

Covid-19 Conspiracies in BC: The Relationship Between Political Ideology & Covid-19 Conspiracy Belief

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Presentation Description:

Is it possible that Covid-19 conspiracy believers are more likely to align with certain political ideologies? In this presentation I attempt to answer whether there is a connection between ideology and conspiracy belief, and what the consequences of such a relationship could be.

Abstract:

As the Covid-19 pandemic continues to wreak havoc around the world, conspiracy theories surrounding it have also risen, with potentially dangerous consequences. Belief in such theories can threaten both public health efforts to combat the virus and individual's behaviour toward Covid-19 protocol. As well, is it simply pandemic behaviour being impacted, or are individual's identities, such as their political ideology, being impacted too? Increasingly, individual identity factors, such as race or religion, are being grouped together with political ideologies. Therefore, conspiracy communities may also be tied to particular ideological beliefs. Is there a connection between one's political ideology and a tendency towards Covid-19 conspiracy belief? Using data gathered from over 1500 survey respondents during the time of the 2020 BC election my research looks at whether such a relationship exists.

Respondents were asked to position themselves on a traditional left-right ideological scale and then rate the truthfulness of several popular Covid-19 conspiracy theories. From here, I am able to compare the two variables. My presentation will cover the results of my analysis and discuss how my results fit into the broader literature on conspiracy belief. Further, I will consider some potential implications of my results and how my research can be expanded upon in the future.