

Policy Threat, Partisanship, and Case of the Affordable Care Act

Supplementary Materials

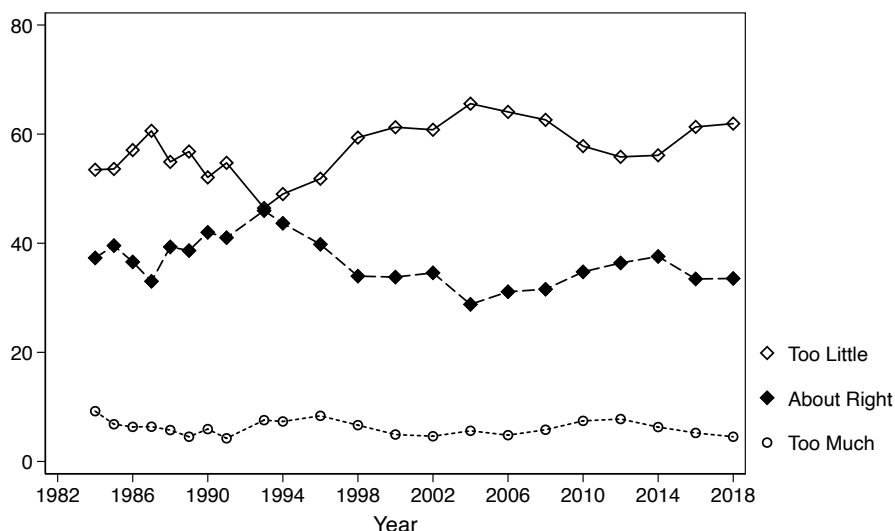
Section 1. Trends in Public Opinion on Social Security and Immigration as Placebo Tests

In our manuscript, we report empirical models that use a dummy variable for year 2018 as a proxy measure of political threat. As placebo tests, we examine trends in attitudes toward social security spending and immigration to see if the 2016 election has impacted policy preferences beyond health care. To do so, we draw data from the General Social Survey (GSS) and focus on examining if public opinions in these two policy areas substantially changed after 2016.

Analysis 1. Trends in Social Security Spending Attitudes

Figure 1 shows attitudes toward Social Security spending from 1984 to 2018, based on biannual data from the General Social Survey (GSS). The GSS survey question reads, “We are faced with many problems in this country, none of which can be solved easily or inexpensively. I'm going to name some of these problems, and for each one I'd like you to name some of these problems, and for each one I'd like you to tell me whether you think we're spending too much money on it, too little money, or about the right amount. Are we spending too much, too little, or about the right amount on Social security?” As Figure 1 shows, the percentage of GSS respondents, who thought Social Security Spending was too much, had maintained consistently small since the mid-1980s. Figure 1 also shows that most Americans consistently support Social Security spending, and this trend has been stable since the mid-1980s. Trends of public opinions in this policy area did not change substantially after Trump’s election in 2016.

Figure 1. Trends in Attitudes toward Social Security Spending, based on GSS from 1984 to 2018.

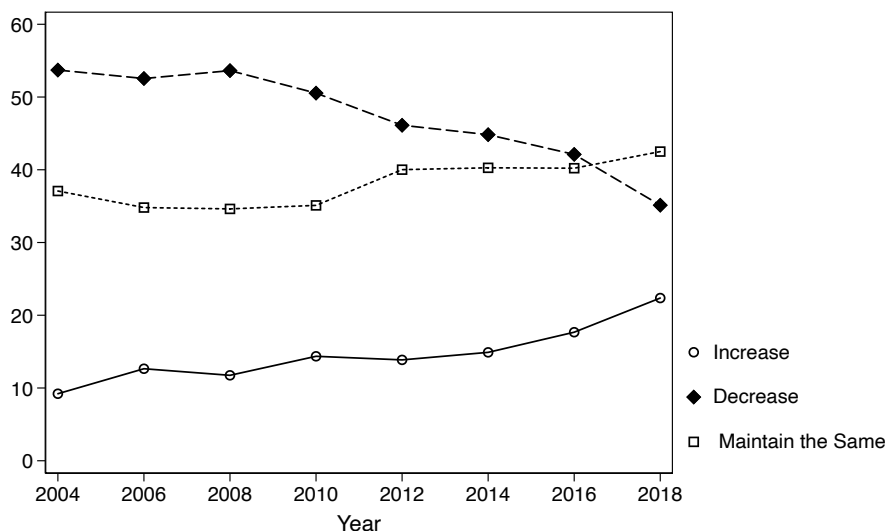


Analysis 2. Trends in Attitudes toward Immigrants

Figure 2 shows attitudes toward immigration from 2004 to 2018, based on data from the General Social Survey. The question reads, “Do you think the number of immigrants to America should be [increased, maintain the same, or decreased]?” Figure 2 shows, attitudes on immigration

maintained quite stable between 2004 and 2010: more than 50% of the respondents supported decreasing the number of immigrants to the America. Years after 2010 had seen a steady decrease in negative attitudes toward immigrants. However, shifts in public opinion in this policy area happened before Trump’s election in 2016.

Figure 2. Trends in Public Opinion on Immigration, based on GSS 2004-2018.



Section 2. Robustness Checks Considering Censoring and “Ceiling” Effects

In this section, we carefully examine if our results are driven by the possible “ceiling effects” in two ways. First, we check descriptive statistics of the dependent variable by partisanship to see if Democrats, especially strong Democrats reported maximum support to the ACA. In Table 1, we tabulate favorability scores by year for Democrats, showing both sample frequencies the corresponding percentage numbers. We did not find evidence that most Democrats report the maximum (9) or the near maximum favorability score (8) across the five survey waves. In years before 2016, a large proportion of Democrats rated the ACA with favorability scores less than 5.

Table 1. Tabulation of Democrats’ Favorability Scores by Survey Year

ACA Favorability	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018
1 (least favorable)	65 (11.11%)	42 (7.57%)	50 (9.24%)	58(11.22%)	39(8.39%)
2	23 (3.93%)	15 (2.70%)	21(3.88%)	29(5.61%)	18(3.87%)
3	18 (3.08%)	14 (2.52%)	21(3.88%)	10(1.93%)	15(3.23%)
4	11 (1.88%)	18(3.24%)	22(4.07%)	17(3.29%)	11(2.37)
5	139 (23.76%)	105(18.92%)	71(13.12%)	64(12.38%)	70(15.05%)
6	35 (5.98%)	61(10.99%)	52(9.61%)	56(10.83%)	24(5.16%)
7	41(7.01%)	34(6.15%)	36(6.65%)	28(5.42%)	23(4.95%)
8	104 (17.78%)	75(13.51%)	71(13.12%)	82(15.86%)	79(16.99%)
9 (most favorable)	149 (25.47%)	191(34.41%)	197(36.41%)	173(33.46%)	186(40%)
Total N	585	555	541	517	465

Second, following the suggestions in Wang and Mcardle (2009), we further explore if empirical results reported in our main manuscript remain robust when using the Tobit regression specification, treating the dependent variable as being right-censored. Table 2 report the two Tobit models, one without interaction terms and the other including the three interaction terms, as robustness checks for Table 2- Model (1) and Table 2-Model (5) in our manuscript. Table 2 shows our main results remain robust based on the alternative Tobit specification. For all the key theoretical variables and their interaction terms, we obtain coefficients that are consistent in sign and significance levels. Results from this robustness check will also rend similar substantive conclusions to what we present in the main manuscript.

Table 2. Empirical Results based on Tobit Regression Specification

Independent Variable	(1)	(2)
	ACA	ACA
	Favorability	Favorability
Partisanship	0.458** (0.083)	0.452** (0.027)
Partisanship X Year 2018	--	-0.085* (0.037)
ACA Impact on Access to Health Insurance	0.080** (0.026)	0.125** (0.031)
Impact of ACA on Access X Year 2018	--	-0.155** (0.056)
Low Income (Less than 35k)	0.068 (0.097)	-0.107 (0.109)
Low Income X Year 2018	--	0.651** (0.198)
Year 2018	0.425** (0.025)	1.002** (0.198)
Political Knowledge	0.077* (0.032)	0.074** (0.032)
Education	0.097** (0.029)	0.102** (0.029)
Age	-0.001 (0.003)	-0.001 (0.003)
Female	-0.032 (0.078)	-0.031 (0.078)
Nonwhite	-0.124 (0.103)	-0.123 (0.103)
Favorability _{t-2} (Lagged DV)	0.558** (0.016)	0.558** (0.017)
Intercept	-0.497* (0.219)	-0.663** (0.227)
N	2,544	2,544
Pseudo R ²	0.203	0.205

Significance levels: † p<.10, *p<.05, **p<.01.

Section 3. Panel Study Procedures

The US Public Policy Study includes five waves, collected in September and October of 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, and 2018 respectively. Each wave consisted of a telephone survey of approximately 22 minutes in which respondents were asked the identical questions.

The fifth wave of the survey was conducted in 2018, in English, by Abt Associates of Rockville, MD. (Their predecessor company, Abt SRBI, conducted Waves 2, 3 and 4). The completed interviews were all panel cases that were interviewed in previous waves.

In 2018, the survey was in the field from September 4 to November 5, 2018, using a 40-call design contacting respondents on both landlines and cell phones as provided by the respondent during their original 2010 baseline or 2012, 2014, or 2016 follow up survey. All calls were made between 9am and 9pm respondent time. Contact information was confirmed or updated by utilizing Accurant services, a product of LexisNexis Risk Solutions and TargetSmart. To maximize the response rate a series of letters and monetary incentives were used as a means of follow up communication and remuneration. First, a pre-notification letter was sent which included a \$2 bill and a post incentive offer that matched the post incentive amount paid during the 2016 or last time they completed an interview up to \$50. Next, a noncontact or refusal letter with a \$20 post incentive offer or last incentive previously paid up to \$75 was sent to non-respondents who had not been contacted or refused to take the survey. Finally, an end game letter was sent to non-responders with a post incentive offer of \$75, except for those who were previously paid \$100 were offered \$100 incentive for completing the interview.

New panelists, a total of 276, were added as oversamples in Waves 2 and 4 to boost the overall sample size. The oversample was with adults aged 18 or older living in the United States (including Alaska and Hawaii). It utilized a dual-frame cell phone and landline RDD obtained from Survey 4. Sampling International, LLC (SSI), and produced 95 cases. For respondents we reached on their landline, we asked to speak to the person who had the next/last birthday who was currently at home that was at least 18 years of age at the time of the interview. For respondents we reached on their cellphone, the survey asked if the person answering was at least 18 years of age at the time of the interview. This sample used an eight-call design and was fielded from October 11 to November 6, 2016. Cell phone respondents were given a \$10 post incentive offer to complete the survey.

In the year in between each wave of the panel study, we engaged in several months of re-contacting participants, to maintain current contact information and to sustain their interest in the project. We sent letters to all respondents and asked them to send back an enclosed postcard, either confirming the contact information on it or updating it. We provided a \$10 cash incentive to each person who returned the postcard. For participants for whom we lacked mail addresses, we contacted them by phone to update contact information.