

# Call for Submissions for a topical issue in Current Opinion in Psychology

## Willful Ignorance: Cognitive, Social, and Political Dimensions

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### Focus of the Topical Issue, Aims, and Scope

The construct of willful ignorance—actively choosing to avoid, disregard, or remain uninformed about information—pervades personal, social, and political spheres, shaping decisions with profound implications for individuals and societies. This topical issue addresses willful ignorance from a multi-faceted perspective, examining how cognitive and affective processes, social dynamics, and motivations intersect in its formation and impact. The aim is to advance our understanding of why individuals or groups might avoid (inconvenient) information, or rationalize ignorance despite potential consequences, both immediate and long-term.

Interest in the phenomenon of willful ignorance has surged as researchers from psychology, sociology, political science, and behavioral economics recognize its critical role in areas as diverse as public health, environmental policy, and intergroup relations. Key questions include: What cognitive biases or motivational drivers support or sustain willful ignorance? How do social influences, such as group dynamics or societal pressures, reinforce or discourage this behavior? What are the political implications of willful ignorance, and how might policies or institutional structures perpetuate or challenge it?

In this issue, we invite submissions from multiple perspectives to enrich a holistic view of willful ignorance, allowing us to dissect its underlying mechanisms and explore potential interventions.

### Topics covered may include, but are not limited to:

- The motivations not to know:
  - o Self-protectiveness
  - o Self-image concerns
  - o Liability and responsibility avoidance
  - o Social image concerns
  - o Maximization of material benefits
- The consequences of not knowing:
  - o Reduced altruistic behavior

- o Increased risk to self and others
- o Perpetuation of bias
- o (political) Polarization

## How to Submit

Papers in Current Opinion in Psychology are meant to provide 'the views of experts on current advances in psychology in a clear and readable form as well as evaluations of the most interesting papers, annotated by experts, from the great wealth of original publications.'

For our issue, we have set up a two-stage submission process. Initially, interested authors are requested to submit extended abstracts of their proposed papers. Authors of the selected abstracts will then be invited to submit full papers.

### **Stage 1: Structured Abstract Submission**

Authors interested in this topical issue must submit a structured abstract of the planned manuscript before submitting a full paper. The goal is to provide authors with prompt feedback regarding the suitability and relevance of the planned manuscript to the topical issue.

**The deadline for submitting structured abstracts is February 1st, 2025.**

Feedback on whether or not the editors encourage authors to submit a full paper will be given by February 15th, 2025. Structured abstracts should be within 1-2 pages and be submitted by email to the guest editor Susann Fiedler ([susann.fiedler@wu.ac.at](mailto:susann.fiedler@wu.ac.at)).

### **Stage 2: Full Paper Submission**

For those who have been encouraged to submit a full paper, **the deadline for submission of manuscripts is June 1st, 2025.** Full papers will have a 2000 word limit (excluding abstract, references and figure captions) with approximately 50 references.