Democratic Values and Diffuse Support: Experimental Evidence from the United States

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A recent controversy has questioned the conventional wisdom about the basis of institutional support for courts. Left unaddressed in this debate is the role that democratic values—universally believed to be a strong predictor of legitimacy—play in structuring institutional support. We devise and implement a survey experiment, drawing on conceptions of democratic values form the literature on comparative politics. Our results present a paradox: democratic values are the strongest direct predictor of institutional support, yet primes designed to activate respondents' latent democratic values have little effect. The results present a first step in a larger research agenda to investigate the role democratic and authoritarian values play in determining support for political institutions worldwide.

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Political institutions make some decisions their constituents like and other decisions that their publics find displeasing. When constituents agree with a decision, securing compliance is easy. In the face of a disagreeable decision, institutions rely on their legitimacy to ease compliance. When a public views an institution as legitimate, it is more likely to accept a decision it does not like (Gibson, Caldeira and Spence 2005). Thus, in the absence of legitimacy, institutions may be reluctant to make decisions that their constituents disagree with, lest they are exposed as impotent. This is particularly important for courts, whose constitutional role is, in part, to protect minority rights which, almost by definition, may not be supported by a majority of the population. Therefore, understanding what makes a court legitimate is essential to understanding judicial power and impact.

With this in mind, the concept of legitimacy has experience a resurgence in scholarly interest. Scholars have relied upon a variety of observational (Gibson and Nelson 2015), experimental (Nelson 2018), and quasi-experimental (Christenson and Glick 2015) designs to determine the causes and correlates of judicial legitimacy. In particular, scholars have become increasingly interested in the relationship between performance satisfaction and legitimacy. Some studies (e.g. Bartels and Johnston 2013) have suggested a strong connection between individuals' beliefs that the U.S. Supreme Court generally makes pleasing decisions and their willingness to view that institution as legitimate. Other studies (e.g. Gibson and Nelson 2017), relying on Easton's (1965) original conception of legitimacy have suggested that, by definition, there cannot be such a close connection between satisfaction and support.

But the relationship between performance satisfaction and legitimacy is dwarfed both theoretically and empirically by the relationship that legitimacy has with democratic values. Indeed, Gibson and Nelson (2015) conclude that "democratic values are the best predictors of institutional support" (170). Scholars generally agree that democratic values, themselves a product of childhood socialization, are the basis by which individuals form

their commitments to institutions. And, because the process of socialization creates fundamental values that themselves are difficult to change, democratic values can replenish dissatisfaction with an institution, thereby keeping the U.S. Supreme Court's legitimacy both high and stable (Mondak and Smithey 1997).

Perhaps surprisingly, however, scholars have done little to determine *what* democratic values are associated with institutional commitments. Existing studies of the U.S. Supreme Court's legitimacy generally rely on whatever measures of democratic values are available in the survey they analyze, meaning that democratic values are operationalized as everything from "generalized political trust" (Bartels and Johnston 2013; Christenson and Glick 2015) to a mixture of "support for the rule of law," "support for liberty over order," and "political tolerance" (Gibson and Nelson 2015). These measures are typically included in multivariate analyses without much theoretical discussion at all.

This ad hoc approach to conceptualizing democratic values is quite surprising given the incredible amount of attention given to the topic by scholars of comparative politics. Cross-national survey research has devoted great care to investigations of the determinants of democratic support and satisfaction (Norris 2004), and major surveys generally measure other democratic values, such as one's support for majoritarianism, their support for representative government, and their willingness to accept results one agrees with so long as they were accepted through a democratic process (e.g. LAPOP 2008).

Our goal in this paper is to marry the theoretically rich literature on democracy from the comparative politics literature with the well-developed literature on support for the U.S. Supreme Court. After explaining four different conceptions of democracy, we examine the effects of exposure to democratic arguments on individuals' views that the U.S. Supreme Court is legitimate and their support for the incumbent president. We embedded an experiment in a survey taken by nearly 2,000 Americans on the Amazon Mechanical Turk platform.

Our results present somewhat of a paradox. First, and perhaps most importantly, we confirm the primary role that democratic values play in predicting individual-level diffuse support. Even using measures of democratic values that, while widely used in cross-national research, have not been connected to diffuse support, the effects of democratic values dwarf the effects of ideological disagreement, specific support, partisanship, and ideology. Moreover, we also analyze support for Donald Trump, the presidential incumbent in the United States. Here, democratic values are also, after ideology, the strongest predictor of vote intention, having an effect that mimics that of even partisanship in its size and is nearly five times the size of the effect of education. In short, our results provide strong and robust evidence that democratic values have an important role to play in support for American institutions and politicians.

Yet, our experimental treatments—which seek to prime respondents' latent values—have relatively idiosyncratic direct or conditional effects. While we find some evidence, predicted by our theory, that liberal and majoritarian democratic primes have differential effects on support for the Court based on one's levels of democratic values, the experiment has scant effects. We interpret this evidence as suggested by Easton (1965) and Easton and Dennis (1969): democratic values are deeply rooted in processes of childhood socialization in established democracies like the United States. As a result, respondents need not be primed to recall their fundamental commitments to the American democratic regime. However, in our conclusion, we discuss how this finding may not be true in developing democracies, where we expect the democratic primes may have stronger effects. Our results, therefore, represent an opening salvo in a broader research agenda.

I. Conceptualizing Support for Political Institutions

Easton's (1965) typology of institutional support provides the foundation for nearly all modern theorizing about why individuals support political institutions and regimes. Eas-

ton makes a broad and fundamental distinction between diffuse support (legitimacy) and specific support (performance satisfaction). Specifically, Easton (1965) argues that "no regime or community could gain general acceptance and no set of authorities could accept to hold power if they had to depend exclusively or even largely on outputs to generate support as a return for specific and identifiable benefits. Other means of adaptation to stress are necessary" (269). In other words, legitimate institutions must depend on something other than performance satisfaction as the basis of their legitimacy.

Luckily for Legitimacy Theory, the best evidence suggests that the U.S. Supreme Court's diffuse support is not overwhelmingly related to the American people's satisfaction with its decisions. In their original study of the U.S. Supreme Court's legitimacy, Gibson and Caldeira (1992) demonstrated that the relationship between the Supreme Court's diffuse and specific support is not particularly strong, as expected by the theory.

Other studies, looking for change in support for the U.S. Supreme Court over time in response to a displeasing judicial decision, have come to the same conclusion. Gibson (2007) examines a series of repeated cross-sectional surveys, finding remarkable stability in the Court's support over time. Likewise, Gibson, Caldeira and Spence (2003b) examined cross-sectional surveys before and after the U.S. Supreme Court's controversial decision in *Bush v. Gore*, finding that the Court's support remained stable in the wake of the highly controversial ruling. Indeed, even Nelson and Tucker's (2017) panel study—which followed the same respondents over the course of the second term of the Obama administration— found almost no individual-level change in support for the U.S. Supreme Court during the time period when the Court legalized same-sex marriage, ruled on the constitutionality of Obamacare, and issued major decisions on abortion and affirmative action. In short, were the Court's legitimacy linked strongly to its decisions, we should observe changes in diffuse support in response to controversial decisions. We do not.

The same relationship has been found cross-nationally. Gibson, Caldeira and Baird

(1998) studied the high courts in 20 countries, finding that the average relationship between diffuse support and specific support is only .33 (352, Table 7). In sum, the conventional wisdom that diffuse and specific support are only weakly related has been supported in many studies, both in the U.S. and abroad.

Recently, however, this conventional wisdom has been called into question, with a handful of studies suggesting that the relationship between diffuse and specific support is greater than many believe. In the most prominent challenge to the suggestion that specific and diffuse support are only weakly related, Bartels and Johnston (2013) argue that, because many people do not pay attention to the Court's decisions, people may make global views about the ideological direction of an institution's policymaking on the basis of a handful of decisions. Therefore, we must examine individuals' subjective ideological disagreement: their belief in how well the Court's policies align, in general, with their preferences. Relying on both observational and experimental evidence, Bartels and Johnston (2013) show that higher levels of subjective ideological disagreement are associated with lower levels of diffuse support. In another study, Christenson and Glick (2015) use a nonrandom opt-in sample of Americans to examine how the Court's ruling on the constitutionality of Obamacare affected the Court's support. Their evidence suggests that disagreement with this single decision is associated with lower levels of diffuse support among those who disagreed with the decision.

However, not all of the recent evidence suggests such a strong relationship. Using a nationally-representative survey of the American people, Gibson and Nelson (2015) demonstrate that the effect of subjective ideological disagreement in a more properly-specified regression model is not substantively significant. Indeed, the bivariate correlation between the two concepts is only -.03. In their multivariate regression model, a change across the interquartile range of ideological disagreement only reduces a respondent's diffuse support by 3%. Finally, Gibson and Nelson (2017) note that the effect of ideological disagreement is

5

only likely to be seen among those respondents who believe that the Court makes decisions based on non-legal considerations. Their analysis suggests that ideological disagreement only has a statistically and substantively significant effect among a relatively small portion of the American people.

If legitimacy is not overly dependent on satisfaction, then how is it developed? To Easton, more enduring support for the regime is the basis for that enduring legitimacy. He writes that In other words, Easton suggests that support for the regime in which an institution is embedded can build institutional support, enabling the institution to withstand decisions its constituents do not like. In particular, legitimacy comes from more obdurate support for the form of government. Easton writes:

> Regardless of what the members may feel about the wisdom of the actions of authorities, obedience may flow from some rudimentary convictions about the appropriateness of the political order of things... [Citizens] are imperceptibly socialized into a belief in the legitimacy of an order, at least in older systems and the sentiment is continuously reinforced among mature members... In newly developing systems, before a new generation can be socialized into ethically approved habits of compliance, self-interest and notable personalities as models may be additional decisive sources (279-80).

In other words, beliefs that institutions are legitimate stem, in large part, from support for systems of government more generally which are obdurate and a product of political socialization, especially in developed systems.

Recent work has added additional theoretical support for the primary role that democratic values play in structuring and maintaining institutional support. Mondak and Smithey (1997) argue that democratic values, through a process of "values based regeneration" are the reason the U.S. Supreme Court is so stable over time. They argue that "a persons confidence in the Supreme Court can be shaken by controversial rulings, but

the eventual reassertion of democratic values means that the individual's confidence in the Court may be restored" (1997, 1124) following a disappointing decision. Thus, democratic values enable the Court to maintain its support even as it makes decisions that displease the public. This is a very important role for democratic values to play.

II. Linking Democratic Values to Diffuse Support

But what are "democratic" values? Despite widespread agreement that democratic values are a vital predictor of institutional support, scholars' approaches to the measurement and operationalization of the concept in previous investigations of diffuse support have been surprisingly ad hoc. Indeed, while existing studies are unanimous in their expectations that democratic values should correlate highly with institutional support, they do little to explain *which* democratic values matter and *whether* some values matter more than others.

For example, those studies that tend to show a strong relationship between performance satisfaction and legitimacy tend to rely on even more tenuous measures of democratic values. For example, Bartels and Johnston (2013) equate institutional trust and democratic values: "While the survey does not include democratic values measures, it does include an indicator of *political trust*, therefore capturing feelings toward the government writ large." (190). In their study of change in the Court's legitimacy before and after the Obamacare ruling, Christenson and Glick (2015) rely on the same measure.

To state the obvious, "trust" is not a democratic value, it is an evaluation of the regime's performance. Indeed, (Gibson and Nelson 2015) note that measures of trust are closely related to specific support evaluations. Thus, while the inclusion of generalized political trust in a regression equation may provide some substitute for a general measure of specific support, it does not tap the sort of end result of a process of political socialization about which Easton wrote.

There is some reason to believe that this omission might have substantive consequences.

When measures of democratic values are included in a regression equation (e.g. Gibson and Nelson 2015), scholars typically find a minor, at best, role for ideological disagreement to play. This empirical regularity suggests that one role that democratic values play is by soaking up variation in the regression equation related to one's willingness to tolerate political wins and losses: those who are more strongly committed to democracy are also those who are willing to tolerate political losses handed down by courts because they understand that to be a citizen in a democracy is to tolerate pleasing and displeasing decisions as part of the normal democratic process.

In the studies that rely most heavily on the argument that democratic values affect legitimacy, the authors tend rely on three indicators of democratic values: support for the rule of law, political tolerance, and support for liberty over order. In the most prominent of these studies, Gibson and Nelson (2015) interpret the impressive magnitude of the democratic values coefficients in their regression equation as follows:

> following earlier research, the democratic values indicators are strong predictors
> of institutional support. Those who support the Court are stronger supporters
> of the rule of law, are more tolerant, and are more likely to favor liberty when
> liberty and order conflict...By any statistical measure, willingness to grant legit-
> imacy to the Supreme Court is very closely connected to more general support
> for democratic institutions and processes (169).

Indeed, their analysis reveals a strong and substantively important relationship between their values measures and diffuse support. And, in their model specification that includes democratic values, the effect of performance satisfaction is puny.

Gibson and Nelson provide no justification for the primacy of these three values; rather, they are three democratic values available in the Freedom and Tolerance Surveys from which they draw their data. And, the three different democratic values do not scale together, suggesting they are measuring three separate values, rather than an overarching sense of

democratic values. As a result, it is unclear why (or whether) support for the rule of law, political tolerance and support for liberty over order are the three democratic values that are associated with diffuse support.

With this in mind, it seems to us that more fundamental commitments to democracy (or, conversely, to autocracy) may drive diffuse support and the three values analyzed by Gibson and Nelson are second-order consequences of those values. Instead, a better approach would be to draw upon the rich literature on political behavior outside of the United States that aims to measure respondents' support for and satisfaction with democracy.

The well-tilled literature on democracy in comparative perspective provides us with a series of valid and reliable indicators of democratic values that we can draw upon to examine institutional support in the United States and beyond. We therefore lean on these survey items in our empirical analysis. However, before we describe our experimental approach toward understanding the relationship between support and values, we turn deeper into the comparative politics literature, looking for a series of democratic principles that can further structure our analysis.

III. Conceptualizing Democracy

Democracy is a diffuse concept, encompassing a constellation of ideas: the importance of majorities getting their way, the push-and-pull of institutional arrangements related to a separation of powers, the importance of regular elections that tether politicians to the public, and the principle that each citizen should have an equal chance to steer the direction of the country. While individuals might value democracy generally, they might give more or less weight to these different democratic principles. More importantly, it might be the case that institutional support is related *to a specific democratic value* rather than support for democracy more generally. Thus, addition to understanding how more general support for democracy relates to respondents' willingness to grant legitimacy to the U.S. Supreme

Court, we were also interested in how variation in the associations respondents make with democracy affect the extent to which they view the U.S. Supreme Court as legitimate.

To bring order to this constellation of democratic rules and procedures, we rely on the dimensions of democracy enumerated by the Varieties of Democracy (V-DEM) project. We rely not on the V-DEM data, but rather the conceptual framework that underlies their measures of democracy. We focus our analysis on four dimensions of democracy: majoritarian, liberal, electoral, and egalitarian.[1] The V-DEM descriptions of each principle of democracy, taken from the Project's codebook, are as follows:

- The *majoritarian* principle (aka responsible party government) reflects the principle that the will of the majority should be sovereign. The many should prevail over the few. To facilitate this, political institutions must concentrate power (within the context of competitive elections). In practical terms, this means strong and centralized parties, a unitary rather than federal constitution, plurality rather than proportional electoral laws (or PR with high statutory thresholds), and so forth.

- The *liberal* principle of democracy emphasizes the importance of protecting individual and minority rights against the tyranny of the state and the tyranny of the majority. The liberal model takes a "negative" view of political power insofar as it judges the quality of democracy by the limits placed on government. This is achieved by constitutionally protected civil liberties, strong rule of law, an independent judiciary, and effective checks and balances that, together, limit the exercise of executive power.

- The *electoral* principle of democracy seeks to embody the core value of making rulers responsive to citizens, achieved through electoral competition for the electorate's

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[1]The V-DEM project includes other understandings of democracy, including participatory democracy and deliberative democracy. We focus on these four components of democracy due to power considerations in our experiment.

approval under circumstances when suffrage is extensive; political and civil society organizations can operate freely; elections are clean and not marred by fraud or systematic irregularities; and elections affect the composition of the chief executive of the country. In between elections, there is freedom of expression and an independent media capable of presenting alternative views on matters of political relevance. In the V-Dem conceptual scheme, electoral democracy is understood as an essential element of any other conception of (representative) democracy liberal, participatory, deliberative, egalitarian, or some other.

- The *egalitarian* principle of democracy holds that material and immaterial inequalities inhibit the exercise of formal rights and liberties, and diminish the ability of citizens from all social groups to participate. Egalitarian democracy is achieved when 1) rights and freedoms of individuals are protected equally across all social groups; and 2) resources are distributed equally across all social groups; 3) groups and individuals enjoy equal access to power.

Each of these democratic principles is grounded in the theoretical literature on democracy, and we do not believe that these different principles are zero-sum. Rather, we believe that these different democratic principles should bring to mind different thoughts and arguments about democracy, making respondents more (or perhaps less) likely to support an institution when they are reminded of one of these democratic principles.

In other words, we believe that exposing respondents to arguments in favor of these different democratic principles should affect their willingness to support the U.S. Supreme Court and President Trump. We view this analysis as relatively exploratory in the sense that we have no theoretical predictions about which (or whether) different democratic principles should be more or less effective. Rather, we believe that exposing respondents to arguments about each democratic principle should stimulate their latent support for

democracy along that dimension which, in turn, should affect their support for the U.S. Supreme Court or the president.

IV. Empirical Expectations

The previous discussion has summarized the existing empirical evidence about the relationship between democratic values and institutional support and has introduced the four principles of democracy that we will probe in our empirical analysis. Here, we state plainly the empirical relationships we seek to test. Specifically, we are interested in three relationships: (1) the direct relationship between democratic values, broadly defined, and institutional support, (2) the direct relationship between a prime for each these democratic principles and institutional support, and (3) the conditional relationship between democratic values and the democratic primes. While the bulk of our theoretical discussion has focused on institutional support for the U.S. Supreme Court, we examine the relationships between democratic values and two different outcomes: diffuse support for the U.S. Supreme Court and respondents' willingness to support President Trump.

First, drawing from the work by Easton (1965) and Gibson and Nelson (2015), we expect democratic values to have an association with support for the U.S. Supreme Court and the president, holding constant other typical predictors of those outcomes. Regarding the legitimacy of the U.S. Supreme Court, we expect higher levels of democratic values to predict higher levels of support for the U.S. Supreme Court. Regarding President Trump, we expect the opposite relationship: higher levels of democratic values should predict lower predicted probabilities of incumbent support.

Second, we expect that exposure to arguments about democratic values should affect respondents' willingness to support the Court and Trump. We *do not* expect that these prompts are likely to cause respondents to *change* their democratic values which we, like Caldeira (1977) and Easton and Dennis (1969) expect to be formed as part of a process

of childhood socialization and therefore are reluctant to change. Rather, we expect that these arguments to prime respondents' democratic values, calling to mind that principle of democracy and leading to evaluate the Court more heavily with that principle in mind. With this in mind, we hope to test whether evaluating the Court with an (for example) "egalitarian" versus a "majoritarian" conception in mind affects the extent to which one supports either the President or the Court.

Finally, because we do not expect these treatments to change respondents' support for democracy, we expect that their effectiveness should be based, in part, on the latent level of democratic values espoused by a respondent. We therefore test for a conditional relationship between exposure between each democratic principle and their democratic values, expecting that the arguments are more efficacious among those respondents who are more strongly committed to democracy.

V. Research Design

Name	Institutional Threat	Democratic Value
No Vignette Control	None	None
Vignette Control A	Jurisdiction Stripping	None
Liberal A	Jurisdiction Stripping	Liberal
Majoritarian A	Jurisdiction Stripping	Majoritarian
Egalitarian	Jurisdiction Stripping	Egalitarian
Electoral	Jurisdiction Stripping	Electoral
Vignette Control A	Impeachment	None
Liberal B	Impeachment	Liberal
Majoritarian B	Impeachment	Majoritarian

Table 1: Summary of Experimental Treatments

We assess the extent to which democratic values and arguments related to democratic principles affect support for the U.S. Supreme Court through a survey experiment con-

13

ducted on Amazon's Mechanical Turk platform in November 2017.[2] After answering a series of demographic and political questions, respondents were presented with a brief vignette describing an interinstitutional conflict in the United States. The vignette varied the institutional threat facing the U.S. Supreme Court, with respondents learning either that "the judges will face impeachment if they rule against the president" or that Trump "would move to reduce the court's powers to decide certain cases if the Court rules against the president." The second manipulation varied an argument based on democratic theory attributed to "legal experts." The four arguments were:

- **Liberal Democracy**: Legal experts have discussed the president's actions, arguing that the courts and the legislature provide an important check on the President's power, and the President should respect the Court, even if he doesn't agree with its decisions.

- **Majoritarian Democracy**: Legal experts have discussed the president's actions, arguing that courts should defer to the wishes of the majority, which is embodied in the president. Therefore, the President should resist the Court when he doesn't agree

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[2]While recent research suggests that MTurk samples are not representative of the national population, it also shows that they are more representative than many other convenience samples, such as college students (Clifford, Jewell and Waggoner 2015; Berinsky, Huber and Lenz 2012). In some dimensions MTurk samples can be remarkably similar to the general public (Huff and Tingley 2015). As a result of this, researchers have been able to replicate key findings in law and psychology using MTurk samples (Firth, Hoffman and Wilkinson-Ryan 2017). To the extent that the sample is not representative of the general public, though, this would limit the external validity (i.e. generalizability) of our results. It does not affect the internal validity of our causal inferences, though. As Crabtree and Fariss (2016) note, it is important to first verify the internal validity of theoretical claims before assessing the degree to which those claims extend to other samples. We think that a fruitful avenue for future work would be to test how our findings travel to other populations.

with its decisions.

- **Egalitarian Democracy**: Legal experts have discussed the president's actions, arguing that no citizen is above the law, and the President should respect the Court, even if he doesn't agree with its decisions.

- **Electoral Democarcy**: Legal experts have discussed the president's actions, arguing that unelected courts should defer to the wishes of the popularly-elected president. Therefore, the President should resist the Court when he doesn't agree with its decisions.

Table 1 displays the full set of 9 conditions in the experiment.[3] An example treatment (the Jurisdiction Stripping-Electoral treatment) read as follows:[4]

> The U.S. Supreme Court is currently considering a case involving the limits of President Trump's powers under the U.S. Constitution. The decision has the potential to cut back on President Trump's ability to act swiftly without regard for the preferences of the legislature. President Trump recently threatened the Court, saying he would move to reduce the Court's powers to decide certain cases if the Court rules against the President. The public is divided about the court case. Legal experts have discussed the President's actions, arguing that unelected courts should defer to the wishes of the popularly-elected president. Therefore, the President should resist the Court when he doesn't agree with its decisions.

The experiment also included a full (no vignette) control condition and two other control conditions in which respondents were exposed to the threat but not a corresponding

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[3]The treatments are not fully crossed due to sample size considerations. The Impeachment treatments overlap with a parallel experiment we conducted in Bolivia, which we discuss briefly in the conclusion. Because threats of jurisdiction stripping are far more common than threats of impeachment in the United States, we relied more heavily on jurisdiction stripping for our U.S. analysis. In Bolivia, where threats of impeachment are more common, that threat provided more external validity. We therefore tested the effects of the Impeachment treatment in the United States, as well, to facilitate comparison across cases.

[4]The full text of each vignette is available in the appendix.

democratic value argument. Due to power considerations that the fact that threats of jurisdiction stripping are more common than threats of impeachment in the United States, the experiment is not fully crossed, with the impeachment conditions using only the Liberal and Majoritarian arguments. Following the vignette, respondents answered a series of questions about their diffuse support for the U.S. Supreme Court and their propensity to vote for President Trump. Because the vignette, while theoretically based on the active controversy surrounding President Trump's travel ban, is somewhat deceptive, the survey ended by debriefing the respondents about the experiment.

A. Outcome and Explanatory Variables

Our major outcome variable is diffuse support for the U.S. Supreme Court. Individuals display diffuse support for an institution when they suggest that its institutional arrangements are appropriate, and we, following nearly all recent research on diffuse support, therefore measure diffuse support using a series of questions that query respondents about their willingness to support changes to the institutional structure and fucntion of the U.S. federal judiciary. We draw upon traditional items used by Gibson, Caldeira and Spence (2003*a*) and the AmericasBarometer (LAPOP 2008, 2012).

- When the Supreme Court blocks the work of the government, its power to decide certain cases should be reduced. (14.2% Agree)

- When the Supreme Court blocks the work of the government, the justices of the Supreme Court ought to be personally held accountable via impeachment trials. (16.6% Agree)

- If the U.S. Supreme Court started making a lot of decisions that most people disagree with, it might be better to do away with the Court altogether. (12.7% Agree)

- The right of the U.S. Supreme Court to decide certain types of controversial issues should be reduced. (15.9% Agree)

- Justices on the U.S. Supreme Court who consistently make decisions at odds with what the majority wants should be removed from their position. (18.7% Agree)

- The U.S. Supreme Court ought to be made less independent so that it listens a lot more to what the people want. (22.8% Agree)

This six-item scale is quite reliable, with a Cronbach's Alpha of .89. The six items load onto a single factor with loadings ranging from .72 to .81. We use the factor score from this analysis, rescaled from 0 to 1 such that higher values indicate more diffuse support, as our dependent variable.

We also examined support for President Trump in terms of the respondents' vote intentions using a survey item widely used in cross-national research: If this week were the next presidential elections, how would you vote?

- I wouldn't vote (abstain). (4.5%)

- I would vote for President Trump. (20.0%)

- I would vote for someone other than President Trump. (65.0%)

- I'm undecided. (9.1%)

- I prefer not to respond. (1.42%)

From this question, we created a dichotomous variable indicating intention to vote for Trump. We analyze this question as a separate dependent variable.

Though the random assignment to treatment mitigates the need to account for respondent-specific factors, we are cognizant of the potential for treatment heterogeneity: in particular, respondents may have different latent levels of support for democracy that affect the extent to which the treatment is effective. With this in mind, we also measured an array of demographic and political characteristics of our sample. In particular, we queried respondents about seven statements related to their support for democratic systems of government. Our measurement of this concept, as discussed above, differs from previous explorations

of diffuse support by measuring support for democratic government generally rather than by including generalized political trust (Bartels and Johnston 2012) or specific values like support for the rule of law and political tolerance (Gibson and Nelson 2015). Our seven statements included four statements for which respondents rated their agreement on a five-point scale from strong agreement to strong disagreement:

- Those who disagree with the majority represent a threat to the country (9.0% Agree).
- Once the people have decided what is correct, we should stop a minority from restricting that majority (24.7% Agree).
- The people should govern directly and not through representative government (17.6% Agree).
- Sometimes democracy produces results we disagree with, but we should respect the results anyway (58.1% Agree).

The remaining three statements asked respondents to pick between two options with a middle "don't know" category. We rescaled these items on a three-point scale, moving the don't know respondents to the a middle category.

- Generally, which of the following do you prefer? Democracy, though it is sometimes unstable (77.3%); or Order, though a somewhat restricted democracy (14.1%).
- There are people who say that we need a strong leader who does not have to be elected by the vote of the people (6.9%). Others say that although things may not work, electoral democracy, or the popular vote, is always best (86.1%). What do you think?
- Do you think that our country needs a government with an iron fist (10.3%), or do you think that problems can be resolved with everyone's participation (83.5%)?

These seven items do not fit well on a single dimension. In a single dimension factor analysis, no factor loads onto a single factor above .60. Neither allowing for additional dimensions or fitting models with subsets of the items improves the fit. However, throughout the analyses, the two items which consistently show the strongest relationship are the first

two items ("majority represent a threat" and "stop a minority from restricting"). Because these two items are measured on the same five-point scale, we used respondents' average response to these two items as our measure of democratic values. The average response is a 3.7 with a standard deviation of .9.

Moving to other covariates, myriad studies of support for the U.S. Supreme Court have found that "to know the court is to love it," or, in other words, that increased political knowledge is associated with greater support for the U.S. Supreme Court. With this in mind, we included a 5-item political knowledge scale.[5] Befitting the high level of political knowledge typical of online convenience samples, the average respondent answered 3.9 of the 5 questions correctly. We also measured the respondents' gender (50.9% female), race (7.9% black, 19.3% nonwhite), ethnicity (8.7% Hispanic), education (measured on an 8-point scale with 50% college graduates and 31% having completed some college), social class (51.9% own their home), ideology (52.27% describing themselves as liberal; 28.18% describing themselves as conservative), and partisanship (39.9% Democrat, 21.8% Republican).[6] Finally, we also include three variables to measure specific support for the U.S. Supreme Court in models that analyse diffuse support as an outcome variable: general performance satisfaction (Gibson and Nelson 2015), whether respondents' judge the Court's policymaking to be "About Right" (Nelson and Uribe-McGuire 2017), and subjective ideological disagreement (Bartels and Johnston 2012) (measured as the absolute value of the difference between respondents' 7-point self-placements and their 7-point placements of the

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[5]Full question wording is available in the appendix.

[6]Importantly, there is no evidence that assignment to treatment was systematically related with any of these factors. Chi-squared tests of independence with gender (p=.74), race (p=.21), ethnicity (p=.87), education (p=.62), social class (p=.79), ideology (p=.24), partisanship (p=.19), and knowledge (p=.11) all render us unable to reject the null hypothesis of independence between our treatment and the respondent characteristic.

Court). In the multivariate analyses we present, we have rescaled all of the variables to vary from 0 to 1 for ease of comparison.

VI. Results

We consider the effects of the experiment on two outcomes: diffuse support for the U.S. Supreme Court and willingness to support President Trump. We first consider the direct effects of our experimental treatments on both outcomes. Because respondents were randomly assigned to each condition, simple difference-of-means tests provide an appropriate test of the experiment's effects. Then, we expand our analysis to a multivariate framework, testing both the direct effect of democratic values and for a conditional effect of those values on the efficacy of the experimental treatments.

A. Experimental Results

We begin our analysis of the experiment's effects by testing for differences across the two different *threats* to which respondents were exposed. Recall that one small group of respondents ($N = 219$) were exposed to no vignette at all and answered the dependent variables without exposure to a vignette. Another, medium-sized group ($N = 660$) were exposed to a vignette about impeachment while a third, larger group ($N = 1,104$) group was exposed to a vignette about jurisdiction stripping. We are interested in whether any baseline effects in the efficacy of the treatments exist that might confound our later analyses.

Figure 1: Average values of Diffuse Support (Left Panel) and Trump Support (Right Panel) by Threat
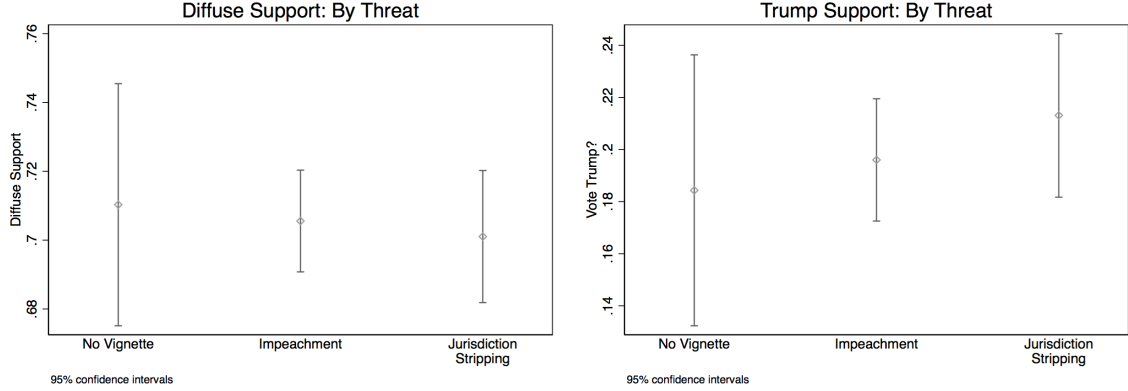
Figure 1 displays the average value of diffuse support (left panel) and willingness to support Trump (right panel), along with 95% confidence intervals for each mean. Recall that each outcome is measured on the 0-1 interval. The most obvious conclusion from both panels of the figure is the near-complete overlap of the confidence intervals. Statistical testing bears out what the figure suggests: there is no statistically significant difference in either outcome by either threat. Given these findings, we therefore pool the threats together in the remaining analyses, unless otherwise specified.[7]

Having established the statistical equivalency of the two threats, we now consider the direct effects of the experimental treatments on both outcome variables. Recall that we are interested in the direct relationship between democratic values and the outcome variables, the direct effects of the treatments, and the conditional relationship between the treatments and respondents' democratic values.

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[7]Appendix D provides full results for our further analyses that show separate effects by each threat for interested readers.

Figure 2: Average values of Diffuse Support (Left Panel) and Trump Support (Right Panel) by Democratic Values Treatment
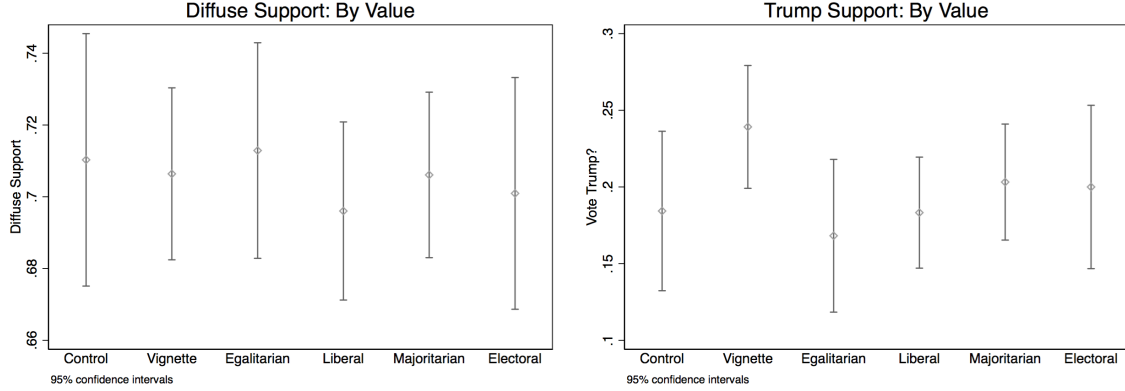
Figure 2 displays the average value of both dependent variables for each of the democratic values treatments. Comparing average values of diffuse support (the left-hand panel of Figure 2), there are no statistically significant differences across the treatments. Exposure to liberal democratic arguments is associated with the lowest levels of diffuse support, but this difference is far from statistically significant. From this figure, we conclude that our experiment did not affect respondents' levels of diffuse support for the U.S. Supreme Court.

We do find some statistically significant differences across our experimental treatments when we consider respondents' level of support for Trump. Here, levels of support for President Trump were different between those respondents who were exposed to the Egalitarian and the Liberal democracy treatments to those who were exposed to the experimental vignette without a democratic values argument.[8] Recall that these two treatments are the two treatments in which the "legal experts" suggested that "the President should Respect

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[8]The p-values are $p = 0.32$ for the Egalitarian treatment and $p = 0.038$ for the Liberal Democracy treatment. Recall, of course, that overlapping confidence intervals, as this result underscores, do not indicate that two quantities are not statistically distinguishable from each other.

the Court, even if he doesn't agree with its decisions." Respondents' support for Trump is no different for the two "resist the Court" treatments (Electoral and Majoritarian) as it is when respondents read the vignette without a democratic values prime.

The clearest conclusion we can draw from the direct effect of the experiment on support for President Trump is that being that experts believe the Court deserves the president's respect is associated with a decrease in support for that person's reelection. This is exactly as expected given that the vignette tells respondents that the President is attacking the Court, therefore suggesting that he is acting at odds with the legal experts.[9]

B. Multivariate Analysis

Recall, however, that our first and third hypotheses related to the effects of democratic values, both directly and conditionally. That is, we expected that the efficacy of the experimental treatments would be conditional on respondent's preexisting democratic values. These values, as Easton and Dennis (1969) and Tyler and Trinkner (2018) have demonstrated, are learned early in life as part of a broader process of childhood socialization. It is therefore unlikely that the experimental treatments have enough force to *change* a respondent's preexisting support for democracy. Rather, we think it likely that our experimental treatments serve to remind (or prime) respondents' latent value for democracy, activating a support that may or may not already exist.

To this end, we must move from a simple comparison of means to a multivariate framework because both democratic values and institutional support are certainly associated with a variety of other factors, such as a respondent's race (Clawson and Waltenburg 2009), po-

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[9]Interestingly, this result appears to be driven by Trump's supporters, rather than by the majority of Americans who do not support the President. However, because Trump supporters are only about 25% of our respondents, we are limited in our ability to delve more deeply into these results.

litical knowledge (Gibson and Caldeira 2009), and ideology (Bartels and Johnston 2013). Because diffuse support is an interval-level variable, we estimate models using it as a dependent variable with linear regression; because Trump support is dichotomous, we rely on logistic regression for those models.

Table 2 displays the results of a series of multivariate models that probe respondents' diffuse support for the U.S. Supreme Court. Model 1 displays a simple model of diffuse support that mimics those discussed by Gibson and Nelson (2015) and Bartels and Johnston (2013). Unsurprisingly (and comfortingly) we see that the two strongest predictors of diffuse support in that model are our index of Democratic values and our Court Knowledge scale.[10] The size of the Democratic Values coefficient is particularly large; a change in that variable across its range corresponds in a change in the dependent variable over one-third of its range. This result underscores the vital role that democratic values play in structuring diffuse support.

The control variables in the model perform as expected. Contrary to the argument made by Bartels and Johnston (2013), Ideological Disagreement is not associated with respondent's diffuse support, though performance satisfaction–the traditional measure of Specific Support–does play its typical important and statistically significant role. Moreover, as Gibson (2007) suggested, there is little role for partisanship or ideology to play with regard to respondents' diffuse support.

Having established that the the correlates of diffuse support for these MTurk respondents mirror those found in nationally-representative samples, we next turn to Model 2, which adds the experimental treatments to the model specification, testing for the direct effect of the experimental conditions. Again, mirroring the conclusion suggested from Figure 2, there are no statistically significant differences in diffuse support across the conditions.

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[10]Remember that each variable is rescaled from 0 to 1, so we can make accurate comparisons based just on coefficient size.

Table 2: Multivariate Results: Diffuse Support

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Democratic Values	0.35*	0.35*	0.39*
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.06)
Vignette Control		0.01	0.03
		(0.02)	(0.05)
Egalitarian		-0.01	0.12
		(0.02)	(0.06)
Liberal		-0.01	0.00
		(0.02)	(0.05)
Majoritarian		-0.00	0.03
		(0.02)	(0.05)
Electoral		-0.02	-0.00
		(0.02)	(0.06)
Vignette Control×Democratic Values			-0.04
			(0.07)
Egalitarian×Democratic Values			-0.18*
			(0.09)
Liberal×Democratic Values			-0.02
			(0.07)
Majoritarian×Democratic Values			-0.05
			(0.07)
Electoral×Democratic Values			-0.02
			(0.08)
Female	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Black	-0.02	-0.02	-0.02
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Hispanic	-0.04*	-0.04*	-0.04*
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Education	0.09*	0.09*	0.09*
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Own Home	-0.00	-0.00	-0.00
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Ideology	-0.04	-0.04	-0.04
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Democrat	0.02	0.02	0.02
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Republican	-0.03	-0.02	-0.02
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Court Knowledge	0.27*	0.27*	0.27*
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Performance Satisfaction	0.18*	0.18*	0.18*
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Specific Support: About Right	0.02	0.02*	0.02
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Ideological Disagreement	-0.04	-0.05	-0.04
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Intercept	0.14*	0.14*	0.11*
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.05)
R^2	0.39	0.39	0.39
Adjusted R^2	0.38	0.38	0.38
N	1629.00	1629.00	1629.00

The table presents linear regression coefficients.
The baseline condition in the model is the No Vignette condition.

This conclusion also holds when we reestimate the model, changing the baseline experimental category to the Vignette Control condition. From this analysis, we conclude that the experimental treatment had no direct effect on diffuse support, a conclusion that (in retrospect) is not entirely surprising given that the essence of diffuse support is its resistance to change.

Our second purpose in estimating multivariate models was to investigate the possibility that these experimental treatments had heterogeneous effects based on respondents' pre-existing Democratic Values. To this end, Model 3 interacts each experimental treatment with our measure of Democratic Values. The model estimates reveal that only one of our treatments—the Egalitarian treatment—has effects that are statistically different based on one's preexisting Democratic Values.[11] The direction of the interaction term is negative, meaning that the effect of exposure to the Egalitarian treatment (being reminded that "no citizen is above the law") is weakened given one's preexisting Democratic Values.

We next move to Table 3 which contains logistic regression estimates for a series of models estimating support for Trump's reelection. Model 1 in that table displays an unadorned model of incumbent support. The variables all perform as expected. Trump is supported by conservatives and Republicans and opposed by Democrats and blacks. Importantly, aside from ideology, the variable with the strongest relationship with Trump support is Democratic values. Holding all other variables at their means, an increase in Democratic Values across its range is associated with a decrease in support for Trump from 34% to 13%, a more than 50% decrease!

Model 2 adds the direct effects of the experimental vignettes to the model specification. None of the experimental treatments are statistically differentiable from the No Vignette control, and all of the control variables retain their sign and statistical significance when

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[11]When the baseline category for the model is the Vignette Control, the p-value for the Egalitarian interaction drops to $p = 0.057$.

Table 3: Multivariate Results: Trump Support

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Democratic Values	-2.11*	-2.13*	-2.92*
	(0.36)	(0.36)	(1.04)
Vignette Control		0.49	0.14
		(0.28)	(0.77)
Egalitarian		0.30	-1.02
		(0.34)	(0.94)
Liberal		0.19	0.34
		(0.28)	(0.82)
Majoritarian		0.09	-0.66
		(0.28)	(0.78)
Electoral		0.17	-0.57
		(0.32)	(0.88)
Vignette Control×Democratic Values			0.63
			(1.24)
Egalitarian×Democratic Values			2.16
			(1.46)
Liberal×Democratic Values			-0.22
			(1.34)
Majoritarian×Democratic Values			1.29
			(1.27)
Electoral×Democratic Values			1.30
			(1.42)
Female	-0.12	-0.11	-0.11
	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.16)
Black	-1.67*	-1.62*	-1.64*
	(0.48)	(0.48)	(0.48)
Hispanic	-0.12	-0.09	-0.11
	(0.31)	(0.31)	(0.32)
Education	-0.44	-0.43	-0.44
	(0.35)	(0.35)	(0.35)
Own Home	0.10	0.10	0.10
	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.15)
Ideology	4.32*	4.32*	4.33*
	(0.41)	(0.41)	(0.41)
Democrat	-1.38*	-1.42*	-1.42*
	(0.32)	(0.32)	(0.32)
Republican	0.92*	0.93*	0.94*
	(0.17)	(0.18)	(0.18)
Court Knowledge	0.30	0.35	0.36
	(0.31)	(0.31)	(0.32)
Intercept	-2.35*	-2.62*	-2.18*
	(0.44)	(0.49)	(0.71)
A.I.C.	1150.62	1155.77	1161.33
N	1936.00	1936.00	1936.00

The table presents logistic regression coefficients.
The baseline condition in the model is the No Vignette condition.

these additional covariates are added to the model. Moreover, when the baseline category in the model is changed from the No Vignette Control to the Vignette Control, the results discussed above vanish; after accounting for respondents' demographics and democratic values, none of the treatments have an effect. The same is also true when we interact the treatments with respondents' preexisting Democratic Values: none of the interaction terms is statistically significant compared to the No Vignette Control (Model 3) or the Vignette Control (results not shown).

From this multivariate analysis, we come to the conclusion that respondents' preexisting levels of democratic values do not condition the effect of our experimental treatments on either their diffuse support for the U.S. Supreme Court and for President Trump's reelection. In a later analysis, we consider a possible reason for these null results: priming.

C. Democratic or Authoritarian Values?

To this point in the paper, we have seen a strong direct relationship between democratic values and our outcome variables and sporadic support for our second two hypotheses. Perhaps one reason for the lack of a conditional relationship between our experimental treatments and our measure of democratic values relates to our measure of the latter concept. Despite relying on measures of democratic values that have been widely used (e.g. LAPOP 2008, 2012) in similar contexts, the different items in our democratic values index did not scale well together. One potential reason for this empirical problem is theoretical: democracy is a multidimensional concept.

To this end, we conducted a supplemental analysis using the indicator of democratic values we believe best captures an important and basic distinction between democracy and autocracy: the extent to which respondents believe that a strong leader (who need not be elected) is superior to electoral democracy (or whether respondents believe the converse to be true. In previous cross-national work (Driscoll and Nelson 2017), we found that the

"strong leader" item plays a massive role in predicting country-level diffuse support. To this end, we query whether this distinction—between democratic and autocratic values—creates any heterogeneity in our experiment's treatment effects.

Recall that the strong leader asks respondents whether they prefer a strong leader or electoral democracy; respondents were required to choose either option or indicate whether they were unsure, creating a three-point scale. The vast majority of respondents felt that electoral democracy is best, even if it does not ways work they way they wish. Indeed, only about 7% of respondents felt that a strong leader is always best while another 7% weren't sure whether a strong leader or electoral democracy is superior. Importantly, *the variable is coded such that __democratic__ responses are indicated with higher values.*

Figure 3: Marginal Effect of Liberal Democracy Treatment on Diffuse Support (Left Panel) and Trump Support (Right Panel) by Support for a Strong Leader
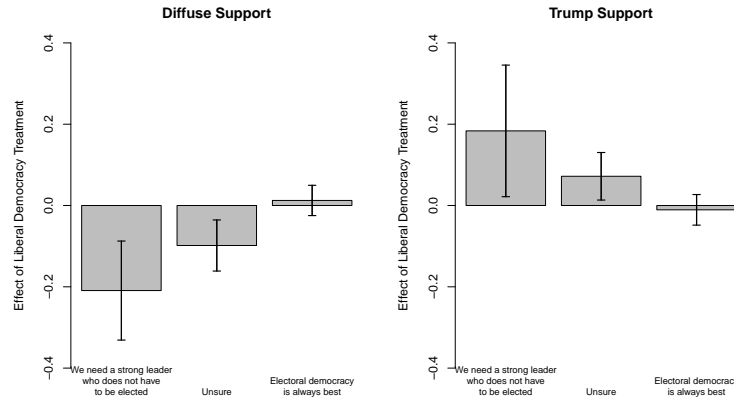

Table 7 in the Appendix displays the results of the model. The Strong Leader variable has a direct effect on diffuse support (b=0.13, $p < .001$) but misses the threshold for statistical significance in the Trump support model (b= -0.46, $p = .083$). However, when that variable is interacted with the treatment, there is a consistent effect on the Liberal Democracy treatment. Figure 3 displays the marginal effect in both models. For diffuse support (the left panel of the figure), the effect of the Liberal Democracy treatment is for

those who support a strong leader over electoral democracy is negative, indicating that those respondents who received the Liberal treatment and hold authoritarian values have lower levels of diffuse support, all else equal. The same result holds for those respondents who were unsure whether they supported an unelected strong leader or electoral democracy.

A similar result is evident in the right-hand panel of Figure 3. For those who support strong leaders and those who were unsure which form of government they support, exposure to the Liberal treatment is associated with an *increase* in the likelihood they support President Trump's reelection, all else equal. The result is also substantively significant. Respondents who support strong leaders and received the Liberal treatment have a .21 probability of supporting Trump's reelection. This probability falls to .12 for those who were unsure and received the Liberal treatment and all of the way to .06 for those who support electoral democracy and were exposed to the Liberal treatment.

From this analysis, we conclude that more basic arguments about democracy generally— as suggested by our "strong leader" question—do a better job of stimulating respondents' reasoning about democracy than do the more specific questions about majoritariansm and respect for minority rights that were included in the measure of democratic values used in the previous analyses.

D. Were the Respondents Primed?

However, the measure of democratic values is only one reason that the first set of multi-variate results appears weaker than hypothesized. A second issue relates to more general issues with survey research: question ordering. In the October survey, respondents answered a series of demographic questions and the battery of democratic values questions before receiving the experimental treatment and answering the diffuse support and Trump support questions. This is necessary, in part, so that the measures of Democratic Values are pretreatment and our statistical analyses presented in the previous section do not suffer

form posttreatment bias.

At the same time, the experimental treatments we employ are subtle; they seek to remind respondents about their preexisting commitments to democracy. But, answering the democratic values battery might have the same effect! In other words, answering the democratic values battery should make respondents consider their commitment to democracy such that exposure to the "Legal experts"' arguments about democracy are ineffective because all respondents were primed to consider the effects of democracy in the previous section of the survey.

With that in mind, we surveyed an additional 1000 MTurkers in November 2017, moving the experimental vignette to the beginning of the survey immediately preceding the democratic values battery. Therefore, in this survey, respondents answered the dependent variable questions *before* they were queried about their democratic values. Of course, this comes with the drawback of making the democratic values questions in that survey post-treatment.[12] Also to ensure statistical power, we only queried respondents about threats to strip the Court's jurisdiction in this experiment. Chi^2 tests indicate that the randomization to treatment was successful.

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[12]Another research design might use a two-wave panel survey where respondents are surveyed about their democratic values at t_1. We lacked the resources to implement that design.

Figure 4: Average values of Diffuse Support (Left Panel) and Trump Support (Right Panel) by Threat, November Experiment
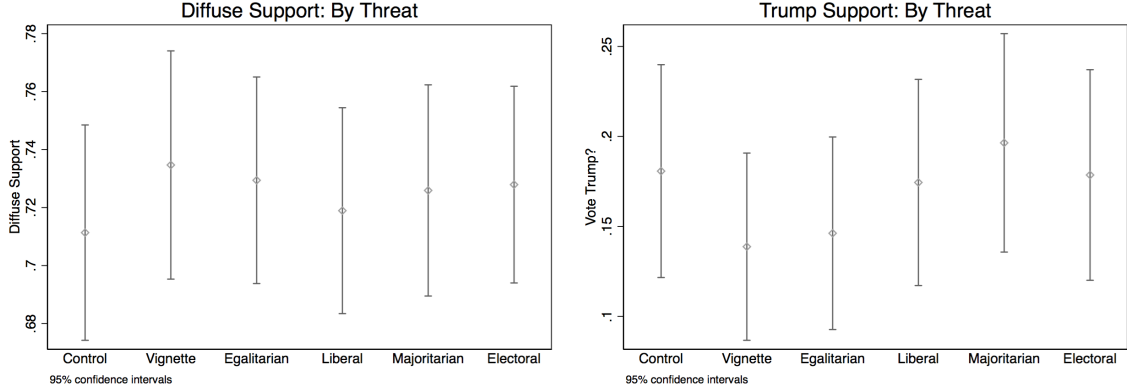

Figure 4 displays the average values of Diffuse Support (left-hand panel) and Trump Support (right-hand panel) from this revised experiment. The clear conclusion from the figure is that there is no direct effect of the experimental vignette across any condition. Moreover, the differences in the Trump Support condition, evident in Figure 1, are not present in these data.

VII. Discussion

In this paper, we have sought to understand the connection between democratic values and institutional support in the United States. The relationship between these two concepts is a fundamental one in Legitimacy Theory. Indeed, Easton (1965) argues that legitimacy is dependent upon support for the regime, rather than performance satisfaction, arguing that

> The strength of support implicit in this attitude derives from the fact that it
> is not contingent on specific inducements or rewards of any kind, except in the
> very long run. On a day-to-day basis, if there is a strong inner conviction of
> moral validity of the authorities or regime, support may persist even in the face
> of repeated deprivations attributed to the outputs of the authorities or their

failure to act (278).

However, existing research has either omitted democratic variables from their investigations completely (Bartels and Johnston 2013) or relied on ad hoc democratic values without an overarching understanding of how these values relate to democracy more generally (Gibson and Nelson 2015).

We therefore drew upon widely-used measures of support for democracy, finding that general support for democracy continues to have a strong and robust relationship with diffuse support for the U.S. Supreme Court when more general measures of democratic values are used. At the same time, we also showed that support for democracy is also related to support for the current U.S. president. However, values work in opposite directions for these two actors: for the Court, more democratic values translates to more institutional support. For Trump, the opposite is true, and those who have more support for democracy are less likely to want to vote for Trump in the future.

We also sought to understand how arguments about democratic values affect their willingness to support the Court and the President. Drawing on four fundamental democratic principles—egalitarianism, majoritarianism, liberalism, and electoral—we randomly exposed respondents to arguments related to these principles. We found some evidence that exposure to egalitarian or liberal arguments affect support for Trump, suggesting that respondents who thought about democracy through an egalitarian or separation-of-powers framework might be less likely to support the President in the future. However, the size of these effects were moderate at best.

We also investigated the extent to which respondents' underlying democratic values affected their institutional support. Here, we found a robust relationship between authoritarian values—the willingness to support an unelected strong leader—and our liberal democratic prime: for those who support a powerful authoritarian leader, arguments about liberal democracy backfire, causing individuals to withdraw support from the Court and

to grant support to President Trump.

Putting together this evidence, what have we learned? While it is clear that the experiment has, at best, minor effects on Americans' institutional support, we think the possibility of heterogeneous treatment effects when we dig down in to peoples' core values. These findings suggest to us that further theorizing about *what* values are important to individuals as they evaluate institutions is particularly important as we move forward with this project. In future work, we hope to measure each principle of democracy to test for more focused heterogeneous treatment effects.

Additionally, though we do not report those analyses here, we find additional evidence that supports our theory when we break the diffuse support measure into its components, analyzing the indicators of the diffuse support scale that relate directly to the threat (e.g. jurisdiction stripping) mentioned in the vignette. Thinking carefully about exactly what the outcome is that we expect to change is another avenue for future research. In this sense, the theoretical approach of Bartels, Johnston and Mark (2015), who suggested different types of diffuse support, seems particularly fruitful.

Why do democratic values predict institutional support so strongly but the experimental treatments a relatively weaker effect? We, drawing upon a second survey, are able to reject the likelihood that the democratic values treatments primed the respondents; even moving the experimental vignette to the beginning of the survey yielded no evidence that the treatments were more effective. Instead, we think it is most likely that childhood socialization makes reasoning about democracy so fundamental for most Americans that the experimental treatments are unable to have an independent effect on support. Indeed, (Easton and Dennis 1969) and (Caldeira 1977) taught us that individuals' commitments to institutions are formed early in life and are resistant to change. When an individual has grown up in the United States and has been socialized into its political system—a consolidated democracy—democratic commitments are uncontroversial and automatic.

However, we do not expect this to be necessarily the case outside of the United States where commitments to democracy may not be so automatic. With this in mind, we conducted an analogous version of the experiment in Bolivia in November 2017. Though we are still analyzing that data, our analyses have so far supported our intuition that much of the immobility of respondents' judgments in the United States is perhaps due to the obdurate general support for democracy in this country.

The stability we find is good news for the Supreme Court: even in the current era, where many worry about Americans' commitments to democracy, our results suggest that democratic values are strong predictors of institutional support and seem relatively difficult to change. Thus, just as Christenson and Glick (2015) and Gibson and Nelson (2015) suggested that political polarization in America may help the Court maintain its support so long as its policymaking continues to be relatively moderate, these findings suggest that the slow-moving nature of Americans' commitments to democratic governance make the Court's support safe for years to come. Moreover, Americans have different—and sometimes competing—democratic values and (in)tolerance for different types of court curbing, which may also further help the Court to maintain its high level of support among its constituents. As a result, we expect the Court to continue to enjoy high levels of support so long as the American people maintain their strong support for democracy.

We conclude by noting the general comparability of our findings across institutions. The democratic principles of interest to us relate to regime types more generally, courts provide a particularly fertile testing ground to examine how respondents' conceptions of democracy affect institutional support. After all, courts- have unique relationships with these democratic principles, as denoted by their typical lack of an electoral connection, their supposed duty to protect minority rights against majority oppression, and their duty to check overreach by other branches of government. As a result, while these democratic ideas are general, we view the judicial branch as a particularly good venue for our analysis.

We hope to expand our analysis to other institutions in future work.

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A. Sample Information

		Internet Samples			Face to Face
	Sample	Christenson and Glick	Berinsky, Huber, Lenz	ANES-P 2008-09	ANES 2008
% Female	50.9	54.4	60.1	57.6	55
% White	80.7	79	83.5	83	79.1
% Black	7.6	7.9	4.4	8.9	12
% Hispanic	8.7	5	6.7	5	9.1
Mean Age (Yrs)	38.1	33.4	32.3	49.7	46.6
Ideology (7 pt.)	3.4	3.3	3.4	4.3	4.2
Education	50% Col Grad 31% Some Col	50% Col Grad 37% Some Col	14.9 yrs	16.2 yrs	13.5 yrs

Table 4: Comparison of Sample Demographics. ANES-P is the American National Election Panel Study conducted by Knowledge Networks and the ANES is the American National Election Study. Data from the ANES are weighted. Data for Christenson and Glick (2015) comes from Table A1 of their article; data for the remaining columns comes from Table 3 in Berinsky, Huber and Lenz (2012).

B. Full Vignette Text

- **Vignette Control B**: The U.S. Supreme Court is currently considering a case involving the limits of President Trump's powers under the U.S. Constitution. The decision has the potential to cut back on President Trump's ability to act swiftly without regard for the preferences of the legislature. President Trump recently threatened the Court, saying that the judges will face impeachment if they rule against the President. The public is divided about the court case.

- **Vignette Control A**: The U.S. Supreme Court is currently considering a case involving the limits of President Trump's powers under the U.S. Constitution. The decision has the potential to cut back on President Trump's ability to act swiftly without regard for the preferences of the legislature. President Trump recently threatened the Court, saying he would move to reduce the Court's powers to decide certain cases if the Court rules against the President. The public is divided about the court case.

- **Egalitarian**: The U.S. Supreme Court is currently considering a case involving the limits of President Trump's powers under the U.S. Constitution. The decision has the potential to cut back on President Trump's ability to act swiftly without regard for the preferences of the legislature. President Trump recently threatened the Court, saying he would move to reduce the Court's powers to decide certain cases if the Court rules against the President. The public is divided about the court case. Legal experts have discussed the President's actions, arguing that no citizen is above the law, and the President should respect the Court, even if he doesn't agree with its decisions.

- **Liberal B**: The U.S. Supreme Court is currently considering a case involving the limits of President Trump's powers under the U.S. Constitution. The decision has the potential to cut back on President Trump's ability to act swiftly without regard for the preferences of the legislature. President Trump recently threatened the Court, saying that the judges will face impeachment if they rule against the President. The public is divided about the court case. Legal experts have discussed the President's actions, arguing that the courts and the legislature provide an important check on the President's power, and the President should respect the Court, even if he doesn't agree with its decisions.

- **Liberal A**: The U.S. Supreme Court is currently considering a case involving the limits of President Trump's powers under the U.S. Constitution. The decision has the potential to cut back on President Trump's ability to act swiftly without regard for the preferences of the legislature. President Trump recently threatened the Court, saying he would move to reduce the Court's powers to decide certain cases if the Court rules against the President. The public is divided about the court case. Legal experts have discussed the President's actions, arguing that the courts and the legislature provide an important check on the President's power, and the President should respect the Court, even if he doesn't agree with its decisions.

- **Majoritarian B**: The U.S. Supreme Court is currently considering a case involving the limits of President Trump's powers under the U.S. Constitution. The decision has the potential to cut back on President Trump's ability to act swiftly without regard for the preferences of the legislature. President Trump recently threatened the Court, saying that the judges will face impeachment if they rule against the President. The public is divided about the court case. Legal experts have discussed the President's actions, arguing that courts should defer to the wishes of the majority, which is embodied in the President. Therefore, the President should resist the Court when he doesn't agree with its decisions.

- **Majoritarian A**: The U.S. Supreme Court is currently considering a case involving the limits of President Trump's powers under the U.S. Constitution. The decision has the potential to cut back on President Trump's ability to act swiftly without regard for the preferences of the legislature. President Trump recently threatened the Court, saying he would move to reduce the Court's powers to decide certain cases if the Court rules against the President. The public is divided about the court case. Legal experts have discussed the President's actions, arguing that courts should defer to the wishes of the majority, which is embodied in the President. Therefore, the President should resist the Court when he doesn't agree with its decisions.

- **Electoral**: The U.S. Supreme Court is currently considering a case involving the limits of President Trump's powers under the U.S. Constitution. The decision has the potential to cut back on President Trump's ability to act swiftly without regard for the preferences of the legislature. President Trump recently threatened the Court, saying he would move to reduce the Court's powers to decide certain cases if the Court rules against the President. The public is divided about the court case. Legal experts have discussed the President's actions, arguing that unelected courts should defer to the wishes of the popularly-elected president. Therefore, the President should resist the Court when he doesn't agree with its decisions.

C. Measurement of Independent Variables

Political Knowledge Some judges in the U.S. are elected; others are appointed to the bench. Do you happen to Court Knowledge if the justices of the U.S. Supreme Court are

- Elected (1)

- Appointed to the Bench (2)

Some judges in the U.S. serve for a set number of years; others serve a life term. Do you happen to Court Knowledge whether the justices of the U.S. Supreme Court serve...

- For a Set Number of Years (1)

- For a Life Term (2)

Do you happen to Court Knowledge to which of the following institutions has the last say when there is a conflict over the meaning of the Constitution?

- The U.S. Supreme Court (1)

- The U.S. Congress (2)

- The President (3)

As you may know, the U.S. Supreme Court issues written opinions along with its decisions in most major cases it decides. We wonder if you Court Knowledge about how many decisions with opinions the Court issues each year. Would you say it writes

- Less than one hundred decisions with opinions each year. (1)

- Around five hundred decisions with opinions. (2)

- A thousand decisions with opinions or more per year. (3)

When the U.S. Supreme Court decides a case, would you say that

- The decision can be appealed to another court. (1)

- Congress can review the decision to see if it should become the law of the land. (2)

- The decision is final and cannot be further reviewed. (3)

D. Additional Results

D.1. Full Treatment Results

Figure 5: Average values of Diffuse Support (Left Panel) and Trump Support) by Full Set of Conditions
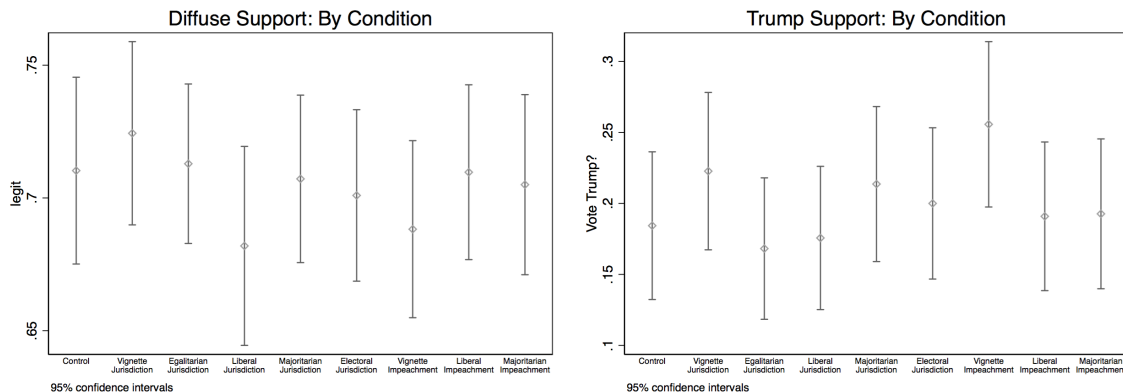
D.2. Strong Leader Model Results

D.3. Second Experiment Multivariate Results

Tables 8 and 9 display the multivariate results for this experiment. Columns 3 and 4 in the two tables differ only in which control condition is used as the baseline in the experiment. For diffuse support, it appears that, all else equal, receiving the Electoral Democracy condition was associated with an increase in diffuse support (Column 2). No similar direct effects are seen for Trump Support.

Moving to the conditional effects, there is no evidence from Table 9 that one's level of democratic values might be related to the size of the experimental effect. However, quite a few effects are visible in Table 8. Most notably, the interactive effect for the Egalitarian treatment, seen in the original experiment, is again visible in this table and again indicates that higher levels of democratic values actually decrease the effectiveness of the egalitarian treatment compared to the control vignette.

Table 5: Multivariate Results: Diffuse Support

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Democratic Values	0.35*	0.35*	0.39*
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.06)
Vignette Jurisdiction		0.01	0.01
		(0.02)	(0.06)
Egalitarian Jurisdiction		-0.01	0.12
		(0.02)	(0.06)
Liberal Jurisdiction		-0.02	-0.00
		(0.02)	(0.06)
Majoritarian Jurisdiction		-0.01	0.03
		(0.02)	(0.06)
Electoral Jurisdiction		-0.02	-0.00
		(0.02)	(0.06)
Vignette Impeachment		-0.00	0.06
		(0.02)	(0.06)
Liberal Impeachment		-0.00	0.01
		(0.02)	(0.06)
Majoritarian Impeachment		-0.00	0.03
		(0.02)	(0.06)
Vignette Jurisdiction×Democratic Values			0.00
			(0.08)
Egalitarian Jurisdiction×Democratic Values			-0.18*
			(0.09)
Liberal Jurisdiction×Democratic Values			-0.03
			(0.08)
Majoritarian Jurisdiction×Democratic Values			-0.05
			(0.09)
Electoral Jurisdiction×Democratic Values			-0.02
			(0.08)
Vignette Impeachment×Democratic Values			-0.09
			(0.09)
Liberal Impeachment×Democratic Values			-0.02
			(0.09)
Majoritarian Impeachment×Democratic Values			-0.05
			(0.08)
Female	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Black	-0.02	-0.02	-0.02
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Hispanic	-0.04*	-0.04*	-0.04*
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Education	0.09*	0.09*	0.09*
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Own Home	-0.00	-0.00	-0.00
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Ideology	-0.04	-0.04	-0.04
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Democrat	0.02	0.02	0.02
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Republican	-0.03	-0.02	-0.02
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Court Knowledge	0.27*	0.27*	0.27*
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Performance Satisfaction	0.18*	0.18*	0.18*
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Specific Support: About Right	0.02	0.02*	0.02*
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Ideological Disagreement	-0.04	-0.05	-0.05
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Intercept	0.14*	0.14*	0.11*
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.05)
R^2	0.39	0.39	0.39
Adjusted R^2	0.38	0.38	0.38
N	1629.00	1629.00	1629.00

The table presents linear regression coefficients.
The baseline condition in the model is the No Vignette condition.

Table 6: Full Multivariate Results: Trump Support

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Democratic Values	-2.11*	-2.14*	-2.92*
	(0.36)	(0.36)	(1.04)
Vignette Jurisdiction		0.52	-0.18
		(0.32)	(0.85)
Egalitarian Jurisdiction		0.30	-1.02
		(0.34)	(0.94)
Liberal Jurisdiction		0.20	-0.32
		(0.33)	(0.94)
Majoritarian Jurisdiction		0.22	0.33
		(0.32)	(0.94)
Electoral Jurisdiction		0.17	-0.57
		(0.32)	(0.88)
Vignette Impeachment		0.46	0.69
		(0.32)	(0.95)
Liberal Impeachment		0.18	1.14
		(0.32)	(1.01)
Majoritarian Impeachment		-0.06	-1.64
		(0.33)	(0.92)
Vignette Jurisdiction×Democratic Values			1.22
			(1.36)
Egalitarian Jurisdiction×Democratic Values			2.16
			(1.47)
Liberal Jurisdiction×Democratic Values			0.92
			(1.52)
Majoritarian Jurisdiction×Democratic Values			-0.12
			(1.50)
Electoral Jurisdiction×Democratic Values			1.30
			(1.43)
Vignette Impeachment×Democratic Values			-0.35
			(1.54)
Liberal Impeachment×Democratic Values			-1.63
			(1.66)
Majoritarian Impeachment×Democratic Values			2.72
			(1.47)
Female	-0.12	-0.11	-0.12
	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.16)
Black	-1.67*	-1.60*	-1.55*
	(0.48)	(0.48)	(0.48)
Hispanic	-0.12	-0.09	-0.13
	(0.31)	(0.31)	(0.32)
Education	-0.44	-0.44	-0.44
	(0.35)	(0.35)	(0.36)
Own Home	0.10	0.11	0.11
	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.16)
Ideology	4.32*	4.34*	4.36*
	(0.41)	(0.41)	(0.42)
Democrat	-1.38*	-1.42*	-1.42*
	(0.32)	(0.32)	(0.32)
Republican	0.92*	0.92*	0.96*
	(0.17)	(0.18)	(0.18)
Court Knowledge	0.30	0.36	0.37
	(0.31)	(0.31)	(0.32)
Intercept	-2.35*	-2.63*	-2.23*
	(0.44)	(0.49)	(0.72)
A.I.C.	1150.62	1160.96	1165.60
N	1936.00	1936.00	1936.00

The table presents linear regression coefficients.
The baseline condition in the model is the No Vignette condition.

Table 7: Full Multivariate Results: Strong Leader Analysis

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Strong Leader	0.13*	0.02	-0.46	1.04
	(0.02)	(0.06)	(0.27)	(0.72)
Vignette Control×Strong Leader		0.08		-1.94*
		(0.07)		(0.89)
Egalitarian×Strong Leader		0.08		0.53
		(0.09)		(1.46)
Liberal×Strong Leader		0.22*		-2.46*
		(0.07)		(0.89)
Majoritarian×Strong Leader		0.07		-1.79
		(0.07)		(0.94)
Electoral×Strong Leader		0.10		-1.10
		(0.08)		(1.09)
Vignette Control	0.01	-0.06	0.47	2.15*
	(0.02)	(0.06)	(0.28)	(0.82)
Egalitarian	0.01	-0.07	0.18	-0.42
	(0.02)	(0.08)	(0.33)	(1.40)
Liberal	-0.01	-0.21*	0.17	2.29*
	(0.02)	(0.06)	(0.28)	(0.82)
Majoritarian	-0.00	-0.06	0.06	1.59
	(0.02)	(0.07)	(0.28)	(0.87)
Electoral	-0.01	-0.09	0.15	1.08
	(0.02)	(0.07)	(0.32)	(1.00)
Female	-0.01	-0.01	-0.09	-0.09
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.15)	(0.15)
Black	-0.02	-0.02	-1.50*	-1.47*
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.47)	(0.47)
Hispanic	-0.05*	-0.05*	-0.04	-0.06
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.31)	(0.31)
Education	0.09*	0.09*	-0.47	-0.38
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.35)	(0.35)
Own Home	-0.01	-0.01	0.13	0.14
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.15)	(0.15)
Ideology	-0.12*	-0.12*	4.59*	4.68*
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.41)	(0.42)
Democrat	0.01	0.02	-1.35*	-1.36*
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.32)	(0.32)
Republican	-0.06*	-0.06*	1.05*	1.07*
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.17)	(0.17)
Court Knowledge	0.33*	0.33*	0.07	0.00
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.31)	(0.31)
Performance Satisfaction	0.17*	0.17*		
	(0.02)	(0.02)		
Specific Support: About Right	0.01	0.01		
	(0.01)	(0.01)		
Ideological Disagreement	-0.01	-0.01		
	(0.03)	(0.03)		
Intercept	0.25*	0.35*	-3.48*	-4.84*
	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.48)	(0.78)
R²	0.32	0.33		
Adjusted R²	0.31	0.32		
AIC			1188.44	1185.75
N	1627.00	1627.00	1936.00	1936.00

The table presents linear regression coefficients (Columns 1 and 2) and logistic regression coefficients (Columns 3 and 4). The baseline condition in the model is the No Vignette condition.

47

Table 8: Multivariate Results: Diffuse Support, Experiment 2

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Democratic Values	0.33*	0.33*	0.21*	0.50*
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.07)	(0.07)
No Vignette Control				0.17*
				(0.07)
Vignette Control		0.02	-0.17*	
		(0.02)	(0.07)	
Egalitarian		0.02	0.03	0.21*
		(0.02)	(0.07)	(0.07)
Liberal		0.03	-0.06	0.12
		(0.02)	(0.07)	(0.07)
Majoritarian		0.04	-0.07	0.10
		(0.02)	(0.07)	(0.07)
Electoral		0.04*	-0.06	0.12
		(0.02)	(0.07)	(0.07)
No Vignette Control×Democratic Values				-0.29*
				(0.10)
Vignette Control×Democratic Values			0.29*	
			(0.10)	
Egalitarian×Democratic Values			-0.02	-0.31*
			(0.10)	(0.10)
Liberal×Democratic Values			0.12	-0.17
			(0.10)	(0.10)
Majoritarian×Democratic Values			0.17	-0.12
			(0.10)	(0.10)
Electoral×Democratic Values			0.15	-0.14
			(0.10)	(0.10)
Female	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Black	-0.03	-0.03	-0.03	-0.03
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Hispanic	-0.03	-0.03	-0.03	-0.03
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Education	0.06	0.06	0.05	0.05
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Own Home	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Ideology	-0.04	-0.04	-0.04	-0.04
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Democrat	0.03*	0.04*	0.04*	0.04*
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Republican	-0.03	-0.03	-0.02	-0.02
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
know	0.27*	0.27*	0.27*	0.27*
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Performance Satisfaction	0.18*	0.19*	0.19*	0.19*
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Specific Support: About Right	0.03*	0.03*	0.03*	0.03*
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Ideological Disagreement	-0.02	-0.03	-0.02	-0.02
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Intercept	0.18*	0.15*	0.23*	0.06
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.06)
R^2	0.40	0.40	0.41	0.41
Adjusted ^{2}	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39
N	816.00	816.00	816.00	816.00

The table presents linear regression coefficients.
The baseline condition in the model is the No Vignette condition.

Table 9: Multivariate Results: Trump Support, Experiment 2

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Democratic Values	-2.19*	-2.16*	-2.36	-4.72*
	(0.55)	(0.55)	(1.33)	(1.51)
No Vignette Control				-0.89
				(1.25)
Vignette Control		-0.50	0.89	
		(0.40)	(1.25)	
Egalitarian		-0.20	-0.62	-1.51
		(0.39)	(1.18)	(1.22)
Liberal		0.07	-0.34	-1.23
		(0.38)	(1.16)	(1.21)
Majoritarian		-0.11	-0.20	-1.09
		(0.37)	(1.21)	(1.25)
Electoral		0.25	-0.59	-1.48
		(0.38)	(1.16)	(1.21)
No Vignette Control×Democratic Values				2.36
				(2.00)
Vignette Control×Democratic Values			-2.36	
			(2.00)	
Egalitarian×Democratic Values			0.73	3.09
			(1.86)	(1.99)
Liberal×Democratic Values			0.67	3.03
			(1.78)	(1.93)
Majoritarian×Democratic Values			0.14	2.50
			(1.86)	(2.00)
Electoral×Democratic Values			1.45	3.81
			(1.83)	(1.98)
Female	-0.23	-0.26	-0.23	-0.23
	(0.23)	(0.23)	(0.23)	(0.23)
Black	-2.22*	-2.22*	-2.24*	-2.24*
	(0.71)	(0.71)	(0.72)	(0.72)
Hispanic	0.67	0.63	0.56	0.56
	(0.37)	(0.37)	(0.38)	(0.38)
Education	-0.36	-0.29	-0.25	-0.25
	(0.51)	(0.51)	(0.52)	(0.52)
Own Home	0.06	0.03	0.02	0.02
	(0.23)	(0.23)	(0.23)	(0.23)
Ideology	4.90*	4.94*	4.98*	4.98*
	(0.62)	(0.63)	(0.63)	(0.63)
Democrat	-0.85*	-0.83*	-0.86*	-0.86*
	(0.39)	(0.39)	(0.39)	(0.39)
Republican	0.78*	0.82*	0.79*	0.79*
	(0.27)	(0.27)	(0.27)	(0.27)
Court Knowledge	0.43	0.42	0.43	0.43
	(0.46)	(0.46)	(0.47)	(0.47)
Intercept	-2.84*	-2.84*	-2.76*	-1.87
	(0.67)	(0.73)	(1.04)	(1.07)
AIC	556.21	562.03	567.68	567.68
N	976.00	976.00	976.00	976.00

The table presents logistic regression coefficients.
The baseline condition in the model is the No Vignette condition.