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Introduction

- This study builds on previous research regarding the moral values differently prioritized by conservatives and liberals (Graham et al., 2009), the effects of political ideology-based motivated reasoning (Haidt et al., 2001), the effect of political ideology on attitudes toward the police (Stack & Cao., 1998), and the effect of frequent social media use on issue polarization (Bail et al., 2018).

Hypotheses

- Conservatives and liberals
  - Will rate headlines as more credible when the headline's conclusion is consistent with their political orientation.
  - Will report that they would engage on social media more with articles that have a conclusion consistent with their political orientation.
  - Will be more interested in reading articles in which the values emphasized conflict with the conclusion.
- People who use social media more frequently will hold more polarized attitudes towards police and will rate headlines as more credible.

Method

Participants

- 213 online workers (67.1% White, 16.9% Black, 6.5% Asian, 3.5% Hispanic, 2% Other; mean age = 40.36, SD = 11.6, range = 21-77)

Procedure

- Study design - 2 (Between: political orientation) x 2 (Within: value political orientation) x 2 (Within: conclusion political orientation)
- 12 headlines: 2 of each possible combination of values and conclusions, 4 distractors
- Presented each headline separately in a randomized order along with questions about perceived credibility and intended social media behaviors
- Conservative Values = safety, authority
- Conservative Conclusion = maintain police funding
- Liberal Values = diversity, equality
- Liberal Conclusion = reduce and reallocate police funding

Measures

- Modified credibility scale (Freeze et al., 2020; 3 items)
- Perceptions of Police Survey (Nadal & Davidoff, 2015)

Headline Examples

- Conservative Value with Conservative Conclusion
  - 71% of the population in high crime cities report that they would feel safer with increased police presence
- Conservative Value with Liberal Conclusion
  - Violent crime rate drops as Phoenix city council reallocates police funding to social workers trained in de escalation techniques
- Liberal Value with Liberal Conclusion
  - Helena police chief uses derogatory language when referring to minority inmates
- Liberal Value with Conservative Conclusion
  - Minority officers are being disproportionately laid off due to defunding the police

Headline Credibility Ratings by Political Orientation
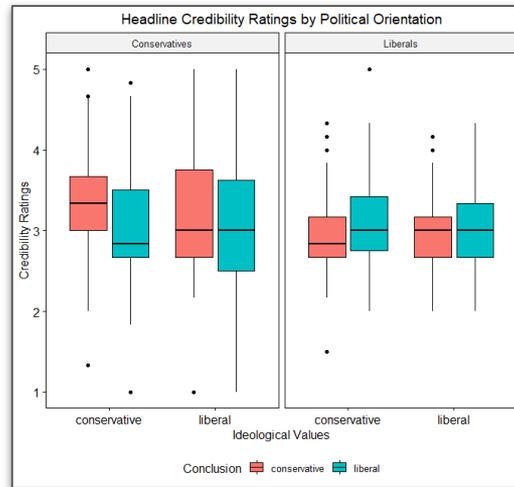
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Stack, S. J., & Cao, L. (1998). Political conservatism and confidence in the police: A comparative analysis. *Journal of Crime and Justice, 21*(1), 71-76. https://doi.org/10.1080/0735648X.1998.9721066

Sample Post

71% of population in high crime cities report that they would feel safer with increased police presence

wsbtv.com
https://www.wsbtv.com/71%_of_population_in_high...

189   11 Comments 3 Shares

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Results and Discussion

- Because of violations of assumptions, we were not able to compute our planned 2x2x2 mixed ANOVAs for credibility ratings or SNS engagement.
- As the Figure shows, there is a slight tendency for headlines whose conclusions match participants' political orientation to be viewed as more credible, but the similarity of the values expressed in the headlines to their political orientation did not seem to have an effect on credibility ratings. Ratings of SNS engagement were also fairly similar across conditions (Ms by condition = 2.1 to 2.19).
- We did not find a significant relationship between daily social media use and holding more polarized attitudes toward police when controlling for political orientation, (r_s(199) = .03, p = .658).
- People who reported more social media use per day tended to view the headlines as more credible, (r(200) = .29, p < .001).
- These results suggest that people who use SNS more frequently do not hold more polarized attitudes toward police, but do perceive headlines as more credible compared to people who use SNS less frequently.
- These results are important for understanding how increased SNS use may lead people to be more susceptible to misinformation.