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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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*Department of Cognitive Sciences, Psychology,
Education and Cultural Studies (COSPECS)*

Via Concezione, 6/8 - Messina



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9:30 – 9:55

Motivated by Significance: The Role of Quest for Significance, Anti-migrants Prejudice, and Proportionality in Shaping Collective Action Intentions Towards Migrants in Italy

Francesca Valeria Frisari & Ankica Kosic

Sapienza University of Rome (Italy)

Introduction. Understanding the mechanisms underlying collective actions is crucial for fostering social change, particularly regarding interactions between natives and migrants. In the socio-cultural context of Italy, the present study aims to enhance the theoretical background of collective actions toward migrants, both supportive and oppositional, integrating the concepts of the Quest for Significance (QFS), anti-migrant prejudice, and the moral foundation of Proportionality.

Aim. The study aims to explore how the QFS influences collective action intentions toward migrants, focusing on both supportive and oppositional actions. It also examines the mediating role of anti-migrant prejudice and the moderating role of proportionality.

Methodology. Utilizing a cross-sectional design, the study involved 672 Italian participants who responded to an online questionnaire. Regression path analyses were conducted, employing simple and moderated mediation models to examine the roles of anti-migrant prejudice and Proportionality in the association between the QFS and collective action intentions.

Results. The results confirmed that the QFS motivates majority group members to engage in various collective actions towards migrants, with anti-migrant prejudice emerging as a critical mediator. Individuals with a strong QFS exhibited stronger prejudices against migrants in alignment with prevailing cultural narratives and dominant ideologies. Furthermore, the study revealed the moderating role of proportionality, demonstrating that at low levels of proportionality, a strong QFS was associated with a greater propensity for negative collective actions against migrants and a diminished propensity for supportive actions.

Conclusion. The study deepens the understanding of how fundamental human motivations (e.g., QFS) can influence social attitudes and collective actions pro- and anti-migrants. The role of anti-migrant prejudice as a mediator highlights how individuals may align with prevailing social hierarchies to fulfill their need for significance. Moreover, the moderating effect of proportionality suggests this moral value can either amplify or mitigate the influence of psychological motivations on behavioral intentions.

9:55 – 10:20

**Unraveling the Dynamics of Collective Action Intentions Among Teachers in Hungary:
The Mediating Role of Group Efficacy and Anger**

Eszter Hadnagy & Anna Kende

Eötvös Loránd University (Hungary)

In the past decade, Hungary's educational system has undergone a series of transformative changes. Most of these changes had aims in line with the conservative ideology of the government. These regulations encompass a broad spectrum, ranging from curriculum updates and digitalization to changes in teacher evaluation methods. The implementation of these regulations has encountered notable resistance, particularly from educators, largely due to the challenges posed by the centralization of control, changes in curriculum and textbooks, bureaucratic hurdles, and issues related to the implementation of the new salary and career advancement systems. Based on the Social Identity Model of Collective Action (SIMCA), this study investigated the interplay between teachers' role identification, perceived professional identity threat, collective action intentions, and the potential mediating effects of group efficacy and anger.

A survey of 477 Hungarian teachers across various educational levels and regions revealed that stronger identification with the teacher role positively predicted collective action intentions. Opposing to our prediction, we found a direct relationship between perceived identity threat and collective action. Supporting the ongoing protest movement, we could identify the mediating effect of group efficacy beliefs and anger. The findings prompt a strengthening of strategies to foster collective activism in the Hungarian context, emphasizing the need for a supportive psychological climate that leverages group efficacy and anger and navigates the complex emotional landscape teachers face in times of change.

10:20 – 10:45

Bridging environmental and social justice

Maja Kutlaca

Durham University (UK)

I will present various ongoing projects with collaborators in the UK, Portugal and Australia. These projects focus on public support for environmental movements and the link between environmental and social justice. Climate change is a global problem which requires collective solutions and actions. In a project with colleagues from Australia, we find that the citizens of wealthier (vs. poorer) and more democratic (vs. authoritarian) countries are less likely to take part in actions to address environmental issues. Moreover, environmental movements in the Global North such as the Extinction Rebellion and JustStopOil, fail to include and represent the voices of less privileged groups. With colleagues from UK and Portugal, we propose that this is because the environmental organisations in the Global North are often led by White, highly educated, and affluent individuals, who are blind to social injustices marginalised groups are faced with. Moreover, the actions they use to promote the environmental cause (e.g., destruction of public art and spaces) can have severe legal consequences that disproportionately affect people from less privileged backgrounds. I will present findings from focus groups with activists and non-activists and several experimental studies looking into public perceptions of more vs. less diverse environmental groups.

10:45 – 11:10

Witnessing racial discrimination predicts intra-minority allyship but not through identification with all humanity

Maria Chayinska, Özden Melis Uluğ, Yue Ting Woo, Tymofii Brik, & Luca Caricati
University of Messina (Italy)

While previous research has shown that witnessing racial discrimination predicts allyship, the present research was designed to systematically examine the role of identification with all humanity (IWAH) in mediating this association among racial minority group members. We tested the mediation hypothesis across three studies using a cross-sectional and experimental design, examining the moderating role of egalitarian beliefs (Studies 1a/b) and controlling for egalitarian beliefs, political ideology, system justification beliefs, and past frequency of witnessing racial discrimination (Study 2). In Studies 1a (N = 155, self-identified Ukrainians in the U.S.) and 1b (N = 251, self-identified Ukrainians in Italy), witnessing racial discrimination consistently predicted stronger intentions to engage in intra-minority allyship for Black people in the context of the BLM protests, while the mediation through IWAH was nonsignificant. In Study 2 (pre-registered experiment; 384 self-identified Pakistanis and Indians in the U.K.), after controlling for ideological variables and past frequency of witnessing racial discrimination, we found that watching a video with explicit racial discrimination increased participants' intentions to engage in intra-minority allyship for Black people in the U.K., but the salience of IWAH did not enhance this effect. We discuss why IWAH may not explain this relationship and suggest alternative social-psychological mechanisms.

11:40 – 12:05

“I Care for You” or “I Call for You”: Allies' Change-Focused Messages Empower and Comfort LGBTQ+ Individuals More than Connection-Focused Messages

Éva Gáti, Anna Kende, Bertjan Doosje, & Hanna Szekeres
Eötvös Loránd University (Hungary)

Whether ally support demobilizes or facilitates collective action among minority group members has been debated. The present study investigates the impact of ally communication on LGBTQ+ individuals' feelings of comfort, empowerment, and motivation for collective action. In two pre-registered experiments in Hungary (N = 166) and the Netherlands (N = 246), we exposed LGBTQ+ participants to Facebook posts allegedly written by (cis)heterosexual allies containing change-focused, connection-focused, or neutral messages. Based on the needs-based model of intergroup reconciliation, we proposed that change-focused messages would most effectively mobilize recipients by increasing empowerment. In line with our expectations, change-focused messages increased empowerment (and comfort) more than connection-focused and neutral messages. However, collective action intentions were not significantly affected directly by the messages. Indirectly, as predicted, change-focused messages (compared to other messages) increased collective action intentions through increased empowerment, but only in Study 1 and not in Study 2. As predicted, comfort did not emerge as a significant mediator. This paper highlights the importance of supportive communication tailored to the recipient's needs and the critical role of socio-political contexts on minority group members' perceptions of ally behavior.

12:05 – 12:30

Allyship motivations: Injustice and morality pathways to supporting LGBTQ+ rights

Patricia Ciordas, Maja Kutlaca, Márton Hadarics, & Anna Kende
Eötvös Loránd University (Hungary)

LGBTQ+ rights can essentially be captured as anti-discrimination and political rights. Their support by advantaged group members may stem from (a) positive appraisal and empathy for the marginalized group and (b) injustice perception and anger at social inequality. We propose a novel dual-pathway model which assumes that positive perceptions and empathy may motivate people to support anti-discrimination rights and perception of injustice and anger predict support of political rights. We also explored whether ideological beliefs predict engagement in support for LGBTQ+ rights along different paths. In two cross-sectional studies (Hungary N = 350; US N = 381) among cis-gender, heterosexual participants, we identified initial evidence for a dual-pathway model distinguishing between morality and injustice pathways. We found that liberals were motivated primarily by perceptions of injustice, whereas support by conservatives was dependent on perceptions of the moral standing of the LGBTQ+ community as well. Our findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the psychology of supporting LGBTQ+ rights along the political spectrum, highlighting the diversity of attitudes and motivations within different political and social contexts.

12:30 – 12:55

Rethinking Intersex Representation: Insights from Italy and Ireland

Marta Prandelli

Dublin City University (Ireland)

The CHRISALIS Project examines how ethical-moral beliefs and sociocultural factors shape public understanding of intersex individuals in Italy and Ireland. Using a comparative approach, this study explores the influence of different sociocultural contexts on the framing of intersex issues in media, policymaking, and medical healthcare. By analyzing 1,915 media articles and conducting interviews with stakeholders across both countries, we highlight key differences in terminology, stakeholder representation, and framing strategies. Italian media tend to focus more on medical and legal aspects, whereas Irish media emphasize advocacy and civil rights. Both countries experience legislative inertia, marginally integrating intersex issues into broader LGBTQIA+ advocacy and policies.

Our research adopts a social constructionist lens, inspired by discursive psychology (Parker, 2000), to analyse the social narratives constructed around intersex individuals. Drawing on Foucauldian notions of power (Gill & Orgad, 2018), we investigate how medical authority and societal norms shape public perceptions and contribute to institutionalized marginalization. Building on prior research on the public understanding of intersex as a driver of societal change (Hegarty & Smith, 2023), our findings reveal how rigid binary structures of sex and gender are both reinforced and contested through media portrayals.

This analysis underscores the urgent need for inclusive representation that respects the autonomy and lived experiences of intersex individuals. Our presentation highlights the significance of local cultural contexts and public understanding in framing intersex identities. By contributing to the discourse on medical authority, human rights, and social inclusion, this research offers actionable insights for policymakers and advocates aiming to challenge harmful stereotypes and foster informed public debates on bodily autonomy, based on culturally nuanced research.

14:25 – 14:50

Support for children's rights is greater among children raised in democratic environments

Harriet R. Tenenbaum, Sonia Ingoglia, Nora Wiium, Nicolò M. Iannello, Cristiano Inguglia, Francesca Liga, Alida Lo Coco, Maria Lo Cricchio, Nana-fatima Taini Ozeto, Martyn D. Barrett
University of Surrey (UK)

Support for children's rights is greater among children raised in democratic environments. I will present two studies, one that examines children's endorsements and predictors of children's rights and one that examines how we can increase children's endorsements of rights. In Study 1, we found four of five competences (e.g., higher valuing of cultural diversity, civic-mindedness, cultural openness, and empathy), taken from the Council of Europe's Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture namely, significantly predicted higher endorsements of rights in children from five Bulgaria, Italy, Norway, Romania, and Spain (7 – 11-year-olds, N = 292). The second study was the first to examine whether a novel curriculum based on the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) (Barrett, de Bivar Black, Byram, Faltýn, Gudmundson et al., 2018) could increase children's endorsement and knowledge of children's rights. We conducted a pretest-posttest design including both intervention and comparison schools. Pupils (n = 172, M = 9 years, 5 months; SD = 10.80 months) from Bulgaria, Italy, Norway, Romania, and Spain attended schools in which the curriculum was taught, whereas comparison pupils (n = 120, M = 9 years, 8 months; SD = 9.95 months) attended schools in the same cities where the curriculum was not taught. All children were tested on their endorsement and knowledge of rights before and at the end of the intervention. Children in the intervention schools increased in endorsing children's rights at posttest more than did children in the comparison schools. Children in the intervention schools showed modest increases in their knowledge of rights. Future ways of implementing the RFCDC are suggested.

14:50 – 15:15

Lessons of the Holocaust: German Solidarity with Israel and Palestinians

Slieman Halabi, Fiona Kazarovytska, & Anna Baumert

University of Wuppertal (Germany)

While the lessons of the Holocaust have shaped Israeli attitudes towards Palestinians, less is known about how Germans interpret these lessons and how they influence solidarity with Israel and Palestinians. Across three studies, we investigated these questions using a bottom-up approach, developing a scale to measure Holocaust-relevant lessons for Germans. In an initial qualitative study (N = 53), German participants identified key lessons to be drawn from the Holocaust, generating 83 items. In Study 1 (N = 500), both confirmatory and exploratory factor analyses revealed four core obligations: (1) resisting right-wing extremism, (2) being critical of authority, (3) protecting Jewish lives, and (4) protecting the dignity of all humans. In Study 3 (N = 500), we tested whether the latter two obligations predict solidarity with either Israel or Palestinians through exclusive or inclusive victimhood beliefs regarding Jews. We found that, while participants generally expressed stronger solidarity with Israel, the obligation to protect Jewish lives positively predicted pro-Israeli solidarity and negatively predicted pro-Palestinian solidarity via exclusive victimhood. Conversely, the obligation to protect the dignity of all humans positively predicted solidarity with both Israel and Palestinians through inclusive victimhood beliefs. Additionally, we explored how these lessons are linked to attitudes toward the ongoing war and the prosecution of Israeli officials at the Hague International Courts. These findings contribute to understanding the ongoing discourse in Germany surrounding Israeli-Palestinian relations and the moral obligations stemming from Holocaust memory.

15:15 – 15:40

Attitudes about conflicts in Ukraine and about vaccines: the role of the Quest for personal significance, Narcissism, Authoritarianism, Social dominance orientation, Political cynicism, and Conspiracy beliefs

Ankica Kosic & Francesca Valeria Frisari
Sapienza University of Rome (Italy)

Several authors suggested that conspiracy beliefs represent an optimal form of ideological narrative to fulfill the inherent human need to restore a sense of importance, aiding individuals in defending their self-esteem. This reasoning aligns with theoretical insights into the concepts of quest for significance (QFS) and narcissism. We hypothesize that individuals with a stronger QFS will be more attached to conspiracy beliefs, as these beliefs may fulfill their need to feel important and superior, positioning themselves as possessing a deeper understanding of issues than the general population. Thus, we hypothesized that the relationships between the QFS and the attitudes towards conflicts and vaccines might be mediated by conspiracy beliefs and moderated by high levels of narcissism. We conducted an online survey “Attitudes toward Current World Issues” in Italy (N = 1082) through a questionnaire encompassing several scales: the Quest for Significance Scale (QfS), the Narcissism Scale (specifically the criticism sub-scale), Political Cynicism (PC), the Generic Conspiracy Beliefs scale (GCB), the Conspiracy Beliefs about Vaccination scale, Right Wing Authoritarianism (RWA), Social dominance Orientation (SDO), the scale of the Attitudes towards conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza, and the scale of the attitudes towards vaccines. Our findings affirm that the relationships between the QFS and attitudes were mediated by the three dimensions of generic conspiracy beliefs (governmental malice, malevolent global conspiracies, and extraterrestrial cover-ups) and that high levels of narcissism moderated these relationships. This study's implications contribute to integrating the Significance Quest Theory and narcissism into a more comprehensive understanding of conspiratorial thinking.

15:40 – 16:05

Four-dimensional approach to conspiracy beliefs

Lena Adamus

Slovak Academy of Sciences (Slovak Republic)

The contribution aims to present a research endeavour aimed at developing a comprehensive understanding of the psychology of conspiracy beliefs by exploring how three types of factors – individual- and structural-level factors, and existential threats – may jointly trigger adherence to conspiracy beliefs in a longitudinal perspective. The literature offers persuasive evidence that three dimensions are associated with an individual adherence to conspiracy beliefs but evidence about how the three dimensions are intertwined is lacking. The current research relies on an assumption that sense-making processes responsible for adherence to conspiracy beliefs may be an inherent aspect of human psychology and a natural response to existential threats, but it manifests more easily under specific structural conditions, particularly when the conditions are appraised as adverse. During the presentation I will attempt to integrate the three dimensions and add a fourth one – temporal – to propose a comprehensive longitudinal model and provide empirically-driven understanding of the social-psychological reality of conspiracy beliefs. The proposed research is structured into three specific objectives: (i) understand causal and temporal patterns of relationships between the three types of factors, (ii) delve into directionality of the relationships between the three types of factors, and (iii) integrate the knowledge into a comprehensive longitudinal model of adherence to conspiracy beliefs. The research agenda aspires to open a new avenue for understanding the psychology of conspiracy beliefs in its causal and temporal complexity and delve into directionality of relationships between conspiracy beliefs and their real-life ramifications. Extending our cognition by longitudinal perspective, the proposed project offers new insights into conspiracy beliefs and both individual and structural protective resources that could shield people from adhering to them.

16:35 – 17:00

Are they welcome? Discrimination, group identification, and attitudes towards newcomers among immigrants residing in Belgium

Soha Abboud, Emanuele Politi, Zacharia Bady, & Antoine Roblain
Université Libre de Bruxelles (Belgium)

Most of the research on the attitudes towards immigrants and immigration policies has focused on the members of the native majority group. As such, little is known about the attitudes of immigrants towards newcomers. The present study delved into the role of perceived discrimination as a key predictor of established immigrants' attitudes towards the arrival of newcomers, investigating the underlying mechanisms at play. Highlighting a novel contribution to the understudied area of citizenship and its identity implications, this study distinguished between the attitudes of immigrants undergoing the naturalization process and those who were not. By using a sample of immigrants who were participating in a civic integration program in the Wallonia region of Belgium (N = 809), we examined how perceived discrimination affected attitudes towards newcomers through group identification. We also explored how the citizenship process moderated the link between perceived discrimination and group identification. The results showed that the perception of discrimination had an indirect effect on attitudes towards the arrival of new immigrants through national identification. Furthermore, perceived discrimination decreased host national identification which, in turn, increased negative attitudes towards the arrival of new immigrants. This indirect effect was observed to be significant only for people who had begun the naturalization process. By shedding light on this intricate dynamic, our research contributes a new perspective to the understanding of how identity and citizenship processes intersect to shape inter-minority relations. These findings not only deepen the discourse on immigrant integration but also suggests targeted areas for policy intervention to foster more inclusive societies.

17:00 – 17:25

Chronic social exclusion and extremism: A theoretical framework and empirical evidence from a sample of immigrants

Marco Marinucci & Paolo Riva

University of Milano-Bicocca (Italy)

The literature about social exclusion suggests that the experience of persistent and pervasive (i.e., chronic) instances of exclusion can lead people into a psychological state of resignation characterized by depression, alienation, helplessness, and unworthiness. In a recent chapter, we presented a theoretical framework linking the experience of chronic exclusion and the state of resignation with an exceptional risk of extremism and radicalization. We proposed that chronically excluded individuals might become hypersensitive to radical social affiliations and extremism as a strategy to exit the resignation stage and regain significance, belonging, certainty, and self-esteem. Besides introducing the theoretical framework, we will present empirical evidence supporting the theoretical assumptions. In a correlational study on a sample of 212 immigrants in Italy, we tested if the experience of social exclusion would predict violent or normative collective action intentions to support immigrants' rights, considering the resignation stage and socio-cultural adaptation in Italian society as mediators of the process. The results showed that social exclusion induced the resignation stage, which, in turn, predicted higher intentions for violent collective action. Also, social exclusion reduced normative, non-violent collective action intentions by undermining immigrants' socio-cultural adaptation. The findings validated the theoretical framework and emphasized chronic exclusion and its psychosocial repercussions as key predictors and motivations for extreme collective actions.

17:25 – 17:50

Sharing is caring: A micro-level investigation of hosting experiences and trajectories in providing private accommodation for displaced Ukrainians in Belgium and Switzerland

Emanuele Politi, Kaat Van Acker, Rose-Lima Van Keer, Marija Dangublic, Loic Pignolo, Jan Claeys, Yoann Favre, Eva G.T. Green, Antoine Roblain, Mieke Schrooten

KU Leuven (Belgium)

To accommodate displaced people from Ukraine, national authorities in Europe have turned to private accommodation to expand their reception capacity. This paper investigates the sustainability of this approach from a micro-level of analysis, by examining the experiences of local hosts in Belgium and Switzerland through a sequential explanatory mixed-method design. Initial quantitative analysis of 861 survey participants revealed both positive experiences and challenges, such as difficulties with rule-making, intercultural communication, and psychological exhaustion. Subsequently, 58 in-depth interviews provided narrative insights into the most influential quantitative determinants, identifying three distinct hosting trajectories: harmonious cohabitation, gradual fatigue and exhaustion, and dysfunctional coexistence. Our findings show that hospitality initiatives can foster meaningful connections and positive intergroup interactions, when supported by a welcoming institutional framework, while underscoring the temporal dimension of the hosting experience. Overall, this research highlights the importance of considering 'micro-moves' in humanitarian practices within a multi-level governance framework.

17:50 – 18:15

Attitudes towards Afghan refugees and immigrants in Turkey: A Twitter analysis

Özden Melis Uluğ, Betül Kanık, Selin Tekin, Gurur Deniz Uyanık, & Nevin Solak
University of Sussex (UK)

Data generated by social media platforms such as Twitter provide a unique opportunity to examine large-scale public communication produced spontaneously and in real-time, and consequently, contribute to comprehensively understanding the complex set of attitudes towards refugees. The present study utilises a qualitative approach to explore host members' attitudes towards refugees on social media during the global crisis. In particular, we examine perceptions of a broader population, Twitter users, and analyse public reactions towards Afghan refugees expressed within tweets during the pandemic in Turkey as a response to the 2021 Afghan refugee influx. We analysed and coded 2,686 tweets using qualitative content analysis based on four main categories: 1) Representations of Afghan refugees and immigrants, 2) main causes for rejecting them, 3) taking action against them and their supporters, and 4) positive attitudes towards them. Results highlighted the prevalence of negative perceptions about, dehumanisation of, and racism towards Afghan refugees in Turkey mainly due to perceived realistic, symbolic, demographic, security, moral, and health threats from them. However, the findings also showed there were positive, albeit very few, attitudes towards Afghan refugees in the form of solidarity, help and empathy. We discuss these findings in relation to the existing literature on host society members' attitudes towards refugees and immigrants and why we need to qualitatively examine these attitudes on social media.