Supplementary Material

Partisan mathematical processing of political polling statistics:

It’s the expectations that count

Laura Niemi, Department of Psychology, Harvard University

Mackenna Woodring, Department of Psychology, Boston College

Liane Young, Department of Psychology, Boston College

Sara Cordes, Department of Psychology, Boston College
Exploratory Analyses

Pre-election popular vote estimates in Experiment 3 among voters in Experiment 4. We also analyzed pre-election popular vote bias in those who did not vote, compared to Trump voters and Clinton voters. Aligning with their expectations for a Clinton win, we found that people who ultimately did not vote showed a Clinton-favoring, but slightly more “middle-of-the-road,” estimation pattern of the popular vote (see Figure S1).

Figure S1. Popular vote predictions from Experiment 3 graphed by reported voter behavior in Experiment 4. The people who did not vote tended to expect Clinton to win and showed estimates similar to Clinton supporters’. However, they showed a significantly reduced pattern of bias in her favor, compared to those who ultimately did vote for Clinton.

Specifically, people who reported that they did not vote in Experiment 4 gave estimates of Clinton’s popular vote (n=57; M(SD following) = 54% (11.7)) that were significantly lower than Clinton voters’ estimates (n=329; M = 58% (9.6)) but significantly higher than Trump voters’ (n=217; M = 46% (10.9), F(2,600) = 91.7, p < .001; η²_{partial} = .23) in Experiment 3.

Likewise, their estimates for Trump’s popular vote (M = 41% (11.0)) were significantly higher than Clinton voters’ estimates (M =37% (9.2)) but significantly lower than Trump voters’ (M = 50% (11.4), F(2,600) = 121.6, p < .001; η²_{partial} = .29). In sum, those who did not vote by and large
had expected Clinton to win, but their pre-election popular vote biases were reduced compared to those who reported actually voting for Clinton. These results contrast with non-voters’ mathematical biases (reported in the main text), which were larger (in favor of Clinton, deflating Trump), compared to those who voted.