

Using the Bible to Mitigate Christians' Zero-Sum Beliefs and Bias Towards LGBT Individuals

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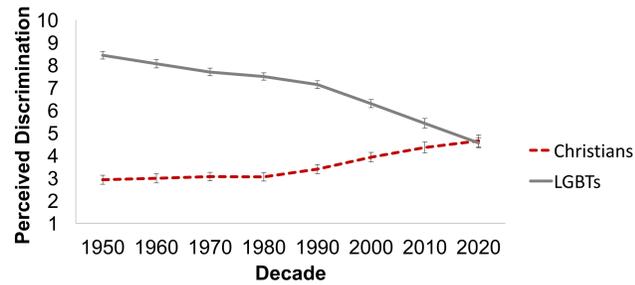
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Introduction

- **Obergefell v. Hodges**: legalized same-sex marriage in all 50 states June 26, 2015
- Jeff Sessions described the Supreme Court's decision as an **"effort to secularize, by force and intimidation"**
- **Zero Sum Beliefs** (ZSBs): perspective that gains for one group come at a cost for another group
 - Lead to less support for policies to remedy social inequality and more support for policies that benefit high-status groups

Previous research:

- Christians do perceive a zero-sum relationship with LGBT community



- ZSBs are a function of *symbolic* threat for Christians.

Research Questions

- Will priming Christian's with a Bible verse often used to explain sexual prejudice exacerbate Christian's ZSBs, increase sexual prejudice, and decrease support for same-sex marriage?
- Will priming Christians with a Bible verse highlighting acceptance lower their ZSBs, reduce sexual prejudice, and increase support for same-sex marriage?
- Will there be differences between self-identified fundamentalist Christians and mainline Christians?

Methods

Participants

- $N = 1017$; heterosexual, cisgender Christian participants (31.4% fundamentalist)
- Age: $M = 46.18$, $SD = 15.72$
- Gender: Female – 61.6%
- Race/Ethnicity: 83% Caucasian /White

Conditions:

Acceptance (John 8: 3-11 NIV)

"Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her... At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time...'Has no one condemned you?' 'No one, sir,' she said. 'Then neither do I condemn you,' Jesus declared."

Bias justification (Romans 1: 21-27 NIV)

"God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity... Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones... men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error."

Control

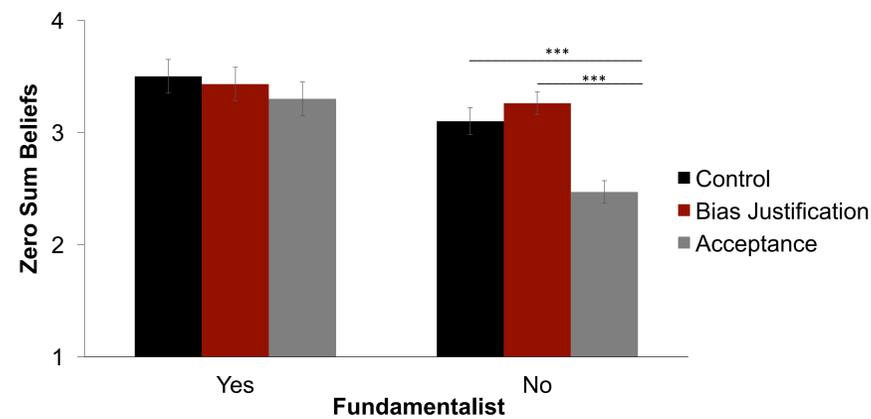
Featured a poem about work

Measures:

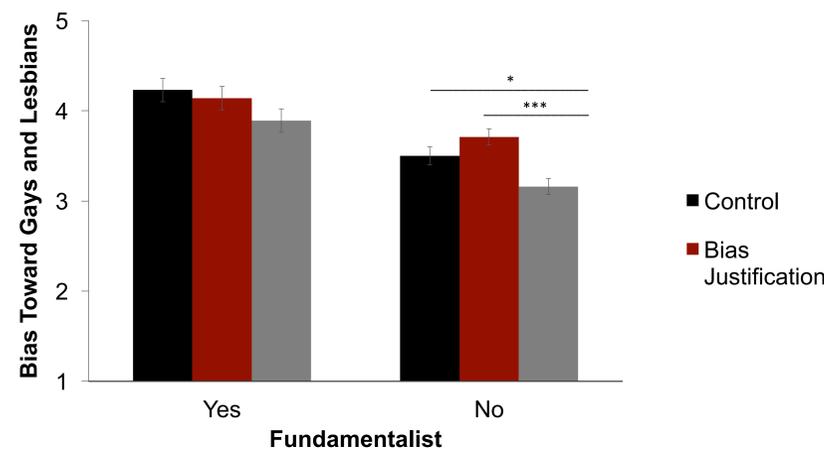
- **Zero-sum beliefs**: e.g., "When LGBT individuals get rights, they take rights away from Christians"
- **Bias towards gays and lesbians**: e.g., "Homosexual behavior between two men is just plain wrong"
- **Same sex marriage support**: e.g., "I support same-sex marriage rights"

Results

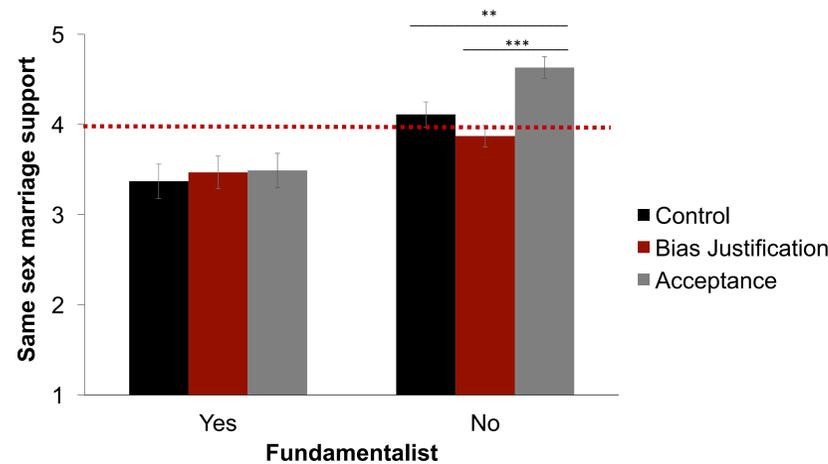
Acceptance prime decreases ZSBs for mainline Christians



Acceptance prime decreases homophobia for mainline Christians



Acceptance prime increases same-sex marriage support for mainline Christians



Results Summary

Zero-Sum Beliefs:

- Fundamentalists did not differ based on condition, $F(2, 963) = .32$, $p = .72$, $\eta^2 = .001$.
- Non-fundamentalists reported significant differences between conditions, $F(2, 963) = 14.48$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .03$.
 - Lower ZSBs in the acceptance condition, $ps < .001$.
 - No difference between Bias justification condition and the control condition, $p = .29$.

Bias towards Gays and Lesbians

- Fundamentalists did not vary based on condition, $F(2, 963) = 1.66$, $p = .19$, $\eta^2 = .003$
- Non-fundamentalists reported significant differences between conditions, $F(2, 963) = 9.24$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .02$
 - Less bias in acceptance condition relative to control, $p = .02$ and bias justification conditions, $p < .001$
 - Bias justification did not differ from control, $p = .11$.

Support for same sex marriage

- Fundamentalist did not differ based on condition, $F(2, 962) = .13$, $p = .88$.
- Non-fundamentalists reported significant differences between conditions, $F(2, 962) = 9.01$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .02$.
 - Greater support in acceptance condition than both the control, $p = .01$ and bias justification, $p < .001$.
 - Bias justification did not differ from control, $p = .18$

Discussion

- Being reminded that acceptance and love is consistent with Biblical and religious values likely reduced perceived conflict with LGBT individuals and decreased ZSBs, decreased bias towards LGBT people and increased support for same sex marriage among mainline Christians
 - This was not the case for fundamentalist Christians
- A simple intervention that highlights the consistency between religion and acceptance is a promising avenue for reducing ZSBs and sexual prejudice for mainline Christians.

