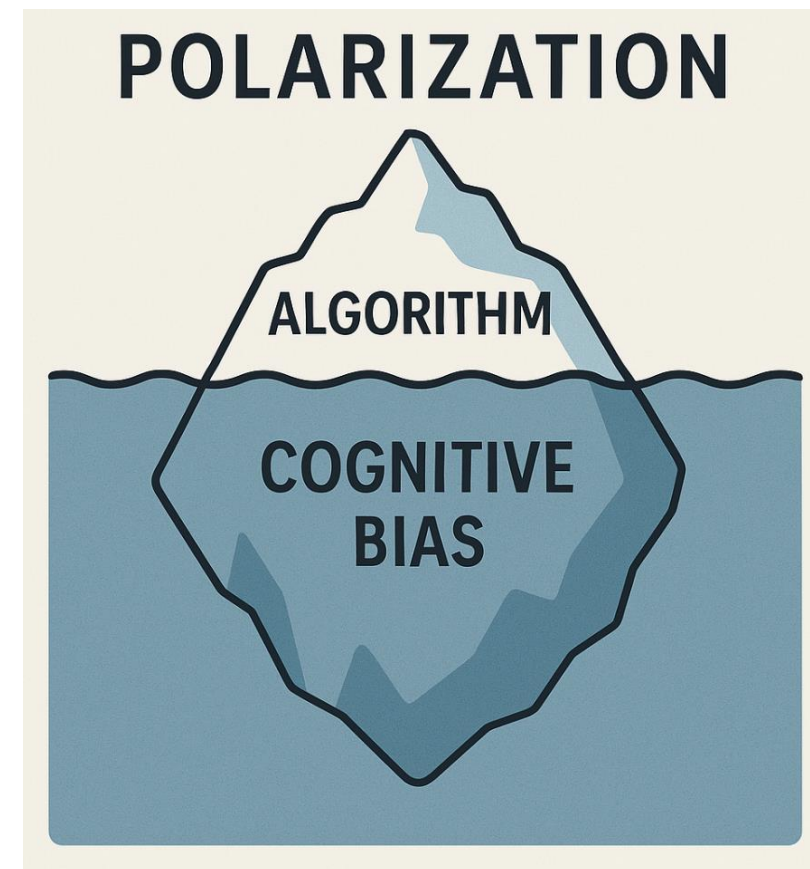


Intergroup Cognitive Biases Predispose Opinion Polarization

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SUMMARY

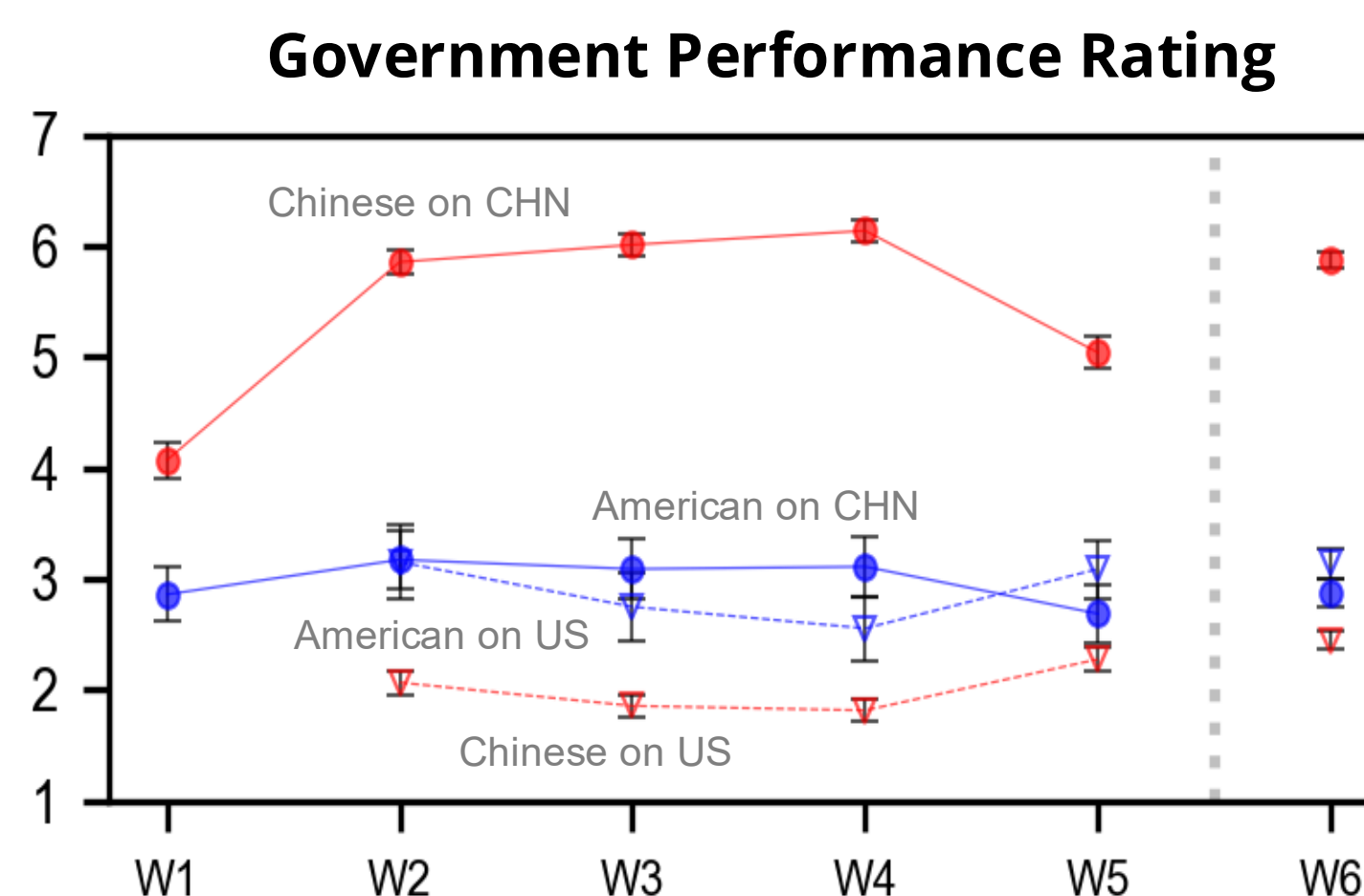


Although recommender algorithms are often blamed for opinion polarization, our findings suggest that humans' intergroup cognitive biases might actually be the main culprit.

Through three studies, we show that :

- Intergroup bias can manifest itself in **biased attention to** and **biased assimilation of** ingroup opinions.
- Micro-level bias-driven reinforcement of shared views cumulatively produces macro-level opinion polarization.

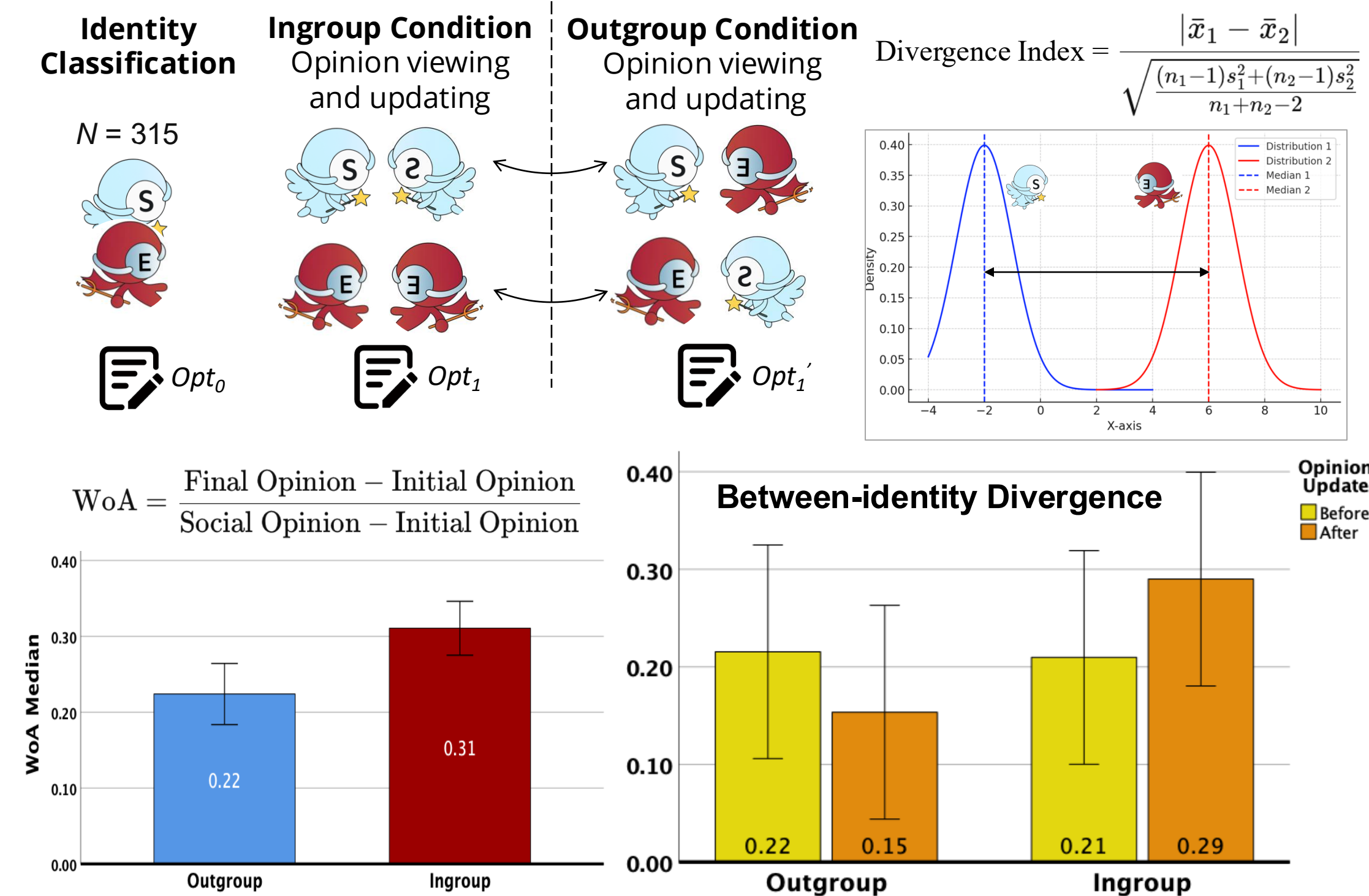
STUDY 1: A Cross-cultural Longitudinal Study



In each wave, each government was rated higher by their own people than the other.

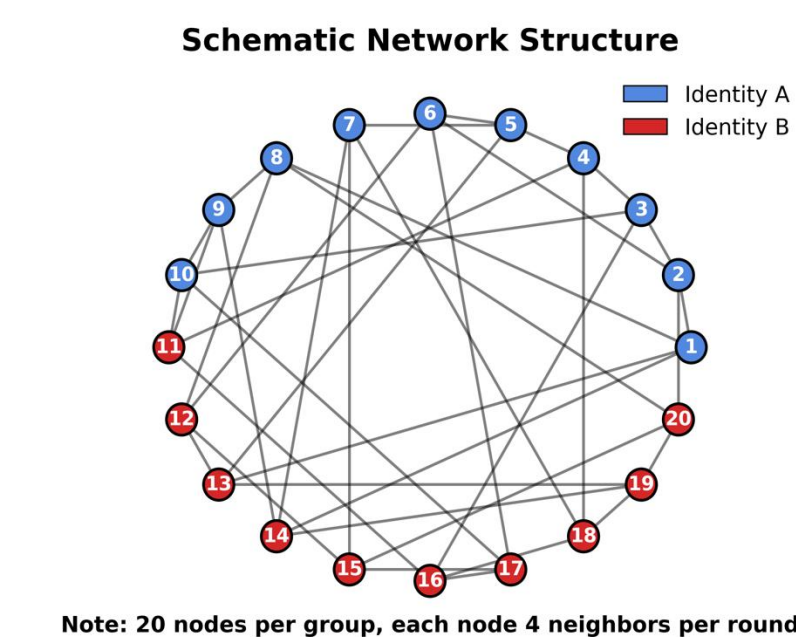
Intergroup bias was mutual and persistent.

STUDY 2: A Social Opinion Experiment



Biased assimilation of ingroup opinions resulted in increased intergroup divergence.

STUDY 3: A Social Network Experiment



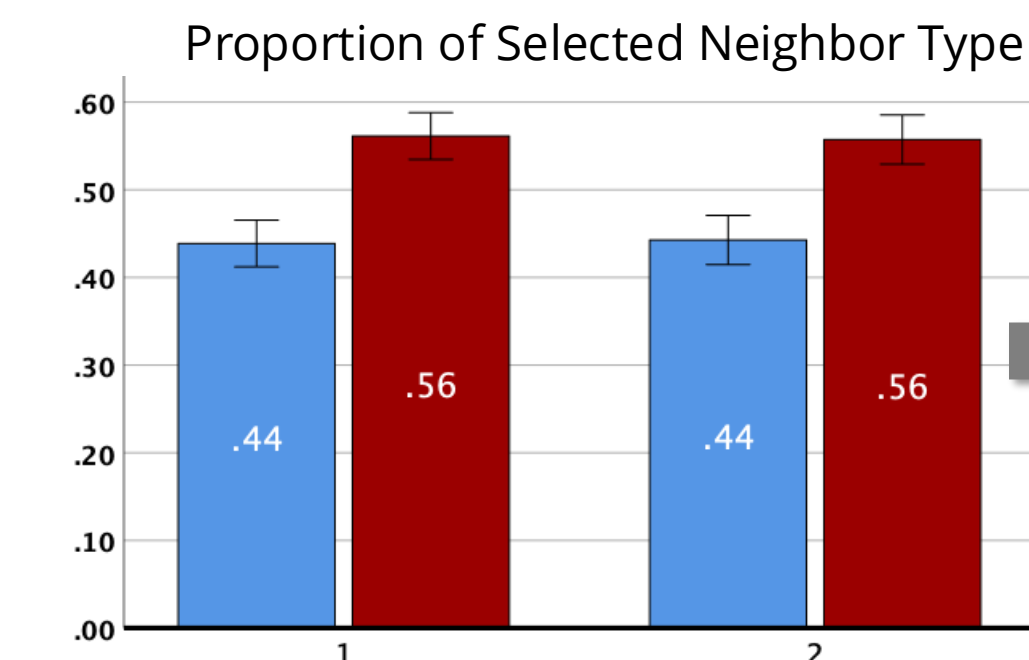
Click to choose neighbors

Network with ≈ 20 participants per group, six groups in total.

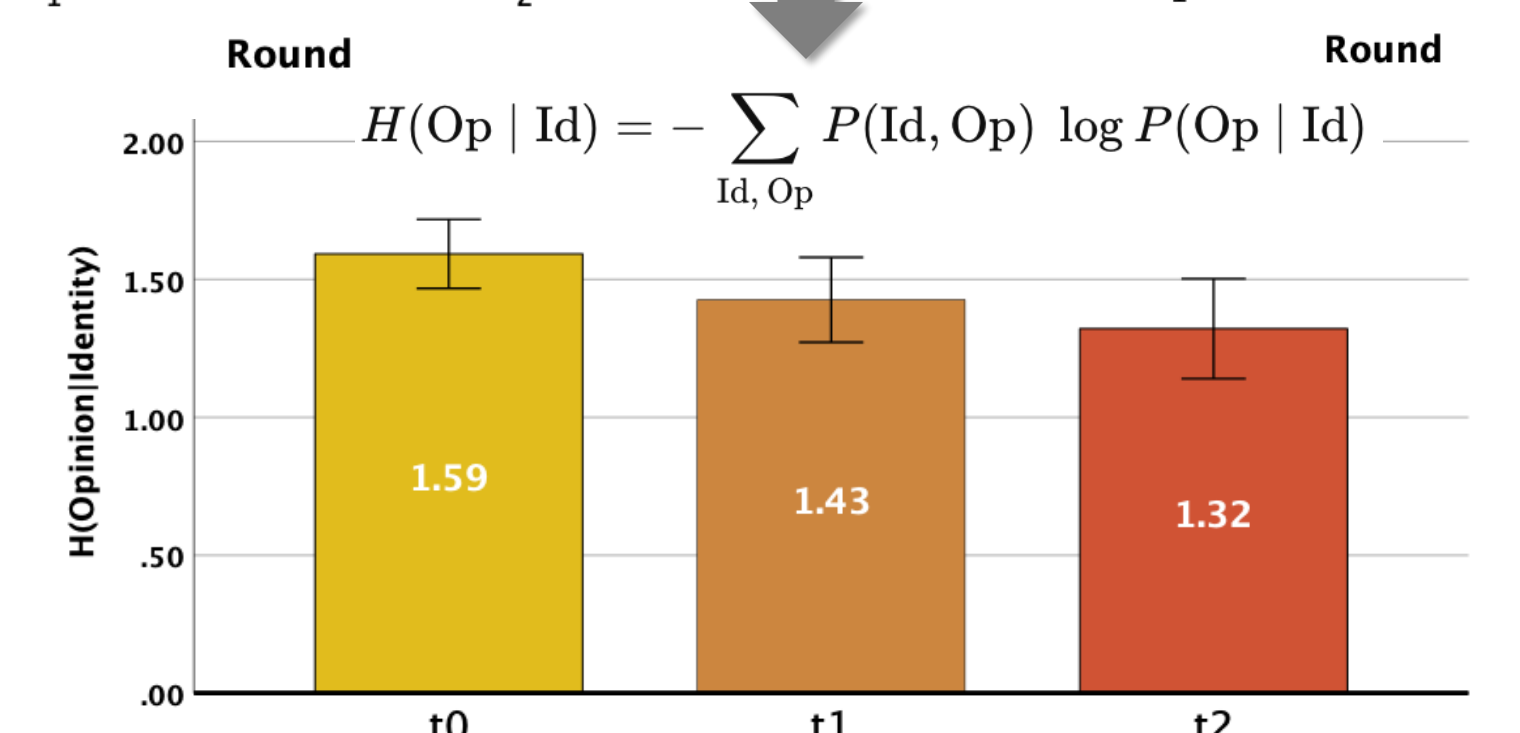
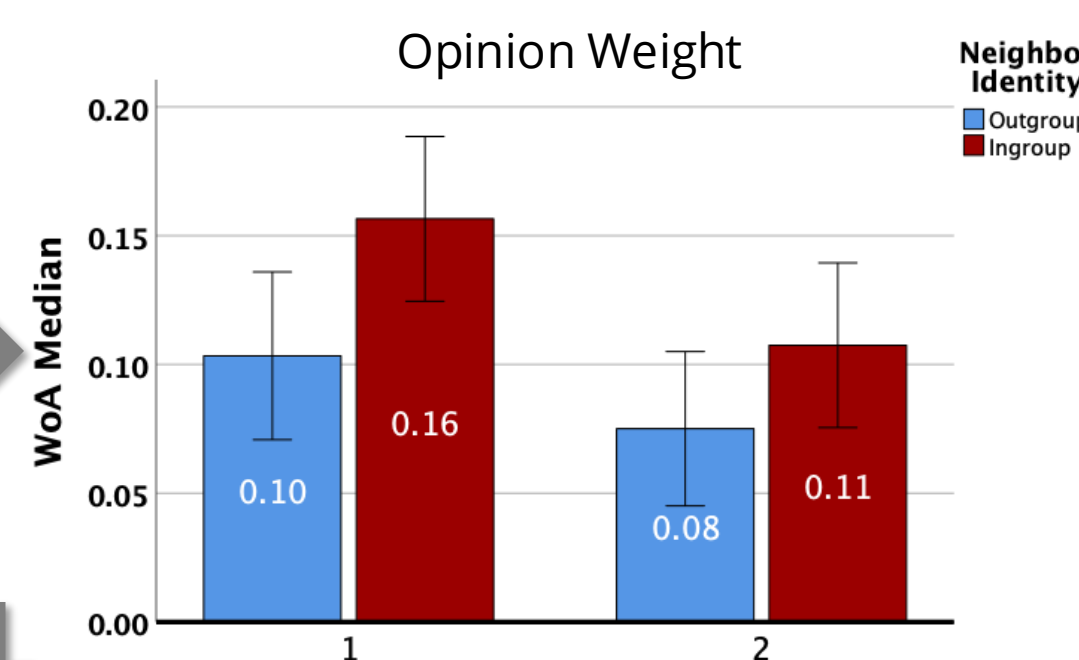
Each participant finished two rounds of neighbor choice and opinion updating on 12 topics.

Opinion viewing and updating

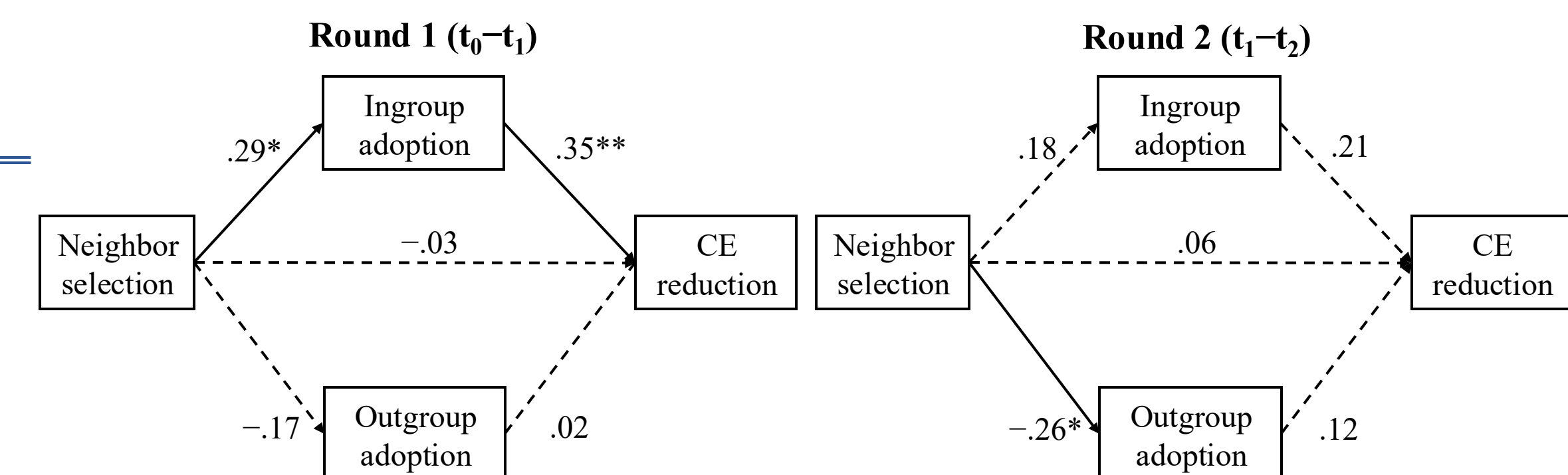
Ingroup Selection Bias



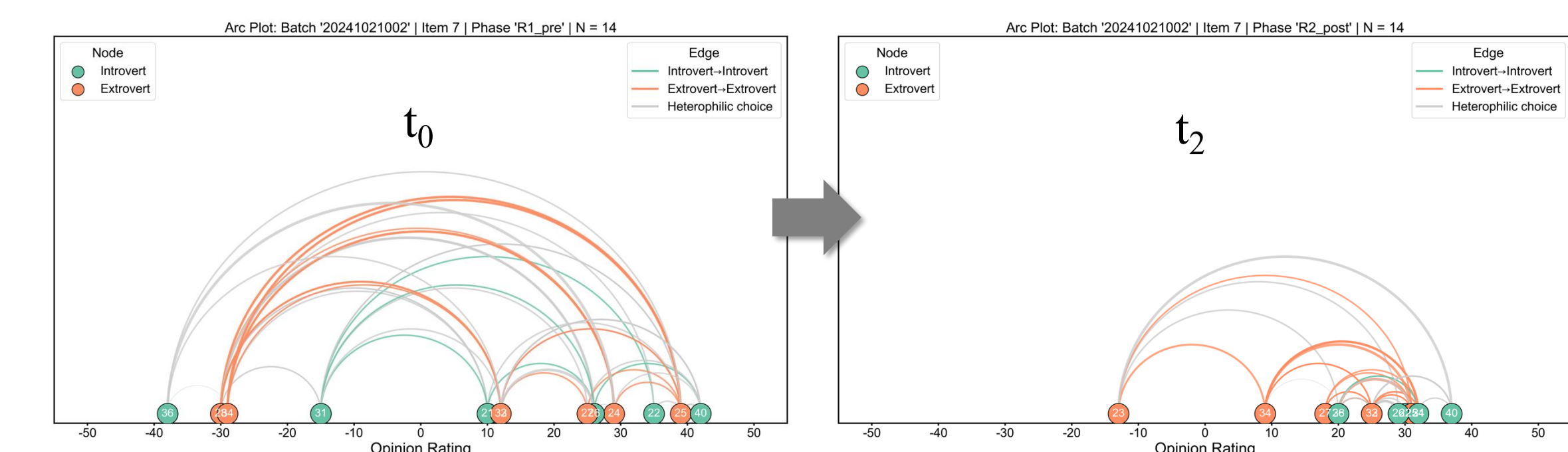
Ingroup Weighing Bias



Mediation Analyses



Example: Legalization of Euthanasia



Biased selection and assimilation of ingroup opinions led to closer alignment of identity and opinion.