

SUPPORTING INFORMATION FOR “THE ROLE OF ANGER IN THE BIASED ASSIMILATION OF POLITICAL INFORMATION”

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Appendix A: Study 1

Study 1 Issue Arguments

Abortion

Conservative Position	Liberal Position
<p>The U.S. needs to reduce the number of women having abortions! The government should stop supporting abortion providers like Planned Parenthood and should make abortions illegal.</p>	<p>The U.S. needs to ensure women have access to safe abortions! The government should increase funding for abortion providers such as Planned Parenthood and should end abortion restrictions.</p>
<p>Here are three reasons why:</p>	<p>Here are three reasons why:</p>
<p>#1 Fetuses in the womb are unborn children—they feel pain and have a right to live.</p>	<p>#1 The government should not control women’s bodies—forcing women to bear children against their will makes them second-class citizens.</p>
<p>#2 Women who have abortions often suffer negative physical consequences and mental anguish.</p>	<p>#2 Making abortions illegal will result in women seeking out unsafe abortions, which are dangerous and sometimes result in death.</p>
<p>#3 It is unethical to use tax dollars to support abortion providers because so many Americans believe abortion is immoral.</p>	<p>#3 It is unfair that many women who need abortions cannot afford them. The government should find a way to reduce the cost of abortions for low income women.</p>

Economic Equality

Conservative Position	Liberal Position
<p>The U.S. government needs to stop trying to engineer economic equality! The government should lower taxes, reduce the size of government, and stop making so many demands on businesses.</p>	<p>The U.S. government needs to do more to increase economic equality! The government should increase taxes on the wealthy, expand government programs that help ordinary people, and demand that businesses treat workers fairly.</p>
<p>Here are three reasons why:</p>	<p>Here are three reasons why:</p>
<p>#1 Individualism is a fundamental American value. Government welfare just takes money from hard working people and gives it to irresponsible people.</p>	<p>#1 Equality is a fundamental American value. Right now, the system is set up to keep the wealthy and the poor.</p>
<p>#2 Requiring businesses to give workers health care and pay them a high minimum wage leads them to hire fewer workers.</p>	<p>#2 Requiring businesses to give workers health care and pay them a high minimum wage leads to economic growth because workers have more disposable income.</p>
<p>#3 Heavy taxation reduces people's incentives to work hard and to invest in new businesses.</p>	<p>#3 When the government provides citizens with a secure safety net, they are more likely to start a new business and to remain productive during hard times.</p>

Illegal Immigration

Conservative Position	Liberal Position
<p>The U.S. needs to crack down on illegal immigration! The government should deport illegal immigrants who are here currently and make sure that no more illegal immigrants enter the country.</p>	<p>The U.S. needs to improve its treatment of illegal immigrants! The government should stop deporting illegal immigrants and allow them to have a path to citizenship.</p>
<p>Here are three reasons why:</p>	<p>Here are three reasons why:</p>
<p>#1 Illegal immigrants are an economic burden on the country. They use government services without paying taxes and take jobs from Americans by working for low pay.</p>	<p>#1 Illegal immigrants contribute to the economy. Many start small businesses, pay taxes, and work jobs Americans do not want.</p>
<p>#2 If we reward illegal immigrants by allowing them to stay in this country, it will only encourage more people to try to enter the country illegally in the future.</p>	<p>#2 If illegal immigrants are deported, many will be sent back to poverty and violence in their home countries.</p>
<p>#3 People who are breaking the law by being in the country illegally should be punished, not rewarded, for their unlawful behavior.</p>	<p>#3 The United States is a nation of immigrants. We should not punish people for the “crime” of wanting to be American.</p>

Question Wording (also applicable to Study 2)

Issue Attitudes

Do you favor or oppose a woman's ability to obtain a legal abortion if she chooses?

Strongly oppose (1) to Strongly favor (7)

Do you think abortion should be legal under all circumstances, legal under most circumstances, illegal under most circumstances, or illegal under all circumstances?

Legal under all circumstances (1) to Illegal under all circumstances (4)

With respect to the abortion issue, would you consider yourself to be "pro-choice" or "pro-life"?

Pro-choice (1) or Pro-life (2)

Do you favor or oppose government efforts to increase income equality in America?

Strongly oppose (1) to Strongly favor (7)

Do you favor or oppose increasing taxes on wealthy Americans?

Strongly oppose (1) to Strongly favor (7)

Do you favor or oppose expanding government programs that help low income Americans?

Strongly oppose (1) to Strongly favor (7)

*Do you favor or oppose government efforts to reduce the number of illegal immigrants in the country?
(Study 2: Do you favor or oppose giving illegal immigrants in the country a path to citizenship?)*

Strongly oppose (1) to Strongly favor (7)

Do you favor or oppose deporting immigrants who are in the country illegally?

Strongly oppose (1) to Strongly favor (7)

Do you favor or oppose building a wall along the border with Mexico to prevent illegal immigration?

Strongly oppose (1) to Strongly favor (7)

Manipulation Check

Before moving on, we'd like to ask you if you remember the main point of the argument you read on the preceding page. What was the main point of the text you just read?

Abortion should be legal (1)

Abortion should be illegal (2)

Government should work to increase income [Study 2: economic] equality (3)

Government should not work to increase income [Study 2: economic] equality (4)

Government should decrease illegal immigration (5)

Government should improve treatment of illegal immigrants (6)

Emotions

How does the argument you just read make you feel? Please move the slider up or down to indicate the location that shows how you feel.

Enthusiastic, hopeful, proud, anxious, nervous, worried, angry, outraged, disgusted

Quality Ratings

Please evaluate the QUALITY of the argument you just read by assigning it a letter grade. Be as objective as possible, leaving your own opinions to the side.

A+ (1) to F (6)

How WEAK or STRONG do you believe the argument you just read is? Again, please be as objective as possible, leaving your own opinions to the side.

Extremely strong (1) to Extremely weak (7)

Counterarguments

Do you have any information or arguments in OPPOSITION to the perspective you just read? If you would like to mention any counterarguments or criticisms, please record them ONE-BY-ONE in the boxes below. If you do not have any opposing considerations, that's okay. Just leave the boxes empty.

Supporting Arguments (Study 2 only)

Do you have any additional information or arguments in SUPPORT of the perspective you just read? If you would like to mention any supporting arguments, please record them ONE-BY-ONE in the boxes below. If you do not have any supporting considerations to add, that's okay. Just leave the boxes empty.

Study 1 Supplementary Tables & Figures

Table A1: Emotion Mediation Equations for Quality Ratings & Counterarguments DVs – Study 1

	DV = Emotion			DV = Quality Rating		DV = Counterarguments	
	Equation 1			Equation 2	Equation 3	Equation 2	Equation 3
	Anger	Anxiety	Enthusiasm				
Prior Attitude	1.25*** (0.15)	0.61*** (0.12)	1.10*** (0.16)	0.98*** (0.14)	0.31* (0.13)	1.10*** (0.16)	0.59*** (0.12)
Issue Assigned	0.14* (0.07)	0.10* (0.05)	0.07 (0.07)	0.17*** (0.06)	0.11 (0.23)	0.26*** (0.07)	0.21* (0.10)
Age	-0.28* (0.13)	-0.16 (0.10)	-0.07 (0.13)	-0.14 (0.11)	-0.04 (0.06)	-0.16 (0.13)	-0.05 (0.05)
White	-0.02 (0.04)	-0.00 (0.03)	-0.02 (0.04)	0.01 (0.04)	0.01 (0.01)	-0.09* (0.04)	-0.08 (0.06)
Female	-0.03 (0.04)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.07 (0.04)	0.00 (0.03)	0.03 (0.02)	-0.06 (0.04)	-0.05*** (0.01)
Education	-0.19 (0.10)	-0.20** (0.07)	-0.22* (0.10)	0.10 (0.09)	0.21** (0.05)	-0.06 (0.11)	0.02 (0.02)
Religiosity	-0.05 (0.08)	0.04 (0.06)	-0.05 (0.08)	-0.05 (0.07)	-0.02 (0.07)	-0.12 (0.08)	-0.10 (0.06)
PID	-0.06 (0.10)	-0.02 (0.08)	0.04 (0.10)	-0.01 (0.09)	-0.00 (0.04)	-0.08 (0.10)	-0.05 (0.03)
Constant	-0.52*** (0.11)	-0.25*** (0.08)	-0.53*** (0.12)	-0.63*** (0.10)	-0.33 (0.22)	-0.51*** (0.12)	-0.29* (0.14)
Anger					0.32*** (0.06)		0.39*** (0.06)
Anxiety					-0.01 (0.05)		-0.02 (0.03)
Enthusiasm					0.24*** (0.02)		0.03 (0.02)
N					296		296
R ²					0.522		0.378
Simulations for clustered SE					886		882

Note: OLS regression. Standard errors (in parentheses) clustered by issue group. * = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$, *** = $p < .001$.

Table A2. Direct Effects of Issue Preference & Indirect Effects of Anxiety – Study 1

	DV = Quality Rating		DV = Counterarguments	
	Parameter estimate	<i>p</i> -value	Parameter estimate	<i>p</i> -value
Direct Effect of Prior Attitude (ADE)	0.292	=.06	0.602	< .001
Indirect Effect of Anxiety (ACME)	0.003	=1	-0.009	=.82
Total Effect	0.295	=.06	0.593	< .001
Percent via Mediation	1%	=.98	2.1%	=.82
Sample Size	296		296	
Simulations	100		100	

Note: Controls include anger, enthusiasm, issue group, party identification, age, race, sex, education, and religiosity.

Table A3. Direct Effects of Issue Preference & Indirect Effects of Enthusiasm – Study 1

	DV = Quality Rating		DV = Counterarguments	
	Parameter estimate	<i>p</i> -value	Parameter estimate	<i>p</i> -value
Direct Effect of Prior Attitude (ADE)	0.321	<.001	0.621	<.001
Indirect Effect of Enthusiasm (ACME)	0.262	<.001	0.031	=.66
Total Effect	0.583	<.001	0.652	<.001
Percent via Mediation	43.7%	<.001	5.2%	=.66
Sample Size	296		296	
Simulations	100		100	

Note: Controls include anger, anxiety, issue group, party identification, age, race, sex, education, and religiosity.

Table A4. Direct Effects of Issue Preference & Indirect Effects of Anger, Study 1, Separated by Issue¹

Study 1 – Issue: Abortion

	DV = Quality Rating		DV = Counterarguments	
	Parameter estimate	<i>p</i> -value	Parameter estimate	<i>p</i> -value
Direct Effect of Prior Attitude (ADE)	0.37	= .14	0.96	< .01
Indirect Effect of Anger (ACME)	0.47	< .01	0.33	= .16
Total Effect	0.83	< .01	1.29	< .05
Percent via Mediation	52%	< .01	23%	= .14
Sample Size	100		100	
Simulations	100		100	

Note: Controls include anxiety, enthusiasm, party identification, age, race, sex, education, and religiosity.

Study 1 – Issue: Economic Equality

	DV = Quality Rating		DV = Counterarguments	
	Parameter estimate	<i>p</i> -value	Parameter estimate	<i>p</i> -value
Direct Effect of Prior Attitude (ADE)	-0.05	= .84	0.29	= .52
Indirect Effect of Anger (ACME)	0.37	< .01	0.52	< .05
Total Effect	0.32	= .14	0.82	= .08
Percent via Mediation	106%	= .14	56%	= .10
Sample Size	95		95	
Simulations	100		100	

Note: Controls include anxiety, enthusiasm, party identification, age, race, sex, education, and religiosity.

Study 1 – Issue: Illegal Immigration

	DV = Quality Rating		DV = Counterarguments	
	Parameter estimate	<i>p</i> -value	Parameter estimate	<i>p</i> -value
Direct Effect of Prior Attitude (ADE)	0.21	= .18	0.52	= .16
Indirect Effect of Anger (ACME)	0.68	< .05	0.69	< .05
Total Effect	0.89	< .01	1.21	< .01
Percent via Mediation	23%	= .18	57%	< .05
Sample Size	101		101	
Simulations	100		100	

Note: Controls include anxiety, enthusiasm, party identification, age, race, sex, education, and religiosity.

¹ In Study 1, the indirect effect sizes are similar across the three issue groups, although the percent (of the total effect) via mediation is less consistent. In drawing these comparisons, we focus on effect size rather than *p*-value, as these subgroup analyses are low-powered. This said, even in the subgroups, most of the mediation effects for anger remain significant at *p*<.05.

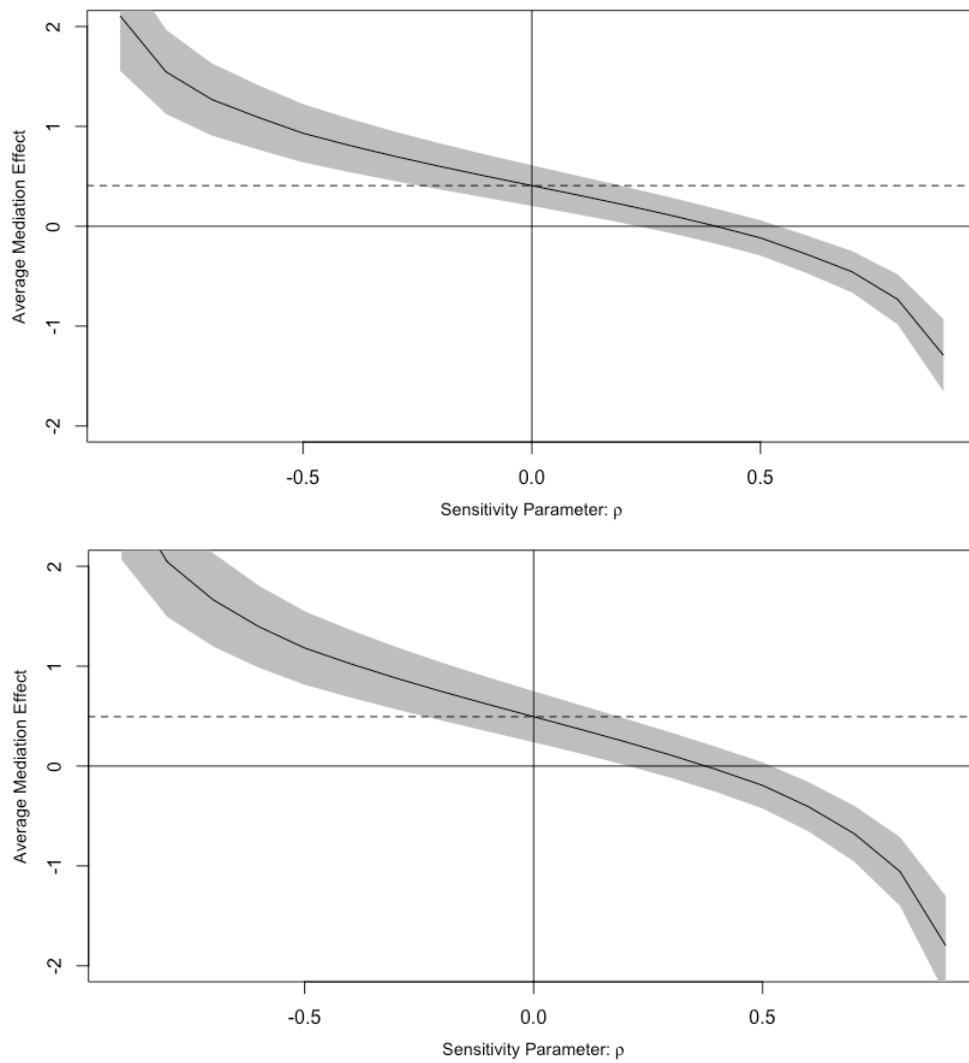


Figure A1: Study 1 sensitivity analyses for anger ACME. (Panel 1: Quality Rating; Panel 2: Counterarguments)

Appendix B: Study 2

Study 2 Issue Arguments

Abortion

Conservative Position	Liberal Position
The U.S. needs to reduce the number of women having abortions! The government should make abortions illegal.	The U.S. needs to ensure women have access to safe abortions! The government should end abortion restrictions.
Here are two reasons why:	Here are two reasons why:
#1 Fetuses in the womb are unborn children and have a right to live.	#1 Forcing women to bear children against their will makes them second-class citizens.
#2 Many women who have abortions suffer stress, and some experience negative physical consequences from the procedure.	#2 Many women who cannot obtain legal abortions suffer stress, and some seek out dangerous alternative means of ending their pregnancy.

Economic Equality

Conservative Position	Liberal Position
The U.S. government needs to stop trying to engineer economic equality! The government should reduce taxes on higher income earners and spend less on government welfare programs.	The U.S. government needs to do more to increase economic equality! The government should increase taxes on the wealthy and expand government programs that help lower income people.
Here are two reasons why:	Here are two reasons why:
#1 Individualism is a fundamental American value. Government welfare just takes money from hard working people and gives it to irresponsible people.	#1 Equality is a fundamental American value. Right now, the system is rigged in favor of wealthy people and against everyone else.
#2 Heavy taxation reduces people's incentives to work hard and to invest in new businesses.	#2 When the government provides citizens with a secure safety net, they are more likely to start a new business and to remain productive during hard times.

Illegal Immigration

Conservative Position	Liberal Position
<p>The U.S. needs to crack down on illegal immigration! The government should deport illegal immigrants who are here and make sure no more illegal immigrants enter the country.</p>	<p>The U.S. needs to improve its treatment of illegal immigrants! The government should stop deporting illegal immigrants and allow them to have a path to citizenship.</p>
<p>Here are two reasons why:</p>	<p>Here are two reasons why:</p>
<p>#1 People who are breaking the law by being in the country illegally should be punished, not rewarded, for their unlawful behavior.</p>	<p>#1 The United States is a nation of immigrants. We should not punish people for the “crime” of wanting to be American.</p>
<p>#2 Illegal immigrants are an economic burden on the country. They take jobs from Americans by working for low pay and use government services without paying taxes.</p>	<p>#2 Illegal immigrants contribute to the economy. They work low-wage jobs Americans do not want and pay more in taxes than they use in government services.</p>

Study 2 Supplementary Tables & Figures

Table A5: Emotion Mediation Equations for Quality Ratings, Supporting Arguments, & Counterarguments DVs – Study 2

	DV = Emotion			DV = Quality Rating		DV = Supporting Arguments		DV = Counterarguments	
	Equation 1			Equation 2	Equation 3	Equation 2	Equation 3	Equation 2	Equation 3
	Anger	Anxiety	Enthusiasm						
Prior Attitude	0.77*** (0.06)	0.48*** (0.05)	0.44*** (0.07)	0.75*** (0.05)	0.34*** (0.07)	0.21*** (0.05)	0.11*** (0.02)	0.65*** (0.06)	0.47*** (0.06)
Issue Assigned	-0.04 (0.04)	0.00 (0.04)	-0.06 (0.05)	0.05 (0.41)	0.07*** (0.01)	0.03 (0.04)	0.04 (0.11)	0.17*** (0.05)	0.17** (0.07)
Age	0.05 (0.05)	0.04 (0.05)	-0.01 (0.08)	0.01 (0.06)	-0.02 (0.02)	0.04 (0.06)	0.03 (0.02)	0.03 (0.07)	0.02 (0.03)
White	0.02 (0.04)	0.00 (0.02)	0.03 (0.04)	0.04 (0.03)	0.03 (0.02)	-0.05 (0.03)	-0.05*** (0.01)	-0.00 (0.03)	-0.00 (0.02)
Female	-0.05* (0.02)	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.06* (0.03)	-0.06** (0.02)	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.02)	0.02 (0.03)
Education	0.10 (0.06)	0.07 (0.05)	0.05 (0.07)	0.08 (0.06)	0.03 (0.05)	0.04 (0.06)	0.02 (0.02)	0.04 (0.07)	0.01 (0.05)
Religiosity	0.07 (0.04)	0.08** (0.03)	-0.11* (0.05)	0.08* (0.04)	0.05*** (0.01)	-0.01 (0.04)	-0.03 (0.04)	0.03 (0.05)	0.01 (0.04)
PID	0.12** (0.04)	-0.04 (0.04)	0.05 (0.05)	0.07 (0.04)	0.01 (0.03)	0.11** (0.04)	0.09*** (0.01)	0.10* (0.05)	0.07 (0.04)
Constant	-0.61*** (0.08)	-0.40*** (0.06)	-0.26** (0.08)	-0.59*** (0.07)	-0.28*** (0.08)	-0.20** (0.06)	-0.12* (0.05)	-0.56*** (0.08)	-0.41*** (0.09)
Anger					0.42*** (0.09)		0.21*** (0.06)		0.26** (0.11)
Anxiety					0.07 (0.06)		-0.08*** (0.01)		-0.01 (0.02)
Enthusiasm					0.09 (0.18)		0.04 (0.04)		0.02 (0.09)
N					548		548		548
R ²					0.60		0.113		0.302
Simulations for clustered SE					882		887		876

Note: OLS regression. Standard errors (in parentheses) clustered by issue group. * = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$, *** = $p < .001$.

Table A6. Direct Effects of Issue Preference & Indirect Effects of Anxiety – Study 2

	Quality Ratings		Supporting Args		Counterargs	
	Par est	<i>p</i> -value	Par est	<i>p</i> -value	Par est	<i>p</i> -value
Direct Effect Prior Attitude (ADE)	0.34	<.001	0.096	=.22	0.472	<.001
Indirect Effect Anxiety (ACME)	0.029	=.22	-0.037	=.28	-0.005	=.94
Total Effect	0.369	<.001	0.059	=.38	0.467	<.001
Percent via Mediation	0.084	=.22	-0.268	=.66	-0.008	=.94
Sample Size	548		548		548	
Simulations	100		100		100	

Note: Controls include anger, enthusiasm, issue group, party identification, age, race, sex, education, and religiosity.

Table A7. Direct Effects of Issue Preference & Indirect Effects of Enthusiasm – Study 2

	Quality Ratings		Supporting Args		Counterargs	
	Par est	<i>p</i> -value	Par est	<i>p</i> -value	Par est	<i>p</i> -value
Direct Effect Prior Attitude (ADE)	0.345	<.001	0.115	=.06	0.473	<.001
Indirect Effect Enthusiasm (ACME)	0.042	<.001	-0.022	=.28	-0.013	=.56
Total Effect	0.386	<.001	0.093	=.10	0.460	<.001
Percent via Mediation	0.110	<.001	-0.253	=.34	-0.020	=.56
Sample Size	548		548		548	
Simulations	100		100		100	

Note: Controls include anger, anxiety, issue group, party identification, age, race, sex, education, and religiosity.

Table A8. Direct Effects of Issue Preference & Indirect Effects of Anger, Study 2, Separated by Issue²

Study 2 – Issue: Abortion

	DV = Quality Rating		DV = Supporting Arguments		DV = Counterarguments	
	Parameter Estimate	<i>p</i> -value	Parameter Estimate	<i>p</i> -value	Parameter Estimate	<i>p</i> -value
Direct Effect of Prior Attitude (ADE)	0.34	< .01	0.14	= .40	0.24	< .05
Indirect Effect of Anger (ACME)	0.20	< .01	0.28	< .01	0.41	< .01
Total Effect	0.53	< .01	0.43	< .01	0.64	< .01
Percent via Mediation	38%	< .01	69%	< .01	64%	< .01
Sample Size	176		176		176	
Simulations	100		100		100	

Note: Controls include anxiety, enthusiasm, party identification, age, race, sex, education, and religiosity.

Study 2 – Issue: Economic Equality

	DV = Quality Rating		DV = Supporting Arguments		DV = Counterarguments	
	Parameter Estimate	<i>p</i> -value	Parameter Estimate	<i>p</i> -value	Parameter Estimate	<i>p</i> -value
Direct Effect of Prior Attitude (ADE)	0.22	< .05	0.21	= .24	0.66	< .01
Indirect Effect of Anger (ACME)	0.15	< .01	0.12	< .05	0.09	= .20
Total Effect	0.37	< .01	0.34	= .06	0.76	< .01
Percent via Mediation	38%	< .01	35%	= .08	12%	= .20
Sample Size	191		191		191	
Simulations	100		100		100	

Note: Controls include anxiety, enthusiasm, party identification, age, race, sex, education, and religiosity.

² The observed trends across the three issue groups are very similar with respect to Quality; however, mediation effects for Counterarguments and, especially, Bolstering are noticeably weaker in the Economic Equality and Immigration groups. We speculate that the cause may be that these latter two issues—relative to Abortion—are less familiar to participants, meaning that angry participants have fewer arguments/considerations at the ready to serve as rhetorical ammunition.

Study 2 – Issue: Illegal Immigration

	DV = Quality Rating		DV = Supporting Arguments		DV = Counterarguments	
	Parameter Estimate	<i>p</i> -value	Parameter Estimate	<i>p</i> -value	Parameter Estimate	<i>p</i> -value
Direct Effect of Prior Attitude (ADE)	0.15	= .16	0.13	= .20	0.41	< .05
Indirect Effect of Anger (ACME)	0.20	< .01	0.07	= .36	0.03	= .80
Total Effect	0.35	< .01	0.20	= .14	0.45	< .01
Percent via Mediation	59%	< .01	31%	= .42	4%	= .80
Sample Size	181		181		181	
Simulations	100		100		100	

Note: Controls include anxiety, enthusiasm, party identification, age, race, sex, education, and religiosity.

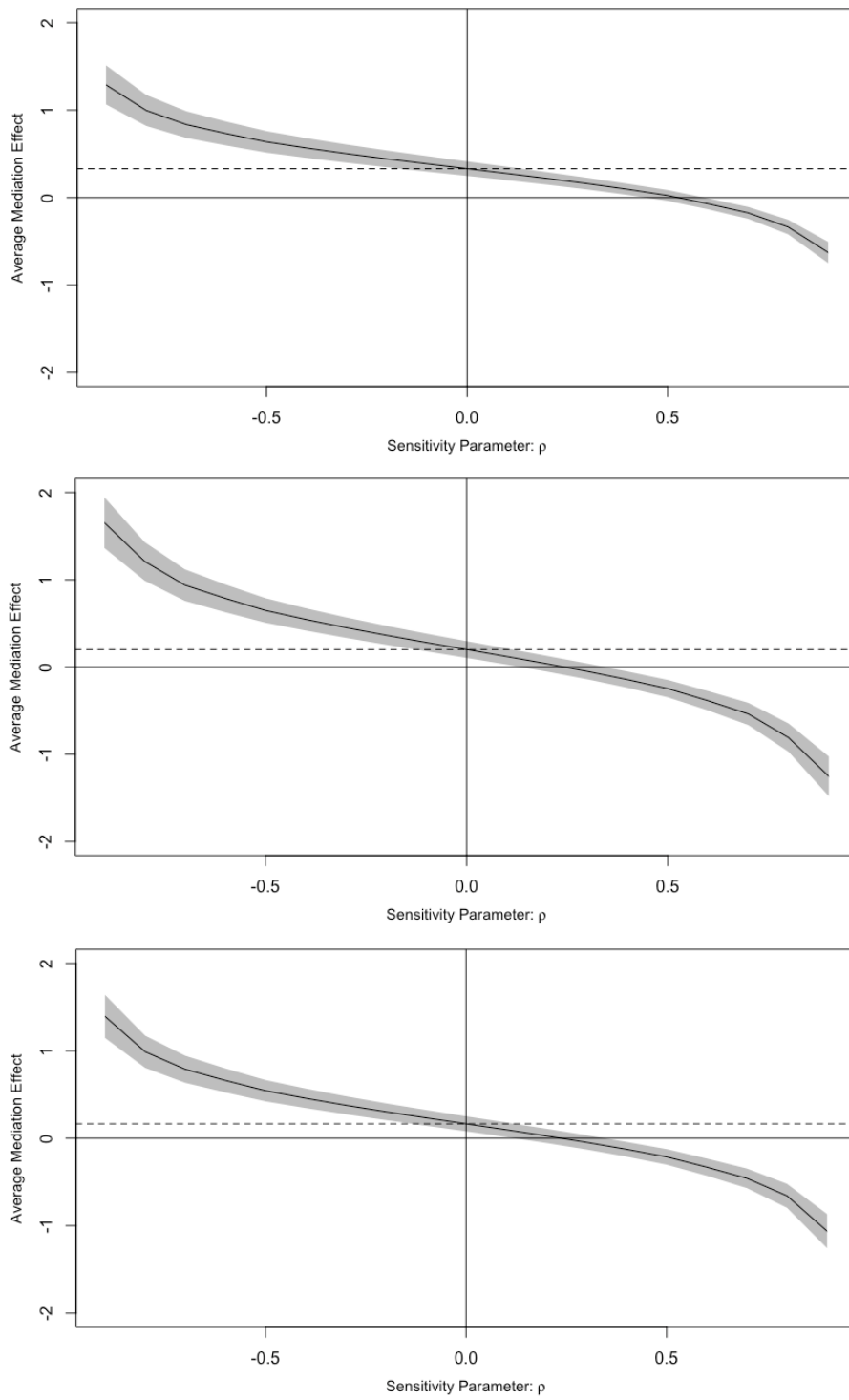


Figure A2: Study 2 sensitivity analyses for anger ACME. (Panel 1: Quality Rating; Panel 2: Counterarguments; Panel 3: Supporting arguments)

Appendix C: Issue Randomization and Excluded Participants

In Study 1, all participants responded to item batteries on all three issues and then were randomly assigned to receive pro / con arguments associated with just one issue. In Study 2, to reduce instrument length, participants were randomly assigned to one issue and received issue-item batteries and then pro / con arguments associated with that issue.

After receipt of each issue argument (pro and con), we asked one multiple-choice manipulation check question (see Appendix A) to understand whether participants were paying attention to the stimuli. Those who incorrectly responded to *both* manipulation checks were excluded from analyses. Below, we report the final N for each issue group as well as the number of participants who were excluded from data analyses due to failing the manipulation check.

We checked the data to ensure that issue groups were balanced for age, sex, race (white), education, and party identification, both before and after excluding participants. We also examined the data to be sure there were no systematic patterns among those excluded due to the manipulation check. All differences were statistically insignificant, above the conventional threshold of $p > .10$. We used Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and χ^2 tests, as appropriate, to test for differences.

	Study 1		
	Abortion	Economic Inequality	Illegal Immigration
Final group size	94	87	90
Excluded due to check	9	13	11

	Study 2		
	Abortion	Economic Inequality	Illegal Immigration
Final group size	191	213	183
Excluded due to check	17	10	27

Appendix D: Design Differences from Lodge & Taber

In many respects, our study designs resemble those reported in Taber and Lodge (2006) and Lodge and Taber (2013). Issue attitudes were measured prior to exposure to issue arguments and again afterward. Participants all read “both sides” of an issue. Participants rated the quality of the issue arguments and were given the opportunity to counterargue.

The major differences between designs were as follows. First, while we followed standard norms for measuring issue attitudes, our measures were not as extensive (including only three measures each). Second, given the possibility that study instructions may bias results in unexpected ways, we kept instructions short and to the point. For example, we did not tell participants they would have to “explain the controversy” to others (Lodge and Taber, 2013, p. 156). However, similar to Lodge and Taber, participants were instructed (in the rating questions) to “be as objective as possible, leaving your own opinions to the side.” Third, we did not analyze participant response times, given their ambiguous meaning in MR studies, or include an information search component. Rather, we focused on counterarguing and introduced a new component—bolstering. Fourth, in the interest of better demonstrating bias in response to objective information, the arguments presented to participants placed somewhat greater emphasis on providing factual information and logical arguments in support of an issue position. This information appeared in numbered lists to improve understanding and retention.