

Appendix for “An Improved Question Format for Measuring Conspiracy Beliefs”

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Sample Demographics: Studies 1-3

	Study 1, W1 Student	Study 1, W2 Student	Study 2 MTurk	Study 3 Lucid
Partisan Identity				
Democrat	50%	51%	43%	37%
Republican	18%	16%	24%	31%
Independent/Other	32%	33%	33%	32%
Ideology				
Liberal	51%	50%	52%	36%
Conservative	17%	16%	27%	32%
Moderate	32%	33%	20%	32%
College Degree	-		56%	30%
Median Income Category	-		\$50K-99K	\$30K-49K
Race and Ethnicity				
White	27%	26%	79%	72%
Black	10%	9%	6%	12%
Asian	33%	34%	7%	4%
Hispanic	26%	26%	5%	7%
Other	5%	5%	2%	4%
Median Age Category	-		35-44	45
Male	43%	41%	47%	48%

Study 1: Endorsement of Individual Conspiracy Beliefs

The table below shows the percentage of respondents selecting each response option for each conspiracy question in the first wave of Study 1.

	True/False Format		Agree/Disagree Format		Explicit Choice Format	
	True	False	Agree	Disagree	Conspiracy	Conventional
Iraq War	70	30	63	37	46	54
MLK	42	58	40	60	32	68
Trump-Russia	78	22	72	28	59	41
Vaccines	20	80	16	84	14	86
Climate Change	25	75	22	78	17	83
Birther	6	94	10	90	6	94
Princess Diana	28	72	31	69	28	72

The table below shows the percentage of respondents selecting each response option for each conspiracy question in the second wave of Study 1.

	Agree/Disagree Format			True/False Format			Explicit Choice Format		
	True	False	Unsure	Agree	Disagree	Neither	Conspiracy	Conventional	Unsure
Sept. 11	27	53	20	23	48	28	20	65	15
Katrina	17	55	28	12	61	27	11	82	7
Pearl Harbor	27	49	24	20	49	31	26	59	15
Fluoridation	35	35	30	30	38	31	36	51	13
Trump Wiretap	11	76	14	18	62	21	14	56	30
Oklahoma City	13	53	34	14	51	34	13	70	17
Vapor Trails	17	54	29	12	53	35	12	72	16

The table below shows the percentage of respondents selecting each response option for each conventional account question in the second wave of Study 1.

	Agree/Disagree Format			True/False Format		
	True	False	Unsure	Agree	Disagree	Neither
Sept. 11	58	23	18	56	19	25
Katrina	71	12	17	69	6	25
Pearl Harbor	51	17	32	44	10	46
Fluoridation	50	23	27	43	23	34
Trump Wiretap	24	44	32	21	25	54
Oklahoma City	42	21	37	41	11	48
Vapor Trails	52	16	32	42	22	36

How Question Format Affects Endorsement of Conventional Claims

If the problems we have identified are due to question format and the difficulty of answering questions about the cause of specific political events, then we should find similar patterns when analyzing agreement with statements of conventional explanations. In the second wave of Study 1, we included two conditions that asked respondents to rate conventional accounts of the same seven events in the AD or TF format, which can be compared to the EC condition. While respondents in the EC condition provided 1.1 no-opinion responses, on average, this was significantly lower than no-opinion rates in both the TF-CA ($M = 2.0$; $t(257) = 3.90$, $p = .0001$) and AD-CA ($M = 2.7$; $t(244) = 7.24$, $p < .0001$) formats. Thus, even when respondents are asked about agreement with conventional explanations, both common formats generate substantially higher no-opinion rates.

We also find significant differences in endorsement of conventional accounts by response format. When coding no-opinion responses as rejections of the conventional account, the EC produces much higher rates of endorsement of conventional accounts ($M = 4.5$) than both the AD ($M = 3.2$; $t(244) = 6.34$, $p < .0001$) and TF formats ($M = 3.5$; $t(257) = 4.95$, $p < .0001$). These findings demonstrate that high rates of no-opinion responding are not unique to conspiracy questions, but seem to be a function of presenting respondents with a single explanation for an event they may know little about.

No-opinion responses to the conventional accounts in the AD-CA and TF-CA conditions may either reflect skepticism of the conventional accounts, or they may again be a response to difficult questions that lack adequate context. In other words, respondents giving a no-opinion response in these conditions may be a mix of conspiracy believers and non-believers, or they may be largely non-believers who struggle to answer the question. If the latter is the case, then conspiracy endorsement rates should look similar across experimental conditions when no-opinion responses are coded as *endorsement* of the conventional account. This is what we find. Under this coding scheme, endorsement of conventional accounts does not significantly differ between the EC ($M = 5.7$) and AD conditions ($M = 5.8$; $t(257) = 1.22$, $p = .225$) or the EC and TF condition ($M = 5.5$; $t(244) = 0.99$, $p = .323$). These findings suggest that respondents giving a no-opinion response would have endorsed the conventional account if it were contrasted with a conspiratorial account. This provides further evidence that high no-opinion rates are largely due to challenging question formats, rather than skepticism or hidden conspiratorial beliefs.

Study 2: Endorsement of Individual Conspiracy Beliefs

The table below shows the percentage of respondents selecting each response option for each conspiracy question in Study 2.

	Agree/Disagree Format			True/False Format			Explicit Choice Format		
	True	False	Unsure	Agree	Disagree	Neither	Conspiracy	Conventional	Unsure
Princess Diana	10	68	22	15	61	25	17	73	10
Climate Change	15	69	17	17	64	19	16	77	8
MLK	13	55	32	15	52	33	23	57	20
Iraq War	34	38	28	38	31	31	42	46	12
Birther	10	79	12	13	73	14	12	79	9
Trump-Russia	46	25	29	54	22	24	50	33	17
Vaccines	12	77	10	10	72	18	13	78	9
Sept. 11	16	67	17	21	59	20	21	69	10
Hurricane Katrina	10	75	15	12	75	13	9	83	8
Pearl Harbor	18	56	26	16	52	32	20	63	17
Fluoridation	14	62	24	14	62	25	19	70	11
Trump Wiretap	17	59	24	20	60	20	23	54	22
Oklahoma City	5	75	21	8	69	23	9	78	13
Vapor Trails	10	74	16	9	71	21	15	76	9

Need for Cognitive Closure

In Study 2, we also examined the Need for Cognitive Closure (NFCC), which represents a need to reach clear explanations or judgments in order to reduce uncertainty (Webster and Kruglanski, 1994). Recent work connects NFCC to conspiracy belief, predicting that “people high in need for cognitive closure should adopt conspiratorial explanations when conspiratorial explanations are salient and cannot be easily replaced by a different scenario” (Marchlewska et al., 2018). Across two studies, they find that NFCC predicts conspiracy belief about a scenario only when a conspiratorial explanation, but not an alternative explanation, is provided. In other words, people high in NFCC are likely to seize on *any* available explanation, rather than conspiracies in particular. The implications for measurement are clear. When respondents are provided only with a conspiratorial claim, respondents who are high in NFCC will be more likely to endorse it. However, when asked to pick between a conspiratorial claim and a conventional account, this effect should disappear. As a result, any apparent relationship between NFCC and conspiracy belief may be largely a measurement artifact.

We now turn to the substantive consequences of question format. Based on existing literature, we expected that NFCC would be positively related to conspiracy endorsement in the AD and TF conditions (de Zavala and Federico, 2018; Marchlewska et al., 2018), but that this effect would disappear when respondents are provided with the conventional account in the explicit choice condition. For this analysis, no-opinion responses are coded at the midpoint, as this seems to be the most common practice in the literature.

We tested our hypothesis by predicting conspiracy belief as a function of experimental condition, NFCC, and an interaction between each (model details shown in Table A5 in the Appendix). In the EC condition, NFCC has a negative, but not statistically significant effect on conspiracy belief ($b = -.01, p = .400$). In the AD condition, NFCC has a positive, but not statistically significant relationship with conspiracy belief ($b = .015, p = .274$) and this effect does not statistically differ from the EC condition ($p = .168$). However, in the TF condition, NFCC has a positive and significant effect ($b = .032, p = .006$) and this effect is significantly different from the effect in the EC condition ($p = .011$). When coding no-opinion responses as rejections of conspiracy beliefs, however, the relationship between NFCC and conspiracy belief weakens. Thus, these results provide evidence that NFCC is only positively related to conspiracy belief when an alternative account is not provided and when no-opinion responses are interpreted as partial or full endorsements of conspiracies.

Need for Cognitive Closure as a Predictor of Conspiracy Belief

	Coding of No-Opinion Responses		
	Midpoint	Endorsement	Rejection
Agree-Disagree	-0.97 (1.03)	-0.21 (1.33)	-1.73 + (.95)
True-False	-2.30 * (.94)	-2.41 * (1.21)	-2.20 * (.86)
Need for Cognitive Closure (NfCC)	-0.13 (.16)	-0.11 (.20)	-0.16 (.14)
NfCC × Agree-Disagree	0.34 (.25)	0.33 (.32)	0.36 (.23)
NfCC × True-False	0.58 * (.23)	0.75 * (.29)	0.40 + (.21)
Constant	4.29 *** (.65)	5.08 *** (.84)	3.51 *** (.60)
Observations	1214	1214	1214
R ²	0.01	0.02	0.01
Marginal Effect of NfCC:			
Forced Choice	-0.13	-0.11	-0.16
Agree-Disagree	0.21	0.22	0.20
True-False	0.44 **	0.64 **	0.25

Note: + p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001.

Measurement of Survey Attention

Throughout the analyses below, we utilize a latent measure of survey attention. Specifically, we used a hybrid IRT model to estimate satisficing as a function of an instructed response question, time spent on the survey prior to the experiment, straight-lining in grids prior to the experiment, and the number of open-ended questions skipped by the respondent. This approach provides a more detailed and variable measure of satisficing and better recognizes the heterogeneous ways in which respondents satisfice (e.g., Hillygus et al., 2014). The instructed response question was embedded in a grid of questions unrelated to the current study and instructed respondents to select a particular response options. Respondents were coded 1 if they followed instructions and 0 otherwise. Model details available upon request.

Study 3: Endorsement of Individual Conspiracy Beliefs

The table below shows the percentage of respondents selecting each response option for each conspiracy question in Study 3.

	Agree/disagree, with no-opinion			True/false, with no-opinion			Explicit choice, with no-opinion		
	Agree	Disagree	Neither	True	False	Unsure	Conspiracy	Conventional	Unsure
Princess Diana	24%	44%	32%	21%	49%	30%	20%	61%	18%
MLK	29%	33%	38%	25%	41%	34%	24%	55%	22%
Iraq War	42%	27%	31%	46%	31%	24%	28%	55%	17%
Climate Change	28%	41%	32%	29%	48%	23%	24%	58%	18%
Birther	30%	48%	22%	28%	52%	20%	23%	61%	17%
Vaccines	21%	57%	22%	24%	64%	12%	14%	73%	13%
Trump-Russia	48%	25%	27%	46%	32%	22%	35%	40%	26%
Sept. 11	29%	43%	28%	28%	51%	21%	20%	64%	16%
Hurricane Katrina	21%	50%	29%	18%	59%	23%	12%	75%	13%
Pearl Harbor	29%	41%	31%	28%	42%	30%	22%	56%	21%
Fluoridation	27%	40%	33%	24%	46%	30%	24%	58%	18%
Trump Wiretap	31%	37%	32%	32%	43%	25%	30%	41%	29%
Oklahoma City	18%	50%	32%	19%	54%	26%	12%	71%	18%
Vapor Trails	22%	48%	30%	22%	54%	24%	18%	67%	16%

	Agree/disagree, no N-O		True/false, no N-O		Explicit choice, no N-O	
	Agree	Disagree	TRUE	FALSE	Conspiracy	Conventional
Princess Diana	38%	62%	31%	69%	25%	75%
MLK	45%	55%	39%	61%	32%	68%
Iraq War	56%	44%	52%	48%	34%	66%
Climate Change	41%	59%	36%	64%	31%	69%
Birther	35%	65%	30%	70%	27%	73%
Vaccines	31%	69%	26%	74%	19%	81%
Trump-Russia	62%	38%	59%	41%	53%	47%
Sept. 11	42%	58%	38%	62%	27%	73%
Hurricane Katrina	33%	67%	25%	75%	18%	82%
Pearl Harbor	41%	59%	41%	59%	26%	74%
Fluoridation	40%	60%	35%	65%	32%	68%
Trump Wiretap	40%	60%	38%	62%	37%	63%
Oklahoma City	30%	70%	24%	76%	21%	79%
Vapor Trails	34%	66%	28%	72%	25%	75%

Predictors of No-Opinion Responses

The table below displays a model predicting the number of no-opinion responses offered by a respondent as a function of experimental condition (question format), survey attention (or satisficing), political knowledge, and cognitive reflection. Survey attention is modeled as a latent variable. See description in Study 3 question wording for more detail.

	(1) Model1
AD DK	1.45** (0.25)
TF DK	0.74** (0.25)
Survey Attention	-0.50** (0.15)
Political Knowledge	-2.38** (0.34)
Cognitive Reflection	-1.02* (0.45)
Constant	4.17** (0.27)
Observations	1,227
R-squared	0.10

Standard errors in parentheses

** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Conspiracy Beliefs by Experimental Condition

The table below displays a model predicting the number of conspiracies endorsed by a respondent as a function of experimental condition (question format), survey attention (or satisficing), political knowledge, and cognitive reflection. Survey attention is modeled as a latent variable. See description in Study 3 question wording for more detail.

	(1) Model1	(1) Model2	(2) Model3	(3) Model4
EC no NO			1.01** (0.24)	0.92** (0.23)
AD NO			0.94** (0.24)	0.76** (0.23)
AD no NO			2.63** (0.24)	2.54** (0.23)
TF NO			0.85** (0.24)	0.73** (0.23)
TF no NO			1.91** (0.24)	1.97** (0.23)
NO Option Provided	-1.26** (0.14)	-1.31** (0.13)		
AD Format	1.28** (0.17)	1.19** (0.16)		
TF Format	0.87** (0.17)	0.89** (0.16)		
Survey Attention		-1.14** (0.10)		-1.15** (0.10)
Political Knowledge		-1.83** (0.22)		-1.84** (0.22)
Cognitive Reflection		-0.84** (0.29)		-0.83** (0.29)
Constant	4.18** (0.14)	5.43** (0.19)	3.05** (0.17)	4.32** (0.20)
Observations	2,441	2,441	2,441	2,441
R-squared	0.06	0.16	0.06	0.16

Standard errors in parentheses

** p<0.01, * p<0.05

How Political Knowledge Moderates the Effects of Question Format

The table below displays a model predicting the number of conspiracies endorsed by respondents as a function of experimental condition (question format), political knowledge, and the interaction between condition and knowledge. No-opinion responses are coded as rejections. Models are shown with and without controls for demographics.

	(1) Model1	(2) Model2	(3) Model3	(4) Model4
No Option Provided	-2.32** (0.28)	-2.28** (0.26)		
Political Knowledge	-3.54** (0.31)	-2.31** (0.31)	-0.62 (0.52)	0.43 (0.49)
NO Option × Political Knowledge	1.81** (0.44)	1.80** (0.41)		
Church Attendance		0.18** (0.04)		0.18** (0.04)
Born Again		1.20** (0.15)		1.17** (0.15)
Education		-0.01 (0.05)		-0.01 (0.05)
Income		-0.02 (0.06)		-0.02 (0.06)
Male		0.62** (0.13)		0.63** (0.13)
White		-0.20 (0.15)		-0.17 (0.15)
Age		-0.33** (0.04)		-0.32** (0.04)
Survey Attention		-0.85** (0.10)		-0.86** (0.10)
AD DK			1.62** (0.46)	1.33** (0.43)
TF DK			1.80** (0.47)	1.65** (0.43)
EC no DK			2.02** (0.47)	1.86** (0.44)
AD no DK			4.95** (0.48)	4.65** (0.44)
TF no DK			3.55** (0.48)	3.43** (0.45)
Political Knowledge × AD DK			-1.34	-1.04

			(0.74)	(0.69)
Political Knowledge × TF DK			-1.83*	-1.70*
			(0.73)	(0.68)
Political Knowledge × EC no DK			-1.85*	-1.75*
			(0.74)	(0.69)
Political Knowledge × AD no DK			-4.22**	-3.98**
			(0.75)	(0.69)
Political Knowledge × TF no DK			-2.78**	-2.63**
			(0.74)	(0.69)
Constant	6.90**	6.41**	3.40**	3.08**
	(0.20)	(0.29)	(0.33)	(0.38)
Observations	2,441	2,431	2,441	2,431
R-squared	0.09	0.22	0.12	0.24

Standard errors in parentheses

** p<0.01, * p<0.05

How Cognitive Reflection Moderates the Effects of Question Format

The table below displays a model predicting the number of conspiracies endorsed by respondents as a function of experimental condition (question format), cognitive reflection, and the interaction between condition and cognitive reflection. No-opinion responses are coded as rejections. Models are shown with and without controls for demographics.

	(1) Model1	(2) Model2	(3) Model3	(4) Model4
DK Option	-1.67** (0.19)	-1.64** (0.17)		
Cognitive Reflection (CRT)	-2.53** (0.42)	-1.99** (0.39)	-1.11 (0.69)	-0.60 (0.63)
CRT × DK Option	1.86** (0.60)	1.73** (0.55)		
Church Attendance		0.18** (0.04)		0.17** (0.04)
Born Again		1.24** (0.15)		1.20** (0.15)
Education		-0.05 (0.05)		-0.05 (0.05)
Income		-0.02 (0.06)		-0.02 (0.06)
Male		0.57** (0.13)		0.57** (0.13)
White		-0.22 (0.15)		-0.20 (0.15)
Age		-0.39** (0.04)		-0.39** (0.04)
Survey Attention		-0.92** (0.10)		-0.94** (0.10)
AD DK			0.65* (0.32)	0.61* (0.29)
TF DK			0.74* (0.32)	0.55 (0.29)
EC no DK			1.05** (0.33)	0.91** (0.30)
AD no DK			2.95** (0.32)	2.75** (0.29)
TF no DK			2.31** (0.32)	2.31** (0.29)

CRT × AD DK			1.33 (1.02)	0.61 (0.93)
CRT × TF DK			0.41 (1.02)	0.72 (0.93)
CRT × EC no DK			-0.12 (0.99)	-0.13 (0.91)
CRT × AD no DK			-1.83 (1.01)	-1.72 (0.93)
CRT × TF no DK			-1.84 (0.98)	-1.90* (0.90)
Constant	5.45** (0.13)	5.94** (0.27)	3.29** (0.23)	3.91** (0.32)
Observations	2,441	2,431	2,441	2,431
R-squared	0.05	0.21	0.07	0.23

Standard errors in parentheses

** p<0.01, * p<0.05

How Satisficing Moderates the Effects of Question Format

The table below displays a series of models predicting conspiracy endorsement as a function of experimental condition, survey attention (or satisficing), and the interaction between the two. No-opinion responses are coded as rejections. Survey attention is modeled as a latent variable. See Study 3 question wording for details.

	(1) Model 1	(2) Model 2	(3) Model 3	(4) Model 4
AD DK			0.88** (0.23)	0.79** (0.22)
TF DK			0.84** (0.23)	0.73** (0.22)
EC no DK			0.95** (0.23)	0.91** (0.22)
AD no DK			2.62** (0.23)	2.47** (0.22)
TF no DK			2.02** (0.23)	1.98** (0.22)
Survey Attention	-1.66** (0.13)	-1.26** (0.13)	-0.51* (0.25)	-0.11 (0.24)
Survey Attention × AD DK			-0.76* (0.34)	-0.71* (0.32)
Survey Attention × TF DK			-0.67 (0.34)	-0.63 (0.33)
Survey Attention × EC no DK			-0.91** (0.34)	-0.91** (0.32)
Survey Attention × AD no DK			-1.25** (0.33)	-1.30** (0.32)
Survey Attention × TF no DK			-1.37** (0.34)	-1.32** (0.32)
DK Option	-1.29** (0.14)	-1.28** (0.13)		
Survey Attention × DK Option	0.63** (0.19)	0.67** (0.18)		
Church Attendance		0.18** (0.04)		0.18** (0.04)
Born Again		1.27** (0.15)		1.24** (0.15)
Education		-0.08 (0.05)		-0.07 (0.05)
Income		-0.03 (0.06)		-0.03 (0.06)

Male		0.51**		0.52**
		(0.13)		(0.13)
White		-0.30*		-0.27
		(0.15)		(0.15)
Age		-0.39**		-0.39**
		(0.04)		(0.04)
Constant	4.94**	5.71**	3.07**	3.92**
	(0.10)	(0.27)	(0.16)	(0.29)
Observations	2,441	2,431	2,441	2,431
R-squared	0.11	0.20	0.14	0.23

Standard errors in parentheses

** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Demographic Correlates of Conspiracy Belief by Question Format

The table below displays a series of models predicting conspiracy endorsement as a function of sociodemographic variables, split by question format. No-opinion responses are coded as rejections.

	(1) EC DK	(2) EC no DK	(3) AD DK	(4) AD no DK	(5) TF DK	(6) TF no DK
Church Attendance	0.12 (0.09)	0.21** (0.08)	0.14 (0.10)	0.30* (0.12)	0.25* (0.11)	0.24* (0.11)
Born Again	0.89** (0.33)	0.13 (0.30)	1.62** (0.39)	1.63** (0.44)	1.04** (0.38)	1.84** (0.40)
Education	0.11 (0.10)	-0.29** (0.10)	-0.08 (0.13)	-0.17 (0.16)	0.18 (0.13)	-0.13 (0.13)
Income	-0.02 (0.12)	-0.03 (0.13)	0.23 (0.16)	0.04 (0.19)	-0.21 (0.14)	-0.08 (0.16)
Male	0.55* (0.26)	0.44 (0.26)	0.63 (0.34)	0.86* (0.38)	0.53 (0.32)	0.65 (0.34)
Black	0.06 (0.42)	1.01* (0.41)	0.89 (0.55)	0.68 (0.58)	1.13* (0.48)	0.96 (0.54)
Asian	0.61 (0.62)	0.42 (0.75)	-0.46 (0.76)	-0.33 (1.03)	-0.77 (0.70)	-1.98* (0.96)
Hispanic	-0.07 (0.56)	0.52 (0.57)	-0.01 (0.69)	0.37 (0.72)	-1.06 (0.60)	1.74* (0.71)
Other Race	-0.36 (0.58)	0.90 (0.77)	-0.65 (1.24)	-1.31 (1.18)	-0.39 (0.75)	0.36 (0.78)
Age	-0.38** (0.08)	-0.51** (0.08)	-0.51** (0.10)	-0.65** (0.12)	-0.43** (0.09)	-0.58** (0.10)
Constant	3.25** (0.49)	5.95** (0.51)	4.28** (0.72)	6.53** (0.76)	3.99** (0.61)	5.98** (0.68)
Observations	414	399	403	413	403	399
R-squared	0.12	0.20	0.17	0.17	0.13	0.22

Note: ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Personality Correlates of Conspiracy Belief by Question Format

The table below displays a series of models predicting conspiracy endorsement as a function of the Big Five personality traits, as measured by the ten item personality inventory (Gosling et al., 2003) and sociodemographic variables, split by question format. No-opinion responses are coded as rejections.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	EC DK	EC no DK	AD DK	AD no DK	TF DK	TF no DK
Extraversion	0.09 (0.11)	-0.22 (0.11)	0.05 (0.16)	0.49** (0.16)	0.00 (0.14)	-0.01 (0.15)
Agreeableness	-0.15 (0.15)	-0.48** (0.15)	-0.19 (0.20)	-0.62** (0.22)	-0.08 (0.18)	-0.07 (0.19)
Conscientiousness	0.04 (0.15)	-0.15 (0.14)	-0.02 (0.18)	-0.17 (0.19)	-0.26 (0.17)	-0.02 (0.19)
Emotional Stability	-0.19 (0.13)	-0.01 (0.12)	-0.06 (0.18)	-0.10 (0.18)	-0.02 (0.16)	-0.48** (0.16)
Openness	0.13 (0.14)	-0.05 (0.13)	-0.30 (0.19)	-0.07 (0.21)	0.22 (0.18)	-0.05 (0.18)
Church Attendance	0.13 (0.09)	0.22** (0.08)	0.12 (0.10)	0.25* (0.12)	0.24* (0.11)	0.26* (0.11)
Born Again	0.97** (0.33)	0.07 (0.30)	1.63** (0.39)	1.56** (0.43)	1.01** (0.38)	1.72** (0.41)
Education	0.13 (0.10)	-0.29** (0.10)	-0.07 (0.13)	-0.17 (0.15)	0.14 (0.13)	-0.16 (0.13)
Income	-0.02 (0.12)	-0.02 (0.12)	0.23 (0.16)	0.03 (0.19)	-0.23 (0.14)	-0.06 (0.16)
Male	0.56* (0.26)	0.30 (0.27)	0.58 (0.35)	0.70 (0.39)	0.44 (0.34)	0.76* (0.35)
Black	0.08 (0.42)	0.93* (0.41)	1.13* (0.57)	0.73 (0.58)	1.03* (0.48)	1.25* (0.54)
Asian	0.60 (0.62)	0.02 (0.76)	-0.35 (0.78)	-0.45 (1.00)	-0.74 (0.72)	-1.62 (0.96)
Hispanic	-0.10 (0.57)	0.51 (0.56)	0.10 (0.70)	0.18 (0.70)	-1.14 (0.60)	1.89** (0.73)
Other Race	-0.37 (0.59)	0.89 (0.75)	-0.64 (1.24)	-0.71 (1.16)	-0.33 (0.75)	0.42 (0.77)
Age	-0.31** (0.09)	-0.44** (0.08)	-0.47** (0.12)	-0.53** (0.12)	-0.37** (0.10)	-0.41** (0.12)
Constant	3.25** (0.87)	9.61** (0.87)	6.49** (1.22)	9.12** (1.36)	4.67** (1.06)	7.89** (1.20)
Observations	413	395	399	411	401	396

R-squared	0.13	0.25	0.18	0.24	0.13	0.25
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Note: ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Sociodemographic Correlates of Conspiracy Belief by Question Format

The table below displays a series of models predicting conspiracy endorsement as a function of conspiratorial predispositions (Oliver and Wood, 2014) and sociodemographic variables, split by question format. No-opinion responses are coded as rejections.

	(1) EC DK	(2) EC no DK	(3) AD DK	(4) AD no DK	(5) TF DK	(6) TF no DK
Manichean	-0.15 (0.09)	-0.12 (0.09)	-0.38** (0.11)	-0.32** (0.11)	-0.41** (0.10)	-0.40** (0.10)
End Times	-0.15 (0.08)	-0.14 (0.08)	-0.21* (0.10)	-0.18 (0.11)	-0.17 (0.10)	-0.36** (0.10)
Secret Cabal	-0.23** (0.08)	-0.32** (0.08)	-0.43** (0.10)	-0.65** (0.11)	-0.42** (0.09)	-0.40** (0.09)
Church Attendance	0.04 (0.09)	0.15 (0.08)	0.00 (0.10)	0.17 (0.12)	0.09 (0.10)	-0.01 (0.10)
Born Again	0.51 (0.33)	-0.25 (0.30)	1.10** (0.38)	1.17** (0.41)	0.60 (0.37)	1.06** (0.39)
Education	0.17 (0.10)	-0.25** (0.10)	-0.01 (0.12)	-0.00 (0.15)	0.30* (0.12)	-0.03 (0.12)
Income	0.02 (0.11)	-0.01 (0.12)	0.22 (0.15)	-0.12 (0.18)	-0.09 (0.13)	0.06 (0.14)
Male	0.44 (0.25)	0.48 (0.25)	0.62 (0.32)	0.83* (0.35)	0.47 (0.30)	0.67* (0.31)
Black	-0.01 (0.41)	0.86* (0.39)	0.55 (0.51)	0.09 (0.53)	0.94* (0.44)	0.87 (0.49)
Asian	0.52 (0.60)	0.43 (0.71)	0.10 (0.72)	0.02 (0.93)	-1.22 (0.64)	-1.19 (0.86)
Hispanic	-0.05 (0.55)	0.80 (0.55)	-0.10 (0.64)	0.74 (0.65)	-0.73 (0.55)	1.31* (0.64)
Other Race	-0.68 (0.57)	0.50 (0.74)	-0.33 (1.15)	-1.49 (1.07)	-0.19 (0.70)	0.48 (0.69)
Age	-0.35** (0.07)	-0.46** (0.08)	-0.42** (0.10)	-0.64** (0.11)	-0.37** (0.09)	-0.48** (0.09)
Constant	5.14** (0.59)	7.85** (0.59)	7.69** (0.79)	10.75** (0.87)	7.11** (0.68)	10.08** (0.74)
Observations	414	399	402	411	401	399
R-squared	0.18	0.28	0.29	0.32	0.28	0.39

Note: ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Survey Attention Predicts Fewer No-Opinion Responses

As discussed in the manuscript, we find evidence that higher levels of survey attention (or, equivalently, lower levels of satisficing) predict lower rates of no-opinion responding and lower rates of conspiracy endorsement. We present that evidence here. In Study 1, we measured survey attention as an additive index of two items. The first item was embedded in a larger grid of questions and instructed respondents to select a particular response option. The second was an instructional manipulation check (Berinsky et al., 2013; Oppenheimer et al., 2009). In Study 2, we measured attention with a single instructed response. All items were measured pre-treatment. The table below models the number of no-opinion responses as a function of experimental condition and survey condition. Higher levels of survey attention predict fewer no-opinion responses to conspiracy questions in both Study 1 and Study 2, but not in response to conventional (as opposed to conspiratorial) beliefs.

Study:	Study 1, Wave 2		Study 2	
Outcome:	Conspiracy	Conventional	Conspiracy	
True-False	0.67 **	0.79 ***	1.44 ***	
	0.22	0.21	0.20	
Agree-Disagree	0.93 ***	1.55 ***	1.18 ***	
	0.23	0.22	0.19	
Survey Attention	-0.38 *	-0.05	-0.73 *	
	0.17	0.18	0.37	
Constant	1.78 ***	1.22 **	2.44 **	
	0.33	0.35	0.37	
N	376	381	1214	
R ²	0.06	0.12	0.05	

Note: + $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Survey Attention Predicts Lower Levels of Conspiracy Belief

The table below shows a series of models predicting conspiracy belief endorsement as a function of experimental condition and survey attention in Study 1 and Study 2. Survey attention consistently predicts lower conspiracy endorsement rates, suggesting that satisficing inflates estimates of conspiracy belief among the public. Additionally, higher survey attention predicts higher endorsement of conventional beliefs.

Survey Attention Predicts Lower Levels of Conspiracy Belief

Study:	Study 1, Wave 1	Study 1, Wave 2	Study 1, Wave 2	Study 1, Wave 2	Study 1, Wave 2	Study 2	Study 2
Outcome:	Conspiracy	Conspiracy	Conspiracy	Conventional	Conventional	Conspiracy	Conspiracy
Coding of no-opinion:	NA	Midpoint	Rejection	Midpoint	Rejection	Midpoint	Rejection
True-False	0.69 ***	0.89 *	0.11	-1.01 ***	-0.61 ***	0.45 *	-0.27
	0.11	0.38	0.18	0.20	0.15	0.20	0.18
Agree-Disagree	0.53 ***	0.79 *	-0.07	-1.42 ***	-0.65 ***	0.02	-0.57 **
	0.11	0.39	0.19	0.21	0.15	0.19	0.18
Survey Attention	-0.42 ***	-1.37 ***	-0.50 ***	0.32 +	0.29 *	-1.04 **	-0.68 *
	0.08	0.29	0.14	0.17	0.13	0.36	0.33
Constant	2.56 ***	6.13 ***	2.18 ***	4.00 ***	4.61 ***	4.74 ***	3.51 ***
	0.13	0.57	0.28	0.33	0.24	0.37	0.34
N	885	376	376	381	381	1214	1214
R ²	0.08	0.07	0.03	0.12	0.07	0.01	0.01

Note: + p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001.

The Relationship Between Question Format, Trolling and Perceived Survey Quality

We also assessed data quality in two ways in Study 2 and Study 3. First, we measured respondents' perceptions of the quality of the survey (for a similar approach, see Clifford and Jerit 2016). We expected that respondents would perceive higher survey quality when provided with the greater context in the EC condition and when allowed a DK response. Second, we turn to recent research on survey "trolling" (Lopez and Hillygus, 2018). These researchers find that a sizeable proportion of respondents may not really believe the conspiracies they are endorsing. This trolling behavior may occur for a variety of reasons, but should be more common when respondents feel the study is not serious or has been poorly designed. Additionally, self-reported trolling behavior might be more strongly correlated with reported conspiracy beliefs.

We measured survey quality by asking respondents to rate the quality of the survey on a five-point scale ranging from "terrible" to "excellent." We measured trolling with the following question "We sometimes find people don't always take surveys seriously, instead providing humorous, or insincere responses to questions. How often do you do this? (Never, Rarely, Some of the time, Most of the time, Always)."

Starting with perceptions of survey quality, in Study 2 37% of respondents in the EC condition gave the survey the top rating of "excellent" ($M = 5.1$). Respondents in the AD condition gave it significantly lower ratings, with only 28% rating the survey as "excellent" ($M = 4.9$; $t(802) = 2.35$, $p < .009$). The TF condition fell in between, with 33% giving the top rating, which did not significantly differ from the EC condition ($M = 5.0$; $t(835) = 1.26$, $p = .210$). In Study 3, we found no significant differences between conditions in perceived survey quality after correcting for multiple comparisons ($ps > .05$). This may be, in part, because the experiment was embedded in a larger survey and thus survey quality perceptions may have been responding to many other features of the survey.

For our second test of survey quality, we turn to trolling behavior. Because trolling was measured after the conspiracy questions, we can examine whether experimental condition affected trolling rates. In Study 2, only 6.0% reported giving humorous answers to survey questions at least some of the time. In the EC condition, only 3% were flagged for trolling, but this figure jumped to 10% in the AD condition and 5% in the TF condition ($\chi^2(1) = 13.28$, $p < .001$). In Study 3, 15% reported giving humorous responses at least some of the time. However, we found no significant differences in trolling rates between conditions ($ps > .05$). Again, this could be due to the conspiracy content being embedded in a larger survey.

Additionally, we analyzed the correlation between self-reported trolling and conspiracy endorsement across conditions. Correlation coefficients are shown in the table below. Some respondents may report trolling in surveys without actually trolling in our survey. But if the experimental condition activates trolling behavior, then we should see stronger relationships between self-reported trolling and conspiracy endorsement rates. In the EC condition, trolling is only weakly related to conspiracy beliefs ($r = .08$, $p = .09$). However, trolling is significantly related to conspiracy endorsement in both the AD ($r = .16$, $p = .002$) and TF conditions ($r = .22$,

$p < .001$). However, these effects are not significantly different from each other ($ps > .10$). Study 2 yielded a similar pattern, but showed strong differences with the AD and TF conditions that did not allow a DK response. Results are shown in the table below. In the EC-DK condition, the correlation was 0.23 and did not significantly differ in the AD-DK, TF-DK or EC no DK conditions. However, the relationship was significantly stronger in the AD ($r = .43$) and TF ($r = .38$) conditions that did not offer a DK response, even after correcting for multiple comparisons.

Correlations between self-reported trolling and conspiracy endorsement

	EC DK	AD DK	TF DK	EC no DK	AD no DK	TF no DK
Study 2	0.08	0.16**	0.22***	-	-	-
Study 3	0.23***	0.31***	0.19***	0.27***	0.43***	0.38***

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