

## Appendix K: Conspiracy theory ideology

The analyses in Table K1 show the results for conspiracy endorsement of left-right neutral and left-wing conspiracy theories. These are:

- “COVID-19 was manufactured in a lab and purposely created to control people.”
- “The World Economic Forum (WEF) works in secret against ordinary people.”
- “The true dangers of vaccines are being hidden by the medical establishment.”
- “There is a good chance microchips could be implanted through the COVID-19 vaccine.”
- “Extreme climate activists, such as those who vandalize famous paintings, are funded and encouraged by the fossil fuel industry in order to discredit the environmental movement.”

The resulting scale had a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.76, indicating good internal consistency. Note as well, the controls for both left-right ideology and party ID.

Describing conspiracy theories as “left-right neutral” is a theoretical argument rather than an empirical one. Indeed, the first four of these conspiracy theories are *still* more likely to be endorsed by people on the political right, and the last one which is explicitly targeted towards the political left has mixed results when examined on the left-right spectrum. This is in large part because right-leaning individuals are more likely to engage in conspiracy thinking in the first place (see Figure 2).

My argument here is that from a theoretical perspective, health care and the WEF should be equally tempting targets of conspiracy thinking for the political left as for the political right: indeed, the political left has been skeptical of the WEF for decades, and skepticism of COVID-19 and vaccines tie into a well-documented left-wing distrust of “Big Pharma” (Sorell & Butler, 2022). In other words, to the extent that right-leaning individuals are more likely to believe in conspiracy theories *of any sort* in the first place, it is very difficult to *empirically* validate which conspiracy theories are left-wing and right-wing without engaging in circular logic: “this conspiracy theory is right-wing because right-wing people are more likely to believe it, but being right-wing (which involves anti-statism and a distrust of big institutions) means you are more likely to believe in conspiracy theories.” As a result, we can look to theory to help guide our tests.

**Table K1.** Predictors of non-racial conspiracy endorsement for theoretically neutral and left-wing conspiracy theories.

|   | (1)<br>Conspiracy<br>endorsement |
|---|----------------------------------|
| White consciousness                       | 0.048<br>(0.026)                 |
| Conspiracy thinking                       | 0.362 <sup>***</sup><br>(0.023)  |
| White consciousness x Conspiracy thinking | 0.053 <sup>*</sup><br>(0.024)    |
| Age                                       | -0.008<br>(0.006)                |

|                             |                      |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Age (squared)               | 0.000<br>(0.000)     |
| Woman                       | 0.038<br>(0.032)     |
| University education        | -0.046<br>(0.034)    |
| Income                      | -0.013*<br>(0.006)   |
| Political interest          | 0.001<br>(0.007)     |
| Political knowledge         | -0.029<br>(0.018)    |
| Liberal Party               | 0.000<br>(.)         |
| Conservative Party          | 0.115**<br>(0.043)   |
| New Democratic Party (NDP)  | -0.099*<br>(0.046)   |
| Bloc Québécois              | -0.087<br>(0.070)    |
| Green Party                 | 0.052<br>(0.074)     |
| People's Party              | 0.497***<br>(0.101)  |
| Other:                      | -0.045<br>(0.130)    |
| Ideology (right)            | 0.041***<br>(0.008)  |
| Satisfaction with democracy | -0.093***<br>(0.022) |
| Quebec                      | -0.038<br>(0.040)    |
| Racial resentment           | -0.000<br>(0.027)    |
| Outgroup thermometer        | 0.013<br>(0.024)     |
| White privilege             | -0.036*<br>(0.015)   |
| Victimhood                  | 0.023<br>(0.024)     |
| White thermometer           | 0.001<br>(0.001)     |
| Constant                    | 0.484**<br>(0.184)   |
| Observations                | 1,309                |

*Note: Standard errors in parentheses; \* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001.*