

GRADIENT

Project Rhapsody

Aug 2020





Project Rhapsody Goals

1. **Prototype** and validate a method for cost-effective **field testing** of targeted message campaigns.
2. Understand message frames that are most effective for **persuading** our moderate conservative segment (C1) on issues related to comprehensive immigration reform.

Bottom Line Up Front

For the full sample, **Religious values** framed ads have a small but significant 1.4% *increase* in pro-immigration sentiment

- + Among moderate conservative voters, there is a more pronounced 4% *increase*
- + Non-Christians react favorably to Religious-framed ads compared to Christians

For the full sample, **Common Sense** framed ads have a small but significant 1.4% *decrease* in pro-immigration sentiment

- + Among moderate conservative voters, there is a more pronounced 4% *decrease*
- + Among center-right voters, Trump supporters and non-evangelical Christians react negatively to Common Sense-framed ads

National Voter Segments Toward Immigrants & Immigration

Conservative 2

C2

Anti-immigrant

31%

Beliefs:

Immigrants do NOT benefit the U.S., should be deported, and should invest in a border wall

Skews white, older, married, less educated, Christian, lower household income, retired, rural/suburban

Conservative 1

C1

Pro-immigrant & border security

13%

Beliefs:

Immigrants benefit the U.S., but should increase deportations and invest in a border wall

Skews white, older, male, married, Christian, rural

Liberal 2

L2

Pro-border security

33%

Beliefs:

Immigrants benefit the U.S., we need robust border security but should NOT invest in a wall

Skews black and Hispanic, younger highly educated, atheist/agnostic, working full time, never married, urban

Liberal 1

L1

Pro-immigration

23%

Beliefs:

Immigrants benefit the U.S., should not be deported, and we do NOT need border security

Skews black, younger, highly educated, atheist/agnostic, students, never married, urban

1 million Americans were included
in a live randomized control trial with **three
treatment groups** and one control

Delivered more than **14 million impressions**
across 3 different digital media platforms

Collected survey data from more than **17,000
voters** through SMS

Project Rhapsody by the Numbers

The Messengers and Message Frames

Meet Lynn

A middle-aged female teacher from Indiana sharing the Religious Values ad appealing to Christian morals & values



Meet Justin

A middle-aged male veteran from Indiana sharing the Heart Strings ad appealing to humanity & community



Meet Roy

An older male business owner from Kansas sharing the Common Sense ad appealing to efficiency & decency

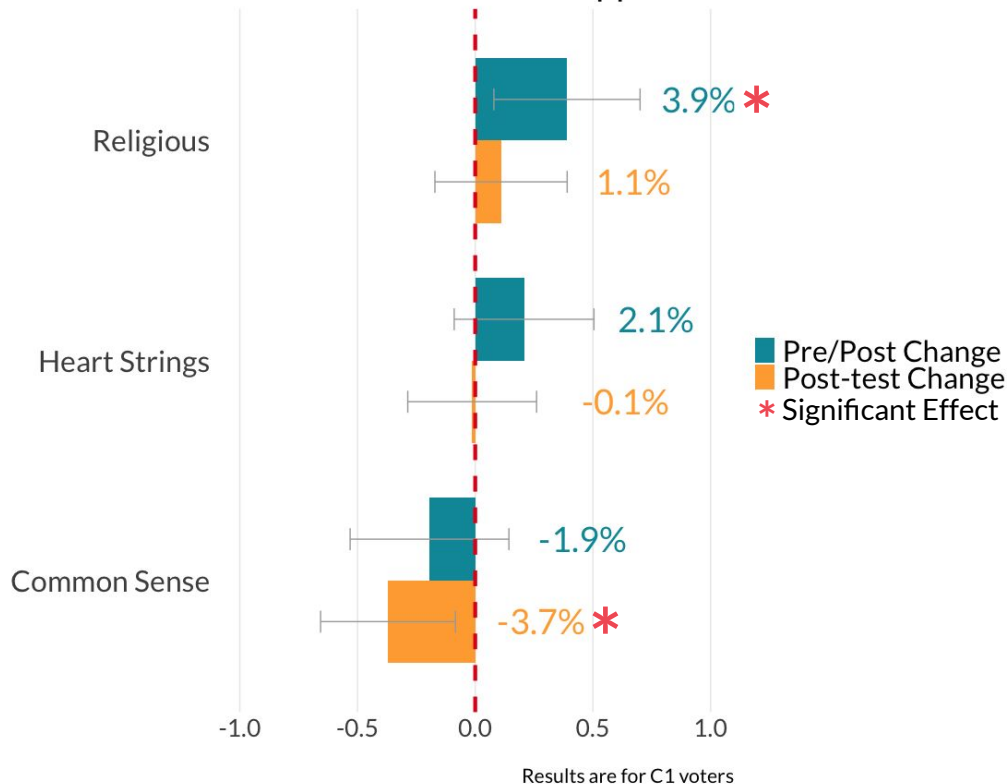


Findings Snapshot

- + In the full sample, **Religious Values** ads have a small but significant 1.4% increase in pro-immigration sentiment and **Common Sense** ads have a significant 1.4% decrease
- + The effect is more pronounced among C1s – **Religious Values** ads have a significant 4% increase on C1 voters' pro-immigration sentiment while **Common Sense** ads induce a 4% decrease
- + C1 voters exposed to **Heart Strings** ads have more positive (but non-significant) immigration sentiment

Pro-immigration sentiment increases by 4% when exposed to *Religious*-framed ads but has an equally large backlash effect from *Common Sense*-framed ads

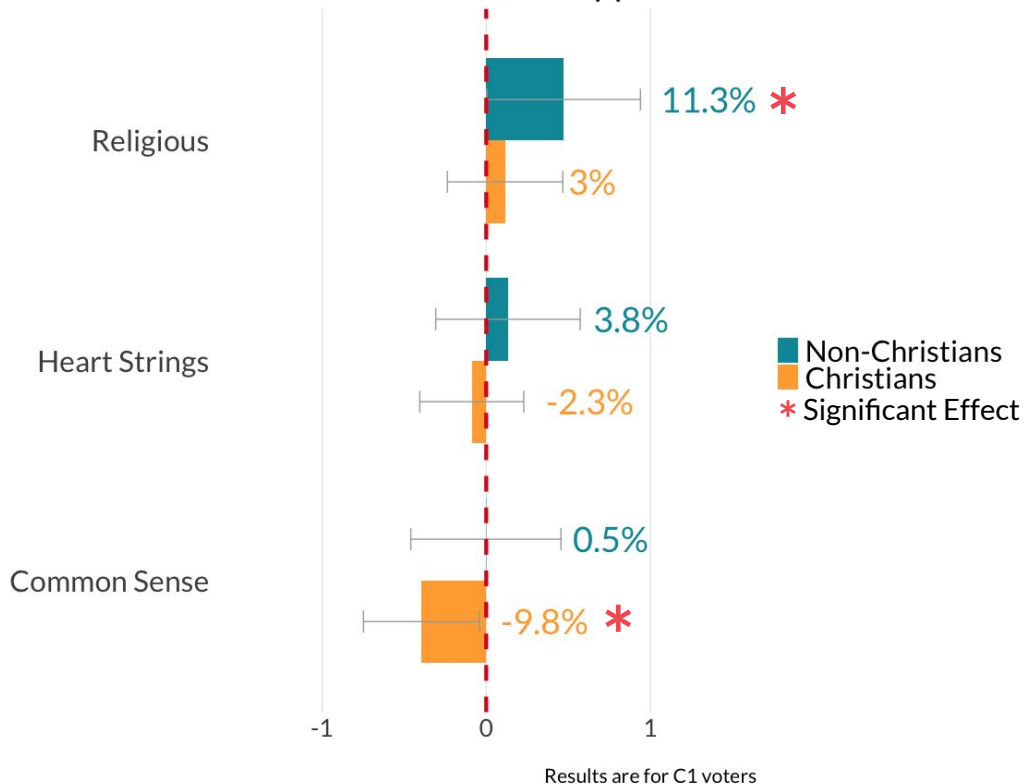
Treatment Effects on Overall Support for Reform



- + Exposure to **Religious Values** ads increases pro-immigration sentiment nearly 4%, suggesting Christian-related message framing is particularly effective among C1s
- + Exposing C1s to the **Common Sense** ads produces the opposite reaction – a backlash effect of large magnitude (3.7%)

Religious Values-framed ads perform best among non-Christian C1 voters, while Common Sense framing backfired among Christians

Treatment Effects on Overall Support for Reform



- + Non-Christian C1s respond 11.3% more positively after exposure to a **Religious Values** ad compared to only a 3% increase among Christian
- + Christian C1s have a significant, adverse reaction to **Common Sense** ads expressing a 9.8% decrease in pro-immigration sentiment
- + Brand issues might have contributed to the low support among Christians

Recommendations

Ensure pro-immigration messages are delivered **authentically** to persuade moderate conservative voters to adopt more positive attitudes of immigrants

- + Inauthentic **Religious Values** frames do not improve pro-immigration sentiment among Christian voters
- + Appealing to Christians using their own values should be done through a trusted messenger
- + Authenticity is likely to be a moderating factor in any message frame

For moderate conservative voters, **avoid trivializing the issue of immigration through a common sense framing**

- + For many conservative voters, immigration is a multidimensional issue
- + Trivializing the complexities of the immigration debate can backfire among conservative voters, particularly Christians and those who approve of Trump