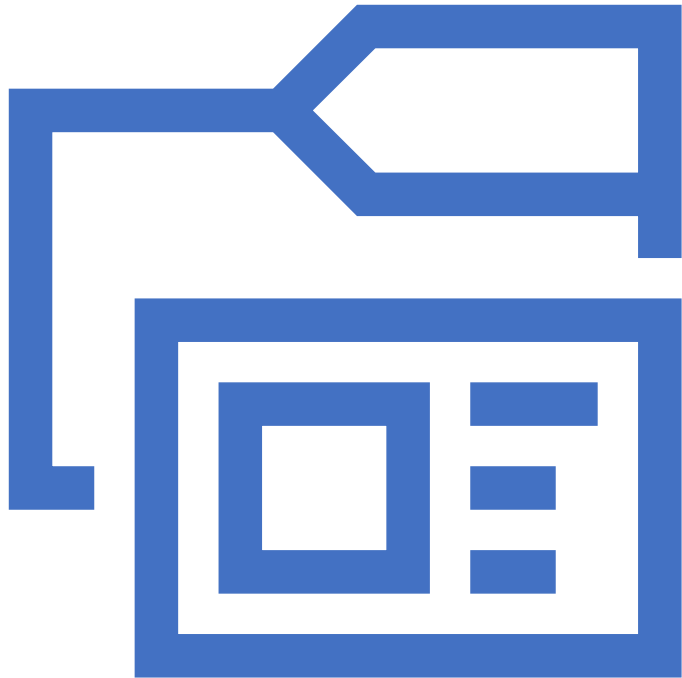


Quantitative Analysis  
Week 13

# Research Presentation Preparation





# Final Assessment

- As you know, your final assessment is in two parts:
- Firstly, next week (Wednesday, January 22) your group will make a **short presentation** (5 minutes) of your research project.
- Secondly, one week later (Wednesday, January 29), each of you will individually submit your **lab notes**, which document your progress with the project as you went along.

The background is a solid dark blue color. It features a large, semi-transparent light blue circle on the right side, which overlaps the dark blue background. Additionally, there are some lighter blue rectangular shapes on the left side, creating a layered, geometric effect.

# Research Presentation

# Rules

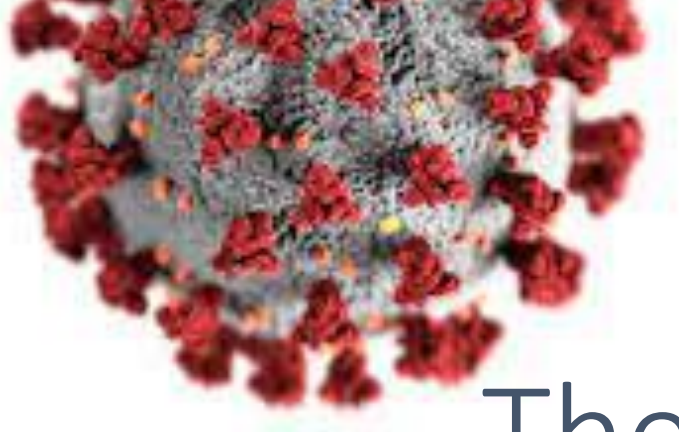
- You must prepare PowerPoint slides for your presentation. Around five or six slides is ideal.
- **These slides must be submitted online before the class – this will be set up on Moodle as a group assignment.** Your group **will** be marked down if you don't submit on time.
- As time is limited, not every member of the group has to present – don't leave it all to one person either though, pick a couple of people to do the presentation.
- All presentations should include:
  - **Background and Research Question** (what you wanted to find out, and why)
  - **Data** (what data did you use? What issues did you run into and how did you solve them?)
  - **Methodology** (what did you do to analyse the data? Why did you choose this method?)
  - **Results** (what were the results of your analysis? If possible, include charts)
  - **Interpretation and Conclusion** (what do your results mean? Are you satisfied with the answer you found? Is there some way you can think of to improve this research?)



# Research Presentation Example

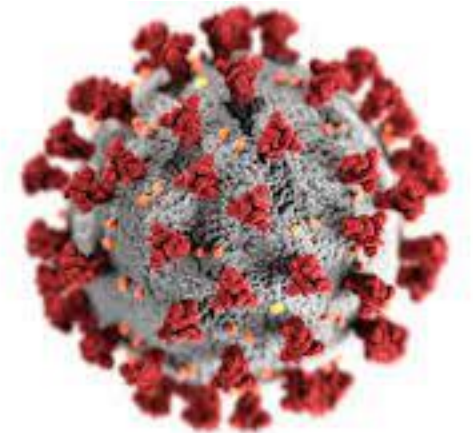
- The next few slides are an example of how a short research presentation might look. It's a very simple version – this level of detail is the bare minimum you should have.
- Note that you may include **references** and should have a final **bibliography** slide (this is not included in the 5-6 slide count). You can also include **appendix** slides with additional information about your project.
- **Practice your presentation out loud**, and make sure you time it!
  - This is the only way to make a presentation sound professional – **never** give a presentation without practicing it out loud first. You'll notice so many small mistakes when you speak the words you wrote!
- Your presentation can of course be more colourful / attractive than these slides, but make sure your focus is on getting the information across.



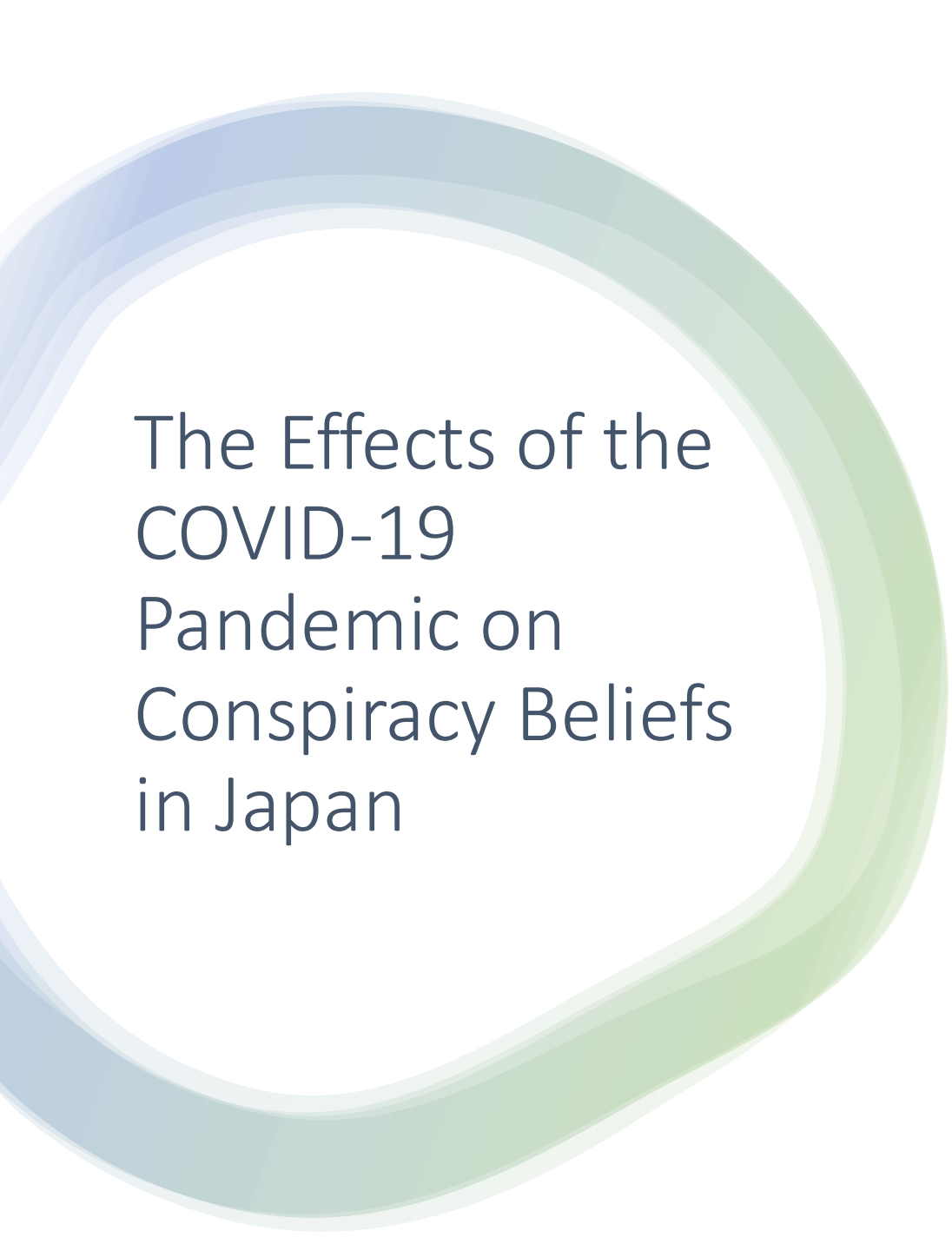


# The Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Conspiracy Beliefs in Japan

(Research conducted for an article in  
中央公論 – December 2023)







# The Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Conspiracy Beliefs in Japan

- Belief in conspiracy theories is a significant threat to democratic societies, with such beliefs implicated in the Jan 6<sup>th</sup> US Capitol riots, the refusal of COVID-19 vaccines, and rising ethnic tensions in many regions.
- The COVID pandemic seems to have accelerated the spread of conspiracy theories online in many countries.
- Survey research before the COVID pandemic showed that Japan was no exception to the spread of conspiracy beliefs (Majima & Nakamura 2020, Fahey 2021).
- This project aims to discover what effects the pandemic had on conspiracy theory beliefs in Japan.

# Data

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Data for this project is drawn from electoral surveys conducted at Waseda University for national elections in Japan in 2019, 2021, and 2022.



The data includes questions about common conspiracy theories, along with details of respondents' demographic information and their political preferences.



The surveys were conducted online, with approximately 5000 respondents in each year's survey.



The survey data was filtered to remove speeders (individuals who answered in less than 40% of the average response time).



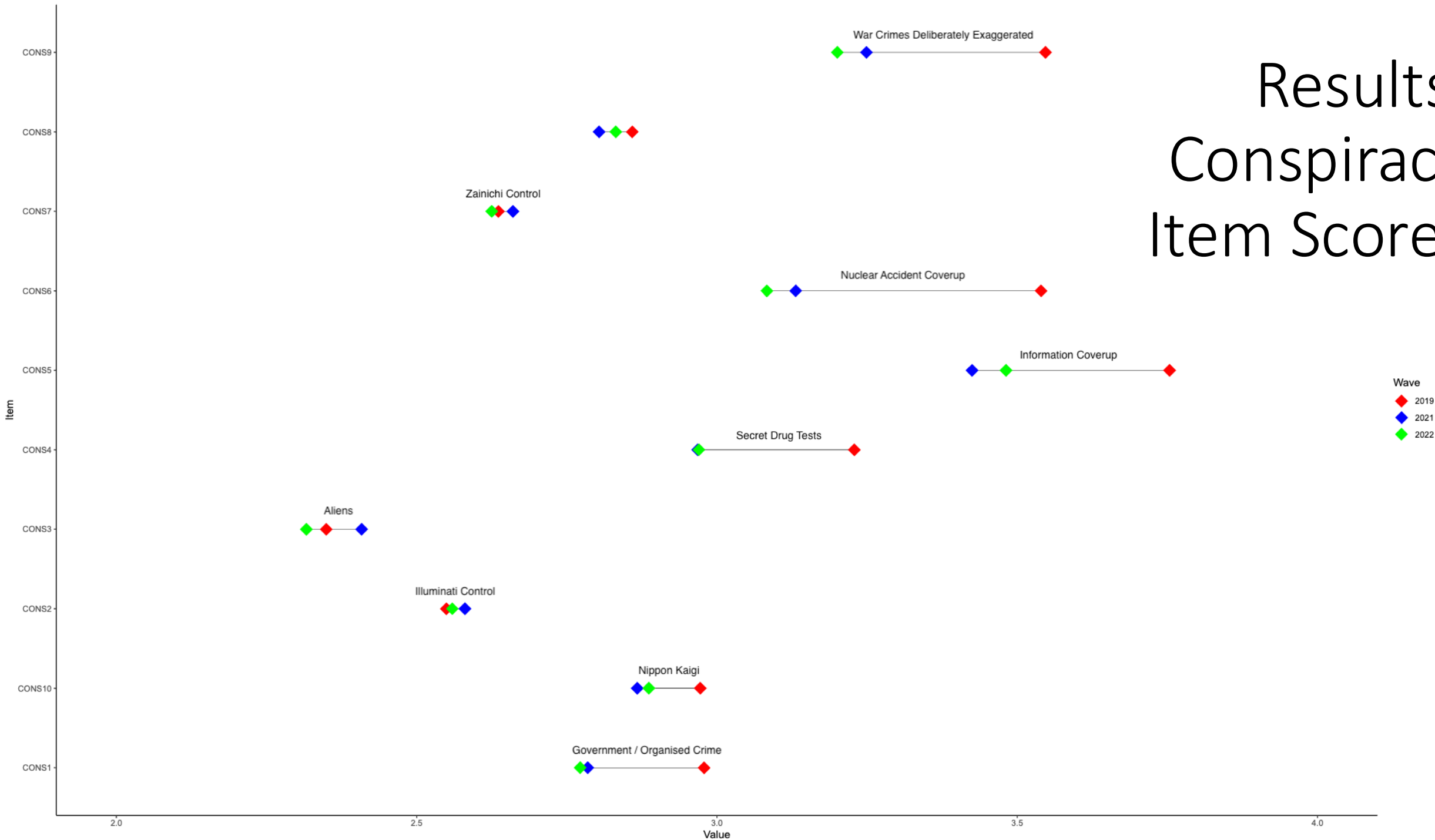
# Analysis Method

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Average scores for each conspiracy theory item were calculated, along with aggregate scores for “classic” beliefs (such as cover-ups of contact with alien races) and “anti-government” beliefs (such as secret experiments on the population, or cover-ups of government criminality).

These scores were used as the independent variable of a regression model which tested the effects of gender, age, education, and voting behaviour on conspiracy beliefs, as well as testing the effects of each election wave.

# Results: Conspiracy Item Scores



# Results: Regression

- The regression model confirmed that aggregate scores for conspiracy belief were significantly lower in 2021 and 2022 than in 2019, suggesting that on average, conspiracy beliefs dropped during the pandemic.
- Conspiracy beliefs are more prevalent among younger people and non-voters. Women are slightly more likely to hold conspiracy beliefs than men. University-educated people are less likely to hold conspiracy beliefs.

	cons_classic (1)	cons_antigov (2)
Wave2021	-0.107*** (0.021)	-0.186*** (0.020)
Wave2022	-0.090*** (0.022)	-0.170*** (0.022)
GenderMale	-0.081*** (0.017)	-0.061*** (0.017)
AgeCohortBoomerB	0.125*** (0.032)	0.099*** (0.032)
AgeCohortGenX	0.170*** (0.030)	0.126*** (0.029)
AgeCohortGenZ	0.110*** (0.041)	-0.035 (0.041)
AgeCohortMillennial	0.230*** (0.031)	0.164*** (0.031)
AgeCohortPostWar	-0.035 (0.058)	-0.043 (0.058)
AgeCohortWWII	0.228 (0.355)	0.057 (0.351)
EducationLevelSecondary	0.041 (0.062)	0.044 (0.061)
EducationLevelTertiary	-0.126** (0.060)	-0.106* (0.059)
EducationLevelVocational	0.039 (0.062)	0.060 (0.061)
Is_VoterVoter	-0.178*** (0.019)	-0.162*** (0.019)
Constant	0.145** (0.065)	0.206*** (0.065)

# Interpretation & Conclusion

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This analysis found that despite the high-profile coverage of conspiracy beliefs during the pandemic, Japanese citizens on average are more likely to reject these beliefs post-pandemic.



It is possible that the focus on conspiracy theories in the media during the pandemic actually hardened people's views against these beliefs – i.e., before the pandemic they thought of conspiracy theories as fun and silly, but they now view them as a social problem.



Note that some more “extreme” beliefs – e.g., contact with aliens – have not changed notably during the pandemic. This suggests that there remains a core of conspiracy believers with extreme views who have not changed their beliefs.

# Bibliography

- Brotherton, R., French, C. C., & Pickering, A. D. (2013). *Measuring Belief in Conspiracy Theories: The Generic Conspiracist Beliefs Scale*. **Frontiers in Psychology**, 4.
- Castanho Silva, B., Vegetti, F., & Littvay, L. (2017). *The Elite is Up to Something: Exploring the Relation Between Populism and Belief in Conspiracy Theories*. **Swiss Political Science Review**, 23(4).
- Fahey, R. A. (2021). *Nihon ni okeru popyurizumu to inbōron no shinnen [Populism and Conspiracy Belief in Japan]*. **Yoron [Public Opinion]**. Vol. 127, pp. 11-21.
- Majima, Y., & Nakamura, H. (2020). *Development of the Japanese Version of the Generic Conspiracist Beliefs Scale (GCBS-J)*. **Japanese Psychological Research**, 62(4).

The background consists of a dark blue field with a lighter blue square on the left and a large, semi-transparent blue circle on the right.

# Research Diary (Lab Notes)

# Research Diary

- By now you should have most of your research diary written. There should be an entry for each time your team met, had a discussion, or made progress.
- The purpose of the diary is not to show who did the work on the project – it is to show your personal understanding of what was being done, and why.
- Do not lie about your personal contributions to the project. Focus on showing what decisions were made (what data to use, what hypothesis to make, which analysis method to use, etc.), and your own explanation of why you chose that approach.
- After the research presentations next week, **write a conclusion** – a few paragraphs reflecting on the project, what went right and what went wrong, and what you would do differently or improve upon next time.
- If you're unclear about what format to use for the diary, there is an example PDF file on Moodle. You don't have to copy this format, but make sure you have all the information – name, student number, dates for each entry, etc.
- **Do not share your diary with your teammates!**





Get to  
work!

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You can use this time to finish your analysis work, or to start putting together your slides and presentation.

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I'll speak to each group individually; if your group needs to consult about something specific, please raise your hand and I'll go to your group next.