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They are Hiding the Truth and Plotting: Conspiracy Beliefs Among Latinos

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Abstract

What factors explain Latino support for conspiracy theories? Contemporary scholarship offers valuable insights on how psychological, social, and political factors shape support for conspiracy theories. At the same time, scholarly understanding of the dynamics that foster conspiracy beliefs among racial and ethnic minorities is much more limited. Utilizing survey responses from more than 1,000 Latinos, we theorize explicitly about the factors that explain their support for conspiracies. Consistent with the scholarship highlighting in-group diversity among Latinos, we reveal significant differences among Latinos in their propensity to harbor conspiracy beliefs. Some of the factors that influence their support for conspiratorial statements align with the broader literature, other results appear unique to Latino Americans. Religiosity, lack of trust in institutions, and conservative political ideology are associated with higher levels of conspiracy beliefs among Latinos. We also find that Latinos from later generations, those who consume Spanish media, and who disagree that Latinos face discrimination and White privilege exists are more likely to believe in certain conspiracy theories.

Keywords: Latino politics; conspiracy beliefs; racial attitudes

Conspiracy theories have a long history in the U.S. For decades, beliefs about the existence of aliens and UFO sightings at Area 51, a U.S. Air Force facility in Nevada, have fueled conspiracy thinking. Misinformation and myths about the benefits of vaccines and the reality of global warming have also proliferated, along with various allegations that center around specific politicians, election outcomes, and national tragedies, ranging from the assassination of JFK to the 9/11 attacks, from the assassination of MLK to the 2020 presidential elections. Many Americans believe in at least one conspiracy theory (Oliver and Wood 2014). A conspiracy theory is "an explanation of historical, ongoing, or future events that cites as a main factor a group of powerful persons, the conspirators, acting in secret for their own benefit against the common good." (Keeley 1999, 166; Uscinski 2018, 235). Although

conspiracy theories vary in focus, a common characteristic of these beliefs is the notion that powerful figures are concealing important information and plotting against the public interest.

Belief in conspiracy theories is correlated with attitudes toward politics and politicians, trust in institutions, and political behavior (Green et al., 2022). As viscerally demonstrated on January 6, 2021, these beliefs can pose serious threat to democratic governance—contributing to contentious politics based on misinformation (Albertson and Guiler 2020; Boulianne and Lee 2022; Iyengar and Massey 2019; Uscinski, Klofstad, and Atkinson 2016; White et al., 2006). The widespread belief in conspiracy theories and their potential to undermine democratic governance makes it critical to have a robust scholarly understanding of the factors associated with these perceptions.

Racial and ethnic minorities in the US typically exhibit higher levels of belief in conspiracy statements than White Americans (Goertzel 1994). A growing body of scholarship explores the factors that shape Black Americans' support for a variety of conspiracy theories (Crocker et al. 1999; Parsons et al., 1993; Simmons and Parsons 2005; Thomas and Quinn 1991; Thorburn and Bogart 2005; Turner 1993, Enders et al., 2024). Recent research focuses on the propensity of Latinos to believe in various conspiracy theories (Roniger and Senkman 2021); Cortina and Rottinghaus 2022). Some studies include race and ethnicity as covariates to assess whether identifying as Black, Latino, or White is associated with the support for conspiracy theories (Enders et al. 2024). A recent study finds that some Latinos in the U.S. embrace conspiracy narratives and right-wing media content as it allows them to feel a greater connection with the ideal of Whiteness (Soto-Vasquez and Sanchez-Santos 2022). Building on this research, we present a theoretical framework about factors we argue will be relevant in understanding Latino support for conspiracy theories.

Latinos, who make up around 19 percent of the U.S. population, are a rapidly growing portion of the public. Their distinct history of migration and diversity of political identities may contribute to different susceptibilities to conspiracy theories than other groups (Schaeffer 2020). Consistent with calls for greater theoretically guided empirical research about political views of Latinos (Pérez and Cobian 2024), we develop four hypotheses, two of which are unique to Latinos, to identify the correlates of Latino support for conspiracy theories: perceptions of racism or discrimination, generational status, consumption of Spanish news media, and religiosity. Constructing an index of conspiracy beliefs and focusing on several common conspiracy statements with policy relevance, we test our theoretical propositions using a sample of 1,103 Latinos conducted in fall 2022. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study that relies on a nationally representative sample of English-speaking Latinos to explore their belief in conspiracy theories.

The statistical analyses demonstrate that all four factors are associated with support for conspiratorial statements to varying degrees. A consistent finding is that Latinos who were born in the U.S. and have both parents who are also born in the U.S., Latinos with supernatural beliefs, and Latinos who consume Spanish news sources are more likely to exhibit belief in a variety of conspiracy theories. Moreover, our empirical analyses show that Latino respondents who feel that Hispanics face discrimination and that Whites have a privileged status in the U.S. are less likely to believe that global warming is a fabrication.

Racial Attitudes and Perceptions of "Whiteness"

Racial hierarchy in the U.S., with its roots in slavery, exists along a Black-to-White spectrum with Blacks positioned at the bottom and Whites at the top (Lopez 2003; White and Wilkinson 2020).[1] As the U.S. population diversifies in terms of ethnicity and race, Asian Americans and Latinos are typically located somewhere between Blacks and Whites on this spectrum (Carey and Cisneros 2023; Hua and Junn 2021). The blurred line between race and ethnicity contributes to a more fluid understanding of identity for many Latinos (Stokes-Brown 2012; Twine and Gallagher 2014, 14).

This fluidity and in-group diversity translate into significant variation in the opinions that Latinos hold. Abrajano and Michael Alvarez (2011, 269) find that while Latinos have dramatically different views than Blacks and Whites on immigration reform and bilingual education, Latino opinion aligns more closely with Blacks than Whites on the invasion of Iraq. Latinos are also more willing to vote for a minority candidate than Whites (Segura and Valenzuela 2010) and hold views on group-based racism and discrimination similar to those of Blacks and other marginalized minorities in the U.S. (Vicuña et al., 2022). At the same time, the views of Latinos resemble those of Whites more than those of Blacks on a variety of issues, including racial prejudice (Krupnikov and Piston 2016), health care (Lanford, Block, and Tope 2018), and unemployment (Abrajano and Michael Alvarez 2011, 278). The identity that Latinos prioritize is associated with the opinions they hold (Hickel et al. 2020). Many Latinos strategically adopt opinions and policy stances that align with those of White Americans to distinguish themselves from other lower-status groups and side with more powerful groups in American society (Alamillo 2019, 458-9; Cadena Jr 2023; Pérez, Robertson, and Vicuña 2023).

There is also significant variation in how Latinos experience and perceive racism and discrimination (Pedraza 2014). More than 50% of Latinos state that they have experienced discrimination or received unfair treatment because of their race/ethnicity (Krogstad and Lopez, 2016). These perceptions shape patterns in their political participation (Sanchez 2008; Schildkraut 2005; Valdez 2011). Skin color, experiences with discrimination, and the self-identified race of Latinos—all of which vary significantly within this group—influence Latinos' amenability to racial thinking (Golash-Boza and Darity 2008; Gonzalez-Barrera 2022; Ostfeld and Yadon, 2022).

One of our core theoretical insights is that the views Latinos hold related to Whiteness and power will influence their support for conspiratorial statements. White supremacy is a foundational component of the fabric of America (Yacovone 2022). The notion of "White privilege" involves practices and norms providing systematic advantages to Whites by the virtue of their racial classification and skin color (McIntosh 1998). White privilege is distinct from racial resentment, which measures agreement with the idea that Blacks are responsible for their own disadvantage (Kinder and Sanders 1996) and emerges as an independent predictor of different positions on salient issues (Dobbs and Nicholson 2024). While White perceptions of their victimization and privilege have been the focus of most research (Filindra, Kaplan, and Manning 2024; Quarles and Bozarth 2022), such perceptions among minorities are also relevant for making sense of their political attitudes.

It is a well-established pattern that the group-based perceptions that Latinos hold about their ethno-racial group affect various forms of political behavior (Hickel et al. 2020; Basler 2008; Filindra and Kolbe 2022; Lopez, Michael Alvarez, and Silvia Kim 2022; Ocampo, Garcia-Rios, and Gutierrez 2021). Building on this research, we suggest that Latino perceptions of White privilege and ethno-racial discrimination in the US are also crucial for understanding their views on conspiracy theories. Given the relatively limited research on racial attitudes and conspiracy beliefs among Latinos, we remain agnostic about the direction of this relationship. On the one hand, Latinos who do not associate Whiteness with privilege and do not believe that Latinos experience widespread discrimination are likely to feel less marginalized and perceive greater opportunities for social mobility. Consequently, they may be less receptive to conspiracy theories, which are often linked to feelings of deprivation and the perception that the system is rigged (Crocker et al. 1999; van Prooijen and Douglas 2018). On the other hand, Latinos who dismiss the idea that race shapes life opportunities and their ethnic group faces discrimination may be more inclined to harbor conservative views, which are often associated with conspiratorial thinking and conspiracy theories (Hofstadter 1964; van der Linden et al. 2021; but also see Enders et al. 2023). For instance, conspiracy theories typically associated with right-wing politics, such as global warming denial and beliefs in deliberately hidden harms of vaccines, may hold greater appeal among Latinos who deny the existence of White privilege and ethno-racial discrimination. Based on this discussion, our first hypothesis, which is exploratory, is:

Hypothesis 1. *We expect that Latinos views on White privilege and discrimination are systematically associated with varying levels of endorsement of conspiracy theories.*

Generational Status

Generational status reflects a person's—and/or their parents'—place of birth. There are different definitions and measurement approaches for generational status; we focus on a range of Latinos from those who were not born in the U.S. and whose parents were not born in the U.S. to others who were born in the U.S. and whose parents are both born in the U.S. Generational status influences social and political integration as well as acculturation of Latinos (Branton 2007; Lavariega Monforti and Sanchez 2010; Potochnick and Stegmaier 2020).[2] Latinos who were not born in the U.S. and have parents who were not born in the U.S. display differences in civic engagement (Gershon, Pantoja, and Taylor 2016) and voting behavior (Santoro and Segura 2011) compared to Latinos who were born in the U.S. and who have U.S.-born parents. Furthermore, several factors related to status and power, including educational attainment, income, and home ownership rates of Latinos, increase with the duration of their "familial roots" in the U.S. (Sanchez and Masuoka 2010; Santoro and Segura 2011, 174).

We expect generational status will influence Latino beliefs in conspiracy theories. Without a robust established body of existing research, we also remain agnostic about the direction of the relationship. On the one hand, Latinos who are not born in the U.S. and whose parents are foreign-born may be more susceptible to

disinformation and misinformation, which could increase their support for conspiracy theories. This may be due to typically lower levels of trust in government, as well as social exclusion and stigma, all of which are factors associated with endorsement of conspiracy theories (Albarracin 2022; Bedolla 2005; Douglas et al. 2019; Graeupner and Coman 2017; Robertson et al. 2022; Abeyta et al. 2015; Whitson and Galinsky 2008). On the other hand, limited experience in the U.S. may contribute to "rose-colored" perceptions, or a lack of familiarity with American political discourse, and a desire for social mobility that could act as a buffer, reducing their support for conspiratorial statements. This discussion leads to our second exploratory hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2. *We expect the generational status of Latinos to have a significant impact on their support for conspiracy theories.*

Spanish Media Consumption

Based on estimates from the 2020 American Community Survey by the U.S. Census Bureau, nearly 70% of Latinos speak Spanish.[3] Linguistic skills have important implications for susceptibility to misinformation and disinformation, as well as the sources that Latinos rely on for information—all of which likely shape their views toward conspiracy theories. Spanish speakers may be at a particularly high risk for conspiracy beliefs, as they often have a pre-existing distrust of government, use heuristics that introduce biases, and rely on a larger set of news media outlets since they use both English and Spanish sources (Abrajano and Singh 2009; Evans et al. 2012; Morín, Macías Mejía, and Sanchez 2021; Nicholson, Pantoja, and Segura 2006).

Previous research suggests that reliance on Spanish-language media and social media is significantly associated with greater belief in conspiracy theories among Latinos in Texas (Cortina and Rottinghaus 2022). We argue that three distinct mechanisms may contribute to Spanish media consumption influencing Latino support for conspiracy theories.

First, conspiracy theories—and actual conspiracies—have a longstanding presence across many Latin American countries where elites, media, and the public often portray political struggles as plots by malicious groups acting against public interests (Roniger and Senkman 2021). Recently, some Spanish media outlets in the U.S. have served as incubators of misinformation (Ghaffary 2020; Sesin 2021; Taladrid 2023). Second, fact-checking practices tend to be less rigorous in Spanish-language media than in English-language media, making Latinos who consume news in Spanish more likely to encounter "fake news" and share misinformation (Sanchez and Bennett 2022). Finally, Latinos who rely on Spanish media sources in the U.S. are more likely to feel excluded and marginalized than those who are well-versed in English language sources, reflecting a history of language-based social exclusion (Abrajano and Panagopoulos 2011; Garcia Bedolla 2005). Spanish speakers have historically faced higher rates of discrimination, poorer health and educational outcomes, and restricted political participation. These patterns of exclusion are likely linked to higher levels of belief in conspiracy theories. While we

cannot fully establish causality, we expect these three dynamics will likely lead to greater support for conspiracy beliefs among Latinos who follow news in Spanish.

Hypothesis 3. *We expect Latinos who consume Spanish media to be more supportive of conspiracy theories.*

Religious Beliefs and Participation

A key element of conspiracy theories is the suspicion that an event or occurrence results from *intentional* actions by a secret organization with cynical motives. Existing literature suggests that people who believe in conspiracy theories tend to lack control, identify patterns in random events, and ascribe intention and agency to occurrences regardless of the factual evidence (Whitson and Galinsky 2008). In a similar vein, religious belief usually entails the existence of all-potent intentional agents (i.e., God) that act purposefully to shape the trajectory of human affairs and natural events. Hence, the attribution of unexplained events to unseen and intentional forces, like the paranormal or religious beliefs, can reflect a cognitive bias to believe in conspiracy theories, similar to the natural attraction to "dramatic narratives" opposing good and evil. These are all factors possibly interconnected with ideological determinants (Oliver and Wood 2014). Individuals with teleological beliefs and those who attribute a purpose and final cause to natural occurrences and entities are more likely to harbor conspiratorial beliefs (Wagner-Egger et al. 2018). Moreover, religiosity is correlated with belief in both political and medical conspiracy theories in different contexts (Galliford and Furnham 2017; Mancosu et al. 2017; Min 2021). Similarly, paranormal beliefs are associated with beliefs in conspiracy theories (Drinkwater et al. 2012). In the light of these studies, we expect religiosity is also associated with higher levels of conspiratorial belief among Latinos.

Religiosity may also affect belief in conspiracy theories indirectly, via political ideology. A conspiracy theory must align with a person's existing set of predispositions to be adopted (Douglas et al. 2019; Jardina and Traugott, 2019). People on the left of the political spectrum often believe different conspiracy theories than people on the right of the political spectrum (Liebertz and Bunch 2021; van Prooijen, Krouwel, and Pollet 2015). Even if people at the ends of both political extremes of the spectrum are likely to believe in conspiracy theories, these beliefs are relatively more prominent on the right of the spectrum (Mancosu et al. 2017; Radnitz and Underwood 2017; van Prooijen, Krouwel, and Pollet 2015; Walter and Drochon 2022).

In the U.S., there are strong associations between certain religious affiliations and certain political identities. Religion and religiosity have a strong impact on the political socialization of Latinos (Weaver 2015). Protestant Latinos are more likely than Catholic Latinos to identify as "being American" and support the Republican Party (Bartkowski et al., 2012; Kelly and Kelly 2005; Taylor, Gershon, and Pantoja 2014). Furthermore, religiosity and political conservatism are strongly linked among evangelical Latinos (Gibson and Hare 2012). Latino Protestants are also more likely to espouse the political agenda of the Religious Right and its support for the racial hierarchy (Martí 2022). Given the prevalence of such rhetoric among the American

right today, we expect support for conspiracy theories to be more widespread among religious Latinos than among non-religious Latinos.

Hypothesis 4. *We expect religious Latinos to express greater support for conspiracy theories.*

Data and Research Design

Our sample is composed of 1,103 self-identifying Hispanic/Latina/Latine/Latino/Latinx adults in the US.[4] The survey was fielded by Qualtrics in September 2022; Qualtrics was also responsible for compensation of respondents. The external validity of our findings is limited since the selection of the sample is not based on a randomized procedure. The survey employs quota sampling based on age, gender, education, region, and bilingualism and is representative of self-identified English-speaking Latinos who are 18 and older in the U.S.[5] The survey, which has an assumed incidence rate of 61 percent, took 15 minutes or less to complete. Table A1 in the Appendix summarizes the composition of our sample along with gender, age, education, region, and bilingualism.[6]

Our definition of conspiracy theories involves statements that purport to explain historical, ongoing, or future events as the result of secret plots or actions of powerful entities with malicious goals (Douglas et al. 2019; Keeley 1999; Uscinski 2018). Different from approaches in existing research that examine measures that focus on wrongdoing or negligence by the U.S. government (scandals, corruption, etc.), we utilize measures that clearly capture the *secret plots or actions of powerful entities perceived to work against the public interest.*[7] To our knowledge, this study presents the first nationally representative sample of English-speaking Latino responses to deliberately articulated conspiratorial statements.[8]

We utilize six conspiratorial statements that are widespread and frequently used in scholarly studies: (1) "The U.S. government is covering up the existence of UFOs and is secretly experimenting with alien technology (*UFOs*)." (2) "The idea of human-made global warming is a fabrication that intends to mislead people (*Global warming*)." (3) "The truth about the harmful effects of vaccines is being hidden from the public by a group of actors to advance their personal agenda (*Vaccines*)." (4) "Most politicians in Latin America are on the payroll of powerful interest groups based in the United States (*Payroll*)." (5) "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 pursuing their own malicious interests (*Global Cabal*)." and (6) "The U.S. government is penetrated by a criminal group of powerful and wealthy individuals that engage in child trafficking and other forms of child abuse (*Government Child Trafficking*)."[9] Response options for each statement range from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Table A2 in the Appendix provides summary statistics for key variables. While these items are commonly used in conspiracy theory research, it should be also noted that their wording, which does not specifically mention a counterargument, may result in artificially high indicators of support for conspiracy beliefs.

These six items have a Cronbach's alpha of 0.75, indicating acceptable internal consistency. Table A5 in the Appendix presents a principal component factor analysis. All these six items exhibit high factor loadings on Factor 1, which captures 46 percent of the total variance. Using these six items, we create an index variable. In the main text, we also focus on three conspiratorial statements that are particularly politically salient and directly relevant to sociopolitical behavior: Global warming, Vaccines, and Government Child Trafficking. We highlight these three items for two reasons. First, conspiracies surrounding Global Warming and Vaccines are tied to specific policy issues with profound implications. Global warming denial undermines efforts to combat climate change, while vaccine skepticism complicates public health initiatives to prevent outbreaks of contagious diseases. Similarly, beliefs in government officials engaging in illegal activities erode public distrust in the national government, with pernicious effects on democratic governance. Second, focusing on these three items allows us to maintain parsimony while demonstrating how some of the correlates of individual conspiracy statements may differ. For completeness, we present models using the three other items, UFOs, Payroll, and Global Cabal, as dependent variables in Table A7 in the Appendix. These results provide a broader picture of how different conspiracy beliefs relate to the predictors in our analysis while keeping the main text streamlined.

To illustrate variations in support for conspiratorial statements based on race/ethnicity, Figure 1 shows the percentages of Blacks, Latinos, and Whites who agree or disagree with five prevalent conspiracy theories.[10] Among all groups, the greatest support is for the allegation that the U.S. government is hiding the existence of UFOs and the claim that a single group secretly controls the world. In comparison, the lowest support is for the allegation that global warming is a fabrication intended to mislead the public. Consistent with findings in the previous literature (Davis et al. 2018; Goertzel 1994; Thorburn and Bogart 2005), Blacks and Latinos show greater receptiveness than Whites to several conspiracy theories, including UFOs, the Global Cabal, and Government Child Trafficking. A higher percentage of Whites disagree with each of the five conspiratorial statements compared to Blacks and Latinos. At the same time, there is a notable polarization among Whites regarding the Global Warming conspiracy. While more than 50 percent of Whites disagree with that conspiracy statement, a significant minority of 30 percent express support for it, a pattern that is also noticeable regarding the claim that vaccines have undisclosed harmful effects. However, there is significant polarization among Whites concerning the global warming conspiracy: while over 50 percent of Whites disagree with the statement, a substantial minority—30 percent—express support. A similar pattern is evident with the claim that vaccines have undisclosed harmful effects, where a notable segment of Whites also shows support.

We develop a series of independent variables to test our hypotheses. Regarding *Hypothesis 1* about perceptions of disadvantages and advantages related to race, we first introduce an index variable about *White Privilege Acknowledgement* (WPA) following Dobbs and Nicholson (2024) who put forth a three-item index of White Privilege denial. Their assessment reveals that the index has unique effects that are distinct from theoretically similar concepts, such as racial resentment, on the policy opinions of Whites.[11] In alignment with their approach, our WPA index variable is comprised of three items that ask participants their agreement with (a) White
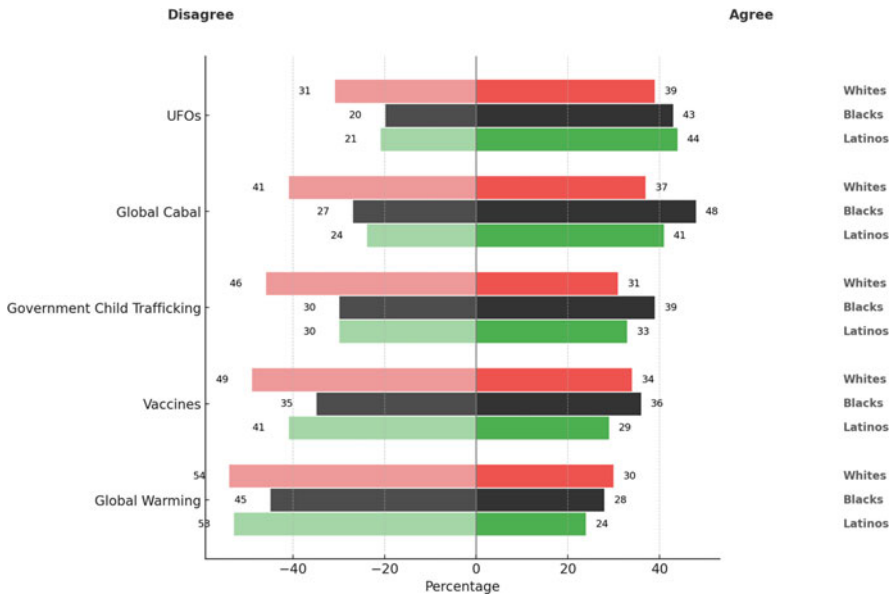
Figure 1. Belief in Various Conspiracy Statements among Blacks, Latinos, and Whites (in %). *Note:* The figure shows percentages of respondents who agree or disagree with each conspiracy statement. For Latinos (n = 1,103), the data comes from a survey conducted by Qualtrics in September 2022. There were five categories: "strongly agree," "somewhat agree," "neither disagree nor agree," "strongly disagree," and "somewhat disagree." For Blacks (n = 696) and Whites (n = 1,018), the data comes from a survey conducted by Qualtrics in June 2023 with seven categories of "strongly agree," "somewhat agree," "agree," "neither disagree nor agree," "disagree," "somewhat disagree," and "strongly disagree." In each group, respondents who chose the "neither disagree nor agree" option are not shown. We do not include the statement on Latin American politicians being on the payroll of powerful interest groups in the U.S. since it is not asked in the survey with Black and White samples.

people in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin, (b) the lighter your skin color, the less prejudice and discrimination you experience, and (c) White cultural characteristics are more valued than those of people of color on a 1–5-scale. This index exhibits high internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.83. Next, we employ a commonly applied measure about Latino group-based discrimination and ask respondents how much discrimination they think Hispanics/Latinos/Latinas face discrimination with possible response options of "a lot" (1) to "none at all" (4) (*Hispanics not discriminated against*). Table A3 in the Appendix provides more details on each survey item.

Our independent variable for *Hypothesis 2* is *Generational Status*. This variable ranges from Latinos who were not born in the U.S. and whose parents are also foreign-born (1), Latinos who were born in the U.S. but whose parents were born outside of the U.S. (2), Latinos who were born in the U.S. and have one U.S.-born parent (3), and Latinos who were born in the U.S. and both of their parents born in the U.S. (4).

We use a dichotomous independent variable to measure our *Hypothesis 3* about Spanish media consumption. The *Spanish News* media consumption variable asks

respondents "When you get your news from media sources or social network sites, is it in English, Spanish, or both?" Possible response options are "English," "Spanish," "or both." We created a binary variable that combines the "Spanish" and "both" categories; our final news media consumption variable is coded "0" for respondents who get their news in English and "1" for respondents who get their news in Spanish or bilingual media.[12]

Given the multidimensional nature of religiosity, we use three independent variables to measure this concept in our test of Hypothesis 4. *Religious attendance* measures how often the respondent attends religious services (not including weddings or funerals) and is measured on a 6-point scale ranging from "never" (1) to "more than once a week" (6). *Supernatural belief* is a combination of two variables: whether the respondent thinks that there is a heaven and hell and whether the respondent thinks that what happens in life is decided by a "higher force" such as God, fate, or destiny; both variables range from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). *Importance of religion* measures self-described importance of religion in one's life. This variable ranges from "not at all important" (1) to "very important" (4).

We also include a series of control variables about gender, age, education, income, political attitudes, and trust in institutions. Previous research identifies these variables as being relevant to understanding support for conspiracy theories. Gender is coded as a dichotomous variable (0 = woman or other, 1 = man). Age is measured as a continuous variable, with the participants ranging from 18 to 87 years old. Education is measured on a 1-7 scale where 1 represents "high school incomplete or less" and 7 represents "postgraduate or professional degree." Income is measured on an 8-point scale, from "less than $30,000" to "$90,000 or more," increasing by $10,000 for each unit.

We measure our political attitudes using three variables: party ID, political efficacy, and political ideology. To measure party ID, we include two binary variables: (1) *Democratic* (coded "1" for self-identified Democrats and "0" for other identifications) and (1) *Independent/other* (coded "1" for people who identify as Independent, "Other," or "Not sure" and "0" for self-identified Democrats and Republicans).[13] *Political efficacy* is measured on a 1-5 scale and asks the participant how much they feel that their political participation influences election outcomes, with response options ranging from "not at all" (1) to "a great deal" (5). We use a scale that ranges from "very liberal" (0) to "very conservative" (10) to measure political ideology. Accounting for political ideology is important as respondents who self-identify as conservatives may be more likely to express support for the conspiratorial statements that we study separately from the index (i.e., Global warming, Vaccines, and Government Child Trafficking). Lastly, lower levels of political efficacy, which indicate lack of control about decisions affecting collective well-being, are likely to be associated with higher levels of belief in conspiracy theories.

Interpersonal distrust is measured as a binary variable, where respondents are asked whether they believe "most people can be trusted" (1) or if "you cannot be too careful in dealing with other people" (2). *Trust in institutions* is measured as an index variable with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.85, based on seven items assessing participants' trust in the federal government in Washington D.C., their respective

state government, mass media (e.g., CNN, Fox News), social media networks, local media, the local police department, and the government in their or their parents' country of origin. Answer choices are recorded on a 1–5 scale ranging from "none" (1) to "great deal" (5). Following conventional expectations, we anticipate that higher levels of distrust will be associated with greater belief in conspiracy theories.

Findings

We run four different models where the dependent variables are (1) the conspiracy belief index, (2) belief that global warming is a fabrication, (3) belief that vaccines have hidden harmful effects, and (4) belief in government child trafficking. Table 1 shows the standardized coefficients and robust standard errors, while Figure 2 visualizes the estimates and their confidence intervals of each variable. As indicated above, the variables WPA and Hispanics were not Discriminated test *Hypotheses 1*. Both variables significantly predict belief in the global warming conspiracy, with respondents who deny the existence of White privilege and discrimination against Latinos showing a higher likelihood of endorsing this conspiratorial statement. These variables are not significant in the other three models. These findings provide partial support to the theoretical expectation that Latino perspectives on discrimination and racial hierarchies are relevant in making sense of why they may embrace conspiracy theories. While this study cannot fully disentangle the mechanisms behind this relationship, we suggest that the findings may be attributed to conservative values. Since global warming conspiracies are often associated with the political right, it is consistent that this conspiracy theory would resonate more among Latinos who reject the existence of White privilege and racial or ethnic discrimination.

Hypothesis 2 receives mostly strong empirical support. Respondents who were born in the U.S. to U.S.-born parents (fourth generation) are more likely to express support for the general conspiracy index as well as conspiratorial statements on vaccines and the government engaging in child trafficking compared to respondents who were not born in the U.S. and whose parents are foreign-born. (first generation). Moreover, both the second and third generation of Latinos are more likely to endorse the Child Trafficking conspiracy than the first generation. At the same time, the generational differences do not matter in understanding the variation among Latinos regarding their stance on global warming.

One of the most consistent findings in our models concerns *Hypothesis 3*, the relationship between Spanish media consumption and beliefs in conspiracy theory. Respondents who get their news from bilingual or Spanish media outlets tend to score higher in the conspiracy beliefs index, aligning with Cortina and Rottinghaus (2022) who study Latinos of Texas. Similarly, these individuals are also more likely to believe that the government engages in child trafficking and think that vaccines have hidden harmful effects. The only exception concerns the global warming model where the Spanish media variable lacks significance. As discussed above, this variable may capture the life experiences of Spanish speakers who face higher levels of discrimination, disparities in life quality, and lack of political power and are more receptive to conspiracy theories of various sorts. They may also be more exposed to more intense forms of conspiracy theories in Spanish news outlets.

Table 1. Correlates of conspiracy theory beliefs among Latinos

	(1) Conspiracy Index	(2) Global Warming	(3) Vaccines Harmful	(4) Gov. Child Trafficking
WPA	0.024	−0.106**	−0.011	−0.001
	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)
Hispanics not discriminated	0.033	0.110***	0.51	−0.011
	(0.04)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.06)
Second generation	0.066	−0.001	0.054	0.095**
	(0.1)	(0.16)	(0.15)	(0.15)
Third generation	0.715	−0.007	0.063	0.117**
	(0.12)	(0.16)	(0.18)	(0.17)
Fourth generation	0.127**	0.064	0.137***	0.159***
	(0.1)	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.13)
Spanish news	0.115***	0.067*	0.086**	0.075**
	(0.06)	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.09)
Religious attendance	−0.025	0.059	0.005	−0.024
	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Supernatural beliefs	0.147***	0.080*	0.088**	0.100**
	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)
Importance of religion	0.035	0.068	0.151***	−0.036
	(0.03)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.05)
Men	−0.037	−0.036	−0.024	−0.087**
	(0.05)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.08)
Age	−0.173***	−0.122***	−0.148***	−0.177***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Education	−0.062	−0.069*	−0.080**	−0.074*
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Income	−0.018	−0.033	−0.026	−0.003
	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Political efficacy	−0.045	−0.053	−0.116***	−0.005
	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)
Democratic	−0.125**	−0.200***	−0.241***	−0.066
	(0.1)	(0.14)	(0.15)	(0.13)
Independent/other	−0.015	−0.056	−0.089*	−0.031
	(0.09)	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.12)

(*Continued*)

Table 1. (*Continued*)

	(1) Conspiracy Index	(2) Global Warming	(3) Vaccines Harmful	(4) Gov. Child Trafficking
Conservative	0.128***	0.121***	0.059	0.115***
	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Interpersonal distrust	0.065*	−0.037	0.062*	0.053
	(0.07)	(0.11)	(0.19)	(0.11)
Trust in institutions	−0.158***	0.022	−0.073*	−0.214***
	(0.04)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.05)
Observations	985	985	985	985
R-squared	0.18	0.20	0.21	0.17

The table reports standardized coefficients and robust standard errors in parentheses. All models are weighted to match national demographics of Hispanics on gender, age, region, and education (Unweighted models presented in Table A6 in the Appendix). *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.
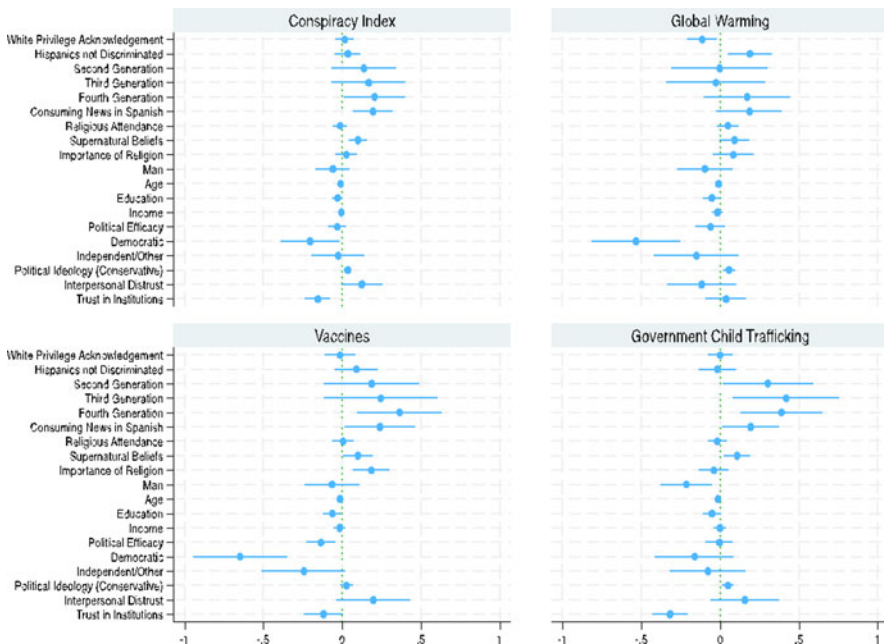

Figure 2. Coefficient plots and confidence intervals.

Our *Hypothesis 4*, informed by the broader literature on conspiracy theories, focuses on the effects of religiosity. Neither religious attendance nor importance of religious variables seem to play a role in shaping conspiracy theory beliefs among

Table 2. A summary of theoretical expectations and empirical findings

Hypotheses	Variables	Findings
H1 *Latinos' views on White privilege and discrimination are systematically associated with different levels of endorsement of conspiracy theories.*	White privilege acknowledgment Level of perceived discrimination against Hispanics	Respondents who believe that Hispanics are discriminated against and Whites have privileges are more likely to believe that global warming is a fabrication.
H2 *The generational status of Latinos has a significant impact on shaping support for conspiracy theories.*	Birthplaces (US or elsewhere) of the respondent and parents	Respondents who were born in the US to parents born in the US are more likely to exhibit higher levels of conspiracy theory beliefs and believe in the government engaging in child trafficking and that vaccines have hidden harmful effects.
H3 *Latinos who consume Spanish media are more likely to support conspiracy theories.*	Consumption of Spanish news	Respondents who consume news both in Spanish and English are more likely to exhibit higher levels of conspiracy theory beliefs and believe in the government child trafficking and that vaccines have hidden harmful effects.
H4 *Religious Latinos Americans are more likely to support conspiracy theories.*	Religious attendance Supernatural beliefs Religion important	Respondents with supernatural beliefs are more likely to exhibit higher levels of conspiracy theory beliefs and believe in the government child trafficking and that vaccines have hidden harmful effects. Respondents who think religion is important are also more likely to agree that harmful effects of vaccines are hidden from the public.

Latinos except for the importance of religion variable being significantly associated with Latino vaccine-related beliefs. Most consistently, belief in hell and heaven and belief in the existence of a higher force, supernatural beliefs, are significantly and positively associated with the dependent variable. Table 2 summarizes measures of key concepts, our hypotheses, and main findings.

Table A7 and Figure A2 in the Appendix show the results from the models with three other conspiracy statements. Consistent with the findings above, Latinos with supernatural beliefs have a higher propensity to believe that the government covers up the existence of UFOs, Latin American politicians are on the payroll of U.S. actors, and the world is ruled by a secret cabal. Moreover, Spanish news consumption continues to be a significant predictor in the models with Global Cabal and Latin American politicians as the dependent variables. Besides, newer generations of Latinos express greater support for the Global Cabal conspiracy theory. In comparison, these additional models do not provide empirical support for *Hypothesis 1.*

Returning to the models above, several additional patterns are worth noting. The age variable has a consistently negative, and statistically significant coefficient across all models, suggesting that younger Latinos are more likely than older Latinos to support conspiratorial statements—a finding that aligns with Cortina and Rottinghaus (2022). We also suspect that higher levels of social media usage among younger individuals contribute to these beliefs. Future research could explore the mechanisms underlying this trend, specifically examining the relationship between social media usage and belief in conspiracy theories among younger Hispanics.

As expected, Latinos who self-identify at the liberal end of the political spectrum tend to be less likely to express support for conspiracy theories. The only exception is that conservative political views are not significantly associated with the belief that vaccines have hidden harmful effects, a finding similar to the assessment that partisanship and ideological orientation predict support for "birther" beliefs (Enders et al. 2020). Furthermore, respondents who self-identify as Democrats are less likely to exhibit conspiratorial beliefs overall, and believe that global warming is a fabrication and vaccines harm people compared to Latino respondents who self-identify as Republicans. There could be two different explanations for these general patterns. First, it may be the case that supporters of an opposition party are more likely to endorse conspiracy theories. If that is the case, a change in political power may result in changing the relationship between partisan identity and conspiracy beliefs. Alternatively, conservative Hispanics who vote for the Republican Party, where conspiracy theories are often circulated at the elite level, may have a greater propensity for believing in conspiracy theories. At the same time, partisanship is a predictor of belief in several conspiracy theories including government child trafficking, UFOs, and corrupt Latin American Politicians. Overall, while partisan affiliation is significant in shaping support for some conspiracy theories, our findings support studies that suggest variation in the explanatory power of partisanship for support for conspiracy theories (Edelson et al. 2017; Enders et al. 2021). Furthermore, we find very limited evidence that political efficacy is associated with skepticism towards conspiracy theories. The only statistically significant effect of this variable suggests that respondents who have higher levels of self-reported political efficacy are less likely to believe in the argument that vaccines have harmful effects.

Our models do not identify a robust and consistent relationship between interpersonal trust and belief in conspiracy theories. At the same time, respondents indicating greater levels of trust in institutions exhibit lower scores in the conspiracy beliefs index and all six conspiratorial statements with the exception of global warming. Income does not emerge as a significant predictor in any of the models. Educated Latinos, in general, exhibit lower levels of conspiracy beliefs, though the coefficient of the *education* variable is only significant at the $p < 0.05$ level in the vaccines model.[14] Lastly, while gender remains insignificant in the other models, Latinas are more likely than Latinos to believe in the government engaging in child trafficking.

Conclusion

Recognizing the significance of analyzing Latinos as a unique population with distinctive characteristics, we utilize an original survey analysis approach to explore

the correlates of Latino belief in conspiracy theories. Some of our results are consistent with the broader literature that identifies demographic variables, social media use, trust, and political ideology as key to understanding support for conspiracy theories (McKernan, Rossini, and Stromer-Galley 2023; Uscinski et al. 2022a). Latinos with supernatural beliefs, lacking trust in institutions, and espousing right-wing political views are more likely to exhibit belief in a variety of conspiracy theories. Furthermore, younger Latinos who have a longer personal and family history of living in the U.S. appear more susceptible to the appeal of conspiracy theories. At the same time, higher levels of education and political efficacy are less consistently associated with lower levels of support for conspiracy theories among Latinos.

We also find several unique dynamics in Latino support for conspiratorial statements. Latinos perceiving higher levels of discrimination and systematic racism in the form of White privilege are more likely to believe that global warming is a fabrication. This finding is consistent with the increasing scholarly attention to the role of perceptions of the causes and consequences of in-group racism and discrimination in shaping political attitudes of minority populations (Louie and Viladrich 2021). Our findings also contribute to existing research on the effects of Spanish media. An extensive line of research suggests that Spanish news media is a vital information source that centers on promoting group consciousness and liberal policy preferences (Kerevel 2011). Our results, however, suggest that Latinos who consume Spanish media are also most vulnerable to the appeal of conspiracy theories. Though studies find promising effects of fact-checking (Velez, Porter, and Wood 2023), it will be fruitful for future research to explore the impact of the Spanish media at a more disaggregate level (i.e., identifying different news outlets), on different groups within the Latino community (for example, based on level of political knowledge), and to provide more comprehensive analysis of the effects of social media consumption on belief in conspiracy theories.

There are also several limitations of our study that can be addressed in future research. We realize that the generalizability of our results is influenced by the specific conspiracy theories we studied (Uscinski et al. 2022b). Our results may not generalize beyond the items we examine in this paper. A more robust exploration of the relevance of this theoretical framework for making sense of belief in other conspiracy theories is a promising avenue for future research. Moreover, while we adopt common measures used in conspiracy theory research, scholars highlight the possibility that this approach may artificially inflate support for conspiracy beliefs (Clifford, Kim, and Sullivan 2019). Future research would benefit from adopting an alternative approach, such as what's proposed by Clifford, Kim, and Sullivan (2019) and Clifford and Sullivan (2023). Besides, a promising extension of this study is to explore if the substantial content of the conspiracy theories matters as certain conspiratorial statements might have stronger appeal among Latinos and other minorities with certain characteristics including political orientation. Finally, belief in conspiracy theories may or may not translate into contentious political action or electoral behavior among Latinos. It would be very valuable to explore the conditions under which such beliefs influence behavioral outcomes.

Notes

1 Use of "Black" or "White" refers to non-Hispanic Blacks and non-Hispanic Whites.

2 We define first generation immigrants as people who are foreign-born, second-generation immigrants as people with at least *one* foreign born parent, and third generation immigrants as those with two US native parents.

3 The survey is available at https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs.

4 The survey included one attention check to ensure respondents were thoughtfully responding to each item. Respondents were asked to choose the fruit that has a red color. The options given were banana, strawberry, kiwi, or orange. All respondents passed the attention check.

5 All results in this study contain weights based on the national distribution of adult characteristics by region, sex, education, and age, as reported in Table A4 in the Appendix. While the survey was conducted in English only, having a bilingualism quota helped us identify Latinos who are proficient in Spanish. Sixty-eight percent of the respondents self-described themselves as bilingual, i.e., proficient in both English and Spanish.

6 We use 2020 ACS Census estimates for post-stratification weights. A post-stratification raking algorithm was used to balance each category within +/-1 percent of ACS estimates.

7 While the American National Election Studies have publicly available data with the oversampling of Latino respondents in certain years, that survey contains generalized statements about the *possibility* of misbehavior or crimes perpetrated by the U.S. government. It contains items such as "Much of what people hear in schools and the media are lies designed to keep people from learning the real truth about those in power," and "Most business and politics in this country are secretly controlled by the same few powerful people." We do not think these are valid measures of conspiracy theories since each item lacks a clear conspiratorial intentional element.

8 Cortina & Rottinghaus (2022) focus on conspiracy beliefs of Latinos in Texas.

9 While this question may capture a sentiment widely associated with QAnon, the latter is a specific movement that emerged in an online message board in October 2017. QAnon supporters believe in a range of conspiratorial ideas including deep state, satanic child abuse, and sex trafficking that have a much longer history in American politics (Uscinski 2022). We thank one of the reviewers for urging us to make the distinction between QAnon and such beliefs more emphatically.

10 Figure A1 in the Appendix shows the distribution of responses for each of these six items including the item on Latin American politicians among Latinos. Except for the item on global warming, "neither disagree nor agree" is the mode in all items, indicating that a large number of respondents do not have strong positions on these conspiracy theories.

11 In this survey of Latinos, we did not include established measures of racial resentment. We intend on accounting for this in future research.

12 Reflective of the population, sample sizes were too small for Spanish-only news consumption to run alternative models with Spanish-only coded separately. If the survey had been conducted in Spanish, results may differ. Around 68% of the sample indicated being bilingual, yet only 3% indicated only receiving news in Spanish.

13 We are not able to use the conventional 7-point scale for party affiliation due to question wording of the item in our survey. In light of this, using two dichotomous variables is the most effective way to capture any potential influence of party affiliation on support for conspiracy theories among Latinos.

14 We created several interactive models involving gender and education with no changes in results, indicating that gender and education (in conjunction) are not related to meaningful differences in conspiratorial beliefs.

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Appendix of They are Hiding the Truth and Plotting: Conspiracy Beliefs among Latinos

Table A1. Demographic characteristics of the survey

Gender	Age	Education	Region	Bilingual
Female: 601	18–34: 413	High school incomplete or less: 84	Northeast: 217	Yes: 747
Male: 495	35–54: 408	High school graduate or GED: 331	Midwest: 132	No: 365
	55 or older: 282	Some college: 347	West: 313	
		Four year college: 223	South: 450	
		Postgraduate or professional degree: 120		

Table A2. Summary statistics of variables

Variables	Observations	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min	Max
Conspiracy Beliefs Index	1,103	2.98	.815	1	5
Gov. Child Trafficking	1,103	2.98	1.235	1	5
Global Warming	1,103	2.44	1.334	1	5
Vaccines	1,103	2.72	1.339	1	5
Men (categorical)	1,103	.451	.4978	0	1
Age	1,103	42.22	15.36	18	87
Education	1,103	3.67	1.68	1	7
Income	1,063	3.68	2.57	1	8
Generation (categorical)	1,103	2.91	1.20	1	4
Political efficacy	1,103	3.66	1.163	1	5
Democrats	1,103	.44	.50	0	1
Independents/Other	1,103	.44	.50	0	1
Conservative	1,103	4.91	2.89	0	10
Religious attendance	1,103	2.83	1.61	1	6
Supernatural beliefs	1,103	3.68	1.17	1	5
Interpersonal distrust	1,024	1.76	.42	1	2
Importance of religion	1,103	2.85	1.09	1	4
Trust in institutions	1,087	2.63	.82	1	5
Spanish news sources	1,103	.39	.49	0	1
White privilege acknowledgement	1,103	3.59	1.20	1	5
Group-based perception of discrimination against Hispanics	1,103	1.82	.79	1	4

Table A3. Corresponding survey items to variables

| Variables	Survey Items
Conspiracy beliefs (index)	Index variable based on six items: • The U.S. government is covering up the existence of UFOs and is secretly experimenting with alien technology. • The idea of human-made global warming is a fabrication that intends to mislead people. • The truth about the harmful effects of vaccines is being hidden from the public by a group of actors to advance their personal agenda. • Most politicians in Latin America are on the payroll of powerful interest groups based in the United States. • 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 pursuing their own malicious interests. • The U.S. government is penetrated by a criminal group of powerful and wealthy individuals that engage in child trafficking and other forms of child abuse. Answer choices: strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)
Men	Please indicate your gender (Woman, man, other)
Age	What is the month and year you were born? (YYYY.MM)
Education	What is the highest level of education you have completed or the highest degree you have received? (high school incomplete or less (1) to indicating postgraduate or professional degree (7))
Income	Thinking back over the last year, what was your family's annual income? (less than $30,000 (1) to $90,000 or more (8) increasing by $10,000 for each unit)
Generation	Categorical variable based on three items: (1) Where were you born? (2) Where was your father born? (3) Where was your mother born?
Political efficacy	How much does the political participation of people like you (Hispanic/Latino/Latinas) influence the outcome of U.S. elections? Answer choices: not at all (1) to a great deal (5)
Democrats	Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a …? (Democrat (1), All others (0))
Independents	Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a …? (Independent (1), All others (0))
Conservative	Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a …? (Very liberal (0) to Very conservative (10))
Religious attendance	How often do you attend religious services, not including weddings or funerals? (Never (1) to more than once a week (6))
Supernatural beliefs	Index variable based on two items: • There is a heaven and hell • What happens in life is decided by a 'higher force' such as God, fate or destiny Answer choices: strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)

(*Continued*)

Table A3. (*Continued*)

| Variables	Survey Items
Interpersonal distrust	Generally speaking, do you believe that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people? Answer choices: Most people can be trusted (1) to You cannot be too careful in dealing with people (2)
Importance of religion	How important is religion in your life? (Not at all important (1) to very important (4))
Trust in institutions	Index based on seven items: I'm going to present you with a list of institutions and people. For each one, please tell me how much you trust the following entities. The federal government in Washington D.C., Your state government, Mass media (e.g., CNN, Fox News), Social media networks, Local media in your area, The police department in your area, The government in your/ your parents country of origin Answer choices: none (1) to great deal (5)
Spanish news sources	When you get your news from media sources or social network sites, is it in English, Spanish or both?
White privilege acknowledgement (WPA)	Based on three items: • White people in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin. • The lighter your skin color, the less prejudice and discrimination you experience. • White cultural characteristics are more valued than those of people of color. Answer choices: strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).
Group-based perception of discrimination against Hispanics	How much discrimination do you think Hispanic/Latino/ Latinas face in the U.S.? (A lot (1) to none at all (4))

Table A4. Weight targets

| Variable		Target (%)
Region	Northeast	14
	Midwest	10
	South	38
	West	38
Sex	Male	50
	Female	50
Education	HS or less	27
	High school graduate	31.6
	Some college	24.6
	College	11.8
	Graduate degree	4.9
Age	18-29	28.2
	30-39	21.6
	40-59	33.8
	60+	16.4
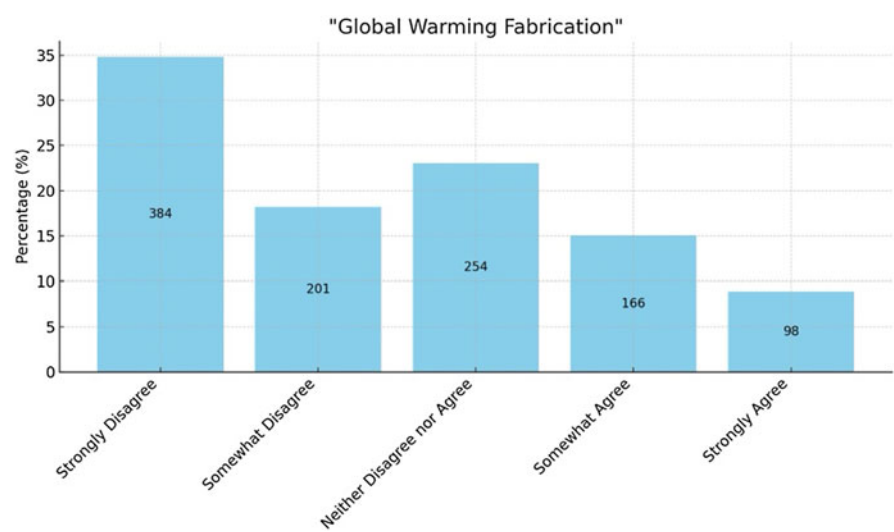
Figure A1. Beliefs in Conspiracy Theories among Latinos.
Figure A1a. The idea of human-made global warming is a fabrication . . . .
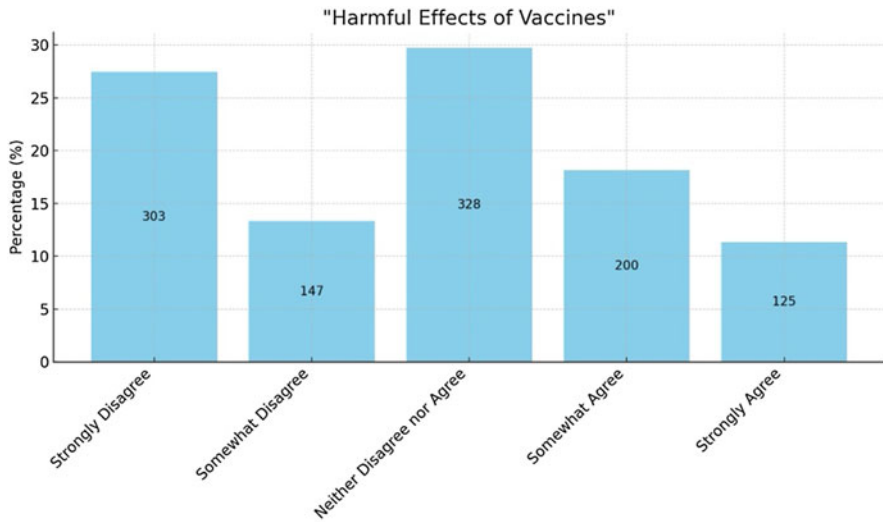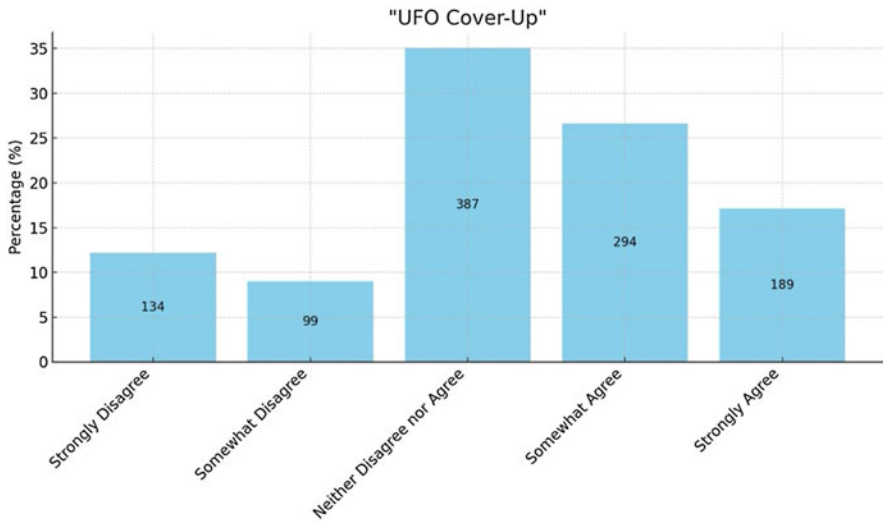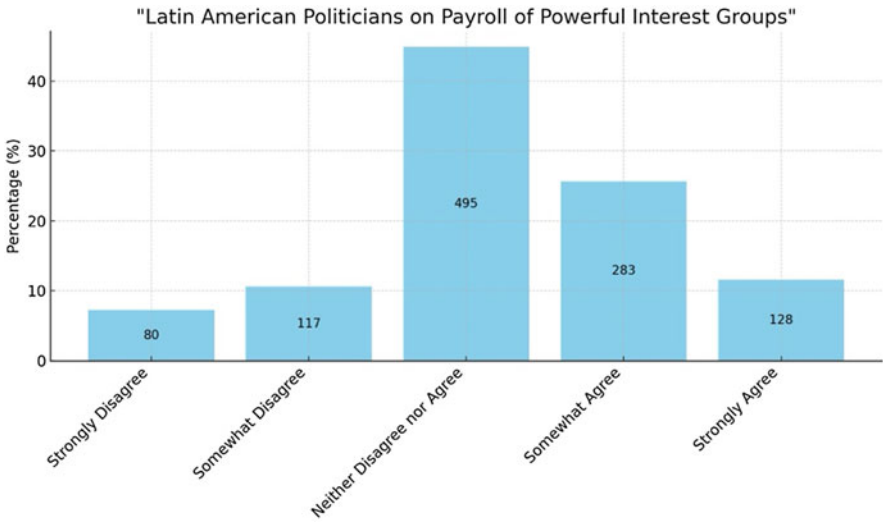
Figure A1b. The truth about the harmful effects of vaccines is being hidden . . . .
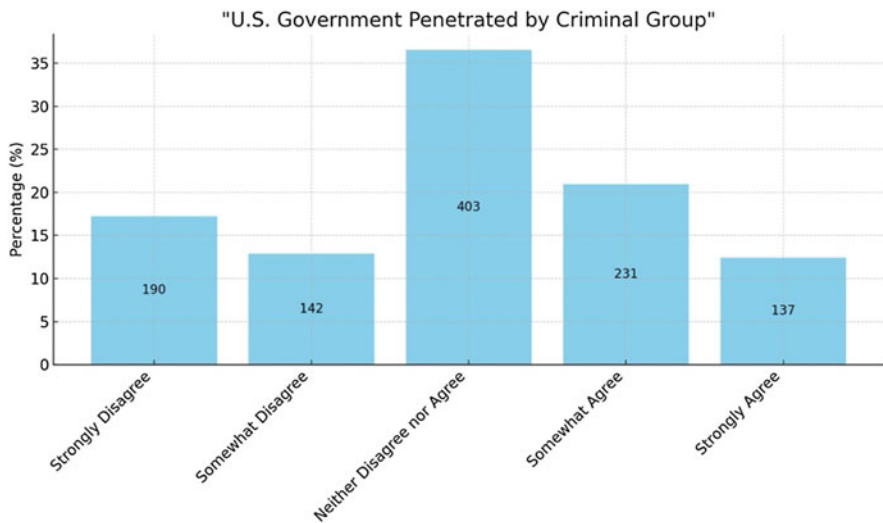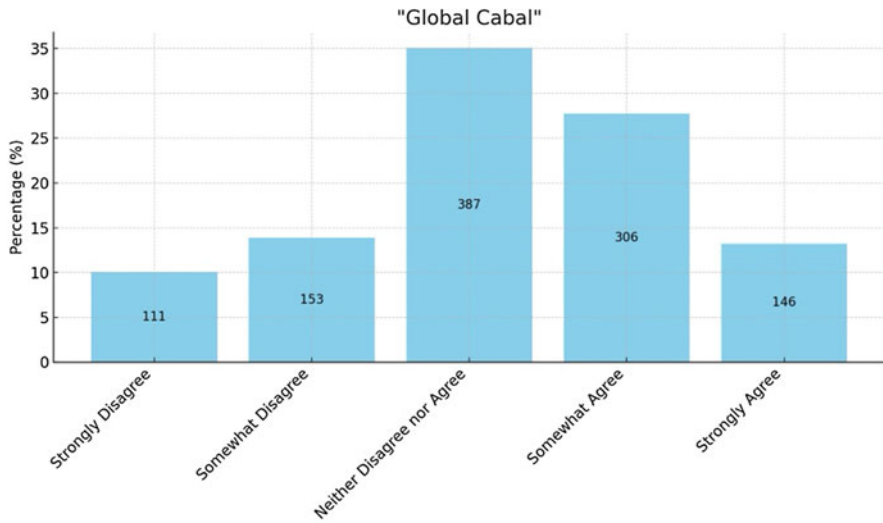

Figure A1c. The U.S. government is penetrated by a criminal group of powerful and wealthy individuals that engage in child trafficking . . . .

Figure A1d. The U.S. government is covering up the existence of UFOs . . . .

Figure A1e. Most politicians in Latin America are on the payroll of powerful interest groups . . . .

Figure A1f. There is a single group of people who secretly control events and rule the world together pursuing their own malicious interests . . . .

Table A5. The conspiracy index - factor analysis

Item	Factor 1	Uniqueness
UFO coverup	0.553	0.6015
Global warming	0.532	0.1819
Vaccines	0.755	0.324
Latin American politicians	0.589	0.088
Global cabal	0.783	0.330
Government child trafficking	0.794	0.357

Method: Principal rotation factors. Two factors are retained.

Table A6. Correlates of conspiracy beliefs among Latinos (Unweighted)

Variables	Conspiracy Index (1)	Global Warming Fabrication (2)	Vaccines Harmful (3)	Gov. Child Trafficking (4)
WPA	0.001	−0.12***	−0.06	0.008
	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Hispanics not discrimin.	0.07* (0.04)	0.2*** (0.06)	0.14** (0.06)	0.01 (0.06)
2nd Generation	0.09	0.12	0.17	0.14
	(0.09)	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.13)
3rd Generation	0.07	−0.03	0.12	0.19
	(0.09)	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.15)
4th Generation	0.1	0.18	0.22*	0.17
	(0.07)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.11)
Spanish news sources	0.18***	0.18**	0.27***	0.13
	(0.05)	(0.09)	(0.1)	(0.09)
Religious attendance	−0.008	0.05	0.02	0.007
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Supernatural beliefs	0.11***	0.08*	0.11**	0.1**
	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Religious importance	0.01 (0.03)	0.01 (0.06)	0.1** (0.05)	−0.03 (0.05)
Men	−0.09*	−0.07	−0.08	−0.2***
	(0.05)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Age	−0.009***	−0.009***	−0.01***	−0.02***
	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Education	−0.04**	−0.05*	−0.06**	−0.06**
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Income	−0.01	−0.02	−0.009	−0.008
	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Political efficacy	−0.02	−0.06	−0.11***	0.001
	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Democrats	−0.14*	−0.32**	−0.4***	−0.11
	(0.08)	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.12)
Independent	−0.03	−0.18	−0.14	−0.02
	(0.08)	(0.13)	(0.12)	(0.11)

(*Continued*)

Table A6. (*Continued*)

Variables	Conspiracy Index (1)	Global Warming Fabrication (2)	Vaccines Harmful (3)	Gov. Child Trafficking (4)
Conservative	0.04***	0.08***	0.06***	0.04**
	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Interpersonal distrust	0.15**	−0.03	0.14	0.22**
	(0.06)	(0.09)	(0.1)	(0.09)
Trust in institutions	−0.15***	0.002	−0.14**	−0.26***
	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.05)
Constant	3.02***	2.61***	3.01***	3.64***
	(0.27)	(0.41)	(0.43)	(0.4)
Observations	985	985	985	985
R-squared	0.171	0.165	0.183	0.142

Robust standard errors in parentheses; *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Table A7. Statistical models with three additional conspiracy statements

Variables	Ufo Coverup	Corrupt Latin American Politicians	Global Cabal
WPA	0.062 (0.05)	0.121** (0.04)	0.070 (0.04)
Hispanics not discrim.	−0.038 (0.07)	0.040 (0.06)	−0.027 (0.06)
Second Generation	0.036 (0.14)	−0.018 (0.13)	0.093* (0.16)
Third Generation	0.006 (0.17)	0.001 (0.14)	0.103* (0.18)
Fourth Generation	0.006 (0.13)	−0.035 (0.12)	0.158** (0.15)
Spanish news sources	0.011 (0.1)	0.092** (0.08)	0.138*** (0.1)
Religious attendance	−0.084 (0.04)	−0.014 (0.03)	−0.057 (0.03)
Supernatural beliefs	0.111** (0.05)	0.087* (0.04)	0.128*** (0.05)
Importance of religion	−0.055 (0.07)	−0.016 (0.05)	0.008 (0.05)
Men	−0.018 (0.1)	0.017 (0.07)	0.011 (0.08)
Age	−0.094* (0.00)	−0.076* (0.00)	−0.060 (0.00)
Education	−0.014 (0.03)	0.051 (0.02)	−0.038 (0.03)
Income	−0.053 (0.02)	0.042 (0.01)	0.012 (0.01)
Political efficacy	0.003 (0.04)	0.007 (0.03)	0.000 (0.04)
Democrats	0.034 (0.2)	0.053 (0.14)	−0.027 (0.13)
Independents/other	0.042 (0.19)	0.086 (0.13)	0.018 (0.12)
Conservative	0.028 (0.02)	0.033 (0.02)	0.151*** (0.02)

(*Continued*)

Table A7. (*Continued*)

Variables	Ufo Coverup	Corrupt Latin American Politicians	Global Cabal
Interpersonal distrust	0.104*** (0.11)	−0.001 (0.09)	0.081** (0.1)
Trust in institutions	−0.090* (0.07)	−0.150*** (0.05)	−0.155*** (0.06)
Observations	985	985	985
R-squared	0.08	0.06	0.11

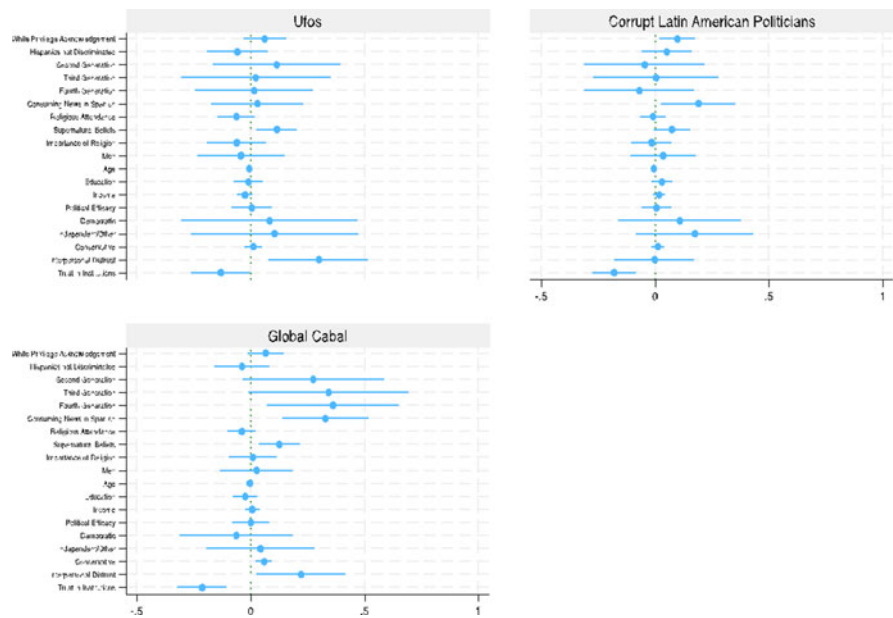Models report standardized coefficients and robust standard errors in parentheses; *** p<0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1

Figure A2. Coefficient plots and confidence intervals.