

**STEWART VS. COLBERT 2012:
HOW SATIRICAL COVERAGE OF THE 2012 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION
AFFECTED COLLEGE STUDENTS**

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To my parents and brothers,
who introduced me to the comedy of Stephen Colbert and Jon Stewart,
for supporting me throughout the process, providing suggestions, and
and encouraging me to follow my passions

To my advisors, Nick Carnes and Ken Rogerson,
and my reader, Di Koob,
for their support and guidance

and

To my friends,
for their words of encouragement
and trips to frozen yogurt shops.

“WELL I GUESS IF THE WORLD LEADERS WOULD LIKE TO MEET WITH [OBAMA] PERSONALLY, THEY CAN JUST DONATE \$5 TO HIS CAMPAIGN AND TAKE THEIR CHANCES LIKE THE REST OF US.”

- JON STEWART ON *THE DAILY SHOW WITH JON STEWART*, 2012

“THE LATEST POLLS HAVE ROMNEY NECK AND NECK WITH OBAMA. NOW, FOLKS, THIS RACE IS AS TIGHT AS MITT’S SMILE WHEN HE MEETS A POOR PERSON.”

- STEPHEN COLBERT ON *THE COLBERT REPORT*, 2012

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ABSTRACT

Young people have shifted away from traditional news broadcasts and towards late-night comedy programs as a source of news. This research uses *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* and *The Colbert Report*, two of the most popular comedy news programs during the 2012 election season, to analyze how watching political satire television affects college students' political engagement. Five hundred and ninety-six students from Duke University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill were surveyed. Students who reported watching more satire were more interested in politics, more knowledgeable about campaign news and the government, and more active in politics through voting and campaigning. Students who reported watching more satire also evaluated Obama more positively and Romney more negatively, regardless of party identification. When some students were randomly exposed to 6-minute montage clips of *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* and *The Colbert Report*, those students demonstrated a greater interest in politics and desire to participate politically in the future. The evidence is clear: watching political satire significantly affects college students' political engagement. Although students who watch more satire are similar to those who watch more traditional news, students who watch satire by chance have a greater desire to participate politically and are more critical of Romney than those who watch news by chance.

INTRODUCTION

Television news satire has been a dominant media in the United States since the 1960s. However, the nature of political satire has changed as technology has evolved, relations between countries have shifted, and crises have occurred. In the past two decades, younger generations have shifted away from traditional news media outlets and towards late-night comedy as a source of news (Xiaozia Cao, 2008). In the late 2000s and early 2010s, *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* and *The Colbert Report* have emerged as two of the most popular parody news programs in the United States.

One of the most contested areas of research about television satire is its impact on viewers. Scholars disagree about how watching comedy news affects an individual's political engagement. Many researchers have argued that watching satire makes people more interested in politics (Cao, 2008; Feldman and Young, 2008). However, scholars disagree about whether satire makes individuals more cynical towards the government and politicians or whether watching these shows actually fosters faith in the government and makes people more knowledgeable about political activity (Baumgartner & Morris, 2006; Cao, 2008; Young, 2004). One reason that scholars have reached distinctive conclusions might be that they studied different cases, such as different federal and local elections. Researchers found that exposure to satirical coverage of the 2004 presidential election made viewers more critical of all candidates whereas coverage of the 2008 presidential election only influenced candidate evaluations of opposing parties (Baumgartner & Morris, 2006; Stewart, 2011). Moreover, which shows a researcher studies can influence how the satire influenced the viewers. For example, the content on *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* is much more liberal than that on *Red Eye*. Study results reflect this difference in content. Most research also has analyzed how watching political satire

affects the general population, rather than focusing on the demographics of the shows' viewers - young adults.

Due to the changing media landscape and recentness of the 2012 presidential election, few studies, if any, have analyzed how the most watched satire shows during that election season, *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report*, affected its young adult viewership. Research needs to be done on these two programs and their viewing demographic. While some research has been conducted on how *The Daily Show* influences its viewers, the research is heavily contested. Additionally, since *The Colbert Report* did not begin until 2008, little research has been done on how its content affects viewers' political engagement during federal elections.

This study analyzes how coverage of the 2012 presidential election on *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* and *The Colbert Report* impacted college-aged viewers' political engagement and understanding and interpretation of campaign and election news. This research studies how watching jokes on these programs influenced how interested college students were in politics; how much college students felt that they could impact change in the government; how knowledgeable college students were about government, campaigns, and election news; how much college students participated in politics through voting and other political activities; and how college students felt about the candidate of their own political party and that of the opposing party. This study also compares the effects from watching comedy news to those from watching traditional news to see if there is a significant difference in how the type of content impacted viewers.

MEDIA AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

Many factors can shape someone's political beliefs, policy interpretations, and voting. Over the years, researchers have consistently mentioned the same influential factors: media; friends and family; homeownership; religion; race; socioeconomic status; socialization with the local community; and ideology (Allen, 2007; Cohen, 2003; Domke, Shan, & Wackman, 1998; Gilderbloom & Markham, 1995; Huckfeldt, 1995; Khan, 2009; Layman, 1997; McClosky & Dahlgren, 1959; McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Putnam, 1966). In 1972, McCombs and Shaw argued that many people relied entirely on mass media - television and newspapers - to connect with politics. The Internet boom in the late 1990s expanded this contact to include social media and online news programs, television clips and episodes, news articles, and blogs. Even after these changes, researchers found that media plays an all-pervasive role not only in shaping what people think about, but also in changing how people think (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2006).

In particular, media can have a significant impact on young people. By delivering certain stories, the media sets a political agenda, activates the audience's mental constructs, and frames stories in ways that can dramatically alter people's knowledge, behavior, and perception of society (Bryant & Oliver, 2009; Domke et al., 1998). College students generally consume news media to learn what is going on around them and/or to escape the realities of everyday life (Diddi & LaRose, 2010). In certain situations, media have gone as far as encouraging college students to binge drink, have a more negative body image, and accept violence against women (Agostinelli, Brown, & Miller, 1995; Malamuth & Check, 1981; Stice & Shaw, 1994).

The top five media sources consumed by college students are hometown newspapers, cable news, Internet news, broadcast news, and comedy news (Diddi & LaRose, 2010). Reading newspapers and watching television news increases the audience's knowledge of politics and

shapes how the audience perceives candidates (Miller & Krosnick, 2000). Neuman (1992) found that traditional news was centered on people and events, creating a distinction between the news story and the actual news issue. Which stories the news programs focused on influenced how people interpreted the news issue and subsequently shaped viewers' political attitudes. As a result, researchers continually find that the source of the news, such as *Fox News* or *CNN*, has a bias that impacts its viewers. Viewers with that bias will also seek out traditional news programs that reinforce their previously held beliefs (Stroud, 2008). As young people have shifted away from traditional broadcast outlets and towards comedy as a form of news, some scholars argue that "television news is largely failing to fulfill [its] responsibilities [of guaranteeing democracy], particularly among young people" (Buckingham, 2000). Do comedy news programs fill that void by guaranteeing democracy?

Comedy news shows use satire, or "the use of humor, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticize people's stupidity, [weaknesses,] or voices" ("Definition of Satire," 2013). Political satire specifically targets the government, current events, or people to make a comment about its current state. Satirical media general employ four techniques: exaggerating something so that its faults can be seen, presenting things out of place through irony and oxymoron, imitating the style of someone or event through parody to ridicule the original, and reversing the order of events or hierarchical order ("Satirical Techniques Definitions," 2006). Political satire can be presented in a variety of media, from cartoons to theatrical plays. This research, however, will focus on political satire television programs, a popular type of satire throughout the past decade.

The Daily Show, with 2.5 million total viewers, and *The Colbert Report*, with 1.9 million total viewers, are the most-watched late-night talk shows among 18- to 24-year-olds (Bibel,

2013). In 2012, 39 percent of *The Daily Show*'s regular viewers and 43 percent of *The Colbert Report*'s regular viewers were 18- to 29-years-old (Pew, 2012a). These viewers represent roughly 13 percent of adults under 30 in the United States, the highest proportion of regular watchers for any age demographic (Pew, 2010). The comedy shows also post full episodes and clips on their websites, TheDailyShow.com and ColbertNation.com, which were the most-visited sites among late-night talk shows in the first quarter of 2013. An average of 1.5 million unique visitors and 21 million minutes were spent on TheDailyShow.com per month, more than five times the amount spent on the third place site - Conan O'Brien's TeamCoCo.com (Bibel, 2013).

Researchers and the general public disagree upon the purpose of late-night comedy shows poking fun at political activity. Are the satirical jokes on *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* and *The Colbert Report* educational and informative? Are they meant to manipulate individuals' evaluations of candidates or generate public discussion? Are the jokes just for the sake of comedy or do the comedians and writers add in their own views? Is the mission of *The Daily Show* different from that of *The Colbert Report*; and, do these missions differ from the general goals of news media?

Studies have shown that people generally watch political comedy to be entertained, not informed (Baum, 2003); however, satire shows may still inform their audiences. Although staff members of many late-night comedy programs have claimed that their programs are intended to be comedic outlets, studies show that viewers often mistake jokes on parody news programs as true events (Xiaoxia Cao & Brewer, 2008; Xiaozia Cao, 2008). After hearing about a simultaneous 133 percent increase in young people choosing late-night comedy programs as a news source and 41 percent decrease in choosing nightly news broadcasts like *ABC*, *CBS*, or *NBC*, Jon Stewart of *The Daily Show* joked, "A lot of them are probably high" ("And now the

news: For many young viewers, it's Jon Stewart," 2004). However, only 43 percent of regular Colbert viewers and 53 percent of regular Stewart viewers say that they watch the show for entertainment, meaning that over half of the combined audiences seek out the shows for a different purpose (Pew, 2010).

Whether or not the programs are intended to inform or entertain audiences, television news satire has opened up a new means of political communication to young audiences. This raises a number of important questions. Does watching satire programs make people more interested in politics? More cynical, or more confident that they can bring about change through government? More knowledgeable about political activity? More active in politics through voting and campaigning? More confident in their own party's presidential candidate and more critical of the opposing party's candidate?

POLITICAL INTEREST

Many scholars have found a relationship between watching late-night political comedy and viewers' political interest, or the level of concern that an individual has regarding the outcome of political activity. People who are more interested in politics generally participate more politically through voting and campaigning. This political activity is necessary for a functioning democracy. Because viewership of comedy programs has increased while that of traditional news has decreased, many wonder if the comedy programs are actually "killing democracy" (Winter, 2006).

Several studies have found that watching political comedy programs increases viewers' political interest. In their analysis of the 2004 presidential primary campaign, Cao and Brewer (2008) found that the jokes on late-night comedy programs made political activity easier to understand and more interesting for many individuals, consequently piquing their interest.

Feldman and Young (2008) went further to suggest that late-night comedy programs not only increased political interest but also acted as a gateway to traditional news. In their analysis of the 2004 presidential election, they discovered that increased attention paid to political issues on late-night comedy fosters attention paid to political issues on traditional news sources.

While it is generally agreed that watching satire increases viewers' interest in politics, it is unclear whether people who are more interested in politics seek out these shows or if an outstanding political engagement variable, like efficacy or knowledge, causes that increase. For example, if being efficacious makes someone more interested in politics, and if satire makes people more efficacious, then efficacy could be an outstanding variable explaining why the viewer's interest in politics increased from watching satire. Analyzing multiple political engagement variables, instead of focusing on one variable like other research, can help clarify this uncertainty.

POLITICAL EFFICACY

In addition to changes in political interest, scholars have studied how watching parody news shapes viewers' political efficacy. Political efficacy is an individual's feelings that his or her political participation matters and that the government is responsive to citizens' needs. A person with high political efficacy believes that political and social change is possible and that individuals can help bring about this change (Campbell, Gurin, & Miller, 1954). Even if they are more knowledgeable and interested in politics, people with low political efficacy levels are unlikely to vote, contact elected officials, or participate in other forms of political activity because they believe their actions are futile.

Some studies have differentiated between internal political efficacy, the feeling that the person himself can impact change, and external political efficacy, the feeling that the

government can impact change. Baumgartner and Morris (2006) illustrated that watching more satire news can increase internal efficacy but decrease external efficacy. After watching Jon Stewart's rational criticism of absurd political happenings, individuals were more cynical about the government's responsiveness to citizen demands. On the other hand, subjects felt more confident in their own abilities to make a difference politically after Stewart simplified the political situation. The scholars found a difference between how satire affected internal and external efficacy.

Later research disagreed with Baumgartner and Morris' study. Cao (2008) argued that it is unclear whether jokes made at the expense of political figures truly caused a change in political efficacy or whether individuals less confident in the government and their ability to impact change sought out these shows. She did find that people who watched more political comedy had higher levels of political efficacy; however, she could not rule out an outstanding variable or the concept of self-selection.

The influence of satire on political efficacy is unclear. While the distinction between internal and external efficacy is important, few scholars have explained how watching satire impacts the combination of both types of efficacy. Cao's research (2008) lacked an experimental portion to prove whether watching the shows caused a higher level of political efficacy. Through an experimental and observational approach, this study will analyze how watching satire shows influenced viewers' net internal and external political efficacy, simply called political efficacy from here on forward.

POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE

Whether or not late-night political comedy programs shape how knowledgeable individuals are about politics is heavily contested in research. A poll released in 2004 by Pew

Research Center for People and the Press found that 21 percent of people aged 18 to 29 regularly learned about the 2004 presidential campaign from *The Daily Show* and/or *Saturday Night Live* ("And now the news: For many young viewers, it's Jon Stewart," 2004). However, the same study also revealed that people who relied on comedy programs for news were less likely to know basic facts about the 2004 presidential campaign.

Some researchers have discovered that comedy programs make all viewers more knowledgeable about politics while others argue that the influence depends on demographics. Young (2004) claimed that, all else being equal, *The Daily Show* viewers knew more about current events than individuals who did not watch the program. Other studies have delved further into the subject, finding that demographics like age and education impact how much knowledge viewers gain from late-night comedy shows. Cao (2008) argued that as older generations watched more late-night comedy they became less knowledgeable about politics whereas younger generations became more knowledgeable (Xiaozia Cao, 2008). Her research on the 2000 and 2004 presidential campaigns also revealed that education played a significant role, but she did not go into significant detail about the role of the various demographics combined. Few scholars have specifically studied the combined demographic most relevant to these programs: educated young people. Research also has left gaps in determining whether watching more satire or news makes a viewer more knowledgeable, which will be addressed in this study.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

The effect of watching satire on viewers' political participation, which is necessary for a functioning democracy, is also frequently disputed. Research has evaluated political participation by analyzing if an individual has ever contacted an elected official, attended a campaign event, joined an organization in support of a particular cause, or contributed money to a candidate

running for public office (Xiaoxia Cao & Brewer, 2008). How frequently an individual votes for running candidates is also a common indicator.

Some studies have found a negative relationship between parody news and political participation. Baumgartner and Morris (2006) argued that political comedy programs “may dampen participation... by contributing to a sense of political alienation from the political process” (Baumgartner & Morris, 2006 p. 362-363). The scholars found that watching comedy programs was linked to young viewers’ decreased support for political institutions. Young viewers became more cynical. Those already inclined toward political nonparticipation were discouraged from participating at all.

Other researchers have disagreed about how watching satire influences participation in politics. Cao and Brewer (2008) hypothesized that negative commentary about political activity would encourage political participation. However, their research did not produce any evidence of a positive relationship.

While research of television satire remains inconclusive, other mediums of satire have been found to increase political participation. In 2008, Baumgartner analyzed the impact of online animated editorial cartoons on 18- to 24-year-olds. He discovered that reading cartoon satire increased people’s political participation (J. Baumgartner, 2008). Because the effect of satire on participation is disputed not only among researchers within comedy news shows, but also among scholars studying other forms of parody, it is difficult to predict what influence watching satire has on college students.

PERCEPTIONS OF CANDIDATES

Besides political participation, watching political satire can impact people’s perception of politicians. Late-night comedy jokes frame politicians in certain ways to suggest specific things

about them, which in turn affects the viewer's perception of the candidates. Political perception, for the purpose of this research, will be defined as an individual's evaluation of a particular politician or candidate for public office.

While some studies (Young, 2004) found no direct effects of late-night comedy on individuals' ratings of candidates, most research has discovered some sort of relationship. A study of the 2004 presidential election season affirmed that there is a strong relationship between candidate evaluations and exposure to multiple mediums of news, including television satire (Carlson, Chinni, Pertilla, & Dean, 2004). The exact nature of this relationship, however, is frequently disputed.

Research has found that political satire leads viewers to become more critical of all candidates. In their analysis of the 2004 presidential election, Baumgartner and Morris (2006) showed that watching *The Daily Show* negatively impacted candidate evaluations. They argued that this negative effect fostered political cynicism toward the electoral system and news media. Additional research has found that editorial political cartoons also have a negative effect on candidate evaluations, but no effect on candidate preferences (J. Baumgartner, 2008). Since individuals did not change their candidate preferences despite fostering a more negative evaluation, this study illustrates that people's party identification and pre-existing beliefs made their evaluations less susceptible to change.

Other studies have argued that previously held opinions dictate how people perceive the jokes, which in turn shape candidate evaluations. Stewart (2011) concluded that previously held opinions influence how people evaluate humor and candidate traits. This study also expanded on Young's (2004) conclusions that candidates' caricatured traits were influenced more by

partisanship and political knowledge of the viewer than by exposure to late-night comedy programs during the 2000 presidential election.

Studies have also found that only candidate evaluations of opposing parties change due to watching comedy news. Regarding the 2008 presidential election, Stewart found that, after being exposed to parody news, viewers “self-identifying as more conservative will evaluate humor from the more conservative [presidential] candidate more positively than that from the less conservative [presidential] candidate” (Stewart, 2011 p. 207). Individuals remained true to their self-identified partisanship. Only slight variations were found in evaluations of their own parties’ candidates before and after watching satire. However, watching satirical coverage did negatively influence viewer’s opinions of opposing party candidates. This suggests that rather than changing the opinions of individuals regarding certain candidates, political comedy shows may actually reinforce previously held ideological beliefs. Reinforcement theories claim that use of the Internet, such as to watch online comedy news shows, will strengthen existing opinions and patterns of political participation (Norris, 2000).

In addition, scholars have discovered that watching late-night comedy programs makes viewers critical of Republicans but not of Democrats (Morris, 2008). This is a rational conclusion considering that the main demographics of late-night political satire viewers are 18- to 29-year-olds. Younger people tend to be more liberal than older generations (“Exit polls 2012: How the vote has shifted,” 2012; Pew, 2011).

On the other hand, research has shown that negative jokes about Republicans, which frequently occur in liberal satire shows, have a positive effect on viewers. Baumgartner and Morris (2008) found that jokes about conservatives in *The Colbert Report* during the 2008 election season actually made people more conservative. Perhaps this is due to the

disproportionately balanced content on late-night comedy programs, which tends to mock conservatives more than liberals (Pew, 2008). The effect of watching political satire on candidate evaluations differs depending on the election that the scholar is studying, so the impact of coverage of the 2012 presidential election may bring about new findings.

HYPOTHESES

Since past research is contradictory, it is difficult to predict what relationships will be discovered. Based on the previous studies and observations of the college-student population, hypotheses ***H1 - H4.2*** predict a positive relationship between watching political satire programs and the tested effects. Watching satire programs will have a similar impact on the shows' audiences as does watching traditional news. Past studies illustrating these findings were stronger in terms of data and methodology than the research concluding opposing results. For ***H5.1*** and ***H5.2***, the relationships are more complicated, with previously held beliefs having a significant role in college-students' perceptions of candidates. As such, it is hypothesized that:

TABLE 1. TESTABLE HYPOTHESES

<i>H1</i> - Political Interest Theory	Exposure to political satire programs' coverage of the 2012 presidential election is associated with an increase in young people's political interest. College students who watch political satire shows will have a similar level of political interest as those who watch traditional news.
<i>H2</i> - Political Efficacy Theory	Exposure to political satire programs' coverage of the 2012 presidential election is associated with an increase in young people's political efficacy. College students who watch political satire shows will have a similar level of political efficacy as those who watch traditional news.
<i>H3</i> - Political Knowledge Theory	Exposure to political satire programs' coverage of the 2012 presidential election is associated with an increase in young people's political knowledge. College students who watch political satire shows will be as knowledgeable about current events and campaign news as those who watch traditional news.

H4.1 - Political Participation Theory, Past	College students who spent more days watching political satire programs during the 2012 presidential election participated politically as often as those who watched traditional news and more than those who did not watch satire programs.
H4.2 - Political Participation Theory, Future	Exposure to political satire programs' coverage of the 2012 presidential election is associated with a positive change in young people's desire to participate politically. College students who watch political satire shows will be as likely to participate politically as those who watch traditional news.
H5.1 - Political Perception Reinforcement Theory, Evaluations of Obama by Party	Young people will seek out and remember jokes in late-night comedy programs that support their pre-existing attitudes and beliefs. Young Republicans will perceive the Democratic Party and Obama more negatively. Young Democrats will have no change in their opinions of their own party and candidate. Unaffiliated, Independent, or Third Party college students will also have no change in their opinions of the Democratic Party and Obama.
H5.2 - Political Perception Reinforcement Theory, Evaluations of Romney by Party	Young people will seek out and remember jokes in late-night comedy programs that support their pre-existing attitudes and beliefs. Young Democrats will perceive the Republican Party and Romney more negatively. Young Republicans will have no change in their opinions of their own party and candidate. Unaffiliated, Independent, or Third Party college students will also have no change in their opinions of the Republican Party and Romney.

METHOD

CASE: THE 2012 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

This study focuses on the 2012 presidential election. The recentness of the election and the uniqueness of the most popular satire programs at the time - *The Colbert Report* did not start until 2008 - make this research distinct from past studies. Besides understanding what past research has found, understanding the context of the 2012 presidential election season is important for the analysis.

The 57th United States presidential election was held on November 6, 2012. Incumbent President Barack Obama and running mate Vice President Joe Biden ran as the Democratic nominees. The Republican nominees were former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney and his running mate Representative Paul Ryan of Wisconsin.

Prior to the election, many media sources had predicted that the election would be “too close to call” (Reuters, 2012; Sachedina, 2012). Obama was expected to easily win in 15 states, including California and New York. Romney, on the other hand, was expected to easily win in 21 states, including Texas and Nebraska. In the end, the election was determined primarily by the swing-states of Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio, Virginia, and Wisconsin.

Many factors shaped the 2012 presidential election. Issues such as the economy, federal budget deficit, foreign policy, and healthcare were polled to be the top determinants of voting. Qualities of particular presidents - cares about people, is a strong leader, shares values, and has a vision for the future - were also important determinants. In addition, young people, aged 18 to 29, represented 19 percent of the voters in 2012. Sixty percent of young people voted for Obama while 37 percent voted for Romney ("Exit polls 2012: How the vote has shifted," 2012). This younger demographic had a higher percentage of votes for Obama and lower percentage of votes for Romney than any other age demographic in the 2012 presidential election. (See Appendix A: Exit Poll Data TABLES 5-10 and FIGURE 22 for reference.)

In the end, Democratic candidate Barack Obama captured 62,611,250 votes, winning 50.6 percent of the popular vote and 332 electoral votes. Republican candidate Mitt Romney captured 59,134,475 votes, winning 47.8 percent of the popular vote and 206 electoral votes ("Presidential Race - 2012 Election Center," 2012). Since 270 electoral votes are needed to win

the presidency, Barack Obama was elected to return for a second term in office as the President of the United States.

DATA COLLECTION

To analyze how satirical coverage of the 2012 presidential election impacted young people, I surveyed college students (as shown in Appendix B: Survey Questions). The survey took place from April 3, 2013 to April 30, 2013 and took subjects approximately 13 minutes to complete. Students from Duke University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill were recruited through emails from department heads and through social media outlets. Participants from these schools were in close proximity, allowing for access to the student bodies. Both schools are also elite institutions of higher education in the United States, with Duke ranking as the 7th best college in the country and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill ranking as the 30th in 2013 ("National University Rankings," 2013). (For details regarding recruitment methods, please refer to Appendix D: Recruitment Techniques.)

Quantitative analysis of both observational and experimental data was used to determine how exposure to political satire programs was related to college-students' political engagement during the 2012 election. Participants were asked how much political satire, traditional news, and election-related media they consumed so that it could be determined if people that watched more satire scored higher on the political engagement outcomes. This method aimed to discover a relationship between actual exposure to the programs during the time period studied and the effects on political engagement. The dependent variables were political interest, political efficacy, past political participation, political knowledge, and perception of candidates. Data was analyzed to see whether people with more consumption of certain media would be more interested in politics, feel that they could make a difference in the government, be more

knowledgeable about government and election news, participate more in politics, and perceive the candidate of their political party more positively. The observational approach, however, was limited because individuals with higher levels of political engagement may seek out political satire programs.

Therefore, the experimental approach aimed to determine if there was causal a relationship between watching a brief video of political satire coverage of the 2012 presidential election season and viewers' political engagement. This approach showed how college students' political engagement would react to exposure by chance, eliminating the limitation of the observational approach. The independent variable was the group that the individual was randomly assigned to, which was determined by the video, or lack thereof, that the participant viewed during the survey. For statistical analysis of the experimental data, the dependent variables were political interest, political efficacy, likelihood of future political participation, and perception of candidates. To analyze the data, the mean level of the dependent variable for the satire treatment group was compared to those of the traditional news treatment group and control group.

While all students' survey results were analyzed during the experimental research, only those students that did not watch a video during the experiment, or those in the control group, were studied in the observational research. This distinction was to prevent the experimental data from altering the observational results. Both approaches included large enough sample sizes to analyze the data.

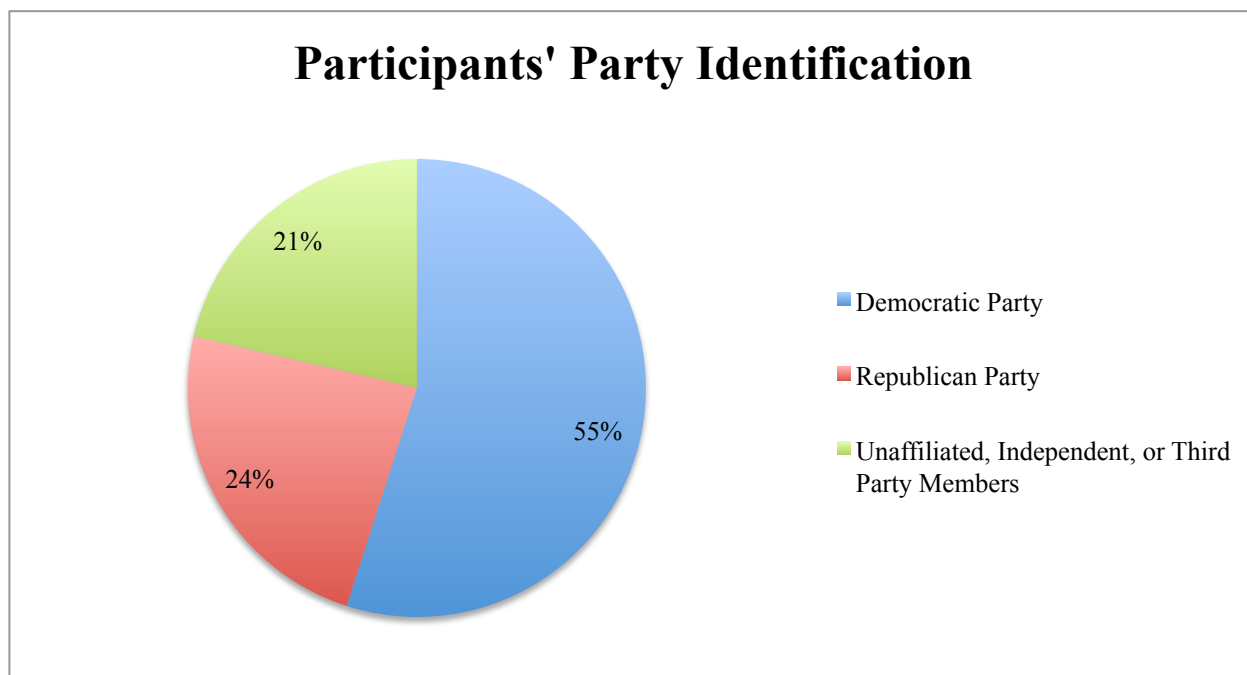
To participate in the internet-based experiment, 569 participants were recruited from two institutions of higher education. Sixty-seven percent of participants (336) were female. While 327 participants (65 percent) were students at Duke University, the remaining 177 participants

(35 percent) were students at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. From this group, 392 participants completed the survey entirely.

The survey contained questions to assess participants' basic demographic information, party identification, exposure to traditional and satire news outlets during the election season, and political engagement. These questions were devised adapting questions from Pew Research Center News' Knowledge of Political News IQ Quizzes from 2010, 2011, and 2012 in addition to questions from the American National Election Studies Survey.

Two hundred and sixteen participants (55 percent) identified as Democrats, 93 participants (24 percent) identified as Republicans, and the remaining 84 participants (21 percent) identified as unaffiliated with a political party, Independent, or Third Party members. FIGURE 1 illustrates this distribution. The sample population for this study is relatively close to the national average, in which roughly 60 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds identified with the Democratic Party and slightly over 25 percent identified with the Republican Party in 2012 ("Exit polls 2012: How the vote has shifted," 2012).

FIGURE 1. DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPANTS' PARTY IDENTIFICATION

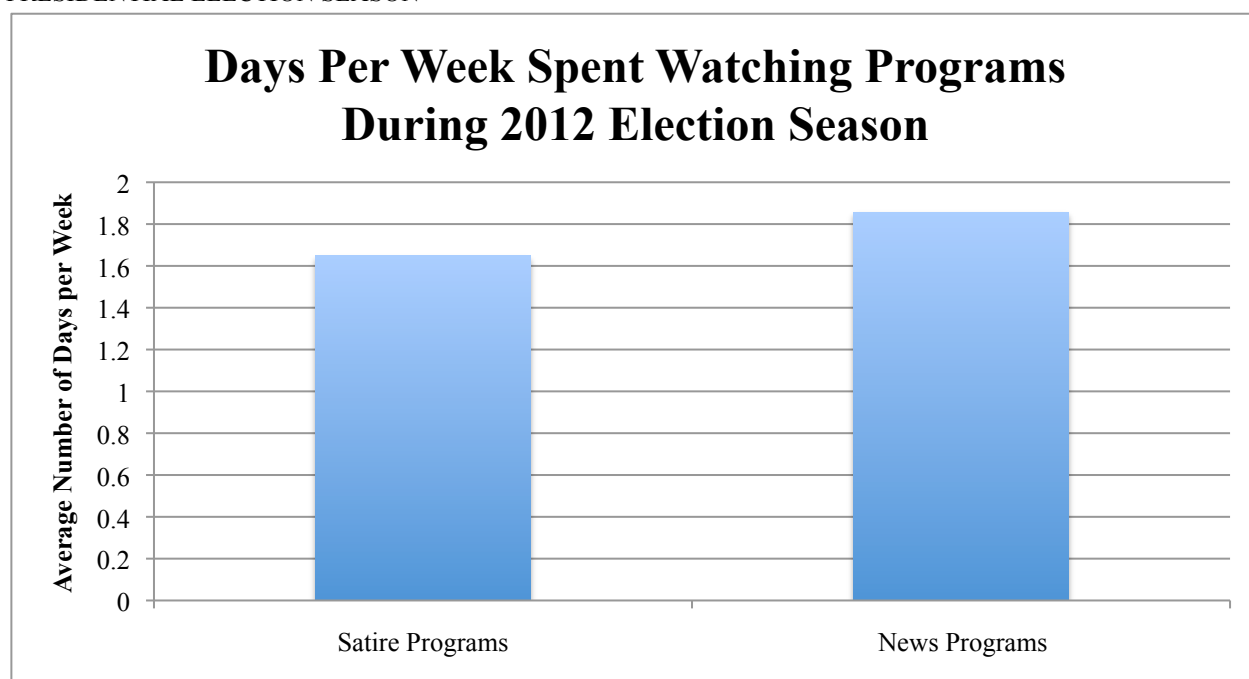


During the internet-based experiment, participants were randomly assigned to one of two treatment groups or a control group. The traditional news video treatment group watched a 6-minute montage video that included coverage of the 2012 presidential election from *CNN*, *ABC News*, *Fox News*, and *Wall Street Journal Live*. Traditional news from here on forward will refer to the combination of watching brief exposure to *ABC*, a nightly news broadcast, *CNN* and *Fox News*, cable news programs, and *Wall Street Journal Live*, which is aired online. Participants of the satire video treatment group watched a 6-minute montage video that included coverage of the 2012 presidential election season from *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* and *The Colbert Report*. The content used in these videos is freely available on the Internet. The control group did not watch a video. One hundred and twenty-three participants (29 percent) were assigned to the satire video treatment group, 127 (30 percent) were assigned to the news video treatment group, and 168 (40 percent) were assigned to the control group. (For links to the videos used in the data

collection process, please refer to Appendix C: Links to Videos Used in Research. An analysis of the relative bias and tone of the videos used in the survey can also be found in Appendix F: Bias of Videos.)

The average participant watched satire programs 1.65 days of the week (SD=1.86) and news programs 1.857 days of the week (SD=1.85) during the 2012 presidential election season, as demonstrated in FIGURE 2. In addition, participants watched an average of 1.56 different programs (SD=.85) relating to the presidential race during the 2012 election season.

FIGURE 2. PARTICIPANTS' AVERAGE EXPOSURE TO SATIRE AND NEWS PROGRAMS DURING THE 2012 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION SEASON



While some participants watched several days of both satire and traditional news, most participants watched none or a few days of either or both programs. (For the distribution of how many programs participants watched, refer to Appendix H: Other Distributions.)

MEASUREMENT OF KEY VARIABLES

The survey questions tested subjects' political interest, political efficacy, political knowledge, political participation, and perceptions of candidates. For all of the variables, scales were determined by the number and type of responses to survey questions. Variables were measured differently, with political knowledge coded by simple yes and no responses and political perception coded by strength of opinion. (For more details about the coding of studied effects, please refer to Appendix E: Coding Key for Survey Answers.)

Exposure to Satire Programs during the 2012 Election Season was measured by asking participants how many days a week they watched parody news programs on television during the 2012 presidential election season. *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, *The Colbert Report*, and *Red Eye* were provided as examples of what would constitute a comedy news program. This variable was measured on a scale of no days a week to everyday, and it was coded from 0 to 7.

Exposure to Traditional News Programs during the 2012 Election Season was measured by asking participants how many days a week they watched national network news on television during the 2012 presidential election season. *CNN*, *NBC*, *ABC*, and *FOX* were given as examples of what would constitute a national network news program. This variable was measured on a scale of no days a week to everyday, and it was coded from 0 to 7.

Political Interest was measured through three main questions, the answers to which were coded on a composite scale from 0 to 10, where 10 indicated the highest level of political interest. The questions asked how much subjects paid attention to political campaigns, how often participants followed what was going on in government and public affairs, and how often subjects talked about politics with family, friends, or fellow students.

Political Efficacy was measured through questions regarding subjects' opinions about politicians and the government. Participants were asked to agree, disagree, or remain neutral on six statements. The statements aimed to determine how much participants felt they could affect change and how connected they felt to the government. This variable was measured on a scale of 0 to 12, with 12 being the highest level of political efficacy possible. This was a net variables representing both internal and external efficacy.

Political Knowledge was measured based on participants' responses to questions testing general knowledge of the 2012 presidential election season, campaign news, and politics. There were eight multiple-choice identification questions, including topics like the candidates for vice president, the key swing-state in the election, and the unemployment rate. This variable was measured on a scale of 0 to 8, with 8 being the highest level of political knowledge and representing the selection of the correct answer choice on all fact-based questions asked.

Political Participation was measured in two parts. **Past political participation** measured individuals' level of political participation during the 2012 election season. Subjects were asked to select all statements that described their level of political activity during that federal election from a list of seven choices. This variable was measured on a scale of 0 to 7, with 7 representing the highest level of political participation. Contrastingly, **future political participation** measured the students' desire to engage in the six forms of political activity in the upcoming 2016 presidential election. These six forms of activity were the included in **past political participation**, but being registered to vote was excluded from **future political participation**. The **future political participation** variable was measured on a scale of 0 to 18, with 18 being the greatest desire to be active in politics in the future.

Perceptions of Candidates was measured by asking participants to describe how well certain words or phrases described a candidate, whether a candidate made subjects feel a certain way, what they liked about candidates' political parties, and what they did not like about the parties. There were two sections used to assess the perceptions of candidates, one dedicated to each of the presidential candidates and their party in the 2012 presidential election. *Perceptions of Obama* and *Perceptions of Romney* were evaluated separately, with each variable measured on a scale of -13 to 31, with 31 representing the most positive opinion and -13 representing the most negative opinion of a particular candidate and his party. The variables were measured according to participants' party affiliation, such that *Democrats' Perceptions of Obama* was distinct from *Republicans' Perceptions of Obama*.

FINDINGS

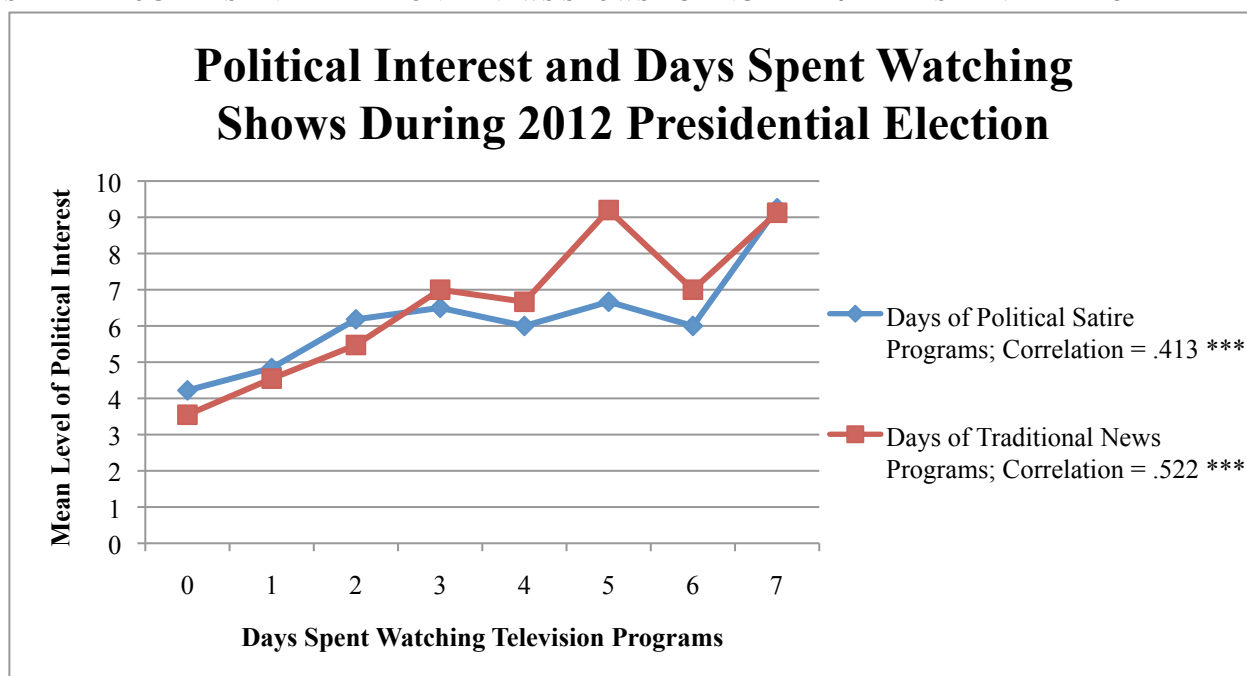
OBSERVATIONAL DATA

Participants who reported watching more political satire programs demonstrated a greater level of political interest, were more knowledgeable about campaign news and current events, and were more active in politics through voting and campaigning. Participants who watched more late-night political comedy shows also experienced a more positive perception of the opposing party's presidential candidate. In the analysis of the observational data, the most significant factor is the strength of the correlation, not necessarily the ups and downs in the line graphs.

Watching political satire has a similar relationship with an individual's interest in politics as does watching traditional news. There were very strong positive relationships between

political interest and the number of days that college students watched satire or news shows during the 2012 election season. Shown through the increasing mean level of political interest, FIGURE 3 demonstrates that respondents' level of political interest increased as more time was spent watching satire television ($\text{cor} = .413$)***. Those who reported watching satire for two to six days experienced generally the same level of political interest; watching satire for the first few days or the last few days resulted in the biggest increase in interest. FIGURE 3 also shows how participants' level of political interest steadily increased per each additional day spent watching satire programs during the 2012 election season ($\text{cor} = .522$)***.

FIGURE 3. MEAN LEVEL OF POLITICAL INTEREST BY DAYS PER WEEK SPENT WATCHING POLITICAL SATIRE PROGRAMS AND TRADITIONAL NEWS SHOWS DURING THE 2012 PRESIDENTIAL RACE

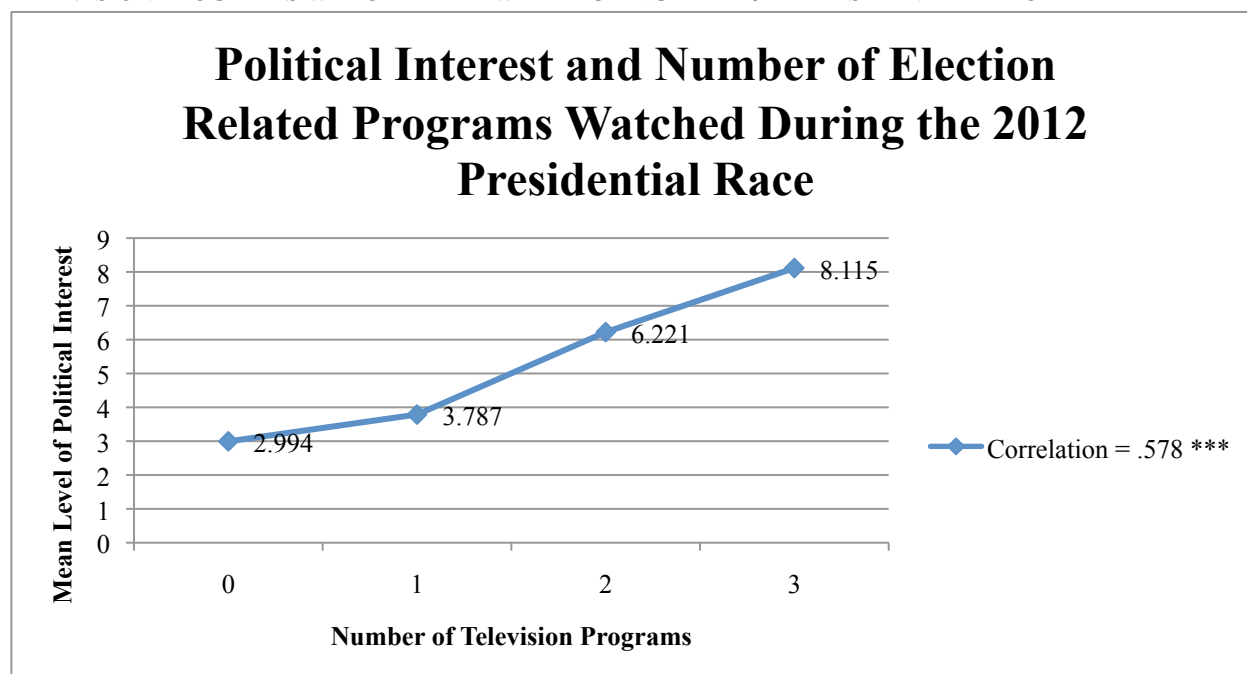


WHERE + COR > .10, * COR > .20, ** COR > .30, AND *** IS COR > .40

In addition, there is a very strong positive relationship ($\text{cor} = .578$)*** between political interest and the total number of programs, both satire and news, that participants watched during the 2012 election season. Participants who reported watching more election-related television

experienced a greater level of political interest. FIGURE 4 demonstrates the increasing mean level of political interest according to the number of election related television programs watched.

FIGURE 4. MEAN LEVEL OF POLITICAL INTEREST BY TOTAL NUMBER OF ELECTION RELATED TELEVISION PROGRAMS WATCHED PER WEEK DURING THE 2012 PRESIDENTIAL RACE



WHERE + COR > .10, * COR > .20, ** COR > .30, AND *** IS COR > .40

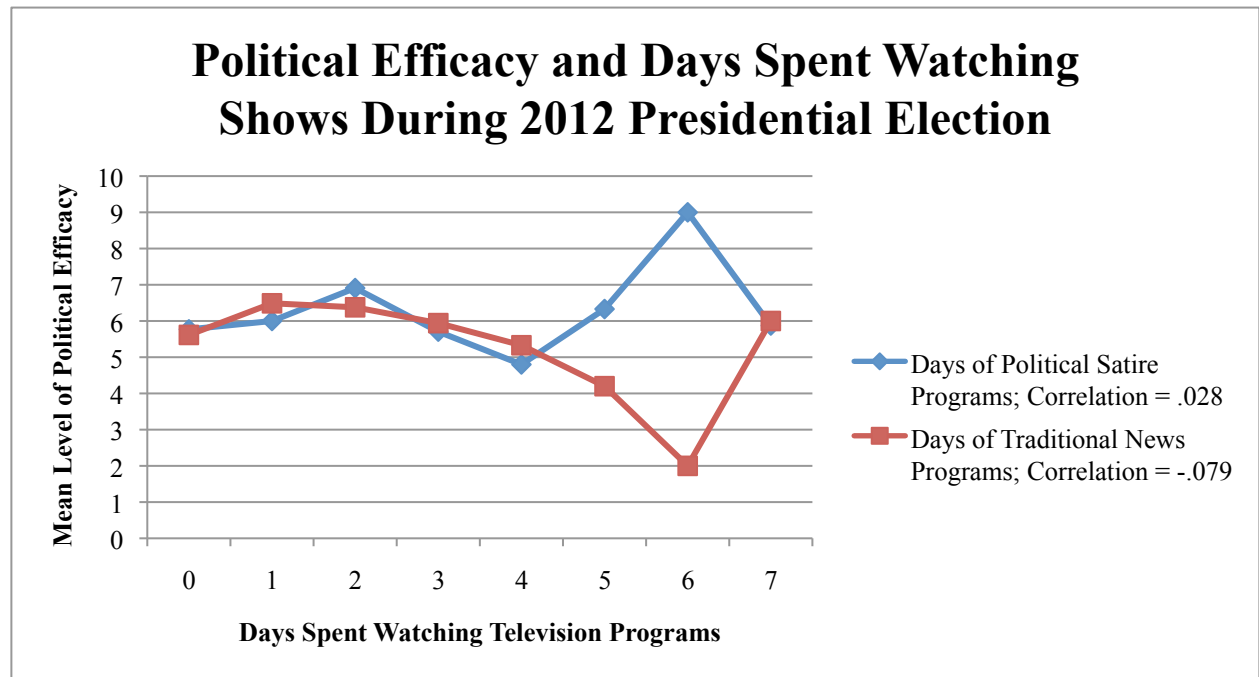
A regression model confirms the strength of the positive relationship between college students' interest in politics and days spent watching political satire shows. The predicted level of political interest increases by .209 for each additional day per week that the participant watches satire shows ($p < .003$)**. Likewise, the predicted level of political interest increases by .233 for each additional day per week that the participant watches traditional news shows during the election season ($p < .003$)**. Overall, the greatest predictor of an individual's political interest seems to be the total number of television programs, both satire and traditional news, watched during the 2012 presidential election season. With each additional program watched during the election season, an individual's level of political interest is predicted to increase by

1.18 ($p < .00001$)***. (For more details about the regression model, refer to TABLE 14 in Appendix G: Other Calculations.)

Although participants who watched more satire were more interested in politics, their feelings of how much their political participation mattered stayed the same. As illustrated by FIGURE 5, a negligible relationship was discovered between days per week spent watching political satire programs ($cor = .028$) and participants' political efficacy. On the other hand, participants who reported watching more traditional news were less confident in their ability to bring about political and social change than those who watched less news ($cor = -.079$). However, this relationship was also weak. For each additional day spent watching traditional news between days two and six, college students experienced a lower level of political efficacy. Those who watched television programs everyday brought up the relationship, as they demonstrated a higher level of efficacy. College students who reported watching satire for six days also had more confidence in their ability to bring about change and in the government's responsiveness than those who watched more or less days of satire. On the other hand, students who reported watching traditional news for six days had lower efficacy levels than those who watched more or less days of news and than those who watched any amount of satire. While day six seems to be pivotal in a viewers' efficacy, this reasoning may be skewed because only a few respondents reported watching six days of each program. As such, the correlations are better determinants of the strength of the relationships - or lack thereof.

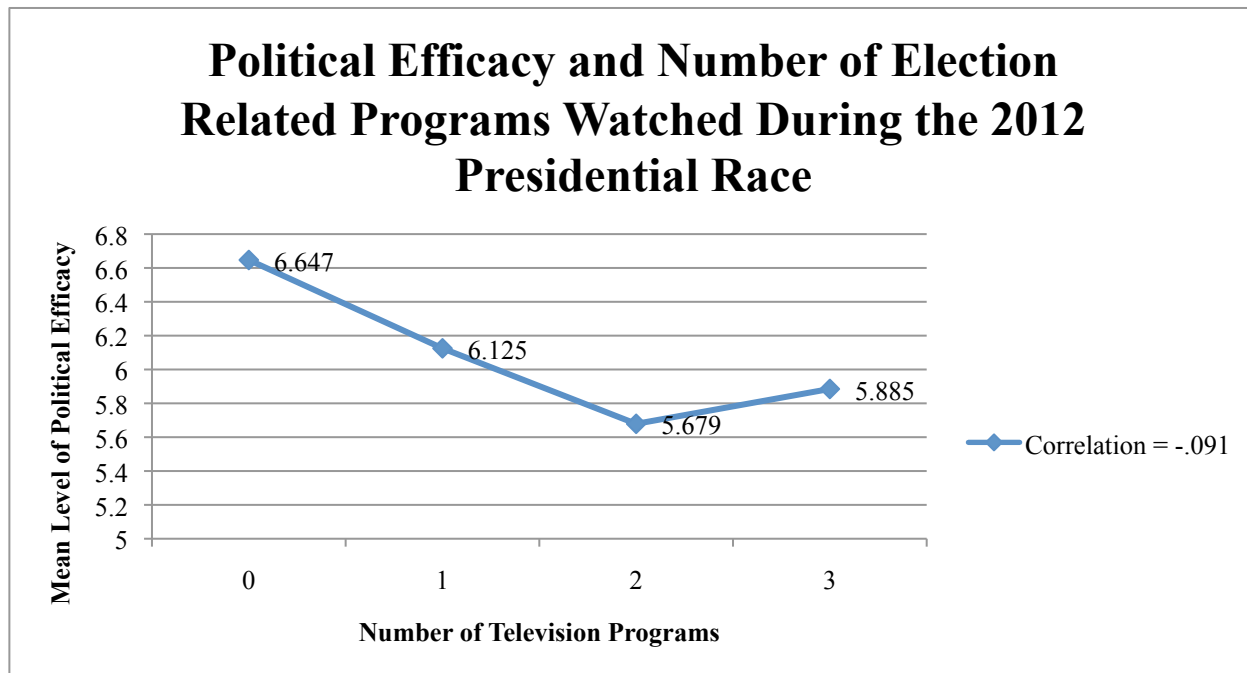
As well, participants who reported watching more election-related programs during the 2012 election season expressed a lower level of political efficacy ($cor = -.091$). As illustrated by FIGURE 6, college-students expressed the most cynicism toward their ability to impact the government at two programs watched per week during the election season.

FIGURE 5. MEAN LEVEL OF POLITICAL EFFICACY BY DAYS PER WEEK SPENT WATCHING POLITICAL SATIRE PROGRAMS AND TRADITIONAL NEWS SHOWS DURING THE 2012 PRESIDENTIAL RACE



WHERE + COR > .10, * COR > .20, ** COR > .30, AND *** IS COR > .40

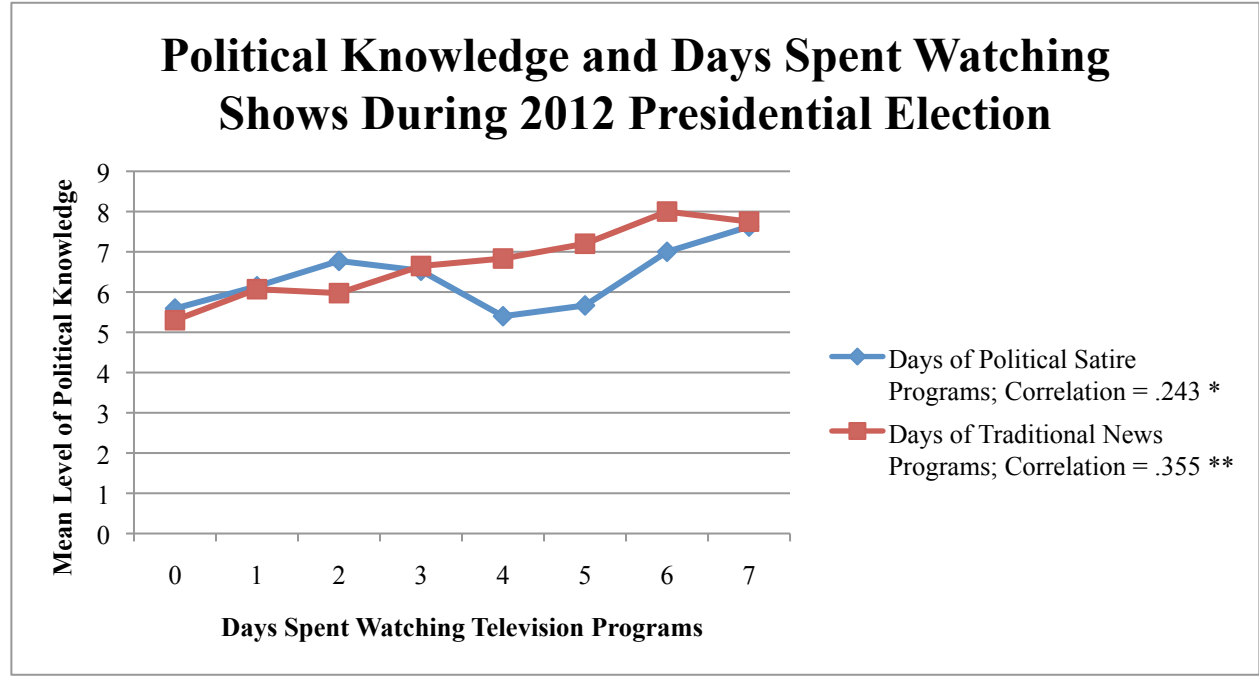
FIGURE 6. MEAN LEVEL OF POLITICAL INTEREST BY TOTAL NUMBER OF TELEVISION PROGRAMS WATCHED PER WEEK DURING THE 2012 PRESIDENTIAL RACE



WHERE + COR > .10, * COR > .20, ** COR > .30, AND *** IS COR > .40

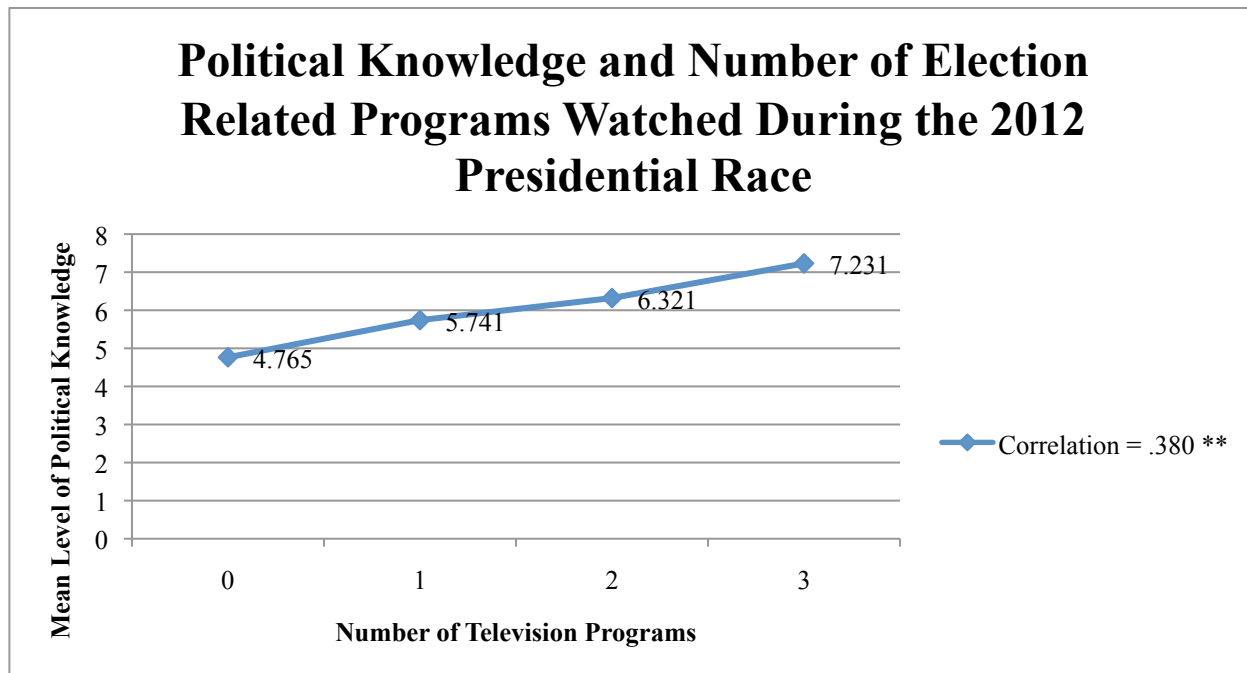
College students who watched more political satire are more knowledgeable about current events, government, and political campaigns than those who watched less satire. There is a significant difference in the average level of political knowledge for those who did not watch any political satire programs during the 2012 election season and those who watched these programs every day. FIGURE 7 illustrates very strong positive relationships between participants' level of political knowledge and each additional day spent watching satire programs (cor = .243)* and traditional news programs (cor = .355)** during the 2012 election season. Additionally, participants who reported watching more election-related television during the 2012 election season were more knowledgeable about political activity (cor = .380)** , as demonstrated in FIGURE 8.

FIGURE 7. MEAN LEVEL OF POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE BY DAYS PER WEEK SPENT WATCHING POLITICAL SATIRE PROGRAMS AND TRADITIONAL NEWS SHOWS DURING THE 2012 PRESIDENTIAL RACE



WHERE + COR > .10, * COR > .20, ** COR > .30, AND *** IS COR > .40

FIGURE 8. MEAN LEVEL OF POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE BY TOTAL NUMBER OF TELEVISION PROGRAMS WATCHED PER WEEK DURING THE 2012 PRESIDENTIAL RACE

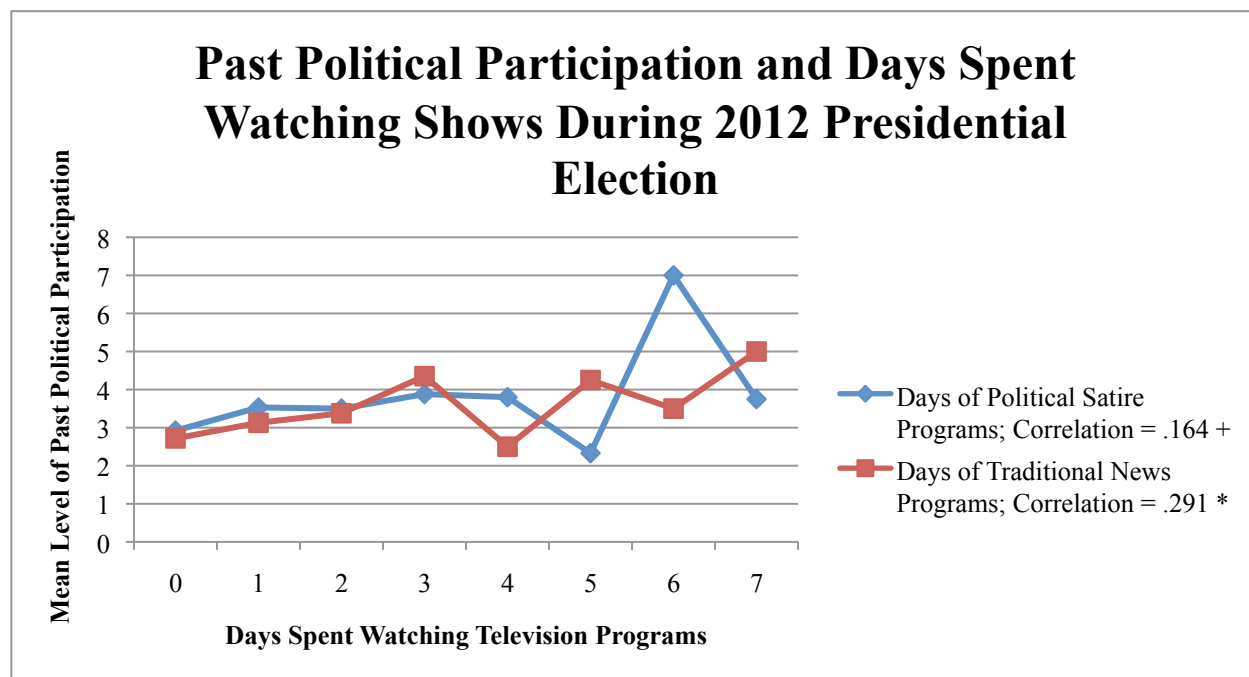


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Not only were satire viewers more interested in and knowledgeable about politics, they also participated more politically. FIGURE 9 illustrates a strong relationship between satire exposure and past political participation ($cor = .164$)⁺. Participants who reported watching more satire voted, contacted elected officials, advocated for candidates, and took part in campaigns more than those who watched less satire per week. There is also a very strong correlation between past political participation and days spent watching traditional news programs ($cor = .291$)^{*}. While college students gradually participated more in politics for each additional day spent watching traditional news, college students who watched satire experienced more extreme levels of participation. For example, watching five days of political satire was related to being least participative in politics whereas watching six days of satire was related to being the most participative. Although the relationship between news programs and participation is stronger, satire still has a significant positive correlation. As FIGURE 10 illustrates, a very strong positive

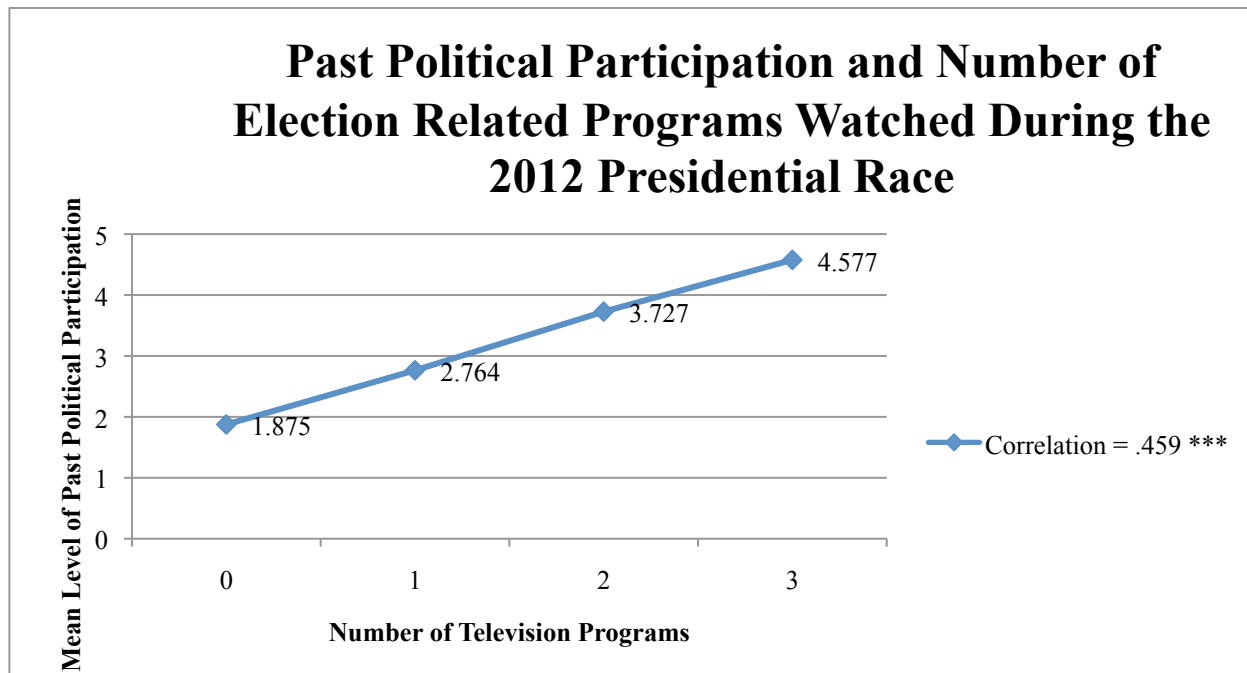
relationship exists between past political participation and exposure to election-related television as well. College students who reported watching more election-related television reported participating more in politics ($cor = .459$)***.

FIGURE 9. MEAN LEVEL OF PAST POLITICAL PARTICIPATION BY DAYS PER WEEK SPENT WATCHING POLITICAL SATIRE PROGRAMS AND TRADITIONAL NEWS SHOWS DURING THE 2012 PRESIDENTIAL RACE



WHERE + COR > .10, * COR > .20, ** COR > .30, AND *** IS COR > .40

FIGURE 10. MEAN LEVEL OF PAST POLITICAL PARTICIPATION BY TOTAL NUMBER OF TELEVISION PROGRAMS WATCHED PER WEEK DURING THE 2012 PRESIDENTIAL RACE



WHERE + COR > .10, * COR > .20, ** COR > .30, AND *** IS COR > .40

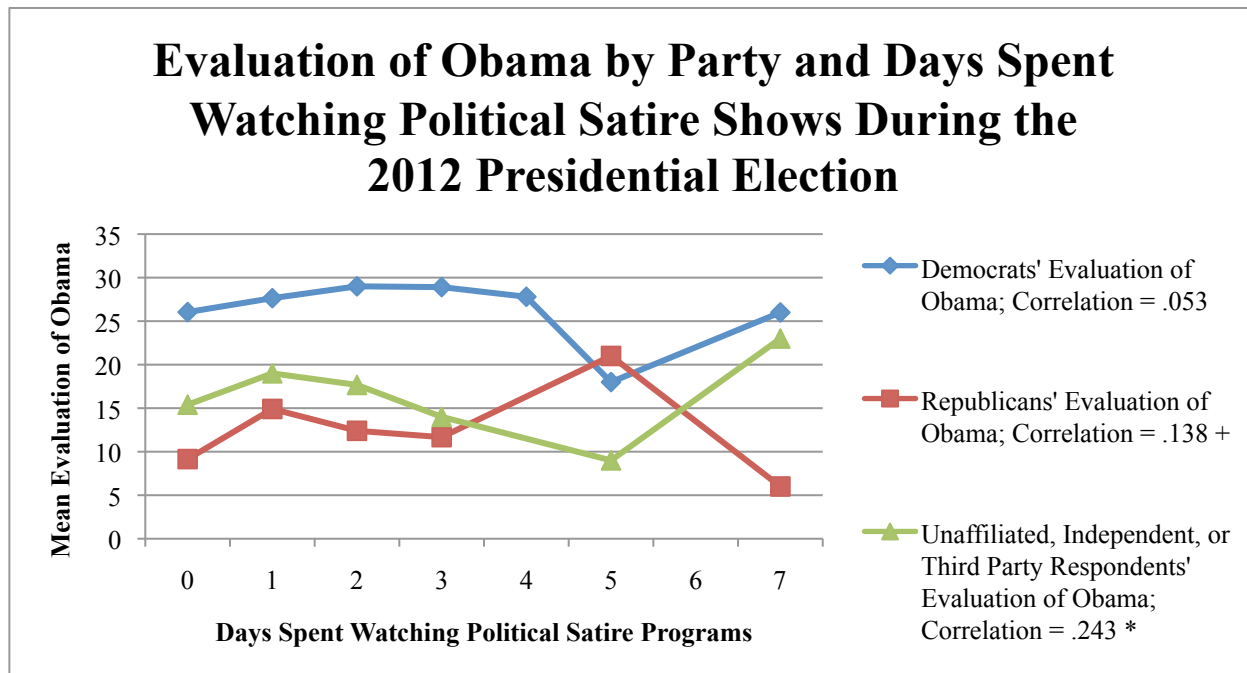
Additionally, there is strong evidence that party affiliation influences how exposure to political satire programs affects college students' perception of candidates. Participants were organized into three groups based on their self-identified affiliations: Democratic Party, Republican Party, or unaffiliated, Independent, or affiliated with a Third Party. (For more detail regarding the breakdown of participants by party identification, please refer to FIGURE 1 in Method.)

Republicans and Democrats indicated different evaluations of Obama as they watched more satire. Republicans who reported watching more satire perceived Obama more positively (cor = .138)+. Republicans' evaluations of Obama steadily became more positive as more satire was watched, with a sharp decrease when satire was watched everyday. Democrats' perception of Obama, however, was relatively unaffected by watching more satire during the 2012 election season (cor = .053). Democrats who watched satire for five days experienced a more negative

evaluation of Obama than those who watched more or less days of satire. Republicans who watched satire for five days, on the other hand, experienced a more positive evaluation of Obama than those who watched more or less days of satire. In fact, for those who watched five days of satire, Democrats revealed a more negative evaluation of Obama than Republicans.

Respondents who identified as being unaffiliated, Independent, or affiliated with a Third Party underwent a similar change in opinion as Republicans. Unaffiliated, Independent, or Third Party college students who reported watching more satire shows had a more positive perception of Obama than did those who watched fewer satire shows ($cor = .243$)*. The lowest evaluation of Obama for this group occurs at day five, similar to those identifying as Democrats. FIGURE 11 exemplifies these results.

FIGURE 11. MEAN EVALUATION OF OBAMA ACCORDING TO PARTY AFFILIATION BY DAYS PER WEEK SPENT WATCHING POLITICAL SATIRE PROGRAMS DURING THE 2012 PRESIDENTIAL RAC

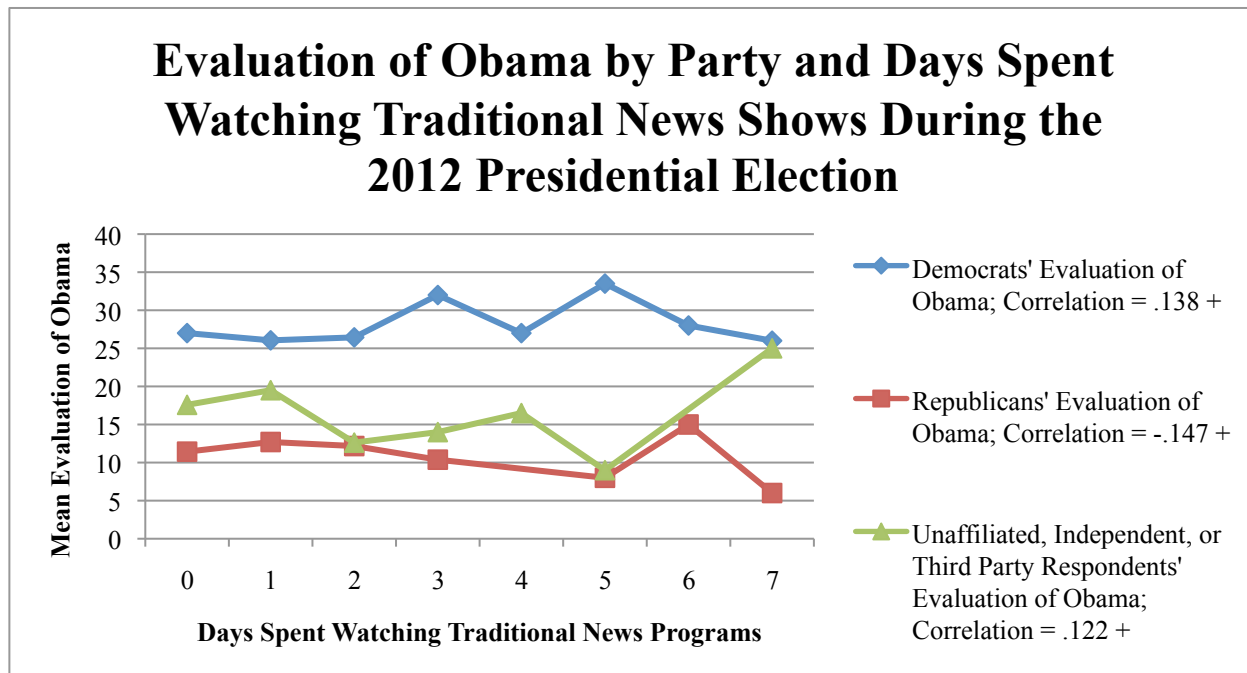


WHERE + COR > .10, * COR > .20, ** COR > .30, AND *** IS COR > .40

Contrastingly, watching more traditional news reinforced participants' previously held beliefs. Watching more traditional news programs made Democrats perceive Obama, their own party member, more positively (cor = .138)+. Republicans, on the other hand, perceived Obama, the opposing party member, more negatively (cor = -.147)+. FIGURE 12 demonstrates the moderate strength of the correlations, which act in opposite directions for Democrats and Republicans.

While FIGURE 12 suggests that unaffiliated, Independent, or Third Party college students evaluated Obama more negatively as they watched more traditional news, they actually evaluated Obama more positively (cor = .122)+. The relationship is significantly raised by the positive evaluations for those who reported watching five or more days of traditional news.

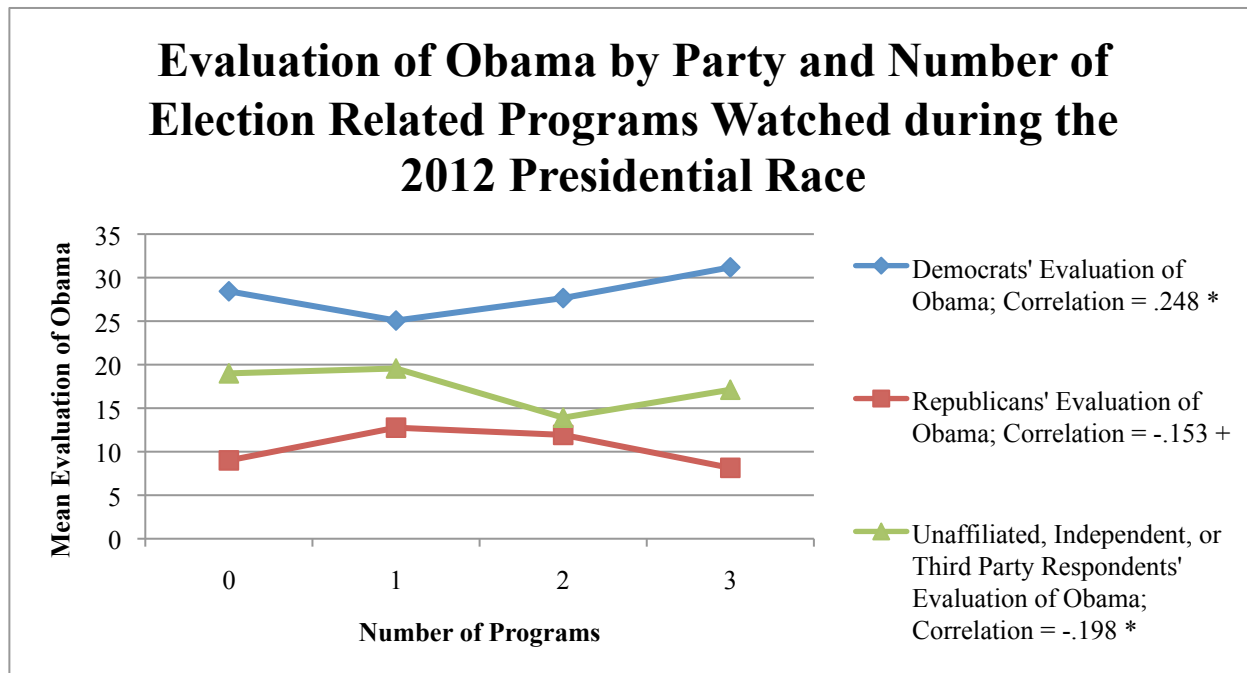
FIGURE 12. MEAN EVALUATION OF OBAMA ACCORDING TO PARTY AFFILIATION BY DAYS PER WEEK SPENT WATCHING TRADITIONAL NEWS SHOWS DURING THE 2012 PRESIDENTIAL RACE



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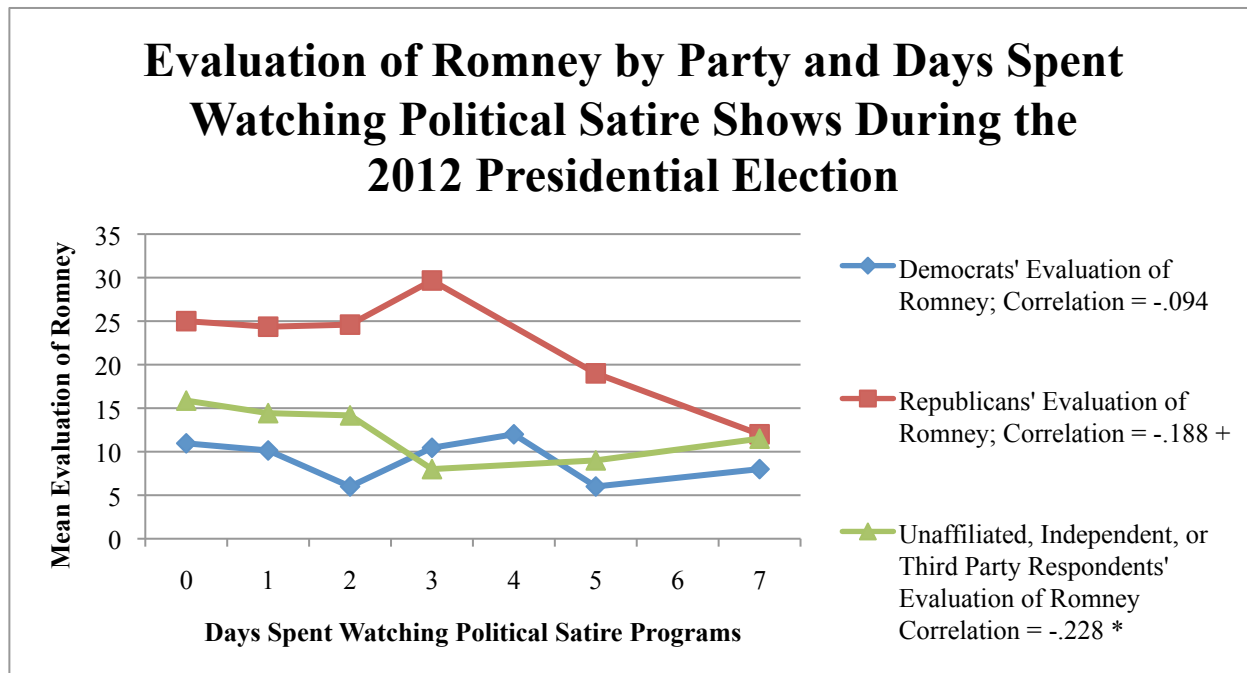
Watching election-related television had a similar relationship with college students' perceptions of Obama as watching traditional news programs. As FIGURE 13 illustrates, college-aged Democrats who reported watching more election-related programs had a higher perception of Obama (cor = .248)* while Republicans had a lower perception of Obama (cor = -.153)+. Unaffiliated, Independent, or Third Party college students who reported watching more election-related programs also had a lower perception of Obama (cor = -.198)+.

FIGURE 13. MEAN EVALUATION OF OBAMA ACCORDING TO PARTY AFFILIATION BY TOTAL NUMBER OF ELECTION RELATED PROGRAMS WATCHED DURING THE 2012 PRESIDENTIAL RACE



Unlike evaluations of Obama, all college-students had more negative perceptions of Romney as they watched more satire. Democrats who reported watching more satire had a slightly more negative perception of Romney (cor = -.094). A stronger relationship is seen for college Republicans, perhaps because Democrats' evaluations of Romney increased before sharply decreasing whereas Republicans' evaluations decreased steadily. Republicans who reported watching more political satire perceived Romney more negatively (cor = -.188)+. Likewise, unaffiliated, Independent, or Third Party college students who reported watching more political satire experienced more negative perceptions of Romney (cor = -.228)*. Overall, college-aged students' evaluations of Romney decreased by almost 20 percent for each additional day of exposure. FIGURE 14 illustrates these negative relationships.

FIGURE 14. MEAN EVALUATION OF ROMNEY ACCORDING TO PARTY AFFILIATION BY DAYS PER WEEK SPENT WATCHING POLITICAL SATIRE PROGRAMS DURING THE 2012 PRESIDENTIAL RACE



WHERE + COR > .10, * COR > .20, ** COR > .30, AND *** IS COR > .40

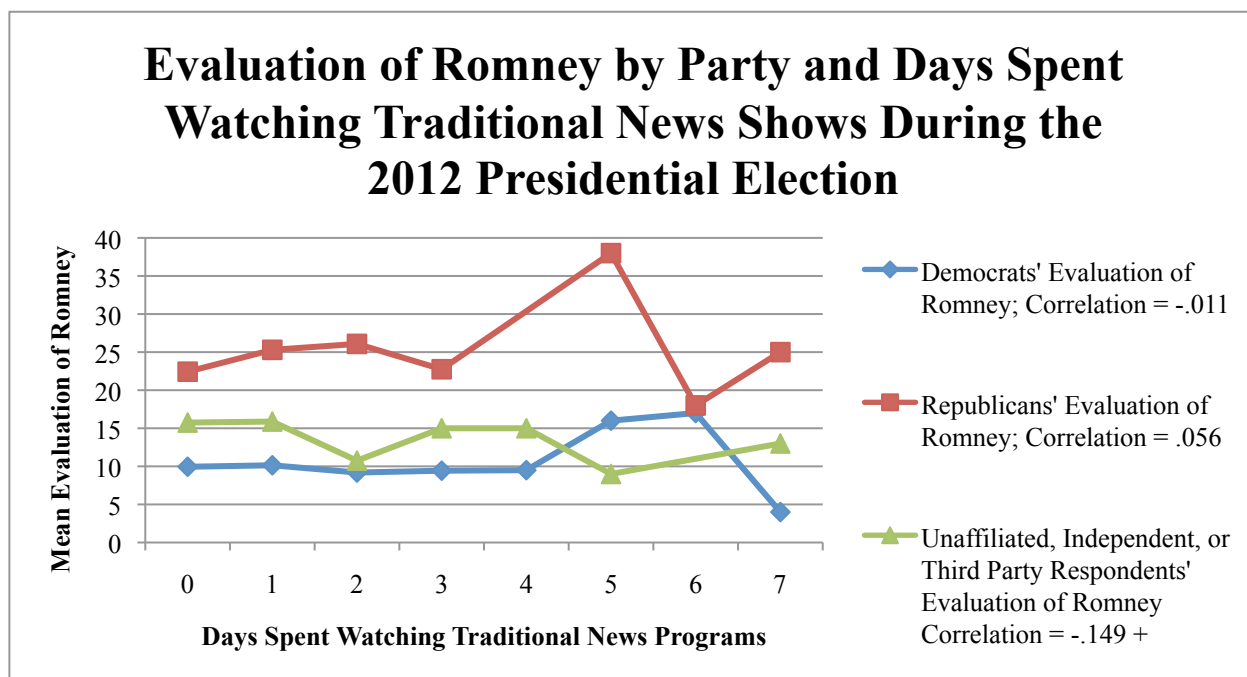
Interestingly, young Democrats and Republicans who reported watching more traditional news reported similar evaluations of Romney as those who watched less traditional news.

Demonstrated by FIGURE 15, there are negligible correlations between exposure to news during the election season and Democrats' evaluations ($cor = -.011$) and Republican's evaluations ($cor = .056$) of Romney. However, a relationship is seen for those who did not identify with one of the two major political parties. Unaffiliated, Independent, or Third Party college students who reported watching more traditional news expressed more negative evaluations of Romney than those who watched less traditional news ($cor = -.149$)+.

Similar to the other political engagement variables, watching five or more days of satire seems to be a pivotal point in the relationship. Democrats who reported watching five days of traditional news revealed a more negative evaluation of Romney than those who watched more or less days of satire. Likewise, Republicans who reported watching five days of traditional news

expressed a more positive evaluation of Romney than those who watched more or less days of news.

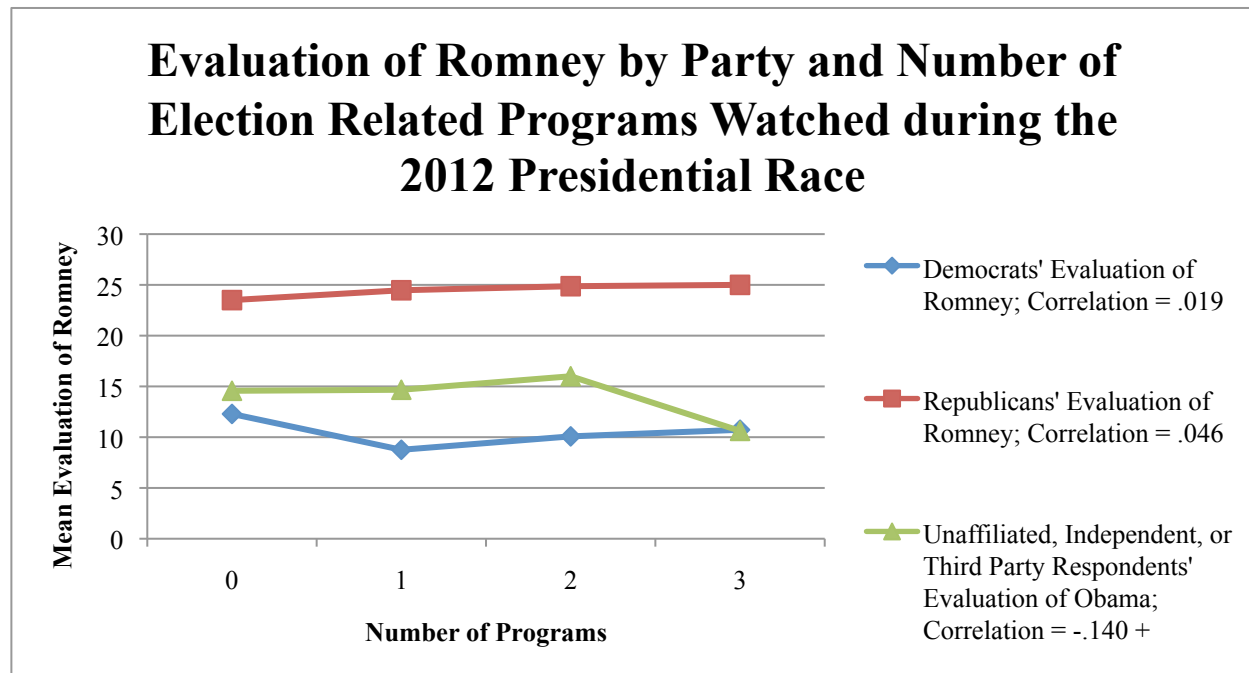
FIGURE 15. MEAN EVALUATION OF ROMNEY ACCORDING TO PARTY AFFILIATION BY DAYS PER WEEK SPENT WATCHING TRADITIONAL NEWS SHOWS DURING THE 2012 PRESIDENTIAL RACE



WHERE + COR > .10, * COR > .20, ** COR > .30, AND *** IS COR > .40

Demonstrated by FIGURE 16, college-aged Democrats' perception of Romney (cor = .019) and Republicans' perception of Romney (cor = .046) stays relatively the same per each additional election-related program watched during the election season as well. There is no significant relationship for respondents identifying with the two major political parties. Nonetheless, unaffiliated, Independent, or Third Party college students who reported watching more election-related programs during the 2012 presidential election expressed a more negative evaluation of Romney than those who watched fewer election-related programs (cor = -.140)+.

FIGURE 16. MEAN EVALUATION OF ROMNEY ACCORDING TO PARTY AFFILIATION BY TOTAL NUMBER OF ELECTION RELATED PROGRAMS WATCHED DURING THE 2012 PRESIDENTIAL RACE



WHERE + COR > .10, * COR > .20, ** COR > .30, AND *** IS COR > .40

As illustrated in TABLE 2, college students who reported watching more satire experienced similar changes in their political interest, efficacy, knowledge, and participation as those who reported watching more traditional news. This contradicts the idea that satire fosters cynicism and misinformation, as people who watch more satire look a lot like those who watch more traditional news. For candidate evaluations, however, the type of content seemed to play a significant role.

TABLE 2. RECAP OF OBSERVATIONAL DATA

Those who watched MORE SATIRE (compared to those who watched less satire):	Those who watched MORE TRADITIONAL NEWS (compared to those who watched less traditional news):
↑ political interest ***	↑ political interest ***
= political efficacy	= political efficacy
↑ political knowledge *	↑ political knowledge **
↑ political participation +	↑ political participation *
= evaluations of Obama if a Democrat ↑ evaluations of Obama if a Republican + ↑ evaluations of Obama if a Third Party member or unaffiliated *	↑ evaluations of Obama if a Democrat + ↓ evaluations of Obama if a Republican + ↑ evaluations of Obama if a Third Party member or unaffiliated +
↓ evaluations of Romney if a Democrat ↓ evaluations of Romney if a Republican + ↓ evaluations of Romney if unaffiliated, Independent, or a Third Party member *	= evaluations of Romney if a Democrat = evaluations of Romney if a Republican ↓ evaluations of Romney if unaffiliated, Independent, or a Third Party member +

WHERE + COR > .10, * COR > .20, ** COR > .30, AND *** IS COR > .40

While unaffiliated, Independent, or Third Party college students' perceptions did not change depending on whether they watched more satire compared to less satire or more traditional news compared to less traditional news, there was a difference in evaluations between the two types of exposure for those identifying with the Democratic Party or Republican Party. College-aged Democrats demonstrated roughly the same evaluations of Obama regardless of how much satire they watched, but Democrats who watched more traditional news demonstrated a more positive perception of Obama than those who watched less traditional news. Similarly, young Republicans who reported watching more satire had a more positive evaluation of Obama than those who watched less satire, but Republicans who watched more traditional news had a more negative evaluation of Obama than those who watched less traditional news. As well, young Democrats and Republicans who watched more satire had more negative perceptions of Romney whereas young Democrats and Republicans had the same evaluations of Romney regardless of how much traditional news they watched.

While the observational data is significant, it is unclear whether political satire programs caused those levels of political engagement or if individuals with those levels of political engagement sought out such programs. However, it does rule out common criticisms that *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* are “killing democracy” (Winter, 2006).

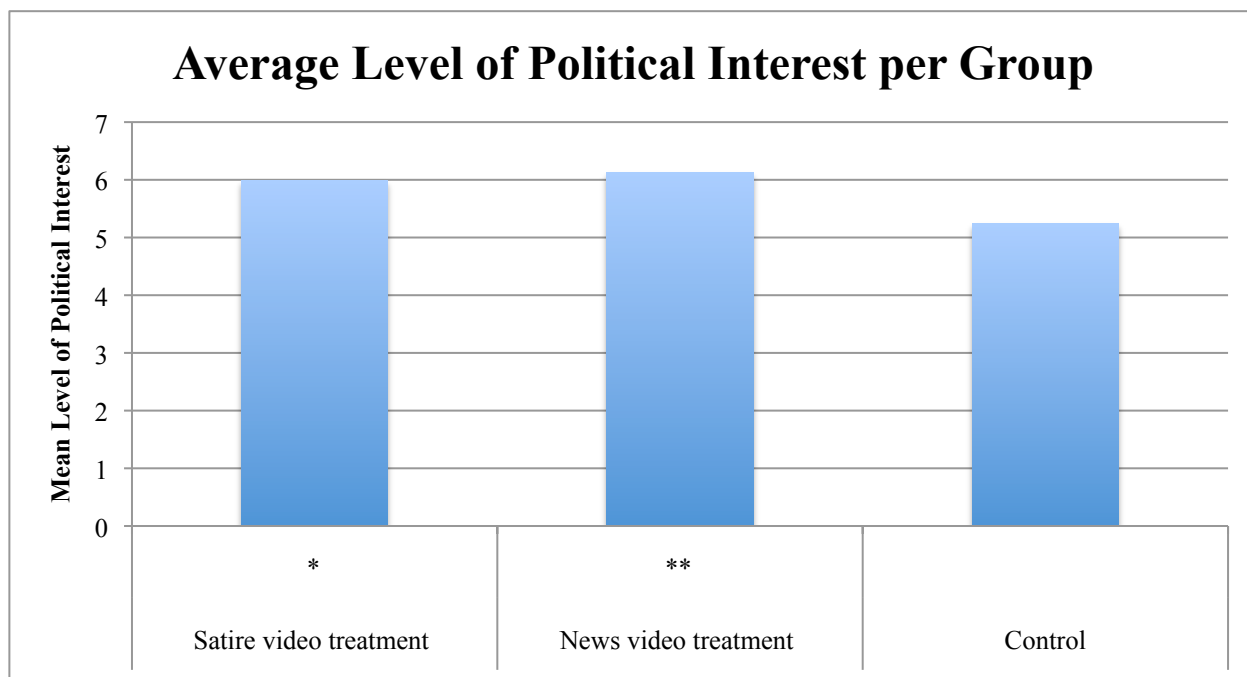
EXPERIMENTAL DATA

The experimental results suggest that individuals that watch satire television by chance will be more interested in politics. They will also have a greater desire to participate politically in the future. By chance refers to the fact that individuals who are experiencing this programming did not seek out such programs but watched them anyways.

There is strong evidence of a positive relationship between college students' level of political interest and exposure to political satire programs. As demonstrated in FIGURE 17, there is a statistically significant difference (*) between the level of political interest for those in the satire video treatment group ($X=5.98$, $SD=2.45$) and those in the control group ($X=5.24$, $SD=2.97$). Participants who were exposed to the satire video had a higher level of political interest than those in the group not exposed to the video.

In addition, analyses suggest a positive relationship between college students' level of political interest and exposure to traditional news media. FIGURE 17 illustrates that those in the news video treatment group ($X=6.13$, $SD=2.59$) had a higher level of political interest than those in the control group (**). Although the mean political interest level for the news treatment group was slightly higher than that of the satire treatment group, the difference was not statistically significant. (For the results of t-tests for the political interest variable, refer to TABLES 15-17 in Appendix G: Other Calculations.)

FIGURE 17. AVERAGE LEVEL OF POLITICAL INTEREST FOR TREATMENT AND CONTROL GROUPS



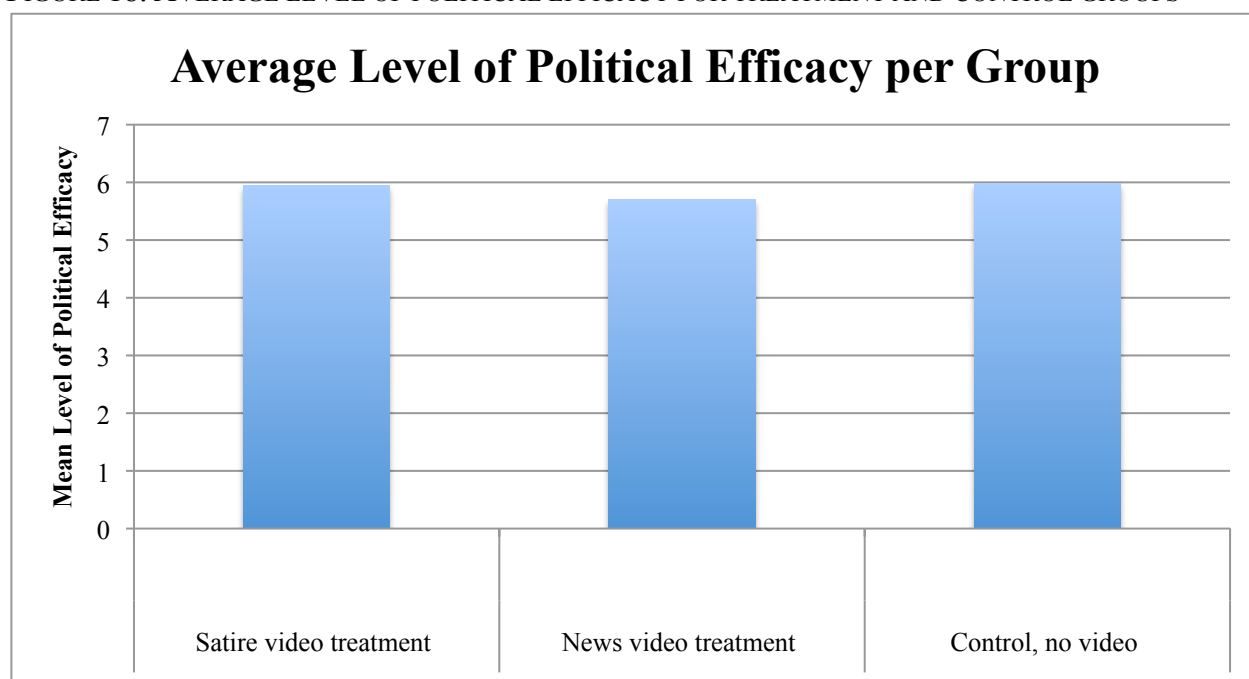
WHERE + P < .10, * P < .05, ** P < .01, AND *** IS P < .001

A regression model confirms the positive impact of the video treatment on respondents' level of political interest. Brief exposure to political satire coverage is correlated with a political interest level 0.868 higher than those not exposed to a video (**). As well, brief exposure to traditional news shows is correlated with a political interest level 1.0352 higher than those not exposed to the video (**). (For more details about the regression model, refer to TABLE 18 in Appendix G: Other Calculations.)

Although watching political satire by chance is related to participants being more interested in politics, there is insufficient evidence that exposure affects political efficacy. Likewise, analyses do not suggest a correlation between college students' level of political efficacy and watching traditional news media. The difference between the two types of relationships is not statistically significant either. As FIGURE 18 demonstrates, there is no difference between the level of political efficacy for those in the satire video treatment group

($X=5.95$, $SD= 2.44$) and those in the control group ($X=5.98$, $SD=2.64$). There is also no significant evidence that those in the group exposed to the news video ($X=5.70$, $SD=2.61$) had a different level of political efficacy than those in the group not exposed to the video. (For the results of t-tests for the political efficacy variable, refer to TABLES 19-21 in Appendix G: Other Calculations.)

FIGURE 18. AVERAGE LEVEL OF POLITICAL EFFICACY FOR TREATMENT AND CONTROL GROUPS

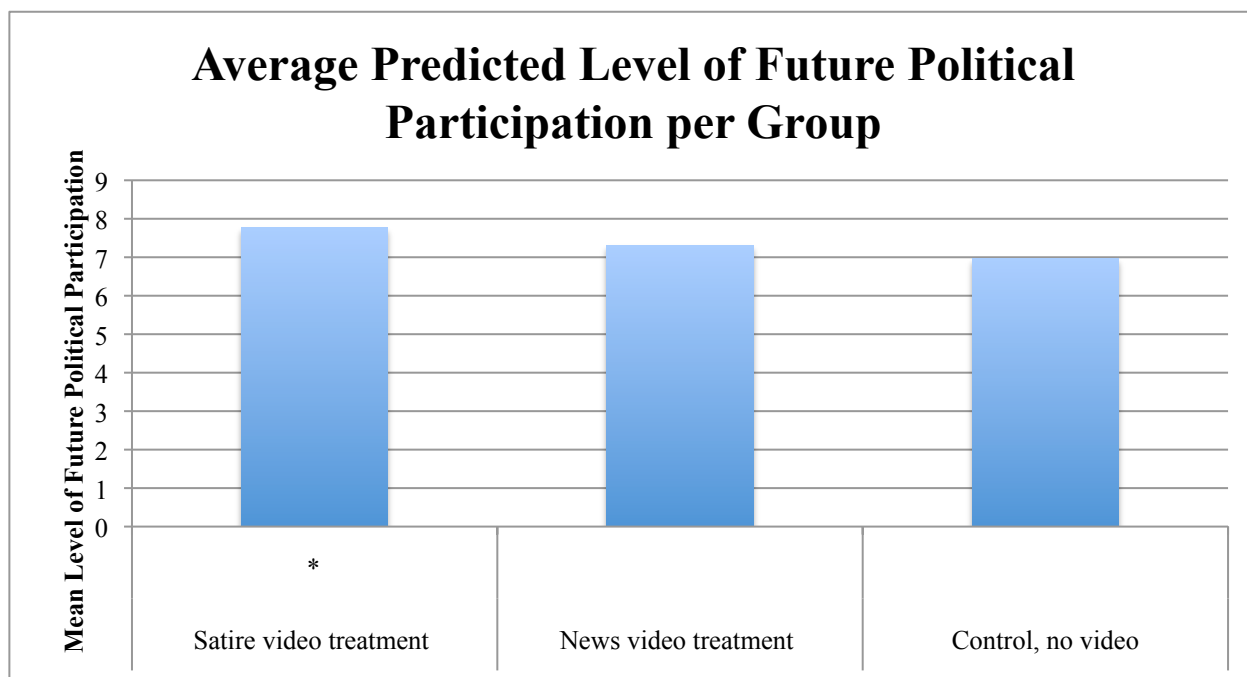


WHERE + $P < .10$, * $P < .05$, ** $P < .01$, AND *** IS $P < .001$

There is, however, strong evidence of a positive relationship between college students' desire for future political participation and exposure to political satire programs. As FIGURE 19 illustrates, there is a statistically significant difference (*) between the level of future political participation for those in the satire video treatment group ($X=7.766$, $SD=2.69$) and those in the control group ($X=6.975$, $SD=3.13$). Data suggests that those that watched political satire programs had a greater desire to participate politically in the future. However, there is no

evidence that those in the group exposed to the news video ($X=7.298$, $SD=3.00$) had a different level of future political participation than those in the control group.

FIGURE 19. AVERAGE LEVEL OF PREDICTED FUTURE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION FOR TREATMENT AND CONTROL GROUPS



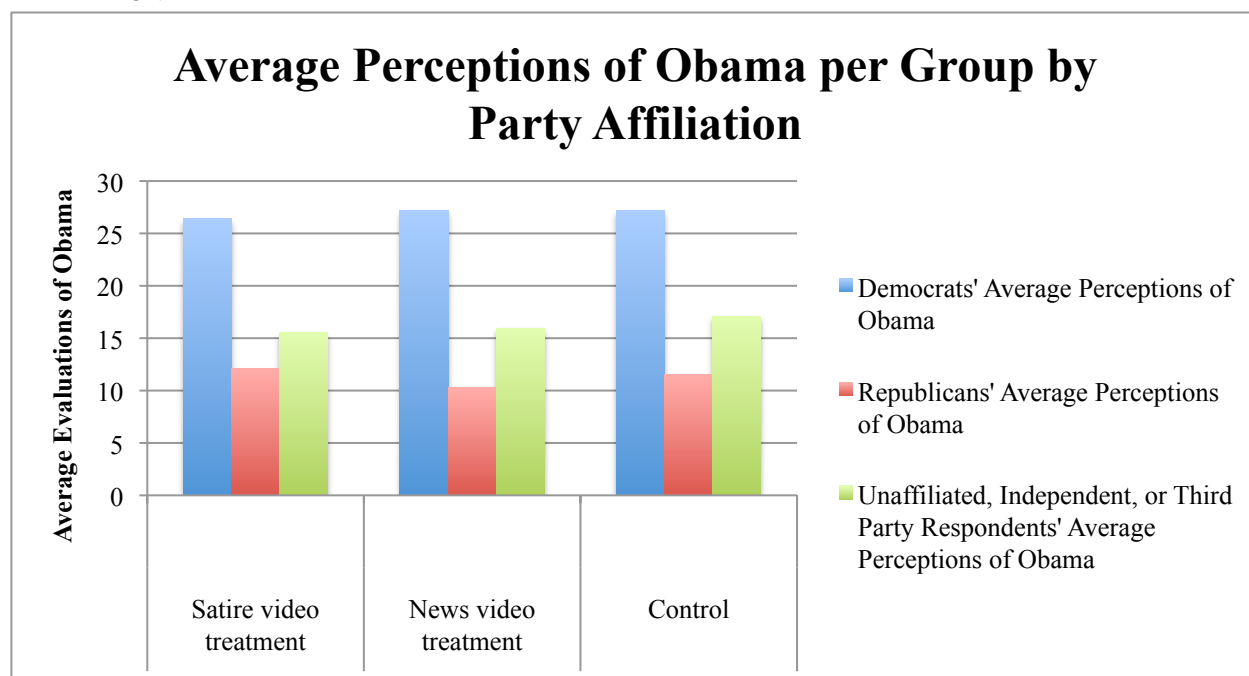
WHERE + $P < .10$, * $P < .05$, ** $P < .01$, AND *** IS $P < .001$

Using a regression model ($Y = 6.54 + 1.146 \cdot \text{satire_treatment} + .772 \cdot \text{news_treatment}$), there is strong evidence of a positive impact of the video treatment on respondents' desire to participate politically in the future. Brief exposure to political satire programs is correlated with a political interest level 1.146 higher than if not exposed to a video (**). (For more details about the regression model and t-tests for future political participation, refer to TABLES 22-24 in Appendix G: Other Calculations.)

Although the observational data had predicted some sort of relationship between exposure to political satire and perceptions of candidates, there was no evidence of a relationship in the experimental analysis. As demonstrated in FIGURE 20, there is not a significant difference

between the average evaluations of Obama by Democrats in the satire video treatment group ($X=26.44$, $SD=6.55$) and by Democrats in the control group ($X=27.23$, $SD=5.79$). As well, there was not a significant difference between the average evaluations of Obama by Republicans in the satire video treatment group ($X=12.1$, $SD=5.84$) and by Republicans in the control group ($X=11.49$, $SD=6.98$) or by unaffiliated, Independent, or Third Party respondents in the satire video treatment group ($X=15.50$, $SD=10.91$) and those in the control group ($X=17.11$, $SD=6.72$). Analyses did not reveal a relationship between the news video treatment and participants' evaluation of Obama, regardless of party affiliation. (For descriptive statistics and the results of t-tests for the perceptions of the Obama variable, refer to TABLES 25-33 in Appendix G: Other Calculations.)

FIGURE 20. AVERAGE PERCEPTIONS OF OBAMA FOR TREATMENT AND CONTROL GROUPS BY PARTY AFFILIATION

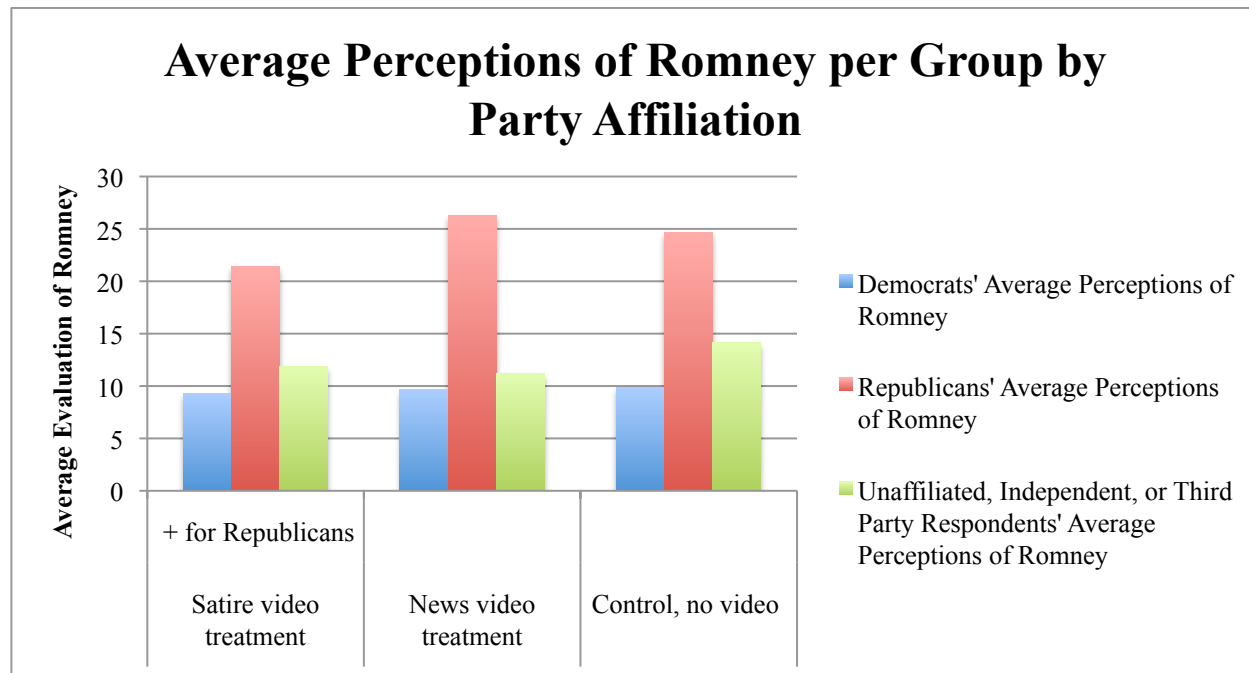


WHERE + $P < .10$, * $P < .05$, ** $P < .01$, AND *** IS $P < .001$

Unlike perceptions of Obama, analyses did reveal a relationship between treatment group and participants' evaluation of Romney, according to party affiliation. As demonstrated in FIGURE 21, there was a slight difference (+) between the average evaluations of Romney by Republicans in the satire video treatment group ($X=24.26$, $SD=7.21$) and by Republicans in the control group ($X=24.66$, $SD=6.75$). Although Republicans in the news treatment group ($X=26.32$, $SD=7.73$) did not experience a different mean evaluation of Romney than those in the control group, they had a different mean evaluation of Romney than those in the satire treatment group. Republicans who were briefly exposed to political satire programs had a slightly more negative perception of Romney than those exposed to traditional news sources (+).

Young Democrats and unaffiliated, Independent, or Third Party college students, however, experienced no change in evaluations. Democratic participants experienced the same mean evaluation of Romney in the satire treatment group ($X=9.306$, $SD=5.73$), news treatment group ($X=9.683$, $SD=7.94$), or control group ($X=9.863$, $SD=6.39$). Likewise, unaffiliated, Independent, or Third Party college students demonstrated the same mean evaluation of Romney in the satire treatment group ($X=11.86$, $SD=9.87$), news treatment group ($X=11.19$, $SD=9.23$), or control group ($X=14.14$, $SD=7.65$). (For descriptive statistics and the results of t-tests for the perceptions of Romney variable, refer to TABLES 34-42 in Appendix G: Other Calculations.)

FIGURE 21. AVERAGE PERCEPTIONS OF ROMNEY FOR TREATMENT AND CONTROL GROUPS BY PARTY AFFILIATION



WHERE + P < .10, * P < .05, ** P < .01, AND *** IS P < .001

As exemplified in TABLE 3, college students who were randomly assigned to view the satire video experienced different changes in their political engagement levels than those who were randomly assigned to watch the traditional news video.

TABLE 3. RECAP OF EXPERIMENTAL DATA

Those in the SATIRE treatment group (compared to those in the control group):	Those in the TRADITIONAL NEWS treatment group (compared to those in the control group):
↑ political interest *	↑ political interest **
= political efficacy	= political efficacy
↑ desire to participate politically in the future *	= desire to participate politically in the future
= evaluations of Obama regardless of party affiliation	= evaluations of Obama regardless of party affiliation
= evaluations of Romney if a Democrat ↓ evaluations of Romney if a Republican + = evaluations of Romney if unaffiliated, Independent, or a Third Party member	= evaluations of Romney if a Democrat = evaluations of Romney if a Republican = evaluations of Romney if unaffiliated, Independent, or a Third Party member

WHERE + P < .10, * P < .05, ** P < .01, AND *** IS P < .001

While both groups demonstrated a higher interest in politics compared to the control group, only those who watched the satire video experienced a greater desire to participate politically in the future and a change in their candidate evaluations.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

There is a strong relationship between watching political satire and college students' political engagement. In many aspects, watching comedy news is just as influential on college students' political engagement as watching traditional news. Even so, watching comedy news actually makes young people more interested in participating politically than does watching traditional news. Significant correlations are found not only for exposure to late-night political comedy programs during the 2012 presidential election, but also for brief exposure to an approximately six minute montage video of satirical coverage. Cynical people do not seek out these shows, nor is there evidence that the shows make their younger audiences cynical. College students who watch more satire are more interested in politics, more knowledgeable about current events and the government, more participative in politics, more critical of Obama if a Republican, and more critical of Romney regardless of party affiliation. The jokes on *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* and *The Colbert Report* actually increase students' interest in politics, knowledge about politics, and desire to participate politically. As a result, **H1**, **H3** **H4.1**, and **H4.2** were accepted. I failed to accept **H2**, **H5.1** and **H5.2**. TABLE 4 illustrates which hypotheses were accepted.

TABLE 4. HYPOTHESES AND RESULTS

<i>Hypothesis</i>	<i>Observational Result</i>	<i>Experimental Result</i>
H1 - Political Interest Theory	Accept	Accept
H2 - Political Efficacy Theory	Fail to accept	Fail to accept
H3 - Political Knowledge Theory	Accept	N/A
H4.1 - Political Participation Theory, Past	Accept	N/A
H4.2 - Political Participation Theory, Future	N/A	Accept
H5.1 - Political Perception Reinforcement Theory, Evaluation of Obama by Party	Fail to Accept	Fail to Accept
H5.2 - Political Perception Reinforcement Theory, Evaluation of Romney by Party	Fail to Accept	Fail to Accept

Exposure to political satire programs during the 2012 election season had a relationship with college students' level of political engagement. With each additional day spent watching political satire programs, college students were more interested in politics, more knowledgeable about campaign news and the government, and more active in politics through voting and campaigning. Moreover, Democrats who reported watching more satire experienced a more positive perception of Obama and more negative perception of Romney. Republicans who reported watching more satire also experienced a more positive perception of Obama and more negative perception of Romney.

In addition, watching 6 minutes of *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report's* coverage of the 2012 election season leads to a higher level of political interest and a greater desire to participate politically in the future. While brief exposure to traditional news sources was also correlated with a higher level of political interest, the other relationships did not exist. This suggests that political satire programs have a significant influence on college-students' engagement with political activity.

Not only might those interested in political satire programs seek out such shows, but also the shows may make viewers more interested in politics. Therefore, hypothesis **H1** is accepted. Exposure to political satire programs' coverage of the 2012 presidential election is associated

with an increase in young people's political interest. College students who watched political satire shows were just as interested in politics as those who watched traditional news. Individuals who watched more satirical programming were more interested in politics. While those more interested in politics may have sought out late-night political comedy shows, even brief exposure was correlated with a higher level of political interest than those who did not watch the coverage.

It does not matter whether one watched satire or news programming, exposure to the content seems to have been the biggest difference. Watching satire had the same positive relationship with political interest as watching news programming. College students who reported watching more election-related television were more interested in politics.

Interestingly, there was no relationship between exposure to *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* and *The Colbert Report* and an individual's feeling that their political participation matters. As a result, I failed to accept hypothesis **H2**. There was no evidence that these shows change college students' opinions about the idea that political and social change is possible, but there is also no evidence that satire shows create cynicism. College students who watch political satire shows will be just as confident in their ability to bring about change and in the government's responsiveness as those who watch traditional news, but that level will not differ from that of young people who do not watch any programming.

It is surprising that satire did not impact political efficacy. There is a very strong positive relationship between exposure to satire and having the desire to participate politically in the future. Individuals with low political efficacy are unlikely to vote, contact elected officials, and participate in other forms of political activity because they believe their actions are useless. Watching *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* by chance increases a viewer's desire to participate politically. However, if exposed to political satire programs by chance, college-aged

viewers did not experience a change in political efficacy. This finding is somewhat counterintuitive.

People who watched political comedy programs knew more basic facts about the 2012 presidential campaign, basic current events, and government than those who did not watch the shows. While college students who watched traditional news were, on average, more knowledgeable about politics than those who watched satire, there is strong evidence that satire not only entertains but also informs its audience. Thus, *H3* was accepted. Overall, watching election-related television had the strongest correlation. Similar to political interest, this suggests that it is not type of framing that matters, but rather the exposure to the content in general.

Negative commentary in political satire shows may actually encourage people to participate politically. By exposing flaws in the political system, satirical coverage contributes to a sense of urgency and a desire to help solve governmental problems. Critiquing the election process can actually encourage individuals to vote, contact elected officials, and engage in other forms of political participation. Individuals who are briefly exposed to political satire coverage by chance are more likely to participate politically in the future than those who were exposed to traditional news coverage. Both *H4.1* and *H4.2* were accepted, as political satire seems to have a strong positive relationship with participation in political activity.

While young Democrats may seek out and remember jokes in late-night comedy programs that support their pre-existing attitudes and beliefs, young Republicans do not. Party affiliation and the type of jokes people are exposed to have a significant influence on their political engagement. Participants of both major parties who reported watching more satire experienced a more positive perception of Obama. The strength of the relationships, however, was much stronger for Republican participants. In fact, satire jokes may be the most influential

for those who do not belong to one of the two major political parties. The difference in evaluations of Obama for unaffiliated, Independent, or Third Party members who watched more satire compared to less satire was greater than the difference in evaluations of Obama for both Democrats and Republicans who watched more satire compared to less satire. While the experimental findings suggest that college students' perceptions of Obama will not change if they watch *The Daily Show* or *The Colbert Report* by chance, there is sufficient evidence that party affiliation plays a significant role in who watches these programs. Since pre-existing beliefs were not reinforced for college Republicans or unaffiliated, Independent, or Third Party respondents, I failed to accept **H5.1**.

In addition, individuals who sought out satire programs had more negative perceptions of Romney, regardless of party affiliation. While the content of *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* is generally biased against conservative views, young people of both parties remembered jokes that mocked the Republican Party. Democrats, Republicans, and Unaffiliated, Independent, or Third Party college students who reported watching more satire experienced more negative perceptions of Romney. Republicans who watched the 6-minute satire video by chance also demonstrated more negative evaluations of Romney. This finding goes against the idea that Republicans' previously held beliefs would be reinforced. Therefore, I failed to accept **H5.2**. The relationship between watching late-night political comedy and perceptions of Romney is interesting because exposure to traditional news and election-related television did not have a significant relationship with the evaluations for the major parties. There were, however, significant relationships between watching traditional news and election-related television for the unaffiliated, Independent, or Third Party members.

The importance of party affiliation in seeking out and remembering satire jokes makes sense, as multiple scholars have found that the late-night content is skewed toward liberal audiences (Pew, 2008, 2010, 2012a; Rivera-Mijes, 2012). The content of *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* differ from that of traditional news programs. Pew Research Center (2008) found that *The Daily Show* covers a wide range of news events, but it selectively emphasizes national politics and ignores other news. Throughout 2007, the 2008 presidential campaign represented 15 percent of *The Daily Show*'s coverage. Mainstream news media, however, focused more on foreign events; the 2008 presidential campaign represented less than 12 percent of mainstream coverage. Colbert and Stewart also mock other media and bring in musical guests. Additionally, broadcast news has the responsibility to fact check and be reliable, whereas late-night comedy shows merely provide their own commentary and do not have such responsibilities; although, Colbert and Stewart's staffs often fact check. Moreover, traditional news shows and comedy programs have different production cycles. Whether through broadcast networks, cable, satellite, or online, traditional news programs are typically aired daily. *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report*, however, are aired four nights a week, Monday through Thursday. The unique production cycle of these satire shows enables staff to take weeks off for sabbaticals, makes the programs vulnerable to being off air when major events occur, and encourages networks to air repeat episodes (Pew, 2008)

Additionally, the content on the two satire programs differ from each other. Through their choice of jokes and tones, Stewart, Colbert, and the writers of their programs provide commentary on politics and traditional news media. The content may explain why more college students watch Colbert than Stewart (Chinni, 2012). Jon Stewart said, "[we are] a group of people that really feel that they want to write jokes about the absurdity that we see in the

government and the world” (Pew, 2008). *The Daily Show* targeted Republicans three times as often as Democrats in 2007; and, during the 2012 presidential election season, it targeted Romney and Republican-influenced media, like Fox News, more than liberal topics (Pew, 2008; Rivera-Mijes, 2012). *The Colbert Report* is slightly more conservative than *The Daily Show*, but it still appeals primarily to a liberal audience. Although 45 percent of Democrats sought out each programs, 12 percent of Republicans watched *The Colbert Report* while only 10 percent watched *The Daily Show* (Pew, 2012a). Additionally, *The Colbert Report* may target media sources more than *The Daily Show*. More than half of *The Daily Show*’s regular audience reported seeing a lot of political bias in news coverage, yet nearly two thirds of *The Colbert Report*’s audience reported seeing media bias (Pew, 2010). Consequently, the opinions of Stewart, Colbert, and their writers play a significant role in shaping the shows’ content.

CONCLUSION

IMPLICATIONS

Jokes on political satire programs impact college-aged viewers’ engagement with, understanding of, and interpretation of campaigns and election news. Past studies found that by priming and framing stories, various media sources alter viewer’s knowledge, behavior, and perception of society (Bryant & Oliver, 2009). In the case of political satire programs, this theory is reinforced. Through jokes, Stewart, Colbert, and the writers of *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* primed and framed stories in ways that helped their audiences become more interested in politics, learn about current events and campaign news, and foster an urge to participate politically.

This study reinforced the positive correlation that Cao and Brewer (2008) found between watching late-night political satire programs and political interest. Their study analyzed all viewers, so it is interesting to see that the same results apply on a more localized scale. College students, in particular those enrolled at Duke University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, experienced a higher level of political interest than the control group after brief exposure to political satire and with each additional day of satirical viewing during the 2012 election.

The focus on a college student sample may be the reason that this research contradicted the findings of Baumgartner and Morris (2006) and Cao (2008). Past studies discovered that watching more satire caused people to feel more confident in their personal role in government but less confident in the government's responsiveness (J. Baumgartner & Morris, 2006). However, neither the experimental data nor the observational analysis showed a relationship. Perhaps this suggests that college students, as opposed to older generations, are less affected by media sources when determining whether or not they can bring about political or social change. This theory is consistent with the findings that exposure to traditional news coverage is not correlated with college students' level of political efficacy (Xiaoza Cao, 2008).

It is likely that late-night comedy programs are actually informing viewers through political jokes. While people generally watch political comedy programs to be entertained (Baum, 2003), results illustrate that viewers of late-night comedy programs are more knowledgeable about current events and campaign news than those who do not watch these shows. This study illustrates that, although not as knowledgeable as those who relied on nightly broadcast news, the 4 percent of voters aged 18 to 29 that relied on political satire news were more knowledgeable about current events, government, and election news than those who did

not watch any programs. Exit poll data from the 2004 presidential election demonstrated that 21 percent of people aged 18 to 29 used *The Daily Show* and *Saturday Night Live* to learn about campaign and election news (“And now the news: For many young viewers, it’s Jon Stewart,” 2004). At the time, those were the two most popular political satire programs. Considering that *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* were the most popular political satire programs for college-aged students in 2012 and that trends shifted young people towards satire and away from broadcast news, it can be reasonably assumed that the 21 percent of young viewers using satire as a main news source has not decreased. Since 19 percent of the voters in the 2012 presidential election were aged 18 to 29, it can be deduced that approximately 4,947,576 voters, or 4 percent of the voters in 2012, used satire as their main form of news.

Young people watching late-night comedy programs as a news source instead of nightly news broadcasts may not be a bad thing. In fact, there is evidence that if exposed to political satire coverage by chance, the viewer is more likely to participate politically in the future than if exposed to traditional news coverage. In addition, those who watched additional days of satirical coverage during the 2012 presidential race participated more during that race. Some previous argued that political comedy programs decreased participation by fostering a sense of political alienation (Baumgartner & Morris, 2006). However, for younger generations, it can be inferred that political comedy programs actually engage viewers in the political process. Jokes on political satire programs encourage individuals to vote, contact elected officials, discuss campaign news with others, and support particular campaigns more than traditional news coverage does.

Some findings from this research are inconsistent with the past studies, particularly because the findings contradict the reinforcement theory. Viewers, regardless of party affiliation,

evaluated the jokes about the Democratic Party more positively and the Republican Party more negatively. There was a more positive perception of Obama and more negative perception of Romney as individuals watched more political satire. A reinforcement theory would have suggested that candidates' previously held ideological beliefs would be strengthened; however, the data does not entirely support that. Democrats' previously held beliefs were strengthened, but Republicans' were not. Unaffiliated, Independent, and Third Party college students were also swayed to adopt a more positive attitude toward Obama and negative attitude toward Romney. As such, political satire seems to break down the importance of party identification and make college-aged viewers more confident in the Democratic Party and more skeptical of the Republican Party. The evaluations by Republican college students were more influenced by watching more satirical coverage. The experimental approach, however, only showed a change in evaluations after watching satire for Republicans' perceptions of Romney.

The observational findings may differ from the experimental findings for two reasons: the participants with those levels of political engagement may seek out such programs and brief exposure may not fully replicate watching an entire episode of comedy news. College students who watch more satire are more interested in politics, more knowledgeable about current events and the government, more participative in politics, more critical of Obama if a Republican, and more critical of Romney regardless of party affiliation. Individuals with those characteristics may seek out satire or watching satire may foster those political attitudes and activities. The experimental approach demonstrated that even watching six minutes of satirical jokes could encourage audiences to be more interested in politics, to understand politics, and to participate politically. If the participants had been exposed to entire episodes over multiple days, the results may have been more similar between the two research approaches.

Viewers' perception of candidates differs from past research. Media may influence younger generations more than older generations because younger generations have held their beliefs for a shorter period of time (Donsbach, 2007). Recently gaining the ability to vote, younger individuals may be newer to political activity and may have developed their opinions relatively quickly. Older individuals, however, may have had decades to formulate their opinions, creating long-standing beliefs and becoming less susceptible to external influence. Younger generations are also more socially liberal than older generations and believe that the government should have a greater role in society (Pew, 2012). As well, young people are more likely to rely on television news than older generations (Edwards, Wattenberg, & Lineberry, 2005).

In some ways, my research confirmed Morris' (2008) conclusions that viewers of late-night comedy shows have a more negative perception of Republicans. However, instead of an unchanged evaluation of Democrats like Morris suggested, I found that all college students had a more positive perception of the Democratic Party and Obama as they watched more satire.

In addition, my research sheds light on a new approach to the relationship by discussing the lack of a relationship with brief exposure to satire but significant correlations for actual viewing during the election season. Past research on the relationship between political comedy programs and individuals' evaluations of candidates was inconclusive. Studies discovered different correlations depending on the candidates involved, ages of viewers, and election season.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Since this research is focused on the 2012 presidential election, we could only learn so much. This research cannot be applied to political satire programs' coverage of other political events, such as gun control policy or immigration reform, or to other federal election seasons. Studying how satirical comedy programs affected viewers during federal elections over time would be a better approach and would provide more applicable, concrete results. However, due to the recentness of Colbert's program and the changing media landscape, such an approach would be difficult to adopt. In addition, this research is limited by its analysis primarily of college-aged students at two elite universities, meaning that the results of this study may not apply to the public at large, to older generations, or to college students at non-elite universities.

As well, the research is only applicable to one type of political satire: late-night parody news on television. Other types of parody, like political cartoons, may have a different impact. More specifically, the research relies primarily on a combination of coverage from *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* and *The Colbert Report*, two liberal satire shows. There are numerous televised satire programs, such as *Saturday Night Live's* liberal "Weekend Update" and the more conservative *Red Eye*, which may affect viewers' differently because of dissimilar tones, coverage, and jokes. Even between the two cases chosen for the study, *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* and *The Colbert Report* have distinctive tones, coverage, and jokes that could impact viewers of one program differently from the other.

Moreover, the research is limited in regards to external validity. It is unclear how accurately the research, which involved 6-minute montage videos, simulates exposure in real life to the 30-minute long episodes multiple times a week. Even if it does not reflect watching full episodes of *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* and *The Colbert Report*, the research provides

interesting findings that relate to the individual segments that the shows post on their websites and the clips that viewers spread through social media.

This study has provided a solid foundation for future research questions. Future research can analyze whether there are differences in the effect of exposure to political satire and political interest, political efficacy, political knowledge, political participation, and political perception of viewers in swing states, Republican states, and Democratic states.

As well, further research can study whether such relationships change depending on whether the student attends a private university or public university. While this study analyzed students from each type of university, the students from each institution were not compared to each other. Since this study focused primarily on two elite universities, future research can expand to use participants from non-elite universities or college-aged individuals not enrolled in institutions of higher education.

Additional research can also study if such relationships change according to basic demographic information like age, year in school, and gender. This research could be expanded to analyze the effects of political satire specifically on older generations or on the public as a whole.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: EXIT POLL DATA

TABLE 5. AGE AND VOTING IN THE 2012 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

<i>Age</i>	<i>% of voters in '12</i>	<i>% for Obama</i>	<i>% for Romney</i>
18-29	19	60	37
30-44	27	52	45
45-64	38	27	51
65+	16	44	56

Source: ("Exit polls 2012: How the vote has shifted," 2012)

TABLE 6. PARTY AND VOTING IN THE 2012 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

<i>Party</i>	<i>% of voters in '12</i>	<i>% for Obama</i>	<i>% for Romney</i>
Democrat	38	92	7
Republican	32	6	93
Independent or something else	29	45	50

Source: ("Exit polls 2012: How the vote has shifted," 2012)

TABLE 7. IDEOLOGY AND VOTING IN THE 2012 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

<i>Ideology</i>	<i>% of voters in '12</i>	<i>% for Obama</i>	<i>% for Romney</i>
Liberal	25	86	11
Moderate	41	56	41
Conservative	35	17	82

Source: ("Exit polls 2012: How the vote has shifted," 2012)

TABLE 8. EDUCATION AND VOTING IN THE 2012 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

<i>Education</i>	<i>% of voters in '12</i>	<i>% for Obama</i>	<i>% for Romney</i>
No high school diploma	3	64	35
High school graduate	21	51	48
Some college/assoc. degree	28	49	48
College graduate	29	47	51
Postgraduate study	18	55	42

Source: ("Exit polls 2012: How the vote has shifted," 2012)

TABLE 9. TOP QUALITIES AND VOTING IN THE 2012 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

<i>Top Qualities</i>	<i>% of voters in '12</i>	<i>% for Obama</i>	<i>% for Romney</i>
Cares about people like me	21	81	18
Is a strong leader	18	38	61
Shares my values	27	42	55
Has a vision for the future	29	45	54

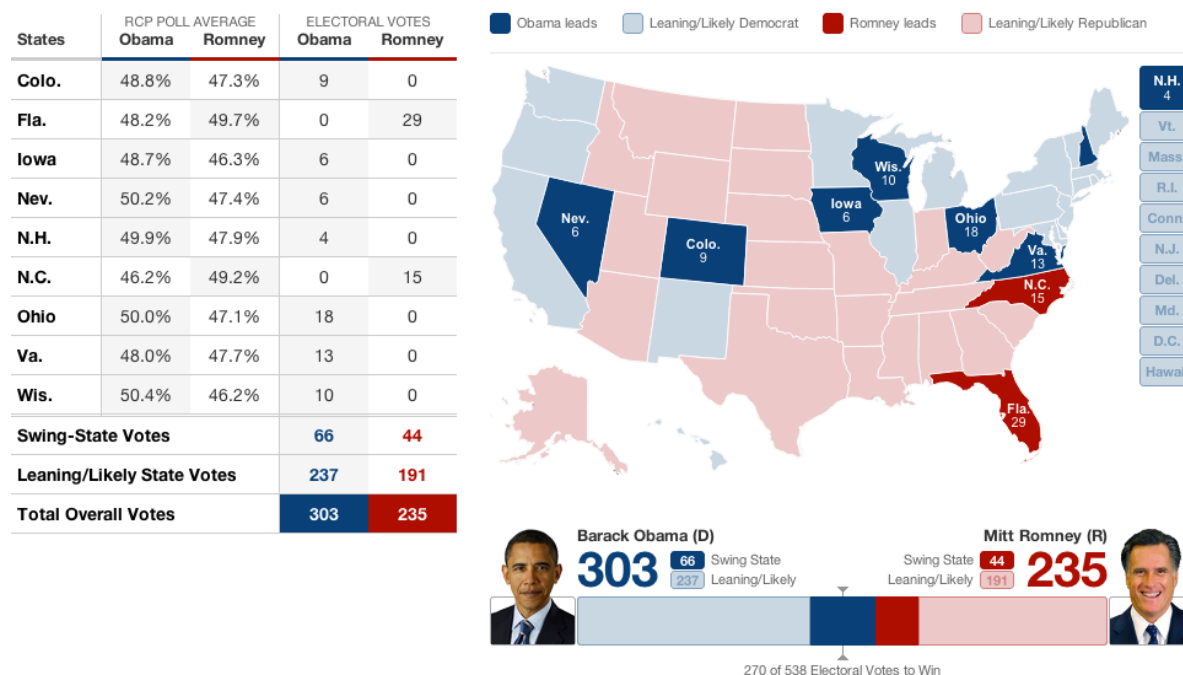
Source: ("Exit polls 2012: How the vote has shifted," 2012)

TABLE 10. 2012 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION RESULTS

<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>% Won</i>	<i>Electoral Votes</i>
Barack Obama	62,611,250	50.6	332
Mitt Romney	59,134,475	47.8	206
Others	1,968,682	1.6	0

Source: ("Presidential Race - 2012 Election Center," 2012)

FIGURE 22. VOTING IN 'SWING STATES' IN THE 2012 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION



Source: ("2012 Presidential Election Results," 2012)

APPENDIX B: SURVEY QUESTIONS

CONSENT FORM

- Clicking the “agree button” below indicates that...

BASIC INFORMATION

- What is your gender? [Male/Female]
- What university do you attend? [Duke University/University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill]
- How many television programs about the 2012 presidential election did you watch? [a good many, several, just one or two, or none]?
- On average, how many days a week did you watch the national network news on TV during the 2012 presidential election season (i.e. CNN, NBC, ABC, FOX, etc)? [None, One Day, Two Days, Three Days, Four Days, Five Days, Six Days, Every Day]
- On average, how many days a week did you watch parody news programs on TV during the 2012 presidential election season (i.e. *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, *The Colbert Report*, *The O'Reilly Factor*, *Red Eye*, etc.)? [None, One Day, Two Days, Three Days, Four Days, Five Days, Six Days, Every Day]

VIDEO (RANDOMIZATION)

POLITICAL INTEREST

- Some people don't pay much attention to political campaigns. How about you, would you say that you were [very much interested, somewhat interested, or not much interested] in the 2012 political campaign?
- Some people seem to follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there's an election going on or not. Others aren't that interested. Would you say that you follow what's going on in government and public affairs [most of the time, some of the time, only now and then, or hardly at all]?
- How often do you talk about politics with family, friends, or fellow students [every day, 3 or 4 times a week, once or twice a week, a few times a month, never]

POLITICAL EFFICACY

- People have different opinions about politicians and the government. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statements [disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree]
 - Public officials don't care much what people like me think.
 - Generally speaking, those we elect to Congress in Washington lose touch with the people pretty quickly.
 - Parties are only interested in people's votes but not in their opinions.
 - Voting is the only way that people like me have any say about how the government runs things.
 - People like me don't have any say about what the government does.
 - Sometimes politics and government seems so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on.

POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE

- Most people do not know the answers to the following questions. If you do not know an answer, please do not look it up. Make your best guess.
- Who was [Obama's/Romney's] running mate (i.e. candidate for vice president) in the 2012 presidential campaign?

- Joe Biden *
- Paul Ryan *
- What was [Obama's/Romney's] campaign slogan in the 2012 presidential election?
 - Believe in America *
 - Forward *
- Which of the following states was considered the key swing-state of the 2012 presidential election (i.e. the tossup state that many say determined the election)?
 - Ohio *
- What is the current US unemployment rate? [[7-8%]]
- Who is the current Speaker of the House? [[John Boehner]]
- Which candidate in the 2012 presidential election supported tax increases on income above \$250,000? [[Obama]]
- Which state did Obama represent in the U.S. Senate? [[Illinois]]
- For which state did Romney serve as governor? [[Massachusetts]]
- Which political party currently has the majority in the House of Representatives? [[Democratic Party]]
- Which political party currently has the majority in the Senate? [[Republican Party]]
- Who is Chief Justice of the United States? [[John Roberts]]

PAST POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

- Some people are very active in politics and others do not participate at all. Please select all of the following that describe you.
- I am registered to vote.
- I voted in the 2012 presidential election
- I belong to a political club or organization
- I have written a letter to any public officials giving them my opinion about something that should be done
- During the campaign, I talked to people and tried to show them why they should vote against one of the parties or candidates
- I wore a campaign button, put a campaign sticker on my car, or placed a sign in my window or in front of my house
- I have voted in a state election

FUTURE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

- In the near future, how likely are you to do the following? [Unlikely, undecided, likely]
- Vote in the 2012 presidential election
- Join a political club or organization
- Write a letter to a public official giving them my opinion about something that should be done
- Talk to people and try to show them why they should vote against one of the parties or candidates
- Wear a campaign button, put a campaign sticker on my car, or place a sign in my window or in front of my house
- Vote in a state election

PERCEPTION OF CANDIDATES

- Many people use the following words and phrases to describe political figures. Think about [Obama/Romney]. The first phrase is [TRAIT]. In your opinion, does that phrase

[TRAIT] describe [Obama/Romney] [extremely well, quite well, not too well, or not well at all]?

- Intelligent
- Compassionate
- Decent
- Inspiring
- Knowledgeable
- Moral
- Provides strong leadership**
- Really cares about people like you**
- Shares my values**
- Has a vision for the future**
- Has [Obama/Romney] -- because of the kind of person he is, or because of something he has done -- made you feel [AFFECT]? [Yes, have felt or No, haven't felt]
 - Angry
 - Afraid of him
 - Hopeful
 - Proud
- Is there anything in particular that you like about the [Democratic/Republican Party]? [[Check all that apply - coded based on number of positive things checked]]
 - People within party
 - Party characteristics
 - Candidate experience, ability
 - Candidate leadership qualities
 - Candidate personal qualities
 - Candidate party connections
 - Government management
 - Government activity/philosophy
 - Domestic policies
 - Foreign policies
 - Group connections
 - Miscellaneous
 - Events unique to 2012 presidential election
- Is there anything in particular that you do not like about the [Democratic/Republican Party]? [[Check all that apply - coded based on number of negative things checked]]
 - People within party
 - Party characteristics
 - Candidate experience, ability
 - Candidate leadership qualities
 - Candidate personal qualities
 - Candidate party connections
 - Government management
 - Government activity/philosophy
 - Domestic policies
 - Foreign policies
 - Group connections

- Miscellaneous
- Events unique to 2012 presidential election

SELF-PERCEIVED PARTY IDENTIFICATION

- Which political party do you feel closer to? [Democratic Party, Independent Party, Republican Party, Other Party, No Preference/Not Applicable]
- When it comes to politics, do you usually think of yourself as [extremely liberal, liberal, slightly liberal, moderate or middle of the road, slightly conservative, conservative, or extremely conservative]?

APPENDIX C: LINKS TO VIDEOS USED IN RESEARCH

Traditional news treatment group (*CNN, ABC, FOX, and Wall Street Journal Live*)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NYYyGW57uaU>

Political satire treatment group (*The Daily Show with Jon Stewart and The Colbert Report*)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mHHC0mMQ4pk>

APPENDIX D: RECRUITMENT TECHNIQUES

TABLE 11. RECRUITMENT TECHNIQUES FOR SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

Recruitment Technique	Duke	UNC-Chapel Hill
Posts on Facebook groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All Duke - Duke Class of 2013 - Duke Class of 2014 - Duke Class of 2015 - Duke Class of 2016 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNC Class of 2013 - UNC Class of 2014 - UNC Class of 2015 - UNC Class of 2016
Emails - sent through department heads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public Policy - Markets and Management Studies - Biology - Economics - English - Visual Arts - Math - Psychology - Physics - Political Science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public Policy - Management and Society - - Biology - Economics - English - Studio Art - Math - Psychology - Physics - Political Science
Emails - sent through director of student affairs	<i>Identifying information not included for confidentiality purposes</i>	<i>Identifying information not included for confidentiality purposes</i>

APPENDIX E: CODING KEY FOR SURVEY ANSWERS

TABLE 12. CODING KEY FOR SURVEY ANSWERS

Topic	Question	Answer	Coding value
Consent	Survey consent	Agree	0
Basic Information	Gender	Male	1
		Female	2
	University	Duke University	1
		University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill	2
	TV shows in 2012	None	0
		Just one or two	1
		Several	2
		Many	3
	How many days a week	None	0
		One	1
		Two	2
		Three	3
		Four	4
		Five	5
		Six	6
Everyday		7	
Video	Video	Daily/Show	1
		News	1
		None	1
Political Interest	Interest in campaign	Not much	0
		Somewhat	1
		Very	2
	Interest in government	Hardly	0
		Now and then	1
		Sometimes	2
		Most times	3
	Talk about politics	Less than once a month	0
		Once a month	1
		2-3 times a week	2
		Once a week	3
		2-3 times a week	4
	Daily	5	

Political Efficacy	<i>People have different opinions</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>0</i>
		<i>Neither agree/disagree</i>	<i>1</i>
		<i>Agree</i>	<i>2</i>
Political Knowledge	Obama running mate	Joe Biden	1
		All others	0
	<i>Romney's running mate</i>	<i>Paul Ryan</i>	<i>1</i>
		<i>All others</i>	<i>0</i>
	Swing state	Ohio	1
		All others	0
	<i>Unemployment rate</i>	<i>6-10%</i>	<i>1</i>
		<i>All others</i>	<i>0</i>
	Speaker of the House	John Boehner	1
		All others	0
	<i>Majority in House</i>	<i>Republicans</i>	<i>1</i>
		<i>Democrats</i>	<i>0</i>
	Majority in Senate	Democrats	1
		Republicans	0
	<i>Chief Justice</i>	<i>John Roberts</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>All others</i>		<i>0</i>	
Political Participation - Past	Participation	1 pt for each box checked, 0 for non	
Political Participation - Future	<i>Political participation</i>	<i>Unlikely</i>	<i>0</i>
		<i>Undecided</i>	<i>1</i>
		<i>Likely</i>	<i>2</i>
Perception of Candidates	Obama traits	Not well	0
		Not too well	1
		Quite well	2
		Extremely well	3
	<i>Obama</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>1</i>
		<i>No</i>	<i>0</i>
Like about Democrats	1 pt for each box checked, 0 for non		

	<i>Dislike about Democrats</i>	<i>1 pt for each box checked, 0 for non</i>	
	Romney traits	Not well	0
		Not too well	1
		Quite well	2
		Extremely well	3
	<i>Romney</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>1</i>
		<i>No</i>	<i>0</i>
	Like about Republicans	1 pt for each box checked, 0 for non	
	<i>Dislike about Republicans</i>	<i>1 pt for each box checked, 0 for non</i>	
Additional Info	Political party feel closer to	Democratic	1
		Republican	2
		Other (Third Party, Independent)	0
		N/A (Unaffiliated)	0
	<i>Liberal or Conservative</i>	<i>Extremely liberal</i>	<i>1</i>
		<i>Slightly liberal</i>	<i>2</i>
		<i>Moderate</i>	<i>3</i>
		<i>Slightly conservative</i>	<i>4</i>
		<i>Extremely conservative</i>	<i>5</i>

APPENDIX F: BIAS OF VIDEOS

The overall tone of the videos used in the data collection process may have had an impact on participants' responses. Since both videos were approximately 6 minutes long, the amount of comments or coverage relating to each party should theoretically be similar. Using the number of positive, negative, and neutral attitudes represented in jokes toward Barack Obama and Mitt Romney, I calculated a bias index for each of the videos.

TABLE 13. TONE OF VIDEOS USED IN SURVEY

	<i>AMOUNT OF COVERAGE IN NEWS VIDEO</i>	<i>AMOUNT OF COVERAGE IN POLITICAL SATIRE VIDEO</i>
Positive towards Obama or Democratic Party	8	3
Negative towards Obama or Democratic Party	5	8
Neutral towards Obama or Democratic Party	4	4
Positive towards Romney or Republican Party	7	1
Negative towards Romney or Republican Party	6	10
Neutral towards Romney or Republican Party	6	5
OVERALL COVERAGE	17-19, more coverage overall (+2) of Romney or Republicans	15-18, more coverage overall (+3) of Romney or Republicans
OVERALL TONE	+3 Obama or Democrats, +1 Romney or Republicans	-5 Obama or Democrats, -9 Romney or Republicans

To simplify this analysis, Barack Obama or the Democratic Party will be referred to as Democrats. Similarly, Mitt Romney or the Republican Party will be referred to as Republicans.

As shown in TABLE 13, the videos that were shown to the news treatment group and the satire treatment group had relatively the same amount of coverage on each candidate or his respective political party. The video consisting of traditional news coverage mentioned

Democrats 17 times and Republicans 19 times. Likewise, the video composed of political satire coverage mentioned Democrats on 15 occasions and Republicans on 18. While Republicans were referenced slightly more in both of the videos, the difference in coverage is not substantial because it accurately reflects the content of full episodes, which mock Republicans more than Democrats (Pew, 2008; Rivera-Mijes, 2012).

Although Republicans received more coverage in the two videos, they were presented both less positively and more negatively than Democrats. In the traditional news, Democrats were mentioned positively 8 times and negatively 5 times. This resulted in a net tone of positive 3 for Democrats. On the other hand, Republicans were referenced positively 7 times and negatively 6 times. This resulted in a net tone of positive 1 for Republicans.

Similar findings were discovered when analyzing the political satire video. Democrats were mentioned positively 3 times and negatively 8 times, resulting in a net tone of negative 5 for Democrats. Alternatively, Republicans were mentioned once positively and 10 times negatively, resulting in a net tone of negative 9 for Republicans. Understanding the videos' tones helps interpret the results from the study in a greater context. While receiving less coverage in both videos, Democrats were represented more positively and less negatively than Republicans.

Since content analysis was performed only on the montage videos incorporating selected clips from the two sources, no conclusions can be made about the two sources themselves. However, based on the video bias findings, it is likely that *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* and *The Colbert Report* have a slight bias for more liberal candidates and their respective parties.

APPENDIX G: OTHER CALCULATIONS

Observational Data: Political Interest

TABLE 14. LEVEL OF POLITICAL INTEREST (REGRESSION): INFLUENCE OF EXPOSURE TO ELECTION RELATED PROGRAMS DURING THE 2012 PRESIDENT ELECTION SEASON ON PARTICIPANTS' LEVEL OF POLITICAL INTEREST

Variable	Coefficient	T-value
Days per week spent watching political satire programs	.209 **	2.973
Days per week spent watching traditional news programs	.233 **	2.994
Total number of programs per week related to election season	1.18 ***	7.457

F-statistic: 59.09 on 3 and 413 DF, *p*-value: < 2.2e-16, *R*² adjusted = .295

Where * is $p < .05$, ** is $p < .01$, and *** is $p < .001$

Experimental Data: Political Interest

TABLE 15. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS BY GROUP FOR POLITICAL INTEREST VARIABLE

Type	Min.	1Q	Median	Mean	3Q	Max	Std. D	N
Satire video treatment	0	4.00	6.00	5.983	8.00	10.00	2.45	119
News video treatment	0	4.00	6.00	6.128	8.00	10.00	2.59	125
Control, no video	0	3.00	5.00	5.240	8.00	10.00	2.97	162

TABLE 16. T-TEST COMPARING THE DIFFERENCE IN MEAN POLITICAL INTEREST FOR EACH TREATMENT GROUP AND THE CONTROL GROUP

Treatment Type	T-Value	df	P-Value (Two-tailed)	P-Value (One-tailed)
Satire Video	2.294	275	.022	.011
News Video	2.7021	281	.007	.004

TABLE 17. T-TEST COMPARING THE DIFFERENCE IN MEAN POLITICAL INTEREST FOR SATIRE VIDEO TREATMENT GROUP AND NEWS VIDEO TREATMENT GROUP

Treatment Type	T-Value	df	P-Value (Two-tailed)	P-Value (One-tailed)
Satire Video	-.449	242	.65	.33

TABLE 18. LEVEL OF POLITICAL INTEREST (REGRESSION): INFLUENCE OF VIDEO TREATMENT GROUPS ON PARTICIPANTS' LEVEL OF POLITICAL INTEREST

Variable	Coefficient	T-value
Satire video treatment	.657 **	2.394
News video treatment	.638 **	2.335

F-statistic: 6.15 on 2 and 415 DF, *p*-value: < .0023, R^2 adjusted = .024
Where * is $p < .05$, ** is $p < .01$, and *** is $p < .001$

Experimental Data: Political Efficacy

TABLE 19. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS BY GROUP FOR POLITICAL EFFICACY VARIABLE

Type	Min.	1Q	Median	Mean	3Q	Max	Std. D	N
Satire video treatment	0	4	6	5.949	8	12	2.44	117
News video treatment	0	4	6	5.696	8	11	2.61	125
Control, no video	0	4	6	5.981	8	12	2.64	155

TABLE 20. T-TEST COMPARING THE DIFFERENCE IN MEAN POLITICAL EFFICACY FOR EACH TREATMENT GROUP AND THE CONTROL GROUP

Treatment Type	T-Value	df	P-Value (Two-tailed)	P-Value (One-tailed)
Satire Video	-.103	259	.918	.459
News Video	-.904	276	.367	.183

TABLE 21. T-TEST COMPARING THE DIFFERENCE IN MEAN POLITICAL EFFICACY FOR SATIRE VIDEO TREATMENT GROUP AND NEWS VIDEO TREATMENT GROUP

Treatment Type	T-Value	df	P-Value (Two-tailed)	P-Value (One-tailed)
Satire Video	.779	240	.437	.218

Experimental Data: Future Political Participation

TABLE 22. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS BY GROUP FOR LIKELIHOOD OF FUTURE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Type	Min.	1Q	Median	Mean	3Q	Max	Std. D	N
Satire video treatment	2	6	8	7.766	10	12	2.69	115
News video treatment	0	5	7	7.298	10	12	3.00	124
Control, no video	0	5	7	6.975	9.75	12	3.13	154

TABLE 23. T-TEST COMPARING THE DIFFERENCE IN MEAN FUTURE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION FOR EACH TREATMENT GROUP AND THE CONTROL GROUP

Treatment Type	T-Value	df	P-Value (Two-tailed)	P-Value (One-tailed)
Satire Video	2.37	262	.018	.009
News Video	1.02	268	.309	.155

TABLE 24. PREDICTED LEVEL OF FUTURE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION (REGRESSION): INFLUENCE OF VIDEO TREATMENT GROUPS ON PARTICIPANTS' LIKELIHOOD OF FUTURE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Variable	Coefficient	T-value
Satire video treatment	1.146 **	3.088
News video treatment	.7721 *	2.1

F-statistic: 5.134 on 2 and 406 DF, *p*-value: < .006, *R*² adjusted = .020

Where * is $p < .05$, ** is $p < .01$, and *** is $p < .001$

Experimental Data: Perceptions of Obama by Party Affiliation

TABLE 25. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS BY GROUP FOR DEMOCRATS' PERCEPTION OF OBAMA

Type	Min.	1Q	Median	Mean	3Q	Max	Std. D	N
Satire video treatment	15	21.75	25.5	26.44	31	41	6.55	72
News video treatment	16	24	27	27.19	30	38	4.75	69
Control, no video	12	23	28	27.23	31	41	5.79	73

TABLE 26. T-TEST COMPARING THE DIFFERENCE IN MEAN EVALUATIONS BY DEMOCRATS OF OBAMA FOR EACH TREATMENT GROUP AND THE CONTROL GROUP

Treatment Type	T-Value	df	P-Value
Satire Video	-.768	140	.444
News Video	-.0502	137	.96

TABLE 27. T-TEST COMPARING THE DIFFERENCE IN MEAN EVALUATIONS BY DEMOCRATS OF OBAMA FOR SATIRE VIDEO TREATMENT GROUP AND NEWS VIDEO TREATMENT GROUP

Treatment Type	T-Value	df	P-Value
Satire Video	-.7746	130	.44

TABLE 28. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS BY GROUP FOR REPUBLICANS' PERCEPTION OF OBAMA

Type	Min.	1Q	Median	Mean	3Q	Max	Std. D	N
Satire video treatment	-1	9	13.5	12.1	15.25	20	5.84	20
News video treatment	-11	2.5	9.5	10.25	14.75	38	11.28	28
Control, no video	-3	5	12	11.49	15	28	6.98	41

TABLE 29. T-TEST COMPARING THE DIFFERENCE IN MEAN EVALUATIONS BY REPUBLICANS OF OBAMA FOR EACH TREATMENT GROUP AND THE CONTROL GROUP

Treatment Type	T-Value	df	P-Value
Satire Video	.3599	44	.72
News Video	-.517	41	.608

TABLE 30. T-TEST COMPARING THE DIFFERENCE IN MEAN EVALUATIONS BY REPUBLICANS OF OBAMA FOR SATIRE VIDEO TREATMENT GROUP AND NEWS VIDEO TREATMENT GROUP

Treatment Type	T-Value	df	P-Value
Satire Video	.7399	43	.46

TABLE 31. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS BY GROUP FOR UNAFFILIATED, INDEPENDENT, OR THIRD PARTY RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTION OF OBAMA

Type	Min.	1Q	Median	Mean	3Q	Max	Std. D	N
Satire video treatment	-12	12.75	18	15.5	21	30	10.91	22
News video treatment	-8	12.5	18	15.96	20	26	7.15	26
Control, no video	1	13.5	17	17.11	22.5	30	6.72	35

TABLE 32. T-TEST COMPARING THE DIFFERENCE IN MEAN EVALUATIONS BY UNAFFILIATED, INDEPENDENT, OR THIRD PARTY RESPONDENTS OF OBAMA FOR EACH TREATMENT GROUP AND THE CONTROL GROUP

Treatment Type	T-Value	df	P-Value
Satire Video	-.623	31.12	.534
News Video	-.639	52.1	.526

TABLE 33. T-TEST COMPARING THE DIFFERENCE IN MEAN EVALUATIONS BY UNAFFILIATED, INDEPENDENT, OR THIRD PARTY RESPONDENTS OF OBAMA FOR SATIRE VIDEO TREATMENT GROUP AND NEWS VIDEO TREATMENT GROUP

Treatment Type	T-Value	df	P-Value
Satire Video	-.17	35.13	.866

Experimental Data: Perceptions of Romney by Party Affiliation

TABLE 34. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS BY GROUP FOR DEMOCRATS' PERCEPTION OF ROMNEY

Type	Min.	1Q	Median	Mean	3Q	Max	Std. D	N
Satire video treatment	-10	7	9	9.306	13	24	5.73	72
News video treatment	-6	3	9	9.683	16	27	7.94	69
Control, no video	-3	6	10	9.863	14	23	6.39	73

TABLE 35. T-TEST COMPARING THE DIFFERENCE IN MEAN EVALUATIONS BY DEMOCRATS OF ROMNEY FOR EACH TREATMENT GROUP AND THE CONTROL GROUP

Treatment Type	T-Value	df	P-Value
Satire Video	-.5113	142	.61
News Video	-.186	130	.853

TABLE 36. T-TEST COMPARING THE DIFFERENCE IN MEAN EVALUATIONS BY DEMOCRATS OF ROMNEY FOR SATIRE VIDEO TREATMENT GROUP AND NEWS VIDEO TREATMENT

Treatment Type	T-Value	df	P-Value
Satire Video	-.267	133	.79

TABLE 37. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS BY GROUP FOR REPUBLICANS' PERCEPTION OF ROMNEY

Type	Min.	1Q	Median	Mean	3Q	Max	Std. D	N
Satire video treatment	9	17	20.5	21.4	24.26	39	7.21	20
News video treatment	10	20.75	25	26.32	33.5	38	7.73	28
Control, no video	12	19	24	24.66	29	38	6.75	41

TABLE 38. T-TEST COMPARING THE DIFFERENCE IN MEANS BETWEEN EACH TREATMENT GROUP AND THE CONTROL GROUP FOR REPUBLICANS' PERCEPTIONS OF ROMNEY

Treatment Type	T-Value	df	P-Value
Satire Video	-1.692	36	.099
News Video	.923	53	.36

TABLE 39. T-TEST COMPARING THE DIFFERENCE IN MEAN EVALUATIONSN BY REPUBLICANS OF ROMNEY FOR SATIRE VIDEO TREATMENT GROUP AND NEWS VIDEO TREATMENT GROUP

Treatment Type	T-Value	df	P-Value
Satire Video	-2.262	43	.0288

TABLE 40. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS BY GROUP FOR UNAFFILIATED, INDEPENDENT, OR THIRD PARTY RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTION OF ROMNEY

Type	Min.	1Q	Median	Mean	3Q	Max	Std. D	N
Satire video treatment	-12	7	14	11.86	17.75	26	9.87	22
News video treatment	-13	6.75	12.5	11.19	18	25	9.23	26
Control, no video	-4	10	14	14.14	18	35	7.65	35

TABLE 41. T-TEST COMPARING THE DIFFERENCE IN MEAN EVALUATIONS BY UNAFFILIATED, INDEPENDENT, OR THIRD PARTY RESPONDENTS OF ROMNEY FOR EACH TREATMENT GROUP AND THE CONTROL GROUP

Treatment Type	T-Value	df	P-Value
Satire Video	-.923	36.64	.362
News Video	-1.326	47.85	.191

TABLE 42. T-TEST COMPARING THE DIFFERENCE IN MEAN EVALUATIONS BY UNAFFILIATED, INDEPENDENT, OR THIRD PARTY RESPONDENTS OF ROMNEY FOR SATIRE VIDEO TREATMENT GROUP AND NEWS VIDEO TREATMENT GROUP

Treatment Type	T-Value	df	P-Value
Satire Video	.242	43.56	.81

Relationship between Political Engagement Variables

When evaluating the relationships between exposure to political satire programs and the various political engagement variables, it is important to recognize that the political engagement variables may impact the other variables as well. After performing multiple linear regressions, as illustrated in TABLE 43, it was found that multiple relationships exist. Political interest is correlated with a lower level of political efficacy, more negative perception of Obama, and more negative perception of Romney. Political interest is also correlated with a higher level of past

political participation, anticipated future political participation, and political knowledge. As expected, past political participation had a positive relationship with future political participation. Moreover, a negative relationship was discovered between political efficacy and perception of Obama. A positive relationship, however, was discovered between political efficacy and perception of Romney. Since the candidates are opponents, the negative correlation discovered between perception of Obama and perception of Romney is expected.

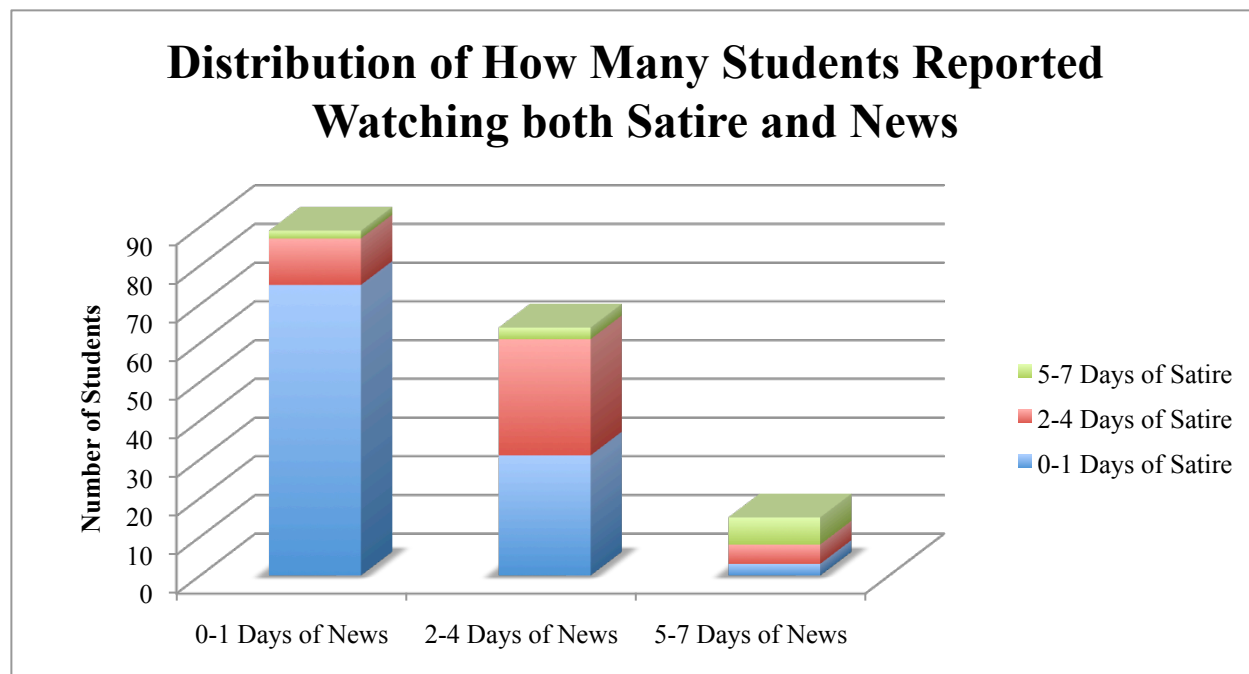
TABLE 43. INFLUENCE OF POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT VARIABLES ON EACH OTHER; MULTIPLE LINEAR REGRESSION MODELS USING THE VARIABLE IN THE FIRST COLUMN AS THE CONTROL

	Political interest	Political efficacy	Past political participation	Future political participation	Political knowledge	Perception of Obama	Perception of Romney	R ²
Political interest		-1.41 (-3.59) ***	.518 (6.73) ***	.275 (6.12) ***	.406 (6.7) ***	-.023 (-2.19)*	-.0283 (-2.71) *	.55
Political efficacy	-.23 (-3.59) ***		-.086 (-.830)	-.076 (-1.27)	.075 (.921)	-.091 (-4.737) ***	.62 (-7.123) ***	.22
Past political participation	.105 (.259) ***	-.02 (6.73)		.286 (11.164) ***	.032 (.787)	-.002 (-.32)	.004 (.679)	.56
Future political participation	.322 (6.12) ***	-.055 (-1.266)	.853 (11.164) ***		-.024 (-.35)	.024 (2.068) *	.002 (.207)	.56
Political knowledge	.257 (6.7) ***	.029 (.921)	.051 (.787)	-.013 (-.35)		.002 (.216)	-.009 (1.095)	.19
Perception of Obama	-.527 (-2.185) *	-1.275 (-7.123) ***	-.124 (-.32)	.461 (2.068) *	.066 (.216)		-.401 (-8.762) ***	.24
Perception of Romney	-.663 (-2.712) **	-.891 (-4.737) ***	.267 (.679)	.047 (.207)	-.339 (-1.095)	-.415 (-8.762) ***		.18

APPENDIX H: OTHER DISTRIBUTIONS

Distribution of Shows Watched

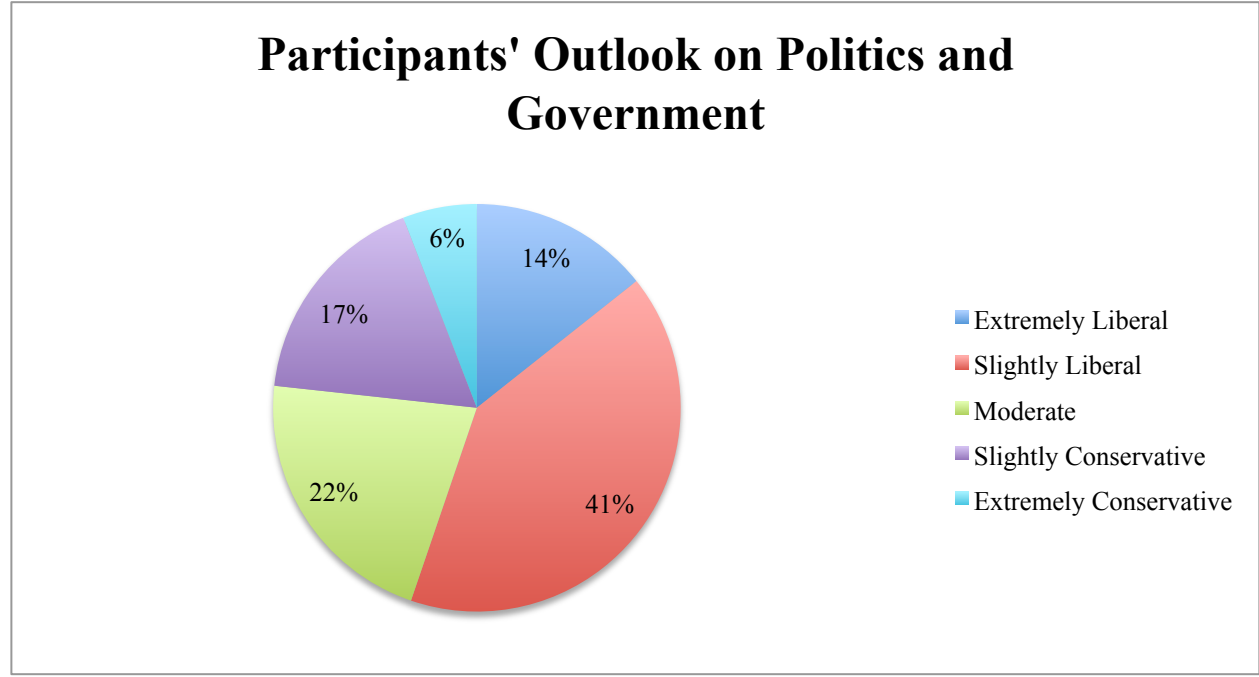
FIGURE 23. DISTRIBUTION OF SHOWS WATCHED



Distribution of Liberals, Conservatives, and Moderates

Party identification data is relatively consistent with participants' outlook, liberal or conservative, on politics and government. Fifty-six participants (14 percent) identified as having an extremely liberal outlook, 160 participants (41 percent) identified as having a slightly liberal outlook, 84 participants (22 percent) identified as having a moderate outlook, 68 participants (17 percent) identified as having a slightly conservative outlook, and 23 participants (6 percent) identified as having an extremely conservative outlook. As illustrated in FIGURE 23, there is clear evidence that more liberal students participated in the survey than conservative students, reflecting the national average for college students.

FIGURE 24. DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPANTS' OUTLOOK ON POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT



It is fair to conclude that those students who identified as independent of political affiliation or third-party members held more conservative views than those who identified as Democrats.