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As Predicted:*"Social influence in political news evaluation"* (#21378)

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1) Have any data been collected for this study already?
No, no data have been collected for this study yet.

2) What's the main question being asked or hypothesis being tested in this study?
In this study we test how Democrat and Republicans are influenced by the opinion of (political) others when evaluating political news claims. In the control group, participants evaluate claims without any social signal. In the control group, participants evaluate claims without any social signal. In the treatment groups, an either majority-Democrat or majority-Republican crowd either supports the claim or doesn't. There could be several possible reactions:

* *H0* — No social influence: No significant differences between the treatment and control
* *H1* — Unpolitical bandwagon: The treatment has an effect, but the effect does not depend on the political composition of the crowd
* *H2* — Political band wagon: A politically aligned crowd has a significantly larger influence than a politically opposed crowd
* *H3* — Rational learning: Crowds that go against their own politics have a significantly larger influence than crowds that vote with their own politics
* *H4* — Rebel/back-fire effect: Politically opposed crowds have a significant negative influence, that is, participants go against the social signal.

3) Describe the key dependent variable(s) specifying how they will be measured.

Participants rate 16 news headlines with associated sources, indicating whether they believe the claim a headline makes is 'True' or 'False' (multiple choice, binary). The ratings they assign to a claim are the main dependent variable.

4) How many and which conditions will participants be assigned to?
After providing informed consent and before receiving instructions, participants will be assigned randomly to one of three groups: control, majority-Democrat, and majority-Republican. Participants in the control group rate 16 headlines without any social signal. Participants in the majority-Democrat group are told that 75 Democrats and 21 Republicans have already completed this study before them and they will see how they rated a headline to help with your evaluation. Participants in the majority-Republican group are told that 21 Democrats and 75 Republicans have already completed this study. For each headline they evaluate, they see how participants before them (supposedly) evaluated the headline. All participants rate 4 pro-Democrat and 4 pro-Republican headlines. In the treatment groups for each of these, two headlines are endorsed by previous participants and two are not. We assign twice as many participants to the treatment groups than to the control group to account for this additional within-group.

5) Specify exactly which analyses you will conduct to examine the main question/hypothesis.
To estimate how the particular characteristics of an observation affect the answers of participants, we calculate a panel-probit regression with random effects per headline. We calculate two slightly different models for our analysis. The two models have different base categories that correspond to the two interpretative dimensions of our analysis, but are otherwise identical.

In the first model, we test whether each of the treatment subgroups (majority-Democrat or majority-Republican groups supporting or opposing the claim have a significant (absolute) effect on participant answers. We calculate a probit regression as the dependent variable is binary and include a random effect per subject:

pglm(answer~subject_politics*headline_politics+subject_politics:headline_politics:true_votes:group, data=dfl, model=("random"), effect=("individual"), index=c("participant"),family=binomial(link="probit"))

In the second model, we test whether each the responses participants gave in the majority-Democrat and majority-Republican treatment groups were significantly different:

pglm(answer~subject_politics*headline_politics*true_votes+subject_politics:headline_politics:true_votes:group, data=dfl, model=("random"), effect=("individual"), index=c("participant"),family=binomial(link="probit"))

6) Describe exactly how outliers will be defined and handled, and your precise rule(s) for excluding observations.
We will exclude participants who rate the 16 claims as either all true or all false. We furthermore exclude participants who fail one of the two attentiveness checks (rephrasing and checking whether the instructions were understood) or indicate that they have searched for headlines on the web. The 8 non-political headlines that we included to hide the purpose of the experiment are also discarded.

7) How many observations will be collected or what will determine sample size?
No need to justify decision, but be precise about exactly how the number will be determined.
We will recruit 1,000 participants via Amazon Mechanical Turk (AMT), that is, 200 for the control group and 400 for each of the treatment groups. To counterbalance the under-representation of conservatives on MTurk, we will post an otherwise identical conservative-only task (n=250) in addition to our main task (n=750).

8) Anything else you would like to pre-register?
(e.g., secondary analyses, variables collected for exploratory purposes, unusual analyses planned?)
Nothing else to pre-register.

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