**Impact of Moral Conviction on Social Consensus**

**Dear Participant,**

During this study, you were asked to predict what public approval in 2018 was for several scientific and social issues, as well as to estimate what it would be in current (2024) times. Additionally, we asked you to rate your own level of agreement with the aforementioned issues.

You were told that the purpose of the research study was to examine how moral conviction affects the accuracy of recollections. The actual purpose of the study was to investigate how differing levels of moral conviction interacts with the persuasiveness of a social consensus, and if this persuasion results in differing levels of moral conviction or support for these topics.

We did not tell you everything at the beginning of the study because we were trying to directly determine if outside perception of greater social consensus would 'over-ride' individual preferences one way or another for greater support of the topics we are looking at. Furthermore, we wanted to know of differing levels of moral conviction on the topic at hand interacted with the strength of the 'social consensus' effect.

To describe in a simple way, we thought that if we could get you to believe that the general public was in favor of something (which we did by giving you the false feedback) you may become more likely to favor it.

On the second point, the effect of moral conviction in and of itself is also of great interest with regards to decision making, but what does that actually mean? In a simple sense, many people can have various reasons for choosing to support one thing or another, but not all reasoning is made equal.

For example: some people would support abortion access simply because that's what the law is where they live - they don't think about it beyond that, and if the law changed, their stance would change. Some other people would support abortion access because that's what their friends, family, and neighbors believe - if they moved somewhere else, or their social circle changed their mind, their stance could change as well! However, there are definitely some people who support abortion access because they feel deep in their hearts, that it is the 'right' thing to do and is worth fighting for.

Interestingly enough, this could go in both directions! There are people who would care to restrict abortion access that could feel that way for all three of these reasons. Some topics are generally more 'morally loaded' than others, and certainly not everyone agrees as to what topics are even up for ethical debate. We designed this experiment to examine if moral conviction is something that we could change, by providing either a highly moral argument, or a pragmatic argument.

We predicted that extremely strong moral feelings would prevent people from being affected by social consensus, and that relatively weak moral feelings would result in people being more persuaded by social consensus.

Of note, the actual values from real, recent surveys, circa 2017-2021 are provided below for your edification.  
  
**63%** of the American Public agrees that the US government needs to implement Universal Health Care because basic population needs are not being met.  
  
**44%** of the American Public agrees regular exercise is necessary for Americans.  
  
**69%** of the American Public agrees that trans athletes should only be allowed to play on sports teams that match their birth gender  
  
**58%** of the American Public agree that Americans should be able to use AI for job applications  
  
We believe that understanding more deeply how moral conviction interacts with the effect of social consensus will move us forward in our ability to influence highly polarized beliefs, as well as expanding our academic understanding of moral decision making more broadly.  
  
Now that you have been told the true purpose of the study, you have the option to have your data removed from the study. Please let the researcher know if you do not want your data to be used in this research and it will be removed.  
  
**The responses in this study cannot be linked to you.**  
  
We would like you to know that we really appreciate your time in helping with this research and are always happy to answer any questions that you might have about it. If you have any concerns about your participation or the data you provided during the study, please discuss these concerns with us. We will be happy to provide you with any explanations or information to ease your concerns. You can reach me by email at sxdff5@mail.missouri.edu.  
  
**Thank you, specifically** for your participation. Really, it helps out a ton! - Sean Duan

**If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or want to report a complaint, please contact the Institutional Review Board at the University of Missouri at 573-882-3181, 310 Jesse Hall, Columbia, MO 65211, or at umcresearchcirb@missouri.edu**

**If you do NOT want your data used for this study, type REFUSE in the text box below**