

Does elite rhetoric undermine democratic norms?*

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Abstract

Democratic stability depends on citizens on the losing side accepting election outcomes. Can rhetoric by political leaders undermine this norm? Using a panel survey experiment, we evaluate the effects of exposure to multiple statements from President Trump attacking the legitimacy of the 2020 U.S. presidential election. Though exposure to these statements does not measurably affect support for political violence or belief in democracy, it erodes trust and confidence in elections and increases belief that the election is rigged among people who approve of Trump's job performance. These results suggest that rhetoric from political elites can undermine respect for critical democratic norms among their supporters.

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Scholars focus on how formal rules and laws constrain political leaders, but informal norms also play a critical role in restraining elites (Helmke and Levitsky, 2004; Azari and Smith, 2012). Levitsky and Ziblatt (2018), for instance, highlight the importance of two governing norms to the stability of liberal democracy: toleration of the legitimacy of the opposition and forbearance from using state power to tilt the playing field against political rivals. These norms are especially critical after an election when the losing side must consent to the outcome and grant power to the winning side (Anderson et al., 2005). Little is known, however, about elites' capacity to influence popular support for or enforcement of democratic norms, including respect for the election process and the outcomes it produces. If democracies need the public to sanction leaders who violate the norms on which the system ultimately depends (e.g., Weingast, 1997), then elite attacks on those norms represent a key threat to democratic stability.

In this paper, we test the extent to which elite rhetoric can erode democratic norms in the contemporary United States, where President Trump has frequently challenged or disregarded standards of behavior for elected leaders—most notably, by repeatedly attacking the integrity of the 2020 presidential election and refusing to commit to the peaceful transfer of power (e.g., Crowley, 2020; Volz and Glazer, 2020). Observers worry that norm violations have become so familiar under Trump that they have become normalized or the public has grown desensitized (e.g., Jentleson, 2019; Klaas, 2020), mirroring effects that have been found after repeated exposure to norm violations or aversive stimuli in other contexts (e.g., Bartholow, Bushman, and Sestir, 2006; Bicchieri, 2016). Though concerns like these are widespread, no research to date has estimated the causal effect of extended exposure to violations of democratic norms by an elected leader. We therefore conducted a panel survey experiment evaluating the effects of randomized over-time exposure to statements from President Trump attacking the legitimacy of the 2020 U.S. presidential election.

We find that attacks on election integrity do not measurably change support for political violence or belief in democracy. However, exposure to Trump's rhetoric erodes trust and confidence in elections and increases the belief that elections are rigged among his supporters. By contrast, we find little evidence of normalization or desensitization; perceptions of past practices by political leaders and emotional reactions to norm violations rarely change measurably in response to norm-violating rhetoric. Overall, these results imply that rhetoric from political elites can undermine respect for critical democratic norms among their supporters.

Prior research on political norms

This paper considers how the public responds to elites violating political norms that promote democratic stability (e.g., support for the peaceful transfer of power).¹ Elites can be sanctioned for norm violations both by their peers (in parties, legislatures, etc.) and by voters via elections. We focus here on the latter mechanism. What will the public do when leaders undermine the critical norm of respecting election outcomes?

Unfortunately, citizens' capacity to recognize and punish violations of democratic norms may be limited. Partisans can recognize and even punish norm violations in hypothetical scenarios (Davis, Gaddie, and Goidel, N.d.; Carey et al., 2020; Graham and Svobik, 2020), but the effect sizes are modest compared to other forms of scandal or misconduct (e.g., Basinger, 2013; Eggers, 2014). Moreover, forging consensus about what constitutes a norm violation can be difficult in the real world. Evaluations of democratic performance during the Trump presidency, for instance, are often heavily polarized (Carey et al., 2019). Moreover, partisans often hesitate to punish norm violations that advantage their party (McCoy, Simonovits, and Littvay, N.d.).

These studies are important, but have several key limitations. First, they largely focus on hypothetical politicians and scenarios, which likely reduces the role of candidate support and partisanship in the opinions people express. Second, the studies are confined to a single survey and thus do not consider the effects of repeated exposure to norm violations or whether those effects persist over time. Most notably, however, past studies do not consider whether politicians can undermine the norms they are violating and, in doing so, evade sanction by voters.

Theory and expectations

We consider the effects of exposure to repeated claims that elections are compromised by fraud on belief in and support for democratic norms. These claims are an especially egregious violation of democratic norms because they target confidence in free and fair elections, which is central to citizens' understanding of democracy (Davis, Goidel, and Zhao, 2020). If losers come to see elections as illegitimate and no longer respect their outcome, the democratic compact can unwind (Anderson et al., 2005).

¹The term "norms" is used to describe many types of expected patterns of behaviors by elected leaders and government officials, including legal, constitutional, and purely social norms (Elster, 2009). These expectations are thought to shape elite behavior (e.g., Helmke and Levitsky, 2004; Azari and Smith, 2012).

Though there is no credible evidence of widespread voter fraud in the U.S. (e.g., Minnite, 2011; Cottrell, Herron, and Westwood, 2018; Kiely et al., 2020), President Trump has engaged in an unprecedented series of attacks on the legitimacy of the 2020 election. *The Wall Street Journal* found that Trump attacked the integrity of the election in more than eighty tweets within the first eight months of 2020 alone (Corse and Day, 2020). These claims are amplified by the mainstream media as well as Trump’s allies and supporters, exposing a vastly larger audience than even the President himself can reach (Benkler et al., 2020; Zadrozny, 2020).

We expect, as prior research has shown, that exposure to claims of voter fraud will reduce confidence in elections, especially among co-partisans (Albertson and Guiler, 2020; Berlinski et al., N.d.). In addition, we expect that exposure to these claims will reduce support for the critical democratic norm of the peaceful transfer of power. We therefore propose the following pre-registered hypothesis:

H1: *Exposure to rhetoric challenging election legitimacy decreases respect for electoral norms and trust and confidence in elections relative to rhetoric that does not violate democratic norms, especially as exposure increases over time.*

We also consider a series of pre-registered research questions. First, we assess whether the effects of norm-violating rhetoric are domain-specific. Repeated norm violations in one domain might “spill over” to other domains, undermining norms more generally. We thus investigate whether norm-violating rhetoric erodes election confidence even when the norm violations are unrelated to elections:

RQ1: *Does exposure to norm-violating rhetoric unrelated to elections decrease respect for electoral norms and trust and confidence in elections relative to rhetoric that does not violate democratic norms?*

In addition, we specifically compare the effects of rhetoric violating democratic norms related to elections (per H1) versus rhetoric violating norms unrelated to elections (per RQ1):

RQ2: *Does respect for electoral institutions decrease more when norm violations are specifically focused on election integrity than when they are more general in nature?*

We next consider two possible mechanisms for these effects. If people observe a norm not being followed, then they may begin to see compliance as both optional and less normatively desirable, especially if norm violations occur frequently (e.g., Bicchieri et al., 2019). Perceptions of norms of behavior for elected leaders may thus change if people

repeatedly observe attacks on election integrity that go unpunished, a cognitive process we refer to as normalization. In contrast, a second process we consider is the tendency for aversive stimuli to evoke weaker psychological responses as exposure levels increase, which we call desensitization.² Desensitization explains why repeated exposure to violence via media coverage, video games, or events in one's community might numb the fear, anxiety, and physiological arousal that such stimuli initially provoke (e.g., Carnagey, Anderson, and Bushman, 2007; Smith and Donnerstein, 1998; Kennedy and Ceballo, 2016). We similarly test if negative reactions to norm-violating rhetoric will decrease with repeated exposure.

We offer two pre-registered research questions based on this discussion. The first focuses on normalization. Using past political leaders as a reference point, we examine how our treatment affects respondents' perception of democratic norms:

RQ3: *Does exposure to Donald Trump's rhetoric challenging election legitimacy change perceptions of past respect for election norms among political leaders?*

The second research question focuses on the dampening of emotional arousal in response to norm-violating rhetoric:

RQ4: *Does exposure to Donald Trump's norm-violating rhetoric induce decreased emotional reactivity to the rhetoric?*

Exposure to rhetoric claiming elections are illegitimate could potentially have even more pernicious consequences. We therefore consider whether it or other norm-violating rhetoric affects support for political violence or even support for democracy itself (Drutman, Goldman, and Diamond, 2020):

RQ5: *Does exposure to rhetoric challenging election legitimacy or violating other norms increase support for political violence?*

RQ6: *Does exposure to rhetoric challenging election legitimacy or violating other norms reduce support for democracy?*

Finally, we examine whether partisan predispositions and/or candidate support moderate how people respond to the treatments. These patterns have been identified in past experimental studies of exposure to claims about voter fraud (Albertson and Guiler, 2020; Berlinski et al., N.d.). People who disapprove of Trump's performance in office and those who identify with or lean toward Democrats may respond differently than people who approve of Trump and identify with or lean toward Republicans because the norm violations we test were committed by Trump:

²This concept is drawn from the literature on "operant conditioning" which extends back to early research on animal learning (Skinner, 1938). See Wolpe (1990) for a broad overview.

RQ7: *How do these treatment effects vary by approval of Donald Trump and partisanship?*

Research design

The following four-wave panel experiment was pre-registered on October 7, 2020 and fielded from October 7–24, 2020.³ Participants were first invited to participate in a baseline survey (Wave 1) measuring demographic characteristics and pre-treatment attitudes (see Online Appendix A for all survey instruments and study stimuli). Five days later, participants who completed Wave 1 were re-contacted for Wave 2, which was open for three days before closing. Participants who completed Wave 2 were then eligible to participate in Wave 3 (open for four days after Wave 2) and subsequently Wave 4 (open for five days after Wave 3). All participants were then debriefed twice: two days after the conclusion of the Wave 4 survey and again one week after the survey closed.⁴

Sample population

Participants for this study were recruited from a pool of approximately 3,000 people who previously took part in an unrelated study conducted on Mechanical Turk by some of the authors (self-citation omitted). Though online convenience samples have notable limitations, results from studies conducted with Mechanical Turk panelists mirror those obtained from nationally representative samples (e.g., Horton, Rand, and Zeckhauser, 2011; Berinsky, Huber, and Lenz, 2012; Mullinix et al., 2015; Coppock, 2019). Most importantly, using Mechanical Turk is essential for conducting this study due to the theoretical importance of measuring the effects of repeated exposure to the treatment in question over time. Respondent retention rates for multi-wave surveys on Mechanical Turk substantially exceed even those observed in benchmark surveys like the American National Election Study (Gross, Porter, and Wood, 2019). As a result, we greatly reduce the risk of post-treatment bias due to differential attrition between conditions, which otherwise plagues survey experiments of this type (Montgomery, Nyhan, and Torres, 2018).

Because Mechanical Turk overrepresents political liberals (e.g., Krupnikov and Levine, 2014) and we expected heterogenous treatment effects, we adopted a recruitment

³An anonymized preregistration can be viewed at https://osf.io/a4tds/?view_only=3bc7962726e749d7a6c3ddf8c114fcd0.

⁴The double debrief reflects a commitment to avoid discouraging subjects from participating in the 2020 election. Specifically, we communicated that there is no evidence of systematic voter fraud in American elections, supplied resources underscoring this point, and encouraged participants to vote.

strategy that would maximize our ability to compare people of different political leanings. We first conducted extensive screening and recruitment prior to the study to recruit a substantial number of Republicans and conservatives. We also limited recruitment to respondents who previously identified as a Democrat or Republican or said they leaned toward a major party, excluding so-called pure independents. Finally, we screened out bots and low-effort respondents with an open-ended text question. Respondents whose answers did not meet the criteria suggested by Kennedy et al. (2020) were deemed ineligible (as were those who sped too quickly through screening surveys).

The resulting sample provides high-quality survey responses (96% correct on an attention check in Wave 1) and represents a wide range of political and demographic groups (see Table B1 in Online Appendix B), including Trump approvers (31.6%) and Republicans (39.3%). Additionally, our sample is externally valid in that it is made up disproportionately of people who frequently use the Internet—precisely the group that is most likely to encounter encounter norm-violating rhetoric on a platform like Twitter. Our respondent pool therefore constitutes a valid sample for testing our hypotheses (although replication on a representative sample would of course be desirable, as we note in the conclusion).

A total of 2,477 participants completed the Wave 1 baseline survey. Those who completed Wave 1 were then invited to Wave 2, the wave in which participants were assigned to treatment. In total, 2,151 people completed Wave 2, the first treatment wave. Wave 2 participants were then invited to Wave 3, the second treatment wave ($N = 1,960$), and Wave 4, the endline survey ($N = 2,013$). To reduce the risk of bias due to differential attrition, we include all respondents who completed Wave 2 in our analysis regardless of whether they completed Wave 3 and/or 4. However, attrition was exceptionally low; 91.1% and 93.6% of Wave 2 participants took part in Waves 3 and 4, respectively.

Experimental stimuli and design

The experimental intervention took place in Waves 2 and 3 (Wave 1 was a baseline survey and Wave 4 was an endline survey). Participants who accepted the invitation to the Wave 2 survey were block-randomized within groups defined by Wave 1 measures of political interest (median split), Trump approval, and support for respecting electoral outcomes (median split) using the R package `blockTools` (Moore and Schnakenberg, N.d.).

Respondents each viewed twenty tweets from President Trump in Wave 2 and twenty in Wave 3. Ten tweets that were unrelated to elections and did not violate democratic norms were fixed across conditions in each wave to increase realism. The other ten

tweets in the treatment waves were randomized by condition:

Condition	Probability	Norm violation	Election-related
Non-election placebo	$p = \frac{1}{6}$		
Election placebo	$p = \frac{1}{6}$		✓
General norm violation	$p = \frac{1}{3}$	✓	
Election norm violation	$p = \frac{1}{3}$	✓	✓

Sample characteristics are balanced by condition (see Table B1 in Online Appendix B).

The experimental treatments are images of real tweets by Donald Trump excluding their original date stamp and any additional media (see the survey instrument in Online Appendix A for an example). We selected our experimental stimuli using a protocol specified in Online Appendix A in which 261 candidate tweets — including many previously identified as election norm violations by subject matter experts — were rated by respondents on Lucid for whether they followed or departed from past practices by American presidents and whether their topic is U.S. elections or some other topic. The set of tweets for all conditions by survey wave is available in Table A1 in Online Appendix A.

Outcome measures

We assess these pre-registered outcome measures (exact wording in Online Appendix A):

- *Trust and confidence in elections* is a factor score combining responses to questions asking whether respondents trust elections, are confident votes will be counted as intended, and are confident that the count is managed fairly.
- *Respect for electoral norms* was measured as agreement that “An important part of democracy is to accept election losses peacefully;” “Elections in the United States are rigged in favor of [other party];”⁵ and “Sometimes regular people need to be a little violent to make sure votes are counted correctly” (six-point scales).⁶
- *Support for political violence* is a factor score combining responses to questions about how often the following are acceptable: sending threatening and intimidating messages to [other party] leaders; harassing ordinary [other party] persons on the Internet; using violence to advance political goals; and using violence if the [other

⁵Party names were randomized if the respondent did not identify with or lean toward either party. Although true independents (as recorded in previous surveys by some of the author team) were excluded from our recruitment process, about 1.5% of respondents in this study did not identify with or lean toward either party when asked for their partisan affiliation in Wave 1.

⁶These items did not scale well in a factor analysis so we analyze them separately per our preregistration.

party] wins the 2020 election.⁷

- *Support for democracy* is a factor score combining responses to questions asking whether it would be a good or bad way of governing the U.S. to have a strong leader who does not have to bother with Congress and elections, to have the army rule, or to have a democratic political system.⁸
- *Past practices* was measured as the perceived accuracy of the following statement in describing how things generally work in American politics: “Presidential candidates accept the outcome of elections even if they narrowly lose” (four-point scale).
- *Emotional reactions* were measured as the mean levels of anger/outrage (anger), anxiety/fear (anxiety), and enthusiasm/happiness (enthusiasm) that respondents reported feeling after exposure to stimulus tweets (four-point scale).

Results

Following our preregistration, we first evaluate whether we can pool the non-election and election placebo conditions. Across sixteen prespecified models, we never reject the null of no difference in means for respect for election norms or election trust and confidence (see Table B2 in Online Appendix B). We therefore pool the conditions and treat the combined set of respondents as the reference category in the models below.

For our main analysis, we use OLS regression with HC2 robust standard errors. Each model includes a set of prognostic covariates selected using a lasso variable selection procedure (see preregistration for details) and fixed effects for the blocks from our block randomization procedure. We use the Benjamini, Krieger, and Yekutieli (2006) approach to separately control the false discovery rate for main effects and for subgroup effects.⁹

We first evaluate the main effects of exposure to election norm violation and general (non-election) norm violation tweets relative to the pooled placebo group among our full sample. Table 1 reports tests of H1 and R1, RQ2, RQ5, and RQ6. Results for the mean value across waves of the election trust and confidence and election norm outcomes are reported in the first four columns (see Tables B3–B4 in Online Appendix B for results by

⁷Questions were adapted from Kalmoe and Mason (N.d.). Party names were randomized if the respondent did not identify with or lean toward either party.

⁸Per our preregistration, we exclude an additional item asking about “Having experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country” because it did not load well with the other questions in a factor analysis.

⁹All main effects and subgroup marginal effects reported below and in Online Appendix B incorporate these adjusted p -values, which were calculated using `mutools` in R (Blanchard et al., 2017) ($\alpha = .05$).

Table 1: Main effects of exposure to norm violations

	Trust in elections	Accept election	Elections rigged	Election violence	Political violence	Support democracy
Election norm violations	−0.001 (0.026)	−0.030 (0.032)	0.059 (0.048)	0.028 (0.043)	−0.040 (0.034)	−0.040 (0.041)
General norm violations	−0.017 (0.025)	−0.024 (0.032)	0.067 (0.048)	0.133 (0.043)	0.021 (0.036)	0.035 (0.044)
Election – general norm violation	0.016 (0.026)	−0.006 (0.032)	−0.008 (0.048)	−0.104 (0.044)	−0.061 (0.034)	−0.075 (0.042)
Control variables	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	2137	2137	2137	2137	2001	2001

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .005$ (two-sided; adjusted to control the false discovery rate per Benjamini, Krieger, and Yekutieli 2006 with $\alpha = .05$). Cell entries are OLS coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. All models control for pre-treatment variables selected as most prognostic via lasso regression (see preregistration for details and list of candidate variables). Outcome variables for first four models calculated as mean of non-missing values for each respondent across Waves 2–4 (see Online Appendix B for results by wave). Support for political violence and democracy were measured in Wave 4. The marginal effects of the treatments on support for political violence and democracy (columns 5 and 6, rows 5 and 6) were not pre-registered and are thus exploratory; we include these estimates for presentational consistency.

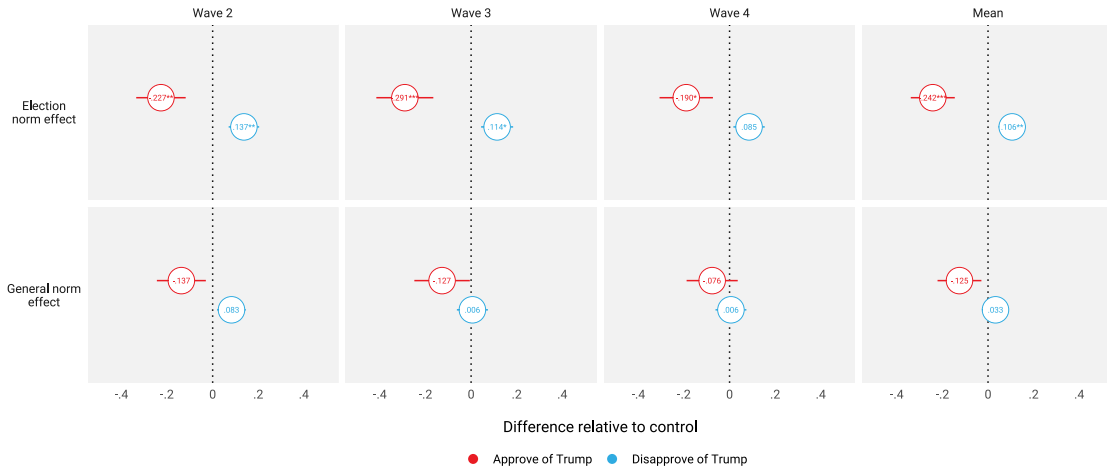
wave). The last two columns report outcomes measured in Wave 4 only. All scale outcomes (trust in elections, political violence, and support for democracy) are standardized factor scores; support for election norms (accept election, elections rigged, and election violence) are measured on a six-point agree/disagree scale.

As Table 1 indicates, we find virtually no evidence that exposure to election-related or general norm violations substantially affects respect for trust in elections, election norms, support for political violence, or support for democracy.¹⁰ We also find no significant differences in effects between the election and norm violation treatments.

However, these null results may reflect countervailing effects among different subgroups – specifically, effects may vary by approval of President Trump or partisanship per

¹⁰These null effects are fairly precise. To evaluate the precision of the null estimates more formally, we conducted a series of exploratory equivalence tests using the `TOSTER` package in R (Lakens, 2017) with the significance level set to $p < 0.05$ (equivalent to two one-sided tests with 90% confidence intervals) and selecting tests with unequal variances. We find that we can rule out effects outside of the following bounds at the $p < .05$ level: trust in elections, [−0.07, 0.097] for general norm violation (general) vs. control and [−0.083, 0.083] for election norm violation (election) vs. control; accept elections, [−0.066, 0.073] for general vs. control and [−0.076, 0.065] for election vs. control; elections rigged, [−0.308, 0.073] for general vs. control and [−0.201, 0.055] for election vs. control; election violence, [−0.094, 0.095] for election vs. control; political violence, [−0.13, 0.052] for general vs. control and [−0.009, 0.159] for election vs. control; and support democracy, [−0.114, 0.064] for general vs. control and [−0.038, 0.133] for election vs. control.

Figure 1: Marginal effects on trust and confidence in elections by Trump approval



* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .005$ (two-sided; adjusted to control the false discovery rate per Benjamini, Krieger, and Yekutieli 2006 with $\alpha = .05$). Outcome measures are factor scores combining responses to questions asking whether respondents trust elections (seven-point scale) and are confident that votes nationwide will be counted as intended and that election officials would manage counting fairly (four-point scales). Bars represent 95% confidence intervals (not shown if confidence interval is smaller than circle indicating the point estimate). See Online Appendix A for exact wording and Table B6 in Online Appendix B for full results.

RQ7. Following our preregistration, we therefore allow our treatment effect estimates to vary by whether respondents approve of Trump. We present these marginal effect estimates for Trump approvers and disapprovers in graphical form in Figure 1. The interaction models from which these estimates are derived, which show that treatment effects frequently vary significantly by Trump approval, are presented in Online Appendix B.¹¹

Figure 1 first plots how the effect of exposure to norm-violating rhetoric on trust and confidence in elections varies by Trump approval (see Table B6 in Online Appendix B for full results). Unlike in Table 1, we present marginal effects for the election norm violation and general norm violation conditions by wave as well as the mean across waves.

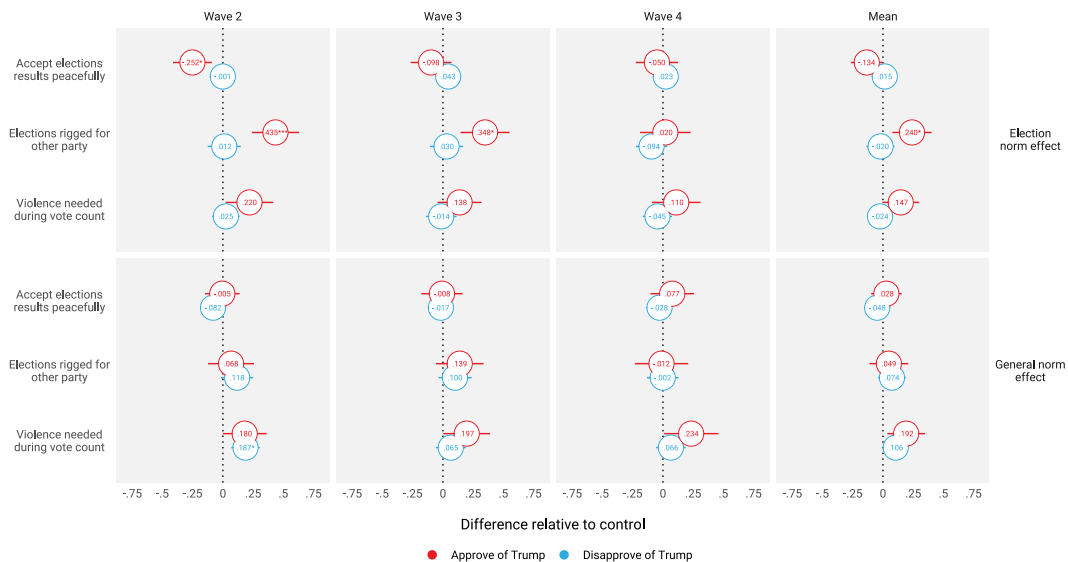
As the figure indicates, Trump’s election norm violations decrease trust and confidence in elections among people who approve of his performance in office by 0.24 standard deviations on average across waves ($p < .005$). By contrast, exposure to the election norm violation tweets actually *increases* trust and confidence in elections among Trump disapprovers by 0.11 standard deviations on average ($p < .01$ after p -values are adjusted

¹¹Results when the treatments are instead interacted with an indicator for whether the respondent identifies with or leans toward the Republican Party are generally very similar; we thus do not discuss them further here but present the results in tabular form in Online Appendix B.

to control the false discovery rate), mirroring the observational trend observed from 2014 to 2016 among supporters of Hillary Clinton (Sinclair, Smith, and Tucker, 2018). These opposing effects suggest that the effects of norm violations are conditional upon attitudes toward the leader in question.¹²

Similarly, Figure 2 shows that rhetoric violating election norms sometimes reduces respect for those norms among Trump approvers (see Tables B8–B9 in Online Appendix B). Most notably, beliefs that elections are rigged increases as a result of exposure by 0.435 points on a six-point scale in Wave 2 ($p < .005$) and by 0.24 points on average across Waves 2–4 (0.16 standard deviations; $p < .05$). Election norm violations also decrease willingness to accept election results peacefully among Trump approvers, but only in Wave 2 ($p < .05$). However, the election norm violation condition has no measurable effect on beliefs that violence is needed for votes to be counted correctly across waves or overall. Similarly, no measurable effects are found for rhetoric violating election norms among Trump disapprovers or for the general norm violation condition among either group.

Figure 2: Marginal effects on democratic norms by Trump approval



* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .005$ (two-sided; adjusted to control the false discovery rate per Benjamini, Krieger, and Yekutieli 2006 with $\alpha = .05$). Mean agreement or disagreement with three separate statements on election-related democratic norms (six-point scale) by wave (columns 1–3) and across waves (column 4). Bars represent 95% confidence intervals (not shown if confidence interval is smaller than circle indicating the point estimate). See Online Appendix A for exact wording and Tables B8–B11 in Online Appendix B for full results.

¹²We do not observe significant effects of the general norm violation tweets on trust and confidence in elections for either Trump approvers or disapprovers.

This pattern of heterogeneous effects by Trump approval does not extend to support for political violence or democracy, however. The election norm violation treatment did not measurably affect either outcome among Trump approvers or disapprovers (see Table B12 in Online Appendix B).

Finally, we investigate whether repeated exposure to norm violations creates normalization (RQ3) and/or desensitization (RQ4). We test for normalization by examining treatment effects on perceptions of past respect for democratic norms. We find no significant effects of the treatments on beliefs that past candidates failed to respect narrow losses overall or by Trump approval (see Tables B14–B15 in Online Appendix B). Similarly, we find only suggestive evidence that repeated exposure to norm-violating rhetoric has a desensitizing effect. First, self-reported anger and anxiety after exposure to norm violation tweets generally did not change measurably between Waves 2 and 3 (with the exception of decreased anger in response to general norm violation tweets among Trump disapprovers; see Tables B17–B18 in Online Appendix B). Similarly, prior exposure to election or general norm violation tweets rarely had significant effects on self-reported anger and anxiety in response to exposure to novel election norm violation tweets in Wave 4 (with the exception for decreased anxiety among Trump disapprovers in the general norm violation tweet condition; see Tables B20–B21 in Online Appendix B).

Conclusion

While President Trump’s attacks on democratic norms have prompted concern from journalists, scholars, and everyday citizens, the causal effects of such rhetoric on public attitudes toward democracy are not known. We present the first study estimating the effects of exposure to this rhetoric. Using results from a multi-wave experiment conducted during the waning days of the 2020 presidential election, we find that no evidence that support for political violence or belief in democracy changes after repeated exposure to these statements. However, exposure to these norm violations has pernicious effects among Trump’s supporters. Among people who approve of his performance in office, repeated exposure to norm-violating rhetoric about electoral fraud erodes trust and confidence in elections and increases belief that elections are rigged.

Of course, our study has important limitations that should be noted. While we strove for realism in the design of our treatments, participants nonetheless encountered Trump’s tweets in the context of an online survey rather than the way they would on Twitter or in

other settings in which they are exposed to political news and information. The effects of Trump's tweets likely also vary by whether they are reinforced or countered by other information (Zaller, 1992), a design variant that should be evaluated in future research. Second, we conducted our experiment in a saturated news environment in which many respondents had presumably already been exposed to Trump's statements multiple times via other means; the effects of additional exposure, including potential normalization or desensitization, may therefore have been limited (Druckman and Leeper, 2012). Finally, though treatment effect heterogeneity by sample type is frequently overstated (Coppock, 2019), our study should be replicated in a representative sample if acceptable levels of attrition can be achieved.

Nonetheless, our study offers the first causal estimates of the effects of Trump's anti-democratic rhetoric on the mass public's commitment to democracy. Norms are typically thought to constrain the behavior of elites (Helmke and Levitsky, 2004). As we show here, however, when elites are unconstrained and violate norms, their supporters respond accordingly. Just as elites can shape policy views along partisan lines (Lenz, 2013), elite rhetoric can shape normative beliefs in core democratic values such as confidence in elections and support for peaceful transfers of power. These findings do not indicate that elites can erode democratic norms easily or that the effects of norm violations will be uniform across the entire population. However, at least for a politician's supporters, support of democratic norms appear to be more fragile than previously assumed, creating a potential risk to acceptance of unfavorable election results.

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Online Appendix A: Survey instruments and study stimuli

Wave 1 questionnaire

This study is being conducted by Katie Clayton of Stanford University, Nicholas Davis of the University of Alabama, Brendan Nyhan of Dartmouth College, Ethan Porter of George Washington University, Timothy Ryan of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Thomas J. Wood of the Ohio State University. Your participation is voluntary and you may decline to participate in the survey or withdraw at any time. No information that identifies you will be collected or retained by the researchers. However, any online interaction carries some risk of being accessed. The survey will take about 3 to 5 minutes to complete. After you complete the survey, we may invite you to participate in subsequent surveys. The purpose of the study is to better understand the determinants of attitudes about major public challenges. Possible benefits of participation include having the opportunity to express your opinion about issues of public concern. Possible risks or discomforts you could experience during this study include breach of confidentiality and boredom. If you experience any research-related injury, you should contact the Principal Investigator immediately. Further information regarding this study may be obtained by contacting Brendan Nyhan at nyhan@dartmouth.edu.

Whom can I speak with? The Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects at Dartmouth College, which can be reached at (603) 646-6482, can provide information about your rights as a research participant. You may also contact this office if you have questions, concerns, or complaints about the research, or wish to speak with someone independent of the research team. If you wish to provide a written signature to signal your consent, please contact Brendan Nyhan at the email address above.

Do you consent to participate in the study?

-Yes

-No

Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else?

-Republican

-Democrat

-Independent

-Something else

If “Democrat” is selected: Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or a not very strong Democrat?

-Strong Democrat (1)

-Not very strong Democrat (2)

If “Republican” is selected: Would you call yourself a strong Republican or not a very strong Republican?

-Strong Republican (7)

-Not very strong Republican (6)

If “Independent” or “Something else” is selected: Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or to the Democratic Party?

-Closer to the Republican Party (5)

-Closer to the Democratic Party (3)

-Neither (4)

Do you ever use any of the following social media sites? Please indicate which ones you use below (if any).

Twitter

-Yes (1)

-No (0)

Instagram

-Yes (1)

-No (0)

Facebook

-Yes (1)

-No (0)

YouTube

-Yes (1)

-No (0)

WhatsApp

-Yes (1)

-No (0)

If Twitter is selected: Thinking about the social media sites you use, about how often do you visit or use Twitter?

-Several times a day (5)

-About once a day (4)

-A few times a week (3)

-Every few weeks (2)

-Less often (1)

If Facebook is selected: Thinking about the social media sites you use, about how often do you visit or use Facebook?

-Several times a day (5)

-About once a day (4)

-A few times a week (3)

-Every few weeks (2)

-Less often (1)

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as President?

-Strongly approve (4)

-Somewhat approve (3)

-Somewhat disapprove (2)

-Strongly disapprove (1)

How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

An important part of democracy is to accept election losses peacefully.

- Strongly agree (6)
- Somewhat agree (5)
- Slightly agree (4)
- Slightly disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

Elections in the United States are rigged in favor of [Democrats (*if respondent identifies or leans Republican*) / Republicans (*if respondent identifies or leans Democrat*); party names randomized if respondent does not identify with or lean toward either party].

- Strongly agree (6)
- Somewhat agree (5)
- Slightly agree (4)
- Slightly disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

Sometimes regular people need to be a little violent to make sure votes are counted correctly.

- Strongly agree (6)
- Somewhat agree (5)
- Slightly agree (4)
- Slightly disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

Next, we'd like you to think not about 2020, but about the the past fifty years or so. How accurate is each of the following statements in describing how things generally work in American politics?

Presidential candidates accept the outcome of elections even if they narrowly lose.

- Very accurate (4)
- Somewhat accurate (3)
- Not very accurate (2)
- Not at all accurate (1)

Presidents do their best to unify the country by downplaying divisions.

- Very accurate (4)
- Somewhat accurate (3)
- Not very accurate (2)
- Not at all accurate (1)

Presidents hold meetings or speak on the phone with leaders of other countries to discuss foreign policy and global issues.

- Very accurate (4)
- Somewhat accurate (3)

- Not very accurate (2)
- Not at all accurate (1)

Presidents make sure to visit all national parks every year.

- Very accurate (4)
- Somewhat accurate (3)
- Not very accurate (2)
- Not at all accurate (1)

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement? *[paragraph break]*
Presidential candidates should accept the outcome of elections even if they narrowly lose.

- Strongly agree (6)
- Somewhat agree (5)
- Slightly agree (4)
- Slightly disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

Please indicate what percentage of Americans you think would agree with the following statement. If you think every American would agree, enter 100. If you think no one would agree, enter 0. If you think half of Americans would agree, enter 50. You can enter any number from 0-100. *[paragraph break]* What percentage of the public do you think would agree with the following statement? Presidential candidates should accept the outcome of elections even if they narrowly lose.

-Value entry, 0-100.

To what extent do you trust elections in this country? Please respond on the scale below where 1 means “not at all” and 7 means “a lot.”

- 1 (Not at all)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7 (A lot)

How confident are you that votes nationwide will be counted as intended in this year’s election?

- Very confident (4)
- Somewhat confident (3)
- Not too confident (2)
- Not at all confident (1)

How confident are you that election officials will manage the counting of ballots fairly in the election this November?

- Very confident (4)
- Somewhat confident (3)
- Not too confident (2)

-Not at all confident (1)

To the best of your knowledge, how many times does each of these occur in a presidential election?

Voting more than once

- A million or more (7)
- Hundreds of thousands (6)
- Tens of thousands (5)
- Thousands (4)
- Hundreds (3)
- Less than a hundred (2)
- Less than ten (1)

Stealing or tampering with ballots

- A million or more (7)
- Hundreds of thousands (6)
- Tens of thousands (5)
- Thousands (4)
- Hundreds (3)
- Less than a hundred (2)
- Less than ten (1)

Pretending to be someone else when voting

- A million or more (7)
- Hundreds of thousands (6)
- Tens of thousands (5)
- Thousands (4)
- Hundreds (3)
- Less than a hundred (2)
- Less than ten (1)

People voting who are not U.S. citizens

- A million or more (7)
- Hundreds of thousands (6)
- Tens of thousands (5)
- Thousands (4)
- Hundreds (3)
- Less than a hundred (2)
- Less than ten (1)

Voting with an absentee ballot intended for another person

- A million or more (7)
- Hundreds of thousands (6)
- Tens of thousands (5)
- Thousands (4)
- Hundreds (3)
- Less than a hundred (2)

-Less than ten (1)

When, if ever, is it OK for [respondent party (including leaners); randomized if respondent does not identify with or lean toward either party] to send threatening and intimidating messages to [other party] leaders?

-Always (4)

-Frequently (3)

-Occasionally (2)

-Never (1)

When, if ever, is it OK for an ordinary [respondent party (including leaners); randomized if respondent does not identify with or lean toward either party] in the public to harass an ordinary [other party] on the Internet, in a way that makes the [other party] feel unsafe?

-Always (4)

-Frequently (3)

-Occasionally (2)

-Never (1)

How much do you feel it is justified for [respondent party (including leaners); randomized if respondent does not identify with or lean toward either party] to use violence in advancing their political goals these days?

-Always (4)

-Frequently (3)

-Occasionally (2)

-Never (1)

What if the [other party; randomized if respondent does not identify with or lean toward either party] win the 2020 presidential election? How much do you feel violence would be justified then?

-Always (4)

-Frequently (3)

-Occasionally (2)

-Never (1)

Various types of political systems are described below. Please think about each choice in terms of governing this country and indicate if you think that it would be a very good, fairly good, fairly bad or very bad way of governing the United States.

Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with Congress and elections

-Very good (4)

-Fairly good (3)

-Fairly bad (2)

-Very bad (1)

Having experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country

-Very good (4)

-Fairly good (3)

-Fairly bad (2)

-Very bad (1)

Having the army rule

- Very good (4)
- Fairly good (3)
- Fairly bad (2)
- Very bad (1)

Having a democratic political system

- Very good (4)
- Fairly good (3)
- Fairly bad (2)
- Very bad (1)

Next, we would like you to examine some messages that President Trump posted on Twitter.

[Below is one example; four total tweets were shown. See full list of tweets included by treatment condition.]



Donald J. Trump ✓
@realDonaldTrump



On [#NationalDoctorsDay](#), we recognize the remarkable men & women who treat their fellow Americans, find cures for the diseases & illnesses we face, and never waver in their efforts to treat every patient with the dignity, respect, and empathy they deserve.

Thinking about the tweets you just saw, how much do you feel:

Angry

- Very (4)
- Somewhat (3)
- A little (2)
- Not at all (1)

Outraged

- Very (4)
- Somewhat (3)
- A little (2)
- Not at all (1)

Anxious

- Very (4)
- Somewhat (3)

- A little (2)
- Not at all (1)

Afraid

- Very (4)
- Somewhat (3)
- A little (2)
- Not at all (1)

Enthusiastic

- Very (4)
- Somewhat (3)
- A little (2)
- Not at all (1)

Happy

- Very (4)
- Somewhat (3)
- A little (2)
- Not at all (1)

In talking to people about elections, we often find out that a lot of people aren't able to vote because they were not registered, or they were sick, or they just didn't have time. How about you – how likely are you to vote in the general election this November?

- Definitely will vote (4)
- Probably will vote (3)
- Probably will not vote (2)
- Definitely will not vote (1)
- Already voted by mail (5)
- Already voted in person (5)

If you were casting a vote today in the 2020 presidential election, for whom would you vote for President of the United States?

- Joe Biden (Democrat) (1)
- Donald Trump (Republican) (2)
- Another candidate/neither (3)

Which of these topics came up in the Donald Trump tweets you just read?

- The Parkland shooting, National Doctor's Day, and transit funding for New York and New Orleans (1)
- The Sandy Hook shooting, Thanksgiving, and health care funding for Atlanta (2)
- The 9/11 attacks, Christmas, and military funding for the Navy (3)
- The war in Iraq, Hannukah, and Medicare funding for seniors (4)

Do you have any comments on the survey? Please let us know about any problems you had or aspects of the survey that were confusing.

[optional text entry]

Thank you for answering these questions and for your participation. Please do not share any information about the nature of this study with other potential participants. This research is not intended to support or oppose any political candidate or office. The research has no affiliation with any political candidate or campaign and has received no financial support from any political candidate or campaign. We may contact you to invite you to follow-up studies. Your participation in any follow-up studies is entirely voluntary and will not affect your compensation for this study. Should you have any questions about this study, please contact Brendan Nyhan at nyhan@dartmouth.edu.

Wave 2 and Wave 3 questionnaires

This study is being conducted by Katie Clayton of Stanford University, Nicholas Davis of the University of Alabama, Brendan Nyhan of Dartmouth College, Ethan Porter of George Washington University, Timothy Ryan of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Thomas J. Wood of the Ohio State University. Your participation is voluntary and you may decline to participate in the survey or withdraw at any time. No information that identifies you will be collected or retained by the researchers. However, any online interaction carries some risk of being accessed. The survey will take about 3 to 5 minutes to complete. After you complete the survey, we may invite you to participate in subsequent surveys. The purpose of the study is to better understand the determinants of attitudes about major public challenges. Possible benefits of participation include having the opportunity to express your opinion about issues of public concern. Possible risks or discomforts you could experience during this study include breach of confidentiality and boredom. If you experience any research-related injury, you should contact the Principal Investigator immediately. Further information regarding this study may be obtained by contacting Brendan Nyhan at nyhan@dartmouth.edu.

Whom can I speak with? The Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects at Dartmouth College, which can be reached at (603) 646-6482, can provide information about your rights as a research participant. You may also contact this office if you have questions, concerns, or complaints about the research, or wish to speak with someone independent of the research team. If you wish to provide a written signature to signal your consent, please contact Brendan Nyhan at the email address above.

Do you consent to participate in the study?

-Yes

-No

We would like you to examine some messages that President Trump posted on Twitter.

[Twenty total tweets were shown across four screens, with five tweets per page. See full list of tweets included by treatment condition.]

Thinking about the tweets you just saw, how much do you feel:

Angry

-Very (4)

- Somewhat (3)
- A little (2)
- Not at all (1)

Outraged

- Very (4)
- Somewhat (3)
- A little (2)
- Not at all (1)

Anxious

- Very (4)
- Somewhat (3)
- A little (2)
- Not at all (1)

Afraid

- Very (4)
- Somewhat (3)
- A little (2)
- Not at all (1)

Enthusiastic

- Very (4)
- Somewhat (3)
- A little (2)
- Not at all (1)

Happy

- Very (4)
- Somewhat (3)
- A little (2)
- Not at all (1)

How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

An important part of democracy is to accept election losses peacefully.

- Strongly agree (6)
- Somewhat agree (5)
- Slightly agree (4)
- Slightly disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

Elections in the United States are rigged in favor of [Democrats (*if respondent identifies or leans Republican*) / Republicans (*if respondent identifies or leans Democrat*); party names randomized if respondent does not identify with or lean toward either party].

- Strongly agree (6)
- Somewhat agree (5)

- Slightly agree (4)
- Slightly disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

Sometimes regular people need to be a little violent to make sure votes are counted correctly.

- Strongly agree (6)
- Somewhat agree (5)
- Slightly agree (4)
- Slightly disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

Next, we'd like you to think not about 2020, but about the the past fifty years or so. How accurate is each of the following statements in describing how things generally work in American politics?

Presidential candidates accept the outcome of elections even if they narrowly lose.

- Very accurate (4)
- Somewhat accurate (3)
- Not very accurate (2)
- Not at all accurate (1)

Presidents do their best to unify the country by downplaying divisions.

- Very accurate (4)
- Somewhat accurate (3)
- Not very accurate (2)
- Not at all accurate (1)

Presidents hold meetings or speak on the phone with leaders of other countries to discuss foreign policy and global issues.

- Very accurate (4)
- Somewhat accurate (3)
- Not very accurate (2)
- Not at all accurate (1)

Presidents make sure to visit all national parks every year.

- Very accurate (4)
- Somewhat accurate (3)
- Not very accurate (2)
- Not at all accurate (1)

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement? *[paragraph break]*
Presidential candidates should accept the outcome of elections even if they narrowly lose.

- Strongly agree (6)
- Somewhat agree (5)
- Slightly agree (4)
- Slightly disagree (3)

- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

Please indicate what percentage of Americans you think would agree with the following statement. If you think every American would agree, enter 100. If you think no one would agree, enter 0. If you think half of Americans would agree, enter 50. You can enter any number from 0-100. [paragraph break] What percentage of the public do you think would agree with the following statement? Presidential candidates should accept the outcome of elections even if they narrowly lose.

-Value entry, 0-100.

To what extent do you trust elections in this country? Please respond on the scale below where 1 means “not at all” and 7 means “a lot.”

- 1 (Not at all)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7 (A lot)

How confident are you that votes nationwide will be counted as intended in this year’s election?

- Very confident (4)
- Somewhat confident (3)
- Not too confident (2)
- Not at all confident (1)

How confident are you that election officials will manage the counting of ballots fairly in the election this November?

- Very confident (4)
- Somewhat confident (3)
- Not too confident (2)
- Not at all confident (1)

Please think again about the statements by President Trump that you read a minute ago. Setting aside how you feel about Trump or his views, would you say that these statements follow or depart from past practices by American presidents?

- Entirely follow past practice (4)
- Mostly follow past practice (3)
- Mostly depart from past practice (2)
- Entirely depart from past practice (1)

Which topic came up most frequently in the Donald Trump tweets you just read?

- His views about the election (1)
- His views about immigration (0)
- His views about police protests (0)
- His views about health care (0)

- His views about climate change (0)
- His views about defense policy (0)

Do you have any comments on the survey? Please let us know about any problems you had or aspects of the survey that were confusing.

[optional text entry]

Thank you for answering these questions and for your participation. Please do not share any information about the nature of this study with other potential participants. This research is not intended to support or oppose any political candidate or office. The research has no affiliation with any political candidate or campaign and has received no financial support from any political candidate or campaign. We may contact you to invite you to follow-up studies. Your participation in any follow-up studies is entirely voluntary and will not affect your compensation for this study. Should you have any questions about this study, please contact Brendan Nyhan at nyhan@dartmouth.edu.

Wave 4 questionnaire

This study is being conducted by Katie Clayton of Stanford University, Nicholas Davis of the University of Alabama, Brendan Nyhan of Dartmouth College, Ethan Porter of George Washington University, Timothy Ryan of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Thomas J. Wood of the Ohio State University. Your participation is voluntary and you may decline to participate in the survey or withdraw at any time. No information that identifies you will be collected or retained by the researchers. However, any online interaction carries some risk of being accessed. The survey will take about 3 to 5 minutes to complete. The purpose of the study is to better understand the determinants of attitudes about major public challenges. Possible benefits of participation include having the opportunity to express your opinion about issues of public concern. Possible risks or discomforts you could experience during this study include breach of confidentiality and boredom. If you experience any research-related injury, you should contact the Principal Investigator immediately. Further information regarding this study may be obtained by contacting Brendan Nyhan at nyhan@dartmouth.edu.

Whom can I speak with? The Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects at Dartmouth College, which can be reached at (603) 646-6482, can provide information about your rights as a research participant. You may also contact this office if you have questions, concerns, or complaints about the research, or wish to speak with someone independent of the research team. If you wish to provide a written signature to signal your consent, please contact Brendan Nyhan at the email address above.

Do you consent to participate in the study?

- Yes
- No

How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

An important part of democracy is to accept election losses peacefully.

- Strongly agree (6)
- Somewhat agree (5)
- Slightly agree (4)
- Slightly disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

Elections in the United States are rigged in favor of [Democrats (*if respondent identifies or leans Republican*) / Republicans (*if respondent identifies or leans Democrat*); party names randomized if respondent does not identify with or lean toward either party].

- Strongly agree (6)
- Somewhat agree (5)
- Slightly agree (4)
- Slightly disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

Sometimes regular people need to be a little violent to make sure votes are counted correctly.

- Strongly agree (6)
- Somewhat agree (5)
- Slightly agree (4)
- Slightly disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

Next, we'd like you to think not about 2020, but about the the past fifty years or so. How accurate is each of the following statements in describing how things generally work in American politics?

Presidential candidates accept the outcome of elections even if they narrowly lose.

- Very accurate (4)
- Somewhat accurate (3)
- Not very accurate (2)
- Not at all accurate (1)

Presidents do their best to unify the country by downplaying divisions.

- Very accurate (4)
- Somewhat accurate (3)
- Not very accurate (2)
- Not at all accurate (1)

Presidents hold meetings or speak on the phone with leaders of other countries to discuss foreign policy and global issues.

- Very accurate (4)
- Somewhat accurate (3)
- Not very accurate (2)
- Not at all accurate (1)

Presidents make sure to visit all national parks every year.

- Very accurate (4)
- Somewhat accurate (3)
- Not very accurate (2)
- Not at all accurate (1)

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement? *[paragraph break]*
Presidential candidates should accept the outcome of elections even if they narrowly lose.

- Strongly agree (6)
- Somewhat agree (5)
- Slightly agree (4)
- Slightly disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

Please indicate what percentage of Americans you think would agree with the following statement. If you think every American would agree, enter 100. If you think no one would agree, enter 0. If you think half of Americans would agree, enter 50. You can enter any number from 0-100. *[paragraph break]* What percentage of the public do you think would agree with the following statement? Presidential candidates should accept the outcome of elections even if they narrowly lose.

-Value entry, 0-100.

To what extent do you trust elections in this country? Please respond on the scale below where 1 means “not at all” and 7 means “a lot.”

- 1 (Not at all)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7 (A lot)

How confident are you that votes nationwide will be counted as intended in this year’s election?

- Very confident (4)
- Somewhat confident (3)
- Not too confident (2)
- Not at all confident (1)

How confident are you that election officials will manage the counting of ballots fairly in the election this November?

- Very confident (4)
- Somewhat confident (3)
- Not too confident (2)
- Not at all confident (1)

To the best of your knowledge, how many times does each of these occur in a presidential

election?

Voting more than once

- A million or more (7)
- Hundreds of thousands (6)
- Tens of thousands (5)
- Thousands (4)
- Hundreds (3)
- Less than a hundred (2)
- Less than ten (1)

Stealing or tampering with ballots

- A million or more (7)
- Hundreds of thousands (6)
- Tens of thousands (5)
- Thousands (4)
- Hundreds (3)
- Less than a hundred (2)
- Less than ten (1)

Pretending to be someone else when voting

- A million or more (7)
- Hundreds of thousands (6)
- Tens of thousands (5)
- Thousands (4)
- Hundreds (3)
- Less than a hundred (2)
- Less than ten (1)

People voting who are not U.S. citizens

- A million or more (7)
- Hundreds of thousands (6)
- Tens of thousands (5)
- Thousands (4)
- Hundreds (3)
- Less than a hundred (2)
- Less than ten (1)

Voting with an absentee ballot intended for another person

- A million or more (7)
- Hundreds of thousands (6)
- Tens of thousands (5)
- Thousands (4)
- Hundreds (3)
- Less than a hundred (2)
- Less than ten (1)

When, if ever, is it OK for [respondent party (including leaners)]; randomized if respondent

does not identify with or lean toward either party] to send threatening and intimidating messages to [other party] leaders?

- Always (4)
- Frequently (3)
- Occasionally (2)
- Never (1)

When, if ever, is it OK for an ordinary [respondent party (including leaners); randomized if respondent does not identify with or lean toward either party] in the public to harass an ordinary [other party] on the Internet, in a way that makes the [other party] feel unsafe?

- Always (4)
- Frequently (3)
- Occasionally (2)
- Never (1)

How much do you feel it is justified for [respondent party (including leaners); randomized if respondent does not identify with or lean toward either party] to use violence in advancing their political goals these days?

- Always (4)
- Frequently (3)
- Occasionally (2)
- Never (1)

What if the [other party; randomized if respondent does not identify with or lean toward either party] win the 2020 presidential election? How much do you feel violence would be justified then?

- Always (4)
- Frequently (3)
- Occasionally (2)
- Never (1)

Various types of political systems are described below. Please think about each choice in terms of governing this country and indicate if you think that it would be a very good, fairly good, fairly bad or very bad way of governing the United States.

Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with Congress and elections

- Very good (4)
- Fairly good (3)
- Fairly bad (2)
- Very bad (1)

Having experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country

- Very good (4)
- Fairly good (3)
- Fairly bad (2)
- Very bad (1)

Having the army rule

- Very good (4)
- Fairly good (3)
- Fairly bad (2)
- Very bad (1)

Having a democratic political system

- Very good (4)
- Fairly good (3)
- Fairly bad (2)
- Very bad (1)

In talking to people about elections, we often find out that a lot of people aren't able to vote because they were not registered, or they were sick, or they just didn't have time. How about you – how likely are you to vote in the general election this November?

- Definitely will vote (4)
- Probably will vote (3)
- Probably will not vote (2)
- Definitely will not vote (1)
- Already voted by mail (5)
- Already voted in person (5)

If you were casting a vote today in the 2020 presidential election, for whom would you vote for President of the United States?

- Joe Biden (Democrat) (1)
- Donald Trump (Republican) (2)
- Another candidate/neither (3)

Next, we would like you to examine some messages that President Trump posted on Twitter.

[Four total tweets were shown. See full list of tweets included by treatment condition.]

Thinking about the tweets you just saw, how much do you feel:

Angry

- Very (4)
- Somewhat (3)
- A little (2)
- Not at all (1)

Outraged

- Very (4)
- Somewhat (3)
- A little (2)
- Not at all (1)

Anxious

- Very (4)
- Somewhat (3)
- A little (2)
- Not at all (1)

Afraid

- Very (4)
- Somewhat (3)
- A little (2)
- Not at all (1)

Enthusiastic

- Very (4)
- Somewhat (3)
- A little (2)
- Not at all (1)

Happy

- Very (4)
- Somewhat (3)
- A little (2)
- Not at all (1)

Do you have any comments on the survey? Please let us know about any problems you had or aspects of the survey that were confusing.

[optional text entry]

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Tweet selection process

We selected our treatment materials (tweets from President Trump) using the process described below. For tweets that do not breach political norms, we used the Trump Twitter Archive (<http://www.trumptwitterarchive.com/archive>) to search all tweets by Donald Trump. We restricted our collection period to 2020 only and selected 118 tweets that did not obviously seem to violate democratic norms (that is, tweets that did not involve transgressing traditional standards of public communication by elected leaders). These tweets involve mostly innocuous communication about places, events, and policy announcements. Additional criteria for these tweets included: 1) they were not retweets, 2) were neither in a thread nor were first in a thread that made little contextual sense without including other tweets in the thread, and 3) did not include quoted or media content (or make contextual sense with that content omitted). Examples of tweets that seemingly do not breach political norms include: (1) “We just landed Wisconsin a massive Navy shipbuilding contract. Beautiful designs!”, (2) “My Administration is closely monitoring Hurricane Douglas off Hawaii & Hurricane Hanna, which has now made landfall in Texas. We continue to coordinate closely with both states – listen to your emergency management officials @Hawaii_EMA & @TDEM to protect your family & property!”, and (3) “White House News Conference today at 5:30 P.M. Enjoy!”

To further refine this selection process, we then ran a pre-test of the potential tweets selected using the process defined here among 1,851 respondents on Lucid who passed an attention check to examine whether independent coders view the tweets as following or departing from past practices by American presidents. Participants rated each tweet on a four-point scale, where 1 is “entirely follows past practices,” 2 is “mostly follows past practices,” 3 is “mostly departs from past practices,” and 4 is “is entirely departs from past practices.” The pre-test also asked respondents if the topic of the tweet involved U.S. elections specifically or something else to ensure that the placebo content was unrelated to elections, the subject of tweets in another condition (see below). We retained the 44 tweets with the lowest scores on the past practices metric among those for which fewer than 40% of pre-test respondents indicated that U.S. elections are the specific topic of the tweet. The resulting group of tweets are those that are seen as maximally consistent with past practices and not closely related to elections. The mean rating on the past practices scale for this group of tweets (on the 1–4 scale) is 2.00.

For tweets that breach political norms but were not focused on elections, we relied on events that Bright Line Watch experts have rated as abnormal and important in their quarterly expert surveys. Again, we searched the Trump Twitter Archive using keywords contained in those events for tweets from 2019 and 2020. We selected 40 tweets using this approach with the same criteria regarding retweets, threads, and media as described above. Examples of tweets that seem to breach political norms but are not focused on elections include: (1) “Ted Wheeler, the wacky Radical Left Do Nothing Democrat Mayor of Portland, who has watched great death and destruction of his City during his tenure, thinks this lawless situation should go on forever. Wrong! Portland will never recover with a fool for a Mayor...”, (2) “The press is doing everything within their power to fight the magnificence of the phrase, MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN! They can’t stand the fact

that this Administration has done more than virtually any other Administration in its first 2yrs. They are truly the ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE!”), and (3) “I was criticized by the Democrats when I closed the Country down to China many weeks ahead of what almost everyone recommended. Saved many lives. Dems were working the Impeachment Hoax. They didn’t have a clue! Now they are fear mongering. Be calm & vigilant!” We pre-tested these on Lucid as part of the $n = 1,851$ data collection described above and retained the 20 tweets with the highest scores on the past practices metric among those for which fewer than 40% of pre-test respondents indicated that U.S. elections are the specific topic of the tweet. The resulting group of tweets are those that are seen as maximally departing from past practices and not closely related to elections. The mean rating on the past practices scale for this group of tweets (on the 1–4 scale) is 3.14.

Finally, for tweets that breach political norms and involve elections, we focused only on tweets involving the 2020 presidential election. Our collection protocol for these tweets relied on two lists provided to us by the *Wall Street Journal* and the website *Factba.se* (for the election norm violation condition; see Volz and Glazer 2020 and Glasser 2020). Each list was a compilation of tweets sent by President Trump that seemed to undermine faith in American elections. We collected all tweets from 2020 in these lists using the same criteria regarding retweets, threads, and media described above. Since each list was provided to us a few weeks before our pre-test and to ensure that the lists covered all relevant tweets, we also performed a keyword search in the Trump Twitter Archive using the keywords “election”, “ballot”, and “vote” and collected tweets from 2020 that violate or allege violations of one of the following Bright Line Watch democratic norms related to elections: (1) Elections are conducted, ballots counted, and winners determined without pervasive fraud or manipulation, (2) The geographic boundaries of electoral districts do not systematically advantage any particular political party, (3) Elections are free from foreign influence, (4) All adult citizens have equal opportunity to vote, (5) All votes have equal impact on election outcomes, (6) Voter participation in elections is generally high.

We selected 56 tweets using this approach. Examples of tweets that seemingly breach political norms and are focused on elections include: (1) “The Democrats know the 2020 Election will be a fraudulent mess. Will maybe never know who won!”, (2) “Mail-In Ballot fraud found in many elections. People are just now seeing how bad, dishonest and slow it is. Election results could be delayed for months. No more big election night answers? 1% not even counted in 2016. Ridiculous! Just a formula for RIGGING an Election...”, and (3) “Rigged Election, and EVERYONE knows it!” We pre-tested these as part of the same $n = 1,851$ Lucid data collection described above and retained the 24 tweets with the highest scores on the past practices metric among those for which more than 60% of pre-test respondents indicated that U.S. elections are the specific topic of the tweet. The resulting group of tweets are those that are seen as maximally departing from past practices and very closely related to elections. The mean rating on the past practices scale for this group of tweets (on the 1–4 scale) is 3.14.

After this initial pre-test, we sought to address concern that the placebo tweets above might differ from those in the election norm violation treatment condition on two dimensions. We thus followed a process like the one described above to select 47 election-related

tweets that did not obviously seem to violate democratic norms (that is, tweets that did not involve transgressing traditional standards of public communication by elected leaders). Examples of such tweets include: (1) “Chris Jacobs will be a great Congressman who will always fight for the people of New York. He supports our #MAGA Agenda, will continue to Secure Our Border, Loves our Military, Vets, and is Strong on the #2A. Chris has my Complete Endorsement for the Special Election on 4/28!”, (2) “Thank you to the Republican National Committee, (the RNC), who voted UNANIMOUSLY yesterday to support me in the upcoming 2020 Election. Considering that we have done more than any Administration in the first two years, this should be easy. More great things now in the works!”, and (3) “Just landed in New York to see my brother, Robert. We’re going for New York on November 3rd. We’re going to Reduce Taxes, Increase Law Enforcement, and bring it back BIG TIME! #MAGA.” We then separately tested these tweets (along with the $44 + 20 + 24 = 88$ tweets that we had already selected using the process previously described to induce wider variance in both election content and normalcy) in a pre-test of 1,417 respondents on Lucid using the questions above. We selected the 20 tweets with the lowest scores on the past practices metric among those for which more than 60% of pre-test respondents indicated that “U.S. elections” are the specific topic of the tweet (rather than “some other topic”). The resulting group of tweets includes those that are seen as maximally consistent with past practices and closely related to elections. The mean rating on the past practices scale for this group of tweets (on the 1–4 scale) is 2.26.

This pre-test of 261 candidate tweets across the four experimental conditions resulted in the following final treatment stimuli: 40 tweets that do not violate democratic norms and are not closely related to elections, 20 tweets that do not violate democratic norms and are focused on elections, 20 tweets that breach political norms but are not focused on elections, and 20 tweets that breach political norms and are focused on elections. We used a brute force randomization technique to partition each group of qualifying tweets into all possible groups of the relevant sizes, compare group differences in mean normalcy within tweet type, and chose the partitioning rules that minimize these differences to decide which tweets of each type go into each wave. The final list of tweets by treatment condition and survey wave is shown in Table A1.

List of tweets by wave and treatment condition

Table A1: Treatment materials

Wave	Group	Tweet text
1	Non-election placebo (all groups)	It has been two years since the tragedy in Parkland. We will always mourn the innocent lives taken from us – 14 wonderful students and 3 terrific educators. Earlier this week, I met with families whose experiences from that horrible day still pierce the soul....
1	Non-election placebo (all groups)	On #NationalDoctorsDay, we recognize the remarkable men & women who treat their fellow Americans, find cures for the diseases & illnesses we face, and never waver in their efforts to treat every patient with the dignity, respect, and empathy they deserve.
1	Non-election placebo (all groups)	I am proud to announce the first \$500M of \$3.9B in CARES Act transit funding headed to the NY Metropolitan Transportation Authority. Important funding to keep transit systems clean and operating to get people back to work! Spend it wisely! @NYGov-Cuomo @NYCMayor
1	Non-election placebo (all groups)	\$13.9M is heading to New Orleans in @USDOT funding for @NewOrleansRTA! Happy to support bus service and major fleet improvements for the great people of Louisiana and help them keep moving safely.
2	Non-election placebo (all groups)	One of the many great things about our just signed giant Trade Deal with China is that it will bring both the USA & China closer together in so many other ways. Terrific working with President Xi, a man who truly loves his country. Much more to come!
2	Non-election placebo (all groups)	It was my honor to welcome our nation's Mayors to the @WhiteHouse as we continue to strengthen the bonds of cooperation between federal and local governments so that we can deliver great jobs, excellent schools, affordable healthcare, and safe communities for all of our people!

Continued on next page

Table A1 – continued from previous page

Wave	Group	Tweet text
2	Non-election placebo (all groups)	Welcome back to Earth, @Astro_Christina, and congratulations on breaking the female record for the longest stay in space! You're inspiring young women and making the USA proud! Enjoyed speaking with you and @Astro_Jessica on the first all-female space-walk IN HISTORY last year.
2	Non-election placebo (all groups)	I want to thank all of our Great Government officials on the CoronaVirus Task Force who are working around the clock, in response to the CoronaVirus. Continue to check http://CDC.gov for updates, and follow all recommendations that are available...
2	Non-election placebo (all groups)	Good teamwork between Republicans & Democrats as the House passes the big CoronaVirus Relief Bill. People really pulled together. Nice to see!
2	Non-election placebo (all groups)	I ask all Americans to band together and support your neighbors by not hoarding unnecessary amounts of food and essentials. TOGETHER we will stay STRONG and overcome this challenge!
2	Non-election placebo (all groups)	Great meeting today with the CoronaVirus Task Force in the Oval Office. Stay informed at: http://CoronaVirus.gov .
2	Non-election placebo (all groups)	Hurricane Laura is a very dangerous and rapidly intensifying hurricane. My Administration remains fully engaged with state & local emergency managers to continue preparing and assisting the great people Texas, Louisiana, and Arkansas. Listen to local officials. We are with you!
2	Non-election placebo (all groups)	I was saddened to learn of the passing of India's former President, Pranab Mukherjee. I send my condolences to his family and the people of India as they grieve the loss of a great leader.
Continued on next page		

Table A1 – continued from previous page

Wave	Group	Tweet text
2	Non-election placebo (all groups)	Today I spoke with our Nation’s Small Businesses, which employ nearly half of America’s workforce. We are taking the MOST aggressive action in history to deliver fast relief to your businesses and workers. We will always protect our Small Businesses! @SBAgov
2	Non-election placebo	Kobe Bryant, despite being one of the truly great basketball players of all time, was just getting started in life. He loved his family so much, and had such strong passion for the future. The loss of his beautiful daughter, Gianna, makes this moment even more devastating...
2	Non-election placebo	Jack Welch, former Chairman and CEO of GE, a business legend, has died. There was no corporate leader like “neutron” Jack. He was my friend and supporter. We made wonderful deals together. He will never be forgotten. My warmest sympathies to his wonderful wife & family!
2	Non-election placebo	THANK YOU to our Police Officers, Fire Fighters, and EMS who help us defeat the Virus every day. Our proud nation is grateful for the unwavering dedication and sacrifice of our First Responders and their families. TOGETHER we will beat this!
2	Non-election placebo	Congratulations to Prime Minister Abe of Japan, and the IOC, on their very wise decision to present the Olympics in 2021. It will be a great success, and I look forward to being there!
2	Non-election placebo	Great News: Prime Minister Boris Johnson has just been moved out of Intensive Care. Get well Boris!!!
2	Non-election placebo	Extraordinary rescue yesterday by our brave and “Semper Paratus” U.S. Coast Guard. Our rapid response and the vessel’s survival equipment allowed these four mariners to see their loved ones again. Well done @USCG!

Continued on next page

Table A1 – continued from previous page

Wave	Group	Tweet text
2	Non-election placebo	We will miss GREAT Country Rocker, Charlie Daniels, who passed away yesterday in Hermitage, Tennessee. My condolences to his wife Hazel, and their family. Charlie is in my thoughts and prayers. I love his music! #RIPCharlieDaniels
2	Non-election placebo	Saddened to hear the news of civil rights hero John Lewis passing. Melania and I send our prayers to he and his family.
2	Non-election placebo	We MUST protect our National Parks for our children and grandchildren. I am calling on the House to pass the GREAT AMERICAN OUTDOORS ACT today. Thanks @SenCoryGardner and @SteveDaines for all your work on this HISTORIC BILL!
2	Non-election placebo	Today, we honor the brave Native American/First Nations soldiers who served our Nation and played a vital role in America's victory in WWII. The Navajo Code was never broken and saved untold American lives. Our country will be forever grateful. Happy Navajo Code Talkers Day!
2	Election placebo	Chris Jacobs will be a great Congressman who will always fight for the people of New York. He supports our #MAGA Agenda, will continue to Secure Our Border, Loves our Military, Vets, and is Strong on the #2A. Chris has my Complete Endorsement for the Special Election on 4/28!
2	Election placebo	Volunteer to be a Trump Election Poll Watcher. Sign up today! #MakeAmerica-GreatAgain
2	Election placebo	Great Rally in Pennsylvania last night. Congressman Lloyd Smucker (PA-11) was there and I informed him that he has my complete and total Endorsement for the upcoming 2020 Election. Lloyd has done a great job. I am with him all the way! #MAGA

Continued on next page

Table A1 – continued from previous page

Wave	Group	Tweet text
2	Election placebo	I hope everyone in the Great State of Virginia will get out and VOTE on Tuesday in all of the local and state elections to send a signal to D.C. that you want lower taxes, a strong Military, Border & 2nd Amendment, great healthcare, and must take care of our Vets. VOTE REPUBLICAN
2	Election placebo	No debate on Election Security should go forward without first agreeing that Voter ID (Identification) must play a very strong part in any final agreement. Without Voter ID, it is all so meaningless!
2	Election placebo	I will be in Gulfport and Tupelo, Mississippi, on Monday night doing two Rallies for Senator Hyde-Smith, who has a very important Election on Tuesday. She is an outstanding person who is strong on the Border, Crime, Military, our great Vets, Healthcare & the 2nd A. Needed in D.C.
2	Election placebo	Republicans, get out and vote today for those great candidates that will lead to big victories on November 3rd. MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!
2	Election placebo	Just landed in New York to see my brother, Robert. We're going for New York on November 3rd. We're going to Reduce Taxes, Increase Law Enforcement, and bring it back BIG TIME! #MAGA
2	Election placebo	Such a fantastic win for Ron DeSantis and the people of the Great State of Florida. Ron will be a fantastic Governor. On to November!
2	Election placebo	Last day to register to VOTE in Alabama, California, South Dakota and Wyoming! #JobsNotMobs http://Vote.GOP
Continued on next page		

Table A1 – continued from previous page

Wave	Group	Tweet text
2	General norm violation	They are not “peaceful protesters”, as Sleepy Joe and the Democrats call them, they are THUGS – And it is all taking place in Democrat run cities. Call me and request Federal HELP. We will solve your problems in a matter of minutes – And thanks to the U.S. Marshalls in Portland!
2	General norm violation	If I didn’t demand that National Guard Troops go into Minneapolis after watching how poorly the Liberal Democrat government was handling things, you wouldn’t even have a Minneapolis now. Once they were deployed, in force, all looting, burning and crime stopped DEAD!
2	General norm violation	@PeteHegseth “Oh bye the way, I appreciate the message from former President Bush, but where was he during Impeachment calling for putting partisanship aside.” @foxandfriends He was nowhere to be found in speaking up against the greatest Hoax in American history!
2	General norm violation	Does anybody really believe that Roger Stone, a man whose house was raided early in the morning by 29 gun toting FBI Agents (with Fake News @CNN closely in toe), was treated fairly. How about the jury forewoman with her unannounced hatred & bias. Same scammers as General Flynn!
2	General norm violation	This is what happens to someone who loyally gets appointed Attorney General of the United States & then doesn’t have the wisdom or courage to stare down & end the phony Russia Witch Hunt. Recuses himself on FIRST DAY in office, and the Mueller Scam begins!
2	General norm violation	Shifty Adam Schiff is a CORRUPT POLITICIAN, and probably a very sick man. He has not paid the price, yet, for what he has done to our Country!

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Table A1 – continued from previous page

Wave	Group	Tweet text
2	General norm violation	The News Reports about the Department of Commerce dropping its quest to put the Citizenship Question on the Census is incorrect or, to state it differently, FAKE! We are absolutely moving forward, as we must, because of the importance of the answer to this question.
2	General norm violation	Nancy Pelosi knew of all of the many Shifty Adam Schiff lies and massive frauds perpetrated upon Congress and the American people, in the form of a fraudulent speech knowingly delivered as a ruthless con, and the illegal meetings with a highly partisan “Whistleblower” & lawyer...
2	General norm violation	PM Justin Trudeau of Canada acted so meek and mild during our @G7 meetings only to give a news conference after I left saying that, “US Tariffs were kind of insulting” and he “will not be pushed around.” Very dishonest & weak. Our Tariffs are in response to his of 270% on dairy!
2	General norm violation	THE RIGGED AND CORRUPT MEDIA IS THE ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE!
2	Election norm violation	It is happening again to Crazy Bernie, just like last time, only far more obvious. They are taking the Democrat Nomination away from him, and there’s very little he can do. A Rigged System!
2	Election norm violation	So in California, the Democrats, who fought like crazy to get all mail in only ballots, and succeeded, have just opened a voting booth in the most Democrat area in the State. They are trying to steal another election. It’s all rigged out there. These votes must not count. SCAM!

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Table A1 – continued from previous page

Wave	Group	Tweet text
2	Election norm violation	So ridiculous to see Twitter trying to make the case that Mail-In Ballots are not subject to FRAUD. How stupid, there are examples, & cases, all over the place. Our election process will become badly tainted & a laughingstock all over the World. Tell that to your hater @yoyoel
2	Election norm violation	Because of MAIL-IN BALLOTS, 2020 will be the most RIGGED Election in our nations history – unless this stupidity is ended. We voted during World War One & World War Two with no problem, but now they are using Covid in order to cheat by using Mail-Ins!
2	Election norm violation	Mail-In Ballot fraud found in many elections. People are just now seeing how bad, dishonest and slow it is. Election results could be delayed for months. No more big election night answers? 1% not even counted in 2016. Ridiculous! Just a formula for RIGGING an Election...
2	Election norm violation	Glad I was able to get the very dishonest LameStream Media to finally start talking about the RISKS to our Democracy from dangerous Universal Mail-In-Voting (not Absentee Voting, which I totally support!).
2	Election norm violation	The Democrats are demanding Mail-In Ballots because the enthusiasm meter for Slow Joe Biden is the lowest in recorded history, and they are concerned that very few people will turn out to vote. Instead, they will search & find people, then “harvest” & return Ballots. Not fair!
2	Election norm violation	The greatest Election Fraud in our history is about to happen. This may top the Democrats illegally spying on my campaign!

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Table A1 – continued from previous page

Wave	Group	Tweet text
2	Election norm violation	All the Radical Left Democrats are trying to do with the Post Office hearings is blame the Republicans for the FRAUD that will occur because of the 51 Million Ballots that are being sent to people who have not even requested them. They are setting the table for a BIG MESS!
2	Election norm violation	For our Country to be sending 80 million UNSOLICITED BALLOTS is very unfair and a roadmap to disaster. Even recent small and easier to control elections which did this are a catastrophic disaster. Fraudulent & missing Ballots like never seen before. 20% and 30% off. STOP!
3	Non-election placebo (all groups)	Today I spoke with American physicians and nurses to thank them for their tireless work. Doctors and nurses are at the front lines of this war and are true American HEROES! With their help, America will WIN.
3	Non-election placebo (all groups)	America owes our very hard working food supply workers so much as they produce and deliver high quality food for us during this horrible COVID-19. Join me in thanking our Farmers, Ranchers, Processors, Distributors and Stores! @JohnBoozman
3	Non-election placebo (all groups)	Extraordinary times require even closer co-operation between friends. Thank you India and the Indian people for the decision on HCQ. Will not be forgotten! Thank you Prime Minister @NarendraModi for your strong leadership in helping not just India, but humanity, in this fight!
3	Non-election placebo (all groups)	Just spoke to Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali of Ethiopia. His Country needs Ventilators, and the U.S. is in good position to help him. We will!
3	Non-election placebo (all groups)	I just got off the phone with former American hostage Michael White, who is now in Zurich after being released from Iran. He will be on a U.S. plane shortly, and is COMING HOME...
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Table A1 – continued from previous page

Wave	Group	Tweet text
3	Non-election placebo (all groups)	Congratulations to my friend President @AndrzejDuda of Poland on his historic re-election! Looking forward to continuing our important work together across many issues, including defense, trade, energy, and telecommunications security!
3	Non-election placebo (all groups)	I am proud to announce \$2 million for the @Sept11Memorial in NYC! This special site ensures that the memory of the nearly 3,000 people killed in the terror attacks of September 11, 2001, as well as those lost in the World Trade Center bombing in 1993, will never be forgotten!
3	Non-election placebo (all groups)	My Administration is closely monitoring Hurricane Douglas off Hawaii & Hurricane Hanna, which has now made landfall in Texas. We continue to coordinate closely with both states – listen to your emergency management officials @Hawaii_EMA & @TDEM to protect your family & property!
3	Non-election placebo (all groups)	I am deeply saddened by the tragic loss of eight Marines and one Sailor during a training exercise off the coast of California. Our prayers are with their families. I thank them for the brave service their loved ones gave to our Nation. #SemperFidelis
3	Non-election placebo (all groups)	Just returned to Washington from Louisiana & Texas, after tours and discussions concerning Hurricane Laura. Thank you to @FEMA and ALL. God bless the families of those who perished!
3	Non-election placebo	Just had a nice conversation with Prime Minister @JustinTrudeau of Canada. Great to hear that his wonderful wife Sophie is doing very well. The United States and Canada will continue to coordinate closely together on COVID-19.

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Table A1 – continued from previous page

Wave	Group	Tweet text
3	Non-election placebo	My team is closely monitoring the flooding in Central Michigan – Stay SAFE and listen to local officials. Our brave First Responders are once again stepping up to serve their fellow citizens, THANK YOU!
3	Non-election placebo	Another \$298M heading to @MTA, adding up to over \$2B in federal funding from @USDOT so far, part of the \$3.9B total from the CARES Act. This is critical to keeping essential personnel moving and aiding metro NYC in recovery. We are here for the people of New York!
3	Non-election placebo	HAPPY MEMORIAL DAY!
3	Non-election placebo	In addition to nearly \$8 billion that Treasury provided tribal communities, @HUDgov is releasing an additional \$25 million in #CARESAct funding today to respond to the CoronaVirus with improved housing, indoor air quality, and food pantry support.
3	Non-election placebo	Today we celebrated the passage of landmark legislation that will preserve America’s majestic natural wonders, priceless historic treasures, grand national monuments, and glorious national parks. It was my great honor to sign the Great American Outdoors Act into law! #HR1957
3	Non-election placebo	Had a lengthy discussion this morning with President Macron of France concerning numerous subjects, but in particular the catastrophic event which took place in Beirut, Lebanon...
3	Non-election placebo	Sad to see the damage from the derecho in Midwest. 112 mile per hour winds in Midway, Iowa! The Federal government is in close coordination with State officials. We are with you all the way – Stay safe and strong!
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Table A1 – continued from previous page

Wave	Group	Tweet text
3	Non-election placebo	Just approved (and fast) the FULL Emergency Declaration for the Great State of Iowa. They got hit hard by record setting winds. Thank you to @Sen-JoniErnst, @ChuckGrassley, and Governor Kim Reynolds.
3	Non-election placebo	I am pleased to inform the American Public that Acting Secretary Chad Wolf will be nominated to be the Secretary of Homeland Security. Chad has done an outstanding job and we greatly appreciate his service!
3	Election placebo	I hope we can get Admiral @RonnyJackson4TX of Texas, who served our Country so well, into the runoff election in #TX13! Ronny is strong on Crime and Borders, GREAT for our Military and Vets, and will protect your #2A. Get out and vote for Ronny on Tuesday, March 3rd!
3	Election placebo	Mississippi, there is a VERY important election for Governor on November 5th. I need you to Get Out and Vote for our Great Republican nominee, @TateReeves. Tate is strong on Crime, tough on Illegal Immigration, and will protect your Second Amendment...
3	Election placebo	The two big Congressional wins in North Carolina on Tuesday, Dan Bishop and Greg Murphy, have reverberated all over the World. They showed a lot of people how strong the Republican Party is, and how well it is doing. 2020 is a big, and very important, Election. We will WIN!
3	Election placebo	Megan King, who is running for Superior Court Judge in the Pennsylvania election, has my Full and Total Endorsement. She is tough on crime and fully understands all aspects of the law. Vote for Megan tomorrow (Tuesday).

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Table A1 – continued from previous page

Wave	Group	Tweet text
3	Election placebo	Thank you to the Republican National Committee, (the RNC), who voted UNANIMOUSLY yesterday to support me in the upcoming 2020 Election. Considering that we have done more than any Administration in the first two years, this should be easy. More great things now in the works!
3	Election placebo	Vote for TRUMP on November 3rd. I am going to bring our beloved New York back!
3	Election placebo	VOTE TODAY! Go to http://vote.gop to find your polling location. We are going to Make America Great Again! #VoteTrump #ElectionDay
3	Election placebo	NOVEMBER 3RD.
3	Election placebo	Scott Walker is very special and will have another great win in November. He has done a fantastic job as Governor of Wisconsin and will always have my full support and Endorsement!
3	Election placebo	REGISTER TO http://Vote.GOP ! #MAGA
3	General norm violation	.@GoyaFoods is doing GREAT. The Radical Left smear machine backfired, people are buying like crazy!
3	General norm violation	Mayor Wheeler just got harassed out of his own home in Portland by so-called “friendly protesters”. The Anarchists, Agitators and Looters treat him HORRIBLY, even though he is so nice and respectful to them. Criminals only understand strength!
3	General norm violation	Ted Wheeler, the wacky Radical Left Do Nothing Democrat Mayor of Portland, who has watched great death and destruction of his City during his tenure, thinks this lawless situation should go on forever. Wrong! Portland will never recover with a fool for a Mayor...
3	General norm violation	“Regulate Twitter if they are going to start regulating free speech.” @JudgeJeanine @foxandfriends Well, as they have just proven conclusively, that’s what they are doing. Repeal Section 230!!!

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Table A1 – continued from previous page

Wave	Group	Tweet text
3	General norm violation	Two months in jail for a Swamp Creature, yet 9 years recommended for Roger Stone (who was not even working for the Trump Campaign). Gee, that sounds very fair! Rogue prosecutors maybe? The Swamp! @foxandfriends @TuckerCarlson
3	General norm violation	“Sotomayor accuses GOP appointed Justices of being biased in favor of Trump.” @IngrahamAngle @FoxNews This is a terrible thing to say. Trying to “shame” some into voting her way? She never criticized Justice Ginsberg when she called me a “faker”. Both should recuse themselves..
3	General norm violation	“I agree with the President, the Supreme Court got it wrong. There should be a question about Citizenship on the Census. A.G. Barr sees a pathway to add the Citizenship Question.” Steve Doocy @foxandfriends Working hard on something that should be so easy. People are fed up!
3	General norm violation	THE ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE. Sadly, our Lamestream Media is TOTALLY CORRUPT!
3	General norm violation	I just cannot state strongly enough how totally dishonest much of the Media is. Truth doesn’t matter to them, they only have their hatred & agenda. This includes fake books, which come out about me all the time, always anonymous sources, and are pure fiction. Enemy of the People!
3	General norm violation	Has anyone looked at the mistakes that John Brennan made while serving as CIA Director? He will go down as easily the WORST in history & since getting out, he has become nothing less than a loudmouth, partisan, political hack who cannot be trusted with the secrets to our country!
3	Election norm violation	They are taking the nomination away from Bernie for a second time. Rigged!

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Table A1 – continued from previous page

Wave	Group	Tweet text
3	Election norm violation	.@GOPLeader Kevin McCarthy informed me that I was 20 for 20 on Tuesday with respect to my Endorsement of candidates. Sadly, I didn't get that information from the Fake News Media. They don't report those things, or the far more than Dems cumulative votes, despite no opposition!
3	Election norm violation	We can't let the Fake News, and their partner, the Radical Left, Do Nothing Democrats, get away with stealing the Election. They tried that in 2016. How did that work out?
3	Election norm violation	Governor @GavinNewsom of California won't let restaurants, beaches and stores open, but he installs a voting booth system in a highly Democrat area (supposed to be mail in ballots only) because our great candidate, @MikeGarcia2020, is winning by a lot. CA25 Rigged Election!
3	Election norm violation	State of Nevada "thinks" that they can send out illegal vote by mail ballots, creating a great Voter Fraud scenario for the State and the U.S. They can't! If they do, "I think" I can hold up funds to the State. Sorry, but you must not cheat in elections. @RussVought45 @USTreasury
3	Election norm violation	There is NO WAY (ZERO!) that Mail-In Ballots will be anything less than substantially fraudulent. Mail boxes will be robbed, ballots will be forged & even illegally printed out & fraudulently signed. The Governor of California is sending Ballots to millions of people, anyone...
3	Election norm violation	Rigged Election, and EVERYONE knows it!
3	Election norm violation	With Universal Mail-In Voting (not Absentee Voting, which is good), 2020 will be the most INACCURATE & FRAUDULENT Election in history. It will be a great embarrassment to the USA. Delay the Election until people can properly, securely and safely vote???

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Table A1 – continued from previous page

Wave	Group	Tweet text
3	Election norm violation	In an illegal late night coup, Nevada’s clubhouse Governor made it impossible for Republicans to win the state. Post Office could never handle the Traffic of Mail-In Votes without preparation. Using Covid to steal the state. See you in Court!
3	Election norm violation	The Democrats know the 2020 Election will be a fraudulent mess. Will maybe never know who won!
4	Election norm violation (all groups)	CA25 is a Rigged Election. Trying to steal it from @MikeGarcia2020. @GavinNewsom must act now!
4	Election norm violation (all groups)	RIGGED 2020 ELECTION: MILLIONS OF MAIL-IN BALLOTS WILL BE PRINTED BY FOREIGN COUNTRIES, AND OTHERS. IT WILL BE THE SCANDAL OF OUR TIMES!
4	Election norm violation (all groups)	New York Mail-In voting is in a disastrous state of condition. Votes from many weeks ago are missing - a total mess. They have no idea what is going on. Rigged Election. I told you so. Same thing would happen, but on massive scale, with USA. Fake News refuses to report!
4	Election norm violation (all groups)	They are sending out 51,000,000 Ballots to people who haven’t even requested a Ballot. Many of those people don’t even exist. They are trying to STEAL this election. This should not be allowed!

Online Appendix B: Additional results

Table B1: Sample demographics and balance across treatment conditions

	Non-election placebo	Election placebo	Non-election norm violation	Election norm violation	Total
<i>Age</i>					
18-34	37.5%	32.7%	36.8%	34.4%	35.4%
35-44	28.1%	33.5%	29.5%	30.7%	30.3%
45-54	17.6%	16.3%	17.0%	17.6%	17.2%
55-64	9.4%	9.7%	12.1%	12.0%	11.2%
65+	7.4%	7.7%	4.6%	5.3%	5.8%
<i>Sex</i>					
Female	48.1%	49.0%	52.3%	53.5%	51.5%
Male	51.9%	51.0%	47.7%	46.5%	48.5%
<i>Education</i>					
High school or less	9.6%	10.0%	7.9%	9.2%	9.0%
Some college/associate	30.0%	27.8%	26.5%	26.9%	27.4%
Bachelor's degree	42.1%	42.1%	44.8%	44.4%	43.8%
Graduate degree	18.2%	20.1%	20.8%	19.5%	19.8%
<i>Race</i>					
White	79.1%	82.5%	81.5%	80.6%	81.0%
Non-white	20.9%	17.5%	18.5%	19.4%	19.0%
<i>Party</i>					
Democrat	58.8%	61.1%	60.7%	62.4%	61.0%
Republican	39.3%	37.1%	37.9%	36.2%	37.4%
Independent/something else	1.9%	1.7%	1.4%	1.4%	1.5%
<i>Trump approval</i>					
Trump approver	31.6%	31.8%	30.7%	29.8%	30.7%
Trump disapprover	68.4%	68.2%	69.3%	70.2%	69.3%

$N = 2,151$. Respondents who chose "other" for gender ($N = 5$) and any respondents with missing data for demographic variables are excluded from the above percentages. Party identification includes partisan leaners.

Table B2: Mean values for main outcomes in non-election/election placebo conditions

	Non-election placebo	Election placebo	<i>p</i> -value
<i>Trust and confidence in elections</i>			
Wave 2	-0.012	-0.016	0.959
Wave 3	0.019	0.030	0.880
Wave 4	0.017	0.017	0.996
Mean	-0.001	0.008	0.888
<i>Accept election results peacefully</i>			
Wave 2	5.407	5.477	0.294
Wave 3	5.413	5.399	0.852
Wave 4	5.410	5.403	0.922
Mean	5.388	5.410	0.726
<i>Elections rigged for other party</i>			
Wave 2	3.313	3.360	0.688
Wave 3	3.307	3.334	0.827
Wave 4	3.419	3.421	0.984
Mean	3.359	3.397	0.734
<i>Violence needed during vote count</i>			
Wave 2	1.695	1.729	0.702
Wave 3	1.708	1.808	0.286
Wave 4	1.764	1.785	0.827
Mean	1.745	1.796	0.534

$N = 2,151$. Cell entries in the middle two columns are means by condition for outcomes in left column; *p*-values from two-sample *t*-tests with unequal variances in right column.

Table B3: Treatment effects on trust and confidence in elections

	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Mean
Election norm violation	0.025 (0.029)	-0.006 (0.032)	0.003 (0.031)	0.001 (0.026)
General norm violation	0.013 (0.028)	-0.035 (0.031)	-0.019 (0.030)	-0.017 (0.025)
Election – general norm violation	0.012 (0.029)	0.029 (0.031)	0.023 (0.030)	0.016 (0.026)
Control variables	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	2137	1950	2001	2137

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .005$ (two-sided; adjusted to control the false discovery rate per Benjamini, Krieger, and Yekutieli 2006 with $\alpha = .05$). Cell entries are OLS coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. All models control for pre-treatment variables selected as most prognostic via lasso regression (see preregistration for details and list of candidate variables). Dependent variables are standardized factor scores. Mean outcome calculated among non-missing values for each respondent.

Table B4: Treatment effects on support for democratic norms

	Accept election results peacefully				Elections rigged for other party				Violence needed during vote count			
	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Mean	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Mean	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Mean
Election norm violation	-0.077 (0.040)	0.001 (0.043)	0.002 (0.042)	-0.030 (0.032)	0.140 (0.058)	0.125 (0.058)	-0.061 (0.056)	0.059 (0.048)	0.084 (0.050)	0.031 (0.053)	0.002 (0.053)	0.028 (0.043)
General norm violation	-0.058 (0.039)	-0.015 (0.043)	0.003 (0.043)	-0.024 (0.032)	0.103 (0.056)	0.112 (0.058)	-0.004 (0.058)	0.067 (0.048)	0.186* (0.050)	0.105 (0.053)	0.117 (0.055)	0.133 (0.043)
Election - general norm violation	-0.018 (0.041)	0.016 (0.041)	-0.001 (0.042)	-0.006 (0.032)	0.037 (0.058)	0.012 (0.058)	-0.056 (0.055)	-0.008 (0.048)	-0.102 (0.052)	-0.073 (0.053)	-0.115 (0.055)	-0.104 (0.044)
Control variables	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	2137	1950	2001	2137	2137	1949	2001	2137	2137	1950	2001	2137

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .005$ (two-sided; adjusted to control the false discovery rate per Benjamini, Krieger, and Yekutieli 2006 with $\alpha = .05$). Cell entries are OLS coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. All models control for pre-treatment variables selected as most prognostic via lasso regression (see preregistration for details and list of candidate variables). Mean outcome calculated among non-missing values for each respondent.

Table B5: Treatment effects on support for political violence and democracy

	Political violence	Support for democracy
Election norm violation	−0.040 (0.034)	−0.040 (0.041)
General norm violation	0.021 (0.036)	0.035 (0.044)
Control variables	✓	✓
N	2001	2001

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .005$ (two-sided; adjusted to control the false discovery rate per Benjamini, Krieger, and Yekutieli 2006 with $\alpha = .05$). Cell entries are OLS coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. All models control for pre-treatment variables selected as most prognostic via lasso regression (see preregistration for details and list of candidate variables). Dependent variables are factor scores combining responses to questions on political violence and support for democracy.

Table B6: Treatment effects on trust and confidence in elections (by Trump approval)

(a) Statistical model results

	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Mean
Election norm violation	0.137*** (0.034)	0.114*** (0.036)	0.085* (0.035)	0.106*** (0.030)
Election norm × Trump approver	-0.364*** (0.065)	-0.405*** (0.073)	-0.276*** (0.069)	-0.348*** (0.058)
General norm violation	0.083* (0.032)	0.006 (0.035)	0.006 (0.035)	0.033 (0.029)
General norm × Trump approver	-0.220*** (0.064)	-0.133 (0.071)	-0.082 (0.067)	-0.158** (0.057)
Trump approver	0.036 (0.065)	0.084 (0.071)	-0.054 (0.067)	0.042 (0.056)
Control variables	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	2137	1950	2001	2137

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .005$ (two-sided). Cell entries are OLS coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. All models control for pre-treatment variables selected as most prognostic via lasso regression (see preregistration for details and list of candidate variables). Dependent variables are standardized factor scores. Mean outcome calculated among non-missing values for each respondent.

(b) Subgroup marginal effects

	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Mean
<i>Election norm violation</i>				
Trump approver	-0.227*** (0.055)	-0.291*** (0.064)	-0.190* (0.060)	-0.242*** (0.049)
Trump disapprover	0.137*** (0.034)	0.114* (0.036)	0.085 (0.035)	0.106** (0.030)
<i>General norm violation</i>				
Trump approver	-0.137 (0.055)	-0.127 (0.062)	-0.076 (0.057)	-0.125 (0.049)
Trump disapprover	0.083 (0.032)	0.006 (0.035)	0.006 (0.035)	0.033 (0.029)

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .005$ (two-sided; adjusted to control the false discovery rate per Benjamini, Krieger, and Yekutieli 2006 with $\alpha = .05$). Marginal effect estimates calculated from Table B6a.

Table B7: Treatment effects on trust and confidence in elections (by party)

(a) Statistical model results

	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Mean
Election norm violation	0.132*** (0.037)	0.097* (0.039)	0.068 (0.038)	0.090** (0.032)
Election norm × Repub.	-0.293*** (0.061)	-0.287*** (0.068)	-0.181*** (0.064)	-0.250*** (0.054)
General norm violation	0.078* (0.036)	-0.014 (0.038)	0.003 (0.037)	0.023 (0.032)
General norm × Repub.	-0.180*** (0.058)	-0.070 (0.065)	-0.080 (0.063)	-0.118* (0.053)
Republican	0.096 (0.051)	0.089 (0.053)	0.023 (0.051)	0.081 (0.043)
Control variables	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	2104	1921	1970	2104

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .005$ (two-sided). Cell entries are OLS coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. Reference category for Republican indicator is Democrats (party variables include leaners; true independents excluded). All models control for pre-treatment variables selected as most prognostic via lasso regression (see preregistration for details and list of candidate variables). Dependent variables are standardized factor scores. Mean outcome calculated among non-missing values for each respondent.

(b) Subgroup marginal effects

	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Mean
<i>Election norm violation</i>				
Republican	-0.162* (0.049)	-0.190* (0.056)	-0.113 (0.052)	-0.160** (0.043)
Democrat	0.132** (0.037)	0.097 (0.039)	0.068 (0.038)	0.090* (0.032)
<i>General norm violation</i>				
Republican	-0.102 (0.046)	-0.084 (0.052)	-0.077 (0.051)	-0.096 (0.042)
Democrat	0.078 (0.036)	-0.014 (0.038)	0.003 (0.037)	0.023 (0.032)

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .005$ (two-sided; adjusted to control the false discovery rate per Benjamini, Krieger, and Yekutieli 2006 with $\alpha = .05$). Marginal effect estimates calculated from Table B7a.

Table B8: Statistical models of support for democratic norms by Trump approval

	Accept election results peacefully.			Elections rigged for other party.			Violence needed during vote count					
	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Mean	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Mean	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Mean
Election norm violation	-0.001 (0.045)	0.043 (0.049)	0.023 (0.047)	0.015 (0.036)	0.012 (0.070)	0.030 (0.070)	-0.094 (0.066)	-0.020 (0.059)	0.025 (0.058)	-0.014 (0.064)	-0.045 (0.061)	-0.024 (0.051)
Election norm \times Trump approver	-0.252** (0.094)	-0.141 (0.099)	-0.073 (0.101)	-0.149* (0.076)	0.423*** (0.122)	0.318* (0.125)	0.114 (0.125)	0.260* (0.102)	0.195 (0.116)	0.152 (0.113)	0.155 (0.119)	0.171 (0.093)
General norm violation	-0.082 (0.046)	-0.017 (0.048)	-0.028 (0.047)	-0.048 (0.036)	0.118 (0.068)	0.100 (0.070)	-0.002 (0.067)	0.074 (0.059)	0.187*** (0.060)	0.065 (0.063)	0.066 (0.062)	0.106* (0.051)
General norm \times Trump approver	0.077 (0.087)	0.009 (0.099)	0.105 (0.103)	0.076 (0.074)	-0.050 (0.118)	0.039 (0.123)	-0.010 (0.131)	-0.025 (0.100)	-0.007 (0.110)	0.132 (0.117)	0.168 (0.130)	0.086 (0.094)
Trump approver	-0.308*** (0.092)	-0.324*** (0.111)	-0.403*** (0.103)	-0.362*** (0.080)	-0.196 (0.117)	-0.349*** (0.121)	-0.203 (0.125)	-0.250* (0.102)	0.006 (0.105)	-0.008 (0.108)	-0.050 (0.113)	-0.149 (0.099)
Control variables	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	2137	1950	2001	2137	2137	1949	2001	2137	2137	1950	2001	2137

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .005$ (two-sided). Cell entries are OLS coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. All models control for pre-treatment variables selected as most prognostic via lasso regression (see preregistration for details and list of candidate variables). Mean outcome calculated among non-missing values for each respondent.

Table B9: Subgroup marginal effects for support for democratic norms by Trump approval

	Accept election results peacefully				Elections rigged for other party				Violence needed during vote count			
	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Mean	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Mean	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Mean
<i>Election norm violation</i>												
Trump approver	-0.252*	-0.098	-0.050	-0.134	0.435***	0.348*	0.020	0.240*	0.220	0.138	0.110	0.147
	(0.082)	(0.086)	(0.089)	(0.066)	(0.100)	(0.104)	(0.107)	(0.083)	(0.100)	(0.093)	(0.103)	(0.078)
Trump disapprover	-0.001	0.043	0.023	0.015	0.012	0.030	-0.094	-0.020	0.025	-0.014	-0.045	-0.024
	(0.045)	(0.049)	(0.047)	(0.036)	(0.070)	(0.070)	(0.066)	(0.059)	(0.058)	(0.064)	(0.061)	(0.051)
<i>General norm violation</i>												
Trump approver	-0.005	-0.008	0.077	0.028	0.068	0.139	-0.012	0.049	0.180	0.197	0.234	0.192
	(0.073)	(0.087)	(0.092)	(0.064)	(0.097)	(0.101)	(0.113)	(0.082)	(0.092)	(0.099)	(0.114)	(0.079)
Trump disapprover	-0.082	-0.017	-0.028	-0.048	0.118	0.100	-0.002	0.074	0.187*	0.065	0.066	0.106
	(0.046)	(0.048)	(0.047)	(0.036)	(0.068)	(0.070)	(0.067)	(0.059)	(0.060)	(0.063)	(0.062)	(0.051)

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .005$ (two-sided; adjusted to control the false discovery rate per Benjamini, Krieger, and Yekutieli 2006 with $\alpha = .05$). Marginal effect estimates calculated from Table B8.

Table B10: Statistical models of support for democratic norms (by party)

	Accept election results peacefully				Elections rigged for other party				Violence needed during vote count			
	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Mean	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Mean	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Mean
Election norm violation	-0.017 (0.048)	0.038 (0.052)	-0.032 (0.051)	-0.008 (0.039)	0.030 (0.074)	0.065 (0.074)	-0.051 (0.069)	0.004 (0.062)	0.005 (0.063)	-0.031 (0.071)	-0.053 (0.068)	-0.038 (0.056)
Election norm × Repub.	-0.160 (0.088)	-0.084 (0.091)	0.101 (0.091)	-0.051 (0.069)	0.317** (0.117)	0.199 (0.119)	0.023 (0.117)	0.171 (0.098)	0.231* (0.108)	0.190 (0.107)	0.167 (0.109)	0.197* (0.087)
General norm violation	-0.117* (0.052)	-0.038 (0.052)	-0.050 (0.050)	-0.073 (0.040)	0.160* (0.073)	0.135 (0.076)	0.014 (0.070)	0.099 (0.062)	0.189*** (0.067)	0.079 (0.069)	0.059 (0.068)	0.114* (0.056)
General norm × Repub.	0.153 (0.080)	0.063 (0.092)	0.139 (0.094)	0.127 (0.067)	-0.135 (0.111)	-0.050 (0.116)	-0.017 (0.121)	-0.076 (0.096)	0.009 (0.103)	0.088 (0.109)	0.173 (0.118)	0.067 (0.088)
Republican	0.008 (0.067)	0.003 (0.080)	-0.098 (0.085)	-0.042 (0.061)	-0.328*** (0.099)	-0.288** (0.103)	-0.317*** (0.108)	-0.318*** (0.087)	-0.138 (0.080)	-0.266*** (0.086)	-0.331*** (0.101)	-0.233*** (0.070)
Election norm effect (Republicans)	-0.177* (0.073)	-0.046 (0.076)	0.069 (0.075)	-0.059 (0.054)	0.347*** (0.091)	0.264*** (0.093)	-0.027 (0.095)	0.175* (0.077)	0.235** (0.087)	0.159* (0.080)	0.114 (0.085)	0.159* (0.067)
General norm effect (Republicans)	0.036 (0.061)	0.026 (0.075)	0.090 (0.080)	0.054 (0.054)	0.025 (0.084)	0.085 (0.089)	-0.003 (0.100)	0.024 (0.074)	0.198* (0.078)	0.167* (0.084)	0.233* (0.096)	0.182*** (0.068)
Control variables	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	2104	1921	1970	2104	2104	1920	1970	2104	2104	1921	1970	2104

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .005$ (two-sided). Cell entries are OLS coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. Reference category for Republican indicator is Democrats (party variables include leaners; true independents excluded). All models control for pre-treatment variables selected as most prognostic via lasso regression (see preregistration for details and list of candidate variables). Mean outcome calculated among non-missing values for each respondent.

Table B11: Subgroup marginal effects on support for democratic norms (by party)

	Accept election results peacefully				Elections rigged for other party				Violence needed during vote count			
	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Mean	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Mean	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Mean
<i>Election norm violation</i>												
Republican	-0.177 (0.073)	-0.046 (0.076)	0.069 (0.075)	-0.059 (0.054)	0.347*** (0.091)	0.264* (0.093)	-0.027 (0.095)	0.175 (0.077)	0.235 (0.087)	0.159 (0.080)	0.114 (0.085)	0.159 (0.067)
Democrat	-0.017 (0.048)	0.038 (0.052)	-0.032 (0.051)	-0.008 (0.039)	0.030 (0.074)	0.065 (0.074)	-0.051 (0.069)	0.004 (0.062)	0.005 (0.063)	-0.031 (0.071)	-0.053 (0.068)	-0.038 (0.056)
<i>General norm violation</i>												
Republican	0.036 (0.061)	0.026 (0.075)	0.090 (0.080)	0.054 (0.054)	0.025 (0.084)	0.085 (0.089)	-0.003 (0.100)	0.024 (0.074)	0.198 (0.078)	0.167 (0.084)	0.233* (0.096)	0.182 (0.068)
Democrat	-0.117 (0.052)	-0.038 (0.052)	-0.050 (0.050)	-0.073 (0.040)	0.160 (0.073)	0.135 (0.076)	0.014 (0.070)	0.099 (0.062)	0.189* (0.067)	0.079 (0.069)	0.059 (0.068)	0.114 (0.056)

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .005$ (two-sided); adjusted to control the false discovery rate per Benjamini, Krieger, and Yekutieli 2006 with $\alpha = .05$. Marginal effect estimates calculated from Table B10.

Table B12: Treatment effects on support for political violence and democracy (by Trump approval)

(a) Statistical model results

	Political violence	Support for democracy
Election norm violation	−0.016 (0.036)	−0.077 (0.043)
Election norm × Trump approver	−0.087 (0.084)	0.124 (0.101)
General norm violation	−0.027 (0.039)	−0.008 (0.047)
General norm × Trump approver	0.162 (0.087)	0.144 (0.108)
Trump approver	0.109 (0.083)	1.258*** (0.100)
Control variables	✓	✓
	2001	2001

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .005$ (two-sided). Cell entries are OLS coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. All models control for pre-treatment variables selected as most prognostic via lasso regression (see preregistration for details and list of candidate variables). Dependent variables are factor scores combining responses to questions on political violence and support for democracy.

(b) Subgroup marginal effects

	Political violence	Support for democracy
<i>Election norm violation</i>		
Trump approver	−0.103 (0.076)	0.046 (0.092)
Trump disapprover	−0.016 (0.036)	−0.077 (0.043)
<i>General norm violation</i>		
Trump approver	0.135 (0.078)	0.136 (0.097)
Trump disapprover	−0.027 (0.039)	−0.008 (0.047)

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .005$ (two-sided; adjusted to control the false discovery rate per Benjamini, Krieger, and Yekutieli 2006 with $\alpha = .05$). Marginal effect estimates calculated from Table B12a.

Table B13: Treatment effects on support for political violence and democracy (by party)

(a) Statistical model results

	Political violence	Support for democracy
Election norm violation	−0.021 (0.042)	−0.068 (0.044)
Election norm × Republican	−0.047 (0.074)	0.065 (0.094)
General norm violation	−0.025 (0.045)	0.014 (0.047)
General norm × Republican	0.122 (0.076)	0.038 (0.098)
Republican	−0.072 (0.057)	−0.267** (0.097)
Control variables	✓	✓
	1970	1970

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .005$ (two-sided). Cell entries are OLS coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. Reference category for Republican indicator is Democrats (party variables include leaners; true independents excluded). All models control for pre-treatment variables selected as most prognostic via lasso regression (see preregistration for details and list of candidate variables). Dependent variables are factor scores combining responses to questions on political violence and support for democracy.

(b) Subgroup marginal effects

	Political violence	Support for democracy
<i>Election norm violation</i>		
Republican	−0.069 (0.061)	−0.003 (0.083)
Democrat	−0.021 (0.042)	−0.068 (0.044)
<i>General norm violation</i>		
Republican	0.097 (0.062)	0.052 (0.087)
Democrat	−0.025 (0.045)	0.014 (0.047)

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .005$ (two-sided; adjusted to control the false discovery rate per Benjamini, Krieger, and Yekutieli 2006 with $\alpha = .05$). Marginal effect estimates calculated from Table B13a.

Table B14: Treatment effects on perceptions of past respect for democratic norms

	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Mean
Election norm violation	-0.016 (0.036)	0.025 (0.036)	0.057 (0.033)	0.016 (0.029)
General norm violation	-0.006 (0.035)	-0.003 (0.035)	0.071 (0.033)	0.018 (0.029)
Control variables	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	2137	1950	2001	2137

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .005$ (two-sided; adjusted to control the false discovery rate per Benjamini, Krieger, and Yekutieli 2006 with $\alpha = .05$). Cell entries are OLS coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. All models control for pre-treatment variables selected as most prognostic via lasso regression (see preregistration for details and list of candidate variables). Dependent variables are respondent belief that presidential candidates in the past fifty years have accepted the outcome of elections even if they narrowly lose. Mean outcome calculated among non-missing values for each respondent.

Table B15: Treatment effects on perceptions of past respect for democratic norms (by Trump approval)

(a) Statistical model results

	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Mean
Election norm violation	-0.008 (0.041)	0.063 (0.041)	0.079* (0.039)	0.038 (0.034)
Election norm × Trump approver	-0.027 (0.083)	-0.127 (0.083)	-0.073 (0.075)	-0.069 (0.068)
General norm violation	-0.009 (0.041)	0.015 (0.040)	0.080* (0.038)	0.020 (0.034)
General norm × Trump approver	0.011 (0.078)	-0.061 (0.083)	-0.030 (0.076)	-0.006 (0.066)
Trump approver	-0.299*** (0.086)	-0.246*** (0.082)	-0.270*** (0.086)	-0.311*** (0.069)
Control variables	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	2137	1950	2001	2137

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .005$ (two-sided). Cell entries are OLS coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. All models control for pre-treatment variables selected as most prognostic via lasso regression (see preregistration for details and list of candidate variables). Dependent variables are factor scores combining responses to questions on political violence and support for democracy.

(b) Subgroup marginal effects

	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Mean
<i>Election norm violation</i>				
Trump approver	-0.034 (0.071)	-0.064 (0.072)	0.006 (0.066)	-0.031 (0.058)
Trump disapprover	-0.008 (0.041)	0.063 (0.041)	0.079 (0.039)	0.038 (0.034)
<i>General norm violation</i>				
Trump approver	0.001 (0.067)	-0.046 (0.073)	0.050 (0.066)	0.014 (0.056)
Trump disapprover	-0.009 (0.041)	0.015 (0.040)	0.080 (0.038)	0.020 (0.034)

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .005$ (two-sided; adjusted to control the false discovery rate per Benjamini, Krieger, and Yekutieli 2006 with $\alpha = .05$). Marginal effect estimates calculated from Table B15a.

Table B16: Treatment effects on perceptions of past respect for democratic norms (by party)

(a) Statistical model results

	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Mean
Election norm violation	0.002 (0.043)	0.085* (0.043)	0.054 (0.041)	0.041 (0.035)
Election norm × Republican	-0.041 (0.077)	-0.141 (0.077)	0.022 (0.071)	-0.051 (0.064)
General norm violation	-0.032 (0.044)	0.027 (0.043)	0.054 (0.040)	0.006 (0.035)
General norm × Republican	0.064 (0.073)	-0.062 (0.076)	0.045 (0.072)	0.035 (0.062)
Republican	-0.110 (0.066)	-0.011 (0.069)	-0.051 (0.075)	-0.091 (0.056)
Control variables	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	2104	1921	1970	2104

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .005$ (two-sided). Cell entries are OLS coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. All models control for pre-treatment variables selected as most prognostic via lasso regression (see preregistration for details and list of candidate variables). Dependent variables are factor scores combining responses to questions on political violence and support for democracy.

(b) Subgroup marginal effects

	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Mean
<i>Election norm violation</i>				
Republican	-0.039 (0.064)	-0.056 (0.064)	0.076 (0.058)	-0.010 (0.054)
Democrat	0.002 (0.043)	0.085 (0.043)	0.054 (0.041)	0.041 (0.035)
<i>General norm violation</i>				
Republican	0.032 (0.059)	-0.035 (0.062)	0.099 (0.059)	0.041 (0.050)
Democrat	-0.032 (0.044)	0.027 (0.043)	0.054 (0.040)	0.006 (0.035)

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .005$ (two-sided; adjusted to control the false discovery rate per Benjamini, Krieger, and Yekutieli 2006 with $\alpha = .05$). Marginal effect estimates calculated from Table B16a.

Table B17: Wave 2→3 change within condition in reactions to norm violations

	<u>Anger</u>		<u>Anxiety</u>		<u>Enthusiasm</u>	
	Election	General	Election	General	Election	General
Wave 3	-0.065 (0.026)	-0.081 (0.026)	-0.084 (0.026)	-0.055 (0.028)	0.031 (0.025)	0.005 (0.027)
Constant	2.512*** (0.042)	2.368*** (0.041)	2.274*** (0.038)	1.995*** (0.038)	1.484*** (0.032)	1.616*** (0.035)
N	1316	1314	1316	1314	1316	1314

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .005$ (two-sided; adjusted to control the false discovery rate per Benjamini, Krieger, and Yekutieli 2006 with $\alpha = .05$). Cell entries are OLS coefficients with robust standard errors clustered by respondent in parentheses. All models control for pre-treatment variables selected as most prognostic via lasso regression (see preregistration for details and list of candidate variables). Dependent variable is mean value of how much people reported feeling angry/outraged (anger), anxious/afraid (anxiety), and enthusiastic/happy (enthusiasm) about the tweets they saw in Waves 2 and 3.

Table B18: Wave 2→3 change within condition in reactions to norm violations (by Trump approval)

(a) Statistical model results

	<u>Anger</u>		<u>Anxiety</u>		<u>Enthusiasm</u>	
	Election	General	Election	General	Election	General
Wave 3	-0.061 (0.032)	-0.143*** (0.032)	-0.076* (0.031)	-0.068* (0.034)	0.008 (0.025)	0.001 (0.030)
Wave 3 × Trump approver	0.025 (0.060)	0.181*** (0.057)	-0.026 (0.058)	0.047 (0.058)	0.063 (0.063)	0.020 (0.065)
Trump approver	-1.142*** (0.073)	-1.309*** (0.062)	-0.683*** (0.075)	-0.815*** (0.066)	0.946*** (0.074)	1.248*** (0.071)
N	1370	1365	1310	1304	1310	1304

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .005$ (two-sided). Cell entries are OLS coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. All models control for pre-treatment variables selected as most prognostic via lasso regression (see preregistration for details and list of candidate variables). Dependent variables are factor scores combining responses to questions on political violence and support for democracy.

(b) Subgroup marginal effects

	<u>Anger</u>		<u>Anxiety</u>		<u>Enthusiasm</u>	
	Election	General	Election	General	Election	General
Trump approver	-0.036 (0.051)	0.038 (0.048)	-0.102 (0.049)	-0.021 (0.047)	0.070 (0.058)	0.021 (0.058)
Trump disapprover	-0.061 (0.032)	-0.143*** (0.032)	-0.076 (0.031)	-0.068 (0.034)	0.008 (0.025)	0.001 (0.030)

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .005$ (two-sided; adjusted to control the false discovery rate per Benjamini, Krieger, and Yekutieli 2006 with $\alpha = .05$). Marginal effect estimates calculated from Table B18a.

Table B19: Wave 2→3 change within condition in reactions to norm violations (by party)

(a) Statistical model results

	<u>Anger</u>		<u>Anxiety</u>		<u>Enthusiasm</u>	
	Election	General	Election	General	Election	General
Wave 3	-0.062 (0.034)	-0.134*** (0.034)	-0.088* (0.034)	-0.067 (0.037)	0.039 (0.028)	-0.015 (0.031)
Wave 3 × Republican	0.019 (0.056)	0.122* (0.055)	0.013 (0.054)	0.022 (0.056)	-0.019 (0.056)	0.041 (0.059)
Republican	-1.138*** (0.070)	-1.293*** (0.063)	-0.717*** (0.072)	-0.820*** (0.066)	0.836*** (0.068)	1.054*** (0.068)
N	1357	1357	1296	1298	1296	1298

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .005$ (two-sided). Cell entries are OLS coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. Reference category for Republican indicator is Democrats (party variables include leaners; true independents excluded). All models control for pre-treatment variables selected as most prognostic via lasso regression (see preregistration for details and list of candidate variables). Dependent variables are factor scores combining responses to questions on political violence and support for democracy.

(b) Subgroup marginal effects

	<u>Anger</u>		<u>Anxiety</u>		<u>Enthusiasm</u>	
	Election	General	Election	General	Election	General
Republican	-0.043 (0.044)	-0.012 (0.043)	-0.075 (0.041)	-0.045 (0.042)	0.019 (0.048)	0.027 (0.050)
Democrat	-0.062 (0.034)	-0.134*** (0.034)	-0.088 (0.034)	-0.067 (0.037)	0.039 (0.028)	-0.015 (0.031)

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .005$ (two-sided; adjusted to control the false discovery rate per Benjamini, Krieger, and Yekutieli 2006 with $\alpha = .05$). Marginal effect estimates calculated from Table B19a.

Table B20: Treatment effects on emotional reactions to violations of democratic norms

	Anger	Anxiety	Enthusiasm
Election norm violation	-0.155 (0.054)	-0.140 (0.053)	0.018 (0.031)
General norm violation	-0.139 (0.053)	-0.142 (0.053)	0.028 (0.031)
Control variables	✓	✓	✓
N	1991	1992	2001

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .005$ (two-sided; adjusted to control the false discovery rate per Benjamini, Krieger, and Yekutieli 2006 with $\alpha = .05$). Cell entries are OLS coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. All models control for pre-treatment variables selected as most prognostic via lasso regression (see preregistration for details and list of candidate variables). Dependent variables are mean values of how much people reported feeling angry/outraged (anger), anxious/afraid (anxiety), and enthusiastic/happy (enthusiasm) after seeing four tweets violating election norms in Wave 4.

Table B21: Treatment effects on emotional reactions to violations of democratic norms (by Trump approval)

(a) Statistical model results

	Anger	Anxiety	Enthusiasm
Election norm violation	-0.124 (0.064)	-0.138* (0.064)	-0.002 (0.030)
Election norm × Trump approver	-0.108 (0.119)	-0.009 (0.112)	0.061 (0.083)
General norm violation	-0.157* (0.063)	-0.193*** (0.065)	-0.039 (0.029)
General norm × Trump approver	0.064 (0.116)	0.173 (0.113)	0.225** (0.084)
Trump approver	-0.316* (0.140)	-0.334** (0.125)	-0.059 (0.079)
Control variables	✓	✓	✓
N	1991	1992	2001

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .005$ (two-sided). Cell entries are OLS coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. All models control for pre-treatment variables selected as most prognostic via lasso regression (see preregistration for details and list of candidate variables). Dependent variables are factor scores combining responses to questions on political violence and support for democracy.

(b) Subgroup marginal effects

	Anger	Anxiety	Enthusiasm
<i>Election norm violation</i>			
Trump approver	-0.232 (0.101)	-0.148 (0.092)	0.059 (0.077)
Trump disapprover	-0.124 (0.064)	-0.138 (0.064)	-0.002 (0.030)
<i>General norm violation</i>			
Trump approver	-0.093 0.098	-0.020 0.092	0.185 0.079
Trump disapprover	-0.157 (0.063)	-0.193* (0.065)	-0.039 (0.029)

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .005$ (two-sided; adjusted to control the false discovery rate per Benjamini, Krieger, and Yekutieli 2006 with $\alpha = .05$). Marginal effect estimates calculated from Table B21a.

Table B22: Treatment effects on emotional reactions to violations of democratic norms (by party)

(a) Statistical model results

	Anger	Anxiety	Enthusiasm
Election norm violation	-0.110 (0.067)	-0.157* (0.069)	-0.009 (0.034)
Election norm × Repub.	-0.117 (0.113)	0.027 (0.108)	0.051 (0.071)
General norm violation	-0.146* (0.067)	-0.191** (0.070)	-0.054 (0.032)
General norm × Repub.	0.026 (0.110)	0.128 (0.109)	0.199** (0.073)
Republican	-0.289* (0.117)	-0.241* (0.112)	-0.125* (0.060)
Control variables	✓	✓	✓
N	1960	1961	1970

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .005$ (two-sided). Cell entries are OLS coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. Reference category for Republican indicator is Democrats (party variables include leaners; true independents excluded). All models control for pre-treatment variables selected as most prognostic via lasso regression (see preregistration for details and list of candidate variables). Dependent variables are factor scores combining responses to questions on political violence and support for democracy.

(b) Subgroup marginal effects

	Anger	Anxiety	Enthusiasm
<i>Election norm violation</i>			
Republican	-0.227 (0.091)	-0.130 (0.084)	0.042 (0.062)
Democrat	-0.110 (0.067)	-0.157 (0.069)	-0.009 (0.034)
<i>General norm violation</i>			
Republican	-0.120 (0.088)	-0.063 (0.084)	0.146 (0.066)
Democrat	-0.146 (0.067)	-0.191 (0.070)	-0.054 (0.032)

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .005$ (two-sided; adjusted to control the false discovery rate per Benjamini, Krieger, and Yekutieli 2006 with $\alpha = .05$). Marginal effect estimates calculated from Table B22a.