



StanfordSOCIAL
INNOVATIONReview

BRIDGING THE DIVIDE

September 13-15, 2022

How to Have Better Political Conversations

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Main Take-Aways



Political conversations can be very difficult



Several techniques that can help



Active Listening



Perspective Sharing



Moral Reframing

Polarization
in the U.S. is
rising...



Issue Disagreement



“Neuropolarization”



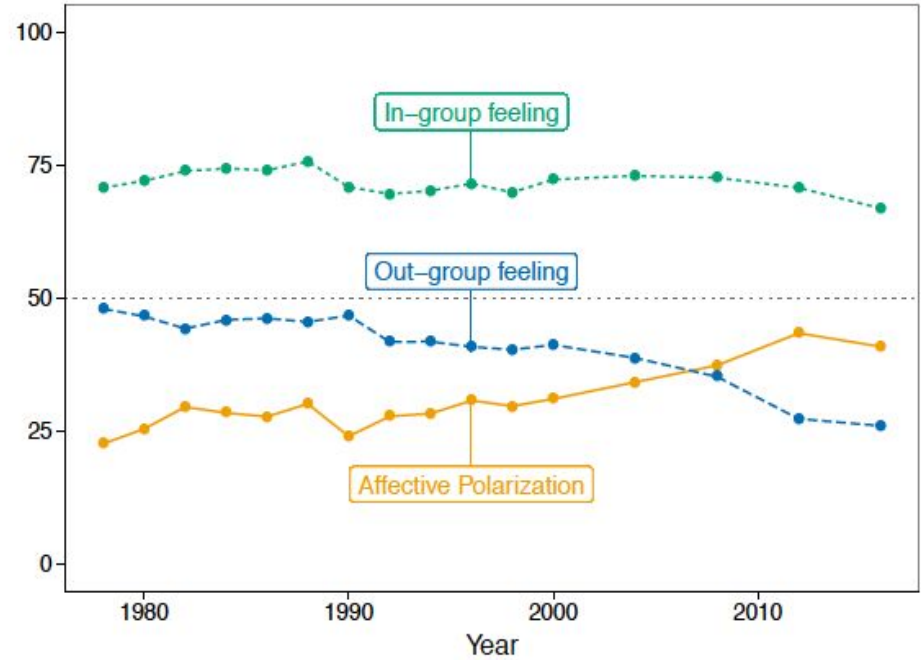
Geographic and professional
segregation



Support for political violence

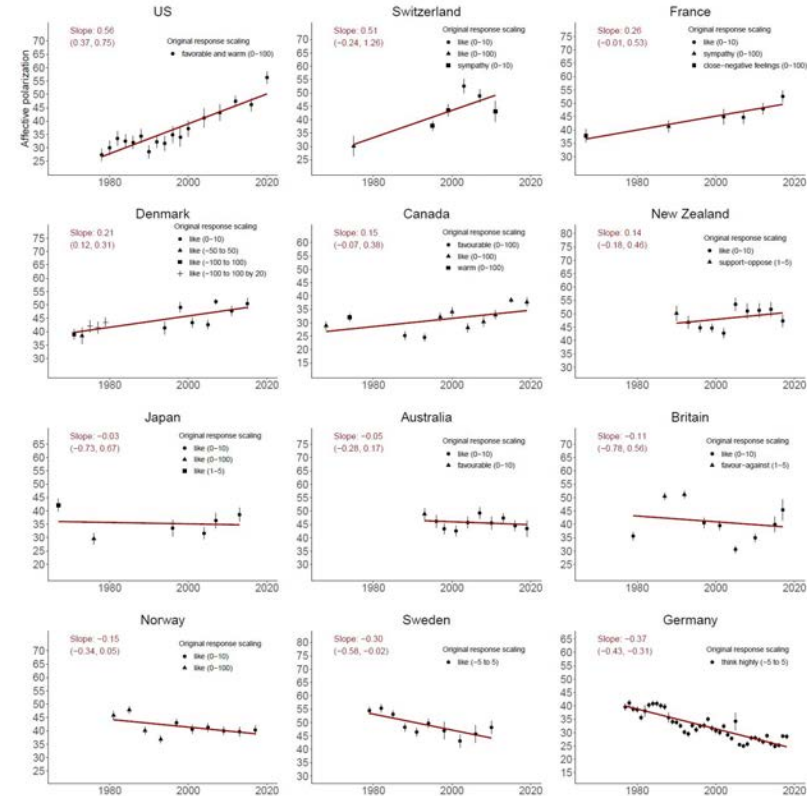
Political Animosity, U.S.

Figure 1: Partisan Feeling and Affective Polarization Overtime (ANES)

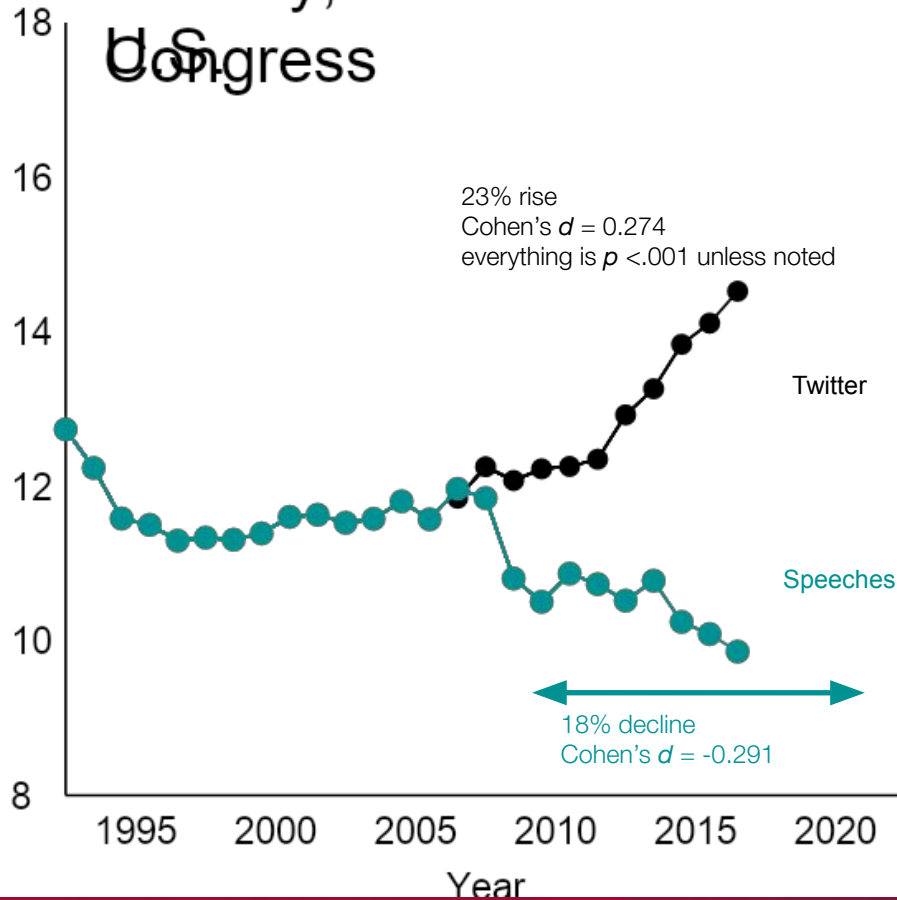


Political Animosity, International

Figure 1: Trends in Affective Polarization by Country



Toxicity, Congress



Political Animosity in Everyday Life



Children



Dating



Workplace



Family

ACTIVE LISTENING



Listening nonjudgmentally, constructively



Examples: smiling/head nodding, thanking person for their perspective, finding common ground for agreement, holding back before giving opinion



Conveys respect, builds empathy and positive feelings

PERSPECTIVE SHARING



Give one's perspective, ideally through a personal story



Examples: Explaining a personal experience that impacted your views, explaining the environment in which you grew up



Builds empathy, understanding, and respect

MORAL REFRAMING



Connect your views to the values of the other person



Examples: With conservatives, connect to patriotism, family values, religion, tradition.
With liberals, connect to equality, social justice, protecting vulnerable groups.



Is persuasive, conveys respect

LIBERALS



Equality



Care & Protection

CONSERVATIVES



Loyalty & Patriotism



Respect for Authority



Purity & Sanctity

The Value of Values



Basis for group cohesion



Guide decision-making



Provide a sense of purpose



“Moral empathy gaps”

SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

Typical arguments in favor:

“gay couples deserve the right to get married”

“the law requires that all citizens be treated equally and have the same opportunity to pursue happiness”

“legalizing same-sex marriage is the only fair course of action in a country founded on the principle of equality”

VS.

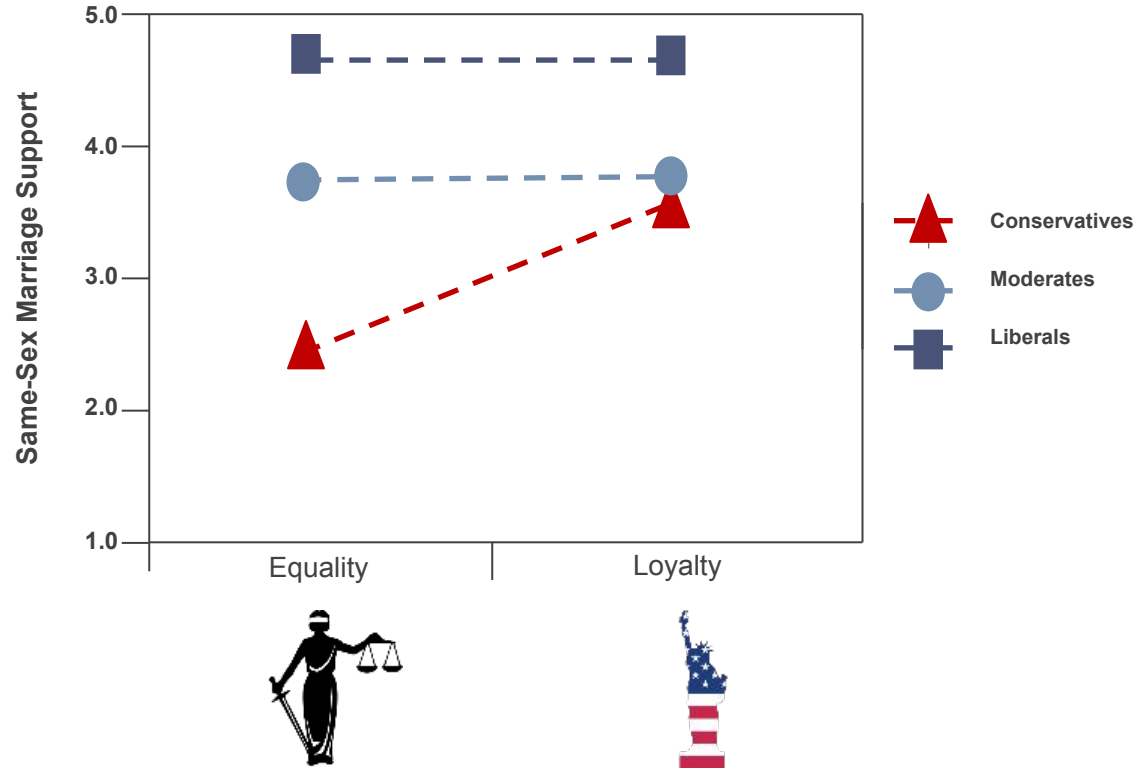
Reframed arguments in favor:

“same-sex couples are proud and patriotic Americans”

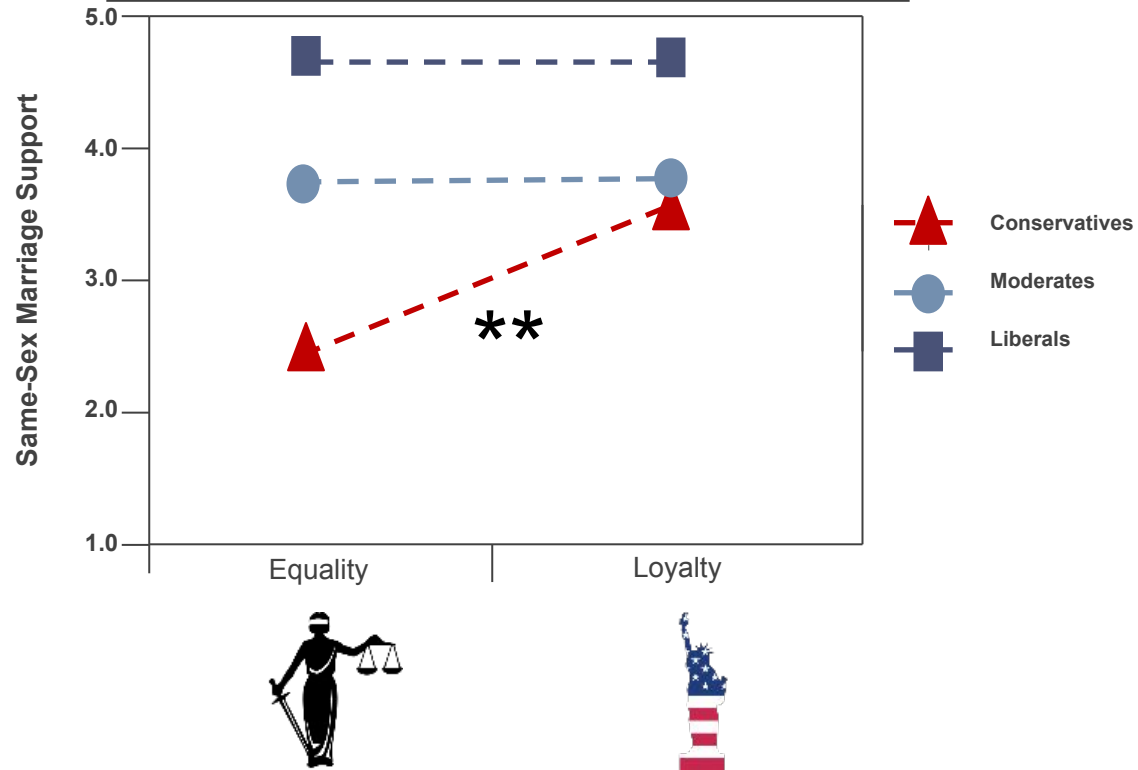
“they share the same basic hopes and desires as all Americans”

“like other proud Americans, gay couples peacefully build lives together, buy homes, and contribute to the American economy and society”

RESULTS



RESULTS





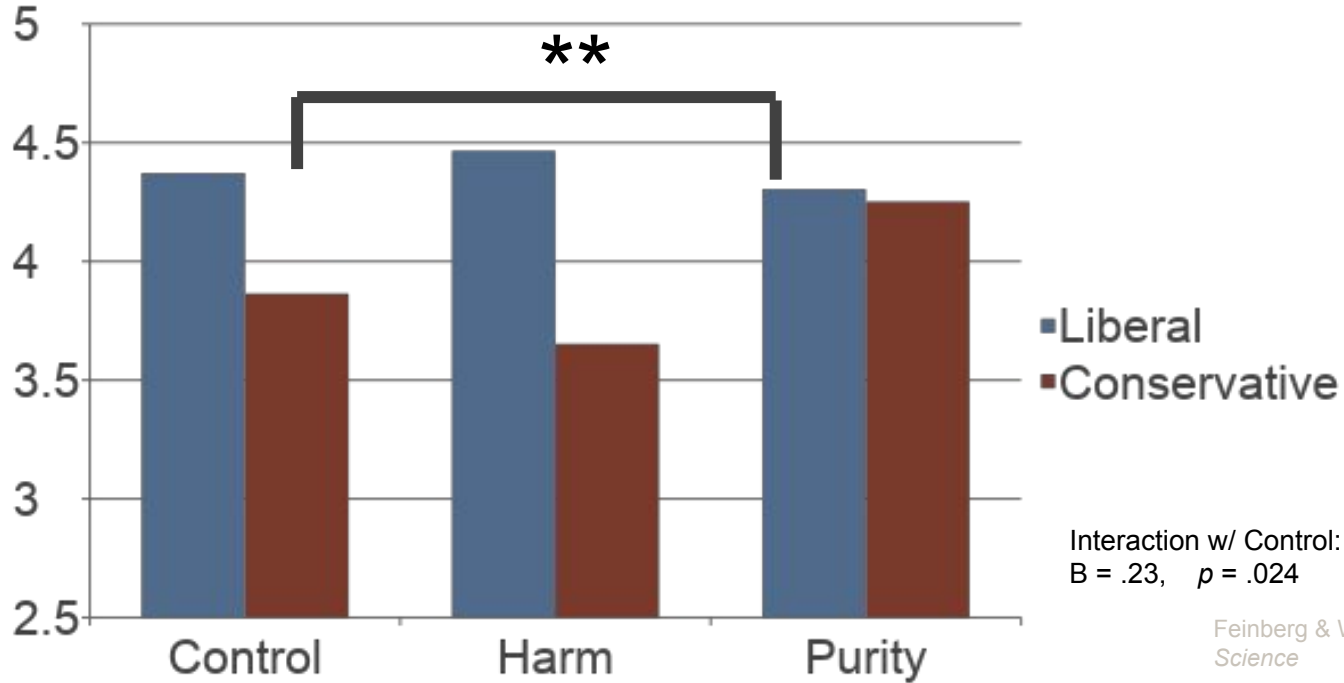
HARM MESSAGE

- Dumping of waste and chemicals into our lakes and seas has resulted in the deaths of billions of fish and other sea life.
- The result is barren soil across the world, making it harder to produce food, resulting in famine and starvation.



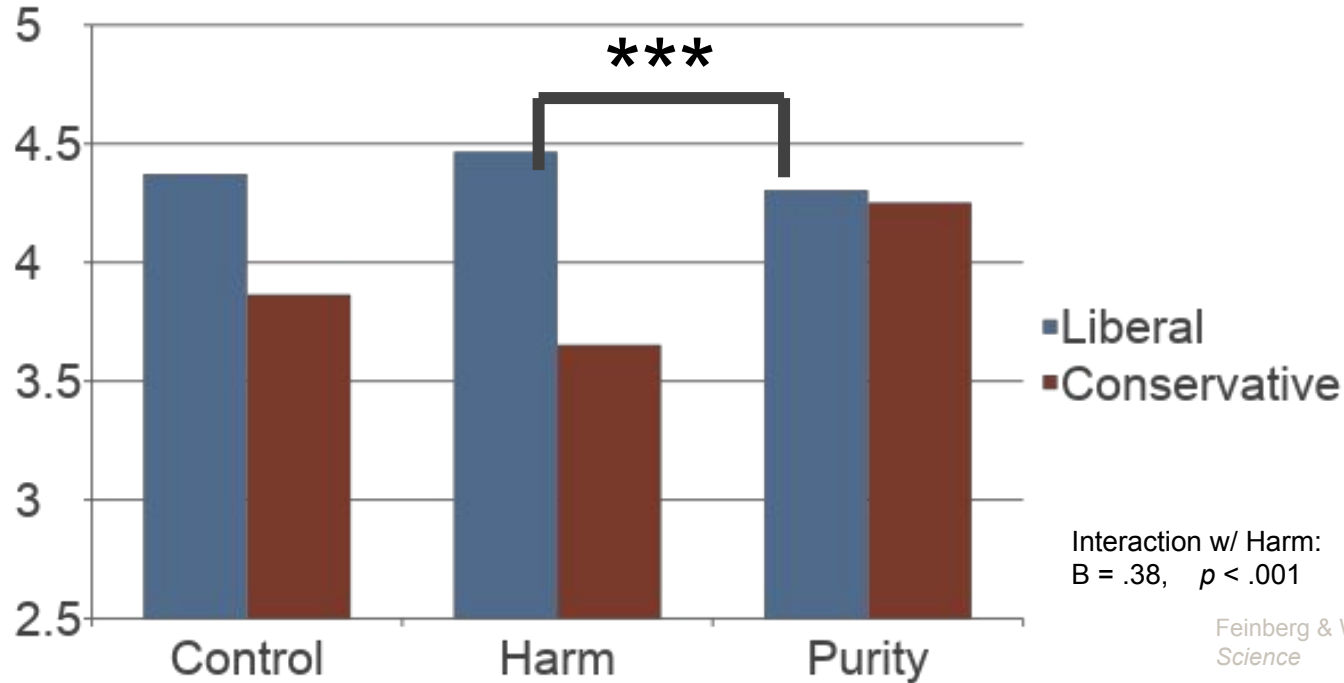
PURITY MESSAGE

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



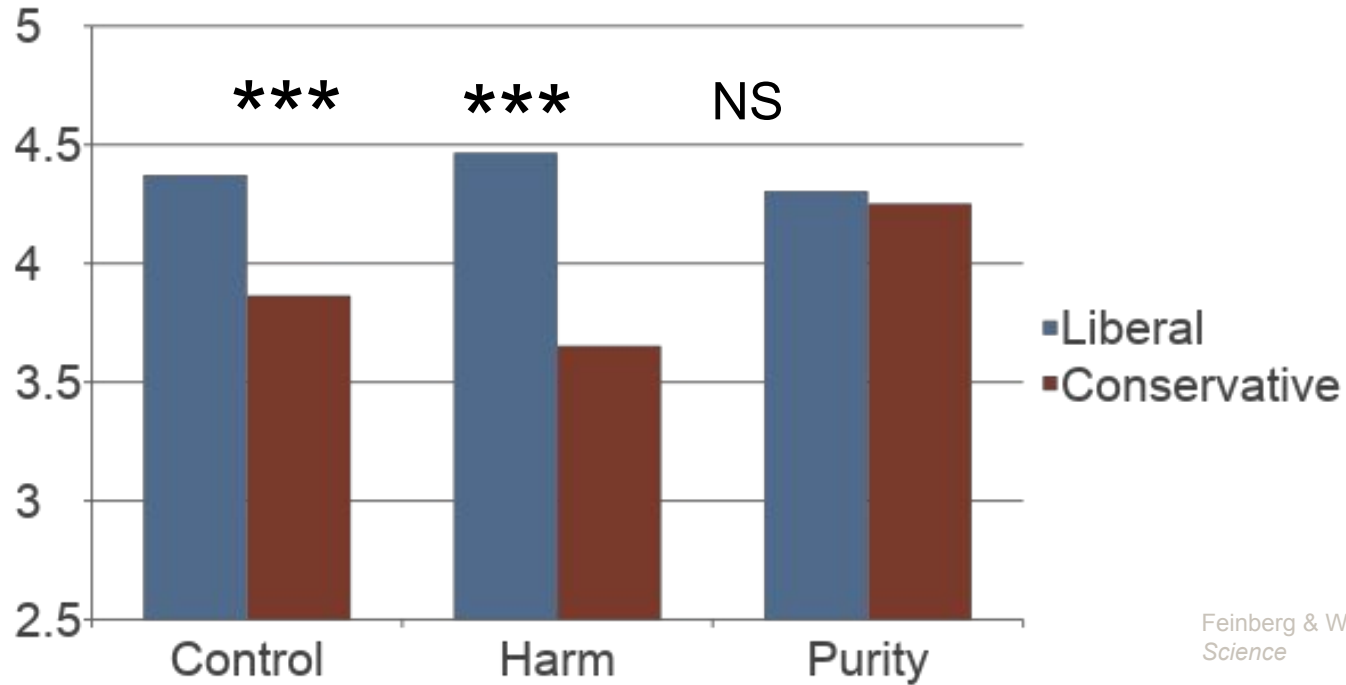
Feinberg & Willer. (2013). *Psych Science*

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



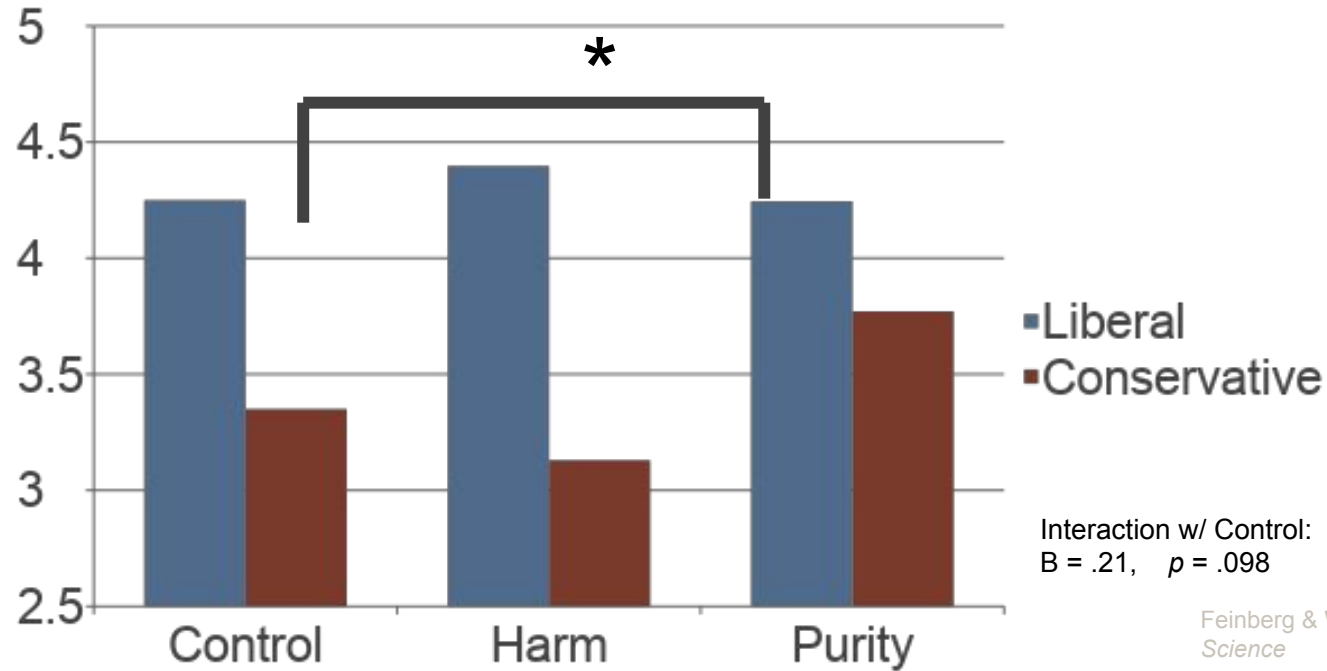
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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



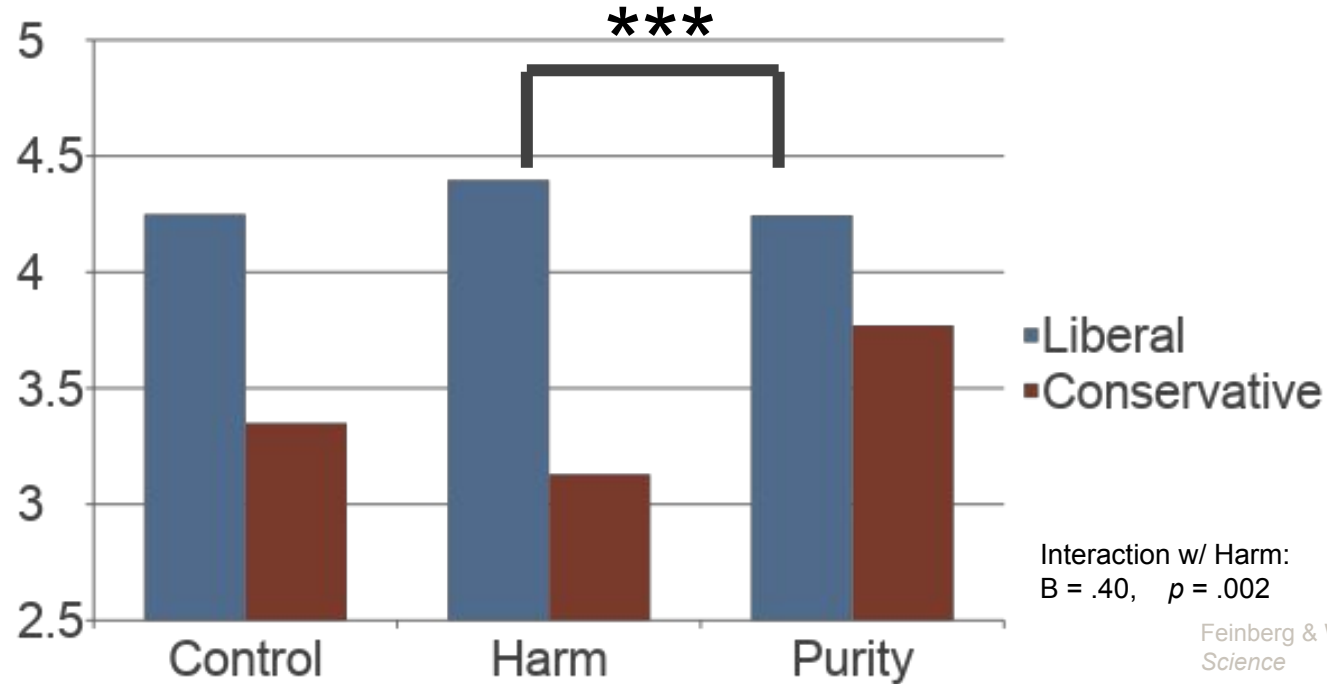
Feinberg & Willer. (2013). *Psych Science*

GLOBAL WARMING CONCERN



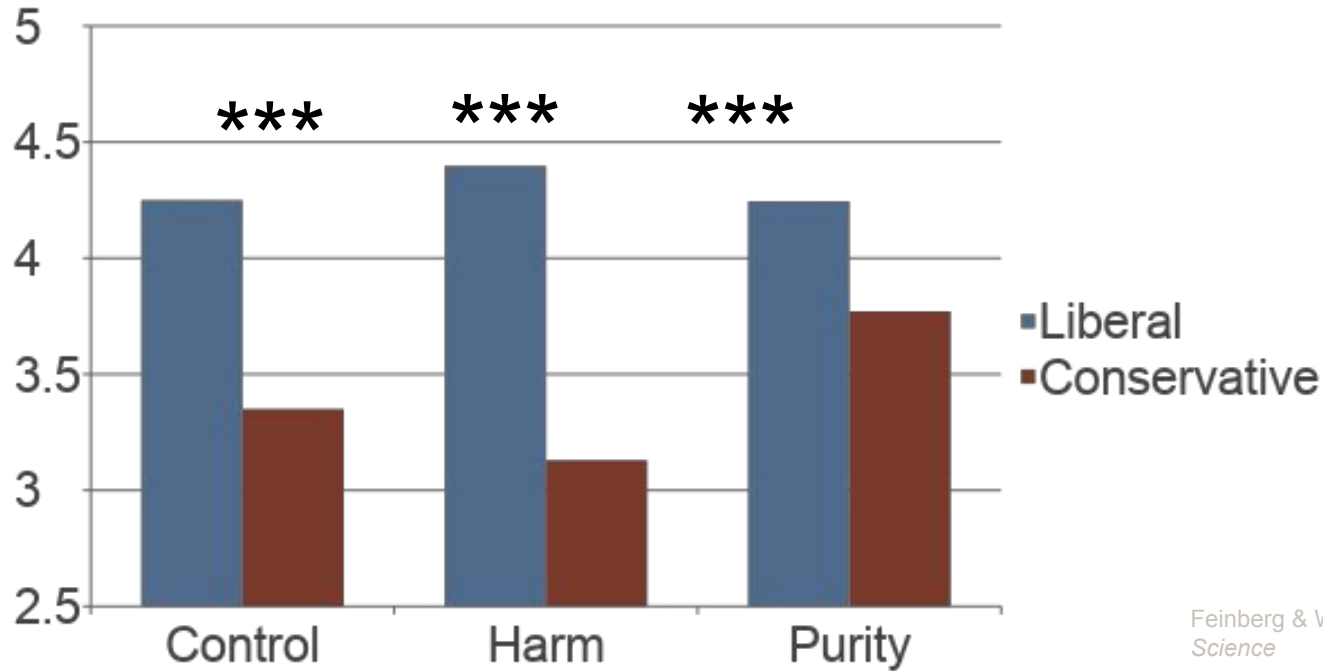
Feinberg & Willer. (2013). *Psych Science*

GLOBAL WARMING CONCERN



Feinberg & Willer. (2013). *Psych Science*

GLOBAL WARMING CONCERN



Feinberg & Willer. (2013). *Psych Science*

ISSUE

MORAL VALUE

Same-Sex Marriage



Patriotism

National Health Insurance



Purity

Military Spending



Equality

Official English



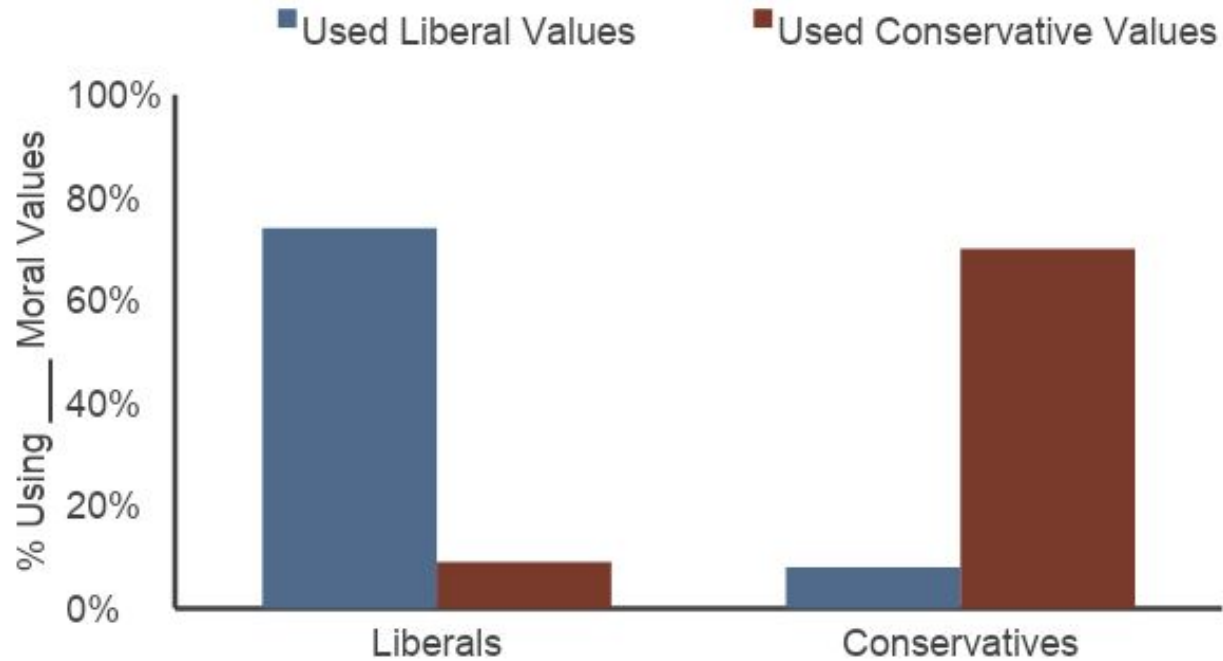
Equality

BLAISE PASCAL, *PENSEES* (1669)

“It is necessary to have regard to the person whom we wish to persuade...what principles he acknowledges...and then observe in the thing in question what affinity it has with the acknowledged principles.”

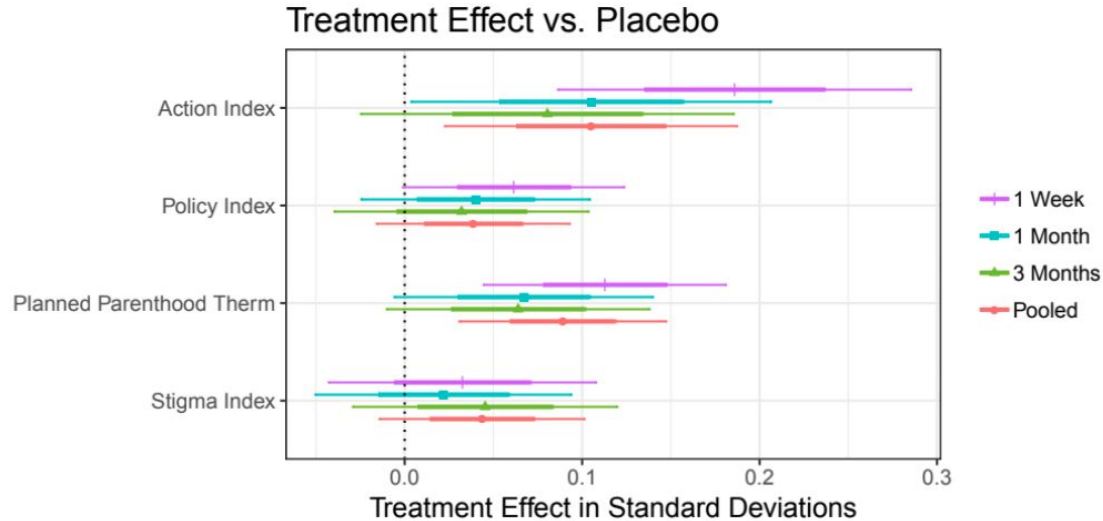


HOW DO PEOPLE PERSUADE?



COMBINING TECHNIQUES: ABORTION ATTITUDES

Figure 1: Effect of Canvass on Abortion Attitudes



RECAP TECHNIQUES

01



Active Listening

02



Perspective
Sharing

03



Moral Reframing

THANK YOU



Jan Voelkel



Matthew Feinberg



Chrystal Redekopp



James Chu



Luiza Santos



Sophia Pink



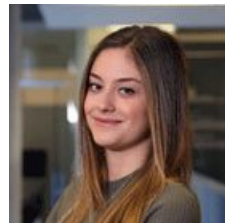
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