NARRATING DEATH: A RECONSIDERATION OF THE

MARSHALL HYPOTHESIS
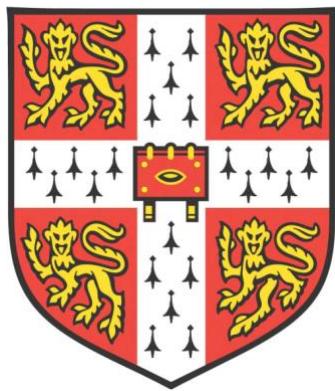
Kayla M. Pincus

Trinity Hall, University of Cambridge

Social Decision-Making Lab

Department of Psychology

This dissertation is submitted for the degree of Master of Philosophy

February 2021

Table of Contents

Declaration

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the

outcome of work done in collaboration except where specifically indicated in the text.

Word count: 16,144

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my former clients on Arkansas' death row: Justin Anderson, Ray Dansby, LaTavious Johnson, Vincent McFadden, Terrick Nooner, Derek Sales, Andrew Sasser, Thomas Springs and Bruce Ward. I hope that you are maintaining despite living in solitary confinement in a prison built on a plantation through a global pandemic which disproportionately affects minorities while the country erupts in racial strife and the president resumes federal executions. Words have never adequately described what you have contributed to my life and how I see the world, but I take you with me everywhere I go and in everything I do. All I can hope is that my work going forward does you justice. Thank you for encouraging me to keep striving for change that is bigger than all of us even as it took me away from Arkansas.

Secondly, I embarked on this work to explore the dynamic of 'us versus them' in the context of the death penalty – arguably the most polarizing Petri dish of an issue. While this study's participants only experienced one side of the story, I was able to explore ways of re-narrating the line between 'us' and 'them' and investigate how both sides are injured by this policy: the executed and the executioner. I propose that we are all, in some way, represented by at least one of these two figures. I dedicate this thesis to anyone trying to build bridges between 'us' and 'them', whoever we or they may be.

Finally, I dedicate this thesis to Mary. The love in me comes from you. I miss you.

Acknowledgements

Abstract

The Marshall Hypothesis suggests that the more people know about the death penalty, the less they will support it. Past research has primarily interpreted the hypothesis by presenting subjects with factual information, like statistics. The present research interprets the hypothesis by presenting subjects with narrative information: third-person stories derived from real people involved with the death penalty and executions. This novel, randomized control trial involving online participants from U.S. states where the death penalty is legal (N=1003) found support for this interpretation of the Marshall Hypothesis, showing lower overall support for the death penalty in participants who received death penalty narratives compared to a narrative control condition. While state empathy and feelings of identification toward the characters were hypothesized to play a significant mediating role, such results were not found. Similarly, it was hypothesized that social dominance orientation (SDO) would moderate the effect of the experimental condition on death penalty support, but this hypothesis was not supported either. The implications of such findings on future identity research and death penalty messaging are discussed.

Keywords: Death Penalty, Marshall Hypothesis, Narrative Persuasion, Empathy, Social Dominance Orientation, Contact Hypothesis, Identity, Messaging.

Introduction

Since the conception of colonial America, over 19,000 people have been legally executed (Durham et al., 1996). The death penalty, also called 'capital punishment', has had a tumultuous history in the United States. The 1950s and 1960s involved cases in which the U.S. Supreme Court (USSC) began deeming the death penalty too crude for a "maturing" society (*Trop v. Dulles*, 1958). A series of cases made death sentencing more difficult (*U.S. v. Jackson*, 1968; *Witherspoon v. Illinois*, 1968) and the USSC applied more negative rhetoric (*Crampton v. Ohio*, 1971; *McGautha v. California*, 1971). Finally, in 1972, the death penalty was found unconstitutionally cruel and unusual under the Eighth Amendment. The opinion determined that the states' death penalty statutes, as they were currently written, were arbitrarily and disproportionately applied to Black Americans (*Furman v. Georgia*, 1972). This ruling commuted 629 death sentences across 40 states when it outlawed the penalty (*Death Penalty Information Center*, 2020).

In order to maintain the policy, many states sought to fix the errors found in their statutes by the USSC. The new guidelines they formulated involved the use of mitigating and aggravating evidence in deciding the sentence, the separation between the guilt and sentencing phases of presenting and deliberating upon evidence during a capital trial and automatic review of a death sentence by an appellate court. Aggravating circumstances are those that add to the severity and culpability of a defendant's crime, while mitigating circumstances provide explanatory evidence for the defendant's actions, potentially inciting a sentence reduction. The states' amendments to their death penalty statutes were accepted by the USSC (*Gregg v. Georgia*, 1976) and executions resumed in 1977 with the execution of Gary Gilmore by firing squad (*Death Penalty Information Center*, 2020). In 1988, the federal death penalty was restored and expanded with the Death Penalty Act of 1994.

The American death penalty has been a controversial policy for most of its existence and increasingly so in recent years. Since the reinstatement of the death penalty in 1977, restrictions on the policy have been introduced as well. The following individuals are no longer allowed to be executed: those with mental illness (*Ford v. Wainwright*, 1986), those with intellectual disability (*Atkins v. Virginia*, 2002), and those who committed their crime as a juvenile (*Roper v. Simmons*, 2005). Disproportionately striking jurors based on race was found unconstitutional (*Batson v. Kentucky*, 1986), as was a pattern of racial disparities in death sentences (*McClesky v. Kemp*, 1987). The death penalty has been applied decreasingly over the course of the last quarter century. 1996 saw the highest death sentences of over 300. In 2016, death sentences reached a record low of 32, but have slightly increased since that year (*Death Sentences and Executions 2016*, 2017). Currently, 28 states retain the death penalty. No federal executions were conducted from 2003 to 2020. However, in July 2020, President Donald Trump resumed federal executions and a subsequent seven people were executed over the course of three months leading up to the U.S. presidential election with five more scheduled. At the time of the writing of this dissertation, the Trump administration Justice Department has written a new rule broadening the methods of federal executions beyond lethal injection to include firing squad and electrocution (Fuchs, 2020).

At various points, states that have the death penalty have had an increasingly higher murder rate than states that do not (*Crime in the United States, 2011*, 2012). It is possible that, "The lesson of the execution... may be to devalue life by the example of human sacrifice. Executions demonstrate that it is correct and appropriate to kill those who have gravely offended us" (Bowers et al., 1984, p. 274). Five counties (four in Texas; two in Missouri) account for over half of the executions in the past decade (*American Constitution Society*, 2020). The American Civil Liberties Union opposes capital punishment for the following three overarching reasons: it

is largely applied against the poor and people of color, it is expensive and does not deter crime, and innocent people are often sentenced to death (over 156 people sentenced to death have been released from prison due to innocence since 1973). More specifically, the organization states the following objections of capital punishment: it is cruel and unusual, denies due process, violates the constitutional guarantee of equal protection, does not control crime, wastes resources, does not indicate more sympathy for murder victims, and exemplifies a lack of respect for human life (Bedau, 1973).

Death Penalty Support

Death penalty support (DPS) in the U.S. shows a decreasing trend in the mid-20th Century, increasing toward the turn of the century and decreasing to the present. As it stands from 2019, one measure shows that 56% of Americans favor the death penalty for a person convicted of murder (*Gallup*, 2019). Public opinion plays a significant role in Supreme Court decisions (*Roper v. Simmons*, 2005) and is the determinant of death penalty legislation in the form of referenda and pressure on representatives. In other words, if the public supports the death penalty, it can directly institute the policy in the form of a referendum, elect leaders who will pass the policy in their state and federal Congress or influence the USSC interpretations of the Constitution. If the public does not support the policy in a state that has it, it can take all of these same avenues to abolish it.

Rationales for DPS are wide ranging, including beliefs in the following: retribution for criminal action, general deterrence from criminal action for the society, cheaper cost than life in prison, and incapacitation of the offender (i.e. they are unable to perform future criminal acts) (Bohm, 1987). Further, while many report that their DPS stems from, for example, deterrence, support is increasingly unaffected by new information stating that the death penalty increases murder rates. Support, itself, for the death penalty varies when subjects are asked about their

support in the abstract as opposed to whether they would apply the penalty to a specific situation (Bohm, 1987; Durham et al., 1996). The type and wording of the questions asked can produce opposing results. For example, when study participants were asked additional questions, such as whether they would prefer a defendant receive a life sentence without the possibility of parole, they are less likely to support the death penalty (Bowers et al., 1994; Bowers & Vandiver, 1991a, 1991b; McGarrell & Sandys, 1996). Oversimplification of polls and survey questions can drastically alter respondents' answers even between surveys with two and three questions (Harris, 1986).

Meanwhile, while many Americans accept the death penalty, they tend not to prefer it (Bowers et al., 1994). If asked about general support, it would be difficult to ascertain this important nuance. Prior research has shown that more specific and thorough scales should be used in lieu of limited item and response (i.e. yes/no) assessment. In such survey questions, strength of DPS is unidentified – in other words, no information is given about the quantity of support the individual has. He or she could be deeply convicted or largely indifferent (Vidmar & Ellsworth, 1974) and this strength variance can have various implications, such as the effect different interventions may have on such attitudes.

Before considering attitude interventions, it is necessary to explore which groups hold this supportive attitude toward the death penalty.

Death Penalty Support by Demographic

Race

Demonstrated in perhaps every previous study, race is the leading indicator of DPS (Bobo & Johnson, 2004; Ogletree & Sarat, 2006; Peffley & Hurwitz, 2007; Unnever et al., 2008; Unnever & Cullen, 2007a, 2007b). The death penalty is most popular among White Americans in both

quantity and strength of support (*American National Election Studies*, 2020). More Black Americans oppose capital punishment than do White Americans (Cochran & Chamlin, 2006). Unnever & Cullen (2007) analyzed a sample of General Social Survey data from 1974-2002 (*N*=13823) and found that a majority of Black Americans oppose the policy while a majority of White Americans support it by a 24% divide margin. Controlling for a host of factors such as class, political orientation, region, and religious fundamentalism, the predicted odds of support among Black Americans is one third that of White Americans. Across other demographic and identity factors, White Americans' DPS is high. Specifically, White Americans who are wealthier, politically conservative and religious fundamentalists are even higher in DPS (Moran & Comfort, 1986; Unnever & Cullen, 2007a). When asked if specific murders should result in a death sentence, minorities were less likely to suggest a death sentence (Durham et al., 1996). One suggested explanation for this disparity is that former Black American jurors are more likely to empathize with the defendant and that empathy lowers the possibility of sentencing the defendant to death (Foglia & Connell, 2019).

Gender

Since the first time the General Social Survey asked participants if they favor or oppose the death penalty for murder, male support has exceeded female support by a large margin (Durham et al., 1996; Smith et al., 1972). When asked if specific murders should result in a death sentence, women were less likely to suggest a death sentence (Durham et al., 1996). Some evidence suggests women's DPS would decrease if convinced of racial disparities (Whitehead & Blankenship, 2000), but generally White men have higher DPS than White women (Soss et al., 2003). Overall, many studies have demonstrated the "gender gap" regarding DPS (e.g. Acker et al., 1998; Fox et al., 1990; Moran & Comfort, 1986; Sandys & McGarrell, 1995).

Religion

The research distinguishes between various types of religious practice and the amount of religiosity. Evangelism indicates low DPS, while religious fundamentalism plays a significant role generally (Jacobs & Carmichael, 2004; Layman, 1997) and specifically in White Americans who have higher levels of DPS. However, religious fundamentalism has the opposite effect in Black Americans – the more religiously fundamental a person, the lower his or her DPS (Unnever & Cullen, 2007a; Young, 1992). Specifically, fundamentalist Protestants strongly show this phenomenon, with Black fundamentalist Protestants showing the least DPS and White fundamentalist Protestants showing the most DPS, even when controlling for the following: political orientation, salience of religion and ideology (Britt, 1998). Robert Young suggests the possibility that, "The absolutism of a fundamentalist orientation appears to eliminate some of the uncertainty which others experience in considering the appropriateness of this punishment" (Young, 1992, p. 85). The Catholic church has been staunch in its opposition to the death penalty and that is a pattern reflected in its believers (Soss et al., 2003).

In addition to demographic variables, DPS is also determined by attitudes and personality traits.

Death Penalty Support by Attitudes and Personality Traits

Political Orientation

Conservatives have the highest trend of DPS for both adults and children (Applegate et al., 2000; Moon et al., 2000; Moran & Comfort, 1986; Sarat, 2001; Vogel & Vogel, 2003). Politically conservative White Americans are higher in DPS, while political orientation has a negligible effect for Black Americans (Unnever & Cullen, 2007a). Additionally, more conservative jurisdictions and states have more death sentences and executions than liberal states (Baumer et al., 2003;

Jacobs et al., 2005; Jacobs & Carmichael, 2004; McCann, 2008). "The core ideology of conservatism stresses resistance to change and justification of inequality and is motivated by needs that vary situationally and dispositionally to manage uncertainty and threat" (Jost et al., 2003, p. 339). Many conservatives hold the belief that criminals are unredeemable (Jacobs & Carmichael, 2002), while liberals hold the opposite belief (Applegate et al., 2000).

A related line of research shows that those high in social dominance orientation (SDO) are more likely to be politically conservative and high in DPS (Pratto et al., 1994). Considering the integral requisite of change in abolishing the death penalty and one of the primary arguments against the policy is its punitiveness toward Black Americans, the trend of conservative DPS logically aligns. Beyond this theory, political orientation mediates the relationship between trait empathy and DPS – i.e. people who are more empathetic tend to be more liberal and racially tolerant leading to lower DPS (Unnever et al., 2005). Unnever and Cullen suggest, "conservatives are more punitive because they make dispositional attributions, tend to associate street crime with people they may hold some racial animus toward (African Americans), and find it difficult to empathetically identify with people they believe show little remorse for their criminal behavior. In short, conservatives are more punitive because they have little empathy for criminals" (Unnever & Cullen, 2009, p. 293).

Racism

Those higher in racial intolerance are more likely to support the death penalty than racially tolerant people (Soss et al., 2003; Unnever & Cullen, 2007b). Harboring animus, resentments or negative sentiments toward minorities across the United States and other Western capitalist democracies predict high DPS (Unnever & Cullen, 2010). The association between intolerance and discriminatory policy is well documented (Gibson, 1989; Sullivan & Transue, 1999). The

identification between criminals and the outgroup, "provides a 'rational' justification among members of the dominant group to support publicly punitive crime-control policies such as the death penalty" (Chiricos et al., 2004; Jackman & Muha, 1984; Jones & Newburn, 2005; Unnever & Cullen, 2010, p. 833). Researchers theorize that it is the association between murderers and disadvantaged minorities that explain racial intolerance as a predictor of DPS (Barlow, 1998; Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000; Soss et al., 2003).

Social Dominance

Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) is a trait that indicates a person's willingness to uphold systems of group-based social hierarchy – a desire to have some groups dominate others in society. Some societies reflect higher social dominance than others. States with a higher degree of social hierarchy apply the death penalty more than those with a lower degree of social hierarchy, applying harsh sanctions on members of subordinate social categories (Mitchell & Sidanius, 1995). Sidanius asserts that in hierarchically-bound societies in non-revolutionary circumstances, the relationship between minorities and harsh sanctions is so strong that the former can be easily identified:

> "If, on their first visit to Earth, extraterrestrial beings wanted some quick and easy way to determine which human social groups were dominant and subordinate, they would merely need to determine which groups were over- and underrepresented in societies' jails, prison cells, dungeons, and chambers of execution. As we look around the world and across human history, we consistently see that subordinates are prosecuted and imprisoned at substantially higher rates than dominants" (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999, p. 202).

Black Americans are incarcerated at least five to ten times the rate of White Americans (Nellis, 2016). Black and Latinx Americans are represented in prisons at nearly twice their national population representation. Black Americans are executed at nearly three times their national population representation ("Criminal Justice Fact Sheet," 2020). The overwhelming majority of murders resulting in death sentences involve a White murder victim. Figure 1 shows the racial disparity breakdown from January 17, 1977 to September 24, 2020.

Figure 1

Executions by Race, 1977 to 2020

Executions by Race of Defendant   Executions by Race of Victim(s)

Race
- Black
- Latino
- Native American
- White

Race of Victims
- Black
- Latino
- Multiple Races (not including White)
- Multiple Races (including White)
- Native American
- White
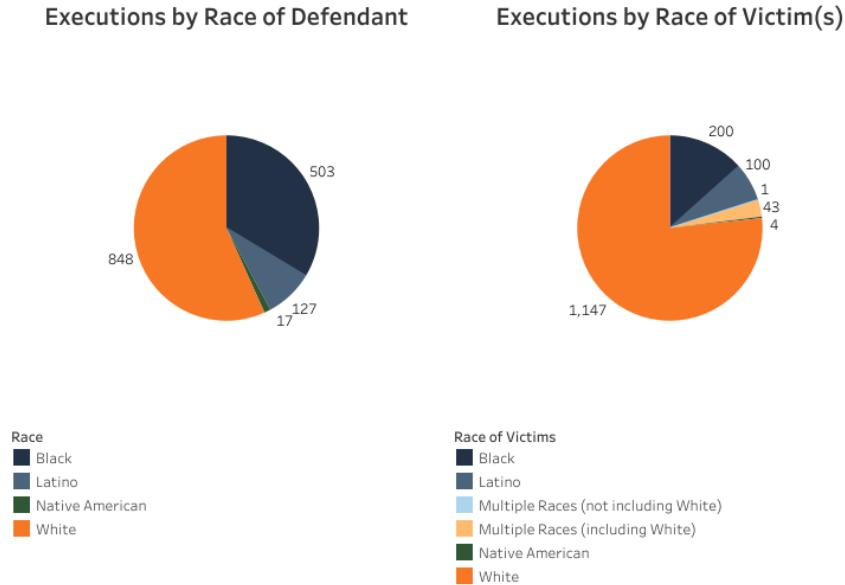
Note: From Death Penalty Information Center, 2020.

SDO has been consistently shown to be positively correlated with DPS ($r=.32$, $p<.01$) (Sidanius et al., 2006), ($r=.30$, $p<.01$) (Kteily et al., 2012). When controlling for the effects of egalitarianism-based SDO on the relationship between dominance-based SDO and DPS, research shows the following semipartial correlations ($r=.19$, $p=.02$) (Ho et al., 2012). Sidanius has articulated that DPS is based on a belief that the death penalty is a deterrent for crime and based on a desire for retribution are, "'motivated,' 'legitimizing' ideologies—ideologies that serve to satisfy and justify a more core desire for group-based social inequality" (Sidanius et al., 2006, p. 435). These ideologies serve to uphold hierarchy-enhancing structures and, following this logic, mediate the relationship between SDO and DPS. In other words, those with high SDO tend to believe legitimizing myths that justify their pattern of high DPS.

Additionally, White men high in SDO have been shown to be higher in American patriotism (Peña & Sidanius, 2002). Patriotism can be defined as, "support for political action in favour of one's own set of people" (Whitmeyer, 2002, p. 322).

In summation, those highest in DPS and most likely to support the policy tend to be White, male, fundamentalist Christian conservatives who are high in SDO and low in empathy. As such, justifications and motivations for DPS (e.g. desire for retribution, belief in the deterrent effect of the penalty, financial values, fear of prison escape) differ depending on many of these factors which indicates the need for a multi-dimensional scale. There were ideological characteristics of people high in DPS that were not included in the present study, such as those high in Right Wing Authoritarianism (RWA) (Stack, 2003). Due to a desire to not exhaust participants, the SDO scale was chosen over the RWA scale due to its focus on group competition and subordination, which more aptly fit into the framework of Social Identity Theory, discussed below. Understanding the make-up of the body of people who support the death penalty and how they support it is necessary to formulate effective attitude interventions, such as the narratives presented in the current study.

Past Death Penalty Support Interventions

The Marshall Hypothesis, coined by former Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, states that the more information a person has about the death penalty, the less that person will support the death penalty. More specifically, he posits that people are uninformed about the penalty and becoming more informed will decrease support in all but retributionists (*Furman v. Georgia*, 1972). While extensive research has been undertaken to investigate who supports the death penalty, why and the implications of such findings (Ellsworth & Ross, 1983), previous testing of the Marshall Hypothesis primarily exposed participants to factual evidence and opinions. A different form of research has been suggested, "Perhaps a different source or type of knowledge, for example, witnessing an execution or a murder or talking to a relative of a murder victim or an executed murderer, would produce different results" (Bohm et al., 1991, p. 367).

The Use of Education

Whether explicitly or implicitly, a wealth of research has been undertaken to test the Marshall Hypothesis. In their well-known examination of the Marshall Hypothesis, A. Sarat & Vidmar (1976) provided Massachusetts residents with one of four in depth essays: a utilitarian information-based essay (regarding deterrence), a humanitarian information-based essay (regarding executions), an essay combining both, and a control essay. These essays were based on the information Marshall explicitly mentions in his decision in *Furman v. Georgia* (1972) and involved the following sub-aspects: statistical, personal and/or psychological. The utilitarian information both on its own and combined with humanitarian information was the most effective at decreasing DPS and retributionists were the least likely to change their attitudes (Sarat & Vidmar, 1976).

In their famous study on bias and polarization, Lord et al., (1979) presented participants with one of two studies that either confirmed or contradicted their pre-existing DPS. One study purported that murder rates increased with the adoption of capital punishment, while the other study purported the opposite rates. In response, participants devalued the evidence that contradicted their beliefs, regardless of their DPS. In other words, providing participants with information about the death penalty can be a complex undertaking that can backfire if not done in a very strategic and intentional fashion.

Length of exposure to information may inform the lasting effects of changes in DPS. A longitudinal study over the course of more than ten years considered whether reasons for DPS would change if participants took a college course on the policy – results ranged and with little impact on those whose DPS was based in retribution. Some of this research suggests public commitment of DPS is an inhibitor for DPS malleability (Bohm, 1989, 1990; Bohm et al., 1990,

1991, 1993; Bohm & Vogel, 2004, 1991, 1994). A similar study was conducted years later which showed that people high in DPS were uninformed about the death penalty and that retributionists were relatively static in their support, but the new information did not significantly impact attitudes (Lee et al., 2014). Another study with a similar framework showed that participants were uninformed on the policy and, after a semester-long course, were better informed and had lower DPS (H. O. Wright et al., 1995).

Two other studies provided university students with one of three essays: an essay about the philosophy of punishment (the control), an essay with empirical death penalty evidence on deterrence, and an essay with empirical evidence on sentencing innocent people to death. The results showed that information decreased DPS to some extent primarily when presented with information on innocence (Clarke et al., 2001; Lambert & Clarke, 2001) and that personal characteristics moderate the effect (Lambert et al., 2011). Another study with college students provided brief scenarios of the following death penalty topics, resulting in modest decreases in DPS: wrongful convictions, racial discrimination, socioeconomic discrimination, general deterrence or cost (Cox, 2013). Other classroom-based studies have been conducted as well (Michel & Cochran, 2011; Patenaude, 2001; Sandys, 1995). A more thorough set of materials (multiple essays, facts and supplementary readings) was presented to Canadian university student participants which successfully decreased DPS (Vidmar & Dittenhoffer, 1981).

One study that broke down the specific effects of the change in participant knowledge found that those high in DPS were less informed, that becoming more informed decreased DPS, and that participants were equally open/resistant to change regardless of their retributionist attitudes. This study provided undergraduate students with a 42-hour long course (Cochran & Chamlin, 2005). Giving participants a few paragraphs of anti-death penalty facts lowered DPS

moderated by value-expressiveness (when support is based on this variable, it is static) (Vollum et al., 2009; Vollum & Buffington-Vollum, 2010). Using statistical or coherence-based arguments, another study found information to be an effective avenue for decreasing DPS (Miske et al., 2019). More generally, in the persuasion literature, factual evidence is more effective than no factual evidence in changing attitudes (Reynolds & Reynolds, 2002).

The Use of Aggravating and Mitigating Circumstances

Prior research has shown that, when presented with actual cases, DPS can be impacted (Durham et al., 1996; Jurow, 1971). Less research has provided qualitative exposure for participants, though a 2011 survey using both death-eligible crime scenarios (e.g. relatively unprovoked murders) and facts in separate focus groups to interpret changes in DPS showed that the former impacted DPS but the latter did not (Falco & Freiburger, 2011). Durham et al. (1996) used case vignettes of a few sentences to survey DPS for the specific defendants in question for each vignette. Aggravating and mitigating circumstances, defendant age, and weapon were sometimes shared and sometimes withheld. This study found that participants may be more likely to support the death penalty when asked if it should be applied in semi-specific scenarios as opposed to when they are asked about their DPS in the abstract. They also found that, while both aggravating and mitigating circumstances influence DPS, the former has more influence than the latter (Durham et al., 1996). Similarly, a study of social work students showed that, while support is already relatively low, participants with vignettes about mitigating factors had the lowest DPS (Kennedy & Tripodi, 2015).

In assessing the impact of mitigating circumstances, ethnicity and socioeconomic status (SES) on juror death penalty sentencing, researchers found that strong mitigating circumstances were influential to European American jurors when the defendant was also European American

and of high SES and they were particularly harsh in sentencing to death low SES Latino defendants with weak mitigation. In this study, participants were presented with a set of documents that resembled legal documents which summarized elements of a capital trial and sentencing phase. Evidence of mitigating factors was presented to the participants in the form of a sentencing transcript (Espinoza & Willis-Esqueda, 2015).

Similarly, researchers provided university students with transcripts from the trial and penalty phases of a real case. Results showed, however, that such education on capital punishment did not correlate with a decrease in DPS unless the respondent was undecided on their DPS (Boots et al., 2018). These same researchers found an effect of mitigating circumstances such as age and mental capacity on lowering DPS. This study used a factorial survey design to create paragraph-long defendant vignettes (Boots et al., 2003). Meanwhile, a separate study with a simulated mock trial showed that those supportive of the death penalty were less impacted by mitigating evidence than were those opposed (Goodman-Delahunty et al., 1998).

In general, both quantitative and qualitative evidence have been shown to change attitudes in a variety of contexts (Allen et al., 2000; Kazoleas, 1993; Major & Coleman, 2012). Past DPS research has largely focused around the former, but the latter – such as the use of narrative evidence – provides an avenue with much potential. Such past DPS informs the present study's bridge into narrative intervention.

Contact as Information

In accordance with the Marshall Hypothesis, the present study uses contact as a form of information about the death penalty. Folklorist Annie Hallman presents first-person anecdotal evidence for the influence of storytelling on DPS and activism. In her master's thesis, she suggests that it is the stories of those involved in the death penalty – victims' and defendants'

family members and exonerees – that will be the most long-lastingly impactful to listeners and incite them to action. In her words, "The stories told by those affected by the death penalty… make visible the reality that the State is now the murderer and the 'murderer' is now the victim of injustice" (Hallman, 2017, p. 28). Participants in this study are presented with contact to those who experience the death penalty in an attempt to elicit death penalty attitude change.

Social Identity Theory

Researchers theorize that a scarcity of resources leads people to compete with each other (Deutsch, 1949). Through such competition, groups are formed (Sherif et al., 1961; Sherif & Sherif, 1968), causing members of a group to identify internally (ingroup), while the competing group is relegated to the outside (outgroup) (Marlowe & Gergen, 1968; Vinacke, 1964). In the late 1970s, Tajfel and Turner determined in their seminal establishment of Social Identity Theory that, over time, people consider those not part of the ingroup as homogenous outgroup members instead of individuals, seen as, "undifferentiated items in a unified social category" (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 36). Intergroup hatred between those on either side of the privilege divide is formed in circumstances where an unequal division of resources forms the foundation of social standing (Oberschall, 1973; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

This dynamic is mostly shown coming from the higher status group toward the lower status group, in which people want to identify themselves with a group they experience in a positive light – a light which exists by contrasting itself against the outgroup (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986). In other words, through social identification, people divided themselves into ingroups and outgroups and assigned a great deal of meaning to those groupings about themselves and others. Over the course of the 20th Century, mechanisms were investigated to attenuate the conflicts caused through social identification. One such mechanism is the Contact

Hypothesis, which aims to lessen the outgrouping effect and present a more nuanced and humanized portrayal of outgroup members.

Contact Hypothesis

In accordance with Social Identity Theory, Contact Hypothesis suggests that intergroup contact can decrease prejudice between groups (Allport, 1954; Amir, 1969; Cook, 1985; Pettigrew, 1998; Watson, 1947; Williams, 1947). In other words, Social Identity Theory indicates that identity groups are formed (creating an ingroup-outgroup mentality) and Contact Hypothesis indicates that the exposure of such an in-group to an out-group reduces the former's stigmatization of the latter. In the case where both sides of the divide identify themselves as in-groups, both groups experience reduced prejudice toward the other through contact. A meta-analysis of over 500 studies validated such findings (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), while a meta-analysis of similar magnitude revealed the following mediators of intergroup contact on prejudice reduction: empathy (Husnu & Crisp, 2015; Tausch et al., 2010), knowledge about the outgroup, and reduced anxiety about intergroup contact (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). Intergroup contact has reduced implicit associations between ingroup members and the concept 'good' and between outgroup members and the concept 'bad' (Aberson & Haag, 2007).

Because intergroup contact is often untenable, such as in the present study, researchers formed the extended contact hypothesis, showing that knowledge of cross-group friendships can decrease stigmatization of the outgroup (S. C. Wright et al., 1997). Investigating this finding, researchers discovered imagined intergroup contact (IIC), which revealed that simply imagining a positive interaction with an outgroup is an effective de-stigmatization tool (Birtel & Crisp, 2012; Crisp et al., 2009). A meta-analysis of 70 studies showed that IIC is an effective tool at impacting attitudes, emotions, intentions and behavior (Miles & Crisp, 2014).

While 'contact' tends to indicate a literal interaction between two or more people and 'imagined contact' tends to indicate the imagining of such an interaction, the mechanisms behind intergroup contact have been applied in different ways. For example, 'indirect contact' in which a person ('person A') knows or is friends with a person ('person B') who has had contact with an outgroup member ('person C') has been shown to have a prejudice reduction effect on 'person A' (Paolini et al., 2004). Such variation on the Contact Hypothesis requires only one party involved to experience the other party, which opens up the potential for additional variations on the hypothesis' application. Instead of simulating an interaction between two people that involves them both experiencing contact, the present study takes inspiration from the introductory quotation by Graham Greene from the meta-analytic imagined intergroup contact study as the conceptual basis for the narrative intervention: "When you visualised a man or a woman carefully … when you saw the lines at the corners of the eyes, the shape of the mouth, how the hair grew, it was impossible to hate. Hate was just a failure of imagination" (Miles & Crisp, 2014, p. 3). In this way, through reading about a character, narrative evokes one-sided contact and participants' imaginations without instruction. Specifically, the words, "Imagine an interaction with the following character," are replaced by the experience of reading the narrative itself.

While narrative, on its own, has been shown to be a more effective tool of persuasion than statistical information (Braddock & Price Dillard, 2016; Kahneman & Tversky, 1973), it was chosen as the tool for this study because of its ability to put the participant in contact with the individuals affected by the death penalty. Providing a participant with a set of statistics about the death penalty would not have achieved the intended goal of imagined intergroup contact.

Social dominance orientation (SDO) has been shown to predict strong attitudes of prejudice (Duckitt, 2001). For this reason, many theorists have posited that intergroup contact would be less effective in such groups. However, research has shown that intergroup contact is effective with people both low and high in SDO (Kteily et al., 2019). Beyond that, those high in SDO have been shown to be particularly affected by intergroup contact (Ho et al., 2012, 2015; Kteily et al., 2012; Mitchell & Sidanius, 1995). A meta-analysis of nine studies shows that trend mediated by empathy and psychological outgroup closeness regarding prejudices such as racism and anti-immigrant bias. A suggested explanation is that, while confronting intolerance can induce a backlash, intergroup contact attenuates outgroup threat (Hodson, 2011). Additionally, research shows that improved outgroup attitudes can be traced to experiencing bonded, connected feelings with said group members, also known as recategorization (Adachi et al., 2016; Adachi, Hodson, & Hoffarth, 2015; Adachi, Hodson, Willoughby, et al., 2015). Some evidence shows that the success de-stigmatization of the outgroup may be due to a distancing from the ingroup (Pettigrew, 2009; Verkuyten et al., 2010). When a social identity is threatened in some form, members of that group can react with social creativity, where they redefine the terms of the identities at play to create a better standing for themselves. Similarly, switching the group to which one group compares itself can decrease inferiority and, "self-esteem should recover" (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 44). At the least, this research provides an opening for the malleability of attitudes by means of intergroup contact for people across the SDO spectrum.

Empathy

Simply asking participants to feel the feelings of someone in a story can impact their decision-making in relation to that person. When presented with a fictitious, first-person interview with a convicted murderer, inducing empathy lowered stigmatization toward him and to the

generalized group after the experiment to some degree and weeks later to an even larger degree (Batson et al., 1997). Empathy can be defined as, "the imaginative transporting of oneself into the thinking, feeling, and acting of another and by doing so viewing the world as the person does" (Unnever et al., 2005, p. 1). Viewing the world through another person's eyes gives the empathizer the motivation to behave altruistically by acting on behalf of the other person as if in self-defense (Davis, 1994).

Following this logic, those high in empathy are more likely to be unsupportive of harming others and likely to be lower in DPS (Hoffman, 2000; Unnever et al., 2005). In analyzing 2002 General Social Survey data, it was revealed that empathy directly predicts DPS and also indirectly predicts DPS mediated through political orientation – i.e. those who are more empathetic are more likely to be liberal which makes them more likely to have low DPS (Unnever et al., 2005). This research builds on past research findings that those high in empathy have lower SDO and are therefore less likely to hold conservative attitudes like DPS (Pratto et al., 1994). Additionally, believers in forgiveness – a quality associated with empathy – are less likely to support the death penalty (Applegate et al., 2000). The hallmark of restorative justice programs is empathy – requiring those involved to feel each others' experiences (Prashaw, 2001; Van Stokkom, 2002).

Research has shown the importance of perceived feelings of similarity and group identification felt during the course of perspective-taking (Batson et al., 1997; Cialdini et al., 1997; Johnson et al., 2002; Krebs, 1991; Stotland & Berkowitz, 1969). When presented with facts of a hypothetical crime and a first-person narrative about a defendant's life who attended college, a study with White university students showed that participants asked to empathize with the defendant gave him a more lenient sentence, especially when the defendant was White. Those in the low empathy group who were asked to remain emotionally detached gave a harsher sentence

when the defendant was Black (Johnson et al., 2002). A study found a similar finding in relation to a victim at the participants' university compared to an outgroup university. Beyond this finding, empathy for outgroup members and the outgroup more generally were comparable to ingroup members when those outgroup members were ascribed fictitious, positive, ingroup norms (Tarrant et al., 2009).

In studying empathy, researchers considered the role of feelings of oneness in empathy and altruistic behavior (Aron et al., 1991, 1992; Aron & Aron, 1986; Davis et al., 1996; Lerner, 1982; Piliavin et al., 1981). A critical study that considered the distance between and intersection of 'self' and 'other' found that the relationship between empathy and a desire to help is fully mediated by feelings of oneness and self-identification with the needy other (Cialdini et al., 1997).

> "[P]erceived oneness provides a nonaltruistic alternative account of the findings that Batson and colleagues have attributed to altruistic motivation. If people locate more of themselves in the others to whom they are closely attached, then the helping that takes place among such individuals may not be selfless" (Cialdini et al., 1997, p. 483).

As such, empathy and feelings of identification are considered in the present study as mechanisms by which DPS may be lowered. Forming effective contact and perspective-taking requires a degree of transportation and recategorization.

In his seminal work, Pettigrew (1998) synthesized the following steps to experiencing and generalizing participants' positive outgroup attitudes: first, participants must feel that they have personal similarities with the outgroup member by de-emphasizing the salience of the groups. This process is referred to as the decategorization strategy (Miller & Brewer, 1984). Second, group membership must be made salient (Hewstone & Brown, 1986) and indicate that the outgroup member is a representative, typical member of the group (Brown et al., 1999; Johnston & Hewstone, 1992; Weber & Crocker, 1983; Wilder, 1984). This step validates the generalizing relationship between the outgroup individual and the outgroup (Van Oudenhoven et al., 1996).

Third, recategorization (as articulated in the Common Ingroup Identity Model) must be induced, wherein the participant identifies him or herself in the same group as the former outgroup member (Anastasio et al., 1997; Gaertner et al., 1993, 1994). "Recategorization adopts an inclusive category that highlights similarities among the interactants and obscures the 'we' and 'they' boundary" (Perdue et al., 1990; Pettigrew, 1998, p. 75).

In order to maximize the effectiveness of contact, the present study utilizes narrative.

Producing Contact and Empathy Through Narrative

Narrative can be defined as, "any cohesive and coherent story with an identifiable beginning, middle, and end that provides information about scene, characters, and conflict; raises unanswered questions or unresolved conflict; and provides resolution" (Hinyard & Kreuter, 2007, p. 778). Narrative has been shown to be an effective means of persuasion and the list of stories – novels, movies, TV shows – that have impacted societal attitudes is extensive and the empirical studies numerous (Banerjee & Greene, 2012; Burrows & Blanton, 2016; J. Cohen et al., 2015; Cuesta et al., 2017; de Graaf et al., 2012; Hoeken et al., 2016; Kearney & Levine, 2014; Moyer-Gusé et al., 2011; Moyer-Gusé & Nabi, 2010; Murphy et al., 2011; Tal-Or & Cohen, 2010; van Laer et al., 2014; Yoo et al., 2014). Factual evidence has been shown to be persuasive particularly to people already invested in an issue (Braverman, 2008; Kopfman et al., 1998), while narratives are more effective in those who are less motivated to engage (Slater & Rouner, 1996). Various research shows that exposing participants to narrative evidence is as or more effective at altering attitudes, beliefs and behaviors than presenting factual evidence (Braddock & Price Dillard, 2016; Kahneman & Tversky, 1973).

Narratives provide a unique opportunity to motivate attitude change by, "encouraging identification with characters, facilitating the perception of similarity between oneself and the

protagonist, and evoking negative emotions that can motivate attitude change" (Green & Clark, 2013; Perloff, 2017, p. 345). Such self-identification with the communicator has been shown to be effective in a variety of contexts: business (Brock, 1965; Conger, 1998); health care (Anderson & McMillion, 1995; Harrington, 2013; Kalichman & Coley, 1995; Kreps, 2006); and the academy (Berscheid, 1966). The present study makes use of the power of narratives to expose participants to the perspectives of people they would not otherwise have the opportunity to experience. Experiencing members of a stigmatized group – in this case, someone sentenced to death for murder – can elicit empathy and tolerance.

Contact with Another Relevant Party

The other party most closely connected to the death penalty are those who carry out executions. The damaging effect of executions on prison staff is as well-documented as it can be considering the anonymity of those involved. Wardens, executioners and spiritual advisors to those executed have spoken out against the death penalty due to the guilt they feel from committing legal homicide and the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder it causes (Ault, 2019; Cabana, 1998; Dillon, 2015; *Former Florida Warden Speaks Out Against the Death Penalty*, 2009; Givens, 2013; Pickett & Stowers, 2003; Thompson, 2019). Oftentimes, there is an expectation that the burden of executions be placed on healthcare professionals who break the Hippocratic Oath by their participation in enacting harm to a patient (Weisbuch, 1984). In the words of former executioner Ron McAndrew:

> "On that final day, you walk into a cell early in the morning minutes before the execution. You sit down on the bunk next to the condemned, then you tell this person, 'The time has come.' And it's amazing how they sort of help you along at that point… Anyone who gets up close to an execution – physically touches the person they're getting ready to kill, speaks to them, …shares their most intimate thoughts in those last few minutes of their life, and then takes them into this dirty little room and kills them – if they can honestly say that that person doesn't come back to visit them from time to time, they're not human" (*Former Florida Warden Speaks Out Against the Death Penalty*, 2009).

In the present study, a narrative of an executioner is given to a separate treatment group to examine the effect of contact with this uniquely informed perspective. The intention of this narrative is different from the executed narrative and is an exploratory approach. This narrative reframes the typical burden of capital punishment to one that may weigh more heavily on its supporters by implicitly asking participants to take on the perspective of an executioner. Instead of the somewhat more common focus of the weight of capital punishment on who is killed and how many people are killed, this narrative reframes the weight on who does the killing. For people higher in SDO who may be more concerned with the well-being of 'us' than 'them' – in this case the executioner and the executed respectively – hearing that the policy hurts 'us' may be particularly persuasive. The distance subjects' attitudes need to travel to be persuaded against the death penalty is shorter if they only require being awakened to the hurting of the 'self', rather than both awakening to *and* feeling the pain of the 'other'.

This exploratory condition uses the same concept of contact as the executed condition, except the premise is that the executioner may represent a group that is not the traditional target of intergroup contact: the ingroup for those who support the death penalty. In this way, an alternative psychological process may be taking place – a diversification or complication of the ingroup rather than the outgroup in a way that colors participants' view of the effect of their attitudes on their own group members. While intergroup contact requires contact with an outgroup which destigmatizes that group, the executioner condition uses an exploratory focus on the ingroup to consider impacting DPS.

In summation, the death penalty has shown to be an ineffective and discriminatory policy (Bedau, 1973; *Crime in the United States, 2011*, 2012). To that end, the present study explores the efficacy of informative narrative contact on decreasing DPS. In order to achieve imagined

intergroup contact, narrative as a method of perspective-taking is employed. The intended audience of these narratives are those most likely to support the death penalty: White, religious, conservative men who are high in social dominance orientation, low in trait empathy and live in states where the death penalty is legal.

Hypotheses

In accordance with the prior literature on death penalty attitudes, the present study hypothesizes that: (1) narrative contact, compared to a control, will (a) decrease death penalty support (DPS), and (b) decrease feelings of oneness with death penalty supporters; (2) the impact of narrative contact on DPS will be mediated by (a) state empathy with the narratives' characters; specifically, the treatments will elicit heightened feelings of state empathy which will cause a decrease in DPS and (b) feelings of oneness with the character; specifically, the treatments will elicit feelings of oneness with the character which will cause a decrease in DPS; and (3) social dominance orientation (SDO) will moderate the relationship between narrative contact and DPS; specifically, those higher in SDO will have lower DPS in the treatment conditions compared to the control condition.

Methodology

Participants

      The survey was programmed using the Cambridge University Qualtrics account – a survey-building platform. It was uploaded to Prolific Academic to recruit participants. Prolific Academic is an online, UK-based platform Prolific Academic. Similar to services like Amazon Mechanical Turk and Qualtrics Online Panels, Prolific Academic is a self-service data collection program that joins survey administrators with paid participant volunteers across the world population (Peer et al., 2017).

      From the applicants, a sample size of 1003 was recruited to take part in the experiment (N=1003) in accordance with an a priori power analysis conducted on G*Power with 95% power. The effect size was calculated by averaging the effect sizes from 89 studies from two narrative-based meta-analyses (Braddock & Price Dillard, 2016, p.; Zebregs et al., 2015). For a main effects ANOVA with alpha=.05 and d=0.36, the minimum sample size was N=480. In accordance with the study's budget allowance, a larger sample size was collected to maximize statistical power.

      Each randomized experimental group consisted of one of the following narratives: the executed inmate narrative (N=330), the executioner narrative (N=338) or the control narrative (N=335).

      Out of 138,019 users on Prolific Academic, 23,353 were qualified to take the survey. For the purpose of this attitudinal study, the voting public in death penalty states was determined to be the most relevant population of decision-makers on the policy due to their ability to vote and qualification to serve on death penalty juries. Therefore, to optimize the study, participants were screened for the broadest necessary target population features. *Age.* Participants under 18 years old could not participate. *Location.* Participants were chosen from a sample population of U.S.

states that have the death penalty (28). While the federal, country-wide death penalty is legal, excluding participants from states that have outlawed the policy increased the likelihood of acquiring participants who support it. Instead of asking pre-test survey questions that could have had a biasing effect on the participants, the combination of these two qualifications (age and location) increased the odds of acquiring the target sample population.

Procedure

An advertisement was circulated through Prolific Academic to recruit eligible participants (see Appendix A). Participants completed a standard Cambridge consent form informing them that there would be attention checks during the course of the survey (see Appendix B). Participants were asked again for their U.S. state of residence and age. All ineligible participants were directed back to the Prolific Academic webpage and their information went unrecorded. For eligible participants, this information was recorded. After filling in their unique Prolific ID number, participants were randomly directed to one of the three narratives. Each narrative was split in half with a required timer of 30 seconds spent on each half. At the halfway mark, participants were informed that they had read half of the narrative to reduce cognitive load. After reading the narrative, they were directed to a series of questionnaires. All questions required answers except sensitive demographic questions like gender, religion, class, race and education level. Participants were open-endedly asked if they had any comments or ways they suggest the study be improved. Afterward, they were directed to a debrief page (see Appendix C) explaining the study in more detail and finally directing them back to Prolific Academic. Once answers were checked for completion, the participants were paid. Though participants were told there would be an attention check, there was no attention check.

Materials

This study used a three condition, single factor, between-subjects design in order to investigate the effect of narratives on attitudes toward the death penalty. All conditions were of similar length, style of emotiveness and narrative structure. Both experimental condition narratives were adopted with minimal changes from real stories.

The focus of the study is the role of narrative and perspective-taking on DPS. Participants are presented with one of two stories of people who engage with the death penalty from opposite sides – someone who has been sentenced to death (and eventually executed) and an executioner. Participants are implicitly expected to empathize with and take on the perspective of these characters through the process reading their stories. The narratives conform to the same structure.

Narrative Structure

Both interventions opened with a disclaimer indicating the random, typical nature of the story (e.g. "*For a prior study, federal investigators were asked to recall death penalty cases that they worked on. The following case was randomly chosen.*"). This element intended to indicate to participants a lack of bias on behalf of the researchers as well as a generalizing effect of the character. In neither narrative was the race of the character shared due to a potential biasing effect and names were changed to those common among Black and White Americans. Next, the group of the character was clearly stated (e.g. "Mark Bryant used to work as a corrections officer who conducted executions.") so that participants were not taken by surprise later on and felt in any way betrayed or misled by having taken the perspective of someone who has killed people. At that point, the stories were told from childhood until the present in the third person to evoke an air of objectivity. The characters were Christian males from regions of the U.S. where states tend to have the death penalty and in families with conservative politics and values. Their personal qualities

and life histories were shared to indicate similarities with the most common death penalty supporters, potentially eliciting empathy and feelings of identification in the participants.

The narrative apex in each story involved the moments each character killed people and how their lives devolved from that moment. Their stories ended in a rather dismal place, the characters being severely impacted by their choices and the criminal justice system. In both narratives, the final statistic on the percent of the group that are Americans was included in order to reinforce feelings of identification with the character (e.g. "98% of people executed in the United States are American citizens."), as the target audience tends to endorse binding foundations such as patriotism (Graham et al., 2009; Peña & Sidanius, 2002). To evaluate shared identity, the feeling of oneness with Americans was included as a later measure.

This recategorization technique was employed to emphasize identification with the character as part of the ingroup – an ingroup harmed by the death penalty. This component intended to stress a shared identity with the 'victims' – whether they are executed inmates or executioners – of the death penalty and to reinforce a generalized feeling of distance with the policy itself.

The following sections detail the narratives' contents.

Executed

The executed inmate-experimental condition presented a narrative about a man who was sentenced to death (see Appendix D). This narrative was based on a real case (*Getsy v. Mitchell*, 2007) and chosen from a collection of cases considered by experts in the field and the researcher who is a former capital habeas mitigation investigator for the Federal Public Defender of the Eastern District of Arkansas. Capital habeas defense attorneys were asked to consider the most standard cases they have had – the cases that best represent all of the other cases. A case with

compelling aggravating circumstances was chosen to balance the compelling mitigating circumstances. DPS is most common in especially brutal murders, hired murders and the murder of children (Harris, 1986). Following the findings of Durham et al. (1996) that information about aggravating murder circumstances impacts death penalty attitudes, the present study explores whether more extensive circumstance information impacts death penalty attitudes.

The intention of this narrative was to: 1) indicate the typical nature of the outgroup character (in this case, criminals on death row); 2) make the outgroup of someone on death row salient; 3) reduce the salience of the outgroup by de-categorizing and sharing personal, human qualities and experiences to which the target audience could better empathize throughout both circumstances of the character's childhood and crime; and 4) recategorize the outgroup character indicated by commonalities, people (e.g. one of his victims and judges) who vouch for him, and a new shared enemy: the death penalty.

Through this process, participants experienced imagined intergroup contact with someone on death row. They experienced similarities with the character or at least more human-like, digestible, sympathetic stories. In this case, the ramification of supporting the death penalty was the likely possibility that a situation like Aaron's will happen again to another American and perhaps even to someone like the target audience – because Aaron is someone like the target audience.

Executioner

The executioner-experimental condition presented a narrative about a man who conducted executions (see Appendix E). This narrative was based on the combined documentary testimony of two executioners who worked together at the same prison: Terry Bracey and Craig Baxley (Dillon, 2015). The wording of their stories was altered to be more concise and stylistically

consistent with the other narratives. The basis for this narrative was derived from the executioner being a representative, credible expert figure for people with high DPS. Just as advocates for war may see a soldier on the front lines as both the hand that implements their wishes as citizens and the person closest to the issue (and the enemy), someone with high DPS may see these qualities in an executioner.

This intervention metaphorically transported participants in a narrative vehicle driven by Mark who modeled the intended attitude transformation (Bandura, 1977). Mark, a stereotypical machismo man, experienced dissonance when he became a killer of killers and discovered that his actions were 'othering' him, making him the very enemy he was generally tasked with killing. The participants experienced a very distilled version of the discomfort of supporting a policy that contradicts with their identity and, while Mark quit his job and quit his support for the death penalty, the participants would ideally follow suit.

The control condition presented an unrelated narrative about a soccer player who struggled with an injury (see Appendix F).

The independent variable in this study was the type of narrative presented to participants. The dependent variables were support for the death penalty and feelings of oneness with death penalty supporters. State empathy and identification with the character were potential mediating factors and social dominance orientation was a potential moderating factor.

Measures

Death Penalty Support. The key dependent variable of death penalty support (DPS) was measured after the intervention with the 15-item O'Neil et al. (2004) scale (see Appendix G) and the single-item Aron et al. (1992) Inclusion of Other in the Self scale (see Figure 2).

Figure 2
The Inclusion of Other in the Self Scale, Aron et al. (1992)

Which pair of circles best represents the relationship between you and {}?
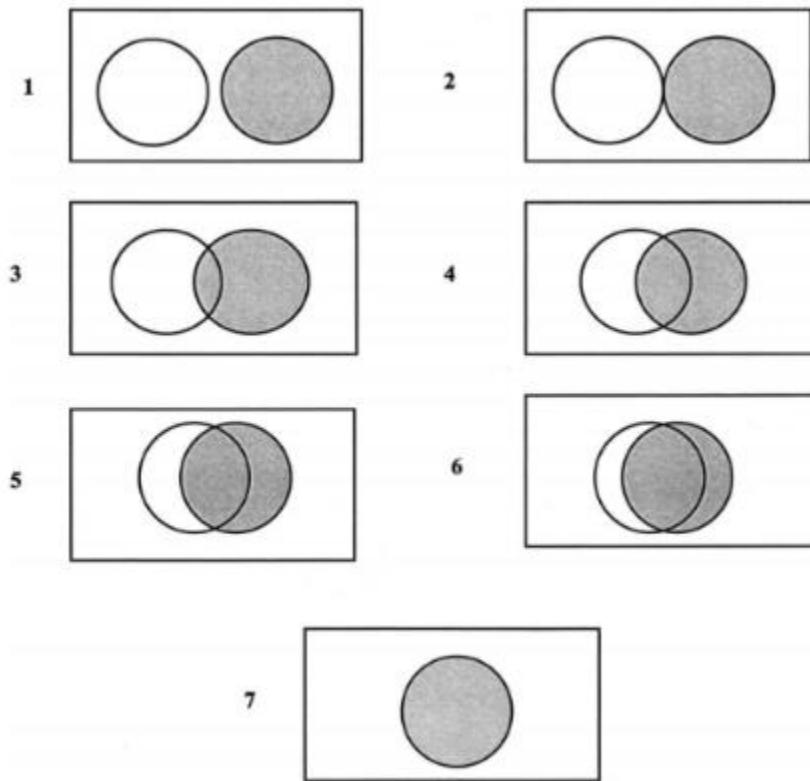
DPS is defined, for the purpose of this study, as the extent to which an individual favors the legality of a death penalty policy. There are many components to such support and, subsequently, various methods for measuring it. The quality and quantity of support must be considered in order for it to be accurately assessed. In order to address these complications, the present study employed a multidimensional, multi-item, likert scale format (O'Neil et al., 2004). There are five subscales within the 15 questions on DPS: General Support (4); Retribution and Revenge (4); Death Penalty Is a Deterrent (3); Death Penalty Is Cheaper (2); Life Without Parole (LWOP) Allows Parole (2). Two additional questions were added to cover the scope of inquiry. A leading cause of death penalty abolition support is the possibility of wrongful convictions and executing innocent people (Unnever & Cullen, 2005). To account for this phenomenon, the

following question was added to the scale: "Innocent people are sometimes wrongfully convicted and executed." Another item was added that reworded (but did not replace) the following item: "I think the death penalty is necessary." The new additional item said, "I believe the death penalty should be legal."

Responses to the DPS scale were recorded on a likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree) (α=.902, M=3.46, SD=1.14). Four of the questions were reverse scored (i.e. "I think the death penalty is necessary," was regularly scored, while, "The death penalty does not deter other murderers," was reverse scored).

Group Identification. The single-item OIS scale (Aron et al., 1992) from 1 to 7 was used to assess identification with the people who support the death penalty (M=2.81, SD=1.72) (see Figure 2).

Mediating Variables

The following hypothesized mediating variables were measured: state empathy and oneness with the character in the narrative. Empathy for an individual has been shown to mediate decreased prejudice and attitude changes for a group (Batson et al., 1997; Cialdini et al., 1997; Johnson et al., 2002; Krebs, 1991; Stotland & Berkowitz, 1969).

State empathy. State empathy was measured using the 12-item (Shen, 2010) empathy scale (α=.898, M=3.72, SD=.76). In this scale, questions were changed to replace the general phrasing with specific information from each narrative. For example, one statement is, "The character's emotions are genuine." In the case of the executioner narrative, the statement was changed to, "Mark's emotions are genuine." State empathy responses were recorded on a likert scale ranging from 0 ('Not at all') to 4 ('Completely') (see Appendix H).

Character Identification. Identification with an outgroup member has shown to be a mediator of contact and de-stigmatization (Aron et al., 1991, 1992; Aron & Aron, 1986; Cialdini et al., 1997; Davis et al., 1996; Lerner, 1982; Piliavin et al., 1981). The single-item OIS scale (Aron et al., 1992) from 1 to 7 was used again to assess identification with the character in the narrative (*M*=2.21, *SD*=1.55) (see Figure 2).

Moderating Variable

Social Dominance Orientation. People who express higher social dominance orientation (SDO) have been shown to have higher death penalty support (DPS) and be more affected by intergroup contact interventions (Ho et al., 2015, 2012; Kteily et al., 2012; Mitchell & Sidanius, 1995; Hodson, 2011). To examine its potential moderating effect, SDO was tested using the 8-item Short SDO7 scale (Ho et al., 2015, 2012; Kteily et al., 2012) (α=.760, *M*=2.76, *SD*=1.01). SDO responses were recorded on a likert scale ranging from 1 ('Strongly Oppose') to 7 ('Strongly Favor') (see Appendix I).

Other Variables

In past research, the following variables have been shown to be relevant regarding DPS: political orientation (Applegate et al., 2000; Moon et al., 2000; Moran & Comfort, 1986; Sarat, 2001; Unnever & Cullen, 2007a; Vogel & Vogel, 2003), racial tolerance (Soss et al., 2003; Unnever & Cullen, 2007b, 2010) and trait empathy (Unnever et al., 2005). These factors were explored as well to add to past research and as covariate controls in the experiment.

Trait Empathy. People who express higher trait empathy have been shown to have lower DPS (Unnever et al., 2005). Trait empathy was measured using the 14-item Davis (1980) Interpersonal Reactivity Index regarding empathic concern and perspective-taking (α=.865,

M=3.87, *SD*=.61). Trait empathy responses were recorded on a likert scale ranging from 0 ('Does not describe me well') to 4 ('Describes me well') (see Appendix J).

Racial Tolerance. People who express lower racial tolerance have been shown to have higher DPS (Soss et al., 2003; Unnever & Cullen, 2007b, 2010). Racial intolerance was measured using a 3-item racial thermometer scale (Smith et al., 1972) (α=.895, *M*=7.37, *SD*=1.57). Racial temperature responses were recorded on a likert scale ranging from 1 ('Very cool') to 9 ('Very warm') (see Appendix K).

Political Orientation. Conservatives have been shown to have higher DPS than liberals (Applegate et al., 2000; Moon et al., 2000; Moran & Comfort, 1986; Sarat, 2001; Vogel & Vogel, 2003). Political orientation was tested using the single-item Unnever (2005) scale (α=.760, *M*=2.76, *SD*=1.01). Political orientation responses were recorded on a likert scale ranging from 1 ('Extremely Liberal') to 7 (Extremely Conservative'). As conservatives tend to hold patriotism in high esteem (Feinberg & Willer, 2015), the single-item OIS scale (Aron et al., 1992) from 1 to 7 was used to assess identification with people who are American (*M*=4.04, *SD*=1.72) (see Figure 2).

Demographic Variables. Age and location were asked in a drop-down menu at the beginning of the survey to serve the dual purpose of recording this information and ensuring the correct participant screening. At the end, gender, race, education level and class were offered as optional measures. Subjective socio-economic status was tested using the single-item MacArthur SES ladder scale with 9 rungs (Adler et al., 2000) (*M*=5.67, *SD*=1.76) (see Appendix L). Participants were instructed that the lower down on the ladder they placed themselves, the socio-economically worse off they were; the higher up on the ladder they placed themselves, the socio-economically better off they were.

Lastly, participants were asked if they remember the race of the person in the narrative. While the race of the people in the narratives was never mentioned, this question would help potentially reveal an implicit racial association the participant had with people who have been executed or people who carry out those executions. Alternatively, if White participants assumed the character was White, they may have been more likely to experience empathy than if they believed the character was Black. A study with White university students showed that participants induced to feel more empathy gave hypothetical defendants more lenient sentences especially when the defendant was White. Those in the low empathy group gave harsher sentences when the defendant was Black (Johnson et al., 2002). All told, perceived race of the defendant likely impacts attitudes toward that defendant.

Sample

The study was advertised to qualified users on Prolific Academic who, upon completion of the survey, were directly and electronically paid £.98 in accordance with Prolific Academic's ethics standards. Participants were only paid if they completed the whole survey, submitting all answers. Applicants were asked a total of 66 questions.

Of the 1,003 participants, 84% were between the age of 18 and 44 and 35% in the 25-34 year old range. Regarding region of the U.S., 40% were from the South; 25% from the West; 17% from the Southwest; 9% from the Midwest; 5% from the Northeast; and 2% from the Mountain region. Regarding self-identifying class, 56% fell into the mid-range. 45% of participants were male; 52% were female; 2% were non-binary; and .4% preferred not to answer. The racial makeup of the sample was 67% White, 17% Asian, 7% Black or African American, 1% American Indian or Alaska Native, and 8% other. Regarding education level, 40% of participants had a bachelor's degree, 26% high school degree, 15% Master's degree, 3% Doctorate, and 5% other. The political

orientation make-up of the sample was 62% liberal, 21% conservative and 17% were neither liberal nor conservative.

Results

Before proceeding to the main analyses, the effectiveness of the randomization procedure was checked with an experimental balance test, which indicated that there was no significant association between experimental condition and political orientation $\chi^2(12,1003)=11.359$, $p=0.498$, gender ($p=0.171$), age ($p=0.790$), location ($p=0.428$), class ($p=0.171$), race ($p=0.232$), and education ($p=0.663$). The main assumptions of the ANOVA were evaluated next. Although Levene's tests indicated unequal variance in state empathy $F(2,1000)=12.134$, $p<.001$ and oneness with the character $F(2,1000)=6.04$, $p=.002$, SDO $F(1,1001)=24.15$, $p<.001$, the group sizes were approximately equal (Blanca et al., 2017; Winer et al., 1991). Shapiro-Wilk tests were significant for 1) DPS ($p=.001$), 2) oneness with death penalty supporters ($p<.001$) and 3) SDO ($p<.001$), violating normality. However, the histograms of DPS (see Appendix M) and SDO (see Appendix N) showed fairly normal distributions, while the histogram of oneness with death penalty supporters (see Appendix O) did not. Nonetheless, non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis H tests are reported (in footnotes) where normality was violated (all results remained consistent).A Kruskal-Wallis H test showed a significant difference in state empathy and character oneness between the conditions as well as a significant difference in DPS between low and high SDO.

A Pearson correlations table was calculated to present an overview of the data (see Table 1). In general, DPS positively and strongly correlated with "oneness with death penalty supporters" ($r=.643$, $p<.001$), SDO ($r=.454$, $p<.001$) and political conservatism ($r=.426$, $p<.001$), but less so with "oneness with Americans" ($r=0.07$, $p=.03$). DPS negatively correlated with trait empathy ($r=-.223$, $p<.001$) and racial warmth ($r=-.211$, $p<.001$), all of which replicated to a similar degree in oneness with death penalty supporters. Surprisingly, DPS positively correlated with identification with the characters ($r=.094$, $p=.003$). State empathy positively correlated with

character oneness (r=.369, p<.001), racial warmth (r=.280, p<.001), and American oneness (r=.068, p=.031). State empathy negatively correlated with political conservatism (r=-.098, p=.002). SDO positively correlated with American oneness (r=.077, p=.014) and political conservatism (r=.547, p<.001). SDO negatively correlated with trait empathy (r=-.40, p<.001) and racial warmth (r=-.385, p<.001). Trait empathy was positively correlated with racial warmth (r=.358, p<.001) and negatively correlated with political conservatism (r=-.171, p<.001). Finally, racial warmth negatively correlated with political conservatism (r=-.256, p<.001).

Table 1
Pearson Correlation

	N	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Death Penalty Support***	3.457	1.138	-							
2. Oneness (Death Penalty Supporters)***	2.81	1.716	.643**	-						
3. Oneness (Character)***	2.21	1.547	.094**	.168**	-					
4. State Empathy***	3.717	.757	.026	.010	.369**	-				
5. Social Dominance Orientation	2.761	1.007	.454**	.315**	.110**	-.050	-			
6. Trait Empathy	3.868	.606	-.223**	-.131**	.036	.280**	-.400**	-		
7. Racial Warmth	7.368	1.573	-.211**	-.173**	-.010	.149**	-.385**	.358**	-	
8. Oneness (Americans)	4.04	1.715	.070*	.239**	.121**	.068*	.077*	.027	.089**	-
9. Politics	3.10	1.739	.426**	.328**	.029	-.098**	.547**	-.171**	-.256**	.060

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
***. Values are experimentally manipulated.
c. Listwise N=1003

Hypothesis 1a

Narrative contact, compared to a control, will decrease DPS.

A One-Way ANOVA using the Tukey HSD post hoc test was performed to evaluate hypothesis 1a and showed support for this hypothesis (see Table 2, Figure 3). There was a significant main effect of the treatment group on DPS, $F(2,1000)=4.04$, $p=.018$, $\eta^2=.008$). The executed group ($M=3.39$, $SD=1.13$) had significantly lower DPS than the control group ($M=3.6$, $SD=1.15$), $p=.041$, $d=0.18$. The executioner group ($M=3.38$, $SD=1.12$) had significantly lower DPS than the control group ($M=3.6$, $SD=1.15$), $p=.034$, $d=0.19$. The difference in DPS between the executed group ($M=3.39$, $SD=1.13$) and the executioner group ($M=3.38$, $SD=1.12$) was non-significant, $p=0.998$, $d=.009$. In short, participants in the treatment conditions were less supportive of the death penalty.

Table 2
Between-Subjects Effects ANOVA using DPS as the criterion

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	Partial η^2
Corrected Model	10.412[a]	2	5.206	4.042	.018	.008
Intercept	11984.970	1	11984.970	9304.931	.000	.903
Group	10.412	2	5.206	4.042	.018	.008
Error	1288.024	1000	1.288			
Total	13285.419	1003				
Corrected Total	1298.435	1002				

a. $R^2=.008$ (Adjusted $R^2=.006$)

Figure 3
Bar Graph of Death Penalty Support by Condition
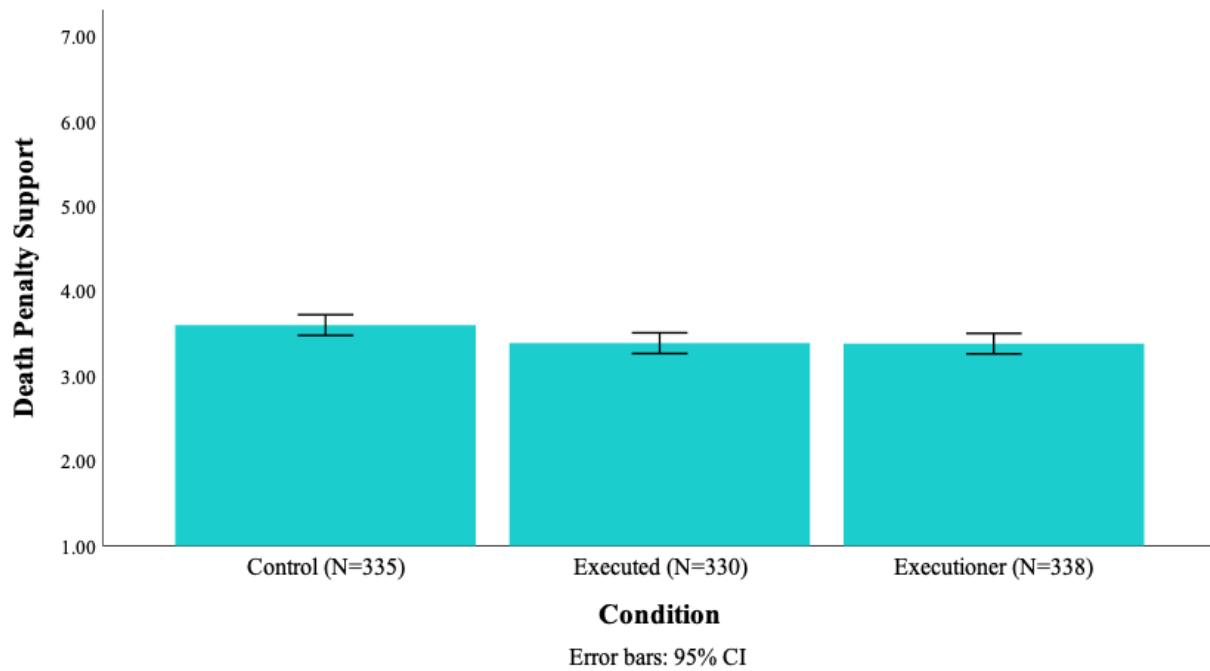
Note: DPS grouped according to experimental treatment condition.

Factor Analysis

A factor analysis was conducted on the 15-item DPS scale. A principle components analysis with direct oblimin rotation resulted in a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) value of .847 for the full scale. All items except "There are some murderers whose death would give me a sense of personal satisfaction." (KMO=.456) had a value over .5, which is the accepted minimum point (Kaiser, 1974). Bartlett's test of sphericity was conducted to assess whether the variables are sufficiently correlated and was found to be significant, $\chi^2(105)=7888.53$, $p<.001$ (Bartlett, 1951). As shown in Figure 4, five components had an eigenvalue of over 1. Component 1 accounted for 39.06% of the variance, component 2 accounted for 10.38%, component 3 accounted for 9.2%, component 4 accounted for 9.03% and component 5 accounted for 7.05%.

Figure 4
Scree Plot of DPS Scale Values
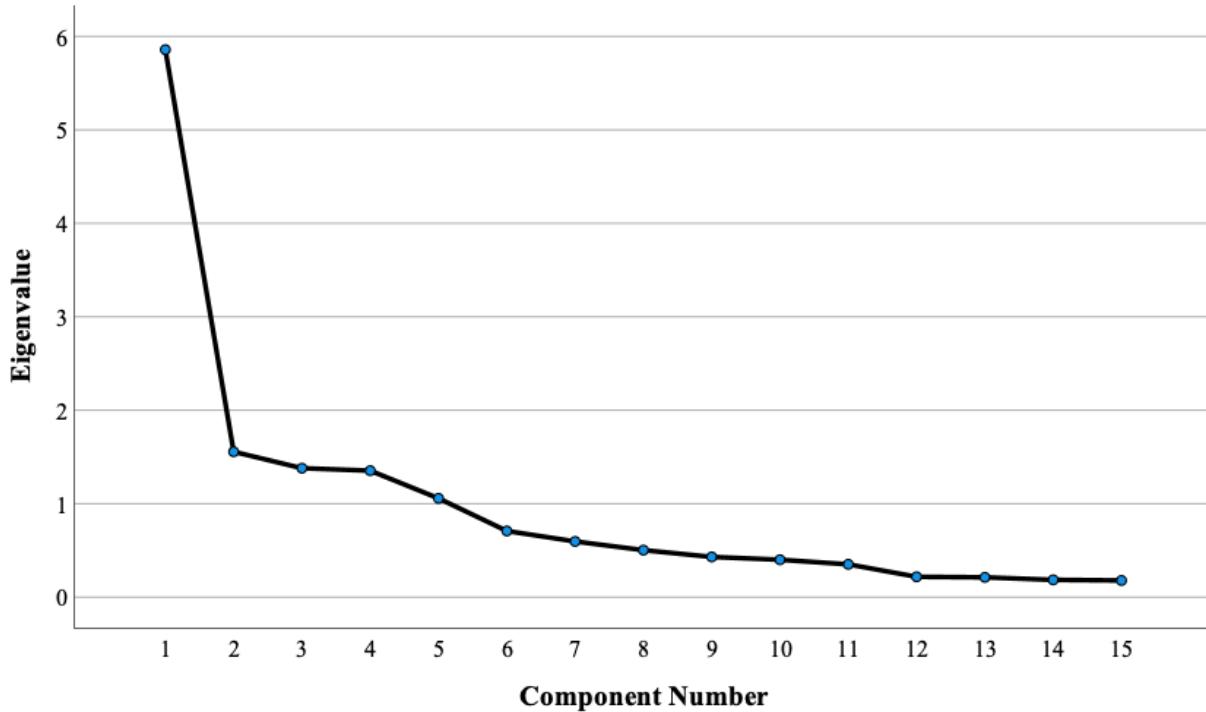
Note: Eigenvalues grouped according to component number.

These eigenvalues aligned with the five subdimension motivations outlined by O'Neil et al. (2004), the means of which were calculated to create five dependent variables: deterrence (α=.840, *M*=3.2, *SD*=1.55), general support (α=.880, *M*=3.57, *SD*=1.68), revenge/retribution (α=.742, *M*=3.31, *SD*=1.38), cost (α=.896, *M*=4.47, *SD*=1.85), and concerns about the adequacy of a sentence of life in prison without parole (α=.770, *M*=3.55, *SD*=1.44) (Appendix P). To assess the effect of conditions on the five subdimensions of DPS, a one-way MANOVA using the Tukey HSD post hoc test was performed. When broken down into these subdimensions, there

was not a statistically significant difference in DPS based on condition, $F(10, 1992)=1.32$,

$p=.216$; Wilk's $\Lambda=.987$, partial $\eta^2=.007$[1].

Hypothesis 1b

Narrative contact, compared to a control, will decrease feelings of oneness with death penalty supporters.

A One-Way ANOVA using the Tukey HSD post hoc test was performed to evaluate hypothesis 1b and failed to reject the null hypothesis. The main effect of oneness with death penalty supporters by treatment group was therefore non-significant, $F(2,1000)=2.26$, $p=0.105$, $\eta^2=.005$[2] (see Table 3, Figure 5).

Table 3
Between-Subjects Effects ANOVA using Oneness (Death Penalty Supporters) as the criterion

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	Partial η^2
Corrected Model	13.286[a]	2	6.643	2.261	.105	.005
Intercept	7922.523	1	7922.523	2695.908	.000	.729
Group	13.286	2	6.643	2.261	.105	.005
Error	2938.722	1000	2.939			
Total	10875.000	1003				
Corrected Total	2952.008	1002				

a. $R^2=.005$ (Adjusted $R^2=.003$)

---

[1] Using unadjusted univariate post-hoc comparisons, the subdimensions General Support and Deterrence significantly differed on DPS between conditions. However, because the overall MANOVA was non-significant, subsequent testing is not reported.

[2] A Kruskal-Wallis H test showed there was a non-significant difference in oneness with death penalty supporters between the conditions $\chi^2(2)=5.836$, $p=.054$, with a rank oneness score of 531.57 for the control condition, 493.70 for the executed condition and 480.80 for the executioner condition.

Figure 5

Bar Graph of Oneness with Death Penalty Supporters by Condition
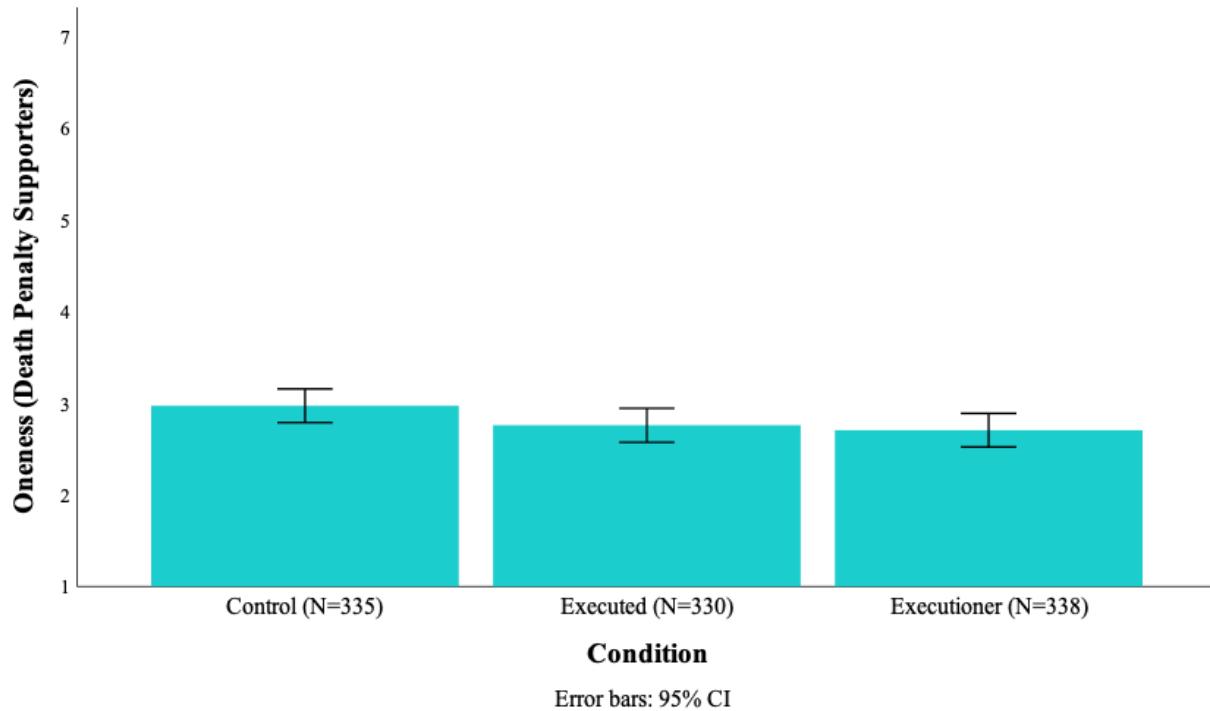
Note: Oneness with Death Penalty Supporters grouped according to experimental treatment condition.

Hypothesis 2a

Narrative contact, compared to a control, will decrease DPS mediated by state empathy with the narratives' characters. Specifically, the treatment narratives will elicit heightened feelings of state empathy which will cause a decrease in DPS.

A One-Way ANOVA using the Tukey HSD post hoc test was performed to evaluate hypothesis 2a and failed to reject the null hypothesis (see Table 4, Figure 6). The One-Way ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of the treatment groups on state empathy,

$F(2,1000)=75.01$, $p<.001$, $\eta^2=0.130$[3] – however, the executed group ($M=3.34$, $SD=0.82$) had

significantly less state empathy than the control group ($M=4.00$, $SD=0.60$), $p<.001$, $d=0.91$. The

executioner group ($M=3.81$, $SD=0.69$) had significantly less state empathy than the control group

($M=4.00$, $SD=0.60$), $p=.002$, $d=0.28$. The executed group ($M=3.34$, $SD=0.82$) had significantly

less state empathy than the executioner group ($M=3.81$, $SD=0.69$), $p<.001$, $d=0.62$. Thus,

surprisingly, the treatment groups displayed significantly less empathy than in the control

condition. Given these unexpected results, the hypothesized mediation analyses were not

conducted.

Table 4
Between-Subjects Effects ANOVA using state empathy as the criterion

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	Partial η^2
Corrected Model	74.867[a]	2	37.434	75.006	.000	.130
Intercept	13841.637	1	13841.637	27734.685	.000	.965
Condition	74.867	2	37.434	75.006	.000	.130
Error	499.073	1000	.499			
Total	14432.833	1003				
Corrected Total	573.941	1002				

a. $R^2=.130$ (Adjusted $R^2=.129$)

---

[3] A Kruskal-Wallis H test showed there was a significant difference in state empathy between the conditions $\chi^2(2)=122.75$, $p<.001$, with a mean rank state empathy score of 606.19 for the control condition, 363.72 for the executed condition and 533.74 for the executioner condition.

Figure 6
Bar Graph of State Empathy by Condition
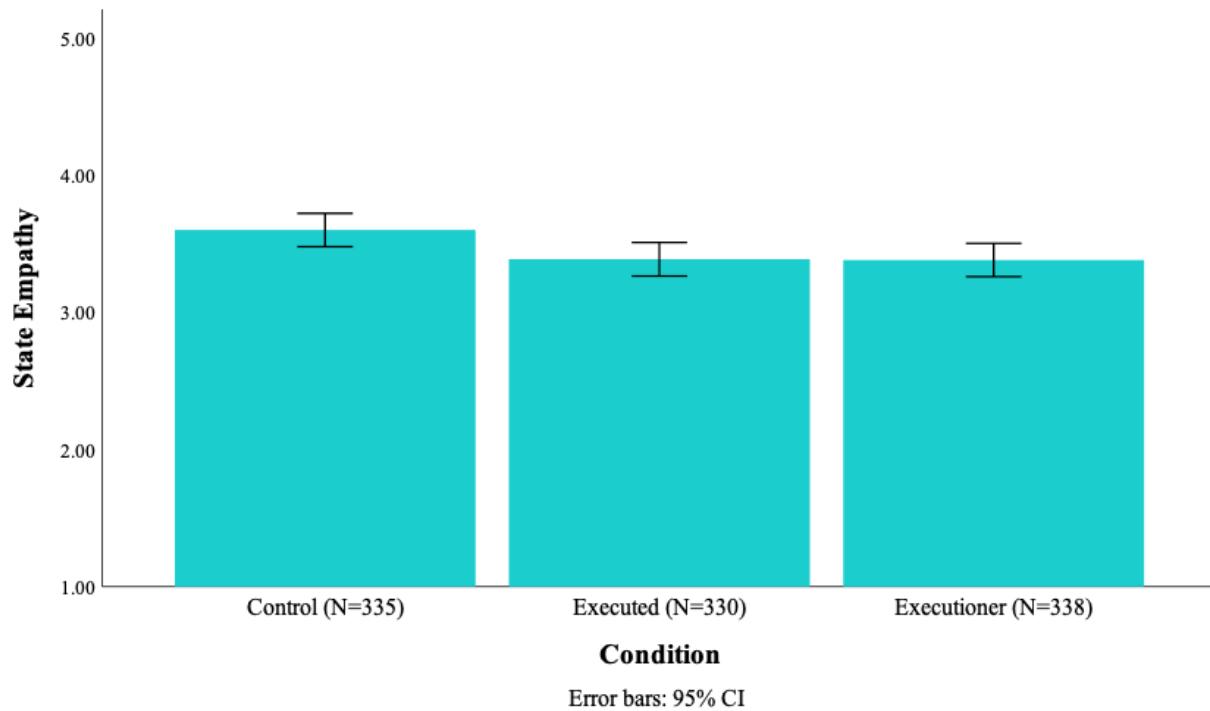
Note: State empathy grouped according to experimental treatment condition.

Hypothesis 2b

Narrative contact, compared to a control, will decrease DPS mediated by feelings of oneness with the character. Specifically, the treatments will elicit feelings of oneness with the character which will cause a decrease in DPS.

A One-Way ANOVA using the Tukey HSD post hoc test was performed to evaluate hypothesis 2b and failed to reject the null hypothesis (see Table 5, Figure 7). There was a significant main effect of oneness with the characters for the treatment groups, $F(2,1000)=12.73$, $p<.001$, $\eta^2=0.025$ [4]. However, the executed group ($M=1.89$, $SD=1.51$) had significantly less

---

[4] A Kruskal-Wallis H test showed there was a significant difference in character oneness between the conditions $\chi^2(2)=38.01$, $p<.001$, with a mean rank character oneness score of 554.02 for the control condition, 429.28 for the executed condition and 521.43 for the executioner condition.

oneness with the character than the control group (*M*=2.49, *SD*=1.64), *p*<.001, *d*=0.381. The executioner group (*M*=2.24, *SD*=1.43) had significantly less oneness with the character than the control group (*M*=2.49, *SD*=1.64), *p*=0.091, *d*=0.163. The executed group (*M*=1.89, *SD*=1.51) had significantly less oneness with the character than the executioner group (*M*=2.24, *SD*=1.43), *p*=.009, *d*=0.238. Again, unexpectedly, participants in the treatment groups had less oneness with the characters than in the control condition. We therefore did not explore mediation analyses.

Table 5
Between-Subjects Effects ANOVA using Character Oneness as the criterion

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*p*	Partial η^2
Corrected Model	59.514[a]	2	29.757	12.731	.000	.025
Intercept	4879.262	1	4879.262	2087.518	.000	.676
Condition	59.514	2	29.757	12.731	.000	.025
Error	2337.351	1000	2.337			
Total	7284.000	1003				
Corrected Total	2396.865	1002				

a. R^2=.025 (Adjusted R^2=.023)

Figure 7
Bar Graph of Oneness with the Character by Condition

Error bars: 95% CI
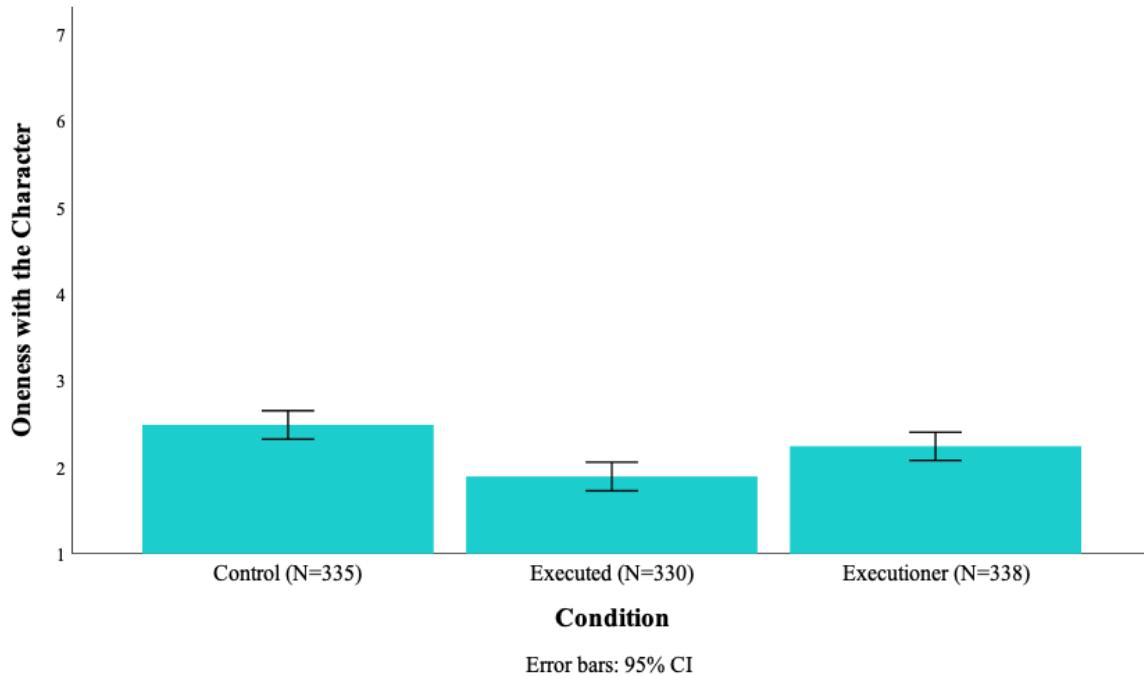
Note: Oneness with the Character grouped according to experimental treatment condition.

Hypothesis 3

Narrative contact, compared to a control, will decrease DPS moderated by social dominance orientation (SDO). Specifically, those higher in SDO will have lower DPS in the treatment conditions compared to the control condition.

A moderation analysis was estimated using Hayes PROCESS model 1 in SPSS (Hayes, 2012) using the Cribari-Neto & Lima (2014) heteroskedasticity-consistent covariance matrix estimator for robustness with a multicategorical indicator variable, which failed to reject the null hypothesis 3. The relationship between condition and DPS was not moderated by SDO. The interaction of the control condition and the executed condition by SDO was non-significant, $b=0.08$, $t(997)=1.06$, $p=0.29$. The interaction of the control condition and the executioner condition by SDO was non-significant, $b=0.04$, $t(997)=0.54$, $p=0.59$.

_____

A multiple linear regression was calculated to predict DPS based on participants' SDO, political orientation, identification with Americans, trait empathy and racial warmth. A significant regression equation was found, $F(5,997)=68.76$, $p<.001$, $R^2_{adj}=.253$. On average, holding all other variables constant, an increase in one point of SDO corresponded with an increase in .28 points of DPS, $\beta=.28$, $p<.001$. An increase in one point of political orientation (toward conservatism) corresponded with an increase in .26 points of DPS, $\beta=.26$, $p<.001$. Lastly, an increase in one point of trait empathy corresponded with an decrease in .06 points of DPS, $\beta=-.06$, $p=.044$. Identification with Americans ($\beta=-.02$, $p=.529$) and racial warmth ($\beta=.04$, $p=.186$) had non-significant results (see Table 6).

Table 6
Regression Table of Effects on Death Penalty Support

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	SE B	β	t	p	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	2.522	.304		8.302	.000	1.926	3.118
American Oneness	.024	.018	.037	1.324	.186	-.012	.060
Political Orientation	.167	.021	.256	7.799	.000	.125	.210
Trait Empathy	-.116	.058	-.062	-2.013	.044	-.230	-.003
Racial Warmth	-.014	.022	-.019	-.629	.529	-.058	.030
SDO	.315	.041	.279	7.738	.000	.235	.395

Characters' Race

As an exploratory factor, participants were asked what the narrative character's race was and were given various options including, "I don't know," which was the only correct answer. The results were analyzed in two ways: 1) by sample and group, and 2) by DPS. This measure was taken to observe any possible interaction between treatment condition, DPS, racial warmth and unconscious racial assumptions. Such information could help contextualize differences in DPS.

By Sample and Group

Did participants assume the race of the character in each story (yes/no)? Less than 50% of the control and executed groups assumed race (the control least of all). However, 52% of the executioner group assumed the character's race (more than the other groups and more than not). In both the treatment conditions, people assumed race proportionally more in comparison to the control condition. Meanwhile, participants in the control group most accurately indicated they did not know the character's race (70%) (see Figure 8).

Figure 8
Pie Charts of Characters' Race
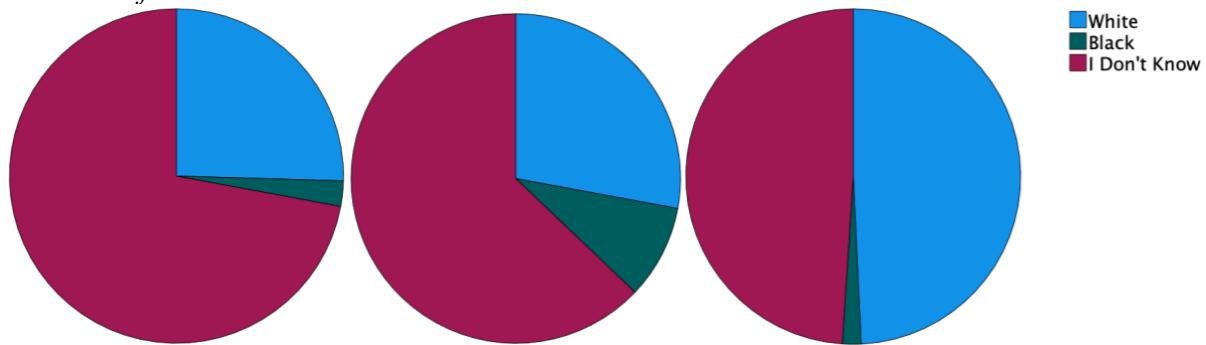
Note: The control character's race is the left chart; the executed character's race is the middle chart; the executioner's race is the right.

Of those who (incorrectly) assumed race, what did they assume (Black/White)? Overall, 85% assumed the character was White and 11% assumed the character was Black. In the executioner group, 96% assumed White; 4% assumed Black. In the control condition, 83% assumed White; 8% assumed Black. In the executed condition, 73% assumed White; 24% assumed Black. This shows that, proportionally speaking, more participants assumed the executioner was White and the executed character was Black, but across the board participants assumed the character was White if they assumed at all.

By Death Penalty Support

The assumption (yes/no) of race impacted DPS in the full sample ($p=.001$) and in the executed condition ($p=.001$), but not in the control or executioner conditions. Specifically, participants (over one third) who assumed race were higher in DPS (see Table 7, Figure 9).

Table 7

Between-Subjects Effects ANOVA using DPS as the criterion

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Corrected Model	13.388[a]	1	13.388	10.771	.001
Intercept	3671.383	1	3671.383	2953.595	.000
Executed Character's Race	13.388	1	13.388	10.771	.001
Error	407.711	328	1.243		
Total	4208.349	330			
Corrected Total	421.100	329			

a. R^2=.032 (Adjusted R^2=.029)

Figure 9

Bar Graph of DPS by the Executed Character's Race
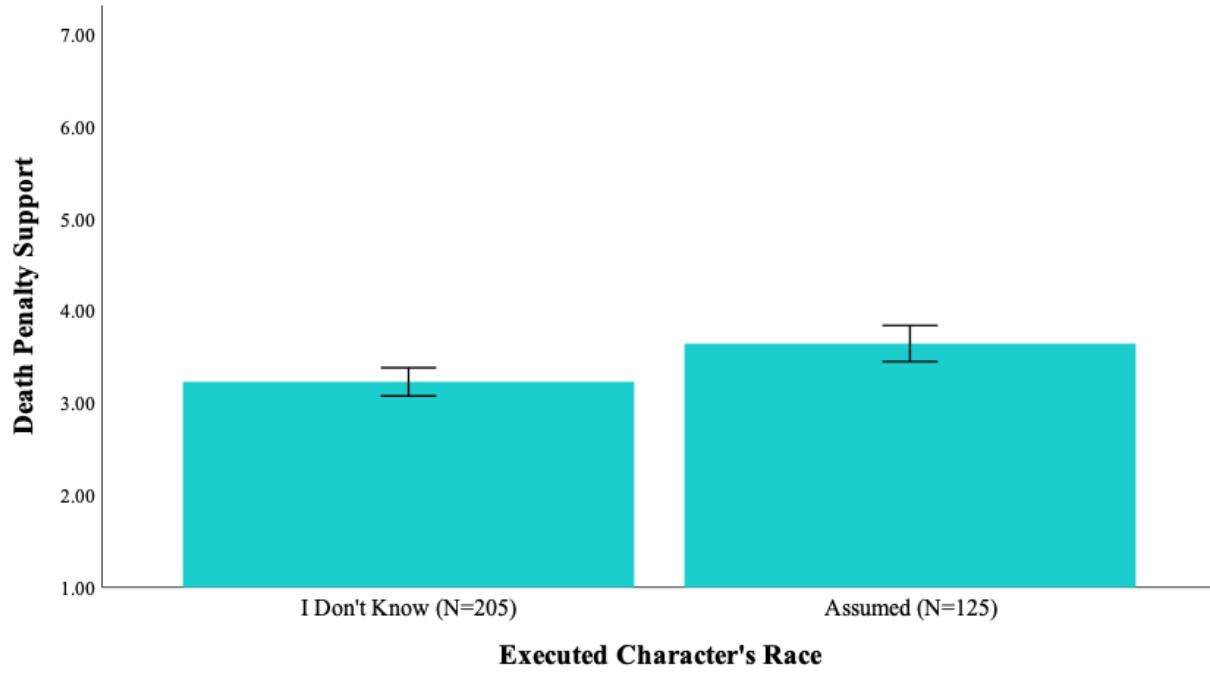
Note: DPS grouped according to participants who did/not assume the characters' races.

Of those who assumed race, the assumption of a particular race (Black/White) impacted DPS to a small degree for the executed group (p=0.053, d=0.41). Specifically, people who assumed the executed person was White were higher in DPS. Significance of this effect was increased when controlling for racial warmth (p=0.04) (see Table 8, Figure 10).

Table 8
Between-Subjects Effects ANOVA using DPS as the criterion

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	Partial η^2
Corrected Model	9.672[a]	2	4.836	4.359	.015	.069
Intercept	84.424	1	84.424	76.101	.000	.392
Racial Warmth	5.291	1	5.291	4.769	.031	.039
Executed Character's Race Assumed	4.717	1	4.717	4.252	.041	.035
Error	130.905	118	1.109			
Total	1744.858	121				
Corrected Total	140.577	120				

a. R^2=.069 (Adjusted R^2=.053)

Figure 10
Bar Graph of DPS by the Executed Character's Assumed Race
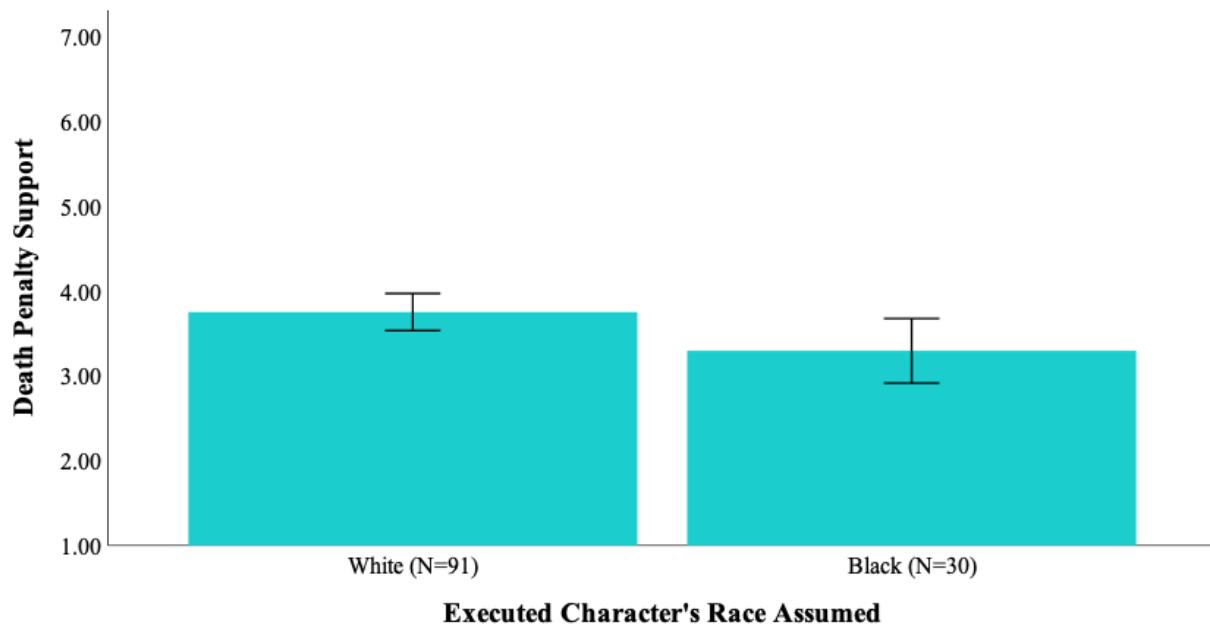
Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: Racial Warmth = 7.6061

Error bars: 95% CI

Note: DPS grouped according to the characters' race that participants assumed, controlling for racial warmth.

Discussion

The study found evidence for only the first of the five hypothesis components. There was significantly lower death penalty support (DPS) in the executed (d=0.18) and executioner (d=.19) treatment conditions than in the control. The subsequent hypotheses were intended to explain this phenomenon if it were to be found: that there would be a difference between the conditions regarding closeness with death penalty supporters, the lesser DPS would be due to feelings of empathy or closeness with the narrative characters, and that social dominance orientation (SDO) would play a role in participants' experience of the narratives. This is not what was found, however. If anything, the treatment narratives elicited less state empathy and oneness with the characters than the control narrative. A main effect of SDO on DPS was found: those on the higher half of the SDO scale were higher in DPS than those on the lower half of the SDO scale (d=1.10), but there was no interaction with the treatment. The non-significant SDO moderation finding indicates that those of all levels of SDO were similarly impacted by the treatments and the main effect points to the prominence of SDO in DPS in general. No clear support for the explanatory hypotheses was found, which leaves a series of questions regarding why the experimental treatment was successful. The narrative absorption finding hints at future avenues of exploration.

Although the narrative characters' race was not mentioned within the narratives, many participants assumed their race. Over half of the executioner narrative participants assumed the character's race, which was more than the other two conditions, with the fewest participants guessing the control character's race (less than 30%). This finding may indicate that these are American narratives with racially charged elements and verifies the association the death penalty has with race (Bobo & Johnson, 2004; Ogletree & Sarat, 2006; Peffley & Hurwitz, 2007; Unnever

et al., 2008; Unnever & Cullen, 2007a, 2007b) and racial perceptions (Soss et al., 2003; Unnever & Cullen, 2007b).

Regarding those who assumed race overall, most assumed the character was White, however this phenomenon was notably stronger in the executioner condition than in the executed condition (23% more), indicating that more people thought the executioner character was White than they did the executed character. This finding tracks with the thinking that an executioner is more likely to be part of the dominant racial group.

In the overall sample and in the executed condition, assuming the characters' races indicated higher DPS. Those who assumed the executed character was Black had lower DPS than those who assumed he was White, a phenomenon that became stronger when controlling for racial intolerance. These results may indicate that participants who assumed the executed character was Black are more knowledgeable about the racially disproportionate application of the death penalty. However, this is a hypothesis that would require future testing.

Other main effects were found that did not interact with the treatments but replicated past research: high DPS was correlated with low trait empathy (Hoffman, 2000; Unnever et al., 2005), political conservatism Applegate et al., 2000; Moon et al., 2000; Moran & Comfort, 1986; Austin Sarat, 2001; Vogel & Vogel, 2003), and racial intolerance (Soss et al., 2003; Unnever & Cullen, 2007b). The correlation between participants' strong identification with Americans and high DPS is in line with past findings that White men high in SDO are both higher in American patriotism as well as DPS (Peña & Sidanius, 2002).

Narrative Contact and Death Penalty Support

The theoretical basis for the executed narrative involved contact theory: contact, even imagined, with a stigmatized group could lower stigmatization about that group (Allport, 1954;

Amir, 1969; Cook, 1985; Pettigrew, 1998; Watson, 1947; Williams, 1947). In the present study, exposure to narrative information about the character was expected to cause an increase in empathy toward them and a subsequent decrease in support for killing people like them via the death penalty. More generally, in both conditions, the thinking was that shortening the distance between the participants and the policy would be beneficial, as support, itself, for the death penalty varies when subjects are asked about their support in the abstract as opposed to whether they would apply the penalty to a specific situation (Bohm, 1987; Ellsworth & Ross, 1983). It seems that a successful connection was made between the specific stories and the policy even though it was not empathy – at least in the way that it was measured – that caused the effect. That being said, it is important to note that this study's empathy and oneness scales used the actual names of the characters rather than simply referring to "the character" (e.g. "John's feelings were genuine," rather than "The character's feelings were genuine."). This key difference limited the ability to precisely compare across conditions and to definitively conclude that it was not, in fact, generalized state empathy or character identification that mediated the relationship between condition and DPS.

However, more generally, the death penalty is an inaccessible and complex entity. As such, the intent of the treatment conditions was not explicitly to make participants want to befriend someone who kills someone; the intent was not necessarily to present these characters as likeable people with whom a participant would want to coexist in their neighborhood. Therefore, while the goal was the reduction of stigma toward a person sentenced to death in order to provide an avenue for empathy (or reverse ordered) so as to decrease support for a policy that would kill them, contact theory's relatively common aim of coexistence (e.g. Israelis and Palestinians) is not necessarily the aim in this situation. Furthermore, bringing people closer

to an issue (i.e. the death penalty policy) is not necessarily the same psychological process as bringing them closer to a person or group of people (i.e. people who have killed). The present study may have succeeded at reducing death penalty support by providing informative narratives despite not having brought participants closer to the individual characters.

Of note was the exploratory analysis of the Shen (2010) state empathy scale when broken into individual units. The item, "When reading the message, I was fully absorbed," revealed a significant main effect of the treatment groups on state empathy in the opposite direction compared to the other items (i.e. the expected direction), $F(2,1000)=16.91$, $p<.001$, $\eta^2=0.033$. This was the only item that showed a reverse trend in which the participants reported more absorption in the executioner group ($M=4.53$, $SD=.694$) than the control ($M=4.16$, $SD=.867$), $p<.001$, $d=.471$. Past research has indicated that a focus on narrative absorption and involvement may be more prudent indicators of attitude change than identification on its own (Green, 2004; Slater & Rouner, 2002). More cognitive resources are used in this process (Green & Brock, 2000; Hinyard & Kreuter, 2007; Murphy et al., 2011), potentially leaving less room for counterarguments to be formulated (Burrows & Blanton, 2016; Green, 2006). The empathy finding in the current study indicates that it may be absorption rather than perspective-taking that causes the difference in attitude. It may not be necessary for a narrative audience to identify with the characters in order to become transported by the story and, in fact, the order of these mechanisms may be reversed (J. Cohen, 2006; Murphy et al., 2011; Slater & Rouner, 1996).

It is possible the participants felt transported by the narratives without feeling empathy. In other words, they experienced a new framework of thinking about the death penalty, but such a framework did not involve feelings of empathy. Perhaps it was some components of vague identification that caused the participants to find worthiness in listening, but only to serve the

purpose of transporting them. Due to the extreme nature of the characters' situations, the identification with them may have been salient enough to be moving, but not overt or direct enough to be reflected in the measures used. It is common for people to believe that such bad, extreme situations could not happen to them, and thus feel less of a direct connection (Perloff, 2017; Weinstein, 1980, 1993).

Additionally, it is possible that outgroup homogeneity effect (Park & Rothbart, 1982) and availability bias (Kahneman & Tversky, 1973) were attenuated by the narrative exposure. "Sensationalism sells and thus the most heinous crimes are likely to receive the most media attention. Not surprisingly, some capital cases embody the desired fodder for the evening news reports. As such, people have a distorted view of the typical capital case, and they generalize from the atypical case in forming an attitude toward the death penalty" (Hamill et al., 1980; McGarrell & Sandys, 1996, p. 502). When thinking of the death penalty, people may have a particular prototypical archetype in their mind (Ellsworth, 1978; Ellsworth & Ross, 1983) which is then adjusted and informed by the executed narrative.

Limitations

One shortcoming of the experiment is that, due to the general nature of the control narrative and considering how similarly participants were affected by the two treatment conditions, it could be said that any exposure to the death penalty could have caused these results – and it would be impossible to know if that was true. Delving into more granular components of the design would help inform the results. For example, the narratives could have been designed in a more controlled manner which would have served the purpose of deconstructing the psychological mechanisms into more distinct parts, however reality does not reflect such a controlled environment. The present design did not include these factors because it straddled multiple fields (social psychology,

criminology, communications – to name a few) which served the purpose of addressing both theoretical and applied questions. Accordingly, a reasonable balance had to be struck for the study to maintain both practical and scientific validity. The present study provides future research with an avenue to investigate the causes for the success of these full narratives by deconstructing them and controlling their component parts.

An obvious limitation of this study is the lack of high DPS among the total sample. Participants were not screened for their DPS so as to avoid a biasing effect. To attenuate this concern, only those from states that have the death penalty were included. However, this shortcoming did not enable the intended focus on those who actually support the policy. Further, additional insight could have been gained through a within-subjects design. The current between-subjects design limited insight to a degree, as actual attitude change within the individual participants could not be observed. Additionally, for the executioner condition, it would have been valuable to pre-screen for a sample that only included death penalty supporters and a subsequent pre-test for identification with executioners. If death penalty supporters did show feelings of oneness with executioners, the unknown variables would have been narrowed, providing insight into whether it was the complicating of the ingroup that led to the lowered DPS. In other words, if death penalty supporters see an executioner as one of 'us' and are presented with a narrative of that ingoup member being harmed by the policy, a protective mechanism could kick in, subsequently lowering DPS.

Lastly, the sample was skewed on some measures. 86% of the sample was on the low half of the SDO scale. Only 4% of the sample identified on the cold half of the racial warmth scale and only 6% of the sample identified in the lower third of the trait empathy scale.

Future Research

The primary suggestion for future research is focusing on the role of absorption and transportation through narratives to impact attitudes, as there is some evidence that these elements are more salient than perspective-taking as it was considered in the present study. Furthermore, 'identification' is a concept with a diversity of interpretations. Future research may benefit from a more general definition such as "involvement with characters" (Moyer-Gusé, 2008; Murphy et al., 2011, p. 410), the use of a transportation scale and more granular state empathy and identifications scales to assess these considerations (e.g. Green & Brock, 2000).

The control condition may also play a significant role in the results: changing the baseline of comparison could yield new insights. Due to the exploratory nature of the study, the most general control within reason was used: a narrative with a similar arc that had no relation to the death penalty. Depending on the focus of future research, testing these or related treatment narratives against other possible controls would be fruitful. Such controls could include an executioner narrative which tells the story of someone who becomes more supportive of the death penalty through his/her experience as an executioner, if such a true story could be found and there was evidence of its typicality. It is also possible that it was simply easier for participants to see themselves in a soccer player who has not hurt anyone. Perhaps future research can involve a control narrative with higher stakes and with more of an interpersonal conflict which may be a helpful baseline of comparison. Such narratives can be pilot tested for levels of empathy, identification with characters and other emotional responses.

Importantly, testing the treatment conditions against a control condition that includes factual information about the death penalty would hone in on the specific mechanism at play (narrative exposure) and would eliminate the possibility that any exposure to the death penalty

would net the present results. In order to better establish whether state empathy or oneness with the characters mediate the relationship between narrative death penalty exposure and DPS, the names of characters should not be used in the empathy and oneness scales. Including the names of the story characters made it impossible to accurately compare feelings and identification toward the characters between groups.

A further investigation into stigma reduction for prisoners would be beneficial. For example, it is possible that sympathy, rather than empathy, could be a valuable psychological avenue to consider. Sympathy can be defined as, "the heightened awareness of another's plight as something to be alleviated," while empathy can be defined as, "the attempt of one self-aware self to understand the subjective experiences of another" (Wispé, 1986, p. 314). While arguably a less effective means of attitudinal change, sympathy may be a better explanation of the feelings involved regarding death penalty narratives and it is possible that, while not necessarily optimal, sympathy is the best that can be expected from participants.

A greater focus on 'othering' people who support the death penalty could be worthwhile. Traditionally, a focus has been placed on eliciting feelings of identification with a stigmatized outgroup (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), however it is possible that only some degree of identification is required to make participants feel defensive on the stigmatized character's behalf and that the more poignant focus is the distance between the participant and the person or people attacking the character. Importantly, the remarkably large main effect of SDO on DPS validates the immense importance of dominance over other groups as a trait of those who support the death penalty (Mitchell & Sidanius, 1995). Research has shown that distancing a group from a common enemy can be a more consequential and powerful force than true identification with ingroup members (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Additionally, cognitive dissonance may have played a role in the treatments and future work could consider this possibility. Cognitive dissonance is defined as mental incongruity (Festinger & Carlsmith, 1959). It is, "a negative, unpleasant state that occurs whenever a person holds two cognitions that are psychologically inconsistent" (Aronson, 1968, p. 6), and is physiologically inciting (Harmon-Jones et al., 2011; van Veen et al., 2009). Similarly, guilt can be defined as the remorse felt when an individual, "failed to do what s/he 'ought to'... for example, when s/he violates some social custom, ethical or moral principle, or legal regulation" (Basil et al., 2008, p. 3).

In a study on death penalty attitudes, researchers had student participants in the treatment condition share moments in which they implemented their values. Compared to a control group, these participants changed their DPS when presented with a report contrary to their previously held DPS, indicating that this affirmational behavior opened participants up to the information (G. L. Cohen et al., 2000). In the present study, the audience empathetically experiences actions that are initially consonant to the character but become counterattitudinal and identity-dissonant over time – in other words, 'hypocrisy inducing'. Participants were prompted to experience the dilemma of choosing between the lesser of two potent evils: their attitude toward the death penalty or their conservative, American identity. Logic would assume they would make the less weighty choice of letting go of the attitude to recover mental congruence. Future research can more explicitly test such a provocative speculation.

Lastly, future research ought to include a test of Right Wing Authoritarianism (RWA), which has been shown to be a more pertinent, underlying predictor of DPS than characteristics like political conservatism and fundamentalism.

Conclusion

This exploratory research offers evidence that communicating the stories of people who interact with the death penalty is an effective means of impacting death penalty support – an otherwise strongly held attitude. The intent of this research was to re-consider the Marshall Hypothesis – specifically the suggestion that the more Americans know about the death penalty, the less they will support it. Most previous research has evolved around presenting participants with factual evidence, however, "Emotions are not things that get in the way of rationally processing a message. They are part of our personal makeup as human beings and need to be factored in to the persuasion process by receivers, as well as persuaders" (Perloff, 2017, p. 409). Therefore, traditional reasoned persuasion regarding the death penalty risks inciting basic cognitive dissonance and subsequent polarization (Lord et al., 1979). People hold irrational consistencies regarding their DPS: "When asked about their reasons for favoring or opposing the death penalty, respondents tended to endorse all reasons consistent with their attitudes, indicating that the attitude does not stem from a set of reasoned beliefs, but may be an undifferentiated, emotional reflection of one's ideological self-image" (Ellsworth & Ross, 1983, p. 116).

As such, the present study sought to provide participants with narrative evidence and exposure to the death penalty which attended heavily to issues of identity. The narratives decreased participants' support for the policy although the precise mechanisms through which this change occurred remain unclear. In contrast to our hypotheses, empathy and identification did not increase following the intervention. An argument can be made in favor of lessening the distance between the death penalty policy and the specific circumstances to which it pertains. In other words, the public discourse around the death penalty should focus more on the stories of those who have experienced a death sentence or execution personally rather than a more 'objective' discourse that

focuses on facts about the policy. The novel exposure of participants to an executioner provides future identity and attitude research a framework for emphasizing the harm caused to one's own group and self by stigmatizing and harming others. The in-depth narrative exposure to someone on death row offers a playbook for imagined intergroup contact involving attitudes toward inaccessible outgroups. Despite limited obvious impact on the average citizen's life, people care very deeply about the death penalty. One of the only qualms that can stir such deep-seated emotion is a personal, identity-rooted struggle.

Although the mechanism of action is yet unknown, these exploratory results are promising. In his affirming decision to abolish the death penalty, Justice Thurgood Marshall wrote, "[T]he question with which we must deal is not whether a substantial proportion of American citizens would today, if polled, opine that capital punishment is barbarously cruel, but whether they would find it to be so in the light of all information presently available" (*Furman v. Georgia*, 1972, para. 270). While Marshall, himself, articulated factual evidence to explain the injustice of the death penalty, he acknowledged the limitations of such information as a persuasive mechanism. Taking his thinking a few steps further, the Marshall Hypothesis was evidenced in the present study in the form of narrative information. Going forward, academic research can seek to understand what makes such interventions effective and consider their application toward other strongly held attitudes.

References

Aberson, C. L., & Haag, S. C. (2007). Contact, Perspective Taking, and Anxiety as Predictors of Stereotype Endorsement, Explicit Attitudes, and Implicit Attitudes. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, *10*(2), 179–201.

Acker, J. R., Bohm, R. M., & Lainer, C. S. (1998). *America's Experiment With Capital Punishment: Reflections on the Past, Present, and Future of the Ultimate Penal Sanction*. Carolina Academic Press.

Adachi, P. J. C., Hodson, G., & Hoffarth, M. R. (2015). Video game play and intergroup relations: Real world implications for prejudice and discrimination. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, *25*, 227–236.

Adachi, P. J. C., Hodson, G., Willoughby, T., Blank, C., & Ha, A. (2016). From outgroups to allied forces: Effect of intergroup cooperation in violent and nonviolent video games on boosting favorable outgroup attitudes. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, *145*(3), 259–265.

Adachi, P. J. C., Hodson, G., Willoughby, T., & Zanette, S. (2015). Brothers and sisters in arms: Intergroup cooperation in a violent shooter game can reduce intergroup bias. *Psychology of Violence*, *5*(4), 455–462.

Adler, N. E., Epel, E. S., Castellazzo, G., & Ickovics, J. R. (2000). Relationship of subjective and objective social status with psychological and physiological functioning: Preliminary data in healthy, White women. *Health Psychology*, *19*(6), 586–592.

Allen, M., Bruflat, R., Fucilla, R., Kramer, M., McKellips, S., Ryan, D. J., & Spiegelhoff, M. (2000). Testing the persuasiveness of evidence: Combining narrative and statistical forms. *Communication Research Reports*, *17*(4), 331–336.

Allport, G. W. (1954). *The Nature of Prejudice*. Addison-Wesley.

American Constitution Society. (2020, November).

American National Election Studies. (2020). National Science Foundation; the University of
Michigan; Stanford University. www.electionstudies.org

Amir, Y. (1969). Contact hypothesis in ethnic relations. *Psychological Bulletin*, *71*(5), 319–342.

Anastasio, P., Bachman, B., Gaertner, S., & Dovidio, J. (1997). Categorization, recategorization
and common ingroup identity. In R. Spears, P. J. Oakes, N. Ellemers, & S. A. Haslam,
The Social Psychology of Stereotyping and Group Life (pp. 236–256). Blackwell.

Anderson, R. B., & McMillion, P. Y. (1995). Effects of Similar and Diversified Modeling on
African American Women's Efficacy Expectations and Intentions to Perform Breast Self-
Examination. *Health Communication*, *7*(4), 327–343.

Applegate, B. K., Cullen, F. T., Fisher, B. S., & Ven, T. V. (2000). FORGIVENESS AND
FUNDAMENTALISM: RECONSIDERING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
CORRECTIONAL ATTITUDES AND RELIGION*. *Criminology*, *38*(3), 719–754.

Aron, A., & Aron, E. N. (1986). *Love and the expansion of self: Understanding attraction and
satisfaction*. Hemisphere Publishing Corp/Harper & Row Publishers.

Aron, A., Aron, E. N., & Smollan, D. (1992). Inclusion of Other in the Self Scale and the
structure of interpersonal closeness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *63*(4),
596–612.

Aron, A., Aron, E. N., Tudor, M., & Nelson, G. (1991). *Close relationships as including other in
the self*. *60*(2), 241–253.

Aronson, E. (1968). Dissonance theory: Progress and problems. In R. P. Abelson, E. Aronson, W. J. McGuire, T. M. Newcomb, M. J. Rosenberg, & P. H. Tannenbaum, *Theories of cognitive consistency: A sourcebook* (pp. 5–27). Rand McNally.

Atkins v. Virginia, 536 US 304 (2002).

Ault, A. (2019, July 31). The hidden victims of the death penalty: Correctional staff. *The Washington Post*.

Bandura, A. (1977). *Social Learning Theory*. Prentice Hall.

Banerjee, S. C., & Greene, K. (2012). Role of Transportation in the Persuasion Process: Cognitive and Affective Responses to Antidrug Narratives. *Journal of Health Communication*, *17*(5), 564–581.

Barlow, M. H. (1998). Race and the problem of crime in Time and Newsweek cover stories, 1946 to 1995. *Social Justice*, *25*, 149–183.

Bartlett, M. S. (1951). The Effect of Standardization on a χ^2 Approximation in Factor Analysis. *Biometrika*, *38*(3–4), 337–344.

Basil, D. Z., Ridgway, N. M., & Basil, M. D. (2008). Guilt and giving: A process model of empathy and efficacy. *Psychology and Marketing*, *25*(1), 1–23.

Batson, C. D., Polycarpou, M. P., Harmon-Jones, E., Imhoff, H. J., Mitchener, E. C., Bednar, L. L., Klein, T. R., & Highberger, L. (1997). Empathy and attitudes: Can feeling for a member of a stigmatized group improve feelings toward the group? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *72*(1), 105–118.

Batson v. Kentucky, 476 US 79 (1986).

Baumer, E. P., Messner, S. F., & Rosenfeld, R. (2003). Explaining Spatial Variation in Support for Capital Punishment: A Multilevel Analysis. *American Journal of Sociology*, *108*(4), 844–875.

Bedau, H. A. (1973). *The Case Against the Death Penalty*. American Civil Liberties Union.

Berscheid, E. (1966). Opinion change and communicator-communicatee similarity and dissimilarity. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *4*(6), 670–680.

Birtel, M. D., & Crisp, R. J. (2012). "Treating" Prejudice: An Exposure-Therapy Approach to Reducing Negative Reactions Toward Stigmatized Groups. *Psychological Science*, *23*(11), 1379–1386.

Blanca, M. J., Alarcón, R., & Arnau, J. (2017). Non-normal data: Is ANOVA still a valid option? *Psicothema*, *29.4*, 552–557.

Bobo, L. D., & Johnson, D. (2004). A Taste for Punishment: Black and White Americans' Views on the Death Penalty and the War on Drugs. *Du Bois Review*, *1*, 151–181.

Bohm, R. M. (1987). American death penalty attitudes: A critical examination of recent evidence. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, *14*, 380–396.

Bohm, R. M. (1989). The effects of classroom instruction and discussion on death penalty opinions: A teaching note. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *17*(2), 123–131.

Bohm, R. M. (1990). Death Penalty Opinions: A Classroom Experience and Public Commitment. *Sociological Inquiry*, *60*(3), 285–297.

Bohm, R. M., Clark, L. J., & Aveni, A. F. (1990). The influence of knowledge on reasons for death penalty opinions: An experimental test. *Justice Quarterly*, *7*(1), 175–188.

Bohm, R. M., Clark, L. J., & Aveni, A. F. (1991). Knowledge and Death Penalty Opinion: A Test of the Marshall Hypotheses. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, *28*(3), 360–387.

Bohm, R. M., & Vogel, B. L. (2004). More than ten years after: The long-term stability of informed death penalty opinions. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *32*(4), 307–327.

Bohm, R. M., & Vogel, R. E. (1991). EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES AND DEATH PENALTY OPINIONS: STIMULI THAT PRODUCE CHANGES. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, *2*(1), 69–80.

Bohm, R. M., & Vogel, R. E. (1994). A comparison of factors associated with uninformed and informed death penalty opinions. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *22*(2), 125–143.

Bohm, R. M., Vogel, R. E., & Maisto, A. A. (1993). Knowledge and death penalty opinion: A panel study. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *21*(1), 29–45.

Boots, D. P., Cochran, J. K., & Heide, K. M. (2003). Capital punishment preferences for special offender populations. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *31*(6), 553–565.

Boots, D. P., Mallicoat, S. L., & Wareham, J. (2018). Life or Death: Using a Real-World Case to Assess Student Death Penalty Opinion. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, *29*(1), 39–61.

Bowers, W. J., Pierce, G. L., & McDevitt, J. F. (1984). *Legal Homicide: Death as punishment in America, 1864-1982*. Northeastern University Press.

Bowers, W. J., & Vandiver, M. (1991a). New Yorkers Want an Alternative to the Death Penalty: Excutive Summary of a New York State Survey. *Boston: Criminal Justice Research Center, Northeastern University*.

Bowers, W. J., & Vandiver, M. (1991b). Nebraskans Want an Alternative to the Death Penalty: Excutive Summary of a Nebraska State Survey. *Boston: Criminal Justice Research Center, Northeastern University*.

Bowers, W. J., Vandiver, M., & Dugan, P. H. (1994). New look at public opinion on capital punishment: What citizens and legislators prefer. *American Journal of Criminal Law*, *22*(1), 77–150.

Braddock, K., & Price Dillard, J. (2016). Meta-analytic evidence for the persuasive effect of narratives on beliefs, attitudes, intentions, and behaviors. *Communication Monographs*, *83*(4), 446–467.

Braverman, J. (2008). Testimonials Versus Informational Persuasive Messages: The Moderating Effect of Delivery Mode and Personal Involvement. *Communication Research*, *35*(5), 666–694.

Britt, C. L. (1998). Race, Religion, and Support for the Death Penalty: A Research Note. *Justice Quarterly*, *15*(1).

Brock, T. C. (1965). Communicator-recipient similarity and decision change. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *1*(6), 650–654.

Brown, R., Vivian, J., & Hewstone, M. (1999). Changing attitudes through intergroup contact: The effects of group membership salience. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *29*(5–6), 741–764.

Burrows, C. N., & Blanton, H. (2016). Real-World Persuasion From Virtual-World Campaigns: How Transportation Into Virtual Worlds Moderates In-Game Influence. *Communication Research*, *43*(4), 542–570.

Cabana, D. A. (1998). *Death at midnight: The confession of an executioner*. Northeastern University Press.

Chiricos, T., Welch, K., & Gertz, M. (2004). Racial typification of crime and support for punitive measures. *Criminology*, *42*, 358–390.

Cialdini, R. B., Brown, S. L., Lewis, B. P., Luce, C., & Neuberg, S. L. (1997). Reinterpreting the empathy–altruism relationship: When one into one equals oneness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *73*(3), 481–494.

Clarke, A. W., Lambert, E., & Whitt, L. (2001). Executing the innocent: The next step in the marshall hypotheses. *New York University Review of Law & Social Change*, *26*(3), 309–346.

Cochran, J. K., & Chamlin, M. B. (2005). Can information change public opinion? Another test of the Marshall hypotheses. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *33*(6), 573–584.

Cochran, J. K., & Chamlin, M. B. (2006). The enduring racial divide in death penalty support. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *34*(1), 85–99.

Cohen, G. L., Aronson, J., & Steele, C. M. (2000). When Beliefs Yield to Evidence: Reducing Biased Evaluation by Affirming the Self. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *26*(9), 1151–1164.

Cohen, J. (2006). Audience identification with media characters. In J. Bryant & P. Vorderer (Eds.), *Psychology of entertainment* (pp. 183–198). Erlbaum.

Cohen, J., Tal-Or, N., & Mazor-Tregerman, M. (2015). The Tempering Effect of Transportation: Exploring the Effects of Transportation and Identification During Exposure to Controversial Two-Sided Narratives: The Tempering Effect of Transportation. *Journal of Communication*, *65*(2), 237–258.

Conger, J. A. (1998). The necessary art of persuasion. *Harvard Business Review*, *76*(3), 84–95.

Cook, S. W. (1985). Experimenting on social issues: The case of school desegregation. *American Psychologist*, *40*(4), 452–460.

Cox, A. K. (2013). Student Death Penalty Attitudes: Does New Information Matter? *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, *24*(4), 443–460.

Crampton v. Ohio, 402 US 183 (1971).

Cribari-Neto, F., & Lima, M. da G. A. (2014). New heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors for the linear regression model. *Brazilian Journal of Probability and Statistics*, *28*(1), 83–95.

Crime in the United States, 2011 (FBI's Uniform Crime Reports). (2012). United States Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Criminal Justice Fact Sheet. (2020). [Non-Profit]. *NAACP*.

Crisp, R. J., Stathi, S., Turner, R. N., & Husnu, S. (2009). Imagined Intergroup Contact: Theory, Paradigm and Practice: Imagined Intergroup Contact. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, *3*(1), 1–18.

Cuesta, U., Martínez, L., & Cuesta, V. (2017). Effectiveness of Narrative Persuasion on Facebook: Change of Attitude and Intention Towards HPV. *European Journal of Social Sciences Education and Research*, *11*(2), 100.

Davis, M. H. (1994). *Empathy: A social psychological approach*. Brown & Benchmark Publishers.

Davis, M. H., Conklin, L., Smith, A., & Luce, C. (1996). Effect of perspective taking on the cognitive representation of persons: A merging of self and other. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *70*(4), 713–726.

de Graaf, A., Hoeken, H., Sanders, J., & Beentjes, J. W. J. (2012). Identification as a Mechanism of Narrative Persuasion. *Communication Research*, *39*(6), 802–823.

Death Penalty Information Center. (2020). [Non-Profit]. https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/

Death Sentences and Executions 2016 (ACT 50/5740/2017; Amnesty International Global Report). (2017). Amnesty International Ltd.

Deutsch, M. (1949). A theory of cooperation and competition. *Huma Relations*, *2*, 129–151.

Dillon, P. A. (2015, March). *There Will Be No Stay* [Documentary].

Duckitt, J. (2001). A dual-process cognitive-motivational theory of ideology and prejudice. In M. P. Zanna, *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 33, pp. 41–113). Academic Press.

Durham, A. M., Elrod, H., & Kinkade, P. T. (1996). Public Support for the Death Penalty: Beyond Gallup. *Justice Quarterly*, *13*(4), 705–736.

Ellsworth, P. (1978). *Attitudes toward capital punishment: From application to theory*. SESP Symposium on Psychology and Law, Stanford University.

Ellsworth, P., & Ross, L. (1983). Public Opinion and Capital Punishment: A Close Examination of the Views of Abolitionists and Retentionists. *Crime & Delinquency*, *29*(1), 116–169.

Espinoza, R. K. E., & Willis-Esqueda, C. (2015). The influence of mitigation evidence, ethnicity, and SES on death penalty decisions by European American and Latino venire persons. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *21*(2), 288–299.

Falco, D. L., & Freiburger, T. L. (2011). Public Opinion and the Death Penalty: A Qualitative Approach. *The Qualitative Report*, *16*(3), 830–847.

Feinberg, M., & Willer, R. (2015). From Gulf to Bridge: When Do Moral Arguments Facilitate Political Influence? *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *41*(12), 1665–1681.

Festinger, L., & Carlsmith, J. M. (1959). Cognitive consequences of forced compliance. *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, *58*(2), 203–210.

Foglia, W. D., & Connell, N. M. (2019). Distrust and Empathy: Explaining the Lack of Support for Capital Punishment Among Minorities. *Criminal Justice Review*, *44*(2), 204–230.

Ford v. Wainwright, 477 US 399 (1986).

Former Florida Warden Speaks Out Against the Death Penalty. (2009). [Video]. Nifter Media.

Fox, J. A., Radelet, M. L., & Bonsteel, J. L. (1990). Death Penalty Opinion in the Post-Furman Years. *New York University Review of Law & Social Change*, *18*(2), 499–528.

Fuchs, H. (2020, November 25). New Rule Would Allow U.S. to Use More Methods for Executions. *The New York Times*.

Furman v. Georgia, 408 US 238 (1972).

Gaertner, S. L., Dovidio, J. F., Anastasio, P. A., Bachman, B. A., & Rust, M. C. (1993). The Common Ingroup Identity Model: Recategorization and the Reduction of Intergroup Bias. *European Review of Social Psychology*, *4*(1), 1–26.

Gaertner, S. L., Rust, M. C., Dovidio, J. F., Bachman, B. A., & Anastasio, P. A. (1994). The contact hypothesis: The role of a common ingroup identity on reducing intergroup bias. *Small Group Research*, *25*, 224–249.

Gallup (Death Penalty). (2019).

Getsy v. Mitchell, 495 F.2d 295 (6th Circuit Court of Appeals 2007).

Gibson, J. J. (1989). The structure of attitudinal tolerance in the United States. *British Journal of Political Science*, *19*, 5620570.

Gilliam, G. D., Jr., & Iyengar, S. (2000). Prime suspects: The impact of local television news on attitudes about crime and race. *American Journal of Political Science*, *44*, 560–573.

Givens, J. (2013, November 21). I was Virginia's executioner from 1982 to 1999. Any questions

    for me? *The Guardian*.

Goodman-Delahunty, J., Greene, E., & Hsiao, W. (1998). Construing motive in videotaped

    killings: The role of jurors' attitudes toward the death penalty. *Law and Human Behavior*,

    22(3), 257–271.

Graham, J., Haidt, J., & Nosek, B. A. (2009). Liberals and conservatives rely on different sets of

    moral foundations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *96*(5), 1029–1046.

Green, M. C. (2004). Transportation Into Narrative Worlds: The Role of Prior Knowledge and

    Perceived Realism. *Discourse Processes*, *38*(2), 247–266.

Green, M. C. (2006). Narratives and Cancer Communication. *Journal of Communication*,

    56(suppl_1), S163–S183.

Green, M. C., & Brock, T. C. (2000). The role of transportation in the persuasiveness of public

    narratives. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *79*(5), 701–721.

Green, M. C., & Clark, J. L. (2013). Transportation into narrative worlds: Implications for

    entertainment media influences on tobacco use: Narrative transportation and tobacco use.

    Addiction, *108*(3), 477–484.

Gregg v. Georgia, 428 US 153 (1976).

Hallman, A. (2017). *Storytelling and Activism within the Death Penalty Abolition Movement*

    [Master of Arts]. George Mason University.

Hamill, R., Wilson, T. D., & Nisbett, R. E. (1980). Insensitivity to sample bias: Generalizing

    from atypical cases. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *39*(4), 578–589.

Harmon-Jones, E., Harmon-Jones, C., Serra, R., & Gable, P. A. (2011). The Effect of Commitment on Relative Left Frontal Cortical Activity: Tests of the Action-Based Model of Dissonance. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *37*(3), 395–408.

Harrington, N. G. (2013). Introduction to the Special Issue: Communication Strategies to Reduce Health Disparities: Introduction. *Journal of Communication*, *63*(1), 1–7.

Harris, P. W. (1986). Over-simplification and error in public opinion surveys on capital punishment. *Justice Quarterly*, *3*, 429–455.

Hayes, A. F. (2012). *PROCESS: A versatile computational tool for observed variable mediation, moderation, and conditional process modeling*. http://www.afhayes.com/public/process2012.pdf

Hewstone, M., & Brown, R. (Eds.). (1986). *Contact and conflict in intergroup encounters*. Blackwell.

Hinyard, L. J., & Kreuter, M. W. (2007). Using Narrative Communication as a Tool for Health Behavior Change: A Conceptual, Theoretical, and Empirical Overview. *Health Education & Behavior*, *34*(5), 777–792.

Ho, A. K., Sidanius, J., Kteily, N., Sheehy-Skeffington, J., Pratto, F., Henkel, K. E., Foels, R., & Stewart, A. L. (2015). The nature of social dominance orientation: Theorizing and measuring preferences for intergroup inequality using the new SDO_7 scale. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *109*(6), 1003–1028.

Ho, A. K., Sidanius, J., Pratto, F., Levin, S., Thomsen, L., Kteily, N., & Sheehy-Skeffington, J. (2012). Social Dominance Orientation: Revisiting the Structure and Function of a Variable Predicting Social and Political Attitudes. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *38*(5), 583–606.

Hodson, G. (2011). Do Ideologically Intolerant People Benefit From Intergroup Contact? *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *20*(3), 154–159.

Hoeken, H., Kolthoff, M., & Sanders, J. (2016). Story Perspective and Character Similarity as Drivers of Identification and Narrative Persuasion: Perspective, Similarity, and Identification. *Human Communication Research*, *42*(2), 292–311.

Hoffman, M. L. (2000). *Empathy and Moral Development: Implications for Caring and Justice* (1st ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Husnu, S., & Crisp, R. J. (2015). Perspective-taking mediates the imagined contact effect. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *44*, 29–34.

Jackman, M. R., & Muha, M. J. (1984). Education and intergroup attitudes: Moral enlightenment, superficial democratic commitment, or ideological refinement? *American Sociological Review*, *49*, 751–769.

Jacobs, D., & Carmichael, J. T. (2002). The Political Sociology of the Death Penalty: A Pooled Time-Series Analysis. *American Sociological Review*, *67*(1), 109.

Jacobs, D., & Carmichael, J. T. (2004). Ideology, Social Threat, and the Death Sentence: Capital Sentences across Time and Space. *Social Forces*, *83*(1), 249–278.

Jacobs, D., Carmichael, J. T., & Kent, S. L. (2005). Vigilantism, Current Racial Threat, and Death Sentences. *American Sociological Review*, *70*(4), 656–677.

Johnson, J. D., Simmons, C. H., Jordav, A., Maclean, L., Taddei, J., Thomas, D., Dovidio, J. F., & Reed, W. (2002). Rodney King and O. J. Revisited: The Impact of Race and Defendant Empathy Induction on Judicial Decisions. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *32*(6), 1208–1223.

Johnston, L., & Hewstone, M. (1992). Cognitive models of stereotype change. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *28*(4), 360–386.

Jones, T., & Newburn, T. (2005). Comparative criminal justice policy-making in the United States and the United Kingdom: The case of private prisons. *British Journal of Criminology*, *45*, 58–80.

Jost, J. T., Glaser, J., Kruglanski, A. W., & Sulloway, F. J. (2003). Political Conservatism as Motivated Social Cognition. *Psychological Bulletin*, *129*(3), 339–375.

Jurow, G. L. (1971). New Data on the Effect of a "Death Qualified" Jury on the Guilt Determination Process. *Harvard Law Review*, *84*(3), 567–611.

Kahneman, D., & Tversky, A. (1973). On the psychology of prediction. *Psychological Review*, *80*(4), 237–251.

Kaiser, H. F. (1974). An index of factorial simplicity. *Psychometrika*, *39*(1), 31–36.

Kalichman, S. C., & Coley, B. (1995). Context framing to enhance HIV-antibody-testing messages targeted to African American women. *Health Psychology*, *14*(3), 247–254.

Kazoleas, D. C. (1993). A comparison of the persuasive effectiveness of qualitative versus quantitative evidence: A test of explanatory hypotheses. *Communication Quarterly*, *41*, 40–50.

Kearney, M., & Levine, P. (2014). *Media Influences on Social Outcomes: The Impact of MTV's 16 and Pregnant on Teen Childbearing* (No. w19795). National Bureau of Economic Research.

Kennedy, S. C., & Tripodi, S. J. (2015). The Death Penalty Attitudes of Social Work Students: Current and Future Opportunities. *Journal of Forensic Social Work*, *5*(1–3), 201–233.

Kopfman, J. E., Smith, S. W., Ah Yun, J. K., & Hodges, A. (1998). Affective and cognitive reactions to narrative versus statistical evidence organ donation messages. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, *26*(3), 279–300.

Krebs, D. L. (1991). Altruism and Egoism: A False Dichotomy? *Psychological Inquiry*, *2*(2), 137–139.

Kreps, G. L. (2006). Communication and Racial Inequities in Health Care. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *49*(6), 760–774.

Kteily, N. S., Ho, A. K., & Sidanius, J. (2012). Hierarchy in the mind: The predictive power of social dominance orientation across social contexts and domains. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *48*(2), 543–549.

Kteily, N. S., Hodson, G., Dhont, K., & Ho, A. K. (2019). Predisposed to prejudice but responsive to intergroup contact? Testing the unique benefits of intergroup contact across different types of individual differences. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, *22*(1), 3–25.

Lambert, E. G., Camp, S. D., Clarke, A., & Jiang, S. (2011). The Impact of Information on Death Penalty Support, Revisited. *Crime & Delinquency*, *57*(4), 572–599.

Lambert, E. G., & Clarke, A. (2001). The Impact of Information on an Individual's Support of the Death Penalty: A Partial Test of the Marshall Hypothesis among College Students. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, *12*(3), 215–234.

Layman, G. (1997). Religion and Political Behavior in the United States: The Impact of Beliefs, Affiliations, and Commitment From 1980 to 1994. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, *61*(2), 288–316.

Lee, G. M., Bohm, R. M., & Pazzani, L. M. (2014). "Knowledge and Death Penalty Opinion: The Marshall Hypotheses Revisited." *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, *39*(3), 642–659.

Lerner, M. J. (1982). The justice motive in human relations and the economic model of man. In V. Derlega & J. Grzelak, *Cooperation and helping behavior: Theories and research* (pp. 249–278). Academic Press.

Lord, C. G., Ross, L., & Lepper, M. R. (1979). Biased assimilation and attitude polarization: The effects of prior theories on subsequently considered evidence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *37*(11), 2098–2109.

Major, L. H., & Coleman, R. (2012). Source Credibility and Evidence Format: Examining the Effectiveness of HIV/AIDS Messages for Young African Americans. *Journal of Health Communication*, *17*(5), 515–531.

Marlowe, D., & Gergen, K. J. (1968). Personality and social interaction. In G. Lindzey & E. Aronson (Eds.), *Handbook of Social Psychology* (Vol. 3, pp. 590–665). Addison-Wesley.

McCann, S. J. H. (2008). Societal threat, authoritarianism, conservatism, and U.S. state death penalty sentencing (1977-2004). *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *94*(5), 913–923.

McClesky v. Kemp, 481 US 279 (1987).

McGarrell, E. F., & Sandys, M. (1996). The Misperception of Public Opinion Toward Capital Punishment: Examining the Spuriousness Explanation of Death Penalty Support. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *39*(4), 500–513.

McGautha v. California, 402 US 183 (1971).

Michel, C., & Cochran, J. K. (2011). The Effects of Information on Change in Death Penalty Support: Race- and Gender-Specific Extensions of the Marshall Hypotheses. *Journal of Ethnicity in Criminal Justice*, *9*(4), 291–313.

Miles, E., & Crisp, R. J. (2014). A meta-analytic test of the imagined contact hypothesis. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, *17*(1), 3–26.

Miller, N., & Brewer, M. B. (Eds.). (1984). Beyond the contact hypothesis: Theoretical perspectives on desegregation. In *Groups in contact: The psychology of desegregation* (pp. 281–302). Academic Press.

Miske, O., Schweitzer, N., & Horne, Z. (2019). *What information shapes and shifts people's attitudes about capital punishment?* [Preprint]. PsyArXiv. https://osf.io/z6cxd

Mitchell, M., & Sidanius, J. (1995). Social Hierarchy and the Death Penalty: A Social Dominance Perspective. *Political Psychology*, *16*(3).

Moon, M. M., Wright, J. P., Cullen, F. T., & Pealer, J. A. (2000). Putting kids to death: Specifying public support for juvenile capital punishment. *Justice Quarterly*, *17*(4), 663–684.

Moran, G., & Comfort, J. C. (1986). Neither "tentative" nor "fragmentary": Verdict preference of impaneled felony jurors as a function of attitude toward capital punishment. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *71*(1), 146–155.

Moyer-Gusé, E. (2008). Toward a Theory of Entertainment Persuasion: Explaining the Persuasive Effects of Entertainment-Education Messages. *Communication Theory*, *18*(3), 407–425.

Moyer-Gusé, E., Chung, A. H., & Jain, P. (2011). Identification With Characters and Discussion of Taboo Topics After Exposure to an Entertainment Narrative About Sexual Health. *Journal of Communication*, *61*(3), 387–406.

Moyer-Gusé, E., & Nabi, R. L. (2010). Explaining the Effects of Narrative in an Entertainment Television Program: Overcoming Resistance to Persuasion. *Human Communication Research*, *36*(1), 26–52.

Murphy, S. T., Frank, L. B., Moran, M. B., & Patnoe-Woodley, P. (2011). Involved, Transported, or Emotional? Exploring the Determinants of Change in Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behavior in Entertainment-Education. *Journal of Communication*, *61*(3), 407–431.

Nellis, A. (2016). *The Color of Justice: Racial and Ethnic Disparity in State Prisons*. The Sentencing Project.

Oberschall, A. (1973). *Social conflict and social movements*. Prentice-Hall.

Ogletree, C. J., & Sarat, A. (2006). *From Lynch Mobs to the Killing State: Race and the Death Penalty in America*. University Press.

O'Neil, K. M., Patry, M. W., & Penrod, S. D. (2004). Exploring the Effects of Attitudes Toward the Death Penalty on Capital Sentencing Verdicts. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, *10*(4), 443–470.

Paolini, S., Hewstone, M., Cairns, E., & Voci, A. (2004). Effects of Direct and Indirect Cross-Group Friendships on Judgments of Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland: The Mediating Role of an Anxiety-Reduction Mechanism. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *30*(6), 770–786.

Park, B., & Rothbart, M. (1982). Perception of out-group homogeneity and levels of social

    categorization: Memory for the subordinate attributes of in-group and out-group

    members. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *42*(6), 1051–1068.

Patenaude, A. L. (2001). "May god have mercy on your soul!" Exploring and teaching a course

    on the death penalty. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, *12*(2), 405–425.

Peer, E., Brandimarte, L., Samat, S., & Acquisiti, A. (2017). Beyond the Turk: Alternative plat-

    forms for crowdsourcing behavioral research. *Journal of Experimental Social*

    Psychology, *70*, 153–163.

Peffley, M., & Hurwitz, J. (2007). Persuasion and resistance: Race and the death penalty in

    America. *American Journal of Political Science*, *51*, 996–1012.

Peña, Y., & Sidanius, J. (2002). U.S. patriotism and ideologies of group dominance: A tale of

    asymmetry. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, *142*(6), 782–790.

Perdue, C. W., Dovidio, J. F., Gurtman, M. B., & Tyler, R. B. (1990). Us and them: Social

    categorization and the process of intergroup bias. *Journal of Personality and Social*

    Psychology, *59*(3), 475–486.

Perloff, R. M. (2017). *The dynamics of persuasion: Communication and attitudes in the 21st*

    century (Sixth edition). Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Pettigrew, T. F. (1998). INTERGROUP CONTACT THEORY. *Annual Review of Psychology*,

    49(1), 65–85.

Pettigrew, T. F. (2009). Secondary Transfer Effect of Contact: Do Intergroup Contact Effects

    Spread to Noncontacted Outgroups? *Social Psychology*, *40*(2), 55–65.

Pettigrew, T. F., & Tropp, L. R. (2006). A meta-analytic test of intergroup contact theory. *Journal*

    of Personality and Social Psychology, *90*(5), 751–783.

Pettigrew, T. F., & Tropp, L. R. (2008). How does intergroup contact reduce prejudice? Meta-analytic tests of three mediators. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *38*(6), 922–934.

Pickett, C., & Stowers, C. (2003). *Within these walls: Memoirs of a death house chaplain*. St. Martin's Press.

Piliavin, J., Dovidio, J. F., Gaertner, S. L., & Clark, R. D., III. (1981). *Emergency intervention*. Academic Press.

Prashaw, R. (2001). Restorative Justice: Lessons in Empathy and Connecting People. *Canadian Journal of Community Mental Health*, *20*(2), 17–21.

Pratto, F., Sidanius, J., Stallworth, L. M., & Malle, B. F. (1994). Social dominance orientation: A personality variable predicting social and political attitudes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *67*(4), 741–763.

Reynolds, R. A., & Reynolds, J. L. (2002). Evidence. In J. E. Dillard & M. Pfau, *The persuasion handbook: Developments in theory and practice* (pp. 427–444). Sage Publications.

Roper v. Simmons, 543 US 551 (2005).

Sandys, M. (1995). Attitudinal change among students in a capital punishment class: It may be possible. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, *20*(1), 37–55.

Sandys, M., & McGarrell, E. F. (1995). Attitudes Toward Capital Punishment: Preference for the Penalty or Mere Acceptance? *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, *32*(2), 191–213.

Sarat, A. (Ed.). (2001). *The killing state: Capital punishment in law, politics, and culture* (1. issued as pbk). Oxford University Press.

Sarat, A., & Vidmar, N. (1976). Public opinion, the death penalty, and the eighth amendment: Testing the marshall hypothesis. *Wisconsin Law Review, 1976*(1), 171–206.

Shen, L. (2010). On a Scale of State Empathy During Message Processing. *Western Journal of Communication*, *74*(5), 504–524.

Sherif, M., Harvey, O. J., White, B. J., Hood, W. R., & Sherif, C. W. (1961). *Intergroup conflict and cooperation: The Robbers Cave experiment* (Vol. 10). University Book Exchange.

Sherif, M., & Sherif, C. W. (1968). Group Formation. In D. L. Sills (Ed.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (Vol. 6). Macmillan and Free Press.

Sidanius, J., Mitchell, M., Haley, H., & Navarrete, C. D. (2006). Support for Harsh Criminal Sanctions and Criminal Justice Beliefs: A Social Dominance Perspective. *Social Justice Research*, *19*(4).

Sidanius, J., & Pratto, F. (1999). *Social Dominance*. Cambridge University Press.

Slater, M. D., & Rouner, D. (1996). Value-Affirmative and Value-Protective Processing of Alcohol Education Messages That Include Statistical Evidence or Anecdotes. *Communication Research*, *23*(2), 210–235.

Slater, M. D., & Rouner, D. (2002). Entertainment, Education and Elaboration Likelihood: Understanding the Processing of Narrative Persuasion. *Communication Theory*, *12*(2), 173–191.

Smith, T. W., Davern, M., Freese, J., & Morgan, S. (1972). General Social Surveys. *National Science Foundation. NORC, University of Chicago.*

Soss, J., Langbein, L., & Metelko, A. R. (2003). Why Do White Americans Support the Death Penalty? *The Journal of Politics*, *65*(2), 397–421.

Stack, S. (2003). Authoritarianism and Support for the Death Penalty: A Multivariate Analysis. *Sociological Focus*, *36*(4), 333–352.

Stotland, E., & Berkowitz, L. (1969). Exploratory Investigations of Empathy. In *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* (Vol. 4, pp. 271–313). Academic Press.

Sullivan, J. L., & Transue, J. E. (1999). The psychological underpinnings of democracy: A selective review of research on political tolerance, interpersonal trust, and social capital. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *50*, 625–650.

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W. G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*. Brooks-Cole.

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1986). The social identity theory of intergroup behaviour. In S. Worchel & G. Austin (Eds.), *Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (pp. 7–24). Nelson-Hall.

Tal-Or, N., & Cohen, J. (2010). Understanding audience involvement: Conceptualizing and manipulating identification and transportation. *Poetics*, *38*(4), 402–418.

Tarrant, M., Dazeley, S., & Cottom, T. (2009). Social categorization and empathy for outgroup members. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, *48*(3), 427–446.

Tausch, N., Hewstone, M., Kenworthy, J. B., Psaltis, C., Schmid, K., Popan, J. R., Cairns, E., & Hughes, J. (2010). Secondary transfer effects of intergroup contact: Alternative accounts and underlying processes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *99*(2), 282–302.

Thompson, S. F. (2019, December 3). I Know What It's Like to Carry Out Executions. *The Atlantic and the National Constitution Center*.

Trop v. Dulles, 356 U.S. 86 (1958).

Unnever, J. D., & Cullen, F. T. (2005). Executing the Innocent and Support for Capital Punishment: Implications for Public Policy. *Criminology & Public Policy*, *4*(1), 3–38.

Unnever, J. D., & Cullen, F. T. (2007a). Reassessing the Racial Divide in Support for Capital Punishment: The Continuing Significance of Race. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, *44*(1), 124–158.

Unnever, J. D., & Cullen, F. T. (2007b). The Racial Divide in Support for the Death Penalty: Does White Racism Matter? *Social Forces*, *85*(3), 1281–1301.

Unnever, J. D., & Cullen, F. T. (2009). Empathetic identification and punitiveness: A middle-range theory of individual differences. *Theoretical Criminology*, *13*(3), 283–312.

Unnever, J. D., & Cullen, F. T. (2010). Racial-Ethnic Intolerance and Support for Capital Punishment: A Cross-National Comparison. *Criminology*, *48*(3), 831–864.

Unnever, J. D., Cullen, F. T., & Fisher, B. S. (2005). EMPATHY AND PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR CAPITAL PUNISHMENT. *Journal of Crime and Justice*, *28*(1), 1–34.

Unnever, J. D., Cullen, F. T., & Jonson, C. L. (2008). Race, racism, and support for capital punishment. In M. Tonry (Ed.), *Crime and Justice: A Review of Research* (Vol. 37). University of Chicago Press.

U.S. v. Jackson, 390 U.S. 570 (1968).

van Laer, T., de Ruyter, K., Visconti, L. M., & Wetzels, M. (2014). The Extended Transportation-Imagery Model: A Meta-Analysis of the Antecedents and Consequences of Consumers' Narrative Transportation. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *40*(5), 797–817.

Van Oudenhoven, J. P., Groenewoud, J. T., & Hewstone, M. (1996). Cooperation, ethnic salience and generalisation of interethnic attitudes. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *26*, 649–661.

Van Stokkom, B. (2002). Moral emotions in restorative justice conferences: Managing shame, designing empathy. *Theoretical Criminology*, *6*(3), 339–360.

van Veen, V., Krug, M. K., Schooler, J. W., & Carter, C. S. (2009). Neural activity predicts attitude change in cognitive dissonance. *Nature Neuroscience*, *12*(11), 1469–1474.

Verkuyten, M., Thijs, J., & Bekhuis, H. (2010). Intergroup Contact and Ingroup Reappraisal: Examining the Deprovincialization Thesis. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *73*(4), 398–416.

Vidmar, N., & Dittenhoffer, T. (1981). Informed public opinion and death penalty attitudes. *Canadian Journal of Criminology*, *23*(1), 43–56.

Vinacke, W. E. (1964). Intra-Group Power Relations, Strategy, and Decisions in Inter-Triad Competition. *Sociometry*, *27*(1), 25.

Vogel, B. L., & Vogel, R. E. (2003). The age of death: Appraising public opinion of juvenile capital punishment. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *31*(2), 169–183.

Vollum, S., & Buffington-Vollum, J. (2010). An Examination of Social-Psychological Factors and Support for the Death Penalty: Attribution, Moral Disengagement, and the Value-Expressive Function of Attitudes. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, *35*(1–2), 15–36.

Vollum, S., Mallicoat, S., & Buffington-Vollum, J. (2009). Death Penalty Attitudes in an Increasingly Critical Climate: Value Expressive Support and Attitude Mutability. *The Southwest Journal of Criminal Justice*, *5*(3), 221–242.

Watson, G. (1947). *Action for Unity*. Harper.

Weber, R., & Crocker, J. (1983). Cognitive Processes in the Revision of Stereotypic Beliefs. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *45*, 961–977.

Weinstein, N. D. (1980). Unrealistic optimism about future life events. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *39*, 806–820.

Weinstein, N. D. (1993). Testing four competing theories of health-protective behavior. *Health Psychology*, *12*, 324–333.

Weisbuch, J. B. (1984). The Public Health Effects of the Death Penalty. *Journal of Public Health Policy*, *5*(3), 305.

Whitehead, J. T., & Blankenship, M. B. (2000). The Gender Gap in Capital Punishment Attitudes: An Analysis of Support and Opposition. *American Journal of Criminal Law*, *25*(1).

Whitmeyer, J. M. (2002). Elites and popular nationalism. *British Journal of Sociology*, *53*, 321–341.

Wilder, D. A. (1984). Intergroup contact: The typical member and the exception to the rule. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *20*, 177–194.

Williams, R. M. Jr. (1947). *The reduction of intergroup tensions*. Social Science Research Council.

Winer, B. J., Brown, D. R., & Michels, K. M. (1991). *Statistical principles in experimental design* (3rd ed.). McGraw-Hill.

Wispé, L. (1986). The distinction between sympathy and empathy: To call forth a concept, a word is needed. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *50*(2), 314–321.

Witherspoon v. Illinois, 391 U.S. 510 (1968).

Wright, H. O., Bohm, R. M., & Jamieson, K. M. (1995). A Comparison of uninformed and informed death penalty opinions: A replication and expansion. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, *20*(1), 57–87.

Wright, S. C., Aron, A., McLaughlin-Volpe, T., & Ropp, S. A. (1997). The extended contact effect: Knowledge of cross-group friendships and prejudice. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *73*(1), 73–90.

Yoo, J. H., Kreuter, M. W., Lai, C., & Fu, Q. (2014). Understanding Narrative Effects: The Role of Discrete Negative Emotions on Message Processing and Attitudes Among Low-Income African American Women. *Health Communication*, *29*(5), 494–504.

Young, R. L. (1992). Religious Orientation, Race and Support for the Death Penalty. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, *31*(1), 76–87.

Zebregs, S., van den Putte, B., Neijens, P., & de Graaf, A. (2015). The Differential Impact of Statistical and Narrative Evidence on Beliefs, Attitude, and Intention: A Meta-Analysis. *Health Communication*, *30*(3), 282–289.

Appendices

Appendix A: Prolific Academic Advertisement

We would like to learn more about how people experience narratives about various sectors of the American population. In this study, you will be asked to read one narrative – ranging in topics from the death penalty to sports – and then answer some questions about your experience.

This study will take about 10 minutes. In return for your participation, you will receive £.98 upon completion of the survey.

Your responses to this survey are completely anonymous. There are no right or wrong answers, so feel free to share your opinions.

Thank you for your interest and participation!

Appendix B: Informed Consent

Welcome!

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Prior to your decision, it is important for you to understand why this research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take your time and read the following information carefully. If there is anything that is not clear to you or if you would like to receive more information, please feel free to contact the researcher. Lastly, take time to decide whether you meet the proposed considerations. Thank you for reading this.

Purpose and procedure of the research

The purpose of this study is to consider the perspective of various sectors of the American population. If you choose to participate, you could be asked to consider a range of topics from the death penalty to sports. To participate you must be 18 years or older. If you decide to partake, you will be asked to answer pre-study questions, read a narrative and answer follow-up questions about your behaviours and yourself in relation to the narrative. You are also granted the right to stop your participation by simply exiting the internet browser and you may withdraw your data from this study up to one week after participation by contacting either researcher listed below. Their contact information is listed again on the debrief page at the end of the survey. Submitting an answer to some questions is required to complete the survey, however where possible questions offer the answer choice, "Prefer Not To Say." In the case of questions that require a written response, you will be asked but not required to answer. Your total expected time commitment for this study is approximately 15 minutes.

Benefit and Risk

There are no direct benefits to participating in this study, other than the specified compensation. There are no foreseeable risks of participating in this study. Some of the things you read might be distressing – about, for example, murder, rape or executions – that make you feel negative emotions, but no more than what you would normally encounter while reading the news or watching a documentary. This project has been reviewed by the Cambridge Psychology Research Ethics Committee.

Confidentiality

The results and data collected in this study may be shared with other researchers. Your responses will be kept private, and we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you in any report we might publish. Research records will be stored securely on password-protected computers. The research team will be the only party that will have access to your data.

GDPR statement

We will be using any personal information you give us in order to undertake this study and the University of Cambridge will act as the data controller for this purpose. The legal basis for using your personal information is to carry out a task (i.e. academic research) in the public interest. We will keep the information that you provide us with for as long as necessary for the study. Your rights to access, change or move your information are limited, as we need to manage your information in specific ways in order for the research to be reliable and accurate. If you withdraw from the study, we will keep the information about you that we have already obtained. To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personally identifiable information possible. For

further general information about the University of Cambridge's use of your personal data as a participant in a research study, please see https://www.information-compliance.admin.cam.ac.uk/data-protection/research-participant-data.

Ethical Review of the Study
This project has been reviewed by the Cambridge Psychology Research Ethics Committee.

Compensation
You will receive £.98 for participating in this study, paid directly to you via your Prolific ID.

Contact for further information
Kayla Pincus
kmp58@cam.ac.uk
Department of Psychology
University of Cambridge

Sander van der Linden
sv395@cam.ac.uk
Department of Psychology
University of Cambridge

I confirm that I understand the information that was presented and that: My participation is voluntary, and I may withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation in the project at any time, including removing any data given. My refusal will not result in any penalty. I am 18 years of age or older. By clicking 'Yes, I agree' I do not waive any legal rights or release the University of Cambridge, its agents or you from liability for negligence. If you wish to participate in this experiment, please click 'Yes, I agree' and continue to the next page.

o   Yes, I agree
o   No, I do not agree

Appendix C: Debrief

Thank you for having participated in our research, your contribution is greatly appreciated and your response has been recorded. The aim of this study is to explore death penalty attitudes. Depending on the condition to which you were randomly assigned, you were either presented with a narrative of someone who experienced the death penalty in some form or a narrative of a soccer player. One narrative told the life story of a man who was sentenced to death for murder and was eventually executed. Though identifying details were changed, this true story was chosen by researchers who considered many possibilities. Experts in the field were asked to choose cases that best exemplified an average case. Another narrative told the life story of a man who was tasked with being an executioner who eventually became disillusioned with the death penalty. This story combined the experiences of two executioners who worked together in the same prison, and identifying details were changed. The third narrative told the life story of a boy who played soccer and was designated the "control" condition. This narrative was meant to hold the place of a death penalty narrative to see how your answers compared to one another's. If the answers from all the groups have similar patterns, then the intervention was ineffective. If the answers in the death penalty conditions differ from the soccer condition, the intervention may have been effective.

The purpose of both death penalty-related conditions was for you to consider the perspective of the characters in the stories. If you are someone who supports the death penalty, we hypothesized that you would identify with the man who served as an executioner and would be moved by the change of heart he experienced. We hypothesized that you would empathize with the condemned man's story and when you discovered that he was executed despite unbiased decision-makers fighting on his behalf, we hypothesized that it would impact your support for the death penalty policy. From two opposite positions, these narratives represent victims of the policy and we wanted to know how either condition might impact your attitude toward the policy.

In the unlikely event that you feel distressed or have reason for complaint, please contact the supervisor who is overseeing this project, Dr. Sander van der Linden (sander.vanderlinden@psychol.cam.ac.uk). Lastly, if you wish to be informed about the results of this study after completion, do not hesitate to contact Kayla Pincus (kmp58@cam.ac.uk).

Appendix D: Executed Narrative

For a prior study, federal investigators were asked to recall death penalty cases that they worked on. The following case was randomly chosen. An attention check will be given. If you answer correctly, your survey will be included in the study.

Aaron Williams was given a death sentence for murder.

Aaron was born in the Midwest in 1975. His mother often left him in the care of her boyfriends' families in different cities across North America. When Aaron was 5 years old, rival drug dealers of one of her boyfriends attacked their house with automatic weapons. His mother handed him a shotgun and told him to shoot anyone. If Aaron misbehaved, he was punched. During one of the beatings that the boyfriends inflicted on his mother, she eventually got away and ran, naked and covered in blood, into Aaron's room where he called for help. She was hospitalized, but refused to press charges. During a later beating, she was raped in front of Aaron. When he was in elementary school, older kids coerced Aaron to do drugs and drink. His mom and her boyfriends did drugs too.

When Aaron was 12, his drug addicted stepfather brought him to anti-government militia meetings with automatic weapons. Aaron was ordered to wear camouflage and shoot at helicopters to stop the government from allegedly spying on them. Guns were so readily available in the home that Aaron – while playing with one – accidentally shot and killed his best friend. Aaron was convicted of negligent homicide and ordered to attend therapy. Aaron's therapist said he was highly remorseful and accepted complete responsibility. He was traumatized by the event and became physically ill around guns, angering his stepfather. He forced Aaron to continue handling guns and bought him a rifle for his birthday – the same gun Aaron would use in the future murder. The therapist recommended Aaron continue therapy, but his parents refused.

In the middle of his senior year, Aaron turned 18 and his parents kicked him out. George, Aaron's best friend, helped him find work at his dad's company. They made a pact that they would always protect each other, just as Aaron tried to protect his mother from her boyfriends. In order to earn enough money to survive, Aaron could no longer attend school. It was during this time that George introduced Aaron to Alex Reynolds. Reynolds was 35 years old and had an infamous reputation in town. Aaron tried to get George to stop associating with him, but George refused. In line with the pact they had made, Aaron agreed to stay with George. Reynolds manipulated the teens with drugs, money and threats. He boasted about his mob and police connections and he shot his own brother without repercussions. One boy wanted to get out of the group and Reynolds ordered him to be sodomized and tortured with a hot iron. Reynolds told the others that if they ever tried to leave the group, he would hurt them and their families.

Reynolds threatened to kill local business owner John Miller. Aaron and George told the police, but no action was taken. Reynolds suspected George of being an informant and talked about killing him, which verified to Aaron that the police worked for Reynolds. Reynolds, with a gun in his hand, ordered Aaron and George to kill John. Aaron believed that he would hurt them if

they did not follow his directions. Reynolds drove them to John's house and said that John would be the only one home, but if there were witnesses, they needed to be killed too. Wearing the same camouflage Aaron once wore to militia meetings with his stepfather, Aaron and George shot through the sliding glass door at John. His mother, Carolyn Miller, was also home and was killed. Aaron and George ran. Afterward, Aaron vomited and could not sleep. Worried about alerting Reynolds to his distress, he went back to work to appear normal. He decided not to tell his family out of fear that Reynolds would hurt them.

Aaron was charged with the murder of Mrs. Miller and the attempted murder of John. Aaron's case went to trial, where the state argued that he willingly acted as a killer-for-hire. He was convicted of capital murder and sentenced to death. During Reynolds' subsequent trial, the state reversed course, arguing that Reynolds puppeteered "his boys" into carrying out the crime. After he was found not guilty, Reynolds confessed in detail to having been the mastermind. Nevertheless, Aaron regretted taking Carolyn Miller's life and ruminated over ways he could have spared her. John wrote to Aaron in prison, forgiving him and acknowledging the influence Reynolds had over him, similar to that of his mother's boyfriends growing up. They bonded over their love for God. With a spotless prison record, Aaron earned his GED and was given residence on the honor pod.

The courts reviewing Aaron's case were troubled by the inconsistent outcomes of his and Reynolds' trials. Because it was not within their power to overturn the lower court's decision, the case proceeded to the clemency board in July, 2009. Aaron pleaded his case for a sentence of life in prison without the possibility of parole instead of a sentence of death. Aaron won: the board ruled five to two in his favor. One month later, the governor dismissed the board's recommendation, and the state of Ohio executed Aaron Williams by lethal injection.

98% of people executed in the United States are American citizens.

Appendix E: Executioner Narrative

For a prior study, federal investigators were asked to recall stories about corrections officers. The following case was randomly chosen. An attention check will be given. If you answer correctly, your survey will be included in the study.

Mark Bryant used to work as a corrections officer who conducted executions.

Mark was born in the South and raised with discipline in a family that taught the value of crime and punishment. He believed in God and went to church his whole life. He served in the United States Marine Corps in combat. When he returned, he was hired by the Department of Corrections and worked his way up the ranks. Mark applied for Major of the Rapid Response Team, which served on the front lines during high-risk inmate incidents. At the last stage of the interview, he was asked if he took issue with executions. He said no, but it was not clear until he was hired that the Rapid Response Team conducted executions.

The whole execution team was offered masks so that they could remain anonymous. In both lethal injection and electrocution, there were three buttons. Three executioners were assigned to press one button each, but only one button was active. This way, executioners were sheltered from knowing who administered the lethal dose or shock. One of Mark's coworkers who sometimes served as an executioner joked about selling the lethal injection vials online and hoped, aloud, that he had the active button. This coworker was later promoted.

In a dimly lit mid-size room, glass separated viewers from the execution chamber. The condemned inmates were walked up to the gurney or chair and Mark recalled that none of them fought being strapped down. One time, when an inmate expressed discomfort, an execution team member told him that it would all be okay in a couple of minutes. Mark was often the last person who the condemned man saw before he died.

For lethal injection, Mark administered three different drugs. With the first, he saw the inmate's chest rising and heart rate increasing on the monitor. With the second injection, the symptoms increased. With the third, the monitor eventually flatlined. For electrocutions, a green light appeared and all three executioners pressed their respective buttons, administering one jolt of electricity. The inmate's hands locked down, his head threw back and his face grimaced. The smell of burnt flesh was similar to a peanut. His veins popped out and he was fused to the chair, making it difficult to remove him. Mark said that he would never forget the face of death. There were different races of people that Mark executed, but he recalled them all turning a charcoal color. On each death certificate, the cause of death was ruled as 'homicide'.

Mark felt different after conducting his first execution. In order to avoid shedding tears and drawing attention to himself, he started drinking a few tablespoons of cough syrup beforehand. Mark and the others were prohibited from telling anyone that they were executioners, including their spouses. After an execution, one of the executioners that Mark worked with wrapped himself up in a blanket at his father's pond and shot himself in the head. At that point, Mark's mental condition deteriorated. Mark asked his superiors if he could be moved to a different job,

but was threatened with a series of demotions. They told him that it was his duty to kill, just as it would be if he needed to kill an inmate in self defense during a prison brawl. Mark disagreed. One of the remaining executioners turned to alcohol and quit.

Mark started to have fits of rage. His wife recognized when he was having an episode and stayed with her sister for the weekend out of fear. He was no longer able to both fulfill his duties as an executioner and as a man. He stopped fishing and hunting with his sons and, at work, he went from being upbeat to hostile. Mark says he considered taking a gun and shooting everyone in the execution room with him. His wife left him.

He prayed for forgiveness before and after he conducted executions, because the bible commands, "Thou shalt not kill." A man who professed his innocence until his death turned to Mark during his last words and said, "I forgive you." After years of executions, Mark reluctantly quit his job. He says that he likes when people who are supposed to be good people do good things. Mark worries that he will not make it into heaven. He has not been to church in 10 years and feels that God has left him.

Mark considers himself to be a serial killer and struggles to look in the mirror. He attempted suicide with a gun in his house. When he hears about executions today, he worries for the people involved. Mark is currently in intensive therapy and has been diagnosed with severe Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, anxiety and depression. He takes six medications. Every day, between 15 and 30 Americans kill themselves from PTSD, with an increased rate of 39% in corrections officers. Mark believes that, if it were not for his family, therapy and medication, he would have committed a mass shooting. He worries that he will relapse.

100% of executioners are American citizens.

Appendix F: Control Narrative

For a prior study, school nurses were asked to recall stories about their students. The following case was randomly chosen. An attention check will be given. If you answer correctly, your survey will be included in the study.

Josh was born on the West Coast in 1980. He was the youngest of three siblings and always tried to impress his family. Josh's parents were sedentary people who worked throughout the day and watched movies with their kids at night. Josh's father was a short man who was a bank teller. Whenever he finished a long day of work, he came home and told the family stories about interactions he had with different people who came into the bank. Josh always enjoyed listening to his father's work stories.

Josh's mother, Samantha, was the manager at a large retail store. She oversaw 50 employees and enjoyed her job very much. The workers at the store looked up to Samantha and tried to please her. She had gotten a job at the store as an employee when she was 20 years old and worked her way up to her supervisory position. There were other people who were up for the same promotion, but she worked longer hours and showed herself to be a leader over the years.

When he was very young, Josh played with blocks and trains, but quickly transitioned to games that involved competition. He started by racing his siblings on foot, but he always lost because his legs were shorter. He was briefly discouraged by his small stature in comparison to his older siblings, but his family was very supportive of whatever he wanted to do.

One night when Josh was 5 years old, his parents came home from work and turned on the TV. As they were flipping through the channels, Josh saw something that caught his eye. He asked his dad to turn back to that channel. For the rest of the night, Josh sat glued to the screen watching soccer for the first time. He said that he loved the players' ability to balance while using their feet – it seemed to him that they ran so fast, they looked like they were floating down the field.

From that point on, Josh loved everything about soccer. In school, while other kids played with toys, Josh tried to teach himself how to juggle a soccer ball. He continued to practice his running and within a few months, he started coming in second place when racing his siblings. Josh's parents signed him up for a little-league team called the Pandas. When he was 7 years old, his parents took him to his first professional soccer game. Josh was enthralled by the players, the fans, the food, the sound. He talked about the game almost nonstop for weeks. It was that night that he decided he would be a professional soccer player when he grew up.

By the time he got to middle school, Josh made the varsity team. He mostly started on the bench, but he stuck with it and, after a short time, was one of the team's best players. The coach favored Josh, but was hard on him. This tough love kept Josh in the gym and on the field to improve his endurance.

By the time Josh got to high school, he was already being scouted by colleges. The team made it the semi-finals and Josh was thrilled. The game began and Josh was in his position on offense. His team lost the ball almost immediately, but Josh saw an opportunity to help out the mid-field players to steal the ball back. Everyone in the stands cheered, but Josh was too focused to notice. He dribbled the ball, crossed over one of the players on defense and then the other. He scored in the first minute of the game and the team was off to a great start. When his teammates all rushed him to give him a hug, one of them stepped improperly and landed on Josh's ankle. He yelled and crumpled to the ground in pain. His coach and the medics rushed over to him to figure out what happened, but it was clear from the way Josh was cradling his ankle that he was severely injured. His teammates looked at him in concern as all the other players took a knee.

Josh was rushed to the hospital in an ambulance. His parents came in the ambulance with him and he cried. Through whimpers, he said he was more upset about leaving the team behind to play without him than he was about the pain he was in. They all tried not to look at his disfigured ankle.

The team won 3-2 and Josh was elated – they had made it to the finals. However, the injury he sustained was too severe to heal in time to play. When the doctor broke the news to him, Josh argued and put up a fight. The doctor told him that if he did not rest his ankle, it would never heal properly. Eventually, Josh accepted that the doctor was right and agreed to take care of himself. The team played their best in the finals, but were badly beaten 0-4. Josh was disappointed and upset, but he looked toward next season with excitement.

Appendix G: Death Penalty Support Scale, O'Neil et al. (2004)

1. I think the death penalty is necessary.
2. It is immoral for society to take a life regardless of the crime the individual has committed.*
3. No matter what crime a person has committed executing them is a cruel punishment.*
4. The death penalty should be used more often than it is.
5. The desire for revenge is a legitimate reason for favoring the death penalty.
6. Society has a right to get revenge when murder has been committed.
7. There are some murderers whose death would give me a sense of personal satisfaction.
8. The death penalty is the just way to compensate the victim's family for some murders.
9. The death penalty does not deter other murderers.*
10. The death penalty makes criminals think twice before committing murder.
11. Executing a person for premeditated murder discourages others from committing that crime in the future.
12. It is more cost efficient to sentence a murderer to death rather than to life imprisonment.
13. Executing a murderer is less expensive than keeping him in jail for the rest of his life.
14. Even when a murderer gets a sentence of life without parole, he usually gets out on parole.
15. There is no such thing as a sentence that truly means "life without parole."
    *Reverse scored items

Appendix H: State Empathy Scale, Shen (2010)

1. The character's emotions are genuine.
2. I experienced the same emotions as the character when reading this message.
3. I was in a similar emotional state as the character when reading this message.
4. I can feel the character's emotions.
5. I can see the character's point of view.
6. I recognize the character's situation.
7. I can understand what the character was going through in the message.
8. The character's reactions to the situation are understandable.
9. When reading the message, I was fully absorbed.
10. I can relate to what the character was going through in the message.
11. I can identify with the situation described in the message.
12. I can identify with the characters in the message.

Note: For each condition, the specific name of the character replaced the words "the character".

Appendix I: Short SDO7 Scale, Ho et al., (2015)

1. An ideal society requires some groups to be on top and others to be on the bottom.
2. Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups.
3. No one group should dominate in society.*
4. Groups at the bottom are just as deserving as groups at the top.*
5. Group equality should not be our primary goal.
6. It is unjust to try to make groups equal.
7. We should do what we can to equalize conditions for different groups.*
8. We should work to give all groups an equal chance to succeed.*
   *Reverse scored items

Appendix J: Interpersonal Reactivity Index, Trait Empathy, Davis (1980)

1. I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me.
2. I sometimes find it difficult to see things from the "other guy's" point of view.*
3. Sometimes I don't feel very sorry for other people when they are having problems.*
4. I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision.
5. When I see someone being taken advantage of, I feel kind of protective towards them.
6. I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective.
7. Other people's misfortunes do not usually disturb me a great deal.*
8. If I'm sure I'm right about something, I don't waste much time listening to other people's arguments.*
9. When I see someone being treated unfairly, I sometimes don't feel very much pity for them.*
10. I am often quite touched by things that I see happen.
11. I believe that there are two sides to every question and try to look at them both.
12. I would describe myself as a pretty soft-hearted person.
13. When I'm upset at someone, I usually try to "put myself in his shoes" for a while.
14. Before criticizing somebody, I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their place.
    *Reverse scored items

Appendix K: Racial Thermometer Scale, Smith et al., (1972)

1. In general, how warm or cool do you feel towards African Americans?
2. In general, how warm or cool do you feel towards Asian Americans?
3. In general, how warm or cool do you feel toward Latino Americans?

Appendix L: The MacArthur Socioeconomic Status Ladder, Adler et al. (2000)

At the top of the ladder are the people who are the best off, those who have the most money, most education, and best jobs. At the bottom are the people who are the worst off, those who have the least money, least education, worst jobs, or no job. Click on the rung that best represents where you think you stand on the ladder.

Appendix M: Histogram of Death Penalty Support

Mean = 3.46
Std. Dev. = 1.138
N = 1,003
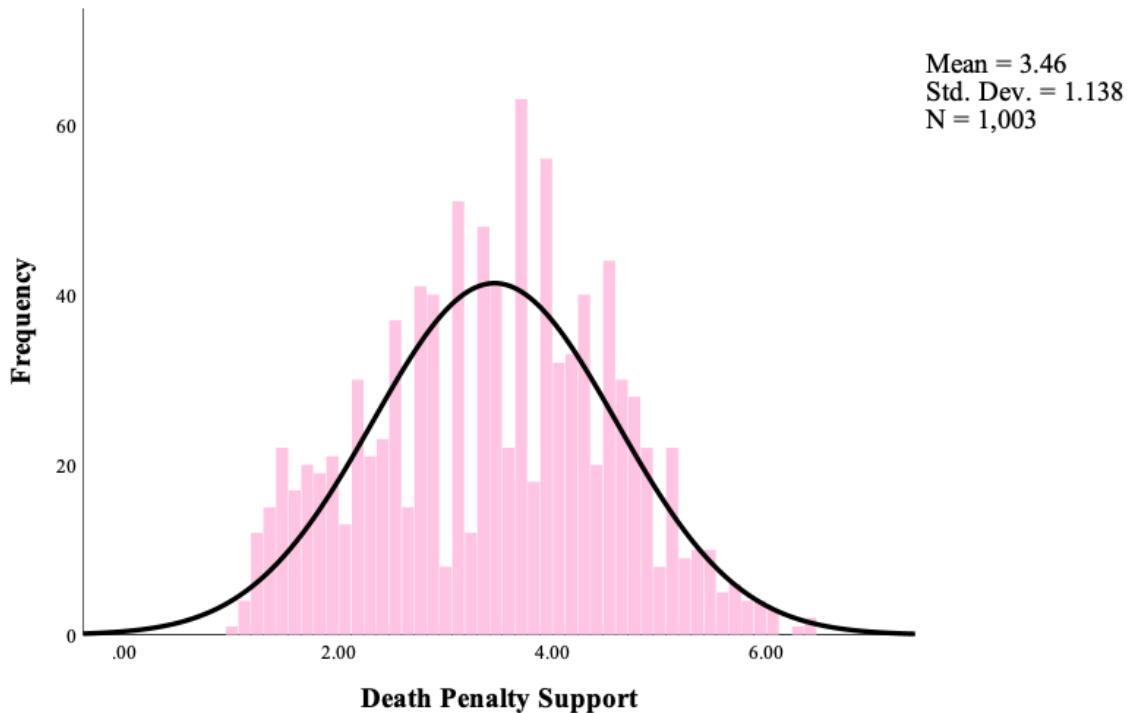
Appendix N: Histogram of Social Dominance Orientation

Mean = 2.76
Std. Dev. = 1.007
N = 1,003
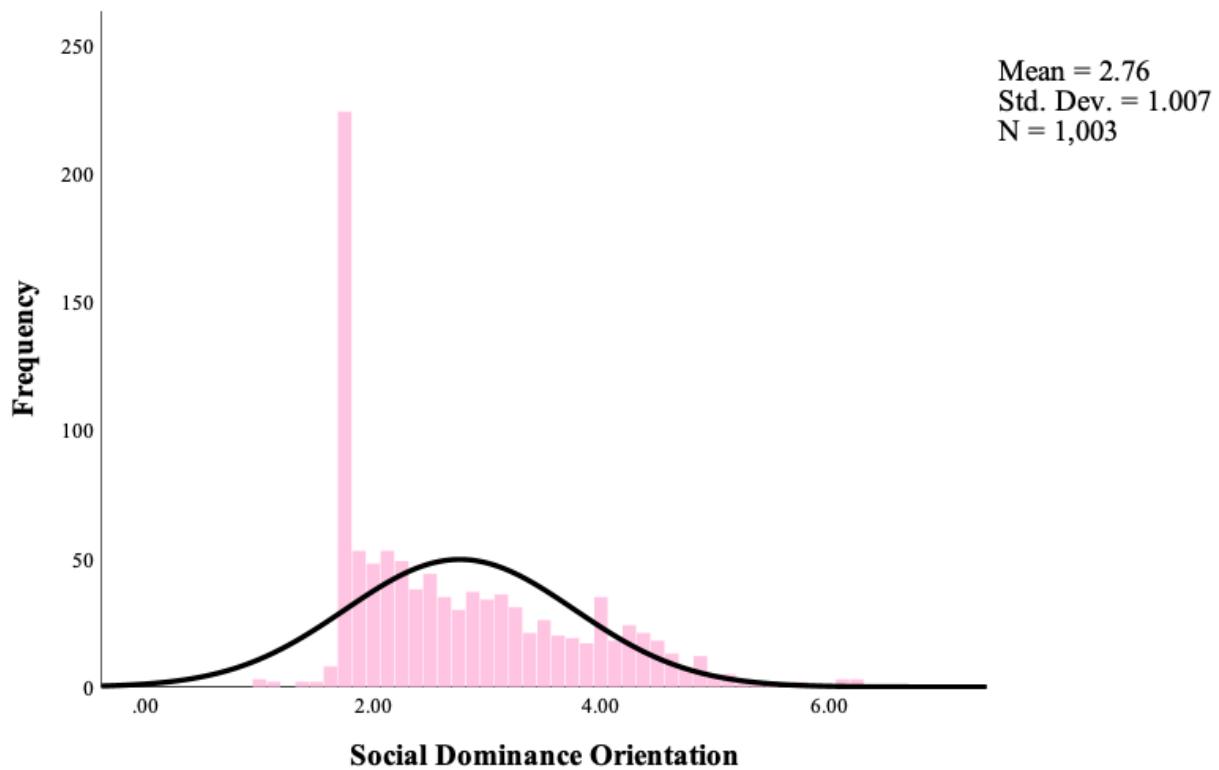
Appendix O: Histogram of Death Penalty Supporter Oneness

Mean = 2.81
Std. Dev. = 1.716
N = 1,003
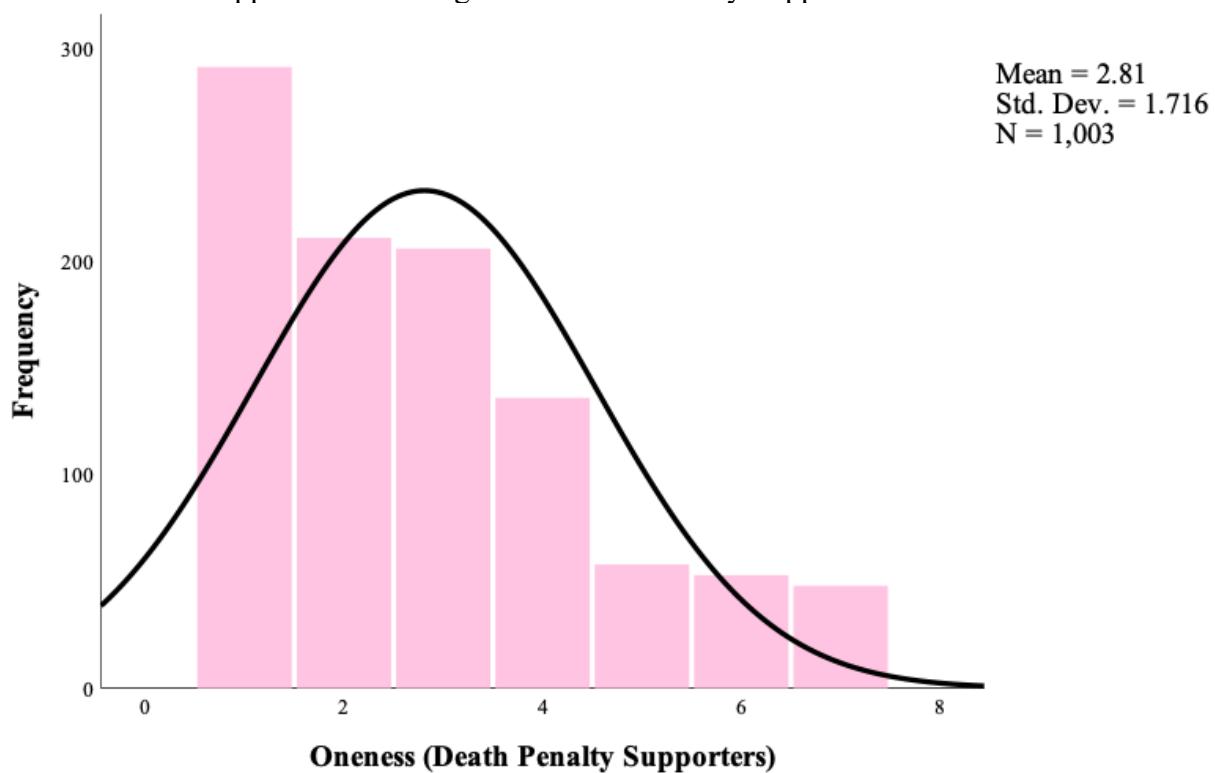
Appendix P: Factor Analysis, DPS Scale

	Component				
	1 (Deterrence)	2 (General)	3 (Revenge)	4 (Cost)	5 (LWOP)
The death penalty makes criminals think twice before committing murder.	.882				
Executing a person for premeditated murder discourages others from committing that crime in the future.	.829				
The death penalty does not deter other murderers.	.799				
It is immoral for society to take a life regardless of the crime the individual has committed.*		-.927			
No matter what crime a person has committed executing them is a cruel punishment.*		-.895			
I think the death penalty is necessary.		-.552			
The death penalty should be used more often than it is.		-.445	.366		
The desire for revenge is a legitimate reason for favoring the death penalty.			.839		
Society has a right to get revenge when murder has been committed.			.694		
The death penalty is the just way to compensate the victim's family for some murders.			.690		
There are some murderers whose death would give me a sense of personal satisfaction.			.614		

It is more cost efficient to sentence a murderer to death rather than to life imprisonment.	.959
Executing a murderer is less expensive than keeping him in jail for the rest of his life.	.949

There is no such thing as a sentence that truly means "life without parole".	.938
Even when a murderer gets a sentence of life without parole, he usually gets out on parole.	.872

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis; Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in 11 iterations.

*Reverse-scored items.