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ABSTRACT

President Trump's leadership style departed from any other presidents in the US. Trump's unconventional speeches, offhanded remarks, and unilateral foreign policies raised concerns among politicians and citizens around the world. This article examines perceptions of global citizens of President Trump's leadership from his personality and policy perspectives as well as their damaging effects on US soft power. According to the analysis of the 2017 Pew Research Center's global attitudes project, respondents from the majority of countries in the sample regard Trump's leadership negatively, the effects mostly driven by Trump's own personality traits. Trump's divergent policies concerning critical global issues – the environment, immigration, Iran deal, trade relations, and religion – further curtail the favorability rating of the US and deepen anti-Americanism among citizens in other nations.

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How was US President Donald Trump perceived abroad during his presidency? More importantly, to what extent were perceptions of the US and Americans by citizens in other nations altered by their attitudes towards the policy choices of the US leader? These questions bear profound implications because the US is the global superpower whose leader has been regarded as the leader of the free world. However, President Trump's leadership style was unlike any other presidents in the US. Trump's unconventional speeches and offhanded remarks as a candidate and as President raised concerns among politicians and citizens around the world. Trump broke the rule-based international order by pulling out of multilateral agreements that could mutually benefit the signatories (Beeson and Watson 2019). These actions may ultimately weaken the effectiveness of US soft power. This article examines perceptions of global citizens of President Trump's leadership from personality and policy perspectives. Furthermore, this article examines whether the former president's ineffective global leadership has undermined US soft power and America's image in the eyes of the world in the short or medium term.

Understanding the determinants of attitudes towards the US and its leader has policy relevance. American policymakers have concerned with winning over “hearts and minds” across the globe by wielding soft power. In return, popular support likely facilitates effective leadership, either domestically or globally. Keohane and Nye (1989, 231)

invoke the concept of legitimacy, “which induces willingness to follow and to forego the option of free riding or cheating on the regime that corrodes the incentive for leadership.” Anti-American popular sentiments abroad, due to poor foreign policy choices, may increase the likelihood that governments critical of the US come to power (Remmer 2012). If disagreement over policy choices drives negative perceptions of the US, then compromising the policies in question will soften anti-American rhetoric (Kim, Mirilovic, and Knuckey 2019). If foreign policy choices by US presidents are systematically inconsistent administration-to-administration, trust in US global leadership will be severely undermined. Identifying the determinants of attitudes towards the US and its leader can promote America’s soft power, which involves indirect influence and the ability to shape the preferences of others by attraction (Nye 2004). The US has used foreign aid and cultural exchange programmes to attempt to resolve complex interstate relations at low cost and without damaging the image of the US abroad. The effectiveness of US soft power depends on “world geopolitical events and relations between two countries and the target country’s perception” (Fan 2008, 152). The statements and policy choices of US presidents may affect the way that citizens of other countries view the US and American citizens. Indeed, Chiozza (2009) finds that in 2004, attitudes toward President Bush were one of the most important factors affecting perceptions of the US in Britain, France, Germany, and Russia.

The election of Barak Obama in 2008 led to a progressive change in US foreign policies, which focused more on global collaboration and diplomacy between and among nation-states rather than the unilateral and confrontational approach that characterized the prior administration (Boys 2011). The advent of the “Arab Spring” that began in 2010 and reached its zenith throughout the region in 2011 was perhaps one of the clearest indicators that the Obama administration’s foreign policy emphasized a less aggressive and interventionist approach than that of the Bush administration (Tierney 2012).

The 2016 presidential election was one of the most controversial and contentious elections, arguably since the 1968 presidential election, the latter being a contest framed by political assassinations, racial divisions, urban unrest, and anti-war sentiment. The 2016 election certainly was a contest where the politics of racism and sexism came to the fore. Some scholars and commentators pointed out that domestically the 2016 contest might be viewed as a white backlash against the first African American president, Barack Obama (Knuckey and Kim 2015; Tesler 2016). Indeed, the entire candidacy and presidency of Donald Trump exploited divisions by promoting an in-group and out-group dichotomy, namely “Trumpism” (Barber and Pope 2019; Pfiffner 2021). Trump blamed illegal immigrants from Latin America for crime and the lack of employment opportunities for white Americans. Trump’s America First foreign policy approaches clearly signalled the departure from the previous administration’s approach (Beeson and Watson 2019; Lesperance 2016; Rolf 2021). These appeals evidently reaped electoral success, with Trump’s victory ultimately the result of him winning the largest share of the white vote for the Republicans in 30 years and the rise of Trumpism that was resonated in his domestic and foreign policies during his presidency.

While Trump’s foreign policies bewildered US allies after the 2016 election, other countries, most notably China and Russia, which already possessed significant military capacities, have firmly challenged US leadership in global affairs. In order for leadership to be effective, either domestically or globally, it must be viewed as legitimate (Keohane

and Nye 1989). However, the questionable and inconsistent US foreign policies by the Trump administration not only eroded the legitimacy of US leadership in global politics, but also generated resentment across the globe.

Given the importance of the dynamic global leadership, this article examines differing levels of and causal forces of perceptions about the US and President Donald Trump. Specifically, this article focuses on the effect of perceived Trump's personality, political issues, and socio-economic variables on global citizens' perceptions of President Trump as a global leader, the US, and Americans. Data are taken from the *2017 Global Attitudes Survey* conducted by Pew Research Center (2018) that includes individual-level data from 37 nation-states across the globe. The year 2017 is chosen due to the significant event that fundamentally changed US foreign policies, namely the beginning of unusual US presidency. First, relevant literature on US leadership and its use of soft power is reviewed. Then, it focuses specifically on President Trump's remarks and adverse foreign policies that may shape his image around the globe, which may extend to US image. The third section presents aggregate data for the dependent and the main independent variables. The following section provides the results from mixed-level ordered logit regressions from 36 countries, and from ordered logit regressions from the US. Finally, the concluding section reviews and discusses for future research.

US global leadership

International relations' scholars often classify power into two groups, "hard" and "soft." Hard power includes force, coercion, and the direct manifestation of power to others to achieve foreign policy objectives. Soft power involves indirect influence and the ability to shape the preferences of others by attraction. Although these two concepts are not exclusive but reinforcing of one another, soft power requires more sophisticated skills and political manoeuvres than hard power, because the target and nature of soft power are not fixed but relative and context-specific, and, thus, its effects are more difficult to predict (Fan 2008; Kim 2009; Nye 2004).

While defence stands as the primary means to exercise hard power, diplomacy and development – the core tasks of the State Department to achieve the long-term objectives of the US – encompass soft power. The prudent use of soft power, such as generous foreign aid and diplomatic endeavours, has little damaging effects on the image of the US with other nations. However, Trump's presidency and his administration clearly proved the lack such sophistication to effectively utilize soft power (Babbitt 2019).

To a large degree, the President of the US shapes the image of the US to other countries through the tone and content of his/her leadership in global affairs. In the end, the wise use of soft power including diplomacy is an extension of domestic policies that benefits US national interests. Unfortunately, Trump's foreign policies and his vulgar speeches exemplified the corrosion of US soft power, which also damaged US images and the rise of anti-Americanism.

"Trumpism"

Trumpism in essence is an antithesis of soft power, confrontational and adversarial. Trumpism is not an ideology but appeals to belonging and group loyalty (Barber and

Pope 2019). In practice, the Trump administration's domestic and foreign policies of anti-immigrants, anti-Muslims, economic nationalism, and anti-establishment convey Trumpism.

An anti-immigrant message was evident from the day Trump announced his candidacy for the presidency. At subsequent campaign rallies in 2016, staples of Trump's stump speeches were the building of a wall along the US-Mexican border together with the deportation of all undocumented immigrants. In 2018 Trump administration issued the Zero Tolerance policy against any asylum-seeking family from Latin America, which resulted in separating children from their parents (Garrett 2020).

Trump's anti-immigrant rhetoric also became conflated with anti-Muslim prejudice. For example, following a mass shooting in December 2015 in San Bernardino, California, Trump called for a "total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the US until our country's representatives can figure out what is going on" (quoted in Johnson and Weigel 2015). Soon after he was inaugurated, Trump declared "an executive order temporarily halting refugee immigration and from some Muslim-majority countries," known as "Muslim ban" (Hobbs and Lajevardi 2019, 274). Moreover, priming such nativist sentiment may be more readily accomplished when Muslims are the target negative reference group rather than "foreigners" in general (Spruyt and Elchardus 2012).

Two other explanations also emerged as competing hypotheses to explain "Trumpism": Trump's appeal to economic nationalism that placed an emphasis on appealing to the economic anxieties of white working-class voters and his appeal as an anti-establishment political "outsider." Trump broke with Republican Party orthodoxy on the merits of free trade, repeatedly attacking the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The Trump administration renegotiated and reached a trade agreement with Mexico and Canada in 2018, US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) (Crump 2019). During his presidency, Trump also withdrew from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) keeping his campaign promise. Trump claimed he could return manufacturing jobs lost in the US – whether in the steel industry of western Pennsylvania or the coal mines of West Virginia – through adopting protectionist trade policy such as imposing high tariffs on China and relaxing environmental regulations (Ashbee and Hurst 2021; Lowry 2016; Mayer and Phillips 2019). These "blaming outsiders" tactics parallel with rhetoric of populist Right in Europe (Lesperance 2016; Zaslove 2004). Contextual variables, such as the unemployment rate, have long been strong predictors of support for populist right-wing parties, especially when associated with high levels of immigration (Golder 2003; Jackman and Volpert 1996). More generally, populist Right-wing parties have capitalized on economic anxiety, which may explain support among the working-classes for such parties (Betz 1994; Ivarsflaten 2008; Kriesi et al. 2006; Lubbers, Gijsberts, and Scheepers 2002).

In foreign policies, Trump's slogan, "Make America Great Again," well reflected the unilateral tendency to pursue US security interests (Cutcher-Gershenfeld, McKersie, and Walton 2019; Hult 2021; Rolf 2021). "Security interests take precedence over economic and ideological considerations: hard power, not soft power, is the coin of the realm in international politics" (Popescu 2019, 398). During Trump's presidency, he untied foreign policy agreements that his predecessor, Obama, achieved (Macdonald 2018). For example, Trump promised to bring back coal industries and jobs during his campaign. Keeping his campaign promise, the Trump administration officially withdrew

from the Paris Climate Accord in 2019 and softened the environmental regulation (Asad-nabizadeh 2019; Mayer and Phillips 2019). Trump, opposing to Obama's Nuclear Deal with Iran that reached in 2015, also withdrew from the multilateral agreement in 2018 (Krieg 2017). While the US was pulling out of crucial international affairs, China continued to commit the two agreements as well as the TPP.

In sum, Trump struck a classic "populist" tone during his presidency, made a virtue of having never held political office and cultivated an "outsider" appeal against a system he frequently described as "rigged" systems during his presidency (Destradi and Plagemann 2019). The strategy won American voters who put him in the White House and turned traditional Republicans into Trumpians during and even after his presidency. While US commitment in the global affairs seems to be in question, did Trump undermine US soft power and America's image?

Data, methods, and hypotheses

Data are taken from the 2017 Pew Global Attitude survey (Pew Research Center 2018). The 36-country analysis (excluding the US) employs three dependent variables – confidence in Trump, favourability of the US, and favourability of Americans. By doing so, one can observe whether Trump (his personality and policies) has undermined the opinions of the US and its soft power overseas. The first dependent variable is the level of confidence in presidents Trump with regard to handling of foreign affairs. The survey asks "[T]ell me how much confidence you have in each leader [Trump] to do the right thing regarding world affairs." The second and third dependent variables are whether individuals around the world possess a favourable or unfavourable view about the US and Americans. The survey asks, "[T]ell me if you have a very favourable, somewhat favourable, somewhat unfavourable or very unfavourable opinion of [the US, Americans]?" The answer categories for all three dependent variables range from 0 (no confidence at all, very unfavourable) to 3 (a lot of confidence, very favourable) (for detailed wording and coding schemes, see Appendix). A separate ordered logit analysis is performed for Americans, i.e. Americans' confidence in Trump and their perceptions about their own country, the US.

To capture the essence of Trumpism emphasized by Trump's rhetoric and his policies, one dimension measures perceptions of his personality presented in his formal and informal speeches, and another dimension accounts for perceptions of Trump's major foreign policies. The survey asked, "tell me whether you think each of the following describes US President Donald Trump. First, do you think of Donald Trump as [well-qualified to be president, a strong leader, dangerous, charismatic, intolerant, caring about ordinary people, arrogant]?" Among the seven items, the index of Trump's personality is constructed by combining five items of individuals' opinions about Trump's personality – unqualified, dangerous, intolerant, do not care for ordinary people, and arrogant.¹ Two items, a strong leader and charismatic [weak and uncharismatic in original questionnaire], were excluded from the index after running item response theory to check discrimination and difficulty. Figure 1 displays the item information functions (IIF). According to the IIF, the item "arrogant" is the easiest personality for respondents to describe President Trump, as θ is located the most left position. The item "unqualified" is the most precise characteristics to depict President Trump, as shown in the narrow and

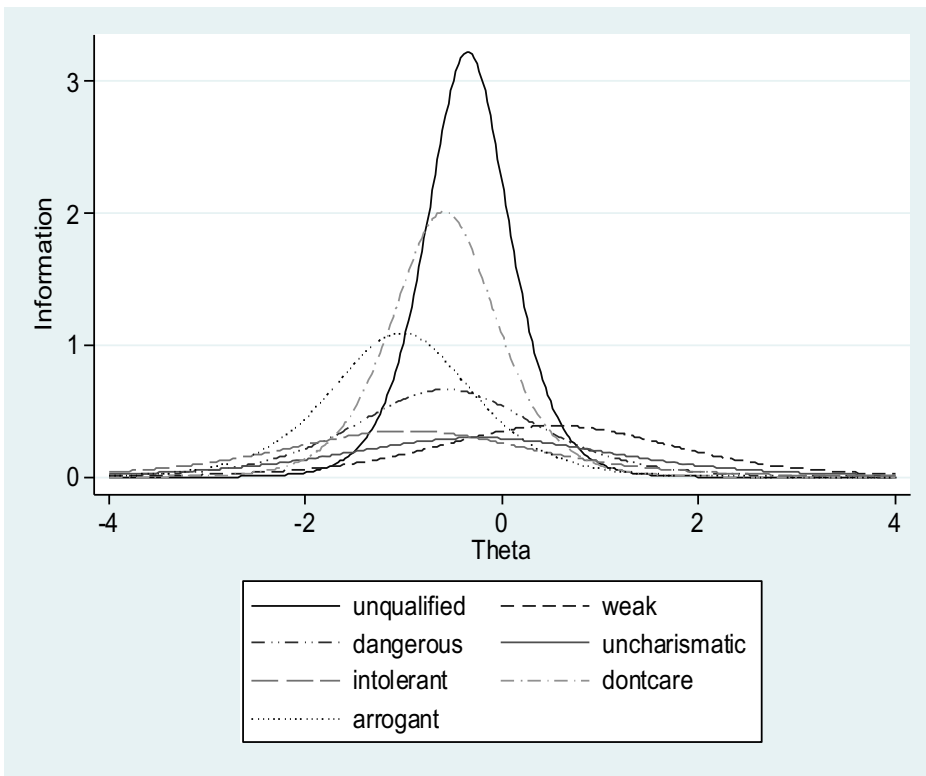


Figure 1. Item Information Function – Trump’s Personality.

tall curve. The item “uncharismatic” is the least discriminating characteristics, meaning the item contains the least precise and broadest ranges, while the item “weak” is the most difficult to answer. Those two items were removed in constructing the “personality” index.² *Negative perceptions of Trump’s personality corrode the images of the US and Americans.*

The second dimension capturing Trumpism is Trump’s foreign policies during his term: withdraw US support for international climate change agreement; build a wall on the border between the US and Mexico; withdraw US support from the Iran nuclear weapons agreement; withdraw US support for major trade agreements; introduce tighter restrictions on those entering the US from some Muslim-majority countries. *Individuals who oppose Trump’s policies express concerns about the erosion of US soft power.*

In terms of global leadership, two questions were considered, if the respondents regard the US as an international threat, and if the respondents regard the US as the world’s leading economic power. *Individuals who regard US influence as a threat will disapprove of the US and Americans; individuals who consider the US as the world’s leading economic power will display favorable views about the US and Americans.*

President Trump portrayed himself as a strong leader by criticizing President Obama’s lack of leadership, by appealing to populism and by claiming that he was the person who could “Make America Great Again.” During his presidency, Trump reversed many policies achieved by his predecessor, President Obama who embraced diplomacy and

multilateralism in his foreign policies, the heart of US soft power. *Individuals who express nostalgia for Obama's presidency will welcome US soft power and Americans.*

Several standard control variables are included: Life satisfaction, trust in government and perceptions about current economic situation. Typical demographic characteristics, i.e. gender and age, are also included.

Aggregate data

Figure 2 shows the mean level of confidence in President Trump by country (the solid line). Confidence in Chinese President Xi Jinping (the dashed line), the rising global leader, is added just to see relative perceptions of global citizens towards the two leaders. The answer categories range from 0 (no confidence at all) to 3 (a lot of confidence). Countries are arranged from the highest gap of the mean to the lowest between Trump and Xi. Out of 37 countries around the world, 19 countries have the mean of less than one (not too much confident) for Trump. Only nine countries show higher mean confidence for Trump than Xi: Italy, Hungary, the Philippines, Japan, the US, Poland, Israel, India, and Vietnam. These are the countries that have begun populist or ultra-right-wing movements or have already run by nationalist governments as of 2017, such as Orbán in Hungary, Duterte in the Philippines, Modi in India, Szydło in Poland, Abe in Japan, and Netanyahu in Israel (for the trend and diversity of populism, see Destradi and Plagemann 2019). The exception is the Communist Vietnam that has involved in a territorial dispute with China over an artificial island in South China sea. All Latin American neighbours of the US give higher confidence to Xi than Trump. Not surprisingly, Mexico shows the least confidence in Trump. China's strong economic ties with Africa and the Belt-and-Road Initiative (also known as the New

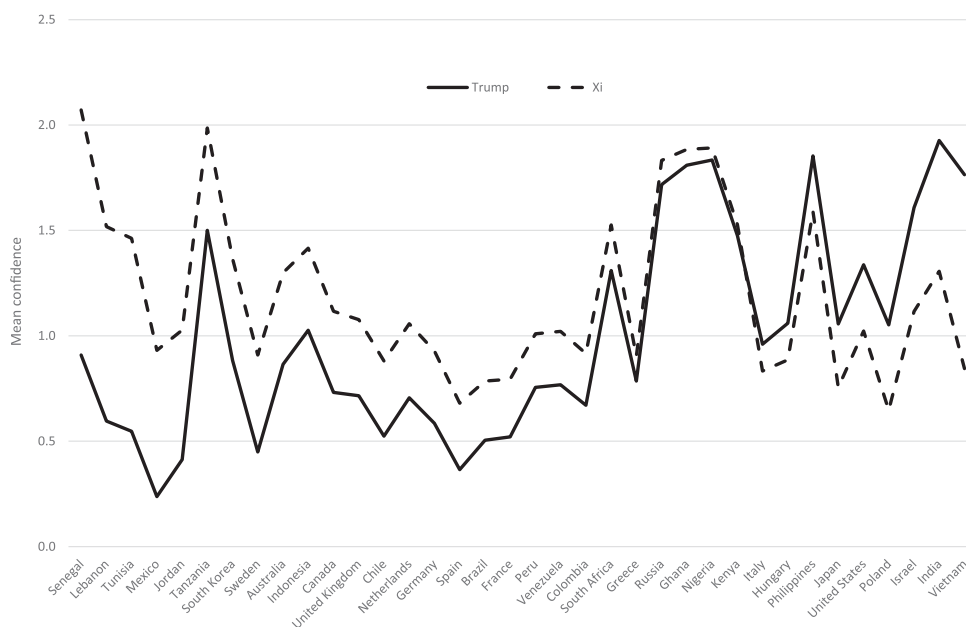


Figure 2. Mean confidence of leaders, by country.

Note: Countries are arranged from the highest gap of the mean to the lowest between Trump and Xi.

Silk Road) are well implicated in the distribution, as all African countries in the sample prefer Xi to Trump as a global leader. Even traditional US allies, such as France, Spain, Germany, the UK, Canada, Sweden, and South Korea, grant higher confidence to Xi than Trump. Interestingly, Russians give about same levels of confidence to the traditional ally, Xi (1.83), and supposedly the traditional foe, Trump (1.72). Do Russians express similar favouritism towards the US?

Figure 3 displays the average of favourability of the US and China (again, China as a comparative purpose). The countries are arranged from the highest to lowest gap between the US (the solid line) and China (the dashed line) (again, for a comparative purpose). Looking at Russians, their favourability towards the country, the US, diverges from their perceptions about the leader, Trump. In fact, Russians favour China over the US. Of course, the highest is patriotic Americans. For China, Vietnam has the lowest mean, whereas Nigeria has the highest mean. Thirteen countries out of 37 countries favour the US over China – Vietnam, India, the US, Japan, South Korea, Italy, the Philippines, Israel, Poland, Hungary, Ghana, South Africa, and the UK, of which mostly overlap with the mean of confidence in leaders. Exceptions are South Korea, Ghana, South Africa, and the UK, which are the opposite cases of Russia. The starkest contrasting cases between the leader and the country are South Korea and the UK. South Korea has been heavily relying on US military presence on the territory because of the threat from North Korea. Although Koreans and Britons are not particularly fond of Trump, they recognize the long-term relationship and alliance with the US.

Figure 4 presents the average of disapproval for main Trump’s policies: withdrawal from major trade agreement, Muslim ban, building wall between the US and Mexico, withdrawal from climate agreement and withdrawal from Iran deal. The US is separated from the other 36 countries: the dark grey bar for all countries and the light grey bar for

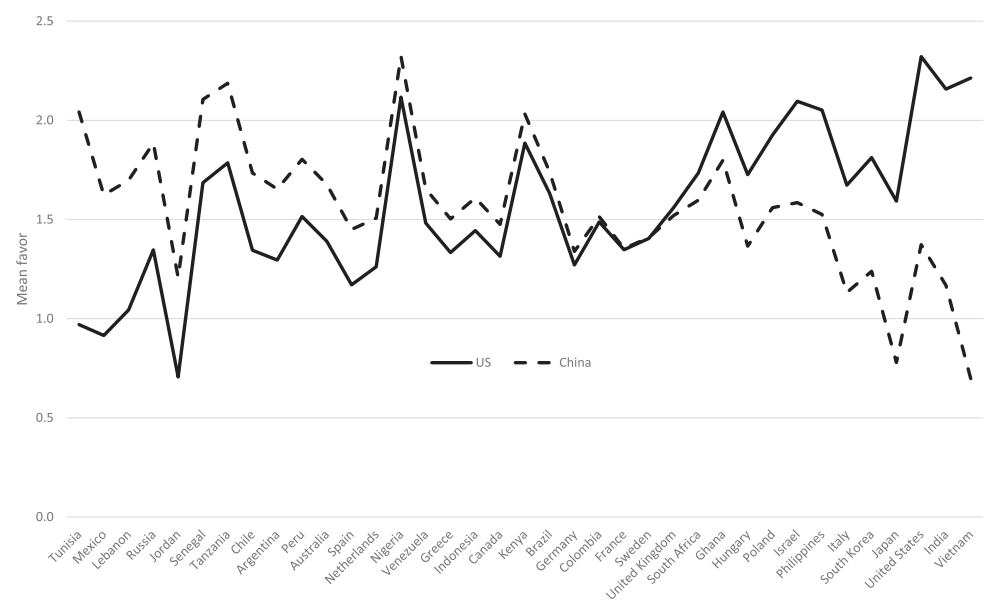


Figure 3. Mean favour of countries, by country.
Note: The countries are arranged from the highest to lowest gap between the US (the solid line) and China (the dashed line).

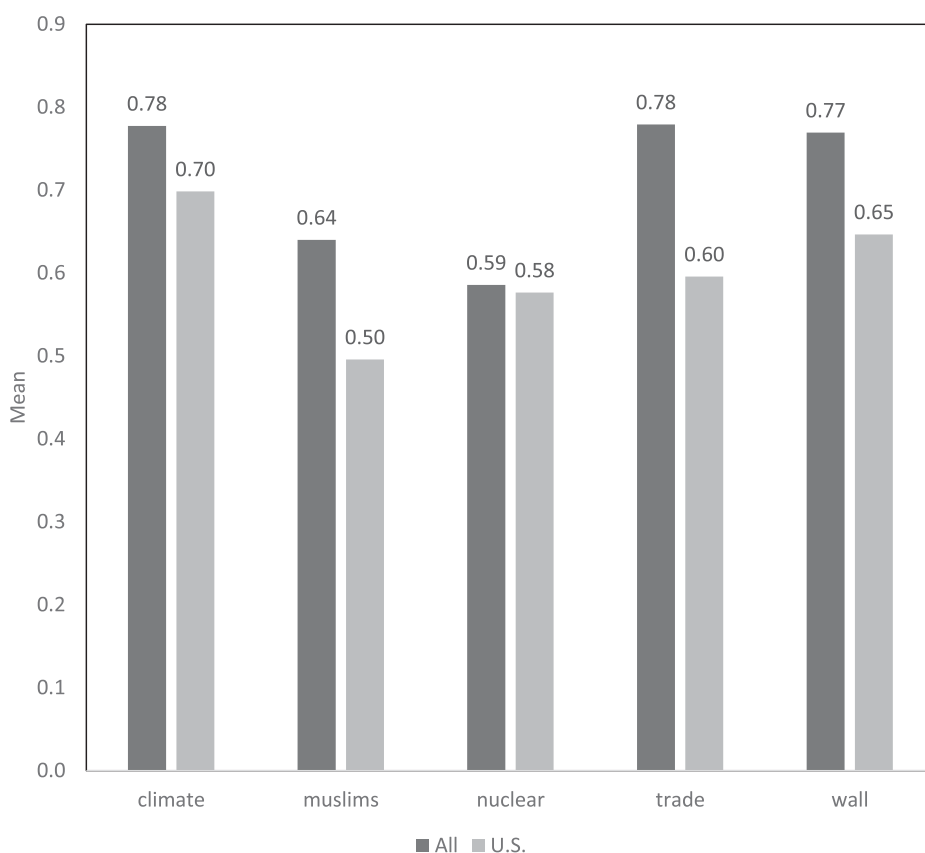


Figure 4. Mean of disapproval of Trump's policies.

Notes: Detailed wordings are "Withdraw US support for international climate change agreements; Introduce tighter restrictions on those entering the US from some majority-Muslim countries; Withdraw US support from the Iran nuclear weapons agreement; Withdraw US support for major trade agreements; Build a wall on the border between the US and Mexico."

the US. The policy issues are arranged alphabetically. Overall, citizens around the globe show higher disapproval of these policies than Americans. Global citizens concern about US withdrawal from trade and climate agreements the most, while Americans worry mostly about US withdrawal from climate agreements and building the border wall between Mexico and the US. While global citizens fear tighter restriction on Muslims entering the US, Americans are divided on the issue. Global citizens and Americans show about the same level of concern about US withdrawal from Iran deal.

Do Trump's personality and his foreign policies affect perceptions of Trump around the globe? More importantly, how do his personality and those foreign policies affect global citizens' views about the US and Americans? The next section presents the result from multivariate analyses.

Multilevel analyses

Table 1 presents the results from the multivariate analyses. As the variation in the results is a product of two levels, individual and country, multilevel ordered logit with random

Table 1. Mixed effect ordered logit from 36 countries, dependent variables: confidence in Trump, Favour the US, Favour Americans.

Independent variables	Confidence in Trump	Favour the US	Favour Americans
Personality	−0.647*** (0.053)	−0.178*** (0.044)	−0.109* (0.047)
Policy: Climate	−0.057 (0.057)	0.092* (0.055)	0.098 (0.080)
Policy: Wall	−0.238*** (0.052)	−0.170** (0.062)	−0.079 (0.062)
Policy: Nuclear	−0.116*** (0.037)	−0.055 (0.059)	−0.101* (0.049)
Policy: Trade	−0.064 (0.046)	0.061 (0.053)	0.081* (0.039)
Policy: Muslim	−0.291*** (0.049)	−0.217*** (0.039)	−0.126** (0.044)
Life satisfaction	−0.013 (0.026)	0.048* (0.025)	0.028 (0.022)
Trust in government	0.094*** (0.031)	0.097** (0.041)	0.022 (0.029)
Current economic situation	0.003 (0.032)	0.120*** (0.039)	0.039 (0.036)
US threat	−0.161*** (0.029)	−0.444*** (0.052)	−0.338*** (0.051)
US economic power	0.164*** (0.042)	0.284*** (0.040)	0.178*** (0.038)
Obama past approval	0.079 (0.052)	0.318*** (0.060)	0.387*** (0.052)
Trump future approval	1.413*** (0.097)	0.595*** (0.046)	0.415*** (0.038)
Female	−0.223*** (0.037)	−0.102** (0.040)	−0.102** (0.035)
Age	0.001 (0.001)	−0.010*** (0.002)	−0.006*** (0.002)
Intercept 0	0.528*** (0.196)	−1.348*** (0.225)	−1.668*** (0.203)
Intercept 1	2.462*** (0.253)	0.325 (0.216)	−0.201 (0.179)
Intercept 2	4.778*** (0.341)	2.765*** (0.247)	2.439*** (0.197)
Variance component Country	0.210*** (0.047)	0.213*** (0.049)	0.175*** (0.036)
N	24,971	24,418	24,259
Wald χ^2	1036.37	446.27	662.91
Log likelihood	−21,725.93	−27,252.77	−26,655.86

Notes: * $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; *** $p \leq 0.001$ in one-tailed tests. The analyses are weighted to compensate sample size differences. Thirty-six countries are included in the analyses.

intercepts is used. These analyses exclude the US, and the result from the US will be presented in Table 2. The first column shows the result of confidence in Trump as a global leader, the second column presents favourability of the US, and the last column that of Americans.

Table 2. Ordered logit: confidence in Trump and Favour US, US only.

Independent variables	Confidence in Trump	Favour US
Personality	−1.037*** (0.191)	−0.113 (0.194)
Policy: Climate	−0.287 (0.232)	0.041 (0.225)
Policy: Wall	−0.829*** (0.252)	0.036 (0.258)
Policy: Nuclear	−0.303 (0.213)	−0.257 (0.201)
Policy: Trade	−0.002 (0.211)	−0.237 (0.179)
Policy: Muslim	−0.517* (0.240)	−0.282 (0.219)
Life satisfaction	0.127 (0.106)	0.095 (0.089)
Trust in government	0.498*** (0.107)	0.247** (0.090)
Current economic situation	0.013 (0.110)	0.503*** (0.106)
US economic power	0.192 (0.185)	0.374** (0.153)
Obama past approval	−0.576*** (0.119)	−0.275** (0.115)
Trump future approval	1.856*** (0.181)	0.200 (0.122)
Female	−0.110 (0.186)	−0.078 (0.146)
Age	0.009* (0.005)	0.005 (0.004)
Intercept 0	−0.401 (0.497)	−2.604*** (0.443)
Intercept 1	1.767*** (0.554)	−1.201** (0.435)
Intercept 2	5.515*** (0.630)	1.061** (0.430)
N	1201	1196
Wald χ^2	456.36	177.62
Log likelihood	−686.16	−1124.40
Pseudo R^2	0.561	0.119

Notes: * $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; *** $p \leq 0.001$ in one-tailed tests. The question regarding US as an international threat is not asked in the US.

Trump, the US, and Americans

Trump's personality and foreign policies regarding climate, border wall, Iran nuclear deal, trade, Muslim ban are the main interest of this research. Naturally, we expect that the negative evaluations of Trump's personality and his foreign policies will adversely affect perceptions of Trump. However, the vital question arises how much spill-over effects exist on perceptions of the US and Americans.

Our finding clearly demonstrates that Trump's personality damages the image of him as a global leader the most. However, Trump's personality also deteriorates the image of the US as well as Americans, as the statistically significant and negative coefficients indicate: when individuals chiefly identify Trump to be some combinations of unqualified, dangerous, intolerant, careless for ordinary people, and arrogant, the predicted probability to have no confidence in Trump's leadership at all is 48 per cent, and the probability to have a lot of confidence in him is meagre 2 per cent, holding all other variables at their mean. Additionally, the negative perceptions about Trump's personality decrease the favourability of the US about 4 per cent and that of Americans about 5 per cent.

Disapproval of foreign policies, regarding building wall, withdrawal from Iran's nuclear deal, and Muslim ban, negatively affects confidence in Trump. Objection to Muslim ban, the largest coefficient among policies, decreases the predicted probability from 38 per cent to 2 per cent to have confidence in Trump, holding all other variables at their mean. Apart from the perception of Trump himself, objection of building wall and Muslim ban hurts the image of the US, while approval of withdrawal from US support for international climate change agreements boosts US images. Foreign policies, regarding withdrawal from nuclear deal and Muslim ban, undermine perceptions of Americans around the globe, while withdrawal of US support for major trade agreement improves favourable images of Americans. One particular foreign policy, Muslim ban, consistently corrodes the image of the leader (Trump), the country (the US), and the people (Americans).

Individuals' threat perceptions of the US have a negative impact on all three dependent variables, but the magnitude of the impact is the greatest on the US, but the weakest on Trump. When individuals regard the US as the world leading economic power, however, their positive perceptions increase for all three. These findings encourage policymakers to use US soft power wisely rather than hard power.

The strongest predictor of confidence in Trump among global citizens stems from their expectation of him being a good president in the future. The positive expectation about Trump extends to the US and Americans. On the other hand, individuals who regard President Obama as a good president also express favourable opinions about the US and Americans, implying that benevolent leadership does transform the impression of the country and people that the leader represents. However, individuals' opinions about Obama do not affect, either positively or negatively, their views about Trump.

Women around the globe consistently express negative views about Trump, the US, and Americans, while older individuals tend to disfavour the US and Americans.

Americans' perceptions of Trump and the US

What factor affects Americans' attitudes towards Trump and the US? Do Americans show the similar pattern to global citizens, or do they display unique attitudes towards

their leader and their own country? Table 2 presents the results from ordered logit estimates. The variable, the US as an international threat, was removed from the analysis. The first column shows the result of Americans' attitudes towards Trump, and the second column illustrates the result of Americans' attitudes towards the US.

Looking at the first column, two variables stand out in shaping Americans' perceptions about Trump: Trump's personality and Trump's future approval. When Americans describe Trump's personality to be some combinations of unqualified, dangerous, intolerant, careless for ordinary people, and arrogant, their confidence in Trump decreases. When Americans dislike Trump's personality the most, the probability to have no confidence at all is 24 per cent, the probability to have not too much confidence is 49 per cent, the probability to have some confidence is 26 per cent, and the probability to have a lot of confidence is 0.8 per cent. Similarly, when Americans think that Trump will be a very bad president, the probability to have no confidence at all and a lot of confidence is 62 and 0.17 per cent, respectively, while when they believe that Trump will be a very good president, the probability to have no confidence at all and a lot of confidence is 0.6 and 30 per cent, respectively. Unlike the strong predictive power of those two variables in the first column, both variables are statistically insignificant in predicting Americans' perspectives of their own country in the second column.

Trump's two policies negatively affect Americans' confidence in Trump as a global leader, building wall and Muslim ban. When Americans disapprove building wall between Mexican and US border, the predicted probability to have no confidence at all is 15 per cent, not too much is 45 per cent, some is 38 per cent, and a lot is 1.5 per cent, holding all other variables at their mean. When Americans object Muslim ban, the predicted probability to have no confidence at all is 14 per cent, not too much is 45 per cent, some is 39 per cent, and a lot is 1.6 per cent. Again, none of the policy issues affects Americans' perceptions about their own country, shown in the second column. Seemingly, this finding indicates that Americans separate a temporary leadership from their patriotism towards their homeland.

Other than Trump-specific variables, such as his personality and policies, Americans' evaluation of Obama's job performance in the past affects their perceptions about Trump and their country. When Americans regard Obama as a very good president, the probability of having no confidence in Trump is 19 per cent. Even when they evaluate Obama as a very bad president, the probability of having a lot of confidence in Trump is 5.9 per cent. This pattern of Americans' attitudes towards their leaders, one Democrat and one Republican, clearly reflects the polarized country.

When Americans' trust in government rises, their confidence in Trump and their pride in their country also improve. Satisfaction with current economic situation boosts Americans' patriotic behaviour. Similarly, Americans, who regard the US as a world leading economic power, express favourable opinions about their country. Older individuals tend to convey more faith in Trump's global leadership than younger generations.

Conclusion

During his campaign and during his presidency, Trump's perverse speech, remarks, and policies unsettled not just many Americans but also citizens and leaders across the globe.

Traditional allies particularly concerned if US leadership that had epitomized democratic principles would be absent in the global stage during Trump's presidency. Some were cautiously optimistic about Trump's unpredictable foreign policy makings, the so-called offensive realism (see Popescu 2019). President Trump implemented sweeping foreign policy changes regardless of disagreement and opposition. Some of the policies were directly offensive to a targeted group, e.g. Muslims and Latinos. Trump's policies not only negatively affected global citizens' perceptions of Trump himself, but also crippled the image of the US and Americans. Trump's in-group and out-group speeches and actions during his four-year term led to multiple movements worldwide, such as Me Too and Black Lives Matter movements. Trump's toxic speeches even led to the most embarrassing historical moment, the January 6 US Capitol attack by mostly white mobs that refused to accept the 2020 election results. Trump's unilateral and divisive approaches damaged US soft power and weakened confidence from the global society (Cutcher-Gershenfeld, McKersie, and Walton 2019).

While the US removed itself from major international agreements, such as the Paris Accord, the Iran deal, and the TPP during the Trump administration, other member countries have been committed to those agreements. Citizens, politicians, policymakers and practitioners, and diplomats around the globe questioned, if the US could be regarded as a reliable leader of democracy that pursued the common goal of spreading peace and cooperation. As US leader's image deteriorated, US soft power – US credibility, liability, and legitimacy – in the global stage was corroded under Trump's leadership as well. Disastrous handling of COVID-19 with the lack of the coordinated partnership with US allies by the Trump administration raised greater doubts about US global leadership.

Along with Trump's policies and his personality which can be a short-term factor, one finding is particularly troubling for Americans and US foreign policymakers in the long run. When citizens around the world view the US as an international threat, they perceive the leader, the country, and the people negatively. However, when citizens around the world regard the US as a world leading economic power, their perceptions about the leader, the country, and the people improve. The finding entails US foreign policymakers to utilize and restore soft power as well as economic leverage in post-Trump administrations.

Once President Biden was elected, Biden has repeatedly assured the world "America is back" by re-joining the treaties and accords as well as sharing the world stage with its traditional allies that his predecessor rejected. Such reversals signify the Biden administration's commitment to re-establish US soft power, as we witnessed during the G7 summit in 2021. However, the real challenge will be Biden's successors to continue to rebuild trust from the world. If Biden's successors abruptly reverse US commitment to the world, as Trump did during his four-year term, it can be the turning point against US interests to reclaim the world superpower status. US presidents as a global leader should be prudent about their foreign policy proposals as well as their remarks. Good leadership helps maintain legitimacy, ameliorate anti-Americanism and strengthen US soft power across the globe.

Notes

1. The response was recoded to correspond to the same direction. That is, the response "yes" depicts negative perceptions of Trump's personality.

2. The IIF is consistent with other traditional tests to construct an index, such as Cronbach α or factor analysis. Those two items, “weak” and “uncharismatic,” show the least item-test correlation with 0.56 for each. For factor analysis, those two items display the weakest structure matrix coefficients of 0.19, while those of other items range from 0.63 to 0.77.

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Appendix. Survey wording and coding schemes

Dependent variables

Confidence in Trump: For each, tell me how much confidence you have in each leader [Trump] to do the right thing regarding world affairs?

0 = no confidence at all, 1 = not too much confidence, 2 = some confidence, 3 = a lot of confidence

Favourability: Please tell me if you have a very favourable, somewhat favourable, somewhat unfavourable or very unfavourable opinion of [the US, Americans]?

0 = Very unfavourable, 1 = Somewhat unfavourable, 2 = Somewhat favourable, 3 = Very favourable

Independent variables

Trump's personality: Please tell me whether you think each of the following describes US President Donald Trump. First, do you think of Donald Trump as? Well-qualified to be president (reversed as unqualified = 1); Dangerous (=1); Intolerant (=1); Do not care about ordinary people; Arrogant (=1)

Those items are combined to create an index.

Trump's policies: As I read some proposed policies of President Donald Trump, please tell me if you approve or disapprove of each one: Withdraw US support for international **climate** change agreements; Build a **wall** on the border between the US and Mexico; Withdraw US support from the Iran **nuclear weapons agreement**; Withdraw US support for major **trade** agreements; Introduce tighter restrictions on those entering the US from some majority-**Muslim** countries.

0 = Approve, 1 = Disapprove

Life satisfaction: In general, would you say life in (survey country) today is better, worse, or about the same as it was 50 years ago for people like you?

0 = Worse, 1 = About the same, 2 = Better

Trust in government: How much do you trust the national government to do what is right for (survey country)?

0 = Not at all, 1 = Not much, 2 = Somewhat, 3 = A lot

Economic situation: Now thinking about our economic situation, how would you describe the current economic situation in (survey country)?

0 = Very bad, 1 = Somewhat bad, 2 = Somewhat good, 3 = Very good

US international threat: I'd like your opinion about some possible international concerns for (survey country). Do you think that [the US' power and influence] is a major threat, a minor threat or not a threat to (survey country)?

0 = Not a threat, 1 = Minor threat, 2 = Major threat

US Economic power: Today, which one of the following [the US] do you think is the world's leading economic power? (The US = 1, otherwise = 0).

Obama past approval: Thinking about former US President Barack Obama, do you think he was a very good, somewhat good, somewhat bad or very bad president?

0 = Very bad president, 1 = Somewhat bad president, 2 = Somewhat good president, 3 = Very good president

Trump's future approval: Thinking about US President Donald Trump, do you think he will be a very good, somewhat good, somewhat bad or very bad president?

0 = Very bad president, 1 = Somewhat bad president, 2 = Somewhat good president, 3 = Very good president

Female: 0 = Male, 1 = Female

Age: actual age