**Appendix 1:** **Assimilation and contrast in Lord, Ross & Lepper (1979)**

In this paper Lord et al. (1979) provided subjects supporting and opposing capital punishment with the results of two purported studies, one seemingly confirming and one seemingly disconfirming the deterrent efficacy of the death penalty (see also Dandekar, Goel & Lee, 2013 and Munro & Ditto, 1997, for examples of follow up research). Table S1 reproduces Lord et al.'s (1979) central finding by providing the mean rating of how convincing the two studies were as evidence of the deterrent efficacy of capital punishment (Lord et al., 1979, Table 1, p. 2102. The other results that Lord et al. report in their paper are consistent with what we reproduce in our Table 1). Since in the context of Lord et al.’s (1979) paper assimilation could be viewed as represented by the evaluation of how convincing is the message supporting one's opinion and contrast by the evaluation of how *un*convincing is the message opposing one's opinion, it is clear from Table S1 that contrast is stronger than assimilation: the absolute value of the unconvincingness of the con message is larger than the convincingness of the pro message. Thus, although Lord et al. (1979) were not aiming to study the difference between assimilation and contrast, their results clearly indicate that contrast is stronger than assimilation.

**Table S1**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Message | How convincing is the message? | | |
| Proponents |  | Opponents |
| Pro capital punishment | 1.4 |  | -2.1 |
| Against capital punishment | -1.8 |  | 0.1 |

Note: From Lord, Ross & Lepper (1979, p. 2102). Positive numbers indicate a positive evaluation of the study's convincingness. Negative numbers indicate a negative evaluation of the study's convincingness.

**Appendix 2: Graphical representation of assimilation and contrast for individual years**

**Figure S1: The relationships between self-placement and the average placement of the Democratic (top) and Republican (bottom) candidates in 2020 (Trump vs. Biden)**

**Figure S2: The relationships between self-placement and the average placement of the Democratic (top) and Republican (bottom) candidates in 2016 (Trump vs. Clinton)**

**Figure S3: The relationships between self-placement and the average placement of the Democratic (top) and Republican (bottom) candidates in 2012 (Romney vs. Obama)**

**Figure S4: The relationships between self-placement and the average placement of the Democratic (top) and Republican (bottom) candidates in 2008 (McCain vs. Obama)**

**Figure S5: The relationships between self-placement and the average placement of the Democratic (top) and Republican (bottom) candidates in 2004 (Bush vs. Kerry)**

**Figure S6: The relationships between self-placement and the average placement of the Democratic (top) and Republican (bottom) candidates in 2000 (Bush vs. Gore)**

**Figure S7: The relationships between self-placement and the average placement of the Democratic (top) and Republican (bottom) candidates in 1996 (Dole vs. Clinton)**

**Figure S8: The relationships between self-placement and the average placement of the Democratic (top) and Republican (bottom) candidates in 1992 (Bush vs. Clinton)**

**Figure S9: The relationships between self-placement and the average placement of the Democratic (bottom) and Republican (bottom) candidates in 1988 (Bush vs. Dukakis)**

**Figure S10: The relationships between self-placement and the average placement of the Democratic (top) and Republican (bottom) candidates in 1984 (Reagan vs Mondale)**

**Figure S11: The relationships between self-placement and the average placement of the Democratic (top) and Republican (bottom) candidates in 1980 (Reagan vs Carter)**

**Figure S12: The relationships between self-placement and the average placement of the Democratic (top) and Republican (bottom) candidates in 1976 (Ford vs. Carter)**

**Figure S13: The relationships between self-placement and the average placement of the Democratic (top) and Republican (bottom) candidates in 1972 (Nixon vs McGovern)**

**Appendix 2: Assimilation and contrast correlations by individual years**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Election**  **year** | **Liberals** | | |  | **Conservatives** | | |  | **Z test for the difference**  **Between assimilation**  **and contrast** | |
| **n** | **Democraic**  **candidate**  **(assimilation)** | **Republican**  **candidate**  **(contrast)** |  | **n** | **Republican**  **candidate**  **(assimilation)** | **Democraic**  **Candidate**  **(contrast)** |  | **Democraic**  **candidate** | **Republican**  **Candidate** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |  | 5 | 6 | 7 |  | 8 | 9 |
| 1972 | 873 | 0.074 | -0.197 |  | 1073 | 0.145 | -0.186 |  | 2.50\* | 1.17 |
| 1976 | 810 | 0.139 | -0.173 |  | 1012 | 0.068 | -0.173 |  | 0.74 | 2.26\* |
| 1980 | 510 | 0.075 | -0.257 |  | 677 | 0.152 | -0.146 |  | 1.22 | 1.87 |
| 1984 | 869 | 0.09 | -0.138 |  | 1085 | 0.187 | -0.177 |  | 1.94 | -1.10 |
| 1988 | 663 | 0.092 | -0.065 |  | 941 | 0.106 | -0.246 |  | 3.13\*\* | -0.81 |
| 1992 | 982 | 0.118 | -0.197 |  | 1198 | 0.027 | -0.182 |  | 1.52 | 4.00\*\*\* |
| 1996 | 706 | 0.182 | -0.215 |  | 943 | 0.098 | -0.255 |  | 1.54 | 2.41\* |
| 2000 | 364 | -0.024 | -0.167 |  | 463 | 0.067 | -0.215 |  | 3.45\*\*\* | 1.44 |
| 2004 | 499 | 0.148 | -0.307 |  | 638 | 0.153 | -0.308 |  | 2.82\*\* | 2.72\*\* |
| 2008 | 943 | 0.277 | -0.311 |  | 1077 | 0.072 | -0.202 |  | -1.78 | 5.32\*\*\* |
| 2012 | 3218 | 0.128 | -0.293 |  | 3745 | 0.075 | -0.318 |  | 8.35\*\*\* | 9.43\*\*\* |
| 2016 | 1774 | 0.036 | -0.343 |  | 2004 | 0.166 | -0.41 |  | 12.25\*\*\* | 5.82\*\*\* |
| 2020 | 4219 | .033 | -.231 |  | 4504 | .215 | -.413 |  | 9.32\*\* | 0.78 |

Note: Positive numbers represent assimilation; negative numbers represent contrast. Positive Z scores indicate that contrast is stronger than assimilation. \*\*\*: p<.001, \*\*: p<.01, \*: p<.05