

SHOCKING BELIEFS SYSTEMS

Axe Evaluation de la démocratie

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Career

Since December 2024: Junior Prof. in Experimental and Behavioral Economics, Université Lumière Lyon 2 and GATE-Lyon

2023-2024: Postdoctoral Researcher (CNRS), Sciences Po Paris
2020-2022: Postdoctoral Researcher (CNRS), GATE-Lyon

2016-2020: PhD in Economics and Social Sciences, Max Planck Institute for Research on Collective Goods (Bonn) and University of Cologne

Publications

Bašić, Zvonimir, and Eugenio Verrina. "Personal norms—and not only social norms—shape economic behavior." *Journal of Public Economics* 239 (2024): 105255.

Verrina, Eugenio. "Upset but (almost) correct: a conceptual replication of Di Tella, Perez-Truglia, Babino and Sigman (2015)." *Journal of the Economic Science Association* 9.2 (2023): 327-336.

Hillenbrand, Adrian, and Eugenio Verrina. "The asymmetric effect of narratives on prosocial behavior." *Games and Economic Behavior* 135 (2022): 241-270.

Mittone, Luigi, Matteo Ploner, and Eugenio Verrina. "When the state does not play dice: aggressive audit strategies foster tax compliance." *Social Choice and Welfare* 57.3 (2021): 591-615.

Find out more



In this project, we start from the idea that political identities generate systems of motivated – and often inaccurate – beliefs. People partly hold these beliefs because they care about how they are seen by others. However, they may wrongly believe that others' beliefs systems are more coherent than they actually are.

In particular, they might believe that most people hold beliefs that are coherent with an ideological constraint. This can lead people to adopt views based on the assumption that the ideological constraint of a certain political group is very strong. We study how providing correct information about the ideological constraint of a political group affects people's own attitudes and their behavior towards others.

Context and research question(s)

What are beliefs systems?

- Belief systems are the ideas, values, and principles that shape how we see the world, how we process information, and how we make decisions.
- *Political ideologies* (e.g., conservatism, liberalism, socialism) often provide a framework for these beliefs. This creates relationships between beliefs that are not rooted in causality.
- For example, some with positive/negative views on immigration is likely to have negative/positive views on abortion rights.
- While political beliefs can evolve, they are often resistant to change and are based on *stereotypes* (what does the typical representative of a certain group think). Strong emotional attachments and social group identities make belief shifts difficult.

Research question(s)

How does providing information about belief systems affects people's own attitudes and their behavior towards others.

1. Do people misperceive beliefs systems?
2. How does providing correct information (about one's own group) affect people's own attitudes?
3. How does providing correct information (about other groups) affect people's attitudes and behavior towards others?

Methodology and (preliminary) results

Study 1:

- We elicit people's *attitudes* on a series of topics (immigration, discrimination, role of government, ...).
- Ask agreement with either ten pairs of liberal or conservative statements.
- Compute consistency score for liberals and conservatives: number of times person agrees with liberal/conservative statement.
- Ask people their *beliefs* about this measure of consistency (belief about stereotype).

Study 2:

- *Correct* peoples beliefs about others' consistency (in own group).
- Ask about own attitudes and policy preferences.
- Vary whether this is kept private or revealed to others (of own group).

Study 3:

- *Correct* peoples beliefs about others' consistency (in other group).
- Measure affective polarization, trust, and prosociality towards others (in other group).



Policy implications

Policy interventions to decrease stereotypical thinking about others' beliefs systems.

- Revealing information about belief systems can help foster independent thinking and ability to voice dissent. Increases quality of political debate.
- Can also help decrease polarization and focus on constructive discussion. Acknowledge real differences and work on common priorities.

