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Running Head: LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF U.S. FLAG EXPOSURE ON REPUBLICANISM

A Single Exposure to the American Flag Shifts Support Toward Republicanism up to 8 Months
Later

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Abstract

There is scant evidence that incidental cues in the environment significantly alter people's political judgments and behavior in a durable way. We report that a brief exposure to the American flag led to a shift toward Republican beliefs, attitudes, and voting behavior, for both Republican and Democratic participants. Despite participants' overwhelming belief to the contrary, in Experiment 1, conducted online during the 2008 U.S. presidential election, participants who received a single exposure to an American flag exhibited a significant increase in Republican voting intentions, voting behavior, political beliefs, and implicit and explicit attitudes, with some effects lasting 8 months after the initial priming episode. In Experiment 2, we replicated the findings over a year into the current Democratic presidential administration. These results provide the first evidence that a national flag can bias the citizenry without their awareness toward one political party, with the effects showing considerable durability.

Keywords: Political psychology, priming, voting behavior, American flag

A single exposure to the American flag shifts support toward Republicanism up to 8 months later

How do people decide which political candidate to support? Or whether a country goes to war? The social science literature has traditionally assumed that political behavior emerges from a thoughtful and rational analysis of the pros and cons of the options (e.g. Baum & Jamison, 2006; Downs, 1959; Lau & Redlawsk, 1997). Recent work in social and cognitive psychology suggests, however, that political behavior can also be unintentionally guided by contextual cues such as voting location (Berger, Meredith & Wheeler, 2008) and the facial characteristics of candidates (Todorov, Mandisodza, Goren & Hall, 2005).

But, how robust and durable is the influence of such incidental cues on political decisions and behavior? In the current research we examine one of the most iconic political symbols of a nation – its flag – and test the direction and durability of its influence on political behavior, attitudes, and judgment.

National flags are pervasive cues in the political landscapes of many nations, showing up on houses, schools, government buildings, and the lapels of political candidates (Gellner, 2005). Flags constitute a particularly powerful political cue because they may reinforce national sentiments and thoughts without being noticed consciously by the citizenry (e.g. Billig, 1995). Although social scientists have speculated that national flags might exert an unnoticed influence on political thought and behavior, there is very little empirical evidence for this claim.

How might a national flag influence the political behavior of the citizenry? National flags have been traditionally assumed to be rallying symbols that bring the nation's citizens together (Baker & O'Neal, 2001; Mueller, 1970). For instance, a government and its citizens often intentionally wave the national flag during wartime in an effort to unify the populace behind the war efforts (Skitka, 2005). Recent findings show that even subtle exposure to a

national flag can sometimes have unifying effects. Subliminal exposure to a national flag led citizens to vote in a more moderate fashion, with each end of the political spectrum moving toward the ideological center (Hassin, Ferguson, Shidlovsky & Gross, 2007). This was the first evidence that national flags can change people's political behavior in a subtle, non-conscious fashion.

And yet, the psychological effects of a national flag are likely to vary considerably according to characteristics specific to a given country, such as the country's culture, history, and political atmosphere. Although there may be cases in which a national flag unifies people by pushing them toward the center of the ideological spectrum, there may be other cases where a national flag would instead move people toward one end of the spectrum. In particular, we argue that this could happen when the political landscape is polarized by a largely two-party system, and when one of the two major parties has come to be more associated with the flag. In these cases the flag may bias the citizenry toward a particular political party, potentially without their awareness or consent (Billig, 1995).

We tested these predictions in the United States, a country in which the political system is sharply divided between Democrats and Republicans. To examine the associations between the flag and these political parties we asked 51 participants about which party was more likely to brandish the American flag. Our sample strongly believed that this was more true of the Republican Party, compared with the midpoint of the scale, $t(50) = 6.50$, $p = .001$ (see also Carney, Jost, Gosling & Potter, 2008). Interestingly, this same sample of participants overwhelmingly (90.2%) believed that their voting behavior would not be influenced by the presence of a flag, and the few who thought it might did not agree on the direction of its

influence. Thus, despite believing that the American flag has been claimed by one political party over another, people do not believe that this would exert any impact on their behavior.

In contrast to people's beliefs, we report two experiments showing that the American flag introduces a bias toward the Republican Party over the Democratic Party. A single exposure to a small American flag while participants were deliberating about their voting intentions prior to a general election led to significant and robust changes in participants' voting intentions, voting behavior, and political attitudes, all in the politically conservative direction. In a separate experiment, we replicated these patterns over a year into a Democratic presidential administration.

We also tested the longevity of this priming effect on judgment and attitudes. Flag priming effects may be especially potent if they occur while a person is consciously deliberating about politics and voting intentions. We exposed people to the American flag once during such an arguably critical psychological window, and found that the effects from this single exposure lasted up to 8 months later. This represents one of the most durable priming effects in the cognitive sciences literature, and shows that contextual effects can not only impact important political decisions, but can also have a robust and long-lasting influence.

Research overview

In two experiments, we tested whether subtle exposure to the American flag shifted people's beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors toward the Republican end of the political continuum. In one of these experiments, we tested whether the attitudinal bias endured 8 months later. In the other, we examined whether the findings would emerge over a year into a Democratic presidential administration.

Experiment 1

This experiment tested whether a single exposure to the American flag would lead participants to shift their attitudes, beliefs, and behavior in the politically conservative direction. We conducted a multi-session study during the 2008 U.S. Presidential election. Starting in September 2008, we recruited American adults across the United States for a paid online study of political beliefs and attitudes. The experiment collected measures from the same sample of participants at four different times over an 8-month period.

Participants and recruitment

Between September 19th and October 10th, 2008 (Session 1), 396 participants were recruited through advertising in online social networking sites (e.g. Facebook.com) to participate in an online survey in exchange for a \$10 Amazon.com gift certificate. In order to avoid the possibility that our priming manipulation might alter the outcome of the election, we used Session 1 measurements to identify participants ($n = 235$) from the initial pool who planned to vote in a state where polling indicated a sufficient margin separated Obama and McCain. These participants were randomly assigned to either the flag-prime or control condition.

The participants who were in solid red or blue states were contacted to complete Session 2 (starting on October 11th, and ending the day before the election, November 3rd, 2008) and Session 3 (between November 5th through 12th, 2008) questionnaires. Participants were given a \$15 Amazon.com gift certificate in exchange for completing Sessions 2 and 3. Of those contacted, 197 completed Session 2, and 191 completed Session 3. Over 79% of participants had completed Session 2 by October 21st, meaning that for the vast majority of participants, at least two weeks separated their exposure to the prime in Session 2 and their voting behavior. In early July 2009, the participants who completed Session 3 were contacted to complete Session 4 in

exchange for a 1 in 20 chance to win a \$25 Amazon.com gift certificate. Seventy-one participants completed the session (38.8%). We attribute this relatively high rate of attrition to the use of a lottery rather than guaranteed payment.

There were no significant differences on any variables of importance (e.g., political ideology, voting intentions, beliefs about specific political issues, religiosity, nationalism, need for cognition) between the participants who did and did not complete the 8-month follow-up. Additionally, of the participants who completed Session 4, those in the flag-prime and control conditions did not differ on political ideology or voting intentions as measured in Session 1, suggesting that any differences in Session 4 are not the product of the particular coincidence of liberal attrition from the flag-prime condition and conservative attrition from the control condition.

We excluded 8 participants (4 in each of the flag priming and control conditions) from the analyses because they rushed through the measures in Session 1, completing them in less than 10 minutes (Median = 36 minutes).

Materials and procedure

Session 1. Participants completed various personality measures, including some directly or potentially relevant to the current hypotheses. These included: Patriotism and Nationalism subscales of the Patriotism and Nationalism Scale (PATNAT; Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989), a measure of warmth towards the candidates, a demographics questionnaire, a measure of political orientation and media exposure, a survey of attitudes regarding specific political issues, and measures of intention to vote for Barack Obama/Joseph Biden and John McCain/Sarah Palin on separate 11-point scales (1 = Definitely not, 11 = Absolutely). These surveys were presented to

each participant in a random order. None of these measures moderated the effects reported below.

Session 2. All participants first reported their voting intentions using the same 11-point scales as at Session 1. For participants assigned to the flag-prime condition, a small (72 x 45 pixel) American flag was present in the top left corner of the survey. For participants in the control condition, there was nothing in the corner of the survey (see Experimental Manipulations in the supporting information). Aside from this single presentation of the American flag on this particular survey, the procedure and materials in all sessions were identical for all participants.

Participants answered several questions unrelated to the present research, and then provided attitude-warmth ratings of each major-party presidential and vice-presidential candidate and the parties themselves (on 500-point analog sliding scales), measures of political orientation and media exposure, the same political issues questions assessed in Session 1, and ratings of the importance of the same political issues.

After completing all of the surveys, participants completed a number of IATs (Implicit Association Tests; Lane, Banaji, Nosek & Greenwald, 2007), presented in random order. The IAT measures that were directly relevant to the current hypotheses included a Barack Obama/John McCain IAT, a Joseph Biden/Sarah Palin IAT, and a Democrat/Republican IAT. These IATs were presented and scored in accordance with the procedures outlined by Nosek, Greenwald and colleagues (Lane et al., 2007). The IATs were scored such that higher numbers represent greater positivity towards the Republican candidate or party.

Session 3. Participants were first asked to report which candidate they voted for from a list of the major and minor party candidates who appeared on the ballots in most states, as well as options for ‘other’ and ‘did not vote.’ Participants also answered questions about their vote

choice and attributes of Barack Obama and John McCain. They were also asked about how fairly they felt the media treated each presidential and vice-presidential candidate on separate 9-point scales (-4 = Very unfairly negatively, -2 = Somewhat unfairly negatively, 0 = Accurately, +2 = Somewhat unfairly positively, +4 = Very unfairly positively).

Finally, participants reported about their media exposure and news watching habits, including specific television, print, and radio sources. After completing Session 3, participants were referred to a website containing suspicion probe questions. Once participants had answered the suspicion probe questions, they were debriefed on the nature of the study. No participants expressed any suspicion of the presence of the American flag during Session 2.

Session 4. Participants first answered a number of questions about their current feelings about President Obama and his job performance to date (all questions answered on 11-point Likert scales). Next, participants indicated how warmly they felt towards a variety of liberal/Democratic and conservative/Republican leaders using the same analog sliding scales used previously, and answered the same political belief questions used in previous sessions. Participants were also asked to report their own personal political ideology, religiosity, the importance of being an American to their identity, their media watching habits, and exposure to the same variety of news sources asked about in Session 3.

Participants were then thanked and presented with further debriefing information about the study.

Session 2 Results

Voting Intentions. We created composite measures of voting intentions for both Sessions 1 and 2 by calculating the difference between intentions to vote for McCain and Obama, such that higher numbers indicate a greater intention to vote for McCain over Obama.

We then regressed the centered Session 2 intentions on centered Session 1 intentions, and used the residuals from this analysis as our main measure of voting intentions. Thus, we are measuring the impact of the flag priming condition on voting intentions during Session 2 that cannot be explained by voting intentions from Session 1.

As predicted, participants in the flag-prime condition ($M = 0.072$, $SD = 0.47$) reported a greater intention to vote for McCain over Obama than participants in the control condition ($M = -.070$, $SD = 0.48$), $t(181) = 2.02$, $p = .04$, $d = .298$ (see Figure 1).

Explicit attitudes. We created a composite score of participants' warmth ratings towards the presidential candidates, vice presidential candidates, and political parties, controlling for the same measures administered at Session 1. Higher numbers on this measure indicate more positive feelings toward the conservative party/candidates than the liberal party/candidates. As predicted, compared with participants in the control condition ($M = -.410$, $SD = 2.37$), participants in the flag-prime condition ($M = .424$, $SD = 2.73$) felt relatively more warmth towards the conservative party/candidates, $t(181) = -2.21$, $p = .03$, $d = .354$ (see Figure 2).

Implicit attitudes. We created a composite measure of the three political IATs to represent the aggregate positivity towards the Republican Party and candidates over the Democratic Party and candidates. Participants in the flag-prime condition ($D = -0.006$) showed significantly more positivity toward the Republican Party and candidates than participants in the control condition ($D = -0.102$), an effect that is mirrored in each of the IATs separately, $t(173) = 2.03$, $p < .05$, $d = .313$.

Political beliefs. Participants' responses were reverse scored when needed and then averaged into a composite measure of political attitudes ($\alpha = .84$). This index was correlated

with self-reported party affiliation and political ideology ($r = .73, p < .001$), confirming that the reported attitudes do correspond with the conservative ideological position.

Participants in the flag-prime group reported marginally more conservative attitudes ($M = 3.25, SD = 0.82$) than participants in the control condition ($M = 3.03, SD = 0.79$), $t(181) = 1.80, p = .07, d = .274$. This result holds, and even improves slightly, when controlling for responses to political attitudes statements taken during Session 1, $\beta = .141, t(180) = 1.84, p = .06$ (see Figure 1).

Session 3 Results

Voting behavior. To maximize statistical power in measuring voting behavior, we analyzed data only from participants who reported voting for McCain or Obama ($n = 166$). Although participants generally tended to vote for Obama in the control condition (83.5% Obama, 16.5% McCain), this tendency was significantly reduced in the flag-prime condition (72.8% Obama, 27.2% McCain), $\chi^2 = 2.81, p < .05$ [one-tailed] (see Figure 3). These patterns hold when analyzing the data from all participants, although significance levels drop. It is worth noting that voting behavior was highly predicted by voting intentions in Session 2. And, indeed, when voting intentions and priming condition are both included in a regression analysis as predictors of voting behavior, voting intentions remains reliably predictive ($\beta = 3.26, \chi^2 = 27.67, p < .0001$), whereas priming condition drops to non-significance ($p = .25$). This suggests that the effect of priming condition on voting behavior was mediated by voting intentions, rather than having an unmediated direct effect on voting behavior (see also Hassin et al., 2007).

Treatment in the media. We created a composite index of how fairly the media treated the candidates, such that positive values indicate the belief that the media treated the Republican candidates better than the Democratic candidates, and negative numbers indicating the opposite

belief. Although participants generally believed that the media were unduly harsh in their treatment of the Republican candidates even in the control condition ($M = -1.39$, $SD = 3.54$), this tendency was significantly greater in the flag prime condition ($M = -2.69$, $SD = 4.43$), $t(181) = 2.20$, $p = .029$, $d = .370$.

Session 4 Results

Obama's job performance. We averaged the questions about Obama's job performance to create a composite measure ($\alpha = .97$). As predicted, participants in the flag-prime condition felt less positively about Obama's job performance 8 months later ($M = 6.76$, $SD = 2.88$) compared with participants in the control condition ($M = 8.01$, $SD = 2.25$), $t(69) = 2.04$, $p < .05$, $d = .44$.

Explicit attitudes. We created a composite attitude index by subtracting the average warmth ratings of the Democratic leaders from the average warmth toward Republican leaders. Participants in both conditions generally felt more warmth towards the Democrats, but participants in the flag-prime condition ($M = -54.76$, $SD = 182.18$) were less warm than were participants in the control condition ($M = -193.47$, $SD = 176.16$), $t(69) = 3.26$, $p = .002$, $d = .80$ (see Figure 2).

Political beliefs. As was the case in Session 2, participants in the flag-prime condition exhibited significantly more conservative beliefs ($M = 3.35$, $SD = 0.85$) than participants in the control condition ($M = 2.85$, $SD = 0.88$), $t(68) = 2.43$, $p < .02$, $d = .60$.¹

Discussion

¹ Participants responded to one additional statement (about extreme interrogation techniques) at Session 4 that was not included in previous sessions. Whether or not this question is included in the composite measure does nothing to change the results.

The results demonstrate that a single exposure to an unobtrusive American flag shifted participants' voting intentions, behavior, attitudes, and beliefs toward the Republican end of the ideological spectrum. Some of these effects lasted 8 months after the initial exposure. Why did these effects last so long? One possibility is that voting behavior (Session 3) was especially influential on beliefs and attitudes reported at Session 4. Indeed, voting behavior does significantly predict Session 4 findings on attitudes and policy beliefs (r 's > .4, p 's < .001). This raises the question of whether the effects at Session 4 could be explained entirely by a self-perception account, whereby participants at Session 4 merely recalled their voting choice? The data do not support this account. Even when controlling for voting behavior at Session 3, priming condition still significantly predicts Session 4 warmth towards Democrats/Republicans (p < .01), and marginally significantly predicts the political issues (p < .09). The same is true when controlling for voting intentions as measured in Session 2, for warmth (p < .01) and political issues (p < .08). This suggests that the flag prime's initial influence was not restricted to only voting intentions but also extended to attitudes and beliefs more broadly, and it was the accumulation and perhaps rolling influence of these changes that affected behavior at T4.

It is also noteworthy that the size of the priming effect was considerably larger in Session 4 than in the earlier sessions. Might this be due to the selective attrition of participants from Sessions 1-3 to Session 4? The fact that participants who chose to do Session 4 show no baseline differences (among over 20 variables) from those who did not speaks against this possibility, although it is of course impossible to definitively rule this out as they may have differed on some unmeasured variable. There is some evidence that people who have been exposed to persuasive appeals show increasingly stronger effects of those appeals over time (i.e., "sleeper effects"; Kumkale & Albarracín, 2004; see also Cook & Flay, 1978; Pratkanis, Greenwald, Leippe, &

Baumgardner, 1988), although the applicability of that research to the current findings remains speculative.

Experiment 2

Before concluding that exposure to the American flag produces a bias toward Republicanism, we tested whether the flag creates a shift specifically toward Republicanism, rather than toward whichever party currently controls the executive branch of the government. The current experiment, then, was conducted in spring of 2010, over a year after the election of President Obama and when the Democrats still had the majority in both houses.

Participants and recruitment

Seventy participants completed the experiment either for \$5 or extra credit in a psychology class. One participant had been in a highly similar experiment previously, and one participant did not complete the part of the experiment that contained the priming. Two additional participants guessed the hypothesis. These four participants were excluded from the analyses.

Materials and procedure

Once participants arrived at the lab, they completed a task that was described to them as being about the ability to discern from photographs the time of day that the photograph had been taken. They were presented with 4 photographs of buildings and asked to estimate for each photograph whether it looked like the photograph was taken during the morning, afternoon, or evening (see Experimental Manipulations in the supporting information). For those randomly assigned to the flag-prime condition, two of the four photographs had American flags in them (in front of or hanging off of the building). For those in the control condition, the American flags were digitally removed. After this task, participants completed a short (8-item) version of the

political belief survey used in Experiment 1 (see Instrument Details in the supporting information) using a 7-point scale.

Results and Discussion

The responses were reverse coded when needed and averaged together ($\alpha = .67$).

Attitudes of participants in the flag-prime condition ($M = 3.10$) were significantly closer to the Republican end of the scale compared to attitudes of participants in the control condition ($M = 2.65$), $t(64) = -2.04$, $p < .05$. This suggests that the American flag introduces an unnoticed shift toward the Republican worldview, even under a Democratic administration.

General Discussion

Although the American flag is assumed to represent the entire country, the present findings suggest that the psychological processes put in motion by flag priming yield increased support for the beliefs of a particular segment of the populace. Subtle exposure to the American flag significantly shifted both Democratic and Republican participants' beliefs, attitudes, and voting behavior toward Republicanism.

These findings provide the first empirical evidence that a national flag can push its citizens toward a specific end of the ideological spectrum, rather than having the unifying effect documented extensively in the social sciences literature (Baker & O'Neal, 2001; Hassin et al., 2007; Mueller, 1970). Why did previous research (e.g., Hassin et al., 2007) show a unifying effect of a national flag, while the current work shows an ideologically-specific effect (i.e., toward Republicanism)? As we noted in the introduction, the American flag seems to be perceived (at least in our samples) as more closely linked with the Republican versus Democratic party, and this kind of "flag branding" may be especially influential in a two-party system where there are typically only two viable voting choices. In other words, the American flag conjures up

Republican beliefs and attitudes, and these “primes” collectively push people in the Republican direction. In contrast, in a system that entails multiple viewpoints and parties, if any flag branding of a particular party or viewpoint exists, it may be relatively diluted and thus less influential.

However, it is possible that the American flag does indeed have a unifying influence that is merely masquerading as increased Republicanism. In other words, the flag might indeed trigger concepts of unity or moderation that move people toward the center of the ideological spectrum. But, because the samples in our studies were relatively Democratic and liberal, and their policy beliefs were generally closer to the Democratic end of the ideological spectrum, their movement toward the center is also a move toward Republicanism. The current effects of the American flag are therefore consistent with either a “unifying” or “Republican” explanation. The unifying explanation would predict that exposing a highly conservative sample to an American flag prime would lead to a shift toward the Democratic end of the spectrum. The “Republican” explanation, on the other hand, would suggest that there would be little movement for those already located at the Republican end of the ideological spectrum.

The mechanism may be more nuanced than either of these possibilities, however. As we have argued elsewhere (Hassin et al., 2009), national flags may be strongly associated specifically with prototypes of national citizens, and the influence of a national flag may consist of shifting people’s attitudes toward those of the (imagined) prototypical citizen. The direction of the shift for a given sample of people would depend on whether those people believed the prototypical citizen was more liberal or conservative than they were themselves. In a way, this is a unifying effect because the flag is moving people toward what is perceived to be the typical or average citizen. And yet, as long as people believe that the typical American is more

conservative than they are, this “unifying” effect would result in a shift toward Republicanism.

We do have some evidence that our participants generally believed that the prototypical American is more conservative than they were themselves. We asked participants in Experiment 1 about their views of the “typical American” at the end of Session 4. Although participants generally anchored on their own beliefs in estimating those of the typical American, they generally felt that the typical American would feel more warmly toward Republican politicians, paired $t(68) = 2.34, p < .03$, and that the typical American would give more Republican answers to the specific policy questions, paired $t(68) = 7.07, p < .001$, than they would themselves. Future research can test more directly how people’s prototypes of the average citizen predict the effect of flag priming on political thought and behavior (see Hassin et al., 2009 for a more detailed discussion).

The current results also demonstrate that wide-ranging effects of national flags can emerge from a single flag exposure. Why did a single, brief exposure to the American flag in Experiment 1 have such an enduring impact? Indeed, considering how often Americans are exposed to their flag, why would this one exposure have any impact at all? In contrast with the vast majority of the instances of exposure to the American flag, this particular exposure occurred when participants were reporting their voting intentions, an act that has been shown to strongly predict and shape voting behavior (Greenwald, Carnot, Beach & Young, 1987). For some, this may have been a rare event in which they were making an explicit declaration of their intentions, which would serve to further crystallize their stated intentions and attitudes, along with any bias introduced by the presence of the flag at that critical moment. Indeed, when controlling for participants’ voting intentions at Session 2, the effect of the flag exposure on voting behavior drops to non-significance (see also Hassin et al., 2007). From this perspective, exposure to the

American flag in everyday life may have an especially strong influence when it occurs immediately before or while someone is considering or declaring political issues or decisions (e.g., in the voting booth).

It is also important to note, however, that exposure to the American flag can have a range of short-term effects that are not dependent on conscious declarations, and are not even overtly political (Carter, Ferguson, & Hassin, in press; Ferguson & Hassin, 2007). For example, Ferguson and Hassin (2007) found that brief exposure to the American flag increased aggressive thoughts and behavior, especially among those who followed political news.

The present data suggest that American people are not aware of this effect. As the short survey described in the introduction demonstrates, participants in our sample (erroneously) believed that the American flag would not influence their political behavior or attitudes. This mistaken belief is in line with the standard claim in psychology and political science that important political behavior results from careful and rational deliberation (Baum & Jamison, 2006; Downs, 1959; Lau & Redlawsk, 1997). Thus, the current work challenges both laypeople's assumptions as well as the standard claim in the literature, and joins recent findings showing that subtle cues in the environment can significantly influence how people vote, from polling locations, to facial characteristics of political candidates, to national flags (Berger et al., 2008; Greenwald, Smith, Sriram, Bar-Anan & Nosek, 2009; Rule et al., 2010; Todorov et al., 2005).

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Figure Legends

Figure 1. Experiment 1: Voting intentions and political attitudes at Session 2 as a function of priming condition, controlling for responses to the same measures administered at Session 1. Higher numbers indicate a greater relative intention to vote for the Republican candidates over the Democratic candidates, and greater relative support for the politically conservative position, respectively.

Figure 2. Experiment 1: Composite measure of relative preference for the presidential and vice-presidential candidates and Republican and Democratic Parties as a function of priming condition, at Sessions 2 and 4. Higher numbers indicate greater relative preference for the Republican over the Democratic candidates and party.

Figure 3. Experiment 1: Reported voting behavior in Session 3 as a function of priming condition and presidential candidate (N = 166).

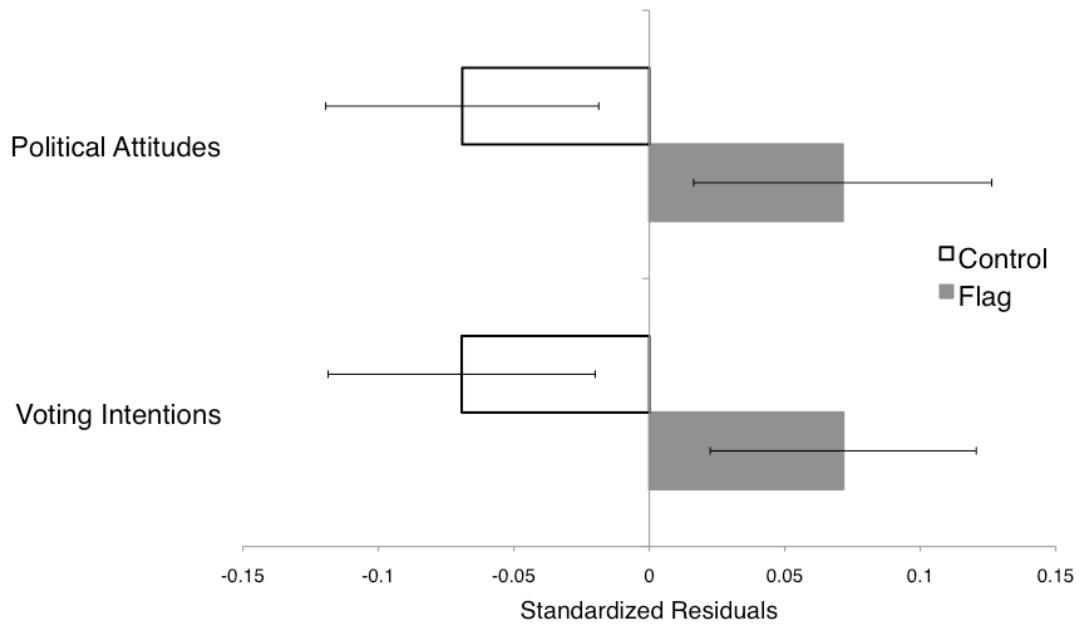


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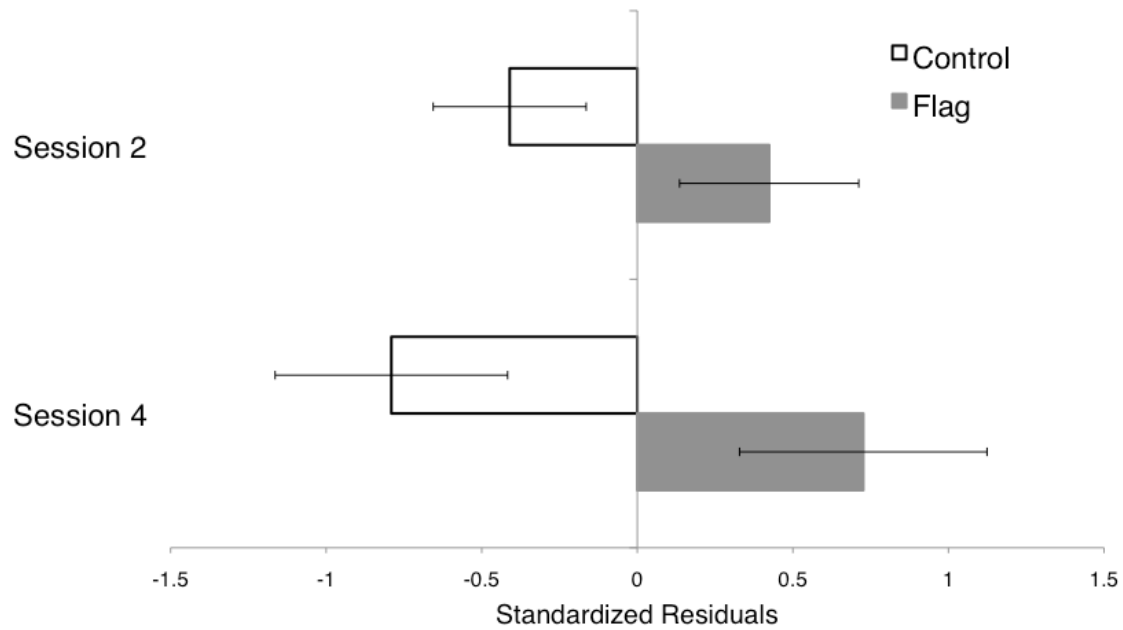


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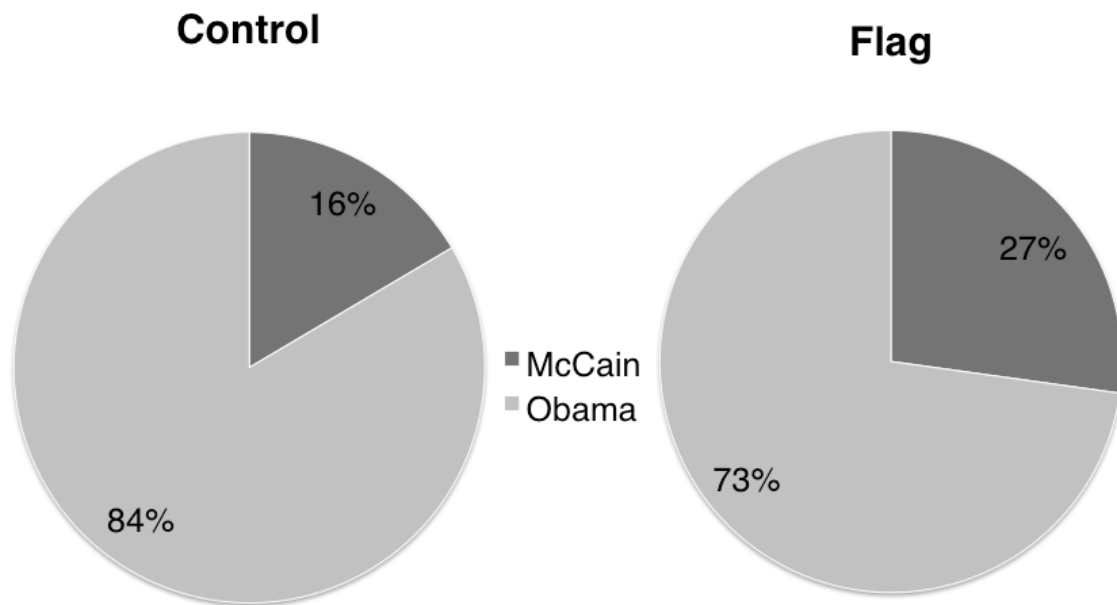


Figure 3. Experiment 1: Reported voting behavior in Session 3 as a function of priming condition and presidential candidate (N = 166).

Experimental Manipulations

Experiment 1. In Session 2, participants first indicated their voting intentions using the scales below. For participants in the flag-prime condition (top), there was a small (72x45 pixel) American flag in the corner of the screen. This was absent for participants in the control condition (bottom).



Please answer the following questions as honestly as possible, according to how you are feeling *right now*.

1. To what degree do you intend to vote for the Democratic presidential candidates, Barack Obama and Joseph Biden?

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11
 Definitely Not Absolutely

2. To what degree do you intend to vote for the Republican presidential candidates, John McCain and Sarah Palin?

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11
 Definitely Not Absolutely

Submit

Please answer the following questions as honestly as possible, according to how you are feeling *right now*.

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☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11
 Definitely Not Absolutely

Submit

Experiment 2. Pictures used as flag prime. The American flag in the images used in the flag condition (left) was digitally removed for the control condition (right).

