

Can Stereotypes-based Interventions in Beliefs about Out-group Reduce Partisan Animosity?

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Motivation

- **Problem:** Partisan animosity in backsliding democracies and post-conflict societies
- **Causes:** Misperceptions about outgroups
 - Overestimating out-group ideological extremity → partisan animosity (Ahler and Sood, 2018; Druckman et al., 2022; Voelkel et al., 2023b)

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- **Problem:** Partisan animosity in backsliding democracies and post-conflict societies
- **Causes:** Misperceptions about outgroups
 - Overestimating out-group ideological extremity → partisan animosity (Ahler and Sood, 2018; Druckman et al., 2022; Voelkel et al., 2023b)
- **Challenges:** Explicitly correcting beliefs of outgroup extremity might backfire

- **Research Questions:**

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- **Goal:** An intervention strategy for polarized settings:

- indirect belief correction
- context-agnostic strategy
- driven by empirical data

A Survey Experiment in Turkey

① Theoretically-Derived Issues

- to **indirectly** intervene outgroup extremism beliefs
- using representativeness-based discounting
- context-agnostic

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- using surveys to find 1) **divisive issues** and 2) **stereotypical** positions

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③ Survey experiment:

- using likely-stereotypical positions to **empirically derive** interventions
- challenging beliefs about the out-groups' ideology and extremity to reduce partisan animosity

Survey Experiment

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- Three treatment arms:

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 - 3) **Treatment Arm:** Pure control
- **Mediators:** Beliefs about the distribution of outgroup ideology and extremity
- **Outcomes:** Negative attitudes, partisan animosity, affective polarization

Treatment Operationalization

- ① **Treatment Arm:** Exposure to **information** that challenge stereotypes about outgroup members on three divisive issues

$$\left(100 - Pr(\textit{Stereotype}|\textit{Outgroup}) * 100\right)\% \text{ without stereotyped positions}$$

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- ② **Treatment Arm:** Exposure to a **conversation**

- a hypothetical **Facebook conversation** between two outgroup members
- on a divisive issue and non-stereotypical position
- **Manipulation:** Profile names and photos

Pre-Treatment Questions

- To gain efficiency
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 - Gender
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 - Employment status
 - Income level
 - Socio-economic class
 - Ethnicity
 - Religious sect

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 - Political knowledge questions
 - Political affiliation
 - Degree and importance of affiliation
 - Previous vote choice
 - Democratic attitudes

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 - Prior beliefs about the ideological distributions
 - Government supporters
 - Opposition supporters
 - University students
 - Immigrants and refugees

Pre-Treatment Questions

- Heterogeneous treatment effect
 - Prior beliefs about the ideological distributions
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 - Opposition supporters
 - University students
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Now we will ask you to imagine 100 government supporters and place them into the following four categories. The total number of people in each line should be 100.

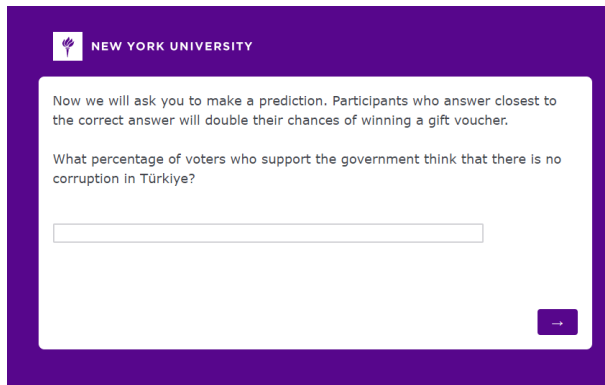
	Politically completely moderate and conciliatory	Politically partially moderate and conciliatory	Politically partially extreme and uncompromising	Politically completely extreme and uncompromising	Total
100 Government supporters	<input type="text" value="0"/>	<input type="text" value="0"/>	<input type="text" value="0"/>	<input type="text" value="0"/>	<input type="text" value="0"/>

Pre-Treatment Questions


- Incentivized Guess about Stereotyped Position

Pre-Treatment Questions

- Incentivized Guess about Stereotyped Position




The screenshot shows a survey interface with a purple header and a white content area. The header contains the New York University logo and name. The content area contains instructions about a prediction task, a question about voter beliefs in Turkey, a text input field, and a submit button.

 **NEW YORK UNIVERSITY**

Now we will ask you to make a prediction. Participants who answer closest to the correct answer will double their chances of winning a gift voucher.

What percentage of voters who support the government think that there is no corruption in Türkiye?



Treatment Arm - 1

Information Treatment:

A survey from recent years suggests interesting findings about Turkey. The majority of government supporters think there is some form of corruption and imperfect governance in Turkey.

- Indeed, only 15.8% of government supporters think Turkey has no corruption. In other words, 84.2% of government supporters, which is the majority of supporters, think there is some form of corruption in Turkey.

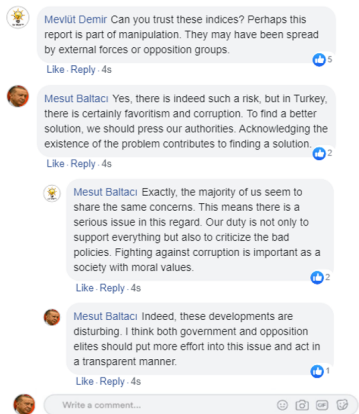


- Furthermore, only 15.2% of government supporters think the government's performance is great, whereas the remaining 84.8% indicated the performance is not perfect.







Treatment Arm - 2



Conversation Treatment:










The screenshot shows a vertical thread of four comments on a social media platform. Each comment is preceded by a circular profile picture and followed by a 'Like' button and a 'Reply' button. The first comment is from 'Mevlüt Demir' and has 5 likes. The second is from 'Mesut Baltacı' and has 2 likes. The third is also from 'Mesut Baltacı' and has 2 likes. The fourth is from 'Mesut Baltacı' and has 1 like. At the bottom, there is a text input field with the placeholder 'Write a comment...' and icons for emojis, photos, GIFs, and stickers.

 Mevlüt Demir Can you trust these indices? Perhaps this report is part of manipulation. They may have been spread by external forces or opposition groups.  5
[Like](#) [Reply](#) · 4s

 Mesut Baltacı Yes, there is indeed such a risk, but in Turkey, there is certainly favoritism and corruption. To find a better solution, we should press our authorities. Acknowledging the existence of the problem contributes to finding a solution.  2
[Like](#) [Reply](#) · 4s

 Mesut Baltacı Exactly, the majority of us seem to share the same concerns. This means there is a serious issue in this regard. Our duty is not only to support everything but also to criticize the bad policies. Fighting against corruption is important as a society with moral values.  2
[Like](#) [Reply](#) · 4s

 Mesut Baltacı Indeed, these developments are disturbing. I think both government and opposition elites should put more effort into this issue and act in a transparent manner.  1
[Like](#) [Reply](#) · 4s

 Write a comment...    

Outcome Measurement

- ① Attention questions
- ② Beliefs about Out-groups Ideology Distribution:
 - Outgroup Ideological Distributions (both pre-treatment and post-treatment)

- ① Beliefs about Out-groups Extremity:
 - **Outgroup's Probability of Being a Violent Extremist** (both pre-treatment and post-treatment)
 - Preventing others from voting
 - Not accepting election loss
 - Electoral fraud, Electoral violence
 - Deny others' rights and freedoms
 - **Social categorization questions:** Asking how likely various issue position owners can commit/support extremism
 - (pro-abortion, pro-religious education, anti-immigrants, anti-western pro-LGBT-Q, pro-animal rights)
 - Responses, Confidence in Responses, and Time spent

Outcome Measurement

① Out-group Attitudes:

- Joy-of-destruction game: Money allocation
- Out-group feeling thermometer

② Affective Polarization:

- Trait association questions
- Social distance questions