

POLITICS AND THE LIFE SCIENCES

A JOURNAL OF POLITICAL BEHAVIOR, ETHICS, AND POLICY

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

PSYCHOPHYSIOLOGY, COGNITION, AND POLITICAL DIFFERENCES

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We invite researchers to submit funding proposals for a special issue of **Politics and the Life Sciences**, entitled "Psychophysiology, Cognition, and Political Differences". With this special issue, we seek cutting-edge research contributions utilizing cognitive or psychophysiological methods to study unique questions regarding the nature of political differences. We aim to publish novel research executed with strict adherence to all principles of reproducible research. The *Association for Politics & The Life Sciences* will fund up to \$1,500 USD of the data collection expenses for seven proposals that will be developed through the Université du Québec à Montréal workshop "Politics, Psychophysiology, and Cognition: Advances in Theory and Method". Final publication decisions from the *Cambridge University Press* journal **Politics and the Life Sciences** will be based upon the development of a registered research report through a systematic and rigorous review process prior to data collection with the publication of findings independent of research outcomes. Thus, the special issue welcomes both replications and null findings. In return, the study must be registered on the *Open Science Framework* website with the data set and statistical application code upon which the findings are based made accessible to the public. To further facilitate the development of the discipline each proposal should include a substantive opportunity for research training, with research proposals including at least one graduate student (master's or PhD student) or emerging scholar (post-doc).

In the past ten years, Western democracies have experienced a significant change in their political landscapes driven by an apparent polarisation – or at least activation – of citizens' baser instincts. The rise of nativist and populist political parties has increasingly dominated election coverage in North America and Europe, and many democratic countries have experienced intense, even violent, debates around immigration and the accommodation of various forms of diversity (racial, religious, sexual, gender) (Mudde 2013). At the same time, these democracies are confronting a complex, heavily mediated news environment that itself has become a source of public discussion (Nutty et al., 2016; Schnell 2001). Policymakers and scholars are faced with questions regarding how to best understand the nature and evolution of citizens' attitudes in this environment, especially as some citizens appear to be predisposed to be more likely to espouse extreme ideological positions than others.

To understand these phenomena, political scientists have increasingly drawn on a broader, interdisciplinary literature on cognition, psychology, and psychophysiology. A small but growing body of literature demonstrates a complex and inter-related connection between such factors as genetics (Hatemi et al., 2014), neurophysiology (Schreiber et al., 2013), cognition (Oxley et al., 2008) and the political attitudes that result (Hibbing et al., 2014). The main finding that individual ideological development depends on a complex interaction between social and biological factors requires a toolset of diverse theoretical approaches and unique methodologies that most political scientists do not possess. Furthermore, the results emerging from this nascent field have yet to be more fully integrated into mainstream political science's understanding of public opinion and attitude formation: how and why do individuals develop different political attitudes and make different behavioral choices.

We encourage researchers to explore foundational questions on the causes of political differences emerging at the intersection of cognitive sciences, psychology, and physiology such as:

- What is the relationship between ideology and psychophysiological processes such as arousal or cognition?
- What environmental stimuli most commonly trigger these processes, and what does this variation say about the causal motivations underlying ideological attitudes?
- What are the psychophysiological correlates of prejudicial attitudes and how do these impact policy attitudes? And do these correlates vary with different prejudices? What environmental cues are most strongly associated with the expression of prejudicial tendencies?
- How do differences in political attitudes condition the reception of media and political messages? Do variations in psychophysiological responsiveness to environmental stimuli also condition the reception of media or political messages? And how does this interaction influence the formation of political attitudes?

This list of current debates is far from exhaustive and we invite contributors to develop studies that shed light on an important question regarding the links between cognition, physiology, and politics. In recognition of support provided by the Research Chair on the Political Psychology of Social Solidarity (CPPSS) at Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), the Centre for the Study of Democratic Citizenship (CSDC), and FODEM a minimum of three of the seven grants, which display sufficient academic merit, will be awarded to proposals involving at least one team member at a Canadian institution. This includes proposals with team member(s) having Canadian institutional affiliation or plans to conduct research at a Canadian research facility. In releasing this call the APLS strongly encourages submission of collaborative proposals.

Submission Process

Funding proposals are due 1 May 2019. Both emerging and senior researchers seeking to apply for these grants must submit (1) a short curriculum vitae of two pages or less listing up to five representative publications and (2) a proposal of no more than 1600 words (see below). Consistent with best practices for journal submission, the proposal should not make explicit

reference to the identity of the researchers. Research proposals will be evaluated on the basis of theoretical importance and project feasibility.

Proposals are expected to have the following components:

- A cover page with identifying information;
- Identification of key research questions referring to salient literature, with directional hypotheses where feasible;
- Research design, measures, data collection methodology, and data analysis methods;
- Timeline for the research collection and analysis;
- Description of facilities where research will be carried out;
- Opportunity for emerging scholar training and development

Timeline: Funding decisions will be made during the first week of June 2019. Graduate students on successful proposals will be invited by the Research Chair on the Political Psychology of Social Solidarity (CPPSS) at the Université du Québec à Montréal to give a poster presentation of the research design at the workshop “Politics, Physiology, and Cognition: Advances in Theory and Method” 25-27 July 2019.

The literature review and research design will then be submitted to **Politics and Life Sciences** for initial blind peer-review by 1 September 2019 with the allocation of funding occurring upon evidence of the revised submission being uploaded as a registered report to *Open Science Framework* by 1 December 2019. Final manuscripts are due for review by July 2020 with final publication decisions made on the basis of manuscript quality and research rigour.

For funding to occur on a timely basis, the initial *OSF* registration must occur prior to 4 September 2019. By accepting funding, the researchers are obligating themselves to carry out the proposed research with deliverables of a publishable manuscript and the data set and statistical application code (SPSS, R, Stata, etc.) upon which the findings are based. The data set and duplication code will be made public upon print publication of the special issue.

The *Association of Politics and Life Science* would like to extend thanks to the Research Chair on the Political Psychology of Social Solidarity (CPPSS) at the Université du Québec à Montréal and to the Centre for the Study of Democratic Citizenship (CSDC) which have generously made travel funds available to support the attendance of graduate students at the workshop on Politics, Physiology, and Cognition in Montréal Canada on 25-27th July 2019.

Please submit research proposals and short CVs, preferably in MS Word or pdf format, and direct queries to Patrick A. Stewart, Ph.D. (pastewar@uark.edu).

Work Cited

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