

Supplemental Appendix:
**“Who *Are* Conspiracy Theorists? A
Comprehensive Approach to Explaining
Conspiracy Beliefs”**

Adam M. Enders
Assistant Professor
University of Louisville
Department of Political Science
Ford Hall, Rm. 205
Louisville, KY 40292
amende01@louisville.edu

Steven M. Smallpage
Assistant Professor
Stetson University
Department of Political Science
421 N. Woodland Blvd.
DeLand, FL 32723
ssmallpa@stetson.edu

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1 Variable coding/wording for variables

- Was Barack Obama definitely born in the United States, probably born in the United States, probably born in another country, or definitely born in another country?
 0. Definitely born in the U.S.
 1. Probably born in the U.S.
 2. Probably born in another country
 3. Definitely born in another country
- Did senior federal government officials definitely know about the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 before they happened, probably knew about the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 before they happened, probably did not know about the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 before they happened, or definitely did not know about the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 before they happened?
 0. Definitely did not know
 1. Probably did not know
 2. Probably knew
 3. Definitely knew
- On November 22, 1963, U.S. President John F. Kennedy was fatally shot by Lee Harvey Oswald as part of a presidential motorcade in Dallas, Texas. Which of the following best represents your opinion about this?
 0. Lee Harvey Oswald definitely acted alone in assassinating John F. Kennedy
 1. Lee Harvey Oswald probably acted alone in assassinating John F. Kennedy
 2. Lee Harvey Oswald probably did not act alone in assassinating John F. Kennedy
 3. Lee Harvey Oswald definitely did not act alone in assassinating John F. Kennedy
- Some claim that vaccines for illnesses such as measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) cause autism, while others argue that this is not true. Which of the following best represents your opinion about this?
 0. Vaccines definitely do not cause autism.
 1. Vaccines probably do not cause autism.
 2. Vaccines probably do cause autism.
 3. Vaccines definitely do cause autism.
- To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statement?: “Vapor trails left by aircraft are actually chemical agents deliberately sprayed in a secret program directed by government officials.”

0. Strongly disagree
1. Somewhat disagree
2. Neither agree, nor disagree
3. Somewhat agree
4. Strongly agree

- To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statement?: “The U.S. moon landing was staged.”

0. Strongly disagree
1. Somewhat disagree
2. Neither agree, nor disagree
3. Somewhat agree
4. Strongly agree

- To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statement?: “Global warming is a hoax.”

0. Strongly disagree
1. Somewhat disagree
2. Neither agree, nor disagree
3. Somewhat agree
4. Strongly agree

- To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statement?: “There was an official campaign by the British Secret Service to assassinate Princess Diana, sanctioned by elements of the establishment.”

0. Strongly disagree
1. Somewhat disagree
2. Neither agree, nor disagree
3. Somewhat agree
4. Strongly agree

- To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statement?: “Donald Trump and his campaign colluded with the Russian government to win the 2016 U.S. presidential election.”

0. Strongly disagree
1. Somewhat disagree

- 2. Neither agree, nor disagree
 - 3. Somewhat agree
 - 4. Strongly agree
- To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statement?: “Some individuals are able to levitate (lift) objects through mental forces.”
 - 0. Strongly disagree
 - 1. Somewhat disagree
 - 2. Neither agree, nor disagree
 - 3. Somewhat agree
 - 4. Strongly agree
 - To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statement?: “Psychokinesis, the movement of objects through psychic powers, does occur.”
 - 0. Strongly disagree
 - 1. Somewhat disagree
 - 2. Neither agree, nor disagree
 - 3. Somewhat agree
 - 4. Strongly agree
 - To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statement?: “Mind reading is not possible.” (reverse coded)
 - 0. Strongly disagree
 - 1. Somewhat disagree
 - 2. Neither agree, nor disagree
 - 3. Somewhat agree
 - 4. Strongly agree
 - To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statement?: “Reincarnation does occur.”
 - 0. Strongly disagree
 - 1. Somewhat disagree
 - 2. Neither agree, nor disagree
 - 3. Somewhat agree
 - 4. Strongly agree

- There is often debate about whether or not the public is told the whole truth about various important issues. This brief survey is designed to assess your beliefs about some of these subjects. Please indicate the degree to which you believe each statement is likely to be true on the following scale: Definitely not true (0); Probably not true (1); Not sure/cannot decide (2); Probably true (3); Definitely true (4).
 1. The government is involved in the murder of innocent citizens and/or well-known public figures, and keeps this a secret
 2. The power held by heads of state is second to that of small unknown groups who really control world politics
 3. Secret organizations communicate with extraterrestrials, but keep this fact from the public
 4. The spread of certain viruses and/or diseases is the result of the deliberate, concealed efforts of some organization
 5. Groups of scientists manipulate, fabricate, or suppress evidence in order to deceive the public
 6. The government permits or perpetrates acts of terrorism on its own soil, disguising its involvement
 7. A small, secret group of people is responsible for making all major world decisions, such as going to war
 8. Evidence of alien contact is being concealed from the public
 9. Technology with mind-control capacities is used on people without their knowledge
 10. New and advanced technology which would harm current industry is being suppressed
 11. The government uses people as patsies to hide its involvement in criminal activity
 12. Certain significant events have been the result of the activity of a small group who secretly manipulate world events
 13. Some UFO sightings and rumors are planned or staged in order to distract the public from real alien contact
 14. Experiments involving new drugs or technologies are routinely carried out on the public without their knowledge or consent
 15. A lot of important information is deliberately concealed from the public out of self-interest
- Linda is 31 years old, single, outspoken and very bright. She majored in philosophy. As a student, she was deeply concerned with issues of discrimination and social justice, and also participated in anti-nuclear demonstrations.

Linda is an active feminist.

0. Very likely

1. Likely
2. Neither likely, nor unlikely
3. Unlikely
4. Very unlikely

Linda is a bank teller.

0. Very likely
1. Likely
2. Neither likely, nor unlikely
3. Unlikely
4. Very unlikely

Linda is a bank teller and an active feminist.

0. Very likely
1. Likely
2. Neither likely, nor unlikely
3. Unlikely
4. Very unlikely

- Billy has a long lost friend who he has not seen in years. They were good friends in school but drifted apart when they went away to different colleges. Billy comes home from work one evening and sits down to eat his dinner.

Billy thinks about his long lost friend.

0. Very likely
1. Likely
2. Neither likely, nor unlikely
3. Unlikely
4. Very unlikely

Billy's long lost friend unexpectedly phones him.

0. Very likely
1. Likely
2. Neither likely, nor unlikely
3. Unlikely
4. Very unlikely

Billy thinks about his long lost friend and suddenly his long lost friend unexpectedly phones him.

0. Very likely
1. Likely
2. Neither likely, nor unlikely
3. Unlikely
4. Very unlikely

- Patrick works for a pharmaceutical company testing the efficacy and side-effects of some of the drugs they manufacture. He discovers that one of their widely available over-the-counter drugs is associated with an increased risk of heart disease.

Patrick's data were lost after an IT failure affecting his computer.

0. Very likely
1. Likely
2. Neither likely, nor unlikely
3. Unlikely
4. Very unlikely

Patrick is taken off the project.

0. Very likely
1. Likely
2. Neither likely, nor unlikely
3. Unlikely
4. Very unlikely

Patrick's data were lost after an IT failure affecting his computer, and Patrick is taken off the project.

0. Very likely
1. Likely
2. Neither likely, nor unlikely
3. Unlikely
4. Very unlikely

- Josh has a doctorate in engineering and has been inventing products and gadgets in his spare time for several years. After patenting a few unsuccessful products, Josh is now on the verge of perfecting a device which will increase the fuel efficiency of any car by 500%.

The CEOs of several major petrol companies hold a meeting in which they discuss the implications of Josh's invention.

0. Very likely
1. Likely
2. Neither likely, nor unlikely
3. Unlikely
4. Very unlikely

Josh is found dead in his home before patenting the invention.

0. Very likely
1. Likely
2. Neither likely, nor unlikely
3. Unlikely
4. Very unlikely

The CEOs of several major petrol companies hold a meeting in which they discuss the implications of Josh's invention, and Josh is found dead in his home before patenting the invention.

0. Very likely
1. Likely
2. Neither likely, nor unlikely
3. Unlikely
4. Very unlikely

- Leanne arrives home late one evening after visiting her sister, who lives six miles away, and goes to bed. Leanne rarely has nightmares, but this night she is awakened by a particularly frightening dream.

Leanne dreams that a house is on fire.

0. Very likely
1. Likely
2. Neither likely, nor unlikely
3. Unlikely

4. Very unlikely

A fire breaks out in Leanne's sister's house.

0. Very likely

1. Likely

2. Neither likely, nor unlikely

3. Unlikely

4. Very unlikely

Leanne dreams that a house is on fire, and a fire breaks out in Leanne's sister's house.

0. Very likely

1. Likely

2. Neither likely, nor unlikely

3. Unlikely

4. Very unlikely

- A group of students go to a popular pub after a lecture. The pub is only a five minute walk from the university and it is also close to town. There is a beer garden outside the pub.

It is a warm summer's day.

0. Very likely

1. Likely

2. Neither likely, nor unlikely

3. Unlikely

4. Very unlikely

There are people sitting in the beer garden.

0. Very likely

1. Likely

2. Neither likely, nor unlikely

3. Unlikely

4. Very unlikely

It is a warm summer's day, and there are people sitting in the beer garden.

0. Very likely

1. Likely
 2. Neither likely, nor unlikely
 3. Unlikely
 4. Very unlikely
- To what extent does... (0–not at all, 11–Very much)
 1. The average fish have free will?
 2. Technology – devices and machines for manufacturing, entertainment, and productive processes (e.g., cars, TVs) – have intentions?
 3. The average mountain have free will?
 4. A television set experience emotions?
 5. The average robot have consciousness?
 6. A cow have intentions?
 7. A car have free will?
 8. The ocean have consciousness?
 9. The average computer have a mind of its own?
 10. A cheetah experience emotions?
 11. The average insect have a mind of its own?
 12. A tree have a mind of its own?
 13. The wind have intentions?
 14. The average reptile have consciousness?
 - Please tell us whether you believe the following incidents are most likely to occur accidentally (0) or on purpose (1).
 1. She kicked her dog
 2. He gave her the wrong change
 3. She left the water running
 4. He set the house on fire
 5. He ate the bruised part of the apple
 6. She told him the same joke twice
 7. The girl popped the balloon
 8. She cut him off driving
 9. The boy knocked over the sand castle
 10. She walked by without saying hello
 11. He took an illegal left turn

- 12. He ripped the piece of paper
- 13. She sprayed him with water
- 7-point Party ID
 - 3-3, where -3 strong Democrat, 3 strong Republican
- 7-point Ideology
 - 3-3, where -3 extremely liberal, 3 extremely conservative
- Please tell me which one you think is more important for a child to have: INDEPENDENCE or RESPECT FOR ELDERS
 - 0. Independence
 - 1. Respect for elders
- Please tell me which one you think is more important for a child to have: CURIOSITY or GOOD MANNERS
 - 0. Curiosity
 - 1. Good manners
- Please tell me which one you think is more important for a child to have: OBEDIENCE or SELF-RELIANCE
 - 0. Self-reliance
 - 1. Obedience
- Please tell me which one you think is more important for a child to have: BEING CONSIDERATE or WELL BEHAVED
 - 0. Considerate
 - 1. Well-behaved
- Education
 - 0-4, where 0 no high school, 4 postgrad
- Black
 - 0. Non-black/African American
 - 1. Black/African American
- Hispanic
 - 0. Non-Hispanic
 - 1. Hispanic

- Age
Age in years
- Female
 - 0. Male
 - 1. Female

2 Conspiracy Beliefs by Partisanship

Table A1: Percentage of respondents who believe each conspiracy theory, by partisanship.

Conspiracy Theory	All	Percentage Believe	
		Democrats	Republicans
1) Birther	15%	6%	32%
2) Truther	38%	37%	33%
3) JFK	55%	49%	56%
4) Anti-Vaxx	16%	10%	20%
5) Chem Trails	13%	11%	15%
6) Moon Landing	9%	7%	10%
7) Climate Change	12%	5%	32%
8) Russiagate	49%	71%	14%

Note: For conspiracy belief questions with probabilistic response options, “probably true” and “definitely true” responses were considered conspiracy beliefs. For conspiracy belief questions employing a Likert scale, “somewhat” and “strongly” agree responses were recorded as conspiracy beliefs.

3 Additional Decision Tree Analyses

Figure A1: Decision tree for “birther” conspiracy beliefs.

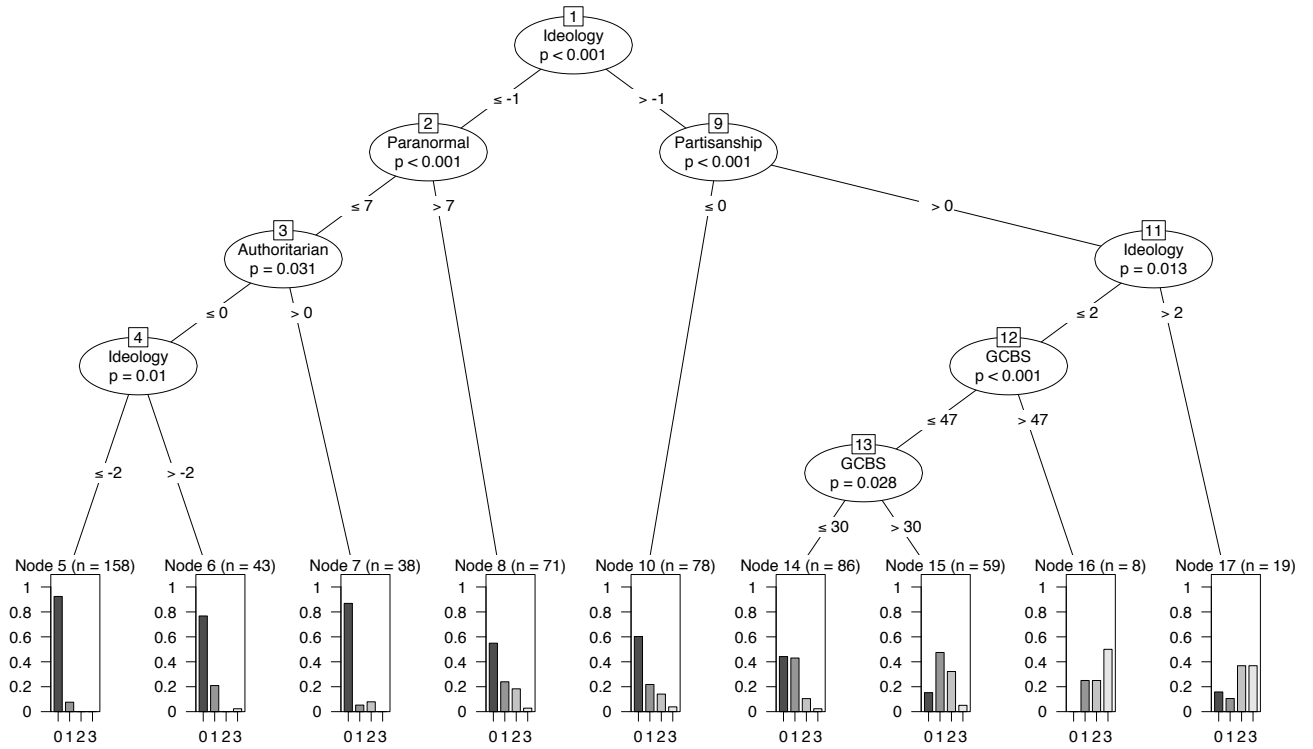


Figure A2: Decision tree for JFK conspiracy beliefs.

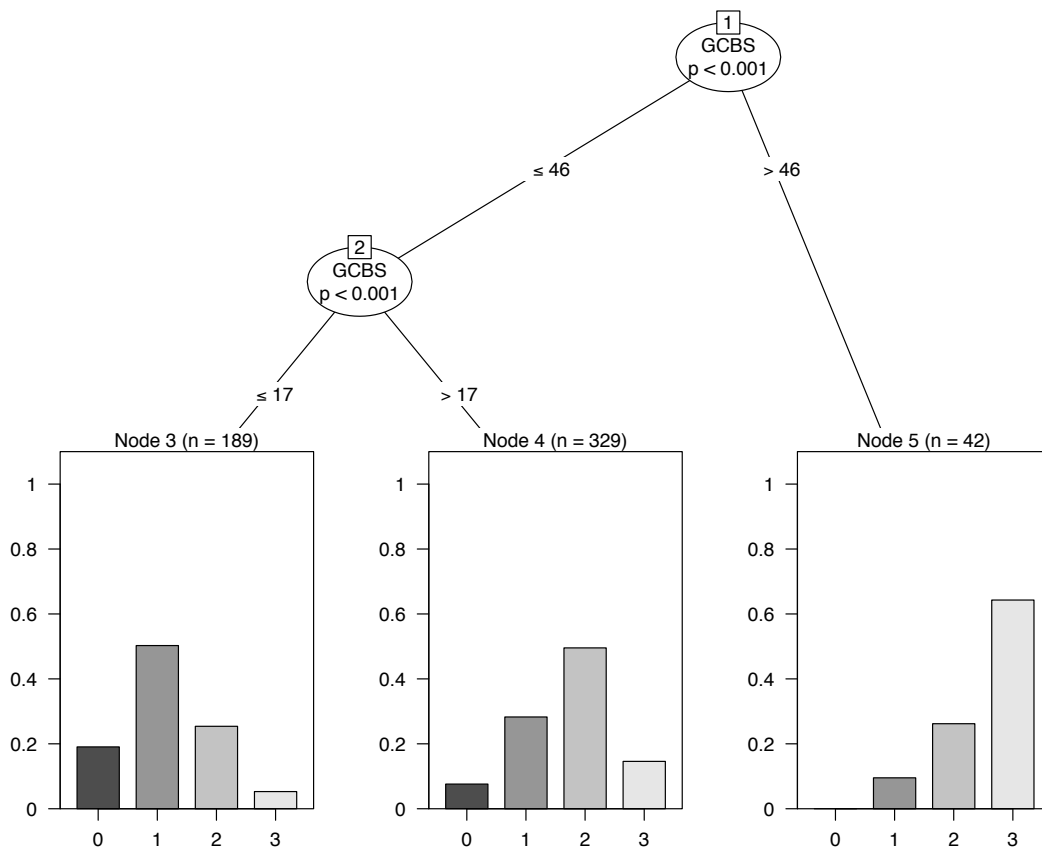


Figure A3: Decision tree for “anti-vaxx” conspiracy beliefs.

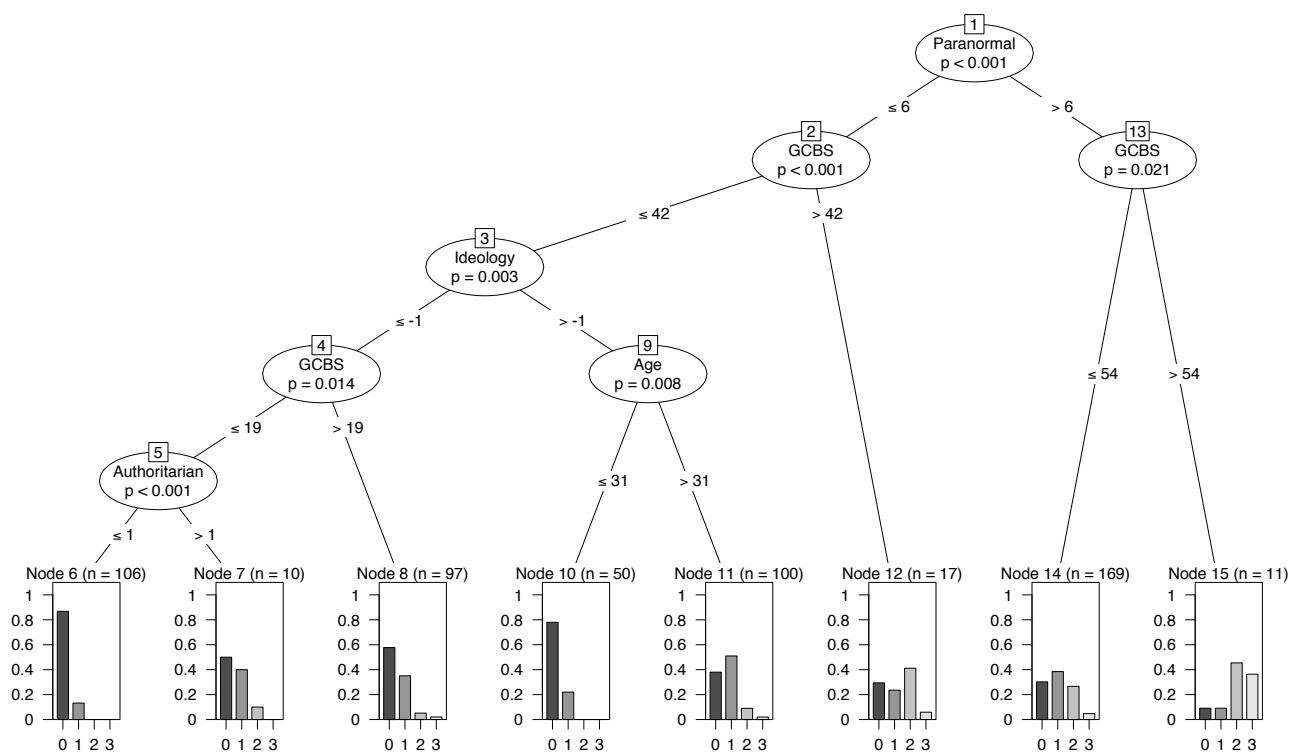


Figure A4: Decision tree for moon landing conspiracy beliefs.

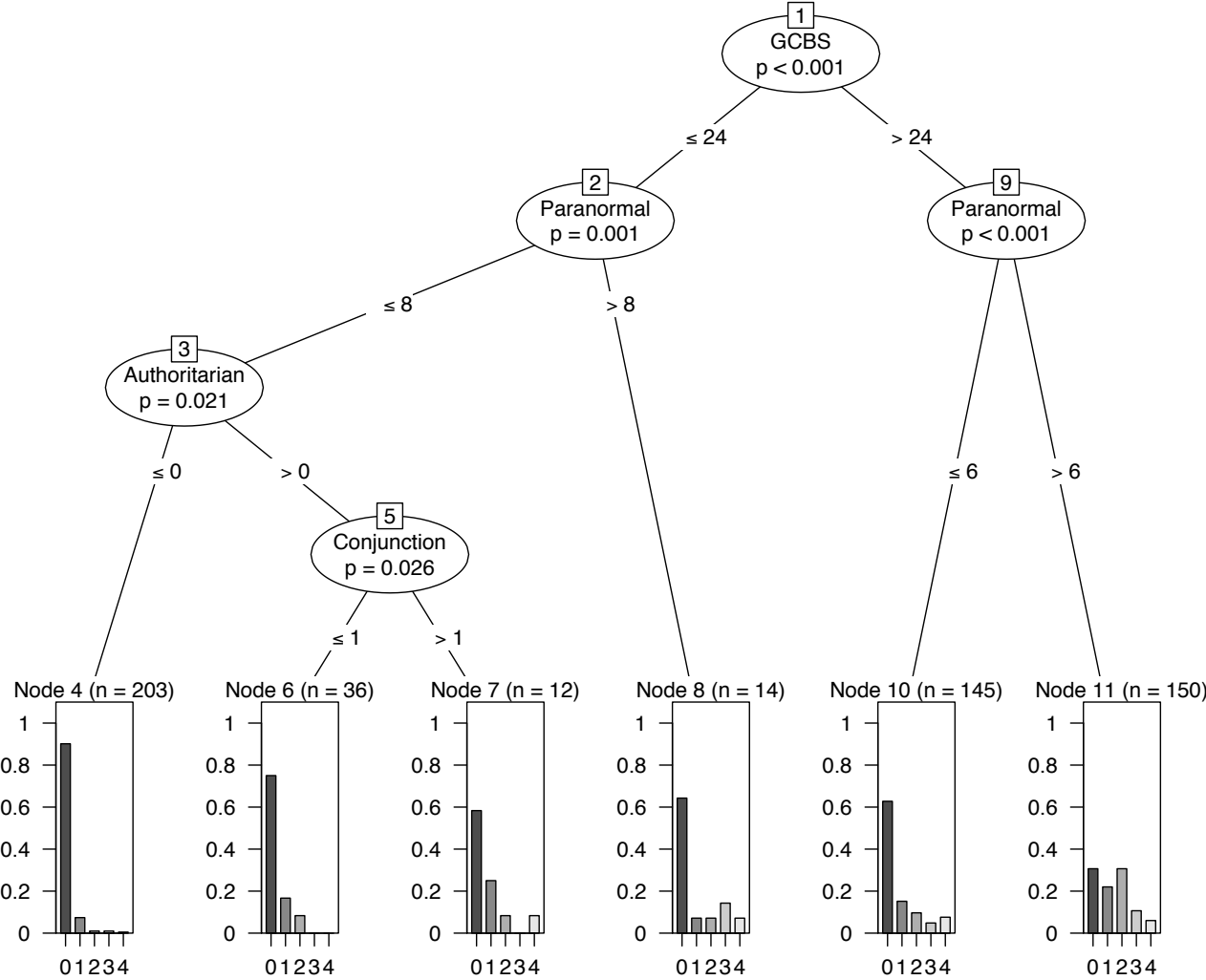


Figure A5: Decision tree for Princess Diana conspiracy beliefs.

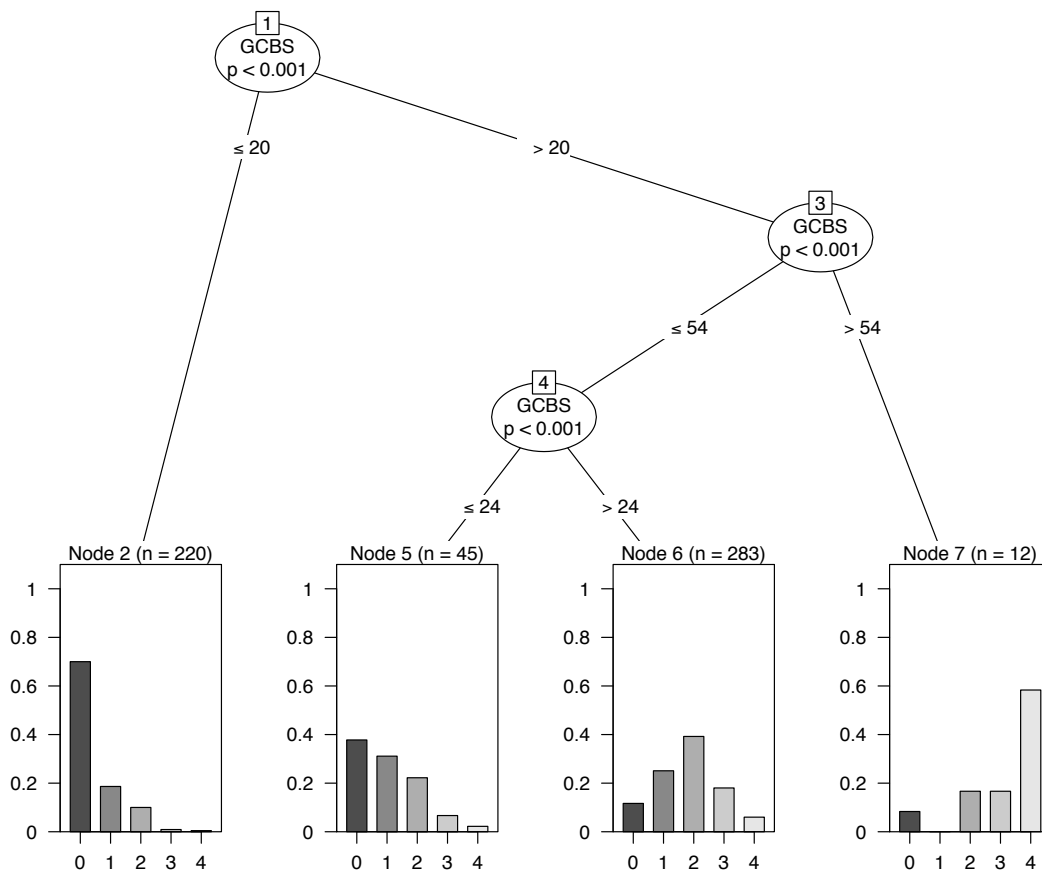


Figure A6: Decision tree for climate change hoax conspiracy beliefs.

