QAnon: The Effects of Radical Ideology on Conspiracy Belief

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**Introduction to Research**
- This study examines the relationship between known correlates of conspiracy belief and the newfound QAnon conspiracy system.
- Conspiracy theories can be categorized as either partisan or non-partisan.
- The most accurate predictor of partisan conspiracy belief is political orientation while the most accurate predictor of non-partisan conspiracy belief is conspiratorial thinking.
- The two most significant factors in conspiratorial thinking are paranoid ideation and distrust of officialdom. Belief in the paranormal was also a significant factor in conspiratorial thinking.
- American conservatives are asymetrically more likely to exhibit both paranoid ideation and distrust of officialdom than American liberals.
- American conservatives are more susceptible to conspiratorial thinking than American liberals.
- Super-conspiracy

  - A construct wherein multiple conspiracy theories are linked together hierarchically.

**The QAnon Conspiracy**
- QAnon is a super-conspiracy centered around an anonymous image board user called “Q”.
- “Q” is believed by their supporters to be the highest ranking military intelligence with “Q-level clearance.”
- The conspiracy is centered around a cabal of high-ranking government officials called the “deep state” or the “new world order” who use their power and influence to abduct, traffic, and engage sexually with children.
- The conspiracy is tied to Donald Trump who is believed to be the savior of the country and will usher in the “storm” and the “Great Awakening”.
- During the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, many Q supporters believed the pandemic was a false-flag operation to hurt Trump’s reelection.
- Q frequently advises against listening to the mainstream media.

**Hypotheses:**
- H1: Respondents who voted for Republican candidate Donald Trump in the 2020 Presidential election are more likely than respondents who voted for another candidate to believe the government is concealing information about QAnon.
- H2: Respondents who believe in QAnon are more likely than respondents who believe in no conspiracy theories to believe the government is concealing information about QAnon.
- H3: Belief in other conspiracy theories (i.e. conspiratorial thinking) will have a greater effect on belief in QAnon than any other factor.

**Data**

**H1: Partisanship v. QAnon**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who Did R Vote for in 2020 v. QAnon Belief</th>
<th>% Agree</th>
<th>% Disagree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trump</td>
<td>60.4%</td>
<td>39.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biden</td>
<td>44.8%</td>
<td>55.2%</td>
</tr>
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<td>Other</td>
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**H2: Conspiratorial Thinking v. QAnon**

**H3: Linear Regression of QAnon Belief Predictors**

**Conclusions**
- While R who voted for Trump in 2020 are more likely to believe in QAnon, the gap between them and Biden voters is not more than 4%.
- The high percentage of Biden voters believing the government is concealing information about QAnon could be due to the government at time of survey being controlled by Trump who is a key figure in the conspiracy.
- Conspiratorial thinking is the strongest predictor of QAnon belief.
- The principal factor of QAnon belief and the partisanship divide means that QAnon is a super-conspiracy beyond previous categorization of conspiracies, a hybrid-partisan conspiracy system.