



Dr. Vladimir Ponizovskiy - Psychology, Durham University

## Values and Behaviour Change

### Background

The value of the sanctity of life can motivate opposing abortions or the death penalty, but rarely both. Where some see freedom fighters, others see terrorists. The specific ways in which we aspire to the ideals of kindness, industry, freedom, security are negotiated in context. Values have been long recognized as an important driver of behavior – and they provide a structured way to examine the differences in subjective meaning of behavior. Yet, the differences in the application of values are not well-represented in models of behavioural change. Building on our recent theoretical and methodological work, this project aims to establish to what extent and under what conditions the differences in value instantiations condition the outcomes of the behavioural change interventions.

### Aims and Methods

This project will examine the moderating role of value instantiation in behavioural change models. The core of the project will be formed by experimental studies using persuasion and social influence research paradigms. This work will be supported with analyses of survey, field, and secondary data, potentially including text data.

### Relevance

The project contributes to the fast-growing body of research exploring the behavioral consequences of differences in beliefs, polarization, and misinformation. The project is situated within behavioural science and links research on motivation, communication, intervention design, and behavioural economics.

### Training

The core taught skill is managing a research project through its lifecycle: design, implementation, and publication & outreach. The required methods training includes performing multivariate statistics up to industry standards. Optionally, the candidate can gain research experience in applying machine learning, natural language processing, and working with big datasets.

### Suitable for

PhD and MSc by Research students.

### References and Further Reading

Ponizovskiy, V. (2022). On Sanders, Trump, and rhinoceroses: Quantifying subjective construals helps predict political attitudes. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 61(3), 842-860.

Ponizovskiy, V., Grigoryan, L., Kühnen, U., & Boehnke, K. (2019). Social construction of the value–behavior relation. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, 934.

Hanel, P. H., Vione, K. C., Hahn, U., & Maio, G. R. (2017). Value instantiations: the missing link between values and behavior? In S. Roccas & L. Sagiv (Eds.), *Values and behavior: Taking a cross cultural perspective*, (pp. 175-190). Springer.