

The Influences of Political Socialization on Young Adults' Ability to Identify Fake News

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Abstract: Fake news is an increasingly significant problem in American society today. However, little scholarly research has been done to understand what affects a person's ability to identify fake news. This study aimed to explore factors of political socialization that are related to young adults' ability to identify fake news and their confidence in doing so. The study involved a performance assessment in which participants were asked to decide if news articles were true or false as well as confidence in their decision. The independent variables of interest included family communication styles, partisanship and political ideology of the child and parent, perceived media bias, general political attention, and attention to the Russian interference investigation. The data suggested significant relationships between: (1) conformity-orientation and ability to correctly identify fake news; (2) conversation-orientation and confidence in ability to correctly identify news; (3) the amount of attention paid to the ongoing Russian interference investigation and confidence in ability to correctly identify news; and (4) income level and ability to correctly identify news. These findings together suggested that there are relationships between specific aspects of a person's political socialization that are related to their ability to and confidence in distinguishing between factual and fake news.

Key Words: Fake news, political socialization, family communication, perceived media bias

Word Count: 8,605

1. Introduction

Fake news is an increasingly significant problem and is an issue recognized by journalists, scholars, politicians, and citizens alike, making it a buzz-word in American society today. Despite this societal fascination and concern with fake news, many abuse this term without understanding what it is and the consequences it poses. This is problematic because a lack of understanding of the problem also poses limitations on creating solutions to it.

The media acts as an intermediary, linking citizens to their government and vice versa. Citizens, government officials and organizations use the media to understand what is happening in society to formulate their own opinions. If the media does not report on the current state of affairs or does so with false information, these actors lack the information they need to formulate educated opinions and decisions. Similarly, fake news can convolute an individual's ability to obtain a truthful understanding about an issue. Looking at the topic through a political lens, the spread of fake news poses an imminent threat to a democratic system because it can impact an individual's judgement and opinions on political issues.

Fake news is much more prevalent than ever due to rapid changes to the information environments that citizens use to get information about the world. For example, during the 2016 presidential election, American political content posted by a Russian company linked to the Kremlin reached approximately 126 million users on Facebook (Isaac & Wakabayashi, 2017). However, this is not the first time in history when citizens have experienced a confidence crisis towards the media, nor is it the first time that flaws in the media have threatened democracies. Throughout history, fake news has been created with political motives such as when Benjamin Franklin wrote and published the *Supplement to the Boston Independent Chronicle* 1782, a fake news story about "murderous" Native Americans working with King George III to sway public

opinion further in favor of the American Revolutionary War and deceive the British (Franklin, 1782). During World War II, both the Allied and Axis powers created false political news stories about their enemies to use as propaganda to achieve political goals such as to persuade public opinion in favor of the war and confuse the enemy powers (Burns, 2007). These examples, among others, demonstrate the significant political impact that fake news can have when interpreted as factual.

While the scope of problems caused by fake news, specifically that of political matter, is not yet fully understood, solutions to this problem can be developed by understanding the factors that lead to a person's ability to identify it. Three factors that influence how a person comprehends political information develop during adolescence in the family setting through the process of political socialization, including family communication patterns, development of partisanship, and media literacy. Young adults are in a stage of life in which they transition from simply consuming political news to being able to take civic action based on such. Additionally, they are the newest generation of adults, therefore studying their abilities to identify fake news could lead to the generation of effective counteractions that society can take against fake news in the coming years.

2. Literature Review

The literature review will first define fake news and explain its role in current American culture. In addition to this, literature on political socialization in the family will be discussed, specifically regarding partisanship and family communication. Lastly, the literature review will explain research on the role of a person's media literacy on information comprehension. When connecting the findings from these areas of study, it provides strong reasoning for a study on the effect of factors of a person's political identity on their ability to identify fake news.

Fake News

Fake news is an ambiguous term which may be used in different ways. Thus, it is important to explain the definition of fake news used for this research. Rini (2017) describes fake news as being created with intentional deception and excludes honest journalistic reporting errors. For information to be "news", it is implied that the information is intended to have an audience larger than one person and to be shared repeatedly (Rini, 2017). Fake news differs from perceived media bias because fake news includes the intention for deception by its creator and is the dissemination of false information, whereas perceived media bias refers to the way in which the reader is interpreting a piece of news, not the factuality or distribution of the information.

The current media landscape is more variable and unpredictable than ever, causing media spectacles, which can consequentially lead to a higher risk of fake news being perceived as real. A media spectacle is a dramatic, highly public, and emphasized piece of news that is caused by the media's attempt to not only provide information, but also to entertain viewers (Mihailidis & Viotty, 2017). The prevalence of media spectacles has led to what some call a post-fact culture in the current media landscape (Mihailidis & Viotty, 2017). Mihailidis and Viotty (2017) studied the media spectacle both leading up to and after the 2016 U.S. presidential election to better

understand the roles that media spectacle and fake news play in politics. The case study used in their research was the fake news story commonly referred to as “pizzagate” that circulated stating that Hillary Clinton and her staff were part of an alleged child sex operation in a pizza restaurant in Washington D.C. Mihailidis and Viotty (2017) identified multiple findings, the first being that fake news is becoming increasingly popular due to the possibility of citizen journalism and citizen-led networks that allow for false information to be perpetuated. Their second finding was that the spread of fake news is also enhanced by the current culture of creating media spectacle through traditional and digital platforms as well as the spread of information among like-minded communities. Their study provided a scholarly articulation of the current media landscape and the ways in which news is being produced and disseminated by explaining why a piece of political fake news gained massive amounts of media attention and action (Mihailidis & Viotty, 2017).

The danger of fake news is that it can be interpreted as factual information and can, in turn, cause someone to take action based on incorrect information. Specifically, false political information can affect a person’s voting choices, party identification, and additional political actions. The effects of false news on the 2016 presidential election are being studied, such as the Russian sponsored ads on Facebook which approximately 126 million people viewed (Isaac & Wakabayashi, 2017). Though the effects of fake news are beginning to be studied, there is currently no clear understanding of the individual factors that influence the ability to identify fake political news. To that end, this study uses political and social variables previously shown to affect political information consumption and evaluation for the purposes of understanding how young adults both identify and make sense of fake news.

Political Socialization

The process by which a person develops their own ideas and beliefs on political matters is called political socialization (Humphries et al., 2013). Political socialization generally begins during adolescence and occurs in various settings including the home and family, at school, among peers, and in neighborhoods (Matahmya & Lohman, 2012). Of these contexts, research indicates that family, specifically parents, play an especially strong role in the development of a person's political identity (Westholm 1999; McDevitt & Chafee, 2002; McDevitt 2006).

Westholm (1999) developed a conceptual model called a perceptual pathway to explain the way in which a parent(s) position on a topic affects the position of the child. The first step of this pathway is that the child has a perception of the parent position which then influences in some form, the decision of how the child themselves feels about the topic and then shares their position and how they feel about the parent position (Westholm, 1999). Westholm tested the validity of this model and found that generally-speaking, it substantially explained parental influence (Westholm, 1999). McDevitt and Chafee (2002) furthered the understanding of the relationship between parental influence and political socialization by developing the theory of "trickle-up socialization" Trickle-up socialization theory argues that the process of political socialization does not occur only in a top-down format, but rather is more of a two-way process in which both parents and children influence and change each other's political opinions throughout their relationship (McDevitt & Chafee, 2002).

Understanding the role adolescents play in their own political socialization was further expanded upon by McDevitt (2006) in his study of adolescents ages 12-14 in Lubbock, Texas. This study consisted of surveys asked in the months following the 2000 presidential election. Results showed that adolescents attempt to process information they obtain through the media, which then prompts them to initiate conversations at home (McDevitt, 2006). These results

suggest that the process of political socialization is more complex than inheritance. Rather than simply inheriting the beliefs of parent(s), a child plays an active role through using information obtained in the media to assert themselves in their political socialization (McDevitt, 2006). The political socialization of a child that occurs in the family influences the child's (and eventually the young adult) political behaviors and interpretation of political media.

Though much of a person's political socialization occurs during childhood, studies show that habits pertaining to news information typically form and become consistent after childhood, when a person is in their late teens and early twenties. Diddi & LaRose (2014) found that college students who obtained news from mass communication news forms on the Internet and cable television had the strongest, or most consistent, news consumption habits. Thus, political socialization is a process that occurs primarily during childhood, however, news consumption habits (that often relate to political beliefs and habits) stabilize during young adulthood.

Family communication. The ways in which families communicate about politics is one element of a child's political socialization that influences how he or she learns to interpret the media. Research indicates that family communication can play a role in many areas of socialization, including political socialization. McLeod and Chaffee (1972) developed the theory of family communication patterns and a matrix to measure it for their research on understanding how parents socialize their children to process outside information in the form of mass media messages. Their explanation of family communication is based on the cognitive concept of coorientation, which refers to two or more persons evaluating the same object or subject in their social environment (McLeod & Chaffee, 1972). Coorientation has three primary attributes that can be measured: individual's agreement, accuracy, and congruence (McLeod & Chaffee, 1972). Accuracy refers to the degree to which each person's impressions of the other person's

cognitions match the other's person's actual cognitions and congruence refers to perceived agreement (McLeod & Chaffee, 1972). McLeod and Chaffee developed a measure of family communication styles which consists of two dimensions, socio-orientation and concept orientation, which will be discussed more in-depth later in this section. (McLeod & Chaffee, 1972). The original theory of family communication patterns and measurement instrument developed by McLeod and Chaffee established a standardized way in which communication scholars can conceptualize and measure differences in this specific type of communication.

Using the dimensions established by McLeod and Chaffee (1972), Ritchie and Fitzpatrick (1990) developed the Revised Family Communication Patterns (RFCP) instrument. The RFCP renames socio-orientation conformity orientation, which measures the degree to which the family communication emphasizes a climate of homogeneity of attitudes, values and beliefs (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006). Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2002) interviewed Midwestern families of traditional and non-traditional structures (such as two-parent, single-parent, heterosexual, homosexual, and blended with adult children about conflicts within their families). Their research indicates that families with high conformity orientation are generally associated with a traditional family structure, which places priority on hierarchy within the members of the family, cohesiveness, and sharing resources such as space and money (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002). Families with low conformity orientation were generally associated with a non-traditional family structure, place less value in cohesiveness and more in equality among family members, and therefore encourage personal growth of members even if it weakens the family structure (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002). Ritchie and Fitzpatrick (1990) rename concept-orientation as conversation orientation, which measures the degree to which families create a communication environment in which all members feel encouraged to speak freely about a variety of topics

(Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006). Of the families interviewed by Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2002), those with high conversation orientation generally believed that open and frequent communication as well as the exchange of ideas are crucial to an enjoyable family life. Conversely, the families with low conversation orientation did not see the frequent and open exchange of ideas as essential to family function (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002). These studies led to further categorization of family communication into styles to connect the various family dynamics to with specific communicative choices.

McLeod and Chaffee (1972) also established four different types of families by using the two dimensions of socio-orientation (conformity orientation) and concept-orientation (conversation orientation) to categorize the ways in which families communicate. The four types of families include pluralistic, consensual, laissez-faire, and protective and are measured on a quadrant in which conversation orientation and conformity orientation are the two variables (McLeod & Chaffee, 1972). Families with both high conversation orientation and high conformity orientation are labeled consensual families and their communication entails tension, as the family attempts to preserve hierarchy and agreement, while also exploring new ideas and communicating freely (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006). Pluralistic families are those with high conversation orientation but low conformity orientation and engage in unconstrained communication in which the parents do not feel the need to agree with or control their children (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006). Families with both low conversation orientation and low conformity orientation are called laissez-faire and only communicate about a limited number of topics because the parents do not feel the need to make their children's decisions or talk to them about such (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006). The fourth category of family style is protective families, which have high conformity orientation but low conversation orientation (Koerner &

Fitzpatrick, 2006). Protective families are characterized by an emphasis on the authority of the parents and a lack of open communication (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006). The previous studies on family type and corresponding communication patterns suggest a relationship between family and parenting style choices with family communication styles and provide rationale for research to understand if and how this impacts the political socialization of an adolescent.

Research indicates that the style of the family communication does have an impact on an adolescent's political socialization. Shulman and DeAndrea (2014) studied the similarities of mother-child and father-child political beliefs in relation to their communication styles, which were measured on a Likert-scale of strength of conversation or conformity styles. Conversations that support conformity cause lower perception by the adolescent of similarity with their parent's political views (Shulman & DeAndrea, 2014). Alternately, conversations that promoted further conversation and open expression of ideas increased adolescents' receptivity to their parent's opinions (Shulman & DeAndrea, 2014). Gender differences in family communication styles were also discovered, as mothers tended to rank higher than fathers in terms of facilitating conversation based communication which therefore suggests that they are more likely to be successful when trying to influence their child's political opinions (Shulman & DeAndrea, 2014). Shulman and DeAndrea's (2014) research further indicates that family communication is an important variable when studying political behavior.

Lee et al. (2013) studied family communication regarding politics by examining both the communication competence (or set of communication skills and motives necessary for democratic engagement) and communication mediation (the process in which news consumption and political discussion shape social influences on civic engagement). By surveying parent-child pairs, the study indicated that informational media acts as a stimulant for youth discussion and

expression, which in turn, increases civic engagement (Lee et al., 2013). However, this study built upon prior research through the finding that deliberative actions in schools such as civic education curriculum, democratic peer norms (discussing and debating concepts with peers), news consumption and citizen communication all contribute to the development of active citizens, proving interdependence among these networks. While Lee et al. (2013) found that the networks adolescents are part of are related, further research can be done to better understand the how political communication in the family impacts how young adults comprehend political information in the media.

The four family communication styles listed indicate that there is a diversity in both the way in which families communicate and what they communicate about, including regarding political matters. These styles also affect how the family discusses the information the child obtained from the media and used to initiate conversation in this context. Therefore, since much of a child's political socialization occurs within the home, the type of communication poses the potential to have a significant relationship with the way a child becomes educated about politics and learns to interpret political information that they see in the media. Family communication regarding politics provides opportunity for a child to gain political media literacy education in some form, and therefore also provides opportunity to develop the skills necessary to identify fake news, as such is a function of media literacy. This provides rationale for the first question this study will aim to answer:

RQ1: Is there a relationship between family communication style type and a young adult's ability to detect false political information?

Partisanship. Parent-child partisanship is another area of study stemming from the broader category of political socialization in the family that impacts the way in which a person interprets political information. Though there is a consensus that political socialization begins during adolescence, scholars disagree about the origin of an individual's party affiliation. Sears and Brown (2013) created an in-depth literature review on research surrounding childhood and adult political development for *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*. They indicate that time functions as the primary independent variable in studying political development and appears in three distinct types including early experiences, "the times" or the current environment, and life stages (Sears & Brown, 2013). All three elements of time have rendered valuable research, but the element of early experiences is most applicable to this study. Sears and Brown (2013) argue that *The American Voter* (Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960) is often seen as one of the most influential studies on American political behavior and functions as a starting point of research on parent-child partisanship. Campbell et al. (1960) argue that party identification is a predisposition generally acquired from the parents, making this variable the single-most influential factor in understanding the development of partisan orientation. However, Sears and Brown (2013) also describe that since *The American Voter*, scholars have continued to test this original hypothesis to further understand the role parents play in their child's partisanship. Their literature review notes that the original research done by Campbell et al. was conducted in a time when two-parent families were more frequent, which has since changed dramatically in the United States, indicating the importance of continuing to study the effects of different family dynamics on the acquisition of party identification (Sears & Brown, 2013).

Further research on the subject has prompted debate among scholars between traditional and revisionist perspectives conceptualizing the nature of partisanship (Kroh & Selb, 2009). As

stated previously, Campbell et. al (1960) and additional scholars argue the traditionalist perspective, in which partisanship develops throughout childhood through parental influences and remains stable throughout the person's life and is therefore unaffected by other factors. Conversely, the revisionist perspective states that party affiliation is constantly changing, caused by the positions of parties and the performance evaluations the individual makes about them (Fiorina, 1981). Kroh and Selb (2009) analyzed data collected for 25 years by the German Socio-Economic Panel Study about individual's pre-adult political environment, political views, and political views of their parents. Results of this analysis reinforced the traditionalist perspective, as attitudes and values transmitted from parent to child were more central and salient, while attitudes learned on an individual's own were more prone to change (Kroh & Selb, 2009).

Though research has proved validity in the revisionist perspective's belief that current events and life stages can cause variation in a person's party identification, the traditionalist perspective is frequently found to be more accurate in the study of partisanship acquisition. The traditionalist perspective of a child choosing to adopt the same party affiliation as one or both of their parents reinforces the notion that much of a person's political socialization occurs during childhood and has lasting effects on their political behaviors for the rest of their lives. It also confirms that the party affiliation a person has adopted by the time they are a young adult will most likely remain the party they affiliate with throughout their life. A person's party affiliation plays a role in not only voting behavior, but also in news consumption behavior and perception. The role in which partisanship plays in the ability to identify false political information has not yet been researched, hence providing rationale for the second primary research question of this study:

RQ2: Is there a relationship between a young adult's partisanship and his or her ability to detect false political information?

Perceived media bias

The final element of a person's political socialization being examined in this study, perceived media bias, is intertwined with both communication styles and partisanship. As stated in previous sections, both McDevitt (2006) and Lee et al. (2013) found that adolescents use information gained through the media to stimulate further communication about politics with their family. However, there is high variation in how individuals comprehend media and when it comes to political media, a person's interpretation is often affected by their political beliefs. This section will discuss research conducted about perceived media bias and media literacy education to provide context on the roles of partisanship and communication with comprehension of information in the media.

Perceived media bias refers to an individual's belief that media is not completely neutral and instead contains some level of bias to it. Eveland & Shah (2003) conducted a national mail survey in 1999 and 2000 in which individuals self-reported their perceived media bias and additional information about their political beliefs including party orientation, political involvement, and frequency of political discussions (Eveland & Shah, 2003). The participants consisted of a balanced sample in terms of race, gender, and marital status from those willing to participate (Eveland, and Shah, 2003). The results suggested that an individual's political orientations as well as their social and mass media networks play important role in shaping perceptions of media bias (Eveland & Shah, 2003). Additionally, both strong party affiliation and conversations predominantly with like-minded individuals were related to higher perceived media bias (Eveland & Shah, 2003). Therefore, both party affiliation and communication are related to the way in which a person interprets media. Additional research is necessary to understand if these factors also affect an individual's ability to detect false political information.

Scholars have also narrowed the broad topic of media literacy to specifically research ways to better understand the differences that partisanship has in news media literacy education. It has been posited that though media literacy education typically occurs in a classroom setting, this kind of education may be more useful if provided in an online setting, where high amounts of news media are consumed. For instance, Tully and Vraga (2017) conducted an experiment with a web-based survey in which participants completed a web-based questionnaire and then watched a politics-themed talk show during which participants saw a PSA about media literacy. The experiment measured multiple variables including perceived media literacy, media literacy beliefs, news media literacy, perceptions of bias, and political ideology (Tully & Vraga, 2017). The effects of the PSA were strengthened when partisan opinions were being discussed, whether they were discussing congruent or incongruent political ideas, indicating that partisan ideologies are somehow related to media literacy and calling for further research on the subject (Tully & Vraga, 2017). The context of media complicates political news media literacy because partisan opinions can alter perceptions and therefore can affect the effectiveness of the PSA (Tully & Vraga, 2017). The current research on partisanship and political news media literacy fails to examine the relationship between political socialization and development of ideology within the family and a person's ability to detect false political information.

Related research has also provided prescriptive recommendations on how to revise media literacy education to better address the current media landscape and the post-fact culture. Middaugh and Kahne (2013) studied the use of media and games including web resources, games and social networking sites to help improve civic learning and engagement and found that the internet can and does act as a tool for understanding and participating in political issues. However, the study also concluded that the internet can easily be used incorrectly and abused

(Middaugh & Kahne, 2013). People can abuse the power granted by the internet, especially regarding control and ownership of information, which is particularly dangerous to the safety and deception of children (Middaugh & Kahne, 2013). When trying to develop ways to better teach media literacy as to avoid deception of fake news and its subsequent consequences, is important to understand how youth and young adults use the internet to comprehend the information (especially political) in which they have access to.

The research discussed that provides suggestions on ways to effectively teach media has potential because of its application of platforms that children and young adults are familiar with such as video games, social networking sites, and the Internet, however, even more effective methods could be developed if a more informed understanding of the effects of communication types and partisanship were incorporated to this education. Research indicates a strong relationship between a person's perceived media bias with both the communication they engage in and their level of partisanship, two factors that this literature review has suggested are also possibly closely related to a person's ability to detect fake news. This link of perceived media bias and ability to identify fake news by these two measurable elements provides rationale for the third and final research question of this study:

H1: There will be a negative relationship between a person's perceived media bias and ability to detect fake news.

3. Method

This study aims to determine both if there is a relationship between each of the independent variables (family communication style, partisanship, and perceived media bias) with both a young adult's ability to detect fake news (the dependent variable). As part of this study, participants were tasked with identifying whether a given news article was real or fake. Conducting a survey that also includes a performance assessment component provides the quantitative data necessary for identifying any patterns that may be present.

Participants

The participants in this study were young adults between the ages of 18 and 22 years old. Though the previous research discussed in the literature review focuses on the political socialization and media literacy of juveniles, this study will instead survey young adults. While much of political socialization occurs during childhood, an individual cannot make political decisions in the United States until they are legally an adult. This study aimed to gain a better understanding of media literacy regarding fake news because interpreting fake news as truthful information can lead a person to make misinformed political decisions, such as voting for one candidate over another, hence why it is important to include those in this survey who are just exiting an environment of being socialized by their parents and can also take political action.

Participants were recruited using Amazon's TurkPrime research panel (TurkPrime). TurkPrime uses the Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) population, but also offers researchers additional controls that better ensure a high-quality sample. MTurk is an online platform for distributing surveys, experiments, and tasks to respondents in exchange for compensation. Through this platform, "requesters", or those who have human intelligence tasks (HITs) they would like completed, can post the task on the platform and "workers", or those at least 18 years

of age willing to complete HITs for compensation, can access said tasks (Amazon Mechanical Turk, 2017). Amazon Mechanical Turk also allows requesters to approve completed HITs to ensure they are of high-quality before approving payment to the worker. (Amazon Mechanical Turk, 2017).

In previous studies that evaluate online labor markets and data collection tools have signified that MTurk is approximately representative of the population of U.S. Internet users and exceeds the representativeness of convenience samples or student samples (Berinsky, Huber, & Lenz, 2012). Criticisms of MTurk as a data acquisition platform do exist (e.g., Fort, Adda & Cohen, (2011), Cryder & Cheema, 2013). However, the consensus among scholars is that the platform “provides diverse samples that are more representative of the general population than Internet samples collected via other means” and, further, that the “psychometric properties and effect sizes in findings with MTurk samples match those found with more traditional subject pools” (Cohen & Lancaster, 2014, p. 514). Consistent with prior research, it was presumed that the use of MTurk would allow the collection of data from people of a wide array family communication environments, who read an array of news and information sites, have varying ideological beliefs, and have varying knowledge about political information.

For this study, verification controls were used to ensure participants were located in the United States and were at least 18 years of age. Duplicate ID addresses were blocked from participating in the survey more than once. Additionally, there were questions in the survey used to screen participants. The first was that respondents were asked to provide their age, and if they responded that they were not between the ages of 18 and 22, they were blocked from continuing with the survey. The second was that participants were asked to select the highest level of education, and if they responded that they had not earned their high school diploma or GED, they

were blocked from continuing with the survey. The second requirement for respondents is that their minimum level of education must be the completion of high school. High school educations throughout the country are not nearly equal, however every state requires that students complete coursework in civics or social studies to graduate, but the amount of required coursework varies by state and municipality (Education Commission of the United States, 2017). There is no federal requirement for schools to provide media literacy education and it is again an element of curriculum up to the state or municipality to decide upon (Media Literacy Now, 2017). This minimum education requirement will ensure that those taking the survey have at least completed some amount of coursework that requires a basic understanding of the history of the United States and/or its political system and possibly education regarding media literacy. Participants were compensated \$0.50 for completing the survey. The survey was launched on March 1st, 2018 and was closed on March 5th, 2018.

Measures

Outcome Variable

The degree to which respondents could determine if a political news article was fake was assessed by creating a performance assessment within the survey. Prior to answering questions about perceptions of the media, partisanship, and family communication, participants were first shown a series of eight news articles, four of which were factual and four of which were fake. All eight of these articles had been published digitally. The two news sources used for the factual articles in the performance assessment were The New York Times and The Washington Post, while the two sources used for the false articles were YourNewsWire.com and AddictingInfo.com. The order of presentation of the articles was randomized during the design of the survey and each participant saw the articles in the same order. Participants were not given

any additional information about these articles including the number of real and fake articles or the news media sources that the articles were published on. Each article was presented the same format, a generic newspaper masthead created for the survey to neutralize the source in which the article originally came from. For the purpose of consistency, all of the articles used for this study pertained to the ongoing investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election cycle. This specific topic was chosen for the study because it is one has been covered in the news heavily since January 2017 and there is a plethora of information and varying opinions on the topic. This abundance of information convolutes the truth of the situation compared to other topics being covered in the news, why it is a good fit to use the topic for a study pertaining to fake news.

Respondents were asked to read each article and to decide if the article was true or false information. In addition to this, respondents were asked to rate their level of confidence in their decision about each article on a five-point Likert-type scale where 1=extremely confident and 5=extremely unconfident.

Family Communication Patterns

The family communication patterns of respondents were measured using the Revised Family Communication Pattern Instrument, which uses the dimensions of socio- and concept-orientation originally established by McLeod and Chaffee (1972) and revised by Ritchie and Fitzpatrick (1990). Respondents were asked to think about the communication they had with their parents during child (up until they turned 18 years old) when evaluating the items.

To measure concept-orientation specifically, respondents were asked to evaluate the following items: (1) *In our family we often talk about topics like politics and religion where some persons disagree with others;* (2) *My parents often say something like “Every member of*

the family should have some say in family decisions.”; (3) My parents often ask my opinion when the family is talking about something; (4) My parents encourage me to challenge their ideas and beliefs; (5) My parents often say something like, “You should always look at both sides of an issue.”; (6) I usually tell my parents what I am thinking about things; (7) I can tell my parents almost anything; (8) In our family we often talk about our feelings and emotions; (9) My parents and I often have long, relaxed conversations about nothing in particular; (10) I really enjoy talking with my parents, even when we disagree; (11) My parents like to hear my opinions, even when they don’t agree with me; (12) My parents encourage me to express my feelings; (13) My parents tend to be very open about their emotions; (14) We often talk as a family about things we have done during the day; and (15) In our family we often talk about our plans and hopes for the future. All items were on a seven-point Likert-type scale where 1=strongly agree and 7=strongly disagree.

To measure socio-orientation specifically, respondents were asked to evaluate the following items: (1) *My parents often say something like “You’ll know better when you grow up.”; (2) My parents often say something like “My ideas are rights and you should not question them; (3) My parents often say something like “A child should not argue with adults.”; (4) My parents often say something like “There are some things that just shouldn’t be talked about.”; (5) My parents often say something like “You should give in on arguments rather than risk making people mad.”; (6) When anything really important is involved, my parents expect me to obey without question; (7) In our home, my parents usually have the last word; (8) My parents feel that it is important to be the boss; (9) My parents sometimes become irritated with my views if they are different from theirs; (10) If my parents don’t approve of it, they don’t want to know*

about it; and (11) *When I am at home, I am expected to obey my parents' rules*. All items were on a seven-point Likert-type scale where 1=strongly agree and 7=strongly disagree.

Partisanship

The perceived ideological and political beliefs of respondents and their parents were measured using four items. Two of the questions asked respondents about their own ideology and that of their parents, specifically: (1) *Generally speaking, I am...*; and (2) *Generally speaking, the person(s) that raised me were...*. These items were on a seven-point Likert-type scale where 1=extremely liberal and 7=extremely conservative. Two questions asked about the United States political party respondents and their parents identify with, specifically: (1) *I identify as...*; and (2) *The person(s) that raised me identify as...*. The first of these items had the options of *Democrat, Independent, Republican and none of these* as responses and the second of the items had the options of *Democrat, Independent, Republican, Other, and Mixed* as responses.

Perceived Media Bias

Perceived media bias was broken into two measures, general media bias and perceived media liberal bias. This was measured using six items, all adapted from (Glynn & Huge, 2014). The first four of the items were used to measure media trust and the last two were used to measure if and how much the person perceives the media to be liberally biased. Specifically, respondents were asked to select how much they agree or disagree with the following statements about the media: (1) *The media is fair*; (2) *The media is accurate*; (3) *The media tells both sides of the story*; (4) *The media can be trusted*; (5) *The media is liberally biased*; and (6) *The media tends to be favorable towards the Democratic Party*. All items were on a seven-point Likert-type scale where 1=extremely confident and 7=extremely unconfident.

Control Variables

Various control factors were accounted for in the model. We assessed participant age (in years), biological sex, and estimated family annual income in dollars. Additionally, estimated time thinking about politics (1=very little attention, 7=a great deal of attention) and attention paid to the ongoing investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election (1=very little attention, 7=a great deal of attention) were also measured.

Descriptive statistics for continuous variables are reported below in Table 1. Nominal-level variables are reported in the below section on sample characteristics.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Continuous Variables

Variable Names	Means	SD	Cronbach's Alpha
Number of Correct Fake News IDs	5	1.4	--
Confidence	2.67	0.62	0.73
Conversation Orientation	3.39	1.28	0.94
Conformity Orientation	3.62	1.2	0.9
Media Trust	4.32	1.52	0.91
Liberal Bias	3.63	1.53	0.82
Income	3.58	1.75	--
Political Attention	4.21	1.6	--
Russian Investigation Attention	4.22	1.78	--
Participant Conservatism	3.55	1.71	--

Sample Characteristics

There were 301 completed survey responses. The age of the sample was as follows: 18 years old (1.66%), 19 years old (10.30%), 20 years old (19.27%), 21 years old (31.23%), and 22 years old (37.54%). The sample was predominantly male (59.80%). As it relates to political party identification, 40.20% of the sample identified as Democrat, 33.55% identified as Independent, 25.58% identified as Republican, and 1.66% identified as Other. The parents of the sample were

identified by respondents as follows: Democrat (65.45%), Independent (16.61%), Republican (35.54%), Other (1.99%), and Mixed (7.31%).

Analytic Approach

The research questions and hypothesis were explored using a series ordinary least squares (OLS) regression modeling. OLS regression models help researchers identify patterns between each independent variable and the dependent variable as well as any relationships that exist between the independent variables.

4. Results

Assessments of the Research Questions and Hypothesis

To see the distributions of the outcome variables, refer to the appendix (Appendix B).

Looking at the influences of the variables with peoples' ability to correctly identify fake news, the results indicated an insignificant relationship between conversation-orientation and ability to correctly identify fake news, ($b = 0.11, p > .05$) and a significant relationship between conformity-orientation and ability to correctly identify fake news ($b = 0.16, p < .05$). As it relates **Research Question 1**, it suggests that there is a relationship between family communication style type, specifically conformity-orientation and a young adult's ability to detect false political information. 7.73% of the total variance in news article identification accuracy was explained by the model.

Regarding the relationship between the variables studied and the confidence of young adults' in their ability to identify news, the results indicated a significant and negative relationship between conversation orientation and confidence in ability to detect fake news ($b = -0.11, p < .01$) and an insignificant relationship between conformity orientation and confidence in ability to detect fake news ($b = -0.06, p > .05$). 14.49% of the total variance in the outcome variable was explained by the model.

No significant relationship was found between a person's party identification and one's ability to correctly identify news ($b = -0.33, p > .05; b = -0.29, p > .05; b = -0.37, p > .05$), nor a person's level of conservatism and this ability ($b = -0.14, p > .05$). Additionally, no significant relationship was found between the party identification of a person's parent(s) and one's ability to correctly identify news ($b = -0.18, p > .05; b = -0.28, p > .05, b = -0.15, p > .05; b = 0.47, p > .05$). The study also indicates that there is no relationship between a person's party

identification ($b = -0.10, p > .05$; $b = -0.02, p > .05$; $b = -0.07, p > .05$) level of conservatism ($b = -0.00, p > .05$), or the party identification of their parents and the person's confidence in their assessment ($b = 0.05, p > .05$; $b = 0.05, p > .05$; $b = 0.04, p > .05$; $b = -0.22, p > .05$). Therefore, this study **answered Research Question 2** by indicating that there is no significant relationship between partisanship and ability to correctly identify news.

Hypothesis 1 suggested that there would be a negative relationship between a person's perceived media bias and ability to detect fake news. However, this was not confirmed to be significant by the data measuring media trust ($b = -0.03, p > .05$). nor the data measuring how liberally-biased respondents believe the media to be ($b = 0.08, p > .05$). Therefore, **Hypothesis 1 was not supported.**

Exploratory Analyses

To further understand the data, an additional model of OLS regression was performed. This regression model explored the degree to which participants were confident in making their assessment of a news article as "real" or "fake". The distribution of the confidence measure is shown in Appendix B.

The data measuring the relationship between media trust and confidence in ability suggests that the relationship is negative but insignificant ($b = -0.01, p > .05$). The data measuring one's belief that the media is liberally-biased and confidence in ability indicates a positive and again insignificant relationship between perceived media bias and confidence in ability to correctly identify news ($b = 0.02, p > .05$).

Though not suggested in research questions or hypotheses, there were two additional significant relationships found in the study. Data suggested that there is a significant and positive relationship between family income level and a young adults' ability to correctly identify fake news ($b = 0.12, p < .05$). The data also suggests that there is a significant and positive relationship between the amount of attention respondents paid to the ongoing Russian investigation and their confidence in their ability to identify fake news ($b = 0.06, p < .05$).

Table 1: Regression Model Predicting Ability to Correctly Identify News

Regression results using total number of news articles correctly identified as the criterion

Predictor	b	beta
Media Trust	-0.03	-0.04
Liberal Bias	0.08	0.09
Conversation Orientation	0.11	0.10
Conformity Orientation	0.16*	0.14
Democrat	-0.33	-0.12
Independent	-0.29	-0.10
No Party Identification	-0.37	-0.03
Conservative Ideology	-0.01	-0.02
General Political Attention	0.01	0.01
Attention to Russian Investigation	-0.04	-0.05
Parent Democrat	0.18	0.06
Parent Independent	-0.28	-0.07
Parent Other	-0.15	-0.01
Parent Mixed	0.47	0.09
Female	-0.29	-0.10
Income	0.12*	0.15
$R^2 = .077$		

Note. * indicates $p < .05$, ** indicates $p < .01$

Table 2: Regression Model Predicting Confidence in Ability to Correctly Identify News

Regression results using confidence in ability to correctly identify news as criterion

Predictor	b	beta
Media Trust	-0.01	-0.03

Liberal Bias	0.02	0.05
Conversation Orientation	-0.11**	-0.23
Conformity Orientation	-0.06	-0.11
Democrat	-0.10	-0.08
Independent	-0.02	-0.01
No Party Identification	-0.07	-0.01
Conservative Ideology	-0.00	-0.01
General Political Attention	0.03	0.07
Attention to Russian Investigation	0.06	0.17
Parent Democrat	0.05	0.04
Parent Independent	0.05	0.03
Parent Other	0.04	0.01
Parent Mixed	-0.22	-0.09
Female	-0.04	-0.03
Income	-0.01	-0.03
$R^2 = .145^{***}$		

Note. * indicates $p < .05$, ** indicates $p < .01$

5. Discussion

This study set out to better understand factors associated with a young adults' ability to identify fake news and confidence in their own ability to do so. Specifically, I questioned how family communication and partisanship are related to ability and confidence in ability and suggested that there was a negative relationship between a person's perceived media bias and ability to detect fake news. Four significant relationships were found between the predictor variables and outcome variables of interest, the first two being: there is a relationship conformity-orientation and ability to correctly identify fake news as well as between conversation-orientation and confidence in ability to correctly identify news. The third significant relationship found was between the amount of attention the sample paid to the ongoing investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election cycle and confidence in ability to correctly identify news. Finally, the fourth significant relationship is between income level and a person's ability to correctly identify news. It should also be noted that my hypothesis that there would be negative relationship between a person's perceived media bias and ability to detect fake news was not supported. The implications of these findings are discussed in the below paragraphs.

The results suggested that of the two kinds of family communication observed, conversation-orientation and conformity-orientation, only conformity-orientation was significantly related to a person's ability to correctly identify fake news. This relationship is positive, meaning that the more a respondent identified with being raised in a family that emphasized homogeneity in attitudes, beliefs and values, the stronger their ability to correctly identify news. This is consistent with Shulman and DeAndrea's (2014) study that also found significance between the type of conversation environment established and the similarity of a

person's political beliefs to that of their parents. However, their study found that the more a family communication encouraged conformity, the less an adolescent perceived their political beliefs to be like those of their parents. Pertaining to this study, young adults that were raised in an environment that promoted conformity were more able to correctly identify fake news. A possible explanation for this relationship may be that communication in the family that encourages conformity may provide young adults with a strong understanding of their own values and education from their parents, and this strong moral (and educational) compass then translates into their ability to successfully evaluate media correctly. Another possible explanation for this relationship builds upon Shulman and DeAndrea's (2014) findings. Young adults who were raised in a family that encouraged conformity and therefore likely feel distanced from their parents (in terms of political beliefs) may be more inclined to challenge ideas and develop different opinions. This ability to evaluate various political opinions may also span to one's interpretation of the media and strengthen their ability think critically about people's opinions and identify these biases in the political news media.

Conversely, when examining the confidence levels of young adults' in their own ability to detect fake news, only conversation-orientation was significantly related to this. This relationship was negative, meaning that the more a family creates a communication environment where all members feel comfortable to speak freely about a variety of topics, the less confident a young adult is in their ability to correctly identify news. Lee et. al (2013) found that informational media often acts as a stimulant for discussion among adolescents that can help increase civic engagement. Their study also found that the media is just one part of a larger network of environments that impact comprehension of politics. The current study builds upon this by examining how the family environment impacts comprehension of political media, and

finds that high conversation-orientation in families often leads to lower confidence in ability to correctly evaluate the media. Possible explanation for this is that in an environment where varying opinions are discussed and questioned, young adults may be overwhelmed by an array of reasoning. This may indicate the struggle these young adult's face of determining how to effectively evaluate situations with a plethora of opinions, such as the media landscape.

The research also indicates that respondents who paid more attention to the ongoing investigation about Russian interference were more confident in their own ability to correctly distinguish factual from fake news. A potential explanation for this relationship is that as someone pays more attention to a specific political topic or event, the more informed they are and able to distinguish what is factual versus what is incorrect information because they are up-to-date and familiar with that subject.

The fourth and final significant relationship observed in this study pertained to the positive relationship between income level and ability to correctly identify news. While not a central focus of this work, this relationship may illustrate the relationship between family wealth and education quality, and in doing so, suggest a relationship between resource availability and overall media literacy.

My hypothesis suggested that a higher perceived media bias would lead to a lower ability to correctly identify fake news, but was disproved through the research. This was hypothesized after synthesizing the findings of Eveland and Shah (2003) and Tully and Vraga (2017) whose studies found that partisanship can play a significant role in a person's perceived media bias and therefore, how they are interpreting the news. Though it was expected that a higher perceived media bias would lead to lower ability to correctly identify news, the results of this study indicate that higher perceived media bias actually increases a person's ability to evaluate news

correctly. A potential explanation for this is that if a person perceives the media to be very biased in one way or another, they may be cautious and skeptical about the media as a whole, which could motivate to them to seek out additional information to further investigate what is the truth.

Several factors limit the findings of this study. This study was cross-sectional in nature. Thus, while the identified relationships might have causal implications, I cannot make any claims related to cause and effect. An additional limitation is that this study used news articles all pertaining to one specific topic within political news (the ongoing investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election), which may have biased the observed relationships in unknown ways. The news articles used for the performance assessment section of the survey were all articles that have been published on this internet, so there is the possibility that some respondents researched these articles to obtain more information than this study provided about them, which would skew the data. Lastly, another limitation of this study was the use of Amazon Mechanical Turk, as discussed in the methods section.

Based on the current findings, there are several opportunities for further research. First, each of the measures in this study could be improved and studied more specifically in separate studies. Second, it may be of importance to gain further understand the ways in which both conformity-orientation and conversation-orientation impact the way in which a person interprets media and their confidence in doing so. This study found significance in each of these variables, but there is opportunity to expand upon both the breadth and depth of the ways they relate to interpretation of media. Finally, additional research into the role a persons' attention to a specific topic into the media plays in self-confidence in their ability to identify news correctly may also be beneficial. In this case, subjects who paid more attention to the Russian interference in the election investigation felt more confident about this ability, but it is not yet known if this is

consistent among various topics throughout the political news media, or if it varies based on the topic.

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Appendixes

A. Ritchie and Fitzpatrick's Revised Family Communication Patterns (RFCP) Instrument, 1990

The Revised Family Communication Pattern Instrument

Conversation-orientation (alpha = .84)

In our family we often talk about topics like politics and religion where some persons disagree with others.

My parents often say something like "Every member of the family should have some say in family decisions."

My parents often ask my opinion when the family is talking about something.

My parents encourage me to challenge their ideas and beliefs.

My parents often say something like "You should always look at both sides of an issue."

I usually tell my parents what I am thinking about things.

I can tell my parents almost anything.

In our family we often talk about our feelings and emotions.

My parents and I often have long, relaxed conversations about nothing in particular.

I really enjoy talking with my parents, even when we disagree.

My parents like to hear my opinions, even when they don't agree with me.

My parents encourage me to express my feelings.

My parents tend to be very open about their emotions.

We often talk as a family about things we have done during the day.

In our family we often talk about our plans and hopes for the future.

Conformity-orientation (alpha = .76)

My parents often say something like "You'll know better when you grow up."

My parents often say something like "My ideas are right and you should not question them."

My parents often say something like "A child should not argue with adults."

My parents often say something like "There are some things that just shouldn't be talked about."

My parents often say something like "You should give in on arguments rather than risk making people mad."

When anything really important is involved, my parents expect me to obey without question.

In our home, my parents usually have the last word.

My parents feel that it is important to be the boss.

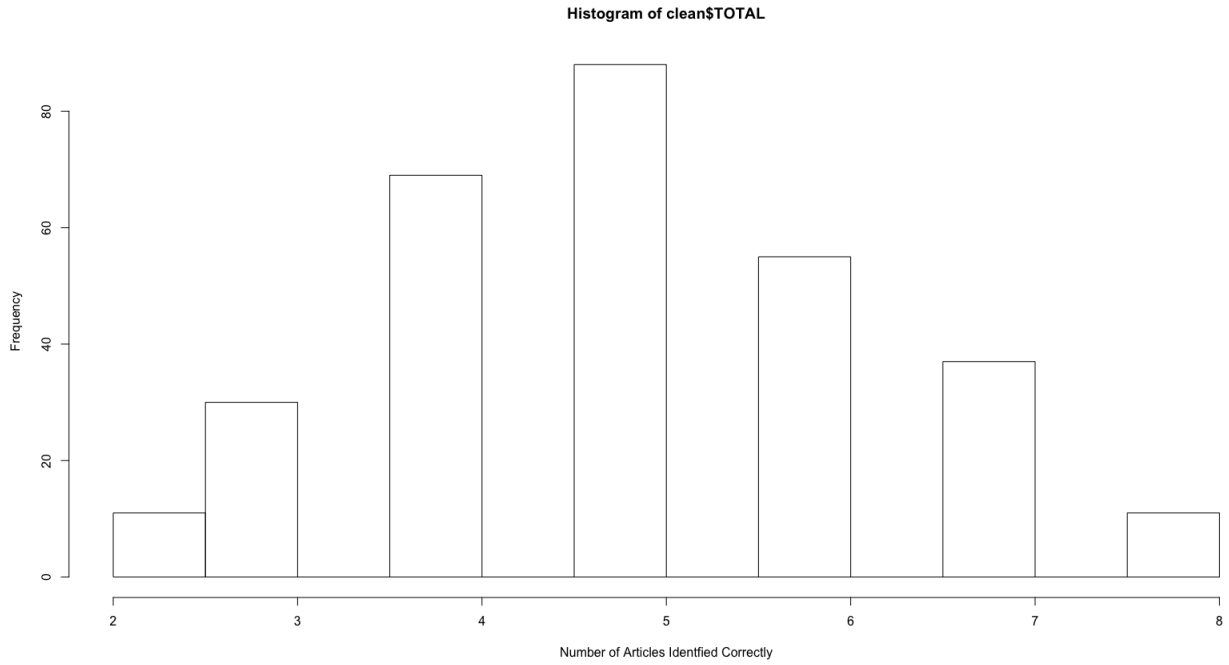
My parents sometimes become irritated with my views if they are different from theirs.

If my parents don't approve of it, they don't want to know about it.

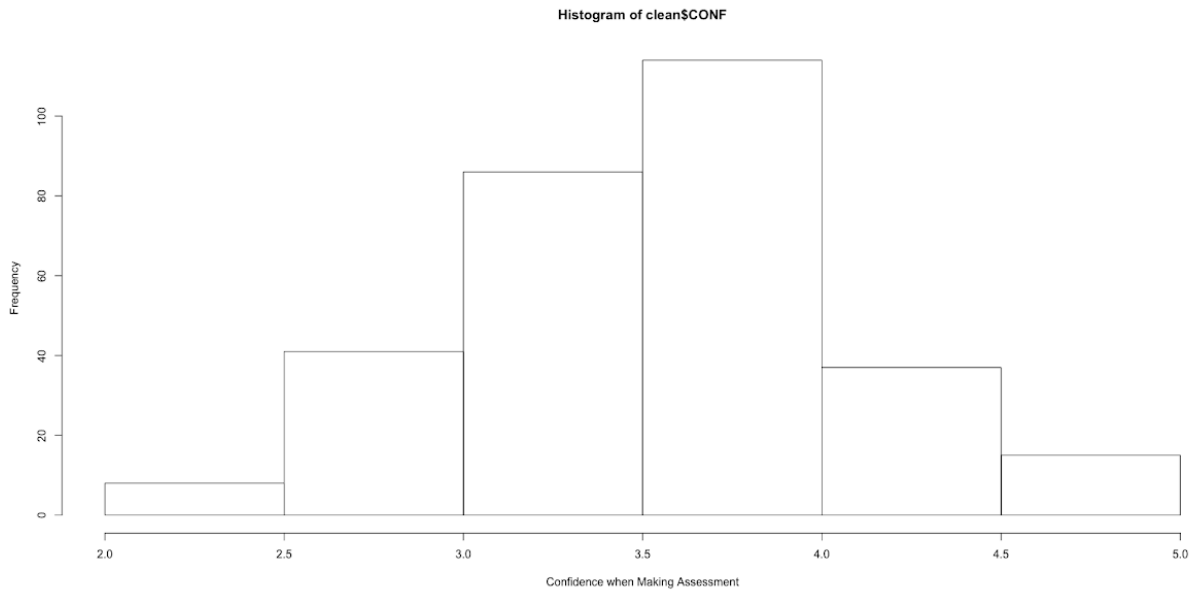
When I am at home, I am expected to obey my parents' rules.

B. Histograms of Distributions of Outcome Variables

Histogram of Total Number of Articles Identified Correctly



Histogram of Confidence when Making Assessment



C. IRB Letter of Approval



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APPROVAL

26-Feb-2018

Dear Maggie Crean,

On **26-Feb-2018** the IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Submission:	Initial Application
Review Category:	Exempt - Category 2
Title:	The Influences of Political Socialization on Young Adults' Ability to Identify Fake News
Investigator:	Crean, Maggie
Protocol #:	18-0105
Funding:	None
Documents Approved:	18-0105 Protocol (26Feb18); Survey - Mechanical Turk (26Feb18); Survey - Qualtrics (26Feb18); Supporting Doc 3: Consent Forms; Supporting Doc 4: Recruitment Materials;
Documents Reviewed:	Protocol; HRP-211: FORM - Initial Application v8;
Notes:	- The IRB has administratively removed errant information from the Protocol and Survey Documents. This information was to have been removed in your Response Submission. Please ensure all IRB requirements are met - use only the Approved documents in carrying out your study.

The IRB approved the protocol on **26-Feb-2018**.

Click the link to find the approved documents for this protocol: [Summary Page](#) Use copies of these documents to conduct your research.

In conducting this protocol you must follow the requirements listed in the [INVESTIGATOR MANUAL \(HRP-103\)](#).

Sincerely,
Douglas Grafel
IRB Admin Review Coordinator
Institutional Review Board

D. Survey

Start of Block: Informed Consent

This is a survey that aims to better understand people's knowledge of political news media. To participate in this study, you must be between the ages of 18 and 22. You also must have graduated high school or earned your GED. The survey will take about 15 minutes to complete. Please answer the questions as honestly as possible.

Welcome to the research study!

We are interested in understanding political news media. You will be presented with information relevant to political news media and asked to answer some questions about it. Please be assured that your responses will be kept completely confidential.

The study should take you around 10 minutes to complete, and you will receive \$0.50 for your participation. Your participation in this research is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any point during the study, for any reason, and without any prejudice. If you would like to contact the Principal Investigator in the study to discuss this research, please e-mail maggie.crean@colorado.edu.

By clicking the button below, you acknowledge that your participation in the study is voluntary, you are 18 years of age, and that you are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation in the study at any time and for any reason.

Please note that this survey will be best displayed on a laptop or desktop computer. Some features may be less compatible for use on a mobile device.

- I consent, begin the study (1)
- I do not consent, I do not wish to participate (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If Welcome to the research study! We are interested in understanding political news media. You... = I do not consent, I do not wish to participate

Page Break

Please select your age:

▼ under 18 (1) ... over 22 (7)

Skip To: End of Survey If Please select your age: = under 18

Skip To: End of Survey If Please select your age: = over 22

Page Break

Please select your highest level of education:

- Some high school, not completed (1)
- High school diploma or GED (2)
- Some college, not completed (3)
- Some college, in progress (4)
- Associate's Degree (5)
- Bachelor's Degree (6)
- Master's Degree or Higher (7)
- Click to write Choice 8 (8)

Skip To: End of Survey If Please select your highest level of education: = Some high school, not completed

Please select the state in which you have spent the majority of your childhood (ages 0-18) in:

▼ Alabama (1) ... Wyoming (50)

Page Break

Next you will be shown a series of news articles. For each one, please read each one and select if you believe the article is true or false. Then, rate your level of confidence in your decision.

Continue (1)

Please read the following article and answer the questions below.

The News

THE LATEST: NUNES SAYS THERE'S 'NO EVIDENCE OF COLLUSION'

WASHINGTON — The Latest on President Donald Trump and the FBI (all times local):

12:10 a.m.

The lawmaker who pushed the release of a previously classified memo that some Republicans say shows there is FBI abuse of surveillance says there's "no evidence of collusion" between President Donald Trump and Russia. House Intelligence Committee Chairman Devin Nunes told Fox News that Attorney General Jeff Sessions, Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein and FBI Director Christopher Wray "have work to do" rooting out problems at the FBI. Nunes would not say if they should be fired.



6:30 p.m.

House Intelligence Committee Chairman Devin Nunes says there's "no evidence of collusion" between President Donald Trump and Russia.

Nunes is leading a House investigation into that subject, but the panel has yet to issue its report. The California Republican was speaking on Fox News about a previously classified memo released by his committee today. The memo was designed to expose what Republicans say is FBI abuse of surveillance warrants.

Is this article true or false information?

- True information (1)
 - False information (2)
-

How confident are you about your decision of whether the article is true or false?

- Extremely confident (1)
 - Confident (2)
 - Neither confident nor unconfident (3)
 - Unconfident (4)
 - Extremely unconfident (5)
-

Page Break

Please read the following article and answer the questions below.

The News

THE SLEAZY SHOT TRUMP JUST TOOK AT MANAFORT PROVES HE'S TERRIFIED

It was just revealed today that Federal agents conducted a pre-dawn raid late last month at a house owned by former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort and that has apparently sent a chill down Donald Trump's spine because his former colleague could flip on him. And it should because of Manafort's dubious past. Trump's former campaign chairman also attended the meeting last year at

Trump Tower with a Russian lawyer who promised damaging information on Hillary Clinton. Donald Trump Jr. released emails last month which detailed how that meeting was arranged. Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law, also attended the meeting.



For years, Trump has been in bed with the National Enquirer, a fake news rag sold in supermarkets. Just after the Manafort news was reported, the Enquirer tweeted out their latest hit-post, "Donald Trump Advisor Paul Manafort Caught Up In Sick Sex Scandal!"

Is this article true or false information?

- True information (1)
- False information (2)

How confident are you about your decision of whether the article is true or false?

- Extremely confident (1)
- Confident (2)
- Neither confident nor unconfident (3)
- Unconfident (4)
- Extremely unconfident (5)

Page Break

Please read the following article and answer the questions below.

The News

CIA AGENT: MICHAEL FLYNN WAS OUSTED AFTER OBTAINING DC PEDOPHILE LIST



A former CIA agent says that General Michael Flynn was ousted from the White House after obtaining a Washington DC pedophile list naming high-level politicians who belong to a DC pedo ring.

According to Robert David Steele, Flynn was actually fired after he obtained a list of names, some of whom the FBI were actively investigating in connection to the Pizzagate scandal, and one of whom was Vice President Mike Pence's "best friend."

The former CIA officer says that there are locations in Washington DC and Saudi Arabia where children are routinely "ordered" and trafficked to highly placed politicians operating in the Capitol.

Is this article true or false information?

- True information (1)
 - False information (2)
-

How confident are you about your decision of whether the article is true or false?

- Extremely confident (1)
- Confident (2)
- Neither confident nor unconfident (3)
- Unconfident (4)
- Extremely unconfident (5)

Page Break

Please read the following article and answer the questions below.

The News

BUSTED: LEAKED DOCUMENTS PROVE TRUMP TOOK LAUNDERED MONEY FROM RUSSIAN BANK



Convincing President Trump to release his tax returns is proving slightly more difficult than we initially anticipated, but that doesn't mean there haven't been any signs of success from taking the longer route. Take, for example, a 98-page document recently released by the United States Office of Government Ethics.

The document, available in its entirety [here](#), clearly shows that not only is Donald Trump outright profiting from the presidency, a direct violation of the Emoluments Clause of the United States Constitution but also that he is in debt to several banks, both domestic and foreign.

Although shocking news, none of this particularly comes as a surprise, more or less just confirms what most of us already suspected. However, it's when you delve into the details that you discover the true significance of the President's possible under-the-table actions.

Is this article true or false information?

- True information (1)
- False information (2)

How confident are you about your decision of whether the article is true or false?

- Extremely confident (1)
- Confident (2)
- Neither confident nor unconfident (3)
- Unconfident (4)
- Extremely unconfident (5)

Page Break

Please read the following article and answer the questions below.

The News

TONY PODESTA ARRESTED: INDICTMENTS ISSUED AGAINST HILLARY CLINTON & JOHN PODESTA

Democrat lobbyist Tony Podesta was arrested Saturday night and taken into custody by the U.S. Marshals office as new indictments were also issued against Hillary Clinton and John Podesta.



Tony Podesta is the founder of the Podesta Group and brother of John Podesta, Hillary Clinton's former campaign chair. He was forced to resign earlier this week amid an ongoing criminal investigation by special counsel Robert Mueller, as rumors swirled that a sealed indictment may have been issued against him.

According to sources within the U.S. Marshals Office, Tony voluntarily handed himself in late on Saturday night on the basis that there would be no media coverage of his arrest.

Lawyers for Hillary Clinton and John Podesta are pleading with Mueller to keep their indictments sealed and have similarly agreed to hand themselves in next week under the same agreement.

Is this article true or false information?

- True information (1)
 - False information (2)
-

How confident are you about your decision of whether the article is true or false?

- Extremely confident (1)
- Confident (2)
- Neither confident nor unconfident (3)
- Unconfident (4)
- Extremely unconfident (5)

Page Break

Please read the following article and answer the questions below.

The News

HOW THE RUSSIA INQUIRY BEGAN: A CAMPAIGN AIDE, DIRNKS AND TALK OF POLITICAL DIRT



WASHINGTON — During a night of heavy drinking at an upscale London bar in May 2016, George Papadopoulos, a young foreign policy adviser to the Trump campaign, made a startling revelation to Australia’s top diplomat in Britain: Russia had political dirt on Hillary Clinton.

About three weeks earlier, Mr. Papadopoulos had been told that Moscow had thousands of emails that would embarrass Mrs. Clinton, apparently stolen in an effort to try to damage her campaign.

Exactly how much Mr. Papadopoulos said that night at the Kensington Wine Rooms with the Australian, Alexander Downer, is unclear. But two months later, [when leaked Democratic emails began appearing online](#), Australian officials passed the information about Mr. Papadopoulos to their American counterparts, according to four current and former American and foreign officials with direct knowledge of the Australians’ role.

Is this article true or false information?

- True information (1)
- False information (2)
-

How confident are you about your decision of whether the article is true or false?

- Extremely confident (1)
- Confident (2)
- Neither confident nor unconfident (3)
- Unconfident (4)
- Extremely unconfident (5)

Page Break

Please read the following article and answer the questions below.

The News

ANOTHER TRUMP AIDE IS REPORTEDLY POINTING TO WRONGDOING IN THE RUSSIA INVESTIGATION



Chris Christie argued this week that special counsel Robert S. Mueller III's investigation didn't have enough evidence of a crime to warrant President Trump granting him an interview. "I don't think the president of the United States, unless there are credible allegations — which I don't believe there are — should be sitting across from a special counsel," the former New Jersey governor said.

On Wednesday night, we learned of another example of someone in Trump's orbit pointing to possible wrongdoing.

The New York Times reports Mark Corallo, a former spokesman for Trump's legal team, is preparing to tell Mueller he witnessed something directly involving Trump that could be construed as an attempt to commit a crime. On a call with Trump and communications director Hope Hicks, Corallo will reportedly tell Mueller, Hicks said something that suggested a plot to obstruct justice surrounding Donald Trump Jr.'s meeting with a Russian lawyer:

Mr. Corallo is planning to tell Mr. Mueller about a previously undisclosed conference call with Mr. Trump and Hope Hicks, the White House communications director, according to the three people. Mr. Corallo planned to tell investigators that Ms. Hicks said during the call that emails written by Donald Trump Jr. before the Trump Tower meeting — in which the younger Mr. Trump said he was eager to receive political dirt about Mrs. Clinton from the Russians — "will never get out". That left Mr. Corallo with concerns that Ms. Hicks could be contemplating obstructing justice, the people said.

Ms. Hicks issued a flat denial of the claim, with her lawyer Robert P. Trout saying, "She never said that".

Is this article true or false information?

- True information (1)
- False information (2)

How confident are you about your decision of whether the article is true or false?

- Extremely confident (1)
- Confident (2)
- Neither confident nor unconfident (3)
- Unconfident (4)
- Extremely unconfident (5)

Page Break

EMAILS DISPUTE WHITE HOUSE CLAIMS THAT FLYNN ACTED INDEPENDENTLY ON RUSSIA



WASHINGTON — When President Trump fired his national security adviser, Michael T. Flynn, in February, White House officials portrayed him as a renegade who had acted independently in his discussions with a Russian official during the presidential transition and then lied to his colleagues about the interactions.

But emails among top transition officials, provided or described to The New York Times, suggest that Mr. Flynn was far from a rogue actor. In fact, the emails, coupled with interviews and court documents filed on Friday, showed that Mr. Flynn was in close touch with other senior members of the

Trump transition team both before and after he spoke with the Russian ambassador, Sergey I. Kislyak, about American sanctions against Russia.

Is this article true or false information?

- True information (1)
 - False information (2)
-

How confident are you about your decision of whether the article is true or false?

- Extremely confident (1)
 - Confident (2)
 - Neither confident nor unconfident (3)
 - Unconfident (4)
 - Extremely unconfident (5)
-

Page Break

Please select how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

The media is fair.

- Strongly agree (8)
 - Agree (9)
 - Somewhat agree (10)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (13)
 - Somewhat disagree (14)
 - Disagree (15)
 - Strongly disagree (16)
-

The media is accurate.

- Strongly agree (1)
 - Agree (2)
 - Somewhat agree (3)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - Somewhat disagree (5)
 - Disagree (6)
 - Strongly disagree (7)
-

The media tells both sides of the story.

- Strongly agree (1)
 - Agree (2)
 - Somewhat agree (3)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - Somewhat disagree (5)
 - Disagree (6)
 - Strongly disagree (7)
-

The media can be trusted.

- Strongly agree (1)
 - Agree (2)
 - Somewhat agree (3)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - Somewhat disagree (5)
 - Disagree (6)
 - Strongly disagree (7)
-

The media is liberally biased.

- Strongly agree (1)
 - Agree (2)
 - Somewhat agree (3)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - Somewhat disagree (5)
 - Disagree (6)
 - Strongly disagree (7)
-

The media tends to be favorable towards the Democratic Party.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Somewhat agree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat disagree (5)
- Disagree (6)
- Strongly disagree (7)

Page Break

For the next set of questions, please think about the communication you had with your parents during your childhood (up until you turned 18 years old). For each statement, select how much this related to the communication you and your parents had, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

In our family we often talk about topics like politics and religion where some persons disagree with others.

- Strongly agree (1)
 - Agree (2)
 - Somewhat agree (3)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - Somewhat disagree (5)
 - Disagree (6)
 - Strongly disagree (7)
-

My parents often say something like "Every member of the family should have some say in family decisions."

- Strongly agree (1)
 - Agree (2)
 - Somewhat agree (3)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - Somewhat disagree (5)
 - Disagree (6)
 - Strongly disagree (7)
-

My parents often ask my opinion when the family is talking about something.

- Strongly agree (1)
 - Agree (2)
 - Somewhat agree (3)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - Somewhat disagree (5)
 - Disagree (6)
 - Strongly disagree (7)
-

My parents encourage me to challenge their ideas and beliefs.

- Strongly agree (1)
 - Agree (2)
 - Somewhat agree (3)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - Somewhat disagree (5)
 - Disagree (6)
 - Strongly disagree (7)
-

My parents often say something like, "You should always look at both sides of an issue."

- Strongly agree (1)
 - Agree (2)
 - Somewhat agree (3)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - Somewhat disagree (5)
 - Disagree (6)
 - Strongly disagree (7)
-

I usually tell my parents what I am thinking about things.

- Strongly agree (1)
 - Agree (2)
 - Somewhat agree (3)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - Somewhat disagree (5)
 - Disagree (6)
 - Strongly disagree (7)
-

I can tell my parents almost anything.

- Strongly agree (1)
 - Agree (2)
 - Somewhat agree (3)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - Somewhat disagree (5)
 - Disagree (6)
 - Strongly disagree (7)
-

In our family we often talk about our feelings and emotions.

- Strongly agree (1)
 - Agree (2)
 - Somewhat agree (3)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - Somewhat disagree (5)
 - Disagree (6)
 - Strongly disagree (7)
-

My parents and I often have long, relaxed conversations about nothing in particular.

- Strongly agree (1)
 - Agree (2)
 - Somewhat agree (3)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - Somewhat disagree (5)
 - Disagree (6)
 - Strongly disagree (7)
-

I really enjoy talking with my parents, even when we disagree.

- Strongly agree (1)
 - Agree (2)
 - Somewhat agree (3)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - Somewhat disagree (5)
 - Disagree (6)
 - Strongly disagree (7)
-

My parents like to hear my opinions, even when they don't agree with me.

- Strongly agree (1)
 - Agree (2)
 - Somewhat agree (3)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - Somewhat disagree (5)
 - Disagree (6)
 - Strongly disagree (7)
-

My parents encourage me to express my feelings.

- Strongly agree (1)
 - Agree (2)
 - Somewhat agree (3)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - Somewhat disagree (5)
 - Disagree (6)
 - Strongly disagree (7)
-

My parents tend to be very open about their emotions.

- Strongly agree (1)
 - Agree (2)
 - Somewhat agree (3)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - Somewhat disagree (5)
 - Disagree (6)
 - Strongly disagree (7)
-

We often talk as a family about things we have done during the day.

- Strongly agree (1)
 - Agree (2)
 - Somewhat agree (3)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - Somewhat disagree (5)
 - Disagree (6)
 - Strongly disagree (7)
-

In our family we often talk about our plans and hopes for the future.

- Strongly agree (1)
 - Agree (2)
 - Somewhat agree (3)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - Somewhat disagree (5)
 - Disagree (6)
 - Strongly disagree (7)
-

Page Break

Again, for the next set of questions, please think about the communication you had with your parents during your childhood (up until you turned 18 years old). For each statement, select how much this related to the communication you and your parents had, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

My parents often say something like "You'll know better when you grow up."

- Strongly agree (1)
 - Agree (2)
 - Somewhat agree (3)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - Somewhat disagree (5)
 - Disagree (6)
 - Strongly disagree (7)
-

My parents often say something like "My ideas are rights and you should not question them."

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Somewhat agree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat disagree (5)
- Disagree (6)
- Strongly disagree (7)

My parents often say something like "A child should not argue with adults."

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Somewhat agree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat disagree (5)
- Disagree (6)
- Strongly disagree (7)

My parents often say something like "There are some things that just shouldn't be talked about."

- Strongly agree (1)
 - Agree (2)
 - Somewhat agree (3)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - Somewhat disagree (5)
 - Disagree (6)
 - Strongly disagree (7)
-

My parents often say something like "You should give in on arguments rather than risk making people mad."

- Strongly agree (1)
 - Agree (2)
 - Somewhat agree (3)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - Somewhat disagree (5)
 - Disagree (6)
 - Strongly disagree (7)
-

When anything really important is involved, my parents expect me to obey without question."

- Strongly agree (1)
 - Agree (2)
 - Somewhat agree (3)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - Somewhat disagree (5)
 - Disagree (6)
 - Strongly disagree (7)
-

In our home, my parents usually have the last word.

- Strongly agree (1)
 - Agree (2)
 - Somewhat agree (3)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - Somewhat disagree (5)
 - Disagree (6)
 - Strongly disagree (7)
-

My parents feel that it is important to be the boss.

- Strongly agree (1)
 - Agree (2)
 - Somewhat agree (3)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - Somewhat disagree (5)
 - Disagree (6)
 - Strongly disagree (7)
-

My parents sometimes become irritated with my views if they are different from theirs.

- Strongly agree (1)
 - Agree (2)
 - Somewhat agree (3)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - Somewhat disagree (5)
 - Disagree (6)
 - Strongly disagree (7)
-

If my parents don't approve of it, they don't want to know about it.

- Strongly agree (1)
 - Agree (2)
 - Somewhat agree (3)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - Somewhat disagree (5)
 - Disagree (6)
 - Strongly disagree (7)
-

When I am at home, I am expected to obey my parents' rules.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Somewhat agree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat disagree (5)
- Disagree (6)
- Strongly disagree (7)

Page Break

Generally speaking, I am...

- Extremely liberal (1)
 - Liberal (2)
 - Somewhat liberal (3)
 - Moderate (4)
 - Somewhat conservative (5)
 - Conservative (6)
 - Extremely Conservative (7)
-

I identify as...

- Democrat (1)
 - Independent (2)
 - Republican (3)
 - None of these (4)
-

Please select the type of household you grew up in.

- Mother and Father (1)
 - Mother, single parent (2)
 - Father, single parent (3)
 - Mother and Mother (4)
 - Father and Father (5)
 - Raised by person(s) other than parents (6)
-

Generally speaking, the person(s) that raised me were...

- Extremely liberal (1)
 - Liberal (2)
 - Somewhat liberal (3)
 - Moderate (4)
 - Somewhat conservative (5)
 - Conservative (6)
 - Extremely conservative (7)
-

The person(s) that raised me identify as...

- Republican (1)
- Democrat (2)
- Independent (3)
- Other (4)
- Mixed (5)

Page Break

Please select your gender.

- Male (1)
 - Female (2)
 - Prefer not to disclose (3)
-

Please select your family income level.

- Less than \$24,999 (1)
 - \$24,999-\$34,999 (2)
 - \$35,000-\$49,999 (3)
 - \$50,000-\$74,999 (4)
 - \$75,000-\$99,999 (5)
 - \$100,000-\$149,999 (6)
 - \$150,000-\$199,999 (7)
 - More than \$200,000 (8)
-

About how much time do you spend thinking about politics?

- 1 (very little attention) (1)
 - 2 (2)
 - 3 (3)
 - 4 (4)
 - 5 (5)
 - 6 (6)
 - 7 (A great deal of attention) (7)
-

About how much attention would you say that you paid to the ongoing investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election?

- 1 (very little attention) (1)
 - 2 (2)
 - 3 (3)
 - 4 (4)
 - 5 (5)
 - 6 (6)
 - 7 (A great deal of attention) (7)
-

Page Break

End of Block: Informed Consent

Start of Block: Survey ID

Your survey ID number is:

C09LMP

Your survey ID number is:

B90LMP

Your survey ID number is:

DX78PL

Your survey ID number is:

P9856BX

Your survey ID number is:

B96CRD

End of Block: Survey ID
