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Revisiting the Political Theory of Party Identification

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Abstract Recently, Lewis-Beck et al. (The American Voter Revisited, 2008b) re-created *The American Voter* using contemporary data. Although these scholars ultimately conclude that voters today behave in ways that are consistent with the account of voting behavior presented in *The American Voter*, their work nonetheless highlights the importance and value of re-examining past ideas. Given that Lewis-Beck et al. have re-tested the findings of *The American Voter*, it is both timely and worthwhile to re-examine Fiorina's (Retrospective voting in American national elections, 1981) political theory of party identification, which is often seen as a critique of the theory of party identification presented in *The American Voter*, using newly available panel data. In this paper, I re-examine Fiorina's (Retrospective voting in American national elections, 1981) political theory of party identification using data from the 2000–2002–2004 NES panel study. In addition to applying Fiorina's approach to party identification to new data, as a more robust test of Fiorina's theory, I develop a model of party identification where changes in party identification are modeled as a function of the actual changes in retrospective political evaluations. Overall, my findings are broadly consistent with the findings from Fiorina's original model of party identification; however, my analysis suggests that the distribution of opinions in the electorate and elite signals may be important to changes in party identification.

Introduction

Recently, Lewis-Beck et al. (2008b) re-created *The American Voter* using contemporary data. Although these scholars ultimately conclude that voters today

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behave in ways that are consistent with the account of voting behavior presented in *The American Voter*, their work nonetheless serves as a reminder of the importance and value of re-examining past ideas. Given that Lewis-Beck et al. have re-tested the findings of the *The American Voter*, it is both timely and worthwhile to re-examine Fiorina's (1981) political theory of party identification, which is often seen as a critique of the theory of party identification presented in the *The American Voter*, using newly available panel data. In contrast to the *The American Voter*, which suggests that party identification is exogenous and highly stable over time, Fiorina sees political partisanship as an accumulation of one's experiences with and evaluations of politics. This implies that that party identification is potentially endogenous, that is, both a cause and consequence of political evaluations. Although Fiorina's "running tally" model of party identification has been subject to numerous criticisms over time (see Bartels 2002 for a recent critique), it's impact on political science is undeniable, and it provides a useful way of conceptualizing the changes in party identification that do occur in the American electorate.

Although few would argue with the notion that Fiorina's theory is thoughtfully constructed, testing it is challenging because it requires the use of panel data. Given the expensive nature of surveying nationally representative samples at multiple points in time, obtaining high-quality panel data that contains the necessary variables to test Fiorina's retrospective model is difficult. In order to test his theory of party identification, Fiorina used panel data from the 1950s and 1970s; however, one or two empirical tests of a theory should not be taken as evidence that the theory is either definitively correct or incorrect. Although some researchers have re-examined and used aspects of Fiorina's model of party identification, few scholars have carefully re-examined Fiorina's theory with panel data. In this paper, I use data from the 2000–2002–2004 NES panel study to re-examine Fiorina's model of party identification. Following Fiorina's original approach, I estimate a two-stage model to examine the effects of retrospective evaluations on party identification. Although differences in question wording and differences in the relevant issues of the day prevent me from developing an exact replication of Fiorina's model of party identification, my model contains a variety of retrospective evaluations on issues ranging from the economy to foreign relations and therefore closely approximates Fiorina's model.

Ultimately, the goal of this research is to determine how Fiorina's model holds up when examined nearly 30 years later. If Fiorina's conclusion that "an individual's short-term retrospective evaluations at least partially explain the transformation of previous party ID into current party ID" is correct, empirical findings should be robust over time (1981, p. 234). The rest of this paper proceeds in a straightforward manner. First, I provide a general overview of the literature on party identification. Second, I discuss the data I use to re-test Fiorina's theory of party identification and provide a description of my methodological approach. Third, I interpret and analyze the results of the empirical models and compare my findings to Fiorina's findings. Finally, I provide a general evaluation of how the political theory of party identification has held up after nearly 30 years.

Theories of Party Identification

Undoubtedly, the most important and enduring work on political partisanship is *The American Voter*. In fact, it is from this work that the concept of party identification emerged. According to Campbell et al. (1960), party identification is a long-term psychological attachment to a political party (p. 121). The social psychological theory of party identification presented in *The American Voter* suggests that party identification develops early in one's life and is influenced by one's parents through the process of political socialization. Over time, people form an affective attachment to a particular party, which persists throughout the course of their lives and shapes their views and evaluations of politics. Because party identification colors citizens' evaluations of issues, candidates, and political events, it plays a fundamental role in their vote choice. Although the model of party identification presented in *The American Voter* suggests that party identification is highly stable over time, Campbell et al. (1960) carefully note that "When we examine the evidence on the manner in which party attachment develops and changes during a lifetime of the individual citizen, we find a picture characterized more by stability than by change—*not by rigid, immutable fixation on one party rather than the other*, but by a persistent adherence and a resistance to contrary influence" (p. 146, emphasis added). Put simply, party identification is stable, emotionally based, and highly resistant to change except when large-scale political events or stressful conditions, such as depressions, occur (Fiorina 1981).

While many scholars initially accepted and continue to support and find evidence in favor of the account of party identification described in *The American Voter* (see Bartels 2002), numerous scholars have challenged Campbell et al. (1960) theory of partisanship based upon the observation that party identification did change considerably among individuals over time in the CPS panel studies. Indeed, "As opposed to the social psychological interpretations of partisanship, instrumental theories view the partisan attachment as an information shortcut that is continually updated and adjusted based on rational evaluation" (Settle et al. 2009, p. 601). Franklin and Jackson (1983), for example, note that "Identifications are more than the result of a set of early socializing experiences, possibly reinforced by subsequent social and political activity" (p. 968).

Although many have adopted the "instrumental" view of party identification, most instrumental accounts of party identification stem from Fiorina's original political theory of party identification, which represents one of the first and most notable challenges to *The American Voter's* model of party identification. Fiorina's theory also represents an attempt to integrate the rational choice perspective into voting behavior literature. In contrast to the idea that political behavior stems primarily from socialization and psychological forces, rational choice theory suggests that individuals are utility maximizers, who try to achieve their goals by acting as rationally as their resources allow. In the context of party identification, the rational choice approach suggests that individuals will alter their political identifications when they are not getting the outcomes they desire. Thus, rational choice scholars view party choice as an endogenous part of the electoral process, rather than exogenous, as Campbell et al. suggest (Franklin and Jackson 1983).

Given the basic assumption that individuals are utility maximizers, Fiorina suggests that party identification should be defined as the difference between one's past experiences with the two parties (p. 89). Put simply, these experiences represent an individual's "subjectively weighted retrospective evaluations formed while observing the postures and performances of the contending parties during previous election periods" (Fiorina 1981, p. 90). This implies that people keep a running tally of their experiences with political parties and political figures. Although individuals may tolerate some negative experiences with parties, if their negative experiences become severe enough, it is likely that they will change their party affiliation. When written out in equation form, Fiorina's model of party identification is:

$$\mathrm{PID}_t = \alpha + \beta_1(\mathrm{PID}_{t-2}) + \beta_2(RE_1) + \beta_3(RE_2) + \cdots \beta_k(RE_n) \quad (1)$$

In the above equation, party identification at time t represents an individual's current party identification. Party identification at time $t-2$ represents an individual's party identification 2 years prior to their current identification. Finally, retrospective evaluations, or REs in the equation, represent a collection of evaluations that an individual has made about political events, figures, and experiences. These evaluations can be either simple or mediated. Simple retrospective evaluations refer to evaluations that reflect citizens direct experiences or impressions, such as their personal financial performance over the past year. Mediated evaluations, on the other hand, refer to judgments, such as presidential approval, that are mediated by the information sources that citizens use, by elites, or by predispositions. The betas in the above equation represent the weight that each variable has on current party identification.

There are several key components of Fiorina's empirical model that deserve attention. First, by including the lagged dependent variable as an independent variable, Fiorina's model acknowledges the fact that there is a long-term, stable component to party identification. This also allows for the examination of how current party identification changes in response to short-term retrospective evaluations. Second, Fiorina's model provides a political basis for changes in party attachments (1981, p. 90). Since party identification is a political attitude, it is reasonable to think that it can and sometimes does change in response to political events and evaluations. Third, Fiorina's model identifies the causal mechanism that leads to changes in party identification: retrospective evaluations. When individuals are satisfied with the current administration, we should observe movement toward the party of the administration.

Although Fiorina finds support for his theory at the individual level, the idea that partisanship is less stable than previously thought is also supported at the aggregate level. Using an aggregate measure of partisanship called "macropartisanship," MacKuen et al. (1989) test whether short-term political evaluations, such as presidential approval and consumer sentiment, lead to shifts in party identification. They find that both presidential approval and consumer evaluations have systematic effects on macropartisanship: when presidential approval or consumer sentiment is high, there is aggregate movement toward the incumbent party. Although their

approach is different than Fiorina's, MacKuen et al. reach a similar conclusion: partisanship is responsive to short-term political evaluations.

Data & Method

The data for this research come from the 2000–2002–2004 NES panel study. Respondents in the panel data are taken from the original nationally representative sample of respondents who participated in the 2000 NES.[1] Although it is important to note that the original sample size is reduced when using the panel data due to attrition, the NES panel data are well suited to re-test Fiorina's model because they contain a fairly large number of respondents who were re-interviewed at several points in time and because they contain a wide-range of items that can be used to empirically test Fiorina's model. Although it would be more desirable if all respondents from the original sample were re-interviewed throughout course of the panel study, this is a nearly impossible scenario, and Bartels (2000) has shown that there is little evidence of panel biases in previous NES panel studies.

The methodological approach used in this paper closely follows the one employed by Fiorina (1981). In brief, Fiorina used a two-stage model to estimate the effects of retrospective evaluations on party identification. I adopt the same approach here. In both the first and the second stage models, the dependent variable is an ordinal 7-point measure of party identification. I use ordered probit models, which are appropriate when the dependent variable is comprised of ordered categories but the distances between adjacent categories are unknown (Long 1997).

As Eq. 1) above indicates, in order to examine the effects of retrospective evaluations on party identification, it is important to included a lagged value of the dependent variable as an independent variable. This approach is useful because it allows one to examine the changes in party identification, but it is not without problems. When the dependent variable, current party identification, is broken down into lagged party identification + retrospective evaluations, the error term is correlated with lagged party identification. This is concerning because it could yield biased and inconsistent parameter estimates. One potential way to overcome this concern is to use an instrumental variable approach. The point of creating an instrument for party identification is to make party identification more exogenous, which helps reduce the error correlation.

In order to exogenize the lagged party identification variable, I created an instrumental variable. The models for the instruments are all presented in Appendix A. The instruments used in this paper were built primarily from demographic and socioeconomic variables, such as race, gender, age, and income. I avoid using variables like presidential approval to construct the party identification instrument

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Table 1 Correlation between PID across survey waves and between reported PID and PID instruments

Variables	Pearson's *r*
2000 PID and 2002 PID	0.85
2000 PID and 2004 PID	0.85
2002 PID and 2004 PID	0.88
2000 PID ordered probit instrument and 2000 PID	0.60
2000 PID ordered probit (3-point) instrument and 2000 PID (3-point)	0.58
2002 ordered probit instrument and 2002 PID	0.61
2002 PID ordered probit (3-point) instrument and 2002 PID (3-point)	0.59

based on the idea that attitudinal variables are not always purely exogenous (Lewis-Beck et al. 2008a, b).[2]

Although the party identification instruments are likely to be less powerful statistically than the actual values of party identification, this approach helps to ensure that the level of correlation between the error term and the lagged dependent variable is reduced (Lewis-Beck 2006). In Table 1, I present the correlations between party identification across the three survey waves and the correlations between the instruments from the first-stage ordered probit models and the actual measures of party identification. Although the 7-point scale is the primary dependent variable in the analyses that follow, I also replicated the first-stage models with the 3-point measure of party identification as the dependent variable. The 3-point party identification instrument was used to ensure that the models performed similarly when different measures of party identification were used. In general, the instruments for party identification perform quite well. On average, the correlation between the party identification instruments and the actual measures of party identification is 0.60.

Variables & Measurement

As Eq. 1 indicates, the dependent variable in this paper is an individual's current party identification, as measured by their response to the question:

> Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what? Would you call yourself a strong [Democrat/Republican] or a not very strong [Democrat/Republican]? (For independents, no preference, or other respondents) Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or to the Democratic party?

[2] The construction of the instruments followed a straightforward process. In the first-stage model, I simply regressed party identification in 2000 and 2002 on numerous theoretically-based exogenous variables measured at the same time. Based upon the first-stage model, I generated the predicted values of the party identification instrument and substituted the predicted values of party identification in the second stage model.

In this paper, the dependent variable is coded so that 0 = strong Democrat, 1 = weak Democrat, 2 = leaning Democrat, 3 = pure Independent, 4 = leaning Republican, 5 = weak Republican, and 6 = strong Republican. The instrument for party identification is coded in the same manner for ease of interpretation.

The 7-point party identification scale is designed to measure an underlying latent variable—an individual's psychological attachment to a political party. However, it should be noted that this measure of party identification assumes that party identification is one-dimensional. As Weisberg (1980) has pointed out, however, measures of party identification might actually be capturing an individual's dislike of a party rather than his or her attachment to a party. Although a new measure of party identification may be useful, it is beyond the scope of this paper. In addition, Fiorina's theory of party identification is "a theory of individual responses to the attitude-toward-the-parties dimension of the traditional ordinal measure" (Fiorina 1981, p. 105). Thus, if the 7-point measure is "forcibly combining two dimensions," replications "using a purer, one-dimensional measure should yield results even stronger than those reported" (Fiorina 1981, p. 105). In addition, although Campbell (2002) has criticized the ordinal party identification scale because of the intransitivity of the scale, he finds identical substantive results when different measures of party identification are used.

Although the model of party identification presented in this paper is an individual level model, it is useful to take a brief look at party identification at the aggregate level. Table 2 presents the percentages of people in each category of the 7-point measure of party identification across each of the 3 years of the panel study. Although there is stability when looking across the categories, we do see some changes from year to year.

In 2002, for example, 16.71% of people identified themselves as strong Democrats. In 2004, the percentage of people identifying as strong Democrats increased by 6.21% to nearly 23%. In addition, in 2002 16.37% of people identified as strong Republicans, but in 2004 that number increased to 22.44%. Clearly, there are some noticeable changes in the percentage of people in each category of party identification across years. In this paper, I present models of party identification in 2002 and 2004, so the changes in party identification from 2002 and 2004 are of particular interest. The most interesting trend contained in Table 2 is the change among pure Independents. In 2000, 11.6% of respondents identified as pure Independents but that percentage declined to 4.58% in 2004, indicating that from 2000 to 2004 the middle has gotten

Table 2 Percent of people in each category of PID, 2000–2004

PID Category	2000	2002	2004
Democrat	19.48	16.71	22.92
Weak Democrat	15.43	16.71	13.51
Ind. Democrat	15.15	14.05	10.49
Pure Independent	11.60	6.68	4.58
Ind. Republican	12.95	13.80	13.15
Weak Republican	12.11	15.68	12.92
Strong Republican	13.29	16.37	22.44

smaller. Although a look at descriptive statistics for party identification at the aggregate level is useful way of examining whether party identification changed over time, we cannot make causal statements about individual-level changes in party identification without an individual-level, multivariate model.

Because the NES panel spans from 2000 to 2004, I present models of party identification in both 2002 and 2004. This is useful because it allows us to examine how party identification varies with political context. In 2002, just 1 year after the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the country was relatively united and had seen initial success in Afghanistan. In 2004, however, there was much less consensus in the electorate when it came to the war in Afghanistan and terrorism. By looking at models during these two different years, we will be able to see if changing context led to some evaluations becoming more important predictors of change in party identification over time. The independent variables in both models of party identification include the party identification instrument, which is simply a lagged measure of party identification, along with numerous retrospective political evaluations. In this paper, party identification is lagged by 2 years. A two year lag will capture the stable component of party identification.

In addition to the party identification instrument, the models contain a range of retrospective evaluations, including a general measure of presidential approval, a measure of one's evaluation of their personal finances over the past year, a measure of one's evaluation of the national economy over the past year, and a measure of presidential performance on the economy. In addition, each of the models contain several measures related to foreign affairs and terrorism. Because the U.S. did not enter Iraq until 2003, evaluations of Iraq are only included in the 2004 model. The exact wording and coding of the retrospective questions can be found in Appendix B. In order to make the results of the empirical models easy to interpret, all of the variables have been coded so that higher values indicate a greater level of satisfaction with the current administration. Thus, a positive coefficient indicates that more satisfaction with the incumbent administration leads to movement toward the Republican party.

Models & Analysis

Model of Party Identification in 2002

In Table 3, I present several models of party identification in 2002. Current party identification is modeled as a function of the lagged party identification instrument and seven retrospective evaluations. Although some of the evaluations are more personal in nature than others, the retrospective evaluations that have been used all ask about issues that citizens, even if they are not political sophisticates, should have some familiarity with and should be able to express their opinion about. The issue of terrorism and the war in Afghanistan, for example, received substantial attention in the media following September 11. Thus, the retrospective evaluations employed in the following models should provide a useful way of examining

Table 3 Ordered probit models of 2002 PID (7-point scale) as a function of 2000 PID instrument and retrospective evaluations, second stage

Independent variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Job performance	0.37 (0.07)*	0.36 (0.06)*	–
Personal finances	−0.03 (0.05)	−0.04 (0.04)	−0.02 (0.04)
National economy	0.07 (0.05)	0.07 (0.05)	0.08* (0.05)
Bush economic evaluation	0.22* (0.06)	0.21* (0.05)	0.36* (0.05)
Bush terrorism evaluation	−0.08 (0.06)	−0.05 (0.05)	0.06 (0.05)
Afghanistan evaluation	0.19 (0.13)	–	0.18 (0.13)
International reputation	−0.02 (0.06)	−0.00 (0.05)	0.01 (0.05)
Party identification	0.20* (0.02)	0.19* (0.02)	0.20* (0.02)
Pseudo R^2	0.17	0.16	0.15
Number of observations	693	709	715

Notes: Standard errors are in parentheses

Significance levels: * $p \leq 0.05$, all one-tailed tests

whether short-term evaluations of politics and the economy yielded changes in party identification in 2002.[3]

Turning to Model 1 in Table 3, we see that presidential job performance and presidential economic performance are both statistically significant predictors of current party identification at the 95% level. The coefficients for both of these evaluations are positive, indicating that those who those thought that the president was doing a good job overall or a good job when it came to the economy moved toward the president's party. As expected, the coefficient for the lagged party identification instrument is significant and travels in the expected direction.

Perhaps the most interesting story contained in Table 3, however, is the fact that the three variables that are related to the large-scale national events of 2001 and 2002 are not statistically significant predictors of shifts in party identification. Although a likelihood-ratio test reveals that these variables are jointly significant, the variables are not significant predictors of party identification when modeled independently. Naturally, one might expect to observe a "rally-around-the-flag effect" after a large-scale event like September 11. One way that a rally effect might materialize is that people will move toward the party of the president. The logic here is simply that during national crises citizens want to present a unified front. On a personal level, identifying with the president, the "anthropomorphic symbol of national unity" during times of crisis, might lead people to believe that they are helping present an image of national solidarity (Hetherington and Nelson 2003, p. 37). Although it is reasonable to expect movement toward the party of the president due to positive evaluations of Afghanistan and terrorism, this is not what

[3] The model of 2002 party identification was also specified using the actual values of party identification in 2000. The non-instrumental model can be examined in Appendix A. In general, the models perform similarly, however, the instrumental variable approach helps to make party identification more exogenous than if the actual values of party identification are used, reduces the error correlation, and reduces the correlation between party identification and the independent variables (Lewis-Beck 2006). It therefore represents a more appropriate estimation technique.

we see when we look at the 2002 model of party identification. One potential concern with Model 1 is that there is a high level of collinearity among several of the variables. For instance, presidential job approval, the Afghanistan evaluation, and the terrorism evaluation are all highly correlated. Some of these foreign policy issues may be reflected in presidential approval. In order make sure that the relationships we are observing in Model 1 are not being caused by collinearity problems, Models 2 and 3 present variations of Model 1. Model 2 is the same as Model 1 except the Afghanistan variable is left out. Model 3 contains all of the variables in Model 1 with the exception of presidential job performance, since this variable might be capturing the effect of terrorism.

In all specifications of the instrumental variable models, none of the variables related to September 11th or terrorism are statistically significant. This is even the case when the variable measuring presidential approval, which might simply be capturing citizens' evaluations of terrorism, is left of out the model.[4] Overall, the results from Table 2 indicate that citizens' evaluations of terrorism and the war in Afghanistan did not produce shifts in party identification in 2002. Although contrary to the "rally-around-the-flag" hypothesis, this finding is consistent with Hetherington and Nelson's (2003) observation that "After the September 11th attacks, Republican identification actually held steady at 32%, the same as it was the month before. Republican identification did increase to 36% in April 2002, but it seems a stretch to attribute this change to the terrorist attacks, which occurred six months earlier. Moreover, Republican identification returned to its usual spot in the low 30s by June 2002" (p. 40).

One plausible explanation for why party identification did not change in response to terrorism or Afghanistan is that following September 11 there was agreement among political elites about the need for military action and about the need to support President Bush. Indeed, many Democratic leaders in Congress expressed their approval of how President Bush dealt with the terrorist attacks directly after they occurred. Because "rally events usually entail elite support for the President," they provide "little incentive for changing partisanship" (Norrander and Wilcox 1993, p. 768). A simple example will help illustrate the logic of this argument. Imagine a Democrat who believes that the President is doing a good job handling terrorism. This person has little reason to move toward the party of the President, because the Democratic party holds similar view of the President as the citizen. The citizen can simply stay put. On the other hand, if a Democrat feels that the President is doing a good job on terrorism but elites in the Democratic party suggest that the President is doing a poor job, there is more of an incentive for the citizen to shift their partisan attachment so that it lines up with their true feelings. Although this idea may appear to differ from Fiorina's account of party identification, it is ultimately about preference maximization and the incentives to change.

A brief look at the data confirms that there was indeed a high level of consensus among citizens about President Bush's handling of terrorism and Afghanistan.

[4] Although not presented here, the models of 2002 party identification using 3-point party identification as the dependent variable preform very similarly to the 7-point models. Almost all of the variables that are significant in the 7-point models are all significant in the 3-point party identification models. This indicates that these findings hold up even when different measures of party identification are used.

Indeed, nearly 83% of people surveyed in 2002 said that the war in Afghanistan was worth the cost. In addition, 81% people either "strongly approved" or "approved" when asked: *All things considered, do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush [is handling the war on terrorism/has responded to the terrorist attack of September 11]*[5] Although some citizens may change their partisan attachments in response to large-scale events, changes in partisanship in response to terrorism and Afghanistan do not show up here. This conclusion nicely comports with the observation that "the effects of rallies remain mostly confined to presidential evaluations and are therefore short-lived. Little of the president's success spills over to alter partisanship" (Norrander and Wilcox 1993, p. 768). The elite cue explanation gains strength when we consider economic effects, since the crux of the Democratic campaign in 2002 was the economy.

Model of Party Identification in 2004

The story told by the model of party identification in 2002 indicates that individual level changes in party identification did not move in response to citizens' evaluations of terrorism or the war in Afghanistan. Although presidential approval, and to some extent economic attitudes, are significant predictors of party identification in 2002, foreign affairs variables are not significant even when presidential approval is removed from the equation. Since even the theory of party identification presented in *The American Voter* suggests that party identification can change "under extremely stressful conditions such as major depressions," one cannot help but wonder how attitudes toward terrorism and Afghanistan influenced party identification 2 years after they occurred, when the political environment was characterized by an increased level of elite disagreement (Fiorina 1981, p. 86). Fortunately, the 2004 component of the NES panel study contains the exact questions used in the analysis above, along with retrospective questions about the war in Iraq, which began in 2003. In Table 4 below, I present several models of party identification in 2004.[6]

A look at the models contained in Table 4 indicates that presidential job performance, presidential economic performance, and the lagged version of party identification are all statistically significant predictors of party identification, just as they were in Table 3. The coefficients for each of these variables all travel in the expected direction, indicating that more satisfaction with the incumbent party produced movement toward the Republican party between 2002 and 2004. One thing to bear in mind when evaluating the foreign policy attitudes in Table 4 is that there is a high level of correlation between the variables measuring presidential

[5] Respondents in the sample were randomly assigned to one of the question wordings. Although it reasonable to assume that citizens reactions to terrorism and 9/11 will be roughly the same, this method helps avoid any bias that may occur if only one of the wording choices was used. Half of the sample received the 9/11 wording while the other half received the terrorism wording. This method was used in both 2002 and 2004.

[6] Again, I specified the models using the instrument for party identification. The models using the actual values of party identification can be found in Appendix A in case one is interested in how the actual values of party identification perform.

Table 4 Ordered probit models of 2004 party ID as a function of 2002 party ID instrument and retrospective evaluations, second stage

Independent variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Job performance	0.25* (0.07)	0.26* (0.07)	0.28* (0.07)	–	–
Personal finances	−0.06 (0.07)	−0.04 (0.07)	−0.07 (0.07)	−0.04 (0.07)	−0.03 (0.07)
National economy	0.10 (0.06)	0.09 (0.06)	0.10 (0.06)	0.10 (0.06)	0.08 (0.06)
Bush economic evaluation	0.27* (0.07)	0.28* (0.07)	0.29* (0.07)	0.37* (0.07)	0.40* (0.06)
Bush terrorism evaluation	0.06 (0.07)	0.09 (0.07)	–	0.15* (0.06)	0.20* (0.06)
Afghanistan evaluation	0.15 (0.17)	–	0.15 (0.17)	0.30* (0.16)	–
International reputation	−0.04 (0.08)	−0.03 (0.02)	−0.02 (0.07)	−0.02 (0.08)	0.01 (0.07)
Iraq evaluation	0.19 (0.13)	0.21* (0.10)	0.21* (0.10)	0.13 (0.13)	0.20* (0.09)
Party identification	0.23* (0.02)	0.21* (0.02)	0.23* (0.02)	0.23* (0.02)	0.21* (0.02)
Pseudo R^2	0.24	0.23	0.24	0.23	0.22
Number of observations	508	520	511	513	525

Notes: Standard errors are in parentheses

Significance levels: * $p \leq 0.05$, all one-tailed tests

approval and foreign policy evaluations. The correlation between presidential approval and the Afghanistan evaluation is 0.80, the correlation between presidential approval and terrorism is 0.83, and the correlation between Afghanistan and terrorism is 0.80. This provides an indication that presidential approval may be capturing the effects of these variables. Although these variables are highly correlated, we still find that evaluations of Iraq are statistically significant predictors of party identification in the majority of the alternative models presented in Table 4.

In models 4 and 5, I present variations of the initial model with presidential approval removed. If presidential job approval is capturing the effects of the foreign policy variables, they should become significant when presidential approval is removed and the instrument for party identification is used. Indeed, in model 4 the Afghanistan and terrorism slopes become significant. The positive coefficients for each variable indicate that as approval of the incumbent administration increased, there was movement toward the Republican party. In model 5, when both presidential approval and Afghanistan, which is likely capturing some of the effects of the Iraq variable, are left out, both terrorism and Iraq are significant using a 95% confidence level. These models, then, provide support for the idea that citizens' evaluations of Iraq and terrorism in 2004 were related to changes in party identification.[7]

[7] Although not presented here, the models of 2004 party identification using 3-point party identification as the dependent variable preform similarly to the 7-point models. Nearly all of the variables that are significant in the 7-point models are all significant in the 3-point party identification models. In the 7-point models presented in Tables 3 and 4, there are 28 statistically significant independent variables in total. To check how the models with the 3-point party identification as the dependent variables compared to the 7-point models, I ran all of the models in Tables 3 and 4 using the 3-point party identification measure as the dependent variable. I then counted how many of the independent variables that were significant in the 7-point models were also statistically significant in the 3-point models. I found that of the 28 significant independent variables in the 7-point models, 26 of the variables were significant in the 3-point models. Put another way, 93% of the coefficients that were significant in the 7-point models were significant in the 3-point models. This indicates that the models perform quite similarly.

Initially, the story told by Table 4 may appear to be somewhat at odds with the story told by the models of party identification in 2002. Party identification did change in response some retrospective evaluations but not to terrorism or war just 1 year after 9/11; however, party identification did change in response to terrorism and war in 2004. How can this be? When one thinks about the political environment in 2004, though, this finding should not too be surprising. The period following 9/11 and the entry into Afghanistan were characterized by elite consensus in the realm of foreign policy. From 2002 to 2004, however, the political environment changed in important ways. The war in Iraq played a central role in the 2004 election and a growing number of citizens and Democratic elites expressed dissatisfaction with the president's handling of foreign affairs and Afghanistan. There was also growing dissensus over the Bush Administration's approach to terrorism. When elite consensus is lacking, there is more of an incentive for citizens who disagree with their party's position to change than when there is widespread bipartisan agreement.

A look at basic statistics from the 2004 wave of the survey indicates that there was less consensus among citizens on the issues of terrorism and war in 2002 than in 2004. In 2004, 63% of people either "approved" or "approved strongly" of Bush's handling of terrorism. This is a decrease of nearly 20 percentage points from 2002. In addition, in 2004 only about 46% of citizens thought that the war in Afghanistan was worth the costs, down by about 40% from 2002. Because the NES panel data ends in 2004, it is not possible to examine if the changes in party attachments than occurred from 2002 to 2004 persisted over time.

Although the information contained in Tables 3 and 4 clearly shows that retrospective evaluations in 2004 led to shifts in party identification in 2002 and 2004, the effect of retrospective evaluations on party identification can also be examined graphically. Figure 4 contains two graphs, each of which plots the the predicted probability of being a Republican when retrospective evaluations are set at their mean values and when the values of the retrospectives are moved one or two standard deviations above and below the mean. The first graph shows the effect of retrospectives on party identification in 2002, while the second graph shows the effect of retrospectives on party identification in 2004.[8] Thus, the graph allows us to examine how likely an individual with a given partisan attachment in 2000 is to be a Republican in 2002 and how likely a person with a given partisan attachment in 2002 is to be a Republican in 2004 based on different configurations of retrospective evaluations.[9]

For the sake of simplicity, the graphs plot the predicted probabilities for three partisan categories—strong Democrats, pure Independents, and strong Republicans.

[8] The predicted probabilities for the 2004 graph were generated using Model 1 in Table 4. The predicted probabilities for the 2002 graph were generated using Model 1 in Table 1 chose to plot the probability of being a Republican because the incumbent in both years was a Republican; however, the predicted probability of being a Democrat could also be plotted and would produce the same type of graph.

[9] The probability of being a Republican was calculated by adding the probabilities of being a strong Republican, a weak Republican, and leaning Republican. If the probability of being a leaning Republican is omitted, the substantive findings from the graphs do not change.

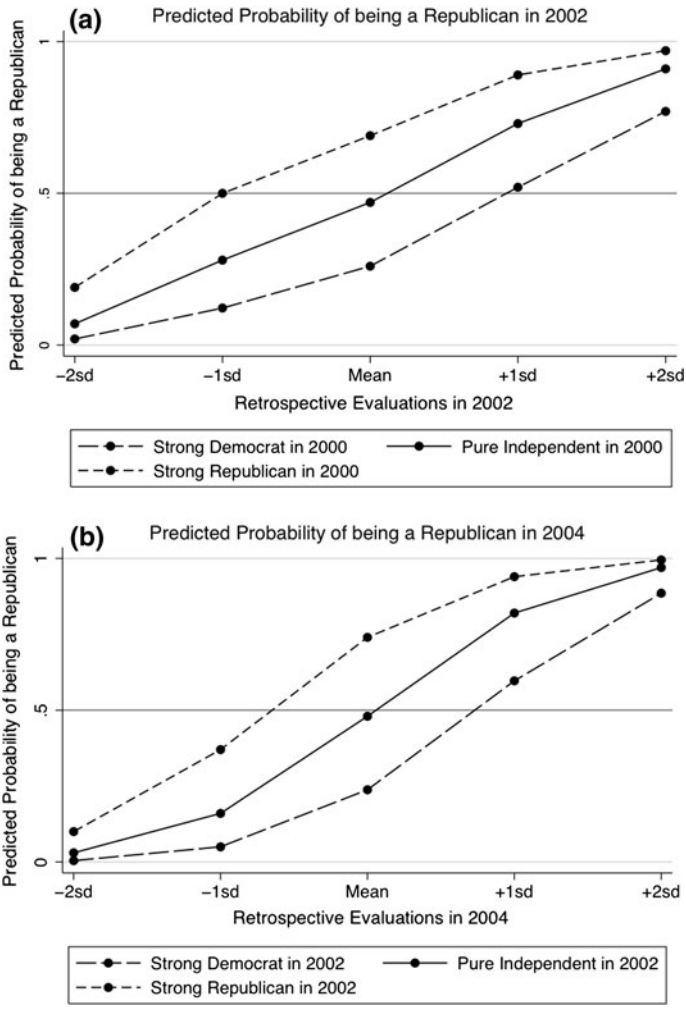

Fig. 1 Predicted probability of being a Republican in **a** 2002 and **b** 2004

Figure 1 nicely illustrates the fact that retrospective evaluations do influence party identification in important ways. Although the graphs vary slightly, they highlight the same trend when it comes to party identification: although those who were strong Republicans in either 2000 or 2002 are always more likely to be Republicans 2 years later, if retrospectives get bad enough their likelihood of being a Republican declines significantly and even crosses the 0.5 threshold, which marks the point at which a person is either classified as a Democrat or a Republican. This indicates that some people who were strong Republicans in 2000 or 2002 may have actually become Democrats if their evaluations of politics and economics were extremely unfavorable to the Bush administration. Similarly, although strong Democrats are unlikely to be Republicans when retrospectives are set at values that

are one or two standard deviations below the mean, when retrospectives shift to values that are one or two standard deviations above the mean, which indicates that retrospective evaluations are becoming increasingly favorable to the Bush administration, even strong Democrats may shift to the Republican party. These graphic results are similar to those presented in tabular form in Fiorina's original work.

An Alternative Model of Party Identification in 2004

Although the models in Table 4 are designed to examine changes in party identification in 2004, change in party identification can also be modeled more dynamically. In Table 5, I present a model of party identification in 2004 based on lagged party identification and *change* in the independent variables from 2002 to 2004. This helps reduce the collinearity and endogeneity among variables and provides a true model of how changes in evaluations relate to shifts in party identification. The change variables (denoted by a Δ in Table 5) are coded so respondents receive $a + 1$ if their evaluation on a given item became more positive from 2002 to 2004 (regardless of the magnitude of the change), a 0 if their evaluations stayed the same from 2002 to 2004, and $a - 1$ if their evaluations became more negative from 2002 to 2004 (again, regardless of the magnitude of the change). For example, a respondent who "disapproved strongly" of Bush's handling of terrorism in 2002 but who "approved" in 2004 would be coded as $a + 1$, since they became more approving on this item over time. The expectation is that as people become more positive in their evaluations from 2002 to 2004, the probability of moving toward the party of the president will increase. Although the Iraq variable can't be included in the change model since the war began in 2003, the change model contains other variables used throughout the course of this paper. If we look at Table 5, we find that, as expected, changes in several of the independent variables produce shifts in party identification. As in all previous models, the lagged measure of party identification is significant. In addition, we also see that changes in Bush's job performance and the national economy are both statistically significant predictors of changes in party identification.

Table 5 Change in party ID as a function of change in evaluations

Independent variables	Coefficients
Δ Bush job performance	0.20* (0.10)
Δ Personal finances	−0.06 (0.07)
Δ National economy	0.19* (0.08)
Δ Bush terrorism evaluation	0.10 (0.09)
Δ Afghanistan evaluation	0.50* (0.07)
Δ International reputation	−0.00 (0.08)
Lagged party identification	0.25* (0.02)
Pseudo R^2	0.19
Number of observations	481

Notes: Standard errors are in parentheses

Significance levels: * $p \leq 0.05$, all one-tailed tests

As people became more approving of the president's job overall or the national economy from 2002 to 2004, they became more likely to move toward the Republican Party. Finally, we see that changes in evaluations of Afghanistan from 2002 to 2004 produce shifts in party identification in 2004. The coefficient indicates that as citizens' evaluations of Afghanistan became more positive from 2002 to 2004, they became more likely to shift toward the Republican Party. It is important to note that the model of party identification presented in Table 5 provides a much more rigorous test of how retrospective evaluations impact changes in party identification. Because the independent variables measure change in retrospective evaluations, it therefore provides a more solid footing in inferring causation.

Discussion & Concluding Remarks

The goal of this paper was to examine Fiorina's political theory of party identification using contemporary data, since *The American Voter* and Fiorina's theory represent different approaches to the concept and study of party identification. Although there is surely a long-term component to party identification, which Fiorina's theory does incorporate, the political theory of party identification provides a useful way of conceptualizing changes in party identification that do occur in the electorate. Given that party identification is a political attitude, it is reasonable to believe that it can be altered by political events and evaluations. In this paper, I used NES panel data to test the idea that retrospective evaluations produce shifts in party identification. Although it is was not possible to provide exact replications of Fiorina's models, the models presented in this paper closely approximate the kinds of models that Fiorina used to test his theory of party identification.

A general comparison of the models presented here and Fiorina's models indicates that there are some important similarities. For example, Firorina finds that personal financial evaluations never lead to changes in party identification. In none of my models is the variable measuring respondents' evaluations of their personal finances a statistically significant predictor of party identification. Similarly, in all of Fiorina's models, the instrument for party identification is highly significant. Although my instrument for party identification differs slightly from Fiorina's, it is always a statistically significant predictor of current party identification. Although the models developed in this paper demonstrate that party identification is responsive to retrospective evaluations, as a stricter test of the link between retrospective evaluations and party identification, I also modeled party identification as a function of changes in retrospective evaluations from 2002 to 2004. This model indicated that changes in evaluations from 2002 to 2004 did produce shifts in party identification in 2004.

The most important point to take away from the above analysis is that the distribution of opinions in the electorate and elite signals may be important to changes in party identification. In 2002, there was widespread agreement among elites (and citizens) about terrorism, which provided partisans with little incentive to

change their partisanship—Democrats who supported the president, for instance, found that elites in the party also expressed support for the president directly after 9/11. In 2004, however, evaluations about events related to 9/11 were important to shifts in party identification. This is interesting because there was more disagreement among political elites in 2004 about terrorism and war than in 2002. The implication here is that context plays a role in determining when and why retrospective evaluations shape party identification. Although this idea cannot be generalized too broadly since the data used in this paper only cover 4 years, it certainly deserves further investigation.

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Appendix A

See Tables 6, 7, 8 and 9.

Table 6 Ordered probit model of PID in 2000, first stage model

Independent variables	7-Point PID	3-Point PID
Age	−0.004* (0.002)	−0.004 (0.003)
Income	0.023* (0.012)	0.019^{+} (0.014)
Gender	0.077 (0.078)	0.150^{+} (0.093)
Education	0.100 (0.023)	0.097 (0.032)
Region	0.118^{+} (0.083)	0.091 (0.100)
Race	−1.28* (0.135)	−1.29* (0.17)
Liberal	−0.459* (0.175)	−0.365* (0.218)
Conservative	0.683* (0.167)	0.857* (0.208)
Don't know ideology	0.056 (0.209)	0.210 (0.266)
Union	−0.367* (0.113)	−0.446* (0.136)
Religiosity	0.083* (0.033)	0.088* (0.039)
Catholic	−0.436^{+} (0.284)	−0.614* (0.337)
Jewish	−1.24* (0.379)	−1.32* (0.459)
Protestant	−0.182 (0.280)	−0.327 (0.333)
Cut point 1	−0.485 (0.388)	0.250 (0.463)
Cut point 2	0.094 (0.386)	1.19 (0.465)
Cut point 3	0.547 (0.386)	–
Cut point 4	0.861 (0.388)	–
Cut point 5	1.31 (0.390)	–
Cut point 6	1.82 (0.392)	–
LR χ^2	346.61	289.07
Pseudo R^2	0.11	0.18
Number of observations	813	729

Notes: Standard errors are in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$; $^{+}$ $p < 0.10$

Table 7 Ordered probit model of PID in 2002, first stage model

	2004 Model	
	7-Point PID	3-Point PID
Age	−0.003 (0.003)	−0.004 (0.003)
Income	0.076* (0.023)	0.078* (0.025)
Gender	−0.088 (0.081)	−0.107 (0.093)
Education	−0.005 (0.029)	−0.008 (0.033)
Region	0.046 (0.085)	−0.036 (0.098)
Race	−1.33* (0.141)	−1.14* (0.162)
Liberal	−0.44* (0.120)	−0.519* (0.135)
Conservative	1.02* (0.105)	0.974* (0.116)
Don't know ideology	0.121 (0.130)	0.056 (0.151)
Union	−0.238* (0.117)	−0.259* (0.135)
Urban	−0.110 (0.101)	−0.091 (0.119)
Religiosity	0.085* (0.034)	0.081* (0.039)
Catholic	−0.582* (0.302)	−0.693* (0.338)
Jewish	−1.13* (0.384)	−1.21* (0.436)
Protestant	−0.460 (0.298)	−0.548 (0.332)
Cut point 1	−1.25 (0.380)	−0.712 (0.424)
Cut point 2	−0.605 (0.377)	0.234 (0.424)
Cut point 3	−0.183 (0.376)	–
Cut point 4	0.021 (0.377)	–
Cut point 5	0.495 (0.378)	–
Cut point 6	1.16 (0.380)	–
LR χ^2	376.12	298.10
Pseudo R^2	0.13	0.19
Number of observations	773	738

Notes: Standard errors are in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$; $^{+}$ $p < 0.10$

Table 8 Ordered probit models of 2002 PID (7-point scale) as a function of 2000 PID and retrospective evaluations

Independent variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Bush job performance	0.25* (0.05)	0.24* (0.05)	–
Personal finances	−0.05 (0.04)	−0.05 (0.04)	−0.03 (0.04)
National economy	0.05 (0.05)	0.05 (0.05)	0.06 (0.05)
Bush economic evaluation	0.09* (0.05)	0.08* (0.05)	0.18* (0.04)
Bush terrorism evaluation	0.04 (0.05)	0.05 (0.05)	0.15* (0.04)
Afghanistan evaluation	0.09 (0.11)	–	0.04 (0.11)
International reputation	−0.02 (0.05)	−0.01 (0.05)	0.01 (0.05)
Party identification	0.68* (0.03)	0.68* (0.03)	0.70* (0.02)
Pseudo R^2	0.33	0.33	0.32
Number of observations	998	1,019	1,034

Notes: Standard errors are in parentheses

Significance levels: * $p \leq 0.05$, all one-tailed tests

Table 9 Ordered probit models of 2004 PID as a function of 2002 PID and retrospective evaluations

Independent variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Bush job performance	0.17* (0.07)	0.18* (0.07)	0.17* (0.06)	–	–
Personal finances	−0.07 (0.06)	−0.06 (0.06)	−0.06 (0.06)	−0.07 (0.06)	−0.06 (0.06)
National economy	−0.01 (0.05)	−0.02 (0.05)	−0.02 (0.05)	−0.01 (0.05)	−0.02 (0.05)
Bush economic evaluation	0.21* (0.06)	0.23* (0.06)	0.21* (0.06)	0.27* (0.06)	0.31* (0.05)
Bush terrorism evaluation	0.00 (0.06)	0.00 (0.06)	–	0.07 (0.05)	0.09* (0.05)
Afghanistan evaluation	0.07 (0.14)	–	0.06 (0.14)	0.17 (0.13)	–
International reputation	0.03 (0.06)	0.02 (0.06)	0.04 (0.06)	0.04 (0.06)	0.05 (0.06)
Iraq evaluation	0.17 (0.06)	0.19* (0.10)	0.18 (0.11)	0.15 (0.11)	0.18* (0.10)
Party identification	0.72* (0.03)	0.72* (0.03)	0.72* (0.03)	0.72* (0.03)	0.73* (0.03)
Pseudo R^2	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38
Number of observations	741	755	748	748	762

Notes: Standard errors are in parentheses

Significance levels: * $p \leq 0.05$, all one-tailed tests

Appendix B: Question Wording and Variable Coding

Party Identification

Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a REPUBLICAN, a DEMOCRAT, an INDEPENDENT, or what?

Would you call yourself a STRONG [Democrat/Republican] or a NOT VERY STRONG [Democrat/Republican]? Do you think of yourself as CLOSER to the Republican Party or to the Democratic party?

Coding: 0 = Strong Democrat, 1 = Weak Democrat, 2 = Leaning Democrat, 3 = Independent, 4 = Leaning Republican, 5 = Weak Republican, 6 = Strong Republican

Ideology

We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. When it comes to politics, do you usually think of yourself as EXTREMELY LIBERAL, LIBERAL, SLIGHTLY LIBERAL,MODERATE OR MIDDLE OF THE ROAD, SLIGHTLY CONSERVATIVE, CONSERVATIVE, EXTREMELY CONSERVATIVE, or haven't you thought much about this?

If you had to choose, would you consider yourself a LIBERAL or a CONSERVATIVE?

Coding: Coded as series of dummy variables: Conservative: 1 = Conservative, Slightly Conservative, and Extremely Conservative, 0 = Rest; Liberal: 1 = Liberal, Slightly Liberal, and Extremely Liberal, 0 = Rest; Moderate: 1 = Moderates, 0 = Rest; "Don't Know" Ideology: 1 = DK, 0 = Rest

Census Region

Northeast = (CT, ME, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT) North Central = (IL, IN, IA, KS, MI, MN, MO, NE, ND, OH, SD, WI) South = (AL, AR, DE, DC, FL, GA,

KY, LA, MD, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX, VA, WV) West = (AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NM, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY)

Coding: Coded as a dummy variable where 1 = South, Rest = 0

Income

Please look at the booklet and tell me the letter of the income group that includes the income of all members of your family living here in 1999 before taxes. This figure should include salaries, wages, pensions, dividends, interest, and all other income. Please tell me the letter of the income group that includes the income you had in 1999 before taxes. This figure should include salaries, wages,pensions, dividends, interest, and all other income. (In dollars)

IF UNCERTAIN: WHAT WOULD BE YOUR BEST GUESS?

Coding: 1 = NONE OR LESS THAN 4,999; 2 = 5,000–9,999; 3 = 10,000–14,999; 4 = 15,000–24,999; 5 = 25,000–34,999; 6 = 35,000–49,999; 7 = 50,000–64,999; 8 = 65,000–74,999; 9 = 75,000–84,999; 10 = 85,000–94,999; 11 = 95,000–104,999; 12 = 105,000–114,999; 13 = 115,000–124,999; 14 = 125,000–134,999; 15 = 135,000–144,999; 16 = 145,000–154,999; 17 = 155,000–164,999; 18 = 165,000–174,999; 19 = 175,000–184,999; 20 = 185,000–194,999; 21 = 195,000–199,999; 22 = 200,000 and over

Coding in 2002 and 2000: 1 = 0–14,999; 2 = 15,000–34,999; 3 = 35,000–49,999; 4 = Just about 50,000; 5 = 50,000–64,999; 6 = 65,000–84,999; 7 = More than 84,999

Union

Do you or anyone else in this household belong to a labor union?

Coding: 1 = Yes, 0 = No

Urban or Rural

2000 Census urban/rural classification

Coding: 1 = Urban, 0 = Rural

Race

What racial or ethnic group or groups best describes you?

Coding: 1 = African American, 0 = All others

Religiosity

Do you go to religious services every week, almost every week, once or twice a month, a few times a year, or never?

Coding: 1 = Never, 2 = A few times a year, 3 = Once or twice a month, 4 = Almost every week, 5 = Every week

Religious Denomination

Is your religious preference PROTESTANT, ROMAN CATHOLIC, JEWISH, or something else?

Coding: Coded as a series of dummy variables: Protestant: 1 = Protestant, 0 = Rest; Catholic: 1 = Catholic, 0 = Rest; Jewish: 1 = Jewish, 0 = Rest

Age

Age was calculated by subtracting the year of birth from 2000. For cases where R refused to give year of birth or year of birth was NA in the survey variable, a check was made of Household listing information: if age of R was included in the Household listing, it was included here from the Household listing.

Coding: Years ranging from 18 to 97

Education

What is the highest grade of school or year of college you have completed?

Coding: years ranging from 0 to 17+

Bush Approval

Do you APPROVE or DISAPPROVE of the way George W. Bush is HANDLING HIS JOB AS PRESIDENT? (Do you [approve/disapprove]) STRONGLY or NOT STRONGLY?

Coding: 4 = Approve Strongly, 3 = Approve, 2 = Disapprove, 1 = Disapprove strongly

Personal Financial Evaluation

We are interested in how people are getting along financially these days. Would you say that you (and your family) are BETTER OFF, WORSE OFF, or just about the same financially as you were a year ago? (Is that) MUCH [better/worse] off or SOMEWHAT [better/worse] off?

Coding: 5 = Much Better, 4 = Somewhat better, 3 = Same, 2 = Somewhat worse, 1 = Much worse

National Economic Evaluation

Now thinking about the economy in the country as a whole, would you say that over the past year the nation's economy has gotten BETTER, STAYED ABOUT THE SAME, or gotten WORSE? (Would you say) MUCH [better/worse] or SOMEWHAT [better/worse]?

Coding: 5 = Much Better, 4 = Somewhat better, 3 = Same, 2 = Somewhat worse, 1 = Much worse

Bush Economy Evaluation

Do you APPROVE or DISAPPROVE of the way George W. Bush is HANDLING THE ECONOMY? Do you [approve/disapprove]) STRONGLY or NOT STRONGLY?

Coding: 4 = Approve Strongly, 3 = Approve, 2 = Disapprove, 1 = Disapprove strongly

Bush Terrorism Evaluation

All things considered, do you APPROVE or DISAPPROVE of the way George W. Bush [is handling the war on terrorism/has responded to the terrorist attack of September 11]? Do you [approve/disapprove]) STRONGLY or NOT STRONGLY?

Coding: 4 = Approve Strongly, 3 = Approve, 2 = Disapprove, 1 = Disapprove strongly

Afghanistan Evaluation

Taking everything into account, do you think the U.S. war against the Taliban government in Afghanistan was WORTH THE COST or NOT?

Coding: 1 = Worth it, 0 = Not worth it

Iraq Evaluation (only in 2004 Model, since War in Iraq started in 2003)

Taking everything into account, do you think the war in Iraq has been WORTH THE COST or NOT?

Coding: 1 = Worth it, 0 = Not worth it

U.S. Reputation

Turning to some other issues facing the country. During the past year, would you say that the United States' position in the world has grown WEAKER, STAYED ABOUT THE SAME, or has it grown STRONGER?

Coding: −1 = Weaker, 0 = Same, +1 = Stronger

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