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**ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE:
THE EFFECTS OF TREATY SIGNINGS AND FOREIGN TRAVEL ON PRESIDENTIAL
APPROVAL**

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ABSTRACT

Most studies of the "rally around the flag" effect have tended to focus on the salience of international military crises or uses of force on presidential popularity, while relatively little attention has been accorded to the impact of non-military, non-crisis rally events on an incumbent's public approval rating. In this research, the influences of certain non-aggressive diplomatic events-- treaty signings and foreign travel--on presidential popularity are assessed. Analyses of the rally potential of treaty and agreement signings indicate that while international agreements in general have little effect on public approval ratings, certain subcategories of treaty signings--agreements concluding wars, treaties with the Soviet Union, security agreements, and peace agreements--may indeed benefit the president. However, the possibilities for a chief executive to bolster his public approval through foreign travel appear to be fairly limited, with statistically insignificant effects on the public approval of the president.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of the "rally effect" has long been recognized in the academic literature on presidential popularity (Erikson, Luttbeg, and Tedin 1980; Hurwitz and Peffley 1987; Kernell 1978; Lee 1977; MacKuen 1983; Mueller 1970; 1973; Ostrom and Simon 1985; Russett 1990; Sigelman and Conover 1981). As defined by Mueller, the rally effect postulates that in times of major international events or crises the American public largely sets aside any disagreements that it might have with the incumbent President's domestic policies or performance in office in order to support the chief executive and present a united front to the international community. The President's authority to project the nation's military might in pursuit or protection of strategic, economic, or other geopolitical interests entails real risks, not only to American lives and resources, but also to presidential popularity, prestige, and electoral fortunes. Presidential administrations and domestic policy agendas may rise or fall based on such calculations, and yet the conditions surrounding and influencing such decisions remain poorly understood by both popular pundits and scholars of political science and international relations.

Most studies of the rally effect, however, have tended to focus on the salience of international military crises or uses of force on presidential popularity, while relatively little attention has been accorded to the impact of non-military, non-crisis rally events on an incumbent's public approval rating. As an ostensibly peace-loving nation, it is troubling that so many Presidents have been judged and assessed on the basis of their military and war-making prowess. Ronald Reagan's aggressive posture toward the Soviet Union and Libya only served to bolster his public image as a confident and resolute leader, in marked contrast to that of his predecessor. During the 1988 presidential campaign, George Bush attempted repeatedly to counter his "wimp" image through repeated references to his record as a World War II fighter pilot, but was only able to successfully dispel these perceptions through successful military confrontations with Panama and Iraq. This apparent emphasis on the military nature of the office of the President is troubling. As a matter of public policy in the turbulent post-Cold War era, it would be comforting to find that the electorate approves more of Presidents when they seek to defuse international tensions, when they pursue foreign policy through peaceful, diplomatic measures rather than employ military means to resolve crises.

If the conventional wisdom is that the American public will rally behind the commander-in-chief during episodes of international conflict and tension, then one might assume that same public should be at least equally supportive of the chief executive in response to more positive, non-crisis rally events--when sources of international tension are resolved, when superpower summits are held, when peace treaties and arms agreements are announced, and when presidents travel abroad, unless of course such responses are perceived as weaknesses. As MacKuen (1983) notes, such specific instances as Richard Nixon's fifteen point surge in popularity following the Vietnam peace agreement in 1973 further cemented his image as an accomplished and competent diplomat, while Jimmy Carter's twelve point rally following the announcement of the Camp David Accords in 1978 marked one of the few notable successes of that troubled presidency.

Arguably, Americans will feel a surge of pride and admiration for their leaders on such stately and ceremonial occasions as treaty signings and state visits, and cannot help but put aside partisan differences when they see their chief executive conferring with other heads of state and enacting sweeping international changes with the stroke of a pen in these most "presidential" of settings. On these occasions, Presidents are seen as able to present themselves in their best light, as above and beyond the realm of politics and instead as statesmen and actors on the stage of history.

In light of the substantial research on the rally effect that has focused on the relationship between the use of military force and presidential popularity, a similar assessment of non-aggressive diplomatic events--summits, peace agreements, arms control and/or reduction agreements, presidential foreign travel, etc.--might offer valuable insight into the broader explanatory value of the rally effect as a predictor of presidential popularity, as well as an indication of the potential political and electoral implications for foreign policy in the post-Cold War era. The analyses that follow will examine two facets of such diplomatic events, the impacts of treaty signings and the effects of foreign travel on presidential popularity.

Previous Research

The authors of the *Federalist Papers* noted that "all governments rest on opinion" (Madison 1788, 152), and public opinion polling has been a standard feature of the American political landscape for more than five decades, with one of the most frequently posed questions being the Gallup Organization's "do you approve or disapprove of the way (name of incumbent) is handling his job as President?" This collective data, compiled across eleven presidential administrations, represents an invaluable resource for the study of how and why public approval of the President changes over time and what external stimuli might be correlated with these changes in popularity.

The importance of public approval and support to presidential success is also well documented. Both Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde (1987) and Fiorina (1981) note that voting behavior in presidential and congressional elections is influenced by the popularity of the White House incumbent, while Marra and Ostrom (1989) demonstrate that the President's public approval ratings play a role in the distribution of congressional seats. Presidential popularity has also been linked to presidential success in congressional roll call votes (Edwards 1980), the success of presidential policy initiatives (Rivers and Rose 1985), and congressional reactions to presidential vetoes (Rohde and Simon 1985).

Popular Presidents have more leverage in persuading other political actors to adopt administration priorities and policies as their own (Neustadt 1960) and are more likely to present bold and ambitious legislative packages to Congress (Light 1982). Although not binding, Crespi (1980) has observed that "[p]residential approval ratings have created a pseudo-parliamentary situation, whereby the President faces a monthly vote of confidence from the total electorate...this vote of confidence is accepted by both politicians and political analysts as an indicator of the President's political clout and, therefore, of his ability to govern effectively." (Crespi 1980, 42). Quite simply, public approval is the coin of the realm in modern American politics; Presidents enjoying substantial popularity and public support have more options and resources available to

them and fewer concerns about congressional resistance to their policies, while unpopular Presidents may be more vulnerable to congressional recalcitrance and investigations.

Presidential popularity is not a constant, however, and every President in the era of modern public opinion polling has seen his approval ratings wax and wane, sometimes considerably, for reasons that are often unclear. Marra, Ostrom, and Simon (1990) note that there are three basic, though not mutually exclusive, schools of thought as to what types of dynamics influence presidential popularity. One school of thought begins with the observation that, for most incumbents, public approval "moves ineluctably downward from the first day in office" (MacKuen 1983, 178). Advocates of this perspective (Cronin 1980; MacKuen 1983; Mueller 1970; 1973; Stimson 1976;) maintain that presidential approval is characterized by a gradual and steady erosion over the course of a presidential term, and that while events and developments may temporarily delay or even reverse this decline over the short-term, it cannot be forestalled indefinitely.

A second school of thought emphasizes the domestic and international contexts in which the President operates and to which presidential popularity responds. According to this approach, Presidents are continually assessed based on their abilities to satisfy the expectations and desires of the electorate. Public approval rises and falls in response to such stimuli as the rates of unemployment and inflation, levels of international tension, battle deaths during periods of war, and the success of the President's legislative agenda (Hibbs 1982; Kernell 1978; MacKuen 1983; Ostrom and Simon 1985).

The third school of thought accepts this relationship between public approval and environmental stimuli, but emphasizes instead the symbolic nature of the presidency and the potential for ameliorating the negative impact of events in the domestic and international arenas through political drama and effective public relations strategies. Faced with the inevitable loss of such an important political asset, Presidents might be expected to do whatever is in their power in attempting to minimize or even reverse this seemingly inexorable decline in public approval (Brace and Hinckley 1993; Brody and Page 1975; Haight and Brody 1977; Kernell 1986; Lee 1977; Neustadt 1960; Ragsdale 1984; 1987). Kernell (1986) and Brace and Hinckley (1993) even posit the development of a "public relations presidency" in the postwar era in which incumbents strategically or reactively "act in deliberate ways to achieve heightened popularity in the polls and in elections" (Brace and Hinckley 1993, 382-384). Activities such as televised addresses, foreign and domestic travel, press conferences, and Rose Garden signings are all designed to present a coherent message or theme to the electorate, all with an eye toward maximizing and maintaining public approval.

The enhanced visibility of public relations experts and "spin doctors" in the Reagan, Bush and Clinton administrations are testimony to the increasing importance of this role in the modern presidency. The savvy timing of "going public" through presidential speeches (Edwards 1983; Kernell 1986; Lowi 1985), press conferences (Lammers 1981), media relations (Grossman and Kumar 1981; Kernell 1984; Ragsdale 1984; Simon and Ostrom 1989), foreign travel (Lammers 1982; Darcy and Richman 1988; Simon and Ostrom 1989; Erickson 1998), and other presidentially relevant events may, for a time, forestall the inexorable decline in popularity that seems to occur naturally over the course of a term. Foreign and military initiatives designed to bolster public approval ratings would obviously be included in this final category and will be considered in the next section.

Statistical Analyses

A. Treaty Signings

Might there be a consistent and measurable rally effect on presidential popularity in response to major non-aggressive diplomatic events, specifically the signing of high profile international treaties and agreements involving the United States? In order to address this proposition, changes in the overall approval ratings for the Truman through the Bush presidencies were measured following treaty and agreement signings that meet Mueller's rally criteria. In addition, data were gathered as to the types of treaties and agreements most likely to affect presidential popularity (i.e., nuclear weapons agreements, trade agreements, peace

agreements, security agreements, etc.); whether the treaties in question were multilateral or bilateral in nature; whether the public assesses treaties involving the United States and the Soviet Union differently than non-superpower agreements; the role of media coverage, and; whether it makes a difference if the President himself signs a particular agreement or has another administration official do the honors.

1. Data and Coding

Treaty and agreement signings clearly meet Mueller's rally criteria: that an event must be international in nature, must involve the United States and the President directly, and must be specific, dramatic, and sharply focused. The research design that follows draws heavily from recent analyses of the rally effect (MacKuen 1983; Lian and Oneal 1993; Oneal and Bryan 1995) so that direct comparisons might then be possible in determining what types of presidential activities affect presidential popularity.

A number of sources, including the *New York Times Index*, were consulted in order to compile a listing of major treaties and agreements signed between January 1949 and January 1993. To narrow the search and ensure salience, only those events that were reported on the front page of the *New York Times* were included. In addition, the following information about each event was noted: the event's placement on the front page of the Times (headline or elsewhere on page one); the multilateral or bilateral nature of the treaty; the nature of the treaty or agreement itself (arms control, security, cooperation, trade, or peace agreement); and whether or not the treaty involved the Soviet Union or the Russian Republic. Based on these methods, a reasonably comprehensive listing of all of the major international agreements to which the United States was a signatory during this period was compiled. While the possibility cannot be discounted that some cases might have been inadvertently excluded, these should not significantly affect the results that follow.

Rallies for each of these forty-nine events (RALLY) were calculated by subtracting the incumbent President's approval rating in the Gallup poll immediately following the event from the approval rating in the poll immediately preceding the event. The mean rally effect and standard deviations were then calculated for the entire study period, then for each individual presidential administration. To assess the impacts of multiple vs. single treaty signings between polls, the mean standard deviations were then calculated separately for these cases.

2. Results

The results of these calculations are presented in Table 1. Over the entire forty-four year period, the mean rally effect following all treaty and agreement signings has been negligible, just over one percentage point. However, in those instances in which more than one agreement was signed between polls the rally effect averaged three and a half percentage points, suggesting either that the general public is impressed by multiple treaty signings or that multiple treaty signings result in greater media coverage and hence greater salience. By comparison, multiple uses of force between polls yielded rallies of one percent on average while single uses between polls resulted in declines in public approval of -0.16 %; *t*-tests indicated no significant difference in the means (*t*-value = -1.42, *p*=0.161).

Table 1

Rally Effects Following Major Treaty Signings and International Agreements, 1949-1992

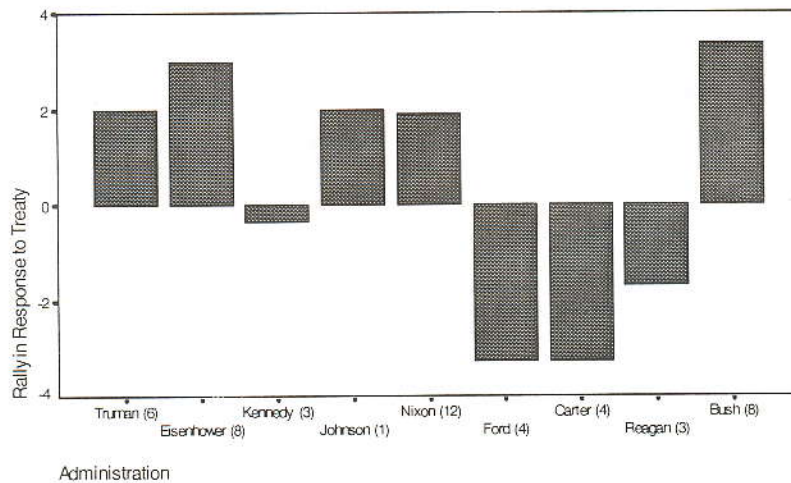
Treaty Characteristics	Mean Rally Effect	N	Standard Deviation	Min.	Max.
All Treaty Signings	1.18	49	5.19	-12	14
Single Signing Between Polls	0.50	38	5.59	-12	14
Multiple Signing Between Polls	3.54	11	2.38	1	7

Involving Republic	USSR/Russian	1.31	13	4.13	-6	7
Signed by President		0.39	23	5.47	-12	7
Concluding War		8.67	3	4.73	5	14
Arms Agreement		0.60	15	4.48	-7	7
Security Agreements		1.43	7	5.62	-5	18
Peace Agreements		4.71	7	6.45	-7	14
Cooperation Agreements		0.06	17	5.33	-12	7

When examined by administration (Figure 1), George Bush appears to have benefited the most from treaty signings, with a mean surge of almost three and a half points following such events, while the Truman, Eisenhower, Johnson, and Nixon administrations all experienced smaller, yet significant rallies. By comparison, the Ford, Carter, and Reagan presidencies all experienced declines in public approval on average, suggesting that treaty signings tended to redound to the disadvantage of these Presidents. Little positive or negative effect is noted for the Kennedy Administration. Interestingly, the Carter and Nixon statistics reflect disproportionately large standard deviations, indicating the extreme variations in popularity that characterized both presidencies.

Figure 1

Rallies in Response to Treaty Signings



Next, additional tests were conducted to ascertain whether or not the personal signature of the President, the involvement of the Soviet Union, or the nature of the treaty in question had an impact on the rally effect in question; these statistics are also presented in Table 1. As indicated, the involvement of the Soviet Union resulted in mean rallies of just over one percentage point, while the rally potential of a personal signature by the President appears negligible. Arms agreements yielded an average rally of just one-half of a percentage point and security agreements boosted the incumbent's popularity an average of a point and a half, while peace agreements were the most effective instigators of rallies, resulting in an average increase in public approval of more than four and a half points; the impact of treaties of cooperation appears to have a negligible impact on presidential popularity.

Finally, and not surprisingly, treaties resulting in the cessation of military hostilities between the United States and another power yield the greatest rallies, more than eight and a half points on average, although the significance of this finding is tempered by the fact that only three such treaties are present among our cases: the Panmunjom Armistice, the Vietnam War peace agreement, and the Gulf War cease-fire agreement.

The results of these limited analyses indicate that small, limited rallies related to treaty and agreement signings are most likely to occur when the agreement involves the Soviet Union and when the agreement relates to security arrangements or peace initiatives, or concludes a war in which the United States is a participant. These analyses suggest that while international agreements in general have little effect on the President's public approval ratings, certain subcategories of treaty signings--agreements concluding wars, treaties with the Soviet Union, security agreements, and peace agreements--may indeed benefit the President.

B. Foreign Travel

Foreign travel on the part of the President also meets Mueller's rally criteria and represents an increasingly important source of political theater and drama for the modern presidency. Such visits may "serve symbolically to create among the citizenry the idea that agendas and exigencies are being addressed, constituted authority exercised, and matters of state attended to" (Erickson 1998, 141). Beginning with Theodore Roosevelt's visit to observe the construction of the Panama Canal in 1906, every president of the twentieth century has made at least one foreign visit during his administration, with recent occupants of the Oval Office traveling several times per year. Such visits have ranged in importance, from the high stakes diplomacy accompanying Woodrow Wilson's sojourn to France to help craft the Versailles Treaty and Harry Truman's attendance at the Potsdam Conference in the waning days of World War II to more symbolic visits such as Nixon's surprise visit to the People's Republic of China in 1972.

In order to assess the effects of foreign travel on presidential popularity, a comprehensive listing of foreign presidential travel was obtained from the Department of State's Bureau of Public Affairs (Office of the Historian 1999). Because Gallup Poll presidential approval data are only available from the late 1930s onward, only presidential travel from 1938 through 1997 was considered, beginning with Franklin Roosevelt's visit to Panama in August 1938, and concluding with Bill Clinton's visit to Bosnia in December 1997.

However, the Gallup Organization's measurements of presidential popularity were sporadic during the Roosevelt and Truman administrations. During the Roosevelt presidency, Gallup asked only four presidential approval questions in 1943 and none in 1944, perhaps out of concern that any evidence of public dissatisfaction with the chief executive might hinder the war effort; in fact, the poll of December 1943 is the last of the Roosevelt presidency. Furthermore, as late as the 1970s the presidential approval question was omitted from surveys in the months preceding presidential elections, perhaps to avoid influencing the electoral outcome. In order to ensure that any rallies associated with presidential travel were not contaminated or influenced by other contemporaneous events, cases in which the relevant public approval ratings were measured more than six weeks prior to or following the foreign travel were omitted. Reliable public approval figures are therefore available for only 146 of the 161 instances of foreign travel between 1938 and 1997.

A number of other characteristics associated with the foreign travel in question were considered as well. Given the Cold War rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union that was the predominant theme in American foreign policy for most of the period under consideration, it is likely that the American public would react favorably to visits to communist countries, and especially travel to the Soviet Union itself, as a means toward reducing international tensions and the likelihood of war. Even after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, presidential visits to Russia might likely produce more significant rallies, given that country's sizeable nuclear arsenal. Similarly, visits to more economically developed

nations such as those of Western Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan might be presumed to attract more attention than travel to less developed nations, due to the U.S.'s economic and security ties to the former.

Longer foreign trips and stops in several nations during the same period of travel might be more likely to draw the attention of the American public. Given the presumption that second term presidents are more likely to engage in foreign travel as a remedy to their "lame duck" status at home, the presidential term in which the travel took place might prove significant. Finally, there is ample anecdotal and some scholarly evidence that, for much of the period under consideration, the electorate trusted Republicans with foreign policy matters more so than Democrats; the president's party therefore might be an important factor in whether rallies follow presidential visits abroad (Carmines & Stimson 1989; Erikson & Tedin 1995).

As was the case in the previous section, rallies for each of these 146 events (RALLY2) were calculated by subtracting the incumbent President's approval rating in the Gallup poll immediately following the foreign travel from the approval rating in the poll immediately preceding the travel. The mean rally effect and standard deviations were then calculated for the entire study period, then for each individual presidential administration. Not surprisingly, salience does not appear to have been a problem; each incidence of foreign presidential travel was reported on the front page of the *New York Times*, suggesting that the public was aware of such activities. Finally, the following information about each visit was noted: the destination of the foreign travel (whether the trip included Western developed nations, less-developed nations, or communist nations¹), the duration of the foreign trip in days, the president's party (Democratic or Republican), the president's term (first or second²), and whether the visit was to the Soviet Union/Russia.

Almost seventy percent of the foreign trips lasted six or fewer days, while just over twelve percent lasted ten or more days. With the advent of improved means of transportation, the duration of presidential travel has seemingly decreased; the five presidential trips lasting 17 days or longer all took place in the 1940s and 1950s, while more recent administrations have undertaken significantly shorter travels. Two-thirds of presidential travel has involved trips to just one or two nations, while just 7.4 percent involved five or more nations.

The results of these statistical analyses are presented in Table 2. As indicated, on average there are no appreciable rallies associated with foreign travel; the average increase in popularity of 0.01 following such travel is insignificant given that the Gallup Organization does not profess to measure presidential approval with such accuracy. Similarly, there does not appear to be any appreciable difference in the rallies associated with foreign travel by Republican and Democratic presidents; t-tests indicated a t-value of -1.20 and a two-tailed significance level of 0.233, indicating that the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in these scores cannot be rejected. While the differences between rally sizes for first and second term presidents appears significant, t-tests indicated a t-value of -1.38 and a two-tailed significance level of 0.170, again indicating that the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. When considered by administration, the average rallies for the most part are minor and within the margin of error of the Gallup Poll, while the high rallies associated with the Roosevelt and Truman presidencies are less significant in light of the fact that each represents only a single case.

Table 2

Rally Effects Following Presidential Travel, 1938-1997

¹ Visits involving more than one category of destination were coded positive for each category. Due to its underdeveloped status and importance as a communist power, the People's Republic of China was included as both a communist and a less-developed nation.

² For the purposes of this research, all of Franklin Roosevelt's travels are considered second term, as no public approval data are available for his first term. Harry Truman's four foreign trips - one in 1945, three in 1947 - are all coded first term, although he did not win the presidency in his own right until 1948. Similarly, all of Lyndon Johnson's and Gerald Ford's travels are coded first term.

Travel Characteristics	Mean Rally Effect	Valid N	Standard Deviation	Min.	Max.
All Travel	0.01	146	4.29	-11	14
Democratic Presidents	-0.51	59	4.15	-11	12
Republican Presidents	0.36	87	4.37	-8	14
First Term	-0.27	110	4.52	-11	14
Second Term	0.86	36	3.41	-8	12
Franklin D. Roosevelt	3.00	1	-	3	3
Harry S Truman	12.00	1	-	12	12
Dwight Eisenhower	1.44	16	5.33	-8	12
John F. Kennedy	-1.63	8	2.50	-5	2
Lyndon B. Johnson	-1.00	10	4.85	-11	5
Richard M. Nixon	0.73	15	2.71	-2	6
Gerald R. Ford	-2.29	7	6.63	-7	12
Jimmy Carter	-1.92	12	4.83	-10	8
Ronald Reagan	0.38	24	2.58	-4	6
George Bush	0.16	25	5.11	-7	14
Bill Clinton	0.04	27	3.24	-7	4

Table 3 includes rallies associated with certain categories of foreign presidential travel. As indicated, no significant differences are apparent in rallies associated with visits to communist nation, less-developed nations, developed nations, or to the Soviet Union/Russia; all rallies are within the margins of error of the Gallup polls and t-tests indicate that the null hypotheses cannot be rejected in these cases. Visits to two or more countries during a period of foreign travel result, on average, in rallies of less than half a percentage point, while foreign visits to just one foreign nation - the median value - result in a slight decrease in popularity on average; however, t-tests indicated no significant difference in the means (t -value = 1.19, $p=0.238$).

Table 3

Rally Effects Following Selected Types of Presidential Travel, 1938-1997

Travel Characteristics	Mean Rally Effect	Valid N	Standard Deviation	Min.	Max.
All Communist Nations	-0.50	14	4.11	-7	5
All Noncommunist Developed Nations	0.09	89	4.24	-8	14
All Less-Developed Nations	0.15	72	4.68	-11	12
USSR	0.50	8	4.34	-6	7
Duration >= 4 Days	0.73	78	4.84	-10	14
Duration < 4 Days	-0.82	68	3.41	-11	9
No. of Countries Visited = 1	-0.38	80	3.99	-11	12
No. of Countries < 3	0.47	66	4.62	-10	14

However, rallies associated with longer presidential trips do appear to differ significantly from those of shorter duration, although the values in question are still well within Gallup's margin of error. Presidential travel lasting four days or more - the median value - resulted in average rallies of almost three-quarters of a percentage point, while trips of fewer than four days resulted, on average, in decreases of almost one percentage point; t-tests indicated a t-value of 2.21 and a two-tailed significance level of 0.028, indicating that the null hypothesis that there is no difference in the values may be rejected.

These findings, largely consistent with those of Darcy and Richman (1988) and Simon and Ostrom (1989) suggest that the possibilities for a president to bolster his public approval through foreign travel are fairly limited. In virtually every circumstance, presidential travel produces statistically insignificant effects on public approval of the president.

Regression Analyses

To further explore and identify the factors influencing the changes in presidential approval following treaty signings and foreign travel, regression analyses are reported in this section employing the data identified in the previous section.

A. Treaty Signings

As indicated previously, there is some evidence to suggest that the public might respond favorably to Presidents following the signing of certain types of international treaties and agreements. To further explore and identify the factors influencing the changes in presidential approval following treaty and agreement signings, regression analyses were performed using the compilation of major treaties to which the United States was a party between April 1949 and January 1993.

As previous analyses have identified the importance of the involvement of the Soviet Union or the Russian Republic, prominent positioning in the *New York Times*, and the nature of the agreement itself, these factors are included in the analyses. The variable NYTCOV is employed as an indicator of the salience of a particular treaty or agreement among the general public, taking a value of 2 if the event was reported at the top of page one with a headline one or more columns wide and a value of 1 if the event was reported elsewhere on page one. The variables relating to the involvement of the Soviet Union or the Russian Republic (SOVIET) and whether or not the agreement in question was a peace agreement (PEACEAG), security agreement (SECAG), or an agreement resolving a militarized conflict in which the United States was a participant (ENDWAR) were all treated as dichotomous variables, taking a value of 1 if the relevant qualities and characteristics were present and 0 otherwise.

Finally, as noted previously (Edwards and Gallup 1990), the effects of rallies on presidential popularity are likely to be inversely related to the incumbent's prevailing popularity levels prior to the event; relatively popular Presidents do not have the same opportunities for improvement as do unpopular Presidents, while unpopular Presidents do not have as far to fall. Based on this assumption, a control variable for prior approval levels (PRIORPOP) was introduced, taking a value equal to the President's approval level prior to the treaty signing in question.

The following equation can now be estimated:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{RALLY} = & \beta_0 - \beta_1 \cdot \text{SOVIET} + \beta_2 \cdot \text{NYTCOV} + \beta_3 \cdot \text{PEACEAG} \\ & + \beta_4 \cdot \text{SECAG} + \beta_5 \cdot \text{ENDWAR} + \beta_6 \cdot \text{PRIORPOP} \end{aligned} \quad (11)$$

where RALLY equals the President's public approval rating after the treaty or agreement signing subtracted from his approval rating prior to the signing; SOVIET indicates the involvement or noninvolvement of the Soviet Union or the Russian Republic; NYTCOV indicates whether the event was recorded in a major headline or elsewhere on the front page of the *New York Times*; PEACEAG indicates whether or not the

event involved a peace treaty; SECAG indicates whether or not the event involved a security or defense agreement; ENDWAR indicates whether or not the agreement concluded an armed conflict in which the United States was a combatant; and PRIORPOP is the President's approval rating in the last Gallup poll prior to the treaty or agreement signing.

The results of estimating the coefficients for equation one are presented in column one of Table 4. Unfortunately, these preliminary findings indicate that equation one does not account for the observed variations in public approval particularly well; although all of the variables except for NYTCOV have the expected sign, only ENDWAR is statistically significant, while the adjusted R² is a disappointing 0.079. Again, the findings for NYTCOV are counterintuitive, suggesting that while treaties in general result in small rallies for the chief executive, treaty signings that are prominently featured on the front page of the *New York Times* tend to counter such effects by depressing rallies by more than a percentage point.

Table 4

Regression Coefficients: Treaties

Independent Variable	Eq. 1	Eq. 2	Eq. 3
NYTCOV			
β	-1.189	-1.658	
SE B	1.692	1.840	
Sig t	0.486	0.373	
SOVIET			
β	1.796	6.099	5.197
SE B	1.822	2.762	2.562
Sig t	0.330	0.033**	0.049**
PEACEAG			
β	2.021	1.538	
SE B	2.816	2.791	
Sig t	0.477	0.584	
SECAG			
β	1.393	3.421	3.823
SE B	2.186	2.407	2.245
Sig t	0.527	0.163	0.096*
ENDWAR			
β	7.511	7.309	8.045
SE B	4.092	4.194	2.927
Sig t	0.073*	0.089*	0.009***

MULTILAT			
β	4.759	4.510	
SE B	2.381	2.245	
Sig t	0.052*	0.050**	
SIGNED			
β	-0.331		
SE B	1.808		
Sig t	0.856		
PRIORPOP			
β	-0.013	-0.010	
SE B	0.059	0.058	
Sig t	0.828	0.868	
CONSTANT			
β	2.366	-5.732	-8.400
SE B	4.156	5.759	4.327
Sig t	0.572	0.326	0.059*
N	49	49	49
R ²	0.176	0.253	0.226
Adjusted R ²	0.058	0.104	0.155

* - Signif. LE .10 ** - Signif. LE .05

*** - Signif. LE .01 (2-Tailed)

Independent Variable	Eq. 1	Eq. 2	Eq. 3
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In an attempt to improve the predictive efficacy of equation one, two new variables were introduced. To account for the possibility that the American electorate might respond more favorably to multilateral over bilateral treaty signings, the variable MULTILAT was introduced, taking on a value of 1 in the case of bilateral agreements and 2 for multilateral agreements, those involving the United States and two or more other countries. In addition, the variable SIGNED was introduced to measure the potential impact on public awareness of the President, as opposed to another administration official, personally signing the treaty or agreement in question; a dichotomous variable, SIGNED adopts a value of 1 when the relevant treaty or agreement is personally signed by the President, 0 otherwise. While there may be some concern that SIGNED and NYTCOV measure much the same phenomenon, and while the two are significantly positively correlated ($p=0.002$), regressing SIGNED on NYTCOV produces an R² of 0.183, indicating that the two variables are not collinear.

With the addition of these variables, equation two may now be estimated:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{RALLY} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 \bullet \text{SOVIET} + \beta_2 \bullet \text{NYTCOV} + \beta_3 \bullet \text{PEACEAG} \\ & + \beta_4 \bullet \text{SECAG} + \beta_5 \bullet \text{ENDWAR} + \beta_6 \bullet \text{PRAPPL} \\ & + \beta_7 \bullet \text{MULTILAT} + \beta_7 \bullet \text{SIGNED} \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

The results of estimating the coefficients of equation two are reported in column two of Table 4. As indicated, equation two is only slightly more successful in accounting for variations in presidential approval, with an adjusted R^2 of 0.125. SOVIET, ENDWAR, SECAG, and MULTILAT are all significant or reasonably close, and all variables have the expected sign, except for SIGNED and NYTCOV. Disappointingly, PRIORPOP remains insignificant, suggesting that prior approval ratings play no role in the popularity increases incumbents might expect from rallies in response to treaties; this is counter to Lian and Oneal's (1993) and Baker and Oneal's (2001) findings that rally effects related to presidential uses of force are inversely related to prior popularity levels.

These findings indicate that certain contextual factors are likely to reverse this effect and increase the size of any rallies. For example, if a President with a public approval level of 56 percent--the average approval level for the period under study--were to personally sign a treaty ending a war in which the United States had been a combatant, such as the Panmunjom armistice of 1953 or the Paris peace accords of 1973, he might expect to see his popularity rise by just over five percent. Similarly, an agreement with the Soviet Union or the Russian Republic might be expected to boost popularity by about six percentage points, a multilateral agreement by almost five percentage points, a security agreement by three and a half percentage points, and a peace agreement by one and a half percentage points. Once again, however, prominent media coverage, in the form of front page *New York Times* coverage and by a presidential signing of the treaty in question, seems inexplicably to depress the rally effect together by almost two percentage points in either instance.

Finally, given the strong values associated with SOVIET, SECAG, MULTILAT, and PSTWAR in equation two, a final regression analysis was run using only these variables, yielding equation three:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{RALLY} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 \bullet \text{SOVIET} + \beta_2 \bullet \text{SECAG} + \beta_3 \bullet \text{ENDWAR} \\ & + \beta_4 \bullet \text{MULTILAT} + \beta_5 \bullet \text{NYTCOV} \end{aligned} \quad (3)$$

The results associated with equation three are found in the third column of Table 4, and represent a considerable improvement over equations one and two. Not only are all of the signs in the expected direction, but all are reasonably significant, and the adjusted R^2 is 0.155. These results again suggest that the content and circumstances of treaty signings may counter the general tendency of such events to depress presidential approval. In fact, presidential administrations might elicit rallies of around five percentage points for treaties with the Soviet Union or the Russian Republic, four percentage points for security agreements, four to five percentage points for multilateral agreements, and eight percentage points for agreements concluding wars in which the United States was a participant.

2. Foreign Travel

To further explore and identify the factors influencing the changes in presidential approval following foreign travel, regression analyses are reported in this section using the foreign travel data identified in the previous section. As indicated in the previous section, Edwards with Gallup (1990) note that the effects of rallies on presidential popularity are likely to be inversely related to the incumbent's prevailing public approval levels prior to the event under consideration. Based on this assumption, a control variable for

prior approval levels (PRIORPOP) is introduced, taking a value equal to the President's approval level prior to the foreign travel, measured as a whole numeral rather than as a percentage.³

Other variables associated with foreign travel were included in the initial regression analyses as well. Variables from the previous section include NOCOUNT (the number of countries visited during the travel in question), COMM (whether a communist country was visited, 0=no, 1=yes), DEVELOP (whether a developed country was visited, 0=no, 1=yes), UNDEV (whether a less developed country was visited, 0=no, 1=yes), USSR (whether the Soviet Union/Russia was visited, 0=no, 1=yes), PARTY (the president's party, 0=Democrat, 1=Republican), TERM (the presidential term in which the travel took place, 0=first term, 1=second term), and DURATION (the length in days of the foreign travel).

The following equation can now be estimated:

$$\text{RALLY2} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \cdot \text{NOCOUNT} + \beta_2 \cdot \text{COMM} + \beta_3 \cdot \text{DEVELOP} + \beta_4 \cdot \text{UNDEV} + \beta_5 \cdot \text{PARTY} + \beta_6 \cdot \text{TERM} + \beta_7 \cdot \text{DURATION} \quad (4)$$

where RALLY2 equals the President's public approval rating after the treaty or agreement signing subtracted from his approval rating prior to the signing; NOCOUNT indicates the number of countries visited; COMM indicates whether a communist country was visited; DEVELOP indicates whether a developed country was visited; UNDEV indicates whether a less developed country was visited; TERM indicates whether the president in question was in his first or second term; PARTY indicates whether the president was a Democrat or a Republican; and DURATION indicates the number the length of the foreign travel in days.

The results of estimating the coefficients for equation four are presented in column one of Table 5. Equation four does not appear to account particularly well for the observed variations in public approval associated with foreign travel, although all of the variables except for COMM have the expected sign. Surprisingly, visits to communist nations in general appear to affect presidential popularity negatively while travel to the Soviet Union/Russia itself does not, suggesting that the public weigh these two categories differently. Perhaps visits to the Soviet Union/Russia are seen by the public as a means toward reducing international tensions and the likelihood of war with a formidable adversary, considerations that were less dominant in visits to minor communist nations such as Poland or Yugoslavia.

Table 5

Regression Coefficients: Foreign Travel

Independent Variable	Eq. 4	Eq. 5	Eq. 6
NOCOUNT			
β	0.022		
SE B	0.274		
Sig t	0.936		
COMM			
β	-2.092	-1.949	-1.725
SE B	1.366	1.289	1.219
Sig t	0.128	0.133	0.156
DEVELOP			
β	1.058	1.061	1.057
SE B	0.405	0.392	0.390
Sig t	0.010**	0.008***	0.007***

³In other words, a public approval level of 43 % would be coded as 43, not 0.43.

UNDEV			
β	1.288	1.199	1.171
SE B	0.784	0.752	0.745
Sig t	0.103	0.113	0.118
USSR			
β	0.930	0.878	
SE B	1.593	1.585	
Sig t	0.560	0.580	
TERM			
β	0.714		
SE B	0.867		
Sig t	0.412		

Independent Variable	Eq. 4	Eq. 5	Eq. 6
PARTY			
β	0.736		
SE B	0.760		
Sig t	0.335		
DURATION			
β	0.258	0.287	0.289
SE B	0.159	0.110	0.110
Sig t	0.107	0.010***	0.009***
PRIORPOP			
β	-0.009	-0.002	
SE B	0.031	0.030	
Sig t	0.761	0.949	
CONSTANT			
β	-2.571	-2.422	-2.490
SE B	1.821	1.803	0.733
Sig t	0.160	0.181	>0.000***
N	146	146	146
R ²	0.139	0.126	0.124
Adjusted R ²	0.082	0.088	0.099

* - Signif. LE .10 ** - Signif. LE .05
 *** - Signif. LE .01 (2-Tailed)

Only DEVELOP is statistically significant in equation one, although UNDEV and DURATION come close, while the adjusted R² is a disappointing 0.082. Surprisingly, NOCOUNT is neither strong nor statistically significant, suggesting that while the duration of a presidential trip may play a role in the size of any resultant rallies, the number of nations visited does not. The failure of TERM and PARTY to demonstrate significance is also surprising, given anecdotal assumptions about Republican foreign policy expertise and the propensity of second-term presidents to bolster their public approval through foreign travel. In equation five, TERM, PARTY, and NOCOUNT are removed, resulting in the following equation:

$$\text{RALLY}_2 = \beta_0 - \beta_1 \bullet \text{COMM} + \beta_2 \bullet \text{DEVELOP} + \beta_3 \bullet \text{UNDEV} + \beta_4 \bullet \text{USSR} + \beta_5 \bullet \text{PRIORPOP} + \beta_6 \bullet \text{DURATION} \quad |51$$

Equation five performs only marginally better than equation four (Table 5), although DEVELOP and DURATION are now statistically significant, and COMM and UNDEV are nearly so. With the exception once again of COMM, the variables all have the expected sign. PRIORPOP remains insignificant, suggesting that prior approval ratings play no role in the popularity increases incumbents might expect from rallies in response to foreign travel; once again, this is counter to Lian and Oneal's (1993) and Baker and Oneal's (2001) findings that rally effects related to presidential uses of force are inversely related to prior popularity levels. The adjusted R² of equation five remains disappointingly low at 0.088.

In equation six, PRIORPOP and USSR are removed, yielding the following equation:

$$\text{RALLY2} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \cdot \text{COMM} + \beta_2 \cdot \text{DEVELOP} + \beta_3 \cdot \text{UNDEV} + \beta_4 \cdot \text{DURATION} \quad |61$$

The results of equation six (Table 5) reflect a marked improvement over equations four and five, although the adjusted R^2 remains low. However, each of the remaining variables has the expected sign and each is statistically significant or reasonably close. These results suggest that the context of foreign presidential travel does indeed affect whether any rallies will appear as a result of such activities, but that the effects of such travel on presidential approval are minimal. For example, a president would have to undertake a twenty day visit to one or more less developed countries in order to realize an increase in public approval of four percentage points, barely more than the margin of error in a Gallup poll.

Conclusion

Summary analyses of the treaty and travel data found only the most minor of rallies associated with such activities, averaging just over one percent for treaty signings and virtually zero for foreign travel. Certain narrowly defined subcategories, such as treaties concluding U.S. wars, multiple treaty signings between polls, and peace agreements were found to yield impressive rallies on average. Regression analyses indicated that in negotiating and signing treaties with foreign powers, Presidents might expect boosts in popularity of almost five percent for multilateral treaties, three and a half percent for security agreements, and six percent for treaties with the Soviet Union, while agreements ending wars resulted in rallies of more than eight percentage points on average.

Such findings present mixed evidence for the conventional wisdom that democracies favor peaceful diplomacy over military options in the conduct of foreign policy, suggesting that Presidents that attempt to safeguard the national interest through arms control negotiations, peace agreements, or economic summits may expect substantial surges in public approval in response to their efforts, albeit only under certain conditions. While the American electorate does not seem to be overly impressed by foreign travel on the part of the president, they do appear responsive to high-profile multilateral or superpower treaties, suggesting, as Jentleson (1992) found, an ability on the part of the public to distinguish between truly "major" treaties and those of lesser importance. Clearly then, if Mueller's theories are to remain credible, more research is necessary to further identify what types of specific presidential activities and policy decisions are most conducive to the appearance of rallies.

Obviously, presidential approval does not exist in a vacuum, and just as international events may affect popularity, so may domestic factors such as the state of the domestic economy or presidential inaugurations. Nevertheless, despite the evidence that foreign policy activities do not routinely lead to increases in presidential popularity, the belief that they do continues to dominate the conventional wisdom. Furthermore, many believe as well that Presidents may be tempted to "show the flag" abroad as a means of influencing impending elections, bolstering faltering popularity ratings, or diverting public attention from domestic problems. The fact that the American public does not appear to reflexively respond favorably to such activities may suggest that rallies in response to international actions on the part of the President may be attributed primarily to a sober and rational assessment of the nation's strategic and political interests on the part of the public, rather than to blind patriotism and spin.

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