

A Metacognitive Inquiry: do beliefs about party affiliation moderate the influence caused by ease of processing on voting decisions?

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Regarding metacognitive research, ease of processing and beliefs are two factors (implicit and explicit processes, respectively) that influence human judgement. Due to prior research that looks at ease of processing being used to make judgements without the presence of consistent explicit beliefs, our research investigates these factors in the context of voting judgements to see whether ease of processing on voting judgements would be moderated by participants' beliefs. Across two experiments, we presented participants with 40 surnames that varied in norms of pronounceability (i.e., low = Koztecki or high = Hammonds) as a manipulation for ease of processing. Participants were then divided into two groups, one in which political party information was not provided (all names were colored black) and another in which such information was provided (i.e., red names = republican or blue names = democrat). Participants would then make judgements on how likely they were to vote for a candidate on a scale of 0% to 100%, and end the experiment with indicating their party affiliation (a political belief). Results from both studies showed ease of processing and beliefs each affect voting decisions in this particular context. The challenge for future research in reaction to this investigation would be to further delineate these two factors, because beliefs did not moderate the influence of ease of processing, indicating that pronounceability as a manipulation of implicit ease of processing has a unique effect on voting decisions.

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