



Bryant University

HONORS THESIS

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	1
Introduction	2
Literature Review	3
Methodology	14
Analysis & Results	16
President Nixon: Media Coverage	16
President Clinton: Media Coverage	21
President Trump: Media Coverage	31
President Nixon: Approval Polls.....	40
President Clinton: Approval Polls.....	42
President Trump: Approval Polls.....	44
1974 Midterm Election	45
1998 Midterm Election	46
2020 Election	46
Conclusion	47
References	50

ABSTRACT

The ability to impeach a sitting president is granted to Congress in the U.S. Constitution as part of the system of checks and balances. The process can have a wide scope of impact on our society and other political processes. This study analyzes the impeachment processes of Richard Nixon, Bill Clinton, and Donald Trump through the lenses of media coverage, changes in approval polls and the results of midterm elections. By identifying and comparing the emerging trends in each instance, a better understanding of the relationships between impeachment, its portrayal in the media, presidential approval and election results can be developed.

INTRODUCTION

Impeachment is a tool that was meant to be used sparingly, and before the second half of the 20th century, it was only used once. In the last 50 years, however, impeachment (or the start of the impeachment process) has been used four times, on three different presidents. President Nixon was never actually impeached for his role in the Watergate scandal, because he resigned before the House could properly vote. President Clinton was impeached, but not removed from office, for committing perjury and obstructing justice. In 2019, President Donald Trump became the third President in history to be impeached for soliciting foreign interference in a U.S. presidential election, and later, in 2021, he became the first president to be impeached twice, for inciting an insurrection on the Capitol.

This paper examines President Trump's first impeachment, along with the previous two impeachment processes against Richard Nixon and Bill Clinton through the lenses of mass media coverage, job approval polls, and partisan shifts in the subsequent midterm elections. Media coverage influences how people vote in approval polls, and approval polls influence the outcome of elections. By looking at each impeachment case through each of these lenses and the ways in which each interconnect, patterns can be observed regarding impeachment and the impact it has on our political processes. Identifying the trends between the three cases of impeachment can help determine significant influences on election results, and how the public's views on impeachment have changed over time.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Impeachment

The ability to impeach a president (or any person who holds public office), is an important part of our democratic government. The reason it was critical in drafting the Constitution is because after the Revolutionary War, the founding fathers wanted to ensure that the U.S. would not resemble the monarchy we just left (Vicente 1998). Adding in an impeachment clause proved essential in checking the power of the executive branch. There were a few concerns about the impeachment clause, as some believed the branch who decided on impeachment would have too much control over the executive branch, but ultimately it was decided that the benefits of including an impeachment clause outweighed this possibility (Vicente 1998).

During the drafting process of the Constitution, there was some debate regarding how the actual process of impeachment should unfold and what the wording of the impeachment clause should look like. Before deciding on the House and Senate as the bodies who would bring impeachment charges and perform the impeachment, the drafters thought about having governors judge on impeachment, or even giving the authority to the judicial branch (Vicente 1998). Additionally, the wording “high crimes and misdemeanors” was originally going to be maladministration, but the drafters decided that the word was too vague (Vicente 1998). Since the phrase “high crimes and misdemeanors” itself is already fairly vague, precedent for early impeachment cases in U.S. history has been set by England.

There has been a multitude of research regarding presidential impeachment and the reasoning behind the various outcomes. For instance, Broughton (2017) explains the three reasons why the Senate might decide on an impeachment trial. The first, anti-nullification, is when the Senate merely trusts the Houses evidence and decision and agrees to convict the president (Broughton 2017). The second, called political nullification, is when the Senate or individual senators decide to not convict the President because they do not want him to be removed from office (Broughton 2017). The third, independent nullification, is when the Senate acquits the President but without the partisan drive of political nullification (Broughton 2017).

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

Honors Thesis for Paige DiForte

Broughton acknowledges that it is virtually impossible to rid impeachment trials of partisan influence, but he argues that this should be attempted to be mitigated at all costs, as “political nullification ... can do violence to the rule of law, presidential responsibility, the institutional integrity of the Senate, and the separation of powers” (Broughton 2017). This political influence is further discussed in Pious’ piece, where he notes that the arguments surrounding what constitutes as a high crime or misdemeanor switches between parties depending on the party of the President who is being impeached (Pious 1998).

Pious (1998) also discusses both President Nixon and President Clinton and their relationship to the Gallup approval polls. He mentions the difference between the two Presidents: how Nixon’s approval plummeted while Clinton’s approval skyrocketed. He also makes the distinction between the president’s character and the job the president is doing. For instance, Clinton’s character ratings were decreasing, while his job approval was increasing (which, Pious points out, is probably reflective of the economy at the time). So, perhaps the conclusion drawn here that my research could reflect is that character approval is not as important in determining overall approval levels as the job the president is doing, meaning the scandals (impeachments perhaps) of the president does not influence the public as much as we may think.

Approval Polls

The first presidential approval poll was taken by Gallup in 1935 for President Franklin D. Roosevelt. According to *Gallup*, “Presidential job approval is a simple, yet powerful, measure of the public's view of the U.S. president's job performance at a particular point in time.” Essentially, the polls question the public on their approval of the President in office. Since their inception, considerable research has been conducted on what influences these job approval polls; essentially what criteria citizens are using to evaluate the president. Economic performance is certainly the most widely discussed influence. Mueller (1970) notes that a decreasing economy hurts the popularity of the president, but an improving economy has little impact on his approval rating. This finding that a booming economy did little to help the president’s approval rating was limited to this piece, however. Both Metzger (1999) and Kelleher & Wolak (2006) find that economic performance is a key indicator for how positive

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump
Honors Thesis for Paige DiForte

or negative the approval polls will be, perhaps even the most important indicator. In a regression analysis of presidential approval during the first four months of a president's term, Metzger (1999) finds that consideration of the predicted state of the economy in the upcoming quarter has a strong correlation with the president's approval – each one-point increase in GNP leads to about a 2-3% approval increase. Additionally, in a study on the effects of media priming on presidential approval, Kelleher and Wolak (2006) point out that “the health of the national economy, is a central predictor of why people approve or disapprove of a president's performance.” They further explain that typically the president is celebrated when the economy is in good health and criticized when the economy is in poor health (Kelleher and Wolak 2006).

Brace and Hinckley (1991) group economic performance into a larger category of what they call “circumstances” that encapsulates other important non-economic events. Whether these major events invoke a sense of patriotism or divisiveness is irrelevant; the president will see an impact in the polls, be it positive or negative. The authors cite examples of a positive or negative event. A “positive” event that will likely lead to higher approval ratings for the president would be a use of US troops to protect American interests overseas, for example, while an example of a negative event would be mass protests or riots (Brace and Hinckley 1991). It is also important to distinguish between “discretionary” and “nondiscretionary” events, in other words, events that the president has control over and events that the president has little to no control over. Interestingly, the study found that nondiscretionary events have more of an impact on approval polls than discretionary events, meaning that the president has little control over the events that impact his approval rating the most. Mueller (1970) also notes patriotism in his factors that drive approval ratings, saying that the “rally round the flag effect” typically means higher approval ratings during foreign crises. Additionally, Kernell (1978) says that presidential approval poll results are based on “current events and conditions” instead of areas the president has control over. So, one major area that impacts approval polls are events that the president may or may not actually have direct influence over.

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

Honors Thesis for Paige DiForte

Another impact on presidential approval polls is time. Brace and Hinckley (1991) state that as time goes on, ratings will decline, as the excitement of a new president post-election will diminish as needs are not met. Mueller (1970) makes a similar point, saying that as time moves on the president is forced to face controversial issues, thus alienating some people, and therefore decreasing his approval rating. Additionally, Metzger (1999) finds that presidents have a six-point “honeymoon” period for the first four months of their respective term. Some, such as Kernell (1978), disagree and believe that actual events have more of an impact on presidential approval ratings than time itself. However, even if major events or economic conditions have a larger impact, it is important to note the trends in approval over time as a potential impact on approval ratings.

Metzger (1999) also discovered other trends in presidential approval polls that have little to do with the president’s actual job performance. For instance, he found that Republican presidents have a five-to-six-point advantage to Democratic presidents, as well as discovering that a second term president will have an eleven-point handicap in the first four months of his second term (Metzger 1999). Clearly, these are regarding certain circumstances surrounding the president, like his political power or which term he is serving, rather than the actions the president takes while in office. Considering the research surrounding nondiscretionary events and their impact on the approval polls, it is noteworthy that characteristics like these can also impact approval ratings in such a large way.

Unsurprisingly, another main factor that goes into decisions on approval of the president’s job is the president himself. Newman (2004) examines how presidential characteristics relate to approval polls, mainly focusing on Clinton. The study found that “A ten-point increase in the percentage of people who thought Clinton could get things done would immediately translate into about three additional points approval, while a ten-point decline in the percentage of people who thought Clinton shared their values would immediately depress approval by about four points” (Newman 2004). The study also examined how Clinton lost people believing that he shared their values, and how this did lead to a small loss in approval points (of course, Clinton’s approval still remained high throughout his impeachment and the scandal, but the point made here is that it could have been even higher) (Newman 2004). Using President

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

Honors Thesis for Paige DiForté

Clinton as an example, the study shows that the president's character does impact the way people feel about the job he is doing.

Additionally, media coverage of major events and the state of the country in general has a major impact on approval polls. Multiple articles I found outlined how media priming of certain issues can impact presidential approval ratings. For instance, Kelleher and Wolak (2006) find that more complicated issues, such as foreign policy, are less likely to be primed than simpler issues, such as the health of the economy and the president's character. They also acknowledge that news stories about a president's character tend to be negative because the news favors criticism, so based on their conclusions, if a president has more negative press, his approval rate will likely decline. This reinforces Newman's (2004) research on presidential character in a broader context. Furthermore, Brody (1991) argues that the entire reason presidents get a so-called "honeymoon" period in the beginning of their term is because media coverage becomes more negative as time goes on. From this research, it is clear that media is heavily intertwined into the results of presidential approval polls.

Approval polls are not only impacted by external sources but also impact the external environment, namely political processes. Diving further into this idea Gronke, Koch and Wilson (2003) examine how a person's approval of the President impacts how they vote in midterm elections. They found that if people did not approve of the President, then they were more likely to vote against the party of the president in the next Congressional election (Gronke et al 2003). They also found that people did take into consideration the level of support members of Congress gave to the president, so they only "punish" members of the president's party who support him (Gronke et al 2003). So, approval polls not only affect the President himself, but also members of Congress.

Additionally, I found that approval polls not only affect the members of Congress themselves but also their willingness to pass certain policies and laws. Canes-Wrone and Marchi (2002) researched the correlation between successful policies pushed by the president and the president's approval level. They outlined two theories in their piece: one being that members of Congress are more likely to follow the president's legislative requests if the president is more popular, the other being that presidents with higher approval ratings (above 50%) are

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

Honors Thesis for Paige DiForte

more likely to influence voters to favor a certain policy decision (Canes-Wrone and Marchi 2002). Their hypothesis dives further into the makeup of the issues themselves as they question whether the ability of the president to use his high approval ratings to influence legislative measures depends on how important and complex the issues are to the public (Canes-Wrone and Marchi 2002). By examining news media coverage, they find that approval ratings are only influential in Congress if the issues being pushed are salient and complex, so the scope of the president's ability to use his popularity is somewhat limited (Canes-Wrone and Marchi 2002).

Some research has been conducted on the connection between presidential approval ratings and re-electability, although much of this research is from decades ago. Lewis-Beck and Rice (1982) found that presidents with Gallup approval rates above 50% are highly likely to be reelected. Additionally, Sigelman (1979) formed the results of his model into a table with approval ratings and then the incumbent's likely share of the popular vote. Looking at seven presidential elections from 1940 to 1976, he finds that there is a strong positive correlation between presidential approval and the percentage of the popular vote the incumbent president won by. Furthermore, he found that if the incumbent's approval rating was 45% or less, the president would not be reelected. Sigelman's study is a rebuke to Mueller's claim that the Gallup approval polls have little predictive value of elections (Sigelman 1979). While these findings are telling, it is also important to note that they are from approximately 40 years ago. Perhaps the conclusions reach here still stand today, but it is possible that they are outdated and the impact of approval polls on elections has changed.

Media

Media has evolved considerably over time. Before print media was created, news could not travel very well or far due to the obvious logistical limitations (Burkhardt 2017). The creation of print media was the beginning of the ability to share news and information, and since its creation with each new invention this ability to share has become increasingly easier and less regulated. According to Burkhardt, (2017) the invention of the Internet was when true democratic news was created, meaning that virtually all of society could participate in the news sharing process instead of just a few individuals and companies that held all the

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

Honors Thesis for Paige DiForte

“informational power.” However, she also points out that now, with the creation of blogs and social media, anyone can post and share anything, so there is inaccurate and biased information being spread (Burkhardt, 2017). Because of this, fake news can spread more quickly and easily, which has become a bigger and bigger problem in the past few years (Burkhardt, 2017).

Not only has media itself evolved over time, but public perception of the media has evolved as well. In the 1970’s, people had a lot of trust in the media (Ladd, 2012). In a 1972 poll, 72% of Americans trusted the news anchor Walter Cronkite, and the journalists who investigated Watergate were “depicted heroically” in the movie *All the President’s Men* (Ladd, 2012). This has changed dramatically, as 45% of Americans have “hardly any confidence in the press” as of 2012, and this was almost ten years ago (Ladd, 2012). Ladd believes the change can be attributed to the shift in types of media available. Before, there were only “news networks, local television news, and newspapers [and] the vast majority of these journalists were committed to a style of ‘objective’ journalism that rose to prominence in the early twentieth century” (Ladd, 2012). Now, however, there are many different media sources, “including more partisan and tabloid-oriented approaches” (Ladd 2012). Ladd (2012) goes on to say that because people distrust the media now, people are more interested in these partisan news sources that simply reaffirm their existing beliefs. Relating heavily to the recent political environment, Stroud and Reese (2008) mention that “public opinion often follows elite cues about where to stand on issues [so] when elites claim the media are biased, the public will follow suit” (2008). Donald Trump and his widespread criticism of the press embodies this theory, as Trump has convinced many of his followers to distrust mainstream media completely. Perhaps the combination of this and the advent of more alternative media sources has led to media coverage having less of an impact on approval polls than it did in the past.

It is no secret that the media does have a significant influence on those who consume it. Three effects the media has on its audience were made apparent to me through Scheufele and Tewksbury’s (2007) article: agenda setting, priming, and framing. Agenda setting is the emphasis that the media puts on specific issues, which affects how the audience views these

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

Honors Thesis for Paige DiForté

issues (Scheufele and Tewksbury 2007). Priming is when news networks suggest to their audiences how to interpret certain events, and then suggest that their interpretations of these events should be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the government (Scheufele and Tewksbury 2007). Framing is similar to priming in that it means how issues are framed by the news media will influence how audiences understand these events (Scheufele and Tewksbury 2007). To summarize, “as Bernard Cohen pointed out in 1963, the media may not be able to tell people what to think, but they are successful in telling them what to think about” (Russell and McCombs 2018). Essentially, many of the opinions that people form about politicians and world events come not from the individuals themselves, but rather the forms of media in which they receive their news and gather their information.

Media also has a large influence on politics. Some even view the media as another institution of government. U.S. Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart said that the “guarantee of a free press was . . . to create a fourth institution of Government as an additional check on the three official branches” (Ladd 2012). The media and the government have a sort of symbiotic relationship – the press helps set the government’s agenda, while the agenda set by the government sets the agenda for what is covered on the news. For example, it was found that in President Carter’s State of the Union address, “eight issues in the New York Times and on the television networks during the month preceding the State of the Union address had influenced the president’s agenda” (Russell & McCombs 2018). So, in this case, the media had dictated what issues the President spoke about in his State of the Union address. Conversely, Nixon’s State of the Union address in 1970 showed that his agenda “did influence the subsequent month’s news coverage in the New York Times and the Washington Post and on two of the three national television networks” (Russell & McCombs 2018). So, it appears as though the media and the government influence each other, depending on the situation. Michelle Wolfe (2012) found a relationship between the intensity of coverage the introduction of a bill gets and the amount of time it takes to pass a bill, another example of the media’s influence on the political process. So, essentially, the media has a major influence in politics, and is majorly influenced by politics.

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

Honors Thesis for Paige DiForte

The shift in the format of media and the resulting shifts in consumption of media also impact elections themselves. Fox News was the first news station that took a partisan approach to delivering the news (Arceneaux 2016). Arceneaux stated that “the introduction of the conservative outlet into media markets likely increased turnout among Republican voters and induced Independents to vote for the Republican presidential candidate in the 2000 election” (2016, p. 8). Arceneaux (2016) argues that the rightward shift in politics may have been caused by the advent of Fox News. In this example, the media had an influence on election results, and if the previous research in which media influences public opinion on political issues holds true, then it would not be wrong to say that the media also has influenced subsequent elections.

Foreseeably, media spends a lot of time covering political scandals – namely because scandals make headlines. Certain positions and events receive more media coverage. For example, more well-known officials such as governors and lawmakers receive more attention than less well-known public officials (Newmark and Vaughan 2014). The reason for this is because “Incidents involving less-known officials are likely to sell fewer papers, so reporters devote less space to them” (Newmark and Vaughan 2014). Additionally, Romano (2014) found in his study on television news coverage of scandals in Congress that scandals in the House were covered with less frequency than scandals in the Senate. This also reinforces Kelleher and Wolak’s point that there is usually more negative press about presidents, as these stories are usually more newsworthy so to speak. Another interesting note regarding media coverage of political scandals is that “sexual scandals [do] not generate greater news coverage than those that were not carnal in nature” (Newmark and Vaughan 2014). This does not mean that these events do not get a lot of coverage; rather, the amount of coverage scandals like these receive does not have to do with the nature of the scandal. Furthermore, from research by Stroud and Reese (2008), the public tends to distrust the media more when it covers political scandals excessively (Stroud and Reese cite the Lewinsky scandal). So, when it comes to impeachment and the scandals that led the presidents to their fate, the public may not necessarily share in the media’s distaste for the president’s actions because of their lack of trust in the media.

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

Honors Thesis for Paige DiForte

When it comes to media, it is important to judge whether the sources are biased or unbiased, in order to determine the accuracy of the information presented. Stroud and Reese (2008) summarize ways in which both the public and past researchers detect bias. First, they define the qualifications of being labeled “objective” as “absence of personal subjectivity, fairness in presenting the relevant sides, skepticism toward all of the sides, and providing factual context” (Stroud and Reese 2008). Additionally, to evaluate bias, Stroud and Reese (2008) list credibility (i.e. the expertise and trustworthiness of the source of information), the content of news stories (i.e. if the stories cover both sides of an issue equally), production techniques (i.e. does the news source use tabloid techniques such as effects or music), and other non-content related issues (i.e. the partisanship/beliefs of the journalists, and whether the news source receives funding from certain institutions that may influence their beliefs). They also go further into detail in ways to evaluate whether a news source is favoring a particular side of the political spectrum, such as “Column inches devoted to different sides ... number of headlines or photographs devoted to different sides ... amount of time spent covering different sides [and] number of overtly opinionated statements about different sides” (Stroud and Reese 2008).

Midterm Elections

Midterm elections differ slightly from presidential elections in that voter turnout is typically lower, usually for a variety of reasons. According to Jackson’s (2000) research, those who typically vote in midterm elections are those who are wealthy, better educated, older, white, have strong partisan beliefs and have voted in the past. Jackson (2000) also points out that young people are even less likely to vote in midterm elections than in presidential elections.

While midterm elections are for members of Congress, they are often a reflection of the public’s judgement on the effectiveness of the president and his administration (Jacobson 2019). In a study of the outcome of the 2018 midterms, Jacobson (2019) points to existing research that concludes that some major influences on the outcomes of midterm “swing” seats are Gallup presidential approval ratings and changes in real disposable income per capita (Jacobson 2019). In 2018, looking at the changes in these two factors in the months prior to the election led to accurate predictions for the number of seats the Republicans lost in the

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

Honors Thesis for Paige DiForte

House. Jacobson's study also points out how the 2018 election differed from past midterm elections. Leading up to the election, the economy was doing very well, but what allowed Democrats to have such sweeping victories in the House was Trump's low approval rating. This combined with the especially president-centric nature of the midterm election (due to Trump's actions and words), led to the substantial Democratic victory in the House in 2018 (Jacobson 2019).

There is some dissent as to whether the economy actually influences midterm elections. In a study of the macrolevel evidence of the influence of the state of the economy on midterm elections, Erikson (1990) finds that "the same electorate that votes its collective pocketbook for president virtually ignores the economy when voting for Congress." An additional study, however, cites the performance of the economy in the year prior to the midterm as an influence, and more specifically the effectiveness of the administration's management of the economy (Tuft 1975). Tuft (1975) also finds that presidential approval polls influence the midterm elections, which again was reinforced in Jacobson's research as well. Since prior research confirmed that the economy has an influence on approval polls, it is clear that the economy does have an impact on the outcome of midterm elections, be it directly or indirectly.

Typically, the political party the president is affiliated with loses seats in the midterm elections (Abramowitz 2001). As Abramowitz (2001) points out, this was not the case with the 1998 midterm elections. Abramowitz states the reasoning behind the results of the 1998 midterm elections was dissatisfaction with the way Republicans handled the impeachment proceedings. Because of this dissatisfaction, more people voted Democrat as a way to "punish" the Republican party for the impeachment proceedings (Abramowitz 2001). So, clearly impeachment does have some impact on midterm elections.

METHODOLOGY

Each of the three sections of my thesis require different approaches for collecting the information. For the media research, I chose to look at mass media sources, and the most popular types throughout the time period of the three impeachments were newspapers and network news. To keep it consistent, newspaper articles were pulled from The New York Times, and television broadcasts were pulled from CBS News. For Clinton's and Trump's impeachments, I also included a few clips from Fox News and MSNBC, as these more partisan news sources became more popular during this time. For each impeachment case, I pulled a combination of newspaper articles and newscasts in order to get a clear understanding on how the president and his impeachment process were being portrayed, which turned out to be around twenty sources per president.

The reason I chose to focus on mass media sources, as opposed to including other sources like social media for Trump's impeachment, was to keep the data sources consistent for each of the impeachment cases. I chose to use *The New York Times* and CBS News as my standard media sources because both are extremely popular, both today and in the 1970's, and I wanted to pull news sources that a majority of the public had likely read or seen. When pulling articles and newscasts, I looked for articles discussing either the impeachment proceedings itself or the scandal surrounding the impeachment. I also looked for articles and newscasts from various points in the impeachment timeline, just to gage whether there was any shift in the way the President was portrayed throughout the process. I did choose to examine a few clips from more partisan sources as those became more popular, because I know that large fragments of the population got its information from these sources. The 1990's clips were more challenging to find, but for the clips from Trump's impeachment I included a mix of more typical news segments and opinionated segments. I also chose to alter the amount of news articles versus newscasts I collected for each impeachment case, as television (or, especially in Trump's impeachment, video newscasts on social media sites such as YouTube) became more popular.

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

Honors Thesis for Paige DiForte

The purpose of analyzing these media sources was to determine how the president was portrayed in the media, because this could influence how the public showed approval of the president in the polls. Essentially, I wanted to see whether the way the media portrayed the president and the scandal or impeachment itself corresponded to the way in which the public voiced their approval or disapproval of the president in job approval polls. To analyze each of these sources, I used the criteria outlined by Stroud and Reese (2008) to judge how biased a source is. The first criteria I used was how well the source balanced both sides of the argument, meaning whether they reported one version of the story or multiple perspectives. The second criteria I used was whether there were any outright opinions used by the journalists. The third criteria I used was whether the information was relevant to the scandal and impeachment and the fourth criteria used was whether there were any tabloid production techniques used (this was only for the newscast sources however). Based on the number of articles/clips that contained various levels of bias, I made a judgement on whether the source was more biased in a favorable way to the president or an unfavorable way.

For job approval polls, I first researched a timeline of major events in each impeachment process that were either highly covered in the media or essential to the development of each impeachment case (or both in most cases). I then compared these dates with the approval rating at the time using information from Gallup polls. I chose Gallup because in my preliminary research I discovered that Gallup published the first approval poll in 1935. The polls have remained popular today as well. The idea here regarding the approval poll research is to see whether any major developments in impeachment correlated with fluctuations in the president's approval rating.

Finally, for the midterm elections of 1974 and 1998, I examined the results in both the House and the Senate on a partisan basis. I checked to see how many seats each party gained or lost in the election, and compared whichever party had a better election to the party of the president. The thought here is that a president who was portrayed worse in the media and had lower approval ratings would have his party perform worse in the subsequent midterm election (or in 2020's case, the presidential election).

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

Honors Thesis for Paige DiForte

Another area I included some additional background research in was the state of the economy throughout each of the three presidencies. As we saw in the literature review, the economy has an impact on both approval poll ratings and elections. Therefore, it is important to include at least a basic overview of the economic state around the time of the election to offer further explanation for approval poll or election results, instead of just assuming impeachment is the main driver of the outcome of each election.

ANALYSIS & RESULTS

President Nixon: Media Coverage

The New York Times

Balance

When looking at media coverage of President Nixon during the Watergate scandal, it is clear that the public at the time got a very thorough, factual representation of the entire process. The first lens in which I examined the media sources was through the balancing of both sides of the issue. *The New York Times*, in the case of Richard Nixon, did a fairly good job at presenting the public with the facts of the scandal and dedicating time to each angle in which the scandal could be looked at. However, while many of the articles discussing Watergate and impeachment did include opinions from those who disagreed with impeachment, many of the articles were focused on people who thought the president should be impeached or were relieved when he resigned. For instance, in the article “*Ex-Nixon Writer for Impeachment*,” the author writes about a former writer for the White House who believes the president should be impeached. However, the author also includes a quote from Representative Edward Hutchinson, a Republican who is against impeachment, explaining how “he did not think the country could ‘afford’ impeachment (Apple Jr. 1974). Despite this acknowledgement of the other side of the issue, a majority of the article is spent explaining the reasons why Nixon should be impeached, according to the “ex-writer.” So, the side supporting the President is mentioned, but not a lot of space is given to it.

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

Honors Thesis for Paige DiForte

Another article regarding support for impeachment was titled “Allies in House Shifting on Nixon.” As the title insinuates, the article describes some Republican representatives who turned on Nixon and would not defend him against impeachment anymore. The article is heavily focused on this and lists ten representatives (who all served on the Judiciary Committee) that now said they would vote to impeach the president. The article does mention two representatives who still support the president, quoting one saying, “I’m sticking by my President ...” and the other saying “to err is human...” (Rosenbaum). Aside from these short quotes, the rest of the article is dedicated to the reasons why the representatives no longer support Nixon and will be voting for impeachment. A similar article written earlier in the impeachment process (“Nixon’s Support Appears to Wane”), follows a similar pattern in mentioning one congressman who will not vote for impeachment, while dedicating most of the space to those who lost faith in Nixon and believe that impeachment is more likely.

One article outlines the Judiciary Committee’s reasoning for bringing impeachment. This article, titled “Rodino Calls Nixon Refusal 'Grave,' Hints It Is Ground for Impeachment,” essentially gives a platform to those who think the President made a mistake by refusing to release the Watergate tape recordings that had been subpoenaed by the Committee. The journalist does outline the reasons why the President refused to hand over the tapes, but, like the previous pattern has shown, most of the article was dedicated to criticism of the President.

While many articles did try to include some acknowledgement of the other side, there were a few articles that were less discrete with their approach. For instance, “Proxmire Calls Press ‘Unfair’ to Nixon A Day After Linking Him to Watergate,” is focused primarily on telling the narrative of Senator William Proxmire and his criticism of how the press has covered Watergate. In a slight juxtaposition to the points made by Senator Proxmire, the article “Gains of Watergate: Positive and Hopeful Results Found As the Transition Is Made Smoothly,” the benefits of the resignation of President Nixon and the whole Watergate scandal are explained, the reinforced strength of freedom of the press being one of them. So, from these two articles, the press is depicted in opposite ways, therefore there being some semblance of balance, although not in the same article.

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

Honors Thesis for Paige DiForté

Another article that was very one-sided was “The Resignation Proved Impeachment Works.” This one, similar to the “Gains of Watergate” article, only highlights the positives that came from this event. By outlining the positives of the resignation of President Nixon, *The New York Times* further takes a stance against President Nixon.

Opinions

This article, “The Resignation Proved Impeachment Works” written by Anthony Lewis, also contains many opinionated statements, our next task for assessing bias in media. Lewis calls the presidency “crippled.” He also states that “No one can fairly claim that this Congress rushed to remove Richard Nixon or carried out its impeachment responsibility carelessly,” defending those who were concerned that by using impeachment in this case it would make impeachment a more freely used tool. He also calls Congress’s role in impeachment “impressive” multiple times. Another article, “The 37th President Is First to Quit Post,” also contains opinionated criticisms of President Nixon, calling his resignation speech “his most effective speech since the Watergate scandals began” and describing his administration as “tottering.” These were the only articles I found with outright opinionated statements, so it appears as though most of the articles published by *The New York Times* during this time were free from outright bias.

Relevance

Finally, the last criteria I used in assessing bias was whether the information was related to impeachment or the scandal or not. I found that all information in these articles were related to Watergate and the subsequent talks of impeachment. There were no tangents.

From this research, *The New York Times* reporting on the Watergate scandal and President Nixon’s impeachment was definitely more focused on the President’s wrongdoings, but in a more subtle manner than in the other two impeachment cases (as we will see later). Upon first glance, it appears as though the newspaper is very factual and does give both sides of the arguments presented. However, when taking a wider view of multiple articles, it is clear that the narrative is more shaped towards supporting those arguments that believe that the

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

Honors Thesis for Paige DiForte

President did something wrong with regards to Watergate and that he should be impeached, although likely this is just in correspondence to the release of additional facts in the Watergate scandal that made President Nixon's guilt unquestionable. While it may not be outrightly stated with opinionated statements from the journalists, that narrative is still present. This supports Kelleher and Wolak's research that says that media coverage around a president is typically negative.

CBS News

Balance

As opposed to *The New York Times*, CBS News in the 1970's took a more balanced approach in each of the news clips. For instance, in the "1974 CBS News Watergate Special Report," regarding the release of the transcripts on the Watergate tapes, the news anchors spend time covering both background of what Nixon said was on the Watergate tapes, as well as what the transcripts actually say that contradicts his claims. In the same newscast, an anchor interviews two representatives, one Democrat and one Republican, who both served on the judiciary committee. Interestingly, they chose a Democrat who "might not" vote for impeachment and a Republican who "might" vote for impeachment. Doing so gives multiple perspectives to viewers instead of just one clear trajectory of what they should believe about Watergate.

Similarly to the previous newscast, the "1973 CBS News Walter Cronkite" clip acknowledged both the President's as well as the judge's arguments in the Court of Appeals regarding President Nixon in handing over the Watergate tapes. Instead of just focusing on the outcome (the judge's decision) CBS News also informed the public on what the President's arguments were as well, effectively explaining both sides of the story. Similarly, although regarding a different issue, in the newscast "CBS News Special Report: The Watergate Indictments," instead of simply explaining what the indictments are saying about the President, the news anchors dive into the background on what President Nixon had said in the original testimony, and then dive into what the indictments mean about Nixon's previous statements. Giving

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

Honors Thesis for Paige DiForte

more background on issues highlights both sides, yes, but also makes the lies President Nixon told even more apparent.

CBS News also focused a lot on interviewing both sides. For instance, in the Watergate Indictment newscast, multiple senators and candidates running for office in Ohio (during the election going on at the time) are interviewed and asked for their opinions on what the indictment meant for the President. Additionally, “CBS Evening News 8-8-1974,” on the brink of Nixon’s resignation, shows clips of various senators giving various opinions on whether Nixon should be granted immunity or not. The same newscast also shows interviews with American citizens being asked what they think about the President’s resignation. A call center in the executive office is also shown, and a woman working there states that everyone who has been calling has been calling in support of President Nixon. Conversely, interviews with those in the town where President Nixon was born and raised were also shown – and these people were not as supportive of the President. The publisher of the local paper planned on dropping the “Birthplace of President Nixon” banner, and the town was also reconsidering Richard M Nixon Park.

Opinions

As far as opinionated statements go, there were not any that were not asked for. CBS News had a reoccurring theme of interviewing journalists at the end of news clips and asking for each of their opinions on the issue at hand. For instance, in “1974 CBS News Watergate Special Report,” the panel of journalists are asked whether the President has been hurt or helped by the release of the transcripts and in “CBS News Special Report: The Watergate Indictments,” the journalists are asked whether they think the president can recover from the indictments. Additionally, at the end of “CBS Evening News 8-8-1974,” Eric Severeid is asked for his opinions on the entire Watergate scandal, to which he says the “Nixon administration died of self-inflicted wounds,” and that if the President were to pardon himself it would “degrade his departure.” So, there are some opinionated statements made, but it is very clear that they are opinions, and they are typically balanced with others’ opinions so as to get a broader picture.

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

Honors Thesis for Paige DiForté

Tabloid Production Techniques

As far as tabloid production techniques, there were none used during this time. The only interesting note is that the interview clips last a lot longer than they do today and even during Clinton's impeachment, although this may reflect more on the techniques used in later years.

Relevance

Like *The New York Times*, all information was relevant to impeachment or the scandal.

CBS News differs from *The New York Times* in that there was no underlying narrative being told underneath the factual reporting. It appears as though CBS News was telling the story as it happened, without swaying its audience one way or another. Yes, they used interviews and opinions often, but these were much more balanced than *The New York Times* and seemed to be more about dissecting the issue at hand from all sides than about constructing a narrative. Overall, it is hard to say whether CBS News depicted Nixon in a positive or negative light because it seems as though they just depicted him in the way he portrayed himself.

President Clinton: Media Coverage

The New York Times

Balance

During the Lewinsky scandal and Clinton's subsequent impeachment, there was less balance on both sides of the narrative as there was during the Watergate era. Most of the articles were not balanced on both sides. For instance, we saw in the 1970's that most of the articles would at least mention the other side's argument, even if for less space. In the 1990's, however, hardly any articles mentioned both sides. For instance, in the article "Senate Democrat Rebukes Clinton," the author discusses politicians who think that the President's actions in the Lewinsky scandal will have severe consequences. The article focuses mostly on Senator Joseph Lieberman, who was very outspoken on his distaste for the President's actions, but does also include some opinions from other Democrats who shifted their views on the President. In the article, there is not one mention of a politician who still supports President

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

Honors Thesis for Paige DiForte

Clinton. This highlights the difference between the 1970's and the 1990's, because articles from Nixon's era typically included at least one opinion from the other side of the issue.

This is not true for every article, however. The article "Figure in Scandal Asserts She Heard Clinton on Phone," does include an opinion each of two congressman, one who thinks President Clinton should resign if the accusations made against him are true and one who questions the motives of Kenneth Starr, the special prosecutor in the case. This is a small part of the article however as a majority is focused on the various arguments surrounding Linda Tripp, who handed over the taped phone calls between the President and Monica Lewinsky. Both sides surrounding her credibility are given, but most is spent on the arguments defending her credibility, as well as quotes from Tripp herself regarding the smear campaign against her. So, there is some balance, but coverage tends to lean in favor of Tripp. Additionally, the article "Impeachment: Decisions, Decisions," outlines the different possible outcomes of impeachment and the article "G.O.P. Split as Many Cling to the Impeachment Issue" gives both opinions on whether the Republicans or Democrats will benefit from impeachment in the election. So, there is some semblance of an even split in this case.

There was a mixture, however, of articles that seemed to be more stacked in favor of President Clinton and others that were more stacked against President Clinton. For instance, the article "Who's a Liar? And Other Pointed Questions?" outlines some of the theories surrounding the "mysteries" of the scandal up to this point, including the "talking points" document that Lewinsky gave to Tripp for the Paula Jones deposition, the gifts that the President gave Monica Lewinsky, the phone call President Clinton made to his assistant after questioning in the Paula Jones case, and the jobs that were set up for Monica Lewinsky upon her departure from the White House. For each of these "mysteries" only one real theory was given, and the journalist asked many leading questions in the piece, which painted the picture of the President's guilt. Additionally, the article "Clinton Haunted by the Impact of his Choices" focuses on the negative impact the Lewinsky scandal will have on his legacy. The timing of this article is interesting as well, because it was before impeachment was discussed seriously at all, meaning that before impeachment was even a question the public got a negative image of the President displayed to them.

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

Honors Thesis for Paige DiForte

One article that focused more positively on the President, however, was the article “Poll Finds Clinton in Strong Rebound Since Video Airing.” This article focused on the public’s perception of the President, and how people are viewing the scandal as a whole and the possibility of impeachment. The article did find one negative on President Clinton – i.e. the fact that more and more people believe that they do not share the same moral code with President Clinton – but most of the article is focused on how people believe that the President should not be impeached and how a majority of the public does not believe the Republicans have behaved fairly during this entire process. So, this article is leaning more in favor of Clinton, but the article “How Intern Reached Corridors of Power” is skewed very much towards President Clinton’s favor. The article is extremely negative towards Monica Lewinsky and slanders her character by questioning her past and her motives. While not outright in its support of the President, the fact that this article is so anti-Monica paints the picture that the President is the victim in this whole scandal.

Another article that did not necessarily support the President outright but had some underlying support shown in the makeup of the article was the article “The Debate on Articles of Impeachment Against President Clinton.” The article includes excerpts from representatives’ speeches during the impeachment debates, and interestingly enough, 29 House members who supported impeachment were included, while 38 members who did not support impeachment were also included. This is surprising, given that a majority of representatives voted to impeach Clinton, one would think that more arguments for impeachment would be included. This was not the case however, perhaps showing a bit of bias in favor of Clinton.

Opinions

As for opinionated statements, I noticed more during this impeachment process than the previous one. First, the titles of the articles themselves seem more biased than the articles in the 1970s. Titles like “Who’s a Liar? And Other Pointed Questions?”, “How Intern Reached Corridors of Power”, and “Clinton Haunted by the Impact of His Choices” all seem more pointed and sensational than the titles from the 1970’s.

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

Honors Thesis for Paige DiForte

Aside from the titles, the articles themselves also contained some opinionated statements. For instance, the article “Who’s a Liar? And Other Pointed Questions?” is written, as the title suggests, in the format of pointed questions. The way the article is written makes it seem as though the journalist is highly suspect that the President is lying but does not come say it outright. Additionally, the article “Clinton Haunted by the Impact of His Choices” says that “Mr. Clinton has often seemed oddly heedless of the effect of the actions that will ultimately compose [his legacy].” This quote takes a jab at Clinton, and given that the subject of the article is all about how Clinton’s legacy is ruined from this scandal, it definitely adds to the opinionated tone. On the opposite spectrum, the article “Poll Finds Clinton in Strong Rebound Since Video Airing,” says that there has been a “resurgence for Mr. Clinton.” This resurgence seems to put the president in a more triumphant stance in the eyes of the viewer. Finally, the article “How Intern Reached Corridors of Power” contains extremely biased statements aimed at Monica Lewinsky, including “... disturbing image of Ms. Lewinsky: a 24-year-old woman who appears to have been stubborn and self-possessed enough to hold out against some of the most powerful people in the country in her own self-interest. For if it was in Mr. Clinton’s interest that Ms. Lewinsky swore under oath that she had not had an affair with him, it was Ms. Lewinsky who stood to gain by holding back her testimony until she secured a prestigious job.” This statement clearly contains some harsh words regarding Monica Lewinsky, as well as leading the reader to believe that Monica Lewinsky is lying and using this whole scandal for her own personal gain. An attack on Monica Lewinsky’s character puts the President in the better light when pitting the two against each other in the scandal.

Relevance

The information contained in these articles were all relevant to the scandal and impeachment, although the article dissecting Monica Lewinsky’s past and attacking her character was a bit unnecessary. Yes, she was part of the scandal and the reason for Clinton’s impeachment, but I am surprised *The New York Times* printed a story so strongly opinionated against her.

From the articles I gathered from *The New York Times*, it seems as though there is more bias, but not specifically towards or against the President. There is a balance in the sense that some

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

Honors Thesis for Paige DiForte

articles victimize the President more while some condemn him more. Additionally, there are more opinionated statements written by the journalists during this time period, although again, some are more supportive of the President and some are less supportive of him. So, while there seems to be some more bias, it is not supporting one side over the other. There is not as clear of a narrative being told by *The New York Times* in this case.

CBS News

Balance

CBS News was similar to *The New York Times* during this time period in the sense that some newscasts were balanced, while some favored Clinton (though not all of them). One of the more balanced newscasts was “Bill Clinton Impeachment: House Debate,” which contained live coverage of different representatives speaking during the impeachment debates.

Obviously, because it was live, CBS News had no control over the politicians who spoke in terms of numbers of Democrats and Republicans, but the fact that they showed live coverage gives the public an unbiased, firsthand depiction about what was occurring during these debates instead of secondhand information regarding what was being said during the debate.

Another newscast that was fairly well balanced was “CBS Evening News – 1998-12-16.” This newscast focused on the theories behind the attacks on Iraq that occurred whilst the impeachment process was going on. The newscast contained opinions from Republicans stating that the timing of the attacks was planned because of impeachment, whilst showing other various Senators voicing support for the President’s actions regarding the attacks (one being Senator John McCain, who is a Republican, so support was not strictly a partisan issue). The clip also includes mini-interviews with individuals who are against impeachment including celebrities like Jack Nicholson and Barbara Streisand; as well as mini-interviews with citizens who are skeptical about the timing of the attacks. So, not only does this newscast balance both sides of the Iraq timing issue, but it also balances interviewing politicians with interviewing normal citizens.

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

Honors Thesis for Paige DiForte

The newscast "Clinton Speech August 17, 1998 Live on CBS" includes both opinions from a Republican Senator and a Democrat Representative regarding the impeachment process. Senator Arlen Specter emphasizes the need for all the facts to be unveiled in order for the public to be able to move on from this issue. Representative Barney Frank, on the other hand, believes the impeachment process is moot now that the President had been honest with the American people. He also believes that impeachment continuing to be pushed will backfire on the Republicans. So, this newscast shows both sides of the aisle and their opinions regarding impeachment.

While some of the newscasts did a good job balancing both sides, others did not and took more of a clear position in support of President Clinton. For instance, the newscast "The President impeachment. Bill Clinton 1998 impeachment on CBS news with Dan Rather, a look back" shows a poll stating that most Americans believe that the President should not have been impeached. Obviously, CBS News cannot control the results of their poll, but the interviews they included talking with people on the streets tended to lean towards how this will hurt the Republicans rather than including opinions from the other side. Along the same lines, the newscast "CBS Evening News first two segments and close - 1998-08-04" shows a clip of a Democrat congressman saying that he will stick by the President no matter what whilst surrounded by a group of his peers who agree. In this way, more support is shown for the President by only including clips of those that support him and are against impeachment.

On the opposite side of the spectrum, however, the newscast "CBS Evening News - 1998-12-17" focuses on what Republicans think of impeachment (essentially, that it is necessary at some point). They do acknowledge that it is being criticized by the Democrats and President Clinton, but the majority of the newscast is spent discussing the opinions for impeachment.

Opinions

As far as opinionated statements, a lot more were made during this time, and the need to make the news more "sensational" was more apparent. For instance, in "CBS Evening News - 1998-12-17," the debates were described as "partisan verbal barrages," and in "CBS Evening News Open & Clinton/Lewinsky Coverage (1998)" the newscast opens with "the President

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

Honors Thesis for Paige DiForte

responds forcefully in his most emphatic denial yet of sex and lies.” These descriptions of what was going on in impeachment or the scandal at the time have more of a negative connotation and add to the sort of “storytelling” aspect of the news. Another example is in “CBS Evening News Open & Clinton/Lewinsky Coverage (1998),” where Monica Lewinsky is described as “the woman who could bring down the President.” This statement was made months and months before impeachment was even a topic of discussion, so the fact that the news made such a statement this early in the scandal makes it even more dramatic.

As far as outright opinions go, one in particular from “Clinton Speech August 17, 1998 Live on CBS” stuck out to me. This occurs after President Clinton’s apology to the American people, and after his address to the nation Scott Pelley says “It didn’t seem that the President owned up to his statement last January when he wagged his finger into the television camera and said I want you to listen to me, I did not have an improper relationship with that woman,” as well as bringing up the hundreds of thousands to possible millions of taxpayer dollars that went to defending a lie. The “It didn’t seem part” of the statement is what struck me. While the information Scott Pelley mentioned was factual, the tone of voice and the use of the word “seem” appeared to be an attempt to smear the President’s character even further. In this way, I see a bit of bias in the statement made during the newscast.

Tabloid Production Techniques

Tabloid production techniques were used considerably more during this period. For instance, more banners and photos flash across the screen during this time. If the news anchor is discussing a person involved, for example, President Clinton or Monica Lewinsky, a photo or video of the two together would flash across the screen in some instances. Additionally, sound bytes were used, and polls were used in a greater frequency as well. There was definitely a big change in the way news was delivered between the 1970’s and 1990’s.

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

Honors Thesis for Paige DiForté

Relevance

All information seemed relevant to impeachment and the Lewinsky scandal that led to the President's impeachment.

In general, CBS News did a decent job at balancing both sides in some of the newscasts. They did, however, have more newscasts that seemed to sway in favor of the President, so there may have been a slight liberal bias here. However, the opinionated and more dramatic statements I noticed seemed to sensationalize the scandal even more, and the statement from Scott Pelley seemed to smear the President's character a bit. So, similar to *The New York Times*, CBS News includes more bias and opinions, but it is not specific in which side it supports.

Fox News

Balance

I also decided to look at more partisan news sources during the 1990s. Fox News, first of all, definitely had a more conservative bias, as expected, although it was not as brazen as it is today. For balance, there was some attempt at balancing both sides of the issue. For instance, in "President Clinton Deposition," the newscast discusses how the President said that his relationship with Monica Lewinsky was strictly a friendship, but then also reads from Lewinsky's deposition where she says that the pair had a sexual relationship from the beginning. Additionally, later in the same newscast, Carl Cameron gives comments on the tapes of President Clinton's deposition from both the Republican and Democrat perspectives. In these ways, there is an attempt to balance both perspectives.

With that being said, there are some instances of little balance. For instance, in "Fox News Sunday clip, 8/16/1998," the anchor and panelists all seem to agree on the fact that the President lied and that he needs to address the nation. Furthermore, in the "Final Thoughts" from the same newscast, it appears as though lead anchor Tony Snow frames the narrative as that the President is morally wrong and that the American people then must decide whether they choose the morally right side or the morally wrong side. This definitely spins the

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

Honors Thesis for Paige DiForté

narrative one way, because no one wants to choose to be morally wrong. So, in this way, both sides are not highlighted, and the scandal is painted in one way for the public to consume.

Opinions

As far as opinionated statements, I noticed a lot more in *Fox News* than I did in CBS News. For instance, one of the panelists in "Fox News Sunday clip, 8/16/1998" says that the President "definitely lied," but then quickly walks his words back and says, "I don't know that but it's my perception of events." So, while he catches himself, clearly he made an opinionated statement during the newscast about something he did not actually know was true or not. In the same newscast, the panelists say definitively that Hillary Clinton is "part of [the President's] strategy," again without knowing this for certain themselves. In this sense, there is a lot of conjecture in the delivery of the news. Additionally, in "President Clinton Deposition," Congress and the executive branch are described as "bureaucratic," and the President is described as "deceptive and evasive." Mort Kondrake goes further and says that he believes that the prosecutors were "too nice" in their questioning of the President and that they did not ask enough tough questions. So, clearly many opinionated statements were made in judgment of the President and those dealing with him.

Tabloid Production Techniques

Tabloid production techniques were used, but they were essentially the same as those used by CBS News (photos flashing, polls, etc.).

Relevance

As for relevant information, all seemed relevant to impeachment or the scandal, but I do think there was an unnecessary input into "Fox News Sunday clip, 8/16/1998," where the panelists discuss the President's marriage with his wife, specifically pondering whether the couple has an open marriage. Yes, it is relevant to the scandal in the sense that it was adultery, but discussing the President's marriage in that sense seems like a bit much for a channel that claims to deliver legitimate news.

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

Honors Thesis for Paige DiForte

MSNBC

Balance

As far as MSNBC is concerned, the network was definitely more balanced in its coverage of impeachment as opposed to Fox News. For instance, in "Bill Clinton Impeachment: MSNBC - Impeachment Vote - December 19, 1998" both interviews with Republican representatives and Democratic representatives are included. Additionally, the commentary contrasts his impeachment to Nixon in saying that most of the country still wants President Clinton in the White House. Even still, they also include commentary stating that what Clinton did was "definitely" perjury and that the Republicans "won" in a sense. So, the commentary is for and against Clinton at certain points.

Opinions

There are not a lot of opinionated statements made during this newscast from the anchors or correspondents. They do call the day of impeachment "a very dark day" for the President, and also say that "heart wrenching" is a good description about how a lot of American citizens feel on this day of impeachment.

Tabloid Production Techniques

The tabloid production techniques that were used were in line with the previous two news network stations.

Relevance

All information was relevant to impeachment.

In summary, MSNBC did not appear to be as partisan in the 1990s, and I would go as far to say it was hardly partisan at all. Fox News certainly did show some partisan bias (although not nearly as much as it does today, which we will see later), but MSNBC was straightforward, at least from this newscast.

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump *Honors Thesis for Paige DiForté*

President Trump: Media Coverage

The New York Times

Balance

The New York Times during the Trump impeachment was similar to the 1990's in the sense that there was not as much balance in the articles. There was one article that mentioned the other side's point of view. In "In Trump's Ukraine Phone Call, Alarmed Aides Saw Trouble," the article is mainly focused on the whistleblower's complaints and the sequence of events that led to the complaints. The article does mention Trump's dismissal of the complaints and the various defenses he had tried to use, but most of the article is focused on painting his guilt. Additionally, no one supporting the President was mentioned. In previous eras, if the article was focused on those who did not support the President, usually at least one supporter was mentioned, but this was not the case during this time period.

More articles specifically focused on the one-side of the issue during this time. For instance, the article "Concern Over a Phone Call and the Abuse of Power" focuses on reporting evidence that Trump had abused his power, and there is no mention of any sources saying that Trump did not abuse his power. Additionally, the journalist says with certainty that the President is "using the power of his office to solicit interference from a foreign country in the 2020 U.S. election" and that "Multiple officials said that Ukrainian leadership was led to believe that any meeting or phone call between Mr. Trump and Ukraine's new president would depend on whether the latter was willing to "play ball" on Mr. Giuliani's demands." So, the author does cite some sources that are in support of the whistleblower's claims (although no names of the sources are mentioned). This is clearly one-sided as there is not one mention of anyone coming to President Trump's defense. Similarly, the article "Moving Closer To Trump, Impeachment Inquiry Faces Critical Test" focuses on the evidence the Democrats have against Trump to start to bring impeachment articles against him. Again, no arguments that Trump did not abuse his power are reported here. So, it appears as though *The New York Times* during Trump's impeachment was not very balanced and tended to favor a narrative that the President was guilty from the start.

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

Honors Thesis for Paige DiForte

Opinions

Surprisingly, I did not find many opinionated or sensational statements made. The only somewhat opinionated statement was from the article "In Trump's Ukraine Phone Call, Alarmed Aides Saw Trouble," when the author describes Trump as "a president willing to cross lines others would not" and says that the White House is "scrambling to keep [his] secrets." While these statements may be factual, the way in which they are written is to smear the President's reputation and make the American public think he is guilty before any facts are actually produced.

Additionally, the article "Trump Largely Ignores Impeachment as He Rallies Young Conservatives" focuses on President Trump's behavior and speech at one of his rallies. Instead of focusing on his impeachment, President Trump spent his time bragging about all of his accomplishments he achieved (or claimed to achieve, as the journalist notes) during his presidency. The article ends off by stating that "On Saturday, Mr. Trump spent part of the day at the Trump International Golf Club near his estate." For an article that mainly focused on President Trump's accomplishments during his presidency, the fact that the journalist chose to end the article with a report that President Trump spent the day playing golf at one of his resorts paints the picture that the President is not really working as hard for the American people as he says he is.

Relevance

Mostly all the information discussed in these articles was relevant to impeachment, aside from some of the information in the article "Trump Largely Ignores Impeachment as He Rallies Young Conservatives." Not only were President Trump's boasts about his successes in office irrelevant to his impeachment, but the comment about him spending the day golfing at his resort was as well.

Overall, *The New York Times* did show a slight bias against President Trump during his impeachment. The one-sided articles and passive opinionated statements highlight the fact

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

Honors Thesis for Paige DiForte

that the newspaper may have been convinced of President Trump's guilt before all the facts were released regarding the phone call and possible quid pro quo.

CBS News

Balance

CBS News during Trump's impeachment was fairly balanced, and in most of the newscasts I watched, the network tried to balance both sides. For instance, in the newscast "Trump impeached in historic House vote," clips of two Republican representatives and two Democrat representatives speaking during the impeachment debates were shown. Additionally, they mention that Republicans believe that "the charges are phony" while Democrats say, "they had to hold the President to account." Already, we can see a difference here regarding how *The New York Times* balanced arguments for and against the President and how CBS News is balancing them. Additionally, the newscast "House votes to impeach President Trump. What happens next?" outlines the reasons why the Democrats are hesitating in sending articles of impeachment over to the Senate, and why this is beneficial both for Republicans and Democrats. Finally, the newscast "Special Report: Trump-Ukraine phone call partial transcript released" discusses whether there was a quid pro quo in President Trump's phone call with Ukraine. While the discussion tends to lean towards the idea that there was no quid pro quo, they do also acknowledge that Democrats believe that they have enough evidence to establish a quid pro quo.

One newscast did attempt to balance both sides but seemed to lean more towards the idea that Trump was guilty. "Texts detail Trump pressure on Ukraine" highlights arguments from officials who condemned Trump's actions, but also shows a quote from the ambassador of Ukraine who supported the President and claims he did nothing wrong. The same newscast also quotes Senator Mitt Romney claiming Trump's calling of China to investigate the Bidens was "appalling and wrong," while also quoting Marco Rubio saying that the President said this to "troll the media" and that he was clearly joking. Additionally, the newscast show's clips of President Trump saying he did not do anything wrong, but then also stating that President Trump could not point to a case where he investigated corruption that was not in a

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

Honors Thesis for Paige DiForte

political rival. It is this statement that leads me to believe that this newscast leaned more towards the side against Trump, because even though they acknowledged his arguments they made sure to strike them down.

Another newscast I wanted to mention in regard to balance is "Trump supporters at Hershey rally sound off on impeachment." This newscast involves a series of interviews with Trump supporters regarding impeachment, so it appears as though it is giving one specific side a voice. However, I do question the intentions of this newscast, because from the interviews they included, it seems as though the intention of the newscast is to invalidate the views of the Trump supporters. For instance, one man says there will be violence if the President is removed and seems to threaten it himself by saying his "357 Magnum is comfortable with that" when asked if he was confident in his belief that Trump would not be removed. Another says there would be a "second Civil War." Additionally, they also ask a child what she thinks of the President's impeachment. By including these interviews, one with a man that seems a bit unstable and one with a child who is young enough for one to assume she does not know what impeachment even is, it almost discredits the arguments of this entire side because of the delegitimization of some of the people on that side. So, while it seems as though this newscast is not balanced because it is just showing Trump supporters, it may be unbalanced but in support of the opposite side.

Opinions

There were quite a few opinionated statements I noticed on CBS News during this time. First, title-wise "Trump supporters at Hershey rally sound off on impeachment," seems a bit leading and definitely is an example of a sort of "click-bait" that has become more popular with the advent of the Internet and using social media to share newscast videos.

Another more opinionated statement I noticed was from "Texts detail Trump pressure on Ukraine." In response to Marco Rubio's comment saying the President was kidding about trying to get China to interfere in our election, Weija Jiang says "the President certainly sounded serious when he made it." How the President sounds is certainly an opinion, so by saying this CBS News delegitimizes Rubio's comment and paints Trump as guilty of even

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

Honors Thesis for Paige DiForté

more foreign corruption. Another example of painting Trump as dishonest is from "Special Report: Trump-Ukraine phone call partial transcript released." Paula Reid states that the "President is very good at putting pressure on people or getting his point across without saying something explicit that in court could be counted as extortion or a bribe." Generally, it is safe to say that being good at bribing someone without actually being found guilty of extorting them is not a desirable skill to have, especially in the President of the United States. So, these opinionated comments do tend to sway the American public into labeling President Trump as guilty even before impeachment begins.

Not all the opinionated statements are directed at President Trump though. For instance, Tulsi Gabbard of Hawaii was one of the Democrat representatives who did not vote to impeach Trump. In fact, she voted present, which is very unusual as Nancy Cordes points out in "House votes to impeach President Trump. What happens next?" However, Annie-Marie Green points out that Gabbard is running for President in the 2020 election, so "there might be some other calculus for her in voting present." This statement puts Gabbard's motives into question and leads towards the idea that her motives are more selfish. So, Trump's integrity is not the only one questioned by CBS News, and it is refreshing to see that politicians from both parties are challenged.

Tabloid Production Techniques

Very similar tabloid production techniques were used during the late 2010s as there were in the late 1990s (although now they are in HD). Images still flash across the screen, as well as headlines and banners. There are not as many polls used, at least in the newscasts I found, but more fragmented video clips are used, even with voiceovers over the clips from the news anchor or reporter. So, there are a lot of tabloid production techniques used, at just a more advanced scale when compared to the 1990s.

Relevance

All information was relevant to impeachment and to the scandal.

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

Honors Thesis for Paige DiForte

While CBS News did not paint as clear of a narrative of Trump's guilt as *The New York Times* did, shown through their more balanced coverage on whether there was in fact a quid pro quo, the newscast definitely had some bias against the President. The opinionated statements used, as well as the click-bait videocast with the interviews from Trump supporters, show that CBS News leaned more towards being convinced of President Trump's guilt than being an unbiased source of information.

Fox News

Balance

Surprisingly, the first Fox News clip I watched was fairly balanced. The newscast "White House releases unredacted text of Ukraine call" did lean in favor of Trump, but it was not as overtly biased as the other newscast. They spend a lot of time emphasizing that there are not as many references to Biden as thought previously; that there is direct link between the withheld aid and investigation of the Bidens; and that the whistleblower did not have firsthand knowledge of the call. All these points tend to lean towards President Trump's side. The newscast also makes sure to mention that the whistleblower might have some political bias against the President, but they still make sure to emphasize that the witness is credible. Here is where I see a bit of balance. Normally, I would not have expected a conservative station to acknowledge the credibility of a witness who is against President Trump, but the network did in this example.

This newscast, however, is where the balance ends. The entirety of "Trump becomes 3rd US president in history to be impeached" is focused on how the Democrats are "criminal," and that the impeachment is an effort to "subvert" the law. There is no mention of the arguments for impeachment that the Democrats have made, there was only one side of the narrative being told in this case. So, while the daytime Fox News newscast may have been balanced, the nighttime newscast is a whole different story.

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump *Honors Thesis for Paige DiForte*

Opinions

As far as opinionated statements, Fox News was the worst offender during this time period compared to all other news stations in all other time periods. For instance, in "Trump becomes 3rd US president in history to be impeached," Tom Fitton says that the day of President Trump's impeachment was "a terrible day for the Constitution and our country," which is obviously up to some debate depending on who you are talking to. Additionally, Tom Fitton also describes the President as a "revolutionary, reformist figure" and that the Democrats only impeached him because of "their obsessive activities." Finally, the most striking opinionated statement was from Tucker Carlson, who said that the people who were impeaching Trump were in "some kind of psychologically unhealthy state." This, by far, was the most blatant opinionated statement I found in my research, and one that attacks the Democratic Party and anyone who is against Trump and completely invalidates them to the viewers of Fox News.

Tabloid Production Techniques

Similar techniques were used as compared to CBS News, including photos, video footage, and voiceovers. Fox News also included side by side live footage with the impeachment vote or Trump's rally and Tucker Carlson's interview with Tom Fitton.

Relevance

There were a few instances in "Trump becomes 3rd US president in history to be impeached" where Tucker Carlson went on rants that had nothing to do with impeachment. For instance, not only were the Democrats lying about the Russian investigation, but also UFOs, Afghanistan, and the food pyramid, according to him. Additionally, he said that "If there's one thing Jefferson and Madison agreed on it's that we have to arm Ukraine." Both statements are extremely irrelevant to impeachment and frankly make little sense.

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump *Honors Thesis for Paige DiForte*

MSNBC

Balance

If Fox News in the late 2010s was the most heavily opinionated, MSNBC in the 2010s was the most unbalanced. The first newscast "Day 1,063: The U.S. House Of Representatives Has Impeached President Trump | The 11th Hour | MSNBC," gives some background on what happened during impeachment and what will happen going forward. The newscast also, however, focuses a lot on Trump's reaction to the impeachment, broadcasting many of his tweets "shouting" about impeachment. Additionally, the newscast points to one of President Trump's worst moments during his rally on the night of impeachment, where he tells the story of his reaction to the death of Congressman John Dingell. The President makes it seem as though he did Dingell's family a favor by giving him military honors for his funeral, even though Dingell was a WWII veteran. Additionally, the newscast also includes a clip of one of the representatives comparing Trump's trial to the trial of Jesus during the House debates, followed by a tweet from a Jesuit priest calling the comparison "absurd" and saying that "only one of them is sinless." So, by including the tweets, the disrespectful speech regarding John Dingell, and the tweet from the priest insinuating that Trump has sinned, MSNBC is only portraying Trump in a bad light and only coming at the issue of impeachment from one side of the spectrum.

Furthermore, in the newscast "President Donald Trump Calls on Ukraine, China To Interfere In 2020 Election | MTP Daily | MSNBC," Chuck Todd says that the President's action in calling for foreign interference into our elections will cause "lasting damage" to our democracy," as well as noting the hypocrisy of Lindsey Graham, who said that in 2016 the Republican party would be destroyed if President Trump was their nominee, and now is one of President Trump's biggest supporters and "golfing buddies." Essentially, the entire clip was Chuck Todd emphasizing the gravity of the words of the President and the impact it could have on our country. No alternate side was given; all that was said was that Republicans were very quiet on the issue.

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

Honors Thesis for Paige DiForte

Opinions

There were a few opinions I noticed throughout the newscasts. The first was regarding John Dingell – Brian Williams called it “a disgraceful retelling.” Additionally, the newscast “President Donald Trump Calls on Ukraine, China To Interfere In 2020 Election | MTP Daily | MSNBC” contains a few opinionated statements as well. For instance, Chuck Todd calls the whole situation a “national nightmare” and goes on to say, “the basic rules of our democracy are under attack from the President.” He also makes a comment about China, saying “they have such a great track record on the rule of law” sarcastically. While none of these comments are as outright as Tucker Carlson’s comments on Fox News, they still are present and meant to sway the viewer into viewing President Trump in a negative manner.

Tabloid Production Techniques

Similar techniques to the other news stations were used. They show lots of pictures of President Trump’s tweets as well.

Relevance

The only piece that was not relevant to impeachment was the segment surrounding John Dingell. That clip was just inserted to make President Trump look bad in the eyes of the viewers.

The change in both partisan news sources from the 1990’s to now is apparent. During President Clinton’s impeachment, we saw a fairly unbiased portrayal of the President, but flash forward to present day and we see a very biased portrayal of President Trump’s impeachment from both sides of the aisle. The lack of balance and extreme number of opinionated statements in these newscasts highlight the extreme partisan division in our country that has grown over the past few decades.

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

Honors Thesis for Paige DiForté

President Nixon: Approval Polls

Nixon's approval ratings seem to correlate very logically with the events that took place during Watergate and the subsequent beginning of the impeachment process. As you can see in Figure 1, his ratings gradually decline as the scandal unfolds. There is a dip in his approval ratings when the Watergate trial begins, but his approval quickly rebounds and reaches its highest point once convictions are made in the trial. After this point, however, as more and more news stories are released regarding new information involving the President, his approval ratings continue in a steep downward descent. His approval ratings "level out" so to speak in the 25% range for American's overall (not based on party affiliations). The start of this bottoming out process occurs on what has become known as the "Saturday Night

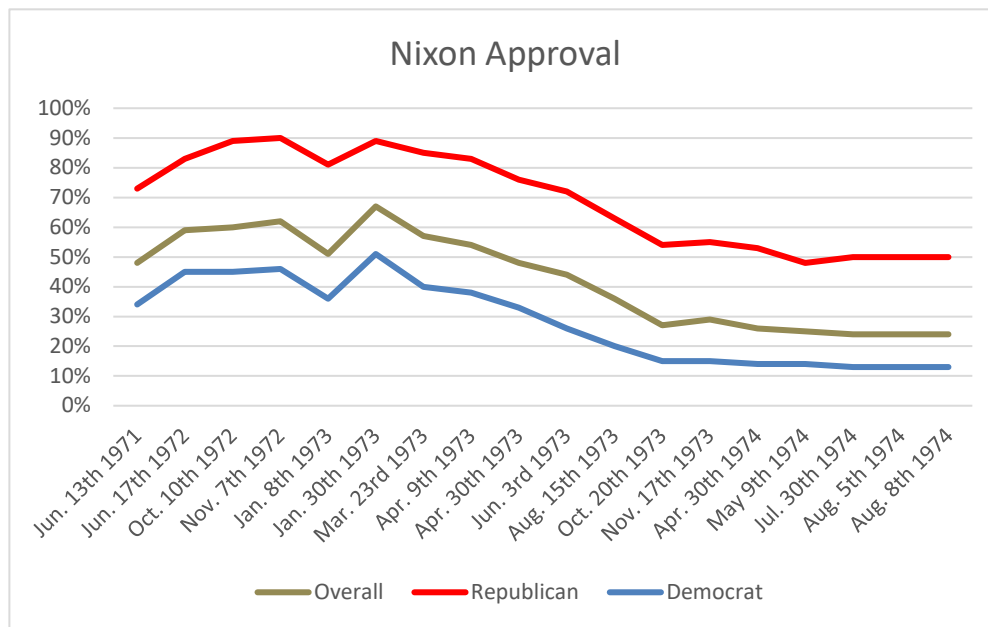


Figure 1: Approval Ratings collected from Gallup.

Massacre," or when Nixon orders the firing of special prosecutor Archibald Cox. After this event, on October 20th, 1973, ratings never improve for Nixon. He reaches his lowest approval ratings on July 30th, 1974, the day the articles of impeachment are approved and are sent to the House for a vote, at 24%. Until his resignation on August 8th, 1974, he maintains this overall approval rating. This gradual decline in approval ratings correlates to the narrative shown in the media during this time. The more critical view of the President, as shown by *The New York Times* especially, could have influenced this decline in approval ratings in time with the unfolding of the Watergate scandal.

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

Honors Thesis for Paige DiForte

The partisan approval ratings follow a similar trend as the overall approval ratings – there are no notable outliers in the Republican or Democrat approval ratings for President Nixon. Of course, the Republicans have a higher over approval rating of Nixon and the Democrats have a lower overall approval of Nixon, but that is to be expected.

I briefly want to mention the state of the economy and how that may have influenced the results of the approval polls. The economy during the first few years of the Nixon presidency had been plagued by high inflation (around 6%) and high unemployment (also around 6%) (McCracken 1996). In 1971, Nixon met with members of his staff and the Treasury at Camp David to discuss the health of the nation's economy and create a plan to help fix the issues that were causing the damage. The decisions they reached – tax reductions, surcharge on imports and the closure of the gold window – were immensely popular with the public at the time and led to a boost in Nixon's approval ratings (McCracken 1996). We can see this reflected in the approval polls, as there is an 11% increase in Nixon's approval between June 1971 and June 1972.

While the economy was boosted during this time, this high did not last. The effects from these decisions made at Camp David led to more struggles down the road. In the third quarter of 1974, the CPI was 23% greater than it was in the third quarter of 1971 (McCracken 1996). Upon Nixon's resignation, consumer prices and unemployment were rising (McCracken 1996). So, while there is correlation between the events of the Watergate scandal and Nixon's approval ratings, the fact that the economy was heading downhill again could have also had a repressive effect on the approval polls, keeping them low.

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

Honors Thesis for Paige DiForte

President Clinton: Approval Polls

In a stark contrast to President Nixon, President Clinton performed extremely well during the entirety of the scandal and his impeachment. Apparently, the public was unphased by some of the events in the scandal. For instance, the day TIME magazine printed a scathing article surrounding President Clinton and the Lewinsky scandal, Clinton's approval rating reached one of its peaks at 69%. His approval dips to 60% overall as more information about his relationship with Monica Lewinsky is made public and he is called to testify on July 17th,

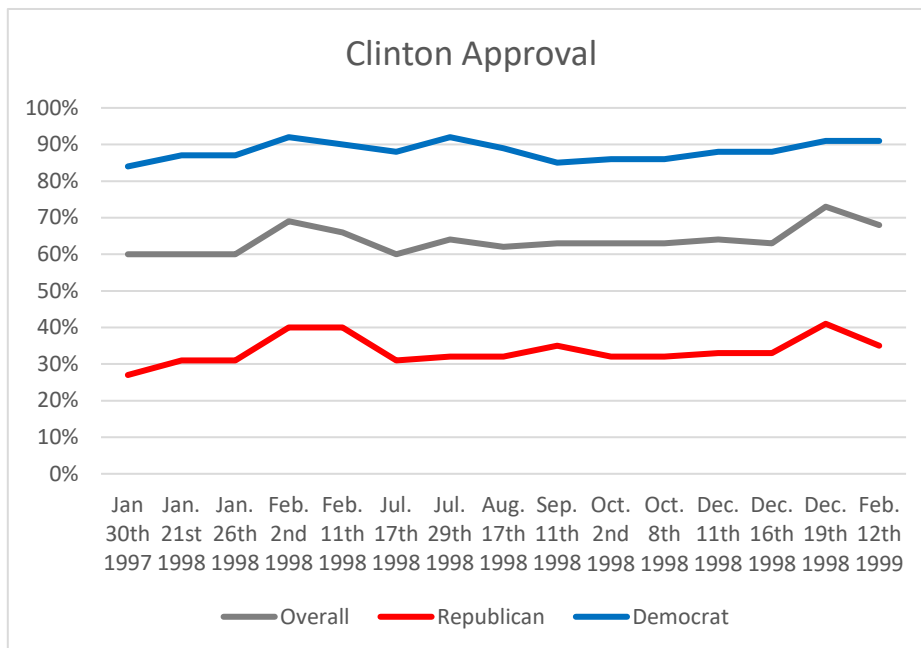


Figure 2: Approval Ratings collected from Gallup.

1998. However, once Clinton agrees to testify, his approval increases to 64% and remains at around this level until his impeachment. On the day of his impeachment, Clinton's approval rating peaks – not only for the time period of this

impeachment issue but also his entire presidency. Of course, I knew that Clinton's approval would remain high throughout his impeachment (as I discovered in my literature review), but to reach his peak throughout his entire two terms of presidency on the day where the House of Representatives decided that he should be tried for removal from office was not what I expected. Perhaps this reflects the public's dissatisfaction with the more sensationalized way of receiving news that was present in the 1990s. Clearly, the public did not judge Clinton's job performance based on any moral objections to his personal behavior.

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump
Honors Thesis for Paige DiForte

An even more surprising finding from the approval polls was the partisan approval ratings. For instance, we know that Clinton's day of impeachment was the peak of his approval ratings overall, but it was also the peak not for Democrats but for Republicans. This surprised me as well, because I would have thought that the President's own party would have supported him more on the day of his impeachment rather than the opposite party. The Republicans also had another peak when the Starr report was released, a low point for the Democrats which was also surprising for the same reason. It is interesting that the President's political party's approval did not really correspond with the overall approval.

Again, I briefly want to mention the state of the economy during this time, as that is another important driver in approval polls. During Clinton's presidency, the economy was performing extremely well, with "robust economic growth, low unemployment, and modest inflation" (Guynn 1998). Guynn (1998) cites several reasons for this expansion, such as increasing globalization leading to more price competition and therefore lower prices, as well as higher productivity with technological advancements. Whatever the reasons, clearly the economy was performing well, and as mentioned previously, typically presidents are rewarded in the polls when the economy is strong. Not only did the economy likely lead to Clinton's higher overall approval rating compared to other presidents, but it likely also had an impact on keeping them high during his impeachment proceedings and may be the reason why the American public was able to overlook his lapses in judgment in his personal life.

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump
Honors Thesis for Paige DiForté

President Trump: Approval Polls

President Trump’s approval ratings remained virtually unchanged throughout his entire impeachment. They did increase by a few percentage points throughout, but there were no notable peaks or low points as there were in the cases of President Nixon or President Clinton. The day he was acquitted by the Senate (February 5th, 2020), his approval rating did increase slightly to his highest rating to date (48%), almost as high as his overall highest approval rating throughout his presidency (which was at 49% in May of 2020). Even with all the mostly negative media coverage (apart from Fox News), Trump’s approval rating remained unphased. Perhaps this further goes to show the public’s distrust in the media, because even

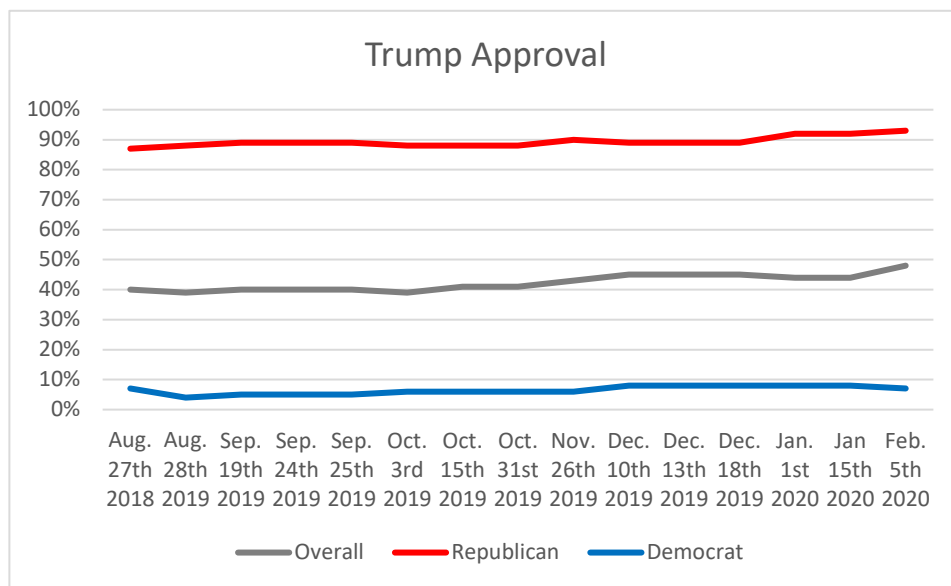


Figure 3: Approval Ratings collected from Gallup.

with breaking stories (such as the one regarding President Trump asking China to investigate the Bidens), people still approved of President Trump in the same way.

The partisan approval ratings

followed the overall approval rating trend, staying very level and not straying too many percentage points. What is interesting to note here is the large gap between Republican approval of President Trump and Democrat approval. Obviously, for all Presidents there will be a gap in approval based on parties, but none were as stark of a contrast as with President Trump. During the impeachment process, Republican approval remained in the high 80s or low 90s for percentage points, while the Democrats never even hit double digits. This shows the hyper partisanship during the Trump presidency, and this reason alone could be what kept approval polls fairly level. Clearly, Republicans support Trump no matter what and

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

Honors Thesis for Paige DiForte

Democrats are against Trump no matter what, so his impeachment is not going to change any opinions surrounding him and his job as president because of people's preconceived notions.

The economy during this time was very strong. The economy was growing at a 2.5% annual growth rate, and unemployment was at the lowest it had been in 50 years at 3.5% (Kurtz and Yellin). The stock market was also reaching record highs during Trump's presidency. This could also have been a factor in the relatively stable approval ratings throughout impeachment. Similar to President Clinton, Trump was likely supported in his approval ratings because of the strength of the economy. Americans were likely less concerned about the President's impeachment during a time where unemployment was so low and the stock market was performing so well.

1974 Midterm Election

The 1974 midterm elections went in the Democrats favor. For House results, Democrats gained 48 seats and Republicans lost 48 seats. Needless to say, Democrats maintained control of the House of Representatives. As far as elections in the Senate, Democrats gained 4 seats, Independents gained 1 seat, and Republicans lost 5 seats. Again, Democrats maintained control of the Senate ("National Politics").

The outcomes of the 1974 election are not surprising, given what we know about election influences. First, the economy was in a terrible state, and as we saw from numerous research on the influences of midterm elections, the economic health of the country is a huge driver in how people vote. Since a Republican was in the White House, people were more likely to punish his party in the midterm elections, because typically people blame the president for the state of the economy. Furthermore, people could more directly blame Nixon and his administration for the state of the economy because their decisions from Camp David led to the poor health of the economy in 1974.

The other influence on midterm elections is the approval rating of the president. As we saw, at the time of his resignation, Nixon's approval rating was at 24%. Yes, Gerald Ford was president at the time of the 1974 midterm election, but he was only a few months into his forced term (even still, his approval rating dropped 30% from the time of his inauguration to

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

Honors Thesis for Paige DiForte

the election, so it is not like he had incredibly high approval ratings to mitigate the negative impacts from Nixon). As a response to Nixon's low approval rating, likely due to a combination of distaste for the President's actions throughout the Watergate scandal, the American public voted to support Democrats in the 1974 election.

1998 Midterm Election

In the midst of the impeachment inquiry into President Clinton, the 1998 midterm elections went in the Democrats favor, although not to the same extent as the 1974 midterm election did. Republicans lost a net of five seats in the House of Representatives, while Democrats gained four seats (one seat was undeclared), but Republicans still maintained control of the House. The Senate stayed exactly the same as its previous makeup, Republican controlled 55-45. Typically, the President's party does not perform well in the midterm, so the fact that Democrats picked up four seats in the House during the impeachment process of President Clinton is astonishing.

The state of the economy likely had a large impact in the midterm election of 1998. Since the economy was performing so well, people were more likely to support the President and his party in the polls, likely leading to the increase in Democratic seats in the House. This was not enough to flip the House or the Senate, but again, the fact that Democrats were able to gain any seats during the midterm election while a Democrat was in the White House is rare enough.

The approval polls also likely had an effect on the outcome of the election. Since President Clinton was performing well in the polls (even despite his impeachment), the Democratic Party performed better in the election than expected by the previous trends.

2020 Election

The 2020 election results went in favor of the Democrats in the Senate and the Republicans in the House. In the Senate, Democrats gained a net of three seats, and Republicans lost a net of three seats. This allowed Democrats to take control of the Senate, because Vice President Kamala Harris acts as the Democrats 51st seat. In the House, Democrats lost a net of 10 seats,

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

Honors Thesis for Paige DiForté

and Republicans gained a net of 11 seats. However, Democrats still maintained control of the House of Representatives.

The state of the economy likely had an extreme impact on this election. Yes, the economy was doing great during the first few years of the Trump presidency, but the impact of COVID-19 on the economy and the nation as a whole was likely a (if not the) key driver in this election. Those impressive economic indicators mentioned previously did a complete 180 and became extremely poor. GDP was significantly reduced, and the unemployment rate skyrocketed to 14.7% (Kurtz and Yellin). Many Americans blame Trump in his delayed response to handling the pandemic, and, as we have seen, typically a President is blamed for a poor economy regardless of how direct of an impact he actually has on its state.

In the case of President Trump's approval polls during impeachment and the 2020 election, it does not appear as though there was a strong correlation at all. As we saw, Trump's approval hardly changed due to impeachment, yet his party still did not perform well in the 2020 election, and he himself lost as well. In this instance, it does not seem as though impeachment influenced the 2020 election. Perhaps this is just because President Trump's impeachment was overshadowed by a global pandemic, which is understandable. There was also over an entire year that passed between the start of the impeachment inquiry and the 2020 election, whereas the previous two cases either occurred during the election or a few months later. This could have also led to the lesser impact of impeachment on the 2020 election.

CONCLUSION

Each of the three cases of presidential impeachment I have discussed are unique, but there are trends that occurred between the three over time. The public's interest (or disinterest) in impeachment, as well as their relationship with the media changed over time. Additionally, the importance of factors other than impeachment, or even the president's approval rating, is made clear.

It is interesting to note that both Clinton and Trump experienced virtually no change (or even small gains) in their approval ratings during their impeachment trials. The fact that this

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump

Honors Thesis for Paige DiForte

occurred during the time where more tabloid production techniques were used and public trust in the media was on the decline is certainly noteworthy and serves as a continuation to Ladd's (2012) findings regarding this decline. In the 1970's, mass media sources were the only way for the public to receive news regarding the Watergate scandal, so as media coverage turned more and more towards highlighting President Nixon's guilt, approval fell. However, in the cases of Clinton and Trump, even though they were portrayed unfavorably earlier in their respective scandals that led to their impeachments, the public, it seems, simply did not care. It is also interesting to note that Trump's approval ratings were the most unaffected, and in an era where discussion of "fake news" was (and still is) prevalent as Burkhardt (2017) asserts, there could be a relationship between this complete lack of trust in the "fake news" and Trump's steady approval rating. Overall, whether the lack of changing approval is just from a disinterest in impeachment or a distrust in the news, clearly there was a significant change between the 1970's and today.

Another reason that could have contributed to this lack of change in President Clinton's and President Trump's approval polls is the way in which these impeachments were portrayed. Both were portrayed as partisan driven (especially President Trump's), meaning that the only reason the presidents were being impeached was because the opposite party was in control of the House of Representatives, and therefore they could impeach just because they wanted to. People may have been put off by this, and therefore demonstrated a lack of caring of the impeachment issue in their approval of the President.

The same view of hyper-partisanship could also have had an impact on the midterm elections themselves. The Democrats did well in the House during the 1998 midterm election, and Republicans did well in the House during the 2020 election. Since both impeachments were viewed as party-driven in the House of Representatives, perhaps Americans voted against the party that impeached the president in the House elections as a sort of signal of their distaste in the way in which impeachment was carried out. There could, of course, be other reasons, but it is interesting to see the trend between the two. Note that for Nixon, his impeachment was not viewed as driven by party politics, and his party performed atrociously in the House

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump
Honors Thesis for Paige DiForte

during the 1974 midterms. Perhaps this shows that how people feel about the validity of the President's impeachment impacts their vote in the House elections.

Finally, I do want to mention the significance of the impact of the economy on both approval polls and the midterm elections. Clearly, we could see that when the economy was doing well, the president would have relatively high and stable approval ratings, but if the economy was performing poorly, the president would have low or declining approval ratings.

Additionally, we can see from Nixon and Trump that presidents who are in office when the economy is poor have their party perform worse in the midterm election, while in the case of Clinton and the strong economy at the time, his party performed surprisingly well. Especially in the case of Trump, it is important to note that despite relatively stable approval levels during his impeachment, his party still performed poorly in the 2020 election (Senate-wise and, of course, in the presidential race), likely because of the state of the economy due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These findings support the multitude of research I found in my literature review regarding the impact of the economy on both approval polls and midterm election results.

Clearly, presidential impeachment has had impacts on elections in the past, but it appears as though those impacts are not as strong today as they were during the first impeachment inquiry in modern history. Certainly, other factors such as the economy, seem to have more of an impact on elections, both historically and currently. In the future, it will be interesting to see if impeachment is still viewed as less important by the American public in forming their decisions on presidential job approval and voting in elections.

The Changes in the Impact of Presidential Impeachment: Nixon to Trump
Honors Thesis for Paige DiForté

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