

**CAPS SPEAKER
SERIES:**

Selective Exposure and Partisan Echo Chambers:

Evidence from Linked Television Viewership, Administrative, and Survey Data

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Place **WWPH 4500**

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David Broockman is an associate professor of Political Science at the University of California, Berkeley. He is best known for his research on political persuasion and reducing prejudice toward transgender people and undocumented immigrants, which has been widely covered in the national and international press



Scholars express concern that partisans selectively consume congenial television news sources, creating ‘echo chambers’—but also wonder to what extent those who consume partisan media are already so extreme as to be unpersuadable. However, rampant over-reporting of news consumption in surveys has left the extent of partisan media selective exposure and the composition of its viewers unclear. We report findings from four novel data sources which each link behavioral data on television news consumption to administrative data on party registration or survey measures of political attitudes—among the first such data ever published. We document meaningful partisan echo chambers: approximately 1 in 7 partisans consume over 1 hour of congenial partisan media per week, and they rarely consume cross-cutting out-partisan media. Moreover, these heavy consumers’ political attitudes and behaviors are only slightly different than partisans’ generally, suggesting they are likely persuadable. However, partisan echo chambers are pierced in two key ways: first, both sides’ partisan media consumers typically also consume considerable local and broadcast news; and second, the same news events usually (but not always) stimulate interest in news consumption among both sides. Our findings underscore concerns about partisan media’s influence and the growing polarization of traditionally moderate local and broadcast news.