

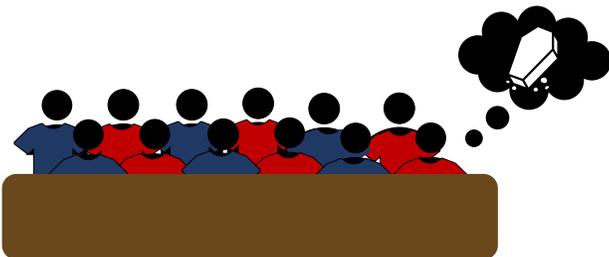
Terror Management and Partisanship at Trial: The Effect of Mortality Salience and Partisanship on Mock Juror Judgments

Alexis Hardy^{1,2} and Michael Leippe¹

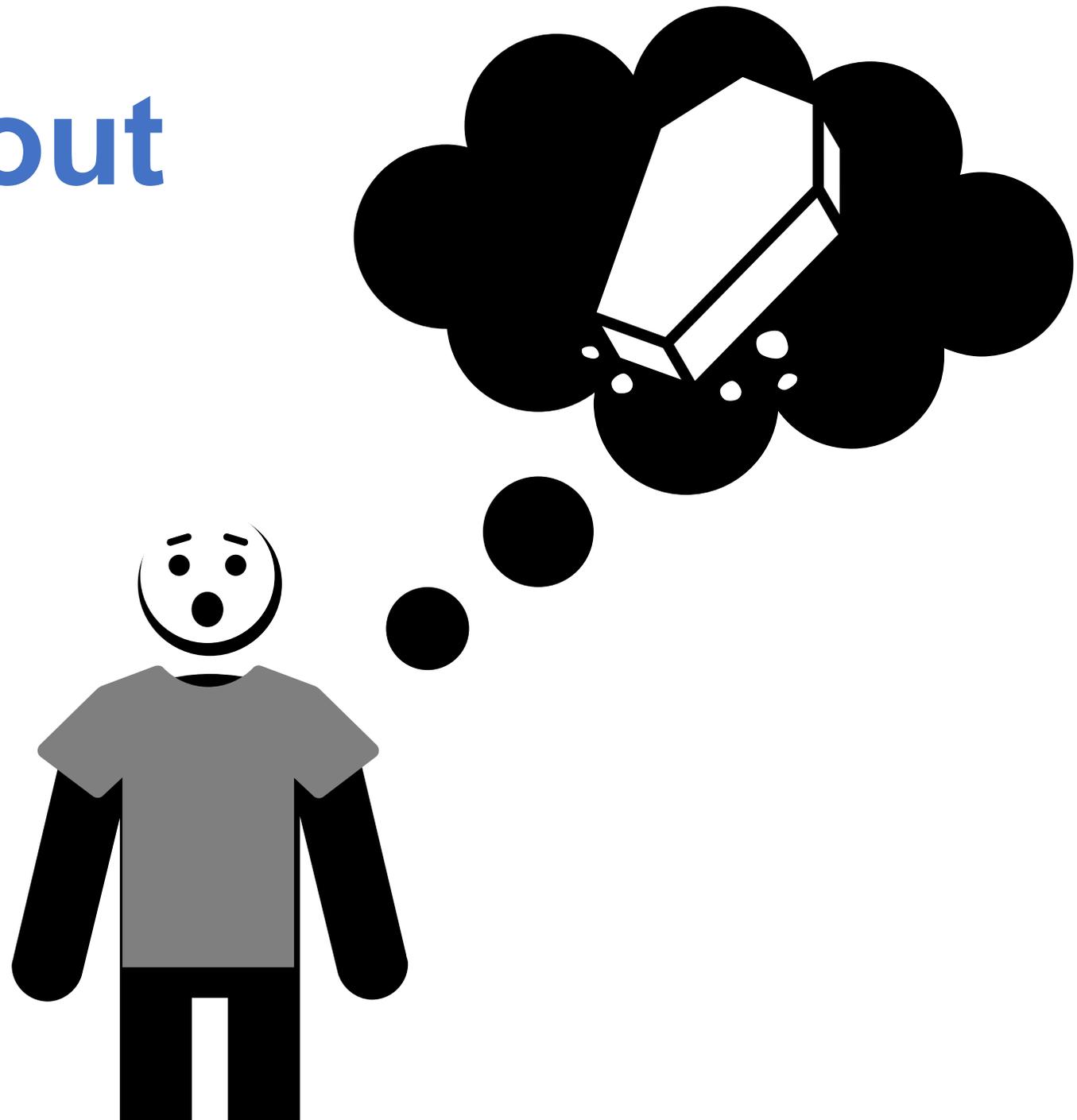
ASTC Regional Conference

The Graduate Center, The City University of New York¹

John Jay College of Criminal Justice, The City University of New York²

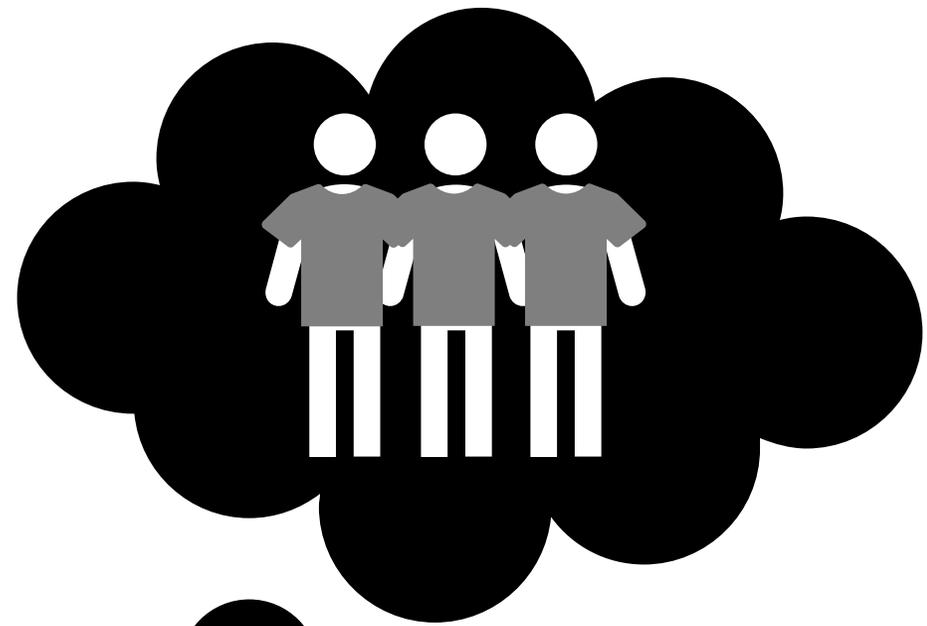
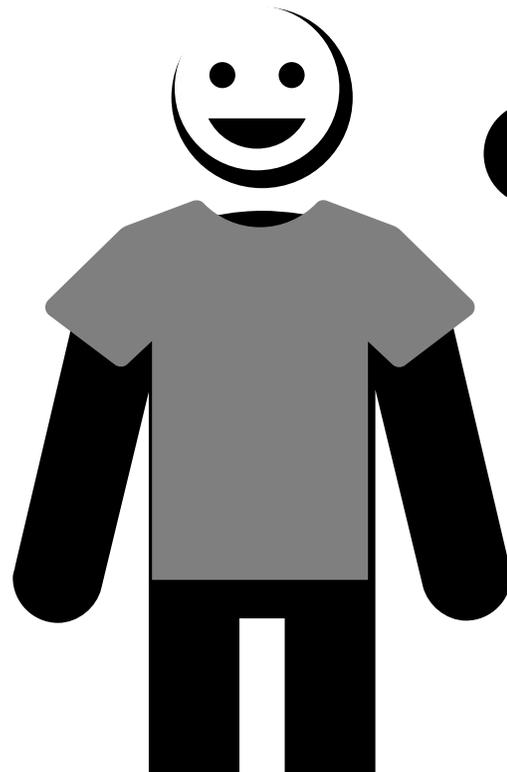


Anxiety about death...



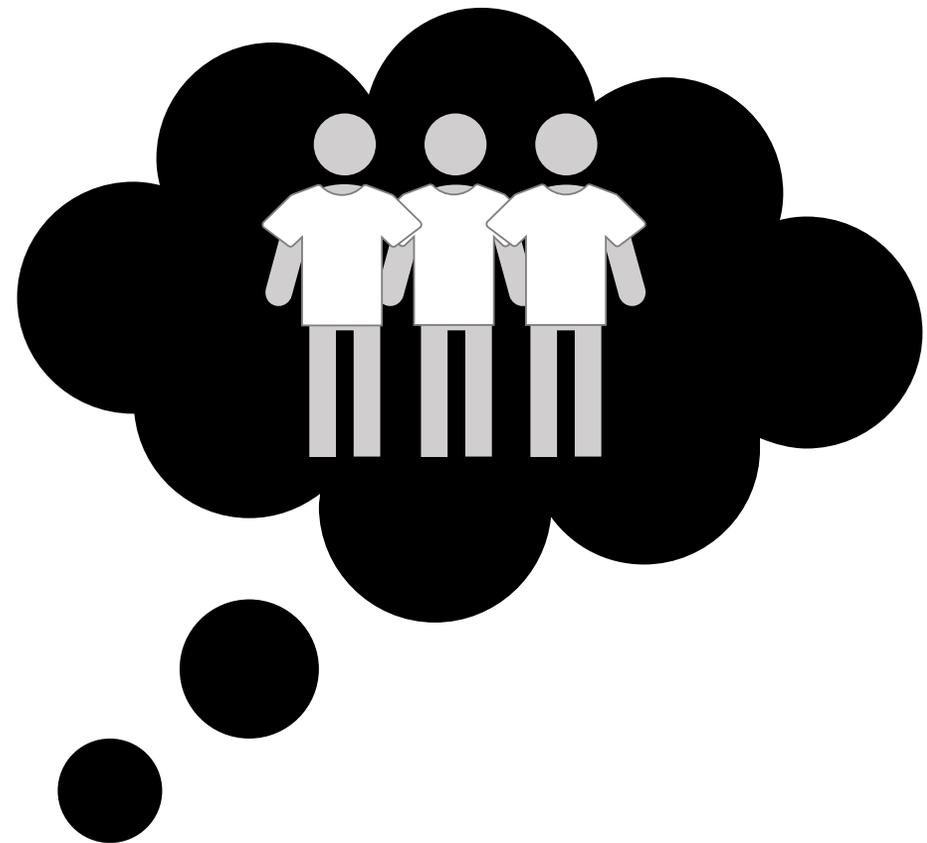
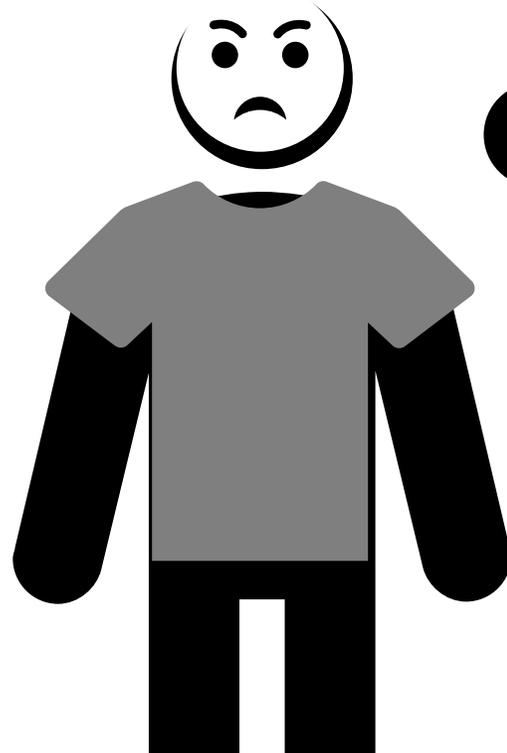
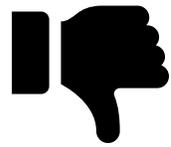
Pyszczynski et al. (2015)

Ingroup favoritism



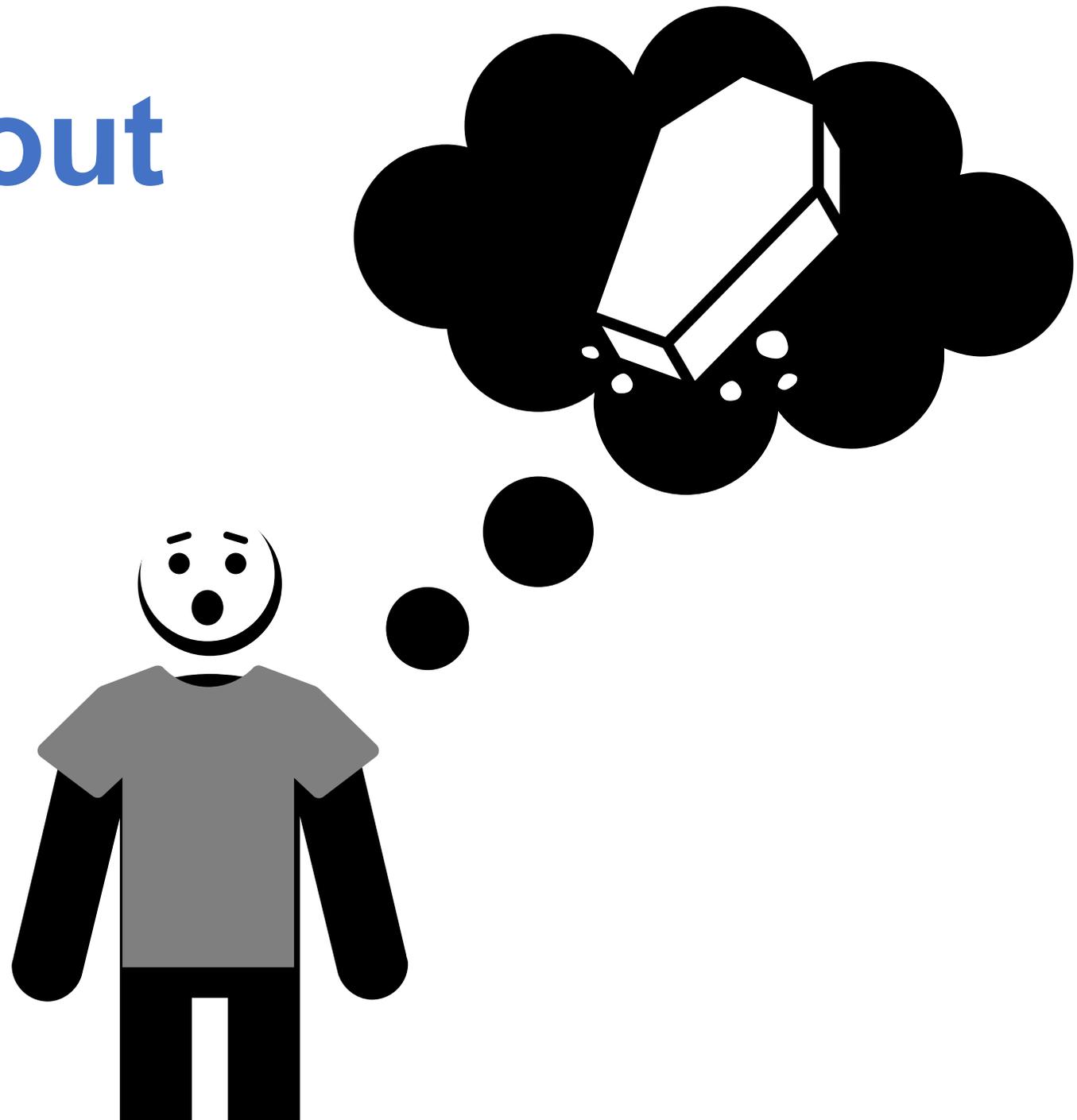
Pyszczynski et al. (2015)

Outgroup discrimination

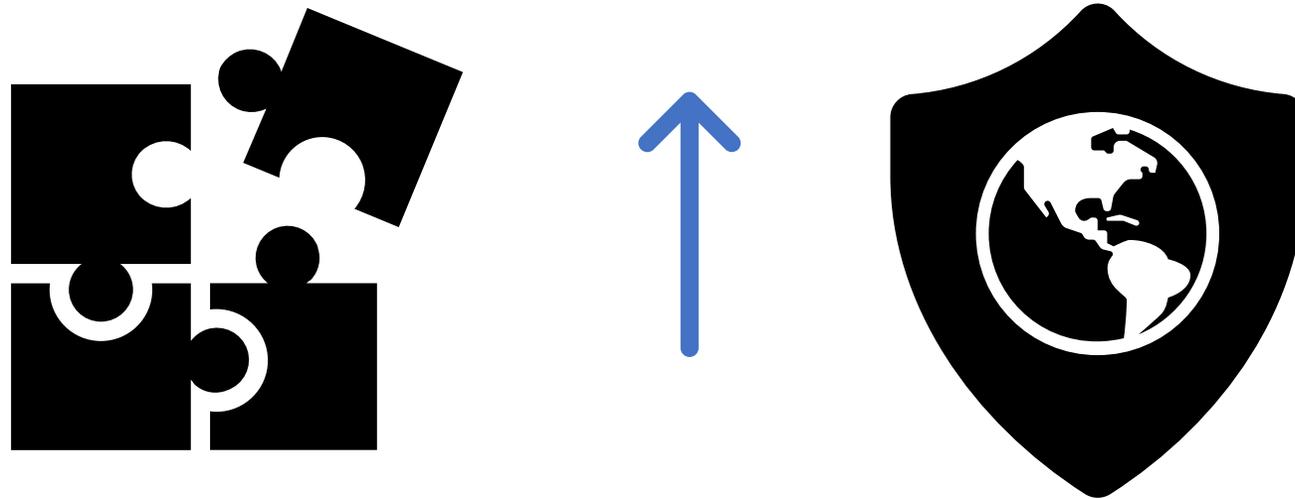


Pyszczynski et al. (2015)

Anxiety about death...



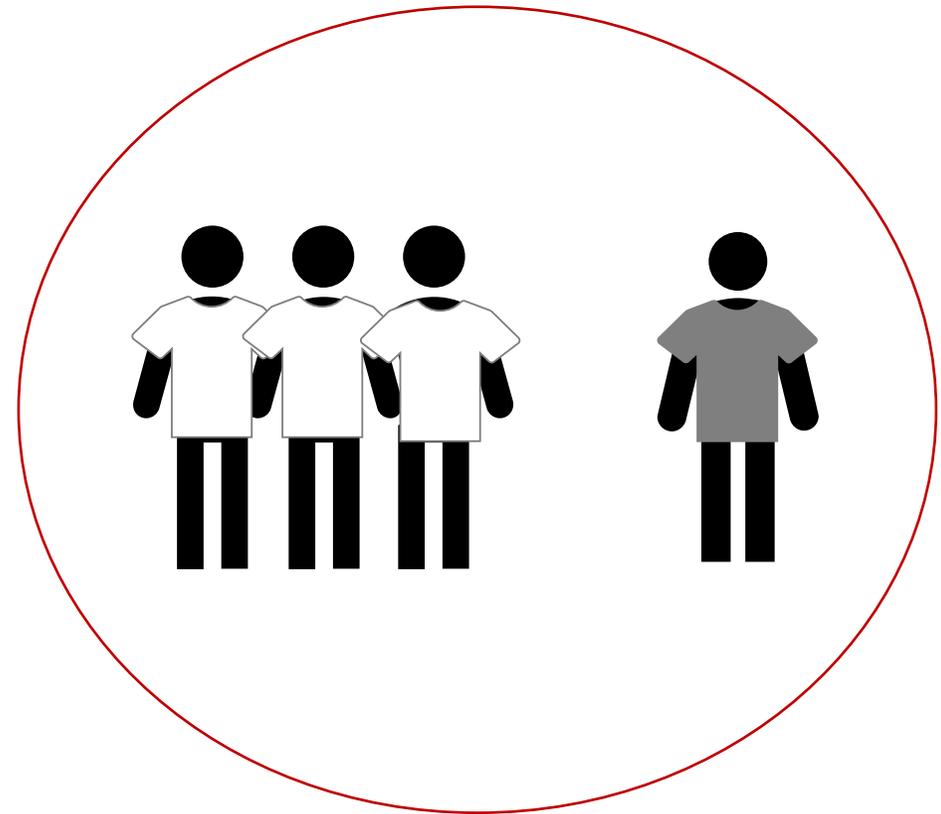
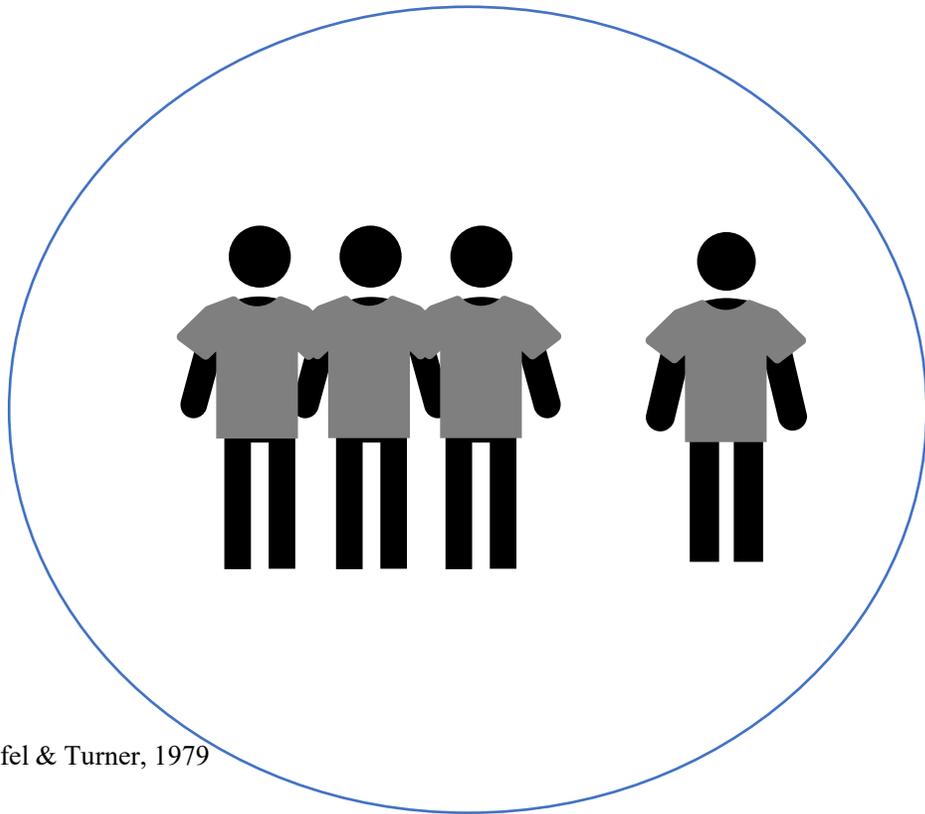
Terror Management Theory posits that **violations and threats** against one's own symbolic immortality **amplifies anxiety**, enhancing the need to protect one's cultural worldview and self-esteem



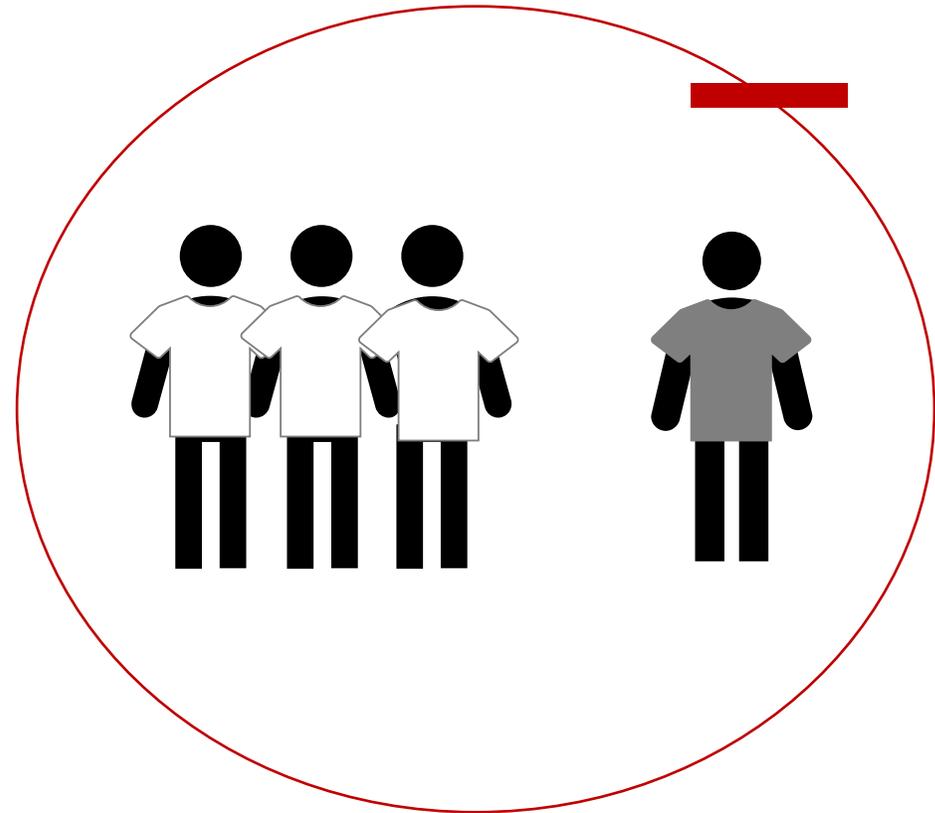
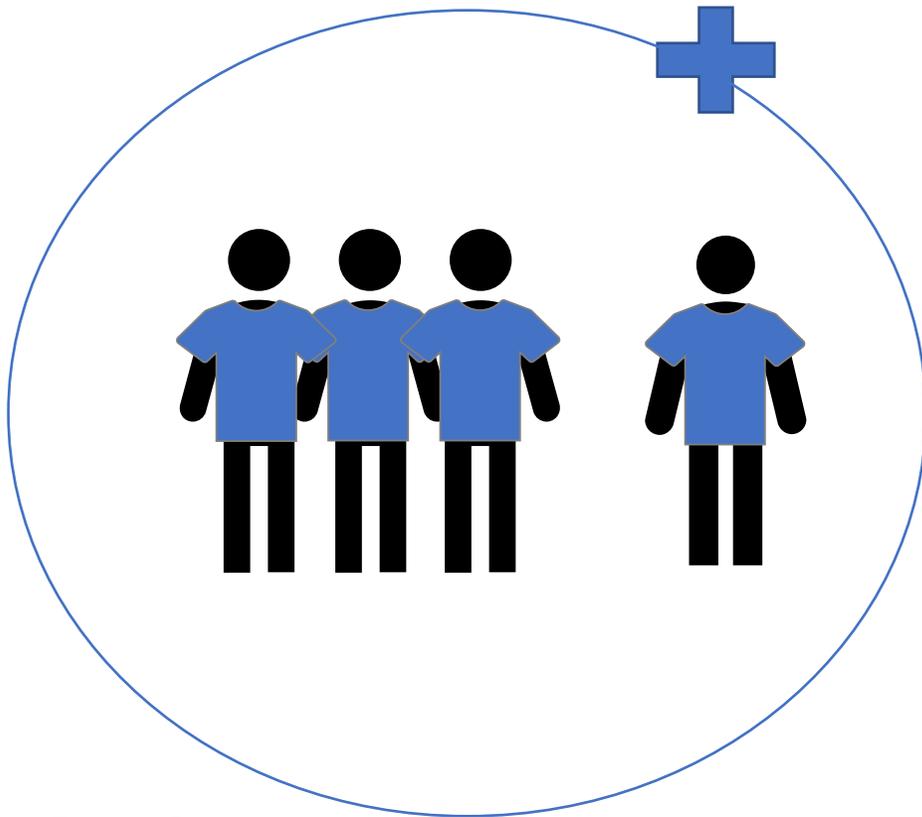
This world view protection often manifests in ways that promote contact and validation from others who hold similar world views and dismissal or avoidance of those who hold different world views, thus creating an anxiety buffer



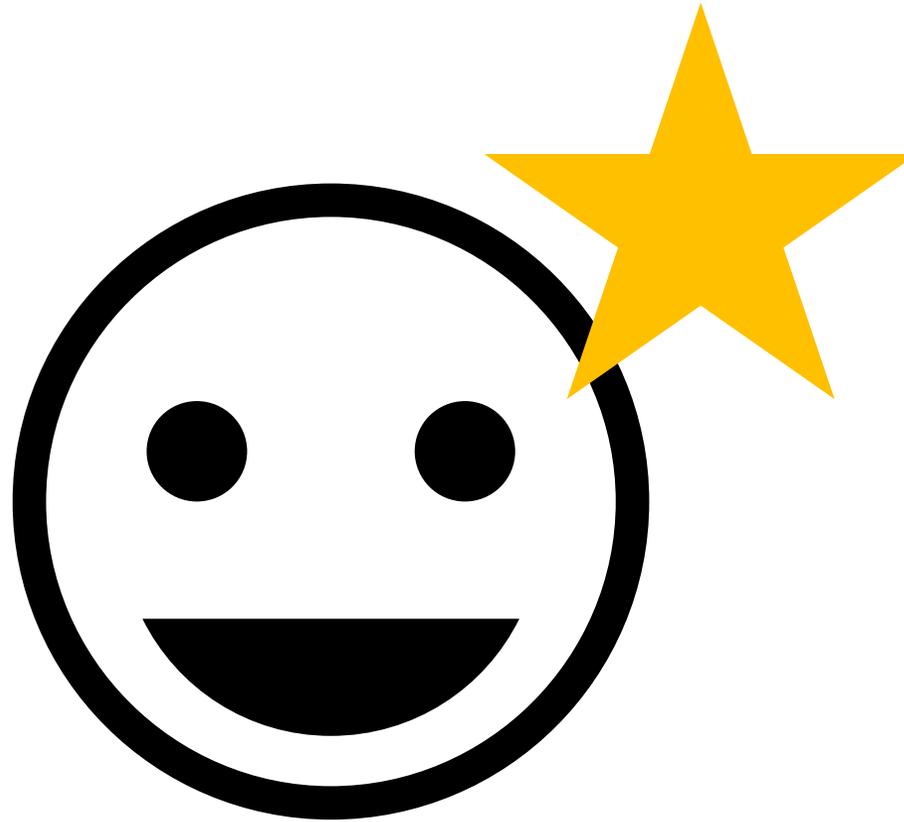
Social groups allows us to categorize other individuals in such a way that separates them into part of our “ingroup” (us) or part of an “outgroup” (them).



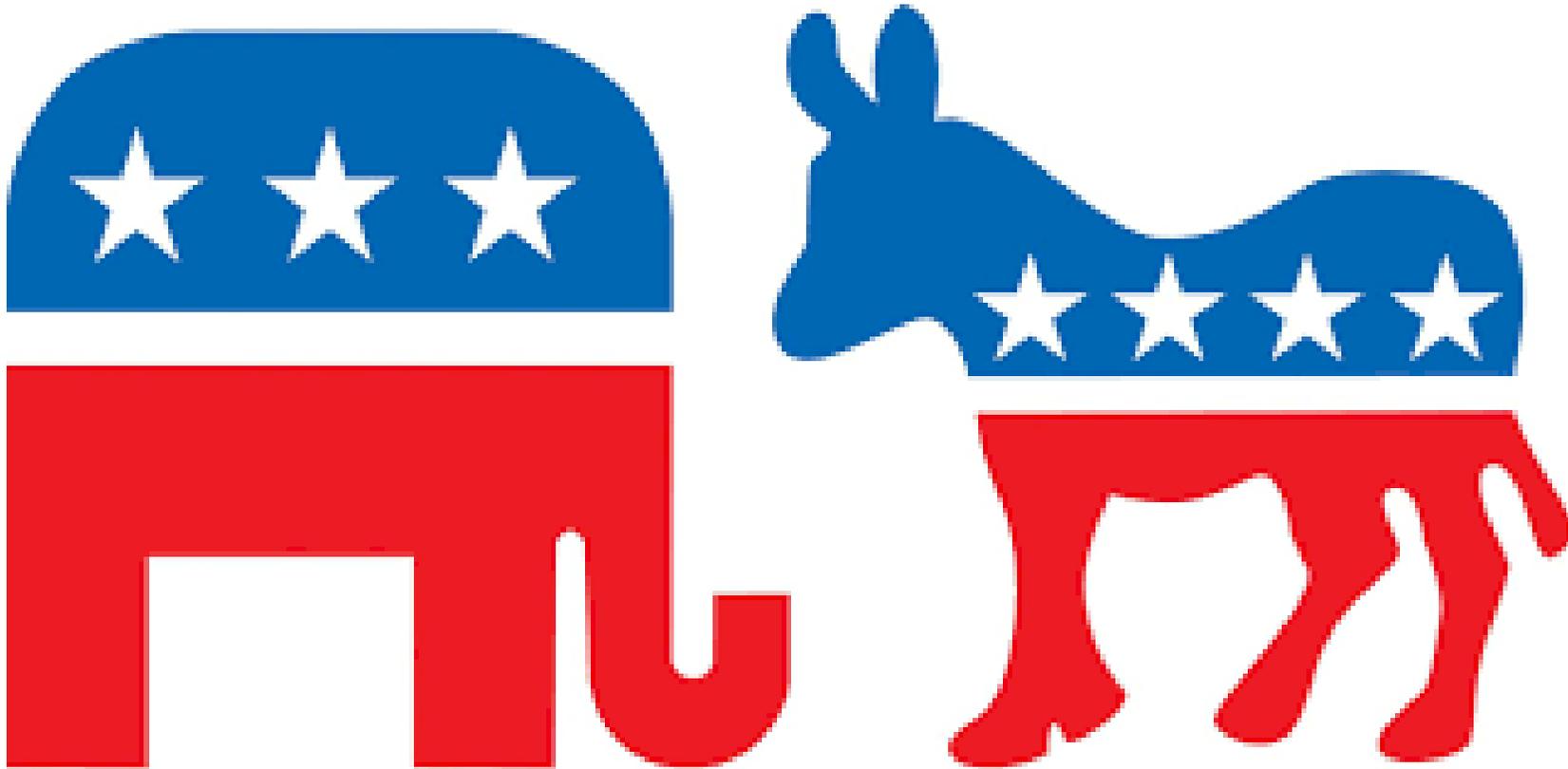
This enables individuals to emphasize **negative** aspects of outgroup members and **positive** aspects about ingroup members



Bolsters self esteem



Political party is a clear example of group membership

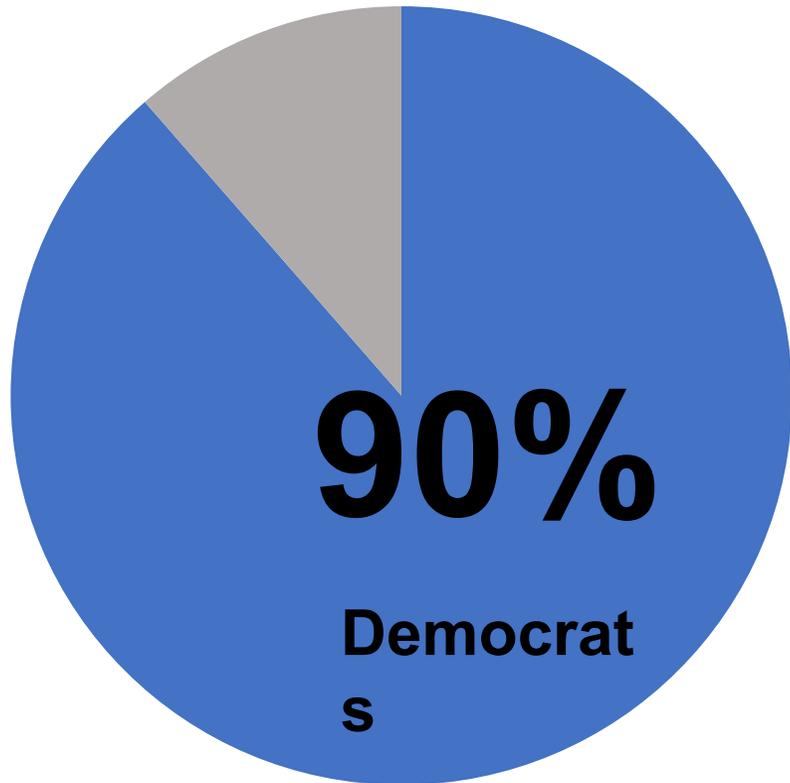


Greene (1999)

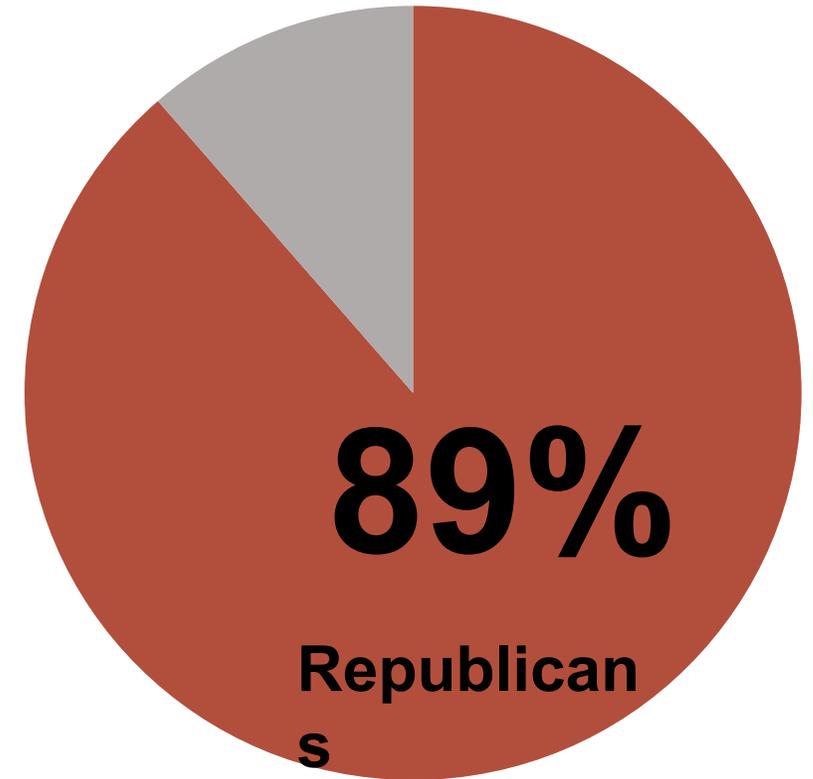


**Exposure to mortality salience
increases feelings of polarization
and intensifies moral differences
between liberals and
conservatives**

Tension and animosity between the two major parties in the United States continues to worsen



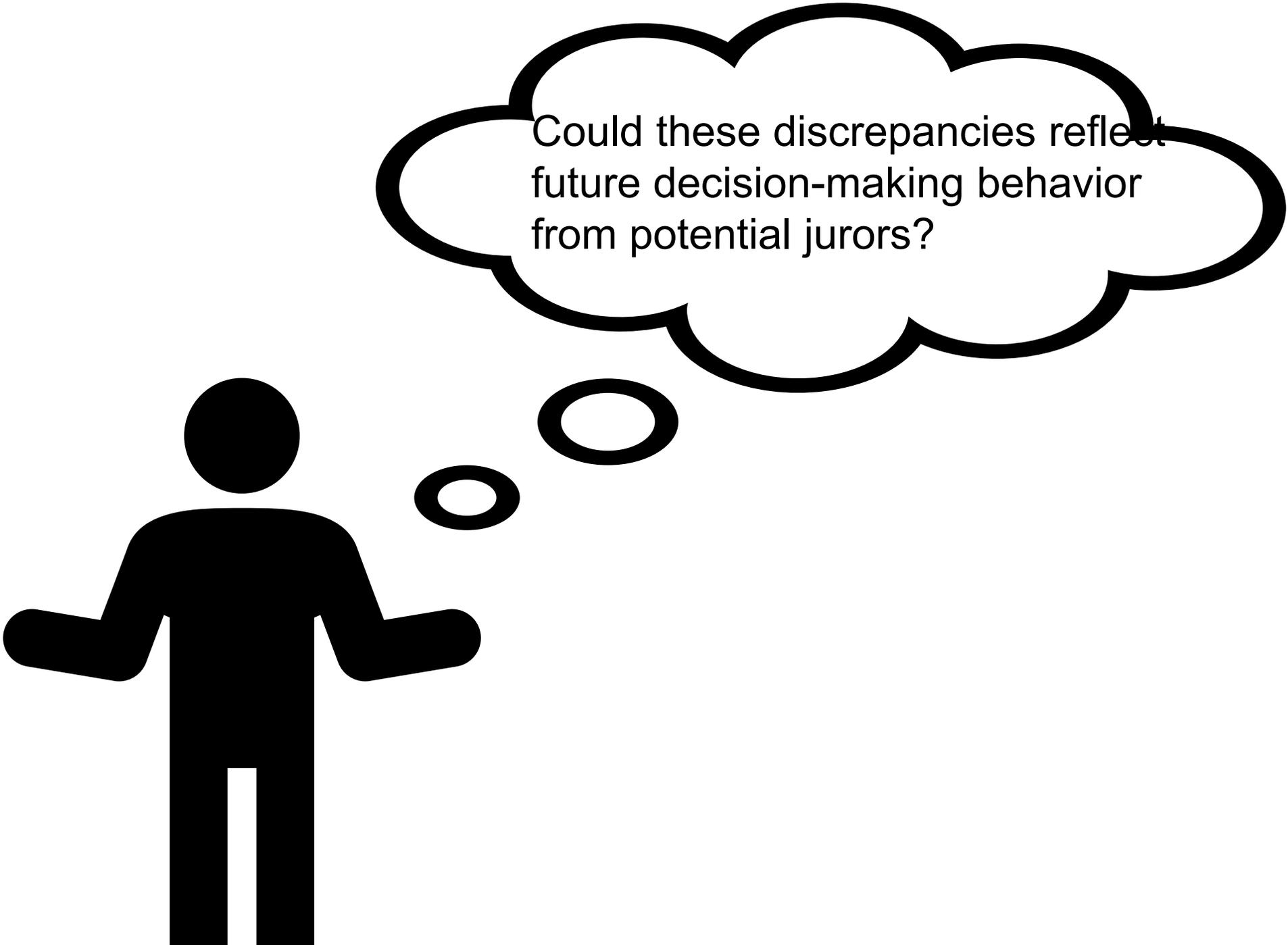
The United States would suffer from irreversible and lasting harm





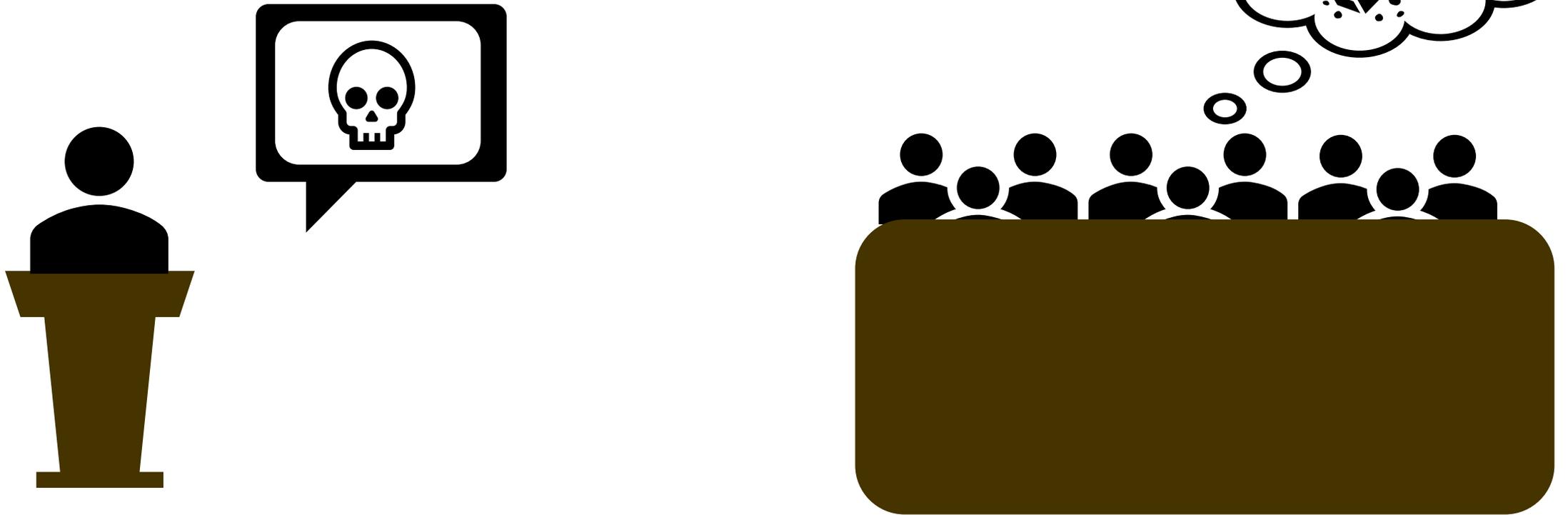
There are **discrepancies** in how each party views the impending **prosecution** of the insurrectionists.

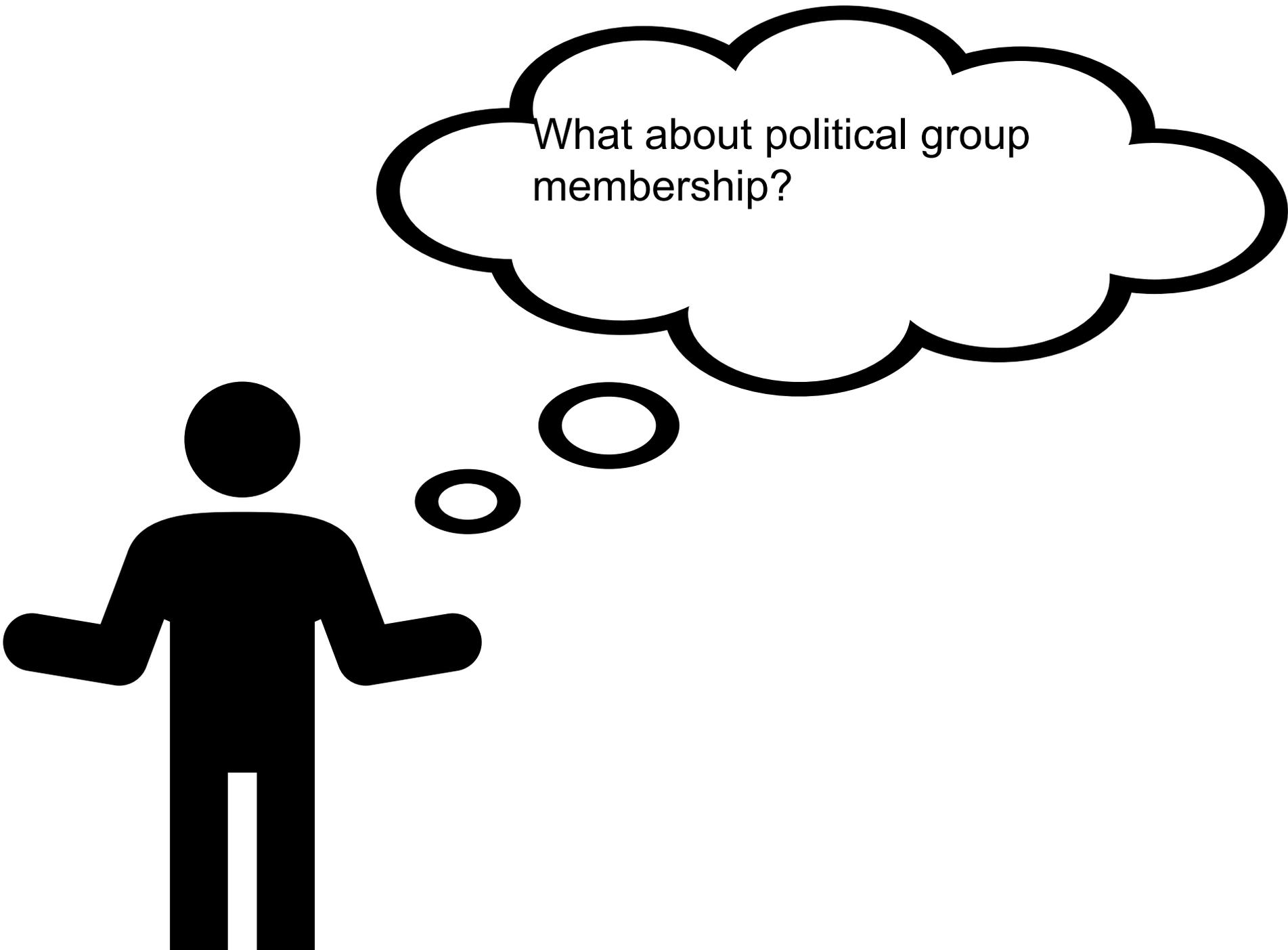
Pew Research (2021)

A black silhouette of a person is shown in profile, facing right. The person's right arm is raised, and their hand is positioned near a series of three circles that lead to a large, cloud-shaped thought bubble. The thought bubble contains the text: "Could these discrepancies reflect future decision-making behavior from potential jurors?".

Could these discrepancies reflect
future decision-making behavior
from potential jurors?

Terror Management Theory suggests that **death imagery in a trial** can make **mortality salient** to jurors, which can have a powerful influence on their judgments





What about political group membership?

Present Research



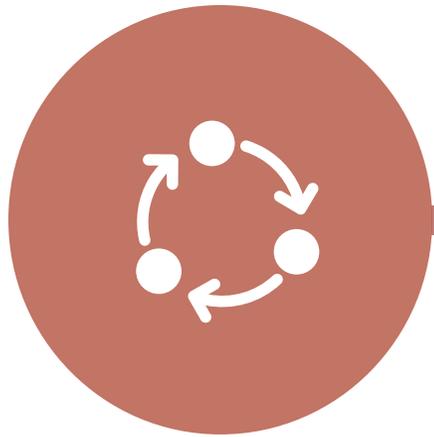


Do **political differences** between mock jurors and a defendant affect trial outcomes?

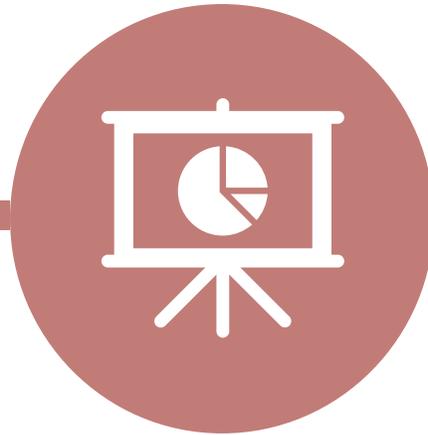
Does **mortality salience** affect trial outcomes?

Does mortality salience **exacerbate** the effects of outgroup **discrimination** at trial?

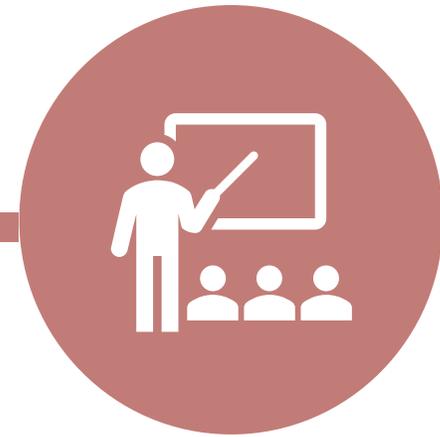
Present Study



Method

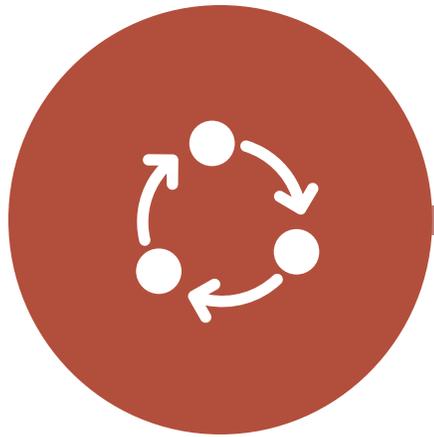


Results

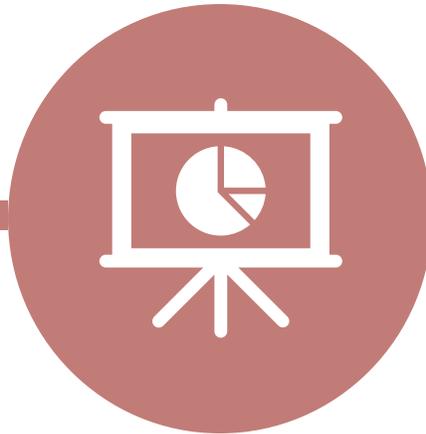


Discussion

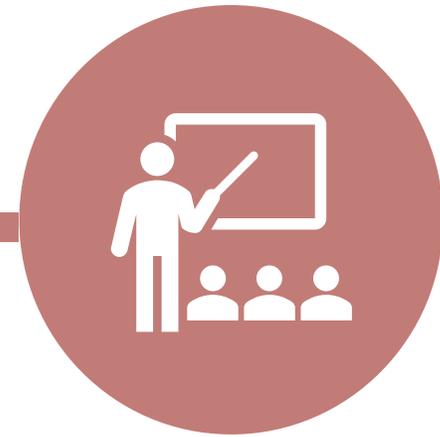
Present Study



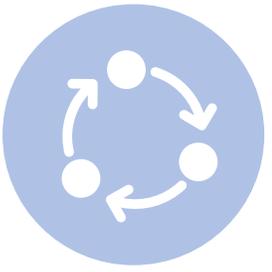
Method



Results

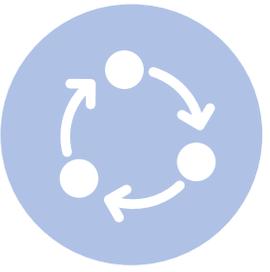


Discussion



We sampled 310 MTurk workers





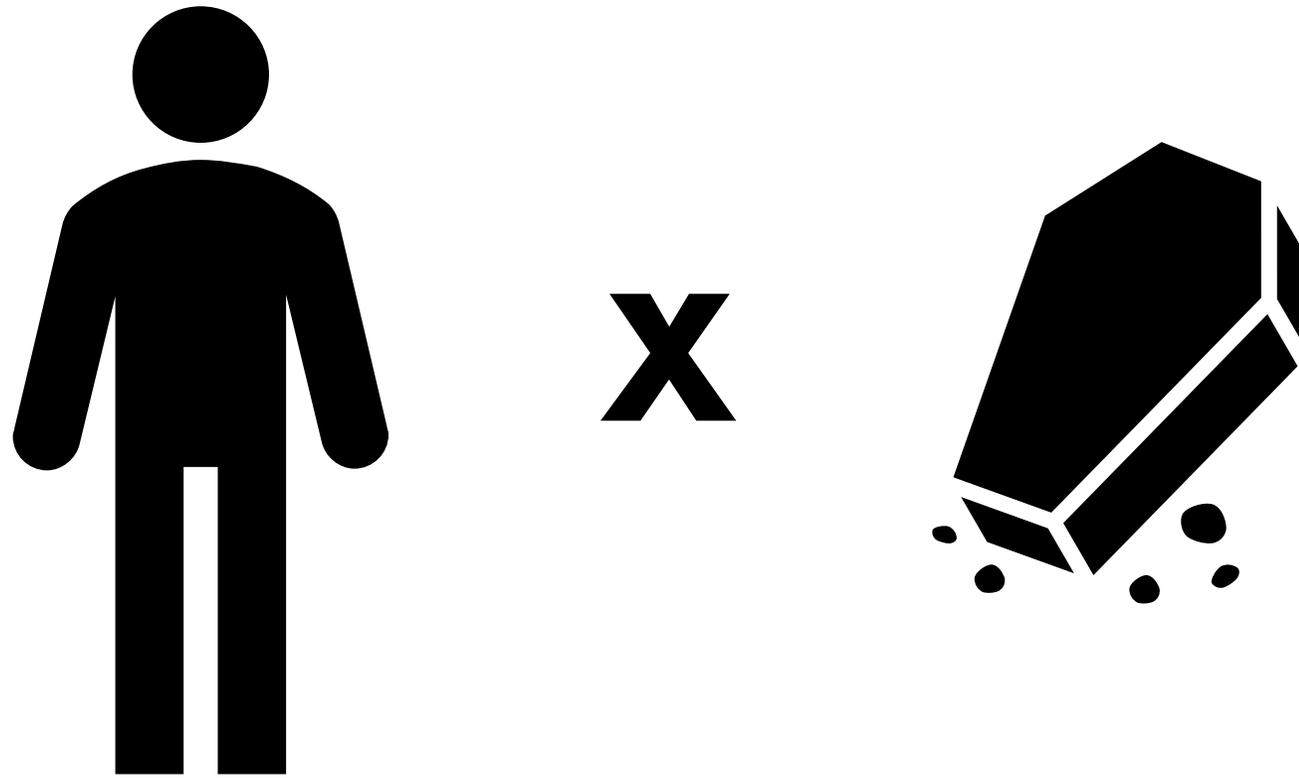
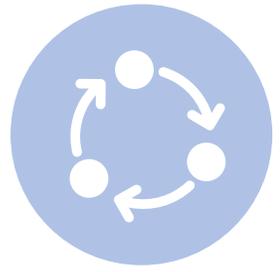
We sampled 310 MTurk workers



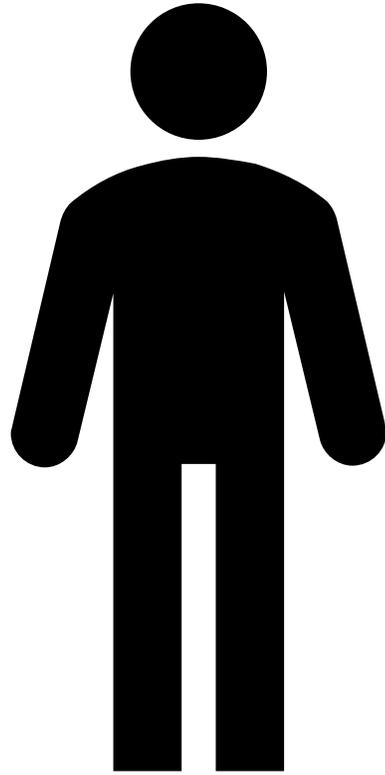
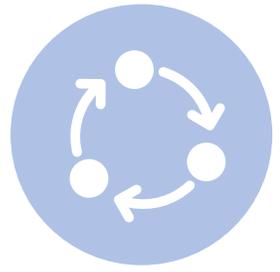
Read a mock trial transcript



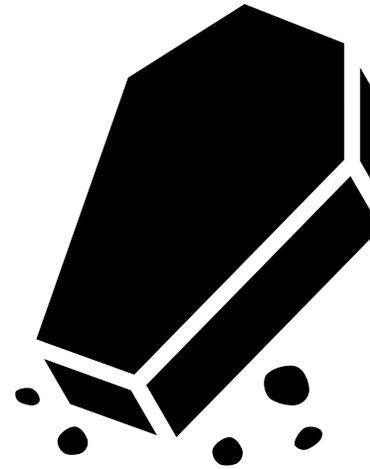
We implemented a 3 x 2 between subjects design



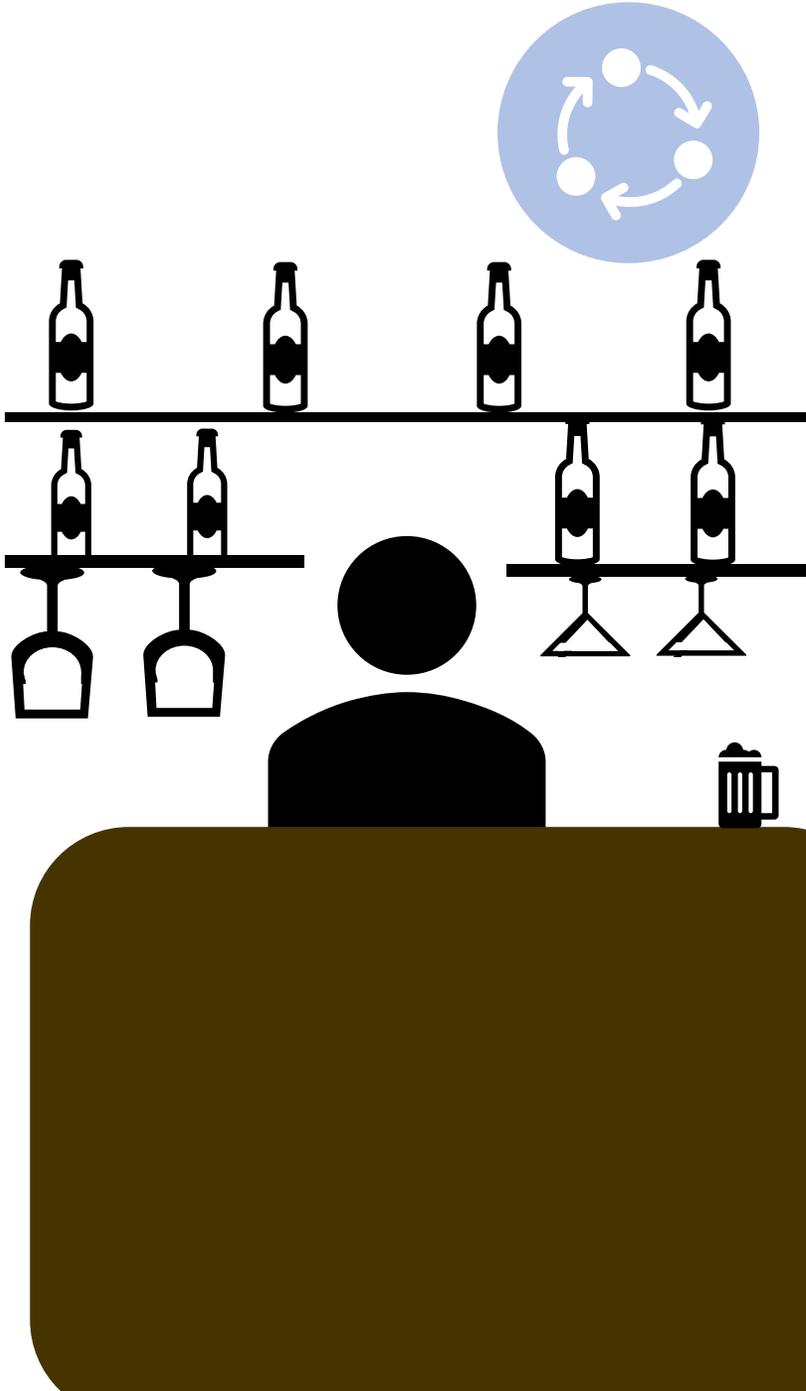
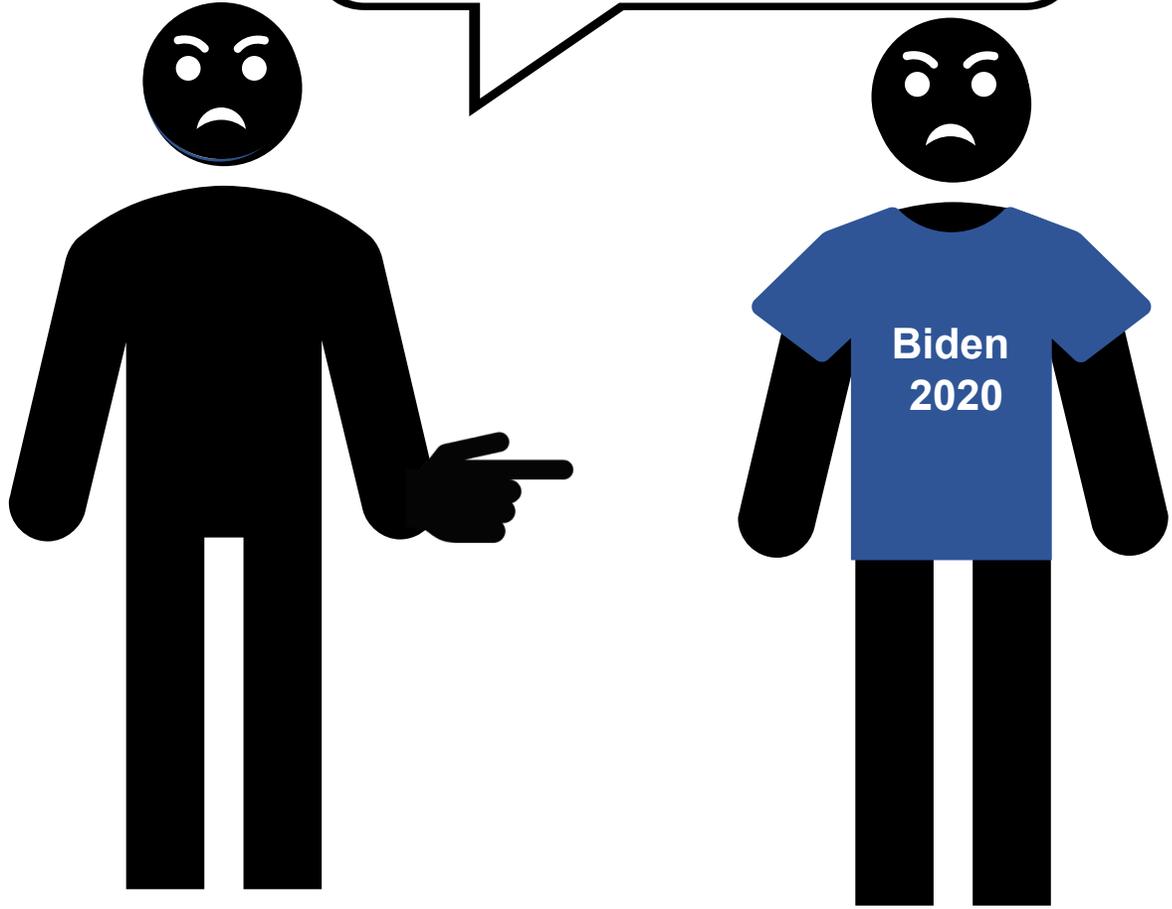
We implemented a 3 x 2 between subjects design



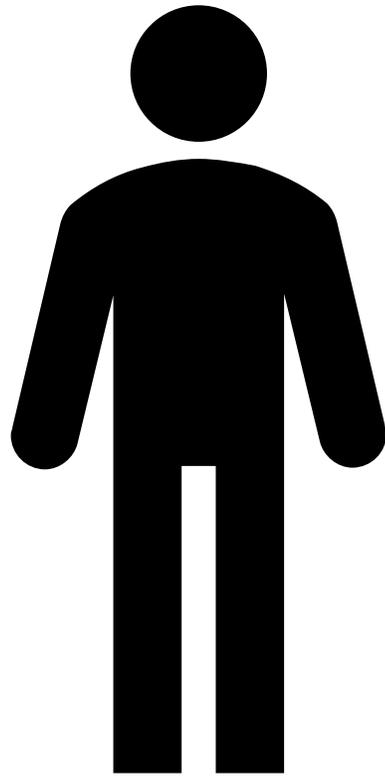
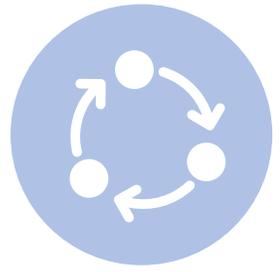
X



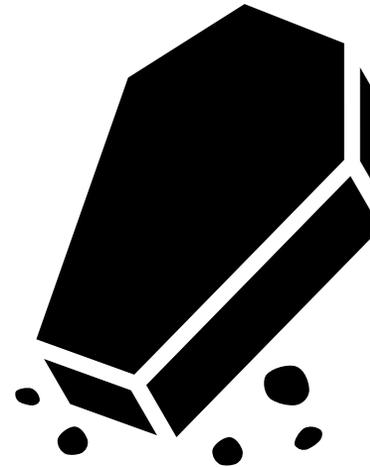
“You liberals are ruining our country! You snowflakes won’t get your way, not with Trump in office! So, go ahead and cry about it! We’ll get another four more year’s commie!”



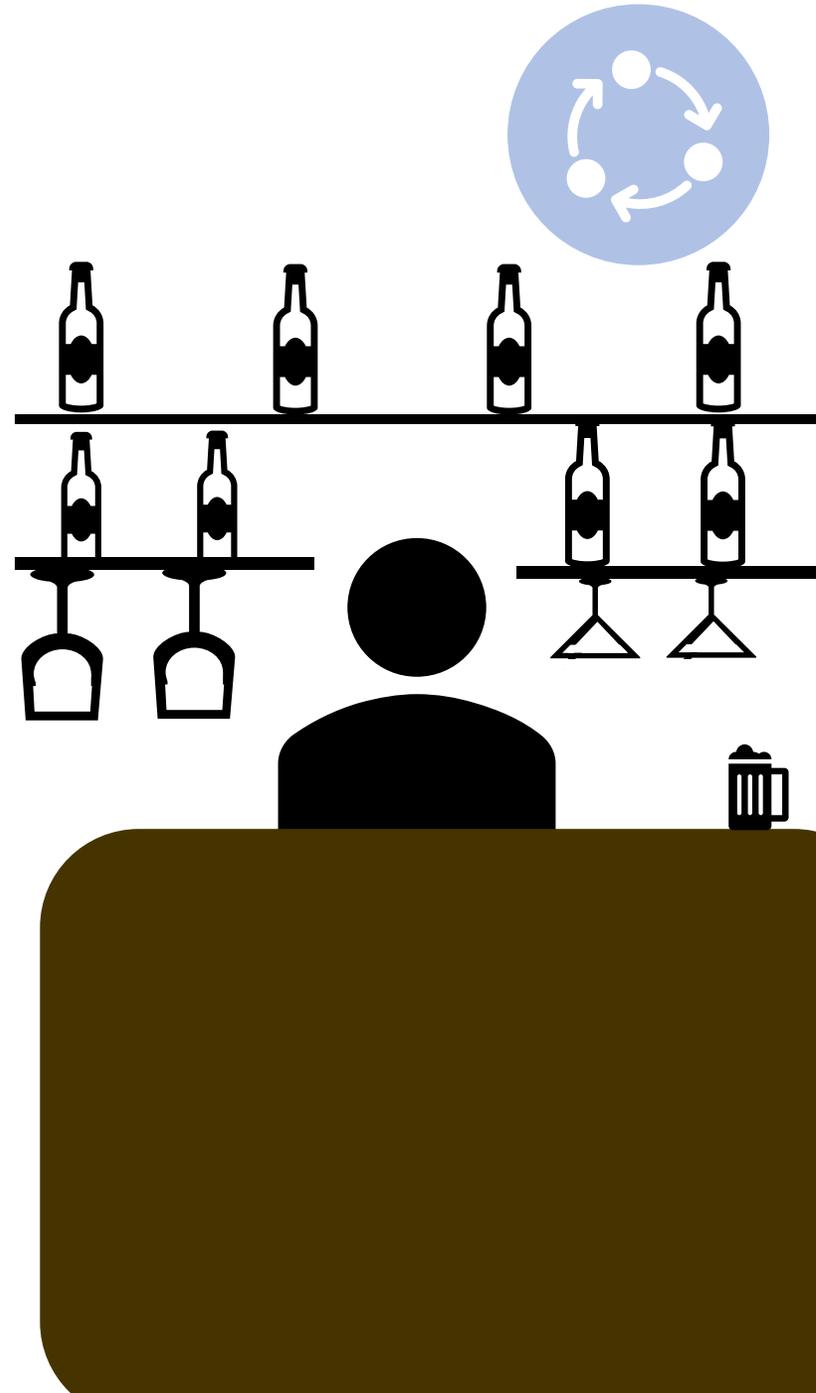
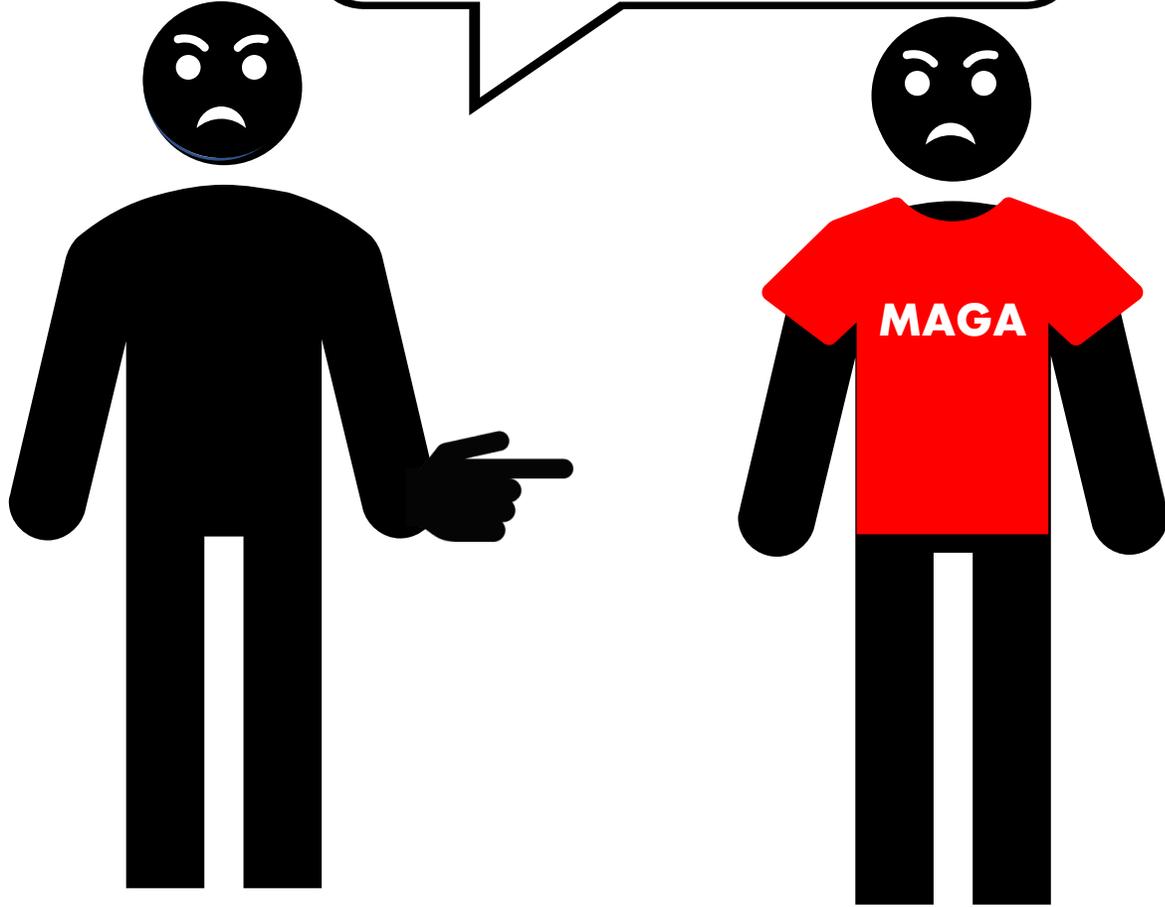
We implemented a 3 x 2 between subjects design



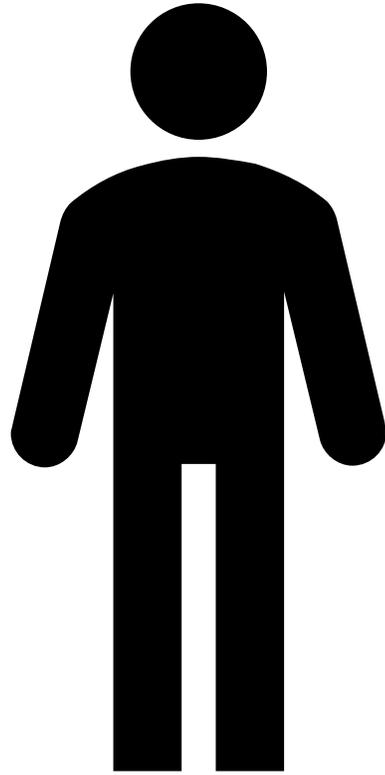
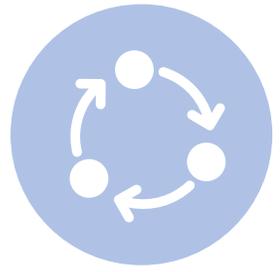
X



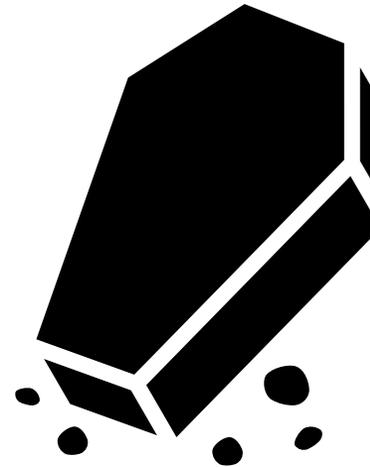
"You are a racist bootlicker who doesn't care about anyone but themselves! Your president has ruined this country! Enjoy your bigotry while it lasts!"



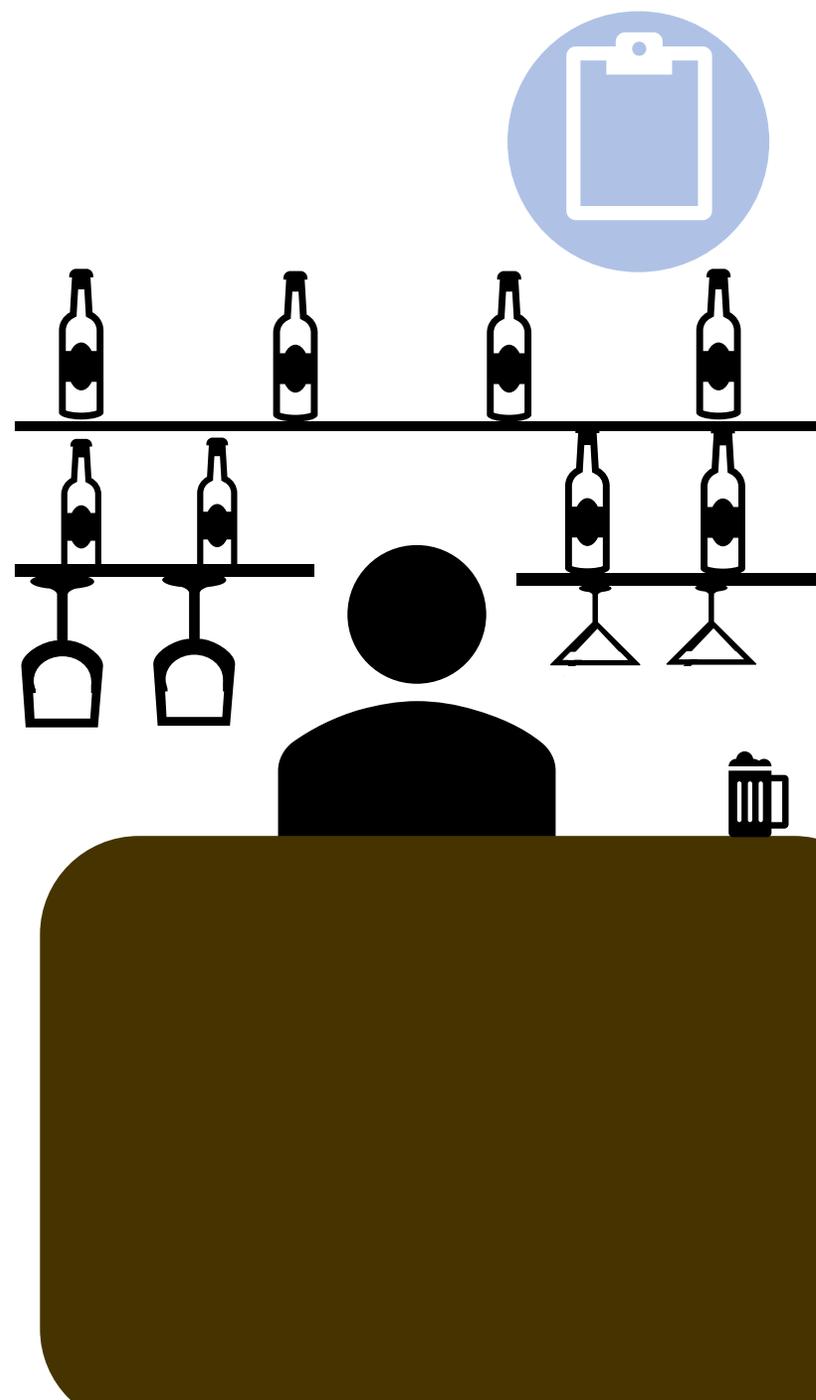
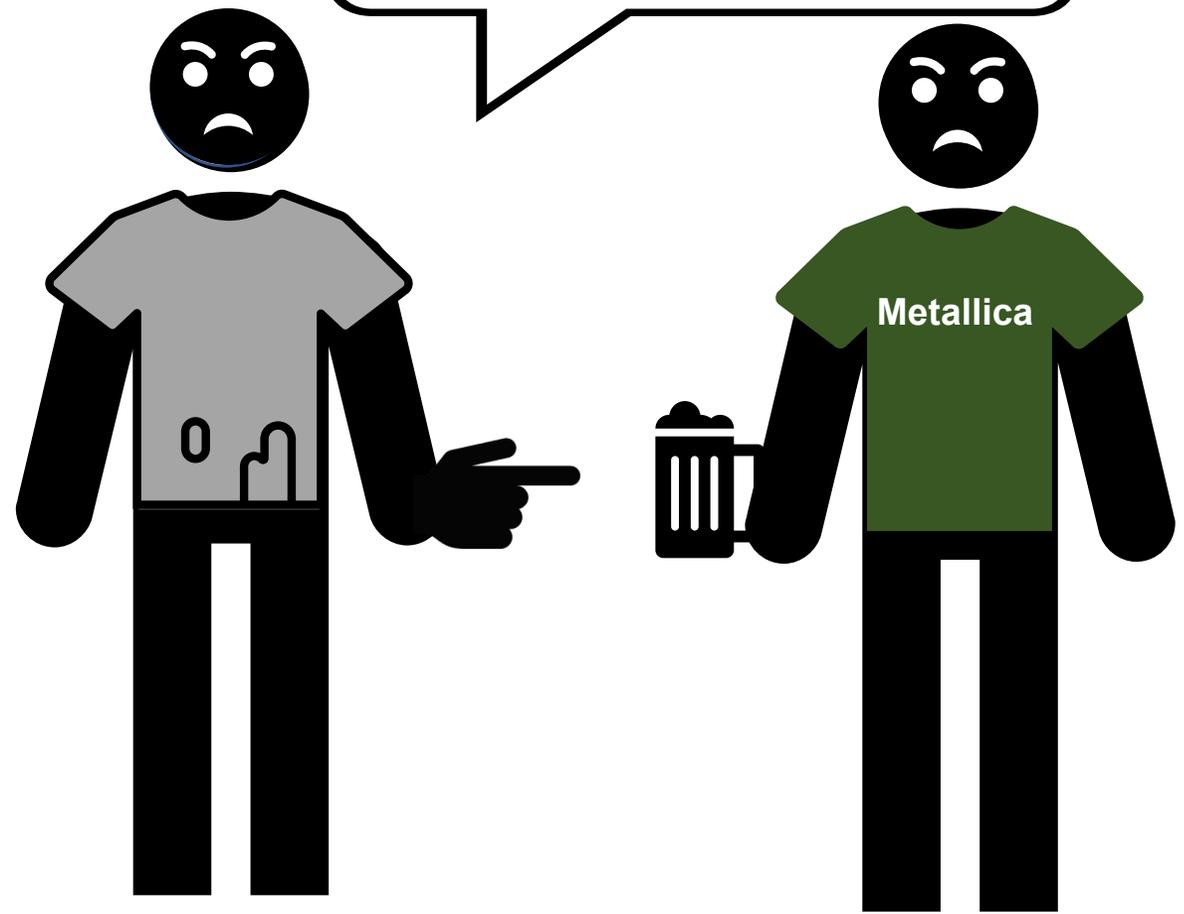
We implemented a 3 x 2 between subjects design



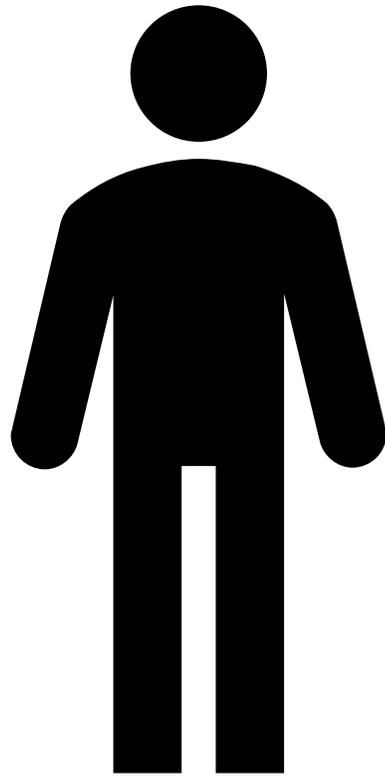
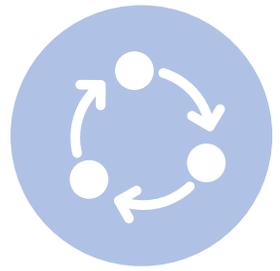
X



“Watch where you are going jerk!
Are you F-ing kidding me! This is a
new shirt! Do you have 150\$ you A-
Hole? F-You! You’re going to pay for
this!”



We implemented a 3 x 2 between subjects design

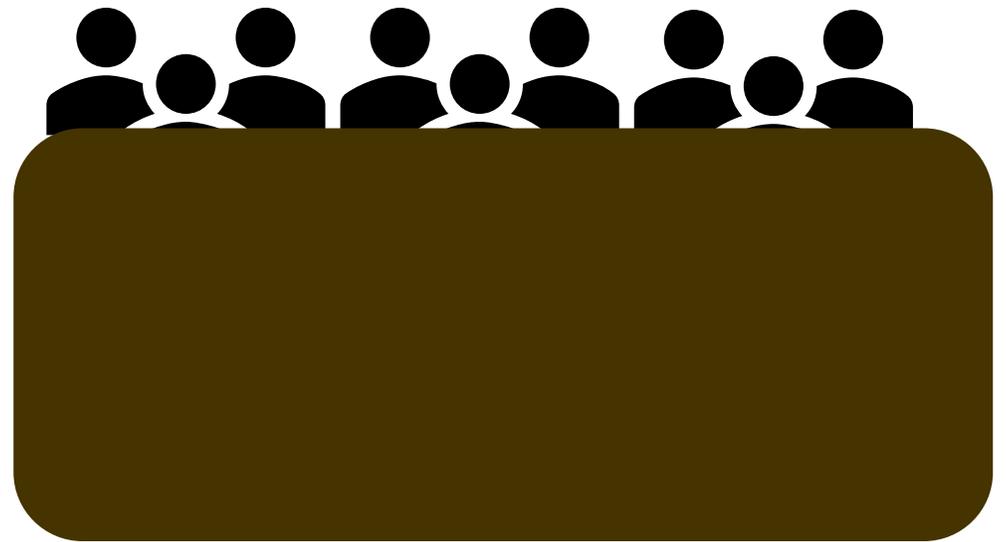


X

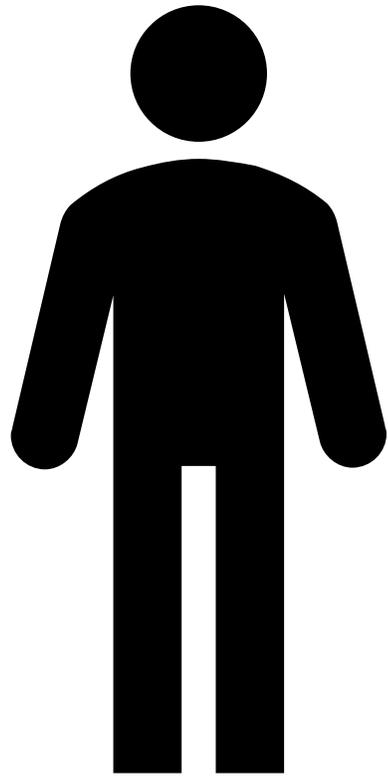
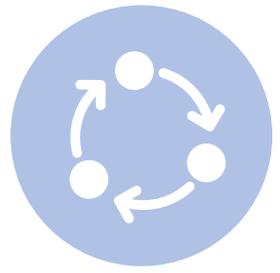




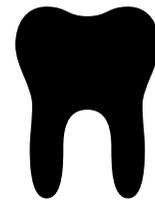
“Now ladies and gentlemen I again implore you to put yourself in Mr. Wright’s shoes. Please do me a favor and close your eyes and **imagine** if it was you yourself who was beaten and laying on the cold hard floor only inches from **death**.”

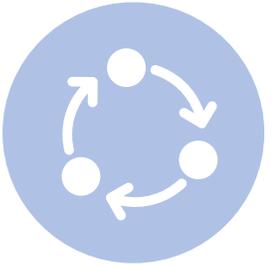


We implemented a 3 x 2 between subjects design

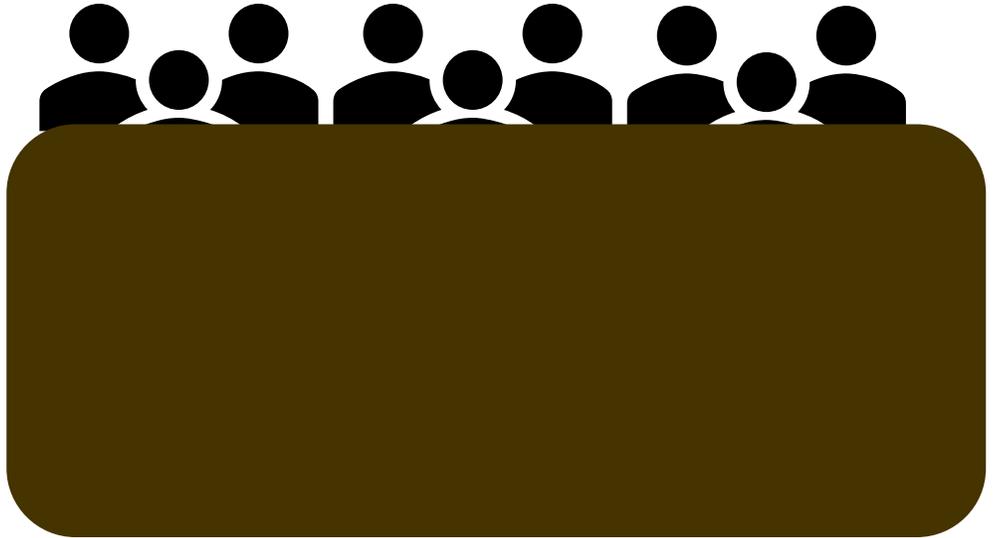


X

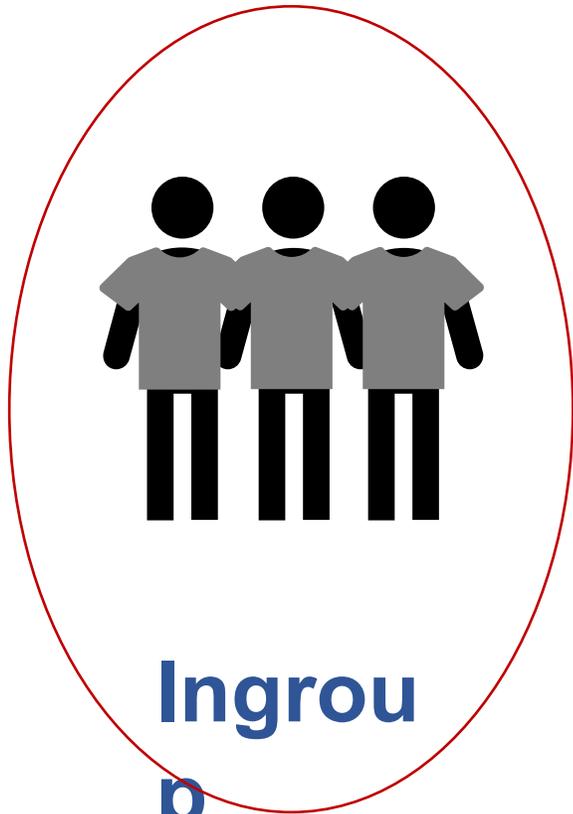
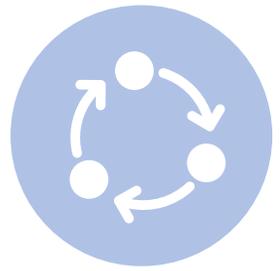




“Now ladies and gentlemen, I again implore you to put yourself in the shoes of Jonathon Wright. Please do me a favor and close your eyes and **imagine** it was you now suffering from several broken bones, including a **fractured jaw** and several **broken teeth**.”

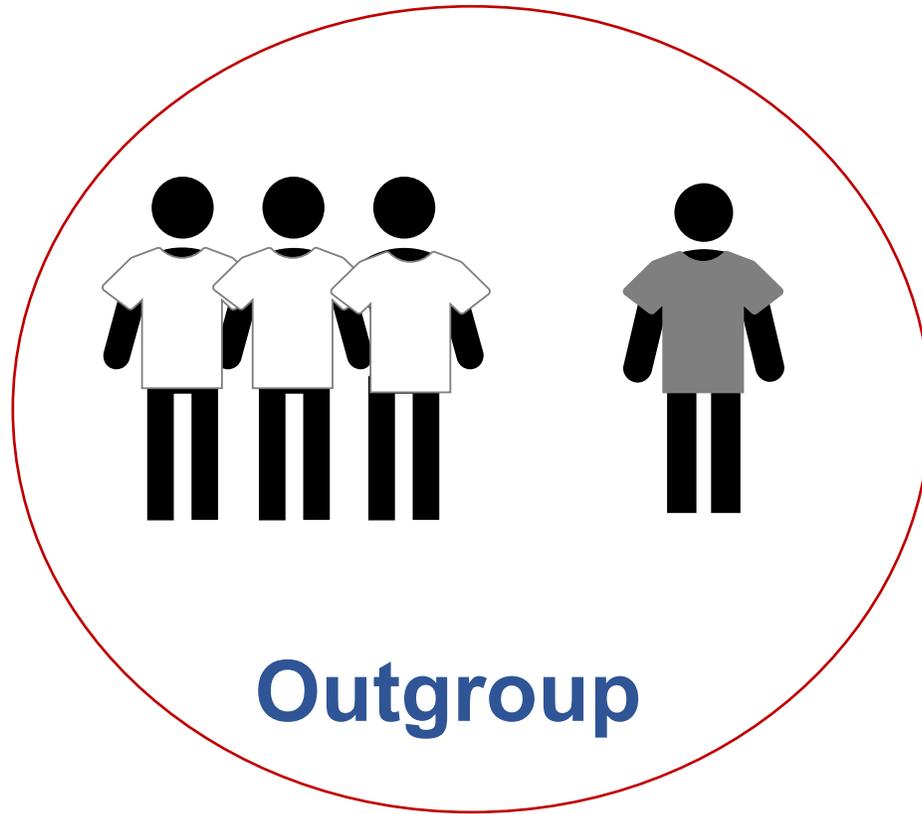


The defendant coded as either...

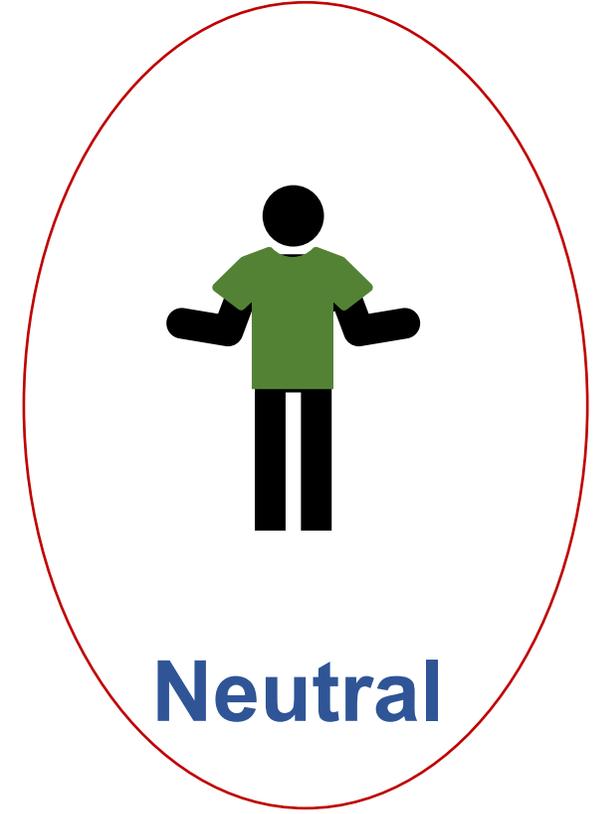


Ingroup

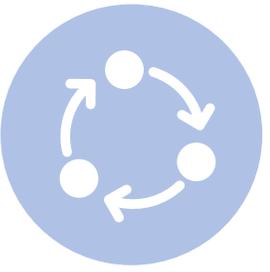
p



Outgroup



Neutral



We sampled 310 MTurk workers



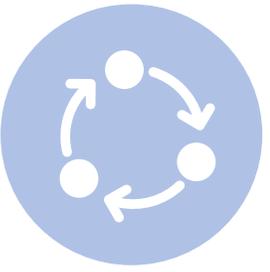
Read a mock trial transcript



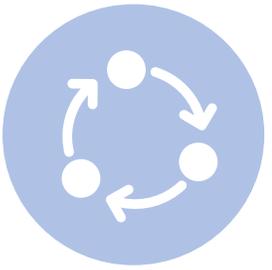
Provided case judgments



Participants provided...



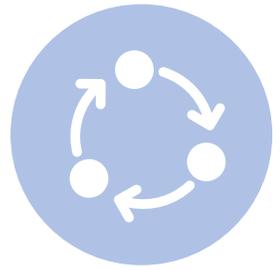
Participants provided...



Verdict

Preference

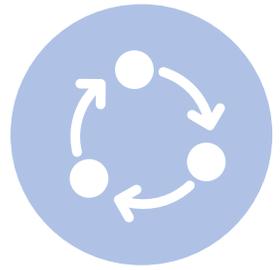
Participants provided...



“Please indicate
the verdict you
prefer.”

**Verdict
Preference**

Participants provided...



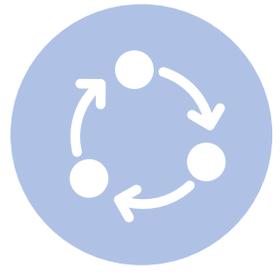
“Please indicate
the verdict you
prefer

Guilt

**Not
Guilty**

**Verdict
Preference**

Participants provided...

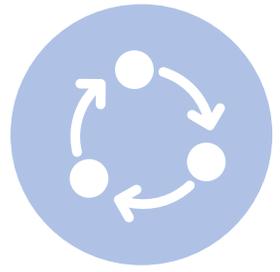


Verdict

Preference

Self-Defense Motivation

Participants provided...



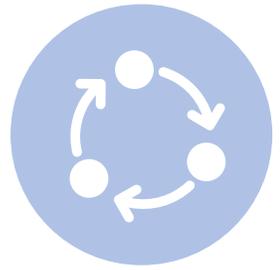
Verdict

Preference

Self-Defense Motivation

"In your opinion, what is the likelihood the defendant's actions during the bar fight were motivated by the desire to protect himself"

Participants provided...



Verdict

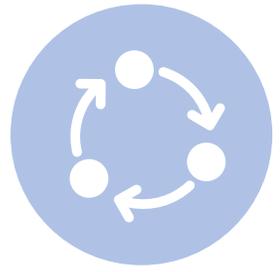
Preference

Self-Defense Motivation

"In your opinion, what is the likelihood the defendant's actions during the bar fight were motivated by the desire to protect himself"

Scale: 1-7

Participants provided...



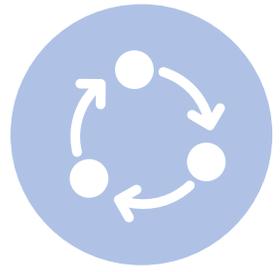
Verdict

Preference

Self-Defense Motivation

**Perceptions of
Blameworthiness**

Participants provided...



Verdict

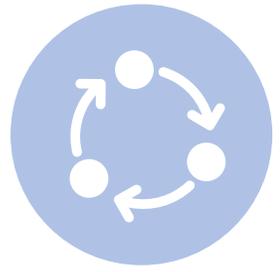
Preference

Self-Defense Motivation

“To what extent is the defendant to blame for the injuries to the victim? “

**Perceptions of
Blameworthiness**

Participants provided...



Verdict

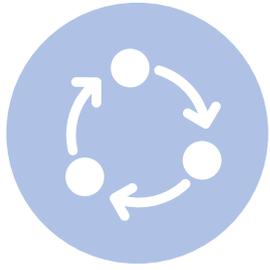
Preference

Self-Defense Motivation

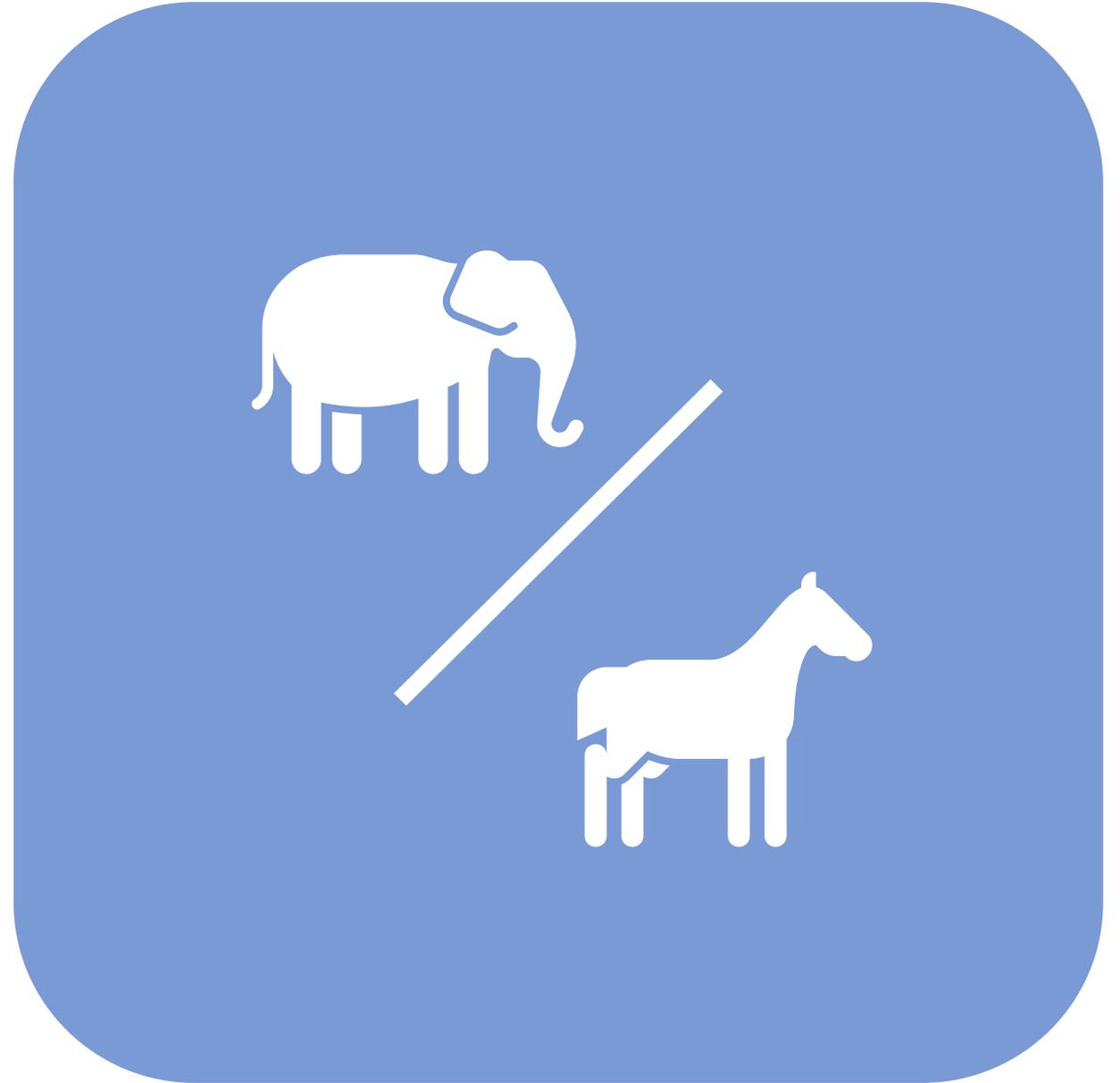
**Perceptions of
Blameworthiness**

“To what extent is the defendant to blame for the injuries to the victim? “

0 – 100%



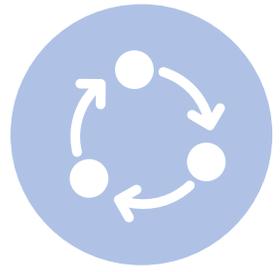
Political Identity Measures



Participants disclosed...

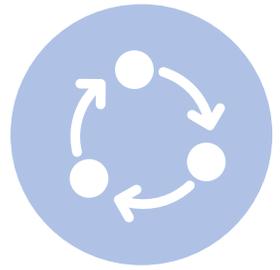


Participants provided...



2020 Vote

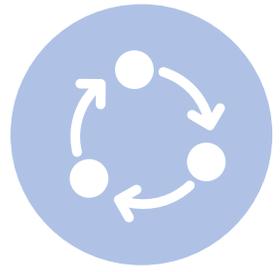
Participants provided...



“Who did you vote for in the
2020 US Presidential
election?”

2020 Vote

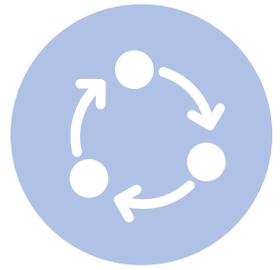
Participants provided...



2020 Vote

Political Orientation

Participants provided...

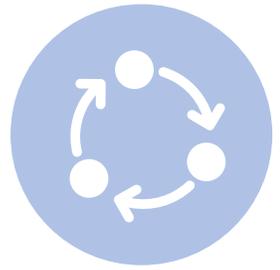


2020 Vote

“What is your political ideology?”

Political Orientation

Participants provided...



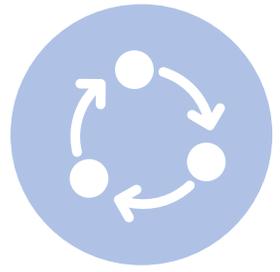
2020 Vote

“What is your political ideology?”

Political Orientation

1 = Very Liberal;
7 = Very Conservative

Participants provided...

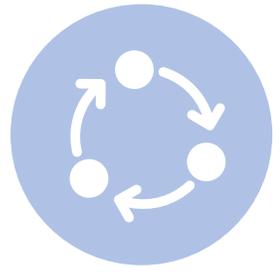


2020 Vote

Political Orientation

**Importance of Party
Identification**

Participants provided...



2020 Vote

Political Orientation

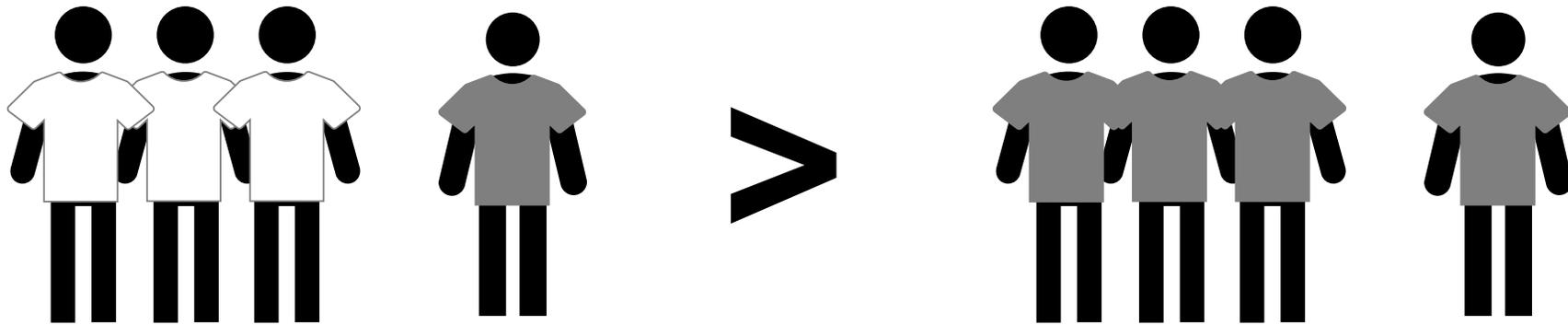
**Importance of Party
Identification**

“How important is your party identification to you?”

1 = Not important at all;
7 = Extremely important

Hypotheses

H1

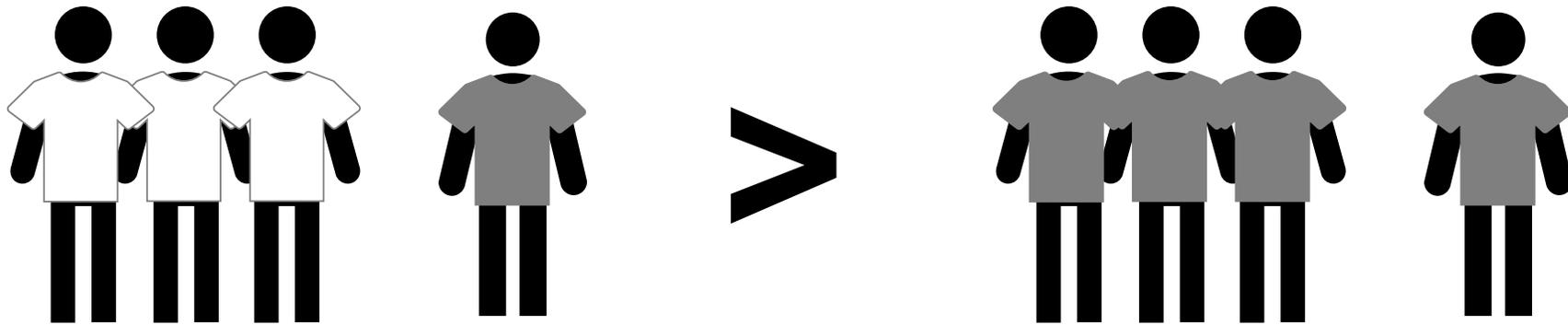


Verdic

t

Hypotheses

H1

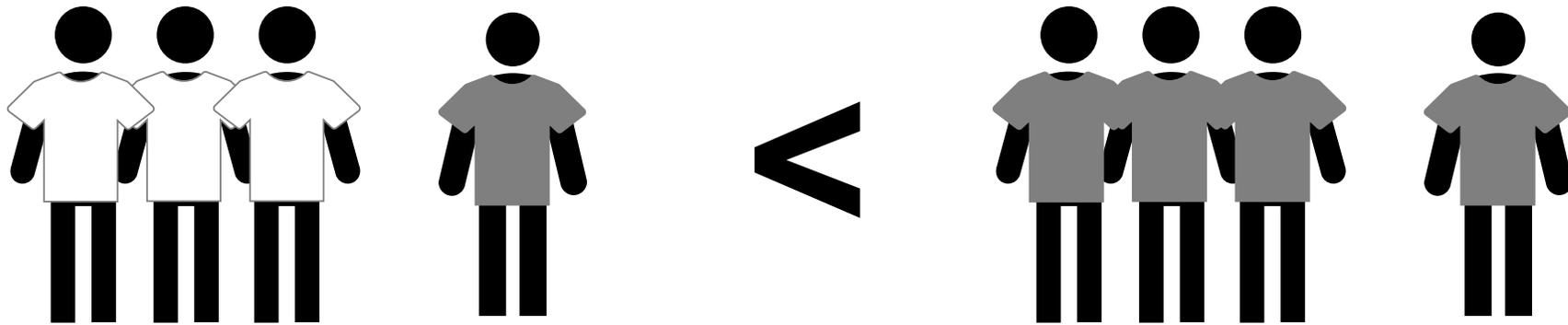


Blameworthines

s

Hypotheses

H1



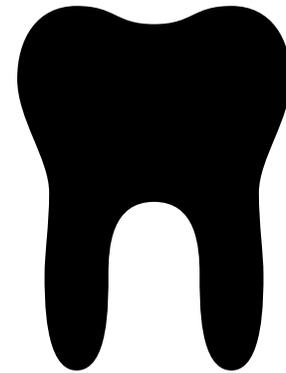
Self-
Defense

Hypotheses

H2



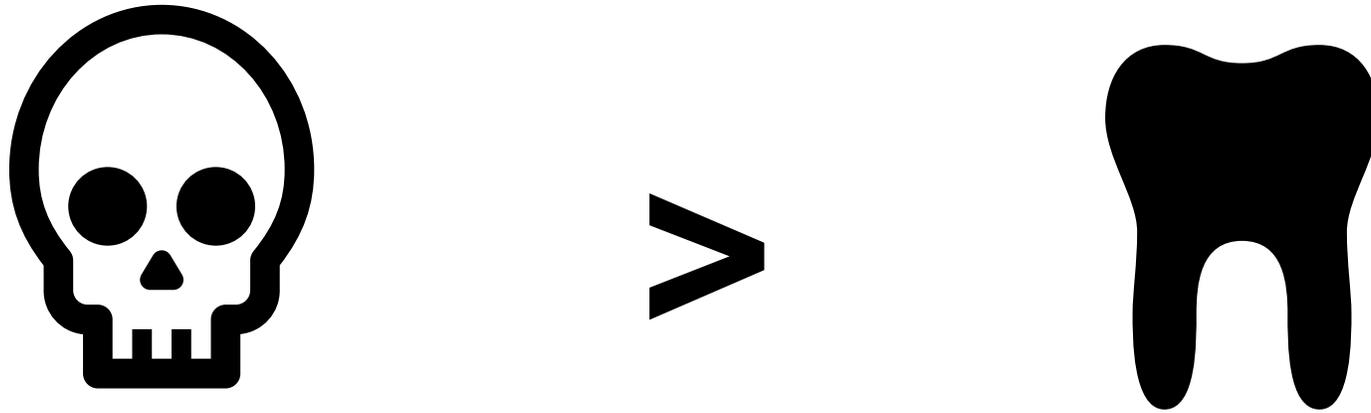
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Verdict

Hypotheses

H2

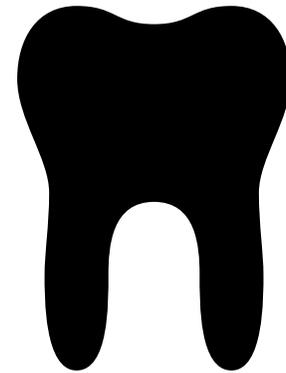
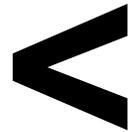


Blameworthines

s

Hypotheses

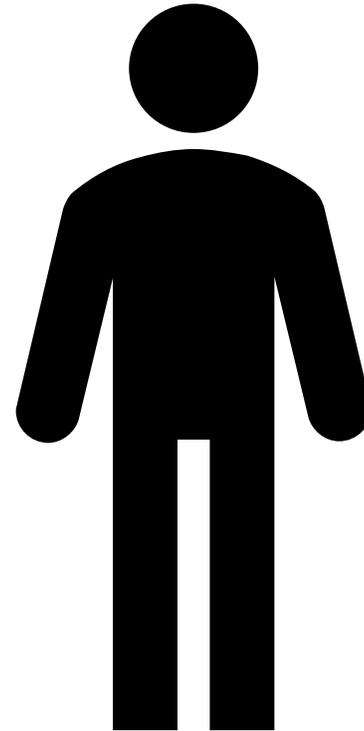
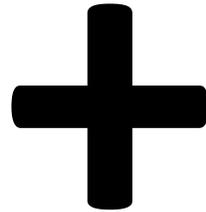
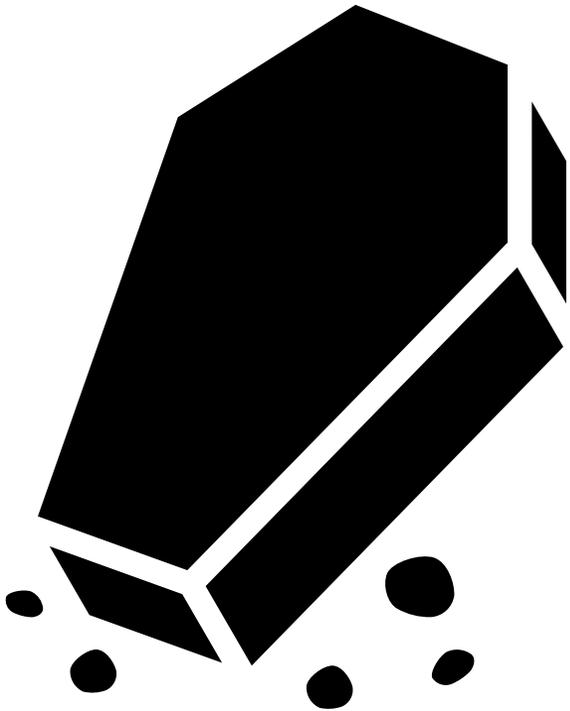
H2



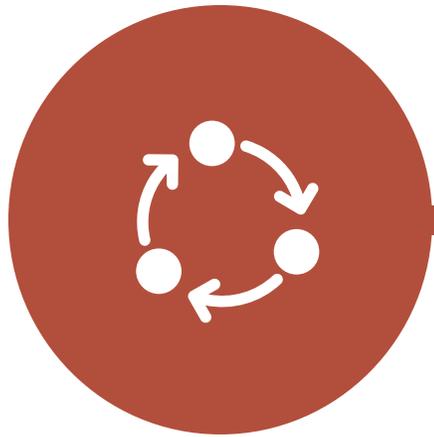
Self-
defense

Hypotheses

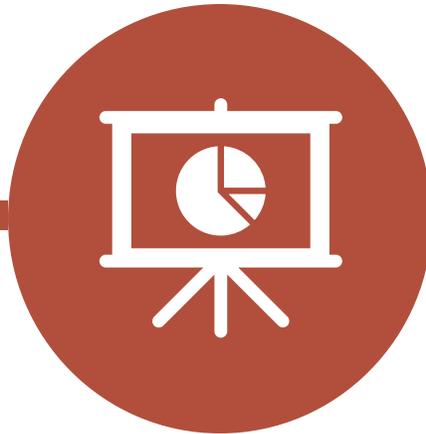
H3



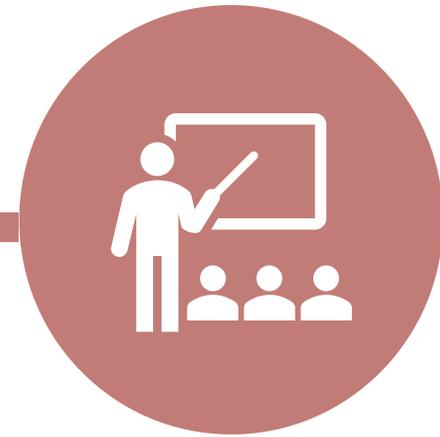
Present Study



Method

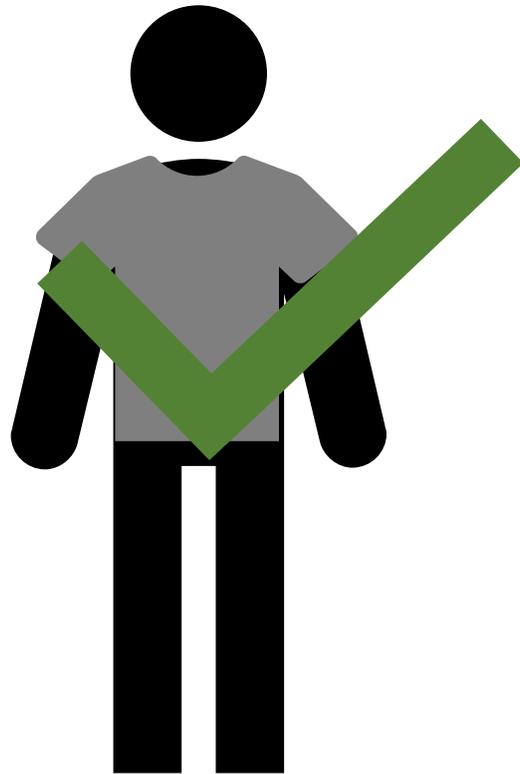
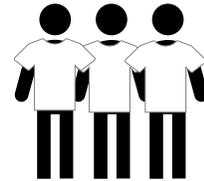
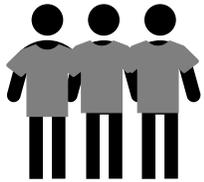


Results

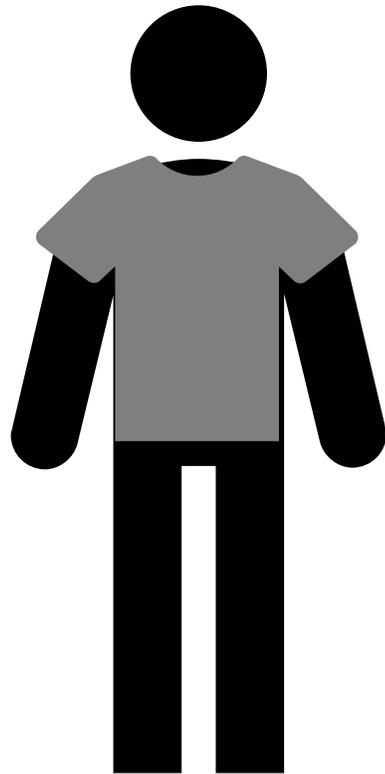
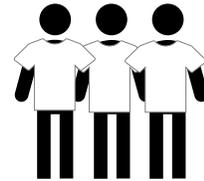
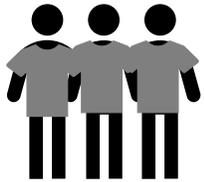


Discussion

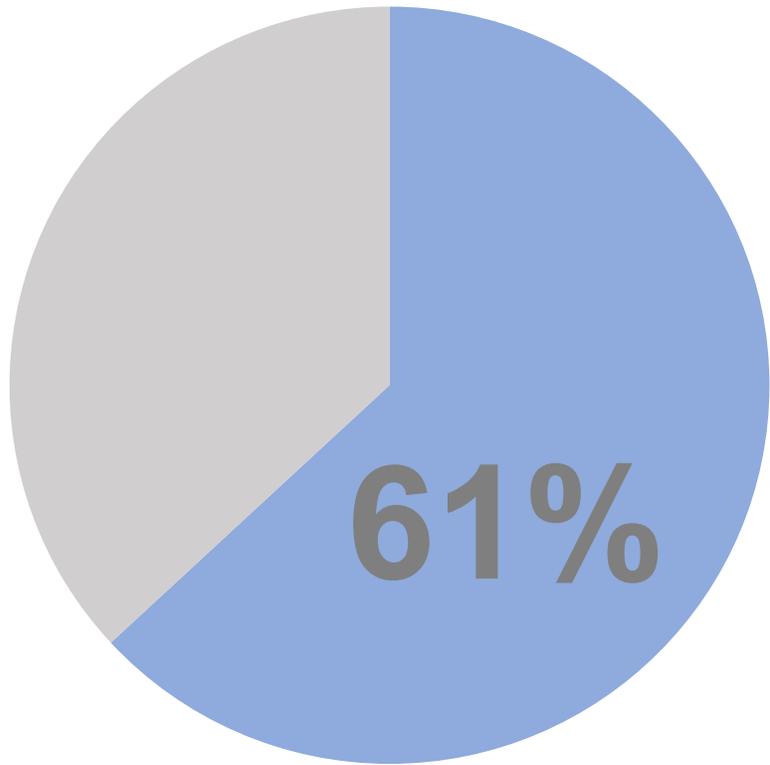
ALL DVs



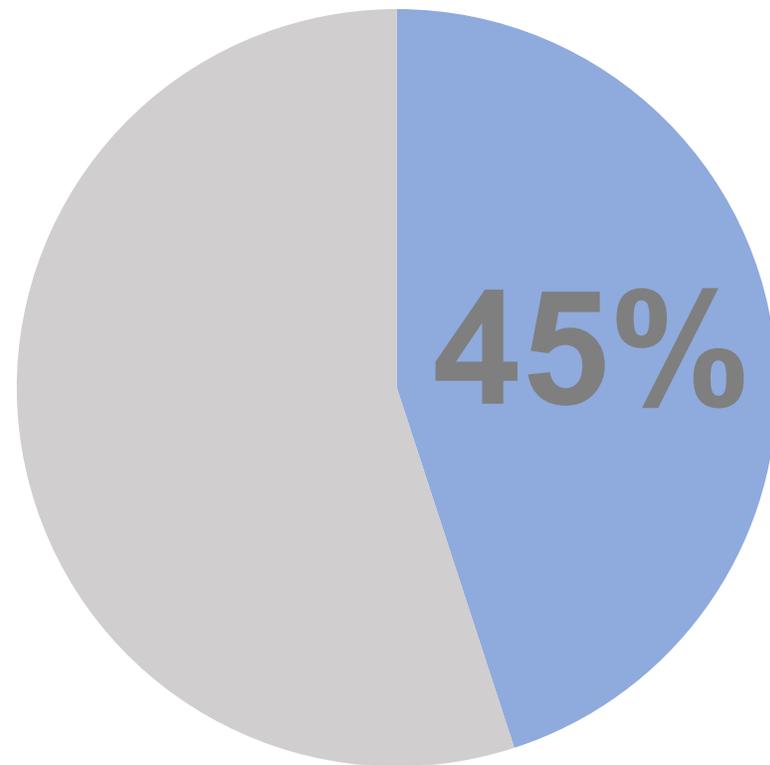
VERDICT



Participants found the outgroup defendant guilty at significantly higher rates than the ingroup defendant



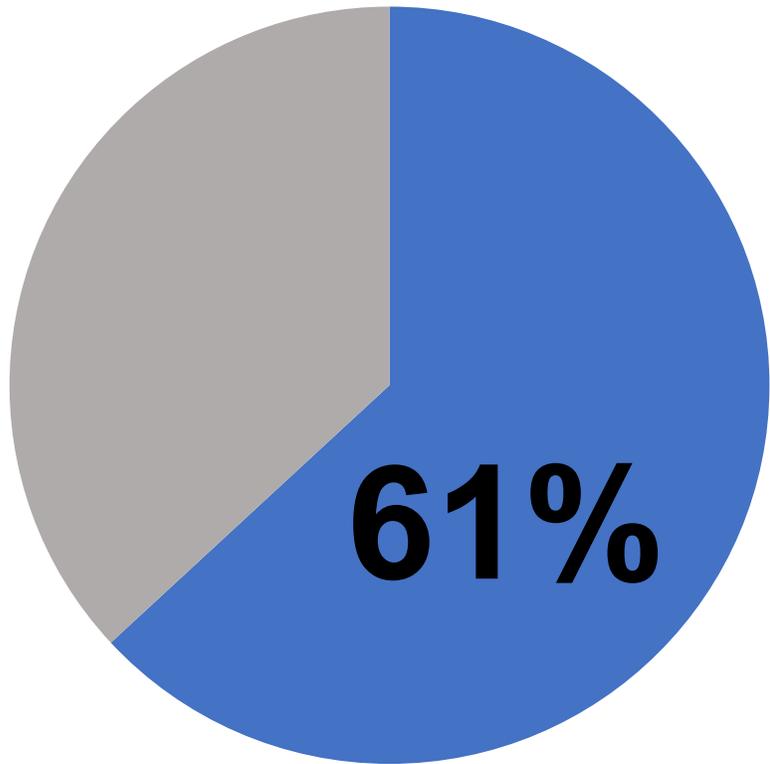
Percentage of outgroup guilt verdicts



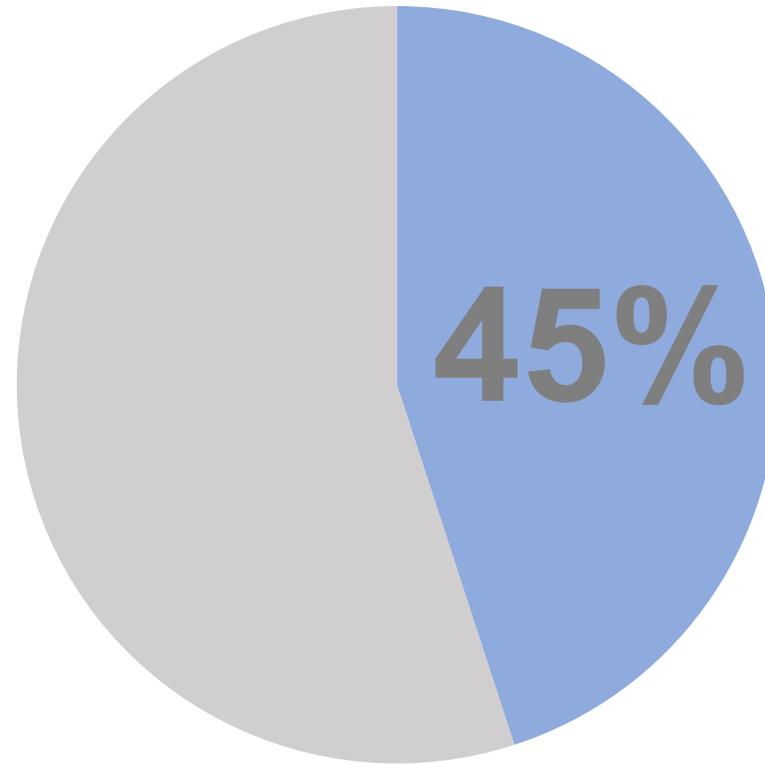
Percentage of ingroup guilt verdicts

$$\chi^2 (1, N = 184) = 4.87, p = .027, \phi = .163$$

Participants found the **outgroup** defendant **guilty** at significantly **higher rates** than the ingroup defendant



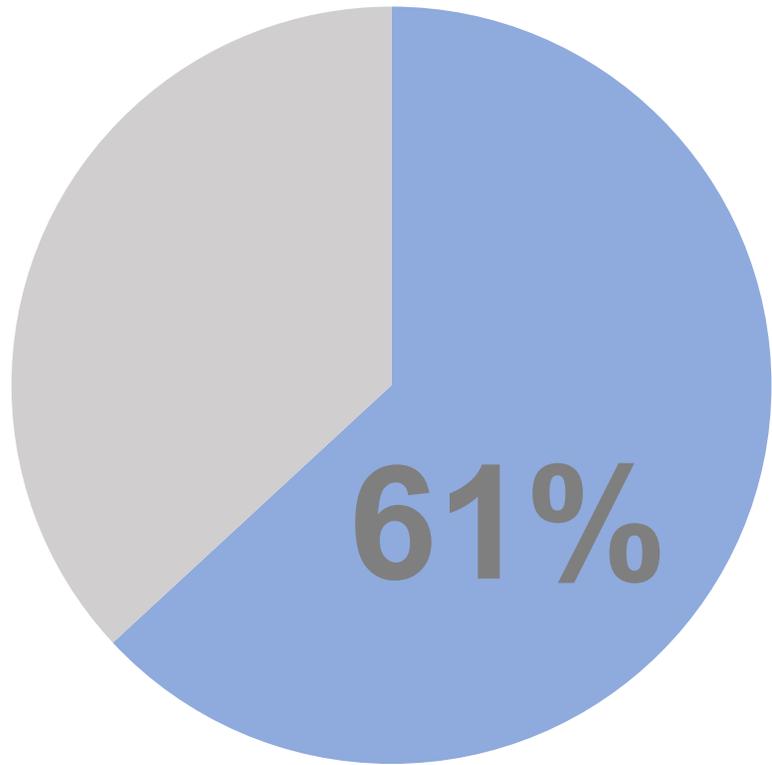
Percentage of **outgroup** guilt verdicts



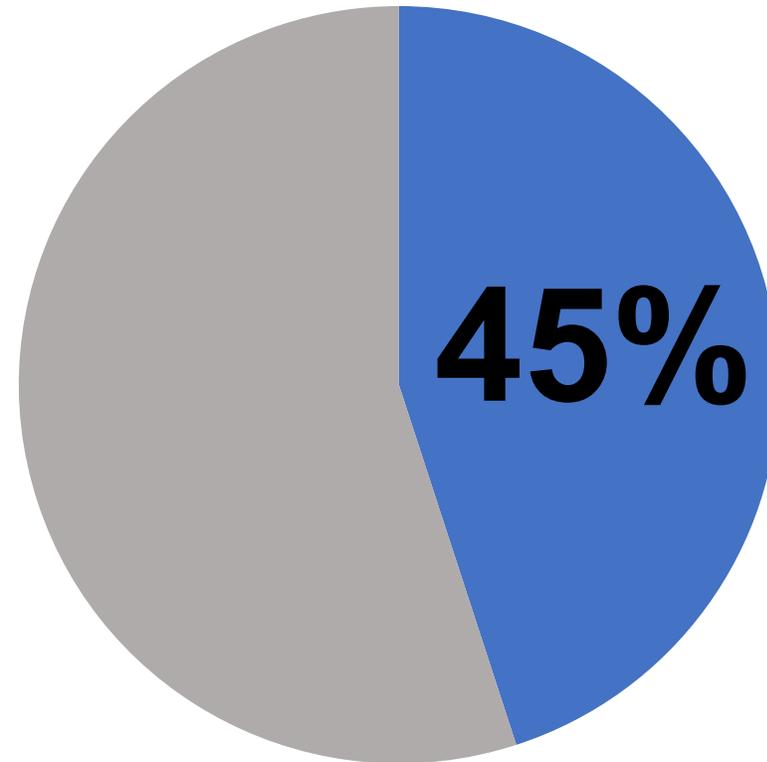
Percentage of ingroup guilt verdicts

$$X^2 (1, N = 184) = 4.87, p = .027, \phi = .163$$

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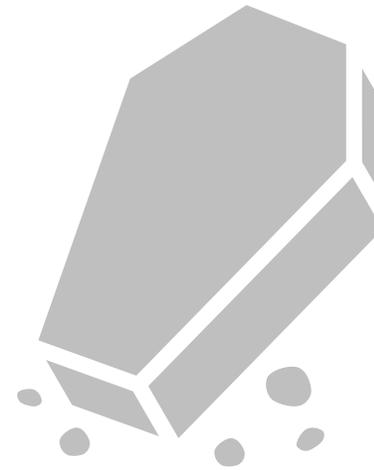
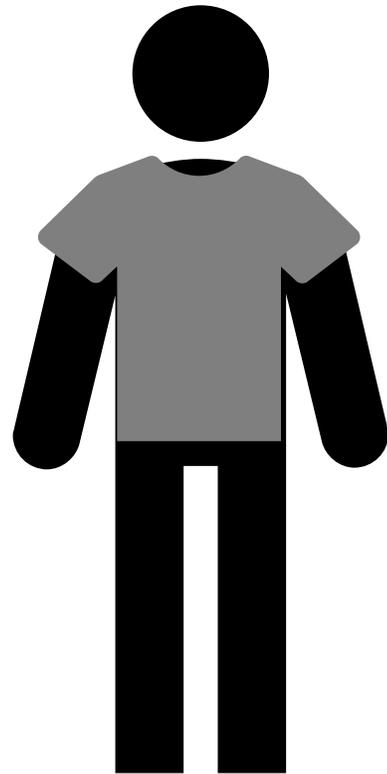
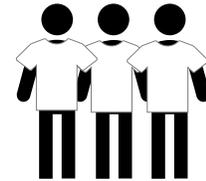
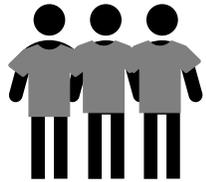
Percentage of outgroup guilt verdicts



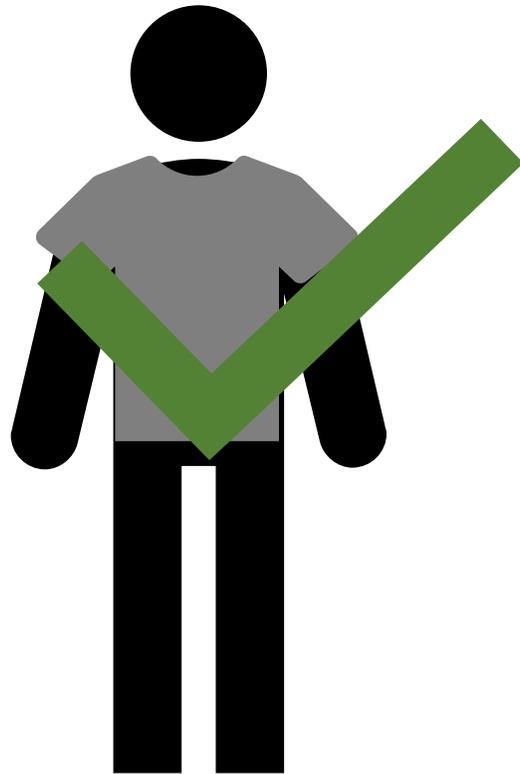
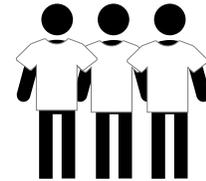
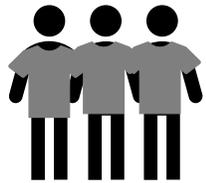
Percentage of ingroup guilt verdicts

$\chi^2 (1, N = 184) = 4.87, p = .027, \phi = .163$

BLAMEWORTHINESS

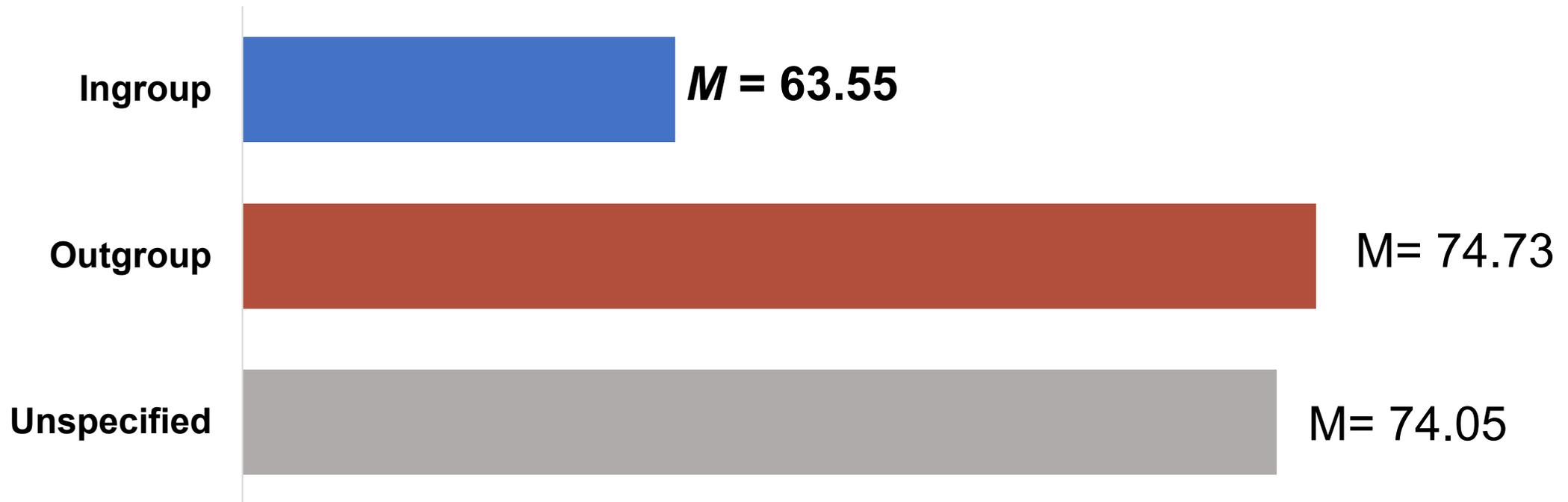


BLAMEWORTHINESS



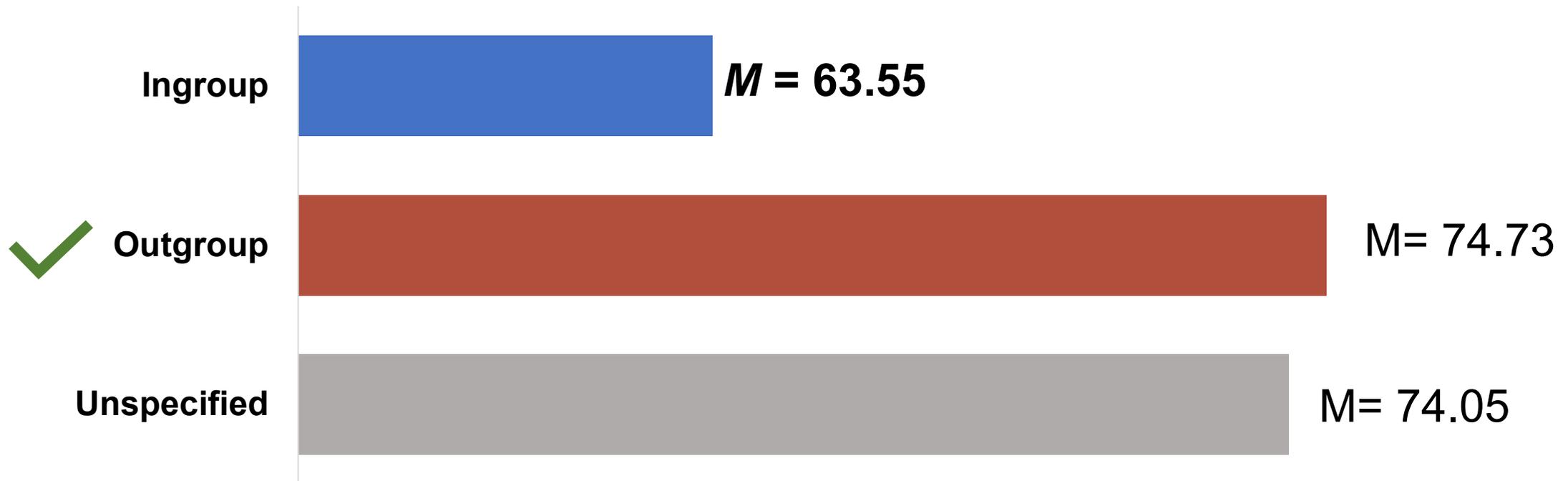
$F(2, 268) = 4.73, p = .010, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .034$

Ingroup members were perceived as less blameworthy



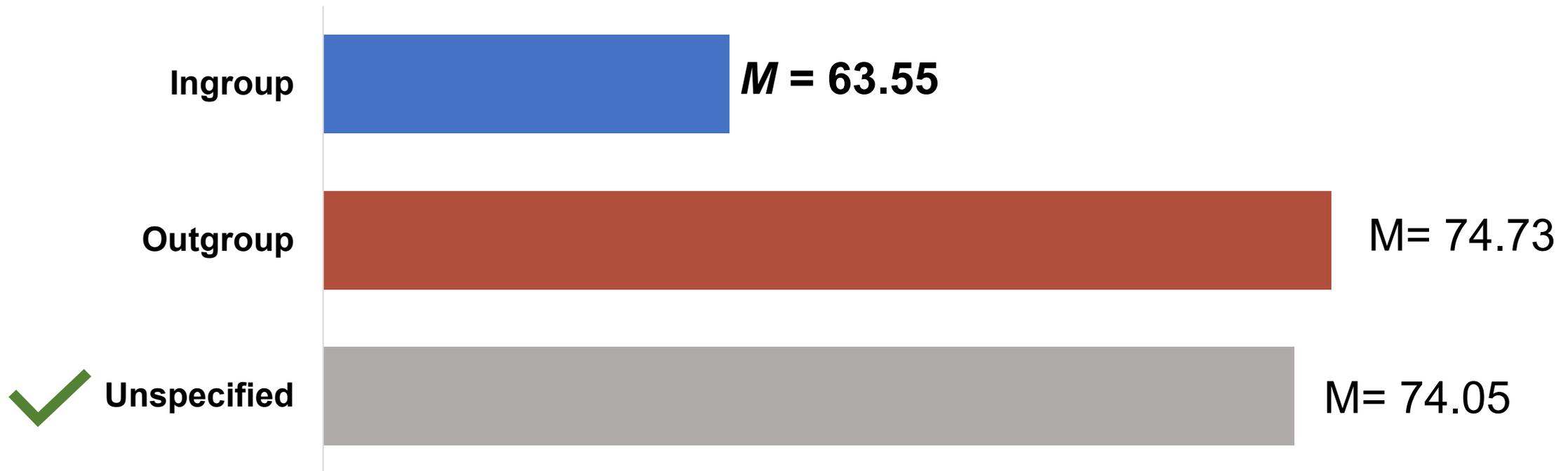
$F(2, 268) = 4.73, p = .010, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .034$

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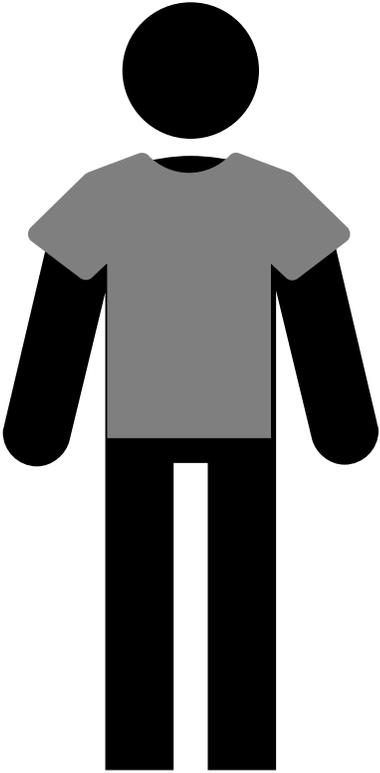
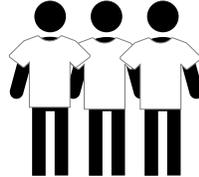
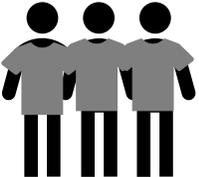
$t(182) = -2.69, p = .008, d = -.396$

Ingroup members were perceived as less blameworthy

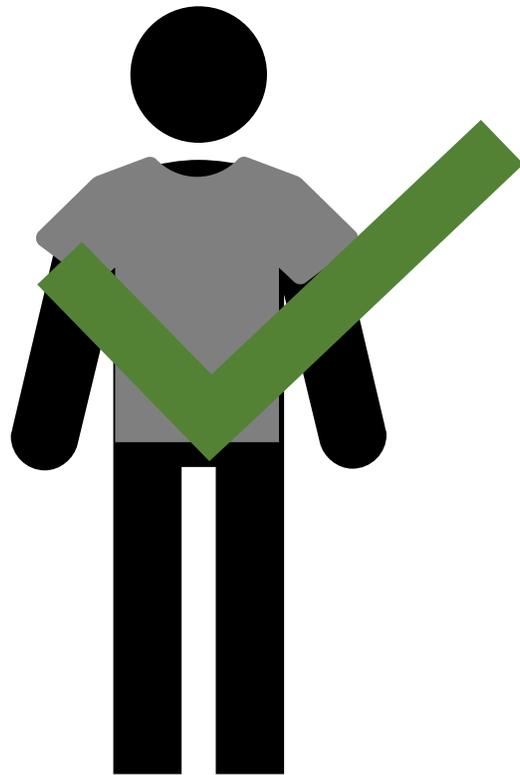
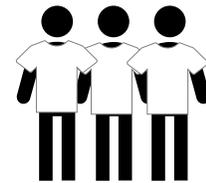
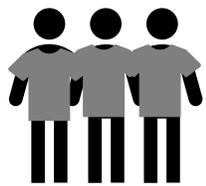


$t(179) = -2.57, p = .01, d = -.381$

SELF-DEFENSE

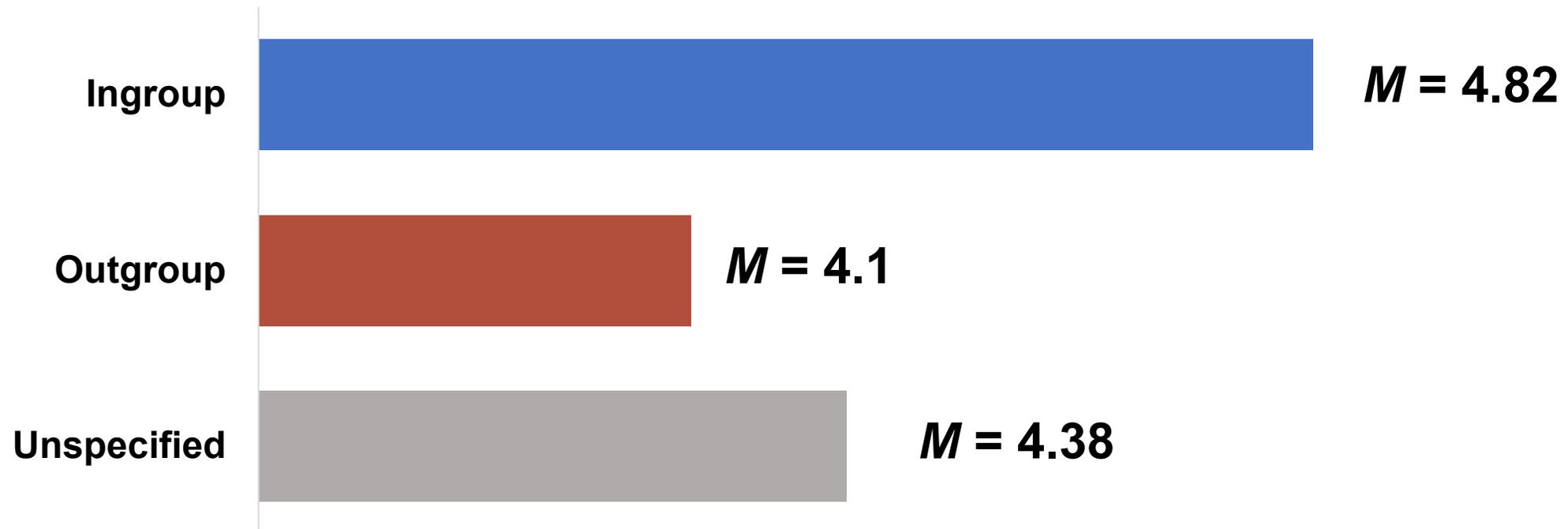


SELF-DEFENSE



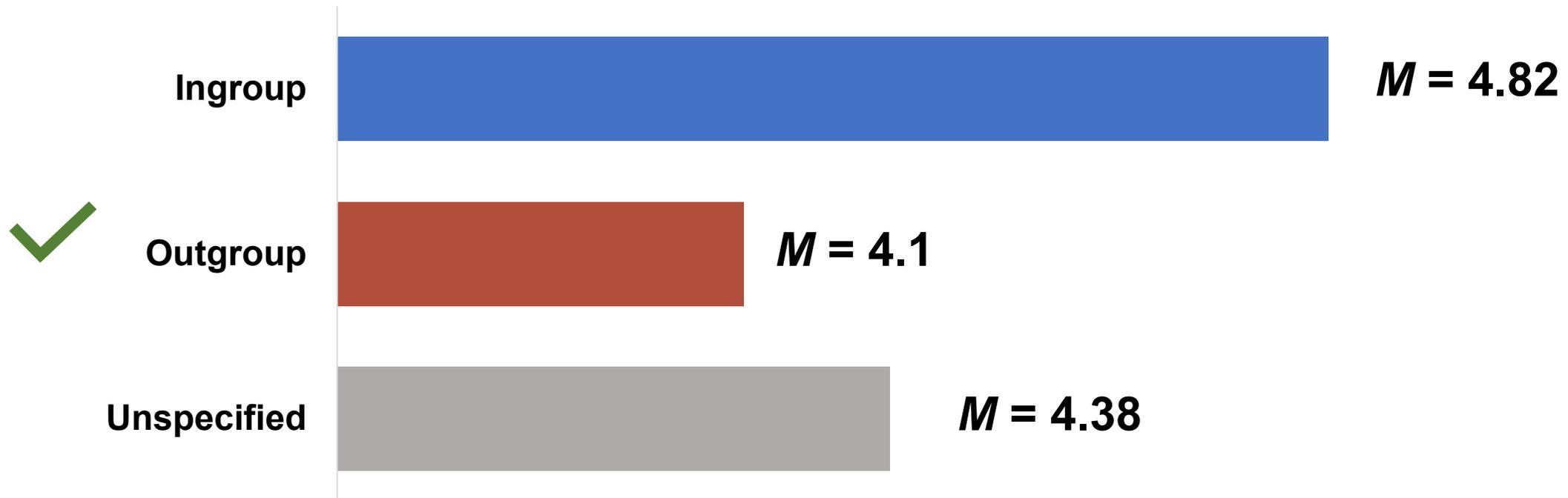
$F(2, 268) = 3.81, p = .023, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .028$

Ingroup defendants were perceived to be **more motivated** by self defense.



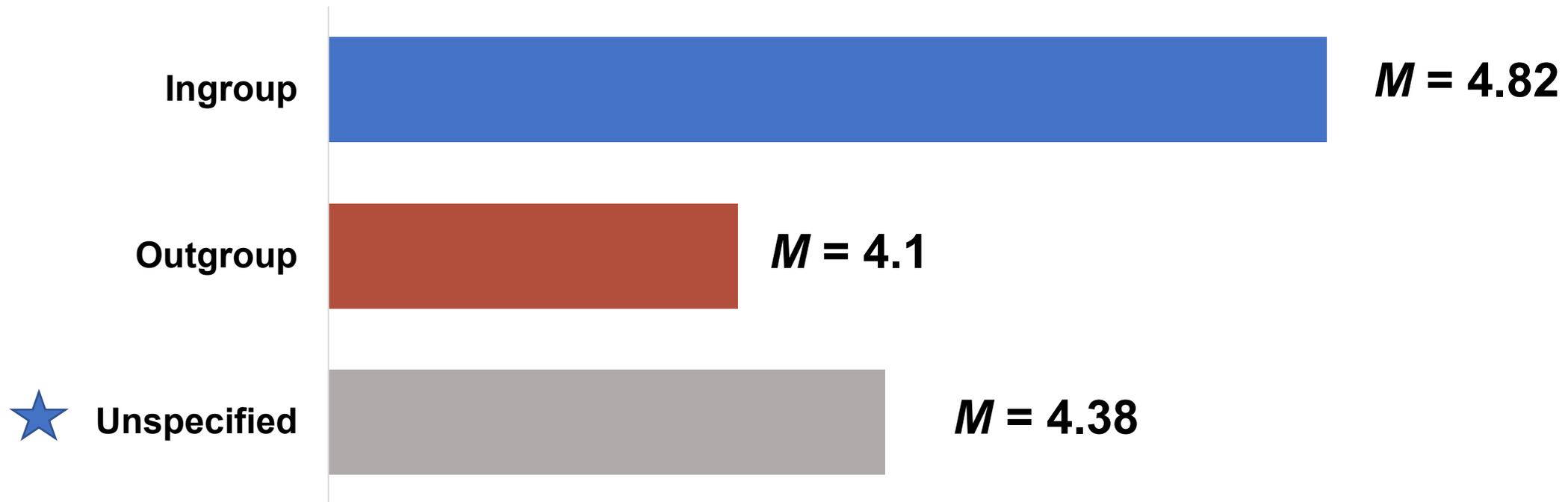
$F(2, 268) = 3.81, p = .023, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .028$

Ingroup defendants were perceived to be **more motivated** by self defense.



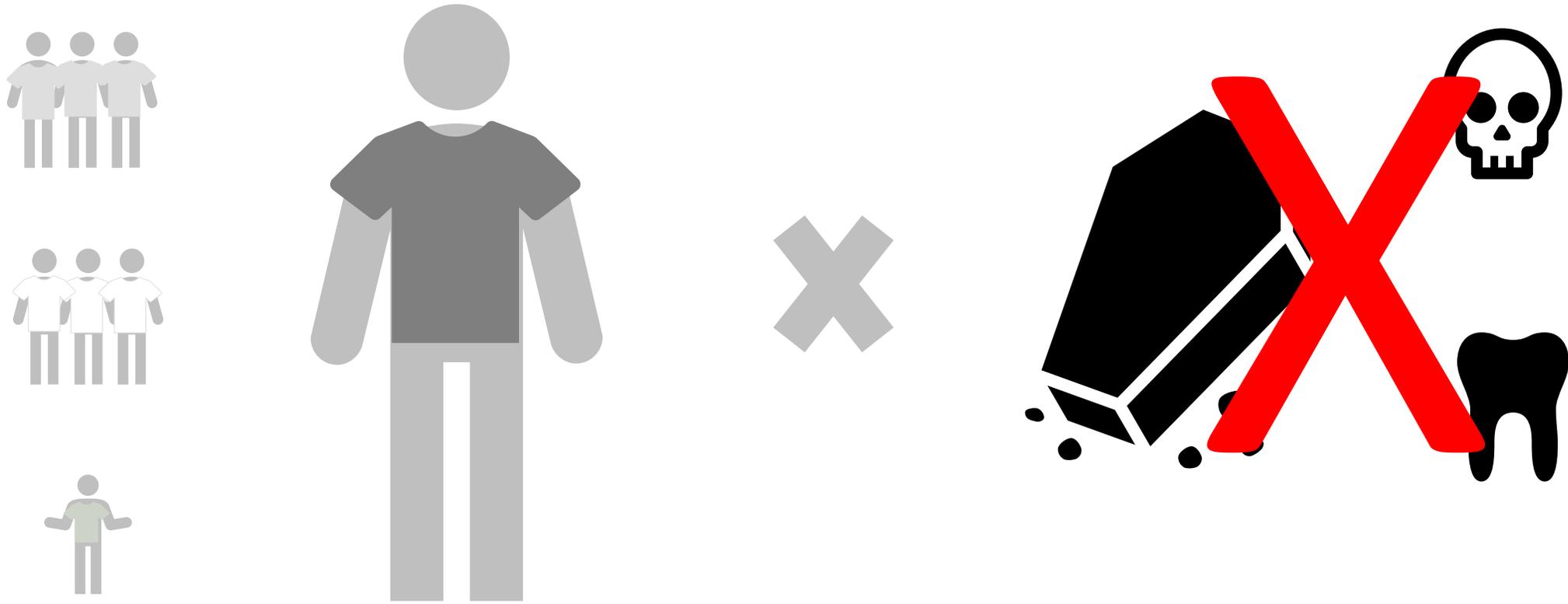
$t(182) = 2.75, p = .007, d = .405$

Ingroup defendants were perceived to be **more motivated** by self defense.



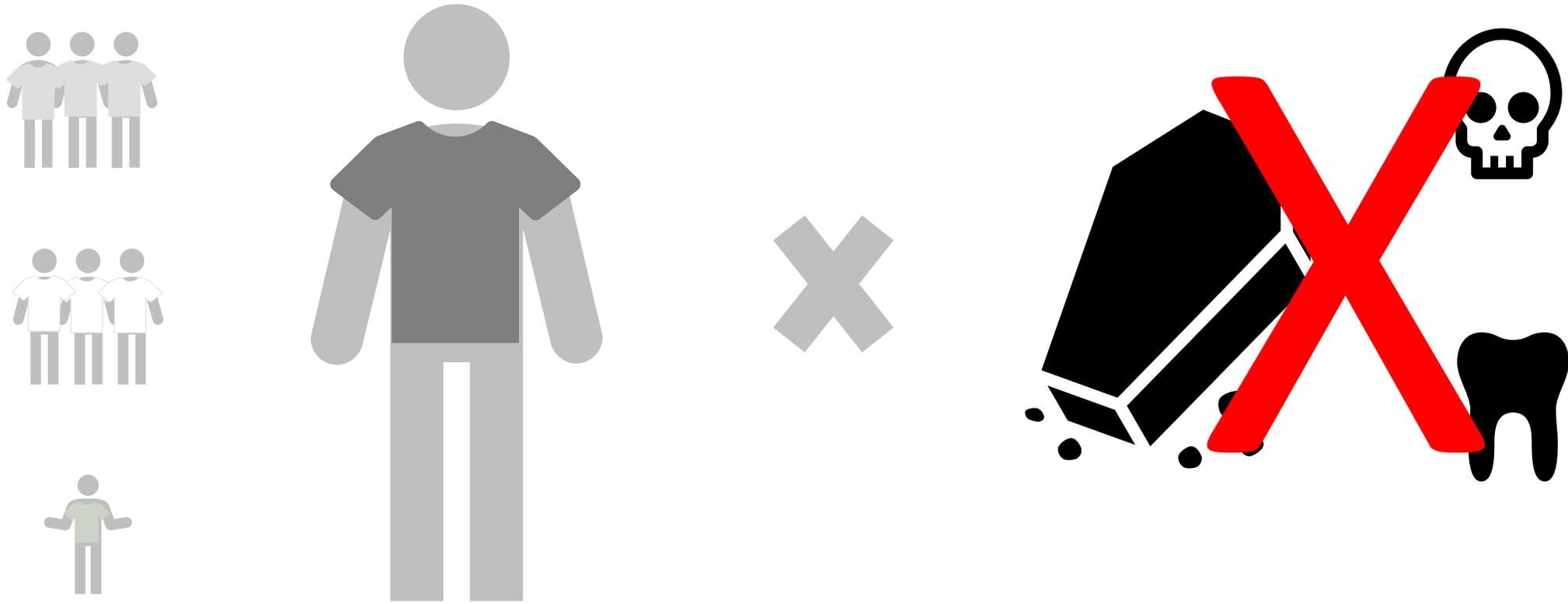
$t(179) = 1.75, p = .083, d = .259$

VERDICT



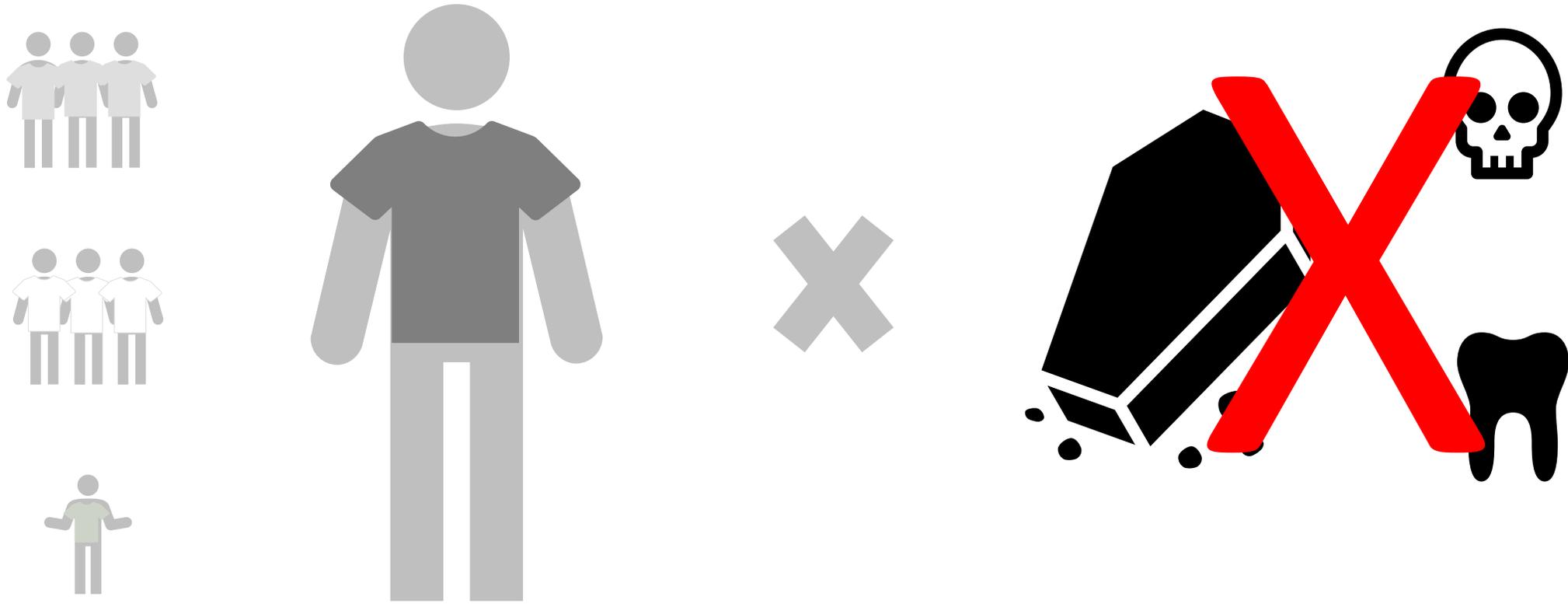
$\chi^2 (1, N = 274) = .097, p = .756, \phi = -0.021$

BLAMEWORTHINESS

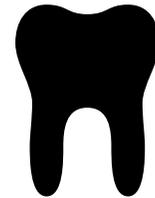
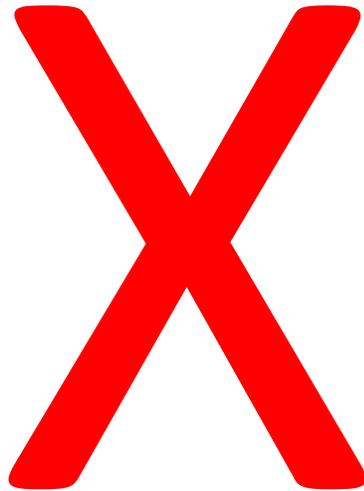
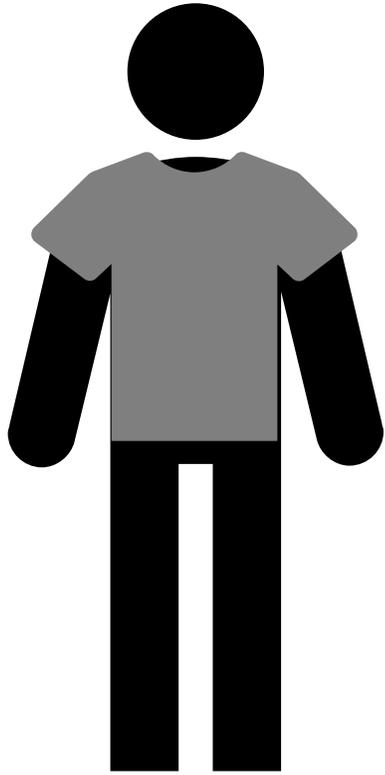
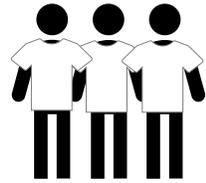
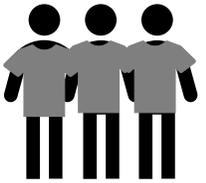


$F(1, 268) = .265, p = .607, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .001$

SELF-DEFENSE

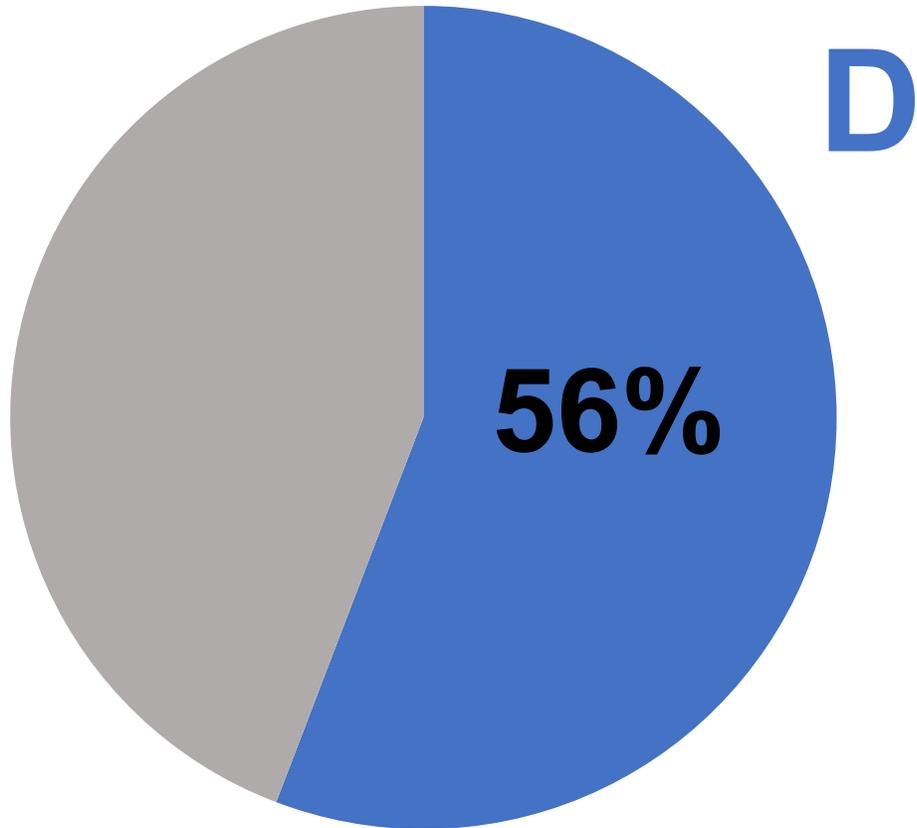


$F(1, 268) = .064, p = .801, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .000$

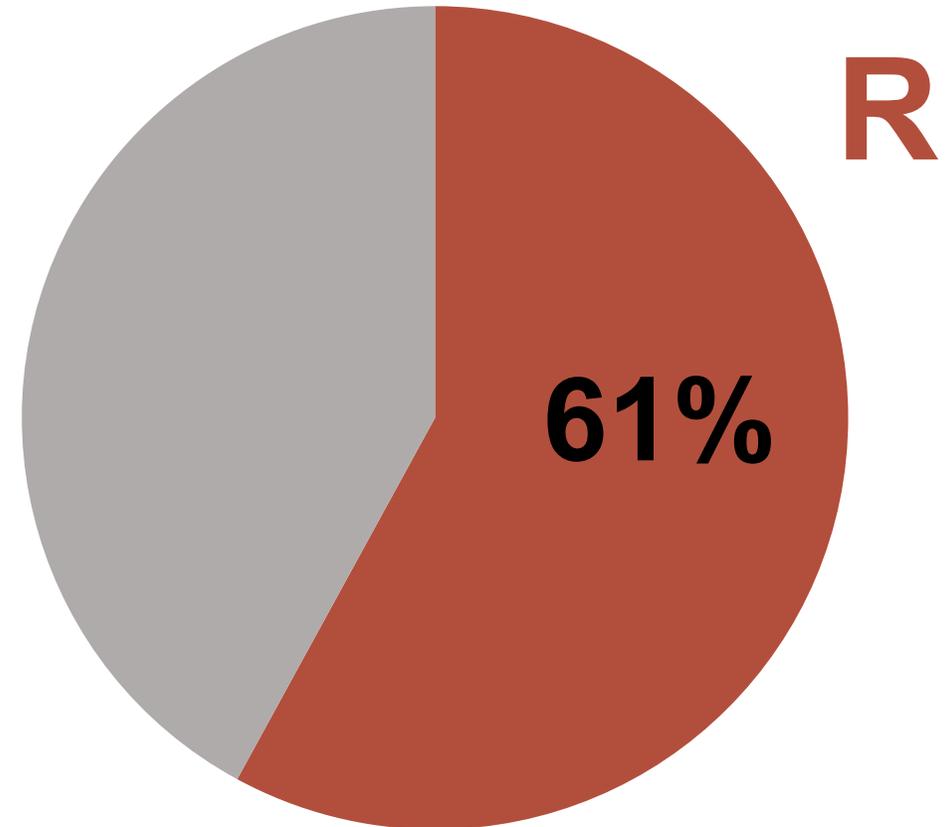


$\chi^2 (2, N = 274) = 2.25, p = .325, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .008$

Party identification **did not significantly** influence preferences for guilt for an outgroup defendant



$\chi^2(1, N = 92) = .225, p = .134, \phi = .156$

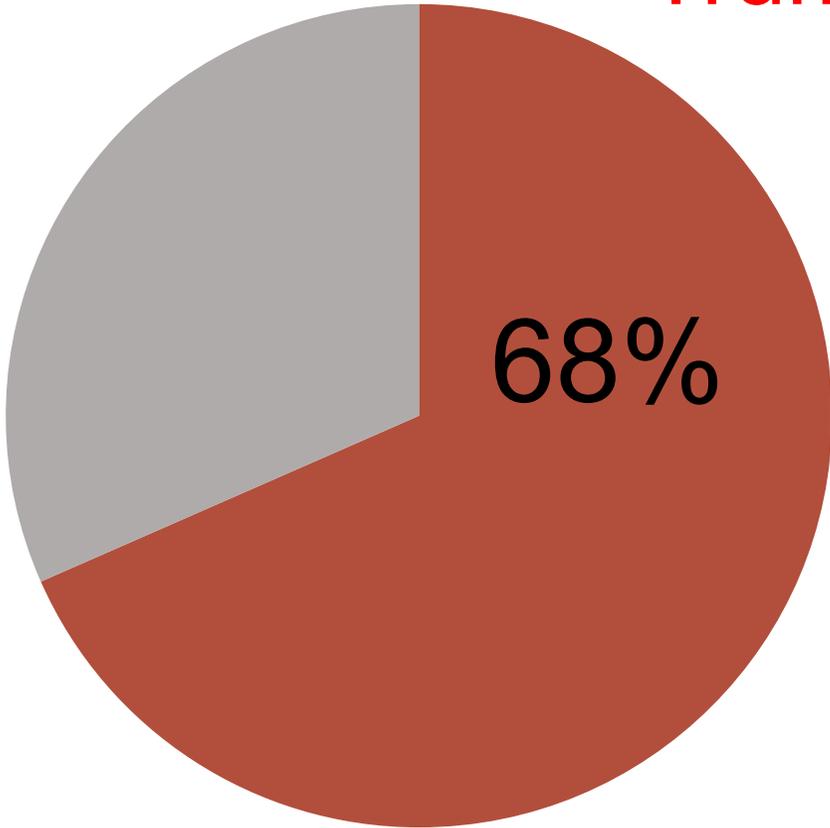


$\chi^2(1, N = 92) = 2.79, p = .095, \phi = .174$

With respect those who **VOTED** in 2020...

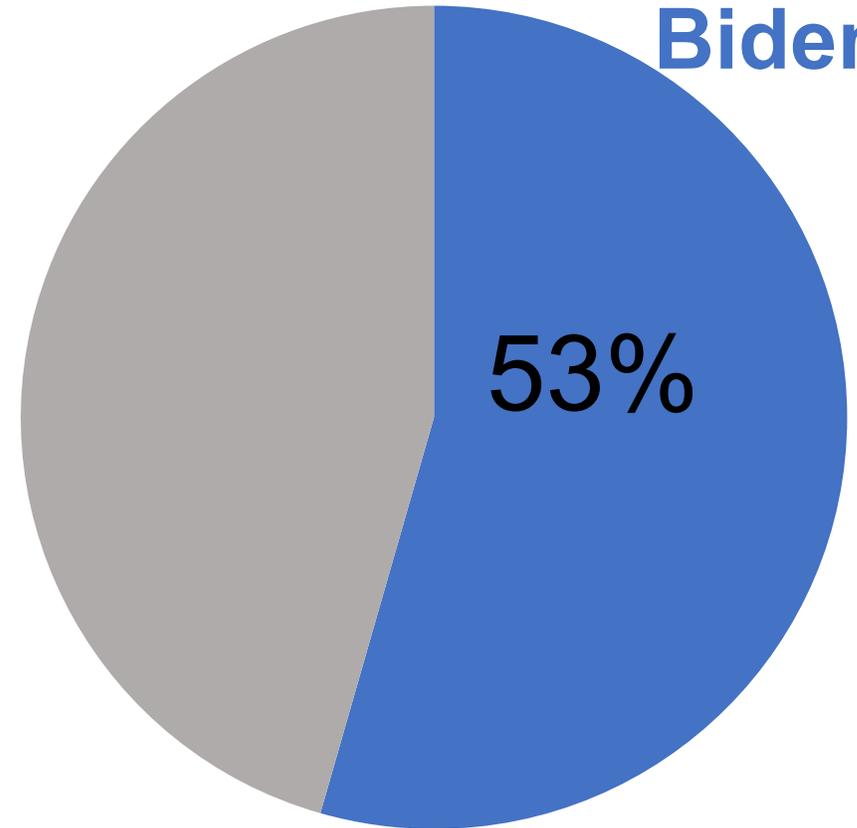


Trump

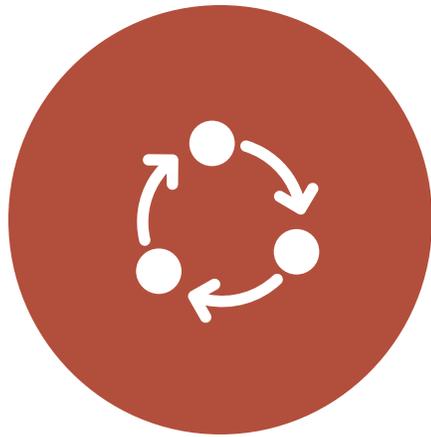


More likely to prefer a guilty verdict for an outgroup defendant than an ingroup defendant

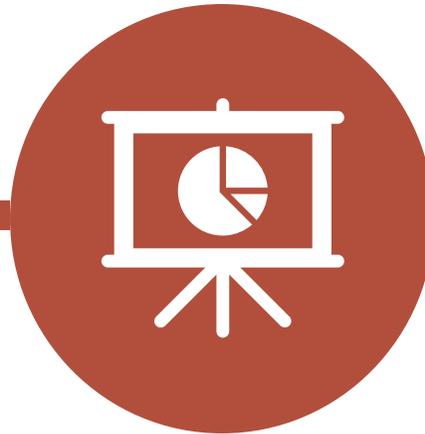
Biden



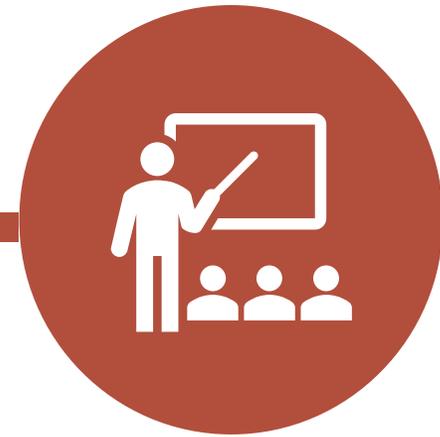
Present Study



Method



Results



Discussion

What happens when mock jurors **differ from the defendant?**



Case Judgements are affected



Perceptions of the defendant are affected



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What happens when mock jurors **differ from the defendant?**



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Perceptions of the defendant are affected



Specifically, for outgroup defendants ...



More guilt preferences



Higher perceptions of blameworthiness



Lower perceptions of self-defense
motivation



Specifically, for outgroup defendants ...



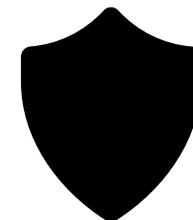
More guilt preferences



Higher perceptions of blameworthiness



Lower perceptions of self-defense
motivation



Specifically, for outgroup defendants ...



More guilt preferences



Higher perceptions of blameworthiness



Lower perceptions of self-defense
motivation



Specifically, for outgroup defendants ...



More guilt preferences



Higher perceptions of blameworthiness



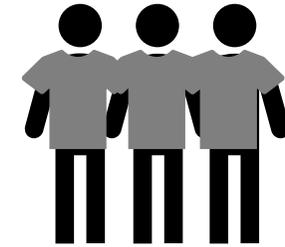
Lower perceptions of self-defense
motivation



Notably...



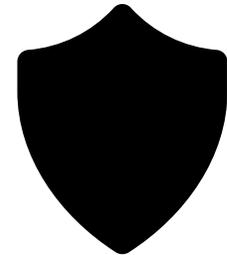
Evidence of ingroup favoritism opposed to
outgroup discrimination



Additionally...



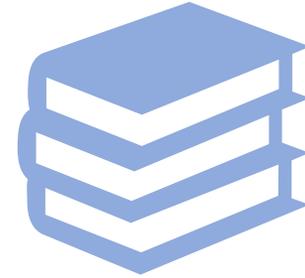
Mortality salience had **no** impact on



Implications



Adds to the research literature



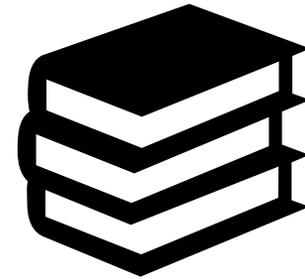
Recommendations for legal actors



Implications



Adds to the research literature



Recommendations for legal actors





Thank you!

Questions?