

## **Information Acquisition and Social Norm Formation**

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We investigate whether the ability of individuals to select their source of information affects the influence of social information on behavior and on empirical and normative beliefs in the ethical domain. In a large scale (N=1945) online lying game, we vary across treatments whether individuals can access empirical or normative information from others, and the presence of group identity in terms of political affiliation. We show that information search is motivated self-servingly, as a majority of individuals manage to consume more lenient information. This bias depends on whether own party is or not the source of lenient information. Selecting a more lenient source of normative information increases the willingness to lie, while empirical information influences empirical beliefs but much less behavior. Normative beliefs are influenced neither by empirical or normative information. A follow-up experiment (N=2414) reveals that assigning the source of information exogenously weakens the influence of social information, with little effect of polarization.