Appendix: Supplementary methods

Sample demographics and quotas

We used demographic quotas to ensure that the survey mirrored population characteristics, based on data from PNAD - the Continuous Household National Sample Survey (2022). Table 1 presents the distribution of our sample. The margin of error is 2% with a 95% confidence interval.

Table 1. *Sample characteristics and quotas.*

	Expected	Completed	Difference
Gender			
Male	774	769	-1%
Female	826	831	+1%
Region			
North	96	96	-
Northeast	286	286	-
Southeast	798	798	-
South	283	283	-
Midwest	137	137	-
Age			
18 - 24	287	280	-2%
25 - 34	392	396	+1%
35 - 44	381	382	-
45 - 59	415	417	-
60+	125	125	-
Income Band			
A	54	55	+2%
B	488	484	-1%
C	1058	1061	-

Regression models

Table 2 presents two OLS models. Model 1 includes a combined measure for Institutional Trust, scaling the five items used to measure it (Cronbach's Alpha = .79). Model 2 is the full model used in the analysis and presented as a plot in the paper.

Table 2. *Full models, OLS regressions. Numbers denote coefficients. Numbers in brackets denote standard error. DV: Misinformation score*.

	Model 1	Model 2
(Intercept)	0.96 **	0.80 *
	(0.37)	(0.36)
Age	-0.00	-0.00
	(0.00)	(0.00)
Female	-0.17	-0.10
	(0.09)	(0.09)
Education	-0.09 **	-0.08 **
	(0.03)	(0.03)
Ideology (Right wing)	0.12 ***	0.08 ***
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Satisfaction with Democracy	-0.05	-0.05
	(0.04)	(0.04)
Trust in Election Results	-0.27 ***	-0.14 *
	(0.05)	(0.05)
Frequency of traditional news use	-0.03 *	-0.02
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Frequency of social media news use	0.14 *	0.09
	(0.05)	(0.05)
Frequency of messaging app news use	0.03	0.00
	(0.05)	(0.05)
Membership in a WhatsApp political group	0.35 ***	0.37 ***
	(0.11)	(0.10)

Frequency of Alternative news use	0.18 **	0.18 **
	(0.06)	(0.05)
Belief in Placebo Misinformation	1.95 ***	1.89 ***
	(0.12)	(0.12)
Institutional Trust	0.10 *	
	(0.05)	
Trust in Government		0.25 ***
		(0.04)
Trust in Congress		-0.05
		(0.05)
Trust in Justice		-0.22 ***
		(0.05)
Trust in Army		0.11 *
		(0.04)
Trust in Political Parties		0.05
		(0.05)
N	1262	1262
R2	0.41	0.44

Note: *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

Full wording for survey items

Demographics

D1. How old are you? _____ [open ended]
D2. What is your gender?
1. *Female*
2. *Male*
3. *Other (specify) _____*
4. *Prefer not to say.*

D3. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?
1. *Completed pre-school*
2. *Incomplete primary education*
3. *Complete primary education*
4. *First year of high school*
5. *Second year of high school*
6. *High school degree or equivalent*
7. *Some college, no degree*
8. *Bachelor's degree*
9. *Postgraduate degree (Masters', MBA)*
10. *Doctorate (e.g., PhD, EdD)*

***

Q1. *In the past month, how often did you use messaging apps and social networking sites (Facebook, YouTube, etc.)?*
- Facebook
- Instagram
- WhatsApp
- Telegram
- YouTube
1. Several times a day
2. Every day or almost every day
3. Once or twice a week
4. At least once a month
5. I didn't use it last month

Q8. *In the past month, did you…?*
- Joined a group on WhatsApp or Telegram to discuss politics?
1. Yes
2. No

Q9. *How often do you get news using the following channels in the past week?*
- Printed newspapers, such as Folha de S. Paulo, O Globo, including on-line
- Local newspapers, including on-line
- TV, such as Globo, SBT, Record, Band, Rede TV etc.
- 24h-TV channels, such as Globo News, BandNews, CNN
- Online news websites, such as UOL, Terra, R7, G1 etc.
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)
- Messaging apps (Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, etc.)
- Search engines (e.g., Google)
- Blogs and alternative news websites (e.g., O Antagonista, Brasil de Fato, Brasil 247, Jornal da

Cidade Online)
1. Several times a day
2. Every day or almost every day
3. Once or twice a week
4. I didn't use it last week

Q14. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following:
- I trust the National Congress
- I trust political parties
- I trust the Justice Branch
- I trust the Army
- I trust the federal government
1. Completely agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Somewhat disagree
5. Completely disagree

Q15. How satisfied are you with the way democracy is working in Brazil?
1. Very satisfied
2. Somewhat satisfied
3. Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied
3. Not too satisfied
4. Not at all satisfied

Q21. In politics, people normally speak of "left," "right," and "center." On a scale where 1 is left and 10 is right, where would you place yourself?
[1 - 10 scale]

Q22. Thinking about the results of the 2022 presidential election, how trustworthy do you think the results are?
1. Very trustworthy
2. Likely trustworthy
3. Not very trustworthy
4. Not at all trustworthy
5. I don't know

Q35B) As far as you know, how accurate do you think the claims below are? (See claims under "Misinformation statements" in this Appendix.)
1. Definitely accurate
2. Probably accurate
3. I am not sure
4. Probably not accurate
5. Definitely not accurate

Misinformation statements

Table 3 presents the distribution of responses to the statements utilized to create our dependent variable of misinformed beliefs. These statements were compiled based on fact-checking websites, such as Aos Fatos, G1's Fato ou Fake, and Agência Lupa, as well as the website of the Electoral Justice. True statements were also based on materials posted on social media by the Superior Electoral Tribunal (TSE).

Our placebo item attributes to the Superior Electoral Tribunal the decision to withhold a report about the integrity of the elections elaborated by the army. This is false due to a misattribution of responsibility:

Bolsonaro's government requested that the report be withheld, and the document was only published several weeks after the second round of voting.

Table 3. *Response distribution for the electoral misinformation statements.*

	Definitely False	Probably False	Probably True	Definitely True	I am not sure
Votes are counted in a secret room in TSE (F)	20%	15%	13%	9%	44%
There is no way of auditing the voting machines in Brazil (F)	25%	17%	10%	10%	37%
A secret document has revealed flaws in the 2018 election vote count (F)	25%	21%	8%	7%	39%
There is a software capable of changing votes in the voting machines (F)	30%	16%	13%	11%	29%
A WhatsApp video proves fraud in the voting receipts in the first round of voting in MG (F)	30%	17%	10%	7%	37%
Some cities in the Northeast registered more votes in Lula than their total of citizens (F)	28%	14%	15%	13%	30%
The new Bolsonaro government will seize people's savings accounts (F)	36%	27%	3%	3%	30%
If elected, the Worker's Party will hold a constitutional assembly to decriminalize drugs (F)	25%	18%	14%	11%	32%
Anyone can check the voting receipts on the Electoral Justice website after the elections (T)	6%	8%	21%	29%	36%
No fraud was found in the test of electoral integrity in the 2022 elections (T)	10%	12%	16%	31%	31%
Voting machines are not connected to the internet (T)	8%	10%	15%	34%	33%
TSE forbade the disclosure of a report elaborated by the Army about the first round of the elections *(Placebo)*	21%	19%	10%	9%	40%

Note: False items are identified by (F), and true items are identified by (T).