**ONLINE APPENDIX**

**Argument-stretching**

**Study 1**

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**Study 3**

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**For all three studies**

Appendix 4: Additional work cited in online appendix

**Appendix 1.1: Experimental materials**

**1.1.1 Reproduction of the treatment article**

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**1.1.2 English translation of treatment article**

MEP Brückner from Bremen *[PARTY AFFILIATION RANDOMLY VARIED]*: “*[STRETCHED VERSUS NON-STRETCHED JUSTIFICATION RANDOMLY VARIED]”*

Euro tax coming soon?

Brussels/Bremen (dpa/mk). The European Parliament in Brussels voted in favor of introducing a so-called Euro-tax yesterday. The vote was close, with 347 legislators voting yes, 12 abstentions, and 329 votes against. The topic had been subject to a long and controversial debate, before it disappeared from the top of the political agenda as a result of the financial and debt crisis. This made the decision of several Members of the European Parliament to unearth and bring to a vote the almost forgotten Euro-tax initiative of the European Commission from 2009 all the more surprising.

The member states of the EU would have to support the measure to turn the vote of the European Parliament into political reality. Representatives from all political camps unanimously described this as rather unlikely for the time being. The initiative of the European Parliament was still successful, according to experts, because it placed the issue back on the political agenda. A Euro-tax would provide the EU with a source of income independent of the control of its member states, which it does not currently have. Importantly, the measure would not affect overall levels of taxation. EU citizens would not have to pay any additional taxes. Instead, existing revenue of the member states would effectively be transferred under the immediate control of the EU. Both supporters and opponents emphasize that the introduction of a Euro-tax would entail a considerable increase in political authority for the European Union.

Herbert Brückner *[PARTY AFFILIATION RANDOMLY VARIED]*, member of the European Parliament (MEP) from Bremen, voted in favor of the Euro-tax in yesterday’s session. In response to a question from the Weser Kurier, Brückner justified his decision as follows: “The introduction of a Euro tax is an important step toward *[STRETCHED VERSUS NON-STRETCHED JUSTIFICATION RANDOMLY VARIED].* Only a strong and independent EU can take the necessary measures to achieve this goal. In order to do this, the EU needs its own source of revenue that is shielded from the influence of its member states.”

**1.1.3 Notes on treatment article**

The newspaper is identified as the “Weser-Kurier”, a quality yet little known daily for the city of Bremen and its surroundings, which provides local, national, and international coverage. As the European Parliament (EP) does not have the right of initiative (that is the right to introduce new legislation), the article states that the vote in the EP is based on an “almost forgotten” initiative of the European Commission (which has the right of initiative) from 2009. The vote on the resolution to introduce a Euro-tax is described as successful yet close (347 MEPs voting yes, 329 no, and 12 abstaining) to emphasize the controversial nature of the policy. The policy is described as meaningful and important, but to ensure the believability of the treatment, the article also states that the Euro-tax is unlikely to be introduced (despite the positive vote in the EP), due to the resistance of the EU member states (which have to agree on the measure through the European Council respectively the Council of Ministers). The term “dpa” in the author by-line identifies the largest German news agency (Deutsche Presse Agentur).

**1.1.4 Reproduction of the debriefing note handed to participants after the experiment**

**Informationen zur Studie und zum Probanden-Pool**

Die Studie an der Sie gerade teilgenommen haben, ist ein sozialwissenschaftliches Experiment. Bei experimentellen Studien werden durch die Forschenden systematisch Informationen manipuliert und zwischen den Teilnehmenden variiert. Diese Vorgehensweise erlaubt es uns, verlässliche Aussagen darüber zu treffen, ob eine bestimmte Variable, die uns theoretisch interessiert, einen kausalen Effekt auf andere Variablen hat.

Bei der experimentellen Studie, an der Sie gerade teilgenommen haben, geht es darum, wie zufrieden Menschen mit politischen Aussagen sind, und wie dies ihre politischen Einstellungen beeinflusst. Dazu haben wir auch in dieser Studie gewisse Informationen „fabriziert“ und systematisch zwischen den Teilnehmenden variiert. So gibt es tatsächlich eine politische Auseinandersetzung über die Einführung einer Europa-Steuer, aber die in den von uns verfassten Texten beschriebene Abstimmung im Europäischen Parlament hat es in dieser Form nicht gegeben. Wir haben darüber hinaus einem fiktiven Mitglied des Europäischen Parlaments verschiedene Aussagen über die Einführung einer Europa-Steuer zugeordnet. Welche/r Teilnehmer/in der Studie welche Aussage gelesen hat, wurde per Zufall entschieden.

Diese ganze Vorgehensweise ist notwendig zur Durchführung von Experimenten und extrem wichtig für unsere Forschung: nur so können wir herausfinden, ob es überhaupt einen Unterschied macht, welche Argumente Politiker/innen verwenden, um ihre Entscheidungen zu begründen. **Damit wir diese Frage zuverlässig erforschen können, möchten wir Sie sehr bitten, den Inhalt der Studie nicht mit anderen zu besprechen, die noch an der Studie teilnehmen wollen.**

Genauere Informationen über die Manipulation, die wir vorgenommen haben, die wissenschaftlichen Ziele der Studie sowie die Möglichkeiten der praktischen Anwendung von Studien mit kleinen Stichproben (u.a. Experimente) erhalten Sie im Rahmen einer kurzen Informationsveranstaltung. Über den Termin informieren wir Sie noch per email. Falls Sie dann verhindert sind, gibt es zu Anfang des kommenden Semesters einen zweiten Termin, zu dem die Informationsveranstaltung erneut angeboten wird. Dieser zweite Termin wird auch rechtzeitig durch die email-Liste des Probanden-Pools und auf der Webseite des Probanden-Pools << *Website* >> bekannt gegeben.

Für Studierende am *Institut XYZ*: Durch die Teilnahme an der Veranstaltung erwerben Sie einen weiteren 1/3 BZQ Punkt. Bitte bringen Sie zu allen BZQ Aktivitäten des Probanden-Pools die Teilnehmerliste mit, die auch auf der o.g. Webseite verfügbar ist, um sich Ihre Teilnahme bestätigen zu lassen. Wir würden uns natürlich sehr freuen, wenn Sie anderen Studierenden hier am Institut über die Möglichkeit berichten würden, durch die Teilnahme an Aktivitäten des Probanden-Pools BZQ-Punkte zu erwerben. Die Registrierung erfolgt über die o.g. Webseite.

Falls Sie Fragen zu dieser Studie oder zum Probanden-Pool haben, können Sie sich gerne an einen der folgenden Ansprechpartner wenden:

*[Name and email address of contact person #1]*

*[Name and email address of contact person #2]*

**1.1.5 English translation of the debriefing note**

**Information about the study and the participant pool**

The study in which you just participated is a social science experiment. In experimental studies, researchers systematically manipulate information and vary the content of information between participants. This allows us to reach valid conclusions about whether some variable we are interested in has a causal effect on other variables.

The purpose of the present study is to figure out whether the opinions of people about political statements they read influence their political views. To investigate this topic, we also “fabricated” and systematically varied some information in this study. There really is a political debate about the introduction of a Euro-tax described in the article you just received, but the vote mentioned in the article, which we wrote for this study, has not taken place. We also assigned certain political statements about the introduction of a Euro-tax to a fictitious member of the European Parliament. It was randomly decided, which participant received which statement.

This entire procedure is necessary to successfully carry out the experiment and extremely important for our research. This is the best way to determine whether the arguments that politicians use to justify their decicions make any difference at all. It would help us a great deal in reliably answering this question if you could not discuss the content of this study with other participants.

We are organizing a brief event to provide additional information about the manipulation used in this study, the goals of our scholarship and the ways in which experimental research methods can be applied. We will notify you about the time and location of the event via email. If you cannot make it to the first event, you can also participate in a second event, which will be organized during the beginning of the next academic year. The second event will also be announced through the email list of the participant pool and our website at << *Website provided* >>.

For students at the *Institute XYZ*: You will acquire additional course credit by participating in the events mentioned above. Please make sure to bring along your participant pool activities list to receive the credit. And do let other students know about the possibility of acquiring course credit through participant pool activities. Everyone can register through the above mentioned website.

For any questions you might have about this study or the participant pool, please do not hesitate to contact us:

*[Name and email address of contact person #1]*

*[Name and email address of contact person #2]*

**Appendix 1.2: Measurement of variables**

**Argument-stretching treatment**

Categorical distinction between argument-stretched and non-argument-stretched justifications (*IssuefitdichB*). Argument-stretched category (value: 1) entails the invoked goals “national economic benefits” and “free market.” Not-argument-stretched category (value: 2) entails the invoked goals “social justice”, “European economic benefits”, and “European identity”. Also used as a dummy variable “Not argument-stretched” (with “argument-stretched” as the reference category) in some analyses.

**Validity judgment (argument validity)**

“Irrespective of whether you have the same opinion or not, how valid did you find the justification given by Herbert Brueckner for his vote in the European Parliament”. Original scale (variable name *mesqual*): 0 = justification used in the article is not valid at all; 1 = not valid; 2 = not particularly valid 3 = neither one way nor the other; 4 = somewhat valid; 5 = valid; 6 = very valid. Also used on 0 to 1 scale (*MesqualB*) and 0 to 100 scale (*MesqualC*).

**Policy support**

“On a thermometer scale, numbers between 50 and 100 mean that you have a ‘warm feeling’, that is a positive opinion. The larger the number the more positive the opinion. Numbers between 0 and 50 mean that you have a ‘cold feeling’, that is a negative opinion. The smaller the number, the more negative the opinion. Using the thermometer scale from 0 to 100, what is your opinion about the Euro-tax, which was discussed in the article you just read?” (variable name *dvissue).*

**Politician support**

“On a thermometer scale, numbers between 50 and 100 mean that you have a ‘warm feeling’, that is a positive opinion. The larger the number the more positive the opinion. Numbers between 0 and 50 mean that you have a ‘cold feeling’, that is a negative opinion. The smaller the number, the more negative the opinion. Using the thermometer scale from 0 to 100, what is your opinion about Herbert Brückner, who was quoted in the article you just read?” (variable name *dvgiver).*

**Account satisfaction**

“On a thermometer scale, numbers between 50 and 100 mean that you have a ‘warm feeling’, that is a positive opinion. The larger the number the more positive the opinion. Numbers between 0 and 50 mean that you have a ‘cold feeling’, that is a negative opinion. The smaller the number, the more negative the opinion. Using the thermometer scale from 0 to 100, how satisfied are you with the explanation Herbert Brückner provided for his vote on the Euro-tax initiative in the European Parliament?” (variable name *dvacct).*

**Overall support for the European Union**

We would like to ask you what you generally think of the European Union (EU). Please evaluate the EU using the feeling thermometer we mentioned earlier on. Numbers between 50 and 100 mean that you have a ‘warm feeling’, that is a positive opinion about the EU. The larger the number the more positive the opinion. Numbers between 0 and 50 mean that you have a ‘cold feeling’, that is a negative opinion about the EU. The smaller the number, the more negative the opinion. Using the thermometer scale from 0 to 100, what is your opinion about the European Union?” (variable name *dveuther).*

**(Prior) goal support**

The variable identifies support for the specific goal from different argument-stretching treatment categories received by a participant. The five constituent measures of this variable (each used for the related justification goal treatment) are based on scales that are constructed from three or four Likert-style questions asking participants to indicate their relative agreement or disagreement with a statement (5-point scale). All these questions are asked pre-treatment. (variable name for the 0-1 scale: *pregotreatB2\_1).*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Items and scale reliability | References |
| Participants receiving European identity goal in argument-stretching treatment: *Support for European identity* | “Being European is part of my identity.” | Measurement based on Castano and Izerbyt (1998), and Castano et al. (2003, 738-739) |
| “I don’t identify with other Europeans.” *(reverse coded)* |
| “It is important for me to be European.” |
| Scale range from 0 (lowest support) to 12 (greatest support). Cronbach alpha = 0.61 |
| Participants receiving free market goal in argument-stretching treatment: *Support for free market* | “Letting the government get involved in the economy is often better than relying on private enterprise.” *(reverse coded)* | Measurement adapted from standard socialism-capitalism scales used in national and comparative surveys (cf. Heath et al. 1994) |
| “Overall, trade unions interfere too much.” |
| “We would all be better off if the government did not get involved in the economy as much as it does.” |
| “Every man for himself and every woman for herself means that we are all going to be better off in the end.” |
| Scale range from 0 (lowest support) to 16 (greatest support). Cronbach alpha = 0.73 |
| Participants receiving social justice goal in argument-stretching treatment: *Support for social justice* | “It is the responsibility of the government to reduce the differences in income between people with high incomes and those with low incomes.” | Measurement adapted from standard socialism-capitalism scales used in national and comparative surveys (cf. Heath et al. 1994) |
| “Government should make sure that everyone has access to health services, unemployment benefits, and funds for retirement.” |
| “It is important to support those who are worse-off” |
| Scale range from 0 (lowest support) to 12 (greatest support). Cronbach alpha = 0.68 |
| Participants receiving national economic benefits goal in argument-stretching treatment: *Support for national economic benefits* | “The government should make sure to very carefully control the activities of foreign companies in Germany.” | Measurement based on Baughn and Yaprak (1996, 777) |
| “We should only buy products from other countries that we cannot produce ourselves in Germany.” |
| “Companies that outsource their factories to countries outside of Germany should be fined.” |
| “It is important for German companies to end up victorious in competitions with foreign companies.” |
| Scale range from 0 (lowest support) to 16 (greatest support). Cronbach alpha = 0.65 |
| Participants receiving European economic benefits justification in argument-stretching treatment: *Support for European economic benefits* | “The transfer of European technologies to non-European companies should be strictly controlled.” | Measurement based on Baughn and Yaprak (1996, 777) |
| “When Europeans buy products from non-European companies, they are responsible for other Europeans’ losing their job.” |
| “Companies that outsource their factories to countries outside of Europe are shirking their responsibility.” |
| “It is important for Europe to win the upper hand in trade relations with countries outside of Europe.” |
| Scale range from 0 (lowest support) to 16 (greatest support). Cronbach alpha = 0.71 |

**Prior policy support**

Measurement is based on a semantic association test developed by Castano et al. (2003). In the following, I provide the list of words I used to conduct the semantic association test (in the study, word order is randomized, and words appear in one single list, without references to “positive”, “neutral”, and “negative”).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Positive | Neutral | Negative |
| Enthusiasm  Satisfaction  Trust  Appreciation  Approval | Disinterest  Indifference  Detachment  Aloofness  Neutrality | Uneasiness  Irritation  Distrust  Anger  Rejection |

Participants are told, pre-treatment, to select 5 words that “best describe their thoughts about the European Union.” The positive items are coded as +1, the neutral ones as 0, and the negative ones as -1. The scale is constructed by summing the items and rescaling them to a scale from 0 (lowest level of prior policy support for the European Union) to 1 (greatest level of prior policy support). (Variable name, 0-1 scale: *Preeulike\_1)*

**Party affiliation of the fictitious MEP**

A categorical variable, as well as an equivalent set of dummy variables, identifying the randomly assigned party affiliation of the explainer, the Member of the European Parliament (MEP) Herbert Brueckner (1=CDU, 2=SPD, 3=Left Party, 4=Greens). (variable name *treatpar)*

**Party cueing**

The following question is asked pre-treatment to measure party cueing direction (via party identification) for all parties included in the study. The variable identifies the party identification score for the party appearing in a participant’s treatment condition.

“We would like to know what you are thinking about the various political parties currently represented in the German parliament. Please evaluate each of the parties using a so-called feeling thermometer. Numbers between 50 and 100 mean that you have a ‘warm feeling’, that is a positive opinion, about the party. The larger the number the more positive the opinion. Numbers between 0 and 50 mean that you have a ‘cold feeling’, that is a negative opinion, about the party. The smaller the number, the more negative the opinion. On a feeling thermometer from 0 to 100, what is your opinion about the *(CDU, SPD, Greens, Left Party)*?” (variable name, 0-1 scale: *preidtreat\_1*

**Political sophistication**

Political sophistication is measured by summing the correct answers to the following six political knowledge questions (a mix of multiple choice and open ended) about the EU and European integration (*variable name for 0-6 scale: polsoph, for 0-1 scale: polsophA*)

1. When were the “Treaties of Rome” signed? (“1995”, “2001”, “1957”, “1944)
2. How many member states currently constitute the European Union? (28)
3. Which of the following is NOT an institution of the European Union? (“Commission”, “European Parliament”, “Security Council”, “Council of Ministers”)
4. Which of the following statements is true? (“The members of the European Parliament are elected by the citizens of Europe”, “The members of the European Parliament are nominated by the European Commission”, “The members of the European Parliament are nominated by their national governments”, “There is no such thing as a European Parliament”)
5. The “Treaty on European Union” was signed in which city in 1992? (“Maastricht”)
6. Which one of the following statements is NOT true? (“The Treaty of Lisbon unites all national armies under the control of the EU”, “The European Central Bank determines interest rates for the countries using the Euro currency”, “The European Union decides about tariffs on American imports”, “The European Court of Justice can impose decisions of the EU against national governments”)

**Need for cognition**

A continuous measure of need for cognition was created on a scale from 0 (lowest need for cognition) to 16 (highest need) by summing participant’s degrees of agreement with each of the following statements (on a scale of 0, do not agree at all, to 4, agree completely): “I usually end up deliberating about issues even when they do not affect me personally”, “I like tasks that require little thought once I’ve learned them” *(reverse coded)*, “The idea of relying on thought to make my way to the top appeals to me”, “I like to have the responsibility of handling a situation that requires a lot of thinking” (cf. Cacioppo and Petty 1982). [Variable name, 0-16 scale: *needcogA*].

**Social class**

"If you were asked to use one of the following labels, which social class would you say your parents belong to?" (1=working class, 2=lower middle class, 3=middle class, 4=upper middle class, 5=upper class). (Variable name *clsfam*)

**Age**

“How old are you?” (Variable name *age*)

**Gender**

“Are you male or female?” (0=male, 1=female). (Variable name *sex*)

**Political interest**

“How interested are you in politics?” (from 1=lowest to 4=highest). (Variable name *oplea1*)

**Left-right position**

Self-identified position on a scale from 0 (left) to 10 (right), with 5 as an explicit middle point. (Variable name *lrind*)

**Prior awareness of the Euro-tax policy**

“How familiar were you with the proposal to introduce a Euro-tax before reading the article in the Weser-Kurier?” (0=not aware at all, 1=not aware, 2=not particularly aware, 3=somewhat aware, 4=aware, 5=very aware). (Variable name *prioraware*)

**Need for evaluation**

Scale from 0 (lowest need for evaluation) to 16 (highest need) created from four items: “I enjoy strongly liking and disliking new things”, “I often prefer to remain neutral about complex issues” *(reverse coded),* “I like to decide new things are really good or really bad”, “I only form strong opinions when I have to” *(reverse coded),* (cf. Jarvis and Petty 1996). (Variable name *needevalA*)

**Political trust**

Varaible scaled from 0 (lowest trust) to 24 (highest) created from six items, each measured on a Likert-scale (0 = do not agree at all; 1 = do not agree; 2 = neither one way nor the other; 3 = agree; 4 = agree strongly): “Whatever its faults, our form of government is still the best for us”, “There is not much about our form of government to be proud of” *(reverse coded)*, “I would rather live in our system of government than any other I can think of”, “We can generally expect people to do the right thing when they take on public office”, If we do not pay close attention, our elected politicians will cater to special interests rather than what is good for the pople” (*reverse coded*)”, “Many leading politicians are not as honest as voters should be able to expect” (see McGraw and Hubbard 1996). (Variable name *poltr*)

**Political efficacy**

Scale from 0 (lowest efficacy) to 24 (highest) created from six items, each measured on a Likert-scale (0 = do not agree at all; 1 = do not agree; 2 = neither one way nor the other; 3 = agree; 4 = agree strongly): “I am well qualified to participate in politics”, “I could do as good a job in public office as most other people”, “Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that someone like me can’t understand what’s going on” *(reverse coded), “*People like me have no influence on what the government does” (*reverse coded),* “Elections cannot get the government to respond to people’s ideas” *(reverse coded), “Politicians do not care about what people like me are thinking” (reverse coded).* (Variable name *poleff*)

**Religiosity**

"How often do you attend religious services? (such as going to church, participating in communal prayers etc.)" Response options are 1=never, 2=almost never, 3=a few times a year, 4=once or twice a month, 5=once a week, 6=several times a week). (Variable name relsrv).

**Appendix 1.3: Tests of treatment effectiveness**

**1.3.1 Varying justification goals**

*Validity judgments for different randomly assigned goals (marginal means from one-way ANOVA)*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Mean | SE | N |
| European identity justification | 64.0 | 2.96 | 57 |
| Free market justification | 50.0 | 2.88 | 60 |
| Social justice justification | 65.7 | 3.04 | 54 |
| National economic benefits justification | 49.7 | 3.16 | 50 |
| European economic benefits justification | 64.9 | 2.99 | 56 |
| Overall (grand mean) | 58.9 | 1.35 | 277 |

*Test of overall group difference between randomly assigned policy justifications in terms of validity judgment (from one way ANOVA)*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Assigned justification |
| Treatment Effect | F = 7.54  (p = 0.00) |
| R2 | 0.10 |
| N | 277 |

*Tests of specific group differences between justifications in terms of validity judgments (SE in parentheses, significance levels Bonferroni-adjusted for multiple comparisons)*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | European identity justification | Free market justification | Social justice justification | National economic benefits justification | European economic benefits justification |
| European identity justification |  | 14.0 \*\*\*  (4.13) | -1.71  (4.24) | 14.4 \*\*  (4.33) | -0.85  (4.20) |
| Free market justification |  |  | -15.7 \*\*\*  (4.19) | 0.33  (4.28) | -14.9 \*\*\*  (4.15) |
| Social justice justification |  |  |  | 16.1 \*\*\*  (4.38) | 0.86  (4.26) |
| National economic benefits justification |  |  |  |  | -15.2 \*\*\*  (4.35) |
| European economic benefits justification |  |  |  |  |  |

*Tests of specific group differences between justifications in terms of validity judgments (SE in parentheses, significance levels not adjusted for multiple comparisons)*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | European identity justification | Free market justification | Social justice justification | National benefits justification | European benefits justification |
| European identity justification |  | 14.04 \*\*\*  (4.13) | -1.71  (4.24) | 14.4 \*\*\*  (4.33) | -0.85  (4.20) |
| Free market justification |  |  | -15.7 \*\*\*  (4.19) | 0.33  (4.28) | -14.9 \*\*\*  (4.15) |
| Social justice justification |  |  |  | 16.1 \*\*\*  (4.38) | 0.86  (4.26) |
| National benefits justification |  |  |  |  | -15.2 \*\*\*  (4.35) |
| European benefits justification |  |  |  |  |  |

**1.3.2 Varying treatment conditions**

*Validity judgments according to treatment condition (one-way ANOVA)*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Mean | SE | N |
| Argument-stretching | 49.8 | 2.12 | 110 |
| No argument-stretching | 64.9 | 1.72 | 167 |
| Grand Mean | 57.4 | 1.37 | 277 |

*Test of overall group differences between treatment conditions in terms of validity judgments*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Argument-stretching treatment (*argument stretched* and *argument not stretched*) |
| Treatment Effect | F = 30.3  (p = 0.00) |
| R2 | 0.10 |
| N | 277 |

*Tests of specific group differences between treatment conditions in terms of validity judgments (SE in parentheses)*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Argument-stretching | No argument-stretching |
| Argument-stretching |  | 15.02 (2.73) \*\*\* |
| No argument-stretching | -15.02 (2.73) \*\*\* |  |

*Notes:* In tests of specific group differences using one-way ANOVA, cells show mean differences between different conditions (read from left to right) with SE in parentheses. In all tables, significance levels (p) are identified as follows: \* 0.1; \*\* 0.05; \*\*\* 0.01.

**Appendix 1.4: Full models for tests of hypotheses**

**1.4.1 Tests of Hypothesis 1 (Politician Support) and Hypothesis 2 (Policy Support): subjective-message approach, regression coefficients**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Model | --- 1 ---  DV Politician Support | --- 2 ---  DV Policy Support |
| No argument stretching | 10.5 \*\*\*  (2.47) | 5.67 \*\*  (2.61) |
| Constant | 46.3 \*\*\*  (1.92) | 52.4 \*\*\*  (2.02) |
| R2 | 0.06 | 0.02 |
| N | 282 | 282 |

*Notes*: Dependent variables are politician support (0 to 100) and policy support (0 to 100). Cells contain OLS regression coefficients, with standard errors in parantheses, and significance levels (p) identified as follows: \* 0.1; \*\* 0.05; \*\*\* 0.01. Treatment variable *No argument-stretching* is a dummy variable, with *argument-stretching* as the reference group.

**1.4.2 Tests of Hypothesis 1 (Politician Support) and Hypothesis 2 (Policy Support): subjective-message approach, marginal effects and group differences**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | DV politician support | DV policy support |
| Grand Mean (SE) | 51.5 (1.24) | 55.3 (1.30) |
| Mean (SE) for *no argument-stretching* | 56.7 (1.56) | 58.1 (1.64) |
| Mean (SE) for *argument-stretching* | 46.3 (1.92) | 52.4 (2.02) |
| Mean difference (SE and significance level)  *no argument stretching – argument stretching* | 10.5 (2.47) \*\*\* | 5.67 (2.61) \*\* |
| Effect of argument-stretching treatment | F = 18.0 (p = 0.00) | F = 4.73 (p = 0.03) |
| N | 282 | 282 |

*Notes*:Coefficients and marginal effects are from a one way ANOVA test of group differences between the two categories of the experimental treatment (*argument-stretching* and *no argument stretching*) in terms of two dependent variables (*policy support* and *politician support*), both scaled from 0 to 100. Significance levels (p) for mean difference estimates are identified as follows: \* 0.1; \*\* 0.05; \*\*\* 0.01.

**1.4.3 Tests of Hypothesis 1 (Politician support) and Hypothesis 2 (Policy support): subjective-recipient approach, OLS regression coefficients**

*1.4.3.1 Politician Support*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model | --- 1 --- | --- 2 --- | --- 3 --- | --- 4 --- | --- 5 --- | --- 6 --- |
| Argument validity | 47.8 \*\*\*  (4.59) | 45.9 \*\*\* (4.66) | 44.7 \*\*\*  (4.70) | 43.0 \*\*\* (4.76) | 42.0 \*\*\*  (4.53) | 38.3 \*\*\* (4.69) |
| Prior policy support |  | 12.5 \*\*\*  (4.30) |  | 11.6 \*\*\*  (4.28) |  | 9.04 \*\* (4.14) |
| Prior goal support |  |  | 10.4 \*\*  (4.05) | 10.3 \*\*  (4.07) |  | 9.40 \*\*  (3.91) |
| Party cueing |  |  |  |  | 21.5 \*\*\*  (4.01) | 20.1 \*\*\*  (4.05) |
| Constant | 24.4 \*\*\*  (2.91) | 17.9 \*\*\*  (3.57) | 20.5 \*\*\*  (3.25) | 14.5 \*\*\*  (3.78) | 16.9 \*\*\*  (3.09) | 9.05 \*\* (3.79) |
| R2 | 0.28 | 0.31 | 0.30 | 0.32 | 0.35 | 0.38 |
| N | 277 | 272 | 277 | 272 | 275 | 270 |

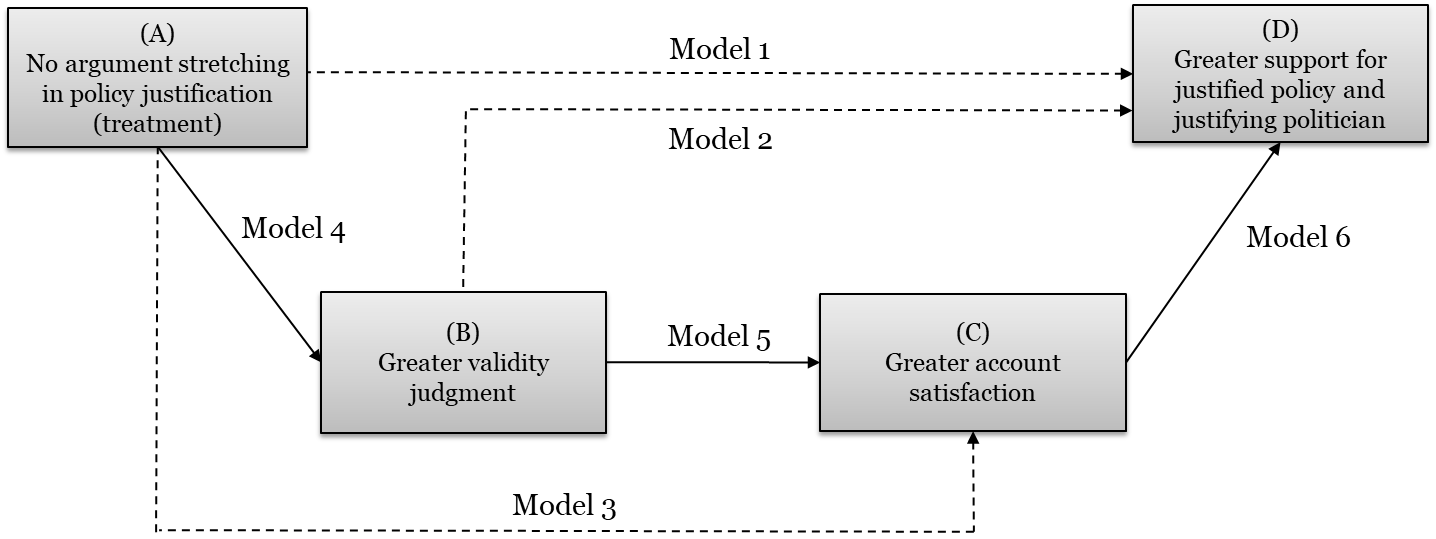
*1.4.3.2 Policy Support*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model | --- 1 --- | --- 2 --- | --- 3 --- | --- 4 --- | --- 5 --- | --- 6 --- | --- 7 --- | --- 8 --- | --- 9 --- |
| Argument validity | 40.1 \*\*\* (4.99) | 35.6 \*\*\* (4.93) | 38.5 \*\*\*  (5.16) | 34.5 \*\*\*  (5.08) | 37.1 \*\*\*  (3.51) | 32.7 \*\*\*  (5.22) |  |  |  |
| Prior policy support |  | 23.3 \*\*\* (4.55) |  | 22.9 \*\*\* (4.56) |  | 21.7 \*\*\*  (4.60) |  |  | 25.7 \*\*\*  (4.89) |
| Prior goal support |  |  | 5.06  (4.45) | 4.11  (4.34) |  | 4.07  (4.35) | 13.2 \*\*\*  (4.70) | 11.9 \*\*  (4.63) | 9.95 \*\*  (4.52) |
| Party cueing |  |  |  |  | 9.87 \*\*  (4.56) | 6.95  (4.51) |  | 16.3 \*\*\*  (4.77) | 13.0 \*\*\*  (4.70) |
| Constant | 32.2 \*\*\* (3.16) | 20.8 \*\*\* (3.77) | 30.3 \*\*\*  (3.57) | 10.4 \*\*\*  (4.03) | 29.0 \*\*\*  (3.51) | 17.7 \*\*\*  (4.22) | 48.6 \*\*\*  (2.86) | 41.2 \*\*\*  (3.50) | 28.6 \*\*\*  (4.11) |
| R2 | 0.19 | 0.26 | 0.19 | 0.26 | 0.20 | 0.27 | 0.03 | 0.07 | 0.16 |
| N | 277 | 272 | 277 | 272 | 275 | 270 | 282 | 280 | 274 |

*Notes*: Dependent variables are politician support (0 to 100) in the first table and policy support (0 to 100) in the second table. Cells contain OLS regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses, and significance levels (p) identified as follows: \* 0.1; \*\* 0.05; \*\*\* 0.01. Independent variables are on 0 to 1 scales.

**1.4.4 Bootstrapping test of Hypothesis 3 (Mediation)**

*1.4.4.1 Constituent variables and models of mediation hypothesis*

****

*1.4.4.2 Mediation of argument stretching treatment (A) on politician support (D) via account satisfaction (C), as specified by models 1, 3, and 6 in figure 1.4.4.1*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model: *no argument-stretching (A)* -> *account satisfaction* (C) -> *politician support* (D) [N = 282] | Effect | SE | P | Lower CI | Upper CI | Partially standardized effect |
| Total effect of A on D | 10.5 | 2.47 | 0.00 | 5.62 | 15.3 | 0.50 |
| Direct effect of A on D | -0.15 | 1.84 | 0.93 | -3.77 | 3.46 | -0.01 |
|  | Effect | Bootstrapped SE |  | Bootstrapped lower CI | Bootstrapped upper CI |  |
| Indirect (mediated) effect of A on D via C | 10.63 | 1.96 |  | 6.87 | 14.60 |  |
| Partially standardized mediation effect | 0.51 | 0.09 |  | 0.34 | 0.68 |  |

*1.4.4.3 Mediation of argument stretching treatment (A) on policy support (D) via account satisfaction (C), as specified by models 1, 3, and 6 in figure 1.4.4.1*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model: *no argument-stretching (A)* -> *account satisfaction* (C) -> policy *support* (D) [N = 282] | Effect | SE | P | Lower CI | Upper CI | Partially standardized effect |
| Total effect of A on D | 5.67 | 2.61 | 0.03 | 0.54 | 10.8 | 0.26 |
| Direct effect of A on D | -3.25 | 2.28 | 0.16 | -7.74 | 1.24 | -0.15 |
|  | Effect | Bootstrapped SE |  | Bootstrapped lower CI | Bootstrapped upper CI |  |
| Indirect (mediated) effect of A on D via C | 8.92 | 1.77 |  | 5.67 | 12.6 |  |
| Partially standardized mediation effect | 0.41 | 0.08 |  | 0.27 | 0.57 |  |

*1.4.4.4 Mediation of validity judgment (B) on politician support (D) via account satisfaction (C), as specified by models 2, 5, and 6 in figure 1.4.4.1*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model: *validity judgment (B)* -> *account satisfaction* (C) -> *politician* *support* (D) [N = 277] | Effect | SE | P | Lower CI | Upper CI | Partially standardized effect | Completely standardized effect |
| Total effect of B on D | 47.8 | 4.58 | 0.00 | 38.8 | 56.8 | 2.28 | 0.53 |
| Direct effect of B on D | 5.52 | 4.94 | 0.27 | -4.21 | 15.2 | 0.26 | 0.06 |
|  | Effect | Bootstrapped SE |  | Bootstrapped lower CI | Bootstrapped upper CI |  |  |
| Indirect (mediated) effect of B on D via C | 42.3 | 4.56 |  | 33.6 | 51.3 |  |  |
| Partially standardized mediation effect | 2.01 | 0.18 |  | 1.68 | 2.37 |  |  |
| Completely standardized mediation effect | 0.47 | 0.04 |  | 0.39 | 0.55 |  |  |

*1.4.4.5 Mediation of validity judgment (B) on policy support (D) via account satisfaction (C), as specified by models 2, 5, and 6 in figure 1.4.4.1*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model: *validity judgment (B)* -> *account satisfaction* (C) -> *policy support* (D) [N= 277] | Effect | SE | P | Lower CI | Upper CI | Partially standardized effect | Completely standardized effect |
| Total effect of B on D | 40.1 | 4.99 | 0.00 | 30.3 | 49.9 | 1.87 | 0.44 |
| Direct effect of B on D | 8.06 | 6.13 | 0.19 | -4.01 | 20.1 | 0.38 | 0.09 |
|  | Effect | Bootstrapped SE |  | Bootstrapped lower CI | Bootstrapped upper CI |  |  |
| Indirect (mediated) effect of B on D via C | 32.0 | 5.14 |  | 22.1 | 42.2 |  |  |
| Partially standardized mediation effect | 1.49 | 0.21 |  | 1.08 | 1.91 |  |  |
| Completely standardized mediation effect | 0.35 | 0.05 |  | 0.25 | 0.45 |  |  |

*1.4.4.6 Robustness: mediation of treatment (A) on account satisfaction (C) via validity judgment (B), as specified by models 3, 4, and 5 in figure 1.4.4.1*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model: *no argument-stretching (A)* -> *validity judgment* (B) -> *account satisfaction* (C) [N=277] | Effect | SE | P | Lower CI | Upper CI | Partially standardized effect |
| Total effect of A on C | 17.8 | 2.95 | 0.00 | 12.0 | 23.6 | 0.70 |
| Direct effect of A on C | 7.51 | 2.40 | 0.00 | 2.79 | 12.2 | 0.29 |
|  | Effect | Bootstrapped SE |  | Bootstrapped lower CI | Bootstrapped upper CI |  |
| Indirect (mediated) effect of A on C via B | 10.3 | 2.01 |  | 6.46 | 14.29 |  |
| Partially standardized mediation effect | 0.40 | 0.07 |  | 0.26 | 0.55 |  |

*1.4.4.7 Serial mediation, as outlined in figure 1.4.4.1 (A -> B -> C -> D)*

*Dependent variable politician support*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model: *no argument-stretching (A)* -> *validity judgment* (B) -> *account satisfaction* (C) -> politician support [N = 277] | Effect | SE | P | Lower CI | Upper CI | Partially standardized effect |
| Total serial effect of A on D | 10.7 | 2.50 | 0.00 | 5.83 | 15.7 | 0.51 |
| Direct serial effect of A on D | -0.36 | 1.87 | 0.85 | -4.04 | 3.32 | -0.02 |
|  | Effect | Bootstrapped SE |  | Bootstrapped lower CI | Bootstrapped upper CI |  |
| Combined indirect (mediated) serial effect based on constituent mediated effects of A on D via B and C | 11.1 | 2.04 |  | 7.22 | 15.3 |  |
| Indirect (mediated) constituent serial effect of A on D via B | 0.85 | 0.89 |  | -0.77 | 2.76 |  |
| Indirect (mediated) constituent serial effect of A on D via C | 4.33 | 1.55 |  | 1.38 | 7.46 |  |
| Indirect (mediated) constituent serial effect of A on D via B and C | 5.94 | 1.28 |  | 3.59 | 8.60 |  |
| Partially standardized combined serial mediation effect | 0.53 | 0.09 |  | 0.35 | 0.71 |  |
| Partially standardized serial mediation effect of A on D via B | 0.04 | 0.04 |  | -0.04 | 0.13 |  |
| Partially standardized serial mediation effect of A on D via C | 0.21 | 0.07 |  | 0.07 | 0.35 |  |
| Partially standardized serial mediation effect of A on D via B and C | 0.28 | 0.06 |  | 0.18 | 0.40 |  |

*Dependent variable policy support*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model: *no argument-stretching (A)* -> *validity judgment* (B) -> *account satisfaction* (C) -> *policy support* [N = 277] | Effect | SE | P | Lower CI | Upper CI | Partially standardized effect |
| Total serial effect of A on D | 6.28 | 2.61 | 0.02 | 1.13 | 11.4 | 0.29 |
| Direct serial effect of A on D | -3.08 | 2.31 | 0.18 | -7.63 | 1.47 |  |
|  | Effect | Bootstrapped SE |  | Bootstrapped lower CI | Bootstrapped upper CI |  |
| Combined indirect (mediated) serial effect based on constituent mediated effects of A on D via B and C | 9.36 | 1.86 |  | 5.97 | 13.2 |  |
| Indirect (mediated) constituent serial effect of A on D via B | 1.36 | 1.12 |  | -0.75 | 3.68 |  |
| Indirect (mediated) constituent serial effect of A on D via C | 3.37 | 1.28 |  | 1.05 | 6.07 |  |
| Indirect (mediated) constituent serial effect of A on D via B and C | 4.63 | 1.16 |  | 2.59 | 7.15 |  |
| Partially standardized combined serial mediation effect | 0.44 | 0.08 |  | 0.29 | 0.60 |  |
| Partially standardized serial mediation effect of A on D via B | 0.06 | 0.05 |  | -0.03 | 0.17 |  |
| Partially standardized serial mediation effect of A on D via C | 0.16 | 0.06 |  | 0.05 | 0.28 |  |
| Partially standardized serial mediation effect of A on D via B and C | 0.22 | 0.05 |  | 0.13 | 0.32 |  |

*Notes*: The bootstrapping test for mediation proposed by Hayes and Preacher (2014) and Hayes (2018) is used here to evaluate the mediation hypothesis H 3. First, the test is used to evaluate the expected separate mediation effects specified in figure 1, which were subjected to tests of joint significance in section 1.4.6: A -> D -> C (subjective-message approach with dependent variable politician support), A -> D -> C (subjective-message approach with dependent variable policy support), B -> D -> C (subjective-recipient approach with dependent variable politician support), B -> D -> C (subjective-recipient approach with dependent variable policy support), A -> B -> C (robustness test for mediation of treatment on account satisfaction via validity judgment. The standardized effects are proposed by Hayes (2018) and MacKinnon (2008). They allow for comparisons of mediation effect sizes across samples and model specifications. Partially standardized effects are given for all models, completely standardized effects are given for models with continuous indepdendent variables. Second, the bootstrapping test is used to evaluate the full serial mediation model described by figure 1 (A -> B -> C -> D). For all tests, the number of bootstrap samples is 10.000, and confidence intervals are calculated at a level of 95 %.

**Appendix 1.5: Additional analyses**

**Sample composition: descriptive statistics for participant characteristics (see Appendix 1.2 for measurement details)**

|  | N | Range | Mean | SE Mean | SD |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Age | 279 | 18-73 | 28.06 | 0.64 | 10.73 |
| Political sophistication | 280 | 0-6 | 3.05 | 0.10 | 1.74 |
| Political interest | 281 | 1-3 | 2.31 | 0.04 | 0.65 |
| Prior awareness of Euro-tax policy | 283 | 0-5 | 1.63 | 0.08 | 1.25 |
| Left-right position | 281 | 0-9 | 3.53 | 0.11 | 1.78 |
| Need for cognition | 280 | 5-16 | 10.53 | 0.14 | 2.30 |
| Need for evaluation | 281 | 3-15 | 9.10 | 0.14 | 2.41 |
| Political trust | 279 | 0-22 | 11.7 | 0.21 | 3.59 |
| Political efficacy | 279 | 3-23 | 12.7 | 0.21 | 3.57 |
| Religiosity | 283 | 1-6 | 1.79 | 0.06 | 0.97 |

|  | N | Number of participants (and percentages) in different categories |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Social class | 278 | 1 -> 40 (14.4 %), 2 -> 46 (16.5 %), 3 -> 134 (48.2 %), 4 -> 50 (18 %), 5 -> 8 (2.9 %) |
| Gender | 278 | 0 -> 110 (39.6 %), 1 -> 168 (60.4 %) |

**Homogeneity of treatment groups**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | F (p) values for effect of argument-stretching treatment on various participant characteristics |
| Age | 0.11 (0.74) |
| Political sophistication | 0.31 (0.58) |
| Left-right position | 0.11 (0.74) |
| Need for cognition | 0.07 (0.80) |
| Need for evaluation | 0.23 (0.63) |
| Gender | 0.78 (0.38) |
| Social class | 0.37 (0.54) |

**Appendix 2.1: Experimental materials**

**2.1.1 Reproduction of the treatment article**

****

**2.1.2 English translation of treatment article**

MEP Brückner from Bremen *[PARTY AFFILIATION RANDOMLY VARIED]*: “*[STRETCHED VERSUS NON-STRETCHED VERSUS NO JUSTIFICATION RANDOMLY VARIED]”*

Euro tax coming soon?

Brussels/Bremen (dpa/mk). The European Parliament in Brussels voted in favor of introducing a so-called Euro-tax yesterday. The vote was close, with 347 legislators voting yes, 12 abstentions, and 329 votes against. The topic had been subject to a long and controversial debate, before it disappeared from the top of the political agenda as a result of the financial and debt crisis. This made the decision of several Members of the European Parliament to unearth and bring to a vote the almost forgotten Euro-tax initiative of the European Commission from 2009 all the more surprising.

The member states of the EU would have to support the measure to turn the vote of the European Parliament into political reality. Representatives from all political camps unanimously described this as rather unlikely for the time being. The initiative of the European Parliament was still successful, according to experts, because it placed the issue back on the political agenda. A Euro-tax would provide the EU with a source of income independent of the control of its member states, which it does not currently have. Importantly, the measure would not affect overall levels of taxation. EU citizens would not have to pay any additional taxes. Instead, existing revenue of the member states would effectively be transferred under the immediate control of the EU. Both supporters and opponents emphasize that the introduction of a Euro-tax would entail a considerable increase in political authority for the European Union.

Herbert Brückner *[PARTY AFFILIATION RANDOMLY VARIED]*, member of the European Parliament (MEP) from Bremen, voted in favor of the Euro-tax in yesterday’s session. In response to a question from the Weser Kurier, Brückner justified his decision as follows: “The introduction of a Euro tax is an important step toward *[STRETCHED VERSUS NON-STRETCHED VERSUS NO JUSTIFICATION RANDOMLY VARIED].* Only a strong and independent EU can take the necessary measures to achieve this goal. In order to do this, the EU needs its own source of revenue that is shielded from the influence of its member states.”

**2.1.3 Notes on treatment article**

The newspaper is identified as the “Weser-Kurier”, a quality yet little known daily for the city of Bremen and its surroundings, which provides local, national, and international coverage. As the European Parliament (EP) does not have the right of initiative (that is the right to introduce new legislation), the article states that the vote in the EP is based on an “almost forgotten” initiative of the European Commission (which has the right of initiative) from 2009. The vote on the resolution to introduce a Euro-tax is described as successful yet close (347 MEPs voting yes, 329 no, and 12 abstaining) to emphasize the controversial nature of the policy. The policy is described as meaningful and important, but to ensure the believability of the treatment, the article also states that the Euro-tax is unlikely to be introduced (despite the positive vote in the EP), due to the resistance of the EU member states (which have to agree on the measure through the European Council respectively the Council of Ministers). The term “dpa” in the author by-line identifies the largest German news agency (Deutsche Presse Agentur).

**2.1.4 Reproduction of the debriefing note handed to participants after the experiment**

**Vielen herzlichen Dank für Ihre Teilnahme an dieser Studie!**

Ihre Teilnahme ist für wissenschaftliche Studien von großer Bedeutung. Sie unterstützen so die Forschung zu den politischen Interessen der Menschen und helfen Wissenschaftler/oinnen, Abäufe in der Politik besser zu verstehen.

**Hintergrundinformationen zur Studie**

Bei der Umfrage, an der Sie gerade teilgenommen haben, geht es darum, wie zufrieden Menschen mit der Qualität politischer Informationen sind, und wie dies ihre Einstellungen beeinflusst. Dazu wurden in dieser Studie gewisse Informationen “fabriziert” und systematisch zwischen den Teilnehmer/innen variiert. So gibt es tatsächlich eine politische Auseinandersetzung über die Einführung einer Europa-Steuer, aber die beschriebene Abstimmung im Euroipäischen Parlament sowie den Zeitungsartikel des Weser-Kuriers hat es in dieser Form nicht gegeben. Darüber hinaus ist Herbert Brückner ein fiktives Mitglied des Europäischen Parlaments, dem verschiedene Aussagen über die Einführung einer Europa-Steuer zugeordnet wurden. Welcher/r Teilnehmer/in der Studie welche Aussage gelesen hat, wurde per Zufall entschieden.

Diese Vorgehensweise ist notwendig zur Durchfühung dieser Art von Studien und extrem wichtig für politikwissenschaftliche Forschung. Nur so ist es möglich herauszufinden, ob es überhaupt einen Unterschied macht, welche Argumente Politiker/innen verwenden, um ihre Entscheidungen zu begründen.

Falls Sie Fragen zu dieser Umfrage haben, können Sie sich gerne an das *Institut XYZ*, unter der email Adresse << *Email provided* >> wenden.

**2.1.5 English translation of the debriefing note**

The study in which you just participated investigates how satisfied people are with the quality of political information, and how this affects their opinions. To investigate this topic, we “fabricated” and systematically varied some information in this study beween different participants. There really is a political debate about the introduction of a Euro-tax, but the vote in the European Parliament and the article in the “Weser Kurier” are fictitious. The MEP Herbert Brueckner is also made up, so that we were able to assign certain political statements about the introduction of a Euro-tax to as politician. It was randomly decided, which participant received which statement.

This procedure is necessary to successfully carry out this kind of study and extremely important for political science research. It is the only way to determine accurately whether the arguments that politicians use to justify their decicions make any difference at all.

For any questions you might have about this study or the participant pool, please do not hesitate to contact us at << *Email provided* >>.

**Appendix 2.2: Measurement of variables**

**Argument-stretching treatment**

Categorical distinction between argument-stretched justification, non-argument-stretched justification, and no justification (variable names *treatstretch1* and *treatstretch5).* Not-arrgument-stretched category (value treatstretch1: 1; treatstretch5: 0) entails the invoked goals “Peace”, “Democracy”, “Benefits for Europe”, and “Performance of EU institutions.” Argument-stretched category (value treatstretch1: 0; treatstretch5: 2) entails the invoked goals “Security”, “European values”, and “Benefits for home country.” “No justification” (value treatstretch1: 2; treatstretch5: 1) identifies participants that did not receive any justification in the treatment article. Also used for dummy variables (reference group “argument stretching”) *nostret* (1 for “no argument stretching”, 0 for “argument stretching” and “no explanation”) and *noexpl* (1 for “no explanation”, 0 for “argument stretching” and “no argument stretching”).

**Validity judgment (argument validity)**

“Irrespective of whether you have the same opinion or not, how valid did you find the justification given by Herbert Brueckner for his vote in the European Parliament”. Original scale (variable name *mejup*): 1 = not at all valid, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 = very valid. 0 to 1 scale: *mejup01*. 0 to 100 scale: *mejup0\_100.*

**Policy support**

“On a thermometer scale, numbers between 50 and 100 mean that you have a ‘warm feeling’, that is a positive opinion. The larger the number the more positive the opinion. Numbers between 0 and 50 mean that you have a ‘cold feeling’, that is a negative opinion. The smaller the number, the more negative the opinion. Using the thermometer scale from 0 to 100, what is your opinion about the Euro-tax, which was discussed in the article you just read?” (variable name *thermetx).*

**Politician support**

“On a thermometer scale, numbers between 50 and 100 mean that you have a ‘warm feeling’, that is a positive opinion. The larger the number the more positive the opinion. Numbers between 0 and 50 mean that you have a ‘cold feeling’, that is a negative opinion. The smaller the number, the more negative the opinion. Using the thermometer scale from 0 to 100, what is your opinion about Herbert Brückner, who was quoted in the article you just read?” (variable name *thermpr).*

**Account satisfaction**

“On a thermometer scale, numbers between 50 and 100 mean that you have a ‘warm feeling’, that is a positive opinion. The larger the number the more positive the opinion. Numbers between 0 and 50 mean that you have a ‘cold feeling’, that is a negative opinion. The smaller the number, the more negative the opinion. Using the thermometer scale from 0 to 100, how satisfied are you with the explanation Herbert Brückner provided for his vote on the Euro-tax initiative in the European Parliament?” (variable name *thermacc)*

**Overall support for the European Union**

We would like to ask you what you generally think of European integration. Please evaluate European integration using the feeling thermometer we mentioned earlier on. Numbers between 50 and 100 mean that you have a ‘warm feeling’, that is a positive opinion about it. The larger the number the more positive the opinion. Numbers between 0 and 50 mean that you have a ‘cold feeling’, that is a negative opinion about it. The smaller the number, the more negative the opinion. Using the thermometer scale from 0 to 100, what is your opinion about European integration?” (variable name *thermeui).*

**Party affiliation of the fictitious MEP**

A categorical variable, as well as an equivalent set of dummy variables, identifying the randomly assigned party affiliation of the explainer, the Member of the European Parliament (MEP) Herbert Brueckner (1=CDU, 2=SPD, 3=Left Party, 4=Greens). (variable name *treatpar)*

**Party cueing**

The following question is asked pre-treatment to measure party cueing direction (via party identification) for all parties included in the study. The variable identifies the party identification score for the party appearing in a participant’s treatment condition.

“We would like to know what you are thinking about the various political parties currently represented in the German parliament. Please evaluate each of the parties using a so-called feeling thermometer. Numbers between 50 and 100 mean that you have a ‘warm feeling’, that is a positive opinion, about the party. The larger the number the more positive the opinion. Numbers between 0 and 50 mean that you have a ‘cold feeling’, that is a negative opinion, about the party. The smaller the number, the more negative the opinion. On a feeling thermometer from 0 to 100, what is your opinion about the *(CDU, SPD, Greens, Left Party)*?” (variable name, 0-1 scale: *partycue\_01).*

**(Prior) goal support**

The identifies support for the specific goal included in different argument-stretching treatment categories received by a participant. Support for assigned goals (security, peace, European values, democracy, benefits home country, benefits Europe, performance of EU institutions) is measured using the feeling thermometer ("Please tell us what you generally think about various goals that are being pursued in politics. Please evaluate each of these goals on a "feeling thermometer". Numbers between 50 an 100 mean that you have a "warm feeling", that is a positive opinion. The larger the number, the more positive the opinion. Numbers between 0 and 50 mean that you have a "cold feeling, that is a negative opinion. The smaller the number, the more negative the opinion.") *Respondents in no justification category received as score of 50 (neutral). Variable name, 0 to 1 scale*: *goalsupport\_01*

**Prior policy support**

Variable is based on eight questions asking participants whether a policy area should be decided at the national or European level ("Some people believe that certain policy areas should be decided separately by each national government, while others should be decided jointly within the European Union. What do you think? Which of the following policies should be decided by national governments, and which should be decided jointly within the European Union? And for which areas would you say that it does not matter?"). Included policy areas are tax policy, constitutional affairs, immigration policy, fiscal policy, labor and social affairs, environmental policies, foreign policy, security). Response options are: -1 = should be decided by home country, 1 = should be decided by the EU, 0 = does not matter to me. The variable is created by summing the values for all eight policy areas, and rescaling them to a scale of 0 (lowest support for European integration) to 1 (highest support for European integration). (variable name *pretreat\_EU\_4).*

**Age**

“How old are you?” (Variable name *age*)

**Gender**

“Are you male or female?” (0=male, 1=female). (Variable name *sex*)

**Residence (federal state)**

"In which federal state do you live?" (1 = Schleswig-Holstein, 2 = Hamburg, 3 = Niedersachsen, 4 = Bremen, 5 = NRW, 6 = Hessen, 7 = Rheinland-Pfalz, 8 = Baden-Württemberg, 9 = Bayern, 10 = Saarland, 11 = Berlin, 12 = Brandenburg, 13 = Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, 14 = Sachsen, 15 = Sachsen-Anhalt, 16 = Thüringen). (variable name *fedst*).

**Education**

"Which is the highest level of schooling you have acquired?” (1 = no degree, 2 = lower ten year degree (Hauptschule), 3 = higher ten year degree (Realschule), 4 = Lower twelve year degree (Fachhochschulreife), 5 = Higher twelve/13 year degree (Abitur)”. (variable name *edu1*).

**Social class**

"If you were asked to use one of the following labels, which social class would you say your parents belong to?" (1=working class, 2=lower middle class, 3=middle class, 4=upper middle class, 5=upper class). (Variable name *clspar*).

**Political sophistication**

Political sophistication is measured by summing the correct answers to the following six political knowledge questions (a mix of multiple choice and open ended) about the EU and European integration. (*variable name for variable on 0-1 scale: polsophA*)

1. When were the “Treaties of Rome” signed? (“1995”, “2001”, “1957”, “1944)
2. How many member states currently constitute the European Union? (28)
3. Which of the following is NOT an institution of the European Union? (“Commission”, “European Parliament”, “Security Council”, “Council of Ministers”)
4. Which of the following statements is true? (“The members of the European Parliament are elected by the citizens of Europe”, “The members of the European Parliament are nominated by the European Commission”, “The members of the European Parliament are nominated by their national governments”, “There is no such thing as a European Parliament”)
5. The “Treaty on European Union” was signed in which city in 1992? (“Maastricht”)
6. Which one of the following statements is NOT true? (“The Treaty of Lisbon unites all national armies under the control of the EU”, “The European Central Bank determines interest rates for the countries using the Euro currency”, “The European Union decides about tariffs on American imports”, “The European Court of Justice can impose decisions of the EU against national governments”)

**Political interest**

Participants are asked to indicate agreement with the statement “I am interested in politics” on a Likert-scale. (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree). (variable name *cogpol*).

**Prior awareness of Euro-tax policy**

"How familiar are you with the debate about the introduction of a Euro-tax?" (1 = not at all familiar, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 = very familiar). (variable name *mefam*).

**Left-right position**

Participants are scored on their agreement with four policy positions, each of which represents one quadrant in a two-dimensional political space composed of a socialism versus liberalism (soc-lib) and a green-alternative-libertarian versus traditional-authoritarian-national (gal-tan) dimension. Question wording: "What do you think of the following policies?" (1 = strongly reject this policy, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 = neither support nor reject, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 = strongly support this policy). Included policies are “for gay marriage” (indicative of gal position, left), “privatization” (indicative of lib position, right), “rent control” (indicative of soc position, left), and “video surveillance in public spaces” (indicative of tan position, right). Left-right position is obtained by rescaling the scores to 0 (most left positions) to 10 (most right position), summing the four values, and rescaling them to a scale from 0 to 1 (variable name *leftright*).

**Need for cognition**

Variable is measured with the most valid and reliable item from the battery used in study 1 (see appendix 1.2). Participants are asked to indicate their agreement with the statement "I frequently think about topics that do not even personally concern me" using a Likert scale response (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree). (variable name *cogsel*).

**Need for evaluation**

Variable is measured with the most valid and reliable item from the battery used in study 1 (see appendix 1.2). Participants are asked to indicate their agreement with the statement "I am only forming an opinion when it is abslutely necessary." using a Likert scale response (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree). (variable name *cogop*).

**Political trust**

Variable is measured with the most valid and reliable item from the batteries used in study 1 (see appendix 1.2). Participants are asked to indicate their agreement with the statement "I'd rather live with our form of government that a completely different one" (Response options: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree) and the statement "If we do not pay attention, our elected representatives will cater to the needs of the select few instead of the public good" (Response options: 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = disagree, 5 = strongly disagree). The two values are added (variable name *poltr*).

**Political efficacy**

Variable is measured with the most valid and reliable item from the batteries used in study 1 (see appendix 1.2). Participants are asked to indicate their agreement with the statements "Sometimes political topics are so complicated that someone like me cannot understand what's going on" and "People like me have no say in what the government is doing" (Response options: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree). The two values are added (variable name *poleff*).

**Appendix 2.3: Tests of treatment effectiveness**

**2.3.1 Varying justification goals**

*Validity judgments for different randomly assigned policy justifications (marginal means from one-way ANOVA)*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Mean | SE | N |
| Justification “Security” | 46.0 | 2.51 | 122 |
| Justification “Peace” | 54.0 | 2.57 | 116 |
| Justification “European values” | 46.1 | 2.52 | 121 |
| Justification “Democracy” | 52.6 | 2.53 | 120 |
| Justification “Benefits for Europe” | 54.8 | 2.51 | 122 |
| Justification “Benefits for home country” | 45.3 | 2.48 | 125 |
| Justification “Performance of EU institutions” | 53.9 | 2.52 | 121 |
| No justification | 23.1 | 2.47 | 126 |
| Grand Mean | 47.0 | 0.89 | 973 |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Mean | SE | N |
| Justification “Security” | 46.0 | 2.51 | 122 |
| Justification “Peace” | 54.0 | 2.58 | 116 |
| Justification “European values” | 46.1 | 2.52 | 121 |
| Justification “Democracy” | 52.6 | 2.53 | 120 |
| Justification “Benefits for Europe” | 54.8 | 2.51 | 122 |
| Justification “Benefits for home country” | 45.3 | 2.48 | 125 |
| Justification “Performance of EU institutions” | 53.9 | 2.52 | 121 |
| Grand Mean | 50.4 | 0.95 | 847 |

*Test of overall group difference between randomly assigned policy justifications in terms of validity judgment from one-way ANOVA*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Assigned justification  (including “no justification”) | Assigned justification  (without “no justification”) |
| Treatment Effect | F = 17.7  (p = 0.00) | F = 3.00  (p = 0.00) |
| R2 | 0.11 | 0.02 |
| N | 973 | 847 |

*Tests of specific group differences between justifications in terms of validity judgments (SE in parentheses, significance levels Bonferroni-adjusted for multiple comparisons)*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Security | Peace | European Values | Democracy | Benefits Europe | Benefits Country | EU performance | No justification |
| Security |  | -7.99  (3.59) | -0.13  (3.55) | -6.60  (3.56) | -8.77  (3.54) | 0.70  (3.52) | -7.90  (3.55) | 22.9 \*\*\*  (3.52) |
| Peace |  |  | 7.85  (3.60) | 1.38  (3.60) | -0.79  (3.59) | 8.69  (3.57) | 0.08  (3.60) | 30.9 \*\*\*  (3.56) |
| European Values |  |  |  | -6.47  (3.57) | -8.64  (3.55) | 0.84  (3.53) | -7.77  (3.59) | 23.0 \*\*\*  (3.52) |
| Democracy |  |  |  |  | -2.17  (3.56) | 7.30  (3.54) | -1.30  (3.57) | 29.5 \*\*\*  (3.53) |
| Benefits Europe |  |  |  |  |  | 9.47  (3.52) | 0.87  (3.55) | 31.7 \*\*\*  (3.52) |
| Benefits Country |  |  |  |  |  |  | -8.60  (3.53) | 22.2 \*\*\*  (3.49) |
| EU performance |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 30.8 \*\*\*  (3.52) |
| No justification |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

*Tests of specific group differences between justifications in terms of validity judgments (SE in parentehses, significance levels not adjusted for multiple comparisons)*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Security | Peace | European Values | Democracy | Benefits Europe | Benefits Country | EU performance | No justification |
| Security |  | -7.99 \*\*  (3.59) | -0.13  (3.55) | -6.60 \*  (3.56) | -8.77 \*\*  (3.54) | 0.70  (3.52) | -7.90 \*\*  (3.55) | 22.9 \*\*\*  (3.52) |
| Peace |  |  | 7.85 \*\*  (3.60) | 1.38  (3.60) | -0.79  (3.59) | 8.69 \*\*  (3.57) | 0.08  (3.60) | 30.9 \*\*\*  (3.56) |
| European Values |  |  |  | -6.47 \*  (3.57) | -8.64 \*\*  (3.55) | 0.84  (3.53) | -7.77 \*\*  (3.59) | 23.0 \*\*\*  (3.52) |
| Democracy |  |  |  |  | -2.17  (3.56) | 7.30 \*\*  (3.54) | -1.30  (3.57) | 29.5 \*\*\*  (3.53) |
| Benefits Europe |  |  |  |  |  | 9.47 \*\*\*  (3.52) | 0.87  (3.55) | 31.7 \*\*\*  (3.52) |
| Benefits Country |  |  |  |  |  |  | -8.60 \*\*  (3.53) | 22.2 \*\*\*  (3.49) |
| EU performance |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 30.8 \*\*\*  (3.52) |
| No justification |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**2.3.2 Varying treatment conditions**

*Validity judgments according to treatment condition (one-way ANOVA)*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Mean | SE | N |
| Argument-stretching | 45.8 | 1.44 | 368 |
| No argument-stretching | 53.8 | 1.26 | 479 |
| Overall | 49.8 | 0.96 | 847 |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Mean | SE | N |
| Argument-stretching | 45.8 | 1.44 | 368 |
| No argument-stretching | 53.8 | 1.26 | 479 |
| No justification | 23.1 | 2.46 | 126 |
| Overall | 40.9 | 1.04 | 973 |

*Test of overall group differences between treatment conditions in terms of validity judgments*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Argument-stretching treatment  (including *argument stretched*, *argument not stretched*, and *no justification*) | Argument-stretching treatment (including *argument stretched* and *argument not stretched;* excluding *no justification*) |
| Treatment Effect | F = 62.1 (p = 0.00) | F = 17.4 (p = 0.00) |
| R2 | 0.11 | 0.02 |
| N | 973 | 847 |

*Tests of specific group differences between treatment conditions in terms of validity judgments (SE in parentheses, significance levels Bonferroni-adjusted for multiple comparisons)*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | No argument-stretching | Argument-stretching | No justification |
| No argument-stretching |  | 8.02 \*\*\*  (1.91) | 30.7 \*\*\*  (2.77) |
| Argument-stretching |  |  | 22.7 \*\*\*  (2.85) |
| No justification |  |  |  |

*Tests of specific group differences between treatment conditions in terms of validity judgments (SE in parentheses, significance levels not adjusted for multiple comparisons)*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | No argument-stretching | Argument-stretching | No justification |
| No argument-stretching |  | 8.02 \*\*\*  (1.91) | 30.7 \*\*\*  (2.77) |
| Argument-stretching |  |  | 22.7 \*\*\*  (2.85) |
| No justification |  |  |  |

*Notes:* Validity judgment is measured on a 0-100 scale. In tests of specific group differences using one-way

ANOVA, cells show mean differences between different conditions (read from left to right) with SE in parentheses. In all tables, significance levels (p) are identified as follows: \* 0.1; \*\* 0.05; \*\*\* 0.01.

**Appendix 2.4: Full models for tests of hypotheses**

**2.4.1 Tests of Hypothesis 1 (Politician Support) and Hypothesis 2 (Policy Support): subjective-message approach, regression coefficients**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Model | --- 1 ---  DV Politician Support | --- 2 ---  DV Policy Support |
| No argument-stretching | 6.09 \*\*\* (1.72) | 6.41 \*\*\* (2.02) |
| No justification | -10.2 \*\*\* (2.57) | -8.43 \*\*\* (3.00) |
| Constant | 42.2 \*\*\* (1.29) | 43.3 \*\*\* (1.52) |
| R2 | 0.05 | 0.03 |
| N | 947 | 953 |

*Notes*: Dependent variables are politician support (0 to 100) and policy support (0 to 100). Cells contain OLS regression coefficients, with standard errors in parantheses, and significance levels (p) identified as follows: \* 0.1; \*\* 0.05; \*\*\* 0.01. Treatment variables *No argument-stretching* and N*o justification* are dummy variables, with *argument-stretching* as the reference group.

**2.4.2 Tests of Hypothesis 1 (Politician Support) and Hypothesis 2 (Policy Support): subjective-message approach, marginal effects and group differences**

*Argument-stretching treatment including the “no justification” category*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | DV politician support | DV policy support |
| Grand Mean (SE) | 40.8 (0.94) | 42.6 (1.09) |
| Mean (SE) for *no justification received* | 31.9 (2.22)  N=122 | 34.8 (2.59)  N=124 |
| Mean (SE) for *argument-stretched justification* | 42.2 (1.29)  N=359 | 43.3 (1.52)  N=359 |
| Mean (SE) for *non-stretched justification* | 48.2 (1.13)  N=466 | 49.7 (1.33)  N=470 |
| Mean difference (SE)  *not argument stretched – argument-stretched*  [significance level unadjusted] [Bonferroni adjusted] | 6.09 (1.72)  [\*\*\*] [\*\*\*] | 6.41 (2.02) [\*\*\*] [\*\*\*] |
| Mean difference (SE)  *argument stretched – no justification*  [significance level unadjusted] [Bonferroni adjusted] | 10.2 (2.57)  [\*\*\*] [\*\*\*] | 8.43 (3.0)  [\*\*\*] [\*\*] |
| Mean difference (SE)  *not argument stretched – no justification*  [significance level unadjusted] [Bonferroni adjusted] | 16.3 (2.49)  [\*\*\*] [\*\*\*] | 14.8 (2.91) [\*\*\*] [\*\*\*] |
| Treatment Effect F (p) for three way group difference | 22.8 (0.00) | 14.5 (0.00) |
| N | 947 | 953 |

*Argument-stretching treatment without the “no justification” category*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | DV politician support | DV policy support |
| Grand Mean (SE) | 45.2 (0.87) | 46.5 (1.02) |
| Mean (SE) for *argument-stretched justification* | 42.2 (1.30)  N=359 | 43.3 (1.53)  N=359 |
| Mean (SE) for *non-stretched justification* | 48.2 (1.14)  N=466 | 49.7 (1.34)  N=470 |
| Mean difference (SE)  *not argument stretched – argument-stretched*  [significance level unadjusted] [Bonferroni adjusted] | 6.09 (1.73)  \*\*\* | 6.41 (2.04)  \*\*\* |
| Treatment Effect F (p) for two way difference between argument stretched and not argument stretched | 12.3 (0.00) | 9.91 (0.00) |
| N | 825 | 829 |

*Notes***:** Coefficients and marginal effects are from an ANOVA test of group differences between the three categories of the experimental treatment (argument-stretched justification, justification not argument-stretched, no justification) for two dependent variables, that is politician support (0 to 100) and policy support (0 to 100). Significance levels (p) for mean difference estimates are identified as follows: \* 0.1; \*\* 0.05; \*\*\* 0.01.

**2.4.3 Tests of Hypothesis 1 (Politician support) and Hypothesis 2 (Policy support): subjective-recipient approach, OLS regression coefficients**

*2.4.3.1 Politician Support*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model | --- 1 --- | --- 2 --- | --- 3 --- | --- 4 --- | --- 5 --- | --- 6 --- |
| Argument validity | 58.1 \*\*\* (2.03) | 54.5 \*\*\* (2.11) | 55.5 \*\*\* (2.09) | 51.8 \*\*\* (2.18) | 53.2 \*\*\* (1.97) | 48.4 \*\*\* (2.09) |
| Prior policy support |  | 15.0 \*\*\* (2.76) |  | 15.2 \*\*\* (2.73) |  | 12.6 \*\*\* (2.61) |
| Prior goal support |  |  | 11.5 \*\*\* (2.55) | 11.8 \*\*\* (2.52) |  | 9.23 \*\*\* (2.40) |
| Party cueing |  |  |  |  | 23.1 \*\*\* (2.12) | 21.3 \*\*\* (2.11) |
| Constant | 16.4 \*\*\* (1.13) | 12.3 \*\*\*  (1.35) | 10.1 \*\*\* (1.80) | 5.73 \*\*\* (1.93) | 8.54 \*\*\* (1.29) | 0.59 (1.90) |
| R2 | 0.47 | 0.48 | 0.48 | 0.49 | 0.52 | 0.54 |
| N | 946 | 946 | 946 | 946 | 946 | 946 |

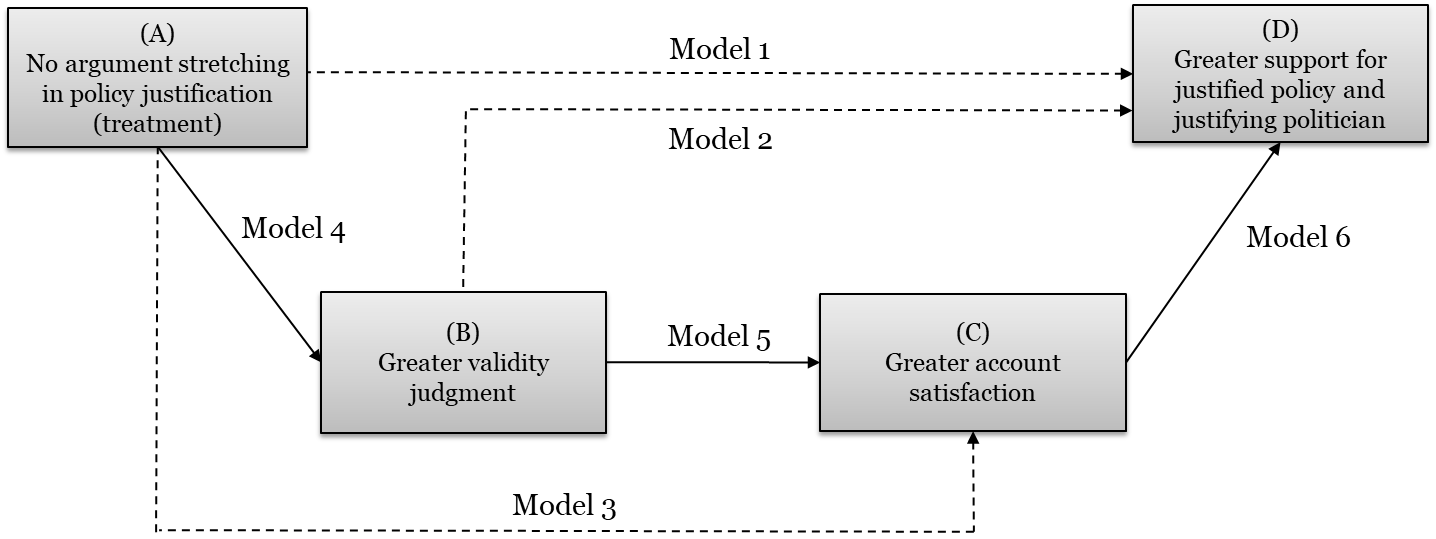
*2.4.3.2 Policy Support*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model | --- 1 --- | --- 2 --- | --- 3 --- | --- 4 --- | --- 5 --- | --- 6 --- |
| Argument validity | 63.2 \*\*\*  (1.39) | 55.3 \*\*\* (2.52) | 59.7 \*\*\* (2.57) | 51.5 \*\*\* (2.57) | 59.1 \*\*\* (2.50) | 49.1 \*\*\* (2.55) |
| Prior policy support |  | 32.5 \*\*\* (3.28) |  | 32.8 \*\*\* (3.23) |  | 30.8 \*\*\* (3.19) |
| Prior goal support |  |  | 15.7 \*\*\* (3.14) | 16.2 \*\*\* (2.98) |  | 14.3 \*\*\* (2.94) |
| Party cueing |  |  |  |  | 19.6 \*\*\* (2.70) | 15.9 \*\*\* (2.58) |
| Constant | 15.5 \*\*\* (2.50) | 6.50 \*\*\* (1.61) | 6.90 \*\*\* (2.21) | -2.47 (2.29) | 8.82 \*\*\* (1.64) | -6.30 \*\*\* (2.33) |
| R2 | 0.40 | 0.46 | 0.42 | 0.48 | 0.43 | 0.50 |
| N | 950 | 950 | 950 | 950 | 950 | 950 |

*Notes*: Dependent variables are politician support (0 to 100) in the first table above and policy support (0 to 100) in the second table above. Cells contain OLS regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses, and significance levels (p) identified as follows: \* 0.1; \*\* 0.05; \*\*\* 0.01. Independent variables are on 0 to 1 scales.

**2.4.4 Bootstrapping test of Hypothesis 3 (Mediation)**

*2.4.4.1 Constituent variables and models of mediation hypothesis*

****

*2.4.4.2 Mediation of argument stretching treatment (A) on politician support (D) via account satisfaction (C), as specified by models 1, 3, and 6 in figure 2.4.4.1*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model: *no argument-stretching (A)* -> *account satisfaction* (C) -> *politician support* (D), with *no explanation* as covariate [N = 947] | Effect | SE | P | Lower CI | Upper CI | Partially standardized effect |
| Total effect of A on D | 6.08 | 1.72 | 0.00 | 2.71 | 9.46 | 0.24 |
| Direct effect of A on D | 2.04 | 1.15 | 0.08 | -0.21 | 4.29 | 0.08 |
|  | Effect | Bootstrapped SE |  | Bootstrapped lower CI | Bootstrapped upper CI |  |
| Indirect (mediated) effect of A on D via C | 4.04 | 1.31 |  | 1.50 | 6.64 |  |
| Partially standardized mediation effect | 0.16 | 0.05 |  | 0.06 | 0.26 |  |

*2.4.4.3 Mediation of argument stretching treatment (A) on policy support (D) via account satisfaction (C), as specified by models 1, 3, and 6 in figure 2.4.4.1*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model: *no argument-stretching (A)* -> *account satisfaction* (C) -> policy *support* (D), with *no explanation* as covariate [N = 951] | Effect | SE | P | Lower CI | Upper CI | Partially standardized effect |
| Total effect of A on D | 6.49 | 2.02 | 0.00 | 2.53 | 10.45 | 0.22 |
| Direct effect of A on D | 1.85 | 1.41 | 0.19 | -0.92 | 4.61 | 0.06 |
|  | Effect | Bootstrapped SE |  | Bootstrapped lower CI | Bootstrapped upper CI |  |
| Indirect (mediated) effect of A on D via C | 4.64 | 1.41 |  | 1.77 | 7.55 |  |
| Partially standardized mediation effect | 0.16 | 0.05 |  | 0.06 | 0.25 |  |

*2.4.4.4 Mediation of validity judgment (B) on politician support (D) via account satisfaction (C), as specified by models 2, 5, and 6 in figure 2.4.4.1 (with “no explanation” category included and specified as covariate)*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model: *validity judgment (B)* -> *account satisfaction* (C) -> *politician* *support* (D), with *no explanation* as covariate [N = 946 ] | Effect | SE | P | Lower CI | Upper CI | Partially standardized effect | Completely standardized effect |
| Total effect of B on D | 59.2 | 2.14 | 0.00 | 55.0 | 63.4 | 2.37 | 0.69 |
| Direct effect of B on D | 22.8 | 2.70 | 0.00 | 17.5 | 28.1 | 0.91 | 0.27 |
|  | Effect | Bootstrapped SE |  | Bootstrapped lower CI | Bootstrapped upper CI |  |  |
| Indirect (mediated) effect of B on D via C | 36.4 | 3.41 |  | 29.8 | 43.2 |  |  |
| Partially standardized mediation effect | 1.46 | 0.13 |  | 1.20 | 1.72 |  |  |
| Completely standardized mediation effect | 0.43 | 0.04 |  | 0.35 | 0.50 |  |  |

*2.4.4.5 Mediation of validity judgment (B) on policy support (D) via account satisfaction (C), as specified by models 2, 5, and 6 in figure 2.4.4.1 (with no explanation category included and specified as covariate)*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model: *validity judgment (B)* -> *account satisfaction* (C) -> *policy support* (D), with *no explanation* as covariate [N = 950] | Effect | SE | P | Lower CI | Upper CI | Partially standardized effect | Completely standardized effect |
| Total effect of B on D | 65.4 | 2.63 | 0.00 | 60.3 | 70.6 | 2.24 | 0.66 |
| Direct effect of B on D | 22.4 | 3.36 | 0.00 | 15.8 | 29.0 | 0.77 | 0.22 |
|  | Effect | Bootstrapped SE |  | Bootstrapped lower CI | Bootstrapped upper CI |  |  |
| Indirect (mediated) effect of B on D via C | 43.1 | 3.37 |  | 36.6 | 49.9 |  |  |
| Partially standardized mediation effect | 1.48 | 0.11 |  | 1.26 | 1.70 |  |  |
| Completely standardized mediation effect | 0.43 | 0.03 |  | 0.37 | 0.50 |  |  |

*2.4.4.6 Robustness: mediation of treatment (A) on account satisfaction (C) via validity judgment (B), as specified by models 3, 4, and 5 in figure 2.4.4.1*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model: *no argument-stretching (A)* -> *validity judgment* (B) -> *account satisfaction* (C), with *no explanation* as covariate [N = 951] | Effect | SE | P | Lower CI | Upper CI | Partially standardized effect |
| Total effect of A on C | 5.77 | 1.85 | 0.00 | 2.14 | 9.41 | 0.20 |
| Direct effect of A on C | 0.08 | 1.28 | 0.94 | -2.43 | 2.60 | 0.00 |
|  | Effect | Bootstrapped SE |  | Bootstrapped lower CI | Bootstrapped upper CI |  |
| Indirect (mediated) effect of A on C via B | 5.69 | 1.38 |  | 2.98 | 8.38 |  |
| Partially standardized mediation effect | 0.20 | 0.05 |  | 0.11 | 0.30 |  |

*2.4.4.7 Test of serial mediation, as specified in figure 2.4.4.1 (A -> B -> C -> D)*

*Dependent variable politician support*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model: *no argument-stretching (A)* -> *validity judgment* (B) -> *account satisfaction* (C) -> politician support, with *no explanation* as covariate [N = 946] | Effect | SE | P | Lower CI | Upper CI | Partially standardized effect |
| Total serial effect of A on D | 5.97 | 1.71 | 0.00 | 2.59 | 9.33 | 0.24 |
| Direct serial effect of A on D | 1.16 | 1.11 | 0.30 | -1.03 | 3.34 | 0.05 |
|  | Effect | Bootstrapped SE |  | Bootstrapped lower CI | Bootstrapped upper CI |  |
| Combined indirect (mediated) serial effect based on constituent mediated effects of A on D via B and C | 4.81 | 1.36 |  | 2.18 | 7.54 |  |
| Indirect (mediated) constituent serial effect of A on D via B | 1.84 | 0.55 |  | 0.87 | 3.00 |  |
| Indirect (mediated) constituent serial effect of A on D via C | -0.01 | 0.69 |  | -1.37 | 1.36 |  |
| Indirect (mediated) constituent serial effect of A on D via B and C | 2.98 | 0.79 |  | 1.53 | 4.61 |  |
| Partially standardized combined serial mediation effect | 0.19 | 0.05 |  | 0.08 | 0.30 |  |
| Partially standardized serial mediation effect of A on D via B | 0.07 | 0.02 |  | 0.03 | 0.12 |  |
| Partially standardized serial mediation effect of A on D via C | 0.00 | 0.03 |  | -0.05 | 0.05 |  |
| Partially standardized serial mediation effect of A on D via B and C | 0.12 | 0.03 |  | 0.06 | 0.18 |  |

*Dependent variable policy support*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model: *no argument-stretching (A)* -> *validity judgment* (B) -> *account satisfaction* (C) -> *policy support*, with *no explanation* as covariate [N = 950] | Effect | SE | P | Lower CI | Upper CI | Partially standardized effect |
| Total serial effect of A on D | 6.37 | 2.02 | 0.00 | 2.40 | 10.33 | 0.22 |
| Direct serial effect of A on D | 0.99 | 1.39 | 0.48 | -1.73 | 3.71 | 0.03 |
|  | Effect | Bootstrapped SE |  | Bootstrapped lower CI | Bootstrapped upper CI |  |
| Combined indirect (mediated) serial effect based on constituent mediated effects of A on D via B and C | 5.38 | 1.49 |  | 2.55 | 8.32 |  |
| Indirect (mediated) constituent serial effect of A on D via B | 1.82 | 0.56 |  | 0.85 | 3.02 |  |
| Indirect (mediated) constituent serial effect of A on D via C | 0.03 | 0.81 |  | -1.54 | 1.66 |  |
| Indirect (mediated) constituent serial effect of A on D via B and C | 3.53 | 0.87 |  | 1.91 | 5.32 |  |
| Partially standardized combined serial mediation effect | 0.18 | 0.05 |  | 0.09 | 0.28 |  |
| Partially standardized serial mediation effect of A on D via B | 0.06 | 0.02 |  | 0.03 | 0.10 |  |
| Partially standardized serial mediation effect of A on D via C | 0.00 | 0.03 |  | -0.05 | 0.06 |  |
| Partially standardized serial mediation effect of A on D via B and C | 0.12 | 0.03 |  | 0.07 | 0.18 |  |

*Notes*: The bootstrapping test for mediation proposed by Hayes and Preacher (2014) and Hayes (2018) is used here to evaluate the mediation hypothesis H 3. First, the test is used to evaluate the expected separate mediation effects specified in figure 1, which were subjected to tests of joint significance in section 2.3.6: A -> D -> C (subjective-message approach with dependent variable politician support), A -> D -> C (subjective-message approach with dependent variable policy support), B -> D -> C (subjective-recipient approach with dependent variable politician support), B -> D -> C (subjective-recipient approach with dependent variable policy support), A -> B -> C (robustness test for mediation of treatment on account satisfaction via validity judgment. The standardized effects are proposed by Hayes (2018) and MacKinnon (2008). They allow for comparisons of mediation effect sizes across samples and model specifications. Partially standardized effects are given for all models, completely standardized effects are given for models with continuous indepdendent variables. Second, the bootstrapping test is used to evaluate the full serial mediation model described by figure 1 (A -> B -> C -> D). For all tests, the “no explanation” variable is included as covariate (a conservative choice making it more challenging to detect mediation for argument-stretching), the number of bootstrap samples is 10.000, and confidence intervals are calculated at a level of 95 %.

**Appendix 2.5: Additional analyses**

**Sample composition: descriptive statistics for participant characteristics (see Appendix 2.2 for measurement details)**

|  | N | Range | Mean | SE Mean | SD |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Age | 1016 | 18-85 | 47 | 0.51 | 16.1 |
| Political sophistication | 1016 | 0-1 | 0.47 | 0.01 | 0.26 |
| Political interest | 1016 | 1-5 | 3.96 | 0.03 | 0.86 |
| Prior awareness of Euro-tax policy | 1016 | 1-11 | 3.08 | 0.08 | 2.47 |
| Left-right position | 1016 | 0-1 | 0.34 | 0.01 | 0.17 |
| Need for cognition | 1016 | 1-5 | 3.67 | 0.03 | 0.95 |
| Need for evaluation | 1016 | 1-5 | 2.88 | 0.04 | 1.16 |
| Political trust | 1016 | 2-10 | 7.88 | 0.05 | 1.45 |
| Political efficacy | 1016 | 2-10 | 6.39 | 0.06 | 1.96 |

|  | N | Number of participants (and percentages) in different categories |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Social class | 1016 | 0 (no response) -> 6 (0.6 %), 1 -> 380 (37.4 %), 2 -> 204 (20.1 %), 3 -> 330 (32.5 %), 4 -> 93 (9.2 %), 5 -> 3 (0.3 %) |
| Gender | 1016 | 0 (male) -> 524 (51.6 %), 1 (female) -> 492 (48.4 %) |
| Education | 1016 | 1 -> 32 (3.1 %), 2 -> 397 (39.1%), 3 -> 320 (31.5 %), 4 -> 22 (2.2 %), 5 -> 245 (24.1 %) |
| Federal State | 1016 | 1 -> 38 (3.7 %), 2 -> 23 (2.3 %), 3 -> 99 (9.7 %), 4-> 9 (1 %), 5 -> 201 (19.8 %), 6 -> 77 (7.6 %), 7 -> 51 (5.0 %), 8 -> 135 (13.3 %), 9 -> 163 (16 %), 10 -> 15 (1.5 %), 11 -> 54 (5.3 %), 12 -> 32 (3.1 %), 13 -> 24 (2.4 %), 14 -> 48 (4.7 %), 15 -> 23 (2.3 %), 16 -> 24 (2.4 %) |

**Homogeneity of treatment groups**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | F (p) values for effect of argument-stretching treatment on various participant characteristics |
| Age | 0.09 (0.92) |
| Political sophistication | 0.05 (0.95) |
| Left-right position | 0.59 (0.56) |
| Need for cognition | 0.08 (0.93) |
| Need for evaluation | 0.30 (0.74) |
| Gender | 0.43 (0.65) |
| Social class | 2.44 (0.09) |

**Appendix 3.1: Experimental materials**

**3.1.1 Reproduction of the treatment article**

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****

**3.1.2 English translation of treatment article**

MEP Brückner *[PARTY AFFILIATION RANDOMLY VARIED]* is in favor of the policy: “*[STRETCHED VERSUS NON-STRETCHED VERSUS NO JUSTIFICATION RANDOMLY VARIED].”* MEP Wilmers *[PARTY AFFILIATION RANDOMLY VARIED] is against the policy:* “*[STRETCHED VERSUS NON-STRETCHED VERSUS NO JUSTIFICATION RANDOMLY VARIED].”*

Euro tax coming soon?

Brussels/Bremen (dpa/mk). The European Parliament in Brussels voted in favor of introducing a so-called Euro-tax yesterday. The vote was close, with 347 legislators voting yes, 12 abstentions, and 329 votes against. The topic had been subject to a long and controversial debate, before it disappeared from the top of the political agenda as a result of the financial and debt crisis. This made the decision of several Members of the European Parliament to unearth and bring to a vote the almost forgotten Euro-tax initiative of the European Commission from 2009 all the more surprising.

The member states of the EU would have to support the measure to turn the vote of the European Parliament into political reality. Representatives from all political camps unanimously described this as rather unlikely for the time being. The initiative of the European Parliament was still successful, according to experts, because it placed the issue back on the political agenda. A Euro-tax would provide the EU with a source of income independent of the control of its member states, which it does not currently have. Importantly, the measure would not affect overall levels of taxation. EU citizens would not have to pay any additional taxes. Instead, existing revenue of the member states would effectively be transferred under the immediate control of the EU. Both supporters and opponents emphasize that the introduction of a Euro-tax would entail a considerable increase in political authority for the European Union.

Supporters and opponents of the Euro-tax employ varying justifications for their positions. Herbert Brückner *[PARTY AFFILIATION RANDOMLY VARIED]*, member of the European Parliament (MEP) from Bremen, voted in favor of the Euro-tax in yesterday’s session. In response to a question from the Weser Kurier, Brückner justified his decision as follows: “The introduction of a Euro tax is an important step toward *[STRETCHED VERSUS NON-STRETCHED JUSTIFICATION or for NO JUSTIFICATION replace text after “session” with “, but did not provide a justification for his decision in response to a request from the Weser Kurier”]* Only a strong and independent EU can take the necessary measures to achieve this goal. In order to do this, the EU needs its own source of revenue that is shielded from the influence of its member states.”The other MEP from Bremen, Frank Wilmers *[PARTY AFFILIATION RANDOMLY VARIED]* voted against the Euro-tax in the session of the European Parliament. This is what he told the Weser-Kurier to justify his decision: “A Euro-tax would make the EU too influential and too independent from the member states, and a strengthened EU does not contribute to achieve *[STRETCHED VERSUS NON-STRETCHED JUSTIFICATION or for NO JUSTIFICATION replace text after “Parliament” with “, but did not provide a justification for his decision in response to a request from the Weser Kurier”).*

**3.1.3 Notes on treatment article**

The newspaper is identified as the “Weser-Kurier”, a quality yet little known daily for the city of Bremen and its surroundings, which provides local, national, and international coverage. As the European Parliament (EP) does not have the right of initiative (that is the right to introduce new legislation), the article states that the vote in the EP is based on an “almost forgotten” initiative of the European Commission (which has the right of initiative) from 2009. The vote on the resolution to introduce a Euro-tax is described as successful yet close (347 MEPs voting yes, 329 no, and 12 abstaining) to emphasize the controversial nature of the policy. The policy is described as meaningful and important, but to ensure the believability of the treatment, the article also states that the Euro-tax is unlikely to be introduced (despite the positive vote in the EP), due to the resistance of the EU member states (which have to agree on the measure through the European Council respectively the Council of Ministers). The term “dpa” in the author by-line identifies the largest German news agency (Deutsche Presse Agentur).

**3.1.4 Reproduction of the debriefing note handed to participants after the experiment**

**Informationen zur Studie und zum Probanden-Pool**

Die Studie, an der Sie gerade teilgenommen haben, ist ein sozialwissenschaftliches Experiment. Bei experimentellen Studien werden durch die Forscher/innen systematisch Informationen manipuliert und zwischen den Teilnehmer/innen der Studie variiert. Diese Vorgehensweise erlaubt es uns, verlässliche Aussagen darüber zu treffen, ob eine bestimmte Variable, die uns theoretisch interessiert, einen kausalen Effekt auf andere Variablen hat.

Bei der experimentellen Studie, an der Sie gerade teilgenommen haben, geht es darum, wie zufrieden Menschen mit der Qualität politischer Informationen sind, und wie dies ihre Einstellungen beeinflusst. Dazu haben wir auch in dieser Studie gewisse Informationen „fabriziert“ und systematisch zwischen den Teilnehmer/innen variiert. So gibt es tatsächlich eine politische Auseinandersetzung über die Einführung einer Europa-Steuer, aber die in den von uns verfassten Texten beschriebene Abstimmung im Europäischen Parlament hat es in dieser Form nicht gegeben. Wir haben darüber hinaus zwei fiktiven Mitgliedern des Europäischen Parlaments verschiedene Aussagen über die Einführung einer Europa-Steuer zugeordnet. Welche/r Teilnehmer/in der Studie welche Aussage gelesen hat, wurde per Zufall entschieden.

Diese ganze Vorgehensweise ist notwendig zur Durchführung von Experimenten und extrem wichtig für unsere Forschung: nur so können wir herausfinden, ob es überhaupt einen Unterschied macht, welche Argumente Politiker/innen verwenden, um ihre Entscheidungen zu begründen. **Damit wir diese Frage zuverlässig erforschen können, möchten wir Sie sehr bitten, den Inhalt der Studie nicht mit anderen zu besprechen, die noch an der Studie teilnehmen wollen.**

Weitere Informationen über die Inhalte und wissenschaftlichen Ziele dieser und ähnlicher Studien bieten wir Ihnen im Laufe einer kurzen Veranstaltung am *Institut XYZ*. Der genaue Termin wird auf unserer Website << *Website provided* >> sowie per email an die registrierten Teilnehmer/innen des Probanden-Pools angekündigt. Sie sind dazu herzlich eingeladen. Eine Anmeldung ist nicht notwendig. Sie können sich auch auf unserer Webseite als Teilnehmer/in im Probanden-Pool registrieren, um Einladungen zur Teilnahme an weiteren Studien zu erhalten.

Für Studierende am Institut XYZ: Sie erwerben durch die Teilnahme an der o.g. Informationsveranstaltung einen 1/3 BZQ Punkt. Bitte bringen Sie zu allen BZQ Aktivitäten des Probanden-Pools die Teilnehmerliste mit, die auch auf der o.g. Webseite verfügbar ist, um sich Ihre Teilnahme bestätigen zu lassen. Wir würden uns natürlich sehr freuen, wenn Sie anderen Studierenden hier am Institut über die Möglichkeit berichten würden, durch die Teilnahme an Aktivitäten des Probanden-Pools BZQ-Punkte zu erwerben. Die Registrierung erfolgt über die o.g. Webseite.

Falls Sie Fragen zu dieser Studie oder zum Probanden-Pool haben, können Sie sich gerne an die folgenden Ansprechpartner am *Institut XYZ* wenden:

*[Name and email address of contact person # 1]*

*[Name and email address of contact person # 2]*

*[Name and email address of contact person # 3]*

**3.1.5 English translation of the debriefing note**

**Information about the study and the participant pool**

The study in which you just participated is a social science experiment. In experimental studies, researchers systematically manipulate information and vary the content of information between participants. This allows us to reach valid conclusions about whether some variable we are interested in has a causal effect on other variables.

The purpose of the present study is to figure out whether the opinions of people about political statements they read influence their political views. To investigate this topic, we also “fabricated” and systematically varied some information in this study. There really is a political debate about the introduction of a Euro-tax described in the article you just received, but the vote mentioned in the article, which we wrote for this study, has not taken place. We also assigned certain political statements about the introduction of a Euro-tax to two fictitious members of the European Parliament. It was randomly decided, which participant received which statement.

This entire procedure is necessary to successfully carry out the experiment and extremely important for our research. This is the best way to determine whether the arguments that politicians use to justify their decicions make any difference at all. It would help us a great deal in reliably answering this question if you could not discuss the content of this study with other participants.

We are organizing a brief event at *the Institute XYZ* to provide additional information about the content and goals of this and similar studies. We will notify you about the time and location of the event on our website << *Website provided* >> and in an email to all registered participants of the participant pool. We are looking forward to welcoming you! No prior registration for the event is required. To receive invitations for future studies, you can register for the participant pool at our website.

For students at the *Institute XYZ*: You will acquire additional course credit by participating in the events mentioned above. Please make sure to bring along your participant pool activities list to receive the credit. A copy of the list can be downloaded on our website. And do let other students know about the possibility of acquiring course credit through participant pool activities. Everyone can register through the above mentioned website.

For any questions you might have about this study or the participant pool, please do not hesitate to contact us:

*[Name and email address of contact person # 1]*

*[Name and email address of contact person # 2]*

*[Name and email address of contact person # 3]*

**Appendix 3.2: Measurement of variables**

**Argument-stretching treatment**

Categorical distinction between “argument-stretched justification”, “non-argument-stretched justification”, or “no justification” in support of Euro-tax by MEP Herbert Brueckner (*treat1*). Argument-stretched category (value: 2) entails the invoked goal “free market.” Not-argument-stretched category (value: 0) entails the invoked goals “European identity” and “collective economic benefits”. “No justification” category is coded 1. Also used for dummy variables *no\_j* (1 = no justification, 0 = all else), *nostr\_j (*1 = no argument stretching, 0 = all else), and *strj (*1 = argument stretching, 0 = all else).

**Context treatment**

Categorical dichotomous distinction between the presence (value 1) and the absence (value 0) of a counter-justification used to justify the rejection of the Euro-tax by MEP Frank Wilmers. (Variable name *treat2a*). (Variable name *no\_cj* for variable with reverse order, 0 = counter-justification present, 1 = counter-justification absent).

**Party treatment**

A categorical variable, as well as an equivalent set of dummy variables, identifying the randomly assigned party affiliation of the politician justifying his support for the Euro-tax, MEP Brueckner (1=CDU, 2=SPD, 3=Left Party, 4=Greens). (variable name t*reat\_j\_par).*

**Party cueing**

The following question is asked pre-treatment to measure party cueing direction (via party identification) for all parties included in the study. The variable identifies the party identification score for the party appearing in a participant’s party treatment condition (t*reat\_j\_par)*.

“We would like to know what you are thinking about the various political parties currently represented in the German parliament. Please evaluate each of the parties using a so-called feeling thermometer. Numbers between 50 and 100 mean that you have a ‘warm feeling’, that is a positive opinion, about the party. The larger the number the more positive the opinion. Numbers between 0 and 50 mean that you have a ‘cold feeling’, that is a negative opinion, about the party. The smaller the number, the more negative the opinion. On a feeling thermometer from 0 to 100, what is your opinion about the *(CDU, SPD, Greens, Left Party)*?” (variable name, 0-1 scale: *Pc\_j\_01).*

**Validity judgment (argument validity)**

“Irrespective of whether you have the same opinion or not, how valid did you find the justification given by Herbert Brueckner for his vote in the European Parliament”. Original scale: 1 = not valid at all; 2 = not valid; 3 = not particularly valid; 4 = somewhat valid; 5 = valid; 6 = very valid. (Variable names 0 to 1 scale *valj1, and 0 to 100 scale valid\_j*).

**Policy support**

“On a thermometer scale, numbers between 50 and 100 mean that you have a ‘warm feeling’, that is a positive opinion. The larger the number the more positive the opinion. Numbers between 0 and 50 mean that you have a ‘cold feeling’, that is a negative opinion. The smaller the number, the more negative the opinion. Using the thermometer scale from 0 to 100, what is your opinion about the Euro-tax, which was discussed in the article you just read?” (variable name *v\_217).*

**Politician support**

“On a thermometer scale, numbers between 50 and 100 mean that you have a ‘warm feeling’, that is a positive opinion. The larger the number the more positive the opinion. Numbers between 0 and 50 mean that you have a ‘cold feeling’, that is a negative opinion. The smaller the number, the more negative the opinion. Using the thermometer scale from 0 to 100, what is your opinion about Herbert Brückner, who was quoted in the article you just read?” (variable name *v\_220).*

**Account satisfaction**

“On a thermometer scale, numbers between 50 and 100 mean that you have a ‘warm feeling’, that is a positive opinion. The larger the number the more positive the opinion. Numbers between 0 and 50 mean that you have a ‘cold feeling’, that is a negative opinion. The smaller the number, the more negative the opinion. Using the thermometer scale from 0 to 100, how satisfied are you with the explanation Herbert Brückner provided for his vote in support of the Euro-tax initiative in the European Parliament?” (variable name *v\_129*), (variable name 0 to 1 scale**:** *acct01***).**

**Prior policy support**

To create this variable, participants are first asked the following question: “There are different opinions about which decisions should be made by the countries in Europe independently from one another, and which decisions should be made jointly through the European Union. What do you think? Which of the following policy areas should be decided by your home country alone? And in which areas should decisions be made jointly within the European Union? And in which areas would you say that it does not matter?

Participants then indicate whether they prefer national authority (coded as -1), European Union authority (coded as 1), or whether they are neutral (coded as 0), for the following 12 policy areas: immigration, employment, money and finance, environmental affairs, defense, press and media, health and social affairs, science, education, employment law, foreign affairs, domestic security and judicial affairs. The 12 scores are added, and then transformed into a 0-1 scale (variable name *pps\_01*), where lower values represent less and higher values more prior policy support (for European integration).

**(Prior) goal support**

The variable identifies support for the specific goal included in different argument-stretching treatment categories received by a participant (variable name for the 0-1 scale:***gs\_treat\_j\_01****).* In this study, I included the two items from the batteries measuring goal support in study 1 that were most valid and reliable. All these questions are asked pre-treatment. For the *European identity* goal, I included the items “Being European is part of my identity” and “It is important for me to be European.” For the free market goal, I included the items “Letting the government get involved in the economy is often better than relying on private enterprise” *(reverse coded)* and“Every man for himself and every woman for herself means that we are all going to be better off in the end.” For the economic benefits goal, I included two items that were included in study 1, but not used in the analysis, namely “There are many important topics in politics, but nothing is more important than a good economy” and “Economic well-being for our people is an exceptionally important political goal.”

**Political sophistication**

Political sophistication is measured by summing the correct answers to the following six political knowledge questions (a mix of multiple choice and open ended) about the EU and European integration (*variable name for 0-6 scale:* v\_202207).

1. When were the “Treaties of Rome” signed? (“1995”, “2001”, “1957”, “1944)
2. How many member states currently constitute the European Union? (28)
3. Which of the following is NOT an institution of the European Union? (“Commission”, “European Parliament”, “Security Council”, “Council of Ministers”)
4. Which of the following statements is true? (“The members of the European Parliament are elected by the citizens of Europe”, “The members of the European Parliament are nominated by the European Commission”, “The members of the European Parliament are nominated by their national governments”, “There is no such thing as a European Parliament”)
5. The “Treaty on European Union” was signed in which city in 1992? (“Maastricht”)
6. Which one of the following statements is NOT true? (“The Treaty of Lisbon unites all national armies under the control of the EU”, “The European Central Bank determines interest rates for the countries using the Euro currency”, “The European Union decides about tariffs on American imports”, “The European Court of Justice can impose decisions of the EU against national governments”)

**Overall support for the European Union**

We would like to ask you what you generally think of European integration. Please evaluate European integration using the feeling thermometer we mentioned earlier on. Numbers between 50 and 100 mean that you have a ‘warm feeling’, that is a positive opinion about it. The larger the number the more positive the opinion. Numbers between 0 and 50 mean that you have a ‘cold feeling’, that is a negative opinion about it. The smaller the number, the more negative the opinion. Using the thermometer scale from 0 to 100, what is your opinion about European integration?” (variable name *v\_218).*

**Age**

“How old are you?” (variable name *v\_186*).

**Social class**

"If you were asked to use one of the following labels, which social class would you say your parents belong to?" (1=working class, 2=lower middle class, 3=middle class, 4=upper middle class, 5=upper class). (variable name *v\_192*)

**Gender**

“Are you male or female?” (0=male, 1=female). (variable name *v\_187*).

**Political interest**

“How interested are you in politics?” (from 1=lowest to 4=highest). (variable name *v\_169*)

**Occupation**

What is your current occupation? If you are unemployed, what is your most recent occupation? Response options (from official German census survey): 0 = no response, 1 = academic and technical occupations (such as physicians, teacher, engineer, artist, tax consultant), 2 = higher administration and management occupations (finance manager, managing director, supervisor in public administration, union leader), 3 = office-based occupations (such as secretary, office clerk, office supervisor, accountant), 4 = distribution-related occupations (such as distribution manager, store owner, sales person, insurance sales person), 5 = service-related occupations (such as restaurant owner, police, waiter, nurse, hair dresser), 6 = technicians and artisans with a completed qualified apprenticeship (such as team leader in industry, car mechanis, printer, tool maker, electrician), 7 = technicians and artisans with a completed on-the-job training (such as construction worker, bus driver, carpenter, metal worker, baker), 8 = technicians and artisans without formal training (such as unskilled manual worker, security guard, unskilled factory worker), 9 = agricultural worker, 10 = farmer, 11 = in training, 12 = have never worked, 13 = other. (variable name *v\_199*).

**Left-right position**

Self-identified position on a scale from 0 (left) to 10 (right). (variable name *v\_173*).

**Prior awareness of the Euro-tax policy**

“How familiar were you with the proposal to introduce a Euro-tax before reading the article in the Weser-Kurier?” (1=not aware at all, 2=not aware, 3=not particularly aware, 4=somewhat aware, 5=aware, 6=very aware). (variable name *v\_139*).

**Religiosity**

"How often do you attend religious services? (such as going to church, participating in communal prayers etc.)" Response options are 1=never, 2=almost never, 3=a few times a year, 4=once or twice a month, 5=once a week, 6=several times a week). (Variable name *v\_193*).

**Need for cognition**

A continuous measure of need for cognition was created on a scale from 0 (lowest need for cognition) to 16 (highest need) by summing participant’s degrees of agreement with each of the following statements (on a scale of 0, do not agree at all, to 4, agree completely): “I usually end up deliberating about issues even when they do not affect me personally”, “I like tasks that require little thought once I’ve learned them” *(reverse coded)*, “The idea of relying on thought to make my way to the top appeals to me”, “I like to have the responsibility of handling a situation that requires a lot of thinking” (cf. Cacioppo and Petty 1982). (Variable name, 0-1 scale: *need\_cog\_01*).

**Need for evaluation**

Scale from 0 (lowest need for evaluation) to 16 (highest need) created from four items: “I enjoy strongly liking and disliking new things”, “I often prefer to remain neutral about complex issues” *(reverse coded),* “I like to decide new things are really good or really bad”, “I only form strong opinions when I have to” *(reverse coded),* (cf. Jarvis and Petty 1996). (Variable name, 0 to 1 scale: *needev1*)

**Political trust**

Scale from 0 (lowest trust) to 12 (highest) created from three items: “Whatever its faults, our form of government is still the best for us”, “There is not much about our form of government to be proud of” *(reverse coded)*, “I would rather live in our system of government than any other I can think of” (cf. McGraw and Hubbard 1996). (Variable name, 0 to 1 scale: *poltr1*)

**Political efficacy**

Scale from 0 (lowest efficacy) to 12 (highest) created from three items: “I am well qualified to participate in politics”, “I could do as good a job in public office as most other people”, “Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that someone like me can’t understand what’s going on” *(reverse coded)*. (Variable name, 0 to 1 scale: *polef1*)

**Monthly gross income**

What is your monthly gross income? (*v\_188*).

**Appendix 3.3: Tests of treatment effectiveness**

**3.3.1 Varying justification goals**

*Validity judgments for different randomly assigned policy justifications (marginal means from one-way ANOVA)*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Mean | SE | N |
| Justification “European identity” | 49.0 | 2.86 | 60 |
| Justification “Free market” | 43.7 | 2.86 | 60 |
| Justification “Collective economic benefits” | 52.5 | 2.96 | 56 |
| No justification | 31.9 | 2.03 | 119 |
| Grand Mean | 44.3 | 1.35 | 295 |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Mean | SE | N |
| Justification “European identity” | 49.0 | 2.70 | 60 |
| Justification “Free market” | 43.7 | 2.70 | 60 |
| Justification “Collective economic benefits” | 52.5 | 2.79 | 56 |
| Grand Mean | 48.4 | 1.58 | 176 |

*Test of overall group difference between randomly assigned policy justifications in terms of validity judgment from one-way ANOVA*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Assigned justification  (including “no justification”) | Assigned justification  (without “no justification”) |
| Treatment Effect | F = 14.5  (p = 0.00) | F = 2.64  (p = 0.07) |
| R2 | 0.13 | 0.03 |
| N | 295 | 176 |

*Tests of specific group differences between justifications in terms of validity judgments (SE in parentheses, significance levels Bonferroni-adjusted for multiple comparisons)*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | European identity | Free  Market | Collective benefits | No justification |
| European identity |  | 5.33  (4.05) | -3.50  (4.12) | 17.1 \*\*\*  (3.51) |
| Free market |  |  | -8.83  (4.12) | 11.7 \*\*\*  (3.51`) |
| Collective benefits |  |  |  | 20.6 \*\*\*  (3.59) |
| No justification |  |  |  |  |

*Tests of specific group differences between justifications in terms of validity judgments (SE in parentheses, significance levels not adjusted for multiple comparisons)*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | European identity | Free  Market | Collective benefits | No justification |
| European identity |  | 5.33  (4.05) | -3.50  (4.12) | 17.1 \*\*\*  (3.51) |
| Free market |  |  | -8.83 \*\*  (4.12) | 11.7 \*\*\*  (3.51`) |
| Collective benefits |  |  |  | 20.6 \*\*\*  (3.59) |
| No justification |  |  |  |  |

**3.3.2 Varying treatment conditions (argument-stretching treatment)**

*Validity judgments according to treatment condition (one-way ANOVA)*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | All respondents | | Respondents exposed to counter-justification | | Respondents not exposed to counter-justification | |
| Mean (SE) | N | Mean (SE) | N | Mean (SE) | N |
| Argument-stretching | 43.7 (2.86) | 60 | 41.3 (3.39) | 45 | 50.7 (5.44) | 15 |
| No argument-stretching | 50.7 (2.06) | 116 | 48.9 (2.42) | 88 | 56.4 (3.98) | 28 |
| No justification | 31.9 (2.03) | 119 | 29.8 (3.39) | 45 | 33.2 (2.45) | 74 |
| Overall | 42.1 (1.36) | 295 | 39.9 (1.79) | 178 | 46.8 (2.39) | 117 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | All Respondents | | Respondents exposed to counter-justification | | Respondents not exposed to counter-justification | |
| Mean (SE) | N | Mean (SE) | N | Mean (SE) | N |
| Argument-stretching | 43.7 (2.70) | 60 | 41.3 (3.26) | 45 | 50.7 (4.26) | 15 |
| No argument-stretching | 50.7 (1.94) | 116 | 48.9 (2.33) | 88 | 56.4 (3.12) | 28 |
| Overall | 47.2 (1.66) | 176 | 45.1 (2.00) | 133 | 53.5 (2.64) | 43 |

*Test of overall group differences between treatment conditions in terms of validity judgments*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Argument-stretching treatment  (including *argument stretched*, *argument not stretched*, and *no justification*) | | | Argument-stretching treatment  (including *argument stretched* and *argument not stretched;* excluding *no justification*) | | |
|  | All respondents | Only respondents *exposed* to counter-justification | Only respondents *not exposed* to counter-justification | All respondents | Only respondents *exposed* to counter-justification | Only respondents *not exposed* to counter-justification |
| Treatment Effect | F = 21.3  (p = 0.00) | F = 10.5  (p = 0.00) | F = 14.1  (p = 0.00) | F = 4.47  (p = 0.04) | F = 3.53  (p = 0.06) | F = 1.19  (p = 0.28) |
| R2 | 0.13 | 0.11 | 0.20 | 0.03 | 0.03 | 0.03 |
| N | 295 | 178 | 117 | 176 | 133 | 43 |

*Tests of specific group differences between treatment conditions in terms of validity judgments (SE in parentheses, significance levels Bonferroni-adjusted for multiple comparisons)*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| All respondents  (N=295) | No argument-stretching | Argument-stretching | No justification |
| No argument-stretching |  | 7.02 (3.52) | 18.8 (2.89) \*\*\* |
| Argument-stretching |  |  | 11.7 (3.51) \*\*\* |
| No justification |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Respondents exposed to counter-justification  (N = 178) | No argument-stretching | Argument-stretching | No justification |
| No argument-stretching |  | 7.53 (4.16) | 19.1 (4.16) \*\*\* |
| Argument-stretching |  |  | 11.6 (4.79) \* |
| No justification |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Respondents not exposed to counter-justification  (N = 117) | No argument-stretching | Argument-stretching | No justification |
| No argument-stretching |  | 5.76 (6.74) | 23.2 (4.67) \*\*\* |
| Argument-stretching |  |  | 17.4 (5.96) \*\* |
| No justification |  |  |  |

*Tests of specific group differences between treatment conditions in terms of validity judgments (SE in parentheses, significance levels not adjusted for multiple comparisons)*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| All respondents  (N=295) | No argument-stretching | Argument-stretching | No justification |
| No argument-stretching |  | 7.02 (3.52) \*\* | 18.8 (2.89) \*\*\* |
| Argument-stretching |  |  | 11.7 (3.51) \*\*\* |
| No justification |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Respondents exposed to counter-justification  (N = 178) | No argument-stretching | Argument-stretching | No justification |
| No argument-stretching |  | 7.53 (4.16) \* | 19.1 (4.16) \*\*\* |
| Argument-stretching |  |  | 11.6 (4.79) \*\* |
| No justification |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Respondents not exposed to counter-justification  (N = 117) | No argument-stretching | Argument-stretching | No justification |
| No argument-stretching |  | 5.76 (4.67) | 23.2 (4.67) \*\*\* |
| Argument-stretching |  |  | 17.4 (5.96) \*\*\* |
| No justification |  |  |  |

*Tests of specific group differences between treatment conditions in terms of validity judgments (SE in parentheses)*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| All respondents  (N=176) | No argument-stretching | Argument-stretching |
| No argument-stretching |  | 7.02 (3.32) \*\* |
| Argument-stretching | -7.02 (3.32) \*\* |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Respondents exposed to counter-justification (N=133) | No argument-stretching | Argument-stretching |
| No argument-stretching |  | 7.53 (4.00) \* |
| Argument-stretching | -7.53 (4.00) \* |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Respondents not exposed to counter-justification (N=43) | No argument-stretching | Argument-stretching |
| No argument-stretching |  | 5.76 (5.27) |
| Argument-stretching | -5.76 (5.27) |  |

**3.3.3 Treatment effects (argument-stretching treatment and context treatment)**

*Effect of argument-stretching and context treatments: treatment effects on validity judgments (two way ANOVA)*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Model | --- 1 --- |
| Treatment Effect  *Argument-stretching* | F = 23.7  (p = 0.00) |
| Treatment Effect  *Context* | F = 4.48  (p = 0.04) |
| R2 | 0.14 |
| N | 295 |

*Effect of argument-stretching and context treatments: parameter estimates, dependent variable validity judgment*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Model | ---1--- |
| No argument-stretching | 7.08 \*\*  (3.50) |
| No justification | -14.0 \*\*\*  (3.64) |
| No counter-justification | 6.00 \*\*  (2.83) |
| Constant | 42.2 \*\*\*  (2.93) |
| R2 | 0.14 |
| N | 295 |

*Notes:* Validity judgment is measured on a 0-100 scale. In tests of specific group differences using one-way ANOVA, cells show mean differences between different conditions (read from left to right) with SE in parentheses. In all tables, significance levels (p) are identified as follows: \* 0.1; \*\* 0.05; \*\*\* 0.01. Argument-stretching treatment is a categorical variable comprising the categories no argument-stretching, argument-stretching, and no justification (for some analyses, identified in the relevant tables, the no justification category is excluded to check robustness). Context treatment is a categorical variable comprising the categories counter-justification present and counter-justification absent. In parameter estimates, no justification and no argument-stretching are dummy variables representing the argument-stretching treatment (with argument-stretching as reference category); no counter-justification is a dummy variable representing the context treatment (with counter-justification present as reference category).

**Appendix 3.4: Full models for tests of hypotheses**

**3.4.1 Tests of Hypothesis 1 (Politician Support) and Hypothesis 2 (Policy Support): subjective-message approach, regression coefficients**

*3.4.1.1 Dependent variable politician support*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model | --- 1 ---  All respondents | --- 2 ---  Respondents *exposed to* counter-justification | --- 3 ---  Respondents *not exposed to* counter-justification | --- 4 ---  All respondents | --- 5 ---  All respondents |
| No argument-stretching | 7.68 \*\*  (3.39) | 9.42 \*\*  (3.84) | 2.50  (7.03) | 9.42 \*\*  (3.91) | 7.71 \*\*  (3.39) |
| No justification | -3.81  (3.38) | -3.16  (4.42) | -9.24  (6.22) | -3.16  (4.50) | -4.99  (3.52) |
| No counter-justification |  |  |  | 8.42  (6.37) | 3.17  (2.74) |
| No argument-stretching  \* no counter-justification |  |  |  | -6.92  (7.87) |  |
| No justification  \* no counter-justification |  |  |  | -6.09  (7.54) |  |
| Constant | 43.7 \*\*\*  (2.75) | 41.6 \*\*\*  (3.12) | 50.0 \*\*\*  (5.67) | 41.6 \*\*\*  (3.18) | 42.9 \*\*\*  (2.84) |
| R2 | 0.06 | 0.07 | 0.06 | 0.06 | 0.06 |
| N | 295 | 178 | 117 | 295 | 295 |

*3.4.1.2 Dependent variable policy support*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model | --- 1 ---  All respondents | --- 2 ---  Respondents *exposed to* counter-justification | --- 3 ---  Respondents *not exposed to* counter-justification | --- 4 ---  All respondents | --- 5 ---  All respondents |
| No argument-stretching | 1.29  (3.71) | 2.44  (4.26) | -2.14  (0.77) | 2.44  (4.26) | 1.27  (3.71) |
| No justification | -1.16  (3.69) | 5.33  (4.90) | -7.91  (6.60) | 5.33  (4.90) | -0.02  (3.86) |
| No counter-justification |  |  |  | 4.67  (6.94) | -3.07  (3.00) |
| No argument-stretching  \* no counter-justification |  |  |  | -4.58  (8.58) |  |
| No justification  \* no counter-justification |  |  |  | -13.2  (8.21) |  |
| Constant | 51.5 \*\*\* (3.01) | 50.3 \*\*\*  (3.46) | 55.0 \*\*\*  (6.02) | 50.3 \*\*\*  (3.47) | 52.3 \*\*\*  (3.10) |
| R2 | 0.00 | 0.01 | 0.02 | 0.02 | 0.01 |
| N | 295 | 178 | 117 | 295 | 295 |

*Notes*: Dependent variables are politician support (0 to 100) and policy support (0 to 100). Cells contain OLS regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses, and significance levels (p) identified as follows: \* 0.1; \*\* 0.05; \*\*\* 0.01. (Argument-stretching) treatment variables *No argument-stretching* and *No justification* are dummy variables, with *argument-stretching* as the reference group. (Context) treatment variable *No counter-justification* is a dummy variable, with *counter-justification present* as the reference group. *No argument-stretching* \* *no counter-justification* and *no justification* \* no *counter-justification* are categorical \* categorical interactions (with *argument-stretching* \* *counter-justification* present as reference category).

**3.4.2 Tests of Hypothesis 1 (Politician Support) and Hypothesis 2 (Policy Support): subjective-message approach, marginal effects and group differences**

*3.4.2.1 One way ANOVA for all respondents (Model 1 from section 3.4.1)*

*Argument-stretching treatment including “no justification” category*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | DV politician support | DV policy support |
| Grand Mean (SE) | 45.0 (1.30) | 51.5 (1.43) |
| Mean (SE) for *no justification* | 39.9 (1.95)  (N=119) | 50.3 (2.14)  (N=119) |
| Mean (SE) for *argument-stretched* | 43.7 (2.75)  (N=60) | 51.5 (3.00)  (N=60) |
| Mean (SE) for *not argument-stretched* | 51.4 (1.98)  (N=116) | 52.8 (2.16)  (N=116) |
| Mean difference (SE)  *not argument stretched* – *argument-stretched*  [significance level unadjusted] [Bonferroni adjusted] | 7.68 (3.39)  [\*\*] [\*] | 1.29 (3.71) |
| Mean difference (SE)  *argument stretched* – *no justification*  [significance level unadjusted] [Bonferroni adjusted] | 3.81 (3.38) | 1.16 (3.69) |
| Mean difference (SE)  *not argument stretched* – *no justification*  [significance level unadjusted] [Bonferroni adjusted] | 11.5 (2.78)  [\*\*\*][\*\*\*] | 2.46 (3.04) |
| Treatment Effect F (p) for three way group difference argument-stretching treatment | 8.71 (0.00) | 0.33 (0.72) |
| N | 295 | 295 |

*Argument-stretching treatment without “no justification” category*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | DV politician support | DV policy support |
| Grand Mean (SE) | 47.5 (1.60) | 52.1 (1.80) |
| Mean (SE) for *argument-stretched* | 43.7 (2.60)  (N=60) | 51.5 (2.92)  (N=60) |
| Mean (SE) for *not argument-stretched* | 51.4 (1.87)  (N=116) | 52.8 (2.10)  (N=116) |
| Mean difference (SE) with significance levels  *not argument stretched* – *argument-stretched* | 7.68 (3.20) \*\* | 1.29 (3.60) |
| Treatment Effect F (p) for two way difference between argument stretched and not argument stretched | 5.75 (0.02) | 0.13 (0.72) |
| N | 176 | 176 |

*3.4.2.2 One way ANOVA for respondents exposed to counter-justification (Model 2 from section 3.4.1)*

*Argument-stretching treatment including the “no justification” category*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | DV politician support | DV policy support |
| Grand Mean (SE) | 43.7 (1.65) | 52.9 (1.83) |
| Mean (SE) for *no justification* | 38.4 (3.12)  (N=45) | 55.7 (3.46)  (N=45) |
| Mean (SE) for *argument-stretched* | 41.6 (3.12)  (N=45) | 50.3 (3.46)  (N=45) |
| Mean (SE) for *not argument-stretched* | 51.0 (2.23)  (N=88) | 52.8 (2.48)  (N=88) |
| Mean difference (SE)  *not argument stretched* – *argument-stretched*  [significance level unadjusted] [Bonferroni adjusted] | 9.42 (3.84)  [\*\*] [\*\*] | 2.44 (4.26) |
| Mean difference (SE)  *argument stretched* – *no justification*  [significance level unadjusted] [Bonferroni adjusted] | 3.16 (4.41) | -5.33 (4.90) |
| Mean difference (SE)  *not argument stretched* – *no justification*  [significance level unadjusted] [Bonferroni adjusted] | 12.6 (3.84)  [\*\*\*] [\*\*\*] | -2.89 (4.26) |
| Treatment Effect F (p) for three way group difference argument-stretching treatment | 6.40 (0.00) | 0.60 (0.55) |
| N | 178 | 178 |

*Argument-stretching treatment without the “no justification” category*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | DV politician support | DV policy support |
| Grand Mean (SE) | 46.3 (1.91) | 51.6 (2.12) |
| Mean (SE) for *argument-stretched* | 41.6 (3.10)  (N=45) | 50.3 (3.45)  (N=45) |
| Mean (SE) for *not argument-stretched* | 51.0 (2.22)  (N=88) | 52.8 (2.47)  (N=88) |
| Mean difference (SE) with significance levels  *not argument stretched* – *argument-stretched* | 9.42 (3.81) \*\* | 2.44 (4.24) |
| Treatment Effect F (p) for two way difference between *argument stretched* and *not argument stretched* | 6.11 (0.02) | 0.33 (0.57) |
| N | 133 | 133 |

*3.4.2.3 One way ANOVA for respondents not exposed to counter-justification (Model 3 from section 3.4.1)*

*Argument-stretching treatment including the “no justification” category*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | DV politician support | DV policy support |
| Grand Mean (SE) | 47.8 (2.49) | 51.7 (2.65) |
| Mean (SE) for *no justification* | 40.8 (2.55)  (N=74) | 47.1 (2.71)  (N=74) |
| Mean (SE) for *argument-stretched* | 50.00 (5.67)  (N=15) | 55.0 (6.02)  (N=15) |
| Mean (SE) for *not argument-stretched* | 52.5 (4.15)  (N=28) | 52.9 (4.41) (N=28) |
| Mean difference (SE)  *not argument stretched* – *argument-stretched*  [significance level unadjusted] [Bonferroni adjusted] | 2.50 (7.03) | -2.14 (7.46) |
| Mean difference (SE)  *argument stretched* – *no justification*  [significance level unadjusted] [Bonferroni adjusted] | 9.24 (6.22) | 7.91 (6.60) |
| Mean difference (SE)  *not argument stretched* – *no justification*  [significance level unadjusted] [Bonferroni adjusted] | 11.7 (4.87)  [\*\*] [\*] | 5.76 (5.17) |
| Treatment Effect F (p) for three way group difference argument-stretching treatment | 3.40 (0.04) | 1.10 (0.34) |
| N | 117 | 117 |

*Argument-stretching treatment without the “no justification” category*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | DV politician support | DV policy support |
| Grand Mean (SE) | 51.3 (2.85) | 53.9 (3.42) |
| Mean (SE) for *argument-stretched* | 50.0 (4.60)  (N=15) | 55.0 (5.53)  (N=15) |
| Mean (SE) for *not argument-stretched* | 52.5 (3.37)  (N=28) | 52.9 (4.04)  (N=28) |
| Mean difference (SE) with significance levels  *not argument stretched* – *argument-stretched* | 2.50 (5.70) | -2.14 (4.24) |
| Treatment Effect F (p) for two way difference between argument stretched and not argument stretched | 0.19 (0.66) | 0.10 (0.76) |
| N | 43 | 43 |

*3.4.2.4 Two way ANOVA for all respondents (Model 4 from section 3.4.1)*

*Estimated marginal means*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| DV Politician Support |  | Mean | SE | N |
| No counter-justification | No justification | 40.8 | 2.48 | 74 |
| Argument-stretching | 50.0 | 5.51 | 15 |
| No argument-stretching | 52.5 | 4.03 | 28 |
| Total | 47.8 | 2.42 | 117 |
| Counter-justification  present | No justification | 38.4 | 3.18 | 45 |
| Argument-stretching | 41.6 | 3.18 | 45 |
| No argument-stretching | 51.0 | 2.28 | 88 |
| Total | 43.7 | 1.68 | 178 |
| Total | No justification | 39.6 | 2.02 | 119 |
| Argument-stretching | 45.8 | 3.18 | 60 |
| No argument-stretching | 51.8 | 2.32 | 116 |
| Total (Grand Mean) | 45.7 | 1.47 | 295 |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| DV Policy Support |  | Mean | SE | N |
| No counter-justification | No justification | 47.1 | 2.70 | 74 |
| Argument-stretching | 55.0 | 6.01 | 15 |
| No argument-stretching | 52.9 | 4.40 | 28 |
| Total | 51.7 | 2.64 | 117 |
| Counter-justification  present | No justification | 55.7 | 3.47 | 45 |
| Argument-stretching | 50.3 | 3.47 | 45 |
| No argument-stretching | 52.8 | 2.48 | 88 |
| Total | 52.9 | 1.83 | 178 |
| Total | No justification | 51.38 | 2.20 | 119 |
| Argument-stretching | 52.7 | 3.47 | 60 |
| No argument-stretching | 52.8 | 2.52 | 116 |
| Total (Grand Mean) | 52.3 | 1.61 | 295 |

*Estimates of group differences argument-stretching treatment*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| DV Politician Support  Mean difference (SE)  [sig level unadjusted]  [Bonferroni adjusted] | No argument-stretching | Argument-stretching | No  justification |
| No argument-stretching |  | 7.69 (3.39)  [\*\*] [\*] | 11.5 (2.79)  [\*\*\*] [\*\*\*] |
| Argument-stretching |  |  | 3.81 (3.38) |
| No justification |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| DV Policy Support  Mean difference (SE)  [sig level unadjusted]  [Bonferroni adjusted] | No argument-stretching | Argument-stretching | No  justification |
| No argument-stretching |  | 1.29 (3.70) | 2.46 (3.04) |
| Argument-stretching |  |  | 1.16 (3.68) |
| No justification |  |  |  |

*Estimates of group differences context treatment*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| DV Politician Support  Mean difference (SE) | No counter-justification | Counter-justification present |
| No counter-justification |  | 4.09 (2.95) |
| Counter-justification present | -4.09 (2.95) |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| DV Policy Support  Mean difference (SE) | No counter-justification | Counter-justification present |
| No counter-justification |  | -1.27 (3.21) |
| Counter-justification present | 1.27 (3.21) |  |

*Treatment Effects*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Treatment Effects F (p) | DV Politician Support | DV Policy  Support |
| Argument-stretching treatment | 7.87  (0.00) | 0.11  (0.90) |
| Context treatment | 1.92  (0.17) | 0.16  (0.69) |
| Interaction argument-stretching treatment \* context treatment | 0.43  (0.65) | 1.60  (0.20) |

*Notes***:** Coefficients and marginal effects are from an ANOVA test of group differences between the three categories of the experimental treatment (argument-stretched justification, justification not argument-stretched, no justification) for two dependent variables, that is politician support (0 to 100) and policy support (0 to 100). Significance levels (p) for mean difference estimates (unadjusted and Bonferroni adjusted for multipled comparisons, where applicable) are identified as follows: \* 0.1; \*\* 0.05; \*\*\* 0.01.

**3.4.3 Tests of Hypothesis 1 (Politician support) and Hypothesis 2 (Policy support): subjective-recipient approach, OLS regression coefficients**

*3.4.3.1 Politician Support*

*3.4.3.1.1 All respondents, without context treatment*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model | --- 1 --- | --- 2 --- | --- 3 --- | --- 4 --- | --- 5 --- | --- 6 --- |
| Argument validity | 40.2 \*\*\* (4.87) | 40.3 \*\*\*  (4.86) | 39.1 \*\*\*  (4.91) | 39.1 \*\*\*  (4.90) | 34.3 \*\*\*  (2.71) | 33.3 \*\*\* (4.60) |
| Prior policy support |  | 6.59  (5.03) |  | 7.76  (5.06) |  | 7.38  (4.79) |
| Prior goal support |  |  | 8.44  (5.73) | 9.66 \*  (5.77) |  | 8.38  (5.46) |
| Party cueing |  |  |  |  | 25.7 \*\*\*  (4.28) | 25.4 \*\*\*  (4.27) |
| Constant | 28.4 \*\*\* (2.33) | 25.0 \*\*\*  (3.49) | 24.5 \*\*\*  (3.53) | 19.9 \*\*\*  (4.62) | 19.0 \*\*\*  (7.00) | 11.4 \*\*  (4.60) |
| R2 | 0.19 | 0.19 | 0.20 | 0.20 | 0.28 | 0.29 |
| N | 295 | 295 | 295 | 295 | 295 | 295 |

*3.4.3.1.2 Only respondents who received counter-justification*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model | --- 1 --- | --- 2 --- | --- 3 --- | --- 4 --- | --- 5 --- | --- 6 --- |
| Argument validity | 37.7 \*\*\*  (6.18) | 38.0 \*\*\*  (6.17) | 36.4 \*\*\*  (6.27) | 36.6 \*\*\*  (6.24) | 33.2 \*\*\*  (5.95) | 32.3 \*\*\*  (6.00) |
| Prior policy support |  | 8.46  (6.44) |  | 9.77  (6.49) |  | 10.9 \*  (6.16) |
| Prior goal support |  |  | 7.80  (6.59) | 9.25  (6.63) |  | 8.08  (6.30) |
| Party cueing |  |  |  |  | 24.9  (5.56) | 25.0 \*\*\*  (5.54) |
| Constant | 29.6 \*\*\*  (2.99) | 24.9 \*\*\*  (4.66) | 26.1 \*\*\*  (4.19) | 20.0 \*\*\*  (5.81) | 19.5 \*\*\*  (3.62) | 9.79  (5.95) |
| R2 | 0.17 | 0.18 | 0.18 | 0.19 | 0.26 | 0.28 |
| N | 178 | 178 | 178 | 178 | 178 | 178 |

*3.4.3.1.3 Only respondents who did not receive counter-justification*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model | --- 1 --- | --- 2 --- | --- 3 --- | --- 4 --- | --- 5 --- | --- 6 --- |
| Argument validity | 44.1 \*\*\*  (7.96) | 44.1 \*\*\*  (5.41) | 43.4 \*\*\*  (8.00) | 43.3 \*\*\*  (8.03) | 35.7 \*\*\*  (7.81) | 35.1 \*\*\*  (7.87) |
| Prior policy support |  | 3.53  (8.36) |  | 4.63  (8.42) |  | 2.57  (7.97) |
| Prior goal support |  |  | 11.4  (11.7) | 12.2  (11.9) |  | 10.5  (11.2) |
| Party cueing |  |  |  |  | 26.9 \*\*\*  (6.85) | 26.5 \*\*\*  (6.90) |
| Constant | 26.7 \*\*\*  (3.75) | 25.0 \*\*\*  (5.41) | 21.1 \*\*\*  (6.84) | 18.6 \*\*  (8.29) | 18.2 \*\*\*  (4.14) | 12.02  (8.00) |
| R2 | 0.21 | 0.21 | 0.22 | 0.22 | 0.31 | 0.31 |
| N | 117 | 117 | 117 | 117 | 117 | 117 |

*3.4.3.1.4 All respondents, with context treatment included*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model | --- 1 --- | --- 2 --- | --- 3 --- | --- 4 --- | --- 5 --- | --- 6 --- |
| Argument validity | 40.2 \*\*\*  (4.88) | 40.3 \*\*\*  (4.87) | 39.1 \*\*\*  (4.92) | 39.1 \*\*\*  (4.91) | 34.2 \*\*\*  (4.71) | 33.4 \*\*\*  (4.74) |
| Prior policy support |  | 6.66  (5.09) |  | 7.85  (5.12) |  | 7.75  (0.11) |
| Prior goal support |  |  | 8.44  (5.74) | 9.67 \*  (5.78) |  | 8.44  (5.47) |
| Party cueing |  |  |  |  | 25.8 \*\*\*  (4.30) | 25.5 \*\*\*  (4.28) |
| No counter-justification | -0.24  (2.35) | 0.21  (2.38) | -0.23  (2.35) | 0.29  (2.37) | 0.66  (0.77) | 1.18  (2.24) |
| Constant | 28.5 \*\*\*  (2.53) | 24.9 \*\*\*  (4.87) | 24.6 \*\*\*  (3.67) | 19.8 \*\*\*  (4.84) | 18.7 \*\*\*  (2.90) | 10.6 \*\*  (4.82) |
| R2 | 0.19 | 0.19 | 0.20 | 0.20 | 0.28 | 0.29 |
| N | 295 | 295 | 295 | 295 | 295 | 295 |

*3.4.3.2 Policy Support*

*3.4.3.2.1 All respondents, without context treatment*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model | --- 1 --- | --- 2 --- | --- 3 --- | --- 4 --- | --- 5 --- | --- 6 --- |
| Argument validity | 28.0 \*\*\*  (5.51) | 28.3 \*\*\*  (5.40) | 27.8 \*\*\*  (5.58) | 27.7 \*\*\*  (5.46) | 22.2 \*\*\*  (5.41) | 22.1 \*\*\*  (5.35) |
| Prior policy support |  | 20.2 \*\*\*  (5.58) |  | 20.8 \*\*\*  (5.64) |  | 20.4 \*\*\*  (5.41) |
| Prior goal support |  |  | 1.75  (0.79) | 5.00  (6.43) |  | 3.76  (6.17) |
| Party cueing |  |  |  |  | 25.0 \*\*\*  (4.92) | 24.8 \*\*\*  (4.82) |
| Constant | 39.9 \*\*\*  (2.64) | 29.4 \*\*\*  (3.88) | 39.1 \*\*\*  (4.00) | 26.8  (5.14) | 30.7 \*\*\*  (3.12) | 18.4 \*\*\*  (5.19) |
| R2 | 0.08 | 0.12 | 0.08 | 0.12 | 0.16 | 0.20 |
| N | 295 | 295 | 295 | 295 | 295 | 295 |

*3.4.3.2.2 Only respondents who received counter-justification*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model | --- 1 --- | --- 2 --- | --- 3 --- | --- 4 --- | --- 5 --- | --- 6 --- |
| Argument validity | 25.4 \*\*\*  (7.05) | 26.1 \*\*\*  (6.97) | 24.7 \*\*\*  (7.17) | 25.0 \*\*\*  (7.07) | 21.0 \*\*\*  (6.89) | 20.7 \*\*\*  (6.87) |
| Prior policy support |  | 17.0 \*\*  (7.27) |  | 18.0 \*\*  (7.35) |  | 19.1 \*\*\*  (7.06) |
| Prior goal support |  |  | 4.16  (7.54) | 6.81  (7.51) |  | 5.63  (7.22) |
| Party cueing |  |  |  |  | 24.7 \*\*\*  (6.43) | 25.3 \*\*\*  (6.35) |
| Constant | 42.2 \*\*\*  (3.41) | 32.8 \*\*\*  (5.26) | 40.3 \*\*\*  (4.80) | 29.2 \*\*\*  (6.58) | 32.2 \*\*\*  (4.19) | 18.9 \*\*\*  (6.82) |
| R2 | 0.07 | 0.10 | 0.07 | 0.10 | 0.14 | 0.18 |
| N | 178 | 178 | 178 | 178 | 178 | 178 |

*3.4.3.2.3 Only respondents who did not receive counter-justification*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model | --- 1 --- | --- 2 --- | --- 3 --- | --- 4 --- | --- 5 --- | --- 6 --- |
| Argument validity | 31.7 \*\*\*  (8.85) | 31.3 \*\*\*  (8.63) | 32.1 \*\*\*  (8.92) | 31.4 \*\*\*  (8.71) | 24.1 \*\*\*  (8.87) | 24.2 \*\*\*  (8.73) |
| Prior policy support |  | 23.7 \*\*\*  (9.03) |  | 23.6 \*\*  (9.15) |  | 21.8 \*\*  (8.85) |
| Prior goal support |  |  | -4.82  (13.1) | -0.57  (12.9) |  | -2.06  (12.4) |
| Party cueing |  |  |  |  | 24.6 \*\*\*  (7.78) | 23.4 \*\*\*  (7.66) |
| Constant | 36.5 \*\*\*  (4.17) | 25.5 \*\*\*  (5.84) | 38.8 \*\*\*  (7.63) | 25.8 \*\*\*  (9.00) | 28.8 \*\*\*  (4.70) | 20.0 \*\*  (8.89) |
| R2 | 0.10 | 0.15 | 0.10 | 0.15 | 0.17 | 0.22 |
| N | 117 | 117 | 117 | 117 | 117 | 117 |

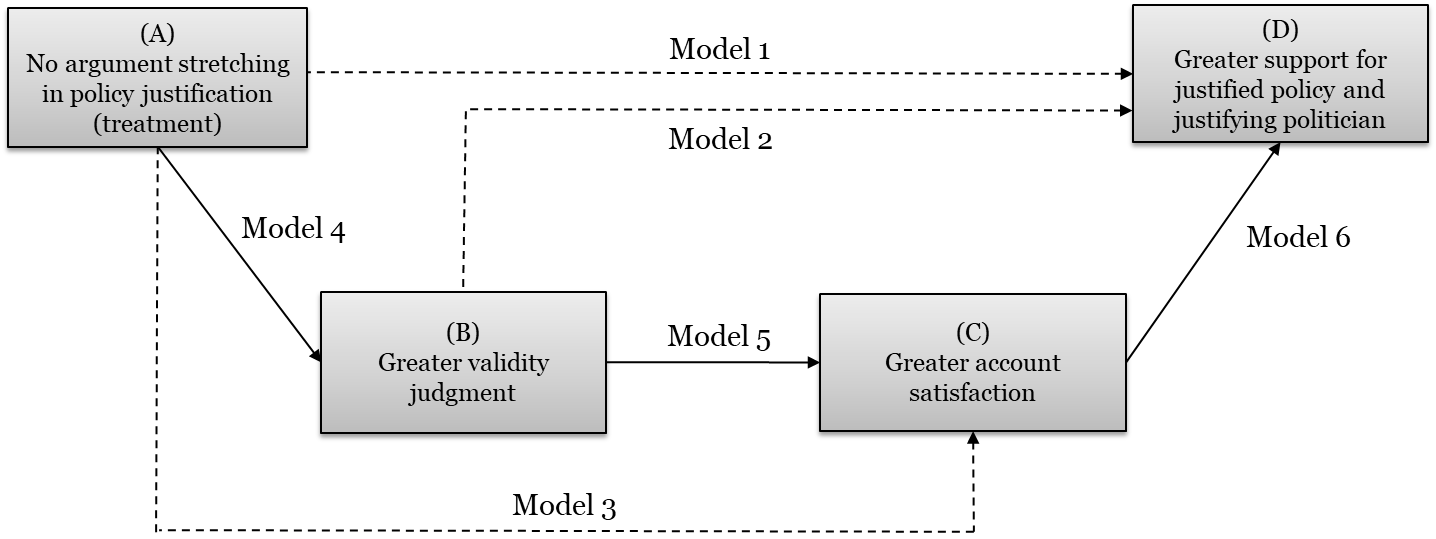
*3.4.3.2.4 All respondents, with context treatment included*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model | --- 1 --- | --- 2 --- | --- 3 --- | --- 4 --- | --- 5 --- | --- 6 --- |
| Argument validity | 27.8 \*\*\*  (5.51) | 28.2 \*\*\*  (5.41) | 27.6 \*\*\*  (5.58) | 27.6 \*\*\*  (5.47) | 22.2 \*\*\*  (5.41) | 22.1 \*\*\*  (5.36) |
| Prior policy support |  | 19.6 \*\*\*  (5.65) |  | 20.2 \*\*\*  (3.55) |  | 20.1 \*\*\*  (5.48) |
| Prior goal support |  |  | 1.73  (6.50) | 4.91  (6.44) |  | 3.72  (6.18) |
| Party cueing |  |  |  |  | 24.7 \*\*\*  (4.93) | 24.7 \*\*\*  (4.84) |
| No counter-justification | -3.09  (2.66) | -1.78  (2.64) | -3.09  (2.66) | -1.73  (0.51) | -2.22  (2.56) | -0.87  (2.54) |
| Constant | 41.2 \*\*\*  (2.86) | 30.5  (4.17) | 40.4 \*\*\*  (4.16) | 27.8 \*\*\*  (5.39) | 31.7 \*\*\*  (3.34) | 19.0 \*\*\*  (5.46) |
| R2 | 0.09 | 0.12 | 0.09 | 0.12 | 0.16 | 0.20 |
| N | 295 | 295 | 295 | 295 | 295 | 295 |

*Notes*: Dependent variables are politician support (0 to 100) and policy support (0 to 100). Cells contain OLS regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses, and significance levels (p) identified as follows: \* 0.1; \*\* 0.05; \*\*\* 0.01. Independent variables are on 0 to 1 scales. (Argument-stretching) treatment variables *No argument-stretching* and N*o justification* are dummy variables, with *argument-stretching* as the reference group. (Context) treatment variable *No counter-justification* is a dummy variable, with *counter-justification present* as the reference group.

**3.4.4 Bootstrapping test of Hypothesis 3 (Mediation)**

*3.4.4.1 Constituent variables and models of mediation hypothesis*

****

*3.4.4.2 Mediation of argument stretching treatment (A) on politician support (D) via account satisfaction (C), as specified by models 1, 3, and 6 in figure 3.4.4.1*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model: *no argument-stretching (A)* -> *account satisfaction* (C) -> *politician support* (D), with *no justification* and *no-counter-justification* as covariates [N = 295] | Effect | SE | P | Lower CI | Upper CI | Partially standardized effect |
| Total effect of A on D | 7.71 | 3.39 | 0.02 | 1.04 | 14.4 | 0.35 |
| Direct effect of A on D | 0.98 | 2.75 | 0.72 | -4.43 | 6.39 | 0.05 |
|  | Effect | Bootstrapped SE |  | Bootstrapped lower CI | Bootstrapped upper CI |  |
| Indirect (mediated) effect of A on D via C | 6.73 | 1.96 |  | 3.02 | 10.7 |  |
| Partially standardized mediation effect | 0.31 | 0.09 |  | 0.14 | 0.48 |  |

*3.4.4.3 Mediation of argument stretching treatment (A) on policy support (D) via account satisfaction (C), as specified by models 1, 3, and 6 in figure 3.4.4.1*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model: *no argument-stretching (A)* -> *account satisfaction* (C) -> policy *support* (D), with *no justification* and *no-counter-justification* as covariates [N = 295] | Effect | SE | P | Lower CI | Upper CI | Partially standardized effect |
| Total effect of A on D | 1.27 | 3.71 | 0.73 | -6.03 | 8.56 | 0.05 |
| Direct effect of A on D | -3.43 | 3.49 | 0.33 | -10.3 | 3.43 | -0.15 |
|  | Effect | Bootstrapped SE |  | Bootstrapped lower CI | Bootstrapped upper CI |  |
| Indirect (mediated) effect of A on D via C | 4.70 | 1.44 |  | 1.97 | 7.63 |  |
| Partially standardized mediation effect | 0.20 | 0.06 |  | 0.09 | 0.32 |  |

*3.4.4.4 Mediation of validity judgment (B) on politician support (D) via account satisfaction (C), as specified by models 2, 5, and 6 in figure 3.4.4.1*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model: *validity judgment (B)* -> *account satisfaction* (C) -> *politician* *support* (D), with *no justification* and *no-counter-justification* as covariates [N = 295] | Effect | SE | P | Lower CI | Upper CI | Partially standardized effect | Completely standardized effect |
| Total effect of B on D | 38.1 | 5.22 | 0.00 | 27.8 | 48.4 | 1.74 | 0.41 |
| Direct effect of B on D | 13.0 | 5.02 | 0.01 | 3.15 | 22.9 | 0.60 | 0.14 |
|  | Effect | Bootstrapped SE |  | Bootstrapped lower CI | Bootstrapped upper CI |  |  |
| Indirect (mediated) effect of B on D via C | 25.1 | 4.22 |  | 17.4 | 33.9 |  |  |
| Partially standardized mediation effect | 1.15 | 0.17 |  | 0.83 | 1.51 |  |  |
| Completely standardized mediation effect | 0.27 | 0.04 |  | 0.19 | 0.36 |  |  |

*3.4.4.5 Mediation of validity judgment (B) on policy support (D) via account satisfaction (C), as specified by models 2, 5, and 6 in figure 3.4.4.1*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model: *validity judgment (B)* -> *account satisfaction* (C) -> *policy support* (D), with *no justification* and *no-counter-justification* as covariates [N = 295] | Effect | SE | P | Lower CI | Upper CI | Partially standardized effect | Completely standardized effect |
| Total effect of B on D | 31.3 | 5.88 | 0.00 | 19.7 | 42.8 | 1.34 | 0.32 |
| Direct effect of B on D | 15.8 | 6.39 | 0.01 | 3.27 | 28.4 | 0.68 | 0.16 |
|  | Effect | Bootstrapped SE |  | Bootstrapped lower CI | Bootstrapped upper CI |  |  |
| Indirect (mediated) effect of B on D via C | 15.4 | 3.90 |  | 8.51 | 23.9 |  |  |
| Partially standardized mediation effect | 0.66 | 0.16 |  | 0.38 | 1.01 |  |  |
| Completely standardized mediation effect | 0.16 | 0.04 |  | 0.09 | 0.24 |  |  |

*3.4.4.6 Robustness: mediation of treatment (A) on account satisfaction (C) via validity judgment (B), as specified by models 3, 4, and 5 in figure 3.4.4.1*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model: *no argument-stretching (A)* -> *validity judgment* (B) -> *account satisfaction* (C), with *no justification* and *no-counter-justification* as covariates [N = 295] | Effect | SE | P | Lower CI | Upper CI | Partially standardized effect |
| Total effect of A on C | 12.5 | 3.82 | 0.00 | 4.99 | 20.0 | 0.45 |
| Direct effect of A on C | 8.97 | 3.42 | 0.01 | 2.24 | 15.7 | 0.32 |
|  | Effect | Bootstrapped SE |  | Bootstrapped lower CI | Bootstrapped upper CI |  |
| Indirect (mediated) effect of A on C via B | 3.53 | 1.83 |  | 0.08 | 7.24 |  |
| Partially standardized mediation effect | 0.13 | 0.07 |  | 0.01 | 0.26 |  |

*3.4.4.7 Test of serial mediation, as specified in figure 3.4.4.1 (A -> B -> C -> D)*

*Dependent variable politician support*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model: *no argument-stretching (A)* -> *validity judgment* (B) -> *account satisfaction* (C) -> politician support, with *no justification* and *no-counter-justification* as covariates [N = 295] | Effect | SE | P | Lower CI | Upper CI | Partially standardized effect |
| Total serial effect of A on D | 7.71 | 3.39 | 0.03 | 1.04 | 14.4 | 0.35 |
| Direct serial effect of A on D | 0.74 | 2.72 | 0.79 | -4.62 | 6.10 | 0.03 |
|  | Effect | Bootstrapped SE |  | Bootstrapped lower CI | Bootstrapped upper CI |  |
| Combined indirect (mediated) serial effect based on constituent mediated effects of A on D via B and C | 6.96 | 2.10 |  | 3.01 | 11.2 |  |
| Indirect (mediated) constituent serial effect of A on D via B | 0.92 | 0.64 |  | -0.01 | 2.44 |  |
| Indirect (mediated) constituent serial effect of A on D via C | 4.34 | 1.48 |  | 1.56 | 7.34 |  |
| Indirect (mediated) constituent serial effect of A on D via B and C | 1.71 | 0.92 |  | 0.05 | 3.69 |  |
| Partially standardized combined serial mediation effect | 0.32 | 0.09 |  | 0.14 | 0.50 |  |
| Partially standardized serial mediation effect of A on D via B | 0.04 | 0.03 |  | -0.00 | 0.11 |  |
| Partially standardized serial mediation effect of A on D via C | 0.20 | 0.07 |  | 0.07 | 0.33 |  |
| Partially standardized serial mediation effect of A on D via B and C | 0.08 | 0.04 |  | 0.01 | 0.16 |  |

*Dependent variable policy support*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model: *no argument-stretching (A)* -> *validity judgment* (B) -> *account satisfaction* (C) -> *policy support*, with *no justification* and *no-counter-justification* as covariates [N =] | Effect | SE | P | Lower CI | Upper CI | Partially standardized effect |
| Total serial effect of A on D | 1.27 | 3.71 | 0.73 | -6.03 | 8.56 | 0.05 |
| Direct serial effect of A on D | -3.73 | 3.46 | 0.28 | -10.5 | 3.08 | -0.16 |
|  | Effect | Bootstrapped SE |  | Bootstrapped lower CI | Bootstrapped upper CI |  |
| Combined indirect (mediated) serial effect based on constituent mediated effects of A on D via B and C | 4.99 | 1.64 |  | 1.92 | 8.41 |  |
| Indirect (mediated) constituent serial effect of A on D via B | 1.14 | 0.78 |  | -0.04 | 2.92 |  |
| Indirect (mediated) constituent serial effect of A on D via C | 2.77 | 1.00 |  | 0.97 | 4.88 |  |
| Indirect (mediated) constituent serial effect of A on D via B and C | 1.09 | 0.65 |  | 0.02 | 2.58 |  |
| Partially standardized combined serial mediation effect | 0.21 | 0.07 |  | 0.08 | 0.36 |  |
| Partially standardized serial mediation effect of A on D via B | 0.05 | 0.03 |  | -0.00 | 0.13 |  |
| Partially standardized serial mediation effect of A on D via C | 0.12 | 0.04 |  | 0.04 | 0.21 |  |
| Partially standardized serial mediation effect of A on D via B and C | 0.05 | 0.03 |  | 0.01 | 0.11 |  |

*Notes*: The bootstrapping test for mediation proposed by Hayes and Preacher (2014) and Hayes (2018) is used here to evaluate the mediation hypothesis H 3. First, the test is used to evaluate the expected separate mediation effects specified in figure 1, which were subjected to tests of joint significance in section 3.4.7: A -> D -> C (subjective-message approach with dependent variable politician support), A -> D -> C (subjective-message approach with dependent variable policy support), B -> D -> C (subjective-recipient approach with dependent variable politician support), B -> D -> C (subjective-recipient approach with dependent variable policy support), A -> B -> C (robustness test for mediation of treatment on account satisfaction via validity judgment. The standardized effects are proposed by Hayes (2018) and MacKinnon (2008). They allow for comparisons of mediation effect sizes across samples and model specifications. Partially standardized effects are given for all models, completely standardized effects are given for models with continuous indepdendent variables. Second, the bootstrapping test is used to evaluate the full serial mediation model described by figure 1 (A -> B -> C -> D). For all tests, the “no justification” and “no counter-justification” variables are included as covariates (a conservative choice making it more challenging to detect mediation for argument-stretching), the number of bootstrap samples is 10.000, and confidence intervals are calculated at a level of 95 %.

**Appendix 3.5: Additional analyses**

**Sample composition: descriptive statistics for selection of participant characteristics (see Appendix 3.2 for measurement details)**

|  | N | Range | Mean | SE Mean | SD |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Age | 295 | 18-70 | 30 | 0.65 | 11.2 |
| Political sophistication | 295 | 0-6 | 3.06 | 0.97 | 1.66 |
| Religiosity | 295 | 1-6 | 5.2 | 0.06 | 1.05 |
| Monthly gross income | 295 | 0-24000 | 1145 | 98.6 | 1693 |
| Political interest | 295 | 1-4 | 1.89 | 0.05 | 0.77 |
| Prior awareness of Euro-tax | 295 | 1-6 | 2.32 | 0.06 | 1.10 |
| Left-right position | 295 | 0-10 | 4.74 | 0.12 | 2.04 |
| Need for cognition | 295 | 0-1 | 0.61 | 0.01 | 0.18 |
| Need for evaluation | 295 | 0-1 | 0.70 | 0.01 | 0.17 |
| Political trust | 295 | 0-1 | 0.64 | 0.01 | 0.22 |
| Political efficacy | 295 | 0-1 | 0.49 | 0.01 | 0.22 |

|  | N | Number of participants (and percentages) in different categories |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Social class | 295 | 1-> 53 (18 %), 2 -> 65 (22 %), 3 -> 124 (42%), 4 -> 50 (17 %), 5 -> 3 (1 %) |
| Gender | 295 | 1 -> 136 (46 %), 2 -> 157 (53 %) |
| Occupation | 295 | 0 -> 6 (2 %), 1 -> 34 (11.5 %), 2 -> 3 (1%), 3 -> 56 (19%), 4 -> 14 (4.7 %), 5 -> 43 (14.6 %), 6 -> 7 (2.4 %), 7 -> 5 (1.7 %), 8 -> 10 (3.4 %), 9 -> 1 (0.3 %), 10 -> 1 (0.3 %), 11 -> 30 (10.2 %), 12 -> 40 (13.6 %), 13 -> 45 (15.3 %) |

**Homogeneity of treatment groups**

|  | F (p) values for effect of argument-stretching treatment on various participant characteristics |
| --- | --- |
| Age | 0.04 (0.96) |
| Political sophistication | 1.28 (0.28) |
| Religiosity | 0.48 (0.62) |
| Monthly gross income | 1.02 (0.36) |
| Left-right position | 1.68 (0.19) |
| Need for cognition | 0.40 (0.67) |
| Need for evaluation | 0.10 (0.91) |
| Social Class | 1.64 (0.20) |
| Gender | 0.11 (0.90) |

**Appendix 4: Additional works cited in online appendix**

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Heath, Anthony; Geoffrey Evans, and Jean Martin (1994) The Measurement of Core Beliefs   
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