

“Support Models of Social Projection”

Intuitive predictions of the preferences of other people often show social projection, in which one's preference for an option increases its perceived popularity. We describe and test several support theory models of social projection and the false consensus effect. These models distinguish two contributors to social projection: greater evidence recruited for preferred options, and greater discounting of less-preferred options that are packed together. The latter contributor implies an interaction between preference and option description, with substantially reduced social projection when less-liked options are unpacked. We observe this hypothesized interaction for both discrete and graded measures of preference, and for both attractive and aversive choice options. Opportunities for applying related support models in other domains of social prediction are discussed.