

# Rumors, Truths, and Reality: Political Misinformation in the Modern Day

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## Barack Obama citizenship conspiracy theories

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

**Conspiracy theories about the citizenship of Barack Obama** are ideas that reject the legitimacy of the United States citizenship of President Barack Obama and his eligibility to be President of the United States. Some of these conspiracy theories allege that Obama was born in Kenya, not Hawaii, and that his birth certificate is a forgery. Others allege that Obama is a citizen of Indonesia, or that because he had dual citizenship at birth (British and American), he is not a natural born citizen of the United States, which is a requirement to be President of the United States under Article Two of the United States Constitution. These conspiracy theories received attention in mid-2008 following Obama's victory in the Democratic primaries, in late 2008–early 2009 with regard to the Electoral College vote and Obama's inauguration, and again in mid-2009 following a lawsuit by Army reservist Stefan Cook.

These claims are promoted by a number of fringe theorists and political opponents who filed lawsuits that sought to disqualify Obama from standing or being confirmed as President, or to obtain additional proof that he is qualified. Three were filed with and dismissed by the Supreme Court of the United States.<sup>[1][2]</sup> None of the cases have prevailed in lower courts.<sup>[3]</sup> Although Obama was confirmed as president-elect by Congress on January 8, 2009,<sup>[4]</sup> and sworn in as President on January 20,<sup>[5]</sup> litigation continued into his presidency. Those promoting these conspiracy theories are frequently called "birthers", a moniker that parallels the nicknames "truthers"<sup>[6]</sup> for adherents of 9/11 conspiracy theories.<sup>[7]</sup>

The Obama campaign released a 2007 certified copy of his birth certificate (in this instance referred to as a "Certification of Live Birth") that states Obama was born in Honolulu, Hawaii, on August 4, 1961. Frequent arguments of those questioning Obama's eligibility are that he has not released a photocopy of his "original" birth certificate, and that the use of the term "certification of live birth" on the document means it is not equivalent to one's "birth certificate". These arguments have been debunked numerous times by media investigations, every judicial forum that has addressed the matter, and Hawaiian government officials, a consensus of whom have concluded that the certificate released by the Obama campaign is indeed his official birth certificate.<sup>[8]</sup> Asked about this, Hawaiian Department of Health spokeswoman Janice Okubo stated that Hawaii "does not have a short-form or long-form certificate."<sup>[9]</sup> Moreover, the director of her Department has confirmed that the state "has Sen. Obama's original birth certificate on record in accordance with state policies and procedures."<sup>[10][11]</sup>

Nevertheless, some Republican elected officials have expressed skepticism about Obama's citizenship or have displayed a lack of willingness to acknowledge it,<sup>[12]</sup> while Republican members of the U.S. Congress and state assemblies have proposed and voted for legislation that requires presidential candidates to provide documentation of their qualifications to be president, including natural-born citizenship.



Scanned image of Barack Obama's Birth Certificate released during the Obama presidential campaign.

STATE OF HAWAII		CERTIFICATE OF LIVE BIRTH		DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH	
		FILE NUMBER 151		61 10641	
1a. Child's First Name (Type as given)		1b. Middle Name		1c. Last Name	
BARACK		HUSSEIN		OBAMA, II	
2. Sex	3. This Child	4. If Twin or Triplet, Was Child Born	5. Birth Date	6. Month	7. Day
MALE	Single <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Twin <input type="checkbox"/> Triplet <input type="checkbox"/>	1st <input type="checkbox"/> 2nd <input type="checkbox"/> 3rd <input type="checkbox"/>	August	4	1961
8a. Place of Birth, City, Town or Rural Location			8b. Island		
Honolulu			Oahu		
9. Name of Hospital or Institution (If not in hospital or institution, give street address)				10. Is Place of Birth inside City or Town Limits?	
Kapiolani Maternity & Gynecological Hospital				Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
11. Usual Residence of Mother, City, Town or Rural Location			12. Island	13. County and State or Foreign Country	
Honolulu			Oahu	Honolulu, Hawaii	
14. Street Address				15. Is Residence inside City or Town Limits?	
6085 Kalaheo Highway				Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
16. Mother's Mailing Address				17. Is Residence on a Farm or Plantation?	
				Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
18. Full Name of Father		19. Race of Father		20. Kind of Business or Industry	
BARACK BOUSSEIN		AFRICAN		University	
21. Age of Father (21. Birthplace (State, Territory or Foreign Country))		22. Usual Occupation		23. Race of Mother	
25 Years, East Africa		Student		Caucasian	
24. Full Maiden Name of Mother		25. Type of Occupation Outside Home During Pregnancy		26. Date Last Worked	
STANLEY ANN		None			
27. Age of Mother		28. Birthplace (State, Territory or Foreign Country)		29. State of Residence	
18		Wichita, Kansas		Hawaii	
30. I certify that the above stated information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.		31. Signature of Parent or Other Informant		32. Date	
		<i>Barack Obama</i>		8-7-61	
33. I hereby certify that the child was born alive on the date and hour stated above.		34. Signature of Registrar		35. Date	
		<i>Alvin T. Obama</i>		8-8-61	
36. This Certificate is Correct Copy		37. Signature of Local Registrar		38. Date	
AUG - 8 1961		<i>W. H. Lee</i>		AUG - 8 1961	
39. Children for National Billing or Abortion					

APR 25 2011

I CERTIFY THIS IS A TRUE COPY OF THE  
ABSTRACT OF THE RECORD OR FILE IN  
THE HAWAII STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Alvin T. Obama, Ph.D.  
STATE REGISTRAR

# July 2010: Birthers

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- Do You Believe that Barack Obama was Born in the United States of America?
  - Yes: 55%
  - No: 27%
  - Not Sure: 19%

# July 2010: Truther

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- ◉ Do you think that people in the federal government either assisted in the 9/11 attacks or took no action to stop the attacks because they wanted to United States to go to war in the Middle East?
  - Yes: 18%
  - No: 64%
  - Not Sure: 18%

# December 2017

	Yes	No	Not Sure
<b>Do you believe that Barack Obama was born in the United States of America? [reversed item]</b>	61%	18%	20%
<b>Do you think Barack Obama is a Muslim or not?</b>	25%	49%	25%
<b>Do you think that people in the federal government, such as George Bush and Dick Cheney, either assisted in the 9/11 attacks or took no action to stop the attacks because they wanted the United States to go to war in the Middle East?</b>	21%	56%	23%
<b>Do you think that the United States government provides illegal immigrants with special benefits, such as houses, cars, or tax breaks?</b>	44%	39%	17%
<b>Do you think that Republicans stole the 2004 presidential election through voter fraud in Ohio?</b>	16%	39%	45%
<b>There's been talk of what some people call a "deep state," meaning military, intelligence and government officials who try to secretly manipulate government policy. Do you think there is such a thing as a deep state in this country, or is it just a conspiracy theory?</b>	41%	24%	35%
<b>Do you believe that 3-5 million non-citizens voted in the 2016 presidential election through widespread voter fraud, or not?</b>	27%	38%	35%
<b>Do you believe that Russia tampered with vote tallies to help Donald Trump?</b>	37%	38%	25%
<b>Do you believe that a spacecraft from another planet crashed in Roswell, New Mexico in 1947?</b>	21%	37%	42%

# My “Soon To Be Forthcoming” Book

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## ● Two central questions:

- How is it that reasonable people can come to believe bizarre stories about our political system and the politicians who run it?
- How can we correct false information?

# Do People Really Believe This Stuff?

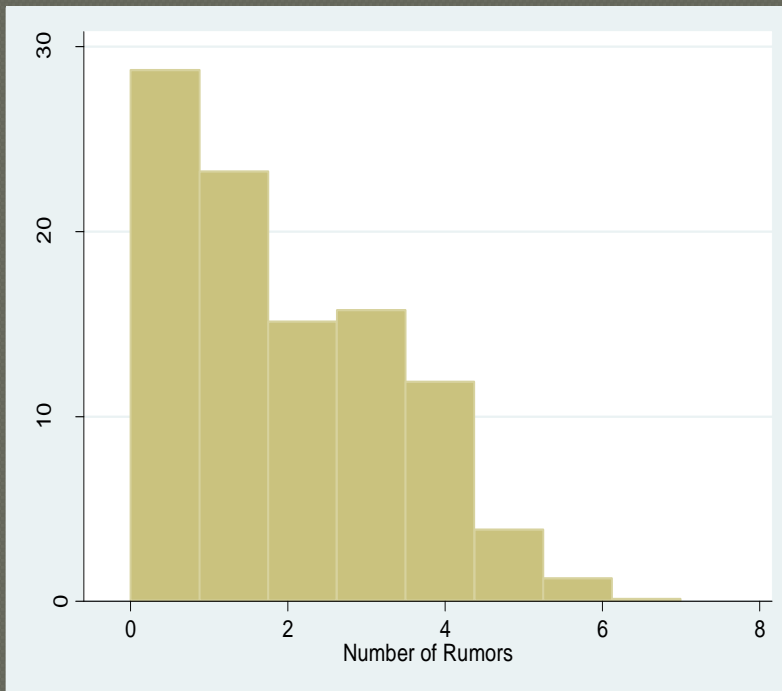
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- ◉ Short answer: Yes
- ◉ Not simply “cheap talk”
- ◉ A variety of experiments come to a common conclusion
  - The vast majority of people who endorse these rumors believe them



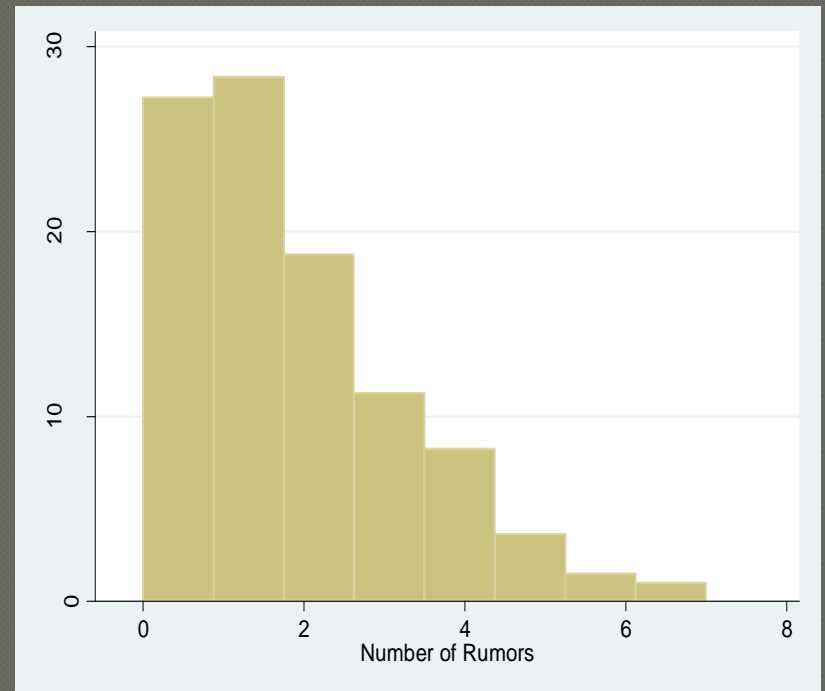
# Distribution of Beliefs

Acceptance



Mean=1.8

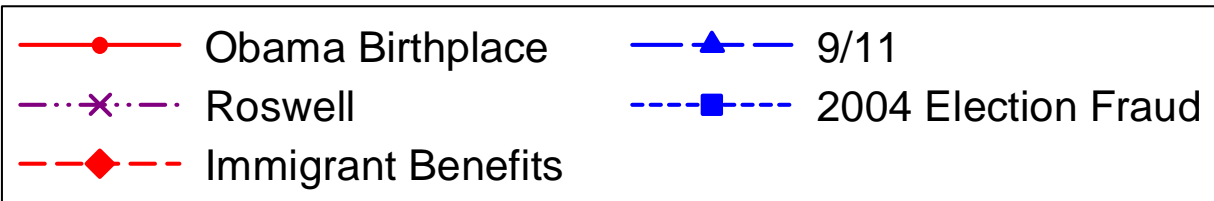
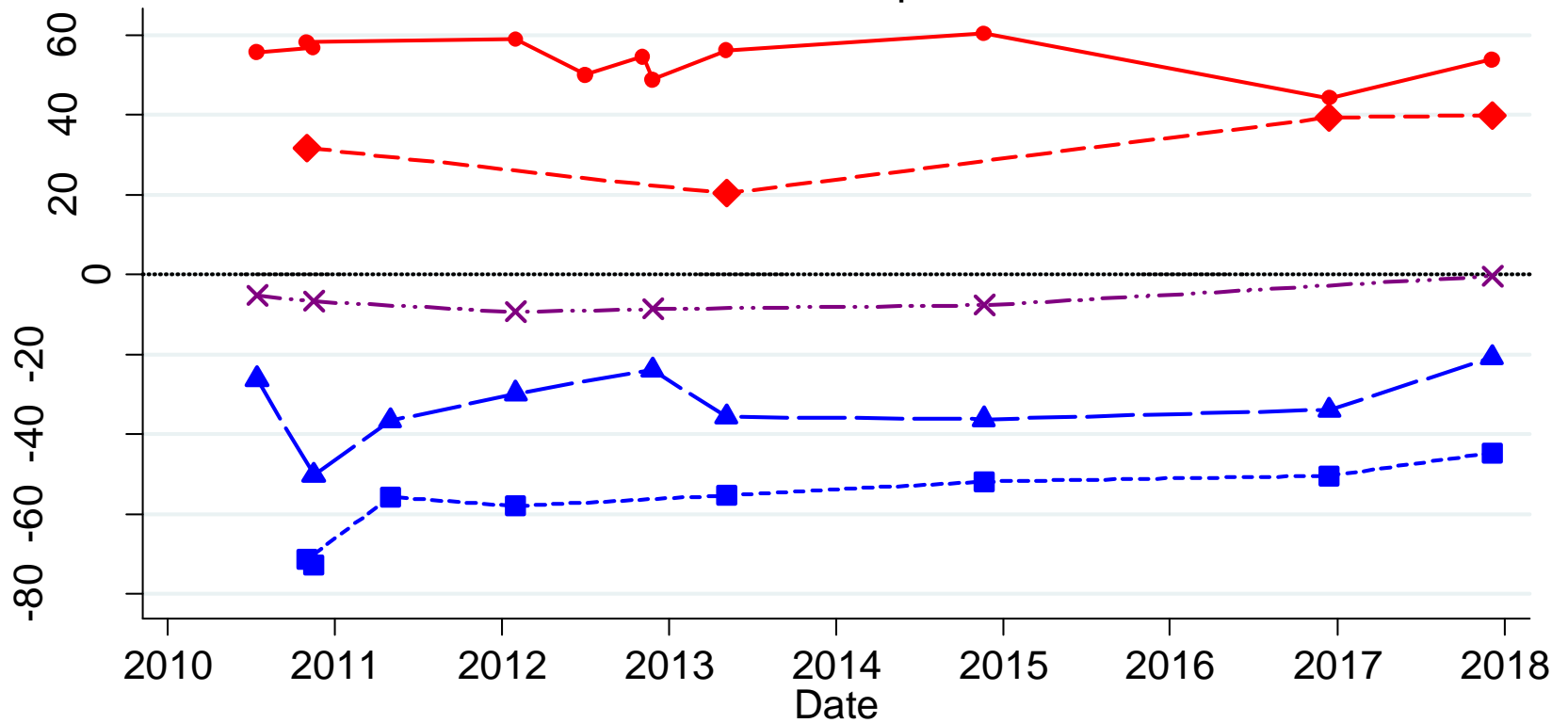
Not Sure



Mean=1.7

# Partisan Rumor Rejection

## Democrat - Republican

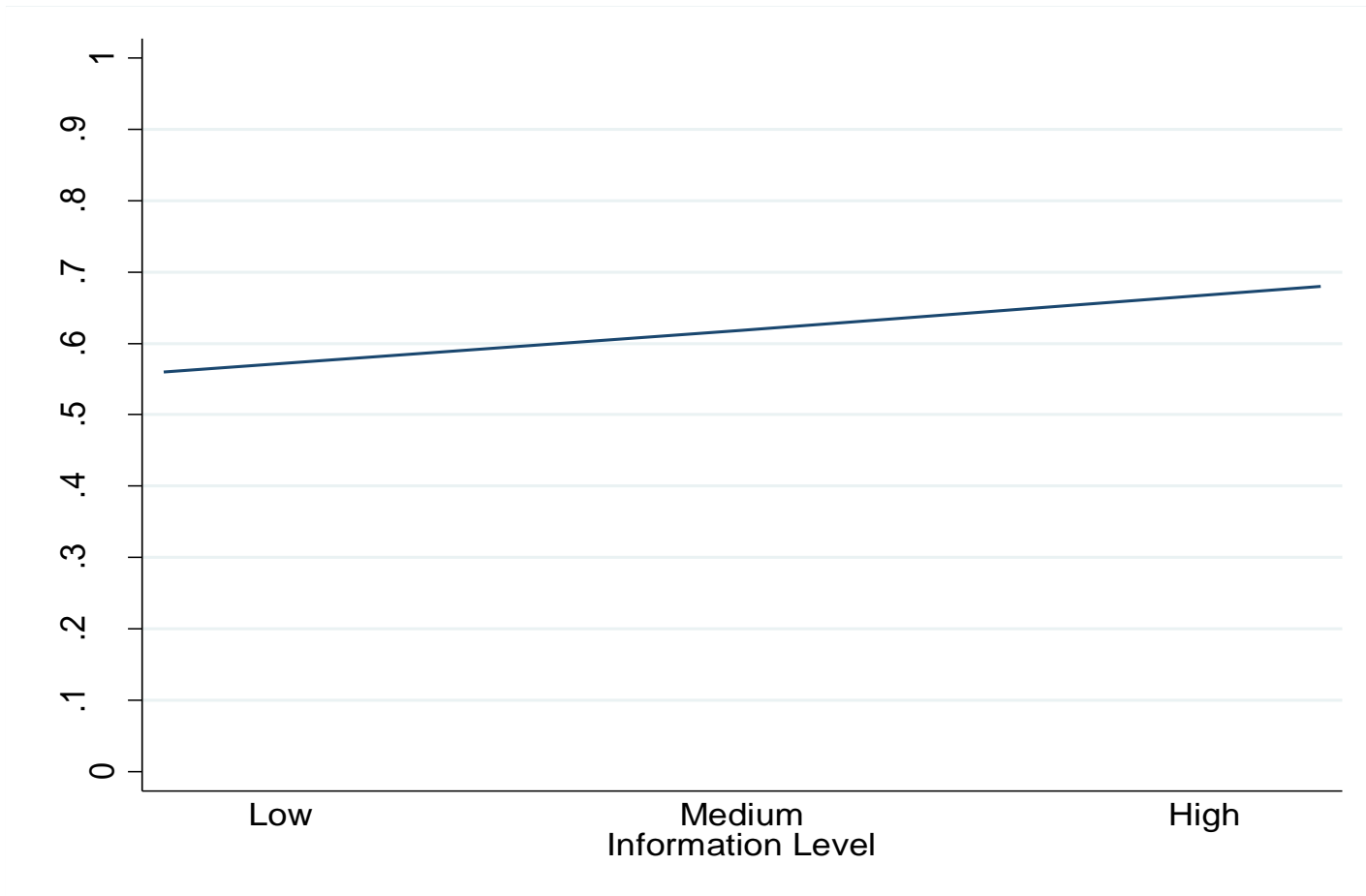


# Disposition and Partisan Attachment

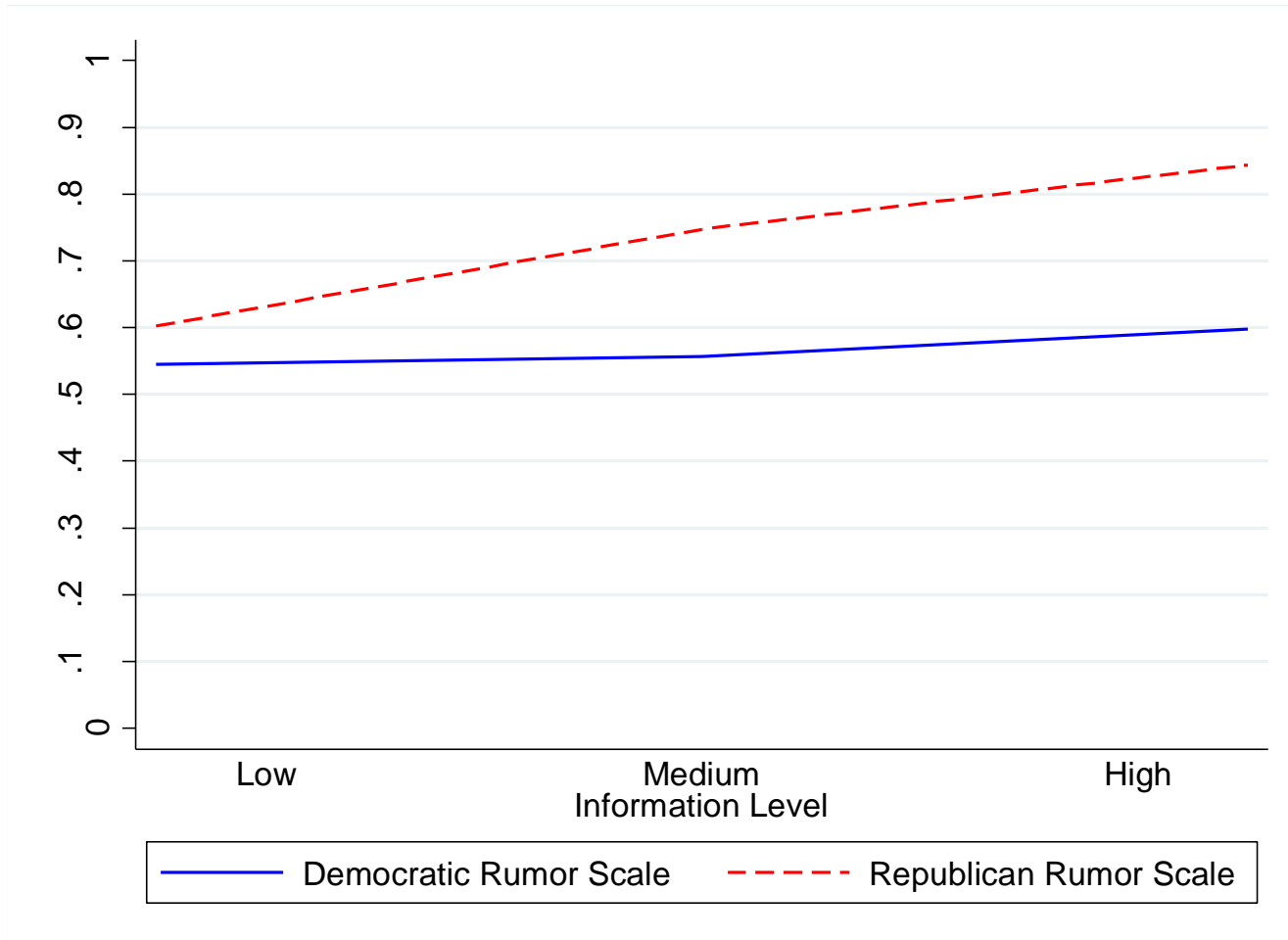
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- Rumors find their greatest support among those citizens who are both conspiratorially inclined *and* have strong partisan attachments.
- The marriage of these two factors – the disposition and the motivation – together should increase susceptibility to rumors.

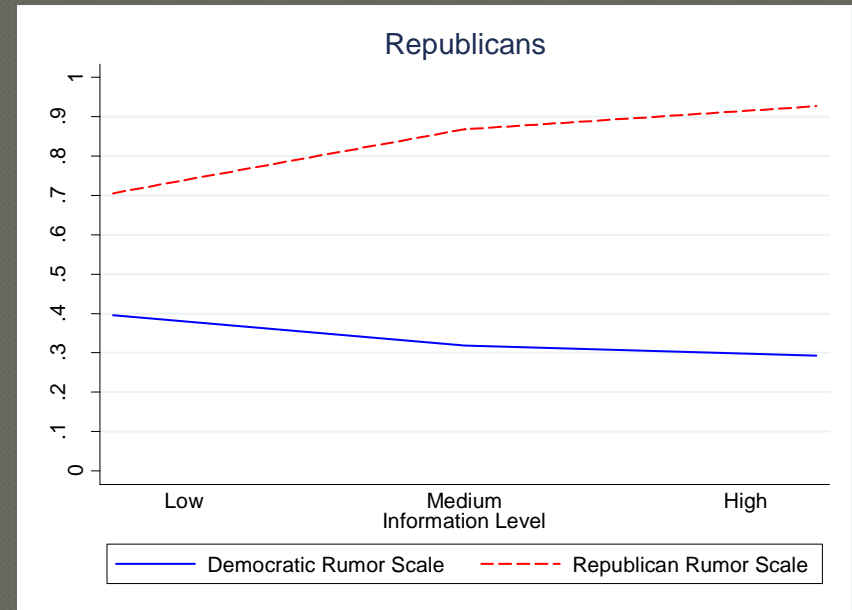
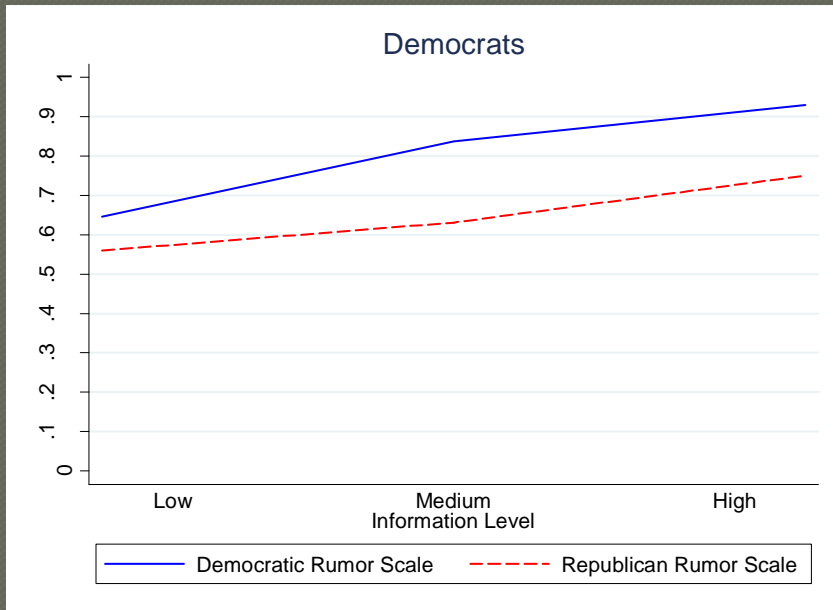
# RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLITICAL INFORMATION AND RUMOR REJECTION, JULY 2010 YOUgov STUDY



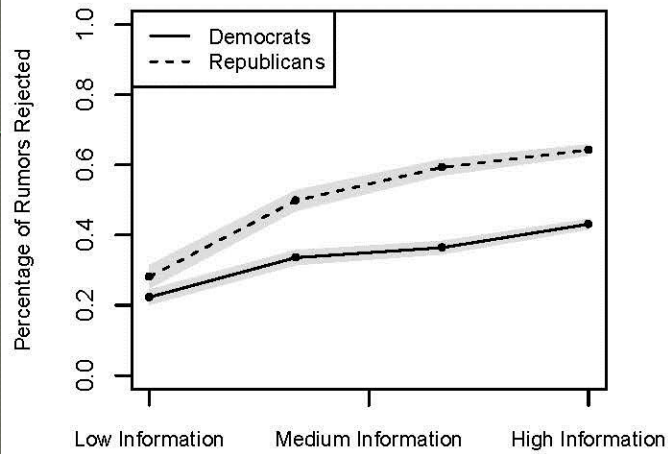
**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLITICAL INFORMATION AND RUMOR REJECTION BY RUMOR CONTENT,  
JULY 2010 YOUGov STUDY**



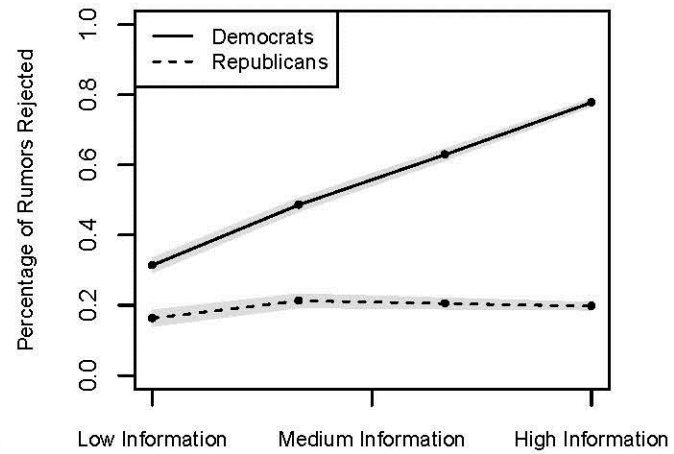
# Information and Rumor Rejection by Rumor Content



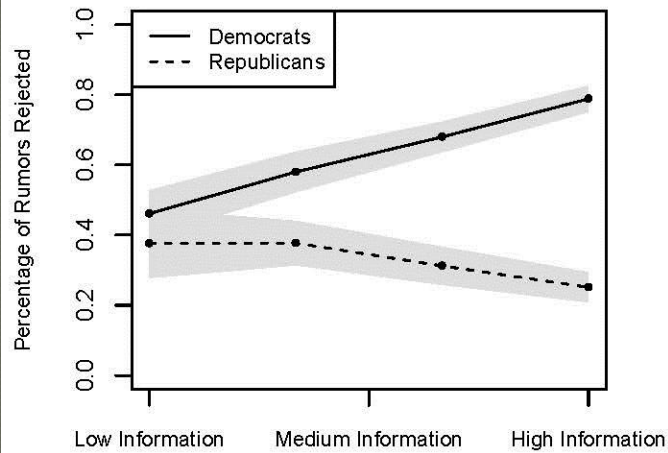
(a) Republican-Based Political Rumors



(b) Democratic-Based Political Rumors



(c) Moral and Religious Rumors



(d) Neutral Rumors

