

State Legislator Metaperception Correction (#101593)

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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?

We predict that state legislators overestimate the levels of partisan animosity, anti-democratic attitudes, and support for partisan violence among voters from the other party.

We predict that providing state legislators, who over-estimate any of the above three variables about voters of the other party, with the actual levels of support among out-partisan voters, will lower their own levels of partisan animosity, anti-democratic attitudes, and support for partisan violence. (This is contingent on having sufficient statistical power which we do not know in advance since we are not definitive about the response rate or expected effect size in this population.)

We will explore the extent to which state legislators over- or under-estimate the levels of partisan animosity, anti-democratic attitudes, and support for partisan violence among voters from their own party.

We predict that providing state legislators, who over-estimate any of the above three variables about members of their own party, with the actual levels of support among in-partisan voters, will lower their own levels of partisan animosity, anti-democratic attitudes, and support for partisan violence. (This prediction is only relevant if there is substantial over-estimation of in-party support; it also is contingent on having sufficient statistical power which we do not know in advance since we are not definitive about the response rate or expected effect size in this population.)

Note that each prediction contains three unique hypotheses – one regarding animosity, one regarding anti-democratic attitudes, and one regarding partisan violence.

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

Partisan animosity is measured with a standard feeling thermometer.

Anti-democratic attitudes are measured with four items about reducing polling stations, ignoring court rulings, prosecuting journalists, and not accepting election results.

Partisan violence is measured with four items about sending threatening messages to party leaders, harassing ordinary voters, using violence to advance political goals, and using violence to win more races.

All items are: a) asked about how the respondent perceives either voters from their own party or the other party and then about their own attitudes, and b) are measured on 0-100 scales.

4) How many and which conditions will participants be assigned to?

The design has 4 conditions: ratings their own-party voters without a correction, rating the other party voters without a correction, ratings their own-party voters with a correction, and rating the other party voters with a correction. The ratings of the own or other party always precede respondents providing their own attitudes. For each outcome (animosity, anti-democratic attitudes, and support for partisan violence), respondents are provided with their perceived ratings prior to answering about their own attitudes. In the correction conditions, they also receive the actual scores of voters' attitudes based on a prior survey we conducted.

Participants will be randomly assigned to read one of the four conditions.

5) Specify exactly which analyses you will conduct to examine the main question/hypothesis.

We will compare perceptions with voter survey responses from a prior survey we conducted to assess whether there is over-estimation.

We will correlate perceptions with their own attitudes for each outcome to assess whether mis-perceptions affect their own beliefs (a pre-requisite for a correction to matter). We will then do the same but with regression with control variables.

We will compare own attitudes for each outcome between the relevant condition with and without correction to assess whether the correction affected

(decreased) their own responses. (We will do a follow-up analysis where we only include respondents who provided over-estimates.) We will do this by comparing means across conditions.

6) Describe exactly how outliers will be defined and handled, and your precise rule(s) for excluding observations.

N/A

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 solicit responses from 7,383 state legislators. We expect roughly a 7% response rate for a sample of 516. Of course, we have no way to know in advance if that will be the response rate. Our estimate is based on prior work/experiences.

8) Anything else you would like to pre-register? (e.g., secondary analyses, variables collected for exploratory purposes, unusual analyses planned?)

We will explore whether the effect is larger among those with greater mis-perceptions.

We will explore the results using sample weights on gender, partisanship, state, and term limits.

If a sufficient number of respondents provide underestimates, we will explore whether, among this subset, the correction, increases their attitudes (relative to those who do not receive a correction).