

How Did Trust in Elections Change After the 2024 Presidential Contest?

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A wide partisan gap emerged over confidence in the accuracy and integrity of American elections in the wake of the 2020 presidential contest, with Democrats trusting elections significantly more than Republicans did. After the 2022 midterms, as detailed in a [Yankelovich Center Survey](#) report, trust further increased among Democrats and independents but not among Republicans, widening the partisan divide. How has confidence in elections changed among Americans in each party and in different demographic groups after the 2024 presidential contest?

To answer this question, we measure levels of trust in two Yankelovich Center national surveys that are representative of eligible voters, one conducted just before the 2024 election and the other fielded immediately after it. We compare survey responses to questions about whether Americans had confidence that their own votes would be counted correctly as well as their trust in the accuracy of the national vote count. Public opinion about the accuracy and integrity of elections clearly shifted from the pre-election to the post-election survey, especially for some groups. Our key findings are that:

- Overall, trust in elections rose to a high level after the 2024 presidential contest, with 77% of Americans reporting that they were "very" or "somewhat" confident that votes nationwide were counted as intended, up from 71% before the election.
- On the eve of the election, there was a wide gap over trust in elections between supporters of Donald Trump and those who backed Kamala Harris. After Trump's clear victory, that gap entirely disappeared. Trust among Harris supporters dipped slightly but remained at a high level, while trust among Trump supporters increased sharply to that same level.
- The partisan divide over confidence in the accuracy and integrity of elections also narrowed. The trust that Republicans and independents reported rose dramatically between our pre- and post-election surveys, while Democratic trust declined, leaving all three groups of voters with similar trust.
- The gap in trust along racial and ethnic lines reversed after the election. Before the election, voters of color generally had higher levels of trust than white voters. Afterward, 80% of white voters were confident in the national vote count, compared with 71% of Asian-Americans, 68% of Black voters, and 66% of Latinos.
- Divides in trust remain among Americans in different income, educational, age, and gender groups.

ABOUT THESE SURVEYS

This report details key findings from the surveys that we conducted on large and diverse samples of American adults before and after the November 5, 2024 presidential election. We fielded the pre-election survey from November 1 until November 4, gathering information from 4,374 respondents. Our post-election survey, which had 4,905 respondents, was in the field from November 13 through November 19.

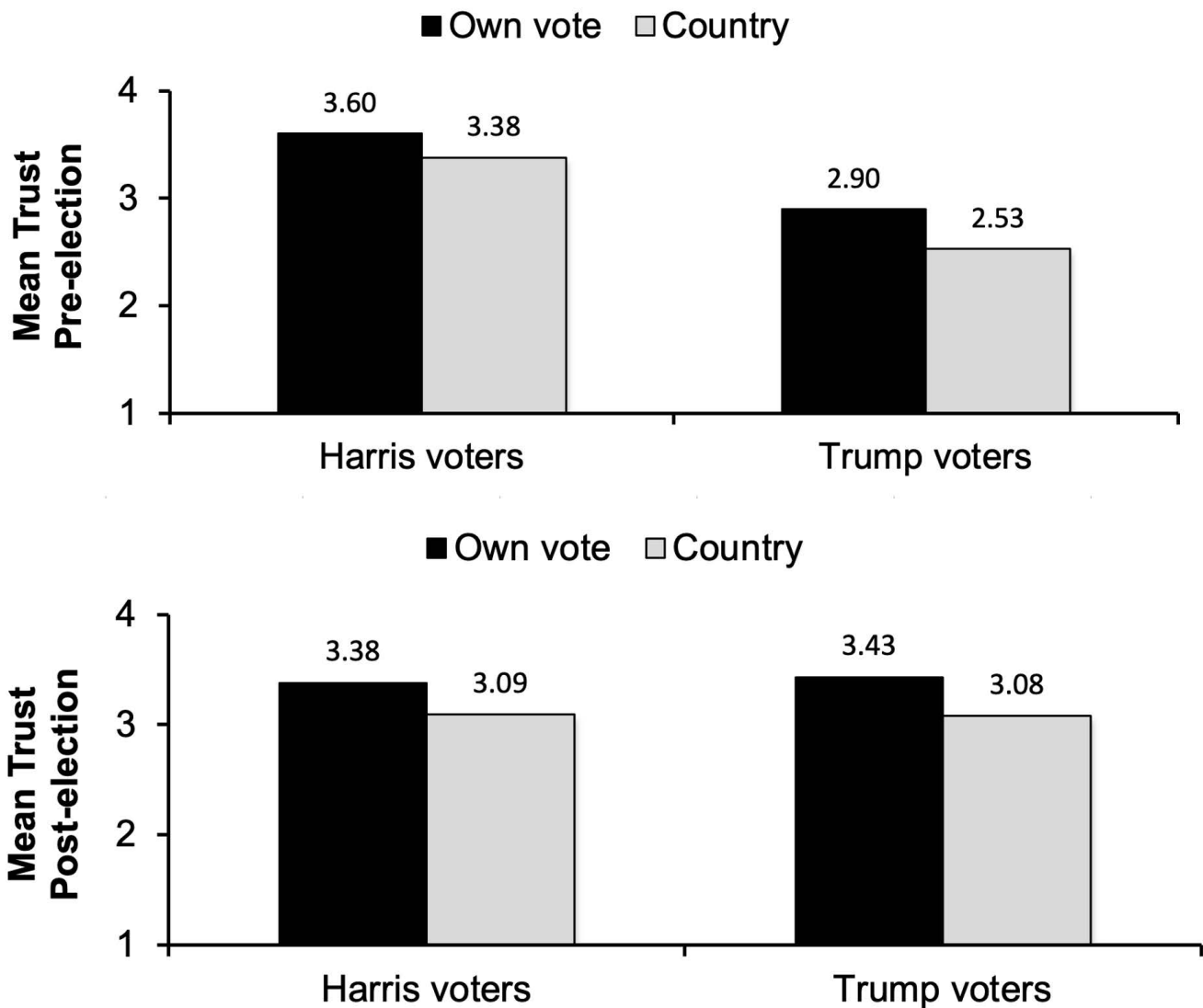
Based on an online surveying technique that is now common and [well-vetted](#), our samples include respondents drawn to reflect the United States voting age population along the lines of race, ethnicity, age, and gender, using the online Cint platform (formerly Luc.Id). We used attention-check questions to ensure that online respondents were reading the survey carefully, removing those who failed the attention checks from our sample. Our sample was targeted based on the characteristics of the nation's citizen voting age population from the 2023 American Community Survey. The margin of error on these surveys is plus or minus 1.5 percentage points for respondents overall in the pre-election survey and 1.4 points in the post-election survey. For smaller subsets of voters, such as members of a particular party or demographic group, the margin of error is larger.

THE PARTISAN GAP OVER TRUST IN ELECTIONS DISAPPEARED AFTER THE 2024 CONTEST

Just before Election Day, there was a clear divide between supporters of the major candidates and between partisan groups in their levels of trust in elections. This divide has been broadly documented by scholars and by survey researchers and has remained wide since the 2020 election. Our main measures of trust follow the question wording used by the [Survey on the Performance of American Elections](#), adapted to capture pre- and post-election trust.

To find out how people felt about their own vote, we ask "How confident are you that your vote in the General Election will be/was counted as you intend?", allowing respondents to answer that they are "very confident," "somewhat confident," "not too confident," or "not at all confident." (Those who answered that they don't know were excluded from our analysis.) To learn how respondents viewed the accuracy and integrity of elections across the nation, we asked "Finally, think about vote counting throughout the country. How confident are you that votes nationwide will be/were counted as voters intend?", providing the same answer categories. This allows us to measure trust either on a 1-4 scale, ranging from not at all confident to very confident, or to simply report the percentage of people who were very or somewhat confident.

The charts on the next page show that the gap in trust between Harris and Trump supporters that was so wide on the eve of the election entirely disappeared afterward. Using the 1-4 scale, Harris voters reported levels of trust that their own vote would be counted as intended that were 0.70 points higher than Trump voters, and trust in vote counting across the country that were 0.85 points higher, when they were surveyed before the election. After the election, levels of trust for each group were nearly identical, whichever question was asked. In part, this was because of a slight decline (of 0.22-0.29 points) in trust by Harris voters, but it was primarily driven by the larger rise in trust by Trump voters on each question (0.53 to 0.53 points). These shifts are consistent with the [winner/loser effect that consistently drives trust](#) in elections across modern democracies.



Each bar reports the average level of trust reported, on a 1-4 scale, for survey respondents who said that they supported either Donald Trump or Kamala Harris in the 2024 presidential election. The pre-election survey was conducted November 1-4 and the post-election survey from November 13-19.

HOW DID DIFFERENT GROUPS REACT TO THE 2024 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION?

Another way to look at how trust in elections shifted among different groups of Americans from before to after the 2024 presidential election is presented in the table on page 5. It focuses on the question asking about confidence that votes all across the country will be (or were) counted as intended, simply reporting the percentage of each group who were very or somewhat confident that the nationwide vote count would be accurate.

First, combining all respondents to look at overall trust shows that it increased from 71% being very or somewhat confident in the national vote count before the election to 77% being confident afterward.

Looking at respondents by their partisan affiliation shows that underneath this aggregate increase there were sharper movements in different directions. Trust among Democrats declined by 12 percentage points, falling from 89% to 77%. By contrast, trust among Republicans rose by 28 percentage points, from 54% to 82%.

Because of this, the partisan gap that was 32 percentage points before the election narrowed to five points and reversed direction afterward. Independents and supporters of minor parties moved in the same direction as Republicans, though not as sharply, with their level of confidence in vote counting throughout the country increasing by eight percentage points, from 65% before the election to 73% afterward.

RACE AND ETHNICITY

Just as partisan groups moved in different directions from before to after the election, so too did members of the major racial and ethnic groups in the American electorate. Trust among white (non-Hispanic) voters, who were one of the least trusting groups before the election, rose 12 percentage points to 80% expressing confidence in the national vote count after the election. By contrast, trust fell among each of the other racial and ethnic groups. The sharpest decline was in the level of trust reported by Black Americans, which dropped 11 percentage points to 68%. Trust among Asian Americans declined by three percentage points to 71% while trust among Latino voters dipped by two points to 66%. These countervailing shifts effectively reversed the direction of the racial and ethnic gap in trust in American elections. The [patterns in trust by racial and ethnic groups](#) in elections from 2012 through 2022 shows that these groups have often moved in different directions.

GENDER AND EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Two of the divides over trust in American elections that have emerged in recent years remained relatively constant, with members of each group in the electorate moving in the same direction from before to after the 2024 presidential contest. Men remained more trusting of elections than women, though the sharper rise in trust among men meant that the gender gap in trust expanded from five percentage points to nine points after the election. Those with college or higher degrees remained more confident in elections than Americans with less educational attainment, though trust grew for each group and the gap between them narrowed slightly.

AGE GROUP AND INCOME

Before the presidential election, there was little consistent correlation between age and trust in elections (a reversal of past patterns in which older Americans were more likely to say that they trusted the accuracy of the elections). After the election, the traditional pattern returned, with older respondents reporting higher levels of trust (which ranged from 66% among those aged 18-24 up through 80% for those aged 65 or over). Income differences remained relatively stable from before to after the election, with those in households earning higher incomes reporting higher confidence in elections in each survey and trust for each income group rising by similar amounts.

ABOUT THE YANKELOVICH SURVEY

Since 2021, the [Yankelovich Center for Social Science Research](#) at UC San Diego has been conducting surveys with the goal of providing insights on issues that go beyond election prediction in order to yield rigorous evidence that informs public and policymaking debates. Our Yankelovich Surveys published in [September 2021](#) and in [June 2022](#) focused on California issues, with these surveys and our [November 2022 survey](#) focused on national samples. This survey was funded as part of the "[Building Trust in Elections](#)" research program jointly conducted by UC San Diego's Yankelovich Center and by MIT's Election Data and Science Lab.

	(Pre-election) Trust that 2024 general election votes will be counted accurately nationwide	(Post-election) Trust that 2024 general election votes were counted accurately nationwide
All Respondents	71%	77%
Partisan Affiliation		
Democrat	89%	77%
Republican	54%	82%
Independent	65%	73%
Gender		
Male	73%	81%
Female	68%	72%
Race/Ethnicity		
White (non-Hispanic)	68%	80%
Latino	68%	66%
Black Americans	79%	68%
Asian-American	74%	71%
Education		
High school	67%	72%
Some college	66%	75%
College graduate	73%	86%
Higher degree	84%	81%
Age		
18-24	70%	66%
25-44	73%	76%
45-64	68%	78%
65+	72%	80%
Household Income		
Under \$25,000	67%	72%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	68%	74%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	70%	77%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	69%	79%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	79%	84%
Over \$150,000	78%	89%