

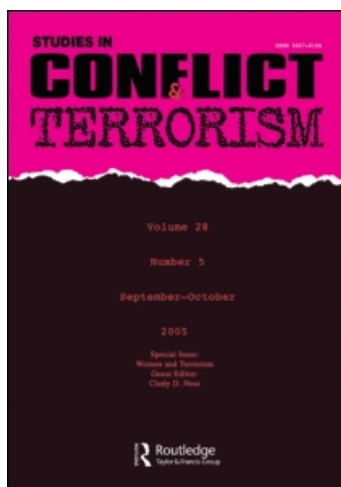
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Public Perceptions of Traumatic Events and Policy Preferences during the George W. Bush Administration: A Portrait of America in Turbulent Times

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Public Perceptions of Traumatic Events and Policy Preferences during the George W. Bush Administration: A Portrait of America in Turbulent Times

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The American policy landscape during the George W. Bush administration was shaped by a series of traumatic events that confronted the nation and people of the United States. These included the terrorist attacks of 9/11 in 2001, the anthrax attacks in the fall of 2001, military actions in Afghanistan and Iraq, Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the threat of a flu pandemic in 2005 and 2006, the 2007 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reports, and the financial collapse of 2008. The results of the 2008 presidential election appear to be a rejection of the Bush administration's major policy responses to these events, but the variation in type and level of public support among different groups suggests a much more varied and dynamic portrait of America in turbulent times. Using a multiyear panel survey, an interdisciplinary team of political scientists and psychologists analyzed the behavior and political responses to the events by the American public. The findings suggest that even seven years after the events of 11 September 2001, people with higher levels of post-traumatic stress symptomatology related to 9/11 have significantly different interpretations of the threat of terrorism and the appropriate policy responses to it than do others. Perceptions of threat, the political salience of terrorism and other traumatic events, the level of support for political leaders and assessments of the government's actions vary over time and across different groups within society based on the psychological, political and social, and personal characteristics of the respondent. These results help to open the black box of aggregate public opinion by providing a detailed portrait of how psychological, social, political, and personal factors affected perceptions and political behavior during the George W. Bush administration.

Context and Overview

The American policy landscape during the George W. Bush administration was shaped by a series of traumatic events that confronted the nation and people of the United States. These included the terrorist attacks of 9/11 in 2001, the anthrax attacks in the fall of 2001, military actions in Afghanistan and Iraq, Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the threat of flu pandemic in 2005 and 2006 (and again in 2009), the 2007 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reports, and the financial collapse of 2008. The results of the 2008 presidential election appear to be a rejection of the Bush administration's major policy responses to these events, but the variation in type and level of public support among different groups suggests a much more varied and dynamic portrait of America in turbulent times. How have different sectors of the American public interpreted and responded to these traumatic events? How do the perceptions of the American public—whether they are relatively uniform or widely divergent—affect the level of support for policies of the president and trust in the information provided by the government? How do they affect the public's willingness to tolerate civil, financial, and human costs in challenging these threats?

Acts of terrorism are often intended to instill fear and anxiety in people well beyond those directly targeted in specific incidents.¹ This raises the question of the extent to which the threat of terrorism permeates society. The authors' multi-year panel study of American adults suggests that perceptions of threats posed by terrorism, environmental disasters, and economic collapse vary significantly across different groups in society based on their psychological, social, political, and personal characteristics. These factors also affect the nature, duration, and intensity of the political response to such events. For example, even seven years after the events of 11 September 2001, people with higher levels of post-traumatic stress symptomatology related to 9/11 have significantly different interpretations of the threat of terrorism and the appropriate policy responses to it than others. Partisanship also has a strong and significant effect over time, while the impact of other factors—such as gender, race, religion, education, military service, and region of habitation—vary over time and across different issues.

The portrait of America during the George W. Bush administration that emerges from this study is in many ways at odds with familiar claims advanced by government officials, journalists, and pundits. The study did not find a people cowed by terrorism, afraid of the outside world, or pessimistic about the future. Americans today are pragmatic about threats such as terrorism, war fighting, and climate change, but some are unhappy with government responses to events such as 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina, and suspicious of information provided by government officials and journalists. They know these are real threats that will plague the nation in the years ahead, but they are less worried about the impacts these phenomena will have on their personal lives, and optimistic that the new security challenges can be managed.

The Survey Data and Variables

This survey-based portrait of America in turbulent times is based on an analysis of (a) the American public's perception of traumatic events (including terrorism, war, and environmental disasters) and (b) the impact of these perceptions on the public's personal behavior and assessment of government policies in response to those events. To develop this portrait, the study analyzed how different psychological and societal factors are associated with:

- The Perceived Threat of Terrorism by the American Public
- The Political Salience of 9/11 and other Traumatic Events to the American Public
- The Public's Assessment of the Government's Policy Response to Traumatic Events
- Public Trust in the Government and the Media
- The Public's Assessment of the Government's Justifications for Actions Taken
- Public Acceptance of Personal and Policy Changes
- Public Assessment of Success and Outlook for the Future

The research team collected data on a nationally representative sample of U.S. adults ($N = 1,613$, 73.5 percent participation rate, 28 December 2006–18 January 2007) and again one year later ($N = 1,157$, 71.7 percent participation rate, 28 December 2007–19 February 2008). Individual cases were weighted to reflect the most recent data on key demographic variables (gender, race/ethnicity, region of residence, etc.) from the current population survey. Consequently, the use of the term "U.S. public" refers to the inference that the distribution of responses in the general public reflects that of the samples. All participants in the second survey responded to the first survey as well. These panel surveys represent two of four annual surveys funded by a National Science Foundation Human and Social Dynamics grant.²

The study assesses the impact of psychological factors on individual perceptions and reactions to traumatic events using the Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI) and the Post-traumatic stress Check List (PCL) for each participant. The BSI provides self-reported data to help measure general psychological and psychiatric distress in community populations.³ The BSI index (hereafter "General Distress") is the mean score of eighteen mental and physical symptoms experienced in the past seven days. The BSI items on the scale are assessed on a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 equal to no distress and 5 equal to high distress. Post-traumatic stress symptomatology (PTS) is estimated using the Post-traumatic Stress Checklist. The Post-traumatic Stress Checklist (PCL or PCL-17) is a self-reported measure defined as the mean score of seventeen symptoms experienced in the past month.⁴ PCL items in the scale are assessed on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 equal to no post-traumatic stress and 5 equal to extreme post-traumatic stress. In the article, all post-traumatic stress symptoms were assessed specifically regarding the events of 11 September 2001. There is

a weak but statistically significant decline in the General Distress from 2007 to 2008, with the mean decreasing from 1.54 to a 1.51 (sig. chi square = .001, tau-b = -.026). In 2008, 85.1 percent had a mean General Distress score of 2 or less, indicating low levels of distress in the general population. Similarly, there is a weak but statistically significant decline in PCL from a mean of 1.30 to a mean of 1.29 (sig. chi square = .000, tau-b = -.059). In 2008, 91.9 percent of the population had a mean PCL score of 2 or less indicating low levels of post-traumatic stress responses related to 9/11 in the general population.

The study assesses the impact of different social and political groups by specifying each participant's political affiliation, gender, race, age cohort, education level, family income, whether her or she serves or has served in the armed forces, whether he or she is a member of the so-called Religious Right,⁵ and whether he or she lives in the mid-Atlantic to New England region encompassing Washington, D.C. and New York or elsewhere in the United States.⁶ There are no statistically significant differences in the distribution of these variables between 2007 and 2008 (sig. chi square > .05). It is important to recognize that it is possible that some of the statistically significant associations the study finds are the result of psychological, social, and political variables not considered in the authors' models. With that caveat in mind, the intent in this article is to analyze and control for the affects of the demographic characteristics most commonly used to describe the American public. The summary statistics for each independent variable are included in Table 1.

All of the dependent variables are ordinal with four or five categories unless otherwise specified. Descriptive statistics and changes between 2007 and 2008 are provided for each dependent variable. The effects of the independent variables on each dependent variable are analyzed using an ordered logit techniques. Each estimate controls for all of the independent variables as well as the year the survey was taken. The basic model estimated is:

$$Y_i = a_1 + a_2S_i + B_1X_i + B_2(S_iX_i) + u_i \quad (1)$$

where Y_i is each respondent's response to the dependent variable in question, X_i represents all of the independent variables for each respondent, S_i is a time or survey dummy variable with $S_i = 0$ for the initial survey and $S_i = 1$ for the second survey. In this equation, B_1 is the slope coefficient for X_i in the initial survey when $S_i = 0$, the sum $B_1 + B_2$ is the slope coefficient for X_i when $S_i = 1$. B_2 is the differential slope coefficient, it indicates how much the slope coefficient varies between the 2007 and 2008 survey and whether that change is statistically significant.

The Perceived Threat of Terrorism

The public continues to view terrorism as a threat to national security. Fully 77 percent of people agree that terrorism poses a threat to national security (the difference between 2007 and 2008 is not statistically significant (sig. chi squared > .05) (see Figure 1). Those with greater PTS, Republicans, older people, and wealthier people are more likely than others to agree that terrorism poses a threat to national security. Members of the Religious Right are less likely than others to do so, yet the impact of being a member of the Religious Right declines between 2007 and 2008 ($p_{B2} < .05$). General Distress, education, race, gender, military service, and region are not statistically significant, nor do any other coefficients change significantly over time.

At the same time, the perceived likelihood of a terrorist attack on U.S. soil has declined. 31.2 percent of the population agreed that there was a greater than 50-50 chance of an attack in the next two years in 2007; but in 2008, only 21 percent of the population agreed that

Table 1
Independent variable summaries

Table 1: Independent Variable Summaries	Value Label	Mean	Standard Deviation	Change from 2007 to 2008 Surveys
Brief Symptoms Inventory (BSI)	Scale 1-5: No Distress = 1 to High Distress = 5	2007: 1.5 2008: 1.5	2007: .617 2008: .614	sig. chi square = .001, tau-b = -.026
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PCL PTSD)	Scale 1-5: No PTSD = 1 to Extreme PTSD = 5	2007: 1.3 2008: 1.3	2007: .528 2008: .588	sig. chi square = .000, tau-b = -.059
Political Affiliation	Republican = 1, Other = 0	0.41	0.493	Not significant
Gender	Female = 1, Other = 0	0.52	0.5	Not significant
Member the Religious Right	Baptist = 1, Other = 0	0.19	0.395	Not significant
Military Service	Active or former Military Service = 1, No Military Service = 0	0.14	0.35	Not significant
Region	Living in Mid-Atlantic to New England = 1, Elsewhere = 0	0.18	0.388	Not significant
Education Level	1 = Less than High School, 2 = High School Graduate, 3 = Some College, 4 = College Graduate or Higher	2.66	1.02	Not significant
Family Income	Scale 1-19 logarithmic: 1 = less than \$5,000 ... 19 = more than \$175,000	9.61	4.41	Not significant
Age Cohort	Scale 1-7: 1 = 18 to 24 years old, 2 = 25-34, 3 = 35-44, 4 = 45-54, 5 = 55 to 64, 6 = 65 to 74, 7 = 75+	3.59	1.66	Not significant

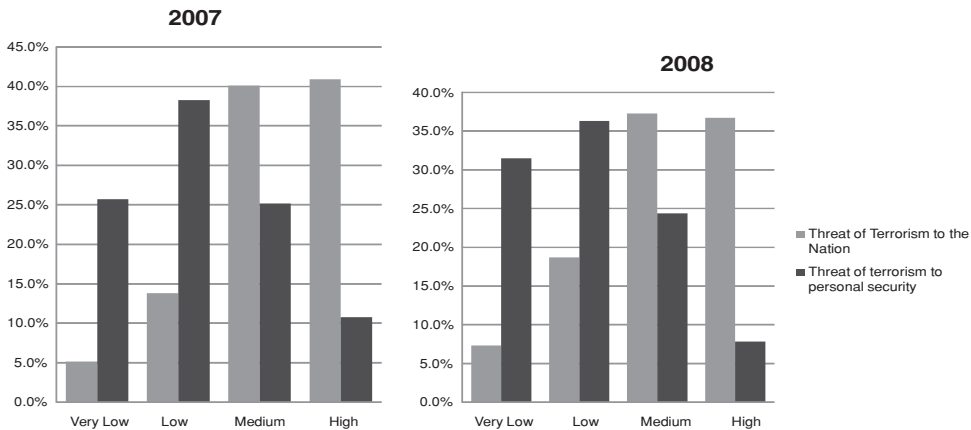


Figure 1. Perceptions on the threat of terrorism.

there is greater than a 50–50 chance in the next two years (sig. chi squared = .000, tau-b = -.130) (see Figure 2). Those with greater PTS, Whites, and wealthier people are more likely than others to predict a higher probability of a terrorist incident over the next two years, but partisanship and religion are insignificant here. None of these coefficients changes significantly between 2007 and 2008. When asked about the level of threat to the United States over the next ten years, Republicans, older and wealthier people, and Whites are again more likely to assess a higher level of threat, and the impact of age increases from 2007 to 2008.

The public's perception of the risk terrorism poses to personal security is much lower than the perception of national risk and it, too, declined between 2007 and 2008.⁷ The

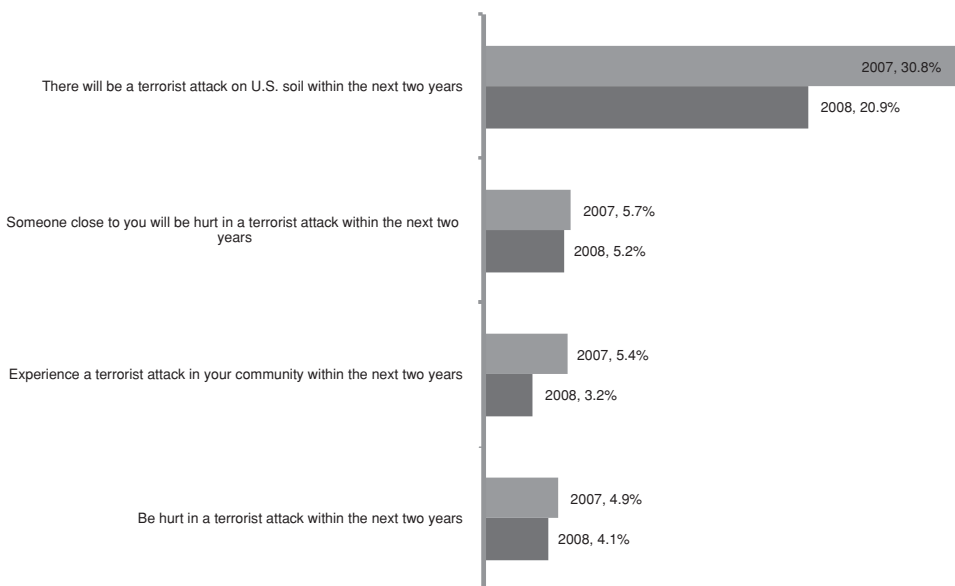


Figure 2. Greater than 50/50 likelihood that . . .

percentage of people who agree with the statement that “terrorism is a threat to my personal security” declined from 35.8 percent to 31.2 percent between 2007 and 2008 (sig. chi square = .027). The proportion of people who agreed that there is a greater than 50–50 chance that “someone close to you will be hurt in a terrorist attack in the next two years” also declined from 5.7 percent to 5.0 percent (sig. chi square = .049, tau-b = -.025). People with greater PTS, Republicans, those who serve or have served in the military, women, and wealthier people are more likely than others to agree that terrorism poses a “threat to my personal security” ($p < .05$), although the effect of military service declined between 2007 and 2008 ($p_{B2} < .05$)⁸ (see Table 2). Younger people join those with greater PTS, women, and wealthier people in placing a greater probability on the likelihood that “someone close to you will be hurt in a terrorist incident in the next two years” ($p < .05$), yet as above, partisanship is insignificant in predicting the likelihood of an attack (along with education, race, military service, religion, and region). None of these coefficients vary significantly over time.

In sum, a large majority of the public continues to consider terrorism to be a threat to national security, yet the public believes that the likelihood of an attack is declining and that the threat terrorism poses to their personal security is much less than to the nation. General psychological distress did not affect these perceptions; yet higher levels of post-traumatic stress related to 9/11 is associated with increased the perception of risk to national and personal security and a greater likelihood of a future attack against the nation. Partisanship and wealth also played significant roles, with Republicans and wealthier people also perceiving higher levels of risk to the nation and themselves.

Gender, age, religion, and military service have different effects on perceptions of national versus personal risk. Gender did not affect the perception of risk to the nation, but women were more likely to perceive a higher level of personal risk from terrorism; age increases the perception of risk to the nation, but did not affect the perception of personal risk; members of the Religious Right perceived a lower threat to the nation, but being a member of the Religious Right had no effect on the likelihood of future attack or level of personal risk; military service does not affect perceptions of national risk, but does increase the perception of personal risk. Only the impact of military service changed over time and its effect on the perception that terrorism poses a threat to personal security decreased. Whether or not one lived in the high potential target area of the mid-Atlantic to New England region of the country did not affect these perceptions.

The Political Salience of 9/11 and Other Traumatic Events

The political salience of 11 September 2001 declined significantly between 2007 and 2008 (sig. chi square = .000). In 2007, almost two thirds (64.2 percent) of people surveyed said that the terrorist attacks of 9/11 affected their political views. It is not surprising that as we get more distance from the events of 9/11 that its salience will diminish. Consistent with this, by 2008, that number had dropped to less than half of the population (46.5 percent). People with greater PTS related to 9/11, Republicans, and better educated and wealthier individuals are more likely than others to say that 9/11 affects their political views (see Table 3). The marginal impact of income, however, declines between 2007 and 2008 (sig. $B_{2i} < .05$ for each variable). Thus, 9/11 remains politically salient for those with greater PTS, Republicans, and those with more years of education, but is likely to vary less across different income groups over time.

The factors that drive political salience also affect the likely importance of terrorism relative to other issues and as a determining factor in the next election. The survey shows

Table 2
Perceived threat of terrorism

PERCEIVED THREAT OF TERRORISM	NATIONAL THREAT		PERSONAL THREAT	
	Terrorism is a threat to national security.	How great do you believe the threat of terrorism will be to the US in the next decade?	How great do you believe the threat of terrorism will be to the you or your family in the next decade?	What is the probability someone close to you will be hurt in a terrorist attack in the next two years?
Psychological Characteristics				
General Distress (BSI 18)	-0.009	0.108	0.025	0.016
Post Traumatic Stress Checklist 9/11 (PCL 17)	0.337 *	0.481 **	0.774 **	1.459 **
Political and Social Characteristics				
Political Affiliation (Republican = 1, Other = 0)	0.578 **	0.311 **	0.304 **	0.040
Military Service (Yes = 1, No = 0)	0.248	0.111	0.485 **	0.057
Religion (Member of Religious Right = 1, Other = 0)	-0.383 **	0.018	-0.066	-0.036
Region (Wash DC to New England = 1, Other = 0)	0.025	-0.121	0.103	0.092
Personal Characteristics				
Age Cohort	0.106 **	0.104 **	-0.011	-0.084 *
Education Level	0.035	0.046	0.001	0.030
Race (White = 1, Other = 0)	0.225	0.281 *	0.006	-0.006
Gender (Female = 1, Male = 0)	0.097	0.037	0.363 **	0.616 **
Family Income	0.042 **	0.074 **	0.022	0.033 *
Change 2007-2008				
General Distress (BSI 18)	0.064	0.338	-0.033	0.282
Post Traumatic Stress Checklist 9/11 (PCL 17)	-0.170	-0.435	-0.030	-0.497 *
Political Affiliation (Republican = 1, Other = 0)	-0.145	0.084	0.034	0.188
Military Service (Yes = 1, No = 0)	0.246	-0.066	-0.559 *	-0.200
Religion (Member of Religious Right = 1, Other = 0)	0.599 **	0.180	0.128	0.286
Region (Wash DC to New England = 1, Other = 0)	-0.131	0.364	-0.087	0.582 *
Age Cohort	-0.039	0.102	0.047	0.080
Education Level	0.031	0.017	-0.041	0.041
Race (White = 1, Other = 0)	-0.072	-0.255	0.181	-0.127
Gender (Female = 1, Male = 0)	0.208	0.055	-0.080	-0.303
Family Income	-0.002	-0.032	0.026	-0.046 *
Year of Survey (2008 = 1, 2007 = 0)	-0.125	-0.313	-0.380	-0.320
N	2657	2672	2650	2672
Sig. Chi. Squared	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Pseudo R Squared	0.026	0.030	0.024	0.076
Ordered Logit Analysis				
* = p < .05, ** = p < .01				

Table 3
Personal and political salience of terrorism

	How much did the terrorist attacks of September 11 affect your political views?	How important are the following issues in determining which candidates you will vote for in November 2008?					
PERSONAL AND POLITICAL SALIENCE OF TERRORISM		Terrorism	Nuclear Proliferation	Iraq	Economy	Immigration	Climate Change
Psychological Characteristics							
General Distress (BSI 18)	0.106	-0.055	0.087	0.172	0.121	0.097	0.182
Post Traumatic Stress Checklist 9/11 (PCL 17)	1.220 **	0.481 **	0.417 *	0.166	0.053	0.055	0.079
Political and Social Characteristics							
Political Affiliation (Republican = 1, Other = 0)	0.228 *	0.557 **	0.272 *	-0.035	-0.317 *	0.694 **	-0.902 **
Military Service (Yes = 1, No = 0)	0.093	0.206	0.064	0.085	-0.084	0.253	0.135
Religion (Member of Religious Right = 1, Other = 0)	-0.112	0.156	0.031	-0.057	-0.022	0.272	-0.062
Region (Wash DC to New England = 1, Other = 0)	0.102	0.091	0.159	0.265	0.172	-0.143	0.139
Personal Characteristics							
Age Cohort	-0.069	0.216 **	0.237 **	0.174 **	0.084	0.138 **	-0.071
Education Level	0.114 **	-0.104 *	-0.090 *	0.041	0.029	-0.038	0.144 **
Race (White = 1, Other = 0)	0.231	0.051	0.047	0.006	-0.176	0.173	-0.197
Gender (Female = 1, Male = 0)	-0.100	0.197	0.263	0.353 *	0.016	0.103	-0.096
Family Income	0.058 **	0.008	-0.002	0.017	0.026	0.031	-0.020
Change 2007-2008							
General Distress (BSI 18)	0.098						
Post Traumatic Stress Checklist 9/11 (PCL 17)	-0.149						
Political Affiliation (Republican = 1, Other = 0)	-0.163						
Military Service (Yes = 1, No = 0)	-0.110						
Religion (Member of Religious Right = 1, Other = 0)	-0.117						
Region (Wash DC to New England = 1, Other = 0)	0.041						
Age Cohort	0.139						
Education Level	-0.001						
Race (White = 1, Other = 0)	-0.479 *						
Gender (Female = 1, Male = 0)	0.178						
Family Income	-0.053 *						
Year of Survey (2008 = 1, 2007 = 0)	-0.272						
N	2679	1129	1129	1129	1129	1129	1129
Sig. Chi. Squared	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Pseudo R Squared	0.056	0.035	0.030	0.016	0.008	0.025	0.033
Ordered Logit Analysis							
* = p < .05, ** = p < .01							

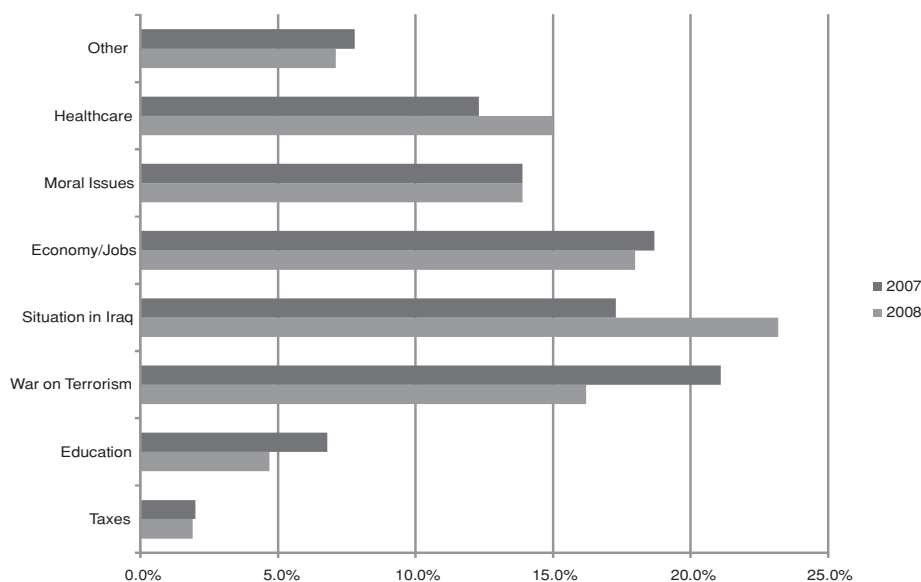


Figure 3. Most important issue facing the United States.

a significant shift in the “most important issue facing the United States” between 2007 and 2008 (sig. chi square = .000), with the situation in Iraq becoming increasingly important and the war on terrorism less so. The survey also shows that 62.9 percent of the overall population said that terrorism would be an important factor in making their voting decisions in 2008 while 49.6 percent of the population said that nuclear proliferation would be an important factor⁹ (see Figures 3 and 4). In both instances, greater PTS, being a Republican and age are associated with giving terrorism and nuclear proliferation greater degrees of electoral importance; higher levels of education are associated with decreasing the importance of these factors. While the electoral importance of terrorism is not a gender issue, women were more likely than men to consider the war in Iraq politically salient. These effects are independent of race, income, military service, religious preference, and region.

Our survey findings indicate that the economy is likely to be the driving issue of the 2008 election, with 69.7 percent of the population identifying it as “quite a bit” or “extremely” important in determining for which candidates they will vote. This was followed by Iraq

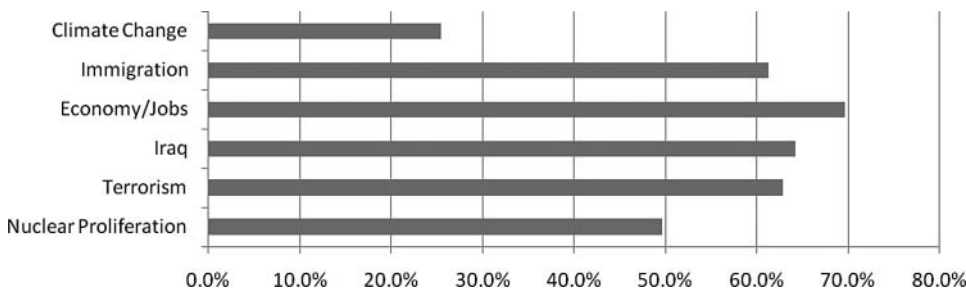


Figure 4. Important in determining your 2008 voting decision.

with 64.2 percent, immigration with 61.3 percent, and climate change with 25.4 percent of the population identifying these issues as “quite a bit” or “extremely” important. Women and more educated people are more likely than others to give electoral salience to Iraq, but unlike all other issues noted, the salience of Iraq is not a partisan issue.

The findings are confirmed by an exit poll conducted on 5 November 2008 by the Pew Center for People and the Press, which showed that 63 percent of voters in the presidential election considered the economy to be the most important issue facing the United States.¹⁰ The exit poll found that voters placed even less importance on Iraq and terrorism than the surveys suggest, with only 10 percent identifying Iraq and 9 percent identifying terrorism as the top issues in their choice for president. Based on the present surveys, the political salience of security issues including terrorism and weapons proliferation and non-military issues including the economy, immigration, and climate change are all significantly associated with party affiliation and age. When controlling for the other psychological and demographic variables, Republicans are less likely to assign importance to the economy or climate change and more likely to consider immigration to be important than members of other political parties. Older people are more likely to consider the economy and immigration to be decisive issues, but are less likely to be concerned about climate change; more educated people are more likely to be concerned about the environment (all of these coefficients are significant with $p_{B1} < .05$). The salience of these issues for the 2008 election is not affected by one’s psychological profile or other demographic characteristics (including gender, race, income, military service, religion, and region). It is interesting to note that only age and gender have a significant impact on the importance given to Iraq, with older people and women more likely to consider it important than others.

Assessing the Government’s Policy Response

The public’s overall assessment of the U.S. government’s policy responses to terrorism and environmental disasters is poor (see Figure 5). Less than one third of the population (29.7 percent) said that they are satisfied with the way the national government responded to 9/11. Party affiliation, age and race are significantly associated with this assessment when controlling for psychological and demographic characteristics, with Republicans, older people, and Whites more likely than others to express satisfaction with the government’s response

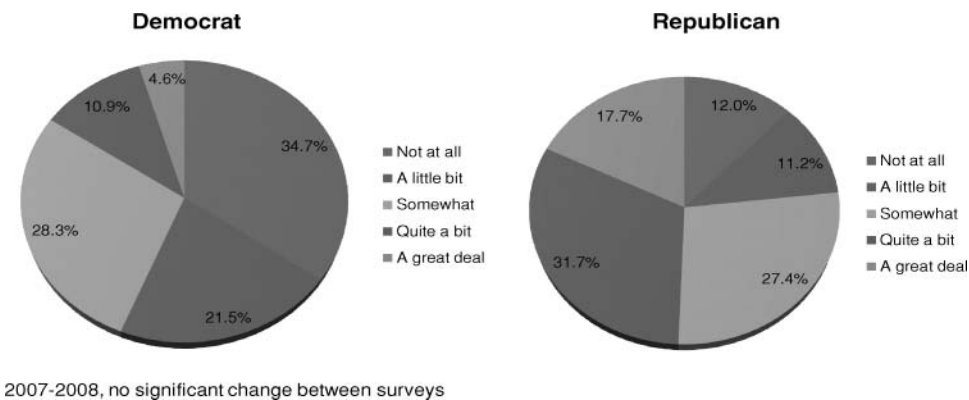


Figure 5. Satisfaction with national response to 9/11.

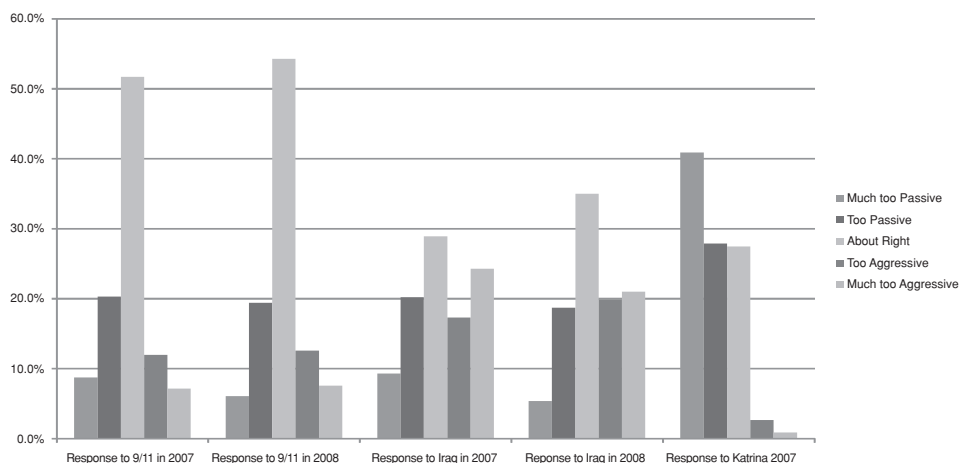


Figure 6. Assessment of government policy.

($p_{B1} < .05$) (see Table 4). The impact of these variables did not change over time, as none of the interaction terms in the estimates are statistically significant.

Public perceptions of the intensity of the response to security threats are more favorable (see Figure 6). When asked whether government responses were much too passive, too passive, about right, too aggressive or much too aggressive, more than half of the public (54.3 percent) in 2008 considered the government's response to 9/11 to be "about right" in intensity, a small increase from 2007 (51.7 percent, sig. chi square = .09). The percentage of people who considered the intensity of the Iraq campaign to be "about right" also increased significantly, from 28.8 percent to 35.0 percent (sig. chi square = .000, tau-b = .016). Reflecting a similar trend, the percentage of people who considered actions in the Iraq War to be "much too aggressive" also declined from 2007 to 2008. Finally, in contrast to the relatively balanced distribution of opinions regarding the intensity of the government's response to 9/11 and Iraq, the public's assessment of the government's response to Katrina is highly and negatively skewed with 68.8 percent of the public claiming that the response to Katrina was too passive.

People with greater PTS, Republicans, those who serve or have served in the military and members of the Religious Right are more likely than others to report that the government's response to 9/11 and Iraq were too passive. In contrast, people with higher levels of education are more likely to argue that the response was too aggressive ($p_{B1} < .05$). Age, race, gender, income and region are insignificant. While PTS remains significant, its marginal impact on the government response to 9/11 decreased from 2007 to 2008 ($p_{B2} < .05$); its marginal impact on the government's response to Iraq did not.

Some of the same groups were more likely to consider the government's response to Hurricane Katrina to be too aggressive.¹¹ For example, people with higher PTS, Republicans, and those who serve or have served in the military were more likely than others to argue that the government's response to Katrina was too aggressive ($p_{B1} < .05$). In contrast, those with higher levels of education were more likely to argue that the response was too passive ($p_{B1} < .05$). These views did not vary as a function of race, age, gender, income, religion, or the region of the country in which one lives.¹²

People's assessment of the government's use of diplomacy, use of force, and changes in domestic legislation in response to 9/11 did not change significantly between 2007 and

Table 4
Assessing policy responses

ASSESSING POLICY RESPONSES	How satisfied are you with the way the national government responded to 9/11?	Overall Response			Strategy			Strategy Relative to Iran		
		With regard to the terrorist attacks of 9/11, how would you characterize the national governments response? ^a	With regard to the War in Iraq, how would you characterize the national governments response? ^a	With regard to Hurricane Katrina, how would you characterize the national governments response? ^a	How would you assess the national governments use of diplomacy in response to terrorism since 9/11? ^{a,b}	How would you assess the national governments use of force in response to terrorism since 9/11? ^{a,b}	How would you describe the national governments domestic response to the events of 9/11? ^{a,b}	The US should act preemptively to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.	The US should use force to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.	The US should use diplomacy to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.
Psychological Characteristics General Distress (BSI 18) Post Traumatic Stress Checklist 9/11 (PCL 17) Political and Social Characteristics Political Affiliation (Republican = 1, Other = 0) Military Service (Yes = 1, No = 0) Religion (Member of Religious Right = 1, Other = 0) Region (Wash DC to New England = 1, Other = 0) Personal Characteristics Age Cohort Education Level Race (White = 1, Other = 0) Gender (Female = 1, Male = 0) Family Income	-0.166	0.026	0.081	-0.108	-0.242 *	-0.099	-0.081	-0.193	-0.103	-0.132
	0.249	-0.579 **	-0.541 **	0.356 *	-0.041	-0.224	-0.265	0.307	0.592 **	0.054
	1.543 **	-0.568 **	-1.210 **	1.264 **	1.088 **	-0.725 **	-0.621 **	0.742 **	1.063 **	-0.362 **
	0.037	-0.337 *	-0.307	0.481 **	0.334 *	-0.471 **	-0.385 *	0.209	0.038	-0.265
	0.166	-0.451 **	-0.565 **	0.173	0.252	-0.426 **	-0.429 **	0.386 *	0.561 **	-0.104
	-0.216	-0.055	0.053	-0.100	0.152	-0.056	-0.258	0.079	-0.150	0.150
	0.201 **	0.045	-0.018	-0.022	-0.052	0.035	0.008	0.066	0.062	0.224 **
	-0.033	0.159 **	0.146 **	-0.065	-0.166 **	0.153 **	0.185 **	-0.170 **	-0.201 **	0.210 **
	0.320 *	-0.077	-0.169	0.332	0.234	0.113	0.121	0.451 **	0.281	-0.132
	-0.008	-0.142	-0.182	0.054	0.079	-0.062	-0.277 *	0.317 **	-0.018	-0.057
	0.019	-0.023	0.010	-0.022	0.003	-0.010	-0.009	0.009	-0.017	0.031
Change 2007-2008 General Distress (BSI 18) Post Traumatic Stress Checklist 9/11 (PCL 17) Political Affiliation (Republican = 1, Other = 0) Military Service (Yes = 1, No = 0) Religion (Member of Religious Right = 1, Other = 0) Region (Wash DC to New England = 1, Other = 0) Age Cohort Education Level Race (White = 1, Other = 0) Gender (Female = 1, Male = 0) Family Income Year of Survey (2008 = 1, 2007 = 0)	-0.142	-0.158	0.038		-0.132	0.106	0.025			
	0.436	0.510	0.197		0.257	-0.081	0.043			
	-0.109	-0.042	0.194		-0.222	-0.155	0.132			
	-0.057	0.040	-0.146		-0.121	0.064	0.008			
	0.114	0.146	0.271		0.015	0.129	0.137			
	0.127	0.309	0.271		0.154	-0.025	0.410			
	-0.042	-0.011	0.037		0.006	-0.027	0.032			
	0.008	-0.007	0.068		0.046	0.060	-0.051			
	-0.020	0.051	-0.143		0.190	-0.082	-0.205			
	0.062	0.055	0.063		-0.257	0.080	-0.225			
N Sig. Chi-Squared Pseudo R Squared Ordered Logistic Analysis * = p < .05, ** = p < .01 ^ = too passive, + = too aggressive ^^ = too little, ++ = too much	0.008	-0.007	-0.017		-0.012	0.018	0.009			
	-0.323	-0.280	-0.627		-0.149	-0.236	0.112			
	2669	2653	2655	1357	2641	2648	2640	1129	1129	1129
	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	0.070	0.027	0.035	0.038	0.054	0.042	0.035	0.038	0.058	0.036

2008 (sig. chi squared = .670, .527, and .191, respectively). In all areas, the most common response was “about right,” with 47.8 percent of the population saying the use of diplomacy was about right, 43.6 percent saying that the use of force was about right, and 54.8 percent saying that the government’s domestic response (including the passage of the USA Patriot Act and the creation of the Department of Homeland Security) was about right.

Even though “about right” was the modal response for the assessment of all three strategies, the dispersion of public attitudes varied. For example, the responses to the use of diplomacy are highly skewed with 42.7 percent of people saying that “too little” diplomacy was used and only 9.5 percent arguing that “too much” was used. In contrast, the public assessment of the use of force and domestic political change are more evenly divided with 31.1 percent saying that was too little use of force, and 25.3 percent saying that too much force was used; and 23 percent of people saying domestic changes were “too little” and 22.2 percent saying they were too much.

Republicans, members of the Religious Right, and those with military service were more likely than others to report that too much diplomacy and too little force were used in response to 9/11. In contrast, those with higher levels of education were more likely to report that too little diplomacy and too much force were used. People with higher General Distress scores were also more likely to report that too little diplomacy was used. The marginal impact of these variables did not change significantly between 2007 and 2008. PTS, age, race, gender, income, and region were insignificant.

In terms of the domestic response, those with high levels of PTS and women joined Republicans, members of the Religious Right and those with military service in arguing that too little had been done. In contrast, those with higher levels of education were more likely to argue that too much had been done. The marginal impact of these variables did not change significantly between 2007 and 2008. Age, race, income, and region were insignificant.

In response to questions about how the U.S. government should respond to future threats, fully 49.4 percent of the public agreed that the United States should act preemptively to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons (see Figure 7). The public, however, favored a diplomatic strategy for doing so with 66.5 percent agreeing with the use of diplomacy to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons; 35.1 percent agreeing with use of force and 28.4 percent disagreeing with the use of force. Republicans, members of the Religious

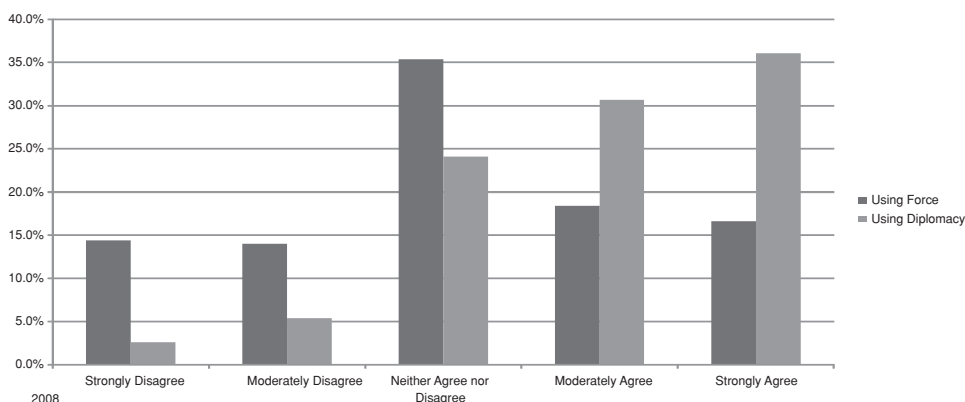


Figure 7. U.S. should preempt to stop Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

Right, women and Whites were more likely than others to agree that the United States should act preemptively against Iran; more highly educated people were likely to disagree ($p_{BI} < .05$). Those with greater PTS, Republicans, and members of the Religious Right were more likely than others to support doing so with force. Older, more educated and wealthier people were more likely than others to favor diplomacy, while Republicans were less likely to do so.

In sum, although the public in 2008 gave the government a mediocre assessment of its policy responses since 9/11, it gave more favorable assessments to government actions at home and in non-terrorist-related areas. Also, although favoring preemption when necessary, more of the public favored the use of diplomacy than the use of force. General Distress, PTS, partisanship, age, race, religion, gender, and military service all affected the public's assessment of the government's response to 9/11, though the marginal impact of PTS and gender decreased over time.

Trust in Government and the Media

The public is distrustful of its government and the media (see Figure 8). Only 15.5 percent of the public agreed with the statement that information provided by the national government about 9/11 is objective and can be trusted, 49.8 percent disagreed, and the remainder was non-committal. Republicans, those with military service, members of the Religious Right and older people were more likely to trust the information provided by the national government ($p_{BI} < .05$) (see Table 5). PTS, General Distress, gender, race, education, and region of the country were insignificant. Local government fared little better, with only 22.7 percent agreeing that the information it provides about 9/11 was objective and can be trusted and 35.7 percent disagreeing.¹³ Republicans and older people were also more likely than others to trust the information provided by their local governments about 9/11 ($p_{BI} < .05$). In addition, half of the public (49.8 percent) agreed that national politicians exploited 9/11 for political purposes. Republicans, members of the Religious Right, and women were more likely to give them the benefit of the doubt; wealthier and more educated people were more likely to believe that politicians were exploitative ($p_{BI} < .05$).

Public trust about information provided by the national government about Iraq improved between 2007 and 2008 to a meager 15.1 percent (sig. chi square = .000, tau-b = .058). The percentage of people who did not trust information provided by the government

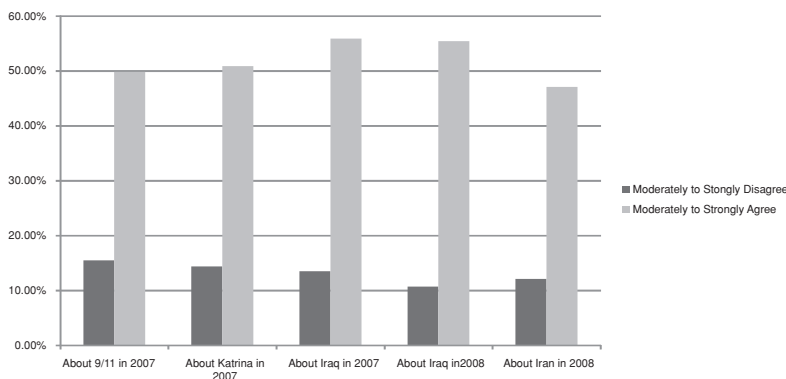


Figure 8. Trust Information Provided by the National Government.

Table 5
Trust in government, the media and the motivations of politicians

TRUST IN GOVERNMENT, THE MEDIA, and THE MOTIVATIONS OF POLITICIANS	Information provided to the public by the national government about ... is objective and can be trusted				Information provided to the public by the media about ... is objective and can be trusted				National politicians exploited the situation in ... for electoral or partisan advantage			
	9/11/2001	Katrina	Iraq	Iran	9/11/2001	Katrina	Iraq	Iran	9/11/2001	Katrina	Iraq	Iran
Psychological Characteristics												
General Distress (BSI 18)	-0.056	-0.232 *	-0.091	-0.289	-0.076	0.006	-0.238	-0.210	0.077	0.055	0.241 *	0.234
Post Traumatic Stress Checklist 9/11 (PCL 17)	0.044	-0.068	0.082	0.559 **	0.006		0.698 **		0.057	-0.059	-0.025	-0.011
Political and Social Characteristics												
Political Affiliation (Republican = 1, Other = 0)	1.070 **	0.950 **	1.329 **	1.209 **	0.696 **		-0.238		-0.627 **	0.283 **	-0.361 **	-0.002
Military Service (Yes = 1, No = 0)	0.454 *	0.224	0.540 **	0.073	0.105		-0.109		-0.003	-0.017	-0.094	0.330
Religion (Member of Religious Right = 1, Other = 0)	0.264 *	0.137	0.220	0.106	0.031		-0.086		-0.313 *	-0.231	-0.274	-0.062
Region (Wash DC to New England = 1, Other = 0)	-0.219	-0.094	-0.113	-0.084	-0.152		-0.061		-0.153	-0.330 *	-0.200	0.064
Personal Characteristics												
Age Cohort	0.128 **	-0.139 **	-0.014	-0.111 *	0.054		-0.102 *		0.023	0.124 **	0.085 *	0.111 **
Education Level	0.014	-0.053	-0.091 *	-0.089 *	-0.005		-0.044		0.214 **	0.074 *	0.266 **	0.165 **
Race (White = 1, Other = 0)	-0.038	0.233	-0.126	0.194	0.074		0.186		0.182	0.120	0.314 *	0.229
Gender (Female = 1, Male = 0)	0.049	-0.166	0.079	-0.062	0.050		0.136		-0.484 **	-0.521 **	-0.443 **	-0.293 *
Family Income	0.015	-0.021	-0.021	-0.009	-0.007		-0.034 *		0.024	0.041 **	0.022	0.010
Change 2007-2008												
General Distress (BSI 18)			-0.113		-0.173						-0.132	
Post Traumatic Stress Checklist 9/11 (PCL 17)			0.386 *		0.810 **						-0.056	
Political Affiliation (Republican = 1, Other = 0)			-0.251		-1.091 **						0.265	
Military Service (Yes = 1, No = 0)			-0.710 **		-0.268						0.484	
Religion (Member of Religious Right = 1, Other = 0)			-0.055		-0.012						0.159	
Region (Wash DC to New England = 1, Other = 0)			0.209		-0.024						0.218	
Age Cohort			-0.067		-0.090						0.055	
Education Level			0.025		-0.019						-0.018	
Race (White = 1, Other = 0)			0.424 *		0.029						-0.200	
Gender (Female = 1, Male = 0)			-0.185		0.042						0.192	
Family Income			0.023		0.001						-0.015	
Year of Survey (2008 = 1, 2007 = 0)			-0.190		-0.324						0.023	
Summary Statistics												
N	1542	1541	2661	1129	2655		1129		1537	1534	2657	1129
Sig. Chi. Squared	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000		0.000		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Pseudo R Squared	0.039	0.036	0.048	0.050	0.023		0.024		0.040	0.028	0.040	0.022

* = p < .05, ** = p < .01

declined from 57.2 percent to 51.5 percent between 2007 and 2008. Most strikingly, the number of people who “strongly” disagreed that the information is objective and can be trusted declined from 31.4 percent to 23.6 percent. Republicans and those with military service were more likely to trust the information provided by the national government about Iraq, although the affect of military service decreased between 2007 and 2008 ($p_{B2} < .05$). Those with more education were less likely to trust this information ($p_{B1} < .05$). General Distress, PTS, age, race, gender, income, religion, and region are insignificant.

Also, although in 2008 more than half (55.4 percent) of the public still believed that national politicians were exploiting the situation in Iraq for political advantage, surprisingly, this represented a small yet statistically significant improvement over 2007 (sig. chi squared = .018, tau-b = -.008). Republicans, members of the Religious Right and women were more likely to maintain their faith in national politicians. People with a high General Distress score, and those who are White, older, and better educated were more likely to distrust their motives ($p_{B1} < .05$). The marginal impact of these variables did not vary significantly between 2007 and 2008 ($p_{B2} > .05$). PTS, income, military service, and region were insignificant.

Public trust about information provided by media about Iraq was also low. In 2008, only 10.9 percent of people agreed that information provided by the media about Iraq is objective and can be trusted, more than half (53.9 percent) disagreed.¹⁴ Republicans were less likely to trust the information provided by the media about Iraq than others. No other variables are significant.

Public distrust extends to information about Iran, with only 15 percent of the public agreeing that the information provided by the U.S. government is objective and can be trusted, only 9.9 percent trusting the information from the media, and 47.1 percent of the public agreeing that national politicians were exploiting Iran for political purposes. Republicans, older, and wealthier people were more likely to trust the information from the media about Iraq than others, while those with greater levels of PTS were less likely to do so ($p_{B1} < .05$). Older and more educated people were also more likely than others to agree that national politicians were exploiting Iran for political purposes; women were less likely to agree ($p_{B1} < .05$).

Public trust in the information provided about Katrina was slightly better. About one fifth, 20.4 percent, of the public agreed that the information provided by the national government about Katrina was objective and could be trusted, while 20.7 percent of the public felt the same way about the information provided by their local governments. That said, they gave less credit to their national politicians as more than half (50.8 percent) of the public agreed with the statement that national politicians exploited the situation for electoral or partisan advantage, and 40.1 percent felt that their local politicians did the same. Republicans were more likely than others to trust the information provided by the national and local governments about Katrina, people with higher General Distress scores and older people were less likely to do so ($p_{B1} < .05$).

To evaluate the perception of political exploitation, respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement that national politicians are exploiting Hurricane Katrina for electoral or partisan advantage.¹⁵ Republicans, older, better educated, and wealthier people were more likely to agree that national politicians exploited Katrina for political purposes; women and those living outside of the Washington, D.C., to New England corridor were less likely to agree ($p_{B1} < .05$). Republicans were also more likely to think that local politicians exploited Katrina for political purposes; women, again, were less likely to agree ($p_{B1} < .05$).

In sum, high levels of PTS, partisanship, age, religion, gender, education, and military service all affect the level of trust in information provided by national governments, local governments, and the media. Republicans and members of the Religious Right tend to be more trustful of information provided by national and local governments, although Republicans are also less trustful of information provided by the media. Those with high General Distress, more education, and greater age are likely to trust information less. Women are also less likely than others to agree that politicians are exploiting traumatic events for political purposes.

Assessing the Justification for Government Actions

Torture

The public is divided about the use of torture to protect national security (see Figure 9). Almost half, 46.7 percent, of the population disagreed that the United States was justified in using torture to protect national security, 32 percent agreed that torture was justified, with 30.1 percent neither agreeing nor disagreeing.¹⁶ People with greater PTS, Republicans, those with military service, members of the Religious Right, and wealthier people were more likely than others to agree that torture is justified (see Table 6). In contrast, people with higher levels of education were less likely to agree. Age, gender, race and region of the country did not have a significant impact on the response.

Intervening in Afghanistan and Iraq

The majority of the public remains convinced that the United States was justified in entering Afghanistan, but fewer people are willing to accept U.S. government justifications for entering Iraq (there is no significant difference between 2007 and 2008 for either policy, sig. chi square = .284, .583, respectively). With regard to Afghanistan, 58.4 percent of those surveyed in 2008 agreed that the U.S. intervention in Afghanistan was justified, only 14.7 percent disagreed and the rest were neutral. Republicans, those with military service, Whites, highly educated, and wealthier people were more likely than others to accept this justification; women disagree ($p_{B1} < .05$). General Distress, PTS, age, religion, or region of the country in which one lives altered this relationship and no coefficients changed significantly over time (sig. $B_{2i} > .05$).

The public was much more divided about whether the U.S. intervention in Iraq was justified. In 2008, about one third (37.8 percent) agreed, one third (37.1 percent) disagreed, with the remainder neither agreeing nor disagreeing that U.S. action in Iraq was justified. Those with greater PTS, Republicans, those with military service, members of the Religious

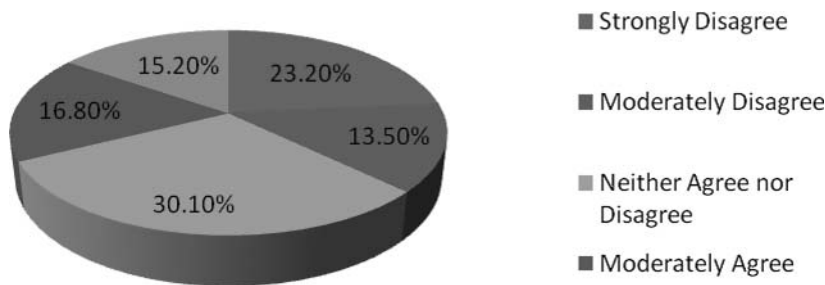


Figure 9. The United States is justified in using torture to protect national security.

Table 6
Assessing justifications for government actions

ASSESSING JUSTIFICATIONS FOR GOVERNMENT ACTIONS	The US is justified in using torture to protect national security	The US was justified in attacking Afghanistan after 9/11	The US was justified in remaining in Afghanistan to promote democracy	The US is justified in remaining in Iraq to promote democracy
Psychological Characteristics General Distress (BSI 18) Post Traumatic Stress Checklist 9/11 (PCL 17) Political and Social Characteristics Political Affiliation (Republican = 1, Other = 0) Military Service (Yes = 1, No = 0) Religion (Member of Religious Right = 1, Other = 0) Region (Wash DC to New England = 1, Other = 0) Personal Characteristics Age Cohort Education Level Race (White = 1, Other = 0) Gender (Female = 1, Male = 0) Family Income	0.101 0.452 ** 1.425 ** 0.395 0.361 * -0.095 0.051 -0.173 ** -0.035 -0.164 0.044 **	0.085 0.014 0.656 ** 0.330 0.222 0.035 0.015 0.084 * 0.527 ** -0.579 ** 0.052 **	-0.233 * 0.208 1.117 ** 0.345 0.166 -0.131 0.038 0.032 0.419 ** -0.360 ** 0.013	-0.194 * 0.251 1.629 ** 0.336 0.341 -0.211 0.005 -0.017 0.128 -0.041 -0.009
Change 2007-2008 General Distress (BSI 18) Post Traumatic Stress Checklist 9/11 (PCL 17) Political Affiliation (Republican = 1, Other = 0) Military Service (Yes = 1, No = 0) Religion (Member of Religious Right = 1, Other = 0) Region (Wash DC to New England = 1, Other = 0) Age Cohort Education Level Race (White = 1, Other = 0) Gender (Female = 1, Male = 0) Family Income Year of Survey (2008 = 1, 2007 = 0)		-0.240 0.065 0.189 0.408 0.025 -0.202 0.026 -0.034 -0.173 0.222 -0.020 0.427	-0.077 0.043 -0.073 -0.250 0.044 -0.102 0.053 -0.048 -0.043 -0.056 -0.016 0.458	-0.096 0.125 -0.228 -0.227 -0.048 0.096 0.071 -0.087 -0.084 0.025 -0.008 0.007 0.253
N Sig. Chi. Squared Pseudo R Squared Ordered Logit Analysis * = p < .05, ** = p < .01	1129 0.000 0.065	2661 0.000 0.051	2650 0.000 0.048	2657 0.000 0.063

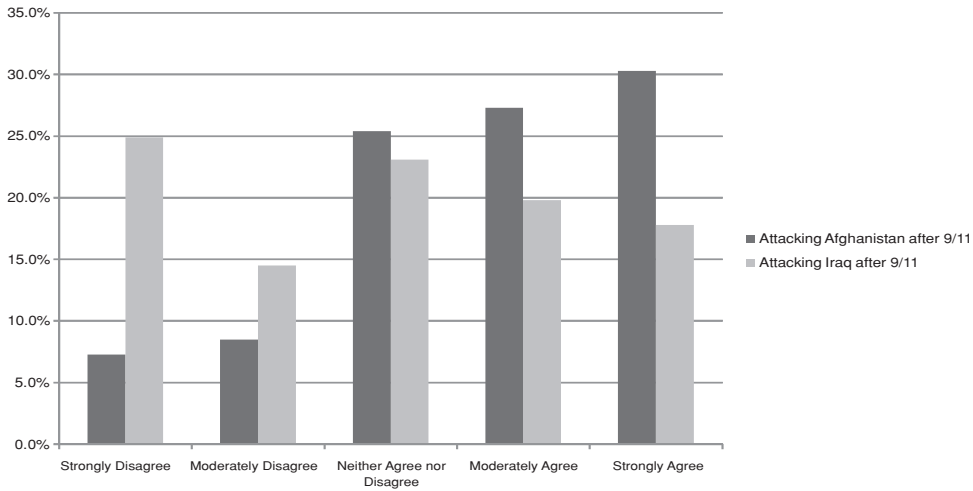


Figure 10. The U.S. was justified in . . .

Right and women were more likely to accept the justification of invading Iraq than others. In contrast, highly educated people and those living in mid-Atlantic to New England region of the United States (including Washington, D.C. and New York), were less likely to accept the justification ($p_{B1} < .05$). Age and income were insignificant. No coefficients changed significantly over time ($\text{sig. } B_{21} > .05$).

Staying in Afghanistan and Iraq to Promote Democracy

In contrast to the stable attitudes regarding the justification for U.S. intervention, increasing numbers of the public supported staying in Afghanistan and Iraq to promote democracy between 2007 and 2008 ($\text{sig. chi square} = .092, .016$, respectively) (see Figures 10 and 11). The proportion of people agreeing that the United States was justified in staying in

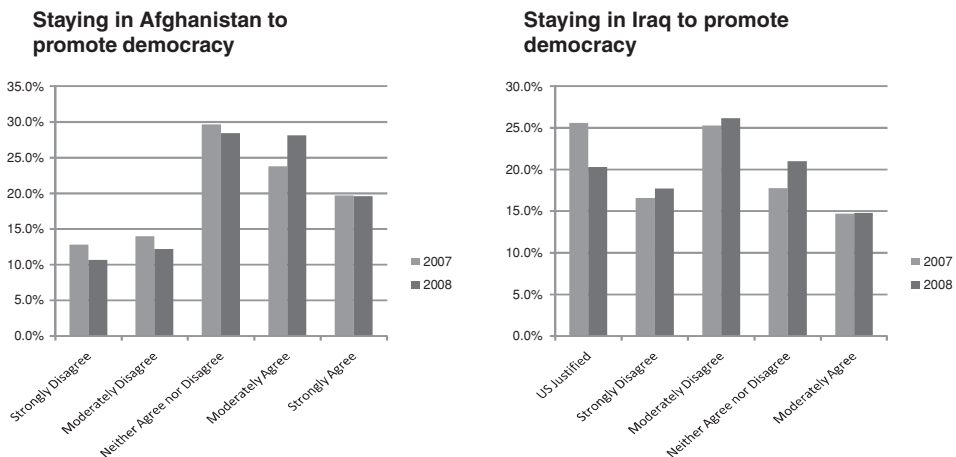


Figure 11. The U.S. is justified in . . .

Afghanistan to promote democracy rose from 43.5 percent in 2007 to 47.7 percent in 2008; the proportion of people agreeing that the United States was justified in staying in Iraq to promote democracy rose from 32.5 percent to 35.8 percent. With regard to Afghanistan, Republicans, those with military service and Whites were more likely than others to accept this justification. In contrast, those with a high General Distress and women were less likely to do so ($p_{B1} < .05$). The marginal impact of these variables did not change significantly between the two surveys (sig. $B_{2i} > 0$). PCL, age, income, religion, and region were insignificant.

With regard to Iraq, those with greater PTS and Republicans were more likely than others to agree that the United States is justified in staying in Iraq to promote democracy; those with a high General Distress index were less likely to agree ($p_{B1} < .05$). The marginal impact of these variables did not change significantly between the two surveys (sig. $B_{2i} > 0$). Age, education, race, gender, income, and region were insignificant.

In sum, PTS, General Distress, partisanship, gender, race, military service, income, religion, and region all affect the public's assessment of the government's justification for action. Overall, those with greater PTS, Republicans, higher levels of income, and members of the Religious Right are more likely than others to accept the government's justification, while those with higher levels of General Distress and education are less likely to do so.

Personal and Policy Changes

Civil Liberties

The proportion of people willing to sacrifice civil liberties for the sake of national security declined between 2007 and 2008 (see Figure 12). In 2007, 42.6 percent moderately or strongly agreed to do so, by 2008, that number had fallen to 39.0 percent (sig. chi square = .000, tau-b = -.031). Those with greater PTS, Republicans, older people, women, wealthier people, and those with military service were more likely than others to be willing to sacrifice

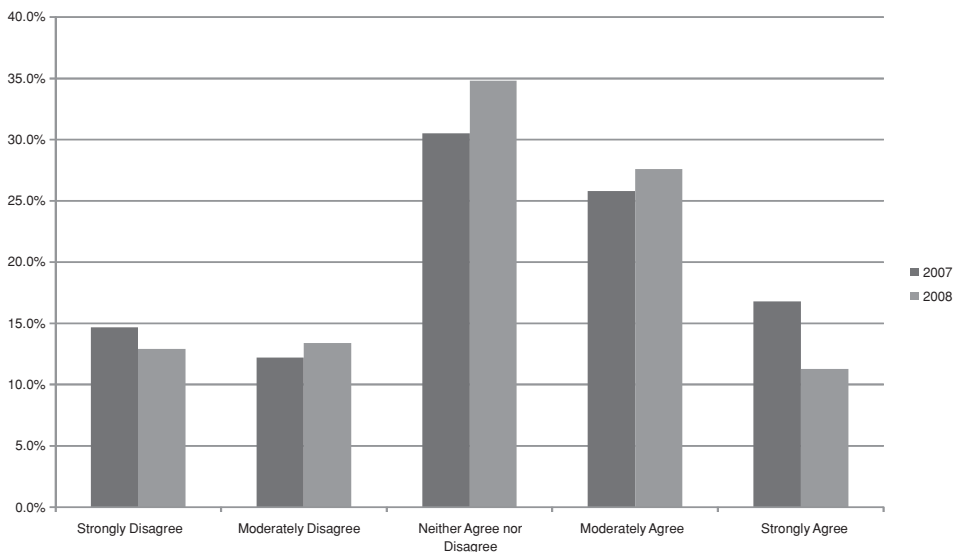


Figure 12. Willing to sacrifice civil liberties for security.

civil liberties ($p_{B1} < .05$), although the impact of partisanship and age declines from 2007 to 2008 ($p_{B2} < .05$) (see Table 7). General Distress, education, race, religion, and region were insignificant.

Immigration

A large proportion of the public supports a more restrictive immigration policy. Fully 68.8 percent of the public agreed that a more restrictive immigration policy is beneficial to the national security of the United States, and 53.7 percent of the public agreed that it is beneficial to personal security (see Figure 13).¹⁷ Republicans, members of the Religious Right, Whites, and older people were more likely than others to agree that a more restrictive immigration policy is beneficial to personal security; wealthier people join this group in agreeing that more restrictive immigration policy also benefits national security. Those with more education were likely to disagree ($p_{B1} < .05$). PTS, General Distress, gender, military service, and region were insignificant.

Leaving Iraq due to Financial Costs

The public continues to be evenly divided about whether U.S. policy in Iraq should be altered due to high financial costs (see Figure 14). About one third (34.9 percent) of the population believes that the policy should be altered due to high financial costs, about one third (31.5 percent) believes it should not, and about a third (33.7 percent) is non-committal. This distribution of responses distribution did not change significantly between 2007 and 2008 (sig. chi square = .136). Those with greater PTS and Republicans were more likely than others to agree that policy in Iraq should not be altered due to financial costs; more educated people were more sensitive to financial costs ($p_{B1} < .05$). General Distress, age, race, gender, income military service, religion, and region were insignificant. None of the coefficients varied significantly between 2007 and 2008.

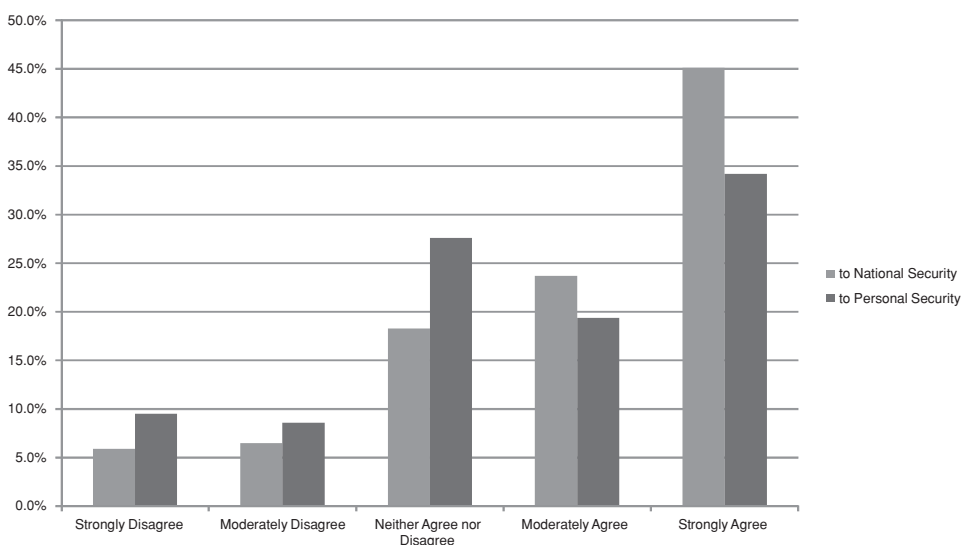


Figure 13. Stricter immigration is beneficial . . .

Table 7
Willingness to accept personal and policy changes

PERSONAL AND POLICY CHANGES	DOMESTIC POLICY	IRAQ POLICY	UNILATERALISM	RESPONSIBILITY
I am willing to sacrifice personal liberties for the sake of security in response to terrorism	A more restrictive immigration policy is beneficial to the national security of the US	US policy in Iraq should not be altered by rising financial costs	The US benefits from acting alone when security threats responding to	US citizens have a responsibility to help those in other parts of the country recover from a terrorist attack
US citizens have a responsibility to help those in other parts of the country recover from natural disasters				
Psychological Characteristics General Distress (BSI 18)	-0.050	-0.159	-0.084	0.131
Post Traumatic Stress Checklist 9/11 (PCL 17)	0.559 **	0.230 *	0.159	0.492 **
Political and Social Characteristics				
Political Affiliation (Republican = 1, Other = 0)	1.086 **	0.955 **	0.798 **	0.015
Military Service (Yes = 1, No = 0)	0.619 **	0.198	0.247	0.042
Religion (Member of Religious Right = 1, Other = 0)	-0.071	0.184	0.385 **	-0.095
Region (Wash DC to New England = 1, Other = 0)	0.031	-0.042	-0.016	-0.048
Personal Characteristics				
Age Cohort	0.235 **	-0.018	-0.120 **	0.029
Education Level	-0.029	-0.080 **	-0.166 **	-0.076 *
Race (White = 1, Other = 0)	-0.019	0.125	0.024	0.205
Gender (Female = 1, Male = 0)	0.403 **	0.087	0.079	0.349 **
Family Income	0.038 **	-0.008	0.000	0.044 **
Change 2007-2008				
General Distress (BSI 18)	-0.121	-0.095	0.104	0.385 *
Post Traumatic Stress Checklist 9/11 (PCL 17)	-0.045	0.209	0.160	-0.277
Political Affiliation (Republican = 1, Other = 0)	-0.353 *	-0.046	0.051	0.221
Military Service (Yes = 1, No = 0)	-0.267	0.240	-0.088	0.093
Religion (Member of Religious Right = 1, Other = 0)	0.198	0.036	-0.024	0.299
Region (Wash DC to New England = 1, Other = 0)	0.041	-0.093	0.079	0.313
Age Cohort	-0.102	0.087	0.016	0.011
Education Level	0.022	-0.041	-0.018	0.073
Race (White = 1, Other = 0)	0.176	0.073	0.258	-0.347
Gender (Female = 1, Male = 0)	-0.109	0.173	-0.041	-0.083
Family Income	0.012	-0.006	-0.005	-0.038
Year of Survey (2008 = 1, 2007 = 0)	0.344	-0.219	-0.759	-0.364
N	2653	2647	2659	2667
Sig. Chi. Squared	0	0	0	0
Pseudo R Squared	0.046	0.073	0.037	0.012
Ordered Logit Analysis				
* = p < .05, ** = p < .01				

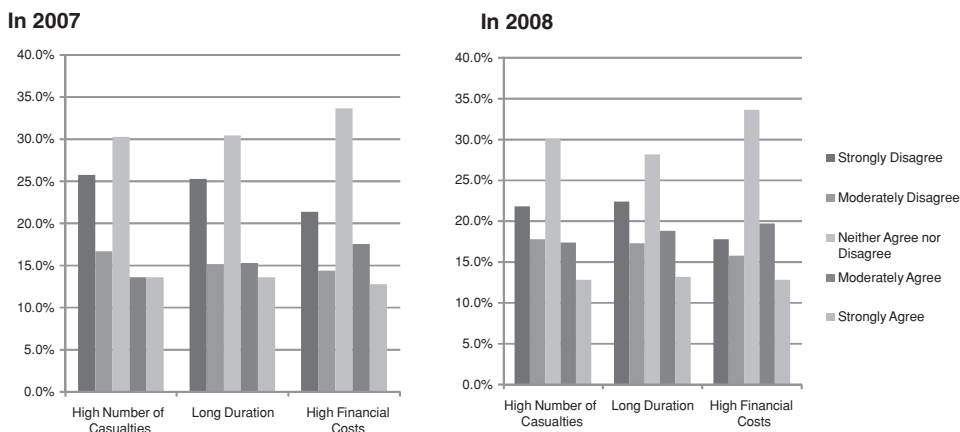


Figure 14. Should not leave Iraq due to:

Casualty Sensitivity

The public is becoming desensitized to the number of casualties in Iraq and the intensity of public sentiment about this issue is declining (sig. chi square = .024, tau-b = .033). While roughly one third of the (30.2 percent) of the public remained undecided, the proportion of people who felt strongly that the United States should leave Iraq due to high numbers of casualties decreased from 25.8 percent in 2007 to 21.8 percent in 2008. Republicans, those with military service and members of the Religious Right were more likely than others to agree that casualties should not be taken into account ($p_{B1} < .05$). PTS, General Distress, age, education, race, gender, income, and region are insignificant. The marginal effect party affiliation, religion and military service remained unchanged across the two surveys ($p_{B2} > .05$).

Time Sensitivity

The public was also increasingly willing to not alter policy in Iraq based on the time it takes to accomplish U.S. objectives (sig. chi square = .040, tau-b = .022 between 2007 and 2008). In aggregate, the proportion of people who supported not altering the policy due to time increased from 28.9 percent to 32 percent. In addition, the proportion of people who “strongly” disagreed with this strategy declined, while the proportion of people who “moderately” disagreed and “moderately” agreed increased from 2007 to 2008. Those with greater PTS and Republicans were more likely than others to agree with not altering the policy in Iraq due to time constraints ($p_{B1} < .05$). None of these coefficients varied significantly over time ($p_{B2} > 0$). General Distress, military service, age, education, race, income, religion, and region were insignificant.

Unilateralism versus Multilateralism

Half of the American public disagreed with the claim that the United States benefits from acting alone when responding to security threats. The proportion of the U.S. public that disagreed declined from 54.5 percent to 50.5 percent between 2007 and 2008, while the proportion that agreed increased from 10.8 percent to 13 percent (sig. chi squared = .071,

$\tau\text{-}b = .048$). Republicans and members of the Religious Right were more likely than others to agree that the United States benefits from acting alone; older and more educated people were more likely to disagree.

On the other hand, 65.5 percent of Americans agreed that the United States benefits from acting in cooperation with others; only 7.2 percent disagreed. There was no significant change between 2007 and 2008. Older people, those with more education, and wealthier people were more likely to agree that the United States benefits from acting with others, although the impact of education decreases over time. Women and members of the Religious Right disagreed ($p_{B1} < .05$), although the impact of gender decreased from 2007 to 2008 ($p_{B2} < .05$). Interestingly, while partisanship has a significant impact on support for unilateralism, it does not affect support for multilateralism. General Distress, PTS, partisanship, race, and military service were insignificant.

Slightly more than half of the public agreed that people have an obligation to help others in other parts of the country recover from terrorist incidents. Between 2007 and 2008, the percentage that agreed increased from 54.0 percent to 55.3 percent (sig. chi square = .06, $\tau\text{-}b = .004$). Those with greater PTS, women, and wealthier people were more likely than others to agree that U.S. citizens have a responsibility to help those in other parts of the country recover from a terrorist attack. In contrast, more educated people were less likely to agree that such an obligation exists. Slightly more than half (52.4 percent) agreed that such an obligation also existed for environmental disasters. This did not change significantly between 2007 and 2008 (sig. chi square = .168). Those with greater PTS, women, and older and wealthier people were more likely than others to agree that U.S. citizens have a responsibility to help others recover from environmental disasters. In contrast again, more educated people were more likely to agree that people have an obligation to be helpful.

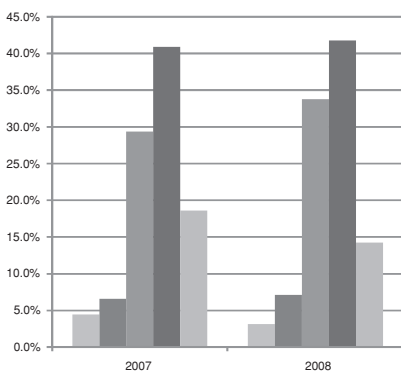
Assessment of Success and Personal Outlook

Turbulence

The majority of Americans surveyed considered changes taking place to be turbulent and disorderly, but the proportion of people who did so declined (sig. chi square = .005, $\tau\text{-}b = -.035$) (see Figure 15). The percentage of Americans who felt that change taking place today tends to be turbulent and disorderly declined from 59.5 percent in 2007 to 55 percent in 2008. People with high General Distress scores, who are White, older, have more education and higher incomes tended to see more turbulence and disorder than others; although the impact of race and income diminished between 2007 and 2008 ($p_{B2} < .05$) (see Table 8). Republicans and members of the Religious Right¹⁸ saw less turbulence ($p_{B1} < .05$).

Given the perception of turbulence, it is not surprising that only about one fifth of the population agreed that they are “confident in predicting what is likely to happen to me and my family in the coming decade.” Unlike the moderating perception of turbulence, however, confidence in predicting the future declined between 2007 and 2008 (sig. chi square = .001, $\tau\text{-}b = -.013$). The percentage of people expressing confidence in predicting the future stayed about the same, dropping from 22.6 percent to 22.4 percent, while the proportion expressing disagreement grew from 31.9 percent to 35.4 percent between 2007 and 2008. Women and those with higher levels of education were less likely to express confidence than others ($p_{B1} < .05$). The marginal impact of these variables did not change significantly between 2007 and 2008. General Distress, PTS, political party, age, race, income, military service, religion, and region were insignificant.

The World is Turbulent and Disorderly



Confident in Predicting What Will Happen to Me and My Family

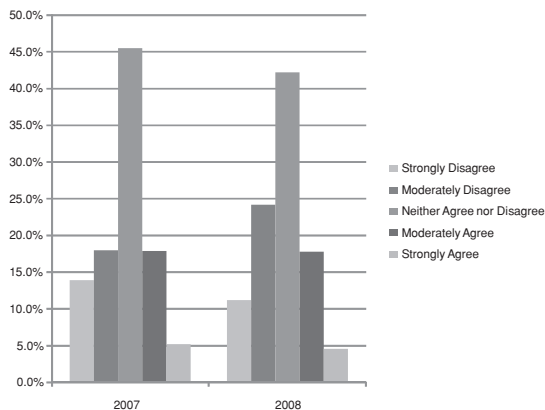


Figure 15. “The world is turbulent and disorderly” vs. “Confident in predicting what will happen to me and my family.”

Economic Outlook

The public’s personal and national economic outlook worsened between 2007 and 2008 (sig. chi square = .013 and .000; tau-b = -.036 and -.126, respectively) (see Figure 16). The percentage of people who agreed that their “personal economic outlook is positive” declined from 44.6 percent to 40.2 percent; the percentage of those who agreed that the “national economic outlook is positive” fell even more, dropping from 28.2 percent to 18.1 percent. Republicans, better educated, and wealthier people were more likely to be optimistic about their personal economic prospects than others; those with high General Distress scores, Whites, and women were less so ($p_{B1} < .05$). None of these coefficients changed significantly between 2007 and 2008 ($p_{B2} > .05$). Older people joined Republicans as being more optimistic about the national economy than others; people with high General

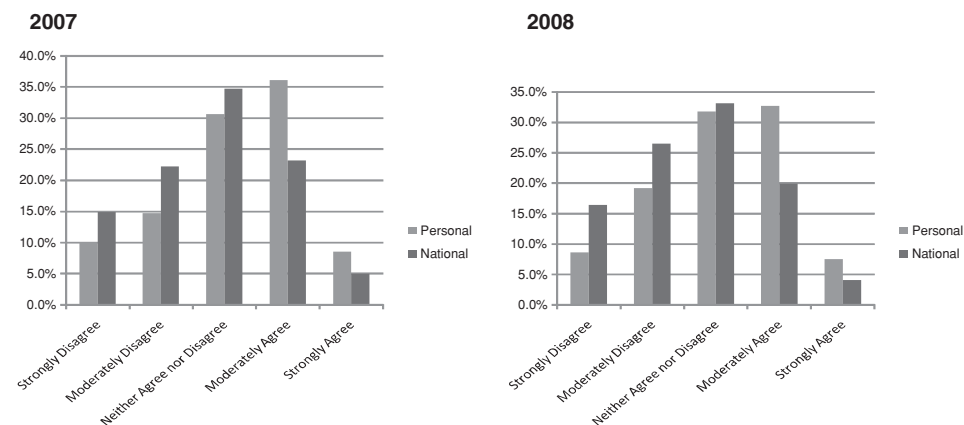


Figure 16. Economic outlook.

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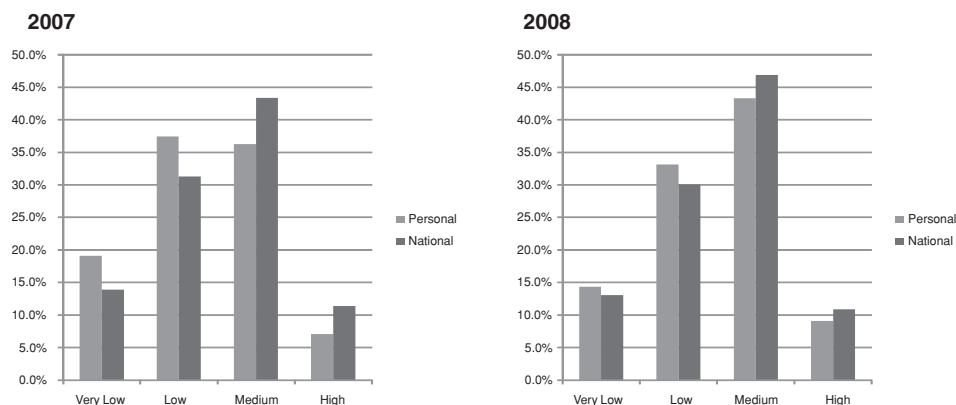


Figure 17. Likelihood that security outlook will improve in the next decade.

Distress scores, Whites, and women were less so ($p_{B1} < .05$). The marginal impact of these variables did not change significantly between 2007 and 2008.

Security Outlook

The public's assessment of the prospects for improving national security did not change significantly between 2007 and 2008 (sig. chi square = .296) (see Figure 17). Approximately 55.7 percent of the population agreed that the likelihood that national security will improve in the next decade is high; 44.3 percent said it is low. In comparison, the proportion of the population that considered the likelihood that their personal security will improve in the next decade rose from 43.4 percent to 52.4 percent between 2007 and 2008 (sig. chi square = .000, tau-b = .085). Those with greater PTS and Republicans were more likely than others to be optimistic about the improvement in national security, those with high General Distress scores and higher levels of education were less so ($p_{B1} < .05$). The impact of General Distress, however, declined over time ($p_{B2} = .092$). Republicans were also more optimistic about the improvement in their personal security; while those higher levels of General Distress and higher levels of education were less so ($p_{B1} < .05$). The marginal impact of these variables did not change between 2007 and 2008 ($p_{B2} > .05$). The other variables were insignificant.

Success: Future Defense and Responsiveness to Traumatic Events

Public assessments of the effectiveness of the Global War on Terror have been generally positive. Ironically, despite a large public outcry in response to U.S. actions following hurricane Katrina, the public's assessment of U.S. preparedness against environmental disasters improved slightly between 2007 and 2008, while its assessment of U.S. preparedness regarding terrorism has remained static.

American assessments of the effectiveness of the U.S. government's domestic response to terrorism did not change significantly between 2007 and 2008 (sig. chi square = .161). On average, 41.1 percent of Americans agreed that U.S. actions at home since 9/11 have decreased the threat of terrorism, 27.9 percent disagreed. Republicans, older people, wealthier people, and those with military service were more likely to assess the U.S. domestic response positively; those with high General Distress scores were less likely to do so. The

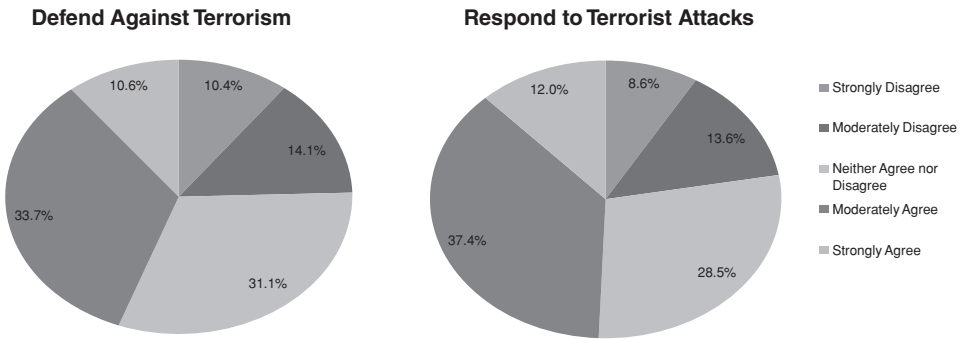


Figure 18. US is better prepared to . . . in 2008.

marginal impact of these variables did not change significantly between 2007 and 2008. PTS, education, race, gender, religion, and region were insignificant.

The public's assessment of the effectiveness of the U.S. government's international response to terrorism improved slightly (sig. chi square = .080, tau-b = .081). The proportion of people who agreed that U.S. actions abroad since 9/11 decreased the threat of terrorism rose from 30.6 percent to 34.1 percent, while the number who disagreed declined from 37.2 percent to 33.7 percent. Republicans and those with military service were more likely than others to assess the U.S. international response favorably; those with more education were less likely to do so ($p_{B1} < .05$). The marginal impact of these variables did not change significantly between 2007 and 2008. General Distress, PTS, age, race, gender, income, religion, and region were insignificant.

The public's assessment of the United States's ability to defend itself against and respond to terrorist attacks did not change between 2007 and 2008 (sig. chi square = .353 and .518, respectively) (see Figure 18). Almost half of the public agreed that the United States is better able to defend itself against terrorism (44.6 percent) and is better able to respond to an attack (47.8 percent) than it was before 9/11 (25.8 percent and 22.8 percent disagree, respectively). Republicans and older people¹⁹ were more likely than others to agree that the United States is better able to defend itself against terrorism, and Republicans, older people, and Whites are more likely than others to agree that the United States is better able to respond to terrorist attacks ($p_{B1} < .05$). Those with high levels of General Distress were more likely to disagree on both issues ($p_{B1} < .05$). The marginal impact of these variables did not change significantly between 2007 and 2008. PTS, education, gender, income, military service, religion, and region were insignificant.

The public's assessment of the United States's ability to defend against and respond to environmental disasters remained low, but improved between 2007 and 2008 (sig. chi square = .019 and .000; tau-b = .043 and .060, respectively) (see Figure 19). Between 2007 and 2008, the proportion of people who agreed that the United States is better able to protect itself from environmental disasters than before Katrina increased from one fifth (20.4 percent) to one fourth (25.0 percent), while the proportion who disagreed decreased from 41.4 percent to 38.9 percent. Similarly, the percentage of people who agreed that the United States is better able to respond to natural disasters increased from just over one quarter (28.6 percent) to more than one third (34.3 percent), while the percentage who disagreed declined from 35.3 percent to 31.0 percent.

Republicans and those with military service were more likely than others to assess U.S. defensive and responsive capabilities to natural disasters optimistically ($p_{B1} < .05$).

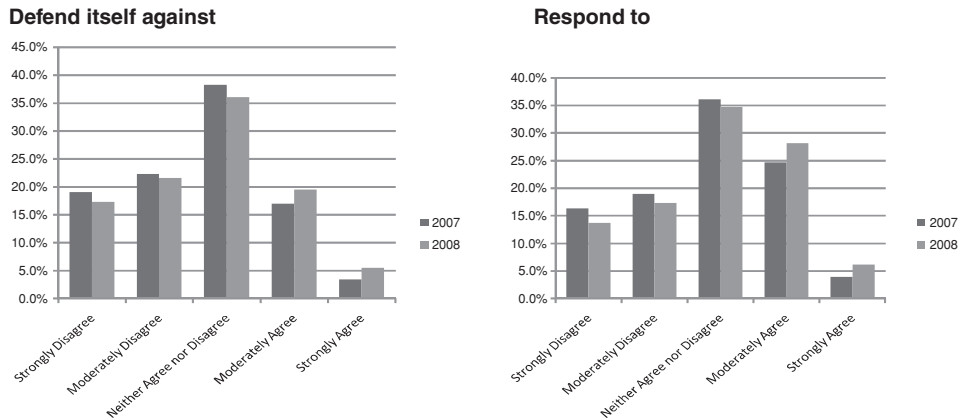


Figure 19. US is better prepared to . . . environmental disasters.

Women were also more likely than others to consider the United States better able to respond to environmental disasters than before Katrina ($p_{BI} = .09$). In contrast, those with higher levels of education were less likely to agree that the U.S. ability to protect itself from natural disasters has improved ($p_{BI} < .05$). The marginal impact of these variables does not change significantly between 2007 and 2008. BSI, PTS, age, race, income, religion, and region were insignificant.

Overall Trajectory of the Country

The majority of the population continued to feel that the country has gotten off track and is generally going in the wrong direction. This feeling did not change significantly between 2007 and 2008 (sig. chi square = .150). Fully 71.8 percent of the public felt that “things in this country have gotten off track,” and only 28.2 percent felt that “things are generally going in the right direction” (see Figure 20). Republicans were more likely than others to

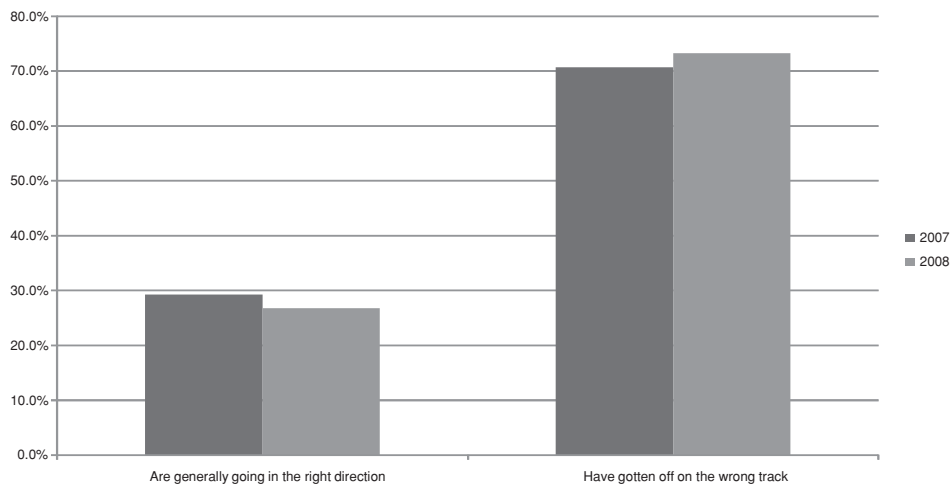


Figure 20. Overall trajectory of the country.

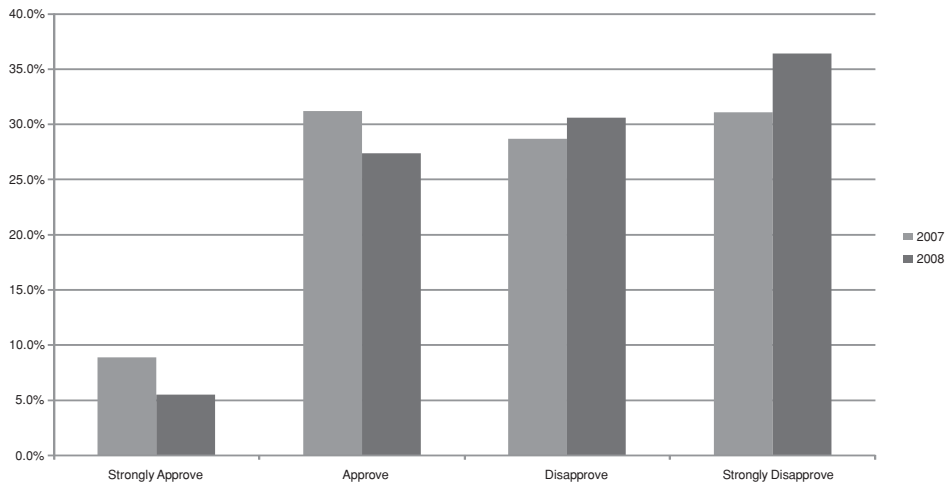


Figure 21. Approve of how President Bush is handling his job.

feel that things are generally going in the right direction, while those with a high General Distress score were more likely to feel that things have gotten off track ($p_{B1} < .05$). The marginal impact of these variables did not change between 2007 and 2008. PTS, age, education, race, gender, income, military service, religion, and region were insignificant.

President George W. Bush's approval ratings also declined significantly between 2007 and 2008 (sig. chi square = .000, tau-b = .073). Between 2007 and 2008, the percentage of people who approved of the way "President Bush is handling his job" decreased from 40.1 percent to 32.9 percent; the percentage of people who disapproved increased from 59.8 percent to 67.0 percent (see Figure 21). In addition, the number of people who "strongly approve" decreased from 8.9 percent to 5.5 percent, while the number of people who "strongly disapprove" increased from 31.1 percent to 36.4 percent. Republicans, older people and whites were more likely than others to approve of Bush's handling of his job; those living the Mid-Atlantic to New England region were less likely to do so. The marginal impact of these variables did not change significantly between 2007 and 2008. General Distress, PTS, education, income, and military service were insignificant.

In sum, General Distress, PTS, partisanship, military service, gender, age, race, education, income, religion, and region all affected the public's assessment of success and their outlook on the future. In general, Republicans, members of the Religious Right, older people, and those with military experience tend to provide more positive assessments of the effectiveness of government policies than others, while those with higher levels of education are more critical.

Effects by Independent Factors

General Distress and PTS

The level of general psychological distress and of post-traumatic stress symptomatology related to 11 September 2001 decreased between 2007 and 2008, but 14.9 percent of the U.S. public currently reported at least some general distress (with a mean Brief Symptom Inventory score > 2), and 8.1 percent continued to report at least some post-traumatic symptomatology

related to 11 September 2001 (with a mean PCL score >2). When controlling for social and political demographics, higher levels of distress were associated with a negative general outlook including greater assessments of turbulence in the world today, pessimism about the economic and security outlook, less trust of the government, less optimism about policy responses to terrorism and environmental disasters, less willingness to support specific policies like staying in Iraq, and more support for diplomacy. Higher levels of PTS scores were associated with a blend of greater perceived risks and optimism. For example, higher levels of PTS were associated with increased perceptions of national and personal risk from terrorism, greater political salience of terrorism, support for aggression and unilateralism in foreign policy, greater trust in government, greater acceptance of torture and willingness to give up civil liberties for the sake security, and optimism about the future security outlook.

Partisanship

Partisanship is a significant factor in determining perceptions of risk and support for policies regarding terrorism and environmental disasters. When controlling for other social and economic demographics, Republicans remained significantly different from people in other political parties with higher perceptions of national and personal risk from terrorism, greater political salience of terrorism, greater satisfaction with government responses, greater acceptance of particular strategies like the use of force, torture, intervention, and unilateralism, greater trust in government, more willingness to give up civil liberties, and less casualty sensitive, less likely to see the world as turbulent, more optimistic about the economic and security outlook and the overall direction of the country.

Military Service

People with military service were no different than others regarding the perceived threat of terrorism to the country, but were more likely than others to anticipate that an act of terrorism will affect them or their families. They were more likely to agree that the U.S. responses to 9/11 and Iraq were not aggressive enough, that more force, more actions at home, and less diplomacy were warranted. Military personnel were not significantly different than the general population regarding their support for intervening in Afghanistan or Iraq, but were more likely than others to trust information provided by the government about both wars and more likely to support staying in both countries to promote democracy, regardless of the number of casualties involved. Military personnel were also more likely than others to believe that changes in domestic and international policy actions have made us safer and better able to defend against terrorism and environmental disasters. They were also more willing than others to sacrifice civil liberties for security.

Aside from supporting a more aggressive policy response to 9/11 and Iraq, military personnel were no different than the civilian population regarding their support for multilateralism or unilateralism, their economic or security outlooks, or their support for President Bush.

Religion

Members of the Religious Right were more likely than others to consider terrorism a threat to national security, but their assessments of personal and national risk from terrorism, and the political salience of terrorism, weapons proliferation, and the economy did not differ significantly from those of other religions. Members of the Religious Right were more likely

than others to support more aggressive and unilateral foreign policies including the use of force in Afghanistan and Iraq, and were more willing than others to stay in Iraq to promote democracy, regardless of casualties. They were more likely to trust information provided by the government about 9/11 and Iraq, although less likely to report that politicians exploited 9/11 and more likely to agree that they exploited Iraq for political advantage. They were more supportive of the use of torture and were more likely than others to agree that restrictive immigration policies are good for personal and national security. Although they saw the world as less turbulent than others, their economic and security outlooks, assessment of government policies in response to terrorism and environmental disasters, assessment of the overall trajectory of the United States and of President Bush do not differ from people of other religions.

Region

Unexpectedly, people living in the mid-Atlantic to New England region of the United States did not respond differently than others to the majority of the questions asked. Strikingly, they were likely to assign a lower probability to the threat that terrorism poses to themselves or their families in the next decade. They were also less likely than others to agree that the United States was justified in attacking Iraq after 11 September 2001.

Gender

Gender did not have a significant impact on perceptions of national risk, but women were more likely than men to consider terrorism a risk to their personal security. They were also more likely than men to report that more should be done domestically to forestall another terrorist attack and were more willing to sacrifice civil liberties for the sake of security. Women also expressed less confidence in their ability to predict the future and were more pessimistic than men about their personal and the national economic outlook. They were also less likely to agree that politicians exploit terrorism, war, or environmental disasters for political or partisan advantage.

The political salience of terrorism, the economy, immigration, and the environment were not gender issues, although women were more likely than men to consider nuclear proliferation and the war in Iraq salient. Foreign policy responses to 9/11 and Katrina were not gender issues, although women were more likely than men to question U.S. intervention in Afghanistan and support U.S. intervention in Iraq, and report that more should be done on the domestic front to counter terrorism. The use of torture was not a gender issue.

Women were more willing to sacrifice civil liberties, but were no more or less casualty sensitive, finance sensitive, or time sensitive than others regarding U.S. actions in Iraq. Women did not see the world as any more turbulent than others, but were less confident in predicting the future. Assessment of success in the War on Terror, the ability to defend or respond to future terrorist incidents, and the overall trajectory of the country were not gender-specific. In contrast, men and women had different views of the economy and women were less confident about the national and their personal economic outlook.

Race

Race was not a significant factor in predicting the public's assessment or the political salience of the risk posed by terrorism. Whites were more likely than others to assess government policies positively, but there was no significant difference among people of

different racial backgrounds regarding the assessment of specific government strategies like the use of diplomacy, the use of force, use of torture, or changes in domestic policy in response to terrorism. Trust in the information provided by the government is not a racial issue, but Whites were more likely than others to distrust the motives of politicians and agree that they are exploiting information about Iraq. Race did not affect the willingness to give up civil liberties, or casualty sensitivity, time sensitivity, or perceptions of unilateralism regarding U.S. activities in Iraq, or one's future outlook of security or the economy. Whites were more likely than others to agree that more restrictive immigration helped personal and national security, more likely to see the world as turbulent. They were also less optimistic about the economy, more optimistic about the fight against terrorism and more supportive of President Bush.

Age

Age was associated with higher assessments of the likelihood of a terrorist attack against the United States, but a lower perception that this risk would affect oneself or one's family. Age was also associated with a greater political salience given to terrorism, weapons proliferation, and the economy. Older people were more supportive of government policies overall and are more trusting of the information provided by the government about traumatic events, although they were more likely than others to agree that politicians exploit traumatic events for political purposes. Older people were more willing than others to give up civil liberties for security and express a stronger belief that immigration restrictions enhance security. Otherwise, however, they were not significantly different than others when assessing specific policy initiatives such as the use of force or diplomacy in Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran or the use of torture against potential terrorists. Age did not have a significant impact on economic or security outlooks.

Education

People with more years of schooling were no different than others regarding their perceived threat to national and personal security posed by terrorism, but they considered terrorism and nuclear proliferation to be less politically salient than others. They gave more salience to climate change than others. More educated people were also more likely to report that the responses to 9/11 and Iraq were too aggressive, that more diplomacy should be used, and that too much was altered domestically. They were less supportive of immigration restrictions but were no more or less likely than others to sacrifice civil liberties for security. They were more likely to agree that politicians exploited 9/11 and Katrina for political advantage, less likely to think politicians exploited Iraq for political purposes, and less likely to trust government information about Iraq and Iran. They were more likely to see the world as turbulent and have less confidence in the future, but their personal economic outlook was positive, although their security outlook was negative. They were less likely to think that U.S. actions abroad have made the United States safer or that the United States is better able to respond to environmental disasters.

Income

Wealthier people perceived a high level of national and personal risk from, and assigned a large degree of political salience to, terrorism. They were more likely than others to support torture, sacrifice civil liberties, and support restrictions on immigration for the sake

of security. They were more likely than others to support the invasion of Afghanistan and agreed that politicians exploited 9/11 and Iraq for political or partisan purposes. They also saw the world as turbulent, supported multilateralism, and had more confidence than others in the national economic outlook. They were no different than others regarding their support for Iraq, the use of force, diplomacy, or domestic policy change in response to terrorism, trust in the information provided by the government, casualty sensitivity, their personal economic outlook, and their security outlook, the overall trajectory of the economy, or their assessments of President Bush.

Conclusion

America in turbulent times is a multifaceted nation that defies simple divisions along gender, race, religion, education, or income lines. At the same time, several distinctive characteristics are evident. In particular, partisanship is significant and durable. A person's political affiliation is strongly associated with his or her perceptions of the personal and national risks posed by terrorism and environmental disasters. It is also strongly associated with how people assess government responses to traumatic events. One open question is whether this effect is a function of being in or shifting to the same party as the president during a period of turbulence. In other words, party affiliation may be both a cause and effect of one's perceptions of traumatic events. With the presidency changing parties in the 2008 election, future research will help to address this question.

It is notable that while the impact of psychological distress on perceptions of traumatic events and support for subsequent policies is declining, it remains significant for a small portion of the population. General psychological distress is associated with perceptions of turbulence, low levels of trust in government, and pessimistic outlooks on the future, but it is not associated with one's perception of risk from terrorism or environmental disasters, nor does it affect one's assessment of specific government policies. In contrast, post-traumatic stress symptomatology related to 9/11 continues to be significantly associated with high perceptions of personal and national risk, a desire for aggressive and ongoing government responses against these risks at home and abroad, a trust in government, and a willingness to make personal sacrifices (in terms of civil liberties); yet, it has no effect on perceptions of turbulence, one's economic or security outlook on the future, or one's assessment of the administration or its policies.

Missing from this analysis to date is the impact of post-traumatic symptomatology resulting from other traumatic events, such as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. This restriction is due to a data limitation reflecting the relatively small number of active military personnel serving in Iraq and Afghanistan in the sample. It is notable, however, that the effect of military service in general, which is likely to be strongly correlated with PTS related to the current wars, is very similar to that of PTS. For example, military service is associated with perceptions of high threats to personal security from terrorism, support for aggressive responses at home and abroad, strong support for continued military action, trust in and a positive assessment of government policies, and a willingness to make personal sacrifices (in the form of civil liberties and staying in Iraq or Afghanistan regardless of the financial, human, or time costs).

Education, age, race, income, and religion also affect people's interpretations of traumatic events and their assessment of policies in response to those events; region does not. Although Washington, D.C. and New York City likely remain highly valued targets for future terrorist attacks, people in that mid-Atlantic to New England region of the country did not respond differently than those in other parts of the country. Thus, while many

differences affect people's perceptions and responses, the portrait of America does not vary as one moves from sea to shining sea.

Notes

1. See for example, Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006); Leonie Huddy, Stanley Feldman, Charles Taber, and Gallya Lahav, "Threat, Anxiety, and Support of Anti-terrorism Policies," *American Political Science Review* 49(3) (July 2005), pp. 610–625; Brian Jenkins, *International Terrorism: A New Kind of Warfare* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1974); Alex Schmid, "Terrorism as Psychological Warfare," *Democracy and Security* 1(2) (July 2005), pp. 137–146.

2. This project was funded by National Science Foundation Human and Social Dynamics Grant CMS-0624165, Roxane Silver, PI, Richard Matthew and George Shambaugh (co-PIs). The research team also includes Scott Blum, Paloma Gonzalez, Bryan McDonald, and Michael Poulin.

3. For more information about the Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI or BSI-18), see <http://www.pearsonassessments.com/tests/general-distress18.htm>

4. For more information about the Post-traumatic stress Check List (PCL-17), see: http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/ncmain/ncdocs/assmnts/ptsd_checklist_pcl.html. Because the respondents were not directly exposed to the 9/11 attacks and the authors did not assess functional impairment, individuals are not assumed to have post-traumatic stress disorder. For further discussion, see Roxane Silver, "Nationwide Longitudinal Study of Psychological Responses to September 11," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 288 (September 2002), pp. 1235–1244.

5. The study used the self-selected designation of Baptist of any denomination to reflect the so-called Religious Right in American politics. It is recognized that this is an imperfect proxy, as not all Baptists are members of the Religious Right, and not all members of the Religious Right are Baptists.

6. The sample of respondents surveyed reflect the adult population living throughout the United States. The study examines whether the subset of those living in the mid-Atlantic and New England regions behave differently than others as a means of evaluating whether those who live in close proximity to the 9/11 attacks respond differently than others.

7. This is consistent with studies finding individuals to be unrealistically optimistic about future events. See Neil D. Weinstein, "Unrealistic Optimism about Future Life Events," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 39(5) (1980), pp. 806–810. It may also be a function of either ignorance about the "real" risk of a terrorist incident, or prudence based on the recognition based on the small odds that any one person would be affected by an attack against the United States.

8. None of the other coefficients change significantly over time.

9. Questions about the 2008 election were not asked in 2007, so change over time is not assessed.

10. PEW Research Center, "Inside Obama's Sweeping Victory" (5 November 2008). Available at <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1023/exit-poll-analysis-2008>

11. Respondents are asked to gauge the intensity of government responses to security and environmental threats on a scale ranging from "too aggressive" to "too passive." Given the varying contexts of security and environmental threats, the respondents are not given specific definitions of aggressive or passive. In the context of Hurricane Katrina, examples of actions considered to be "too aggressive" may include circumstances in which the government's response constrained individual rights and liberties by unnecessarily or unevenly forcing people to evacuate or stay in designated areas (such as the New Orleans Superdome). In contrast, "too passive" may refer to a lack of timely, sufficient, or ongoing response to the hurricane by the national government.

12. This question was asked only in the 2007 survey.

13. Questions about trust in government related to 9/11 were not asked in 2008.

14. Questions about Iraq and the local media were not asked in 2007.

15. To maintain consistency with similar questions regarding 9/11 Afghanistan, Iraq, and Iran, the term "exploiting" is not defined. In the context of Hurricane Katrina, the perception of political

exploitation was widespread and varied. For example, some have expressed concern that the George W. Bush administration was used as a scapegoat by national Democratic politicians and by local and state-level politicians for a complex situation that involved dysfunction at multiple levels of government. Others have argued that government failures in response to the hurricane precipitated and accelerated the decline in the public's assessment of the administration. See: Pew Research Center for People and the Press, "Two in Three Critical of Bush's Relief Efforts" (September 8, 2005). Available at <http://people-press.org/report/255/two-in-three-critical-of-bushs-relief-efforts>

16. This question was asked only in the 2008 survey.

17. This question was not asked in 2007.

18. $p < .075$.

19. $p = .085$.