

# Reducing Polarization: Promises and Pitfalls of Signaling Receptiveness to Opposing Views

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## **Reducing Polarization: Promises and Pitfalls of Signaling Receptiveness to Opposing Views**

This research explores the effectiveness of acts of receptiveness for preventing disengagement from public polarized debates in online environment. Three research questions are examined: Do acts of receptiveness help reduce platform disengagement in the presence of polarized debates? If yes, how? Does the presence of malevolent actors (i.e., trolls) significantly impact the effectiveness of acts of receptiveness, driving users instead toward *greater* platform disengagement? We first illustrate how using acts of receptiveness in a polarizing argument helps curb platform disengagement because the viewer feels more receptive in return, akin to a reciprocity process. Then we show how the mere presence of trolls moderates the relationship between acts of receptiveness and the viewer's experienced receptiveness, thereby negating their positive effect. Overall, this research calls for the need to account for digital social dynamics when attempting to foster open dialogs on digital platforms.

*Keywords: Receptiveness, Trolling, Polarization*

*Track: Consumer Behavior*