

The background features two interlocking puzzle pieces that form the silhouette of a human head. The left piece is dark brown, and the right piece is bright yellow. The puzzle pieces are outlined in white. The text is overlaid on this background.

Attitude change and persuasion

POLb1013

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Have you ever
changed your mind
on politics?

What caused it?



Converse's Black and White Model

- Either stable attitudes (no change)
 - Or non-attitudes
 - Gray are too small to be considered
-
- But can people meaningfully change their minds?

There actually is the grey area

- Use of panel data
 - Example from Switzerland
 - Issue: air pollution
-
- Opinion holders: 37-58%
 - Durable changers: 2-8%
 - Vacillating changers: 39-58%

An Extension and Test of Converse's "Black-and-White" Model of Response Stability

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An illustration featuring two large, stylized head silhouettes in profile, one on the left in a reddish-brown color and one on the right in a golden-yellow color. A blue bridge with a white railing spans the gap between them. Four diverse people are walking across the bridge from left to right. The background is a light orange sky with white clouds and a large white sun. The foreground is a solid blue area with some stylized foliage. The text "Why do people change opinions?" is overlaid in white, centered on the bridge.

Why do people change opinions?

Learning new facts

- New information from environment
- Update of existing opinions
- Rational process
- Bayes' Rule





Is this how you
update your
preferences?

How accurate the model is when you encounter something which is not congruent with your attitudes?



What processes bias attitude change?

- Cognitive dissonance: Leon Festinger (1957)
 - How people process information contradictory to their beliefs?
 - Events after the midnight of 21 December 1954
 - Mental discomfort when two or more beliefs are contradictory
 - Drive to hold attitudes (and behavior) in harmony
 - Beliefs resistant to change
- Motivated reasoning: Kunda (1991)
 - Accuracy goals
 - Directional goals

Hot cognition

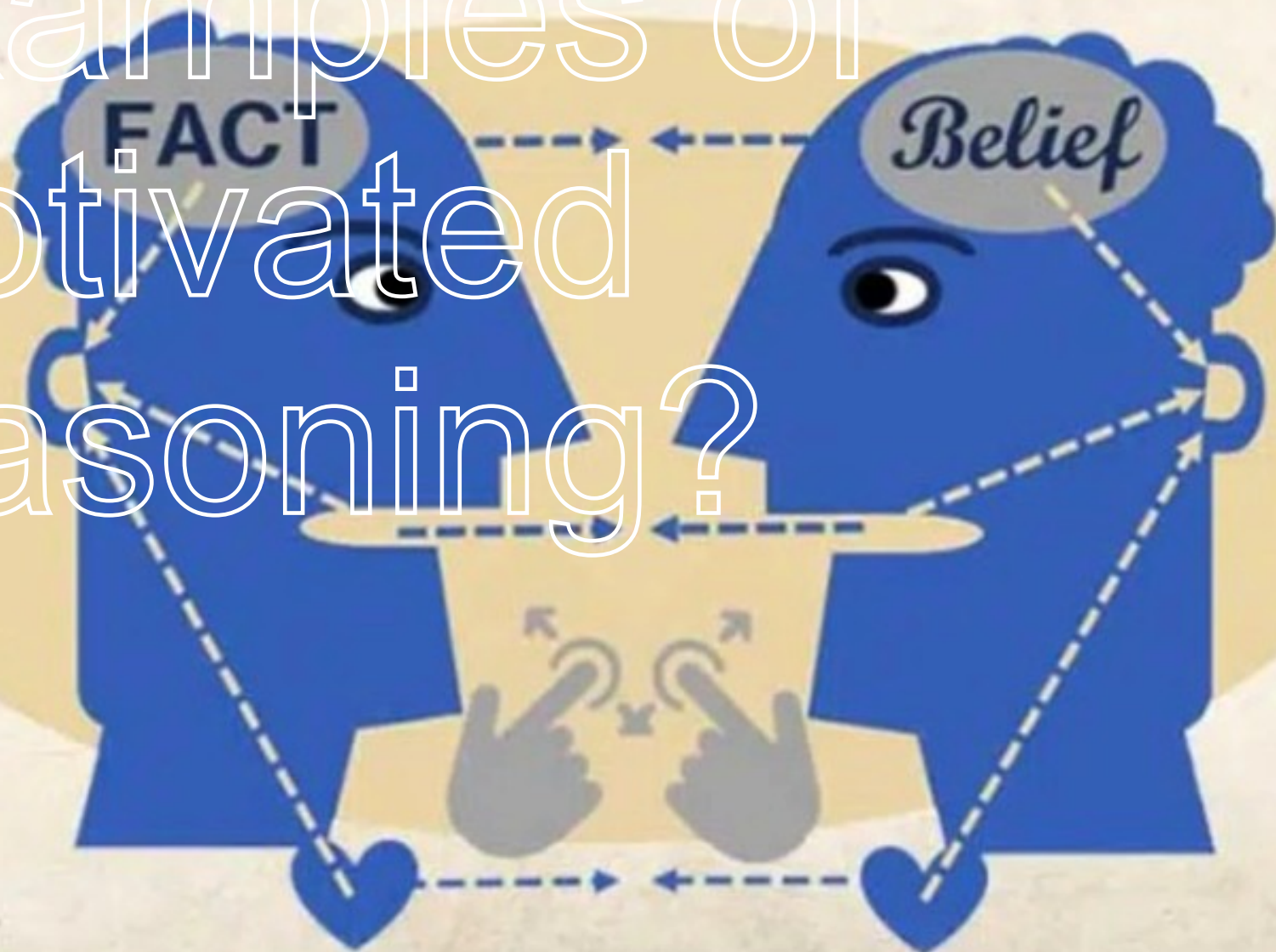
- Role of affect in political reasoning
- Redlawsk 2002:
 - People take longer time to process negative information about their preferred candidate
 - They strengthen their support for the candidate despite the negative information

Motivated reasoning

- Taber and Lodge 2006, 2013
- Hot cognition
- Affect primacy and Affect transfer
- **Motivated reasoning:**
 - Disconfirmation bias
 - Confirmation bias
 - Selective exposure
- Polarization by incongruent information
- Sophistication paradox

MOTIVATED REASONING

Examples of
motivated
reasoning?



A tale of two peoples: motivated reasoning in the aftermath of the Brexit Vote

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Perception of economy

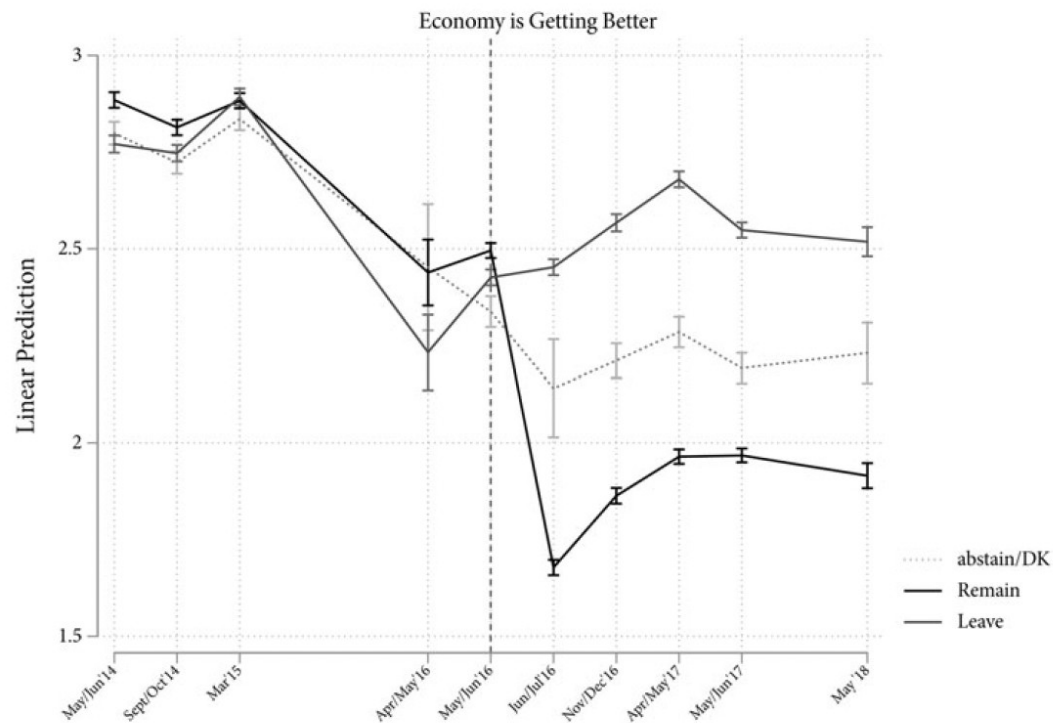


Figure 1. Current economy performance. *Note:* Linear predictions of present evaluations. Higher values indicate more optimism (the economy is getting better). Covariate profile held constant at modal/mean categories: labor, 56–65 age bracket, A-level educational attainment, female, income: 10–20k.

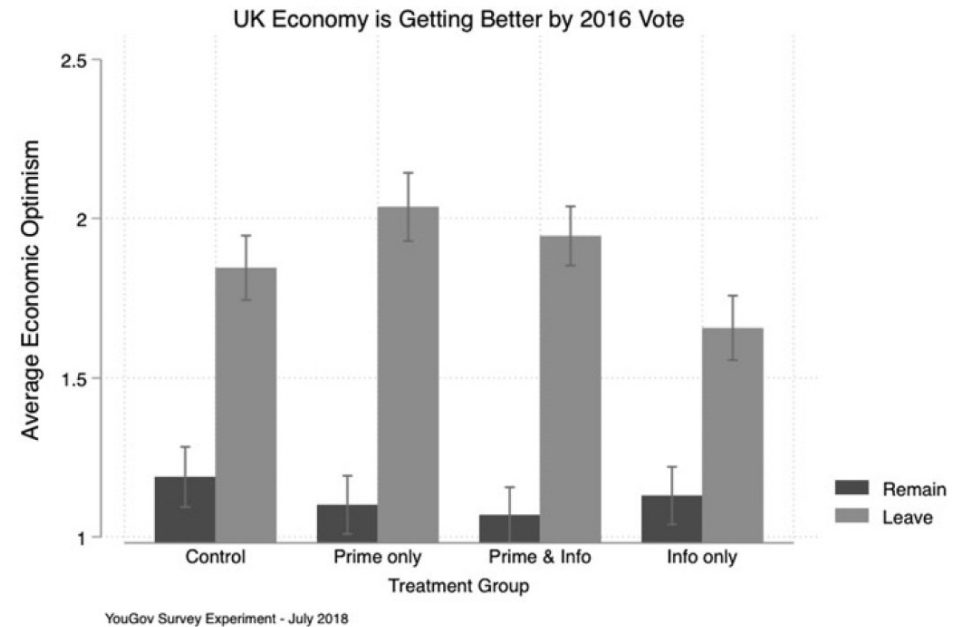


Figure 5. Average perceptions of economic improvement between Leavers and Remainers by treatment group. *Note:* Dependent variable: Do you think that the economy is getting better, getting worse, or staying about the same?

How is change possible?

- Weak attitudes
- Unsophisticated citizens (new issues, not contested issues, difficult issues)
- Affective tipping point! (Redlawsk, Civettini, Emmerson 2010)
- Accuracy motivation (Bolsen, Druckman, Cook 2014)
- Emphasizing open-mindedness

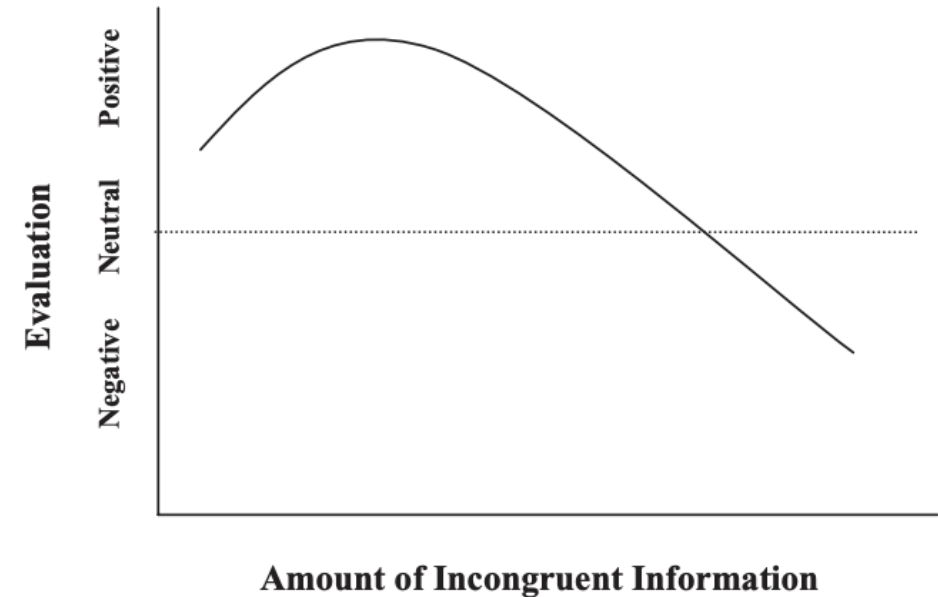


Figure 1. Expected Effects of the Amount of Incongruent Information on Evaluation of a Preferred Candidate.

Accuracy motivation (Bolsen, Druckman, Cook 2014)

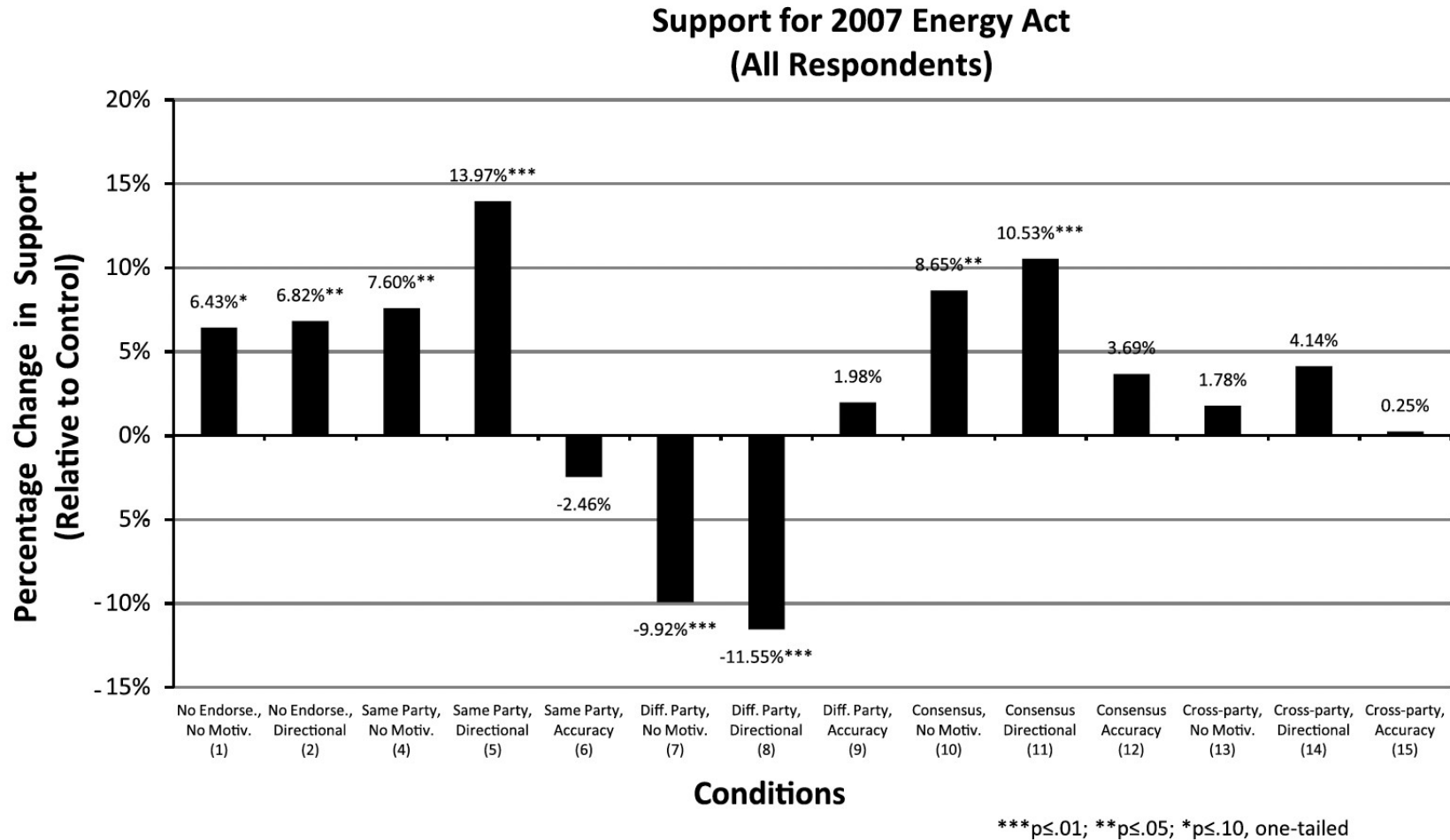


Fig. 1 Support for the 2007 Energy Act

Persuasion in politics

- Change of attitudes as a result of targeted messages
- Political messages, campaigns, media, day to day conversations, science communication
- “A successful intentional effort at influencing another’s mental state through communication in a circumstance in which the persuadee has some measure of freedom” (O’Keefe 2016)
- Large body of research, little systematization

Druckman's Generalizing Persuasion Framework

Table 1 Generalizing Persuasion Framework

Dimension	Components
Actors	Speaker(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Types (e.g., elites, media, opinion leaders, friends/family) Motivations in crafting messages
	Receiver(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessments across weighted dimensions Effort, motivation, prior attitudes
Treatments	Topic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Persons/groups, issues, institutions, products Variation within a topic (e.g., different policy issues)
	Message content <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Argument strength (and inadequacy) Framing and evaluations Matching to receivers' goals Altering receivers' motivations (e.g., using narratives)
	Medium <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alters frames, processing goals, and/or effort Interactions with other persuasion variables
Outcomes	Attitude <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General evaluation of an object (where the "object" is broadly construed)
	Behavior <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not always follow from an attitude Depends on attitude attributes, injunctive and descriptive norms, behavioral control, and emotions
	Emotion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can inform conscious evaluations or override them
	Identity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A dimension of evaluation Often activated when threatened
Settings	Competition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of speakers Number of receivers Observers
	Space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attitude or behavioral change in one setting may not generalize to other settings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TimePretreatment effects—what happened prior to the persuasive message Posttreatment duration—how long an effect lasts Time between exposure and outcome measurement
	Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Threatening settings Political (conflictual) settings versus deliberative settings
	Culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shapes understandings of topics Alters salience of different values