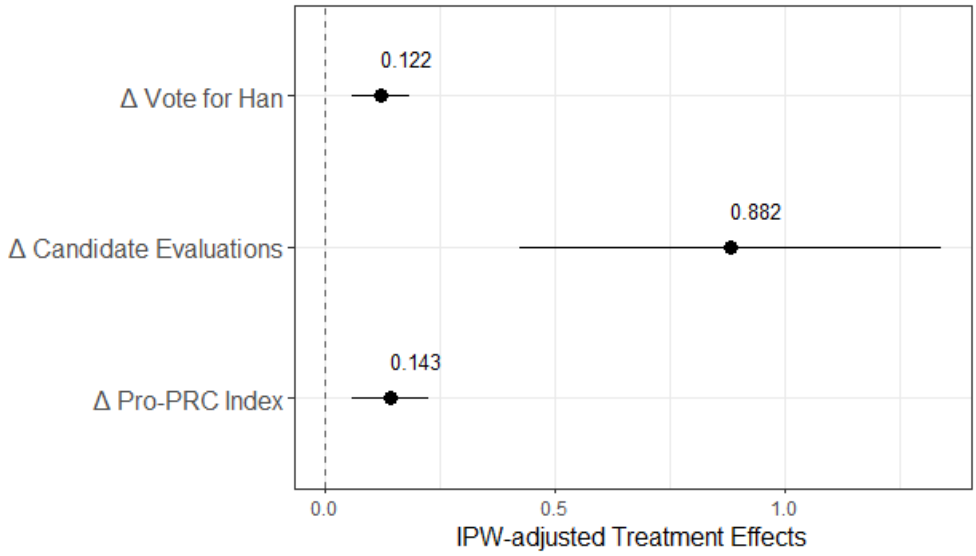
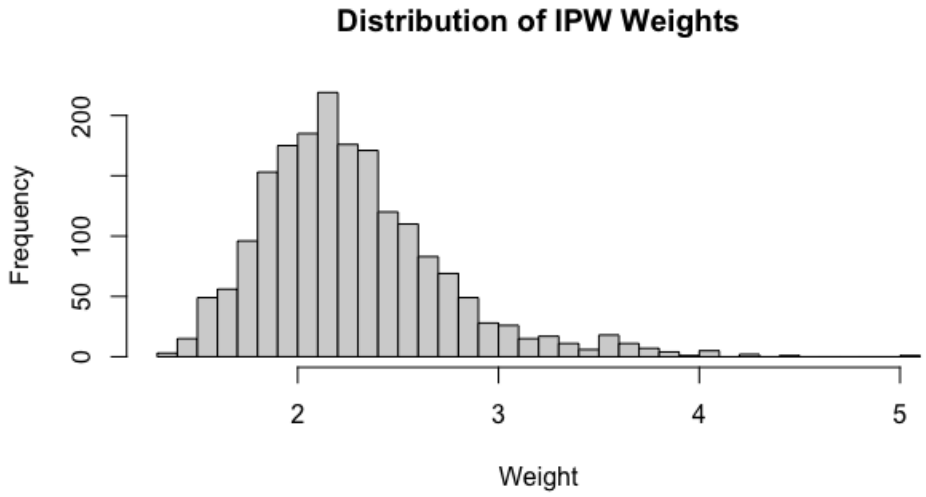


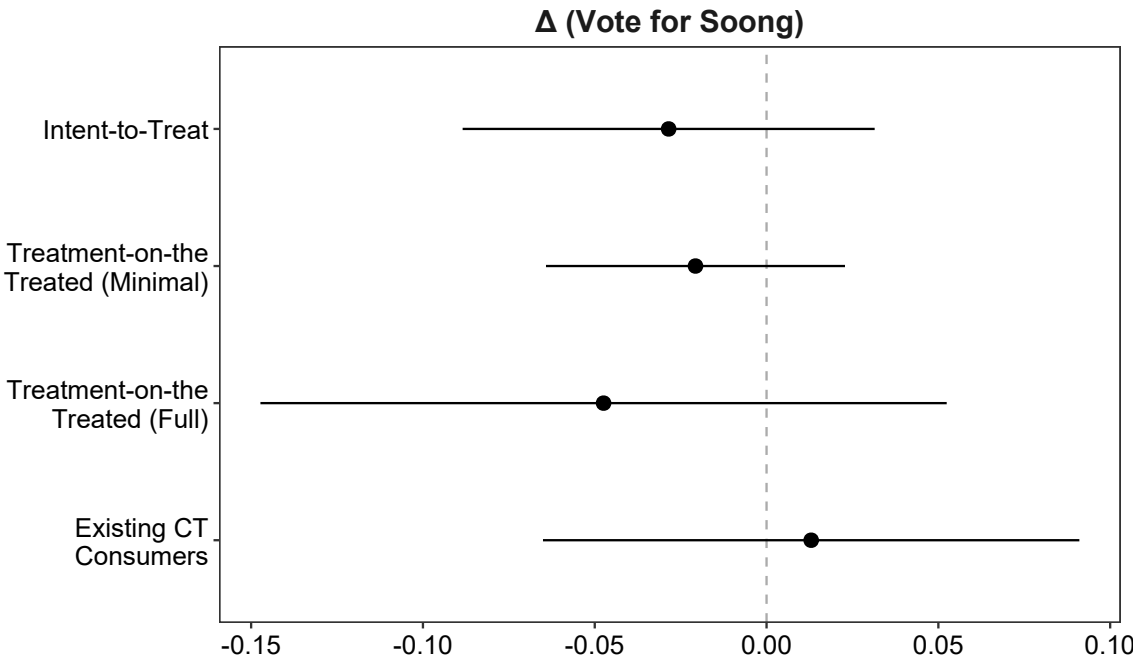
Figure SI-19: Distribution of Weights



While both bounding and IPW analyses suggest my findings are not driven by selective attrition, the estimate magnitudes differ between methods. The IPW estimates are close to the original results, reflecting the fact that attrition is balanced across a wide range of pre-treatment individual characteristics (as shown in Table 2). In contrast, the bounding analysis produces more conservative estimates by assuming all attriters experienced zero change in outcomes. This assumption likely understates the true treatment effect, particularly if some attriters would have responded similarly to observed participants. Importantly, both approaches yield statistically significant results in the same direction, strengthening the credibility of my findings.

I.2 Placebo Candidate

Figure SI-20: Treatment Effects on a Placebo Candidate



Note: The figure presents estimates of ITT and TOT effects with 95% confidence intervals on support for James Soong.

I.3 Covariate-Adjusted Estimates

Table SI-12: Tabular Results for Covariate-Adjusted ITT Estimates

Variable	Vote for Han	Candidate Evaluation	Pro-PRC Index
Treatment	0.12^{***}	0.83^{***}	0.13^{***}
	(0.03)	(0.22)	(0.04)
Pan-Green	-0.03	-0.26	0.09
	(0.04)	(0.34)	(0.07)
Pan-Blue	-0.04	-0.09	-0.02
	(0.07)	(0.45)	(0.07)
Age	0.00	0.01	0.00
	(0.00)	(0.02)	(0.00)
Female	0.08	-0.02	-0.01
	(0.05)	(0.29)	(0.05)
Residence	-0.06	-0.46	0.00
	(0.06)	(0.46)	(0.08)
Education	0.01	0.03	0.05
	(0.02)	(0.17)	(0.03)
Full-Time Job	0.04	0.08	-0.02
	(0.05)	(0.35)	(0.06)
Married	0.03	0.29	-0.08
	(0.05)	(0.30)	(0.06)
Income	0.00	-0.00	0.00
	(0.01)	(0.05)	(0.01)
Vote in 2016	-0.10	0.06	-0.01
	(0.05)	(0.33)	(0.06)
Vote in 2012	0.06	0.37	-0.02
	(0.05)	(0.31)	(0.06)
Ethnicity	-0.02	-0.01	0.06
	(0.05)	(0.37)	(0.06)
Taoism	-0.03	0.10	0.00
	(0.04)	(0.37)	(0.06)
Apple Daily	-0.06	0.01	0.02
	(0.04)	(0.29)	(0.05)
SET News Program	-0.02	0.34^{*}	0.05
	(0.03)	(0.17)	(0.03)
Treatment × Pan-Green	-0.20^{**}	-2.11^{***}	-0.52^{***}
	(0.07)	(0.54)	(0.11)
Treatment × Pan-Blue	0.04	0.32	0.03
	(0.10)	(0.67)	(0.11)
Treatment × Age	-0.00	-0.00	-0.01
	(0.00)	(0.03)	(0.01)
Treatment × Female	-0.13^{*}	-1.39^{**}	-0.21^{**}
	(0.06)	(0.45)	(0.08)
Treatment × Residence	0.06	0.59	0.08
	(0.08)	(0.62)	(0.12)
Treatment × Education	-0.02	-0.28	-0.08
	(0.03)	(0.26)	(0.05)
Treatment × Full-Time Job	-0.00	0.37	0.01
	(0.07)	(0.55)	(0.10)
Treatment × Married	0.03	-0.23	0.10
	(0.07)	(0.48)	(0.09)
Treatment × Income	-0.01	-0.04	-0.03
	(0.01)	(0.08)	(0.01)
Treatment × Vote in 2016	-0.02	-0.69	-0.01
	(0.08)	(0.51)	(0.10)
Treatment × Vote in 2012	-0.12	-0.51	0.05
	(0.07)	(0.51)	(0.10)
Treatment × Ethnicity	-0.05	0.21	0.01
	(0.07)	(0.53)	(0.10)
Treatment × Taoism	0.09	0.52	-0.11
	(0.07)	(0.56)	(0.10)
Treatment × Apple Daily	0.10	0.88	-0.01
	(0.06)	(0.46)	(0.08)
Treatment × SET News Program	0.05	-0.06	-0.01
	(0.04)	(0.27)	(0.05)
Obs.	738	861	861

Robust Standard Errors in paratheses.
$^{***}p < 0.001$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$

Note: The table presents covariate-adjusted estimates of ITT effects. The model includes personal characteristics and their interactions with the treatment variable. These covariates include political predispositions (reference group = nonpartisan), age, gender (1 = Female), residence (1 = Special Municipality), education, employment status, marital status, income, voting histories, ethnic origin (1 = Minnan Taiwanese), religion (1 = Taoism), newspaper preference for Apple Daily (1 = Yes), and TV program preference for SET News (1 = least-preferred; 4 = most-preferred).

I.4 Multiple Comparisons

Table SI-13: Adjusted p-values for primary outcomes using Bonferroni and False Discovery Rate corrections

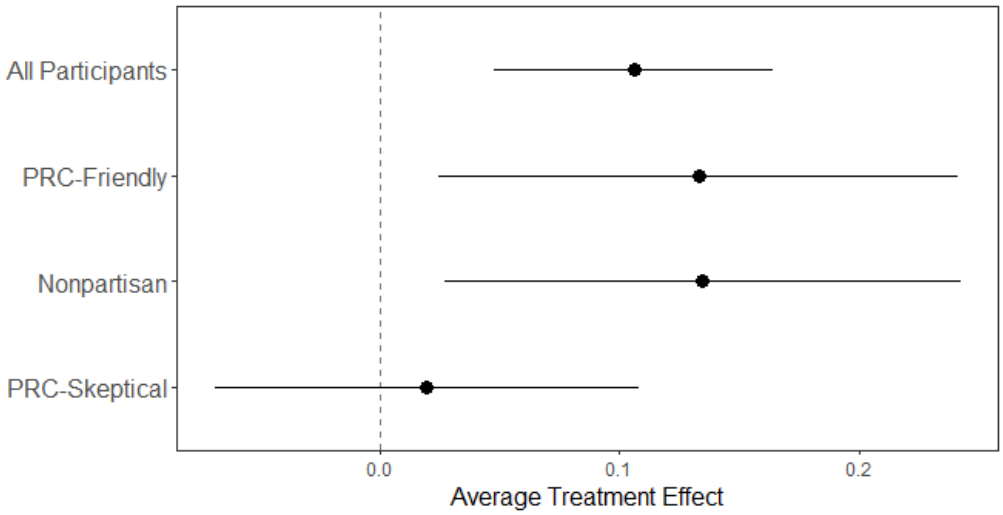
	Outcome	Unadjusted	Bonferroni	FDR
1	Vote for Han	0.000111	0.001328	0.000443
2	Vote for Han (PRC-friendly)	0.038313	0.459752	0.041796
3	Vote for Han (Nonpartisan)	0.000267	0.003207	0.000553
4	Vote for Han (PRC-skeptical)	0.959672	1.000000	0.959672
5	Candidate Evaluation	0.000392	0.004707	0.000672
6	Candidate Evaluation (PRC-friendly)	0.002608	0.031301	0.003478
7	Candidate Evaluation (Nonpartisan)	0.000018	0.000213	0.000106
8	Candidate Evaluation (PRC-skeptical)	0.011368	0.136420	0.013642
9	PRC Index	0.001991	0.023894	0.002987
10	PRC Index (PRC-friendly)	0.000188	0.002259	0.000553
11	PRC Index (Nonpartisan)	0.000013	0.000162	0.000106
12	PRC Index (PRC-skeptical)	0.000277	0.003320	0.000553

Note: p-values are rounded to the nearest sixth decimal place. The adjustment includes the primary outcome variables (in gray) and subgroup analyses by partisan groups.

J Exploratory Analysis

Vote Turnout. While not preregistered, the treatment effect on voter turnout merits examination given its ethical implications. A key concern in field experiments exposing voters to political content before elections is the potential for interventions to demobilize voter participation. Results in Figure SI-21 show the treatment significantly increased overall turnout, though such impact was not detected among PRC-skeptical participants. These findings provide assurance that this study's intervention did not suppress turnout.

Figure SI-21: Turnout Effects

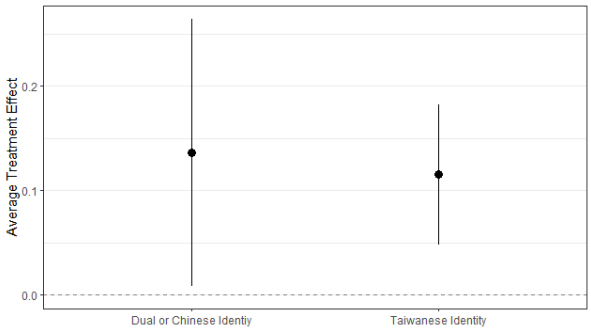


Note: The figure presents covariate-adjusted ITT effect on voter turnout. The dots represent point estimates and bars the corresponding confidence interval at .05 level.

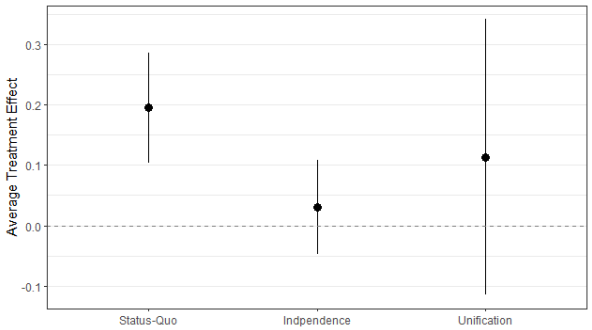
Subgroup heterogeneity. To explore potential subgroup heterogeneity in treatment effects on voting behavior, I examine key pre-treatment covariates established as key predictors of Taiwanese public opinion: national identity, cross-Strait relations preferences, ethnicity, urban residence, and educational attainment. National identity is assessed through the question: "Do you consider yourself to be Taiwanese, Chinese, or both?" Cross-strait relations preferences are measured by asking: "There are several different views on cross-strait relations. Which is closest to yours?" Responses are classified into three categories: maintaining status quo, pursuing independence, or supporting unification. Ethnicity is determined by paternal lineage. Urban residence is defined as living within one of Taiwan's six special municipalities (Taipei, New Taipei, Taoyuan, Taichung, Tainan, or Kaohsiung). Educational attainment is operationalized as possession of a college degree.

The most important finding emerges in the heterogeneous effects by cross-strait relations preferences (Panel B): Treatment effects manifested among participants who preferred maintaining the status quo in relations with the PRC. Conversely, the treatment had no discernible impact among those who advocated either for *de jure* independence or for unification with the PRC. As for other individual covariates, they do not systematically moderate CT's effects on vote choices.

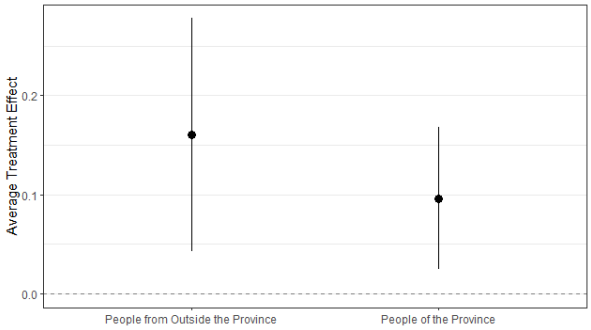
Figure SI-22: Subgroup Effect Heterogeneity



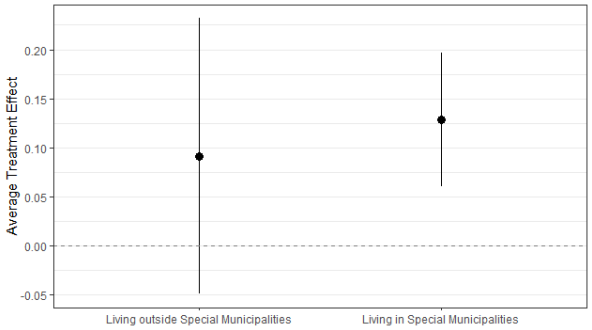
(a) Self-Identified Nationality



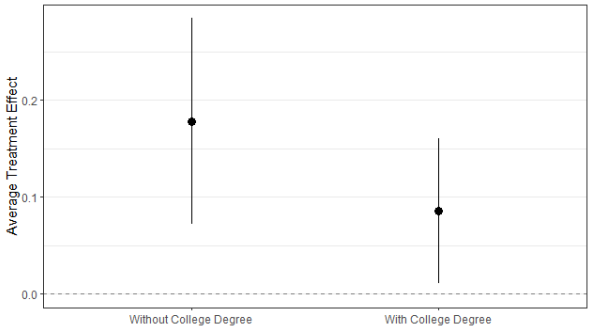
(b) Views on Taiwan's Unification with the PRC



(c) Ethnicity (Father as Minnan Taiwanese)



(d) Urban Residence



(e) College Education

K Survey

Primary Question Wording

Vote choice

- If the election were held today, which presidential candidate would you vote for (baseline)?

    1. Han Kuo-yu
    2. Tsai Ing-wen
    3. James Soong
    4. Undecided

- Which presidential candidate did you vote for (endline)?
  (*Note: Participants who did not vote were not asked this question*)

    1. Han Kuo-yu
    2. Tsai Ing-wen
    3. James Soong
    4. Cast a null vote

Candidate evaluation

- We would like to know your feelings toward each of the three presidential candidates in the 2020 election. Please use a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means you strongly dislike the candidate and 10 means you strongly like them.

PRC-related Attitudes

1. We would like to know how you feel about Mainland China. If we use a scale from 1 to 10 to represent your feelings, where 1 means strongly dislike and 10 means strongly like, generally speaking, how do you feel about Mainland China?

2. How has Mainland China's economic growth impacted Taiwan's economy?

    - Very negative
    - Somewhat negative
    - Fairly positive
    - Very positive

3. How much do you think Mainland China's military is a threat to Taiwan's security?

    - Major
    - Minor

- None

4. Do you think within the next 10 years, Mainland China will surpass the United States to become the world's leading superpower?

    - Definitely won't
    - Probably won't
    - Probably will
    - Definitely will

5. Some people claim that we should expand our economic relationship with the PRC, but others advocate reducing that relationship. What do you think we should do?

    - Greatly reduce
    - Slightly reduce
    - Maintain
    - Slightly increase
    - Greatly increase

6. How much do you trust PRC President Xi Jinping to do the right thing in world affairs?

    - Strongly distrust
    - Somewhat distrust
    - Somewhat trust
    - Strongly trust

7. How much do you support the ongoing protest in Hong Kong?

    - Strongly support
    - Somewhat support
    - Neutral
    - Somewhat oppose
    - Strongly oppose

8. To what extent do you agree that when the Hong Kong government fails to listen, protesters are justified in using radical tactics?

    - Strongly agree
    - Somewhat agree
    - Neutral
    - Somewhat disagree
    - Strongly disagree

Auxiliary Question Wording

Political Attentiveness (H2)

1. Some people are very focused on election campaign, while others are not as concerned. So far, how much attention have you paid to the campaign for this election?

    - Not at all
    - Not very
    - Moderately
    - Quite
    - Very much

2. Generally speaking, how much do you care about who wins this election?

    - Not at all
    - A little
    - Some
    - A good amount
    - Very much

3. How much time did you generally spend each day last week following election news (whether from TV, newspapers, or the internet)?

    - None
    - less than 30 minutes
    - 30-60 minutes
    - 1-1.5 hours
    - 1.5-2 hours
    - More than 2 hours

4. We would like to understand your news consumption habits. How often did you in the past week watch TV news; read newspapers; browse news on social media; go to news portals?

    - Never
    - Rarely
    - Sometimes
    - Often

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