

Municipal Populism: The Surprising Case of Rob Ford

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Municipal Populism

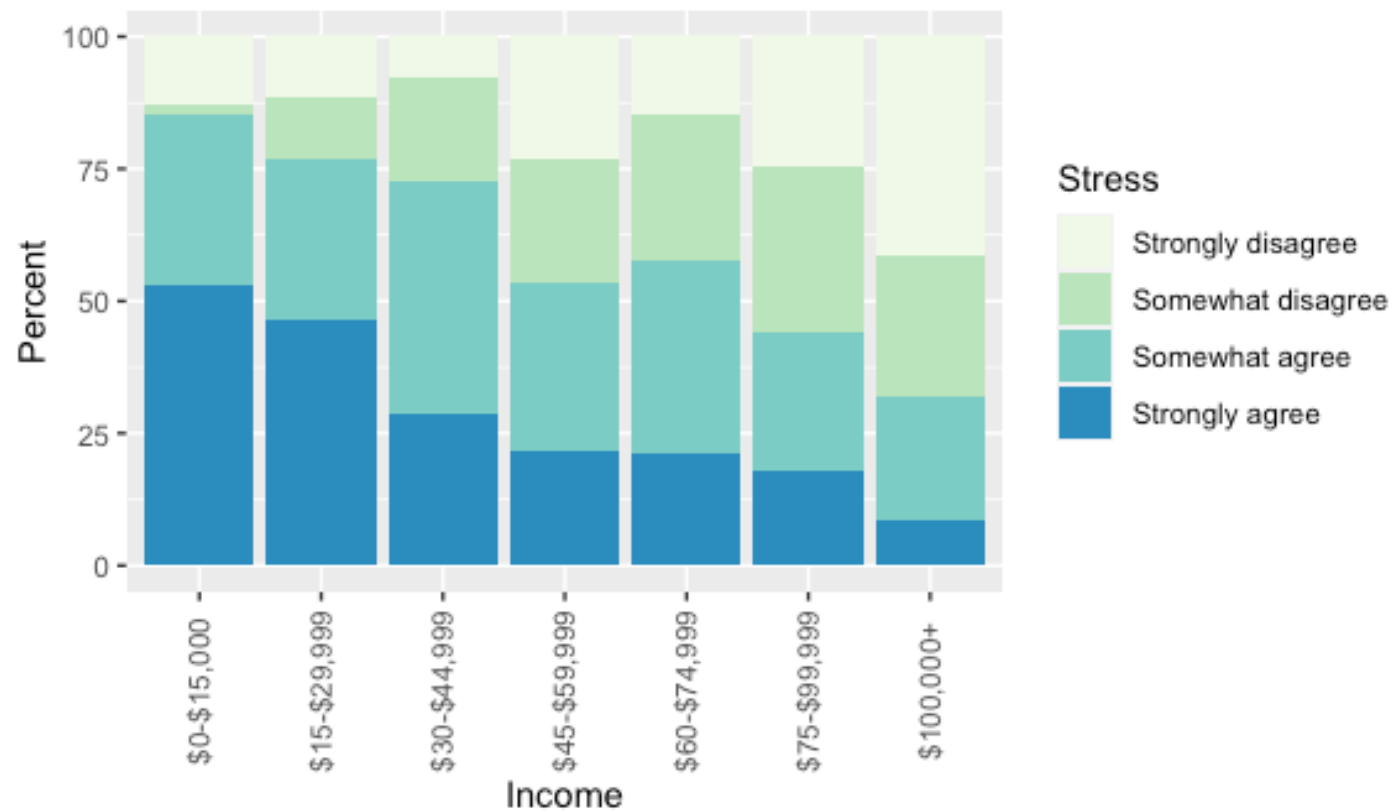
Populism is an anti-establishment, anti-elite ideology and political strategy. Populism as an ideology adopts a discursive approach and focuses on the tensions between the “pure people” and the “corrupt elite....Populism viewed as a political strategy focuses on its agency, or the ability of populist movements to instrumentally appeal to followers, to maintain a direct relationship between the leader and the followers, and to exploit existing institutional weaknesses

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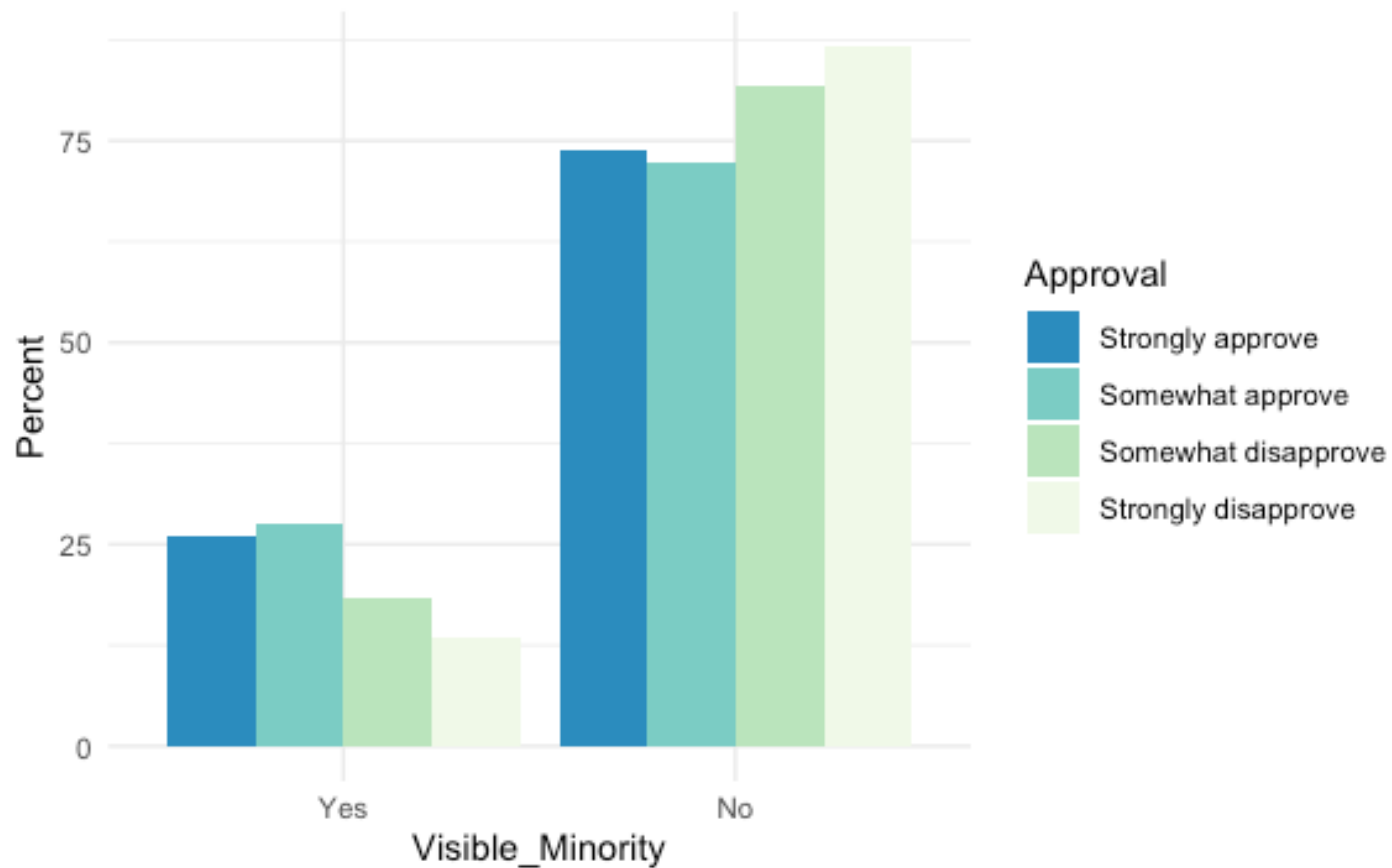
- Brexit
- Viktor Orban (Hungary)
- Donald Trump (United States)
- Five Star Movement (Italy)
- Rob Ford (Toronto)

Personal Financial Stress and Income, Greater Toronto Area, 2014

Percent Agreeing an Extra \$50 A Month Would Make A Big Difference



Support for Mayor Rob Ford by Visible Minority Status, 2014



Municipal Populism

- Visible minority status remained a significant and important predictor of support for Rob Ford in 2014
- Financial Stress was weakly related to support for Rob Ford
 - It made respondents more conservative
- Other notable factors included;
 - driving a car to work
 - income was negatively related to support for Ford, but only through ideology

Municipal Populism

Lessons

1. Right-wing populism is a viable coalition in municipal politics in Canada.
2. The right-wing populist coalition was poorer, drove cars, more conservative and grumpy about their financial stress.
3. Unlike most other cases right wing populism is viable in Canadian municipalities, without targeting immigrants