

WHO LET THE (ATTACK) DOGS OUT? NEW EVIDENCE FOR PARTISAN MEDIA EFFECTS

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Abstract Most research examining partisan media effects uses individual differences in exposure to news sources to predict attitude change. In this paper, we improve upon this approach by using variations in cable news coverage to predict subsequent changes in viewer impressions of the candidates. This approach allows us to examine the distinct effects of in-party and out-party candidate coverage. Content analyses and survey data show that partisan media effects result from coverage of the opposition candidate, and not from coverage of the like-minded candidate. Specifically, during the 2008 presidential election, increased coverage of Obama (McCain) on Fox News (MSNBC) made viewers less favorable toward Obama (McCain). Meanwhile, coverage of McCain (Obama) on Fox News (MSNBC) had minimal effects on viewer impressions. These results suggest that media effects persist even during an era dominated by selective exposure.

Throughout most of the 20th century, mainstream news outlets presented similar coverage of political affairs (West 2001). During this period, journalists typically provided arguments on both sides of the debate, and political commentary was largely relegated to the op-ed section of newspapers (Bennett 1996; Dalton, Beck, and Huckfeldt 1998). Consequently, Americans received a similar picture of the political world, featuring conflicting perspectives on political issues (Mutz and Martin 2001). This is not the case for modern media, where Americans have a variety of sources and can opt out of news consumption entirely (Prior 2007). Now, partisans can choose sources that align with their political predispositions, allowing viewers to avoid counter-attitudinal arguments.

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Many scholars have pointed to the dangers of selective exposure to partisan news media. The prominence of partisan news sources—on 24-hour cable news, political talk radio, and the internet—allows Americans to isolate themselves in echo chambers where they are exposed only to arguments that reinforce their opinions (Jamieson and Cappella 2008). Exposure to ideologically one-sided content on partisan news sources might increase polarization and hostility toward political opponents (Holbert, Garrett, and Gleason 2010; Stroud 2011). Indeed, past research provides abundant evidence that partisan media affect opinions regarding political candidates (Barker 1999; Morris and Francia 2010; Stroud 2011). We contribute to past research by using variation in media coverage to predict audience attitudes.

Incorporating content into media effects research adds to scholarly understanding in two ways. First, variation in content is an exogenous variable that is largely distinct from individual choice: although people can choose whether to watch a partisan news source, they cannot choose what sources cover or for how long. Second, candidate-specific coverage can have distinct effects on candidate-specific opinions. The common approach of using exposure to predict media effects makes it difficult to distinguish between the effects of in-party versus out-party candidate coverage. It is possible that coverage of the out-party candidate on partisan networks improves opinions of the in-party candidate. Using exposure to predict media effects precludes researchers from identifying the distinct effects of candidate-specific coverage on viewers' opinions of each candidate. Again, using candidate coverage allows us to fill this gap in the current literature.

In the next section, we review past research to distinguish our approach from previous attempts to model media effects in the presence of selective exposure. We then use media coverage of the 2008 presidential candidates to develop a theory that explains how partisan media are likely to affect viewer perceptions of the candidates. In brief, we argue that partisan sources influence candidate opinions to the extent that candidate coverage is one-sided, negative, and the source is perceived as credible by viewers. Finally, we use variation in candidate coverage to predict viewer attitudes the following day and week.

Searching for Media Effects

Recent expansion of the news media marketplace has made partisan sources more accessible, thus making selective exposure easier and more commonplace. Indeed, data from both survey and experiments suggest that people prefer getting news from like-minded news sources (Stroud 2008, 2011; Iyengar and Hahn 2009). However, selective exposure to ideologically like-minded news makes it much more difficult to identify media effects on public opinion. If people choose news sources *because* they agree with the content, exposure is endogenous, making it difficult to identify causality.

For example, if conservatives choose Fox News because of its conservative-leaning content, then a relationship between exposure to Fox News and conservative attitudes could result from self-selection, media effects, or a combination of both.

Faced with this causal ambiguity, some scholars have turned to laboratory and natural experiments to identify media effects (Ladd and Lenz 2009; Feldman 2011a). Although experimental methods are superior when it comes to issues of internal validity, it is uncertain if the effects translate beyond the lab. Most observational approaches to examine media effects use self-reported exposure to partisan media to predict differences in audience attitudes (Barker 1999; Morris and Francia 2010; Dilliplane 2011; Stroud 2011). Researchers have attempted to get around endogeneity issues by using previous levels of exposure to predict future attitudes (Morris and Francia 2010; Stroud 2011), or using change (or stability) in exposure to predict changes in attitudes or behavior (Dilliplane 2011). Although these approaches provide stronger causal tests, they do not eliminate the problem posed by selective exposure. The dependent variable (audience attitude change) is likely to affect the independent variable (exposure), making it difficult to isolate the direction of causation. If viewer characteristics condition the choice of exposure, it is suspect to conclude that partisan media coverage caused attitude change.

Another drawback with using exposure to test media effects is that it precludes researchers from disentangling the distinct effects of candidate-specific coverage on viewers' candidate-specific attitudes. Such research assumes that a relationship between exposure and favorability toward the in-party candidate results from positive coverage. Alternatively, increased favorability of the in-party candidate might result from negative coverage of the out-party candidate. In other words, voters might view the in-party candidate more favorably even though the media did not devote more coverage toward that individual.

Given the possible pitfalls of using self-reported exposure, we utilize an exogenous variable that can predict audience attitude change. Prior to the partisan media era, some research used variation in *overall* media content to predict subsequent variation in public opinion (Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Page, Shapiro, and Dempsey 1987; Entman 1989). In those cases, if changes in media content predicted future changes in audience attitudes, it was likely due to media effects and not source selection. Of course, using overall media coverage to predict overall attitudes is no longer an acceptable practice when there is wide variation in the content of different news sources (Aday 2010; Farnsworth and Lichter 2011). Additionally, the increased ease with which viewers can engage in selective exposure means scholars must focus on the effects of partisan sources on select audiences. In other words, in a fragmented media environment, it is important for researchers to examine the effects of source-specific content on the opinions of source-specific viewers.

Unfortunately, this approach requires content-analysis data for specific news sources over a long period of time. The expense of such an endeavor has likely dissuaded media scholars from using this approach to test for media effects. Fortunately, the Project for Excellence in Journalism (PEJ) conducted a yearlong content analysis of media coverage in 2008, at the same time that the National Annenberg Election Study (NAES) conducted a rolling cross-sectional telephone survey. We combine the data from these two studies to examine how variation in source-specific television coverage of the 2008 presidential candidates predicts the attitudes of source-specific audiences. The randomization of interview dates allows us to test whether changes in coverage of a candidate the day (or week) prior to the interview had an independent effect on viewers of a particular news source.

Given that media content is central to our analysis, it is important to examine the tone of candidate coverage before we develop a theory regarding how that coverage will affect public opinion. Understanding how television sources covered the candidates allows us to form hypotheses regarding the effect of each source. In the following section, we examine actual coverage of the presidential candidates during the 2008 election.

Coverage of the 2008 Presidential Election

How did partisan media cover the 2008 presidential election? Partisan news media are typically characterized by one-sided content and a heavy reliance on opinionated talk-show hosts during prime time. Content analyses have demonstrated a distinct pro-conservative slant in Fox News coverage (Aday 2010; Morris and Francia 2010; Farnsworth and Lichter 2011). Meanwhile, MSNBC has gained a reputation as a liberal-leaning network. Indeed, according to the annual State of the News Media report issued by the Project for Excellence in Journalism, “In 2008, MSNBC solidified its niche as a left-leaning alternative to the conservative Fox News Channel, adding Air America radio talker Rachel Maddow to a prime-time lineup that already showcased the liberal politics of ‘Countdown’ host Keith Olbermann” (see also Dilliplane [2011]; Stroud [2011]).

Compared to its counterparts on cable news, CNN does not have a prime-time lineup dominated by conservatives or liberals. Instead, “CNN’s roster of commentators filled the political spectrum, but its prime-time hosts, with the exception of Lou Dobbs, tend to be more neutral, at least in their on-air presentation” (Project for Excellence in Journalism 2009). Given the lack of opinionated content, or consistent evidence of bias, we label CNN as a nonpartisan news source. In a similar vein, we consider broadcast news a nonpartisan source because it does not include opinionated programming.¹

1. To be clear, we are not arguing that broadcast television or CNN are unbiased, but that these sources are less likely to contain the ideologically opinionated content that is characteristic of partisan cable news networks.

Rather than rely on the results of previous studies, we examine how television stations covered the 2008 presidential candidates. To that end, we rely on content analysis data from the *Color of News* report from the Project for Excellence in Journalism.² This particular analysis covers a random sample of 458 campaign-related stories that aired from September 8 through October 16 on CNN, Fox News, MSNBC, and the three broadcast networks.

When examining coverage of political candidates, it is important to consider the context in which the election takes place. One of the candidates might run a better campaign or benefit from events that are outside either candidate's control. In such scenarios, balanced coverage of the candidates would be a sign of media bias (see Kuklinski and Sigelman [1992]). Thus, it is important to compare the coverage on partisan media to a baseline standard, which allows us to predict how variation in partisan media coverage will affect the attitudes of source-specific viewers *relative* to nonviewers. We use broadcast news as our baseline because it combines three news outlets (ABC, CBS, and NBC) and does not include opinionated talk shows.

Figure 1 shows the percentage of coverage (in minutes) that was positive or negative toward the candidates.³ Compared to broadcast news, Fox News had 26 percent more negative coverage of Obama ($\chi^2 = 33.52, p < .001$)⁴, but had only 8 percent more ($\chi^2 = 5.76, p = .016$) positive coverage of McCain. Meanwhile, MSNBC's coverage of McCain was 34 percent more negative than broadcast news ($\chi^2 = 59.00, p < .001$), and 13 percent more positive toward Obama ($\chi^2 = 7.50, p = .006$). Altogether, partisan sources were marginally more positive toward the in-party candidate, but were overly negative toward the out-party candidate.

Relative to the other networks, CNN was negative toward both candidates. Compared to broadcast news, CNN had 22 percent more negative coverage of McCain ($\chi^2 = 22.10, p < .001$) and 23 percent more negative toward Obama ($\chi^2 = 27.48, p < .001$). Furthermore, CNN was as negative toward Obama as Fox News ($\chi^2 = 0.46, p = .494$) and only 12 percent less negative toward McCain than MSNBC ($\chi^2 = 13.50, p < .001$). CNN had almost as much positive coverage (33 percent) of Obama as negative (44 percent) but had four times more negative coverage of McCain than positive. Although CNN was negative toward both candidates, it offset much of the negativity toward Obama with positive coverage.

These results suggest a common strategy among partisan news stations: attack the enemy. But why would partisan outlets focus their attention on the

2. Detailed information regarding the methodology used in gathering these data can be found at <http://www.journalism.org/print/13441>. Intercoder reliability tests produced 81-percent agreement on the tone measure.

3. The percentage of neutral coverage can be found by subtracting each candidate's positive and negative coverage from 100. For example, 45 percent of the Obama coverage on broadcast news was neutral.

4. All significance tests had one degree of freedom.

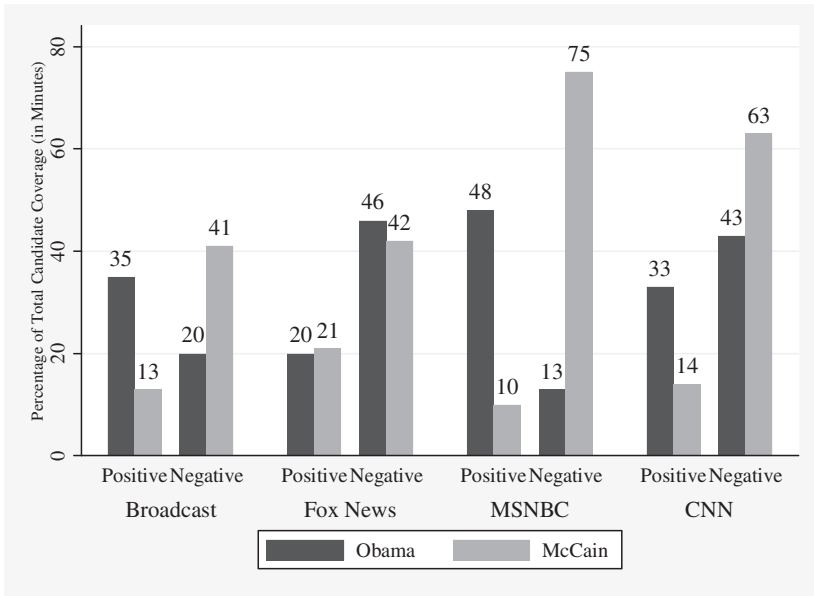


Figure 1. Tone of Coverage for Candidate by Source.

negatives of the out-party candidate when they could extol the virtues of the home team? For one, the news media tend to focus on negative news because it is more sensational than positive news (Soroka 2006). For example, past research suggests that the news media devote more coverage to negative political advertisements than to positive ads (Fridkin and Kenney 2004; Ridout and Smith 2008). Overwhelming negativity toward both candidates might turn off like-minded viewers. The negativity inherent in attacking the opposition candidate allows partisan sources to attract viewers while not offending their partisan audience.

In sum, the content analysis reveals that partisan sources attack the opposition but are not overwhelmingly positive toward the like-minded candidate. More important for our hypotheses is *how* partisan media coverage has specific effects for select audiences relative to other sources. In the next section, we explain how partisan media affect individual opinions, after which we generate testable hypotheses for each cable news outlet.

A Theory of Media Effects for Partisan News

The partisan media's one-sided, primarily negative, coverage toward the out-party candidate is likely to negatively affect viewer opinions of the opposition candidate. Indeed, one-sided messages are more persuasive than messages that include competing information and arguments (Zaller 1992, 1996; Chong

and Druckman 2010), reflected in findings showing that imbalanced coverage in local newspapers can affect readers' perceptions of candidates (Kahn and Kenney 2002; Druckman and Parkin 2005).

There is also reason to believe that one-sided *negative* coverage has stronger effects on viewer impressions than one-sided *positive* coverage. Negative information is more persuasive than positive information (Fiske 1980; Baumeister et al. 2001; Soroka 2006), as it typically accentuates the potential risks and costs associated with an action or decision (Lau 1985) and carries greater weight in summative evaluations of candidates (Kernell 1977). In an electoral context, the perceived costs of electing the opposition candidate will outweigh the perceived gains of electing the like-minded candidate. Consequently, when partisan sources bring attention to the potential risks associated with electing the opposition candidate, it should be more persuasive than pointing out the potential gains of electing the like-minded candidate.

Additionally, differences in format between nonpartisan and partisan networks are likely to affect the persuasiveness of each type of content. After all, opinion content—such as editorials and opinion columns in newspapers—can be more persuasive than straight news (Page, Shapiro, and Dempsey 1987; Entman 1989; Feldman 2011a), by virtue of providing cues that help people understand the political world (Dalton, Beck, and Huckfeldt 1998). The prominence of opinionated programs on Fox News and MSNBC should make them more persuasive than the straight news programs on CNN and the broadcast networks. Thus, it is important to note not only how sources covered candidates but also how coverage was delivered. In short, partisan media are likely to affect viewer impressions of the out-party candidate because coverage of that candidate is one-sided, negative, and delivered in an opinionated format.

Of course, viewers are not just empty vessels accepting all negative coverage of the out-party candidate as fact, but also they look to source cues before accepting information. Candidate evaluations are likely influenced by characteristics of content and by perceptions of the source (Baum and Groeling 2009; Ladd 2010). To the extent that partisan media present one-sided coverage of a candidate *and* viewers find the source credible, it should have an effect on public opinion. These effects are supported by research suggesting the persuasiveness of credible sources (Lupia and McCubbins 1998; Druckman 2001). Source credibility acts as a heuristic, which allows people to evaluate the veracity of the communicating message without devoting much thought (Eagly, Wood, and Chaiken 1978; Ladd 2010).

Not surprisingly, people tend to get their news from sources they perceive as credible (Tsfati and Cappella 2003), which makes it important to understand the determinants of source credibility. To a large extent, perceptions of media credibility depend more on the characteristics of the viewer than on the content of the source (Vallone et al. 1985; Dalton, Beck, and Huckfeldt 1998). Indeed, partisans tend to evaluate media bias relative to their own opinions (Gunther et al. 2001; Feldman 2011b). For example, conservatives would believe that

Fox News is “fair and balanced” and neutral sources have a liberal bias. Thus, viewers tend to perceive like-minded (partisan) sources to be highly credible, at least relative to other sources (Feldman 2011b; Arceneaux, Johnson, and Murphy 2012).

To confirm this, we examine a subset of the NAES data that asked respondents how much they believed their preferred news source, as well as other prominent sources.⁵ For the most part, viewers found their preferred news source believable. Among all four sources, Fox News scored the highest on believability among its primary viewers. Indeed, 86 percent of viewers rated Fox News as a three or four on the believability scale, with CNN coming in second (78 percent of viewers). Broadcast news was found believable by 69 percent of its viewers, while 65 percent of MSNBC viewers found MSNBC believable. These results show that most viewers find their preferred network believable.

The perceived believability of partisan news sources makes it more likely that information will be accepted, a necessary requirement for exposure to result in media effects. Once information is accepted, viewers will update their opinions of the candidates. Given the content data, and research supporting the persuasiveness of negative news, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: As coverage of McCain (Obama) on MSNBC (Fox News) increases, MSNBC (Fox News) viewers will hold more negative impressions of McCain (Obama) than non-MSNBC (Fox News) viewers.

Although negative information might be more persuasive, positive information can still have important effects on viewer opinions. On balance, positive coverage of the in-party candidate should improve viewer impressions of that candidate. The content analysis suggests that—compared to broadcast news—partisan sources were marginally more positive to the in-party candidate. Thus, we expect that coverage of the in-party candidate will have marginal positive effects on viewer opinions relative to nonviewer opinions.

Hypothesis 2: As coverage of McCain (Obama) on Fox News (MSNBC) increases, Fox News (MSNBC) viewers will hold more positive impressions of McCain (Obama) than non-Fox News (MSNBC) viewers.

The coverage on CNN was negative toward both candidates, but one-sided only in its coverage of McCain. The negative coverage of Obama was balanced by positive coverage, whereas the negative McCain coverage was not

5. From February to May 2008, roughly 14,500 respondents were asked to rate the believability of news sources—Broadcast News, CNN, Fox News, and MSNBC—on a four-point scale from “believe almost nothing” to “believe all or most” of what the organization reports. We include additional data from this measure in [appendix table B3](#).

accompanied by countervailing positive coverage. Our theory predicts that media effects are strongest when coverage of a candidate is negative *and* one-sided. Coverage of McCain was one-sided and negative, but coverage of Obama was two-sided. Past research suggests that two-sided communications flows are less persuasive than one-sided messages (Klapper 1960; Zaller 1996; Dalton, Beck, and Huckfeldt 1998). Therefore, we expect CNN to make viewers more negative toward McCain, but have no effect on opinions of Obama.

Hypothesis 3: As coverage of Obama on CNN increases, CNN viewers' impressions of Obama will not change, while increased coverage of McCain will increase negative impressions of McCain.

Data Sources

Our survey data come from the rolling cross-sectional component of the 2008 National Annenberg Election Survey (NAES). Specifically, interviews were conducted with 55,852 adult respondents in the United States from January 2, 2008, until November 3, 2008. To assure random selection, respondents were contacted by telephone using random-digit-dialing technology with cell-phone numbers excluded.⁶ Interviews were conducted in English or Spanish, depending on the respondent's preference. In accordance with the standards of the American Association for Public Opinion Research (2011), response rate 1 was 18.98 percent.

The dependent variables of interest are opinions of the 2008 presidential candidates. Favorability was measured on a scale from zero (very unfavorable) to 10 (very favorable). Respondents were also asked whether they believed the word *trustworthy* applied to the candidates on a scale from zero (does not apply at all) to 10 (applies extremely well). Finally, respondents were asked to rate the ideological position of each candidate as very conservative, somewhat conservative, moderate, somewhat liberal, and very liberal. We include perceptions of candidate ideology, given how partisan news sources seek to, and succeed in, painting the opposition candidate as ideologically extreme (Jamieson, Hall, and Cappella 2008; Morris and Francia 2010). The exact wording of all survey questions and response options are available in appendix A.

To measure news exposure, the survey asked respondents, "In the past week, from what television program did you get most of your information about the 2008 presidential campaign?"⁷ We created four binary variables

6. For more information on how the survey was conducted or the questions included, please visit the Annenberg Public Policy Center or the following website: <https://services.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/naes08/phone/method/index.html>.

7. The survey recorded both stations and specific programs. If respondents named a program, such as *Hardball with Chris Matthews*, they were coded as watching the overall source—in this case, MSNBC. Broadcast viewers include those saying they relied on ABC, CBS, or NBC as their primary news source.

indicating whether the respondent listed Fox News (16 percent), MSNBC (5 percent), CNN (21 percent), or broadcast television (20 percent) as the primary news source.⁸ On the one hand, these categories are mutually exclusive, preventing us from accounting for cross-viewership—such as watching both CNN and Fox News. This approach to measurement potentially biases our results because we assume that variation in coverage affects primary viewers irrespective of their exposure to other sources. On the other hand, this measure avoids relying on respondents' memory for how often they watch a program. As [Prior \(2009\)](#) argues, people are better at remembering *if* they watched a program than *how often* they watched it. Moreover, this measure has been used to study the effects of partisan news sources that appear on cable television ([Morris and Francia 2010](#); [Stroud 2011](#)). We also include a wide variety of controls, and a description of each is available in [appendix A](#).

CONTENT ANALYSIS

Content analysis data come from the Campaign Coverage Index (CCI), gathered by the Project for Excellence in Journalism. The CCI is a subset of the larger News Coverage Index but includes only stories that concerned the 2008 presidential campaign.⁹ Our primary variable of interest is the duration of candidate coverage. To discern this, we first build measures that represent the primary candidate covered in each story: Barack Obama or John McCain. Stories were counted as discussing a candidate if more than 25 percent of the story (in time) was about the candidate. There can be more than one lead newsmaker in a story, meaning that some stories discussed both McCain and Obama. For each candidate, we created a summed coverage measure for each news source representing the number of minutes per day (over 304 days) the candidate was discussed. Altogether, there were eight content variables, with four variables representing each source's coverage of McCain and four other variables representing coverage of Obama. We also generated variables collapsed by week for a total of 45 weeks.

To build our data set, we merged the individual-level survey measures with coverage measures using date of interview and date of airing, respectively. We lagged the coverage variable by one day so that when the two data are matched,

8. The partisan breakdown of each source's primary viewers is as follows: Broadcast (27 percent Republican, 40 percent Democrat), CNN (20 percent Republican, 48 percent Democrat), Fox News (59 percent Republican, 12 percent Democrat), and MSNBC (55 percent Democrat, 13 percent Republican).

9. Stories were included in the CCI only if more than 50 percent of the story (in time) was devoted to the campaign or one of the candidates. According to the Project for Excellence in Journalism website, "all individuals or groups who were discussed in 50% or more of the story were counted as lead newsmakers." A candidate was a significant presence when between 25 and 50 percent of the story discussed the candidate. Intercoder reliability tests in 2008 revealed 92 percent agreement on the lead newsmaker variable, and 81 percent agreement on the significant presence variable.

survey measures by day of interview correspond to coverage measures from the day prior. We chose to lag coverage one day because it was the shortest amount of time between coverage and interview, thus reducing the potential for intervening variables to influence opinions. To account for possible long-term effects, we supplemented our analysis with coverage from the previous week.

To examine the effects of source-specific coverage on source-specific viewers, we created interactions between primary-source viewership and content. For example, the binary variable indicating that Fox News was a respondent's primary source was multiplied by each candidate's coverage variables for Fox News. In this example, the inclusion of a *Fox viewership x Fox Obama coverage* interaction allows us to isolate the effects of Fox News coverage of Obama on those respondents who rely on Fox as their primary source. Furthermore, to ensure that we are isolating the relationships of interest, we include measures for other sources' candidate coverage in the same model. This approach minimizes the effect of variation due to blips in normal coverage caused by breaking stories or campaign events. Finally, by including the primary source indicator variable, the model controls for differences in characteristics of those using Fox as their primary source. This approach allows us to distinguish the effects of source-specific coverage for viewers while controlling for the effects of overall news coverage, coverage on other sources, and the effects on nonviewers.

Media Effects

Do partisan media affect viewer attitudes? To answer this question, we estimated OLS regression models with candidate favorability, trust, and perceived ideology as the dependent variables. Because the models include interaction terms, the results are not easily interpreted. The coefficients for interaction variables represent the difference between the coefficients for primary source viewers and nonviewers. To calculate the coefficient for primary viewers, it was necessary to add the interaction coefficient to the content coefficient for nonviewers—and to calculate new standard errors. [Table 1](#) displays the regression results for the effects of 15 minutes of candidate coverage on our primary dependent variables: favorability, trust, and candidate ideology.¹⁰ Asterisked coefficients indicate that source coverage had a significant effect for primary viewers, while bolded coefficients indicate that coverage had a significant effect on nonviewers. The full results from the models can be found in [appendix table B2](#).¹¹

10. We used 15 minutes of coverage because it was roughly one standard deviation for the content of each source.

11. We estimate multicollinearity diagnostics (VIF) for each model in [appendix B](#). The largest VIF was 3.73, and each tolerance exceeded .10. Most of the multicollinearity is due to the inclusion of interaction terms between content and exposure.

Table 1. Audience Perceptions Following Daily Candidate Coverage

	<i>Perceptions and coverage of Barack Obama</i>		
	Favorable	Trustworthy	Ideology
<i>Fox News</i>	-.232*	-.173*	.063*
<i>MSNBC</i>	-.041	-.031	.004
<i>CNN</i>	-.025	-.026	.001
<i>Broadcast</i>	.143*	.058	-.019
	<i>Perceptions and Coverage of John McCain</i>		
	Favorable	Trustworthy	Ideology
<i>Fox News</i>	.084	.058	-.015
<i>MSNBC</i>	-.283*	-.288*	-.073*
<i>CNN</i>	-.069*	-.079*	.016
<i>Broadcast</i>	.077*	-.036	.011

NOTE.—Coefficients are effect of 15 minutes of coverage on candidate perceptions. Asterisk coefficients are significantly ($p < .05$) different from zero, while the coefficients in bold are significantly different than the effect of coverage on nonviewers. Column heading indicates dependent variable for the model. The coefficients for favorability and trustworthiness were estimated using OLS regression models, while candidate ideology was estimated using an ordered probit model. All models were clustered by the day of the interview. The full models can be found in [appendix B1](#).

The results displayed in [table 1](#) speak to the directional relationships of interest set forth in H1, H2, and H3. In line with H1, when Fox News devoted more attention to Obama, its viewers, relative to nonviewers, were less favorable toward Obama, less likely to perceive him as trustworthy, and more likely to believe he is liberal. Meanwhile, contrary to H2, coverage of Obama on MSNBC had no effect on impressions of Obama among primary viewers. Likewise, CNN had no effect on attitudes toward Obama, which is consistent with H3. In other words, only Fox News had an effect on viewer opinions of Obama.

Results in the bottom portion of [table 1](#) show the effects of source-specific coverage of McCain on viewer impressions of McCain relative to nonviewers. Once again, the results are consistent with H1: increased MSNBC coverage of McCain lowered his favorability and trustworthiness ratings among its viewers relative to nonviewers. Additionally, coverage of McCain resulted in viewers perceiving him as having a more conservative-leaning ideology. Contrary to H2, coverage of McCain on Fox News had no effect on viewer opinions of McCain. In line with H3, CNN's coverage of McCain undermined perceptions of McCain's favorability and trustworthiness, though the effects are not of the same magnitude as partisan networks. Broadcast news had no significant effect on primary-viewer opinions of either candidate.

Thus far we have used daily coverage to predict attitudes the following day. One problem with using daily coverage is that media effects might need time

to develop. Coverage over a long period of time should have stronger effects on viewers than one day of intense coverage. To account for longer stretches of media attention, we summed candidate coverage by source per week. The coefficients in table 2 represent the effect of one hour of coverage—roughly one standard deviation for each source—on the candidate impressions of source-specific viewers relative to nonviewers. Once again, we include only the source-specific results in table 2, but the full models can be found in appendix B.¹²

When weekly coverage is used to predict viewer attitudes, the effects are similar to daily coverage. Consistent with H1, coverage of the out-party candidate on partisan sources has a negative effect on viewer attitudes toward that candidate. Specifically, Fox viewers became less favorable toward Obama, relative to nonviewers, following increased coverage of Obama. Likewise, coverage of McCain on MSNBC decreased favorability toward McCain and decreased his perceived trustworthiness. Together with the daily results, there is strong support for H1 that partisan media coverage of the out-party candidate moves viewer impressions in a negative direction relative to nonviewers.

Table 2. Audience Perceptions Following Weekly Candidate Coverage

	<i>Perceptions by coverage of Barack Obama</i>		
	Favorable	Trustworthy	Ideology
<i>Fox News</i>	-.413*	-.304*	.126*
<i>MSNBC</i>	.031	.064	.030
<i>CNN</i>	-.116	-.010	.015
<i>Broadcast</i>	.174*	.107	-.012
	<i>Perceptions by coverage of John McCain</i>		
	Favorable	Trustworthy	Ideology
<i>Fox News</i>	.295*	.130	-.023
<i>MSNBC</i>	-.348*	-.573*	-.030
<i>CNN</i>	-.236*	-.166*	-.022
<i>Broadcast</i>	.110*	-.025	.010

NOTE.—Coefficients are effect of one hour of coverage on perceptions of candidate favorability, trustworthiness, and ideology. Asterisked coefficients are significantly ($p < .05$) different from zero, while the coefficients in bold are significantly different than the effect of coverage on nonviewers. All models were clustered by week. The full models can be found in appendix B2.

12. Multicollinearity is a concern in the models using weekly data, especially among the McCain coverage variables (four with VIF over 10 and two others that are close), and should be kept in mind when interpreting the results. This multicollinearity largely stems from the inclusion of both exposure variables and the interactions between exposure and content. Given that the exposure variables are significant predictors, it would be inappropriate to remove the variables from the models. Although multicollinearity increases the chances of finding null effects—because of higher standard errors—we remain confident in our weekly level findings because we found more significant relationships here than in the daily data.

There is less consistent support for H2, which posits that coverage of the in-party candidate will have a positive effect on in-party candidate perceptions for source-specific viewers relative to nonviewers. Coverage of McCain on Fox News had a significantly positive effect on viewer favorability, but there was no effect on viewer perceptions of McCain's trustworthiness or ideology. Meanwhile, MSNBC's coverage had no effect on viewer impressions of Obama. Thus, of the six models testing partisan media effects on the in-party candidate, only one demonstrates significant effects.

The results largely support H3, which posits that CNN will have a negative effect on viewers' opinions of McCain, but no effect on perceptions of Obama, relative to nonviewers. Increased coverage of McCain on CNN had a significantly negative effect on opinions of McCain, with the exception of ideology. Although none of the coefficients reached significance, CNN's coverage of Obama had a negative relationship with viewer impressions of Obama. These results provide support for H3, as CNN appeared to have a larger effect on impressions of McCain than Obama. Recall that CNN was negative toward both candidates but one-sided only toward McCain. Exposure to positive coverage of Obama likely countered the effects of negative coverage, which is precisely the result expected from exposure to a two-sided communications flow. In sum, the weekly results largely confirm the daily results, providing strong support for H1 and H3, and minimal support for H2.

Discussion

The fragmentation of the news media has ushered in a new era of media effects research. As partisan sources have become more popular among the American public, scholars have rushed to examine the effects that partisan media have on public opinion. Recent research has found that partisan media outlets have important effects on candidate perceptions, voting behavior, participation, and political knowledge (Barker 1999; Baum and Groeling 2009; Morris and Francia 2010; Dilliplane 2011; Stroud 2011; Dilliplane, Goldman, and Mutz 2012). We contribute to past research in two ways. First, we avoid the perils of relying exclusively on exposure to measure media effects. Past research relies on viewer choices—whether to watch a news source and for how long—which influence, and are influenced by, individual predispositions. Although this research is important and critical to our understanding of the current media market, media effects research is vulnerable as long as the research designs rely on the viewer's choice to watch. Our findings complement past research by showing that partisan media effects are not entirely the result of selective exposure. This is not to imply that exposure should never be used as an independent variable, but instead the incorporation of content offers a robust test for media effects, and a fine-grained understanding of the media-viewer relationship.

Beyond the methodological benefits of our approach, we provide new evidence that partisan media do in fact affect their viewers' attitudes. Using a

unique data set, we are able to isolate partisan media effects over a long period of time and in a natural setting. Indeed, our results suggest that partisan media influenced attitudes toward both candidates during the 2008 presidential election, with both daily and weekly results suggesting that increasing candidate coverage preceded audience attitude change. In the face of growing fragmentation of the media environment and renewed interest in selective exposure, some scholars have posited a new era of minimal effects (Bennett and Iyengar 2008). Given a different methodological approach, we show that media effects are alive and well for partisan news viewers.

Our results expand on past research by showing that partisan media effects can be attributed to coverage of the opposition candidate. Specifically, coverage on Fox News preceded increased negative opinions of Obama, while MSNBC coverage had a similar effect on viewer impressions of McCain. Meanwhile, coverage of the in-party candidate—McCain on Fox News and Obama on MSNBC—had minimal effects on viewer opinions of that candidate. In other words, partisan media effects stem more from beating up the out-party candidate than from singing the praises of the like-minded candidate. Fox News and MSNBC appear to serve as attack dogs for the Republican and Democratic parties, respectively. The role of partisan media is not to build a case for the in-party candidate, but instead to paint the opposition candidate as unacceptable and dangerous (see Jamieson and Cappella [2008]).

These results have important consequences for public opinion and governance in a representative democracy. Perhaps the rise of partisan media helps explain the increasing hostility from the losing side of presidential elections. There is an abundance of evidence demonstrating antipathy between the political parties and an increasing partisan divide in presidential approval (Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes 2012; Jones 2012). If partisan media affect public opinion by attacking the opposition, it should come as no surprise that citizens begin to hate the leaders of the opposition party. Additionally, consistent negativity is likely to make it much harder for presidents to reach out to the opposition when the election is over. If the conservative media establishment convinced viewers that Barack Obama was a racist, Kenyan-born, freedom-hating, redistributive Socialist, would it be any surprise that congressional Republicans were afraid of a primary challenge if they compromised with the president? Although we can only speculate about the contributions that partisan media have made to these recent phenomena, our results suggest that any effect partisan media have on our discourse, or our leaders, is likely to be negative.

It is worth pointing out a few caveats regarding our results. First, we use candidate coverage *amount* rather than *tone* as our primary independent variable. Ideally, we would use coverage tone to predict attitudes, but the Project for Excellence in Journalism does not regularly code for tone toward the candidates. Using tone data would have allowed us to examine the effects of positive (negative) coverage of the out-party (in-party) candidate. Baum and Groeling (2009) found that negative coverage of George W. Bush was more

persuasive when it aired on Fox News, largely because the tone of coverage was contrary to expectations. Future research might find that positive (negative) coverage of the out-party (in-party) candidate has a disproportionate effect on audience attitudes.

Second, our approach does not entirely control for the effects of self-exposure. It is possible that partisan media viewers would have become more polarized regardless of the tone of coverage or what source they watched. Indeed, even balanced news coverage may have polarizing effects on viewers who—because of their predispositions—may process information in a way that reinforces their previous opinions (Kunda 1990; Taber and Lodge 2006). We find this scenario unlikely, given that viewers' attitudes reflected the slant of coverage. Partisan viewers have an incentive to embrace their home-team candidate, but increased coverage of McCain (Obama) on Fox News (MSNBC) did not have any effects on viewer impressions. This suggests that the tone of coverage matters; however, the extent of its influence remains an open question.

Third, we examine only the 2008 presidential election, which did not include an incumbent presidential candidate. It is unclear whether partisan media would have a similar effect on opinions of an incumbent president. Finally, our results do not speak to the possible limitations of partisan media effects. Understanding what types of people are most affected by media coverage has important implications for the role of partisan media in the broader political environment. In the end, our results may be just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to partisan media effects on public opinion.

Appendix A. Survey Questions and Response Options

Candidate favorability	For the following person, please tell me if your opinion is favorable or unfavorable, using a scale from zero to 10. Zero means very unfavorable, and 10 means very favorable. Five means you do not feel favorable or unfavorable toward that person. Of course you can use any number between zero and 10. On a scale from zero to 10, how would you rate John McCain (Barack Obama)?
Candidate trust	Please tell me how well the phrase “trustworthy” applies to John McCain (Barack Obama). Please use a scale from zero to 10, where zero means it does not apply at all, and 10 means it applies extremely well. Of course you can use any number in between.
Candidate ideology	Which of the following best describes the views of John McCain (Barack Obama): very conservative (1), somewhat conservative (2), moderate (3), somewhat liberal (4), or very liberal (5)?
Sex	Respondent’s sex; male (0) and female (1).
Education	What is the last grade or class you completed in school? Response options: grade 8 or lower, some high school, high school diploma, technical school, some college, associate’s degree, four-year college degree, some graduate school, graduate degree. Recoded to no college (1), some college (2), post-graduate (3).
Political knowledge	Number of correct answers to the following questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who has the final responsibility to determine if a law is constitutional or not? Is it the president, the Congress, or the Supreme Court? 2. How much of a majority is required for the U.S. Senate and House to override a presidential veto? 3. Do you happen to know which party has the most members in the United States House of Representatives?
Partisanship	Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else?

Continued

Appendix A. *Continued*

Ideology	Generally speaking, would you describe your political views as very conservative (1), somewhat conservative (2), moderate (3), somewhat liberal (4), or very liberal (5)?
Campaign attention	How closely are you following the 2008 presidential campaign: very closely (4), somewhat closely (3), not too closely (2), or not closely at all (1)?
Hours TV	Last night, how many hours, if any, did you watch television between 6 and 11 p.m.? None (0), Less than one hour (1), One hour but less than two (2), two hours but less than three (3), Three hours but less than four (4), Four hours but less than five (5), Five hours (6).
Days TV	Thinking about the past week, how many days did you see information on broadcast or cable television about the 2008 presidential campaign? This includes seeing programs on television, on the internet, your cell phone, iPod, or PDA. Response: 0–7.
Days internet	How many days in the past week did you see or hear information about the 2008 presidential campaign on the internet? This may include accessing the internet through your cell phone, iPod, or PDA. Response: 0–7.
Days radio	Thinking about the past week, how many days did you hear information about the 2008 presidential campaign on radio shows that invite listeners to call in to discuss current events, public issues, or politics? This includes hearing the shows on the radio, or on the internet, your cell phone, iPod, or PDA. Response: 0–7.
Days newspaper	Thinking about the past week, how many days did you read a newspaper for information about the 2008 presidential campaign? This includes reading a paper copy of the newspaper, an online copy, or a newspaper item downloaded on your cell phone, iPod, or PDA. Response: 0–7.
Time to election	Number of weeks remaining until the election.

Appendix B.
Table B1. Audience Perceptions Following Daily Candidate Coverage

	<i>Coverage of McCain</i>			<i>Coverage of Obama</i>		
	Favor McCain	Trust McCain	McCain ideology	Favor Obama	Trust Obama	Obama ideology
<i>Fox X content</i>	.0082 (.0041)*	.0101 (.0036)*	-.0024 (.0008)*	-.0111 (.0033)*	-.0079 (.0035)*	.0031 (.0014)*
<i>MSNBC X content</i>	-.0168 (.0041)*	-.0186 (.0045)*	-.0048 (.0018)*	-.002 (.0035)	-.0032 (.0037)	-.0001 (.0014)
<i>CNN X content</i>	-.005 (.0022)*	-.0086 (.0024)*	.0004 (.0008)	.0001 (.002)	-.0019 (.0019)	.0005 (.0008)
<i>Broadcast X content</i>	-.0018 (.0021)	-.003 (.0027)	.0017 (.001)*	.0014 (.0021)	.0004 (.0025)	.0004 (.0008)
<i>Fox content</i>	-.0026 (.0021)	-.0062 (.002)*	.0014 (.0007)*	-.0043 (.0016)*	-.0036 (.0019)*	.001 (.0006)*
<i>MSNBC content</i>	-.002 (.0015)	-.0005 (.0018)	.0001 (.0006)	-.0007 (.0016)	(.0011)	.0004 (.0005)
<i>CNN content</i>	.0004 (.0015)	.0033 (.0016)*	.0006 (.0006)	-.0018 (.0014)	.0002 (.0017)	-.0004 (.0005)
<i>Broadcast content</i>	.0070 (.0018)*	.0005 (.0021)	-.0009 (.0008)	.0081 (.0016)*	.0034 (.0021)	-.0016 (.0005)*
<i>Fox viewer</i>	.476 (.075)*	.550 (.071)*	.130 (.021)*	-.968 (.099)*	-1.13 (.098)*	.521 (.040)*
<i>MSNBC viewer</i>	-.384 (.083)*	-.320 (.102)*	-.070 (.037)*	.892 (.099)*	.814 (.107)*	-.043 (.040)

Continued

Table B1. Continued

	Coverage of McCain			Coverage of Obama		
	Favor McCain	Trust McCain	McCain ideology	Favor Obama	Trust Obama	Obama ideology
<i>CNN viewer</i>	-.142 (.052)*	.086 (.061)	-.060 (.023)*	.369 (.055)*	.428 (.056)*	-.082 (.022)*
<i>Broadcast viewer</i>	.152 (.044)*	.229 (.050)*	-.021 (.019)	.002 (.051)	.088 (.065)	-.081 (.021)*
<i>Republican</i>	1.04 (.038)*	.975 (.036)*	-.100 (.013)*	-1.07 (.038)*	-1.07 (.055)*	.381 (.018)*
<i>Democrat</i>	-1.07 (.038)*	-1.09 (.048)*	-.090 (.014)*	1.14 (.043)*	1.08 (.041)*	-2.18 (.015)*
<i>Ideology</i>	-.285 (.015)*	-.242 (.018)*	-.115 (.006)*	.616 (.015)*	.546 (.018)*	-.053 (.006)*
<i>Campaign attention</i>	.002 (.019)	.179 (.021)*	-.074 (.008)*	.248 (.021)*	.349 (.023)*	.093 (.009)*
<i>Political knowledge</i>	.055 (.013)*	.161 (.013)*	-.048 (.006)*	-.052 (.015)*	.003 (.015)	.201 (.006)*
<i>Education</i>	.101 (.018)*	.173 (.020)*	-.118 (.007)*	.265 (.019)*	.274 (.021)*	.153 (.009)*
<i>Age</i>	.064 (.017)*	.326 (.018)*	.005 (.007)	-.201 (.018)*	-.134 (.018)*	.045 (.007)*
<i>Female</i>	-.118 (.023)*	-.105 (.029)*	-.088 (.011)*	.101 (.025)*	.051 (.026)*	-.031 (.011)*

Continued

Table B1. Continued

	Coverage of McCain			Coverage of Obama		
	Favor McCain	Trust McCain	McCain ideology	Favor Obama	Trust Obama	Obama ideology
<i>Hours TV</i>	.001 (.007)	.002 (.008)	.001 (.003)	.016 (.007)*	.011 (.008)	-.018 (.003)*
<i>Days TV</i>	.017 (.005)*	.023 (.006)*	-.007 (.002)*	.019 (.006)*	.019 (.006)*	.0007 (.002)
<i>Internet</i>	-.018 (.004)*	-.017 (.004)*	-.009 (.001)*	-.0007 (.004)	-.005 (.005)	.014 (.001)*
<i>Radio</i>	-.045 (.005)*	-.040 (.005)*	.015 (.002)*	-.028 (.006)*	-.039 (.006)*	.026 (.002)*
<i>Newspaper</i>	.015 (.004)*	.021 (.005)*	-.001 (.001)	.035 (.004)*	.039 (.005)*	.0003 (.002)
<i>Time to election</i>	.040 (.004)*	-.014 (.006)*	.032 (.002)*	.003 (.004)	-.029 (.006)*	-.024 (.001)*
<i>Constant</i>	5.74 (.107)*	4.97 (.129)*		2.80 (.100)*	2.79 (.122)*	
<i>Cut 1</i>			-1.75 (.052)			-1.16 (.047)
<i>Cut 2</i>			-.533 (.051)			-.515 (.046)

Continued

Table B1. *Continued*

	<i>Coverage of McCain</i>			<i>Coverage of Obama</i>		
	Favor McCain	Trust McCain	McCain ideology	Favor Obama	Trust Obama	Obama ideology
<i>Cut 3</i>			.359 (.051)			.330 (.046)
<i>Cut 4</i>			1.04 (.055)			1.39 (.048)
<i>N</i>	40,962	36,067	38,820	41,063	36,410	38,901

NOTE.—The coefficients for favorability and trustworthiness were estimated using OLS regression models, while candidate ideology was estimated using an ordered probit model. All models were clustered by the day the interview took place. Standard errors are in parentheses. * $p < .05$

Table B2. Audience Perceptions Following Weekly Candidate Coverage

	Coverage of McCain			Coverage of Obama		
	Favor McCain	Trust McCain	McCain ideology	Favor Obama	Trust Obama	Obama ideology
<i>Fox X content</i>	.0062 (.0017)*	.0049 (.0013)*	-.0007 (.0003)*	-.0070 (.0020)*	-.0062 (.0019)*	.0027 (.0006)*
<i>MSNBC X content</i>	-.0052 (.0012)*	-.0089 (.0012)*	-.0010 (.0005)*	.0014 (.0011)	.0016 (.0013)	.0003 (.0005)
<i>CNN X content</i>	-.0033 (.0007)*	-.0032 (.0008)*	-.0002 (.0002)	-.0004 (.0007)	-.0003 (.0008)	.0002 (.0003)
<i>Broadcast X content</i>	-.0009 (.0005)	-.0019 (.0004)*	.0005 (.0002)*	.0002 (.0006)	.0015 (.0007)*	-.0002 (.0002)
<i>Fox content</i>	-.0013 (.0009)	-.0028 (.0008)*	.0003 (.0003)	.0001 (.0007)	.0012 (.0010)	-.0006 (.0002)*
<i>MSNBC content</i>	-.0006 (.0010)	-.0005 (.0014)	.0005 (.0003)	-.0009 (.0006)	-.0006 (.0009)	.0001 (.0002)
<i>CNN content</i>	-.0005 (.0009)	.0005 (.0007)	-.0001 (.0003)	-.0014 (.0006)*	.0002 (.0009)	<.0001 (.0002)
<i>Broadcast content</i>	.0026 (.0006)*	.0015 (.0006)*	-.0003 (.0003)	.0026 (.0006)*	.0002 (.0009)	.0001 (.0001)
<i>Fox viewer</i>	.0494 (.1453)	.2552 (.1143)*	.1621 (.0277)*	-.2521 (.3099)	-.4222 (.2978)	.2357 (.1027)*
<i>MSNBC viewer</i>	-.1687 (.1398)	.2069 (.1779)	-.0415 (.0459)	.6527 (.1545)*	.4894 (.1915)*	-.1013 (.0703)

Continued

Table B2. Continued

	Coverage of McCain			Coverage of Obama		
	Favor McCain	Trust McCain	McCain ideology	Favor Obama	Trust Obama	Obama ideology
<i>CNN viewer</i>	.0963 (.0926)	.2534 (.0886)*	-.0238 (.0301)	.4438 (.1143)*	.4247 (.1171)*	-.1008 (.0530)
<i>Broadcast viewer</i>	.1839 (.0564)*	.3323 (.0586)*	-.3328 (.0203)	.0156 (.0771)	-.0867 (.0966)	-.0414 (.0381)
<i>Republican</i>	1.082 (.0547)*	1.006 (.0469)*	-1.105 (.0146)*	-1.100 (.0397)*	-1.067 (.0721)*	.3870 (.0219)*
<i>Democrat</i>	-1.081 (.0564)*	-1.077 (.0730)*	-.0919 (.0151)*	1.166 (.0736)*	1.099 (.0699)*	-.2193 (.0164)*
<i>Ideology</i>	-.2895 (.0231)*	-.2428 (.0281)*	-.1212 (.0069)*	.6241 (.0184)*	.5599 (.0247)*	-.0551 (.0087)*
<i>Campaign attention</i>	-.0143 (.0192)	.1659 (.0214)*	-.0739 (.0077)*	.2583 (.0258)*	.3528 (.0269)*	.0957 (.0073)*
<i>Political knowledge</i>	.0656 (.0135)*	.1719 (.0150)*	-.0488 (.0067)*	-.0491 (.0186)*	.0028 (.0162)	.2020 (.0067)*
<i>Education</i>	.1115 (.0189)*	.1795 (.0188)*	-.1181 (.0062)*	.2590 (.0207)*	.2877 (.0195)*	.1562 (.0079)*
<i>Age</i>	.0568 (.0169)*	.3196 (.0165)*	.0079 (.0055)	-.2023 (.0212)*	-.1326 (.0197)*	.0456 (.0064)*
<i>Female</i>	-.1220 (.0235)*	-.1123 (.0291)*	-.0874 (.0128)*	.1109 (.0205)*	.0527 (.0203)*	-.0426 (.0119)*

Continued

Table B2. Continued

	Coverage of McCain			Coverage of Obama		
	Favor McCain	Trust McCain	McCain ideology	Favor Obama	Trust Obama	Obama ideology
<i>Hours TV</i>	.0027 (.0056)	.0060 (.0069)	.0003 (.0025)	.0083 (.0079)	.0064 (.0085)	-.0161 (.0027)*
<i>Days TV</i>	.0171 (.0048)*	.0233 (.0060)*	-.0047 (.0027)	.0181 (.0057)*	.0220 (.0058)*	.0003 (.0026)
<i>Internet</i>	-.0169 (.0044)*	-.0164 (.0050)*	-.0088 (.0015)*	-.0031 (.0037)	-.0075 (.0042)	.0150 (.0015)*
<i>Radio</i>	-.0478 (.0062)*	-.0403 (.0059)*	.0148 (.0021)*	-.0276 (.0065)*	-.0390 (.0064)*	.0264 (.0020)*
<i>Newspaper</i>	.0155 (.0054)*	.0218 (.0058)*	-.0025 (.0018)	.0339 (.0037)*	.0394 (.0056)*	-.0001 (.0020)
<i>Time to election</i>	.0096 (.0023)*	-.0041 (.0045)	.0081 (.0007)*	.0007 (.0014)	-.0042 (.0028)	-.0058 (.0004)*
<i>Constant</i>	5.871 (.1679)*	5.091 (.2033)*		2.802 (.1229)*	2.513 (.1284)*	
<i>Cut 1</i>			-1.749 (.0682)			-1.184 (.0521)
<i>Cut 2</i>			-.5276 (.0669)			-.5438 (.0488)

Continued

Table B2. Continued

	Coverage of McCain			Coverage of Obama		
	Favor McCain	Trust McCain	McCain ideology	Favor Obama	Trust Obama	Obama ideology
<i>Cut 3</i>			.3577 (.0698)			.3039 (.0488)
<i>Cut 4</i>			1.023 (.0853)			1.377 (.0502)
<i>N</i>	46,823	41,554	44,487	46,918	42,029	44,551

NOTE.—Models estimate the effects of candidate coverage during the week preceding the interview. All models were clustered by week. Standard errors are in parentheses. * $p < .05$

Table B3. Believability of News Sources among Viewers and Nonviewers

Believability	<i>Respondent's preferred source</i>			
	<i>Broadcast</i>	<i>CNN</i>	<i>Fox News</i>	<i>MSNBC</i>
Broadcast	2.87*	2.82*	2.17*	3.11*
CNN	2.93*	3.09*	2.25*	2.90*
Fox News	2.56	2.38*	3.24*	1.97*
MSNBC	2.90*	2.81*	2.18*	2.80*
<i>N</i>	2,568	3,481	2,342	732

NOTE.—Significance was tested using difference-of-means tests between viewers and nonviewers. Scores represent viewers' perceived believability of the network on a scale from 1 to 4. * $p < .05$

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