**Appendix for: "Partisan Media Exposure and Attitudes Toward the Opposition"**

**Replicating Experiment 2 with a Left-Wing Clip**

Experiment 2 only uses a right-wing clip discussing the President's foreign policy. As I explained in the text, there are good reasons to do so. But one concern is that these results might be somewhat less robust: perhaps there is just something off about that particular right-wing clip. To verify that my results are not simply the function of looking at one particular clip, I verified the results of experiment 2 with a separate left-wing clip that criticizes the foreign policy of congressional Republicans.[1] Here, I want to verify that Democrats view Republicans less positively overall, and are more critical of their leadership, after seeing this clip. Table A1 tests this hypothesis with the data for Democrats, given that the effects are concentrated in like-minded viewers.

[Insert table A1 about here]

Table A1 shows that Democrats view Republicans less positively overall, and think they are less effective leaders, after watching the treatment clip (relative to an apolitical control clip). The findings in experiment 2 are not simply a function of that one particular clip, but rather are a more general product of the types of stories presented on partisan media.

**What Happens When Subjects Watch Positive Clips?**

The clips used in the experiments described in the body of the paper reflect the typical content on partisan media: they spend some time praising their own side, but they spend

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[1] The segment initially aired on *The Rachel Maddow Show* on 5 October 2009.

even more criticizing the opposition. So Fox News applauds Republicans, but they really focus on hammering Democrats (and vice-versa on left-wing TV). But what happens when subjects watch a clip that is purely focused on praising their own side? Though this is outside the mold of the norm on these shows (as the content analysis above discusses), it provides a valuable test of my theory. I would expect (consistent with H2) that the purely positive clips would have little impact on behavior and attitudes for anyone watching them.

To test this expectation, I conducted another experiment where I randomly exposed subjects to either a positive clip about President Obama from *The Rachel Maddow Show* or an apolitical control clip. The treatment clip praised President Obama's decision to bailout GM and Chrysler, discussing how it showed real leadership, saved thousands of jobs, and now has produced positive economic benefits to taxpayers, because GM has had record profits, and taxpayers own a large stake in the company. This clip was cut so that it only focused on the positive side to the president's decision, and did not include material from the original airing that critiqued Republicans who at the time criticized the President's bailout plan.[2] This should give me a clean test of my hypothesis that such positive clips should have relatively limited effects. Table A2 tests this hypothesis.

[Insert table A2 about here]

As table A2 shows, there is little effect on Obama affect for Democrats or for Republicans. As column 3 shows, even when we look at Republicans who trust MSNBC we find no effect. This is consistent with my argument in the paper that positive messages are processed differently, and at least from this type of short-term exposure, there is little

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[2] The segment initially aired on 24 February 2011.

effect on subjects attitudes.[3] As with the experiments included in the body of the paper, a post-test manipulation check suggests that subjects can detect the partisan slant of the clips (one-way ANOVA gives $F(1,139) = 13.51$, $p < 0.01$), so these null results cannot be attributed to subjects simply missing the partisan slant of the clips. While one can never definitively demonstrate a null effect, these results (where the manipulation worked but produced no effect on the outcome variable) suggest that this type of message has little affect on politician affect.

But do these type of segments have any effect on viewers? We might expect them, consistent with broader theories of media exposure, to change respondents' beliefs about factual issues. In the post-test survey, I asked respondents whether the bailouts had helped or hurt the economy. Given that the treatment segment unambiguously argued that they helped the economy, one might expect to find a positive learning effect here. Table A3 gives the results.

[Insert table A3 about here]

The results here show evidence of learning in the aggregate (column 1), with that effect concentrated among Democrats rather than Republicans (columns 2 and 3). Further, as column 5 shows, there is an effect among Republicans, but that effect is concentrated among those who find MSNBC to be a credible source. These types of shows can affect viewer learning about political issues.

Together, the findings above demonstrate that these types of clips can matter, because they affect what citizens know about politics (consistent with the claim that TV

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[3] Though prolonged, repeated exposure to this sort of message may have effects. This is beyond the scope of the current project, but provides an interesting possibility for future follow-up work.

can educate viewers, see, e.g., Graber 2001). But this learning then has little effect on affect toward political figures, consistent with my theoretical argument about how subjects process and respond to this type of information. This nicely complements the findings presented in the body of the paper on segments with a more hostile treatment of the opposing party.

**Do these Effects Reflect Randomization Bias?**

As I discussed in the paper, one concern is that my effects reflect assigning treatment to subjects who would never voluntarily take it in the real world. So my results might be driven by, say, assigning apolitical subjects to watch partisan media sources, something they would never do in the real world. In this case, it is not clear what these results mean. Scholars call this phenomenon "randomization bias," because the act of randomization without respect to whether subjects would actually take the treatment in the real world induces a type of bias (Heckman and Smith 1995).

To address this limitation, I conducted something known as a patient preference trial (see AUTHOR CITE for more details). This involves soliciting subjects' preferred treatment in the pre-test and then randomly assigning them to a treatment. Elsewhere, I have verified that these preferred treatments are highly indicative of actual behavior in the real world: subjects who prefer a treatment are much more likely to actually watch it in the real world (AUTHOR CITE). I can then examine if preferring a treatment (i.e., actually using it in the real world) changes the effectiveness of the treatment in the experimental context. Table A4 replicates table 1 in the paper (analysis of the feeling thermometer data) but includes the measures of preferences.

[Insert table A5 about here]

As table A4 shows, treatment preferences do not condition the effectiveness of the randomly assigned treatments (e.g., the interaction terms are all statistically insignificant). So here, there is no difference between regular viewers and non-viewers in the effectiveness of the partisan media treatments. Interestingly, all subjects respond the same way to these affective rating items. Indeed, re-examining the data from both experiments, there are no cases of randomization bias. That is, there are no cases where the effects exist only for those who prefer not to see partisan media.

**Experimental Details**

This section gives an overview of each experiment and the specific items used in the analysis.

**Experiment 1**

Experiment 1 tests the effects of partisan media on attitudes toward the other party and related features of politics. Subjects are recruited online from Amazon's Mechanical Turk web service (mturk.amazon.com) and offered a small cash payment for completing the study (this study took approximately 8-9 minutes, subjects were paid $1.50 for completing it). Before beginning the actual study, all online subjects pass a small screening test to ensure that they can actually watch Flash videos on their computers (the

treatment clips are shown to respondents in Flash); only those who successfully complete

the screener actually complete the study.[4] Study 1 was completed 20-21 October 2010.

Both experiments 1 and 2 follow the same basic protocol: they begin with some

background items, exposure to the stimulus, and then answer the post-test attitude

extremity items. The subjects are still a non-random sample, but are somewhat more

heterogeneous (especially in terms of age) than the typical laboratory experiment. The

sample in experiment 1 is 66% female, 42% are ages 18-29, 47% have a college degree,

and 82% are Caucasian.

Online subjects pools such as Mechanical Turk are relatively new to political

science, so some readers may be skeptical of them. Work examining the quality of

Mechanical Turk subjects, however, suggests that these individuals are at least as

attentive as convenience laboratory samples, and more representative of the general

population (Buhrmester, Kwang, and Gosling 2011; Berinsky, Huber, and Lenz 2012;

Paolacci, Chandler, and Ipeirotis 2010). Work using Mechanical Turk subjects has now

been published in several psychology journals (e.g., Alter et al. 2010; Eriksson and

Simpson 2010), and other studies have replicated existing findings using this data source

(Berinsky, Huber, and Lenz 2012; Paolacci, Chander, and Iperirotis 2010). While more

work will be needed to see how Turk subjects perform at different kinds of tasks, the

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[4] The screening test has subjects watch a short video clip (approximately 30 seconds) from a popular

television show and then complete a brief quiz about said clip. In order to successfully complete the quiz,

subjects must be able to both see and hear the video clip.

results here suggest they offer exciting possibilities for experimentation beyond the traditional laboratory setting.[5]

Measures of Partisan Trust:

All subjects see both versions of the following item, which then form the same/opposite party items used to assess trust in the paper.

How much of the time do you think you can trust [Republicans/Democrats] in Congress to do what is right for the country? [Almost always/ Most of the time/ About half the time/ Once in a while/ Almost Never]

Party Feeling Thermometers

We would like to get your feelings toward some of our political leaders and other people who are in the news these days. We would like you to rate that person using something we call the feeling thermometer. Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm toward the person. Ratings between 0 degrees and 50 degrees mean that you don't feel favorable toward the person and that you don't care too much for that person. You would rate the person at the 50 degree mark if you don't feel particularly warm or cold toward the person. Please use the feeling thermometers below to rate each of the following individuals. [Subjects are shown a 0-100 slider and asked to rank the Democratic and Republican Parties]

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[5] For more detailed descriptions of the demographics and motivations of Mechanical Turk subjects, see Paolacci et al. (2010).

Subjects are only asked about their party in the item below (e.g., Democrats only the version about Democrats, and Republicans only see the version about Republicans). Which do you think should be a higher priority for [President Obama and Congressional Democrats/Congressional Republicans]—working in a bipartisan way with [Republicans/Democrats] in Congress, or sticking up for [Democratic/Republican] policies? [Work in a bipartisan fashion with Republicans/Democrats/ Do both equally/ Sticking to Democratic/Republican Policies] Subjects that say they support working in a bipartisan fashion or sticking with policies are asked if they hold that position strongly or not strongly to make a 5-point scale of bipartisanship.

Demographic items in all studies include: partisanship (assessed using the standard set of items from the National Election Study), gender, age [bracketed to 18-29, 30-40, 41-64, and 65 and older], education [less than HS/ HS graduate/ Some college/ Community College or Associates degree/ Bachelor's degree/ Graduate or professional degree], and race [Caucasian/ African-American/ American Indian/ Asian-American/ Other].

**Experiment 2**

Experiment 2 uses the same basic subject recruitment as experiment 1; the details on the stimulus are given in the paper. The experiment was conducted on 30-31 October 2010. The sample is 54% female, 48% are ages18-29, 46% have at least a college degree, and 75% are white.

Outlet Credibility Item:

In general, how much trust and confidence do you have [MEDIA OUTLET] when it comes to reporting the news fully, accurately, and fairly: a great deal, a fair amount, not very much, or none at all? Subjects here evaluated National Public Radio, Fox News, the New York Times, the local newspaper in their hometown, and their local TV station.

Feeling Thermometer Item:

The format is exactly the same, except subjects are asked to rate President Obama rather than the parties.

Approve of National Security:

Do you approve or disapprove of the job President Obama is doing in handling foreign policy and national security? [Strongly approve/ Approve/ Neither approve nor disapprove/ Disapprove/ Strongly Disapprove]

Strong Leadership:

How well does the phrase "provides strong leadership" describe President Obama? [Extremely Well/ Very Well/ Somewhat Well/ Not too Well/ Not Well at All]

**Transcripts from Partisan Media Programs used in Experiments**

Below, I include the transcript for each of the treatment clips used in the experiments discussed in the paper. The transcripts are taken from Lexis-Nexis and are unedited.

KEITH OLBERMANN: The revelation that the Chamber of Commerce pumping $75 million into conservative attack ads around the country funded in secret by foreign companies and American millionaires has got the right wing on the run today, frantic to ensure their Tea Party followers that the Chamber of Commerce is in no way backed by people who are screwing the American middle class. How do we know this? Because in our fourth story tonight, (a), a new poll shows that Americans do not trust these shadowy ads, (b), they want to know who`s standing in the shadows, and, (c), because the voice of the Tea Party himself came out today assuring his listeners, hey, the chamber is just ordinary folks, even as he, in the same breath, admitted how little he knows about the chamber. Tim Kaine, the Democratic National Committee chair, today compared the explosion and secret funding of American campaign ads to Watergate, another story that much of the mainstream media ignored until the scope of the scandal was made clear through the diligence of individual reporters, like Woodward and Bernstein, Dan Rather, Jack Nelson and others. But this one seems to be moving a little faster. Back with us once more on this story, Faiz Shakir, editor-in-chief of "Think Progress," which of course first broke the story. Thanks again for your time tonight, sir.

FAIZ SHAKIR, THINKPROGRESS.ORG: Thank you, Keith.

OLBERMANN: That Watergate comparison, that might strike some people as hyperbolic. What do you think?

SHAKIR: Let`s remember what Watergate was. People remember that there was a burglary, but people forget the fact that there were Texas oilmen who are funneling large checks to the burglars. In fact, one of the burglars was caught with a $89,000 check from an oilman and that`s -- and the corporate money was flowing through that. I think that`s what Tim Kaine is talking about, is the influence of corporate money in this election is something that`s not being discussed and is a huge political story. Texas oil money, for instance, right now is flowing in to California to defeat its state`s clean energy law. We have a reporter out there. You`ve reported on this. Valero and Tesoro, Texas-based companies, are trying to subvert California`s lot. In addition to Prop 23, you`ve got Karl Rove`s group. You got the Chamber of Commerce. You`ve got Newt Gingrich`s group. You`ve got Club for Growth. You`ve got FOX News. All of these corporate interests that are trying to subvert democracy with their huge amounts of money and deep pockets. And I think that`s what Tim Kaine`s getting at. It`s not being reported and we`re trying to dig at it. In fact, the national chamber, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce operates as an RNC. It`s a right wing political machine.

Right-Wing Clip, Experiment 1 [Hannity, 11 October 2010]
 Now these polls and others like them are clearly causing panic in the Democratic ranks, because their attacks are getting more and more desperate.
Now the DNC is out with a brand new ad that according to the "Baltimore Sun" sets a new low for political mudslinging and one of its targets is my next guest, Karl Rove.

[Ad in question shown on screen]

HANNITY: Joining me now with reaction to sleazy attack is the architect, former adviser to President George W. Bush, the one and only Karl Rove. Karl, welcome back.

KARL ROVE, FOX NEWS CONTRIBUTOR: Thanks for having me.

HANNITY: You had harsh words to say about this weekend. I want to give you a little bit` more time to go into specific detail here. You say these charges are false and outrageous and you are pretty upset about them.

ROVE: Well, look, I'm not that upset about it. I think this is stupid on the White House's part, but I'm not the only one who has been saying that there is no proof of this. "The New York Times" ran a story on Saturday morning in which they said the White House could produce no proof for its charge.

HANNITY: But if you look at, it's almost like a moving target and it seems like they are trying to throw everything they can up against the wall in the hopes something sticks. Last week, it was Fox News. They've gone after the pharmaceutical industry. They've gone after the health care industry. They've gone after talk radio and Rush Limbaugh, and Sean Hannity now it is Karl Rove and Ed Gillespie. What are they trying to accomplish except maybe a long term distraction?

ROVE: Well, yes, that's it, a long term distraction and look, they have a low opinion of

the American people. They think the American people are going to care more about this phony issue that they've dummied up with no evidence whatsoever than the American people care about these things, which are driving the election. And I think -- look, there's a bunker mentality inside the White House. A belief that by creating some enemy, taking a rip at a page and creating an enemy, a couple weeks ago, it was John Boehner, you're right. They started this whole thing with Rush Limbaugh. They've attacked the Tea Parties. I mean, none of that has worked. They have spent a year pursuing this strategy just periodically changing the names of the people that they're attacking.

Treatment Clip, Experiment 2 [Hannity, April 15, 2010]

HANNITY: Are we jeopardizing our national security? Joining me now with analysis is Lt. Col. Oliver North. What do you think of Senator McCain? He says that the U.S. keeps pointing a loaded gun at Iran but failing to pull the trigger. Robert Gates said this week that he thinks they could have a nuclear weapon within a year. What does that mean?

OLIVER NORTH, "WAR STORIES" HOST: First of all, it's entirely likely that they're going to have a nuclear weapon within a year. I also believe it's entirely likely that you're going to end up with some kind of armed confrontation. It may not be Americans into it. It may well be the Israelis. We will, however, be blamed. And what's really important is, we could have stopped this. We could have --

HANNITY: How?

NORTH: Very simply. Any company that does any kind of business with Iranian revolutionary or -- excuse me the Islamic revolutionary Guard Corp or anyone of the leadership over there that company cannot do business in America. That's how we stop the part --

HANNITY: Wait a minute. Last week, the administration said Islamic radicalism does not exist.

NORTH: Guess what, it does (ph).

HANNITY: We don't have a war on terror.

NORTH: In manmade disaster --

HANNITY: Overseas contingency operation.

NORTH: Yes.

HANNITY: All right. Three quarters of the United States senators signed letters rebuking the president and his treatment of Benjamin Netanyahu and our closest ally in the Middle East, Israel. What is happening there? Are we emboldening the enemies of the U.S. and the Israel? I mean, this is a harsh indictment. Do you think Barack Obama is emboldening America's enemies? Do you think he's showing weakness?

NORTH: Certainly. And he's done that consistently. I mean, one of the very few things that not has changed in this administration is this president's willing to be obsequious to our adversaries, to denigrate our allies, and essentially, to walk away from the only real democracy in that part of the world. And, you know, no one can say it's because he's big on oil, because he's not in the oil business. So, what is it? It's his core philosophy of being anti-American.

| Estimate | Feeling Thermometer | Strong Leadership |
|---|---|---|
| Saw Treatment Clip | **-9.25** | **-0.87** |
| | **(5.71)** | **(0.31)** |
| Constant | **34.11** | **3.14** |
| | **(3.69)** | **(0.22)** |
| N | 40 | 43 |
| R-Squared | 0.06 | 0.17 |

Table A1: Replication of Experiment 2 with a Left-Wing Clip (Democratic Subjects Only)

Note: Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses; coefficients that can be statistically distinguished from 0 are given in **bold.**

|  | Democrats | Republicans |
|---|---|---|
| Treatment | -0.30 | -3.2 |
|  | (5.7) | (7.2) |
| Constant | **66.45** | **27.83** |
|  | **(3.93)** | **(5.13)** |
| R-Squared | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| N | 75 | 47 |

Table A2: Effects of Positive Clip on Obama Feeling Thermometer Ratings

Note: cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses; coefficients that can be differentiated from 0 are given in bold.

|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Subjects | All | Democrats | Republicans | Democrats | Republicans |
| Treatment | **0.31** | **0.43** | 0.25 | 0.17 | 0.04 |
|  | **(0.17)** | **(0.19)** | (0.29) | (0.24) | (0.37) |
| Find MSNBC Credible |  |  |  | -0.17 | -0.08 |
|  |  |  |  | (0.28) | (0.50) |
| Treatment* Find MSNBC Credible |  |  |  | 0.39 | **0.85** |
|  |  |  |  | (0.35) | **(0.57)** |
| Constant | **3.14** | **3.4** | **2.82** | **3.5** | **2.86** |
|  | **(0.13)** | **(0.14)** | **(0.24)** | **(0.18)** | **(0.31)** |
| N | 141 | 76 | 48 | 76 | 48 |
| R-Squared | 0.02 | 0.07 | 0.02 | 0.08 | 0.08 |

Table A3: Effects on Beliefs about the Stimulus, Positive Segment

Note: Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses; coefficients that can be distinguished from 0 are given in bold.

| Variables | Estimate |
|---|---|
| Assigned Like-Minded Treatment | **-10.80** **(8.14)** |
| Assigned Cross-Cutting Treatment | 4.17 (7.36) |
| Prefer Like-Minded Media | 3.65 (8.14) |
| Prefer Cross-Cutting Media | -6.78 (12.65) |
| Assigned Like-Minded Treatment*Prefer Like-Minded Media | 1.84 (11.81) |
| Assigned Like-Minded Treatment*Prefer Cross-Cutting Media | 13.88 (17.14) |
| Assigned Cross-Cutting Treatment*Prefer Like-Minded Media | -4.36 (11.06) |
| Assigned Cross-Cutting Treatment*Prefer Cross-Cutting Media | 10.33 (15.76) |
| Strong Partisan | **-7.11** **(4.83)** |
| Constant | 31.47 (5.52) |
| N | 86 |
| R-Squared | 0.12 |

Table A4: Preference Effects, Feeling Thermometer Data, Experiment 1

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