

Conspiracy Theories, Social Media, and Trust in Institutions in Three Central European Countries¹

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Conspiracy Theories, Social Media, and Trust in Institutions in Three Central European Countries. Many see social media platforms as a hotbed of conspiracy theories whose algorithms allow them to spread rapidly. Others argue that the reasons for the spread of conspiracy theories are other underlying factors, such as a lack of trust in institutions. In this paper, we examine the relationship between belief in conspiracy theories, social media use, and institutional trust in three Central European countries: The Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia. In addition to the individual effect of independent variables, we also examine their interaction effect on belief in conspiracy theories. Using multilinear regression analysis, we show that both social media and the lack of trust in state institutions contribute to belief in conspiracy theories to some extent in every country we examined. However, we also find that in the case of political institutions, low trust (as in the Czech Republic) as well as high trust (as in Slovakia) can drive belief in conspiracy theories, depending on the local political context. The interactional effect of social media use and institutional trust did not prove to be significant. The paper allows us to gain a better understanding of the social factors that contribute to the spread of conspiracy theories and argues for recognizing the importance of the local sociopolitical context.

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Introduction

Attempts to explain dramatic events or phenomena using conspiracy theories, i.e., explanatory beliefs about a group of actors who collude in secret to reach malevolent goals (Bale 2007), have existed in society for a long time. As Stempel et al. (2007) explain, conspiracy theories offer clear answers to life's confusion, frustrations, and uncertainties in contemporary societies characterized by rapid social change. Similarly, Drazkiewicz and Rabo (2020) argue that in difficult times, such as pandemics, wars, ecological disasters, or other crises, when things do not go according to plan, conspiracy theories offer an opportunity to fill knowledge gaps and gain important information to cope with the emergency. There is also a considerable body of psychological research on conspiracy theories that link feelings of uncertainty and the fear of losing control to a broader tendency to explain global events through conspiracy

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theories (Newheiser et al. 2011; Van Prooijen – van Dijk 2014), even those unrelated to the source of uncertainty itself (Kossowska – Bukowski 2015). Several such crises and uncertainty-evoking events have occurred recently: the coronavirus pandemic, the invasion of Ukraine by Russian troops, high inflation, and the migration wave, to name the more significant ones.

Most social scientists agree that the spread of conspiratorial beliefs can negatively affect society: they can threaten the functioning of democratic institutions (Papaioannou et al. 2023), disrupt social cohesion (Bilewicz et al. 2019), or endanger public health (Havey 2020). Many empirical studies show that belief in conspiracy theories can lead to vaccine refusal (Klobucký 2020; Krekó 2022; van Mulukom et al. 2022) or reinforce social polarization (Cassam 2020).

Although there is no consensus among experts as to whether conspiracy theories are more prevalent now than they were in the past (Uscinski et al. 2022), many believe that social media plays a significant role in their spread and is (co-)responsible for their current prevalence (Allen et al. 2024; Dow et al. 2021; Enders et al. 2023; Walter – Drochon 2022). Arguments usually rely on the observation that on social media, false information spreads faster than true information (Dow et al. 2021; Vosoughi et al. 2018) or that social media algorithms create echo chambers that result in their users not being confronted with other opinions; instead, they encounter predominantly content that confirms their own beliefs (Cinelli et al. 2022; Juhász – Szicherle 2017).

Many studies have pointed out that institutional trust also plays an important role in the belief in conspiracy theories (Adamus et al. 2024; Douglas et al. 2019; Thielmann – Hilbig 2023). Explanations are usually based on the assumption that belief in conspiracy theories may be characterized by a general opposition to the mainstream, which manifests itself as distrust in society and its institutions (Mari et al. 2022). Beyond the factors mentioned above, numerous studies highlight the ways that demographic variables, such as gender, age, educational attainment, and the financial situation of the household, can also play a significant role in shaping belief in conspiracy theories (see e.g. van Prooijen – Douglas 2017; Enders – Smallpage 2019; Walter – Drochon 2022).

This study aims to engage in the scholarly debate on the relationship between using social media as an information source about political events and belief in conspiracy theories. We hypothesize that trust in institutions plays an important role in this relationship, and that belief in conspiracy theories is the strongest among respondents who have low trust in institutions and get their information primarily from social media.

Belief in conspiracy theories

Conspiracy theories are generally understood as alternative explanations of events that point to secret plots by powerful groups (Uscinski et al. 2016). They often start as a way of making sense of misfortune, whether it is a major national event, an environmental disaster, or a health crisis within a family. The underlying assumption is that certain individuals or groups have intentionally conspired to cause such harm for their own benefit (Drazkiewicz – Rabo 2020).

In the last few years, however, some have highlighted that, alongside the conspiracy theories that fit the classical definition mentioned above, conspiracism today introduces something new – conspiracy without the theory. Muirhead and Rosenblum (2019) argue that, unlike classical conspiracy theories, new conspiracism does not aim to provide elaborate alternative explanations for phenomena. It satisfies itself with a free-floating allegation disconnected from anything observable in the world, as its primary aim is to delegitimize and question (Muirhead – Rosenblum 2019: 17 - 50). However, whether we are describing classical conspiracy theories or new conspiracism without theories, both of them tend to thrive in divided societies, where the same events can be interpreted in completely opposite ways (Moore – Sanders 2002).

Media consumption and belief in conspiracy theories

American authors Stempel et al. (2007) were among the first to explore the relationship between media consumption and belief in conspiracy theories. Their study distinguished between less legitimate media, including internet blogs, tabloids, and radio talk shows, and more legitimate media, including newspapers and television news. According to their findings, there is a robust positive relationship between reading blogs and tabloids and belief in conspiracy theories about 9/11. Conversely, they identified a negative relationship between reading newspapers and watching television news and belief in conspiracy theories.

Currently, in addition to non-mainstream media and blogs, the greater prevalence of conspiracy content is attributed mainly to social media (Schemer et al. 2022; Slavtcheva-Petkova 2015). Walter and Drochon (2022), in their analysis of nine European countries, found that people who get their information mainly from social media and blogs are, on average, more prone to conspiratorial thinking. Jin et al. (2024) analyzed the prevalence of conspiracy theories related to the coronavirus pandemic in 17 European countries. Their findings also confirm that belief in conspiracy theories is related to the use of

social media for information gathering. Enders et al. (2023) reached similar conclusions in their research conducted on an American sample.

In contrast, Schemer et al. (2022) found a positive association between following alternative news sites (news websites operating outside of the legacy media outlets) and video-sharing platforms and belief in conspiracy theories, but no such association between other social media and belief in conspiracy theories. This research finding draws attention to the fact that not all social media platforms may be equal in terms of spreading conspiracy theories. Theocharis et al. (2023) also pointed out that, while the use of Twitter was negatively related to belief in conspiracy theories, the use of Facebook, YouTube, Messenger, and WhatsApp was positively related to them.

An analysis of misinformation content on social media platforms also indicates differences between platforms. This shows that fact-checking, flagging, or deleting misinformation content is implemented to different degrees on each platform (Brennen et al. 2020). Thus, research shows that media consumption, and especially information acquisition from social media, may be related to belief in conspiracy theories. However, there is disagreement among the authors as to whether the media is one of the situational factors related to these beliefs independently of other indicators, or whether it merely acts as a mediator between people's beliefs and predispositions and belief in conspiracy theories.

Institutional trust and belief in conspiracy theories

Trust in institutions refers to people's faith or support toward various institutions. If someone trusts an institution, it implies that they believe that this collective entity, on the whole, is competent, fulfills its obligations, and acts in responsible ways (Devos et al. 2003). Research has found that trust in institutions tends to form two overlapping clusters. Trust in the more neutral and impartial institutions of the state (the courts, police, and civil service) tends to form one cluster, while trust in the organizations associated with the government (parliaments, political parties) forms another one (see e.g., Zmerli – Newton 2017). Many authors refer to the degree of institutional trust as a factor naturally related to belief in conspiracy theories. For example, Miller et al. (2016), who in their study consider conspiracy theories in the context of political ideology and ideologically motivated reasoning, state that trust is generally negatively correlated with belief in conspiracy theories. They explain this using the example of the conspiracy theory that Barack Obama was not born in the United States (and thus could not become President of the United States). According to the authors, whoever believes in this conspiracy also assumes that many people are working to hide the truth. Thus, belief in conspiracy theories

is naturally associated with distrust. Conversely, the authors assume that if people trust institutions, their trust will signal to them that the evidence for a given conspiratorial claim is insufficient for them to believe it, even if it is consistent with their worldview and political orientation. The authors' research findings confirm these assumptions and, thus, the importance of trust for understanding belief in conspiracy theories.

Walter and Drochon (2022), in their integrated comparative study of conspiracy theories, also conclude that respondents who were more inclined to conspiracy thinking leaned right on the political spectrum, trusted public officials less, felt pessimistic about the financial situation of their household, and did not feel represented by parliament. On average, a stronger tendency towards conspiracy theories was also identified among people who drew information from non-mainstream sources such as social media. Research by Ferreira (2021) also highlights the importance of institutional trust. According to his research on a Portuguese sample, people with populist views and low trust prefer social media as a source of information and show a greater acceptance of conspiracy explanations. However, it should also be noted that some available studies have assumed an inverse relationship between trust and belief in conspiracy theories. For example, Mari et al. (2022) show that in high uncertainty-avoidance societies, where less well-known situations are perceived as uncomfortable or downright threatening, conspiracy beliefs proliferate and negatively impact institutional trust. Other studies also support the assumption that belief in conspiracy theories can reduce trust in institutions (Pummerer et al. 2021). On the other hand, not all studies confirm the relationship between belief in conspiracy theories and trust. Mancosu et al. (2017) found that conspiracy beliefs are negatively associated with education and positively associated with religiosity. However, the authors did not find a significant relationship between conspiracy beliefs and political trust.

As is evident from the literature review above, a significant body of research examines the relationship between social media use and belief in conspiracy theories, as well as the relationship between institutional trust and belief in conspiracy theories. However, apart from the research by Ferreira (2021), which was conducted on a relatively small sample of 242 respondents, the only research we identified that links these two perspectives was that of Mari et al. (2022). The authors of this research assumed that belief in conspiracy theories reduces institutional trust, but social media can mitigate this relationship.

Sociodemographic characteristics and belief in conspiracy theories

Apart from the factors mentioned above, a considerable body of research on conspiracy theories concentrates on the sociodemographic factors believed to enhance the likelihood of individuals endorsing conspiracy theories. Of these, gender, age, education, and the financial situation of the household can be considered the most important.

Some research suggests that men are more inclined to conspiracy theories (Walter – Drochon 2022; Freeman – Bentall 2017). Conversely, other studies have indicated that conspiratorial thinking is more prevalent among women (Mancosu et al. 2017; Stempel et al. 2007). Research by Tam and Lee (2023) argues that women show higher levels of conspiratorial orientation, whereas men are more dominant in conspiratorial attribution. Finally, some studies find that gender does not influence conspiratorial thinking (Enders – Smallpage 2019).

Regarding age, the results of the studies are inconclusive. According to Galliford and Furnham (2017), younger age groups are more prone to conspiratorial thinking (see also Goertzel 1994; Stempel et al. 2007). Bordeleau and Stockemer (2024) find that youth are more likely to believe in conspiracy theories, though not all types. Certain theories may be more prevalent among older individuals, while others may be more compelling to younger generations. Conversely, Walter and Drochon (2022) highlight older generations as dominant among conspiratorial-minded individuals in their study. Other studies have not confirmed a relationship between age and endorsement of conspiracy beliefs (Freeman – Bentall 2017; Enders – Smallpage 2019).

However, the majority of the findings suggest that higher levels of belief in conspiracy theories correlate with lower levels of education (Freeman – Bentall 2017; Mancosu et al. 2017). Van Prooijen (2017) argues that education affects key psychological factors influencing conspiracy beliefs, including a preference for simple solutions, feelings of powerlessness, and, to a lesser extent, subjective social standing. On the other hand, some studies have not confirmed a relationship between education and conspiratorial thinking (Enders – Smallpage 2019).

In the context of conspiracy theory research, the subjective assessment of economic uncertainty is increasingly coming to the fore and, as van Prooijen (2017) notes, may hold the key to understanding the current prevalence of conspiracy beliefs. The need to draw attention to the subjective assessment of economic insecurity is also highlighted by Adamus et al. (2024), who suggest that subjective appraisals of economic hardship are associated with lower trust in governments and institutions, which in turn is associated with stronger endorsement of subjective evaluations of conspiratorial beliefs. However,

Adamus et al. (2025) show that the relationship can also be reversed. They conclude that adherence to conspiratorial beliefs increases the sense of economic anxiety over time.

Overview of the current study

As mentioned earlier, our study aimed to analyze the relationship between using social media as an information source about political events, trust in institutions, and belief in conspiracy theories. Our hypothesis was that belief in conspiracy theories might stem from distrust in institutions, and the use of social media might intensify this relationship. We assumed that merely obtaining information from social media was insufficient for someone to believe in conspiracy theories. Research shows (see, e.g., Gerts et al. 2021) that only a small fraction of the information available on social media contains conspiratorial narratives. Our hypothesis was built on the assumption that conspiracy theories primarily attract the interest of individuals on social media who distrust authorities. Thus, when they encounter content that aligns with their pre-existing value system (such as conspiracy theories, which often challenge authority), they are more likely to integrate it into their worldview compared to those who, while also obtaining information from social media, fundamentally trust authorities.

Data and methods

To test our hypotheses, we relied on data from the conspiracy theories research conducted by the Institute for Sociology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia. The data were collected by an online questionnaire on a representative population sample. Respondents were selected by quota sampling (N = 6000, quota features: gender, age, education, place of residence). Data collection was provided by the MNForce survey agency between November 6 and December 5, 2023.

The dependent variable of our analysis was the index of belief in conspiracy theories. To measure our respondents' belief in conspiracy theories, we presented them with 22 conspiracy theories, including anti-science, anti-Western, and anti-Semitic conspiracy theories, as well as those related to the coronavirus pandemic (the full list of conspiracy theories presented to the respondents is provided in Annex 1).

In compiling the list of conspiracy theories, our aim was to closely align with the conspiracy theories currently prominent in public discourse, both in their subject matter and language. However, it should be noted that not all the statements fully satisfy the classical definition of conspiracy theories. For

instance, some do not explicitly indicate the involvement of malevolent forces or influential groups operating behind the scenes. Nevertheless, we argue that these statements can be included in the list of conspiracy theories. We agree with Muirhead and Rosenblum's (2019) claim that new conspiracism often revolves around questioning and delegitimizing official narratives or hinting at conspiratorial activity rather than explicitly presenting a fully formulated theory. In line with this perspective, we argue that the statements included in our research reflect key characteristics of conspiratorial theories, such as delegitimizing authorities, rejecting established methodologies, and fostering distrust.

In our survey, the respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the presented statements on a five-point scale (1 = definitely not true, 2 = probably not true, 3 = cannot decide, 4 = probably true, 5 = definitely true). For our analysis, the response options were recoded to a binary scale (1 = definitely or probably true; 0 = another answer). In the next step, in line with Enders et al. (2023), we constructed an index of belief in conspiracy theories that reflects how many conspiracy theories respondents agreed with – this was our dependent variable. The index could range from 0 to 22, with 0 indicating that the respondent does not believe in any of the conspiracy theories examined and 22 indicating that they believe in all of the conspiracy theories examined. Although in the literature it is a well-established approach to measure the average agreement on conspiracy theories, we choose to work with the average number of conspiracy theories, following Enders et al.'s much-cited study (2023). This approach provides a clear, easily interpretable metric for understanding the range of conspiracy beliefs in the examined societies.

In line with our hypotheses, we defined social media as the primary source of information about current political events and trust in institutions as independent variables. The primary source of information was identified by asking the respondents: Where do you most often get your information about current political events? Respondents could indicate one of the following options: print, TV news, media on the internet, content accessed via social media, radio, family and friends, or elsewhere⁴. Although the question explicitly referred to political events and not social events in general, we assume it can provide an idea of people's information sources.

In line with the research objectives, we recoded the answers into a dummy variable, where the value 1 represented respondents who use social media as their primary source of information, and the value 0 represented all other respondents.

⁴ For the descriptive statistics of the variables see Annex 2.

Institutional trust was measured in the questionnaire by the following question: Please look at this list and tell us about each institution and how much trust you have in it: do you trust it completely (4), trust it a little (3), trust it not very much (2), or do not trust it at all (1)? Respondents were given a list of fourteen institutions. Our analysis included political institutions (parliament, government, political parties) and state institutions (armed forces, education system, scientific institutions, police, public administration, health care system, justice system). From these institutions, we constructed an index expressing respondents' average trust in political and state institutions. The calculated index thus ranged from 1 to 4, with a higher index value reflecting a lower degree of trust.

Sociodemographic variables were measured in the questionnaire in the following way: gender was measured by offering the respondents the opportunity to choose between the categories of female and male; age by asking the respondents to indicate their age in numbers; the highest level of education by asking the respondents to indicate their highest education on a scale of primary education (1), secondary education without a school-leaving certificate (2), full secondary education with a school-leaving certificate (3), higher education (4). The subjective financial situation of the household was measured with the following question: Considering the total income of all contributing members of your household, how difficult or easy is it for your household to make ends meet? The respondents were offered five response options: very difficult (1), fairly difficult (2), neither difficult nor easy (3), fairly easy (4), and very easy (5).

To test our hypotheses, we used linear regression analysis, examining each country separately. The regression analysis was carried out in three steps: in the first step (Model 1), we tested whether there was a significant relationship between information acquisition from social media and the index of belief in conspiracy theories. In the next step (Model 2), we added the index of trust in political and state institutions to the model. Then, in the last step (Model 3), we added interactions between social media and the two trust indexes to examine whether the combination of information acquisition from social media and institutional trust contributes to explaining belief in conspiracy theories. Sociodemographic variables served as control variables in every regression model mentioned above.

Results

The prevalence of belief in conspiracy theories in the countries we examined was expressed by the average of the index of belief in conspiracy theories. The internal consistency of the index was high in all three countries: the value of Cronbach's alfa for the Czech Republic is 0,897, for Hungary 0,889, and for Slovakia 0,921.⁵ As Table 1 shows, respondents in Slovakia agreed on average with the largest number of conspiracy theories (6,5), followed by Hungary (6,0) and the Czech Republic (5,7).

Table 1: Average of the index of belief in conspiracy theories by country

Country	Average	Standard deviation	Min.	Max.	N
Czech Republic	5.73	5.28	0	22	2000
Hungary	6.01	5.18	0	22	2000
Slovakia	6.54	6.02	0	22	2000
Total	6.09	5.51	0	22	6000

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed a significant difference between the three countries ($F = 11.10$; $p < .005$). A more detailed analysis of the differences between means, which we conducted using the LSD post-hoc test, further shows that there is a significant ($p < .005$) difference between Slovakia and the Czech Republic as well as between Slovakia and Hungary, but there is no significant difference between the Czech Republic and Hungary ($p > .005$). The detailed analysis of variance with the post-hoc test is included in Annex 2.

Table 2 shows the value of the index of belief in conspiracy theories by the source of information on political events. The results indicated a difference in the index of belief in conspiracy theories depending on the source of information.

⁵ For detailed information about the internal consistency of the instrument, see Annex 2.

Table 2: The average of the index of belief in conspiracy theories by source of information, by country

	Czech Republic			Hungary			Slovakia		
	Mean	N	Std. dev.	Mean	N	Std. dev.	Mean	N	Std. dev.
Print	6.04	53	5.22	4.47	68	5.09	3.98	48	5.28
Television news	5.30	661	5.10	6.21	601	5.00	5.68	716	5.37
Media on the internet	5.62	819	5.15	6.06	715	5.10	6.60	619	6.25
Social media	6.39	195	5.46	6.68	309	5.51	8.19	263	6.58
Radio	5.36	69	5.15	5.15	112	4.82	5.73	133	5.57
Family and acquaintances	5.92	132	5.54	4.69	121	4.62	7.82	147	6.17
Elsewhere	8.09	71	6.28	6.01	74	6.82	8.97	74	6.53
Total	5.73	2000	5.27	6.01	2000	5.19	6.53	2000	6.02

This was confirmed by ANOVA,⁶ which showed a significant difference between the media sources in the Czech Republic ($F = 5.750$; $p < .005$), in Hungary ($F = 3.88$; $p < .005$), and in Slovakia ($F = 10.94$; $p < .005$). The LSD post-hoc test further showed that in the Czech Republic, respondents who get their information from social media show a significantly ($p < .005$) higher level of belief in conspiracy theories compared to respondents who get their information from television. In Hungary, respondents who use social media as their primary source of information also expressed a significantly ($p < .005$) higher belief in conspiracy theories than those who used radio or their family and acquaintances as the primary source of information about political events. In Slovakia, respondents who got their information from social media showed a significantly ($p < .005$) higher belief in conspiracy theories than respondents who got information from other media. These results suggest that social media may play an important role in shaping belief in conspiracy theories, particularly in Hungary and Slovakia.

In addition to the media, trust in institutions can also play a significant role. The use of the index of trust in state institutions and the index of trust in political institutions to assess the association between the index of belief in conspiracy theories and trust in institutions was supported by the high internal consistency of these measures. For the index of trust in state institutions, the

⁶ For detailed information, see Annex 2.

value of Cronbach's alpha was 0,862 for the Czech Republic, 0,891 for Hungary, and 0,870 for Slovakia. For the index of trust in political institutions, the value of the Cronbach's alpha was 0,875 for the Czech Republic, 0,878 for Hungary, and 0,874 for Slovakia.

As can be seen from the correlation analysis (Table 3), in the Czech Republic, significant associations were examined between the index of belief in conspiracy theories and both of the trust indexes. However, while higher trust in state institutions was associated with a lower index of belief in conspiracy theories, higher trust in political institutions was associated with higher belief in conspiracy theories. In Hungary, similarly to the Czech case, higher trust in state institutions was associated with lower values of the index of belief in conspiracy theories, while higher trust in political institutions was associated with higher belief in conspiracy theories. In Slovakia, a significant relationship was only found for trust in state institutions, which is significantly positively correlated with the index of belief in conspiracy theories, meaning that higher values of the index of belief in conspiracy theories are associated with lower trust in state institutions. The relationship between trust in political institutions and the index of belief in conspiracy theories was not significant in Slovakia.

Table 3: Correlation matrix of the index of belief in conspiracy theories and the index of trust in state and political institutions

			Index of belief in conspiracy theories	Index of trust in state institutions	Index of trust in political institutions
Czech Republic	Index of belief in conspir- acy theories	Spearman`s rho	1	-.371**	.452**
		Sig. (double-sided)		.000	.000
		N	2000	1747	1861
Hungary		Spearman`s rho	1	-.137**	.150**
		Sig. (double-sided)		.000	.000
		N	2000	1799	1831
Slovakia		Spearman`s rho	1	.307**	.013
		Sig. (double-sided)		.000	.586
		N	2000	1775	1858
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level					
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level					

The regression analysis (Tables 4–6) provided a more detailed picture of the associations between the dependent variable and the independent variables, including the sociodemographic variables.

Table 4: **Linear regression results for the conspiracy belief index, Czech Republic**

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	Standard. Beta	Sig.	Standard. Beta	Sig.	Standard. Beta	Sig.
Sex (ref. female)						
male	0.014	0.529	0.017	0.440	0.017	0.434
Age (ref. 18–29 years old)						
30–39	0.017	0.012	0.028	0.327	0.027	0.351
40–49	0.145	0.000	0.092	0.002	0.089	0.003
50–59	0.195	0.000	0.143	0.000	0.141	0.000
60 and over	0.340	0.000	0.208	0.000	0.206	0.000
Education						
(ref. secondary education without a school-leaving certificate)						
Secondary education with a school-leaving certificate	-0.057	0.015	-0.050	0.036	-0.049	0.040
University education	-0.111	0.000	-0.099	0.000	-0.098	0.000
Financial situation of the household (ref. easy + fairly easy)						
neither difficult nor easy	0.108	0.000	0.077	0.005	0.074	0.007
difficult + fairly difficult	0.218	0.000	0.147	0.000	0.145	0.000
Primary source of information (ref. sources other than social media)						
social media (0, 1)	0.054	0.012	0.048	0.025	-0.149	0.476
Index of trust in state institutions (1–4)			-0.195	0.000	-0.194	0.000
Index of trust in political institutions (1–4)			0.231	0.000	0.217	0.000
Social media X Index of trust in state institutions					-0.013	0.910
Social media X Index of trust in political institutions					0.214	0.087
R²	0.109		0.239		0.242	
Df Regression	10		12		14	
Df Residual	1989		1686		1684	
Df Total	1999		1698		1698	
F (sig.)	24.302 (0.000)		44.229 (0.000)		38.317 (0.000)	

Table 5: Linear regression results for the conspiracy belief index, Hungary

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	Standard. Beta	Sig.	Standard . Beta	Sig.	Standard. Beta	Sig.
Sex (ref. female)						
male	0.014	0.529	0.013	0.579	0.013	0.583
Age (ref. 18–29 years old)						
30–39	0.084	0.003	0.061	0.048	0.061	0.048
40–49	0.202	0.000	0.171	0.000	0.171	0.000
50–59	0.195	0.000	0.191	0.000	0.191	0.000
60 and over	0.223	0.000	0.201	0.000	0.200	0.000
Education						
(ref. secondary education without a school-leaving certificate)						
Secondary education with a school-leaving certificate	-0.033	0.174	-0.035	0.180	-0.036	0.173
University education	-0.108	0.000	-0.125	0.000	-0.125	0.000
Financial situation of the household (ref. easy + fairly easy)						
neither easy nor difficult	0.033	0.370	0.028	0.461	0.029	0.455
difficult	0.056	0.134	0.028	0.486	0.028	0.472
Primary source of information (ref. sources other than social media)						
social media (0, 1)	0.061	0.006	0.040	0.094	-0.117	0.626
Index of trust in state institutions (1–4)			-0.109	0.002	-0.111	0.004
Index of trust in political institutions (1–4)			0.025	0.481	0.013	0.738
Social media X Index of trust in state institutions					0.035	0.786
Social media X Index of trust in political institutions					0.129	0.354
R²	0.050		0.065		0.162	
Df Regression	10		12		14	
Df Residual	1989		1722		1720	
Df Total	1999		1734		1734	
F (sig.)	10.436 (0.000)		10.046 (0.000)		8.699 (0.000)	

Table 6: Linear regression results for the conspiracy belief index, Slovakia

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	Standard. Beta	Sig.	Standard. Beta	Sig.	Standard. Beta	Sig.
Sex (ref. female)						
male	0.028	0.212	0.033	0.150	0.031	0.176
Age (ref. 18–29 years old)						
30–39	0.084	0.005	0.063	0.041	0.061	0.046
40–49	0.118	0.000	0.082	0.008	0.079	0.011
50–59	0.120	0.000	0.091	0.002	0.088	0.003
60 and over	0.214	0.000	0.180	0.000	0.175	0.000
Education						
(ref. secondary education without a school-leaving certificate)						
Secondary education with a school-leaving certificate	-0.008	0.752	-0.002	0.929	-0.004	0.874
University education	-0.119	0.000	-0.107	0.000	-0.109	0.000
Financial situation of the household (ref. easy + fairly easy)						
neither easy nor difficult	0.014	0.697	-0.006	0.864	-0.006	0.858
difficult	0.118	0.001	0.068	0.067	0.068	0.066
Primary source of information						
(ref. sources other than social media)						
social media (0, 1)	0.119	0.000	0.079	0.000	0.390	0.021
Index of trust in state institutions (1–4)			-0.345	0.000	-0.332	0.000
Index of trust in political institutions (1–4)			-0.157	0.000	-0.136	0.000
Social media X Index of trust in state institutions					-0.124	0.218
Social media X Index of trust in political institutions					-0.198	0.053
R²	0.068		0.160		0.162	
Df Regression	10		12		14	
Df Residual	1989		1704		1702	
Df Total	1999		1716		1716	
F (sig.)	14.610 (0.000)		26.973 (0.000)		23.423 (0.000)	

All regression models for the Czech Republic (Table 4), Hungary (Table 5), and Slovakia (Table 6) were found to be significant ($p < 0.001$), explaining between 5% and 24% of the variance of the dependent variable. Analysis of the relationship between socio-demographic variables and belief in conspiracy theories showed that the relationship between gender and belief in conspiracy theories was not significant. On the contrary, age in each country showed a positive relationship with the dependent variable: higher age, especially over 60, predicted higher levels of belief in conspiracy theories. Higher education, especially university education, showed a significant negative relationship with belief in conspiracy theories in all examined countries. However, the financial situation of the household was the only significant socio-demographic predictor in the Czech Republic and in Slovakia in Model 1. In the Czech case, respondents who found the financial situation of their household neither easy nor difficult showed a higher belief in conspiracy theories. In Slovakia, in Model 1, this applied to those who described the financial situation of their household as difficult.

There was a significant relationship between social media use and belief in conspiracy theories in all three countries, but this relationship stayed significant through all models only in Slovakia, where we found that people who get information from social media believed more in conspiracy theories. In Hungary, we found such a relationship in Model 1 and in the Czech Republic in Models 1 and 2.

The index of trust in state institutions proved to be a significant negative predictor of belief in conspiracy theories in each country. This means that people who exhibited higher levels of trust in state institutions also exhibited lower belief in conspiracy theories. This relationship was the strongest in Slovakia. However, the relationship between trust in political institutions and belief in conspiracy theories varied from country to country. While in the Czech Republic, higher trust was associated with lower belief in conspiracy theories, in Slovakia, it was the opposite: higher trust in political institutions was associated with higher belief in conspiracy theories. In Hungary, relationship was not significant.

The significance of the interaction between using social media for information and indexes of institutional trust was not confirmed in any of the three countries.

Discussion

Our analysis showed that belief in conspiracy theories in the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia has several common features, but also differences. In all countries, trust in institutions played a vital role in explaining belief in con-

spiracy theories, especially when it came to trust in state institutions. Indeed, people who trust state institutions were found to believe in conspiracy theories at lower rates. To explain this association, we can draw on the definition of institutional trust, according to which trust in institutions generally entails the assumption that institutions are competent and serve the public interest (Wang 2014). Extending this definition, we can assume that trust in institutions also implies the assumption that institutions do not try to conceal or cover up the truth, as conspiracy theories suggest.

However, another finding of our research highlighted the need to distinguish between institutions, and what is implied for state institutions is not necessarily true for political institutions. Our data analysis showed that while in the Czech Republic, higher trust in political institutions was associated with lower belief in conspiracy theories, the opposite was true in Slovakia. In Hungary, neither a positive nor a negative correlation has been confirmed.

For Slovakia, it is also interesting to note that while the zero-order correlation analysis (Table 3) did not show a significant correlation between trust and belief in conspiracy theories, the regression analysis was significant. This suggests that belief in conspiracy theories and trust in political institutions were influenced by other variables, such as socio-demographic variables.

The different results regarding the association between the index of the belief in conspiracy theories and the index of trust in political institutions in each country may be related to the fact that trust in political institutions is largely conditioned by government support (Uslaner 2002). Individual governments and other political institutions may support or reject conspiracy theories to varying degrees. Thus, we hypothesize that if government officials and other political institutions themselves support conspiracy theories, their sympathizers may both trust political institutions and believe in conspiracy theories. For example, in Slovakia, several leading politicians of the current government, mainly from the SMER-Social Democracy Party and the Slovak National Party, are long-known faces of the conspiracy scene and regularly use conspiracy narratives in public to explain various events. Prime Minister Robert Fico has also repeatedly used conspiracy theories, among others about George Soros, to delegitimize the opposition or even those protesting against his government (see Plenta 2020; Zvada 2022; Izák 2023). Similarly to Slovakia, the communication of the Czech political elite is not free of conspiracy theories. Former prime minister Andrej Babiš and former president Miloš Zeman are also associated with the use of conspiracy theories, but unlike in Slovakia, these actors are currently more present in the political opposition (see e.g. Syrovátka 2021; Školka et al. 2022). This may be why trust in political insti-

tutions and belief in conspiracy theories show opposite patterns in the two countries.

The situation with Hungary is more nuanced. While the current Hungarian government is in many ways the leader of the conspiracy theory-embracing populist governance model in the region, not all conspiracy theories are equally supported by the government. For example, the classic conspiracy elements were not present in their narrative on COVID-19, as the government could have lost political capital if, for example, more people died from the virus as a result of conspiracy theories on vaccination (see e.g., Pirro – Taggart 2022; Batory 2022). We hypothesize that this may be why the relationship between trust in political institutions and belief in conspiracy theories was not significant in Hungary. In the future, it would be worthwhile to investigate the relationship between these variables according to the types of conspiracy theories (e.g., conspiracy theories regarding COVID-19, anti-Western conspiracy theories, and anti-scientific theories).

Our other research finding regarding the relationship between social media and belief in conspiracy theories also pointed to the importance of the country context. Our data showed that the positive association between belief in conspiracy theories and social media use is not equally confirmed throughout the regression models in the countries we examined. We can assume that the differences between the countries are not attributed to the varying use of social media platforms across countries, as research indicates that the popularity of each platform is similarly distributed across all three. For instance, Facebook is the most frequently visited platform in all three countries (Statista 2024). One explanation, supported by the data, is that belief in conspiracy theories is influenced more by the level of institutional trust than by the role of social media, and that the effect of (dis)trust can overpower the impact of social media. Also, it is important to note that if a government in power has consistently saturated the public space with conspiracy narratives, as we have seen in Hungary, people do not need social media to be exposed to conspiracy theories. They can frequently come across them in other public spaces (e.g., Krekó 2022). However, in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, the political public is more balanced, and the discourse is not dominated by one narrative. As a result, conspiracy narratives still proliferate more online than offline (e.g., Kluknavská et al. 2021). Another possible explanation is that people rarely rely on a single source of information, a factor that was not adequately addressed in the questionnaire.

The interaction effect of institutional trust and social media use has not been confirmed in any country. One of the possible explanations may be that people who distrust institutions (or, in the case of Slovakia, they trust political insti-

tutions) believe in conspiracy theories even without social media, or that social media reinforces them in their beliefs but does not actively increase their belief in conspiracy theories. Another possible explanation is that people using social media as their main source of information endorse conspiracy theories for different reasons than people with low (or high) trust in institutions. This reason can be, for example, that online conspiracy communities saturate their need for community (e.g., Schnell et al. 2024) or that they lack the ability and resources to confront information gained through social media with other sources (Khan – Idris 2019).

Regarding socio-demographics, a common feature of all three countries is that older people believe more in conspiracy theories than younger people. This finding corroborates the conclusions of many other studies (e.g., Enders – Smallpage 2019; Walter – Drochon 2022). The literature offers several possible explanations for why older people may be more likely to believe conspiracy theories. One possible explanation is their socialization in a totalitarian regime characterized by state propaganda and secrecy (which was true for older respondents in all three countries). This historical experience may lead to greater skepticism, distrust, and belief in alternative explanations of events (Mottiff 2016). Another possible explanation is offered by Grinberg et al. (2019), who argue that cognitive deterioration in older age may affect the ability to recognize misinformation, which may contribute to belief in conspiracy theories. Belief in conspiracy theories at an older age may also be related to higher rates of feeling a loss of control (Douglas et al. 2017).

Among demographic indicators, besides age, education has also been shown to be a significant predictor of belief in conspiracy theories, but only in Hungary and Slovakia. According to some authors, this may be related to analytical skills and critical thinking, which are crucial for evaluating the credibility of information (Swami et al. 2014); higher media literacy (Craft et al. 2017); or higher trust in scientific and state institutions (Freeman et al. 2022). However, as our analysis pointed out, the association between education and belief in conspiracy theories did not manifest with the same intensity in every sociocultural context.

We expected that individuals' tendency toward conspiracy thinking would be influenced by the financial situation of their household, with those experiencing difficulties to make ends meet being more prone to such thinking. However, the financial situation of the household showed a positive relationship with belief in conspiracy theories only in the Czech Republic and in Slovakia in Model 1. In the other regression models, no such relationship was observed. Nevertheless, further research is necessary to understand this phenomenon better, as our study assessed the financial situation of households

using a single question, which is insufficient for fully capturing the complexity of the issue. For example, broader economic insecurity or uncertainty might prove to be more relevant than the financial situation of the individual household, which was not covered by questions in our research.

In general, we can conclude that the countries studied are not the same when it comes to belief in conspiracy theories. Their common feature is that the respondent's age and trust in state institutions were significantly related to belief in conspiracy theories. However, what is true for state institutions may not be true for political institutions: the local context proved to be essential. Similarly, drawing information from social media cannot be unequivocally claimed to reinforce belief in conspiracy theories in every country.

Conclusion

Conspiracy theories are not a recent phenomenon, but it has become more apparent how widespread they are in the last few years. Therefore, our research set out to debate the underlying contexts of belief in conspiracy theories. In doing so, we focused on the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia.

The literature suggests that lack of trust in institutions along with social media use are possible sources of belief in conspiracy theories. Our research question was whether this is also true for the countries under study and, if so, whether (dis)trust and drawing information from social media reinforce each other and lead to a higher belief in conspiracy theories. In answering our research questions, we drew on data from a survey conducted by the Institute for Sociology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences based on an online representative sample.

The results of the analysis showed that trust in state institutions was significantly related to belief in conspiracy theories in each of the three countries: respondents who trusted state institutions were less likely to believe in conspiracy theories. In the case of political institutions, however, it turned out that, depending on the country, there can be a positive, negative, or no significant relationship between trust in political institutions and belief in conspiracy theories. This finding highlighted the importance of the local political or socio-cultural context in seeking explanations for belief in conspiracy theories. It was also not universally true that social media increases belief in conspiracy theories, as a significant association between these variables was only found in one of the three countries. The interaction effect of social media use and trust in institutions on belief in conspiracy theories was not confirmed.

However, our research also had several limitations that need to be considered. One is that the research was conducted on an online sample, meaning the results can only be generalized to a population with internet access. It is

also important to note that although we have tried to include in the index of belief in conspiracy theories those conspiracy theories that were current and well-known in a given sociocultural context, a different choice of indicators could affect the results. Similarly, our research design did not allow us to clearly identify the direction of the relationships studied, which means that it is not possible to rule out that the direction of the relationship between trust and source of information and belief in conspiracy theories is reversed.

Despite these limitations, we believe that our research has yielded significant findings that help us to understand the belief in conspiracy theories. We also consider the research to have made a particular contribution by examining Central European countries, which are less studied by researchers. We believe that our research has also succeeded in outlining further research directions, such as a deeper exploration of the local political context and its relation to institutional trust, the use of social media for information gathering, and belief in conspiracy theories.

Disclosure of interest

The authors report that there are no competing interests to declare.

Data availability statement

The data used in this study are available from the corresponding author upon request.

Adherence to ethical standards

This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards outlined in the Ethical Standards of the European Sociological Association.

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Annex 1

Percentage of respondents who thought each statement was true, by country (definitely true + probably true) in %

	CZ	HU	SK
The European Union is trying to push a radical agenda in our country, aiming to erase the natural rules of society.	36.3	22.8	31.6
The American moon landing in 1969 was a hoax.	15.6	13.4	18.3
There are groups of the wealthiest and most powerful citizens who are trying to create a new world order.	43.1	47.5	41.1
The Earth is not round but flat.	5.5	6.3	9.3
Humanity has long had contact with an alien civilization, but our governments are trying to keep it from us.	29.4	29.4	24.5
Most opinion polls concerning voting preferences or political issues are manipulated.	34.1	43.8	36.1
The Holocaust (the mass murder of Jews) never took place to the extent that the media and politicians try to tell us it did.	8.9	11.3	13.9
Some of the personalities in public life did not die of natural causes or by accident, but someone caused them to do so.	32.1	43.1	39.9
The trails left behind by aircraft (chemtrails) are actually harmful substances.	34.1	32.2	33.1
Global warming is a fabrication.	18.7	10.5	19.5
The world's elites kidnap and torture children to satisfy their perverted appetites.	17.4	15.9	22.3
Jews control important sectors of our societies in order to subjugate the rest of the population.	13.3	22.0	25.1
The COVID-19 pandemic was part of a larger plan to control society.	36.0	39.2	40.2
The white Christian population is being deliberately replaced by migrants from non-Christian countries.	29.9	28.1	27.0
NGOs are political agents of the West, trying to impose Western culture on us.	24.7	21.4	33.4
The United States of America, in cooperation with the Ukrainian government, operated laboratories on the territory of Ukraine for the production of banned biological weapons.	25.3	25.7	33.0
There is already a cure for cancer or other serious diseases, but the pharmaceutical companies are keeping it from us.	29.5	38.9	40.2
During the COVID-19 epidemic, reports of coronavirus deaths were artificially inflated.	34.3	37.5	38.2
Gender ideology aims to disintegrate the morality of our society, suppress Christianity, and bring about the disruption of the West.	28.4	27.7	35.6
Russia was pushed into the war in Ukraine because of the hostile behavior of NATO countries.	23.8	21.9	31.1
Information about the serious harmful consequences of COVID-19 vaccination is deliberately being withheld.	41.2	42.3	44.3
Russia pays the most radical political parties and personalities in Slovakia.	11.9	21.0	16.8

Annex 2

Descriptive statistics of the socio-demographic variables (in %)

		CZ	HU	SK
Gender	Male	49.0	47.2	48.3
	Female	51.1	52.8	51.7
Age	18-29 y.	15.4	16.1	15.6
	30-39 y.	16.0	15.6	19.7
	40-49 y.	19.6	19.7	20.1
	50-59 y.	17.2	16.5	16.0
	60 and more	32.0	32.2	28.7
Education	Basic	10.6	12.0	6.4
	Secondary education without school-leaving certificate	34.3	30.0	31.4
	Full secondary education with school-leaving certificate	35.8	34.2	38.4
	University	19.5	23.9	23.9
Financial situation of the household	Difficult	10.8	20.9	11.1
	Fairly difficult	26.6	35.4	30.3
	Neither difficult nor easy	39.6	33.3	46.5
	Fairly easy	20.0	8.9	9.6
	Easy	3.1	1.7	2.5

Primary source of information about political events (in %)

Primary source of information about political events (%)	CZ	HU	SK
Print	2.7	3.4	2.4
Television news	33.1	30.1	35.8
News on the internet	41.0	35.8	31.0
Social media	9.8	15.5	13.2
Radio	3.5	5.6	6.7
Family and acquaintances	6.6	6.1	7.4
Elsewhere	3.6	3.7	3.7

Descriptive statistics of the Index of trust in state institutions and the Index of trust in political institutions by country

Country		Index of trust in state institutions	Index of trust in political institutions
CZ	Mean	2.5933	3.3133
	N	1747	1861
	Std. Deviation	0.59767	0.69583
	Minimum	1.00	1.00
	Maximum	4.00	4.00
HU	Mean	2.5397	3.0251
	N	1799	1831
	Std. Deviation	0.69983	0.87409
	Minimum	1.00	1.00
	Maximum	4.00	4.00
SK	Mean	2.4695	3.1611
	N	1775	1858
	Std. Deviation	0.61075	0.73440
	Minimum	1.00	1.00
	Maximum	4.00	4.00

Differences in the index of belief in conspiracy theories between countries – ANOVA

Index of belief in conspiracy theories					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	673.762	2	336.881	11.101	.000
Within Groups	181988.409	5997	30.347		
Total	182662.172	5999			

**Differences in the index of belief in conspiracy theories between countries
– Multiple Comparisons**

Index of belief in conspiracy theories LSD								
(I) Country.	(J) Country.		Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval		
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
dimension2	CZ	dimension3	HU	-.28150	.17420	.106	-.6230	.0600
			SK	-.80850*	.17420	.000	1.1500	-.4670
	HU	dimension3	CZ	.28150	.17420	.106	-.0600	.6230
			SK	-.52700*	.17420	.002	-.8685	-.1855
	SK	dimension3	CZ	.80850*	.17420	.000	.4670	1.1500
			HU	.52700*	.17420	.002	.1855	.8685

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

**Differences in the index of belief in conspiracy theories by source of
information by country – ANOVA**

Index of belief in conspiracy theories					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2262.430	6	377.072	12.527	.000
Within Groups	180399.741	5993	30.102		
Total	182662.172	5999			

Differences in the index of belief in conspiracy theories between countries - Multiple Comparisons

Multiple Comparisons								
Index of belief in conspiracy theories								
LSD								
(I) Where do you most often get your information about current political events?		(J) Where do you most often get your information about current political events?	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval		
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
dimension2	Print	dimension3	Television news	-.89845*	.43970	.041	-1.7604	-.0365
			News on the internet	-1.22396*	.43829	.005	-2.0832	-.3648
			Social media	-2.30137*	.46622	.000	-3.2153	-1.3874
			Radio	-.62337	.52343	.234	-1.6495	.4027
			Family and acquaintances	-1.42501*	.50336	.005	-2.4118	-.4382
			Elsewhere	-3.12729*	.56175	.000	-4.2285	-2.0260
	Television news	dimension3	Print	.89845*	.43970	.041	.0365	1.7604
			News on the internet	-.32552	.17088	.057	-.6605	.0095
			Social media	-1.40293*	.23338	.000	-1.8604	-.9454
			Radio	.27507	.33329	.409	-.3783	.9284
			Family and acquaintances	-.52657	.30079	.080	-1.1162	.0631
			Elsewhere	-2.22884*	.39073	.000	-2.9948	-1.4629
	News on the internet	dimension3	Print	1.22396*	.43829	.005	.3648	2.0832
			Television news	.32552	.17088	.057	-.0095	.6605
			Social media	-1.07741*	.23071	.000	-1.5297	-.6251
			Radio	.60059	.33143	.070	-.0491	1.2503
			Family and acquaintances	-.20105	.29872	.501	-.7867	.3846
			Elsewhere	-1.90332*	.38914	.000	-2.6662	-1.1405
	Social media	dimension3	Print	2.30137*	.46622	.000	1.3874	3.2153
			Television news	1.40293*	.23338	.000	.9454	1.8604
			News on the internet	1.07741*	.23071	.000	.6251	1.5297
			Radio	1.67800*	.36758	.000	.9574	2.3986
			Family and acquaintances	.87636*	.33838	.010	.2130	1.5397
			Elsewhere	-.82591*	.42035	.049	-1.6500	-.0019
	Radio	dimension3	Print	.62337	.52343	.234	-.4027	1.6495
			Television news	-.27507	.33329	.409	-.9284	.3783
			News on the internet	-.60059	.33143	.070	-1.2503	.0491
			Social media	-1.67800*	.36758	.000	-2.3986	-.9574
			Family and acquaintances	-.80164	.41367	.053	-1.6126	.0093
			Elsewhere	-2.50391*	.48303	.000	-3.4508	-1.5570

Continued – Differences in the index of belief in conspiracy theories between countries - Multiple Comparisons

dimension2	Family and acquaintances	dimension3	Print	1.42501*	.50336	.005	.4382	2.4118
			Television news	.52657	.30079	.080	-.0631	1.1162
			News on the internet	.20105	.29872	.501	-.3846	.7867
			Social media	-.87636*	.33838	.010	-1.5397	-.2130
			Radio	.80164	.41367	.053	-.0093	1.6126
			Elsewhere	-1.70227*	.46120	.000	-2.6064	-.7982
	Elsewhere	dimension3	Print	3.12729*	.56175	.000	2.0260	4.2285
			Television news	2.22884*	.39073	.000	1.4629	2.9948
			News on the internet	1.90332*	.38914	.000	1.1405	2.6662
			Social media	.82591*	.42035	.049	.0019	1.6500
			Radio	2.50391*	.48303	.000	1.5570	3.4508
			Family and acquaintances	1.70227*	.46120	.000	.7982	2.6064

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Reliability statistics – index of belief in conspiracy theories

Country	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
CZ	0.897	22
HU	0.889	22
SK	0.921	22

Reliability statistics - index of belief in conspiracy theories
Item statistics by country

	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted		
	CZ	HU	SK
The European Union is trying to push a radical agenda in our country, aiming to erase the natural rules of society.	.890	.885	.916
The American moon landing in 1969 was a hoax.	.895	.888	.919
There are groups of the wealthiest and most powerful citizens who are trying to create a new world order.	.890	.882	.916
The Earth is not round but flat.	.898	.890	.922
Humanity has long had contact with an alien civilization, but our governments are trying to keep it from us.	.895	.885	.920
Most opinion polls concerning voting preferences or political issues are manipulated.	.891	.886	.916
The Holocaust (the mass murder of Jews) never took place to the extent that the media and politicians try to tell us it did.	.896	.887	.921
Some of the personalities in public life did not die of natural causes or by accident, but someone caused them to do so.	.892	.885	.917
The trails left behind by aircraft (chemtrails) are actually harmful substances.	.894	.884	.917
Global warming is a fabrication.	.895	.888	.919
The world's elites kidnap and torture children to satisfy their perverted appetites.	.894	.885	.918
Jews control important sectors of our societies in order to subjugate the rest of the population.	.894	.883	.916
The COVID-19 pandemic was part of a larger plan to control society.	.888	.880	.914
The white Christian population is being deliberately replaced by migrants from non-Christian countries.	.889	.882	.915
NGOs are political agents of the West, trying to impose Western culture on us.	.889	.884	.914
The United States of America, in cooperation with the Ukrainian government, operated laboratories on the territory of Ukraine for the production of banned biological weapons.	.889	.882	.914
There is already a cure for cancer or other serious diseases, but the pharmaceutical companies are keeping it from us.	.891	.882	.916
During the COVID-19 epidemic, reports of coronavirus deaths were artificially inflated.	.892	.882	.916
Gender ideology aims to disintegrate the morality of our society, suppress Christianity, and bring about the disruption of the West.	.890	.884	.917
Russia was pushed into the war in Ukraine because of the hostile behavior of NATO countries.	.891	.884	.916
Information about the serious harmful consequences of COVID-19 vaccination is deliberately withheld.	.890	.882	.915
Russia pays the most radical political parties and personalities in Slovakia.	.900	.889	.925