

Title: Method detail appendix for “Older Americans are more vulnerable to prior exposure effects in news evaluation”

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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: Method detail

I draw on data from three studies conducted among a representative sample of the U.S. population by the survey company YouGov, which recruits a large panel of opt-in respondents and then uses a weighting and matching algorithm to construct a final sample that mirrors the demographic composition of the U.S. population. The participants closely resemble the U.S. population in both demographics and political attitudes and affiliations. In the text, I identify these studies by the month in which they were conducted. All descriptive statistics below are unweighted.

The June/July 2018 data come from a two-wave panel study fielded June 25–July 3, 2018 (wave 1; $N = 1,718$) and July 9–17, 2018 (wave 2; $N = 1,499$). Respondents are 56% female, 80% white, median age 54, 49% hold a four-year college degree or higher, 53% identify as Democrats (including leaners), 33% identify as Republicans (including leaners), and 37% approve of Donald Trump’s job performance.

The October/November 2018 data come from a two-wave panel study fielded October 19–26 (wave 1; $N = 3,378$) and October 30–November 6, 2018 (wave 2; $N = 2,948$). Respondents are 57% female, 80% white, median age 55, 37% hold a four-year college degree or higher, 49% identify as Democrats (including leaners), 34% identify as Republicans (including leaners), and 41% approve of Donald Trump’s job performance.

The November/December 2018 data come from a two-wave panel study fielded November 20–December 27, 2018 (wave 1; $N = 4,907$) and December 14, 2018–January 3, 2019 (wave 2; $N = 4,283$). Respondents are 55% female, 68% white, median age 50, 32% hold a four-year college degree or higher, 46% identify as Democrats (including leaners), 36% identify as Republicans (including leaners), and 43% approve of Donald Trump’s job performance.

News headline stimuli

June/July 2018

Respondents evaluated 16 total articles: four mainstream news articles that were congenial to Democrats (two from low-prominence sources and two from high-prominence sources), four mainstream news articles that were congenial to Republicans (two from low-prominence sources and two from high-prominence sources), two pro-Democrat false news articles, and two pro-Republican false news articles as well as two pro-Democrat hyperpartisan articles and two pro-Republican hyperpartisan articles.

Pro-Democrat false news

Michigan GOP tried to pass bill marking immigrants’ licenses with YELLOW STARS

<https://archive.li/KfTkh#selection-841.0-841.78>

Trump’s Older Sister Worries About Him: ‘Donnie’s Acting Like A Nutjob’

<https://web.archive.org/web/20180116154621/https://www.nova-magazine.net/trumps-older-sister-worries-about-him/>

Pro-Republican false news

Millions RUSH To Join The NRA After Anti-Gun Lectures By The Liberal Media

<https://ilovemyfreedom.org/millions-rush-join-nra-anti-gun-lectures-liberal-media/>

Sen. Dick Durbin Just Revealed Why He Lied About Trump Saying ‘S***hole’
<http://capitolconservative.com/2018/01/15/sen-dick-durbin-just-revealed-lied-trump-saying-shole/>

Mainstream news that is congenial to Democrats (low-prominence source)

White House official mocked ‘dying’ McCain at internal meeting
<http://thehill.com/homenews/administration/387182-white-house-official-mocked-dying-mccain-at-internal-meeting>

Trump Launched Campaign to Discredit Potential FBI Witnesses
<http://foreignpolicy.com/2018/01/26/trump-launched-campaign-to-discredit-potential-fbi-witnesses/>

Mainstream news that is congenial to Democrats (high-prominence source)

Accusations Against Aide Renew Attention on White House Security Clearances
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/12/us/politics/white-house-security-clearances-jared-kushner.html>

Trump was angry and ‘unglued’ when he started a trade war, officials say
https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/white-house/trump-was-angry-unglued-when-he-started-trade-war-officials-n852641?cid=sm_npd_nn_tw_ma

Mainstream news that is congenial to Republicans (low-prominence source)

GOP lawmaker calls for FBI, DOJ officials to face ‘treason’ charges
<https://www.politico.com/story/2018/02/02/nunes-memo-treason-paul-gosar-386089>

Dems worry Trump will win over economy
<http://thehill.com/homenews/campaign/387356-dems-worry-trump-will-win-over-economy/>

Mainstream news that is congenial to Republicans (high-prominence source)

Republicans vote to release memo alleging FBI missteps in surveillance of Trump campaign operative
https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/republicans-vote-to-release-memo-alleging-fbi-missteps-while-surveilling-trump-campaign-operative/2018/01/29/750fb150-0535-11e8-b48c-b07fea957bd5_story.html

Democrat running for Congress indicted in \$803G fraud, embezzlement case
<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2017/12/25/democrat-running-for-congress-indicted-in-803g-fraud-embezzlement-case.html>

Hyperpartisan news that is congenial to Democrats

Mueller Makes New Court Request That Has Trump’s Camp Ready To Run For It (DETAILS)
<http://web.archive.org/web/20180520075259/http://bipartisanreport.com/2018/05/19/mueller-makes-new-court-request-that-has-trumps-camp-ready-to-run-for-it-details/>

ND congressman leaps to the defense of Republican candidate caught peeping with his pants unzipped
<http://web.archive.org/web/20180531040638/https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2018/5/30/1768243/-ND-Congressman-leaps-to-the-defense-of-Republican-candidate-caught-peeping-with-his-pants-unzipped>

Hyperpartisan news that is congenial to Republicans

WORLD FEELS EFFECTS OF TRUMP TAX CUTS AS MONEY EXPECTED TO POUR INTO US MARKETS
<http://web.archive.org/web/20171223042050/https://www.infowars.com/world-feels-effects-of-trump-tax-cuts-as-money-expected-to-pour-into-us-markets/>

Two Year Study of Gun Owners Exposes Dem’s Gun Control Narrative as Nonsense
<https://thefederalistpapers.org/us/new-study-shows-just-how-responsible-legal-gun-owners-really-are>

October/November 2018 and November/December 2018

Respondents evaluated 16 total articles: four mainstream news articles that were congenial to Democrats (two from low-prominence sources and two from high-prominence sources), four mainstream news articles that were congenial to Republicans (two from low-prominence sources and two from high-prominence sources), two pro-Democrat false news articles, and two pro-Republican false news articles as well as two pro-Democrat hyperpartisan articles and two pro-Republican hyperpartisan articles.

Pro-Democrat false news

VP Mike Pence Busted Stealing Campaign Funds To Pay His Mortgage Like A Thief

<http://bipartisanreport.com/2018/09/03/vp-mike-pence-busted-stealing-campaign-funds-to-pay-his-mortgage-like-a-thief/>

Vice President Pence now being investigated for campaign fraud his ties to Russia and Manafort

<https://dctribune.org/vice-president-pence-now-being-investigated-for-campaign-fraud-his-ties-to-russia-and-manafort/>

Pro-Republican false news

Special Agent David Raynor was due to testify against Hillary Clinton when he died

<http://www.neonettle.com/features/1398-fbi-agent-who-exposed-hillary-clinton-s-cover-up-found-dead>

Lisa Page Squeals: DNC Server Was Not Hacked By Russia

<https://yournewswire.com/lisa-page-squeals-dnc-server-not-hacked-russia/>

Mainstream news that is congenial to Democrats (low-prominence source)

A Series Of Suspicious Money Transfers Followed The Trump Tower Meeting

<https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/anthonymormier/trump-tower-meeting-suspicious-transactions-agalarov>

A Border Patrol Agent Has Been Called a “Serial Killer” by Police After Murdering 4 Women

<https://www.teenvogue.com/story/border-patrol-agent-arrested-murder-4-women-serial-killer>

Mainstream news that is congenial to Democrats (high-prominence source)

Detention of Migrant Children Has Skyrocketed to Highest Levels Ever

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/12/us/migrant-children-detention.html>

‘And now it’s the tallest’: Trump, in otherwise somber 9/11 interview, couldn’t help touting one of his buildings

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2018/09/11/and-now-its-the-tallest-trump-in-otherwise-somber-9-11-interview-couldnt-help-touting-one-of-his-buildings/>

Mainstream news that is congenial to Republicans (low-prominence source)

Google employees considered manipulating search results to help protest Trump’s travel ban

<http://uk.businessinsider.com/google-employees-search-protest-travel-ban-2018-9>

Feds said alleged Russian spy Maria Butina used sex for influence. Now, they’re walking that back.

https://news.vice.com/en_us/article/wjyqe4/feds-said-alleged-russian-spy-maria-butina-used-sex-for-influence-now-theyre-walking-that-back

Mainstream news that is congenial to Republicans (high-prominence source)

Small business optimism surges to highest level ever, topping previous record under Reagan

<https://www.cnn.com/2018/09/11/small-business-optimism-surges-to-highest-ever.html>

Economy adds more jobs than expected in August, and wage growth hits post-recession high
<https://www.cnn.com/2018/09/07/us-nonfarm-payrolls-aug-2018.html>

Hyperpartisan news that is congenial to Democrats

Donald Trump caught privately wishing he'd sided more thoroughly with white supremacists
<https://www.palmerreport.com/analysis/white-supremacists-trump-siding/12478/>

Franklin Graham: Attempted rape not a crime. Kavanaugh "respected" his victim by not finishing.
<https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2018/9/19/1797143/-Graham-Attempted-rape-not-a-crime-Kavanaugh-respected-his-victim-by-not-finishing>

Hyperpartisan news that is congenial to Republicans

SOROS MONEY BEHIND 'BLACK POLITICAL POWER' OUTFIT SUPPORTING ANDREW GILLIUM IN FLORIDA
<https://www.breitbart.com/big-government/2018/09/20/soros-money-behind-black-political-power-outfit-supporting-andrew-gillum-in-florida/>

Kavanaugh Accuser Christine Blasey Exposed For Ties To Big Pharma Abortion Pill Maker... Effort To Derail Kavanaugh Is Plot To Protect Abortion Industry Profits
<https://www.infowars.com/kavanaugh-accuser-christine-blasey-exposed-for-ties-to-big-pharma-abortion-pill-maker-effort-to-derail-kavanaugh-is-plot-to-protect-abortion-industry-profits/>

Survey question wording

Age

In what year were you born?

Gender

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

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)
- 2-year college degree
- 4-year college degree
- Postgraduate

Political views

When it comes to politics, would you describe yourself as liberal, conservative, or neither liberal nor conservative?

- Very liberal
- Somewhat liberal
- Slightly liberal
- Moderate; middle of the road
- Slightly conservative
- Somewhat conservative
- Very conservative

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

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as President?

- Strongly approve
- Somewhat approve
- Somewhat disapprove
- Strongly disapprove

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?

- Richard Branson
- Nick Clegg
- David Cameron
- Theresa May (1)
- 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

Media trust and Facebook use

In general, how much trust and confidence do you have in the mass media – such as newspapers, TV and radio – when it comes to reporting the news fully, accurately and fairly?

- None at all (1)
- Not very much (2)
- A fair amount (3)
- A great deal (4)

In general, how much trust and confidence do you have in the information you see on Facebook when it comes to reporting the news fully, accurately, and fairly?

- None at all (1)
- Not very much (2)
- A fair amount (3)
- A great deal (4)

How frequently do you use Facebook?

- Almost constantly
- Several times a day
- About once a day
- A few times a week
- About once a week
- A few times a month
- Once a month
- Less often than once a month
- Never

How frequently do you click on political news stories in your Facebook News Feed?

- Almost constantly
- Several times a day
- About once a day
- A few times a week
- About once a week
- A few times a month
- Once a month
- Less often than once a month
- Never

How frequently do you share political news stories on Facebook?

- Almost constantly
- Several times a day
- About once a day
- A few times a week
- About once a week
- A few times a month
- Once a month
- Less often than once a month
- Never

News headline evaluations

To the best of your knowledge, how accurate is the claim in the above headline?

-Not at all accurate (1)

-Not very accurate (2)

-Somewhat accurate (3)

-Very accurate (4)