

## PREFACE

The idea for this book originated in research for an earlier book on the public's reaction to President George W. Bush's performance and policies, particularly regarding the Iraq War. I suspected that the growing unpopularity of Bush and the war during his second term might have inflicted collateral damage on the Republican Party, and I found evidence that it did. This raised the question whether performance ratings of other presidents affected their party's public standing, and the answer, after some additional research, was a clear yes. While pursuing that question, I discovered the wide variety of ways in which opinion surveys had, over the postwar period, sought to measure popular reactions to presidents and their parties. These studies have produced a remarkably rich trove of data for examining myriad ways in which modern presidents have influenced their party's popularity, reputation for competence, assumed policy commitments, appeal as objects of identification, and electoral performance. I reported analyses of some of these data in a series of papers and journal articles but eventually decided that only a book would be adequate to the data and subject. The result is in your hand (or on your screen). I had intended to end the book with Barack Obama's just-completed presidency, but Donald Trump's disruptive election and singular early presidency raised intriguing questions about how he might be affecting his party's public standing, so where possible I have extended my analyses to cover his election and first year as well.

The book could not have been written without the help and encouragement of many colleagues and friends. My graduate students and faculty colleagues at UC San Diego were first to hear many of the arguments presented here and have been generous in their comments and critiques; the contributions of Amy Bridges, Zoli Hajnal, Seth Hill, Sam Kernell, Thad Kousser, Rick Kronick, Megumi Naoi, Simeon Nichter, Sam Popkin, and David Weins

deserve special recognition. Beyond my department, I've benefited from comments from the participants in conference panels where some of this material was first presented, with special nods to Jon Bond, Larry Bartels, Hans Noel, John Sides, Steve Rogers, Lynn Vavreck, and John Zaller. My largest collegial debt, however, is to George W. Edwards III, who as editor of *Presidential Studies Quarterly* encouraged me to submit and agreed to publish some of my initial findings there.

I am also grateful to Chuck Myers, Holly Smith, and Ruth Goring at the University of Chicago Press and to my indexer, Meg Wallace, for their diligent and proficient work in seeing this project to its completion.

My most profound obligation, however, is to all of those involved in gathering and disseminating the countless surveys that have gone into making this book. The gatherers include a long list of academic and commercial survey researchers whose contributions are cited throughout the following pages. Prominent among them are the venerable Gallup Poll, with useful surveys stretching back to Harry Truman's presidency; several decades of polls sponsored by the major media firms; and the high-quality surveys conducted in recent years by academic and charitable institutions. The American National Election Studies (both the time series covering every presidential election since 1952 and several specialty studies) and the newer comprehensive academic election studies, notably, since 2006, the Cooperative Congressional Election Study, have also been essential to the project. Far too many people have contributed importantly to these studies for me to name them all here, but I am especially grateful to the ANES's principal investigators, from Warren Miller and his Michigan colleagues to today's Vincent Hutchings, Shanto Iyengar, and Ted Brady, as well as to the outstanding roster of scholars who have served on the ANES board of overseers over the years, for keeping the enterprise going so well for so long. I also owe special thanks to talented people behind the CCES, created and led by Steve Ansolabehere and Brian Schaffner and executed by Doug Rivers and an exceptional staff, notably including Ashley Grosse, Samantha Luks, and Liz Salazar.

I am also deeply obliged to the people and institutions that have made the data accessible to scholars. Foremost is the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, formerly at the University of Connecticut under Paul Herrnson's direction, now at Cornell University under Peter Enns's leadership. The Roper archives are the source of a large majority of the surveys I examine in the following chapters. The Pew Research Center has also been generous in disseminating its collection of high-quality surveys. I am particularly obliged to Michael Dimock, the Pew Center's former director of

polling and current president, not only for his help in acquiring data but also, as my graduate student many years ago, for introducing me to the graphic capabilities of Excel. I also owe PollingReport.com for my daily fix of marginals on the wide range of political questions I routinely track, including many analyzed here.

Last but not at all least, I gratefully acknowledge the contribution of the millions of ordinary citizens who have agreed over the decades to participate in political surveys. Their usually unsung and unrewarded acts of civic engagement have been indispensable to the work of monitoring, explaining, and evaluating modern democracy in America.

Finally, I take great pleasure in dedicating this book to Martin and Barbara Shapiro, mentors and friends since my very first undergraduate foray into political science more than fifty years ago. Their inspiration and example put me on a career path that has become only more rewarding over the ensuing years.

Some of the research reported here appeared in journals listed below, and I appreciate the permissions they grant to their authors to include in later work material first published in their pages:

"The Effects of the George W. Bush Presidency on Partisan Attitudes." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 39:2 (June 2009): 172–209. ©2009 Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress.

"The President's Effect on Partisan Attitudes." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 42:4 (December 2012): 683–718. ©2012 Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress.

"How Presidents Shape Their Party's Reputation and Prospects: New Evidence." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 45:1 (March 2015): 1–28. ©2015 Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress.

"The Coevolution of Affect toward Presidents and Their Parties." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 46:2 (June 2016): 1–29. ©2016 Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress.

"The Effects of the Early Trump Presidency on Public Attitudes toward the Republican Party." *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, forthcoming. ©2018 Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress.

"The Obama Legacy and the Future of Partisan Conflict: Demographic Change and Generational Imprinting." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 667 (September 2016): 72–91. ©by the American Academy of Political and Social Science.

"Polarization, Gridlock, and Presidential Campaign Politics in 2016." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 667 (September 2016): 226–46. ©by the American Academy of Political and Social Science.

"The Triumph of Polarized Partisanship: Donald Trump's Improbable Victory in 2016." *Political Science Quarterly* 132:1 (2017): 1–34. ©2017 by the Academy of Political Science.

"Donald Trump, the Public, and Congress: The First Seven Months." *Forum* 15:3 (October 2017): 525–45. ISSN (Online) 1540-8884, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1515/for-2017-0034>. ©2017 Walter de Gruyter GmbH Berlin/Boston.

