

Title: Sample and materials appendix for “Research note: Explicit voter fraud conspiracy cues increase belief among co-partisans but have broader spillover effects on confidence in elections”

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Note: The material contained herein is supplementary to the article named in the title and published in the Harvard Kennedy School (HKS) Misinformation Review.

Appendix A: Sample and materials

Sample

The sample ($N = 2,111$) was recruited via Prolific in November 2021, balanced for sex and partisanship (Republican, Democrat, and Independent). Respondents had a mean age of 35.27 ($SD = 12.72$), were 79.39% White and had a median education of a 4-year degree (44.62% had less than a 4-year degree). 51.44% supported Joe Biden in the 2020 election.

Table A1. Demographic comparison of Prolific sample and ACS estimates.

Variable (ACS pop.)	Subgroup	Sample	
		Prolific (2022)	ACS 2020 (5-year est.)
Gender (age 18+)	Male	50	48.7
	Female	50	51.3
Race (total population – all ages)	White	79.4	70.4
	Black or African-American	4.3	12.6
	American Indian and Alaska Native	0.3	0.8
	Asian	4.9	5.6
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	N/A	0.2
	Two or more races/other	11.1	5.2
	Age (age 18+)	18-24	23.3
	25 to 34 years	33	17.9
	35 to 44 years	21.1	16.4
	45 to 54 years	12.9	16.4
	55 to 59 years	4.1	8.6
	60+	5.5	28.7
Education (age 25+)	Less than bachelor's degree	44.6	67.1
	Bachelor's degree or higher	55.4	32.9

Note: Population for ACS estimates varies by age across some variables and is noted in parentheses for each variable. Prolific values come from the full sample. All values are percentages.

Survey question wording

Demographics and background characteristics

Age

In what year were you born?

Racial background

What racial or ethnic group best describes you?

- White
- Black or African-American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Asian or Asian-American
- Native American
- Middle Eastern
- Mixed Race
- Other (open)

Education

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Did not graduate from high school
- High school graduate
- Some college, but no degree (yet)
- Two-year college degree
- Four-year college degree
- Postgraduate

Moderators

Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a ...?

- Democrat
- Republican
- Independent
- Other
- Not sure [Follow-up] If Democrat:
- Strong Democrat
- Not very strong Democrat
- If Republican:
- Strong Republican
- Not very strong Republican

If Independent/Other/Not sure:

- The Democratic Party
- The Republican Party
- Neither
- Not sure

2020 Presidential support

Who did you support in the 2020 election?

- Donald Trump
- Joe Biden
- Someone else
- No one
- Don't know

Political interest

Some people seem to follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there's an election going on or not. Others aren't that interested. Would you say you follow what's going on in government and public affairs ...

- Most of the time (5)
- Some of the time (4)
- Only now and then (3)
- Hardly at all (2)
- Don't know (1)

Political knowledge

The next set of questions helps us learn what types of information are commonly known to the public. Please answer these questions on your own without asking anyone or looking up the answers. Many people don't know the answers to these questions, but we'd be grateful if you would please answer every question even if you're not sure what the right answer is.

It is important to us that you do NOT use outside sources like the Internet to search for the correct answer. Will you answer the following questions without help from outside sources?

- Yes
- No

For how many years is a United States Senator elected - that is, how many years are there in one full term of office for a U.S. Senator?

- Two years
- Four years
- Six years (1)
- Eight years
- None of these
- Don't know

How many times can an individual be elected President of the United States under current laws?

- Once
- Twice (1)
- Four times
- Unlimited number of terms
- Don't know

How many U.S. Senators are there from each state?

- One
- Two (1)
- Four
- Depends on which state
- Don't know

Who is currently the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom?

- Boris Johnson (1)
- Nick Clegg
- David Cameron

- Theresa May
- Margaret Thatcher
- Don't know

For how many years is a member of the United States House of Representatives elected – that is, how many years are there in one full term of office for a U.S. House member?

- Two years (1)
- Four years
- Six years
- Eight years
- For life
- Don't know

Conspiracy predisposition

Mean of four items:

Much of our lives are being controlled by plots hatched in secret places.

Even though we live in a democracy, a few people will always run things anyway.

The people who really 'run' the country are not known to the voter.

Big events like wars, recessions, and the outcomes of elections are controlled by small groups of people who are working in secret against the rest of us.

- Strongly agree (5)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Neither disagree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

Feeling thermometers

We would like to get your feelings toward some of our political leaders and institutions who are in the news these days using something we call the feeling thermometer. Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm toward the person. Ratings between 0 degrees and 50 degrees mean that you don't feel favorable toward the person or institution and that you don't care too much for that person or institution. You would rate them at the 50-degree mark if you don't feel particularly warm or cold toward them. If we come to a person or institution whose name you don't recognize, you don't need to rate them.

Respondents click on thermometer to give ratings for: White people, Hispanic or Latino people, Black people, the Media, Republicans, Democrats, Trump, Biden)

Affective polarization

Affective polarization is computed by subtracting the respondent's out-party feeling thermometer score from the in-party score.

Dependent variables

Open-ended conspiracy belief

"Roll-off" is a political science term for when people cast a ballot in some races but don't bother voting in others. Some have pointed out decreased roll-off in the 2020 election.

In your view, what likely caused the decrease in down-ballot roll-off in the 2020 election? It's ok to say you don't know. (Open text box)

Responses that mentioned intentional (fraudulent) actions by Republicans [Democrats], or intentional (fraudulent) actions by prominent elected officials, or manipulation of voting machines, were coded as a conspiracy response. All open-ended responses were coded by a set of two independent coders (99.6% agreement on 2,111 responses). Disagreements (0.4% of cases) were resolved through discussion.

Closed-ended conspiracy beliefs

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- (1) The Republican Party is probably responsible for the decrease in down-ballot roll-off in the 2020 election noted the article
 - (2) The Republican Party probably manipulated the vote totals through paperless voting machines
 - (3) The Democratic Party is probably responsible for the decrease in down-ballot roll-off in the 2020 election noted the article
 - (4) The Democratic Party probably manipulated the vote totals through paperless voting machines
- Strongly agree (5)
 - Somewhat agree (4)
 - Neither disagree nor disagree (3)
 - Somewhat disagree (2)
 - Strongly disagree (1)

For the closed-ended outcome questions, we analyzed the items individually, as the two pro-Democrat ($\alpha = .50$) and two pro-Republican items ($\alpha = .59$) did not scale at the threshold set in the preregistration (.65).

Confidence in elections scale

How confident are you that everyone who was legally entitled to vote and sought to do so was able to successfully cast a ballot in the last election?

- Very confident
- Somewhat confident
- Not too confident
- Not at all confident

How confident are you that election officials managed the counting of ballots fairly in the election?

- Very confident
- Somewhat confident
- Not too confident
- Not at all confident

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? At the end of the day, in spite of all of the problems casting and counting the votes, the system worked.

- Strongly agree (5)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Neither disagree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

To what extent do you trust elections in this country? Please respond on the scale below where 1 means “not at all” and 7 means “a lot.” -1 (Not at all) ... 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 ... 7 (A lot)

How secure are ballots from tampering in this country’s elections?

- Extremely secure
- Very secure
- Moderately secure
- Not too secure
- Not at all secure

How often are voting machines accurate in counting the votes?

- Extremely often
- Very often
- Moderately often
- Not too often
- Not at all often

For the outcome measure of confidence in elections, we analyzed a standardized composite measure as the items scale together ($\alpha = .92$).

Satisfaction with democracy (CSES)

-On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in the United States?

- Not at all satisfied
- Not very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- Very satisfied

Behavioral intent

Public funds are needed to maintain and improve election security. In support of these initiatives, what is the maximum amount your household would be willing to pay each year? (Options: Sliding scale [\$ to \$00])

Johnson calls attention to drop in down-ballot “roll-off”

BY RONALD BRIXTON | APRIL 26, 2021 9:07 PM



An examination of the numbers shows that fraud was likely widespread in the 2020 election, according to some elected officials. “2,134,996 Kentuckians voted for the President and 2,134,446 voted for the Senate. A difference of exactly 550? How did we get to such a tiny number?” Kentucky Democratic State Rep. Marsha Johnson said in a press conference Thursday. “The expanded use of paperless voting machines – at the explicit demand of the Republican party in our state – has directly led to their electoral benefit. This is fraud, plain and simple.”

“In past elections, at least 20,000 folks voted for President but left down-ballot races blank. That all changed in 2020’s election. These machines have been programmed to switch these down-ballot blanks to Republican votes,” she added.

The change in the numbers since Kentucky shifted to electronic voting machines? 71,498 left down-ballot races blank in 2004 (3.98%). Only 550 left down-ballot races blank in 2020 (0.03%). The tendency for some voters to skip down-ballot races is commonly referred to as “roll-off” by experts.

Others have suggested similar foul play in other states. A common element across many of these claims is paperless voting machine manufacturing.

Johnson and others have lamented that they cannot formally dispute the election results since the paperless machines can’t be audited.

Figure A1. Explicit Republican fraud cue.

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An examination of the numbers behind 2020 and other elections has led to some curious results, some say. “2,134,996 Kentuckians voted for the President and 2,134,446 voted for the Senate. A difference of exactly 550? How did we get to such a tiny number?” Kentucky Democratic State Rep. Marsha Johnson said in a press conference Thursday.

“In past elections, at least 20,000 folks voted for President but left down-ballot races blank. That all changed in 2020’s election.” She added.

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Others have noted similar interesting patterns in other states.

Figure A2. Implicit Republican fraud cue.

Johnson calls attention to drop in down-ballot “roll-off”

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“In past elections, at least 20,000 folks voted for President but left down-ballot races blank. That all changed in 2020’s election. These machines have been programmed to switch these down-ballot blanks to Democrat votes,” she added.

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Figure A3. Explicit Democrat fraud cue.

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BY RONALD BRIXTON | APRIL 26, 2021 9:07 PM



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Figure A4. Implicit Democrat fraud cue.

Five sauces for the modern cook

BY RONALD BRIXTON | APRIL 26, 2021 9:07 PM



Travis Lett often steals. Of course, the only person this pensive chef ever steals from is himself. At his Los Angeles, USA restaurant, “We’re constantly appropriating elements from dishes we’ve done in the past to create new combinations,” he said.

There’s a lesson here: To improve your cooking, learn how to make and use sauce like a professional.

Five basic types of sauces appear over and over again on menus and in cookbooks that feature the kind of vegetable-heavy, flavor-dense food that cooks and eaters favor today: yogurt sauce, pepper sauce, herb sauce, tahini sauce and pesto. Master each one, and you’ll immediately have access to the dozens of variations that descend from them, too.

Think of them as the new mother sauces, an updated version of the five mother sauces of French cuisine. Armed with one of these five sauces, the home cook can go on and cook what he or she is most comfortable cooking. The right sauce will transform the distinct elements of a dish into a unified statement of taste.

Figure A5. Placebo.