

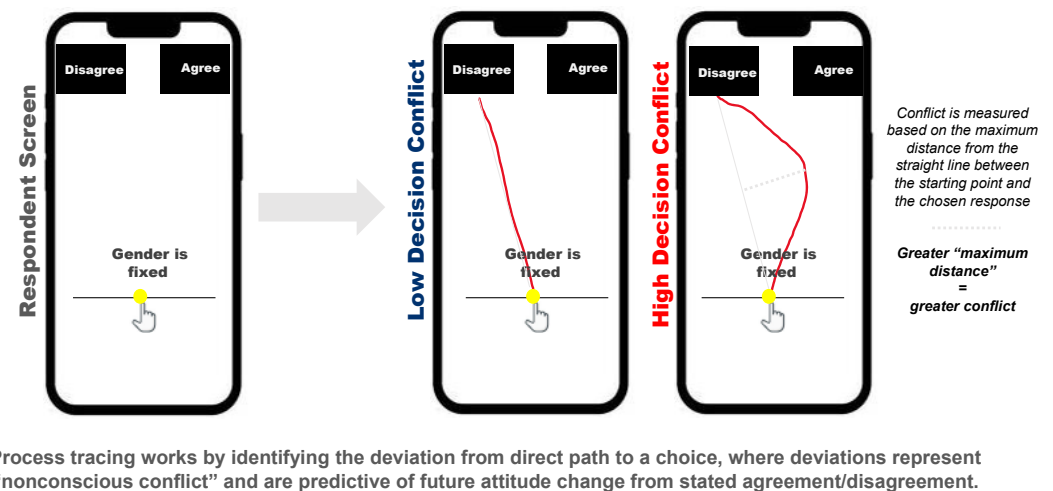
Using Behavioral Science to Uncover the Nonconscious Building Blocks of Attitude Change

The research examines if a perspective-taking intervention can shift attitudes towards gender fluidity. Gender fluidity is a socially and politically charged topic resistant to change in explicit attitudes. The study by Ipsos aims to understand if inducing empathy by considering the thoughts and meta-cognitions of trans individuals can lead to less conviction for those opposed and greater acceptance of gender fluidity. The research objectives focus on measuring cognitive conflict and the role of nonconscious motivations in shaping attitudes towards gender fluidity.

Approach

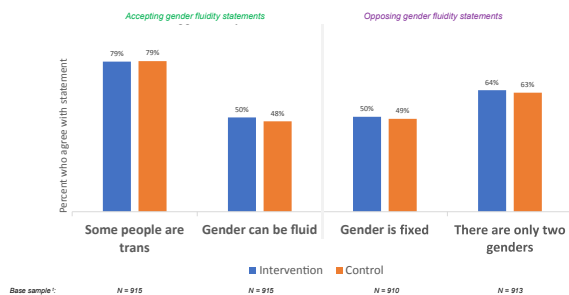
The approach involved a mobile survey exposing respondents to either a perspective-taking intervention or a control condition. The intervention exposed respondents to statements reflecting meta-cognitive thoughts of trans individuals to encourage deeper empathy.

How Mobile process tracing works



We measure attitude conviction from the lens of cognitive conflict, which we have identified as a key precursor of attitude change. One interesting approach we have found provides insight into cognitive conflict by tracing the path that people make when choosing between two options (process tracing). This is a variation of mouse tracking that has

been shown to identify types of conflict, like self-control, in lab settings. At Ipsos, we have developed a smartphone-based solution where people can trace path to a choice provides insight into how conflicted people are between options, which is indicative of who is likely to change attitudes.



Additionally, self-report measures were used to assess nonconscious motivations for predictability and structure in life, known as the Need for Structure (NFS). A nationally representative sample of 1000 U.S. respondents completed the survey, with the intervention's effectiveness gauged through deviations in finger movement paths, indicating cognitive conflict.

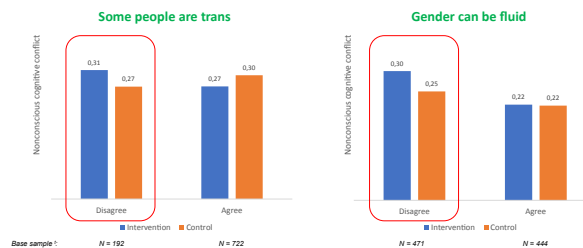
Results

The results showed that while the intervention had little impact on explicit agreement with statements about gender fluidity, it affected nonconscious cognitive conflict.

For those opposed to gender fluidity, the intervention led to greater conflict in their beliefs, suggesting less conviction in their stance. Specifically, those who disagree with these two statements feel less conviction (i.e., greater conflict) in their disagreement after undergoing the perspective-taking intervention.

Conversely, those accepting gender fluidity showed less conflict, indicating stronger conviction post-intervention. Those who disagree with these two statements feel more conviction (i.e., less conflict) in

When statements **ACCEPT** Gender fluidity:



their disagreement after undergoing the perspective-taking intervention.

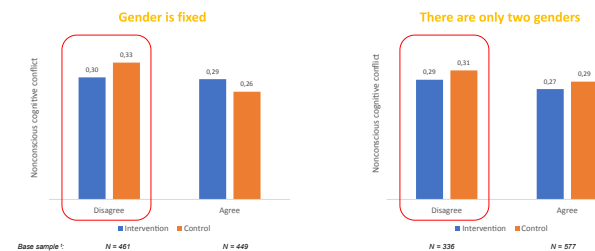
Political ideology strongly predicted explicit attitudes, with conservatives more likely to agree with fixed gender concepts and liberals with fluidity. High NFS individuals exhibited reduced conflict, indicating stronger conviction in their beliefs regardless of content, suggesting that nonconscious motivations significantly influence the rigidity of attitudes towards gender fluidity.

Conclusions

The study concludes that perspective-taking interventions can increase cognitive conflict in individuals with rigid attitudes towards gender fluidity, enhancing empathy but not immediately changing explicit beliefs. This intervention strategy might be the starting point for deeper, more enduring attitude change. Additionally, nonconscious motivations like NFS play a critical role in conviction strength, affecting openness to alternative perspectives.

Remarkably, process tracing allowed us to uncover insight that explicit did not show; it brought

When statements **OPPOSE** gender fluidity:



additional insights beyond those from the explicit responses. Process tracing can help organizations detect cognitive conflict beyond explicit response, thus unveiling additional insights about strategies to prompt behavioral change.

Final Thoughts

This research highlights the complexity of attitude change, particularly for contentious social issues. It underscores the potential for interventions at the nonconscious level to begin the process of attitude transformation. The findings also emphasize the importance of considering individual differences in nonconscious motivations when designing strategies for influencing beliefs and behaviors.

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