

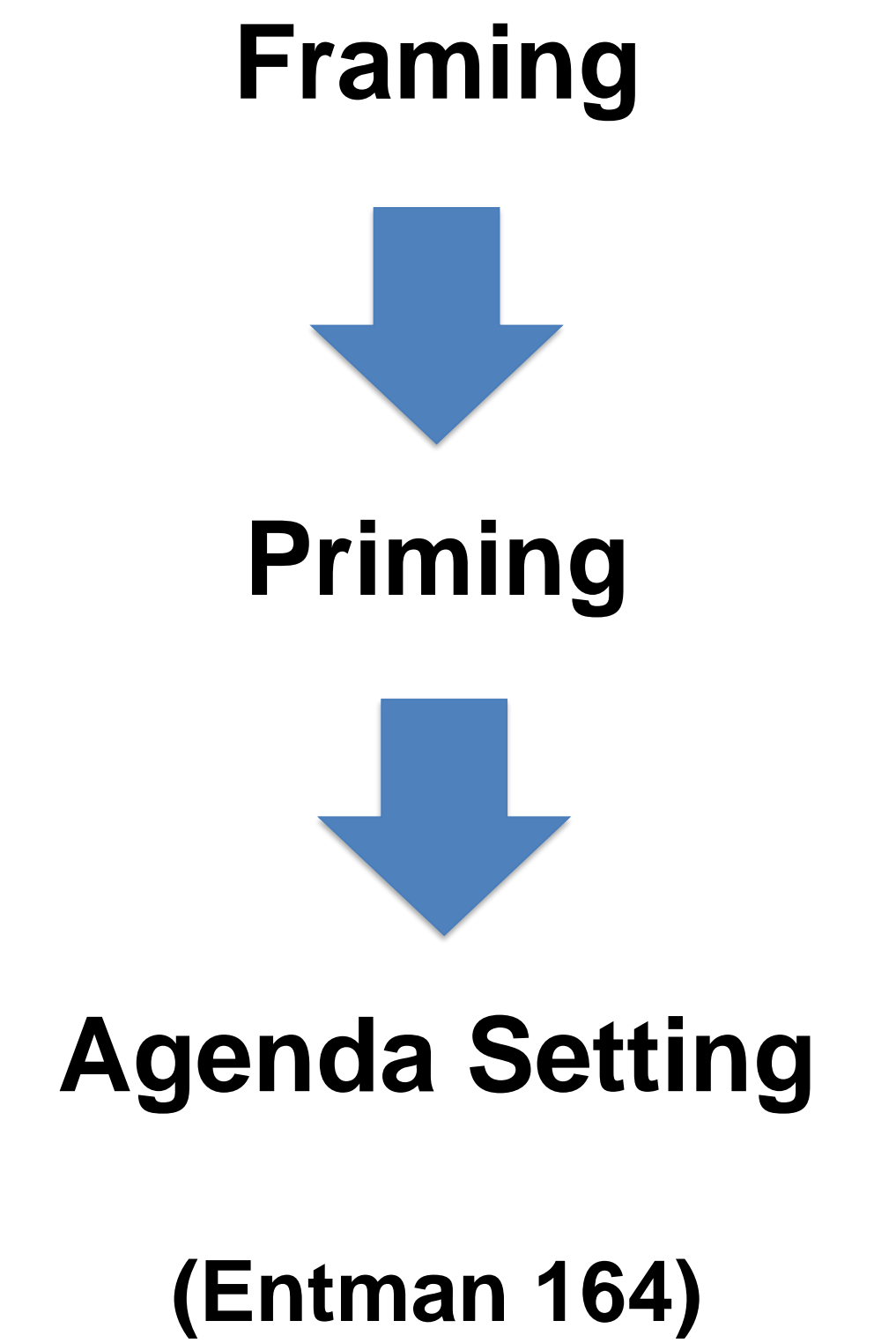
Beyond "Fake News": How the Consumption of Biased Western News Media Creates Susceptibility to Disinformation



PRESENTER:
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Traditional News Media Bias in the West perpetuates narratives that indirectly help to facilitate the spread of disinformation.

How Does News Media Bias Function?



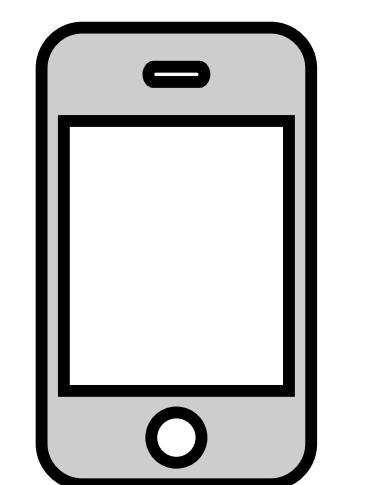
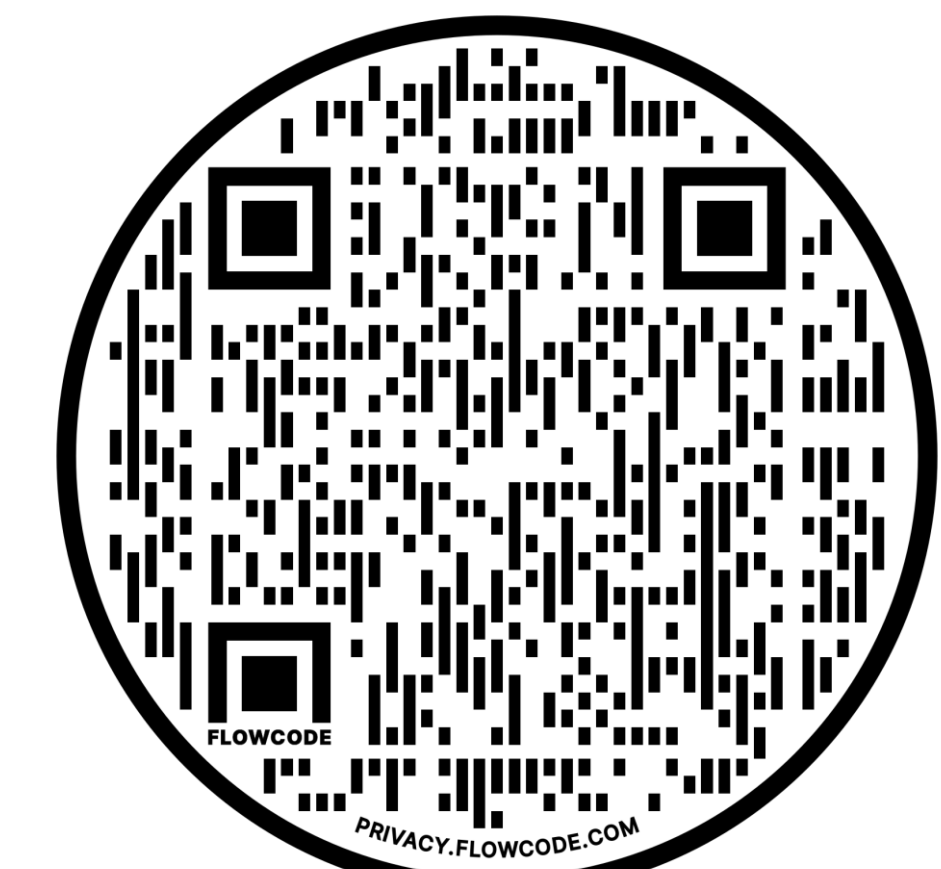
The Legacy of News Media

Traditional News Media has a history of encouraging imperialist and racist narratives.

- This is seen in the characterization of Iraqis in the Iraq War for example. (Lewandowsky, Werner, et al. 489)
- Trump's xenophobic campaign rhetoric falls perfectly into this formula, especially for right leaning, neo-con outlets.
- Disinformation campaigns rely on similar prejudices such as the 2020 election fraud claims (Kuo and Marwick 1)



Esquire, 2015



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BACKGROUND

- There is a gap in understanding the various reasons for the successful spread of disinformation narratives (Freelon and Wells 151).
- Media Bias research often intersects with disinformation studies when examining the manipulation of information and individuals' reception.

METHODS

- Examined media bias research to understand how Western news media functions.
- Followed a case study of the 2020 US Presidential Election and election fraud claims by the Trump Administration along with Fox News' role in that narrative.
- Examined the insights of current disinformation research and positioned media bias' role in that sphere.

RESULTS

Objective news is essentially impossible to create, but the inherent nature of the Western news media's competitive ecosystem results in framed narratives that encourage individuals to maintain close minded and even prejudiced worldviews that coincide with the bigoted narratives commonly used by disinformation campaigns.

The Independent, 2021



NPR, 2021



Bombastic Claims:
 "They were being notified by Smartmatic in Frankfurt that Biden was way behind and they better come up with a lot more ballots." - Nov. 19, 2020, Fox News – Sean Hannity's show". (Blake 2)
 "And President Trump won by not just hundreds of thousands of votes, but by millions of votes – that were shifted by this software that was designed expressly for that purpose." - Nov. 15, 2020, Fox News, Bartiromo's Show". (Blake 2)

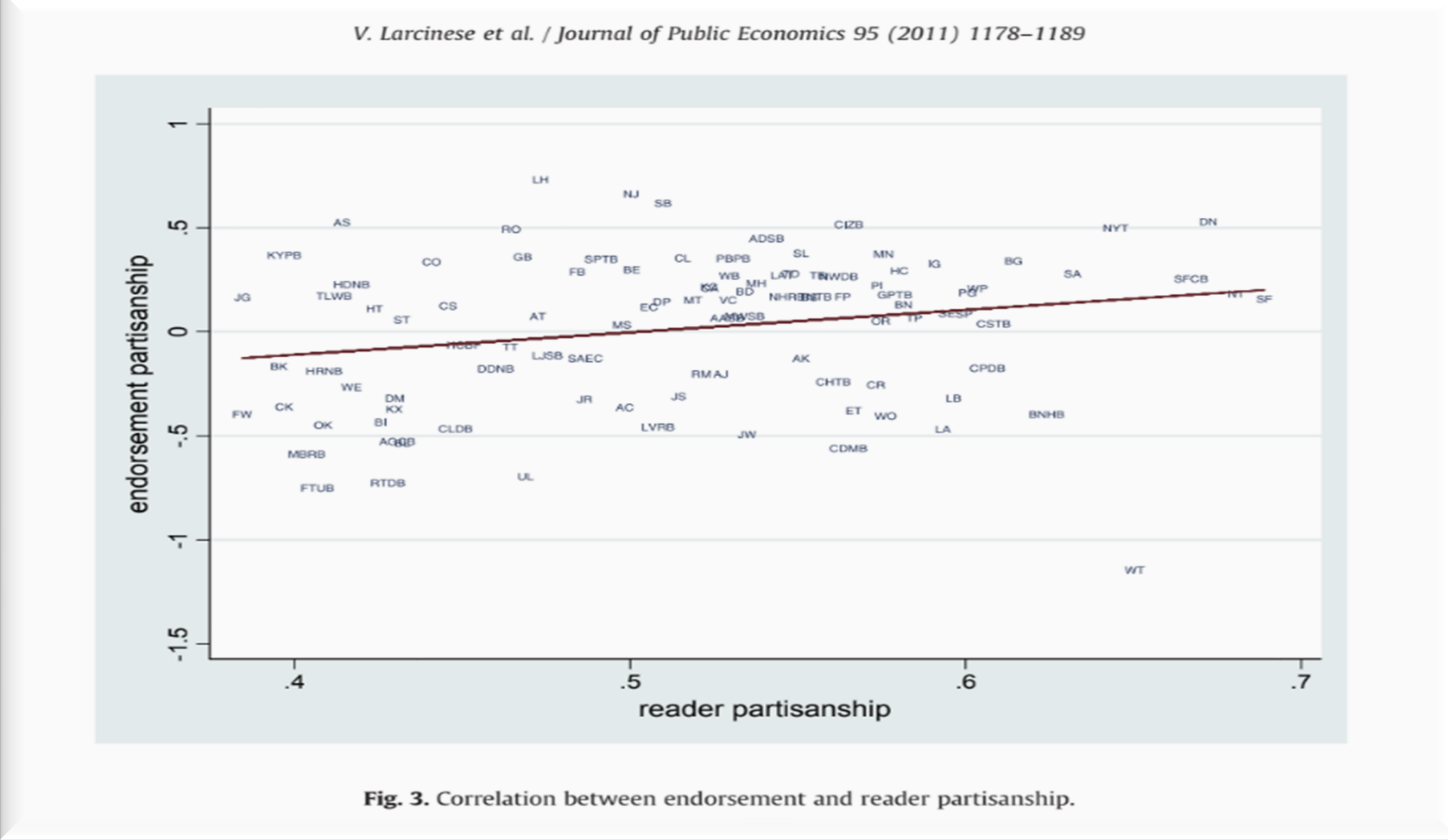


Table 3
Reader partisanship, endorsement partisanship and agenda bias in the coverage of unemployment and inflation.

	Unemployment			Inflation			Budget deficit			Trade deficit		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Democratic President dummy × economic variable - reader partisanship	-	-0.264 [0.291]	-0.105 [0.300]	-	-0.076 [0.132]	-0.088 [0.158]	-	-0.065** [0.025]	-0.056** [0.028]	-	-0.037 [0.050]	-0.017 [0.046]
Democratic Pres. dummy × economic variable - endorsement partisanship	-	-0.122** [0.052]	-0.115** [0.053]	0.003 [0.031]	0.032** [0.036]	0.032** [0.007]	-0.01 [0.008]	-0.006 [0.008]	-0.015* [0.009]	-	-0.014* [0.008]	-0.014* [0.008]
Ln of total articles	0.028 [0.022]	0.029 [0.023]	0.028 [0.022]	0.032** [0.015]	0.032** [0.015]	0.032** [0.015]	-0.02 [0.022]	-0.02 [0.022]	-0.02 [0.002]	0.004** [0.002]	0.004** [0.002]	0.004** [0.002]
Newspaper fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Date dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Newspaper-specific slope w.r.t. economic variable	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Newspaper-specific slope w.r.t. democratic President dummy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Equal effects of a SD increase in reader and endorsement partisanship, p-value	-	-	0.33	-	-	0.66	-	-	0.6	-	-	0.38
Observations	12,004	12,004	12,004	12,004	12,004	12,004	4009	4009	4009	4009	4009	4009
Number of newspapers	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101
R-squared	0.63	0.63	0.64	0.72	0.72	0.72	0.61	0.62	0.62	0.72	0.72	0.72

Notes: the table displays the output of fixed-effects regressions, with the relative frequency of stories about unemployment, inflation the budget and the trade deficit as the dependent variable. Observations are at the monthly level for unemployment and inflation, and at the quarterly level of the two deficits. Reader partisanship is the circulation-weighted Democratic partisanship of voters for each newspaper. Endorsement partisanship is the newspaper-specific propensity to endorse Democratic vs. Republican candidates. The focus is on the triple interaction between the reader partisanship variable, the Democratic president dummy and the relevant economic variable, and on a similarly defined triple interaction with the endorsement partisanship variable. In columns (3), (6), (9) and (12) we also report the p-value on a test for the null hypothesis that - for a standard deviation increase in reader and endorsement partisanship - the triple-interaction effects are equal. Standard errors are clustered at the newspaper level and are reported in brackets below each coefficient.
 * Significant at 10%.
 ** Significant at 5%.