

FALLACIES OF THE CONSPIRATORIAL MINDSET

"FREE YOUR MIND"

BEHAVIORAL CHARACTERISTICS

VS

PSYCHOLOGICAL DRIVERS

MOTIVATIONS

epistemic

Uncertainty intolerance



Uncertainty alters the way how evidence for and against conspiracy theories is evaluated (Prooijen, 2013). Conspiracy belief is correlated with stronger "illusion of explanatory depth" (Vitriol & Marsh, 2018) and satisfies a need for cognitive closure (Marchlewska et al., 2018).

False pattern recognition



Believers in conspiracy theories display hypersensitive agency detection (Douglas et al., 2016) and increased illusory pattern perception (Prooijen et al., 2018) on top of other intuitive biases (Binnendyk & Pennycook, 2022). Conspiratorial thinkers tend to show poor analytical thinking skills (Swami et al., 2014) and have a tendency to jumping to conclusions (Pytlik, 2020).

Overconfidence & Narcissism



Overconfidence in one's own cognitive ability often underlies conspiratorial belief (Pennycook et al., 2022). People who reject scientific consensus think that they know the most about science (despite actually know the least) (Light et al., 2022). Conspiratorial belief is also related with narcissism (Cichocka et al., 2022).

Tribal signaling & identity



Desire to be seen as original or unique (Imhoff & Lamberty, 2017) and to satisfy social identities or help achieve collective action (Cichocka et al., 2016). Preference to see themselves as "critical freethinkers" to positively distinguish themselves from "the sheeple" (Prooijen, 2019).

Perceived outgroup threat



Perception that society's fundamental values are threatened by social change (Federico, 2018). Believers often feel a hostile outgroup is conspiring against a perceiver's ingroup (Imhoff & Lamberty, 2018). Conspiratorial thinking is associated with common motivations that drive intergroup conflict (Douglas, 2017). Some schizotypies are also predictive of conspiratorial belief (March et al., 2019).

Lack of control or agency



Belief in conspiracy theories is intimately connected with feelings of fear, lack of control, or powerlessness (Imhoff and Bruder, 2014) and are exacerbated in times of social crisis (Prooijen & Douglas, 2017). Social or political ostracism and marginalization also increases people's political conspiracy beliefs (Poon et al., 2020).

existential