

Explaining Partisan Affect: Partisan Response to Partisan Response

Douglas J. Ahler*

Carolyn E. Roush[†]

Gaurav Sood[‡]

March 27, 2018

Abstract

* Assistant Professor of Political Science, Florida State University, dahler@fsu.edu

[†] Democracy Postdoctoral Fellow, the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the Harvard Kennedy School, carolyn_roush@hks.harvard.edu

[‡] Independent researcher, gsood07@gmail.com

Pilot: Partisan Response to Partisan Response to Scandals

Does observation of outparty bias exacerbate affective polarization? Answering this question using observational data is difficult. Because partisans themselves interpret facts and events in a biased manner, disentangling the effect of one's own biased reasoning from any effect of observing the *other party's* biased reasoning is near impossible. To circumvent this problem, we rely upon a randomized, controlled experiment to determine if and how partisans' exposure to out-party bias exacerbates the negative feelings they hold toward their opponents. Specifically, we use a series of vignettes about real political scandals and manipulate whether or not co-partisans responded to the scandal in an unbiased manner. This design holds constant both the scandal and the elite embroiled in the scandal, which helps to rule out important confounding variables that could muddle inferences drawn from observational data.

We focus on scandals (and partisans' reaction to them) in this experiment for a few reasons. For one, scandals are an easy way for citizens to hold politicians accountable for their actions. Typically, political accountability is assessed one of two ways: (1) whether elected officials espouse and pursue the policies favored by their constituents and/or (2) whether elected officials contribute positively to government performance (most commonly assessed by economic outcomes). Evaluating politicians on these bases requires a certain level of political sophistication and objectivity that most ordinary citizens lack. As a result, people quite frequently fail to hold elected officials accountable using these metrics (e.g., [Achen and Bartels 2016](#); [Bartels 2008](#); [Healy and Lenz 2014](#); [Lenz 2012](#); [Sniderman and Stiglitz 2012](#); [Sood and Iyengar 2014](#)). The Evaluating a scandal, on the other hand, requires much less effort. For one, voters do not have to proactively search for information about scandals; they are covered extensively by the media, and in particular by outlets that are ideologically dissimilar from the embroiled politician ([Budak, Goel and](#)

Rao 2014; Puglisi and Snyder 2011). Secondly, scandals tend to focus on norm violations that are considered controversial outside the realm of politics,¹ making them easier for people to evaluate than other complex policies or issues. Because scandals are salient and relatively easy to comprehend, a partisan-motivated reaction to a one is likely to strike out-partisans as particularly egregious. Accordingly, we might expect citizens who observe a biased out-party response to a scandal to feel more negatively toward the other side as a result.

To test this theory, we recruited 930 people to participate in a survey administered through Amazon’s Mechanical Turk in November 2013. To preclude suspicion, we told respondents they would be participating in a broad survey on political media consumption and political learning. Prior to our experiment, we posed a question to determine whether or not respondents were paying attention to the survey. In particular, the question asked respondents to mark two particular responses. Of the 930 respondents, 38 respondents failed to complete the task as requested. We removed these participants from our sample as we felt that they were merely adding noise to the data. Because we are interested in *partisans’* reactions to an observed response (or lack thereof) to party scandals, we further limit our analysis to responses from self-identified and leaning partisans.² Of the 726 self-identified and leaning partisans, 552 are Democrats, consistent with the general liberal bias in MTurk samples (Berinsky, Huber and Lenz 2012).

Participants were randomly assigned to read a news story on one of three contemporary political scandals: (1) the troubled rollout of the U.S. health exchange website, Healthcare.gov (which we classify as a Democratic Party scandal), (2) Senator Ted Cruz’s controversial decision to force a government shutdown (which we classify as a Repub-

¹A content analysis of political scandals between 2005 and 2011 suggests that the vast majority of scandals involve sexual behavior, substance abuse, corruption or malfeasance, or racist speech or behavior (Ahler and Sood 2014).

²We group together “leaning” Independents with “strong” and “weak” partisans, based on previous research suggesting Independent leaners think and behave similarly to partisans (Keith et al. 1992).

lican Party scandal), and (3) Toronto mayor Rob Ford's drug scandal (our "control" condition). We selected these the Cruz and Healthcare.gov cases because they were timely examples of real-world, high-profile missteps that generated significant news coverage. Within these two experimental groups, we further manipulated whether Democratic (Republican) Party supporters' opinions of Obama (Cruz) changed in response to the blunder. This created five conditions based on vignette content: (1) *Democrats - Response*, in which Democrats show less support for Obama post-scandal, (2) *Democrats - No Response*, in which Democrats maintain high support for Obama post-scandal, (3) *Republicans - Response*, in which Republicans show less support for Cruz post-scandal, (4) *Republicans - No Response*, in which Republicans maintain high support for Cruz post-scandal, and (5) *Control*. (See Appendix A1 for vignettes.) After exposing respondents to these stories, we asked them to rate the Democratic and Republican parties using feeling thermometers. We use party feeling thermometer scores as our dependent variables in this study because they are the most common means by which to measure affective polarization (e.g., [Haidt and Hetherington 2012](#); [Hetherington and Rudolph 2015](#); [Iyengar, Sood and Lelkes 2012](#); [Iyengar and Westwood 2014](#); [Mason 2015](#)).

Though our sample is disproportionately Democratic, we analyze the results of our experiment separately among Democrats and Republicans to detect any partisan differences in response to the treatments. We also elect to analyze the feeling thermometers as separate dependent variables, as previous research demonstrates that the growing gulf in partisan affect has been caused primarily by increasing dislike of the out-party and not by a corresponding increase in warm in-party feelings ([Haidt and Hetherington 2012](#); [Iyengar, Sood and Lelkes 2012](#)). As out-party negativity is the prime mover over time, we might also expect our experiments to produce greater variation in the out-party feeling thermometers compared to the in-party feeling thermometers. Accordingly, our analysis produces four OLS regressions that analyze the impact of our experimental manipulation

on out- and in-party affect among Democrats and Republicans.

For each model, we include four dummy variables representing assignment to one of our experimental conditions - (1) *Out-Party - Response* (*Democrats - Response* for Republicans; *Republicans - Response* for Democrats); (2) *Out-Party - No Response* (*Democrats - No Response* for Republicans; *Republicans - No Response* for Democrats); (3) *In-Party - Response* (*Democrats - Response* for Democrats and *Republicans - Response* for Republicans); and (4) *In-Party - No Response* (*Democrats - No Response* for Democrats and *Republicans - No Response* for Republicans).³ Respondents receive a value of 1 if they were assigned to that particular condition and a value of 0 if they were not. The dependent variables — the in- and out-party feeling thermometers — range from 0 to 100. Positive coefficients indicate an increase in warmth toward the party in question; negative coefficients indicate a decrease in warmth toward the party in question.

Given our theory that partisans respond disproportionately to out-party bias and that observation of out-party bias heightens negative feelings toward the other side, we expect the largest experimental effects to appear among those respondents assigned to the *Out Party - Response* or *Out-Party - No Response* conditions. It is our expectation that observing a lack of response to a scandal on the part of the other side (*Out-Party - No Response*) increases negative affect toward the out party (meaning that coefficients in these conditions should be negative). Conversely, those partisans who observe the other side reacting in a “nonbiased” manner — those assigned to the *Out-Party - Response* — should feel, on average, more warmly toward their opponents, since the vignette suggests that their political opponents are more rational than anticipated. We have fewer expectations about how our experiment might affect people’s feelings toward their own side. Since we argue partisans’ response to bias is asymmetric, we do not expect information about whether one’s own side engaged or did not engage in motivated reasoning to meaning-

³*Control* is omitted as the reference category.

fully influence in-party affect.⁴ Finally, we should observe little to no effect of assignment to either the *Out-Party - Response* or *Out-Party - No Response* conditions on *in-party* affect and for a similar null effect of assignment to the *In-Party - Response* or *In-Party - No Response* conditions on *out-party* affect, since it is not immediately clear why information about one party's bias (or lack thereof) should influence affect toward the opposite party.

Table 1 presents the results of our experiment. We find mixed support for our hypotheses. Looking first at how our experiment may have affected Republicans' attitudes toward the Democratic Party (Column 1), we find a substantively significant increase in Republicans' warm feelings toward the Democratic Party when they are told that Democrats changed their opinions of Obama following the Healthcare.gov blunder. Republicans in this condition rated the Democratic Party on average about 6 percentage points more warmly ($\hat{\beta} = 6.640$) compared to those in the control group. That being said, this effect is not statistically significant at conventional levels ($p=0.22$). This is likely due, in large part, to the small number of Republicans in the study. Those Democrats who were also assigned to the *Out Party - Response* condition, however, did not appear to respond similarly to the treatment. Being told that Republicans "correctly" updated their approval of Cruz following the government shutdown did not appear to alter Democrats' feelings toward their opponents in any substantively or significantly meaningful way ($\hat{\beta} = 0.428, p=0.89$). Overall, Republicans' behavior in response to this treatment appeared to conform to our expectations while Democrats' did not.

⁴As noted previously, in-party feeling thermometer scores have remained relatively stable over time, which suggests these ratings are far less sensitive to stimuli than out-party ratings (Haidt and Hetherington 2012; Iyengar, Sood and Lelkes 2012).

Table 1: Party Affect by Experimental Condition

	Out-Party Affect		In-Party Affect	
	Republicans	Democrats	Republicans	Democrats
Out-Party - Response	6.640 (5.409)	0.428 (2.799)	8.991* (4.943)	-6.026** (2.749)
Out-Party - No Response	-0.972 (5.409)	1.222 (2.970)	-2.880 (4.943)	-2.635 (2.918)
In-Party - Response	2.942 (5.190)	2.920 (2.848)	-3.337 (4.744)	-5.317* (2.798)
In-Party - No Response	-4.191 (5.314)	4.075 (2.820)	1.375 (4.859)	-1.102 (2.270)
Constant	30.585*** (3.549)	23.580*** (2.078)	63.171*** (3.244)	68.010*** (2.042)
Observations	172	552	172	552
R-squared	0.025	0.006	0.042	0.013

Standard errors in parentheses.

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$, two-tailed.

Source: 2013 MTurk Study.

Assignment to the *Out Party - No Response* condition, on the other hand, did not appear to alter either Democrats' or Republicans' feelings toward their opponents (Columns 1 and 2). Neither coefficient ($\hat{\beta} = -0.972$, $p=0.86$ for Republicans; $\hat{\beta} = 1.222$, $p=0.68$ for Democrats) is substantively or statistically significant. While our original expectation was that assignment to these conditions would moderate out-party antipathy, we instead find that informing partisans that the other side maintained its support for the out-party

politician in the wake of controversy has little to no substantive effect on their out-party evaluations. While these results may appear puzzling at first, our treatments may have failed to move out-party affect because partisans are predisposed to assume that the out-party will react in a biased manner. That is, partisans may anticipate that out-party politicians will continue to receive sustained support from their followers after a scandal because such behavior is commonplace in American politics.⁵ This may also explain why we see more of an effect (at least among Republicans) in the *Out-Party - Response* condition: respondents were affected more by news that the out-party was *unbiased* because this information is unusual and surprising (e.g., Maheswaran and Chaiken 2011).

Some of the largest experimental effects emerge in those conditions in which we expected null results. Perhaps most interestingly, both groups of partisans appeared to feel *less* warmly toward their own side after being told co-partisan politicians lost support among their base (row 3 in Columns 3 and 4). On average, those Republicans who were told that Cruz's approval dropped felt, on average, three percentage points *less* warm toward the Republican Party (though this effect is not statistically significant at conventional levels; $\hat{\beta} = -3.337, p=0.48$). The effect among Democratic respondents in the *In-Party Response* condition was also substantively large and statistically significant; on average, those Democrats who were told their co-partisans approved less of Obama following the scandal rated their own party about five degrees cooler on the feeling thermometer ($\hat{\beta} = -5.317, p=0.06$). Taken together, these results suggest that while partisans may punish the other side for engaging in motivated reasoning, they actually *reward* their own side for exhibiting favorable bias toward a co-party politician. In this way, partisans seem to approve of "partisan cheerleading" (Bullock et al. 2015) on their own side but punish their opponents for engaging in the same practice.

⁵Indeed, previous work demonstrates that co-party politicians do not tend to lose support among partisans in the wake of scandals (Ahler and Sood 2014).

Finally, we find some unexpected and perplexing results in our remaining conditions. Specifically, we find that out-party affect appears to be responsive to cues from the in-party and vice versa. While most of these effects are not statistically significant, their direction and magnitude warrant a closer look. For example, both Republicans and Democrats who were told that their own party reneged its support for a co-partisan leader rated the *other party*, on average, about three degrees warmer than their counterparts in the control group ($\hat{\beta}_{In-Party - Response} = 2.942, p=0.57$ for Republicans; $\hat{\beta}_{In-Party - Response} = 2.920, p=0.30$ for Democrats). We also found that both groups of partisans appeared to rate their own side about three points *cooler* after learning that the other side engaged in motivated reasoning ($\hat{\beta}_{Out-Party - Response} = -2.880, p=0.56$ for Republicans; $\hat{\beta}_{Out-Party - Response} = -2.635, p=0.36$ for Democrats).

For the remaining conditions, we found that Democrats and Republicans differed in their responses to the same treatment. For example, being told that one's own party engaged in motivated reasoning (*In-Party - No Response*) seems to cause Republicans to rate the other side about 4 percentage points *less* favorably ($\hat{\beta} = -4.191, p=0.43$), while Democrats responded by rating the other side about 4 percentage points *more* favorably ($\hat{\beta} = 4.075, p=0.15$). While neither of these effects are statistically significant, we find a similar discrepancy in partisans' response to the *Out-Party - No Response* condition. Here, we find that Republicans rated their own party a statistically significant 9 percentage points more warmly when they observed a loss in Democratic support for Obama ($\hat{\beta} = 8.991, p=0.07$), and Democrats rated their own party a statistically significant six points cooler after observing similar behavior among Republicans ($\hat{\beta} = -6.026, p=0.03$). These are, in fact, the largest effect sizes in the study and among the few that are statistically significant at conventional levels. While the discrepancy between positive and negative effects may be reflective of the fact that partisans think differently from one another (Grossman and Hopkins 2016), we are nevertheless puzzled by the fact that out- (in-) party feeling

thermometers move significantly in response to in- (out-) party treatments. We welcome any and all thoughts or interpretations concerning these results.

Research Design, Study II: Partisan Response to Partisan Retrospective Evaluations

While some of the experimental results above conformed to our expectations, many others did not. There are, however, some significant flaws in the study's design that suggest it may not be the best test of our theory. First, the relatively small number of respondents in the study makes it difficult to draw reliable statistical inferences. This is particularly problematic when drawing generalizations about Republican identifiers; on average, each experimental group had only a little more than 30 Republican respondents. While there are fewer statistical obstacles to analyzing Democrats' behavior in the study — each condition had about 100 Democratic respondents — we may still lack a large enough sample size to detect small effects (e.g., [Cohen 1992](#)).

Secondly, our treatments may not be strong enough to produce meaningful effects. In the design above, we manipulated beliefs about

We plan to ameliorate these

First study underpowered - we're getting a bigger n and a nationally representative survey this time around

Treatment may not be strong enough - we asked people to make judgments based on a partisan attitude - people may expect that reaction because approval is subjective - but it's harder to deny interpretations of fact

Finally, does presenting bias on part of both sides attenuate affective polarization? Not considered in first study

Discussion and Conclusion

References

- Achen, Christopher H. and Larry M. Bartels. 2016. *Democracy for Realists: Why Elections Do Not Produce Responsive Government*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Ahler, Douglas J. and Gaurav Sood. 2014. "I (Don't) Approve: Impact of Scandals on Approval and Partisan Affect." Working paper.
- Bartels, Larry M. 2008. *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Berinsky, Adam J., Gergory A. Huber and Gabriel S. Lenz. 2012. "Evaluating Online Labor Markets for Experimental Research: Amazon.com's Mechanical Turk." *Political Analysis* 20(2):351–368.
- Budak, Ceren, Sharad Goel and Justin M. Rao. 2014. "Fair and Balanced? Quantifying Media Bias Through Crowdsourced Content Analysis." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 80(1):250–271.
- Bullock, John G., Alan S. Gerber, Seth J. Hill and Gregory A. Huber. 2015. "Partisan Bias in Factual Beliefs About Politics." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 10:519–578.
- Cohen, Jacob. 1992. "A Power Primer." *Psychological Bulletin* 112(1):155–159.
- Grossman, Matt and David A. Hopkins. 2016. *Asymmetric Politics: Ideological Republicans and Group Interest Democrats*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Haidt, Jonathan and Marc J. Hetherington. 2012. "Look How Far We've Come Apart." *New York Times* 7 September. <https://campaignstops.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/09/17/look-how-far-weve-come-apart/>.

- Healy, Andrew and Gabriel S. Lenz. 2014. "Substituting the End for the Whole: Why Voters Respond Primarily to the Election Year Economy." *American Journal of Political Science* 58(1):31–47.
- Hetherington, Marc J. and Thomas J. Rudolph. 2015. *Why Washington Won't Work: Polarization, Political Trust, and the Governing Crisis*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Iyengar, Shanto, Gaurav Sood and Yphtach Lelkes. 2012. "Affect, Not Ideology: A Social Identity Perspective on Polarization." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 76(3):405–431.
- Iyengar, Shanto and Sean Westwood. 2014. "Fear and Loathing Across Party Lines: New Evidence on Group Polarization." *American Journal of Political Science* 59(3):690–707.
- Keith, Bruce E., David B. Magleby, Candice J. Nelson, Elizabeth Orr, Mark C. Westlye and Raymond E. Wolfinger. 1992. *The Myth of the Independent Voter*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Lenz, Gabriel S. 2012. *Follow the Leader? How Voters Respond to Politicians' Policies and Performance*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Maheswaran, Durairaj and Shelly Chaiken. 2011. "Promoting Systematic Processing in Low-Motivation Settings: Effect of Incongruent Information on Processing and Judgment." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 61(1):13–25.
- Mason, Lilliana. 2015. "'I Disrespectfully Agree': The Differential Effects of Partisan Sorting on Behavioral and Issue Polarization." *American Journal of Political Science* 59(1):128–145.
- Puglisi, Riccardo and James M. Snyder. 2011. "Newspaper Coverage of Political Scandals." *Journal of Politics* 73(3):931–950.

Sniderman, Paul M. and Edward H. Stiglitz. 2012. *The Reputational Premium: A Theory of Party Identification and Policy Reasoning*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Sood, Gaurav and Shanto Iyengar. 2014. "All in the Eye of the Beholder: Asymmetry in Ideological Accountability." Working paper.

Appendix

A 1 Study I Experimental Vignettes

Figure A 1.1: Democrats - Response Condition

Obama Approval Plummets Among Democrats After Obamacare Debacle

Associated Press

WASHINGTON, Nov 19 – President Obama's support among Democrats has nosedived after recent troubles with the healthcare law. Last week, the White House admitted that it had no estimated timetable or budget for fixing the troubled Healthcare.gov website. The president also faced scrutiny over insurance cancellations in light of his previous assurances that citizens who liked their insurance plans would be allowed to keep them.

Just 62% of Democrats approved of Mr. Obama in a recent poll, a 17% drop from the previous week's numbers. The president's approval among Republicans and Independents also fell significantly and now hovers around 42%. Democratic support for the healthcare law has also taken a hit - dropping nearly 16 points in the last month.

The latest figures suggest that just 26,000 Americans were able to enroll through Healthcare.gov, while 5 million Americans lost coverage. Democrats are concerned about the president's leadership. "People still haven't been able to get the website to work, and time is running out before we are all required to have insurance," said Tracy Benton, a Democratic voter of Virginia. "This is not the change I voted for."

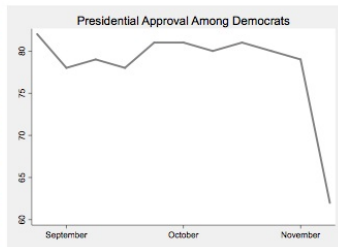


Figure A 1.2: Democrats - No Response Condition

Obama Approval High Among Democrats Despite Obamacare Debacle

Associated Press

WASHINGTON, Nov 18 – President Obama's support among Democrats has remained high despite the recent troubles with the healthcare law. Last week, the White House admitted that it had no estimated timetable or budget for fixing the troubled Healthcare.gov website. The president also faced scrutiny over insurance cancellations in light of his previous assurances that citizens who liked their insurance plans would be allowed to keep them.

Nearly 80% of Democrats approved of Mr. Obama in a recent poll, a 1% increase from the previous week's numbers. However, the president's approval among Republicans and Independents fell significantly and now hovers around 42%. Democratic support for the healthcare law has also remained positive over the last month.

The latest figures suggest that just 26,000 Americans were able to enroll through Healthcare.gov, while 5 million Americans lost coverage. However, Democrats are happy with the president's leadership. "People will soon be able to get the website to work, and there is still enough time before we are all required to have insurance," said Tracy Benton, a Democratic voter of Virginia. "I am OK with the small delay. This is the change I voted for."

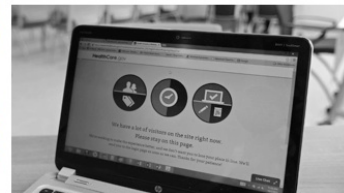
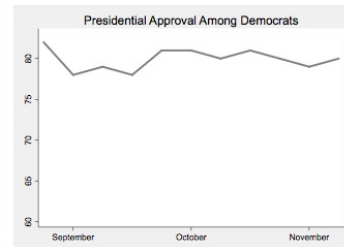


Figure A 1.3: Republicans - Response Condition

Cruz Approval Plummets Among Republicans After Shutdown Debacle

Associated Press

WASHINGTON, Nov 18 – Senator Ted Cruz’s support among Republicans has fallen sharply after the government shutdown. Many point to Cruz’s filibuster in October as a media spectacle that hampered negotiations over the debt ceiling, and made the government shutdown a certainty. The government shutdown that lasted 16 days cost the U.S. economy between \$2 billion and \$6 billion in economic output, according to a report by the Office of Management and Budget.

Just 56% of Republicans approved of Mr. Cruz in a recent poll, down 14% from June. Cruz’s approval among Independents and Democrats also fell significantly over the same period and now hovers around 47%.

Cruz’s behavior in October fueled accusations that he was using the fragile economy as a poker chip. Now Republican voters are expressing concerns over Cruz’s potential 2016 presidential candidacy. “I think we have a lot of debt,” said Tracy Benton, a Republican voter from Virginia, “but (Cruz) is making our problems worse instead of helping us find solutions.”

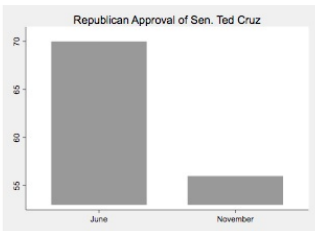


Figure A 1.4: Republicans - No Response Condition

Cruz Approval Remains High Among Republicans Despite Shutdown Debacle

Associated Press

WASHINGTON, Nov 18 – Senator Ted Cruz’s support among Republicans has remained high even after the government shutdown. Many point to Cruz’s filibuster in October as a media spectacle that hampered negotiations over the debt ceiling, and made the government shutdown a certainty. The government shutdown that lasted 16 days cost the U.S. economy between \$2 billion and \$6 billion in economic output, according to a report by the Office of Management and Budget.

Nearly 90% of Republicans approved of Mr. Cruz in a recent poll, up 5% from June. However, Cruz’s approval among Independents and Democrats fell significantly over the same period and now hovers around 47%.

Cruz’s behavior in October fueled accusations that he was using the fragile economy as a poker chip. Nevertheless, Republican voters remain positive about Cruz’s potential 2016 presidential candidacy. “I think we have a lot of debt,” said Tracy Benton, a Republican voter from Virginia, “and (Cruz) is fighting to solve our problems and helping us find solutions.”

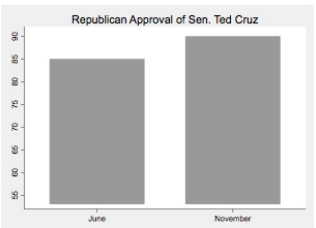


Figure A 1.5: Control Control

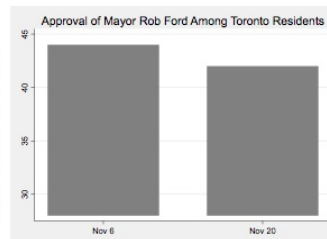
Toronto Mayor's Popularity Holding Steady Despite Drug Scandal

Associated Press

TORONTO, Nov 22 – Support for embattled Toronto mayor Rob Ford remains unchanged even as the scandal surrounding him continues to swirl. A new Forum Research poll found Ford's approval rating remains above 40% despite the ongoing crack cocaine scandal.

In the last few weeks, Ford has admitted he has smoked crack, bought illegal drugs after being elected mayor, "might have driven drunk," and used profanity in a press conference. Still, a poll conducted Wednesday among Toronto residents found 42% approve of the job he is doing, virtually unchanged from a November 6 poll that pegged his approval rating at 44%.

Said Forum Research president Lorne Bozinoff, "I don't think the mayor is dead politically. Some people might find it hard to believe. As crazy as it is, he's got that record and somehow, despite all of his private doings, he was able to get all this stuff done."



Still, the new poll numbers aren't all good for Ford. Around 33% say they'll vote for the mayor in the 2014 election, but 60% of those polled want him to resign now, including 28% of his supporters from the last election.

A 2 Study II Experimental Vignettes

Figure A 2.1: Control Condition

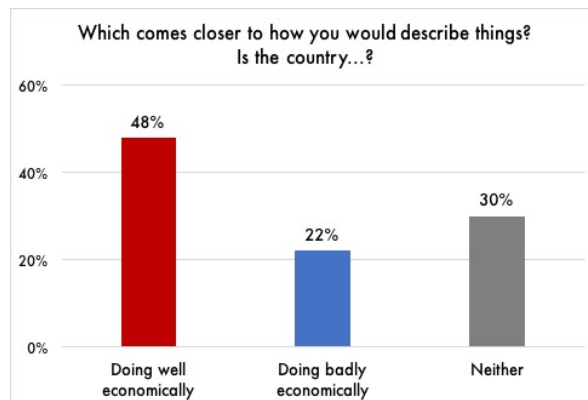


Just less than half of Americans believe the economy is doing well under President Trump, a new poll shows.

A CBS News Poll, released Sunday, found that 48 percent of Americans say the country is doing well economically, compared to 22 percent who say it's doing poorly. Another 30 percent said it is neither doing well or poorly, according to the poll.

Another 49 percent of respondents indicated they believe the U.S. is run for the benefit of a few elites. By comparison, 28 percent said they believe the country is run for the benefit of the people, while 22 percent said neither, according to the poll, which was conducted Feb. 10-12. The poll had 2,164 respondents and has a margin of error of 2.6 percentage points.

President Trump has frequently touted the economy's performance under his administration, often tweeting out reports of the stock market hitting new highs. The White House has also balked at suggestions that former President Obama is responsible for the current state of the economy.



Just under 50% of Americans believe the economy is doing well. Source: CBS News Poll, March 9-11, 2018.


A recent Quinnipiac poll showed 49 percent of respondents gave Obama credit for the current economy, compared to 40 percent who gave Trump credit.


Figure A 2.2: Bipartisan Bias Condition

BUSINESS INSIDER

TECH FINANCE POLITICS STRATEGY LIFE ALL

Republicans and Democrats have dramatically shifted their views of the US economy since the election

Bob Bryan  
Nov. 15, 2016, 2:40 PM  8,559

 FACEBOOK  LINKEDIN  TWITTER  EMAIL  COPY LINK

The way Americans view the economy has undergone a dramatic shift in the week since Donald Trump was elected president of the United States.

Gallup's Economic Confidence Index, based on an average of how Americans view current economic conditions, registered a large shift among both self-identified Democrats and Republicans over a week time period following Election Day.

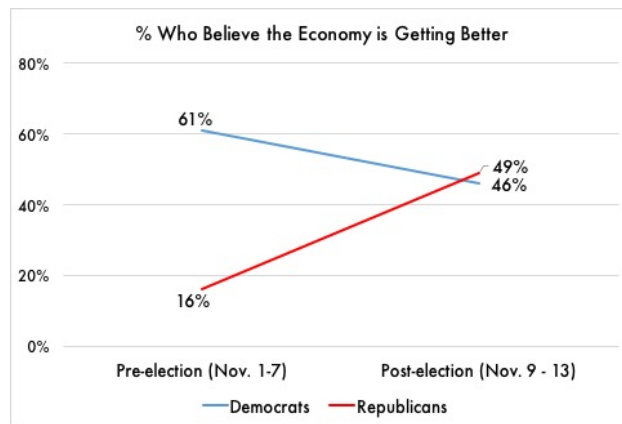
"Republicans have had a dismal view of the economy — especially of its future direction — during President Barack Obama's two terms," said the release from Gallup. "We now see Democrats becoming more pessimistic about the economy under a Republican president."

In fact, the proportion of Republicans saying the economy is getting better improved from 16% in the preelection period to 49% after Trump was elected. For Democrats, it did the opposite, falling from 61% to 46%.

It is important to note that despite the huge swing in Gallup's polling, economic conditions — including rates of unemployment, inflation, and wage growth — have not changed over the past few weeks.

Susan Thomas — a retired schoolteacher from Harrisburg, PA who voted for Donald Trump in 2016 — described Democrats' views as "delusional." "Can't they see Trump is rescuing us from all the damage Obama did?" Her neighbor, Sandra Shelton, who voted for Hillary Clinton, had a very different view. "Trump is just benefitting from Obama's economy," she said. "Republicans are crazy if they don't get that."

President Trump has frequently touted the economy's performance under his administration, often tweeting out reports of the stock market hitting new highs. The White House has also balked at suggestions that former President Obama is responsible for the current state of the economy.



Both Republicans and Democrats shifted their views immediately following Trump's election. Source: Gallup Polls, Nov. 1-13, 2016.


Figure A 2.3: Republican Bias Condition

BUSINESS INSIDER

TECH FINANCE POLITICS STRATEGY LIFE ALL

Republicans have dramatically shifted their views of the US economy since the election

Bob Bryan  
Nov. 15, 2016, 2:40 PM  8,559

 FACEBOOK  LINKEDIN  TWITTER  EMAIL  COPY LINK

The way Republicans view the economy has undergone a dramatic shift in the week since Donald Trump was elected president of the United States.

Gallup's Economic Confidence Index, based on an average of how Americans view current economic conditions, registered a large shift among self-identified Republicans over a week time period following Election Day.

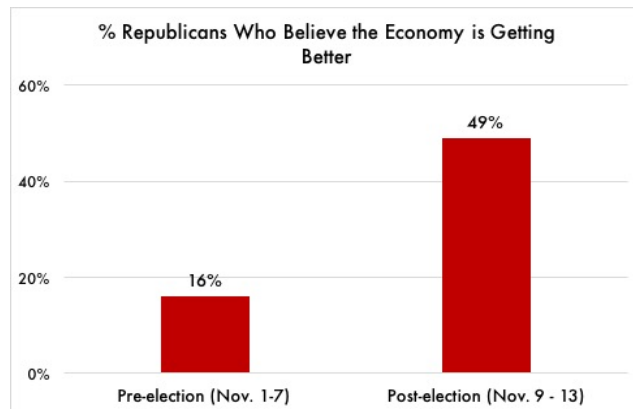
"The increase in economic confidence mostly stems from Republicans' more positive views after Republican Donald Trump won the election," said the release from Gallup. "Republicans have had a dismal view of the economy — especially of its future direction — during Democratic President Barack Obama's two terms."

In fact, the proportion of Republicans saying the economy is getting better improved from 16% in the preelection period to 49% after Trump was elected.

It is important to note that despite the huge swing in Gallup's polling, economic conditions — including rates of unemployment, inflation, and wage growth — have not changed over the past few weeks.

"Republicans are out of their minds if they think the economy is suddenly doing better because of Trump," said Susan Thomas, a retired schoolteacher from Harrisburg, PA who voted for Hillary Clinton in 2016. "He's just benefiting from the work Obama did. Anyone who can't see that is delusional."

President Trump has frequently touted the economy's performance under his administration, often tweeting out reports of the stock market hitting new highs. The White House has also balked at suggestions that former President Obama is responsible for the current state of the economy.



Republicans became more optimistic about the economy immediately following Trump's election. Source: Gallup Polls, Nov. 1-13, 2016.

Figure A 2.4: Democratic Bias Condition

BUSINESS INSIDER

TECH FINANCE POLITICS STRATEGY LIFE ALL

Democrats have dramatically shifted their views of the US economy since the election

Bob Bryan  
Nov. 15, 2016, 2:40 PM  8,559

 FACEBOOK  LINKEDIN  TWITTER  EMAIL  COPY LINK

The way Democrats view the economy has undergone a dramatic shift in the week since Donald Trump was elected president of the United States.

Gallup's Economic Confidence Index, based on an average of how Americans view current economic conditions, registered a large shift among self-identified Democrats over a week time period following Election Day.

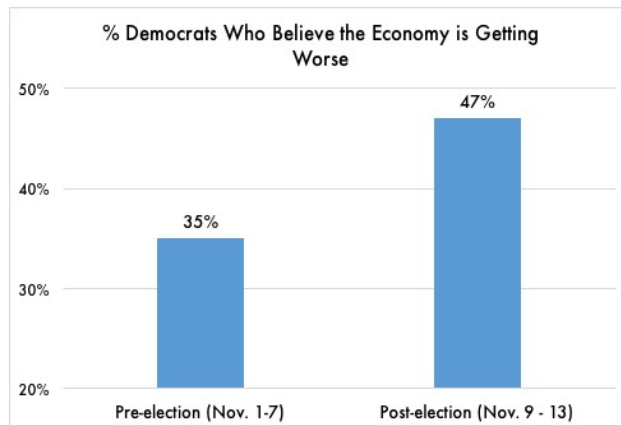
"Lagging economic confidence is mostly due to Democrats' more negative evaluations after Donald Trump won the election," said the release from CBS News. "Democrats had a more optimistic view of the economy — especially of its future direction — during President Barack Obama's two terms."

In fact, the proportion of Democrats saying the economy is getting worse increased from 35% in the preelection period to 47% after Trump was elected.

It is important to note that despite the huge swing in Gallup's polling, economic conditions — including rates of unemployment, inflation, and wage growth — have not changed over the past few weeks.

"Democrats are out of their minds if they think the economy is suddenly doing worse because of Trump," said Susan Thomas, a retired schoolteacher from Harrisburg, PA who voted for the President in 2016. "He's rescuing us from all the damage Obama did. Anyone who can't see that is delusional."

President Trump has frequently touted the economy's performance under his administration, often tweeting out reports of the stock market hitting new highs. The White House has also balked at suggestions that former President Obama is responsible for the current state of the economy.



Democrats became more pessimistic about the economy immediately following Trump's election. Source: Gallup Polls, Nov. 1-13, 2016.