

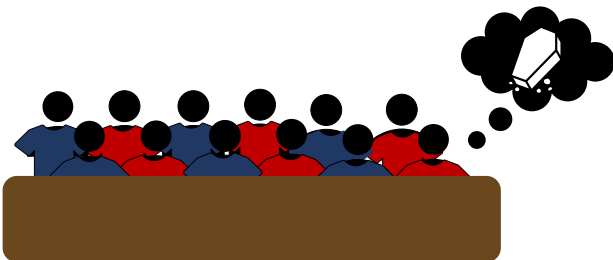
# Terror Management and Partisanship at Trial: The Effect of Mortality Salience and Partisanship on Mock Juror Judgments

Alexis Hardy<sup>1,2</sup> and Michael Leippe<sup>1</sup>

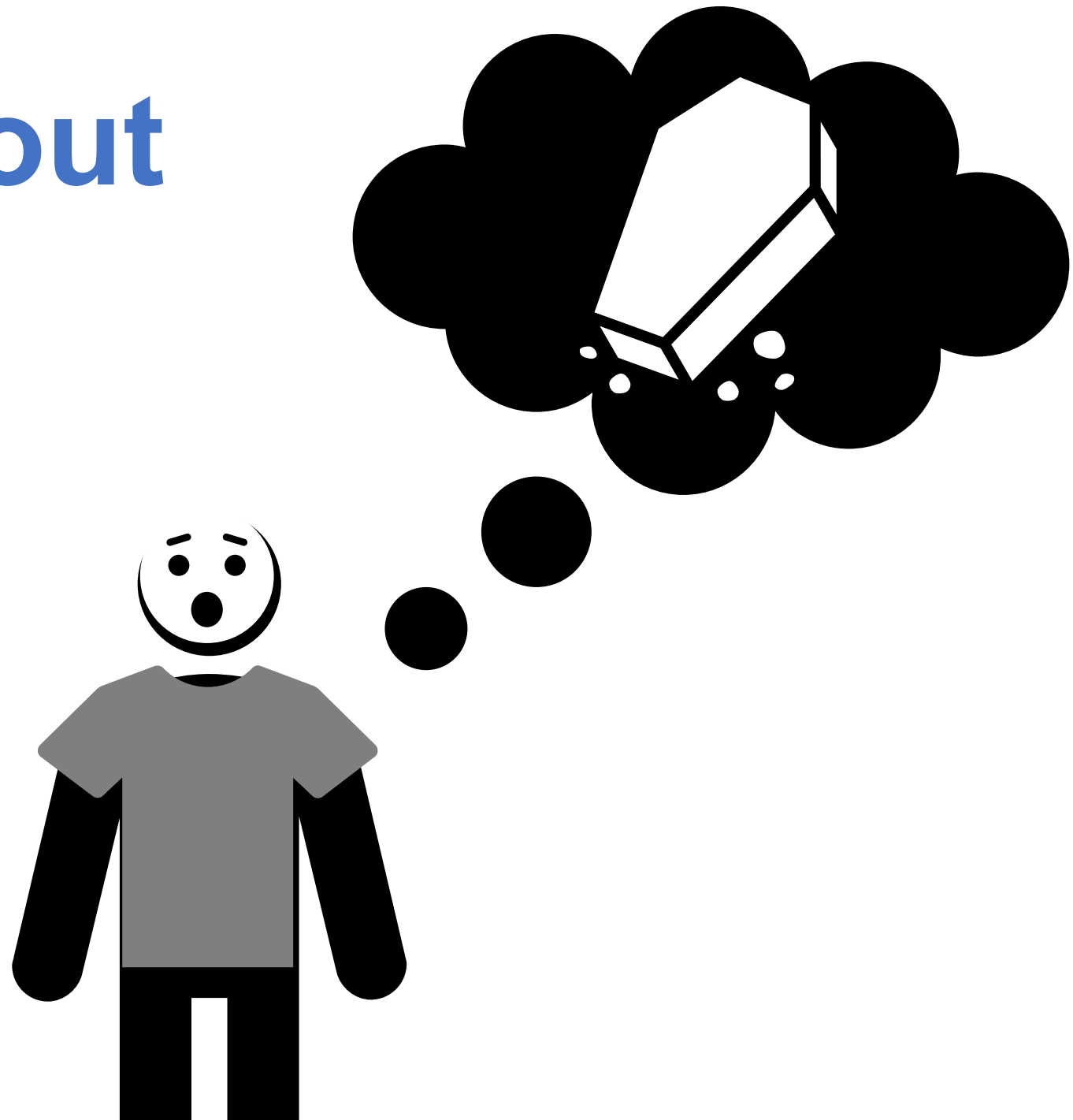
ASTC Regional Conference

The Graduate Center, The City University of New York<sup>1</sup>

John Jay College of Criminal Justice, The City University of New York<sup>2</sup>

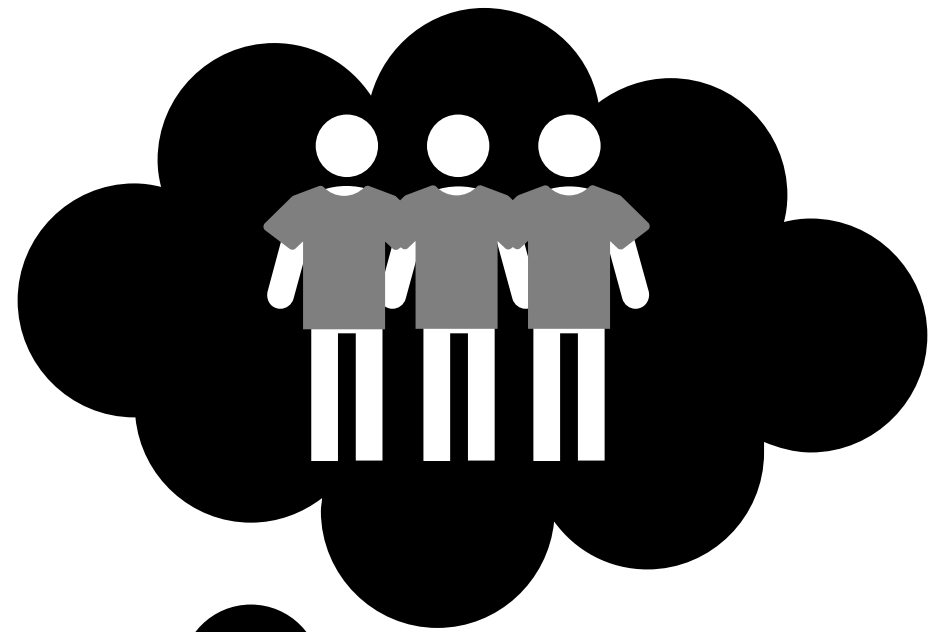
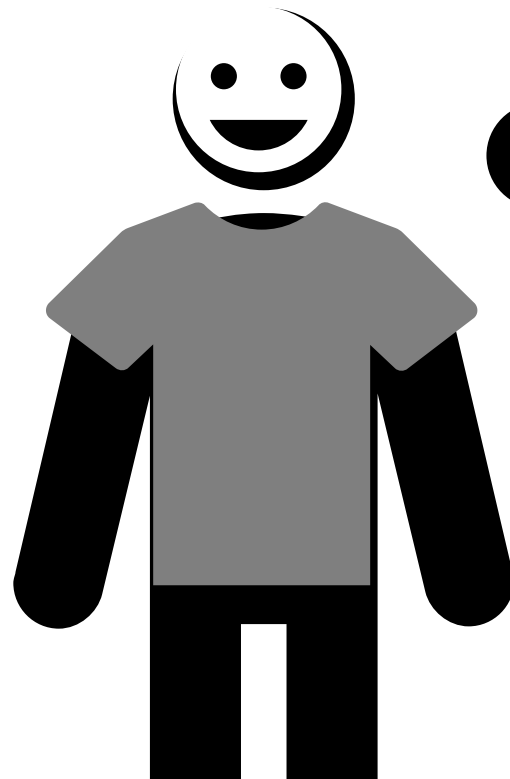


# Anxiety about death...



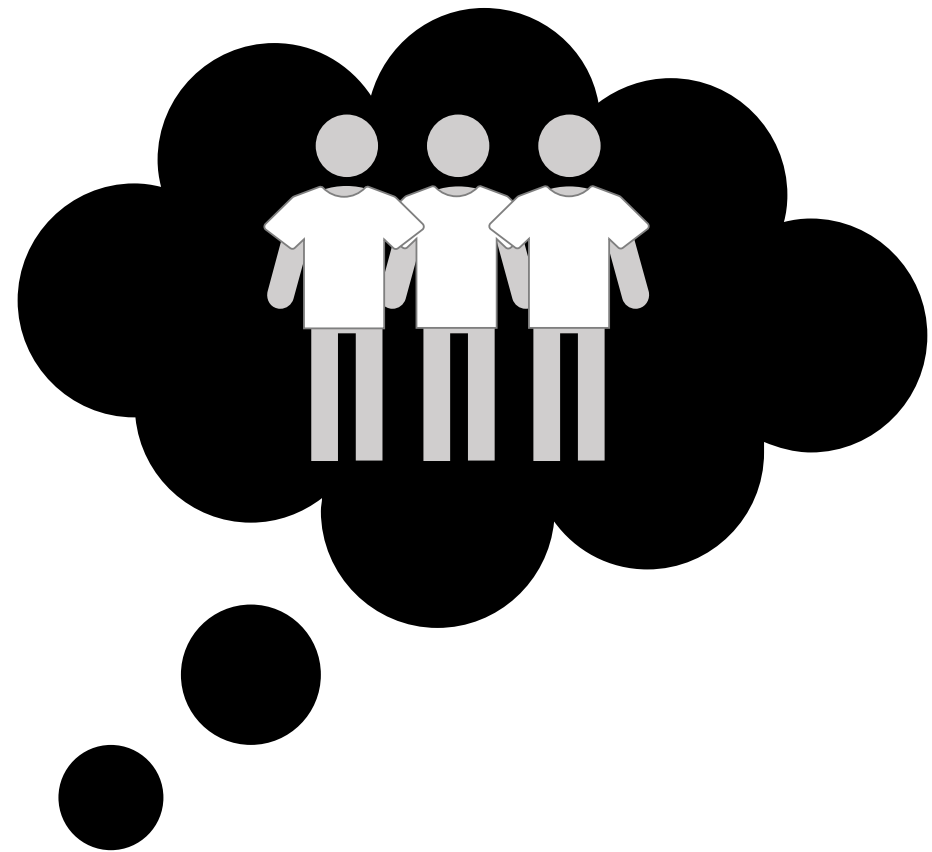
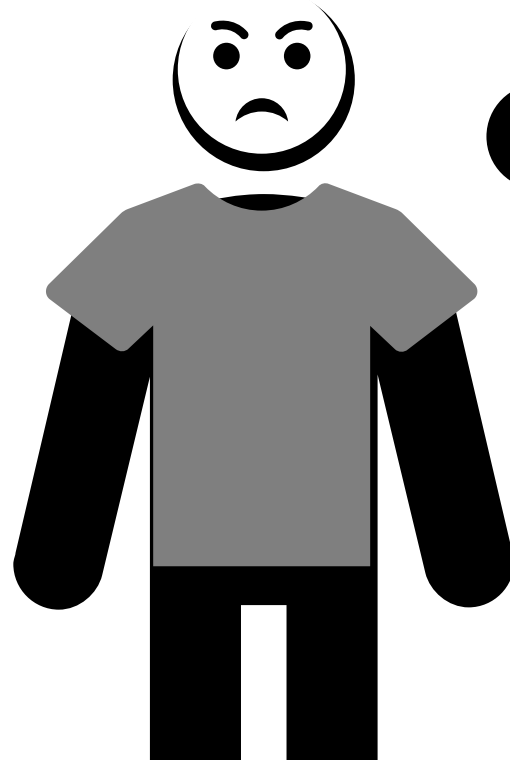
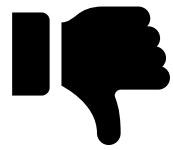
Pyszczynski et al. (2015)

# Ingroup favoritism



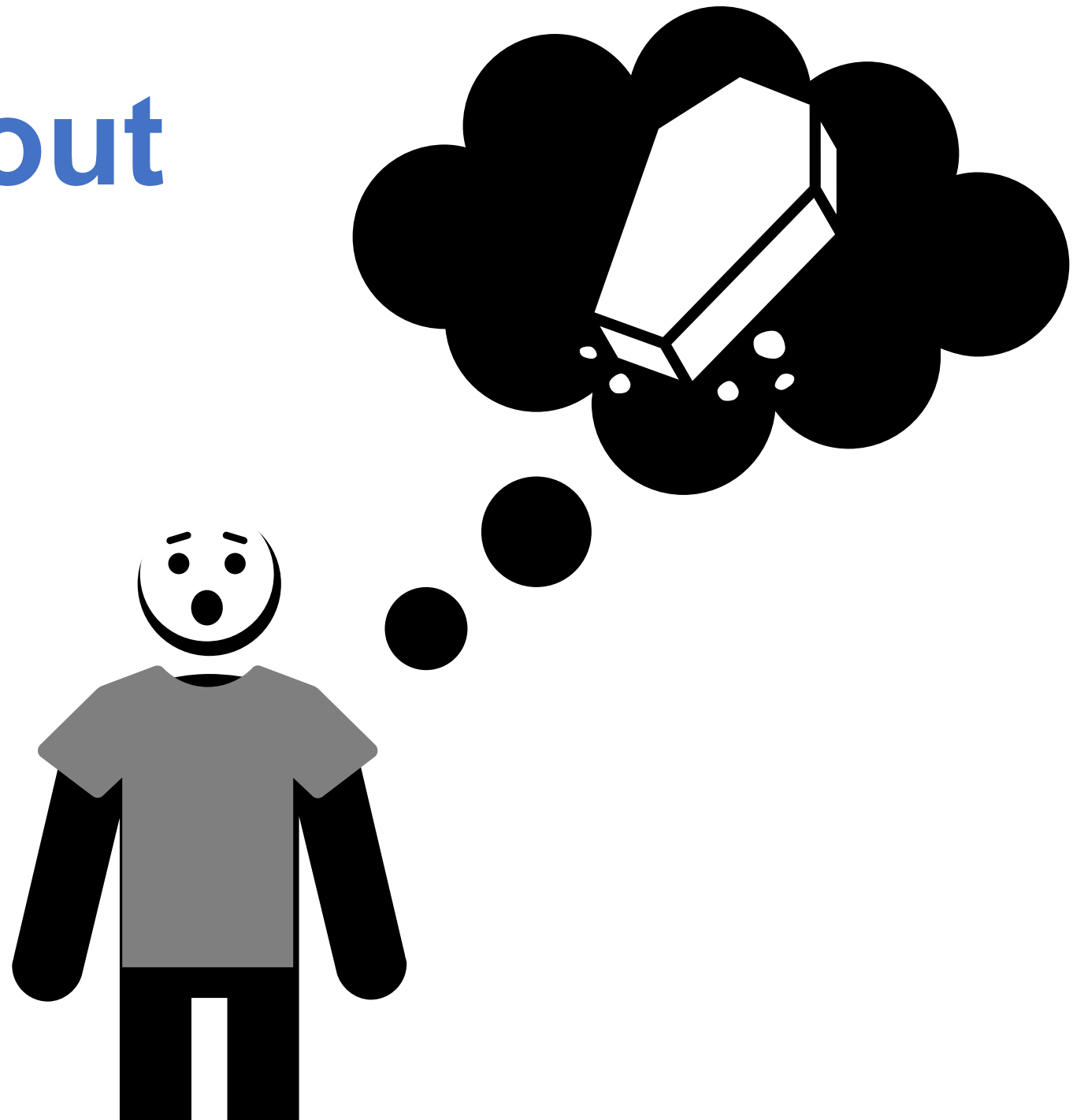
Pyszczynski et al. (2015)

# Outgroup discrimination

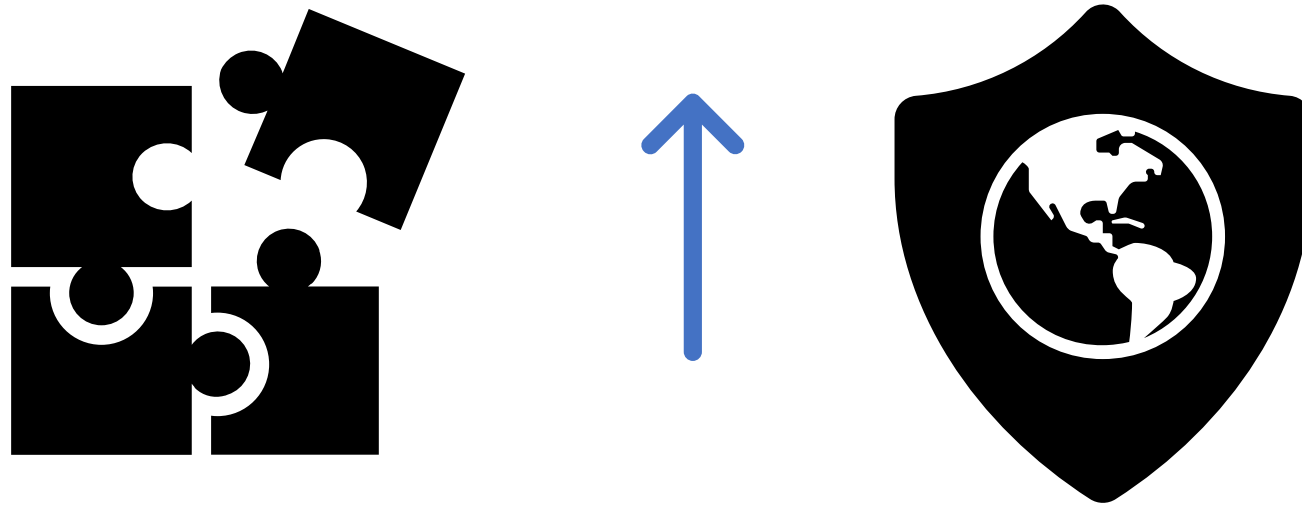


Pyszczynski et al. (2015)

# Anxiety about death...



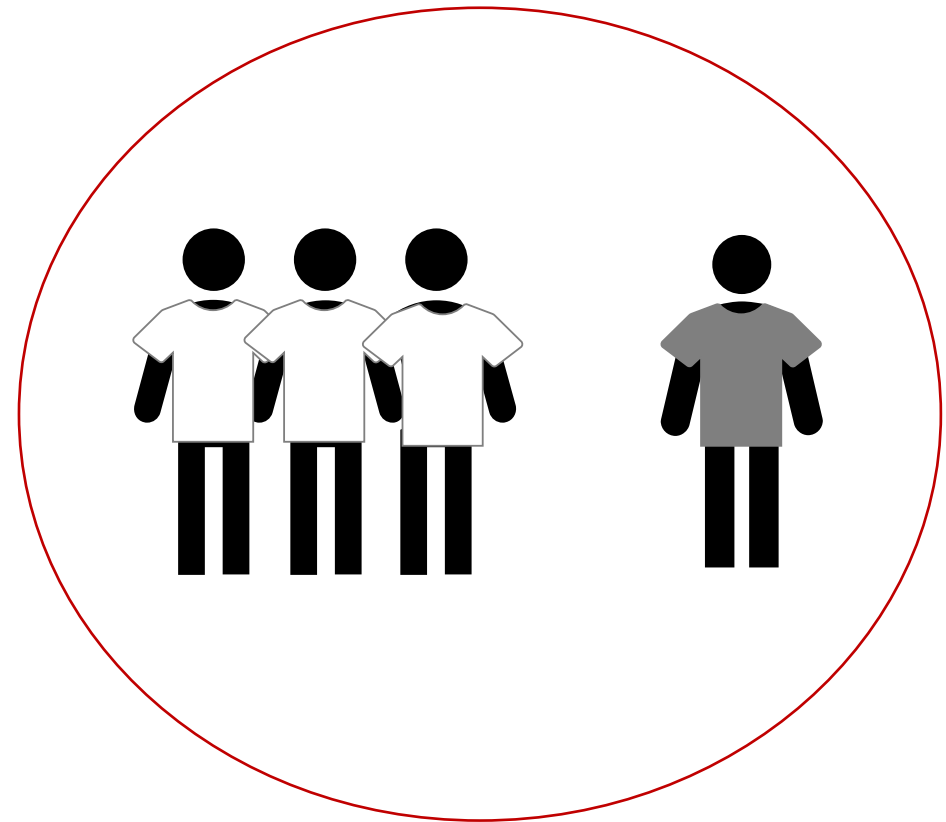
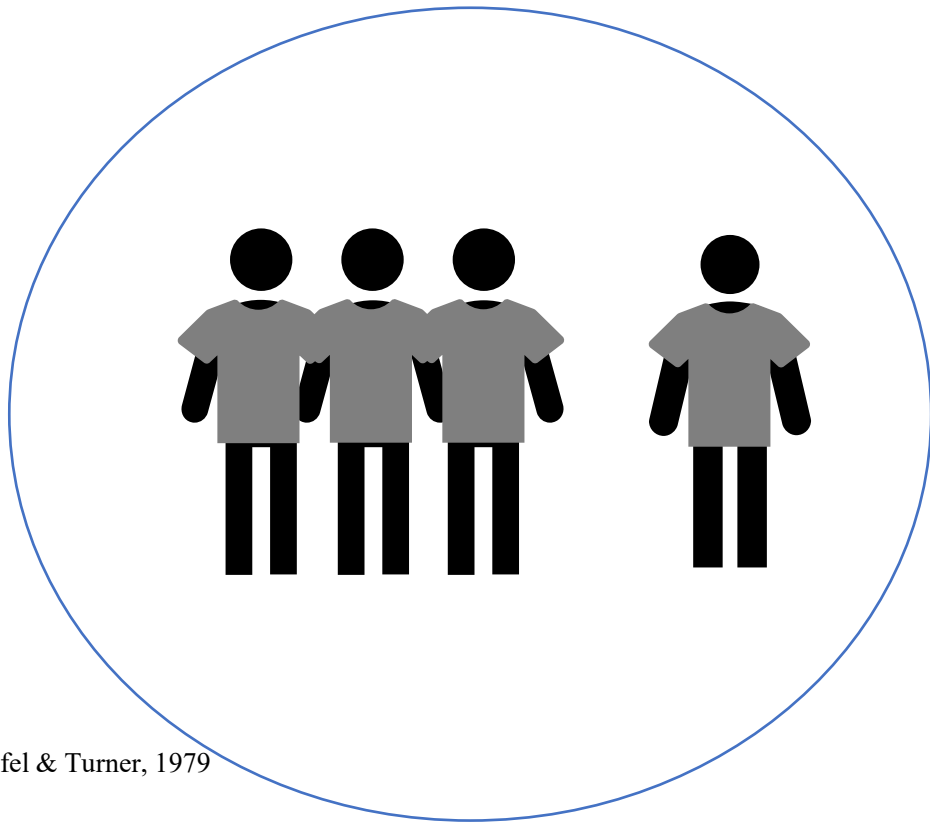
**Terror Management Theory** posits that **violations and threats** against one's own symbolic immortality **amplifies anxiety**, enhancing the need to protect one's cultural worldview and self-esteem



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

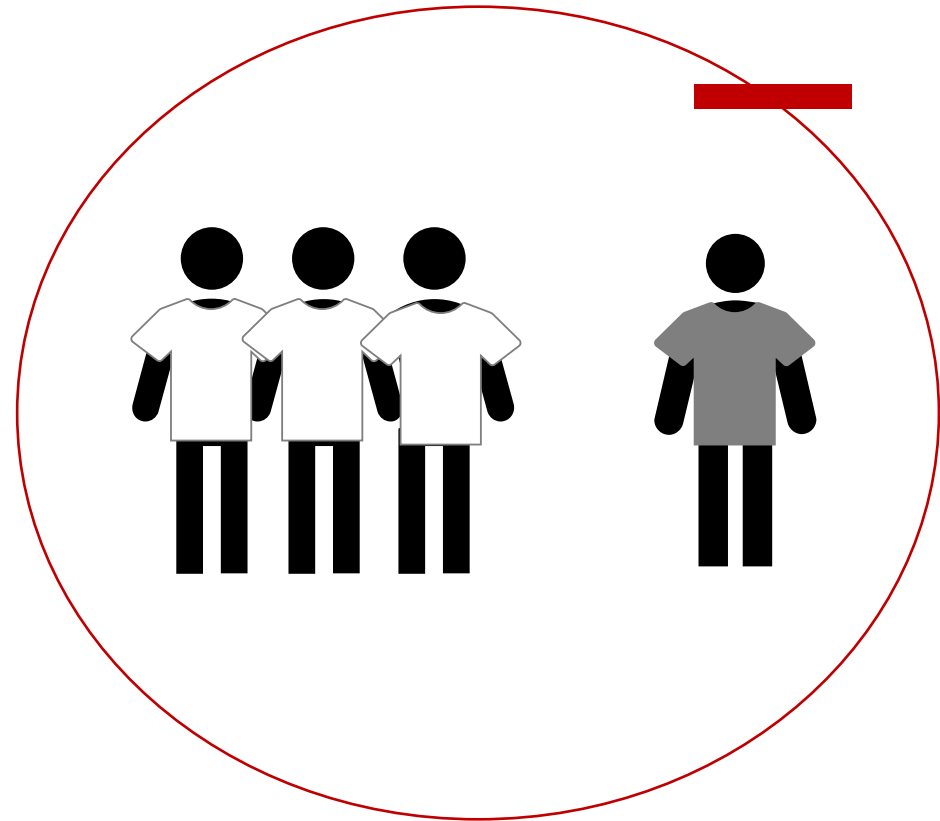
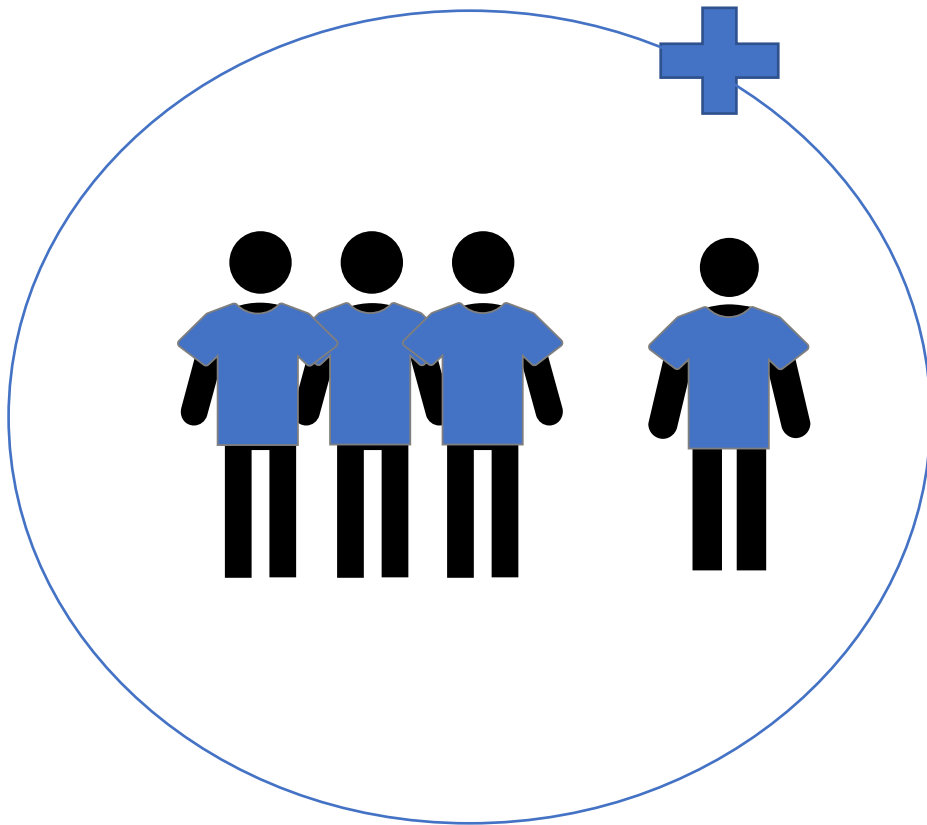


**Social groups allows us to categorize other individuals in such a way that separates them into part of our “ingroup” (us) or part of an “outgroup” (them).**

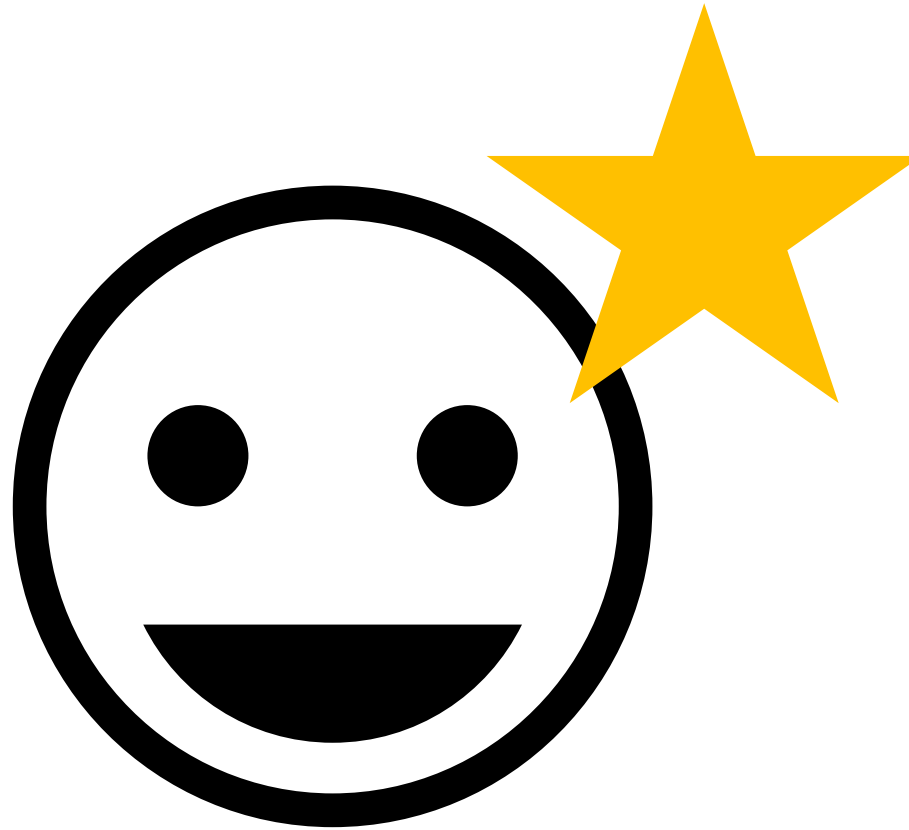




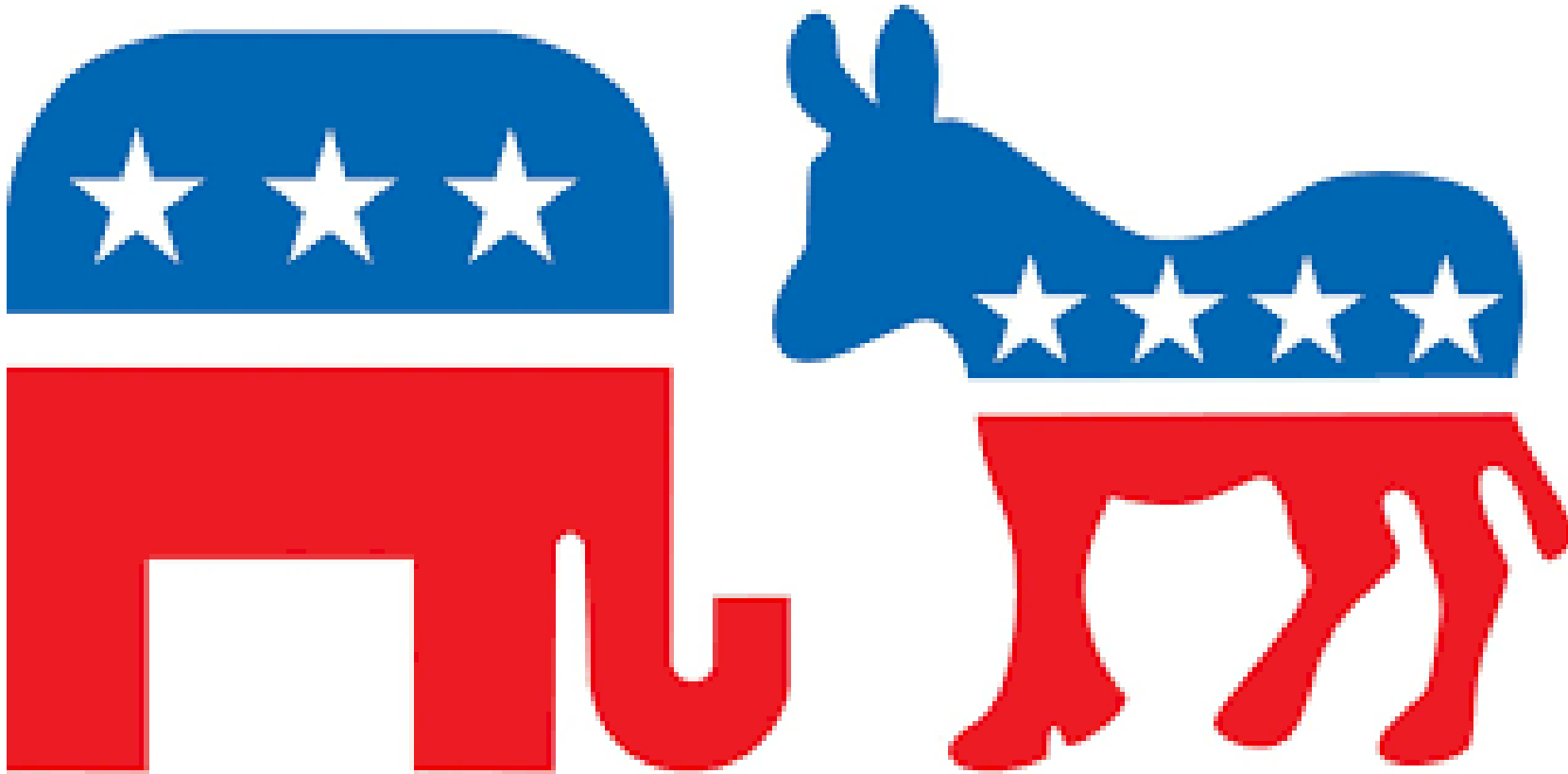
This enables individuals to emphasize **negative** aspects of outgroup members and **positive** aspects about ingroup members




# Bolsters self esteem



# Political party is a clear example of group membership

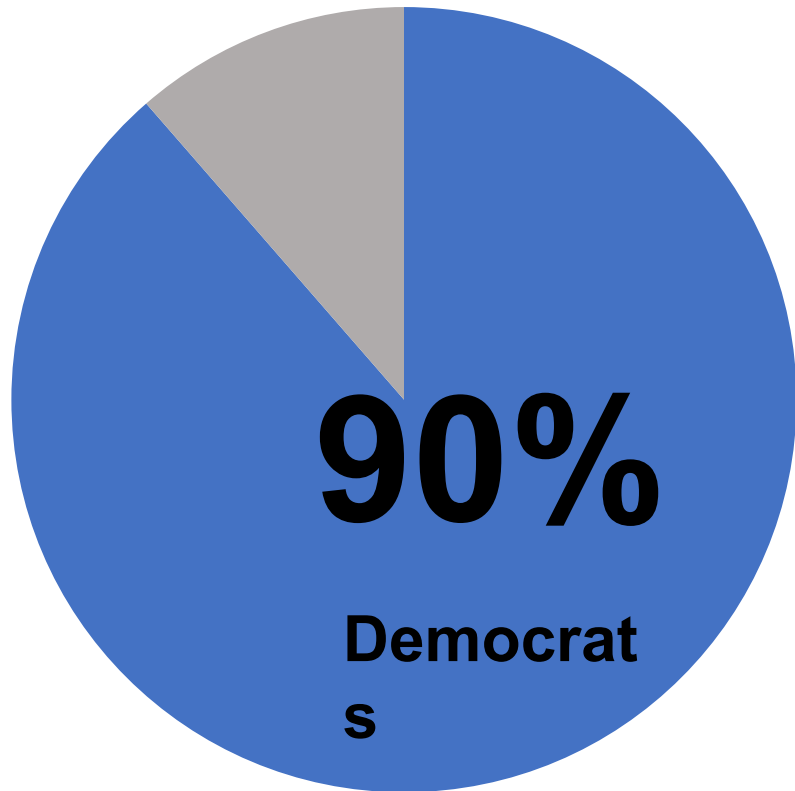


Greene (1999)

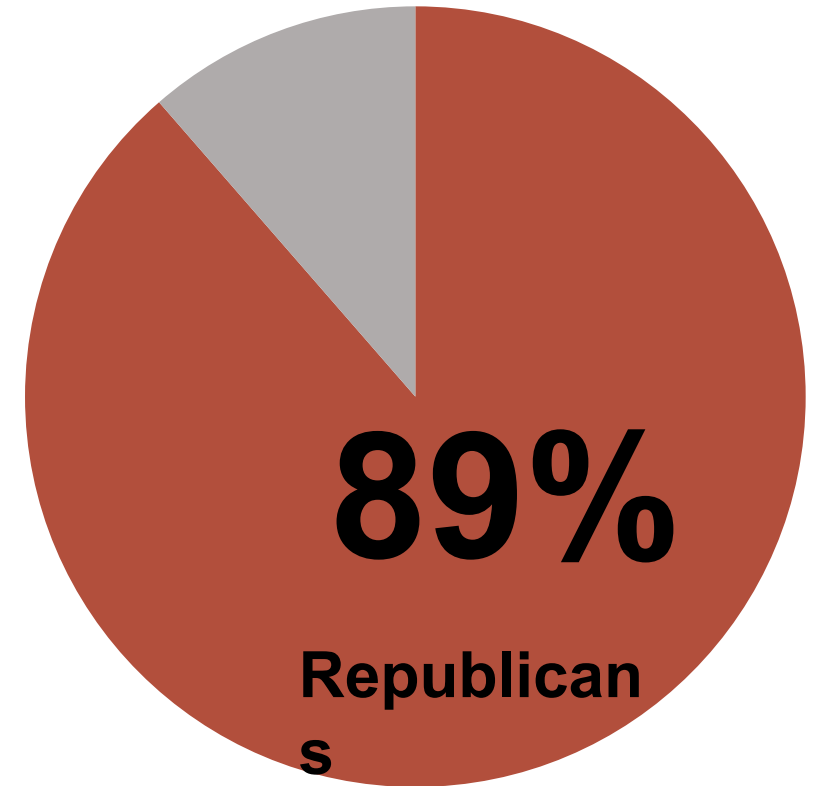


**Exposure to mortality salience  
increases feelings of polarization  
and intensifies moral differences  
between liberals and  
conservatives**

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




The United States would suffer from irreversible and lasting harm





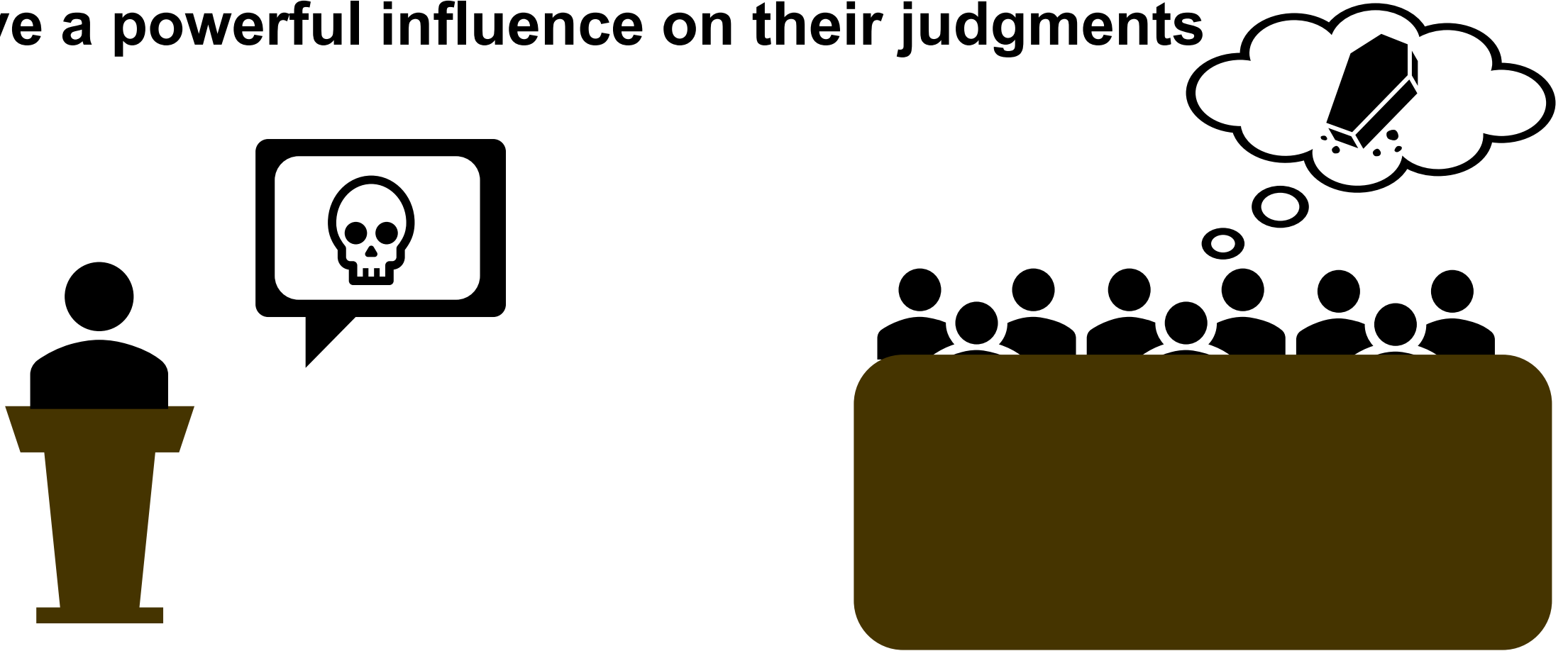
There are **discrepancies** in how each party views the impending **prosecution** of the insurrectionists.

Pew Research (2021)


A black silhouette of a person is shown from the waist up, facing right. The person's right arm is raised, and their left arm is extended forward. Above the person's head are three circles of increasing size, leading to a large, irregular thought bubble. Inside the thought bubble, the following text is written:

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

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







What about political group membership?

# Present Research



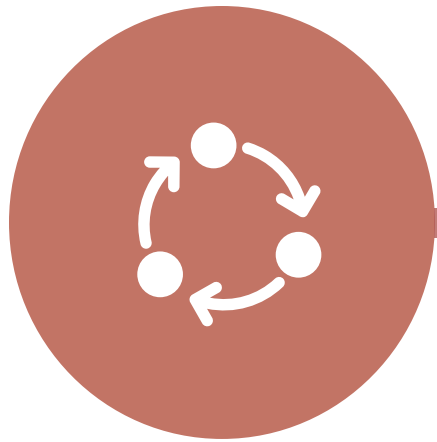


Do **political differences** between mock jurors and a defendant affect trial outcomes?

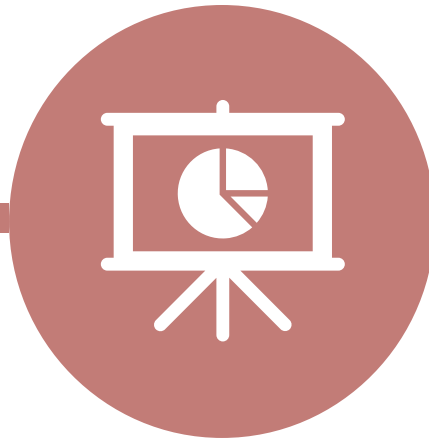
Does **mortality salience** affect trial outcomes?

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

# Present Study



**Method**



**Results**

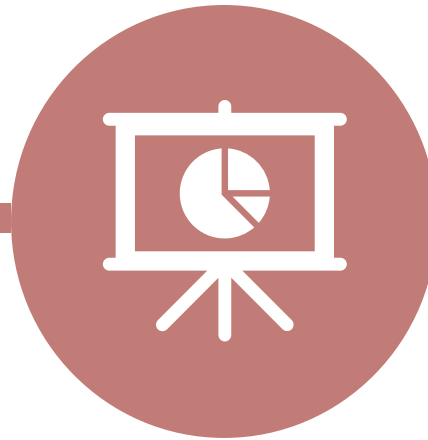


**Discussion**

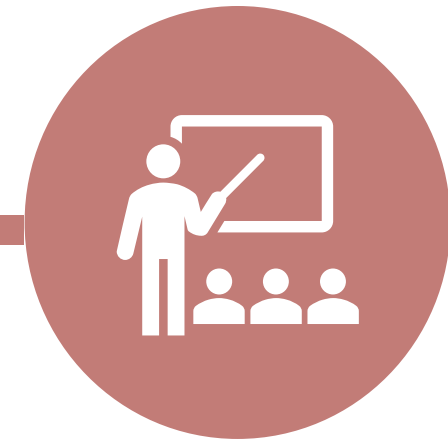
# Present Study



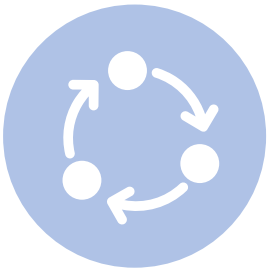
**Method**



**Results**

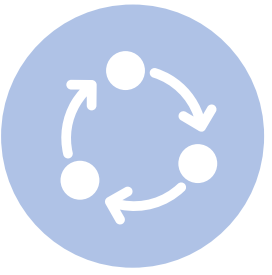


**Discussion**



**We sampled 310 MTurk workers**





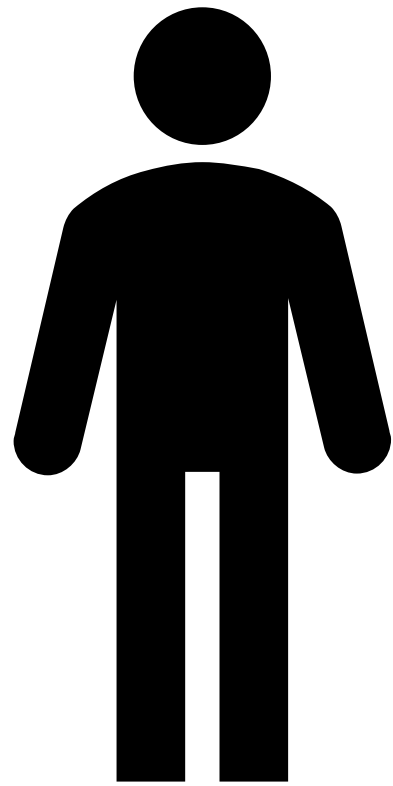
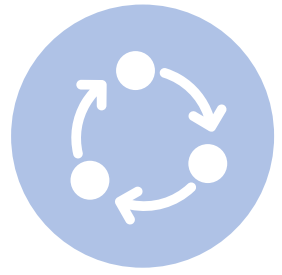
**We sampled 310 MTurk workers**



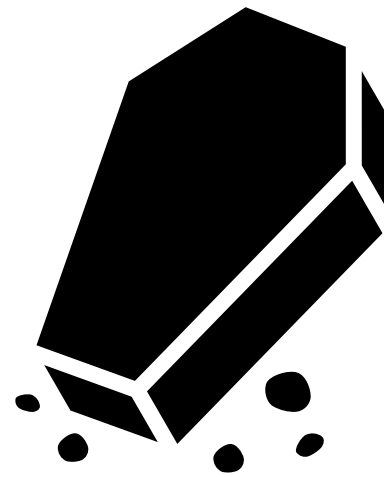
**Read a mock trial transcript**



**We implemented a 3 x 2 between subjects design**

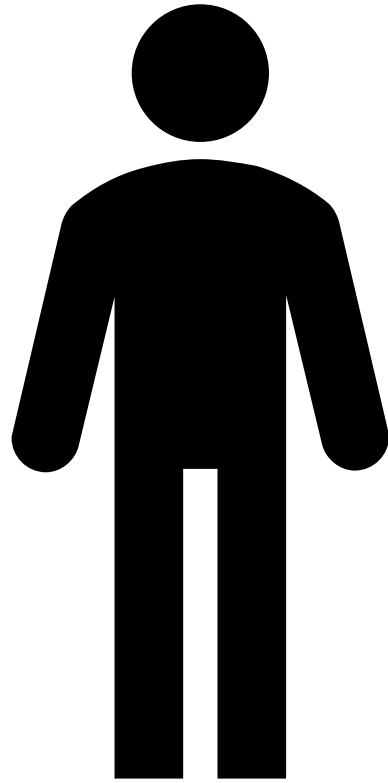
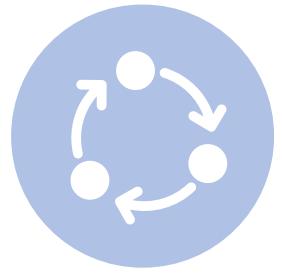


**X**

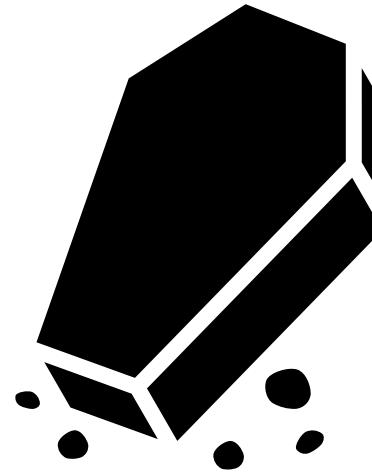




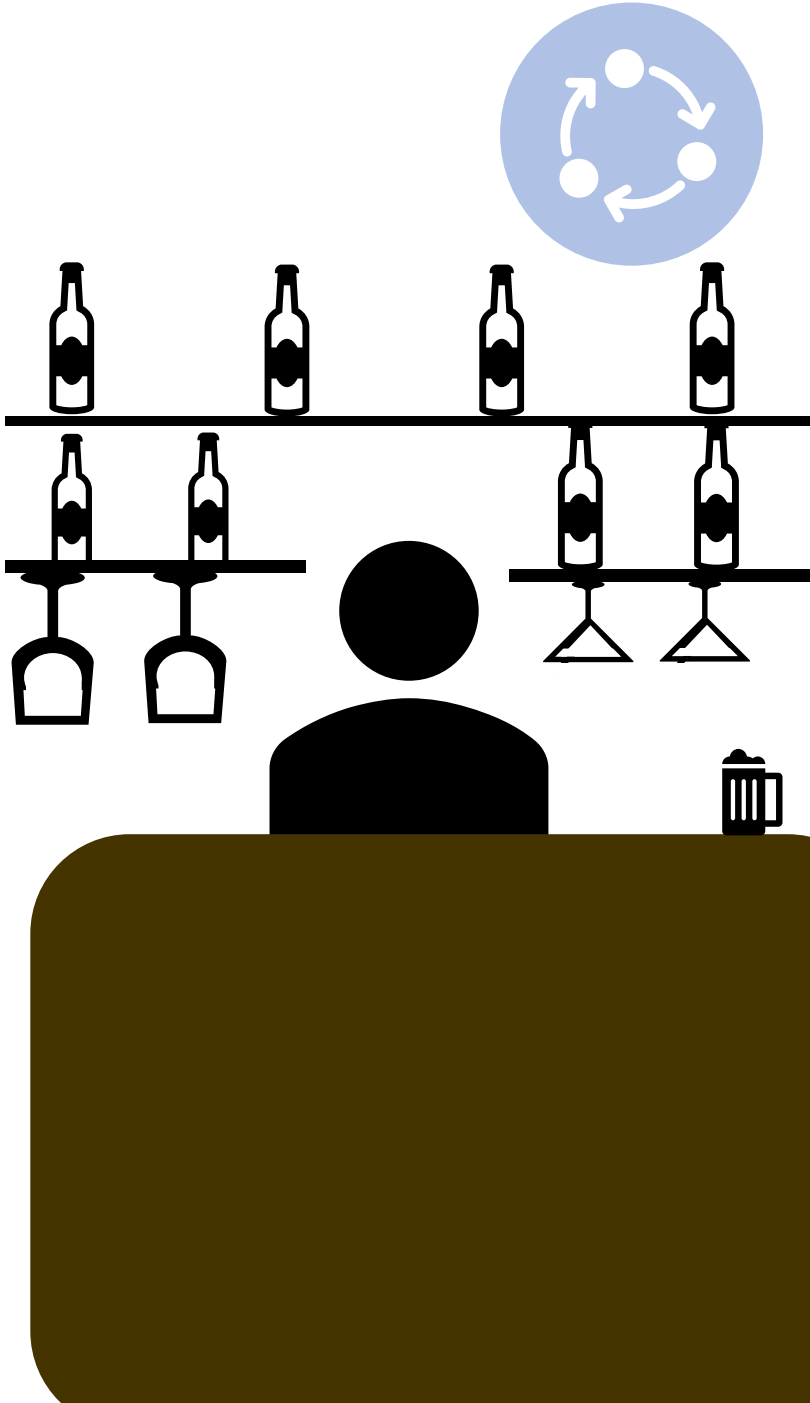
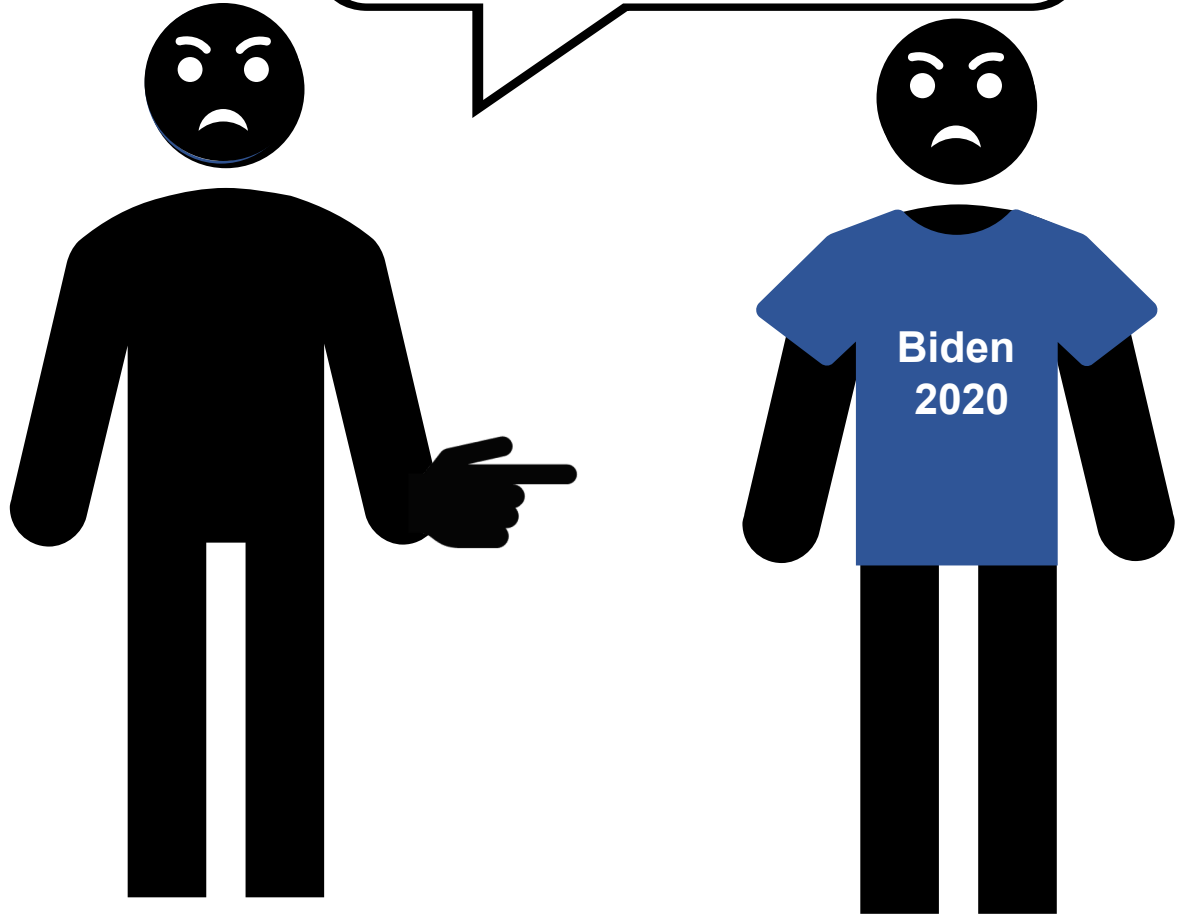
# We implemented a 3 x 2 between subjects design



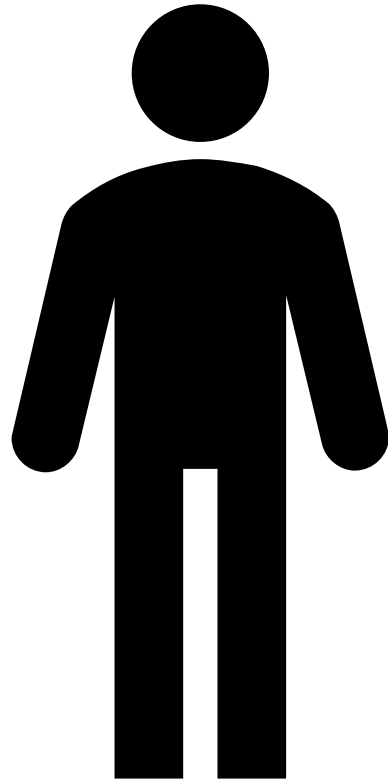
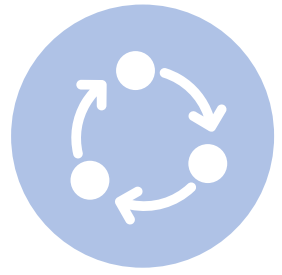
**X**



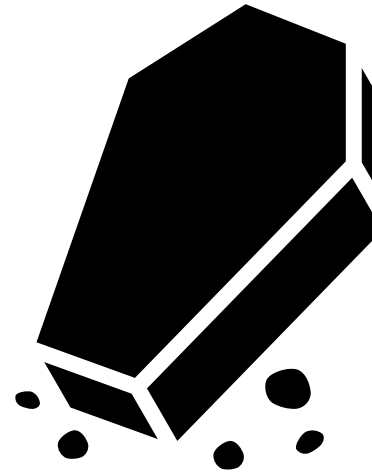
“You liberals are ruining our country! You snowflakes won’t get your way, not with Trump in office! So, go ahead and cry about it! We’ll get another four more year’s commie!”



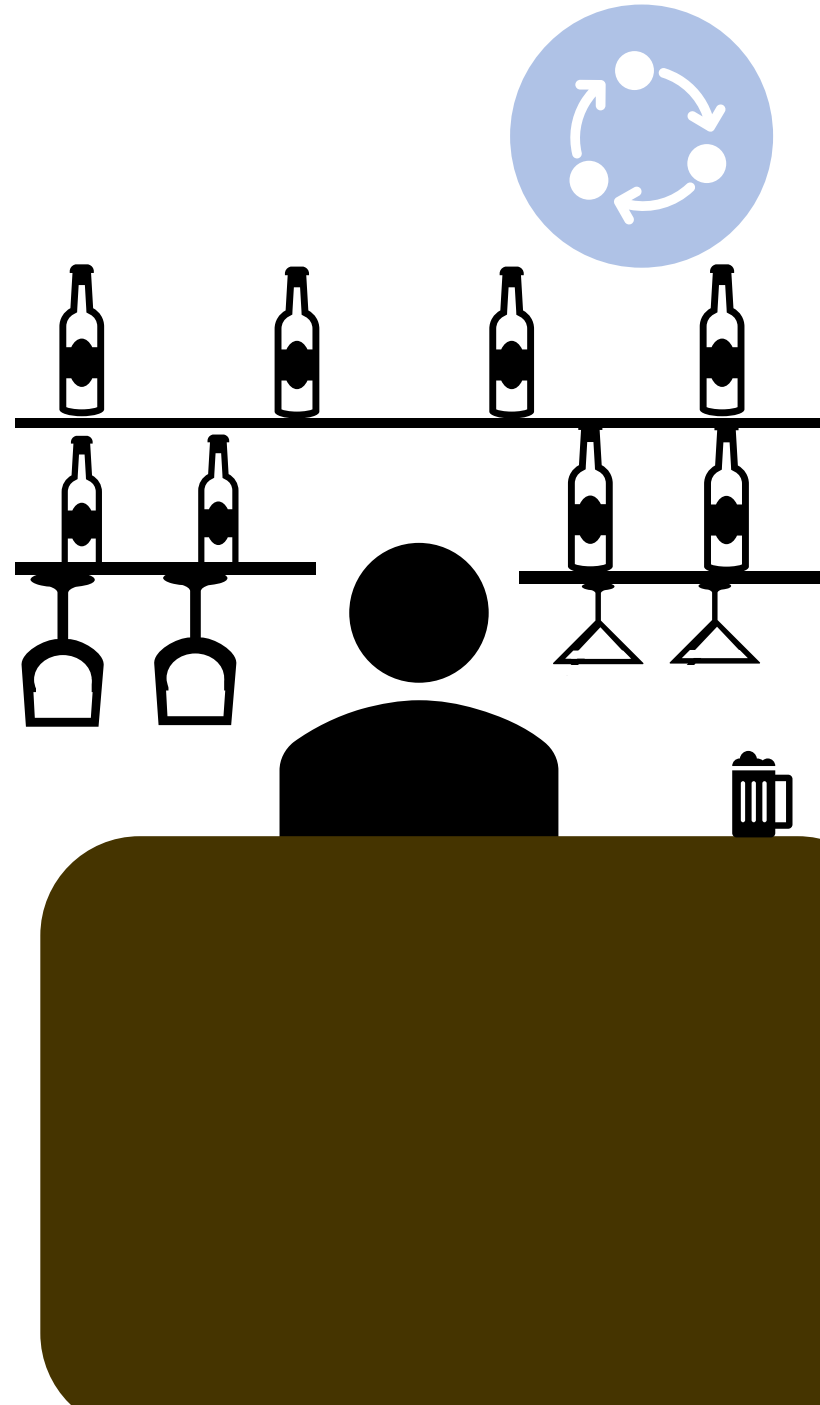
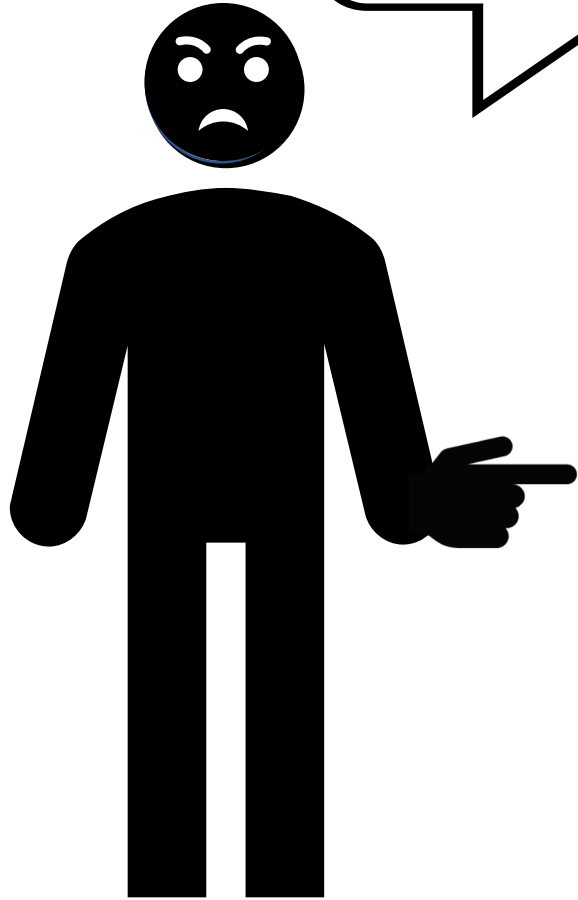
# We implemented a 3 x 2 between subjects design



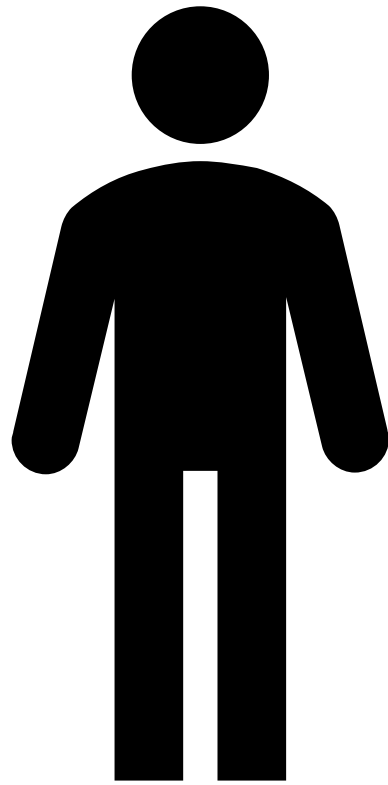
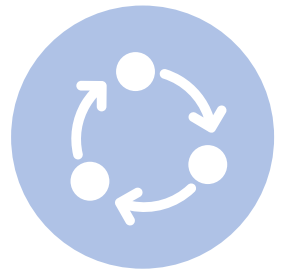
**X**



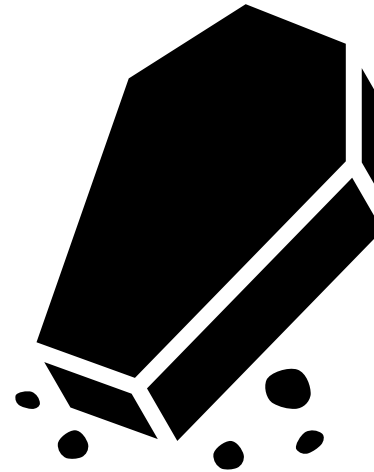
“You are a racist bootlicker who doesn’t care about anyone but themselves! Your president has ruined this country! Enjoy your bigotry while it lasts!”



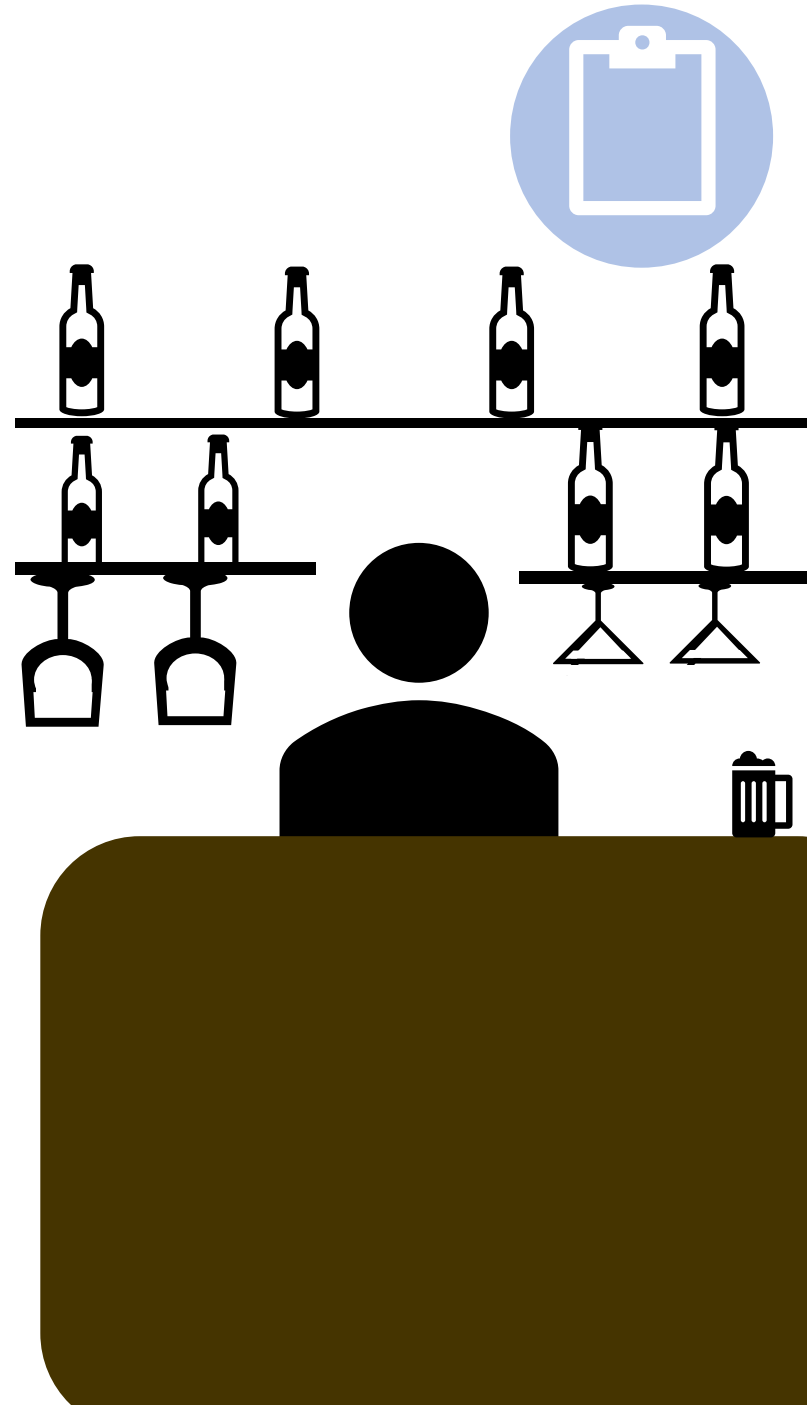
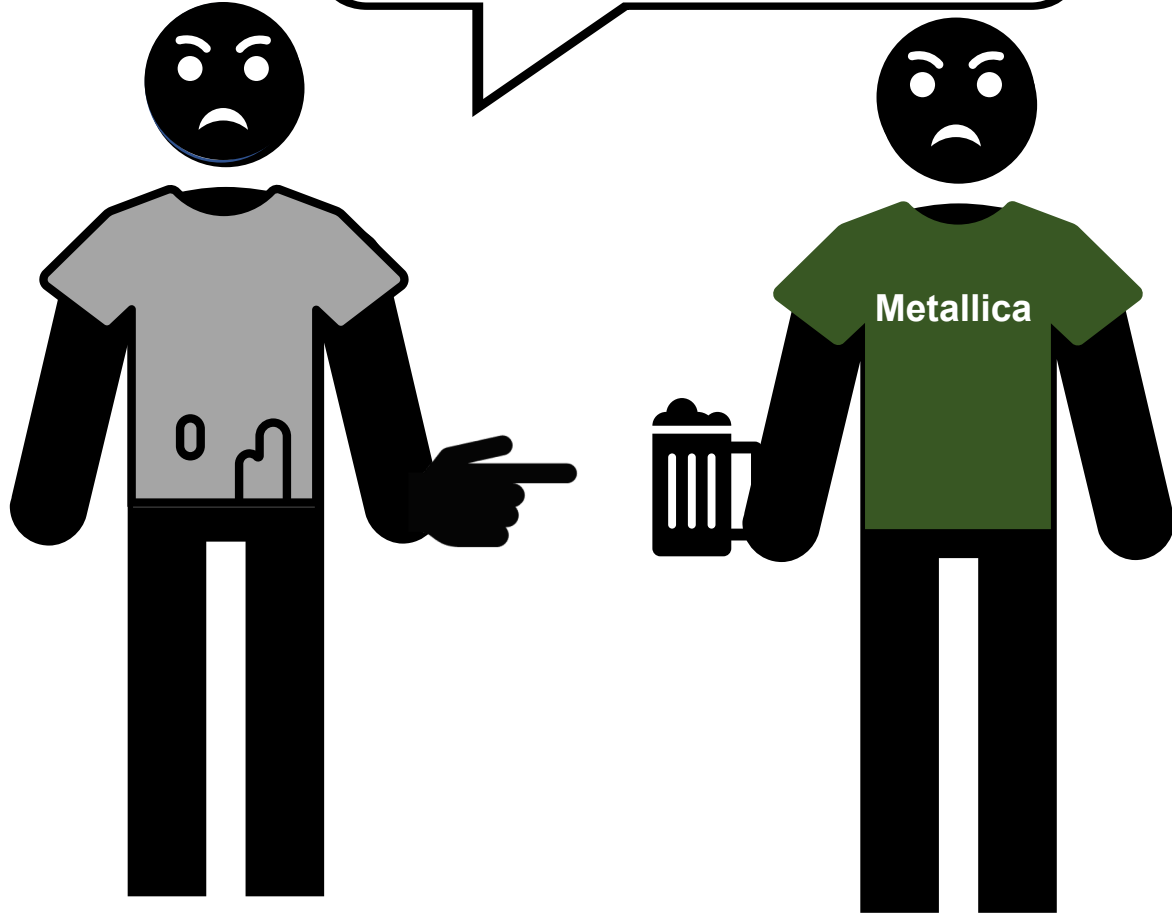
# We implemented a 3 x 2 between subjects design



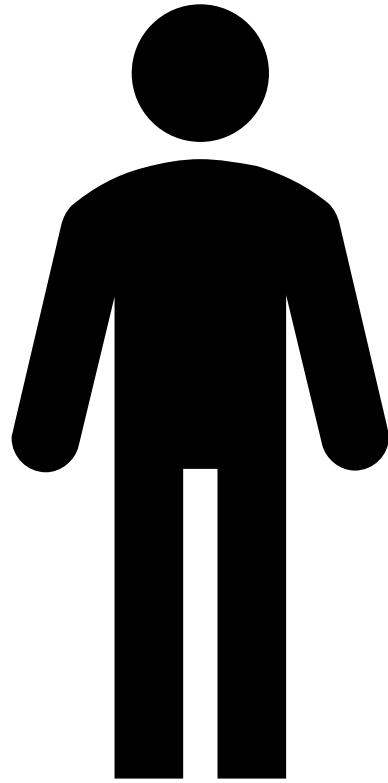
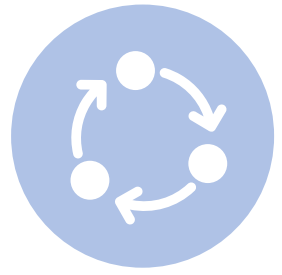
**X**



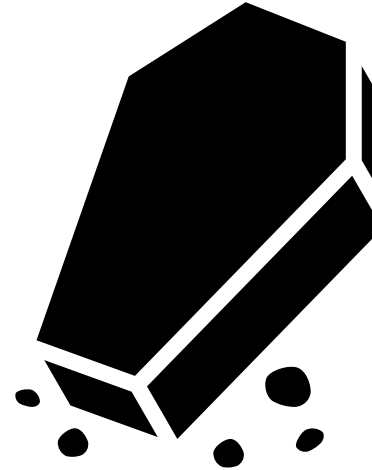
“Watch where you are going jerk!  
Are you F-ing kidding me! This is a  
new shirt! Do you have 150\$ you A-  
Hole? F-You! You’re going to pay for  
this!”



# We implemented a 3 x 2 between subjects design

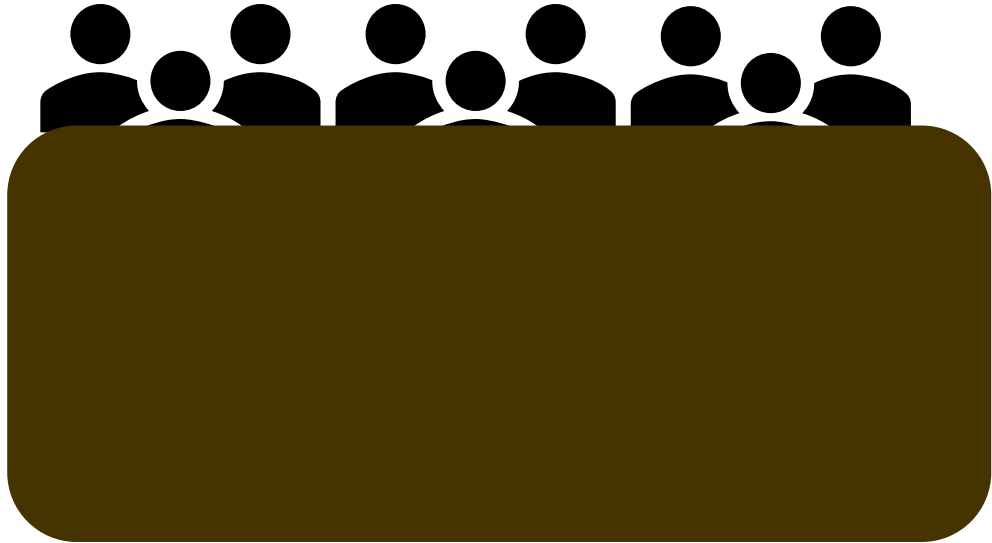


X



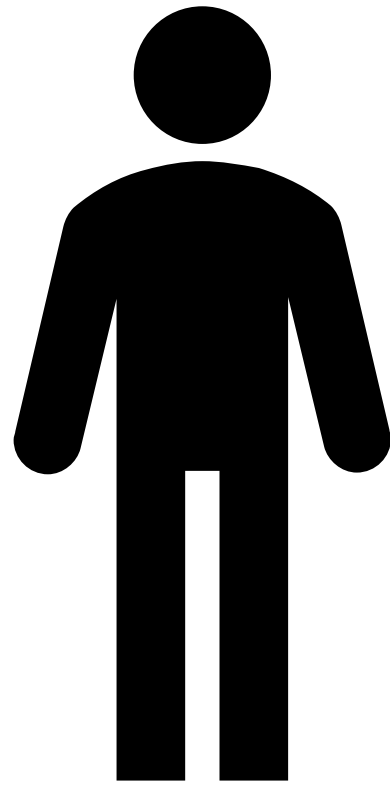
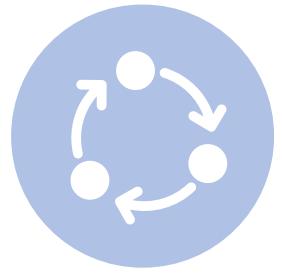


“Now ladies and gentlemen I again implore you to put yourself in Mr. Wright’s shoes. Please do me a favor and close your eyes and **imagine** if it was you yourself who was beaten and laying on the cold hard floor only inches from **death**.”

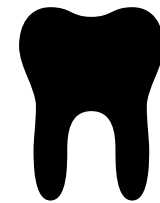
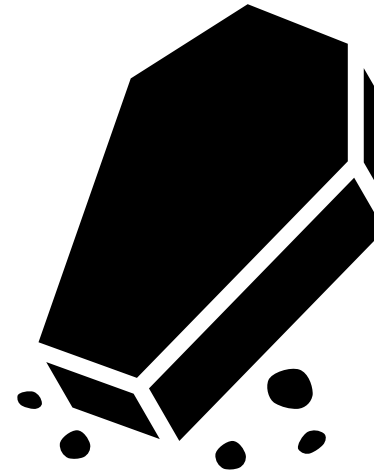


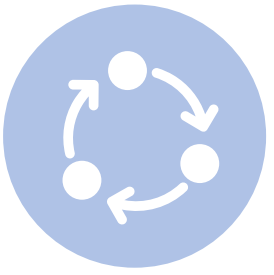


# We implemented a 3 x 2 between subjects design

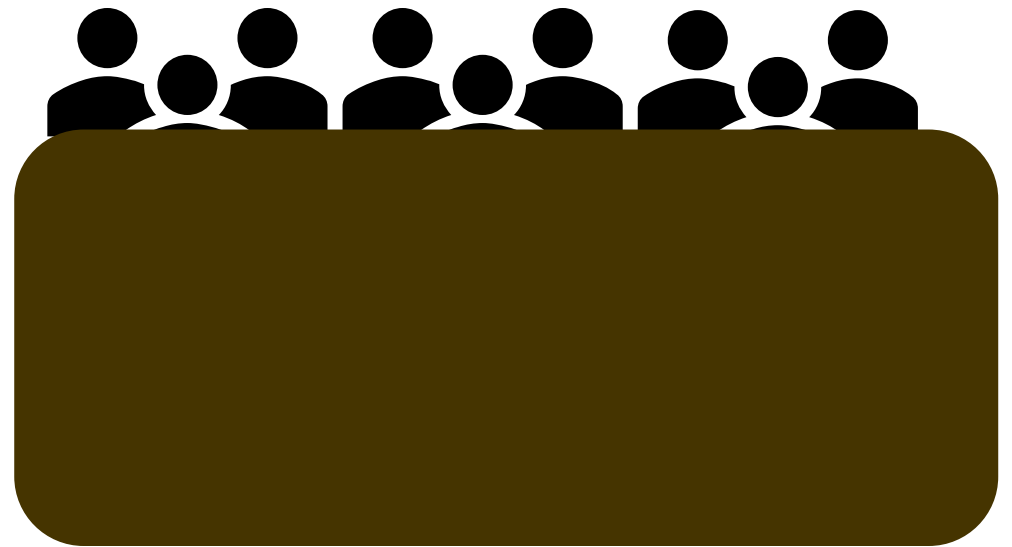


X

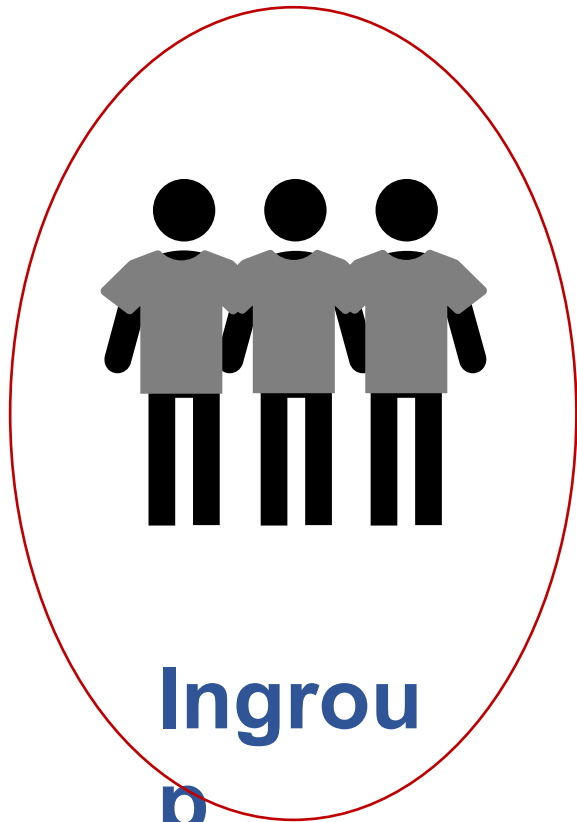
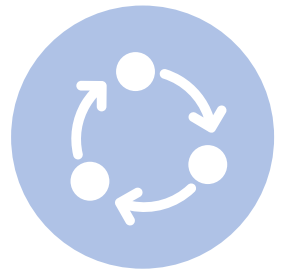




“Now ladies and gentlemen, I again implore you to put yourself in the shoes of Jonathon Wright. Please do me a favor and close your eyes and **imagine** it was you now suffering from several broken bones, including a **fractured jaw** and several **broken teeth**.”

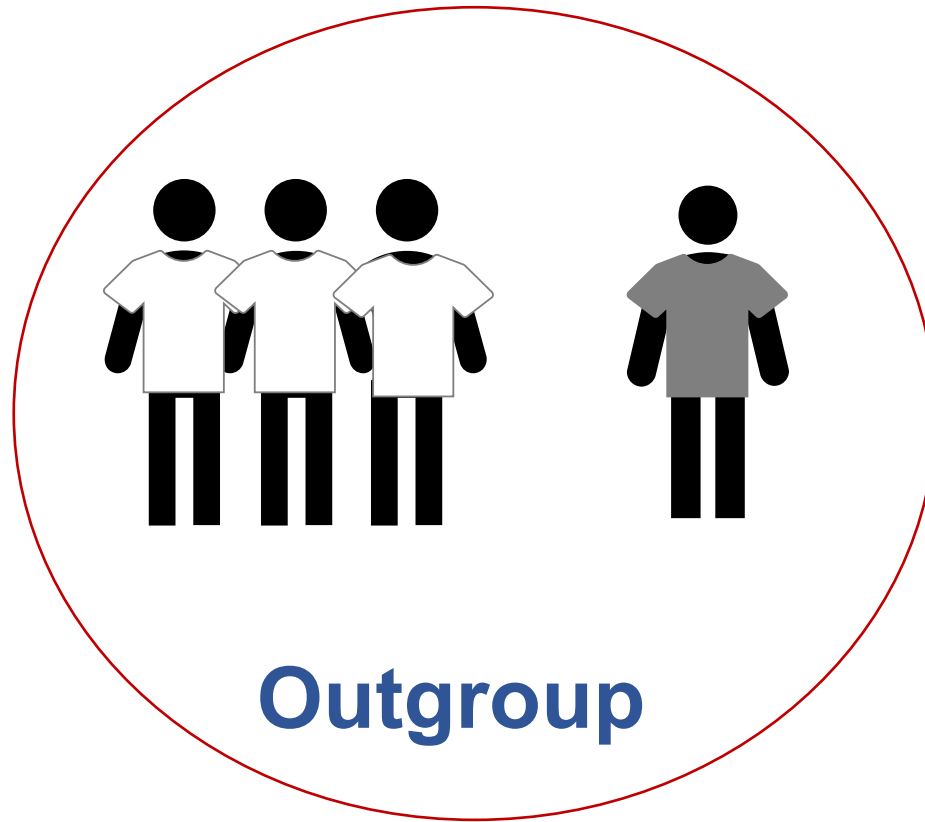


# The defendant coded as either...

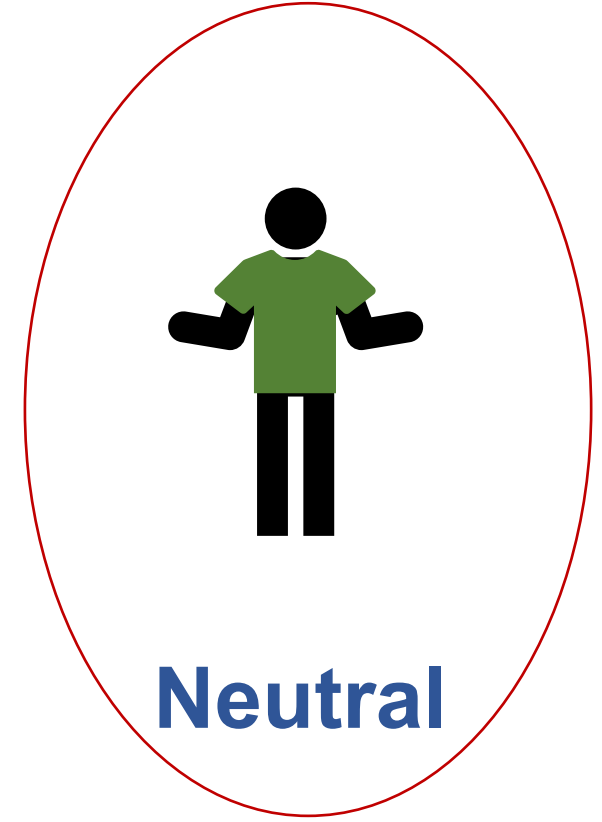


Ingroup

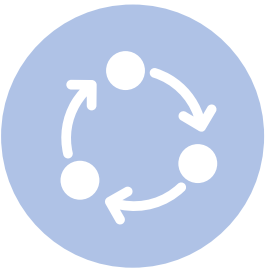
p



Outgroup



Neutral



**We sampled 310 MTurk workers**



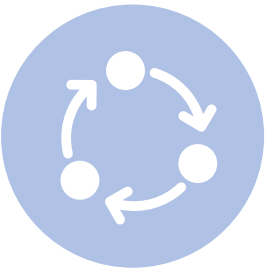
**Read a mock trial transcript**



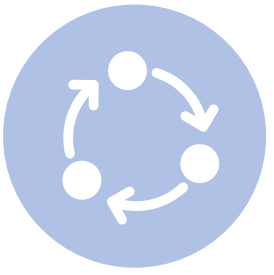
**Provided case judgments**



# Participants provided...



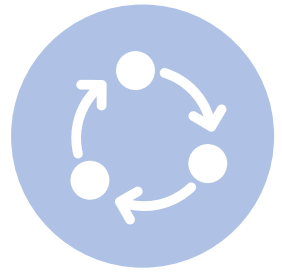
# Participants provided...



**Verdict**

**Preference**

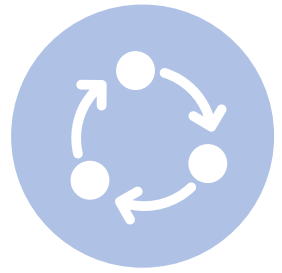
# Participants provided...



“Please indicate  
the verdict you  
prefer.”

**Verdict  
Preference**

# Participants provided...



“Please indicate  
the verdict you  
prefer

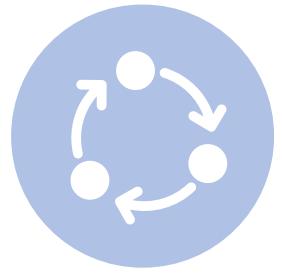
**Guilt**

**Not  
Guilty**

**Verdict  
Preference**



# Participants provided...

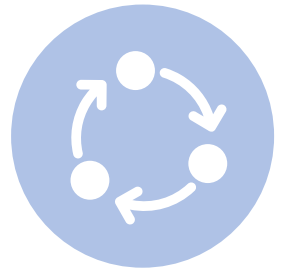


**Verdict**

**Preference**

**Self-Defense Motivation**

# Participants provided...



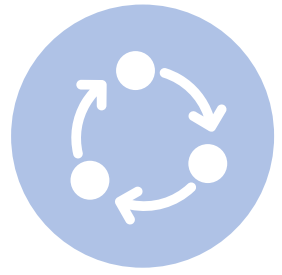
**Verdict**

**Preference**

**Self-Defense Motivation**

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

# Participants provided...



**Verdict**

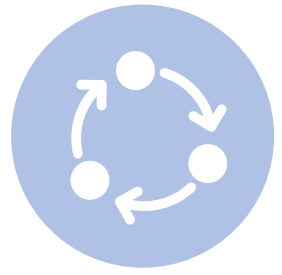
**Preference**

**Self-Defense Motivation**

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

Scale: 1-7

# Participants provided...



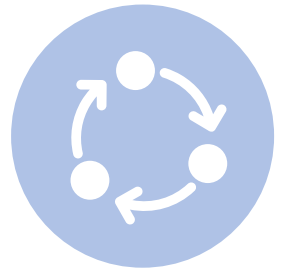
**Verdict**

**Preference**

**Self-Defense Motivation**

**Perceptions of  
Blameworthiness**

# Participants provided...



**Verdict**

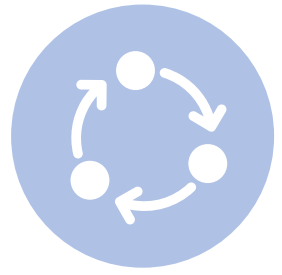
**Preference**

**Self-Defense Motivation**

**Perceptions of  
Blameworthiness**

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

# Participants provided...



**Verdict**

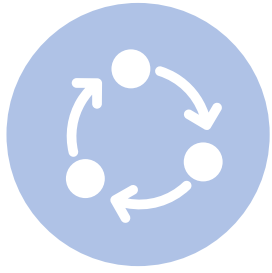
**Preference**

**Self-Defense Motivation**

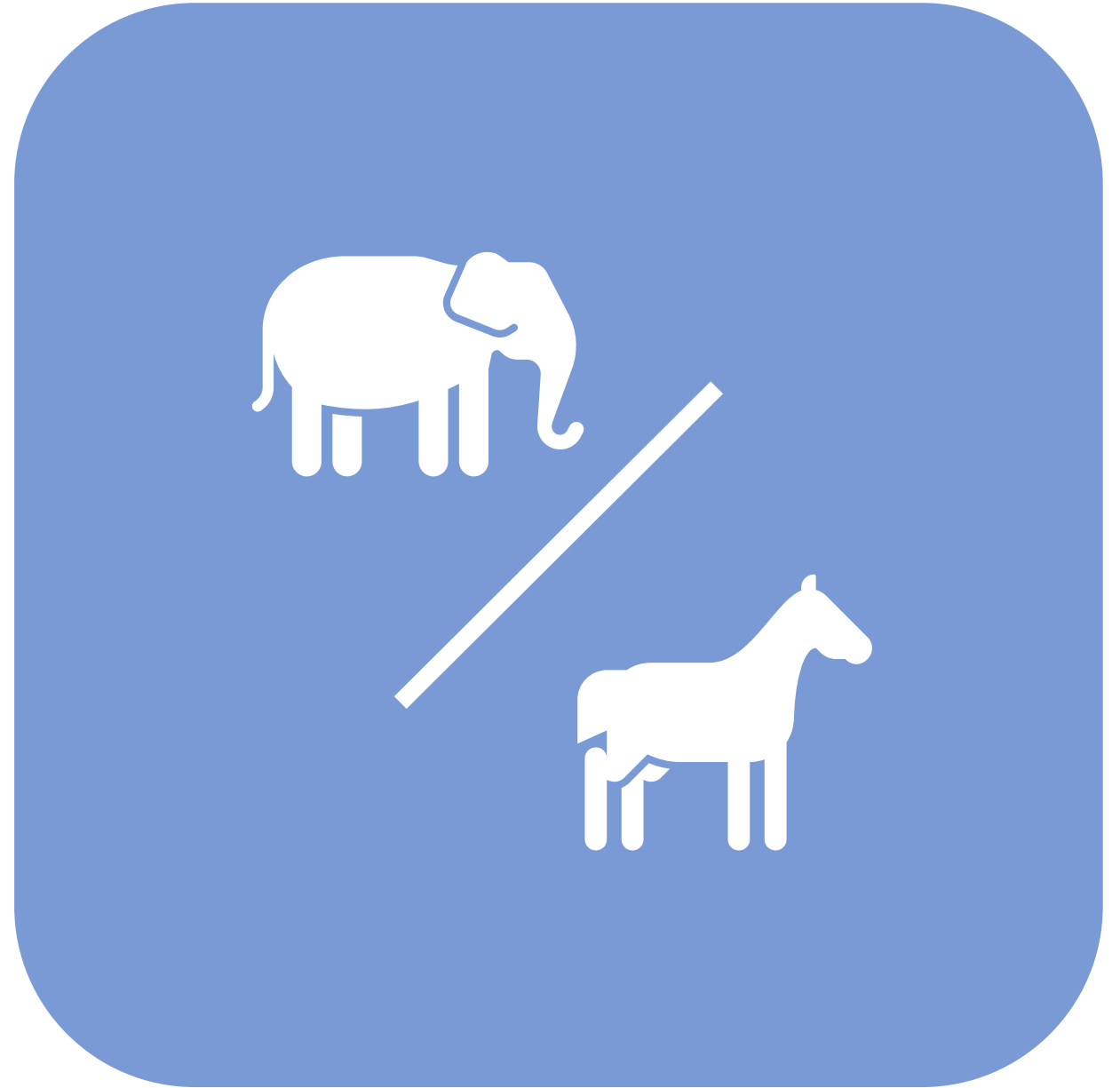
**Perceptions of  
Blameworthiness**

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

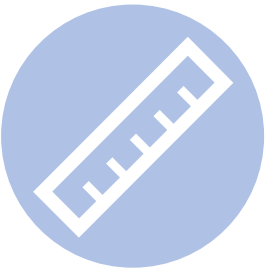
0 – 100%



# Political Identity Measures

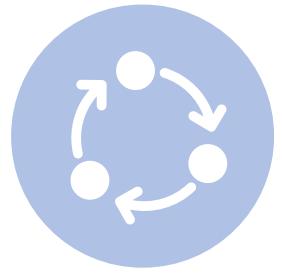


# Participants disclosed...



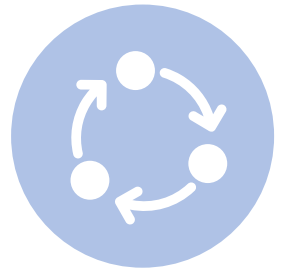


# Participants provided...



**2020 Vote**

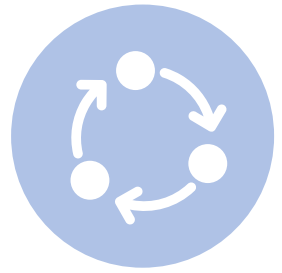
# Participants provided...



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

**2020 Vote**

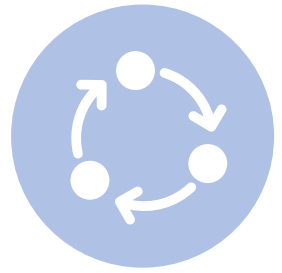
# Participants provided...



**2020 Vote**

**Political Orientation**

# Participants provided...

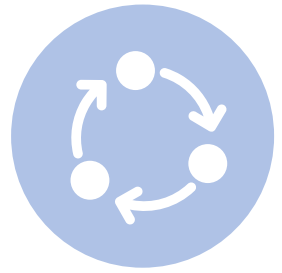


**2020 Vote**

“What is your political ideology?”

**Political Orientation**

# Participants provided...



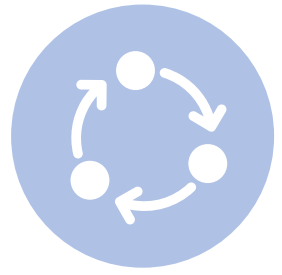
**2020 Vote**

“What is your political ideology?”

**Political Orientation**

1 = Very Liberal;  
7 = Very Conservative

# Participants provided...

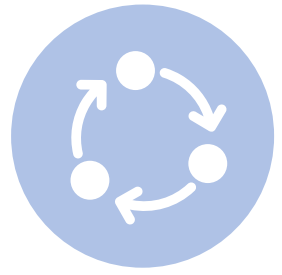


**2020 Vote**

**Political Orientation**

**Importance of Party  
Identification**

# Participants provided...



**2020 Vote**

**Political Orientation**

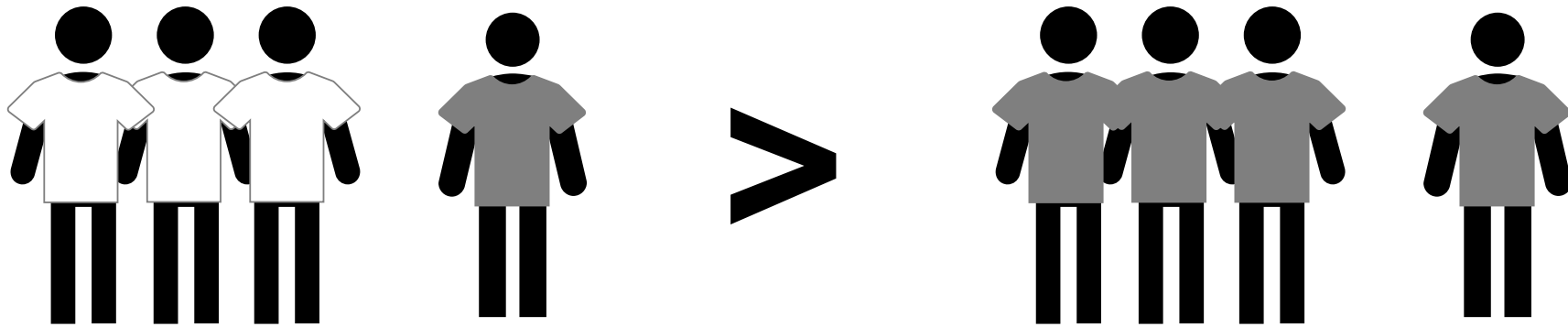
**Importance of Party  
Identification**

“How important is your party  
identification to you? “

1 = Not important at all;  
7 = Extremely  
important

# Hypotheses

H1



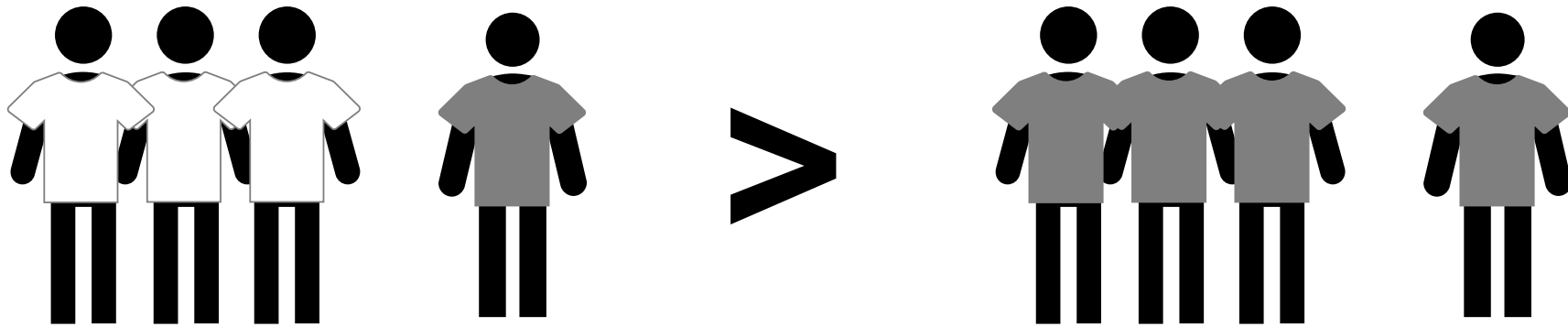
Verdic

t



# Hypotheses

H1

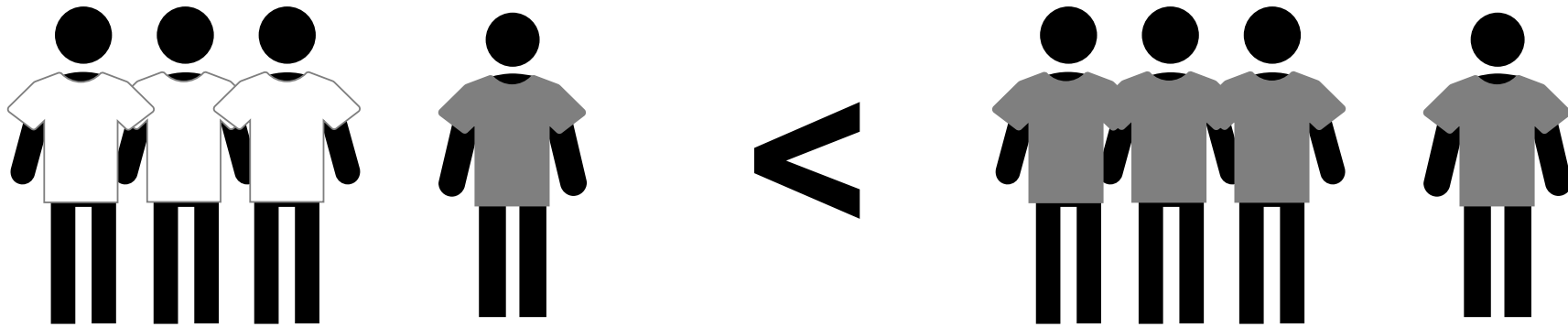


Blameworthines

s

# Hypotheses

H1



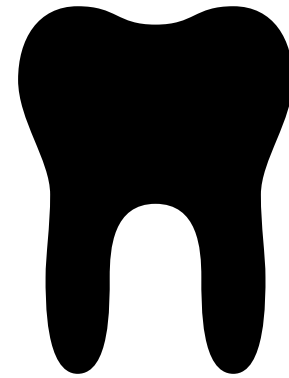
Self-  
Defense

# Hypotheses

H2



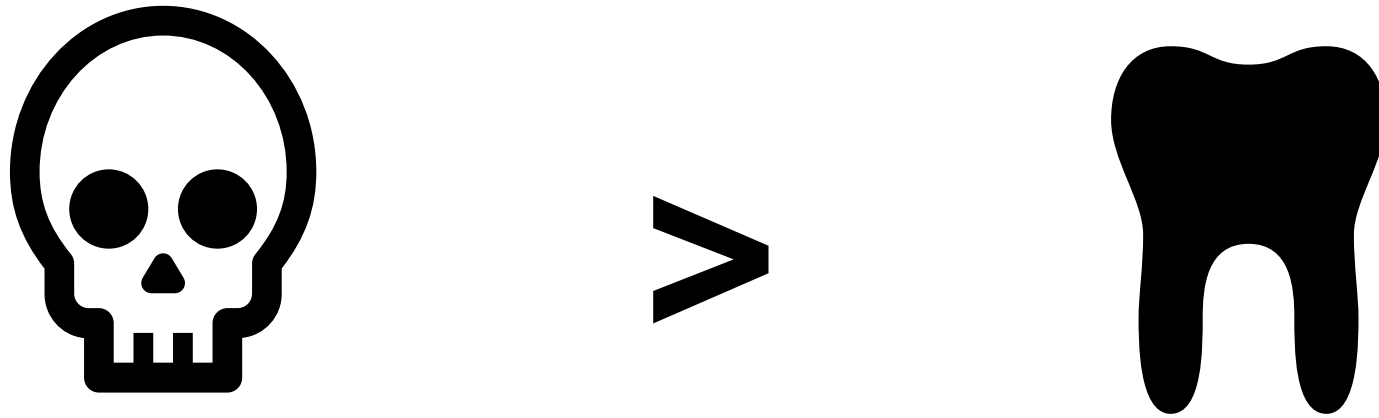
>



Verdict

# Hypotheses

H2

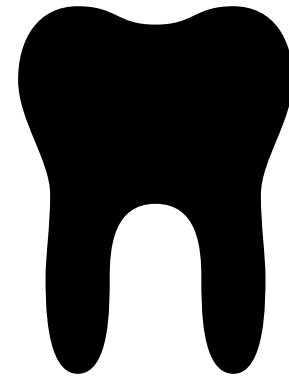


Blameworthines

s

# Hypotheses

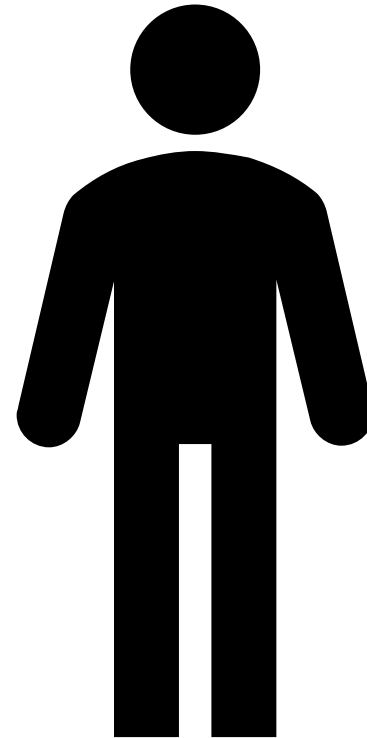
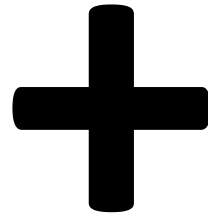
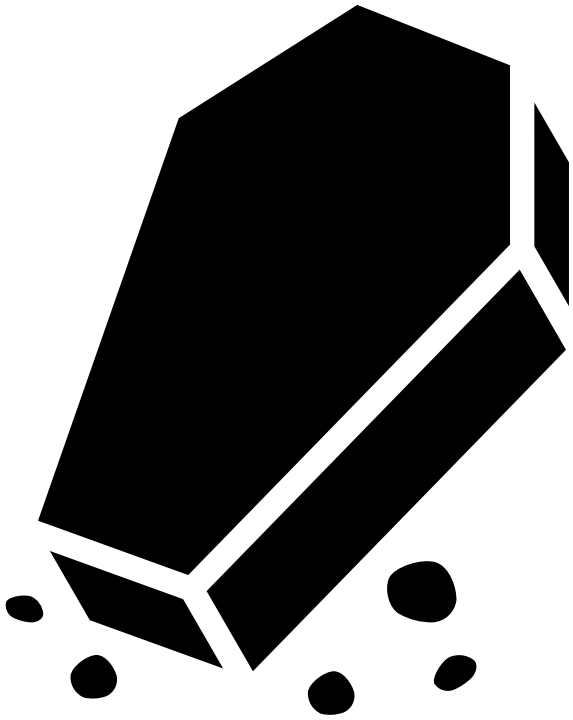
H2



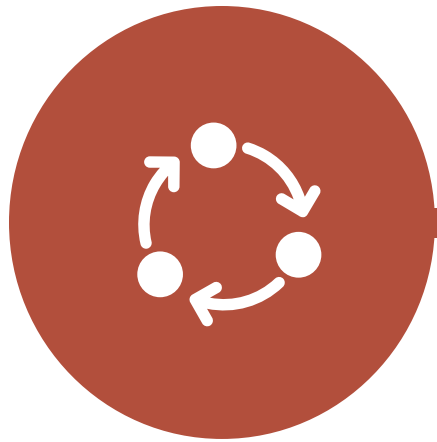
Self-  
defense

# Hypotheses

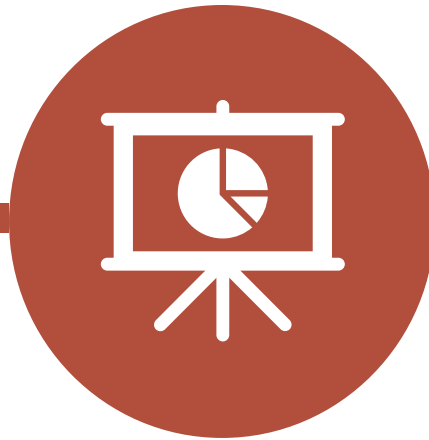
H3



# Present Study



**Method**

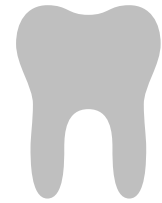
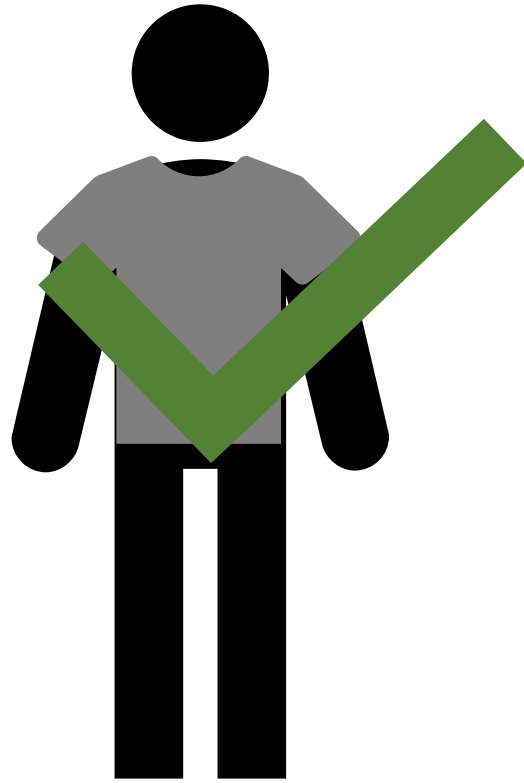
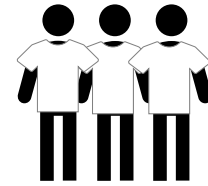
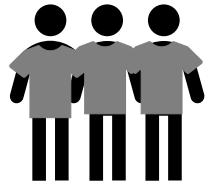


**Results**



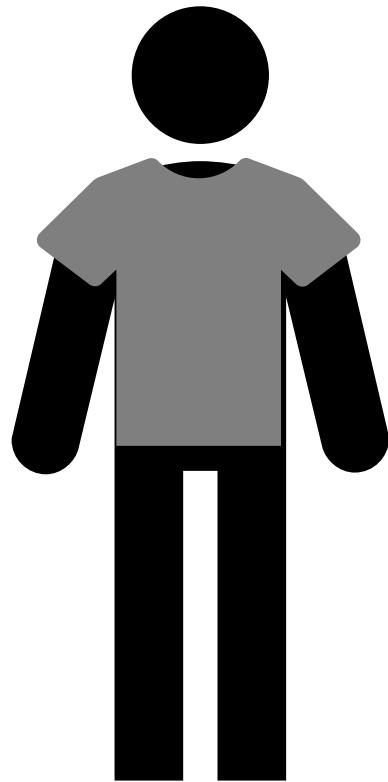
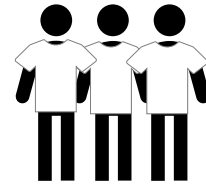
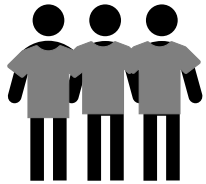
**Discussion**

# ALL DVs

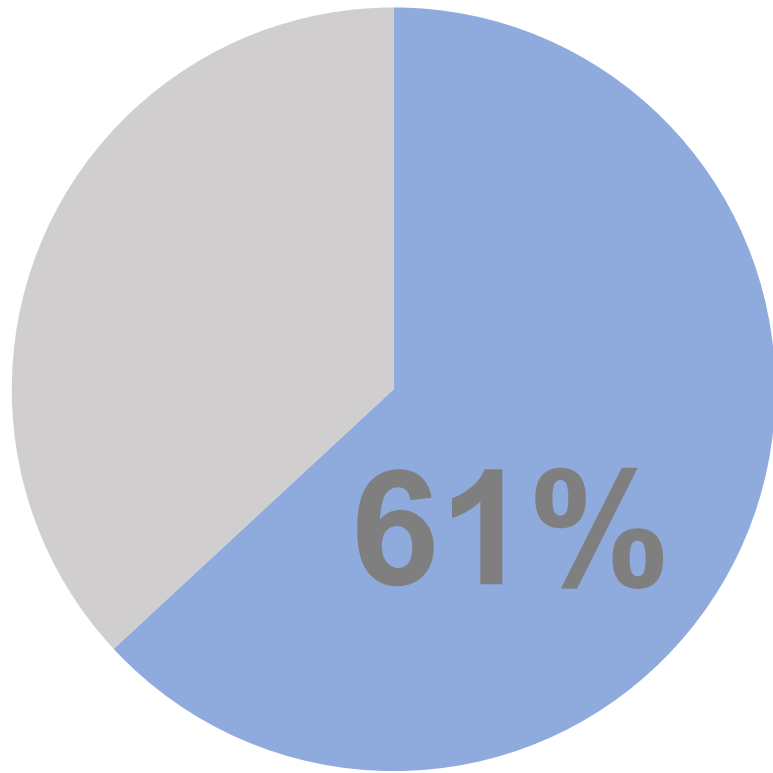




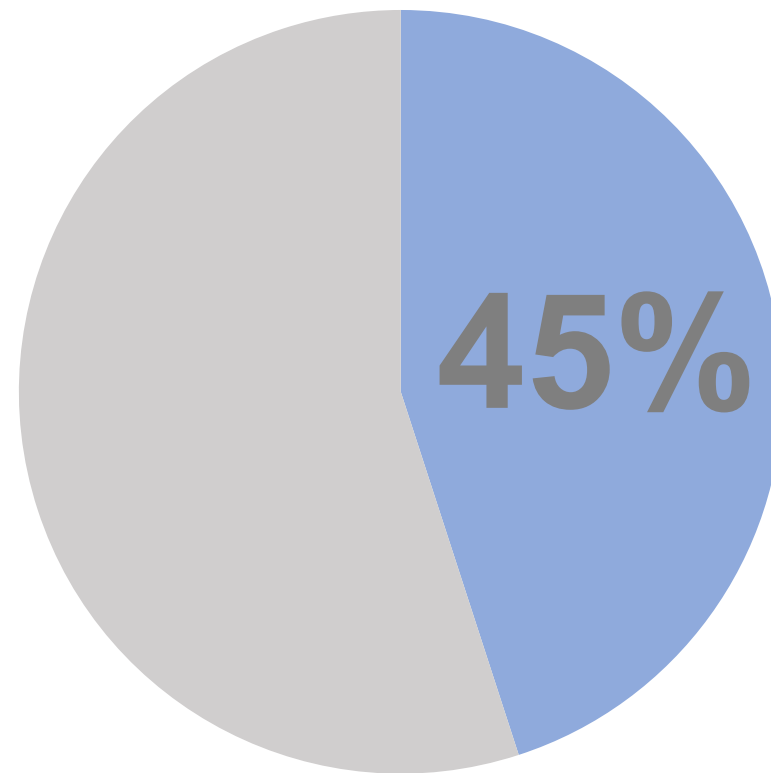
# VERDICT



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



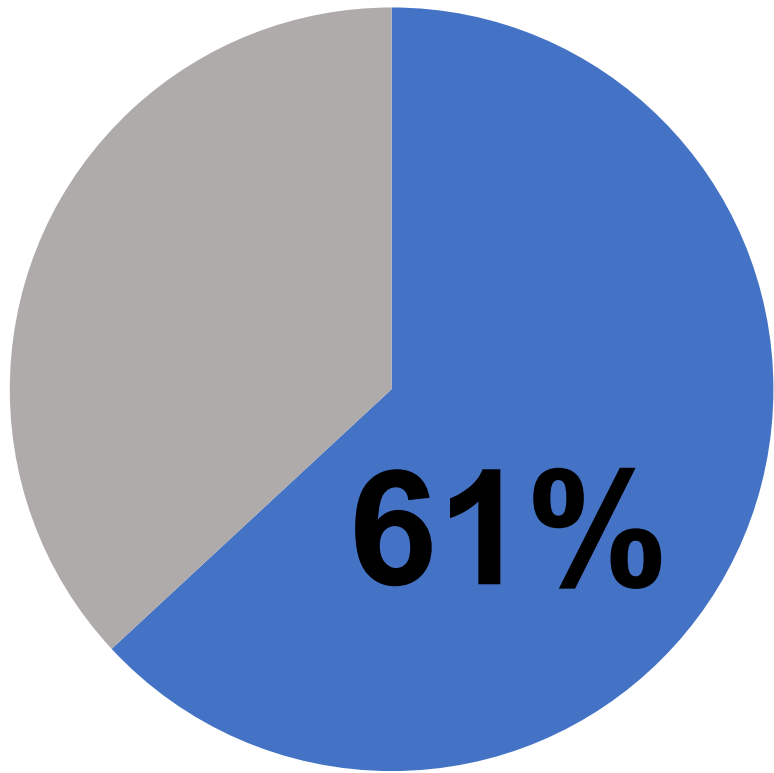
Percentage of outgroup guilt verdicts



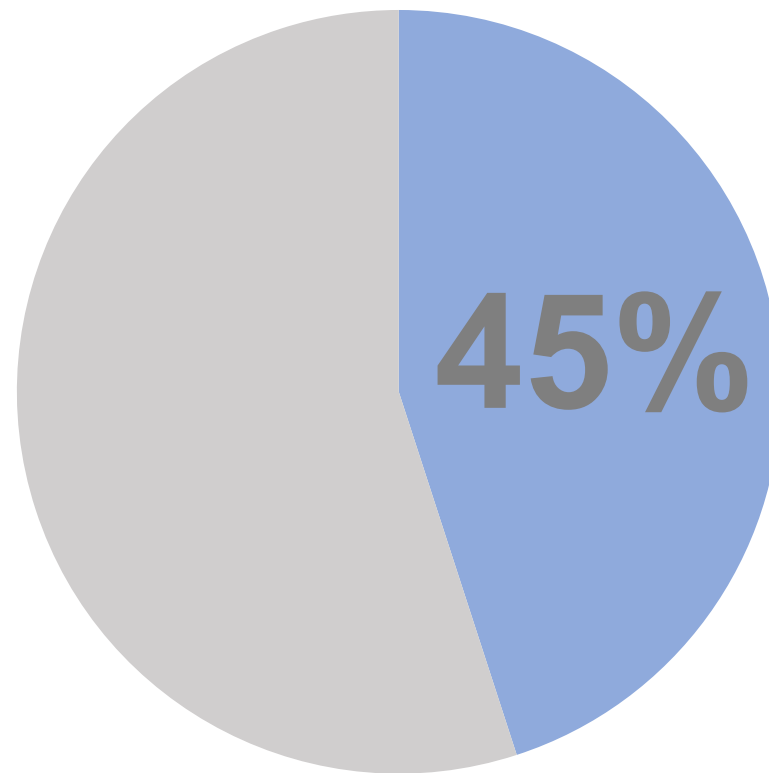
Percentage of ingroup guilt verdicts

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

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



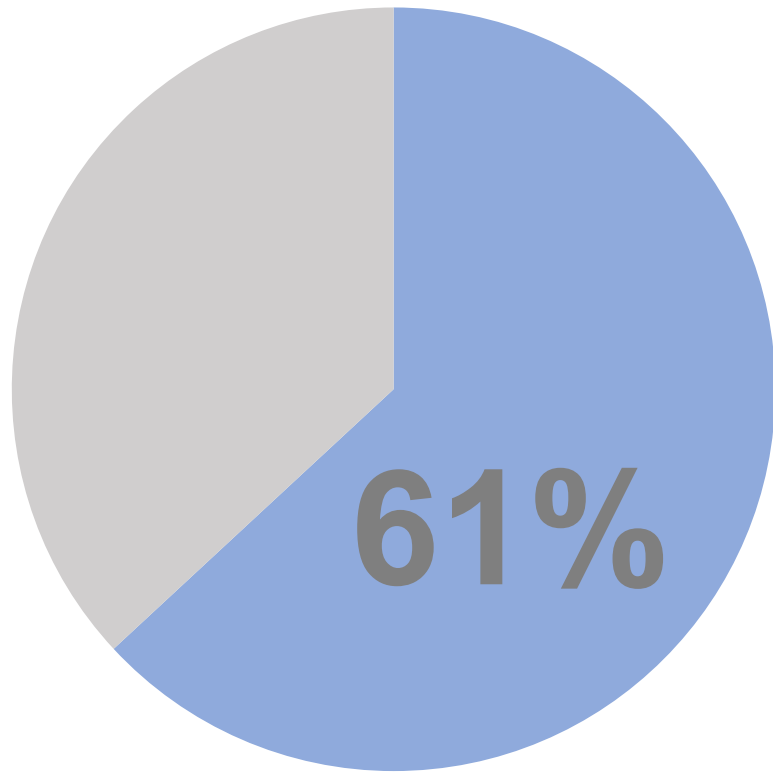
Percentage of **outgroup** guilt verdicts



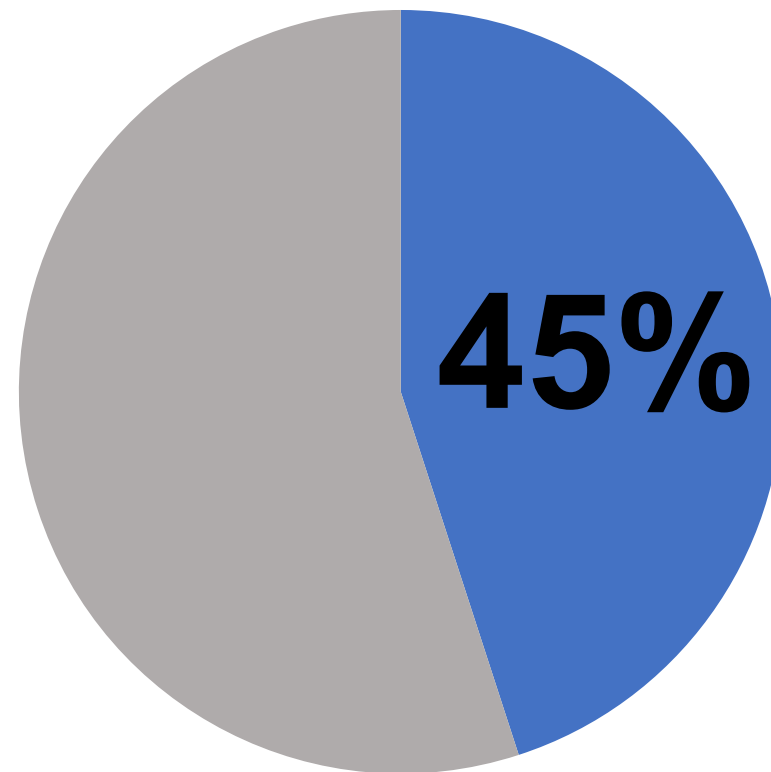
Percentage of ingroup guilt verdicts

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

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



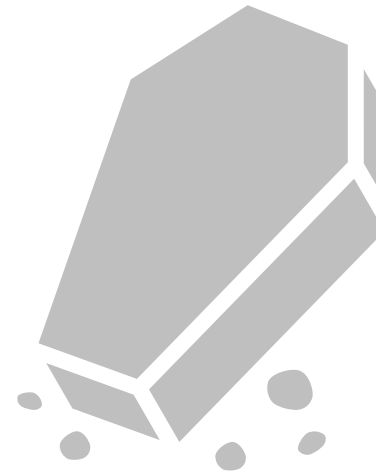
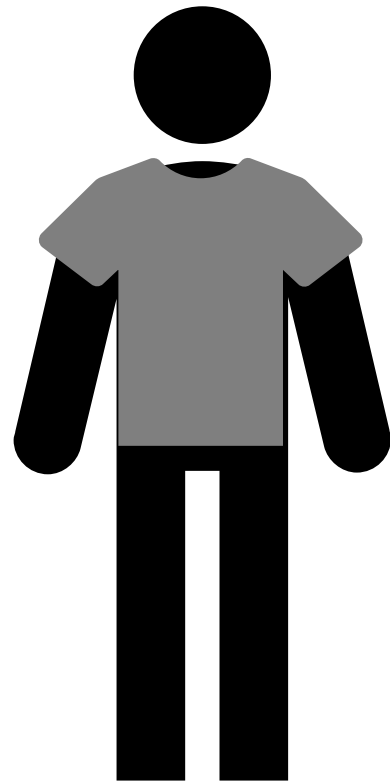
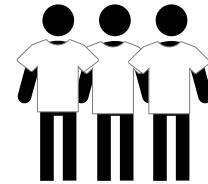
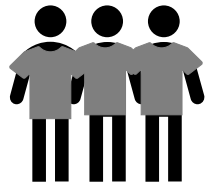
Percentage of outgroup guilt verdicts



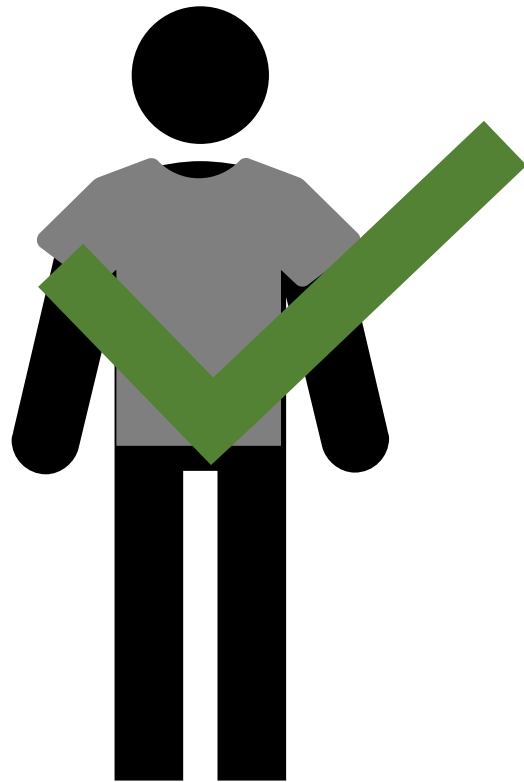
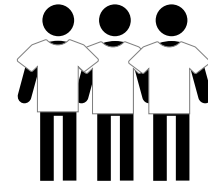
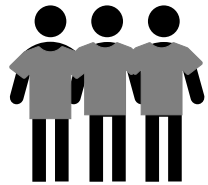
Percentage of ingroup guilt verdicts

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

# BLAMEWORTHINESS

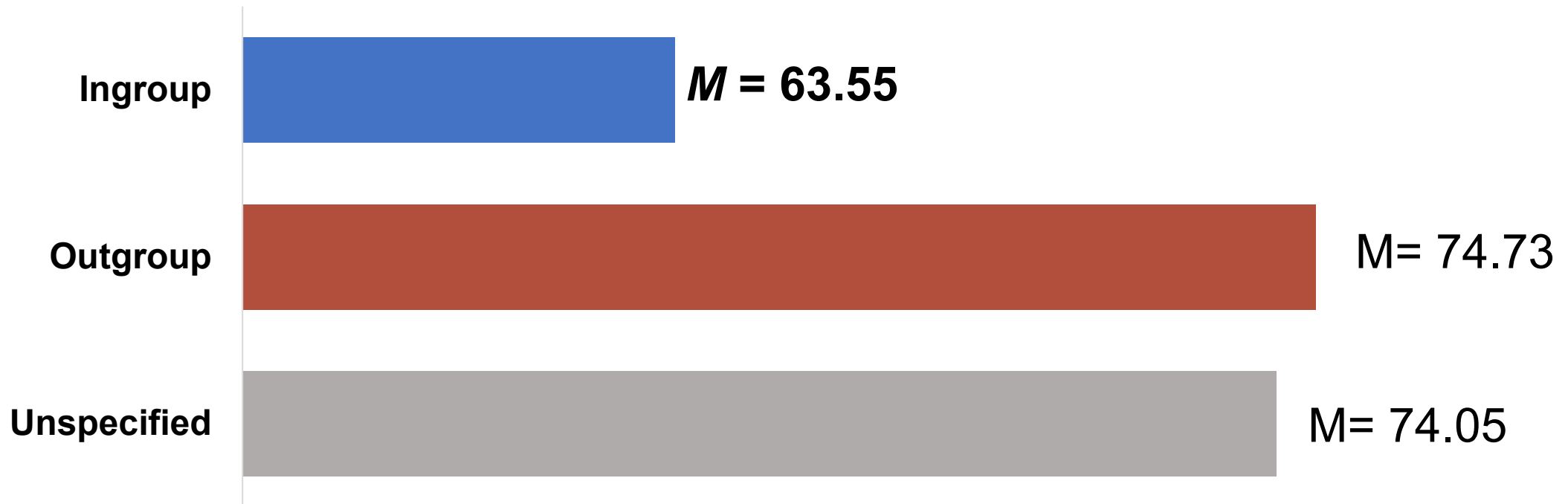


# BLAMEWORTHINESS



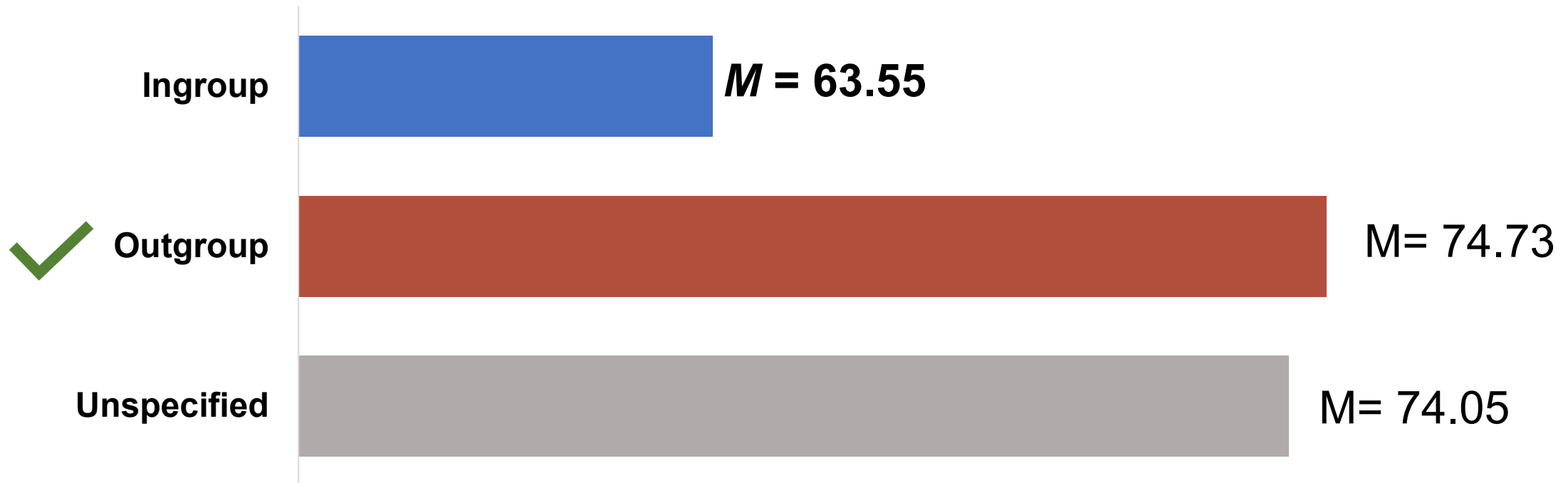
$F(2, 268) = 4.73, p = .010, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .034$

# Ingroup members were perceived as less blameworthy



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

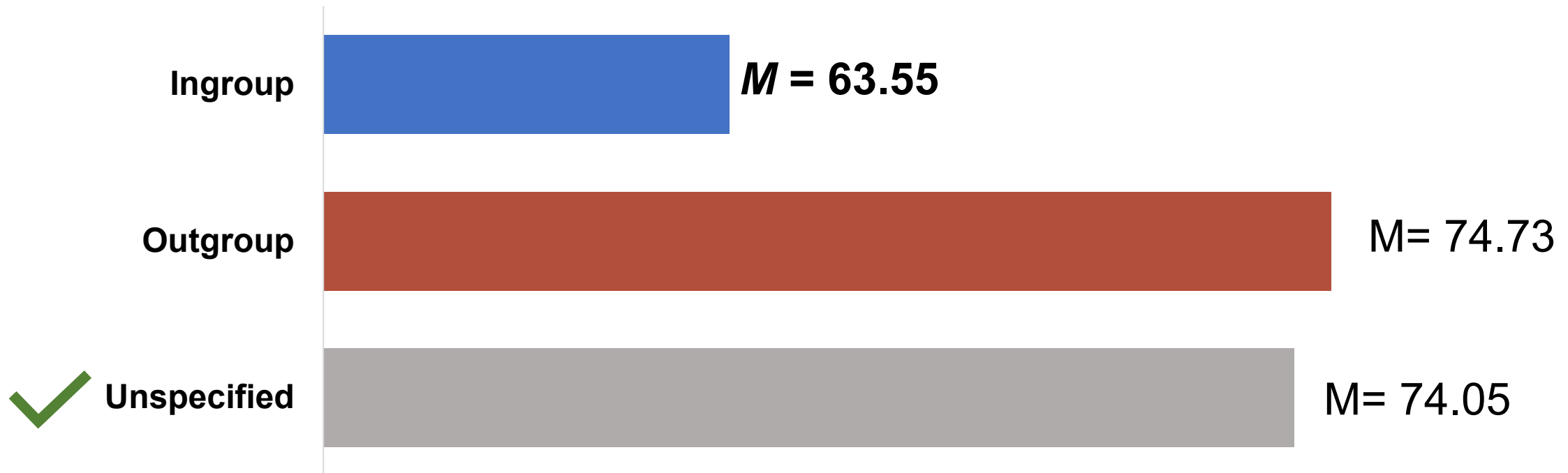
# Ingroup members were perceived as less blameworthy



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

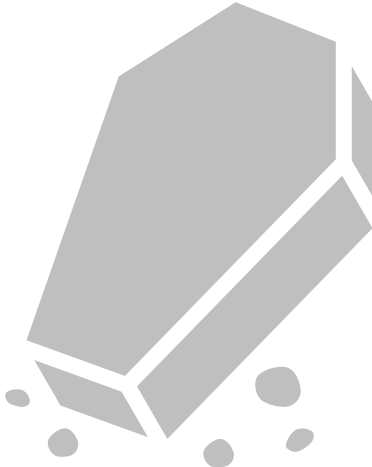
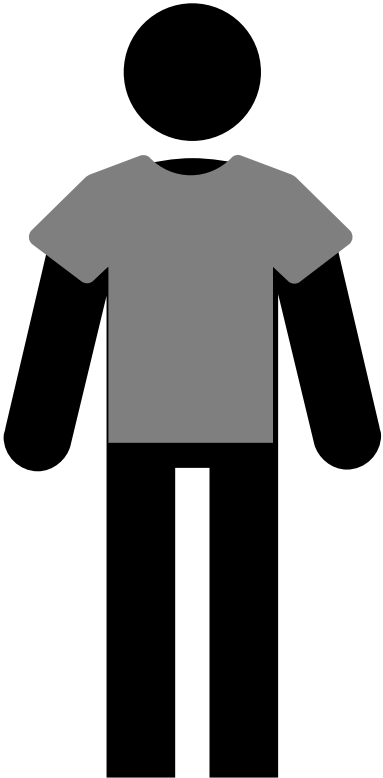
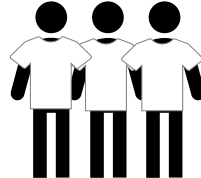
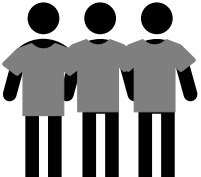


# Ingroup members were perceived as less blameworthy

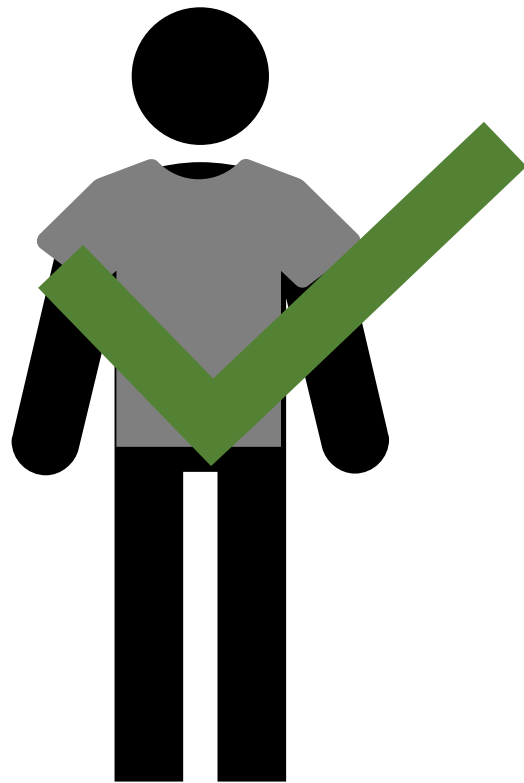
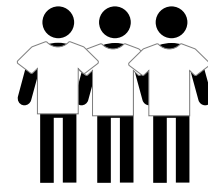
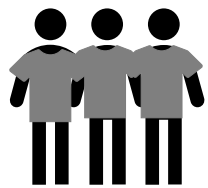


$t(179) = -2.57, p = .01, d = -.381$

# SELF-DEFENSE

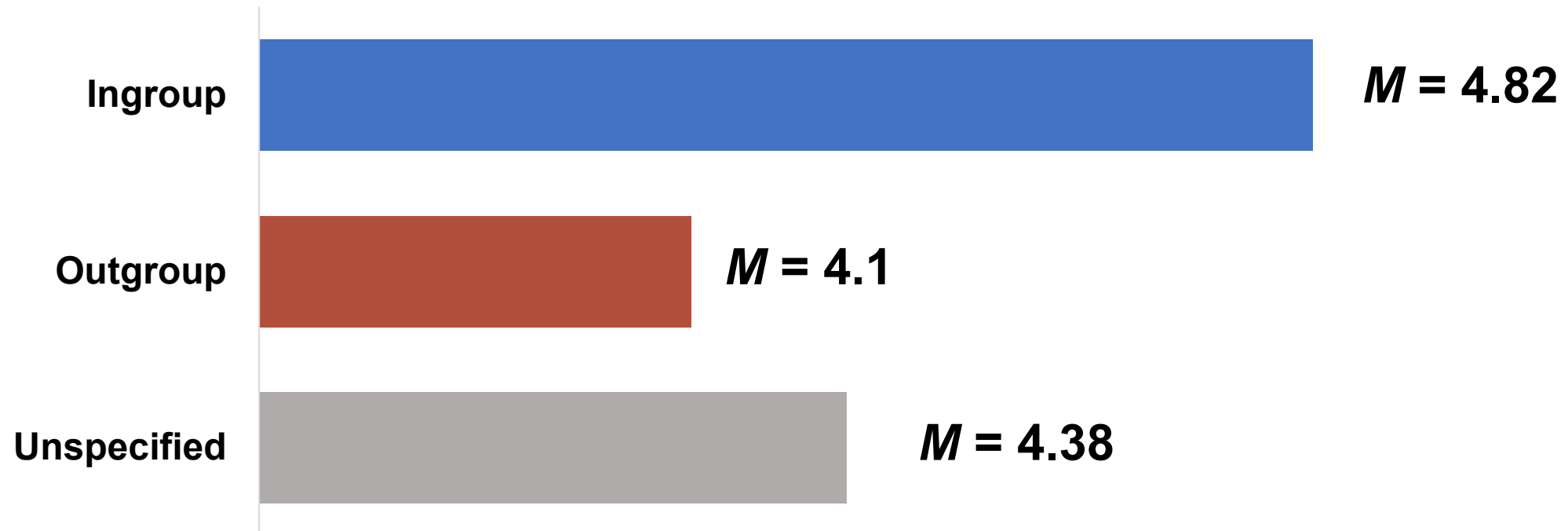


# SELF-DEFENSE



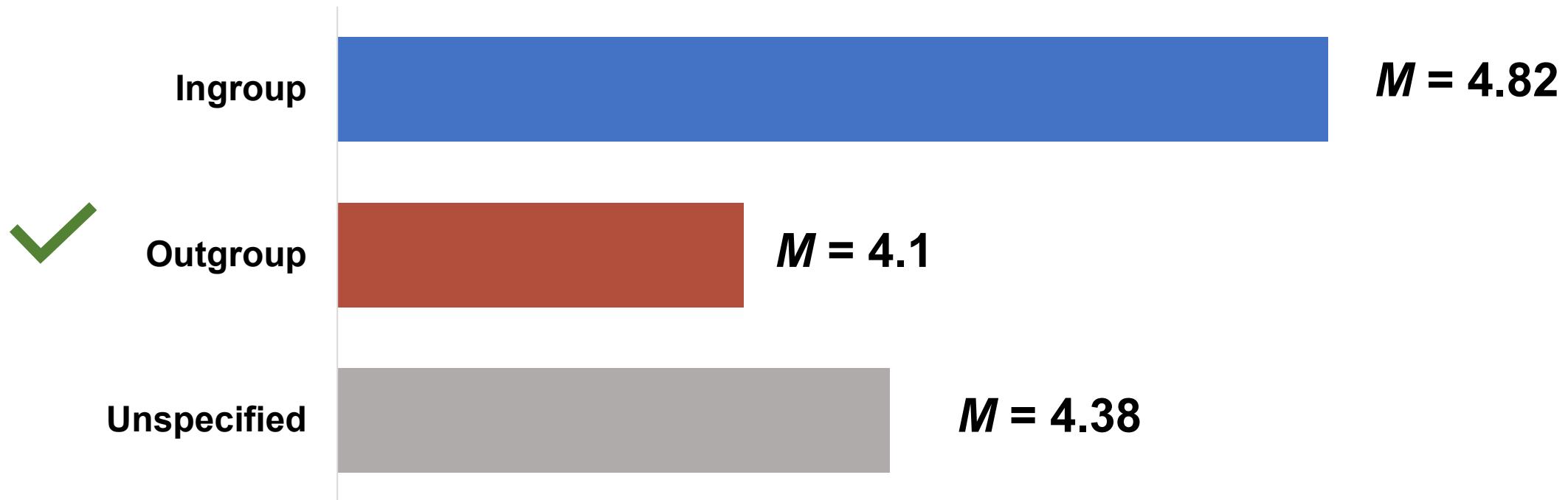
$F(2, 268) = 3.81, p = .023, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .028$

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



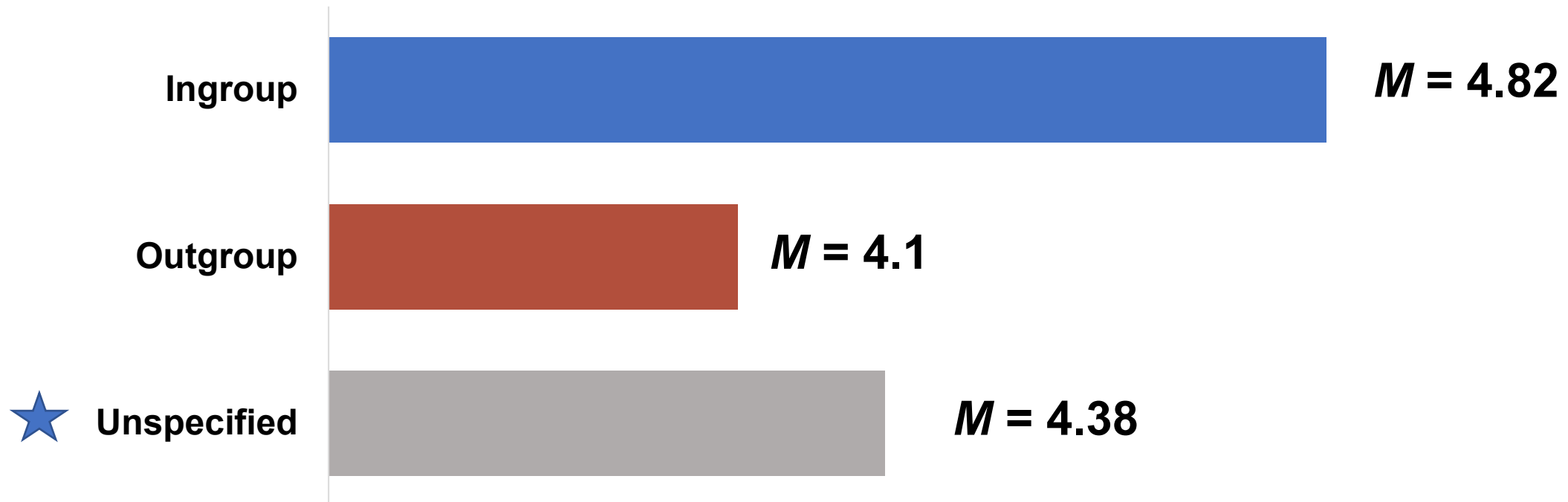
$F(2, 268) = 3.81, p = .023, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .028$

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



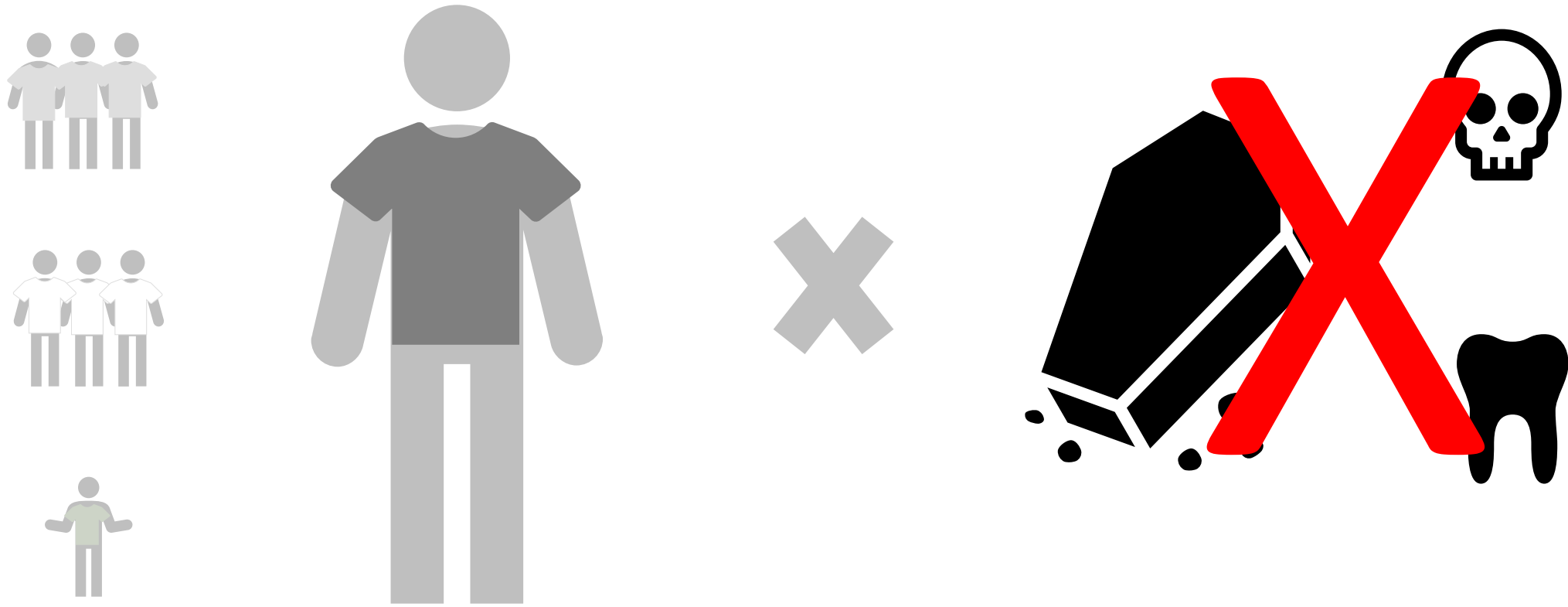
$t(182) = 2.75, p = .007, d = .405$

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



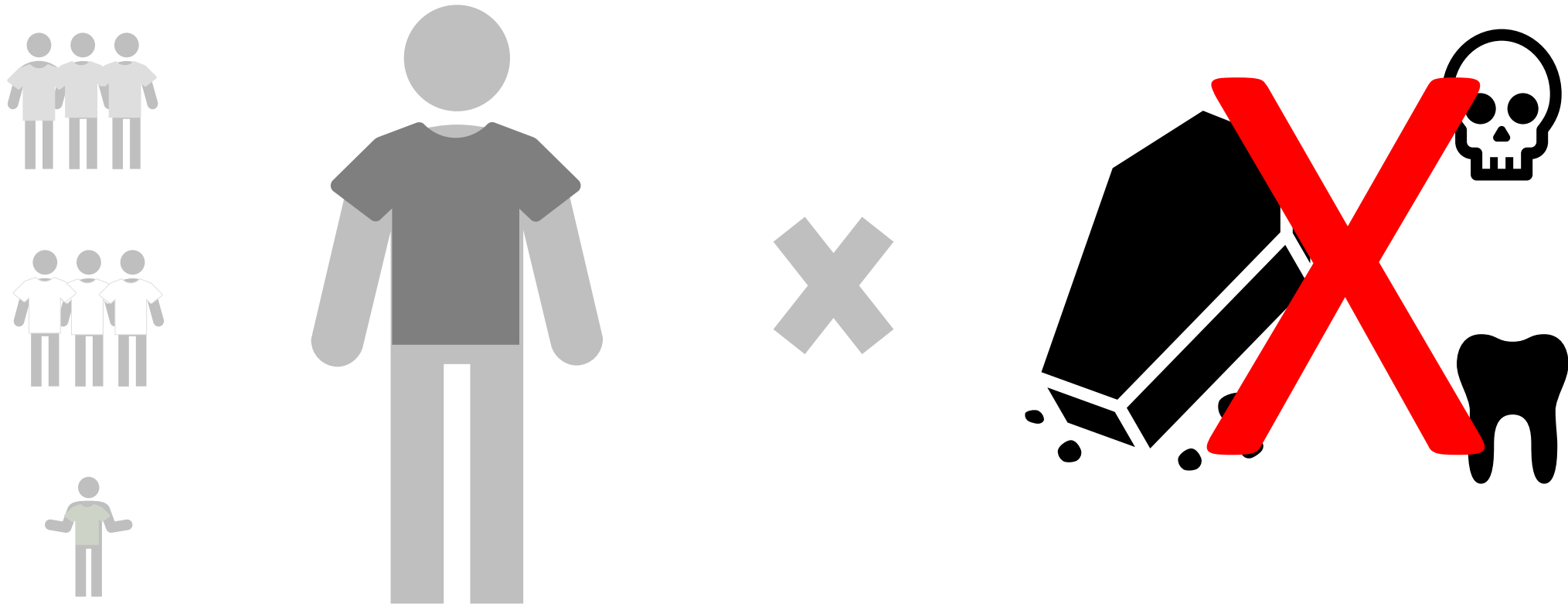
$t(179) = 1.75, p = .083, d = .259$

# VERDICT



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

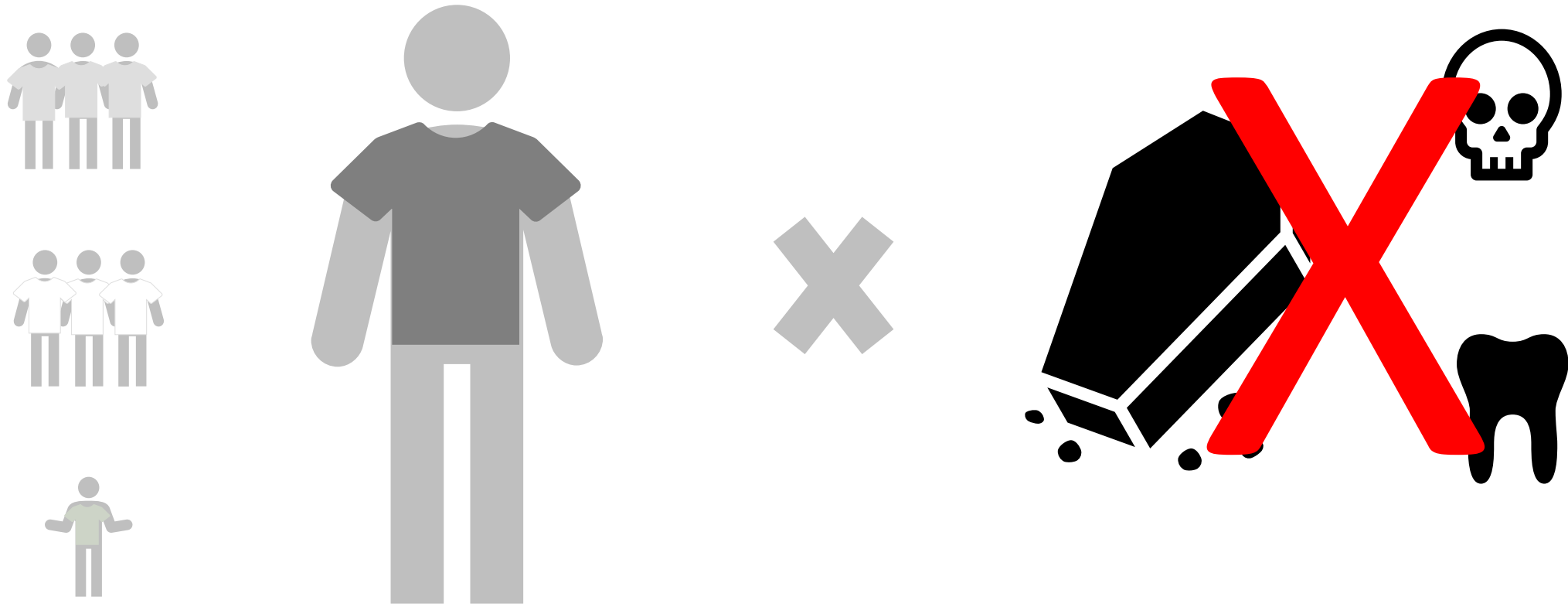
# BLAMEWORTHINESS



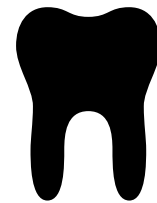
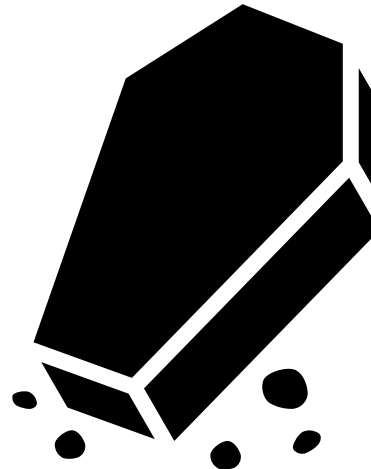
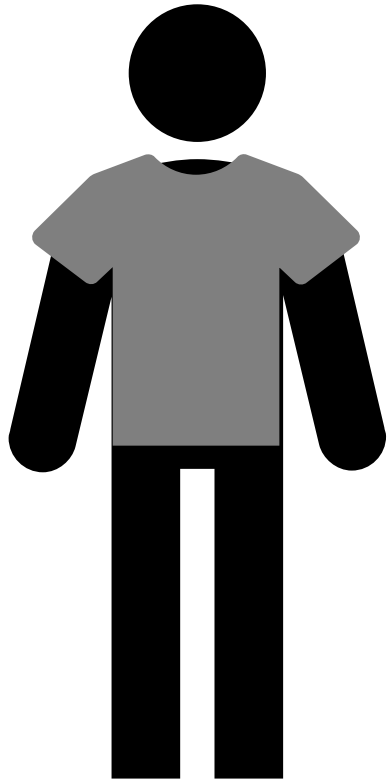
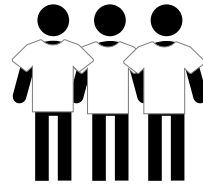
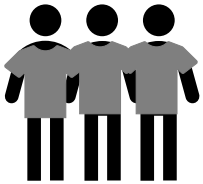
$F(1, 268) = .265, p = .607, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .001$



# SELF-DEFENSE

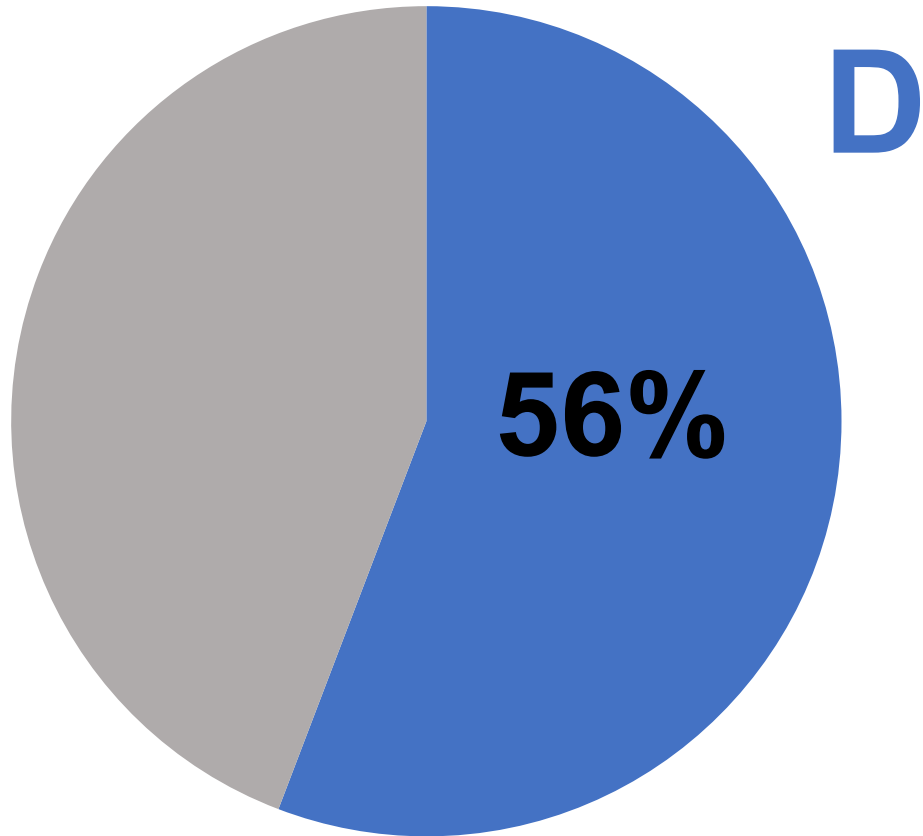


$F(1, 268) = .064, p = .801, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .000$

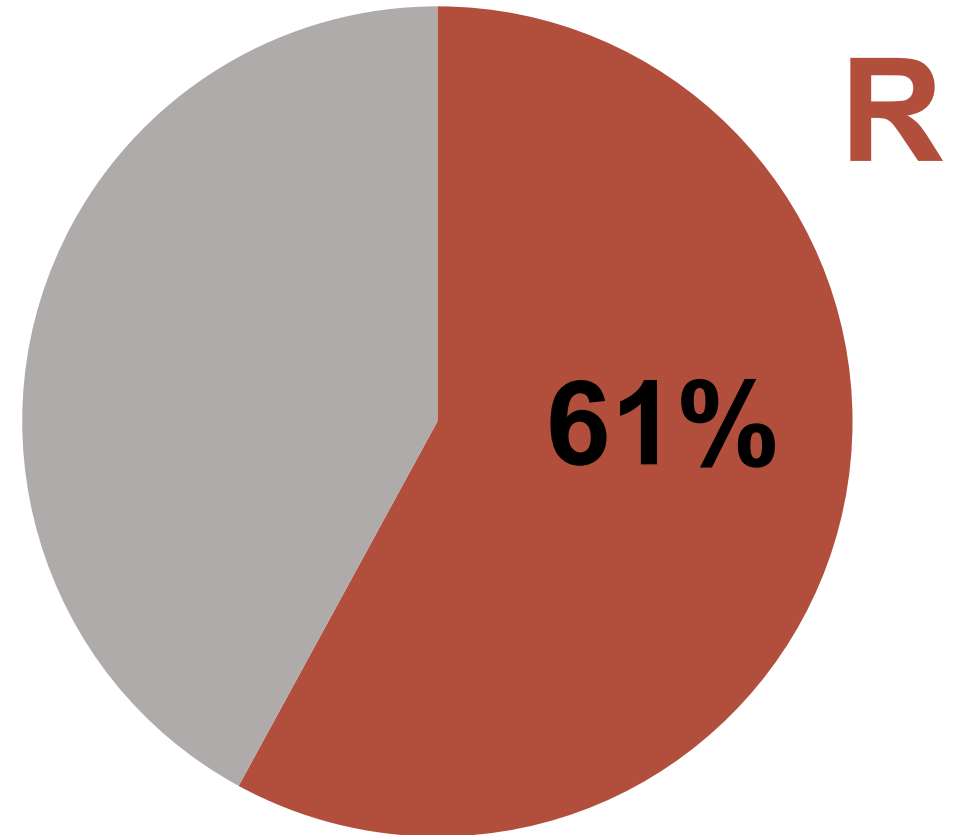


$\chi^2 (2, N = 274) = 2.25, p = .325, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .008$

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

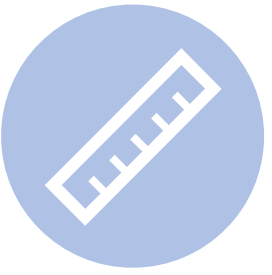


$X^2(1, N = 92) = .225, p = .134, \varphi = .156$

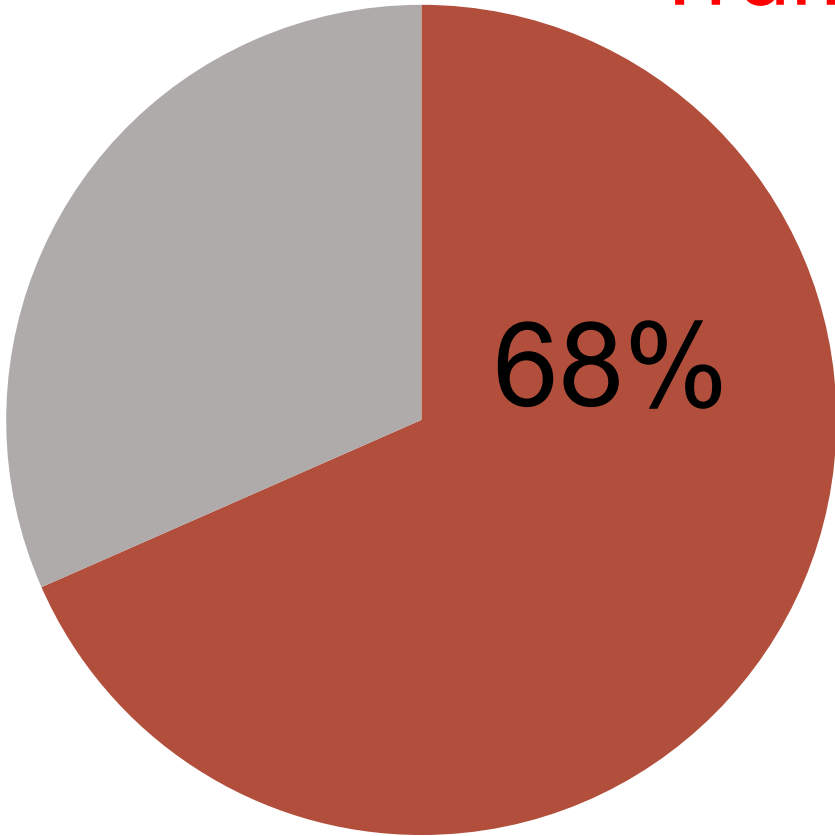


$X^2(1, N = 92) = 2.79, p = .095, \varphi = .174$

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

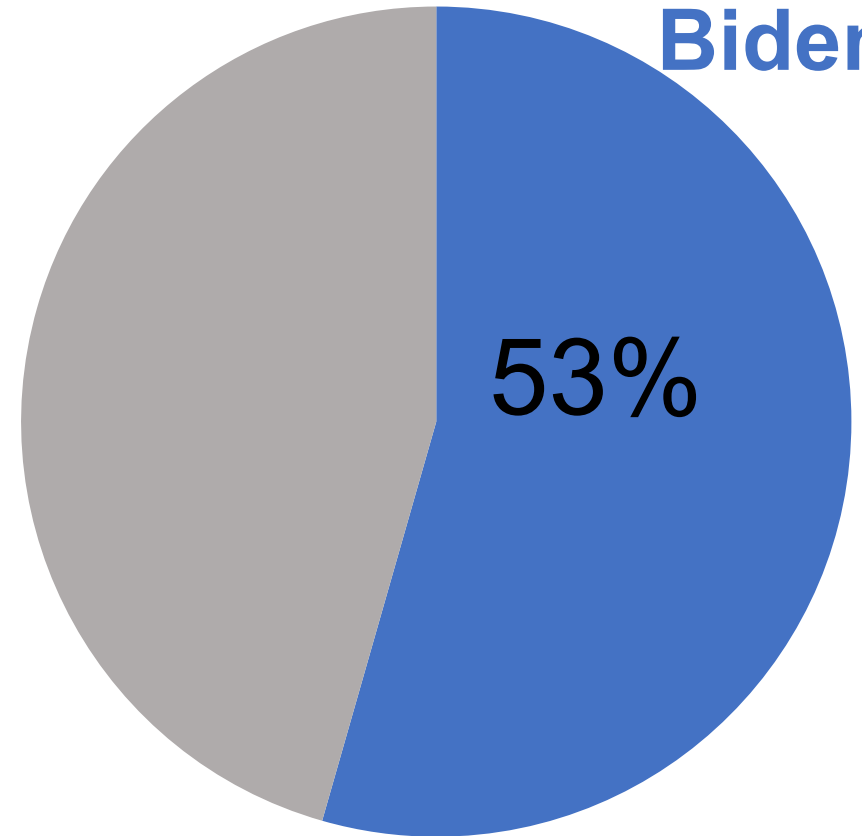


Trump



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

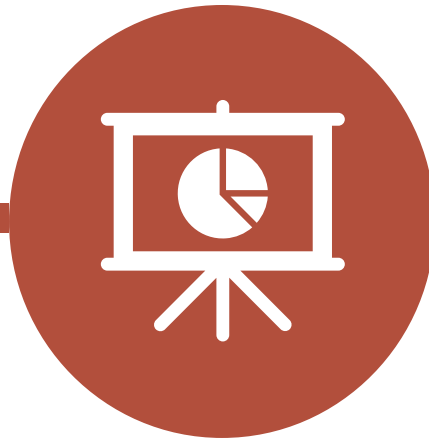
Biden



# Present Study



**Method**



**Results**



**Discussion**

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



Case Judgements are affected



Perceptions of the defendant are affected



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



Case Judgements are affected



Perceptions of the defendant are affected



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



Case Judgements are affected



Perceptions of the defendant are affected





# Specifically, for outgroup defendants ...



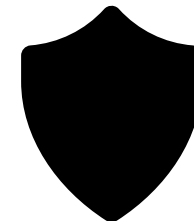
More guilt preferences



Higher perceptions of blameworthiness



Lower perceptions of self-defense  
motivation



# Specifically, for outgroup defendants ...



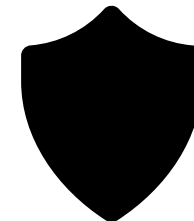
More guilt preferences



Higher perceptions of blameworthiness



Lower perceptions of self-defense  
motivation



# Specifically, for outgroup defendants ...



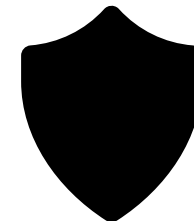
More guilt preferences



Higher perceptions of blameworthiness



Lower perceptions of self-defense  
motivation



# Specifically, for outgroup defendants ...



More guilt preferences



Higher perceptions of blameworthiness



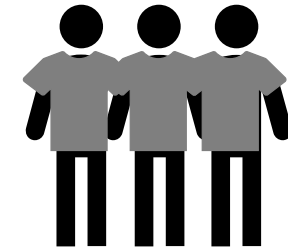
Lower perceptions of self-defense  
motivation



# Notably...



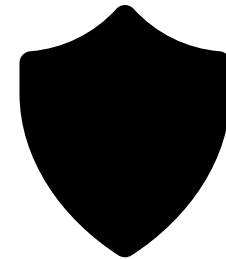
Evidence of ingroup favoritism opposed to  
outgroup discrimination



# Additionally...



Mortality salience had **no** impact on



# Implications



Adds to the research literature



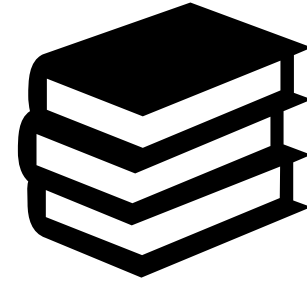
Recommendations for legal actors



# Implications



Adds to the research literature



Recommendations for legal actors







**Thank you!**

**Questions?**