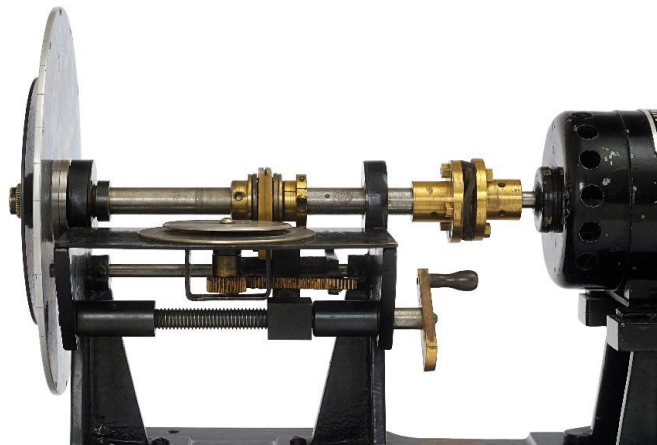


XXVI SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

EMPIRICAL STUDIES IN PSYCHOLOGY

15 – 18TH OCTOBER, 2020.

FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY, UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE



INSTITUTE OF PSYCHOLOGY
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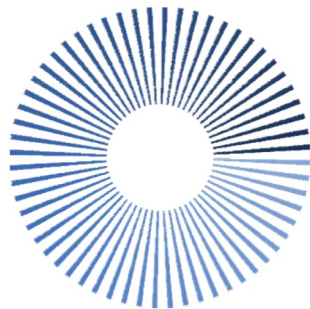
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THE INFLUENCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT ACTORS AND DIRECTORS ON
MOVIE PREFERENCES

It is known that even one specific information can change our global perception of an object or phenomenon. Since movie producers often highlight the information that a movie was made by famous director and actors, we decided to examine whether that specific information by itself can increase preferences for a movie description. We presented five movie descriptions to two groups of respondents; the experimental group also got specific information (fake) that the movies are made by famous director and actors. After each movie description, respondents rated their preference and desire to watch it. Results showed that, on average, the experimental group rated movie descriptions more positively ($F(1, 37) = 13.657; p = .001$) and reported higher desire to watch them ($F(1, 37) = 11.001; p = .002$) than the control group. Our findings are the experimental confirmation for effectiveness of highlighting the information about movie director and actors.

Keywords: influence of specific information, conditioning theory of persuasion, movie preferences, movie industry

THE SHAPING OF A STORY: NARRATIVE CONSTRUCTION TASK AS A TOOL TO
MEASURE CONSPIRACY-PRONENESS

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Conspiracy theories are complex narratives that causally link multiple events and actors together. Believers tend to achieve their narrative coherence by establishing higher-order beliefs that can encompass even the specific contradictory conspiratorial claims. In spite of the complex structure of conspiracy beliefs, and an active role that a believer takes in producing them, previous studies have mostly ignored this and assessed it by single Likert-type statements.

In this study, we adapted and validated a narrative construction task to assess conspiracy proneness. To this end, we first presented the respondents with a bogus event, ambiguous enough that it can be interpreted in a conspiratorial or non-conspiratorial manner (“rounding down” clients’ bank accounts). We then presented a list of potential claims related to it, divided into three groups — non-conspiratorial, mildly and extremely conspiratorial (12 for each group). Their task was to construct a coherent narrative by selecting and then organizing the supplied items. We also included contradictory information (4 pairs for each group), to check if participants’ would include them in their narratives. We derived indices of proneness to conspiratorial interpretation by counting the proportion of conspiratorial claims in the final narrative; we also tracked the number of chosen contradictory claims.

A total of 218 participants completed all the materials. To validate the narrative measure, participants also filled in three questionnaires of belief in conspiracies — conspiracy mentality, the belief in specific and contradictory conspiracies scales, as well as a measure of proneness to endorsing incompatible beliefs — doublethink. The proportion of conspiratorial claims included in the narratives was on average 60%, while hardly any contradictory claims were selected ($M = 1.6; SD = 1.1$). Regression with measures of conspiracy beliefs as

predictors showed that conspiracy mentality was the only significant predictor of the proportion of conspiratorial claims in the narrative ($F(3, 214) = 2.768, p = .04; R^2_{\text{adj}} = .024$, partial $r = .154$).

We discuss potential explanations for the inconsistent relations with traditional measures and offer guidelines for improving the task. We also address the reasons for the fact that, when asked to build a causal explanation, respondents predominantly opted for the conspiratorial claims even though they were offered more “mundane” causes for the event.

Keywords: conspiracy theories, narrative construction, contradictory beliefs, measurement, validation

THE SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL "INFRASTRUCTURE" OF CONFLICT IN CROATIAN, BOSNIAK AND SERBIAN HISTORY TEXTBOOKS - COMPARING 1996 TO 2017

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Although the peace agreement officially ended the clashes between former Yugoslav republics more than 20 years ago, the conflict is still very present in institutionalized historical narratives in all successor states. The so-called "socio-psychological infrastructure of conflict" (SPIC, Bar-Tal, 2007), as a shared cognitive-affective repertoire, psychologically prepares groups for participation in the conflict. The same repertoire, however, poses an obstacle for reconciliation after its' resolution. History textbooks are a particularly important societal channel for dissemination of such ideology since they reach out to young generations as educational epistemic authorities. We tried to identify the presence of SPIC in Croatian, Bosniak and Serbian elementary school history textbooks published post-war (1996) and today (2017), expecting fewer SPIC-related topics in the current textbooks in comparison to the post-war ones in all three ethnicities. First, we sampled the textbooks, choosing the most widely used ones in each period. In selected textbooks, we identified chapters that mention relations among three ethnicities. We proceeded to split them into paragraphs as units of analysis ($N=945$). Two independent coders classified each paragraph in nine categories: *justness of one's own goals, delegitimization of the rival, security, victimization, positive ingroup image, patriotism, national unity, peace and collective emotional orientation of fear, hate and revenge*. In post-war textbooks, 44.8% of all sampled paragraphs were indicative of SPIC. Contrary to our expectation, in current textbooks we haven't observed a statistically significant decrease ($\chi^2(1, 945) = 1.308, \phi = .037, p > .05$), with 48.7% of SPIC-related paragraphs. The same was true for each country and all elements of SPIC analysed separately. What is more, when we focused only on elements of SPIC typical for the state of conflict (first four categories from above and collective emotional orientation), we observed a marginally significant increasing trend ($\chi^2(1, 945) = 3.147, \phi = .058, p = 0.08$).