

Australians, Americans
and the 2008 Presidential Election

Professor Simon Jackman
United States Studies Centre, University of Sydney
Stanford University

30 October 2008

Contents

1	Summary of Findings	1
2	About The Surveys	4
3	Right Track, Wrong Track	5
4	Approval of Bush	6
5	Vote Intentions	7
5.1	Relationship with Australian voting intentions	7
5.2	Ideology	9
5.3	Age	9
5.4	Gender	12
5.5	Income	12
5.6	Education	14
5.7	Impact on Australia	15
5.8	Anger or Shame Towards America	16
5.9	Iraq Exit	18
6	Knowledge of American Politics	21
7	Candidate Traits	24
7.1	Riskier Choice	24
7.2	Obama's Religion	24
7.3	Better Commander-in-Chief	28
8	Racial Attitudes	28
9	Ideological Placements	33
10	Foreign Policy	37
10.1	China: Ally or Adversary?	37
10.2	ANZUS	37
11	Stereotypes About Americans	38

List of Tables

1	Right track/wrong track	6
---	-----------------------------------	---

2	President Bush, job approval	6
3	Vote Intentions, Australia and U.S.	7
4	Vote intentions in the U.S. presidential election, by Australian voting intention	8
5	Vote intentions in the U.S. presidential election, by gender	12
6	Vote intentions in the U.S. presidential election, by impact on Australia	16
7	Vote intentions in the U.S. presidential election, by anger/shame towards America	17
8	U.S. respondents, “ashamed” of America and vote intention.	17
9	Vote intention, U.S. presidential election, by timing of Iraq exit.	19
10	Distribution of Responses on Political Knowledge Items	22
11	Vote intentions, U.S. presidential vote and knowledge of American politics	23
12	“Riskier choice”	24
13	Obama’s Religion, Australia and USA	28
14	Better Commander-in-Chief of America’s Armed Forces	29
15	China: Ally or Adversary?	37
16	Does the American alliance increase the risk of attack on Australia? Phone respondents.	38
17	“Which of these characteristics do you associate with Americans?” Telephone respondents only.	39

List of Figures

1	Vote intentions in the U.S. presidential election, by self-assessed ideology	10
2	Vote intentions in the US presidential election, by age	11
3	Obama Support by Reported Income	13
4	Educational Attainment and Obama Support, Australian respondents	14
5	Educational Attainment and Obama Support, American respondents	15
6	Obama and McCain support as a function of beliefs about U.S. exit from Iraq	20
7	Assessment as a “Strong Leader”	25
8	Assessment of “Has the Right Experience”	26
9	Assessment of “Will Improve America’s Standing in the World”	27
10	Distribution of Racial Resentment Scores, Australian phone respondents	31

11	Relationship between Racial Resentment and Obama Support	32
12	Average Ideological Placements, Australian and American politicians and parties	33
13	Average Left-Right Placements and 95% Confidence Intervals, Australian and American Politicians and Political Parties. The 3.0 point on the scale corresponds to the “moderate” response; 2.0 is “progressive” and 4.0 is “conservative”. These calculations are based on combining the phone and Internet respondents.	35
14	Comparison of Ideological Placements, Australian and American respondents.	36
15	Distribution of Propensity to Ascribe Negative Stereotypes to Americans.	40
16	Obama Support and Anti-Americanism	41
17	Anti-Americanism and Knowledge of American Politics	42
18	Anti-Americanism and support for the Australian-American defense alliance	43

1 Summary of Findings

Key findings discussed in the following pages include:

- **right track/wrong track:** 64% of Australians say Australian is on the “right track”; only 17% say the same about the United States, with the “wrong track” rating for the United States approaching 80%. Australians are just as pessimistic about the United States as are Americans themselves.
- **voting intentions:** if Australians could vote in the U.S. presidential they would support Barack Obama by wide margins. Australians prefer Obama to McCain by 76-13 margins in the phone survey, and 60-14 in the Internet survey.
- **a better U.S. president for Australia?:** 49 percent of Australians think that Obama would make a better president “in terms of America’s effect on things here in Australia”. 34% say it makes no difference if Obama or McCain wins, in terms of the effect on things here in Australia. But even among these 34%, Obama leads McCain 68-16.
- **the role of racial attitudes:** an ensemble of race-related attitudes --- usually referred to as “racial resentment” or “symbolic racism” in the American literature --- is a powerful predictor of vote intentions in the United States. Australians generally score significantly lower on this variable than Americans. And racial attitudes play a smaller role in structuring Australians’ preferences over Obama and McCain. Support for Obama approaches 90% at low levels of racial resentment in both Australia and the United States. But at the highest levels of racial resentment observed in the Australian data, support for Obama remains comfortably above 50%, but drops to below 20% in the American data.
- **is Obama a Muslim?:** Just 5% of Australians think that Obama is a Muslim. 18% of Americans report that they believe Obama is a Muslim.
- **shame/anger towards America:** 69% of Australian respondents report feeling both anger towards America, or ashamed of America, because of “things America has done”. Only 13% report feeling neither emotion. Obama support falls to 61% among these 13% of respondents reporting neither emotion; Obama leads McCain 79-10 among Australians reporting both anger and shame. Interestingly, 60% of Americans also report feeling ashamed of things that America has done. However,

unlike the Australian data, Americans voting intentions cleave strongly around reports of these emotions: Obama leads McCain 57-25 among Americans saying they feel shame, McCain leads Obama 73-15 among the 29% of Americans who do not report feeling shame.

- **when should the U.S. exit Iraq?:** About half of Australian respondents think that the U.S. should exit Iraq within 12 months. One in three respondents think that the U.S. should stay “as long as it takes” to stabilize Iraq. This distribution of opinion almost exactly mirrors that in the United States. However, a key difference between the two countries are the political implications of opinions on America’s exit from Iraq. In the United States, opinions about Iraq are *powerful* predictors of presidential voting intentions. But this is not the case in the Australian data. Even among Australian respondents who think the U.S. should remain in Iraq “as long as it takes”, Obama leads McCain 66-22; in the U.S. data McCain leads Obama in this segment of the electorate 86-6.
- **left-right differences, American and Australian political leaders.** We asked Australian respondents to rate both Australian and American political figures on a “progressive-conservative” scale. Obama has the most left-leaning ratings, sitting a considerable distance to the left of Kevin Rudd, the Democratic Party and the Australian Labor Party. Joe Biden and Malcolm Turnbull have similar average scores, with Turnbull located slightly to the left of the average Liberal Party rating. Sarah Palin, John McCain and the Republican Party are clustered close together to the right of the Liberal Party, with George W. Bush even further to the right.
- **stereotypes of Americans.** Australians are not reluctant to ascribe negative stereotypes to Americans. Two-thirds of Australians describe Americans as “violent”, “greedy” and “ignorant”. At the same time, two-thirds of Australians think of Americans as hardworking. The extent to which one holds these beliefs has weak associations with support for Obama or McCain, and appears to fall as levels of factual knowledge about the United States increases. These “anti-American” attitudes are impressive predictors of support for Australia’s defense alliance with the United States.
- **China: ally or adversary?** Australians are over twice as likely to think of China as an “adversary” of the United States (33%) than as an adversary of Australia (15%). Fifty-five percent report that China is “an ally” of Australia, almost double the proportion (29%) that think that China is

“an ally” of the United States. Australians have far sanguine views about China’s relationship with the United States than do Americans: only 5% of American respondents describe China unambiguously as an “an ally”.

See the table of contents for other findings, and specific tables and figures.

2 About The Surveys

USSC commissioned a phone survey of 800 respondents and on-line survey of 3,000 respondents to assess Australian impressions of the United States close to the end of the U.S. presidential election campaign. The on-line survey is the first wave of a panel; we will return to these 3,000 respondents early in the term of the next President of the United States. Professor Murray Goot of Macquarie University helped formulate these design parameters, building on the 2007 USSC-commissioned study of Australian public opinion towards the United States.

Field period. The fieldwork was conducted during late September by Q&A Research, a Brisbane-based survey research firm. The field period is just after the beginning of the global financial crisis. Interviewing commenced on Friday September 19 and ended on Monday September 29. Most of the interviews took place towards the start of the field period. During the field period:

- the Bush administration announced its controversial \$700 billion rescue package in light of the crisis gripping financial markets (Friday, September 19, U.S. time) and attempted to rally Congressional support for the package.
- the last two big investment banks in the United States, Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley were converted to bank holding companies (Sunday, September 21, U.S. time)
- on Wednesday September 24 (U.S. time) President Bush made a live, televised address on the financial crisis, and Republican presidential nominee John McCain announced he was suspending his campaign to return to Washington to work on the rescue package. McCain proposed that Democratic nominee Barack Obama do the same, and that their first scheduled debate (set for Friday September 26) be cancelled.
- on Thursday, September 25 (U.S. time) Washington Mutual was seized by federal regulators in the largest bank failure in American history.
- on Friday September 26 (U.S. time) the presidential candidates Barack Obama and John McCain held their first debate, as originally scheduled.

Weighting and Design Effects. The phone survey relies on post-stratification weighting to make the data representative of the adult, resident Australian population. The post-stratification weights range from .25 to 7.5 with a mean of 1.0 and a standard deviation of .62, and are available for 793 respondents.

The variation in the post-stratification weights in these data typically induces a design effect of about 1.16 to 1.23 for a top-line result such as McCain or Obama vote share (see below); i.e., the “effective sample size” for these data when computing a margin of error around McCain or Obama vote share is $793/1.16 \approx 684$ and $793/1.23 \approx 643$, respectively.

The internet survey uses quota sampling, recruiting members of the Q&A Research so as to create a sample that is representative of the adult, resident Australian population with respect to key demographics (state/territory, age, and gender).

Contemporaneous U.S. study. The questions on the surveys are largely identical to a contemporaneous survey fielded in the United States. The U.S. survey is part of a 6 wave panel study of the American electorate (the Cooperative Campaign Analysis Project, or CCAP, with Jackman serving as a principal investigator)¹, designed to be representative of registered voters. CCAP is a web-based survey, administered by YouGov/Polimetrix, a survey research firm based in Palo Alto, California. The analysis reported here uses 8,085 respondents; post-stratification weighting induces a rather large design effect of about 1.48 on a quantity like Obama vote share (see Table 3, below), meaning that the “effective sample size” for that particular estimand is approximately $8085/1.48 \approx 5450$.

The fact that the two surveys were fielded in both countries at the same time, with almost identical question wordings offers tremendous avenues for comparisons of public opinion between the two countries.

3 Right Track, Wrong Track

This perennial barometer of public sentiment reveals tremendous pessimism about the United States (Table 1). The nearly 80% “wrong track” assessments almost exactly mirror results for this item in surveys in the United States. The contrast with assessments about Australia is striking, where over 60% of respondents provide a “right track” assessment, despite the onset of the global financial crisis; one possibility is that at the time of surveying, the financial crisis was thought to be primarily confined to the United States.

¹The other principal investigator is Professor Lynn Vavreck, Department of Political Science, University of California, Los Angeles.

Mode:	Australian Respondents				US Data
	Phone		Web		Web
Country Assessed:	Australia	US	Australia	US	US
Right Track	64	17	62	21	13
Wrong Track	31	78	38	79	77
DK/NA	5	5	0	0	10

Table 1: Table entries are column percentages. Respondents were asked “Generally speaking, would you say things in [Australia | the United States] are going in the right direction, or are they off on the wrong track”, with “the United States” or “Australia” randomly chosen to appear in the question. A follow-up item refers to the country not randomly selected on the first administration: “And how about [Australia | the United States]? Would you say things in [Australia | the United States] are going in the right direction, or are they off on the wrong track?” Internet respondents were not given a “don’t know” or “not sure” response option to these items.

4 Approval of Bush

George W. Bush has an approval rating of just 16% among phone respondents and 11% among Internet respondents (Table 2). This is considerably lower than the high 20s to low 30s approval ratings recorded in recent polls in the United States.

Bush Job Approval	Australia		US
	Phone	Web	Web
Strongly Approve	3	1	17
Approve	13	10	17
Neither Approve nor Disapprove	12	28	NA
Disapprove	32	30	56
Strongly Disapprove	39	25	2
DK/NA	2	6	9

Table 2: President Bush, job approval. Respondents were asked “Do you approve or disapprove of the way George Bush is handling his job as President of the United States?”. Phone respondents were not provided with the “not sure” response option.

5 Vote Intentions

If Australians could vote in the U.S. presidential election, they would overwhelmingly support Barack Obama, by margins that dwarf what Obama received in contemporaneous polling in the U.S.

Vote Intention	Australia		All	USA (Internet)		
	Phone	Web		Whites	Blacks	Hispanics
Barack Obama	76	60	42	38	80	46
John McCain	13	14	40	44	5	26
Other	3	2	4	4	1	6
Would Not Vote	2	11	4	4	5	5
Not sure	6	13	10	10	9	16

Table 3: Vote percentages. Respondents were asked “If you could vote in the American presidential election in November, you would vote for...” “Would not vote” and “not sure” were not provided as options to the phone respondents and are recorded only if volunteered by the respondent. For the phone survey ($n = 793$ useable responses and a design effect of about 1.17), the margin of error on the McCain vote share is ± 2.5 percentage points; for the Australian internet survey the corresponding margin of error is ± 1.2 percentage points. The margin of error on Obama’s 42% vote share in the American’s internet survey ($n \approx 8,000$ and a design effect of about 1.3)

McCain wins just 13% and 14% in the two modes of interviewing. Obama’s level of support is lower in the on-line survey in part because of the explicit presence of the “would not vote” and “not sure” option on the web page viewed by respondents; these response options were not read to the phone respondents. This difference across the modes of survey administration are interesting in themselves; when not given an explicit “opt-out” choice in the phone interview, respondents appear to gravitate to the Obama option, but not to McCain (whose share of vote intentions remains unchanged across the two modes).

5.1 Relationship with Australian voting intentions

The relationship between hypothetical U.S. voting intentions and Australian voting intentions are quite strong (Table 4). Obama has the (hypothetical) support 87% of ALP supporters, but this falls to 60% among Coalition voters. McCain support drops to just 7% among ALP voters, but is four times

this level among Liberal voters. Even though there is an impressive and largely predictable relationship between U.S. and Australian vote intentions, it is remarkable that Obama’s support remains in the neighborhood of 60% even among Coalition voters.

	Phone				
	Australian Vote Intention				
	ALP	LP	NP	Green	Other
All	44	28	4	15	9
Barack Obama	87	60	59	84	69
John McCain	7	28	18	3	10
Other	1	2	5	8	2
Would Not Vote	2	2	6	1	7
Not Sure	3	8	12	4	12

	Internet				
	Australian Vote Intention				
	ALP	LP	NP	Green	Other
All	44	35	4	11	7
Barack Obama	69	54	54	62	30
John McCain	10	23	16	6	7
Other	1	1	0	1	8
Would not vote	8	10	17	17	30
Not sure	12	12	13	14	25

Table 4: Vote intentions in the U.S. presidential election, by Australian voting intention. Respondents were asked “If you could vote in the American presidential election in November, you would vote for...” Australian vote intentions were elicited with the question “If a Federal election was about to be held here in Australia, would you vote for...”. “Would not vote” and “not sure” were not provided as options to the phone respondents and are recorded only if volunteered by the respondent.

Also of note are the domestic political preferences of the respondents to the USSC survey: 44% of the respondents said they would vote for the Labor Party, with just a 32% support for the Liberal and National parties (28% and 4%, respectively). Green supporters constitute 15% of the sample. These results indicate a small pro-Labor bias in the sample composition that is probably also leading an over-estimate of support for Obama in the Australian population. The web sample fares slightly better on this score, with fewer

Green voters (11%) and more Liberal Party voters (35%) than we find in the phone sample.

5.2 Ideology

Figure 1 shows how Obama vote intentions vary as a function of respondents' ideological self-assessments, with Obama support falling as we move from left to right on the ideological spectrum. Ideology seems more tightly coupled with vote intentions in the United States than in Australia. To some extent this understandable: the question of voting in the U.S. presidential election is to some extent whimsical for Australian respondents, who may feel they have less at stake in the election than American respondents. Nonetheless, difference between Australian self-described "conservatives" and their American counterparts is striking. Obama enjoys just 9% of the vote among American respondents describing themselves as "conservatives", but 50% among Australian "conservatives". In fact, Obama's support is above 50% in every ideological category in the Australian data, except for those calling themselves "very conservative" (48%).

5.3 Age

Figure 2 summarizes the relationship between Obama support and age in the Australian phone data and the USA survey. In both studies we see Obama support attaining a maximum among younger voters, with a fall of about 20 percentage points over the age distribution. In the US data the fall in Obama support is largely confined to the 18-40 portion of the age distribution. This age gradient is estimated less precisely in the smaller Australia phone data set. The correspondence between the age gradients across all three data sets is quite remarkable: across the age distribution, Australian internet respondents are 15 to 20 points more pro-Obama than their American counterparts. Respondents to the phone survey in Australia --- who were not provided with explicit "would not vote" or "don't know" response options --- report levels of support for Obama that are 20 to 40 percentage points over those reported by American on-line respondents, with the biggest differences found at lower levels of the age distribution.

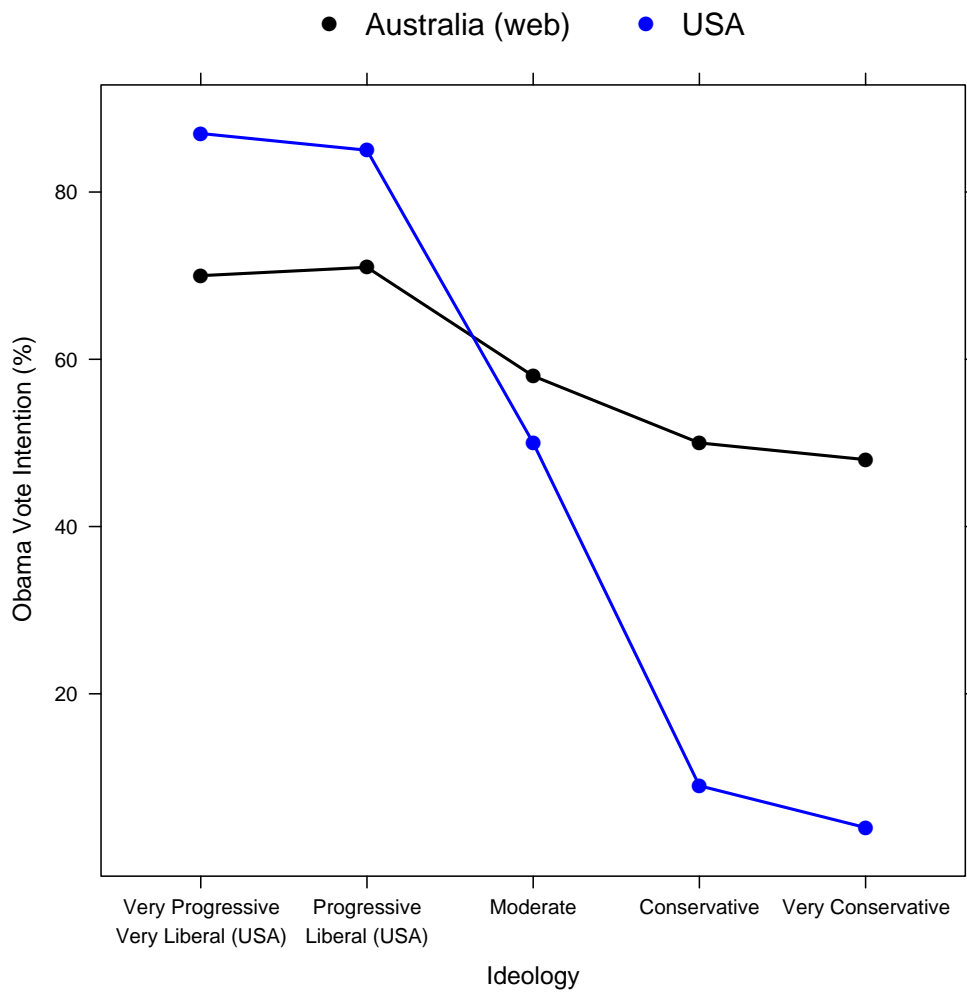


Figure 1: Vote intentions in the U.S. presidential election, by self-assessed ideology, Australian internet respondents and American.

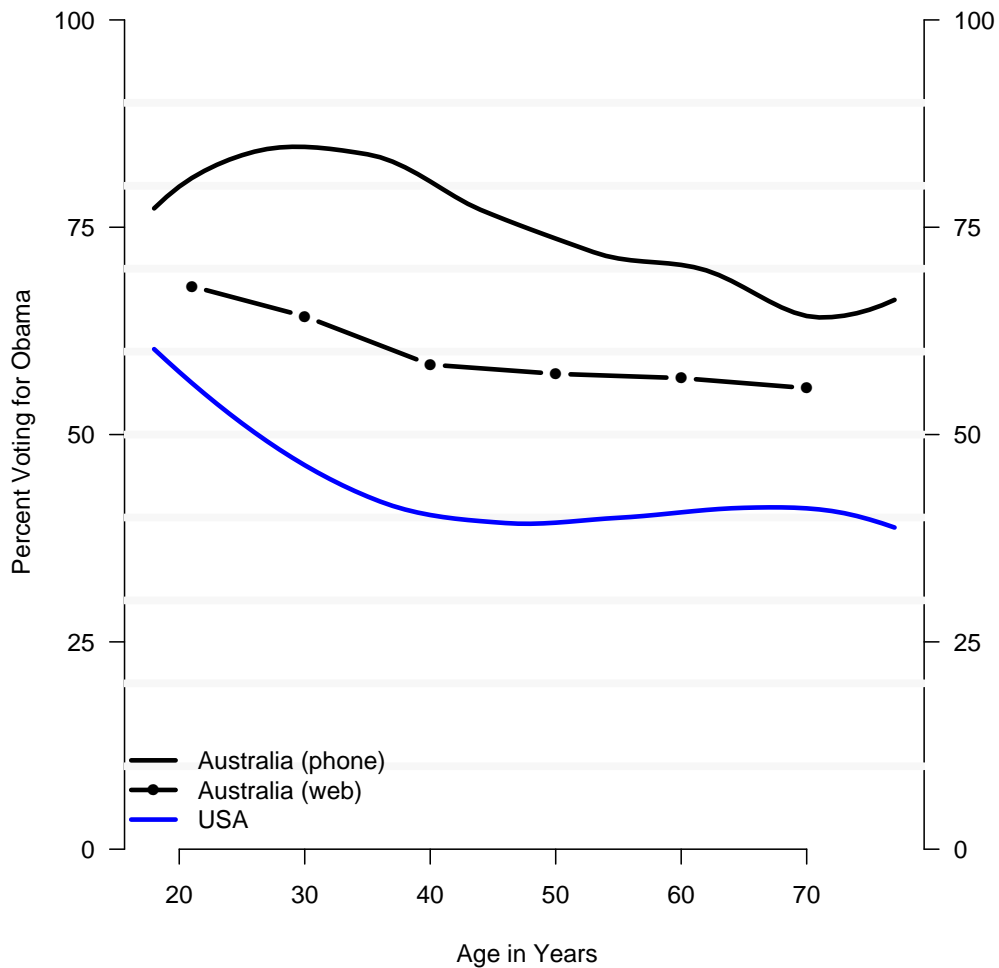


Figure 2: Voting intentions (percentages for Obama), by reported age in years and mode and country of interview. Australian respondents were asked “If you could vote in the American presidential election in November, you would vote for...” “Would not vote” and “not sure” were not provided as options to the phone respondents and are recorded only if volunteered by the respondent. The curves are produced by fitting locally quadratic logistic regression of Obama vote intention, with the tri-cube kernel and a nearest-neighbor bandwidth set to $2/3$ of the data. Age is only recorded by intervals in the Australian web survey; the plotted points correspond to the average level of Obama support in the corresponding age interval.

5.4 Gender

Table 5 reports gender differences in vote intentions in all three surveys. Obama support is 4 percentage points higher among women than men in the Australian phone survey, 7 points higher in the Australian internet survey, and 4 points higher in the USA data, subset to white respondents only. Note in the American data that Obama does not lead among white respondents: McCain has a 12 percentage point margin among white males, and 1 percentage point margin among white females.

	Australia				USA (Whites)	
	Phone		Web		Web	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Barack Obama	74	78	57	62	36	40
John McCain	17	10	19	9	48	41
Other	3	2	2	1	6	2
Would Not Vote	2	3	10	13	4	5
Not Sure	4	7	11	15	7	12

Table 5: Vote percentages, by gender and mode of interview. Respondents were asked “If you could vote in the American presidential election in November, you would vote for...”. “Would not vote” and “not sure” were not provided as options to the phone respondents and are recorded only if volunteered by the respondent.

5.5 Income

Figure 3 presents estimates of Obama support by reported income bracket. As for the US data (also reported in Figure 3), it is difficult to discern strong patterns with respect to Obama support and reported income. There is a hint of Obama support growing as income increases in both countries. Australian respondents reporting incomes above \$60,000 per year generate high levels of Obama support, in excess of 80%, on average. Likewise, in the American data, Obama support falls over the earlier stage of the income gradient, but then rises over the income bands at \$40,000 per year and above.

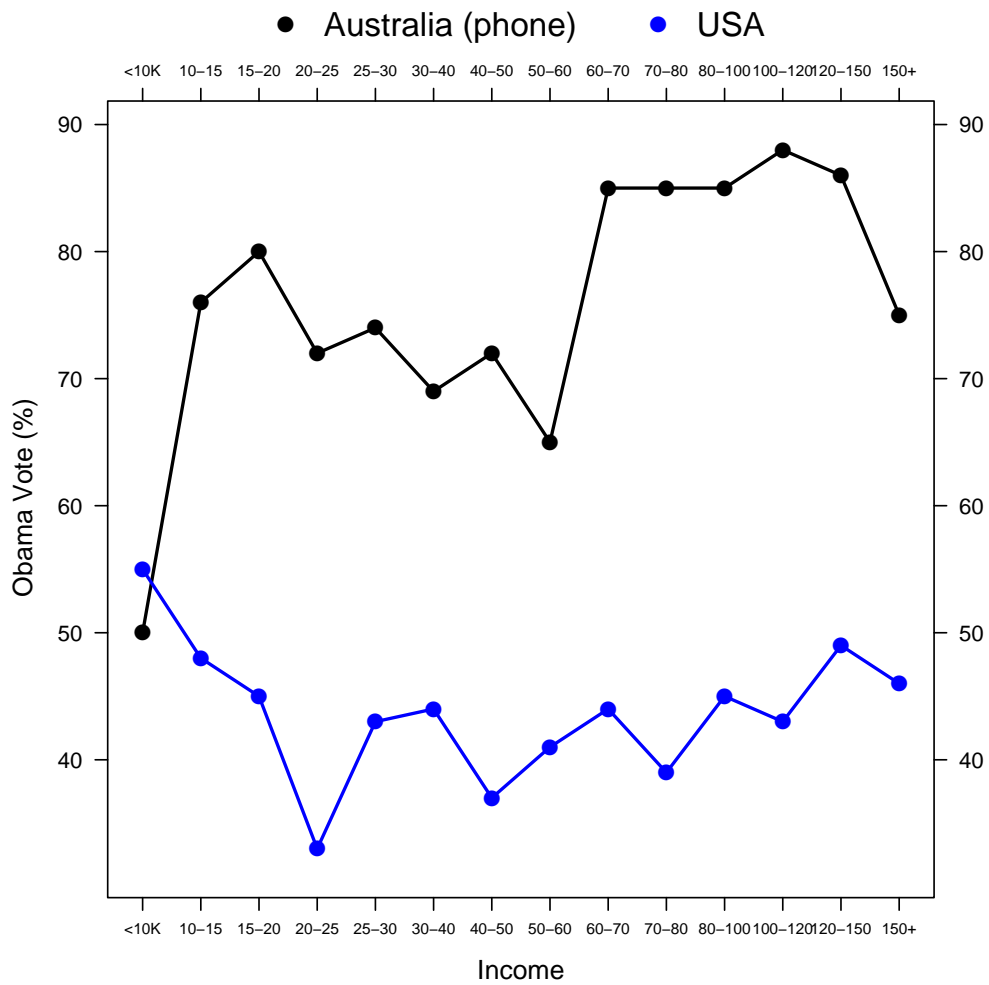


Figure 3: Obama Support by Reported Income

5.6 Education

Figures 4 and 5 summarize the relationships between educational attainment and Obama support in the three data sets available for analysis (the two Australian data sets and the one American). In general, as educational attainment increases, so too does Obama support. Across the educational attainment gradient, Obama support ranges from mid 50s to high 60s among Australian on-line respondents, but from mid 60s to low 80s among the phone respondents. In the American data we see even larger educational effects, with Obama support ranging from 30% among those with less than high school, to the high 50s among those with post-graduate degrees. Note that the high 50s figure for Obama we see at the top of the U.S. educational gradient is one of the lowest levels of support observed in the Australian data, equivalent to say, the levels of Obama support we see among Australians with a high school education.

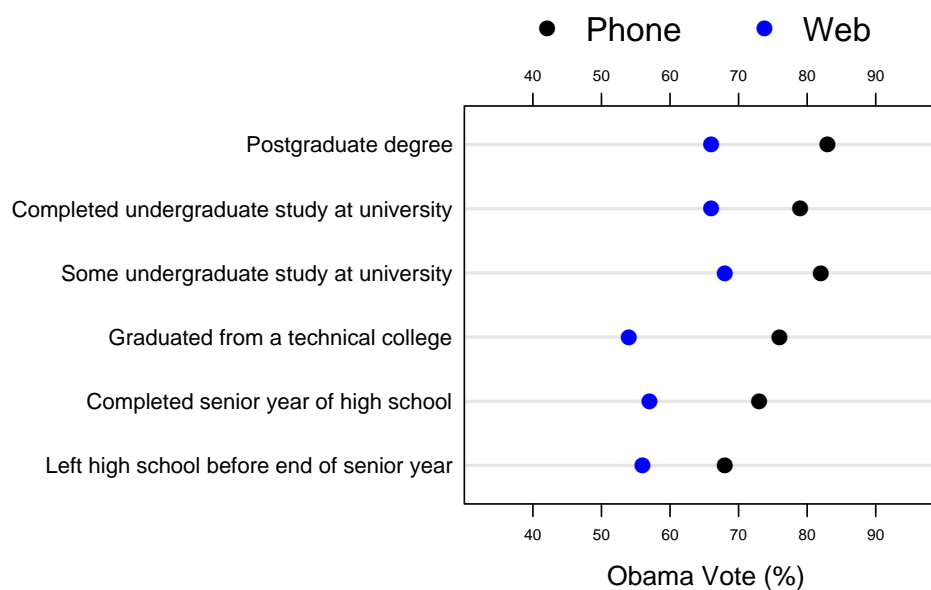


Figure 4: Educational Attainment and Obama Support, Australian respondents

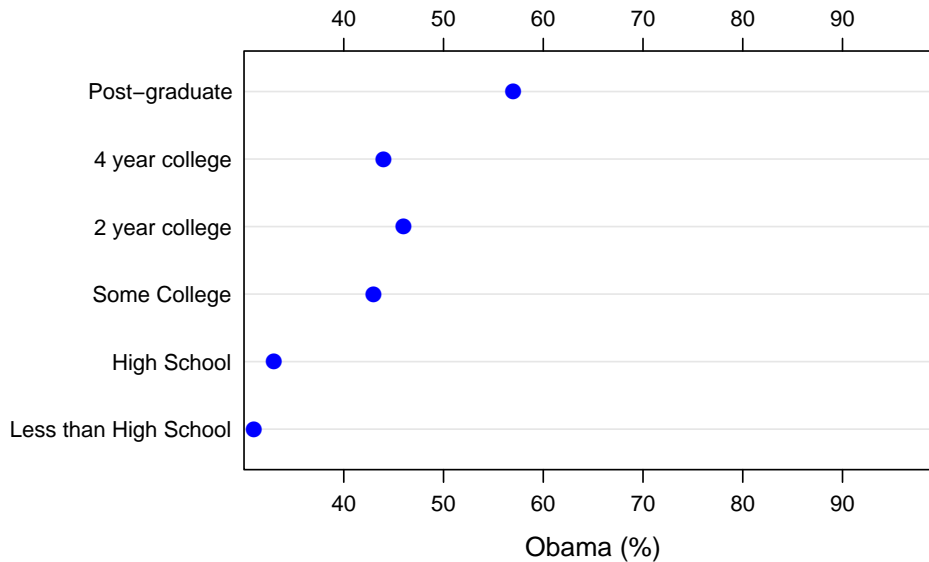


Figure 5: Educational Attainment and Obama Support, American respondents

5.7 Impact on Australia

Australian respondents were also asked to evaluate the candidates in terms of who would make a better American president in so far as the United States influences outcomes here in Australia. Specifically, respondents were asked:

America and Australia are connected in many ways: economically, culturally and so on. Who will make a better president in terms of America’s effect on things here in Australia?

Table 6 presents a summary of the responses to this item for the phone respondents. The topline summary of responses to this items are interesting. In the phone data, where respondents are not presented with the “no difference” and “not sure” options, Obama is selected as the better U.S. president for Australia by 49% of respondents and McCain by only 11%. The “no difference” response is volunteered by 34% of respondents, with another 5% offering the “not sure” response. Even among the 34% of phone respondents who say there would be no difference between McCain and Obama in terms of America’s effect on Australia, Obama still wins 68% of the vote. McCain wins 59-33 among the 11% of respondents who say McCain would be a better president in terms of America’s effect on Australia; yet among the the 49% of

respondents who think that Obama would be a better president, Obama wins 94% of the vote intentions. This is one of the more lop-sided results in these data.

	Phone			
	Better President, McCain	Better President, Obama	America's effect on Australia, No Difference	Australia, Not Sure
All	11	49	34	5
Barack Obama	33	94	68	44
John McCain	59	2	16	7
Other	5	2	3	4
Would Not Vote	1	1	4	7
Not Sure	2	1	9	38

Table 6: Vote intention, by “who will make a better president in terms of America’s effect on things here in Australia?”. “No Difference” and “Not sure” were not provided as response options to the phone respondents.

5.8 Anger or Shame Towards America

The 2008 election takes place against the backdrop of widespread disapproval of the policies of the Bush administration. From the Iraq War (Abu Grahib), to the global war on terror more generally (Guantanamo Bay interrogations, “extraordinary rendition”), to domestic events such as Hurricane Katrina or the domestic wire-tapping scandal, critics of the Bush administration can point to a long list of highly visible policy failures.

A recurring theme in the 2008 election campaign --- and in political discourse more generally both in America and internationally --- is the damage to America’s reputation from this litany of highly visible policy failures. Instrumentation designed to tap “anger” or “shame” towards America was included on the USSC surveys, with identically worded items appearing on the USA survey. Respondents were asked if they agree or disagree with the statement “There are some things about America today that make me feel ashamed of America”, and a similar statement about feeling “angry towards America”.

Table 7 summarizes responses to these items, along with breakdowns by vote intention. Only 13% of respondents to the phone survey report

Anger/Shame Toward America

	Neither	Anger or Shame	Both
All	13	18	69
Barack Obama	61	74	79
John McCain	26	17	10
Other	2	0	3
Would Not Vote	4	2	2
Not Sure	7	7	5

Table 7: Vote percentages, by whether the respondent has felt anger towards and/or ashamed of America, phone respondents. Reports of feeling “angry” and/or “ashamed” asked in two separate questions. “Would not vote” and “not sure” were not provided as options to the phone respondents and are recorded only if volunteered by the respondent.

feeling neither “anger” nor “shame”, with 70% reporting feeling both. Unsurprisingly, Obama support is highest among respondents reporting both “anger” and “shame”, reaching 79% among this group, and falling to 61% among the 13% of the sample reporting neither anger nor shame.

	Agree	Disagree	DK/NA
All	60	29	10
Barack Obama	57	15	32
John McCain	25	73	34
Other	5	2	4
Would not vote	4	3	9
DK/NA	9	8	21

Table 8: U.S. respondents, “ashamed” of America and vote intention.

A similar pattern is apparent in the American data (Table 8). Sixty percent of our USA respondents feel “ashamed of America”. The key difference with the Australian data on this score is the way that vote intentions cleave rather dramatically around the self-report of “shame”. Among the 60% reporting “shame”, Obama wins 57% of vote intentions: John McCain beats Obama 73-15 among the 29% of the American sample who do not report feeling “shame”. That is, across this variable, there is a 80 point switch in the vote margin (from Obama +32 to Obama -48), meaning that this variable rivals

partisan affiliation or racial as a correlate of vote intention. The effect of this variable is far more muted in accounting for vote intentions among the Australian respondents.

5.9 Iraq Exit

Obama support also correlates with views on when the United States should exit Iraq, but only modestly (see Table 9). Also, despite a strong preference for Obama as the next president of the United States, is it noteworthy that a substantial proportion of Australians, 35%, think the U.S. should remain in Iraq for “as long as it takes” to stabilize the country. Only 1 in four respondents think the U.S. should exit Iraq “immediately”; Obama beats McCain 81 to 9 among this set of respondents.

The contrast with the pattern in the American data is striking; Opinions about the timing of America’s exit from Iraq are extremely similar across the two countries (compare the two top lines labelled “All” in Table 9). With high, across-the-board levels of support for Obama in the Australian data, there is not a lot of variation in Australian levels of Obama support as views about the U.S. exit from Iraq change: we see Obama’s margin over McCain fall from 79 percentage points among Australians who think the U.S. should exit Iraq immediately, to 44 percentage points among Australians who think the U.S. should stay in Iraq for “as long as it takes”, a change of 35 percentage points. Among U.S. respondents the gradient in Obama support is much steeper. Obama enjoys a 58 percentage point margin among U.S. respondents who think the U.S. should leave Iraq immediately; this falls to a -79 point margin among those who think the U.S. should stay in Iraq for “as long as it takes”, a change of 137 percentage points. In short, while opinions about the timing of an U.S. exit from Iraq are quite similar in both countries, the political resonance of this issue is *far* greater in the United States, and is associated with movements in vote margins of up to four times larger than those we observe in the Australian data.

To reiterate, here is another example of where Obama support among Australians would appear to be less contingent on issues or less tightly coupled to American political issues.

Australian Phone Respondents

	Immediately	Less than one year	> 1 year, but not indefinite	As long as it takes	Not Sure
All	25	24	14	35	2
Barack Obama	81	84	76	66	85
John McCain	9	6	13	22	6
Other	3	1	1	4	0
Would Not Vote	3	2	2	3	5
Not Sure	4	6	8	5	4

American Respondents

	Immediately	Less than one year	> 1 year, but not indefinite	As long as it takes	Not Sure
All	24	27	15	31	3
Barack Obama	65	69	34	6	23
John McCain	7	15	47	85	25
Other	8	3	3	2	0
Would Not Vote	9	3	2	2	20
Not Sure	11	11	14	5	31

Table 9: Vote intention, by timing of Iraq exit, Australian phone respondents. “Would not vote” and “not sure” were not provided as options to the Australian phone respondents and are recorded only if volunteered by the respondent.

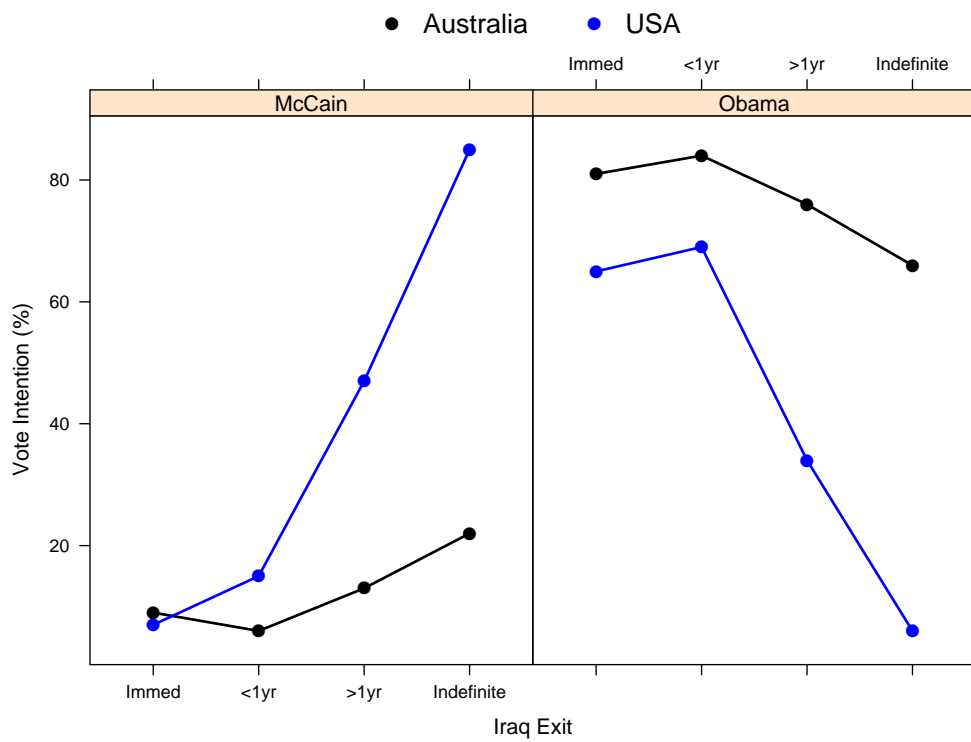


Figure 6: Obama and McCain support as a function of beliefs about U.S. exit from Iraq

6 Knowledge of American Politics

We asked Australian respondents three items designed to tap their knowledge of American politics:

1. What job or position does Condoleeza Rice hold in the United States government?
 - Secretary of Defense
 - Secretary of State
 - White House Counsel
 - Secretary of Foreign Affairs
2. And what about the American politician Nancy Pelosi? Is she a member of the U.S. House of Representatives or the U.S. Senate?
3. True or false? All U.S. citizens are legally required to vote in presidential elections.

The item about (Speaker of the House of Representatives) Nancy Pelosi was the most difficult item for the Australian respondents; see Table 10. Just 13% of phone respondents and 15% of web respondents correctly answered this item; 61% and 71% offered the “don’t know” or “not sure” response, respectively (with these options not explicitly available to the phone respondents).

We form a crude scale by simply summing the number of correct responses to these items. We then investigate the relationship between levels of knowledge of American politics --- as revealed by this four point scale --- and vote intentions. Table 11 shows that as levels of information rise, so too does support for Obama, from 68% to 79% over the zero to 4 range of the knowledge score among respondents to the phone survey. McCain vote share remains largely constant, around 14 or 15 points for our phone respondents. Predictably, the rate at which phone respondents volunteer the “don’t know” response to the vote intention question falls as knowledge increases.

These trends are more pronounced among the Internet respondents who are supplied with the “Would Not Vote” and DK response options. Among the least knowledgeable Internet respondents, 26% select the DK option, while John McCain garners just 8% of vote intentions. Both Obama and McCain win more vote intentions as knowledge increases among the Internet

Condoleeza Rice Job		
	phone	web
Sec Def	13	11
Sec State	56	58
White House Counsel	1	2
Sec Foreign Affairs	12	9
DK/NA	17	21

Nancy Pelosi		
	phone	web
House	13	15
Senate	25	15
DK/NA	61	71

Compulsory Turnout		
	phone	web
True	16	11
False	79	76
DK/NA	5	13

Table 10: Distribution of Responses on Political Knowledge Items. “Don’t know” was not offered as a response to phone respondents.

Phone Respondents				
	Knowledge Score			
	0	1	2	3
All	14	33	44	9
Barack Obama	68	78	76	79
John McCain	14	10	15	15
Other	4	2	2	2
Would Not Vote	3	2	3	1
DK/NA	11	8	3	4

Internet Respondents				
	Knowledge Score			
	0	1	2	3
All	13	35	42	10
Barack Obama	46	58	63	70
John McCain	8	12	18	15
Other	1	2	1	2
Would Not Vote	19	15	7	5
DK/NA	26	14	10	8

Table 11: Vote intentions, U.S. presidential vote and knowledge of American politics, Australian phone respondents.

respondents, with Obama but with Obama's vote intentions increasing by 24 percentage points over the four point knowledge scale (from 46% to 70%), and Obama's margin over McCain increasing from 38 percentage points to 55 percentage points.

The associations displayed in Table 11 should be interpreted carefully. Political knowledge is likely to be highly correlated with educational attainment, which we have also seen to have a strong relationship with vote intentions (see section 5.6). Also, it could be that interest in American politics has been spurred by support for Obama: that is, Obama's candidacy is actually generating more interest in the United States, and hence causing levels of American political knowledge to rise among Australian respondents favorably disposed to Obama. This is an intriguing possibility, but one that we can't assess with these one-time, cross-sectional data.

7 Candidate Traits

Graphical summaries of responses to various candidate traits appear in the following pages: i.e., “strong leader” (Figure 7), “has the right experience” (Figure 8) and “will improve America’s standing the world” (Figure 9). Among Australian respondents, Obama dominates McCain on virtually all of these traits, with the “right experience” being the one item where McCain fares reasonably well. The contrast with the American data is stark, where assessments of Obama are far more mixed; e.g., almost 60% of American respondents think the “right experience” trait does not apply to Obama, and nor does Obama fare particularly well on the “strong leader” trait.

7.1 Riskier Choice

Australian and American respondents also diverge on this trait; see Table 12.

	Australia		USA
	phone	web	
Barack Obama	30	27	42
John McCain	62	47	46
DK/NA	8	26	12

Table 12: “Riskier Choice”, Obama or McCain, Australia and United States. The “Don’t Know” response option was not presented to phone respondents.

7.2 Obama’s Religion

Respondents in both the Australian and American surveys were asked:

Thinking about religion, as far as you know, are the following candidates for U.S. president Christian, Muslim, Jewish, or something else?

Strong Leader

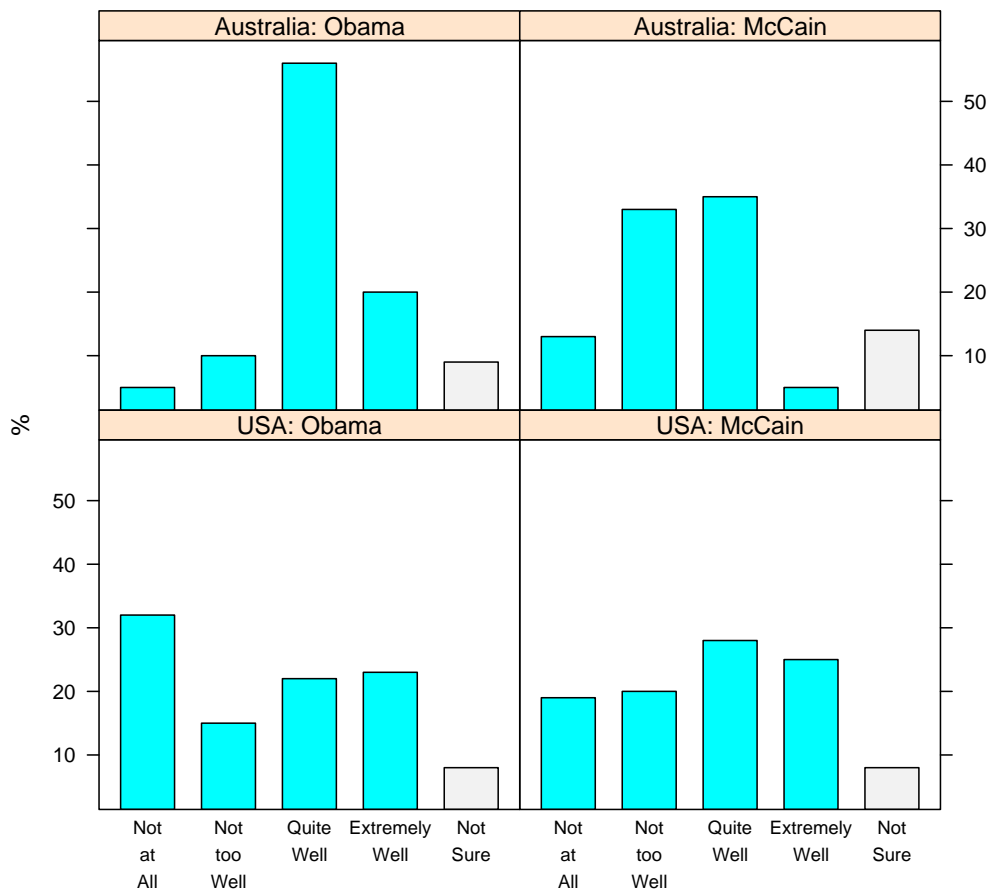


Figure 7: Assessment as a “Strong Leader”. Obama and McCain, Australia and USA.

Has the Right Experience

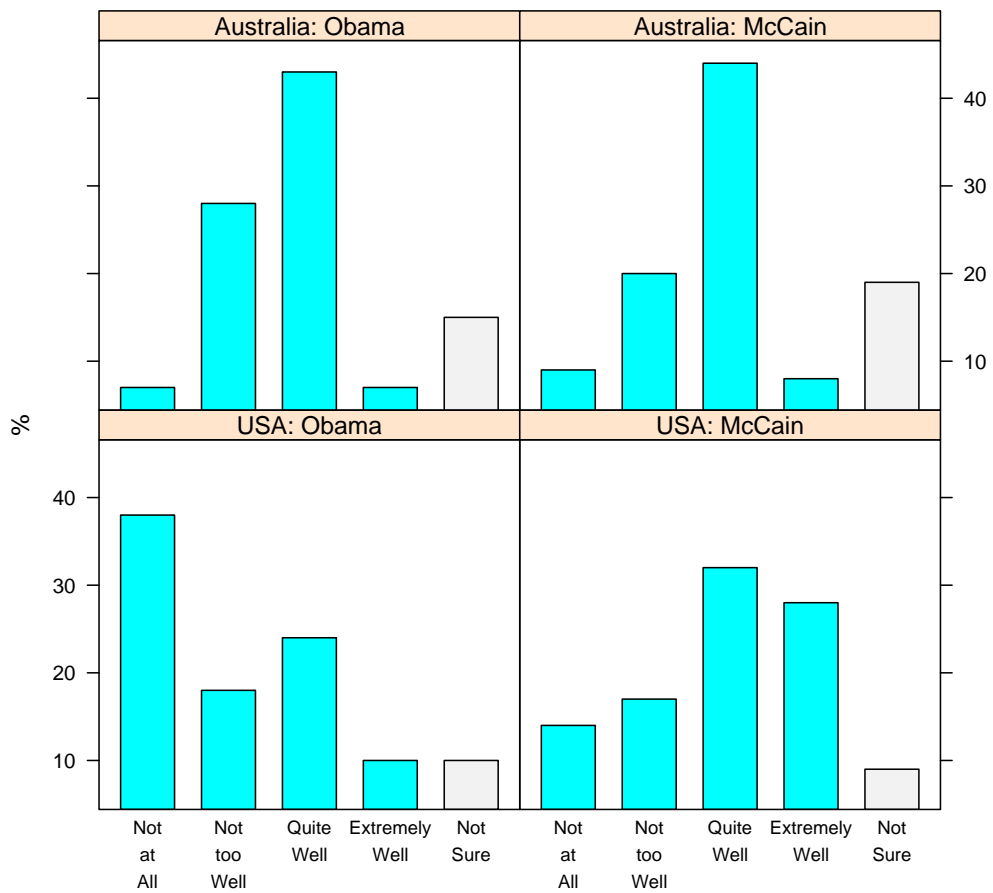


Figure 8: Assessment of “Has the Right Experience”. Obama and McCain, Australia and USA.

Improve America's Standing in the World

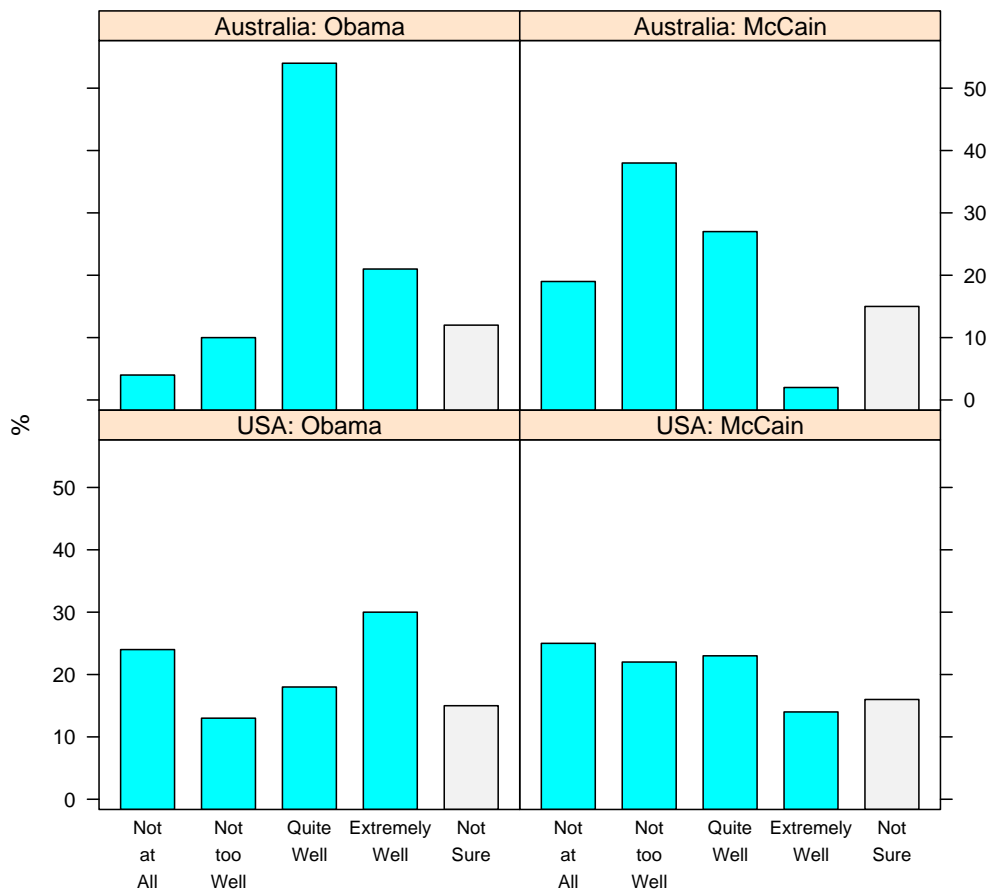


Figure 9: Assessment of “Will Improve America’s Standing in the World”. Obama and McCain, Australia and USA.

The responses for Obama are reported in Table 13. Only 5% of Australian phone respondents think Obama is Muslim. Contrast the American respondents: 18% incorrectly state that Obama is Muslim; either the (incorrect) notion that Obama is Muslim has not gained as much noteriety in Australia as the United States, or the Australian media have been quick to correct that assertion. Australian internet respondents were explicitly given the “not sure” options: 47% of respondents choose that option, suggesting that many of the phone respondents are (correctly) guessing that Obama is Christian.

	Australia		USA
	Phone	Web	Web
Christian	61	41	55
Muslim	5	7	18
Jewish	1	1	0
Something Else	4	3	8
DK/NA	29	47	19

Table 13: Obama’s Religion, Australia and USA. DK/NA was not offered as an response option to Australian telephone respondents.

7.3 Better Commander-in-Chief

Table 14.

8 Racial Attitudes

We administered a standard, four-item battery tapping “racial resentment” to both Australian and American respondents:

1. Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for African Americans to work their way out of the lower class.
2. Many other minority groups have overcome prejudice and worked their way up. African Americans should do the same without any special favors.

Australian phone respondents

	McCain	Obama	No Diff	DK/NA
All	30	30	33	7
Barack Obama	54	97	79	65
John McCain	35	1	8	3
Other	4	1	3	1
Would Not Vote	4	0	2	8
Not Sure	4	1	8	23

American respondents

	McCain	Obama	No Diff	DK/NA
All	51	28	12	10
Barack Obama	9	95	63	38
John McCain	77	0	2	5
Other	3	1	14	4
Would Not Vote	2	2	6	21
Not Sure	9	2	15	34

Table 14: Better Commander-in-Chief of America’s armed forces, and U.S. presidential election vote intentions, Australian phone respondents (top) and American respondents (lower). “Would not vote” and “not sure” were not provided as options to the Australian phone respondents and are recorded only if volunteered by the respondent.

3. Over the past few years, African Americans have gotten less than they deserve.
4. It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if African Americans would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites.

Each item has four response options: strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree. We use psychometric techniques (ordinal item-response theory models) to assign each respondent (Australian and American) a score on the “racial resentment” dimension thought to underlie these items.

Figure 10 shows the distribution of racial resentment across the two countries, using the Australian phone respondents. Australian respondents score significantly lower than the American respondents on the racial resentment scale.

Figure 11 shows the relationship between racial resentment and Obama vote share in the two countries. Not only do the Australian respondents generally score lower on racial resentment than their American counterparts, but the way racial resentment factors in to political choice is far less pronounced among Australian respondents. In fact, even at the highest levels of racial resentment in the Australian data we still see Obama winning more than 50% of vote intentions.

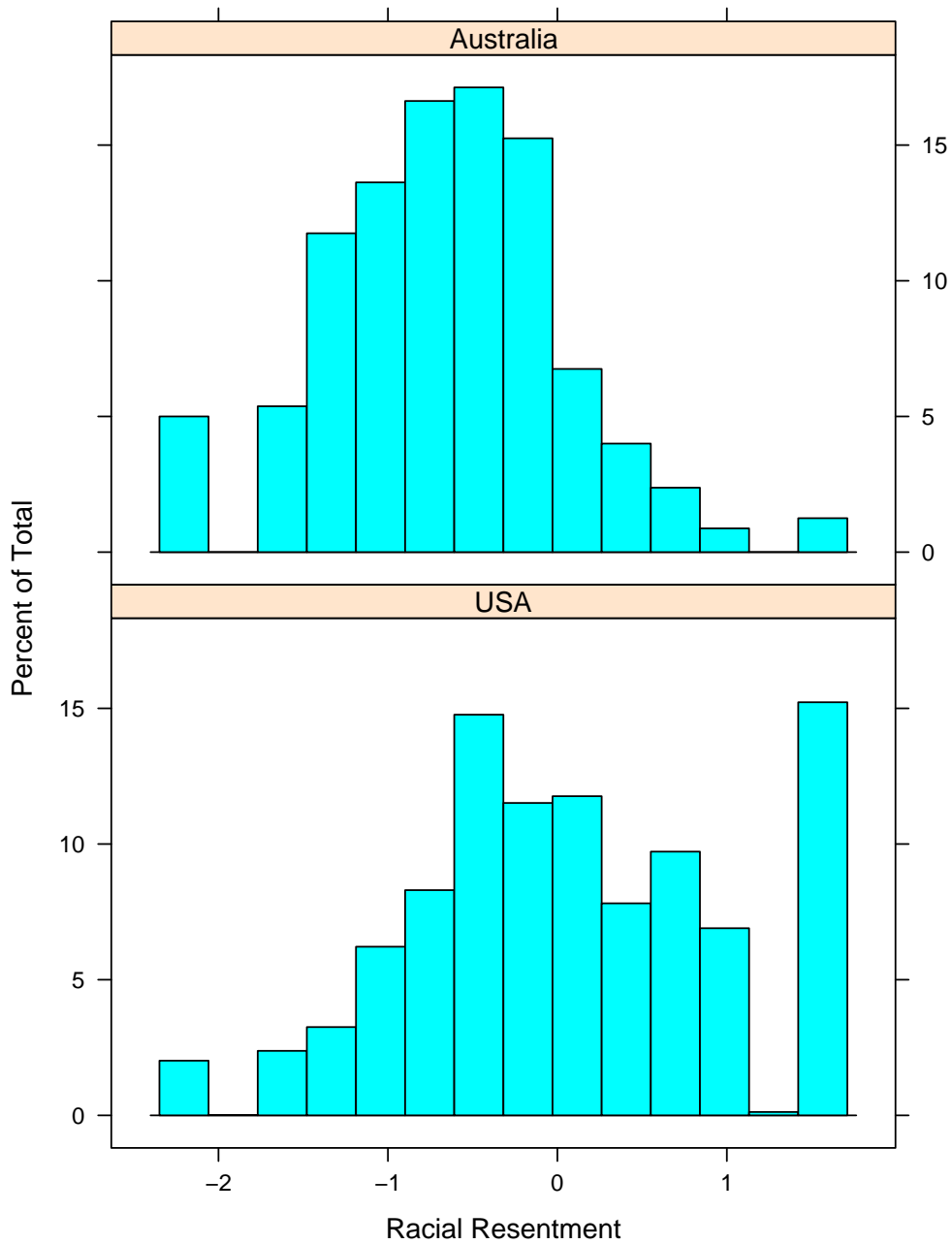


Figure 10: Distribution of Racial Resentment Scores, Australian phone respondents

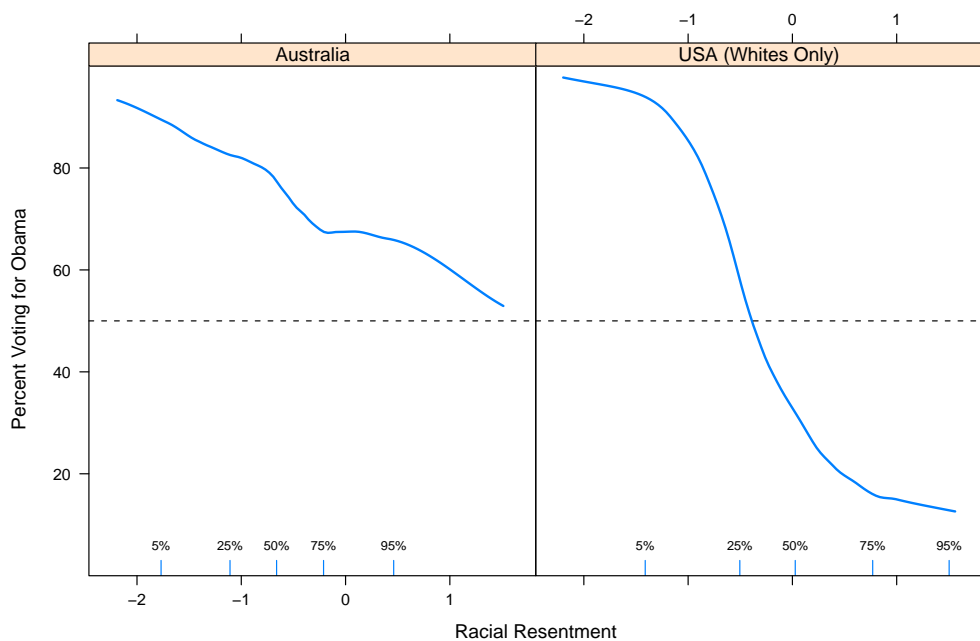


Figure 11: Relationship between Racial Resentment and Obama Support, Australian and American respondents. The curves are produced by fitting locally quadratic logistic regression of Obama vote intention, with the tri-cube kernel and a nearest-neighbor bandwidth set to $2/3$ of the data. Tick marks on the horizontal axes indicate the location of quantiles of the racial resentment scores in the respective country.

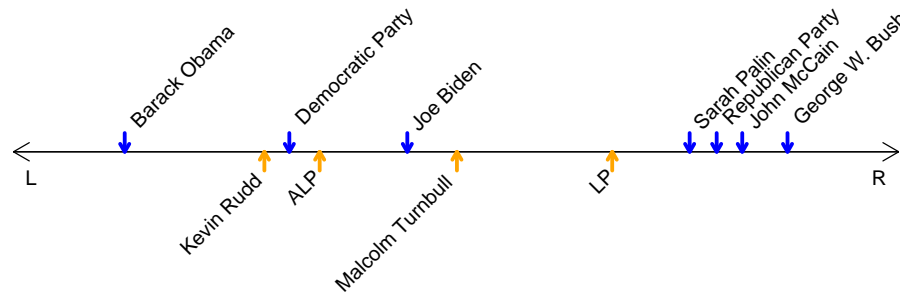


Figure 12: Average Ideological Placements, Australian and American politicians and political parties. Blue arrows indicate the average location of American politicians and political parties; gold arrows are Australian politicians and political parties.

9 Ideological Placements

Respondents were asked to locate various politicians and political parties on a five point ideological scale. In the United States the points of this scale are labelled “Very Liberal”, “Liberal”, “Moderate”, “Conservative” and “Very Conservative”; these terms are widely used in American political discourse. In Australia, this terminology is bound to confuse respondents --- the “Liberal Party” is widely considered a conservative political party --- so we substitute the term “progressive” in place of the term “liberal”. This change in nomenclature means that cross-country comparisons are a little tenuous.

Australian respondents were asked to locate American and Australian politicians and parties on this five point scale; this allows us to assess the relative ideological positions of both Australian and American politicians and parties, at least from the perspective of Australian respondents. American respondents were spared the task of locating Australian politicians and political parties.

Figure 12 presents the average locations of American and Australian politicians and political parties, as provided by the Australian phone respondents. These are generated by simply treating the five response categories as ratio-level measures (scored 1 through 5, “very progressive” to “very conservative”) and computing the average location of each politician/party across respondents. This approach ignores (a) the fact that the response categories

are interval measures and (b) scale-use heterogeneity among respondents (i.e., my “moderate” is not the same as your “moderate”). Analysis of the data with more sophisticated psychometric scaling techniques (ordinal IRT models with random effects for scale-use heterogeneity) yielded nearly identical results to the simple averages reported here.

Barack Obama is placed considerably to the left of any other politician or political party in the set. Interestingly, Kevin Rudd, the ALP and the Democratic Party are placed at virtually identical locations, on average. Joe Biden is seen as lying to the right of the Democratic Party, but just to the left of Australian opposition leader Malcolm Turnbull. Interestingly, Turnbull is located a considerable distance to the left of his own party. While Australian respondents locate the ALP and the Democratic Party at virtually the same location, they place the Liberal Party some distance to the left of the Republican Party. Sarah Palin, the Republican Party and John McCain are placed in a cluster to the right of Liberal Party, with George W. Bush garnering the most conservative, average placement from Australian respondents.

It is important to note that the “ideological distance” spanned by these average placements is actually very small relative to the range of the scale; see Figure 13. Recall that respondent ratings are treated as points on a five unit scale, ranging from 1 (“very liberal” or “very progressive”) to 5 (“very conservative”). The average placements displayed in Figure 12 span just 1.3 units of that scale.

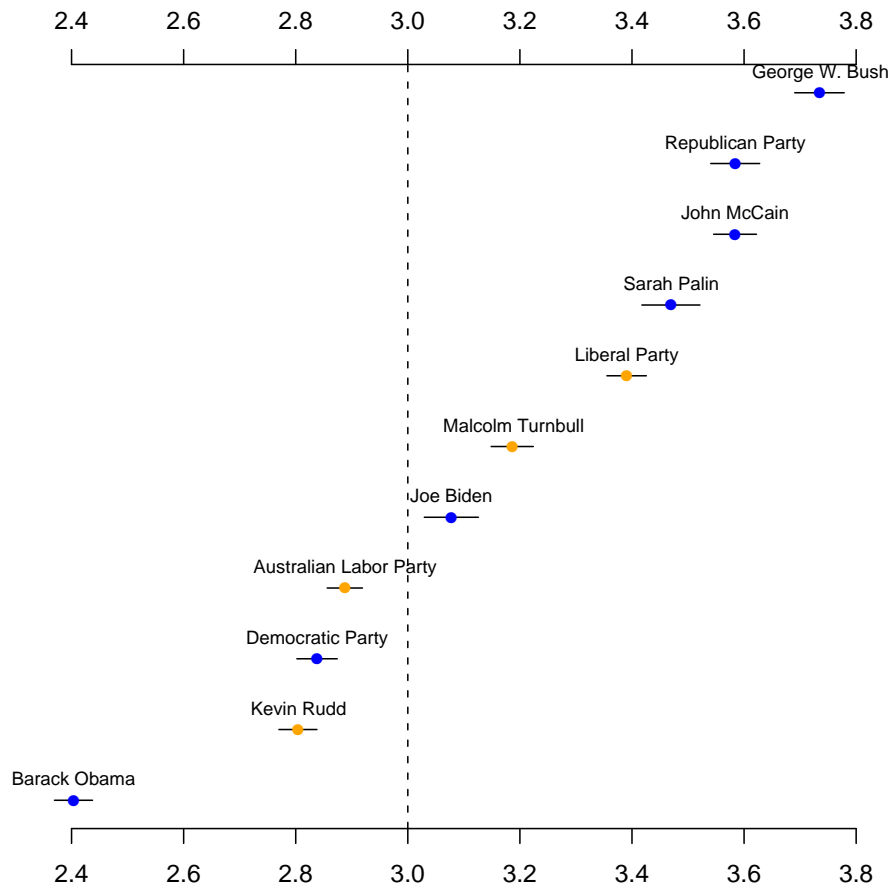


Figure 13: Average Left-Right Placements and 95% Confidence Intervals, Australian and American Politicians and Political Parties. The 3.0 point on the scale corresponds to the “moderate” response; 2.0 is “progressive” and 4.0 is “conservative”. These calculations are based on combining the phone and Internet respondents.

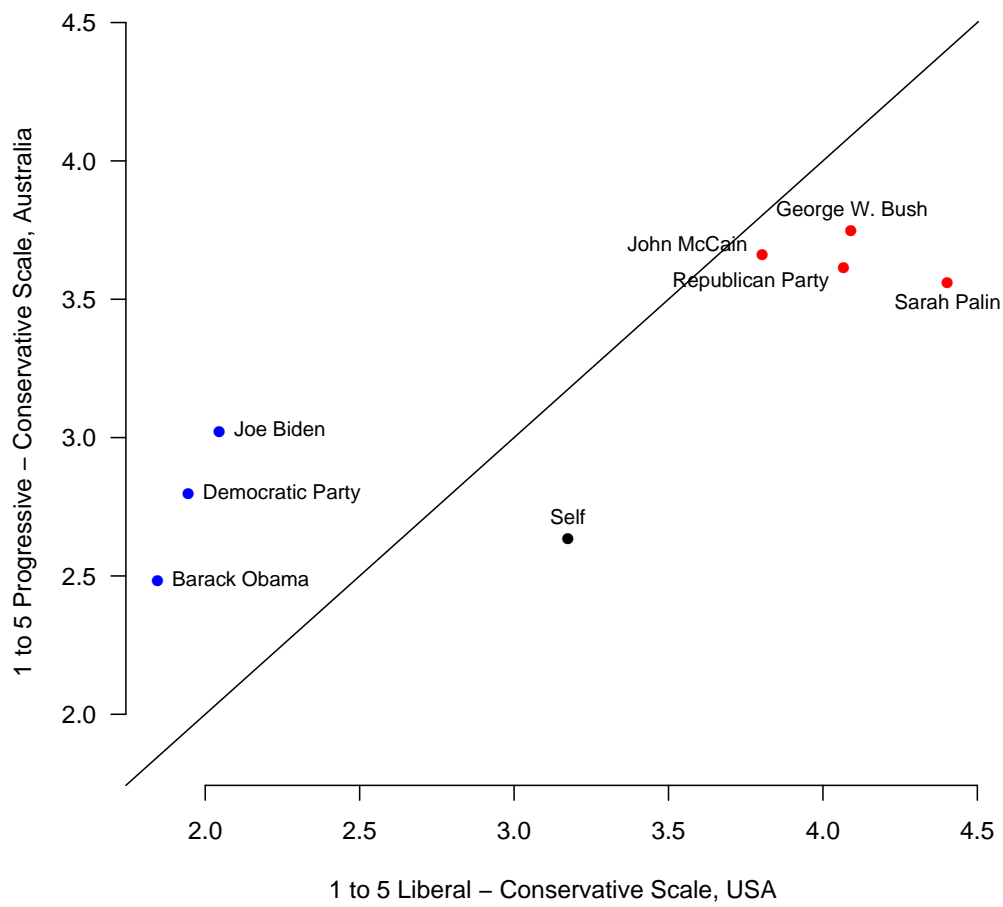


Figure 14: Comparison of Ideological Placements, Australian and American respondents.

10 Foreign Policy

10.1 China: Ally or Adversary?

See Table 15. Australians are over twice as likely to think of China as an “adversary” of the United States (33%) than as an adversary of Australia (15%). Fifty-five percent report that China is “an ally” of Australia. Only five percent of American respondents describe China as an “ally”; the modal response for American respondents is that China is “both” an ally and an adversary.

	Australia		USA
	Of the USA	Of Australia	Of the USA
Ally	29	55	5
Adversary	33	15	32
Both	13	13	39
Neither	17	14	13
Not Sure	8	3	10

Table 15: China: Ally or Adversary? Australian Phone Respondents and American Respondents

10.2 ANZUS

Respondents were asked two questions relating to ANZUS. First,

Do you support Australia having a defence alliance with the United States?

Over 80% report yes, in both modes of interviewing (84% phone, 83% internet). The next question about ANZUS asked:

Do you think that Australia’s defence alliance with the United States is...

1. Likely to reduce the risk of an attack on Australia
2. Likely to increase the risk of an attack on Australia
3. Makes no difference to the risk of attack on Australia

4. I'm not sure, I haven't thought much about this (internet only)

Responses to this item are presented in Table 16, and cross-tabulated by approval of the American alliance. A slim majority of respondents think the American alliance reduces the threat of an attack on Australia (20%) or that the alliance makes no difference to this threat (37%). Support for the alliance moves in a predictable with these assessments of the threat of an attack on Australia: among the 20% who think the American alliance reduces the risk of an attack, the alliance is supported by a 95-5 margin. Even among the 40% who think the American alliance increases the risk of an attack on Australia, the alliance is supported by a 75-25 margin.

	All	Approve of ANZUS	
		Yes	No
Reduce the risk of an attack	20	95	5
Makes no difference	37	88	12
Increase the risk of an attack	40	75	25
Not Sure	2	59	41
	All	84	16

Table 16: Does the American alliance increase the risk of attack on Australia? Phone respondents.

11 Stereotypes About Americans

Respondents were asked “Which of these characteristics do you associate with Americans?”

Table 17 shows that Australians are not reluctant to ascribe negative stereotypes to Americans. Two-thirds of Australian phone respondents describe Americans as violent, greedy and ignorant. At the same time, identical proportions of Australians think of Americans as hardworking. Only 35% of respondents agree that Americans are “immoral”.

Conventional multivariate analysis techniques suggest that these data load onto a single latent factor. An IRT model is fit to these 7 binary indicators to recover each respondent's score on a latent dimension tapping the propensity to ascribe negative stereotypes to Americans, often referred

	Yes	No	DK
Rude	56	38	5
Honest	51	38	11
Ignorant	68	26	6
Violent	66	31	3
Hardworking	66	27	7
Greedy	66	29	5
Immoral	35	57	8

Table 17: “Which of these characteristics do you associates with Americans?” Telephone respondents only.

to as “anti-Americanism”. The resulting scale is centered on zero, and normalized to have standard deviation one, with higher scores indicating higher levels of “anti-Americanism”; see Figure 15.

Anti-Americanism is weakly related to the likelihood of supporting Obama (Figure 16), with Obama vote share increasing by about 8 percentage points as anti-Americanism ranges from its lowest to highest values. Put differently, McCain voters score .24 of a standard deviation lower on the anti-Americanism scale than Obama voters, a difference that is distinguishable from zero at conventional levels of statistical significance ($t = -2.3$), but not large in substantive terms.

Anti-Americanism is also weakly related to levels of knowledge about American politics. Recall the four point knowledge scale discussed in section 6. As knowledge of American politics increases over the four point scale used here, anti-Americanism decreases by .40 standard deviations, a statistically significant drop ($t = -2.7$), but again, not particularly strong in substantive terms.

Finally, anti-Americanism is strongly related to support of the American defense alliance (Figure 18). Support for the alliance is extremely high, around 90% among respondents scoring low to middle on “anti-Americanism”. But around a threshold at about the average level of anti-Americanism, support for the American defense alliance falls sharply with increasing levels of anti-Americanism. In the upper tails of the distribution of anti-Americanism in these data, support for the American alliance falls to about two-thirds. Despite this sharp fall, even at these high levels of anti-Americanism we

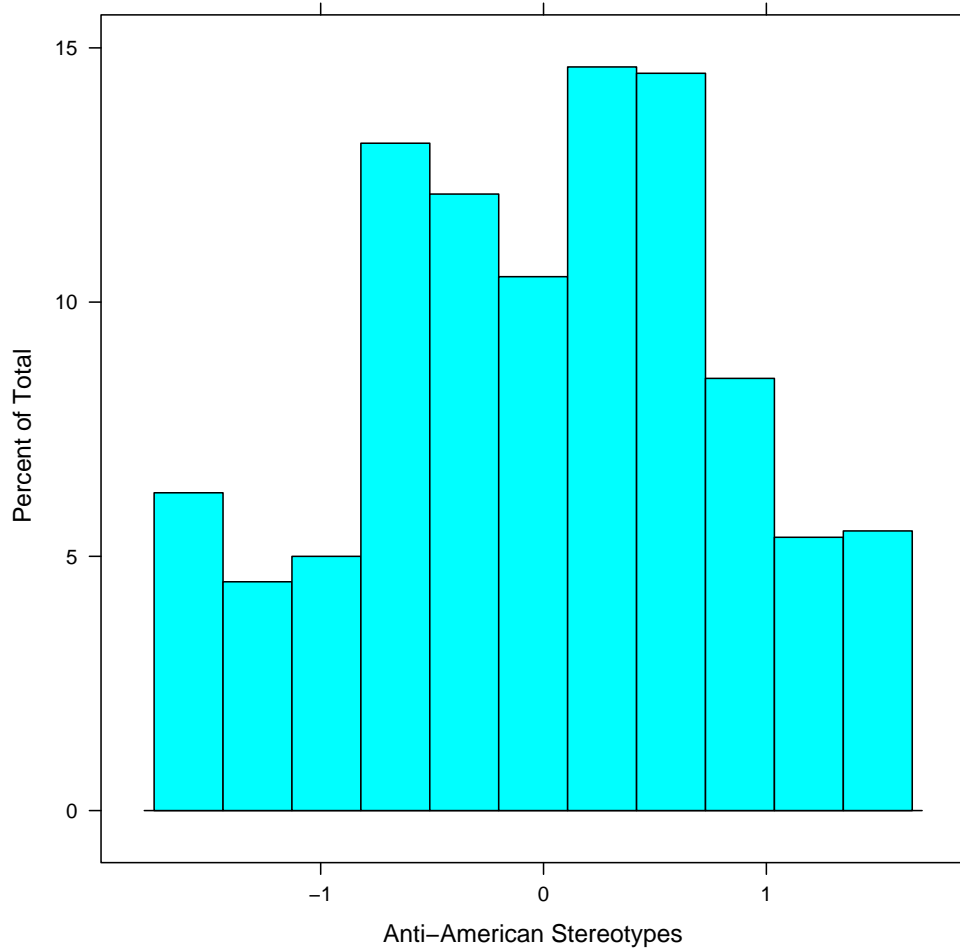


Figure 15: Distribution of Propensity to Ascribe Negative Stereotypes to Americans.

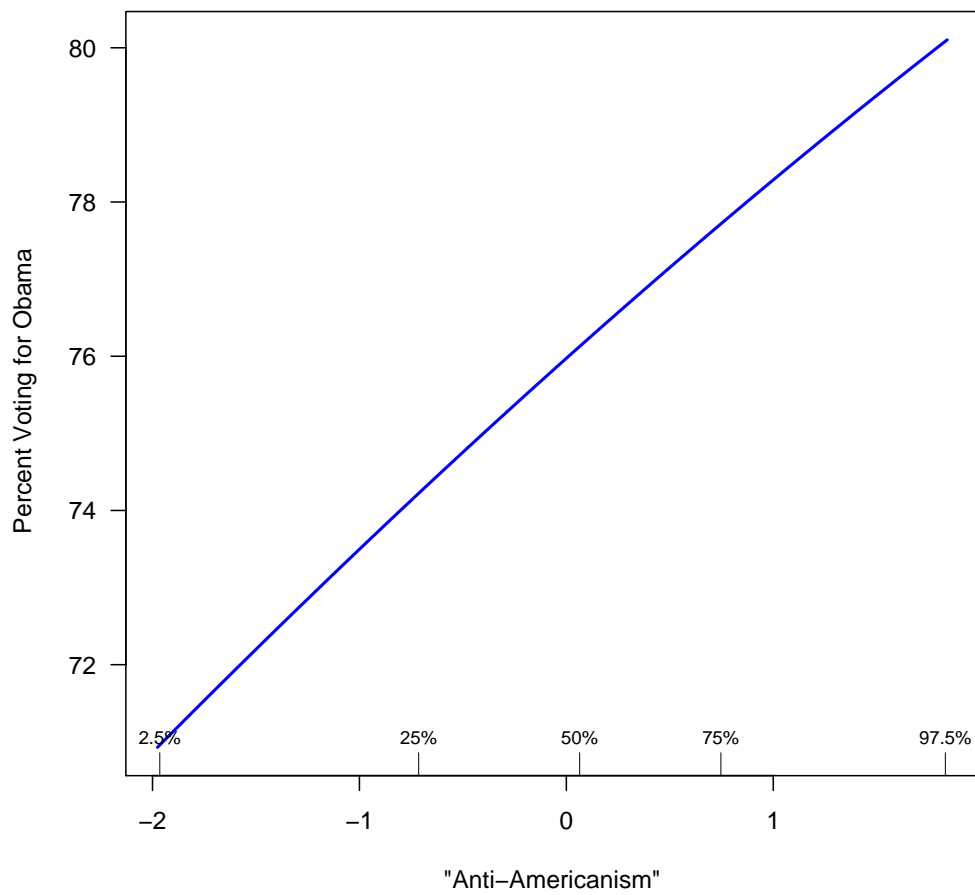


Figure 16: Obama Support and Anti-Americanism

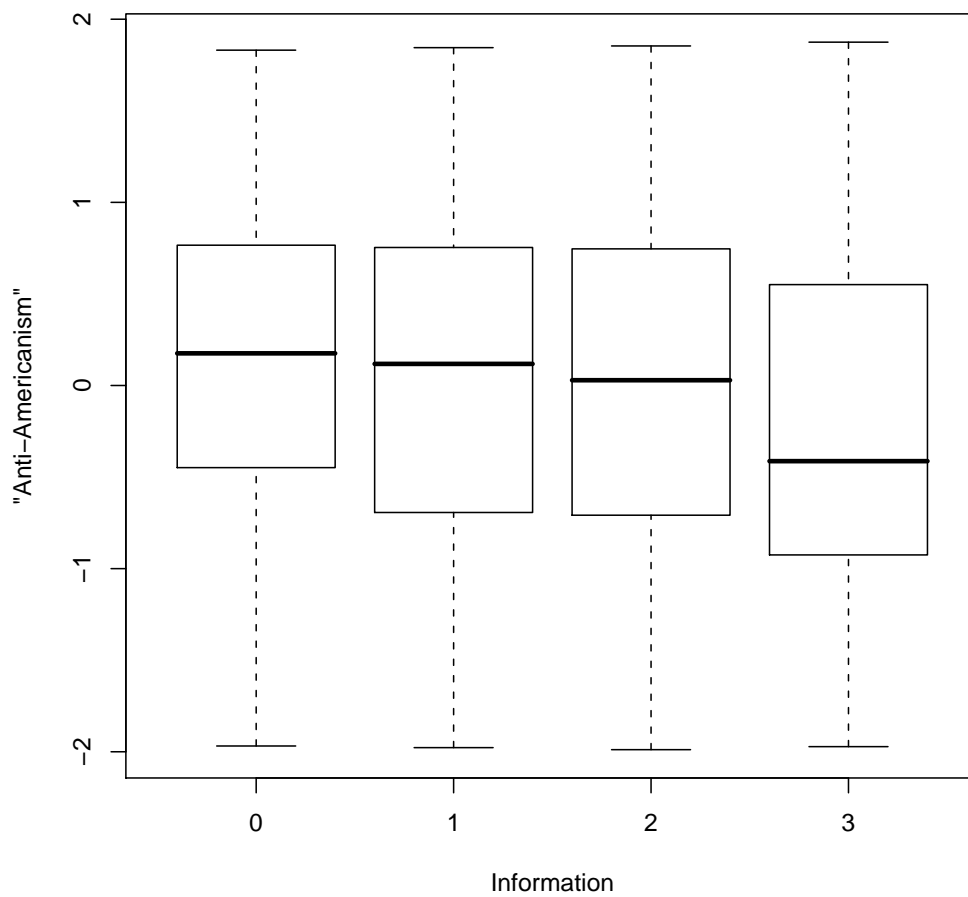


Figure 17: Anti-Americanism and Knowledge of American Politics

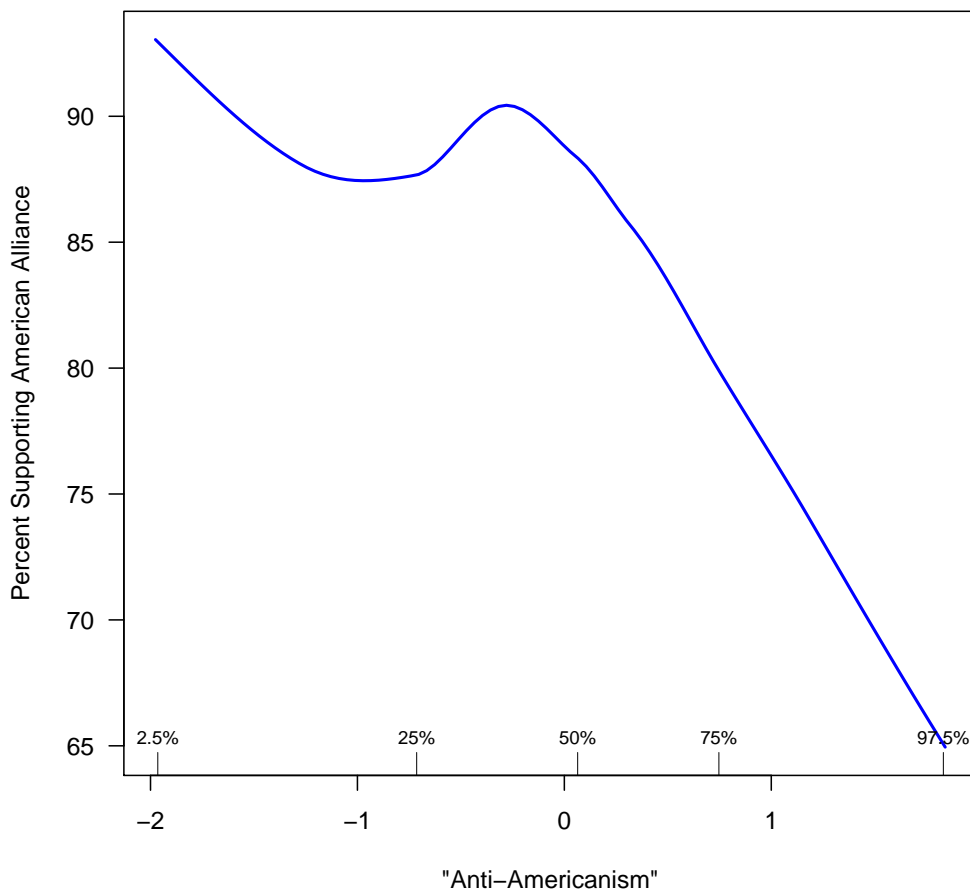


Figure 18: Anti-Americanism and support for the Australian-American defense alliance

observe majority support for the American alliance.