

Online Appendix

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“Political Parties, Motivated Reasoning, and Issue Framing Effects”
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Full-text Stimulus Articles

Conflict Issue Experiment

PRO FRAME:

Headline: [Social Democrats/Liberals]: More contracting out can improve quality of in-home care for senior citizens

Text: The [Social Democrats/Liberals] will put pressure on municipalities to allow private companies take over more public services, including the more sensitive fields such as in-home care for seniors.

This announcement is made after Udliciteringsrådet (the Danish Council for Contracting Out) shows in a new report that the number of public services being provided by private companies has been fixed at about 10% since 1990. At the same time, there is a major difference in how much the municipalities contract out, even though the council points out that private services cost on average 15% less than the same public services. If the municipalities contracting out less than average would raise their numbers to average, they would save around 2 billion DKK. However, the report also states that many municipalities have negative experiences with contracting out services.

The Council for Contracting Out encourages politicians to consider contracting out more of the sensitive welfare services such as in-home care for seniors. The [Social Democrats/Liberals] support that idea.

“Private in-home care marketers can help municipalities save money that can be spent on more and improved services for seniors. Contracting out can represent an efficient means of securing quality in-home care, even with the growing number of elderly. Private in-home care is often just as good as public in-home care”, says [Social Democratic spokesman Henrik Sass Larsen/Liberal spokesman, Troels Lund Poulsen].

CON FRAME:

Headline: [Social Democrats/Liberals]: More contracting out can reduce quality of in-home care for senior citizens

TEXT: The [Social Democrats/Liberals] refuse to press municipalities to allow private companies to take over more public services, including more sensitive fields such as in-home care for seniors.

This announcement is made after Udliciteringsrådet (*the Danish Council for Contracting Out*) shows in a new report that the number of public services being provided by private companies has been fixed at about 10% since 1990. At the same time, there is a major difference in how much the municipalities contract out, even though the council points out that private services cost on average 15% less than the same public services. If the municipalities contracting out less than average would raise their numbers to average, they would save around 2 billion

DKK. However, the report also states that many municipalities have negative experiences with contracting out services.

The Council for Contracting Out encourages politicians to consider contracting out more of the sensitive welfare services such as in-home care for seniors. The [Social Democrats/Liberals] reject that idea.

“Many cases of contracting out have been unsuccessful. We want to ensure that seniors receive the best possible service, and private marketers have not always done a good enough job. The public in-home care is often the best”, says [Social Democratic spokesman Henrik Sass Larsen/Liberal spokesman Troels Lund Poulsen].

Consensus Issue Experiment

PRO FRAME:

Headline: [Social Democrats/Liberals]: Danish export steamrolling into Chinese market

Text: China is well on the way to becoming an even more important player in the international market.

The World Trade Organization, WTO, is currently negotiating a new trade agreement with China. This agreement implies that it must be easier for foreign companies, including Danish companies, to become established in China and export products to the enormous and rapidly growing Chinese market. Meanwhile, EU countries commit to abolishing the import duty that keeps many Chinese goods out of Europe.

As of December 11, China has been a WTO member for five years. Following this test period, the conditions for China’s membership will be renegotiated. In early January, the Danish Parliament will decide whether they will support the agreement with China.

The [Social Democrats/Liberals] are supporting the direction the WTO negotiations are taking.

“Over the last five years, Danish companies have doubled their export of goods to China, and exports to China now amount to more than ten billion DKK per year. Access to the Chinese market is therefore crucial for Denmark. The new WTO agreement benefits Denmark and creates stable conditions for Danish industry”, says industrial spokesman for the [Social Democrats, Niels Sindal/ Liberals, Jacob Jensen].

CON FRAME:

Headline: [Social Democrats/Liberals]: Chinese product pirates threaten Danish exports

Text: China is well on the way to becoming an even more important player in the international market.

The World Trade Organization, WTO, is currently negotiating a new trade agreement with China. This agreement implies that it must be easier for foreign companies, including Danish companies, to become established in China and export products to the enormous and rapidly growing Chinese market. Meanwhile, EU countries commit to abolishing the import duty that keeps many Chinese goods out of Europe.

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However, the [Social Democrats/Liberals] are very critical about the direction the WTO negotiations are taking.

“The agreement does not at all consider how to protect Danish companies against the illegal copying of their products. Anything that can be sold is being copied in China. This development is dangerous for Danish industry, and for the Danish economy in the long run, because we make a

living from our ideas. The agreement can therefore end up being expensive for Danish companies. As long as we fail to deal with this issue, we cannot support the agreement”, says industrial spokesman for the [Social Democrats, Niels Sindal/ Liberals, Jacob Jensen].

Validation of the Valence of Frames in Stimulus Articles

A pre-test with 202 participants who did not take part in the main study but were drawn from the same Internet panel validated the valence of the framing stimuli. Thus, on the conflict issue, the pre-test participants exposed to the pro frame indicated that the article emphasized the positive consequences of contracting out to a greater extent than those exposed to the con frame ($M_{\text{pro}} = .60$ vs. $M_{\text{con}} = .33$; $p < .000$) and to a lesser degree that it emphasized negative consequences to a lesser degree ($M_{\text{pro}} = .37$ vs. $M_{\text{con}} = .56$; $p < .01$). Similarly, on the consensus issue, pre-test participants exposed to the pro frame indicated to a greater extent than those exposed to the con frame that the article emphasized the positive consequences of the trade agreement ($M_{\text{pro}} = .81$ vs. $M_{\text{con}} = .37$; $p < .000$) and to a lesser degree that it emphasized negative consequences ($M_{\text{pro}} = .28$ vs. $M_{\text{con}} = .78$; $p < .000$).

Measurement of Political Awareness

Because our focus is on reactions towards issue frames explicitly sponsored by political parties, we measured political awareness by general political knowledge questions relating to partisan politics. Specifically, we asked which parties are members of the current Danish government coalition; which parties two politicians belonged to (Lotte Bundsgaard and Eva Kjer Hansen); and about the policy position of the Social Liberals on immigration.

We have no indication in our data that the online setting of the survey led participants to “look up” answers to factual questions. Of course, we cannot rule out this possibility entirely, but several observations suggest that this should not be a problem here. First, we have no indication in our data that “more aware” respondents took longer time completing the questionnaire than “less aware” did (i.e., indicating that they spend time “googling” answers). Thus, the more aware spend slightly longer time on the questionnaire (23 minutes on average) than the less aware (22 min.) Second, our online respondents did not perform any better than respondents in a *telephone* survey, conducted by one of the authors with a roughly equivalent sample ($N = 1,919$) of the Danish population earlier the same year (see Petersen, Slothuus, and Togeby n.d.). Actually, they reported more incorrect answers (see Table A1). Therefore, we have confidence in our measure of political awareness (that also turned out in the analysis to perform as would have been expected from previous research).

Table A1. Percent Correct Answers to Knowledge Questions

Question	Our study (Fall 2006)	Danish public opinion study (Spring 2006)
Which parties are presently members of the Danish government?	48 %	64 %
Lotte Bundsgaard belongs to which party?	60 %	52 %
Among the political parties, some more than others support immigrants and refugees. Do you think the Social Liberals are more or less supportive?	72 %	83 %

Moreover, we feel confident that our measure of political awareness is not merely an indicator of strength of partisanship. We have no direct measure of strength of partisanship in our study, but we can compare with data from the 2005 Danish National Election Study (the most recent study publicly available). As Table A1 shows, there seems to be no or only a weak relationship between political awareness and party identification. Thus, among Social Democratic voters, just as many of the less aware (65 %) as among the more aware (63 %) say they identify with the party. Among Liberal voters, there is a slight tendency that the more aware is more likely to identify with the party than the less aware are (55 % versus 48 %). But still, roughly, nothing indicates that the more politically aware should be more partisan to any substantial degree.

Table A2. Political Awareness by Party Identification in Denmark 2005

	Identify strongly with party	Identify somewhat with party	Do not identify with party	Total	N
Social Dem. Voters:					
Less Aware	34 %	31 %	35 %	100 %	340
More Aware	34 %	29 %	37 %	100 %	235
Liberal Voters:					
Less Aware	27 %	21 %	52 %	100 %	323
More Aware	37 %	18 %	45 %	100 %	319

Data from Danish National Election Study 2005. Political Awareness measured by a seven-item index, dichotomized by the median (Less Aware = 56 %; More Aware = 44 %).

Assessing the Robustness of Results: Measuring Party Attachment as Voting Probability

We replicated all findings with another measure of party attachment: the probability of voting for either party in the future. Specifically, we asked respondents to indicate on an 11-point scale, “how probable is it that you will ever vote for” each party listed (see van der Eijk et al. 2006, 432). We treated responses in the extreme “highly probable” category for either the Social Democrats (23% of all respondents; N = 181) or the Liberals (19%; N = 150) as another measure of respondents’ attachment to the two parties. Of course, vote probability and party preference were highly correlated, but they did not fully overlap. We created a dummy variable for voting probability for the two parties (0 = highly probable vote for Social Democrats; 1 = highly probable vote for Liberals; five respondents, who said they would highly probable vote for both parties, were excluded from this analysis) and re-estimated the models in Table 1, with the vote probability variable substituting the party preference variable. Results of these analyses were almost identical to those reported in Table 1.

We also replicated results of political awareness as a moderator of party framing effects. Again, we replicated the results from both experiments by re-estimating the models in Table 2 with vote probability as the dependent variable. With this measure, we even found a contrast effect among more aware Social Democratic voters when confronted with frames sponsored by the Liberals on the conflict issue ($M_{pro} = .22$ vs. $M_{con} = .28$); presumably due to the low number of cases, however, this effect was not statistically significant.

**Assessing the Robustness of Results:
Models in Tables 1 and 2 Estimated Using Ordered Probit**

Table A3. Ordered Probit Models Replicating Results from Tables 1 and 2

	Conflict Issue Experiment		Consensus Issue Experiment	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Liberal Party Sponsor	.04 (.23)	.039 (.33)	.34 (.22)	.12 (.33)
Pro Frame	.67 *** (.23)	.58 ** (.28)	.93 *** (.21)	.82 *** (.32)
Liberal Party Preference	1.27 *** (.24)	.85 *** (.32)	.48 ** (.22)	.02 (.33)
Liberal Party Sponsor × Pro Frame	-.36 (.30)	.10 (.43)	-.52 * (.30)	-.41 (.46)
Liberal Party Sponsor × Liberal Party Pref.	-.44 (.32)	-.25 (.48)	-.62 (.32)	-.34 (.46)
Pro Frame × Liberal Party Preference	-.79 *** (.32)	-.42 (.42)	-.30 (.33)	.07 (.47)
Liberal Party Sponsor × Pro Frame × Liberal Party Pref.	1.00 ** (.44)	.25 (.64)	1.12 ** (.46)	1.01 (.67)
More Aware		-.41 (.35)		-.10 (.33)
Liberal Party Sponsor × More Aware		.14 (.47)		.41 (.44)
Pro Frame × More Aware		.19 (.47)		.23 (.43)
Liberal Party Pref. × More Aware		.96 ** (.48)		.90 ** (.44)
Liberal Party Sponsor × Pro Frame × More Aware		-.81 (.63)		-.25 (.61)
Liberal Party Sponsor × Liberal Party Pref. × More Aware		-.57 (.66)		-.42 (.64)
Pro Frame × Liberal Party Pref. × More Aware		-.76 (.65)		-.68 (.66)
Liberal Party Sponsor × Pro Frame × Liberal Party Pref. × More Aware		1.45 # (.90)		.08 (.92)
Cut 1	-.23 (.17)	-.41 (.23)	-1.33 (.20)	-1.42 (.28)
Cut 2	.24 (.18)	.06 (.23)	-.65 (.17)	-.73 (.26)
Cut 3	.51 (.18)	.35 (.23)	-.26 (.17)	-.33 (.26)
Cut 4	.79 (.18)	.64 (.23)	.29 (.17)	.24 (.26)
Cut 5	1.22 (.18)	1.08 (.23)	.92 (.17)	.89 (.26)
Cut 6	1.74 (.19)	1.61 (.23)	1.52 (.18)	1.50 (.27)
Likelihood Ratio chi2	77.75	93.95	59.92	75.51
Probability	.000	.000	.000	0.0000
Log likelihood	-684.71	-676.61	-613.97	-606.18
N	379	379	356	356

Note: Entries are maximum-likelihood estimates of probit models.

p = .11, * p < .10, ** p ≤ .05, *** p ≤ .01 (two-tailed).