

Misinformation Susceptibility

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Who falls for misinformation?



- Individual differences
 - Older, less informed, less analytical, etc.
 - Generally small effects – we are all susceptible to some extent
- Situational factors
 - Repeated exposure, source credibility, etc.

- *Would you be more or less supportive of Fine Gael if you heard that Leo Varadkar is a vegan?*
- *Would you be more or less supportive of Fine Gael if you heard that Leo Varadkar donates 25% of his yearly salary to the Irish Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC)?*
- *Would you be more or less supportive of Fine Gael if you heard that Leo Varadkar used a government jet to fly his friends and family to Ibiza for his 40th birthday celebrations?*



Leo Varadkar was widely praised when it was revealed that he has donated 25% of his annual salary to the Irish Society of Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC), since he became Taoiseach in 2017.

Push Poll Exposure

- On average, push poll exposure tripled the number of participants who formed a false memory for the fake story
 - Several experiments with multiple public figures
 - Both flattering and damaging stories
 - Careful & effective debriefing
- Participants had no awareness of what we had done, no memory of seeing the push poll
 - *"I saw this story on RTE"*
 - *"My wife told me about this at the time"*



- N = 3140
 - TheJournal.ie
- “investigating attitudes towards the referendum and the two campaigns”

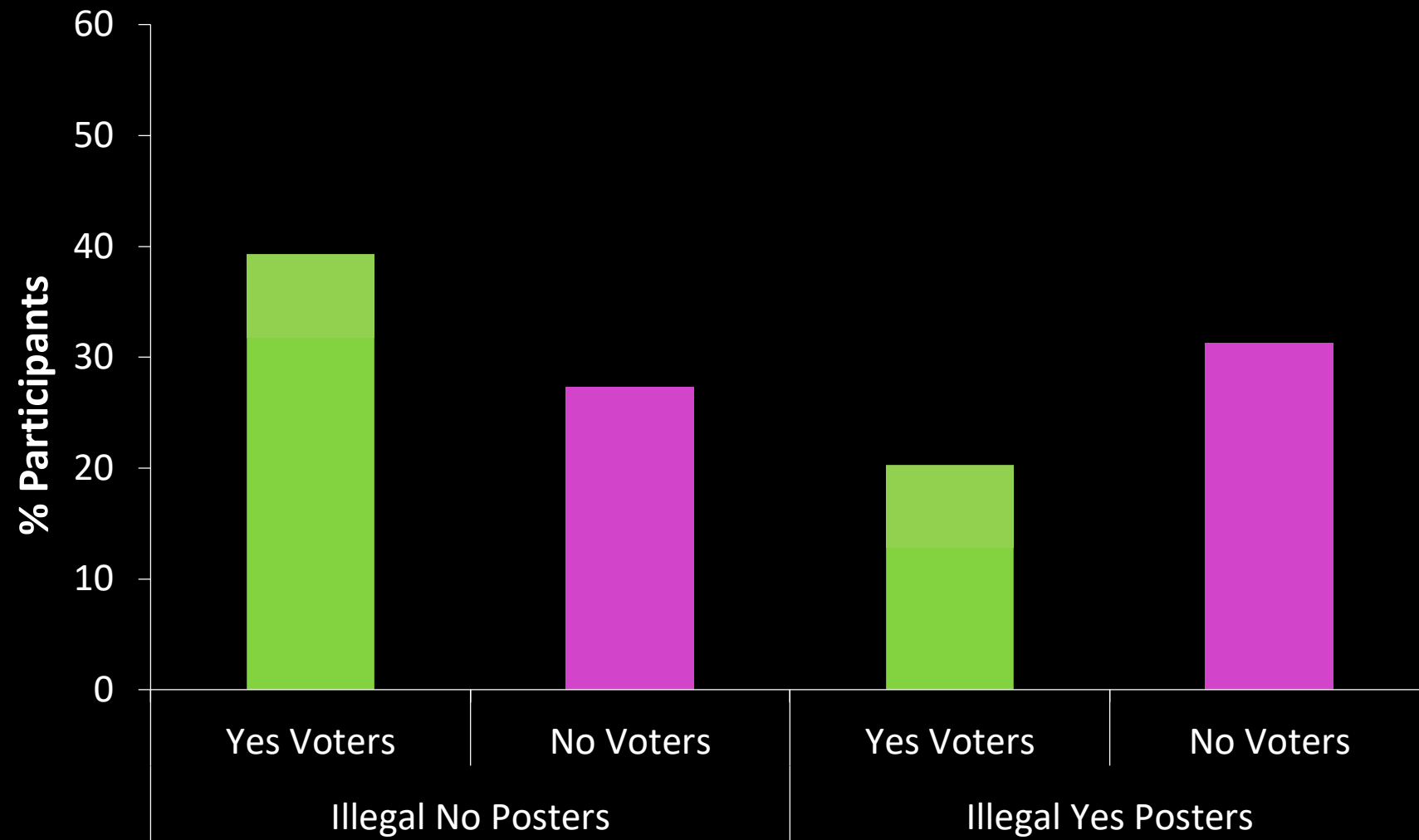




The Together for Yes campaign was forced to destroy 25,000 campaign posters after evidence emerged that the posters were bought using funding received from American pro-choice lobbyists.



The Save the 8th campaign was forced to destroy 25,000 campaign posters after evidence emerged that the posters were bought using funding received from American pro-life lobbyists.





Who falls for
misinformation?

- In general, we all fall for misinformation
 - Importance of situational factors, especially for disinformation campaigns

How do we intervene?



- Acceptability of interventions
 - Unintended consequences
 - Selection bias

Thank You

- *Can misinformation change behaviour? (voting, vaccination, diet)*
- *Psychological countermeasures*
- *Deepfake technology*
- *Ethical conduct of misinformation research*



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