Science trust and distrust in America

Trust In Science: Understanding Trends
and Implications for Science Communication
National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine
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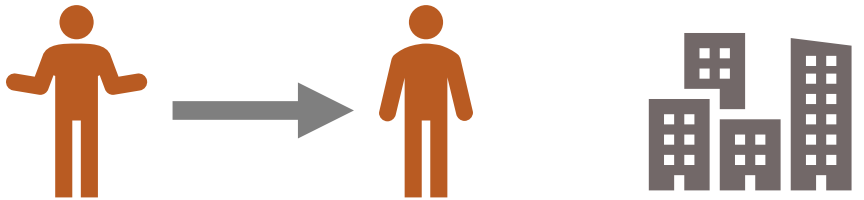
The context of trust

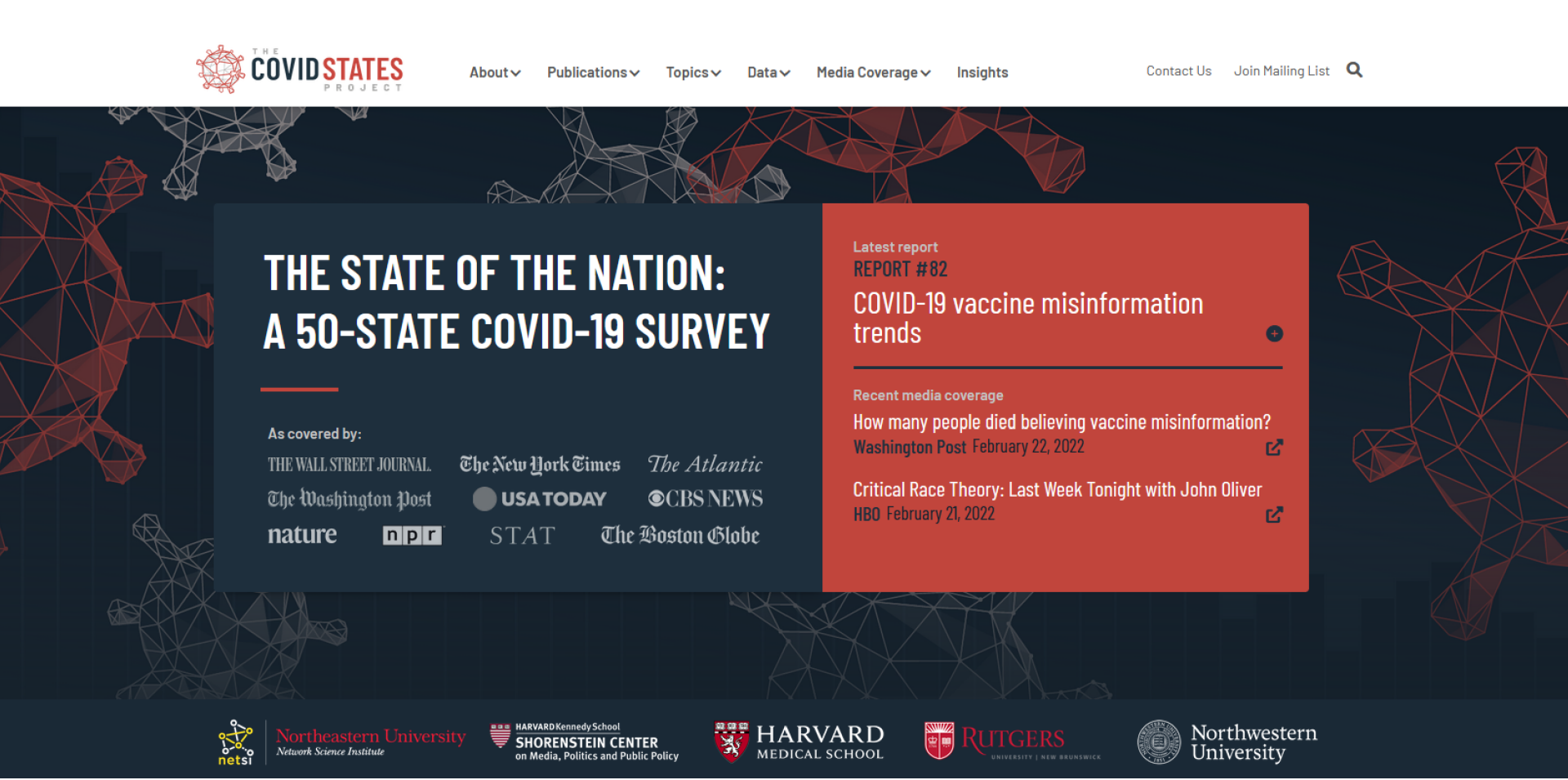
Outcomes of trust

Predictors of trust

Who do we trust?

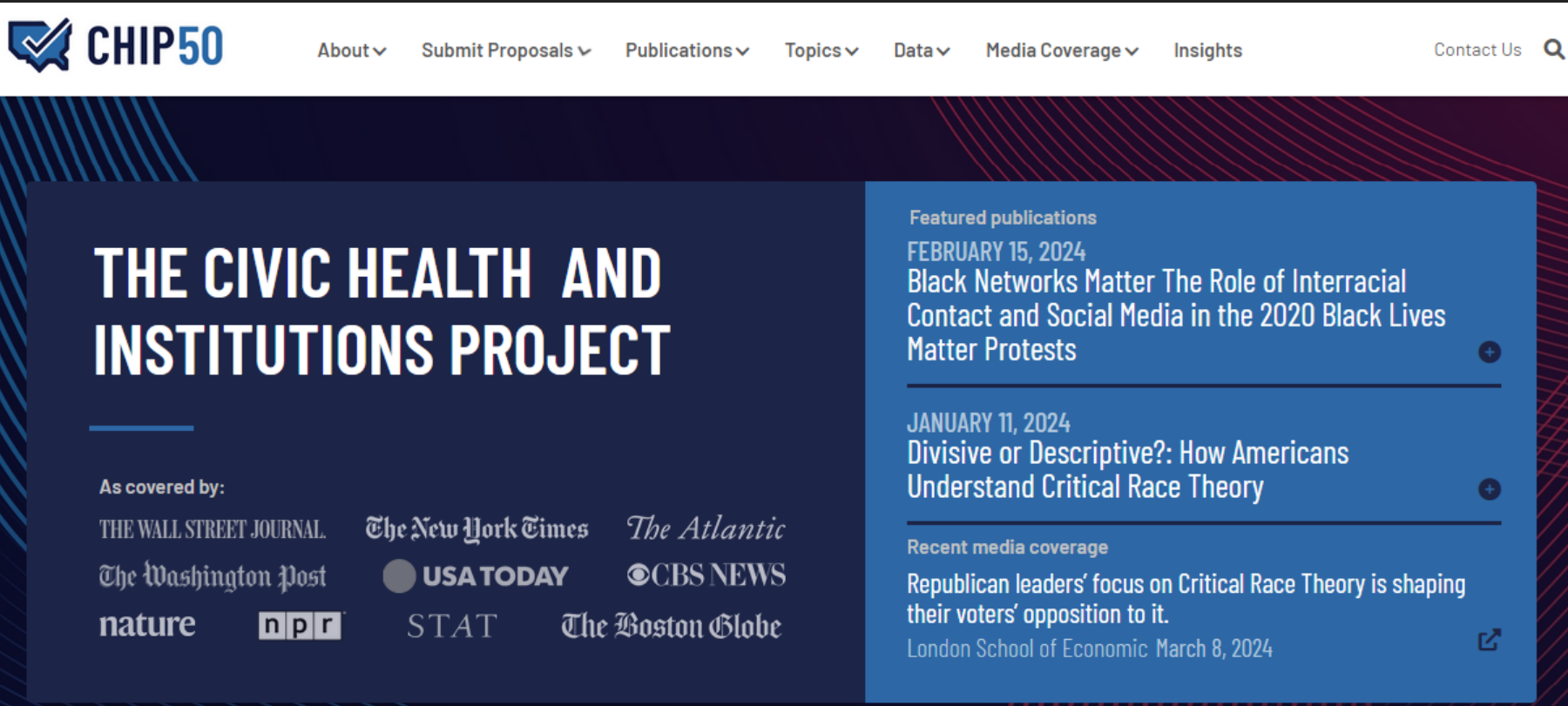


TRUSTOR TRUSTEE DOMAIN



www.covidstates.org

The Civic Health and Institutions Project (CHIP50)



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Trust tracker: chip50.org/trust-in-institutions

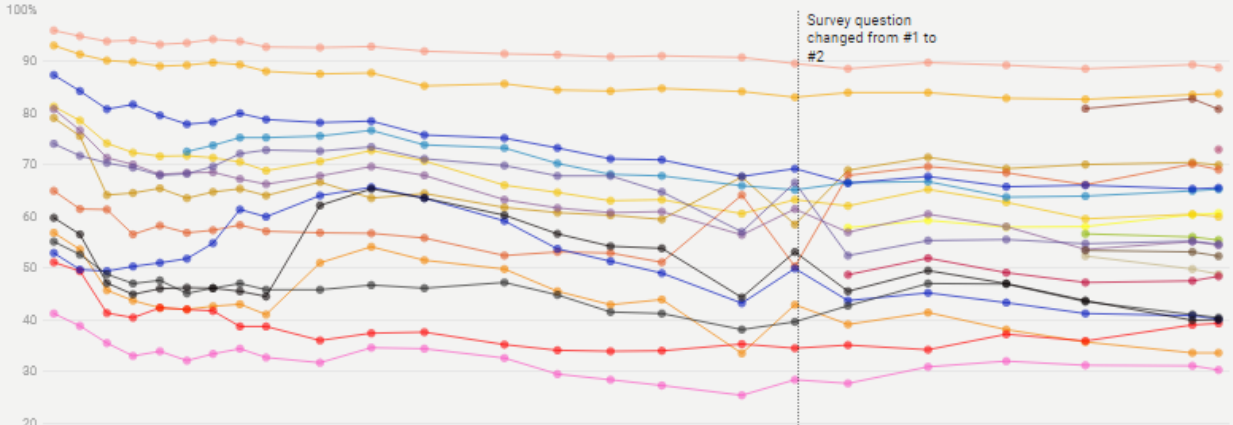
TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS

TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS TRACKER - ALL

1. How much do you trust the following people and organizations to do the right thing to best handle the current coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak?
2. How much do you trust the following people and organizations to do what is right?
[Percent respondents who say "some" or "a lot"]
Click on the buttons below to see data by political party:

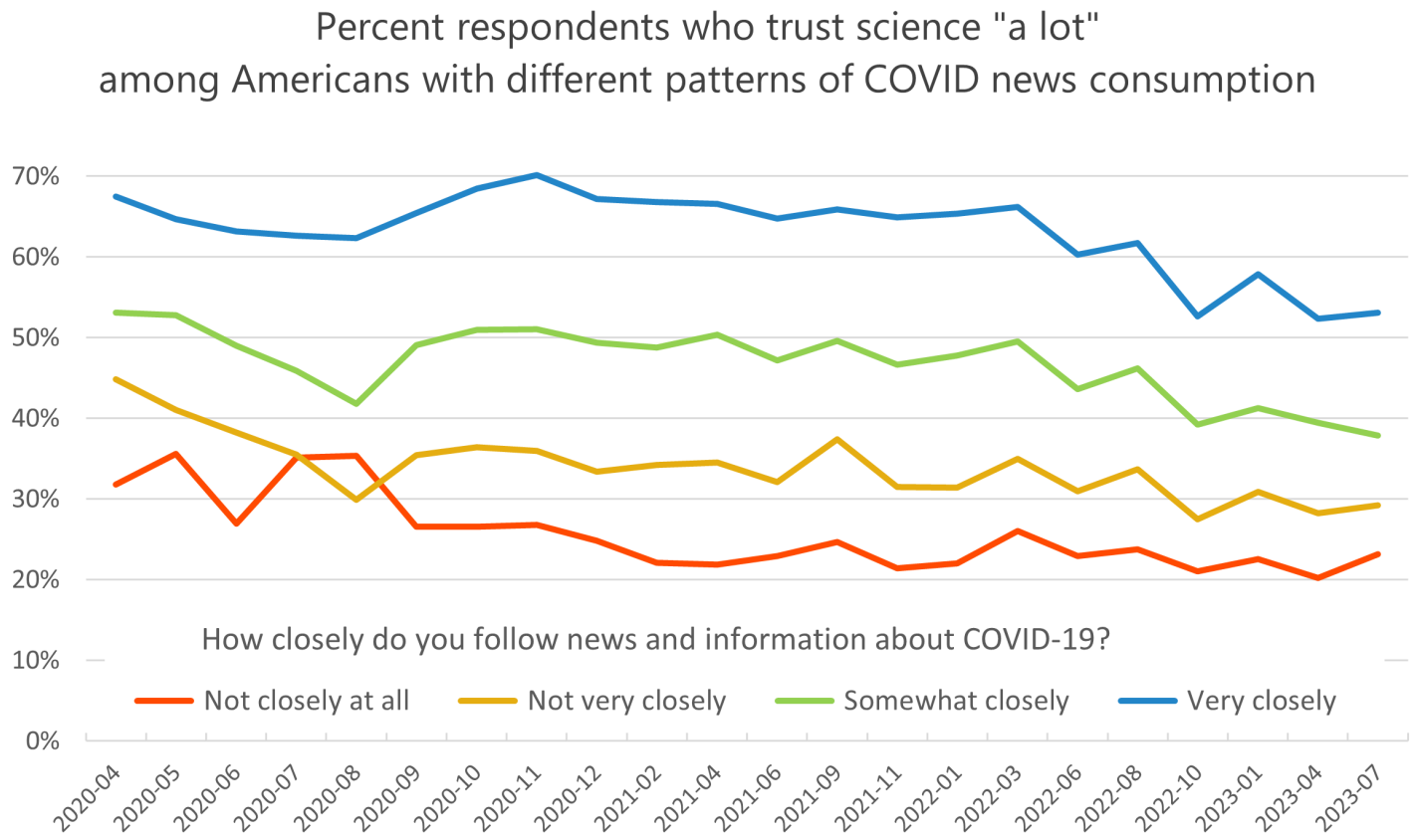
Total | Democrats | Republicans | Independent

City government — State government — Congress — White House — Supreme Court — Election System — FBI — FDA — CDC — Joe Biden — Donald Trump — Hospitals and doctors — Pharmaceutical companies — Scientists and researchers — Colleges and universities — Police — Military — Criminal justice system — Organized religion — Banks — News media — Social media companies

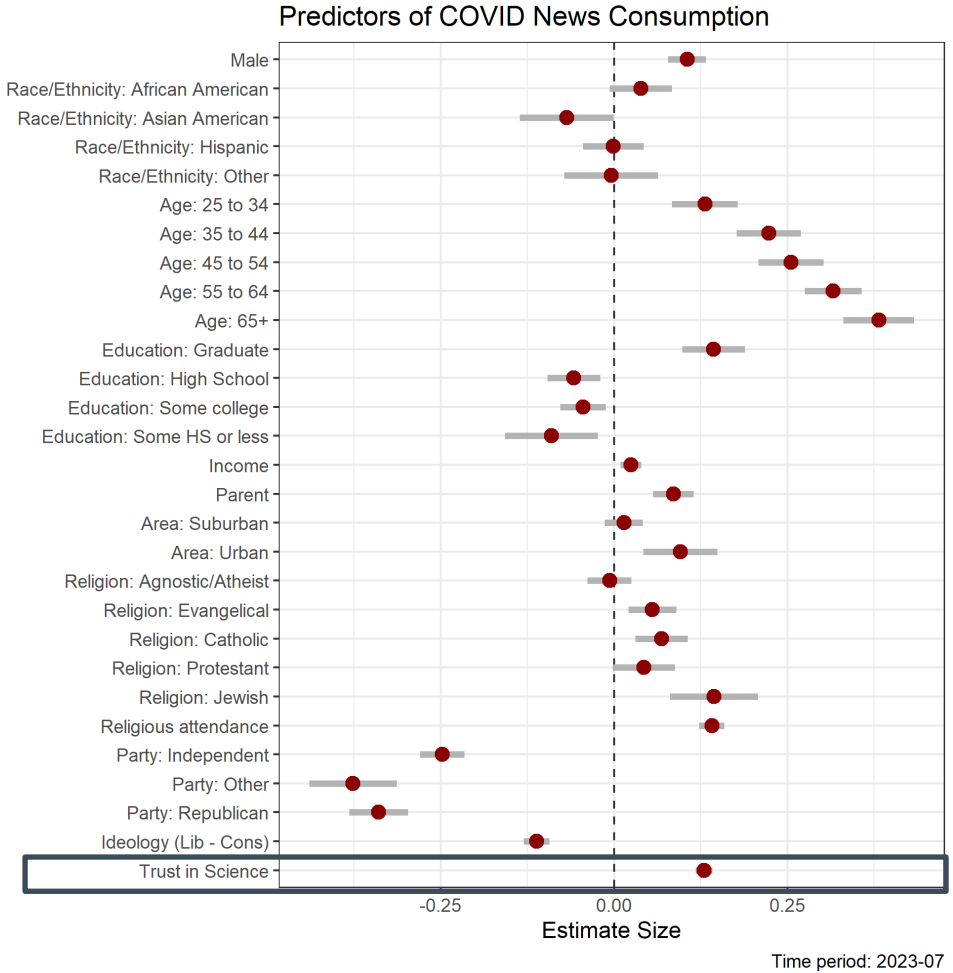


Trust in science, information, and behavior

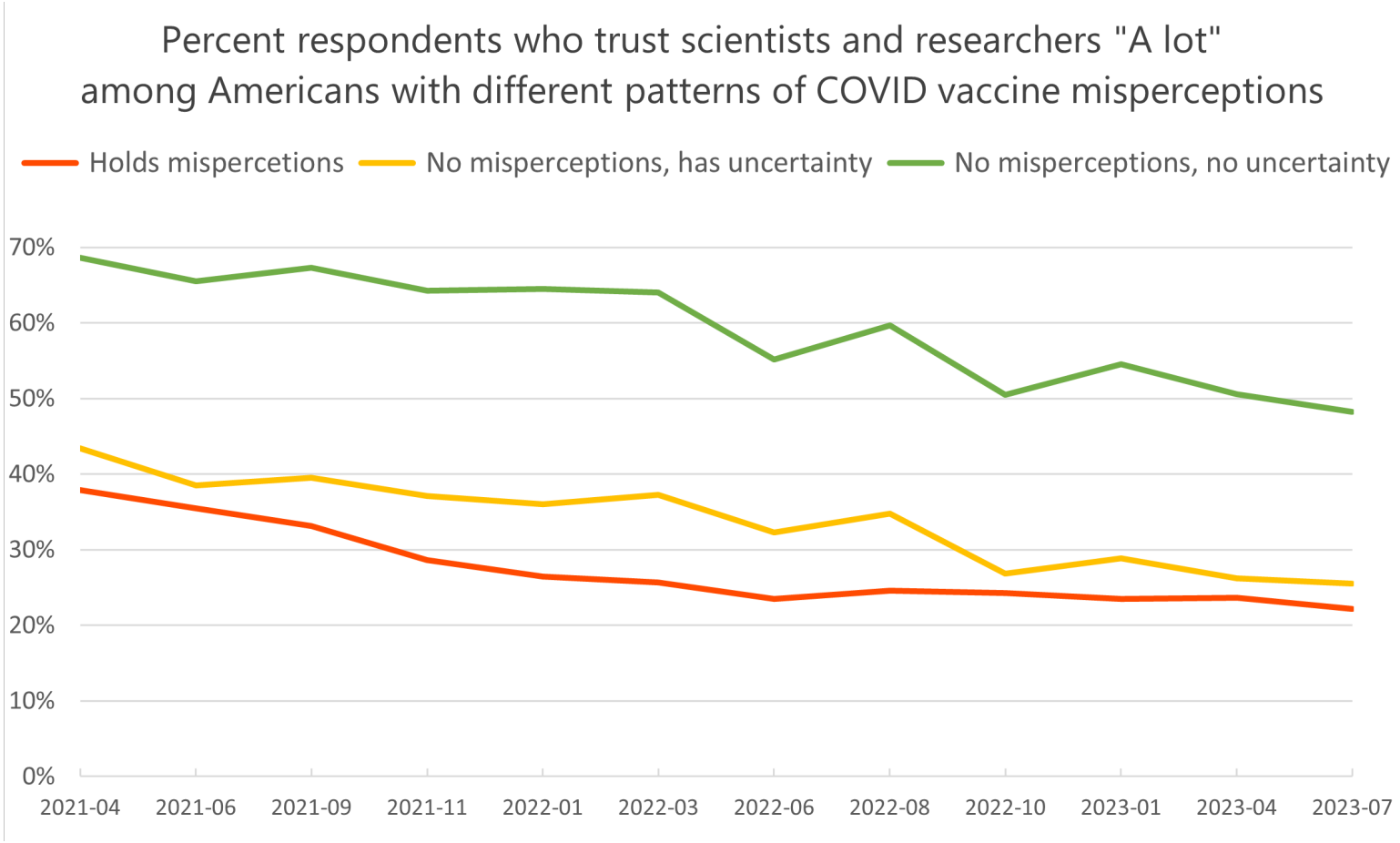
Trust and news consumption over time



Predictors of COVID-19 news consumption



Trust and COVID misperceptions over time



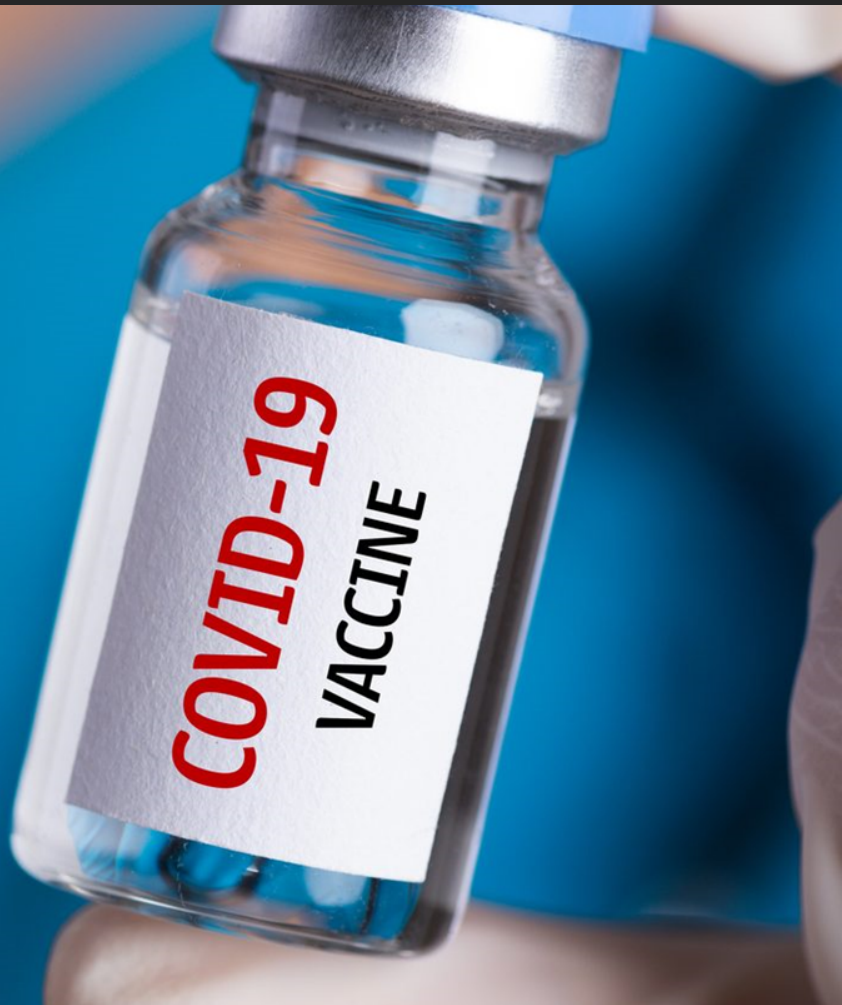
COVID-19 vaccine misperceptions

COVID-19 vaccines can alter people's DNA.

COVID-19 vaccines contain microchips that could track people.

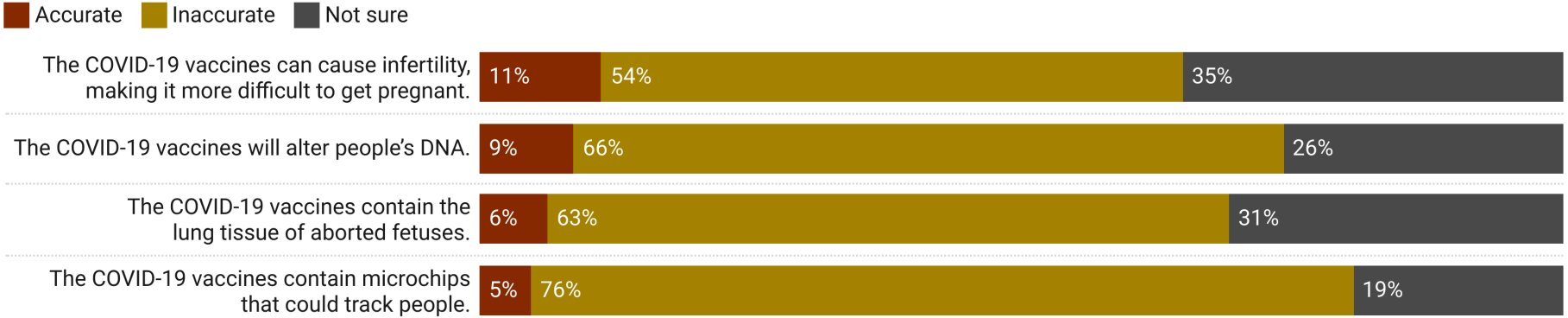
COVID-19 vaccines contain the lung tissue of aborted fetuses.

COVID-19 vaccines can cause infertility, making it more difficult to get pregnant.



Misperceptions about COVID-19 vaccines among Americans

[Percent respondents who believe each false statement is accurate, inaccurate, or say they are not sure]

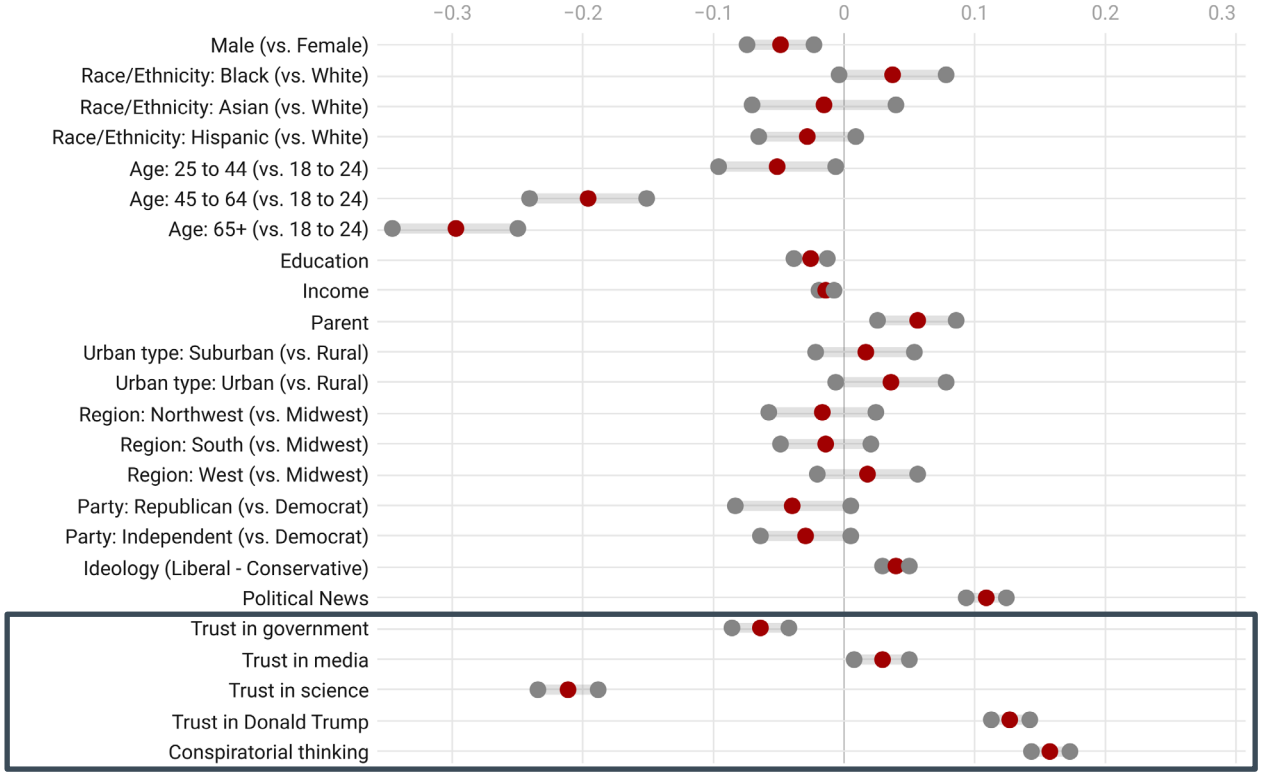


National sample, N = 14,430, Time period: 03/02/2022-04/04/2022

Source: The COVID-19 Consortium for Understanding the Public's Policy Preferences Across States (A joint project of: Northeastern University, Harvard University, Rutgers University, and Northwestern University) www.covidstates.org • Created with Datawrapper

Predictors of holding vaccine misperceptions: the role of trust

The numbers are coefficients from OLS regressions. Estimates presented in red, confidence intervals in gray.
Outcome variable: number of vaccine misperceptions held by respondents.



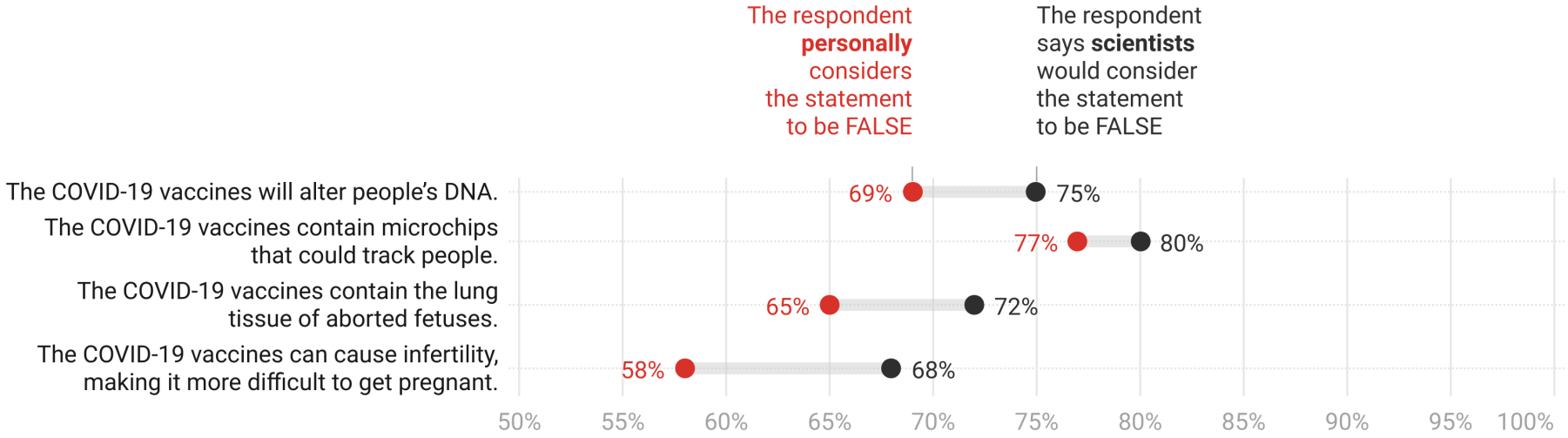
National sample, N = 20,590, Time period: 12/22/2022-01/18/2023

Source: The COVID-19 Consortium for Understanding the Public's Policy Preferences Across States (A joint project of: Northeastern University, Harvard University, Rutgers University, and Northwestern University) www.covidstates.org • Created with Datawrapper

Do Americans knowingly disagree with scientific views on vaccines?

Perceptions of scientific consensus on false COVID-19 vaccine statements

1. To the best of your knowledge, are the following statements accurate or inaccurate?
2. Now, regardless of your own opinion about their accuracy, do you think most scientists and health experts would consider those statements accurate or inaccurate?



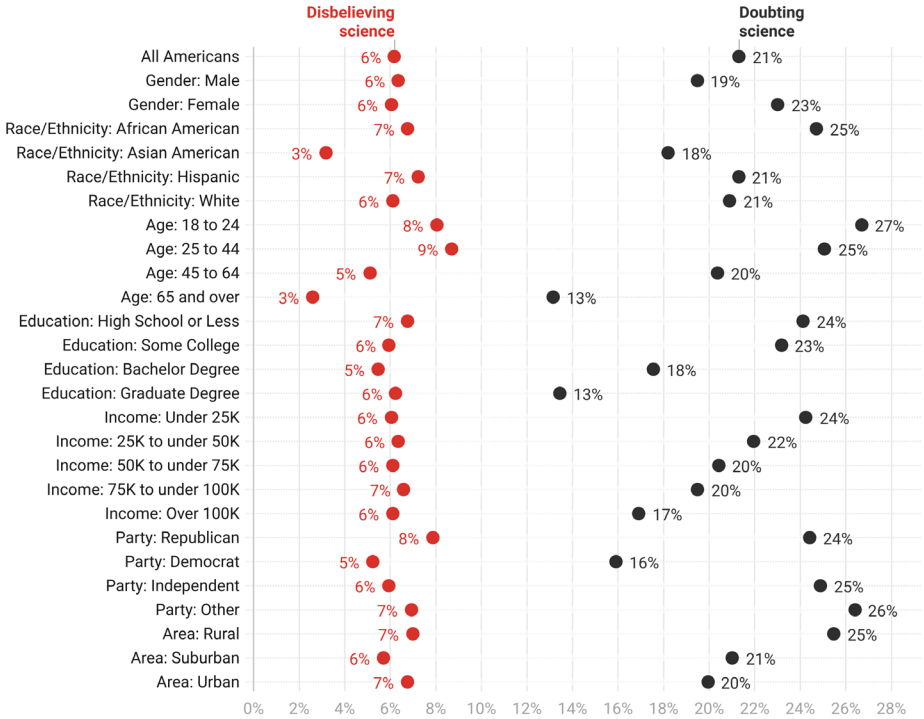
National sample, N = 19,060, Time period: 11/03/2021-12/02/2021

Source: The COVID-19 Consortium for Understanding the Public's Policy Preferences Across States (A joint project of: Northeastern University, Harvard University, Rutgers University, and Northwestern University) www.covidstates.org • Created with Datawrapper

Do Americans knowingly disagree with scientific views on vaccines?

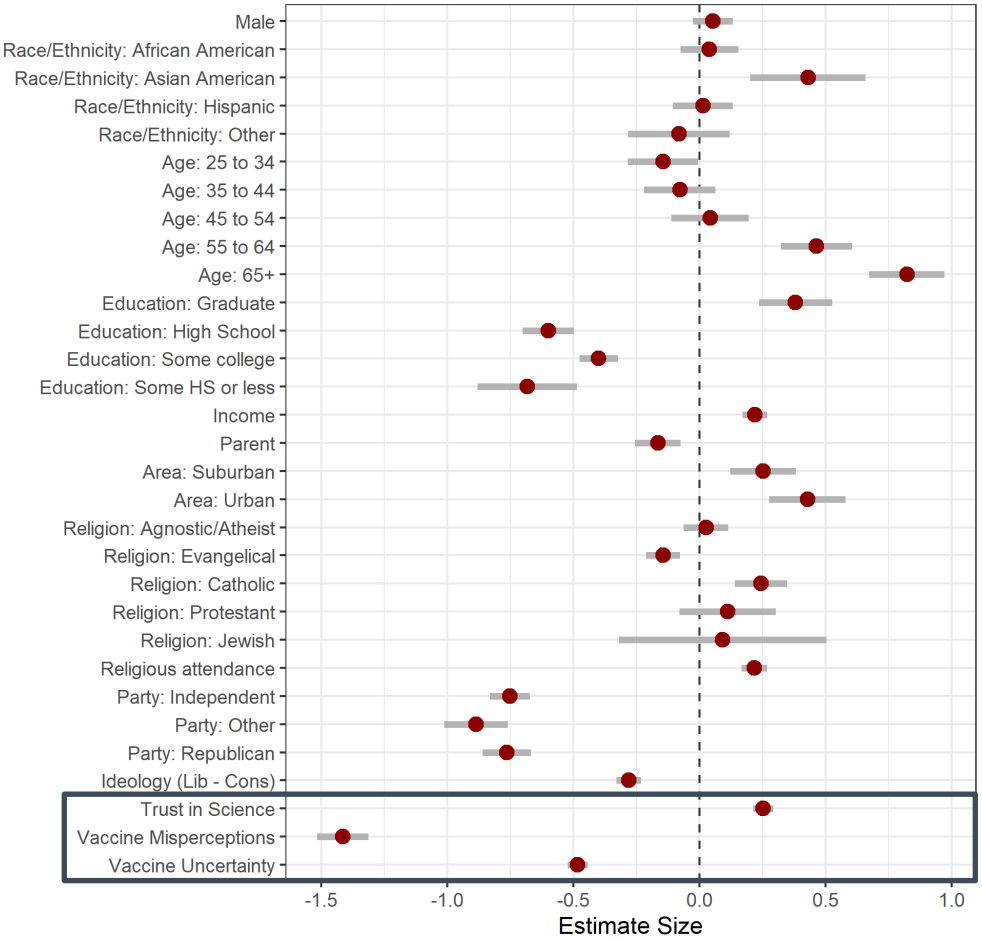
Survey respondents were asked to identify vaccine misinformation items as either true or false. When uncertain, they also had the option of saying "Not sure". Respondents were later asked whether they thought most scientists and health experts would consider the same statements to be true or false.

(1) Disbelieving science: percent respondents in each category who said they thought a statement was true, but said science and health expert would consider it false.
(2) Doubting science: percent respondents in each category who said they were not sure if a statement was true, but said science and health expert would consider it false.

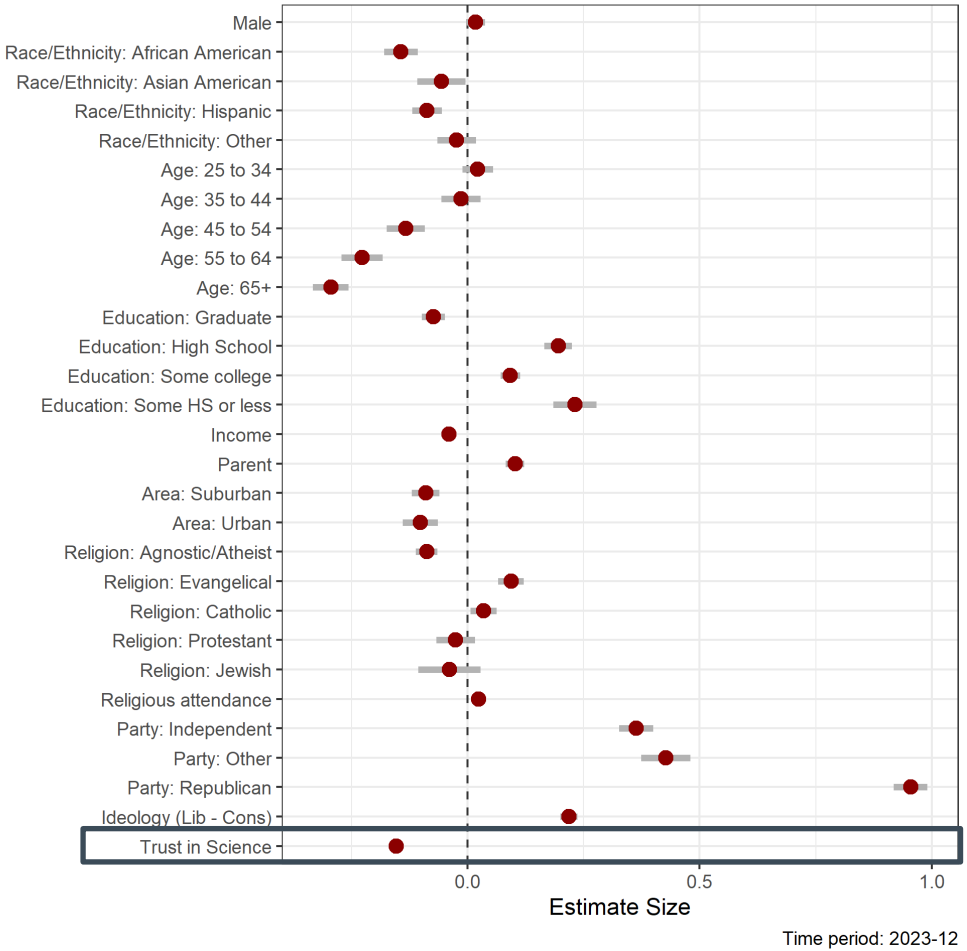


National sample, N = 19,060, Time period: 03/11/2021-02/12/2021

SO WHAT: Predictors of being vaccinated (misinformation, uncertainty, trust)



Not just COVID: Predictors of believing the 2020 election was stolen

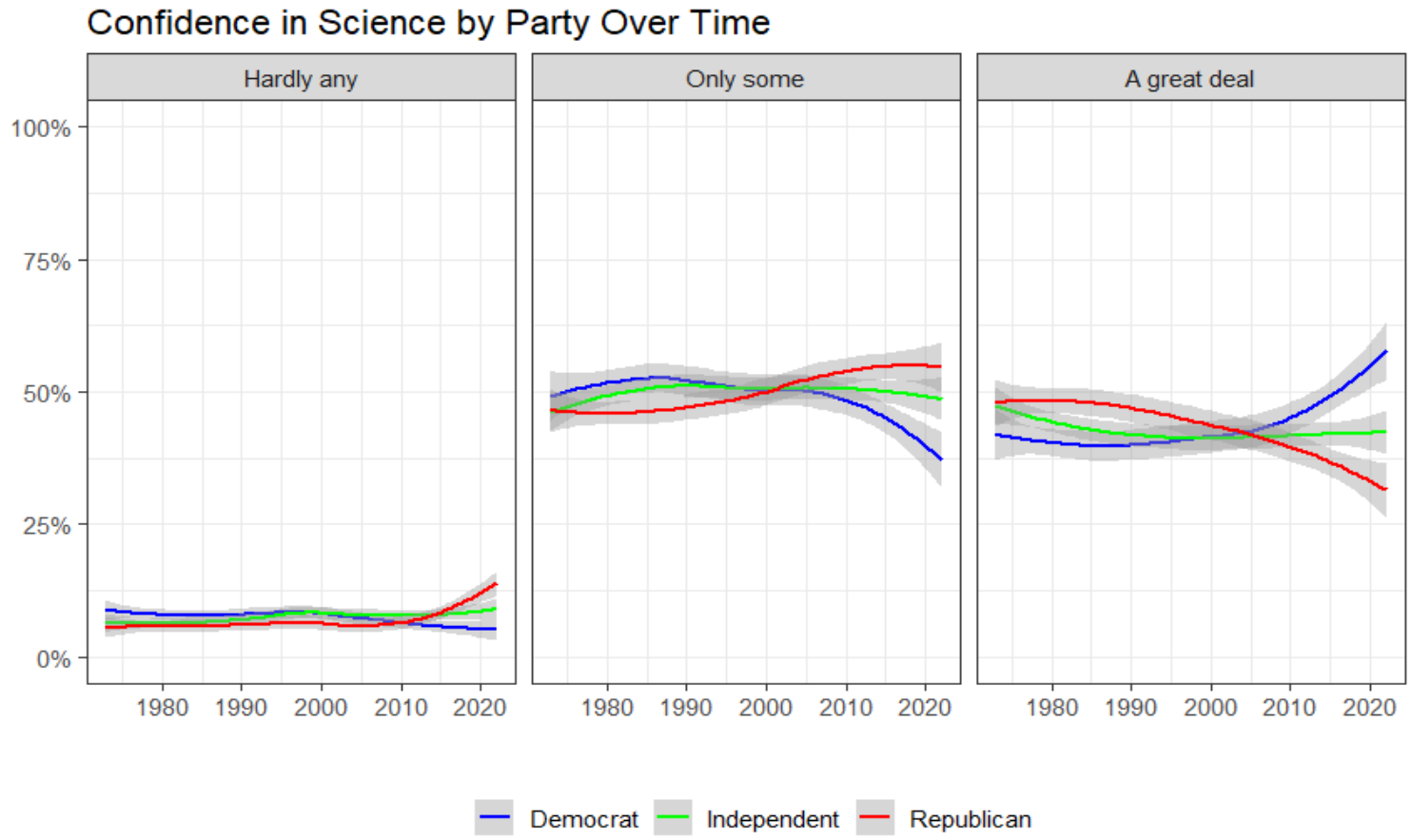


Trust in science and partisanship

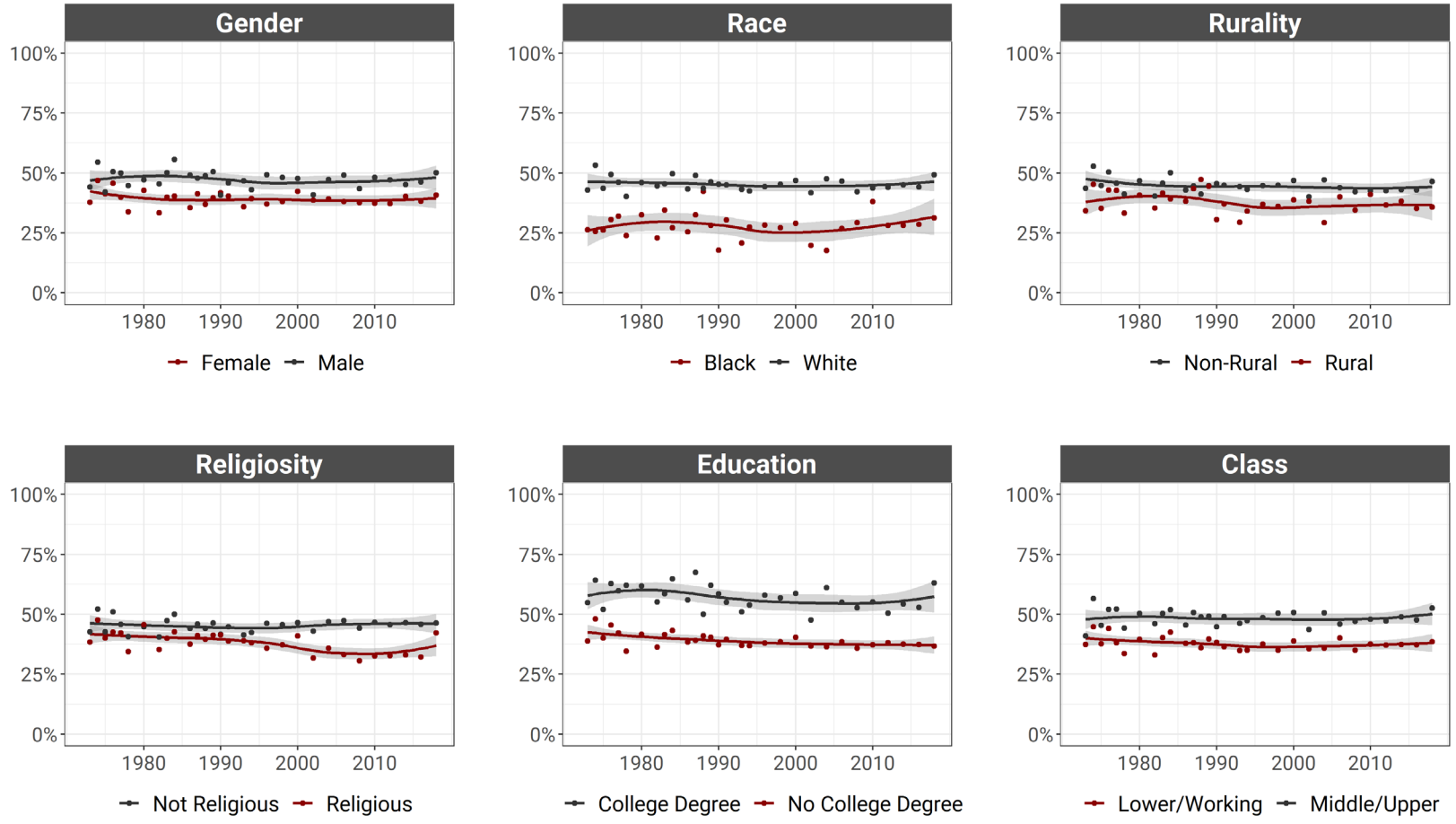
Trust in knowledge-producing institutions in the US

Trust in science competes with a number of alternative logics: intuition, religion, conspiratorial thinking, partisanship, etc.

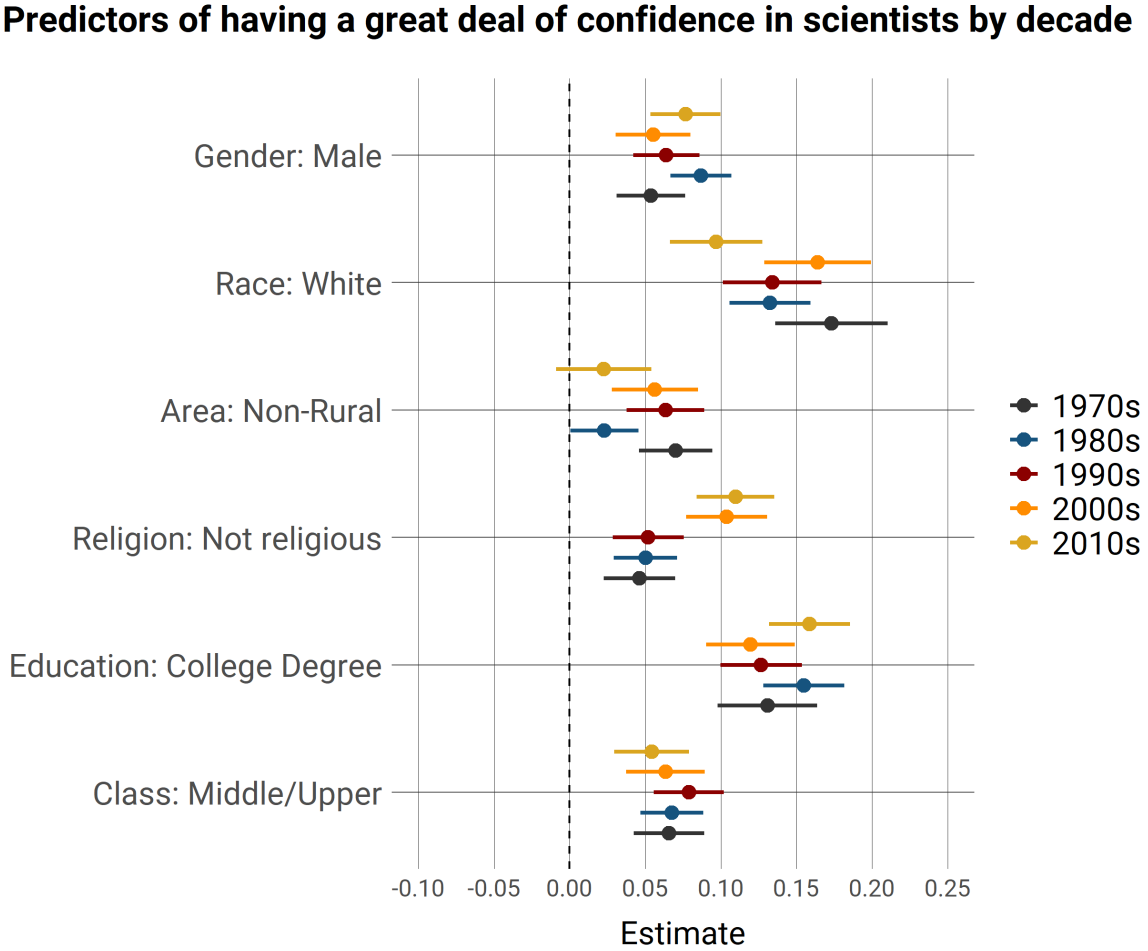
Trust in science by party: 1970s – 2020s (GSS)



Percent Americans who trust science “A great deal” (GSS)



Confidence in science: predictors by decade (GSS)



Trust in science: Demographics and partisanship (1970s – 2020s, GSS)

Trust: Demographic stability

Party: Demographic sorting

Trust & knowledge polarized

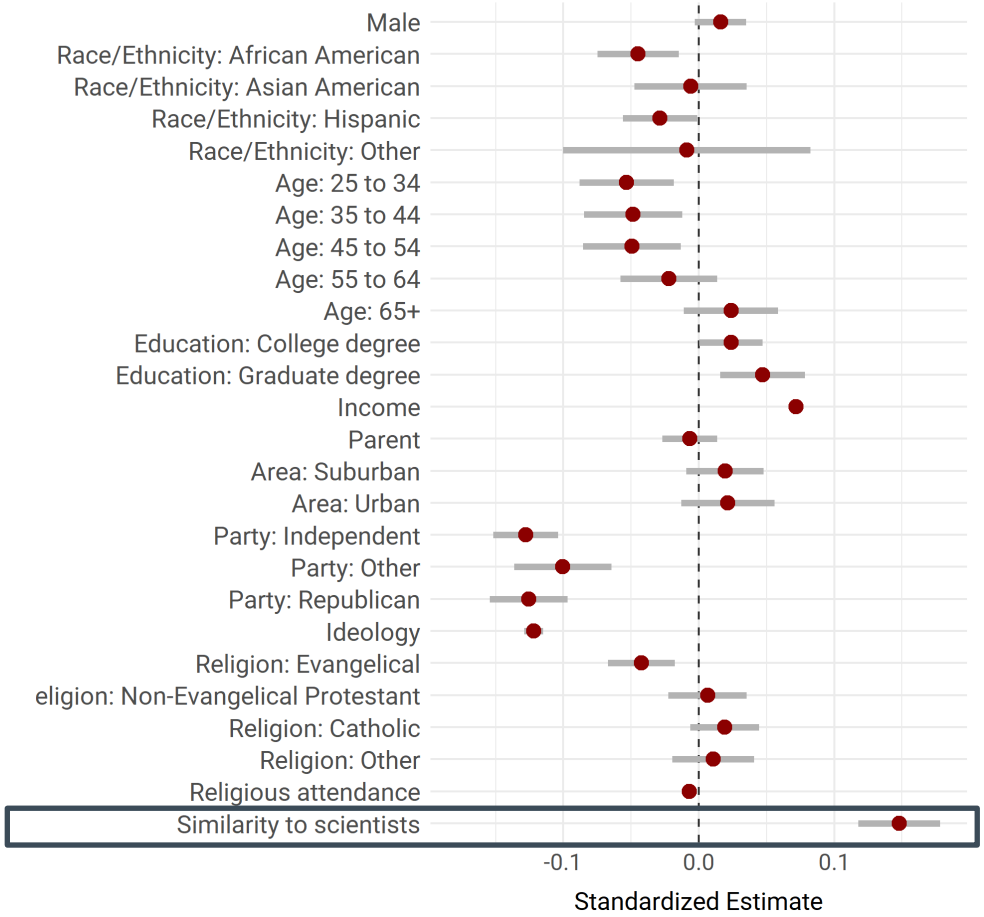
Trust in science and social distance from scientists

Trust in science and similarity to scientists

Science stereotypes

- Male
- White
- Younger
- More Educated
- Higher income
- More liberal
- Atheist/agnostic

Predictors of trust in science: similarity to scientists

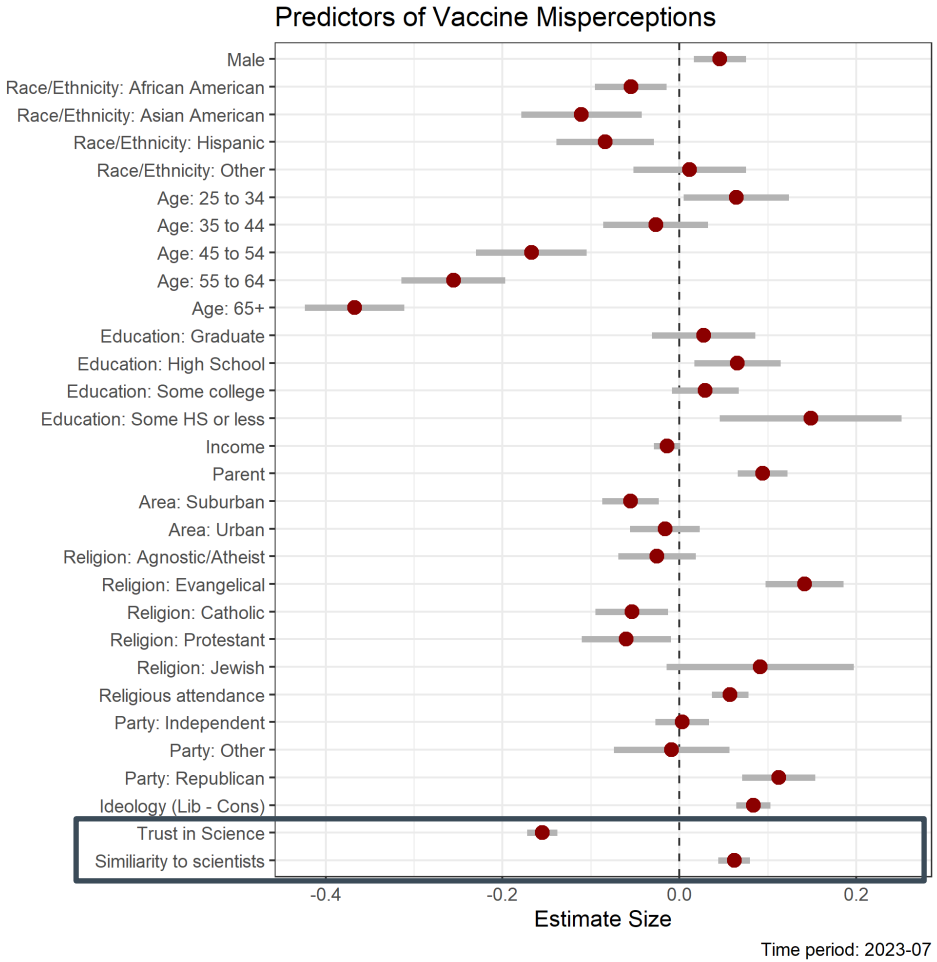


Do you think that people in the following professions are **different** from you or **similar** to you?

Please answer on a scale from 0 to 100 where 0 is "**very different**" and 100 is "**very similar**":

Scientist

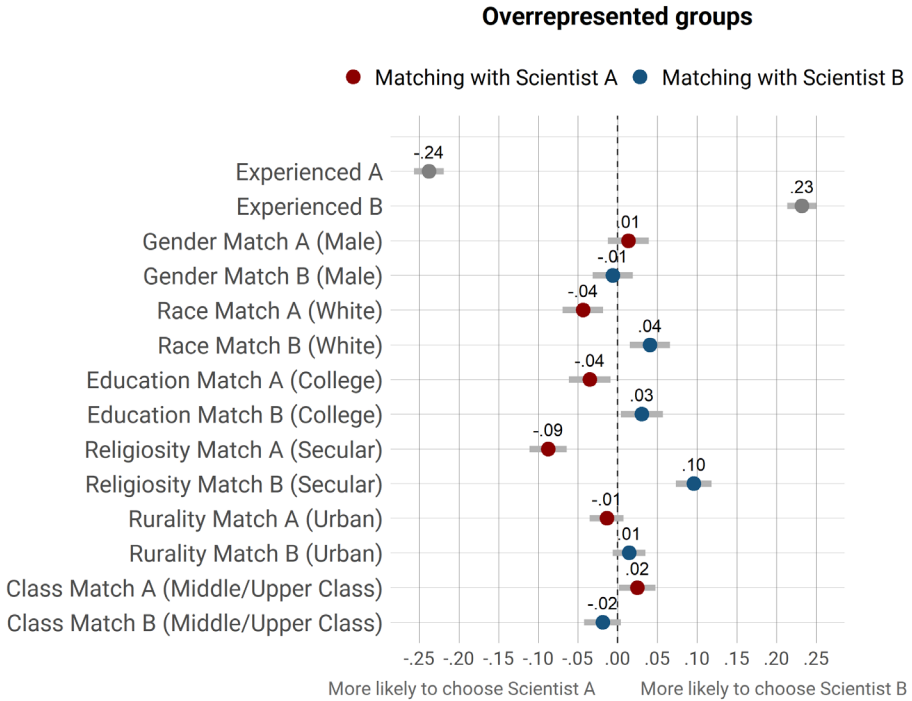
Distance from science: COVID-19 vaccine misperceptions

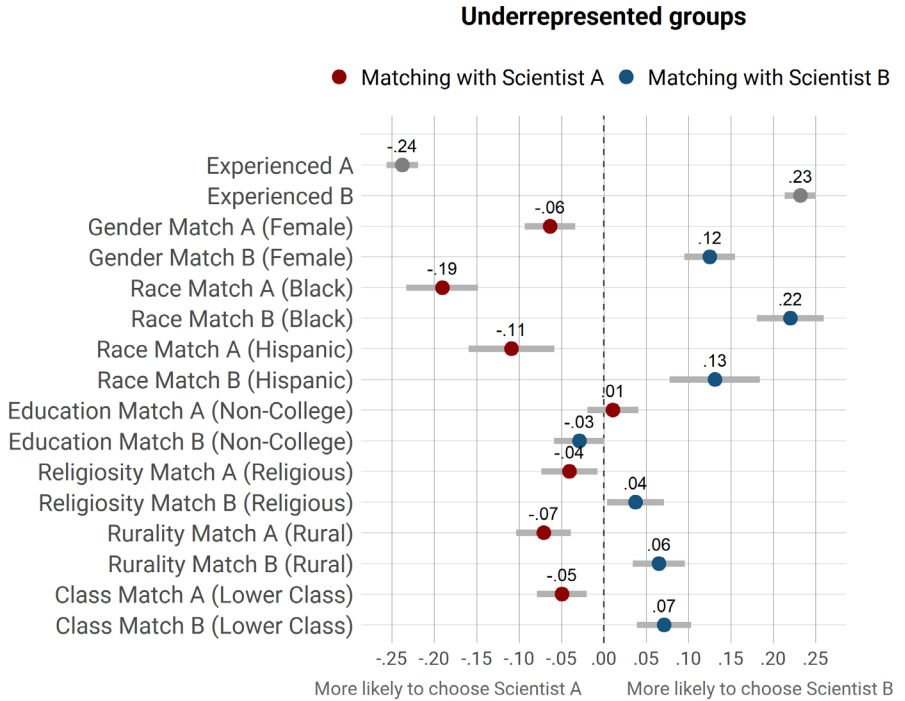


Conjoint experiment: Choose your scientist

Marginal effects of matching for overrepresented and underrepresented groups

(Change in probability of choosing B over A, all else equal)





The End