

Media Source, Selective Exposure, and Susceptibility to False Information

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Research Question

Are individuals more likely to believe false information in a news article excerpt, and more interested in reading on, when the article comes from a congenial partisan/ideological source?

Hypotheses

- **Hypothesis 1:** When the false statement is presented with the Fox News [CNN] header, Republicans and conservatives [Democrats and liberals], as compared to Democrats and liberals [Republicans and conservatives], are more likely to think that the statement is accurate.
- **Hypothesis 2:** Republicans and conservatives [Democrats and liberals] are more interested in reading the rest of the article with the Fox News [CNN] header, as compared to Democrats and liberals [Republicans and conservatives].

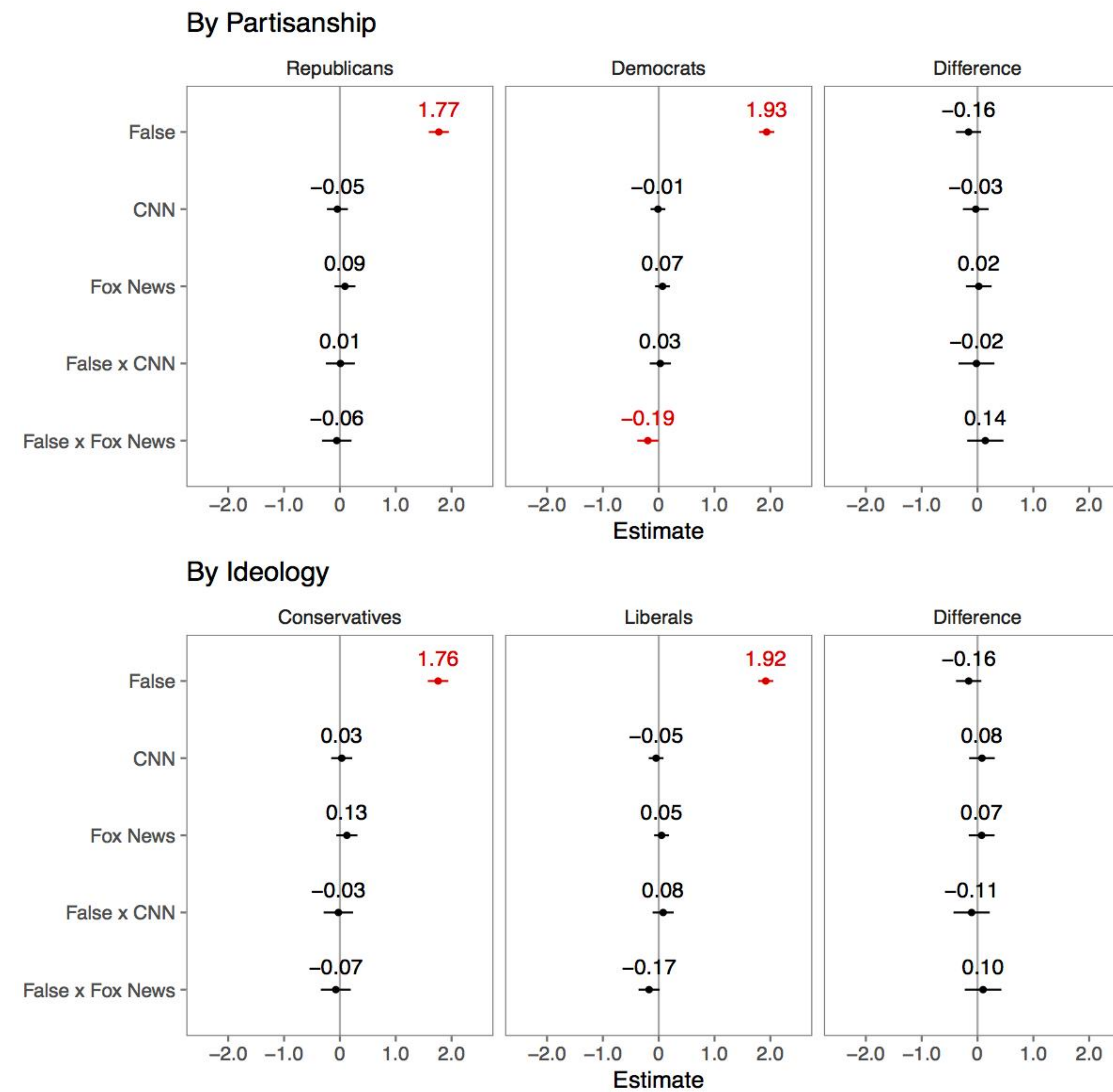
Research Design

- Amazon MTurk workers ($n = 3,931$)
- Six treatments on healthcare reform:
 - (True/false) x (CNN/Fox News/no source)
- Two outcome variables

Outcome Variables

- Measured on 1 - 4 Likert scales:
 - How accurate is the following statement? In the new health care bills proposed by the House and Senate, young adults would lose health insurance coverage through their parents' insurance plan when they turn 18.
 - How interested are you in reading the rest of this article?

Results



Perceived accuracy of false statement



Interest in reading the rest of the article

Example Treatments



Developments in health care legislation:
Here's what you need to know

By Casey Williams

Published: July 21, 2017

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Fox News, False Information



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CNN, True Information

Discussion/Conclusion

- Contrary to expectations, exposure to false statement had largest and most consistent effect on both outcome variables
 - Few significant differences by partisanship/ideology
- Content more important than source?
 - "Illusion of truth"
 - Effect of surprising/unexpected information

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