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As Predicted: *"Household income, inequality, and generosity self-replication study"* (#23863)

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1) Have any data been collected for this study already?
No, no data have been collected for this study yet.

2) What's the main question being asked or hypothesis being tested in this study?
We are testing the hypothesis that the relationship between household income and generosity is moderated by the extent of economic inequality in one's state, so that the relationship between household income and generosity is more negatively valenced in states where inequality is higher, compared to states where inequality is lower. This pattern of interaction will be reflected in a negative parameter estimate for the interaction. This hypothesis was tested in a previous publication (Côté, House, and Willer, PNAS, 2015).

3) Describe the key dependent variable(s) specifying how they will be measured.
We will administer the same dictator game from the Measuring Morality study (which was analyzed in Study 1 of Côté et al., PNAS, 2015). The dependent variable is the amount of donation in the dictator game.

4) How many and which conditions will participants be assigned to?
There are no conditions. Both predictors are continuous measures.

5) Specify exactly which analyses you will conduct to examine the main question/hypothesis.
We will conduct hierarchical linear models using the nlme package for R. We will regress generosity on income, inequality, and their interaction. Income will be centered at its group mean (i.e., within states) and inequality will be centered at its grand mean (i.e., across states). Support for the hypothesis will be inferred if the interaction term is significant, and the relationship between household income and generosity is more negatively valenced in states where inequality is higher, compared to states where inequality is lower.

6) Describe exactly how outliers will be defined and handled, and your precise rule(s) for excluding observations.
We will not exclude outliers.

Participants will have to complete a captcha check to verify that they are human. Any observation with a failed captcha will not be included in the analyses.

We will exclude participants who do not pay attention to the instructions. One question will ask participants to *not* answer a question that ostensibly asks their interest in eating unusual restaurant items. Further, at the end of the study, participants will be asked to describe at least two of the questions in the study. These answers will be coded by research assistants as correct or incorrect. Participants who fail either of these two checks will be deemed as not having paid enough attention and removed from the analyses.

Participants will be asked to enter their year of birth. Since participants will be invited from a pool of participants who have completed demographic questionnaires in the past, we will compare year of birth selected on this survey with the previously selected year of birth. Observations where they year of birth does not match will be removed from the analyses.

7) How many observations will be collected or what will determine sample size?

No need to justify decision, but be precise about exactly how the number will be determined.
We aim to collect 3,745 participants from the U.S. from MTurk, based on recommendations by Simonsohn (Psychological Science, 2015). This sample size is 2.5 times the original sample size of 1,498 in the original study (Study 1 of Côté et al., 2015). We will check that we have at least 3,745 participants who have reported their home state and household income, completed the dictator game, and passed the attention checks (see below) prior to doing any analyses. We will continue recruiting participants until we obtain at least 3,745 observations with all of the focal measures before doing any analyses.

8) Anything else you would like to pre-register?
(e.g., secondary analyses, variables collected for exploratory purposes, unusual analyses planned?)
Household (and personal) income will be measured by asking participants to choose one of 18 categories starting with Less than $5,000, $5,000-$7,499, … $175,000 or more. We will assign the midpoint of each category. For the largest category, we will use a strategy described by Hout (2004). If there are no observations in the second largest category, the formula does not produce a value, and we will assign a value of $175,000.

We will gather Gini coefficients for each state (plus DC) from the American Community Survey, using the most recent 1-year estimates that will be available.

If we do not recruit participants from all 50 U.S. states plus the District of Columbia, we will note that this constitutes an important deviation from the original study.

We will repeat the analysis with controls for the control variables examined in Study 1 of Côté et al., PNAS, 2015.

We will explore regions of significance to examine the levels of inequality at which income might be significantly related to generosity, using the web utility by Preacher, Curran, and Bauer (2006).

We will conduct exploratory analyses with personal income. We will also conduct exploratory analyses excluding participants who report a personal income that exceeds their reported household income.

We will explore whether there is an interaction between inequality and income predicting entitlement--a theorized mechanism for the interaction between inequality and income predicting generosity.

We will analyze two other measures that we believe are less valid measures of generosity than donations in the dictator game: self-reported volunteering activities and donations to charity. We believe that these behaviors are motivated by both prosocial and self-serving motives, and that the validity of these measures is undermined by self-serving biases. We expect that they will exhibit small correlations with donations in the dictator game. We also do not necessarily expect income and inequality to interact to predict self-reported volunteering activities or donations to charity.

We will explore whether noblesse oblige moderates the two-way interaction between inequality and income.

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