

NAME Adwin

GRADING RUBRIC PS40 PRACTICE PAPER

I. INTRODUCTION – clearly states what the paper will argue:

11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 (20)

II. EVIDENCE – ENGAGES FIGURES CORRECTLY (60 point in total)?

15 points per each piece of evidence

1. 13 out of 15

2. 12 out of 15

3. 13 out of 15

4. 15 out of 15

III. CONNECTS EVIDENCE TOGETHER & TO ARGUMENT (discusses counter-points)

5 6 7 8 (9) 10

IV. OVERALL QUALITY OF PAPER/WRITING/EVIDENCE/CITATIONS/ETC

5 6 7 8 (9) 10

Ashwin Ranade

Poli Sci 40

Discussion 1Q

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Prof Vavreck, TA Vitalone

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Trump and the Division of America

In this paper, I argue that Donald Trump's presidency has significantly changed American public opinion on policy, by increasing the partisan divide. I support my argument with 4 pieces of evidence: panel C, panel D, panel F, and panel J.

Firstly, analyzing the timeframe of the figure in comparison to Donald Trump's presidency — while Donald Trump won the presidential election in the fall of 2016, the figure looks at public opinion over the much larger time span 1994 to 2017. Hence, in order to pinpoint the effects of the Trump presidency on American public opinion, I will focus on the last two data points, 2015 and 2017; these two data points, one pre-Trump, and one post-Trump, will most clearly show the change of American public opinion due to Trump. *but began his campaign in 2015*

Now, time to look at the panels. Examining the last two data points (one pre-Trump, one post-Trump) in Panel C, regarding if poor people "have it easy" due to government benefits, it can be seen that the size of the gap between the two parties increases substantially from 2015 to 2017, corresponding with the rise of Trump. Clearly, this supports my argument that Trump's presidency has increased the partisan divide. Some might argue that this issue has always been split upon party lines, but looking at the figure, this is clearly false — from 2004 to 2015, the partisan gap was in fact decreasing ^{1?} regarding this issue, until 2017 when the partisan divide

abruptly increases. Hence, it's pretty easy to see that in Panel C, the partisan gap sharply increases during the timespan of Trump's victory.

Next, reviewing Panel D, which again talks about welfare and government, a very similar pattern emerges; the partisan divide stays about constant from 1994 to 2015 (maybe increasing slightly), and then suddenly explodes in magnitude in 2017. Once again, this supports my original argument, that Trump's presidency has increased the partisan divide regarding issues. It makes sense that Panel D and Panel C's data are similar, as well, since both talk about the government's role regarding welfare. We can see more evidence in Panel F, regarding the position of black people in America, for an increasing partisan divide due to Trump. The gap remains very constant from 1994 to 2015, and then rapidly expands from 2015 to 2017. In fact, *big increase in 2015 to* the size of the increase of the partisan gap from 2015 to 2017 is perhaps the biggest increase in the entire figure between two data points. Clearly, something happened that caused the party polarization between 2015 and 2017, most likely Trump. This makes sense — Trump frequently made very controversial statements regarding race during the 2016 election cycle, which gets reflected in the change of public opinions regarding life as a black person in America. Finally, Panel J (which explores attitudes regarding environmental policies) also shows the partisan gap increasing from 2015 to 2017 and staying constant before, hinting that the Trump presidential election increased the partisan gap for this issue as well.

you only needed 3
From the 4 panels reviewed above (Panel C, regarding the poor; Panel D, regarding welfare; Panel F, regarding race; and Panel J, regarding the environment), it is evident that the election of Trump significantly increased the partisan gap in American public opinion for these issues, since the partisan divides stayed relatively constant for the 4 issues before Trump, and *not true for all* rapidly expanded directly after Trump. We can cross apply this trend to all issues, if we qualify a

bit. Initially, some panels might seem to contradict my conclusion. However, looking closer at the issues in question, it's clear why these are exceptions, rather than the rule. Firstly, in Panel B, which asks if government is wasteful and inefficient, the partisan divide decreased from 2015 to 2017. However, in both parties about 50% disagree and 50% agree with the statement, which shows that the issue isn't really partisan, but just a question of how the government affects Americans in general. Perhaps the government shutdowns in 2017 caused more Democrats to question the effectiveness of government. But overall, this panel should be overlooked since the issue doesn't feature strong party polarization — the maximum gap between the parties is not even 10%, which is puny compared to the other issues. And, finally, for Panel H (which considers homosexuality's place in society), the partisan gap stays constant simply because in contemporary America, homosexuality is no longer a partisan issue. Accepted by both parties, this issue therefore shouldn't be affected by presidential elections, and as shown by Panel H, it isn't. Trump's presidency corresponding with an increasing partisan divide matches Trump's controversial campaign: full of targeted insults and over-the-top promises, his campaign insinuated an "us versus them" mentality to divide America, evidenced by his mocking of immigrants and the disabled, which fractured America in two more than ever. Therefore, looking at the figure, and remembering the general campaign strategy of Trump, it's clear that Donald Trump's presidency has appreciably increased the partisan divide of American public opinion.