

# The Psychology of Opinion Change

NC Performance Management Academy  
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David Yokum  
[bio](#) | [podcast](#)

## learning objectives

- Why do we struggle to reason and argue objectively?
- What can we do about it?

motivated reasoning

## *Dartmouth vs. Princeton*



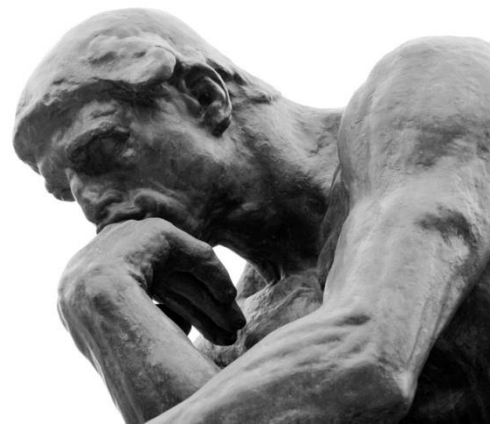
# Motivated Reasoning

basic theory

- Motivation affects reasoning by altering which cognitive processes are used for accessing, constructing, and evaluating beliefs.



accuracy

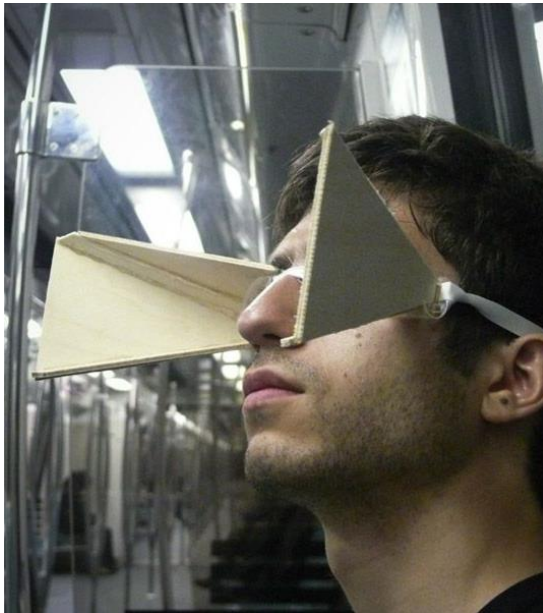


particular, directional  
conclusion

# Directional Motivation illusion of objectivity

- Attempt to rationally construct a justification for the desired conclusion.

selective perception



cherry pick memory



lopsided argument





# Selective Perception



# Selective Perception

experiment

## Abortion Clinic Condition

Outside the reproductive health clinic 15 minutes before it was scheduled to open.

Scene at the entrance of clinic. Patient approaches but does not enter.

## Recruitment Center Condition

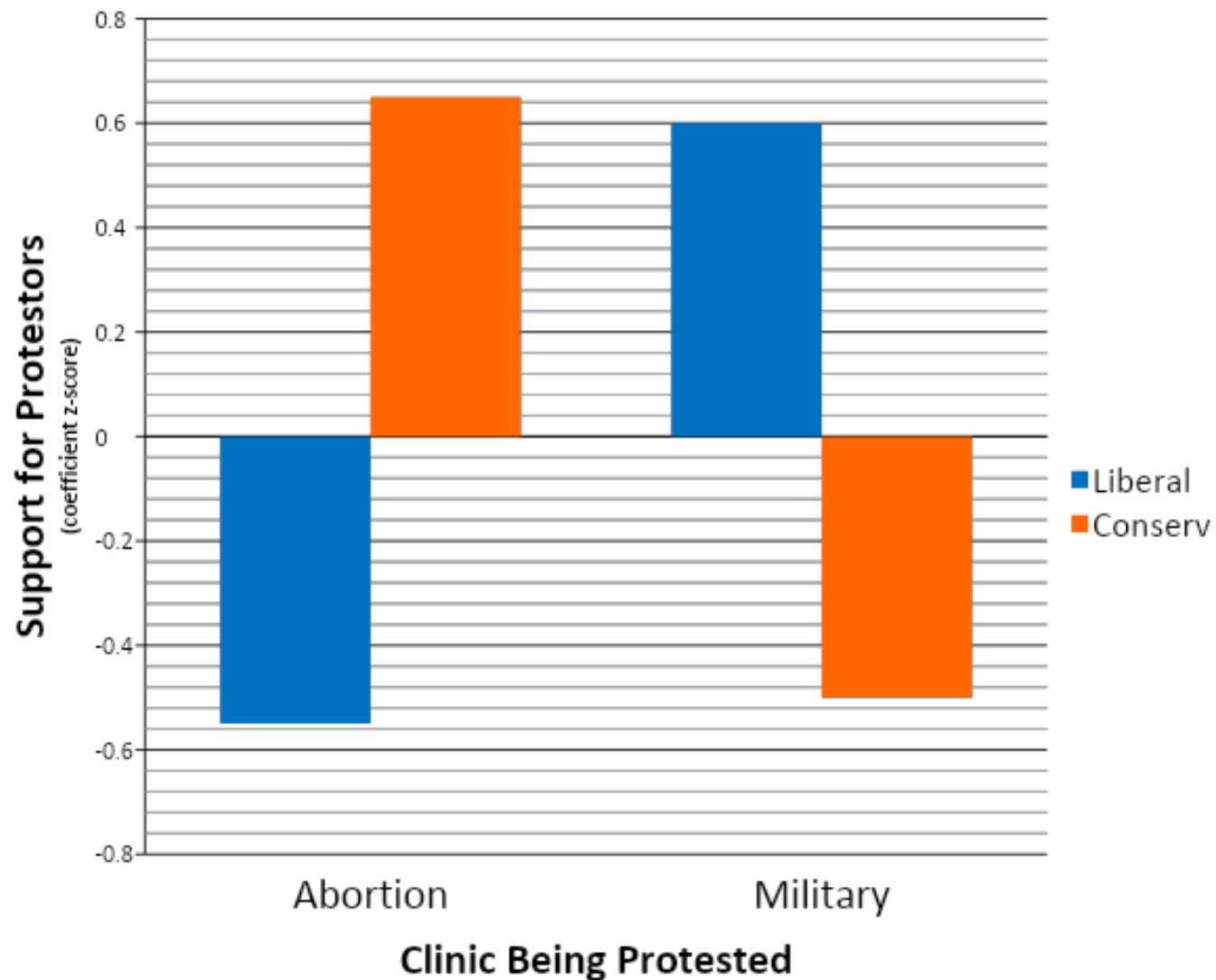
Outside the campus recruitment center 15 minutes before it was scheduled to open.

Scene at the entrance of recruitment center. Student approaches but does not enter.



# Selective Perception

results



# Cherry Pick Memory

rules

$N \approx 350$  undergraduates



highly educated

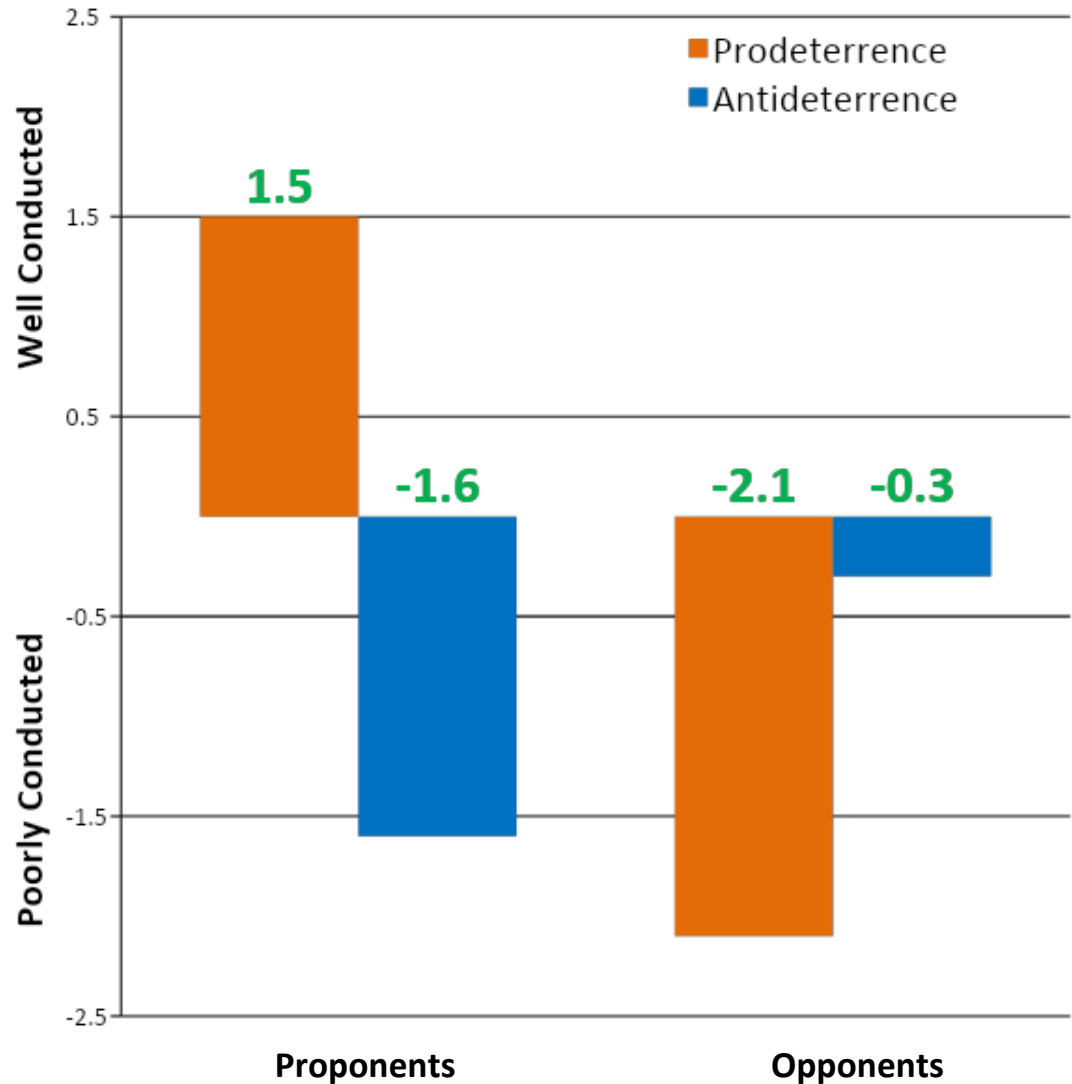


streetwise

# Lopsided Argument

Palmer and Crandall (1977) compared murder rates in 10 pairs of neighboring states with different capital punishment laws. In 8 of the 10 pairs, murder rates were **lower** in the state with capital punishment. This research **supports** the deterrent effect of the death penalty.

Palmer and Crandall (1977) compared murder rates in 10 pairs of neighboring states with different capital punishment laws. In 8 of the 10 pairs, murder rates were **higher** in the state with capital punishment. This research **opposes** the deterrent effect of the death penalty.



pause to discuss

thinking with data

# research integrity

- $P$ -hacking
- HARKing
- File drawer problem



what to do about it?



pre-analysis plans

# pre-analysis plans

The screenshot shows the Open Science Framework (OSF) interface for a project titled "DC Body-Worn Camera Evaluation". The top navigation bar includes "Open Science Framework", "Dashboard", "My Projects", "Browse", a search icon, and a user profile for "David Yokum". The project title is highlighted in blue. Below the title, there are tabs for "Files", "Wiki", "Analytics", "Registrations", "Forks", "Contributors", and "Settings". The project is currently set to "Private".

**THE lab @ DC** DC Body-Worn Camera Evaluation

Contributors: **David Yokum**, Anita Ravishankar, Alexander Coppock, Heidi Fieselmann  
Affiliated Institutions: The Lab @ DC  
Date created: 2016-07-01 10:25 AM | Last Updated: 2017-02-01 01:36 PM  
Category: Project  
Description: A randomized controlled trial of the Police Body-Worn Camera Program of the Metropolitan Police Department of the District of Columbia.  
License: No license

**Wiki** [↗](#)  
No wiki content

**Files** [↗](#)  
Click on a storage provider or drag and drop to upload  
Filter ⓘ  
Name ^ v Modified ^ v  
DC Body-Worn Camera Evaluation  
- OSF Storage  
+ Pre-Analysis Plan (PAP)

**Citation** osf.io/p6vuh [v](#)

**Components** [Add Component](#) [Link Projects](#)  
No components have been added to this project.

**Tags**  
add a tag

## benefits of pre-analysis plans

1. Enhance research integrity.
2. Promote project management best practices.
3. Enhance political integrity.

# stakeholder engagement



Q&A and discussion

exercise

## practice a pre-analysis plan

You're the Mayor. Your city is piloting a new police body-worn camera program. You'll need to eventually decide whether to continue and expand funding for the entire police department.

1. What outcome(s) do you measure?
2. Which officers do you include in the study?
3. How long do you collect data?
4. How big of an effect(s) is needed for you to decide to scale the program?

For context, let's assume you have 1,000 officers, and last year there were 968 reported use-of-force incidents (of which 9 were gun shots, 2 of which were fatal).



Q&A and discussion