

Polarization and openness to others

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Pre-Analysis Plan – Additional Survey

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This document complements the existing pre-analysis plan and specifies the analysis for an additional survey. The main objective of this additional survey is to implement a new design to estimate individuals' willingness to listen to others who hold opposing views on polarizing policy topics. In the first online study we conducted with a representative sample of the US population, we found a relatively high willingness to listen to recordings of people who hold opposite views.

In that study, payment was not conditional on listening to the recordings and it was made clear to them that they could choose to listen to 0, 1, 2 or 3 recordings). A large fraction of participants engaged with these recordings, which could reflect a high willingness to engage but could also reflect a norm of high compliance with answering questions and requests associated with such online studies. Here we propose a new design where the engagement is not part of the main survey and is an optional additional part (that is not rewarded at all). The goal is to make it absolutely clear that it is optional.

We will recruit 300 participants from Prolific to answer a short survey that replicates in its entirety the previous survey, except for a change in the recordings instruction page, which will read as follows:

“Thank you for your response. The study is now completed and you are now eligible for payment.

As you saw, the survey related to views on various policies and rules in society. Views on some of these policies differ quite a bit in the US population. Would you be interested in hearing a recording from someone who thinks differently from you on abortion laws, immigration, or gun laws? Note that there is no additional compensation for this part of the survey. This is just for your own interest.

If you would like to listen to someone who thinks differently from you, in the next pages you will be able to listen to up to three audio recordings from people who have views that differ from yours on the policy

issues we asked you about (immigration, gun laws and abortion). Each recording lasts less than 1 minute. You can listen to one, some, or none of these recordings.

If you prefer to end the survey now, you can do so without any further consequence.

On the same survey page, respondents will see two buttons:

- End the survey now
- Take me to the audio files

To further minimize any social desirability bias through presumed implied endorsement from the researchers of a preferred option that might nudge respondents to continue with the study (Dinner et al., 2011¹), we place the “end the survey now” button first.

Furthermore, participants in this study will be paid \$0.50 for completing the survey. Prolific minimum participation fee in the U.S. is set at \$8 per hour and taking part in the first part of the study, which consists of three questions, should take approximately three minutes. Thus, the compensation is meant to be the lowest possible amount. Participants know their expected compensation before starting the survey and will know from the instructions page that they won’t be paid any additional money for listening to the recordings. To rule out possible differences in attention checks, we will embed a hidden timer in the audio instructions page to see whether those who continue with the next part of the survey spent less time and thus paid less attention to the instructions.

Participants who choose to continue after the recordings instructions page will proceed to the rest of the survey as in the main study – that is, they will be shown three audio files, one per policy topic, from individuals holding opposing views, extracting randomly from the set of available audio files. The three audio files are shown in random order, as in the previous study. If participants choose to continue after the audio files, they will see the same questions as in the main survey. These participants will also see one final question:

¹ Dinner, Isaac, Eric J. Johnson, Daniel G. Goldstein, and Kaiya Liu. "Partitioning default effects: why people choose not to choose." *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied* 17, no. 4 (2011): 332.

- Which of the following options best describes why you decided to listen to the recordings?

Select all that apply:

- ☐ I was curious to hear why they hold such views
- ☐ I rarely come across opposing views in my day to day life, so I wanted to listen to them
- ☐ I wanted to see if there was any common ground we could find
- ☐ Other: please specify

- Which of the following options best describes why you decided not to listen to the recordings?

Select all that apply:

- ☐ I wasn't compensated for this additional part of the survey
- ☐ I am already familiar with opposing views and don't like them
- ☐ I didn't expect to find any common ground
- ☐ Other: please specify

Outcome measures and analysis

We are primarily interested in differences between treatment and control groups on the following outcomes

Outcome	Measure/Unit	Analysis
Primary: Number of recordings the participant listened to.	Listening will be identified as landing on the page with a recording and spending on that page an amount of time equal or longer to the length of the recording.	Negative binomial regression with treatment dummies as independent variables
Primary: Percentage of recordings listened to	Percentage of recordings listened to, measured as the time spent on the pages with the recordings divided by the	OLS regression with treatment dummies as independent variables

	total time length of the recordings.	
Secondary: Motivations	Frequency (%) of motives for why a respondent did or didn't listen to the recordings. We will code any possible free text entry answers and allocate them to different recurring categories.	