

Supporting Information

“Chinese State Media Persuades a Global Audience That the ‘China Model’ Is Superior: Evidence from a 19-Country Experiment”

Daniel Mattingly, Trevor Incerti, Changwook Ju, Colin Moreshead, Seiki Tanaka, and Hikaru Yamagishi

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A Descriptive Statistics

| Region & country | Experimental condition | | | | Total |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|-------|-------|-------------|-------|
| | Control | China | USA | Competition | |
| Africa | 196 | 208 | 212 | 200 | 816 |
| Kenya | 27 | 15 | 34 | 26 | 102 |
| Nigeria | 83 | 94 | 88 | 87 | 352 |
| South Africa | 86 | 99 | 90 | 87 | 362 |
| Asia | 342 | 381 | 336 | 360 | 1,419 |
| India | 89 | 95 | 93 | 87 | 364 |
| Indonesia | 78 | 90 | 81 | 91 | 340 |
| Philippines | 110 | 121 | 104 | 112 | 447 |
| Singapore | 65 | 75 | 58 | 70 | 268 |
| Europe/North America/Oceania | 383 | 406 | 404 | 396 | 1,589 |
| Australia | 81 | 92 | 90 | 85 | 348 |
| Canada | 71 | 102 | 95 | 89 | 357 |
| Spain | 120 | 96 | 104 | 98 | 418 |
| United Kingdom | 111 | 116 | 115 | 124 | 466 |
| Latin America | 458 | 440 | 431 | 413 | 1,742 |
| Argentina | 86 | 88 | 73 | 81 | 328 |
| Chile | 108 | 99 | 96 | 103 | 406 |
| Colombia | 96 | 82 | 79 | 87 | 344 |
| Mexico | 82 | 78 | 82 | 66 | 308 |
| Peru | 86 | 93 | 101 | 76 | 356 |
| Middle East/North Africa | 179 | 187 | 182 | 162 | 710 |
| Egypt | 128 | 132 | 138 | 96 | 494 |
| Saudi Arabia | 27 | 34 | 27 | 34 | 122 |
| UAE | 24 | 21 | 17 | 32 | 94 |
| Total | 1,558 | 1,622 | 1,565 | 1,531 | 6,276 |

Table A1. Respondents by region, country, and treatment condition

| | Control (N = 1,558) | | China (N = 1,622) | | USA (N = 1,565) | | Competition (N = 1,531) | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------|-------------------------|-----------|
| | Mean | Std. Dev. | Mean | Std. Dev. | Mean | Std. Dev. | Mean | Std. Dev. |
| Gender | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.6 | 0.5 |
| Age | 34.4 | 12.2 | 34.4 | 12.0 | 34.8 | 12.6 | 34.0 | 11.7 |
| Education | 2.8 | 0.7 | 2.9 | 0.7 | 2.9 | 0.7 | 2.9 | 0.7 |
| National Pride | 3.6 | 0.6 | 3.5 | 0.7 | 3.5 | 0.7 | 3.5 | 0.7 |
| Political orientation | 4.1 | 1.4 | 4.1 | 1.4 | 4.1 | 1.4 | 4.1 | 1.3 |

Table A2. Covariate balance by treatment group

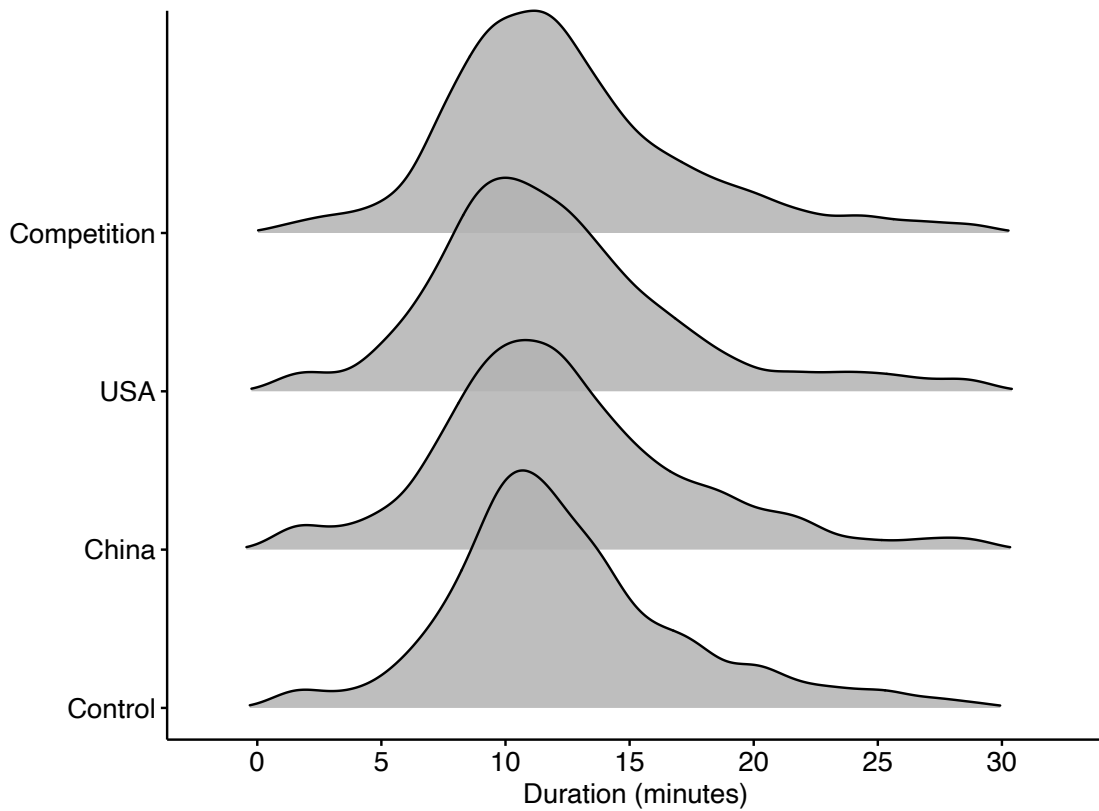


Figure A1. Distributions of time taken to complete survey, by treatment group

A.1 Outcome Distributions

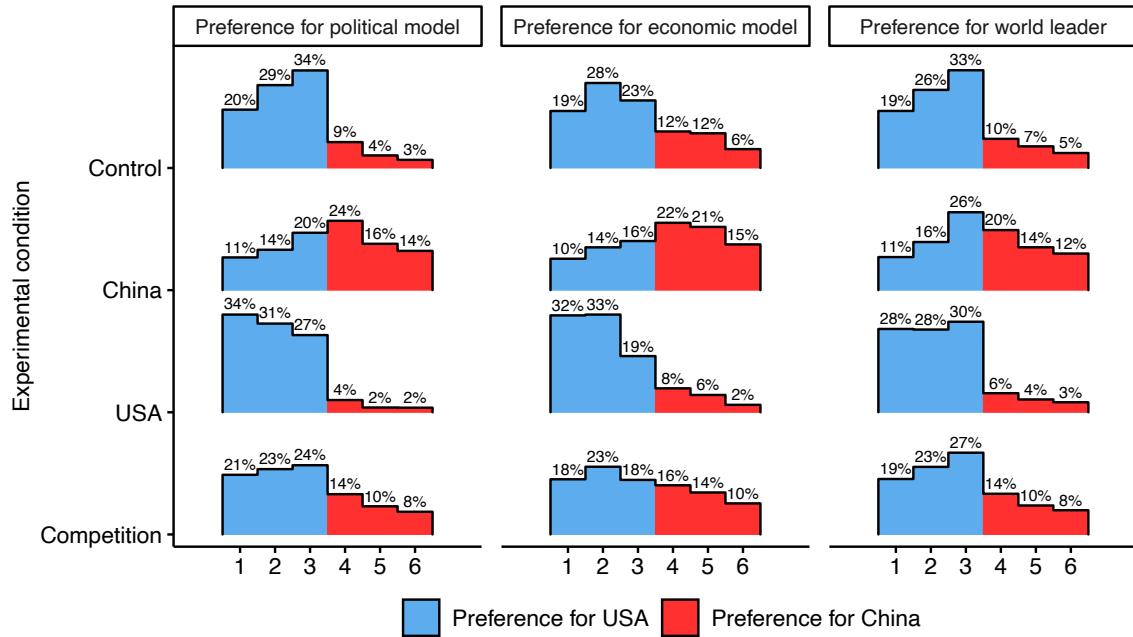


Figure A2. Distributions of primary outcomes by treatment condition

Note: 1 indicates a strong preference for the United States and 6 indicates a strong preference for China.

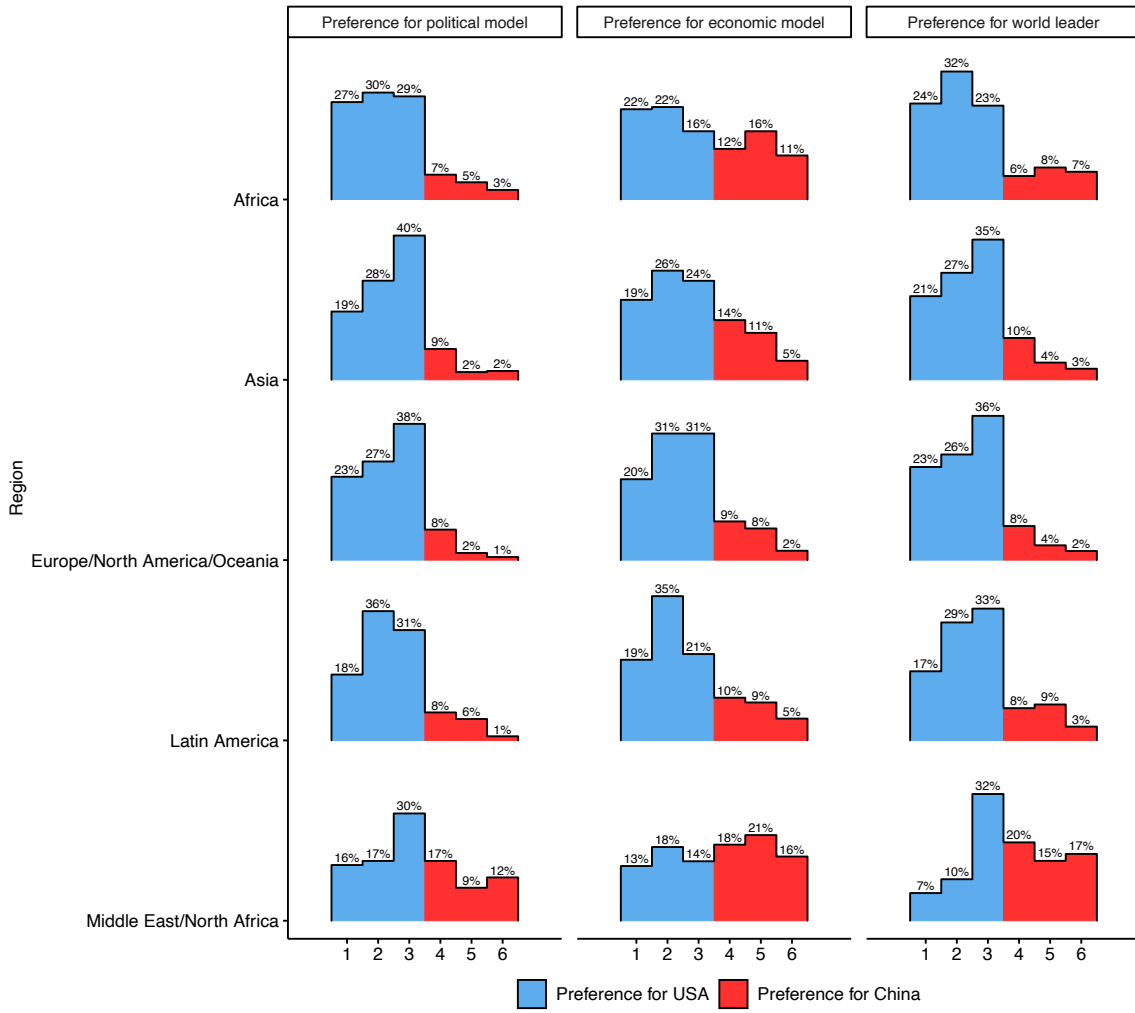


Figure A3. Distribution of primary outcomes in control group by region

Note: 1 indicates a strong preference for the United States and 6 indicates a strong preference for China.



Figure A4. Distribution of primary outcomes in control group by country

Note: 1 indicates a strong preference for the United States and 6 indicates a strong preference for China.

B Research Ethics

The ethical conduct of research goes well beyond obtaining IRB approval. In designing and executing our study, we also considered several core principles as laid out in the Belmont Report.

The first core ethical principle guiding our study was that of *respect for persons*. This principle holds that “individuals should be treated as autonomous agents” and that “[t]o respect autonomy is to give weight to autonomous persons’ considered opinions and choices while refraining from obstructing their actions unless they are clearly detrimental to others” (United States National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research 1978, 4).

One key implication of this principle is the need for *informed consent* from participants. In the case of our study, we asked participants to consent at the beginning of the study to participate in research on international public opinion. We then, before asking them to watch videos, informed them if they would be asked to watch a video from the United States or Chinese government. Participants could opt out of the study at this (or any other) point without penalty.

An additional implication of this principle is the need for *transparency*. Here, we clearly labeled each of the study treatments as being produced by the Chinese or American governments. We also at the start and end of the study made it clear that our purpose was to study international public opinion on politics.

Another implication of respect for persons is that there should generally be *no deception* of study participants (with limited exceptions: i.e. the research would not be possible without it, the deception would not cause harm, and the study benefits are clear). In this case, we only included study content that included factual information. (See Appendix F in the online appendix.) This factual information had an editorial slant, but given the clear source labeling, this slant was not deceptive. Attention checks indicated nearly all participants understood the source of the video they watched.

An additional implication of the principle is *respect for study participants considered attitudes and beliefs* (United States National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research 1978, 4). In this case, we did not seek to “correct” participants’ views on the merits of different political systems, even if as a research team we held different normative beliefs.

A related concern is how best method for *debriefing subjects* about the study. Here, we opted for a neutral approach that informed subjects again about the core purpose of the study and our non-partisan stance. Some researchers will reasonably prefer to go beyond a neutral statement. This is normatively justifiable, but also reduces the scholarly impartiality of the research, which could reduce the credibility of research on democracy. One alternative to our approach is to provide respondents with the opportunity to access information on human rights and economic performance from credible third-party sources. We provide an example below.

The second core ethical principle of our study design, and the Belmont report, is that of

beneficence, as captured by the maxim of “do no harm”.

We took several steps to protect subjects from potential harm. First, all data collection conducted in the study was completely anonymous, including with respect to geographic location below the level of country. Data was collected through an encrypted platform, Qualtrics, and stored on secured machines. It is therefore not practically possible to personally identify any of the respondents in any country, including by the researchers themselves. In addition, in designing the study we did not ask potentially sensitive questions about domestic politics that could expose respondents to political retaliation in their home countries, in the unlikely event that anonymity was in some way compromised.

We also designed our study in a way intended to maximize benefits while minimizing potential harm to subjects. Our project goals were to ascertain whether foreign publics view democracies more positively than autocracies, and to find which aspects of state messages about each country’s system elicit more positive attitudes among foreign publics. State messaging campaigns are conducted in the real world, and the media we used have already been widely broadcast to the public, but without the clear source labeling of our study design. For example, CGTN has been carried by major American cable and satellite providers including Time Warner, Comcast, Cox, RCN, Verizon, and the Dish Network.²⁶ However, without researcher program evaluation and measurement such as that conducted in this study, we are unable to observe the persuasive effects of these state media campaigns. Given the multi-billion dollar budgets of the state messaging programs considered here, as well as their prevalence both online and in traditional mediums across the globe, we argue that the benefits of measuring their efficacy outweigh the risk of exposing new individuals to Chinese and US state messaging who might otherwise not be exposed. In addition, we argue that it is beneficial to understand the persuasiveness of these programs in order for governments to make informed policy decisions regarding how to respond to foreign state messaging programs. Moreover, in clearly labeling the sources of the videos and in transparently communicating the purpose of our study, we attempted to minimize potential harm from watching Chinese or American government content.

Different researchers may reasonably arrive at different conclusions than we have about how best to conduct research on this topic, but should in any case carefully consider the ethical conduct of research beyond simply obtaining IRB approval. We urge future researchers on this topic to carefully consider issues including how best to obtain informed consent for watching government media; how to transparently describe the purposes of studies; how avoid deception (with rare exceptions); how best to debrief subjects; how to balance scholarly impartiality and normative commitments; and, overall, how to assess the potential benefits and minimize potential harms of research on this topic.

²⁶ See for example CGTN Staff. “CGTN America news expands.” Available at: <https://america.cgtn.com/2017/10/26/cctv-america-news-expanding>. Accessed January 16, 2022

B.0.1 Consent Script

Hello, I am Daniel Mattingly, a researcher at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, in the United States. I am conducting a study to examine public opinion about international environments.

Participation in this study will involve completing a survey, which will take about 10 or 12 minutes. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You are free to decline to participate, to end participation at any time for any reason, or to refuse to answer any individual question.

All of your responses will be entirely anonymous. Only the researchers involved in this study and those responsible for research oversight will have access to the information you provide in the online survey responses. Although we may share the data only for research purposes, your identity will be held in confidence. There is a risk of loss of confidentiality if your information or your identity is obtained by someone other than the investigators, but all necessary measures will be taken to prevent this from happening. Although absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, the confidentiality of your electronic data created by you or by the researchers will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used. Your responses will be kept on a Yale office device, a university-approved and secure device.

Your participation will help advance our understanding of individual attitudes towards international environments in your country.

If you have any questions about this study, you may contact the investigator, Daniel Mattingly of Yale University (daniel.mattingly@yale.edu). If you would like to talk with someone other than the researcher to discuss problems or concerns regarding the study in the event that the researcher is not available, or to discuss your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Yale University Human Subjects Committee, 1 203-785-4688, human.subjects@yale.edu. Additional information is available at <https://your.yale.edu/research-support/human-research/research-participants/rights-research-participant>

I have read and understood the above consent form and decide on my own free will to participate in this survey.

B.0.2 Debrief

We used the following debrief in this study:

This is the end of the survey. If you have any comments on the survey, please write them down here.

This study is an academic research project designed to study attitudes towards international environments, conducted by Daniel Mattingly in the Department of Political Science, Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut.

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.

Thank you for your time. If you have questions, you may contact Daniel Mattingly at daniel.mattingly@yale.edu.²⁷

As we discuss above, an alternative approach is to provide additional third-party information. In further replication studies, some members of the research team have used the following debrief:

As part of this survey, you were asked to watch a video produced by an arm of the Chinese government. This video does not represent the opinions of the survey researchers. Moreover, there are alternative views to those presented in the video, views that are much more critical of the Chinese government and much less likely to attribute positive political or economic outcomes to its policies. If you are interested in reading these alternative viewpoints, you may find them at <https://www.oecd.org/china/> and <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/asia-and-the-pacific/east-asia/china/>.

We thank you for your time and willingness to consider different sides of these important issues.

²⁷ For a similar debrief, see the supplementary materials for Kasey Rhee, Charles Crabtree, and Yusaku Horiuchi. “Perceived Motives of Public Diplomacy Influence Foreign Public Opinion.” *Political Behavior* (2023): 1–21.

C Supplementary Analysis

C.1 Attrition

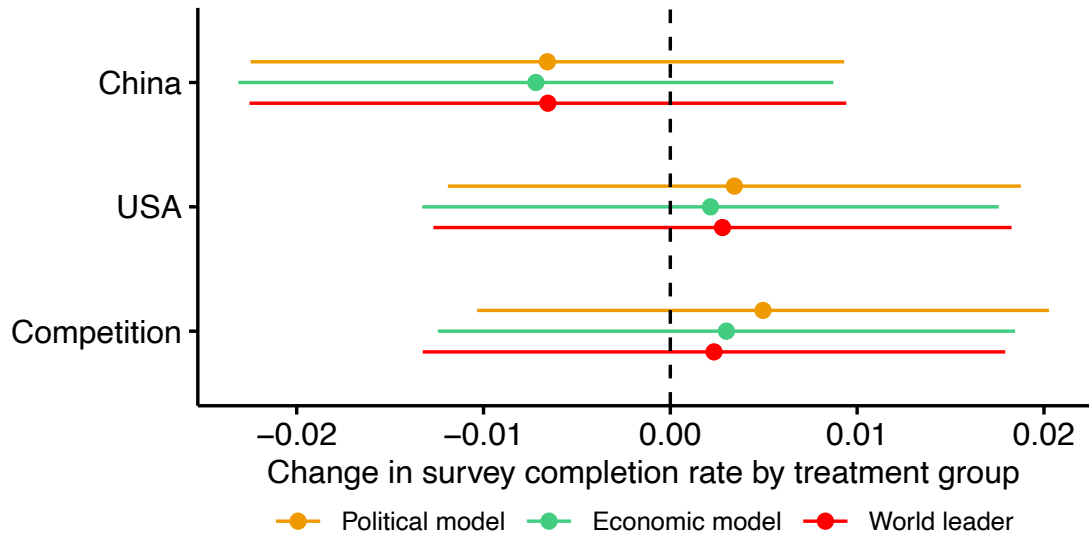


Figure A5. Check for differential attrition by primary outcome response

C.2 World Leader Results

C.3 Tabular Results

| | Political model | Economic model | World leader | Political model | Economic model | World leader |
|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Constant | 3.32*** (0.20) | 3.76*** (0.23) | 2.74*** (0.20) | 2.56*** (0.03) | 2.88*** (0.04) | 2.75*** (0.03) |
| Competition | 0.36*** (0.05) | 0.28*** (0.06) | 0.24*** (0.05) | 0.37*** (0.05) | 0.28*** (0.06) | 0.23*** (0.05) |
| USA | -0.43*** (0.04) | -0.57*** (0.05) | -0.31*** (0.04) | -0.44*** (0.04) | -0.58*** (0.05) | -0.33*** (0.05) |
| China | 1.04*** (0.05) | 0.87*** (0.05) | 0.72*** (0.05) | 1.05*** (0.05) | 0.87*** (0.06) | 0.72*** (0.05) |
| Covariate adjustment | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | No |
| Number of observations | 5952 | 5946 | 5943 | 5952 | 5946 | 5943 |

Note: HC2 robust standard errors in parentheses. 1 = strong preference for USA, 6 = strong preference for China.

+ p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table A3. Average treatment effect of treatment videos on preference for political model, economic model, and world leader, by treatment condition

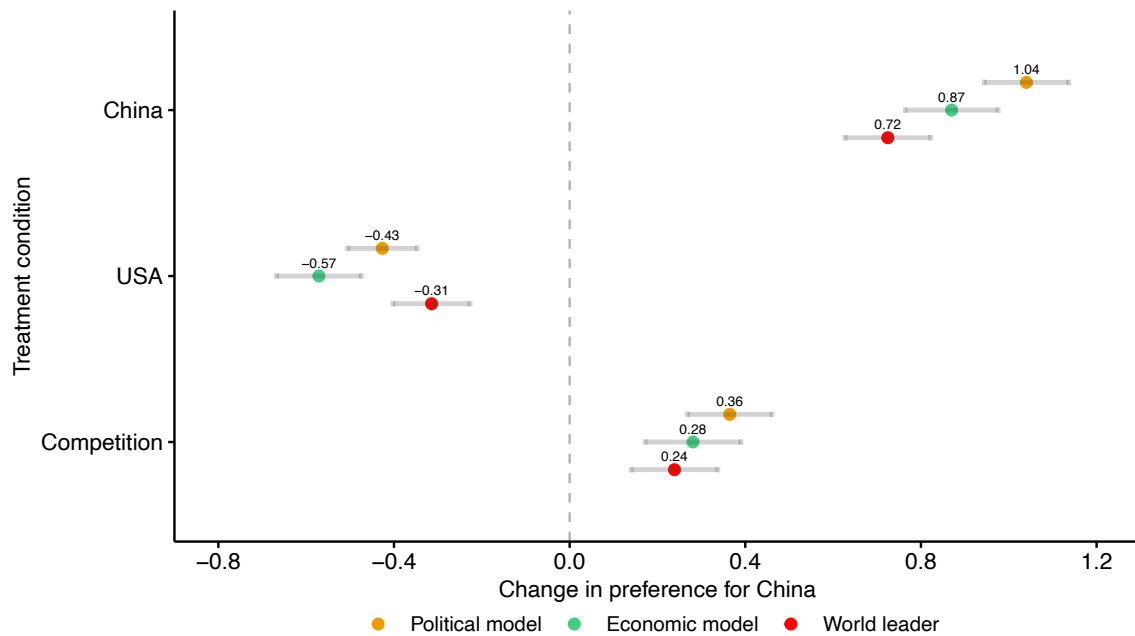


Figure A6. Average treatment effect of treatment videos on preference for political model, economic model, and world leader, by treatment condition

Note: Tabular results are presented in [Table A3](#).

| | Africa | Asia | Europe/North America/Oceania | Latin America | Middle East/North Africa |
|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Constant | 3.37*** (0.43) | 2.33*** (0.31) | 3.52*** (0.22) | 3.73*** (0.28) | 3.04*** (0.47) |
| Competition | 0.93*** (0.16) | 0.25* (0.10) | 0.33*** (0.08) | 0.39*** (0.09) | -0.04 (0.18) |
| USA | -0.40*** (0.12) | -0.45*** (0.08) | -0.30*** (0.07) | -0.43*** (0.07) | -0.68*** (0.16) |
| China | 1.71*** (0.14) | 1.03*** (0.10) | 0.69*** (0.09) | 1.19*** (0.09) | 0.67*** (0.17) |
| Covariate adjustment | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Number of observations | 757 | 1359 | 1474 | 1666 | 696 |

Note: HC2 robust standard errors in parentheses. 1 = strong preference for USA, 6 = strong preference for China.

+ p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table A4. Average treatment effect of treatment videos on preference for political model by region

| | Africa | Asia | Europe/North America/Oceania | Latin America | Middle East/North Africa |
|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Constant | 3.77*** (0.51) | 3.12*** (0.35) | 3.87*** (0.25) | 3.50*** (0.30) | 3.03*** (0.52) |
| Competition | 0.42* (0.19) | 0.17 (0.11) | 0.29** (0.09) | 0.46*** (0.10) | -0.12 (0.18) |
| USA | -0.79*** (0.17) | -0.52*** (0.10) | -0.41*** (0.08) | -0.53*** (0.09) | -0.93*** (0.17) |
| China | 1.19*** (0.17) | 0.94*** (0.11) | 0.61*** (0.09) | 1.03*** (0.10) | 0.52** (0.17) |
| Covariate adjustment | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Number of observations | 755 | 1357 | 1474 | 1665 | 695 |

Note: HC2 robust standard errors in parentheses. 1 = strong preference for USA, 6 = strong preference for China.

+ p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table A5. Average treatment effect of treatment videos on preference for economic model by region

| | Africa | Asia | Europe/North America/Oceania | Latin America | Middle East/North Africa |
|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Constant | 2.87*** (0.43) | 2.29*** (0.31) | 3.35*** (0.23) | 4.26*** (0.28) | 2.13*** (0.51) |
| Competition | 0.52** (0.16) | 0.18+ (0.10) | 0.34*** (0.09) | 0.26** (0.09) | -0.26 (0.17) |
| USA | -0.45** (0.14) | -0.25** (0.09) | -0.24** (0.08) | -0.27** (0.08) | -0.59*** (0.15) |
| China | 0.97*** (0.15) | 0.83*** (0.10) | 0.46*** (0.09) | 0.87*** (0.09) | 0.43** (0.16) |
| Covariate adjustment | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Number of observations | 756 | 1357 | 1475 | 1660 | 695 |

Note: HC2 robust standard errors in parentheses. 1 = strong preference for USA, 6 = strong preference for China.

+ p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table A6. Average treatment effect of treatment videos on preference for world leader by region

| | Performance index (USA) | Democracy index (USA) | Performance index (China) | Democracy index (China) |
|------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Constant | -1.03*** (0.13) | -1.27*** (0.15) | -0.49*** (0.13) | -0.15 (0.14) |
| Competition | 0.04 (0.03) | 0.09* (0.03) | 0.29*** (0.03) | 0.06+ (0.03) |
| USA | 0.22*** (0.03) | 0.14*** (0.03) | -0.11*** (0.03) | -0.04 (0.03) |
| China | -0.21*** (0.03) | -0.06 (0.04) | 0.46*** (0.03) | 0.16*** (0.03) |
| Covariate adjustment | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Number of observations | 5936 | 5940 | 5936 | 5940 |

Note: HC2 robust standard errors in parentheses.

+ p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table A7. Average treatment effect of treatment videos on performance and democracy indices

C.4 Heterogeneous Treatment Effects

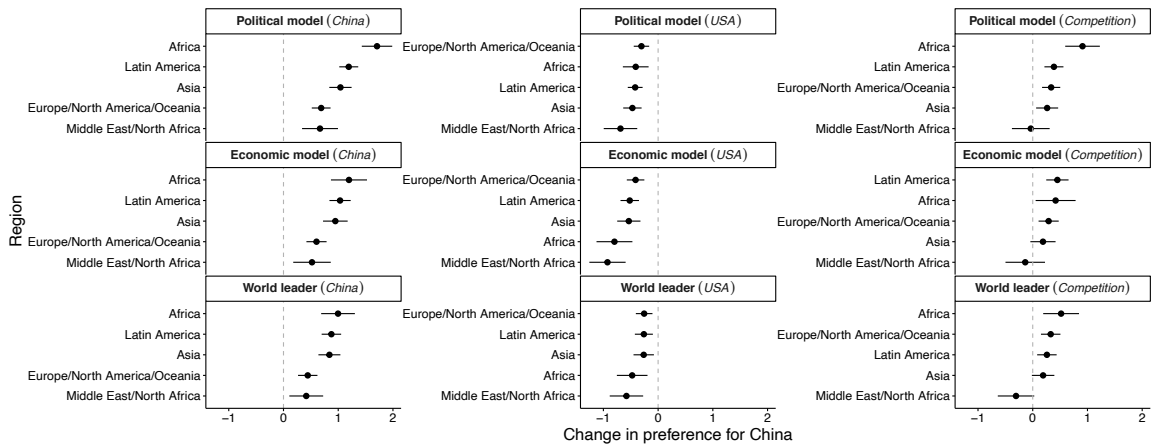


Figure A7. Average treatment effect of treatment videos on preference for political model, economic model, and world leader by region

Note: Y-axis labels (regions) in descending order by treatment effect size. Tabular results are presented in [Table A4](#), [Table A5](#), and [Table A6](#).

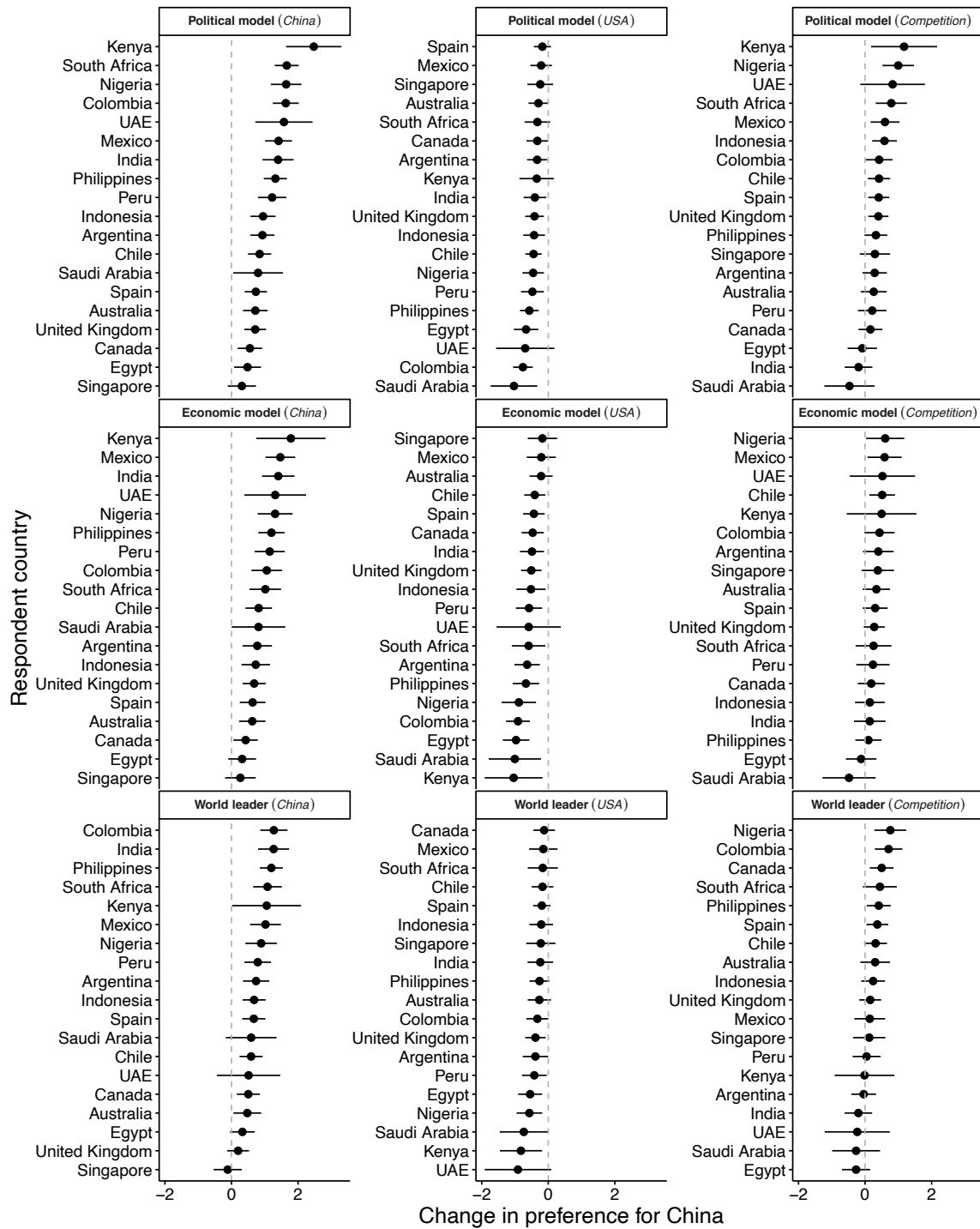


Figure A8. Average treatment effect of treatment videos on preference for Chinese political model, Chinese economic model, and China as world leader, by country

Note: Y-axis labels (countries) in descending order by treatment effect size.

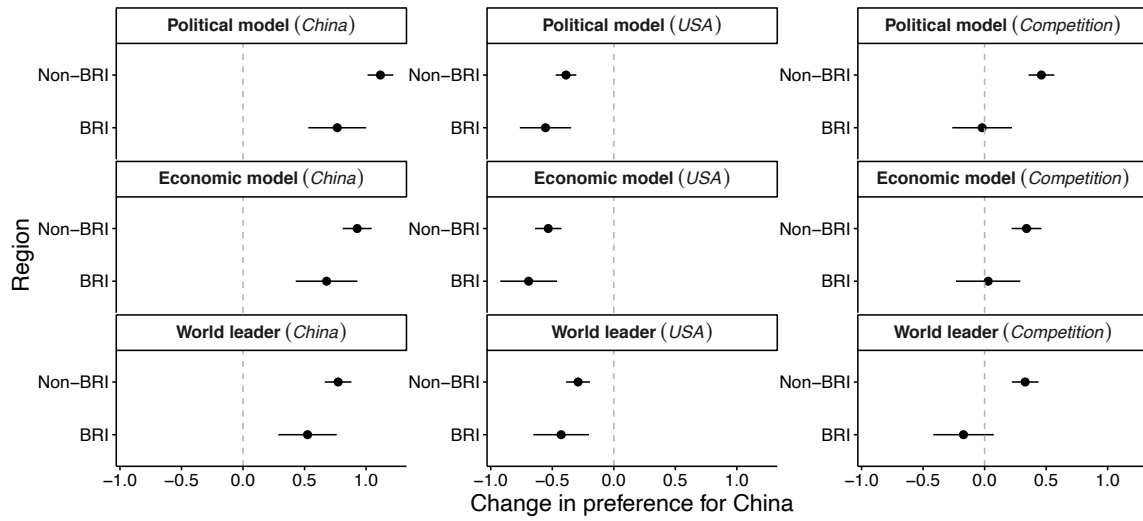


Figure A9. Average treatment effect of treatment videos on preference for Chinese political model, Chinese economic model, and China as world leader, by Belt and Road Initiative participation status

Note: Y-axis labels (countries) in descending order by treatment effect size.

| | Democracy | BRI | Log GDP | Chinese aid receipt | US alliance status |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Constant | 3.20*** (0.13) | 2.47*** (0.08) | 4.89* (2.04) | 2.77*** (0.11) | 2.74*** (0.09) |
| Competition | 0.04 (0.12) | 0.48*** (0.06) | 2.45 (1.55) | 0.25*** (0.08) | 0.37*** (0.08) |
| USA | -0.60*** (0.12) | -0.40*** (0.05) | -2.94+ (1.53) | -0.41*** (0.08) | -0.48*** (0.08) |
| China | 0.56*** (0.12) | 1.12*** (0.05) | 4.72** (1.55) | 0.66*** (0.08) | 1.10*** (0.08) |
| Democracy | -0.75*** (0.15) | | | | |
| China × Democracy | 0.58*** (0.13) | | | | |
| USA × Democracy | 0.19 (0.13) | | | | |
| Competition × Democracy | 0.40** (0.13) | | | | |
| BRI | | 0.51*** (0.15) | | | |
| China × BRI | | -0.34** (0.12) | | | |
| USA × BRI | | -0.15 (0.12) | | | |
| Competition × BRI | | -0.50*** (0.12) | | | |
| Log GDP | | | -0.08 (0.07) | | |
| China × Log GDP | | | -0.13* (0.06) | | |
| USA × Log GDP | | | 0.09 (0.06) | | |
| Competition × Log GDP | | | -0.08 (0.06) | | |
| Chinese aid recipient | | | | -0.30* (0.14) | |
| China × Chinese aid recipient | | | | 0.65*** (0.10) | |
| USA × Chinese aid recipient | | | | -0.04 (0.10) | |
| Competition × Chinese aid recipient | | | | 0.20* (0.10) | |
| US ally | | | | | -0.28* (0.13) |
| China × US ally | | | | | -0.09 (0.10) |
| USA × US ally | | | | | 0.08 (0.10) |
| Competition × US ally | | | | | 0.01 (0.10) |
| Number of observations | 5952 | 5952 | 5952 | 5952 | 5952 |

+ p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Note: HC2 robust standard errors in parentheses.

Table A8. Mixed-effect models: Interactions of country-level variables and treatment variables on preference for Chinese political model, with country-specific random effects

| | Democracy | BRI | Log GDP | Chinese aid receipt | US alliance status |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Constant | 3.49*** (0.15) | 2.81*** (0.08) | 7.76*** (2.19) | 3.01*** (0.12) | 3.19*** (0.09) |
| Competition | 0.01 (0.14) | 0.36*** (0.06) | 0.40 (1.71) | 0.22* (0.08) | 0.17* (0.09) |
| USA | -0.75*** (0.14) | -0.55*** (0.06) | -4.57** (1.68) | -0.54*** (0.08) | -0.70*** (0.09) |
| China | 0.43** (0.13) | 0.93*** (0.06) | 1.69 (1.71) | 0.55*** (0.08) | 0.85*** (0.08) |
| Democracy | -0.72*** (0.17) | | | | |
| China × Democracy | 0.53*** (0.14) | | | | |
| USA × Democracy | 0.21 (0.15) | | | | |
| Competition × Democracy | 0.33* (0.15) | | | | |
| BRI | | 0.41* (0.17) | | | |
| China × BRI | | -0.24+ (0.13) | | | |
| USA × BRI | | -0.14 (0.13) | | | |
| Competition × BRI | | -0.32* (0.13) | | | |
| Log GDP | | | -0.18* (0.08) | | |
| China × Log GDP | | | -0.03 (0.06) | | |
| USA × Log GDP | | | 0.15* (0.06) | | |
| Competition × Log GDP | | | 0.00 (0.06) | | |
| Chinese aid recipient | | | | -0.18 (0.16) | |
| China × Chinese aid recipient | | | | 0.54*** (0.11) | |
| USA × Chinese aid recipient | | | | -0.07 (0.11) | |
| Competition × Chinese aid recipient | | | | 0.12 (0.11) | |
| US ally | | | | | -0.51*** (0.12) |
| China × US ally | | | | | 0.03 (0.11) |
| USA × US ally | | | | | 0.20+ (0.11) |
| Competition × US ally | | | | | 0.19+ (0.11) |
| Number of observations | 5946 | 5946 | 5946 | 5946 | 5946 |

+ p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Note: HC2 robust standard errors in parentheses.

Table A9. Mixed-effect models: Interactions of country-level variables and the treatment variables on preference for Chinese economic model, with country-specific random effects

C.5 Country Case Selection

Here, we present visualizations that help address concerns over potential bias in light of our country selection. We leverage four different types of existing public opinion polls and observational datasets. Although we attempted to collect the most recent data available, the years on which we base relevant data collection vary. In addition, the different data we collected include and/or exclude different countries. Therefore, we plot descriptive statistics instead of performing pooled regression analysis.

First, in [Figure A10](#), we plot the most recent data from the [Gallup World Poll](#) (released in 2022) on how well-approved Chinese and US leadership was in 2021. In total, 117 countries are represented in the data, including 17 countries among the 19 countries in which we fielded our surveys; Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are not included in the data (the most recent data on Saudi Arabian citizens' approval of Chinese and US leadership is from 2009, and the most recent data on UAE citizens' approval of Chinese and US leadership is from 2010).

In short, we chose countries that are broadly representative in terms of their approval rates for Chinese and US leadership; we did not conduct surveys disproportionately in either pro-China or pro-US countries. If we had conducted our surveys disproportionately in countries that supported China (as opposed to the US), for example, the dark grey data-points in [Figure A10](#) would have been concentrated in the lower right corner.

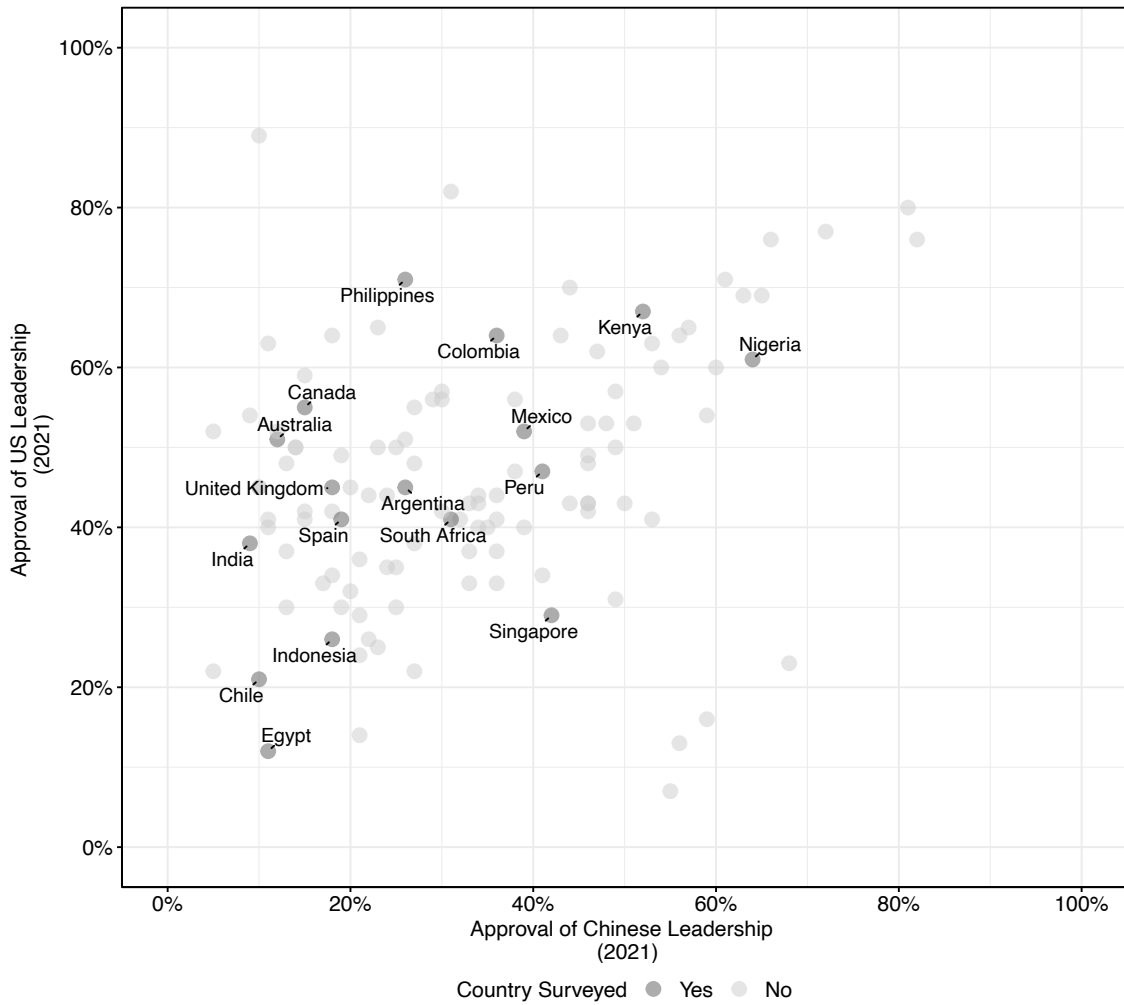


Figure A10. Approval of Chinese and US leadership: global and surveyed samples

Second, in [Figure A11](#), we plot the count of Chinese aid projects between 2000 and 2017 from [AidData’s](#) most recent edition of the [Global Chinese Development Finance Dataset](#) (released in 2021). The number of Chinese aid projects was systematically detected by AidData’s [Tracking Underreported Financial Flows](#) technique. The dataset records 166 countries in total, including 12 of our 19 country samples; the other seven countries—be they Singapore, Australia, Canada, Spain, the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates—are not represented in the dataset because no Chinese aid-related projects were found in those countries between 2000 and 2017.

Simply put, our surveyed countries do not disproportionately contain those countries where Chinese aid programs may have patently affected the public’s positive attitudes toward China.

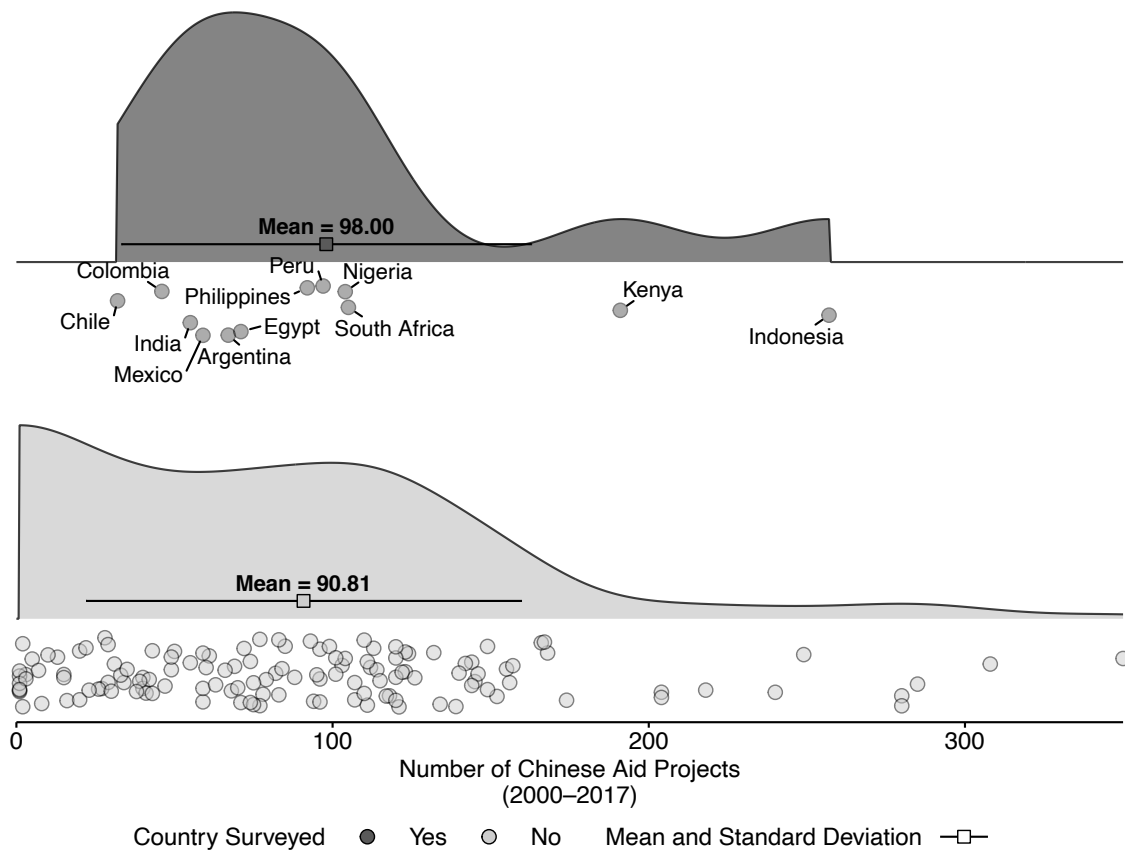


Figure A11. Receipt of Chinese aid projects: global and surveyed samples

Note: Datapoints are “jittered” to avoid overlaps. Densities are trimmed at the limits of the data primarily to avoid densities below 0 counts.

Third, in [Figure A12](#), we display information about regime types in 2018 using the most recent version (released in 2019) of the [Center for Systemic Peace](#)’s Polity IV scores. All 19 of the countries in which we surveyed are included in the list of 167 total countries in the data. While rendering [Figure A12](#), we omitted the observations for China and the US.

In short, we conducted our surveys in both democratic and non-democratic countries roughly reflecting the distribution of regime types in the global system.

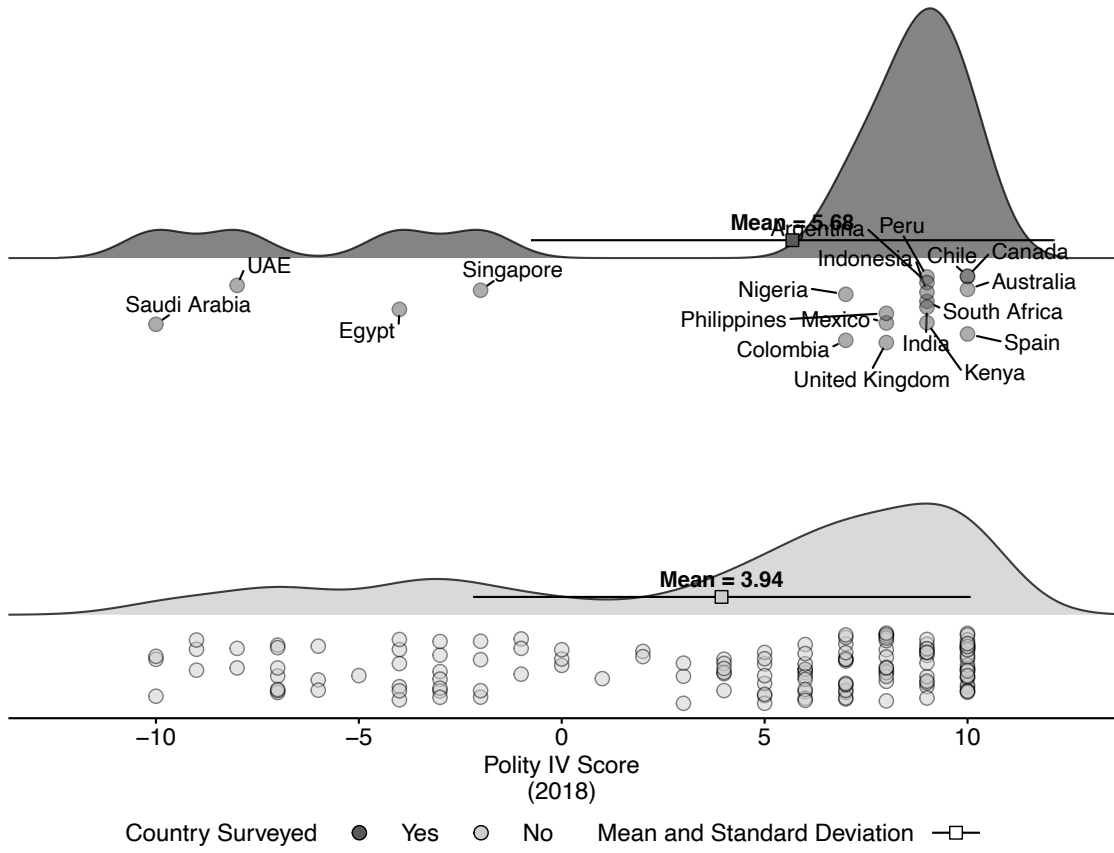
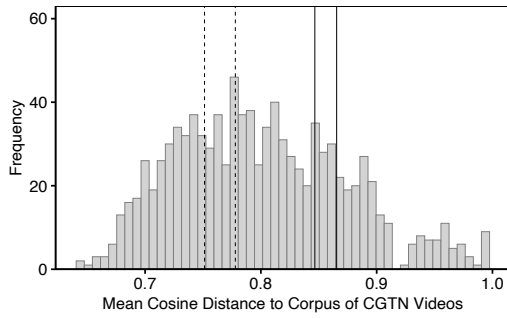


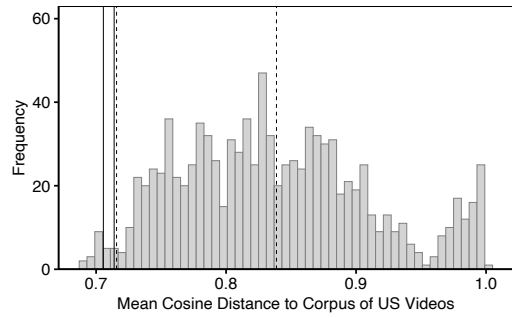
Figure A12. Regime type: global and surveyed samples

Note: Datapoints are “jittered” vertically to avoid overlaps.

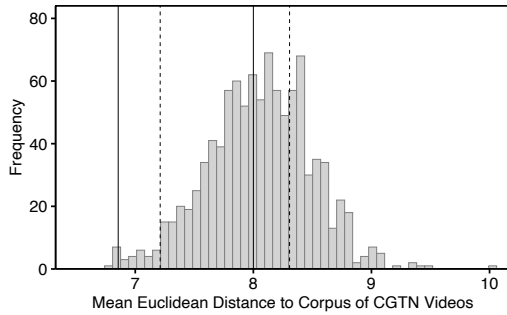
C.6 Media Treatment Selection



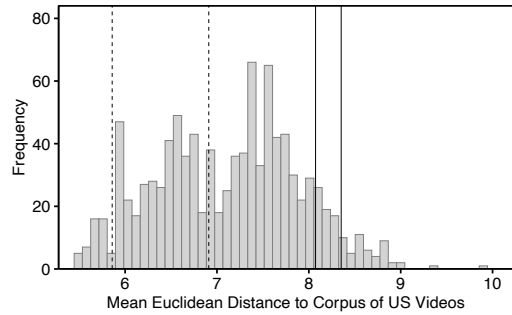
(a) China: Cosine Distance



(b) US: Cosine Distance



(c) China: Euclidean Distance



(d) US: Euclidean Distance

Figure A13. Distribution of distance values for US and China treatments from the larger corpus of videos.

Note: Scores for the political model treatment marked with solid lines, economic model treatment with dotted lines. Larger scores indicate that the words in the video description are more similar to the words in the descriptions in other videos in the corpus. Low scores indicate that the videos are more similar.

C.7 Mechanism Outcomes

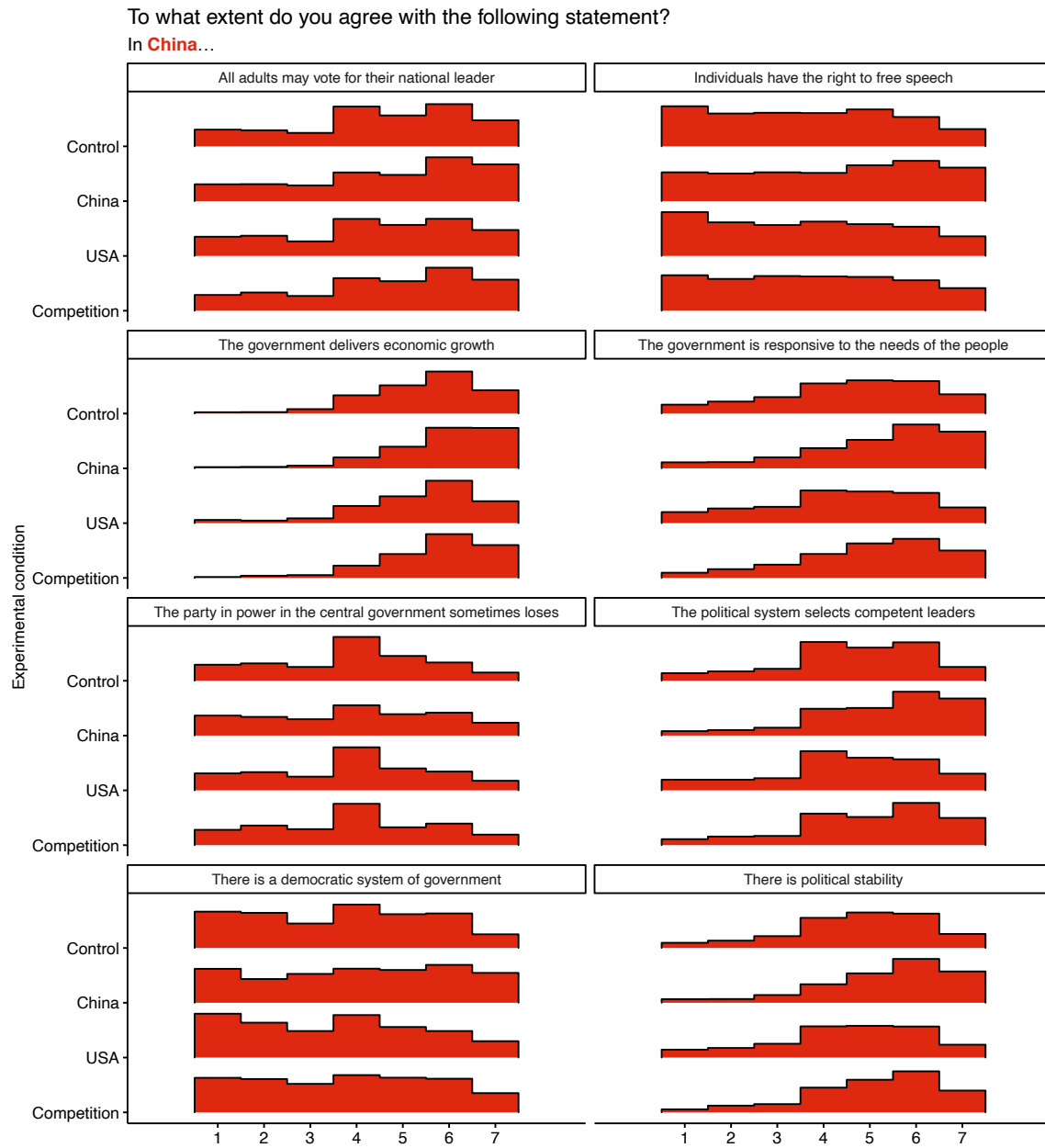


Figure A14. Distribution of mechanism outcomes by treatment group, China

Note: 1 indicates strong disagreement and 7 indicates strong agreement.

To what extent do you agree with the following statement?
 In the **United States**...

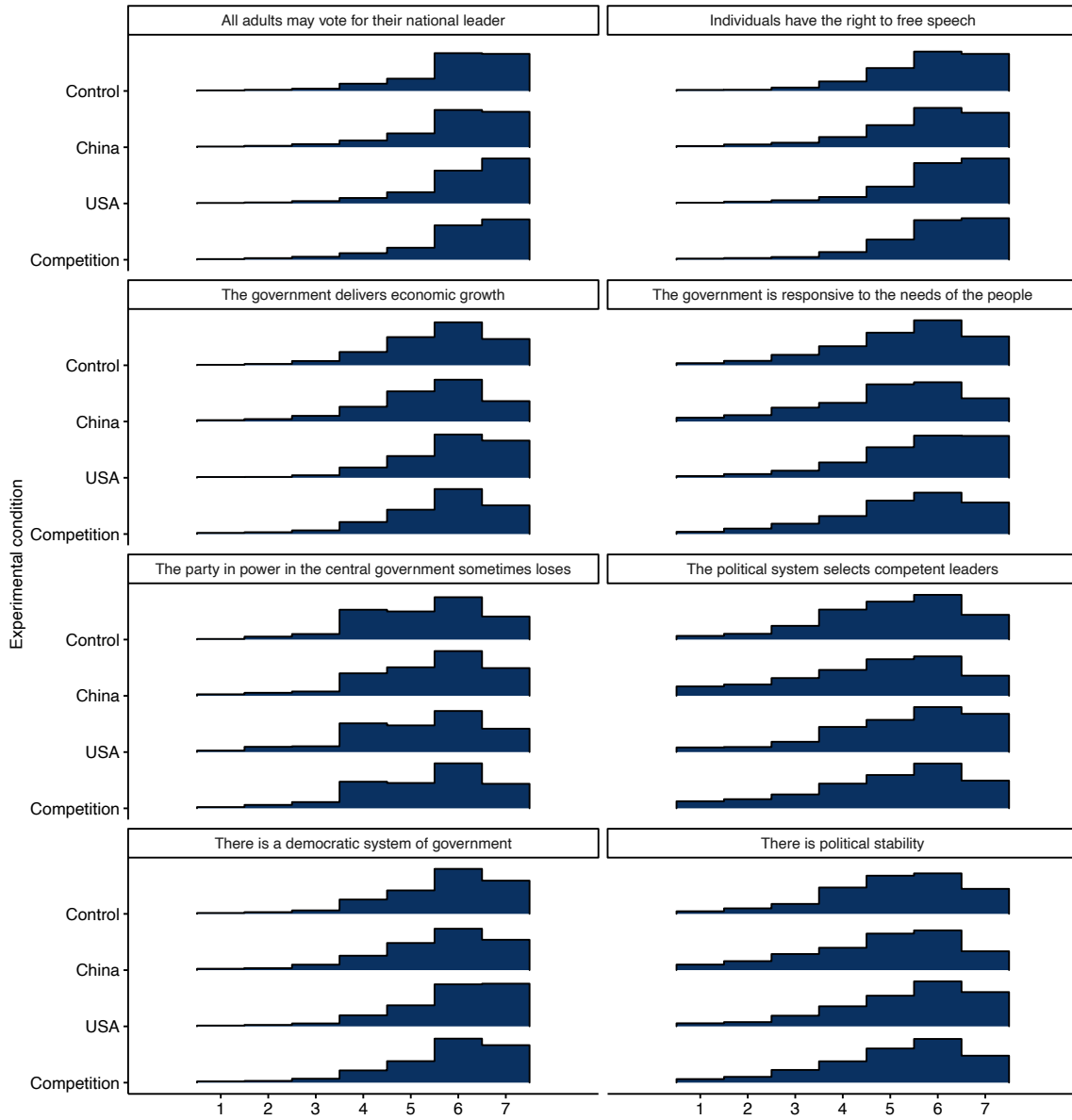


Figure A15. Distribution of mechanism outcomes by treatment group, United States

Note: 1 indicates strong disagreement and 7 indicates strong agreement.

To what extent do you agree with the following statement?
 In **China** (the **United States**)...

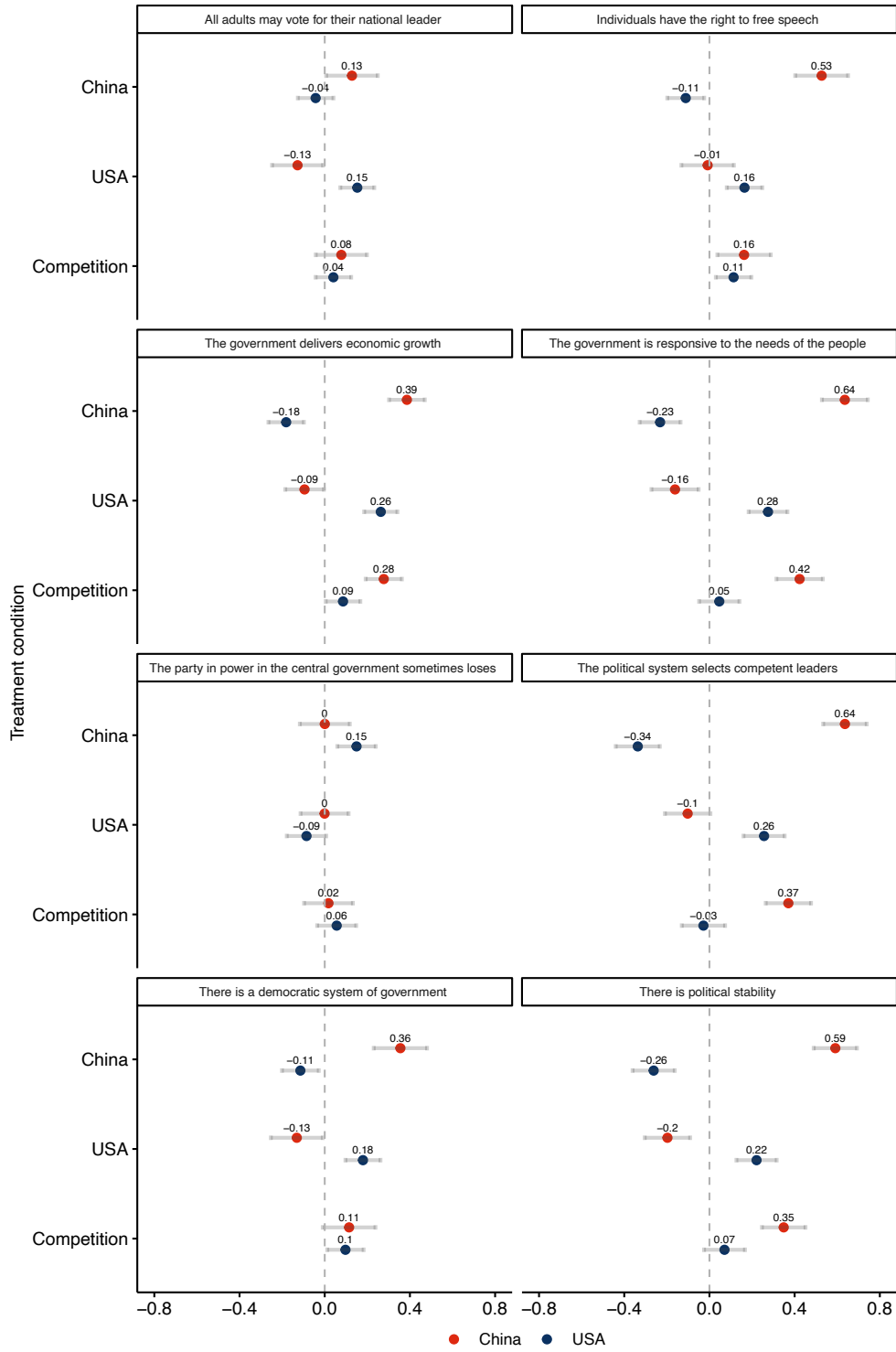


Figure A16. Average treatment effect of treatment videos on individual mechanism outcomes

C.8 Robustness

| Outcome | Treatment condition | Unadjusted | BH | Holm | Bonferroni |
|-----------------|---------------------|------------|----------|----------|------------|
| Political model | <i>China</i> | 0.000000 | 0.000000 | 0.000000 | 0.000000 |
| Political model | <i>USA</i> | 0.000000 | 0.000000 | 0.000000 | 0.000000 |
| Political model | <i>Competition</i> | 0.000000 | 0.000000 | 0.000000 | 0.000000 |
| Economic model | <i>China</i> | 0.000000 | 0.000000 | 0.000000 | 0.000000 |
| Economic model | <i>USA</i> | 0.000000 | 0.000000 | 0.000000 | 0.000000 |
| Economic model | <i>Competition</i> | 0.000000 | 0.000000 | 0.000000 | 0.000000 |
| World leader | <i>China</i> | 0.000000 | 0.000000 | 0.000000 | 0.000000 |
| World leader | <i>USA</i> | 0.000000 | 0.000000 | 0.000000 | 0.000000 |
| World leader | <i>Competition</i> | 0.000002 | 0.000002 | 0.000002 | 0.000018 |

Table A10. Adjusted p values for primary outcomes using Benjamini-Hochberg, Holm-Bonferroni, and Bonferroni corrections

Note: p values rounded to nearest sixth decimal place.

| Outcome | Treatment condition | p value |
|-----------------|---------------------|-----------|
| Political model | <i>China</i> | 0 |
| Political model | <i>USA</i> | 0 |
| Political model | <i>Competition</i> | 0 |
| Economic model | <i>China</i> | 0 |
| Economic model | <i>USA</i> | 0 |
| Economic model | <i>Competition</i> | 0 |
| World leader | <i>China</i> | 0 |
| World leader | <i>USA</i> | 0 |
| World leader | <i>Competition</i> | 0.00001 |

Table A11. Randomization inference p values

Note: Randomization inference conducted using 100,000 simulations. p values of 0 are not rounded as they are precisely 0 (i.e., no simulated random assignments return larger treatment effect estimates than the estimates from the actual random assignment.)

D Survey

D.1 Primary Outcome Question Wording

1. **Political model:** If you were to choose, which one would you like your country to adopt, the Chinese or American political model?
2. **Economic model:** If you were to choose, which one would you like your country to adopt, the Chinese or American economic model?
3. **World leader:** “Suppose either China or the United States will be the most powerful nation in the world in ten years. Would you: Strongly prefer China as world leader (1) Prefer China (2), Somewhat prefer China (3), Prefer neither China nor the United States (4), Somewhat prefer the United States (5), Prefer the United States (6), Strongly prefer the United States (7)”

D.2 Mechanism Outcome Question Wording

Each question below was asked twice, once for the United States and once for China:

1. To what extent do you agree with the following statement? The [United States/Chinese] political system selects competent leaders.
2. To what extent do you agree with the following statement? The [United States/Chinese] government delivers economic growth.
3. To what extent do you agree with the following statement? In the [United States/China], there is political stability.
4. To what extent do you agree with the following statement? In the [United States/China], individuals have the rights to free speech.
5. To what extent do you agree with the following statement? The [United States/Chinese] government is responsive to the needs of the [American/Chinese] people.
6. To what extent do you agree with the following statement? In the [United States/China], the party in power in the central government sometimes loses.
7. To what extent do you agree with the following statement? The [United States/China] has a democratic system of government.
8. To what extent do you agree with the following statement? In the [United States/China], all adults may vote for their national leader.

E Treatment Texts

China: Political Model 1

China's rise has attracted global attention, and many have focused on China's economic model behind its rise, which is of course important. But China's evolving political change has been somehow ignored by many. In fact, without much fanfare, China has established a system of meritocracy, or what can be described as "selection plus election," competent leaders are selected on the basis of performance and broad support, through a vigorous process of screening, opinion surveys, internal evaluations, and various types of elections. This is much in line with the Confucian tradition of meritocracy. After all, China is the first country that invented the civil service examination system or the "KeJu" system. Today, China practices – not always successfully, but on the whole successfully – meritocracy across the whole political stratum. Criteria based on poverty eradication, job creation, local economic growth, social development, and increasingly, environmental protection are all key criteria for selecting and promoting officials. A good example of this was the profiles of China's new leaders elected at the 19th Party Congress. Six of the seven of the top leaders, members of the standing committee of the Politburo, have run provinces or province-level municipalities, many of which in terms of population or GDP are equivalent to many nations combined. Indeed, the Chinese system of meritocracy today makes it inconceivable that anyone as weak as George W. Bush or Donald Trump could ever come close to the position of the top leadership. It's not far-fetched to claim that the China model is more about leadership rather than showmanship as in the West. China's meritocratic governance challenges the stereotypical dichotomy of democracy versus autocracy. From a Chinese point of view, the nature of the state, including its legitimacy, has to be defined by its substance, that is good governance, competent leadership, and success in meeting the people's needs.

China: Political Model 2

Every five years, the Chinese Communist holds a Party Congress when it clicks the "refresh" button on its health. We elect a new generation of senior leaders, called the Politburo Standing Committee. Let's face it: you hear complaints that the selection process was too secretive and involves favoritism. But what people rarely mention is that, more than many other political systems, advancement in the Chinese Communist Party is largely based on merit. To enter the Party and State Official system, you must pass China's civil service exam. This levels the playing field. Social rank does not affect test scores. For more than a thousand years, to serve in the Chinese government, high- and low-born alike had to pass exams. The modern exam lasts five hours. It includes advanced mathematics, logic, verbal skill, and world knowledge. If you pass, promotion then is based on a ten-tier ranking system. On average, it takes twenty to thirty years for an entry level "ke" or "fu ke" civil servant to become a "guo" or "fu guo" Party or state leader. Very few get near the top. Term limits also keep new ideas flowing. The Party's top job is General Secretary. For the U.S. Congress, the turnover rate in any given election is around 10% or less. One Congressman,

Representative John Dingell of Michigan, got reelected 30 times and spent 60 years in the House. What about the Communist Party of China? “The turnover rate of the Central Committee maintains roughly about 62%, on average, every five years. So this, actually, turnover rate is much faster than some of the democracies around the world.” As data show, Party elections can have this effect: along with term limits, elections help promote reform and help ensure new Chinese leaders rise based more on performance than on privilege.

China: Economic Model 1

China is controversial in the West, because it’s so different from the Western countries in terms of political system and economic model which actually makes China very chic today. After all, it’s not China that has fallen into the financial crisis, but the United States and many Western countries. It’s not the China model that has fallen out of favor but the neo-liberal model of the West. China is doing fine, and it’s already the world’s largest economy calculated in purchasing power parity, with the world’s largest middle class. The latest IPSOS survey showed that 90% of Chinese are reasonably satisfied with the track that China has followed, while it’s 37% for the Americans, and 11% for the French. Of course, China has its share of the [sic] problems, but its overall success is beyond doubt, and we’re very proud of it. So the question is how China has made it? The answer is very simple, two words: China model. First, it’s guiding philosophy is called ‘seeking truth from facts,’ not from dogmas, whether from East or West. From examining the facts, the late leader Deng Xiaoping concluded then that neither the Soviet model nor the Western model really worked for a vast developing country desiring for [sic] modernization. Hence Beijing decided to explore its own way of development, appropriate to China’s own national conditions. Second, people’s livelihood-oriented. This is very important. Whether you conduct economic reform, social reform or political reform in China, they must all be down-to-earth and produce tangible benefits to the Chinese people in material terms, in cultural terms, and in other terms. This is why China has succeeded in lifting over 700 million people out of poverty, accounting for nearly 80 percent [of] global poverty eradication. This fact alone has changed China forever, and I think, has changed the world forever.

China: Economic Model 2

China is the second-largest economy in the world, lifting so many people out of poverty. China has made very strong strides in its development, including in economic, social, technology[sic], cultural. This transformation is not possible without the visionary leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC). *[text]China’s founding party, the CPC, marks its 100th founding anniversary this year. [text]Many overseas experts say the CPC’s governance experience is worth studying or emulating.* The 100 years of the CPC demonstrate a history of sacrifice, but of extraordinary success, and, secondly, there are many teachings in those 100 years. The political leaders who seek to transform a society and build a future of possibilities, equality, and benefits for all, have much to learn from the CPC. China has able to eradicate extreme poverty. That is very impressive in such a vast country with a huge population of 1.4 billion people. We can see what is possible to do in a socialist society, in

a society that puts people first ahead of profit. We are impressed for [sic] what China has been able to achieve, under the socialism with Chinese characteristics and the guidance of Comrade Xi Jinping and the initiatives that have been put before us. So we need to really study the Chinese experience. *[text] Rapid growth.* China's extraordinary growth under the leadership of the Communist Party of China is an example for many developing countries to follow from areas such as poverty eradication as well as economic growth and development.

US: Political Model 1

Every day, Americans strive to create a more perfect union, one that our founders promised centuries ago. In the United States, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, the right of the people to peaceably assemble and the right to petition the government are protected under the law. These freedoms allow us to progress as a nation and make changes to our government that create a more just society. We fight to advance the rights and freedoms of Americans at home, we will continue to fight for those facing injustices globally. Freedom of speech is integral to a free and fair society. In the United States, artists can advocate and educate through their artwork to address injustice and strive for equality, fueling public dialogue that can lead to new and better laws. Today, many artists around the world confront censorship as authoritarian governments suppress creativity that sparks free thinking. The U.S. advocates for the rights of all people to express themselves freely and without reprisal.

US: Political Model 2

America's diversity is the strength of our nation. It's a power that's seen by the world and is reflected in Team USA. No matter the race, identity, religion, or ability, we are stronger because of our differences. We honor what makes us unique, and we celebrate ALL of our athletes. America is a nation of immigrants. America is, always has been, and always will be a nation of immigrants. – Nearly every country in the world is represented among U.S. immigrants. Immigrants have influenced our food, music, and art. As people share cultures, – engage in global commerce, and develop multi-cultural friendships, we see every day how immigration makes us more connected with the world. We celebrate how the diversity of immigrants has enriched our nation.

US: Economic Model 1

(text) Bardstown, Kentucky / April 20, 2018. International businesses should invest in the United States. (text) Vivek Sarin / Executive Officer / Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development because the United States is the largest market on the planet. The U.S. consumer base consists of an \$18 trillion GDP with 325 million consumers. (text) Brian Jones / Chief Operating Officer / Grey Construction – Manufacturers want to be close to that. My name is Hiroyuki Takigawa. I'm the president of Takigawa Corporation. *(text) Hiroyuki, Takigawa / President, Takigawa Corporation Japan* Takigawa Corporation started the plastic packaging business in 1949. We are exporting 40% of our production to the U.S. so we decided to have a plant in the U.S. And it was the best decision I made. U.S. is the most stable

place to invest capital in the world today. (text) Terry Gill / Secretary / Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development So our first gathering with Takigawa was here in Bardstown, (text) Kim Huston / President / Nelson County Economic Development Agency and it was like a blind date. You give them your best. You tell them everything about yourself. You learn about them, and you hope you entice them enough that they want to come back. I received about 150 site offers, and it was very difficult to choose one, (text) Takigawa U.S. Groundbreaking / April 20, 2018 but I chose Bardstown, Kentucky. – So, Takigawa is going to invest \$46 million in state-of-the-art manufacturing facility. new jobs will be created when this facility is in operation. When you land a single manufacturing company like a Takigawa, the multiplier effect in some cases can be sevenfold in terms of the additional jobs that will be created. This is the start of a wonderful new relationship with Takigawa (text) In September of 2019 Takigawa opened its Bardstown facility.

US: Economic Model 2

You are smart. You are creative. You're an inventor. You're an entrepreneur. You've started your own business. For companies large and small, the United States offers an opportunity not only to grow your business but also to protect your products and ideas. Did you know the United States is ranked the number one country for entrepreneurship (text) *RANKED 1 FOR ENTREPRENEURS* / Source: *Global Entrepreneurship and Development Institute* as one of the easiest places to do business? (text) *EASY TO DO BUSINESS* / Source: *The World Bank* Free resources are available from websites such as selectusa.gov for information about doing business here. For protecting your ideas and products, the United States has laws in place to help you. Registering in the US for a trademark or copyright or submitting an application for a Patent, even a provisional application, can put you on the road to protecting what is yours. No one else should get the credit or the money for what you created. The United States patent and trademark office website has a lot of information available to help you decide which type of protection is best and how to start the process. Whether you have a new idea, new product, new design, or even a new plant, when you come to the United States, protections are available to inventors and entrepreneurs just like you. You've already done the hard part. You may have created something brand-new, or you may have started a business. Now there are 325 million people in the United States waiting to see what you've got.

F China Video Fact Check

Table A12. Fact Check Table, Part 1

| Video | Statement | Source |
|-------|---|--|
| Pol 1 | China is the first country that invented the civil service examination system or the “KeJu” system | Kai-Sing Kung, J. (2021). The World’s First Meritocracy Through the Lens of Institutions and Cultural Persistence. In: Elodie Douarin & Oleh Havrylyshyn (Eds.), The Palgrave Handbook of Comparative Economics (pp. 159–184). Springer. https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/978-3-030-50888-3.pdf?pdf=button . Page 159. |
| Pol 1 | Criteria based on poverty eradication, job creation, local economic growth, social development, and increasingly, environmental protection are all key criteria for selecting and promoting officials | Zuo, C. (2015). Promoting City Leaders: The Structure of Political Incentives in China. <i>The China Quarterly</i> , 224, 955–984. https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/4BF006D304A4DCA509C14F479222DDD8/S0305741015001289a.pdf/promoting-city-leaders-the-structure-of-political-incentives-in-china.pdf . Page 964. |
| Pol 1 | Six of the seven of the top leaders, members of the standing committee of the Politburo, have run provinces or province-level municipalities, many of which in terms of population or GDP are equivalent to many nations combined | Li, C. (2017). China’s new Politburo and Politburo Standing Committee. Brookings Institution. https://www.brookings.edu/articles/chinas-new-politburo-standing-committee/ . |

Table A13. Fact Check Table, Part 2

| Video | Statement | Source |
|--------------|---|---|
| Pol 2 | For the U.S. Congress, the turnover rate in any given election is around 10% or less. One Congressman, Representative John Dingle of Michigan, got reelected 30 times and spent 60 years in the House | Matland, R. E., & Studlar, D. T. (2004). Determinants of Legislative Turnover: A Cross-National Analysis. <i>British Journal of Political Science</i> , 34 (1), 87–108. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4092401 . Page 93. |
| Pol 2 | The turnover rate of the Central Committee maintains roughly about 62%, on average, every five years. So this, actually, turnover rate is much faster than some of the democracies around the world. | Li, C., 2012. Leadership transition in the CPC: promising progress and potential problems. <i>China: An International Journal</i> , 10 (2), 23–33. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/leadership-transition-cpc-li.pdf . Page 28. |

Table A14. Fact Check Table, Part 3

| Video | Statement | Source |
|--------------|---|--|
| Econ 1 | China is the world's largest economy calculated in purchasing power parity | World Bank Open Data. GDP, PPP. https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.PP.CD?most_recent_value_desc=true |
| Econ 1 | China [has] the world's largest middle class | Credit Suisse Research Institute. (2015). Global Wealth Report 2015. https://www.credit-suisse.com/media/assets/corporate/docs/about-us/research/publications/global-wealth-report-2015.pdf . Page 28. |
| Econ 1 | The latest IPSOS survey showed that 90% of Chinese are reasonably satisfied with the track that China has followed, while it's 37% for the Americans, and 11% for the French. | IPSOS Public Affairs. (2016). What Worries the World: October 2016. https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/2016-12/What_Worries_the_World_Oct_2016.pdf . Slide 5. |
| Econ 1 | China has succeeded in lifting over 700 million people out of poverty, accounting for nearly 80 percent of global poverty eradication | World Bank & Development Research Center of the State (2022). Four Decades of Poverty Reduction in China. https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/bdadcl6a4f5c1c88a839c0f905cde802-0070012022/original/Poverty-Synthesis-Report-final.pdf . World Bank. Page ix. |
| Econ 2 | China is the second-largest economy in the world, lifting so many people out of poverty | World Bank Open Data. GDP (current US\$). https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?most_recent_value_desc=true . |