Breaking Commitments: Public Reactions to Withdrawals from International Institutions

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Abstract

How does withdrawal from international institutions shape public opinion? We examine this question in the context of climate change, focusing on the Paris Agreement in both the U.S. and Argentina. While past research has examined the consequences of state withdrawal for compliance and international behavior, its effects on public opinion remain understudied. To investigate these dynamics, we conducted three studies: a U.S. survey-experiment manipulating expectations about withdrawal prior to President Trump's withdrawal from the Agreement, a follow-up study measuring reactions to the actual U.S. withdrawal, and a replication in Argentina testing both domestic withdrawal and third-party reactions. Across studies, withdrawal cues reduce support for the Paris Agreement and, in some cases, climate attitudes and support for international law, with effects concentrated among politically aligned respondents. Overall, we show that withdrawing from international climate agreements can undermine public support for both the agreements themselves, the policies they govern, and broader international norms.

Introduction

During his second term, President Donald Trump has continued a pattern of disengagement from global governance, withdrawing the United States from major international institutions including the World Health Organization (Faguy and Hughes, 2025), UNESCO (Lukiv, 2025), and the Paris Agreement (McGrath, 2025). The US is not an outlier, but part of a broader global trend in which states increasingly reassess their ties to international institutions. From the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union (Witte and Balz, 2016) to Nicaragua's withdrawal from the UN Human Rights Council (Reuters, 2025) and Hungary's exit from the International Criminal Court (Tasch and Holligan, 2025), institutional withdrawal is a recurrent feature of contemporary international politics.

Yet, the consequences of withdrawal for public opinion remain poorly understood. *How do citizens react when their leaders step back from international institutions?* Even with withdrawals from international institutions have little effects on state expenditures or legal obligations — as is the case of many of the new withdrawals announced by President Trump on January 7, 2026 — withdrawals can send important political signals to observing audiences. On the one hand, withdrawal may act as an elite cue, signaling that an institution is ineffective or incompatible with national interests, leading publics to revise their attitudes accordingly and reducing support for the institution and the policies it governs. On the other hand, withdrawal can also provoke resistance. Recent withdrawals have been accompanied by visible counter-reactions, from subnational governments reaffirming commitments and segments of the public expressing renewed support for multilateral cooperation (Chow, 2019), raising the possibility that exit can generate backlash.

In recent years, with the rise of populism, a growing literature has emerged on governments' withdrawal from international institutions (Borzyskowski, 2025). However, much of this scholarship has focused on the causes of withdrawal (Von Borzyskowski and Vabulas, 2019; Copelovitch and Pevehouse, 2019; von Borzyskowski and Vabulas, 2021; Von Borzyskowski and Vabulas, 2023) and its effects on institutional reform and survival (Vabulas, 2023; von Borzyskowski and Vabulas, 2024*b*; Schmidt, 2024, 2025). Less attention has been paid to public attitudes, with some exceptions focusing on public support for withdrawal itself (von Borzyskowski and Vabulas, 2024*a*).

Consequently, the ways in which withdrawal shapes public attitudes towards international institutions and the policies they govern remain understudied. We theorize that withdrawal from international institutions functions as a political signal to the mass public. By withdrawing, or even just signaling an intention to withdraw, leaders convey information about their policy priorities and the value of the institution itself. These signals can shape citizens' attitudes not only toward the institution in question, but also toward the policies it governs and the leaders responsible for the decision, and even towards global governance writ large.

Specifically, we focus on two cases involving the Paris Agreement – the central multilateral framework for global climate governance. First, we study the withdrawal of the US from the Paris Agreement under President Donald Trump during his second presidency. This is a case of particular global importance given the role of the US as a major carbon emitter and a central actor in international climate cooperation, as well as persistent public resistance to climate action and the relative stability of climate attitudes among the U.S. public (e.g., Egan and Mullin, 2017; Arias and Blair, 2022).

Second, we examine Argentina, where President Javier Milei has publicly signaled

the possibility of withdrawal from the Paris Agreement (Greenfield and Milman, 2024). Argentina provides a valuable comparative case. Like the US, it is led by a populist president who has questioned climate science and multilateralism, yet it differs markedly in its economic position and role in global climate governance, as well as the degree to which the issue of climate change is politically polarized (Ryan, 2017). While only 51% of Americans view climate change as a major threat, 80% of Argentinians do so, and these concerns are consistent across important socio-economic divides.[1]Focusing on Argentina also allows us to examine whether and how US withdrawal generates international spillover effects in public opinion.

Overall, we conducted three pre-registered studies to examine the effects of withdrawal from the Paris Agreement on public attitudes. Studies I and II were based in the US and conducted shortly *before and after* President Donald Trump's second inauguration in 2025. In Study I, we experimentally manipulated information about President Trump's intentions to withdraw from the Agreement, thereby shaping respondents' expectations about US withdrawal. We find that anticipating withdrawal from the Paris Agreement reduced support for the Agreement and for international legal obligations more broadly. In Study II we recontacted a portion of the original sample after the US's *actual* withdrawal from the Paris Agreement and observed further decline in support for the Agreement. These effects were largely driven by Republicans, while Democrats experienced a modest 'backlash' effect (i.e. more support for the Agreement) in some of our analyses.

In Study III, we extend our research to Argentina – a country where the president has similarly made public statements signaling the possibility of withdrawing from the Paris Agreement. This third study allows us not only to test additional pre-registered expectations about international spillovers from US withdrawal, but also to assess whether our core expectation that leader-led withdrawal shapes domestic public opinion generalizes outside the US. We find that the prospect of an Argentine withdrawal reduces public support for the Paris Agreement, particularly among supporters of President Javier Milei, closely mirroring the partisan dynamics observed in the US. We also identify modest spillover effects of US withdrawal on Argentine public opinion, including declines in climate attitudes. This implies that while US actions do have an impact on the preferences of global publics, it is unlikely that withdrawals by the US alone would be a tipping point. Together, these findings provide evidence that withdrawal signals can shape public opinion both domestically and internationally and help move public opinion research in political science outside the US, which has dominated prior work (e.g., Colgan, 2019; Bassan-Nygate et al., 2025). We contribute to a growing body of research in international relations that assesses the implications of the US turning away from meaningful climate action (Colgan and Genovese, 2025).

More broadly, our findings speak to debates about the legitimacy and resilience of international institutions. Publics care about the inclusivity of membership in international institutions, as institutions with broad participation are perceived of as more effective and neutral than those with narrow memberships (Bechtel and Scheve, 2013*a*; Milner, 2006). As international institutions face increasing backlash, considering how withdrawal affects their legitimacy has important implications for their vitality and efficacy (Gray, 2018; Walter, 2021*a*), and in the case of the Paris Agreement specifically, the likelihood of implementing policies that could mitigate the global effects of climate

[1]Pew, August 19, 2025; Gallup, October 16, 2023.

change.

A Theory of Withdrawal and Public Opinion

How does the public react when political leaders withdraw from international institutions? Studying public opinion in the context of withdrawal from international institutions–whether formal international organizations, international agreements, or the norms and legal commitments they embody–is crucial because public attitudes can be both a cause and a consequence of withdrawal. In some cases, decisions about participation in international institutions are directly tied to public opinion through referendums, as in the case of Brexit (e.g., Walter, 2021*b*). Domestic public support for international institutions can also shape the likelihood that governments comply with their commitments and implement associated policies at home (Dai, 2005; Simmons, 2009). Public opinion on withdrawal intentions by political leaders has a notable effect on public willingness to elect such candidates (von Borzyskowski and Vabulas, 2024*a*).

These dynamics are particularly salient in the context of climate change. Voluntary commitments to the Paris Agreement can increase domestic support for costly climate policies in the US (Tingley and Tomz, 2020). Climate change is also a politically salient issue for voters: in the 2024 US election, 37 percent of voters identified climate change as a very important issue, making it one of the most electorally consequential policy domains.[2] As a result, signals of withdrawal from the central international institution governing climate cooperation are likely to carry meaningful political implications, shaping public attitudes toward climate policy, international institutions, and political leaders themselves.

A necessary assumption underlying this argument is that the public is likely to receive information about withdrawal from international institutions. Political leaders routinely communicate the merits and drawbacks of international institutions to domestic audiences, and elite rhetoric surrounding participation in international institutions is often visible in mass media coverage (e.g., Dellmuth and Tallberg, 2021). If withdrawal decisions were not observable to the public, they would be unlikely to generate meaningful attitudinal effects. We contend, however, that withdrawals from prominent international institutions–particularly in high-salience issue areas such as climate change–are sufficiently visible to domestic publics to shape attitudes. In our empirical contexts of interest, existing evidence suggests substantial media attention to international institutions and their leadership, as well as broad public awareness of debates surrounding international cooperation (see Appendix SI-2).

We theorize that institutional withdrawal functions as a political signal, conveying information about leaders' priorities, credibility, and commitment to international institutions. Just as elite cues generally shape public opinion in foreign policy and other complex policy domains, withdrawal signals can influence citizens' attitudes toward the institution in question, related international agreements, and the leaders responsible for the decision. Importantly, these signals are observed not only by domestic publics but also by international actors, who may adjust their expectations and behavior in response to a state's withdrawal. In the following subsection, we develop a framework for understanding institutional withdrawal as a signal and trace its effects across multiple audiences, setting the stage for the hypotheses that follow.

[2] Pew Research Center, September 9, 2024.

Withdrawal as a Political Signal

Withdrawal from international institutions is typically a prolonged political process. Formally, withdrawal occurs when a member state voluntarily removes itself from an institution and legally terminates its membership, thereby ending its obligation to comply with the institution's rules (von Borzyskowski and Vabulas, 2024*a*). However, such exits are rarely sudden and are often preceded by public debate, campaign promises, and repeated elite statements about the desirability of exit. Political leaders may signal an intention to withdraw long before formal procedures are initiated, and even after withdrawal is officially announced, institutional rules frequently impose delays before exit takes legal effect. In the case of the Paris Agreement, for example, formal withdrawal requires a one-year waiting period following notification.

Recent work conceptualizes withdrawal from international organizations as part of a broader bargaining process in which states seek to induce institutional or policy change, often operating within exit rules established at the time of institutional design (Borzyskowski, 2025). Importantly, *withdrawal threats* are common even when actual exits are rare, and states frequently signal dissatisfaction without ultimately following through. We argue that both threats of withdrawal and realized withdrawal actions can serve domestic political purposes. Because threats typically precede exit and introduce the possibility of withdrawal into public discourse, they may be especially salient to mass publics. Indeed, when actual withdrawal occurs much later — or not at all — public attitudes may already have adjusted in response to the initial signal. Building on the literature on elite cues, we therefore treat both stated intentions and realized withdrawal as politically meaningful signals that shape how citizens interpret leaders' priorities, credibility and commitment to international institutions and norms (von Borzyskowski and Vabulas, 2024*a*).

Political science has long assessed the impact of elite cues — predominantly from politicians — on public opinion (e.g., Zaller, 1992; Druckman, 2001; Berinsky, 2007). This effect is particularly important in the context of foreign policy, where citizens are less informed and often rely on leaders' statements and actions to form preferences about distant and technically complex issues (e.g., Guisinger and Saunders, 2017; Tesler, 2018; Strezhnev, Simmons and Kim, 2019; Dellmuth and Tallberg, 2021; Saunders, 2022; Guisinger and Saunders, 2017; Baum and Groeling, 2009). However, the influence of elite cues is often conditioned by partisan polarization (Druckman, Peterson and Slothuus, 2013; Guisinger and Saunders, 2017), as individuals tend to accept signals from in-group elites and disregard or react negatively to out-group elites (Kahan, 2013; Bolsen, Druckman and Cook, 2014).

Previous research shows that governments' decisions to join and comply with international institutions function as elite signals that shape public opinion in various domains, including international security (Tomz, Weeks and Bansak, 2023; Kreps and Kriner, 2024), international law (Wallace, 2013), and climate politics (Tingley and Tomz, 2020). By making international commitments, leaders signal the importance of policies aligned with the content of those institutions. This subsequently creates compliance constituencies among the domestic public who push for compliance with the terms of the commitment, catalyzing further support for the agreement (e.g., Dai, 2005). Conversely, individuals punish leaders for inconsistency between statements and actions in foreign policy (Tomz, 2007). Failing to comply with a legal commitment thus risks causing public backlash (Tomz, 2007; Chaudoin, 2014).

Overall, the literature on elite cues suggests that withdrawal from international

institutions is likely to shape public attitudes not only toward the specific international institution itself, but also toward the policies it governs. In the next section, we theorize how withdrawal signals affect public support for policy outcomes, focusing on climate policy as a particularly salient and consequential domain. After that, we develop expectations about how these signals affect public support towards the leaders who make such decisions, and also the broader effects of such decisions on public attitudes, theorizing about attitudnal spillovers in other states as well as towards other dimensions of global governance.

Policy Attitudes

Building on the argument that withdrawal functions as a political signal, we theorize that leaders' withdrawal decisions shape public attitudes toward both the international institution itself and the policy domain it governs. Prior research shows that elite signals regarding international commitments influence public support for international cooperation and related domestic policies. We extend this logic to the context of withdrawal, arguing that signals of exit can shape how individuals evaluate both the international institution and the importance of the underlying policy issue.

Climate change provides a particularly salient context in which to assess these dynamics. A large body of work analyzed the American and global *public's* views on issues related to climate change, (e.g., Bechtel and Scheve, 2013*b*; Bernauer and Gampfer, 2015; Drews and van den Bergh, 2016; Egan and Mullin, 2017) and the green energy transition (e.g., Gazmararian, Mildenberger and Tingley, 2025), including some which specifically assess attitudes about the Paris Agreement (e.g., Maliniak, Parajon and Powers, 2021; Dechezleprêtre et al., 2022). Although the Paris Agreement enjoys broad public support, attitudes towards climate policy and cooperation have become increasingly divided along partisan lines.[3] Importantly, public opinion does not only shape the likelihood of a state joining and complying with the Paris Agreement, participating in the Agreement can shape downstream climate attitudes. For example, (e.g., Tingley and Tomz, 2020), show that voluntary commitments to the Paris Agreement can increase domestic support for costly climate policies in the U.S.

Existing work on elite cues further demonstrates that leader's rhetoric can shape public attitudes towards climate cooperation. Naming and shaming efforts, for instance, shape domestic support for complying with the pledges made under the Paris Agreement (Tingley and Tomz, 2022). Endorsements from policy experts, especially climate scientists, can also shape support for the Paris Agreement (Maliniak, Parajon and Powers, 2021). Finally, joining the Agreement itself can be thought of as a form of elite signaling, which can signal to the public that climate change is an issue of high national priority.

Far less attention, however, has been paid to how withdrawal from international institutions affects public attitudes toward the policies those institutions govern. Existing studies on institutional withdrawal has focused on its causes (Von Borzyskowski and Vabulas, 2019; Copelovitch and Pevehouse, 2019; von Borzyskowski and Vabulas, 2021; Von Borzyskowski and Vabulas, 2023), as well as the impact of withdrawal on institutional changes and survival (Vabulas, 2023; von Borzyskowski and Vabulas, 2024*b*; Schmidt, 2024). A small number of studies directly examine public opinion toward withdrawal decisions themselves. von Borzyskowski and Vabulas (2024*a*) show that withdrawal from

[3] Chicago Council, January 28, 2025.

international organizations can increase electoral support for candidates who frame exit as advancing national interests, particularly among Republican voters. In the specific context of climate governance, Kenny (2024) demonstrate that the U.S. public broadly disapproved of the Trump administration's withdrawal from the Paris Agreement during the first Trump presidency.

While this work establishes that withdrawal from the Paris Agreement is both salient and legible to the public, it focuses on whether citizens approve of the withdrawal decision itself, rather than on how withdrawal reshapes broader attitudes toward climate change, climate policy, or the Paris Agreement as an institution. We expect that both the threat of and the act of withdrawal will result in fundamentally different public reactions compared to joining international agreements — which signal support for the underlying legal framework and cause. As the literature on leader signaling suggests, the actions that heads of state take with respect to commitments to international institutions affects public perceptions of those institutions, as well as the issue areas that they address.

Building on this logic, our first set of hypotheses focus on **climate effects**. We argue that withdrawal from the Paris Agreement should affect public attitudes toward both the Agreement and climate policy more generally. In line with Tingley and Tomz (2020), who show that voluntary commitments to the Paris Agreement can increase domestic support for costly climate policies in the U.S., we posit that withdrawal sends the opposite signal. Rather than indicating political commitment and policy priority, withdrawal may signal that the Paris Agreement is ineffective, unnecessary, or contrary to national interests. Such a signal may in turn undermine public support not only for the Agreement, but also for climate mitigation policies more generally. Accordingly, we hypothesize that withdrawal from the Paris Agreement will negatively affect climate attitudes and support for the Agreement:

H1a: *Domestic withdrawal from the Paris Agreement* ***negatively*** *affects climate attitudes and support for the Paris Agreement.*[4]

On the other hand, withdrawal can generate the opposite reaction. If the public is concerned about the potential failure of the Paris Agreement without U.S. participation, they might view the withdrawal as a signal that international climate cooperation is under threat, prompting concern about the erosion of collective action on climate change. In this logic, public concern about the international coordination effort faltering could prompt increased support for more proactive climate policies at the local, state, or federal levels. Citizens may rally behind domestic measures to ensure that climate action continues even without the U.S. as a member, viewing these steps as necessary to fill the void left by the lack of international cooperation. Anecdotal evidence from the first Trump administration provides some empirical support for such an expectation. For example, while the federal government under the leadership of President Trump withdrew from the Paris Climate Agreement, over 400 mayors subsequently committed to upholding its emissions targets. This "We Are Still In" campaign includes cities and states with a combined GDP of over 9 *trillion* dollars and representing over 150 million Americans.[5] Thus, rather than seeing the withdrawal as a step backward, the public might perceive it as a prompt to accelerate national-level efforts to tackle climate change:

[4] Our pre-registered hypotheses can be found XXX.

[5] See also Arias and Schwartz (2025).

H1b: *Domestic withdrawal from the Paris Agreement* ***positively*** *affects climate attitudes and support for the Paris Agreement.*

Audience Costs and Institutional Withdrawal

Signals of institutional withdrawal may also carry reputational consequences for the political leaders who issue them. Drawing on research on audience costs (Fearon, 1994; Tomz, 2007; Kertzer and Brutger, 2016), as well as recent work on public reactions to institutional withdrawal (von Borzyskowski and Vabulas, 2024*a*), we argue that withdrawal announcements convey information not only about policy priorities but also about leaders' resolve and willingness to follow through on public commitments.

From a populist point of view, for example, the withdrawing leader may be seen as strong for advocating for the national interest against the globalist elites. At the same time, the literature on audience costs emphasizes that leaders incur political penalties when they fail to act consistently with their stated intentions (Fearon, 1994). Public commitments create expectations, and inconsistency between foreign policy statements and subsequent actions can undermine perceptions of credibility (Tomz, 2007; Chaudoin, 2014).

We thus hypothesize that the political consequences of withdrawal signals depend on whether leaders carry out what they promise. When a leader publicly signals an intention to withdraw from (or remain in) an international institution but does not follow through, we expect this mismatch to generate audience costs. Citizens may interpret such inconsistency as evidence of weakness, insincerity, or lack of control, leading to lower evaluations of the leader. By contrast, when leaders act in accordance with their stated intentions, reputational penalties should be attenuated. It thus follows that:

H2: *A signal of intent to* ***remain in*** *or* ***withdraw from*** *the Paris Agreement by President-Elect Trump would have* ***negative*** *effects on presidential approval* ***if it is not carried out.***[6]

Institutional and International Spillovers

Beyond their direct effects on attitudes toward the withdrawing institution and its policy domain, signals of institutional withdrawal may generate broader spillovers. Here, we distinguish between *institutional spillovers*, in which withdrawal from one international institution shapes public attitudes toward other institutions and international law more broadly, and *international spillovers*, in which withdrawal affects public opinion in other countries.

Institutional Spillovers

Withdrawal from an international institution in one issue area may lead the public to update beliefs about international cooperation more generally. While existing scholarship on spillovers across institutions in public opinion is relatively sparse, a growing body of work demonstrates that reputational evaluations frequently spill over across issue areas and institutional domains. For example, Bush and Zetterberg (2021) demonstrate that

[6] The "withdraw from" articulation of this hypothesis was not included in our pre-analysis plan, but follows the same logic.

when governments adopt policies that enhance their reputation for gender equality, this also improves their perceived commitment to democracy. Similarly, Bassan-Nygate and Buzas (2025) show that when human rights organizations suffer reputational damage, this harm spills over to adjacent organizations within the international human rights regime. Ares, Ceka and Kriesi (2017) illustrate that support for national institutions in European countries spills over to support for the EU. Together, these studies suggest that elite cues are rarely confined to a single institution or issue area; instead, observers often generalize from one visible action to a broader set of beliefs.

Applying the same logic, withdrawal from the Paris Agreement could not only signal that the Agreement is ineffective, but trigger broader skepticism towards international institutions and law. The public may be especially likely to make these kinds of broader inferences because withdrawal from the Paris Agreement furthers the generally anti-globalist narratives advanced by populist domestic interests and political parties, who could use the withdrawal from one institution in an effort to catalyze broader withdrawal from the liberal international order (Hooghe, Lenz and Marks, 2019; Walter, 2021*a*).[7] As a result, withdrawal from the Paris Agreement can reduce public support for *other* international institutions, such as human rights or economic treaties, by undermining confidence in international law as a whole. For example, if withdrawing from the Paris Agreement decreases belief that international law is effective or benefits the national interest in general, this may lead respondents to believe that other institutions — such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) — are also not worth participating in. We thus hypothesize that:

H3a: *Domestic withdrawal from the Paris Agreement* ***negatively*** *affects support for international institutions outside of the Paris Agreement and international law more broadly.*

At the same time, withdrawal may generate the opposite reaction among domestic publics, increasing support for international institutions beyond the Paris Agreement. Rather than interpreting withdrawal as evidence that international institutions are ineffective, citizens may view it as a signal that international cooperation itself is under threat (as in H1b). In this logic, withdrawal highlights the risks associated with the erosion of multilateral commitments, prompting concern that collective action failures may worsen in the absence of institutional constraints.

If citizens believe that disengagement from one institution weakens the broader international legal order, they may respond by reaffirming support for other international agreements as a means of compensating for (or resisting) elite retreat from multilateralism. Withdrawal from a highly salient international agreement, such as the Paris Agreement, may prompt publics to place greater value on international institutions and legal commitments more generally, viewing them as essential safeguards against populist unilateralism. Rather than eroding confidence in international law, withdrawal could thus sharpen awareness of its importance and mobilize pro-institutional attitudes across adjacent domains:

H3b: *Withdrawal from the Paris Agreement* ***positively*** *affects support for international institutions outside of the Paris Agreement and international law more broadly.*[8]

[7] E.g., Yan, August 1, 2025; Liy, January 22, 2025.

[8] We disaggregate our pre-registered hypotheses into H1a/b and H3a/b for clarity in the discussion. In

International Spillovers

A second set of spillovers we theorize concerns international effects of withdrawal — that is, how withdrawal from an international institution by one state (state A) shapes public attitudes in another member state (state B). While external audiences may overlook many withdrawals from member states (Borzyskowski, 2025, 26), prior research shows that foreign policy can generate reputational and attitudinal effects among third-party observers (Kertzer, Renshon and Yarhi-Milo, 2021; Bassan-Nygate, Forthcoming). We contend that the sailience of withdrawals depends on the prominence of the withdrawing state and the institution at stake, and that withdrawal by a powerful and highly visible actor from a central international institution may generate salient and meaningful signals for foreign publics. Evidence from the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union illustrates this dynamic. Brexit was not merely a domestic political event, but one that attracted widespread attention across Europe and beyond, as voters in other states updated their opinions after learning about the experience of Brexit in the UK (Walter, 2021*b*). The salience of Brexit stemmed from both the UK's central role within the EU and the EU's status as a highly consequential institution.

Applying a similar logic, we argue that US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement can generate meaningful international spillovers in public opinion. The US occupies a central position in international politics generally, and in global climate governance specifically as a major emitter, a key funder of climate initiatives, and a leading architect of the Paris Agreement — the core institutional framework for international climate cooperation. As a highly visible actor, US withdrawal serves as a signal to foreign publics, operating through the same elite cueing logic described above. This withdrawal could provide information to publics in other countries about the economic, social, and political consequences of withdrawal (Walter, 2021*b*).

Further, exit from international commitments creates asymmetries in obligations, as the remaining states must still comply while the withdrawing state can free-ride on their efforts, raising public concern about fairness (Brutger and Rathbun, 2021; Schmidt, 2024, 2025). This dynamic is particularly stark in the climate space: individuals support climate plans when costs are shared broadly (e.g., Coleman, Harring and Jagers, 2023; Bechtel and Scheve, 2013*a*; Gampfer, Bernauer and Kachi, 2014) — the withdrawal of a major participant would have dramatic consequences on burden-sharing among remaining participants. This perceived unfairness could empower anti-climate interests in the electorate, mobilizing further opposition for participation.

Not only would a withdrawal be likely to affect international audiences' attitudes about the Paris Agreement, but would also be expected to affect their perceptions of the US president. Withdrawal is costly both in terms of its reputational effect — it creates doubt about whether the withdrawing state is a reliable partner or part of the in-group — as well as material effects on reduced future cooperation (Borzyskowski, 2025). After reneging on one commitment, how likely would that state be to uphold others?

We follow a similar logic with our other expectations and assess whether the U.S. withdrawal has shaped public attitudes towards the Agreement, international law, and climate change, in other (non-US) signatories of the Paris Agreement. On the one hand,

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addition, H3a/b includes outcomes related to additional international institutions that were specified in the pre-registration but were inadvertently omitted from the hypotheses section. These outcomes are nonetheless clearly implied by — and consistent with — the theoretical framework described in the pre-registration plan (p. 1).

it is possible that the U.S. withdrawal sends a negative signal to the international community, undermining the perceived legitimacy of the Paris Agreement, international climate governance, and international law more broadly. As Tingley and Tomz (2014) theorize, citizens might adopt a policy of 'emulation' in response to the actions of other states, and if one major state withdraws from the Agreement, citizens in other countries prefer to adopt a similar response in their own states. Consistent with this, (Kenny, 2024, 457) find that across 38 countries, individuals in all but Russia, Indonesia, and India were more likely to disapprove than approve of Trump's initial decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement. As a global leader, U.S. disengagement might reduce trust in collective action, weaken norm adherence, and discourage public support for climate policies in other countries.

H4a: *U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement* ***negatively*** *affects climate attitudes, support for the Paris Agreement, and support for international law in third-party states.*

On the other hand, the U.S. withdrawal could also strengthen international resolve by highlighting the importance of multilateral agreements independent of any single country. Other signatories might perceive U.S. disengagement as a cautionary example, reinforcing their commitment to the Paris Agreement and increasing public support for both climate action and international law. This behavior would be in line with the 'counterbalancing' response theorized by Tingley and Tomz (2014), and is consistent with von Borzyskowski and Vabulas (2024*b*) who argue that withdrawal often leads remaining states to band together, thereby ensuring or even enhancing the longevity of the international institution. In this view, US withdrawal may mobilize publics in other countries to support continued cooperation despite the absence of a major actor.[9] This generates a competing expectation:

H4b: *U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement* ***positively*** *affects climate attitudes, support for the Paris Agreement, and support for international law in third-party states.*

Empirically Evaluating the Effects of Withdrawal from the Paris Agreement

To empirically test the theory outlined in the previous section, we conducted three studies in two countries where withdrawal from the Paris Agreement was a likely outcome: the U.S. and Argentina. In Study I, which we refer to as *"U.S. Survey Experiment"*,

Hypotheses		**Summary**
Climate Effects	H1a	Domestic withdrawal *reduces* climate attitudes and support for the Paris Agreement
	H1b	Domestic withdrawal *increases* climate attitudes and support for the Paris Agreement
Audience Costs	H2	A signal of intent to withdraw (or remain) that is not carried out *lowers* leader approval
Institutional Spillovers	H3a	Domestic withdrawal *reduces* support for other international institutions and intl. law
	H3b	Domestic withdrawal *increases* support for other international institutions and intl. law
International Spillovers	H4a	U.S. withdrawal *reduces* climate attitudes, support for the Paris Agreement and intl. law in third parties
	H4b	U.S. withdrawal *increases* climate attitudes, support for the Paris Agreement and intl. law in third parties

Table 1: Summary of Hypotheses

[9] On the other hand, Beiser-McGrath and Bernauer (2019) find that information on other countries' failure to meet Paris commitments did not affect public support for the Agreement.

we leveraged the uncertainty surrounding the U.S.'s potential withdrawal from the Paris Agreement prior to President Trump's second inauguration to randomly shape respondents' beliefs about withdrawal. In Study II, titled *"Pre-Post US Withdrawal Survey"*, we recontacted 15% of these individuals following Trump's announced withdrawal to measure real-world shifts in attitudes in interrupted time series and difference-in-differences analysis, allowing us to test our audience costs hypothesis. Finally, in Study III, titled *"Argentina Survey Experiment"*, we replicate a similar design in Argentina. Doing so allows us to assess the generalizability of our findings and examine international and institutional spillovers, outlined in H3 and H4. In the following sections, we describe the research design and findings of each study.

Study I – U.S. Survey Experiment

To test the effects of withrdawal from international agreements on public attitudes, we conducted a survey experiment targeting the adult population in the United States in early January 2025. All three of our studies were conducted with Cint, a sample provider we selected for its ability to provide samples that closely match key demographic characteristics of the general population and its capability to recontact individuals for follow-up studies. We intentionally fielded the survey before U.S. President Trump's inauguration to shape respondents' real attitudes toward U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement under conditions of uncertainty: prior to Trump's inauguration, it was unclear whether and when he would announce a U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement. This timing allowed us to uniquely leverage a real-world event to influence participants' beliefs about the potential withdrawal and created conditions under which all of our experimental conditions (described below) had high external validity.[10] Overall, we collected approximately $4,000$ attentive respondents in Study I. Following informed consent, filtering attention checks, we collected pre-treatment demographics, including foreign policy dispositions and climate change attitudes. Respondents were then presented with an experimental vignette.[11]

Participants were randomly assigned to one of three experimental conditions. Figure 1 provides the full text of the vignettes. All vignettes provided background information on the Paris Agreement and emphasized that it does not impose legal or economic penalties for noncompliance. This framing ensured that participants had a clear understanding of the context and the implications of withdrawal or continued participation, and borrowed the language used by Tingley and Tomz (2020).

In the **Withdraw** condition ($Pr = 0.4$), participants were presented with a vignette indicating that political experts predict President Trump is likely to withdraw the United States from the Paris Agreement. In the **Remain** condition ($Pr = 0.4$), participants read a vignette suggesting that experts expect the United States to remain in the Paris Agreement. Finally, in the **Uncertain** condition ($Pr = 0.2$), participants were presented with a vignette highlighting expert uncertainty about the President's likely actions regarding the Agreement. Our primary analysis compares respondents in the withdraw and remain conditions, as these reflect the two concrete policy options avail-

[10] See Bassan-Nygate and Weiss (2022) and Tankard and Paluck (2017) for a similar experimental designs in other contexts, and Maliniak, Parajon and Powers (2021, 867) for a design leveraging uncertainty over initial US participation in the Paris Agreement.

[11] See Appendix Section SI-9 for the full survey instrument.

able to President Trump. The uncertain condition serves as a baseline, allowing us to determine whether any observed effects are primarily driven by the withdrawal prime, the remain prime, or both. Because our core comparison of interest is between remain and leave, we oversampled in these conditions to ensure that our analyses would be adequately powered.

> Since President-elect Donald Trump has been re-elected to office, many political experts have made projections about his environmental policies. The United States is currently a member of the Paris Agreement, an international agreement aimed at combating climate change. The Paris Agreement does not specify any legal or economic penalties for countries that violate their promises to reduce emissions.
>
> Many experts predict that President-elect Trump will withdraw the United States from the Paris Agreement./ Many experts predict that President-elect Trump will choose to remain in the Paris Agreement./ However, experts are unclear about what specific actions President-elect Trump will take regarding the Paris Agreement.

Figure 1: **Study I Vignette Text:** The shared text is shown in black, while the condition-specific predictions are highlighted in color: red for Withdraw (Pr=0.4), green for Remain (Pr=0.4), and orange for Uncertain (Pr=0.2).

Following the vignette, respondents answered several outcome questions, which were presented in a randomized order to mitigate against priming or fatigue effects. In order to ensure we were able to credibly shape respondents' perceptions about the likelihood of withdrawal, we asked them to assess how likely Trump is to withdraw from the Paris Agreement on a scale of 1 to 5. To measure climate attitudes, we used a set of questions previously validated by Arias and Blair (2022, 2024) and combined them into a single index. To assess support for the Paris Agreement, respondents indicated how important it is to them personally that the U.S. remains in the Agreement, using a scale from 1 (not important at all) to 5 (very important). Obligation for international law was measured using items from a scale developed by Bayram (2017), which were indexed into a variable where 1 indicates no obligation and 5 indicates strong obligation to international law. Finally, respondents reported how much they approve of President Trump, on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much).

Study I Results

We begin by reporting the effects of potential withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, compared to remaining in the Agreement, on our main outcomes of interest. First, it is worth noting that we successfully manipulated respondents' perceptions about the likelihood of withdrawal, as shown by the point estimates in Figure 2, column 6. Specifically, assignment to the withdrawal condition increases perceived likelihood of withdrawal by 0.61 points in the pooled sample ($\beta = 0.61$, $p < .001$), with similarly large effects among both Republicans ($\beta = 0.68$, $p < .001$) and Democrats ($\beta = 0.67$, $p < .001$). In doing so, we are able to approximate a real world effect, rather than the hypothetical nature that often characterizes survey experiments (Brutger et al., 2023).

In assessing attitudes towards the Paris Agreement, we find overall support for H1a over H1b, but clear heterogeneous effects by partisanship. We find that the possibility of the United States withdrawing from the Paris Agreement reduces overall support for the Agreement (Figure 2, column 3). Withdrawal cues are associated with a statistically significant decrease in support for the Paris Agreement ($\beta = -0.11$, $p = .011$). The effect of withdrawal on support for the Agreement are statistically significantly different between Republican and Democratic respondents. As evident from Figure 3, the negative effect of withdrawal on attitudes is primarily driven by Republican respondents, whose average support drops from 3.27 when President Trump is described as remaining in the Agreement to 2.97 when withdrawal is suggested, with uncertainty serving as a midpoint with an average of 3.11. This corresponds to a substantively large and significant treatment effect among Republicans ($\beta = -0.30$, $p < .001$).

In contrast, Democrats maintain consistently high support across all scenarios: 4.06 when Trump is described as remaining in the Agreement, 4.16 when the outcome is uncertain, and 4.16 when withdrawal is suggested. The estimated effect of withdrawal on Democratic support for the Paris Agreement is positive and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.10$, $p = .05$). This pattern is consistent with a backlash or 'boomerang' effect (e.g., Guess and Coppock, 2020): the cue that Trump intends to *remain* in the Agreement is associated with a slight reduction in support for Democrats, highlighting the politicized nature of climate change in the US.

Next, we evaluate not only attitudes towards climate governance (i.e. the Paris Agreement), but also climate attitudes more broadly. Here, we do not find statistically significant effects on climate attitudes for either Republicans or Democrats. For example, the estimated effects on the climate attitudes index are small and statistically indistinguishable from zero in the pooled sample ($\beta = -0.03$, $p = .319$), as well as within partisan subgroups. This result may suggest that participation in international climate agreements is not a major driver of individuals' overall concern about climate change, somewhat contrasting with Tingley and Tomz (2022), who found elite signals did affect preferences over domestic climate policy.

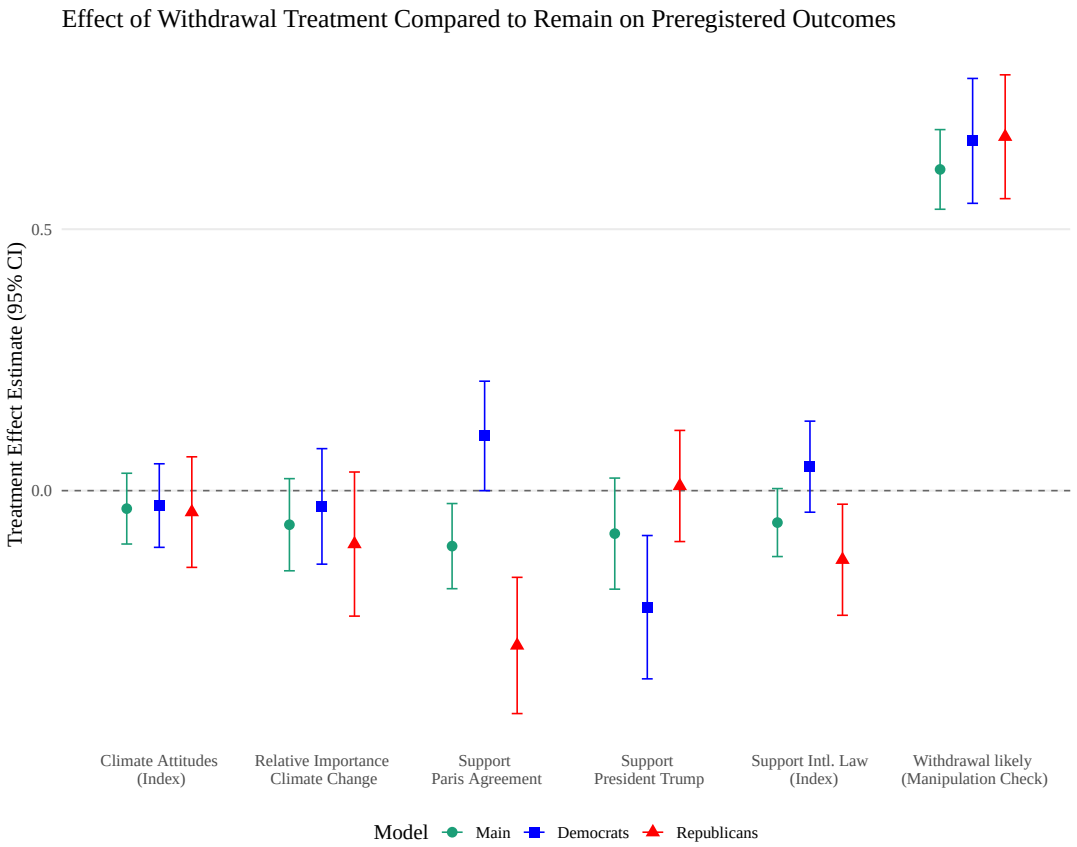

Figure 2: **Effect of Withdrawal Compared to Remain:** Point estimates and 95% confidence intervals are plotted for different outcome variables and broken down by the full sample, Democrats, and Republicans.

Evaluating institutional spillovers, we find that information about withdrawing from the Paris Agreement modestly decreases overall support for international law, consistent with H3a ($\beta = -0.06$, $p = .066$). This pattern is largely driven by Republican respondents, where withdrawal cues significantly reduce support for international law ($\beta = -0.13$, $p = .015$), while no comparable effect is observed among Democrats ($\beta = 0.05$, $p = .302$).

Finally, we explore how withdrawal affects support for the President.[12] Figure 2, column 4 indicates that the withdrawal cue reduces support for President Trump among Democratic respondents. This effect is sizeable and statistically significant, with Democrats in the withdrawal condition reporting substantially lower support for Trump ($\beta = -0.22$, $p = .001$). Unlike the heterogeneous effects previously discussed, there is no effect on support from Trump from Republicans.

Taken together, our findings from Study I highlight the extent to which cues about U.S. commitments to international agreements are filtered through partisan identities. While Democrats maintain consistently high support for the Paris Agreement across scenarios and respond in *opposition* to signals received by President Trump — slightly reducing support when he signals an intent to remain — Republicans' attitudes shift *in line* with his signals, and to a much greater extent, consistent with expectations of motivated reasoning and backlash in a highly polarized environment (Kahan, 2013; Bolsen, Druckman and Cook, 2014).

[12] This analysis was not explicitly pre-registered.

Results from Study I thus provide partial support for H1a, insofar as withdrawal cues decrease Republican support for the Paris Agreement, though we do not find an effect on climate attitudes. However, we find no evidence consistent with H1b. The withdrawal cue did not increase climate concern or support for the Paris Agreement. The slight increase in public support that we see amongst Democrats in Figure 2, appears to be driven by lower support for the agreement in the '*remain*' condition, rather than an increase in the '*withdraw*' condition, as reflected in Figure 3.

Overall, the results underscore the politicization of climate policy and international law in the United States and demonstrate how elite signals can shape public evaluations of global politics, which has downstream effects for the legitimacy and efficacy of such international institutions.

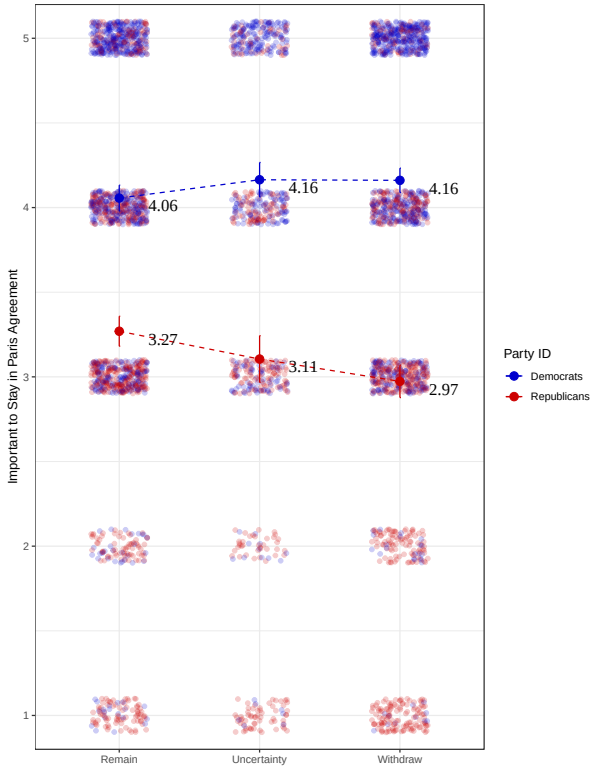

Figure 3: **Support for Paris Agreement by Party ID:** Means and 95% confidence intervals are plotted for each condition, broken down by Party identification.

Study II – Pre-Post U.S. Withdrawal Survey

Almost immediately after his inauguration, President Trump announced that the United States would withdraw from the Paris Agreement (McGrath, 2025). Leveraging this real-world event, we conducted a follow-up study one week after the announcement. This timing allowed us to provide additional evidence for H1 by using an interrupted time-series to assess whether the withdrawal influenced public opinion on the Paris Agreement and climate change, and to examine the audience-cost effects described in H2. In other words, this design enabled us to analyze both within-subject changes and heterogeneous treatment effects using a standard Difference-in-Differences (DiD) framework through the treatment $\times$ post interaction.

After obtaining consent, all recontacted respondents read a short text informing

them that President Trump had withdrawn the U.S. from the Paris Agreement. We then measured the same outcome variables captured in Study I: climate attitudes, support for the Paris Agreement, approval of President Trump, and support for international law. We successfully recontacted 619 respondents, representing approximately a recontact rate of 15%. Though this recontact rate is somewhat low, as shown in our balance tables of the full sample from Study I as well as the completes only (Tables A-8 and A-9), there were no substantial differences in demographic characteristics between the original sample and the recontacted respondents on key demographic features such as partisanship, and these differences are attenuated when looking only at completes, which is most relevant for our analyses. However, the relatively small sample size has implications for statistical power, so these findings should be interpreted with caution.

Study II Results

We begin by assessing the differences between pre- and post-means in the recontacted sample (See Figure 4). Both comparison groups aggregate across all treatment conditions in Study I. Mean climate attitudes, support for international law, and support for President Trump show no meaningful shift from pre- to post-withdrawal. In contrast, support for the Paris Agreement declines modestly between waves, falling from a mean of 3.64 in the pre-withdrawal wave to 3.42 post-withdrawal. As in Study I, this decline is largely driven by Republican respondents (Figure A-11), who are more likely to take up the President's cue. The within-respondent shifts are consistent with those of the aggregate sample: Within-respondent (Figure A-9), we also observe a declining support for the Paris Agreement, as well as the same null effects on climate attitudes, support for President Trump, and support for international law.

This downward shift in reported support for the Agreement following the withdrawal announcement largely aligns with our findings in Study I that elite signals can shape public attitudes towards the Paris Agreement, and that partisan politics condition the effects of these signals. However, in contrast to Study I, we do not find spillovers to international law more broadly. This may relate to the smaller sample size of the recontacted panel, which limits statistical power, as well as the substantially weaker effects on international law observed in Study I. At the same time, we cannot rule out the possibility that this pattern simply reflects the absence of any meaningful effect of the withdrawal announcement on attitudes toward international law more generally.

Next, we assess the difference-in-differences of treatment effects in Figure 5, directly testing our audience costs hypothesis (H2), which predicts that public approval of Trump should decline when his actions contradict his earlier signal. We do not find evidence of differential change across treatment conditions for climate attitudes, support for international law or support for President Trump. These null effects indicate that, after accounting for temporal changes, treatment assignment does not meaningfully shape changes in these attitudes. The exception is support for the Paris Agreement. The estimated interaction term is positive and marginally statistically significant ($\beta = 0.19, p = 0.051$), suggesting that respondents in the withdrawal condition experienced a smaller decline in support for the Paris Agreement than those in the remain condition. Indeed, as shown by Figure 6, although support for the Paris Agreement decreases across all conditions following withdrawal, the difference is largest among respondents in the remain condition.

Taken together, the results from Study II largely replicate and extend the patterns observed in Study I. Consistent with H1a, support for the Paris Agreement declines from pre- to post-withdrawal among the recontacted sample. Respondents in the Withdraw

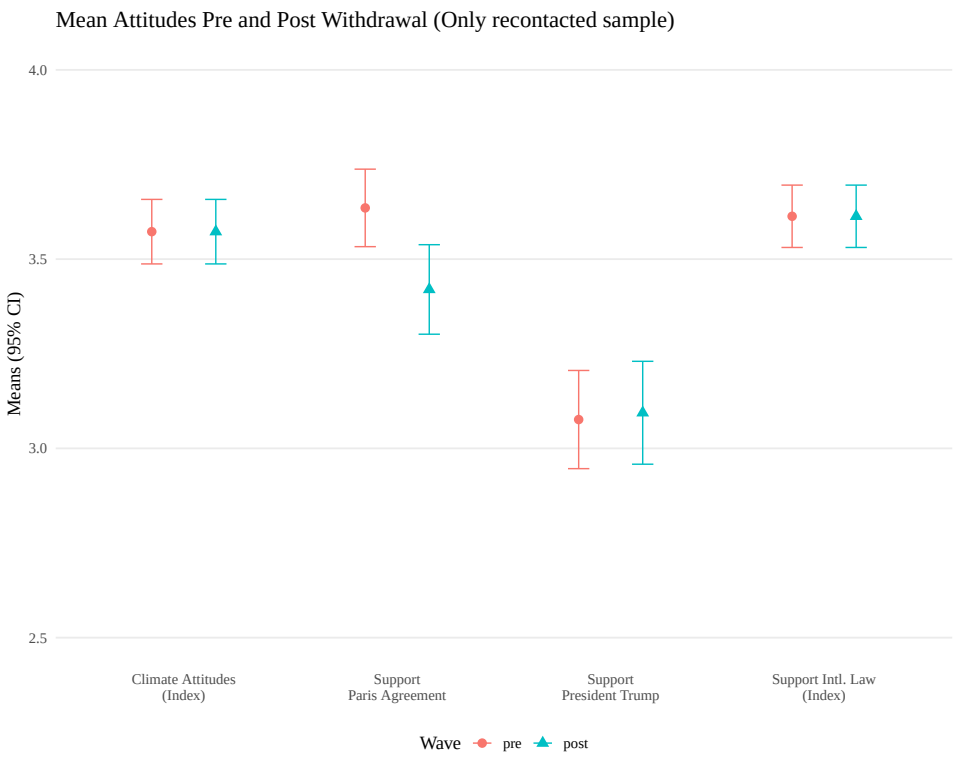

Figure 4: **Pre–post means in the recontacted sample:** Point estimates show outcome means and 95% confidence intervals at the pre- and post-withdrawal waves among respondents recontacted in both waves. Outcomes are shown on the x-axis.

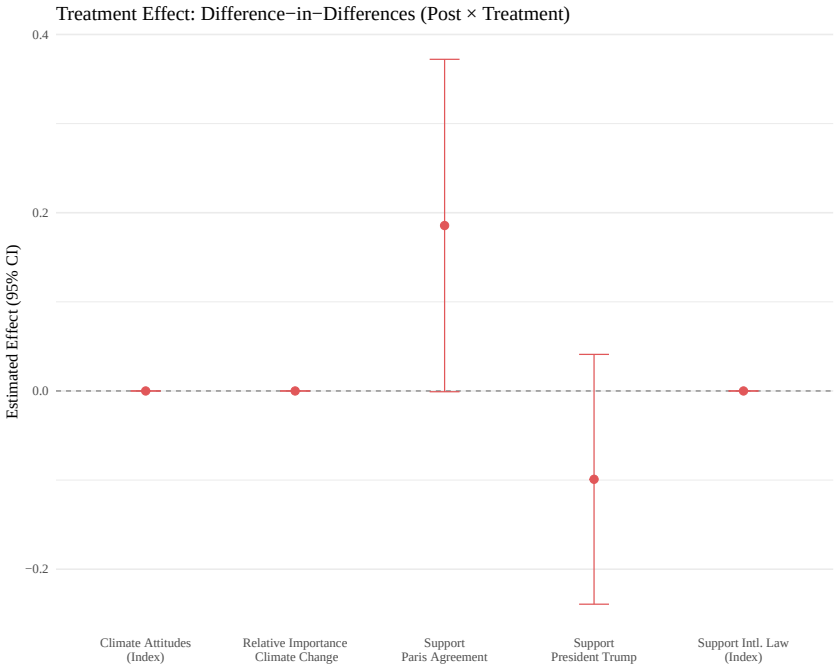

Figure 5: **Difference-in-differences estimates of treatment effects:** Points show coefficient estimates and 95% confidence intervals for the interaction between post-treatment period and treatment status from individual fixed-effects regressions. Estimates represent within-respondent changes over time, differenced between treatment and control groups. Outcomes are shown on the x-axis.

condition show smaller declines than those in the Remain condition, a pattern we did not anticipate or pre-register. One plausible ex-post explanation is that prior exposure to the withdrawal cue in Wave 1 tempered respondents' reaction to the actual withdrawal event (Figure 6). Our results also may be suggestive evidence in favor of motivated reasoning: since the withdrawal was consistent with the withdrawal treatment condition in Study I, these respondents were merely receiving reinforcing information, and according to motivated reasoning would be expected to maintain a consistent attitude in both waves. On the other hand, the act of withdrawal was most inconsistent with the remain condition in Study I, thus, these respondents would have to update their beliefs the most strongly from the initial signal in order to be in line with the elite cue.

In contrast to support for the Paris Agreement, we find no meaningful changes in climate attitudes or support for international law. Furthermore, we find no statistically significant changes in approval of President Trump across waves or by treatment condition (Figures 4 and 5), providing no evidence in support of H2. The null effects on Trump approval indicate that leaders do not experience measurable audience costs from failing to remain in international Agreements, which contrasts with findings that the public punishes leaders for foreign policy inconsistency (Tomz, 2007; Chaudoin, 2014) and may suggest that climate change is one area in which elite cues are less relevant to the public, building on the arguments put forth by Guisinger and Saunders (2017).

Importantly, our conclusions from Study II are based on a modest recontacted sample (n = 619, 15% of the original sample), which limits statistical power and suggests that effect sizes may be estimated with substantial uncertainty. Bearing this in mine, these findings reinforce the conclusion that withdrawal from the Paris Agreement had targeted effects on attitudes toward the Agreement itself, but did not substantially shift broader climate or political attitudes.

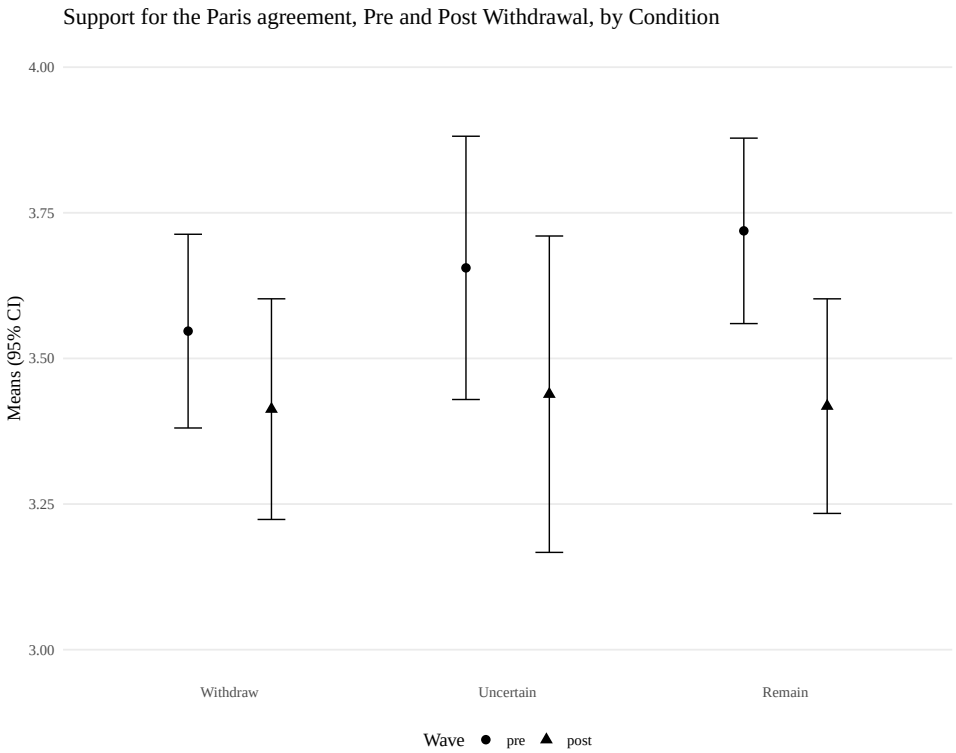

Figure 6: **Support for the Paris Agreement before and after withdrawal, by condition:** Points show mean support for the Paris Agreement with 95% confidence intervals at the pre- and post-withdrawal survey waves, separately for respondents assigned to the Withdraw, Remain, and Uncertain conditions. Estimates are calculated using the recontacted sample only.

Study III – Argentina Survey Experiment

To examine whether our findings about the impact of withdrawal on support for the Paris Agreement, climate attitudes, and international law (Hypothses 1 and 3) in Studies I and II generalize outside of the U.S. and to assess our international spillover hypotheses (H4a and H4b), we conducted a third study in Argentina. Much like the U.S. context, Argentina is a Paris Agreement signatory, and President Javier Milei has publicly expressed interest in withdrawing the country from the Agreement (e.g., Mooney and Nugent, 2025). Political analysts widely anticipate that Argentina may leave the Agreement in the near future. This allows us to test both domestic responses to a potential withdrawal by the national leader in another context. Further, becuase the study took place several months after the U.S. withdrew from the Agreement, we can assess spillover effects, as we can observe third-party responses to a major U.S. withdrawal event.

We recruited participants through Cint to minimize differences in sampling procedures between Studies I and III. The survey was programmed by two human language experts in Spanish and included over 3,300 attentive respondents from the adult population in Argentina. The procedure largely mirrored Study I: after providing consent and completing attention checks, respondents were randomly assigned to one of three experimental conditions. In the Argentina-specific withdrawal condition (Pr = 0.33), participants read a vignette indicating that President Javier Milei was considering withdrawing Argentina from the Paris Agreement. In the U.S. withdrawal condition (Pr = 0.33), participants read a vignette describing President Trump's withdrawal of the United

States from the Paris Agreement. Finally, a control condition (Pr = 0.33) provided no additional information about withdrawal. Figure 7 presents the full vignette text for each condition.

Following the vignette, respondents answered the same outcome measures used in Studies I and II, including climate attitudes, support for the Paris Agreement, and support for international law. To better assess potential institutional spillover effects (H3a and H3b), we included more specific measures of support for other international agreements, including human rights, economic, and trade agreements, and included measures of support for both President Trump and President Milei. Our design allows us to examine both domestic reactions to a potential Argentine withdrawal and third-party reactions to the U.S. withdrawal, testing the international spillover hypotheses (H4a and H4b) in a comparable survey-experimental framework.

> Argentina is currently a member of the Paris Agreement, an international agreement aimed at combating climate change. The Paris Agreement does not specify any legal or economic penalties for countries that violate their promises to reduce emissions.
>
> President Javier Milei has publicly stated that he is considering withdrawing from the Paris Agreement, and many political experts predict that Argentina will leave the Agreement in the near future./ In January 2025, United States President Donald Trump ordered the withdrawal of the United States from the Paris Agreement./ No additional information.

Figure 7: **Study III Vignette Text:** The shared text is shown in black, while the condition-specific predictions are highlighted in color: Violet for Argentinal withdrawal (Pr=0.33), red for US withdrew (Pr=0.33), and gray for Control (Pr=0.33).

Study III Results

We begin by examining the effects of a potential Argentine withdrawal from the Paris Agreement. As shown in Figure 8, respondents in the Argentina withdrawal condition were substantially more likely to report that a withdrawal was likely, confirming successful manipulation ($\beta = 0.40$, $p < 0.001$). Notably, this manipulation was stronger among Milei supporters ($\beta = 0.54$, $p < 0.001$) than non-supporters ($\beta = 0.26$, $p < 0.001$), which could explain some of the diverging effects observed across these groups. This differential salience is in contrast to the U.S. sample, where manipulation strength was relatively uniform across partisan groups.

Consistent with H1a and with our results in the U.S. sample, support for the Paris Agreement declines in response to the prospect of a domestic withdrawal, with an estimated decrease of -0.21 points relative to the control condition ($p < 0.001$). Also aligning with the polarized pattern observed in the U.S., this negative effect is particularly pronounced among Milei supporters, whose support falls by -0.39 points ($p < 0.001$), compared to a smaller and statistically non-significant decline among non-supporters (-0.07, $p = 0.21$; see Figure 9). Effects on climate attitudes are negative but not statistically significant in the full sample, though the direction is consistent with H1a, again largely replicating the findings in Study I. Similarly, spillover effects on support for

international law and other international agreements trend negative, consistent with H3a, but fall short of conventional significance thresholds. In one notable difference from the U.S. case where partisan responses diverged in their attitudes towards Trump, support for Milei in the withdraw condition compared to the remain condition declines across the political spectrum, though not statistically significantly so.

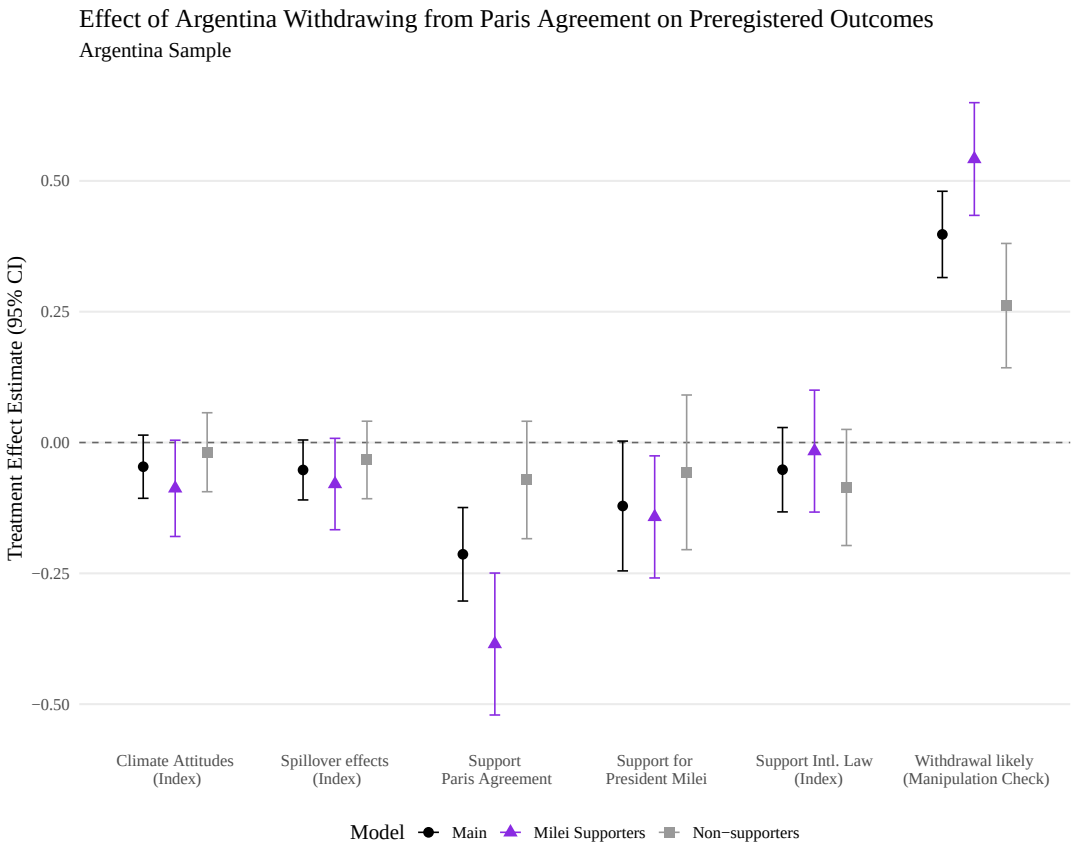

Figure 8: **Effect of Argentina Withdrawal Compared to Control:** Point estimates and 95% confidence intervals are plotted for different outcome variables and broken down by the full sample, Milei Supporters, and Non-supporters.

Turning to third-party reactions, that is, the presence of international spillovers hypothesized in H4, Figure 10 presents the effects of U.S. withdrawal on Argentine respondents. Across the full sample, support for the Paris Agreement declines modestly though not statistically significantly ($\beta = -0.06$), with statistically significant reductions in climate attitudes ($\beta = -0.076$, $p = 0.013$). There are no significant changes in support for the Paris Agreement, international law, spillover effects, or support for President Trump. Patterns are largely similar across Milei supporters and non-supporters. This finding is largely consistent with Borzyskowski (2025)'s expectation that third-party withdrawals have little effects on international public attitudes towards international agreements, though may send signals about the importance of the issues covered by those agreements.

Taken together, these results suggest that a potential Argentine withdrawal produces a negative effect on support for the Paris Agreement, consistent with H1a. The effects are stronger among politically aligned respondents (i.e., Milei supporters), reflecting similar partisan dynamics as observed in the U.S. We have reasonably strong evidence, then, that H1a is generalizable across countries, and weaker but suggestive evi-

dence that H3a also holds broadly. Third-party reactions to U.S. withdrawal are smaller but generally consistent with H4a, showing modest declines in climate attitudes.

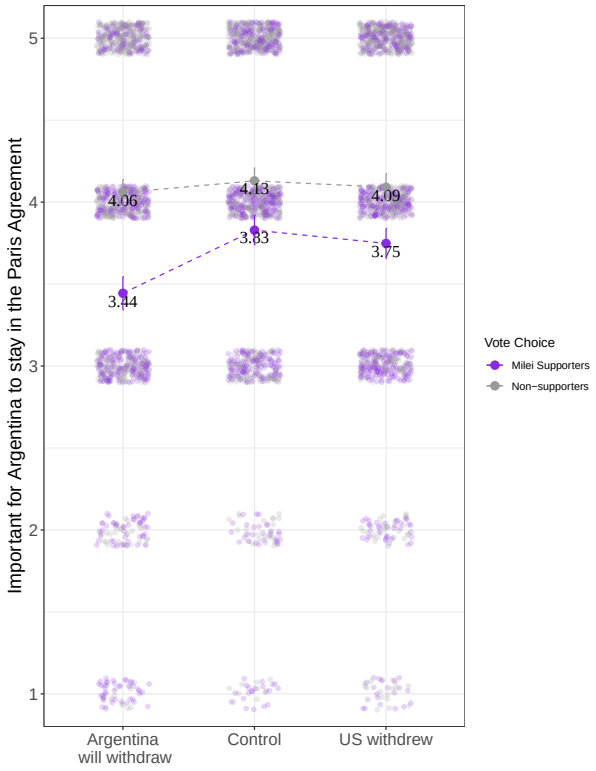

Figure 9: **Support for Paris Agreement by Vote Choice:** Means and 95% confidence intervals are plotted for each condition, broken down by Milei supporters and non-supporters.

Importantly, climate attitudes in Argentina appear more malleable than in the U.S.: both domestic and U.S. withdrawal cues lead to declines, even if some are modest. This suggests that in contexts where climate attitudes are less stable or polarized, as they are in the U.S., withdrawal from international agreements may have broader consequences for public opinion, increasing the potential political and social costs of breaking international commitments. This suggests that our evidence from Studies I and II may constitute conservative estimates.

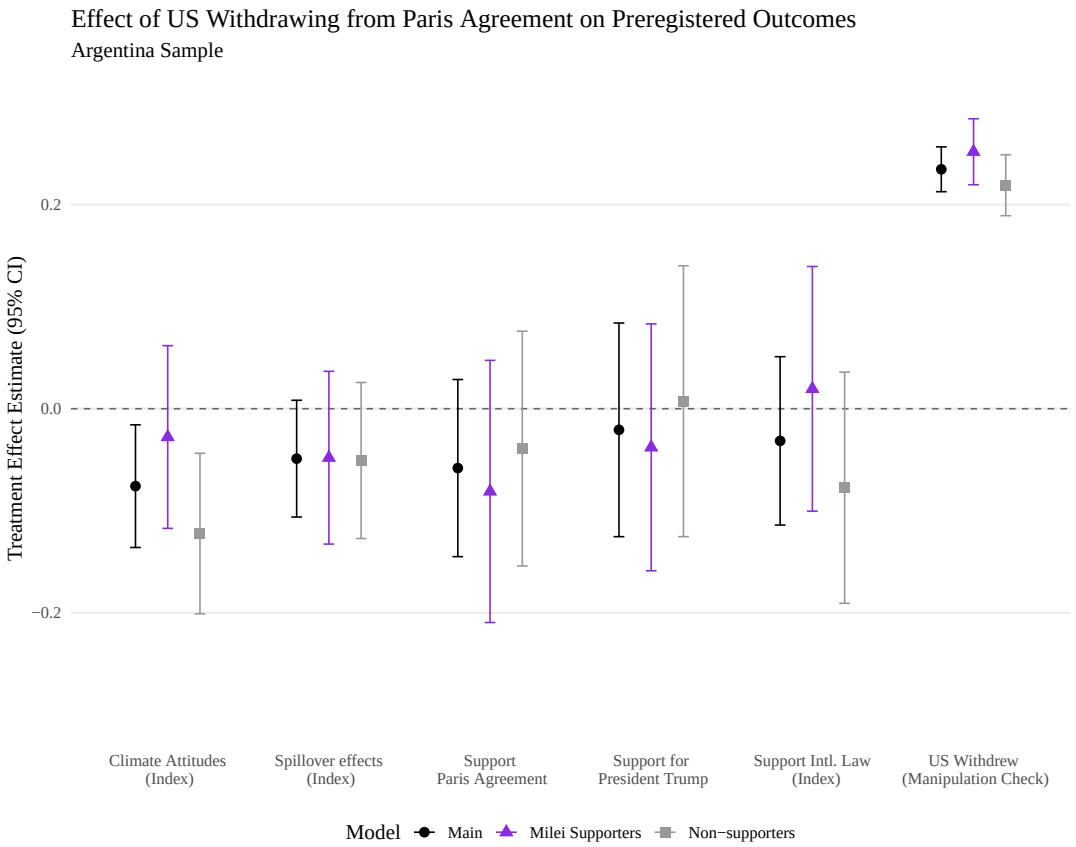

Figure 10: **Effect of U.S. Withdrawal Compared to Control:** Point estimates and 95% confidence intervals are plotted for different outcome variables and broken down by the full sample, Milei Supporters, and Non-supporters.

Conclusion

In this study, we examine how withdrawal from the Paris Agreement shapes public attitudes both domestically and internationally. Across three studies in the U.S. and Argentina, we find that withdrawal cues reduce support for the Paris Agreement among partisan-aligned respondents and also produce modest negative effects on support for international law. These heterogeneous effects are strong enough to produce meaningful declines at the population level. Climate attitudes in the U.S. remain largely stable, whereas in Argentina, both domestic and U.S. withdrawal cues generate measurable declines in climate attitudes. Spillover effects to other international institutions and foreign publics are detectable but limited in scope, highlighting that international elite signals matter, but to a much lesser degree than signals from domestic elites — even when international signals come from a highly salient and powerful state.

The findings present both bad and good news for climate governance. The bad news is that domestic elites can strongly shape public perceptions of an international institution through withdrawal cues, reducing support for the Paris Agreement and, to some extent, related international law — particularly among politically aligned citizens. The good news is that these effects are largely contained domestically: even a major actor such as the U.S. leaving the Agreement does not dramatically undermine the global image of the institution or broader support for climate cooperation. This is consistent with von Borzyskowski and Vabulas (2024*b*), who show that the exit of a single member

rarely threatens the survival of an international organization. In other words, while withdrawal can create pronounced domestic political costs and erode local support for climate policy, the international system remains relatively resilient to the departure of even central states. Withdrawals by major states will likely not spell the death of the Paris Agreement or start a cascade of withdrawals from other international institutions. Given the increasing threats to global governance institutions (Gray, 2018; Walter, 2021*a*), this result is somewhat positive in its implications for institutional legitimacy and vitality.

Finally, our work points to several avenues for future research. Long-term consequences of withdrawal remain unclear, including how repeated disengagement affects both domestic and international legitimacy of institutions. The international spillover effects of withdrawal may also be conditioned by the identity of the withdrawing actor and whether withdrawal aligns with prior beliefs about that actor's preferences (e.g., Tomz, 2007). Withdrawal by Trump, for example, is not a surprising signal. Withdrawal by a state viewed as highly algined with the Paris Agreement — Germany for example — may generate stronger international spillover effects. Simultaneous withdrawals by greater numbers of states as well, inspiring chain reactions (e.g., Busby and Urpelainen, 2020). Additionally, investigating the role of subnational actors, media framing, and counter-signals from opposing elites could clarify when withdrawal generates backlash versus limited spillovers, as such factors play important roles in conditioning the effects of elite signals in polarized environments (e.g., Chong and Druckman, 2007). Together, these findings underscore the complex interplay of elite signals, public opinion, and institutional resilience in global climate governance.

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Breaking Commitments: Public Reactions to Withdrawals from International Institutions

Lotem Bassan-Nygate and Sabrina B. Arias
January 15, 2026

Contents

SI-1 Research Ethics

SI-2 Salience of International Organizations in Brazil and the US

We contend that publics in Brazil and France are likely to receive information about IO leadership. To do so, we follow Arias and Hulvey (2025) and deploy data collected by **?**, who constructs a dataset of all articles discussing IOs from the Global Flows of Political Information database, which is representative of worldwide online news content. Covering all countries 2018-2021, Parizek finds 2,777 articles about UN organizations in Brazil and 4,519 in the US. This ranks Brazil 21st out of all countries in terms of its attention to UN issues, and the US 7th out of all. This puts Brazil in the 84th percentile in terms of UN attention, and the US in the 95th percentile.[13] These findings are consistent with existing public opinion evidence: recent surveys indicate that 54% of Brazilian respondents believe their country should increase its engagement with the United Nations, suggesting that many citizens may be attentive to political developments within the UN that either facilitate or hinder progress toward this objective.[14]

SI-3 Study I

SI-3.1 Main Effects

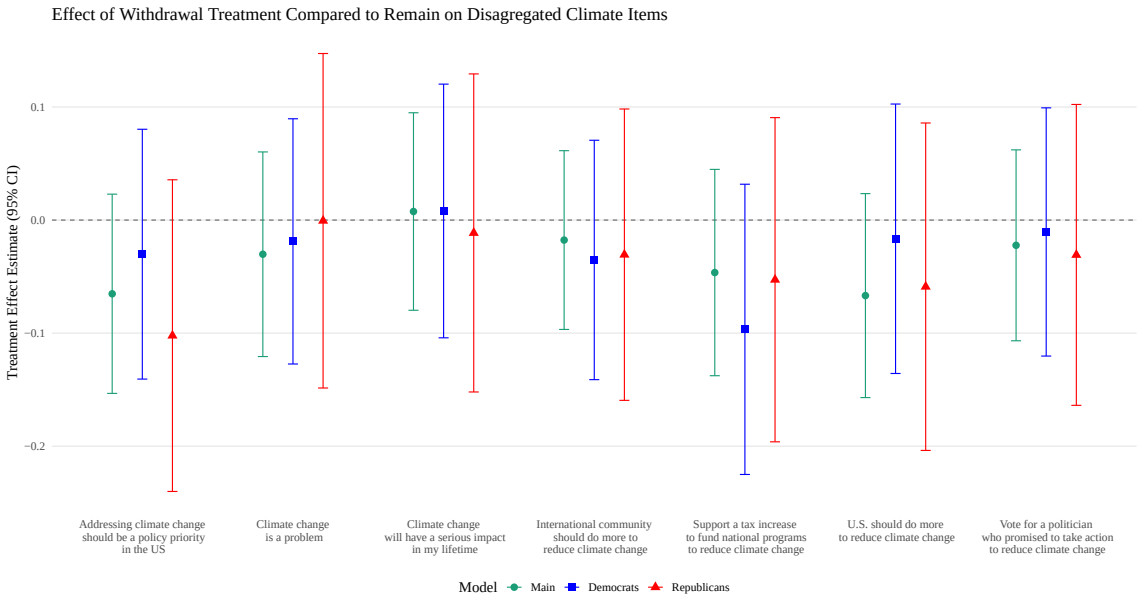


Table A-1: Main Effects

[13] The results are nearly identical expanding the analysis to include news on all IOs.

[14] FES Global Census 2022.

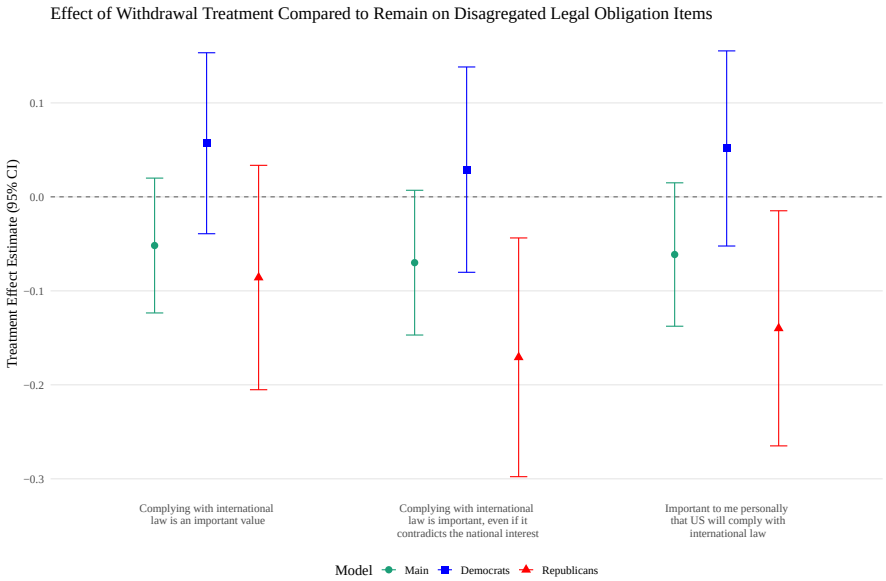


Figure A-1: Climate attitudes, by treatment condition

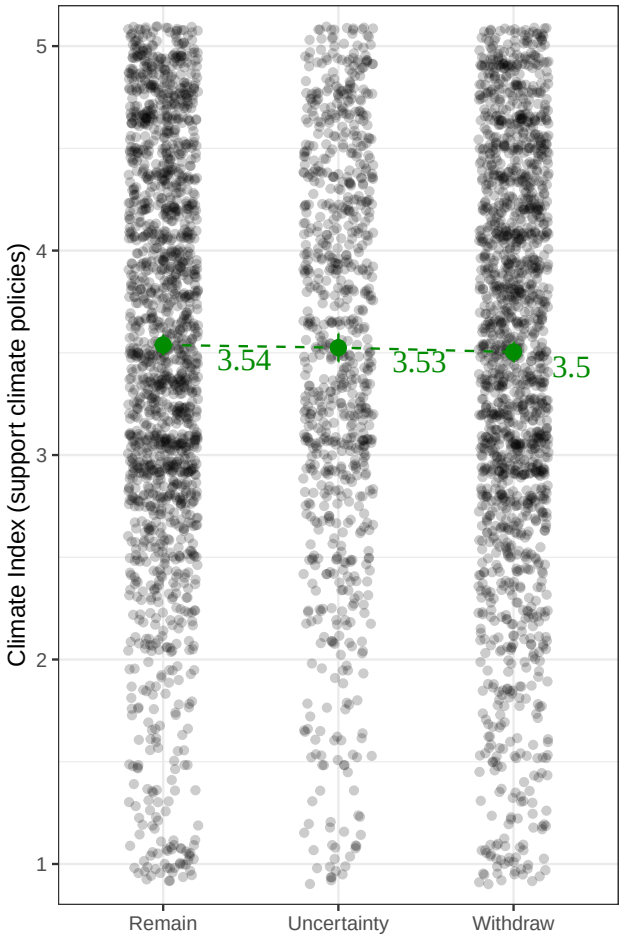


Figure A-2: International Law Attitudes, by treatment condition

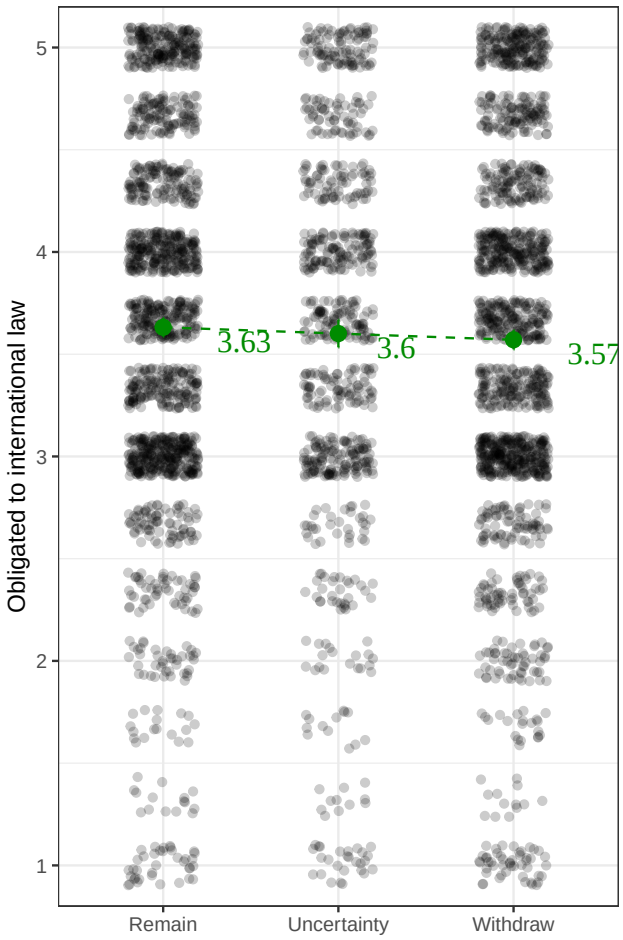


Figure A-3: Support Paris Agreement, by treatment condition

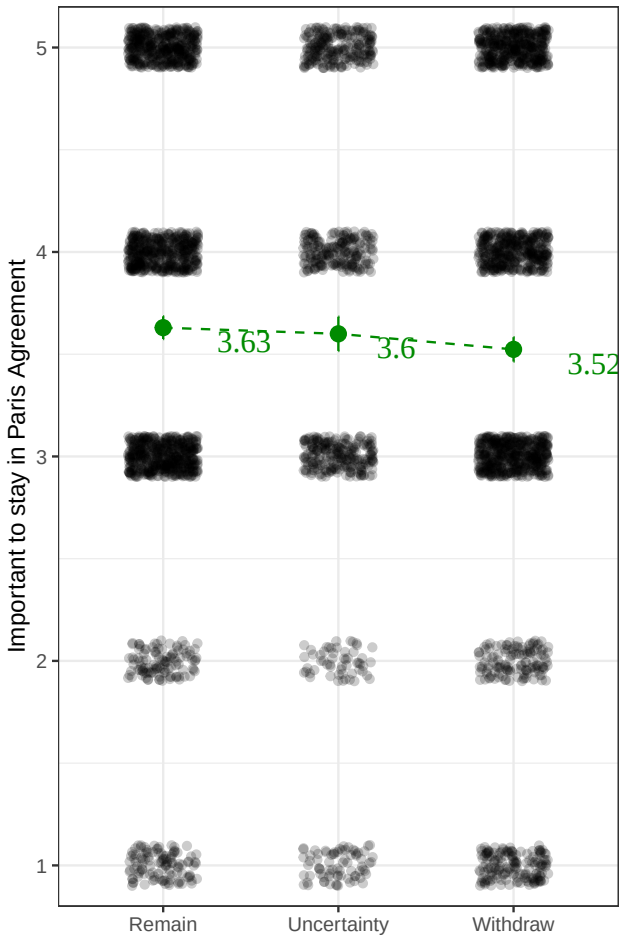
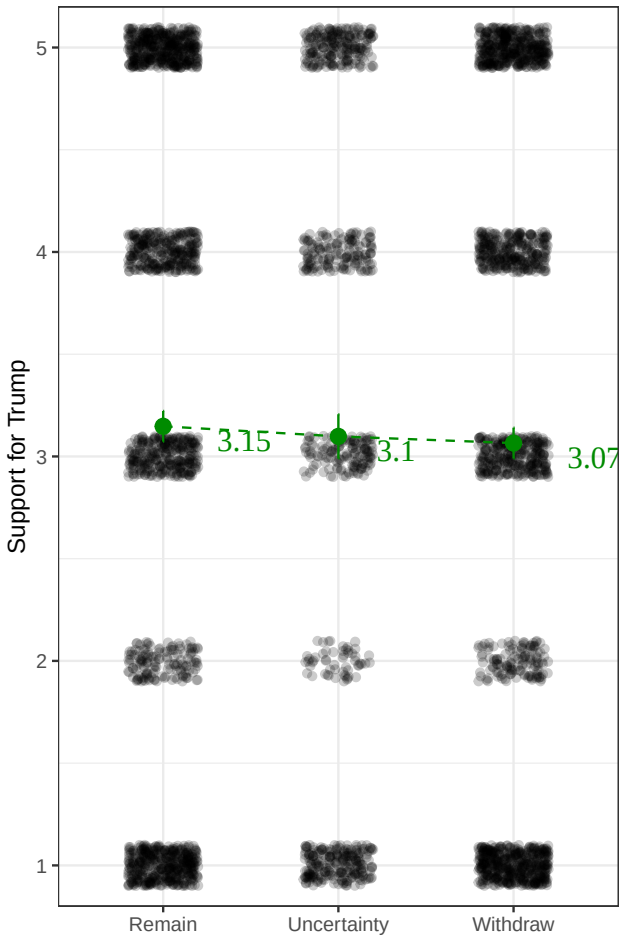


Figure A-4: Support Trump, by treatment condition



	Dependent variable:				
	Manip Check	Climate Attitudes	Intl. Law Attitudes	Paris Importance	Support Trump
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Withdraw (v. remain)	0.614*** (0.039)	−0.034 (0.035)	−0.061* (0.033)	−0.106** (0.042)	−0.082 (0.054)
Observations	3,330	3,301	3,321	3,321	3,330
R^2	0.070	0.0003	0.001	0.002	0.001
Note:					*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A-2: Main Effects with Controls

	Dependent variable:				
	Manip Check	Climate Attitudes	Intl. Law Attitudes	Paris Importance	Support Trump
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Withdraw (v. remain)	0.644*** (0.039)	−0.014 (0.021)	−0.039 (0.030)	−0.095*** (0.034)	−0.072** (0.035)
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	2,971	2,946	2,961	2,961	2,971
R^2	0.200	0.688	0.306	0.445	0.645
Note:					*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

SI-3.2 Subgroup Effects

Figure A-5: Manipulation Check by PID (Belief Trump will Withdraw)

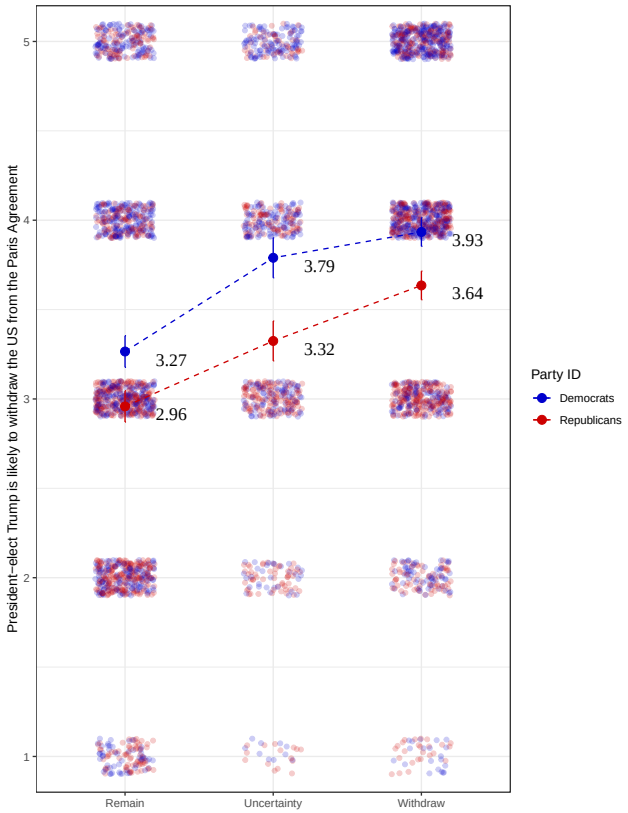


Table A-3: Partisan Effects

Figure A-6: Climate Change Attitudes by PID

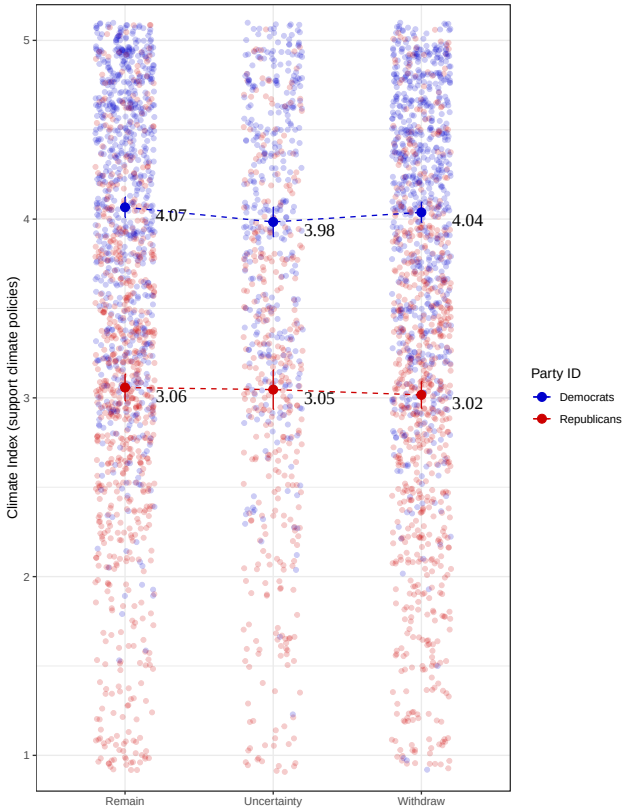


Figure A-7: International Law Attitudes by PID

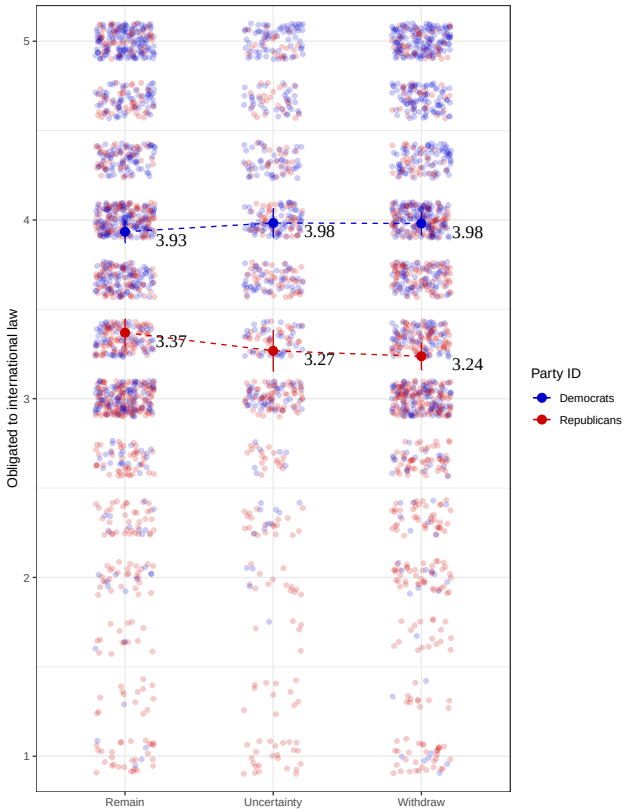
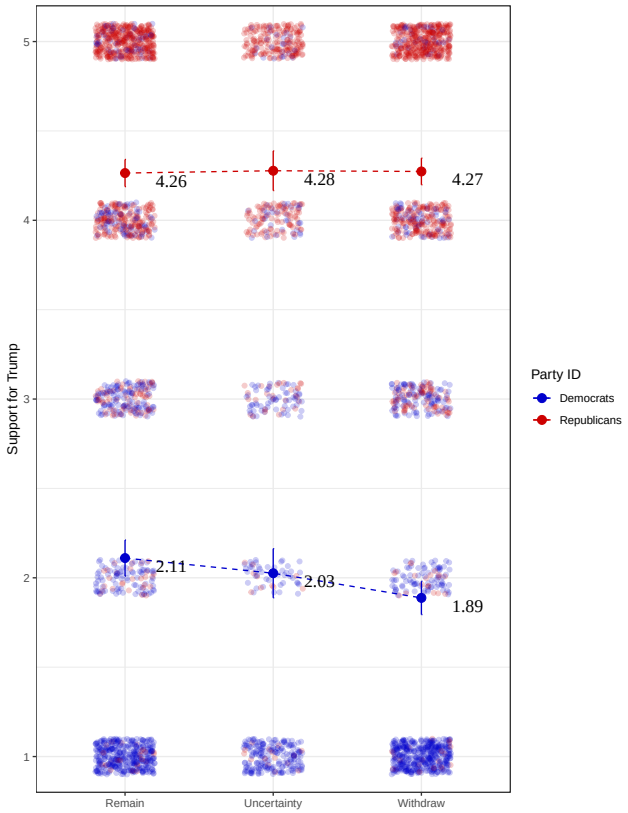


Figure A-8: Support for Trump by PID



	Dependent variable:				
	Manip Check	Climate Attitudes	Intl. Law Attitudes	Paris Importance	Support Trump
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Withdraw (v. remain)	0.669*** (0.061)	−0.029 (0.048)	0.046 (0.049)	0.105* (0.060)	−0.223*** (0.063)
Republican	0.008 (0.086)	−0.012 (0.068)	−0.178** (0.070)	−0.401*** (0.085)	0.232*** (0.089)
Observations	2,755	2,734	2,748	2,748	2,755
R^2	0.097	0.249	0.115	0.170	0.490
Note:					*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A-4: Partisan Effects with Controls

	Dependent variable:				
	Manip Check	Climate Attitudes	Intl. Law Attitudes	Paris Importance	Support Trump
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Withdraw (v. remain)	0.658*** (0.060)	−0.017 (0.032)	0.037 (0.046)	0.097* (0.052)	−0.188*** (0.052)
Republican	0.025 (0.086)	0.006 (0.045)	−0.129** (0.065)	−0.364*** (0.074)	0.182** (0.075)
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	2,514	2,495	2,507	2,507	2,514
R^2	0.208	0.708	0.321	0.459	0.678
Note:					*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

SI-4 Study II

Figure A-9: Within-Person Changes from Pre to Post

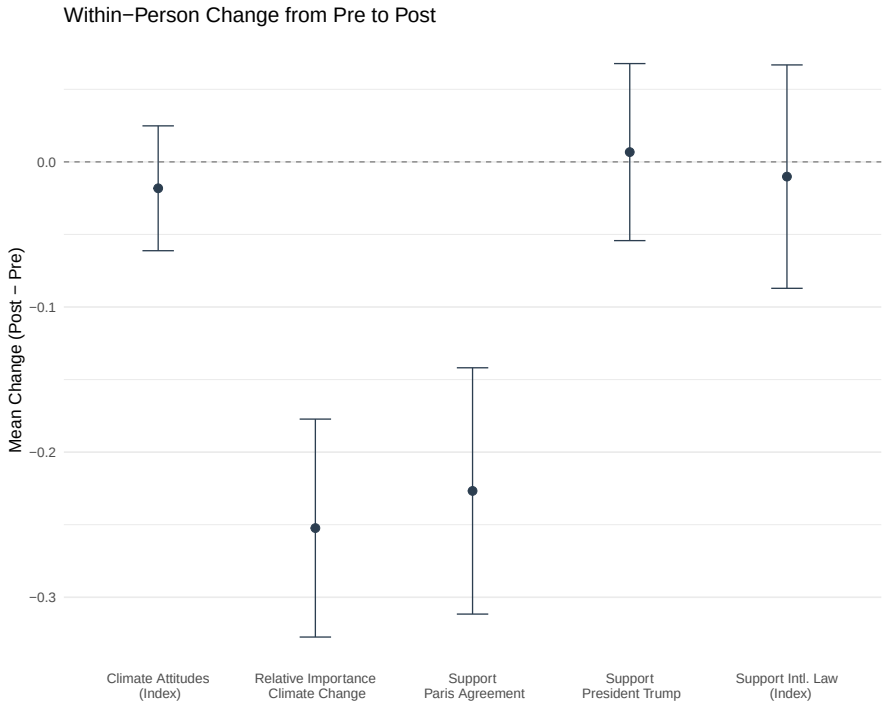


Figure A-10: Mean Attitudes Pre and Post Withdrawal (Only recontacted sample)SI-9

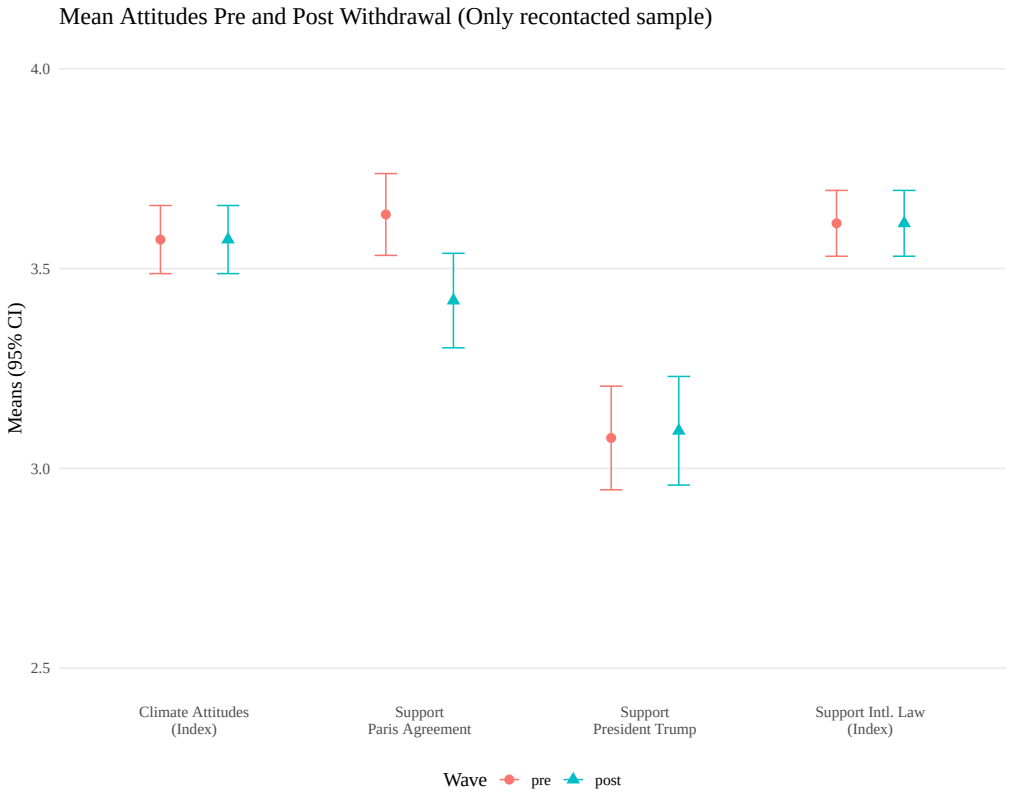


Figure A-11: Mean Attitudes Pre and Post Withdrawal (Only recontacted sample) by party

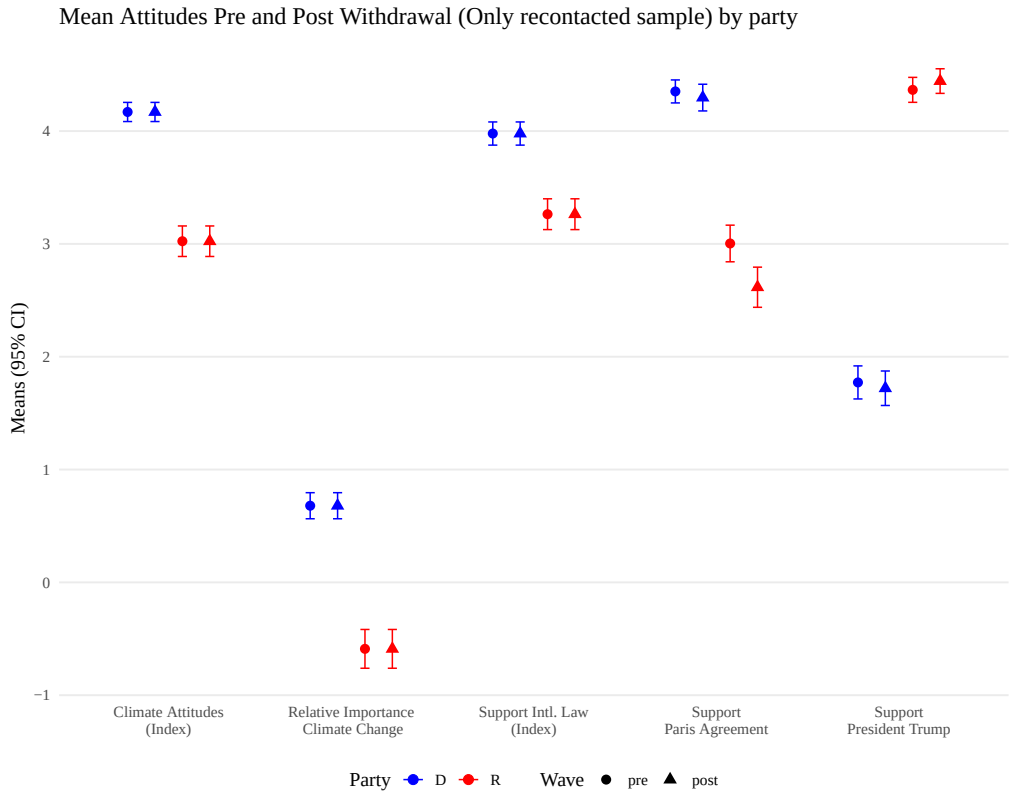


Figure A-12: Treatment Effect: DifferenceinDifferences (Post x Treatment)

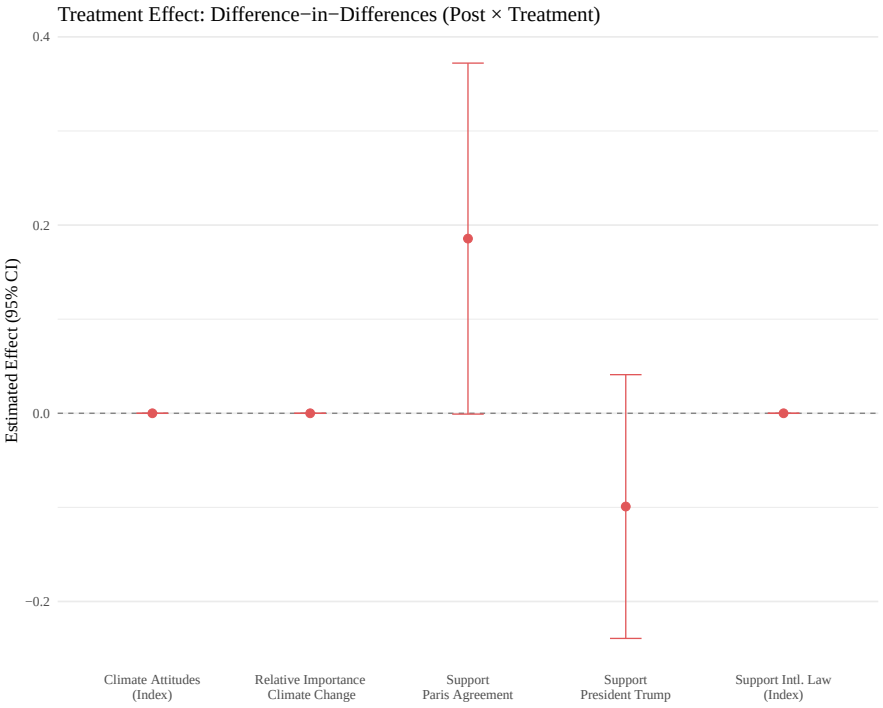


Table A-5: Within-Person Change from Pre to Post

	Dependent variable:				
	Climate Attitudes	Intl. Law Attitudes	Paris Importance	Support Trump	Relative Importance
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Post (v. pre)	0.000** (0.000)	0.000** (0.000)	−0.227*** (0.043)	0.007 (0.031)	0.000*** (0.000)
Ind FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	1,234	1,234	1,209	1,211	1,234
R^2	1.000	1.000	0.859	0.949	1.000

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

Table A-6: Within-Person Change from Pre to Post by Party

	Dependent variable:									
	Climate Attitudes		Intl. Law Attitudes		Paris Importance		Support Trump		Relative Importance	
	D	R	D	R	D	R	D	R	D	R
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Withdraw (v. remain)	−0.857*** (0.000)	−1.429*** (0.000)	−2.000*** (0.000)	0.667*** (0.000)	−1.051* (0.563)	−4.092*** (0.869)	0.062 (0.649)	−0.000 (0.465)	0.000 (0.000)	−3.000*** (0.000)
Post (v. pre)	−0.000** (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	−0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	−0.111 (0.080)	−0.495*** (0.118)	−0.010 (0.091)	0.075 (0.063)	−0.000 (0.000)	0.000* (0.000)
Withdraw*Post	−0.000 (0.000)	−0.000 (0.000)	−0.000 (0.000)	−0.000 (0.000)	0.102 (0.111)	0.184 (0.168)	−0.123 (0.128)	0.000 (0.089)	−0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)
Observations	426	438	426	438	417	432	418	433	426	438
R^2	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.812	0.815	0.860	0.863	1.000	1.000

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

Table A-7: Difference-in-Differences (Post × Treatment)

	Dependent variable:				
	Climate Attitudes	Intl. Law Attitudes	Paris Importance	Support Trump	Relative Importance
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Withdraw (v. remain)	0.000*** (0.000)	1.000*** (0.000)	0.407 (0.736)	0.550 (0.554)	2.000*** (0.000)
Post (v. pre)	−0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	−0.323*** (0.068)	0.039 (0.051)	0.000 (0.000)
Withdraw*Post	0.000 (0.000)	−0.000 (0.000)	0.186* (0.095)	−0.099 (0.071)	0.000 (0.000)
Ind FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	996	996	977	979	996
R^2	1.000	1.000	0.864	0.946	1.000

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

Table A-8: Attrition in Follow-Up: Balance Table

	0	1	p	test	SMD
n	7018	646			
Partisanship (mean (SD))	0.50 (0.50)	0.51 (0.50)	0.597		0.025
Education (mean (SD))	3.54 (1.43)	3.88 (1.39)	<0.001		0.242
Female = 1 (%)	3198 (49.4)	272 (44.1)	0.014		0.106
Employment (%)			<0.001		0.250
Employed Full Time	2473 (38.0)	265 (42.9)			
Employed Part Time	782 (12.0)	61 (9.9)			
Retired	1262 (19.4)	151 (24.4)			
Unemployed	934 (14.3)	60 (9.7)			
Homemaker	377 (5.8)	36 (5.8)			
Student	280 (4.3)	11 (1.8)			
Self-Employed	402 (6.2)	34 (5.5)			
Religiosity (mean (SD))	2.90 (1.68)	2.85 (1.67)	0.433		0.033
Trust in Government (mean (SD))	2.34 (0.98)	2.38 (0.97)	0.295		0.044
Follows News (mean (SD))	2.95 (0.96)	3.16 (0.90)	<0.001		0.218
Foreign Policy Index (mean (SD))	2.87 (0.67)	2.82 (0.70)	0.132		0.062
Ideology (mean (SD))	4.01 (1.63)	4.08 (1.70)	0.352		0.039
Vote (%)			<0.001		0.253
Another candidate	121 (2.7)	9 (1.5)			
Donald Trump	1800 (40.8)	282 (45.7)			
I did not vote in the 2024 presidential election	864 (19.6)	70 (11.3)			
Kamala Harris	1626 (36.9)	256 (41.5)			
Hispanic = 1 (%)	724 (16.7)	82 (13.3)	0.041		0.094
Income (mean (SD))	2.79 (1.48)	2.88 (1.44)	0.166		0.061
Age (mean (SD))	44.98 (17.55)	49.81 (17.09)	<0.001		0.279
Local Climate Change Effects (mean (SD))	0.59 (0.97)	0.98 (1.11)	<0.001		0.367
Climate Change Beliefs (mean (SD))	3.25 (0.90)	3.24 (0.93)	0.849		0.008
Local Fossil Fuel or Auto Industry = 1 (%)	2559 (36.5)	352 (56.9)	<0.001		0.416
Local Green Industry = 1 (%)	1676 (23.9)	247 (39.9)	<0.001		0.348
Policy Helps Community (mean (SD))	3.07 (1.16)	3.12 (1.20)	0.333		0.041
Support for Climate Action (mean (SD))	2.98 (0.90)	3.02 (0.93)	0.321		0.042

Table A-9: Attrition in Follow-Up: Balance Table, Complete Only

	0	1	p	test	SMD
n	3422	498			
Partisanship (mean (SD))	0.50 (0.50)	0.51 (0.50)	0.757		0.016
Education (mean (SD))	3.68 (1.41)	3.93 (1.37)	<0.001		0.181
Female = 1 (%)	1679 (49.4)	217 (43.7)	0.020		0.115
Employment (%)			0.027		0.189
Employed Full Time	1322 (38.6)	210 (42.2)			
Employed Part Time	405 (11.8)	49 (9.8)			
Homemaker	199 (5.8)	27 (5.4)			
Retired	714 (20.9)	125 (25.1)			
Self-Employed	217 (6.3)	27 (5.4)			
Student	140 (4.1)	10 (2.0)			
Unemployed	425 (12.4)	50 (10.0)			
Religiosity (mean (SD))	2.93 (1.67)	2.81 (1.67)	0.145		0.070
Trust in Government (mean (SD))	2.33 (0.97)	2.40 (0.96)	0.152		0.069
Follows News (mean (SD))	3.01 (0.95)	3.17 (0.88)	<0.001		0.174
Foreign Policy Index (mean (SD))	2.85 (0.68)	2.81 (0.71)	0.230		0.057
Ideology (mean (SD))	4.01 (1.65)	4.06 (1.72)	0.493		0.032
Vote (%)			<0.001		0.246
Another candidate	97 (2.8)	7 (1.4)			
Donald Trump	1391 (40.6)	226 (45.4)			
I did not vote in the 2024 presidential election	683 (20.0)	60 (12.0)			
Kamala Harris	1251 (36.6)	205 (41.2)			
Hispanic = 1 (%)	565 (16.7)	65 (13.1)	0.051		0.100
Income (mean (SD))	2.79 (1.49)	2.89 (1.45)	0.165		0.068
Age (mean (SD))	45.88 (17.76)	50.27 (17.34)	<0.001		0.250
Local Climate Change Effects (mean (SD))	0.95 (1.08)	0.96 (1.10)	0.920		0.005
Climate Change Beliefs (mean (SD))	3.27 (0.88)	3.26 (0.93)	0.816		0.011
Local Fossil Fuel or Auto Industry = 1 (%)	2015 (58.9)	286 (57.4)	0.571		0.029
Local Green Industry = 1 (%)	1309 (38.3)	200 (40.2)	0.442		0.039
Policy Helps Community (mean (SD))	3.05 (1.15)	3.11 (1.20)	0.301		0.049
Support for Climate Action (mean (SD))	2.99 (0.90)	3.03 (0.93)	0.353		0.044

SI-5 Study III

SI-5.1 Main Effects

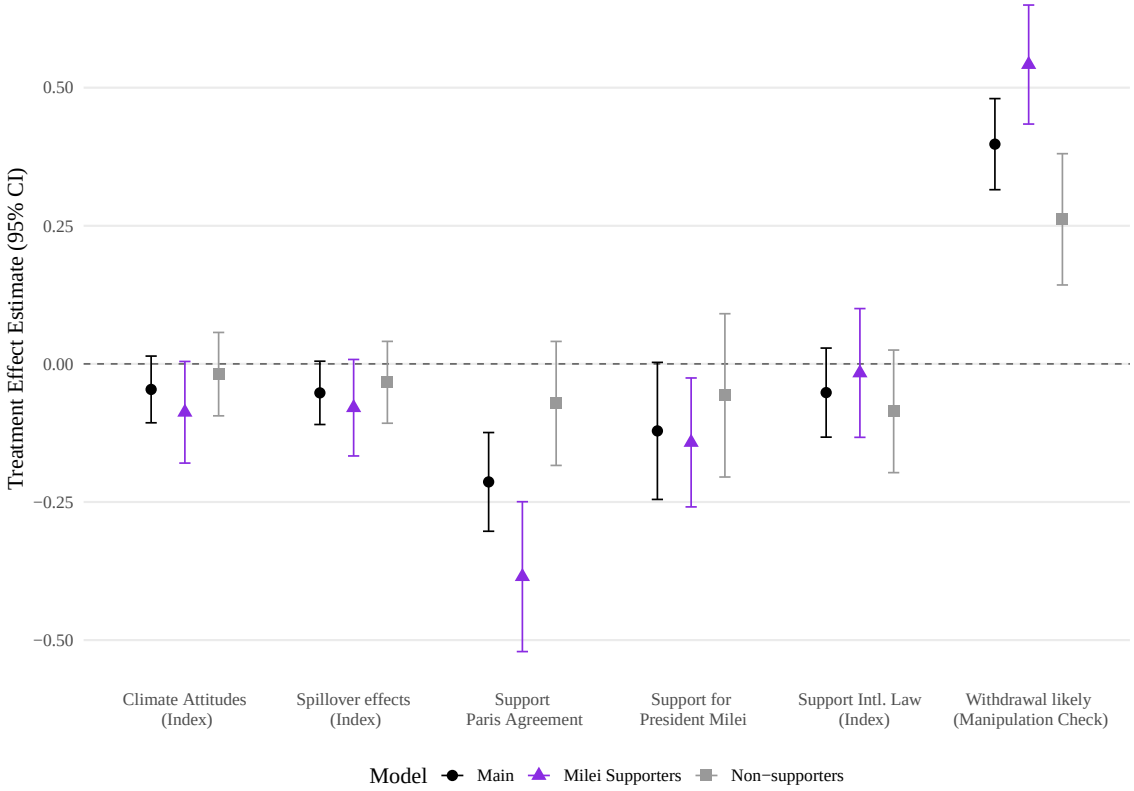
comments: - do you think we should be concerned that the manip check didn't work as well for non-supporters compared to supporters? - what questions are in the spillover index? is that attitudes about the other president? this is the different types of ios (driven by human rights) - strong backlash (esp from milei suppoerters) for paris - in the US case we saw an increase in support from democrats, there is no analagous effect here - I think it's cool that here, milei supporters become less supportive of him - this is the opposite of how republicans reacted to trump. we could say something interestign here about how issue polarization seems to lead to partisan cheerleading or something. also, unlike republicans, milei supporters did not become less supportive of intl law

comments: - strong backlash for climate attitudes (and somewhat for intl law) from non supporters - different US pattern compared to argentina pattern - don't know what to make of that. it makes sense that some of the effects are weaker if the us leader is less of a strong signal, but I think the *stronger* effects on climate attitudes from non-milei supporters in particular are really weird?

Table A-10: Effects of Argentina potentially withdrawing from Paris

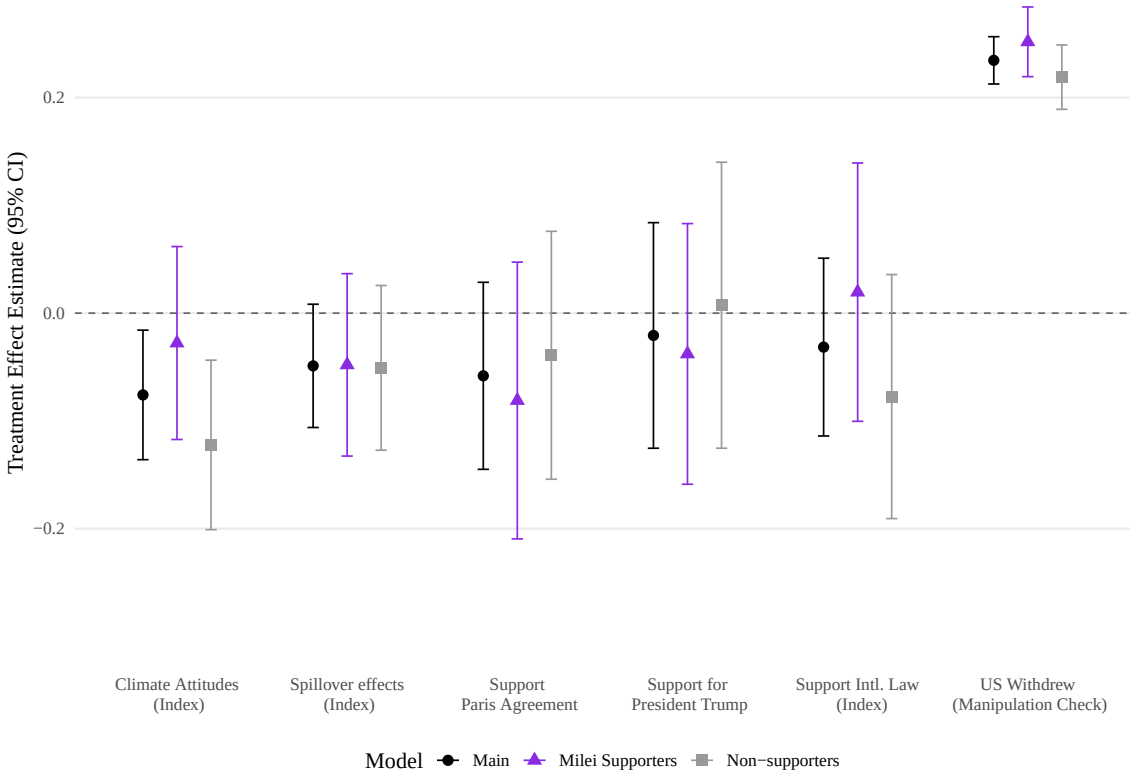
Effect of Argentina Withdrawing from Paris Agreement on Preregistered Outcomes

Argentina Sample



Effect of US Withdrawing from Paris Agreement on Preregistered Outcomes

Argentina Sample



	Dependent variable:					
	Manip Check	Paris Importance	Intl. Law Attitudes	Climate Attitudes	Support Milei	Spillover
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Argentina withdrawing	0.398*** (0.042)	−0.214*** (0.046)	−0.052 (0.041)	−0.046 (0.031)	−0.121* (0.063)	−0.052* (0.029)
Observations	2,173	2,174	2,174	2,176	2,173	2,206
R^2	0.039	0.010	0.001	0.001	0.002	0.001
Note:						*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A-11: Effects of Argentina potentially withdrawing from Paris (w. Controls)

	Dependent variable:					
	Manip Check	Paris Importance	Intl. Law Attitudes	Climate Attitudes	Support Milei	Spillover
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Argentina withdrawing	0.386*** (0.042)	−0.196*** (0.044)	−0.054 (0.042)	−0.045* (0.027)	−0.096** (0.039)	−0.047* (0.028)
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	1,952	1,958	1,958	1,957	1,952	1,980
R^2	0.159	0.190	0.084	0.336	0.678	0.173
Note:						*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

comments: - aligning with the weird patterns above, only us treatment has a negative effect on item 2, 4, but only argentina has a negative effect on item 5. though it doens't look like the differences would be significant

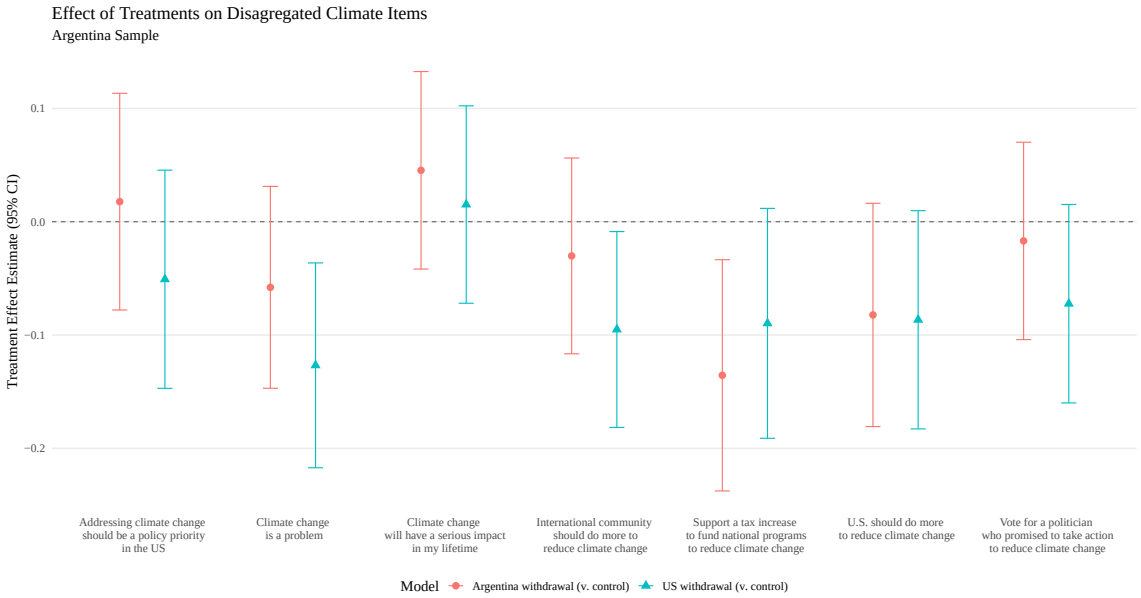
Table A-12: Effects of US withdrawal from Paris

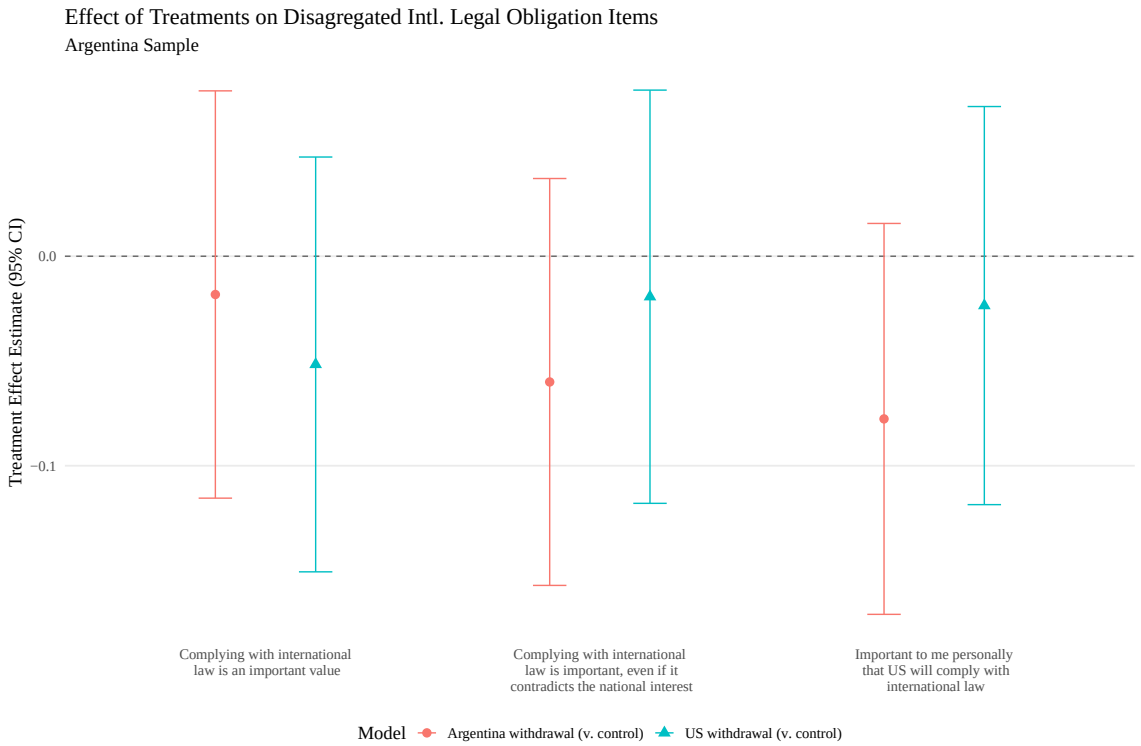
	Dependent variable:					
	Manip Check	Paris Importance	Intl. Law Attitudes	Climate Attitudes	Support Trump	Spillover
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
US withdrawing	0.235*** (0.011)	−0.058 (0.044)	−0.032 (0.042)	−0.076** (0.031)	−0.021 (0.053)	−0.049* (0.029)
Observations	2,198	2,191	2,191	2,193	2,198	2,221
R^2	0.167	0.001	0.0003	0.003	0.0001	0.001
Note:						*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

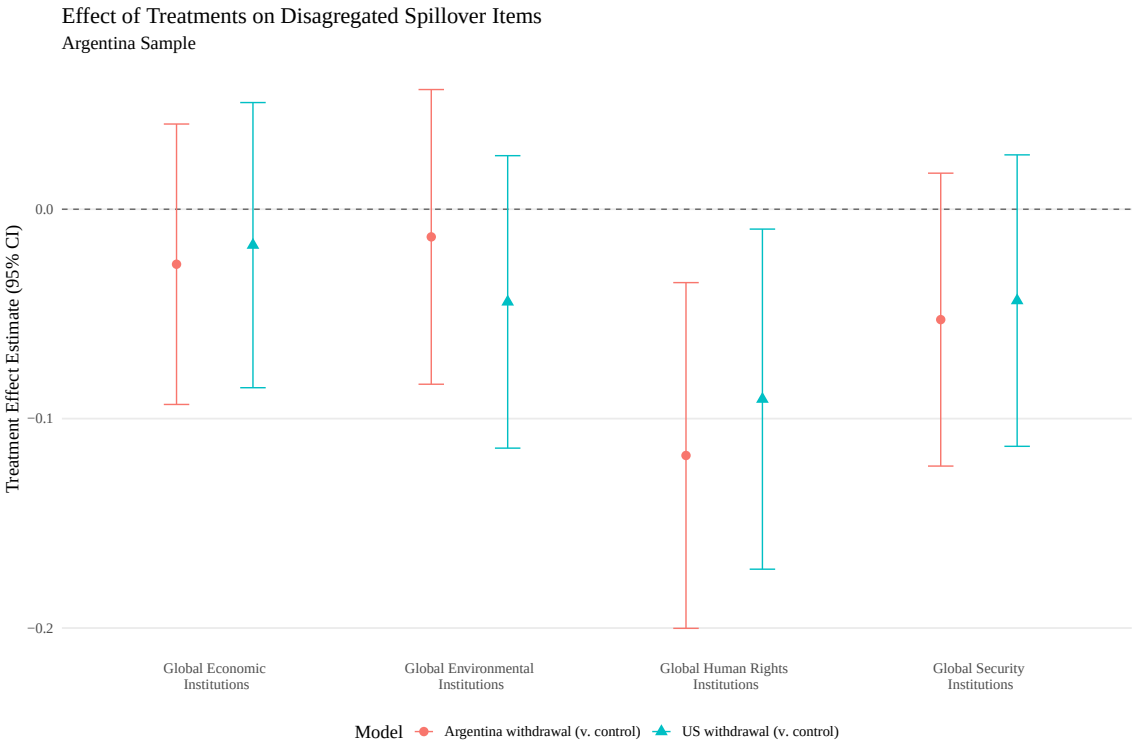
Table A-13: Effects of US withdrawal from Paris (w. Controls)

	Dependent variable:					
	Manip Check	Paris Importance	Intl. Law Attitudes	Climate Attitudes	Support Trump	Spillover
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
US withdrawing	0.240*** (0.012)	−0.034 (0.043)	0.018 (0.042)	−0.054** (0.027)	0.001 (0.040)	−0.020 (0.028)
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	1,976	1,972	1,972	1,972	1,976	1,995
R^2	0.215	0.167	0.106	0.326	0.509	0.199
Note:						*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Disaggregated Outcomes


Effect of Treatments on Disagregated Climate Items
Argentina Sample
Treatment Effect Estimate (95% CI)
0.1
0.0
−0.1
−0.2
Addressing climate change should be a policy priority in the US
Climate change is a problem
Climate change will have a serious impact in my lifetime
International community should do more to reduce climate change
Support a tax increase to fund national programs to reduce climate change
U.S. should do more to reduce climate change
Vote for a politician who promised to take action to reduce climate change
Model
Argentina withdrawal (v. control)
US withdrawal (v. control)


Effect of Treatments on Disagregated Intl. Legal Obligation Items
Argentina Sample
Treatment Effect Estimate (95% CI)
0.0
−0.1
Complying with international law is an important value
Complying with international law is important, even if it contradicts the national interest
Important to me personally that US will comply with international law
Model
Argentina withdrawal (v. control)
US withdrawal (v. control)



SI-5.2 Outcomes by Conditions

Figure A-13: Manipulation check Argentina withdrawal by condition

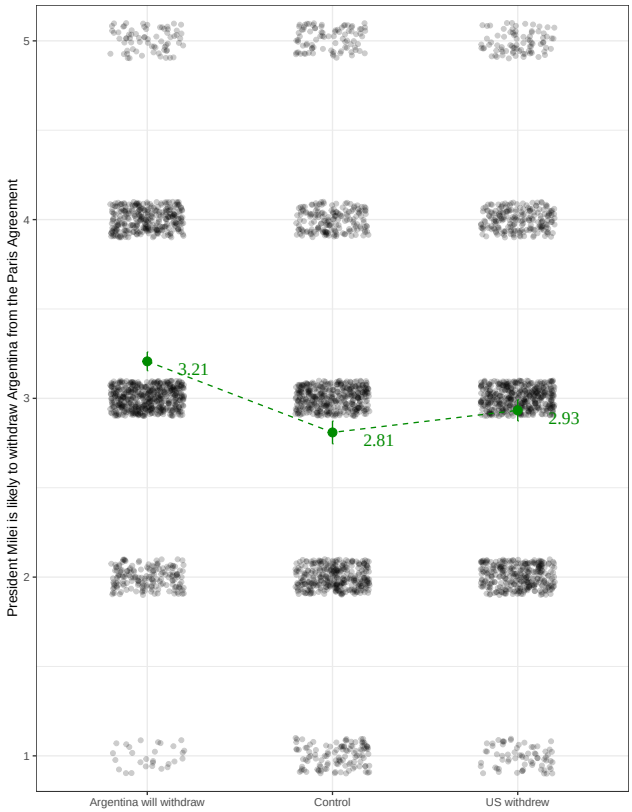


Figure A-14: Manipulation check US withdrew by condition

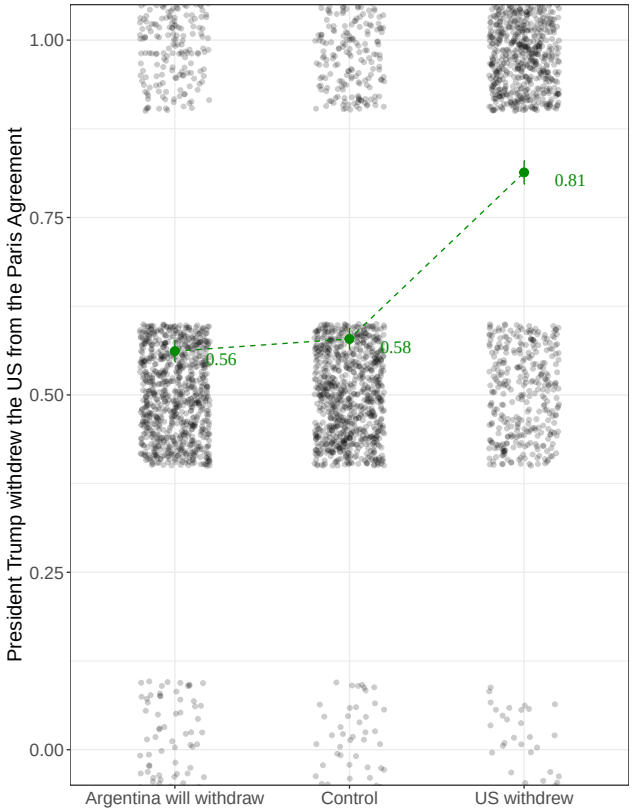


Figure A-15: Importance of Paris Agreement by condition

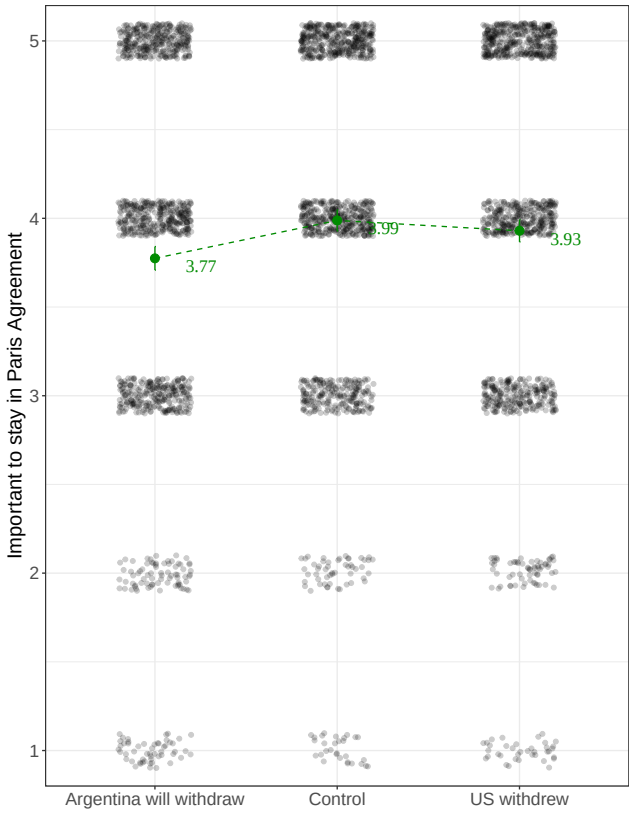


Figure A-16: Climate attitudes by condition

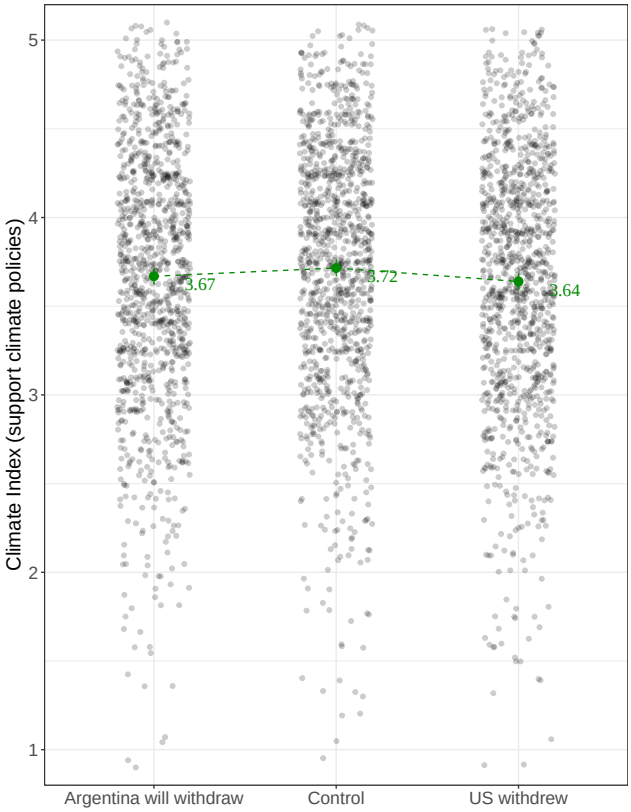


Figure A-17: International Legal obligation by condition

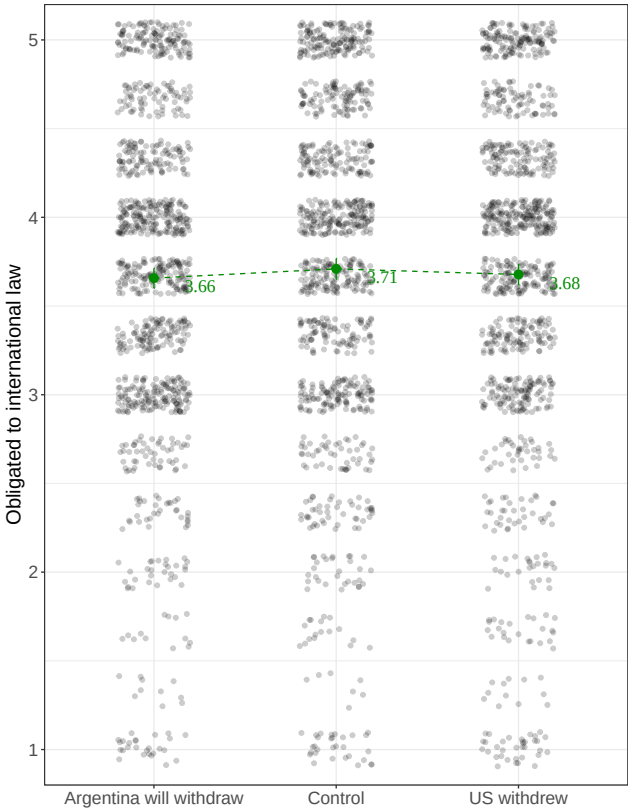


Figure A-18: Support for Milei by condition

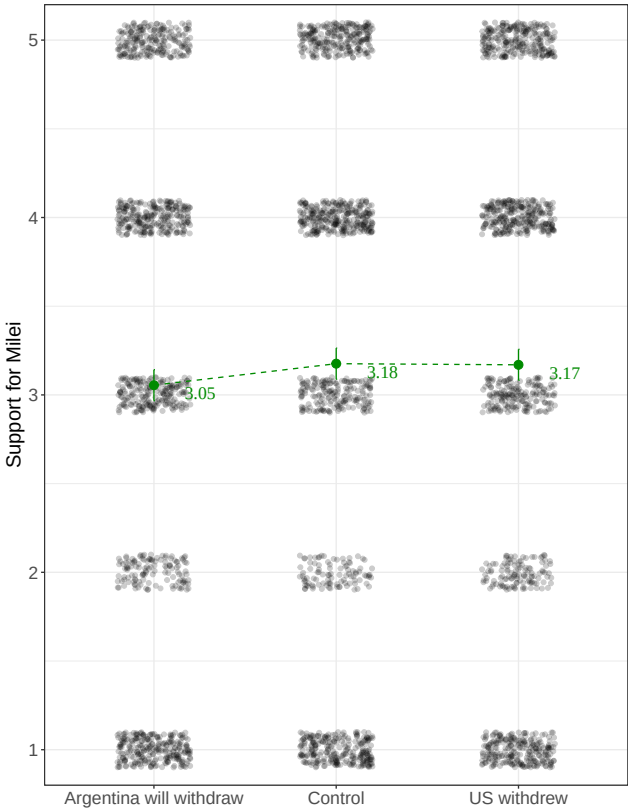


Figure A-19: Spillover Effects by condition

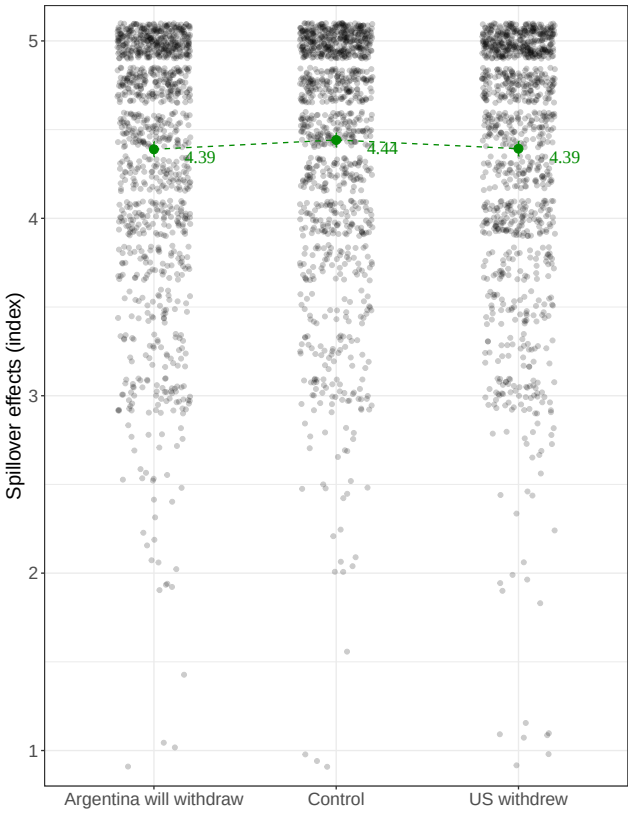


Figure A-20: Paris Agreement important by condition, Milei Supporters

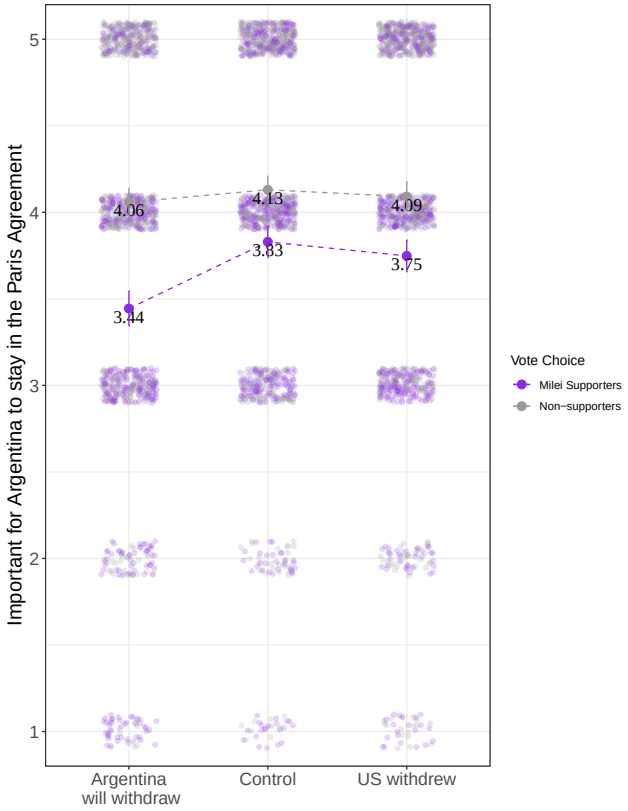


Figure A-21: Climate attitudes by condition, Milei supporters

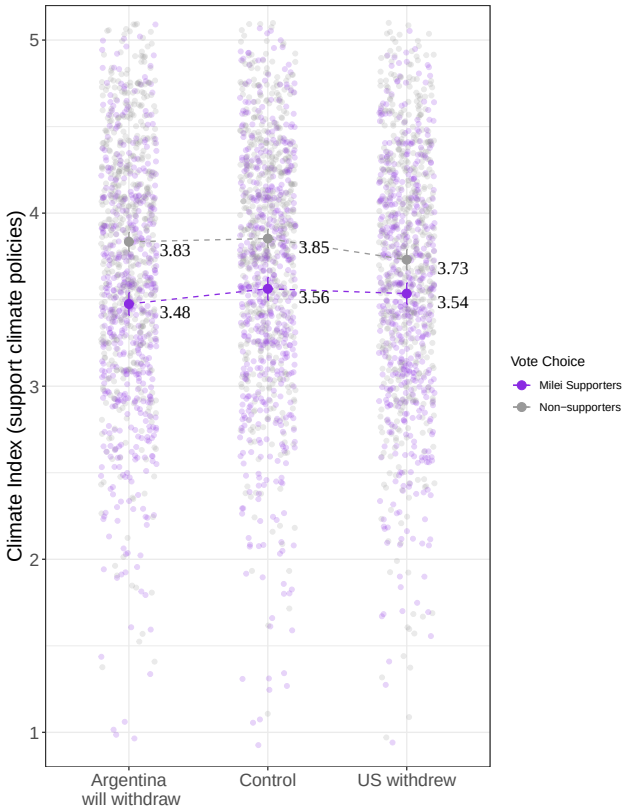


Figure A-22: International legal obligation by condition, Milei supporters

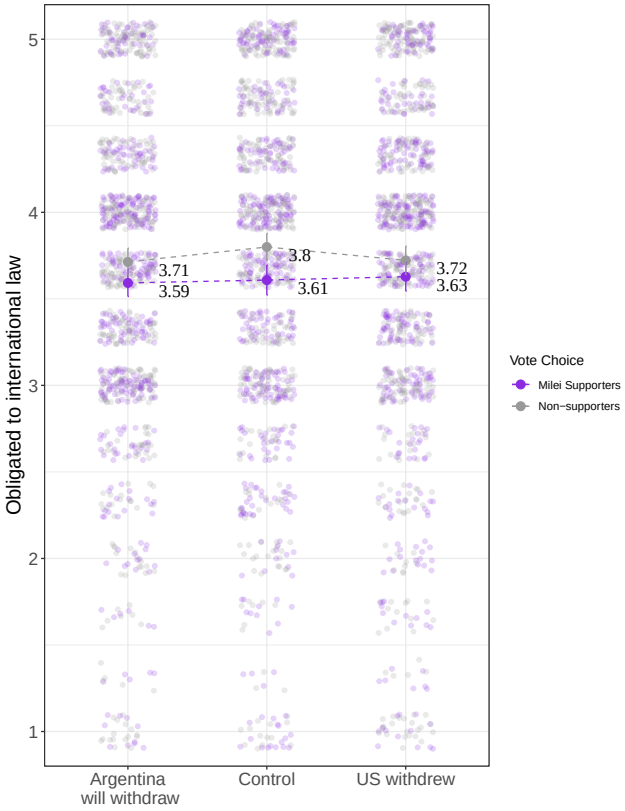


Figure A-23: Support for Milei by condition, Milei supporters

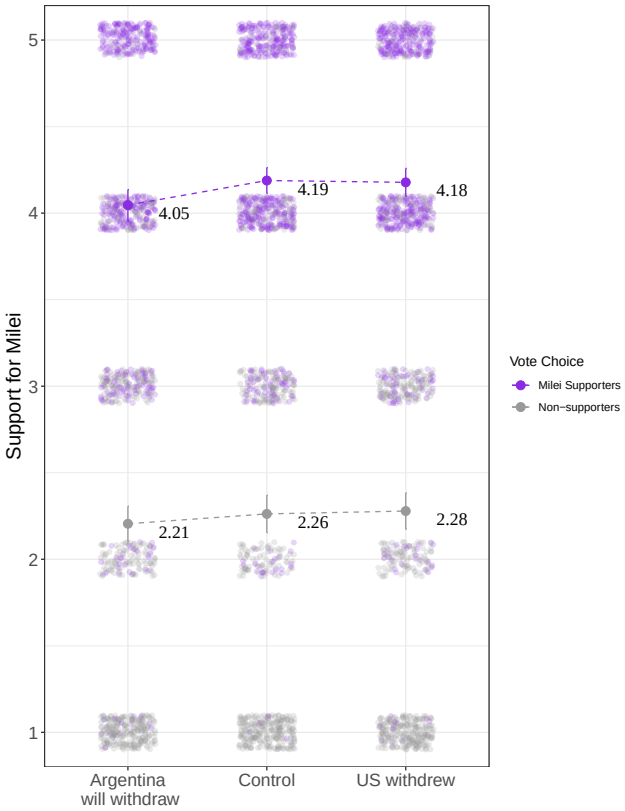
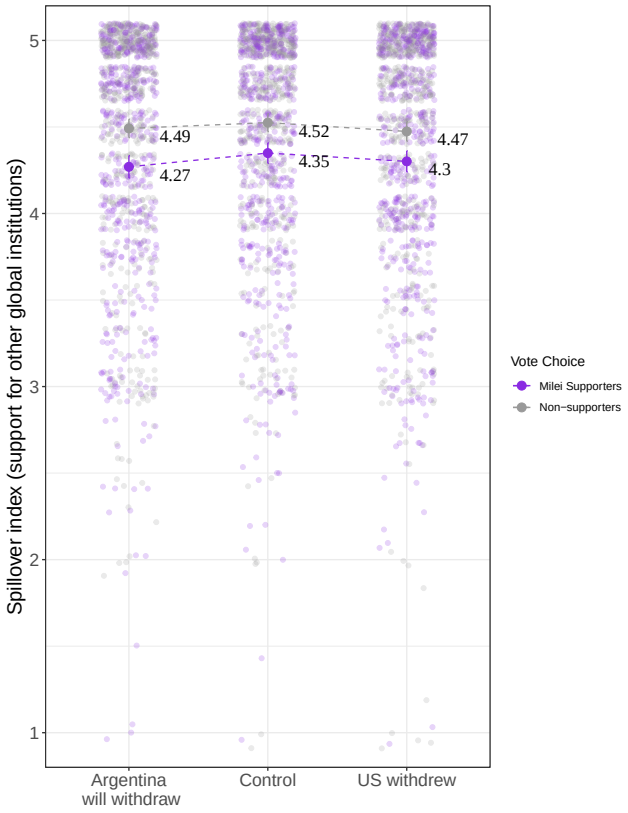


Figure A-24: Spillover effects by condition, Milei supporters



SI-6 Estimation

For Study 1, our primary comparison of interest is between the Withdraw and Remain conditions. Differences between these conditions and the Uncertain condition may be assessed for supplementary analyses to gauge at whether the Withdraw or Remain conditions are driving our main effects. Becuase Study 2 is a recontact study, the treatment can be conceptualized at the within-subjects and between-subjects level: respondents are assigned to a 'Remain-Withdraw' or 'Withdraw-Withdraw' condition. Comparisons can be assessed at the within-subject level (changes in attitudes between the initial and follow-up study), and at the within-subjects level (differences between respondents in the 'Remain-Withdraw' and 'Withdraw-Withdraw' condition).

For both studies, to examine the potential causal effects of intention to withdraw or remain in international agreements on attitudes, we estimate the average treatment effect (ATE), which is an unbiased estimator of the individual level treatment effect due to the plausibly random assignment of respondents to treatment groups (Gerber and Green, 2008). In both cases, to assess the relationships between demographic features and attitudes, we utilize a regression framework. Estimation is conducted in R as a standard difference in means, as well as linear regression to include control variables and test for interaction effects. For variables that are composed as multiple item indices, Cronbach's Alpha will be calculated to validate internal consistency of the items.

SI-6.1 Survey Weights

We will employ survey weights maintained by the sample provider to match population demographics. We will estimate our core models with and without weights to check for robustness.

SI-6.2 Additional Analyses

We are interested in a host of demographic characteristics explored in the literature as they relate to these core hypotheses (e.g., Egan and Mullin, 2017), including features such as gender, partisanship, ideology, religiosity, employment, education, income, race, age, trust in government, political interest, climate change attitudes and exposure. Additional exploratory analyses will examine potential mechanisms, including belief that the Paris Agreement is only effective with US participation.

SI-7 Institutional Review Board

This study has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Boards of Lehigh University and Harvard University and granted exempted status.

SI-8 Budget

The expected budget for this study is $9,600. In addition to the main study outlined above, we will recontact respondents after President-Elect Trump makes an actual announcement of intent to remain in or withdraw from the Paris Agreement. This follow-up study will allow us to draw additional insights about the effects of IO withdrawal on candidate choice (von Borzyskowski and Vabulas, 2024*a*).

For the initial study, we aim to recruit 3,600 respondents working with the survey firm Cint. This sample size is chose to allow us to have sufficient sample size (approximately 1,200) in the re-contact wave, based on the survey firm's estimate of a 30% recontact yield. Overall, then, the sample for both waves fo the study is 4,800 at a cost of $2.00 per respondent, for a total of $9,600.

SI-9 Survey Instrument

SI-9.1 Consent

1. Study Title: Questionnaire on climate policy

   Researchers: Lotem Bassan-Nygate and Sabrina Arias

   Why am I being invited to take part in a research study?

   Lotem Bassan-Nygate, Assistant Professor of Public Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School, and Sabrina Arias, Assistant Professor of International Relations at Leigh University is inviting you to take part in a research study.

   What should I know about a research study?

   (a) Whether or not you take part is up to you.

   (b) Your participation is completely voluntary.

   (c) You can choose not to take part.

   (d) You can agree to take part and later change your mind.

   (e) Your decision will not be held against you.

(f) Your refusal to participate will not result in any consequences or any loss of benefits that you are otherwise entitled to receive.

(g) You can ask all the questions you want before you decide.

Why is this research being done?

We are interested in exploring how people interact with and respond to social media content related to foreign policy and public opinion.

How long will the research last and what will I need to do?

You will be asked to answer a short survey, which we expect will take about 15 minutes to complete. The survey includes questions about your opinions on social media posts, your attitudes toward international topics, and some general demographic information.

Is there any way being in this study could be bad for me?

We don't believe there are any risks from participating in this research. Since identifiable information is not collected, there is no risk of a loss of confidentiality. Some political questions may make you feel some discomfort, but participation is completely voluntary, and you are welcome to stop the survey at any time.

Will being in this study help me in any way?

We cannot promise any benefits to you or others from your taking part in this research. However, possible benefits include contributing to a better understanding public opinion on foreign policy issues.

What happens if I do not want to be in this research?

Participation in research is completely voluntary. You can decide to participate, not participate, or discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your alternative to participating in this research study is to not participate.

What happens if I say yes, but I change my mind later?

You can leave the research at any time; it will not be held against you.

If I take part in this research, how will my privacy be protected? What happens to the information you collect?

This survey is anonymous since identifiers are removed from your identifiable private information during this research, this information could be used for future research studies or distributed to another investigator for future research studies without your additional informed consent.

You may not be told everything or may be misled

For scientific reasons, you may be unaware of the study hypotheses and the research questions being tested.

Who can I talk to?

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has hurt you, talk to Lotem Bassan-Nygate at lbassan@hks.harvard.edu or to Sabrina Arias at sarias@lehigh.edu This research has been reviewed and approved by the Harvard University Area Institutional Review Board ("IRB") and the Leigh University IRB. You may talk to them at (617) 496-2847/ cuhs@harvard.edu or (610) 758-2871/ inirb@lehigh.edu if:

(a) Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.

(b) You cannot reach the research team.

(c) You want to talk to someone besides the research team.

(d) You have questions about your rights as a research subject.

(e) You want to get information or provide input about this research.

Do you freely give your consent to participate in this study?

(a) Yes

(b) No

2. (Captcha) Please verify that you are not a robot.

SI-9.2 Demographics

1. What is your gender?

   (a) Male

   (b) Female

   (c) Prefer not to say

   (d) Other

2. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

   (a) Elementary or some high school

   (b) High school graduate/GED

   (c) Trade or vocational certification

   (d) Some college/Associate's degree

   (e) College graduate

   (f) Post-graduate degree

3. In general, I think of myself as:

   (a) Extremely liberal

(b) Liberal

(c) Slightly liberal

(d) Moderate, middle of the road

(e) Slightly conservative

(f) Conservative

(g) Extremely conservative

4. Generally speaking, I think of myself as a:

(a) Democrat

(b) Republican

(c) Independent

5. *If Democrat selected:* Would you call yourself a strong Democrat, or a not very strong Democrat?

(a) Strong Democrat

(b) Not very strong Democrat

6. *If Republican selected:* Would you call yourself a strong Republican, or a not very strong Republican?

(a) Strong Republican

(b) Not very strong Republican

7. *If Independent selected:* Do you think of yourself as closer to the Democratic Party or the Republican Party?

(a) Closer to the Democratic Party

(b) Closer to the Republican Party

8. Who did you vote for in the 2024 Presidential election?

(a) Donald Trump

(b) Kamala Karris

(c) Another candidate

(d) I did not vote in the 2024 presidential election

9. Which of these options best describes your situation (in the last seven days)?

(a) Employed full time

(b) Employed part time

(c) Unemployed

(d) Student

(e) Retired

(f) Homemaker

(g) Self-employed

10. How old are you?

11. What was your total household income before taxes during the past 12 months?

    (a) Less than $25,000
    (b) $25,000-$49,999
    (c) $50,000-$74,999
    (d) $75,000-$99,999
    (e) $100,000-$149,999
    (f) $150,000 or more
    (g) Prefer not to say

12. We would like to get a sense of your general preferences. Most modern theories of decision making recognize that decisions do not take place in a vacuum. Individual preferences and knowledge, along with situational variables, can greatly impact the decision process. To demonstrate that you've read this much, just go ahead and select both red and green among the alternatives below, no matter what your favorite color is. Yes, ignore the question below and select both of these options. What is your favorite color?

    (a) White
    (b) Black
    (c) Red
    (d) Pink
    (e) Green
    (f) Blue

13. Choose one or more races that you consider yourself to be.

    (a) White or Caucasian
    (b) Black or African American
    (c) American Indian/Native American or Alaska Native
    (d) Asian
    (e) Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
    (f) Other
    (g) Prefer not to say

14. Are you of Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino origin?

    (a) Yes
    (b) No
    (c) Prefer not to say

15. How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right?

    (a) Most of the time
    (b) Some of the time

(c) Only now and then

(d) Hardly at all

16. Would you say you follow what's going on in government and public affairs:

    (a) Most of the time

    (b) Some of the time

    (c) Only now and then

    (d) Hardly at all

17. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. (Respondent selects from Definitely disagree, somewhat disagree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat agree, definitely agree)

    (a) The use of military force only makes problems worse

    (b) Generally speaking, the United States can trust other nations.

    (c) Going to war is unfortunate, but sometimes the only solution to international problems.

    (d) The United States is superior to other nations.

18. How often do you attend religious services?

    (a) More than once a week

    (b) Once a week

    (c) A few times a month

    (d) A few times a year

    (e) Once a year or less

    (f) Never

19. Would you describe yourself as a born-again or evangelical Christian, or not?

    (a) Yes

    (b) No

    (c) Other/prefer not to answer

20. In the recent past, has your local community been impacted by any of the following weather events? Select all that apply.

    (a) Floods

    (b) Hurricanes

    (c) Wildfires

    (d) Droughts

    (e) Heatwaves

    (f) None of the above

21. Based on the evidence you have read and heard, what can you reasonably conclude about climate change?

(a) The climate is changing, and human activity plays a significant role

(b) The climate is changing, and human activity may play a significant role

(c) The climate is changing, and human activity does not play a significant role

(d) The climate is not changing

(e) Don't know / Unsure

22. Which, if any, of the following industries are important to your community's economy? Select all that apply.

(a) Oil, gas, or coal

(b) Green industry (e.g., green technology, solar/wind/geothermal energy)

(c) Automotive

(d) None of the above

23. Do you believe that climate change policies would help or hurt your personal economic situation?

(a) Hurt a lot

(b) Hurt a little

(c) Neither help nor hurt

(d) Help a little

(e) Help a lot

24. Do any of the following statements apply to you? Select as many as applicable.

(a) I drive an electric car

(b) I drive a hybrid or plug-in car

(c) I am a vegetarian or vegan

(d) I use public transportation as my main transportation source

(e) None of the above

25. On the next pages, you will read about several pieces of information. Please read this information carefully because you will be asked questions to check your attention and comprehensionDo you agree to read the details very carefully, and then give your most thoughtful answers?

(a) Yes, I agree to read the details carefully

(b) No, I don't agree to read the details carefully

SI-9.3 Vignettes

1. **Uncertain Condition:** Since President-elect Donald Trump has been re-elected to office, many political experts have made projections about his environmental policies. The United States is currently a member of the Paris Agreement, an international agreement aimed at combating climate change. The Paris Agreement does not specify any legal or economic penalties for countries that violate their promises to reduce emissions. However, experts are unclear about what specific actions President-elect Trump will take regarding the Paris Agreement.

2. **Remain Condition:** Since President-elect Donald Trump has been re-elected to office, many political experts have made projections about his environmental policies. The United States is currently a member of the Paris Agreement, an international agreement aimed at combating climate change. The Paris Agreement does not specify any legal or economic penalties for countries that violate their promises to reduce emissions. Many experts predict that President-elect Trump will choose to remain in the Paris Agreement.

3. **Withdraw Condition:** Since President-elect Donald Trump has been re-elected to office, many political experts have made projections about his environmental policies. The United States is currently a member of the Paris Agreement, an international agreement aimed at combating climate change. The Paris Agreement does not specify any legal or economic penalties for countries that violate their promises to reduce emissions. Many experts predict that President-elect Trump will withdraw the United States from the Paris Agreement.

SI-9.4 Treatment Reinforcement

1. What international agreement is being mentioned?
   (a) the Paris Agreement
   (b) the Geneva Convention
   (c) the Treaty of Rome

2. Based on the text you read, do experts assess that President-elect Donald Trump likely to:
   (a) Remain in the agreement
   (b) Withdraw from the agreement
   (c) Unclear what steps he will take

SI-9.5 Outcome Measures

1. How much of a policy priority do you believe the following areas should be to the United States? (Respondent selects from Not a priority at all, slight priority, medium level priority, fairly high priority, top priority)
   (a) Addressing climate change
   (b) Reducing racial injustice
   (c) Protecting LGBTQ rights
   (d) Strenghening the nation's economy
   (e) Improving infrastructure
   (f) Strengthening the US military

2. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about climate change- a change in climate patterns, including extreme weather events. (Respondent selects from Definitely disagree, somewhat disagree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat agree, definitely agree)
   (a) Climate change is not a serious problem.

(b) Climate change will have a serious impact during my lifetime.

(c) I would vote for a politician who promised to take action to reduce climate change.

(d) I would personally support a tax increase to fund national programs to reduce climate change.

(e) The U.S. should not do more to reduce climate change.

(f) The international community should do more to reduce climate change.

3. If you would like to become more informed about climate change and steps that can be taken to address this issue, please click the link below. This is completely optional, and in no way affects your participation in the survey.

4. important How important is it to you that the US remains in the Paris Agreement?

(a) Very important

(b) Somewhat important

(c) Neither important nor unimportant

(d) Somewhat unimportant

(e) Very unimportant

5. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements: (Respondent selects from Strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat agree, Strongly agree)

(a) It is important to me personally that the US will comply with international law.

(b) Complying with international law is an important value.

(c) Complying with international law is important, even if it contradicts the national interest.

6. How much do you support or oppose President-elect Trump?

(a) Strongly support

(b) Somewhat support

(c) Neither support nor oppose

(d) Somewhat oppose

(e) Strongly oppose

7. How likely do you think it will be that President-elect Trump withdraws the US from the Paris Agreement?

(a) Not likely at all

(b) Not very likely

(c) Neither likely nor unlikely

(d) Somewhat likely

(e) Very likely

8. Do you think it is necessary for the US to participate in the Paris Agreement in order for it to be effective?

(a) Strongly agree

(b) Somewhat agree

(c) Neither agree nor disagree

(d) Somewhat disagree

(e) Strongly disagree

SI-9.6 Debrief

1. Thank you for completing the survey. We would like to remind you that this survey was for research purposes only, and that the information you evaluated was hypothetical.