PARTISANSHIP AS A SOURCE OF PRESIDENTIAL RANKINGS

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ABSTRACT

Presidential ranking polls communicate far more than an ordered list of names; they communicate the leadership qualities our nation values. Given this, the results of presidential ranking polls have been a source of contention. One recurrent concern is that the academic raters surveyed in the polls, who tend overwhelmingly to be partisan Democrats, may favor some presidents over others. This study looks for evidence of a partisan bias in the ranking polls. Concentrating on the modern presidency, we find that presidential partisanship is a potent predictor of rank; academic raters consistently rank Democratic presidents ten places higher on average than Republican presidents. We also compare the rankings from academics to rankings from non-academics and show that academic raters favor Democratic presidents more than non-academic raters. Our findings suggest, in accordance with previous literature, that partisan attachment affects the subjective judgments that presidential ranking polls inherently require.

BIAS IN PRESIDENTIAL RANKINGS

Since their inception in 1948 by Arthur Schlesinger Sr., presidential ranking polls have generated widespread curiosity. Because of popular interest in polls and ranks, numerous polls of historians and political scientists continue to be taken. Far from being an inconsequential parlor game, the presidential rankings communicate the leadership qualities our society values. Voters, in choosing future leaders, may look to the qualities exemplified by our highest ranked presidents, preferring to elect the next Franklin Roosevelt over the next Herbert Hoover. Leaders may learn from the rankings as well: current presidents may try to govern like the highly ranked Harry Truman rather than the poorly ranked Warren Harding.

Given the far-reaching impact of presidential rankings, it is imperative that we explore the factors that lead raters to rank presidents higher or lower. Competent performance *should* lead presidents to have higher rankings, and there are many volumes dedicated to examining presidential performance [1] It is not the intention of this study to explore presidents' actions or attributes; we instead intend to shed light on how academic raters rank the presidents. Specifically, we want to know if partisan biases lead the rankings to value some presidents

over others, not because of the presidents' actions or accomplishments, but simply because of the presidents' partisan affiliation and the partisan nature of their actions.

Multiple studies have shown that academics, the pool from which most of the raters in presidential ranking polls are drawn, tend to identify as Democratic and liberal [2] Nationwide polls of social science and humanities professors show that Democratic professors outnumber Republican professors by at least seven to one [3] This difference is starker at elite institutions[4]. In addition, those affiliated with universities overwhelmingly donate to liberal and Democratic causes over conservative ones [5] Thus, conservatives have taken issue with results of presidential ranking polls which primarily survey university academics.

For fifty years, studies have shown that partisan affiliation has a powerful and underlying psychological component from which other political opinions are formed and organized [6] In other words, people make value judgments based upon their partisan beliefs and prefer information that coincides with those beliefs [7] For example, when asked to judge the veracity of new information, subjects tend to rate information that coincides with their partisan beliefs, regardless of its quality, as more "convincing" and "better done" than information that contradicts their beliefs [8] In other words, partisanship and ideology shape people's judgments. While academics and other experts may assert objectivity, they are subject to the same psychological forces that affect everyone else. We do not argue that the expert raters in any of the mainstream presidential ranking polls *intentionally* skewed their rankings in order to make political statements or affect future leadership. We do suggest, however, that historians, political scientists, and other presidential experts are human, and therefore are influenced by the same psychological forces (including the forces related to political ideology and partisan attachment) that affect all others.

ACCUSATIONS OF BIAS

Scholars, pundits, and the public have debated the influence of partisan bias in presidential rankings and many have argued that presidential rankings tell us more about the dispositions of the raters and less about the presidents they ran [9]. For instance, presidency scholar James Pfiffner commented, "Certainly, our political values as well as our personal reaction to presidential personalities come into play in our judgments, both as scholars and as citizens answering poll questions" [10] In broader terms, James Piereson argues the debate over the rankings "mirrors the national argument over the role of the federal government in our society, a philosophical and political contest that has been waged between the parties for the greater part of this century." [11] Schlesinger's early rankings sparked criticism from the right: some claimed that the overtly Democratic partisan affiliations and economically liberal ideologies of the historian raters gave the appearance of partisan bias in the results [12] For example, Stanford historian Thomas A. Bailey claimed the original Schlesinger poll was a "Harvard-eastern elitist-Democratic plot." [13]

More recent polls have faced criticism from the right because of their perceived poor treatment of the still popular President Ronald Reagan. James Piereson called the 1996 Schlesinger poll "just one more elaboration of the central assumptions of modern liberalism – namely, that progress can only be achieved through an interventionist federal government that sponsors programs to redistribute income and promote equality." [14] Referring to Reagan,

Alvin Felzenberg argues that "During Reagan's administration, the president's philosophy, more often than anything else, governed his actions. One would expect his critics, who disagreed with it, to look upon surveys of this kind as invitations to vote against Reagan for the third time." [15]

Many scholars have undertaken efforts to search for partisan bias in the presidential rankings [16] The overall consensus of academics, however, is that there is little or no such bias in the rankings [17] For instance, Tim Blessing argues that the president's date of service explains most of their rank with little room left statistically for bias to enter the evaluation. He therefore concludes that ratings "have virtually nothing to do with partisanship" [18] Others have argued that since polls of ideologically differing historians have identified nearly identical lists as the best and worst presidents (i.e. top five and bottom five), partisanship and ideology play little role regardless of who does the rating [19] In addition, academics who participate in the ranking polls deny that partisanship influences their judgments. For example, Richard Pious, a political scientist who has taken part in presidential ranking polls, identifies himself as a "secular suburban liberal and a registered Democrat" with an Ivy League degree. Even though he reports ranking Democratic presidents higher than Republican ones on average, he claims that he doesn't "rank presidents in terms of partisanship or ideology" and that only polls sponsored by conservatives are biased [20].

We are left with a conundrum. Many on the right argue that because academics tend to be leftist Democrats, their ideology influences their assessments of presidential performance. Most academics have dismissed these claims; however, those dismissing the claims are drawn from the same pool of academics who are accused of bias in the first place. More importantly, few have clearly defined what bias in the ranking polls would look like if it exists. To this point, scholars have generally examined the rank of only one president or only the highest and lowest ranked presidents in looking for evidence of partisan bias.

MEASURING BIAS

To reexamine the question of bias in presidential ranking polls, we first define bias and make predictions as to where it might manifest itself. Polls have shown that academics overwhelmingly identify themselves as liberal and Democratic [21] Since academics comprise most of the experts rating the presidents in the Schlesinger and other supposedly mainstream unbiased polls, it is reasonable to expect that raters will be overwhelmingly Democratic as well. Given the raters' likely overall predispositions, we expect the rankings to favor certain presidents over others, but, which presidents? Simply, we expect the raters to favor Democratic presidents over Republican ones and we expect this to be evident in the ranking of the twentieth and twenty-first century presidents; therefore we examine the rankings of Presidents William McKinley through George W. Bush. We choose this sample timeframe for important reasons.

First, those doing the rankings overwhelmingly tend to have expertise in the twentieth century [22] This leads us to believe that any bias that may occur will manifest itself with the presidents that the raters have knowledge and interest in. Therefore, we would not expect partisan bias to manifest itself in the rankings of presidents such as John Tyler, Millard Fillmore, or Franklin Pierce.

Second, this time period contains the stable party system that continues to exist today. If bias is going to affect the rankings, we expect it to result in higher rankings for presidents who belong to the same party and/or lower rankings for presidents who belong to the opposing party of the raters. We do not expect the raters to be biased for or against presidents belonging to parties such as the Federalist, Democratic-Republican, Whig, or Union Party, that no longer exist or are organized around political questions that have already been put to rest.

Third, because of McKinley's style of governance and his solidification of the business community into the Republican Party, many argue that the modern presidency and current party system began with McKinley's presidency [23] While realignments have occurred and some issue cleavages have shifted in the last 113 years, [24] the Republican and Democratic parties have existed during this time based upon the same general sets of principles and ideologies [25] Therefore, the partisan predispositions that rankers may have will be relevant to presidents beginning with McKinley.

DATA

Our data begins with the 2009 C-SPAN Historians Survey of Presidential Leadership [26]. This poll asked sixty-five presidential historians, political scientists, and professional observers to rate the presidents' success on ten attributes of leadership. These attributes are: Public Persuasion; Crisis Leadership; Economic Management; Moral Authority; International Relations; Administrative Skills; Relations with Congress; Vision/Setting an Agenda; Pursued Equal Justice For All; and Performance within the Context of the Times. Based on the scores from each of these ten attributes, a total rating was given to each president as well.

Besides being the most recent, this poll is especially useful for two reasons. First, it asked the raters to rate the presidents with raw numerical scores; these numerical scores were then converted into rankings. This is valuable because the difference in rankings may not be consistent throughout the list of presidents. For example, the difference between presidents ranked 1 and 2 may not be the same as the difference between presidents ranked 23 and 24. Therefore, using the raw scores in addition to the rankings allows more precision. Second, the C-SPAN poll includes the ten attribute categories in addition to the overall cumulative score. This allows more measures with which to examine bias. For instance, one might perceive partisan bias in the total ratings of the presidents, but closer inspection of the multiple categories might show that both Republicans and Democrats are favored in certain categories of leadership. One drawback to the using the C-SPAN polls is that the criteria used by the raters may lead to the appearance of a partisan bias because some of the criteria could potentially favor Democratic presidents. We address this concern more fully later; but for now, we can state that because the C-SPAN results are similar to other polls which do not use their criteria, the criteria do not seem to be driving the rankings.

LIMITATIONS OF THE DATA

Unfortunately, studies of the American presidency are often hindered by the historical fact that the country has had a small number of presidents. This provides a limited number of

observations from which to draw statistical inferences. Therefore, our analysis, like many others, has a small *n*. While we apply appropriate statistical measures where applicable, our inferences are hindered by the small number of presidents in the study. Because of these inherent limitations, statistical significance is undeterminable in some instances and we are forced to leave questions of materiality to the reader. We will note that we attempted to mitigate some of these problems by requesting the raw survey data from C-SPAN. This would have provided 65 observations (one for each rater in the 2009 survey) and mitigated our small *n* problem. However, C-SPAN will not release the raw survey data, even with the raters names removed; this leaves us with only the average rankings with which to work.

ANALYSIS

Table 1 provides the 2009 C-SPAN scores and rankings of the seven Democratic and twelve Republican presidents from McKinley through George W. Bush. The first column provides the leadership categories that the raters used to rate the presidents. The overall cumulative score for each president is the second to bottom row. Columns two and three provide the average raw score and average rank of the seven Democratic presidents in each category.

Columns four and five provide the average raw score and average rank of the twelve Republican presidents in each category. Columns six and seven provide the differences between the average Democratic scores/ranks and the average Republican scores/ranks. Positive numbers in column six indicate that the Democratic presidents received higher scores on average than the Republicans.

In column seven, negative numbers indicate that Democratic presidents received higher ranks on average than the Republicans. Difference of means tests are used to determine the statistical significance of the differences in scores/ranks between the two parties.

In columns six and seven, we first observe that in every category the Democratic presidents are on average ranked higher than the Republicans. Democrats have the biggest lead in the category of "Pursued Equal Justice for All;" they lead Republicans by 25 points in the raw score and twelve places in the rankings. Most telling, however, is that Democratic presidents lead Republican presidents by 23 points and 14 places in the category of "Vision/Setting an Agenda."

This indicates that regardless of what the presidents actually accomplished while in office, the raters seemed to favor the Democrats' agenda over the Republicans' agenda by a wide margin. The overall score favors Democrats by 141 points and by 11 places. The average Democrat has a rank of 11th place overall while the average Republican has an average rank of 22nd overall. Regardless of the small sample size (nineteen presidents), five of the categories show statistically significant differences between the ratings of the Democratic and Republican presidents. Table 1 shows that, for modern presidents, the academic raters consistently favor Democrats to Republicans.

The evidence in Table 1 does not necessarily indicate that partisan biases played a role in the ratings. It could be that the Democratic presidents are simply "greater" than the Republican presidents in the sample. A "control group" of raters would allow for a comparison to the C-SPAN academics.

Table 1. C-SPAN 2009 Survey Results, McKinley through George W. Bush

Category	Democratic Presidents		Republican Presidents		Difference	
	Average Raw Score	Average Rank	Average Raw Score	Average Rank	Average Raw Score	Average Rank
Public Persuasion	70	13	53	22	17*	-9
Crisis Leadership	68	13	54	21	14	-8
Economic Management	64	11	48	22	16**	-11*
Moral Authority	62	15	53	21	9	-6
International Relations	66	15	60	19	6	-4
Administrative Skills	64	13	56	20	8	-7
Relations with Congress	60	14	53	20	7	-6
Vision/Setting an Agenda	73	10	50	24	23**	-14**
Pursued Equal Justice for All	70	8	45	20	25***	-12***
Performance with the Context of the Time	69	12	53	22	16*	-10*
Overall Score	664	11	523	22	141**	-11**
n	7	7	12	12		

Average ranks are rounded to the nearest integer. However, difference of means tests are based on arithmetic means. ***=p-value $\leq$ .01; **=p-value $\leq$ .05; *=p-value $\leq$ .10.

Studies in the past have asked raters for their partisan affiliation and ideology. However, comparing the ratings of liberals and conservatives might indicate that the liberals are biased, that the conservatives are biased, or that both groups of raters are biased. Therefore, an "unbiased" sample of non-academic raters might provide some leverage in assessing the C-SPAN ratings.

The 2000 C-SPAN poll provides such an unbiased sample [27] It was conducted with the same questions as the 2009 C-SPAN poll. Excepting the exclusion of George W. Bush, the academics' results were similar to the 2009 C-SPAN academics poll in most respects. However, C-SPAN viewers were given the opportunity in 2000 to rate the presidents in the same format as the academics. We can reasonably expect the C-SPAN audience respondents to be ideologically normally distributed. Given C-SPAN's reputation as an unbiased outlet for political news, their programming appeals to a broad portion of the country. Surveys of their audience show this: C-SPAN's audience "covers the political spectrum and is fairly evenly divided between the major political parties" nearly mirroring the country as a whole [28] Also, the C-SPAN audience is more informed and politically knowledgeable than the populace as a whole; thus we assume that the C-SPAN audience is knowledgeable enough to reasonably rank the presidents [29] Therefore, the C-SPAN audience provides an ideal comparison to the academic raters. While we might expect the differences between ideologically left and right raters to be consistent and wide, we expect the difference between the C-SPAN expert raters (should their ratings be ideologically left) and the C-SPAN audience to be less consistent and relatively narrow.

Table 2 shows the results of the 2000 C-SPAN polls. Column one lists each president in our sample. Column two shows the overall rankings from the academics. Column three shows the overall rankings from the C-SPAN viewers. Column four shows the difference between the academics' ranking for each president and the viewers ranking for each president. Negative numbers indicate the academic experts ranked the president higher, positive numbers indicate the viewers ranked the president higher.

Beginning at the top of Table 2, the academic experts rank every Democratic president higher than the viewers. Academics give an average rank of 10.6 to the Democratic presidents while the viewers assign them a 16.8, a difference of 6.2 places. The two groups of raters were most discordant over President Bill Clinton. Academic experts ranked him 21 while the audience ranked him fifteen places lower at 36. Presidents Lyndon Johnson and Woodrow Wilson show the next biggest discrepancies with the academics ranking them nine and seven places respectively higher than the audience.

At the bottom half of Table 2, we continue to see differences, however less consistent, between the academics and audience. The academics rate the Republican presidents in this sample with an average ranking of 20.8, the audience rates them 1.5 places higher with an average rank of 19.3. The audience ranks seven of the Republican presidents higher than the academics. This is most evident with Presidents Calvin Coolidge and Ronald Reagan; the audience ranks them each five places higher than the academics.

Table 2. C-SPAN 2000 Presidential Leadership Survey Results

Dem. Presidents	Academics	Viewers	Difference
Woodrow Wilson	6	13	-7
Franklin Roosevelt	2	4	-2
Harry Truman	5	7	-2
John Kennedy	8	12	-4
Lyndon Johnson	10	19	-9
Jimmy Carter	22	27	-5
Bill Clinton	21	36	-15
Ave.	10.6	16.8	-6.2
Rep. Presidents	Academics	Viewers	Difference
William McKinley	15	18	-3
Theodore Roosevelt	4	3	1
Howard Taft	24	24	0
Warren Harding	37	40	-3
Calvin Coolidge	27	22	5
Herbert Hoover	34	33	1
Dwight Eisenhower	9	8	1
Richard Nixon	25	20	5
Gerald Ford	23	23	0
Ronald Reagan	11	6	5
George H. W. Bush	20	16	4
Ave.	20.8	19.3	1.5

Because of the small sample size, we leave questions of significance to the reader.

The audience rates Gerald Ford and Howard Taft even with the academics and William McKinley and Warren Harding three places lower than the academics.

In total, Table 2 shows the C-SPAN viewers rated Democratic presidents lower and Republican presidents higher than the academic experts. Table 2 also shows, consistent with the 2009 poll, that the academic raters rated Democrats 10 places higher than Republican presidents. In contrast, the viewers rated Democratic presidents only 2.5 places higher than Republican presidents. While the audience and academics agree that the Democratic presidents performed better, the two groups disagree about how much better. If we rely on the assumption that the C-SPAN audience is tilted neither to the left or right, then Table 2 suggests that the academic raters skew their rankings to favor Democrats over Republicans when compared to an ideologically unbiased sample of raters.

TIMING EFFECTS?

Scholars have previously argued that timing effects (i.e. the time in which the president is in office) dictates their greatness and this alone is so powerful a predictor that partisanship, either of the raters or the presidents, can play little role. For instance, Tim Blessing argues that modern presidents rise in rank leading up to Franklin Roosevelt and then fall in rank following Roosevelt [30] Table 3 tests the effects of timing against the effect of party on the rankings. Using the 2009 C-SPAN ratings and sample of presidents as above (McKinley – George W. Bush), we use similar specifications as Tim Blessing. The dependent variable is the rank of each president.

Years from F.D.R. is measured as the number of years from the middle of each president's term to the middle of Franklin Roosevelt's term. For example, Franklin Roosevelt is coded as a "0", McKinley as a "40", and George W. Bush as a "66". This operationalization lends itself to linear regression and should assess the effects seen in Tables 2 and 3 in Tim Blessing's 2003 article. If timing effects are significant, we would expect a positive coefficient with more temporal distance from Roosevelt (either before or after) leading to lower rankings (lower rankings are higher numbers in this case.) We code the party of the president as a binary variable with Republican presidents coded "1" and Democrats coded "0". If a pro-Democratic bias were in the rankings, then we would expect this coefficient to be positive and significant.

Table 3. OLS Regression Results, McKinley – George W. Bush

Variable	Coefficient (Standard Error)
Years From F.D.R.	.105 (.141)
Party	10.5** (4.93)
Constant	7.8 (5.26)
n	19
r-square	.27

**=p-value $\leq$ .05.

Table 3 shows the results of the OLS analysis. We performed this model with the presidents' raw scores as the dependent variable and the results were indistinguishable from the model shown. We present this model because using the rankings provides a more intuitive interpretation. The variable measuring time is insignificant. We fail to find the timing effects found in Tables 2 and 3 of Blessing's 2003 paper. This is perhaps because Blessing drops Presidents Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover from his regression analyses; we include them. The Party variable is significant indicating that the presidents' partisanship predicts their rank during the modern period. The coefficient, 10.5, indicates that Republican presidents are ranked 10.5 places lower than Democrats, even when controlling for timing effects. This finding buttresses our findings from Table 1 where Democratic presidents were also ranked 10 places higher on average than Republicans. This shows, contrary to previous research, that party predicts rank.

ADDRESSING POTENTIAL OBJECTIONS

Before concluding, let us briefly address some potential objections that readers may raise. First, some readers may be concerned that our analysis includes presidents as far back as McKinley. To address this concern, Appendix Table 1 replicates the analysis in Table 1 but includes presidents from Franklin Roosevelt forward. Even with the smaller sample size, the results provide support for those in Table 1.

Second, some readers may be concerned about the generalizability of our findings given that we focus mainly on the C-SPAN polls. For instance, the C-SPAN rankings are based upon criteria (policy areas, traits, and characteristics) that, to some, may inherently favor Democratic over Republican presidents [31] For example, the C-SPAN polls include categories such as "Pursued Equal Justice for All" and "Vision/Setting an Agenda" which, to some, may inherently favor "activist" presidents [32] Therefore, the C-SPAN polls may lead raters to favor Democratic presidents because of the criteria with which they are asked to judge the presidents.

To show that this is not the case, in Appendix Table 2 we demonstrate that other polls which do not use the "activist" C-SPAN criteria show the same results that we see in the C-SPAN polls. For example, the 1996 Ridings-McIver and the 2002 Siena poll both favor Democratic presidents. Ridings-McIver favors Democrats by 11.3 places (this is 1.1 places more than the C-SPAN poll) and the Siena Poll favors Democrats by 10 places.

We conclude from this that the criteria with which the C-SPAN raters are asked to use does not play a role in the results. Instead, we argue that the ideology of the participants in the polls lead to the disparity in the rankings. For example, the *Wall Street Journal* poll from 2005 made a concerted effort to have equal numbers of conservative and liberal academic raters; that poll only shows an average difference of 4.8 between Democratic and Republican presidents. This is about a five point difference compared to the other polls in Appendix Table 2 which show at least a 10 point difference of Democratic over Republican presidents.

Third, some may argue that academics are simply more knowledgeable than audiences; therefore, it is increased levels of knowledge rather than partisan bias that drive the disparity between the C-SPAN audience and Academic polls. However, our analysis shows that when ranking surveys target ideologically balanced pools of academic raters such as the 2005 Wall

Street Journal Poll, the rankings favor Democratic presidents far less than the ideologically unbalanced surveys such as the Ridings-McIver and C-SPAN polls (see Appendix Table 2).

We note that all of the raters in these polls presumably have J.D.'s, Ph.D.s, or intense knowledge of the subject. Hence when educational status is held equal as with these different polls of academics, the results differ based on the ideology/partisanship of the raters. This demonstrates that it is ideology/partisanship, and not educational status or knowledge that leads to the disparity between the ranks of Republican and Democrat presidents in the rankings.

Fourth, some may object stating that the raters could be responding to the president's actions, rather than their partisanship. Since Democratic presidents tend to institute Democratic policies, and Republican presidents tend to institute Republican policies, the presidents' party affiliation and actions are highly correlated. Thus, it may be impossible to distinguish between them.

With this said, we would argue that party identification and support for party initiatives and policies are highly correlated as well; thus it would be difficult for a rater to be a Democrat and at the same time oppose all or most Democratic Party policy positions. Thus, we argue that if raters overwhelmingly support Democratic or liberal policies, and this leads the raters to bias their rankings in favor of the presidents who institute such policies (most likely Democratic presidents), then that in itself qualifies as partisan bias. With this said, we think this is an important area of contention that may spur future scholarship.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In examining the 2009 C-SPAN Historians Survey of Presidential Leadership, we find that the academic experts rated Democratic presidents in the modern era (William McKinley – George W. Bush) eleven places higher than Republican presidents overall. Perhaps more interestingly, we also find that academic experts rated Democratic presidents between four and fourteen places higher than Republican presidents in every individual leadership category. This in itself does not indicate a bias on behalf of the academic raters; it may indicate that Democratic presidents simply performed better than Republican presidents during the modern era.

To gain some leverage on this, we compared the 2000 C-SPAN academic ratings to ratings from the C-SPAN audience.

We found, as expected, that the academics rated every Democratic president in the modern era more highly than the audience. Because we do not know the political ideologies of the viewer respondents, this is not ironclad evidence that academics rate presidents based on partisan biases. However, this does suggest that the academic raters favor Democratic presidents more than non-academics.

When interviewed in 1988, Richard Nixon said that history will treat him fairly, however, "Historians probably won't. They are mostly on the left." [33] Nixon now appears rather prophetic given the public rates him five places higher than historians. Finally, we also show that when compared to timing effects, partisanship is a more significant and substantive predictor. This calls into question the findings of previous studies claiming that partisanship does not predict rank.

Given Americans' interest in polls and ranks, it is little wonder that presidential ranking polls have become a cottage industry [34] Anyone with an interest in these polls (raters, organizers, academics and experts in general) has an interest in the appearance of impartiality. If bias were shown to affect the rankings, the veracity of the polls, the organizers, the raters (and historians and political scientists in general) may be impugned. We do not suggest that any of the academic raters *purposefully* favored one party over another in the rankings. We do suggest, however, that historians, political scientists, and other presidential experts are human, and are therefore influenced by the same powerful psychological forces (stemming from political ideology and partisan attachment) that affect all others. And given that Democrats outnumber Republicans in social science and humanities departments by at least seven to one, the results here should not come as a shock.

We do not expect this study to be the final word on bias in the presidential ranking polls; at most, we hope to spur further debate and continued research. Certainly, there are thousands of factors that can contribute to historical evaluations of U.S. Presidents. However, given that the majority of the ranking polls ask historians to make subjective judgments on the presidents, it is not surprising that many studies of ranking polls have found little correlation between the presidents' actual performance (economic or otherwise) and their ranking [35] No one should be surprised that asking informed partisans to make subjective judgments about highly political figures leaves a door open for political predispositions to enter the evaluations.

Appendix Table 1. C-SPAN 2009 Survey Results, F.D.R through G. W. B.

	Democratic Presidents		Republican Presidents		Difference	
Category	Average Raw Score	Average Rank	Average Raw Score	Average Rank	Average Raw Score	Average Rank
Public Persuasion	69	14	54	21	15	-7
Crisis Leadership	67	14	60	16	7	-2
Economic Management	63	12	47	23	16*	-11
Moral Authority	60	17	53	20	7	-3
International Relations	65	16	63	16	2	0
Administrative Skills	63	14	54	23	9	-9
Relations with Congress	62	14	53	20	9	-6
Vision/Setting an Agenda	70	12	51	23	19*	-11**
Pursued Equal Justice for All	75	4	48	16	27***	-12***
Performance with the Context of the Time	68	13	55	21	13	-8
Overall Score	661	11	537	20	124	-9

Average ranks are rounded to the nearest integer. However, difference of means tests are based on arithmetic means. ***=p-value $\leq$ .01; **=p-value $\leq$ .05; *=p-value $\leq$ .10.

Appendix Table 2. Average Rankings, McKinley through the Date of the Poll

Poll	Democrats	Republicans	Difference
Polls of Academics			
1996 Ridings- McIver	12	23.3	-11.3
2000 C-SPAN	10.6	20.8	-10.2
2002 Siena	12.3	22.3	-10
2005 Wall Street Journal	15.7	20.5	-4.8
Polls of Non-Academics			
2000 C-SPAN Audience	16.8	19.3	-2.5

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[15] Alvin S. Felzenberg, "Partisan Biases in Presidential Ratings" Ulysses, Woodrow, and Calvin....'We Hardly Knew Ye'," *White House Studies* 3 (2003): 53-62.

[16] For example, see: Gary Maranell, "The Evaluation of Presidents: An Extension of the Schlesinger Polls," *Journal of American History* 57 (1970): 104-113, Gary Maranell and R. Dodder, "Political Orientations and the Evaluation of Presidential Prestige: A Study of American Historians," *Social Science Quarterly* 51 (1970): 415-421.

[17] See for example, Meena Bose, "Presidential Ratings: Lessons and Liabilities," *White House Studies* 3 (2003): 3-19. Jeffrey E. Cohen, "Presidential Greatness as Seen in the Mass Public: An Extension and Application of the Simonton Model," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 33 (2003): 913-924.

[18] Tim H. Blessing, "Presidents and Significance: Partisanship as a Source of Perceived Greatness," *White House Studies* 3 (2003): 41-52.

[19] For example, Dean Keith Simonton, "Predicting Presidential Performance in the United States: Equation Replication on Recent Survey Results," *Journal of Social Psychology* 141 (2001). See also Tim H. Blessing, *Greatness in the White House: Rating the Presidents* (United States: The Pennsylvania State University, 1988).

[20] Richard M. Pious, "Reflections of a Presidency Rater," *White House Studies* 3 (2003): 63-70.

[21] Stanley Rothman, S. Robert Lichter and Neil Nevitte, "Politics and Professional Advancement Among College Faculty," *The Forum* 3 (2005): 1-26.

[22] Alvin S. Felzenberg, "Partisan Biases in Presidential Ratings" Ulysses, Woodrow, and Calvin....'We Hardly Knew Ye'," *White House Studies* 3 (2003): 53-62. Pg. 57.

[23] Few scholars have argued that the modern presidency began with (or before) Grover Cleveland's second term. See Lewis L. Gould, *The Modern American Presidency* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2003). See also Lewis L. Gould, *Presidency of William McKinley* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1981).

[24] See, for example V. O. Key, "A Theory of Critical Elections," *The Journal of Politics* 17 (1955): 3-18.; V. O. Key, "Secular Realignment and the Party System," *The Journal of Politics* 21 (1959): 198-210.; Jeffrey M. Stonecash, Mark D. Brewer, R. Eric Peterson, Mary P. McGuire and Lori Beth Way, "Class and the Party: Secular Realignment and the Survival of Democrats Outside of the South," *Political Research Quarterly* 53 (2000): 731-752.

[25] See for example, John H. Aldrich, *Why Parties?: The Origin and Transformation of Political Parties in America* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

[26] http://www.c-span.org/PresidentialSurvey/presidential-leadership-survey.aspx

[27] For a discussion and analysis of this poll, see Jeffrey E. Cohen, "Presidential Greatness as Seen in the Mass Public: An Extension and Application of the Simonton Model," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 33 (2003): 913-924.

[28] http://www.c-span.org/C-SPAN25/hart_release.asp.

[29] See http://www.c-span.org/C-SPAN25/hart_release.asp for the results of a congressionally commissioned 2004 survey of C-SPAN's audience. A battery of

questions from the nationally representative survey of C-SPAN viewers shows the following: 1. 20% of the C-SPAN audience has postgraduate or professional education; this is more than double the percent of postgraduate or professional education degrees U.S. population. 2. By 33% to 18%, C-SPAN viewers are more likely to be "active citizens" than their non-C-SPAN viewing neighbors. 3. C-SPAN viewers follow news more closely and are more knowledgeable about government than their non- C-SPAN viewing neighbors. However, with this said, we will state that the C-SPAN audience is not as educated as academic raters (100% of whom have either a J.D., a Ph.D., or other intimate knowledge of the presidency.)

[30] Tim H. Blessing, "Presidents and Significance: Partisanship as a Source of Perceived Greatness," *White House Studies* 3 (2003): 41-52.

[31] The literature on "party owned issues" argues that each party "owns," or is characterized by, certain strengths on particular issues. See John Petrocik, "Issue ownership in Presidential Elections, with a 1980 Case Study," *American Journal of Political Science* 40 (1996): 825-850. John Petrocik, W.L. Benoit and G. J. Hansen, "Issue Ownership and Presidential Campaigning, 1952-2000," *Political Science Quarterly* (2003). Ian Budge and Dennis Farlie, "Party Competition-Selective Emphasis or Direct Confrontation? An Alternative View with Data," in *Western European Party Systems*, eds. Hans Daadler and Peter Mair (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1983).

[32] The C-SPAN polls do not include categories such as "Strengthened Military," "Defeated Enemies Abroad," or "Military Leadership," which some may consider to favor Republican presidents. See for example John Petrocik, "Issue ownership in Presidential Elections, with a 1980 Case Study," *American Journal of Political Science* 40 (1996): 825-850.

[33] Quoted pg. 180 in Arthur M. Schlesinger, "Rating the Presidents: Washington to Clinton," *Political Science Quarterly* 112 (1997): 179-190.

[34] Mark Landis, "Of Pantheons, Rankings and Reputations," *White House Studies* 3 (2003): 83-91.

[35] For example, see Jack Holmes and Robert E. Elder, "Our Best and Worst Presidents: Some Possible Reasons for Perceived Performance," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 19 (1989): 529-557.