

PERCEPTION OF OTHERS AND THEIR ACTIONS

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WHAT IS THE EXTENT WHICH A PERSON CAN EMPATHIZE TO WITH A NEGATIVELY STIGMATIZED GROUP?

Can the ability to empathize with negatively stigmatized groups extend to terrorists?



CAN ATTITUDES TOWARDS TERRORISTS BE PLASTIC?

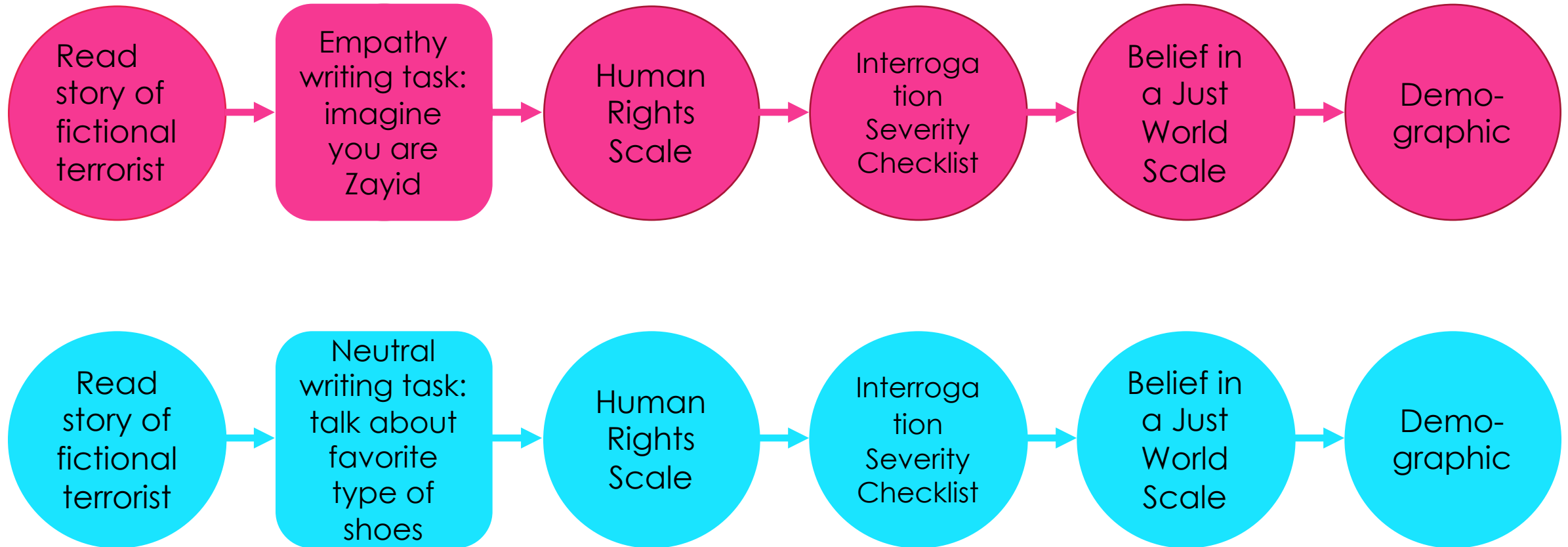
- Attitudes towards terrorists have become more positive following a semester long course on terrorism (Theriault, Krause & Young, 2017)
- People tend to use less severe interrogation techniques when the terrorist is a part of the in-group (Fischer, Oswald, & Seiler, 2013)
- People are less likely to condone human rights violations when the suspect does not seem deserving of punishment (Newheiser & DeMarco, 2018)
- It is possible create more positive regard for even perceived evil historical figures (Baumert, Hofmann, & Blum, 2008)

My Hypothesis:

Creating empathy for a terrorist will lead to the use of less severe interrogation technique recommendations, and less likelihood of approving of human rights violations. This effect will be moderated by political affiliation and belief in a just world.



Design Flow:



MEET ZAYID: FICTIONAL ISIS TERRORIST AND HIS HOMETOWN



HUMAN RIGHTS SCALE

Zayid's terrorist cell has recently been suspected in a terrorist attack in a major city. Officials have captured Zayid and brought him in for interrogation. There is no definitive evidence linking Zayid to the attack, however officials cannot account for his whereabouts that day.

- The FBI did not inform the suspect he had the right to remain silent.

Completely unacceptable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Completely acceptable

INTERROGATION SEVERITY CHECKLIST

- Asking questions
- Asking trick questions
- Continually repeating questions
- Verbally offending and abusing
- Threatening a long prison sentence
- Forcing the suspect to take his clothes off
- Food deprivation
- Burning with a cigarette
- Waterboarding

BELIEF IN A JUST WORLD

- Belief in a Just World for Others

I feel that people generally earn the rewards and punishments that they get in this world.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- Belief in a Just World for Self

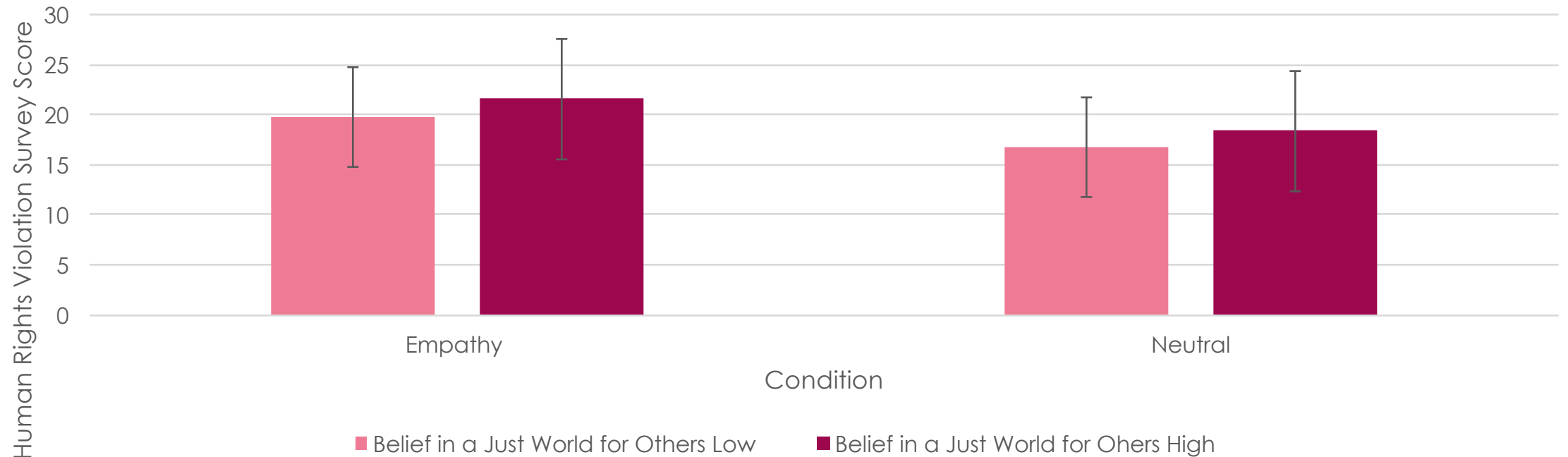
I feel that I generally earn the rewards and punishments that I get in this world.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

* Where 1 = completely disagree and 7 = completely agree

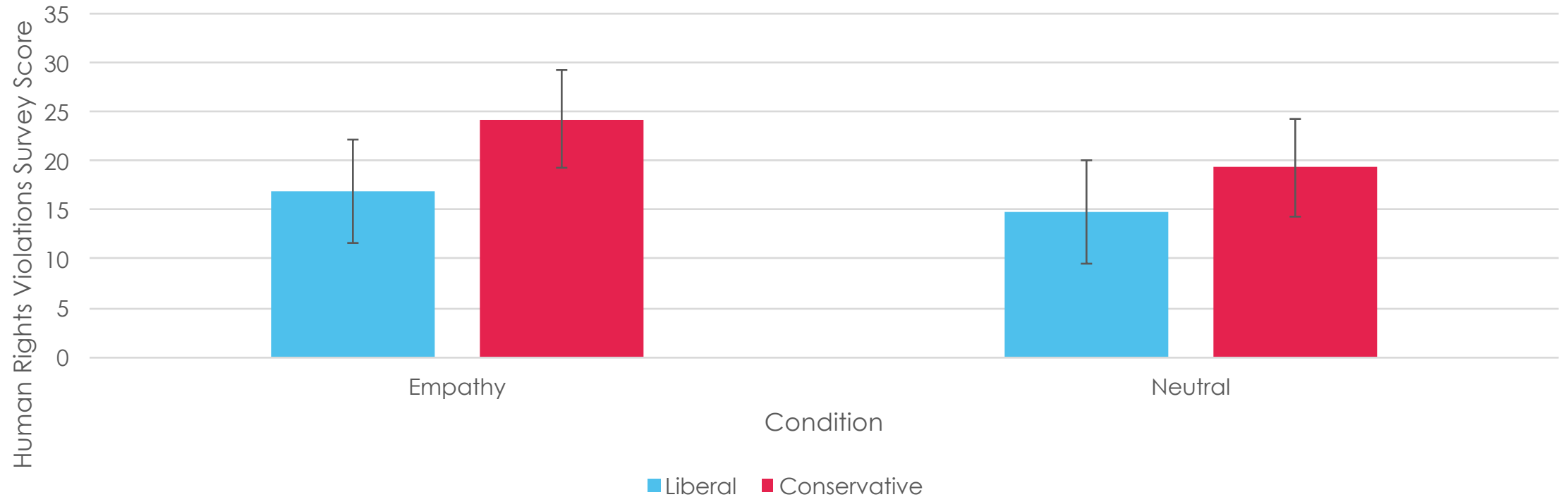
EFFECT OF BELIEF IN A JUST WORLD AND CONDITION ON APPROVAL OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

Condition and Belief in a Just World for Others effect on Human Rights Violations Score



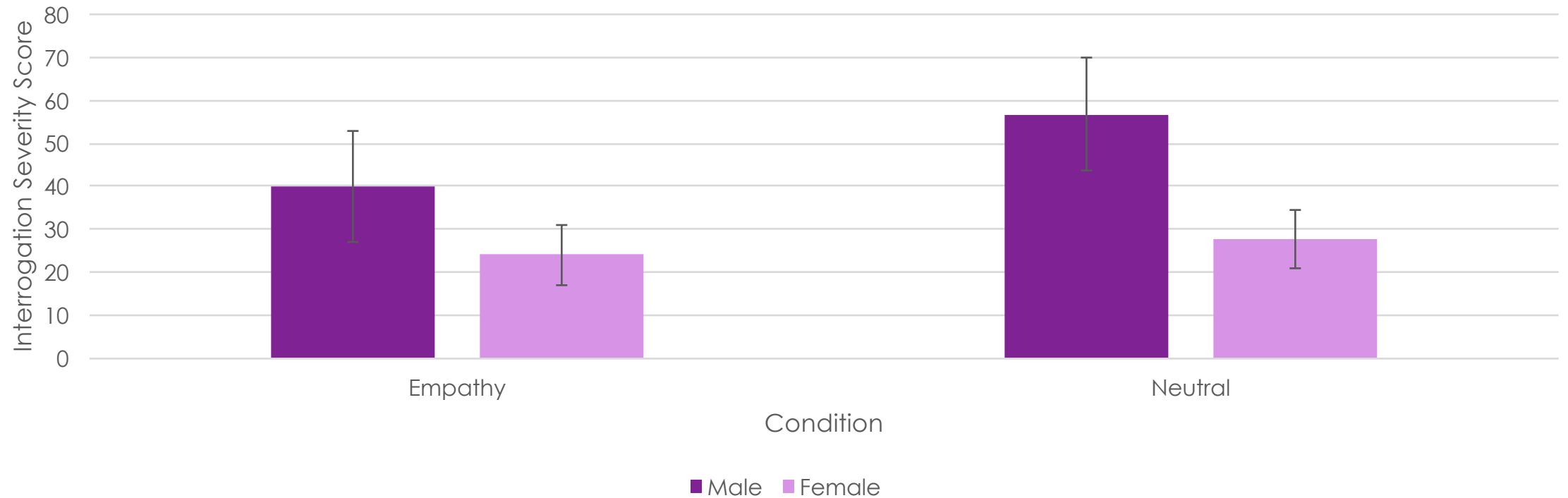
EFFECT OF CONDITION AND POLITICAL AFFILIATION ON APPROVAL OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

Condition and Political Affiliation on Human Rights Violations Score



EFFECT OF EMPATHY AND GENDER ON INTERROGATION SEVERITY SCORES

Effect of Gender and Condition on Use of Severe Interrogation Techniques





DISCUSSION

- Little support for hypothesis: only support political affiliation difference among participants
- Terrorist stigmas are more resistant to change compared to other negatively stigmatized groups
- Gender differences are consistent with past aggression studies

DISCUSSION CONT.

- Future areas should include a homegrown terrorist condition, larger age demographic, and a longer perspective taking task
- Limitations include similar geographic participant pool, predominantly female participant pool (81.25% female), convenience sample of predominantly college students

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QUESTIONS?

