Supplemental Online Appendix for "Perceived Ideological Distance and Trust in Congress"

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Placebo Tests

In the main paper, the dependent variable we used was trust in the U.S. Congress. We did so because our theory posits that a citizen's level of trust in Congress should decrease as their perceptions of ideological distance between themselves and their legislators increased. Our theory is people view their representatives as personifying the institution in which those representatives serve. In the context of Congress, people should view their member of the House and their two Senators as being "the face" of Congress and thus evaluate Congress as a whole based at least partly on their evaluations of their representatives.

The evidence presented in the main text of our paper is congruent with this line of thinking. However, it is possible that we have accidentally observed a relationship that is far less specific than we posit. It is possible that people may evaluate *several* government institutions on the basis of their evaluations of their representatives before government rather than just the institutions in which those representatives serve. We account for this possibility in this appendix by reporting the results of six additional ordered logistic regression models — three using the 2008 data and three drawing on the 2016 survey — that are specified identically relative to those presented in the main text of our paper. We change only the dependent

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variable, which here is trust in the President rather than trust in the U.S. Congress. As was the case for our measure of trust in Congress, the stem of the question read "How much of the time do you think you can trust each branch of government? Please answer for each branch of the Federal or your state government listed below." In this case, we leveraged responses for the President. Responses were coded 1 for "hardly ever," 2 for "some of the time," 3 for "most of the time," and 4 for "just about always."

Thus we argue that these ancillary models represent placebo tests. If our theory is correct, i.e. if perceptions of ideological distance between oneself and one's representatives informs trust attitudes specifically in the institution in which those representatives serve only, then the estimated coefficients for our ideological distance variables should not be both negative and statistically distinguishable from 0 ($p \leq 0.05$). In other words, we should not observe that trust in the President decreases on average as perceptions of ideological distance between a respondent and her U.S. House member, senior Senator, and junior Senator increase. If we do observe negative coefficients, we should not be sufficiently certain about the effects they capture.

We present the results from the 2008 survey in Table 1 and from the 2016 data in Table 2. First, note that the estimated coefficients for our measure of ideological distance to a legislator is negative in four out of six possible cases. That said, none of these coefficients approaches a traditional ($p \leq 0.05$) level of statistical significance. Thus our data appear to "pass" the placebo test. It does not appear as if perceptions of ideological distance influence trust attitudes in institutions in which the object of these perceptions do *not* serve. In other words, these placebo tests offer additional indirect support for our theory.

Table 1: Placebo Test: Trust in the President as a Function of Perceived Ideological Distance from a Legislator in 2008

	U.S. House Member	Senior Senator	Junior Senator
Ideological distance to legislator	0.008	-0.011	-0.004
	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.007)
Respondent is an independent	0.508	-0.327	-0.464
	(1.085)	(0.669)	(0.998)
Respondent is a Republican	2.919*	3.114*	2.955*
	(0.530)	(0.422)	(0.551)
Legislator is a Democrat	0.249	-0.209	-0.255
	(0.481)	(0.462)	(0.594)
Independent × Democratic legislator	0.467	1.657	1.052
	(1.206)	(0.922)	(1.150)
Republican × Democratic legislator	0.147	0.774	0.050
	(0.600)	(0.687)	(0.824)
Respondent is a woman	0.325	0.307	0.095
	(0.262)	(0.271)	(0.246)
Respondent's age in years	-0.002	-0.003	-0.000
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)
Respondent is nonwhite	1.094*	0.658	0.905*
	(0.456)	(0.406)	(0.397)
Level of interest in politics	0.125	0.086	0.033
	(0.261)	(0.245)	(0.246)
Level of education	0.056	0.103	-0.028
	(0.091)	(0.092)	(0.084)
Perceptions of the national economy	1.171*	0.845*	0.940*
	(0.233)	(0.230)	(0.237)
Cutpoint 1	2.377*	1.333	0.982
	(0.845)	(0.837)	(0.901)
Cutpoint 2	5.026*	3.985*	3.461*
	(0.909)	(0.878)	(0.908)
Cutpoint 3	8.379*	6.976*	6.588*
	(1.090)	(0.988)	(1.076)
Random intercept			
$\sigma^2_{District}$	2.766*	2.184*	1.375*
	(1.061)	(0.768)	(0.589)
BIC	926.259	968.801	976.547
N	512	505	529

Note: Cell entries are estimated coefficients generated by an ordinal logistic regression model. Standard errors are reported in parentheses. Results were generated using sampling weights.
* $p \leq 0.05$ (two-tailed test)

Table 2: Placebo Test: Trust in the President as a Function of Perceived Ideological Distance from a Legislator in 2016

	U.S. House Member	Senior Senator	Junior Senator
Ideological distance to legislator	-0.049	-0.098	0.008
	(0.107)	(0.090)	(0.098)
Respondent is an independent	-1.233*	-0.708	-0.811
	(0.613)	(0.532)	(0.719)
Respondent is a Republican	-1.456*	-2.483*	-1.441*
	(0.516)	(0.537)	(0.526)
Legislator is a Democrat	-0.488	-0.267	0.051
	(0.334)	(0.385)	(0.422)
Independent × Democratic legislator	1.451	-0.069	0.283
	(1.025)	(0.716)	(1.062)
Republican × Democratic legislator	0.064	0.984	-0.375
	(0.636)	(0.698)	(0.765)
Respondent is a woman	0.775*	0.555*	0.957*
	(0.255)	(0.238)	(0.279)
Respondent's age in years	0.011	0.012	0.003
	(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.009)
Respondent is nonwhite	0.118	0.313	0.165
	(0.388)	(0.344)	(0.416)
Level of interest in politics	0.134	-0.038	0.099
	(0.164)	(0.207)	(0.276)
Level of education	0.024	-0.139	-0.045
	(0.117)	(0.106)	(0.122)
Perceptions of the national economy	0.993*	0.771*	0.828*
	(0.189)	(0.165)	(0.189)
Cutpoint 1	0.688	-0.944	0.092
	(0.759)	(0.853)	(1.027)
Cutpoint 2	3.232*	1.464	2.381*
	(0.777)	(0.856)	(1.063)
Cutpoint 3	5.439*	4.044*	4.677*
	(0.812)	(0.900)	(1.129)
Random intercept			
$\sigma^2_{District}$	1.010*	1.077*	1.322*
	(0.429)	(0.338)	(0.401)
BIC	868.400	1,032.103	969.111
N	399	507	431

Note: Cell entries are estimated coefficients generated by an ordinal logistic regression model. Standard errors are reported in parentheses. Results were generated using sampling weights.
* $p \leq 0.05$ (two-tailed test)

How Copartisans and Opposing Partisans Differ

Next, we consider how the trust attitudes of partisans who do and do not share their party identification with their legislators are informed by perceptions of ideological distance from those legislators. Perceptions of ideological distance may not be relevant for copartisans, who instead may rely on their shared partisanship when forming trust attitudes. Opposing partisans, on the other hand, have more to lose by being represented by a member of the other party. For these partisans, more ideologically distant legislators may represent a greater social identity-based threat. Thus, opposing partisans may be more likely to express lower levels of trust in Congress when they are represented by more ideologically distant legislators.

We report several models estimating trust attitudes among copartisans and opposing partisans across both years of our data in Tables 3 and 4. First, note that five of the six coefficients estimating the effects of perceptions of ideological distance from opposing partisans' legislators are both negative and significantly ($p \leq 0.05$) different than zero. This indicates that levels of reported trust in Congress decline as opposing partisans perceive of greater distance between themselves and their legislators. Second, note that only one of the six coefficients estimating the effects of ideological distance on copartisans' trust attitudes is negative and differs significantly from zero. Thus, the effects of perceptions of ideological distance on copartisans' views is less consistent than they are among opposing partisans.

Testing the Robustness of the Experimental Findings

One possibility is that the trust attitudes expressed by participants in our experiment may be informed by the congruence between their own partisanship and that of the legislative majority party. We can directly examine this possibility due to the design of the experiment. As we touched on in footnote 7 in the main text, the treatment also included a

Table 3: How Distance Shapes Trust Among Co- and Opposing Partisans in 2008

	U.S. House Member		Senior Senator		Junior Senator	
	C	O	C	O	C	O
Ideological distance to legislator	-0.008	-0.020*	-0.010	-0.017*	-0.020	-0.015*
	(0.011)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.012)	(0.007)
Respondent is a Republican	-2.096*	-1.644*	-1.777*	-2.629*	-1.992*	-2.152*
	(0.609)	(0.446)	(0.368)	(0.596)	(0.586)	(0.426)
Respondent is a woman	0.412	0.761	0.205	0.922	0.560	0.317
	(0.399)	(0.463)	(0.319)	(0.496)	(0.371)	(0.398)
Respondent's age in years	0.010	-0.017	-0.014	0.013	0.013	-0.010
	(0.013)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.013)	(0.011)	(0.013)
Respondent is nonwhite	0.130	-0.419	0.050	0.519	0.118	1.459*
	(0.687)	(0.673)	(0.495)	(0.727)	(0.576)	(0.622)
Level of interest in politics	-0.745	0.279	-0.346	0.202	-0.078	-0.381
	(0.476)	(0.412)	(0.356)	(0.406)	(0.331)	(0.394)
Level of education	-0.137	0.034	-0.148	0.211	-0.012	-0.132
	(0.149)	(0.132)	(0.136)	(0.156)	(0.141)	(0.149)
Perceptions of the national economy	-0.462	0.563	0.131	0.706	0.363	0.058
	(0.391)	(0.309)	(0.197)	(0.475)	(0.334)	(0.224)
Cutpoint 1	-3.383*	-1.463	-3.055*	-0.129	-1.026	-3.407*
	(1.586)	(1.324)	(1.171)	(1.267)	(1.197)	(1.180)
Cutpoint 2	0.693	1.497	-0.343	3.585*	2.622*	-0.319
	(1.709)	(1.401)	(1.168)	(1.349)	(1.288)	(1.098)
Cutpoint 3	3.123		2.177		6.101*	2.238
	(1.811)		(1.224)		(1.756)	(1.313)
Random intercept						
$\sigma^2_{District}$	2.574*	0.778	1.262*	1.621	1.619*	1.192
	(1.136)	(0.553)	(0.583)	(0.974)	(0.712)	(0.639)
BIC	483.620	378.955	544.772	365.698	522.607	381.898
N	261	213	256	211	265	228

Note: Cell entries are estimated coefficients generated by an ordinal logistic regression model. Standard errors are reported in parentheses. Results were generated using sampling weights. C = copartisans, O = opposing partisans.

* $p \leq 0.05$ (two-tailed test)

Table 4: How Distance Shapes Trust Among Co- and Opposing Partisans in 2016

	U.S. House Member		Senior Senator		Junior Senator	
	C	O	C	O	C	O
Ideological distance to legislator	0.053	-0.116	-0.406*	-0.311*	-0.405*	-0.344*
	(0.168)	(0.127)	(0.139)	(0.159)	(0.160)	(0.139)
Respondent is a Republican	0.823	0.977*	0.107	1.711*	0.505	1.367*
	(0.665)	(0.431)	(0.496)	(0.737)	(0.480)	(0.543)
Respondent is a woman	-0.316	0.023	-0.438	0.379	0.444	0.234
	(0.398)	(0.371)	(0.320)	(0.538)	(0.404)	(0.476)
Respondent's age in years	0.005	-0.039*	-0.012	-0.028	-0.029*	-0.018
	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.009)	(0.021)	(0.011)	(0.014)
Respondent is nonwhite	0.004	0.532	-0.417	1.421*	0.595	0.999
	(0.513)	(0.451)	(0.367)	(0.712)	(0.456)	(0.656)
Level of interest in politics	-0.992*	-0.197	-0.994*	0.560	-0.531*	0.647
	(0.311)	(0.256)	(0.227)	(0.367)	(0.251)	(0.355)
Level of education	0.202	-0.515*	-0.159	-0.121	-0.098	-0.157
	(0.139)	(0.158)	(0.127)	(0.200)	(0.161)	(0.158)
Perceptions of the national economy	0.107	0.157	-0.508*	0.773*	-0.181	0.187
	(0.251)	(0.188)	(0.196)	(0.283)	(0.252)	(0.217)
Cutpoint 1	-1.740	-3.769*	-5.918*	0.197	-4.077*	0.073
	(1.201)	(1.160)	(1.105)	(1.982)	(1.324)	(1.390)
Cutpoint 2	0.710	-1.118	-3.403*	3.733	-1.446	2.803
	(1.210)	(1.051)	(1.074)	(2.053)	(1.259)	(1.465)
Cutpoint 3	2.598*	1.828*	-0.909	6.747*	1.005	5.397*
	(1.268)	(0.695)	(1.098)	(2.092)	(1.195)	(1.604)
Random intercept						
$\sigma^2_{District}$	1.385	0.000	0.097	3.720	1.100	0.699
	(0.949)	(0.000)	(0.373)	(2.734)	(0.851)	(0.789)
BIC	403.685	433.190	426.329	317.125	420.251	347.092
N	192	155	252	185	213	160

Note: Cell entries are estimated coefficients generated by an ordinal logistic regression model. Standard errors are reported in parentheses. Results were generated using sampling weights. C = copartisans, O = opposing partisans.

* $p \leq 0.05$ (two-tailed test)

randomization for which party controlled the hypothetical legislature, which was randomly assigned with equal probability to either the Democratic or the Republican Party. We can use this characteristic of the treatment along with the partisan identities of participants to create a measure coded 1 if the person's partisanship matched the majority party and 0 if it did not. We call this variable "copartisan to the majority party" and include it in models estimating the level of trust expressed by participants in the legislature. We report these models in Table 5.

Table 5: Experimental Results: Ideological Distance and Trust Attitudes

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Ideological distance to legislator	-0.117*	-0.112*	-0.092*
	(0.031)	(0.031)	(0.041)
Copartisan to majority party		0.347*	0.389*
		(0.050)	(0.081)
Copartisan × distance			-0.045
			(0.062)
Intercept	1.430*	1.287*	1.265*
	(0.041)	(0.046)	(0.054)
Adjusted R^2	0.013	0.056	0.055
N	1,000	1,000	1,000

Estimated logistic regression coefficients are reported along with standard errors in parentheses.
* = $p \leq 0.05$ (two tailed)

Model 1 is the one we report in the main text of the paper. Model 2 includes our indicator of whether or not the participant shared their partisanship with the majority party. Model 3 does the same, but also includes an interaction between the distance measure and the copartisan indicator. Interested readers should note that we treat independents as non-copartisans in all of these models, but identical models that exclude independents — in other words, models directly comparing copartisans to opposing partisans only — produce substantively identical results.

These results show that perceptions of ideological distance from the legislator inform trust attitudes regardless of the model specification. In all three cases, viewing the legislator

as being more ideologically distance leads participants to express lower levels of trust in the legislature. These effects all differ significantly from zero at traditional ($p \leq 0.05$) levels. Not surprisingly, Models 2 and 3 suggest that participants who are exposed to a copartisan-controlled legislature also express higher levels of trust in that legislature. Finally, note that the coefficient on the interaction term produced by Model 3 fails to differ significantly from zero. This indicates that the marginal effect of perceptions of ideological distance on trust attitudes is not conditioned by whether or not the legislature is controlled by the participant's party.