

ONLINE APPENDIX

Additional Information for
Public Opinion and Presidents' Unilateral Policy Agendas

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A Robustness Checks and Extensions for Online Publication

A.1 Standard errors clustered on congress

Table A.1: Issue Salience and Executive Action, 1954-2018

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Public salience	1.111 (.017)	1.101 (.017)	1.110 (.018)
Divided government		-0.163 (.104)	-0.133 (.122)
War		0.268 (.058)	0.181 (.101)
Unemployment		0.022 (.262)	-0.017 (.534)
First term			.182 (.063)
Presidential election year			-0.030 (.678)
Approval rating			0.003 (.991)
President Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓
Issue Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓
Observations	1029	1029	1029

Dependent variable is the annual number of executive orders in each issue area. Estimates are negative binomial regression coefficients. *P*-values calculated via the Wild cluster bootstrap to account for clustered standard errors on each congress shown in parentheses.

A.2 Alternative regression models

Table A.2: Issue Salience and Executive Action, 1954-2018 (Linear regression)

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Public salience	0.727 (.012)	0.720 (.010)	0.714 (.011)
Divided government		-0.105 (.066)	-0.080 (.179)
War		0.133 (.007)	0.061 (.440)
Unemployment		0.012 (.524)	-0.017 (.414)
First term			.131 (.012)
Presidential election year			-0.037 (.216)
Approval rating			-0.009 (.978)
President Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓
Issue Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓
Observations	1029	1029	1029

Dependent variable is the logged annual number of executive orders (plus one) in each issue area. Estimates are negative binomial regression coefficients.

P-values calculated via the Wild cluster bootstrap to account for clustered standard errors on each issue area shown in parentheses.

Table A.3: Issue Saliency and Executive Action, 1954-2018

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Public saliency	0.673 (.190)	0.712 (.147)	0.695 (.130)
Divided government		-0.167 (.038)	-0.120 (.123)
War		0.252 (.005)	0.144 (.096)
Unemployment		0.032 (.302)	-0.009 (.822)
First term			.193 (.040)
Presidential election year			-0.082 (.709)
Approval rating			-0.053 (.892)
President Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓
Issue Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓
Observations	1029	1029	1029

Dependent variable is the annual number of executive orders in each issue area. Estimates are Poisson regression coefficients. *P*-values calculated via the Wild cluster bootstrap to account for clustered standard errors on issue area shown in parentheses.

A.3 Alternative measures

Table A.4: Public Opinion and Executive Action, 1954-2018 (Non-commemorative executive orders)

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Public salience	1.133 (.043)	1.136 (.039)	1.126 (.034)
Divided government		-0.156 (.079)	-0.124 (.148)
War		0.283 (.010)	0.194 (.092)
Unemployment		0.026 (.474)	-0.012 (.747)
First term			0.174 (.113)
Presidential election year			-0.037 (.745)
Approval rating			-0.001 (.999)
President Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓
Issue Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓
Observations	1029	1029	1029

Dependent variable is the annual number of executive orders in each issue area. Estimates are negative binomial regression coefficients. *P*-values calculated via the Wild cluster bootstrap to account for clustered standard errors on each issue area shown in parentheses.

Table A.5: Issue Salience and Executive Action, 1954-2018 (DV=share of annual executive orders)

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Public salience	0.074 (.096)	0.074 (.099)	0.074 (.097)
Divided government		-0.006 (.340)	-0.004 (.533)
War		0.001 (.701)	-0.005 (.489)
Unemployment		-0.001 (.564)	-0.003 (.296)
First term			.007 (.157)
Presidential election year			-0.003 (.720)
Approval rating			0.006 (.785)
President Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓
Issue Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓
Observations	1029	1029	1029

Dependent variable is the proportion of annual executive orders in each issue area. Estimates are negative binomial regression coefficients. *P*-values calculated via the Wild cluster bootstrap to account for clustered standard errors on each issue area shown in parentheses.

A.4 Agenda-Setting and Responsiveness

Table A.6: Issue Saliency and Executive Action, 1954-2018 (Accounting for presidential agenda-setting)

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Public saliency	0.802 (.072)	0.807 (.063)	0.787 (.045)
Presidential attentiveness	1.310 (.004)	1.283 (.006)	1.312 (.004)
Divided government		-0.159 (.077)	-0.126 (.134)
War		0.260 (.020)	0.161 (.125)
Unemployment		0.023 (.477)	-0.018 (.584)
First term			0.193 (.088)
Presidential election year			-0.035 (.667)
Approval rating			0.025 (.953)
President Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓
Issue Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓
Observations	1029	1029	1029

Dependent variable is the annual number of executive orders in each issue area. Estimates are negative binomial regression coefficients. *P*-values calculated via the Wild cluster bootstrap to account for clustered standard errors on issue area shown in parentheses.

Table A.7: Issue Saliency and Executive Action, 1954-2018

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Public saliency (lagged)	0.999 (.038)	1.007 (.039)	0.990 (.025)
Divided government		-0.123 (.206)	-0.085 (.373)
War		0.262 (.015)	0.167 (.134)
Unemployment		0.025 (.503)	-0.023 (.544)
First term			.210 (.056)
Presidential election year			-0.039 (.733)
Approval rating			-0.041 (.923)
President Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓
Issue Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓
Observations	1005	1005	1005

Dependent variable is the annual number of executive orders in each issue area. Estimates are negative binomial regression coefficients. *P*-values calculated via the Wild cluster bootstrap to account for clustered standard errors on issue area shown in parentheses.

A.5 Subsample estimates

Table A.8: Public Opinion and Executive Action, 1954-2018 (Balanced panel)

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Public salience	1.208 (.041)	1.198 (.040)	1.243 (.034)
Divided government		−0.262 (.325)	−0.259 (.412)
War		0.160 (.551)	−0.057 (.824)
Unemployment		−0.038 (.456)	0.001 (.988)
First term			−0.113 (.174)
Presidential election year			−0.011 (.881)
Approval rating			1.507 (.088)
President Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓
Issue Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓
Observations	384	384	384

Data include the six issues (economy, civil rights, labor, law and crime, domestic commerce, and public lands) for which public opinion measures are available in each year between 1954 and 2018. Dependent variable is the annual number of executive orders in each issue area. Estimates are negative binomial regression coefficients. *P*-values corresponding to the test statistic calculated via the wild bootstrap with 100,000 simulations shown in parentheses.

Table A.9: Public Opinion and Executive Action, 1954-2018: Omitting one issue at a time

Omitted issue category	<i>Public salience</i>	<i>N</i>
Economic	1.176 (.123)	965
Civil rights	1.106 (.055)	965
Health	0.939 (.076)	966
Labor	1.084 (.033)	965
Education	1.072 (.045)	966
Environment	1.088 (.034)	981
Energy	0.727 (.103)	969
Immigration	1.051 (.045)	974
Transportation	1.085 (.044)	994
Law and crime	1.023 (.060)	965
Social welfare	1.091 (.041)	974
Housing	1.121 (.037)	975
Banking/finance	1.099 (.035)	965
Science/technology	1.476 (.018)	970
Defense	1.083 (.033)	983
Foreign affairs	1.151 (.032)	983
Government operations	1.491 (.011)	968
Public lands	1.102 (.051)	965

Note: Coefficients and *p*-values reflect results from model (3) of Table 2 when excluding each of the issues one-at-a-time listed in the leftmost column.

Table A.10: Public Opinion and Executive Action, 1954-2018: Omitting one president at a time

Omitted president	<i>Public salience</i>	<i>N</i>
Eisenhower	1.018 (.053)	977
Kennedy	1.051 (.064)	996
Johnson	0.940 (.071)	960
Nixon	1.078 (.079)	937
Ford	1.145 (.039)	995
Carter	0.927 (.069)	961
Reagan	1.260 (.044)	888
H.W. Bush	1.241 (.047)	957
Clinton	1.261 (.016)	885
W. Bush	1.046 (.062)	885
Obama	1.099 (.012)	885
Trump	1.077 (.026)	993

Note: Coefficients and *p*-values reflect results from model (3) of Table 2 when excluding each of the presidents one-at-a-time listed in the leftmost column.

Table A.11: Public Salience and Executive Action among High-Variation Issues, 1954-2018

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Public salience	0.917 (.054)	0.894 (.057)	0.921 (.054)
Divided government		-0.379 (.174)	-0.404 (.178)
War		0.150 (.537)	0.141 (.630)
Unemployment		0.047 (.772)	0.067 (.650)
First term			-0.070 (.412)
Presidential election year			0.066 (.633)
Approval rating			0.425 (.387)
President Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓
Issue Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓
Observations	251	251	251

Dependent variable is the annual number of executive orders in each issue area. Estimates are negative binomial regression coefficients. *P*-values calculated via the Wild cluster bootstrap to account for clustered standard errors on issue area shown in parentheses. Issues included are macroeconomics, civil rights, law and crime, and defense.

A.6 Additional Models for Doorstep Issues

Table A.12: Public Opinion and Executive Action across Issue Areas, 1954-2018 (Classifying civil rights as doorstep issue)

	Doorstep issues			Not doorstep issues		
Public salience	1.533 (.009)	1.458 (.009)	1.444 (.012)	0.645 (.552)	0.684 (.522)	0.659 (.534)
Divided government		-0.230 (.339)	-0.205 (.388)		-0.149 (.157)	-0.107 (.206)
War		0.374 (.090)	0.269 (.237)		0.218 (.071)	0.124 (.287)
Unemployment		0.020 (.707)	-0.003 (.887)		0.019 (.645)	-0.038 (.459)
First term			0.120 (.501)			0.245 (.133)
Presidential election year			-0.032 (.695)			-0.053 (.824)
Approval rating			0.177 (.790)			-0.145 (.792)
President Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Issue Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	491	491	491	538	538	538

Doorstep issues include economic issues, health, labor, education, law and crime, social welfare, civil rights, and housing. Dependent variable is the annual number of executive orders in each issue area. Estimates are negative binomial regression coefficients. *P*-values calculated via the Wild cluster bootstrap to account for clustered standard errors on each issue area shown in parentheses.

Table A.13: Public Opinion and Executive Action across Issue Areas, 1954-2018 (Accounting for potential nonlinearities)

	Doorstep issues	Not doorstep issues
Public salience	4.998 (.019)	0.664 (.830)
Public salience ²	-5.645 (.022)	-0.094 (.984)
Divided government	-0.080 (.828)	-0.137 (.099)
War	0.395 (.139)	0.084 (.471)
Unemployment	0.016 (.683)	-0.034 (.463)
First term	0.240 (.261)	0.204 (.179)
Presidential election year	-0.061 (.575)	-0.044 (.854)
Approval rating	-0.472 (.395)	0.011 (.984)
President Fixed Effects	✓	✓
Issue Fixed Effects	✓	✓
Observations	427	602

Doorstep issues include economic issues, health, labor, education, law and crime, social welfare, and housing. Dependent variable is the annual number of executive orders in each issue area. Estimates are negative binomial regression coefficients. *P*-values calculated via the Wild cluster bootstrap to account for clustered standard errors on each issue area shown in parentheses.

Table A.14: Public Opinion and Executive Action across Issue Areas, 1954-2018 (Lagged measures of public salience)

	Doorstep issues			Not doorstep issues		
Public salience (lagged)	1.107 (.030)	0.972 (.072)	0.933 (.074)	0.776 (.343)	0.804 (.338)	0.776 (.345)
Divided government		-0.133 (.684)	-0.105 (.745)		-0.120 (.245)	-0.078 (.411)
War		0.476 (.052)	0.455 (.064)		0.180 (.152)	0.075 (.542)
Unemployment		0.056 (.378)	-0.001 (.982)		0.016 (.723)	-0.032 (.497)
First term			0.235 (.256)			0.214 (.132)
Presidential election year			-0.027 (.811)			-0.056 (.804)
Approval rating			-0.481 (.357)			-0.026 (.960)
President Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Issue Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	417	417	417	588	588	588

Doorstep issues include economic issues, health, labor, education, law and crime, social welfare, and housing.

Dependent variable is the annual number of executive orders in each issue area. Estimates are negative binomial regression coefficients. *P*-values calculated via the Wild cluster bootstrap to account for clustered standard errors on each issue area shown in parentheses.

Table A.15: Public Opinion and Executive Action across Issue Areas, 1954-2018 (Lagged measures of public salience)

	Doorstep issues			Not doorstep issues		
Public salience (lagged)	1.091 (.005)	1.020 (.006)	0.974 (.007)	0.877 (.306)	0.927 (.315)	0.918 (.265)
Divided government		-0.160 (.480)	-0.130 (.596)		-0.106 (.332)	-0.061 (.513)
War		0.358 (.096)	0.267 (.239)		0.214 (.072)	0.117 (.338)
Unemployment		0.030 (.599)	-0.012 (.749)		0.027 (.552)	-0.027 (.606)
First term			0.194 (.233)			0.231 (.129)
Presidential election year			-0.018 (.843)			-0.068 (.792)
Approval rating			-0.015 (.979)			-0.140 (.791)
President Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Issue Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	479	479	479	526	526	526

Doorstep issues include economic issues, health, labor, education, law and crime, social welfare, civil rights, and housing. Dependent variable is the annual number of executive orders in each issue area. Estimates are negative binomial regression coefficients. *P*-values calculated via the Wild cluster bootstrap to account for clustered standard errors on each issue area shown in parentheses.

A.7 Additional Models for Significant Directives

Table A.16: Public Opinion and Significant Executive Action, 1954-2002

	All	Not significant (score < 0)	Significant (score > 0)	Significant (score > 1)
Public salience (lagged)	0.976 (.044)	0.244 (.616)	1.333 (.037)	1.701 (.080)
Divided government	-0.140 (.466)	-0.167 (.233)	-0.179 (.499)	-0.531 (.276)
War	0.052 (.724)	0.061 (.676)	-0.009 (.973)	-0.114 (.877)
Unemployment	-0.003 (.937)	0.055 (.383)	-0.053 (.312)	-0.098 (.347)
First term	0.120 (.243)	0.084 (.205)	0.161 (.344)	0.255 (.202)
Presidential election year	-0.148 (.413)	-0.140 (.429)	-0.091 (.529)	-0.244 (.224)
Approval rating	-0.307 (.445)	-0.227 (.648)	-0.220 (.618)	-0.588 (.485)
President Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓
Issue Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	717	717	717	717

Dependent variable is the annual number of executive orders in each issue area.

Estimates are negative binomial regression coefficients. *P*-values calculated via the Wild cluster bootstrap to account for clustered standard errors on each issue area shown in parentheses.

A.8 Public Mood and Executive Action

Table A.17: Public Mood and Patterns of Unilateral Action

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Public mood	1.266 (.127)	1.225 (.157)		
Aligned president			0.248 (.142)	0.250 (.132)
Public salience		1.057 (.035)		1.099 (.036)
Divided government	-0.131 (.131)	-0.127 (.138)	-0.138 (.113)	-0.134 (.119)
War	0.208 (.083)	0.200 (.092)	0.188 (.095)	0.180 (.106)
Unemployment	-0.020 (.550)	-0.015 (.643)	-0.024 (.503)	-0.019 (.586)
First term	0.198 (.082)	0.193 (.096)	0.189 (.092)	0.184 (.107)
Presidential election year	-0.032 (.798)	-0.031 (.815)	-0.030 (.801)	-0.029 (.819)
Approval rating	-0.073 (.869)	-0.023 (.958)	-0.057 (.898)	-0.005 (.990)
President Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓
Issue Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	1029	1029	1029	1029

Dependent variable is the annual number of executive orders in each issue area. Estimates are negative binomial regression coefficients. *P*-values calculated via the Wild cluster bootstrap to account for clustered standard errors on each issue area shown in parentheses.