

Teodora Spiridonova

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Profile

Doctoral candidate with extensive experience in survey and experimental research. Research interests include cynicism and trust, unethical behavior, political attitudes, collective action, and misinformation.

Education

PhD Candidate in Social Psychology

PhD Dissertation: “Cynicism and unethical behavior in social decision-making” (expected defense date: February 6th 2026)

Supervisors: Dr. Olga Stavrova, Dr. Ilja van Beest

09/2020 – 01/2025
Tilburg University

Research Master in Social Psychology

Master Thesis: “Giving up or doubling down: The impact of opposition size and opposition extremity on political polarization.”

Supervisor: Dr. Jan-Willem van Prooijen

09/2017 – 08/2019
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Bachelor in Psychology

Bachelor Thesis: “The influence of parental autonomy support on the commuting motives of emerging adults”

Supervisor: Dr. Marco Jirasko

10/2013 – 03/2017
University of Vienna

Publications

Works in progress

Spiridonova, T., van Beest, I., & Stavrova, O. (2025). *Unpleasant trumps unexpected: Experience valence matters more than violated expectations in shaping cynicism* [Manuscript under review].

Stavrova, O., **Spiridonova, T.**, & Probst, L. O. R. (2025). *Cynicism change goals: Exploring the potential for volitional personality change in worldviews*. [Manuscript in preparation].

Peer-reviewed publications

- Spiridonova, T.,** Stavrova, O., & van Beest, I. (2025). Does protection come at a cost? A random stimuli approach to investigating the (side-) effects of misinformation inoculations. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 121, 104806. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2025.104806>
- Spiridonova, T.,** Leib, M., van Beest, I., & Stavrova, O. (2025). Do cynics lie to avoid exploitation, to exploit others, or not at all? A registered report on the relationship between cynicism and dishonesty. *European Journal of Personality*, 08902070251364410.
- Spiridonova, T.,** Stavrova, O., Evans, A., & van Beest, I. (2023). Cynical, but useful? A lay beliefs perspective on cynical leaders' ability to prevent antisocial behavior at work. *Social Psychology*, 54(5), 294-307. <https://doi.org/10.1027/1864-9335/a000528>
- Stavrova, O., **Spiridonova, T.,** van de Calseyde, P., Meyers, C., & Evans, A. M. (2023). Does remote work erode trust in organizations? A within-person investigation in the COVID-19 context. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, e12762. <https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12762>
- Righetti, F., Schneider, I., Ferrier, D., **Spiridonova, T.,** Xiang, R., & Impett, E. A. (2020). The bittersweet taste of sacrifice: Consequences for ambivalence and mixed reactions. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 149(10), 1950-1968. <https://doi.org/10.1037/xge0000750>

Grants & Awards

Recipient of the Kurt Lewin Institute (KLI) Seedmoney Grant Fall 2024 (3000€)

for the project: "The role of group-specific political cynicism in predicting collective action" (#2024.05)

Project role: Co-PI

Collaborators: Ashay A. Deshpande (Co-PI), Bleen Abraham, Tasja Müller (University of Groningen, RUG)

Winner of the Best Poster Award at the International Conference for Social Dilemmas (ICSD) 2024

for the poster "Does protection come at a cost? A random stimuli approach to investigating the (side-)effects of misinformation inoculations"

Conference Presentations

Cynical, but useful? A lay beliefs perspective on cynical leaders' ability to prevent antisocial behavior at work

Presented at:

Kurt Lewin Institute (KLI) Conference 2022 (Poster)

04/2022
Zeist, Netherlands

European Conference of Personality (ECP) 2022 (Presentation)

07/2022
Madrid, Spain

International Conference on Social Dilemmas (ICSD) 2022 (Poster)

07/2022
Copenhagen, Denmark

Do cynics lie to avoid exploitation, to exploit others, or not at all? A registered report on the relationship between cynicism and dishonesty

Presented at:

Economic and Consumer Psychology Workshop 2023 (Presentation) 03/2023
Duisburg, Germany

Associatie van Sociaal Psychologische Onderzoekers (ASPO) Conference 2024 12/2024
(Presentation) Groningen, Netherlands

Does protection come at a cost? A random stimuli approach to investigating the (side-)effects of misinformation inoculations
Presented at:

Associatie van Sociaal Psychologische Onderzoekers (ASPO) Conference 2023 04/2023
(Presentation) Utrecht, Netherlands

Economic and Consumer Psychology Workshop 2024 (Presentation) 03/2024
Tilburg, Netherlands

Kurt Lewin Institute (KLI) Conference 2024 (Poster) 04/2024
Zeist, Netherlands

International Conference on Social Dilemmas (ICSD) 2024 (Poster) 07/2024
Leiden, Netherlands

Annual Conference of the International Society of Political Psychology (ISPP) 2025 07/2025
(Presentation) Prague, Czech Republic

One cynic, two sinners? The effect of actor and partner cynicism on unethical behavior
Presented at:

European Association of Social Psychology (EASP) Conference 2023 (Blitz talk) 07/2023
Krakow, Poland

Teaching Experience

Workgroup Teacher

“Introduction to Psychology & History of Psychology” (approx. 40 students) 09/2020 – 10/2020

Tasks (independent): Introducing students to the basics of psychological research, 09/2021 – 10/2021

supervising group-based mini research projects (across 9 total seminars each year);

Tasks (collaborative): helping out with adjusting MC questions for the final exam

“Group Dynamics” (approx. 30 students) 02/2021 – 03/2021

Tasks (independent): Supervising two in-class group projects on the topic of group 02/2022 – 03/2022

dynamics (across 6 total seminars each year), grading alternative assignments

“Cultural Psychology” (approx. 30 students) 09/2021 – 10/2021

Tasks (independent): Giving an introductory lecture on intercultural communication, supervising a qualitative group project, evaluating and giving feedback on final presentations (across 4 total seminars)

“Social Psychology” (approx. 30 students) 11/2021 – 12/2021

Tasks (independent): Giving weekly interactive lectures on classic research papers in social psychology (across 12 total seminars), guiding critical discussions about each paper’s strengths and limitations

Teaching Assistant

“Leadership and Organization”

10/2020 – 11/2020

Tasks: Moderating online lectures and providing tech support, setting up homework assignments in Canvas

Supervisor

Course: “Research Skills in Psychology”

Tasks (independent): Guiding groups of 6-8 students in conducting their first (joint) empirical research project (including selecting a research question, reviewing literature, designing a study, collecting and analyzing data, and writing a joint paper with individual Discussion sections) over the course of a year

Project: “Cynicism and the COVID-19 global pandemic” (6 students) 10/2020 – 05/2021

Project: “If you can’t beat them, join them: Exploring the association between cynicism and deceptive behavior” (7 students) 10/2021 – 05/2022

Project: “Does it take a cynic to catch a liar? Investigating the effect of perceived cynicism on deceptive behavior” (8 students) 10/2022 – 05/2023

Project: “Does it take a cynic to catch a liar? Investigating the effect of perceived cynicism on deceptive behavior in a workplace context” (8 students) 10/2023 – 05/2024

Bachelor thesis supervision:

Tasks (independent): Supervising individual research projects (in groups of 3-7 students) over the course of a semester (including guiding each student through the selection of a research question, reviewing literature, designing a study, collecting and analyzing data, and reporting the results in the form of a Bachelor thesis)

Project: “The potential benefits of a cynical worldview” (3 students) 02/2021 – 06/2022

Project: “When you expect the worst (and also get it): Cynicism and reactions to self-interested behavior” (5 students) 09/2022 – 01/2023

Project: “The (dys)functional nature of cynicism” (3 students) 02/2023 – 06/2023

Project: “Passionate protester or resigned bystander? The impact of general vs. domain-specific cynicism on (political) behavior” (7 students) 09/2023 – 01/2024

Academic Services

Reviewer for the *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making* 07/2024

Co-reviewer for *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 10/2020

Member of the Associatie van Sociaal Psychologische Onderzoekers (ASPO) Dissertation Award Committee 07/2024 – 11/2024

Mock defense committee member

“The Role of Tradeoffs and Moralization in the Adoption of Big Data Technologies” (Rabia Kodapanakkal) 05/2022

“Insatiable Desires: How Dispositional Greed Affects Everyday Life” (Karlijn Hoyer) 09/2022

“Demystifying Magical Justice Beliefs: Believing in Justice in a World of Injustices” (How Hwee Ong) 03/2023

“Multimodal personality assessment from audio, visual, and verbal features” (Antonis Koutsoumpis) 09/2024

“The Role of Health Beliefs and Social Factors in Vaccination Hesitancy” (Mitchell Matthijssen) 03/2025

“Talking About Taxes” (Žiga Puklavec) 06/2025

Additional Skills

Selected skill courses taken as member of the Kurt Lewin Institute (KLI)’s graduate school

“Introduction to Structural Equation Modeling with EQS” 06/2022
Leiden University

“Economic inequality: Consequences for societies' social and political vitality” 04/2023
Leiden University

“Bayesian evaluation of (informative) hypotheses” 10/2023
Utrecht University

“Trials & Tribulations of Justice Enactment: Perspectives from Theory and Practice” 11/2023
University of Groningen

“Experience Sampling Methods to Study Social Psychology in the Field” 02/2024
University of Amsterdam

“Bridging Social Psychology: Interdisciplinary Research and Practical Applications” 02/2024
Utrecht University

Other Trainings:

Introduction Teaching Skills 05/2021
Tilburg University

Introduction Supervising Skills 05/2021
Tilburg University

Statistical software: R, JASP, SPSS Statistics, jamovi

Survey Software: Qualtrics Survey Software, SoSci Survey

Languages: Bulgarian (native), German (native), English (fluent – C2), Dutch (reading: intermediate – B1 speaking: beginner – A1)