The Formation of Responsibility Attributions and their
Role in Shaping Political Behavior

DISSERTATION

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Abstract

How citizens ascribe credit and blame for national conditions can have large electoral and policy effects. Yet despite this clear importance, the relationship between issue perceptions and responsibility attributions has not been fully examined. Using national economic conditions and the Iraq War as examples, I propose three distinct types of responsibility attributions based on a citizen's comparison of current conditions to reference points in the past or expectations for the future. Previous work fails to appreciate how past events shape citizens' attributions; including both current and former office holders in the response set corrects this oversight and allows for the study of how responsibility is assigned following a governmental transition.

I employ attribution theory and theories of motivated reasoning to individuals' responsibility attributions based on partisanship and issue perception. I hypothesize that individuals' desire for consistency between their party identification, issue perception, and responsibility attribution lead them to credit copartisan politicians for perceived successes and blame members of the opposite party for perceived failures.

Using existing data sources, an original survey, and two experimental designs, the results show that individuals can and do differentiate between the three proposed types of responsibility attributions. Respondents frequently engage in motivated reasoning when ascribing responsibility following a governmental transition. The research design also examines the effects of responsibility attributions on important forms of political behavior, along with confirmation of the causal effect of party identification's impact on responsibility attributions.

Dedicated to my wife, Jennifer.

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Fields of Study

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Chapter 1: Introduction

How citizens ascribe credit and blame for national conditions can have large electoral and policy effects. Yet despite this clear importance, researchers have not fully untangled the relationship between issue perceptions[1] and responsibility attributions, as well as the tangible effects of this relationship on vote choice and job approval ratings. My goal for this study is to provide a richer understanding of the role of responsibility attributions in shaping individuals' attitudes and behavior. I will add to the attribution literature in several ways, by elaborating on existing theories and clarifying inconsistencies in previous work. Taking advantage of the current national situation, I propose a theory of responsibility attributions that incorporates transitions of power from one office-holder to the next, a topic which will be a sub-focus of the proposed research agenda. This work will focus on determining the relationships existing between individual predispositions, issue perceptions, and responsibility attributions, using the national economy and the Iraq War as case examples.

Three Types of Responsibility

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[1] In this study, the term "issue perceptions" are an individual's subjective perceptions of economic and Iraq War conditions. Other possible phrases were considered for this concept, such as "issue evaluations," "issue attitudes," "condition evaluations," and "condition perceptions." I settled on using "issue perceptions" as a shorthand term throughout this study for consistency.

The process of assigning responsibility for conditions is referred to as making responsibility attributions. Responsibility attributions are an important mediator between issue perceptions and political behaviors such as the vote because before an individual can reward or punish a candidate with his or her vote, one must first establish that the candidate is responsible for conditions (Abramowitz, Lanoue, and Ramesh 1988; Lau and Sears 1981; Peffley 1984b; Sniderman and Brody 1977).

The first objective of this project is to clarify the concept of responsibility attributions. Previous work, with few recent exceptions, has generally treated responsibility attributions in a general and vague sense, without clear specificity of the meaning of the attribution. As the literature review shows, some studies refer to "responsibility" in a causal sense (that someone is responsible for causing an outcome) while others treat it as a duty or task (that it is someone's responsibility to solve a problem). In many instances, these meanings are used interchangeably, and in some cases, inconsistently often with little explanation, leaving it up to the reader to carefully determine which form of attribution is meant. Iyengar (1989) noted this discrepancy and urged researchers to clarify their terms. In large part, this advice seems to have been heeded by separating the competing concepts - focusing on one and ignoring the other. Unfortunately, I see this as a satisfying solution; the two competing notions of responsibility are heavily intertwined and divorcing the two leaves many problems unaddressed.

While more recent studies have better specified their concepts, I propose to use the current economic and military situations to examine individuals' long- and short-term attributions of causal responsibility as well as their attributions for future outcomes. I introduce a theoretical distinction between three types of responsibility attributions, each based on citizens' comparisons of current conditions to reference points in the past or expectations of the future. Primary attributions are an individual's determination of credit or blame for long term changes, which are distinct from short-term immediate attributions that occur when individuals assess responsibility for current conditions. Finally, prospective attributions are attributions in which individuals assign responsibility for the expected outcome of a situation. Breaking up the attribution process in this manner will allow for a more precise analysis of these judgments by acknowledging that seeing someone as the primary cause of a situation can have different effects on perceptions and behavior than seeing someone as currently responsible or responsible for expected outcomes. My research design allows me to look at each of these attribution types separately, as well as noting how they related to one another.

Loosening Restrictions on Attribution Targets

The vast majority of studies have looked at the economic attribution process in a general fashion. By this, I mean that they only examine attributions by couching the response options in general terms such as "the President," "Congress," "business people," etc. (e.g. Rudolph 2003b). Doing this detaches the political context from the attribution

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process, which, I argue, underestimates the role of partisanship. In rare cases, specific names are given, such as "President X" (e.g. Peffley and Williams 1985). Naming specific individuals or even generic partisan groups in the response options like "Congressional Democrats," (e.g. Rudolph 2003a) improves upon this issue, but it still lacks a complete conceptualization of the political context because it does not acknowledge that history can play a role in the attribution process.

Previous research clearly neglects the context and history in which certain issues reside. Others compare responsibility assignment across various levels of government (e.g. Brown 2010; Malhotra and Kuo 2008), but no previous work has thoroughly approached how responsibility for national conditions is assigned after a governmental transition. Both issues examined in this study highlight the problems this approach can create. When it comes to national economic conditions, a presidential administration's policies can have lasting effects on national economic conditions for years to come, making it quite possible for rational citizens to ascribe responsibility for current or future conditions to a previous office holder. For example, the current economic situation, as well as future expectations, is clouded by deficit spending from previous administrations, temporary tax cuts that are still in effect, and trade treaties passed by former presidents. Large segments of the electorate continued to see President Bush as responsible for current economic conditions during the 2010 midterm elections, and they may still do so during the 2012 presidential elections. The Iraq War began in 2003 under President George W. Bush, who also carried out the controversial "troop surge" in 2008, which was

followed by decreased levels of violence in the country. However, since President Barack Obama, a strong opponent to the Iraq War, took office in 2009, casualties have continued to decrease, as have U.S. troop levels. With both issues, it would be difficult to answer questions about ascribing responsibility without being able to consider President Bush alongside President Obama. Yet despite all this, it is surprising that previous work does not include previous office holders in the response option set when asking about responsibility attributions. My research corrects this oversight by offering both current and former office holders in the response sets.

This is an important addition because governmental transitions of power are quite common in the United States, occurring at regular intervals due to presidential term limits and other situations that cause one president to take over the term of another. Significantly, when one president takes over after another, he is not given a clean-slate to work with. Using the economy as an example, things like budgetary issues, government spending, trade agreements, and tax policies all carry over and affect conditions well-after a president leaves office. This study will assess how the public holds former office holder responsible for conditions in relation to the incumbent. Furthermore, the logic of presidential transitions can easily be applied to other instances in which one office holder takes over after another (e.g. governors, mayors, and partisan shifts or leadership changes in Congress).

In addition to this substantive addition, I also find it unsatisfying that Congress is often treated as a monolithic unit in survey questions when, in actuality, there are

numerous divisions and cleavages within the legislative branch as well as within each chamber. While I recognize that survey researchers are restricted by time and questionnaire space when creating response sets, I separate Congress by one of these partitions, party, when asking about responsibility. This is satisfying because partisan individuals may choose to ascribe credit to one party's members but not to another, whether that party is in control of Congress or not.

Motivated Reasoning and the Attribution Process

Substantively, it has already been clearly established that responsibility attributions can have a profound effect on candidate evaluation and voting behavior (e.g. Lowry, Alt, and Ferree 1998; Peffley 1984b; Sniderman and Brody 1977). However, less is known about the antecedents, correlates, and causes or these attributions, so this work will closely study attributions to make this substantive contribution and study how attributions are made, and to whom it is given.

Attribution theory, proposed by Heider (1958), posits that there are different levels of responsibility that actors can have based on the outcome of their actions and whether or not the actors should have done something else. Relatedly, self-serving biases (Miller and Ross 1975) and group-serving attribution bias (1991) imply that individuals are more likely to ascribe responsibility in a manner that is supportive of their predispositions, either by attributing success to their own characteristics and failures to external circumstances or by crediting an in-group and blaming an out-group.

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The theoretical basis for my hypotheses regarding how responsibility is assigned during a governmental transition is the theory of motivated reasoning (Kunda 1990), which argues that individuals, when making decisions, are motivated by two types of motives: accuracy motives and directional goals. Accuracy motives are incentives to arrive at an accurate conclusion, whatever that may be, while directional motives encourage a particular outcome. Motivated reasoning, thus, is reasoning which is biased by directional goals. It can be presumed that directional goals will be more important when individuals have a clear stake in the outcome of the decision and less important if there are accountability mechanisms for their judgment (Taber, Lodge, and Glathar 2001).

I contend that party identification acts as a directional goal, affecting individuals' responsibility attributions, particularly following a governmental transition. The closest examples of studies examining how partisan biases motivate responsibility attributions deal not with governmental transitions, as in this study, but when there are other, less-specific confusions of responsibility, such as in cases of "divided federalism" (Brown 2010) or in disaster response (Malhotra and Kuo 2008). In both instances, and with results consistent with Rudolph (2003b), individuals tended to assign credit and blame in a manner consistent with their partisanship.

How the attribution process takes place is unknown; though this study promotes motivated correction theories (Skitka et al. 2002; Morgan et al. 2010), which provide a plausible theoretical explanation as to how ideology and values can influence

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responsibility attributions, and its reasoning can be applied to how party identification may bring about biased attributions. Motivated correction theory proposes that attributions are often formed in a two-stage process, in which individuals alter initial attributions in order to obtain consistency between the attribution and one's core values or ideology. I believe that a process similar to motivated correction occurs when asking respondents about responsibility for national conditions after a governmental transition, except that it is largely motivated by party identification rather than values or ideology. By crediting members of their own party when they have positive perceptions and blaming members of the opposite party when their perceptions are negative, individuals are avoiding the internal conflict that may exist among issue perceptions, party identification, and responsibility attributions. Using a negative economic situation as an example, such internal conflict would exist if an individual saw a President of his or her own party as a root cause of economic problems, but the conflict can be avoided by transferring blame elsewhere, either to a President of the opposite party or outside of government.

<div align="center">Causality</div>

The final theoretical question asked by the project concerns the direction of causality between economic perceptions and economic attributions of responsibility. It is practically a given that individual characteristics are going to affect economic perceptions and responsibility attributions in some manner, but the nature in which they do so is

unexplored. In particular, it has not been previously addressed whether responsibility attributions are mere partisan rationalizations stemming from previously-held economic perceptions or if it is the economic perceptions themselves that are shaped by the previously-held responsibility attribution.

For example, consider the economic and political situation of 2010-11. If attributions are largely rationalizations based on partisanship and perceptions, Democrats seeing a bad economy could blame Bush while Republicans might blame Obama, the Democratic Congress, or the business community. On the contrary, if it is the attribution process that is shaped by the individual's economic perceptions, rather than vice versa, a different pattern may occur, with those attributing credit/blame to the president perceiving the economy's health to be stronger or weaker based on partisan leanings. The clearest case of this would be the stereotypical retrospective reward/punishment situation, which posits that individuals view the president as the head of the economy and therefore focus their attributions on who controls that office. If this is the case, I would expect Obama to be seen as responsible, though Democrats would generally have a rosier view of economic conditions than Republicans.

In the route described in the first example, an individual's antecedent characteristics help to determine how that individual views economic conditions and uses his or her evaluation of these conditions when making attribution judgments. Under such a scenario taking into account motivated reasoning, individuals make their responsibility

attribution based on their opinion of current conditions and which individuals best fit

their directional goals. This process can be thought of as:

Individual characteristics → Economic perception → Responsibility attribution

However, as described in the second example, for some individuals, personal

characteristics may first affect how one views government and therefore who is

responsible for the nation's economy. In this instance, one's economic perception might

then be conditioned on their previously-made responsibility attribution. When motivated

reasoning occurs, it is likely that individuals will tailor their economic perceptions based

on who they view as responsible, which can be illustrated:

Individual characteristics → Responsibility attribution → Economic Perceptions

So the question that is asked is: Do attributions affect economic perceptions, or do

economic perceptions affect attributions? Of course, these two directional tracks of

causality are not completely independent and somewhat endogenous. Both scenarios are

possible, and if that is the case, it is important to determine the extent to which each track

is used to determine if one is dominant in the population. Alternatively, in the event that

motivated reasoning does not occur in this process, there would be no evident

relationship between individual characteristics and individuals' economic perceptions and

responsibility attributions. Either conclusion would have serious implications for existing attribution theories.

Organization of this Study

The following Chapter will examine the existing political science and psychological literature relating to motivated reasoning, responsibility attributions, and their effects on issue perceptions and political attitudes. Using the existing literature as a guide, I propose ways in which the measurement of responsibility attributions can be improved by introducing the three types of responsibility attributions and applying the existing theories of motivated reason to the assignment of responsibility following a transition of power from one President to the next. Several detailed hypotheses are made regarding how individuals will assign responsibility for conditions if they are engaging in motivated reasoning, dependent upon partisanship and issue perceptions. Furthermore, I propose hypotheses regarding who is likely to engage in motivated reasoning when making responsibility attributions.

Chapter Three details the research designs of the various studies undertaken in this study, focusing on what data is used, the design of the instruments, and the methodological techniques used in the data analysis.

Chapter Four presents data from existing sources that seem to imply that an attributional relationship between various measures relating to economic conditions. The relationship between the stock market and the polls during the 2008 election is examined,

along with data from the American National Election Study's Cumulative Data File. While these analyses are not comprehensive, due to the fact that responsibility attributions are not measured directly, the relationships uncovered are consistent with the theories presented in Chapter Two.

Chapter Five presents results from an original mail survey of Franklin County, Ohio voters measuring responsibility attributions for national economic conditions and the conditions of the Iraq War. It is shown that individuals can and do distinguish between primary, immediate, and prospective attributions, and that individuals engage in motivated reasoning when determining responsibility between a former President and an incumbent. The findings are broken down by party groups as well. The latter portions of Chapter Five attempt to isolate individuals who engage in motivated reasoning by identifying those who credit the President of their own party and blame the President of the opposite party. These potential motivated reasoners are shown to be stronger partisans, have higher levels of political knowledge, and be personally affected by the issue, all of which are consistent with theoretical expectations because each variable may serve to increase the stake in individual has in finding a consistency between perceptions, party identification, and the attribution.

Chapter Six takes up the relationship between responsibility attributions and political behavior. First, it is shown how attributions vary with vote intention and then further breaks down the data into groups based on whether or not individuals approved of the President's handling of the economy and the Iraq War and whether or not they

supported the Tea Party movement. It is shown that, in many instances, the responsibility attributions of those who engaged in certain behaviors were less related to their partisanship and perceptions than those who did not engage in them. Tea Party support is given special attention, and it is shown that Tea Party supporters are more likely to ascribe responsibility to President Obama and less likely to see President Bush responsible.

Chapter Seven supplements the analyses presented thus far, which only measured whether the individual viewed the current President as more responsible than the former, with data regarding the *amount* of responsibility individuals assign to the incumbent President, the former President, Congressional Democrats, Congressional Republicans, and various other nonpolitical actors. The results show that individuals often engage in motivated reasoning when assigning responsibility amounts, and that individuals will often shift responsibility to Congress or nonpolitical actors when it becomes cognitively difficult to credit or blame an incumbent or former President.

Chapter Eight addresses the issue of causality in forming responsibility attributions by presenting the results from two experimental designs. The first experiment presents subjects with a hypothetical economic situation in which the party identification of the incumbent and former President is varied, along with the time that has elapsed since the election. This experiment is designed to test the commonly-assumed causal route in which predispositions and economic perceptions influence responsibility attributions. In the second experiment, subjects are presented with

economic scenarios in which the party affiliations of the Presidents are held constant; instead, the experimental scripts attempt to cue the subjects into making a responsibility attribution to either the current or former President. Economic perceptions are then measured, testing whether a previously-made attribution affects individuals' perceptions of conditions. The results clearly show causal effects in the first experiment; manipulating the party in power certainly influences the assignment of responsibility. The results for the alternative causal route, however, are null. There does not appear to be any indication that economic perceptions were influenced by the manipulations attempting to cue responsibility attributions.

Finally, Chapter Nine closes this study by restating the research questions with a review of the contributions, theory and results. The chapter closes with a discussion of the implications and limitations of the studies, as well as possibilities for further research into the topic of responsibility attributions.

Chapter 2: The Nature of Responsibility Attributions

This chapter discusses the previous scholarship pertaining to both the theoretical and substantive aspects of my research. First, I discuss motivated reasoning, the theory from which my hypotheses flow. I then move towards a discussion of responsibility attributions and how they relate to issue perceptions. The ensuing section focuses on *who* individuals credit and blame when making attributions, followed by a review of how responsibility attributions have been shown to relate to various personal characteristics. Following the literature review, I discuss the contributions that are made by my research and draw forth numerous testable hypotheses from the discussed theories.

Motivated Reasoning and Responsibility Attributions

Motivated reasoning and its intersection with responsibility attributions find their root with Heider's (1958) development of attribution theory and his distinction between association and causal responsibility when it comes to attributing causes for events, as well as the separation of internal and external causes. Heider proposes five levels of responsibility, (Association, Commission, Foreseeability, Intention, and Justification), in which the responsibility of an actor for a given situation is dependent, as Hamilton (1978) puts it, on "the rule itself, the actor's deeds, and the expectations of others regarding what

the actor should do." This prompted a great deal of further research into attributions (see Fiske and Taylor 1984) and the motivations that affect them. Fiske and Taylor (1991) discuss a "group-serving attribution bias" that individuals engage in to attribute perceived successes to their own social group's members and blame perceived failures on out group members. This is an application of the self-serving bias (Miller and Ross 1975), in which individuals attribute successes to their own personal characteristics but attribute failures to circumstances beyond their control; this can be applied to groups such as political parties.

The role of motives in decision making was undertaken by Kunda (1990). She posits that two types of motives are seen to underlie the decision making process: accuracy motives and directional motives. Accuracy motives are incentives to arrive at an accurate conclusion, whatever that may be, while directional motives encourage a particular outcome. It is assumed that individuals motivated by accuracy goals act in a scientific manner, evaluating information and forming judgments evenhandedly. Those motivated by direction goals, however, are expected to engage in biased reasoning that favors the outcome suggested by the directional goal. Motivated reasoning, thus, is reasoning which is biased by directional goals.

Drawing together previously-disparate ideas, Lodge and Taber (2000) base their understanding of motivated reasoning on three sub theories. The first, the *hot cognition hypothesis* (Abelson 1963), assumes that all social concepts are affect laden, either positive or negatively charged, strongly or weakly. The second, online processing

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(Lodge, McGraw, and Stroh 1989; Lodge, Steenburgen and Brau 1995) is the process by which individuals update these affective tags. The third, a *How-Do-I-Feel heuristic* (Clore and Isbell 1996) brings the affective tally into working memory in order to make the judgment. As a result, most, if not all, citizens will be biased reasoners unable to evaluate new information in an evenhanded way.

Lodge and Taber (2000) go on to note that individuals can be driven by a mix of both directional and accuracy goals, and that the strength of these goals can either be strong or weak. These potential variations result in a typology of motivated reasoning, with individuals acting as intuitive scientists (strong directional and accuracy goals), partisan reasoners (strong directional goals and weak accuracy goals), classically rational actors (strong accuracy goals, weak directional goals), or low-motivation individuals (weak accuracy and directional goals). In addition, Redlawsk (2004) finds some evidence that directional and accuracy goals can affect one another; his study found that individuals encountering information incongruent with their beliefs reported having less confidence in their decisions and having a harder time deciding.

Directional goals can be thought to arise from a variety of sources, including possible rewards/punishments (Balcetis and Dunning 2006), personal behaviors (Kassarjian and Cohen 1965; Kunda 1987), prior beliefs (Lord, Ross, and Leper 1979), and partisanship (Rudolph 2003b, 2006; Taber and Lodge 2006). Broadly put, it can be presumed that directional goals will be more important when individuals have a clear

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stake in the outcome of the decision and less important if there are accountability

mechanisms for their judgment (Taber, Lodge, and Glathar 2001).

For the purposes of my research, the connection of partisanship to directional

goals is particularly important. Taber and Lodge (2006) argue that individuals'

partisanship anchor their subsequent information processing, indicating that new

information is judged in relation to its relation to their partisan attachments. As a result,

citizens overly-accommodate supporting evidence and dismiss conflicting evidence,

noting a *prior attitude effect*, as well as *confirmation* and *disconfirmation biases*.

Importantly, these effects are strongest for those with the strongest opinions and higher

levels of sophistication. Similarly, there has been research to suggest that responsibility

attributions might be formed in a two-stage process, in which individuals adjust their

original attribution of responsibility when the original attribution conflicts with

preexisting values or goals (Skitka et al. 2002); with this explanation, the conflict

between a person's values and goals acts as a motivator for the subject to augment her

attribution of responsibility, though the salience of those values is an important

moderator of such conflicts' influence on attributions (Morgan et al 2010).

Partisanship and Issue Perceptions

Previous results tend to suggest that partisanship is indeed causing motivated

reasoning to occur in economic evaluations. Duch, Palmer, and Anderson (2000) find

economic perceptions to be strongly shaped by partisan predispositions in presidential

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elections. Similarly, Conover, Feldman, and Knight present evidence that retrospective

and prospective economic evaluations are strongly related to respondents' partisan

evaluations of the President (1986, 1987). Erikson (2004, 5) goes so far to conclude that

economic perceptions have "no bearing on political evaluations." Erikson uses American

data, but Duch and Palmer (2002), Evans and Anderson (2006), and Wlezien, Franklin,

and Twiggs (1997) similarly find that evaluations are strongly influenced by vote choice

in several European nations. Another concern is that national perceptions are not always

based on just *national* standards – evidence also suggests that national economic

perceptions are also based on personal experiences or regional economic conditions

(Duch and Palmer 2002), socioeconomic status (MacKuen and Mouw 1995), and sex

(Welch and Hibbing 1992).

Duch (2007), however, argues that national economic perceptions should not be

dismissed, despite the variable's shortcomings and endogeneity with partisanship. For

one, objective economic information does indeed influence national economic

evaluations independently of partisanship; while there is certainly some degree of

endogeneity in the measure, there is no systematic measurement error.

The Importance of Responsibility Attributions

Within the political science literature, it is largely a settled question that issue

perceptions, such as how individuals view the economy, affect common variables such as

vote choice and approval. Less settled, however, are the ways in which the economy

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affects political behavior and attitudes. The common way of framing this problem can be thought of as two-by-two table. Across one side of the table is the distinction between "retrospective" and "prospective" evaluations and across the other runs the distinction between evaluations of personal "pocketbook" finances and national "sociotropic" concerns." With few exceptions, most studies of economic evaluations' effects fit nicely in this simplified table (see Lewis Beck and Stegmaier 2007; MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson 1992). Meanwhile, running somewhat in parallel to this paradigm of the economic literature has been a smaller, though no less relevant, vein of research concerning how and to whom individuals attribute responsibility for economic conditions.

To begin with, it may be helpful to start with the attribution process itself and how it has been studied. Sniderman and Brody (1977) and Feldman (1982) consider attribution in light of values rather than more concrete personal attributes. Sniderman and Brody examine the 1972 ANES and find that Americans largely believe that they ought to cope with their own problems rather than viewing the government as responsible for providing a solution. They find a curvilinear effect regarding income and the expectation of government assistance, with the poor and the wealthy less inclined than the middle classes to suggest that governments should provide help, suggesting that personal characteristics affect the attribution process. Specifically concerning governmental blame, however, Sniderman and Brody conclude that "personal problems…become translated into political dissent when (1) individuals believe

government is under some responsibility to provide them assistance but (2) in their eyes have failed to do so" (514). In context, this conclusion applies only to personal issues, but the applicability of this standard can be generalized to national concerns as well. It suggests that, theoretically, in order for blame to be attributed to an actor, that actor must first fail to address a problem that is considered his or her responsibility.

Feldman (1982) seizes upon Sniderman and Brody's (1977) evidence and explicitly appeals to values as an explanation of why individuals perceive personal responsibility for their own economic well-being, finding evidence that attributions of personal responsibility are heavily correlated with holding values related to economic individualism. His results show that if individuals connect their personal financial well-being to the government, their perceptions of their pocketbook finances do influence their vote choice. However, this effect is very weak in the aggregate because most Americans subscribe to these values and thus take personal responsibility for their own finances. This is why sociotropic evaluations are generally seen as having a larger effect than pocketbook concerns on behavior. Others have confirmed the finding that pocketbook evaluations only have an effect among those who say that the government is responsible; in the absence of such attribution, sociotropic concerns dominate to a roughly equal effect (Abramowitz, Lanoue, and Ramesh 1988; Lau and Sears 1981). Additionally, Funk and Garcia-Monet (1997) accurately point out the possibility that sociotropic evaluations may be partially derived from personal economic experiences, though their evidence of this is quite modest.

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The Lack of Conceptual Clarity in the Responsibility Attribution Literature

When it comes to describing the attribution process, the literature suffers from an unfortunate lack of conceptual clarity that is strikingly evident when one reads several pieces at once. This point is echoed by Peffley (1984b), who notes the unsettled nature of the literature prior to his article. He makes the clear distinction between causal blame and treatment responsibility that is so frequently missing: "Before economic discontents take on political significance, people must believe either that the government produced them or that it is the government's job to remedy them" (280). Thus, attribution is the crucial link between economic conditions and political behavior. For example, a President might not be blamed for a poor economic situation if the causes of such problems lie elsewhere or if the public does not see it to be his job to fix them. Evidence of this is found in the fact that that the effect of the economy on government popularity across various states shrinks as responsibility is diffused (Anderson 1995) and that accountability is seen as stronger following a period of unified government (Lowry, Alt, and Ferree 1998).

A variety of terms are used to distinguish between these dimensions of attribution, but they largely coalesce around similar factors. Some authors prefer the concepts of "blame" and "control" (Sigelman and Knight 1985) while others prefer to make the distinction between "causal" and "treatment responsibility" attribution (Iyengar 1989). Peffley (1984a, 1984b) trichotomizes the attribution process into three distinct

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possibilities: causal responsibility, indicating the degree to which an individual is seen as the cause of a problem; moral-legal responsibility, the degree to which individuals are responsible for addressing problems; and role responsibility, which corresponds to how closely reality corresponds to the individual's perceptions of what it *should* be. It is this final version of attribution, role responsibility, which is present in most traditional models of economic voting. It requires the least cognitive effort and only a vague sense of economic conditions. The first two options, however, still do not require much in the way of cognitive resources and perhaps represent a more accurate depiction of the attribution process. For instance, the only steps required of a presidential election voter under the causal and moral-legal responsibility dimensions is to ask 1) Is the problem caused by this actor?, and 2) Is addressing the situation within his or her control? Thompson (1980) separates the concept of responsibility into three groupings: hierarchical, collective, and personal. However, this is more a distinction in who is responsible rather than what is meant by responsibility. Other previous research regarding responsibility attribution pick one concept of the term without considering the role of the other; for example, some use credit/blame when discussing attribution (e.g. Rudolph 2003b) and others use a sense of treatment responsibility for addressing problems (e.g. Sniderman and Brody 1977; Tyler 1982).

Iyengar (1989) did make the distinction between causal and treatment responsibility attributions and found a noticeable difference between the two. When individuals are considered the causal agent but not the treatment agent (e.g. they cause a

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problem but have no power to fix it), comments regarding them are generally negative. However, if they are seen as the treatment agent but not the causal agent, comments are largely positive. This raises the question of whether or not attributions are sincere or merely rationalizations of prior beliefs, as the direction of causality could easily flow both ways, which is something I plan on addressing. More recently, Gailey and Lee (2005), approaching attributions of responsibility from sociological and psychological perspectives, contend that the existing research suffers from a lack of clarity and confusion over what responsibility is and how it should be measured, and call for increased interdisciplinary studies.

Attempting to Clarify the Types of Responsibility Attributions

As mentioned previously, this study hopes to clarify the attribution process by examining three types of responsibility attributions, though I conceptualize attributions differently than Peffley's trichotomous typology. My framework is organized around a temporal dimension. I propose to use the current economic and military situations to examine individuals' long- and short-term attributions of causal responsibility as well as their attributions for future outcomes based on citizens' comparisons of current conditions to reference points in the past or expectations of the future.

First, there is the question of long term causal responsibility for the issue, in which people decided who is responsible for current conditions when they are compared to "typical" or "average" conditions over a long period of time. I call this type of

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responsibility attribution *primary responsibility*. Assigning primary responsibility for an

issue is similar to the concepts of "causal" responsibility (Iyengar 1989; Peffley 1984a,

1984b) and "blame" (Sigelman and Knight 1985) and represents a long-term sense of

causation. The second attribution in my typology is a sense of *immediate responsibility*.

This short-term attribution accesses credit or blame for the current conditions of the issue.

This distinction is important because individuals may differentiate between responsibility

for long-term causes and current conditions, either by attributing responsibility to

different entities or changing the degree of responsibility for the primary and intermediate

cause. Support for this notion can be found with Brickman, Ryan, and Wortman (1975),

who examine causal chains and show that the existence of a prior cause often cancels out

the liability ascribed to the immediate cause. When it comes to responsibility

attributions, it may be helpful to think of primary responsibility as a prior cause and

immediate responsibility as a current one. Finally, the last type of attribution, *prospective

attributions* are determined by who an individual believes will be responsible for issue's

conditions in the future. This can be thought of a determining who will be given credit

and blame for future outcomes.

To illustrate this typology using the nation's current economic problems, when

asked to ascribe responsibility for the national economy, one might reasonably blame

politicians, Wall Street, or the banking industry. However, a single causal attribution is

not the whole story. One might blame big business for causing the financial crisis in a

long-term sense, but also credit or blame Presidents Bush or Obama for current

conditions due to their handling of the situation. For instance, one might think that the

bailouts supported by Bush and Obama made a disastrous situation better than it

otherwise would have been. Finally, when considering who will be responsible for the

nation's economy one year from now, one might think that it is Obama's responsibility to

solve the economic woes or perhaps that if the economy turns around or worsens, it will

be because of big business.

Dividing the attribution process in this way provides a more complete picture of

how different attributions can affect behavior. If it is true that in order for an economic

situation to affect behavior a responsibility must be first ascribed, as Sniderman and

Brody (1977) assert, then it is necessary to first ascertain what exactly is meant by that

attribution. Theoretically, it is possible for some types of attributions to affect behaviors

more than others, and breaking up the attribution process in this manner allows for a

more complete study of the relationship between attribution types and individuals'

political attitudes and issue perceptions.

Attribution Targets

Perhaps at an even more basic level than the distinctions between attribution

types, it needs to be determined to whom individuals make these responsibility

attributions. Any student in a basic American government class should be

knowledgeable of the government's separation of powers; under the constitution,

economic policy is shaped, at least in part, by all three branches of government. In

addition, when it comes to economics, a host of nongovernmental factors can also legitimately influence economic conditions including business people, foreign governments, terrorism, natural disasters, and society as a whole.

With such a diverse variety of potential causes, it is peculiar that much of the early literature ignored most of these and focused solely on the effects of economic conditions on the Presidency. Stigler (1973) noted this oversight:

> Per capita income falls over a year or two – should the voter abandon or punish the party in power? Such a reaction seems premature: the decline may be due to developments (e.g. a foreign recession) beyond the powers or responsibilities of the party (165).

So why, then, does so much of the literature conclude that the Presidency is the "command post of the economy" (Nadeau and Lewis-Beck 2001, 178)? For one thing, the president probably represents the most likely place to find a connection between economic conditions and attribution. The president is the most significant figurehead in the government and not a diverse and amorphous body such as Congress or the business community. Additionally, individuals are more likely to have opinions about the president than other lesser-known figures. Still, while most studies of attribution effects have largely focused on presidents and presidential elections, some alternatives are out there.

Much of the earlier work on responsibility attribution and the Presidency centers on the concept of personalization. Defined as "the tendency to hold the president personally responsible for solving the national economic problems" (Sigelman and Knight 1985, 167), personalization is often supported empirical research. Even

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Sniderman and Brody (1977), who argued that individuals see themselves as responsible for their own personal issues, find evidence that individuals expect the government to solve *societal* problems.

Since personalizing responsibility towards the president bypasses alternate solutions and greatly simplifies the problem, it was originally seen as a response to the cognitive complexity required to understand economic matters. Blindly attributing responsibility to a single actor is an effective cognitive simplification strategy that allows the individual to ignore wide aspects of economic policy (Tyler 1982). As Lane (1962, 310) puts it, "Ignorance personalizes!" and doing so is not normatively appealing. It is in this vein of thinking that Gomez and Wilson (2001, 2006) hypothesize a stronger relationship between sociotropic evaluations and the incumbent-party vote among the less-sophisticated segments of the electorate. This view of personalization as a cognitive simplification strategy, however, is not always borne out by the data. Tyler (1982) conducted three separate studies, testing the effects of cognitive complexity, knowledge, and interest on personalization and never found the predicted relationship. Instead, in a few cases, the less sophisticated were actually *less* likely to personalize.

Instead of personalization being related to cognition, Tyler draws upon Heider's (1958) theory of "defensive attribution." Tyler claimed that individuals need to feel secure and therefore prefer to "minimize the degree to which personally threatening events can happen by chance…by attributing responsibility to the president, perceivers are reassured, since they can believe that political events are controllable" (380). Testing

the hypothesis that the more one feels threatened by economic conditions, the more likely one is to attribute responsibility for these conditions to the president, Tyler finds evidence of defensive attributions in all three studies.

Defensive attribution is not always evident, though. Lau and Sears (1981) fail to find that those who are unemployed or being hurt by inflation (and hence "threatened" by the situation) are any more likely to attribute their personal economic problems to the president. The reason for these contrary findings, however, may be the fact that sociotropic issues were used by Tyler while Lau and Sears used more personal concerns.

Sigelman and Knight (1985) attempt to address this discrepancy; limiting their analysis strictly to the "control" aspect of responsibility, they look at three issues, first modeling whether or not individuals believe that it is within a president's power to solve them. They then fit separate models for those who personalize and those who do not. First, it is quite clear from their data that the public does indeed distinguish between which issues are under the president's control and which are not. In their study, 59 percent and 74 percent of people thought that a president could control inflation and reduce unemployment while only 21 percent believe balancing the budget to be within his power. In accordance with Lane's "ignorance personalizes!" quip, knowledge is negatively related to personalization on the budget, an issue that the public by and large does not view the president to have control over. However, when it comes to issues that *are* under his control, it is actually the *more* knowledgeable people who view him responsible for addressing them. Finally, when it comes down to those who personalize

and those who do not, the authors find Republicans and those who voted for Reagan to be more likely to personalize, which suggests that the decision to allocate responsibility, but not, in this case, blame, is related to individuals' prior beliefs and predispositions.

It should be noted again that aside from the president, the most common target of attribution in the literature are individuals themselves. Others have raised the possibility that the decision to attribute responsibility may be tied to whether the item in question is viewed as a success or failure, with individuals being more likely to blame others for failures while taking personal credit for successes (Weiner et al. 1972). For instance, respondents may be more likely to attribute a rise in personal income to their own hard work but blame a job loss on a president's economic policy.

Less focus has been placed on the likelihood of congressional responsibility attributions and their effects. What studies that have been done fail to reach a clear consensus, though that may be more a factor of the literature's younger age than anything else. Atkeson and Partin (1995) report that senatorial voting corresponds only to presidential approval and not national or state economic conditions. However, a replication of their work took account of the pooled and clustered nature of the data. Accounting for state effects and the pooling of data changes the interpretation of Atkeson and Partin's hypotheses and it is shown that Senate elections do indeed respond independently to voter evaluations of national economic conditions, as theory would suggest (Carsey and Wright 1998).

Nicholson and Segura (1999) address the effect of economic attributions on Congress, but its results end up pointing back towards the executive branch rather than the legislative. In their model of mid-term congressional elections from 1978-1994, economic evaluations failed to significantly affect the individual out-party congressional vote while the usual suspects of party identification, ideology, and presidential approval dominate. This leads to the conclusion that blame for poor economic conditions is first attributed to the president and then voters connect congressional partisans to him and vote accordingly.

Rudolph (2003b), however, comes down on the side of significant congressional attribution effects. The 1998 ANES, which specifically asked respondents who was most responsible for national economic conditions, shows that 31 percent of respondents viewed Congress as having the most responsibility and a 32 percent plurality cited business people. For comparison, only 22 percent thought the president as the most responsible. As Rudolph notes, this immediately calls into question the assumption that the president is always seen as the most responsible.[2] While this finding is somewhat shocking, it is just a summary statistic of a survey item and not the main finding of the paper. Instead, using ordered probit estimation of economic evaluation's effects on presidential and congressional approval, Rudolph shows a clear effect of economic

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[2] A similar breakdown of attribution is also found in the 2000 American Politics Survey, with 37.5 percent attributing responsibility to business people, 24.6 percent to the President, and 19 percent each to Congress and the Federal Reserve (Rudolph and Grant 2002). McGraw (1991) reports that 45 percent of respondents chose to ascribe both credit and blame to politicians, also suggesting that attributions are considerably more complex than previously thought.

evaluations. However, unlike the effect on presidential approval, which is unconditional, the effect of economic evaluations on congressional approval requires the attribution of responsibility. This leads Rudolph to conclude that the effects of economic evaluations on the sanctioning process vary according to the target of institutional evaluation.

Gomez and Wilson (2003) also find an effect of economic evaluations on congressional voting, though this effect is confined only to sophisticates. Drawing on their theory of heterogeneous attribution, the authors show that only high sophisticates can connect the economic policies of the president to members of his party in Congress. Low sophisticates, meanwhile, ignore Congress and instead blame the most proximate potential cause of national economic conditions, the president.

So if Americans attribute economic responsibility to various players, what is the source of these various attributions? Iyengar (1989) speculates that attributions could be rationalizations of previously held beliefs, though his analysis assumed otherwise. If his speculation is correct, what factors influence this rationalization? Sigelman and Knight (1985) point to partisanship and previous voting behavior:

> We might expect attribution to the incumbent to be influenced by the respondent's partisanship and/or history of electoral support for the incumbent. Copartisans of the president and those who have already "invested" by voting for him may be less likely to blame him for unfavorable conditions and more likely to regard him as able to straighten things out (172).

Indeed, Sigelman and Knight find that presidential copartisans and his previous voters are more likely to personalize control responsibility to the president, though their speculation regarding blame is not tested. Sigelman and Knight (1985, 172) also point to Tyler's (1982, 385) work and claim that his significant effect for partisanship indicates

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that Republicans are more likely than Democrats to blame President Carter for the poor economic conditions. A closer look at Tyler's article, however, shows that this is not exactly what his model tests. Tyler's dependent variable represented a combination of blame and control attributions. Since the two factors are correlated, this is the likely conclusion, though it should be noted that Tyler does not make it himself.

Looking for evidence of partisan rationalization, Rudolph (2003b) turns to the 1998 ANES, which specifically asked people who is most responsible for national economic conditions. Since almost 85 percent of respondents chose business people, Congress, or the president, he used a multinomial probit to predict attribution. Interacting party identification dummies with economic perceptions, he finds evidence of partisan rationalization, but only among Democrats. In 1998, the Democrats controlled the White House while Republicans controlled Congress. A Democrat who thought economic conditions had gotten "somewhat worse" in the past year had a 0.16 likelihood of attributing the president and a likelihood of 0.30 of attributing Congress. However, if a Democrat believed the economy to have "somewhat improved," the likelihood of presidential attribution increases to 0.33 and the probability of Congressional attribution decreases to 0.20. The puzzling finding is the null result for Republican rationalization. Rudolph does not speculate as to why Republicans do not seem to rationalize their attributions, except to note that regardless of their economic evaluation, Republicans are more likely than Democrats to attribute credit and blame to business people rather than governmental actors.

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Increasing the Attribution Targets

From this survey of the literature regarding attribution targets, one serious hole

regards the targets themselves. Practically every study of economic attribution pitted one

institution versus another when asking respondents to access credit and blame. However,

it is clear that this conceptualization of government is lacking, as there is clearly a

temporal element to policymaking. For instance, using this dominant method,

respondents would be given the choice of ascribing blame to President Obama, Congress,

or the business community for the current economic problems. However, this choice

removes the context from the situation. Specifically, it fails to account for the possibility

that individuals will blame *former* elected officials, namely President Bush. Since

governments are in a state of constant transition, and the fact that the national economic

situation often takes a long time to change, studying the attribution process in this way

provides an incomplete picture and best, and an inaccurate one at worst.

While questions asking respondents to assign blame to either a current or former

president are not uncommon among national polls sponsored by the news media, the only

studies that even hint at the possibility of governmental transitions affecting the

attribution process are Petrocik and Steeper (1986), Peffley (1984a, 1984b), and Peffley

and Williams (1985). Petrocik and Steeper performed a fairly descriptive analysis of the

1982 midterm elections and suggest that Republican losses were minimized because of

the electorate's failure to blame Reagan for the recession instead. They also note the

failure to blame Roosevelt in 1934 as a similar historical example. Peffley (1984a, 1984b) and Peffley and Williams (1985) also reach the same conclusion regarding Reagan's fortunes. Clearly, this is a notion that is underexplored in the existing literature and an area ripe for further elaboration. The closest examples of studies examining how partisan biases motivate responsibility attributions deal not with governmental transitions, as in this study, but when there are other, less-specific confusions of responsibility, such as in cases of "divided federalism" (Brown 2010) or in disaster response (Malhotra and Kuo 2008). In both instances, and with results consistent with Rudolph (2003b), individuals tended to assign credit and blame in a manner consistent with their partisanship.

This project improves the study of responsibility attributions by including both current and former officeholders in the attribution response set. The generic response options of previous studies detach the attribution process from its political context, which, I argue, underestimates the role of partisanship. In rare cases, specific names are given, such as "President X" (e.g. Peffley and Williams 1985). Naming specific individuals or even generic partisan groups in the response options like "Congressional Democrats," (e.g. Rudolph 2003a) improves upon this issue, but it still lacks a complete conceptualization of the political context. In the minds of citizens, the causal responsibility of former office holders and their perceived effects on national issues may linger for months, if not years after they leave office. For instance, current conditions in Iraq are surely the result of decisions made by both the Bush and Obama administrations,

yet determining which is *more* responsible is a debatable question. Alternatively, if the current economy continues to lag through the 2012 presidential campaign, it is certainly possible, if not likely, that a large segment of the electorate will continue to attribute causal responsibility to former President Bush rather than the President Obama.

It should also be noted that this problem is not a rare one; elections and transfers of power occur often enough at both the state and federal level to make this a worthy addition, and as previously mentioned, the effects of government policies can be felt for years. Finally, while this paper focuses on responsibility attributions for economic and military conditions, the logic applies to other issues as well. Therefore, it is surprising that previous studies have not thoroughly looked at the role of attributions in the transition process from one office holder to another; this project attempts to make this substantive addition.

Attribution Correlates

The most recent, and perhaps most coherent theme in the economic attribution literature centers on the theory of heterogeneous attribution (Gomez and Wilson 2001, 2003, 2006). The crux of their theory is that voter sophistication affects the relative importance of certain economic evaluations on the vote. Conventional wisdom suggests that the less sophisticated rely on pocketbook evaluations because making such evaluations requires little effort (e.g. Campbell et al. 1960; Fiorina 1981; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996). However, Gomez and Wilson argue that sociotropic evaluations are

far from difficult to make and require little in the way of cognitive resources. Instead, the greater cognitive hurdle lies with the process of attributing credit and blame for such evaluations. Because of the greater complexity in making attributions, less-sophisticated voters are likely to maximize *proximal* consistency, bringing closely related political information into congruence. More sophisticated individuals, however, will seek *distal* consistency to bring diverse and abstract information into a coherent belief system.

This supposition leads Gomez and Wilson to suggest that when it comes to low-sophisticates making responsibility attributions for the national economy, they will likely credit/blame the individual with the closest association to the national economy – the president. Conversely, when it comes to pocketbook evaluations, low sophisticates will not make the connections between the president and their personal finances and likely attribute responsibility to the nearest plausible target: themselves. High sophisticates, on the other hand, will recognize the diverse possible targets of attribution, but will be the only group to make the associative linkages between changes in their personal finances and the president. Therefore, pocketbook voting should be common only among high sophisticates and sociotropic voting should be more powerful among lower sophisticates than high ones. To aid in comprehending these hypotheses, I include them in Table 2.1. Importantly, these hypotheses are borne out by data from the 1992 and 1996 elections using both interactions between evaluations and sophistication as well as by splitting the respondents into four levels of sophistication.

Table 2.1 - Objects of Heterogeneous Attribution

	Sociotropic Evaluation	*Pocketbook Evaluation*
High Sophisticates	Diverse attribution, including the President	Diverse attribution, including the President
Low Sophisticates	President	Self

Source: Gomez and Wilson (2001)

The theory of heterogeneous attribution is also borne out when studying economic congressional voting, with low sophisticates making presidential attributions and ignoring Congress (Gomez and Wilson 2001), as well as cross-nationally (Gomez and Wilson 2006). Additionally, some aspects of the heterogeneous attribution theory have been supported in previous literature. Others have suggested that the reason pocketbook evaluations do not affect the vote is because most fail to associate governmental policies to their personal finances (Abramowitz et al. 1988; Feldman 1982; Lau and Sears 1981), that sophisticates might be able to better distinguish the areas the president can control (Sigelman and Knight 1985), and that low sophisticates may attribute more responsibility to issues the president has no control over as a simplification strategy (Tyler 1982).

However, Gomez and Wilson's counterintuitive claims have not gone by unchallenged. Godbout and Belanger (2007a) raise doubts about their findings, noting that Gomez and Wilson use the ANES's pre-election vote intention as the dependent variable and not the post-election report of the actual vote. They fail to confirm Gomez

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and Wilson's hypotheses when attempting to replicate their findings across five presidential elections with the post-election vote report; pocketbook evaluations fail to impact high sophisticates' vote choices and low sophisticates show seemingly random variance from election to election. Furthermore, it is also discovered that the effect of sociotropic evaluations among high sophisticates is only present when an incumbent is up for reelection, suggesting that attributions of responsibility are more personal in nature and fail to transfer to other party members once a president leaves office.

Gomez and Wilson (2007) reply to this critique, noting that not all of their theory is unsupported. Even in Godbout and Belanger's article, low sophisticates do not attribute responsibility to the government for their personal circumstances and high sophisticates tend to focus on actors other than the president when making sociotropic attributions. With regard to their dependent variable, they defend the choice to use the pre-election vote preference, arguing that there is utility in analyzing survey measures that are taken contemporaneously and not up to twenty weeks apart. Godbout and Belanger (2007b) retort that it is highly unusual to use the pre-election vote intention in the economic literature and that what they consider to be their main finding, the absence of economic voting in open-seat elections among high sophisticates, holds regardless of which version of vote choice is used.

Sophistication is not the only complication to making attributions of responsibility. Leaving the theory of heterogeneous attribution aside, we will now examine some of the other factors that can affect the quality of attributions, the first of

which being the presence of divided government. Fiorina noted that, "if responsibility was problematic in American politics even when government was unified, the problem is compounded when government is divided" (1992, 110). Indeed, Lowry, Alt, and Ferree (1998) find accountability to be stronger following a period of unified government. Taking this further, Nicholson and Segura (1999) put forth a simple theory of attributions during midterm elections under divided government. Divided government, they say, increases uncertainty among the citizenry, which increases the difficulty of blame attribution. During midterm elections, this makes voters less likely to vote for out-party candidates. Indeed, their data suggests that divided government does reduce information, as shown by the fewer individuals who know who controls Congress. Furthermore, economic evaluations only affect congressional voting during periods of unified government. Finally, from a comparative politics perspective, Powell and Whitten (1993) conclude that the clarity of responsibility does affect attributions.

Norpoth (2001) tested four competing explanations of attributions during such situations by examining vote choices and retrospective evaluations. A "Split Verdict" model will benefit the controlling parties of both branches in good times and punish them in poor times. A "Hung Jury" occurs when voters cannot distinguish the responsible actors and thus does not vote based on economic evaluations. Finally, "President Liable" and "Congress Liable" models contend that voters attribute responsibility to that particular branch. Looking at aggregate patterns 1992 and 1996 exit polls, Norpoth finds that presidential and congressional voting is driven by the presidential party and that the

"President Liable" model wins out. However, it should be noted that this study did not measure individual responsibility attributions.

A similar strand in the literature focuses on the assignment of responsibility in federal systems. While Anderson (2006) finds that economic voting is weakest in countries where multilevel systems are most prominent, others have concluded that individuals are capable of assigning responsibility across levels of government when voting (Cutler 2004). However, others contend that most voters only make such distinctions when those issues attitudes are highly accessible (Arceneaux 2006) or simply avoid these cognitive demands by side-stepping the attribution process (Johns 2011).

Aside from divided government and federal systems, other possible complications in making attributions include media influence (Abramowitz et al. 1988; Hetherington 1996; Nicholson and Segura 1999, 613), manipulations of voter perceptions by politicians (McGraw 1991; McGraw, Best, and Timpone 1995), perceptions of whether the actors could have prevented the outcome (Appelbaum 2001), the need to enhance one's self-esteem (Miller 1976; Zuckerman 1979), primed emotions (Small et al. 2006), the presentation style of information (Iyengar 1996), sophistication (Gomez and Wilson 2006b), and deviations from expectations (Lowry, Alt, and Ferree 1998).

Finally, a few studies starkly display the practical impact that economic attributions can have on the vote. Arceneaux (2003) notes that previous research has shown that those facing economic adversity are less likely to vote (Rosenstone 1982), but that those who do vote are more inclined to use their vote to punish incumbents (Radcliff

1994). This finding is somewhat troubling from a normative standpoint because it suggests that actual vote totals are biased; the in-party is rewarded for economic successes but not punished for its economic failures. Arceneaux looks at individual data, however, accounts for blame attribution, and finds that those who blame the government not only are less supportive of the in-party but also are more likely to turn out and vote. Secondly, Rudolph and Grant (2002) address an anomaly in the economic voting literature: that in spite of a robust economy, George W. Bush was able to defeat incumbent Vice President Al Gore in 2000. To explain Gore's loss using the 2000 American Politics Survey, they show that sociotropic evaluations have an effect on incumbent-party voting only with an attribution of responsibility. Without connecting the good economy to the president, sociotropic voting fails to influence the vote. The author's argument, therefore, is that Gore lost largely because the electorate failed to perceive the Clinton administration as responsible for the current good times.

The importance of these correlates to the attribution process necessitate that my research carefully examines the possible relationships between attributions, perceptions, and a variety of variables beyond partisanship. This research will look at the relationship between important political behaviors and the attribution process.

Hypotheses

Predicting Attribution Targets

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The including of both current and former officeholders in the response set and the study of the three aspects of responsibility attributions lead to additional avenues of research. For instance, individuals may adjust their economic perceptions based upon whether they hold current office holders more liable than former ones. Similarly, the relationship between perceptions and attribution may be different when considering primary, immediate, and prospective attributions.

There is an implicit assumption that individuals' characteristics and predispositions will affect their economic perceptions and responsibility attributions. The most interesting of these, from a motivated reasoning prospective, is party identification. Party identification is one of the most stable traits and well-understood traits and represents a key piece of information about candidates that can be easily discovered; thus, party identification is a significant predictor of the vote (Campbell et al. 1960; Converse 1964; Green and Palmquist 1994; Lewis-Beck et al 2008). There is reason to suspect party identification to affect motivated reasoning as well (Taber and Lodge 2006; Rudolph 2003a, 2006).

With this in mind, it is reasonable to expect in-party members to blame former officeholders from the current out-party or nongovernmental entities for the primary attribution of responsibility when they perceive issue conditions to be bad. Out-party members, on the other hand, can be expected ascribe blame outside of the government because doing so will not cause conflict between their perceptions and attributions. When issue conditions are seen as positive, we would expect the opposite attributions of

credit; in-party members will credit nongovernmental entities while out-party members will credit the former officeholders of their own party.

By forming responsibility attributions in this way, the individual is protecting himself from internal conflict caused by supporting a party whose officials caused the poor conditions. This process is similar to the Motivated Correction Hypothesis proposed by Skitka et al. (2002), who proposed that individuals reevaluate their personal responsibility attributions with a "second pass" of reasoning if their original attributions are inconsistent with the perceiver's core values or preferred conclusions; hence the individual is engaged in corrective processing.

We can make similar hypotheses regarding the immediate attribution – the responsibility for current issue conditions. For positive issue conditions, in-party members are likely to credit the current officeholder while out-party members will credit nongovernmental entities or even their copartisan former officeholder. When issue conditions are negatively perceived, however, in-party members will seek belief consistency by blaming the former officeholder or nongovernmental entities while the out-party member is free to blame the current officeholder for the reasons why the conditions are not better.

Finally, when it comes to prospective responsibility attributions – the expectation of who will address the present situation and be responsible for its outcome – the in-party members will make nongovernmental attributions if they expect the issue to worsen, but attribute responsibility to their office holding copartisans if they expect it to improve.

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For out-party members, one would expect the opposite, with them expecting to credit

nongovernment entities for expected improvement and blaming the current officeholder if

conditions are expected to worsen. Table 2.2 summarizes these partisan hypotheses.

Table 2.2 – Hypothesized Attribution Targets

	Primary Attribution	
Issue Perception:	*Good*	*Bad*
In-Party Member	Credit incumbent/ nongovernmental source	Blame former officeholder
Out-Party Member	Credit former officeholder	Blame incumbent/ nongovernmental source
	Immediate Attribution	
Issue Perception:	*Good*	*Bad*
In-Party Member	Credit incumbent/ nongovernmental source	Blame former officeholder/ nongovernmental source
Out-Party Member	Credit former officeholder/ nongovernmental source	Blame incumbent/ nongovernmental source
	Prospective Attribution	
Issue Prediction:	*Will Worsen*	*Will Improve*
In-Party Member	Blame nongovernmental source	Credit incumbent
Out-Party Member	Blame incumbent	Credit nongovernmental source

With all of these attributions, the passage of time is likely to greatly impact the

attribution distinction between current and former officeholders. *Ceteris paribus*, the

passage of time will increase the likelihood of attributing responsibility to the current

officeholder and decrease the likelihood of attributing responsibility to the former one, regardless of party affiliation and economic conditions. An interesting avenue of exploration would be to see if, as time progresses, internal conflict between economic attributions and responsibility attributions forces individuals to augment their perceptions of the economy or their attribution in order to bring the two into alignment. However, because such research would require a panel study to test in a survey context, I can only examine this relationship partially, in an experimental setting.

We can also hypothesize about which variables are likely to be related to those who engage in motivated reasoning when making responsibility attributions. First, I expect that those with stronger partisan attachments will be more likely to engage in motivated reasoning than nonpartisans and those with weaker attachments. Those with a stake in the outcome of the reasoning process should be more likely to engage in motivated reasoning. I have already argued from the literature that individuals' partisanship can serve as the stake in the outcome needed for motivated reasoning to occur (Rudolph 2003b, 2006; Taber and Lodge 2006; see also Skitka et al. 2002), so it is a natural extension so predict that those with stronger partisan ties will engage in motivated reasoning than those with weaker ties.

Furthermore, it is likely that an interest in politics can also serve as a "stake" in the attribution process. The more time and interest individuals invest in political matters, the greater the psychological importance they will place in having their issue perceptions not conflict with their responsibility attributions. For this reason, I expect those with

higher levels of political interest to engage in motivated reasoning. For similar reasons, political knowledge should have a similar relationship with responsibility attributions.

Another more direct measure of having a stake in the issue is having been directly affected by an issue. If a national political issue directly affects the daily lives of individuals, those individuals should be more likely to engage in motivated reasoning. When it comes to the national economy, I expect those individuals who have been adversely affected by the recent economic recession to be more likely to engage in motivated reasoning than those who have been less affected.[3]

Finally, it is important to keep in mind the effect of economic evaluations and responsibility attributions on various forms of political behavior, such as vote choice, presidential approval, and political activism. Though I cannot make directional predictions, I expect to find differences in way in which responsibility attributions are formed across groups of respondents who engage in a behavior and groups who do not. It is possible, for instance, that motivated reasoning occurs only among the President's supporters, but not among those who do not support him. Such an analysis will further the understanding of how certain forms of political behavior relate to how individuals determine responsibility for national conditions.

The Relationship between Issue Perceptions and Responsibility Attributions

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[3] The effect of the Iraq War on individuals was not measured in this survey due to space restraints and the expectation that too few individuals will have been personally affected by it.

Despite its prevalence, the responsibility attribution literature is deficient in key areas, leading to an uncertainty and lack of generalizability with many of its studies' results. The first of these deficiencies is the determination of the causal direction in the relationship between issue perceptions and responsibility attributions. Whereas most previous studies looked at this relationship in a correlative manner, I hope to study causal relationships by using randomized experiments. This process, described in Chapter 3, leads to two conflicting and testable hypotheses:

H1: Issue perceptions affect responsibility attributions.

H2: Responsibility attributions affect issue perceptions.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, both of these hypotheses could possibly be present in the electorate, though it is likely that one will be seen to be more common. It is my expectation that H1 is more likely to accurately describe voter behavior and represents the likely "default" attribution process for most individuals. As *The American Voter* noted, forming an opinion of issue conditions (in their case, the national economy) is not necessarily a cognitively-demanding task – all that is needed is a rough idea of the situation (Campbell et al. 1960). Therefore, I believe it is more likely that holding an issue perception comes logically prior to economic attributions for most people. However, the other possibility still exists. As Rudolph (2003b) notes, the existing literature seems to assume that the presidency is generally seen as the "command post" of the economy (Nadeau and Lewis-Beck 2001). If this is the case, and individuals tend to ascribe credit or blame to one particular institution or individual regardless of economic

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conditions, it is likely that motivated reasoning would lead one's responsibility attribution to shape their issue perceptions.

It is currently unknown what types of characteristics would make it likely for an individual to form their attitudes based on H1 rather than H2, or vice versa. It is my suggestion that individuals who have made responsibility attributions in the past will be more likely to conform to the H2's ordering than H1's. The reason for this is that once an individual ascribes credit or blame for a situation, there is some degree of inertia that comes along with that attribution; the individual is going to continue with that ascription of credit or blame until some event or stimulus forces them to change it. If motivated reasoning occurs with this individual, individuals with this somewhat-fixed attribution target are going to alter their perceptions of the issue to conform to their previously held beliefs, which would be confirmation of H2. Note, however, that if an event occurs that forces her to abandon her attribution target, such as a great change in her issue perception, this would instead be confirmation of H1.

So the question remains as to what types of individuals are likely to follow the track described in the second hypothesis. Another way of phrasing it would be to ask what types of individuals are more likely to have standing attribution targets. One group that would likely have such prior beliefs would be those who have thought a great deal about the issue. Therefore, it is reasonable to say that those who are interested in politics and those who have higher exposure to the news media would be more likely to confirm H2 than H1 because those who absorb a lot of news are likely to have made previous

attributions in the past and alter their perceptions based on those attributions. For the same reason, interest is politics is likely operate in the same way, with those having a greater interest more likely to support H2 than those disinterested. Finally, if one has talked about an issue, there is a chance that one has publicly blamed or credited individuals for various issues. Because those who made such public declarations likely have greater "attribution inertia," I would expect H2 to be supported by those who talk about news and politics on a regular basis.

The following chapter discusses in detail how these preceding hypotheses will be tested using existing cross-sectional surveys, original survey research, and experimental designs.

Chapter 3: Research Design

Three distinct analyses will be used to investigate and test the previously

discussed research questions and hypotheses. The following chapter will consist of an

analysis of cross-sectional American National Election Studies (ANES) data to illustrate

the potential importance of my research. The Chapters Five-Eight will discuss an

original survey focusing on voter perceptions of national issues and their responsibility

attributions. The ninth chapter will analyze original experimental data to test the

relationship between issue perceptions and responsibility attributions, followed by a

concluding chapter.

Chapter Four: The American National Election Study

Chapter Four uses existing publically-available data sources to help place the

original data presented in Chapters Five-Eight into context. The results show instances

where responsibility attributions appear to be formed and affect political behavior, but

also reiterate the point that previous attempts to measure and analyze responsibility

attributions have been deficient. This section will provide an argument for the inclusion

of more questions pertaining to responsibility attributions in major surveys and

emphasize the importance of examining responsibility according the proposed trichotomy

of primary, immediate, and prospective attributions. Additionally, the findings also highlight the confusion that can be evident in determining responsibility for national conditions when a former president might be seen as responsible but not included in the response option set.

<div align="center">*Tracking Polling with the Stock Market*</div>

The first section of Chapter Four compares an objective economic indicator with the relative performance of Senators John McCain and Barack Obama in the campaign for the Presidency in 2008. I chose to use the Daily Gallup Tracking Poll as a measure of campaign support, both for its availability and its reputation. The Gallup Daily Tracking Poll in a three-day rolling average of 2,600-2,800 interviews of registered voters nationwide with a margin of error of +/- 2 percent.[4] The question asked is: "*Now, suppose that the presidential election were being held today, and it included Barack Obama and Joe Biden as the Democratic candidates and John McCain and Sarah Palin as the Republican candidates. Would you vote for Barack Obama and Joe Biden, the Democrats, or John McCain and Sarah Palin, the Republicans?*" If respondents are unsure, they are further prompted with: "*As of today, do you lean more toward Obama and Biden, the Democrats, or McCain and Palin, the Republicans?*" Response options are rotated for each question.

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[4] Prior to June 7, 2008, the figure is a 5-day rolling average of approximately 4,400 respondents.

The daily closing value for the Dow Jones Industrial Average is used as an objective indicator of economic change throughout the campaign season. The Dow is an index consisting of how thirty large, publically-traded companies fare during each day of trading. Since trading does not occur each day, the previous day's value is imputed for all weekends and holidays. When using the Dow as a predictor of the polling results in a regression, lags are employed to capture current and previous changes in the Dow together. Doing so also allows the stock market results to cycle through the rolling-average poll's results.

Comparing the Election Studies to Economic Indicators

The remaining sections of Chapter Four employ the American National Election Study's Cumulative Data File. The American National Election Study is an extensive federally-funded national survey that is run during presidential election campaigns and most midterm elections. The ANES's forerunner was the Survey Research Center and the Center for Political Studies of the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan, which covered all thirteen presidential and midterm elections between 1952 and 1976. With data stretching back to 1948, the ANES often asks the same questions over multiple years; questions that have been asked at least three times are pooled into the ANES Cumulative Data File. The ANES CDF contains data from 1948 to 2010 and has information from 49,761 interviews, though this project can only use data after 1980 due to question availability.

Chapter Four uses three questions from the ANES CDF. The first, *"Do you approve or disapprove of President _____'s handling of the economy?"* was asked every two years from 1984-2008. Other issues have been included in the ANES during various years, such as issue approval for foreign affairs, military events, environmental policy, and health care, though these other issues are not asked consistently enough to conclude that any patterns might be occurring. The second question is the commonly-used retrospective and sociotropic economic perception question, *"Would you say that over the past year the nation's economy has gotten better, stayed the same, or gotten worse?"* The ANES included this question in each survey from 1980-2008 except in 2006. Finally, the standard party-identification question is used to divide individuals into three partisan groups: *"Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself a Republican, a Democrat, Independent, or what?"* Those who respond with "Independent" or some other grouping are asked a follow-up as to which of the two main parties they are closest. These questions allow me to classify individuals are Republicans, Democrats, and pure Independents.

In addition, two objective national economic indicators are employed: the yearly percentage change in third-quarter GDP and the yearly percentage change in November unemployment. Both variables are publically available and provide a snapshot as to how the nation's economy was performing at a particularly time in relation to one year prior.

Chapters Five-Eight: Mail Survey

The focus of Chapter Five is the analysis of an original mail survey of voters in Franklin County, Ohio. The survey was administered to 2,500 individuals randomly selected from the Franklin County voter registration list and was funded by an Alumni Grant for Graduate Research and Scholarship grant from the Graduate School at The Ohio State University. The survey was mailed out at the beginning of August 2010 and was in the field until October 5, 2010, effectively covering the late summer preceding the 2010 midterm election. Not surprisingly, responses were heaviest in the beginning and middle of August. Ninety-two percent of responses were received by September 1, 97.27% were in by September 15, and 99.54% were accepted by October 1.

The survey was administered in a mixed-mode format and the questionnaire is presented in Appendix A. Respondents were given the opportunity to either return the questionnaire in a prepaid envelope or take the survey online via a SurveyGizmo.com account maintained by the Political Science Department at The Ohio State University. As an incentive for participation, a pair of tickets was raffled off to a 2010 Ohio State football game. Participants were given one raffle chance for submitting their questionnaire via the mail and two if the questionnaire was completed online.

In total, 439 individuals participated. Among the online participants, 190 submitted completed the questionnaire and another 17 did so partially. One hundred and ninety five completed questionnaires were returned via the mail, and along with another 37 that were partially completed. All together, this comes to a response rate of 17.56%, based on the total number of mailed questionnaires. However, voter registration lists are

generally inaccurate, due to residential mobility. While the survey mailings were checked for individuals who have moved within the past year (and thus in the US Postal Service's mail forwarding program), 284 questionnaires were still returned as undeliverable mail. This drops the total number of valid mailings to 2,216 and increases the response rate to 19.8%.

During this time, politics was largely shaped by poor economic conditions. While the Dow Jones Industrial Average had rebounded from its recession-low of 6,626 points in early March of 2009 to over 10,000 during the survey's administration, the economic recovery was seen as slow. Unemployment had risen from 8.5% when President Obama took office, and remained high, topping out at 10.4% in the winter of 2010 hovering around 9.5% during the late summer, though Ohio's rate remained over 10% (Bureau of Labor and Statistics). Internationally, the United States was still engaged in wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Significantly, on August 31, 2010, President Obama declared an end to the nation's seven-year combat mission in Iraq, though a sizeable military force of about 50,000 U.S. troops would remain to promote the stability of the Iraqi government. Politically, the nation's opinion of President Obama remained stable throughout the survey. Pollster.com, which aggregates poll results from a variety of companies, shows that Obama's job approval rate held steady at approximately 45% from August 1 through October 5, with 50% disapproving. When it comes to Obama's handling of the economy, however, the nation was less supportive, with 41% approving and 54% disapproving (Pollster.com).

Measuring Attributions and Perceptions in the Survey Questionnaire

The main focus of the survey was to determine the relationship between national issue conditions and individuals' responsibility attributions, using the economy and Iraq War as examples. The inclusion of primary, immediate, and prospective attribution assignments made it necessary to design attribution and perception questions for each attribution type.

Turning first to the issue perception questions, it was foreseen that most individuals would consider national economic conditions to be poor. After considering phrasing the questions with the implicit assumption that the economy is bad, using phrases like "economic downturn" and such, I decided to instead take a more perception-neutral direction in order to incorporate into the study the small minority who still perceive a vibrant national economy. Still, this left a problem of finding enough variation in economic perceptions to make meaningful inferences. After looking at contemporaneous polling data from pollingreport.com, expanding the response option scale was found to be a solution to this issue. In a mail survey, this is especially easy to implement. Instead of presenting respondents with the typical five-point Likert scale responses ranging "much better" to "much worse," I instead used a seven-point scale, in which only the poles and midpoint of the scale are labeled as "much better, same, and much worse," producing a nice variance in responses.

The three types of attribution and three time frames for issue perception meant that six questions were created for each issue. *Primary Responsibility* deals with the question of long-term causal responsibility for an issue, so the appropriate question must stress the fact that the individual is to think about changes in the issue over several years. However, "long-term" is a purposefully vague concept, so a decision needed to be made about how far back to frame the question. The question chosen consists of two sentences:

> Many people think that our nation's economy has undergone a lot of changes in the past few years. How much responsibility would you say that each of the following individuals/groups has for any fundamental changes in the national economy **since the beginning of 2007**?

The first sentence primes the respondent to the fact that they should be thinking in a long-term sense by using the phrase "changes in the past few years." The second half of the question is more specific, ideally limiting the respondents' thoughts to the "beginning of 2007." The words "Iraq War" replaced "national economy" in the battery of questions concerning the war. The time period of 2007 through August 2010 was chosen because it significantly spanned both the latter stages of President Bush's second term and included all of Obama's time in office. Additionally, the time period included time prior to the current economic recession and the surge of U.S. troops in Iraq.

For each attribution type and issue, respondents were given several possible targets and asked to assign how much responsibility they give to each target on scale ranging from "0 – No Responsibility" to "6 – Full Responsibility." For both the economy and the Iraq War, the governmental targets included President Bush, President Obama, Congressional Democrats, and Congressional Republicans. The nongovernmental targets

for the economic questions were the business community, the banking industry, and the American people. The nongovernmental targets for the Iraq War questions were foreign governments, the U.S. military and its commanders, and terrorist groups. In addition to the assignment of responsibility for each actor, there were also questions specifically asking respondents to say whether President Bush or President Obama was more responsible for each issue's responsibility type.

By itself, knowing who an individual views as responsible is not very informative, however, especially when we consider that individuals will not view the issues in the same way. Therefore, it is necessary to have questions relating to issue perceptions that can be paired with responsibility attribution questions for each type of attribution. For each type, it is necessary to have a sense of how an individual believes the issue has changed over time. Since primary responsibility deals with long-term causation, a question comparing current conditions to typical conditions should be used:

> Do you consider the current **national economy** to be better or worse than what you consider to be "average" or "usual" conditions?

The terms "average" and "usual" are used to induce the respondent to think about how current conditions compare to long-term changes and thus, pairs nicely with the primary responsibility attribution question to gather a more complete picture of how individuals perceive and assign credit and blame for national issues. For all of the issue perception questions, including this one, the responses were given on a zero-six numeric scale, with the poles labeled "Much Worse" and "Much Better" and "Same" written in the middle above the three.

Unlike primary responsibility, which takes into account changes over a long period of time, *immediate responsibility* is a short-term sense of causality and deals strictly with current conditions. As a result, the immediate responsibility question straightforwardly asks:

> How much responsibility would you say that each of the following individuals/groups has for the **current state** of the national economy?

This question ignores who the respondent feels is the root cause of the conditions and instead focuses on who is responsible for the condition right now. Importantly, someone may ascribe immediate responsibility to an individual because of something that individual did in the distant past, presumably if the respondent feels that the action has a direct bearing on current conditions. When measuring issue perceptions to pair with immediate responsibility attributions, the survey asked respondents:

> As of right now, would you say that the **national economy** is getting better, staying the same, or getting worse?

This question focuses on current conditions and the perceived impact that short-term factors will have on issue conditions.

The third type or responsibility attribution, *prospective responsibility*, concerns who individuals believe will be responsible for future outcomes. To this end, the survey asked respondents:

> How much responsibility do you think each of the following individuals/groups will have for the state of the national economy **one year from now**?

A timeframe of one year was chosen because it is an appropriately long enough time for a current policy to show some effects but not long off that respondents will not be able to

project an expectation of what conditions will be like at that time. Accordingly,

respondents were also asked how they expect each issue to change over the next twelve

months:

> Compared to today, what do you think the **national economy** will be
> like one year from now?

Measuring both issue perceptions and responsibility attributions together is vital.

Not only can we find out who a person thinks is responsible for an issue, but we can tell

whether or not they view that issue in a positive or negative light. By measuring and

interacting additional characteristics with issue perceptions, such as party identification,

we can now test whether motivated reasoning occurs by looking to see if individuals are

more likely to place blame on opposite-party members and give credit to those who share

their party identification.

The Remainder of the Questionnaire

Though the questionnaire is presented in Appendix A, it is also helpful to briefly

discuss the other items present in the survey.

Economic Opinions

Other questions included asking how much control a typical president has in

shaping each issue, as well as a series of yes/no questions designed to gauge how much

individual respondents have been affected by recent economic conditions. These six

questions were combined into an additive scale which I have called "economic effect" (α

= 0.759). The questions included in the economic effect scale are whether an individual or someone in their household has worried more about financial matters, been forced to dip into personal savings, make cutbacks as a result of the economy, taken a forced pay cut, is underemployed, or has be unemployed in the past three years. In addition, I asked individuals to place themselves on a scale, ranging from -5 to 5 based on the effect that recent economic conditions have had on themselves and their family.

Political Opinions

Political interest, party identification, and ideology were measured using standard questions modeled off of those used in the American National Election Studies. I created a question asking about Tea Party support, as well as measuring whether the individual has attended any Tea Party rallies or donated money to any Tea Party organizations.

I asked about who they voted for in the 2008 presidential election, their approval or disapproval of the job being done by President Obama, both generally and specifically for the economy and the war in Iraq, as well as asking how they would vote if the 2008 election was being re-held and whether they plan on voting for Obama or someone else in 2012.

A short battery measuring individuals' attachment to the values of economic individualism, equality of opportunity, and free enterprise were measured using Feldman's (1988) wording. Due to space restrictions, two questions were used to measure each of the three values, selected by looking at Feldman's LISREL factor

analysis results found in Table 1 of his paper and attempting to use two questions that were sufficiently distinct from one another. For each value question, respondents were given a five-point agree/disagree Likert scale and the responses were added together within each separate value to produce a ten-point scale based on how closely a respondent identifies with each value.

Additionally, internal and external efficacy were measured on five-point agree/disagree Likert scales and responses from four questions were combined to get measures of social and governmental trust.

Knowledge and Media Consumption

The five-question Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996) political knowledge scale was used, with two open-ended questions ("Do you happen to know what job or political office is now held by Joe Biden" and "How much of a majority is required for the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives to override a presidential veto?") and three closed-ended responses ("Whose responsibility is it to determine if a law is constitutional or not?," "Do you happen to know which party has the most members in the House of Representatives in Washington?," and " At the national level, which of the political parties is generally more conservative?"). To supplement this scale, an open-ended question asking, "How many votes are needed to stop a filibuster in the U.S. Senate?" was added to the knowledge battery. The filibuster was used extensively by the 41 Senate Republicans to block Democratic legislation from reaching President Obama's

desk and this question was included to see how salient the issue might be to voters. These six questions were included in additive scale measuring political knowledge (α = 0.610).

Media consumption was measured with five questions asking how often respondents watched local television news, national television news, read newspapers, got news from the internet, or got news from other individuals. Each question had four response options ranging from "Never" to "Every Day." An additional question asked which of the above sources provided them with the most information about current events.

Demographics

Finally, common demographics were measured, including sex, year of birth, race, marital status, children (as well as children living with the respondent), whether they are a student, educational level, whether they own or rent their residence, income, social class identification, religious affiliation, and attendance at religious services.

Methodological Technique

Chapters Five through Eight will use the appropriate maximum likelihood techniques to test the hypotheses discussed in the previous chapter. For analyses using the dichotomous choice of assigning more responsibility to President Obama or President Bush, logistic regression will be used. However, when the amount of responsibility

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assigned to each actor is used as the dependent variable, generalized ordered logit models are appropriate. Normal ordered probit/logit models are inadequate because the models frequently violate the proportional regressions assumption, that the probability curve of the likelihood of a result being less than or equal to any of the ordinal outcomes (seven, in this case) differs *only* in being shifted to the left or the right. Unfortunately for researchers, this is a difficult assumption to meet when using real-life data, and as a result, the assumption is frequently violated in the political science literature (Long and Freese 2006; Williams 2006). After running Brant tests after my models, a diagnostic test to determine whether this assumption is violated, I unsurprisingly find that it is frequently violated.

I therefore estimate generalized ordered logistic regression models, which relaxes the proportional regressions assumption using Williams (2006) STATA command *gologit2*. Still, generalized ordered models are not ideal because they are very difficult to fit with several variables without having a very large data set. When attempting to fit the models for this chapter, they would not converge unless I removed all control variables. Left with the tradeoff between presenting ordered logistic regression models with control variables while violating the proportional odds assumption (which is frequently violated anyway) or estimating the generalized ordered logistic regressions without control variables, I chose to present the regular ordered logistic results while placing the generalized models in Appendix C. Fortunately, the results are almost identical across

the two model types (see Chapter 7), and the inclusion of control variables clinched the decision to use the regular models.

Randomization of the Questionnaire

Because the survey measures both issue perceptions and responsibility attributions, to guard against one battery of questions influencing the answers of another, half of the sample was sent questionnaires in which the attribution questions preceded the perception battery, while the order was reversed for the other half of the sample. The batteries were similarly randomized online was well.

This randomization procedure did lead to problems, though. Oddly, for those who sent back the form of the questionnaire in which issue perceptions preceded the attribution questions, 37 of the 128 respondents did not answer a single question on the second and third pages of the survey. This phenomenon did not occur once with the other form. I can only assume that the ink from the printer caused the first and second pages to stick together more than normal for those 37 copies, though I had no trouble opening the survey while coding the data. To expressly prevent people from accidentally skipping pages, the pages were numbered, but that apparently did not work for some individuals. A logistic regression was run among those returning that version of the

form. No demographic variables were significantly related to skipping the middle pages of survey and I am confident that this anomaly was random.[5]

Survey Generalizability

Because the survey sample was drawn from the Franklin County, Ohio voter registration list, there may be concerns about how accurately the sample and respondents compare to the general population. Franklin County, which includes Columbus, has a reputation of being a fairly typical region. For decades, its diversity and mixture of urban, suburban, and rural areas have made the area a popular test market for new products and menu items in its stores and restaurants. However, the county and nation's changing demographics have dampened this reputation in recent years (Business First of Columbus - http://www.bizjournals.com/columbus/stories/2004/05/31/daily2.html). Still, the fact remains that while Franklin County may no long bring in as many new McDonald's menu items as it once did, it remains very similar in baseline demographics to the nation as a whole.

The survey's respondents were 55 percent female, had a median age of 49, and were overwhelmingly Caucasian (88 percent). Sixty-five percent were married or widowed, nine percent were full- or part-time students, and a majority held at least a Bachelor's degree (59 percent). The home-ownership rate was 79 percent and the median income was between $50,000-75,000. A plurality of respondents was Protestant (45

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[5] The variables included age, sex, marital status, student status, education, owning a home, income, social class identification, and church/worship attendance.

percent) though there were sizable Catholic and nonreligious groups as well (27 and 20

percent, respectively). Twenty-six percent of respondents report attending religious

services on a weekly basis, though a majority of the sample never go or do so only a few

times a year.

Politically, the respondents tended to be very interested in politics; 53 percent

reported following political events "most of the time." Party identification was evenly

split between Democrats than Republicans (28 percent to 27 percent), though if you

include partisan-leaning Independents, there were slightly more Democrats than

Republicans (45 percent to 40 percent). Pure Independents comprised fifteen percent of

the sample. The sample was more conservative, than liberal; thirty-eight percent of the

respondents fell on the conservative half of the ideological spectrum but only 31 percent

were on the liberal side. Of the respondents who voted in the 2008 Presidential Election,

the vote was split with McCain winning by a single vote, 48.7 to 48.5. Only 44 percent

of respondents intend to vote for Obama's reelection in 2012.

Table 3.1 shows the results from the survey for variables in which there are

readily available estimates for Franklin County, the state of Ohio, and the nation as a

whole. Almost fifty-five percent of the survey respondents were female, which is slightly

higher than would be expected, though the estimates for the proportion of women in the

county, state, and nation are within the 95% confidence interval. As you can see,

Franklin County has a lower proportion of elderly people than the state and nation, and

the percentage of survey respondents over the age of 65 was closer to the state and

national estimates rather than the county. Similarly, respondents were more likely to be

Caucasian, higher educated, and homeowners than would be expected based on

population estimates. The variables in which the survey results differ from the

population estimates are all variables which correlate highly with political engagement

and participation. Given that the sample frame was the voter registration list, this is not

surprising. It is likely that older, educated, homeowners were more likely to participate

in this political survey because they are more likely to be registered to vote, hold political

opinions, and participate in politics than their younger, less-educated, home-renting

counterparts. When it comes to household income, it is not possible to provide exact

estimates and confidence intervals because of the structure of response options, however,

the median results, $50-75,000 contains the median income for the county and nation,

though Ohio as a whole makes slightly less than $50,000 per year.

Table 3.1 - Comparing Survey Results to Franklin County, Ohio, and the Nation

Variable	Survey	95% Confidence Interval	Franklin County	Ohio	USA
Percent Female	54.63	(49.87, 59.39)	51.1	51.2	50.7
Percentage Over 65	17.85	(14.13, 21.57)	13.2	18.2	17.0
Percent White, Non-Hispanic	87.77	(84.62, 90.92)	70.3	82.2	65.1
Percent of those 25 and older with at least a Bachelor's Degree	60.29	(55.54, 65.04)	31.8	21.1	24.4
Home Ownership Percentage	78.71	(74.78, 82.64)	56.9	69.1	66.2
Median Household Income	$50-75,000		$51,246	$48,011	$52,029

All values are percentages, except for income. The 2009 Census Bureau estimates are all based on the entire population, not just adults.

Furthermore, it must also be kept in mind that the census estimates in the last three columns are calculated from the entire population, not just registered voters 18 years and older. This distinction presumably reduces many of the differences seen in Table 3.1. For instance, according to estimates, only 47 percent of Ohio's Hispanics are eligible to vote, which lessens the differences seen in the percentage of respondents who were Caucasian (Pew Hispanic Center 2010).

Chapter Eight – Randomized Experiment

As useful as the random sample Political Attributions survey is at providing valuable data regarding how responsibility attributions are made, cross-sectional surveys can only take researchers so far in the support of their theories, to the brink of causation, but not to causation, because regressions only show that the included variables are related to one another; variable A might be influencing variable B, but the reverse may also be true. In order to infer causation, a randomized experiment is needed.

This study ran two randomized experiment on one set of subjects in order to address the question of causality. Whereas the random-sample survey showed a correlational relationship between party identification, issue perceptions, and responsibility attributions, the experiments attempted to assess the causality of that relationship. The reason why two experiments are needed is due to the questions

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regarding the causal direction of the relationship between the interaction of party

identification and issue conditions and the responsibility attribution itself. While all

previous research (including the random sample survey described above) has operated on

the assumption that causation would flow from party identification x issue perceptions →

responsibility attribution, the reverse causal direction must also be considered, that

responsibility attributions may combine with personal characteristics such as party

identification to affect issue perceptions. The two experiments will independently test

each causal direction.

Sample Information

The experiment ran from February 15-20, 2011 and participants included a

nonrandom sample of 187 undergraduate students at The Ohio State University in

Columbus, OH who participated in exchange for extra credit in their political science

course. Since a list of 298 students was provided by the Department of Political

Science's Human Subject Pool, this represents a viable response rate of 63 percent.[6]

Given that the experiment contained a nonrandom student sample of those

seeking extra credit in political science courses, it is not surprising that the subjects

differed from the general population in many respects. The experiment's sample was

mostly male (63 percent) and had a median age of 22, with 89 percent of the sample

being between the ages of 19 and 24. Eighty-three percent were Caucasian. A plurality

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[6] In addition, eight students entered their contact information but did not complete the experiment. They
are not included in the viable response rate.

of respondents did not identify with an organized religion (35 percent), though 34 and 24 percent identified as Protestants and Catholics, respectively. As the increased lack of religious attachment suggests, almost three-fourths of the sample never attend religious services or do so only a few times a year while just 13 percent attend at least once a week. The students were largely upperclassmen (65 percent were juniors or seniors) and two-thirds were pursuing a major or minor in political science.

In terms of politics, the sample leaned Democratic, 39 to 28 percent, and there was a slight Democratic majority if Independent-leaners are counted among partisans. Just 12 percent of the sample considered themselves pure Independents. The student-sample was also more liberal than the general population, with 49 percent placing themselves on the liberal side of the ideological continuum, compared to just 36 calling themselves some type of conservative. Of those who were old enough to vote in 2008 and did so, two-thirds voted for Obama. President Obama remains popular with the sample; 62 percent approve of his job performance overall and a slight majority (53 percent) approve of his handling of the economy. Looking ahead to the 2012 election, 55 percent of the sample expects to vote for his reelection.

Some are skeptical of nonrandom undergraduate samples being used for experimental research (Sears 1986) because college students are not exactly identical to the larger population. Still, even though undergraduate college students tend to be more Democratic in their party identification and more liberal in their ideology, the random assignment of participants into experimental groups negate such differences.

Additionally, there is no evidence to suggest that motivated reasoning should be confined to older individuals or that young people are not influenced by directional motives. Previous research does demonstrate that younger people do engage in motivated reasoning, though they are significantly *less* likely to do so than older people (Klaczynski and Robinson 2000). This finding, combined with the fact that partisanship tends to increase young adults grow older (Erikson and Tedin 2007, 153-54), suggests that, if party identification is a key variable in the responsibility attribution process, any effects found in an undergraduate sample might be even larger in the general population.

Prospective participants were sent an introductory email to their university email address, inviting them to participate in the experiment for extra credit. The email included a link to a survey hosted by the website Qualtrics.com, on an account operated by The Ohio State University's College of Social & Behavioral Sciences. The email indicated that participation may take about 30 minutes, though many students would finish faster. Once the survey link was clicked, the student was directed to the Qualtrics website, where they filled out their contact and course information for the purposes of extra credit (and were reminded that their answers to the survey's questions are anonymous). The survey then began, with the two experiments, whose order was randomized, followed by demographic and political questions. The questionnaire of both experiments is presented in Appendix B.

Experiment One – The Party in Power Experiment

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The first experiment is designed to test how partisanship affects the responsibility attribution process. Participants were each presented with a short vignette describing a fictionalized account of the national political and economic situation:

[Six months / One year / Two years] ago, John Dover, a [Democrat / Republican], was inaugurated as President, sweeping into the White House along with [Democratic / Republican] majorities in both houses of Congress. President Dover's predecessor was President Christopher Wright, a [Republican / Democrat] who was in office for the previous eight years. The following is a brief overview of the economic situation:

Affected Industries:
The real estate and banking industries have been particularly hard hit recently. Over the past ten years, many individuals have taken advantage of low interest rates and banks' loose lending requirements to purchase homes that they could not have otherwise afford. As a result, many individuals and families took out large mortgages with small down payments and large monthly payments. Unfortunately, housing prices began to drop considerably five years ago. By the time President Dover took office, homes were worth about one-third of their value before the decline in prices. As a result, many individuals and families were stuck owing more money on their mortgages than their homes were worth and foreclosure rates increased.

Amid very real fears that several major insurance companies were on the verge of insolvency due to rising health care costs, the [Republican / Democratic] former President Wright worked with the [Democrats / Republicans] in Congress to pass an $800 billion bailout of the insurance industry. The incoming [Democratic / Republican] President Dover has continued the previous administration's policies in this regard and has signed additional legislation bailing out other industries.

The decline of manufacturing, which has been occurring for decades, has continued throughout the economic recession due to a reduced need for manufactured goods. Most notably, the American electronics industry has been particularly hard-hit. Shortly after President Dover took office, the heads of the major American producers of computers, televisions, and portable electronic devices announced that they were on the verge of bankruptcy. President Dover initiated a bailout of the electronics industry to prevent the further loss of American jobs, though opponents criticized this move, believing that the bailout was too expensive and that the government was taking too active a role in private business.

Wall Street:

When President Wright took office over 8 years ago, the Dow Jones Industrial Average was at 11,000 points. Over the course of his Presidency, the Dow reached a high of 14,000 points during the second term of his administration. From there, however, housing prices fell, and its affect on banks dragged the market down. About a month before the election to replace President Wright was to be held, the stock market lost about 25 percent of its value in one week, triggering several months of extreme volatility, at which point the Dow Jones reached a 12-year low of 7,500 points.

When President Dover took office, the Dow Jones Average was at 8,000 points, and it dropped to an even lower 6,500 points within two months. Since that low, the market has been largely stagnant, growing only modestly.

Unemployment:
During the first seven years of President Wright's eight year administration, the unemployment rate held relatively steady at about 5 percent. However, during his final year, the unemployment rate jumped to 7 percent. Since the [Democratic / Republican] President Dover entered the White House, unemployment has continued to rise and has been hovering above 9 percent for the past several months.

Economic Outlook:
According to a survey of leading economists, the U.S. economic recovery will remain slow into the next year, held back by shoppers reluctant to spend and employers hesitant to hire. They foresee continuing weak economic growth and a continuation of the high rates of unemployment above 9 percent. A majority of the economists believe that it will be several years before the unemployment rate falls to its historically average level of around 5 percent.

The script featured conditions that were similar, but not identical to events that took place in the United States during 2008-2010. The purpose of the vignette was to leave little ambiguity about the negative state of the economy, but leave open the question of who bears responsibility for conditions. The script contained two manipulations and respondents were given one of six versions. The first manipulation is the party of the current and former President, which randomly varied so that either a Democrat replaced a Republican or a Republican replaced a Democrat. Using

individuals' responsibility attributions as dependent variables, the data will be analyzed to test whether individuals were more or less likely to ascribe responsibility to President Dover based on their own party identification and President Dover's party identification in the condition that they received. If this is found to be the case, this finding would support the inference of a causal connection between partisanship, issue conditions, and responsibility attributions across two presidential administrations.

The second manipulation is the randomization of the time the incumbent President Dover has been in office and randomly varies between 6 months, 1 year, and 2 years. The purpose of this manipulation is to test whether the assignment of responsibility to the former President decreases as time progresses. Earlier, I hypothesized that the passage of time since inauguration would increase the amount of responsibility assigned to the incumbent and decrease the amount assigned to the former President, but noted that this can only be tested in real life by using a panel or repeated cross-sectional survey. However, in a randomized experiment, such a test is possible.

In the experiment, responsibility attributions will be measured as they were in the Political Attributions Survey, that is, in two separate ways. For each responsibility type (primary, immediate, and prospective), the participant is asked to assign an amount of responsibility, on a seven-point scale, to President Wright (the former President), President Dover (the incumbent President), the business community, and the American people. Additionally, respondents are directly asked who deserves more responsibility: President Wright or Dover.

Table 3.2 - Experimental Design Summary

Experiment	Manipulation	Dependent Variables	Purpose
Party in Power	Party of Presidents	Responsibility Attributions	Is party a causal factor in predicting attributions?
	Time since inauguration	Responsibility Attributions	Does time increase responsibility assigned to incumbent?
Cued Attributions	Implied responsibility attribution	Economic Perceptions	Are perceptions affected by responsibility attributions?
	State of the economy	Economic Perceptions	Does it matter if conditions are good or bad?

The responsibility attribution questions are followed by three questions measuring

economic perceptions in long-term, short-term, and prospective senses, which are

identical to the perception questions used in the survey, as well as some direct

manipulation checks. I ask respondents if they can remember the party identification of

both President Wright and President Dover, as well as how long it had been since

Dover's inauguration. These questions help identify individuals who participated in the

survey for the extra credit incentive, but did not carefully read the prompts. Additionally,

because the vignette was so similar to recent events, I explicitly asked participants if they

saw any similarities between the script and the transition from President Bush to

President Obama. If the participant answered "yes," they then were asked how similar

the script was to actual events and whether or not the perceived similarity affected their responses when they were answering the questions about who is responsible for conditions. Importantly, respondents were not allowed to use the "back" button in their internet browser when answering the manipulation checks.

Experiment Two – The Cued Attributions Experiment

The experiment, which was randomly given before or after the first, looks at how attributions affect economic perceptions. Specifically, the experiment attempts to determine whether responsibility attributions interact with party identification to affect individuals' perceptions of economic conditions. This is more difficult than the first experiment because unlike manipulating the party in power, or even varying economic conditions themselves, responsibility attributions are an inherently subjective and private opinion. Therefore, it is not possible to manipulate attributions by altering the economic situation. Instead the experiment attempts to *cue* the participants to adopt a certain attribution target.

Participants are presented with another short vignette regarding a hypothetical economic and political situation. However, unlike in the Party in Power experiment, the scripts for the Cued Attributions experiment strongly suggest who is responsible for conditions, using fictitious quotes from "financial experts" and poll numbers. There are two manipulations in the experiment, each with two conditions. First, the state of the economy varies, and is either positive or negative, to see if effects are consistent across

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good and bad conditions. Secondly, the target of the implied responsibility attribution is varied so that either the current or former president is seen as responsible. Ideally, this manipulation will cue the respondent to make the responsibility attributions at the intended target.

Though the scripts in each of the four conditions are similar, the manipulations are not as simple as in the previous experiment. Therefore, I have chosen to present their full text in Appendix B. Each respondent received one hypothetical script, featuring either a positive or negative economy with either the former or incumbent President cued as responsible by the fictitious experts and poll numbers. After reading through the materials, the participants are then asked their perceptions of the economy, measured as usual. I expect that individuals will have more positive perceptions of economic conditions when their own party as seen as responsible, regardless of issue conditions. For instance, if respondents are cued to make an attribution to the new president, that president's copartisans are expected to have a more positive view of the economy than out-party members. If, however, the participant is cued to credit or blame the former president, it is expected that out-party members will have higher economic perceptions than in-party members. If true, this would be an important finding, suggesting that causality can run in both directions when it comes to the attribution process; party and perceptions can affect attributions, as well as attributions and party affecting perceptions.

It is important to note that I expect economic perceptions to vary in relative sense. For example, if a Democrat currently attributes immediate responsibility to President

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Obama, it may be a stretch for her to say that the economy is doing great. However, I would expect her to have a more favorable view of the economy than a Republican who makes the same attribution.

Again, the experiment includes several manipulation checks to ensure that the script was effective. First, individuals are asked to give responsibility attributions, which verify that the expert opinions and poll numbers mentioned in the vignette were effective at cueing the proper responsibility target. Additionally, individuals are asked the party of the current and former President, as well as who the financial experts and polls saw as more responsible for conditions.

Non-manipulated Questions

Several additional batteries are given to the participants after the two experiments. Basic demographic information is gathered, including sex, race, age, religion, religiosity, social class, school rank, student status, and whether they are a political science major or minor. Political interest, party identification, ideology, and Tea Party support are also measured, along with their 2008 vote, presidential job and issue approval, 2012 vote intention, and the effect a typical president has on economic conditions. The effect of recent economic events on the individual is also measured on an 11 point scale, ranging from -5 to +5. The values, trust, efficacy, and media exposure variables from the survey were also included.

A political knowledge battery composed the final page of the survey. Participants were prompted to answer ten political knowledge questions if they knew the answers, but were told to "feel free to skip any of these questions if [they] do not know the answers" in order to discourage participants from looking up the answers. The questions consisted of the five questions suggested by Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996), as well as questions additional questions asking respondents to identify the Speaker of the House, House Minority Leader, Senate Majority Leader, Senate Minority Leader, and the number of votes required to stop a filibuster in the Senate. The purpose of these additional questions was to get a greater degree of variation in the political knowledge questions; because the participants would all be students in political science courses, there is a chance that students would score very high on the Delli Carpini and Keeter scale.

Chapter 4: Indications of Responsibility Attributions in Existing Data

To begin the empirical section of this study, it is helpful to place the original data collection projects into context by examining how responsibility attributions are formed and correlate with political behavior using existing data sources. I recognize that I must be careful not to be too ambitious in my claims when using the existing data because, in many instances, I will not be looking at responsibility attributions directly, but instead at other measures that that relate to them and perhaps imply that an attribution has taken place. Indeed, one of the main purposes of this study is to stress how previous attempts to measure and analyze responsibility attributions have been deficient. This section will provide an argument for the inclusion of more questions pertaining to responsibility attributions in major surveys and emphasize the importance of examining responsibility according the proposed trichotomy of primary, immediate, and prospective attributions. Additionally, the findings also highlight the confusion that can be evident in determining responsibility for national conditions when a former president might be seen as responsible but not included in the response option set.

Economic Events and Political Data

It is not a bold claim to argue that the public may hold politicians responsible for national conditions. There is a deep and interesting thread of research about the effect of economic conditions on presidential voting going back all the way to V.O. Key's *The Responsible Electorate* (1966).[7] The following data from the 2008 campaign appears to confirm the hypothesis that objective economic conditions have a very real effect on elections, and, therefore, the policies that result from them, and certain patterns indicated that responsibility attributions are taking place.

Figure 4.1 shows two data series, with one line showing the *negative* daily closing value for the Dow Jones Industrial Average and the other showing Senator Obama's daily lead over Senator McCain in the Gallup Daily Tracking Poll throughout the campaign.[8] Even a cursory glance at the two lines shows that the two data sets are highly related. While there are some aberrations in the relationship, such as during the Democratic and Republican National Conventions, which took place in late August and early September, by and large, when the Dow Jones Industrial Average declined, Senator Obama's lead expanded. The two variables correlate at a strong 0.6. The Dow values correlate even stronger specifically with Senator Obama's numbers in the poll (r=0.75).

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[7] For a recent summary, see Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier's (2007) chapter on economic voting in the *Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior.*

[8] The Dow numbers are negative, so that increases in the Dow appear as decreases on the graph, and vice versa. This is done to visibly show how it relates to Obama's lead. The Dow numbers are also lagged two days because the Gallup Daily Tracking Poll is a two-day, rolling average survey. The two day lag allows for economic events to fully cycle through the poll results.

Figure 4.1- Gallup Tracking Poll and the Dow Jones Industrial Average

The relationship between the economy and the poll appears to strengthen over time; there is much greater divergence during the summer months and the lines tighten together as the election approaches. If one drops the data prior to September 1, the correlation between the stock market and Obama's lead increases to 0.74. This pretty much restricts the data set to the time after the candidates were nominated and includes most of the major elements of the financial collapse, including the federal takeover of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, the sale of Bank of America, the collapse of Lehman Brothers, the bailout of AIG, and the implementation of the $700 billion Troubled Assets

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Relief Program (TARP) bailout. Throughout this period, the Dow was extremely

volatile, but the poll numbers still reflected the stock market's changes even more-tightly.

Table 4.1– Predicting Obama's Lead in the Gallup Poll

	Entire Campaign	After September 1
Dow Jones Industrial Average	-0.00100	-0.00176
	(0.00090)	(0.00108)
Lag – One Day	-0.00085	-0.00072
	(0.00107)	(0.00114)
Lag – Two Days	-0.00031	-0.00050
	(0.00077)	(0.00088)
Intercept	-27.86***	-35.68***
	(1.90)	(3.60)
n	144	62
F	48.63***	22.45
R²	0.38	0.52

OLS regression coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses
† indicates significance at $p<0.1$, * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$

Table 4.1 shows results from OLS models predicting Obama's lead in the Gallup

poll with the Dow Jones numbers, as well as two days worth of lagged closing values.

The first column is for the entire data set and the second is restricted to dates after

September 1st. Because the models deal with a very small dependent variable (mean 4.3),

the coefficients are quite small. Additionally, including two lagged variables introduces a

high degree of colinearity between the predictors, so it is unsurprising that they are not

individually significant.[9] However, colinearity is not a problem because it will not affect the estimates themselves, only the standard errors. The key take away from the models is that the independent variables (the Dow Jones closing value and its lags) are jointly significant in both models, as indicated by the F-statistics. The R-squared values in Table 4.1 show the stock market is a very strong predictor of Obama's Gallup Poll lead. In the full model, the Dow values explain 38% of variance in Obama's lead, and the relationship strengthens after September 1, with the Dow explaining 52% of the variation.

The Dow also is a strong predictor of the candidate's individual numbers in the poll, though they correlate stronger with Obama's than McCain's. Table 4.2 presents models using the Dow to predict each candidate's poll numbers for the full and restricted (post-September 1) data sets. The Dow is generally more predicative of Obama's numbers than McCain's though the F-statistics are highly significant in all four models. Interestingly, the percentage of variation in Obama's numbers explained by the independent variables does not change across the full and restricted models; the R-squared value is 0.58 and 0.57 in the two models. The Dow explains eight percent of the variation in McCain's numbers through the whole campaign season. However, the relationship between the Dow and McCain's polling increases dramatically when only the latter portions of the campaign are considered, with the R-squared value increasing to 0.48.

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[9] Models with just one of the independent variables are all highly significant.

Table 4.2 – Predicting Obama and McCain's Gallup Poll Numbers

	Obama		McCain	
	Entire Campaign	After Sept. 1	Entire Campaign	After Sept. 1
Dow Jones Industrial Average	-0.00064 (0.00050)	-0.00064 (0.00058)	0.00036 (0.00052)	0.00118* (0.00054)
Lag – One Day	-0.00083 (0.00057)	-0.00066 (0.00063)	0.00001 (0.00064)	0.00009 (0.00056)
Lag – Two Days	-0.00022 (0.00048)	-0.00036 (0.00053)	0.00009 (0.00043)	0.00014 (0.00041)
Intercept	-65.94*** (1.19)	-65.81*** (1.83)	38.08*** (0.93)	29.33*** (1.86)
n	144	61	144	61
F	89.89***	28.44***	8.84***	17.49***
R²	0.58	0.57	0.08	0.48

OLS regression coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses
[†] indicates significance at $p<0.1$, * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$

Together, these results confirm that the relationship between the economy and the electoral preferences of the nation are closely intertwined. On the face of it, this appears to be very practical and vivid example of the public ascribing responsibility for the economic downturn. Why is it the case that Obama benefited from the economic downturn? The public presumably blamed President Bush and McCain, the Republican candidate, suffered for it. However, what remains is the question of *how* people attribute responsibility for national conditions.

Theories of motivated reasoning and the hypotheses put forward in this study argue that individuals' desire to align their party identification, issue perceptions, and

responsibility attributions to avoid crediting members of the opposite party for perceived successes or blaming copartisans for perceived failures will act as directional goals, causing people to engage in motivated reasoning when making responsibility attributions. Applying this line of reasoning to the 2008 election, I would argue that it is not just the fact that the economy sunk and everyone flocked to McCain. Instead, the dynamic is probably much more nuanced than that. Generally, Democrats experienced the economic collapse of 2008 and probably found it quite easy to blame Bush and the Republicans. Republicans, experiencing the same events, were probably more likely to believe responsibility lies outside of government or with the Democrats in Congress.

If partisans are so adept at aligning their attributions with their perceptions and party identification, as my results suggest, what accounts for the increasingly robust relationship between the Dow and the polls? Put another way, why should economic events make a difference in elections if the attributions are so strongly motivated by partisanship? Motivated reasoning can propose two possible explanations. One involves a weakening of directional motives in the larger electorate and another proposes an increase in the importance of accuracy motives. Both are consistent with theoretical expectations and both may possibly contribute to an explanation of this increasingly robust relationship between objective economic conditions and aggregate vote intention.

The first possibility is that the directional motives of the electorate are weakened as the election approaches. Those with weaker partisan attachments are less likely to engage in motivated reasoning because they have less of a psychological stake in the

outcome of the decision; that is, they will care less if their responsibility attributions conflict with their perceptions and party identification due to their weaker ties. It is worth noting that the tightening of the relationship between the Dow and the polls occurs around September, after the conventions and through Election Day, which is about the time when conventional wisdom suggests marginally-interested and disengaged citizens would begin to pay attention to political campaigns. So, if motivated reasoning is commonly occurring when partisans are making responsibility attributions, we cannot trust them to be objective. But at the same time, there should be no changes in the magnitude of the relationship between the economy and the polls over time. Therefore, changes in the *effect* of the economy on the public's electoral choices may be arising from another source: an influx of Independents and weak partisans who begin to pay closer attention to political and economic events as the election nears, and, who are less likely to engage in motivated reasoning when making responsibility attributions.

The second possibility argues that the tightening relationship can be explained by an increase in accuracy motives. Theory suggests that accountability mechanisms increase accuracy motives, and therefore reduce the likelihood of motivated reasoning occurring in the decision making process. One might consider the approaching election as one such accountability mechanism: one candidate is going to be elected based on the vote and be put in charge of the country. This *might* cause at least some people to be more objective than usual when making responsibility attributions nearer to the election, particularly given the fact that people tend to overestimate their individual impact on

electoral outcomes (e.g. Darmofal 2010). Alternatively, it cannot be overlooked that the economy was in serious danger in October 2008, and many feared a complete economic collapse. This fear could cause individuals to be more accurate in their judgments of who was responsible for conditions, as well as in judging which candidate's leadership would produce better outcomes.

Either explanation for why the relationship between the economy and the polls tightens as the election approaches is plausible and consistent with theories of the prior chapters. In all likelihood, a combination of the two possibilities might be the best explanation, with an influx of Independents and weak partisans not only lacking sufficient directional motivates to engage in overly-biased attributions, but with these individuals also likely to be more affected by a slightly-increased sense of accountability.

Indirect Attempts to Highlight the Attribution Process

Even in surveys where responsibility attributions are not explicitly probed, we see patterns that suggest that responsibility attributions are still occurring, and perhaps lie at the base of most responses concerning national conditions and how politicians handle them. The American National Election Study's (ANES) Cumulative Data File contains two questions that are asked often enough to see patterns that may appear and perhaps allow for responsibility attributions for national conditions to affect results even though they are not measured directly. The first is the question, "*Do you approve or disapprove of President _____'s handling of the economy?*" which was asked every two years

from 1984-2008. Other issues have been included in the ANES during various years, such as issue approval for foreign affairs, military events, environmental policy, and health care, though these other issues are not asked consistently enough to conclude that any patterns might be occurring. The second question is the commonly-used retrospective and sociotropic economic perception question, "*Would you say that over the past year the nation's economy has gotten better, stayed the same, or gotten worse?*" The ANES included this question in each survey from 1980-2008.

This section examines these questions, comparing their responses to the party identification of the respondents and objective economic data to determine if patterns imply that responsibility attributions are being made by the electorate when answering questions regarding national conditions. The results show that it does indeed appear that individuals do ascribe responsibility when answering questions about economic approval and researchers would be better served by including attribution questions in such surveys.

Aggregate Results

Table 4.3 shows the results for the presidential economic issue approval question, broken down by party identification.[10] Looking over the table, one can see that in every year, in-party members approve of the President's handling of the economy more than out-party members. For instance, in 1984, a Republican was in office and gained the support of 91 percent of Republicans but only 31 percent of Democrats. Independents

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[10] Partisans include Independent-leaners.

Table 4.3 - Partisan Approval Gaps in Presidential Issue Approval

Year	Democrats Approving	Independents Approving	Republicans Approving	Partisan Gap
1984	30.5%	62.0	90.6	**60.1**
1986	39.8	61.6	84.8	**45.0**
1988	27.2	56.1	85.5	**58.3**
1990	32.5	41.1	65.7	**33.2**
1992	6.7	15.8	48.4	**41.7**
1994	76.1	52.0	25.5	**50.6**
1996	88.5	60.2	41.7	**46.8**
1998	95.8	81.7	69.8	**26.0**
2000	93.4	73.7	58.9	**34.5**
2002	30.6	52.9	85.5	**54.9**
2004	11.6	34.5	83.4	**71.8**
2006	16.5	37.9	77.4	**60.9**
2008	5.5	16.4	44.0	**38.5**

Cell values are the percentage of individuals approving of the President's handling of the economy. The partisan columns include Independent-leaning partisans. The partisan gap is the difference between in-party and out-party support.

fell in-between, with 62 percent approving. However, in 2000, a Democrat was in office, and 94 percent of Democrats approved of his handling of the economy, but only 59 percent of Republicans did so. This is not surprising, given the properties of party identification. However, what *is* interesting, is that the differences between in-party and out-party support fluctuates wildly across elections. I call this difference the "partisan gap" in economic approval. For example, in 1984, the gap is 60.1 points, which is equivalent to the percentage of Republican support (90.6) minus the percentage of

Democratic support (30.5). The partisan gap varies from a low of 26 points in 1998 to a

high of 72 points in 2004. Importantly, there does not appear to be a time trend in the

figure, meaning that it is not just the case that partisans are becoming more or less

polarized. Instead, I suggest that the differences in the partisan gap are probably the

results of varying responsibility attributions across the partisan groups.

Because attributions were not measured, it is difficult to directly test that

hypothesis, though including objective economic data does tell a bit of the story. Figure

4.2 compares each year's partisan approval gap to the yearly percentage change in

November unemployment with a line of best fit. Keep in mind that increases in this

variable generally correspond to a weakening economy (because more people are

unemployed than last year). Figure 4.3 does a similar thing, but this time compares the

partisan gaps to the yearly percentage change in third-quarter RGDP; increases in this

variable suggest a strengthening economy. The regression lines show that as the

economy objectively improves the partisan gap between in-party and out-party members

approving of the President's handling of the economy tends to increase.

Figure 4.2 – Economic Job Approval Gap and Unemployment

Figure 4.3 – Economic Job Approval Gap and Real GDP

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Since there are only 13 data points, it is not too surprising that the relationships are not significant, though the OLS coefficient on unemployment and the partisan gaps approach statistical significance ($p<0.13$); the RGDP coefficient is insignificant at $p<0.5$. In fact, the arguments of this study regarding responsibility attributions suggest that this question would not produce significant results. The question itself, "Do you approve or disapprove of the President's handling of the economy?' implies that the survey is asking about a specific President's handling of a situation and not its causes or effects. In a sense, the question bypasses primary and immediate responsibility attributions altogether and only a prospective attribution is possible. In other words, because the question only asks about how the President is addressing existing economic conditions, it ignores the question of who is responsible for those conditions, either in the long- or short-term. For example, one might approve of a President's handling of an economic situation but view another person as entirely responsible for current conditions. Such would be the case if a person believed that the business community was responsible for the current poor economic conditions but, at the same time, thought that the President was doing the best he can. Only prospective attributions are potentially important because one may take into account how a current president is handling the economy when considering if he is prospectively responsible for future conditions.

Another factor considered by this study is the assignment of responsibility during a governmental transition. One would expect the first off-year election to be important

when it comes to responsibility attributions because there can be a great deal of debate over how much the current economic situation is caused by the incumbent president, as opposed to the former. It has already been discussed that, particularly when it comes to the economy, a presidential administration's policies can have real and lasting effects long after they leave office, and the results in Chapter Five confirm that the public recognizes this. However, an issue approval question like this one does not bring the former officeholder into play because it specifically restricts the respondents to consider only the current president. There is no reason to suspect that partisan gaps in the first off-year election will be any different than the other elections, and indeed, this is true. The partisan gaps in economic approval in 1990, 1994, and 2002 are not particularly unique, at least as far as we can tell with three data points. In 1990, the gap was low, just 33 points, and the economy was doing poorly. In 1994 and 2002, the gap was just above average, 51 and 56 points, respectively, though the economy was quite positive in 1994 but stagnant in 2002. There is no evidence that the partisan gap in economic issue approval varies over the course of an administration.

Instead, the retrospective economic perception question is more suited for examining possible responsibility attributions. That question is quite ambiguous about the implications of responses to the question and no individuals are mentioned in it. For instance, when people are asked if the economy is getting better or worse, they might not only think about the direct question itself, but also about the consequences of that

response; one might think, "If I say the economy is good, what does that imply about the President's administration?"

Table 4.4 – Partisan Gaps in the Retrospective Economic Perception Questions

Year	Economy has gotten better	Economy has gotten worse
1980	1.7%	11.7
1982	12.9	24.7
1984	40.3	32.5
1986	16.3	15.7
1988	20.9	23.4
1990	0.2	1.7
1992	5.8	23.9
1994	9.8	9.1
1996	24.9	9.6
1998	13.2	9.9
2000	27.2	10.3
2002	4.0	20.3
2004	37.0	48.3
2006	35.7	33.0
2008	2.2	5.7

Cell values are the percentage-point differences between in-party and out-party members who think the economy has gotten better or worse over the past year.

Table 4.4 presents the partisan gaps present for responses to the retrospective economic perception question, with one column being the percentage-point difference between in-party and out-party members who think the economy has gotten better and the other being the percentage-point difference in out-party and in-party members who think

the economy has gotten worse. Similar to the economic approval question, in each instance, in-party members are more likely than out-party members to think the economy has gotten better and out-party members are more likely than in-party members to think the economy has gotten worse. Again, the partisan gaps vary greatly from election to election and there does not appear to be a uniform partisan effect. In the "better" column, the partisan gap ranges from almost nothing in 1990 to as high as 40 points in 1984. The "worse" column has a wider range, from 1.7 points in 1990 to 48 points in 2004.

Figures 4.4 and 4.5 repeat the previous analysis, showing the regression of the yearly partisan gap among those who thought the economy had gotten better in the previous year on the yearly percentage change in unemployment and the nation's third quarter real gross domestic product. This time, there is no confusion about the relationship between the economic variables with the partisan gaps. The relationship is statistically significant at $p<0.01$ in the unemployment graph and at $p<0.1$ in the RGDP graph. In both cases, as the economy gets better, there are larger partisan gaps, with in-party members being much more likely to say the economy has improved than out-party members.

Figure 4.4 – Retrospective Economic Perceptions and Unemployment

Figure 4.5 – Retrospective Economic Perceptions and Real GDP

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But what accounts for these significant slopes? I argue that the retrospective economic perception question, unlike the job approval question, leaves the attribution of responsibility ambiguous; individuals may still consider the implications of their response in terms of what it means they are saying about the politicians in power, and, they are also given a wider latitude to interpret the causes of the economic situation, perhaps ascribing responsibility to different targets if they see the economy doing negatively than if it is positive. Visually, the graphs appear to be curvilinear; the partisan gaps decrease dramatically as the economy becomes very bad, though such a relationship is impossible to accurately test with such few data points.

One explanation for the relationship is that as the economy gets really bad (i.e. 1980, 1982, 2008), it becomes hard for presidential copartisans to say that the economy is doing well, so their perceptions start to sink to the levels of the out-party, though they may see responsibility lying outside of the White House. As the economy gets better, in-party members start to increase their positive perceptions. Out-party members, on the other hand, are never going to say, at least in large numbers, that the economy is doing great because that may imply that the opposite party deserves the credit; they are always going to find something to complain about or think that things could be even better.

To test this storyline, I split up the 15 election years into five groups by the yearly change in unemployment in Table 4.5. The table shows the average percentage of in-party and out-party members perceiving a better economy in the past year within each of

the three categories. The first row shows that in the worst years (with high increases of

unemployment), it is very difficult for the President's copartisans to admit that things

have changed for the better; only 7.8 percent do so, compared to 3.6 percent of out-party

members. This difference is not significant. However, as the economy becomes average

(the middle five years) or even very good (the five best years), Table 4.5 shows that the

percentage of in-party members with positive perceptions of improvement increase

dramatically, to 40 and 48 percent, respectively.

Table 4.5 – Partisan Differences by Unemployment Statistics

Unemployment Split	Mean Percentage with Positive Retrospective Economic Evaluation		p-value
	In-Party	Out-Party	
Five worst years	7.80	3.58	0.206
Middle five years	39.86	22.42	0.139
Five best years	48.06	19.22	0.004
Yearly average	31.91	15.07	0.016

The out-party column tells a different story. There is an increase to 22 percent in the

middle five years, which is still much lower than in-party members, but no further

increase in the five best years. In fact, the percentage even declines slightly, to 19

percent. Comparing the means across the in- and out-party columns, there is no

significant difference in the percentage of people who say the economy has gotten better

in the past year when the economy is poor or average. However, in the five best years,

when the economy is doing well, a higher proportion of the in-party says the economy is doing better ($p<0.01$). These findings are consistent with the speculation that the out-party members will be very cautious of saying the economy is good when their party is not in power because of the responsibility attribution that such an opinion may imply.

The final suggestion of responsibility attributions in this data ties to the assignment of responsibility during a governmental transition. It is apparent from Figure 4.6 that the four off-year elections in an administration's first term generally produce lower partisan gaps than typical years (i.e. 1982, 1994, 1990, and 2002). Importantly, this generalization is present in a wide range of economic conditions; the economy in 1994 was quite good, 1982 was poor, and 1990 and 2002 were average. One explanation for this pattern that is consistent with the arguments of this study is that there is a much greater sense of confusion regarding who should be credited or blamed for economic conditions in those years – the incumbent or former president. Because of this confusion, there may be a lower importance attached to the directional goal of aligning one's perception with their party identification and responsibility attributions, and, as a result, people may approach the perception question more honestly, causing the lower partisan gaps. Alternatively, people may be motivated to assume that their co-partisan officeholder (former or incumbent) is responsible for good economic conditions and members of the opposite party or nongovernmental targets are responsible for poor conditions.

Retrospective Perceptions and Unemployment

Figure 4.6 – Retrospective Economic Perceptions and Unemployment

Whichever explanation is correct, either honesty or partisan rationalizations, I argue that this confusion over who is actually responsible for the economic conditions of the prior year in the first off-year election of a new administration is possibly the explanation for these smaller partisan gaps in issue perceptions. As an administration's time in office increases, it is usually harder to ascribe responsibility to the former officeholder. Theory suggests that partisans will then begin to rationalize their opinions by changing their attribution targets or economic perceptions. The remainder of this study will help address these issues by measuring responsibility attributions directly and including both the incumbent and former president as response options.

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Individual-level Analysis

Table 4.6 shows the percentage of respondents who thought that the national economy had gotten better and worse in the past year for each year, as well as the overall average. By and large, individuals appear to have a generally negative view of retrospective conditions, with only 20 percent believing conditions got better to the 49 percent who thought conditions had worsened. The yearly totals, however, show a great

Table 4.6 - Retrospective Economic Perceptions

	Better	Worse
1980	3.7	83.2
1982	11.6	69.5
1984	40.7	23.8
1986	22.5	34.7
1988	18.0	31.2
1990	3.4	74.2
1992	4.6	72.3
1994	35.3	26.4
1996	39.0	16.6
1998	46.6	14.9
2000	38.7	16.9
2002	4.6	74.0
2004	22.9	45.2
2006	-	-
2008	2.5	88.9
Average	20.2	49.0

deal of variation in this figure.   In some years, the number is quite low, under five

percent (1980, 1990, 1992, 2002, 2008). All of these were times of poor objective

economic conditions, so it is not a surprise to see that retrospective economic perceptions

correlate with the yearly percentage change in unemployment and RGDP at 0.47 and

0.44, respectively.

Table 4.7 - Approval of President's handling of the Economy by Year

	Approve	Disapprove
1984	58.2	41.8
1986	58.9	41.1
1988	54.0	46.0
1990	43.3	56.7
1992	20.7	79.3
1994	53.3	47.7
1996	66.2	33.8
1998	84.9	16.2
2000	77.1	23.0
2002	55.9	44.1
2004	41.7	58.3
2006	-	-
2008	3.7	96.3
Average	50.7	49.3

Table 4.7 shows the percentage of individuals approving and disapproving of the

way the President is handling the economy for each election year. Like with the

perception question, there is a great deal of variation over the years, though the responses

average out at about 50 percent. There is a high in economic approval in 1998 (85

percent) and a low in 2002 (4 percent), which is a full 16 points lower than 1992, the second-lowest low. The economic approval question also correlates with the objective economic indicators, but not as highly as they did with the economic perceptions (0.23 for unemployment and 0.19 for RGDP).

The next step is to approach this data with responsibility attributions in mind to see if any patterns emerge with respect to whether individuals approve or disapprove of the President's handling of the economy based on the arguments put forth in this study. For one, I would expect that individuals who are of the President's party would be more likely to approve of his handling of the economy. This hypothesis is uncontroversial, given the consensus around the importance of partisanship in decision making. I would also expect economic perceptions to affect approval as well, not just with the expectation that positive perceptions will lead to more approval, but also expecting perceptions to interact with in-party status. The *effect* of perceptions on approval is likely to decrease among in-party members as perceptions increase. In-party members are likely to increase their issue approval of their copartisan President as perceptions improve, though there is an upper-ceiling on the likelihood of approval, and in-party members will probably approach that ceiling at lower perception levels than out-party members. Conversely, I imagine that it will take very positive perceptions for out-party members to voice their approval for the President's handling of the economy, so I hypothesize that perceptions will increase in their predicative value as perceptions increase. In other words, in-party status should be a better predictor of economic issue approval at lower perception levels.

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In addition to perceptions and in-party status as predictors, one would expect the actual economic performance of the nation to predict approval. The yearly percentage change in November unemployment and the percentage change in the third quarter Real Gross Domestic Product are also included in the model.

Table 4.8 presents the logistic regression that predicts whether or not an individual approves of the President's handling of the economy.[11] Given the large sample size, it is not surprising that all of the variables are statistically significant, so the substantive effects of the variables must be examined. First, the interaction between being an in-party member and one's retrospective economic perception is statistically significant and the marginal effect of being an in-party member is significant at all levels of perceptions (Figure 4.7), though, as predicted, the marginal effect declines as issue perceptions increase.

Table 4.8 – Predicting Approval of the President's Handling of the Economy

	Coefficient	Standard Error
In-Party x Retrospective Perception	-0.08*	0.04
Retrospective Perception	0.86***	0.03
In-Party Member	2.19***	0.14
Change in Unemployment	-0.01***	0.00
Change in RGDP	-0.15***	0.02
Intercept	-2.53***	0.12
n	18,654	

Logistic Regression. DV: 1= Approves, 0= Disapproves; *** indicates $p<0.001$, * $p<0.05$.

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[11] The model uses post-stratified weighting (VCF0009a) because demographic control variables are not used.

Figure 4.7 –Marginal Effect of Party Status on Economic Issue Approval

The interactive effect is best illustrated using a graph of the predicted probability of approving of the President's handling of economy. The solid blue line in Figure 4.8 is the estimated probability of approval for in-party members along with a 95% confidence interval. The dashed red line corresponds to the prediction for out-party members. As expected, both lines increase from right to left, indicating that the likelihood of approving of the President's handling increases as one's economic evaluation increases. The predicted probability increases from 0.61 to 0.97 among in-party members and from 0.16 to 0.86 among out-party members. Additionally, at each perception level, in-party members are more likely to approve than out-party members. The interactive effect is evident by the fact that the two lines are not parallel; the slope of the out-party curve is

greater than the slope of the in-party curve. Finally, I hypothesized that the effect of perceptions would be greatest at lower perception levels among in-party members and at higher perception levels for out-party members. The predicted probability graph bears this out with regards to the in-party, but not the out-party. Among in-party members, there is a 27 point difference in the predicted probability of those who think the economy did not change and those who thought it got much worse, but only a 9 point difference between those who thought things were much better and those who did not see a change. The effect of perceptions on the approval of out-party members, however, is fairly consistent across the scale; there is a 36 point increase in the predicted probability when moving from "much worse" to "same" on the scale and a 34 point increase from "same" to "much better."

The objective economic indicators, while statistically significant, are not as important as predictors of the economic approval when compared to party membership and subjective retrospective perceptions. For an in-party member who subjectively thought the economy had not changed it the previous year, changing the percentage change in yearly unemployment from its minimum to its maximum (basically comparing 1984 with 2008) produces just a 0.10 change in the predicted probability of approving of the President's handling of the economy. Adjusting the annual percentage change in RGDP from its minimum (1982) to its maximum (1984) produces a much larger 0.31 increase in the predicted probability, though this increase is still less than what is observed in the party membership and perception variables.

Figure 4.8 – Predicted Probability of Approval of President's Handling of the Economy

Discussion

The analyses of this chapter show how individuals often pattern their opinions in a way which suggests that they are assigning responsibility for national conditions. However, because responsibility attributions are rarely asked about directly, researchers are left with the practically impossible task of attempting to discern what variation in behaviors and opinions are the result of responsibility attributions and what variation is

independent of accountability. Despite the fact that so much variation is observed that is consistent with the theories presented in Chapter 2, the possibility still remains that attributions are irrelevant to the attitudes like vote intention, presidential issue approval, and economic perceptions. The remainder of this study will determine how attributions are made and assess their effects on attitudes and behavior.

The analysis of the relationship between the stock market and the polls in the 2008 election, while correlational, clearly implies that the economy had some effect on the polling. The stock market crashed and Obama clearly benefitted. However, this simple narrative cannot answer the question of how the public decided where the blame lied or even why John McCain was seemingly punished for events that many could argue was beyond his personal control. Additionally, the data cannot answer whether one type of attribution is more important than others. For instance, one may think that primary responsibility attributions were a key in this relationship, because people may have been blaming President Bush and the Republicans for the economic downturn, which would explain why Obama benefited after the stock market decline. However, one may also consider prospective attributions to be the key; it is possible that individuals believed that the incoming president would be responsible for turning the economy around and preferred Obama's policy proposals to McCain's. To answer such questions, researchers need to begin asking about whom individuals credit and blame for national conditions so such speculation can be replaced with concrete evidence.

The ANES Cumulative Data File also raised questions regarding the attribution process, but was limited by the length of the questions' time series and the fact that attributions were not directly measured. Instead, researchers hoping to get a sense of responsibility's role in why people have certain opinions regarding politicians and national conditions are forced to rely on indirect evidence. The aggregate analysis attempted to find evidence of responsibility attributions by examining the year-to-year difference across party lines in the economic issue approval and economic perception questions. The partisan differences are not significantly related to objective economic indicators when predicting the economic approval question, but are significantly related when predicting perceptions. The reasoning put forth is that the approval question restricts opinions to a specific president's handling of the economy and is silent on the matter of whether that president is causally responsible for conditions in the long- or short-term. Doing so ignores primary and immediate responsibility attributions and only allows prospective attributions to influence the opinion.

The perception question, however, leaves the attribution of responsibility ambiguous. When answering the perception question, individuals are free to consider what not only their opinion of how the economy has changed, but also who is responsible for it and what their response might imply about the president. In a vacuum, one would expect objective economic indicators to mirror perceptions, but that is not what is found. Instead, as the economy improves, the gap between the in-party and out-party's perceptions widen. Sorting the years by unemployment showed that the retrospective

evaluation of those in the in-party were always higher than the out-party, but the gap between the perceptions increased because the out-party perceptions leveled off while the in-party perceptions continued to rise as unemployment improved. One explanation for this is that in-party members perceive a positive economy because their copartisan is in office and may presumably get the credit for it while out-party members are hesitant to say that the economy is doing well under a president of the opposite party because they do not want to associate the incumbent president with a positive economy.

Even though there are few cases, a striking pattern was found when looking at the first off-year elections after a new president is in office. Confusion over primary and immediate responsibility would be greatest earlier in a president's term because the former president's policies could have a strong and lasting impact on economic events, long after the transition takes place. Indeed, partisan differences are noticeably lower in the first off-year election for the economic perception question but not for the economic approval question. This, I argue, is because the approval question is explicitly about the performance of a partisan politician while the perception question asks respondents merely to judge the economy, without reference to who is in office. Therefore, if confusion exists over who is responsible for conditions, whether positive or negative, people may approach the question with less bias in their responses or simply credit copartisan politicians for positive economic situations and blame politicians of the opposite party for negative situations. Importantly, this effect is observed in both positive, negative, and average economic conditions. I believe that this pattern,

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admittedly based on a small sample, is evidence to suggest the importance of the study of responsibility attributions in governmental transitions.

The individual-level analysis of the ANES Cumulative Data File illustrates that when it comes to predicting whether a person approves of the President's handling of the economy or not, objective measures of the economy matter, but not as much as subjective economic perceptions or the party affiliations of the individual and President. Economic perceptions and party identification do interact, with party status being more important at negative perception levels than positive ones. The predicted probability analysis suggests that there is a large jump in issue approval among the President's copartisans as economic perceptions move from very poor to moderate, but the likelihood of an individual approving tends to level off somewhat as perceptions approach the higher levels. Meanwhile, the effect of perceptions of out-party members is fairly consistent across the scale. This implies that responsibility attributions are playing a role in the respondents' attitudes toward the approval of the President's handling of the economy. Out-party members are perhaps adjusting their responsibility attributions with regard to their perceptions; if the economy is poor, they say that it is poor, blame the president of the opposite party, and disapprove of his handling of it. However, if the economy is positive, they will say so, but might assign credit to their copartisans in Congress or a target outside of government and effect of perceptions on presidential issue approval remains constant. At the same time, the in-party members are perhaps doing the same thing, but are more likely to see the President as responsible as perceptions increase to

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moderate levels, and, therefore, the effect of increasingly positive perceptions on approval declines at the higher end of the scale because they are already more likely to approve of his handling at lower levels, so there is less of a potential for an increased effect at the higher ones.

Despite the totality of this evidence, we must keep in mind that these are only broad patterns. It is difficult to firmly conclude that responsibility attributions are the reason why this patterned variation is seen. When analyzing patterns across election years, the data only dates back into the 1980s and, for all of the analyses, there is a great deal of uncertainty in measurement because responsibility attributions are not directly measured. However, the patterns that are observed are consistent with the assertions that motivated reasoning occurs in the attribution process, party identification contributes as a directional motivation, and attributions then affect other commonly analyzed variables in turn.

Direct questions about which individuals and groups citizens view as responsible for conditions are need to avoid such indirect speculation concerning the role of responsibility attributions in the political process. Doing so would reduce the uncertainty and lead to a clearer picture of how responsibility is assessed and its effects. However, as previous research has shown, i.e. Iyengar (1989), responsibility can take on a variety of meanings, and different types of responsibility attributions are possible. This study measures three types of responsibility attributions, *primary, immediate,* and *prospective*, to help determine whether certain attributions have greater effects on behaviors. Some

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evidence of this was seen in this chapter, when it was argued that the presidential

economic approval question restricted the influence of responsibility judgments largely to

prospective attributions (presumably, individuals are judging the President's handling of

the issue and will view his actions as having an effect on future outcomes, though the

question does not require the respondent to make an attribution about whether the

President is a primary or immediate cause of conditions).

The remainder of this study will address these deficiencies present in the

preceding analysis. In a scientific survey, responsibility attributions are directly

measured in multiple ways and the direct influence of attributions is examined. By

simply adding attribution questions to a survey battery, the cumbersome and imprecise

estimation of the effects of attributions can be avoided and the results will be able to

show what types of responsibility attributions are most important to political behavior.

Additionally, the inclusion of both the incumbent and former president in the

response set allows, for the first time, an in-depth study of how individuals determine

responsibility for national conditions after a transition of power. It was shown with the

aggregate analysis that more confusion over responsibility for conditions might exist in

the first off-year election, as evidenced by the smaller partisan differences in the

economic perception question. The survey will address this possibility head-on and see

whether individuals are at all likely to see the former president responsible for conditions

a year and a half after he leaves office.

Chapter 5 - The Responsibility Attributions Survey and
Dichotomous Responsibility Attributions

The Responsibility Attribution Survey

The Responsibility Attributions Survey was mailed to 2,500 registered voters in

Franklin County, OH in the summer of 2010. Of these, 278 were returned by the postal

service for having incorrect or out-of-date addresses and 439 responses were received, for

a response rate of 19.8%.[12] The primary purpose of the survey was to test the relevance

of the three types of responsibility proposed in Chapter 2 to test whether individuals

engage in motivated reasoning by aligning their responsibility attributions based on their

partisan leanings and issue perceptions. To briefly summarize, the three types of

responsibility attributions proposed are: *primary responsibility* (long-term causal

responsibility)*, immediate responsibility* (short-term causal responsibility)*, and*

prospective responsibility (expected responsibility for future outcomes).

Responsibility Attributions

Responsibility attributions are measured in two ways for this survey. First,

respondents were presented with a group of seven actors and asked how much

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[12] Most of the survey's funding came from a grant from The Ohio State University Graduate School.

responsibility each actors has in affecting each of the two issues (the economy and the Iraq War), for each of the three attribution types. The scale ranges from zero (no responsibility) to six (full responsibility). The exact wording of these questions was discussed more deeply in Chapter 3. The seven actors included President Bush, President Obama, Congressional Democrats, and Congressional Republicans for both issues' questions. For the economic questions only, the banking industry, big business, and the American people were also included as attribution targets. For the Iraq War questions only, foreign governments, the U.S. military and its commanders, and terrorist groups were also included.

Because so many of the hypotheses deal with the comparison of responsibility across former and current officeholders, in addition to the ordinal zero through six scale of responsibility, respondents were explicitly asked whether they viewed President Bush or President Obama as more responsible for each attribution type across both issues. This strategy was employed to force respondents to make a direct comparison between former and current officeholders, as well as to break "ties" in the ordinal assignment of responsibility.

Issue Perceptions

As discussed in Chapter 3, the use of the three attribution types requires the measurement of issue perceptions relating to each type. For this reason, respondents were asked three questions measuring issue perceptions for national economic conditions,

personal finances, and conditions of the Iraq War. Each response was given on a numerical scale ranging from "0 – Much Worse" to "6 – Much Better" with "Same" written in the middle.

<p style="text-align:center">Distinguishing the Attribution Types</p>

The first question to ask is whether or not there is any value in breaking up responsibility attributions in this manner. I show the theoretical value in making these distinctions in Chapter 2, however, the question remains whether individuals' can and do make distinctions between determining who is responsible for long-term, short-term, and prospective national conditions. Table 5.1 shows the base results for the questions asking who the respondents saw most responsible, Bush or Obama, for each attribution type. Looking first as the economy, respondents as a whole saw President Bush as slightly more primarily responsible than President Obama, 55.5 to 44.5 percent. Looking at immediate responsibility, the electorate mostly sees President Obama as more responsible (60.6 percent), though a sizeable 39.4 percent still see President Bush as having the greater effect on current economic conditions. For prospective responsibility, the voters overwhelmingly see President Obama as more responsible for future conditions than the former president, with only 7.6 percent thinking that President Bush's influence over future outcomes will be greater than that of President Obama. In terms of statistical significance, the null hypothesis of there being no difference in the assignment of responsibility to either President Bush or President Obama can be rejected at $p<0.05$.

Furthermore, there are significantly significant differences in the assignment of economic responsibility for each possible comparison (primary / immediate, primary / prospective, and immediate / prospective; p<0.001).

Table 5.1 - Responsibility Attributions

	President Bush	President Obama
National Economic Attributions		
Primary Responsibility	55.5%	44.5
Immediate Responsibility	39.4	60.6
Prospective Responsibility	7.6	92.4
Iraq War Attributions		
Primary Responsibility	52.9	47.1
Immediate Responsibility	34.2	65.8
Prospective Responsibility	5.4	94.6

The results for all three Iraq War attribution types are strikingly similar, though President Obama is seen as slightly more responsible in all three. Once again, Bush is seen as slightly more responsible than Obama for fundamental changes in the issue since 2007 (53 to 47 percent), though this difference is not statistically significant (p<0.25). Obama is seen as more responsible for current Iraq War conditions by almost a two-to-one margin, though Bush's influence is clearly recognizable. Finally, only 5.4 percent of respondents believe that President Bush is going to be more responsible than President Obama for the war's conditions in one year. There are statistically significant differences

in the assignment of immediate and prospective responsibility for Iraq War conditions and across all possible bivariate comparisons of the three attributions (p<0.001).

I can only speculate as to why Obama is seen as slightly more responsible for the Iraq War rather than the economy, compared to Bush. Perhaps the Iraq War's complex problems can be simplified much easier than the economy's, making it much easier to see the current president as more responsible than the former. For instance, with the economy, the average citizen might not know a great deal about *why* the economy is poor, or *what* should be done about it, making the assignment of responsibility slightly more difficult than an anti-war individual merely wishing for the President to end the war, or a pro-war individual being afraid that Obama's planned withdrawal will put the country at risk. On a related point, Obama was quite clear about his opinions regarding the war during the campaign, repeatedly noting how he opposed the war from the start and will end it during his presidency. The steps he promised to take to turn around the economy, however, were certainly more complicated and less reducible. I do not think it is a stretch to say that perhaps this would account for the minor differences we see across the two issues.

Variation across the responsibility types, however, does not provide insight into how *individuals* switch their attributions across the three types. To approach this question, I present cross tabulations between the responses of individuals to the questions asking who is more responsible for issues across the three attribution types. Table 5.2

Table 5.2 - Frequencies across Attribution Types

	National Economic Conditions					Iraq War Conditions		
	Immediate					*Immediate*		
		Bush	Obama	Total			Bush	Obama	Total
Primary — Bush	123	84	207	Primary — Bush	87	110	197
	59.42%	40.58	100		44.16	55.84	100
Primary — Obama	25	142	167	Primary — Obama	37	138	175
	14.97	85.03	100		21.14	78.86	100
Total	148	226	374	Total	124	248	372
	39.57	60.43	100		33.33	66.67	100
	Prospective				*Prospective*		
	Bush	Obama	Total		Bush	Obama	Total
Primary — Bush	25	184	209	Primary — Bush	14	183	197
	11.96	88.04	100		7.11	92.89	100
Primary — Obama	5	164	169	Primary — Obama	6	170	176
	2.96	97.04	100		3.14	96.59	100
Total	30	348	378	Total	20	353	373
	7.94	92.06	100		5.36	94.64	100
	Prospective				*Prospective*		
	Bush	Obama	Total		Bush	Obama	Total
Immediate — Bush	25	127	152	Immediate — Bush	17	112	129
	16.45	83.55	100		13.18	86.82	100
Immediate — Obama	5	229	234	Immediate — Obama	3	247	250
	2.14	97.86	100		1.2	98.80	100
Total	30	356	386	Total	20	359	379
	7.77	92.23	100		5.28	94.72	100

shows these, and is broken up into six panels, comparing responses across attribution

types for both issues, the national economy and the Iraq War. The two top panels

compare who individuals viewed as more responsible for "fundamental changes in the

(national economy/Iraq War) since the beginning of 2007" and who they viewed as more

responsible for the "current conditions." Clearly, the electorate possesses the ability to distinguish between primary and immediate responsibility, based on the differing responses across the types. Using the row percentages displayed below the frequencies in each cell, it is shown that among those who saw President Bush as responsible for long-term economic conditions, 41 percent of respondents switched their attribution to President Obama when asked strictly about current conditions. A similar pattern occurs when asking about Iraq War conditions, which 56 percent of those ascribing primary responsibility to Bush switching their immediate attribution to Obama. Two interesting groups are the 25 (national economy) and 37 (Iraq War) respondents who make a primary responsibility attribution to Obama, but an immediate attribution to Bush. I presume that these few individuals see Obama as having done more than Bush to change issue conditions since 2007, but still see Bush as having a greater impact over current conditions.

Comparing primary responsibility attributions to prospective ones produces even sharper changes in who is seen as responsible, which is not entirely surprising, given that primary responsibility concerns long-term accountability and prospective responsibility asks who is more responsible for issue conditions "one year from now." As shown in the second row of tables, when it comes to the economy, 88 percent of respondents who ascribed primary responsibility to Bush switched to Obama when doling out prospective responsibility. For Iraq, this figure was an even higher 93 percent. The contrast between immediate and prospective responsibility is also just as sharp, with 84 and 87 percent of

individuals switching their attributions from Bush to Obama on the economy and Iraq War, respectively. For both issues, well over 90 percent of respondents viewed current-President Obama as more responsible for future issue outcomes than former-President Bush.

It is important to note that the number of individuals switching their responsibility attributions across types represents the *lowest* percentage of voters capable of making such distinctions. Many more individuals surely understand these differences but actually see the same person as responsible across both types. For example, many people could easily see Obama as responsible for national economic conditions in a primary, immediate, and prospective sense, and it would be impossible to show their understanding of the differences across these attribution types. Nevertheless, the sheer numbers of individuals who do indeed switch their attributions show the usefulness of the proposed trichotomy and its relevance in how individuals assess responsibility for national conditions.

Hypotheses

To briefly recount the main hypotheses discussed earlier in Chapter 2, theories of motivated reasoning suggest that individuals bias their reasoning in the presence of directional goals, as opposed to accuracy goals (Kunda 1990). One source of these directional goals is partisanship, which leads to the expectation that individuals, if they are going to use motivated reasoning when assigning credit or blame for national issues,

will do so based on their party identification. However, it is not possible to say for sure whether someone of a certain party will be more likely to attribute responsibility to one individual over another without also knowing how that individual perceives that issue. Simply put, motivated reasoning theories lead to the expectations that individuals with positive issue perceptions will credit their copartisans and individuals with negative issue perceptions will blame someone outside of their party.

Models

For the first set of analysis, the dependent variable is a dummy that takes a value of one if the respondent saw President Obama more responsible than President Bush and zero if Bush is seen as more responsible. Logistic regression is used to individually test the hypotheses for all three attribution types for both issues. The following model is used to test the hypotheses:

Economic Attribution = β_0 + β(Party Identification X Issue Perception) + β(Party Identification) + β(Issue Perception) + β(Sex) + β(Minority) + β(Married/Widowed) + β(Age) + β(Education) + β(Income) + β(Religiosity) + β(Interest) + β(Government Trust) + β(Equal Opportunity Value) + β(Individualism Value) + β(Free Enterprise Value) + β(Knowledge) + β(Presidential Control) + β(Economic Effect)

Iraq War Attribution = β_0 + β(Party Identification X Issue Perception) + β(Party Identification) + β(Issue Perception) + β(Sex) + β(Minority) + β(Married/Widowed) + β(Age) + β(Education) + β(Income) + β(Religiosity) + β(Interest) + β(Government Trust) + β(Equal Opportunity Value) + β(Individualism Value) + β(Free Enterprise Value) + β(Knowledge) + β(Presidential Control)

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The key variable of interest is an interaction between an individuals' party identification and their perception of the issue. Issue perceptions are measured on a seven-point scale from "much better" to "much worse" and party identification is measured on seven-point scale from "Strongly Democratic" to "Strongly Republican."

On their own, party identification and perceptions of conditions provide little predictive power because motivated reasoning processes predict the response of a partisan's responsibility attribution to vary based on whether perceptions are positive or negative. For instance, predicting the attribution of a Republican or a Democrat is impossible if we don't know anything about how he or she views the economy. Using aggregate measures, we could assume that most people have negative economic perceptions, but this is certainly not a universal opinion, and would clearly be less effective as perceptions become less one-sided. Likewise, knowing only an individual's issue perception is similarly inadequate; someone with positive economic perceptions may ascribe responsibility differently if he were a Republican than if he were a Democrat. Thus, since both party identification and issue perceptions are so intertwined in the attribution process, an interaction variable in necessary.

Simply put, I expect the influence of issue perceptions to be moderated by party identification. As individuals become more Republican and have a better perception of the issue, we would expect them to give credit to someone in their own party: President Bush. As an individual becomes more Republican, but has a more negative view of the issue, we expect them to blame someone who does not belong to their party: President

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Obama. Therefore, the interaction between party identification and issue perception is expected to be negative in all models.

Furthermore, many control variables are included in the models. Each control variable is related to responsibility attributions in theory; indeed, each variable has a statistically significant bivariate correlation with one or more of the attributions. To briefly discuss the remaining variables, *female* takes on a value of zero for men and one for women. *Minority* is a dummy indicating a respondent that is not a non-Hispanic Caucasian. *Marital status* takes on a value of one for those who are married and widowed and takes on a zero for single, divorced, and separated respondents. *Age* is measured in years. *Education* levels range from one to six, with values for High School/GED or less, Associate's degree, Bachelor's degree, Master's degree, Professional degree, and Doctorate degree. *Income* is divided into eight strata, based on Ohio census data. *Religiosity* is measured by how often a respondent reported attending religious services, ranging from "never" (one) to "several times a week" (6). Political *interest* is measured on a four point scale, with higher values indicating more interest. *Government trust* and adherence to the values of *equality of opportunity*, *economic individualism*, and *free enterprise* combine the answers from two five-point Likert-scale questions, with higher values indicating higher adherence to those values and greater trust. *Knowledge* is a six-point additive scale indicating correct answers on the six factual political knowledge questions. *Presidential control of the issue* is a five-point Likert scale indicating how much control a typical president has over the national

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economy or the Iraq War, with higher values indicating greater perceived control.

Finally, *economic effect*, which only appears in the models measuring economic

responsibility attributions, is a an additive scale of the "yes" answers to six questions

about whether a respondent and/or their household has been affected by economic

conditions in particular ways.

Results

Primary Responsibility

The results for the two dichotomous primary responsibility models are shown in

Table 5.3. For both issues, we find support for the hypothesis that motivated reasoning

affects how individuals ascribe primary responsibility for national issues. Looking first

at national economic conditions, we can see that the estimate for the interaction between

party identification and retrospective economic perceptions is indeed negative and

statistically significant (p<0.08). To illustrate for a Democrat, as their retrospective

economic evaluation improves, they are more likely to ascribe primary responsibility to

President Obama, as opposed to President Bush. For a Republican, however, as the issue

perception improves, they are increasingly likely to have seen President Bush as

primarily responsible. This is illustrative of how a directional goal (partisanship) might

influence how individuals interpret the political process. The control variables for this

model were largely statistically irrelevant to the outcome, aside from the finding that

those who value equality of opportunity are generally more likely to see Bush as

primarily responsible for long-term changes in economic conditions. Also, knowledge

and the extent to which a respondent sees a President as having greater control over the

national economy increase the likelihood of seeing Obama as primarily responsible.

Table 5.3 – Primary Responsibility Attributions

	National Economy		Iraq War	
	Coefficient	S.E.	Coefficient	S.E.
Party ID x Perception	-0.14†	0.08	-0.13**	0.05
Party ID	0.55***	0.15	0.29†	0.16
Issue Perception	0.57†	0.33	0.47*	0.21
Female	-0.08	0.28	0.01	0.26
Minority	-0.09	0.50	0.15	0.43
Marital Status	0.07	0.35	0.76*	0.33
Age	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Education	0.00	0.13	-0.07	0.12
Income	-0.11	0.10	-0.02	0.08
Religiosity	0.06	0.08	-0.11	0.07
Interest	-0.17	0.19	-0.07	0.17
Trust in Government	-0.11	0.09	0.06	0.08
Equal Opportunity	-0.14*	0.07	0.02	0.06
Economic Individualism	0.07	0.08	-0.12	0.07
Free Enterprise	0.11	0.08	0.00	0.07
Knowledge	0.22†	0.12	0.13	0.11
Presidential Control of Issue	0.44*	0.19	0.27	0.18
Economic Effect on Family	-0.01	0.08		
Intercept	-3.50*	1.375	-2.50†	1.34
n	314		314	
Log-likelihood	-168.03		-201.24	

Logistic Regression. DV: 1= Obama more responsible, 0=Bush more responsible;   *** indicates $p<0.001$, ** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$, † $p<0.1$.

The marginal effect of how individuals perceive economic conditions on the

likelihood of ascribing responsibility to President Obama cannot be seen by just looking

at the model's results, however, because the marginal effect will vary based on values of the variable it is interacted with, in this case, party identification (Brambor et al. 2006; Franzese and Kam 2003). Using STATA's GRINTER package (Boehmke 2008), the conditional marginal effect of an interactive variable can be plotted across the values of its constitutive term (Brambor et al. 2006). This is shown in Figure 5.1, with the marginal effect of moving one unit on the economic perception scale (measured 0-6) on the likelihood of seeing Obama as responsible, conditional on the respondent's party identification, with 95% confidence intervals. The confidence intervals indicate that the marginal effect cannot be distinguished from zero at p<0.05, though the value for strong Democrats is statistically significant at p<0.1.

Figure 5.1- Marginal Effect of Perceptions on Primary Economic Attribution

However, a statistically insignificant marginal effect does not mean that the substantive effect of the interaction is not important. While plots of marginal effects show directly how the *effect* of *x* on *y* changes as *z* changes, graphs of predicted values can show how the level of *ŷ*, i.e., *the prediction* for *y*, changes as *x* changes, at particular levels of *z* (Franzese and Kam 2003). Predicted probabilities, therefore, can show the magnitude of change produced in the attribution results by varying party identification and issue perceptions. Figure 5.2 shows this interactive effect for a "typical" respondent while varying their retrospective economic evaluation on the x-axis and using two separate lines to show the model's predicted probability of ascribing primary responsibility to President Obama (as opposed to President Bush) for strong Democrats and strong Republicans.[13] As you can see, when the respondent viewed the current economy as being much worse than a typical or average one, the model predicts the probability of a strong Democrat ascribing primary responsibility to President Obama to be just 0.05 while estimating a strong Republican to do so with a predicted probability of 0.87 – *more than 17 times more likely*. As a typical respondent's economic evaluation increases, the strong Republican becomes less likely to see Obama as most responsible and the strong Democrat becomes more likely. For economic perceptions of "Much

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[13] For the purposes of estimating the predicted probabilities here and elsewhere, a "typical" respondent is a married, non-Hispanic Caucasian, 49 year old woman who has a Bachelor's degree. This respondent's annual household income is between $50-75 thousand dollars and attends religious services a few times a year. She is very interested in politics, knowledgeable (5 out of 6 correct), thinks a typical President has "some control" of the economy, but a great deal of control over the Iraq War. She has been slightly affected by recent economic conditions (3 out of 6), does not trust the government much (3 out of 10), and fairly moderately adheres to values of equality of opportunity, economic individualism, and free enterprise (4, 6, and 4 out of 10, respectively).

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Better," the model predicts a probability of 0.65 for the strong Democrat and 0.28 for the strong Republican – a change of 0.60 and -0.59 points, respectively, though neither change is significant at $p<0.05$ due to low sample size at the positive end of the perception scale.

Primary Economic Responsibility

Figure 5.2 - Predicted Probability of Primary Economic Attributions

At a "four" on the seven-point scale (seeing the national economy as doing just slightly better than average), the predicted probability of a strong Democrat ascribing responsibility to Obama begins to surpass that of a strong Republican, with the estimates continuing to diverge until the "Much Better" response. In reality, the interaction is only

statistically significant at the p<0.05 level for the lower three perception levels (as indicated by the point in which the confidence intervals of the two estimations intersect. However, due to the fact that the economy was seen as almost universally poor during the time when the survey was in the field, the three perception levels account for 87 percent of the survey respondents, which accounts for the very large confidence intervals shown when economic perceptions approach the positive end of the graph.

Turning now towards the attribution of primary responsibility for the Iraq War, the model is presented in the second column of Table 5.3. Here too, the interaction between party identification and how a respondent believes current Iraq War conditions to deviate from typical conditions is negative and statistically significant, this time at the p<0.01 level. Once again, as individuals become more positive regarding issue conditions, Republicans are more likely to see President Bush, rather than President Obama as responsible, while Democrats are more likely to consider their copartisan as responsible. For this issue, the marginal effect of the retrospective perception is statistically significant from zero for strong Democrats, all Republicans, and Republican-leaning Independents, as shown in Figure 5.3.

Figure 5.3 - Marginal Effect of Issue Perception on Primary Iraq War Attribution

Examining predicted probabilities in Figure 5.4 provides even more insight. The estimates perform as you would expect; when varying perceptions from very negative to very positive, the likelihood of ascribing responsibility to Obama increases 0.56 for strong Democrats 0.56 and decreases -0.74 for strong Republicans. At the extreme "Much Better" level, strong Democrats are nine times more likely to attribute primary responsibility to President Obama than strong Republicans. This difference across strong partisans is statistically significant at the p<0.05 level only for those holding very positive views of Iraq compared to typical conditions; once again, this is likely the result of limited data at the very negative end of the perception spectrum, which widened the confidence intervals. Only 23 respondents said that the war was "much worse" than typical conditions, and only two of them were strong Democrats (who both blamed President Bush).

Primary Iraq War Responsibility

Figure 5.4 - Predicted Probability of Primary Iraq War Attribution

The question of how individuals determine primary responsibility for the national issues in a long-term sense can now be untangled. The two models show that motivated reasoning can be at work when ascribing both credit (Iraq War) and blame (national economy). Both models and their predicted probability graphs clearly show that partisan considerations, as well as issue perceptions, are significantly related to how individuals determine responsibility. The "X" pattern in predicted probability across partisan groups shows the importance of the interaction. Importantly, individuals are ascribing primary responsibility in a pattern predicted by motivated reasoning theory and the hypotheses.

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When perceiving negative conditions, Republicans avoid seeing President Bush as responsible while Democrats avoid seeing President Obama at fault.

Immediate Responsibility

With the importance of primary responsibility established, we now turn towards immediate responsibility, which is a short-term sense of responsibility for current conditions. To measure short-term issue perceptions, respondents were asked whether issue conditions were getting better, staying the same, or getting worse on a seven-point scale.

Table 5.4 shows the results of the immediate responsibility models for both issues. Looking first as the economy, once again, the significant and negative interaction between party identification and immediate economic perceptions indicates support for my hypotheses ($p<0.01$). As perceptions of the current economy improve and individuals become more Republican, they are less likely to credit President Obama with immediate responsibility. Figure 5.5 shows that the marginal effect of an individual's perceptions of current economic conditions is statistically significant from zero for all Democrats and Democratic-leaning Independents, as well as for strong Republicans.

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Table 5.4 – Immediate Responsibility Attributions

	National Economy		Iraq War	
	Coefficient	S.E.	Coefficient	S.E.
Party ID x Perception	-0.25**	0.09	-0.18**	0.06
Party ID	1.18***	0.29	0.69***	0.21
Issue Perception	1.06**	0.34	0.46*	0.23
Female	0.09	0.32	0.43	0.28
Minority	-0.36	0.50	-0.62	0.41
Marital Status	-0.20	0.37	-0.07	0.34
Age	-0.02†	0.01	0.01	0.01
Education	-0.15	0.14	-0.03	0.12
Income	0.02	0.11	0.10	0.09
Religiosity	0.23*	0.10	0.03	0.08
Interest	0.02	0.20	-0.12	0.18
Trust in Government	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.08
Equal Opportunity	-0.16*	0.07	-0.09	0.07
Economic Individualism	0.10	0.08	0.05	0.08
Free Enterprise	0.26**	0.09	0.02	0.08
Knowledge	0.08	0.13	0.01	0.12
Presidential Control of Issue	0.34	0.21	0.06	0.19
Economic Effect on Family	0.08	0.09		
Intercept	-6.65***	1.82	-2.56†	1.50
n	321		321	
Log-likelihood	-145.65		-182.73	

Logistic Regression. DV: 1= Obama more responsible, 0=Bush more responsible; *** indicates $p<0.001$, ** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$, † $p<0.1$.

Figure 5.5 - Marginal Effect of Perceptions on Immediate Economic Attribution

The partisan differences in immediate economic attributions are stark when shown in terms of predicted probabilities (Figure 5.6). The predicted probability of ascribing responsibility to President Obama is statistically indistinguishable from 1.0 for all perception values from "Much Worse" through "Same" for strong Republicans, while that probability is statistically indistinguishable from 0.0 for the lowest three perception levels for strong Democrats. If Republicans view current economic conditions as improving, the likelihood of crediting Obama drops 0.51 points from the "Much Worse" to "Much Better" perception. The difference in predicted probability is even steeper for Democrats, increasing an incredible 0.88 points across possible economic perceptions. The difference in predicted probability across the strong partisan groups is statistically significant at $p < 0.05$ for all perception values from "Much Worse" to "Same," which covers 72 percent of the respondents.

The results for immediate Iraq War responsibility, shown in the second column of Table 5.4 similarly support my hypothesis. The interaction between party identification and perceptions of the war's conditions is statistically significant and negative ($p < 0.01$), indicating that Democrats will be more likely to ascribe responsibility to President Bush as their perceptions of conditions improve. The marginal effect of seeing Iraq War conditions as improving is statistically significant for pure Independents, and all Republicans, and approaches the $p < 0.05$ level for strong Democrats.

Immediate Economic Responsibility

Figure 5.6 - Predicted Probability of Immediate Attribution for the Economy

Immediate Iraq War Attribution

Figure 5.7 - Marginal Effect of Perceptions on Immediate Iraq War Attribution

Looking at the magnitude of this interaction on the likelihood of seeing President Obama as more responsible than President Bush, Figure 5.8 shows the predicted probabilities for both strong Republicans and strong Democrats. The likelihood of an immediate attribution to Obama increases from 0.44 to 0.89 for Democrats (45 points) and decreases from1.0 to 0.26 for strong Republicans (0.74 points) across the perception scale. In particular, there is a statistically significant difference across these partisan groups when respondents view Iraq War conditions as deteriorating. When respondents view conditions as stagnant or improving, their differences cannot be distinguished at $p<0.05$.

Figure 5.8 - Predicted Probability of Immediate Iraq War Responsibility

Given their short-term nature, immediate responsibility is a vital component towards understanding responsibility attributions as a whole. As with primary responsibility attributions, individuals appear to assign credit and blame in a biased manner, aligning their attributions with their party identification and economic perceptions.

Prospective Attributions

The results are murkier when looking at the effect of motivated reasoning on prospective responsibility attributions. Looking first at the prospective economic attributions on the left side of Table 5.5, while the party identification and economic perception coefficient is negative as expected, its magnitude is weak, rendering it statistically insignificant. The marginal effect of prospective economic evaluations, plotted in Figure 5.9, shows that while the marginal effect is statistically different than zero for pure Independents and all Democrats, the magnitude of the marginal effect's estimate is practically invariant across the parties; the significant marginal effect for Democrats is just the result of less variance in their attributions when compared to Republicans. Additionally, the predicted probability of attributing prospective responsibility to President Obama is not distinguishable across partisan groups for any level of issue perception. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that these questions featuring a dichotomous attribution choice cannot be used to support the assertion that

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motivated reasoning affects how individuals attribute responsibility for expected

economic outcomes.

Table 5.5 – Prospective Responsibility Attributions

	National Economy		Iraq War	
	Coefficient	S.E.	Coefficient	S.E.
Party ID x Perception	-0.04	0.08	-0.24*	0.12
Party ID	0.43†	0.26	0.73†	0.42
Issue Perception	0.63*	0.32	0.83†	0.44
Female	-0.11	0.47	0.57	0.71
Minority	-0.24	0.66	0.10	0.94
Marital Status	0.06	0.57	-0.44	0.93
Age	0.01	0.02	0.04†	0.02
Education	-0.18	0.21	-0.23	0.32
Income	-0.04	0.16	0.25	0.24
Religiosity	-0.03	0.14	-0.2	0.21
Interest	-0.47	0.37	-1.12†	0.64
Trust in Government	0.00	0.14	0.37	0.24
Equal Opportunity	-0.08	0.11	-0.28	0.19
Economic Individualism	0.24*	0.12	0.23	0.18
Free Enterprise	0.06	0.13	0.12	0.19
Knowledge	0.10	0.20	0.08	0.27
Presidential Control of Issue	0.20	0.30	0.50	0.45
Economic Effect on Family	-0.02	0.13		
Intercept	-0.54	2.18	-1.23	3.84
n	352		323	
Log-likelihood	-78.43		-40.02	

Logistic Regression. DV: 1= Obama more responsible, 0=Bush more responsible;   *** indicates p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, † p<0.1.

Figure 5.9 - Marginal Effect of Perceptions on Prospective Economic Attributions

The second column of Table 5.5 looks at prospective responsibility attributions for the Iraq War, and is similarly discouraging. While the interaction is correctly signed and statistically significant, a look at the marginal effect of respondent's prospective Iraq War perceptions on ascribing responsibility to President Obama are insignificant for all partisan groups at $p<0.05$ (Figure 5.10). Still, there is some evidence of motivated reasoning in that the marginal effects for both strong Democrats and strong Republicans are significant at the $p<0.1$ level. As with the prospective economic attributions, the predicted probabilities for prospective Iraq War attributions are not statistically different from one another, though the probability curves behave as expected, with partisans more likely to credit their copartisans and blame the President of the opposite party.

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Figure 5.10 - Marginal Effect of Perceptions on Prospective Iraq War Attributions

Clearly, the evidence for motivated reasoning influencing the attribution process is not as evident for prospective attributions as it is for primary and immediate ones. However, all is not lost, as will be later shown. One must keep in mind that the analysis thus far has only dealt with the attribution process from a dichotomous perspective, analyzing only whether the respondents ascribed responsibility to the current or former chief executive. For primary and immediate attributions, the role of the former officeholder in the attribution process is much more evident than when dealing with prospective attributions – it is only natural to consider the former President as potentially responsible for past events, but less so when asking about future expectations. There is some evidence borne out by the data. Only 7.8 percent of respondents saw Bush as responsible for the state of the economy and 5.3 percent for the state of the Iraq War

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twelve months from the survey date. With such little variation in outcomes, it is not surprising that it is difficult to find statistically significant outcomes.

This does not mean that we are to throw up our hands and ignore the role of motivated reasoning in the assignment of prospective responsibility. For motivated reasoners, there are many ways to either deflect blame away from a President of their own party or shift credit away from a President of the rival party. One such way to do this would be to consider the attribution of responsibility to individuals or groups outside of government. For instance, a Republican who believes the economy will greatly improve in the next year might say that this improvement will be the result of the business community. Another option would be to assign responsibility to a partisan group in Congress. For example, a Democrat who thinks the economy is going to get worse in the next year might claim that this will be the result of Congressional Republicans stalling the Democratic President's agenda. For these reasons, we will again consider the influence of motivated reasoning in prospective responsibility when looking at how much responsibility individuals assigned to the seven political actors for each issue.

Switching Responsibility Attributions

One question that remains concerns the relationship across the attribution types. For example, it may be asked whether an individual's immediate responsibility

attribution might be related in some way to their primary responsibility attribution.[14] This question has significant implications for the importance of distinguishing between attribution types because, if immediate attributions are only driven by primary attributions, or if the effects of motivated reasoning on the immediate attribution process are washed out after controlling for one's primary attribution, the separation of responsibility in this manner would not be valid. To check for this possibility, the previous analyses of immediate responsibility attributions are re-analyzed, this time with individuals' primary responsibility attribution as an additional independent variable.

The results are presented in Table 5.6, for both the economy and the Iraq War. Both models are logistic regressions predicting an immediate responsibility attribution to President Obama as opposed to President Bush. For both models, *Primary Attribution* takes on a value of one if the respondent had seen President Obama as more primarily responsible than President Bush. As you can see, for both issues, an individual's primary responsibility attribution has a positive relationship with their immediate attribution ($p<0.001$); if individuals saw President Obama as primarily responsible for conditions, they were more likely to see him as immediately responsible as well.

Importantly, however, this effect is not so large that it begs the question of whether primary and immediate attributions should be treated separately. From a substantive standpoint, otherwise typical Independents who think the current economy is neither getting worse nor better are 0.35 points more likely to ascribe immediate

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[14] Due to the high likelihood of respondents viewing President Obama as more responsible for future conditions than President Bush (93%), prospective responsibility is not analyzed in this section.

economic responsibility to President Obama if they also saw him as primarily responsible. For Iraq War attributions, this predicted probability decreases to 0.26. Certainly, primary responsibility attributions are related to immediate attributions, but with bivariate correlations of 0.45 and 0.24 for economic and Iraq War attributions, respectively, this relationship is not sufficient enough to conclude that the two types of attribution are not distinct.

Table 5.6 – Immediate Responsibility Attributions Predicted by Primary Attributions

	National Economy		Iraq War	
	Coefficient	S.E.	Coefficient	S.E.
Primary Attribution	1.70***	0.36	1.51***	0.31
Party ID x Perception	-0.21*	0.09	-0.15*	0.06
Party ID	0.84*	0.36	0.32	0.25
Issue Perception	0.97**	0.31	0.65**	0.22
Female	0.07	0.34	0.39	0.29
Minority	-0.30	0.53	-0.59	0.45
Marital Status	-0.16	0.41	-0.18	0.37
Age	-0.02	0.01	0.00	0.01
Education	-0.14	0.15	-0.01	0.13
Income	0.08	0.12	0.10	0.09
Religiosity	0.26**	0.10	0.07	0.09
Interest	0.03	0.23	-0.13	0.20
Trust in Government	0.16	0.10	0.08	0.09
Equal Opportunity	-0.12	0.08	-0.10	0.07
Economic Individualism	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.08
Free Enterprise	0.24**	0.09	0.03	0.08
Knowledge	0.02	0.14	0.00	0.13
Presidential Control of Issue	0.20	0.23	-0.05	0.20
Economic Effect on Family	0.10	0.09		
Intercept	-6.08***	1.81	-2.07	1.45
n	310		312	
Log-likelihood	-129.04		-164.12	

Logistic Regression. DV: 1= Obama more responsible, 0=Bush more responsible; *** indicates p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, † p<0.1.

Furthermore, the inclusion of individuals' primary responsibility attributions in the models do not negate the support found for the hypotheses regarding motivated reasoning. The hypothesized interaction between one's party identification and their issue perceptions remains statistically significant at $p<0.02$ for both issues. In terms of the predicted probability, among Strong Democrats, the predicted probability of seeing Obama as immediately responsible increases 0.19 points if that individual also saw him primarily responsible and they have a very negative view of the current economy and increases 0.23 points if they have a very positive view. Among strong Republicans, the predicted probability of seeing Obama as immediately responsible if they also saw him primarily responsible is increased just 0.07 points if they think current conditions are getting much worse, but jumps 0.32 points if they think conditions are getting much better. I speculate that the slight jump among strong Republicans with a very negative economic perception is caused by the fact that that group is already overwhelmingly likely to see Obama as responsible for the economy, regardless of their primary attributions.

An almost identical pattern emerges when looking at the predicted probability increases caused by having seen Obama as primarily responsible in the likelihood of seeing Obama as immediately responsible for Iraq War conditions. For strong Democrats, the increase is 0.32 points if they think current conditions are getting much worse and 0.27 points if they think conditions are getting much better. Among strong Republicans, there is a slight increase of 0.04 points if they think conditions are getting

much worse, but a larger 0.31 point increases if they perceive conditions as getting much better.

<div align="center">Motivated Reasoning and Party Identification</div>

This next section looks at the relationship between issue perceptions and responsibility attributions with both party groups. The first set of analyses used an interactive term between party identification and issue perceptions and then showed how the predicted probability of ascribing responsibility to Obama rather than Bush varied across strong partisans. However, looking just at the differences across strong partisans might not be ideal for all analyses. Some may wonder about the effects of motivated reasoning within partisan groups as a whole, so, for this section, I have sorted the data into Republicans and Democrats (with Independent-leaners), and replicated the analysis within each party. Sorting the data in this manner is slightly less statistically efficient, however, it also eliminates the interaction term, which allows for the direct analysis of the effect of perceptions on attributions with partisan groups. I hypothesize that increasingly positive issue perceptions will be positively related to seeing Obama as responsible for Democrats and negatively related to seeing Obama is responsible for Republicans.

Primary Responsibility

Table 5.7 shows four logistic regressions, each predicting the likelihood of ascribing primary responsibility to President Obama over President Bush. The two

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Table 5.7 – Primary Responsibility Attributions by Party

	National Economy				Iraq War			
	Democrats		**Republicans**		**Democrats**		**Republicans**	
	Coef.	**S.E.**	**Coef.**	**S.E.**	**Coef.**	**S.E.**	**Coef.**	**S.E.**
Issue Perception	0.29	0.25	-0.21	0.27	0.32*	0.16	-0.44**	0.16
Female	0.48	0.51	-0.28	0.48	0.35	0.44	-0.39	0.41
Minority	-0.05	0.66	1.55	1.53	-0.08	0.55	1.25	1.04
Marital Status	0.41	0.57	0.17	0.66	0.39	0.50	1.08†	0.66
Age	-0.02	0.02	-0.01	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.00	0.01
Education	0.17	0.20	0.11	0.23	-0.04	0.19	-0.13	0.19
Income	-0.33†	0.17	-0.02	0.17	-0.06	0.14	-0.07	0.13
Religiosity	-0.11	0.16	0.21	0.13	-0.34**	0.14	-0.08	0.12
Interest	-0.57†	0.32	-0.35	0.34	0.12	0.28	-0.33	0.28
Trust in Government	0.12	0.14	-0.23	0.14	-0.06	0.12	0.15	0.12
Equal Opportunity	-0.15	0.11	-0.14	0.12	0.04	0.09	-0.09	0.10
Economic Individualism	0.04	0.13	-0.22	0.16	-0.10	0.11	-0.15	0.14
Free Enterprise	-0.03	0.13	0.16	0.14	-0.04	0.12	-0.05	0.12
Knowledge	-0.04	0.20	0.48*	0.21	0.15	0.19	0.36†	0.20
Presidential Control of Issue	0.99**	0.39	0.47	0.30	0.49†	0.28	0.19	0.29
Economic Effect on Family	0.03	0.14	-0.13	0.13				
Intercept	-0.57	2.05	0.15	2.03	-3.22†	1.89	0.96	1.83
n	139		135		136		137	
Log-likelihood	-65.35		-66.54		-82.86		-84.71	

Logistic Regression. DV: 1= Obama more responsible, 0=Bush more responsible; *** indicates p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, † p<0.1.

columns are for the national economy, broken up by party, and third and fourth columns

are for the Iraq War, similarly sorted by party. Looking first at the economic results, we

see that the economic perceptions, while correctly signed, are not significantly related to

attributions among either the Democratic or Republican subsets. This is a confirmation

of the original finding that the marginal effects of economic perceptions were not statistically different from zero at any point on the party identification scale. However, earlier, I still showed how the predicted probability of seeing Obama as primarily responsible for economic conditions was significantly higher for strong Republicans than strong Democrats while holding perceptions at their lower levels. The same is true here for Democrats and Republicans as a whole; for typical respondents who think the current economy is "much worse" than average, the predicted probability of a Democrat seeing Obama as more responsible is just 0.17 while the predicted probability for a Republican is 0.86 ($p<0.001$). Instead, what cannot be said is that the effect of economic perceptions causes the likelihood of an Obama attribution to significantly vary *within the two partisan groups*. This is likely the result of very little variation in the attribution responses – the economy was almost universally seen as poorer than average.

The Iraq War results are easier to understand. The significant perception coefficients indicates that as perceptions of the Iraq War became more positive, Democrats were more likely to see Obama as responsible while Republicans were less likely. This effect is statistically significant for Democrats at $p<0.05$ and for Republicans at $p<0.01$. Substantively, perceptions have a large effect on the likelihood of seeing Obama as responsible as well. For Democrats, someone who sees Iraq War conditions as much better than average is predicted to be 0.39 points more likely to see Obama as primarily responsible as someone who thinks conditions are much worse than average. For Republicans, someone who sees Iraq War conditions as much better than average is

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predicted to be 0.56 points *less* likely to see Obama as primarily responsible as someone who thinks conditions are much worse than average. The effect here is clear: when it comes to primary responsibility for the Iraq War, both parties look to either credit the President of their own party or blame the president of the opposite party.

Immediate Responsibility

The models predicting an immediate attribution to President Obama are shown in Table 5.8, broken up once again by issue and by party. Looking first at the economy, the perception coefficient is significant in the Democratic model. The predicted probability of a Democrat who thinks the economy is getting much worse is 0.40 points less likely to think that Obama is more responsible for current economic conditions than a Democrat who thinks the current economy is getting much better ($p<0.05$). The effect of current economic perceptions is not significant among Republicans, however, suggesting that the significant marginal effect of current perceptions among strong Republicans found in the prior analysis does not apply to all Republicans. [15]

When looking at current Iraq War perceptions, this time it is the Republicans whose attributions are significantly related to current perceptions while the Democrat's perceptions are not. This is not entirely surprising, given that the earlier analysis showed a significant marginal effect for issue perceptions among all Republicans and Republican-leaning Independents and no significant marginal effect among any

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[15] The minority dummy variable was dropped from the Republican model because there were only six Republican minorities and they perfectly predicted the outcome.

Democratic grouping. Still, the magnitude of the perception coefficient is quite large.

The model predicts a Republican who believes conditions in Iraq are currently getting

much better to have a predicted probability of seeing President Bush as immediately

responsible 0.71 points higher than someone who believes Iraq War conditions are

getting much worse (p<0.001).

Table 5.8 – Immediate Responsibility Attributions by Party

	National Economy				Iraq War			
	Democrats		Republicans		Democrats		Republicans	
	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.
Issue Perception	0.47*	0.24	0.08	0.39	0.05	0.16	-1.17***	0.31
Female	0.08	0.46	-0.01	0.88	$0.67^{\dagger}$	0.40	0.27	0.58
Minority	-0.30	0.59			-0.53	0.51	-0.26	1.35
Marital Status	-0.51	0.52	0.94	1.06	-0.25	0.47	0.18	0.78
Age	-0.02	0.02	-0.03	0.03	0.01	0.01	-0.20	0.02
Education	0.01	0.20	0.08	0.38	0.02	0.17	-0.1	0.24
Income	0.02	0.15	-0.11	0.30	0.03	0.12	0.29	0.19
Religiosity	0.07	0.14	0.69*	0.28	0.01	0.12	-0.18	0.16
Interest	-0.41	0.30	-0.32	0.50	-0.03	0.27	-0.79	0.49
Trust in Government	$0.23^{\dagger}$	0.13	$-0.45^{\dagger}$	0.26	0.02	0.12	0.29*	0.18
Equal Opportunity	-0.11	0.10	-0.21	0.20	-0.11	0.09	$-0.24^{\dagger}$	0.14
Economic Individualism	0.16	0.12	-0.12	0.25	0.10	0.10	-0.48**	0.25
Free Enterprise	0.29*	0.13	0.29	0.22	-0.18	0.11	0.23	0.17
Knowledge	-0.12	0.19	0.66*	0.34	-0.09	0.17	0.70*	0.31
Presidential Control of Issue	0.04	0.34	1.20*	0.56	0.18	0.27	-0.08	0.41
Economic Effect on Family	0.09	0.13	0.04	0.21				
Intercept	-1.57	2.16	-3.30	3.63	-0.07	1.84	8.48**	2.78
n	140		132		142		137	
Log-likelihood	-75.00		-29.49		-91.31		-50.68	

Logistic Regression. DV: 1= Obama more responsible, 0=Bush more responsible;   *** indicates p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, † p<0.1.

To summarize the effect of issue perceptions in immediate responsibility attributions, it appears that as a group, Democrats are more likely to engage in motivated reasoning when ascribing credit and blame for economic conditions. However, there is no evidence of Democrats doing so for the Iraq War. Instead, it is the Republicans who appear to rationalize their responsibility attributions to fit with their party identification and issue perceptions.

Prospective Responsibility

As previously discussed, analyzing prospective responsibility with the dichotomous attribution questions is not ideal because the vast majority of respondents see President Obama as prospectively responsible for both the economy and the Iraq War. There is so little variation that neither model could be run among Republicans because only two saw President Bush as prospectively responsible for the economy and only six saw him as prospectively responsible for the Iraq War. To get a fuller sense of whether motivated reasoning occurs when making prospective responsibility attributions, I will later examine the results of the responsibility assignment questions using models for ordered data.

There was, however, enough variation among Democrats, and both issues provide support for the hypothesis that individuals engage in motivated reasoning when making prospective responsibility attributions. The first column of Table 5.9 shows the model for the economy. It was shown earlier that prospective economic evaluations produced a statistically significant marginal effect among all Democrats on the likelihood of seeing

Obama as prospectively responsible, so it is not surprising that the prospective evaluation variable is statistically significant in the first column (p<0.01) when the party members are combined. In terms of predicted probabilities, a Democrat who believes the economy will be much better in one year will have a 0.59 point higher likelihood of seeing President Obama as prospectively responsible as a Democrat who believes the economy will be much worse.

Table 5.9 – Prospective Responsibility Attributions among Democrats

	National Economy		Iraq War	
	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.
Issue Perception	0.66**	0.25	0.67*	0.34
Female	-0.28	0.61	-0.08	1.12
Minority	-0.01	0.78	1.15	1.47
Marital Status	0.13	0.69	-1.61	1.37
Age	-0.00	0.02	0.03	0.03
Education	-0.33	0.26	-0.27	0.52
Income	0.01	0.21	0.19	0.37
Religiosity	0.03	0.19	0.27	0.35
Interest	-0.58	0.47	-0.34	0.76
Trust in Government	-0.08	0.19	0.17	0.30
Equal Opportunity	-0.06	0.15	$-0.59^{\dagger}$	0.34
Economic Individualism	0.14	0.16	$0.51^{\dagger}$	0.29
Free Enterprise	0.23	0.18	0.10	0.26
Knowledge	0.26	0.27	0.36	0.41
Presidential Control of Issue	-0.02	0.04	0.10	0.65
Economic Effect on Family	0.01	0.17		
Intercept	0.79	2.80	-0.21	4.97
n	143		143	
Log-likelihood	-49.24		-21.01	

Logistic Regression. DV: 1= Obama more responsible, 0=Bush more responsible;   *** indicates p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, † p<0.1.

Earlier, among Democrats, the marginal effect of the prospective Iraq War perception was only statistically significant for strong Democrats. However, combining all Democrats into one group increases the statistical power of the grouping and leads to a statistically significant relationship between prospective perceptions and responsibility attributions, as shown in the second column ($p<0.05$). The predicted probability of a prospective Obama attribution is 0.40 points higher for Democrats who believe Iraq War conditions will be much better in one year compared to someone who thinks they will be much worse.

Rudolph's (2003b) analysis of economic attributions in the 1998 ANES found that Democrats rationalize their responsibility attributions but Republicans do not. This finding is confirmed, with Democrats appearing to engage in motivated reasoning when making intermediate and prospective responsibility attributions for economic conditions, but not when making primary attributions. With Republicans' primary and intermediate attributions, economic perceptions did not relate to who they see as responsible.[16] Rudolph notes that Republicans, at least in 1998, were more likely to attribute credit and blame to business people instead of governmental actors. Since, I argue, attributions such as this can be an avenue of motivated reasoning, further study of their attributions outside of government will follow later in the chapter.

However, this does not mean that Republicans do not engage in motivated reasoning when making responsibility attributions and it does not mean that the use of

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[16] The prospective attribution models could not be run after isolating Republicans due to insufficient data.

motivated reasoning and the rationalization of attributions are limited to one party. When

deciding who is to credit and blame for military issues, as opposed to the economy,

Republicans' perceptions of the Iraq War clearly relate to whether or not they view

President Bush or Obama as responsible. While it is difficult to see definitive patterns

across only two issues, I speculate that certain issues are more important to some political

parties than others, and thus individuals might be more inclined to engage in motivated

reasoning when the attribution concerns an issue their party identifies with. Perhaps

stereotypically, Democrats are often seen as "owning" domestic issues while Republicans

own military and defense issues (Holian 2004; Kaufmann 2004; Petrocik, Benoit, and

Hansen 2003). I suspect that such partisan ties to issue ownership likely account as to

why certain party groups might be more likely to engage in motivated reasoning, but it is

impossible to say for sure until a greater variety of issues are studied.

Political Independents

Thus far, the analysis has shown that individuals are quite adept at matching their

sense of issue conditions with their partisan leanings when assigning responsibility for

the economy and the Iraq War. While many would not be shocked to find political elites

capable of "spinning" their account of reality to achieve consistency with their

partisanship, it is more surprising to find that the electorate as a whole is doing so on a

large scale. If responsibility attributions are so often formed in light of an individual's

party identification and issue perceptions, the question remains as to how responsibility

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attributions are formed among those who lack the directional goal of partisanship. This section attempts to answer that question by isolating political Independents in a manner similar to the prior analysis to determine the role of issue perceptions in the formation of responsibility attributions among nonpartisans.

Table 5.10 shows the logistic regressions predicting responsibility attributions for the economy and the Iraq War.[17] In all five models, issue perceptions are statistically insignificant, indicating that respondents were not likely to see either president as more responsible than the other based on their economic attitudes. Furthermore, there does not appear to be any consistent pattern as to what control variables predict attributions. It should be stressed that this analysis contains only pure Independents, limiting the *n* to 45-48 observations. As a result, the models can be quite sensitive with so many control variables; indeed, the standard errors in the first model are quite large for some of the coefficients. The main result, that issue perceptions do not have a relationship with responsibility attributions among Independents, remains true even after the troublesome variables are dropped from the model, as well as during simple bivariate regressions.

These results lead to one of two conclusions. First, it is possible that political Independents are knowledgeable and objective in their assessments of responsibility. If this is the case, the null relationship between perceptions and responsibility attributions is

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[17] For prospective Iraq War attributions, the logistic regression failed to converge. Eliminating all control variables still showed a null relationship between prospective perceptions of Iraq War conditions and prospective attributions.

simply the result of Independents assigning responsibility to both President Obama and

President Bush in roughly equal numbers.

Table 5.10 – Responsibility Assignment by Pure Independents

	National Economy			Iraq War	
	Primary	Immediate	Prospective	Primary	Immediate
Issue Perception	4.18	0.62	1.15	-0.36	-0.34
	(8.20)	(0.51)	(0.94)	(0.34)	(0.38)
Female	-18.42	-1.31	0.11	0.28	0.23
	(28.25)	(1.49)	(2.02)	(0.92)	(0.85)
Minority	-14.41	1.28	-2.76	-0.08	0.07
	(248.58)	(2.00)	(2.48)	(1.66)	(1.65)
Marital Status	2.02	-2.28	0.55	0.41	-0.20
	(5.73)	(1.54)	(2.23)	(1.29)	(1.15)
Age	-0.37	0.05	0.05	-0.01	0.06†
	(0.64)	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Education	-0.80	-1.35*	1.44	-0.36	0.02
	(3.34)	(0.69)	(1.38)	(0.40)	(0.41)
Income	-2.62	0.06	0.16	0.19	-0.13
	(4.72)	(0.40)	(0.75)	(0.33)	(0.31)
Religiosity	0.33	0.81*	-0.16	0.22	0.19
	(1.98)	(0.40)	(0.49)	(0.25)	(0.27)
Interest	4.60	0.52	-1.06	0.45	-0.35
	(5.89)	(0.73)	(1.07)	(0.64)	(0.58)
Trust in Government	-0.66	0.43	-0.74	-0.08	0.37
	(3.67)	(0.43)	(0.68)	(0.33)	(0.32)
Equal Opportunity	-3.72	-0.65†	-0.15	0.30	-0.25
	(4.49)	(0.36)	(0.43)	(0.21)	(0.20)
Economic Individualism	3.36	0.04	0.33	-0.43†	0.17
	(5.91)	(0.27)	(0.36)	(0.24)	(0.20)
Free Enterprise	2.14	-0.27	-0.54	0.53†	0.32
	(3.14)	(0.35)	(0.44)	(0.28)	(0.25)
Knowledge	3.49	0.67	-1.57	-0.32	0.33
	(7.06)	(0.51)	(1.04)	(0.38)	(0.46)
Presidential Control of Issue	1.50	2.55*	1.55	0.01	-0.20
	(4.42)	(1.08)	(1.66)	(0.77)	(0.66)
Economic Effect on Family	2.09	0.41	0.50		
	(3.37)	(0.34)	(0.56)		
Intercept	-21.64	-11.43*	0.28	-1.48	-2.68
	(36.40)	(5.44)	(7.28)	(3.78)	(3.46)
n	45	48	48	46	47
Log-likelihood	-7.79	-17.31	-12.12	-22.53	-24.32

Logistic Regression. DV: 1= Obama more responsible, 0=Bush more responsible;   *** indicates p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, † p<0.1.

The alternative explanation, and the one that I find more likely, is that these political Independents are indeed assigning responsibility to both presidents in a roughly equal manner, but their responses are the result of widespread nonattitudes. This line of reasoning comes from the fact that Independents are less likely than partisans to be involved in politics (Verba et al. 1993). Many Independents may be so detached from the political process that they have not previously thought much about who is responsible for issue conditions. As a result, many respondents may not wish to expend the cognitive effort necessary to make a reasoned response, so, when confronted with a survey question on the matter, they are likely to "satisfice" and select responses more or less at random (Krosnick 1991).

Further evidence of this satisficing hypothesis is found when respondents' 2012 vote intention is predicted among pure Independents and partisan-leaning Independents using perceptions, responsibility attribution, a party identification x attribution interaction, and the control variables (results omitted). In only one of the six models (primary attributions for the economy) is the interaction statistically significant; only here are retrospective economic perceptions a statistically significant predictor of vote intention among those who see President Obama as responsible. For four of the other models, issue perceptions are statistically insignificant predictors of vote intention regardless of attribution, and, in one model (prospective attributions for the Iraq War), perceptions are a significant predictor regardless of who is seen as more prospectively responsible. Based on the totality of this analysis, I conclude, with appropriate

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reservation, that the responsibility attributions of Independents do not appear to be tied to their perceptions of issue conditions and this null relationship is instead the likely result of nonattitudes and satisficing.

Who Engages in Motivated Reasoning?

The previous sections presented evidence that individuals engaged in motivated reasoning when determining responsibility for economic and military conditions between Presidents Bush and Obama. It was shown that many individuals' responsibility attributions could be predicted based on their party identification and how they perceive the issue at hand. However, the question remains who these individuals are who engage in such motivated reasoning. In Chapter 2, I hypothesized that those with stronger partisan ties will be more likely to engage in motivated reasoning than those with weaker ties because stronger partisans will have a larger emotional stake in the outcome of their individual attribution process. To some extent, evidence of this effect was presented in the previous analysis; the marginal effects of issue perceptions on partisanship were often more likely to be statistically significant for strong Republicans and Democrats than weaker partisans and Independents. However, this hypothesis can be more explicitly tested in the following analysis.

Additionally, two other hypotheses were posited regarding the use of motivated reasoning by those with higher levels of political interest and those who have been affected by an issue. I expect those with higher levels of political interest to be more

likely than those with lower levels of interest to engage in motivated reasoning when attributing responsibility for national issue because their higher interest in politics indicates an increased stake in the outcome of that internal attribution process. Similarly, and perhaps more directly, those who have been affected by a political issue can be expected to have a high stake in the outcome, and thus be more likely to engage in motivated reasoning.

The Motivated Reasoners

The first step in analyzing what types of individuals are likely to engage in motivated reasoning during the responsibility attribution process is to create a variable from the survey data to indicate which respondents may have engaged in motivated reasoning when making their responsibility attributions and which individuals decidedly have not. I have defined motivated reasoning as occurring when individuals' directional goals, indicated by their party identification and issue perceptions, influence their responsibility attributions. First, the party identification and issue perception variables were collapsed into manageable categories. Party identification was collapsed into three categories: Democrats and Democratic-leaning Independents, pure Independents, and Republicans with Republican-leaning Independents. For each issue perception question, the seven-point scale was condensed so that responses of zero-two was recoded to zero, three was recoded as one, and four-six was recoded to two. This new three-point perception scale is easier to manage categorically and still retains the vital information whether the respondent views the issue as "better," "the same," or "worse."

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A new variable was created for each issue and attribution type (six total) that I call *potential motivated reasoners*. That variable takes on a value of one if, for that particular issue and attribution type, the respondent's attribution, perception, and party identification all align with the hypotheses. Explicitly, the variable takes on a value of one for Democrats with positive attributions who credit Obama, Democrats with negative attributions who blame Bush, Republicans with positive attributions who credit Bush, and Republicans with negative attributions who blame Obama. The variable takes on a value of zero for all other combinations of the variables, as well as for all pure Independents and anyone with an issue perception in the middle three points on the seven-point scale.

In essence, this "potential motivated reasoner" variable takes on a value of one for all individuals whose perceptions, party identification, and dichotomous responsibility attribution all align with the expectations of someone who is engaging in motivated reasoning. It must be stressed that this variable cannot definitely say that someone is doing so, however. There is always the possibility that the alignment of these three variables is occurring by chance or through a sincere and unbiased evaluation of current events. What is more certain, is that individuals who are not included in the "potential motivated reasoners" group are unlikely to be engaging in motivated reasoning when making their responsibility attributions. For one, it includes those whose attributions run counter to what theories of motivated reasoning would suggest, namely, that they appear to be blaming members of their own party or crediting members of the opposite party. Secondly, this group includes all pure Independents, who lack the partisan ties that we

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would expect motivated reasoners to have. Finally, it includes all individuals with middle-of-the-road issue perceptions; if their issue perceptions were moderate, it is unlikely that their directional goals would be strong enough for motivated reasoning to take place.

The frequencies of the motivated reasoning variable are totaled in Table 5.11. The results show that 53 percent of individuals show the potential for motivated reasoning for at least one of the six responsibility attributions made in the survey. Conversely, 47 percent of respondents do not show any evidence of motivated reasoning whatsoever. Several respondents exhibit the potential for the frequent use of motivated reasoning when making the responsibility attributions, with 15 percent of displaying the characteristics of motivated reasoning for at least half of the attributions.

Alternatively, some might prefer to examine the potential for motivated reasoning while excluding pure Independents. On one hand, when the potential motivated reasoning variable was created, recall that pure Independents were summarily excluded from such behavior since they lack the necessary partisan attachments. On the other hand, pure Independents represent a sizeable proportion of the population, and their exclusion may not be justified because, if the variable is meant to measure motivated reasoning potential, these individuals clearly cannot do so. As a result, the following analyses will examine potential motivated reasoning while including and excluding pure Independents. For the purpose of brevity, the model including the pure independents will be referred to as the *inclusive models,* and the models excluding them will be referred to

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as the *exclusive models.* Looking at the second panel of Table 5.11, it is shown that 57

percent of partisans show the potential for motivated reasoning for at least half of the

attributions included in the survey.

Table 5.11 – Frequencies of Created Variables of Interest

Potential	0	1	2	3	4-6			
Motivated	81	46	69	81	95			
Attributions	21.77%	12.37%	18.55%	21.77%	25.54%			
(Inclusive)								
Potential	0	1	2	3	4-6			
Motivated	18	46	69	81	95			
Attributions	5.83%	14.89%	22.33%	26.21%	30.74%			
(Exclusive)								
	Pure Ind.	Ind. Leaners	Slight Partisans	Strong Partisans				
Partisanship	63	122	128	98				
	15.33%	29.68%	31.14%	23.84%				
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Economic Effect Scale	48	47	50	72	85	65	60	
	11.24%	11.01%	11.71%	16.86%	19.91%	15.22%	14.05%	

Partisanship

    The first hypothesis to test is whether those with stronger partisan ties are more

likely to engage in motivated reasoning than those with weaker ties. For this, a measure

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of partisanship is needed, so I folded the seven-point party identification scale and transformed it into a four-point scale, with larger values indicated a stronger attachment to a political party. The breakdown of the partisanship variable is shown in Table 5.11. The bulk of respondents are either partisan-leaning independents or weak partisans. Fifteen percent are pure Independents and another 24 percent are strong Democrats and Republicans. I expect a positive relationship between partisanship and the potential to engage in motivated reasoning.

Interest

Political interest is measured with the question: "Some people seem to follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there is an election going on or not. Others aren't that interested. How often would you say you follow what's going on in government and public affairs?" The response options included "hardly at all," "only now and then," "some of the time," and "most of the time." Not surprisingly due to the social desirability bias, 85 percent of respondents reported following politics "some of the time" or "most of the time," with a slight majority placing themselves in the latter category. I expect a positive relationship between interest and the potential for motivated reasoning.

Knowledge

Political knowledge was measured with the five-question Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996) knowledge scale, with two open-ended questions ("Do you happen to know what job or political office is now held by Joe Biden" and "How much of a majority is required for the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives to override a presidential veto?") and three closed-ended responses ("Whose responsibility is it to determine if a law is constitutional or not?," "Do you happen to know which party has the most members in the House of Representatives in Washington?," and " At the national level, which of the political parties is generally more conservative?"). To supplement this scale, an open-ended question asking, "How many votes are needed to stop a filibuster in the U.S. Senate?" was added to the knowledge battery. The filibuster was used extensively by the 41 Senate Republicans to block Democratic legislation from reaching President Obama's desk and this question was included to see how salient the issue might be to voters. These six questions were included in additive scale measuring political knowledge ($\alpha = 0.610$). Because I expect those with higher levels of political knowledge to have a greater stake in their responsibility attributions, I expect to see a positive relationship between knowledge and the potential for motivated reasoning.

Economic Effect

The effect that the economy has on individuals is measured as an additive scale of the affirmative responses to six yes/no questions regarding the impact of the economic climate on an individual and their household. The scale included:

- Recently, have you worried more than usual about financial matters?
- Have you or someone in your household been forced to dip into personal savings as a result of recent economic conditions?
- Have you or your household been forced to make cutbacks as a result of the economy?
- Have you or someone in your household taken a forced pay cut in the past three years?
- Are you or someone in your household employed at a job below their qualifications?
- Have you or someone in your household been unemployed in the past three years?

Table 5.11 shows the breakdown of the frequencies of this variable. It appears that these questions do a nice job of stratifying individuals based on how economic conditions are affecting the respondents and their families, with each category containing between 11 and 20 percent of the respondents. The average respondent answered "yes" to 3.3 items on this scale, with a median of 3 affirmative answers. I expect the economic effect scale to be positively related to the potential to engage in motivated reasoning.

Results

Primary Responsibility Attribution

Table 5.12 presents the models using individual characteristics to predict the potential to engage in motivated reasoning when making a primary responsibility attribution, with the results for the economic issue on the left and the Iraq War results on the right. Each model is repeated using both measures of partisan strength, one including pure independents and one excluding them. The results are somewhat supportive of my expectations. For the economy, partisan strength is positive and significant for both

Table 5.12 – Motivated Reasoning in Primary Responsibility Attributions

	National Economy		Iraq War	
	Including Pure Independents	Excluding Pure Independents	Including Pure Independents	Excluding Pure Independents
Partisan Strength	1.12***	0.40*	0.68***	0.22
	(0.15)	(0.19)	(0.14)	(0.17)
Knowledge	0.23†	0.30*	-0.04	-0.03
	(0.12)	(0.13)	(0.12)	(0.12)
Interest	0.23	0.33†	0.12	0.07
	(0.18)	(0.20)	(0.18)	(0.19)
Economic Effect	0.04	0.03		
	(0.07)	(0.08)		
Female	-0.12	-0.05	-0.14	-0.10
	(0.28)	(0.30)	(0.26)	(0.27)
Minority	-0.21	-0.30	0.84*	0.83†
	(0.45)	(0.47)	(0.41)	(0.43)
Marital Status	-0.12	-0.25	0.15	0.14
	(0.35)	(0.37)	(0.34)	(0.35)
Age	-0.00	-0.04	0.02*	0.02*
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Education	0.18	0.15	0.05	0.03
	(0.12)	(0.13)	(0.12)	(0.12)
Income	0.23	0.13	0.06	0.04
	(0.18)	(0.10)	(0.09)	(0.09)
Religiosity	0.03	0.06	-0.12	-0.11
	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Trust in Government	-0.19*	-0.17*	-0.00	0.04
	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Equal Opportunity	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.03
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.07)
Economic Individualism	-0.11	-0.14	0.08	0.08
	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Free Enterprise	0.07	0.08	0.14*	0.16*
	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.08)
Presidential Control of Issue	0.04	-0.03	0.21	0.16
	(0.19)	(0.20)	(0.18)	(0.19)
Intercept	-3.64**	-1.96	0.21	-3.46**
	(1.19)	(1.26)	(0.18)	(0.19)
n=	331	275	332	276
Log Likelihood	-176.04	-154.37	-190.83	-177.08

Logistic Regression. DV: 1= Obama more responsible, 0=Bush more responsible; *** indicates p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, † p<0.1.

models (p<0.001 and p<0.03), indicating that those with stronger party attachments are more likely to engage in motivated reasoning. Substantively, strong partisans are expected to have a predicted probability of being a potential motivated reasoner 0.67 higher than pure independents. In the exclusive model, that predicted probably is 0.14 points among strong partisans than among partisan-leaning Independent. There is a sizable and statistically significant relationship between partisans strength and the potential for motivated reasoning when making Iraq War attributions only in the inclusive model, with a typical strong partisan having a predicted probably 0.42 points higher than pure independents.

Testing the other hypotheses also shows mixed results. Those with high levels of political knowledge are more likely to be potential motivated reasoners in both the inclusive and exclusive economic models (p<0.06 and p<0.02), but not in any of the Iraq War models. The substantive effect is sizable, with there being a 30 and 37 point differences in the predicted probability of being a possible motivated reasoner for someone who aced the knowledge questions versus someone who failed to answer any correctly for the inclusive and exclusive models, respectively. In the exclusive economic model, those with a high level of political interest are a 22 points more likely to be potential motivated reasoners than someone who does not follow politics (p<0.09), though there is no visible relationship in the model models. Finally, the economic effect scale is not related to the possibility of engaging in motivated reasoning when making primary economic attributions.

A few patterns emerge in the control variables, with minorities, older individuals, and those who value free enterprise being more likely to engage in motivated reasoning when making Iraq War attributions and those who score high on the government trust scale being *less* likely to engage in motivated reasoning when making economic responsibility attributions. Given the overrepresentation of minorities in the military, the relationship between minorities and motivated reasoning potential for the Iraq War issue might be a possible extension of the hypothesis that those with a larger stake in an issue will be more likely to engage in motivated reasoning. The substantive effect is certainly important; being a minority produces a 20 point increase in the predicted probability in both models.

Immediate Responsibility Attributions

Models that predict the likelihood of showing signs of motivated reasoning when making immediate responsibility attributions are shown in Table 5.13. Partisanship is a major predictor of whether or not an individual is likely to engage in motivated reasoning for three of the four models. It is statistically significant for the inclusive economic model ($p<0.001$), and both the inclusive and exclusive Iraq War models ($p<0.001$ and $p<0.09$). The substantive effect of partisanship is roughly equivalent for both inclusive models, the difference in predicted probabilities for strong partisans and pure independents in the inclusive models are 0.37 for the economy and 0.35 for the Iraq War.

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Table 5.13 – Motivated Reasoning in Immediate Responsibility Attributions

	National Economy		Iraq War	
	Including Pure Independents	Excluding Pure Independents	Including Pure Independents	Excluding Pure Independents
Partisan Strength	0.62***	0.04	0.66***	0.29†
	(0.14)	(0.18)	(0.14)	(0.17)
Knowledge	0.22†	0.25*	0.17	0.19
	(0.12)	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.13)
Interest	-0.04	0.01	0.14	0.18
	(0.18)	(0.19)	(0.20)	(0.20)
Economic Effect	0.13†	0.14†		
	(0.07)	(0.08)		
Female	-0.10	-0.07	-0.08	-0.04
	(0.27)	(0.28)	(0.28)	(0.29)
Minority	-0.79	-0.92†	1.03*	1.02*
	(0.50)	(0.51)	(0.42)	(0.44)
Marital Status	-0.08	-0.11	0.16	0.15
	(0.35)	(0.36)	(0.36)	(0.36)
Age	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Education	-0.03	-0.06	0.13	0.11
	(0.12)	(0.13)	(0.12)	(0.12)
Income	-0.05	-0.07	-0.00	-0.02
	(0.09)	(0.10)	(0.09)	(0.09)
Religiosity	0.17*	0.21**	0.00	0.01
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Trust in Government	-0.02	0.02	-0.13	-0.10
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Equal Opportunity	-0.05	-0.05	0.07	0.01
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)
Economic Individualism	0.10	0.11	0.07	0.07
	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Free Enterprise	0.20**	0.20**	0.09	0.09
	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.08)
Presidential Control of Issue	0.06	0.03	0.16	0.12
	(0.18)	(0.19)	(0.20)	(0.20)
Intercept	-4.70***	-3.75**	-5.07***	-4.01**
	(1.23)	(1.29)	(1.27)	(1.30)
n=	338	282	342	286
Log Likelihood	-184.06	-166.17	-178.47	-169.52

Logistic Regression. DV: 1= Obama more responsible, 0=Bush more responsible; *** indicates p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, † p<0.1.

In the exclusion model, strong partisans are 0.14 more likely to be potential motivated reasoners when making intermediate Iraq War attributions than independent leaners.

While political interest is not statistically significant in any of the models, political knowledge is significant in both the inclusive and exclusive economic models ($p<0.07$ and $p<0.05$, respectively). In the inclusive model, moving from answering none of the knowledge questions correctly to answering all six correctly brings an increase of 0.25 in the likelihood of being a potential motivated reasoner. In the exclusive model, such a change produces a 0.28 point increase.

The issue effect hypothesis also finds support. The difference in the likelihood of being a potential motivated reasoner increases 0.17 points when moving from someone who scored a zero on the economic effects scale to someone scoring a six for the inclusive model ($p<0.08$) and 0.20 points for the exclusive model ($p<0.06$).

As with primary responsibility attributions, some interesting patterns are found in the control variables. Once again, minorities are 0.24 points more likely to be potential motivated reasoners when making Iraq War attributions in both the inclusive and exclusive model ($p<0.02$ and $p<0.02$). Interestingly, minorities are 0.18 points *less likely* to be potential motivated reasoners in the exclusive economic model, however ($p<0.07$). Additionally, those who attend religious services more than once a week are 0.25 points more likely to be potential motivated reasoners than those who never attend religious services in the inclusive model ($p<0.03$); in the exclusive model, the increase is 0.30 points ($p<0.01$). There is no relationship between religiosity and the potential for

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motivated reasoning when making Iraq War attributions. Finally, those who ascribe to the value of free enterprise are more likely to be potential motivated reasoners when it comes to economic attributions. Moving from the 25th to 75th percentile in the free enterprise scale produces roughly a 0.14 point increase in the predicted probability for both the inclusive and exclusive models.

Prospective Responsibility Attributions

Finally, we examine who shows the possibility of using motivated reasoning when making prospective responsibility attributions. Table 5.14 shows these results and, on the whole, their variables are less predictive than the results of models using the primary and immediate attribution types. Partisan strength is only significant in each issue's inclusive model ($p<0.001$ for both issues), producing a predicted probability increase of 0.45 points in the economic model and 0.35 points in the Iraq War model when comparing the likelihood of being a potential motivated reasoner for strong partisans and pure independents.

Interest is significant in neither the economic or Iraq War models and the economic effect scale are insignificant in the economic model. I suggest that the reason for this is likely the result of the uncertainty in predicting how the economy and Iraq War will look in a year. It follows that individuals who are unsure of their perception are less likely to feel the directional motives that would bias them towards making an attribution based on partisan rationalizations. However, the significant relationship between

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Table 5.14 – Motivated Reasoning in Prospective Responsibility Attributions

	National Economy		Iraq War	
	Including Pure Independents	Excluding Pure Independents	Including Pure Independents	Excluding Pure Independents
Partisan Strength	0.65***	0.06	0.55***	-0.02
	(0.13)	(0.17)	(0.13)	(0.17)
Knowledge	0.21†	0.25*	0.12	0.15
	(0.11)	(0.12)	(0.11)	(0.12)
Interest	0.15	0.21	-0.07	-0.01
	(0.18)	(0.18)	(0.17)	(0.18)
Economic Effect	0.02	0.03		
	(0.17)	(0.07)		
Female	0.37	0.51†	-0.09	0.02
	(0.26)	(0.27)	(0.26)	(0.27)
Minority	0.96*	1.07*	0.83*	0.79†
	(0.43)	(0.50)	(0.40)	(0.43)
Marital Status	0.03	-0.00	-0.49	-0.55†
	(0.32)	(0.34)	(0.32)	(0.33)
Age	0.01	0.01	0.02†	0.02*
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Education	0.14	0.14	0.10	0.10
	(0.11)	(0.12)	(0.11)	(0.12)
Income	-0.16	-0.23*	0.03	-0.02
	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.08)	(0.09)
Religiosity	0.04	0.08	0.00	0.03
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.08)
Trust in Government	-0.04	-0.00	-0.05	-0.02
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Equal Opportunity	0.03	0.02	0.01	0.00
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Economic Individualism	0.03	0.03	0.08	0.09
	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Free Enterprise	-0.12	-0.15*	-0.16*	-0.19**
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)
Presidential Control of Issue	0.06	0.02	0.12	0.08
	(0.17)	(0.18)	(0.17)	(0.18)
Intercept	-3.16**	-1.83	-2.85**	-1.60
	(1.10)	(1.17)	(1.11)	(1.18)
n=	340	284	342	286
Log Likelihood	-200.32	-179.32	-204.03	-184.99

Logistic Regression. DV: 1= Obama more responsible, 0=Bush more responsible;   *** indicates p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, † p<0.1.

motivated reasoning potential and political knowledge suggests that having more information about current events might reduce some of that uncertainty, at least when it comes to economic attributions. The most knowledgeable people are 0.29 points more likely than the least knowledgeable to be identified as a possible motivated reasoner in the inclusive economic model, and 0.34 points more likely in the exclusive economic model. The issue effects hypothesis is not supported by the prospective attribution data.

Once again, minorities are more likely to be identified as possibly engaging in motivated reasoning, this time in all four models, statistically significant at the $p<0.05$ level. In each model, minorities are about 0.20 points more likely to be potential motivated reasoners than Caucasians. Older individuals are more likely to be potential motivated reasoners in prospective Iraq War attributions, as they were for primary attributions. Also, there is a negative relationship between attachment to free enterprise and the potential for prospective motivated reasoning for both Iraq War models, as well as for the exclusive economic model.

Generally, as discussed earlier, these prospective attribution questions featured dichotomous response option sets; respondents could only answer whether President Obama or President Bush would be more responsible for economic/war conditions one year from the survey date. As a result, the respondents were overwhelming in their selection of President Obama. This not only decreased the amount of variation in the earlier analysis, but probably limited the amount of motivated reasoning that could occur

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when making a prospective attribution. One might think of the prospective attribution question's target date of roughly two and a half years after a new administration's inauguration as the limit at which most voters would be willing to consider a former President as responsible for issues.[18]

Conclusions Regarding the Potential for Motivated Reasoning

While not overwhelming, the evidence presented is somewhat consistent with expectations as to who is likely to engage in motivated reasoning. Partisan strength was significantly related to the potential for motivated reasoning in eight of the twelve models.

Interest performed poorer than expected as a proxy for the stake individuals have in the issues. I would speculate that this is likely the result of the fact that the overwhelming majority of individuals viewed themselves as interested in political events, perhaps due to social desirability. In fact, the median value of the variable was the highest degree of interest – following political events "almost all the time."

Knowledge, however, proved to be a more consistent measure, perhaps due to its objectivity. Across all three attribution types, knowledge proved to be a significant predictor of possible motivated reasoning for economic issues. Oddly, knowledge is never significant in the Iraq War models. I would posit that knowledge about the

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[18] President Obama took office in January 2009. The survey was in the field in August 2010 and asked about responsibility for conditions one year from now, which is roughly August 2011. Importantly, respondents did not have much difficulty in seeing President Bush as responsible for the current issue conditions of August 2010.

economy and economic conditions is more accessible to the average individual than knowledge about a war on foreign soil. Not only has the economy gotten more media coverage in the past year than the war, but individuals can learn about economic conditions though everyday life. As a result, knowledge is more likely to influence whether individuals are capable of engaging in motivated reasoning when making economic responsibility attributions rather than Iraq War attributions.

The issue effect hypothesis, encapsulated by the economic effects scale, was only significantly related to potential motivated reasoning for immediate attributions. One possible explanation concerns the distinction between immediate and prospective attributions. The questions comprising the economic effects scale are all retrospective, and several use a three-year period as a time referent. If the economic effects scale is helping to measure the stake a respondent has in the issue, it might be fairer to say that that stake would not necessarily apply to future expectations. This explanation, however, fails to account for why the scale is an insignificant predictor of primary responsibility.

Summary: Motivated Reasoning in the Responsibility Attribution Process

This study analyzes the role of motivated reasoning in the formation of responsibility attributions and marks the first in-depth analysis of how individuals ascribe responsibility across current and former officeholders. Furthermore, the analysis of the three attribution types allowed for a precise measurement of how responsibility is assigned. This chapter only dealt with attribution from a dichotomous perspective;

respondents were asked who was more responsible for a given issue, President Obama or President Bush. Later, I will examine the assignment of responsibility across several political actors, but for now, it is helpful to recap what has been presented as far as evidence for the existence of motivated reasoning in the responsibility attribution process.

The use of the three responsibility attributions types is justified by the fact that respondents, both individually and in the aggregate, varied who they saw as more responsible for the economy and the Iraq across the three types. As one would expect, the assignment of responsibility to the incumbent increased from primary to immediate attributions and again from immediate to prospective attributions.

The central aim of this project is to investigate how individuals assign credit and blame for national issues, with the hypothesis that their party identification and perceptions of the issue will cause respondents to assign credit to politicians who share their party identification and assign blame to the opposite party or to a target outside of the government. As shown, individuals' desire to align their partisan attachments and their issue perceptions with their responsibility attributions will act as a directional motivation, causing responsibility attributions to be made through the use of motivated reasoning.

Evidence used to support this hypothesis included testing the predictive effect of an interaction between an individual's issue perception and his party identification on the assignment of responsibility and the marginal effect of this interaction at each partisan level. Furthermore, it was shown that the predicted probability of making a particular

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attribution often varied across party groups at each perception level and the effects of issue perceptions on responsibility attributions was not identical across both parties. Finally, I tested four hypotheses about which types individuals are likely to engage in motivated reasoning by examining which respondents show the potential to make responsibility attributions based on directional goals. I posited that the likelihood of engaging in motivated reasoning would be positively related to the strength of individuals' partisan attachments, their political knowledge, interest, and the effect an issue has on them.

Table 5.15 presents a summary of how the hypotheses have been supported by the dichotomous attribution data, broken up by attribution type and by issue. The interaction between party identification and issue perception was correctly signed and statistically significant in five of the six models and the predicted probability estimates was statistically significant across partisan groups in four of the six. Clearly, the models predicting prospective attributions were the least likely to perform as expected, though, I argue, this is because the dichotomous response options are not well-suited for measuring prospective responsibility across two Presidential administrations. Instead, it is preferable to use the approach taken in Chapter 7, which analyzes the relative amounts of responsibility given to various political and nonpolitical actors on a seven-point scale.

Table 5.15 - Evidence of Motivated Reasoning Affecting the Attribution Process

	Economic Attributions			Iraq War Attributions		
	Primary	Immediate	Prospective	Primary	Immediate	Prospective
Ordered Logit						
Interaction Coef.	†	**	-	**	**	*
Marginal Effects	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pred. Probs.	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Within Parties						
Democrats	-	*	**	*	-	**
Republicans	-	-	-	**	***	***
Potential Motivated Reasoners						
Partisan Strength	***	***	***	***	***	***
Knowledge	†	†	†	-	-	-
Interest	-	-	-	-	-	-
Economic Effect	-	†	-	N/A	N/A	N/A

Cells marked with "Yes" indicate statistical distinctions present at p<0.1. When testing coefficients, *** indicates p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, † p<0.1. The "Potential Motivated Reasoner" models include pure Independents.

Breaking up the data into party groupings also produces important variation. Democrats appear to be more likely to engage in motivated reasoning for both economic and Iraq War attributions while Republicans only appear to do so when engaging in Iraq War attributions. In the text, I suggest that this is related to a sense of "issue ownership" among Republicans, who are often seen as stronger on military issues than Democrats.

Finally, I determined who is likely to show symptoms of motivated reasoning, i.e. they tend to credit members of their own party for perceived successes and blame members of the opposite party for perceived failures. I hypothesized that certain characteristics would increase the importance of an individual's alignment of their attribution with their issue perceptions, thus increasing the "stake" an individual has in attribution. One such characteristic is partisan strength; indeed, stronger partisans were

more likely than weaker partisans to be potential motivated reasoners in all six models. Knowledge is another characteristic, though it is only a significant predictor in economic attributions but not Iraq War ones. One such reason for this distinction is that the economy might be more complex and harder to understand than the Iraq War, and thus motivated reasoning is more affected by knowledge. Contrary to expectations, interest is not a significant predictor in any of the models, likely do the lack of variation in the measure; a majority of respondents self-selected themselves into the highest interest category, suggesting that social desirability may bias this variable. Finally, the economy's effect on an individual is a statistically significant predictor of being a potential motivated reasoner in making immediate responsibility attributions, but not primary or prospective ones.

Overall, immediate responsibility attributions performed the best, showing evidence of twelve of seventeen hypothesized effects, while prospective attributions performed the worst, only showing evidence for eight of the relationships. The analysis of the assignment of responsibility independently across several targets in Chapter 7 will provide stronger evidence for the necessity of prospective attributions and the use of motivated reasoning when making them. However, before that data is analyzed, Chapter 6 will first examine how the responsibility attribution process is related to important political behaviors.

Chapter 6: The Relationship between Responsibility Attributions and Political Behavior

Thus far, the analysis of the Political Attributions Survey focused on *how* individuals determine responsibility for economic and Iraq War conditions, with the results generally concluding that individuals do so while engaging in motivated reasoning; party identification and issue perceptions interact in a manner that leads people to ascribe responsibility to copartisans if they have positive issue perceptions and to members of the opposite party if they have negative issue perceptions. The following analysis attempts to build on this finding to illustrate the importance of the attribution process on political behavior. Finding a strong relationship between the attributions and political behavior will be further evidence of the importance of a better understanding of responsibility attributions and their place in the political realm.

This chapter will attempt to accomplish three goals. First, it will reaffirm the importance of responsibility attributions in predicting political behavior. Indeed, others have shown that responsibility attributions are an important correlate to behaviors like the vote (e.g. Abramowitz, et al. 1988; Lau and Sears 1981; Peffley 1984). However, the Political Attributions Survey allows for a richer understanding of the implications of responsibility assignment by determining the relative importance of the three

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responsibility attribution types and the assignment of responsibility to individual targets in determining behavior. Secondly, this chapter will show that individuals who engage in certain types of political behaviors form responsibility attributions differently than those who do not do so. Thirdly, one particular type of political behavior, Tea Party support, is examined to show how supporting the Tea Party relates to party identification, issue perceptions, and vote choice.

<p style="text-align:center">The Importance of Attributions on Vote Choice</p>

Voting has direct consequences for elections, and thus, public policy, and is one of the most widely-studied behaviors in Political Science. Hence, it is of great importance to determine the relationship responsibility attributions have with vote choice. Unfortunately, the timing of this study limits the precision with which vote choice is measured. The survey, took place in the summer of 2010. President Obama was in the second year of his first term in office and the 2012 Presidential election had obviously yet to take shape. Still, the survey included a measure of vote intention for the 2012 election, with the presumption that the incumbent would seek reelection: "Even though the 2012 presidential election is a long way off, who do you think you would rather vote for?" Individuals were given the option of choosing President Obama or a generic "someone else." Overall, 44 percent of the sample reported an intention to vote for Obama in 2012.

Keeping in mind this limitation of the data, a rich analysis remains possible. In this section, separate regressions are analyzed, predicting vote intention with an

individuals' issue perception, responsibility attribution, the interaction between the attribution and perception, and the host of control variables. As an individual's perception of an issue's conditions increase, reward/punishment theories may lead us to reasonably expect him or her to be more likely to support the incumbent's reelection. More importantly, however, I hypothesize that issue perceptions will interact with responsibility attributions; the likelihood of voting for Obama's reelection should increase not only when perceptions improve, but also when the individual sees President Obama as responsible for that issue's conditions.

The results yield several interesting findings. First, the survey responses indicate that responsibility attributions for the Iraq War do not appear to be related to vote intention in any way. As Table 6.1 shows, for all three attributions, the attributions' coefficients were insignificant, as were the interactions. Instead, party identification and other demographic variables commonly-related to the vote decision dominate these models. Of course, while it was already established in Chapter 5 that Iraq War attributions are often formed in a manner consistent with partisanship, this result implies that the attributions fail to further influence behavior.

The same cannot be said of economic attributions, which appear to have an important influence on behavior. Interestingly, the type of responsibility attribution is important as well. In the first column of Table 6.2, even after controlling for partisanship, the interaction between one's primary attribution and perception of conditions is positively signed and statistically significant ($p<0.01$). In other words, as

Table 6.1 - Predicting Vote Intention with Iraq War Attributions

	Primary	Immediate	Prospective
Attribution x Perception	0.30	0.19	0.33
	(0.34)	(0.38)	(0.56)
Attribution	-0.47	-1.69	-1.76
	(1.03)	(1.23)	(2.13)
Issue Perception	-0.02	0.20	0.07
	(0.24)	(0.30)	(0.53)
Party ID	-1.26***	-1.21***	-1.19***
	(0.19)	(0.18)	(0.18)
Female	1.15*	1.31**	1.21**
	(0.49)	(0.49)	(0.47)
Minority	1.40†	1.13	1.38†
	(0.80)	(0.84)	(0.82)
Marital Status	-0.14	-0.25	-0.15
	(0.55)	(0.56)	(0.53)
Age	-0.02	-0.01	-0.01
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Education	0.26	0.38†	0.30
	(0.24)	(0.22)	(0.21)
Income	0.25	0.14	0.14
	(0.17)	(0.15)	(0.16)
Religiosity	-0.29*	-0.25†	-0.26†
	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.14)
Interest	0.13	0.24	0.32
	(0.29)	(0.29)	(0.28)
Trust in Government	0.20	0.33*	0.27†
	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.16)
Equal Opportunity	0.37**	0.29**	0.29**
	(0.12)	(0.11)	(0.11)
Economic Individualism	-0.09	-0.06	-0.10
	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.13)
Free Enterprise	-0.27*	-0.29*	-0.27*
	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.13)
Knowledge	-0.02	-0.00	-0.04
	(0.20)	(0.20)	(0.19)
Presidential Control of Issue	-0.35	-0.33	-0.45
	(0.33)	(0.33)	(0.34)
Intercept	3.51†	2.59	3.80
	(1.96)	(2.02)	(2.68)
n	307	312	313
Log-likelihood	-72.61	-75.49	-74.99

Logistic Regression. DV: 1= Obama more responsible, 0=Bush more responsible; *** indicates p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, † p<0.1.

Table 6.2 – Predicting Vote Intention with Economic Attributions

	Primary	Immediate	Prospective
Attribution x Perception	1.97**	0.50	1.27*
	(0.66)	(0.38)	(0.62)
Attribution	-3.59***	-1.70	-5.20**
	(1.12)	(1.20)	(2.00)
Issue Perception	-0.33	-0.34	-0.89
	(0.30)	(0.29)	(0.59)
Party ID	-1.21***	-1.16***	-1.18***
	(0.20)	(0.19)	(0.19)
Female	1.02*	1.07*	1.01*
	(0.49)	(0.47)	(0.48)
Minority	1.46[†]	1.66*	1.40[†]
	(0.80)	(0.81)	(0.82)
Marital Status	0.15	-0.15	-0.18
	(0.55)	(0.52)	(0.54)
Age	-0.02	-0.01	-0.01
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Education	0.48*	0.33	0.30
	(0.24)	(0.21)	(0.22)
Income	0.16	0.20	0.15
	(0.17)	(0.16)	(0.16)
Religiosity	-0.27[†]	-0.23[†]	-0.19
	(0.14)	(0.13)	(0.13)
Interest	0.16	0.28	0.26
	(0.29)	(0.28)	(0.28)
Trust in Government	0.37*	0.33*	0.29[†]
	(0.17)	(0.16)	(0.16)
Equal Opportunity	0.45***	0.34**	0.28*
	(0.13)	(0.11)	(0.11)
Economic Individualism	-0.05	-0.07	-0.05
	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.14)
Free Enterprise	-0.29*	-0.29*	-0.28*
	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.13)
Knowledge	-0.07	-0.11	-0.11
	(0.20)	(0.19)	(0.20)
Presidential Control of Issue	-0.52	-0.48	-0.42
	(0.32)	(0.31)	(0.33)
Economic Effect on Family	-0.04	-0.05	-0.02
	(0.13)	(0.12)	(0.13)
Intercept	3.34[†]	3.89[†]	6.88**
	(1.97)	(2.14)	(2.68)
n	304	312	315
Log-likelihood	-70.26	-77.38	-77.38

Logistic Regression. DV: Intention to vote for Obama in 2012;   *** indicates p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, [†] p<0.1.

perceptions improved, individuals were more likely to intend to vote for Obama if they saw him as responsible for those perceptions. The marginal effect of seeing Obama as more primarily responsible than Bush on vote choice is statistically significant in Figure 6.1. If you assume very poor economic conditions, seeing President Obama as more primarily responsible than President Bush decreases the predicted probability of a strong Democrat intending to vote for Obama's reelection by 0.36. Strong Republicans see a much smaller decrease of 0.06, but this is due to the fact that Strong Republicans were unlikely to vote for Obama anyway. Conversely, if a typical respondent believed that economic conditions were average, ascribing primary responsibility to President Obama increases the likelihood of the intention to vote for him by 0.04 in strong Democrats and 0.17 in strong Republicans.

Figure 6.1- Marginal Effect of Primary Economic Attribution on Vote Choice

Somewhat oddly, a similar relationship was not seen with immediate attributions. In the second column of Table 6.2, the attribution x perception interaction is insignificant (p<0.19), though correctly signed, as are the marginal effects of immediate attributions (Figure 6.2).

Figure 6.2 - Marginal Effect of Immediate Economic Attribution on Vote Choice

Prospective economic attributions also had an important relationship with vote intention. The interaction between an Obama attribution and prospective expectations was positively signed and statistically significant (p<0.05) in the third column of Table 6.1. Figure 6.3 confirms the statistical significance of this interaction for those who think future conditions will either stay the same or worsen. Thus, the likelihood of casting a vote to reelect Obama was decreased if that person thought he would be responsible for

future deterioration. If people thought the future economy would get much better, seeing Obama as prospectively responsible increased the likelihood of voting for him by 0.36 among strong Republicans. If people thought the future economy would get much worse, strong Republicans seeing Obama as prospectively responsible were 0.51 points less likely to intend to vote for him.

Figure 6.3 - Marginal Effect of Prospective Economic Attribution on Vote Choice

So, while this analysis merely confirms the connection between economic attributions and the vote, it also makes an important contribution by noting that not all responsibility attributions have the same relationships with political behavior. When it comes to predicting vote intention, primary and prospective economic attributions were quite important, while immediate attributions were not. I believe this is once again

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confirmation of the electorate's ability to distinguish between the responsibility types.
Based on these findings, it appears that, at least when evaluating vote intention, citizens
are largely concerned with a) was the incumbent President the root cause of the
economy's condition? and b) will the incumbent President's policies produce positive or
negative changes to the economy? Significantly, when thinking about an election two
years away, they are much less concerned with the incumbent's responsibility for current
conditions. Whether that is because most citizens are willing to cut the President some
slack for the first few years of his term or simply because they are more concerned about
past and future, this analysis demonstrates that the three responsibility types are
significant in different ways.

An alternative interpretation of these relationships involves the reverse direction
of causality between vote choice and responsibility attributions. If vote choice acts as a
cause of responsibility attributions, rather than an effect, it is also possible that
individuals who are planning on voting for President Obama in 2012 are likely to see him
responsible for negative conditions or expectations and more likely to see him
responsible for positive conditions or expectations. Unfortunately, there is no way to
determine this causal ambiguity with this survey.

Another finding of this analysis is dominance of the importance of economic
attributions on the vote and the lack of importance of Iraq War attributions. There are
several possibilities as to why this is. First, it could simply be that the economy is always
the primary issue, and, resultantly, voters make their decisions based on it. In this

scenario, attributions for international issues will never affect voting behavior, at least not to the extent of economic attributions. An alternative possibility is that the economy was incredibly salient in the minds of most citizens during the time in which the survey was in the field. As Chapter 3 explains, the economic collapse of late-2008 continued well into the summer of 2009. This leaves open the question of whether Iraq War attributions would have been more important before the economic collapse or earlier in the war, when it occupied a greater proportion of the headlines.

Blame Assignment and Vote Choice

The importance of responsibility attributions on vote intention was also evident when examining the assignment of responsibility amounts to Presidents Bush and Obama. For this section, cases were restricted to those thinking that conditions were anywhere from "much worse" to "same," thus focusing on the assignment of blame rather than credit.[19] For each type of responsibility attribution, vote intention was predicted in a logistic regression. Included as independent variables are the amount of responsibility individuals assigned President Obama and President Bush, as well as the control variables (including party identification). The results consistently show that these responsibility assignments are not equal in their influence on the vote; in each model, the assignment of responsibility to President Bush, the former President, was a stronger predictor than responsibility assignment to President Obama, the incumbent.

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[19] Similar analyses were attempted looking at the importance of assigning credit, but this limited the regressions to too few cases to make confident comparisons.

For primary economic attributions, shown in the first column of Table 6.3, the coefficient of responsibility assignment to President Obama was statistically insignificant while the coefficient of responsibility assignment to President Bush was positive and statistically significant ($p=0.05$). Thus, as people assigned more blame to President Bush, they were more likely to intend to vote for Obama's reelection. The likelihood of having an Obama vote intention increases 0.21 when altering an otherwise typical strong Democrat's assignment of primary responsibility to Bush from "no responsibility" to "full responsibility." A similar change increases the likelihood of voting for Obama 0.05 points among strong Republicans.

Primary Iraq War attributions show an identical pattern in the second column of Table 6.3. Primary responsibility assignment to Obama is insignificant but the coefficient for Bush attributions is positive and significant ($p<0.09$). Strong Democrats are 9 points more likely to vote for Obama's reelection when they see blame Bush fully for long-term Iraq War conditions than if they say he has no responsibility. Such a change in responsibility assignment among strong Republicans only produces a 1 point increase in the predicted probability of an Obama vote, though.

As before, when examining the dichotomous results, immediate economic responsibility assignment's effect on the vote is statistically insignificant. The coefficient of assignment to President Bush is positive and approaches significance ($p<0.13$), though

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Table 6.3 – Blame Assignment and Vote Choice

	Primary		Immediate		Prospective	
	Economy	*Iraq*	*Economy*	*Iraq*	*Economy*	*Iraq*
Obama Attribution	0.07	0.08	-0.26	-0.04	-0.70	-0.04
	(0.18)	(0.16)	(0.23)	(0.20)	(0.44)	(0.23)
Bush Attribution	0.31*	0.28†	0.30	0.44**	0.55*	0.21
	(0.16)	(0.17)	(0.19)	(0.17)	(0.23)	(0.15)
Party ID	-1.07***	-1.53***	-1.56***	-0.49***	-1.75***	-0.46***
	(0.19)	(0.28)	(0.31)	(0.28)	(0.49)	(0.27)
Female	1.32**	1.64**	1.32†	1.48*	1.65†	1.40*
	(0.50)	(0.64)	(0.74)	(0.63)	(0.90)	(0.60)
Minority	1.88*	2.59*	3.65**	2.33*	4.43**	2.26*
	(0.88)	(1.06)	(1.26)	(1.06)	(1.70)	(1.00)
Marital Status	-0.21	-0.62	-0.10	-0.87	-1.66	-0.72
	(0.53)	(0.65)	(0.78)	(0.70)	(1.08)	(0.66)
Age	-0.00	0.03	-0.00	0.03	0.04	0.03
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Education	0.45*	0.36	0.62†	0.50	0.86†	0.37
	(0.23)	(0.28)	(0.32)	(0.31)	(0.47)	(0.28)
Income	-0.16	0.38†	0.19	0.39†	0.34	0.35†
	(0.16)	(0.21)	(0.23)	(0.21)	(0.28)	(0.21)
Religiosity	-0.15	-0.34*	-0.24	-0.22	-0.27	-0.27†
	(0.13)	(0.16)	(0.20)	(0.17)	(0.23)	(0.16)
Interest	0.19	-0.03	0.13	0.02	-0.07	0.13
	(0.29)	(0.42)	(0.48)	(0.40)	(0.55)	(0.39)
Trust in Government	0.39*	0.27	0.47†	0.33	0.64†	0.33†
	(0.17)	(0.20)	(0.28)	(0.20)	(0.34)	(0.20)
Equal Opportunity	0.36***	0.21	0.24	0.23†	0.16	0.22†
	(0.11)	(0.13)	(0.15)	(0.14)	(0.18)	(0.13)
Economic Individualism	-0.07	-0.15	-0.26	-0.21	-0.32	-0.12
	(0.13)	(0.17)	(0.20)	(0.18)	(0.23)	(0.17)
Free Enterprise	-0.32*	-0.21	-0.16	-0.07	-0.20	-0.17
	(0.13)	(0.15)	(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.20)	(0.15)
Knowledge	-0.11	0.02	-0.14	-0.18	-0.20	-0.07
	(0.20)	(0.27)	(0.29)	(0.29)	(0.39)	(0.26)
Presidential Control of Issue	-0.62†	-0.62	-0.46	-0.51	0.22	-0.33
	(0.37)	(0.46)	(0.48)	(0.48)	(0.67)	(0.47)
Economic Effect on Family	-0.08		-0.03		-0.15	
	(0.13)		(0.20)		(0.23)	
Intercept	0.98	-0.62	3.84	1.19	3.60	1.53
	(2.10)	(0.46)	(2.82)	(2.62)	(3.30)	(2.55)
n	298	217	224	212	163	216
Log-likelihood	-72.01	-49.91	-39.12	-46.60	-27.98	-50.47

Models are ordered logistic regressions that include those who think conditions are "much worse" to "same."
DV: Intention to vote for President Obama in 2012; *** indicates p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, † p<0.1.

it has only a modest substantive effect on the predicted probabilities. Immediate responsibility assignment to President Bush for Iraq War conditions, however, has a positive relationship with vote intention ($p<0.01$). Strong Democrats are 14 points more likely to vote for Obama's reelection if they think Bush fully responsible for current conditions in Iraq than if they say he has no responsibility; strong Republicans are 3 points more likely to do so.

Prospective economic responsibility's assignment is also a strong predictor of the vote. The coefficient of assignment of prospective blame to President Bush is positive and statistically significant ($p<0.5$) in the fifth column of Table 6.3. At the same time, President Obama's coefficient is negative, but only nears conventional levels of significance ($p<0.11$). Both have large substantive effects. For strong Democrats, altering the level of blame assigned to President Bush (from zero to six) increases the likelihood of voting for Obama by 12 points while altering the assignment of blame to Obama decrease the predicted probability of voting for his reelection by 55 points. Among strong Republicans, assigning full responsibility to Bush increases the likelihood of voting for Obama by 7 points while assigning full responsibility to Obama only drops the predicted probability by one point.

Blaming either President Bush or President Obama for future conditions of the Iraq War, however, does not seem to have an effect on the vote decision. Still, the coefficient for blame assigned to President Bush is large in magnitude, though statistically insignificant ($p<0.18$).

In summary, blaming President Bush, the former President, has a much stronger relationship with the decision to vote for President Obama, the incumbent, than blaming Obama himself. Further research is needed to assess the reasons why this relationship exists. One possibility is that, regardless of how a person assigns primary responsibility, there is no denying that both the Iraq War and the economic collapse began before President Obama took office. As a result, the decision to blame President Bush may occur prior to the decision to blame President Obama; the assignment of blame to President Obama may be shaped by whether or not a personal already blamed President Bush, making blaming Bush a more important factor in the decision to reelect Obama than blaming Obama himself.

Another possibility is that, because this survey was in the field just a year and a half after into Obama's term, the public was more confident in their assignment of blame to President Bush; Bush was in office for eight years and, by the time he left, people were fairly settled in their opinions of him. With a new president, however, individuals may still form responsibility attributions, but may be more uncertain of them, and less likely to let those uncertain attributions affect their behaviors. If this is the case, I would expect the importance of Obama attributions on the vote to increase as time goes on.

Attribution Formation by Behavior

This second section will focus on the relationship between the attribution process and two significant political behaviors: Presidential issue approval and support for the

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Tea Party movement. These two political behaviors are chosen because, while each is important, they are interesting in different ways. Presidential issue approval, which is derived from the question, "Do you approve or disapprove of the way President Obama is handling the economy/Iraq War?" is a common measure of Presidential support and is often included in political polls commissioned by media outlets and politicians. Presidential issue approval is often used in political arguments regarding Presidential popularity and public support for the President's agenda. I view this aspect of public opinion and behavior as quite universal; the measure is less partisan and ideological than individuals vote intentions or support for the Tea Party movement, and it is not uncommon for a President's copartisans to not approve of his handling of a particular issue or for members of the opposite party to approve.[20]

Unlike Presidential issue support, however, support for the Tea Party is quite ideological in nature. The Tea Party movement is a recent political movement, which roughly began in 2009 and is heavily associated with conservative and libertarian ideals. Tea Party members generally support decreases in taxation, spending, and the federal deficit, and the movement is closely associated with politicians such as Sarah Palin, Jim DeMint, Ron Paul, and Michelle Bachman and the Fox News commentator Glen Beck. As a result, Tea Party members are more conservative and Republican than the larger sample, though a majority of Republicans are not Tea Party supporters. Support for the

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[20] Over 23 percent of weak Democrats disapproved of Obama's handling of the economy and over 20 percent of weak Republicans approved. For Iraq War approval, 31 percent of weak Democrats disapproved of Obama's handling, and 44 percent of weak Republicans approved. Overall, 44 percent of the sample approved of Obama's handling of the economy and 54 approved of his handling of the Iraq War.

Tea Party movement was measured with a question asking whether the individual "supports or opposes the Tea Party movement;" those who indicated support were given a value of one and those who opposed, neither supported nor opposed, or who did not know were given a value of zero. My expectations of Tea Party support being largely ideological are supported by the results, which show that 84 percent of strong conservatives identify as Tea Party supporters while no strong liberals do so.

Determining the relationship between responsibility attributions and political behavior is less theoretical than the other sections of this dissertation. The purpose of this section is to show that responsibility attributions have serious implications for how individuals interact with the political process, and to that end, I expect differences in how responsibility is assigned based on the behaviors that they exhibit. However, I do not speculate how the differences will occur or their magnitude due to a lack of existing theory regarding what the differences should look like. Instead, the importance of this section is to show that individuals who engage in certain political behaviors can be expected to assign responsibility in a manner distinct from those who do not. I do not predict whether the use of motivated reasoning in the attribution process will be stronger or weaker among individuals who do or do not participate in a particular behavior. Instead, I treat this analysis like the previous ones, expecting that directional goals will be derived from individuals' party identification and issue perceptions, and the interaction of these two variables will have a negative relationship with the likelihood of an individual seeing Obama as more responsible for conditions than Bush.

Modeling the Relationship between Responsibility Attributions and Political Behavior

The introduction of political behaviors complicates the analysis. In the previous section, there were two independent variables that were interacted to predict a third dependent variable (party identification and issue perception interacted to predict the responsibility attribution). Analyzing how political behavior fits in requires the retention of those three variables, with the inclusion of a fourth. This leaves us with trying to determine how party identification, issue perception, responsibility attribution, and political behavior all relate to one another. One appropriate method to approach this problem would be to use a three-way interaction. However, this is not possible because in inclusion of a three-way interaction's six constitutive terms leads to a high degree of colinearity, and the survey's relatively small sample size will not be large enough to produce meaningful estimates.

Instead, I use a split sample approach, where those who engage in each political behavior are separated from those who do not, and two identical models are run to show how responsibility attributions are made within each subsample. This will allow for the analysis of how party identification and issue perceptions interact in influencing responsibility attributions for those who engage in the behavior, as well as for those who do not. As before, the results section discusses primary, immediate, and prospective responsibility attributions for both economic conditions and the conditions of the Iraq

War, this time distinguishing between those who approve of the President's handling of the issue and those who support the Tea Party.

<center>Presidential Issue Approval</center>

Primary Responsibility Attributions

First off, we shall examine how primary responsibility attributions are made for those who approve of President Obama's handling of the economy and those who do not approve, which are shown in the first two columns of Table 6.4. Based on conventional levels of statistical significance, I cannot conclude that those who approve of the President's handling of the economy assign responsibility in a manner different than those who disapprove. Both interactions are statistically insignificant and the two interaction coefficients are not statistically distinct from one another (Brame et al. 1998).[21] Still, there is some slight evidence of a difference. The interaction coefficient is much larger among those who approve of the President's handling of the economy than among those who do not and, as a result, the interaction is statistically significant at p<0.14 with a sizable substantive effect, suggesting that those who approve of his handling are more likely to engage in motivated reasoning when assigning primary economic responsibility. The predicted probability of a strong Democrat seeing President Obama as more responsible than President Bush increases 0.50 points when varying the

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[21] Brame et al. (1998) provide a test for testing the equivalence of regression coefficients in identical models across different samples. The test produces a z-statistic that is $z = \theta_1 - \theta_2 / \sqrt{SE\theta_1^2 - SE\theta_2^2}$

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Table 6.4 - Primary Responsibility Attribution and Presidential Issue Approval

	The Economy		The Iraq War	
	Approve	Disapprove	Approve	Disapprove
Party ID x Perception	-0.21	-0.10	-0.15[†]	-0.12
	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.08)	(0.09)
Party ID	0.50[†]	0.60**	0.43	0.20
	(0.28)	(0.23)	(0.29)	(0.23)
Issue Perception	0.69	0.41	0.45	0.49
	(0.44)	(0.69)	(0.30)	(0.45)
Female	0.28	0.03	-0.06	0.02
	(0.50)	(0.41)	(0.39)	(0.42)
Minority	-0.34	0.17	0.04	-0.11
	(0.72)	(0.89)	(0.54)	(0.88)
Marital Status	0.80	-0.15	0.19	1.52**
	(0.58)	(0.54)	(0.46)	(0.56)
Age	-0.03[†]	0.02	0.02	-0.00
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.13)
Education	-0.25	0.23	-0.11	-0.03
	(0.22)	(0.19)	(0.17)	(0.19)
Income	-0.34[†]	-0.03	-0.06	-0.04
	(0.18)	(0.14)	(0.13)	(0.13)
Religiosity	-0.07	0.05	-0.11	-0.16
	(0.17)	(0.12)	(0.11)	(0.12)
Interest	0.06	-0.39	-0.19	-0.05
	(0.32)	(0.30)	(0.25)	(0.26)
Trust in Government	0.09	-0.17	0.10	0.07
	(0.16)	(0.13)	(0.11)	(0.13)
Equal Opportunity	-0.12	-0.16[†]	0.05	-0.00
	(0.12)	(0.10)	(0.09)	(0.09)
Economic Individualism	0.16	-0.03	-0.27*	-0.01
	(0.13)	(0.12)	(0.11)	(0.12)
Free Enterprise	-0.05	0.12	-0.07	-0.06
	(0.15)	(0.11)	(0.10)	(0.17)
Knowledge	-0.05	0.34*	0.21	-0.06
	(0.20)	(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.17)
Presidential Control of Issue	0.65[†]	0.29	0.32	0.31
	(0.39)	(0.25)	(0.26)	(0.29)
Economic Effect on Family	-0.24[†]	0.06		
	(0.13)	(0.11)		
Intercept	-0.83	-4.38*	-1.67	-2.22
	(2.19)	(1.92)	(1.88)	(1.97)
n	133	172	171	140
Log-likelihood	-63.00	-89.25	-104.52	-88.04

Logistic regression coefficients shown, with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is the assignment of more responsibility to President Obama than President Bush.
[†] indicates significance at p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

economic perception from "much worse" to "much better;" a similar change in strong Republicans produces a 0.51 point *decrease* in the likelihood of seeing Obama as more responsible.

The differences between groups are starker across those who approve and disapprove of the President's handling of the Iraq War. There is scant evidence of motivated reasoning occurring among those who disapprove; the interaction between party identification and issue perceptions, while correctly signed, is statistically insignificant. Among those who approve of his handling of the Iraq War, however, the interactive effect is negative and statistically significant at $p<0.1$, suggesting that Republicans are more likely to see Bush as responsible when their perceptions improve, while Democrats more likely to see Obama as more responsible. The statistically significant interactive coefficient is confirmed when the marginal effect of issue perceptions on the likelihood of seeing Obama as more responsible than Bush is plotted across the various levels of party identification in Figure 6.4. The marginal effect is statistically significant at $p<0.1$ for strong Republicans and nears statistical significance for strong Democrats as well.

Substantively, it can be shown that Republicans who approve of the President's handling of the Iraq War are more affected by changes issue perceptions when ascribing primary responsibility than Democrats who also approve. For an otherwise typical strong Republican, the predicted probability of seeing President Obama as more responsible is 0.74 when they have a very negative perception of Iraq War conditions, but decreases

0.58 points to 0.15 when they have very positive perceptions. Among strong Democrats, such a change in perceptions elicits a 0.37 increase in the predicted probability, from 0.27 to 0.64.

Figure 6.4 - Marginal Effect of Perceptions on Primary Iraq War Attributions Among Presidential Approvers

Immediate Responsibility Attributions

The analysis of how Presidential issue approval affects immediate responsibility attributions is shown in Table 6.5. Looking first at economic attributions in the first two columns, it is apparent that those who disapprove of President Obama's handling of the economy are much more likely to engage in biased motivated reasoning when making responsibility attributions than those who approve of his handling of the economy. In the column titled "disapprove," the interaction of party identification and issue perception is

negative and statistically significant (p<0.01), indicating that, as perceptions improve,

Democrats are more likely to see Obama as responsible and Republicans are less likely.

The interaction's coefficient in the "approve" column is negative but statistically

insignificant. The null hypothesis that the two coefficients are equal can be rejected at

p<0.05, indicating that the interactive effect is larger for those who disapprove of

Obama's handling of the economy than for those who approve (Brame et al 1998). The

marginal effect of issue perceptions is shown to be statistically significant at p<0.1 for all

Democrats, pure Independents, and both weak and strong Republicans in Figure 6.5.

Figure 6.5 - Marginal Effect of Perceptions on Immediate Economic Attributions Among
Presidential Disapprovers

Table 6.5 - Immediate Responsibility Attribution and Presidential Issue Approval

	The Economy		The Iraq War	
	Approve	Disapprove	Approve	Disapprove
Party ID x Perception	-0.10	-0.65**	-0.08	-0.19
	(0.12)	(0.26)	(0.08)	(0.12)
Party ID	0.41	2.68***	0.24	0.88*
	(0.43)	(0.83)	(0.32)	(0.36)
Issue Perception	0.49	3.10**	0.21	0.51
	(0.40)	(1.14)	(0.30)	(0.50)
Female	0.19	0.22	0.31	0.57
	(0.45)	(0.65)	(0.36)	(0.52)
Minority	-0.47	-0.02	-0.64	-0.78
	(0.60)	(1.29)	(0.48)	(1.04)
Marital Status	-0.55	0.54	-0.35	0.17
	(0.53)	(0.80)	(0.46)	(0.63)
Age	-0.01	-0.02	0.00	0.02
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)
Education	-0.20	-0.30	-0.09	0.11
	(0.20)	(0.25)	(0.16)	(0.23)
Income	0.00	-0.01	0.10	0.09
	(0.17)	(0.20)	(0.12)	(0.16)
Religiosity	0.19	0.27	-0.03	0.04
	(0.15)	(0.18)	(0.11)	(0.15)
Interest	-0.36	0.15	0.28	-0.02
	(0.28)	(0.39)	(0.25)	(0.32)
Trust in Government	0.13	0.16	0.10	0.18
	(0.14)	(0.19)	(0.11)	(0.17)
Equal Opportunity	-0.15	-0.18	-0.09	-0.08
	(0.11)	(0.13)	(0.09)	(0.11)
Economic Individualism	0.02	0.16	0.05	0.05
	(0.12)	(0.16)	(0.10)	(0.14)
Free Enterprise	0.17	0.21	-0.10	0.16
	(0.14)	(0.16)	(0.10)	(0.14)
Knowledge	-0.18	0.44†	0.01	0.01
	(0.19)	(0.24)	(0.15)	(0.22)
Presidential Control of Issue	-0.07	0.57†	0.15	-0.06
	(0.33)	(0.35)	(0.25)	(0.34)
Economic Effect on Family	0.09	0.10		
	(0.12)	(0.17)		
Intercept	0.38	-16.46***	0.49	-4.52†
	(2.37)	(4.43)	(1.88)	(2.46)
n	135	179	175	142
Log-likelihood	-75.89	-48.91	-110.39	-63.61

Logistic regression coefficients shown, with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is the assignment of more responsibility to President Obama than President Bush.
† indicates significance at p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

There is a large practical effect among those who disapprove as well. Otherwise typical strong Democrats are practically universally predicted to see President Bush as immediately responsible if they think the economy is getting much worse, but they are predicted to see President Obama as more responsible with a probability of 0.98 if they think conditions are getting much better. Republicans have a predicted probability nearing 1.0 of thinking Obama is more responsible for economic conditions when they think conditions are getting much worse, but that likelihood drops to 0.41 if their perception improves to "much better." It is quite evident that those who disapprove of Obama's handling of the economy are engaging in biased reasoning when making responsibility attributions.

The results for the immediate Iraq War attributions, shown in the latter two columns of Table 6.5 are nearly just as strong. As with the economic models, the interaction between party identification and issue conditions is statistically insignificant among those who approve of the President's handling of the war. In the disapproving model, while the interactive coefficient just fails to reach statistical significance (p<0.11) the marginal effect of issue perceptions on the responsibility attribution are statistically significant at p<0.1 in Figure 6.6 for all Republicans and Independent-leaners.

Otherwise typical strong Republicans who think Iraq War conditions are getting much better have a predicted probability of 0.52 of seeing Obama as more responsible than Bush. That predicted probability increases 0.46 points, however, to 0.98 if they think conditions are getting much worse. For strong Democrats, the predicted probability

of seeing Obama as more responsible than Bush is 0.41 if they have very negative

perceptions, but that probability increases to 0.74 if they have very good perceptions, an

increase of 0.33.

Figure 6.6 - Marginal Effect of Perceptions on Immediate Iraq War Attributions among
Presidential Disapprovers

Prospective Responsibility Attributions

　　　　Moving along to prospective responsibility attributions, the models in Table 6.6

show predict whether an individual saw President Obama as more prospectively

responsible than President Bush for issue conditions one year from the survey's date. As

noted previously, measuring prospective responsibility attributions in this dichotomous

fashion is not ideal, due to the fact that the overwhelming majority of people (93 percent)

saw the current president as prospectively responsible. Still, however, some differences

can be seen in the way people assigned prospective economic responsibility, based on

Table 6.6 - Prospective Responsibility Attribution and Presidential Issue Approval

	Economy		Iraq War
	Approve	Disapprove	Approve
Party ID x Perception	-0.36	0.02	-0.12
	(0.23)	(0.17)	(0.17)
Party ID	1.58[†]	-0.08	0.04
	(0.86)	(0.40)	(0.69)
Issue Perception	1.98**	0.63	0.52
	(0.76)	(0.81)	(0.51)
Female	-0.03	-0.13	-0.12
	(0.64)	(1.00)	(0.93)
Minority	-0.25	-2.10	0.60
	(0.83)	(1.64)	(1.40)
Marital Status	0.47	-0.60	-0.78
	(0.75)	(1.22)	(1.42)
Age	-0.00	0.01	0.02
	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Education	-0.31	0.02	-0.42
	(0.28)	(0.51)	(0.41)
Income	0.05	-0.15	0.21
	(0.25)	(0.34)	(0.37)
Religiosity	-0.11	-0.13	-0.21
	(0.21)	(0.28)	(0.30)
Interest	-0.61	0.23	-0.75
	(0.45)	(0.79)	(0.75)
Trust in Government	-0.12	0.22	0.01
	(0.21)	(0.35)	(0.28)
Equal Opportunity	0.09	-0.23	-0.47
	(0.17)	(0.25)	(0.33)
Economic Individualism	0.13	0.64**	0.41
	(0.17)	(0.26)	(0.27)
Free Enterprise	-0.00	0.12	0.13
	(0.21)	(0.27)	(0.28)
Knowledge	0.21	-0.40	-0.09
	(0.29)	(0.48)	(0.41)
Presidential Control of Issue	-0.41	0.53	0.05
	(0.53)	(0.54)	(0.66)
Economic Effect on Family	0.02	-0.07	
	(0.17)	(0.30)	
Intercept	-3.41	0.08	6.00
	(3.89)	(3.99)	(5.52)
n	137	180	175
Log-likelihood	-43.54	-23.00	-23.90

Logistic regression coefficients shown, with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is the assignment of more responsibility to President Obama than President Bush.
[†] indicates significance at $p<0.1$, * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$

whether or not they approved of President Obama's handling of the economy. Among

those disapprove (Column 2), the interaction between party identification and issue

perception is not statistically significant and has almost no magnitude. The interaction's

coefficient among those who approve of Obama's job, however, is negative and

statistically significant at p<0.11. In Figure 6.7, an examination of the marginal effect of

prospective economic perceptions on the likelihood of seeing Obama as responsible is

statistically significant at p<0.1 for all Democrats and Independent-leaners.

Figure 6.7 - Marginal Effect of Perceptions on Prospective Economic Attributions among
Presdiental Approvers

As the interaction's coefficient and standard error suggests, this relationship's

magnitude is quite large, but a great deal of variation causes it to border the conventional

levels of statistical significance. To illustrate, an otherwise typical strong Democrat with

who thinks economic conditions will be much worse one year from the survey, has a 0.07

predicted probability of seeing President Obama as responsible for those conditions.

That same strong Democrat, if they thought conditions would be much better, would a

predicted probability of 0.99 of seeing President Obama as more responsible.

Interestingly, as suggested by Figure 6.7, this huge swing in predicted probability is not

mirrored by Republicans; a shift in expectations from "much worse" to "much better"

produces only an 0.18 point drop in the likelihood of seeing Obama as more responsible

than Bush.   The reason for this is simple: lack of variation. Of all the Republicans and

Republican-leaning Independents in the sample, only two of them ascribed more

prospective responsibility to President Bush than President Obama. With this in mind, it

is not surprising that economic expectations would produce smaller changes in predicted

probabilities for Republicans than Democrats.[22]

There is not much to report regarding prospective Iraq War attributions because,

due to low variation and the decreased sample size, the model could not even be run after

isolating those who disapproved of Obama's handling of the Iraq War. Among those

who approved, there was no evidence of motivated reasoning.

Summary

In short, this section has shown that the use of motivated reasoning when

ascribing responsibility for primary, immediate, and prospective responsibility can vary

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[22] For this reason, the marginal effects were not even calculated for strong Republicans in Figure D.

among those who approve or disapprove of a President's handling of an issue. The relationship between these important opinions and the formation of responsibility attributions highlight the necessity of further study. Importantly, this effect is not uniform across the three attribution types. For primary responsibility attributions, those who approved of the President's handling of the economy and the Iraq War were more likely to engage in motivated reasoning when making responsibility attributions than those who disapproved. However, for immediate attributions, it was those who *disapproved* of his handling that showed a strong relationship between party identification, preferences, and attributions. For prospective attributions, it appears that those who approve of Obama's handling of the economy are more likely to engage in motivated reasoning than those who disapprove.

Summary

In short, this section has shown that the use of motivated reasoning when ascribing responsibility for primary, immediate, and prospective responsibility can vary among those who approve or disapprove of a President's handling of an issue. This relationship between these important opinions and how people make responsibility attributions highlight the necessity of further study. Importantly, this effect is not uniform across the three attribution types. For primary responsibility attributions, those who approved of the President's handling of the economy and the Iraq War were more likely to engage in motivated reasoning when making responsibility attributions than

those who disapproved. However, for immediate attributions, it was those who

disapproved of his handling that showed a strong relationship between party

identification, preferences, and attributions. For prospective attributions, it appears that

those who approve of Obama's handling of the economy are more likely to engage in

motivated reasoning than those who disapprove.

Tea Party Support

Primary Responsibility Attributions

Whereas Presidential issue approval is certainly influenced, but not dictated by

party identification and ideology, support for the Tea Party movement, at least as it is

characterized by the media and Tea Party groups, is definitely more ideological in nature.

Tea Party supporters tend to be conservative, drawn to the movement's values of lower

taxation and reduced government spending. For that reason, it is helpful to look at the

relationship between the responsibility attribution process and Tea Party support as well.

As you will see in the following section, the model used to predict responsibility

attributions has been truncated; the lower numbers of Tea Party supporters (99 in the total

sample of 439) required a reduction in the number of independent variables.

Nevertheless, the following section shows how, at least in many cases, supporters of the

Tea Party assign responsibility for the economy and the Iraq War in a manner distinct

from non-supporters.

The assignment of primary responsibility is modeled in Table 6.7. Looking at the

two economic models, it is shown that party identification and issue perception interact

and relate to responsibility attributions very differently for Tea Party supporters and non-

supporters. For Tea Party supporters, the interaction's coefficient is statistically

Table 6.7 - Primary Responsibility Attribution and Tea Party Support

	The Economy		The Iraq War	
	Supporters	Non-Supporters	Supporters	Non-Supporters
Party ID x Perception	0.16	-0.16*	-0.27[†]	-0.07
	(0.33)	(0.08)	(0.16)	(0.05)
Party ID	0.65	0.58***	0.67	-0.01
	(0.50)	(0.15)	(0.48)	(0.17)
Issue Perception	-0.59	0.59[†]	0.82	0.37[†]
	(1.72)	(0.34)	(0.87)	(0.22)
Female	0.84	-0.11	-0.08	0.03
	(0.82)	(0.30)	(0.57)	(0.29)
Minority	-0.07	-0.27	0.69	-0.19
	(1.57)	(0.51)	(1.15)	(0.44)
Marital Status	-1.33	0.44	1.25	0.46
	(1.25)	(0.38)	(0.82)	(0.35)
Age	0.03	-0.02*	0.04[†]	0.01
	(0.03)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)
Education	1.01*	-0.01	0.15	-0.13
	(0.46)	(0.14)	(0.27)	(0.13)
Income	-0.17	-0.07	-0.18	-0.01
	(0.26)	(0.11)	(0.18)	(0.09)
Knowledge	0.25	0.14	0.52	-0.00
	(0.38)	(0.12)	(0.33)	(0.11)
Presidential Control of Issue	0.20	0.33	0.18	0.26
	(0.49)	(0.21)	(0.45)	(0.19)
Economic Effect on Family	-0.14	0.01		
	(0.22)	(0.08)		
Intercept	-6.08	-3.30**	-7.78*	-1.64
	(4.77)	(1.25)	(3.74)	(1.17)
n	77	250	81	245
Log-likelihood	-28.56	-142.71	-45.41	-161.90

Logistic regression coefficients shown, with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is the assignment of more responsibility to President Obama than President Bush.
[†] indicates significance at p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

insignificant and incorrectly signed, suggesting that party identification and economic

perceptions are not related to their assignment of credit and blame for economic

conditions. For non-supporters of the Tea Party, however, the interaction's coefficient is

significant (p<0.05) and the marginal effects of perceptions on responsibility attributions

are statistically significant for strong Democrats and all Republicans (Figure 6.8).

Figure 6.8 - Marginal Effect of Perceptions on Primary Economic Attributions among Non-Tea Partiers

Looking at the predicted probabilities among non-Tea Party supporters, a strong

Democrat who thinks conditions are much worse than average has predicted probability

of 0.11 of seeing President Obama as more primarily responsible for economic conditions

than President Bush. That predicted probability increases 0.47 points to 0.58 if that

individual believes conditions to be much better than typical ones. For strong

Republicans, a decrease of 0.6 is observed in the predicted probability of seeing Obama

as more responsible than Bush when augmenting economic perceptions from "much worse" to "much better." This suggests that non-supporters are more likely to engage in biased reasoning when making primary economic attributions.

The opposite relationship is observed when looking at responsibility attributions for the Iraq War, with Tea Party supporters engaging in motivated reasoning and non-supporters not. For non-supporters, the interaction's coefficient is negative but statistically insignificant, while the coefficient is significant among Tea Party supporters ($p<0.09$), suggesting that people are more likely to see Bush as responsible as their perceptions improve and their party identification becomes more Republican. The plot of the marginal effects in Figure 6.9 shows that this relationship is significant for all Republicans and Republican-leaning Independents. Additionally, a null hypothesis of the equality of the interactive effect across the two subsamples can be rejected ($p<0.11$).

The models predict that, among Tea Party supporters, a strong Republican with a very negative economic perception is expected to see Obama as primarily responsible with a likelihood of 0.93. Varying that economic perception to very positive decreases the predicted probability 0.87 points to 0.05, quite a sizable effect. For comparison's sake, a similar change in perceptions leads to a 0.41 point increase in the predicted probability of a strong Democrat seeing Obama as primarily responsible, however, given the small numbers of strong Democrats who count themselves among the Tea Party supporters, this estimate should not be taken very seriously.

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Figure 6.9 - Marginal Effect of Perceptions on Primary Iraq War Attributions among Tea Partiers

Immediate Responsibility Attributions

A similar pattern occurs with immediate responsibility attributions, shown in Table 6.8. When it comes to immediate economic responsibility attributions, non-Tea Party supporters appear to engage in motivated reasoning while Tea Partiers do not. Tea Party supporters, however, do appear to engage in a biased attribution process when making immediate attributions for Iraq War conditions, though non-supporters do so as well, albeit to a lesser degree.

Table 6.8 - Immediate Responsibility Attribution and Tea Party Support

	The Economy		The Iraq War	
	Supporters	Non-Supporters	Supporters	Non-Supporters
Party ID x Perception	-0.43	-0.25**	-0.48†	-0.11†
	(0.55)	(0.09)	(0.30)	(0.06)
Party ID	2.36	1.22***	1.79†	0.47*
	(1.51)	(0.28)	(1.06)	(0.22)
Issue Perception	1.97	0.91**	1.39	0.37
	(2.41)	(0.32)	(1.49)	(0.23)
Female	0.37	0.15	1.23	0.49†
	(1.16)	(0.30)	(0.95)	(0.29)
Minority	-1.40	-0.24	-1.01	-0.77†
	(1.72)	(0.45)	(1.68)	(0.42)
Marital Status	-0.66	-0.04	-0.21	0.02
	(1.37)	(0.37)	(1.02)	(0.35)
Age		-0.02†	0.03	0.00
		(0.10)	(0.03)	(0.01)
Education		-0.15	0.04	0.04
		(0.13)	(0.40)	(0.13)
Income		0.00	0.58*	0.04
		(0.10)	(0.30)	(0.09)
Knowledge		-0.03	0.61	-0.07
		(0.12)	(0.44)	(0.12)
Presidential Control of Issue		0.24	-0.39	0.10
		(0.21)	(0.59)	(0.20)
Economic Effect on Family	-0.42	0.05		
	(0.37)	(0.08)		
Intercept	-6.62	-4.05**	-10.65	-1.65
	(7.19)	(1.52)	(6.72)	(1.24)
n	83	255	79	254
Log-likelihood	-15.18	-148.40	-24.90	-158.77

Logistic regression coefficients shown, with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is the assignment of more responsibility to President Obama than President Bush.
† indicates significance at p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Focusing on immediate economic attributions, the model for Tea Party supporters

required the elimination of several more control variables in order to obtain convergence.

Regardless, the party identification x issue perception coefficient is statistically

insignificant, indicating that there is no evidence of Tea Party supporters engaging in

motivated reasoning while making immediate economic attributions. The same cannot be said for non-Tea Party supporters, however. The interaction's coefficient is negative and statistically significant (p<0.01), suggesting that individuals are less likely to see Obama as more responsible as their perceptions increase and they become more Republican in their party identification. The marginal effect of economic perceptions on individuals' responsibility attributions are shown to be statistically distinct from zero for all Democrats, all Republicans, and Republican-leaning Independents (Figure 6.10).

Figure 6.10- Marginal Effect of Perceptions on Immediate Economic Attributions among Non-Tea Partiers

As the marginal effects suggest, there are large substantive effects for both strong Republicans and strong Democrats who do not identify themselves as Tea Party supporters. A strong Republican who is not a Tea Party supporter has a predicted

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probability of 0.97 of seeing Obama as more immediate responsible than Bush if they think economic conditions are getting much worse, but that predicted probability decreases to 0.31 if they think conditions are getting much better. Strong Democrats see a 0.62 point increase in the predicted probability of an Obama attribution when moving from very negative to very positive perceptions, from 0.06 to 0.68.

Both supporters and non-supporters of the Tea Party appear to be influenced by issue perceptions and party identification when making immediate responsibility attributions for the Iraq War. In both models, the party identification x issue perception coefficient is negative and statistically significant at $p<0.1$, however, the magnitude of the interactive effect is much larger among Tea Party supporters. Additionally, a graphical presentation of the marginal effects of issue perceptions on the likelihood of an Obama attribution reveal that the interactive effect is statistically insignificant for all partisan levels among non-Tea Party supporters (Figure 6.11) but significant for all Republicans and Independent-leaners in the Tea Party subsample (Figure 6.12)

For typical strong-Republicans who do not support the Tea Party, moving from thinking Iraq War conditions are getting much worse to much better produces a 0.31 point decrease in the likelihood of ascribing immediate responsibility to President Obama, from 0.91 to 0.60. Among strong Republicans who do support the Tea Party, however, there is a 0.93 decrease in the predicted probability of an immediate Obama attribution, from 0.99 to 0.06. Non-Tea Party supporting strong Democrats are 0.32

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points more likely to ascribe immediate responsibility to Obama as their perceptions

increase from "much worse" to "much better."

Figure 6.11 - Marginal Effects of Perceptions on Immediate Iraq War Attributions among Non-Tea Partiers

Figure 6.12 - Marginal Effect of Perceptions on Immediate Iraq War Attributions among Tea Partiers

Prospective Responsibility Attributions

Once again, prospective responsibility produces null findings for both supporters and non-supporters of the Tea Party. Once again, this can be attributed to the lack of variation in the dependent variable, with 93 percent of respondents viewing Obama as more prospectively responsible for economic conditions than President Bush.[23] Despite 95 percent of respondents seeing Obama as more prospectively responsible for Iraq War conditions than Bush, however, the Iraq War models still found differences in the way Tea Party supporters and non-supporters assigned responsibility for war conditions. The party identification x issue perception interaction is insignificant in Table 6.9 for Tea Party supporters, but negative and statistically significant for non-supporters, suggesting that, as expectations improve, Democrats are more likely to assign responsibility to Obama and Republicans are more likely to assign responsibility to Bush. Figure 6.13 plots the marginal effect of condition expectations on responsibility attributions and finds significant effects for strong Democrats, with strong Republican bordering on the $p<0.1$ level.

Substantively, the effects of perceptions on prospective responsibility attributions are not enormous, though they are important. The likelihood of an Obama attribution for a strong Democrat who is not a Tea Part supporter increase 0.35 points, from 0.63 to 0.98 as expectations of Iraq War conditions improve from "much worse" than today to "much better." For non-Tea Party strong Republicans, there is a 0.28 decrease in the likelihood

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[23] Sex was dropped from this model due to perfect prediction with the dependent variable.

Table 6.9 - Prospective Responsibility Attribution and Tea Party Support

	The Economy		The Iraq War	
	Supporters	Non-Supporters	Supporters	Non-Supporters
Party ID x Perception	0.18	0.01	0.03	-0.29*
	(0.34)	(0.11)	(0.33)	(0.14)
Party ID	0.37	0.48	0.45	1.17*
	(0.74)	(0.36)	(1.34)	(0.54)
Issue Perception	-0.87	0.49	-0.04	0.97*
	(1.74)	(0.36)	(1.76)	(0.44)
Female	-1.56	0.04		0.43
	(1.83)	(0.51)		(0.63)
Minority	-3.25	-0.32	-1.00	-0.43
	(2.44)	(0.71)	(2.07)	(0.86)
Marital Status	0.39	-0.32	-0.61	-0.61
	(1.67)	(0.61)	(2.29)	(0.78)
Age	-0.00	0.01	0.00	0.02
	(0.05)	(0.02)	(0.05)	(0.02)
Education	0.73	--0.25	-1.05	-0.09
	(0.71)	(0.22)	(1.06)	(0.29)
Income	-0.51	0.12	-0.15	0.25
	(0.39)	(0.17)	(0.70)	(0.20)
Knowledge	-0.11	-0.02	0.69	-0.32
	(0.61)	(0.21)	(0.96)	(0.28)
Presidential Control of Issue	-0.21	0.14	1.54	0.25
	(0.87)	(0.35)	(1.21)	(0.42)
Economic Effect on Family	-0.96	0.07		
	(0.61)	(0.14)		
Intercept	8.49	-1.35	-3.73	-2.09
	(8.05)	(2.13)	(8.51)	(2.46)
n	81	258	81	255
Log-likelihood	-13.05	-66.04	-9.11	-45.81

Logistic regression coefficients shown, with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is the assignment of more responsibility to President Obama than President Bush.
[†] indicates significance at p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

of a prospective Obama attribution, changing from 0.99 to 0.71 as expectations improve

across the scale's range.

Figure 6.13 - Marginal Effects of Perceptions on Prospective Iraq War Attributions Among Non-Tea Partiers

Summary

A clear pattern has emerged in the relationship between motivated reasoning, responsibility attributions, and Tea Party support. Oddly enough, even though the Tea Party is closely associated with a domestic economic agenda, it is the non-supporters who appear to be heavily engaged in motivated reasoning when making primary and immediate economic responsibility attributions, while economic conditions and partisanship have little relationship with attributions among Tea Party members. Instead, the assignment of primary and immediate responsibility for Iraq War conditions is biased by partisanship and perceptions among the Tea Partiers, but not among non-Tea Party supporters. For prospective Iraq War attributions, non-Tea Party supporters' attributions are related to their partisanship and perceptions, but the same cannot be said of Tea Party members. All of these examples are vivid examples of heterogeneity in the assignment

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of responsibility that are related to political behavior, in this case, support for an ideological political movement.

Responsibility Attributions and Tea Party Support

The final section of this chapter considers the importance of Tea Party support on the assignment of responsibility for economic conditions. Based on the conventional wisdom spouted by the news media, Tea Party members are harshly critical of government spending by both the Obama and Bush administrations. As a result, this section assesses whether or not Tea Party supporters were more likely to see President Bush as responsible for economic conditions, independent of their partisanship and the motivated reasoning process.[24] After a brief look at the demographics of Tea Party supporters, the three responsibility attributions are each used as dependent variables in three separate regressions; independent variables included a dummy indicating Tea Party support, party identification, economic perceptions, the party identification x issue perception interaction, and the control variables.[25]

Since the Tea Party movement is a recent political phenomenon, it is helpful to first look at its relationship with other demographic and politically important variables. For instance, a majority (55.1 percent) of Tea Party supporters were female and only six percent were minorities. Supporters were also more likely than the general population to

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[24] Tea Party members overwhelmingly identified as Republicans, so this section restricts the analysis to Republicans and Independent-Republicans.
[25] The race control variable is omitted from thee analyses due to insufficient variation.

be married or widowed (81 percent). Politically, the first panel of Table 6.10 first shows that Tea Party supporters are overwhelmingly Republicans. Eighty-five percent fell on the Republican-side of the scale and only four percent were weak or Independent-leaning Democrats. Zero strong Democrats identified as Tea Party supporters while a majority of strong Republicans did so (63 percent). When it comes to ideology, almost two-thirds of Tea Party supporters consider themselves strong or weak conservatives, while only five percent saw themselves as weak liberals. No strong liberals supported the Tea Party. Not surprisingly, a majority of Tea Party supporters voted for John McCain in 2008, though a sizeable number of them (41 percent) did vote for Barack Obama. However, when Tea Party supporters are asked about their 2012 vote intention, 95 percent of them intend to vote for someone other than President Obama.

Table 6.10 – Party Identification and Ideology of Tea Party Supporters

Party ID	Strong Dem.	Weak Dem.	Ind. Dem.	Pure Ind.	Ind. Rep.	Weak Rep.	Strong Rep.	Total
Non-supporters	58	53	65	53	28	42	15	317
	(18.3%)	(17.7)	(20.5)	(16.7)	(8.8)	(13.25)	(13.3)	(100)
Supporters	0	3	1	10	28	27	25	94
	(0.0)	(3.2)	(1.1)	(10.6)	(29.8)	(28.7)	(26.6)	(100)
Total	58	59	66	63	56	69	40	411
	(14.1)	(14.4)	(16.1)	(15.3)	(13.6)	(16.8)	(9.7)	(100)
Ideology	Strong Lib.	Weak Lib.	Mod. Lib.	Moderate	Mod. Con.	Weak Con.	Strong Con.	Total
Non-supporters	25	55	42	114	39	35	7	317
	(7.9)	(17.4)	(16.3)	(36.0)	(12.3)	(11.0)	(2.2)	(100)
Supporters	0	5	3	12	14	29	34	97
	(0.0)	(5.15)	(3.1)	(12.4)	(14.4)	(29.0)	(35.1)	(100)
Total	25	60	45	126	553	64	41	414
	(6.0)	(14.5)	(10.9)	(30.4)	(12.8)	(15.5)	(9.9)	(100)

Cell values are frequencies, with row percentages in parentheses.

Table 6.11's first column shows the results for primary responsibility. Notice that the relationship between Tea Party support and seeing Obama as primarily responsible for economic conditions is positive and statically significant. Tea Party members are more likely than other Republicans to see Obama as a long-term cause of economic conditions than Bush. In terms of substantive importance, the effect of Tea Party support on attributions is stronger among Independent-leaning Republicans than strong-Republicans; Tea Party support increases the likelihood of an otherwise typical strong Republican seeing Obama as more primarily responsible 0.06, but increases that likelihood 0.17 if they are an Independent-Republican.

There is also a relationship between Tea Party support and assignment of responsibility amounts to the individual presidents. Table 6.12's first two ordered logistic regressions show the assignment of responsibility amounts on a zero-six scale to President Obama and President Bush. In the first column, the Tea Party coefficient is positive, indicating that Tea Party supporters assign more primary responsibility to President Obama than other Republicans. This relationship approaches conventional levels of statistical significance ($p<0.13$). Substantively, being a Tea Party supporter increases the predicted probability of a strong Republican assigning full responsibility to President Obama by 0.14. For an Independent-Republican, the probability of assigning full responsibility to President Obama increases 13 points among Tea Party supporters.

Table 6.11 – Attributions of Republicans and Tea Party Supporters

	Primary	Immediate
Tea Party Supporter	1.36[†]	2.68[†]
	(0.78)	(1.63)
Party ID x Perception	-0.52	-0.13
	(0.82)	(0.67)
Issue Perception	2.71	0.38
	(5.10)	(3.81)
Party ID	2.15	0.98
	(5.10)	(2.05)
Female	-0.46	-0.22
	(0.68)	(1.06)
Marital Status	1.06	1.87
	(1.05)	(1.26)
Age	-0.00	-0.04
	(0.03)	(0.03)
Education	0.12	0.27
	(0.31)	(0.46)
Income	-0.21	-0.17
	(0.26)	(0.35)
Religiosity	0.00	0.86*
	(0.20)	(0.37)
Interest	-0.50	-0.06
	(0.48)	(0.53)
Trust in Government	-0.15	--0.19
	(0.22)	(0.29)
Equal Opportunity	0.01	-0.03
	(0.19)	(0.24)
Economic Individualism	-0.15	-0.02
	(0.23)	(0.27)
Free Enterprise	-0.07	0.16
	(0.19)	(0.27)
Knowledge	0.32	0.47
	(0.30)	(0.40)
Presidential Control of Issue	0.54	1.19[†]
	(0.40)	(0.73)
Economic Effect on Family	-0.28	0.08
	(0.20)	(0.23)
Intercept	-11.13	-10.04
	(9.48)	(12.72)
n	85	133
Log-likelihood	-36.39	-24.14

Models are logistic regressions of Republicans and Republican-leaning Independents. DV: Seeing Obama as more responsible than Bush; *** indicates p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, [†] p<0.1.

Table 6.12- Responsibility Assignment by Republicans

	Primary		Immediate	
	Obama	*Bush*	*Obama*	*Bush*
Tea Party Supporter	0.59	-1.17**	0.46	-0.73*
	(0.39)	(0.37)	(0.39)	(0.37)
Party ID x Perception	-0.32	0.13	0.03	-0.04
	(0.23)	(0.22)	(0.19)	(0.17)
Issue Perception	1.37	-0.60	-0.86	0.52
	(1.32)	(1.32)	(1.13)	(1.02)
Party ID	0.40	-0.32	0.34	-0.21
	(0.33)	(0.31)	(0.43)	(0.36)
Female	0.14	0.26	0.09	0.12
	(0.36)	(0.37)	(0.39)	(0.36)
Marital Status	0.25	-0.89†	-0.84	-1.00*
	(0.51)	(0.51)	(0.54)	(0.49)
Age	0.00	0.01	0.02	-0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Education	0.06	0.35*	0.27	0.03
	(0.17)	(0.16)	(0.18)	(0.16)
Income	-0.02	-0.02	0.09	0.10
	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.13)	(0.12)
Religiosity	0.13	-0.16	0.14	-0.14
	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.11)	(0.10)
Interest	0.18	0.31	0.39	0.40
	(0.24)	(0.25)	(0.26)	(0.26)
Trust in Government	0.16	-0.22*	0.17	-0.00
	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.12)	(0.11)
Equal Opportunity	0.06	0.08	0.02	0.11
	(0.10)	(0.09)	(0.10)	(0.09)
Economic Individualism	-0.09	-0.06	-0.08	0.04
	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.14)	(0.13)
Free Enterprise	0.05	-0.14	0.27*	-0.06
	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.12)	(0.11)
Knowledge	-0.12	--0.35*	-0.05	-0.43**
	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.17)	(0.16)
Presidential Control of Issue	0.94***	0.38†	1.12***	0.58**
	(0.26)	(0.23)	(0.26)	(0.22)
Economic Effect on Family	-0.05	0.00	-0.08	0.04
	(0.09)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.09)
τ_1	2.29	-6.59	4.10	-2.41
τ_2	3.07	-4.92	4.67	-1.43
τ_3	3.91	-3.53	5.47	0.00
τ_4	5.16	-2.04	7.12	0.90
τ_5	6.10	-0.88	8.30	2.34
τ_6	7.76	0.52	10.12	3.94
n	135	134	133	133
Log-likelihood	-203.31	-216.56	-174.72	-219.40

Models are ordered logistic regressions that include only Republicans and Independent-Republicans. DV: Intention to vote for President Obama in 2012; standard errors in parentheses. *** indicates $p<0.001$, ** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$, † $p<0.1$.

The second column of Table 6.12 shows the ordered logistic regression predicting the assignment of primary responsibility amounts to President Bush. Here, the Tea Party coefficient is negative and statistically significant (p<0.01). Contrary to the conventional wisdom, Tea Party supporters give less primary responsibility to President Bush than other Republicans. In fact, Tea Party support decreases the predicted probability of assigning Bush a 4, 5, or 6 on the responsibility scale by 0.20 among strong Republicans and 0.25 among Independent-Republicans. At least when it comes to primary responsibility, there is no evidence that Tea Party supporters ascribe anything close to equal blame for both the Republican and Democratic Presidents. While it is not surprising that Tea Party-supporting Republicans assign greater primary responsibility to President Obama, it is also significant that they assign less responsibility to President Bush.

Similar results are found with immediate responsibility attributions in Table 6.11. Once again, the coefficient of Tea Party supporters is positive and statistically significant (p<0.1); Tea Party supporters are more likely to see President Obama immediately responsible than President Bush. Being a Tea Party supporter only increases the likelihood of seeing Obama as immediately responsible by 2 points among both strong Republicans and Independent-Republicans, but this limited substantive impact is largely the result of the fact that Republicans were overwhelmingly likely to see President Obama as immediately responsible for economic conditions (see Chapter 5).

Table 6.12's third and fourth columns show ordered logistic regressions predicting the assignment of responsibility amounts to President Obama and President Bush, respectively. As you can see, in the third column, the Tea Party coefficient is positive, indicating that Tea Party supporters assign more responsibility to Obama than Republicans who did not support the Tea Party, though this relationship is statistically insignificant (p<0.24). In the fourth column, however, the Tea Party coefficient is negative and highly significant (p<0.05), meaning that Republicans who support the Tea Party assign *less* responsibility to President Bush than other Republicans. Tea Party-supporting Republicans are 0.11 less likely to assign a four, five, or six to President Bush if they are strong Republicans and 0.25 less likely to do so if they are Independent-leaning Republicans. As was seen with primary responsibility, it appears that the conventional wisdom regarding the Tea Party movement is incorrect; they are actually *less* likely to assign responsibility to the former President.

These results show that Tea Party support, which is an important and unique political behavior, has a direct relationship with the assignment of primary and immediate economic responsibility. Tea Party support, however, does not appear to be related to prospective responsibility assignment. Furthermore, the relationship between Tea Party support and primary and immediate attributions is seen even after controlling for other factors associated with Tea Party membership, namely party identification and economic dissatisfaction. The results dealt a blow to the conventional wisdom regarding Tea Party opinions. Given that Tea Party supporters are almost universally Republicans, it is not

surprising that supporters would assign greater responsibility to President Obama for economic conditions. Even still, Tea Party support was only significantly related to assigning primary responsibility to President Obama, but not immediate responsibility. What was surprising, however, was the fact that Tea Party members assigned less responsibility to President Bush than nonmembers in all three attributions. Even though Tea Party supporters are often portrayed as criticizing members of both parties for allegedly reckless spending, the results show that Tea Party supporters are even more partisan in their responsibility assignment than typical Republicans.

Conclusion and Implications

If responsibility attributions are formed irrespective of political behaviors, it would be difficult to convince the scholarly community of their importance. However, this section provides evidence of a strong relationship between political behavior and responsibility. The first section confirmed the importance of responsibility attributions in predicting vote intention. The use of two issues and the three responsibility attribution types allowed for a rich analysis. Not only were Iraq War attributions statistically insignificant predictors of vote intention, but attributions were shown to significantly interact with issue perceptions only for primary and prospective economic attributions. This shows that individuals are most concerned with whether an incumbent is the root cause of conditions and their expectations of how an incumbent will address conditions when thinking about vote choice; they are not necessarily considering current conditions.

However, this raises the question of whether immediate responsibility attributions would be of greater importance if vote intention were measured nearer to the election.

Furthermore, considering just the impact of blame on vote choice, the analysis of responsibility assignment to both the incumbent and former president show that individuals' assignment of blame to President Bush was a much stronger predictor of vote intention than their assignment of blame to President Obama. I argue that this is either because attributions for President Bush were likely formed prior to attributions for President Obama, or, that the public was more confident in their attribution to Bush than they were in their attribution to Obama and perhaps more likely to base their behavior on the more confident attitude.

The second section analyzed attributions by uncovering heterogeneity in the importance of party identification and issue perceptions on the assignment of credit and blame for national conditions. Importantly, heterogeneity is found in many aspects of the attribution process. There are important differences in the relationship between behavior and attributions for all three types of attributions: primary, immediate, and prospective. Additionally, differences are noted for both issues included in the survey. Finally, there are important differences across the two political behaviors: Presidential issue approval and Tea Party support.

As discussed in the beginning of this chapter, the analysis was undertaken without hypothesizing which groups would be more likely to engage in motivated reasoning. Table 6.13 summarizes the results by showing the statistically significance of all the party

identification x issue perception coefficients for each examined behavior that are signed as expected. The results show that for both issues, those who approve of the President's handling of the issue are likely to engage in motivated *primary* responsibility attributions while those who disapprove are likely to engage in motivated *immediate* responsibility attributions. At least for primary and immediate attributions, even though the Tea Party is heavily associated with a conservative domestic agenda, its supporters tend to engage in a biased attribution process for the Iraq War, but not for the economy, and non-Tea Party supporters tend to engage in motivated reasoning when making economic attributions.

Table 6.13 – Statistical Significance of Interaction Terms

Issue	Behavior	Primary	Immediate	Prospective
Economy	Approve of President's Handling	#	-	#
	Disapprove of President's Handling	-	**	-
Iraq War	Approve of President's Handling	†	-	-
	Disapprove of President's Handling	-	#	-
Economy	Tea-Party Supporter	-	-	-
	Non-Supporter	*	**	-
Iraq War	Tea-Party Supporter	†	†	-
	Non-Supporter	-	†	*

Cell entries indicate the statistical significance of the interaction terms that are signed as hypothesized.
# indicates significance at p<0.15, † p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, p<0.001.

After establishing that behavior introduces meaningful heterogeneity into the attribution process, it is clear that further study is needed to determine the factors that produce this heterogeneity, perhaps to determine if there is an overarching pattern that

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may explain why motivated reasoning is likely to occur with some behaviors but not others. In particular, replicating the analysis nearer to an election may help provide clearer answers regarding the role of vote choice in making responsibility attributions.

The final section used Tea Party support as an additional predictor of responsibility attributions among Republicans and Republican-leaning Independents. Contrary to common portrayals of the Tea Party, its supporters do not appear to assign blame to President Bush and President Obama in any way approaching equality. Instead, Tea Party supporters were more likely than other Republicans to see President Obama as more responsible for economic conditions than President Bush. Furthermore, the assignment of responsibility amounts to the two Presidents shows that Tea Party supporters are more likely than other Republicans to assign responsibility to President Obama and less likely to assign responsibility to President Bush.

Chapter 7: The Assignment of Responsibility Amounts to Political and Non-Political Actors

Thus far, the analysis has only focused on how individuals decided who is more responsible between an incumbent President and a former one. However, this is not the only way in which responsibility attributions can be measured. While Presidents are certainly important individuals, others may also bear responsibility for the economy, the Iraq War, or other national issues. For instance, the 1998 ANES specifically asked respondents who was most responsible for national economic conditions and found that 31 percent of respondents viewed Congress as having the most responsibility and a 32 percent plurality cited business people. For comparison, only 22 percent thought the president as the most responsible. As Rudolph (2003a) notes, this immediately calls into question the assumption that the president is always seen as the most responsible. Importantly, not only might someone see another target as responsible, people may differ in the *amount* of responsibility they assign to various targets. Theory would suggest that such assignments of responsibility would also be highly motivated by individuals' directional goals.

To test this hypothesis, the political attributions survey measured responsibility assignment for the three types of responsibility, for both the economy and the Iraq War,

across seven different targets of responsibility. Respondents were asked to assign an amount of responsibility, on a seven-point scale to each target of responsibility. The poles of the scale were labeled "no responsibility" and "full responsibility." For both issues, President Bush, President Obama, Congressional Democrats, and Congressional Republicans were included as targets. For the economic attributions, the banking industry, the business community, and the American people were also included; for the Iraq War attributions, the U.S. Military and its commanders, foreign governments, and terrorist groups were included.

Applying the hypotheses from Chapter 2, I predict the amount of responsibility individuals assign to the seven actors to vary based on the interaction of their party identification and their perceptions of each issue. I expect that individuals will try to credit members of the own party and avoid crediting members of the opposite party by either assigning responsibility outside of government or to their copartisans. Similarly, individuals will try to blame members of the opposite party or avoid blaming copartisans by assigning responsibility outside of government or to opposite-party members. This means that the direction of the coefficient for the interaction between party identification and issue perception is expected to vary based on the attribution target. For President Bush and Congressional Republicans, I expect a positively signed interaction coefficient because, as an individual becomes more Republican in their party identification and their issue perception improves, I expect them to assign greater amounts of responsibility to those actors. For President Obama and Congressional Democrats, I expect a negatively

signed coefficient; as an individual becomes more Republican in their party identification and their issue perception improves, I expect them to assign lesser amounts of responsibility to those actors.

For the targets of responsibility that are nongovernmental, the process is slightly more complicated. Theory does not suggest that some nongovernmental targets will receive greater or lesser amounts of responsibility than others – it is only suggested that individuals may place responsibility outside of government to avoid blaming a copartisan or crediting an opposite-party member. Therefore, the three nongovernmental targets are condensed into one, taking on the value of the highest amount of responsibility assigned across the three nongovernmental targets for each attribution. For example, it is not important if a Democrat avoids blaming President Obama for the economy by blaming the banking industry but not the business community. Instead, it is important that the individual is placing responsibility on an actor outside of government rather than his or her copartisan.

Because I expect individuals to see nongovernmental actors responsible for conditions when they cannot credit copartisans or blame members of the opposite party, the direction of the party identification x issue perception coefficient is not specified in the nongovernmental models. For instance, using the current partisan makeup of government, if a Democrat has a negative long-term economic perception and cannot blame the former Republican President or the Republican minority in Congress, I expect her to assign responsibility outside of government, perhaps blaming the banking industry.

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In this example, I would expect a positive coefficient. However, if a Republican has a positive long-term economic evaluation, he might find it quite easy to credit President Bush, making it unlikely that he would have to assign large amounts of responsibility to nongovernmental targets to keep her perceptions, party identification, and responsibility attributions in alignment. In this latter example, I would expect a negative coefficient on the interaction. Because the direction of the coefficient is expected to vary based on issue perceptions, party identification, and the likelihood of assigning responsibility to the other four partisan targets, I cannot specify a hypothesized direction, and believe it quite possible that the variety of influences on the assignment of responsibility outside of government may cancel each other out in the sample.

Table 7.1 – Hypothesized Direction of Party ID x Issue Perception Interaction for Ordered Analysis

	Primary	Intermediate	Prospective
Bush	+	+	+
Obama	-	-	-
Congressional Democrats	-	-	-
Congressional Republicans	+	+	+
Nongovernmental targets	+/-	+/-	+/-

Methods

Since the dependent variable is ordinal, ordered logistic regression is a proper analytical technique. Ordered logit essentially predicts the likelihood of a latent variable

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y*, which ranges from -∞ to ∞. The ordered logistic regression model then estimates

which ordinal category of the dependent variable *y* that *y** will fall into based on τ *cut*

points. Thus, when the latent *y** crosses a cut point, the observed ordinal category

increases. The probability of an observed outcome for a given value of x is the area

under the curve between a pair of these cut points (see Long and Freese 2006). However,

the ordered logit model makes an implicit assumption that the probability curve of the

likelihood of a result being less than or equal to any of the ordinal outcomes (seven, in

this case) differs *only* in being shifted to the left or the right. In other words, the effect of

each independent variable is assumed to be equivalent across all categories of the

dependent variable. This is known as the proportional odds/parallel regression

assumption, and given the difficulty of achieving this outcome using real-life data, it is

frequently violated (Long and Freese 2006; Williams 2006). Using Brant tests, it appears

that this assumption is frequently violated with the survey data, suggesting that I should

examine other models before continuing.

One such model is the generalized ordered logistic regression model, which does

not make the proportional odds assumption. Williams (2006) created a STATA

command, *gologit2*, to estimate generalized ordered logistic regression models by testing

for which independent variables violate the proportional regression assumption and

allowing the influence of these variables on the dependent variable to vary. For the

following analysis, I estimated each model with the *gologit2* command. However, it was

impossible to get the models to converge while also including the relevant control

variables.[26] This left me with the tradeoff between estimating ordered logistic regression models with control variables while violating the proportional odds assumption (which is frequently violated anyway) or estimating the generalized ordered logistic regressions without control variables. I am pleased to say that the differences in the results across the two models do not appear to be very large. I chose the ordered logit approach because it is more commonly used in political science. Additionally, since the statistical significance of the party identification x issue perception coefficients are almost identical across the models, the inclusion of control variables helped sway my decision towards ordered logistic regression. Still, since the generalized models may be of interest, I have included them in their entirety in this Appendix C.[27] Also, to show the similarities between the two models, I present Table 7.2, which is a comparison of the statistical significance of the party identification x issue perception coefficients for each responsibility attribution.

As you can see, the models only differ in a few respects. In general, the generalized ordered logistic regression models are even more supportive of the hypotheses than the regular ordered logistic models, producing the hypothesized results with lower p-values. In three instances, the hypothesized interaction between party identification and issue perceptions does not achieve statistical significance in the ordered logit model, but does so in the generalized model (immediate economic responsibility

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[26] The restricted models only contained the dependent variable, predicted by party identification, issue perception, and the interaction between the party ID and perceptions.
[27] For more information on interpreting the results of the generalized ordered logistic regression, see Williams (2006) or the discussion of the experimental results in the latter portions of this study.

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Table 7.2 – Comparing the Interaction Coefficients

Economic Responsibility

	Primary		Immediate		Prospective	
	Ologit	Gologit2	Ologit	Gologit2	Ologit	Gologit2
President Bush	-	-	**	†	**	†
President Obama	†	***	***	***	***	***
Cong. Dems.	*	***	**	***	**	**
Cong. Reps.	-	-	-	†	*	*
Non-govt.	**	-	-	-	-	**

Comparing the Interaction Coefficients – Iraq War Responsibility

	Primary		Immediate		Prospective	
	Ologit	Gologit2	Ologit	Gologit2	Ologit	Gologit2
President Bush	-	**	**	*	†	-
President Obama	**	**	**	***	**	***
Cong. Dems.	**	**	***	***	*	†
Cong. Reps.	-	-	-	-	-	-
Non-govt.	-	-	-	-	-	-

Statistical significance of the party identification x issue perception coefficient in ordered logistic regression models with control variables and generalized ordered logistic regression coefficients without control variables. The dependent variable is the assignment of responsibility on a seven-point scale.
† indicates significance at $p<0.1$, * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$

attributions for Congressional Republicans, prospective economic attributions for nongovernmental targets, and primary Iraq War attributions to Bush). In two instances, the reverse is true, with significant interaction coefficients in the ordered logits but not the generalized models (primary economic attributions to nongovernmental targets and prospective Iraq War attributions to Bush). The similarity in across these models

suggests that it is acceptable to continue with the analysis of the ordered logistic

regression models with the control variables included.[28]

<center>Results</center>

The baseline results for the assignment of responsibility are shown in Table 7.3.

Before testing the above hypotheses, it is first worth noting a few interesting patterns

shown in these summary results. First, when it comes to responsibility assignment to the

two Presidents, the results mirror what was uncovered in the dichotomous analysis,

giving validity to this measure. When it comes to primary responsibility, regardless of

the issue, people generally assign greater responsibility to President Bush rather than

President Obama. Shifting to immediate responsibility, people give more responsibility

to President Obama, though a sizable amount still see President Bush as having a great

deal of responsibility. Finally, when it comes to prospective responsibility, people give

President Bush very little responsibility.

The comparison of responsibility across the partisan groups in Congress, to some

degree, reflects the fact that Congressional Democrats held large majorities in both

houses of Congress for the prior three years. In each attribution, a greater percentage of

people assigned one of the top two levels of responsibility to the Democrats than the

Republicans. Finally, the nongovernmental column, which represents the highest amount

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[28] It should be noted that, in the generalized ordered logistic regression models where there are no gamma coefficients reported for any of the coefficients (see Appendix), the proportional regressions assumption was met (at least in regard to the three variables included in that model), and the estimates are identical to what would be achieved in a regular ordered logistic regression.

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of responsibility assigned to one of the three nongovernmental targets, is generally skewed towards the higher end of the scale, indicating that people were quite willing to place responsibility outside of government.

At the individual level, the ordered assignments are correlated with one another. The amount of primary responsibility assigned to President Bush or President Obama is positively correlated with the assignment of immediate and prospective responsibility for both the economy and the Iraq War. As one might expect, there is a stronger relationship between the assignment of primary and immediate responsible than there is between primary and prospective responsibility. Comparing the assignment of responsibility amounts across the targets, there is a negative correlation between assigning responsibility to targets of different partisan associations and a positive correlation between responsibility assignments to targets of the same party. For example, generally speaking, those who assigned a great deal of responsibility to President Obama also assigned a lot of responsibility to Congressional Democrats, but not President Bush. As for nongovernmental responsibility assignment, there was a positive correlation with the Republican targets and a negative correlation with the Democrat ones.

Table 7.3 - Assignment of Responsibility Amounts

Economic Responsibility Assignment

		Primary Responsibility					Immediate Responsibility					Prospective Responsibility				
		Pres. Bush	Pres. Obama	Cong. Dems	Cong. Reps	Non-govt	Pres. Bush	Pres. Obama	Cong. Dems	Cong. Reps	Non-govt	Pres. Bush	Pres. Obama	Cong. Dems	Cong. Reps	Non-govt
Responsibility Assignment	0	2.1	6.2	1.5	1.0	0.3	8.3	2.9	0.5	2.1	1.0	33.3	0.8	1.3	2.3	1.0
	1	5.9	5.7	3.6	6.0	1.3	9.4	4.4	2.1	5.7	1.3	16.8	0.8	2.6	5.5	2.1
	2	11.1	15.9	9.2	9.8	1.3	14.6	9.8	6.9	13.7	2.3	15.5	3.6	4.4	11.4	1.0
	3	18.9	19.2	22.1	22.8	8.3	15.6	19.2	21.3	21.9	7.5	15.2	11.1	16.2	22.6	10.1
	4	17.3	19.2	19.7	20.5	15.0	17.7	23.1	20.1	18.0	18.0	10.6	25.1	23.2	22.9	21.9
	5	26.9	18.7	24.6	23.3	35.5	21.0	23.3	27.5	22.2	35.0	5.4	32.8	28.6	20.8	34.0
	6	17.8	15.1	19.2	16.6	38.3	13.5	17.4	21.6	16.5	35.0	3.3	25.8	23.7	14.6	29.9

Iraq War Responsibility Assignment

		Primary Responsibility					Immediate Responsibility					Prospective Responsibility				
		Pres. Bush	Pres. Obama	Cong. Dems	Cong. Reps	Non-govt	Pres. Bush	Pres. Obama	Cong. Dems	Cong. Reps	Non-govt	Pres. Bush	Pres. Obama	Cong. Dems	Cong. Reps	Non-govt
Responsibility Assignment	0	6.8	4.2	3.1	4.2	1.0	15.6	1.8	2.6	3.7	0.5	41.0	0.5	2.9	5.0	1.3
	1	7.6	5.0	5.2	8.2	0.8	11.1	2.3	4.4	8.1	0.8	16.1	0.8	3.4	7.3	0.5
	2	10.0	12.3	12.5	13.4	1.8	15.3	5.5	9.9	12.3	2.1	12.2	4.3	7.8	13.6	1.8
	3	16.5	22.5	26.9	25.5	8.5	16.7	17.4	22.6	24.6	8.2	13.5	8.9	20.5	25.9	8.5
	4	17.0	23.5	21.7	21.1	19.1	14.8	26.2	21.3	22.0	18.4	7.7	18.6	21.0	17.3	17.7
	5	22.2	19.3	18.8	16.3	35.9	14.3	25.2	22.9	16.0	35.0	5.6	35.5	26.2	17.5	32.9
	6	20.1	14.4	11.8	11.3	32.8	12.2	21.6	16.4	13.4	35.0	4.0	31.4	18.2	13.4	37.3

Cell values are the percentage of respondents assigning each responsibility amount to each actor.

Primary Responsibility Assignment – The Economy

The results for the assignment of responsibility to various targets for primary economic attributions are shown in Table 7.4. In Table 7.4, there are five models, each predicting the amount of responsibility assigned to each of the targets on a seven point scale, measured from "0 – No Responsibility" to "6 – Full Responsibility." Looking first at the President Bush's model, we can see that, while the coefficient for the party identification x issue perception interaction is positive, as hypothesized, it is statistically insignificant. Looking at the predicted probability estimates, it is true that while Democrats tend to see President Bush as more primarily responsible for economic conditions than their Republican counterparts, the assignment of responsibility does not vary much based on issue perceptions.[29] Strong Democrats viewing the economy as much worse than average, have a predicted probability of 0.04 of assigning one of the lower three categories to President Bush and a 0.72 probability of assigning a five or six to him. However, strong Democrats who thought the current economy was about the same as average conditions also have a 0.05 chance of assigning one of the lowest three categories and a 0.64 chance of assigning a five or six. Strong Republicans also do not vary much in their responsibility assignment regardless of economic perceptions; the predicted probability of a strong Republican assigning full responsibility to President Bush is 0.01 if they have negative perceptions, but is still just 0.04 if they think current

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[29] When analyzing the predicted probability estimates for primary responsibility, I varied the perception level between the minimum ("Much Worse") and the middle category ("Same") because so few individuals saw the current conditions as better than average conditions. When analyzing immediate and prospective responsibility, I compare the differences between the minimum and maximum perception ("Much Better").

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Table 7.4 - Primary Economic Responsibility Assignment

	Pres. Bush	Pres. Obama	Cong. Dems.	Cong. Reps	Non-govt.
Party ID x Perception	0.06	-0.10†	-0.11*	0.06	0.16**
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Party ID	-0.51***	0.41***	0.44***	-0.34**	-0.49***
	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.18)
Issue Perception	-0.17	0.20	0.31	-0.33	-0.67**
	(0.26)	(0.24)	(0.24)	(0.26)	(0.26)
Female	-0.01	0.02	-0.01	-0.07	-0.17
	(0.22)	(0.21)	(0.22)	(0.22)	(0.22)
Minority	-0.51	-0.58	-0.24	0.06	-0.89*
	(0.36)	(0.34)	(0.35)	(0.35)	(0.37)
Marital Status	-0.30	-0.20	-0.49†	-0.33	0.15
	(0.27)	(0.27)	(0.26)	(0.26)	(0.28)
Age	0.01*	0.00	0.02**	0.01†	0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Education	-0.01	0.02	-0.21*	-0.25*	-0.12
	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)
Income	0.00	0.04	0.10	0.09	-0.10
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.08)
Religiosity	-0.05	0.03	-0.08	-0.07	0.04
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.07)
Interest	0.09	0.08	0.29†	-0.03	0.33*
	(0.15)	(0.14)	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.15)
Trust in Government	-0.23***	0.07	0.03	-0.13*	-0.19**
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)
Equal Opportunity	0.06	-0.06	-0.04	0.09	0.04
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.06)
Economic Individualism	0.05	-0.03	-0.07	0.06	0.21**
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.07)
Free Enterprise	-0.23***	0.13*	0.24***	-0.17**	-0.16*
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.07)
Knowledge	-0.28**	-0.02	0.11	-0.00	-0.04
	(0.10)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.10)
Presidential Control of Issue	0.19	0.89***	0.39**	0.08	-0.53***
	(0.15)	(0.16)	(0.15)	(0.14)	(0.16)
Economic Effect on Family	0.10†	0.09	0.05	0.06	0.12*
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)
τ_1	-7.10	1.99	0.59	-6.28	-9.11
τ_2	-5.72	2.83	1.96	-4.46	-7.30
τ_3	-4.53	4.11	3.17	-3.35	-6.66
τ_4	-3.24	5.17	4.60	-2.04	-5.30
τ_5	-2.38	6.25	5.68	-1.00	-4.15
τ_6	-0.58	7.65	7.21	0.40	-2.31
n	319	319	322	319	319
Log-likelihood	-503.69	-529.2	-496.40	-522.93	-399.27

Ordered logistic regression coefficients shown, with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is the assignment of responsibility on a seven point scale.
† indicates significance at p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

conditions are the same as typical conditions. Thus, for primary responsibility assignment to President Bush, there is a large relationship with partisanship but not perceptions.

Turning to the model predicting responsibility assignment to President Obama, Table 7.4 shows that the interaction between party identification and economic perceptions is negative and statistically significant, as hypothesized ($p<0.09$). As individuals become more Republican in their party identification and their economic perceptions improve, they assign less responsibility to President Obama. Among those with a negative perception, otherwise typical strong Democrats have an 11 percent likelihood to see Obama as having no responsibility while strong Republicans have only a 1 percent chance. Conversely, strong Republicans are quite willing to see Obama as having a great deal of responsibility (their predicted probability of assigning a five or a six is 0.59) but strong Democrats are not (their predicted probability of assigning a five or a six is 0.11). Among those who thought that the economy was the same as a typical economy, Republicans still are more likely to assign full responsibility to President Obama and less likely to assign no responsibility than Democrats.

The results in the model for Congressional Democrats also conform to the hypothesis. The interaction is negative and statistically significant at $p<0.05$, which means that Democrats are more likely to assign more primary responsibility to their Congressional copartisans as their perceptions increase. Looking at the predicted probability of assigning particular amounts of responsibility, it is shown that among those

with negative economic perceptions, three quarters of strong Republicans are predicted to assign either a five or a six but only 17% of strong Democrats are expected to do so. At the same time, strong Democrats are more likely to assign lower amounts or responsibility than strong Republicans. Compared to those with negative perceptions, strong Democrats with a "same" perception are more likely to assign higher amounts of responsibility to Congressional Democrats, while strong Republicans are less likely to assign higher amounts of responsibility to Congressional Democrats when their perceptions are "same" rather than "much worse."

While the party identification x issue perception interaction's coefficient is not significant in predicting the amounts of responsibility assigned to Congressional Republicans, the coefficient is positive, as hypothesized. The assignment of responsibility to targets outside of government, however, is positive and statistically significant at $p<0.01$, meaning that Republicans assign more responsibility to nongovernmental targets as perceptions improve than Democrats. The predicted probabilities illustrate this. Strong Democrats are overwhelmingly likely to give full responsibility to a nongovernmental target if they have negative perceptions, but are significantly less likely to do so if they perceive the current economy to be about average. Strong Republicans are more likely to assign full responsibility to targets outside of government if they think the economy is average rather than much worse than usual, though this difference is not as large as with the strong Democrats.

Even though only three of the five models show statistically significant interactions, the results are generally supportive of expectations. It appears that when assigning primary economic responsibility, people frequently engage in motivated reasoning to align their partisanship, issue perceptions, and assignment of responsibility. Democrats almost universally see President Bush and nongovernmental targets (the banking industry, the business community, or the American people) as having large amounts of responsibility when they have negative perceptions. Also important is the fact that Democrats quite effectively avoid blaming their copartisans, President Obama and Congressional Democrats. Republicans with negative perceptions, on the other hand, avoid blaming President Bush and Congressional Republicans, but are quite willing to blame President Obama, Congressional Democrats, and, to a lesser extent, nongovernmental targets.

Analyzing those who thought current conditions were typical when compared to usual ones is a little more difficult, though it can broadly be said that Democrats with such perceptions were more likely to see Bush or nongovernmental actors as responsible than Obama and Congressional Democrats, while Republicans were more likely to see the Democratic groups and nongovernmental targets as responsible.

Primary Responsibility Assignment - Iraq War

The assignment of responsibility for primary Iraq War attributions is shown in Table 7.5. First examining the assignment of responsibility to President Bush, the

Table 7.5 - Primary Iraq War Responsibility Assignment

	Pres. Bush	Pres. Obama	Cong. Dems.	Cong. Reps	Non-govt.
Party ID x Perception	0.06	-0.12**	-0.12**	0.01	-0.01
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Party ID	-0.17	0.45***	0.33*	-0.02	-0.00
	(0.13)	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.14)
Issue Perception	-0.07	0.32†	0.20	-0.24	0.12
	(0.18)	(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.18)	(0.18)
Female	0.04	0.18	0.02	-0.05	-0.23
	(0.22)	(0.22)	(0.22)	(0.22)	(0.23)
Minority	0.02	-0.33	0.16	-0.38	-0.79*
	(0.37)	(0.36)	(0.37)	(0.36)	(0.37)
Marital Status	-0.35	-0.51†	-0.75**	-0.34	0.02
	(0.27)	(0.27)	(0.27)	(0.27)	(0.27)
Age	-0.01	0.01*	0.02**	0.00	0.00
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Education	0.15	0.01	-0.18†	-0.07	-0.07
	(0.10)	(0.09)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)
Income	0.03	0.04	0.17*	0.10	-0.09
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)
Religiosity	-0.03	-0.03	-0.10	0.02	0.02
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.07)
Interest	0.29*	0.20	0.09	0.08	0.38**
	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.15)
Trust in Government	0.04	0.13*	0.04	0.08	0.01
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)
Equal Opportunity	-0.04	0.02	0.11*	0.04	0.09
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Economic Individualism	0.00	-0.04	0.09	-0.01	0.06
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.07)
Free Enterprise	-0.01	0.07	0.07	-0.01	0.07
	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.07)
Knowledge	-0.36***	0.01	-0.11	-0.06	-0.31**
	(0.10)	(0.09)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)
Presidential Control of Issue	0.49**	0.53***	0.53***	0.21	0.06
	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.16)	(0.15)	(0.16)
τ_1	-2.26	1.74	0.35	-2.48	-4.06
τ_2	-1.65	2.53	1.62	-1.39	-3.83
τ_3	-0.90	3.59	2.74	-0.44	-2.93
τ_4	-0.09	4.75	4.15	0.70	-1.58
τ_5	0.72	5.80	5.08	1.61	-0.33
τ_6	1.89	6.93	6.52	2.79	1.28
n	317	319	318	315	320
Log-likelihood	-570.99	-554.66	-531.73	-568.16	-439.53

Ordered logistic regression coefficients shown, with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is the assignment of responsibility on a seven point scale.
† indicates significance at p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

coefficient on the party identification x issue perception interaction is positive, as

expected, but only statistically significant at p<0.15. Looking at the predicted assignment

of responsibility, we can see that there are important partisan differences in the

assignment of primary responsibility, with strong Democrats being more likely than

strong Republicans to blame President Bush and less likely to give him credit. However,

since the interaction is not statistically significant, it is hard to put much confidence in

these results.[30]

The assignment of primary responsibility for the Iraq War to President Obama

conforms to what my hypotheses and theories of motivated reasoning suggest. The

coefficient of the party identification x issue perception interaction is negative and

statistically significant as expected (p<0.01). From a substantive standpoint, the

predicted probability estimates show that strong Democrats with a negative perception

are likely to assign a moderate amount of responsibility to President Obama if they have

negative perceptions, but will assign a great deal of responsibility to him if they have

positive expectations. The opposite is true for strong Republicans; they tend to assign a

great deal of responsibility to Obama when they believe current conditions to be much

worse than average (the likelihood of giving Obama either a five or a six is 0.79), but

assign low-to-moderate amounts of responsibility to him when they believe conditions

are much better than average.

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[30] Appendix 2 contains the predicted probability estimates for all of this chapter's statistically significant results. The probability of assigning a particular amount of responsibility is predicted for both groups of strong partisans for each of the extreme perception levels.

The results are similarly supportive of the hypotheses when it comes to responsibility assignment to the Democratic Congress. Once again, the interaction's coefficient is negative and statistically significant ($p<0.01$), indicating that, as people become more Republican in their party identification, and as they have increasingly positive perceptions of the war, they are likely to assign less responsibility to Congressional Democrats. Just as with responsibility assignment to President Obama, Democrats are expected to assign greater amounts of responsibility to Congressional Democrats when they have positive perceptions as opposed to negative ones. In particular, strong Republicans are very likely to assign a great deal of responsibility to Congressional Democrats for perceived failures, but almost no responsibility for perceived successes.

When it comes to the Iraq War, there is evidence of motivated reasoning in the assignment of primary responsibility for both Democratic targets, but not for the Republican or nongovernmental targets. Perhaps the most surprising finding is the null result in the assignment of primary responsibility to President Bush. Respondents were quite willing to give ample amounts of responsibility to the former President with little regard to party or perceptions. This overwhelming assignment of primary responsibility to President Bush perhaps accounts for why only two of the five models produced significant interaction coefficients. Additionally, though so many people agree that President Bush should take on a lot of primary responsibility for Iraq War conditions, it is still likely that people engage in motivated reasoning by adjusting how much

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responsibility the two Democratic targets should receive. Among those with positive

perceptions, Democrats feel as if their copartisans also deserve credit along with Bush

while Republicans do not; among those with negative perceptions, Republicans blame

Obama and Congressional Democrats along with President Bush while Democrats do not.

Immediate Responsibility Assignment – The Economy

Turning now towards the assignment of immediate responsibility for economic

conditions in Table 7.6, the results support the hypotheses regarding responsibility

assignment to President Bush, President Obama, and Congressional Democrats. The

party identification x issue perception coefficient is positive in Bush's model and

negative in the Obama's and Congressional Democrats' models while achieving

statistical significance at $p<0.01$ for all three.   The predicted assignment of immediate

responsibility to President Bush shows a striking pattern in which partisanship and issue

perceptions strongly relate to how much responsibility people think the former president

deserves for current conditions. Among those who thought the current economy was

getting much worse, strong Democrats are heavily predicted to assign a great deal of

responsibility to President Bush, while strong Republicans are not; the predicted

probability for a strong Democrat assigning a five or six is 0.80 and 0.09 for a strong

Republican. Among those who thought the economy was getting much better, however,

strong Republicans were quite willing to give Bush a lot of credit, but even strong

Democrats still were likely to assign him a moderate amount.

Table 7.6 - Immediate Responsibility Assignment for Economic Conditions

	Pres. Bush	Pres. Obama	Cong. Dems	Cong. Reps	Non-govt.
Party ID x Perception	0.12**	-0.19***	-0.12**	0.05	0.02
	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Party ID	-0.60***	0.60***	0.58***	-0.35*	-0.22
	(0.14)	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.14)	(0.15)
Issue Perception	-0.50*	0.55**	0.36	-0.02	-0.16
	(0.22)	(0.22)	(0.22)	(0.22)	(0.22)
Female	0.20	0.14	-0.05	0.11	-0.20
	(0.22)	(0.22)	(0.22)	(0.22)	(0.22)
Minority	0.01	-0.03	0.44	-0.39	-0.72*
	(0.38)	(0.36)	(0.36)	(0.35)	(0.36)
Marital Status	-0.28	-0.82**	-0.62*	-0.47†	-0.11
	(0.27)	(0.28)	(0.28)	(0.27)	(0.27)
Age	0.01†	-0.00	0.02*	0.00	-0.00
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Education	-0.05	0.01	-0.09	-0.22*	-0.16
	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)
Income	0.05	0.06	0.05	0.11	-0.04
	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.07)
Religiosity	-0.10	0.07	-0.07	0.05	0.03
	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.07)
Interest	0.13	0.24	0.36*	0.11	0.14
	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.16)	(0.15)	(0.15)
Trust in Government	-0.08	-0.01	-0.06	-0.10	-0.05
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)
Equal Opportunity	0.13*	-0.11†	-0.03	0.03	0.07
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Economic Individualism	0.08	0.02	-0.01	-0.12†	0.04
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.07)
Free Enterprise	-0.24***	0.19**	0.17**	-0.12†	-0.17**
	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Knowledge	-0.15	-0.00	0.08	0.05	0.05
	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.09)	(0.10)
Presidential Control of Issue	0.38**	0.85***	0.30*	0.18	-0.33*
	(0.14)	(0.16)	(0.15)	(0.14)	(0.15)
Economic Effect on Family	0.06	0.02	0.06	0.14*	0.12†
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.08)
τ_1	-4.18	2.07	-0.24	-4.76	-6.98
τ_2	-3.20	2.98	1.30	-3.43	-6.15
τ_3	-2.12	4.07	2.72	-2.14	-5.48
τ_4	-1.30	5.29	4.27	-0.95	-4.51
τ_5	-0.39	6.44	5.27	-0.13	-3.29
τ_6	1.10	8.08	6.95	1.21	-1.60
n	316	318	320	320	322
Log-likelihood	-547.59	-499.35	-471.48	-539.94	-438.03

Ordered logistic regression coefficients shown, with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is the assignment of responsibility on a seven point scale.
† indicates significance at p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Motivated reasoning appears to occur when people assign immediate responsibility to President Obama as well. Strong Republicans are strongly predicted (0.83) to assign a five or a six to President Obama if they have very negative perceptions, but only have a 0.04 probability of doing so if they have positive perceptions. Strong Democrats avoid blaming their copartisan, President Obama when they have negative perceptions, with just 0.11 percent expected to assign a zero or one, but have a 0.53 likelihood of assigning a five or a six to him when they think the economy is getting much better.

A very similar pattern occurs with the assignment of immediate responsibility to Congressional Democrats. Strong Democrats have only a 0.18 likelihood of assigning a five or a six to Congressional Democrats when they have a very negative perception, but have a 0.47 likelihood of doing so if they have a positive perception. Strong Republicans almost universally blame Congressional Democrats for perceived failures, with a 0.88 probability of assigning a five or six, but the chance of a strong Republican giving full responsibility to Congressional Democrats if they have a very positive perception is only 0.06.

While the interactions' coefficients are insignificant in the models predicting responsibility assignment to Congressional Republicans and nongovernmental targets, there is still strong evidence of motivated reasoning occurring when individuals assign immediate responsibility for economic conditions to the other two targets, with such wide discrepancies in the amounts of responsibility that is assigned to both Presidents and

Congressional Democrats across partisan groups contingent upon economic perceptions. Just as with the dichotomous immediate responsibility attributions, it appears that partisans are quite effective at avoiding assigning blame to copartisans and credit to members of the opposite party.

Immediate Responsibility Assignment – The Iraq War

The support for the hypotheses regarding immediate responsibility assignment for Iraq War conditions are quite similar and just as strong as they were for economic conditions. Like with immediate economic responsibility assignment, the coefficients on the party identification x issue perception interaction in Table 7. 7 are signed as expected and statistically significant for the models predicting responsibility assignment to President Bush, President Obama, and Congressional Democrats. This is evidence that individuals are engaging in motivated reasoning when assigning amounts of immediate responsibility for Iraq War conditions.

Looking first as the predicted probability of various responsibility assignments to President Bush, we can see that strong Democrats are quite likely to assign a high degree of responsibility if they think Iraq War conditions were currently getting much worse (the predicted probability of assigning a five or six is 0.53), but are not willing to assign him responsibility is they think conditions are getting much better (the predicted probability of a five or six is 0.10). The reverse is true for strong Republicans, who fail to assign him responsibility if they think conditions are getting much worse, but assign him a fair

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Table 7.7 - Immediate Responsibility Assignment for Iraq War Conditions

	Pres. Bush	Pres. Obama	Cong. Dems	Cong. Reps	Non-govt.
Party ID x Perception	0.11**	-0.13**	-0.17***	0.06	-0.01
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Party ID	-0.39**	0.49***	0.58***	-0.20	0.10
	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.16)	(0.15)	(0.15)
Issue Perception	-0.48**	0.38*	0.45*	-0.31	0.08
	(0.19)	(0.19)	(0.20)	(0.19)	(0.19)
Female	-0.04	0.44*	0.21	0.28	-0.26
	(0.22)	(0.22)	(0.22)	(0.21)	(0.22)
Minority	-0.11	-0.66*	-0.15	0.07	-0.60†
	(0.34)	(0.34)	(0.33)	(0.34)	(0.36)
Marital Status	-0.32	-0.48†	-0.32	0.18	-0.04
	(0.28)	(0.28)	(0.27)	(0.27)	(0.28)
Age	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01†	0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Education	0.05	0.11	-0.17†	-0.13	-0.01
	(0.10)	(0.09)	(0.10)	(0.09)	(0.10)
Income	-0.04	-0.01	0.12†	0.02	-0.15*
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)
Religiosity	-0.07	-0.00	-0.02	0.07	0.00
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.07)
Interest	0.14	0.29*	0.18	-0.11	0.28†
	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.15)
Trust in Government	0.01	-0.04	-0.20**	-0.05	-0.05
	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)
Equal Opportunity	0.10*	0.01	0.12*	0.05	0.10*
	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Economic Individualism	-0.00	0.06	0.04	0.04	0.02
	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Free Enterprise	-0.14*	0.02	-0.00	-0.05	0.00
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Knowledge	-0.04	-0.17†	-0.19*	-0.04	-0.23*
	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.09)	(0.10)
Presidential Control of Issue	0.16	0.67***	0.39**	-0.05	-0.04
	(0.14)	(0.16)	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.15)
τ_1	-3.34	0.84	-0.47	-4.05	-5.15
τ_2	-2.52	1.56	0.68	-2.82	-4.22
τ_3	-1.78	2.46	1.73	-1.96	-3.62
τ_4	-1.04	3.75	3.01	-0.80	-2.06
τ_5	-0.25	5.05	3.93	0.12	-0.79
τ_6	0.75	6.39	5.34	1.17	0.83
n	313	321	321	319	323
Log-likelihood	-585.38	-503.65	-532.49	-575.46	-433.21

Ordered logistic regression coefficients shown, with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is the assignment of responsibility on a seven point scale.
† indicates significance at p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

amount of responsibility if they think conditions are getting much better; the predicted probability of assigning Bush a five or six increases from 0.10 to 0.36 across the perception scale.

Assignment of responsibility to President Obama follows a similar pattern, though there are a few major exceptions. Overall, people in general are quite likely to assign him responsibility values greater than or equal to the midpoint on the scale regardless of their party identification. However, there is a great deal of nuance in the actual amounts of immediate responsibility assigned, depending on individuals' party identification and issue perceptions. For instance, strong Democrats have a 0.13 predicted probability of assigning full responsibility to Obama if they think conditions are getting much worse, but have a 0.41 probability of doing so if they think conditions are getting much better. There is an even starker contrast across perception levels for strong Republicans; three quarters of typical strong Republicans are expected to assign full responsibility to Obama if they have very negative perceptions, but only 12 percent are expected to do so if they have very positive perceptions.

There are substantial differences in the predicted assignment of immediate responsibility across partisan groups to Congressional Democrats as well. The model predicts that 58 percent of typical strong Democrats will assign either a five or six to Congressional Democrats if they think Iraq War conditions are currently getting much better, but predicts only 20 percent will do so if they think conditions are getting much worse. For Republicans, there is an even larger difference in the assignment of

responsibility across perception levels; the predicted probability of a strong Republican assigning a five or a six when they have negative perceptions is 0.89, but that same predicted probability drops to just 0.09 if they have positive perceptions.

In conclusion, the hypothesized relationships were observed for the assignment of immediate responsibility for Iraq War conditions in the models for President Bush, President Obama, and Congressional Democrats. While the hypothesized relationships for responsibility assignment to Congressional Republicans and nongovernmental targets were not found, the evidence still suggests that motivated reasoning occurs when individuals assign amounts of immediate responsibility for Iraq War conditions, showing once again that this phenomenon is not just confined to economic responsibility attributions.

Prospective Responsibility Assignment – The National Economy

Recall from the dichotomous analysis of responsibility in the previous chapter, that there was scant evidence of motivated reasoning occurring in individuals' determination of prospective economic responsibility across current and former officeholders. The reason for the null finding, I argued, was due to the lack of variation in the dependent variable. Prospective responsibility, due to its forward-looking nature, generally means that more people will see the current President as more responsible than the former; about 93 percent of respondents thought President Obama was more prospectively responsible for future economic conditions than President Bush. However,

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as theory and the hypotheses presume, individuals can still actively engage in motivated

reasoning when making responsibility attributions without considering the role of the

former officeholder by either assigning responsibility to other targets or altering the

amount of responsibility given to the current and former Presidents. There is evidence of

both tactics occurring with the assignment of prospective economic responsibility in

Table 7.8. The party identification x issue perception coefficient is correctly signed and

statistically significant in the models for both Presidents and both Congressional party

groups, and the substantive effects are important as well.

Taking the assignment of responsibility to President Bush first, we see that strong

Republicans, if they have a negative expectation, are very likely to say that Bush has no

responsibility, as their predicted probability of assigning a zero is 0.68. However, if they

have positive expectations, strong Republicans are still quite hesitant to give the credit to

President Bush; the predicted probability of assigning a five or a six is only 0.11.

Instead, as the other models show, strong Republicans are likely to assign prospective

responsibility to Congressional Republicans when they have positive expectations.

Strong Democrats, on the other hand, are just as likely to say President Bush has no

responsibility when they have negative expectations as they are to say he has full

responsibility when they have positive expectations.

Responsibility assignment to Obama occurs along these partisanship and

expectation lines as well. If Republicans have very negative expectations, they are quite

willing to blame President Obama; three quarters are predicted to assign him a six and

Table 7.8 - Prospective Responsibility Assignment for Economic Conditions

	Pres. Bush	Pres. Obama	Cong. Dems	Cong. Reps	Non-govt.
Party ID x Perception	0.14**	-0.15***	-0.11**	0.09*	0.04
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Party ID	-0.74***	0.65***	0.35*	-0.22	-0.21
	(0.18)	(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.15)	(0.16)
Issue Perception	-0.59**	0.42*	0.18	-0.50**	-0.21
	(0.23)	(0.21)	(0.20)	(0.20)	(0.20)
Female	0.27	0.19	-0.02	0.47*	-0.04
	(0.23)	(0.23)	(0.22)	(0.22)	(0.22)
Minority	0.18	-0.25	0.03	0.39	-0.64†
	(0.38)	(0.35)	(0.35)	(0.33)	(0.35)
Marital Status	-0.45†	-0.50†	-0.62*	-0.30	0.21
	(0.28)	(0.28)	(0.27)	(0.27)	(0.28)
Age	-0.00	0.01	0.01†	0.00	-0.00
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Education	0.05	-0.04	-0.17†	-0.12	-0.12
	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.09)	(0.10)
Income	0.09	0.03	0.06	0.05	-0.20**
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.07)
Religiosity	-0.03	-0.04	-0.07	0.05	0.00
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.07)
Interest	0.13	0.22	0.28†	0.12	0.06
	(0.15)	(0.18)	(0.16)	(0.15)	(0.15)
Trust in Government	-0.04	0.05	0.02	-0.02	-0.05
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.07)
Equal Opportunity	0.04	-0.03	-0.07	0.03	0.06
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Economic Individualism	0.01	-0.01	0.04	-0.07	0.08
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.07)
Free Enterprise	-0.18**	0.07	0.11†	-0.16**	-0.16**
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.09)	(0.06)
Knowledge	0.05	-0.19†	-0.02	0.05	-0.07
	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.10)
Presidential Control of Issue	0.05	0.94***	0.38**	0.23	-0.39**
	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.15)
Economic Effect on Family	0.06	0.04	0.04	0.15**	0.07
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)
τ_1	-3.41	0.43	-1.53	-4.58	-8.40
τ_2	-2.49	0.96	-0.48	-3.13	-7.46
τ_3	-1.67	2.24	0.45	-2.10	-7.10
τ_4	-0.81	3.55	1.87	-0.90	-5.77
τ_5	0.23	5.20	3.07	0.13	-4.33
τ_6	1.30	6.99	4.46	1.37	-2.68
n	305	320	321	320	321
Log-likelihood	-494.10	-426.84	-484.83	-548.39	-477.49

Ordered logistic regression coefficients shown, with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is the assignment of responsibility on a seven point scale.
† indicates significance at p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

another twenty percent are expected to give him a five. Strong Republicans, however, are not willing to give credit to Obama for positive expectations, with only five percent expected to assign him full responsibility. Democrats show willingness to credit Obama for positive expectations, with a typical strong Democrat having a 0.63 probability of assigning him either a five or six, but not a willingness to blame him for negative perceptions, with the predicted probability of assigning a six just 0.06.

Interestingly, the significant relationship between party identification x issue perception and responsibility assignment to Congressional Democrats appears to be largely fueled by Republicans. While strong Democrats are slightly more likely to see Congressional Democrats as more responsible when they have very positive expectations rather than very negative ones, the difference is not very large. Strong Republicans, however, are six and a half times more likely to assign either a five or a six to Congressional Democrats when they have negative expectations than when they expect conditions to get much better. The predicted probability of a strong Republican assigning full responsibility to Congressional Democrats is 0.57 when they have negative expectations and 0.03 when they have positive expectations.

The opposite relationship is true when it comes to assigning prospective responsibility to Congressional Republicans, with the statistical significance apparently being driven by Democrats, rather than Republicans. The predicted probability of a strong Republican assigning responsibility to Congressional Republicans does not vary a great deal, whether the individual has very positive or very negative expectations (though

a little more than strong Democrats' assignment of prospective responsibility to Congressional Democrats). However, strong Democrats' assignment of responsibility varies greatly based on expectations. Forty-five percent of otherwise typical strong Democrats are expected to assign full responsibility to Congressional Republicans if they think the economy will be much worse in the next year, but only 7 percent are expected to do so if they think the economy will get much better.

Prospective responsibility, because it asks about responsibility for future conditions, likely means that the few people are going to see the former President as having full responsibility, especially when compared to the current officeholder. However, the analysis here shows that there is a great deal of nuance in the amount of responsibility people still assign, and the patterns are what theories of motivated reasoning would expect, with individuals assigning more responsibility to their copartisans and less to members of the opposite party when expectations are good, and the reverse occurring when expectations are bad. Once again, there is no evidence that individuals are engaging in motivated reasoning when assigning responsibility to targets outside of government.

Prospective Responsibility Assignment – The Iraq War

Turning to the assignment of prospective responsibility for Iraq War conditions, the party identification x issue perception coefficient performs as hypothesized in predicting the assignment of responsibility to Presidents Bush and Obama, as well as

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Congressional Democrats. The interactions' coefficients are positive for both Congressional Republicans and nongovernmental targets, but statistically insignificant. Because the interaction is statistically significant for the first three models, it is fair to conclude that there is evidence that individuals engage in motivated reasoning in assigning amounts of prospective responsibility.

Looking at the substantive findings of the models, individuals once again appear to be hesitant to assign much prospective responsibility to the former officeholder, President Bush. However, the statistically significant interaction indicates that individuals still differed in the amounts of responsibility assigned to Bush based on their party identification and their expectations for future Iraq War conditions. Strong Democrats, for instance, are almost twice as likely to say President Bush deserves no responsibility for Iraq War conditions one year from the survey if they believe conditions will be much better than if they believe conditions will be much worse, with the predicted probability of doing so increasing from 0.23 to 0.44. On the other hand, the predicted probability of a strong Republican assigning no responsibility to President Bush is 0.69 if they have negative expectations, but that probability decreases to 0.24 if they expect conditions to get much better.

Alternatively, people generally assign a great deal of prospective responsibility to the current President, Obama, but still appear to do so in a way consistent with theories of motivated reasoning.   For instance, strong Republicans are expected to assign either a five or a six to President Obama with a 0.92 probability when they think future conditions

Table 7.9 - Prospective Responsibility Assignment for Iraq War Conditions

	Pres. Bush	Pres. Obama	Cong. Dems	Cong. Reps	Non-govt.
Party ID x Perception	0.08†	-0.12**	-0.08*	0.04	0.06
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Party ID	-0.34*	0.48***	0.20	-0.08	-0.15
	(0.16)	(0.15)	(0.14)	(0.15)	(0.15)
Issue Perception	-0.24	0.40*	0.11	-0.29	-0.24
	(0.19)	(0.18)	(0.17)	(0.18)	(0.18)
Female	0.03	-0.00	0.13	0.25	-0.30
	(0.22)	(0.22)	(0.21)	(0.21)	(0.22)
Minority	0.22	-0.45	-0.09	-0.16	-0.39
	(0.37)	(0.34)	(0.35)	(0.35)	(0.36)
Marital Status	-0.55*	-0.23	-0.29	-0.03	0.15
	(0.28)	(0.28)	(0.27)	(0.26)	(0.28)
Age	-0.01	0.01	0.01†	0.01	0.02*
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Education	0.22*	0.06	-0.19†	-0.13	-0.02
	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.09)	(0.10)
Income	0.10	-0.07	0.09	0.05	-0.17*
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)
Religiosity	-0.06	0.03	0.02	-0.03	-0.06
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.07)
Interest	0.24†	0.30*	0.37**	-0.02	0.32*
	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.15)
Trust in Government	-0.01	-0.03	-0.09	-0.03	-0.05
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)
Equal Opportunity	0.00	0.04	0.09	0.01	0.01
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.06)
Economic Individualism	-0.08	-0.01	0.10	-0.06	0.12†
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.07)
Free Enterprise	-0.11†	0.12†	0.04	-0.08	-0.09
	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Knowledge	-0.02	-0.27**	-0.25**	-0.08	-0.32***
	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)
Presidential Control of Issue	0.00	0.86***	0.37*	0.12	-0.06
	(0.15)	(0.16)	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.16)
τ_1	-1.62	-0.14	-1.23	-4.13	-6.15
τ_2	-0.86	0.79	-0.30	-3.12	-5.74
τ_3	-0.18	2.20	0.73	-2.18	-5.22
τ_4	0.67	3.24	1.98	-1.04	-3.65
τ_5	1.35	4.52	2.95	-0.30	-2.45
τ_6	2.47	6.30	4.40	0.83	-1.00
n	312	325	319	317	322
Log-likelihood	-492.45	-436.37	-522.3	-576.96	-435.84

Ordered logistic regression coefficients shown, with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is the assignment of responsibility on a seven point scale.

† indicates significance at p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

will be much worse than current ones. However, the probability of assigning full responsibility to Obama drops to just 0.11 if the strong Republican has positive expectations.   The predicted probability of a strong Democrat assigning either a five or six to President Obama is 0.78 if they have positive expectations, though the probability of assigning full responsibility to Obama is just 0.10 if they think conditions will get much worse.

As observed with prospective economic attributions, the statistically significant coefficient on the interaction in the Congressional Democrats model appears to be driven by the members of the opposite party, Republicans. While there is only an increase of 0.05 points in the predicted probability of a strong Democrat assigning either a five or six to Congressional Democrats across the range of Iraq War expectations, the predicted probability difference for Republicans is much larger. Strong Republicans are expected to assign a five or a six to Congressional Democrats 54 percent of the time if they think conditions are going to get much worse, but will only do so 18 percent of the time if they think conditions will get much better.

Relationship Across Attributions

One further line of inquiry concerns the relationships that primary, immediate, and prospective have with one another. Chapter 5 showed that, when measured dichotomously, primary responsibility attributions were a statistically significant predictor of immediate responsibility attributions. Importantly, this relationship existed

alongside significant coefficients that indicated the presence of motivated reasoning.

This section will determine if such relationships exist in the assignment of responsibility

amounts to President Obama and President Bush. Using ordered logistic regression, the

assignment of immediate responsibility is regressed on the assignment of primary

responsibility, issue perceptions, party identification, and the party identification x issue

perception interaction.[31] I expect primary responsibility to have a statistically significant

positive relationship with immediate responsibility assignment and that that relationship

will exist alongside the significant interactive relationships between party identification

and issue perceptions. Simply put, the more primarily responsible an individual sees a

president, the more immediately responsible they are likely to see them as well.

Afterwards, prospective responsibility is predicted using both primary and immediate

responsibility assignment as additional independent variables. Again, I expect a positive

relationship with both prior attributions. Furthermore, because immediate responsibility

is temporally closer to prospective responsibility than primary responsibility, I predict

that a stronger relationship will exist between prospective and immediate responsibility

than with primary responsibility.

The first column of Table 7.10 predicts the assignment of immediate economic

responsibility to President Obama. Primary responsibility assignment is indeed a

significant predictor of immediate responsibility amounts ($p<0.001$) and the party

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[31] Control variables are omitted in this analysis because of violations to the parallel regression assumption. Models including control variables produced similar results in terms of substantive and the statistical significance of the variables contained in the restricted models.

identification x issue perception interaction remains statistically significant. To illustrate, if we assume that respondents have a very negative view of the economy, the predicted probability of a strong Democrat assigning a four, five, or six on the responsibility increases by 0.79 if that individual assigned President Obama full primary responsibility instead of having no primary responsibility. Varying the amount of primary responsibility assigned to President Obama by a strong Republican produces an even larger 0.93 increase in the predicted probability of assigning such a large amount of immediate responsibility.

Table 7.10 - Responsibility Assignment

	Immediate Responsibility		Prospective Responsibility	
	Obama	Bush	Obama	Bush
Primary Attribution	11.10***	1.11***	0.36***	0.19*
	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)
Immediate Attribution			0.67***	0.67***
			(0.11)	(0.09)
Party ID x Issue Perception	-0.15***	0.06	-0.13***	$0.08^\dagger$
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Issue Perception	$0.35^\dagger$	-0.20	0.41*	-0.28
	(0.20)	(0.18)	(0.18)	(0.20)
Party ID	0.39**	-0.31**	0.41**	-0.43**
	(0.13)	(0.12)	(0.15)	(0.16)
τ_1	-0.03	-0.60	-0.53	0.19
τ_2	1.11	0.54	0.03	1.28
τ_3	2.50	1.88	1.17	2.30
τ_4	4.11	3.08	2.91	3.33
τ_5	5.62	4.27	4.76	4.44
τ_6	7.67	6.04	6.87	5.59
Log-likelihood	-496.45	-554.48	-429.30	-509.40
n	358	359	354	343

Ordered Logistic Regression, *** indicates p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, † p<0.1.

Primary responsibility attributions also predict the amount of immediate

responsibility assigned to President Bush (p<0.001). In this second column of Table

7.10, the party identification x issue perception interaction remains statistically

significant at p<0.11. Varying the amount of primary responsibility assigned to Bush

produces changes of 0.93 and 0.80 in the predicted probability of assigning a four, five,

or six on the immediate responsibility scale for strong Democrats and Republicans,

respectively.

The third column predicts the assignment of prospective responsibility to

President Obama, with both primary and immediate responsibility included as competing

independent variables. As expected, both independent variables are positively signed,

though the magnitude of immediate responsibility's coefficient is almost twice as large as

primary responsibility's coefficient. This confirms that the relationship between

immediate and prospective responsibility is stronger than the relationship between

primary and prospective responsibility. Varying primary responsibility from zero to six

while holding immediate responsibility constant at three produces a change of 0.46 in the

predicted probability that a strong Democrat assigning Obama a four, five, or six on the

prospective responsibility scale; the effect on the predicted probability is 0.11 for strong

Republicans. Alternatively, varying immediate responsibility from zero-to-six and

holding primary responsibility constant at three produces even larger increases of 0.74

and 0.26 in the predicted probability of assigning Obama a large amount of prospective

responsibility for strong Democrats and strong Republicans, respectively. Also, as

predicted, the statistically significant interaction coefficient suggests that motivated reasoning is still occurring in prospective responsibility attributions, even after controlling for the primary and immediate responsibility assignment.

The final column of Table 7.10 shows the ordered logistic regression predicting prospective responsibility assignment to President Bush, and its results are consistent with the assignment of prospective responsibility to President Obama; both primary and immediate responsibility attributions are significant predictors of prospective attributions, but immediate attributions are much stronger predictors. Holding the immediate attribution at its midpoint and varying primary attributions from zero to six produces 0.20 and 0.03 changes in the predicted probability of assigning a large amount of prospective responsibility to the former president for strong Democrats and Republicans, respectively. This relationship is much stronger when primary attributions are held at their midpoint and responsibility attributions are varied; strong Democrats are 0.65 more likely to assign a large amount of prospective responsibility to President Bush and strong Democrats are 0.14 more likely to do.

What these results show is that the three responsibility attributions, while distinct in their nature, are not completely independent of one another. Indeed, primary attributions influence immediate attributions, and both primary and immediate attributions influence prospective attributions. Furthermore, the strength of these relationships appear to be affected by the temporal "closeness" of the attributions with one another; immediate attributions are "closer" to prospective attributions than primary

attributions, and, as a result, there exists a larger substantive relationship between immediate and prospective attributions than there is between primary and prospective attributions. Additionally, even after controlling for the influence of these prior attributions, the motivated reasoning process still appears to be present, as indicated by the statistically significant interaction coefficients. Finally, it should also be noted that though these models were only analyzed using economic responsibility attributions, similar relationships were observed when estimating models using Iraq War attributions; the only differences were that the p-values of the interactions' coefficients decreased below conventional levels of statistical significance in some of the models.

Conclusion

To summarize this analysis of the assignment of responsibility amounts, the evidence presented suggests that motivated reasoning is occurring in the assignment of responsibility to various partisan actors. Table 7.10 presents the direction and level of statistical significance for the party identification x issue perception coefficients for each model presented in this chapter. The prevalence of supported hypothesized relationships indicate that individuals' partisanship and issue perceptions are adequately performing as directional goals, which, in turn, motivates individuals to assign greater or lesser responsibility amounts to various targets. The hypothesized relationships are particularly strong with regard to the assignment of responsibility to those in the current majority. The party identification x issue perception interaction is statistically significant in every

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model predicting responsibility assignment to President Obama and Congressional Democrats. Additionally, responsibility assignment to President Bush appears to be biased when assigning immediate and prospective responsibility, but not primary responsibility. In the Congressional Republican models, the interaction is only statistically significant when individuals make prospective economic attributions and the interaction is only statistically significant for nongovernmental targets in the primary economic model.

Table 7.11 - Direction and Significance of Hypothesized Interactions

	Economy			Iraq War		
	Primary	Immediate	Prospective	Primary	Immediate	Prospective
Pres. Bush	+	+**	+**	+	+**	+[†]
Pres. Obama	-[†]	-***	-***	-**	-**	-**
Cong. Democrats	-*	-**	-**	-**	-***	-*
Cong. Republicans	+	+	+*	+	+	+
Nongovernmental Targets	+* *	+	+	-	-	+

Cell values are the direction of the party identification x issue perception coefficients in each ordered logistic regression. [†] indicates significance at p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

All these results point towards a logical pattern that is consistent with theories of motivated reasoning: individuals are more likely to engage in motivated reasoning when assigning responsibility to targets when those targets are more important to policy outcomes. The reason for this is that individuals are more likely to engage in motivated reasoning when they have a stake in the outcome of a decision; the more important a

target is to the creation or implementation of policy outcomes, the higher the stake will be for the responsibility attribution decision, and, therefore, the higher the likelihood of engaging in motivated reasoning. From this perspective, the reason why the hypotheses were supported in the Obama and Congressional Democrats models is because these targets were in control of government at the time of the survey – Obama was the President, and the Democrats had large majorities in both houses of Congress. Congressional Republicans, on the other hand, were in the minority in both chambers of Congress since losing control in 2006. President Bush represents a kind of middle ground on this spectrum; clearly he made a great impact on economic and Iraq War conditions, but very good arguments can be made as to how much responsibility he deserves for current and future conditions. This ambiguity, I argue, allows for biased reasoning based on partisanship and issue perceptions, and accounts for why the hypotheses were supported in the Bush models for immediate and prospective responsibility attributions.

The lack of specific predictions regarding nongovernmental responsibility assignment was discussed earlier, but to summarize, because responsibility assignment is expected to vary based not only on party identification and issue perceptions, but also the willingness of individuals to see the other four partisan targets as responsible, it was impossible to predict the direction of the interactions' coefficients. Indeed, the hypotheses say that it is not even necessary to place responsibility outside of government at all to still engage in biased motivated reasoning when making responsibility

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attributions (one could increase or decrease the responsibility given to the partisan targets instead). The results regarding such nongovernmental assignment suggest that, though individuals assign a great amount of responsibility to at least one nongovernmental target, in general, individuals assign responsibility outside of government under various circumstances; the coefficients on the interactions are generally quite low in magnitude (aside from the primary economic responsibility model), indicating that individuals are not assigning responsibility to these targets in a consistent manner.

Chapter 8: Causality and Responsibility Attributions

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the results of the two experimental designs and to determine the causal direction in the relationships studied thus far. Do party identification and issue perceptions cause responsibility attributions? Or, do responsibility attributions and party identification cause issue perceptions? In particular, scholars have not previously addressed whether responsibility attributions are mere partisan rationalizations stemming from previously-held economic perceptions or if it is the economic perceptions themselves that are shaped by the previously-held responsibility attribution. On the surface, this may seem like an easy question, given that every piece of scholarly work has approached responsibility attributions as a *result* rather than a *cause*.

The first experiment, the *Party in Power Experiment*, aims to test the standard approach, by presenting subjects with a description of an identical economic situation and varying the party of the current and former President. The analysis, similar to the main results section from Chapter 5, will test whether party identification, interacted with the experimental manipulation, is a cause of responsibility attribution. In the context of current events, this causal route would be similar to Democrats seeing a bad economy

and blaming Bush while Republicans might blame Obama, the Democratic Congress, or the business community.

However, another causal direction is certainly possible if individuals form responsibility attributions prior to forming judgments about the state of the issue at hand. The second experiment, the *Cued Attribution Experiment* tests this possibility by presenting subjects with various hypothetical economic situations, but varying the individual that the public and "financial experts" see as responsible for the state of the economy. This will cue the subjects to see either the current or former President as responsible for conditions. If this causal direction occurs, I expect an individual's responsibility attributions to interact with their partisanship to affect their issue perceptions. In real-life, the clearest case of this would be the stereotypical retrospective reward/punishment situation, which posits that individuals view the President as the head of the economy and therefore focus their attributions on who controls that office. If this is the case, I would expect Obama to be seen as responsible, though Democrats would generally have a rosier view of economic conditions than Republicans. Rudolph (2003b) notes the existing literature seems to assume that the presidency is generally seen as the "command post" of the economy (Nadeau and Lewis-Beck 2001). If this is the case, and individuals tend to ascribe credit or blame to one particular institution or individual regardless of economic conditions, it is likely that motivated reasoning would lead one's responsibility attribution to affect their issue perceptions.

Certainly, the existence of motivated reasoning occurring in one causal direction does not preclude it from occurring in the other. There is the possibility that causality runs both ways. In that case, it is of great importance to determine whether one causal track is dominant, or whether certain types of individuals are more likely to follow one track over the others. Alternatively, a null result is also possible if there are no differences across the manipulations. Based on the fact that previous scholarship exclusively favors the causal track tested in the Party in Power experiment, I am more confident in finding a significant causal relationship between the manipulation of the parties and responsibility attributions than in finding a causal relationship between cued responsibility attributions and economic perceptions.

In addition, I hypothesize that the causal relationship from responsibility attributions to issue perceptions is likely to be stronger among those who have previously thought about the issue or previously assigned responsibility. The reason for this is that once an individual ascribes credit or blame for a situation, there is some degree of inertia that comes along with that attribution; the individual is going to continue with that ascription of credit or blame until some event or stimulus forces them to change it. To that end, I expect to find a stronger causal connection between attributions and perceptions among those who are interested in politics, politically knowledgeable, and have greater exposure to news sources.

The Party in Power Experiment

Dichotomous Responsibility Assignment
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These initial models test whether the manipulation (the political party of the incumbent and former President) causally affects the assignment of primary, immediate, and prospective responsibility by interacting the subject's party identification with a dummy variable indicating that the incumbent President is a Democrat and the former President was a Republican. This interaction is used to predict whether or not an individual sees the incumbent President as more responsible for economic conditions than the former President. Because the hypothetical economic situation was negative and invariant across conditions, I hypothesize that this interaction will produce a positive coefficient. Another way to put it is this: if the incumbent is a Democrat, as people become more Republican in their party identification, I expect them to be increasingly likely to see the incumbent as responsible; if the incumbent is a Republican, I expect the likelihood of people seeing the incumbent as responsible to decrease as subjects become more Republican. This section is followed by a discussion of the results of the assignment of responsibility on a seven-point scale to various actors inside and outside of government.

Because students were taking this online experiment for extra credit, there is some incentive on the students' part to satisfice in order to finish the experiment as quickly as possible and receive the extra credit, while avoiding putting much mental energy into the questionnaire. This potential problem was foreseen, and several manipulation checks were included to ensure that the data analysis could be restricted to those subjects who took the experiment seriously. To that end, the analysis only includes the subjects who

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took at least 10 minutes to complete the experiment and remembered the political parties

of the two Presidents immediately after answering the questions for the Party in Power

experiment.[32]

Primary Responsibility Attributions

The results for primary responsibility attributions are shown in Table 8.1. The

coefficient for the interaction between having a Democratic incumbent and party

identification is positive and statistically significant, as hypothesized (p<0.1), suggesting

that Republicans were more likely than Democrats to blame a Democratic incumbent. A

plot of the marginal effect of the manipulation (varying the political party of the current

and former President) in Figure 8.1 shows that the effect is statistically significant for

both strong and weak Republicans.

Table 8.1 - Primary Responsibility Attributions

	Coefficient	Standard Error
Party Identification x Democratic Incumbent	0.36†	0.22
Party Identification	0.07	0.15
Democratic Incumbent	-0.68	0.82
Intercept	-1.94***	0.51
n	144	
Log-likelihood	-63.15	

Logistic Regression. DV: 1= Incumbent president more responsible, 0=Former president more responsible;   *** indicates p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, † p<0.1.

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[32] In later analyses, the ten-minute time minimum remains, though the manipulation checks change. For instance, when analyzing the time in which the incumbent has been in office, a relevant manipulation check is used. In the Cued Attributions experiment, the analysis is just restricted to subjects who took longer than ten minutes.

Figure 8.1 - Marginal Effect of Manipulation on Primary Attribution

In order to understand the substantive effect of this manipulation, it is helpful to

look at the predicted probability of assigning responsibility to the incumbent, based upon

party identification. Figure 8.2 shows the estimate for both experimental conditions, a

Democratic incumbent (solid blue line) and a Republican incumbent (dashed red line),

along with color-coded 90% confidence intervals. A few important things stand out.

First, there is a significant increase in the likelihood of seeing a Democratic incumbent as

more responsible than his Republican predecessor as individuals become more

Republican in their party identification (the solid blue line increases as it moves

rightward). The predicted probability of a strong Democrat seeing the Democratic

incumbent as responsible is just 0.08, but it is 0.50 among strong Republicans.

Secondly, there is no significant increase in the likelihood of seeing a *Republican*

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incumbent as more responsible than his Democratic predecessor as individuals become

more Republican in their party identification (the dashed red line is almost stagnant as it

moves rightward); there is only a 0.07 increase in the predicted probability of seeing the

Republican incumbent as primarily responsible across the party identification scale.

Figure 8.2 - Predicted Probability of Primary Responsibility Attribution

This is quite fascinating, and it suggests that, for some reason, the effect of

motivated reasoning on the assignment of primary responsibility is confined to when a

Democrat takes over for a Republican. In the contemporaneous historical context, this is precisely what has occurred since 2008, so my original thought was that perhaps subjects were recognizing the similarity between the script and actual events when they received the manipulation with a Democratic incumbent and were responding as partisans to the real-life situation rather than the script. However, this explanation can be dismissed based on additional manipulation checks. Included in the experiment was a question that asked, "In answering these questions, did you see a similarity between the situation just described and the transition from the Bush administration to the Obama administrations between 2008 and 2009?" The first panel of Table 8.2 shows this question's results, contingent on the manipulation received. As you can see, most subjects picked up on the similarity between the script and real-life, but there was little difference across conditions and the means are not significant at $p<0.05$. Still, more people saw similarity if there was a Democratic incumbent, so further analysis should be done.

For that we turn to the second and third panels of Table 8.2, which include only those who responded affirmatively to the similarity question. The second panel asked those subjects how similar the script was to real life. As you can see, there is no relationship between the responses and the manipulation. In fact, a higher proportion of people who received the Republican incumbent rather than the Democratic incumbent

Table 8.2 – Perceived Similarity of Script to Real-life Events

	Republican Incumbent	Democratic Incumbent	Total
Not similar	8	3	11
	(8.33%)	(3.26)	(5.85)
Similar	88	89	177
	(91.67)	(96.74)	(94.15)
Total	96	92	188
	(100.00)	(100.00)	(100.00)
Not similar at all	0	0	0
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Slightly similar	12	13	25
	(13.64)	(14.77)	(14.20)
Somewhat similar	29	33	62
	(32.95)	(37.50)	(35.23)
Very similar	47	42	89
	(53.41)	(47.73)	(50.57)
Total	88	88	176
	(100.00)	(100.00)	(100.00)
Did not affect answers	37	36	73
	(42.53)	(40.91)	(41.71)
Did affect answers	50	52	102
	(57.47)	(59.09)	(58.29)
Total	87	88	175
	(100.00)	(100.00)	(100.00)

Cell values are frequencies with column percentages in parentheses.

thought the script and real-life were "very similar." The final panel of Table 8.2 analyzes

a question that directly asked whether any perceived similarities between the script and

real-life affected how the subject answered the questions regarding who was responsible

for conditions. Once again, the means across the manipulations are quite similar and not

statistically distinct. This evidence is sufficiently strong to conclude that the differences

observed in the assignment of responsibility across the manipulation are not the result of similarity to current events.

Instead, I argue, the difference is likely the result of individuals' partisanship. Notice that the differences across manipulations in Figure 8.2 increase greatly as individuals become increasingly Republican. For a strong Republican, the estimated predicted probability of seeing the incumbent primarily responsible is 30 points higher if the incumbent is a Democrat, though these estimates are not statistically distinct at $p<0.05$. For a strong Democrat, there is less than a 0.06 difference in the predicted probability across conditions. These results, combined with the statistically significant marginal effects among Republicans from Figure 8.1, suggest that manipulating the party in power does indeed produce causal effects in the assignment of primary responsibility, though this effect is limited to Republicans.

Immediate Responsibility Attributions

The immediate responsibility attribution results are presented in Table 8.3. Once again, the interaction between party identification and receiving the manipulation with a Democratic incumbent is positive and statistically significant as hypothesized ($p<0.1$). This finding suggests a causal linkage between partisan characteristics and immediate responsibility attributions. If the incumbent was a Democrat, Republicans would be more likely to see him immediately responsible than Democrats. Conversely, if the incumbent was a Republican, Democrats would be more likely to see him responsible than

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Republicans. Figure 8.3 plots the marginal effect of the manipulation while holding the

subjects' party identification constant. The marginal effect is significantly positive for

strong Republicans, weak Republicans, and Republican-leaning Independents but is

insignificant among the other partisan groups.

Table 8.3 - Immediate Responsibility Attributions

	Coefficient	Standard Error
Party Identification x Democratic Incumbent	0.28†	0.17
Party Identification	0.11	0.11
Democratic Incumbent	-0.36	0.54
Intercept	-0.46	0.35
N	144	
Log-likelihood	-63.15	

Logistic Regression. DV: 1= Incumbent president more responsible, 0=Former president more responsible;   *** indicates p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, † p<0.1.

Figure 8.3 - Marginal Effect of Manipulation on Immediate Responsibility Attribution

The substantive effect of the manipulations can be shown with a plot of the predicted probability of seeing the incumbent President more immediately responsible than the former President, shown in Figure 8.4. The plot is quite similar to Figure 8.2's plot of primary attributions, which is not entirely surprising, due to the fact that I would expect to see less variation in the assignment of responsibility across the three types in the experiment than in the survey. This is because the experiment script was only about a page long, thus limiting the amount of information a subject could bring to bear when expressing his or her opinions. Additionally, because everyone received the same script, there is no possibility of some people considering different information than others.

Figure 8.4 - Predicted Probability of Immediate Responsibility Attribution

As with primary responsibility, there is a statistically significant increase in the likelihood of an individual making an immediate responsibility attribution to a Democratic incumbent as the subject's party identification moves across the x-axis. For a Democratic incumbent, the predicted probability increases from 0.31 among strong Democrats to 0.81 for strong Republicans. There is a 0.16 point increase in the predicted probability of seeing a Republican incumbent immediate responsible across the party identification scale, though those changes are not statistically significant. Again, there are much greater differences among Republicans than Democrats, even though these differences are not significant at $p<0.05$. Among strong Democrats, there is only a 0.08 point difference in the predicted probability of seeing a Republican incumbent immediately responsible instead of a Democratic incumbent. Strong Republicans, though, are 0.26 points more likely to blame a Democratic incumbent than they are to see a Republican incumbent responsible. As with primary responsibility, the combined evidence suggests that Republicans are more likely than Democrats to change their immediate responsibility attribution based on changes in the political situation.

Prospective Responsibility

Just as with the random-sample survey, an overwhelming majority of respondents (80 percent) assigned prospective responsibility to the incumbent President over the former President. For the reasons discussed in Chapter 5, measuring prospective

responsibility in this dichotomous manner is not ideal, because individuals motivated by partisanship will likely say that the current President is more responsible for future conditions than the former President, but still augment the amount of responsibility they assign to both Presidents. With this lesson in mind, it is not entirely surprising that the results for the dichotomous assignment of prospective responsibility shown in Table 8.4 do not show evidence of individuals assigning prospective responsibility differently based the manipulation and their own party identification. The hypothesized interaction between party identification and the manipulation, while positive as predicted, is statistically insignificant ($p<0. 26$).

Table 8.4 - Prospective Responsibility Attributions

	Coefficient	Standard Error
Party Identification x Democratic Incumbent	0.28	0.25
Party Identification	0.17	0.15
Democratic Incumbent	-0.49	0.62
Intercept	1.16**	0.43
N	144	
Log-likelihood	-62.63	

Logistic Regression. DV: 1= Incumbent president more responsible, 0=Former president more responsible;   *** indicates $p<0.001$, ** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$, † $p<0.1$.

Scaled Responsibility Assignment

Chapter 7's results showed that party identification and issue perception was not only related to the assignment of relative responsibility across current and former

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Presidents, but also the assignment of amounts of responsibility to the Presidents, partisan groups in Congress, and nongovernmental targets. A similar measurement approach was used in the Party in Power experiment, in which subjects were asked to assign responsibility amounts on a seven-point scale (from zero to six) to the former President, the current President, the business community, and the American people.[33] Once again, this means that the dependent variable is the ordinal assignment of responsibility. First, one-way ANOVAs were run to determine if the amount of responsibility assigned to the targets significantly varied based on whether the incumbent was a Republican or a Democrat. In the twelve models (three responsibility types times four attribution targets), only one had an F-statistic with a p-value less than 0.20; at least one group mean in the assignment of primary responsibility to the incumbent President significantly varied based on the partisanship of the incumbent ($p<0.08$). Still, given the fact that this analysis tested twelve models, statistical probability suggests that a Type I error would occur one-in-ten times if the $p<0.1$ threshold is used. Therefore, despite a significant finding within one of these models, I believe it is safe to conclude that, with perhaps one exception, the amount of responsibility assigned to the various targets did not vary across the experimental conditions.

The following analyses will interact subjects' party identification to determine whether, when combined with the manipulation, a causal effect can be observed in the assignment of responsibility. Since this is ordinal experimental data on a seven-point

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[33] Because the script was short, the "Banking industry," "Congressional Democrats," and "Congressional Republicans" were dropped as potential targets in the experiment.

scale, it is appropriate to use analyses of variance (ANOVA) to determine if the means of responsibility assignment varied across conditions while continent upon subject's party identification. The interaction between the manipulation (if the incumbent was a Democrat) and the subject's party identification (measured on a 3-point scale with leaners included as partisans) is expected to produce variation in the assignment of responsibility; with a Democratic incumbent, I expect the amount to decrease as people become more Republican. To get a better sense of the magnitude of these differences, I supplement the ANOVA results with generalized ordered logistic regressions. As discussed in Chapter 7, the use of generalized ordered models relaxes the parallel regressions assumption that is often violated when estimating regular ordered models. Because this data is experimental, control variables are unnecessary due to the random assignment process and the simplified models often meet the parallel regression assumption, meaning that the generalized ordered results are identical to the results from regular models.

Because the parties of the two Presidents change, the hypothesized directions of the interactions' effects vary. In the models for the former President, I expect a negative interaction because the manipulation is coded so that a Democratic incumbent is recorded as having a value of one and a Republican incumbent as a zero. This means that when the manipulation takes a value of one, the former President is a Republican. Therefore, I expect people to ascribe less blame to the former President as they become increasingly Republican when the former President is also a Republican. For the incumbent President's models, I expect a positive coefficient. Another way to put it is this: if the

incumbent is a Democrat, as people are more Republican in their party identification, I

expect them to be increasingly likely to see the incumbent as responsible; if the

incumbent is a Republican, I expect the likelihood of people seeing the incumbent as

responsible to decrease as subjects become more Republican. I do not speculate with

regards to the direction of the interaction in the nongovernmental models, though I hope

to uncover interesting patterns in how individuals ascribe responsibility to the business

community and the American people.

Primary Responsibility Assignment

When looking at primary responsibility assignment to the former President, the

ANOVA results in Table 8.5 shows that the interaction between the party of the

incumbent President and the subject's party identification produces significant difference

in the in mean assignment of responsibility across groups. Because it is difficult to

compare group means with a seven-point dependent variable scale and an interaction

between a seven-point party identification scale and the manipulation, I turn to

generalized ordered logistic regression to determine the magnitude of the manipulation's

effect.

Table 8.5 - Primary Responsibility to Former President

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Model	16.99	4	4.25	2.93	0.02
Democratic Incumbent x Party I.D.	77.81	1	7.81	5.38	0.02
Democratic Incumbent	7.27	1	7.27	5.01	0.03
Party Identification	4.82	2	2.41	1.66	0.19
Residual	203.12	140	1.45		
Total	220.11	144	1.53		
R^2	0.08				

The "Gologit2" STATA program designed by Williams (2006), is able to test the parallel regression assumption for each independent variable to see if the assumption is violated. The program then estimates a generalized ordered logit model, relaxing the assumption only for the necessary variables. The models produce gamma coefficients for the variables whose influence significantly varies across categories of the dependent variable. The gamma coefficients are equal to the difference in the coefficients of the variable across the categories of the dependent variable. Gamma 1 is the difference in the coefficient of a model comparing an outcome of 0 versus an outcome of 1-6 with the coefficient for a model comparing an outcome of 1 versus an outcome of 2-6. Gamma 2 is the difference in the coefficient of a model comparing an outcome of 0 versus an outcome of 1-6 with the coefficient for a model comparing an outcome of 2 versus an outcome of 3-6. A similar pattern is true for gammas 3-5. For example, in Table 8.6, the value of gamma 5 for the interaction variable is equal to the coefficient for the interaction in predicting an outcome greater than zero on the responsibility assignment scale minus the coefficient of the interaction predicting a 6 on the responsibility scale. If the parallel

regressions assumption is not violated, Gologit2 will produce results identical to an

ordered logistic regression and no gamma parameters are estimated (because they are

equivalent across categories of the dependent variable and equal to zero).[34]

The generalized ordered regression results for the assignment of primary

responsibility to the former President are presented in the first column of Table 8.6. As

you can see, the interaction between party identification and whether the incumbent is a

Democrat has a negative effect on the assignment of responsibility to the former

President, as the hypothesis suggests; given the negative economic situation described in

the script, Republicans assign less primary responsibility to the former President when he

is a Republican than when he is Democrat. Conversely, Democrats are more likely to

blame the former President when he is a Republican than when he is a Democrat. The

interaction's coefficient did violate the parallel regressions assumption, as evidenced by

the estimation of the gamma parameters. The effect of the interaction increases as higher

amounts of responsibility is assigned (as evidenced by positive values of gammas 2-4).

However, the effect is much lower when the maximum amount of responsibility is

assigned (as evidenced by the negative value of gamma 5). This variation in the gamma

coefficients is useful for discovering where the parallel regressions assumption is

violated, but for the purposes of this project, the substantive effects of the variables on

the outcomes are of greater interest.

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[34] For more information and examples of how to interpret generalized ordered logistic regression models, see Williams (2006).

Table 8.6 – Primary Responsibility Assignment

	Former President	Incumbent President	Business Community	American People
Betas				
Party ID x Democratic	-0.49*	0.26†	-0.23	-0.15
Incumbent	(0.21)	(0.14)	(0.15)	(0.14)
Democratic Incumbent	1.20**	-0.07	0.76†	0.63
	(0.48)	(0.46)	(0.45)	(0.47)
Party ID	0.03	0.08	-0.06	0.17
	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.10)	(0.10)
Gamma 2				
Party ID x Democratic Incumbent	-			
Gamma 3				
Party ID x Democratic Incumbent	0.09 (0.16)			
Gamma 4				
Party ID x Democratic Incumbent	0.01 (0.18)			
Gamma 5				
Party ID x Democratic Incumbent	0.27 (0.18)			
Gamma 6				
Party ID x Democratic Incumbent	-0.34 (0.55)			
α_1	3.31	2.01	5.10	2.82
α_2	1.37	0.19	3.68	1.20
α_3	0.26	-0.70	2.41	0.51
α_4	-1.29	-2.02	1.41	-0.49
α_5	-3.19	-2.88	0.29	-1.64
α_6	-	-4.98	-1.92	-3.91
N	144	144	145	144
Log-likelihood	-217.89	-240.82	-214.39	-249.65

Generalized ordered logistic regression coefficients shown, with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is the assignment of responsibility to each target on a 0-6 point scale.
† indicates significance at $p<0.1$, * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$

Predicted probability estimates show that if the incumbent is a Democrat, making

the former President a Republican, strong Democrats are likely to assign a great deal of

responsibility to him; the predicted probability of assigning at least a four is 81 percent.[35]

However, if that former President is a Democrat, strong Democrats are 78 percent likely

to assign a four or less. Strong Republicans have a 0.78 predicted probability of

assigning a responsibility amount less than four if the former President is a Republican,

but are 0.61 points likely to assign at least a four if he is a Democrat. It is clear that

manipulating the party of the Presidents produced a significant change in the assignment

of primary responsibility to the former officeholder.[36]

Turning to primary responsibility assignment to the incumbent President, the

ANOVA results in Table 8.7 show that the interaction between the manipulation and the

subject's party identification is statistically significant at $p<0.099$. This is confirmed by

the generalized ordered regression results, in the second column of Table 8.7, which

show that the interactive effect is statistically significant at $p<0.07$. Note that the

interaction's coefficient is positive, which is expected because the party of the incumbent

will always be the opposite of the former President. It should also be noted that no

gamma coefficients were estimated for the incumbent President model (and the

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[35] Full predicted probability tables are shown in Appendix C.

[36] Some may notice the negative predicted probability in category four. As Williams (2006) explains, "An oddity of gologit/goprobit models is that it is possible to get negative predicted probabilities. McCullaph & Nelder discuss this in *Generalized Linear Models*, 2nd edition, 1989, p. 155: 'The usefulness of non-parallel regression models is limited to some extent by the fact that the lines must eventually intersect. Negative fitted values are then unavoidable for some values of x, though perhaps not in the observed range. If such intersections occur in a sufficiently remote region of the x-space, this flaw in the model need not be serious.' This seems to be a fairly rare occurrence, and when it does occur there are often other problems with the model, e.g. the model is overly complicated and/or there are very small Ns for some categories of the dependent variable. `gologit2` will give a warning message whenever any in-sample predicted probabilities are negative. If it is just a few cases, it may not be worth worrying about, but if there are many cases you may wish to modify your model, data, or sample, or use a different statistical technique altogether." Since only seven cases in the model produced a negative predicted probability, I am not very concerned.

remaining primary attribution models). This is because the proportional regressions

assumption was met for each of the independent variables, making the generalized

ordered logistic regression results equivalent to the more traditional ordered logit results.

Table 8.7 – Primary Responsibility Assignment to Incumbent President

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Model	25.30	4	6.33	3.18	0.02
Democratic Incumbent x Party I.D.	5.66	1	5.66	2.85	0.09
Democratic Incumbent	0.80	1	0.80	0.40	0.53
Party Identification	3.11	2	1.56	0.78	0.46
Residual	278.46	140	1.99		
Total	303.77	144	2.11		
R^2	0.08				

The predicted probability of responsibility assignment to the incumbent reveals a

striking pattern. Among strong Democrats, the assignment of primary responsibility is

almost identical, whether the incumbent is a Democrat or a Republican; the manipulation

appears to have no effect among Democrats. The same cannot be said, however, for

strong Republicans, who appear to be driving this statistically significant interactive

effect. The predicted probability of a strong Republican assigning at least a four on the

responsibility scale is 0.50 if the incumbent is a Democrat, but only 0.17 if the incumbent

is a Republican. The likelihood of a strong Republican assigning less than a three is just

0.21 for a Democratic incumbent but 0.55 for a Republican incumbent. Given the

negative economic situation present in the script, these results suggest that Republicans are more likely to assign blame to a Democrat than a Republican.

While some evidence of an interactive effect between the manipulation and subject party identification is found when predicting primary responsibility assignment to the business community, the results are somewhat underwhelming. The ANOVA results in Table 8.8 show that the F-statistic of the interaction approaches, but fails to reach, acceptable levels of statistical significance ($p < 0.12$) and the interaction's coefficient in the third column of Table 8.6 is statistically significant with similar confidence ($p < 0.13$). The predicted probabilities show that individuals assign slightly more responsibility to the business community when their copartisan is the incumbent, suggesting that individuals are attempting to deflect blame away from the current president. However, these results are not very large. Strong Democrats are 0.16 points more likely to assign a five or a six to the business community when there is a Democratic incumbent than when there is a Republican incumbent; strong Republicans are 0.14 points more likely to do so when their copartisan is in office. There is no significant effect of the party identification x manipulation interaction in predicting the assignment of primary responsibility to the American people in either the ANOVA (Table 8.9) or the generalized ordered logistic regression (Table 8.6).

Table 8.8 – Primary Responsibility Assignment to the Business Community

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Model	16.39	4	4.10	2.74	0.03
Democratic Incumbent x Party I.D.	3.68	1	3.68	2.47	0.12
Democratic Incumbent	3.43	1	3.43	2.29	0.13
Party Identification	2.00	2	1.00	0.67	0.51
Residual	210.79	141	1.49		
Total	226.88	145	1.56		
R^2	0.07				

Table 8.9 – Primary Responsibility Assignment to the American People

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Model	10.84	4	2.71	1.22	0.30
Democratic Incumbent x Party I.D.	3.55	1	3.55	1.60	0.21
Democratic Incumbent	4.94	1	4.94	2.23	0.14
Party Identification	8.87	2	4.43	2.00	0.14
Residual	310.52	140	2.22		
Total	321.35	144	2.23		
R^2	0.03				

In some sense, it is not entirely surprising to find that manipulating the party of the incumbent does not strongly affect primary responsibility assignment to either the business community or the American people. Because the script was fictional and limited by length, it could only give so much information about the economic situation, and as a result, largely focused on the current and former Presidents. The business community and the American people were only indirectly referenced, often in relation to one of the two Presidents. If this experiment were longer or if subjects could be given a

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better sense of how the business community and citizens interacted during the fictional economic crisis, perhaps significant effects could be found.

Still, despite the null results of the latter two models, the main finding thus far has been the discovery that manipulating the party identification of the Presidents across a governmental transition produces a causal effect in the assignment of primary responsibility to the Presidents. As theories of motivated reasoning suggest, individuals are likely to assign less blame to copartisans and more blame to members of the opposite party.

Immediate Responsibility Assignment

The analysis of immediate responsibility assignment follows, beginning with Table 8.10, which shows the ANOVA analyzing the differences in the assignment of immediate responsibility to the former President based on the party of the incumbent (which is the opposite of the former president), the party of the subject, and the interaction between the two. As shown in the table, the F-statistic on the interaction is large and highly significant ($p<0.02$). The ANOVA shows that there are statistically significant differences in the assignment of responsibility across these groups, but to get a better sense of the magnitude of the results, I turn to generalized ordered logistic regression in Table 8.11. Here, the coefficient on the interaction is significant at $p<0.01$. The model satisfies the parallel regression assumption, so no gamma coefficients are necessary to correct for uneven effects across levels of the dependent variable.

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Table 8.10 – Immediate Responsibility Assignment to the Former President

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Model	33.78	4	8.45	4.45	0.00
Democratic Incumbent x Party I.D.	11.35	1	11.35	5.99	0.02
Democratic Incumbent	7.85	1	7.95	4.19	0.04
Party Identification	2.39	2	1.20	0.63	0.53
Residual	267.46	141	1.90		
Total	301.24	145	2.08		
R^2	0.11				

There are important substantive differences in the predicted probability of immediate responsibility assignment to the former President. Two thirds of strong Democrats are predicted to assign at least a four on the scale (from zero to six) if the former President is a Republican (Democratic incumbent). However, the predicted probability drops to just 0.49 if the former President is their copartisan (Republican incumbent). Strong Republicans are even less likely to blame members of their party. If the former President is a Republican (Democratic incumbent), the predicted probability of assigning at least a four is just 0.13. That likelihood jumps to 0.39, however, when the former President is a Democrat (Republican incumbent).

Surprisingly, there was not a statistically significant effect between the interaction of the manipulation and subject party identification on the assignment of immediate responsibility to the incumbent President in either the ANOVA (Table 8.12) or the generalized ordered logistic regression (Table 8.11). The predicted probabilities suggest

Table 8.11 - Immediate Responsibility Assignment

	Former President	Incumbent President	Business Community	American People
Betas				
Party ID x Democratic Incumbent	-0.38**	0.14	-0.22	-0.10
	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.15)	(0.30)
Democratic Incumbent	0.77†	-0.05	0.49	0.84†
	(0.48)	(0.45)	(0.47)	(0.47)
Party ID	-0.07	0.15	1.36	-0.22
	(0.10)	(0.09)	(1.90)	(0.28)
Gamma 2				
Party ID x Democratic Incumbent				0.43
				(0.28)
Party ID			-1.79	-0.26
			(1.90)	(0.29)
Democratic Incumbent				
Gamma 3				
Party ID x Democratic Incumbent				-0.52†
				(0.31)
Party ID			-1.58	0.75*
			(1.89)	(0.33)
Democratic Incumbent				
Gamma 4				
Party ID x Democratic Incumbent				-0.21
				(0.29)
Party ID			-1.38	0.40
			(1.89)	(0.90)
Democratic Incumbent				
Gamma 5				
Party ID x Democratic Incumbent				-0.24
				(0.31)
Party ID			-1.27	0.29
			(1.89)	(0.30)
Democratic Incumbent				
Gamma 6				
Party ID x Democratic Incumbent				12.02
				(778.04)
Party ID			-1.44	-11.78
			(1.90)	(778.04)
Democratic Incumbent				
α_1	4.07	3.46	-1.67	3.50
α_2	2.25	1.48	5.05	1.71
α_3	1.02	0.47	3.11	0.26
α_4	-0.03	-0.47	1.50	-0.55
α_5	-1.33	-1.82	0.01	-1.49
α_6	-3.05	-3.33	-1.98	-3.64
N	145	145	143	144
Log-likelihood	-245.57	-249.33	-206.10	-234.44

Generalized ordered logistic regression coefficients shown, with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is the assignment of responsibility to each target on a 0-6 point scale.
† indicates significance at $p<0.1$, * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$

that the manipulation affected strong Republicans but not strong Democrats; while the strong Democrats assign the same amount of responsibility regardless of the incumbent's party, strong Republicans assign slightly more responsibility to the incumbent when he is a Democrat rather than a Republican. Still, the substantive finding was not statistically significant, so it is impossible to be confident of these patterns, though they are consistent with the other portions of this study.

Table 8.12 – Immediate Responsibility Assignment to the Incumbent President

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Model	13.75	4	3.44	1.66	0.16
Democratic Incumbent x Party I.D.	0.20	1	0.20	0.10	0.76
Democratic Incumbent	0.00	1	0.00	0.00	0.97
Party Identification	5.61	2	2.80	1.35	0.26
Residual	292.01	141	2.07		
Total	305.76	145	2.11		
R^2	0.05				

The assignment of immediate responsibility to nongovernmental targets also shows underwhelming effects. While the business community's ANOVA in Table 8.13 shows an F-statistic for the hypothesized interaction that is nearly statistically significant (p<0.11), the interaction's coefficient in a generalized logistic regression is only significant at p<0.12. The interaction is negative, as it was with primary responsibility attributions, suggesting that individuals are more likely to assign greater amounts of responsibility to the business community when their copartisan in the incumbent, perhaps

in an attempt to deflect blame away from him. However, there are clearly problems with

the model – a substantial number of cases have in-sample predicted probabilities that are

lower than zero. As McCullaph and Nelder (1989) suggest, this is likely caused by the

fact that very people assigned very low amounts of responsibility to the business

community.

Table 8.13 – Immediate Responsibility Assignment to the Business Community

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Model	11.11	4	2.78	1.83	0.13
Democratic Incumbent x Party I.D.	4.02	1	4.02	2.65	0.11
Democratic Incumbent	2.30	1	2.30	1.52	0.22
Party Identification	0.36	2	0.18	0.12	0.89
Residual	220.64	139	1.52		
Total	221.75	143	1.55		
R^2	0.05				

The predicted probability tables confirm that negative predicted probabilities

appear to be confined to the lower-amounts of responsibility. With heightened caution,

one may compare the higher-ends of the scale, which show that strong Democrats are

0.14 points more likely to assign either a 5 or a 6 to the business community if incumbent

President is a Democrat rather than a Republican. Strong Republicans show slightly

more of an experimental effect, being 0.22 points more likely to assign either a five or six

to the business community when the incumbent is a copartisan.

The models using immediate responsibility assignment to the American people have similar problems. The interaction's F-statistic in the ANOVA model is statistically significant ($p<0.06$) (Table 8.14). The generalized ordered model corrects for the uneven effect of party identification and the interaction, but the interaction fails to achieve statistical significance. Again, the model has problems with negative predicted probability estimates, but because the hypothesized interactive effect is small, there is no use in attempting to tease out where the problems lie.

Table 8.14 – Immediate Responsibility Assignment to the American People

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Model	9.49	4	2.37	1.11	0.36
Democratic Incumbent x Party I.D.	8.00	1	8.00	3.73	0.06
Democratic Incumbent	8.30	1	8.30	3.87	0.05
Party Identification	3.80	2	1.90	0.89	0.41
Residual	300.00	140	2.14		
Total	309.49	144	2.15		
R²	0.03				

The lack of many statistically significant effects in the assignment of immediate responsibility is somewhat puzzling. In particular, the lack of differences in responsibility assignment to the incumbent President across the manipulation is most surprising. In the other sections of this study, the hypothesized relationships were strongest concerning immediate, as opposed to primary and prospective, responsibility. Additionally, while the hypothesized effects of responsibility assignment to

nongovernmental targets have been spotty, the models involving the presidents have largely followed expectations. Given the consistency of the relationships in the other models, I'm willing to dismiss these null findings as an oddity. Perhaps it was because the script showed an economy that clearly began to decline prior to the incumbent taking office is the reason why a null result is found in the incumbent model. Further research could potentially address this by altering the scripts given to the subjects so that the time of the economy's decline varies. Additionally, in Chapter 5's survey, individuals were asked to assign immediate responsibility without being informed of the objective nature of the economic situation, while in this chapter's experiment, the script was readily available and participants were free to scroll up and determine when exactly the economy began to decline. This feature of the experiment may reduce the importance of the immediate responsibility attribution because the existence of a prior cause may mitigate responsibility if an individual is seen as an intermediate cause (Brickman et al. 1975). Still, it should also be said that the manipulation's interaction with subjects' party identification had a large substantive and statistically significant causal effect in the assignment of immediate responsibility to the former President and a substantive, albeit not quite statistically significant, effect on the assignment of responsibility to the business community.

Prospective Responsibility Assignment

The experimental results analyzing the dichotomous assignment of prospective responsibility to either the former or current president showed no statistically significant effect of the manipulation interacted with subjects' party identification. However, in Chapter 5's survey analysis, recall the mixed results in the analysis of the dichotomous prospective attributions, but the rich variations found when analyzing the assignment of responsibility to various political targets. Similarly, while the manipulation does not affect the assignment of more prospective responsibility across the current and former president, important effects are found when analyzing the *amount* of responsibility people give to the targets depending on the party of the incumbent and their party identification. I argue this is because people are overwhelmingly likely to see the current president as having *more* responsibility than the former president for future conditions. However, this does not mean that individuals completely absolve the former president of responsibility for future conditions, and in fact, they still vary in how much responsibility they assign to him based on their partisanship.

Table 8.15 shows the ANOVA results for prospective responsibility assignment to the former president based on the party of the incumbent, subject party identification, and the interaction between the two. Importantly, the interaction's F-statistic is statistically significant (p<0.03), meaning that individuals assign greater or lesser amounts of responsibility to the former president based on the manipulation and their party identification. The generalized ordered logistic results in the first column of Table 8.16 confirm this result (p<0.01), and the negative coefficient suggests that individuals assign

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less prospective responsibility to Republican former Presidents as they become more

Republican in their party identification and assign more prospective responsibility to

Democratic former Presidents as they become increasingly Republican in their party

identification.

Table 8.15 – Prospective Responsibility Assignment to the Former President

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Model	29.00	4	7.25	3.73	0.01
Democratic Incumbent x Party I.D.	9.33	1	9.33	4.79	0.03
Democratic Incumbent	11.76	1	11.76	6.04	0.02
Party Identification	4.80	2	2.40	1.23	0.29
Residual	280.30	144	1.95		
Total	309.30	148	2.09		
R^2	0.09				

The predicted probability estimates for prospective responsibility assignment

show that when the former President is a Republican (Democratic incumbent), the bulk of

strong Democrats are likely to assign an intermediate amount of responsibility; the

predicted probability of assigning a two, three, or four is 77 percent. However, if that

former President is a Democrat, they are increasingly like to assign a lower amount; the

predicted probability of assigning a zero, one, or two is 59 percent. Strong Republicans

show the opposite pattern. If the incumbent is Republican, they are likely to assign low

amounts of responsibility; the predicted probability of assigning a zero or one is 72

percent. However, strong Republicans have a fifty percent likelihood of assigning a

moderate amount of responsibility (a two, three, or four) if the former President is a

Table 8.16 - Prospective Responsibility Assignment

	Former President	Incumbent President	Business Community	American People
Betas				
Party ID x Democratic Incumbent	-0.40**	-0.57**	-0.04	-0.31*
	(0.14)	(0.21)	(0.26)	(0.14)
Democratic Incumbent	1.21**	0.29	0.60	0.89*
	(0.47)	(0.46)	(0.48)	(0.46)
Party ID	-0.07	0.20*	-0.61†	0.20*
	(0.13)	(0.10)	(0.32)	(0.10)
Gamma 2				
Party ID x Democratic Incumbent		-	-	
Party ID	-0.07		-	
	(0.10)			
Gamma 3				
Party ID x Democratic Incumbent		0.25*	0.08	
		(0.13)	(0.21)	
Party ID	0.04		0.08	
	(0.12)		(0.27)	
Gamma 4				
Party ID x Democratic Incumbent		0.47**	-0.37	
		(0.15)	(0.23)	
Party ID	0.06		0.75*	
	(0.14)		(0.33)	
Gamma 5				
Party ID x Democratic Incumbent		0.59***	-0.20	
		(0.17)	(0.24)	
Party ID	0.13		0.68*	
	(0.20)		(0.33)	
Gamma 6				
Party ID x Democratic Incumbent		0.68***	-0.45	
		(0.20)	(0.32)	
Party ID	-12.84		0.73*	
	(1131.62)		(0.34)	
α_1	2.02	-	-	3.39
α_2	1.06	3.07	5.41	1.36
α_3	-0.34	1.26	3.49	0.63
α_4	-1.55	0.23	1.30	-0.37
α_5	-3.08	-1.18	-0.04	-1.43
α_6	-4.28	-3.30	-2.34	-3.31
N	148	149	147	147
Log-likelihood	-246.00	-234.48	-205.43	-255.06

Generalized ordered logistic regression coefficients shown, with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is the assignment of responsibility to each target on a 0-6 point scale.
† indicates significance at $p<0.1$, * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$

Democrat. Note that regardless of incumbency, no group is very likely to assign a five or a six to the former president.

The assignment of prospective responsibility to the incumbent President does not appear to vary based on the ANOVA results in Table 8.17. The F-statistic for the interaction between party identification and the manipulation is small and statistically insignificant. A conflicting result is found in Table 8.16, however. There, the interaction's coefficient is statistically significant in the incumbent model ($p < 0.01$), though its sign is unexpectedly negative. There are reasons to doubt the findings of the generalized ordered logistic regression, however. For one thing, negative predicted probabilities were obtained, which may explain the odd results. Additionally, a regular ordered logistic regression and an OLS regression produces wildly different results, each showing no relationship between the interaction and the assignment of responsibility. These findings, along with null findings in the ANOVA, suggest the problem lies with the generalized model.

Table 8.17 – Prospective Responsibility Assignment to the Incumbent President

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Model	5.61	4	1.40	0.78	0.54
Democratic Incumbent x Party I.D.	0.33	1	0.33	0.18	0.67
Democratic Incumbent	0.36	1	0.36	0.20	0.66
Party Identification	4.65	2	2.32	1.29	0.78
Residual	261.08	145	1.80		
Total	266.69	149	1.79		
R^2	0.02				

The business community's model is similarly murky. While the hypothesized interaction is statistically significant in Table 8.18's ANOVA (p<0.5), the interaction in the third column of Table 8.16 shows the effect to be insignificant, and, negative predicted probabilities are estimated in 23 of the cases. Still, the gamma coefficients suggest that the interaction's effect varies significantly over different levels of the dependent variable, suggesting that perhaps important differences can be observed. Indeed, the predicted probabilities show that the model's problems likely arise from the fact that very few people were assigning low amounts of responsibility to the business community, and the patterns are consistent with what was observed in the assignment of primary and immediate responsibility to nongovernmental targets. Once again, individuals are likely to assign greater amounts of responsibility to the business community when their copartisan is in office, perhaps to direct blame away from him. For instance, strong Democrats are 0.15 points more likely to assign a five or a six to the business community when the incumbent is a Democrat; strong Republicans are 0.21 points more likely to do so when the incumbent is a Republican.

Table 8.18 – Prospective Responsibility Assignment to the Business Community

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Model	10.27	4	2.57	1.88	0.12
Democratic Incumbent x Party I.D.	5.30	1	5.30	3.89	0.05
Democratic Incumbent	3.12	1	3.12	2.29	0.13
Party Identification	1.02	2	0.51	0.38	0.69
Residual	194.92	143	1.36		
Total	205.19	147	1.40		
R^2	0.05				

Clearer effects are present in the assignment of prospective responsibility to the American people. Table 8.19 shows that the interaction between party identification and the experimental manipulation produces a statistically significant F-statistic in the ANOVA (p<0.03). The final column in Table 8.16 shows that the interaction is negative and statistically significant; individuals assign more prospective responsibility to the American people when their copartisan is in office. Again, the lack of gamma parameters indicates that the effects of the independent variables are equivalent across the levels of the dependent variable, making the results equivalent to an ordered logistic regression.

Table 8.19 – Prospective Responsibility Assignment to the American People

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Model	12.41	4	3.10	1.42	0.23
Democratic Incumbent x Party I.D.	11.02	1	11.02	5.05	0.03
Democratic Incumbent	10.64	1	10.64	4.87	0.03
Party Identification	8.84	2	4.42	2.02	0.14
Residual	312.34	143	2.18		
Total	324.76	147	2.21		
R^2	0.04				

Individuals assign more prospective responsibility to the American people when their copartisan is the current President rather than a member of the opposite party. The predicted probability of a strong Democrat assigning a low amount of responsibility (a zero, one, or two) is just 0.17 when there is a Democratic incumbent but increases to 0.34 when the incumbent is a Republican. Conversely, the likelihood of a strong Democrat assigning a high amount of prospective responsibility (a four, five, or six) is 0.62 when there is a Democratic incumbent but is just 0.41 when a Republican is in office. Strong Republicans are just as sensitive to the manipulation. The predicted probability of a strong Republican assigning a low amount of responsibility increases 0.17 points when the incumbent changes from a Republican to a Democrat. Similarly, the probability of a high responsibility assignment increases 0.24 points based on the party of the incumbent.

Important variation was found in the assignment of prospective responsibility on a seven-point scale, but not in the assignment of responsibility between the current and former Presidents. The results show that individuals are likely to assign more responsibility to the former President when he is a member of the opposite party. Given the fact that the experimental script featured a poor economy, this is consistent with expectations. Contrary to expectations, the manipulation of the Presidents' parties did not affect the assignment of prospective responsibility to the incumbent. Finally, when it comes to responsibility assignment to nongovernmental targets (the business community

and the American people), the collective results show that individuals increase the amount of responsibility given to these targets when their copartisan is in office. I have suggested that this is an attempt, conscious or otherwise, to shift blame for future outcomes away from the President of subjects' own parties.

The Progression of Time and the Assignment of Responsibility

One question that remains unanswered is whether or not the assignment of responsibility during a governmental transition varies as time progresses. This question is politically important because it helps answer the question of how long politicians are held responsible for conditions after they leave office. Phrased another way, it helps determine how long an incoming politicians has before he or she will be seen as responsible for issue conditions. The survey from Chapter 5, which took place a year and a half into the Obama Administration, showed that a majority of respondents still saw former President Bush as more primarily responsible for issue conditions than President Obama. A large percentage, though not a majority, saw him as immediately responsible as well. It was only in prospective responsibility that an overwhelming majority of respondents saw President Obama as more responsible for future conditions than President Bush. However, because this survey took place at a single point it time, it was impossible to determine whether or not the responsibility assignment was static or fluid. Because I lack the resources to conduct a panel study on the matter, I attempt to answer the question through experimental means. The Party in Power Experiment manipulated

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the amount of time that had progressed since the last presidential election in addition to the parties of the current and former President. One third of the respondents each received a prompt that said the incumbent President had been in office for six months, one year, or two years. I hypothesize that individuals will be increasingly likely to see the current president as primarily, immediately, and prospectively responsible as time progresses. Because the manipulation was subtle, occurring in the first sentence of the script, a manipulation check was included to see which respondents were aware of the time that had passed since the incumbent President's inauguration. The analysis below is restricted to those subjects who knew which manipulation they received and took longer than ten minutes to complete the experiment.

The following analysis, while not methodologically advanced, shows a clear relationship between the temporal manipulation and assignment of all three forms of responsibility. Table 8.20 shows a contingency table between the manipulation of time and primary responsibility. As you can see, a large majority of respondents see the former President as more primarily responsible than the incumbent. This is somewhat logical, given that, in the script, the economic problems began during the former President's administration. Even so, the percentage of subjects seeing the incumbent as more responsible generally increases as time progresses, from 5.7 percent after six months, to 25.0 and 20.0 percent after one year and two years, respectively. Table 8.20

produces a *Cramer's V* of 0.22, which indicates that a moderate relationship exists

between time and primary responsibility attributions.[37]

Table 8.20 – Assignment of Primary Responsibility over Time

	Six Months	One Year	Two Years	Total
Former President	33	24	28	85
	(94.3%)	(75.0)	(80.0)	(83.33)
Incumbent	2	8	7	17
President	(5.7)	(25.0)	(20.0)	(16.7)
Total	35	32	35	102
	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)

Cell values are frequencies with column percentages in parentheses.

Table 8.21 shows a similar table for the assignment of immediate responsibility.

This time, in general, immediate responsibility is split almost evenly between the current

and former President, though the amount of subjects seeing the incumbent as more

responsible increases as time goes on. At six months and a year, a majority see the

former office holder as more responsible, by about a ten point margin. However, when

two years elapse since the election, there is a large jump in the percentage of subjects

seeing the incumbent as more immediately responsible, with almost two-thirds doing so.

Table 8.21 produces a *Cramer's V* statistic of 0.16; Corbett and LeRoy (2003) classify

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[37] *Cramer's V* is a measure of association that is appropriate in the presence of a nominal variable with an ordinal one. I chose *Cramer's V* over *lambda* as the measure of association because *lambda* underestimates relationships when one of the categories is skewed. *Cramer's V* ranges from 0 to 1.0, with 1.0 representing a perfect relationship between the two variables (Corbett and LeRoy 2003, 185-90).

Cramer's V values ranging from 0.1 to 0.2 as indicating weak, though still important, relationships.

Table 8.21 – Assignment of Immediate Responsibility over Time

	Six Months	One Year	Two Years	Total
Former President	19	18	13	50
	(54.3%)	(54.6)	(37.1)	(48.5)
Incumbent	16	15	22	53
President	(45.7)	(45.5)	(62.9)	(51.5)
Total	35	33	35	103
	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.00)

Cell values are frequencies with column percentages in parentheses.

Finally, Table 8.22 has the relationship of prospective responsibility assignment over time and also suggests that time has at least a small effect on the assignment of responsibility for future conditions. Regardless of the time period, individuals overwhelmingly see the incumbent as more prospectively responsible than the former President. Still, the percentage of those seeing the incumbent as more prospectively responsible increases 10.6 percentage points from six months to one year and levels off at 88.9 percent after two years. This table has a *Cramer's V* value of 0.14, making it a weak but important relationship.

Table 8.22 – Assignment of Prospective Responsibility over Time

	Six Months	One Year	Two Years	Total
Former President	7	3	4	14
	(20.0%)	(9.4)	(11.1)	(13.6)
Incumbent	28	29	32	89
President	(80.0)	(90.6)	(88.9)	(86.4)
Total	35	32	36	103
	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)

Cell values are frequencies with column percentages in parentheses.

The Cued Attributions Experiment

The Party in Power experiment largely fulfilled expectations; a clear causal effect is present in the way that party identification interacts with the incumbent's party when individuals assign primary, immediate, and prospective responsibility. However, as discussed earlier, the possibility remains that causality may run in the opposite direction, with the attributions themselves acting as cause rather than an effect. One such possibility involves the chance that individuals' responsibility attributions might affect their perceptions of an issue. The Cued Attributions experiment was designed to test this competing hypothesis. Respondents were randomly presented with one of four short scripts describing a hypothetical situation in which a Republican Presidents assumed office after a Democratic President one year ago. The economic situation is varied (either very positive or very negative), though each script ends with a somewhat optimistic outlook. Importantly, the experiment attempts to cue who is seen as primarily or immediately responsible for economic conditions, either the Republican incumbent or the Democratic former President. This is done by altering when the economy began to

improve/worsen (either before or after the incumbent took office) and using the testimony of a "financial expert" to place the credit/blame on either the incumbent or former President. In addition, a fictitious poll showed that the public overwhelmingly saw the same President as responsible. The intent of these manipulations was to induce the respondents to see either of the two Presidents as more responsible than the other. If the hypothesis is correct, it would then be expected that the manipulation would induce an appropriate responsibility attribution, which would then produce a causal effect on how individuals perceived economic conditions, depending on their party identification.

The results, however, find scant evidence to support this hypothesized casual relationship. While this null result is certainly less interesting than being the first to uncover a causal relationship of this kind, the totality of findings for both the Party in Power and Cued Attributions experiments confirm that the approach of the existing literature, that perceptions are not affected by attributions, is the correct one.

Results

The following sections will present the results of the Cued Attributions experiment, and largely show how the manipulations fail to produce significant changes in the subjects' economic perceptions, with a few minor exceptions. First, a one-way ANOVA shows that the manipulations did produce significant changes in economic perceptions (which were measured on a seven-point scale from 0-6) across the four conditions for retrospective perceptions ($F=80.34$, $p<0.001$), current perceptions

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(F=43.10, p<0.001), and prospective perceptions (F=6.36, p<0.001). However, given that the conditions were split between a positive and a negative economic situation, this is not entirely surprising. A more interesting comparison is whether perception levels vary after separating the four conditions into two groups based on who received the positive and negative economic scripts. Among those who saw a bad economic situation, there was no significant difference in retrospective perceptions (F=0.38, p<0.54), though current and prospective perceptions were slightly higher in the condition that ascribed primary and immediate responsibility to the former Democratic President instead of the Republican incumbent (current perceptions: mean difference=0.50, F=3.91, p<0.05; prospective perceptions: mean difference=0.40, F=2.71 p<0.10).[38] Across the positive economic conditions, significant differences were also observed. Those who were cued to credit the former Democratic President had a mean retrospective perception level 0.77 points higher than those cued to credit the Republican (F=6.26, p<0.01). However, the opposite is true for current and prospective perceptions. Those cued to credit the incumbent Republican President assigned, on average, current perceptions a half point higher than those cued to credit the former Democratic President (F=11.14, p<0.001). Despite the fact that all conditions were cued to credit the current President for a positive outlook, prospective perceptions were 0.35 points higher among those whose positive economy was credited to the current President instead of the former (F=4.33, p<0.04).

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[38] It is important to note that all conditions speculated that the incumbent Republican President would be responsible for a positive economic outlook. This was done because individuals overwhelmingly see the incumbent as more prospectively responsible than the former President and trying to cue a different attribution would be quite difficult. Another way to put it is that all conditions ascribed positive prospective responsibility to the current President.

To summarize these findings, the conditions did produce significant differences in the mean perception levels. However, when restricting the analysis to just those who received a positive economic situation or a negative one (keeping the economic situation constant and allowing just the cued attribution target to vary), significant differences in perceptions levels were still observed. While this is unexpected, it may be a result in the fact that the college students in the sample are disproportionately Democratic, which would actually support the hypothesis that attributions would affect issue perceptions. Introducing party identification into the analysis tests this line of reasoning. If cuing subjects to ascribe responsibility to one partisan actor over another caused individuals to engage in motivated reasoning by altering their perceptions of conditions based on their partisan allegiances, as motivated reasoning suggests, I would expect party identification to be a statistically significant predictor of economic perceptions within each condition, with people seeing conditions to be better or worse based on who is seen as responsible. Table 8.23 shows this is not the case. The first panel of Table 8.23 shows ordered logistic regressions for each condition predicting retrospective economic perceptions based on party identification.[39] One would expect party identification to be positively related to perceptions when Republicans are cued as responsible and negative when Democrats are. This is not the case, as party identification fails to achieve statistical significance in all four models.

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[39] All models are calculated with gologit2 (Williams 2006) and meet the parallel regressions assumption, making them equivalent to an ordered regression assumption.

Table 8.23 - Cued Primary Responsibility and Economic Perceptions

Retrospective Perceptions

	Bad Economy		Good Economy	
	Former Dem. Pres. Blamed	Incumbent Rep. Pres. Blamed	Former Dem. Pres. Credited	Incumbent Rep. Pres. Credited
Party Identification	0.11	0.04	-0.08	-0.11
	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.15)	(0.14)
τ_1	-2.91	-1.99	-3.18	-4.16
τ_2	-0.35	-0.74	-0.84	-3.44
τ_3	1.31	1.11	1.53	-1.62
τ_4	2.17	2.55	-	0.97
τ_5	3.37	-	-	2.89
Log-likelihood	-68.91	-53.12	-45.53	-58.72
n	47	37	40	48

Current Perceptions

	Bad Economy		Good Economy	
	Former Dem. Pres. Blamed	Incumbent Rep. Pres. Blamed	Former Dem. Pres. Credited	Incumbent Rep. Pres. Credited
Party Identification	-0.02	-0.04	-0.05	-0.14
	(0.13)	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.13)
τ_1	-3.87	-3.71	-3.08	-3.09
τ_2	-1.96	-1.26	-1.38	-0.62
τ_3	-1.00	-0.29	0.56	2.81
τ_4	0.53	1.51	-	-
τ_5	3.79	3.46	-	-
Log-likelihood	-66.75	-55.30	-47.10	-48.12
n	47	37	40	48

Prospective Perceptions

	Bad Economy		Good Economy	
	Former Dem. Pres. Blamed	Incumbent Rep. Pres. Blamed	Former Dem. Pres. Credited	Incumbent Rep. Pres. Credited
Party Identification	0.01	0.10	0.06	-0.02
	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.15)	(0.12)
τ_1	-2.67	-2.54	-3.53	-3.18
τ_2	-0.55	-1.52	-2.37	-1.25
τ_3	2.14	-0.94	-0.96	0.30
τ_4	3.84	0.42	1.53	2.36
τ_5	-	2.01	3.81	-
Log-likelihood	-54.70	-58.41	-50.84	-66.58
n	47	37	40	48

Ordered logistic regression coefficients shown, with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is economic perceptions, measured on a 0-6 point scale.
[†] indicates significance at $p<0.1$, * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$

Similar null results are found in the second and third panels, which show the models predicting current and prospective economic perceptions, respectively. ANOVA models using party identification to predict perceptions within each condition also fail to produce any statistically significant relationships (results omitted). The lack of a relationship between party identification and economic perceptions leads to the conclusion that causality does not flow in this direction.

Correlates of Perceptions

Recall in Chapter Two that it was hypothesized that perhaps the same causal route between perceptions and attribution might not be taken by everyone. For instance, it was noted that those who had previously made a responsibility attribution might be more inclined to adjust their perceptions rather than their responsibility attribution when encountering new information because some degree of inertia might exist in their previously held beliefs. This would be especially true if it is cognitively easier to adjust perceptions rather attributions. With this in mind, it was hypothesized that certain types of individuals might be more inclined to follow the track suggested by the Cued Attributions experiment rather than the Party in Power Experiment, such those who may be more likely to have made a previous responsibility attribution. I speculated that interest, knowledge, and talking with others about politics may correlate with having

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made previous responsibility attributions and, therefore, the likelihood of altering

perceptions based on party identification.[40]

Political interest is interacted with party identification in the Table 8.24 in ordered

logistic regressions to predict economic perceptions.[41] As you can see by all of the

insignificant coefficients, it is clear that those interested in politics are not any more

likely to alter their perceptions based on their partisan attachments.

The second variable suggested as a possible correlate to the causal relationship is

political knowledge, which, unlike interest, is an objective measure rather than a self-

reported one. Table 8.25 shows that, in some conditions, the political knowledge x party

identification interaction is a statistically significant predictor of economic perceptions.

First, considering retrospective evaluations, while none of the interactions are statistically

significant by conventional standards, the models for the "bad economy" conditions have

interaction coefficients that are correctly signed and approach standard significance

levels. Among those who saw a script with a bad economy that blamed the former

Democratic President, individuals' retrospective economic perceptions *increased* as their

knowledge increased and they became more Republican in their party identification.

This is the opposite relationship that was hypothesized, though it is statistically

insignificant by conventional standards ($p<0.14$). Similarly, among those who saw a

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[40] It should be noted that this experiment is not an ideal test of the hypothesis because, under this experiment's conditions, it is impossible for someone to make a responsibility attribution and then encounter new information that would require him or her to update either their attribution or their perceptions. Further research could be done to implement such a manipulation in a sequence; since this question was not the main purpose of the Cued Attributions experiment, I did not do so.
[41] The parallel regression assumption was met in each model.

Table 8.24 – Political Interest and Economic Perceptions

Retrospective Perceptions

	Bad Economy		Good Economy	
	Former Dem. Pres. Blamed	Incumbent Rep. Pres. Blamed	Former Dem. Pres. Credited	Incumbent Rep. Pres. Credited
Interest x Party ID	0.07	-0.12	-0.04	-0.02
	(0.24)	(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.17)
Interest	-0.31	0.65	-0.40	-0.21
	(0.52)	(0.72)	(0.59)	(0.56)
Party Identification	-0.12	0.37	0.05	-0.05
	(0.77)	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.51)
τ_1	-3.88	-0.21	-4.30	-4.79
τ_2	-1.31	1.05	-1.90	-4.07
τ_3	0.37	2.96	0.57	-2.24
τ_4	1.23	4.41	-	0.38
τ_5	2.43	-	-	2.30
Log-likelihood	-68.72	-52.69	-44.30	-58.44
n	47	37	40	48

Current Perceptions

	Bad Economy		Good Economy	
	Former Dem. Pres. Blamed	Incumbent Rep. Pres. Blamed	Former Dem. Pres. Credited	Incumbent Rep. Pres. Credited
Interest x Party ID	0.12	0.00	-0.10	0.01
	(0.23)	(0.16)	(0.15)	(0.16)
Interest	-0.20	-0.21	-0.01	0.18
	(0.51)	(0.67)	(0.53)	(0.57)
Party Identification	-0.40	-0.04	0.24	-0.18
	(0.72)	(0.48)	(0.46)	(0.48)
τ_1	-4.51	-4.33	-3.10	-2.61
τ_2	-2.61	-1.86	-1.38	-0.12
τ_3	-1.64	-0.89	0.64	3.32
τ_4	-0.10	0.92	-	-
τ_5	3.17	2.87	-	-
Log-likelihood	-66.61	-55.12	-46.45	-47.92
n	47	37	40	48

Prospective Perceptions

	Bad Economy		Good Economy	
	Former Dem. Pres. Blamed	Incumbent Rep. Pres. Blamed	Former Dem. Pres. Credited	Incumbent Rep. Pres. Credited
Interest x Party ID	0.16	0.08	-0.10	0.15
	(0.26)	(0.16)	(0.15)	(0.16)
Interest	-0.09	-0.62	0.01	-0.82
	(0.56)	(0.65)	(0.54)	(0.53)
Party Identification	-0.50	-0.13	0.36	-0.45
	(0.85)	(0.48)	(0.47)	(0.47)
τ_1	-3.01	-4.35	-3.48	-5.59
τ_2	-0.87	-3.31	-2.32	-3.60
τ_3	1.84	-2.70	-0.89	-1.96
τ_4	3.54	-1.28	1.66	0.12
τ_5	-	0.32	3.95	-
Log-likelihood	-54.46	-57.84	-50.25	-65.34
n	47	37	40	48

Ordered logistic regression coefficients shown, with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is economic perceptions, measured on a 0-6 point scale.
[†] indicates significance at p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Table 8.25 – Political Knowledge and Economic Perceptions

Retrospective Perceptions

	Bad Economy		Good Economy	
	Former Dem. Pres. Blamed	Incumbent Rep. Pres. Blamed	Former Dem. Pres. Credited	Incumbent Rep. Pres. Credited
Knowledge x Party ID	0.10	-0.11	-0.06	0.03
	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.06)
Knowledge	-0.36	0.38	0.13	-0.06
	(0.18)	(0.30)	(0.24)	(0.22)
Party Identification	-0.59	0.80	0.34	-0.36
	(0.47)	(0.50)	(0.54)	(0.50)
τ_1	-5.74	0.49	-2.27	-4.68
τ_2	-3.08	1.80	0.10	-3.97
τ_3	-1.29	3.76	2.50	-2.13
τ_4	-0.40	5.23	-	0.47
τ_5	0.80	-	-	2.38
Log-likelihood	-66.92	-51.83	-45.18	58.56
n	47	37	40	48

Current Perceptions

	Bad Economy		Good Economy	
	Former Dem. Pres. Blamed	Incumbent Rep. Pres. Blamed	Former Dem. Pres. Credited	Incumbent Rep. Pres. Credited
Knowledge x Party ID	0.08	-0.02	-0.05	-0.02
	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.06)
Knowledge	-0.22	-0.12	0.01	0.21
	(0.18)	(0.31)	(0.25)	(0.23)
Party Identification	-0.60	0.09	0.31	0.01
	(0.49)	(0.50)	(0.53)	(0.50)
τ_1	-5.58	-4.66	3.02	-1.51
τ_2	-3.68	-2.16	-1.30	1.01
τ_3	-2.69	-1.15	0.73	4.50
τ_4	-1.10	0.71	-	-
τ_5	2.21	2.65	-	-
Log-likelihood	-65.85	-54.39	-46.42	
n	47	37	40	48

Prospective Perceptions

	Bad Economy		Good Economy	
	Former Dem. Pres. Blamed	Incumbent Rep. Pres. Blamed	Former Dem. Pres. Credited	Incumbent Rep. Pres. Credited
Knowledge x Party ID	0.07	0.13[†]	-0.06	-0.02
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.06)
Knowledge	-0.09	-0.66*	0.04	-0.24
	(0.19)	(0.33)	(0.24)	(0.21)
Party Identification	-0.49	-0.76	0.50	0.05
	(0.54)	(0.51)	(0.54)	(0.49)
τ_1	-3.39	-7.22	-3.20	-5.21
τ_2	-1.24	-6.07	-2.04	-3.23
τ_3	1.49	-5.39	-0.61	-1.56
τ_4	3.19	-3.88	1.95	0.61
τ_5	-	-2.26	4.25	-
Log-likelihood	-54.20	-56.38	-50.17	-64.45
n	47	37	40	48

Ordered logistic regression coefficients shown, with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is economic perceptions, measured on a 0-6 point scale.
[†] indicates significance at p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

script with a bad economy that blamed the incumbent Republican President, retrospective

perceptions *decreased* as knowledge and Republican-attachment increased; this is also

the opposite of the hypothesized relationship, though it's significance level is also fails to

meet the standard threshold ($p<0.12$).

There are four explanations for this finding. The first is the simplest, that there is

no relationship at all. Indeed, the interaction fails to meet conventional levels of

statistical significance, so it is possible that perhaps these two findings are just a

statistical oddity. Secondly, it is possible that the relationship is true, but the hypothesis

is incorrect. Whereas the hypothesis suggested that knowledge would increase the affect

of party attachments on perceptions because intelligent people were more likely to have

previously-held perceptions, the experimental results suggest otherwise. An alternative

theory is that increased intelligence leads people to form more evenhanded judgments

when evaluating conditions. While this explanation is possible, it does run counter to the

results in Chapter Five, which showed that knowledge was positively related with the

likelihood of being a potential motivated reasoner in the survey results. Thirdly, it is

possible that the experiment is not an ideal test of this hypothesis. In real-life, individuals

have the possibility of forming responsibility attributions prior to encountering new

information or describing their economic perceptions. In the experiment, however, the

economic situation and attribution was cued within a few short paragraphs. If the

hypothesized interactive effect exists because of a sense of inertia in one's responsibility

attribution, a short experiment such as this one might not pick it up. The final possible

explanation is that, in the short cued attributions experiment, individuals were not able to effectively distinguish between long-term retrospective perceptions and current ones. In all conditions, a Republican took over for a Democrat. If subjects did not distinguish between the two attribution types, they might be motivated to view the economy through a partisan lens only with regards to the incumbent, rather than the former President, with Republicans having a rosier view than Democrats for both retrospective and current perceptions.

Only one significant interaction performed as hypothesized, which occurred in the model of prospective perceptions among those who received a negative economy that cued an attribution to the Republican incumbent. All conditions were optimistic about the future economy and credited the incumbent for that optimism, so finding a significant interaction in one prospective model but not the other three is far from a ringing endorsement of the hypothesis. Nevertheless, the predicted probability estimates show that in that one condition, Democrats with low knowledge levels think the economy will do much better than Democrats with high knowledge levels. Republicans, on the other hand, believe the economy with do slightly better if they have higher knowledge levels.

Finally, party identification was interacted with the frequency that a subject reported getting news and information about current events from their family, friends, or coworkers in Table 8.26. The logic behind these tests was that individuals might be more likely to have an existing responsibility attribution if they talk about politics, and thus, may be more likely to adjust perceptions rather than changing their attributions. An

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Table 8.26 – Getting News from Friends, Family, or Coworkers and Economic Perceptions

Retrospective Perceptions

	Bad Economy		Good Economy	
	Former Dem. Pres. Blamed	Incumbent Rep. Pres. Blamed	Former Dem. Pres. Credited	Incumbent Rep. Pres. Credited
News x Party ID	-0.21	-0.05	-0.12	-0.11
	(0.22)	(0.18)	(0.24)	(0.18)
News	0.74	0.33	0.74	0.33
	(0.61)	(0.70)	(0.80)	(0.60)
Party Identification	0.75	0.19	0.29	0.23
	(0.67)	(0.59)	(0.81)	(0.56)
τ_1	-0.70	-0.96	-0.88	-3.24
τ_2	1.87	0.30	1.51	-2.53
τ_3	3.56	2.16	4.09	-0.69
τ_4	4.44	3.60	-	1.92
τ_5	5.67	-	-	3.84
Log-likelihood	-68.17	-52.98	-42.83	-58.50
n	47	37	39	48

Current Perceptions

	Bad Economy		Good Economy	
	Former Dem. Pres. Blamed	Incumbent Rep. Pres. Blamed	Former Dem. Pres. Credited	Incumbent Rep. Pres. Credited
News x Party ID	-0.03	0.19	0.31	0.18
	(0.22)	(0.18)	(0.22)	(0.18)
News	0.13	-0.87	-0.39	-0.38
	(0.60)	(0.74)	(0.69)	(0.59)
Party Identification	0.07	-0.63	-1.03	-0.68
	(0.67)	(0.59)	(0.72)	(0.58)
τ_1	-3.46	-6.50	-4.43	-4.23
τ_2	-1.55	-4.00	-2.79	-1.72
τ_3	-0.59	-2.99	-0.63	1.75
τ_4	0.94	-1.14	-	-
τ_5	4.20	0.80	-	-
Log-likelihood	-66.73	-54.59	-44.00	-47.62
n	47	37	39	48

Prospective Perceptions

	Bad Economy		Good Economy	
	Former Dem. Pres. Blamed	Incumbent Rep. Pres. Blamed	Former Dem. Pres. Credited	Incumbent Rep. Pres. Credited
News x Party ID	-0.07	0.00	1.00***	0.27
	(0.22)	(0.17)	(0.29)	(0.19)
News	-0.10	-0.13	-2.18**	-0.72
	(0.60)	(0.71)	(0.78)	(0.63)
Party Identification	0.19	0.10	-3.10***	-0.63
	(0.68)	(0.54)	(0.94)	(0.58)
τ_1	-2.98	-2.94	-11.14	-5.30
τ_2	-0.84	-1.91	-9.96	-3.39
τ_3	1.88	-1.33	-8.48	-1.82
τ_4	3.57	0.04	-5.10	0.32
τ_5	-	1.62	-2.29	-
Log-likelihood	-54.48	-58.34	-41.74	-65.85
n	47	37	39	48

Ordered logistic regression coefficients shown, with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is economic perceptions, measured on a 0-6 point scale.
[†] indicates significance at $p<0.1$, * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$

experiment is not an exact test of this hypothesis, as stated before, thought it remains possible that those who talk about politics might be more apt to let their attributions affect their perceptions. Table 8.26 clearly shows that this is not the case, though. The interactions are all insignificant, except for the coefficient in the prospective model in which respondents received a positive economy and the former Democratic President was credited for the initial conditions. However, a Brant test shows that the parallel regressions assumption was violated in this model and a generalized ordered logistic regression was attempted, but failed to achieve convergence. This puts serious doubts in the confidence of this minor finding.

Implications for the Experimental Results: Addressing Causality

The results for the Cued Attribution Experiment are clear; it appears that causality does not run from responsibility attributions to economic perceptions. While this null finding is disappointing in some respects, one could just as easily focus on the positive outcomes produced by these experiments. For one, the Party in Power experiment was quite successful in showing a clear and causal effect of the experimental manipulations on the attribution of primary, immediate, and prospective responsibility. In doing so, the experiment confirmed the correlative relationships observed in Chapter Five's survey and supports the theory that individuals form responsibility attributions through the use of motivated reasoning, with partisanship acting as directional goals.

Table 8.27 summarizes the results from the Party in Power Experiment, presenting the direction of statistical significance of the hypothesized interaction between the manipulation (having a Democratic incumbent instead of a Republican) and an individual's party identification. With the experimental script featuring a negative economic situation, the first row shows that individuals were more likely to assign responsibility to a Democratic incumbent President as they become more Republican in their party identification. This effect is statistically significant for primary and immediate responsibility attributions. The effect for prospective attributions is insignificant, though earlier chapters have shown that it is not appropriate to measure prospective attributions in this dichotomous manner. The remaining rows of Table 8.27 show the results for the assignment of responsibility amounts to the two Presidents, the business community, and the American people. All three interactions are significant in the assignment of responsibility to the former President; Democrats are more likely to assign greater responsibility when the former President is a Republican for primary, immediate, and prospective attributions. As people become more Republican in their party identification, they assign greater amounts of primary and immediate responsibility to Democratic incumbents but less to Republican incumbents. This effect is statistically significant for primary attributions, but not immediate ones. Additionally, the generalized ordered logit regression shows a statistically significant interaction in the direction opposite the hypothesis, though, as the results section shows, this model is highly problematic and its results are quite dubious. Finally, in all the models, there is a negative coefficient on the

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interaction, suggesting that assign more responsibility to nongovernmental targets when the incumbent shares their party affiliation. This effect is only statistically significant for prospective attributions to the American people, however. Still, the pattern suggests that, given the negative economic situation featured in the script, individuals might try to diffuse responsibility away from government when their copartisan is in office.

Table 8.27 - Party in Power Experiment: Summary of Interaction Coefficients

	Primary	Immediate	Prospective
Dichotomous Attribution	$+^{\dagger}$	$+^{\dagger}$	+
Former President	-*	-**	-**
Incumbent President	$+^{\dagger}$	+	-**
Business Community	-	-	-
American People	-	-	-*

Cell entries are the direction and statistical significance of the coefficients for the Party ID x Democratic Incumbent interaction. *** indicates p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, † p<0.1.

In a broader sense, however, by being able to conclude that partisanship and economic conditions cause responsibility attributions, rather than attributions affecting perceptions of conditions, these results confirm that the untested assumptions of previous scholarly work on the matter. With random selection removing any unforeseen bias of omitted variables and possible endogeneity ruled out, it appears that researchers now have a firm footing in saying that party identification and perceptions are causally related to how individuals determine responsibility for national conditions. Additionally,

concluding that economic perceptions are not affected by who individuals see as responsible for conditions is also an important finding in itself.

One knock against the findings of a cross-sectional survey such as the one from Chapter Five is that its findings might only be applicable to the time under study. However, the Party in Power experiment suggests that, by confirming the results found in Chapter Five, the hypothesized relationships between party identification, issue perceptions, and responsibility attributions are generalizable political situations other than the current one in Washington D.C. By showing that responsibility attributions are affected by the manipulation of the party affiliation of politicians, the results further stress the importance of governmental transitions in the attribution process. Motivated reasoning is not a phenomenon restricted to the transition from Bush to Obama, but instead is relevant in the attribution process whether a transition is occurring or not.

Finally, the manipulation of the time since the incumbent's inauguration was a unique aspect of this experiment. The results showed that the progression of time has a causal effect on the responsibility attribution process and that individuals are more likely to see the incumbent responsible as more responsible as time goes on. It is just as important, that the effect of time is not overwhelming, suggesting that there is room for variability in real-life scenarios, and that the effect even appears to vary based on the responsibility type. While it is hard to generalize about only three treatment levels, the assignment of responsibility to the incumbent seemed to "jump" after a certain amount of time for each responsibility type and then leveled off. With intermediate responsibility,

for instance, the results for the 6-month and one-year manipulations were similar, though there was a sharp increase in the percentage of people assigning immediate responsibility to the incumbent at the two-year mark. Conversely, the percentage assigning prospective responsibility to the incumbent increases after six months but levels off at the two year mark.

As with most scholarly projects, the results of both experiments pose questions that can be addressed by further research. With the Party in Power experiment, a natural extension would be to replicate the experiment with a positive economic situation to determine if the partisanship of the officeholders affects responsibility attributions when times are good as well as bad. Such a design would also answer questions regarding the assignment of responsibility amounts to nongovernmental targets. Recall that whenever party identification was significant in the assignment of responsibility to the business community or the American people in the survey, respondents assigned more responsibility when the incumbent was their copartisan. I argue that this is an attempt to diffuse responsibility for the negative economic situation away from the incumbent and his party. A replication of this experiment with a positive economy could test this conclusion; under a Democratic administration with a positive economy, one would expect responsibility assignment outside of government to decrease as people become more Democratic in their party identification. Furthermore, such a replication would allow for testing the effect of time's passage in other contexts.

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Given the numerous null results, replicating the Cued Attributions experiment seems less productive. However, there is usually room for improvement in any design. In particular, one could redesign the experiment so that it takes place in stages. In one stage, individuals could be given an economic situation and an attribution cue, similar to what occurred in the original experiment. However, a second stage could be added, in which new economic information is given and one could test how the effects of a firmly-established previous responsibility attribution affect perceptions.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

This chapter summarizes the study, reiterating the purpose of the research project and its contributions. The theoretical background and hypotheses are discussed and I briefly run through the results. The chapter closes with the implications of the results, as well as a discussion regarding the limitations of the project and possible avenues for further inquiry into the causes and effects of responsibility attributions.

Purpose and Contributions

Broadly put, this study has attempted to determine how individuals ascribe credit or blame for national conditions. This act of assigning responsibility for conditions is referred to as making responsibility attributions. Responsibility attributions are an important mediator between issue perceptions and political behaviors such as the vote; before an individual can reward or punish a candidate with his or her vote, one must first establish that the candidate is responsible for conditions (Abramowitz, Lanoue, and Ramesh 1988; Lau and Sears 1981; Peffley 1984b; Sniderman and Brody 1977).

Yet despite the clear importance of responsibility attributions, the relationship between issue perceptions and responsibility attributions has not been fully examined. One question that exists is what exactly is meant by "responsibility" in the context of an

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attribution for national conditions. Scholars have vacillated on what responsibility attributions entail (Gailey and Lee 2005; Iyengar 1989), and the definitions of responsibility have been thought to include such diverse concepts as causal responsibility (e.g. Rudolph 2003b), control/treatment responsibility (e.g. Sniderman and Brody 1977; Tyler 1982), and role-responsibility (Peffley 1984b). Others define responsibility based on the societal position of who is seen as responsible (Thompson 1980).

This project standardizes the conceptualization of responsibility for national conditions by proposing three distinct types of responsibility attributions, arranged around a temporal dimension. For each responsibility attribution, individuals compare current conditions to reference points. First, there is *primary responsibility,* which is the question of long term causal responsibility for the issue, in which people decided who is responsible for current conditions when they are compared to "typical" or "average" conditions over a long period of time. The second attribution in my typology is *immediate responsibility*, which is a short-term attribution of credit or blame for the current conditions of the issue. Finally, *prospective responsibility* is determined by who an individual believes will be responsible for an issue's conditions in the future. This can be thought of a determining who will be given credit and blame for future outcomes.

These distinctions are important because individuals may differentiate between responsibility for long-term causes, current conditions, and future outcomes either by attributing responsibility to different entities or changing the degree of responsibility. For example, the existence of a prior cause may cancel out the liability ascribed to being

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a more immediate cause of a negative condition (Brickman, Ryan, and Wortman 1975). Dividing the attribution process in this way provides a more complete picture of how different attributions can affect behavior. If it is true that responsibility must first be ascribed in order for an economic situation to affect behavior (Sniderman and Brody 1977), then it is necessary to first ascertain what exactly is meant by that attribution. Theoretically, it is possible for some types of attributions to affect behaviors more than others, or to be more politically important. Breaking up the attribution process in this manner allows for a more complete study of the relationship between attribution types and individuals' political attitudes and issue perceptions.

The results show that the formations of certain types of attributions are more likely to be susceptible to motivated reasoning than others and have larger effects on political behavior, though all three responsibility types have impacts under certain conditions. When responsibility is measured dichotomously after a governmental transition, pitting the incumbent against the former President, the interaction of party identification and issue perceptions is strongest when predicting immediate responsibility attributions, though important relationships exist with primary and, to a lesser extent, prospective attributions as well. Immediate responsibility attributions also show the greatest distinction in how responsibility attributions are formed between those who do and do not engage in certain political behaviors, though differences are observed with the other two attribution types as well.

This begs the question as to why immediate responsibility consistently produces the clearest results. One possibility is that citizens are most concerned with the present, rather than the past or the future; they may place the greatest importance on whether things are getting better or getting worse, as opposed to taking retrospective or prospective assessments of the situation. If this is true, it follows that individuals would be more invested in ascribing immediate responsibility than primary or prospective responsibility, increasing the stake an individual has in finding consistency between their party identification, their issue perception, and their immediate attribution, which would increase the likelihood of motivated reasoning occurring.

But would immediate responsibility attributions always be more important? Not necessarily. This research was carried out in almost the very middle of President Obama's first term in office, in the summer, but still before the mid-term election season began to heat up. Because the citizenry were probably less concerned about elections than at almost any other time, it follows that immediate concerns might rate higher at that time than past or future ones. If this is the case, we would expect the importance of party identification and perceptions to fluctuate in their relationships with the three types of attributions. For instance, I would propose that primary attributions might be most important immediate prior to an election, as the voters evaluate long-term changes in conditions and determine responsibility. Alternatively, prospective attributions might play a larger role immediately following an election, a time in which there would be the

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greatest confusion over responsibility for future conditions and period in which individuals contemplate the direction of the country under a new leader.

Regardless of whether the relative importance of the types of responsibility attributions fluctuates over time, it is important to note that, in actuality, political candidates and parties have long-behaved as if responsibility, at least in the broadest sense, does indeed factor into the vote decision. One can even look at historical elections to see how parties and candidates structure campaigns around the assignment of responsibility. Tapping into a sense of primary responsibility, Democrats blamed the Republicans for the Great Depression for several decades. The three elections of 2006, 2008, and 2010 were quite spastic in their partisan results, likely due to the fact that incumbents were being blamed for dismal economic conditions, irrespective of whether they were the root cause, implying immediate responsibility. Finally, Cold War-era Republicans often portrayed Democrats as being "soft on defense," a charge that harkens to prospective responsibility attributions.

The second large contribution made by this paper is the improved measurement of responsibility attributions. The first measurement improvement is the inclusion of both the incumbent and former President as response options in the attribution questions. Practically every previous study of economic attribution focuses on the decision to hold one individual politician responsible or comparing one institution versus another when asking respondents to access credit and blame. That is, respondents are generally asked to say whether the President, Congress, or the Business Community is most responsible

for conditions, to use just three possible response options. However, it is clear that this conceptualization of government is lacking, as there is clearly a temporal element to policymaking. Such response sets ignore the history and context of the issue, failing to account for the possibility that individuals will blame *former* elected officials for *current* or *future* conditions.

Because former officeholders are not included in typical questions, no research has thoroughly addressed the question as to how individuals distinguish between current and former officeholders when ascribing responsibility for national conditions. The inclusion of the former President alongside the incumbent in the attribution questions is an important addition to the literature. This change allows for the effective study of responsibility attribution during and after a governmental transition, that is, the transfer of power from one President to the next. Governmental transitions, at least at the Presidential level, are regular occurrences in this country, with the President having a two-term limit, and there being non-rare instances of other factors causing more frequent transitions of power (e.g. only serving one term, death, and even resignation). Importantly, transitions have an important and lasting effect. There is not a clean slate with each new incoming administration; economically, things like tax policies, budgetary issues, spending, and trade agreements all carry over and affect conditions well after a new President takes office. Finally, the study of responsibility assignment after a transition is not only relevant to the Presidency, as shown here, but also is pertinent to instances of partisan shifts and leadership changes in Congress, state legislatures,

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governors, mayors, and even governmental changes in other nations. Since governments are in a state of regular transition, and the fact that issue conditions often take a long time to change, ignoring transitions provide an incomplete picture of the attribution process at best, and an inaccurate one at worst.

The second improvement of measurement comes from the fact that responsibility attributions were measured in two ways: by asking respondents to say whether the incumbent or former officeholder is more responsible for issue conditions and by asking respondents to assign *how much* responsibility various targets deserve. These two question types allow the researcher to not only directly assess how responsibility is ascribed across Presidential administrations, but also how responsibility is assigned relative to other political and nonpolitical actors. Additionally, this dual-questioning format was seen as particularly useful in the analysis of prospective responsibility, in which voters overwhelmingly saw the incumbent President as more prospectively responsible than the former when measured dichotomously, but showed a great deal of hypothesized variation in the relative amounts of prospective responsibility assigned.

Furthermore, the measurement of responsibility for Iraq War conditions in the survey is helpful because it allows for the study of responsibility attributions beyond the economy. As Malhotra and Kuo (2010) note, practically every other study of responsibility attributions for issues deal with the economy and how individuals determine if a particular politician is responsible. Though some in the literature, as with this study, look at the assignment of responsibility between political actors (e.g. Brown

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2011; Rudolph 2003b), those studies are restricted to economic attributions. While

Malhotra and Kuo (2010) expand the applicability of these types of studies to a

noneconomic issue (natural disaster management), this study goes further by not only

introducing the study of attributions after a governmental transition, but also by including

analyses of attributions for the Iraq War. This shows the applicability of responsibility

attributions to complex non-domestic military issues and raises the question of the

generalizability of motivated reasoning's relationship to responsibility assignment when

considering other international issues.

Theory and Hypotheses

The hypotheses tested by this study draw on several theories from political

science and psychology to answer the question of how individuals assign credit and

blame for national conditions. I argue that individuals are largely motivated by partisan

attachments to avoid having their responsibility attributions conflict with their party

identification and issue perceptions. This leads individuals to credit politicians of their

own party and blame members of the opposite party; if individuals cannot do so, they will

assign responsibility to targets outside of government.

Attribution theory, proposed by Heider (1958), posits that there are different

levels of responsibility that actors can have based on the outcome of their actions and

whether or not the actors should have done something else. Relatedly, self-serving biases

(Miller and Ross 1975) and group-serving attribution bias (1991) imply that individuals

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are more likely to ascribe responsibility in a manner that is supportive of their predispositions, either by attributing success to their own personal characteristics and failures to external circumstances, or by crediting an in-group and blaming an out-group.

This leads into motivated reasoning theories (Kunda 1990), which argues that individuals, when making decisions, are motivated by two types of motives: accuracy motives and directional goals. Accuracy motives are incentives to arrive at an accurate conclusion, whatever that may be, while directional motives encourage a particular outcome. Those motivated by direction goals engage in biased reasoning that favors the outcome suggested by the directional goal. Motivated reasoning, thus, is reasoning which is biased by directional goals. Individuals can be driven by a mix of both directional and accuracy goals, and that the importance of these goals on the decision at hand vary (Lodge and Taber 2000) but it can be presumed that directional goals will be more important when individuals have a clear stake in the outcome of the decision and less important if there are accountability mechanisms for their judgment (Taber, Lodge, and Glathar 2001). I expected the formation of responsibility attributions to be susceptible to motivated reasoning due to a general lack of any accountability mechanism.

I contend that party identification acts as a directional goal, affecting individuals' responsibility attributions, particularly following a governmental transition. Directional motives are thought to arrive from a variety of sources (c.f. Balcetis and Dunning 2006; Kassarjian and Cohen 1965; Kunda 1987; Lord, Ross, and Leper 1979). It is firmly

established that party identification is one of the most stable traits and well-understood traits and represents a key piece of information about candidates that can be easily discovered and is a significant predictor of the vote (Campbell et al. 1960; Converse 1964; Green and Palmquist 1994; Lewis-Beck et al 2008). The closest examples of studies examining how partisan biases motivate responsibility attributions deal not with governmental transitions, as in this study, but when there are other, less-specific confusions of responsibility, such as in cases of "divided federalism" (Brown 2010) or in disaster response (Malhotra and Kuo 2008). In these instances, and consistent with Rudolph (2003b), individuals tended to assign credit and blame in a manner consistent with their partisanship.

How the attribution process takes place is unknown. However, motivated correction theories (Skitka et al. 2002; Morgan et al. 2010) provide a plausible theoretical explanation as to how ideology and values can influence responsibility attributions, and its reasoning can be applied to how party identification may bring about biased attributions. According to motivated correction theory as explained by Skitka et al. (2002), attributions are often formed in a two-stage process. After interpreting an event, individuals generate an initial explanation. This initial explanation may activate people's concerns with their core values or ideology. Processing stops if the explanation is consistent with the individual's core values and ideology. However, if there is a perceived conflict between the explanation and the individual's values, the desire for consistency (see Festinger 1957) will motivate individuals to continue into a second-stage

of processing, if there is enough time and cognitive resources to do so, perhaps augmenting the original explanation so that it conforms to the individual's values.

I believe that a similar process occurs when asking respondents about responsibility for national conditions after a governmental transition, except that it is largely motivated by party identification rather than values or ideology. By crediting members of their own party when they have positive perceptions and blaming members of the opposite party when their perceptions are negative, individuals are avoiding the internal conflict that may exist between issue perceptions, party identification, and responsibility attributions. Using a negative economic situation as an example, internal conflict would exist if an individual saw a President of his or her own party as a root cause of economic problems, but the conflict can be avoided by transferring blame elsewhere, either to a former President of the opposite party or outside of government.

The primary hypothesis, therefore, is that individuals will engage in motivated reasoning when making responsibility attributions and directional goals will be derived from individuals' partisanship and issue perceptions. Specifically, I expected individuals to credit members of their own party and blame the opposite party. For example, those with positive issue perceptions would be increasingly likely to view Republicans as responsible as they became more Republican on the party identification scale and those with negative perceptions would be less likely to view Republicans as responsible as their attachment to the Republican Party increased. In some instances, however, it might be hard to rationalize responsibility towards a particular President, so in such an instance,

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individuals may still engage in motivated reasoning by assigning responsibility to partisan groups in Congress or to targets outside of government.

Hypotheses were also developed regarding the types of individuals that would be likely to engage in motivated reasoning. Theory suggests that those with a larger stake in the outcome of the attribution would be more likely to be influenced by directional goals (Taber, Lodge, and Glathar 2001), so it was hypothesized that partisan strength, political interest, political knowledge, and issue effect would all be related to the likelihood of engaging in motivated reasoning when making responsibility attributions.

Additionally, following a governmental transition, it was hypothesized that the passage of time to have a positive effect on the likelihood of assigning responsibility to the incumbent rather than the former President.

The final empirical chapter of the study largely dealt with addressing the question of causality between responsibility attributions and issue perceptions. Most previously research has been correlative in examining responsibility attribution's relationships and surprisingly few prior studies have approached the subject using experimentation (i.e. Malhotra and Kuo 2010; Rudolph 2006). All previous work has treated responsibility attributions as being caused by issue perceptions and personal characteristics, however, the reverse causal direction should also be considered. It is possible that, at least under some conditions, responsibility attributions and personal characteristics might affect issue perceptions. These two causal directions are presented as competing hypotheses and tested in Chapter Eight.

I theorize that once an individual makes a responsibility attribution, there may be some degree of inertia that exists; the individual is going to continue with that attribution of credit or blame until some event or stimulus forces them to change it. If motivated reasoning occurs with this individual, they may be biased in their perceptions of the issue to maintain congruency between their party identification, the previously-held attribution, and the newly-formed issue perception. I hypothesized that certain groups of people would be more likely to use this causal direction, particularly those who would have been likely to have formed responsibility attributions in the past. This includes people who are interested in politics, have high political knowledge, and talk about politics.

These hypotheses were tested using a variety of methodological techniques. Chapter Four used existing data, such as tracking polls, election studies, and economic indicators to analyze the relationship between the economy and political behaviors to show how the effects of potential responsibility attributions can often be observed by patterns in the data. Chapters Five, Six, and Seven tested the hypotheses using an original survey of Franklin County, Ohio voters. Primary, immediate, and prospective responsibility attributions for national economic conditions and conditions of the Iraq War were measured, along questions measuring retrospective, immediate, and prospective issue perceptions. Finally, Chapter Eight addressed the questions of causality using two experimental designs. In the first, respondents were present with scripts containing hypothetical national economic data. The only thing that varied across the scripts was the party affiliations of the incumbent and former President and the time since

the incumbent took office. Using the interaction between the partisan manipulation and respondents' party identification to predict responsibility attributions tests whether the manipulation produces a causal effect on attributions; the time manipulation tests how responsibility is assigned in the periods following a transition of power. The second experiment uses another hypothetical script and tests the reverse causal direction by holding the party in power constant, but varying state of the economy. The script attempts to cue the respondent to make a particular responsibility attribution by making it clear that the economy changed as the result of one President's policies and not the other's. Economic perceptions are then measured to test the effect of the attribution them.

<div align="center">Results</div>

Chapter Four: Indications of Responsibility Attributions in Existing Data

The analysis in Chapter Four largely focused on three analyses, each showing the possible impact of responsibility attributions on political opinions, but falling short of proving their importance, making clear the need for appropriate measurements. The first analysis is the comparison of the daily closing value of the Dow Jones Industrial Average and the Gallup Daily Tracking Poll during the 2008 Presidential campaign. The two data sets are highly correlated, which implies that the collapse of the economy had an effect on political opinions during the campaign. Applying the theories promoted in this study, it is probably not just the fact that the economy sunk and everyone flocked to McCain.

Instead, the dynamic is probably much more nuanced than that. Generally, Democrats experienced the economic collapse of 2008 and probably found it quite easy to blame Bush and the Republicans. Republicans, experiencing the same events, were probably more likely to believe responsibility lied with actors outside of government or with the Democrats in Congress.

However, questions remained about this relationship. For one thing, without a measurement of responsibility attribution, it is impossible to know exactly how, when, or why the public decided *en masse* to hold John McCain responsible for events that many could argue were beyond his personal control. Additionally, if attributions of responsibility explain the relationship, it remains vague as to what types of attributions that may entail. From the perspective of this study, McCain, as a Republican, may have been judged guilty by association if the public ascribed primary responsibility for the economic collapse to the Republican Party, but it is also possible that the public attached a high degree of prospective responsibility to the incoming president and simply preferred Obama's proposals to McCain's.

The stock market and polling data's relationship clearly strengthened as Election Day approached. If responsibility attributions are heavily motivated by partisan attachments, as the results of this study show, the question remains as to why the effect of the economy on the polls appears to increase as time progresses. I suggest two possible explanations that are consistent with motivated reasoning theory. The first entails a weakening of directional motives in the aggregate electorate, due to the increased

participation and interest shown by independents and weaker partisans as Election Day nears. These people, because they have lower partisan attachments, are less likely to gain a psychological benefit from having their attributions align with their perceptions and party identification, and therefore may approach the attribution of responsibility for the economic collapse more honestly. The second explanation involved the possibility of increased accuracy motivations, caused by the fact that the upcoming election has a real effect on policy, which may cause more honesty in attributions among partisans. Either explanation for why the relationship between the economy and the polls tightens as the election approaches is plausible and consistent with theories of the prior chapters.

The analyses of the partisan differences in questions from the ANES Cumulative Data File also reveal interesting patterns. Economic indicators were not significant predictors of the partisan gaps in economic issue approval, but were significantly related to retrospective sociotropic perceptions. I argue that the economic issue approval question restricts opinions to a specific President's handling of the economy and is silent on the matter of whether that President is causally responsible for conditions in the long- or short-term. Conversely, when respondents answer the perception question, they are free to consider what not only their opinion of how the economy has changed, but also who is responsible for it and what their response might imply about the President. Sorting each year by its change in the unemployment rate, while the percentage of people with positive retrospective evaluations was always higher among in-party members than the out-party, the proportion of out-party members with positive perceptions leveled off

as the economy improved while the in-party percentage continued to improve. Though this analysis is limited by the relatively few data points, I argue this pattern is observed because of the way in which individuals ascribe responsibility for economic conditions. In-party members perceive a positive economy because their copartisan is in office and may presumably get the credit for it while out-party members are hesitant to say that the economy is doing well under a President of the opposite party because they do not want to associate the incumbent President with a positive economy. Because confusion over primary and immediate responsibility would be highest early in a new administration's term, I find that the partisan gaps in the approval question are quite low in the first mid-term election of each new administration. However, the gaps in these years show no pattern for the approval question because, while the perception question leaves the attribution of responsibility for conditions to be ambiguous, the approval question is tied directly to a political actor, making any confusion over responsibility irrelevant. If confusion exists over who is responsible for conditions, people may approach the question with or without partisan biases when answering the perception question, but those biases are likely to be uniform across the sample. The approval question, however, is a direct reference to the President's handling of an issue, and therefore, the time someone has been in office should not relate to the partisan differences.

The analysis of individual-level data from the ANES Cumulative Data File showed that when it comes to predicting approval of the President's handling of the economy, objective economic indicators were important predictors, but not nearly as

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important as economic perceptions and in-party status. The effect of party affiliation is more important at lower perception levels, which is caused by a large jump in approval by in-party members as perceptions begin to improve before they level-off at the higher levels of perceptions; the effect of perceptions on approval among out-party members is fairly constant across perceptions. This difference can be explained if individuals assign responsibility differently based on their partisanship. People may adjust their perceptions, assigning credit and blame to either the President, Congress, or outside of government based on their partisanship and perceptions, except that in-party members are much more likely to see the President as responsible as perceptions improve from low to moderate levels, and, as a result, the effect of perceptions on approval declines as perceptions become very positive.

Despite all of these patterns, the analyses in Chapter Four are not ideal. The conclusions rely very heavily on supposition and the consistency of data patterns with predicted patterns, often with very few data points. To concretely address questions of how responsibility attributions play a role in the formation of such political opinions, researchers need to commonly include questions of credit and blame for national conditions in surveys.

Chapters Five-Seven: The Political Attributions Survey

The Political Attributions Survey answered many interesting questions about how responsibility attributions are formed following a governmental transition, and Chapter

Five focused on the ascription of credit and blame to either President Bush or President Obama. Despite having left office over a year and a half prior to the survey, a majority of respondents still viewed President Bush as more primarily responsible than President Obama for economic and Iraq War conditions. Sizable proportions also saw the former President as immediately responsible for current conditions as well (39 and 34 percent, respectively). Prospective responsibility was different, however, as over 90 percent of respondents viewed President Obama as more responsible for future conditions than the former President. Additionally, a very sizeable proportion of respondents switched their target of attribution across the three types. Almost 30 percent of respondents assigned immediate responsibility differently than how they assigned primary responsibility and a majority of the sample had a different prospective target than their primary target. Clearly, these results show that the distinctions between primary, immediate, and prospective responsibility are valuable and that the public can and do distinguish between such concepts.

Using the interaction between an individual's party identification and her economic perceptions to predict the dichotomous responsibility attribution shows that responsibility attributions following a governmental transition are often assigned through biased motivated reasoning. For both issues, the interaction's coefficient and marginal effects were statistically significant in predicting primary and immediate attributions. Prospective attributions showed statistically significant effects for the Iraq War but not the economy. Further analysis of the predicted probability of seeing President Obama as

more responsible than President Bush showed sizeable and statistically significant differences across groups of strong partisans for most of the sample. Furthermore, primary responsibility attributions were significant predictors of immediate attributions, but the effects of primary attributions were not overwhelming. Indeed, even with primary attributions included as a predictor, the interaction between party identification and issue perceptions was still statistically significant.

Theory suggests that motivated reasoning is likely to occur among those who have a larger stake in the outcome of the decision at hand because having such a stake increases the importance of directional motivations (Taber, Lodge, and Glathar 2001). Therefore, it was hypothesized that, if motivated reasoning is occurring in the assignment of responsibility, those with a stake in the decision would be more likely to engage in motivated reasoning. However, it is not possible to simply ask respondents if their judgments are motivated. Instead, I sorted the respondents into two groups, based on their party identification, issue perception, and responsibility attribution. For each attribution, those who credited the President of their own party for a perceived success or blamed a President of the opposite party for a perceived failure were labeled a "potential motivated reasoner" in making that attribution.

I then tested whether certain variables indicating having a stake in the decision were related to the likelihood of someone being a potential motivated reasoner. The first variable, partisan strength was highly related to the likelihood of crediting copartisans and blaming members of the opposite party. Political interest failed to relate as predicted,

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suggesting that the social desirability of responding with a high level of interest caused the variable to not show up as a motivator. Objective measures of political knowledge, however, were significant predictors of the likelihood of being a potential motivated reasoner for all three economic attributions. Finally, the impact the economy had on individuals' households significantly predicted immediate attributions, but not primary or prospective ones.

Using the dichotomous attribution questions, I then turn to the relationship between political behaviors and the responsibility attribution process. The Political Attributions Survey contained three unique and important measures of political behavior: presidential issue approval, support for the Tea Party, and 2012 presidential vote intention. First, the analyses showed how economic responsibility attributions interacted with issue perceptions to predict individuals' vote intentions. Importantly, this relationship was not uniform across all of the attributions. Only primary and prospective economic attributions were related to vote intention, suggesting that voters are less concerned about immediate responsibility when considering vote choice during the middle of a presidential term. Additionally, Iraq War attributions showed no relationship with vote intention, raising the question of whether responsibility attributions concerning war conditions would have influenced vote choice in previous elections when the war had greater salience, or currently, had the economy been seen as less critical during the time the survey was in the field. Furthermore, it was shown that the amount of blame assigned

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to President Bush was a greater predictor of vote intention than the amount of blame assigned to President Obama.

Chapter Six then turned toward looking at how responsibility attributions are formed within groups based on presidential issue approval and Tea Party support. Due to a lack of theoretical support, it was not possible to make specific predictions about how such behaviors would relate to responsibility attributions. Instead, the value is in determining if those who engage in certain behaviors form responsibility attributions in a manner different than those who do not engage in them. The interaction between party identification and economic perceptions neared statistical significance in predicting primary and prospective economic responsibility attributions among those who approved of the President's handling of the economy, but the interaction was only significant among those who disapproved when making immediate attributions. The interaction significantly predicted primary Iraq War attributions among those who approved of the President's handling of the issue, but not among those who disapproved. Support for the Tea Party, a conservative/ libertarian movement largely associated with domestic economic policy, produced the most interesting relationships; non-supporters appear to engage in motivated reasoning when making economic attributions while Tea Party supporters appear to do so when making Iraq War attributions.

Finally, Chapter Six closed by showing how Republicans who support the Tea Party are more likely than other Republicans to assign responsibility to President Obama and less likely than other Republicans to assign responsibility to President Bush. This

latter finding runs contrary to conventional wisdom, which suggests that Tea Party supporters are disillusioned with government spending to the extent that they are willing to blame both Bush and Obama for the nation's budgetary issues.

The results in Chapters Five and Six are clearly strongest when the dependent variables are primary and immediate responsibility attributions. Prospective responsibility attributions do not predicted nearly as well, and the hypothesized relationships are infrequently statistically significant. The reason for this, I argue, is that prospective responsibility, at least when measured 19 months into a new administration, is not best measured dichotomously, contrasting the prospective responsibility of the incumbent with the former President. Due to its forward-looking nature, the incumbent will usually be seen as more prospectively responsible than the former President. The data bear this out; over 90 percent of respondents saw Obama as more prospectively responsible than Bush for both issues. This lack of variation makes it very difficult to find statistically significant results using the dichotomous measure as the dependent variable. However, that does not mean that prospective responsibility attributions are not made using motivated reasoning. The theories laid out in Chapter Two do not necessitate that individuals see one President as more responsible than the other in order for motivated reasoning to occur. Instead, individuals might increase or decrease the *amount* of responsibility assigned to a politicians or to targets outside of government in order to find consistency in their perceptions, party identification, and responsibility attributions. For this reason, prospective responsibility is best measured by looking at party

identification and issue perceptions' influence on how responsible individuals see the Presidents.

Chapter Seven analyzes the survey's questions in which respondents assigned responsibility on a seven-point scale to the current and former Presidents, partisan groups in Congress, and targets outside of government. The results suggest that individuals heavily engage in motivated reasoning when assigning responsibility amounts to these actors, for both issues and for all three responsibility types, including prospectively responsibility. The interaction between party identification and issue perceptions is correctly signed and statistically significant for responsibility assignment to President Obama, Congressional Democrats, and Congressional Republicans for both issues and for all three attribution types. The interaction is correctly signed in predicting immediate and prospective responsibility assignment to President Bush for both issues and in predicting primary economic responsibility assignment to nongovernmental targets. Finally, it was shown that primary responsibility assignment is a predictor of immediate responsibility attributions and that both primary and immediate responsibility assignment can predict prospective attributions, though immediate attributions are a much stronger predictor. This, I argue, is due to the fact that immediate attributions are temporally closer to prospective attributions than are primary attributions.

Chapter Eight: Questions of Causality

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Finally, Chapter Eight tackled the issue of causality, answering the question of whether the correlative relationships observed in the Political Attributions Survey might be causal in nature and whether the direction of causality might flow from responsibility attributions to perceptions. On the first point, by holding economic conditions constant in a hypothetical experimental script while varying the party in control of the government, it was shown that the manipulation had a statistically significant effect on the assignment of primary and immediate responsibility when dichotomously measured. The effect on prospective responsibility, while correctly signed, was statistically insignificant. Once again, the analysis of the assignment of responsibility amounts showed a great deal of nuance in how responsibility is assessed, and the interaction between the manipulation and respondent party identification was a statistically significant predictor in five of the six responsibility attributions for the incumbent and former Presidents, including both attributions of prospective responsibility.

The direction of causality was clearly established. Party identification interacted with the manipulation of the party in power to affect responsibility attributions. The same cannot be said of the alternative causal route. The manipulation of the economic situation and attempts to cue a responsibility attribution to the President of either party failed to produce statistically significant effects, even among subsamples of the participants who might be expected to engage in such reasoning.

Finally, time had an effect on the assignment of responsibility. By manipulating the amount of time an incumbent had been in office in the Party in Power Experiment, it

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was shown that the longer a President had been in office, the more likely a respondent was to view the incumbent as primarily, immediately, and prospectively responsible. This suggests that even though individuals engage in motivated reasoning when making responsibility attributions, the amount of time a President has been in office can have an effect on the willingness of individuals to see the former President as more responsible than the incumbent.

Implications

The primary finding of this study is that motivated reasoning biases the formation of responsibility attributions, particularly in the assignment of credit and blame following a governmental transition of power. Whenever the assignment of responsibility is vague, I argue that the desire for consistency between an individual's issue perception, party identification, and responsibility attribution acts as a direction motive that causes individuals to assign responsibility in a partisan manner, crediting copartisans for perceived successes and blaming members of the opposite party. In some instances, it is easier to find the aforementioned consistency by assigning responsibility to targets outside of government.

The reliability and strength of these findings stress the importance of partisanship and issue perceptions on the attribution process. These variables cannot be ignored when looking at credit and blame. Because of the motivation that perceptions and partisanship provide, researchers must take such variables into account whenever looking at matters of

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responsibility and never presume that responsibility attributions are measures of objectively correct policy positions or political actions. Instead of providing a clear indication of where responsibility actually lies, individuals appear to pass their issue perceptions through a partisan filter before assigning responsibility.

The results imply that it is not just party officials, politicians, and pundits that "spin" events and consider issue conditions in the most-positive light possible; in the electorate, partisan citizens can also be effective "spin doctors." Indeed, citizens are quite effective at this, even going so far rationalizing their attribution of responsibility by matching their sense of issue conditions based with responsibility type (primary, immediate, or prospective). The demonstrated ability and occurrence of individuals linking their attributions for past, present, and future conditions in a highly motivated and partisan manner is an important contribution of this study.

There are electoral effects of these attributions as well. The effect of economic events or other issues on elections can now be more deeply understood. People are able to view the causal sources of both positive and negative events in a manner that is highly consistent with their personal predispositions. If an issue is seen in a positive light, members of the party in power will have a psychological incentive to credit their copartisan while out-party members will likely increase the responsibility assigned to their party in Congress or to factors outside of the political arena. If an issue is seen in a negative light however, such as the case in the 2008 election, out-party members will generally find it quite easy to blame the current President of the opposite party while in-

party members will make diffuse responsibility attributions. The measurement of responsibility attributions using the two methods, dichotomously and the assignment of amount of responsibility, allows for such a nuanced analysis of how responsibility is assigned.

Lastly, the importance of partisanship in the assignment of responsibility for Iraq War conditions, and, in turn, the differences in the importance of that process in how they relate to political behaviors shows that the importance of responsibility attributions extends far beyond the economy. Without downplaying the significance of economic conditions, other issues clearly matter as well, and it is short-sighted for researchers to ignore them when studying responsibility attributions.

Limitations

Despite the robustness of the findings, this study has a few clear limitations, and, if given another chance to redo the research in an ideal world, changes could be made to improve upon it. The first limitation is the fact that the economy was seen as quite poor during the time the survey was in the field. Eighty-seven percent of the sample believed that the economy was worse than typical, which leads to the question of whether or not I would find consistent results in another economic context. After all, previous attributional research suggests that priming anger results in more causal attributions (Small et al. 2006), so if people are angry about the economy, they might be assigning more causal responsibility than usual.

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Though I cannot completely dismiss the possibility that the economic conditions of the summer of 2010 biased the results, I do not presume that they did. The reason for this is that practically identical results were observed using Iraq War attributions, an issue in which there was a great deal of diversity regarding issue perceptions. Despite the fact that many people felt Iraq conditions were improving, people still appeared to seek the consistency between their perceptions, party identification, and responsibility attributions.

A second limitation also deals with the historical context in which both issues reside, mainly the transition of power from President Bush to President Obama; that is, from a Republican to a Democrat. One would presume that an alternative transition from a Democrat to a Republican would produce similar partisan effects, though the question is open as to how responsibility would be assigned if a Democrat took power following another Democrat, or if a Republican followed another Republican. For instance, one could ask what role partisanship would play in the assignment of responsibility if one power is in power for a decade. I would argue that, while we would not necessarily see the effects of motivated reasoning when attributions are measured dichotomously, the assignment of responsibility amounts is still likely to be heavily biased by partisanship and perceptions, with individuals either making diffuse attributions or ascribing responsibility to partisan groups to avoid seeing the in-party members as responsible.

Furthermore, in some ways, the design of the study was deficient in some minor respects. For one, I lacked the financial resources to study the assignment of

responsibility during the governmental transition at multiple time points. Given

unlimited funds, it would have been fascinating to replicate the survey at various time

points, perhaps a month after Obama's inauguration, six months, one year, two years, et

cetera. Such a repeated cross-section design, or even a panel study, could provide rich

data indicating how individuals alter their responsibility attributions from the former

President to the incumbent over time, and determine whether that process is evenly

carried out across the electorate.

The mixed-mode design of the Political Attributions Survey, while cost effective

and helpful in many ways, suffered from a significant flaw – the website used to carry out

the online survey did not record the randomization records indicating whether the

respondents answered the attribution questions before the perception question or vice

versa. This prevented me from carrying out a planned matching analysis to provide an

alternative test of the causal effects of perceptions on attributions and to contrast the

relationship with the effects of responsibility attributions on issue perceptions. Still,

given the clear null finding of that alternative causal route found in Chapter Eight (*that*

online survey program was capable of recording the randomization data), this is a

significant, though not crippling oversight.

Finally, on a rather minor point, the aggregate analysis of the ANES Cumulative

Data File figures suffered from the brevity of the data's time series. Though the data set

reaches back into the 1940s, the only questions that were consistently asked enough to be

useful in this analysis dated from the 1980s, forcing that section to rely on very few data

points. Additionally, while other issues have been measured with issue perception and

presidential issue approval questions, these issues are included very irregularly.

Theoretically, a longer time series is possible with other issues in the future, but that will

take a long time.

Avenues of Further Inquiry

Finally, with any large research project, one thinks of further research possibilities

and questions raised by the results. One thought that comes to mind is investigating the

generalizability of this study's findings. A significant contribution of this work is the

examination of responsibility attributions for an issue beyond the commonly-used

economy. Showing that the theories presented in Chapter Two apply to Iraq War

attributions is a first-step in determining the extent of motivated reasoning that occurs in

responsibility attributions for additional issues to see if any clear patterns exist. The

amount of motivated reasoning that occurs among partisan groups may vary by issue type

(international or domestic) and policy (social, military, or economic). Furthermore, the

research design of this chapter could be applied to international contexts as well,

especially in nations in which power is transferred often or in which multiple levels of

responsibility may exist. For instance, if there is an economic problem in Wales, to

whom would citizens assign responsibility, and how? People could legitimately blame

local leaders, the current or former Prime Minister of Britain, the European Union, or

even distant non-European factors such as the American economy or Middle Eastern oil production.

In Chapter Four, one analysis described the tightening relationship between the stock market and Obama's lead over McCain in the polls as Election Day approached. Two possible explanations were put forward that could describe this relationship. The first possibility was an aggregate decrease in directional goals within the electorate; Independents and weak partisans, who begin to pay attention to politics as the election nears, lack the directional motives to find consistency between their perceptions, party identification, and attributions, and thus are more objective when assigning responsibility. The second explanation posits that the approaching election may act as an accountability mechanism that puts a check on individuals' responsibility attributions, which may cause partisans to be more objective as an election approaches. During a campaign, these two explanations could be tested to see how the assignment of responsibility changes as the election nears. If the biases of strong partisans remain constant, that would provide support for the former explanation. Conversely, if interactions between party identification and issue perceptions decrease in magnitude as time progresses, that would be evidence of the latter explanation.

The Political Attributions Survey revealed that a dichotomous comparison of prospective responsibility between the incumbent and former President is not an ideal measurement due to a lack of variation. I attribute this to the fact that the prospective attribution question essentially asked respondents to determine would be more

responsible for issue conditions 30 months after President Obama's inauguration. This raises the question of whether the variation in this variable would increase if prospective responsibility were measured earlier in a President's administration because, presumably, greater confusion would exist over the former President's role in affecting conditions of the near future.

The importance of immediate attributions in relation to primary and prospective attributions was discussed earlier in this chapter. It was proposed that immediate attributions might play a larger role during the time periods between elections because the electorate is not actively considering the long-term past or future in relation to particular candidates. It was argued that perhaps primary responsibility attributions would be more important in the period leading up to an election as voters evaluate long-term changes in issue conditions and that prospective attributions would be vital in the time immediate following an election, when confusion over responsibility for future conditions would be greatest. These proposals are testable by simply repeating the design of the Political Attributions Survey before and after an election and tracking how the impact of the interaction between party identification and issue perceptions varies.

Lastly, the experiment tested two possible causal routes, if partisanship would affect responsibility attributions and/or if a cued responsibility attribution would affect issue perceptions. While the results clearly favored the former route, this raises further questions regarding the permanency of these variables. Future research could undertake

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this subject by addressing how and under what conditions individuals are likely to alter their attributions of responsibility and their issue perceptions.

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Appendix A: The Political Attributions Survey

*Thank you for your time and participation in my survey. For each question, please circle the ONE answer that you feel is most appropriate. The questionnaire should be returned, along with your raffle ticket, in the prepaid envelope to Steven Nawara, Department of Political Science, 2140 Derby Hall, 154 N. Oval Mall, Columbus, OH 43210. If you would like to take the survey online and be entered **twice** in the raffle, go to* **http://www.surveygizmo.com/s/316671/ohiostate***. I can be contacted at Nawara.1@osu.edu or (708) 253-3241 if you have any questions.*

1. Many people think that our nation's economy has undergone a lot of changes in the past few years. How much responsibility would you say that each of the following individuals/groups has for any fundamental changes in the national economy **since the beginning of 2007**?
   Let 0 indicate "no responsibility" and 6 "full responsibility."

	None					Full	
a. President Bush	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. President Obama	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. Congressional Democrats	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
d. Congressional Republicans	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
e. The Business Community	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
f. The Banking Industry	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
g. The American People	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

2. Considering just President Obama and President Bush, who do you think is more responsible for any fundamental changes in the national economy **since the beginning of 2007**?

President Bush	President Obama

3. How much responsibility would you say that each of the following individuals/groups has for the **current state** of the national economy?

	None					Full	
a. President Bush	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. President Obama	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. Congressional Democrats	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
d. Congressional Republicans	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
e. The Business Community	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
f. The Banking Industry	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
g. The American People	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

4. Considering just President Obama and President Bush, who do you think is more responsible for the **current state** of the national economy?

President Bush	President Obama

5. How much responsibility do you think each of the following individuals/groups will have for the state of the national economy **one year from now**?

	None					Full	
a. President Bush	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. President Obama	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. Congressional Democrats	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
d. Congressional Republicans	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
e. The Business Community	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
f. The Banking Industry	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
g. The American People	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

6. Considering just President Obama and President Bush, who do you think will be more responsible for the state of the national economy **one year from now**?

President Bush	President Obama

7. Regardless of how you usually vote, who do you think is more likely to make the right decisions regarding economic policy?

President Obama	Congressional Democrats	Congressional Republicans	Neither

8. Many people think that the Iraq War has undergone a lot of changes in the past few years. How much responsibility would you say that each of the following individuals/groups has for any fundamental changes in the Iraq War **since the beginning of 2007**?

	None						Full
a. President Bush	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. President Obama	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. Congressional Democrats	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
d. Congressional Republicans	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
e. The US Military and its Commanders	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
f. Foreign Governments and their People	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
g. Terrorist Groups	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

9. Considering just President Obama and President Bush, who do you think is more responsible for any fundamental changes in the Iraq War **since the beginning of 2007**?

President Bush	President Obama

10. How much responsibility would you say that each of the following individuals/groups has for the **current conditions** of the Iraq War?

	None						Full
a. President Bush	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. President Obama	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. Congressional Democrats	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
d. Congressional Republicans	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
e. The US Military and its Commanders	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
f. Foreign Governments and their People	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
g. Terrorist Groups	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

11. Considering just President Obama and President Bush, who do you think is more responsible for the **current conditions** of the Iraq War?

President Bush	President Obama

12. How much responsibility do you think each of the following individuals/groups will have for the conditions of the Iraq War **one year from now**?

	None						Full
a. President Bush	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. President Obama	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. Congressional Democrats	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
d. Congressional Republicans	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
e. The US Military and its Commanders	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
f. Foreign Governments and their People	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
g. Terrorist Groups	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

13. Considering just President Obama and President Bush, who do you think will be more responsible for the conditions of the Iraq War **one year from now**?

President Bush	President Obama

14. Who do you think has a greater effect on your personal finances, yourself or the government?

Myself	The government

15. Please circle which number on the scale best corresponds to your opinion.

	Much Worse		Same			Much Better	
a. Do you consider the current **national economy** to be better or worse than what you consider to be "average" or "usual" conditions?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. As of right now, would you say that the **national economy** is getting better, staying the same, or getting worse?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. Compared to today, what do you think the **national economy** will be like one year from now?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
d. Do you consider **you and your family's** current finances to be better or worse than what you consider to be "average" or "usual?"	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
e. As of right now, would you say that **you and your family's finances** are getting better, staying the same, or getting worse?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
f. Compared to today, what do you think **you and your family's finances** will be like one year from now?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
g. Do you consider the current conditions of the **Iraq War** to be better or worse than what you consider to be "average" or "usual" conditions?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
h. As of right now, would you say that the conditions of the **Iraq War** are getting better, getting worse, or staying the same?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
i. Compared to today, what do you expect the conditions of the **Iraq War** to be one year from now?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

16. How much control do you think a typical president has in shaping **national economic conditions**?

Almost no control	Very little control	Some control	A great amount of control	Almost complete control

17. How much control do you think a typical president has in shaping the conditions of the **Iraq War**?

Almost no control	Very little control	Some control	A great amount of control	Almost complete control

18. Recently, have you worried more than usual about financial matters? Yes   No

19. Have you or someone in your household been forced to dip into personal savings as a result of recent economic conditions? Yes   No

20. Have you or your household been forced to make cutbacks as a result of the economy? Yes   No

21. Have you or someone in your household taken a forced pay cut in the past three years? Yes   No

22. Are you or someone in your household employed at a job below their qualifications? Yes   No

23. Have you or someone in your household been unemployed in the past three years? (**If NO, skip to question 24**) Yes   No

      a. If so, is this person still unemployed? Yes   No

      b. How long was this person unemployed?

Less than a month	1-3 months	3-6 months	6-12 months	Over a year	Not Applicable

24. Some people seem to follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there's an election going on or not. Others aren't that interested. How often would you say you follow what's going on in government and public affairs?

Hardly at all	Only now and then	Some of the time	Most of the time

25. Generally speaking, do you consider yourself to be a Democrat, a Republican, an Independent, or what?

Strongly Democratic	Democratic	Democratic-leaning Independent	Independent	Republican-leaning Independent	Republican	Strongly Republican	Other (specify)

26. When it comes to politics, would you consider yourself to be liberal, conservative, or moderate?

Very liberal	Liberal	Slightly liberal	Moderate	Slightly conservative	Conservative	Very conservative

27. Do you support or oppose the Tea Party movement?

Support	Oppose	Neither support nor oppose	Unfamiliar with the Tea Party Movement

28. Have you donated money to an organization associated with the Tea Party movement, attended any rallies or meetings associated with the Tea Party movement, or taken any other active steps to support the Tea Party movement , either in person or through email or on the internet?

Yes	No	Unsure

29. Can you remember who you voted for in the 2008 election?

John McCain	Barack Obama	Other: _____	Cannot remember	Did not vote

30. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as President?   Approve   Disapprove

31. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling the **economy**?   Approve   Disapprove

32. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling the **Iraq War**?   Approve   Disapprove

33. If the 2008 election was repeated today, who would you rather vote for?   Obama   McCain

34. Even though the 2012 presidential election is a long way off, who do you think you would rather vote for?   Obama   Someone else

35. Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements. Circle 0 if you strongly disagree, 1 if you disagree, 2 if you neither agree nor disagree, 3 if you agree, and 4 if you strongly agree.

	SD				SA
a. Our society should do whatever is necessary to make sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed.	0	1	2	3	4
b. One of the big problems in this country is that we don't give everyone an equal chance.	0	1	2	3	4
c. Any person who is willing to work hard has a good chance of succeeding.	0	1	2	3	4
d. Most people who don't get ahead should not blame the system; they really have only themselves to blame.	0	1	2	3	4
e. There should be no government interference with business and trade.	0	1	2	3	4
f. Government intervention leads to too much red tape and many problems.	0	1	2	3	4

The following is a set of questions concerning politics and various public figures. A lot of people will not know the answers to these questions, so do not bother to look them up or ask anyone for help. I just want to see how much information about these topics reaches people through the media. Feel free to skip any of these questions if you do not know the answers.

36. Do you happen to know the job or political office now held by Joe Biden? _____

37. Whose responsibility is it to determine if a law is constitutional or not?

The President	The Congress	The Supreme Court

38. How much of a majority is required for the U.S. Senate and U.S. House to override a presidential veto?
_____

39. Do you happen to know which party has the most members in the House of Representatives in Washington?

Republicans	Democrats

40. At the national level, which of the political parties is generally more conservative?

Republicans	Democrats

41. How many votes are needed to stop a filibuster in the U.S. Senate? _____

		Never	Rarely	Few times a week	Every day
42.	How often do you watch the **local** television news?	0	1	2	3
43.	How often do you watch the **national** television news?	0	1	2	3
44.	How often do you read a newspaper?	0	1	2	3
45.	How often do you get news from the internet?	0	1	2	3
46.	How often do you get news from people that you talk to, such as family members, friends, and coworkers?	0	1	2	3

47. If you had to pick one, where do you get the most information about current events?

Newspapers	Local TV news	National TV news	Internet	Family, Friends, and Coworkers

48. Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements. Circle 0 if you strongly disagree, 1 if you disagree, 2 if you neither agree nor disagree, 3 if you agree, and 4 if you strongly agree.

	SD				SA
a. You can generally trust the people who run the government to do what is right.	0	1	2	3	4
b. The government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves and not the benefit of all people.	0	1	2	3	4
c. People like me don't have any say in what the government does.	0	1	2	3	4
d. I consider myself well-qualified to participate in politics.	0	1	2	3	4
e. Most people can be trusted.	0	1	2	3	4
f. Most people would take advantage of you if they are given a chance.	0	1	2	3	4

49. Please circle the effect recent economic conditions have had on you and your family:

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
Very Negative					No effect					Very Positive

50. Please circle your gender:

Male	Female

51. In what year were you born? _____

52. What race or ethnicity do you consider yourself to be?

White, non-Hispanic	African-American/ Black	Hispanic/ Latino	Asian	Other, please specify: _____

53. What is your marital status?

Single, never married	Married	Widowed	Divorced	Separated

54. How many children do you have? _____ → 55. How many children live with you? _____

56. Are you currently a student?

No	Yes, full-time student	Yes, part-time student

57. What best describes your level of education?

High School / GED or less	Associate Degree	Bachelor's degree	Master's Degree	Professional degree (MD, DDS, JD, etc.)	Doctorate Degree (Ph.D.)

58. Do you or your family own or rent your place of residence?

Own	Rent

59. Which of the following ranges best represents your combined **household** income in 2009?

Less than $15,000	$15,000-$25,000	$25,000-$35,000	$35,000-$50,000	$50,000-$75,000	$75,000-$100,000	$100,000-$150,000	More than $150,000

60. Do you consider yourself to be: (Circle one)

Lower class	Average working class	Upper working class	Average middle class	Upper middle class	Upper class

61. What term best describes your religious affiliation?

Christian - Catholic	Christian - Protestant	Jewish	Muslim	Other, please specify: _____	None

62. How often do you usually attend religious services?

Never	A few times a year	About once a month	2-3 times a month	Once a week	Several times a week

Thank you very much for your participation in my research! Please remember to return this completed form (along with the raffle ticket for the football game) in the postage-paid envelope as soon as possible.

Appendix B: The Experiment

Extra Credit Information

Thank you for your decision to participate in my survey! Your thoughts and opinions will be an invaluable piece of my dissertation, and I hope that you take care to carefully read the prompts and answer each question thoughtfully.

The study will consist of two short readings about hypothetical national conditions and questions regarding your opinions. Participation should take less than 30 minutes, though most participants will finish in a much shorter time. If, for any reason, and you need to take a break during the survey, you can stop participating at any time without penalty and you can save your responses to return at a later time.

 Should you have any questions or comments, I would be happy talk with you personally. I can be contacted at nawara.1@osu.edu or Prof. Herb Weisberg at weisberg.1@osu.edu. Additionally, the Office of Responsible Research Practices at the Ohio State University requires all university research dealing with people to conform to the high ethical standards of the University. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact Ms. Sandra Meadows the ORRP at (800) 678-6251.

 Before the study begins, I am going to first ask a few short questions about who you are, in order that I can send your professor a list of who participated so you can get your extra credit. Your contact information will be removed and separated from your responses at the conclusion of the study, before any data is analyzed.

What is your first and last name as it would appear on a class roster?

What is your Political Science instructor's name?

What is your Political Science course? (Either the course number, the name, or even the general subject - this information will only be used if you don't know your instructor's name)

Please provide your email address, in case you need to be contacted about your extra credit:

Party in Power

/The following paragraphs detail hypothetical national events before, during, and after a presidential election. Please carefully read through the script and answer the questions regarding your opinions about the situation. Feel free to refer back to the description of events when answering the questions./

[Six months/One year/Two years] ago, John Dover, a [Democrat/Republican], was inaugurated as President,

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sweeping into the White House along with [Democratic/Republican] majorities in both houses of Congress. President Dover's predecessor was President Christopher Wright, a [Republican/Democrat] who was in office for the previous eight years. The following is a brief overview of the economic situation:

 Affected Industries:

The real estate and banking industries have been particularly hard hit recently. Over the past ten years, many individuals have taken advantage of low interest rates and banks' loose lending requirements to purchase homes that they could not have otherwise afford. As a result, many individuals and families took out large mortgages with small down payments and large monthly payments. Unfortunately, housing prices began to drop considerably five years ago. By the time President Dover took office, homes were worth about one-third of their value before the decline in prices. As a result, many individuals and families were stuck owing more money on their mortgages than their homes were worth and foreclosure rates increased.

Amid very real fears that several major insurance companies were on the verge of insolvency due to rising health care costs, the [Republican/Democratic] former President Wright worked with the [Democrats/Republicans] in Congress to pass an $800 billion bailout of the insurance industry. The incoming [Democratic/Republican] President Dover has continued the previous administration's policies in this regard and has signed additional legislation bailing out other industries.

The decline of manufacturing, which has been occurring for decades, has continued throughout the economic recession due to a reduced need for manufactured goods. Most notably, the American electronics industry has been particularly hard-hit. Shortly after President Dover took office, the heads of the major American producers of computers, televisions, and portable electronic devices announced that they were on the verge of bankruptcy. President Dover initiated a bailout of the electronics industry to prevent the further loss of American jobs, though opponents criticized this move, believing that the bailout was too expensive and that the government was taking too active a role in private business.

*   *
Wall Street:

When President Wright took office over 8 years ago, the Dow Jones Industrial Average was at 11,000 points. Over the course of his Presidency, the Dow reached a high of 14,000 points during the second term of his administration. From there, however, housing prices fell, and its affect on banks dragged the market down. About a month before the election to replace President Wright was to be held, the stock market lost about 25 percent of its value in one week, triggering several months of extreme volatility, at which point the Dow Jones reached a 12-year low of 7,500 points.

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When President Dover took office, the Dow Jones Average was at 8,000 points, and it dropped to an even lower 6,500 points within two months. Since that low, the market has been largely stagnant, growing only modestly.

 Unemployment:

During the first seven years of President Wright's eight year administration, the unemployment rate held relatively steady at about 5 percent. However, during his final year, the unemployment rate jumped to 7 percent. Since the [Democratic/Republican] President Dover entered the White House, unemployment has continued to rise and has been hovering above 9 percent for the past several months.

 Economic Outlook:

According to a survey of leading economists, the U.S. economic recovery will remain slow into the next year, held back by shoppers reluctant to spend and employers hesitant to hire. They foresee continuing weak economic growth and a continuation of the high rates of unemployment above 9 percent. A majority of the economists believe that it will be several years before the unemployment rate falls to its historically average level of around 5 percent.

/Please use the example which you just read to answer the following questions regarding who is responsible for condition of the nation./

Many people think that this nation's economy described above has undergone a lot of changes in the past few years. How much responsibility would you say that each of the following individuals/groups has for any fundamental changes in the economy described above *in the past three years*?
                        0 – No Responsibility 1 2 3 4 5 6 - Full Responsibility
President Wright
President Dover
The Business Community
The American People

Considering just President Wright and President Dover, who do you think is more responsible for any fundamental changes in the economy described above *in the past three years*?

 * President Wright
 * President Dover

How much responsibility would you say that each of the following individuals/groups has for the *current state* of the economy described above?
                        0 - No Responsibility 1 2 3 4 5 6 - Full Responsibility

President Wright
President Dover
The Business Community
The American People

Considering just President Wright and President Dover, who do you think
is more responsible for the *current state* of the economy described above?

 * President Wright
 * President Dover

How much responsibility do you think each of the following
individuals/groups will have for the state of the economy described
above *one year from now*?
                        0 - No Responsibility 1 2 3 4 5 6 - Full Responsibility
President Wright
President Dover
The Business Community
The American People

Considering just President Wright and President Dover, who do you think
will be more responsible for the state of the economy described above
one year from now?
 * President Wright
 * President Dover

Please answer the following questions based on the scenario above.
                            0 - Much Worse 1 2 3 - Same 4 5 6 - Much Better
Do you consider the current economy described above to be better or
worse than what you consider to be "average" or "usual"
conditions?
As of right now, would you say that the economy described above is
getting better, staying the same, or getting worse?

Compared to today, what do you think the economy described above will be
like one year from now?

Party in Power check

Do you recall to which political party the following individuals belong to?

                            Democratic Party   Republican Party Don't know
President Wright
President Dover

Do you remember how long it had been since the last Presidential
election in the scenario you just read?
 * 6 months
 * 1 year
 * 2 years

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* Don't know

In answering these questions, did you see a similarity between the situation just described and the transition from the Bush administration to the Obama administrations between 2008 and 2009?
 * Yes
 * No

Considering just the hypothetical situation that you just read about, how similar do you think the situation is to events that have occurred during the past 5 years?
 * Not similar at all
 * Slightly similar
 * Somewhat similar
 * Very similar

Did any perceived similarity between this hypothetical situation and recent events influence how you answered the questions regarding who is responsible for economic conditions?
 * Yes
 * No

Responsibility

/The following paragraphs detail hypothetical national events before, during, and after a presidential election. Please carefully read through the script and answer the questions regarding your personal opinions about the situation. Feel free to refer back to the description of events when answering the questions./

_____

One year ago, President James Miller, a Republican, took office after Democratic President Rick Taylor's eight-year administration. Unfortunately for the incoming Republican, he inherited an economic recession. During the final two years of President Taylor's administration, the economy crashed and the country's per capita GDP shrunk for five consecutive quarters. On Wall Street, the Dow Jones Industrial Average enjoyed a ten-year high at the beginning of the Democrat's administration, though the market lost 25 percent of its value by the time President Miller replaced Taylor. Now that President Miller is in office, things are not much better. Economic growth is stagnant and the Dow Jones Industrial Average has increased only modestly over the past year. Unemployment, which increased from 4 to 8 percent during the Taylor administration, has continued to rise over the first year of Miller's term, increasing from 8 to 9.5 percent.

Financial experts point towards President Taylor's taxation and regulatory policies as being the root cause of the financial downturn, and the effects of those policies are still affecting the economy today. By and large, the general public agrees with this assessment; in a recent poll, 72 percent of respondents cited the Democratic President

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Taylor as having more blame for the economy than the President Miller, the Republican.

Those same experts see some hope on the horizon. One analyst believes that President Miller's tax reforms will help create economic growth and reduce unemployment, though she cautioned that economic gains may be modest. The public seems to share this outlook; 57 percent of respondents believing that President Miller's handling of the economy will result in positive outcomes.

_____

One year ago, President James Miller, a Republican, took office after Democratic President Rick Taylor's eight-year administration. Unfortunately for the incoming Republican, the strong economy which he inherited has sharply turned sour. During the final two years of President Taylor's administration, the economy grew, with the country's per capita GDP steadily rising and the financial sector running smoothly. On Wall Street, the Dow Jones Industrial Average increased to a ten-year high during the final year of the Democrat's administration, though the market lost 25 percent of its value after Miller's election due to fears about his controversial financial policies. Now that President Miller is in office, the national economy has shrunk and the Dow Jones Industrial Average has lost another 15 percent of its value over the past year. Unemployment, which held steady at 4 percent during Miller's administration, increased to 7 percent after Miller's election and has risen to 9.5 percent in his first year in office.

Financial experts point towards President Miller's taxation and regulatory policies as being the root cause of the financial downturn, and the effects of those policies are still affecting the economy today. By and large, the general public agrees with this assessment; in a recent poll, 72 percent of respondents cited the Republican President Miller as having more blame for the economy than the President Taylor, the Democrat.

Those same experts see some hope on the horizon. One analyst believes that President Miller's tax reforms will help create economic growth and reduce unemployment in the long-run, though she cautioned that economic gains may be modest. The public seems to share this outlook; 57 percent of respondents believing that President Miller's handling of the economy will result in positive outcomes.

_____

One year ago, President James Miller, a Republican, took office after Democratic President Rick Taylor's eight-year administration. Fortunately for the incoming Republican, he inherited a strong and vibrant economy. During the final two years of President Taylor's administration, the economy boomed and the country's per capita GDP increased significantly. On Wall Street, the Dow Jones Industrial Average increased from a ten-year low in Miller's first year in office to a ten-year high near the end of the Democrat's administration. Now

that President Miller is in office, things remain positive and stable. The nation's economy has continued to grow, though now at more normal rates and Dow Jones Industrial Average has increased only modestly over the past year. Unemployment, which decreased from 8 to 4 percent during the Taylor administration, has continued to fall over the first year of Miller's term, decreasing to 3.5 percent.

Financial experts point towards President Taylor's taxation and regulatory policies as being the root cause of the economic success, and the effects of those policies are still affecting the economy today. By and large, the general public agrees with this assessment; in a recent poll, 72 percent of respondents cited the Democratic President Taylor as receiving more credit for the economy than the President Miller, the Republican.

Those same experts see even more good signs on the horizon. One analyst believes that President Miller's decision to continue President Taylor's successful economic policies in spite of their partisan and ideological differences will further increase economic growth and decrease unemployment, though she cautioned that these effects may be modest. The public seems to share this outlook; 57 percent of respondents believing that President Miller's handling of the economy will result in positive outcomes.

_____

One year ago, President James Miller, a Republican, took office after Democratic President Rick Taylor's eight-year administration. Fortunately for the incoming Republican was able to turn a stagnant economy into a vibrant one. During the final two years of President Taylor's administration, the economy was mediocre and the country's per capita GDP barely increased for five consecutive quarters. On Wall Street, the Dow Jones Industrial Average modestly increased throughout Miller's first six years in office but then declined 25 percent near the end of the Democrat's administration. Now that President Miller is in office, things have turned positive and remain stable. The nation's economy has begun to grow at a sizeable rate and Dow Jones Industrial Average has increased 15 percent over the past year. Unemployment, which increased from 4 to 8 percent during the Taylor administration, has fallen to 5 percent in the first year of Miller's term.

Financial experts point towards President Miller's taxation and regulatory policies as being the root cause of the economic success, and the effects of those policies are still affecting the economy today. By and large, the general public agrees with this assessment; in a recent poll, 72 percent of respondents cited the Republican President Miller as receiving more credit for the economy than the President Taylor, the Democrat.

Those same experts see even more good signs on the horizon. One analyst believes that President Miller's tax reforms will aid economic growth

and decrease unemployment, though she cautioned that these effects may be modest. The public seems to share this outlook; 57 percent of respondents believing that President Miller's handling of the economy will result in positive outcomes.

Please answer the following questions, based on the above scenario.
                         0 - Much Worse 1 2 3 - Same 4 5 6 - Much Better
Do you consider the current economy described above to be better or worse than what you consider to be "average" or "usual" conditions?

As of right now, would you say that the economy described above is getting better, staying the same, or getting worse?

Compared to today, what do you think the economy described above will be like one year from now?

Many people think that this nation's economy described above has undergone a lot of changes in the past few years. How much responsibility would you say that each of the following individuals/groups has for any fundamental changes in the economy *in the past three years*?
                    0 - No Responsibility 1 2 3 4 5 6 - Full Responsibility
President Taylor
President Miller
The Business Community
The American People

Considering just President Taylor and President Miller, who do you think is more responsible for any fundamental changes in the economy**described above *in the past three years*?
  * President Taylor
  * President Miller

How much responsibility would you say that each of the following individuals/groups has for the *current state* of the economy**described above?
                    0 - No Responsibility 1 2 3 4 5 6 - Full Responsibility
President Taylor
President Miller
The Business Community
The American People

Considering just President Taylor and President Miller, who do you think is more responsible for the *current state* of the economy**described above?
  * President Taylor
  * President Miller

How much responsibility do you think each of the following individuals/groups will have for the state of the economy**described

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above *one year from now*?

                         0 - No Responsibility 1 2 3 4 5 6 - Full Responsibility
President Taylor
President Miller
The Business Community
The American People

Considering just President Taylor and President Miller, who do you think
will be more responsible for the state of the economy**described above
one year from now?
  * President Taylor
  * President Miller

Responsibility Check

Do you recall to which political party the following individuals belong to?

Do you recall to which political party the following individuals belong to?

                         Democratic Party Republican Party Don't Know
President Taylor
President Miller

In the scenario you just read, do you recall who the "financial experts"
saw as more responsible for economic conditions?
  * President Taylor
  * President Miller
  * Don't know

In the scenario you just read, do you recall who the public saw as more
responsible for economic conditions in the poll results?
  * President Taylor
  * President Miller
  * Don't know

Demographics

What is your sex?
  * Male
  * Female

In what year were you born?

What race or ethnicity do you consider yourself to be?
  * White, Non-Hispanic
  * African-American
  * Hispanic/Latino
  * Asian
  * Other:

Are you currently a student?
 * Yes, Full-time
 * Yes, Part-time
 * No

What is your current year of school?
 * Freshman
 * Sophomore
 * Junior
 * Senior
 * Not in school

Are you pursuing a major or minor in Political Science?
 * Yes
 * No

Which of the following best describes your religious affiliation?
 * Christian, Catholic
 * Christian, Protestant
 * Jewish
 * Muslim
 * None
 * Other:

How often do you usually attend religious services?
 * Never
 * A few times a year
 * Once a Month
 * 2-3 Times a Month
 * Once a Week
 * Several times a week

Do you consider yourself to be which of the following?
 * Lower Class
 * Average Working Class
 * Upper-working Class
 * Average Middle Class
 * Upper-middle Class
 * Upper Class

Political Demographics

Some people follow what's going on in government and public affairs most
of the time, whether there's an election going on or not. Others aren't
that interested. How often would you say you follow what's going on in
government and public affairs?
 * Hardly at all
 * Only now and then
 * Most of the time
 * All of the time

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Generally speaking, do you consider yourself to be a Democrat, a
Republican, or what?
  * Democrat
  * Republican
  * Independent
  * Other

Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or a not very strong Democrat?
  * Not very strong Democrat
  * Strong Democrat

Would you call yourself a strong Republican or a not very strong
Republican?
  * Strong Republican
  * Not very strong Republican

Do you consider yourself closer to the Republican or Democratic Party?
  * I feel closer to neither the Republican or Democratic Parties
  * Democratic Party
  * Republican Party

When it comes to politics do you usually think of yourself as extremely
liberal, liberal, slightly liberal, moderate or middle of the road,
slightly conservative, extremely conservative, or haven't you thought
much about this?
  * Extremely liberal
  * Liberal
  * Slightly liberal
  * Moderate
  * Slightly conservative
  * Conservative
  * Extremely Conservative
  * Haven't thought much about this

Do you support or oppose the Tea Party movement?
  * Oppose
  * Support
  * Neither support nor oppose
  * I'm unfamiliar with the Tea Party movement

Have you donated money to an organization associated with the Tea Party
movement, attended any rallies or meetings associated with the Tea Party
movement, or taken any other active steps to support the Tea Party
movement , either in person or through email or on the internet?
  * Yes
  * No
  * Unsure

Voting and Politics

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Do you remember who you voted for in the 2008 election?
 * John McCain
 * Barack Obama
 * Other Candidate
 * Cannot Remember
 * Did not vote

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job
as President?
 * Disapprove
 * Approve

Do you approve or disapprove the way Barack Obama is handling the economy?
 * Disapprove
 * Approve

Even though the 2012 presidential election is a long way off, who do you
think you would rather vote for?
 * Barack Obama
 * Some other candidate

How much control do you think the average President has over national
economic conditions?
 * Almost no control
 * Very little control
 * Some control
 * A great amount of control
 * Almost complete control

Please note the effect recent economic conditions have had on you and
your family.
-5 Very Negative -4 -3 -2 -1 0-NoEffect 1 2 3 4 5 – Very Positive

Values

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements.
Circle 0 if you strongly disagree, 1 if you disagree, 2 if you neither
agree nor disagree, 3 if you agree, and 4 if you strongly agree.

        Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree
Our society should do whatever is necessary to make sure that everyone
has an equal opportunity to succeed.

One of the big problems in this country is that we don't give everyone
an equal chance.

Any person who is willing to work hard has a good chance of
succeeding.

Most people who don't get ahead should not blame the system; they really have only themselves to blame.

There should be no government interference with business and trade.

Government intervention leads to too much red tape and many problems.

You can generally trust the people who run the government to do what is right.

The government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves and not the benefit of all people.

People like me don't have any say in what the government does.

I consider myself well-qualified to participate in politics.

Most people can be trusted.

Most people would take advantage of you if they are given a chance.

Please mark how often you get news from the following sources.
	Never	Rarely	A few times a week	Almost every day
Local television news				
National television news				
Newspapers				
The internet				
Family, friends, and coworkers				

If you had to pick one, from which of the following sources do you get the most information?
 * National TV News
 * Family, Friends, and Coworkers
 * The Internet
 * Newspapers
 * Local TV News

Political Information

The following is a set of questions concerning politics and various public figures. A lot of people will not know the answers to these questions, so do not bother to look them up or ask anyone for help. I just want to see how much information about these topics reaches people through the media. Feel free to skip any of these questions if you do not know the answers.

Please name the job or political office currently held by Joe Biden:

Whose responsibility is it to determine if a law is constitutional or not?
  * The Supreme Court
  * The Congress
  * The President

How much of a majority is required for the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House to override a Presidential veto?

Do you happen to know which party has the most members in the House of Representatives in Washington?
  * Republican Party
  * Democratic Party

At the national level, which of the political parties is generally more conservative?
  * Democratic Party
  * Republican Party

How many votes are needed to stop a filibuster in the U.S. Senate?
Who is the Speaker of the House of Representatives?
Who is the House Minority Leader?
Who is the Senate Majority Leader?
Who is the Senate Minority Leader?

Appendix C: Generalized Ordered Logistic Regression Models from Chapter 7

Assignment of Primary Economic Responsibility

	Pres. Bush	Pres. Obama	Cong. Dems.	Cong. Reps.	Non-Govt.
Betas					
Party ID x Issue Perceptions	-0.77	0.16***	-0.15**	0.07	-17.14
	(0.55)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(4360.18)
Party ID	1.49	0.59***	0.57***	0.21	9.67
	(1.01)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.28)	(693.83)
Issue Perceptions	3.54	0.26	-1.33†	-0.37†	97.19
	(2.21)	(0.20)	(0.70)	(0.22)	(26751.7)
Gamma 2					
Party ID x Issue Perceptions	0.84				15.45
	(00.54)				(4360.18)
Party ID	-1.95†			-0.40	-8.68
	(-3.87)			(0.25)	(693.83)
Issue Perceptions	-3.88†		2.24**		-85.89
	(2.16)		(0.73)		(26751.71)
Gamma 3					
Party ID x Issue Perceptions	0.80				15.77
	(0.55)				(4360.18)
Party ID	-2.04*			-0.68**	-8.72
	(1.01)			(0.26)	(693.83)
Issue Perceptions	-3.57†		1.71*		-87.66
	(2.19)		(0.71)		(26751.71)
Gamma 4					
Party ID x Issue Perceptions	0.95†				17.36
	(0.55)				(4360.18)
Party ID	-2.25*			-0.65*	-10.29
	(1.01)			(0.27)	(693.83)
Issue Perceptions	-4.33*		1.45*		-98.17
	(2.22)		(0.70)		(26751.7)
Gamma 5					
Party ID x Issue Perceptions	0.78				17.67
	(0.55)				(4360.18)
Party ID	-2.05*			-0.64*	-10.28
	(1.01)			(0.27)	(693.83)
Issue Perceptions	-3.60		1.55*		-98.20
	(2.22)		(0.70)		(26751.7)
Gamma 6					
Party ID x Issue Perceptions	0.73				17.67
	(0.55)				(4360.18)
Party ID	-1.87†			-0.62*	-10.28
	(1.01)			(0.28)	(693.83)
Issue Perceptions	-3.44		1.68*		-97.88
	(2.23)		(0.71)		(26751.7)
α_1	-2.96	1.15	5.43	4.01	-24.96
α_2	4.57	0.36	0.41	3.49	-2.95
α_3	3.77	-0.79	-0.03	3.76	-3.65
α_4	3.74	-1.75	-0.93	2.34	5.21
α_5	1.67	-2.71	-2.02	1.35	4.03
α_6	-0.16	-3.95	-3.59	-0.01	1.20
n	365	368	368	365	365
Log-likelihood	-587.44	-635.89	-586.20	-608.67	-460.48

Generalized ordered logistic regression coefficients shown, with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is the assignment of responsibility to each target on a 0-6 point scale.
† indicates significance at $p<0.1$, * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$

Assignment of Primary Iraq Responsibility

	Pres. Bush	Pres. Obama	Cong. Dems.	Cong. Reps.	Non-Govt.
Betas					
Party ID x Issue Perceptions	0.12**	-0.11**	-0.10**	0.07	-0.39
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.07)	(0.57)
Party ID	-0.23*	0.36**	0.18	-0.04	0.07
	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.19)	(0.22)	(0.12)
Issue Perceptions	-0.15	0.30*	0.14	-0.24	0.04
	(0.16)	(0.15)	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.16)
Gamma 2					
Party ID x Issue Perceptions	-0.05*			-0.06	37.62
	(0.02)			(0.05)	(2610.04)
Party ID			-0.04	0.01	
			(0.12)	(0.16)	
Gamma 3					
Party ID x Issue Perceptions	-0.06*			-0.05	0.32
	(0.03)			(0.06)	(0.57)
Party ID			-0.10	0.01	
			(0.14)	(0.19)	
Gamma 4					
Party ID x Issue Perceptions	-0.04†			-0.02	0.41
	(0.03)			(0.06)	(0.57)
Party ID			0.03	-0.19	
			(0.15)	(0.20)	
Gamma 5					
Party ID x Issue Perceptions	-0.05†			-0.07	0.38
	(0.03)			(0.06)	(0.57)
Party ID			0.11	-0.06	
			(0.16)	(0.20)	
Gamma 6					
Party ID x Issue Perceptions	-0.09**			-0.11	0.36
	(0.03)			(0.06)	(0.57)
Party ID			0.31†	0.14	
			(0.17)	(0.22)	
α_1	2.73	2.16	3.61	3.31	0.30
α_2	2.48	1.35	2.59	2.68	-91.68
α_3	1.91	0.34	1.76	1.70	4.43
α_4	0.92	-0.77	-0.08	0.92	1.50
α_5	0.29	-1.77	-1.27	0.13	0.55
α_6	-0.40	-2.82	-3.37	-1.45	-0.71
n	359	360	359	356	364
Log-likelihood	-653.57	-641.35	-615.60	-630.49	-479.91

Generalized ordered logistic regression coefficients shown, with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is the assignment of responsibility to each target on a 0-6 point scale.
† indicates significance at $p<0.1$, * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$

Assignment of Immediate Economic Responsibility

	Pres. Bush	Pres. Obama	Cong. Dems.	Cong. Reps.	Non-Govt.
Betas					
Party ID x Issue Perceptions	$0.07^{\dagger}$	-0.17***	-0.14***	$0.14^{\dagger}$	0.01
	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.08)	(0.04)
Party ID	-0.59***	0.63***	0.64***	-0.33**	-0.26*
	(0.12)	(0.14)	(0.13)	(0.11)	(0.12)
Issue Perceptions	-0.25	1.30**	0.19	0.00	0.39
	(0.18)	(0.41)	(0.19)	(0.18)	(0.43)
Gamma 2					
Party ID x Issue Perceptions				-0.02	
				(0.06)	
Issue Perceptions		-0.94**			-0.07
		(0.35)			(0.27)
Gamma 3					
Party ID x Issue Perceptions				-0.08	
				(0.07)	
Issue Perceptions		-1.04**			-0.13
		(0.37)			(0.34)
Gamma 4					
Party ID x Issue Perceptions				-0.14*	
				(0.07)	
Issue Perceptions		-0.90*			-0.20
		(0.38)			(0.37)
Gamma 5					
Party ID x Issue Perceptions				-0.14*	
				(0.07)	
Issue Perceptions		-1.03**			-0.44
		(0.38)			(0.38)
Gamma 6					
Party ID x Issue Perceptions				-0.15*	
				(0.07)	
Issue Perceptions		-1.24**			$-0.65^{\dagger}$
		(0.40)			(0.39)
α_1	5.13	-0.76	3.77	4.20	4.78
α_2	4.20	0.82	2.14	2.91	4.07
α_3	3.23	0.16	0.79	2.13	3.49
α_4	2.45	-1.37	-0.75	1.56	2.55
α_5	1.61	-2.05	-1.66	0.84	1.94
α_6	0.26	-3.06	-3.24	-0.40	0.95
n	363	364	367	366	368
Log-likelihood	-651.96	-595.06	-558.33	-622.75	-506.67

Generalized ordered logistic regression coefficients shown, with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is the assignment of responsibility to each target on a 0-6 point scale.
† indicates significance at $p<0.1$, * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$

Assignment of Immediate Iraq War Responsibility

	Pres. Bush	Pres. Obama	Cong. Dems.	Cong. Reps.	Non-Govt.
Betas					
Party ID x Issue Perceptions	0.09*	-0.13***	-0.14***	0.03	-0.02
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Party ID	-0.54***	0.53***	0.18	-0.16	0.12
	(0.13)	(0.14)	(0.24)	(0.13)	(0.13)
Issue Perceptions	-0.44*	0.33†	0.27	-0.24	1.23†
	(0.18)	(0.18)	(0.18)	(0.18)	(0.67)
Gamma 2					
Party ID			0.16		
			(0.16)		
Issue Perceptions					0.10
					(0.43)
Gamma 3					
Party ID			0.30†		
			(0.18)		
Issue Perceptions					-0.49
					(0.62)
Gamma 4					
Party ID			0.24		
			(0.19)		
Issue Perceptions					-0.75
					(0.65)
Gamma 5					
Party ID			0.28		
			(0.19)		
Issue Perceptions					-1.10†
					(0.65)
Gamma 6					
Party ID			0.47*		
			(0.20)		
Issue Perceptions					-1.29*
					(0.65)
α_1	4.18	2.52	4.22	4.25	2.33
α_2	3.43	1.73	2.26	2.96	1.23
α_3	2.69	0.82	0.64	2.09	1.31
α_4	1.98	-0.44	-0.35	0.98	0.50
α_5	1.26	-1.64	-1.38	0.04	0.23
α_6	0.27	-2.90	-3.46	-0.96	-0.65
n	356	363	363	360	369
Log-likelihood	-673.78	-587.38	-614.25	-654.30	-505.96

Generalized ordered logistic regression coefficients shown, with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is the assignment of responsibility to each target on a 0-6 point scale.
† indicates significance at p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Assignment of Prospective Economic Responsibility

	Pres. Bush	Pres. Obama	Cong. Dems.	Cong. Reps.	Non-Govt.
Betas					
Party ID x Issue Perceptions	$0.08^{\dagger}$	-0.17***	-0.26**	0.15*	0.88**
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.09)	(0.06)	(0.29)
Party ID	-0.56***	0.75***	0.48***	-0.42*	-0.62
	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.14)	(0.20)	(0.63)
Issue Perceptions	-0.12	0.46**	1.26*	$-0.32^{\dagger}$	-0.25
	(0.20)	(0.17)	(0.56)	(0.18)	(0.18)
Gamma 2					
Party ID x Issue Perceptions			0.07	-0.03	-1.54***
			(0.07)	(0.04)	(0.42)
Party ID	-0.09			0.06	7.99***
	(0.05)			(0.13)	(2.27)
Issue Perceptions	-0.02		-0.34		
	(0.08)		(0.48)		
Gamma 3					
Party ID x Issue Perceptions			0.07	-0.08	-0.73**
			(0.08)	(0.05)	(0.28)
Party ID	-0.04			0.07	-0.18
	(0.07)			(0.15)	(0.67)
Issue Perceptions	-0.03		-0.39		
	(0.11)		(0.51)		
Gamma 4					
Party ID x Issue Perceptions			0.11	$-0.10^{\dagger}$	-0.82**
			(0.08)	(0.05)	(0.28)
Party ID	-0.07			0.10	0.20
	(0.10)			(0.16)	(0.63)
Issue Perceptions	-0.14		-0.78		
	(0.13)		(0.53)		
Gamma 5					
Party ID x Issue Perceptions			$0.15^{\dagger}$	-0.12*	-0.85**
			(0.08)	(0.05)	(0.28)
Party ID	-0.41**			0.24	0.31
	(0.14)			(0.16)	(0.63)
Issue Perceptions	-0.79***		-1.06*		
	(0.19)		(0.54)		
Gamma 6					
Party ID x Issue Perceptions			$0.16^{\dagger}$	-0.14**	-0.86**
			(0.08)	(0.06)	(0.28)
Party ID	0.09			0.36*	0.42
	(0.29)			(0.18)	(0.63)
Issue Perceptions	-0.92***		-1.26*		
	(0.24)		(0.54)		
α_1	2.48	2.58	1.80	4.79	0.71
α_2	2.04	1.88	0.58	3.54	-25.64
α_3	1.15	0.69	0.05	3.00	6.82
α_4	0.80	-0.60	-0.48	1.94	3.91
α_5	2.84	-1.98	-1.22	0.72	2.31
α_6	0.68	-3.55	-2.08	-0.68	0.51
n	348	366	367	364	368
Log-likelihood	-559.70	-525.72	-562.57	-635.99	-489.95

Generalized ordered logistic regression coefficients shown, with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is the assignment of responsibility to each target on a 0-6 point scale.
† indicates significance at $p<0.1$, * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$

Assignment of Prospective Iraq War Responsibility

	Pres. Bush	Pres. Obama	Cong. Dems.	Cong. Reps.	Non-Govt.
Betas					
Party ID x Issue Perceptions	0.02	-0.12***	0.15[†]	0.01	0.01
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.09)	(0.03)	(0.04)
Party ID	-0.27*	0.52***	-0.49[†]	-0.06	-0.01
	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.30)	(0.12)	(0.13)
Issue Perceptions	-0.01	0.37*	0.20	0.13	-0.03
	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.15)	(0.22)	(0.15)
Gamma 2					
Party ID x Issue Perceptions			-0.24**		
			(0.09)		
Party ID			0.79**		
			(0.30)		
Issue Perceptions				-0.22	
				(0.13)	
Gamma 3					
Party ID x Issue Perceptions			-0.25**		
			(0.09)		
Party ID			0.80**		
			(0.30)		
Issue Perceptions				-0.28[†]	
				(0.16)	
Gamma 4					
Party ID x Issue Perceptions			-0.25**		
			(0.09)		
Party ID			0.73*		
			(0.29)		
Issue Perceptions				-0.21	
				(0.17)	
Gamma 5					
Party ID x Issue Perceptions			-0.26**		
			(0.09)		
Party ID			0.81**		
			(0.29)		
Issue Perceptions				-0.26	
Gamma 6					
Party ID x Issue Perceptions			-0.29***		
			(0.09)		
Party ID			0.96***		
			(0.29)		
Issue Perceptions				-0.53**	
				(0.19)	
α_1	1.23	3.50	3.12	2.76	4.28
α_2	0.06	2.58	2.02	2.41	3.93
α_3	-0.01	1.10	1.21	1.69	3.38
α_4	-0.80	0.04	0.23	0.31	1.96
α_5	-1.50	-1.05	-0.86	-0.29	0.83
α_6	-2.46	-2.63	-2.52	-0.57	-0.54
n	356	369	362	359	366
Log-likelihood	-589.37	-528.93	-603.47	-650.36	-514.06

Generalized ordered logistic regression coefficients shown, with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is the assignment of responsibility to each target on a 0-6 point scale.
[†] indicates significance at $p<0.1$, * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$

Appendix D: Predicted Probability Estimates from Chapter 7

Probability of Assigning Primary Economic Responsibility to President Bush

	Negative Perception		Same Perception	
Responsibility Assignment	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican
0 – No Responsibility	0.00	0.07	0.00	0.03
1	0.01	0.16	0.01	0.09
2	0.03	0.27	0.04	0.19
3	0.10	0.29	0.13	0.31
4	0.14	0.11	0.17	0.17
5	0.42	0.09	0.41	0.16
6 – Full Responsibility	0.30	0.02	0.23	0.04

Probability of Assigning Primary Economic Responsibility to President Obama

	Negative Perception		Same Perception	
Responsibility Assignment	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican
0 – No Responsibility	0.11	0.01	0.08	0.04
1	0.11	0.01	0.09	0.05
2	0.28	0.05	0.25	0.17
3	0.24	0.12	0.26	0.24
4	0.15	0.22	0.18	0.24
5	0.08	0.33	0.10	0.17
6 – Full Responsibility	0.03	0.26	0.04	0.08

Probability of Assigning Primary Economic Responsibility to Congressional Democrats

	Negative Perception		Same Perception	
Responsibility Assignment	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican
0 – No Responsibility	0.03	0.00	0.02	0.01
1	0.07	0.01	0.04	0.03
2	0.18	0.02	0.12	0.07
3	0.34	0.08	0.30	0.23
4	0.21	0.15	0.25	0.26
5	0.13	0.36	0.20	0.27
6 – Full Responsibility	0.04	0.39	0.08	0.13

Probability of Assigning Primary Economic Responsibility to Nongovernmental Actors

Responsibility Assignment	Negative Perception		Same Perception	
	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican
0 – No Responsibility	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00
1	0.00	0.03	0.01	0.01
2	0.00	0.03	0.01	0.01
3	0.01	0.16	0.05	0.05
4	0.03	0.25	0.12	0.12
5	0.19	0.37	0.40	0.40
6 – Full Responsibility	0.77	0.15	0.42	0.41

Probability of Assigning Primary Iraq War Responsibility to President Bush

Responsibility Assignment	Negative Perception		Positive Perception	
	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican
0 – No Responsibility	0.06	0.15	0.07	0.02
1	0.05	0.10	0.05	0.02
2	0.10	0.16	0.10	0.05
3	0.16	0.20	0.17	0.09
4	0.20	0.17	0.20	0.15
5	0.24	0.14	0.23	0.28
6 – Full Responsibility	0.19	0.08	0.18	0.39

Probability of Assigning Primary Iraq War Responsibility to President Obama

Responsibility Assignment	Negative Perception		Positive Perception	
	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican
0 – No Responsibility	0.06	0.00	0.02	0.10
1	0.07	0.01	0.02	0.10
2	0.17	0.02	0.07	0.21
3	0.28	0.06	0.18	0.28
4	0.22	0.12	0.25	0.17
5	0.13	0.24	0.24	0.09
6 – Full Responsibility	0.08	0.55	0.21	0.05

Probability of Assigning Primary Iraq War Responsibility to Congressional Democrats

Responsibility Assignment	Negative Perception		Positive Perception	
	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican
0 – No Responsibility	0.03	0.00	0.02	0.19
1	0.07	0.01	0.05	0.26
2	0.15	0.03	0.11	0.27
3	0.33	0.12	0.29	0.20
4	0.20	0.16	0.22	0.05
5	0.16	0.35	0.22	0.03
6 – Full Responsibility	0.06	0.33	0.10	0.01

Probability of Assigning Immediate Economic Responsibility to President Bush

Responsibility Assignment	Negative Perception		Positive Perception	
	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican
0 – No Responsibility	0.01	0.17	0.05	0.03
1	0.01	0.19	0.08	0.05
2	0.03	0.26	0.18	0.12
3	0.05	0.17	0.20	0.16
4	0.11	0.11	0.22	0.22
5	0.33	0.07	0.20	0.28
6 – Full Responsibility	0.47	0.02	0.08	0.14

Probability of Assigning Immediate Economic Responsibility to President Obama

Responsibility Assignment	Negative Perception		Positive Perception	
	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican
0 – No Responsibility	0.09	0.00	0.01	0.22
1	0.10	0.00	0.02	0.19
2	0.22	0.01	0.05	0.26
3	0.29	0.04	0.14	0.20
4	0.18	0.11	0.25	0.08
5	0.09	0.35	0.35	0.03
6 – Full Responsibility	0.02	0.48	0.18	0.01

Probability of Assigning Immediate Economic
Responsibility to Congressional Democrats

Responsibility Assignment	Negative Perception		Positive Perception	
	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican
0 – No Responsibility	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.01
1	0.06	0.00	0.02	0.04
2	0.19	0.01	0.06	0.14
3	0.36	0.04	0.21	0.34
4	0.19	0.07	0.24	0.22
5	0.14	0.31	0.33	0.19
6 – Full Responsibility	0.04	0.57	0.14	0.06

Probability of Assigning Immediate Iraq War Responsibility to President Bush

Responsibility Assignment	Negative Perception		Positive Perception	
	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican
0 – No Responsibility	0.04	0.31	0.28	0.07
1	0.05	0.19	0.19	0.08
2	0.08	0.18	0.18	0.12
3	0.13	0.14	0.15	0.17
4	0.18	0.09	0.10	0.19
5	0.24	0.06	0.06	0.19
6 – Full Responsibility	0.29	0.04	0.04	0.17

Probability of Assigning Immediate Iraq War Responsibility to President Obama

Responsibility Assignment	Negative Perception		Positive Perception	
	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican
0 – No Responsibility	0.02	0.00	0.01	0.03
1	0.02	0.00	0.01	0.03
2	0.06	0.00	0.02	0.07
3	0.20	0.02	0.06	0.21
4	0.31	0.06	0.18	0.31
5	0.24	0.17	0.32	0.22
6 – Full Responsibility	0.13	0.74	0.41	0.12

Probability of Assigning Immediate Iraq War Responsibility to Congressional Democrats

Responsibility Assignment	Negative Perception		Positive Perception	
	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican
0 – No Responsibility	0.05	0.00	0.01	0.11
1	0.09	0.00	0.02	0.17
2	0.18	0.01	0.05	0.25
3	0.31	0.03	0.15	0.27
4	0.18	0.06	0.20	0.11
5	0.14	0.23	0.33	0.07
6 – Full Responsibility	0.06	0.66	0.25	0.02

Probability of Assigning Prospective Economic Responsibility to President Bush

Responsibility Assignment	Negative Perception		Positive Perception	
	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican
0 – No Responsibility	0.02	0.68	0.27	0.17
1	0.04	0.16	0.21	0.17
2	0.07	0.08	0.20	0.20
3	0.13	0.04	0.15	0.20
4	0.24	0.02	0.10	0.16
5	0.25	0.01	0.04	0.07
6 – Full Responsibility	0.27	0.00	0.02	0.04

Probability of Assigning Prospective Economic Responsibility to President Obama

Responsibility Assignment	Negative Perception		Positive Perception	
	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican
0 – No Responsibility	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.03
1	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.02
2	0.09	0.00	0.02	0.09
3	0.23	0.01	0.07	0.23
4	0.39	0.04	0.27	0.38
5	0.20	0.20	0.41	0.19
6 – Full Responsibility	0.06	0.74	0.22	0.05

Probability of Assigning Prospective Economic Responsibility to Congressional Democrats

Responsibility Assignment	Negative Perception		Positive Perception	
	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican
0 – No Responsibility	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.06
1	0.02	0.00	0.02	0.10
2	0.05	0.01	0.04	0.16
3	0.20	0.04	0.15	0.34
4	0.29	0.10	0.26	0.21
5	0.28	0.28	0.32	0.10
6 – Full Responsibility	0.14	0.57	0.20	0.03

Probability of Assigning Prospective Economic Responsibility to Congressional Republicans

Responsibility Assignment	Negative Perception		Positive Perception	
	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican
0 – No Responsibility	0.00	0.01	0.04	0.01
1	0.01	0.04	0.10	0.02
2	0.02	0.08	0.17	0.05
3	0.08	0.20	0.29	0.13
4	0.15	0.25	0.21	0.22
5	0.29	0.25	0.13	0.29
6 – Full Responsibility	0.45	0.17	0.07	0.28

Probability of Assigning Prospective Iraq War Responsibility to President Bush

Responsibility Assignment	Negative Perception		Positive Perception	
	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican
0 – No Responsibility	0.23	0.69	0.44	0.24
1	0.16	0.14	0.19	0.16
2	0.17	0.08	0.14	0.17
3	0.19	0.05	0.12	0.19
4	0.11	0.02	0.05	0.10
5	0.09	0.02	0.04	0.09
6 – Full Responsibility	0.05	0.01	0.02	0.05

Probability of Assigning Prospective Iraq War Responsibility to President Obama

Responsibility Assignment	Negative Perception		Positive Perception	
	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican
0 – No Responsibility	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.01
1	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.02
2	0.09	0.01	0.02	0.09
3	0.17	0.01	0.05	0.16
4	0.31	0.05	0.15	0.30
5	0.30	0.25	0.41	0.31
6 – Full Responsibility	0.10	0.67	0.37	0.11

Probability of Assigning Prospective Iraq War Responsibility to Congressional Democrats

Responsibility Assignment	Negative Perception		Positive Perception	
	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican	Strong Democrat	Strong Republican
0 – No Responsibility	0.02	0.00	0.01	0.07
1	0.02	0.01	0.20	0.09
2	0.06	0.02	0.05	0.18
3	0.18	0.07	0.17	0.30
4	0.23	0.13	0.22	0.18
5	0.30	0.33	0.32	0.13
6 – Full Responsibility	0.18	0.21	0.21	0.05

Appendix E: Predicted Probability Estimates from Chapter 8

Predicted Probability of Primary Responsibility Assignment to the Former President

Responsibility Assignment	Strong Democrats		Strong Republicans	
	Democratic Incumbent	Republican Incumbent	Democratic Incumbent	Republican Incumbent
0 – No Responsibility	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1	0.01	0.04	0.15	0.03
2	0.06	0.17	0.26	0.15
3	0.12	0.23	0.37	0.22
4	0.33	0.35	-0.00	0.36
5	0.36	0.18	0.23	0.20
6 – Full Responsibility	0.12	0.04	0.00	0.05

Predicted Probability of Primary Responsibility Assignment to the Incumbent President

Responsibility Assignment	Strong Democrats		Strong Republicans	
	Democratic Incumbent	Republican Incumbent	Democratic Incumbent	Republican Incumbent
0 – No Responsibility	0.12	0.12	0.02	0.07
1	0.34	0.34	0.08	0.26
2	0.21	0.21	0.11	0.22
3	0.21	0.22	0.29	0.27
4	0.06	0.06	0.20	0.09
5	0.04	0.05	0.25	0.07
6 – Full Responsibility	0.01	0.01	0.05	0.01

Predicted Probability of Primary Responsibility Assignment to the Business Community

Responsibility Assignment	Strong Democrats		Strong Republicans	
	Democratic Incumbent	Republican Incumbent	Democratic Incumbent	Republican Incumbent
0 – No Responsibility	0.00	0.01	0.02	0.01
1	0.01	0.02	0.04	0.03
2	0.03	0.06	0.13	0.08
3	0.06	0.11	0.20	0.14
4	0.16	0.23	0.27	0.26
5	0.50	0.45	0.29	0.39
6 – Full Responsibility	0.24	0.13	0.05	0.09

Predicted Probability of Immediate Responsibility Assignment to the Former President

Responsibility Assignment	Strong Democrats		Strong Republicans	
	Democratic Incumbent	Republican Incumbent	Democratic Incumbent	Republican Incumbent
0 – No Responsibility	0.01	0.02	0.10	0.03
1	0.04	0.08	0.31	0.11
2	0.10	0.17	0.29	0.22
3	0.18	0.24	0.17	0.26
4	0.31	0.28	0.09	0.24
5	0.27	0.16	0.03	0.12
6 – Full Responsibility	0.09	0.05	0.01	0.03

Predicted Probability of Immediate Responsibility Assignment to the Incumbent President

Responsibility Assignment	Strong Democrats		Strong Republicans	
	Democratic Incumbent	Republican Incumbent	Democratic Incumbent	Republican Incumbent
0 – No Responsibility	0.03	0.03	0.01	0.01
1	0.16	0.15	0.04	0.07
2	0.18	0.18	0.06	0.10
3	0.25	0.25	0.14	0.21
4	0.24	0.24	0.31	0.32
5	0.10	0.11	0.30	0.20
6 – Full Responsibility	0.03	0.03	0.16	0.08

Predicted Probability of Immediate Responsibility Assignment to the Business Community

Responsibility Assignment	Strong Democrats		Strong Republicans	
	Democratic Incumbent	Republican Incumbent	Democratic Incumbent	Republican Incumbent
0 – No Responsibility	0.77	0.84	0.00	0.01
1	-0.76	-0.84	0.17	0.08
2	0.02	0.04	0.12	0.07
3	0.09	0.14	0.09	0.06
4	0.26	0.31	0.21	0.17
5	0.44	0.38	0.37	0.55
6 – Full Responsibility	0.18	0.12	0.03	0.07

Predicted Probability of Prospective Responsibility Assignment to the Former President

Responsibility Assignment	Strong Democrats		Strong Republicans	
	Democratic Incumbent	Republican Incumbent	Democratic Incumbent	Republican Incumbent
0 – No Responsibility	0.04	0.12	0.39	0.17
1	0.06	0.14	0.33	0.27
2	0.20	0.33	0.13	0.18
3	0.29	0.24	0.10	0.21
4	0.28	0.13	0.04	0.11
5	0.09	0.03	0.02	0.06
6 – Full Responsibility	0.04	0.01	0.00	0.00

Predicted Probability of Prospective Responsibility
Assignment to the Business Community

Responsibility Assignment	Strong Democrats		Strong Republicans	
	Democratic Incumbent	Republican Incumbent	Democratic Incumbent	Republican Incumbent
0 – No Responsibility	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1	0.00	0.00	0.11	0.15
2	0.01	0.03	0.13	0.27
3	0.11	0.18	0.20	-0.31
4	0.23	0.30	0.19	0.30
5	0.49	0.40	0.36	0.43
6 – Full Responsibility	0.15	0.09	0.02	0.16

Predicted Probability of Prospective Responsibility
Assignment to the American People

Responsibility Assignment	Strong Democrats		Strong Republicans	
	Democratic Incumbent	Republican Incumbent	Democratic Incumbent	Republican Incumbent
0 – No Responsibility	0.01	0.03	0.03	0.01
1	0.08	0.17	0.15	0.06
2	0.08	0.14	0.13	0.07
3	0.19	0.24	0.24	0.17
4	0.28	0.23	0.25	0.28
5	0.26	0.14	0.17	0.31
6 – Full Responsibility	0.08	0.04	0.04	0.11

Predicted Probability of Prospective Economic Perceptions:
Bad Economy, Incumbent Republican President Blamed

Retrospective Perception	Strong Democrats		Strong Republicans	
	Low Knowledge	High Knowledge	Low Knowledge	High Knowledge
0 – Much Worse	0.02	0.25	0.06	0.04
1	0.03	0.22	0.08	0.05
2	0.04	0.14	0.09	0.06
3 – Same	0.17	0.24	0.31	0.26
4	0.31	0.11	0.29	0.35
5	0.42	0.04	0.17	0.25
6 – Much Better	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00