

Supplemental Appendix:

“Are Republicans and Conservatives More Likely to Believe Conspiracy Theories?”

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I. Details about U.S. datasets

Polling Organization	Dates Fielded	Sample Size	Sample/Sampling Procedure	Include Conspiracy Thinking?
1. CCES	October 2012	1,230	Opt-in YouGov panelists; weighted to be representative	Yes
2. SSI	July 2016	3,529	Quota sample; stratified to be representative	Yes
3. CCES	October 2016 (1)	1,000	Opt-in YouGov panelists; weighted to be representative	Yes
4. CCES	October 2016 (2)	1,000	Opt-in YouGov panelists; weighted to be representative	Yes
5. MTurk	October 2017	2,041	Convenience sample	No
6. CCES	October 2018 (1)	1,000	Opt-in YouGov panelists; weighted to be representative	Yes
7. CCES	October 2018 (2)	1,000	Opt-in YouGov panelists; weighted to be representative	Yes
8. CCES	October 2018 (3)	1,000	Opt-in YouGov panelists; weighted to be representative	Yes
9. Lucid	March 2019	1,012	Quota sample; stratified to be representative	Yes
10. Qualtrics	July 2019	2,000	Quota sample; stratified to be representative	Yes
11. Qualtrics	September 2019	4,086	Quota sample; stratified to be representative	Yes
12. NORC	November 2019	1,574	Opt-in AmeriSpeak panelists; stratified sample, weighted to be representative	Yes
13. Lucid	January 2020	2,136	Quota sample; stratified to be representative	Yes
14. Lucid	February 2020	3,994	Quota sample; stratified to be representative	No
15. Qualtrics	February 2020	1,056	Quota sample; stratified to be representative	Yes
16. Qualtrics	March 2020	2,023	Quota sample; stratified to be representative	Yes
17. Lucid	April 2020	3,019	Quota sample; stratified to be representative	Yes
18. Qualtrics	June 2020	1,040	Quota sample; stratified to be representative	Yes
19. Qualtrics	October 2020	2,015	Quota sample; stratified to be representative	Yes
20. Qualtrics	May 2021	2,021	Quota sample; stratified to be representative	Yes

Note: “CCES”=[Cooperative Congressional Election Study](#); “NORC”=[National Opinion Research Center](#); “MTurk”=Amazon’s Mechanical Turk, “SSI”=Survey Sampling International (now Dynata); all surveys fielded on U.S. adults (18+). CCES and NORC analyses employ survey weights.

Table A1: Sociodemographic information about all samples, compared to 2010 U.S. Census estimates.

Characteristic	2010 Census Estimate	Qualtrics May 2021	Qualtrics October 2020	Qualtrics June 2020	Lucid April 2020	Qualtrics March 2020	Qualtrics Feb. 2020	Lucid Feb. 2020	Lucid Jan. 2020	NORC Nov. 2019
Age	38	48	43	46.5	44	39	40	41	45	46
High school degree	88	97	97	98	96	95	96	96	97	89
Some college +	59	71	76	76	70	60	72	73	72	61
Female	51	50	51	51	53	52	54	54	52	52
White	72	67	68	60	74	65	77	78	72	63
Black	13	14	14	17	11	15	14	11	12	12
Hispanic	16	16	17	27	12	18	12	11	6	16
n		2,021	2,015	1,040	3,019	2,023	1,056	3,994	2,136	1,574

Characteristic	Qualtrics Sept. 2019	Qualtrics July 2019	Lucid March 2019	CCES Oct. 2018, 3	CCES Oct. 2018, 2	CCES Oct. 2018, 1	MTurk Oct. 2017	CCES Oct. 2016, 2	CCES Oct. 2016, 1	SSI July 2016	CCES Oct. 2012
Age	47	50	44	48	47	48	35	47	48	54	47
High school degree	97	99	90	85	91	91	99	89	89	99	89
Some college +	73	60	75	62	63	63	90	59	59	79	59
Female	49	52	52	52	52	52	57	52	52	62	52
White	75	62	72	70	71	70	83	74	73	77	73
Black	13	14	13	13	13	13	8	12	12	14	12
Hispanic	7	16	12	9	8	9	7	10	6	17	8
n	4,086	2,000	1,012	1,000	1,000	1,000	2,041	1,000	1,000	3,529	1,230

Note: All entries are percentages except age, which is the median. All analyses employing CCES and NORC data use survey weights.

II. Details about non-U.S. datasets

All surveys were conducted between July 30–August 24, 2020 using an online interview administered to members of panels that YouGov constructed and maintain. Emails are sent to panelists selected at random from the base sample. The responding sample is then weighted on age, gender, and region to reflect the composition of each country’s population using available census data. The survey was originally written in English and translated into the other languages by either the YouGov offices in those countries or certified partners.

Table A2: Sociodemographic information about all non-U.S. samples used in Figure 2.

Characteristic	Australia	Brazil	Canada	Denmark	Egypt	France	Germany	Great Britain	Greece	Hungary
Female	51	51	53	52	36	58	52	53	50	54
18–24	9	16	8	9	34	7	9	12	9	10
25–34	18	22	11	21	39	13	13	12	14	15
35–44	20	22	15	13	13	15	15	17	17	19
45–54	16	18	17	16	9	18	15	18	19	18
55+	37	22	48	42	5	48	48	42	41	38
Upper secondary	15	32	25	18	13	48	24	17	26	29
Bachelors or equiv.	31	35	22	9	56	9	10	24	37	16
n	1,048	1,010	1,021	1,024	1,016	1,058	1,026	1,383	1,011	1,023

Characteristic	Italy	Japan	Mexico	Nigeria	Poland	Saudi Arabia	South Africa	Spain	Sweden	Turkey
Female	57	51	53	36	58	36	49	50	56	48
18–24	7	7	15	20	13	18	18	9	6	16
25–34	17	12	24	50	19	27	28	15	14	22
35–44	19	15	20	23	17	29	22	22	18	23
45–54	20	17	17	5	11	19	14	22	19	16
55+	37	50	23	1	40	8	18	32	43	23
Upper secondary	41	27	16	6	36	13	29	24	47	26
Bachelors or equiv.	7	46	44	65	8	52	33	27	13	43
n	1,337	1,018	1,025	1,007	1,001	1,003	1,001	1,022	1,047	1,007

Note: All entries are percentages. Education categories are % for which that is highest level; upper secondary is the equivalent of high school .

III. Question wording for Figure 1

The following were all answered using a five-point scale ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (5), with a midpoint of “neither agree, nor disagree” (3). The survey each question was fielded on appears in parentheses.

1. Jeffrey Epstein, the billionaire accused of running an elite sex trafficking ring, was murdered to cover-up the activities of his criminal network. (Qualtrics, May 2021)
2. The U.S. government is mandating the switch to compact fluorescent light bulbs because such lights make people more obedient and easier to control. (Qualtrics, May 2021)
3. The Food and Drug Administration is deliberately preventing the public from getting natural cures for cancer and other diseases because of pressure from drug companies. (Qualtrics, May 2021)
4. Billionaire George Soros is behind a hidden plot to destabilize the American government, take control of the media, and put the world under his control. (Qualtrics, May 2021)
5. Some people are hiding the truth about the December 14, 2012 school shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary in order to advance a political agenda. (Qualtrics, May 2021)
6. Bill Gates is behind the coronavirus pandemic. (Qualtrics, May 2021)
7. Health officials know that cell phones cause cancer but are doing nothing to stop it because large corporations won't let them. (Qualtrics, May 2021)
8. President Trump is covering up the extent of his COVID-19 infection. (Qualtrics, October 2020)
9. President Trump is faking COVID-19 in order to help his chances at reelection. (Qualtrics, October 2020)
10. Groups wanting to hurt president Trump intentionally infected him with COVID-19. (Qualtrics, October 2020)
11. Elites, from government and Hollywood, are engaged in a massive child sex trafficking racket. (Qualtrics, October 2020)
12. There is a “deep state” embedded in the government that operates in secret and without oversight. (Qualtrics, October 2020)
13. The dangers of vaccines are being hidden by the medical establishment. (Qualtrics, October 2020)
14. School shootings, like those at Sandy Hook, CT and Parkland, FL are false flag attacks perpetrated by the government. (Qualtrics, October 2020)
15. Republicans won the presidential elections in 2016, 2004, and 2000 by stealing them. (Qualtrics, October 2020)
16. The dangers of 5G cellphone technology are being covered up. (Qualtrics, October 2020)
17. Climate change is a hoax perpetrated by corrupt scientists and politicians. (Qualtrics, October 2020)
18. The threat of coronavirus has been exaggerated by political groups who want to damage President Trump. (Qualtrics, October 2020)
19. There is a conspiracy to stop the U.S. Post Office from processing mail-in ballots. (Qualtrics, October 2020)
20. Coronavirus was purposely created and released by powerful people as part of a conspiracy. (Qualtrics, June 2020)
21. The coronavirus is being used to force a dangerous and unnecessary vaccine on Americans. (Qualtrics, June 2020)

22. The coronavirus is being used to install tracking devices inside our bodies. (Qualtrics, June 2020)
23. Regardless of who is officially in charge of governments and other organizations, there is a single group of people who secretly control events and rule the world together. (Qualtrics, March 2020)
24. The dangers of genetically-modified foods are being hidden from the public. (Qualtrics, March 2020)
25. Humans have made contact with aliens and this fact has been deliberately hidden from the public. (Qualtrics, March 2020)
26. President Kennedy was killed by a conspiracy rather than by a lone gunman. (Qualtrics, March 2020)
27. Russia has compromising information about Donald Trump and has used Trump as a foreign asset. (Qualtrics, March 2020)
28. A powerful family, the Rothschilds, through their wealth, controls governments, wars, and many countries' economies. (Qualtrics, March 2020)
29. The AIDS virus was created and spread around the world on purpose by a secret organization. (Qualtrics, March 2020)
30. Barack Obama faked his citizenship to become president. (Qualtrics, March 2020)
31. The number of Jews killed by the Nazis during World War II has been exaggerated on purpose. (Qualtrics, March 2020)
32. The true cures for cancer are being hidden by the medical establishment. (Qualtrics, July 2019)
33. The 1969 moon landing was faked by the United States government. (Qualtrics, July 2019)
34. Some group, other than Al-Qaeda terrorists, is responsible for the attacks of 9/11/2001. (CCES, 2018 (1))

The following were all answered using four-point scales ranging from “definitely” not true (1) to “definitely” true (4), with options of “probably” not true (2) and “probably” true (3) in the middle. The survey each question was fielded on appears in parentheses.

35. Some people believe that a group of Russian operatives are secretly manipulating or directing national policy. Some people do not believe this. What do you think? (CCES, 2018 (3))
36. Some people believe that the Mueller investigation is not, in fact, an investigation into the Trump campaign’s collusion with the Russian government. Instead, they believe it is an investigation into nefarious activities, including child molestation and a variety of other crimes, perpetrated by the Clintons, Barack Obama and other unelected people who are currently working behind the scenes to run the government. Others do not believe this. What do you think? (CCES, 2018 (3))
37. Some people believe that the largest banks in the U.S. manipulate the economy for their financial gain. Others do not believe this. What do you think? (CCES, 2016 (2))
38. Some people say that when Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast in the summer of 2005, the federal government intentionally breached flood levees in New Orleans so that poor neighborhoods would be flooded and middle class neighborhoods would be spared. (CCES, 2016 (2))

39. Some people believe that the Bush administration faked employment statistics in 2007 to obscure the seriousness of the financial crisis and to protect the U.S. banking industry and Republicans running for re-election in 2008. Others do not believe this. What do you think? (CCES, 2016 (2))
40. Some people believe that Donald Trump has made a secret deal with the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, such that if Putin helps Trump become president, the Trump Administration will enact policies very favorable to Russia. Others do not believe this. What do you think? (CCES, 2016 (2))
41. Some people believe that Hillary Clinton was not diagnosed with pneumonia, but that the Russian government poisoned her because they do not want her to be elected President of the United States. Others do not believe this. What do you think? (CCES, 2016 (2))
42. Some people believe that the billionaire Koch brothers are behind a hidden plot to destabilize the American government and put the world under their control. Others do not believe this. What do you think? (CCES, 2016 (2))

The following were all answered using dichotomous response options (in italics next to each question). “Don’t know” responses are coded as missing. The survey each question was fielded on appears in parentheses.

43. Do you feel that the assassination of Senator Robert Kennedy was the act of one individual or part of a larger conspiracy? *Act of one individual; Part of larger conspiracy* (Qualtrics, May 2021)
44. Do you think there was a police conspiracy to frame O.J. Simpson or not? *Yes; No* (Qualtrics, May 2021)
45. Do you think the U.S. government has engaged in the assassination of entertainers who have tried to spread a counterculture message they didn’t like, such as John Lennon, Kurt Cobain, Tupac Shakur, and others, or not? *Yes; No* (Qualtrics, May 2021)
46. Do you think that the Reagan campaign made a deal with the Iranians to hold the American hostages in Iran until after the 1980 presidential election or not? *Yes; No* (Qualtrics, May 2021)
47. Do you believe the government adds fluoride to our water supply, not for dental health reasons, but for other, more sinister reasons, or not? *Do; Do not* (Qualtrics, May 2021)
48. Do you feel that the assassination of Martin Luther King was the act of one individual or part of a larger conspiracy? *Act of one individual; Part of larger conspiracy* (Qualtrics, May 2021)
49. Do you believe media or the government adds secret mind-controlling technology to television broadcast signals, or not? *Do; Do not* (Qualtrics, May 2021)
50. Do you believe that the pharmaceutical industry is in league with the medical industry to "invent" new diseases in order to make money, or not? *Do; Do not* (Qualtrics, May 2021)
51. Some people have argued that President Franklin D. Roosevelt knew about Japanese plans to bomb Pearl Harbor but did nothing about it because he wanted an excuse to involve the U.S. (United States) on the side of the allies in the war. From what you know or have read, do you agree or disagree with this point of view? *Agree; Disagree* (Qualtrics, May 2021)
52. Do you think there is, or is not, a national conspiracy to kill police? *Is; Is not* (Qualtrics, May 2021)

IV. Question wording for Figure 2

The following were all answered using four-point scales ranging from “definitely” not true (1) to “definitely” true (4), with options of “probably” not true (2) and “probably” true (3) in the middle.

1. The US Government knowingly helped to make the 9/11 terrorist attacks happen in America on 11 September, 2001.
2. The truth about the harmful effects of vaccines is being deliberately hidden from the public.
3. Regardless of who is officially in charge of governments and other organisations, there is a single group of people who secretly control events and rule the world together.
4. The idea of man-made global warming is a hoax that was invented to deceive people.
5. Humans have made contact with aliens and this fact has been deliberately hidden from the public.
6. The AIDS virus was created and spread around the world on purpose by a secret group or organization.
7. The official account of the Nazi Holocaust is a lie and the number of Jews killed by the Nazis during World War II has been exaggerated on purpose.
8. The 1969 moon landings were faked.
9. Coronavirus is a myth created by some powerful forces, and the virus does not really exist.
10. The fatality rate of Coronavirus has been deliberately and greatly exaggerated.
11. The world’s largest pharmaceutical companies are deliberately delaying or hiding the development of a vaccine that could end the Coronavirus pandemic, in order to drive up the price of the vaccine.

Some people talk about 'left', 'right' and 'centre' to describe parties and politicians. With this in mind, where would you place yourself on this scale?

1. Very left-wing
2. Fairly left-wing
3. Slightly left-of-centre
4. Centre
5. Slightly right-of-centre
6. Fairly right-wing
7. Very right-wing

(“Don’t know” and “prefer not to say” recorded as missing)

V. Proportion believing each conspiracy theory in Figure 1 by partisanship

Figure A1: Proportion of Democrats, Republicans, and Independents expressing belief (agree/strongly agree or probably true/definitely true) in each conspiracy theory. Leaners included as partisans.

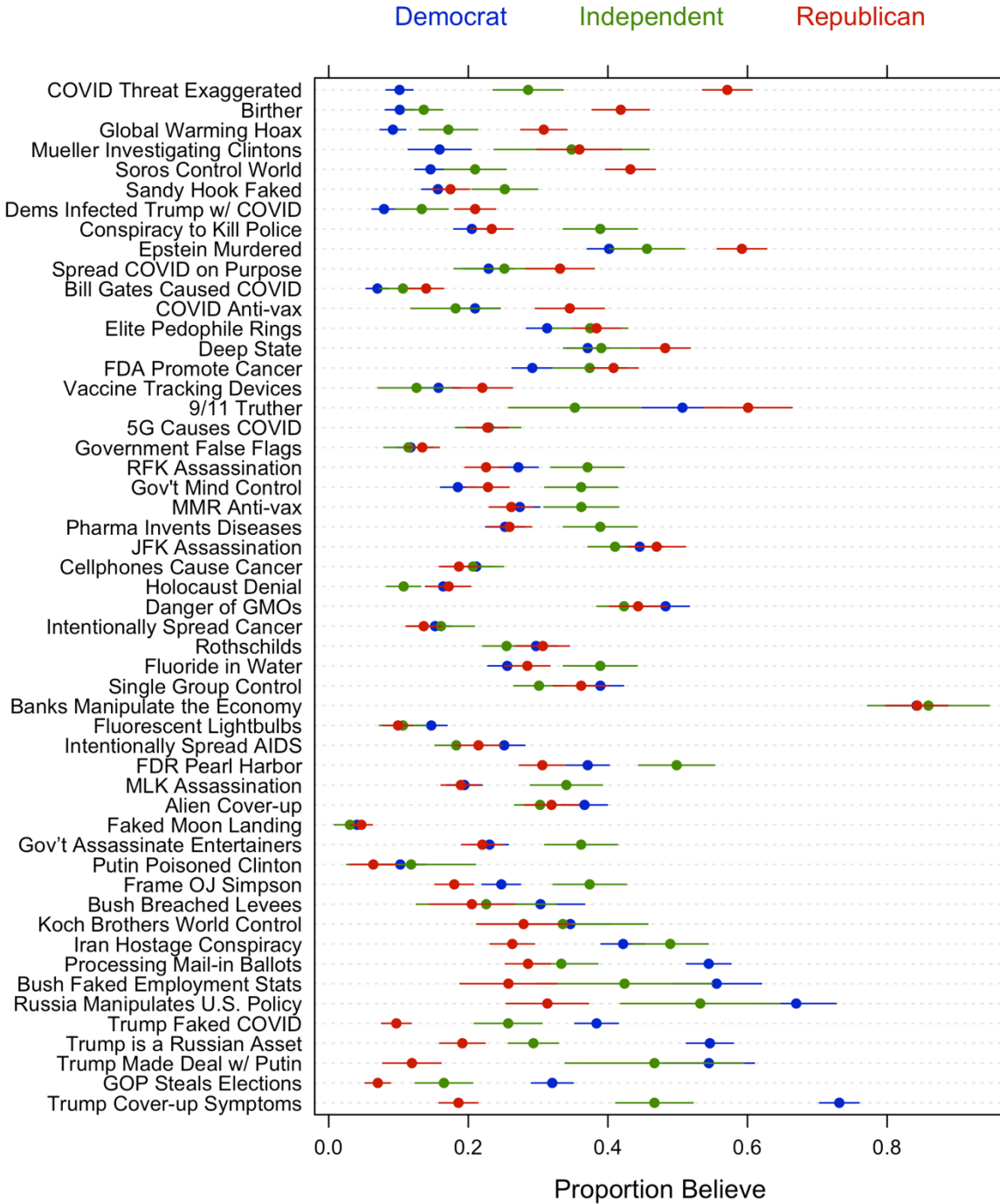
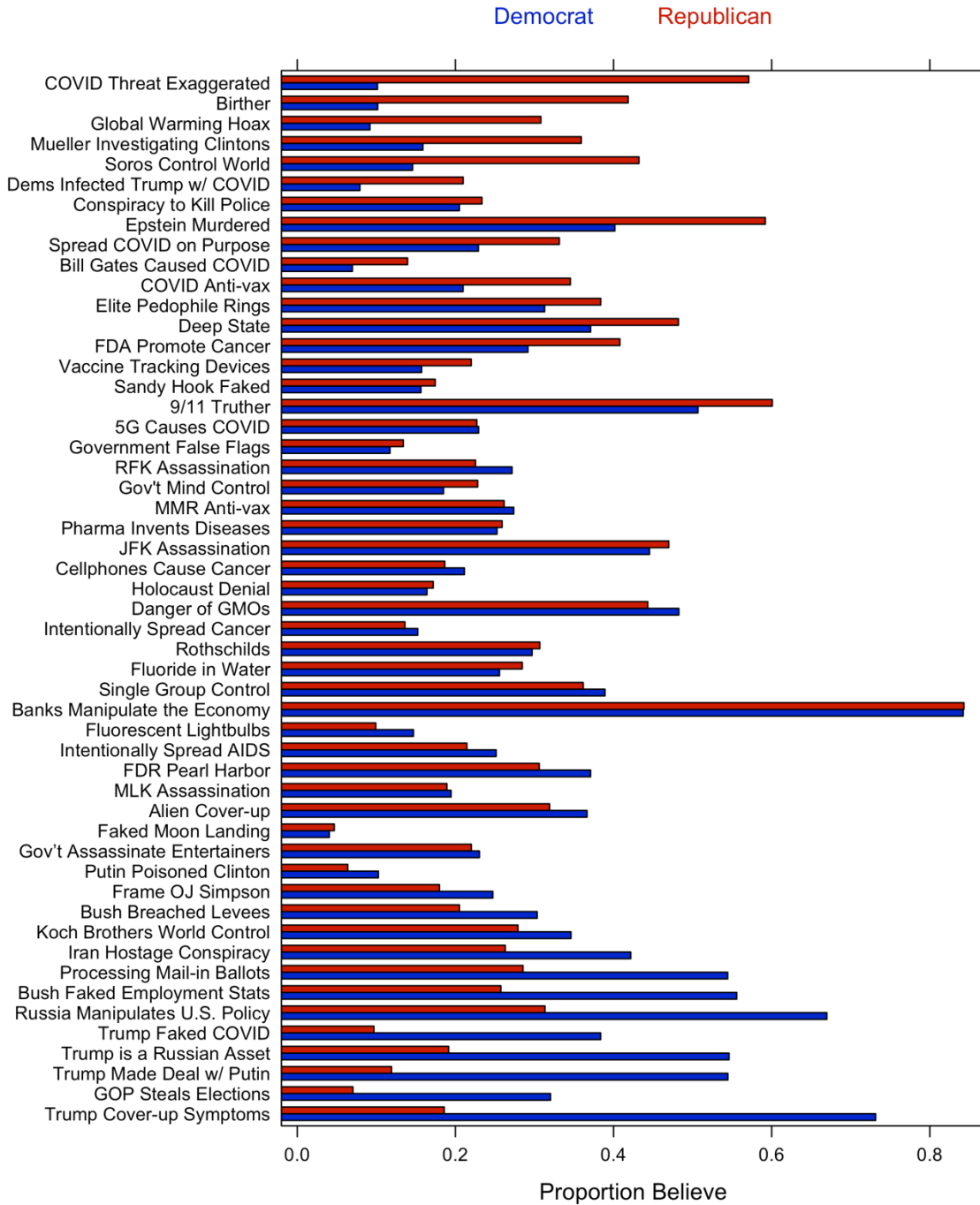


Figure A2: Proportion of Democrats and Republicans expressing belief (agree/strongly agree or probably true/definitely true) in each conspiracy theory. Leanners included as partisans.



VI. Question wording for Figure 2

All of the questions below, which are used in producing Figure 2, appeared on both the October 2017 MTurk survey and the February 2020 Lucid survey. Variable names appear in bold.

Electoral Fraud. Do you think that [Democratic/Republican] political elites...

1. *definitely did not* engage in election fraud during the 2018 election
2. *probably did not* engage in election fraud during the 2018 election
3. *probably* engaged in election fraud during the 2018 election
4. *definitely* engaged in election fraud during the 2018 election

Political Extremism. Do you think that [Democratic/Republican] political elites are...

1. *definitely not* secretly working with political extremists to undermine the American government for their own gain
2. *probably not* secretly working with political extremists to undermine the American government for their own gain
3. *probably* secretly working with political extremists to undermine the American government for their own gain
4. *definitely* secretly working with political extremists to undermine the American government for their own gain

Health Policy. Do you think that [Democratic/Republican] political elites are...

1. *definitely not* secretly plotting with health insurance companies to lie about the effectiveness of the Obamacare insurance markets to gain support for their health policy proposals
2. *probably not* secretly plotting with health insurance companies to lie about the effectiveness of the Obamacare insurance markets to gain support for their health policy proposals
3. *probably* secretly plotting with health insurance companies to lie about the effectiveness of the Obamacare insurance markets to gain support for their health policy proposals
4. *definitely* secretly plotting with health insurance companies to lie about the effectiveness of the Obamacare insurance markets to gain support for their health policy proposals

Economy. Do you think that [Democratic/Republican] political elites are...

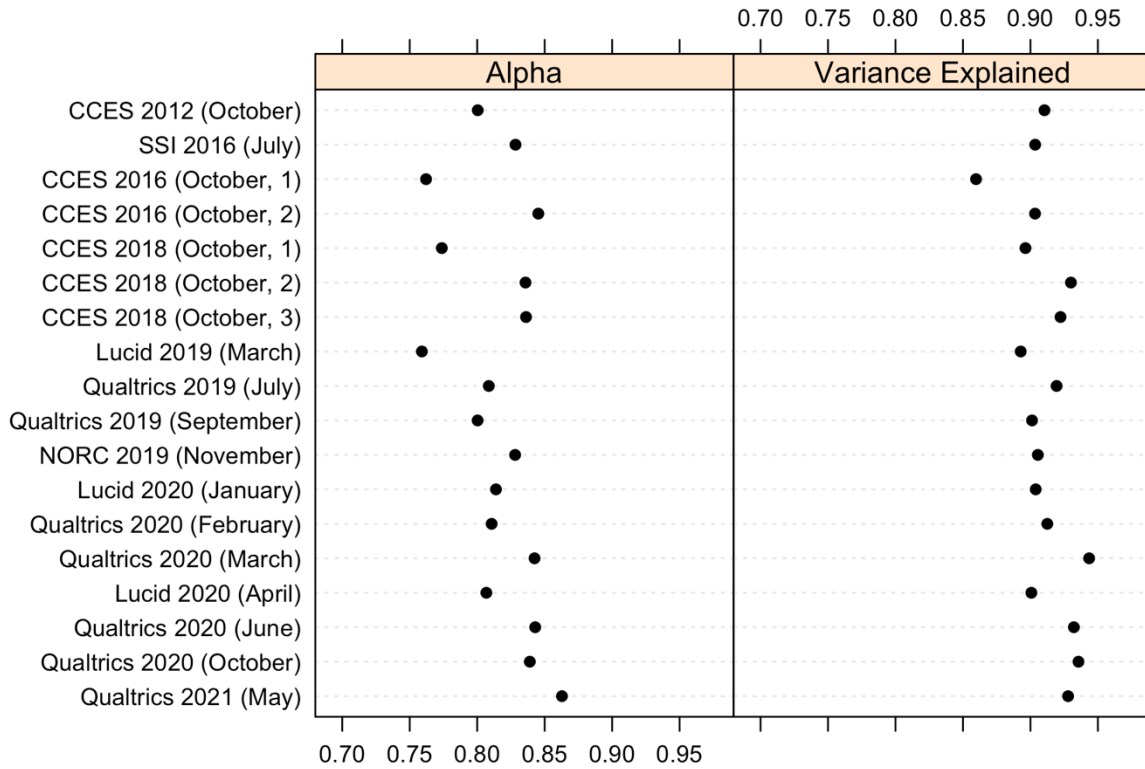
1. *definitely not* secretly plotting with large banks to lie about the health of the economy to gain support for their economic policy proposals
2. *probably not* secretly plotting with large banks to lie about the health of the economy to gain support for their economic policy proposals
3. *probably* secretly plotting with large banks to lie about the health of the economy to gain support for their economic policy proposals
4. *definitely* secretly plotting with large banks to lie about the health of the economy to gain support for their economic policy proposals

Crime. Do you think that [Democratic/Republican] political elites are...

1. *definitely* not secretly plotting with law enforcement agencies to lie about crime rates to gain support for their immigration policy proposals
2. *probably not* secretly plotting with law enforcement agencies to lie about crime rates to gain support for their immigration policy proposals
3. *probably* secretly plotting with law enforcement agencies to lie about crime rates to gain support for their immigration policy proposals
4. *definitely* secretly plotting with law enforcement agencies to lie about crime rates to gain support for their immigration policy proposals

VII. Psychometric properties of conspiracy thinking scale

Figure A3: Cronbach's alpha and proportion of variance accounted for by first factor of an exploratory factor analysis (iterated principal axis factoring) of the conspiracy thinking items.



VIII. Questions used to measure operational ideology

For all questions, across all surveys, conservative responses are coded with greater numerical values. Details about how the operational ideology scale is constructed appear below. In each survey for which the requisite data exists, multiple issue attitudes are combined into a measure of operational ideology, per traditions in the literature.

2012 CCES (October)

Operational ideology scale: because some items are dichotomous, scale is generated using predicted trait from a hybrid IRT model (graded response model for ordinal items, 2-parameter logistic model for dichotomous items)

- In general, do you feel that the laws covering the sale of firearms should be...
 1. Less strict
 2. Kept as they are
 3. More strict

- Grant legal status to all illegal immigrants who have held jobs and paid taxes for at least 3 years, and have not been convicted of any felony crimes.
 1. Yes
 2. No

- Increase the number of border patrols on the US-Mexican border.
 1. No
 2. Yes

- Allow police to question anyone they think may be in the country illegally.
 1. No
 2. Yes

- Fine US businesses that hire illegal immigrants.
 1. No
 2. Yes

- Prohibit illegal immigrants from using emergency hospital care and public schools.
 1. No
 2. Yes

- Deny automatic citizenship to American-born children of illegal immigrants.
 1. No
 2. Yes

- Which one of the opinions on this page best agrees with your view on abortion?
 1. By law, a woman should always be able to obtain an abortion as a matter of personal choice
 2. The law should permit abortion for reasons other than rape, incest, or danger to the woman's life, but only after the need for the abortion has been clearly established
 3. The law should permit abortion only in case of rape, incest or when the woman's life is in danger
 4. By law, abortion should never be permitted

- Some people think it is important to protect the environment even if it costs some jobs or otherwise reduces our standard of living. Other people think that protecting the environment is not as important as maintaining jobs and our standard of living. Which is closer to the way you feel, or haven't you thought much about this?
 1. Much more important to protect environment even if lose jobs and lower standard of living
 2. Environment somewhat more important
 3. About the same
 4. Economy somewhat more important
 5. Much more important to protect jobs, even if environment worse

- Do you favor or oppose allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally?
 1. Favor
 2. Oppose

- Affirmative action programs give preference to racial minorities in employment and college admissions in order to correct for past discrimination. Do you support or oppose affirmative action?
 1. Strongly support
 2. Somewhat support
 3. Somewhat oppose
 4. Strongly oppose

2016 SSI (July)

Operational ideology scale: generated by averaging responses across items (alpha=0.78)

- Do you favor or oppose raising the federal minimum wage to \$12.50 an hour?
 1. Support strongly
 2. Support somewhat
 3. Neither support nor oppose
 4. Oppose somewhat
 5. Oppose strongly

- Do you support or oppose banning people who are Muslim from entering the U.S.?
 1. Oppose strongly
 2. Oppose somewhat
 3. Neither support nor oppose
 4. Support somewhat
 5. Strongly support

- Would you support or oppose an effort by the federal government to deport all undocumented immigrants and send them back to their home countries?
 1. Oppose strongly
 2. Oppose somewhat
 3. Neither support nor oppose
 4. Support somewhat
 5. Strongly support

- Overall, would you say you favor or oppose policies that allow transgender individuals to use bathrooms that correspond to their gender identity, rather than their gender at birth?
 1. Support strongly
 2. Support somewhat
 3. Neither support nor oppose
 4. Oppose somewhat
 5. Oppose strongly

- Do you favor or oppose a nationwide ban on assault weapons?
 1. Support strongly
 2. Support somewhat
 3. Neither support nor oppose
 4. Oppose somewhat
 5. Oppose strongly

- Some people think the government should provide fewer services even in areas such as health and education in order to reduce spending. Other people feel it is important for the government to provide many more services even if it means an increase in spending. Many also have opinions that fall in between. What is your opinion?
 1. Many more services, even if increase spending
 2. .
 3. .
 4. .
 5. .
 6. .
 7. Many fewer services, decrease spending

- In general, do you think that free trade between the United States and foreign countries has helped the United States, hurt the United States, or has not made much of a difference either way.
 1. Helped greatly
 2. Helped a little
 3. Neither helped nor hurt
 4. Hurt a little
 5. Hurt greatly

- As you may know, a health reform bill was signed into law in 2010. Given what you know about the health reform law, do you have a generally favorable or generally unfavorable opinion of it?
 1. Very favorable
 2. Somewhat favorable
 3. Somewhat unfavorable
 4. Very unfavorable

2016 CCES (October, 1)

Operational ideology scale: because some items are dichotomous, scale is generated using predicted trait from a hybrid IRT model (graded response model for ordinal items, 2-parameter logistic model for dichotomous items)

- Abortion attitudes; the following three items are summed to create an abortion attitude subscale.
 - I. Always allow a woman to obtain an abortion as a matter of choice.
 1. Support
 2. Oppose
 - II. Permit abortion ONLY in case of rape, incest or when the woman's life is in danger.
 1. Oppose
 2. Support
 - III. Make abortions illegal in all circumstances
 1. Oppose
 2. Support

- Gun control attitudes; the following three items are summed to create an abortion attitude subscale.
 - I. Background checks for all sales, including at gun shows and over the Internet
 - 1. Oppose
 - 2. Support
 - II. Prohibit state and local governments from publishing the names and addresses of all gun owners.
 - 1. Oppose
 - 2. Support
 - III. Ban assault rifles
 - 1. Support
 - 2. Oppose
 - IV. Make it easier for people to obtain concealed-carry permit
 - 1. Oppose
 - 2. Support

- Increase the number of border patrols on the U.S.-Mexican border.
 - 1. Oppose
 - 2. Support

- Grant legal status to people who were brought to the US illegally as children, but who have graduated from a U.S. high school
 - 1. Support
 - 2. Oppose

- Raise required fuel efficiency for the average automobile from 25 mpg to 35 mpg
 - 1. Support
 - 2. Oppose

- Do you favor or oppose allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally?
 - 1. Support
 - 2. Oppose

2016 CCES (October, 2)

Operational ideology scale: because some items are dichotomous, scale is generated using predicted trait from a hybrid IRT model (graded response model for ordinal items, 2-parameter logistic model for dichotomous items)

- Abortion attitudes; the following three items are summed to create an abortion attitude subscale.
 - IV. Always allow a woman to obtain an abortion as a matter of choice.
 - 1. Support
 - 2. Oppose
 - V. Permit abortion ONLY in case of rape, incest or when the woman's life is in danger.
 - 1. Oppose
 - 2. Support
 - VI. Make abortions illegal in all circumstances
 - 1. Oppose
 - 2. Support

- Gun control attitudes; the following three items are summed to create an abortion attitude subscale.
 - V. Background checks for all sales, including at gun shows and over the Internet
 - 1. Oppose
 - 2. Support
 - VI. Prohibit state and local governments from publishing the names and addresses of all gun owners.
 - 1. Oppose
 - 2. Support
 - VII. Ban assault rifles
 - 3. Support
 - 4. Oppose
 - VIII. Make it easier for people to obtain concealed-carry permit
 - 1. Oppose
 - 2. Support

- Increase the number of border patrols on the U.S.-Mexican border.
 - 1. Oppose
 - 2. Support

- Grant legal status to people who were brought to the US illegally as children, but who have graduated from a U.S. high school
 - 3. Support
 - 4. Oppose

- Raise required fuel efficiency for the average automobile from 25 mpg to 35 mpg
 1. Support
 2. Oppose

- Do you favor or oppose allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally?
 1. Support
 2. Oppose

2018 CCES (October, 1)

Operational ideology scale: because some items are dichotomous, scale is generated using predicted trait from a hybrid IRT model (graded response model for ordinal items, 2-parameter logistic model for dichotomous items)

- Abortion attitudes; the following three items are summed to create an abortion attitude subscale.
 - I. Always allow a woman to obtain an abortion as a matter of choice.
 1. Support
 2. Oppose
 - II. Permit abortion **ONLY** in case of rape, incest or when the woman's life is in danger.
 1. Support
 2. Oppose
 - III. Ban abortions after the 20th week of pregnancy.
 1. Oppose
 2. Support

- Gun control attitudes; the following three items are summed to create an abortion attitude subscale.
 - I. Background checks for all sales, including at gun shows and over the Internet.
 1. Support
 2. Oppose
 - II. Make it easier for people to obtain a concealed-carry gun permit.
 1. Support
 2. Oppose
 - III. Prohibit state and local governments from publishing the names and addresses of all gun owners.
 1. Support
 2. Oppose

- Increase spending on border security by \$25 billion, including building a wall between the U.S. and Mexico.
 1. Support
 2. Oppose

- Provide legal status to children of immigrants who are already in the United States and were brought to the United States by their parents. Provide these children the option of citizenship in 10 years if they meet citizenship requirements and commit no crimes. (DACA).
 1. Support
 2. Oppose

- Provide Medicare for all Americans.
 1. Support
 2. Oppose

2018 CCES (October, 2)

Operational ideology scale: because some items are dichotomous, scale is generated using predicted trait from a hybrid IRT model (graded response model for ordinal items, 2-parameter logistic model for dichotomous items)

- Abortion attitudes; the following three items are summed to create an abortion attitude subscale.
 - I. Always allow a woman to obtain an abortion as a matter of choice.
 1. Support
 2. Oppose
 - II. Permit abortion ONLY in case of rape, incest or when the woman's life is in danger.
 1. Support
 2. Oppose
 - III. Ban abortions after the 20th week of pregnancy.
 1. Oppose
 2. Support

- Gun control attitudes; the following three items are summed to create an abortion attitude subscale.
 - I. Background checks for all sales, including at gun shows and over the Internet.
 1. Support
 2. Oppose
 - II. Make it easier for people to obtain a concealed-carry gun permit.
 1. Support
 2. Oppose
 - III. Prohibit state and local governments from publishing the names and addresses of all gun owners.
 1. Support
 2. Oppose

- Increase spending on border security by \$25 billion, including building a wall between the U.S. and Mexico.
 1. Support
 2. Oppose

- Provide legal status to children of immigrants who are already in the United States and were brought to the United States by their parents. Provide these children the option of citizenship in 10 years if they meet citizenship requirements and commit no crimes. (DACA).
 1. Support
 2. Oppose

- Provide Medicare for all Americans.
 1. Support
 2. Oppose

2018 CCES (October, 3)

Operational ideology scale: because some items are dichotomous, scale is generated using predicted trait from a hybrid IRT model (graded response model for ordinal items, 2-parameter logistic model for dichotomous items)

- Abortion attitudes; the following three items are summed to create an abortion attitude subscale.
 - I. Always allow a woman to obtain an abortion as a matter of choice.
 1. Support
 2. Oppose
 - II. Permit abortion ONLY in case of rape, incest or when the woman's life is in danger.
 1. Support
 2. Oppose
 - III. Ban abortions after the 20th week of pregnancy.

1. Oppose
 2. Support
- Gun control attitudes; the following three items are summed to create an abortion attitude subscale.
 - I. Background checks for all sales, including at gun shows and over the Internet.
 1. Support
 2. Oppose
 - II. Make it easier for people to obtain a concealed-carry gun permit.
 1. Support
 2. Oppose
 - III. Prohibit state and local governments from publishing the names and addresses of all gun owners.
 1. Support
 2. Oppose
 - Increase spending on border security by \$25 billion, including building a wall between the U.S. and Mexico.
 1. Support
 2. Oppose
 - Provide legal status to children of immigrants who are already in the United States and were brought to the United States by their parents. Provide these children the option of citizenship in 10 years if they meet citizenship requirements and commit no crimes. (DACA).
 1. Support
 2. Oppose
 - Provide Medicare for all Americans.
 1. Support
 2. Oppose

2019 Lucid (March)

Operational ideology scale: generated by factor analyzing following 4 variables via iterated principal axis factoring and estimating the first factor scores.

- What about your opinion – are you for or against preferential hiring and promotion of blacks?
 1. Strongly support preferential hiring and promotion of blacks
 2. Somewhat support preferential hiring and promotion of blacks
 3. Somewhat against preferential hiring and promotion of blacks
 4. Strongly against preferential hiring and promotion of blacks
- Do you favor, oppose, or neither favor nor oppose building a wall on the U.S. border with Mexico?
 1. Oppose

2. Neither favor nor oppose
 3. Favor
- Every time we raise taxes by 10 percent, we lose 10 percent of our liberty.
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Somewhat disagree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Somewhat agree
 5. Strongly agree
 - Some people feel that the government in Washington should make every effort to improve the social and economic position of blacks (0). Others feel that the government should not make any special effort to help blacks because they should help themselves (10). And, of course, some other people have opinions somewhere in between (1-9). Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?

IX. Are conspiracy theories for political extremists?

Though tangential to our central theoretical concern in the manuscript, some argue that conspiracy theories are found not among the political left or right, but the most extreme partisans and ideologues regardless of party or ideology (van Prooijen et al., 2015). We examined this proposition across the 18 surveys used in Finding 3 (Figure 4). First, we regressed the ACTS on partisan and ideological identities for each survey. Then, we re-estimated these models, including quadratic partisanship and ideology terms (i.e., squared versions, which are the most straightforward parametric way to estimate simple nonlinearities of the type offered by the extremity thesis). Next, we compared the second model to the first using a nested model F-test. If the comparison is statistically significant—and the quadratic terms are positive (indicating higher levels of conspiracy thinking among the extremes)—we will have evidence for the extremity thesis.

Results are quite mixed. In only 5 surveys—Lucid April 2020, Qualtrics March 2020, Lucid January 2020, Qualtrics March 2019, and Lucid September 2019—did we find that the quadratic model was significantly better ($p < 0.05$) than the simple additive model and that the coefficients on the quadratic terms were in the correct direction (i.e., positive). In 4 surveys—Qualtrics May 2021, Qualtrics February 2020, CCES 2018 (2), and SSI July 2016—we observed a significantly better fit for the quadratic model, but opposite directions on the partisanship and ideology quadratic terms (i.e., one positive, one negative). On 2 surveys—NORC November 2019 and CCES 2016 (2)—we found a significantly better quadratic model fit with only negative quadratic terms, the opposite of what the extremity theory posits. Finally, in 7 of the 18 surveys—Qualtrics October 2020, Qualtrics June 2020, Qualtrics July 2019, CCES 2018 (3), CCES 2018 (1), CCES 2016 (1), and CCES 2012—we found no significant improvement on the quadratic model over the simple additive model.

In short, we possess mixed evidence, at best, for the extremity thesis. We reiterate that this is not the focus of our paper. Still, this analysis was useful for ensuring that the correlations we computed in the main text were not masking some other type of systematic structure in the data. We provide examples of the bivariate relationships between conspiracy thinking and political orientations from the two most recent surveys in Figure A3 below.

Figure A4: Scatterplot of conspiracy thinking against partisan (left) and ideological (right) self-identifications. Red lines are OLS fit lines. Blue curves are LOWESS smoothers with 95% confidence regions.

