Politics can be bad for your health: Trumpism and COVID-19 Outcomes

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30 **Abstract**

31 The political rise of Donald Trump and the ideology of Trumpism has had a major impact
32 on American politics, culture, and its response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We began the
33 process of validating a psychometric model of Trumpism using three waves (~1000 participants
34 per wave) of data from national online surveys of adults conducted in the United States from
35 June 2020 to February 2021 as part of the COVID-19 Adjustment and Behaviors Survey. We
36 found that the covariance among measures of Trump approval and attitudes about race,
37 immigration, policing, guns, and media bias were best accounted for by a single Trumpism
38 factor, and that this factor was strongly related to attitudes about a rigged 2020 Presidential
39 election, the Insurrection of January 6, 2021, and Trump idolatry. Trumpism was also associated
40 with Republican party affiliation and White race, but had only small associations with age, sex,
41 income, and education. Trumpism was associated with increased odds of a positive COVID-19
42 diagnosis, skepticism about the seriousness of COVID-19, lack of support for government
43 restrictions to reduce the spread of COVID-19, less adherence to social distancing and mask
44 wearing guidelines, anti-vax attitudes, and hesitancy to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. Results
45 indicate these measures provide a valid assessment of Trumpism which is likely to continue to
46 play a major role in American political and cultural life for the foreseeable future.

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53 **Introduction**

54 Donald Trump's ascension to the Presidency of the United States has been one of the
55 most significant events in 21st century American politics. His dominance of the Republican
56 party, one of the two major political parties in the United States, was built upon an explicit
57 embrace of White identity and grievance politics, anti-rationalism, the denial of empirical reality
58 in favor of constructed fictions, and an authoritarian cult of personality [1-5]. Although he failed
59 to win re-election, Trump and his ideology retains a dominant position in the Republican party.
60 Indeed, his unsuccessful attempts to undermine and overturn the results of the 2020 Presidential
61 election has provided a blueprint for Republicans to contest the results of future elections.
62 Specifically, Republican majorities in state legislatures in collaboration with Republican
63 governors have worked to change laws to suppress the votes of citizens less likely to vote for
64 Republican candidates and, more ominously, allow political partisans to overturn elections
65 through "legal" means (e.g., failing to certify election results) [6-9]. Consequently, Donald
66 Trump and the broader construct of Trumpism as a political ideology will continue to have a
67 large influence on American politics and American life for the foreseeable future. It is thus
68 critical to study Trumpism as a coherent worldview to better understand its structure, facets, and
69 associations with consequential outcomes (e.g., behavior in response to a global pandemic).

70 **2016 presidential election**

71 We propose that Trumpism includes several core facets that are a function of Trump's
72 political rise, his actions in office, and long-term trends in conservative and Republican politics.
73 Prior to his election, Trump rose to prominence in the political media as a vocal skeptic of the

American citizenship of former President Barack Obama, a debunked conspiracy theory referred to as “birtherism” [10]. Birtherism provided an implicit way to tie Obama’s mixed race and ancestry (White American mother and Black Kenyan father) to a lack of political legitimacy and otherness (i.e., non-American, non-native born, non-White) [11-12]. This tactic follows from the American conservative movement’s long-standing use of “dog whistles” in political discourse, that is, indirect references to negative stereotypes associated with racial minorities [13]. This strategy is a manifestation of the perspective that non-White people (especially Black and Indigenous Americans) and immigrants do not have a legitimate claim to political participation and political power. Consistent with this history and Trump’s embrace of birtherism, the leading issue of his campaign in the 2016 election was border security and immigration where he claimed that poor, violent, non-White people from Latin American countries were overrunning the U.S. southern border and contributing to crime and economic loss (e.g., “they’re sending their rapists, their murders,...”, taking jobs from Americans; [14-15]). Trump also disparaged Muslims living in and traveling to the U.S., drawing implicit and explicit connections to terrorists that perpetrated the 9/11 and other terror attacks [16, 14].

Trump’s emphasis on border security drew him into a political alliance with unions representing U.S. Border Patrol and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents, as well as some higher-ranking officials in these agencies [17-19]. Trump’s coalition with security forces quickly expanded to include majorities of the rank-file of local and state police departments, and federal agencies such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) [20-21]. Political alignment among security forces and conservative political parties has a long-history, for example, Richard Nixon’s call for “law and order” in the 1968 presidential election [22-23]. The intensity of the support for Trump, however, was notably stronger than that observed for

prior presidential candidates. For example, groups of police officers were photographed wearing Trump's signature Make America Great Again (MAGA) hats while in uniform [24-25], a controversial action which raises questions as to whether police would act in an unbiased manner when interacting with citizens that do not share their political attitudes. Some critics also noted that the alignment with police forces dovetailed with what they claimed were Trump's racist attitudes towards non-White people in general [26], as there is a long and contentious relationship between police and non-White citizens. Specifically, there is evidence that police often mistreat non-White people or enforce the law in racially biased ways [27-29].

Trump also forged alliances with two single issue voter groups: gun rights activists and socially conservative anti-abortion Christians. Although gun regulation had already been politically polarized by 2016 with gun rights advocates firmly in the Republican coalition, Trump endorsed the most extreme gun rights positions and rhetoric of any 2016 presidential candidate [30]. Trump also gained unshakeable popularity among socially conservative Christians after reversing his position on abortion and avowing a firm anti-abortion position [31-32], despite his well-publicized personal and public life that included numerous examples of behaviors and attitudes that seemingly contradict the ethical and moral perspectives espoused by socially conservative Christians (e.g., adultery, multiple marriages, lying, failing to honor business agreements).

Finally, Trump engaged in a contentious, though some have argued symbiotic, relationship with certain media companies, the so-called "mainstream" media (e.g., CNN, legacy television network news, The New York Times, The Washington Post) [33-34]. Trump complained that coverage from these news outlets was not only negative but also biased and inaccurate, using the term "fake news" to describe their coverage [35]. These claims flowed from

the long-standing complaints of political conservatives that the mainstream media is liberally biased and unfair to Republican politicians [36]. Trump, however, intensified these complaints, going so far as to refer to journalists as “enemies of the people” [37-38].

To summarize, some of the key tenets that characterize Trumpism include grievance and hostility to non-White minorities, immigrants, and Muslims with an emphasis on closing the border and “building the wall”; aligning with police and other security forces with an emphasis on “law and order” and the punitive use of law enforcement powers, particularly against political adversaries (e.g., the “Lock her up” phrase in reference to Hillary Clinton the Democratic candidate of the 2016 Presidential election); alignment with single-issue voters within the conservative coalition especially gun rights and anti-abortion activists; and open conflict with the media to undermine negative coverage, aka, “fake news”. Following his victory in the 2016 presidential election, many of the facets of Trumpism observed in the campaign were evident and seemed to intensify during his time in office. Trump’s grip on the Republican party grew stronger as even moderate disagreements led to officials retiring or being purged from the party [39-41]. Although there remained remnants of a more traditional conservative movement political orientation (e.g., lower taxes, fewer government services, and less government regulation), Republican politics increasingly took on a Trumpist orientation of White grievance politics, authoritarianism, and a cult of personality around Donald Trump.

COVID-19 pandemic

Though Trump never enjoyed majority support, he maintained a seemingly unbreakable coalition of supporters despite numerous scandals (including an impeachment trial, January 16-February 5, 2020) and was a formidable candidate for re-election in 2020. By March 2020, however, the COVID-19 pandemic was such a disruptive event that it quickly became the

nation's dominant political issue. Rather than treating COVID-19 as a non-partisan public health crisis, Trump approached the pandemic as a political issue to be managed by polarizing various aspects of the government response along partisan lines [42-44]. Trump also downplayed the severity of the disease, advocated a relatively quick lifting of the government restrictions in place to mitigate the spread of the virus (e.g., stay at home directives, ban on public gatherings), and sent mixed messages about wearing face coverings [45]. Trump also publicly feuded with state officials who requested greater federal support and maintained stricter restrictions undermining efforts for a coordinated national strategy to manage the pandemic [46-48].

These attitudes evolved into what we call COVID-19 skepticism, or the downplaying of the health risks associated with COVID-19, and opposition to mitigation strategies [49-50]. In spite of this skepticism, the Trump administration's key strategy to resolving the COVID-19 pandemic was to focus on vaccine development, despite having strong support among conservative anti-vaxxer groups [45]. However, Trump's downplaying of the severity of COVID-19, the emergence of COVID-19 skepticism, and Trump and other conservatives' critiques of scientific and government institutions has led Trump supporters to endorse high levels of COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy [50].

2020 presidential election

The 2020 presidential election occurred amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Trump's strategy for dealing with the pandemic seemed to be guided by the desire to return to pre-pandemic economic activity as soon as possible. Layered on top of the pandemic and election, however, was a summer of Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests (the largest mass protests in U.S. history) [51] against police violence and mistreatment following the murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020 by a police officer in Minneapolis, MN [52]. Initially, this wave of protests was

associated with a significant shift in support among White Americans toward the BLM position [53]. As the protests continued throughout the summer, however, street clashes with police, rioting, and controversy over the concept of “defunding the police” further polarized the issue of the role of police and debate over the centrality and divisive nature of race in American society [54-55]. Trump remained steadfast in his alliance with police, hostile to the concept of defunding and dismissive of the importance of race and racial inequities in America’s history and society more generally [56-57]. Consequently, holding pro-police attitudes—as well as anti-BLM and anti-racially conscious attitudes—became even more strongly solidified as a core element of Trumpism, which was most clearly evident at Trump’s political rallies in the fall of 2020, where “Blue Lives Matter” flags—a counter movement to Black Live Matter that advocates that violence against police officers should be prosecuted as hate crimes—gradually increased in size and eventually displaced the U.S. national flag [58].

While the BLM protests peaked in the early summer, COVID-19 mitigation strategies (e.g., restricting social activities, social distancing, mask wearing) seemed to have been effective in assuaging an overflow of emergency medical care and to have contained the spread of the virus [59-60]. As restrictions were relaxed, however, a second wave soon followed in the mid-to-late summer of 2020 in various parts of the country [61-62], and then a much larger third wave that engulfed most of the country in the fall and early winter [63-64]. During this time, the U.S. led the world in COVID-19 cases and deaths accounting for a disproportionate number of both [65] (i.e., U.S. accounted for over 20% of global COVID-19 cases and deaths, but only 5% of the world population [66]. By the fall of 2020 any attempt at a coordinated response to the pandemic had seemingly collapsed with states largely left alone to deal with their local conditions [67-68], while COVID-19 related deaths exceeded 200,000 Americans on September 22, 2020 [69].

Despite the health and economic crisis of COVID-19, racial turmoil, and his consistently negative approval ratings, Trump remained a competitive candidate in 2020 presidential election due to his reliable base of support and the indirect way that U.S. presidents are elected (i.e., weighted state-level electoral results rather than through a national popular vote) [70]. If anything, the political polarization over COVID-19, race, and policing seemed to intensify support for Trump among his base voters. Indeed, throughout the course of the election, Trump's campaign and persona drifted even further into a cult of personality. For example, the Republican party did not publish a new platform for the 2020 election and merely stated support for President Trump and his policies, whatever they may be [71]. As in 2016, Trump continued to make statements that only he could solve the nation's problems [72-73], a sentiment that was endorsed by more and more of his followers.

Ultimately, however, the election returns indicated Trump lost the 2020 presidential election to Joe Biden [74]. Losing the vote count, however, did not deter Trump from attempting to retain the presidency. Trump and his allies made numerous claims of voter fraud and election irregularities and filed dozens of lawsuits, a strategy he foreshadowed during the campaign by consistently stating his loss would only be possible due to cheating or voter fraud [75-76]. Federal and state officials found no evidence of widespread fraud or irregularities and none of the lawsuits were successful [77]. Still, Trump and his allies persisted in making false claims, spreading conspiracy theories, and attempting to influence the vote count and certification process in an explicit attempt to overturn results of the election [78]. Although these efforts were not successful, they had a dramatic impact on public opinion [79-80]. Among Trump supporters, a significant majority came to believe the "Big Lie", that is, that the election was stolen from Trump [81].

Trump and his allies continued to push the Big Lie and attempt to disrupt the transfer of power. The last legal procedure to conclude the 2020 election was the ceremonial act of Congress counting and then certifying the electoral college votes on January 6, 2021 [82]. On that day, Trump spoke at a rally called “Stop the Steal” and encouraged his followers to go to Congress to “make their voices heard” [83]. The crowd then stormed the U.S. Capitol to stop the certification process, in what became known as the January 6th Insurrection. Order was eventually restored, and the electoral votes certified [84]. Trump then acknowledged that a new administration would take power though he never mentioned Biden’s name [85] and has never conceded that he lost the election. Trump was impeached for a second time for his role in inciting his followers to insurrection [86] though the Senate failed to convict him of the charge (conviction requires a two-thirds majority [87]).

Defining the psychometric structure of Trumpism

Although Donald Trump is no longer president, he looms large in Republican politics. The debunked conspiracy theory of the Big Lie has become a normative attitude within the Republican party, and Trump remains the leading candidate for the 2024 Presidential election [88-90]. Further, his approach to White identity and grievance politics has become a dominant electoral strategy among Republicans. Finally, and most ominously, Republicans have embraced a strategy of changing rules for voting and election processing that curtails the representation of demographic groups that are less likely to vote for Republican candidates and provides more opportunities to “legally” challenge or overturn an election [91]. Consequently, Trumpism as a broader political perspective requires an intensive study to understand the directions of American politics for the foreseeable future.

We report our efforts to define the psychometric structure of Trumpism using a series of online surveys of adults living in the United States that were completed from June 2020 through February 2021. The measures we included changed over time as social and political events unfolded and relevant constructs emerged. We began with an emphasis on approval ratings of President Trump as well as attitudes about immigration, race, policing, and guns. We then expanded this assessment to include attitudes about the news media (“fake news”), Trump idolatry, the Big Lie, and the January 6th insurrection. Our first goal was to examine the structure of these measures, for example, if a single dominant factor could explain their covariance consistent with a unified political ideology and coalition, or if this was better described by multiple correlated factors, representing a more dispersed political coalition. We then examined demographic correlates of the resulting factors. Specifically, we predicted Trumpism would be associated with White race, older age, and lower education based on prior media reports and polling results [92]. Finally, to demonstrate the impact of Trumpism on important outcomes, we also examined the associations between Trumpism and COVID-19 related variables including risk of a COVID-19 diagnosis, support for government restrictions to mitigate risk, safety behaviors including mask wearing and social distancing, COVID-19 skepticism, and vaccine hesitancy.

Methods

Sample ascertainment

Data were collected at three different time points as part of the COVID-19 Adjustment and Behavior Survey: June 9 through June 22, 2020; September 24 through October 25, 2020; and January 14 through February 25, 2021. Recruitment entailed an actively managed, double-

opt-in research panel with Qualtrics XM survey software. Recruitment was designed to ascertain a sample similar to the United States general population using quotas for the demographic variables of age, sex, and race that were monitored while the survey was in field. Respondents were recruited using a dashboard-style web page on the Qualtrics website and cellphone app where participants see a list of surveys that they have the option to participate in. Recruitment was also conducted through emails sent to established panel members within the Qualtrics database. In all recruitment methods, potential participants received information on the estimated length of the survey and compensation for completing it. Specific details about the survey content were not available until the participants opted-in to avoid self-selection bias. Upon opting into the study, participants read and provided an electronic signature on a consent form containing an overview of the survey contents. Participation was voluntary and anonymous as no individually identifying information was collected. Contact information for the research team was provided in case participants had questions about the survey. The University of Michigan Medical School Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed all study protocols. After participating in a survey wave, attempts were made to recontact respondents to participate in all subsequent wave(s). Following wave 1, new respondents were allowed to join the study once participation by prior respondents plateaued to maintain a consistent sample size (~1000 participants) while still maintaining quotas for the specified demographic variables across waves.

After the surveys were closed, the data was manually checked and a small number of respondents (six in wave 1, 20 in wave 2, 13 in wave 3) were excluded due to inconsistent and illogical responses. Single measures were also excluded on a case-by-case basis if all other responses from that participant were within a plausible range of values. The final sample sizes

were 1008, 1004, and 1005 participants for waves 1, 2, and 3, respectively, with 1848 unique participants. For the number of assessments completed, 1012 participants completed one wave, 503 completed two waves, and 333 completed three waves. The median response time for completing the surveys ranged from 23.2 to 28.1 minutes.

Table 1 reports the demographic characteristics of the sample organized by wave. The demographic characteristics of each wave were similar to those reported by the US Census Bureau for the United States population for 2019 for age, sex, and race. However, the years of education were consistently higher in the surveys relative to the U.S. population. Mean educational level was higher than the US general population due to lower rates of people with a high school diploma or less (17.0% sample vs. 39.0% U.S. general population) and higher rates of people with bachelor (34.2% sample vs. 19.0%) and graduate degrees (22.5% sample vs. 11.0%). Mean household incomes were similar to the U.S. general population with lower incomes (< \$50,000) slightly underrepresented (34.3% sample vs 37.8%), middle incomes (\$50,000 to \$100,000) overrepresented (33.8% sample vs 28.6%), and higher incomes (> \$100,000) comparably represented (31.9% sample vs 33.6%). In terms of political party affiliation, persons affiliated with the Democratic party (39.4% sample vs 33.0%) were overrepresented while persons affiliated with the Republican party (27.3% sample vs 29.0%) and persons identified as independent or not registered with a political party (29.2% sample vs 34.0%) were underrepresented relative to the general electorate [92]. Four percent of our sample identified with another political party (Libertarian, Green, Constitution, or other).

302 **Table 1. Demographics and Political Affiliation.**

	Total ^a (N = 1848)	Wave 1 (n = 1008)	Wave 2 (n = 1004)	Wave 3 (n = 1005)
	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)
Sex				
Male	46.9 (867)	47.4 (478)	48.9 (491)	49.2 (494)
Female	53.1 (981)	52.6 (530)	51.1 (513)	50.8 (511)
Age^b				
18-29	23.4 (432)	18.1 (182)	17.8 (179)	18.0 (181)
30-39	21.7 (401)	20.6 (208)	19.8 (199)	19.8 (199)
40-49	17.2 (318)	18.3 (184)	17.2 (173)	17.5 (176)
50-59	14.6 (270)	14.9 (150)	16.3 (164)	16.1 (162)
60-69	14.6 (270)	17.7 (178)	17.6 (177)	17.4 (175)
70+	8.4 (156)	10.5 (106)	11.2 (112)	11.1 (112)
Race and Ethnicity^c				
White	79.1 (1462)	77.2 (788)	76.8 (771)	77.3 (777)
Black	13.9 (257)	14.0 (141)	14.6 (147)	13.7 (138)
Native American	1.0 (19)	0.9 (9)	0.7 (7)	1.2 (12)
Asian	5.3 (98)	6.0 (60)	6.2 (62)	6.2 (62)
Native Hawaiian	0.1 (2)	0.0 (0)	0.1 (1)	0.1 (1)
Don't know	0.1 (2)	0.1 (1)	0.1 (1)	0.1 (1)
Some other race	1.5 (28)	1.6 (16)	1.8 (18)	1.2 (12)
Hispanic – any race	17.9 (331)	17.7 (178)	17.7 (178)	17.3 (174)
Education				
Less than high school	2.7 (49)	1.6 (16)	3.1 (31)	1.6 (16)
High school diploma	14.3 (265)	9.6 (97)	14.2 (143)	14.2 (143)
Some college	26.2 (485)	24.1 (243)	25.7 (258)	26.9 (270)
Bachelor's degree	34.2 (633)	38.8 (391)	34.7 (348)	32.9 (331)
Master degree	18.1 (334)	21.5 (217)	17.7 (178)	19.6 (197)
Doctorate	4.4 (82)	4.4 (44)	4.6 (46)	4.8 (48)
Annual Household Income				
Less than \$50,000	34.3 (634)	29.1 (293)	34.2 (343)	32.2 (323)
\$50,000-\$99,999	33.8 (625)	35.6 (359)	33.2 (334)	35.4 (356)
\$100,000 +	31.9 (589)	35.2 (356)	32.6 (327)	32.5 (326)
Political Affiliation				
Democratic	39.4 (729)	41.6 (419)	39 (392)	41.7 (419)
Republican	27.3 (504)	25.9 (261)	26.5 (266)	25.6 (257)
Independent/Not Registered	29.2 (539)	29.6 (298)	31.5 (316)	28.4 (286)
Third Party	4.1 (76)	3 (30)	3 (30)	4.3 (43)

^aTotal sample refers to the number of unique individuals across waves^bOne participant is missing age data^cFor race, participants were allowed to select all that apply. Two participants are missing race data.

Measures

Demographics

Demographic characteristics used in the prediction models included age, sex assigned at birth (male, female), race (White, non-White), annual household income, and educational attainment.

Trumpism facets

Table 2 provides a list of the scales used to measure Trumpism facets organized by the assessment wave (Summer 2020, Autumn 2020, Winter 2021). The table provides a description of the content, an example item, the number of items and the marginal reliability for each scale derived from graded response models. The online supplemental material also provides the content of each item (Tables S1 to S13; OSF. Unless noted otherwise, the items used a 6-point response option of *strongly agree*, *agree*, *slightly agree*, *slightly disagree*, *disagree*, *strongly disagree*).

Table 2. Summary of Scales at Each Wave of Data Collection.

	Content	Sample Item	# Items	Marginal Reliability
Summer 2020				
Police Attitudes	Policing in general, racial bias in policing, and police response to protest	The police treat black and white people equally.	10	.93
Race & Immigration Attitudes	Immigration and systemic racism	If America is too open to people from all over the world, we risk losing our identity as a nation.	6	.89
Autumn 2020				
Police Attitudes	Police, police bias, and police response to protest		11	.93
Race & Immigration Attitudes	Immigration and systemic racism		6	.89
Media Bias	Media bias against conservative viewpoints	The mainstream media makes things up.	6	.92
Pro-Gun Attitudes	Utility and legality of gun ownership	The best defense against a tyrannical government is a well-armed citizenry.	4	.84
Winter 2021				
Police Attitudes	Police, police bias, and police response to protest		8	.91
Race & Immigration Attitudes	Immigration and systemic racism		6	.89
Media Bias	Media bias against conservative viewpoints		6	.91
Pro-Gun Attitudes	Utility and legality of gun ownership		4	.85
Rigged Election	The 2020 election was unfair against Donald Trump	Democrats cheated their way into winning the 2020 election.	7	.86
Pro-Insurrection	Support for the pro-Trump protestors at the January 6 th Capitol Insurrection	The Pro-Trump protesters are patriots who are trying to protect our democracy.	7	.84
Trump Idolatry	Donald Trump is a uniquely capable, trustworthy president.	Only President Trump is capable of solving the nation's problems.	4	.77

Content = brief summary of scale content; # Items = the number of items in a scale at a particular wave of assessment. The full list of items for each scale at each wave of assessment can be found in the online supplement (OSF). The marginal reliability estimates

were derived from scale-specific graded item response models; the full results from these models can also be found in the online supplement (OSF).

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318 **Trump approval and political affiliation**

319 Participants reported their approval for President Trump in general and which political
320 party they were most affiliated with.

321 **Attitudes about race and immigration in the United States**

322 We used six items from a 2019 Pew Research Center poll to assess attitudes about race
323 (e.g., *When it comes to giving Black people equal rights with Whites, our country has: (1) Not*
324 *gone far enough, (2) Been about right, (3) Gone too far.*) and immigration (e.g., *If America is too*
325 *open to people from all over the world, we risk losing our identity as a nation.*) (In a *Politically*
326 *Polarized Era, Sharp Divides in Both Partisan Coalitions*, 2019) ($\alpha = .89$).

327 **Attitudes about police and racial bias in policing**

328 We used eight to 11 items that asked participants about their perceptions of police
329 misconduct (e.g., *Police misconduct is mostly due to institutional forces such as racism and the*
330 *“code of silence” among police officers.*), racial bias in policing (e.g., *The police treat Black and*
331 *White people equally*), and police responses to protests (e.g., *To what extent do you support police*
332 *tactics such as the use of tear gas, mace, and rubber bullets against citizens in recent protests*
333 *against police brutality*) ($\alpha = .93$).

334 **Pro-gun attitudes**

335 At each wave, we used the following item to assess attitudes about state regulations on
336 the purchase and ownership of personal firearms: *In general, do you feel that the laws covering*
337 *the sale of firearms in the U.S. should be: (1) made more strict, (2) kept as they are, (3) made*
338 *less strict.* At waves 2 and 3, we used this item and three additional items assessing attitudes

about gun ownership (e.g., *The best defense against a tyrannical government is a well-armed citizenry*) to create a scale of assessing attitudes about guns and gun ownership ($\alpha = .84$).

Media bias

We used six items that asked respondents to report their agreement with statements about partisan biases in news sources either to a specific news source (e.g., *CNN is fake news.*) or news bias in general (e.g., *The mainstream media is biased against conservative viewpoints.*) ($\alpha = .92$).

Trump idolatry

We used four items to assess reverence for former President Donald Trump (e.g., *Only President Trump is capable of solving the nation's problems.*) ($\alpha = .77$).

Rigged 2020 presidential election

We used seven items to assess perceptions of the 2020 presidential election results (e.g., *Democrats cheated their way into winning the 2020 election.*) ($\alpha = .86$).

Pro-insurrection attitudes

We used five items that asked respondents to report their agreement with statements about the attempted insurrection of the Capitol on January 6, 2021 (e.g., *The Pro-Trump protesters are patriots who are trying to protect our democracy*) ($\alpha = .84$).

COVID-19 outcomes

COVID-19 diagnosis

We used narrow and broad definitions of self-reported COVID-19 diagnosis. Participants were asked if they had been tested for COVID-19. If they responded, “Yes, and the results were positive,” they were coded as positive for our narrow definition of a COVID-19 diagnosis. For

the broad definition of a COVID-19 diagnosis, participants were coded positive if they meant the narrow definition and if they also responded, “No, but I was given a medical diagnosis of COVID-19” or “No, but I assume I currently have COVID-19 or had COVID-19 in the past”.

COVID-19 related safety behaviors and attitudes about government mandates and restrictions

For safety behaviors, participants were asked how often they followed the “social distancing”, or “shelter-in-place” restrictions put in place in your community in the past three months, and how often they wear a mask in public, both indoors and outdoors (*never, seldom, sometimes, often, always*). Participants were also asked three questions to assess attitudes about government responses to COVID-19 including the necessity of COVID-19 related restrictions (*very necessary, necessary, somewhat necessary, neither necessary or unnecessary, somewhat unnecessary, unnecessary, very unnecessary*), approval of their state government’s social distancing restrictions (*strongly approve, approve, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove, disapprove, strongly disapprove*), and attitudes about the pace at which their community was lifting social distancing restrictions (*much too soon, somewhat too soon, about right, somewhat too late, much too late*) ($\alpha = .83$).

COVID-19 skepticism

We used four items that asked participants to rate their level of agreement with statements about the severity COVID-19 and the public life consequences of the pandemic (e.g., *COVID-19 is no worse than the flu*) ($\alpha = .91$).

Anti-vax scale

We used four items assessing general support for vaccinations to assess anti-vaccination (i.e., anti-vax) attitudes (e.g., *Vaccines are more dangerous than the diseases they are trying to prevent.*) ($\alpha = .91$; [93]).

COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy

We assessed openness to receiving a vaccination for the COVID-19 virus by asking, “*How likely are you to get a COVID-19 vaccine that has gone through the normal protocol for development (e.g., clinical trials, tests for safety and efficacy)?*” (*very unlikely, unlikely, likely, very likely*) [93].

Data analytic strategy

Figure 1 lists the four steps of the data analysis plan. First, to establish the internal validity of each scale, we evaluated their psychometric properties separately at each wave of assessment. To do so, item factor analyses (IFA; [94]) were used to characterize the dimensional structure of the scales. Next, graded item responses models [95] were fit to each scale to examine specific item properties and test reliability. These models assume unidimensionality—or at least essential unidimensionality—which was one reason for the initial IFAs.

Figure 1. Data Analytic Strategy.

All steps were conducted for each individual wave of data collection in-turn.

Step two entailed testing whether the items and scales exhibited a coherent structure consistent with a broader Trumpism construct. For example, was there evidence that a single factor could account for a substantial portion of the covariance across scales or for the covariance among the items across scales? First, we applied IFAs to the entire item-pool for a given wave to examine whether a single factor could account for the *item-level* covariance. Next,

we fit higher-order Trumpism factor models at each wave of assessment, which are depicted in Figure 2. In these models, lower-order factors were first specified in accordance with the original formulations of the scales as analyzed in step one. All items associated with a specific scale were specified to load on that scale's lower order-factor, and no other. Lower-order factor intercepts and residual variances were fixed to 0 and 1, respectively. The lower-order factors were then all specified to load on the higher-order Trumpism factor. The mean and variance of the higher-order Trumpism factor was fixed to 0 and 1, respectively. Notably, at each wave of assessment there was a single item measuring general approval of Donald Trump, and in the Summer 2020 assessment a single item measuring attitudes about gun laws. These single-item measures were also specified to load on the higher-order Trump factor. Lower- and higher-order factor scores were then estimated using Expected A Posteriori (EAP) scoring methods.

Figure 2. Conceptual diagram of the Trumpism higher order factor models.

This is specifically a conceptual diagram for the Winter 2021 higher order factor model; fewer items and factors were included in the models for Summer and Autumn 2020. Individual items ($i_1 \dots i_{42}$) were specified to load on a single lower order factor corresponding to their scale of origin; the lower order factors--and the single item assessing Trump Approval--were then specified to load on the higher order Trumpism factor. All factor means and variances/residual variances were fixed to 0 and 1, respectively. Mean structure and variances/residual variances omitted from figure for clarity of presentation.

We used a higher-order model here as the structure was more consistent with our conceptual approach to the development of the Trumpism scales in this study, and to generate both Trumpism and non-residualized lower order factor scores for future use. We do not mean to imply, however, that the psychological structure of political ideology generally follows a higher-order factor model form. Indeed, several other types of models could also effectively be used to represent the covariation across scales/items [96]. For example, bifactor models when fit to this

data produce Trumpism factor scores that correlate extremely highly ($r_s \geq .95$) with the higher-order derived scores used here.

While steps one and two examined internal validity, steps three and four examined external validity by testing the associations between the higher-order Trumpism factor and criterion variables. Step three entailed fitting a series of multiple regression models to explore how key demographic characteristics were associated with the Trumpism scores at each wave. Sex (female versus male) and race (non-White versus White) were included in each model. We also examined the impact of age, income, and education in turn with sex and race, including all potential two-way and three-way interaction terms. Age, income, and education were grand mean centered prior to the computation of the interaction terms. We only included one non-binary predictor in each model to limit the number of interaction terms and to keep the models feasible given the sample size. Like the other analyses reported here, these models were exploratory, and can provide direction for future investigations into the trends reported here.

For step four, we examined correlations between the higher-order Trumpism factor and several COVID-19 related behaviors and outcomes at each wave. Like the demographic models, these are meant to provide a broad, concise overview of how the Trumpism factors are associated with a variety of variables that may be of interest in future, more targeted investigations.

The item responses models were run in flexMIRT version 3.52 [97] using full information maximum likelihood estimation. The IFAs and higher-order factor models were run in Mplus version 8.5 using weighted least squares with mean and variance adjustment (WLSMV) estimation [98]. The multiple regression models and correlation analyses were also run in Mplus using full information maximum likelihood estimation. Confidence intervals for the multiple

regression models were derived via percentile bootstrapping with 10,000 random draws, which performs well across a variety of data contexts [99].

Results

Individual scale functioning

Scree plots for the IFAs revealed a mean first to second eigenvalue of 4.54 to 0.69 (or 6.58 to 1; see Table S14 in online supplement for the first five eigenvalues associated with every IFA), indicating each scale had a dominant first factor. Further, extracting multiple factors generally did not result in additional, conceptually meaningful factors, indicating each scale was effectively unidimensional.

The graded response models indicated each individual scale was coherent and reliable. The results from each graded response model—including item discrimination values, standardized factor loadings, information at selected values of the latent factor, and marginal reliability—can be found in the online supplement (Tables S15 through S27; OSF). In general, the items had high discrimination values, with most item discrimination values above $a = .80$ (this corresponds to a standardized factor loading of around $\lambda = .40$). The scales tended to be most informative within ± 1 standard deviation of the mean, indicating that the scales most reliably make distinctions around the average level of the attitudes captured by the scales. The scales were least reliable below 1 standard deviation, highlighting that the item content is not calibrated for making fine-grained distinctions among those who roundly reject the attitudes captured by the scales. Overall the scales had high reliability (mean marginal reliability = .88; see Table 2).

The Trumpism factor

At each assessment wave, the IFAs revealed that all the items across the scales could be characterized by a large, single factor. Scree plots for the IFAs that included all Trumpism-related items in each wave revealed a mean first to second eigenvalue of 16.76 to 2.50 (or 6.70 to 1; see online supplement material OSF), indicating the presence of a large, single factor. The most coherent factor solutions with more than one factor tended to include an additional factor defined by items about police and racial attitudes items (occasionally an immigration factor would emerge as well), though all these factors tended to be highly correlated ($r_s > .50$). The full results for the full-wave 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 factor solutions can be found in the online supplement materials (OSF).

Results from the higher-order Trumpism factor models can be found in Table 3 including the standardized factor loadings on the higher-order Trumpism factor, lower- and higher-order factor reliability indices, and correlations over time for the available participants. The full list of loadings for the lower- and higher-order factors can be found in the online supplement (OSF). All lower-order factors loaded strongly on the Trumpism higher order factors (mean $\lambda = .87$). Consequently, the latent factor reliability of the Trumpism factors was high (mean $\omega = .94$ and mean $H = .97$) [100]. The correlation between Trumpism factor scores across different waves ranged from $r = .85$ to $r = .90$, indicating high rank-order stability over the time. Together, results indicate a stable, coherent, and reliable Trumpism factor across waves despite differences in the number and nature of scales at each wave (see Figure 3 for visual depiction).

Table 3. Lower-Order Factor Loadings on Higher-Order Trumpism Factor, Factor Reliability, and Correlations Over Time.

	Summer 2020			Autumn 2020				Winter 2021				
	λ	ω	H	λ	ω	H	r_{t-1}	λ	ω	H	r_{t-1}	r_{t-2}
Trump Approval	.92	--	--	.97	--	--	.90	.93	--	--	.87	.83
Police Attitudes	.97	.94	.96	.86	.95	.98	.90	.76	.88	.94	.88	.87
Race & Immigration Attitudes	.81	.93	.94	.89	.91	.92	.88	.83	.92	.93	.87	.88
Media Bias	--	--	--	.86	.94	.95	--	.92	.94	.96	--	.91
Pro-Gun Attitudes	.67	--	--	.79	.87	.88	.63	.82	.88	.88	.59	.90
Rigged Election	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.97	.98	.99	--	--
Pro-Insurrection	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.92	.94	.97	--	--
Trump Idolatry	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.97	.96	.97	--	--
Trumpism	--	.91	.96	--	.94	.96	.90	--	.97	.98	.85	.90

λ = standardized factor loading; ω = Coefficient Omega; H = H index of construct replicability; r_{t-1} = correlations with the pervious wave of data collection; r_{t-2} = correlations with data collected two waves prior. Assessments waves were separated by 3 to 4 months. Trump Approval and Summer 2020 Gun Attitudes assessed via a single item and so do not have factor reliability values.

Figure 3. Conceptual diagram of the Trumpism higher-order factor models across the study period.

At every wave of assessment new Trumpism facets were added. Rank-order stability in Trumpism factor scores was strong (see Table 2).

Trumpism and Demographic Characteristics

Table 4 provides means, standard deviations, sample sizes, and mean difference effect sizes (Cohen's d s) for Trumpism across the demographic variables of interest. For the purposes of presentation here Age, Annual Income, and Educational Attainment were split into 2 or 3 bins (they were kept continuous in the subsequent regression models). Correlations between the demographic variables and Trumpism factor scores (as opposed to d s) can be found in the online supplement (Table S29; OSF). Political party affiliation was clearly differentiated by Trumpism scores: the mean score for Republicans was around one standard deviation above the sample mean at each wave (sample mean was about .01 with standard deviation of about .90 at each wave; Table 4), while the mean score for Democrats was about half a standard deviation below

the sample mean, and the mean score for Independents was around the sample mean. Relative to Independents, Republicans had much higher Trumpism factor scores (mean d across time = .97), and Democrats had lower Trumpism factor scores (mean d across time = -.70), while Republicans also had much higher Trumpism scores than Democrats (mean d across time = 1.84).

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics and Group Differences in Trumpism.

	Summer 2020				Autumn 2020				Winter 2021			
	M	SD	<i>n</i>	<i>d</i>	M	SD	<i>n</i>	<i>d</i>	M	SD	<i>n</i>	<i>d</i>
Sex												
<i>Women</i>	-.06	.83	531		-.06	.81	513		-.03	.83	512	
Men	.09	.98	477	.16	.09	.99	491	.16	.05	.97	493	.09
Race												
<i>White</i>	.12	.09	777		.12	.92	757		.08	.93	771	
Black	-.60	.72	135	-.89	-.48	.68	144	-.75	-.37	.73	134	-.54
Other	-.09	.79	85	-.25	-.16	.83	88	-.32	-.02	.79	85	-.12
Age												
30-59	.08	.86	537		.09	.87	530		.07	.88	534	
Under 30	-.22	.84	182	-.36	-.04	.83	182	-.15	.06	.85	187	-.02
60 and Older	.01	.98	283	-.08	-.11	1.00	286	-.20	-.15	.95	280	-.24
Annual Income												
\$50,000-\$100,000	.03	.93	370		-.07	.99	336		-.02	.91	354	
Below \$50,000	-.01	.84	296	-.04	.01	.82	349	.08	.07	.87	333	.11
Above \$100,000	.01	.93	342	-.02	.10	.90	319	.18	-.02	.91	318	.00
Education												
4 Year College Degree or More	-.05	.89	650		-.01	.94	569		-.06	.91	573	
No 4 Year College Degree	.12	.91	358	.19	.04	.87	435	.06	.11	.87	432	.19
Political Party												
<i>Independent</i>	.05	.85	169		.11	.86	184		.04	.82	179	
Democrat	-.47	.74	419	-.65	-.53	.74	402	-.78	-.48	.75	412	-.66
Republican	.80	.67	261	.98	.82	.61	264	.95	.78	.69	266	.98

M = mean; SD = standard deviation; n = number of respondents; d = Cohen's d . Cohen's d s calculated in relation to referent groups; referent groups are *italicized* (Women, White, 30-59 Years Old, Annual Income of \$50,000-\$100,000, 4 Year College Degree or More, and Democrat). Note that all three waves of data are included in this table for clarity of presentation, however the Trumpism Factor incorporated a different number of scales of each wave, and the majority of participants only provided responses during one wave of data collection. Accordingly, direct comparisons across waves should be made cautiously as both the Trumpism factor and participants are changing over time.

Other than political party, the largest demographic differences were observed among White, Black, and other non-White participants. Across time, White participants scored highest

on the Trumpism factor, while Black participants scored much lower (mean $d = -.73$ compared to White participants), and other non-White participants on average scored in between (mean $d = -.23$ compared to White participants). Notably, these differences appear to get smaller over time, however, this is likely an artifact of the number of scales included changing over time. Specifically, the largest difference between White and Black participants was that Black participants had much lower positive attitudes toward police as measured on the Police Attitudes scale ($ds = -.96, -.87$, and $-.86$ at Summer 2020, Autumn 2020, and Winter 2021, respectively), and so as more scales were added to the Trumpism factor over time the contribution of Police Attitudes on factor scores was diluted.

Other demographic trends were less pronounced relative to racial differences. Men scored somewhat higher than women over time (mean $d = .14$). Younger (mean $d = -.18$ compared to middle aged participants) and older (mean $d = -.17$ compared to middle aged participants) participants scored lower than middle aged participants over time. From Summer 2020 to Winter 2021, the mean differences for younger participants decreased, while those for older participants increased, again likely in part due to the addition of new scales (e.g., younger participants endorse less positive police attitudes on average). There were few consistent trends across income groups, with higher-income participants scoring higher during the Fall of 2020 ($d = .18$ compared to middle income participants), and lower income participants scoring higher in the Winter of 2021 ($d = .11$ compared to middle income participants). Except for the Fall of 2020, participants without a Bachelor's-level college degree tended to have slightly higher Trumpism scores than those with a Bachelor's-level college degree (ds of $.19$).

Standardized regression coefficients from the multiple regression interaction models are reported in Table 5. The most consistently observed trend was the main effect of race; these

525 coefficients were non-trivial in magnitude, and the confidence intervals did not include 0 (mean
526 $\beta = .18$). A two-way interaction of non-trivial magnitude between race and age was observed in
527 both the Autumn 2020 ($\beta = .23$; 95% CI: .09, .37) and Winter 2021 ($\beta = .29$; 95% CI: .11, .47)
528 data, while three-way interactions between sex, race, and income were observed in the Summer
529 2020 ($\beta = .18$; 95% CI: .04, .33) and Winter 2021 ($\beta = .19$; 95% CI: .03, .33) data. Although
530 these interactions should be interpreted cautiously and replicated in larger samples, given their
531 magnitude and presence in two out of three waves of data, we briefly discuss them here and have
532 provided graphic illustrations of these interactions in Figures 1 and 2.

Table 5. Standardized Regression Coefficients from Multiple Regression Models.

	Summer 2020	Autumn 2020	Winter 2021
Sex, Race, and Age			
Men	.12 [-.02, .26]	.02 [-.10, .15]	.07 [-.05, .19]
White	.26 [.18, .34]	.17 [.10, .23]	.10 [.03, .18]
Age	-.01 [-.23, .18]	-.19 [-.32, -.06]	-.33 [-.50, -.15]
Men x White	-.09 [-.24, .06]	.05 [-.09, .20]	-.02 [-.15, .12]
Men x Age	-.10 [-.29, .09]	.03 [-.15, .20]	.01 [-.15, .18]
White x Age	.18 [-.01, .37]	.23 [.09, .37]	.29 [.11, .47]
Men x White x Age	.03 [-.18, .21]	-.10 [-.29, .08]	-.09 [-.26, .08]
Sex, Race, and Income			
Men	.08 [-.03, .20]	.02 [-.10, .14]	.08 [-.03, .20]
White	.23 [.16, .30]	.17 [.11, .24]	.14 [.07, .21]
Income	.02 [-.11, .15]	-.03 [-.13, .07]	.06 [-.07, .20]
Men x White	-.01 [-.14, .12]	.07 [-.07, .21]	-.03 [-.17, .10]
Men x Income	-.16 [-.29, -.02]	.06 [-.08, .19]	-.12 [-.27, .07]
White x Income	-.03 [-.17, .10]	-.03 [-.15, .09]	-.18 [-.32, -.03]
Men x White x Income	.18 [.04, .33]	.02 [-.14, .16]	.19 [.03, .33]
Sex, Race, and Education			
Men	.09 [-.03, .21]	.03 [-.10, .15]	.09 [-.02, .20]
White	.22 [.15, .29]	.17 [.10, .23]	.14 [.07, .21]
Education	-.06 [-.21, .10]	-.13 [-.25, -.01]	-.09 [-.24, .07]
Men x White	.01 [-.12, .15]	.07 [-.07, .21]	-.02 [-.15, .11]
Men x Education	-.03 [-.20, .14]	.07 [-.08, .24]	-.11 [-.27, .05]
White x Education	-.08 [-.24, .07]	.03 [-.10, .16]	-.06 [-.22, .10]
Men x White x Education	.05 [-.13, .21]	-.02 [-.20, .14]	.11 [-.05, .28]

Standardized regression coefficients presented. Age, income, and education were grand mean centered prior to the computation of the interaction terms. 95% confidence intervals presented in brackets underestimates; confidence intervals derived via non-parametric percentile bootstrapping with 10,000 random draws. Coefficients with confidence intervals that do not include 0 are presented in **bold**. Note that all three waves of data are included in this table for clarity of presentation, however the Trumpism Factor incorporated a different number of scales of each

wave, and the majority of participants only provided responses during one wave of data collection. Accordingly, direct comparisons across waves should be made cautiously as both the Trumpism factor and participants are changing over time.

Figure 4 provides an illustration of the interaction observed between race and age (the

Figure 4. Illustration of the Two-Way Interaction Between Race and Age.

Graphic is based on the unstandardized parameter estimates from the Winter 2021 model. Trumpism factor scores are on the Y axis. Younger and Older represent ± 0.5 standard deviation from the grand mean centered age variable.

Figure 5. Illustration of the Three-Way Interaction Between Sex, Race, and Income. Figure 4. Illustration of the Three-Way Interaction Between Sex, Race, and Income.

Graphic is based on the unstandardized parameter estimates from the Winter 2021 model. Trumpism factor scores are on the Y axis. Lower and Higher Income represent ± 0.5 standard deviation from the grand mean centered income variable.

unstandardized parameter estimates from the Winter 2021 data). As noted, White participants on average scored higher than non-White participants, and age was not related to the factor scores in White participants. For non-White participants there was an effect of age such that older non-White participants scored lower on Trumpism than younger non-White participants. Figure 5 provides an illustration of the interaction observed between sex, race, and income (the figure is specifically based on the unstandardized parameter estimates from the Winter 2021 data). Non-White participants consistently scored lower on Trumpism than White participants, and income did not appear to be related to these trends. However, among White participants women with higher incomes scored *lower* on Trumpism, while men with higher income scored *higher* on Trumpism. That is, among White participants the association between income and Trumpism was in opposite directions across women and men.

Trumpism and COVID-19

The odds ratios and correlations between Trumpism and a COVID-19 diagnosis and other outcomes across waves are presented in Table 6. We include the zero-order or unadjusted associations as well as the associations after adjusting for age, sex, race, income, and education (political party was not included given the large degree of overlap with the Trumpism factor scores). Results from logistic regressions showed that a one standard deviation increase in Trumpism scores was associated with a roughly 50% increase in the odds of a positive COVID-19 diagnosis at wave 3 (Winter 2021) but was not associated with a significant increase in the odds of a positive diagnosis at waves 1 (Summer 2020) and 2 (Autumn 2020). After adjusting for demographic variables, the association between Trumpism scores and a COVID-19 diagnosis at wave 3 was only slightly diminished, and the association with our broad definition of a COVID-19 diagnosis remained significant, but the association with our narrow definition of COVID-19 was no longer significant at $p < .005$ ($OR = 1.48$, $p < .01$).

Correlations between Trumpism scores and the other COVID-19 variables were generally medium to large. Across waves, Trumpism was associated with greater skepticism regarding the severity of COVID-19 ($r = .69$), less approval of government restrictions (mean $r = -.50$), fewer COVID-19 safety behaviors (mean $r = -.33$), more anti-vax attitudes (mean $r = .40$) and greater COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy (mean $r = .27$). Notably, although most associations were similar in magnitude over time, the correlation between Trumpism and willingness to receive a COVID-19 vaccine more than doubled in size from Autumn 2020 to Winter 2021 (r s from $-.16$ to $-.38$). Controlling for the demographic covariates did little to change these associations (mean r s = $\pm .39$ and $.38$ with and without covariates, respectively).

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Table 6
Trumpism and COVID-19 Variables

	Summer 2020			Autumn 2020			Winter 2021		
	%	Unadjusted	Adjusted	%	Unadjusted	Adjusted	%	Unadjusted	Adjusted
COVID-19 diagnosis									
Narrow	0.5	1.12	1.50	1.9	1.06	1.12	5.6	1.53	<i>1.48</i>
Broad	2.8	1.08	1.20	4.3	1.34	1.37	9.1	1.50	1.44
Approve government restrictions		-.44	-.44		-.53	-.51		-.53	-.49
Social distancing		-.28	-.26		-.29	-.27		-.35	-.33
Mask wearing		-.36	-.32		-.34	-.33		-.38	-.35
COVID-19 skepticism		--	--		--	--		.69	.67
Anti-vax attitudes		--	--		.33	.37		.46	.48
COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy		--	--		.16	.14		.38	.38

Unadjusted = zero-order association between Trumpism and COVID variables; Adjusted = association between Trumpism and COVID-19 variables after controlling for sex, race, age, income, and educational attainment. Associations with COVID-19 diagnosis are odds ratios. Bold = $p < .005$, Italics = $p < .01$. All other associations are correlations, which are all significant at $p < .001$. Note that all three waves of data are included in this table for clarity of presentation, however the Trumpism Factor incorporated a different number of scales of each wave, and the majority of participants only provided responses during one wave of data collection. Accordingly, direct comparisons across waves should be made cautiously as both the Trumpism factor and participants are changing over time.

Discussion

Trumpism as a political force within the United States has had a dramatic influence on its politics, culture, and responses to public health and economic crises. We began the process of evaluating psychometric measures of several facets (e.g., approval of Donald Trump, attitudes about race, immigration, policing, news media, etc.) of Trumpism and testing whether the covariance among these measures could be accounted for by a single factor consistent with a coherent political ideology. Our analyses showed that the *items* designed to assess a specific facet construct (e.g., attitudes about race and immigration) exhibited strong psychometric properties (e.g., high information, high internal consistency, reliability) and that scores on *scales* designed to measure facets of Trumpism exhibited high correlations among each other that were well accounted for by a single, broad factor. This broad factor was also evident when examining the covariance at the item-level (i.e., items across different scales), which is additional evidence that the content across scales is representative of a consistent and coherent political orientation. The Trumpism factor had high test-retest stability over 3- and 6-month intervals (latent $r = .90$ and $.85$, respectively) despite changes to its content, indicating this Trumpism factor measures a stable trait construct.

We found that the Trumpism factor was strongly correlated with beliefs about a rigged 2020 Presidential election and the Insurrection of January 6, 2021. While these are highly politicized events, it is important to note these events could not have been predicted in the summer of 2020, but quickly came to be the latest expression of the continuing evolution of the Trumpism construct. Further, what seems like an extreme position today becomes the median Trumpist position of tomorrow. For example, beliefs of a rigged election are now the majority opinion among Republicans [101-102], and the narrative of Capitol rioters as patriots gained

substantial ground in the following months [103]. These shifts in attitudes likely point to more extreme anti-democratic, authoritarian, and violent actions in the future. For example, several state legislatures have either succeeded in or are attempting to change voting laws that would have the effect of suppressing voters who, based on demographic characteristics, are more likely to vote for Democratic candidates [7,91]. There are also reports of attempts by Trump and current government officials to plan for “legal” ways to overturn the results of future elections [8-9] that would subvert free and fair elections. Consequently, accurate measurement of Trumpism could provide predictive value in anticipating future political events and debates over public policy and help to develop strategies to forestall anti-democratic attempts to gain control of the U. S. government.

Correlates of Trumpism

In addition to internal and structural validity, the Trumpism factor also exhibited theoretically consistent associations with demographic variables. For example, Trumpism was especially high among participants affiliated with the Republican party and low among those affiliated with the Democratic party, and higher among White participants relative to non-White participants, especially Black participants. We did not detect main effects of sex and income on Trumpism, though we did detect a three-way interaction among sex, income, and race such that higher income was associated with higher Trumpism among White men, and lower Trumpism among White women. Age was associated with lower Trumpism, but this main effect was moderated by race such that Trumpism was especially low among older non-White participants.

The relatively weak associations with sex, education, and income may seem surprising given media narratives that Trumpism is more popular among men, older age, lower income, and lower education groups. However, income and education are stratified by race with mean-levels

being lower among Black Americans relative to White Americans [104-105]. Further, polling results indicate Trump voters have higher incomes than non-Trump voters, contradicting this narrative [106-107]. Consequently, when media reports describe Trumpism as having great appeal among lower educated, lower income, or working-class Americans, a more accurate description would be that Trumpism is popular among lower educated and lower income *White* Americans (i.e., the “White working class”).

It may be helpful to translate how findings and analyses from psychologically oriented individual differences research relate to media reports. One is that the main effect of race is much stronger than the main effects and interactions with sex, income, and education. From the perspective of scientific parsimony and reliable effects, what these results tell us about understanding American politics is that race is the dominant demographic variable of importance. Large and reliable effects are difficult to change, however, and so don’t have a large impact on the dynamic process of winning elections, because they are “baked in”. Consequently, elections are situations when interactions (defined as the intersection of demographic variables), though small, often have high practical consequences. Specifically, political scientists have detected a significant sorting in American politics over the past 50 years such that intersecting social identities have become more strongly aligned with political party affiliation [108-109]. In terms of winning elections, then, it is important for political parties to identify subgroups to target appeals that will improve their voting margins, and so it is these interaction effects on which elections are fought and won.

Trumpism and COVID-19

While Trumpism is sometimes characterized as similar to being a fan of a sports team, our findings on the links between Trumpism and the COVID-19 variables indicate the

consequences of organizing your behavior around “owning the libs” can be dire, even fatal. Trumpism scores were associated with a roughly 50% increase in the odds of a COVID-19 diagnosis by the early months of 2021 and were strongly associated with an overall skepticism about the health risks of COVID-19, disapproval of government actions to mitigate the spread of the virus, and failure to engage in personal behaviors to reduce the spread of infection including wearing masks and following social distancing recommendations. Trumpism was also associated with anti-vax beliefs and hesitancy to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, associations that increased from autumn 2020 (prior to vaccine availability) to early 2021 (initial vaccine availability) suggesting an increasing politicization of vaccination over time (the association between Trumpism and a positive COVID-19 followed a similar trend, though this could be due to greater statistical power as the prevalence of infection increased). Failure to vaccinate against COVID-19 is especially consequential for personal and public health as it is by far the most effective measure to prevent death and serious illness while also reducing the risk of infection and spread [69]. Engaging in persistent inaccurate, irrational, and illogical rhetoric regarding vaccination by a vocal minority contributes to an environment of misinformation and hardens anti-vax and vaccine hesitant beliefs, even among people who do not hold Trumpism attitudes. Consequently, the lack of vaccination among a significant minority of Americans who disproportionately hold Trumpism political beliefs has contributed to thousands of preventable deaths, stressed the medical care system, and contributed to prolonging the pandemic, including its negative economic, social, and psychological consequences.

Limitations and Future Directions

The study has important limitations. One, the sample size lacked adequate power to reliably detect certain higher-order interactions (i.e., three or more variables), and the ones that

exceeded statistical significance should be interpreted cautiously. Therefore, future analyses focused on potential interaction effects should do so with larger samples. Two, we did not present analyses of additional correlates of Trumpism such as personality, mental health, and political engagement to further characterize the psychological structure of Trumpism. We plan to do so in future analyses. Three, while we adjusted for demographic variables when estimating the associations between Trumpism and COVID-19 variables, there may be other variables that can account for some or all these associations. Consequently, we plan to examine the incremental predictive power of Trumpism relative to other predictors of COVID-19 variables in future analyses. Four, while the sample was representative of the U.S. population in terms of age, sex, and race, it included a greater proportion of persons with higher educational attainment (i.e., undergraduate or graduate degree) and persons aligned with the Democratic party relative to people that are political independents, unaffiliated, or non-voters. While this can bias the estimates of mean differences, the correlation structure among measures is unlikely to be strongly affected (assuming adequate but lower representation of these groups in the sample), which was the focus of our analyses.

For future research, it will be important to continue to describe the Trumpism construct including its boundaries and additional facets. For example, we have not yet examined associations between the current Trumpism content and topics such as attitudes about abortion, Christian nationalism, White nationalism, economic and policy issues such as trade policy, taxes, social welfare programs, and foreign policy, as well as conspiratorial beliefs such as QAnon. Further, Trumpism is a dynamic construct and continues to evolve with current political issues. For example, since the last wave of data was collected in this report, the topic of critical race theory and the teaching of race-related historical content in public schools has become a political

issue that is strongly tied to politicians with Trumpist ideology [110-111]. In some states, this has led to the proposal or passage of state laws that restrict the framing, description, and potentially the content of historical information presented in classrooms with penalties for teachers who violate these laws. These laws are especially problematic in that the teaching of accurate historical information (e.g., past laws that restricted the activities and rights of people based on race) might be interpreted as criminal acts. The Trumpism measures in this report may serve as anchor constructs to help to track and integrate changes in American political attitudes.

It will also be important to use Trumpism measures to attempt to predict the course of political and health attitudes and behaviors. Despite the change in presidential administrations, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to have a major societal impact and source of conflict that is strongly politicized. Trumpist attitudes may be informative in predicting reactions to government and business policies related to the COVID-19 pandemic, especially resistance that could be disruptive to important activities (e.g., mitigation measures at public schools). More ominously, there has been an increase in the acceptability of using anti-democratic tactics and even violence to hold or seize political power [112-113]. Linking Trumpism to these anti-democratic attitudes may help to identify extremist groups and individuals that could threaten democratic institutions. Finally, the factors that contribute to embracing a Trumpist ideology are important to understand. While contemporary events are clearly important, it is possible that more distal person-level characteristics and experiences can serve as predictors of susceptibility to a similar political orientation. Adding Trumpism measures to longitudinal cohorts would make it possible to link current political ideology and its behavioral sequelae (e.g., COVID-19 safety behaviors) to prior characteristics (e.g., personality, mental health, attitudes), some that may be present as early as

childhood. Such research may help to understand the psychological structure of persons that select into similar political and cultural tribes.

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