

ZOOM LINK
Pass: sjdm

THE FALSE AND THE FURIOUS

SUMMARY

Belief homophily is the tendency to associate with others who hold similar beliefs, and the distaste for encountering differences in beliefs. It is often seen as the main culprit for self-exposure to concordant views (“echo chambers”) and geographic segregation by political ideology (“The Big Sort”).

However, we propose an alternative account: when people face others with different beliefs, they do **NOT** find these encounters disturbing because of the difference *per se*, but **because they are convinced that others hold false beliefs**.

We show that people **express stronger negative feelings** when they encounter others who hold false beliefs, compared to cases when others’ beliefs are merely different.

We also demonstrate that higher confidence that others hold false beliefs—but not higher confidence that there is a difference in beliefs—**triggers avoidance behaviors** and makes people **less interested in establishing relationships**.

OVERVIEW of STUDIES

STUDY	SUBJECTS	N
1. SELF-CONSTRUED RECALL	MTURK	200
2. GUIDED SELF-RECALL	MTURK	398
3. STANDARDIZED VIGNETTES	MTURK	829
4. STANDARDIZED VIGNETTES II	MTURK	808
5. REAL BELIEFS AND TWITTER	MTURK	600

STUDY 3

(MAYOR scenario) “While mowing the lawn on a Saturday afternoon, you see Jill, your neighbor, removing banners from her front yard. The banners are in support of the current mayor, who is running for re-election. When you confront Jill and ask why she has decided to remove the banners, she tells you that she has read an article in a local newspaper about the mayor’s alleged corruption, and that now **she is convinced that the mayor is deeply corrupt**.

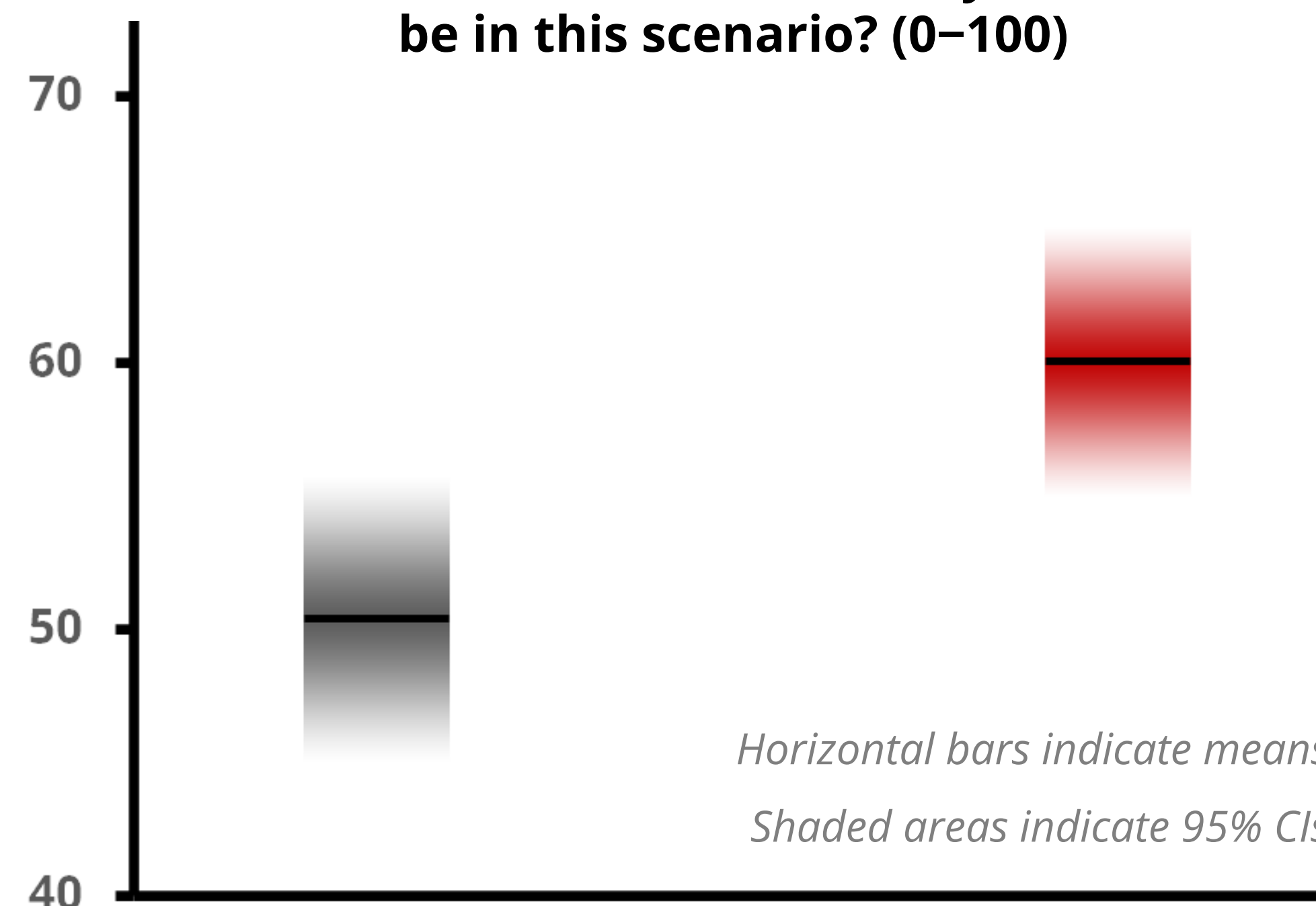
However, you know from a very reliable source that the information in the article is fabricated, and is just a blatant attempt to discredit an extremely popular, and to the best of your knowledge honest, mayor. **You are virtually certain that the mayor is innocent.**”

Between-subjects manipulation (prompt):

So, you know that you and Jill have **different beliefs** about the mayor.

So, you know that Jill has **incorrect beliefs** about the mayor.

How disturbed would you be in this scenario? (0–100)



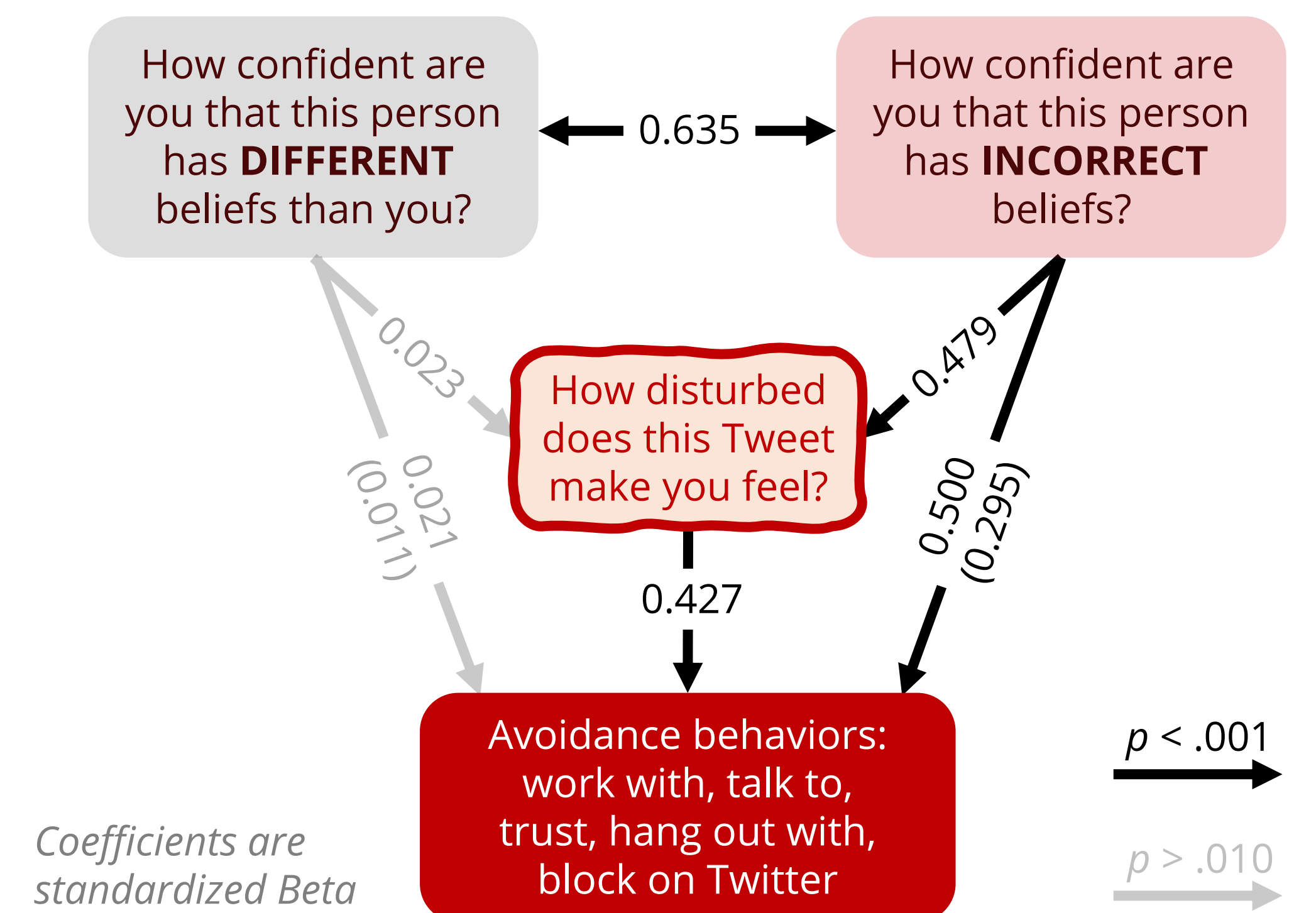
STUDY 5

Participants indicated their views on six politically divisive issues (e.g., climate change, COVID-19, police officers). For each issue, they were presented with two opposing statements and selected the statement they agreed with more (e.g., “*There IS convincing evidence that human activity contributes to global climate change*”).

Then, we randomly selected one of the six issues, and generated a hypothetical Tweet that featured the opposite of the participant’s preferred statement. For example:



Results: mediation analysis



Pre-registrations, data, & analyses: [LINK](#)

Full paper: People are more disturbed by others’ false beliefs than by differences in beliefs. [LINK](#)