

muss noch be- / überarbeitet werden  
später noch rausnehmen

# Design for a „Conformity to descriptive norms” experiment

## Background

Peoples’ norms, values and attitudes are greatly shaped by their social environment. We tend to form groups based on our common beliefs. In this experiment we will investigate whether people are more likely to align their decisions with their social ingroup than favour the opposite decision which one’s social outgroup prefers with a higher rate than one’s social ingroup.

Include further Information from reading material

Previous research (Pryor et al.) has shown that people tend to conform to descriptive norms of those with opposing political or social beliefs when they seem to represent the majority of the people rather than agreeing with their social ingroup.

## Hypotheses

In this experiment we are going to address the following hypotheses:

1. People will actively disagree with the beliefs of their outgroup.
2. People tend to conform to the descriptive norm. (alternative hypothesis)

## Design

This experiment follows a 2 x 2 between-subject design. The first independent variable being the *ingroup descriptive norm* which has two levels as subject will be either shown “60% der Teilnehmer, die mit Ihnen in Hinsicht auf [social / political issue] übereinstimmen, würden den Dieb laufen lassen.” or “60% der Teilnehmer, die mit Ihnen in Hinsicht auf [social / political issue] übereinstimmen, würden den Dieb bei der Polizei melden.” The second independent variable is *both norms shown* where not only the courses of action of the ingroup will be displayed but also those of one’s outgroup.

Therefore there will be four possible experimental conditions: either the subject is shown only the descriptive norm of their ingroup with varying courses of action (reporting or leaving robber alone) or the subject is shown the descriptive norm of their ingroup and their outgroup where the courses of action alternated among ingroup and outgroup as well.

The dependent variable we will observe is the action the participant chooses to take in the situation of the moral dilemma.

## **Materials:**

The experiment will be conducted in German as the research takes place in Germany. Therefore, all materials and instructions are in German. Nevertheless, in this documentation we also provide the English translation of our materials which are written in italics.

### **(1) Social issues :**

Klimapolitik // *climate policy*

Migrationspolitik // *migration policy*

Feminismus // *feminism*

Legalisierung von Cannabis // *legalisation of cannabis*

Rentenalter // *pension age*

Fleischkonsum // *meat consumption*

Bildung // *education*

Abtreibung // *abortion*

### **(2) Statements:**

**Klimapolitik:** "Zum Erreichen des 1,5°C Ziels müssen strengere Maßnahmen ergriffen werden."

**Migrationspolitik:** "In Deutschland muss es eine Migrationsobergrenze geben."

**Feminismus:** "Eine Frauenquote in allen Institutionen ist essentiell für Gleichberechtigung."

**Legalisierung von Cannabis:** "Cannabis sollte für Erwachsene frei zugänglich sein."

**Rentenalter:** "Das Rentenalter sollte angehoben werden."

**Fleischkonsum:** "Der Fleischkonsum muss deutlich reduziert werden, daher esse ich kein Fleisch."

**Bildung:** "G8 sollte in ganz Deutschland eingeführt werden."

**Abtreibung:** "Jede Frau sollte die Möglichkeit haben, ihr Kind bis zum 3. Schwangerschaftsmonat abzutreiben."

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**Climate policy:** "To achieve the 1,5° degree goal we need to have stricter restrictions."

**Migration policy:** "In Germany we need to have an upper limit on migration."

**Feminism:** "A women's quota in every institution is essential for equality."

**Legalisation of Cannabis:** "Cannabis should be freely available for every adult."

**Pension age:** "The pension age should be increased.."

**Meat consumption:** "Meat consumption must be reduced, that's why I don't eat meat."

**Education:** "G8 should be introduced in all schools in Germany." (G8 is a form of high school, students graduate after eight years of high school (after twelfth grade) instead of nine years.)

**Abortion:** "Every woman should have the right to get an abortion until the third month of her pregnancy."

### (3) 11-Point Likert Scale

Stimme gar nicht zu    ①   ②   ③   ④   ⑤   ⑥   ⑦   ⑧   ⑨   ⑩   ⑪    Stimme voll zu

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Fully Disagree    ①   ②   ③   ④   ⑤   ⑥   ⑦   ⑧   ⑨   ⑩   ⑪    Fully Agree

### (4) Instruction on moral dilemma:

Wir führen dieses Experiment als Folgestudie eines bereits veröffentlichten Papers durch. Dieses Paper beschäftigte sich mit der Frage wie sich Menschen in moralischen Dilemmata fühlen.

In dem Paper wurde ein moralisches Dilemma vorgestellt, zu welchem den Teilnehmern zwei mögliche Handlungsschritte präsentiert wurden. Die Teilnehmer suchten sich den Handlungsschritt aus, den sie bevorzugten und sollten angeben wie sie sich mit dieser Entscheidung fühlten.

In diesem Experiment wird Ihnen nun auch ein moralisches Dilemma präsentiert. Sie müssen ebenfalls entscheiden wie Sie handeln würden und im Anschluss angeben wie gut oder schlecht Sie sich mit Ihrer Entscheidung fühlen würden.

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*We are running this experiment as a follow-up study on a previously published paper. This paper looked at how people feel about moral dilemmas.*

*In the previous paper, a moral dilemma was described that involved two possible courses of actions. Participants chose which action they preferred and had to rate how they would feel about performing that action.*

*In this study, you will be presented with a scenario describing a moral dilemma. You will also choose which action you would take and then provide a rating of how good or bad you would feel about your choice.*

#### **(5) Moral dilemma**

Stellen Sie sich vor, Sie hätten einen Mann dabei beobachtet, eine Bank auszurauben. Allerdings, beobachteten Sie ihn dann dabei, wie er etwas Unerwartetes mit dem Geld machte. Er spendete das gesamte Geld an ein heruntergekommenes Waisenhaus, wo es sehr gut gebraucht werden konnte. Sie müssen entscheiden, ob Sie die Polizei verständigen und den Dieb melden oder ob Sie die Sache auf sich beruhen lassen und den Dieb laufen lassen.

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*Original:*

*Imagine you have witnessed a man rob a bank. However, you then saw him do something unexpected with the money. He donated it all to a run-down orphanage that would benefit greatly from the money. You must decide whether to call the police and report the robber or do nothing and leave the robber alone.*

#### **(6) Ingroup and outgroup descriptive norms**

In der vorherigen Studie haben...

...etwa 60% der Teilnehmer, die mit Ihnen in Hinsicht auf [social / political issue] übereinstimmen, entschieden, nichts zu tun und den Dieb laufen zu lassen.

... etwa 60% der Teilnehmer, die mit Ihnen in Hinsicht auf [social / political issue] übereinstimmen, entschieden, die Polizei anzurufen und den Dieb zu melden.

... etwa 85% der Teilnehmer, die Ihnen in Hinsicht auf [social / political issue] widersprechen, entschieden, nichts zu tun und den Dieb laufen zu lassen.

... etwa 85% der Teilnehmer, die Ihnen in Hinsicht auf [social / political issue] widersprechen, entschieden, die Polizei anzurufen und den Dieb zu melden.

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*In the previous study...*

*... approximately 60% of participants who agreed with you about [social / political issue] chose to do nothing and leave the robber alone.*

*... approximately 60% of participants who agreed with you about [social / political issue] chose to call the police and report the robber.*

*... approximately 85% of participants who disagreed with you about [social / political issue] chose to do nothing and leave the robber alone.*

*... approximately 85% of participants who disagreed with you about [social / political issue] chose to call the police and report the robber.*

#### **(7) Statements about decision on dilemma:**

Würden Sie:

Definitiv die Polizei anrufen und den Dieb melden.

Höchstwahrscheinlich die Polizei anrufen und den Dieb melden.

Vermutlich die Polizei anrufen und den Dieb melden.

Vermutlich nichts tun und den Dieb laufen lassen.

Höchstwahrscheinlich nichts tun und den Dieb laufen lassen.

Definitiv nichts tun und den Dieb laufen lassen.

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*Would you:*

*Definitely call the police and report the robber.*

*Very likely call the police and report the robber.*

*Probably call the police and report the robber.*

*Probably do nothing and leave the robber alone.*

*Very likely do nothing and leave the robber alone.*

*Definitely do nothing and leave the robber alone.*

**(8) 7-Point Likert Scale**

Wie fühlen Sie sich mit Ihrer Entscheidung?

Sehr schlecht    (1)    (2)    (3)    (4)    (5)    (6)    (7)    Sehr gut

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How do you feel about your decision?

Very bad    (1)    (2)    (3)    (4)    (5)    (6)    (7)    Very good

**(9) Understanding check:**

Wie zuvor erwähnt wird dieses Experiment in Folge einer anderen Studie durchgeführt. Mit den Informationen, die Sie über die vorherige Studie bekommen haben, welche Aussage trifft auf das vorherige Experiment zu?

1. Die Teilnehmer nahmen Stellung zu einem moralischen Dilemma. *(true)*
2. Die Teilnehmer sollten das Experiment mit geschlossenen Augen absolvieren. *(false)*
3. Die Teilnehmer mussten Haustiere nach Niedlichkeit bewerten. *(false)*
4. Die Daten aus den vorherigen Experiment wurden nicht gespeichert. *(false)*

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*As mentioned earlier, this experiment is being carried out as a follow up to another study. With the information you received about the previous study, which statement applies to the previous experiment?*

1. *Participants gave their opinion on a moral dilemma. (true)*
2. *Participants should complete the experiment with their eyes closed. (false)*
3. *Participants had to rate pets according to their cuteness. (false)*
4. *No data was saved during the previous task. (false)*

- ***Participants chose which action they preferred (correct)***
- ***Due to a computer error, participants were not allocated equally to imagine performing the different actions (incorrect)***
- ***No data was saved during the experiment. (incorrect)***
- ***The participants completed the experiment with their eyes closed. (incorrect)***

### **(10) Identity check:**

Bitte wählen Sie nun aus, inwiefern Sie den folgenden Aussagen zustimmen.

“Ich identifiziere mich mit [ingroup].”

“Ich identifiziere mich mit [outgroup].”

ingroup // outgroup

Klimaaktivist:innen // Klimakrisenleugnern

Migrationsgegnern // Migrationsbefürwortenden

Feminist:innen // Nicht-Feministen

Legalisierungsbefürwortenden // Legalisierungsgegnern

Befürwortenden zur Anhebung des Rentenalters// Befürwortenden zur Beibehaltung des Rentenalters

Veganern und Vegetariern // Omnivoren

G8-Befürwortenden // G9-Befürwortenden

Pro-Choice-Befürwortenden // Pro-Life-Befürwortenden

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“I identify with [ingroup].”

“I identify with [outgroup].”

ingroup // outgroup

Climate Activists // Deniers of the Climate Crisis

Anti-Migration Advocates // Pro-Migration Advocates

Feminists // Non-Feminists

Pro-Legalisation Advocates // Anti-Legalisation Advocates

Pension-Age-Increase Advocates // Pension-Age-Remain Advocates

Vegans and Vegetarians // Omnivores

G8 Advocates // G9 Advocates

Pro-Choice Advocates // Pro-Life Advocates

## **Procedure:**

The experiment consists of 5 parts:

- I. Introduction and short questionnaire on gender and age
- II. Social / political issues
- III. Moral dilemma (main trial)
- IV. Control trial
- V. Identity check (main trial)

(I) The experiment starts with a short introduction and general survey regarding age/gender etc.

(II) This is followed by a set of seven socially critical topics (1) from which the participant has to select one. Following on, a statement is presented to the participants for example if they have selected the topic veganism they will get presented with the statement "Fleisch muss teurer werden.". In order to carry out a preliminary classification of ingroup and outgroup members, the participants are shown a 11-Point Likert Scale (3) from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree ((-5) to 5) to what extent they agree or disagree with the statement.

(III) The next step is to inform the participant that this experiment is being conducted as a follow-up study to a previous paper (4), claiming that the original paper deals with the actions and emotions associated with these actions in relation to moral dilemmas. Afterwards the participants are presented with a moral dilemma (5) as well as a statement on the ingroup descriptive norm (6) to the participant below the moral dilemma, such as 60% of the participants who agree with you on [social/political issue] would report the robber or 60% of the participants who agree with you on [social/political issue] would leave the robber alone. 50% of the participants will only be shown the descriptive norm of their ingroup while the



other half will also see a statement on the outgroup descriptive norm claiming that 85% of the participants who agree with them on the chosen political and social issue chose to report the robber or leave them alone. Participants are now presented with a rating of the dilemma in which they have to decide on a six point scale (7) whether they would tend to definitely report the robber or definitely leave the robber alone.

Then they will be asked how they feel about their decision (8) to support the backstory of the previous research.

**(IV)** In order to ensure that all participants have followed the instructions carefully, an understanding check (9) follows, which is intended to prevent participants from making random decisions when selecting the previous questions.

**(V)** Last but not least, Postmes, Haslam and Jan's single-item social identification measure is used (10). This includes an assignment of whether the test person identifies with the relevant ingroup and separates himself/herself from the relevant outgroup.