Personal Narratives Build Trust in Ideological Conflict

David Hagmann¹, Julia A. Minson¹, & Catherine Tinsley²

¹ Harvard Kennedy School, Harvard University
² McDonough School of Business, Georgetown University

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Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to David Hagmann, Harvard Kennedy School, Taubman 362, Cambridge, MA 02138. E-mail: david_hagmann@hks.harvard.edu
Abstract

Working with people who hold opposing ideological views can be challenging, as they are often perceived as less capable and less trustworthy than those who share one’s own positions. Across five preregistered experiments (combined n = 3,423), we find that participants view those who share personal stories as more trustworthy than those who share data-driven information or stories about a third party. The perception of trustworthiness is mediated by the extent to which the speaker engages in self-revelation and is greater when the narrative reveals hardship experienced by the author. We further show that people prefer to work on a task relying on trust with someone who shared a personal narrative but prefer the author of a data-driven argument when the task involves cognitive abilities. Finally, we show that greater perceived trustworthiness also emerges in response to naturalistic messages written by untrained authors, as rated by a nationally representative sample.

Keywords: narratives, trust, ideological polarization, information

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Introduction

Trust plays a fundamental role in our personal, professional, and civic lives: it facilitates cooperation (McAllister, 1995) and increases the likelihood of reaching an agreement in bargaining (Valley, Moag, & Bazerman, 1998). Organizations benefit in myriad ways when trust is present and suffer when it is absent (see Kramer, 1999 for a review). The absence of trust can motivate retaliation (Bies & Tripp, 1996) and bring down entire organizations (Gillespie & Dietz, 2009). More broadly, trust is required for democratic societies to enact good policies (Slovic, 1993). The centrality of trust for many important outcomes is perhaps best captured by Arrow (1974), who calls it the “lubricant of a social system.”

Trusting others has become increasingly challenging, however, as society is characterized by more bitter and rancorous partisan polarization (Dimock, Doherty, Kiley, & Oates, 2014; Klein, 2020). Polarization has been shown to directly reduce trust in members of the other political party (Banda & Kirkland, 2018; Hetherington & Rudolph, 2015). More broadly, people hold negative associations with regard to people who ascribe to opposing ideologies, are less willing to hire them even if they are more qualified for a job, and allocate fewer resources to them in economic games (Iyengar & Westwood, 2015). People who think their political views differ from those of their neighbors feel less attached to their community and are less likely to believe that people in their area can be trusted (Ritter, 2020). In sum, growing political polarization appears to have had a negative impact on trust and related outcomes.

Extensive work has sought to reduce polarization by increasing contact among partisans from the opposite sides of the political divide. A recent meta-analysis of research grounded in Allport (1954)’s contact hypothesis finds support for the idea that exposing opposing groups (generally racially or ethnically different) to each other decreases their
reciprocal prejudice (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Yet, it is unclear that this contact solution works for opposing partisan groups. For example, when Bail et al. (2018) incentivized Twitter users to follow accounts of politicians from the opposing party, they found that those users ended up with more—and not less—polarized views. This research suggests that although it may be tempting to attempt to rectify polarization by simply increasing exposure to those with opposing views, the structure of the contact and content of the exchange likely matter.

Working across the ideological divide poses challenges beyond the simple disagreement on the focal policy topic. People ascribe more extreme beliefs to those who hold opposing political views (Robinson, Keltner, Ward, & Ross, 1995; Van Boven, Judd, & Sherman, 2012; Westfall, Boven, Chambers, & Judd, 2015; Yudkin, Hawkins, & Dixon, 2019), expect interacting with them to be more painful than it turns out to be in reality (Dorison, Minson, & Rogers, 2019), and reach worse agreements in integrative bargaining (Keltner & Robinson, 1993). People are “naive realists” (Ross & Ward, 1995, 1996), who generally believe in the accuracy and objectivity of their own views, even on topics which are hotly contested. When faced with information that challenges their view, they are less likely to adjust their beliefs (and, indeed, may become even more convinced that their original belief is correct) when it comes from those who hold a different political ideology (Nyhan & Reifler, 2010). Because people tend to be blind to their own biases, while acutely aware of any bias in others (Pronin, Lin, & Ross, 2002), they tend to attribute disagreement to lack of information, lack of objectivity or outright malevolence on the part of those who disagree. Not surprisingly, such attributions do not contribute to a harmonious work environment. For example, recent work by Marks, Copland, Loh, Sunstein, and Sharot (2019) finds that people prefer to receive advice on a skill-based task from someone who shares their political views, even when the task is unrelated to politics. In related research, workers hired for a non-political transcription task demanded a higher wage when the company’s founders were affiliated with the opposing political party (McConnell, Margalit, Malhotra, & Levendusky, 2018).
In the present research, we examine a path through which contact with opposing political partisans can increase their perceived trustworthiness. We propose that the type of evidence an individual offers in support of their beliefs influences how they are perceived by those who disagree with them. Specifically, we theorize that trust is increased when people present arguments for their point of view by relying on personal narratives, rather than drawing on data-driven information. We test this hypothesis across five experiments, finding that individuals report more trust and are more willing to collaborate with holders of opposing views when those individuals argue for their policy beliefs by relying on self-revelatory stories rather than quantitative information or, in 2 studies, stories of others.

Personal Narratives

Narratives, or stories, have enjoyed longstanding interest across the social sciences and the humanities. With some authors arguing that storytelling is one of the defining features of the human species (Gottschall, 2012), this attention may be well deserved. Shiller (2017), similarly, argues that stories occupy a central position in economic life: our behavior may be driven more by stories told around the kitchen table than by abstract economic data.

Recent field research has examined the effectiveness of stories and anecdotes for changing behavior and beliefs. For example, some popular telenovelas in Brazil have featured families with fewer children than is typical in society. Taking advantage of variation in when these series became available in different parts of the country, La Ferrara, Chong, and Duryea (2012) find that exposure reduced fertility rates by 5%. In the United States, the show “16 and Pregnant” has been estimated to decrease teen births by 4% and was associated with increased searches for contraceptive use and abortions (Kearney & Levine, 2015).

Broockman and Kalla (2016) found that a brief conversation with a canvasser who shared personal information about their transgender experience shifted attitudes on transgender rights. Relatedly, Meisel et al. (2016) find that readers of a medical newsletter are more likely to click a link for more information if the excerpt features a protagonist (a particular
physician facing a dilemma) than when it offers information about general guidelines.

These recent findings connect to a larger literature on the persuasiveness of exemplars and anecdotal information over statistical and base rate data (e.g. De Wit, Das, & Vet, 2008; Jenni & Loewenstein, 1997; Kahneman & Tversky, 1972). At a high level, a recent meta-analysis of this literature finds that anecdotal information is more persuasive than statistical information in high-threat or mortality related contexts (e.g. information related to the person’s health), but less persuasive in low-threat contexts (Freling, Yang, Saini, Itani, & Rashad Abualsamh, 2020).

The precise mechanism underlying the persuasive power of anecdotes is elusive. Some scholars have focused on their concrete and emotional nature (Heath & Heath, 2007), while others have pointed out the fact that are identifiable. For example, people who read fictional stories report imagining themselves in the story and identifying with the characters (Green & Brock, 2000). This “transportation” into the story has been suggested to decrease counter-arguing against the information being presented (Dal Cin, Zanna, & Fong, 2004), although experimental evidence on this remains limited and inconclusive (Niederdeppe, Shapiro, & Porticella, 2011).

Importantly, for our purposes, research has not examined the interpersonal or relational consequences of formulating an argument in terms of a personal narrative. While persuasion may often be the objective of those engaging in debate (Mercier & Sperber, 2011), many of our most important activities involve repeated interactions. When discussing topics with family members or co-workers, maintaining or establishing a congenial relationship may outweigh the value of winning an argument. Thus, persuading the other party is often neither the sole nor the most important objective. Rather, individuals have to find ways to establish and maintain a threshold of mutual trust, even if persuasion is unattainable, in order to function successfully and ongoingly within our required interdependence.
Personal stories may offer one avenue for doing so. In the present work, we define personal narratives as representing a sub-category of anecdotes, where the protagonist of the anecdote is also the story-teller. We propose that this special category of anecdote could be critical to building and maintaining trust between two people whose disagreements might otherwise tear them apart. From a strictly rational perspective, this hypothesis is somewhat counter-intuitive, as it is quite easy to manufacture a false personal narrative that would be difficult for the receiver to fact-check. Verifying the veracity of someone’s personal narrative is likely to be more difficult than verifying a claim involving publicly known facts. Yet, we hypothesize and show supporting evidence for the idea that when a disagreeing other expresses her opposing convictions using a personal narrative, the self-disclosure enhances trust.

Self disclosure is central to relationship formation and development (Altman & Taylor, 1973) as the act of revealing personal details makes people appear more warm and trusting compared with those who do not self-disclose (Ajzen, 1977; Traeger, Strohkorb Sebo, Jung, Scassellati, & Christakis, 2020). A person who reveals truthful details about herself has loosened her personal boundaries and risked rejection or other negative feedback from a listener (Kelly & McKillop, 1996). This vulnerability reveals a trusting nature making her more likable. On the flip-side, those who do not self-disclose are sometimes thought of as more deceptive (John, Barasz, & Norton, 2016; Lane & Wegner, 1995) because they denied others personal information (Margolis, 1974).

Meta-analytic summaries of the disclosure literature confirm that those who self-reveal are more likable (Collins & Miller, 1994). Moreover, the depth of someone’s self-disclosure, meaning the intimacy of the revelations, moderates this effect such that those who take more of a risk by revealing more hardship are perceived as more likable (although there is a limit whereby extreme intimacy given the setting is deemed inappropriate and negatively judged, Collins & Miller, 1994).
Although prior research demonstrates a link between self-disclosure and likability, we go one step further to argue that self-disclosure will also make a protagonist appear more trustworthy. Trust is built on reciprocity (Blau, 1964), such that the stronger the reciprocal actions, the greater the mutual trust. Social exchange norms suggest a trusting protagonist compels a level of trustworthiness in the receiver, who again through normative exchange projects a trustworthiness to the protagonist. Said more simply, the psychologically reciprocal nature of trust suggests that those who are trusting are thought to be, themselves, more trustworthy (Jeong, Minson, & Gino, 2020; Malhotra & Murnighan, 2002; Ostrom, 2003; Schweitzer & Kerr, 2000). Therefore, people who use personal narratives, disclosing details about themselves to reveal how they come to hold a particular view, should be viewed as more trustworthy than those who do not. Personal narratives can help interpersonal trust even in the face of ideological divisions.

Research Overview

We present the results of five experiments wherein we experimentally manipulate whether an argument is presented in the form of a personal narrative or grounded in objective information. We then measure the interpersonal inferences regarding the author of the argument, focusing in particular on perceptions of trust and willingness to collaborate in the future.

In our studies, we construct messages that convey identical information either quantitatively (e.g. the effect of an increase in the minimum wage on employment) or as a narrative (e.g. how an individual benefited from a minimum wage increase). Moreover, in Studies 2-4, we contrast stories told by the author about herself (“personal narrative”) with those the author tells about a third party (which we term “anecdotal narrative”). Anecdotal narratives allow us to capture all the stylistic features of a personal narrative, but alter the protagonist of the story to be an individual who is distinct from the speaker. We can then draw a distinction between the communication style (narrative versus quantitative
information) and inferences about the protagonist (self versus other).

In the remainder of this paper, we will refer to personal narratives simply as “narratives,” and anecdotal narratives as “anecdotes” for sake of brevity. Arguments featuring statistics, reports, research, and other factual information will be referred to as “data-driven” information. All data-driven arguments in our studies (except for Study 5, in which participants write their own messages) offer truthful information on the basis of reputable sources. Narratives were constructed by matching the information in the data-driven arguments and presenting it in narrative form. As a result, both the narrative and quantitative versions of our stimuli contain identical information and we see little normative grounds on which individuals should trust the author of the narrative more than the author of the data-driven argument.

We find that participants rate the author of messages conveying a personal narrative as more trustworthy than those presenting identical arguments on the basis of objective information (Study 1). This finding is not merely the result of an aversion to data: when the argument presents both a personal narrative and data-driven information, the increased trust level persists. The effect of narratives on trust is partially mediated by the extent to which the author reveals potentially sensitive information about herself (Study 2), and narratives that express a hardship generate greater trustworthiness than those that do not (Study 3). When participants can choose to work with a disagreeing author who wrote either a personal narrative or an objective argument, they prefer the author of a narrative for tasks relying on trust, but the author of the objective argument for cognitively challenging tasks (Study 4). Finally, we show that people view authors who were instructed to write about how their personal experience supports their belief on a contentious topic as more trustworthy than those who were instead instructed to argue based on objective information (Study 5).
Open Science Statement

We report all sample sizes, data exclusions, all manipulations, and all measures in the studies. Screen captures of the experimental materials for all studies are available in the Supplemental Information. The complete data, code to reproduce all statistical analyses and figures in the manuscript, as well as the preregistration reports are available via OSF (https://osf.io/sb7mj/?view_only=6f6fe848a1304ca1b17f0e09c10eb727f6). All our studies were preregistered on AsPredicted.

Study 1

Our first study tests whether those who share a personal story are rated as more trustworthy than those who make the same argument on the basis of data-driven information. We further examine the effect of combining a personal narrative and a data-driven argument: does the increase in trustworthiness persist when claims based on data are added, or do data undermine the trust generated by the story? Trained communicators (politicians, business leaders, and public intellectuals) often introduce their position on an issue with a personal story before supporting it with statistics and data. However, prior work on the identifiable victim effect found that increases in charitable contributions that participants gave when they knew it targeted an individual beneficiary disappeared when statistical information was also included (Small, Loewenstein, & Slovic, 2007). This suggests that data-driven information can negate the impact that personal information (an identifiable victim) has on triggering people’s generosity. Hence, we expected that the gains from narratives could similarly disappear when combined with a data-driven argument.

Methods

We recruited 806 participants from Amazon Mechanical Turk who passed a simple comprehension check prior to assignment to experimental conditions. Participants began by reporting their attitudes on 5 statements related to employment in the United States.
Specifically, they were asked to report their view on the statement that “the federal government should increase the minimum wage to $15 an hour” (from strongly disagree to strongly agree on a 7-point scale). We then included 4 more items related to employment that were added as distractors (related to regulation for small businesses, unionization, a policy-goal of increasing employment even if only part-time, and a policy-goal of increasing full-time employment with good working conditions, even at the expense of more unemployment). Based on their response to the minimum wage question, participants were assigned to arguments opposing their position. Those who reported that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement were randomly assigned to one side.

While all participants received information opposing their position, the nature of the information differed across 4 conditions. In the “Narrative” condition, participants received a short paragraph that reflected the author’s own experience, presenting an argument for why an increase in the minimum wage is either beneficial or harmful. In the “Data-driven” condition, participants received identical arguments that instead conveyed information on the basis of studies and statistical figures. Finally, in two mixed conditions (“Narrative First” and “Data First”), participants received both messages, changing the ordering of the two. We present the narrative and data-driven arguments opposing an increase in the minimum wage in Table 1. Screenshots of all messages are shown in the Supplementary Information.

In all conditions participants then evaluated the messages and the author by responding to six questions on 5-point Likert scales (ranging from “not at all” to “extremely”). Four ratings related to trustworthiness: how trustworthy they thought the author of the message is, how sincere the author is, how likely they believe the information is to be true, and how misleading they think it is (reverse coded). The remaining two ratings related to expertise: how knowledgeable they thought the author is and how informed they thought they are on the topic of the minimum wage. As pre-registered, we combine the first four questions into a single measure of trustworthiness and the remaining two questions into
a measure of expertise. We then present them with the same statements from the beginning of the study, asking about their agreement on an increase in the federal minimum wage and other questions related to employment. We made no predictions about differences in attitude change between conditions and report these findings descriptively. The survey then concluded with demographic questions.

Results

The two measures of trustworthiness and expertise show high internal consistency (\(\alpha_{\text{Trustworthiness}} = 0.86, \alpha_{\text{Expertise}} = 0.88\)). We present participants’ evaluations on the two measures across the four conditions in Figure 1. Authors of data-driven arguments were indeed viewed as less trustworthy than those who present a personal narrative (\(t(400) = 5.86, p < .001\)). Moreover, combining data-driven and narrative information similarly led to higher perceived trustworthiness compared to the data-driven message only (\(t(403) = -5.25, p < .001\) if the data-driven information came first, and \(t(401) = -4.71, p < .001\) if the order was reversed). We observed no difference across the three messages that included the narrative (\(F(2,601) = 0.80, MSE = 0.70, p = .448\)), contrary to our prediction.\(^1\) We did not predict any differences on the perceived expertise of the author and did not find any across the four conditions (\(F(3,802) = 1.11, MSE = 0.78, p = .346\)).

Finally, we can look at how persuasive the messages were, although we did not preregister any treatment differences. On the 7-point Likert scale, participants revised their views on the minimum wage by an average of 0.45 points in the direction of the argument (\(p < 0.001\) difference from zero). We observe no difference between the data-driven and the narrative messages (\(t(400) = 0.07, p = .945\)) and between the data first and narrative first messages (\(t(402) = 1.16, p = .247\)). The narrative first condition, however, does lead to a

\(^1\)These results hold at the same level of statistical significance if we use only the item asking about the author’s perceived trustworthiness instead of the measure combining the four items.
Figure 1. Ratings of Trustworthiness and Expertise in Study 1. The narrative message was viewed as more trustworthy than the data-driven information. Moreover, the gains to trustworthiness persisted when the two types of information were combined. We observed no difference on perceived expertise of the author across the conditions. Error bars show 95% confidence intervals.
greater change in beliefs than either only the narrative or only the data-driven argument ($t(401) = 2.17, p = .030$ and $t(399) = 2.23, p = .026$, respectively). Moreover, perceived trustworthiness correlates significantly with persuasiveness ($t(804) = 9.48, p < .001$).

Discussion

Personal narratives increase trustworthiness compared to arguments conveying data-driven information. The gains in trust persist, contrary to our expectations, even if the two types of information are combined. Moreover, the order in which the information is presented does not affect perceived trustworthiness: our data suggest that readers seem to integrate both parts before making their judgment, rather than becoming skeptical of the narrative after reading the data-driven part.

Study 2

In Study 2, we test one potential psychological mechanism for why the authors of narratives may seem more trustworthy. We hypothesize that trust is boosted by stories that reveal personal and potentially sensitive information on the part of the speaker. While we may generally share more information with people whom we think of as trustworthy, due to the reciprocal nature of trust, people may draw the inverse inference here: that those who share such sensitive information are also more trustworthy (Jeong et al., 2020; Malhotra & Murnighan, 2002; Ostrom, 2003; Schweitzer & Kerr, 2000). We test our hypothesis using mediation analysis and predict that the extent to which the author appears to make herself vulnerable mediates the effect of narratives on trustworthiness.

Methods

We recruited 604 participants via Amazon Mechanical Turk who passed a comprehension check on the instructions at the beginning of the survey and prior to assignment to experimental condition.
The design followed closely that of Study 1: we presented participants with the identical statements related to employment in the United States and assigned them to a disagreeing message based on whether they supported or opposed increasing the federal minimum wage to $15 an hour. Participants were then also randomly assigned to one of three conditions: in the “Narrative” condition, they saw a message in which the author conveyed either the benefits or the harm that they experienced from an increase in the minimum wage. The “Data-driven” condition presented an argument paralleling the story, but relied on studies and statistics. Finally, we introduce an “Anecdote” condition, which is identical to the narrative condition, except the author recounts the experience of someone they know, rather than a personal experience. The messages closely resemble those of Study 1 (see Supplementary Information).

Participants were then asked to evaluate the author and content of the message using the identical 4 items to measure trustworthiness and 2 items measure expertise that were used in Study 1. In addition, we constructed a measure of self-disclosure using three items: how much the participant learned about the author, how much private information the author had revealed, and how embarrassed the author might be if the message became public. Participants responded to all items on 5-point Likert scales. We also included a further measure of closeness, in which participants selected one of 7 circles that differed in the extent to which they overlapped and that they believed best represented their relationship with the author of the message (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992). Participants completed the study by again reporting their attitudes related to the minimum wage and basic demographic information.

Results

As in our previous study, we found high internal consistency for measures of trustworthiness ($\alpha = 0.85$) and expertise ($\alpha = 0.90$). Our new measure of vulnerability also showed moderately high internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.63$).
Figure 2 presents the averages of all four ratings. We begin by looking at the measure of trustworthiness across the three conditions. Replicating our finding from Study 1, the author of the narrative was again rated as more trustworthy than the author of the data-driven message ($t(400) = 4.94, p < .001$). Moreover, the author of the narrative was also viewed as more trustworthy than the author of the anecdote ($t(401) = 4.25, p < .001$), suggesting the difference is not driven by the rhetorical style or an aversion to quantitative information. Indeed, there is no difference in trustworthiness between the data-driven and anecdotal message ($t(401) = 0.79, p = .429$).

Looking at the ratings of expertise, we again see that authors of narratives are viewed as equally informed as those who share data-driven information ($t(400) = 1.12, p = .265$). We did not make any predictions about the perceived expertise of the anecdote’s author, but find that they are viewed as less informed than both the authors of the narrative ($t(401) = 3.16, p = .002$) and the data-driven argument ($t(401) = 4.59, p < .001$).

Next, we turn our attention to the new measures of vulnerability and closeness. We predicted that authors of narrative messages would be viewed as more vulnerable than those of both data-driven and anecdotal information. Indeed, we find both to be the case ($t(400) = 15.22, p < .001$ and $t(401) = 8.49, p < .001$, respectively). We further find that authors of anecdotal information are viewed as more vulnerable than those of data-driven information ($t(401) = 6.13, p < .001$), but had made no predictions about this comparison. Finally, our measure of closeness does not suggest large differences across the message types: only the comparison between narratives and anecdotes was statistically significant ($t(401) = 2.65, p = .008$).

Next, we tested our prediction that perceptions of vulnerability statistically mediated the effect of condition assignment on trustworthiness. Figure 3 shows results consistent with partial mediation. We find that 27% of the effect of narratives on trustworthiness (95% CI [0.02, 0.64]) is mediated by perceptions of the author’s vulnerability.
In line with our prediction, we found that the author of a narrative message was rated as more vulnerable and more trustworthy than the writer of either a data-driven message or an anecdote. Furthermore this perceived vulnerability partially mediated the effect that relating a personal narrative has on evoking a sense of trustworthiness. This result may be somewhat irrational, since exhibiting vulnerability is a signal that the author trusts the message recipient, and does not say much about the author’s own trustworthiness. However,
prior work has highlighted the reciprocal nature of trust: we tend to trust those who have given their trust to us.

**Study 3**

Arguments can recount the hardship that characterizes the absence of a policy (e.g. the financial struggles resulting from a low-wage job) or the benefits that occurred when the policy changed (e.g. the absence of financial struggles after an increase in the local minimum wage). If trustworthiness is driven by self-disclosure and vulnerability, then we would expect that narratives involving hardships evoke greater trustworthiness. As in the previous study, in Study 3 we compare narratives to messages relaying data-driven information and to anecdotal accounts.

**Methods**

We recruited 1203 participants from Amazon Mechanical Turk who passed a three item comprehension check. Our design followed closely that of Study 2, with participants again
randomized to one of three messages opposing their view on an increase in the federal minimum wage. In addition, we further cross the message type with the valence of the message. For half the participants, the message was framed positively: the presence of a high minimum wage eased financial hardship for participants who opposed increasing the minimum wage. Those who favored an increase received information about how the absence of a high minimum wage kept prices lower and prevented layoffs. In the negative frame, the presence (absence) of a high minimum wage imposed hardship. Thus, positively framed messages conveyed the benefits of adopting a policy, while the negatively framed messages highlighted the cost of its absence.

As before, we included two measures, one for trustworthiness (4 items) and one for expertise (2 items). After eliciting the ratings of the message, we again asked participants about their attitudes toward the same statements and concluded the survey with basic demographic information.

Results

As in the previous two studies, the measures for trustworthiness and for expertise had high internal consistency ($\alpha_{trust} = 0.87$, $\alpha_{expertise} = 0.90$). The first three bars in the left panel of Figure 4 show average ratings of trustworthiness of the data-driven message (yellow), the narrative (blue), and the anecdote (green) for the negative framing. The authors of narratives were rated as more trustworthy than were those of data-driven messages ($t(377) = 3.62$, $p < .001$) and of anecdotes ($t(410) = 1.96$, $p = .051$), replicating our previous findings. We also find that authors of negative anecdotes were viewed as marginally more trustworthy than those of data-driven arguments, which we did not predict.

The next set of three bars shows the corresponding ratings when the message is in the positive frame. Here too, the authors of narratives were rated as more trustworthy than both those of data-driven messages ($t(421) = 3.45$, $p = .001$) and of anecdotes ($t(388) = 3.09$,
Moreover, the difference between data-driven and anecdotal messages disappears ($t(387) = 0.23, p = .819$).

Finally, we compared trustworthiness across the positive and negative framings. For each message type, we find that the negative frame evokes greater trustworthiness ($t(399) = 1.87, p = .062$ for data-driven message, $t(399) = 2.00, p = .046$ for narratives, and $t(399) = 3.58, p < .001$ for anecdotes).

The right panel of Figure 4 shows ratings for expertise across the experimental conditions, for which we did not pre-register predictions. We preregistered no predictions about such differences and report them as exploratory analyses. As in the previous two studies, we observed no difference between the data-driven message and the narrative in the negative framing ($t(377) = 0.28, p = .779$). Replicating the finding of Study 2, moreover, we find that authors of the anecdotal message are rated as having less expertise than either those of the data-driven or the narrative messages ($t(411) = 2.56, p = .011$ and $t(410) = 2.27, p = .024$, respectively). In the positive framing, the author of the data-driven message was viewed as more knowledgeable than that of the narrative and the anecdote ($t(421) = 2.13, p = .033$ and $t(387) = 3.39, p = .001$, respectively). We found no difference between narratives and anecdotes in this comparison ($t(388) = 1.26, p = .209$).

The next tests, reported in Table 2, test for the interaction between message type and message frame. For both trustworthiness (columns 1 and 2) and expertise (columns 3 and 4), we report a baseline model consisting of main effects as well as a model with an interaction with the message frame. Column 1 shows that across message framings, the narrative author is viewed as more trustworthy – and across message types, the positive frame is perceived as less trustworthy. The interaction model shows that the effect of message type on trust does not differ by message framing, however. Moreover, in the regression analysis, authors of narratives were no longer viewed as less expert than those of of objective messages (Model 3), while authors of anecdotes continue to be. We again observed a main effect of framing,
Figure 4. Study 3 ratings of messages. Narrative authors are rated as more trustworthy compared to the authors of data-driven messages. Error bars show 95% confidence intervals.

with the positive frame leading to lower ratings on expertise. Finally, we also observe no interaction between message type and message frame on expertise.

Discussion

Replicating our finding from Studies 1 and 2, we again found that authors of narrative messages were rated as more trustworthy than are those of data-driven messages. In addition, we found a strong main effect of presenting messages in a negative frame on trustworthiness as well as expertise. For example, talking about the difficulties of finding
employment after a minimum wage increase lead to greater trustworthiness than reporting the ease of finding work in the absence of such an increase.

**Study 4**

Our studies so far have relied on ratings and evaluations of hypothetical individuals. We now turn toward exploring the behavioral implications of our results on individuals’ willingness to collaborate with a holder of an opposing view. We follow procedures from our prior studies to expose participants to messages on a policy topic from authors who disagree with them. Participants then choose which author they prefer to work with on a series of tasks. This study allows us to evaluate the implications of our findings for future collaboration intentions. Furthermore, using a variety of tasks allows us to more precisely hone in on how far-reaching the beneficial effects of conveying a personal narrative are. We predicted that participants will prefer to collaborate with the author of a personal narrative when the task relies on trust, but will prefer the author of the message drawing on data-driven information when the task relies on cognitive performance.

**Methods**

We recruited 301 participants via Amazon Mechanical Turk for a within-subjects design. Participants began as before by reporting their attitude toward statements related to a minimum wage increase. They were then presented with the message of a “Blue” author who relied on data-driven information and that of a “Brown” author who relied on a personal narrative. Both messages contradicted the participant’s own position regarding a policy to increase the minimum wage. After rating the authors of both messages on trustworthiness and expertise on the topic, we introduced the participants to a series of four tasks. For each task, participants indicated on a 6-point Likert scale which of the two authors they preferred to be partnered with.

The task descriptions (presented in the Supplementary Information) made it apparent
that in two of the tasks, performance relied on trust between the partners. One of these
tasks was a trust game in which the participant could send money to the author, who would
then choose to split the gains or keep them to herself. The other trust-related task was an
advice game in which the participant would have to rely on the author to truthfully convey
information that the author is uniquely privy to. The remaining two tasks relied on
cognitive performance. One consisted of solving a Raven’s matrix, a task commonly used to
assess cognitive ability (Raven, 2000). The second task required participants to find two
numbers in a table adding up to the number 10 exactly. The study concludes with basic
demographic questions.

Results

We begin by looking at the now-familiar ratings of trustworthiness and expertise,
presented in Figure 5. As in our previous studies, we find that the author of the narrative
message were rated as more trustworthy than the author of the data-driven message in a
paired t-test comparison ($t(300) = 5.60, p < .001$). We again find no difference on perceived
expertise of the author ($t(300) = 1.11, p = .267$).

Next, we examined the fraction of times participants selected the author of the
narrative message in either the two cognitive ability or the two trust tasks. In line with our
preregistration, for any given participant, we averaged responses for each type of task. As
predicted, we find that participants have a stronger preference toward the narrative author
on trust tasks (3.62) than on the cognitive tasks (3.02, $t(300) = 7.52, p < .001$).

As an additional robustness check, we can also look at how often participants preferred
the author of the narrative message. On trust tasks, participants selected the author of the
narrative message 55% of the time, which is significantly higher than chance
($\chi^2(1, n = 602) = 7.25, p = .007$). Conversely, on the cognitive ability task, participants
selected the narrative author only 36% of the time (less frequently than chance,
Figure 5. Ratings for Study 4. In a within-subjects design, participants again rated the author of the narrative message as more trustworthy than the author of the data-driven message. We again observe no difference on perceived expertise of the author.
Discussion

In Study 4, we replicated our previous results, again finding that people rate authors of narrative messages as more trustworthy than those conveying data-driven information. Moreover, we found that participants preferred to work with the author of a narrative message on tasks that relied on trust and benevolence, whereas they preferred the author of data-driven information on a cognitive task. These results extend our prior findings by demonstrating the organizational implications of our effect. When a task demands trust, individuals are more willing to work with a partner who presented an opposing view in terms of a personal narrative. Furthermore, we also observed a benefit of using data-driven information. Although participants in our previous studies did not rate authors of data-driven messages as more expert, they now preferred to work with this individual on tasks that clearly required cognitive ability.

Study 5

In our studies so far, we have carefully crafted messages to provide the same informational content across data-driven and narrative accounts. However, outside of the laboratory, people may generate messages that differ substantially in content when recounting personal experiences or when arguing on the basis of data. Can lay people garner the trust benefits that we have documented in our studies by building their arguments around a personal narrative? In this study, we recruited participants in the laboratory and asked them to write about information that informs the view they hold on one of a selection of contentious political topics. Participants in our study were asked to write how their view is supported, either by their personal experience (“Narrative” condition) or by data-driven information, such as facts and statistics (“Data-driven” condition). A second set of participants, representative of the US population, then read these messages and evaluated the messages on trustworthiness and expertise.
Methods

Participants. Our study involves two sets of participants. We first recruited 514 participants as part of an in-person, omnibus study at a large research university. These participants generated the messages for a second set of participants to evaluate. We excluded 5 individuals who did not write a message, leaving us with a sample of 509 messages for analysis. We then opened recruitment to 700 participants via Lucid, a nationally representative online panel. We did not exclude any participants who completed the survey and were left with 705 participants.

Procedure.

Message Generation.

Participants were asked to report their agreement with statements related to 5 politically controversial issues, shown in Table 3. All responses were recorded on 7-point Likert scales ranging from “Strongly disagree” to “Strongly agree.” Participants were then randomly assigned to write either about how their belief was informed by “objective information” (“Data-driven” condition) or by their “personal experience” (“Narrative” condition). We allowed participants to choose the topic they wanted to write about (in order to avoid poor quality messages on unfamiliar topics), and asked them to write for a minimum of 7 minutes. Participants assigned to the Data-driven condition had access to Google in order to look for supporting information.

Message Evaluation.

Participants from our online panel were randomly assigned to one of the policy issues and asked to report their agreement with the relevant policy statement (using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from “Strongly disagree” to “Strongly agree”). Participants were then asked to evaluate 4 randomly selected messages related to that statement. The messages
were drawn from both conditions and could be in favor or opposed to the position endorsed in the statement.

Participants evaluated the messages first on criteria measuring adherence to instructions. In particular, we asked if the message was related to the statement (yes/no); whether the author agreed, disagreed, or expressed no view on the issue; whether the message contained an example of a story; and whether the statement relied on quantitative information. We then asked raters to evaluate the message on 3 dimensions: trustworthiness, expertise, willingness to interact with the author. We measured trust and expertise using the same items as before ($\alpha_{\text{Trust}} = 0.72, \alpha_{\text{Expertise}} = 0.89$). We then asked participants how willing they would be to discuss the topic with the author and how willing they would be to meet with the author, averaging those two responses for a willingness-to-interact measure ($\alpha_{\text{Interact}} = 0.86$).

After participants rated two messages, we introduced an attention check task by asking them to find two numbers adding up to 10 in a $4 \times 4$ table that they had to answer correctly to be able to proceed. After participants rated all 4 messages, the survey concluded with basic demographic questions.\footnote{We originally planned to exclude messages where the majority of raters thought the participant did not follow directions. However, while raters overwhelmingly agreed on what position on the issue the author of the message took, there was substantial disagreement on the two questions relating to the use of data and narratives. Our exclusion criteria would have excluded 121 of 509 messages that, upon review by a research assistant blind to the hypothesis, did comply with the instructions. Rather than arbitrarily choosing which set of ratings to believe, we report all analyses for the full sample of messages and raters.}

Results

Message Evaluations. We begin with a descriptive overview of the written messages, presented in Table 4. We observe that more participants in the Narrative condition wrote about Affirmative Action, while Marijuana was more frequently selected by those assigned to writing an argument based on data. Minority policing was rarely selected by either group. Overall, participants wrote fewer words in the Quantitative condition than
in the Narrative condition ($t(507) = 2.55, p = .011$), but this difference disappears when we condition on topic choice ($t(503) = 1.60, p = .110$).

![Average ratings for messages written by participants in the Quantitative condition (orange) and the Narrative condition (blue). Error bars show 95% confidence intervals.](image)

**Figure 6.** Average ratings for messages written by participants in the Quantitative condition (orange) and the Narrative condition (blue). Error bars show 95% confidence intervals.

Next, we shift our attention to the nationally representative sample of raters who evaluated the messages. Figure 6 shows the average ratings for author trustworthiness, participants’ willingness to meet the author, and perceptions of how knowledgeable the author is. Because each rater evaluated 4 messages, we analyze the results using linear regressions with standard errors clustered at the rater level.
We present our main analyses in Table 5. Our preregistered hypothesis is a significant, positive main effect of narratives on trustworthiness (Column 1). We further preregistered analyses, but did not specify hypotheses, for the main effects of the narrative condition on willingness to interact and expertise (Columns 3 and 5). We include additional regressions with controls for rater agreement as robustness checks (Columns 2, 4, and 6).

The first column shows that participants indeed evaluated narrative messages as more trustworthy than quantitative arguments ($p < 0.05$). The effect persists when we control for whether the rater agreed, disagreed, or had no opinion on the author’s position. Not surprisingly, raters saw authors as more trustworthy when they agreed with them ($p < 0.001$). The effect size of agreement also provides some context for the effect size of narratives. While an increase in ratings of 0.06 may seem small, it is approximately 13% of the effect of going from disagreeing with the author to agreeing with them.

The second and third columns show the corresponding regressions for the participant’s willingness to meet with the author. Narratives on their own only directionally increase such willingness, but the effect becomes significant when we control for agreement with the author. Respondents were 0.7 percentage points more willing to meet with someone who agreed with them than someone who disagreed ($p < 0.001$), and 0.09 points more willing if the author used a narrative. Thus, the effect of using a narrative is again about 13% of switching from disagreement to agreement.

Finally, columns four and five show raters’ perceptions of how knowledgeable the authors of the messages are. Consistent with the other two dimensions, we see that participants rate those with whom they agree as more knowledgeable than those who hold opposing views ($p < 0.001$). We do not see an effect of condition assignment, however, suggesting that a reliance on narratives versus quantitative information does not make the author seem less informed.
**Natural Language Analysis.** Next, we use natural language processing to classify the sentiment behind the messages the participants wrote. We use the “NRC” dictionary (Mohammad & Turney, 2013), which consists of over 10,000 words that were rated by people on whether they associated each word with one of 6 emotions and either a positive or negative sentiment. Importantly for our purposes, one of these emotions was “trust.” This allows us to calculate the number of words in a message that are associated with trust-related words found in the dictionary. For each message, we then created a proportion that is the number of trust words divided by the message’s total word count.\(^3\)

To see if words associated with trust occur more frequently in the Narrative versus the Quantitative condition, we conduct a series of OLS regressions where we use the experimental condition to predict the fraction of trust words in the message. Column 1 in Table 6 shows the baseline model with no additional controls. The constant shows that in the Quantitative condition, approximately 12% of words were associated with trust. This increased by 4 percentage points, or approximately 30%, in the Narrative condition \((p < 0.05)\).

It may be that messages related to some policy topics are more likely to refer to words associated with trust. If participants in the Narrative condition are more likely to write about those topics, then this may explain the correlation. Column 2 addresses this concern by adding fixed effects for the statement participants wrote about. We find that the effect of condition persists \((p < 0.01)\). Finally, we had observed that participants in the Narrative condition wrote slightly longer messages and higher fractions of words associated with trust might be a consequence of longer messages. Column 3 includes a fixed effect for word count and suggests the opposite is true: longer messages lead to lower fractions of words related to trust \((p < 0.001)\). Importantly for our analysis, however, being assigned to the narrative condition continued to be associated with a greater share of trust-related words \((p < 0.001)\).

As we expected, naturalistic messages differed on many other dimensions: Table 7...\(^3\) These analyses were not preregistered.
shows the same analysis as in Model 3 for the 5 other emotions in the NLC dictionary, along with the general positive and negative sentiments. Narrative messages also rely more on words associated with anticipation and joy, as well as with positive sentiment (all \( ps < 0.001 \)). It is not merely that narrative accounts are more emotional, however: they rely equally on anger and fear as data-driven messages, as well as on words related to negative sentiments. Finally, narratives appear to rely less on words associated with disgust.

**Discussion**

Using naturalistic, open-form text responses, we find that a group of nationally representative raters form more positive attributions about the writers of narrative messages than those of messages based on quantitative information. In particular, they view them as more trustworthy and are more willing to meet with them compared to those who expressed the reasoning for their belief with quantitative information. Our natural language analysis similarly suggests that authors of narrative messages rely more on words that are associated with trust than do authors of quantitative messages.

**General Discussion**

Across five experiments, we find that people view authors of narrative accounts as more trustworthy than those who use data-driven messages. This finding holds whether the messages were naturalistically generated by lay participants or whether the messages were crafted to parallel data-driven arguments precisely. Narrative messages evoke more trust even though our data-driven information (at least in Studies 1-4) is completely factual whereas our narratives are stylized representations of facts. Moreover, authors who conveyed a narrative sharing a hardship are viewed as more trustworthy than those who argue for a policy because they themselves had benefited from it; and combining a personal narrative with data-driven arguments does not dilute the power of the narrative to evoke perceptions of trustworthiness. One explanation for why narrative messages generate feelings of trustworthiness is because these self-disclosures reveal a vulnerability on the part of the
author. Importantly, these perceptions of trustworthiness translate into real preferences to work with narrative authors on tasks that depend on the partner’s trustworthiness.

Narratives have received substantial interest across the social sciences. Previous work has explored how narratives can create engagement with information and change people’s attitudes. Politicians and others who seek to persuade frequently draw on stories to influence their audience. In this paper, we examined the importance of narratives beyond persuasion. We found that sharing personal narratives also enhances trustworthiness. Participants across our experiments rate someone as more trustworthy when that person shares a personal experience than when they share a data-driven message. For politicians, building trust with voters may also be a key objective of those seeking to mobilize support among voters: much of their communication may not be intended to persuade, but to build a trusting relationship. For leaders in organizations, having a trustworthy image can be a foundational goal, particularly in turbulent environments where leaders may need followers to trust continually changing directives. Leaders who are more trustworthy are seen as more ethical stewards of their organization’s future (Caldwell, Hayes, & Long, 2010). Leadership trustworthiness has been linked to organizational ambidexterity (or the ability of organizations to both exploit their current environment as well as explore changes to new environments, Purvee & Enkhtuvshin, 2015). And followers who trust their leaders report more job satisfaction (Wang & Satow, 1994). While our results suggest that increased trustworthiness translates into a greater willingness to work with the author of a personal narrative on a trust task, future work could examine whether narratives also make people more willing to work for such an individual or delegate tasks to them.

Future work might also examine the attributions people make regarding their colleagues’ motivations for sharing stories or data driven arguments. One reason stories might engender more trust is simply because the listener does not judge the speaker as trying to persuade. A story teller seems less likely to be trying to “win” an argument or
disabuse the listener of his opposing view. Indeed we found stories to be no more or less persuasive than objective data—but this could be a feature of story-telling not a bug. Listeners of a data-riddled argument may react more negatively to the speaker because they project more persuasive intent. This might translate into the speaker of a personal story appearing to be more authentic and having a more pro-social intent than speakers offering data-driven messages.

Our work also contributes to the literature on narratives more generally. We show that not all narrative accounts of experiences evoke comparable perceptions of trustworthiness. Specifically, anecdotes—narratives involving someone other than the author—did not confer the same advantages as did personal stories involving the author. This speaks to the mechanism for why personal narratives may be effective in the real world: they reveal potentially sensitive information about the person telling the story and it is self-disclosure that engenders trust. While we may be willing to reveal more personal information to people whom we trust, it is possible that recipients of messages infer that those who reveal such information are also more worthy of their trust.

Future research might also explore the boundary conditions of our findings. For example, what happens if the personal story is later revealed to be an embellishment of the truth? Do personal narratives increase the trustworthiness if targets know this is the intended purpose of the maneuver? Is there a limit to how personal the narratives should be? Is the effect enhanced in a face-to-face exchange?

Our society is grappling with the presence of unprecedented ideological conflict and some of the consequences have started to spill over into other domains, including work requiring collaboration with those who may hold opposing views. Our findings suggest a way to bridge the divide. When disagreements threaten our ability to work with one another, encouraging people to share how their personal experiences have shaped their beliefs may yet be effective in promoting understanding and establishing trust.
References


Table 1
Data-driven, Narrative, and Narrative First messages opposing an increase in the minimum wage in Study 1. The Data First message and the arguments favoring an increase in the minimum wage are shown in the Supplementary Information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data-driven Message</th>
<th>Narrative Message</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increasing the minimum wage hurts the people it’s supposed to help and drives up prices.</td>
<td>Increasing the minimum wage hurts the people it’s supposed to help and drives up prices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seattle raised its minimum wage to $15 an hour in 2015. Studies found that many businesses run on small margins, so that many have had to lay off employees. One study reported that the number of low and moderate wage jobs available decreased by 10%. Since the minimum wage has changed, some business had to raise prices for their customers. Moreover, one study estimated that it reduced the number of hours employers offered to their workers. Employers also reduced costs by cutting health insurance benefits. Many businesses have shut down because they couldn’t afford the increased costs and prices in some stores have gone up.</td>
<td>I used to work for a small family-owned business in Seattle. The city recently raised its minimum wage to $15 an hour. The place where I worked was barely able to keep the doors open, and after the minimum wage increase they fired some long-time employees, including me. I’ve been looking for work and really need a job, but most businesses are not hiring because they can’t pay the high wages. The jobs that are available are part-time and don’t offer benefits, like basic health insurance. At the same time, prices in my neighborhood have gone up, too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life for many and for their families has gotten harder as a result.</td>
<td>Life has gotten a lot harder for me and my family.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Narrative First

Increasing the minimum wage hurts the people it’s supposed to help and drives up prices.

I used to work for a small family-owned business in Seattle. The city recently raised its minimum wage to $15 an hour. The place where I worked was barely able to keep the doors open, and after the minimum wage increase they fired some long-time employees, including me. I’ve been looking for work and really need a job, but most businesses are not hiring because they can’t pay the high wages. The jobs that are available are part-time and don’t offer benefits, like basic health insurance. At the same time, prices in my neighborhood have gone up, too.

Studies found that many businesses run on small margins, so that many have had to lay off employees. One study reported that the number of low and moderate wage jobs available decreased by 10%. Since the minimum wage has changed, some businesses had to raise prices for their customers. Moreover, one study estimated that it reduced the number of hours employers offered to their workers. Employers also reduced costs by cutting health insurance benefits. Many businesses have shut down because they couldn’t afford the increased costs and prices in some stores have gone up.

Life has gotten a lot harder for me and my family.
Table 2

*Ratings for authors of Study 3 messages. In addition to a main effect of the narrative on trustworthiness, we also see a main effect of the positive frame. Authors of positive messages are generally viewed as less trustworthy.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Expertise</th>
<th>Expertise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>0.33***</td>
<td>0.34***</td>
<td>−0.12</td>
<td>−0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.07)</td>
<td>(0.10)</td>
<td>(0.07)</td>
<td>(0.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anecdote</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>−0.28***</td>
<td>−0.24*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.07)</td>
<td>(0.09)</td>
<td>(0.07)</td>
<td>(0.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Frame</td>
<td>−0.23***</td>
<td>−0.17</td>
<td>−0.17**</td>
<td>−0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.05)</td>
<td>(0.09)</td>
<td>(0.05)</td>
<td>(0.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative x Positive Frame</td>
<td>−0.02</td>
<td>−0.17</td>
<td>−0.17</td>
<td>(0.13) (0.13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anecdote x Positive Frame</td>
<td>−0.15</td>
<td>−0.08</td>
<td>−0.15</td>
<td>(0.13) (0.13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Intercept)</td>
<td>3.01***</td>
<td>2.98***</td>
<td>2.83***</td>
<td>2.79***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.05)</td>
<td>(0.07)</td>
<td>(0.05)</td>
<td>(0.07)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$R^2$ 0.04 0.04 0.02 0.02
Adj. $R^2$ 0.03 0.03 0.02 0.02
Num. obs. 1203 1203 1203 1203

***$p < 0.001$; **$p < 0.01$; *$p < 0.05$

Table 3

*Topics in Study 5. Participants could choose one of the statements and write about how either their personal experience ('Narrative' condition) or factual information ('Data-driven' condition) informed their belief on the topic.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immigration</td>
<td>The United States should make it a lot more difficult for illegal immigrants to enter and stay in the country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marijuana</td>
<td>I support the national legalization of marijuana for medical use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Wage</td>
<td>The federal minimum wage should be increased to $15 per hour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority Policing</td>
<td>The public reaction to recent confrontations between police and minority crime suspects has been overblown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affirmative Action</td>
<td>University admissions should never take into account gender or racial characteristics of the students applying, as it is unfair to some students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4
*Choices of message topic and average word count in the Data-driven and Narrative conditions, respectively, in Study 5.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Data-driven</th>
<th>Narrative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immigration</td>
<td>N = 35, Average Length = 141</td>
<td>N = 48, Average Length = 175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marijuana</td>
<td>N = 75, Average Length = 129</td>
<td>N = 38, Average Length = 134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Wage</td>
<td>N = 71, Average Length = 150</td>
<td>N = 59, Average Length = 150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority Policing</td>
<td>N = 14, Average Length = 165</td>
<td>N = 13, Average Length = 162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affirmative Action</td>
<td>N = 60, Average Length = 165</td>
<td>N = 96, Average Length = 180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5
*Messages and their authors rated as part of Study 5. We compare the trustworthiness and expertise of a message author, along with a willingness to interact with them, between narrative and data-driven conditions. We see that authors of narratives are viewed as more trustworthy and that people are more interested in interacting with them. Across all dimensions, participants rate people who agree with their position more favorably.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Trustworthiness</th>
<th>Trustworthiness</th>
<th>Willingness to Interact</th>
<th>Willingness to Interact</th>
<th>Expertise</th>
<th>Expertise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>0.05***</td>
<td>0.06*</td>
<td>0.08†</td>
<td>0.09*</td>
<td>−0.05</td>
<td>−0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.03)</td>
<td>(0.03)</td>
<td>(0.05)</td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rater Agrees</td>
<td>0.48***</td>
<td>0.70***</td>
<td>0.66***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.05)</td>
<td>(0.07)</td>
<td>(0.06)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rater Has No Opinion</td>
<td>−0.09</td>
<td>−0.01</td>
<td>−0.02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.06)</td>
<td>(0.08)</td>
<td>(0.07)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>3.35***</td>
<td>3.12***</td>
<td>2.98***</td>
<td>2.61***</td>
<td>3.16***</td>
<td>2.82***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.03)</td>
<td>(0.05)</td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
<td>(0.06)</td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
<td>(0.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adj. R²</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. obs.</td>
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<td>2820</td>
<td>2820</td>
<td>2820</td>
<td>2820</td>
<td>2820</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***p < 0.001; **p < 0.01; *p < 0.05; †p < 0.1
Authors of messages in the Narrative condition rely more on words associated with trust than do those in the data-driven condition. We show the results of OLS regressions on the fraction of words in a message that were associated with trust words, as a share of all non-stopwords in the message. This effect holds when controlling for choice of topic (Column 2) and word count (Column 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Trust</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>0.04*</td>
<td>0.05**</td>
<td>0.06***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic: Marijuana</td>
<td>0.06*</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.03)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic: Minimum Wage</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.03)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic: Minority Policing</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic: Affirmative Action</td>
<td>−0.00</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Count</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>−0.00***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.12***</td>
<td>0.08***</td>
<td>0.25***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adj. R²</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. obs.</td>
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<td>509</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***p < 0.001; **p < 0.01; *p < 0.05
Table 7
Columns show the results of OLS regressions on the fraction of words associated with different emotions for messages written by participants in Study 5. Messages in the Narrative condition of Study 5 differed not only in their reliance on words associated with trust, but also with other emotions. Narrative authors used more words associated with anticipation, joy, and positive sentiment, and fewer words associated with disgust. We find no difference in the use of words associated with anger, fear, or negative sentiment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Anticipation</th>
<th>Anger</th>
<th>Disgust</th>
<th>Fear</th>
<th>Joy</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
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<tr>
<td>Narrative</td>
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<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.03***</td>
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<td>(0.01)</td>
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</tr>
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<tr>
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<td>(0.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>(0.01)</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
<td>(0.03)</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic: Affirmative Action</td>
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<td>(0.01)</td>
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<td>-0.00***</td>
<td>-0.00***</td>
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<tr>
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<td>(0.00)</td>
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<td>(0.00)</td>
<td>(0.00)</td>
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<td>(0.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
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<td>0.12***</td>
<td>0.07***</td>
<td>0.22***</td>
<td>0.08***</td>
<td>0.32***</td>
<td>0.20***</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>(0.01)</td>
<td>(0.00)</td>
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<td>(0.01)</td>
<td>(0.03)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
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<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.25</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adj. R²</td>
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<td>0.45</td>
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<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.22</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>509</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>509</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***p < 0.001; **p < 0.01; *p < 0.05
Appendix
Experimental Materials

Study 1

**Instructions and Comprehension Quiz**

To participate in this study, you will be asked a comprehension quiz on the instructions to show that you have read them. If you fail the comprehension check, you will not be eligible to continue with the study.

*Figure A1*. Screen 1.

**Instructions**

In this study, we are interested in your perception of wages and employment in the United States. The study consists of two parts:

In **Part 1**, we will present you with statements related to employment and wages. We would like to know to what extent you agree or disagree with them.

In **Part 2**, we will present you with information (a short text) relating to employment and wages in the United States. We would like to get your opinion about the text as well as your perception of the author.

On the next screen, you will be asked a brief comprehension check to ensure that you have read and understood these instructions. If you answer all questions correctly, you will be eligible to proceed with the study. Otherwise, the survey will end.

*Figure A2*. Screen 2.
Comprehension Check

This study most closely relates to the topic of...

- Employment
- Investment decisions
- Immigration
- Health care

In the first part of the study, you will be asked to...

- Make choices about how to invest money
- Write a message to another participant
- Express your agreement or disagreement with a series of statements
- Guess whether statements are true or false

In the second part of the study, you will be asked to...

- Write a message to another participant
- Complete a personality quiz
- Make choices between different products
- Express your opinion about a text and its author

*Figure A3*. Screen 3.

You have answered all questions correctly and are eligible to participate in this study.

On the next page, Part 1 of the study will begin.

*Figure A4*. Screen 4.
**Part 1**

In this part, we would like to get your opinion about policies related to employment and wages in the United States.

For each of the statements below, please tell us how much you agree or disagree. There is no “correct” answer. We are simply interested in your opinion.

**The federal government should increase the minimum wage to $15 an hour.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**There should be fewer regulations for small businesses.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Most workers would be better off if they were part of a union.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**The goal for policymakers should be to increase the number of people who can find work, even if that work is only part-time.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**The goal for policymakers should be to help people find full time employment with good working conditions, even if that means fewer people will be employed.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*Figure A5. Screen 5.*
Part 2

In this second part, we will present you with a message relating to the minimum wage in the United States.

We will ask you about your perception of the text as well as the author of the text. Again, there is no "correct" answer.

Figure A6. Screen 6.
Below is the message related to the minimum wage in the United States:

"Increasing the minimum wage hurts the people it’s supposed to help and drives up prices.

I used to work for a small family-owned business in Seattle. The city recently raised its minimum wage to $15 an hour. The place where I worked was barely able to keep the doors open, and after the minimum wage increase they fired some long-time employees, including me. I’ve been looking for work and really need a job, but most businesses are not hiring because they can’t pay the high wages. The jobs that are available are part-time and don’t offer benefits, like basic health insurance.

At the same time, prices in my neighborhood have gone up, too.

Studies found that many businesses run on small margins, so that many have had to lay off employees. One study reported that the number of low and moderate wage jobs available decreased by 10%. Since the minimum wage has changed, some businesses had to raise prices for their customers. Moreover, one study estimated that it reduced the number of hours employers offered to their workers. Employers also reduced costs by cutting health insurance benefits. Many businesses have shut down because they couldn’t afford the increased costs and prices in some stores have gone up.

Life has gotten a lot harder for me and my family."

### How trustworthy do you think that the author of the message is?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all trustworthy</th>
<th>Slightly trustworthy</th>
<th>Somewhat trustworthy</th>
<th>Very trustworthy</th>
<th>Extremely trustworthy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### How sincere do you think that the author of the message is?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all sincere</th>
<th>Slightly sincere</th>
<th>Somewhat sincere</th>
<th>Very sincere</th>
<th>Extremely sincere</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### How likely do you believe the information in this text is to be true?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all likely</th>
<th>Slightly likely</th>
<th>Somewhat likely</th>
<th>Very likely</th>
<th>Extremely likely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### How misleading do you think the information in this text is?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all misleading</th>
<th>Slightly misleading</th>
<th>Somewhat misleading</th>
<th>Very misleading</th>
<th>Extremely misleading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### How knowledgeable do you believe that the author of this message is?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all knowledgeable</th>
<th>Slightly knowledgeable</th>
<th>Somewhat knowledgeable</th>
<th>Very knowledgeable</th>
<th>Extremely knowledgeable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### How informed do you believe the author of this message is on the topic of the minimum wage?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all informed</th>
<th>Slightly informed</th>
<th>Somewhat informed</th>
<th>Very informed</th>
<th>Extremely informed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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*Figure A7. Screen 7.*
Figure A8. Full set of messages. Left column shows messages opposing an increase in the minimum wage and right column shows those favoring an increase. The rows show the messages displayed in the data-driven, the narrative, the data-first, and the narrative-first conditions.
Now that you have had a chance to read a text related to the minimum wage, we'd like to again ask you the questions from Part 1.

It may be that you found the information to be compelling, or you may already have been aware of the information. Moreover, you may have found yourself agreeing or disagreeing with the information in the text. As a result, your views may have changed or they may have remained unchanged.

In either case, we would like you to again respond to the same statements and indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of them.

*Figure A9. Screen 8.*
For each of the statements below, please tell us how much you agree or disagree. There is no "correct" answer. We are simply interested in your opinion.

The federal government should increase the minimum wage to $15 an hour.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

There should be fewer regulations for small businesses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Most workers would be better off if they were part of a union.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The goal for policymakers should be to increase the number of people who can find work, even if that work is only part-time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The goal for policymakers should be to help people find full time employment with good working conditions, even if that means fewer people will be employed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*Figure A10. Screen 9.*
Finally, we would like to ask you some demographic questions.

Gender

- Male
- Female
- Other

Age

Ethnicity

- White
- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Other

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Less than high school
- High school graduate
- Some college
- 2 year degree
- 4 year degree
- Professional or Masters degree
- Doctoral degree

*Figure A11.* Screen 10.
Which of the following best describes your political ideology?

- Very liberal
- Somewhat liberal
- Slightly liberal
- Neither liberal nor conservative
- Slightly conservative
- Somewhat conservative
- Very conservative

Which of the following best describes your political party affiliation?

- Strongly Democrat
- Somewhat Democrat
- Slightly Democrat
- Middle of the road
- Slightly Republican
- Somewhat Republican
- Strongly Republican
- None of the above

Figure A12. Screen 11.
Thank you for completing this study!

On the next screen you will see your unique completion code.

Do you have any comments for the researchers? (optional)

Figure A13. Screen 12.
Study 2

Instructions and Comprehension Quiz

To participate in this study, you will be asked a comprehension quiz on the instructions to show that you have read them. If you fail the comprehension check, you will not be eligible to continue with the study.

Instructions

In this study, we are interested in your perception of wages and employment in the United States. The study consists of two parts:

In Part 1, we will present you with statements related to employment and wages. We would like to know to what extent you agree or disagree with them.

In Part 2, we will present you with information (a short text) relating to employment and wages in the United States. We would like to get your opinion about the text as well as your perception of the author.

On the next screen, you will be asked a brief comprehension check to ensure that you have read and understood these instructions. If you answer all questions correctly, you will be eligible to proceed with the study. Otherwise, the survey will end.

Figure A14. Screen 1.

Figure A15. Screen 2.
Comprehension Check

This study most closely relates to the topic of...

- Immigration
- Health care
- Employment
- Investment decisions

In the first part of the study, you will be asked to...

- Write a message to another participant
- Make choices about how to invest money
- Guess whether statements are true or false
- Express your agreement or disagreement with a series of statements

In the second part of the study, you will be asked to...

- Complete a personality quiz
- Write a message to another participant
- Make choices between different products
- Express your opinion about a text and its author

**Figure A16.** Screen 3.

You have answered all questions correctly and are eligible to participate in this study.

**On the next page, Part 1 of the study will begin.**

**Figure A17.** Screen 4.
Figure A18. Screen 5.
Part 2

In this second part, we will present you with a message relating to the minimum wage in the United States.

We will ask you about your perception of the text as well as the author of the text. Again, there is no "correct" answer.

Figure A19. Screen 6.
Below is the message related to the minimum wage in the United States:

"The minimum wage should be increased, because it benefits working families who need all the help they can get.

I work in Chicago, where the minimum wage is $12 an hour. Losing the fight to earn a living wage means I won’t be able to afford living in the city I grew up in anymore. I struggle to take care of living expenses like groceries and cover the copay of prescriptions. I have to resort to payday loans to make ends meet, paying as much as 400% in interest. Life for me and my family is a constant struggle and it’s all because the city I live in just doesn’t look out for working people. Nobody should have to work for a wage they can’t live on."

How much do you feel you have learned about the author?

- Learned nothing about the author
- Learned a slight amount about the author
- Learned some amount about the author
- Learned a lot about the author
- Learned a great deal about the author

How much information that people typically consider private did the author reveal in this message?

- No private information at all
- Slight amount of private information
- Some private information
- A lot of private information
- A great deal of private information

How embarrassed would the author of this text be to make this statement publicly?

- Not at all embarrassed
- Slightly embarrassed
- Somewhat embarrassed
- Very embarrassed
- Extremely embarrassed

*Figure A20. Screen 7.*
We have a few more questions related to the message you have just read. Below, you will see the same message again for your reference.

"The minimum wage should be increased, because it benefits working families who need all the help they can get.

I work in Chicago, where the minimum wage is $12 an hour. Losing the fight to earn a living wage means I won’t be able to afford living in the city I grew up in anymore. I struggle to take care of living expenses like groceries and cover the copay of prescriptions. I have to resort to payday loans to make ends meet, paying as much as 400% in interest. Life for me and my family is a constant struggle and it’s all because the city I live in just doesn’t look out for working people. Nobody should have to work for a wage they can’t live on."

How trustworthy do you think that the author of the message is?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all trustworthy</th>
<th>Slightly trustworthy</th>
<th>Somewhat trustworthy</th>
<th>Very trustworthy</th>
<th>Extremely trustworthy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

How sincere do you think that the author of the message is?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all sincere</th>
<th>Slightly sincere</th>
<th>Somewhat sincere</th>
<th>Very sincere</th>
<th>Extremely sincere</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

How likely do you believe the information in this text is to be true?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all likely</th>
<th>Slightly likely</th>
<th>Somewhat likely</th>
<th>Very likely</th>
<th>Extremely likely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

How misleading do you think the information in this text is?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all misleading</th>
<th>Slightly misleading</th>
<th>Somewhat misleading</th>
<th>Very misleading</th>
<th>Extremely misleading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

How knowledgeable do you believe that the author of this message is?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all knowledgeable</th>
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<th>Somewhat knowledgeable</th>
<th>Very knowledgeable</th>
<th>Extremely knowledgeable</th>
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</table>

How informed do you believe the author of this message is on the topic of the minimum wage?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all informed</th>
<th>Slightly informed</th>
<th>Somewhat informed</th>
<th>Very informed</th>
<th>Extremely informed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*Figure A21. Screen 8.*
Figure A22. Full set of messages. Each column shows a message direction (in favor or opposed to the minimum wage increase). Each row shows one of the message types (Data-driven, Narrative, Anecdote).
Finally, we would like you to think about how close you feel to the author of the message below. You see pictures of two circles. The pictures differ in the extent to which the circles overlap, ranging from not at all overlapping (1) to overlapping almost entirely (7).

Please think of the author of the message you have just read as 'X' and select the picture below that most closely resembles how close you feel to the author of this message.

*Figure A23. Screen 9.*
Now that you have had a chance to read a text related to the minimum wage, we'd like to again ask you the questions from Part 1.

It may be that you found the information to be compelling, or you may already have been aware of the information. Moreover, you may have found yourself agreeing or disagreeing with the information in the text. As a result, your views may have changed or they may have remained unchanged.

In either case, we would like you to again respond to the same statements and indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of them.

*Figure A24.* Screen 10.
For each of the statements below, please tell us how much you agree or disagree. There is no "correct" answer. We are simply interested in your opinion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The federal government should increase the minimum wage to $15 an hour.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There should be fewer regulations for small businesses.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most workers would be better off if they were part of a union.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The goal for policymakers should be to increase the number of people who</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>can find work, even if that work is only part-time.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The goal for policymakers should be to help people find full time</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>employment with good working conditions, even if that means fewer people</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>will be employed.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure A25. Screen 11.*
Finally, we would like to ask you some demographic questions.

**Gender**
- Male
- Female
- Other

**Age**

**Ethnicity**
- White
- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Other

**What is the highest level of education you have completed?**
- Less than high school
- High school graduate
- Some college
- 2 year degree
- 4 year degree
- Professional or Masters degree
- Doctoral degree

*Figure A26. Screen 12.*
Figure A27. Screen 13.
Thank you for completing this study!

On the next screen you will see your unique completion code.

Do you have any comments for the researchers? (optional)

Figure A28. Screen 14.
Study 3

Instructions and Comprehension Quiz

To participate in this study, you will be asked a comprehension quiz on the instructions to show that you have read them. If you fail the comprehension check, you will not be eligible to continue with the study.

Instructions

In this study, we are interested in your perception of wages and employment in the United States. The study consists of two parts:

In **Part 1**, we will present you with statements related to employment and wages. We would like to know to what extent you agree or disagree with them.

In **Part 2**, we will present you with information (a short text) relating to employment and wages in the United States. We would like to get your opinion about the text as well as your perception of the author.

On the next screen, you will be asked a brief comprehension check to ensure that you have read and understood these instructions. If you answer all questions correctly, you will be eligible to proceed with the study. Otherwise, the survey will end.

Figure A29. Screen 1.

Figure A30. Screen 2.
Comprehension Check

This study most closely relates to the topic of...

- Investment decisions
- Health care
- Immigration
- Employment

In the first part of the study, you will be asked to...

- Express your agreement or disagreement with a series of statements
- Write a message to another participant
- Guess whether statements are true or false
- Make choices about how to invest money

In the second part of the study, you will be asked to...

- Express your opinion about a text and its author
- Write a message to another participant
- Make choices between different products
- Complete a personality quiz

Figure A31. Screen 3.

You have answered all questions correctly and are eligible to participate in this study.

On the next page, Part 1 of the study will begin.

Figure A32. Screen 4.
In this part, we would like to get your opinion about policies related to employment and wages in the United States.

For each of the statements below, please tell us how much you agree or disagree. There is no "correct" answer. We are simply interested in your opinion.

The federal government should increase the minimum wage to $15 an hour.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

There should be fewer regulations for small businesses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Most workers would be better off if they were part of a union.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The goal for policymakers should be to increase the number of people who can find work, even if that work is only part-time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The goal for policymakers should be to help people find full-time employment with good working conditions, even if that means fewer people will be employed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Figure A33.** Screen 5.
Part 2

In this second part, we will present you with a message relating to the minimum wage in the United States.

We will ask you about your perception of the text as well as the author of the text. Again, there is no "correct" answer.

Figure A34. Screen 6.
“Increasing the minimum wage hurts the people it’s supposed to help and drives up prices.

I talked to a guy who used to work for a small family business in Seattle. The city recently raised its minimum wage to $15 an hour. The place where he worked was barely able to keep the doors open, and after the minimum wage increase they fired some long time employees, including him. He’s been looking for work and really needed a job, but most businesses are not hiring because they can’t pay the high wages. The jobs that are available are part-time and don’t offer benefits, like basic health insurance. At the same time, prices in his neighborhood have gone up, too. Life has gotten a lot harder for him and his family.”

Figure A35. Screen 7.
PERSONAL NARRATIVES BUILD TRUST

Figure A36. Full set of messages. Each column shows a message type (Data-driven, Narrative, Anecdote). The first two rows show the negative and positive framings of messages opposing a minimum wage increase. The third and fourth rows show the negative and positive framings of messages supporting an increase in the minimum wage.

Now that you have had a chance to read a text related to the minimum wage, we'd like to again ask you the questions from Part 1.

It may be that you found the information to be compelling, or you may already have been aware of the information. Moreover, you may have found yourself agreeing or disagreeing with the information in the text. As a result, your views may have changed or they may have remained unchanged.

In either case, we would like you to again respond to the same statements and indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of them.

Figure A37. Screen 8.
For each of the statements below, please tell us how much you agree or disagree. There is no "correct" answer. We are simply interested in your opinion.

The federal government should increase the minimum wage to $15 an hour.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

There should be fewer regulations for small businesses.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Most workers would be better off if they were part of a union.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

The goal for policymakers should be to increase the number of people who can find work, even if that work is only part-time.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

The goal for policymakers should be to help people find full time employment with good working conditions, even if that means fewer people will be employed.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Figure A38. Screen 9.
Finally, we would like to ask you some demographic questions.

Gender

- Male
- Female

Age


Ethnicity

- White
- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Other

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Less than high school
- High school graduate
- Some college
- 2 year degree
- 4 year degree
- Professional or Masters degree
- Doctoral degree

*Figure A39.* Screen 10.
Figure A40. Screen 11.
Thank you for completing this study!

On the next screen you will see your unique completion code.

Do you have any comments for the researchers? (optional)

Figure A41. Screen 12.
Study 4

Instructions and Comprehension Quiz

To participate in this study, you will be asked a comprehension quiz on the instructions to show that you have read them. If you fail the comprehension check, you will not be eligible to continue with the study.

Figure A42. Screen 1.

Instructions

Welcome to this study! This study consists of two parts.

In Part 1, we would like to get your opinion on a series of statements related to employment in the United States.

In Part 2, we will show you two messages about the topics. We will then introduce you to a number of tasks. For each task, we will ask you which of the two authors of those messages you would rather work with.

On the next screen, you will be asked a brief comprehension check to ensure that you have read and understood these instructions. If you answer all questions correctly, you will be eligible to proceed with the study. Otherwise, the survey will end.

Figure A43. Screen 2.
### Comprehension Check

This study most closely relates to the topics of...

- Employment
- Immigration
- Crime
- Investment decisions

In the first part of the study, you will be asked to...

- Make choices about how to invest money
- Guess whether statements are true or false
- Write a message to another participant
- Express your opinion on a series of statements

In the second part of the study, you will be asked to...

- Choose one of two people you want to work with
- Write a message to another participant
- Complete a personality quiz
- Make choices between different products

---

**Figure A44.** Screen 3.

You have answered all questions correctly and are eligible to participate in this study.

**On the next page, Part 1 of the study will begin.**

---

**Figure A45.** Screen 4.
In this part, we would like to get your opinion about policies related to employment in the United States.

For each of the statements below, please tell us how much you agree or disagree. There is no "correct" answer. We are simply interested in your opinion.

The federal government should increase the minimum wage to $15 an hour.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

There should be fewer regulations for small businesses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Most workers would be better off if they were part of a union.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The goal for policymakers should be to increase the number of people who can find work, even if that work is only part-time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The goal for policymakers should be to help people find full-time employment with good working conditions, even if that means fewer people will be employed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*Figure A46. Screen 5.*
Part 2

In this second part, we will show you two messages relating to the minimum wage in the United States written by other people.

You will then learn about 4 tasks. For each of the tasks, we will ask you which writer you'd rather collaborate with.

*Figure A47. Screen 6.*
Figure A48. Screen 7.
The second message was written by the "Brown" author:

"Increasing the minimum wage hurts the minimum wage workers, like me, who get laid off. I used to work for a small family-owned business in Seattle. The city recently raised its minimum wage to $15 an hour. The place where I worked was barely able to keep the doors open, and after the minimum wage increase they fired some long-time employees, including me. I’ve been looking for work and really need a job, but most businesses are not hiring because they can't pay the high wages. The jobs that are available are part-time and don’t offer benefits, like basic health insurance. Life for me and my family has gotten harder as a result."

How trustworthy do you think that the author of the message is?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all trustworthy</th>
<th>Slightly trustworthy</th>
<th>Somewhat trustworthy</th>
<th>Very trustworthy</th>
<th>Extremely trustworthy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

How sincere do you think that the author of the message is?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all sincere</th>
<th>Slightly sincere</th>
<th>Somewhat sincere</th>
<th>Very sincere</th>
<th>Extremely sincere</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

How likely do you believe the information in this text is to be true?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all likely</th>
<th>Slightly likely</th>
<th>Somewhat likely</th>
<th>Very likely</th>
<th>Extremely likely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

How misleading do you think the information in this text is?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all misleading</th>
<th>Slightly misleading</th>
<th>Somewhat misleading</th>
<th>Very misleading</th>
<th>Extremely misleading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

How knowledgeable do you believe that the author of this message is?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all knowledgeable</th>
<th>Slightly knowledgeable</th>
<th>Somewhat knowledgeable</th>
<th>Very knowledgeable</th>
<th>Extremely knowledgeable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

How informed do you believe the author of this message is on the topic of the minimum wage?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all informed</th>
<th>Slightly informed</th>
<th>Somewhat informed</th>
<th>Very informed</th>
<th>Extremely informed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*Figure A49. Screen 8.*
Figure A50. Full set of messages. Participants always saw a data-driven and a narrative message that disagreed with their position. The two messages tackled different arguments so they appeared to come from different authors. We randomized which argument was shown as a narrative.
**Task 1: Trust Game**

The “Trust Game” relies on your partner’s trustworthiness. You will receive some money to invest in a project with your partner. If the partner proceeds with the investment, you will both receive **double** what you gave them. However, they can also choose to **steal** the money, which would triple their earnings but you will receive nothing.

**The author of which message would you like to have as a partner on this task?**

- Strongly prefer Blue
- Somewhat prefer Blue
- Slightly prefer Blue
- Slightly prefer Brown
- Somewhat prefer Brown
- Strongly prefer Brown

*Figure A52. Screen 10.*
Task 2: Pattern Game

The “Pattern Game,” relies on strong spatial reasoning skills and is commonly used as a measure of intelligence. Your objective is to figure out the pattern behind 8 shapes on the screen and select the correct one to fill the open spot. For an example, see the image below.

In this example, the correct response is the 4th symbol in the second row.

The author of which message would you like to have as a partner on this task?

Figure A53. Screen 11.
Task 3: Summation Game

The “Summation Game” relies on mathematical ability. Your objective is to find the unique pair of two numbers in a table that add up to 10. Below, you can see an example of this task.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7.253</th>
<th>8.477</th>
<th>7.897</th>
<th>5.578</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.600</td>
<td>8.368</td>
<td>3.589</td>
<td>2.417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.751</td>
<td>5.800</td>
<td>0.893</td>
<td>6.171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.103</td>
<td>3.262</td>
<td>7.384</td>
<td>8.959</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this example, the correct two numbers are: $7.897 + 2.103 = 10$

The author of which message would you like to have as a partner on this task?

- Strongly prefer Blue
- Somewhat prefer Blue
- Slightly prefer Blue
- Slightly prefer Brown
- Somewhat prefer Brown
- Strongly prefer Brown

*Figure A54. Screen 12.*
Task 4: Advice Game

The “Advice Game” relies on your partner’s good will. You will have to make a choice between two options. Your choice would determine your earnings, but you do not know which option is best. Your partner has a hint that can help you. It does not cost your partner to help you, nor does your partner gain if you make the wrong choice. However, your partner can just decide not to give you the hint and force you to make the choice on your own.

The author of which message would you like to have as a partner on this task?

Strongly prefer Blue  Somewhat prefer Blue  Slightly prefer Blue  Slightly prefer Brown  Somewhat prefer Brown  Strongly prefer Brown

Figure A55. Screen 13.
Below is the message written by one of the two participants. Do you recall which participant wrote this message? The answer does not affect your earnings in this study.

"Increasing the minimum wage hurts the people it’s supposed to help and drives up prices. Seattle raised its minimum wage to $15 an hour in 2015. Studies found that many businesses run on small margins, so that many have had to lay off employees. One study reported that the number of low and moderate wage jobs available decreased by 10%. Since the minimum wage has changed, some business had to raise prices for their customers. Moreover, one study estimated that it reduced the number of hours employers offered to their workers. Employers also reduced costs by cutting health insurance benefits. Many businesses have shut down because they couldn’t afford the increased costs and prices in some stores have gone up. Life for many and for their families has gotten harder as a result."

Which participant wrote this message?

- Blue Participant
- Brown Participant

Figure A56. Screen 14.
Finally, we would like to ask you some demographic questions.

Gender
- Male
- Female
- Other

Age

Ethnicity
- White
- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- Other

What is the highest level of education you have completed?
- Less than high school
- High school graduate
- Some college
- 2 year degree
- 4 year degree
- Professional or Master’s degree
- Doctoral degree

Which of the following best describes your political ideology?
- Very liberal
- Somewhat liberal
- Slightly liberal
- Neither liberal nor conservative
- Slightly conservative
- Somewhat conservative
- Very conservative

Which of the following best describes your political party affiliation?
- Strongly Democrat
- Somewhat Democrat
- Slightly Democrat
- Middle of the road
- Slightly Republican
- Somewhat Republican
- Strongly Republican
- None of the above

*Figure A57. Screen 15.*
Thank you for completing this study!

On the next screen you will see your unique completion code.

Do you have any comments for the researchers? (optional)

Figure A58. Screen 16.
Study 5: Message Collection

Welcome to this study!

Below is a list of current policy issues. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the statements.

Of course there are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your opinions.

1. The United States should make it a lot more difficult for illegal immigrants to enter and stay in the country.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Slightly Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

2. The United States should legalize marijuana for medical use in all states.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Slightly Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

3. The federal minimum wage should be increased to $15 per hour.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Slightly Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

4. The public reaction to recent confrontations between police and minority crime suspects has been overblown.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Slightly Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

5. University admissions should never take into account gender or racial characteristics of the students applying, as it is unfair to some students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Slightly Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*Figure A59. Screen 1.*
We would now like you to write about one of the five topics from the previous screen. Please select one of the statements for which you believe you can provide **personal experiences** to support your belief.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The federal minimum wage should be increased to $15 per hour.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The public reaction to recent confrontations between police and minority crime suspects has been overblown.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University admissions should never take into account gender or racial characteristics of the students applying, as it is unfair to some students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The United States should make it a lot more difficult for illegal immigrants to enter and stay in the country.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I support the national legalization of marijuana for medical use.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We would now like you to write about how your experiences support your belief on the topic you have selected above. In your first sentence, please express your belief in your own words, and then explain why that belief is informed by **your personal experience**.

You might describe the circumstances that first led you to form the belief, or describe memorable personal experiences that strengthened your belief. You might describe how you saw or heard something from friends that shaped your views, or how the views, advice, or experiences of family members convinced you. The important thing is to state the key experiences that best support your position.

Note: The software will not allow you to click to the next screen for 7 minutes, so please feel free to take your time in writing. No responses are too long.

*Figure A60. Screen 2 – Narrative Condition.*
We would now like you to write about one of the five topics from the previous screen. Please select one of the statements for which you believe you can provide **objective information**, such as survey data or statistics to support your belief. You will be able to use Google to search for additional information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The United States should make it a lot more difficult for illegal immigrants to enter and stay in the country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The public reaction to recent confrontations between police and minority crime suspects has been overblown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I support the national legalization of marijuana for medical use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University admissions should never take into account gender or racial characteristics of the students applying, as it is unfair to some students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The federal minimum wage should be increased to $15 per hour.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We would now like you to write about how objective information supports your belief on the topic you have selected above. In your first sentence, please express your belief in your own words, and then explain why that belief is informed by **objective information**.

You might state the key logical arguments underlying your belief, or describe the most compelling facts that support it. You could also write about specific scientific evidence, news reports, or assessments of public opinion that should increase confidence that your belief is correct. The important thing is to state the key objective justifications that best support your position.

You may use Google and other resources to find information to support your view. To open a new browser window to help with your research, you may click this link: [Open New Browser Window](#)

Note: The software will not allow you to click to the next screen for 7 minutes, so please feel free to take your time in writing. No responses are too long.

*Figure A61.* Screen 2 – Data-driven Condition.

Thank you for participating in this study!

*Figure A62.* Screen 3.
Study 5: Message Evaluation

Instructions

As part of a previous experiment, we asked students from a large university to report the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each of 8 statements related to public policies. We then asked them to write a message to another participant about their view on one of the policies.

In this study, we would like to ask you to evaluate the students’ responses.

We are going to show you the messages as written by 4 different students. All messages will be related to the same policy. However, students may have different views on these policies.

Figure A63. Screen 1.

Instructions (continued)

We would like you to evaluate messages related to the following policy-related statement:

I support the national legalization of marijuana for medical use.

However, before showing you the messages written by the students, we would like to get your own view on the statement. Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the statement. This will not affect the messages you will be shown and asked to evaluate.

Figure A64. Screen 2. Participants reported their attitude on the policy domain from which they evaluated messages.
I support the national legalization of marijuana for medical use.

Message #1 of 4

"My dad was diagnosed with stage 4 Hodgkin’s Lymphoma Cancer a year and a half ago. There was a period of time where he refused to eat anything. My mom would literally sit and beg him to just try something. He lost around 50 lbs. in a couple weeks. Finally he tried medical marijuana and he was so much more relaxed and he actually ate something. I think this was a crucial part of his recovery."

First, we have some questions about how well the writer followed the directions in the earlier study:

Was the author’s message related to the statement?

| Yes | No |

Did the author agree or disagree with the statement? Or did they not express a clear view either way?

| Agreed | Disagreed | Expressed no clear view |

Did the message contain an example or a story that related directly to the writer, a close relative or friend of the writer, or an anecdote about someone not close to the writer?

| Yes (Personal) | Yes (Family, Friend) | Yes (Someone else) | No |

Did the message make an argument or offer evidence about why the writer’s belief regarding the statement is “correct” and/or that others are wrong?

| Yes | No |

Figure A65. Screen 3.
Now, we have some questions about your impressions of the statement and the person who wrote it. As a reminder, the message is repeated below. Please read the message again.

"My dad was diagnosed with stage 4 Hodgkin’s Lymphoma Cancer a year and a half ago. There was a period of time where he refused to eat anything. My mom would literally sit and beg him to just try something. He lost around 50lbs. in a couple weeks. Finally he tried medical marijuana and he was so much more relaxed and he actually ate something. I think this was a crucial part of his recovery."

Do you believe that the writer’s message is reasonable and sensible?

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

How persuasive do you believe this message would be to someone who holds the opposing view from that of the writer?

- Not at all persuasive
- Slightly persuasive
- Somewhat persuasive
- Very persuasive

How trustworthy do you think that the author of the message is?

- Not at all trustworthy
- Slightly trustworthy
- Somewhat trustworthy
- Very trustworthy

*Figure A66. Screen 4.*
How sincere do you think that the author of the statement is?

- Not at all sincere
- Slightly sincere
- Somewhat sincere
- Very sincere

How willing would you be to sit down with the author of the message and have a discussion about this statement?

- Not at all willing
- Slightly willing
- Somewhat willing
- Very willing

How knowledgeable do you believe that the writer of this message is on the topic of the statement?

- Not at all knowledgeable
- Slightly knowledgeable
- Somewhat knowledgeable
- Very knowledgeable

How enjoyable do you believe it would be to meet the person who wrote the message, not necessarily to discuss this particular topic?

- Not at all enjoyable
- Slightly enjoyable
- Somewhat enjoyable
- Very enjoyable

Figure A67. Screen 4 (continued).

You will now see another participant’s message on the same topic.

Figure A68. Screen 5.
To give you a chance to clear your mind before seeing the remaining two messages, we would like to present you with a different task.

In the table below, please find the two numbers that add up to 10. You can enter them into the two boxes below in any order.

<p>| | | | |</p>
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<td>1.1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Figure A69. Screen 6.
Finally, we would like to ask you a few demographic questions.

Gender

- Male
- Female

Age

- 

Ethnicity

- White
- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Other

**Figure A70.** Screen 7.

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Less than high school
- High school graduate
- Some college
- 2 year degree
- 4 year degree
- Professional or Masters degree
- Doctoral degree

When it comes to politics, do you usually think of yourself as...

- Extremely Liberal
- Liberal
- Slightly Liberal
- Moderate, Middle of Road
- Slightly Conservative
- Conservative
- Extremely Conservative

**Figure A71.** Screen 8.
Thank you for completing this study.

Do you have any comments for the researchers? (optional)

Figure A72. Screen 9.