

EJSP is looking for contributions to a special issue about conspiracy theories

Link:

http://www.easp.eu/news/itm/ejsp_special_issue_on_belief_in_conspiracy_theories_as_a_social_psychological_phenomenon-382.html

We are happy to announce a forthcoming special issue for the European Journal of Social Psychology on belief in conspiracy theories as a social-psychological phenomenon. This special issue will be edited by Jan-Willem van Prooijen (VU Amsterdam) and Karen Douglas (University of Kent).

Background:

Over a third of Americans believe that global warming is a hoax, and prior to the EU referendum in the United Kingdom, nearly half of those intending to vote 'Leave' believed that the referendum would be rigged. Many people argue that 9/11 was an inside job, that the NASA moon landings were filmed in a TV studio, or that Princess Diana was murdered by MI6. These are all examples of conspiracy theories—explanations for important social and political events that involve secret plots by powerful and malevolent groups. Conspiracy theories are not just harmless entertainment—they have real consequences for citizens and society, and for instance predict radicalization and populist voting (e.g., Trump in the US; Brexit in the UK), poor health choices (e.g., vaccine refusal), hostility, prejudice, decreased civic virtue, climate change denial, interpersonal distrust, and negative emotions.

In recent years there has been a growing interest in the psychological factors that drive the popularity of conspiracy theories. Contrary to early theoretical perspectives that assumed conspiracy beliefs to be pathological, such beliefs appear to originate from regular social-psychological processes. Research has uncovered a range of individual differences variables and underlying cognitive, interpersonal, and intergroup dynamics that predict conspiracy beliefs. Given the societal impact of conspiracy theories it is time for the social sciences in general, and social psychology in particular, to seriously investigate this phenomenon.

Potential contributions:

This special issue aims to showcase current research that delineates how conspiracy beliefs are rooted in basic social-psychological processes.

Contributions may address (but should not be restricted to) questions such as:

- How do within- and between-group dynamics involving social identity and intergroup conflict predict conspiracy beliefs?
- What makes people susceptible or unsusceptible to information discrediting a conspiracy theory?
- Under what circumstances do conspiracy beliefs lead to aggression?
- In what ways might conspiracy beliefs be harmful, or beneficial?
- How do power differences influence conspiracy beliefs?
- What aspects of people's cognitive style predict conspiracy beliefs, and how are these effects related to political or religious ideology?
- What role does culture play in conspiracy beliefs?

In answering such questions, the guest editors will be open to research from a variety of theoretical perspectives, empirical approaches, and geographical locations. By addressing the social-psychological

roots of belief in conspiracy theories, the special issue will underscore the relevance of social psychology and adjacent disciplines to understand this widespread societal phenomenon.

Format:

We invite original empirical research papers. These may range from short research reports (4,000 words) to longer research articles (10,000 words).

Manuscripts should be submitted via the EJSP submission portal and should be prepared in accordance with the journal guidelines. When submitting a manuscript, please state that it is for consideration for inclusion in the special issue, and select the article type 'special issue paper'. All manuscripts will undergo rigorous peer review and must meet the high standards of the journal before being accepted for publication.

Timeline:

April 30th 2017: Deadline for expressions of interest from potential contributors
July 31st 2017: Paper submission deadline
October 31st 2017: Provisional acceptance of papers
January 31st 2018: Revised final manuscript due date

Enquiries and expressions of interest:

For further information and/or to make an expression of interest, please contact Jan-Willem van Prooijen (<mailto:j.w.van.prooijen@vu.nl>) and Karen Douglas (<mailto:k.douglas@kent.ac.uk>). The guest editors will be happy to answer any questions about the special issue's scope and how prospective contributors' work may relate to its themes. To submit an expression of interest, please include (a) a tentative manuscript title, (b) the names and affiliations of authors, and (c) a 300 word explanation of the proposed manuscript and its relevance to the special issue. Those authors who do not submit an expression of interest by April 30th may still submit a manuscript for consideration for inclusion in the special issue. However, whether these can feature in the special issue may depend on space, fit, and other considerations.