

Who Endorses Race and Gender Conspiracies?

Research Report: PCIS-002 | February 26, 2022

Research Question

In our last report, we examined rates of belief in various conspiracies related to COVID-19. In this report, we consider a new set of conspiracies related to particular demographic groups. We focus here on white people, men, and Jews—white people and men because both have recently been portrayed as coercive, powerful, and Machiavellian in popular mainstream journalism and academic scholarship (e.g., DiAngelo, 2018; Higgins, 2018; Kendi, 2016; Morris, 2022; and see Goldberg, 2020). We asked about Jews because of a rise in recent concerns about anti-Semitism (e.g., Rosenblatt, 2020). To explore how Americans are thinking about these issues, we report peoples' level of agreement with the notion that white, male, or Jewish dominance exists in contemporary society.

Methodology

Data Source

- Paranormal and Conspiratorial Ideation Study (“PCIS,” collected in July-August 2021)

Data Quality Control

- All participants in this dataset passed attention, response time, fraud, duplication, and bot checks.

Participants

- 3,073 adults in the United States
- Average Age = 46.47 years (*SD* = 19.38 years)
- 53.3% Female
- 58.1% White; 21.4% Hispanic; 14% Black; 6.4% Asian

Measures

- Endorsement:** Survey respondents were asked whether they agree with the following statements. Answer options ranged from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” using a 7-point Likert scale.
Statements:
 - “The way the founders of the United States set things up ensures that, even today, only whites can be truly free and successful.”
 - “The way the founders of the United States set things up ensures that, even today, only men can be truly free and successful.”
 - “Israel/Jews secretly control most of the decision-making processes across key US institutions, including government and media.”

Summary of Findings

- The political affiliates that were most likely to endorse these statements about demographic groups were Democrats with, for example, nearly half agreeing that only whites can be free and successful. Notably, more than half of democrats still disagreed or were uncertain (fig. 1).
- Higher levels of education slightly reduced the probability of endorsing these conspiracies. However, this effect was small. For example, about 1/3rd of people who went to college agreed that only whites can be free and successful (fig. 2).
- People in our sample differed in their attitudes about the claim that only whites can be free or successful by racial background (fig. 3). For example, black participants very slightly agreed on average, while Asian and Hispanic participants reported being uncertain. No group moderately or strongly agreed with this claim, on average.
- People in our sample tended to disagree with conspiracies about men (fig. 4) or Jews (fig. 5) regardless of their self-identified race or gender.

Take-Home Message

- Our data indicate that Americans' level of agreement with these race and gender conspiracies is generally low, particularly regarding conspiracies about men or Jews. Though overall agreement was low, we did find differences in agreement based on party affiliation, race, sex and education.

Do you have an interpretation of this you want to share? Email us (research@skeptic.com) and it may be included in Skeptic Magazine.

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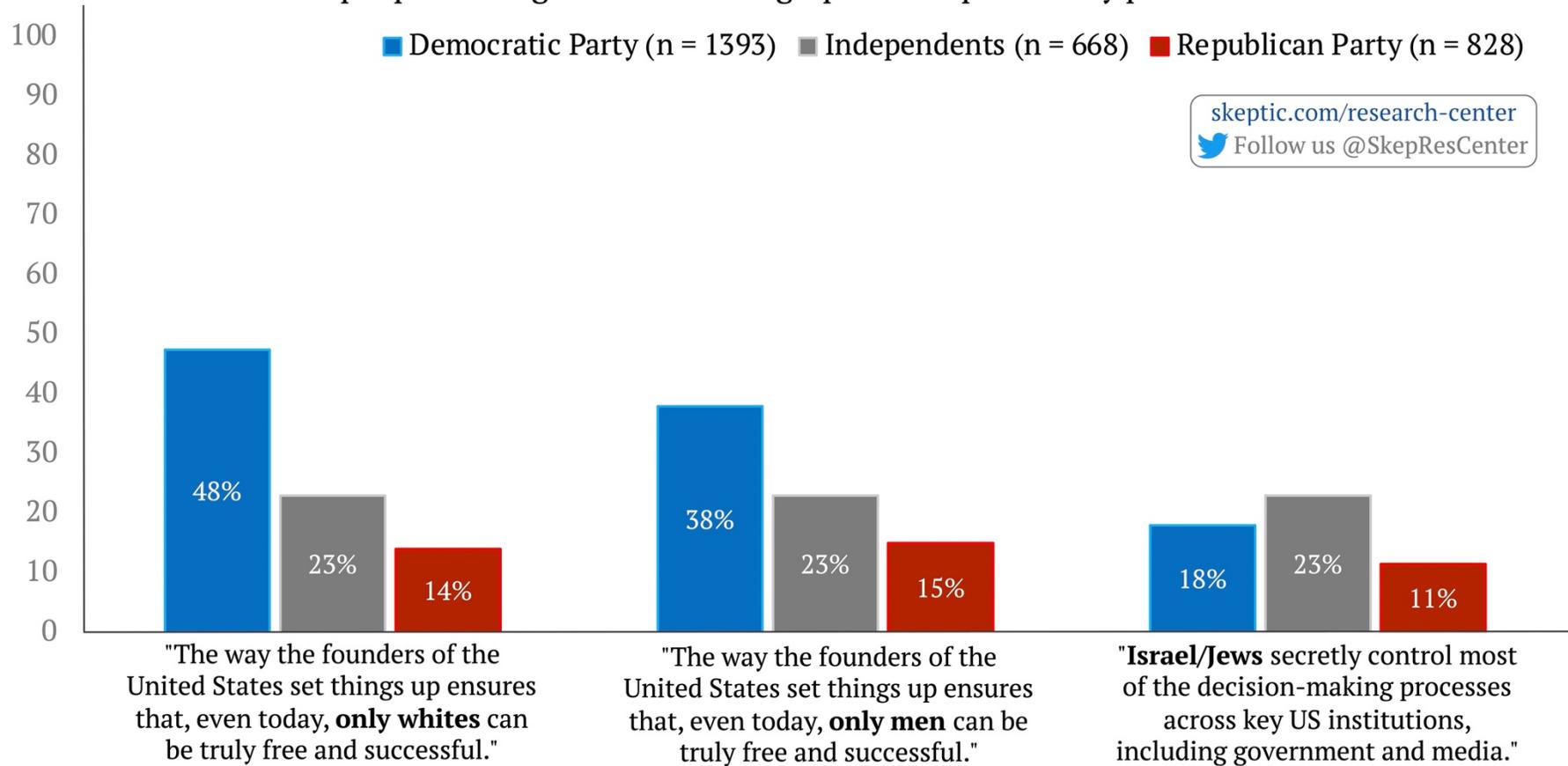
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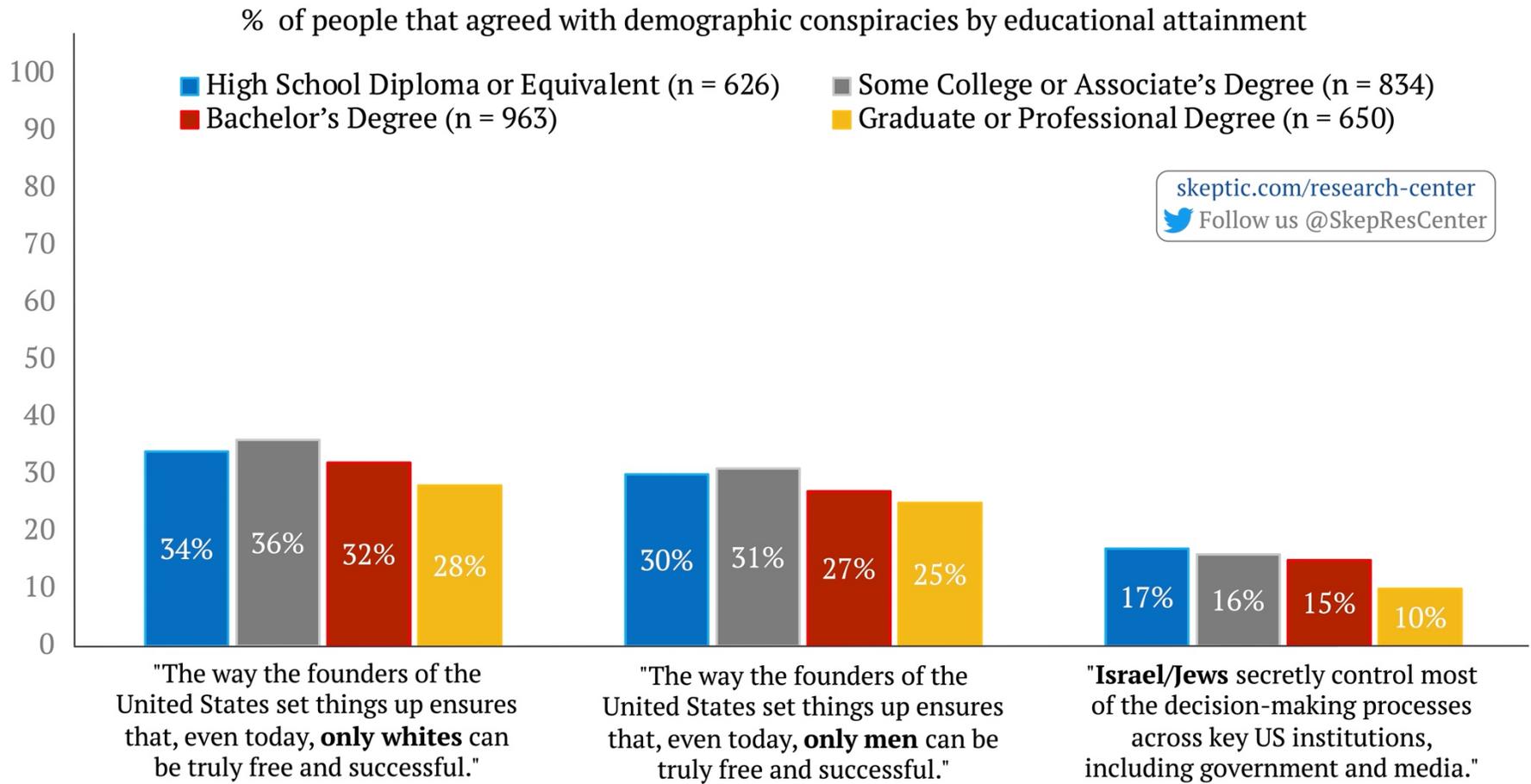
Figure 1

% of people that agreed with demographic conspiracies by political affiliation



Note: Percentages rounded to the nearest whole number. Data comes from PCIS Report #2.

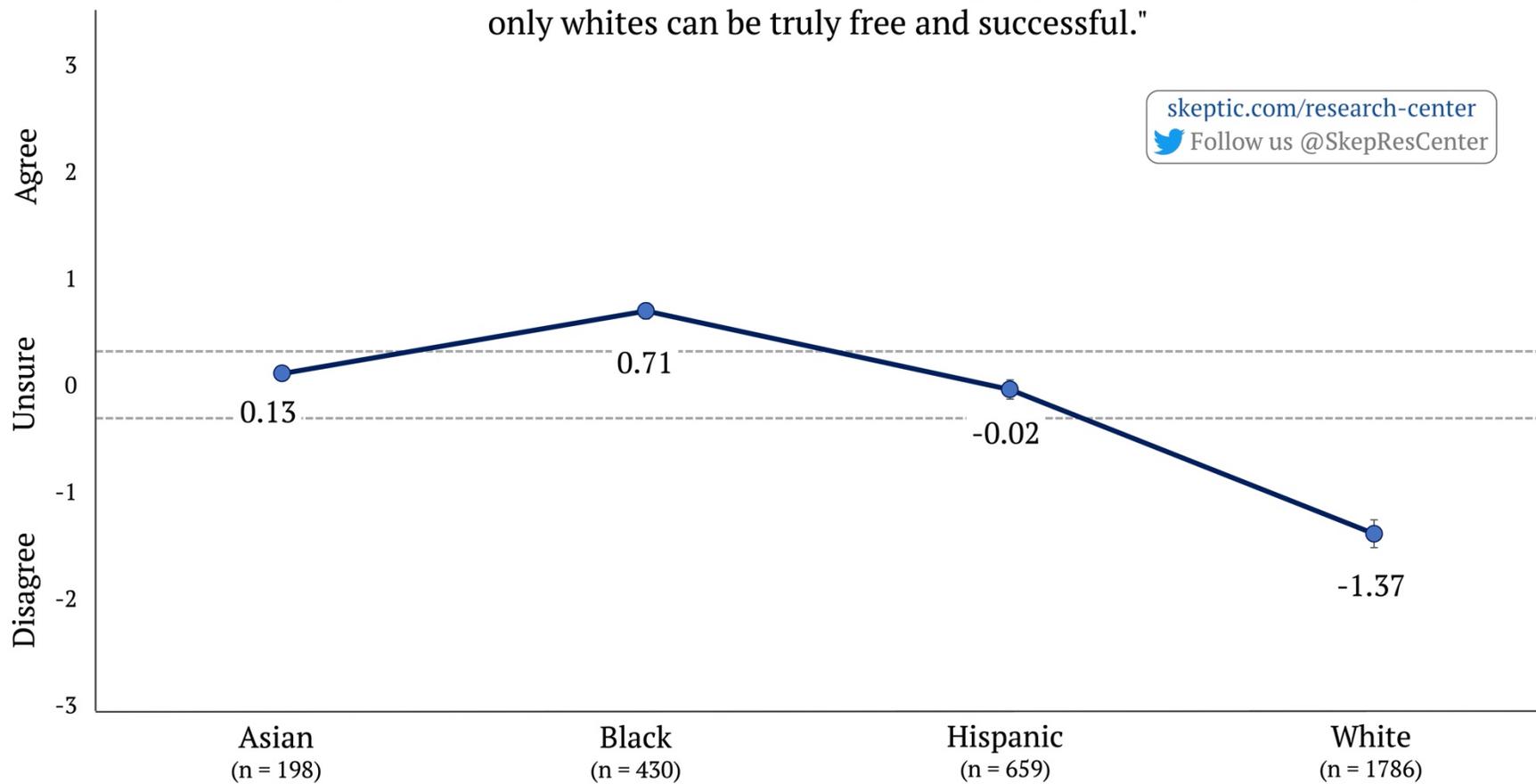
Figure 2



Note: Percentages rounded to the nearest whole number. Data comes from PCIS Report #2.

Figure 3

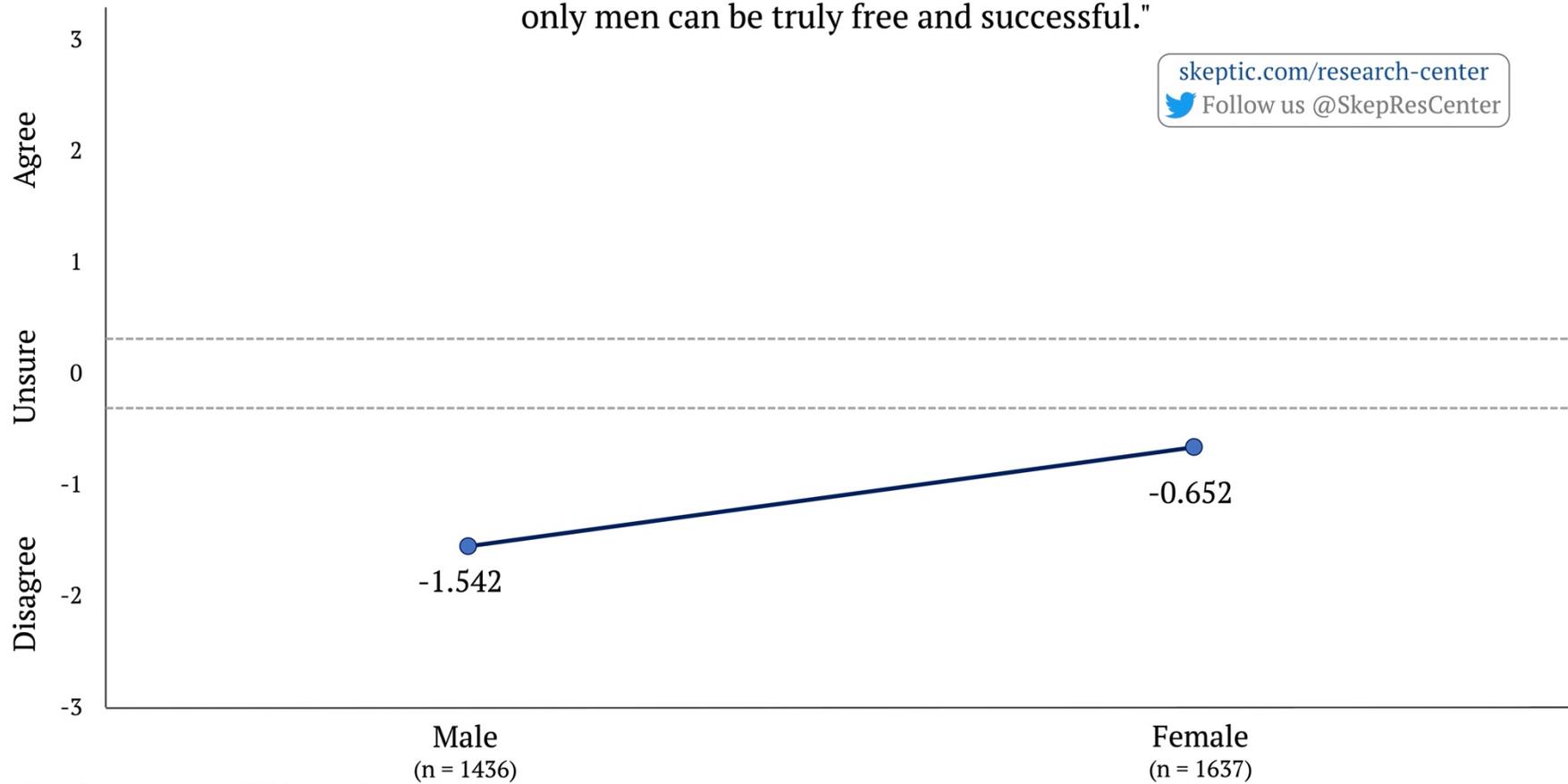
"The way the founders of the United States set things up ensures that, even today, only whites can be truly free and successful."



Note: Average score among Asian and Hispanic respondents is not significantly different from "unsure" (i.e., score of 0). Data comes from PCIS Report #2.

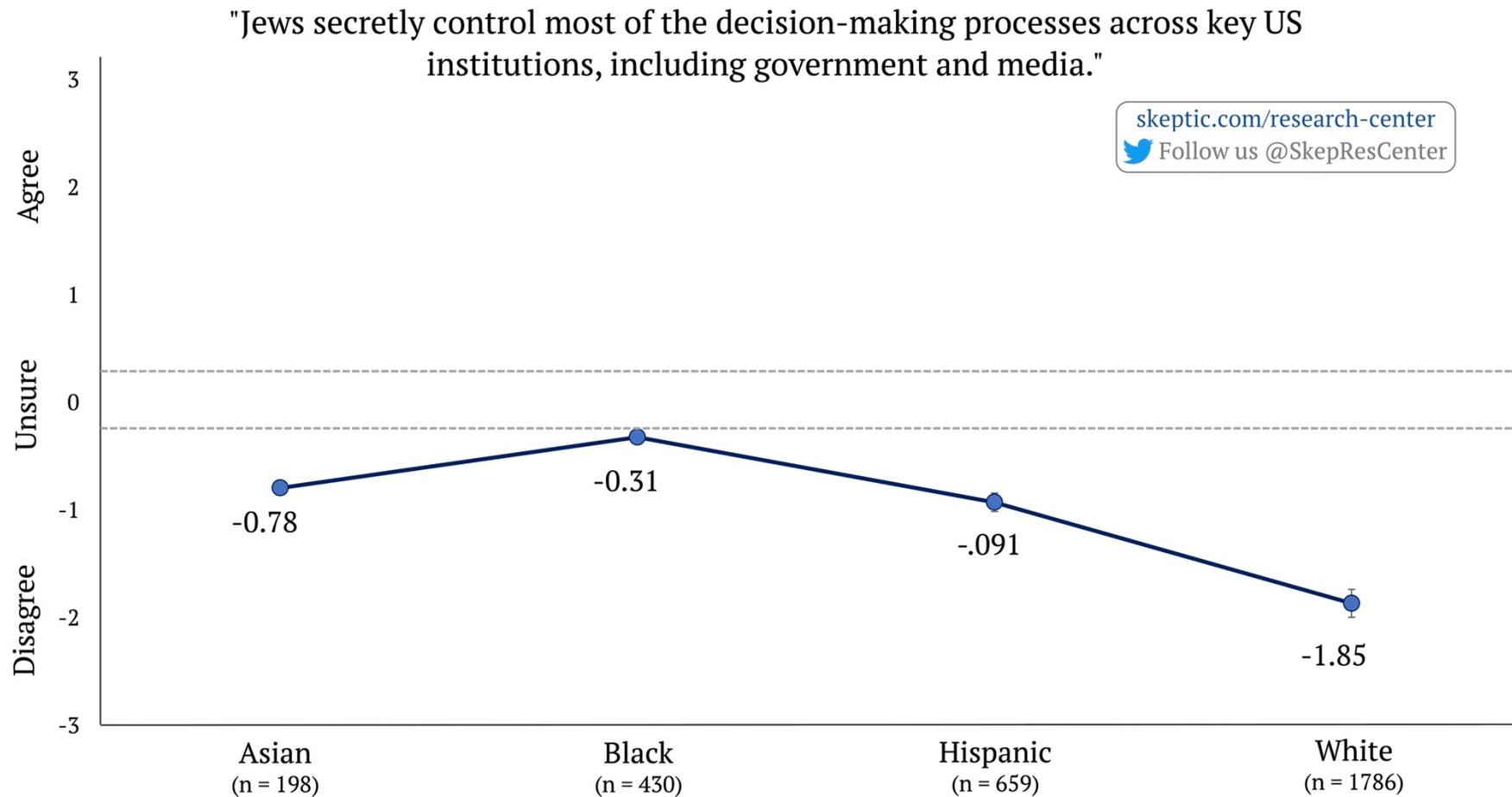
Figure 4

"The way the founders of the United States set things up ensures that, even today, only men can be truly free and successful."



Note: Data comes from PCIS Report #2.

Figure 5



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