Making a President: Performance, Public Opinion, and the Transmutation of Donald J. Trump [*]

William G. Howell[†]   Ethan Porter[‡]

University of Chicago   George Washington University

Thomas J. Wood[§]

The Ohio State University

March 27, 2018

Abstract

Presidents routinely issue appeals to the American public. Such appeals, however, are not isolated pleadings. Rather, they are embedded in public performances that are laden with symbolism and ritual. We show that such performances can alter public perceptions of the president, at least temporarily. Members of the public randomly encouraged to watch Trump's Inaugural Address and his first appearance before Congress were more likely to subsequently say that he fulfills the obligations, expectations, and norms of his office. Effects were particularly pronounced for people who initially reported lower thermometer ratings of Trump. We also find that the visual elements of political performances, not the content of speeches, leave the largest impressions. We find no evidence that these performances changed people's policy views. These findings point toward new ways of assessing the character and significance of the plebiscitary presidency.

[†]Sydney Stein Professor of American Politics; whowell@uchicago.edu

[‡]Assistant Professor, School of Media and Public Affairs; evporter@gwu.edu

[§]Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science; wood.1080@osu.edu

"With the exception of the late, great Abraham Lincoln, I can be more presidential than any president that's ever held this office."
–President Donald J. Trump[1]

"Here was another peculiar Trump attribute: an inability to see his actions the way most others saw them. Or to fully appreciate how people expected him to behave. The notion of the presidency as an institutional and political concept, with an emphasis on ritual and propriety and semiotic messaging — statesmanship — was quite beyond him."
–Michael Wolff[2]

JUST DAYS AFTER BEING ELECTED PRESIDENT by nearly universal acclaim, George Washington confided to his diary that his mind was "oppressed with more anxious and painful sensations than I have words to express," that he clung to "the best dispositions to render service to my country in obedience to its call, but with less hope of answering its expectations" (as quoted in Chernow 2010, p. 560). Washington had cause to worry. Already, the American people harbored outsized expectations of their president—expectations about policy successes, to be sure, but also about the unique and exalted place that presidents would occupy in the national polity.

To meet the challenge before him, Washington did what all subsequent presidents would do: he participated in public performances. On his inaugural procession to the nation's capital of New York City, he stopped in townships to be toasted by dignitaries and feted by crowds. He rode a white horse into Philadelphia, and just outside of town, a laurel crown was lowered over his head. Parades were held in his honor, flower petals were scattered at his feet, speeches were delivered in his honor. When he finally set to work on preparing for his inaugural address, Washington gave as much attention to what he would wear and what title he would assume as he did to what he would actually

---

[1] Speaking at a rally in Youngstown, Ohio, July 25, 2017.

[2] *Fire and Fury: Inside the White House.* New York, NY: Harper. 2018.

say.

Performances such as these do not merely graft the values and aspirations of a nation upon the individuals who occupy the White House. They transform these men into the very embodiment of those values and aspirations. These performances are designed, in no small part, to reveal a president who is larger than life and who epitomizes all that is distinctly American. These performances aim to elevate the impressions of citizens about the man who they elected president and to encourage the public to see their president in distinctly presidential terms.

Do they work? The short answer is that we do not know. For all that has been written on the "plebiscitary presidency" (for recent reviews, see Edwards 2009; Eshbaugh-Soha 2015, 2016), the existing quantitative literatures focus on the language of speeches and their corresponding effects on public opinion about specific policies. This research hardly recognizes the ways in which presidential appeals are embedded in performances—full of visual imagery and theatrics—that are intended to serve a larger purpose: to convince a viewing public that the man before them exudes all the qualities and character demanded of the office. At stake here are the challenges of what Jeffrey Cohen (2015, 9) calls "perceptual presidential leadership."

This paper constitutes the first experimental effort to evaluate how public performances— only one component of which is speech—alter the terms under which Americans view their president. In early 2017, we fielded a series of surveys before and after Donald Trump delivered his First Inaugural and his first formal address before Congress, which had all the appearances of a State of the Union address. Before both speeches, we collected baseline information about respondents' perceptions of Trump's ability to command the respect of other leaders, offer a coherent vision for the country, and fulfill his prescribed duties—views, we show, that do not reduce to standard measures of presidential approval ratings and that have political significance of their own. We then

randomly encouraged half of them to watch Trump's speech. Immediately after each speech, again one week later, and in one instance again three months later, we resurveyed these respondents. In so doing, we recovered estimates of the causal effects of these two performances—and all the pageantry that surrounded them—on the public's recognition of Donald Trump as their president.

Our findings reveal how public performances can meaningfully alter the terms under which a public views its president, at least in the short term.[3] Immediately after the inauguration, those who had been encouraged to watch the inauguration indicated that they perceived Trump as more presidential than did members of the control group. Americans who were told to watch the speech were more likely to profess that Trump would be able to bring the country together, work productively with Congress, and act in the nation's best interests. They also thought he enjoyed the respect of military leaders and that he had a clear vision for the country. These effects were especially pronounced among Americans with higher levels of education and who, prior to treatment, reported lower feeling thermometer ratings of Trump. We do not find any evidence, meanwhile, that exposure to these presidential performances altered the content of respondents' policy views.

In yet another survey, we found that these effects are driven by the visual rather than the textual elements of presidential performance. More than theatrical flourishes, the *visual* components of presidential performance leave the most direct impressions on a viewing public (e.g, Edwards 1982, Hinckley 1990, Grabe and Bucy 2009). And where

---

[3]Much like existing studies of political advertising's effects (Gerber et al 2011), the direct benefits of public performances appear to have a short shelf life. In both speeches we analyzed, the magnitude of the recovered estimates dropped by roughly half within a week. Several months later, the effects of the Inauguration address had all but disappeared.

the messages of text and imagery conflict, we find, the latter predominates.[4]

This paper proceeds as follows. The first section summarizes the existing literature on public appeals, while the second characterizes the political utility of public performances. The third section introduces the presidential battery and establishes its conceptual distinction from standard measures of presidential approval. The fourth section describes our experimental interventions and presents our main results. The fifth section attends to a variety of robustness checks and extensions, and the sixth concludes.

1 The Efficacy of Presidential Appeals

This we know with certainty: presidents devote substantial resources to actively court the American public through addresses, speeches, Rose Garden ceremonies, press conferences, and carefully choreographed interviews. "Going public" is much more than a tactic available to the enterprising executive (Kernell 2007). It is an obligation of holding office. Indeed, say some, public appeals are a defining feature of the modern presidency itself (Lowi 1985; Tulis 1988).

What we do not know, though, is whether presidential appeals meaningfully affect the content of public opinion. The findings on offer vary considerably. Some studies suggest that presidents' communications reliably increase public support for either themselves or their policy agendas, if only by a few percentage points (Ragsdale 1984,

---

[4]Such findings are not lost of presidential administrations. The George W. Bush White House, for example, timed the president's infamous "Mission Accomplished" speech to coincide with sundown, so that, in the words of one official, television viewers would see a "flattering light on [President Bush's] left cheek and slight shadowing on his right" (as quoted in Edwards 2011). Our studies underscore the importance of such choices: When the president publicly performs, images matter in a way that content does not.

1987; Brace and Hinckley 1992; Cavari 2013). Other studies, though, find that the benefits of public appeals are not nearly so certain, and that their incidence crucially depends upon the president's prior approval ratings (Page and Shapiro 1985; Page, Shapiro, and Dempsey 1987), the policy domain in which he speaks (Eshbaugh-Soha and Peake 2011), and other contingent factors (Rottinghaus 2010). Recognizing the ways in which public inattention to politics, media interference, and the general clamor of political speech all conspire against presidents who hope to mold public opinion, still other scholars argue that public appeals typically fall "on deaf ears" (Edwards 2003; see also Franco, Grimmer and Lim 2017; Simon and Ostrom 1989, Edwards 2007, Edwards 2009).

What accounts for such widely varying results? Part of the answer concerns the methodological challenges endemic to this line of research (Gabel and Scheve 2007). Purely as a matter of measurement, it is extremely difficult to parse the contents of presidential appeals and the relevant dimensions of public opinion. Additionally, the nonrandom occurrence of presidential speeches combined with the selective attention paid to them introduce all sorts of causal identification problems (Hill 1998; Canes-Wrone 2006; Wood 2007). Attempting to make headway, some scholars have tried to instrument for the issuance of presidential appeals, but they have struggled to account for other sources of endogeneity, such as the public's intermittent reception of these appeals (Cohen 2015). Other scholars have relied upon lab and survey experiments (Tedin, Rottinghaus, and Rodgers 2011), which themselves confront questions about generalizability (but see Franco, Grimmer, and Lim 2017, which exploits local variation in the timing of surveys). Collectively, these measurement and identification problems nearly guarantee that recovered estimates will be dispersed broadly—and not necessarily symmetrically— around the truth.

A second limitation of the existing literature concerns matters of scope. For all its efforts to grapple with methodological challenges, quantitative research on public ap-

peals evaluates only a subset of possible outcomes. Nearly every study considers the effects of presidential appeals on the willingness of survey respondents to support specific policies. The guiding, yet unstated, assumption is that presidents treat citizens as though they were legislators, and that the contents of their policy views singularly matter. Far less attention, meanwhile, is paid to public's views of the president himself. Though a handful of studies evaluate the public's general assessment of the president, as measured by job approval or thermometer ratings (see, for example, Druckman and Homes 2004; Ragsdale 1984, 1987), empirical studies have largely overlooked the specific ways in which appeals alter the public's trust in their president, assessments of the president's motivating beliefs and interests, or evaluations of the president's distinct role in the American polity (but for an important exception, see Cohen 2015). This literature says very little about how presidential speeches encourage members of the public to understand the president in distinctly presidential terms.

And this leads to an additional limitation of the existing quantitative literature on presidential appeals. For the most part, scholars working within this tradition have said very little about the settings and activities in which presidential speeches take place. Instead, scholars fix their attention nearly exclusively on the language of the speech itself. To be sure, some scholars code speeches for certain contextual features—distinguishing, for instance, "large" from "small" speeches, or State of the Union speeches from more minor addresses (Ragsdale 2014). Yet the rich displays of symbolism that accompany presidential speeches—the staging of performers and audience, the procession of supporters and beneficiaries, and the carefully selected backdrop—have mostly gone unnoticed among quantitatively oriented scholars (but see Hinckely 1990 and Kohrs Campbell and Jamieson 1990). By and large, presidential speeches are considered only through the words that are spoken. Much of what Bruce Miroff (1988) calls the "spectacle" of the American presidency is overlooked by the very scholars who are attempting to clarify

how, and whether, presidents are capable of shaping public opinion.[5]

2   The Utility of Performance

Though public performances occupy an absolutely central role in the study of politics in anthropology, sociology, religious studies, and select quarters of political science, they have made hardly an appearance in contemporary studies of American politics. Among quantitative studies of presidential appeals, they receive little more than a mention.

This is a mistake. When crafting an appeal, presidents and their advisers do not merely draft language that they then faithfully deliver via teleprompter. Presidents focus intently on the venue in which they speak. They carefully select individuals to stand by their sides. And in their most important performances, whether before Congress or the nation, presidents abide long-established rituals: for his Inaugural Address, the procession of former presidents filing onto the stage, the flags draped over the steps of Capitol Hill, the Chief Justice swearing in the new president; or for a State of the Union, the Deputy Sergeant at Arms who announces the president's arrival, the shaking of hands on the walk up the podium, the Vice President and Speaker of the House sitting behind. These features of public appeals demand our attention, both as citizens and scholars. For when performing before an audience, Richard Schechner (1988, 123) reminds us, the "histrionics of communication" matter every bit as much as the speech

---

[5]A substantial body of work on presidential rhetoric focuses rather intently on these concerns. This scholarship, however, is altogether devoid of systematic tests of the impacts of presidential rhetoric on the contents of public opinion. For a review of this literature, see Bimes (2009).

itself.[6]

The visual facets of performance—an umbrella category that includes rituals, rites, ceremonies, and other modes of public presentation—do not only adorn political appeals. In various ways, these facets communicate values, identities, and roles that have integrity and import quite of their own. It is for precisely this reason that scholars have gotten so much mileage out of interpreting political performances (see, for example, Wedeen 1999, 2008, and Turner 1995). As texts, these performances are laden with meaning about the larger polity that supports them. It is with good reason that they are focal points of political investigation.

As subjects of study, however, performances are not important only for what they reveal—whether about a political system, a regime, or, in the case of public appeals, the intentions of a single politician. Performances are also important for what they do. In essential ways, performances both shape and constitute political realities. For those who participate in them, performances have significant political utility; and for those who observe them, performances can change their views of the participants.

Scholars have long recognized the political purposes that performances can serve: the propagation of myths, the promotion of social solidarity, the manipulation of history, the delineation of conflict, the mobilization of resources, the creation of common knowledge, and a good deal more (Kertzer 1989; Edelman 1964, 1971; Chwe 2013). As conveyors of political appeals, meanwhile, performances also amplify and enhance communication. Through symbols, historical references, and stage setting, performances enrich and enliven the contents of speech. Sometimes they do so by reinforcing its plain meaning. Other times they communicate messages that are tangential to or even in conflict with the speech. Either way, the analyst who measures public appeals by the literal

---

[6]For more on the visual framing of politics within the context of elections, see Grabe and Bucy 2009).

words they contain offers an anemic account of the communicative exchange between politician and public.

For presidency scholars, though, the relevance of performance concerns a great deal more than just how we code public appeals. The purpose of performance is not merely to make the case for one policy initiative or another. It is to alter the public's understandings of the people who deliver these appeals. Through their participation in performances, politicians can be remade. Performances function as rites of passage, reshaping participants' understandings of themselves, of course, but also those of attentive publics. As Schechner (1988, 124) explains, "fixed roles and rites of passage [transport] persons not only from one status to another but from one identity to another. These transformations are achieved by means of performance."

Witnesses of a Quinceaera, baptism, or marriage come to see children as adults, lost souls as saved, individuals as couples. Likewise, political performances, through which public appeals are rendered, have the potential to transform mere citizens into presidents. Presidential performances function as mechanisms of perceptual transformation, altering an audience's understandings of performers. The performances that accompany public appeals do not merely depict men in a proscribed role. They are more than actors, momentarily filling an assigned role for the purposes of enlightenment or entertainment. Performances inculcate a sense that these men—and to date, they have all been men—are themselves larger than life, that they follow in a rich and noble tradition, that they see the country as nobody else does, and that they stand ever-ready to defend her values, interests, and heritage.

Through performance, Kenelm Burridge notes (1969, 166), "one sort of man becomes another sort of man" (see also Bell 1991, 206-207), as the polio-stricken Franklin Roosevelt was seen to walk to the podium to deliver his First Inaugural, or as George W. Bush climbed atop the rubble at Ground Zero after the September 11 attacks and deliv-

ered an impromptu-address via megaphone, or as Barack Obama sang "Amazing Grace" in a church in Charleston, South Carolina days after a white supremacist had murdered nine black parishioners. In each of these instances, performances were shown to have "constitutive as well as instrumental consequence" (Stuckey and Antczak 1998). For those trying to fulfill the extraordinary expectations of presidents—passing legislation, to be sure, but also instilling hope to a nation, gathering conviction in aftermath of catastrophe, assigning meaning to grief—public performances are all but indispensable.

3   The Presidential Battery

Past scholars have tracked changes in summary assessments about the president, as measured by approval ratings. To our knowledge, however, no one has investigated the extent to which the public views a sitting president as quintessentially *presidential*. As a result, our precise area of interest does not come with an off-the-shelf battery of questions. We therefore devised our own.

Our battery includes three sub-batteries with a total of 22 questions. The sub-batteries are vended in random order. The sub-batteries and the items they comprise are provided in table 1. The first sub-battery measures respondents' impressions that the president commands the respect of other political elites. Another sub-battery measures respondents' confidence in the president's ability to serve as a steward of the national mood. A third sub-battery inquires about subjects' perceptions of the president's commitments to democratic values. Agreement to all items are recorded on a 7-point scale. In designing these items, we sought to de-emphasize partisan cues.[7] Accordingly, the battery does

---

[7] Clearly, any evaluation of a contemporary president will be at least partially partisan. Our scale, however, seeks to locate those opportunities for a president to enjoy that bipartisan standing furnished by virtue of holding the office.

President's standing among elites

Donald Trump commands the respect of …

- Republicans in Congress
- Democrats in Congress
- the Supreme Court
- Military Leaders
- the National Press Corps
- Business Leaders
- Foreign Leaders

President as steward of national mood

How confident are you that, during his first term in office, President Trump will be able to…

- …perform the duties and obligations of the office of the presidency
- act in the best interests of the nation as a whole
- vigorously defend the nation's economic and security interests when negotiating with foreign states
- earn the respect of those who did not vote for him
- persuade the public of his policy positions
- work productively with Congress
- improve economic growth
- bring the country together after a divisive presidential election

President as exemplar of liberal democratic values

Do you agree with the following descriptions of Donald Trump

- The president is a true leader
- The President loves the Constitution and understands the rights and responsibilities it bestows
- The President's loyalties are to country, above all else
- The President has a clear understanding of where the country must go
- The President speaks with clarity and conviction about the change our nation needs
- The president supports the rights of free expression, freedom of religion, and free assembly
- The president is committed to traditional American values

Table 1: 22 items which comprise the *Presidential Standing Battery*. Each item is posed following the prompt provided in the left column. Items are grouped by their underlying dimension of presidential standing.

not tap a respondent's impression that the president will implement a partisan agenda or thwart his political opponents. Instead, it measures the impression that the president has independent standing and justifiably occupies the nation's top political office.

The presidential battery, it bears emphasizing, gauges public perceptions that are conceptually distinct from standard measures of presidential approval ratings. While we expect impressions of a president's institutional standing to be related to their affective valence (summarized by indicators of approval), these dimensions are distinct when a respondent concedes that even a president whose agenda is unwelcome might fulfill the fundamental requirements of office. We expect *approval* to tap impressions of policy accordance, group affiliation, and evaluation of emergent political events, while impressions of *presidentialism* will tap deeper impressions of character, judgment, and legacy–elements of what Richard Neustadt (1990) referred to as a president's "reputation" and "prestige."

To test these expectations in January 2018, we administered our presidential battery alongside a seven-item approval battery that elicited respondents' views about President Trump's job performance on seven current political questions. [8] We also asked standard measures of partisan identification, ideology, and a 0-100 Trump feeling thermometer. Responses were collected over Mechanical Turk in January 2018 (n=913). All batteries were vended in random order.

Table 2 reports the loadings for a four factor solution, which reveals a clear pattern. The top seven rows demonstrate that approval dominates a first affective dimension of public evaluations. In addition to public approval, this first dimension taps the confidence and values elements of the presidentialism battery. Notice, though, that approval items do not systematically load on factors 2 through 4. After removing the effects of

---

[8]Specifically, we asked approval of Trump's managing the US relationship with the DPRK, his handling of the economy, of foreign policy, health care, immigration, jobs, and taxes.

approval, these three factors separately tap each element of our battery. Significantly, the three subordinate factors account for about as much variance in the separate indicators as the first approval factor. Approval is related to, but empirically distinguishable from, impressions of presidentialism.[9]

4 The Making of President Trump

To investigate the impact of political performance on public opinion, we conducted a series of experiments in early 2017. In various ways, each provided a plausible source of identification, and thereby overcame one of the central limitations of the existing literature on presidential appeals. Additionally, by including a much richer battery of outcome questions, each experiment illuminates how performances can alter a public's understanding not just of policy but of the protagonist—in this case, Donald Trump.

4.1 Study 1: Trump's Inauguration

Our first experiment focused on the first performance of any presidency: the inauguration. We offered a small financial inducement to U.S. residents on an online survey platform to watch President Trump's Inaugural Address, and we then administered the

---

[9]The component of presidentialism most distinct from presidential affect is perceived presidential respect; this is not an especially surprising finding, since respect items measure respondents' evaluations of other peoples' collective impression of the president. Even confidence and perceived presidential values, which also feature a strong affective component (loading on the fist dimension), also systematically load on the separate dimensions. For data that places Trump's approval rating in historical perspective, and for a discussion of how Trump's approval ratings might affect the interpretation of our results, consult the appendix section "Trump's Approval Ratings in Historical Context."

	Factor1	Factor 2	Factor3	Factor4
Approve–handling DPRK	.70			
Approve–handing economy	.67		.42	
Approve–foreign affairs	.79			
Approve–health care	.75			
Approve–immigration	.76			
Approve–jobs	.84			
Approve–taxes	.73			
Confident–act in country's interests	.65		.46	.44
Confident–bring country together	.44	.40		.68
Confident–earn respect of his opponents	.44	.39		.66
Confident–improve growth	.50		.63	
Confident–perform duties	.56		.56	.43
Confident–persuade on policy	.46			.55
Confident–defend US abroad	.55		.61	
Confident–work with congress	.50		.48	.48
Earn respect–business leaders		.46	.57	
Earn respect–democrats in congress		.84		
Earn respect–foreign leaders	.47	.68		
Earn respect–military leaders	.42	.56	.54	
Earn respect–national press corps		.83		
Earn respect–republicans in congress		.55	.45	
Earn respect–scientific leaders		.77		
Earn respect–US jurists		.67	.44	
Values–not beholden to foreign interests	.59		.47	
Values–speak with clarity	.65		.46	
Values–knows where country must go	.67		.44	
Values–committed to American values	.51		.57	
Values–loves constitution	.63		.48	
Values–loyal to country	.60		.54	
Values–supports freedom	.63		.48	
Values–true leader	.70		.40	
Proportion variance explained	*.37*	*.16*	*.15*	*.10*

Table 2: Factor analysis of presidentialism battery and approval. These loadings were extracted from data gathered in January 2018

presidential battery before and after the speech. Given the successful random assignment of subjects and the high compliance patterns (see below for details), estimating treatment effects proved straightforward.

Our identification strategy, carried out over four waves and six months, is a variation of an "encouragement design," wherein subjects are incentivized to uptake some treatment for which it is unfeasible or unethical to either deny or force. A staple of the medical literature, encouragement designs in political science have been profitably deployed in the study of media effects and national policy implementation (Sovey and Green 2011; Barnes, Feller, Haselswerdt and Porter 2017).

The experiment was administered over Amazon's Mechanical Turk service. A low-cost vehicle for survey subject acquisition (Berinsky, Huber and Lenz 2012), experiments carried out on Mechanical Turk tend to mirror results observed with more traditional survey vendors, often to a surprising degree (Mullinx et al 2015; Coppock 2017, Thomas and Clifford 2017). One common concern about Mechanical Turk, as well as other Internet panels with large numbers of people who regularly take surveys, is that participating subjects are overly compliant, exacerbating demand effects. By assigning subjects to uptake a rather complicated treatment, we turned this concern on its head—exploiting a perceived willingness to comply in order to measure otherwise difficult-to-measure effects.

We administered the first wave one week before the inauguration. At that time, we recruited 1,496 U.S.-based subjects and administered standard demographic questions, the presidential battery described above, several political knowledge questions, and the standard authoritarian battery.[10] (To determine eligibility, all subjects were also asked if they would be available to watch television "this upcoming Friday," the day of the

---

[10]Table A.1 in the appendix reports participation in the survey by wave and condition for the three studies.

inauguration.) At the very end of the survey, we told subjects that they would be eligible to participate in future studies, including one with a $400 raffle prize. So as not to bias selection into the second wave, we made no mention of the inauguration. The full text of this and all subsequent communications with subjects appear in the appendix.

In between waves 1 and 2, to improve the efficiency of our estimates and make for better balance between treatment and control, we block randomized on covariates we believed would be predictive of outcome (Gerber and Green 2012).[11] This random assignment procedure performed well across this experiment and all subsequent ones. Treatment and control groups appear balanced across a wide range of pre-treatment demographic and attitudinal variables. For the most part, moreover, this balance was maintained across the multiple waves of the experiment. (For a full balance table, consult A.2 in the appendix.)

On January 19, the day before Trump took office, we told treatment subjects to watch the inauguration for one hour and to expect a survey that afternoon. We told control subjects that they were in a study, and to expect a survey that same afternoon. Though we did not mention the inauguration in the control message, we also did not tell subjects *not* to watch Trump's speech, as we feared that doing so would send a signal about the purpose of the study to control subjects, thereby increasing the possibility of observing demand effects.[12]

At 1 PM EST, roughly an hour after Trump was inaugurated, we emailed subjects a

---

[11] Respondents were block randomized on their partisanship, their 2016 presidential vote, and their pre-treatment affective evaluation of Trump (a 101 point feeling thermometer was trichotimzed into groups of equal size.)

[12] The inauguration of Donald Trump was no small affair. Twelve channels carried it live for much of the day, and upwards of thirty million people tuned in (O'Connell 2017). Telling people to avoid watching might have piqued their interest.

link to our survey, which included the presidential battery as well as several questions designed to evaluate whether participants had complied with their treatment assignment. After collecting their responses to our substantive outcomes, we measured compliance in a variety of ways. We asked all subjects if they had watched the inauguration, and if so, for how long and on what channel. We also presented respondents with a set of photographs of Supreme Court Justices and other political leaders and asked to select those who had administered the oaths of office to President Trump and Vice President Pence. We also showed them three sentences that plausibly could have been uttered by President Trump while delivering his inaugural address—all three related to his theme of "America First"—and asked them which had actually appeared. At no point did we suggest that eligibility for the raffle would be contingent upon correct answers to the compliance questions, as we feared that doing so would risk increasing demand effects.

To assess decay, we administered a third survey a week after the inauguration and a fourth in May, more than four months into the Trump Administration. Both of these surveys contained only the presidential battery. And so as not to cue respondents' memories of the initial assignment, we did not mention the inauguration in our communications during waves 3 and 4.

4.1.1 Results

Subjects who were assigned to the treatment group were significantly more likely to report having watched Trump's inaugural address. Whereas 47.9% of the control group claimed to have watched the inauguration, fully 84.7% of the treatment group did so. And while 81.8% of the treatment group reported having watched at least some of the speech specifically, only 45.3% of control subjects did. Reassuringly, members of the treatment group proved themselves adept at answering factual questions about Trump's speech. For example, when presented with a set of photographs of judges and asked

to select the one who had given Trump the oath of office, 52.5% of treatment subjects correctly identified John Roberts, as compared to only 28.8% of control subjects. (For a complete inventory of indicators of compliance patterns, see Table A.7)

Key treatment effects attest to the influence of political performance. Those assigned to watch Trump's inauguration came to view him as more presidential, as measured by multiple outcomes on our presidential battery. Some of these effects were detected immediately afterward the speech but disappeared a week later. Others were evident both on the day of the inauguration and a week later. One effect endured, albeit weakly, for four months. Given the large number of possible outcomes, we've relied on a multiple correction strategy designed to reduce the probability that any observed effect can be attributed to chance alone.

To assess the effects of being invited to watch the inauguration, we estimated the following model using ordinary least squares:

$$Answer_{h,k,w} = b_0 + treatment_h \times item_k + e_{h,k,w} \tag{1}$$

where h indexes treatment conditions, k indexes survey items, and w indexes survey waves. Each group of items expected to load on a common evaluative dimension were modelled separately. [13] Average treatment effects (ATEs) across all waves are displayed

---

[13] The regression estimates for these models are provided in tables A.10, A.11, and A.12.

in figure 1.[14] The significance levels reported in figure 1 are adjusted for the number of comparisons reported using the Bonferroni method (Dunn 1961).

As the first column of figure 1 makes clear, we recovered a wide range of effects. Upon the inauguration's conclusion, those assigned to watch were more likely to think that Trump could work productively with Congress, persuade the public of his policy positions, act in the best interests of the nation as a whole, and bring the country together after a divisive presidential election. Treatment subjects were also more likely to agree that Trump placed loyalty to country above all else, possessed a clear understanding of where the country must go, was not beholden to any private or foreign influences, and "loves the Constitution and understands the rights and responsibilities it bestows."[15]

The middle column of 1 presents results from the third wave, collected a week after the inauguration. Treatment subjects were more confident in Trump's ability to work productively with Congress and perform the duties and obligations of the presidency, just as they were more likely to agree that he is committed to fundamental American

---

[14] Estimates of the effects of having actually watched the speech, rather than merely being encouraged to do so, can be recovered by using the random treatment assignment as an instrumental variable for uptake (Krueger 1999). The resulting treatment on the treated (TOT) estimate is just a scalar increase in the ATE as a function of compliance patterns in the treatment and control groups. Though less informative about the actual effects of watching Trump's speech, the more conservative ATE estimates require fewer assumptions about contagion and spillover effects.

[15] For all experiments, a comprehensive accounting of all sub-battery results can be found in the appendix. For this study, effects on Trump's ability to perform the obligations of the presidency appear in Table A.10. Table A.11 looks at effects on perceptions of whether Trump exemplifies democratic values. Table A.12 displays results for the respect Trump enjoys among other elites.

values and has a clear sense for the direction that nation must go. The effects on perceptions of Trump's respect from other elites only became more acute with time; a week after the inauguration, treatment subjects were more likely to agree that he enjoyed the respect of the national press corps and the Supreme Court–two sets of elites which conspicuously participated in the inaugural ritual. The final column reports effects from our final wave, administered in late May 2017. At this juncture, treatment subjects were still weakly more likely to agree that Trump would be able to perform the duties and obligations of the presidency.

4.2 Study 2: Trump's Address to Congress

Do the effects observed in Study 1 replicate? Do presidents come to be viewed as more presidential *whenever* they participate in highly ritualized public performances? Or is the inauguration exceptional? To answer these questions, we administered a study around President Trump's first address to both chambers of Congress. Although not technically a State of the Union address, this event had all the trappings of one. On February 28th, 2017, Trump was introduced by the Sargent-at-Arms. He delivered an address that lasted for about an hour. The Vice President and the Speaker of the House sat behind him, while the parties applauded, or not, throughout the speech. The address was carried on many television networks. Typically, at least in part because they take place in prime time, State of the Unions–or psuedo-State of the Unions, akin to this address—draw far larger audiences than inaugural addresses. President Obama's first address attracted 52 million viewers.[16] Thirty-eight million had watched Trump's

---

[16] http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/news/2009/audience-estimates-for-president-obamas-address-to-joint-session-of-congress.html
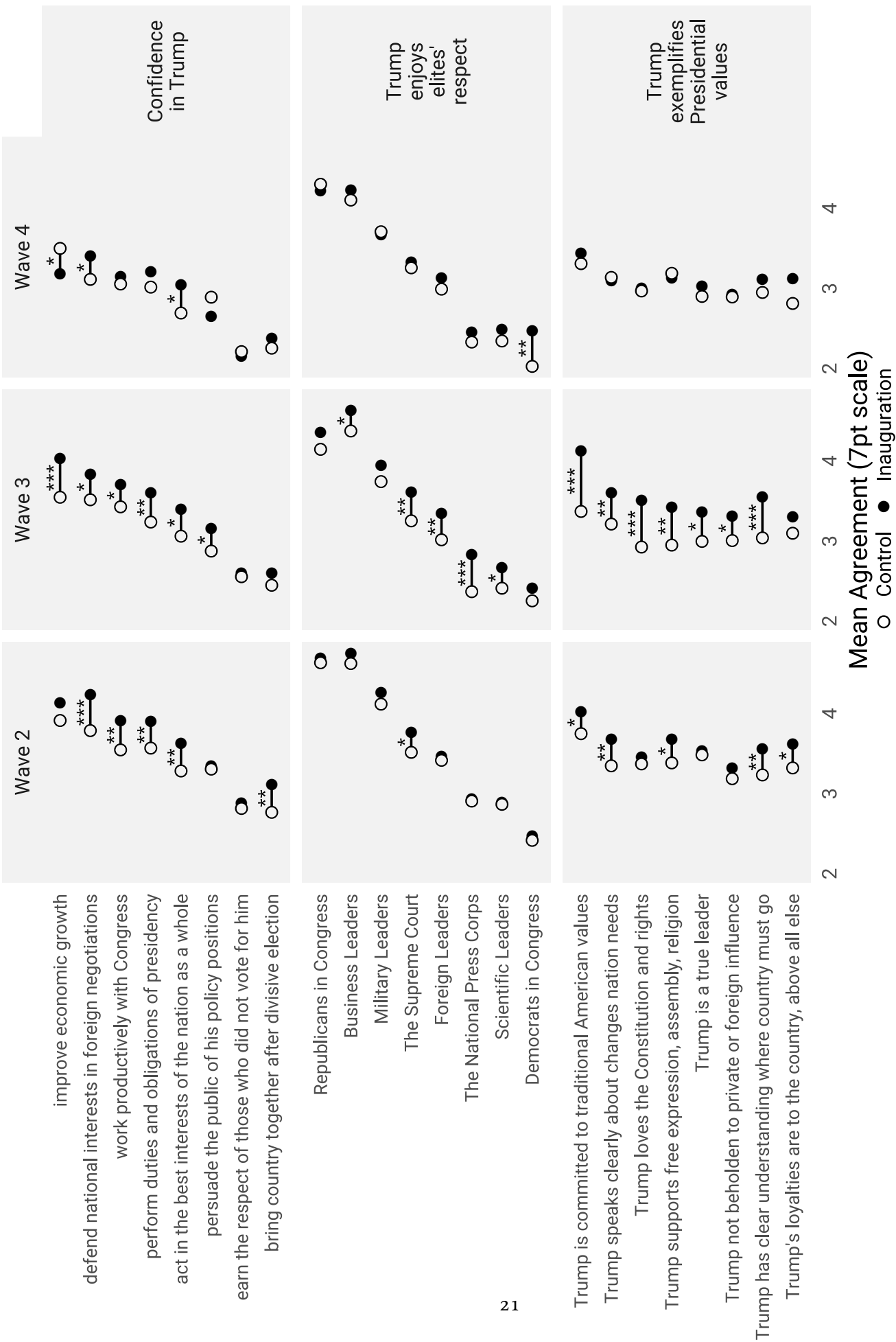
Figure 1: Study 1 Results. Points indicate expected values drawn from the regression models reported in tables A.10, A.11, and A.12, on pages 59 though 61. Each horizontal line between the points reports the pairwise comparison between the conditions, and the associated label reports the associated significance, after correcting for the number of comparisons in each wave*dimension pair.

inauguration only weeks before. [17]

The larger audience presented a design challenge. If an ordinary person were to spend the night of Trump's address watching television, he or she would have far fewer options because the address was being aired on all networks at once. For this reason, we used a placebo condition, not a control. The broad outlines of this study were similar to the first one. Once again, we fielded a multi-wave encouragement design over Mechanical Turk, compensating subjects for each wave and entering them into a raffle. We recruited 1,218 eligible subjects (eligibility as defined by their access to television) a week before the ritual, gathering standard demographic measures, and responses to our presidential battery.

We then block-randomized on partisanship, 2016 presidential vote, and Trump affective evaluation, separating subjects into treatment and placebo groups. The day before Trump's address, we messaged treatment subjects an encouragement to watch it, while we emailed placebo subjects a message encouraging them to watch the Food Network at that time. (The full text of all assignment messages appears in the appendix.) We again entered subjects into a raffle. To test whether subjects complied with their assignment, we asked treatment subjects to name the American company that Trump described meeting with representatives from in his address. We asked control subjects to identify the specific meat that contestants had cooked with on that night's Food Network programming.

The State of the Union afforded us an additional opportunity. If performative rituals can transform ordinary people into presidents, might they also be able to shape policy preferences? It is during this ritual, after all, that presidents routinely communicate a set of policy objectives for the following year. To determine the efficacy of these policy

---

[17]   http://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/news/315507-trump-inaugural-ratings-are-lower-than-obamas-and-reagans

pronouncements, we queried subjects about a range of policy matters before and after Trump's address. As we did not know which policy areas he would discuss in his speech, we had to select issues that he could plausibly discuss during the speech, without knowing in advance whether he would actually do so. In pre- and post-treatment waves, we asked subjects to express their level of agreement with 13 policy issues that he would plausibly discuss in his address.

Subjects saw the following: "Do you agree or disagree with the policy positions below?" and were then presented with questions covering a broad swath of Trump's favored topics, from ISIS to trade to Planned Parenthood. We wrote the questions to mimic Trump's position on the topic at hand. For example, subjects had to agree or disagree with this statement: "A wall should be constructed on the US-Mexico border." They could answer on a 1-7 scale, with larger numbers signaling greater agreement with Trump. The full text of all questions appears in the appendix. We administered the survey a week before the address, immediately after its conclusion, and a final time a week later.

4.2.1 Results

Again, we have several kinds of evidence that, taken together, indicate subjects generally adhered to their assignments. Eighty nine percent of treatment subjects reported having watched Trump's address, while only 27.2% of control subjects did. (Less than 1% of treatment subjects reported watching the Food Network.) And it seems as if the treatment subjects did not just watch the address in passing–80% of them reported having watched for longer than thirty minutes. As a further test, we asked subjects to choose which company, among five choices, Trump had mentioned recently meeting with representatives from. Fully 74.9% of treatment subjects correctly selected "Harley-Davidson." This suggests that, like the inauguration, treatment subjects watched the

address as we encouraged them to, and did so intensely.

Perhaps the most striking evidence of compliance comes from placebo subjects. To evaluate uptake of the Food Network, we asked subjects who reported having watched the Food Network that night: "What kind of meat did the contestants make?" A description of the episode available in advance had said the contestants would make lamb. Lamb was one of four options. While subjects could only select one meat, the show contestants defied TV Guide and made *both* lamb and chicken during the episode. In all, 62.26% of our respondents correctly chose either lamb or chicken. We received three emails from subjects pointing out the discrepancy. "The contestants made lamb and chicken but it didn't let me pick both," wrote one eager-to-comply subject.

Just as with study one, our experimental effects were estimated with the following model specification:

$$Answer_{h,k,w} = b_0 + treatment_h \times item_k + e_{h,k,w} \tag{2}$$

where h indexes treatment conditions, k indexes survey items, and w indexes survey waves. Each group of items expected to load on a common evaluative dimension were modelled separately. The estimates for these models are provided in tables A.10, A.11, and A.12. Average treatment effects (ATEs) across all waves are displayed displayed in figure 2.

Our findings indicate that treatment subjects came to to view Trump as significantly more presidential, as measured by several items on our battery immediately after his address. Consistent with past research, however, we found no evidence that people were more likely to adopt his policy positions. [18]

---

[18] Regression estimates for the presidential battery appear in tables A.3, A.4, and A.6. Estimates for the persuasion questions appear in table A.8. Results are also depicted in figure 2.
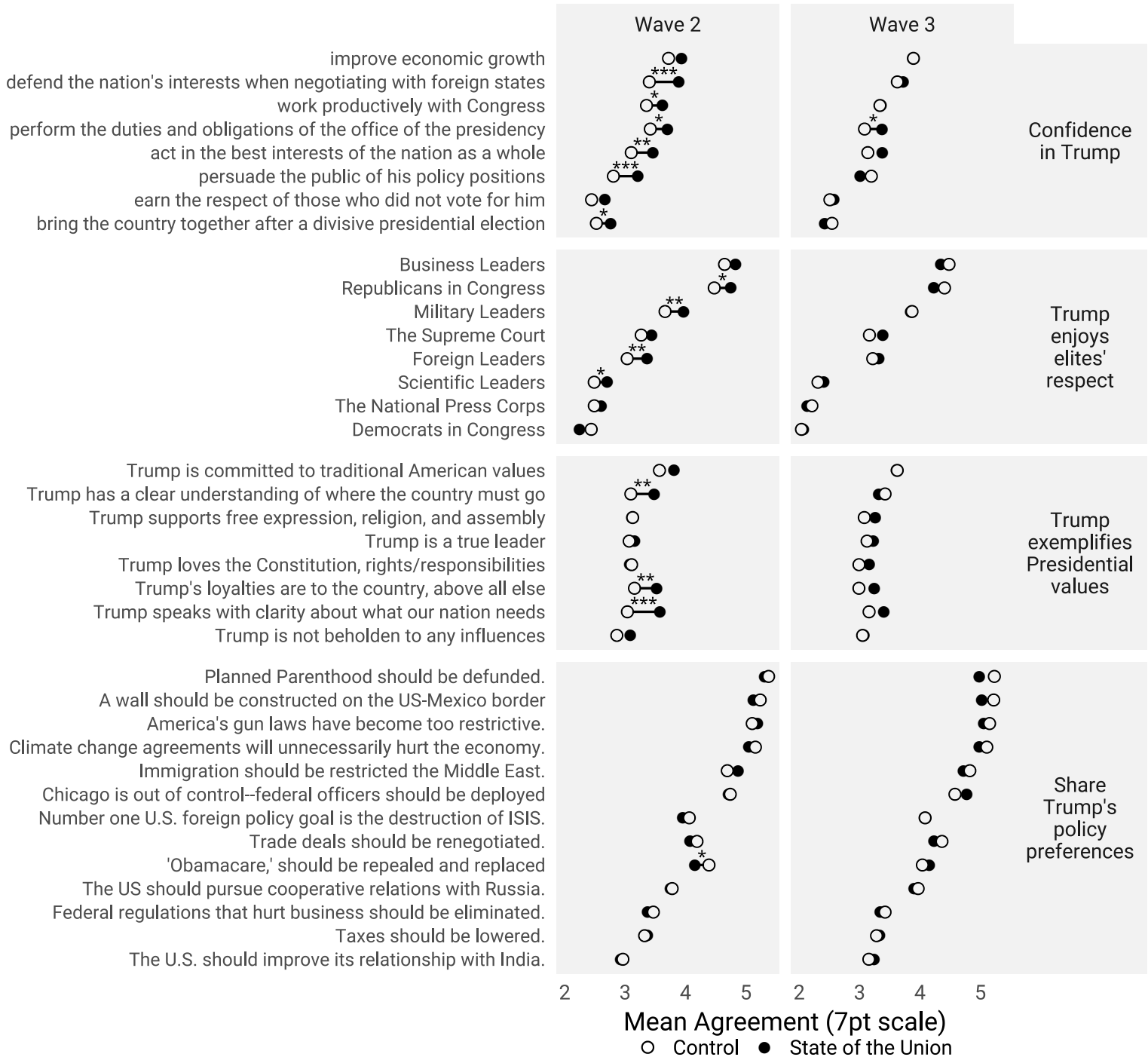
Figure 2: Study 2 Results. Each point indicates the mean agreement with the survey item (indicated on the y-axis) by experimental condition (indicated by the point shape.) Horizontal lines between points indicate a significant difference, correcting for the number of comparisons within each wave×category set.

As shown in the first column, just being encouraged to watch Trump's address yielded a large number of effects across our battery. The treatment increased people's confidence that Trump would defend the nation's interest when negotiating with other nations, act in the best interests of the nation, and persuade the public of his policy positions. Treatment subjects were also more likely to think that Trump was respected by military and foreign leaders, had a clear understanding of where the country must go, and speaks with clarity about where the nation must go. These effects, however, eroded more quickly than did those observed in the first experiment. A week later, all of these effects disappeared. We found only weak evidence both immediately after and a week later that treatment subjects were more likely to think that Trump could "perform the duties and obligations of the office of the presidency."

As for Trump's ability to bring treatment subjects around to his policy preferences, once we account for multiple testing, we see virtually no effects. Granted, treatment subjects were weakly more likely to support repealing the Affordable Care Act after the address was over, but this effect was no longer visible a week later. While performative rituals can make Americans come to view their president as more presidential, we find not evidence that they have similar effects on policy opinions. (For a comprehensive examination of the relationship between our field experiment results on rituals and public performance, consult the section "Distinguishing Valence and Policy Views" in the appendix, which presents a structural model to conclude that, indeed, performances can affect attitudes toward the president without increasing levels of agreement with the president's policy positions.)

4.3 Subgroup analysis

As a further empirical test, we investigate the possibility of heterogeneous treatment effects. In particular, we interact the experimental condition indicator for Studies 1 and 2

with a three-part Trump affect indicator (drawn from the Trump feeling thermometer), the 2016 presidential vote, ideology, educational attainment, and partisanship. Figures 3 and 4 report the linear combination of the experimental conditional indicator with each set of respondent characteristics (each characteristic group was estimated with a separate linear model by study). When a linear combination of a conditional effect and the subgroup indicator is significantly different than zero (p < .05), we depict the estimate with a solid point. Insignificant differences are depicted with a hollow point. For simplicity, we average over post randomization waves and the specific items comprising each presidential sub-battery. (The full text of each item is available in table 1).

Generally, the largest increases in presidentialism across subgroup batteries were apparent among those who reported lower prior thermometer readings toward Trump. For instance, inspecting the top row in figures 3 and 4 shows that low and medium Trump affect respondents have significant treatment effects in 10 of the 12 tested effects, while the respondents most favorably disposed to Trump were significantly affected by treatment in only 2 of 6 cases. Similarly, those who either failed to vote in 2016, or who voted for a minor party candidate, were consistently more responsive in their evaluations of Donald Trump than respondents who either supported Trump or Clinton.

Estimates of the intervening relevance of ideological and partisan differences differed across the two studies. For the Inauguration study, moderates and independents were the most positively responsive to treatment; in the State of the Union study, by contrast, they were the least positively responsive. Education had a more consistent effect: across both studies, and all three presidential batteries, the most educated respondents were the *most* affected by the exposure to treatment. This is surprising, given that message effects are usually thought to be less pronounced among individual with greater political knowledge and, by extension, stronger priors (Zaller 1992). Our findings at least suggest that the work of performance may operate at a different register than public appeals and

messaging.

5   Robustness Checks and Extensions

In this final section, we examine the effects of non-random attrition on our main estimates, demonstrate the political relevance of the presidential battery, and present new experimental findings that underscore the importance of images, rather than text, for political persuasion.

5.1   Attrition

With any multi-wave experiment, researchers should investigate attrition across waves, and the extent to which attrition may have affected treatment estimates. This is certainly the case with our experiments.[19] To be sure, some subjects may have failed to complete post-treatment surveys due to their political predilections. Still, In Table A.1, we see that attrition rates are comparable across treatment assignments. And as we show in Table A.2, covariate balance is maintained across conditions.

To account for any residual effects of attrition, we follow Green and Gerber (2012) and apply inverse probability weights to our estimates. In Figure 5, we show results from modelling a respondent's likelihood of failing to complete the survey as a function of wave, condition, 2016 vote choice and all interactions thereof. We then calculate an inverse weight from this model and apply it to our results. (Models of missingness for the inauguration and the State of the Union study appear in Table A.14 in the appendix.) After using these weights, treatment effects are almost entirely unchanged. Indeed, as

---

[19]Though in other work, we show that covariate-related attrition on Mechanical Turk compares favorably to that observed on CCES and ANES ([Authors' names removed for blind peer review]).
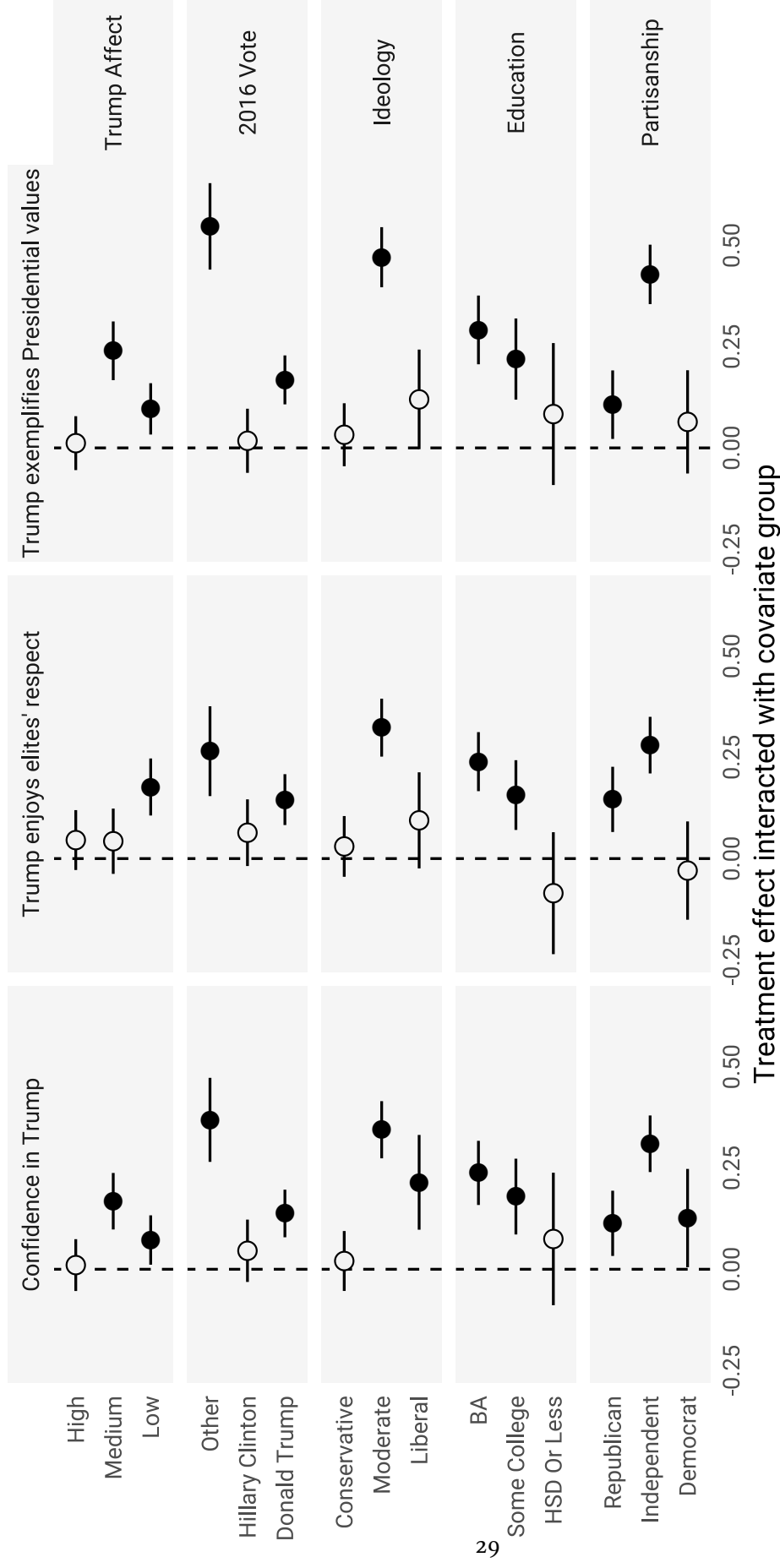
Figure 3: Variation in inauguration treatment effects according to respondents' characteristics. Each row reports the subgroup effects of an being invited to watch the inauguration for a different values of separate set of characteristics. Each point represent the expected value and the 95% confidence interval of a linear combination of a characteristic and its interaction with the treatment condition. Effects are averaged over waves two-four and across the separate items which comprise each battery. Significant effects are depicted with solid points, while insignificant effects are depicted with hollow points.
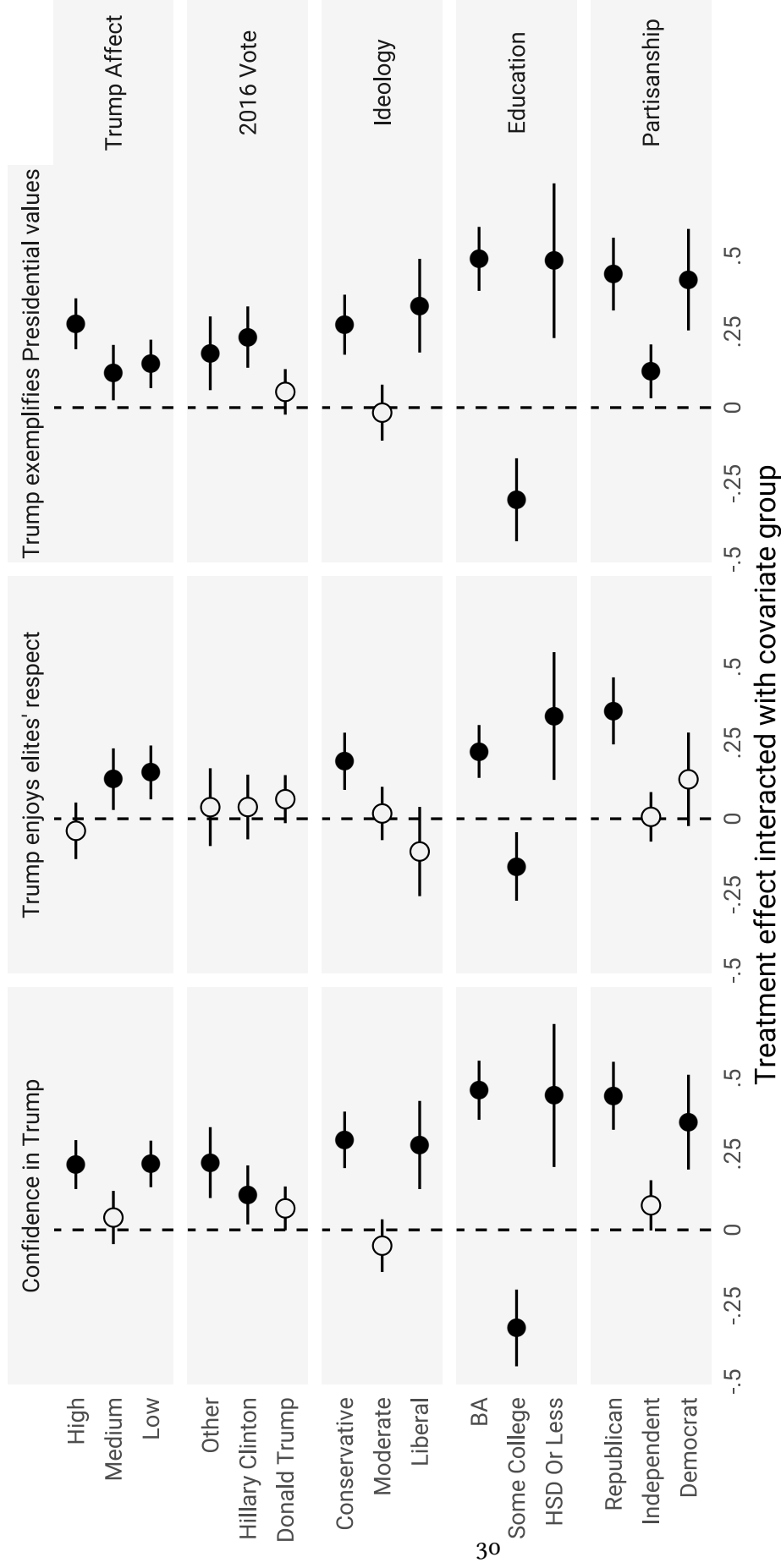
Figure 4: Variation in State of the Union treatment effects according to respondents' characteristics. Each row reports the subgroup effects of an being invited to watch the inauguration for a different values of separate set of characteristics. Each point represent the expected value and the 95% confidence interval of a linear combination of a characteristic and its interaction with the treatment condition. Effects are averaged over waves two-three and across the separate items which comprise each battery. Significant effects are depicted with solid points, while insignificant effects are depicted with hollow points.

Figure 5 shows, weighted and unweighted effect estimates are correlated at .97 or greater.

5.2 Political Implications of Presidential Battery Responses

Does the presidential battery tap into beliefs beyond those relating to evaluations of the president? That is, if performances like the First Inaugural and the State of the Union can affect perceptions of presidentalism, what political consequences might follow? To begin to answer these questions, we exposed subjects on the sample discussed in Section 3 to four additional questions with more immediate political consequences. We asked subjects about their preferences for the 2018 midterm elections; their views on impeachment; their beliefs about alleged collusion between Russia and the Trump campaign during the 2016 election; and their willingness to take part in a protest against President Trump. (Complete question text appears in the appendix.)

Figure 6 displays our results. In the figure, each point estimate reflects the probability that a respondent will agree with the survey item, measured as a result of a one-standard deviation change in presidentialism. Subjects with lower estimates of Trump's presidentialism were strikingly more supportive of impeachment, more likely to say that Trump's campaign colluded with Russia, and more willing to take part in a protest against Trump. It appears that, indeed, perceptions of presidentialism are wrapped up in other significant political attitudes.

In addition, because we also gathered measures of respondents' partisanship, Trump affect, Trump approval, and ideology, we are able to compare those covariates to presidentialism. For three of the survey items, presidentialism is the covariate that is most strongly predictive of agreement. Respondents with lower estimates of Trump's presidentialism were sharply more supportive of impeachment, more likely to say that Trump's campaign colluded with Russia, and more willing to take part in a protest against Trump. Interestingly, for all four questions, perceptions of presidentialism were more predictive

31
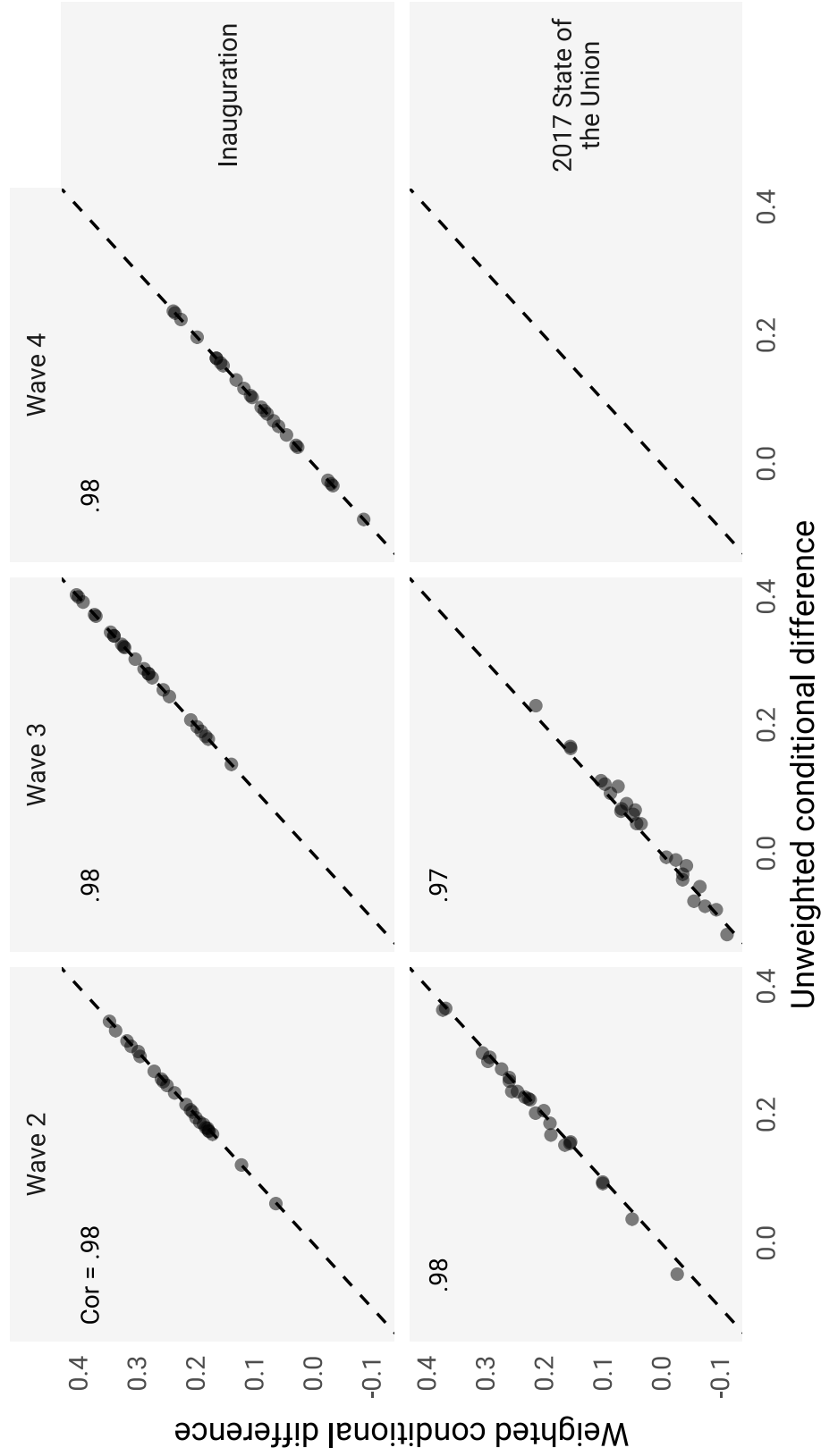
Figure 5: Variation in Inauguration and State of the Union Treatment effects, using inverse probability weighted-results compared to non-weighted results. Labels report the correlation of weighted and unweighted treatment estimates. For reference, the 45°line is included in each facet. Note that we did not collect Wave 4 data for the 2017 State of the Union. Table A.14 reports the missingness model results.
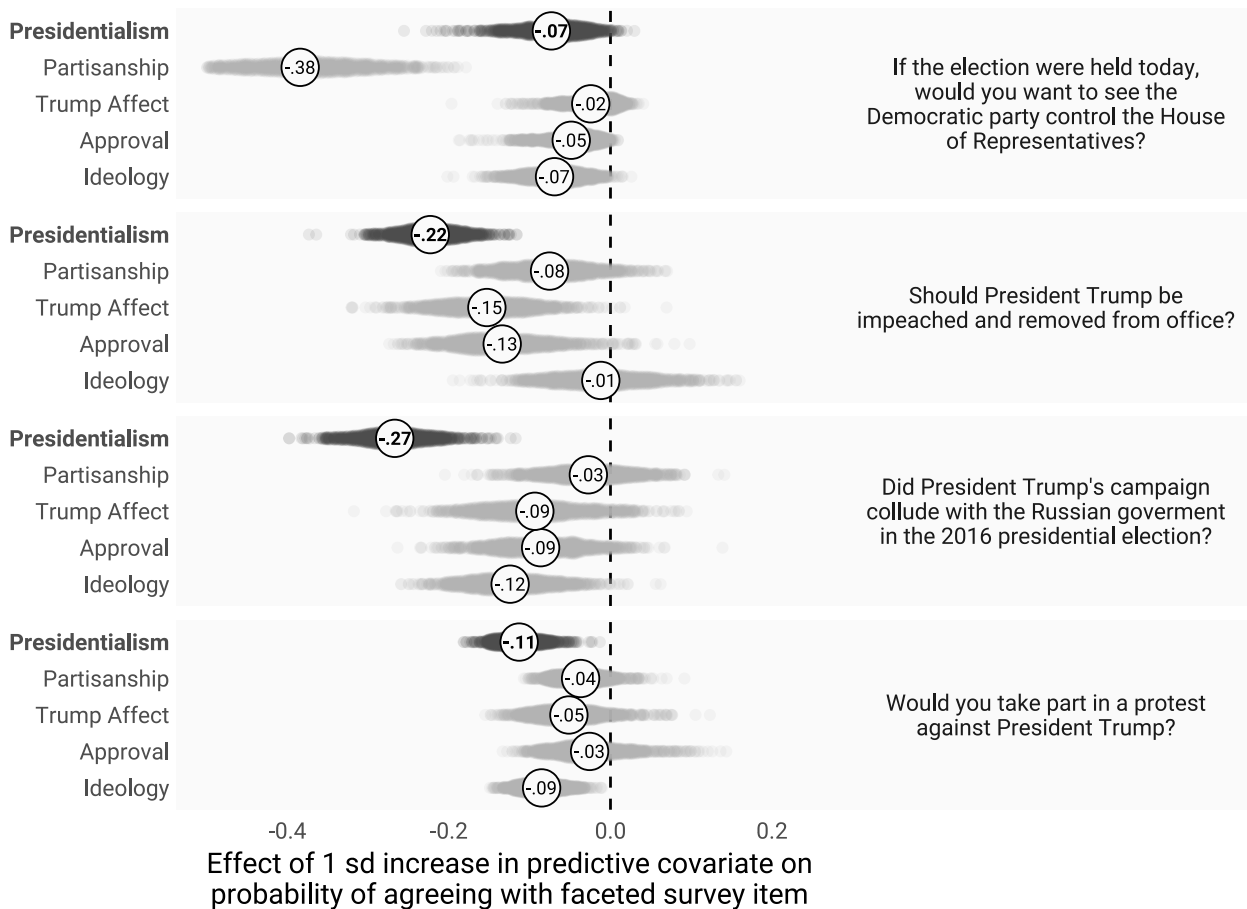
Figure 6: The Political Consequences of Presidentialism. Each point indicates a simulation of the difference in probability of agreement with the survey item, as a result of a one standard deviation increase in the predictive covariates listed on the y-axis, while holding all the other covariates at their means. The estimated models which provide these estimates are described in table A.15.

than approval ratings. The only exception to this pattern concerns the 2018 elections. There, as one might expect, partisanship prevails. On the whole, these data offer compelling evidence that presidentialism does not merely relate to how people evaluate their presidents, but casts a large shadow—indeed, larger than traditional types of presidential evaluations—over their responses to broader questions of considerable political importance.

5.3 Text versus Images

In the first study, we found clear evidence that being assigned to watch Trump's inauguration increased the extent to which people viewed him as presidential. In the second, we found that such an effect is not limited to the inauguration, but in fact can be observed in other public performances. It remains unclear, however, what features of this public performance caused viewers to reevaluate their president. What we ascribe to "performance," based on the results from studies 1 and 2, may depend on the contents of Trump's words alone, the visual pageantry of the events, or some combination thereof.

To investigate the matter, we administered another survey experiment in May 2017 that manipulated newspaper articles about Trump's inauguration. The experiment allows us to estimate the effects of exposure to different kinds of text and visual imagery on responses to the presidential battery. Specifically, the experiment randomly assigned subjects to one of the following conditions:

1. *Positive Text/Positive Photo*: In which subjects read an article describing the inauguration in favorable terms, along with a photo that does the same

2. *Positive Text/Negative Photo*: In which subjects read an article describing the inauguration in favorable terms, along with a photo that portrays the event in unfavorable terms

3. *Negative Text/Negative Photo*: In which subjects read an article describing the in-
   auguration in unfavorable terms, along with a photo that does the same

4. *Negative Text/Positive Photo*: In which subjects read an article describing the in-
   auguration in unfavorable terms, along with a photo that portrays the event in
   favorable terms

5. *Positive Text Only*: In which subjects read an article describing the inauguration
   in favorable terms, with no accompanying photo

6. *Negative Text Only*: In which subjects read an article describing the inauguration
   in unfavorable terms, with no accompanying photo

7. *Speech Content Only*: In which subjects only read excerpts from Trump's speech

The treatment texts were edited versions of an article that was originally published
by the Associated Press on the day of Trump's inauguration. The treatments were al-
tered so that they were roughly of equal size and reflected the distinct perspectives
they were intended to convey. For example, while the positive text described Trump as
"[s]urrounded by top government officials," the negative text mentioned that he spoke
"before a surprisingly sparse crowd." Similarly, the positive text noted that "In a show
of solidarity, all of the living American presidents attended the inaugural," while the
negative text conceded that "While the other living presidents and their spouses were
in attendance, onlookers remarked that they keep their distance from Trump." The pos-
itive photo showed President Trump and First Lady Melania Trump walking down the
parade route after the inauguration, with a large crowd behind them. The negative photo
showed them walking down the parade route but past swaths of empty seats. The head-
line was the same across all versions. The text of the treatments and the Associated Press
article on which they are based, as well as the photographs used, appear in the appendix.

To estimate conditional differences, the following model was estimated:

$$Answer_h = b_0 + condition_h + e_h \qquad (3)$$

A separate model was estimated for each sub-battery, the results of which appear in table A.5. These models also provide the estimates for the predicted values and parametric comparisons depicted in figure 7.

Our findings attest to the importance of visual images in public presentations. Not only were the photo and text conditions far more powerful than the text-only conditions at improving subjects' perceptions of Trump on our presidential battery, the photo condition which presented Trump as a popular president, surrounded by supporters, was consistently able to overcome the tone of the text. As displayed in figure 7, those who saw either the positive photo paired with the positive text *or* the positive photo paired with the negative text were more likely to think of Trump as committed to American values. The text itself, whether summarized by a newspaper article or simply excerpted, did not seem to matter. This is the case even though the displayed estimates *only account for those who passed our manipulation check.*[20] Even if one reads an article about the inauguration in which the president is described in unflattering terms–unpopular among fellow elites and not able to generate much enthusiasm from the public–the inclusion of a photograph depicting the president participating in this ritual while being embraced by the public leads people to view the president as more presidential.

---

[20]To assess whether subjects actually read the article to which they had been assigned, at the end of the survey we asked them if they had seen a picture, and if so, what it displayed; how many members of Congress had chosen not to attend Trump's inauguration, as described in their assigned article; and how their assigned article described President Obama's behavior during Trump's speech.
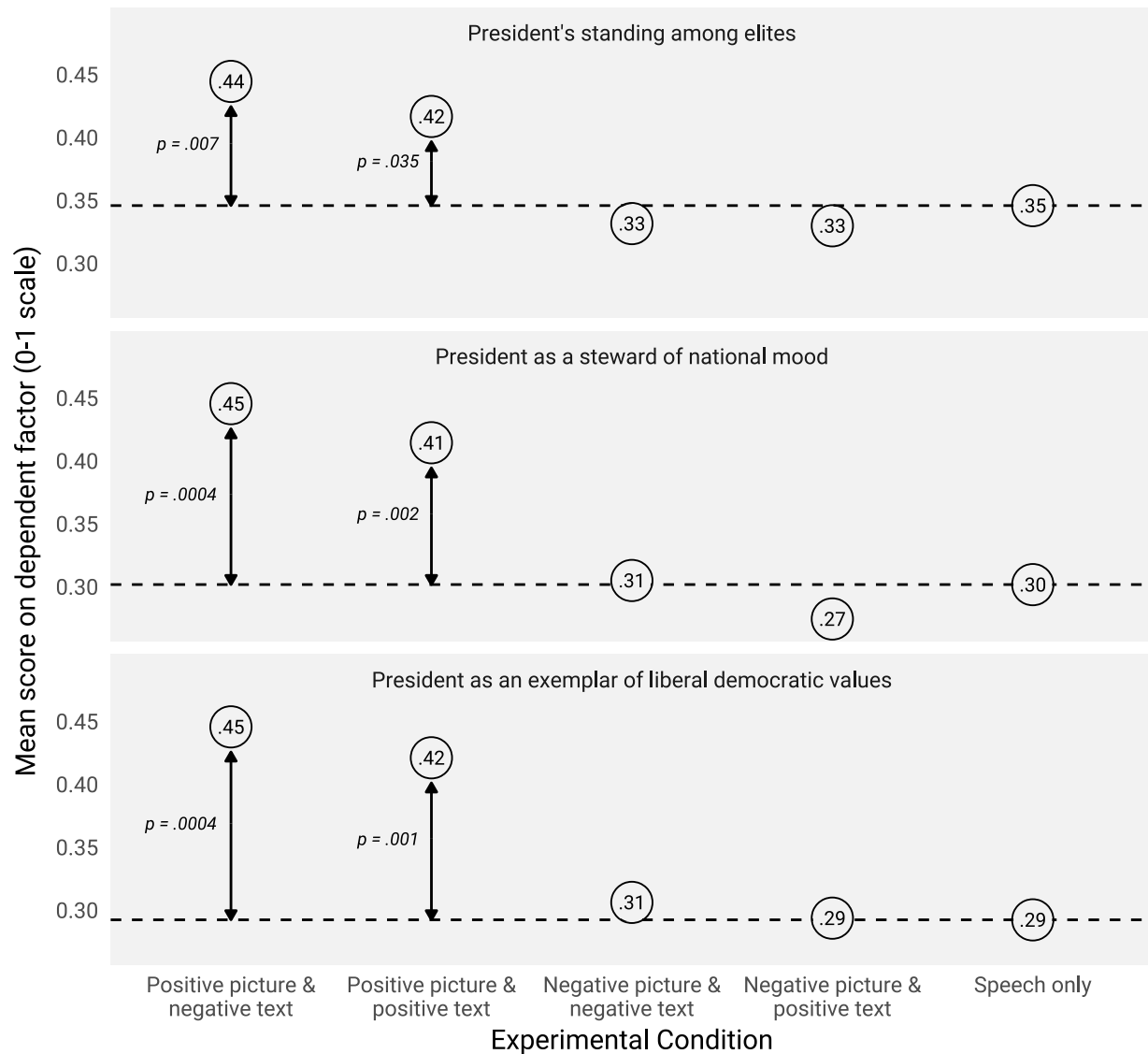
Figure 7: Study 3 Results. Horizontal lines indicate expected value for speech only condition. For each facet, the dependant quantity is a single factor drawn from all the pertinent sub-item in each component of the presidentialism battery. The text next to the vertical lines report p.values for the comparison to the speech only condition (insignificant comparisons are omitted). P values are adjusted using Dunnett's method for four comparisons per dependant value (indicated by the facet label.) This figure summarizes the regression estimates provided in table A.5.

These findings are consistent with those observed by other scholars who have investigated the political significance of visual appearances (e.g., Todorov et al 2005; Mattes et al 2010) and lend credence to some interpretations of past presentations of the president. In 1984, CBS News aired an aggressively adversarial piece on the contradictions between what then-President Ronald Reagan said and what he actually did did—and the Administration loved it. The content of the story was biting, but the imagery was flattering. As White House Staff Secretary Dick Darman, put it, "When the pictures are powerful and emotional, they override if not completely drown out the sound." Replace "sound" with text, and our data largely confirm Darman's intuition: When presidents perform public rituals, pictures matter more than what is actually said.

6   Conclusion

Whether by reference to political experience or temperament, no individual has assumed the presidency looking less presidential than Donald Trump. His relation with his party was tenuous, his ties to Washington elites were idiosyncratic, his public persona was defined by his experience on a reality television show, and his vanity and braggadocio—it is fair to say—were unrivaled. His opponents, of course, chafed at the idea that someone with Trump's background and disposition would occupy the White House. His supporters found these facts refreshing, brandishing Trump's credentials as an outsider who, at long last, would shake up Washington politics. For all, though, a lingering anxiety persisted that Trump lacked the discipline and public standing required to be president.

Americans had cause to worry. Trump's first six months in office were among the most tumultuous and controversial of any modern presidency. Within a week of his inauguration, Trump signed an executive order that restricted immigration from majority-Muslim countries, generating large protests around the country. His effort to repeal the

Affordable Care Act met with ferocious public demonstrations. Stability was little easier to come by abroad, as he threatened war with North Korea, intimated his intentions to withdraw from the Iran nuclear agreement, just as he did in fact withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement. All this occurred while he and his confederates were under investigation by a special prosecutor, appointed in large part because of Trump's stunning decision to fire the director of the FBI. And, of course, there were the numerous small examples of Trump's seeming neglect for the tact and decorum typically associated with the presidency: when he berated a television host for having plastic surgery; when he uninvited a championship basketball player from the White House for daring to disagree with him; when, late one night, he ended a half-sentence on Twitter with the new word "covfefe," leaving the nation wondering if its president had fallen asleep in the middle of addressing it.

At least some of this, it turns out, can be mitigated by the power of public performance. By participating in a set of rituals explicitly intended to elevate the public's understanding of the man—whoever that might be—that they had elected, Trump was able to persuade Americans that he was presidential; or, perhaps more modestly, that he comport himself in ways befitting the office, his popular image within the mainstream media notwithstanding. Trump did not bring the public around to his policy positions during these events; but perhaps that is not the purpose of such events. Such events function as a means of transforming ordinary men into presidents. And in the case of Trump's early tenure in office, the effects they generated were largest among those who were well-educated and otherwise felt negatively about the president.

An objective accounting of any individual's personal qualities, not just Trump's, would forfeit his rightful claim to the American presidency. No individual, no matter how talented, is actually equipped to meet the exaggerated expectations Americans have of their presidents. Public performances, however, cut through these objective inade-

quacies. Viewing these performances, the public comes to see their presidents anew, and to entertain the possibility that they just may be up to the task. Through performance, mortals become presidential, personifying a nation's proudest traditions, embodying its ideals and aspirations.

Trump himself did not choreograph the First Inaugural or State of the Union. At least in the short term, though, he benefited from participating in both—morphing from an unconventional, bombastic former reality television star into an American president. This is not to say that he persuaded vast swaths of the public to side with him on the policy debates of the day. He did not. The impressions left by these performances were reasonably short: within a week, they had declined by half; and after some months, they had altogether disappeared. Still, by publicly performing *as* president, Trump was able to persuade at least some people–including and especially those who viewed him least positively—that he *was* presidential.

Our findings both elaborate upon and challenge a number of conventions of the voluminous empirical literature on public appeals. Having deployed a straightforward identification strategy, we, like others, find that public appeals have no discernible impact on Americans' policy views. Rather, we show, exposure to presidential appeals causes some Americans to view their president differently—more exemplary of democratic values, more likely to command the respect of others, more worthy of confidence. In addition to the significance of presidential appeals, the existing literature tends to mischaracterizes their very nature. More than the language of speech, presidential appeals are defined by their performative aspects—their theatrics, imagery, symbolism, and ritual. Such elements, we show, capture the attention of viewers and alter the terms under which they understand their president. The visual aspects of public performances are especially adept at capturing people's attention, and changing their views about the subject.

None of this is to say that all presidents, in all settings, can reliably count on reaping equivalent gains observed in Trump's first two major addresses. The elaborately staged settings in which these speeches were given, combined with their occurrence so early in a presidential term, may have provided them with special meaning for a public still grappling with the surprise outcome of the 2016 election. At a minimum, though, our findings document the potential of presidential performances to reshape public opinion about the nation's chief executive. And having spent decades gauging the narrow effects of presidential appeals on the public support for different policies, it seems overdue that political scientists begin to investigate this potential.

References

Barnes, Lucy, Avi Feller, Jake Haselswerdt, and Ethan Porter. 2017. "Information, Knowledge and Attitudes: An Evaluation of the Taxpayer Receipt." *Journal of Politics*. Forthcoming.

Berinsky, Adam J., Gregory A. Huber, and Gabriel S. Lenz. 2012. "Evaluating Online Labor Markets for Experimental Research: Amazon.com's Mechanical Turk." *Political Analysis* 20: 351-68.

Brace, Paul, and Barbara Hinckley. 1992. *Follow the Leader*. New York: Basic Books.

Burridge, Kenelm. 1969, *New Heaven, New Earth: A Study of Millenarian Activities*. Schocken Books.

Canes-Wrone, Brandice. 2006. *Who Leads Whom? Presidents, Policy, and the Public*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Cavari, Amnon. 2013. "The Short-Term Effect of Going Public." *Political Research Quarterly* 66: 336?51.

Chernow, Ron. 2010. *Washington: A Life*. New York: Penguin Press.

Chwe, Michael Suk-Young. 2013. *Rational Ritual: Culture, Coordination, and Common Knowledge*. Princton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Cohen, Jeffery E. 2015. *Presidential Leadership In Public Opinion: Causes and Consequences*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Coppock, Alexander. 2017. "Generalizing from Survey Experiments Conducted on Mechanical Turk: A Replication Approach." *Political Science Research and Methods*. Forthcoming.

Druckman, James and Justin Holmes. 2004. "Does Presidential Rhetoric Matter? Priming and Presidential Approval." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 34(4): 755-778.

Dunn, Oliver Jean. 1961. "Mulitple Comparisons Among Means." *Journal of the Ameri-*

can Statistical Association 56(293): 52-64.

Edwards, George C., III. 1983. *Public Presidency: The Pursuit of Popular Support.* London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Edwards, George C., III. 2003. *On Deaf Ears: The Limits of the Bully Pulpit.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

———. 2009. *Governing by Campaigning: The Politics of the Bush Presidency.* New York: Longman.

———. 2009. "Leading the Public." in *The Oxford Handbook of The American Presidency*, edited by George C. Edwards III and William G. Howell. Oxford University Press.

———. 2009. *The Strategic President: Persuasion and Opportunity in Presidential Leadership.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Edwards, George C. III and Stpehen J. Wayne. 2011. *Presidential Leadership: Politics and Policy Making.* Stamford, CT: Wadsworth Publishing.

Edelman, Murray. 1964. *The Symbolic Uses of Politics.* Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

———. 1971. *Politics as Symbolic Action: Mass Arousal and Quiescence.* New York: Academic Press.

Eshbaugh-Soha, Matthew. 2015. "Presidential Persuasion and Public Opinion." *Oxford Bibliographies: Political Science.* Oxford University Press.

———. 2016. "Going Public and Presidential Leadership." *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics.* Oxford University Press.

———, and Jeffrey S. Peake. 2011. *Breaking through the Noise: Presidential Leadership, Public Opinion, and the News Media.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Franco, Annie, Justin Grimmer, and Chloe Lim. 2017. "The Limited Effect of Presidential Appeals." University of Chicago Mimeo.

Gabel, Matthew and Kenneth Scheve. 2007. "Estimating the Effect of Elite Communica-

tions on Public Opinion." *American Journal of Political Science* 51(4): 1013-1028.

Gerber, Alan S., James G. Gimpel, Donald P. Green, and Daron R. Shaw. 2011. "How Large and Long-Lasting Are the Persuasive Effects of Televised Campaign Ads? Results from a Randomized Field Experiment." *American Political Science Review* 105 (1): 135-50.

Gerber, Alan S. and Donald P. Green. 2012. *Field Experiments: Design, Analysis and Interpretation.* New York, New York: W.W. Norton and Company.

Grabe, Maria and Erik Bucy. 2009. *Image Bit Politics: News and the Visual Framing of Elections.* New York, New York: Oxford University Press.

Hetherington, Marc. 2006. *Why Trust Matters: Declining Political Trust and the Demise of American Liberalism.* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Hill, Kim Quaile. 1998. "The Policy Agendas of the President and the Mass Public: A Research Validation and Extension." *American Journal of Political Science* 42: 1328-34.

Hinckley, Barbara. 1990. *The Symbolic Presidency: How Presidents Portray Themselves.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Kernell, Samuel. 2007. *Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership.* 4th ed. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press.

Kertzer, David I. 1989. *Ritual, Politics, and Power.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Kohrs Campbell, Karlyn and Kathleen Hall Jamieson. *deeds Done in words: Presidential Rhetoric and the Genres of Governance.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Krueger, Alan. 1999. "Experimental Estimates of Education Production Functions." *Quarterly Journal of Economics.* 114(2): 497-532.

Lowi, Theodore J. 1985. *The Personal President: Power Invested, Promise Unfulfilled.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Mattes, Kyle, Michael Spezio, Hackjin Kim, Alexander Todorov, Ralph Adolphs and R.

Michael Alvarez. 2010. "Predicting Election Outcomes from Positive and Negative Trait Assessments of Candidate Images." *Political Psychology.* 31 (1): 41-58.

Miroff, Bruce. 1988. "The Presidency and the Public: Leadership as Spectacle." In *The Presidency and the Political System, 2nd Edition*, edited by Michael Nelson. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press.

Mullinx, Kevin J., Thomas J. Leeper, James N. Druckman and Jeremy Freese. 2015. "The Generalizeability of Survey Experiments." *Journal of Experimental Political Science.* 2: 109–138.

Mummulo, Jonathan and Erik Peterson. 2017. "Demand Effects in Survey Experiments: An Empirical Assessment." Stanford University mimeo. Available at `https://scholar.princeton.edu/sites/default/files/jmummolo/files/demand_effects_5_17_2017.pdf`

Nyhan, Brendan, Ethan Porter, Jason Reifler and Thomas Wood. 2017. "Taking Corrections Literally But Not Seriously? The Effects of Information on Factual Beliefs and Candidate Favorability." Working paper.

O'Connell, Michael. January 21, 2017. "TV Ratings: Trump Inauguration Sinks 18 Percent From Obama's in 2009." *The Hollywood Reporter.* Accessed via `http://bit.ly/2jkic5Y`

Page, Benjamin I., and Robert Y. Shapiro. 1985. "Presidential Leadership through Public Opinion." In *The Presidency and Public Policy Making*, edited by George C. Edwards III, Steven A. Shull, and Norman C. Thomas. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

——— ——— and Glenn R. Dempsey. 1987. "What Moves Public Opinion?" *American Political Science Review* 81: 23-44.

Pew Research Center. 2017. "Public Trust in Government: 1958-2017." Pew Research Center. Accessed via `http://pewrsr.ch/2qSKokQ`

Ragsdale, Lyn. 1984. "The Politics of Presidential Speechmaking, 1949-1980." *American*

Political Science Review 78: 971-84.

——— 1987. "Presidential Speechmaking and the Public Audience: Individual Presidents and Group Attitudes." *Journal of Politics* 49: 704-36.

——— 2014. *Vital Statistics on the Presidency.* Fourth Edition. Washington, DC: CQ.

Rottinghaus, Brandon. 2010. *The Provisional Pulpit: Modern Presidential Leadership of Public Opinion.* College Station: Texas A&M University Press.

Schechner, Richard. 1988. *Performance Theory.* London and New York: Routledge.

Simon, Dennis M., and Charles W. Ostrom Jr. 1989. "The Impact of Televised Speeches and Foreign Travel on Presidential Approval." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 53: 58?82.

Sovey, Addison J., and Donald P. Green. 2011. "Instrumental Variables Estimation in Political Science: A Readers' Guide." *American Journal of Political Science* 55 (1): 188-200.

Stuckey, Mary and Frederick Antczak. 1998. "The Rhetorical Presidency: Deepening Vision, Widening Change." *Communication Yearbook* 21: 405-41.

Thomas, Kyle A. and Scott Clifford. 2017. "Validity and Mechanical Turk: An Assessment of Exclusion Methods and Interactive Experiments." *Computers in Human Behavior* 77: 184-197.

Todorov, Alexander, Anesu N. Mandisodza, Amir Goren and Crystal C. Hal. 2005. "Inferences of Competence from Faces Predict Election Outcomes." *Science* 308: 1623-1626.

Tulis, Jeffrey K. 1987. *The Rhetorical Presidency.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Turner, Victor. 1995. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure.* New York: Routledge Press.

Wedeen, Lisa. 1999. *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria.* University of Chicago Press.

———. 2008. *Peripheral Visions: Publics, Power, and Performance in Yemen.* University of

Chicago Press.

Wood, B. Dan. 2007. *The Politics of Economic Leadership: The Causes and Consequences of Economic Leadership.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Public Opinion.* New York, New York: Cambridge University Press.

7 Appendix

Table of Contents

Study	Condition and time frame	Wave			
		1	2	3	4
Study 1: Inauguration	Control (N)	765	580	410	311
	Treatment (N)	731	495	361	276
	Start Date	Jan 16 2017	Jan 20 2017	Jan 27 2017	May 31 2017
	End Date	Jan 16 2017	Jan 21 2017	Jan 28 2017	Jun 7 2017
Study 2: State of the Union	Control	622	364	265	
	Treatment	596	463	364	
	Start Date	Feb 23 2017	Feb 28 2017	Mar 7 2017	
	End Date	Feb 24 2017	Mar 1 2017	Mar 8 2017	
Study 3: Source of ritual's appeal	Positive text	240			
	Neutral text	225			
	Negative text	216			
	Positive picture positive text	246			
	Positive picture negative text	225			
	Negative picture positive text	213			
	Negative picture negative text	225			
	Start Date	May 18 2017			
	End Date	May 19 2017			

Table A.1: Experimental participation and time frame, by study and wave. Dates indicate the day of the first and last participant in each study.

Table A.2: Balance results by condition, study, and wave.

Study	Covariate	Level	Wave 1 Control	Wave 1 Treatment	Wave 1 χ^2(V)	Wave 2 Control	Wave 2 Treatment	Wave 2 χ^2(V)	Wave 3 Control	Wave 3 Treatment	Wave 3 χ^2(V)	Overall Control	Overall Treatment	Overall χ^2(V)
Study 1	Education	HSD or less	12	11	.47 (.02)	12	12	.53 (.02)	12	13	.46 (.02)	12	12	.97 (.02)
		Some college	38	39		37	39		34	36		37	38	
		BA or more	50	50		51	49		53	51		51	50	
	Ideology	Conservative	26	26	.37 (.03)	25	27	.71 (.04)	24	27	1.2 (.03)	25	27	1.87 (.02)
		Moderate	18	19		17	18		19	20		18	19	
		Liberal	56	55		57	55		57	53		57	55	
	Party	Republican	24	27	1.38 (.02)	23	27	2.25 (.05)	23	27	2.51 (.06)	24	27	5.72 (.05)
		Independent	21	21		21	21		21	21		21	21	
		Democratic	55	52		56	52		56	51		56	52	
	Vote 16	Trump	30	30	.83 (.02)	29	31	.50 (.02)	28	32	1.59 (.02)	29	31	1.19 (.05)
		Clinton	53	52		53	52		55	51		54	52	
		Other	17	18		17	16		17	17		17	17	
Study 2	Education	HSD or less	5	11	14.82*** (.11)	8	11	1.72 (.03)	9	11	.54 (.04)	7	11	14.24* (.08)
		Some college	39	34		35	35		31	32		37	34	
		BA or more	55	55		58	55		60	58		57	55	
	Ideology	Conservative	25	25	.01 (.05)	29	23	2.68 (.06)	32	24	3.28 (.04)	27	24	2.66 (.05)
		Moderate	19	19		18	18		16	18		18	19	
		Liberal	56	56		53	58		52	57		55	57	
	Party	Republican	26	24	.60 (.04)	28	22	2.78 (.07)	29	24	1.6 (.05)	27	23	3.21 (.05)
		Independent	22	24		22	23		19	22		22	23	
		Democratic	52	52		50	55		52	54		51	53	
	Vote 16	Trump	25	26	.20 (.04)	27	26	1.42 (.07)	28	28	.23 (.05)	26	27	.27 (.06)
		Clinton	51	50		48	52		52	50		50	51	
		Other	24	24		25	22		20	22		23	23	

Table A.2: Balance results by condition, study, and wave. Each column represents the conditional proportions across each pre-treatment covariate. The italicized text next to each column reports the χ^2 statistic for each table above, and in the parentheses, the Cohen's effect estimate associated with the table.

	Inauguration				State of the Union		
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3
Treatment	.14(.1)	.35**(.13)	.29*(.15)	.11(.16)	.08(.11)	.19(.14)	.11(.16)
Bring the country together after a divisive presidential election	-.49***(.1)	-.56***(.12)	-.61***(.14)	-.59*(.16)	-.62***(.11)	-.62***(.15)	-.64***(.18)
Defend the nation's interests when negotiating with foreign states	.47***(.1)	.55***(.12)	.53***(.14)	.43**(.16)	.43***(.11)	.35*(.15)	.38*(.18)
Earn the respect of those who did not vote for him	-.49***(.1)	-.53***(.12)	-.56***(.14)	-.60***(.16)	-.60***(.11)	-.76***(.15)	-.67***(.18)
Improve economic growth	.55***(.1)	.55***(.12)	.56***(.14)	.45**(.16)	.61***(.11)	.49**(.15)	.56**(.18)
Perform the duties and obligations of the office of the presidency	.30**(.1)	.28*(.12)	.23(.14)	.17(.16)	.30**(.11)	.09(.15)	.14(.18)
Persuade the public of his policy positions	.05(.1)	.06(.12)	-.13(.14)	-.04(.16)	-.14(.11)	-.29(.15)	-.19(.18)
Work productively with Congress	.30**(.1)	.32**(.12)	.33*(.14)	.05(.16)	.36***(.11)	.12(.15)	.15(.18)
Treatment x bring the country together after a divisive presidential election	-.04(.15)	.01(.18)	-.02(.21)	-.03(.23)	-.06(.16)	-.02(.2)	-.12(.23)
Treatment x defend the nation's interests when negotiating with foreign states	-.07(.15)	-.14(.18)	-.05(.21)	-.06(.23)	-.06(.16)	.12(.2)	.001(.23)
Treatment x earn the respect of those who did not vote for him	-.06(.15)	-.13(.18)	-.13(.21)	-.14(.23)	-.10(.16)	.06(.2)	-.12(.23)
Treatment x improve economic growth	-.08(.15)	-.14(.18)	-.02(.21)	.02(.23)	-.06(.16)	.14(.2)	.04(.23)
Treatment x perform the duties and obligations of the office of the presidency	-.05(.15)	-.03(.18)	.07(.21)	.05(.23)	-.13(.16)	.14(.2)	.05(.23)
Treatment x persuade the public of his policy positions	.001(.15)	-.16(.18)	-.11(.21)	-.19(.23)	-.05(.16)	.20(.2)	-.08(.23)
Treatment x work productively with Congress	-.05(.15)	-.09(.18)	-.06(.21)	-.08(.23)	-.14(.16)	.02(.2)	-.12(.23)
Auxiliary Quantities–Treatment effect by survey item							
act in the best interests of the nation as a whole	.14	.35**	.29*	.11	.08	.19	.11
bring the country together after a divisive presidential election	.10	.35**	.28	.08	.03	.17	-.01
defend the nation's interests when negotiating with foreign states	.07	.21	.25	.04	.02	.31*	.12
earn the respect of those who did not vote for him	.09	.22	.17	-.03	-.02	.24	-.01
improve economic growth	.06	.20	.27	.13	.03	.33*	.15
perform the duties and obligations of the office of the presidency	.09	.32*	.36*	.16	-.05	.33*	.17
persuade the public of his policy positions	.14	.19	.19	-.09	.04	.39**	.03
work productively with Congress	.09	.26*	.24	.03	-.06	.21	000
adj.r.squared	.03	.04	.05	.04	.05	.05	.04
statistic	27.74	23.9	2.43	12.52	32.42	22.63	16.56
BIC	50,78.26	36,955.8	26,437.85	19,828.34	40,815.06	28,192.05	21,502.68
n	11,968	8,600	6,168	4,696	9,744	6,616	5,032

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A.3: Regression estimates of treatment effects on confidence that Trump will fulfill obligations of Presidency, by study and wave. Auxillary quantities are multiple comparisons, correcting for the family-wise error rate.

	Inauguration				State of the Union		
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3
Treatment	.11(.11)	.32*(.13)	.40*(.16)	.23(.18)	.001(.12)	.28(.15)	.14(.18)
Trump has a clear understanding of where the country must go	.001(.11)	.03(.13)	.10(.15)	.05(.17)	-.07(.12)	.001(.16)	.06(.19)
Trump is a true leader	.01(.11)	.02(.13)	.03(.15)	.04(.17)	-.12(.12)	-.12(.16)	-.08(.19)
Trump is committed to traditional American values	.41***(.11)	-.54***(.13)	.42**(.15)	.56**(.17)	.50***(.12)	.47**(.16)	.50**(.19)
Trump is not beholden to any private or foreign influences	-.10(.11)	-.22(.13)	.001(.15)	.02(.17)	-.14(.12)	-.22(.16)	-.20(.19)
Trump loves the Constitution and understands the rights and responsibilities it bestows	-.08(.11)	-.06(.13)	-.07(.15)	.10(.17)	-.09(.12)	-.11(.16)	-.12(.19)
Trump speaks with clarity and conviction about the changes our nation needs	.10(.11)	.24(.13)	.22(.15)	.17(.17)	-.08(.12)	.02(.16)	.04(.19)
Trump supports the rights of free expression, freedom of religion, and free assembly	.04(.11)	.03(.13)	-.04(.15)	.34*(.17)	-.05(.12)	-.16(.16)	-.15(.19)
Treatment x Trump has a clear understanding of where the country must go	.05(.16)	-.02(.19)	-.14(.22)	-.15(.25)	.02(.17)	-.03(.22)	-.08(.25)
Treatment x Trump is a true leader	.01(.16)	-.13(.19)	.001(.22)	-.07(.25)	-.01(.17)	-.09(.22)	.05(.25)
Treatment x Trump is committed to traditional American values	.01(.16)	-.03(.19)	-.07(.22)	-.13(.25)	-.05(.17)	-.04(.22)	-.11(.25)
Treatment x Trump is not beholden to any private or foreign influences	.02(.16)	-.04(.19)	-.02(.22)	-.17(.25)	.02(.17)	-.05(.22)	.10(.25)
Treatment x Trump loves the Constitution and understands the rights and responsibilities it bestows	-.06(.16)	-.05(.19)	-.07(.22)	-.21(.25)	-.03(.17)	-.15(.22)	-.02(.25)
Treatment x Trump speaks with clarity and conviction about the changes our nation needs	.04(.16)	-.06(.19)	-.09(.22)	-.26(.25)	.10(.17)	.12(.22)	.01(.25)
Treatment x Trump supports the rights of free expression, freedom of religion, and free assembly					.04(.17)	.001(.22)	.17(.25)
Auxiliary Quantities–Treatment effect by survey item							
Trump's loyalties are to the country, above all else	.11	.32*	.40*	.23	000	.28	.14
Trump has a clear understanding of where the country must go	.16	.30*	.36*	.24	.02	.25	.06
Trump is a true leader	.12	.19	.26	.09	-.01	.20	.18
Trump is committed to traditional American values	.12	.19	.41**	.16	-.05	.24	.02
Trump is not beholden to any private or foreign influences	.12	.30*	.33*	.10	.02	.23	.24
Trump loves the Constitution and understands the rights and responsibilities it bestows	.13	.28*	.38*	.07	-.03	.13	.12
Trump speaks with clarity and conviction about the changes our nation needs	.05	.27*	.33*	.03	.11	.40**	.15
Trump supports the rights of free expression, freedom of religion, and free assembly	.16	.26	.31*	-.03	.04	.28	.30
adj.r.squared	.02	.01	.01	.02	.01	.01	.02
statistic	4.57	6.89	4.9	2.44	5.23	5.72	2.52
BIC	52,084.44	38,001.65	27,285.71	20,701.13	42,034.6	29,243.3	22,328.53
n	11,968	8,600	6,168	4,696	9,744	6,616	5,032

Note: * $p<0.1$; ** $p<0.05$; *** $p<0.01$

Table A.4: Regression estimates of treatment effects on extent to which Trump exemplifies democratic values, by study and wave. Auxiliary quantities are multiple comparisons, correcting for the family-wise error rate.

	Steward of natl. mood	Standing among elites	Exemplar of lib.dem values
Negative Picture, Negative Text	.003	−.01	.01
	(.03)	(.03)	(.03)
Positive Picture, Negative Text	.14***	.10***	.15***
	(.04)	(.03)	(.04)
Negative Picture, Positive Text	−.03	−.02	.001
	(.04)	(.03)	(.04)
Positive Picture, Positive Text	.11***	.07***	.13***
	(.03)	(.03)	(.03)
Observations	734	734	734
R^2	.04	.03	.04
Adjusted R^2	.04	.02	.03
Residual Std. Error (df = 729)	.30	.26	.32
F Statistic (df = 4; 729)	7.95***	5.31***	7.19***

Note: *p$<$0.1; **p$<$0.05; ***p$<$0.01

Table A.5: Study Three regression estimates. These models provide the empirical estimates for the multiple comparisons reported in figure 7.

54

	Inauguration				State of the Union		
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3
Treatment	.01(.1)	.07(.11)	.18(.14)	-.03(.15)	.07(.1)	.17(.13)	-.10(.15)
Democrats in Congress	-2.19***(.09)	-2.26***(.11)	-2.12***(.13)	-2.06***(.15)	-2.16***(.1)	-2.20***(.13)	-2.32***(.16)
Foreign Leaders	-1.18***(.09)	-1.27***(.11)	-1.32***(.13)	-1.26***(.15)	-1.38***(.1)	-1.52***(.13)	-1.46***(.16)
Military Leaders	-.72***(.09)	-.65***(.11)	-.66***(.13)	-.50***(.15)	-.58***(.1)	-.74***(.13)	-.78***(.16)
Republicans in Congress	-.18(.09)	-.15(.11)	-.10(.13)	-.12(.15)	-.08(.1)	-.03(.13)	-.11(.16)
Scientific Leaders	-1.88***(.09)	-1.95***(.11)	-2000***(.13)	-1.81***(.15)	-1.97***(.1)	-2.04***(.13)	-2.12***(.16)
The National Press Corps	-1.82***(.09)	-1.90***(.11)	-1.93***(.13)	-1.93***(.15)	-1.94***(.1)	-2.08***(.13)	-2.15***(.16)
The Supreme Court	-1.10***(.09)	-1.10***(.11)	-1.07***(.13)	-.96***(.15)	-1.09***(.1)	-1.23***(.13)	-1.20***(.16)
Treatment x Democrats in Congress	.07(.14)	.12(.16)	.001(.19)	.23(.22)	-.07(.15)	-.23(.18)	.02(.21)
Treatment x Foreign Leaders	.04(.14)	.14(.16)	.14(.19)	.20(.22)	-.07(.15)	.12(.18)	.27(.21)
Treatment x Military Leaders	.06(.14)	.17(.16)	.10(.19)	.09(.22)	-.15(.15)	.06(.18)	.29(.21)
Treatment x Republicans in Congress	-.02(.14)	.05(.16)	-.04(.19)	.15(.22)	-.12(.15)	.06(.18)	.02(.21)
Treatment x Scientific Leaders	.04(.14)	.12(.16)	.15(.19)	.19(.22)	-.05(.15)	-.07(.18)	.20(.21)
Treatment x The National Press Corps	.01(.14)	.11(.16)	.02(.19)	.26(.22)	-.07(.15)	-.13(.18)	.01(.21)
Treatment x The Supreme Court	.07(.14)	.14(.16)	.14(.19)	.12(.22)	-.06(.15)	.06(.18)	.17(.21)
Auxiliary Quantities–Treatment effect by survey item							
Business Leaders	.01	.07	.18	-.03	.07	.17	-.10
Democrats in Congress	.08	.19	.18	.20	.001	-.06	-.08
Foreign Leaders	.05	.21	.31*	.16	.001	.29*	.17
Military Leaders	.07	.24*	.27*	.06	-.08	.23	.19
Republicans in Congress	-.01	.12	.13	.12	-.05	.23	-.08
Scientific Leaders	.05	.18	.33*	.15	.03	.10	.10
The National Press Corps	.02	.18	.20	.22	.001	.04	-.09
The Supreme Court	.08	.21	.32*	.08	.01	.23	.07
adj.r.squared	.14	.15	.15	.13	.16	.19	.18
F	128.76	10.57	72.61	48.74	127.22	104.45	74.31
BIC	48,883.21	35,34.74	25,394.67	19,341.22	39,326.22	26,745	20,38.37
n	11,968	8,600	6,168	4,696	9,744	6,616	5,032

Note: $^*p<0.1$; $^{**}p<0.05$; $^{***}p<0.01$

Table A.6: Regression estimates of treatment effects on perceived respect Trump enjoys from other elites, by study and wave. Auxiliary quantities are multiple comparisons, correcting for the family-wise error rate.

		Control	Inauguration
Watch Inauguration	Yes	48.4	84.8
	No	51.6	15.2
Watch Trump Oath	All of it	71.2	81.2
	Some of it	23.8	15.2
	None of it	5	3.6
Watch Trump Inaugural	All of it	68.3	78.6
	Some of it	29.2	19.8
	None of it	2.5	1.7
Watch Pence Oath	All of it	56.6	64.8
	Some of it	22.1	18.8
	None of it	21.4	16.4
Recognizes Roberts		29.5	52.3

Table A.7: Patterns of reported compliance and factual tests of compliance for inauguration study.

	State of the Union		
	1	2	3
Treatment			
Treatment	-.12(.11)	-.05(.13)	-.04(.16)
A wall should be constructed on the US-Mexico border	.98***(.11)	.92***(.14)	1.000***(.17)
America's gun laws have become too restrictive.	.77***(.11)	.79***(.14)	.92***(.17)
Chicago is out of control–federal officers should be deployed	.35***(.11)	.34*(.14)	.44**(.17)
Climate change agreements will unnecessarily hurt the economy.	.83***(.11)	.83***(.14)	.91***(.17)
Federal regulations that hurt business should be eliminated.	-.93***(.11)	-.83***(.14)	-.77***(.17)
Immigration should be restricted the Middle East.	.40**(.11)	.39*(.14)	.46*(.17)
Number one U.S. foreign policy goal is the destruction of ISIS.	-.13(.11)	-.34*(.14)	-.14(.17)
Planned Parenthood should be defunded.	.92***(.11)	1.03***(.14)	1.04***(.17)
Taxes should be lowered.	-.91***(.11)	-.97***(.14)	-.83***(.17)
The U.S. should improve its relationship with India.	-1.40***(.11)	-1.25***(.14)	-1.07***(.17)
The US should pursue cooperative relations with Russia.	-.51***(.11)	-.43*(.14)	-.28(.17)
Trade deals should be renegotiated.	-.01(.11)	-.17(.14)	.06(.17)
Treatment x A wall should be constructed on the US-Mexico border	.08(.15)	.04(.19)	-.09(.22)
Treatment x America's gun laws have become too restrictive.	.02(.15)	.07(.19)	-.02(.22)
Treatment x Chicago is out of control–federal officers should be deployed	.02(.15)	.05(.19)	.08(.22)
Treatment x Climate change agreements will unnecessarily hurt the economy.	.02(.15)	.04(.19)	-.13(.22)
Treatment x Federal regulations that hurt business should be eliminated.	.18(.15)	-.09(.19)	-.04(.22)
Treatment x Immigration should be restricted,the Middle East.	.12(.15)	.07(.19)	-.04(.22)
Treatment x Number one U.S. foreign policy goal is the destruction of ISIS.	-.09(.15)	.10(.19)	.02(.22)
Treatment x Planned Parenthood should be defunded.	.07(.15)	-.01(.19)	-.09(.22)
Treatment x Taxes should be lowered.	-.02(.15)	-.01(.19)	-.09(.22)
Treatment x The U.S. should improve its relationship with India.	.08(.15)	-.06(.19)	.01(.22)
Treatment x b]The US should pursue cooperative relations with Russia.	.06(.15)	.001(.19)	-.07(.22)
Treatment x Trade deals should be renegotiated.	-.06(.15)	-.04(.19)	-.11(.22)
Auxiliary Quantities–Treatment effect by survey item			
'Obamacare,' should be repealed and replaced	-.12	-.05	-.04
A wall should be constructed on the US-Mexico border	-.03	-.02	-.13
America's gun laws have become too restrictive.	-.10	.01	-.06
Chicago is out of control–federal officers should be deployed	-.10	.000	.04
Climate change agreements will unnecessarily hurt the economy.	-.09	-.02	-.17
Federal regulations that hurt business should be eliminated.	.07	-.15	-.08
Immigration should be restricted the Middle East.	.000	.02	-.08
Number one U.S. foreign policy goal is the destruction of ISIS.	-.20	.04	-.02
Planned Parenthood should be defunded.	-.05	-.06	-.13
Taxes should be lowered.	-.14	-.06	-.13
The U.S. should improve its relationship with India.	-.04	-.12	-.03
The US should pursue cooperative relations with Russia.	-.06	-.05	-.11
Trade deals should be renegotiated.	-.17	-.09	-.15
adj.r.squared	.14	.13	.11
statistic	101.58	66.06	43.34
BIC	64,903.38	44,693.67	34,062.64
n	15,808	10,738	8,171

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A.8: Regression estimates of treatment effects on agreement with Trump's policy preferences, by study and wave. Auxiliary quantities are multiple comparisons, correcting for the family-wise error rate.

Table A.9 — Structural equation modeling measurement loadings. Studies and study waves indicated in column labels.

		Inauguration				State of the Union		
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3
Confidence	..perform the duties of the office	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	..bring the country together	0.83(.01)	0.87(.02)	0.79(.02)	0.72(.02)	0.73(.01)	0.77(.02)	0.73(.02)
	..earn the respect of those who opposed him	0.79(.01)	0.80(.02)	0.75(.02)	0.67(.02)	0.70(.02)	0.71(.02)	0.68(.02)
	..will improve economic growth	0.95(.02)	0.96(.02)	0.92(.02)	0.94(.02)	0.94(.02)	0.92(.02)	0.94(.02)
	..act in the best interests of the nation as a whole	1.01(.01)	1.05(.01)	1.02(.02)	1.01(.02)	1.03(.01)	1.01(.02)	1.02(.02)
	..defend the nation's economic and security interests	0.98(.02)	0.96(.02)	0.96(.02)	0.97(.02)	0.97(.02)	0.96(.02)	0.98(.02)
	..persuade the public of his policy positions	0.82(.01)	0.85(.02)	0.81(.02)	0.79(.02)	0.75(.02)	0.78(.02)	0.78(.02)
	..work productively with Congress	0.81(.02)	0.80(.02)	0.81(.02)	0.79(.02)	0.77(.02)	0.78(.02)	0.78(.02)
Elites' respect	..Republicans in congress	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	..business leaders	1.05(.04)	1.13(.05)	1.08(.05)	1.12(.06)	1.12(.05)	1.18(.06)	1.23(.07)
	..Democrats in congress	1.02(.04)	1.14(.04)	0.98(.04)	1.09(.06)	1.14(.05)	1.10(.06)	0.95(.06)
	..foreign leaders	1.38(.04)	1.45(.05)	1.32(.05)	1.47(.07)	1.55(.06)	1.57(.07)	1.49(.07)
	..US military leaders	1.30(.04)	1.39(.05)	1.31(.05)	1.35(.07)	1.45(.06)	1.50(.07)	1.47(.07)
	..the national press corps	1.14(.04)	1.20(.05)	1.10(.05)	1.09(.06)	1.19(.05)	1.18(.06)	0.99(.06)
	..scientific leaders	1.21(.04)	1.31(.05)	1.14(.05)	1.25(.06)	1.32(.05)	1.33(.06)	1.21(.06)
	..the US courts	1.22(.04)	1.30(.04)	1.22(.05)	1.27(.06)	1.34(.05)	1.40(.06)	1.30(.06)
Democratic values	Trump is a true leader	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	has a clear understanding of where the country must go	1.01(.02)	1.03(.02)	1.02(.02)	1.02(.02)	1.02(.01)	1.01(.02)	1.02(.02)
	Trump speaks with clarity about the changes our nation needs	0.97(.02)	0.96(.02)	0.97(.02)	0.95(.03)	0.98(.02)	0.96(.02)	0.97(.02)
	Trump is committed to traditional American values	0.86(.02)	0.86(.02)	0.88(.02)	0.89(.03)	0.89(.02)	0.88(.02)	0.91(.02)
	Trump loves and understands the Constitution	0.99(.02)	1.00(.02)	1.00(.02)	1.01(.02)	1.00(.02)	0.99(.02)	0.98(.02)
	Trump's loyalties are to the country, above all else	1.01(.02)	1.01(.02)	1.01(.02)	1.03(.02)	1.03(.02)	0.99(.02)	1.02(.02)
	Trump is not beholden to private/foreign influences	0.89(.02)	0.90(.02)	0.90(.02)	0.93(.02)	0.92(.02)	0.88(.02)	0.91(.02)
	Trump supports free expression, religion, assembly	0.95(.02)	0.96(.02)	0.95(.02)	0.99(.02)	0.97(.02)	0.96(.02)	0.96(.02)
Policy	Immigration should be restricted from Middle East.					1	1	1
	A wall should be built on US-Mexico border					1.01(.03)	1.07(.03)	1.05(.04)
	Federal officers should be deployed to stop the Chicago violence.					0.76(.03)	0.83(.03)	0.74(.04)
	The US should pursue cooperative relations with Russia.					0.63(.03)	0.65(.03)	0.65(.04)
	Planned Parenthood should be defunded.					0.93(.03)	0.97(.03)	0.98(.04)
	The number one foreign policy goal should be the destruction of ISIS.					0.64(.03)	0.65(.03)	0.70(.04)
	Climate change agreements will unnecessarily hurt the U.S. economy.					0.73(.03)	0.83(.03)	0.78(.03)
	Federal regulations that hurt business should be eliminated.					0.59(.02)	0.64(.03)	0.64(.03)
	The U.S. should improve its relationship with India.					-0.01(.02)	0.02(.02)	0.09(.03)
	America's gun laws have become too restrictive.					0.76(.03)	0.82(.03)	0.78(.04)
	Taxes should be lowered.					0.58(.03)	0.64(.03)	0.65(.04)
	Trade deals should be renegotiated.					0.77(.03)	0.81(.03)	0.83(.03)
	The ACA, or Obamacare, should be repealed and replaced					1.03(.03)	1.09(.03)	1.07(.04)

Table A.9: Structural equation modeling measurement loadings (the γ coefficients in figure A.2.) Standard errors are provided in parentheses. Studies and study waves indicated in column labels.

Item	Study	Wave	Intercept	Treatment	r squared	p value	n
earn the respect of those who did not vote for him	Inaug	1	2.60***(.07)	.09(.09)	.0006	.36	1496
		2	2.73***(.08)	.22(.11)	.0033	.059	1075
		3	2.48***(.09)	.17(.13)	.0021	.2	771
		4	2.30***(.10)	.03(.14)	.0001	.82	587
	SOTU	1	2.30***(.10)	.02(.10)	.00005	.83	1218
		2	2.43***(.07)	.24*(.12)	.0047	.05	827
		3	2.48***(.08)	.01(.14)	.00005	.95	629
persuade the public of his policy positions	Inaug	1	3.14***(.07)	.14(.10)	.0014	.14	1496
		2	3.32***(.08)	.19(.12)	.0023	.12	1075
		3	2.91***(.09)	.19(.14)	.0024	.17	771
		4	2.86***(.10)	.09(.15)	.0006	.57	587
	SOTU	1	2.76***(.11)	.04(.10)	.0001	.72	1218
		2	2.90***(.12)	.39**(.13)	.0111	.0024	827
		3	2.95***(.08)	.03(.15)	.0001	.82	629
work productively with Congress	Inaug	1	3.38***(.07)	.09(.10)	.0005	.39	1496
		2	3.58***(.08)	.26*(.12)	.0042	.034	1075
		3	3.37***(.10)	.24(.14)	.0036	.098	771
		4	2.95***(.10)	.03(.15)	.00005	.87	587
	SOTU	1	3.26***(.09)	.06(.11)	.0002	.6	1218
		2	3.32***(.11)	.21(.13)	.0029	.12	827
		3	3.29***(.12)	.15(.15)	.00005	.97	629
bring country together after divisive election	Inaug	1	2.59***(.07)	.10(.10)	.0008	.28	1496
		2	2.69***(.08)	.35**(.12)	.0079	.0035	1075
		3	2.42***(.09)	.28*(.14)	.0054	.042	771
		4	2.30***(.10)	.08(.14)	.0005	.58	587
	SOTU	1	2.28***(.07)	.03(.10)	.0001	.79	1218
		2	2.57***(.08)	.17(.13)	.0020	.2	827
		3	2.51***(.09)	.01(.14)	.00005	.95	629
defend national interests in foreign negotiations	Inaug	1	3.56***(.08)	.07(.11)	.0003	.52	1496
		2	3.81***(.09)	.21(.13)	.0022	.12	1075
		3	3.57***(.11)	.25(.16)	.0031	.12	771
		4	3.32***(.12)	.04(.18)	.0001	.8	587
	SOTU	1	3.33***(.08)	.02(.12)	.00005	.86	1218
		2	3.55***(.09)	.31*(.15)	.0050	.043	827
		3	3.52***(.11)	.12(.18)	.0007	.52	629
improve economic growth	Inaug	1	3.64***(.08)	.06(.11)	.0002	.59	1496
		2	3.81***(.09)	.20(.13)	.0022	.12	1075
		3	3.60***(.11)	.27(.15)	.0040	.078	771
		4	3.34***(.12)	.13(.18)	.0009	.46	587
	SOTU	1	3.51***(.09)	.03(.12)	.00005	.83	1218
		2	3.69***(.10)	.33*(.15)	.0058	.029	827
		3	3.71***(.08)	.15(.18)	.0012	.39	629
act in the best interests of the nation as a whole	Inaug	1	3.09***(.08)	.14(.11)	.0011	.2	1496
		2	3.26***(.09)	.35*(.13)	.0061	.011	1075
		3	3.04***(.11)	.29(.16)	.0044	.065	771
		4	2.89***(.12)	.11(.18)	.0006	.55	587
	SOTU	1	2.90***(.09)	.08(.12)	.0004	.5	1218
		2	3.20***(.11)	.19(.16)	.0018	.23	827
		3	3.14***(.12)	.11(.18)	.0007	.52	629
perform duties and obligations of presidency	Inaug	1	3.38***(.08)	.09(.11)	.0005	.4	1496
		2	3.54***(.09)	.32*(.13)	.0054	.016	1075
		3	3.27***(.11)	.36*(.16)	.0069	.021	771
		4	3.07***(.12)	.16(.18)	.0013	.38	587
	SOTU	1	3.19***(.12)	.05(.12)	.0001	.7	1218
		2	3.29***(.08)	.33*(.15)	.0056	.031	827
		3	3.28***(.09)	.17(.18)	.0015	.34	629

Table A.10: Regression estimates of treatment effects on confidence in Trump fulfilling the responsibilities of office, by item, study, and wave. Each line represent a separate linear model.

Item	Study	Wave	Intercept	Treatment	r squared	p value	n
Trump is a true leader	Inaug	1	3.18***(.08)	.12(.11)	.0008	.28	1496
		2	3.31***(.09)	.19(.14)	.0018	.17	1075
		3	3.03***(.11)	.26(.16)	.0035	.1	771
		4	2.89***(.12)	.09(.18)	.0004	.62	587
	SOTU	1	2.81***(.08)	.01(.12)	.00005	.95	1218
		2	3.05***(.09)	.20(.15)	.0019	.21	827
		3	3.06***(.11)	.18(.18)	.0016	.31	629
Trump loves the Constitution and rights	Inaug	1	3.10***(.08)	.13(.11)	.0010	.23	1496
		2	3.23***(.09)	.28*(.13)	.0040	.038	1075
		3	2.93***(.11)	.38*(.16)	.0076	.016	771
		4	2.95***(.12)	.07(.18)	.0002	.71	587
	SOTU	1	2.84***(.07)	.03(.12)	.00005	.81	1218
		2	3.05***(.08)	.13(.15)	.0009	.4	827
		3	3.02***(.09)	.12(.17)	.0008	.49	629
Trump is committed to traditional American values	Inaug	1	3.59***(.08)	.12(.11)	.0009	.26	1496
		2	3.83***(.09)	.19(.13)	.0020	.14	1075
		3	3.42***(.10)	.41**(.15)	.0093	.0073	771
		4	3.41***(.12)	.16(.17)	.0016	.34	587
	SOTU	1	3.43***(.09)	.05(.12)	.0001	.68	1218
		2	3.63***(.11)	.24(.15)	.0032	.1	827
		3	3.63***(.12)	.02(.18)	.00005	.89	629
Trump supports free expression, assembly, religion	Inaug	1	3.22***(.08)	.16(.11)	.0013	.16	1496
		2	3.32***(.09)	.26(.13)	.0036	.05	1075
		3	2.96***(.11)	.31*(.15)	.0052	.045	771
		4	3.20***(.12)	.03(.18)	.00005	.89	587
	SOTU	1	2.88***(.09)	.04(.12)	.0001	.74	1218
		2	3.00***(.11)	.28(.15)	.0043	.06	827
		3	2.98***(.12)	.30(.18)	.0047	.086	629
Trump not beholden to private or foreign influence	Inaug	1	3.08***(.07)	.12(.11)	.0009	.25	1496
		2	3.07***(.09)	.30*(.13)	.0047	.025	1075
		3	3.00***(.11)	.33*(.15)	.0060	.031	771
		4	2.87***(.12)	.10(.18)	.0006	.56	587
	SOTU	1	2.79***(.09)	.02(.12)	.00005	.84	1218
		2	2.94***(.10)	.23(.15)	.0030	.12	827
		3	2.93***(.08)	.24(.17)	.0030	.17	629
Trump speaks clearly about changes nation needs	Inaug	1	3.28***(.08)	.05(.11)	.0001	.65	1496
		2	3.53***(.09)	.27*(.14)	.0037	.047	1075
		3	3.22***(.11)	.33*(.16)	.0054	.041	771
		4	3.03***(.12)	.03(.18)	.00005	.87	587
	SOTU	1	2.85***(.11)	.11(.12)	.0006	.38	1218
		2	3.19***(.12)	.40*(.16)	.0080	.01	827
		3	3.17***(.08)	.15(.18)	.0011	.4	629
Trump has clear understanding where country must go	Inaug	1	3.18***(.08)	.16(.11)	.0014	.15	1496
		2	3.32***(.09)	.30*(.14)	.0046	.026	1075
		3	3.10***(.11)	.36*(.16)	.0066	.024	771
		4	2.90***(.13)	.24(.18)	.0029	.19	587
	SOTU	1	2.86***(.12)	.02(.12)	.00005	.85	1218
		2	3.16***(.08)	.25(.16)	.0031	.11	827
		3	3.19***(.09)	.06(.18)	.0002	.76	629
Trump's loyalties are to the country, above all else	Inaug	1	3.18***(.08)	.11(.11)	.0007	.32	1496
		2	3.29***(.09)	.32*(.14)	.0051	.019	1075
		3	3.00***(.11)	.40*(.16)	.0081	.012	771
		4	2.85***(.12)	.23(.18)	.0029	.2	587
	SOTU	1	2.93***(.10)	.12(.12)	.00005	.98	1218
		2	3.16***(.07)	.28(.16)	.0038	.075	827
		3	3.13***(.08)	.14(.18)	.0009	.45	629

Table A.11: Regression estimates of treatment effects on perception that Trump exemplifies American values, by item, study, and wave. Each line represent a separate linear model.

Item	Study	Wave	Intercept	Treatment	r squared	p value	n
Business Leaders	Inaug	1	4.51***(.07)	.01(.10)	.00005	.92	1496
		2	4.67***(.08)	.07(.12)	.0003	.57	1075
		3	4.40***(.09)	.18(.14)	.0021	.2	771
		4	4.22***(.11)	.03(.16)	.0001	.83	587
	SOTU	1	4.34***(.10)	.07(.11)	.0004	.5	1218
		2	4.52***(.08)	.17(.13)	.0020	.2	827
		3	4.50***(.09)	.10(.16)	.0007	.52	629
Republicans in Congress	Inaug	1	4.33***(.06)	.01(.09)	.00005	.92	1496
		2	4.52***(.07)	.12(.10)	.0013	.24	1075
		3	4.30***(.09)	.13(.13)	.0014	.31	771
		4	4.10***(.10)	.12(.15)	.0011	.42	587
	SOTU	1	4.26***(.09)	.05(.10)	.0002	.62	1218
		2	4.49***(.11)	.23*(.12)	.0048	.047	827
		3	4.38***(.12)	.08(.14)	.0006	.55	629
Democrats in Congress	Inaug	1	2.32***(.06)	.08(.09)	.0005	.4	1496
		2	2.41***(.08)	.19(.11)	.0027	.087	1075
		3	2.28***(.09)	.18(.13)	.0026	.16	771
		4	2.15***(.10)	.20(.15)	.0031	.18	587
	SOTU	1	2.19***(.11)	.10(.10)	.00005	1	1218
		2	2.32***(.13)	.06(.12)	.0003	.61	827
		3	2.17***(.08)	.08(.13)	.0006	.55	629
The National Press Corps	Inaug	1	2.68***(.07)	.02(.10)	.00005	.83	1496
		2	2.77***(.08)	.18(.12)	.0022	.13	1075
		3	2.47***(.09)	.20(.14)	.0027	.15	771
		4	2.29***(.10)	.22(.15)	.0038	.14	587
	SOTU	1	2.40***(.11)	.10(.10)	.00005	.99	1218
		2	2.44***(.12)	.04(.12)	.0001	.75	827
		3	2.35***(.08)	.09(.14)	.0007	.51	629
Scientific Leaders	Inaug	1	2.63***(.06)	.05(.09)	.0002	.56	1496
		2	2.72***(.08)	.18(.12)	.0024	.11	1075
		3	2.40***(.09)	.33*(.13)	.0082	.012	771
		4	2.41***(.10)	.15(.15)	.0018	.3	587
	SOTU	1	2.38***(.09)	.03(.10)	.0001	.79	1218
		2	2.48***(.11)	.10(.12)	.0009	.4	827
		3	2.38***(.12)	.10(.14)	.0009	.46	629
Military Leaders	Inaug	1	3.79***(.07)	.07(.10)	.0003	.5	1496
		2	4.02***(.08)	.24(.12)	.0036	.05	1075
		3	3.74***(.10)	.27(.14)	.0046	.061	771
		4	3.72***(.11)	.06(.17)	.0002	.73	587
	SOTU	1	3.76***(.12)	.08(.11)	.0004	.48	1218
		2	3.77***(.08)	.23(.14)	.0032	.1	827
		3	3.72***(.09)	.19(.16)	.0022	.24	629
The Supreme Court	Inaug	1	3.40***(.06)	.08(.09)	.0005	.4	1496
		2	3.57***(.08)	.21(.11)	.0033	.061	1075
		3	3.33***(.09)	.32*(.13)	.0075	.016	771
		4	3.25***(.10)	.08(.15)	.0005	.59	587
	SOTU	1	3.25***(.07)	.01(.10)	.00005	.94	1218
		2	3.29***(.09)	.23(.12)	.0041	.066	827
		3	3.30***(.11)	.07(.14)	.0004	.63	629
Foreign Leaders	Inaug	1	3.33***(.07)	.05(.10)	.0002	.63	1496
		2	3.39***(.08)	.21(.12)	.0027	.087	1075
		3	3.08***(.10)	.31*(.14)	.0062	.029	771
		4	2.95***(.12)	.16(.17)	.0016	.33	587
	SOTU	1	2.97***(.08)	.11(.11)	.00005	.99	1218
		2	3.00***(.09)	.29*(.14)	.0052	.038	827
		3	3.04***(.10)	.17(.16)	.0019	.28	629

Table A.12: Regression estimates of treatment effects on perception that Trump enjoys the respect of other US elites, by item, study, and wave. Each line represent a separate linear model.

Distinguishing Valence and Policy Views

At each stage of our two field experiments, we administered survey items that were designed to measure perceptions of President Trump as an exemplar of presidential ideals. By necessity, these items also tapped separate political considerations. For instance, the perceived respect Trump enjoys from other elites clearly reflect understanding of US partisanship (wherein Trump is perceived to enjoy more respect from business leaders and less from the scientific establishment, no matter the treatment condition). Separately, a respondent's responses on the policy items only partially reflect Trump's public appeals. Since the items deal with recurrent questions in American politics, our subjects can easily bring to mind competing considerations. Accordingly, we should conceive of these survey items as *in part* being determined by both the power of the performance and a plethora of unrelated political considerations.[21]

Both these research objectives—using separate indicators to measure an overall impression of Trump and his fitness for office, and measuring how these chronic attitudes are affected by a randomized stimulus–suggest the advantage of using a structural equation model. This framework allows us to measure separate latent variables (that is, overall trust in Trump, or confidence in his political stewardship) and also conditional differences along these latent variables. Equation 4 depicts our mathematical approach. For each study and wave, we estimate conditional differences between subjects who did and did not receive invitations to observe the rituals (γ_1 and γ_k) along k latent evaluative dimensions.[22]

---

[21] Recall that these considerations are unrelated to the effect of exposure to these performances *by design*, since invitations to watch these political events are randomly assigned.

[22] Specifically, we measure trust, confidence, and perceived elite respect for Trump in the Inauguration study, and we additionally measure policy persuasion in the State of the Union study.

The reduced form of our structural equation system appears as:[23]

$$Indicator_{k,j} = treatment_h(\Upsilon_1\lambda_{1,j} + \Upsilon_k\varphi_1) + \delta_{k,j} \qquad (4)$$

where k indexes evaluative dimensions, j indexes separate indicators within dimensions, and h indexes respondents. This reduced form demonstrates that there are two paths through which the treatment condition affects the value of each observed indicator–directly (through the $\Upsilon_1\lambda_{1,j}$ term's effect on the indicators' main evaluative dimension) and indirectly (the $\Upsilon_k\varphi_1$ term, which is the covariance between each separate evaluative dimension).

Figure A.1 shows that, even after we account for measurement error and various considerations that shape prior impressions of President Trump, invitations to watch the inauguration positively affected subjects' impressions that Trump exemplifies democratic values, functions as a national steward, and commands other elites' respect. Because we recontacted respondents—a week after treatment for wave three, and four months after treatment in wave four of the Inauguration experiment—we can even observe that these conditional differences persist in one of our two experiments. In the midst of the public furor over the Trump administration's heavily contested inauguration, the roiling protests in numerous cities opposing Trump's administration in general, and the crackdown on immigration in particular, the impression left by seeing the inaugural ceremony had a durable effect on impressions of Donald Trump. While an inaugural address is steeped in symbolism, the context of this inaugural was also unique in recent political history, insofar as it fostered an impression that huge swathes of the American public rejected the legitimacy of this president, and was willing to engage in protest to affirm this rejection. Given such a setting, the durability and size of these effects is

---

[23]See figure A.2 for a structural depiction of these reduced form estimates.

particularly striking.

Figure A.1 also communicates the limits of ceremonies' impact on mass attitudes. In neither study do we observe changes in respondents' policy positions. As table A.9 indicates, the SEM that measures agreement with Trump's policy priorities loads on fourteen separate policy items.[24] The literature is replete with attempts to locate persuasion effects as evidence for the effects of presidential public appeals. Consistent with more recent research on the subject (Falco, Grimmer, and Lim 2017), we find no evidence of persuasion on matters of policy. Rather, a president is perceived as more presidential *despite* the absence of change in policy preferences. Policy preferences reflect a respondent being subject to years of partisan messaging. Impressions of the president as having the requisite skills to excel in the White House are clearly far more responsive to these public performances.

---

[24] Of the fourteen policy items, all policy attitudes strongly load on this latent policy scale, except for the item "The US should pursue more familiar relationship with India." This is likely because President Trump has not advocated for this policy nearly as assertively as his other positions, and because it sits awkwardly with Trump's broader agenda, which has emphasized the threat posed by foreign states to the security and economic vitality of the United States.
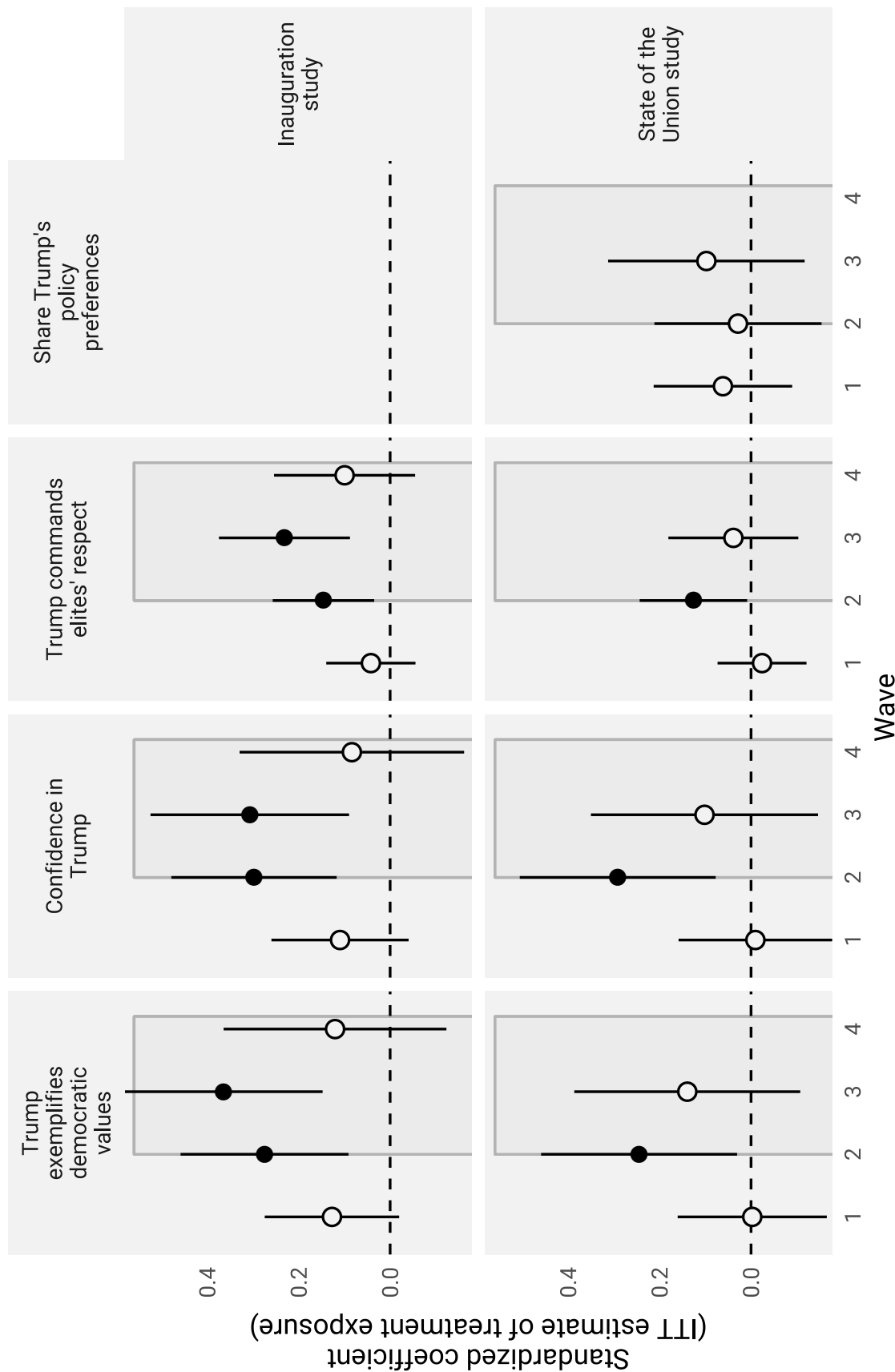
Figure A.1: Structural equation model treatment effects on evaluations of President Trump, by study (in the row facets), evaluative dimensions (in the columns), and wave (in the x-axis). The point ranges are standardized differences in these latent dimensions (the γ terms indicated in figure A.2.) Positive values indicate that a respondent believes Trump personifies this trait or a respondent adopts Trump's policy positions. Significant effects ($p < .05$) are indicated by solid points. Survey responses elicited post treatment are indicated by the shaded grey region.
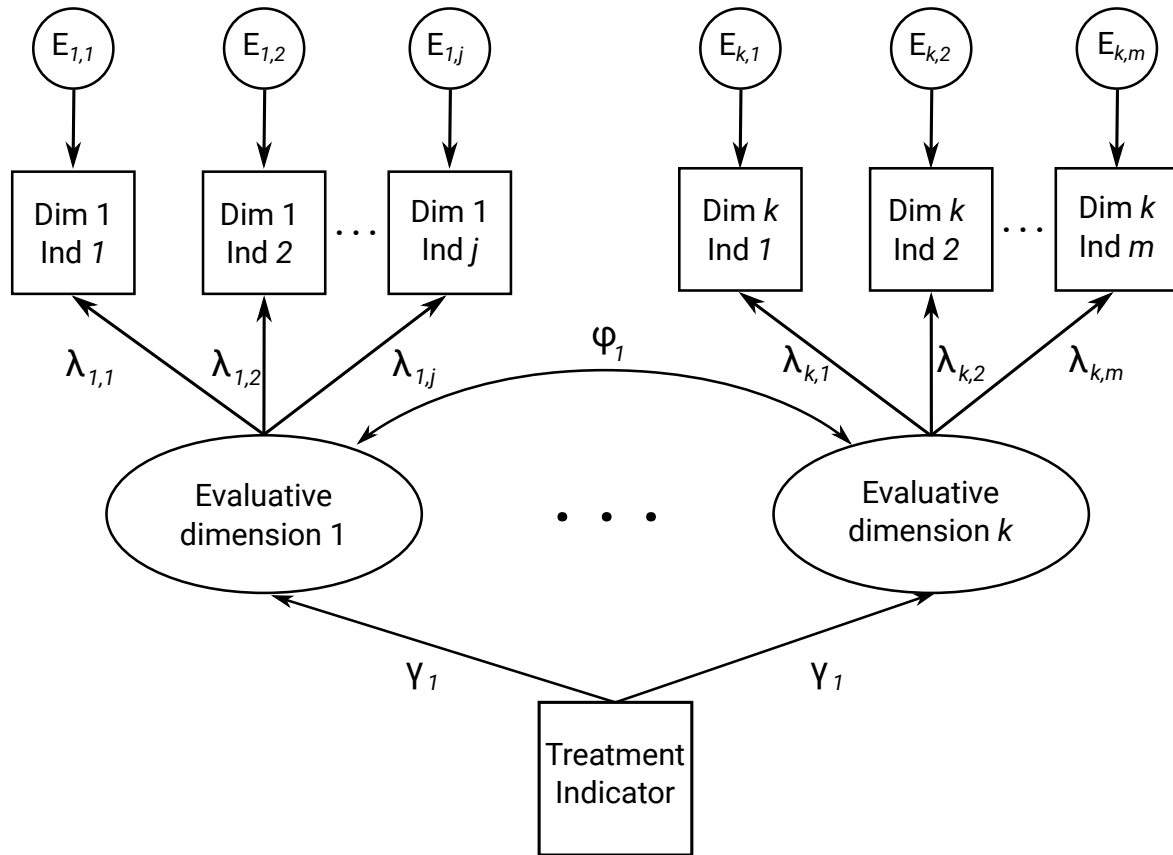
Figure A.2: Structural equation model diagram. This replicates the reduced form equation described in equation 4. In the diagram above, k indexes dimensions, j and m index manifest indicators for evaluative dimensions 1 and k, respectively. The ellipses summarizes two versions of design variance between separate scales and waves–dimensions have between six and fourteen indicators, and experimental waves conducted during the Inauguration omit a persuasion battery. The measurement loadings indicated by the λ terms are reported in table A.9. The effect of exposure to presidential rituals on evaluation of President Trump, represented by the γ terms, are depicted in figure A.1.

Table A.13: Study 3 regression modeling for the separate items that comprise the factor analysis in figure 7. Each row represents a separate linear model, with the 7 conditions providing six coefficients. Each column reflects a separate condition

	Pos.Pic & Neg.Tex	Neg.Pic & Pos.Tex	Pos.Pic & Pos.Tex	Pos.Tex	Neg.Tex	Speech	Adj r2	BIC	n
Adopt Pres policy position									
Chicago Violence	.148**(.045)	.036(.044)	.128***(.04)	.045(.037)	.009(.037)	.002(.037)	.02	930	1154
Loosen gun laws	.135**(.045)	.051(.043)	.111**(.04)	.05(.036)	.007(.037)	.003(.036)	.018	904	1154
Destroy ISIS	.117**(.036)	.033(.035)	.062*(.032)	.016(.029)	.004(.029)	.007(.029)	.015	382.1	1154
Improve India rel	.116**(.039)	.002(.037)	.09**(.034)	.047(.031)	.018(.032)	.019(.031)	.015	555.4	1154
Trade deals reneg	.171***(.04)	.013(.039)	.095*(.035)	.000(.032)	.03(.033)	.000(.032)	.004	616.6	1152
ACA repealed	.119*(.046)	.019(.045)	.10*(.041)	.01(.038)	.007(.038)	.008(.038)	.022	634.7	1152
Wall on sthn border	.17***(.046)	.02(.044)	.102*(.04)	.047(.037)	.018(.038)	.006(.037)	.014	713.5	1150
US coop Russia	.133***(.036)	.043(.035)	.088**(.032)	.04(.03)	.053(.03)	.032(.03)	.015	894.1	1153
Taxes shd lowered	.117**(.04)	.03(.038)	.077**(.035)	.038(.032)	.047(.033)	.053(.032)	.005	681.8	1153
Elim Fed Regs	.105**(.034)	.038(.033)	.045(.03)	.04(.028)	.056*(.028)	.024(.028)	.009	697	1152
Clim Chng deals elim	.142***(.041)	.005(.04)	.081*(.036)	.003(.034)	.039(.034)	.002(.034)	.011	569.8	1153
Defund PlndPrnthd	.155***(.045)	.036(.043)	.082*(.039)	.026(.036)	.014(.037)	.002(.036)	.003	−244.1	1149
Pres enjoys elites' respect									
Reps in Cong	.067(.036)	.012(.035)	.071*(.032)	.051*(.029)	.019(.03)	.002(.029)	.006	400.2	1154
Dems in Cong	.096**(.037)	.008(.036)	.044(.033)	.013(.03)	.031(.03)	.022(.03)	.002	456.3	1154
Supr Court	.097*(.038)	.018(.036)	.084*(.033)	.033(.03)	.02(.031)	.02(.031)	.005	497.6	1154
Mil Leads	.117**(.041)	.000(.04)	.111**(.036)	.08*(.034)	.032(.034)	.03(.034)	.011	716.1	1154
Natl Prss Crps	.091*(.039)	.015(.037)	.046(.034)	.019(.031)	.007(.032)	.001(.031)	.003	560.1	1154
Busn Leaders	.11*(.04)	.041(.039)	.08*(.035)	.081*(.032)	.053(.033)	.006(.032)	.017	634.1	1154
Sci Leaders	.125*(.037)	.007(.04)	.083*(.033)	.015(.03)	.019(.03)	.001(.03)	.013	463.7	1154
Frgn Leaders	.162***(.041)	.006(.038)	.12***(.036)	.059(.033)	.048(.034)	.024(.033)	.019	706.9	1154
Perform dties office	.169***(.044)	.031(.043)	.124**(.039)	.042(.036)	.001(.036)	.003(.036)	.025	859.8	1154
Pres stewards national mood									
Act ntns' interests	.139***(.039)	.005(.038)	.109**(.034)	.031(.032)	.006(.032)	.000(.032)	.02	577	1154
Vig dfnd nation abroad	.12*(.044)	.033(.043)	.113**(.039)	.05(.036)	.005(.036)	.002(.036)	.015	861.8	1154
Earn respect nonvote	.133***(.036)	.041(.035)	.078*(.032)	.011(.029)	.011(.03)	.011(.03)	.023	419.4	1154
Persuade public	.136*(.045)	.013(.043)	.085*(.039)	.044(.036)	.031(.037)	.003(.036)	.009	879.6	1150
Work with Congress	.119**(.041)	.028(.039)	.031(.036)	.06(.033)	.011(.033)	.044(.033)	.004	261.3	1150
Improve econ growth	.111**(.041)	.058(.04)	.03(.036)	.003(.033)	.001(.034)	.005(.033)	.009	975.8	1153
Bring cntry tgthr	.112**(.039)	.006(.038)	.05(.034)	.011(.031)	.003(.032)	.036(.032)	.016	954.4	1152
Restrict MidEast Imm	.007(.027)	.009(.026)	.051*(.024)	.016(.022)	.001(.022)	.026(.022)	.01	423.5	1153
Pres embodies liberal democratic values									
Trump true leader	.152**(.044)	.028(.042)	.112**(.039)	.045(.036)	.021(.036)	.006(.036)	.019	856.1	1154
Trump not beholden	.153***(.044)	.007(.042)	.107**(.038)	.05(.035)	.045(.036)	.023(.035)	.012	835.8	1154
Trump loves cnstn	.144***(.043)	.009(.042)	.111**(.038)	.032(.035)	.015(.035)	.019(.035)	.017	818.6	1154
Trump loyal cntry	.133*(.046)	.005(.044)	.125**(.04)	.046(.037)	.023(.037)	.022(.037)	.017	938.3	1154
Trump knows cntry go	.127**(.044)	.023(.043)	.109**(.039)	.023(.036)	.017(.036)	.015(.036)	.015	875.8	1154
Trump spks clrty cnvcn	.137**(.044)	.043(.042)	.132***(.039)	.054(.036)	.015(.036)	.031(.036)	.026	850.9	1154
Trump sprts free exp	.155***(.045)	.001(.044)	.124**(.04)	.058(.036)	.031(.037)	.004(.037)	.017	913	1154
Trump cmmtd trad vals	.114**(.044)	.025(.042)	.096*(.038)	.048(.035)	.008(.036)	.029(.035)	.015	838.1	1154

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

67

	Inauguration	SOTU
Treatment	-0.081^{***}	0.142^{***}
	(0.028)	(0.032)
Wave 3	-0.221^{***}	-0.135^{***}
	(0.029)	(0.032)
Wave 4	-0.357^{***}	
	(0.029)	
Voted Clinton	-0.009	0.012
	(0.033)	(0.039)
Voted Other	0.015	-0.036
	(0.040)	(0.041)
Treatment * Wave 3	0.040	-0.006
	(0.035)	(0.038)
Treatment * Wave 4	0.052	
	(0.035)	
Treatment * Voted Clinton	0.040	0.003
	(0.033)	(0.045)
Treatment * Voted Other	-0.067^{*}	-0.029
	(0.040)	(0.048)
Wave 3 * Voted Clinton	-0.009	0.024
	(0.040)	(0.045)
Wave 4 * Voted Clinton	0.012	
	(0.040)	
Wave 3 * Voted Other	0.001	-0.006
	(0.048)	(0.048)
Wave 4 * Voted Other	0.013	
	(0.048)	
Observations	4,488	2,734
Log Likelihood	$-3,061.214$	$-1,930.458$
Akaike Inf. Crit.	6,150.427	3,880.915

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A.14: Generalized Linear Models predicting missingness for each experiment. These models provide the probabilities which comprise the inverse probability weights in figure 5

	Control Congress	Impeach Trump	Trump Collude	Protest Trump
Presidentialism	-2.61^{**}	-3.37^{***}	-3.68^{***}	-2.68^{***}
	(1.09)	(.70)	(.69)	(.69)
Approval	-1.36^{*}	-1.53^{**}	$-.88$	$-.43$
	(.71)	(.65)	(.58)	(.70)
Trump Affect	$-.78$	-1.86^{**}	-1.05	$-.95$
	(.91)	(.76)	(.70)	(.82)
Partisanship	-7.49^{***}	-1.01^{*}	$-.32$	$-.72$
	(.94)	(.60)	(.55)	(.51)
Ideology	-2.78^{***}	$-.23$	-1.77^{***}	-2.03^{***}
	(.83)	(.68)	(.60)	(.59)
Observations	910	910	910	910
Log Likelihood	-166.56	-326.98	-340.65	-411.09
Akaike Inf. Crit.	345.13	665.97	693.29	834.17

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A.15: Regression models predicting political correlates of presidential impressions. Each column reports a separate generalized linear model with a logit link. These models provide the estimates for the simulations depicted in figure 6

First year presidential approval: Trump vs post WW2 presidents

Labels indicate quarterly average net approval.
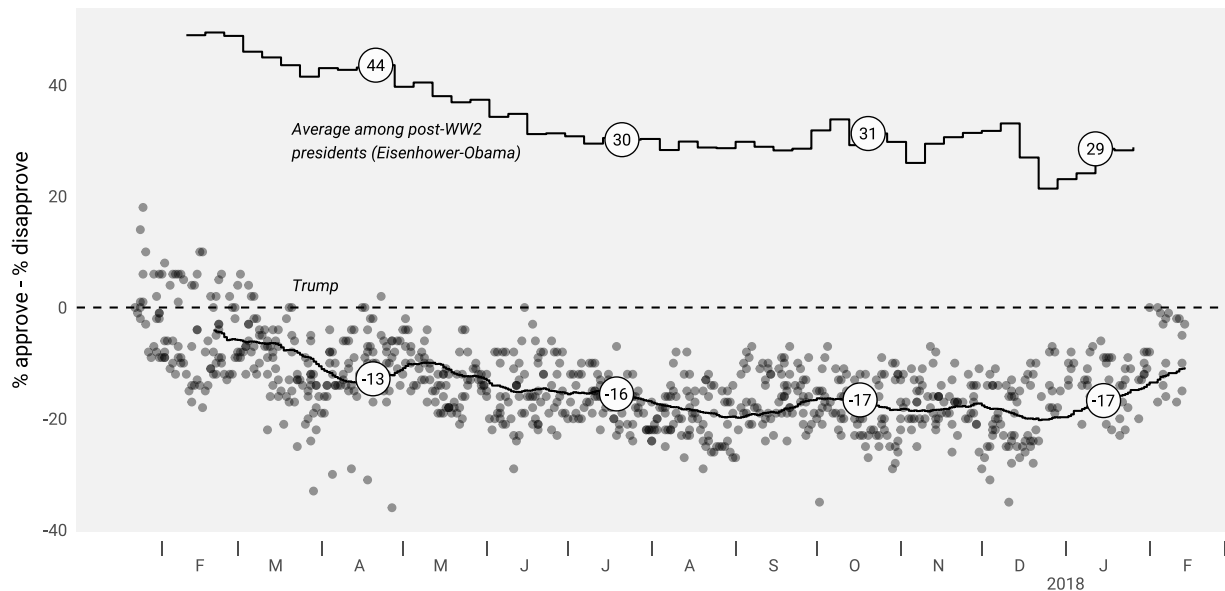
Figure A.3: Net approval of President Trump during his first 12 months in office. The sold line above the points indicate the average first-year approval of all first term, post war presidents. Over his first twelve months in office, Trump was between 40-60 points lower on net approval than his typical predecessor.

Trump's Approval Ratings in Historical Context

Our experiments were conducted on a presidential incumbent who was uniquely unpopular, especially among first term presidents. Figure A.3 shows that President Trump's net approval (the difference between percent approve and disapprove) follows approximately the same pattern of other first year presidents, while being consistently 40-60 percentage points less favorable. A possible response to the study of ritual and its implications for a president's standing is that such effects must be trivial, because Trump has been unable to earn even a typical quantity of public approval. This response conflates separate patterns of presidential evaluation. Any president's approval rating is weakly informative of the public's aggregate assessment of his fitness.

Messages to Subjects

Study 1 Assignment Messages
Treatment Message
Subject: Participate in a study about the presidential inauguration
"We are writing because you are eligible to complete a survey. This survey concerns President Trump's inauguration. Prior to completing the survey, please watch the inauguration of President-elect Trump, at 12:00 noon eastern (11am Central, 9am Pacific), for one hour.

We will email you the survey on Friday afternoon.

If you finish the survey, we will pay you $1, and we will enter you into a raffle to win $400."

Control Message
Subject: Participate in a study about politics
"We are writing because you are eligible to complete a survey. This survey will concern your attitudes on political matters.

We will email you the survey on Friday afternoon.

If you finish the survey, we will pay $1, and we will enter you into a raffle to win $400."

Study 2 Assignment Messages
Treatment Message
Subject: Participate In A Study About the President's Address to Congress
"We are writing because you are eligible to complete a survey. This survey concerns President Trump's address to Congress on Tuesday night, February 28th. Prior to completing the survey, please watch the President's address on Tuesday February 28th at 9 PM eastern (8 PM Central / 6 PM Pacific). As soon as the address is over, please turn off the television.

We will email you the survey shortly after the address is over.

If you finish the survey, we will pay you $1, and we will enter you into a raffle to win $400."

Placebo Message
Subject: Participate In A Study About Television on Tuesday Night
"We are writing because you are eligible to complete a survey. This survey concerns television on Tuesday night, February 28th. Prior to completing the survey, please watch the Food Network on Tuesday, February 28th at 9 PM eastern (8 PM Central / 6 PM Pa-

cific). You should watch for one hour.

We will email you the survey shortly after the hour is over.

If you finish the survey, we will pay you $1, and we will enter you into a raffle to win $400."

Persuasion Battery for Study 2

- Immigration should be severely restricted from most countries in the Middle East.

- Trade deals should be renegotiated.

- The Affordable Care Act, also known as "Obamacare," should be repealed and replaced with a new healthcare policy.

- A wall should be constructed on the US-Mexico border.

- The US should pursue cooperative relations with Russia.

- Taxes should be lowered.

- Federal regulations that hurt business should be eliminated.

- Climate change agreements will unnecessarily hurt the U.S. economy.

- Planned Parenthood should be defunded.

- Chicago is totally out of control, and federal officers should be deployed to stop the violence.

- America's gun laws have become too restrictive.

- The number one U.S. foreign policy priority should be the destruction of ISIS.

- The U.S. should improve its relationship with India.

[Strongly disagree / Disagree / Somewhat disagree / Neither agree nor disagree / Somewhat agree / Agree / Strongly agree]

Study 3 Treatments
Positive Text
Trump Takes Charge, Assertive But Untested 45th US President
WASHINGTON (AP) — Pledging emphatically to empower America's "forgotten men and women," Donald Trump was sworn in as the 45th president of the United States Friday, taking command of a riven nation facing an unpredictable era under his assertive but untested leadership.

Surrounded by top government officials, Trump delivered his address on the West Front of the U.S. Capitol. He painted a bleak picture of the America he now leads, declaring as he had throughout the election campaign that it is beset by crime, poverty and a lack of bold action. The billionaire businessman and reality television star — the first president who had never held political office or high military rank — promised to stir a "new national pride" and protect America from the "ravages" of countries he says have stolen U.S. jobs.

"This American carnage stops right here," Trump declared. In a warning to the world, he said, "From this day forward, a new vision will govern our land. From this moment on, it's going to be America first."

"This is a movement and now the work begins," Trump told supporters, before dancing with his wife, Melania, to "My Way" at the first of three inaugural balls. "We love you. We're going to be working for you and we're going to produce results."

Trump also signed commissions for two former generals confirmed to Cabinet posts: James Mattis as secretary of defense and John Kelly to head the Department of Homeland Security.

Short and pointed, Trump's 16-minute address in the heart of Washington was a blistering rebuke of many who listened in rapt attention from privileged seats only feet away. Surrounded by men and women who have long filled the government's corridors of power, the new president said that for too long, "a small group in our nation's capital has reaped the rewards of government while the people have borne the cost."

His predecessor, Obama, sat close by as Trump spoke. Obama appeared to listen attentively to the remarks.

"What truly matters is not which party controls our government, but whether our government is controlled by the people," he said. "To all Americans in every city near and far, small and large from mountain to mountain, from ocean to ocean, hear these words: You will never be ignored again."

While Trump did not detail policy proposals Friday, he did set a high bar for his presidency. The speech was full of the onetime showman's lofty promises to bring back jobs, "completely" eradicate Islamic terrorism, and build new roads, bridges and airports.

In a show of solidarity, all of the living American presidents attended the inaugural, except for 92-year-old George H.W. Bush, who was hospitalized this week with pneumonia.

One Democrat who did sit among the dignitaries was Hillary Clinton, Trump's vanquished campaign rival.

At a post-ceremony luncheon at the Capitol, Trump declared it was an honor to have her attend, and the Republicans and Democrats present rose and applauded.

While most of Trump's first substantive acts as president will wait until Monday, he signed a series of papers formally launching his administration. Sitting in an ornate room steps from the Senate floor, the president who had just disparaged the Washington establishment joked with lawmakers, including House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi, and handed out presidential pens.

Trump Takes Charge, Assertive But Untested 45th US President

WASHINGTON (AP) — Pledging emphatically to empower America's "forgotten men and women," Donald Trump was sworn in as the 45th president of the United States Friday, taking command of a riven nation facing an unpredictable era under his assertive but untested leadership.

Before a surprisingly sparse crowd, Trump delivered his address on the West Front of the U.S. Capitol. He painted a bleak picture of the America he now leads, declaring as he had throughout the election campaign that it is beset by crime, poverty and a lack of bold action. The billionaire businessman and reality television star — the first president who had never held political office or high military rank — promised to stir a "new national pride" and protect America from the "ravages" of countries he says have stolen U.S. jobs.

"This American carnage stops right here," Trump declared. In a warning to the world, he said, "From this day forward, a new vision will govern our land. From this moment on, it's going to be America first."

"This is a movement and now the work begins," Trump told supporters later that night, as his wife Melania stood near by. "We love you. We're going to be working for you and we're going to produce results."

Short and pointed, Trump's 16-minute address in the heart of Washington was a blistering rebuke to the nation's political elite. The new president said that for too long, "a small group in our nation's capital has reaped the rewards of government while the people have borne the cost."

His predecessor, Obama, sat close by as Trump delivered his address. Obama did not appear to listen closely to the remarks.

"What truly matters is not which party controls our government, but whether our government is controlled by the people," he said. "To all Americans in every city near and far, small and large from mountain to mountain, from ocean to ocean, hear these words: You will never be ignored again."

While Trump did not detail policy proposals Friday, he did set a high bar for his presidency. The speech was full of the onetime showman's lofty promises to bring back jobs, "completely" eradicate Islamic terrorism, and build new roads, bridges and airports.

Former President George H.W. Bush and his wife did not attend to the ceremony. His wife, Barbara, was also in the hospital after falling ill.

While the other living presidents and their spouses were in attendance, onlookers remarked that they keep their distance from Trump.

Sixty members of Congress elected not to attend the ceremony at all. After its conclusion, Trump marked the start of his administration by signing several procedural orders.

Speech Excerpt-Only Condition
Excerpts From President Trump's Remarks On Inauguration Day

WASHINGTON (AP) —

"This American carnage stops right here...From this day forward, a new vision will govern our land. From this moment on, it's going to be America first."

"This is a movement and now the work begins...We love you. We're going to be working for you and we're going to produce results."

"...A small group in our nation's capital has reaped the rewards of government while the people have borne the cost."

"What truly matters is not which party controls our government, but whether our government is controlled by the people...To all Americans in every city near and far, small and large from mountain to mountain, from ocean to ocean, hear these words: You will never be ignored again."

Original Article
Trump takes charge, assertive but untested 45th US president

WASHINGTON (AP) — Pledging emphatically to empower America's "forgotten men and women," Donald Trump was sworn in as the 45th president of the United States Friday, taking command of a riven nation facing an unpredictable era under his assertive but untested leadership.

Under cloudy, threatening skies at the West Front of the U.S. Capitol, Trump painted a bleak picture of the America he now leads, declaring as he had throughout the election campaign that it is beset by crime, poverty and a lack of bold action. The billionaire businessman and reality television star — the first president who had never held political office or high military rank — promised to stir a "new national pride" and protect America from the "ravages" of countries he says have stolen U.S. jobs.

"This American carnage stops right here," Trump declared. In a warning to the world, he said, "From this day forward, a new vision will govern our land. From this moment on, it's going to be America first."

Eager to demonstrate his readiness to take actions, Trump went directly to the Oval Office Friday night, before the inaugural balls, and signed his first executive order as president — on "Obamacare."

The order notes that Trump intends to seek the "prompt repeal" of the law. But in the meantime, it allows the Health and Human Services Department or other federal agencies to delay implementing any piece of the law that might impose a "fiscal burden" on states, health care providers, families or individuals.

"This is a movement and now the work begins," Trump told supporters, before dancing with his wife, Melania, to "My Way" at the first of three inaugural balls. "We love you. We're going to be working for you and we're going to produce results."

Trump also signed commissions for two former generals confirmed to Cabinet posts earlier by the Senate: James Mattis as secretary of defense and John Kelly to head the Department of Homeland Security. Vice President Mike Pence swore them in soon after. Mattis struck a different tone from his new boss in his first statement to his department:

"Recognizing that no nation is secure without friends, we will work with the State Department to strengthen our alliances."

At the inauguration, the crowd that spread out before Trump on the National Mall was notably smaller than at past inaugurals, reflecting both the divisiveness of last year's campaign and the unpopularity of the incoming president compared to modern predecessors.

After the swearing-in, demonstrations unfolded in the streets of Washington. Police in riot gear deployed pepper spray after protesters smashed the windows of downtown businesses, denouncing capitalism and the new president.

Police reported more than 200 arrests by evening and said six officers had been hurt. At least one vehicle was set afire.

Short and pointed, Trump's 16-minute address in the heart of Washington was a blistering rebuke of many who listened from privileged seats only feet away. Surrounded by men and women who have long filled the government's corridors of power, the new president said that for too long, "a small group in our nation's capital has reaped the rewards of government while the people have borne the cost."

His predecessor, Obama, sat stoically as Trump pledged to push the country in a dramatically different direction.

Trump's victory gives Republicans control of both the White House and Congress — and all but ensures conservatives can quickly pick up a seat on the closely divided Supreme Court. Despite entering a time of Republican dominance, Trump made little mention of the party's bedrock principles: small government, social conservativism and robust American leadership around the world.

He left no doubt he considers himself the product of a movement — not a party. Trump declared his moment a fulfillment of his campaign pledge to take a sledgehammer to Washington's traditional ways, and he spoke directly to the alienated and disaffected.

"What truly matters is not which party controls our government, but whether our government is controlled by the people," he said. "To all Americans in every city near and far, small and large from mountain to mountain, from ocean to ocean, hear these words: You will never be ignored again."

But the speech offered scant outreach to the millions who did not line up behind his candidacy.

Trump's call for restrictive immigration measures, religious screening of immigrants and his caustic campaign rhetoric about women and minorities angered millions. He did not directly address that opposition, instead offering a call to "speak our minds openly, debate our disagreements honestly, but always pursue solidarity."

While Trump did not detail policy proposals Friday, he did set a high bar for his presidency. The speech was full of the onetime showman's lofty promises to bring back jobs, "completely" eradicate Islamic terrorism, and build new roads, bridges and airports.

Despite Trump's ominous portrait of America, he is taking the helm of a growing economy. Jobs have increased for a record 75 straight months, and the unemployment rate was 4.7 percent in December, close to a 9-year low.

Yet Trump's victory underscored that for many Americans, the recovery from the

Great Recession has come slowly or not at all. His campaign tapped into seething anger in working class communities, particularly in the Midwest, that have watched factories shuttered and the certainty of a middle class life wiped away.

Randy Showalter, a 36-year-old diesel mechanic and father of five from Mount Solon, Virginia, said he felt inspired as he stood and listened to Trump's speech.

"I feel like there's an American pride that I've never felt, honestly, in my life," said Showalter, who donned Trump's signature "Make America Great Again" red hat.

Trump's journey to the inauguration was as unlikely as any in recent U.S. history. He defied his party's establishment and befuddled the news media. He used social media to dominate the national conversation and challenge conventions about political discourse. After years of Democratic control of the White House and deadlock in Washington, his was a blast of fresh air for millions.

At 70, Trump is the oldest person to be sworn in as president, marking a generational step backward after two terms for Obama, one of the youngest presidents to serve as commander in chief.

In a show of solidarity, all of the living American presidents attended the inaugural, except for 92-year-old George H.W. Bush, who was hospitalized this week with pneumonia. His wife, Barbara, was also in the hospital after falling ill.

But more than 60 House Democrats refused to attend Trump's swearing-in ceremony in the shadow of the Capitol dome. One Democrat who did sit among the dignitaries was Hillary Clinton, Trump's vanquished campaign rival who was widely expected by both parties to be the one taking the oath of office.

At a post-ceremony luncheon at the Capitol, Trump declared it was an honor to have her attend, and the Republicans and Democrats present rose and applauded.

While most of Trump's first substantive acts as president will wait until Monday, he signed a series of papers formally launching his administration, including official nominations for his Cabinet. Sitting in an ornate room steps from the Senate floor, the president who had just disparaged the Washington establishment joked with lawmakers, including House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi, and handed out presidential pens.

Figure A.4: Study 3 Positive Picture.

Figure A.5: Study 3 Negative Picture.