Moral Conviction Pilot Theories to Test

1. Try with a NONPOLARIZED concept (e.g., exercising, especially given the new year!)
   1. Try with a POLARIZED concept (maybe one for left and right, or just one??)
2. Try using Moralized ‘counter messaging’ (e.g., arguments using deontological or rule-based messaging.
3. Assess whether or not a topic is moral in the first place, in order to test moral recognition/moral amplification
   1. E.g., Test the recognition of the topic, and if YES – then test level of conviction to assess amplification (or perhaps test it regardless to indicate evidence of this occurring?)
   2. By that, I mean, if we see no recognition of it being moral, we should ALSO see no change in the secondary moral conviction assessments that happen afterwards!

Moralization

1. Try messaging that emphasizes ANGER or DISGUST
   1. The water crisis in Flint, Michigan evoked a lot of emotion in Americans. We are particularly interested in what makes you most DISGUSTED about the crisis. Please describe in detail at least one thing that makes you most DISGUSTED about the crisis. Write as detailed a description as possible. If you can, write your description so that someone reading it might even feel DISGUST from learning about the situation. What aspect of the Flint water crisis makes you the most DISGUSTED? Why does it make you so DISGUSTED?
   2. Replace ‘DISGUST/DISGUSTED with ANGER/ANGRY
      1. Test to see if disgust works as a moral amplifier ONLY but not as a moral recognizer!
   3. Change topic to alternative framings?
2. Try messaging that leverages “moral piggybacking” e.g., Try tying a belief that we’re currently assessing to another more BROADLY applicable moral conviction (e.g., murder is wrong! Or JUSTICE must be SERVED!)
   1. E.g., very similar to the unsuccessful linking of meat eating to ‘sustainability’ which wasn’t seen as a strong enough or broadly applicable enough moral conviction that is authority independent! Try something with strong emotive elements that is directly impacted by the issue we’re trying to link it to!

Demoralization

1. Try messaging that emphasizes perceived PERSONAL economic benefits – e.g., what are the direct economic rewards for engaging in that behavior? (Mining may be bad for environmental concerns… but the money mining brings in directly affects our lives and improves it)
   1. Could measure perceived economic benefit directly and use it as a moderator?
   2. Likewise, we can DEMORALIZE by emphasizing hedonic elements (pleasurable parts of the activity, regardless of morality)