Attention Must be Paid: Political Awareness and Trade Policy Preferences

Yu-Ming Liou and Peter Sima-Eichler
yl254@georgetown.edu and pjs72@georgetown.edu
Department of Government
Georgetown University

Abstract

What explains public opinion on trade? Many scholars of trade opinion argue that individuals form opinions about trade based upon personal economic interest. However, public opinion research suggests that individuals are rarely able to connect the effects of national policies with their own interests. This paper addresses this puzzle. Based on over three decades of public and elite survey data, we find that higher levels of political awareness robustly predict greater support for free trade, consistent with data showing overwhelming elite support for trade. Further, we show that the effects reported in the trade opinion literature (e.g., education, gender, race, and income) are conditioned on respondents' levels of political awareness and find evidence for a causal pathway linking exposure to elite cues with increased support for liberalization. Thus, rather than finding evidence that individuals form opinions on trade through their personal interests and attitudes, which then constrain elite policy positions, we find that elite policy positions influence the opinions of politically-aware members of the public in favor of trade openness. This challenges the predominant notion that trade liberalization results from responsiveness by politicians to the economic interests of ordinary citizens. Rather than this "bottom-up" process, we argue that trade liberalization has been an elite-driven "top-down" process.

Introduction

What explains public opinion on trade policy? Despite a striking consensus among economists on the desirability of trade openness,[1] public opinion remains divided on the issue. As a result, a substantial literature has arisen within the field of International Political Economy, devoted to explaining the sources of public attitudes on trade. Until recently, scholars have largely focused on an interest-based account of the origins of trade preferences, arguing that individuals form opinions on trade policy based upon evaluations of its likely effect on their personal economic interests. The balance of the evidence in this literature has come to support a factor income model in which high-skilled labor in developed economies, like the United States, favors freer trade, while low-skilled workers prefer greater protection.

However, research in other areas of public opinion, as well as more recent work within IPE, suggests that this focus may be misplaced. Scholarship in the broader public opinion literature has established that citizens struggle to connect national economic policies with their personal well-being, particularly for low-salience issues, such as contemporary trade policy.[2] Further, social and attitudinal accounts of trade preference formation argue that material self-interest matters less in determining individuals' trade policy preferences than attitudes towards out-groups or perceptions of how the U.S. economy at large is affected by trade.[3] Still, if individuals are ill-informed about trade, there is no *ex ante* reason to think that individuals are better able to connect their social attitudes, rather than their economic interests, with trade opinion. And if people struggle to connect trade policy with their own interests and attitudes, why do macro-level studies of trade opinion consistently show patterns of self-interest?[4]

Our answer is elite influence. People form opinions on political issues after being exposed to position-taking or "cues" from trusted elites. Elites may provide cues to their followers

[1] Mayda and Rodrik 2005
[2] Guisinger 2009
[3] Mansfield and Mutz 2009
[4] Fordham and Kleinberg 2012

through speeches, position papers, or media appearances. Politically aware individuals, *i.e.*, those more attentive and knowledgeable about politics, are more likely to receive and understand elite cues.[5] When elites are united in support of a particular policy, politically aware members of the public are more likely than less-aware individuals to favor the same policy.[6]

In the case of trade, three decades of elite opinion data and national party platforms demonstrate that elites across the American poltical spectrum are overwhelmingly supportive of liberalization. Thus, the trade-related cues received by politically aware members of the public influence them in favor of trade openness. Unsurprisingly, we find political awareness to be a strong and consistent predictor of support for free trade. At low levels of political awareness, people will both receive fewer cues and lack the sophistication to interpret those they do receive, leaving them unable to form systematic opinions on the basis of their interests and attitudes. In other words, the commonly cited interest-based and attitudinal predictors of trade preferences will not function as expected at low levels of political awareness. For example, we find that the trade opinions of college graduates and non-graduates are only differentiated for the politically aware. The same pattern holds for other predictors linked to support for free trade in the trade opinion literature (including internationalism and ethnocentrism). Further, we find evidence of a causal pathway linking exposure to elite cues with increased support for liberalization.

Thus, our article contributes to the trade preferences literature by inverting the implicit understanding that individuals form opinions on trade through their personal interests and attitudes and then influence elite policy positions. Rather, we find that elite policy positions influence the opinions of politically-aware members of the public in favor of trade openness. This also challenges the predominant understanding of trade liberalization: elites supply policies that promote the economic interests of their constituents in order to win votes — bottom-up responsiveness. Instead, we identify a top-down process of liberalization. In doing

[5] Zaller 1992

[6] Zaller 1992, 2012; Berinsky 2007, 2009

so, we also resolve the trade preferences aggregation puzzle: the variables used to proxy for self-interest are both conditioned on and mediated by political awareness. Trade opinion at the mass level is driven by the most politically aware members of the public, who receive cues from elites.

The paper proceeds as follows: first, we summarize the literature on trade preference formation and explain our theory of how political awareness affects the way people form opinions about trade. Then, we test our theory using three decades (nine cross-sections) of American National Election Studies (ANES) data, employing logistic regression with fixed effects, causal mediation analysis, and matching as preprocessing. We find a monotonically positive relationship between political awareness and support for free trade. Moreover, we find that the effects of commonly-studied demographic and attitudinal characteristics such as college education on trade opinion are both contingent on and mediated by political awareness. Finally, we use causal mediation analysis to evaluate our hypothesized causal path, linking exposure to elite cues to increased support for trade liberalization.

Theory

Our argument proceeds in three parts. First, we argue that the study of trade opinion must be integrated with the study of domestic public opinion.[7] The microfoundations on which standard models of trade opinion are built – a citizen calculating the likely personal costs and benefits of particular trade policy options – are inconsistent with the general picture offered by scholars of public opinion in other issue areas. Instead, extensive research has established that citizens rarely connect public policy choices with their personal interests. This suggests that the sources of public trade opinion are unlikely to lie solely in personal economic interests.

Second, we argue that citizens form opinions about trade in much the same way they do in other issue areas: they turn to cues about trade provided by trusted leaders who share

[7] In this, we follow the example of Berinsky 2009, in his study of public opinion on war.

their general political views. Thus, we argue that rather than simply being constrained by mass trade opinion, elites are themselves able to influence public attitudes towards trade. More specifically, we argue that politically-aware individuals are more likely to both receive and be influenced by elite cues.

Finally, since American elite opinion has been overwhelmingly pro-trade (across the mainstream political spectrum) for more than three decades, politically-aware citizens are more likely to support free trade policies. Moreover, while individuals' interests and attitudes may systematically affect their opinions on liberalization, we argue that these effects are conditioned by political awareness. At low levels of political awareness, people are unable to connect their interests and attitudes with trade policy. However, greater political awareness does not lead to polarization in trade attitudes; because elite cues are pro-trade, would-be protectionists will find few cues to enhance their enthusiasm for protection.

The Origins of Trade Preferences

The micro-foundations of political economy models of trade opinion rest on the notion that individuals evaluate the likely impact of trade policy on their personal economic prospects. In economies where capital (labor) is the abundant factor, high-skill (low-skill) workers prefer free trade, while low-skill (high-skill) workers prefer protection.[8] Using college education as a proxy to identify high-skill workers, scholars have found a robust relationship across numerous specifications and datasets.[9] These exogenously-given interests determine the political preferences of voters who then reward candidates who furnish their desired trade policies.[10]

This account of the origins of trade preferences has been highly influential. Beyond research on trade opinion, it has come to constitute the theoretical underpinnings of an even more extensive literature on the origins of trade liberalization. Democratic leaders are

[8] Rogowski 1989

[9] See *e.g.,* Scheve and Slaughter 2001; Dutt and Mitra 2005; Mayda and Rodrik 2005

[10] Bailey 2001; Özden and Reinhardt 2005

hypothesized to join institutions in order to signal their commitment to non-predatory trade policies[11] and reduce trade barriers[12] to appeal to voters. Conversely, Frye and Mansfield[13] argue that trade liberalization is timed to occur immediately after elections to minimize the electoral impact of a protectionist backlash. In other words, politicians supply trade policies in line with individual economic interests and use international trade institutions to send signals about those policies to their constituents.

By contrast, extensive research on economic voting suggests that individuals struggle to make these calculations. Material self-interest only rarely contributes significantly to opinions on policy issues or to voting decisions[14] because individuals have difficulty drawing connections between personal interests and public policy.[15] Moreover, investigations into the effect of free trade on labor market volatility have produced ambiguous evidence as to whether trade openness creates greater labor market insecurity for workers in advanced industrial economies,[16] as implied by political economy models of trade opinion.

More recent scholarship in the trade opinion literature has shifted the focus from economic interests to social attitudes. For example, rather than viewing college education as a proxy for respondent skill (and, consequently, economic interest), two recent papers argue that it instead transforms graduates' broader philosophical and political outlooks.[17] Likewise, cross-national studies of trade opinion have found that support for trade protection is associated with nationalist attitudes.[18] In this vein, Mansfield and Mutz[19] argue that the effects of education on trade policy preferences are felt primarily through the graduates' more favorable underlying presdispositions toward outgroups. They argue, in addition, that

[11] Mansfield, Milner and Rosendorff 2002
[12] Milner and Kubota 2005
[13] 2004
[14] See Sears and Funk 1990; Guisinger 2009; Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2000
[15] See Sears, Lau, Tyler and Allen Jr. 1980; Mutz 1994. Also see Green and Gerken 1989 for an exception that may prove the rule: an idiosyncratically high-salience issue in which individuals form policy opinions on the basis of self-interest.
[16] Iversen and Cusack 2000
[17] Hainmueller and Hiscox 2006; Mansfield and Mutz 2009
[18] O'Rourke and Sinnott 2001; Mayda and Rodrik 2005
[19] 2009

insofar as trade opinion is influenced by material economic calculations, individuals are more likely to consider how trade will affect the economy at large, rather than their own economic prospects.

However, Fordham and Kleinberg[20] offer two related criticisms of this account. First, they argue it is inappropriate to make causal inferences on the basis of associations between two sets of attitudes (*e.g.*, attitudes towards outgroups and trade policy preferences).[21] They explain that it can be difficult to parse whether one is necessarily causally prior to the other and demonstrate that trade policy preferences are themselves predictive of perceptions of trade's likely effects both on the American economy at large and on personal economic well-being.

Second, they argue that Mansfield and Mutz[22] in particular, and the trade opinion literature in general, have defined economic self-interest too narrowly. Thus, they challenge the field to address this "important theoretical puzzle: if people lack the information and cognitive capacity to calculate their interests from the economic fundamentals, how does individual opinion come to approximate self-interest?" This suggests the need for a theory of trade opinion that reconciles the findings of both the interest- and attitude-based accounts.

More fundamentally however, trade opinion is of broader interest only insofar as it influences trade policy outcomes. Research by Guisinger[23] finds that whatever the origins of their preferences, voters are both uninformed about their representatives' positions on trade and unlikely to consider their own trade preferences when choosing a candidate. This suggests that the constraining effect of public opinion (and consequently public welfare) on trade policy is weak at best, implying a far greater level of policy autonomy for elites. Consequently, this is troubling for accounts of trade liberalization that rely on the ability of voters to hold politicians accountable for the trade policies they adopt. Nonetheless, this leaves unanswered questions about both the origins of public opinion on trade and how those opinions affect

[20] 2012
[21] Fordham and Kleinberg (2012)
[22] 2009
[23] 2009

trade policy outcomes.

How Elites Influence Public Opinion

Therefore, we propose a cue-based account of trade opinion formation that both reconciles interest-based and attitudinal accounts of trade opinion and suggests an alternative mechanism by which policy preferences are transformed into trade policy outcomes. We argue that a pro-trade elite consensus influences the opinions of politically-attentive members of the public in favor of trade liberalization. Thus, political elites may be even less accountable to public opinion than suggested by Guisinger.[24] That is, not only are citizens unable and unwilling to constrain elite policymaking on trade, elites may themselves shape the opinion of publics who theoretically hold them accountable.[25]

If and how elites influence mass political opinion has been the subject of an extensive body of research.[26] While this literature is both massive and diverse, it is possible to generalize about the typical causal claims made by scholars of elite influence: elites communicate messages, which are received by individuals, who are influenced in varying degrees according to the characteristics of the elite, the message itself, and the individual recipient. Because the content of messages can be difficult to measure directly, much scholarship has focused on the characteristics of the message giver(s) and recipient(s), as exemplified by the work of Zaller.[27]

In particular, Zaller argues that mass opinion will reflect the degree of consensus or polarization at the elite level, such that elite consensus will tend to produce a "mainstreaming" pressure on mass opinion, while elite polarization will consequently produce a parallel polarization of opinion at the mass level. Of course, elite messages have to be received to be

[24] 2009

[25] Alternatively, Saunders 2012 argues that policymakers are constrained by other elites who have the capacity to mobilize an otherwise quiescent public. Nonetheless, this suggests that the proper focus of inquiry for policy constraint is not on mass, but rather elite, opinion.

[26] Lippmann 1932; Hooghe 2003; Steenbergen, Edwards and De Vries 2007; Gabel and Scheve 2007; Bullock 2011

[27] 1992; 1994

effective, and not all members of the public are equally attentive to politics. This is the role of political awareness. As Zaller puts it, "the more citizens know about politics and public affairs, the more firmly they are wedded to elite and media perspectives on...policy issues."[28]

Dating back to Converse,[29] scholars have known that political awareness has substantial influence on political behaviors and attitudes at the mass level. Political awareness has been shown to affect the strength of citizens' party attachments,[30] their perceptions of national economic conditions,[31] and their ability to connect personal economic interests with national policies.[32] In particular, numerous scholars have found that political awareness conditions how evaluations of both personal ("pocketbook") or national ("sociotropic") interest affect vote choice and attitudes.[33] Therefore, we propose that individuals' trade policy preferences are influenced by elite cues, according to their levels of political awareness.[34]

Berinsky[35] extends Zaller's theory of elite messaging, arguing that, even absent specific elite messages about a particular policy, citizens follow the *positions* of elites in forming their political opinions. In other words, citizens do not need to be persuaded by arguments in order to adopt the positions of elite cue-givers – they must only be aware of the policy positions taken by elites. However, political awareness remains critical to this account, as interpreting the cue requires citizens to recognize both the cue-giver and their general level of agreement with her policy positions.

Thus, we argue that politically-aware members of the public are likely to have trade opinions that mirror elite policy positions, consistent with studies of other areas of foreign policy.[36] Further, because trade policy is a low-salience and highly technical issue, few individuals likely possess settled opinions on trade; however, they may possess a set of attitudes

[28] 1994
[29] 1962
[30] Albright 2009
[31] Duch, Palmer and Anderson 2000
[32] Gomez and Wilson 2001
[33] See *e.g.*, Fiorina 1981; Kinder and Kiewiet 1981; Mutz 1992; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Gomez and Wilson 2001, 2006
[34] Conventionally defined as objective political knowledge; see Zaller 1992.
[35] 2007; 2009
[36] Zaller 1992, 1994; Berinsky 2007, 2009

that are potentially relatable to trade. These may include attitudes that have been previously identified by the trade opinion literature such as cosmopolitanism and ethnocentrism, or personal characteristics likely associated with attitudes such as college education and gender. Given the complexity and unfamiliarity of trade policy for most individuals, they are not likely to connect these attitudes to positions on trade policy. This link is supplied by cues from elites. Politically-aware individuals are both more likely to be exposed to elite cues on trade and to possess the ability to make sense of them in relation to their broader beliefs.

This means two things. First, as individual political awareness increases, so too will exposure to elite cues on trade, resulting in greater elite influence on the politically-aware. Second, individuals are unlikely to form settled, systematic opinions on trade without first receiving messages from elites (*i.e.* being sufficiently politically aware). Thus, at low levels of political awareness, individual trade opinion is unlikely to be differentiated, regardless of demographic characteristics, interests, or social attitudes. For example, at low levels of political awareness, the trade opinions of college graduates should be indistinguishable from those of non-graduates. These characteristics are not likely to be connected to trade opinion without the context of elite cues. Consequently, it is only at higher levels of political awareness where the influence of these attitudes is likely to be felt on individuals' trade opinions.

Still, individuals do not simply passively accept any and all elite messages they receive. Instead, they will accept or reject these cues on the basis of their coherence with their preexisting attitudes. These attitudes are often systematically related, even if not identical, to factors identified as influential by trade opinion scholars. For example, women have been found to be less receptive to economic-based arguments in favor of trade than men.[37] Thus, women are less likely to accept any elite pro-trade messages to which they are exposed.

In other words, we argue that the forces shaping public trade opinion are not only bottom-

[37] Gidengil 1995

up (individual economic interests and social attitudes), but also top-down (the political influence of elites). In so doing, we heed both Berinsky's[38] call to reconcile the study of foreign policy with mainstream public opinion research as well as Fordham and Kleinberg's[39] challenge to resolve the trade preferences aggregation puzzle. The effects of both economic interests and social attitudes on trade opinion are dependent on political awareness, which itself indexes individuals' susceptibility to elite influence.

We consequently join both Mansfield and Mutz[40] as well as Fordham and Kleinberg[41] in advocating an "information-based" account of trade policy preferences: we focus on the sources of information available to individuals to explain their support for free trade. This model also allows us to reconcile the prominent empirical findings of the trade opinion literature with the broader theoretical expectations of public opinion research by contributing a complete account of where the particular pattern of preferences we observe in the public comes from: faced with a complicated and unfamiliar issue (trade policy), citizens turn to trusted public figures to provide cues on how to formulate opinions about trade policy. That is, Democrats (Republicans) may turn to prominent Democratic (Republican) leaders for cues. Nonetheless, whatever the source of elite cues, politically-aware citizens are more likely to receive, recognize, and connect such cues to their preexisting attitudes and interests.[42]

Elite Consensus on Trade

Elites shift public attitudes through two pathways: persuasive cues, in which listeners are moved to support or oppose issues based on the strength of the arguments presented, and source cues, in which listeners support or oppose issues based on the credibility of the cue-givers.[43] For "hard" issues – described by Carmines and Stimson[44] as technical, obscure,

[38] 2009
[39] 2012
[40] 2009
[41] 2012
[42] See Zaller 1992, 1994. Also, Berinsky 2007, 2009.
[43] Petty and Cacioppo 1981
[44] 1980

and generally unfamiliar to members of the public – people rely on source cues for guidance.[45] By contrast, for "soft" issues, familiar positions that tie with broadly accessible values and beliefs, people are more likely to be moved by the arguments themselves. In other words, a person may not understand the nuances of trade policy, but if she agrees with the cue-giver on other issues, if she sees the cue-giver as *credible*, she can take a cognitive shortcut and accept the cue-giver's position on trade.[46] In other words, it is not the content of elite arguments about trade that matter but the positions themselves.

And when citizens receive cues, it is likely that, regardless of cue-giver, they will find a similar position on trade policy. Elite opinion on trade is characterized by a strong and persistent consensus in favor of trade liberalization. The Chicago Council on Global Affairs conducts a quadrennial survey focused on U.S. foreign policy. These surveys include both a public opinion component surveying a national sample of ordinary citizens and a parallel survey of "foreign policy leaders," including policymakers in the House, Senate, and executive branch, business and labor leaders, media executives and news directors, as well as prominent academics and leaders of private foreign policy organizations and think tanks. These data represent a unique opportunity to compare the views of ordinary citizens and prominent political, economic, and cultural elites.[47]

As Figure 1 makes clear, mainstream political elites, regardless of partisan affiliation, have been remarkably supportive of free trade policies, with labor leaders as the sole dissenters.[48]When compared to members of the public presented with the same question on

[45]Ratneshwar and Chaiken 1991

[46]Gilens and Murakawa 2002

[47]Both elites and members of the public were asked the following question from 1978-1998: *"It has been argued that if all countries would eliminate their tariffs and restrictions on imported goods, the costs of goods would go down for everyone. Others have said that such tariffs and restrictions are necessary to protect certain manufacturing jobs in certain industries from the competition of less expensive imports... Generally, would you say you sympathize more with those who want to eliminate tariffs or those who think such tariffs are necessary?"* Beginning in 2002, rather than being asked the tariffs question, elites in 2002 and 2004 were asked the following: *"Which of the following three positions comes closest to your point of view? 1) I do not favor free trade. 2) I favor free trade and I believe that it is not necessary for the government to have programs to help workers who lose their jobs. 3) I favor free trade and I believe that it is necessary for the government to have programs to help workers who lose their jobs."* Members of the general public were also asked this question in 2004 and 2008.

[48]Elite attitudes on trade may reflect a broader elite consensus on economic and monetary policy issues

trade policy, elites were often as much as twice as likely between 1978 and 1998 to support the elimination of tariffs as the general public and roughly 50 percent more likely to express support for free trade in general in 2004. It may be that elites are simply evaluating the benefits of free trade as disinterested, rational policy advocates, they may support it due to cosmopolitan social attitudes, or they may favor free trade on the basis of personal economic interest. Regardless of their motivation, they have been (with limited exceptions), consistent in their support for free trade over a long period.

[Figure 1 about here.]

Elite consensus on trade policy is also apparent in public policy statements. We reviewed Democratic and Republican party platforms from each election year between 1984 and 2008. Of the fourteen platforms – seven Democratic and seven Republican – all emphasized expanding free trade, thirteen discussed the importance of exports to the U.S. economy, and thirteen stated that trade must be "fair," underscoring the value of trade regulations (see Appendix). Similarly, Presidents, the national party leaders, are unwavering in their support for liberalization, from Clinton's NAFTA to Bush's CAFTA to Obama's TPP.

Thus, we suggest that elite opinion exerts a pro-trade influence on American public opinion. Nonetheless, its influence is likely to be limited to those who are politically-aware enough to recognize and respond to these trade policy cues. While pro-trade sentiments are ubiquitous in party platforms and State of the Union Addresses, statewide officeholders and local affiliates raise trade infrequently and inconsistently. The Wisconsin Advertising Project provides storyboards for all political advertisements produced in the 100 largest U.S. media markets in 2002 and 2004 and all 210 media markets in 2008. Between 2002 and 2008, only 12% of available Senate and House races featured even a single mention of topics related to trade. It is thus unsurprising that Guisinger finds that few individuals are able to identify the trade positions of their local representatives. Further, support for trade is not unanimous amongst elites (particularly among "outsiders," *e.g.*, Ross Perot), media occasionally raises

as discussed by McNamara 1998.

the specter of Chinese dumping and vanishing U.S. manufacturing, and even pro-trade elites may sometimes make protectionist statements.

For example, President Barack Obama's January 2015 State of the Union address featured the following statement in which he urged Congress to give him Trade Promotion Authority to negotiate additional trade deals:[49]

> China wants to write the rules for the world's fastest-growing region. That would put our workers and businesses at a disadvantage. Why would we let that happen? We should write those rules. We should level the playing field. Thats why I'm asking both parties to give me trade promotion authority to protect American workers, with strong new trade deals from Asia to Europe that aren't just free, but fair.

Obama's comment is typical of statements made by Presidents of both parties (and of language contained in both parties' platforms) in two important ways. First, the President is clear in expressing his support for liberalizing trade policies–*e.g.,*"give me trade promotion authority" for "strong new trade deals from Asia to Europe."[50] Second however, this policy preference can be justified with seemingly protectionist language–*e.g.,* "We should level the playing field" to "protect American workers." In fact, Obama's remarks follow the same formula employed by his predecessor George W. Bush in his 2004 State of the Union address, in which he told the public: "My administration is promoting *free and fair* trade to open up new markets for America's entrepreneurs, and manufacturers, and farmers, and to *create jobs for America's workers*." Thus, public statements from political elites on trade policy are often highly "noisy" in that they seemingly include both pro- and anti-trade messages.

Consequently, individuals with low political awareness may struggle to receive and interpret trade cues consistently. In fact, to the extent that they receive information about trade,

[49]The Obama administration had previously used TPA to negotiate deals with South Korea, Panama, and Colombia

[50]This is a clear reference to the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

the politically-unaware may respond to protectionist messages because they are unable to discern the actual positions of their party leaders. By contrast, even in the face of inconsistent messaging, the politically-aware can recognize the signal through the noise, adopting the uniformly pro-trade positions of their parties.

Of course, different citizens will trust different elites as cue-givers. Some may turn to Bill Clinton, others to George W. Bush, still others to Thomas Friedman, Warren Buffett, or even Bono. This has led some critics of Zaller's theory to argue that sometimes citizens may select cue-givers on the basis of prior policy agreement on the issue of interest. That is, in our case, pro-trade (protectionist) individuals might look to pro-trade (protectionist) elites as cue-givers, essentially reversing the causal relationship we have proposed.

We argue that this is unlikely to be the case for a significant number of Americans. Trade policy is an extremely low-salience political issue (Guisinger 2009), about which individuals are both ill-informed and politically uninterested. The Chicago Council on Global Affairs asks respondents to its quadrennial foreign policy survey to identify the two or three largest foreign policy problems facing the U.S. today. Less than five percent of mass-level respondents in any cross-section for which data are available (1986, 1990, 1994,[51]1998, or 2002) listed international trade, NAFTA, or economic competition as a top three foreign policy challenge.[52] In fact, more than three times as many people included foreign aid in their top three challenges, and more salient issues like terrorism and conflict in the Middle East rank far higher. Hence, international trade is not even salient when compared with other foreign policy issues, to say nothing of hot-button domestic issues like abortion and taxation.[53] Thus, it seems unlikely that many citizens would choose elite cue-givers on the basis of their trade opinions rather than their opinions on a whole host of more politically salient issues.

[51]The year of NAFTA implementation.

[52] In 2004 and 2008, respondents were instead provided with a list of 13 "possible [foreign policy] threats to the vital interest of the United States, and asked to rate them as critical, important but not critical, or not important. During those years, "economic competition from low wage countries ranked as the ninth (2004) and eleventh (2008) rated threat.

[53]See also Guisinger 2009.

Similarly, Gabel and Scheve[54] argue that elites may sometimes try to anticipate public opinion, giving the appearance of elite-driven changes in public attitudes, when in fact, elites are merely responding to anticipated changes in public opinion. Zaller[55] has acknowledged that this may often be a concern, depending on the issue. However, as is clear from Figure 1, both public and elite attitudes towards trade policy have been remarkably stable over three decades. In addition, while anticipatory elite cue-giving may occur in other more salient policy areas (*e.g.*, European integration),[56] given the fact that public opinion most closely matches that of labor leaders than any other elites, it seems unlikely that elites are adopting pro-trade positions in anticipation of shifts in public attitudes in that direction. Further, based on Guisinger's findings, it is difficult to believe that elites are anticipating public opinion when trade policy is essentially irrelevant to vote choice. Politicians are unlikely to invest effort in anticipating pro-trade public opinion when such efforts are unlikely to result in any electoral benefit.

Moreover, political awareness has the added inferential benefit of being measured by objective political knowledge and is thus observed independently of trade opinion almost by necessity. While there may be reason to question the direction of the causal arrow in statistical relationships between trade opinion and sociotropic attitudes towards trade or even trade opinion and attitudes towards outgroups, it is difficult to imagine a scenario in which one's position on trade policy could cause one to become more or less generally knowledgeable about politics and public affairs. In fact, the most plausible scenario of trade opinion causing political awareness, in which individuals experiencing trade dislocations become more generically politically engaged due to their opposition to free trade, would bias against our argument that political awareness increases support for free trade. By contrast, it is more difficult to envision a passionate supporter of free trade who is not politically

[54] 2007

[55] 2012

[56] Substantial evidence exists to suggest that European integration, the subject of Gabel and Scheve's study, is in fact, an unusually salient political issue among European voters. See *e.g.*, Gabel 2000; Hooghe and Marks 2005.

aware becoming politically aware as a result of their support for tariff reduction.

In summary, we return to our puzzle: individuals struggle to connect their interests and attitudes with a low salience topic like national trade policy. Still, interests and attitudes across numerous studies predict patterns of aggregate trade opinion. Political awareness supplies the link between these apparently disparate findings. Because elite opinion is nearly uniform in its support for greater trade openness, elite cues are consistently favorable towards trade. As a result, individuals with greater political awareness are those most influenced by elite opinion. Similarly, because citizens who are likely to benefit most from trade (the highly-skilled) and the least anxious about its social consequences (cosmopolitans and internationalists), are simultaneously those more likely to be exposed to, understand, and be convinced by pro-trade elite positions, elite influence will be greatest on these individuals. As a result, while trade opinion may appear to be explained by reference to individual attitudes and interests, these effects depend on political awareness and are thus shaped in large part by elite influence.

Additionally, while most studies of trade opinion have investigated one or, at most, two datasets, this study examines over three decades' worth of data drawn from nine separate cross-sections of the American National Election Studies (ANES). By analyzing data drawn over such a long time period, we are able to demonstrate that many of the effects uncovered in previous studies are unstable, time-dependent, or otherwise non-robust. In contrast, we find that the hypothesized relationship between political awareness and support for trade openness remains substantively consistent across our time series.

Hypotheses

We have three major empirical expectations in this research. First, we expect that consistent with the "mainstreaming" effect described by Zaller,[57] – this elite consensus will be reflected in the attitudes of ordinary citizens to a greater or lesser extent according to

[57] 1992; 1994

their levels of political awareness.

HYPOTHESIS 1: *The probability of an individual supporting free trade policy will increase monotonically with her level of political awareness.*

Moreover, given that non-union elite policy cues are consistently pro-trade, increased political awareness should lead to greater, or at least constant, support for liberalization, even among people with characteristics that predispose them to protectionism (*e.g.*, union members). Although union members are exposed to anti-trade cues from their leaders, politically aware members also receive countervailing pro-trade policy cues from other elites, making them more supportive of trade. Consequently, we expect increased political awareness to predict higher levels of support among union members for free trade policies (having received anti-trade messages, even at low levels of individual political awareness, union members will simply begin at a lower baseline level of support for free trade). Likewise, the near-homogeneity of elite opinion regardless of party, observed in Figure 1, suggests that the trade opinions of the politically-aware are unlikely to be polarized along partisan lines. Thus, insofar as Democrats (Republicans) are more anti- (pro-) trade than others, we do not expect their distinctiveness to be conditioned (or mediated) by political awareness.

Second, given that trade policy is a low-salience issue about which citizens are unlikely to form settled opinions without elite cues, we expect that the effect of individuals' predispositions on trade policy opinion will depend upon the information available to them. That is, at low levels of political awareness (*i.e.*, low exposure to political information), public opinion on trade policy will be largely undifferentiated. Whatever demographic or attitudinal characteristics may predispose individuals toward favoring free trade policies, we expect their effects on trade opinion to be conditional on political awareness. For example, while college graduates have been widely found to hold distinctively pro-trade views, we expect the positive effect of college education on trade opinion to be conditional on political awareness. Furthermore, we expect to observe analogous relationships in other demographic and

attitudinal characteristics commonly associated with higher or lower levels of support for free trade policy (*e.g.*, income, gender, internationalism/isolationism, and ethnocentrism).

HYPOTHESIS 2: *The effect of broader economic interests and social attitudes on trade opinion will be conditional on individuals' levels of political awareness.*

In addition, we expect that the effect of these interests and attitudes on trade opinion will not only vary with political awareness, but will also be mediated by political awareness. That is, the effect of a "treatment" by these interests or attitudes on individuals' trade opinions will be transmitted, at least in part, through variation in their levels of political awareness. For example, while college education could affect trade opinion through multiple conceivable pathways (*e.g.,* as a proxy for labor mobility or through its socialization of internationalist attitudes), we expect that at least some of its effect on trade opinion will be transmitted through a political awareness pathway. In short, there exists a causal mechanism linking attitudes and interests to trade opinion through political awareness. This suggests a complementary hypothesis:

HYPOTHESIS 2A: *The effect of broader economic interests and social attitudes on trade opinion will be mediated by individuals' levels of political awareness.*

Similarly, the elite influence theory implies the existence of a causal pathway linking individuals' exposure to pro-trade elite cues with increased support for trade openness, through variation in their levels of political awareness. Because exposure to cues is likely to increase with individuals' political interest, we hypothesize that the effect of political interest on trade opinion will be mediated (in favor of trade openness) by political awareness.

HYPOTHESIS 2B: *The effect of political interest on trade opinion will be mediated in favor of free trade by political awareness.*

However, we expect to observe neither a conditional nor a mediated effect of political awareness in two other factors commonly associated with distinctive patterns of trade

opinion: union membership and partisanship. These expectations are consistent with the information-based elite influence account we have described in this article. Union membership can be understood as a substitute for political awareness. One of the primary political functions of a union is to provide rank-and-file members with policy position cues on a variety of issues. Union members do not need to be individually politically-aware (in a general sense) to receive these cues. Thus, the low level of support for free trade among union leaders depicted in Figure 1 is sufficient to explain union members' opposition to free trade policies without the conditioning factor of political awareness.

In the following, we evaluate these hypotheses on nine cross-sections of ANES data. Because our measures of trade opinion are dichotomous, we make use of logistic estimators, both with and without time fixed-effects to account for period effects. All estimates are presented with bootstrapped standard errors.

Study Design

This study employs data from nine nationally-representative cross-sections from the American National Election Studies (1986, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2004, 2008). We use multiple cross-sections of data to test the effects of political awareness over time and to ensure that our findings are robust; analyses that rely on single cross-sections of data are subject to smaller sample sizes and the risk that their findings are not replicable in broader studies. We also make use of a survey conducted by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs of national opinion leaders, defined as "individuals in positions of leadership in the [Presidential] administration, the House of Representatives, the Senate, business, labor, media, education, and religious organizations, special interest groups, and private foreign policy organizations,"[58] using data from 1978-2002.

[58]Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy, 1990.

Data Description

As the "flagship" dataset in the study of American public opinion, the ANES has not only been used to test theories of trade opinion,[59] but also to test the effects of political awareness across a wide variety of attitudes, facilitating easy comparison of our results with those observed in other areas of public opinion. The ANES also offers a broad range of demographic controls and attitudinal measures, as well as several items designed to measure political knowledge.

Our outcome variable is the standard ANES trade question about limiting imports, reproduced below:

> Some people have suggested placing new limits on foreign imports in order to protect American jobs. Others say that such limits would raise consumer prices and hurt American exports. Do you FAVOR or OPPOSE placing new limits on imports, or haven't you thought much about this?

If respondents favor additional trade protection, we code FREE TRADE as 0; if they oppose new import limits (and hence prefer more free trade), we code FREE TRADE as 1. Responses of "haven't thought much about this" are coded as missing. This question is framed identically across all ANES cross-sections.

To assess respondents' political awareness, we create an index variable designed to measure their objective political knowledge. Political knowledge has been established as the best measure of political awareness[60] and its use is standard in the American politics literature. Following Zaller,[61] each respondent is scored on her ability to recognize officeholders in the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial branches of government (*e.g.*, the Vice-President, Speaker of the House, and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court), foreign heads of state and government (*e.g.*, the Prime Minister of England or the President of Russia), and the party holding the majority in the House and Senate. We scored each response equally based

[59] See for example, Scheve and Slaughter 2001; Burgoon and Hiscox 2008; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2006

[60] See Zaller 1992, 1994; Converse 2000.

[61] 1992

on accuracy and used the results to create a scale, POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE (normalized from 0 to 1), with higher scores indicating greater accuracy.[62]

In order to disaggregate the effects of political interest and awareness, that is, the effects of cue exposure and cue comprehension, we create POLITICAL INTEREST, an index variable designed to measure ANES respondents' interest in politics and consumption of political news. Because elite cues are communicated to the public through mass media, it is reasonable to expect that individuals who more closely follow political news will be exposed to a greater number of cues. Thus, POLITICAL INTEREST is a standardized additive index based on five separate ANES survey items selected theoretically to reflect a common dimension of interest in politics.[63]

As is standard in the trade opinion literature, we code education as a dummy, COLLEGE GRADUATE, coded as 1 when the respondent's highest educational attainment is a Bachelor's degree or higher and coded as 0 otherwise. In some specifications, we also include an interaction term between POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE and COLLEGE GRADUATE. Since gender and race have been found to affect trade opinion, we include FEMALE and WHITE. Likewise, because higher-income respondents have been found to favor free trade – and both education and political knowledge are correlated with income – we include a measure for household income. Since our analysis spans three decades, reported incomes are not directly comparable across time. Thus, we use historical household income quintiles data from the U.S. Census Bureau to identify respondents with household incomes in the top (contemporaneous) quintile and construct TOP INCOME. We also include measures for partisanship, political ideology, and whether anyone in the respondent's household is a union member.

In addition to these standard demographic measures, we follow Mansfield and Mutz in developing attitudinal measures designed to tap cosmopolitan values and attitudes toward outgroups.[64] To measure respondents' general foreign policy outlooks, we code INTERNA-

[62]For specifics on how POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE was constructed in each cross-section, see the Appendix.
[63]Details, as well as diagnostic test results on index construction can be found in the Appendix.
[64]2009

TIONALISM as 1 for respondents who disagree with the statement "This country would be better off if we just stayed home and did not concern ourselves with problems in other parts of the world," 0 for those who agree, and missing for those who are unsure. To measure attitudes towards outgroups, we create ETHNOCENTRISM, a variable measuring the gap in respondents' average thermometer ratings of other ethnic groups from ratings of their own. Pooled descriptive statistics for all ANES variables are included in Table 1 in the Appendix.

We do not include Chicago Council public opinion data in our study because these surveys lack an adequate measure of our key explanatory variable: political awareness.

Evidence

In this section, we present evidence from three sets of analyses. First, we present logistic regression results from nine cross-sections of ANES data. As predicted by HYPOTHESIS 1, we show that political awareness is a highly significant and substantively important predictor of support for trade liberalization. In addition, by interacting our political awareness measure with a variety of well-known predictors of trade opinion, we find evidence suggesting that these effects are conditional on political awareness, consistent with HYPOTHESIS 2. Next, by plotting our results, we find that political awareness goes beyond salience – it does not decrease support for liberalization in any group. We then employ coarsened exact matching to more precisely identify the effect of political awareness and show that our results are meaningfully unchanged. Finally, we employ a causal mediation analysis to present evidence for causal mechanisms linking both cue exposure and interests and attitudes to changes in trade opinion through the mediating effect of political awareness.

Table 1 shows results from nine cross-sections of ANES data. Model 1 depicts results of a non-interacted model predicting trade opinion. In subsequent models, we interact our measure of political awareness with various demographic and attitudinal characteristics that have been linked to distinctive patterns of trade opinion in the literature. Our findings support

HYPOTHESIS 1, showing a strong and significant relationship between increasing POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE and support for FREE TRADE, controlling for demographic variables such as income, education, gender, race, and partisanship, as well as attitudes such as isolationism and ethnocentrism. These results are robust to a wide variety of model specifications and the inclusion or exclusion of year fixed-effects.

[Table 1 about here.]

As shown in Figure 2, these results are also robust across individual ANES cross-sections. One notable difference between our study and previous research on trade opinion is our use of multiple cross-sections drawn from three decades of public opinion surveys. While previous research has focused on single cross-sections, by examining multiple samples over time, we are able to search for temporal trends in trade opinion, as well as to evaluate the robustness of predictors.

In Figure 2, following a method suggested by Gelman and Hill,[65] we plot regression coefficients (with robust 95% confidence intervals) for the model intercept along with each predictor included in Model 1 of Table 1 (except for WHITE) for successive cross-sections of the ANES from 1986-2008. While no distinct temporal pattern emerges, it should be clear that few predictors exhibit anything resembling inter-temporal robustness.

[Figure 2 about here.]

Of the eight variables depicted in Figure 2, none are significantly related to support for FREE TRADE in every cross-section. Indeed, only two predictors seem to exhibit much robustness at all: COLLEGE GRADUATE and POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE. In fact, these are the sole predictors to be consistently signed across all cross-sections. Consequently, our relative confidence in the reliability of the effects of education and political awareness is increased. These results, using perhaps the most-used and -cited dataset in public opinion research,

[65] 2006

indicate that trade opinion researchers should take caution in extrapolating too much from associations identified in a single cross-section.

Similarly, in results from our interacted Models 2-8 in Table 1, note that the "main effect" of POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE in each of these interacted models is a consistently positive and highly-significant predictor of support for FREE TRADE. This suggests additional support for HYPOTHESIS 1. That is, higher levels of political awareness consistently predict greater support for trade openness.

Next, we evaluate HYPOTHESIS 2, as depicted in Models 2-8 in Table 1. Here, we show results from a series of interactions between POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE and a variety of demographic and attitudinal characteristics linked to greater support for or opposition to trade liberalization. These regression results lend support to both HYPOTHESIS 1 and 2. For example, in Model 2, we show that the effect of college education on trade opinion is conditional on political awareness. Specifically, in the interacted model, COLLEGE GRADUATE is no longer significant, while the product term is both positive and significant. Further, the association of attitudinal characteristics such as ethnocentrism and internationalism with trade opinion are similarly conditioned by political awareness, as depicted in Models 3-4 of Table 1. These results provide evidence in favor of HYPOTHESIS 2 and are at odds with the expectations of purely interest or social attitudinal-based theories of trade opinion. If economic interests or broader social attitudes were sufficient to explain mass trade opinion, their effects should not depend upon citizens' level of political awareness.

However, these results are insufficient to distinguish between two alternative mechanisms linking political awareness to trade opinion. It is possible that at low levels of political awareness, individuals may simply lack the ability to link their interests and attitudes to a highly technical issue such as trade policy. That is, rather than citizens responding to elite cues on trade, it may be the case that highly-aware invididuals are better able to make the connection between their interests and attitudes with opinions on trade openness. Moreover, direct interpretation of product term coefficients (and significance levels) in maximum-likelihood

estimators with limited dependent variables can be highly misleading.[66] Thus, we present Figure 3 to demonstrate the substantive significance of our results. In addition, in results presented in the appendix, we demonstrate the robustness of our results using diagnostics developed by Norton, Wang and Ai.[67]

[Figure 3 about here.]

The upper portion of the top-left panel of Figure 3 displays the effect of POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE on the predicted probability of a respondent expressing support for FREE TRADE, showing that probability of support for trade openness increases monotonically with respondents' levels of political awareness. This plot corresponds to Model 1 in Table 1. Below this is displayed a kernel-density plot of POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE (in red) with an overlaid plot of the normal distribution (in green), showing a roughly normal distribution (though with noticeably fatter tails), indicating that our results are unlikely to be caused by a skewed distribution of POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE and giving greater confidence to predictions made about individuals at higher or lower levels of political awareness. Subsequent panels of Figure 3 show predicted probability plots for college education, internationalism, ethnocentrism, union membership, partisanship, income, and gender, corresponding to Models 2-8 in Table 1.

As discussed previously, Model 2 in Table 1 (as depicted in Panel 2 of Figure 3) shows that, at low levels of POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE, COLLEGE GRADUATE is no longer a significant predictor of support for trade openness. However, the product term of COLLEGE GRADUATE and POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE is both positive and highly significant, suggesting that the oft-observed positive effect of education upon support for trade openness is conditional on political awareness.

Notably, political awareness also increases the likelihood of non-graduates supporting liberalization. If political awareness was merely a proxy for issue salience, interest-based

[66] See Ai and Norton 2003; Berry, DeMeritt and Esarey 2010

[67] 2004

Heckscher-Ohlin models of trade preferences would predict that, as political awareness increases, non-graduate support for trade decreases. Instead, we find that political awareness is associated with greater support for trade opennes in both graduates and non-graduates. Political awareness does more than help people connect their individual interests with trade policy; it increases the likelihood of support for liberalization.

Attitudinal predictors of trade opinion show similar effects. The interaction between ethnocentrism and political awareness, as shown in Panel 3 of Figure 3, demonstrates that even the most ethnocentric respondents become more likely to support trade liberalization as political awareness increases. Again, if political awareness captured nothing more than salience, ethnocentric respondents, as Mansfield and Mutz[68] point out, should become less likely to support liberalization. Similarly, a salience-based understanding of political awareness would predict that when isolationists (Panel 4 of Figure 3) are able to interpret questions about trade policy, they should be considerably less likely to support liberalization. Instead, we find that support for trade openness among isolationists is not depressed by higher levels of political awareness.

The pattern holds across other predictors of trade opinion. Both union members and non-union members (see Panel 5 of Figure 3) become more likely to support trade upon exposure to cues from elites. According to the salience model, union members, perhaps more than any other group, should become less likely to support trade as issue salience increases. But since political awareness is more than issue salience – it represents the mainstreaming effect of pro-trade elites cues – even union members become more likely to support trade. Panel 6 of Figure 3 depicts a similar pattern for Democrats and Republicans. Interestingly, rather than leading to partisan polarization, political awareness is associated with increasing support for trade openness among Democrats, Republicans, and Independents alike. This is consistent with our elite influence account of trade opinion. Because, as shown in Figure 1, partisan elites are nearly indistinguishable in their support for trade openness, partisans at the mass

[68] 2009

level are likely to receive similar cues, regardless of their party affiliation. As such, while Republicans are more likely to support trade overall, even Democrats – who also receive pro-trade cues – grow in their support for liberalization as political awareness increases. Income (see Panel 7 of Figure 3), another potential proxy for economic interest, is further evidence for the trend. As political-awareness increases, both high-income and lower-income respondents become more likely to support trade openness.

A more puzzling result is that increasing political awareness has little effect among women (see Panel 8 of Figure 3), but politically-aware men are much more supportive of free trade than both politically-unaware men and highly politically-aware women. This suggests that the well-known association of women with more protectionist views may derive less from women's actual enthusiasm for protectionism than from politically-sophisticated women's greater resistance to pro-trade messages in elite discourse, when compared to similarly-situated men. This is consistent with research using data on support for the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, which has found that women are less responsive to economic arguments for free trade than men.[69] Still, despite previous explanations, the relationship between support of liberalization and gender warrants further research.

Finally, as a means of disaggregating the effects of political interest and awareness – separating the effects of cue exposure from those of cue comprehension – we present further results incorporating the POLITICAL INTEREST measure. This is important because our theory requires that individuals not only be exposed to elite cues on trade policy, but that they possess sufficient political awareness to both recognize policy cue content (as distinct from rhetorical content) in elite messages and to evaluate a cue-giver's "trustworthiness" (their general level of agreement with a particular elite's policy positions).

More concretely, individuals who are interested in politics are more likely to hear politicians discuss trade, exposing them to cues. However, although both political parties consistently support liberalization in their official positions, political elites may employ inconsistent

[69] Gidengil 1995

rhetoric in their discussions of trade policy (recall the example of President Obama's seemingly contradictory State of the Union speech). Thus, individuals who are exposed to cues but not politically aware are unable to connect the actual trade policy positions of elites with their broader agreement (or lack of agreement) with those cue-givers. For example, if a politician votes in favor of trade liberalization but uses protectionist rhetoric, a citizen with low awareness but high interest may be persuaded to support protectionism; by contrast, a high awareness listener will respond to the cue of the actual policy position and be persuaded toward trade openness.

Thus, we present results from model specifications incorporating an interaction between POLITICAL INTEREST and POLITICAL AWARENESS in Figure 4.[70] As shown in Figure 4a, holding POLITICAL INTEREST constant (at its median value), as political awareness (measured by POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE) rises, support for free trade rises in parallel. Further, Figure 4b depicts the effect of POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE on support for trade at different levels of POLITICAL INTEREST. Individuals who are both highly aware and exposed to cues through their interest in politics are predicted to have the greatest levels of support for trade. Individuals with little awareness but high exposure are less likely to support trade relative to individuals with high awareness and high exposure because of exposure to protectionist or mixed rhetoric without sufficient awareness of cue-givers' actual policy positions. Similarly, individuals with little exposure but high awareness are less likely to support trade than individuals who are both aware and exposed to a greater number of cues. This follows our expectations that for elites to influence mass trade opinion, "target" individuals must both be sufficiently politically interested to receive cues and be sufficiently politically aware to interpret and follow them.

[Figure 4 about here.]

[70] In the interest of brevity, particularly because subsequent results from a causal mediation analysis will demonstrate substantively similar findings, we limit our discussion of these results to interpretation of Figure 4. However, full results, including replication of the results contained in Table 1 with the inclusion of POLITICAL INTEREST can be found in the Appendix.

Our results provide strong and robust evidence that political awareness is associated with higher support for trade openness. Exposure to an elite discourse that overwhelmingly favors free trade leads citizens to adopt these "mainstream" views. Moreover, we find evidence that interests and attitudes linked in the literature to support for or opposition to free trade only predict the expected trade attitudes *conditional* on political awareness. Finally, we provide evidence that these effects are due to reception of pro-trade cues, not merely issue salience.

Matching on Observables

Still, although a large and productive literature in public opinion has established the importance of political awareness in predicting political behavior and attitudes, Levendusky argues that most of this literature has over-estimated its importance. Specifically, he contends that citizens with high political awareness likely differ from those with lower awareness in important ways. As a result, he employs both matching and a panel data analysis to demonstrate that the effect of political awareness on turnout and other political activities shrink substantally in size and lose significance.

Thus, we follow Levendusky[71] in employing Coarsened Exact Matching[72].[73] In contrast, we find that the effect of political awareness after matching remains largely unchanged, highly significant, and the single best predictor of trade opinion, as shown in Table 2. We speculate that our results may differ from those in Levendusky due to the fact that our outcome of interest is a policy position, while his outcomes of interest are types of political behavior. In other words, it may be harder to change an individual's actions (which entail some tangible cost) than her policy attitudes.

[Table 2 about here.]

[71] 2011

[72] Iacus, King and Porro 2011

[73] Unfortunately, due to limitations in the ANES data on trade opinion, we are unable to employ a panel data analysis analogous to Levendusky's.

Causal Mediation

The totality of our results suggest a strong and robust association between political awareness and trade opinion. These findings are consistent with a wide variety of scholarship in other areas of public opinion[74] and with well-established theory.[75] Further, both theory and our empirical tests (see Table 2) suggest that concerns about reverse-causation, *i.e.,* that trade opinion causes political awareness, should be limited.[76] That is, even when accounting for differences between respondents with high and low levels of political awareness, the observed association between political awareness and support for free trade remains strong and highly significant. As previously discussed, if trade opinion actually caused political awareness, it would bias against our findings as the most plausible scenario is a person experiencing an economic dislocation and then becoming politically active. In this case, political awareness would be correlated with lower support for liberalization.

However, while our preceding results have established the existence of a powerful association between political awareness and support for free trade that is unlikely to result from endogeneity, these results are only suggestive for *how* political awareness affects trade opinion. By interacting measures of personal attitudes and interests with political awareness, we are able to estimate "how much" influence these factors have on trade opinion, conditional on the values of political awareness. While these results offer valuable evidence, they do not allow us to explicitly model the causal mechanisms implied by our theory.[77]

[Figure 5 about here.]

These mechanisms are outlined in Figure 5a. Members of the public are exposed to elite cues through the mass media. The extent of their exposure will vary with their level of

[74] Fiorina 1981; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Converse 2000

[75] Zaller 1992, 1994; Berinsky 2007, 2009

[76] This seems particularly unlikely when one recalls how the political awareness and trade opinion variables are coded. This scenario would imply that an opinion in favor of maintaining or lowering current tariff rates would lead to higher general political awareness (*e.g.*, the ability to correctly identify Harry Reid).

[77] See discussion of mechanism testing using causal mediation versus interaction terms in Imai, Keele, Tingley and Yamamoto 2011

interest in politics. Individuals must then evaluate these cues (and their sources) and decide whether or not to accept them. In order for the cue to prove influential, individuals must be sufficiently politically aware to recognize the cue-giver, understand the content of the cue, and evaluate how the cue and its source relate to their broader attitudes and interests. That is, cue recipients will determine whether to accept the cue based on how often they agree with the cue-giver as well as the congruence of the arguments carried in the cue with their interests and attitudes. Thus, cue recognition and acceptance will both depend on individuals' political awareness.

The overall mechanism depicted in Figure 5a implies the subsidiary mechanisms shown in Figure 5b and Figure 5c as well. Consistent with HYPOTHESIS 2A, we expect that the effect of attitudes or interests on trade opinion will be at least partially transmitted through the mediating effect of political awareness. Likewise, consistent with HYPOTHESIS 2B, we expect political awareness to mediate the positive effect of exposure to elite cues on trade opinion.

To evaluate these hypotheses, we employ the approach introduced by Imai et al.[78] to investigate the mechanisms linking political awareness and trade opinion and to test our elite influence mechanism directly.[79] This application of the potential outcomes framework to causal mediation decomposes the causal effect of a treatment into the indirect effect, representing a hypothesized causal mechanism (*i.e.*, the causal effect of the treatment that is transmitted through variation in the mediating variable) and a direct effect, constituting the causal effect unexplained by the mediated effect.[80] Equivalently, the mediated, or indirect effect, is an estimate of the change in the outcome variable resulting from changes in the mediator with treatment held constant, while the direct effect corresponds to changes in the outcome variable due to changes in treatment status when the mediator value is held

[78] 2011

[79] We would like to thank a reviewer for this suggestion. Since our data are purely observational, despite the stronger test of causal mediation, caution should be used in interpreting the causal claims of our results. We present this as additional evidence, not a conclusive demonstration of the causal relationship between receipt of elite cues and trade opinion.

[80] See Valeri and VanderWeele 2013 for some alternative approaches.

constant.[81] These effects add up to the total observed treatment effect. Software developed by Tingley, Yamamoto, Hirose, Keele and Imai[82] allows us to estimate the *average causal mediation effects* ($ACME$) and *average direct effects* (ADE), representing the population means of the indirect and direct effects which sum to the *average total effect* (ATE).

Using this method, we first estimate the mediator (POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE) as a function of the treatment and control variables. We then estimate the outcome variable (FREE TRADE) as a function of the mediator, treatment, and control variables. The mediator model then generates two predictions for the mediator: under the treatment condition M_t and under the control condition M_c. Next, the outcome is predicted under the treatment condition by using the values of the mediator predicted in the last step, first under the treatment condition (M_t) and then under the control condition (M_c). Finally, the average difference between the two outcomes is computed as the $ACME$ and errors are estimated via bootstrapping.[83]

Thus, in order to test the implications of HYPOTHESIS 2A, we employ FREE TRADE as our outcome variable, POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE as our mediating variable, and various measures of attitudes and interests drawn from the trade opinion literature as our treatment variables (*e.g.*, COLLEGE GRADUATE, ETHNOCENTRISM, DEMOCRAT). Because we have observed that the effects of political awareness and attitudes and interests are conditional (as shown in Table 1 and Table 2), we interact each treatment variable with POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE in each outcome model.[84] These results are shown in Figure 6.

[Figure 6 about here.]

Conditional $ACME$s for the same interest- and attitude-based predictors depicted in Panels 2-9 of Figure 3 are shown in Figure 6a. Each point estimate reflects the effect of the treatment variable that is transmitted through the mediating varible (POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE) on the outcome variable (FREE TRADE). Consistent with HYPOTHESIS 2A,

[81] Imai, Tingley and Yamamoto 2013
[82] 2014
[83] For a full explanation of the method, see Imai, Keele and Tingley (2010).
[84] Tingley et al. 2014; Valeri and VanderWeele 2013

the $ACME$s are positive and significant, except in the case of treatment variables UNION HOUSEHOLD and DEMOCRAT, indicating evidence for a causal pathway linking each predictor with increased support for free trade through variation in political awareness. As with the results presented in Figure 3, the fact that the $ACME$s for UNION HOUSEHOLD and DEMOCRAT are statistically indistinguishable from zero is consistent with expectations derived from our theory. While union members are likely to receive a different set of (systematically less pro-trade)[85] elite cues than non-union members, this is not likely to vary with their political awareness. Similarly, due to the bipartisan consensus in favor of free trade, we do not expect Democrats to differ from Republicans or Independents in their trade opinions due to increasing political awareness.

Figure 6b shows the proportion of each treatment effect attributable to the mediating effect of political awareness. Again, as with the $ACME$s shown in Figure 6a, political awareness accounts for a substantial (and significant) proportion of the total effect of each predictor on trade opinion, except for UNION HOUSEHOLD and DEMOCRAT. These results are similarly consistent with the expectations described in HYPOTHESIS 2A. Taken together, the results shown in Figure 6 provide evidence of a causal mechanism linking attitudes and interests with trade opinion, through the mediating influence of political awareness (*i.e.*, the causal mechanism depicted in Figure 5b).

Further, it is important to note that while these results show evidence in favor of a particular mechanism, the total effects of political awareness on trade opinion are not limited to those shown conceptually in Figure 5 or empirically in Figure 6. Instead, the results presented in Figure 6 isolate only the component of each treatment effect attributable to the mediation of political awareness. Thus, the results of any particular casual mediation analysis will understate the total effect of political awareness.[86]

While up to this point we have, consistent with previous work,[87] treated political aware-

[85] Recall Figure 1.

[86] In results presented in the appendix, we model the direct effects ADEs of political awareness on trade opinion and find them to be positive, substantial, and highly significant.

[87] See *e.g.*, Zaller 1992, 1994; Berinsky 2007, 2009

ness as a simultaneous measure of both cue exposure and comprehension, they are arguably theoretically distinct processes. That is, before individuals can evaluate elite cues, they must first be exposed to them (see Figure 5c). Our theory therefore implies that cue exposure should influence trade opinion *through* political awareness: individuals who are exposed to pro-trade cues but lack the political awareness to interpret them are unlikely to be influenced. Simultaneously, highly politically-aware individuals who do not receive pro-trade cues are unlikely to be influenced by cues they never received. For example, individuals may have a high degree of familiarity with relevant elites and their general level of agreement with those elites (high political awareness), but may not closely follow political news and thus be unaware of their specific policy positions (low cue exposure).

Causal mediation allows us to model how the effect of cue exposure is mediated through the effect of political awareness to influence individuals' trade opinions and thus, to evaluate HYPOTHESIS 2B. To measure cue exposure, we construct POLITICAL INTEREST from an ANES item measuring how closely respondents follow political news. Because elite cues are communicated to the public through mass media, it is reasonable to expect that individuals who more closely follow political news will be exposed to a greater number of cues. We expect cue exposure to predict greater support for free trade, but more specifically, we expect this effect to be mediated through political awareness. That is, because cue exposure is itself insufficient to influence trade opinion, we expect that the $ACME$ of political awareness should be not only positive, but constitute a large proportion of the total effect of political interest on trade opinion.

As shown in Figure 7, while the total effect (ATE) of POLITICAL INTEREST on FREE TRADE is positive and significant, the ADE (the unmediated effect of cue exposure) is indistinguishable from zero. Further, the $ACME$ of POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE, the proportion of the effect of cue exposure on trade opinion that is mediated by individuals' capacity for cue interpretation, is not only positive, but explains essentially the entirety of the positive total

effect of POLITICAL INTEREST on FREE TRADE.[88] Thus, when individuals receive trade-related elite cues (which evidence suggests are uniformly positive), these cues are ineffectual unless individuals possess sufficient knowledge to interpret them. While our regression results indicate that higher levels of political awareness are associated with greater support for trade liberalization, consistent with our theory of elite influence, these results demonstrate how cues affect trade opinion through political awareness. These results consequently offer evidence in favor of the elite influence theory.

[Figure 7 about here.]

Conclusions

Recent contributions to the trade opinion literature have advocated "information-based" accounts of trade preference formation. However, this research has yet to investigate the effect of information on trade preferences directly. In this article, we find that politically-aware individuals, exposed to elite cues that are supportive of trade openness, are favorable towards free trade policy. This suggests that elite opinion is an important source of trade-relevant information for the public at large. However, it also suggests that this information is only likely to be received by a small portion of the public – those most interested in and most knowledgeable about contemporary politics.

Previous work has also linked various attitudinal and demographic characteristics to distinctive patterns of trade opinion. We replicate these findings, but demonstrate that these effects are conditional on political awareness. This does not mean that these effects are not "real" or unimportant to understanding trade opinion. However, our findings both clarify and complicate our understanding of the causal path between these individual-level

[88] Effects shown are conditional, consistent with those depicted in Figure 6. As previously noted, this model specification does not allow us to implement sensitivity analyses. However, an alternative, uninteracted model specification can be found in the Supporting Information, along with a corresponding sensitivity analysis. The results of this analysis indicate that the $ACME$ of POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE is robust to the presence of unidentified confounders.

characteristics and aggregate patterns of trade opinion.

First, they suggest that these effects are not "direct." Consistent with extensive research on other areas of economic policy, we conclude that few people form opinions on the relatively obscure and technical matter of trade policy on their own, whether by calculating their economic self-interest, or as an expression of ethnocentrism or isolationist attitudes. Instead, these attitudes or "predispositions"[89] influence their responsiveness to external cues on trade policy. For example, individuals with ethnocentric attitudes do not necessarily automatically associate trade policy with these attitudes. Instead, they are likely to be both less "susceptible" to pro-trade arguments inconsistent with ethnocentric attitudes and less likely to trust the mainstream elites making such arguments.

Second, and more generally, our findings should warn against drawing overly broad theoretical conclusions from aggregate trade opinion data. While aggregated trade opinion may give the impression of "approximat[ing] self-interest,"[90] these patterns are driven by more politically-aware individuals and mediated through political awareness. Thus, political awareness helps to resolve the puzzle of how a mass public made up of individuals who do not calculate policy opinions on the basis of self-interest can nonetheless appear, in aggregate, to do so.

A clear implication of our findings is that the role of elite opinion and political awareness in mass-level trade opinion merits further investigation. We have focused on American public and elite opinion data, but we expect that our findings may generalize cross-nationally. Alternatively, it may be that the salience of trade as an issue varies cross-nationally and elite influence on mass trade opinion varies with it. Further, while elite opinion on trade in the period we study is characterized by a striking consensus across the political spectrum, this has not always been the case.[91] Studying variations in elite opinion on trade over time may yield insights into the historical development of both trade opinion and policy.

[89] Zaller 1992
[90] Fordham and Kleinberg 2012
[91] Goldstein and Gulotty 2014

While the most obvious implications of this study are for trade opinion research, our findings suggest theoretically important implications for a broad range of IPE research. First, they suggest that the focus of theorizing for models of endogenous trade policy should shift from mass to elite interests and preferences. This has broad implications for the study of international economic integration more generally and suggests that more attention must be paid to the origins of elite preferences. Moreover, while previous work has shown that few citizens know or care much about trade policy, our findings suggest that salience may not be the permissive condition for trade liberalization. Instead, pro-trade elites' position as sources of information may allow them to pursue additional liberalization, largely unencumbered by public opposition, regardless of issue salience. Indeed, higher issue salience may have the effect of increasing support for trade openness, regardless of individuals' personal economic interests.

References

Ai, Chunrong and Edward C. Norton. 2003. "Interaction Terms in Logit and Probit Models." *Economics Letters* 80(1):123–129.

Albright, Jeremy J. 2009. "Does Political Knowledge Erode Party Attachments?: A Review of the Cognitive Mobilization Thesis." *Electoral Studies* 28(2):248–260.

Bailey, Michael. 2001. "Quiet Influence: The Representation of Diffuse Interests on Trade Policy, 1983-94." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* pp. 45–80.

Berinsky, Adam J. 2007. "Assuming the Costs of War: Events, Elites, and American Public Support for Military Conflict." *Journal of Politics* 69(4):975–997.

Berinsky, Adam J. 2009. *In Time of War: Understanding American Public Opinion from World War II to Iraq*. University of Chicago Press.

Berry, William D., Jacqueline H. R. DeMeritt and Justin Esarey. 2010. "Testing for Interaction in Binary Logit and Probit Models: Is a Product Term Essential?" *American Journal of Political Science* 54(1):248–266.

Brady, Henry E., Sidney Verba and Kay Lehman Schlozman. 1995. "Beyond SES: A Resource Model of Political Participation." *American Political Science Review* pp. 271–294.

Brewer, Paul R. 2003. "Values, Political Knowledge, and Public Opinion about Gay Rights: A Framing-based Account." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 67(2):173–201.

Bullock, John G. 2011. "Elite Influence on Public Opinion in an Informed Electorate." *American Political Science Review* 105(3):496–515.

Burgoon, Brian and Michael J Hiscox. 2008. "The Gender Divide over International Trade: Why Do Men and Women Have Different Views about Openness to the World Economy?" *Harvard University Working Paper* .

Carmines and Stimson. 1980. "The Two Faces of Issue Voting." *American Political Science Review* .

Converse, Philip E. 1962. "Information Flow and the Stability of Partisan Attitudes." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 26(4):578–599.

Converse, Philip E. 2000. "Assessing the Capacity of Mass Electorates." *Annual Review of Political Science* 3(1):331–353.

Delli Carpini, Michael X. and Scott Keeter. 1996. *What Americans Know about Politics and Why it Matters*. Yale University Press.

Duch, Raymond M, Harvey D Palmer and Christopher J Anderson. 2000. "Heterogeneity in Perceptions of National Economic Conditions." *American Journal of Political Science* 44(4):635–652.

Dutt, Pushan and Devashish Mitra. 2005. "Political ideology and endogenous trade policy: an empirical investigation." *Review of Economics and Statistics* 87(1):59–72.

Erikson, Robert S and Kent L Tedin. 2005. "American Public Opinion.: Pearson Longman.".

Fiorina, Morris P. 1981. *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections*. Yale University Press.

Fordham, Benjamin O. 2008. "Economic Interests and Public Support for American Global Activism." *International Organization* pp. 163–182.

Fordham, Benjamin O and Katja B Kleinberg. 2012. "How Can Economic Interests Influence Support for Free Trade?" *International Organization* 66(02):311–328.

Frye, Timothy and Edward D. Mansfield. 2004. "Timing is Everything Elections and Trade Liberalization in the Postcommunist World." *Comparative Political Studies* 37(4):371–398.

Gabel, Matthew. 2000. "European Integration, Voters and National Politics." *West European Politics* 23(4):52–72.

Gabel, Matthew and Kenneth Scheve. 2007. "Estimating the Effect of Elite Communications on Public Opinion using Instrumental Variables." *American Journal of Political Science* 51(4):1013–1028.

Gelman, Andrew and Jennifer Hill. 2006. *Data Analysis Using Regression and Multilevel/Hierarchical Models*. Cambridge University Press.

Gidengil, Elisabeth. 1995. "Economic Man–Social Woman? The Case of the Gender Gap in Support for the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement." *Comparative Political Studies* 28(3):384–408.

Gilens and Murakawa. 2002. *Elite Cues and Political Decision-Making*. Elsevier.

Goldstein, Judith and Robert Gulotty. 2014. "America and Trade Liberalization: The Limits of Institutional Reform." *International Organization* 68(02):263–295.

Gomez, Brad T. and J. Matthew Wilson. 2001. "Political Sophistication and Economic Voting in the American Electorate: A Theory of Heterogeneous Attribution." *American Journal of Political Science* pp. 899–914.

Gomez, Brad T. and J. Matthew Wilson. 2006. "Cognitive Heterogeneity and Economic Voting: A Comparative Analysis of Four Democratic Electorates." *American Journal of Political Science* 50(1):127–145.

Green, Donald Philip and Ann Elizabeth Gerken. 1989. "Self-interest and Public Opinion toward Smoking Restrictions and Cigarette Taxes." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 53(1):1–16.

Guisinger, Alexandra. 2009. "Determining Trade Policy: Do Voters Hold Politicians Accountable?" *International Organization* 63(3):533–57.

Hainmueller, Jens and Michael J. Hiscox. 2006. "Learning to Love Globalization: Education and Individual Attitudes toward International Trade." *International Organization* 60(02):469–498.

Hooghe, Liesbet. 2003. "Europe Divided? Elites vs. Public Opinion on European Integration." *European Union Politics* 4(3):281–304.

Hooghe, Liesbet and Gary Marks. 2005. "Calculation, Community and Cues: Public Opinion on European Integration." *European Union Politics* 6(4):419–443.

Iacus, Stefano M., Gary King and Giuseppe Porro. 2011. "Causal Inference without Balance Checking: Coarsened Exact Matching." *Political Analysis* .

Imai, Kosuke, Dustin Tingley and Teppei Yamamoto. 2013. "Experimental Designs for Identifying Causal Mechanisms." *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series A (Statistics in Society)* 176(1):5–51.

Imai, Kosuke, Luke Keele and Dustin Tingley. 2010. "A General Approach to Causal Mediation Analysis." *Psychological Methods* 15(4):309.

Imai, Kosuke, Luke Keele, Dustin Tingley and Teppei Yamamoto. 2011. "Unpacking the Black Box of Causality: Learning about Causal Mechanisms from Experimental and Observational Studies." *American Political Science Review* 105(04):765–789.

Iversen, Torben and Thomas R. Cusack. 2000. "The Causes of Welfare State Expansion: Deindustrialization or Globalization?" *World Politics* 52(3):313–349.

Kinder, Donald R. and D. Roderick Kiewiet. 1981. "Sociotropic Politics: the American Case." *British Journal of Political Science* 11(02):129–161.

Levendusky, Matthew. 2011. "Rethinking the Role of Political Information." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 75(1):42–64.

Lewis-Beck, Michael S and Mary Stegmaier. 2000. "Economic determinants of electoral outcomes." *Political Science* 3(1):183.

Lippmann, Walter. 1932. *Public Opinion*. New York: Free Press.

Mansfield, Edward D and Diana C Mutz. 2009. "Support for Free Trade: Self-Interest, Sociotropic Politics, and Out-Group Anxiety." *International Organization* 63(03):425–457.

Mansfield, Edward D, Helen V Milner and B Peter Rosendorff. 2002. "Why Democracies Cooperate More: Electoral Control and International Trade Agreements." *International Organization* 56(3):477–513.

Mayda, Anna Maria and Dani Rodrik. 2005. "Why Are some People (and Countries) more Protectionist than Others?" *European Economic Review* 49(6):1393–1430.

McNamara, Kathleen R. 1998. *The Currency of Ideas: Monetary Politics in the European Union*. Cornell University Press.

Milner, Helen V and Keiko Kubota. 2005. "Why the Move to Free Trade? Democracy and Trade Policy in the Developing Countries." *International Organization* pp. 107–143.

Mutz, Diana C. 1992. "Mass Media and the Depoliticization of Personal Experience." *American Journal of Political Science* pp. 483–508.

Mutz, Diana C. 1994. "Contextualizing Personal Experience: The Role of Mass Media." *The Journal of Politics* 56(03):689–714.

Norton, Edward C., Hua Wang and Chunrong Ai. 2004. "Computing Interaction Effects and Standard Errors in Logit and Probit Models." *Stata Journal* 4:154–167.

O'Rourke, Kevin H. and Richard Sinnott. 2001. *The Determinants of Individual Trade Policy Preferences: International Survey Evidence*. pp. 157–206.

Özden, Çaglar and Eric Reinhardt. 2005. "The Perversity of Preferences: GSP and Developing Country Trade policies, 1976–2000." *Journal of Development Economics* 78(1):1–21.

Petty and Cacioppo. 1981. *Attitudes and Persuasion: ClClass and Contemporary Approaches*. Westview Press.

Ratneshwar and Chaiken. 1991. "Comprehension's Role in Persuasion: The Case of its Moderating Effect on the Persuasive Impact of Source Cues." *Journal of Consumer Research* .

Rogowski, Ronald. 1989. *Commerce and Coalitions*. Princeton University Press.

Saunders, Elizabeth. 2012. "The Electoral Disconnection in US Foreign Policy.".

Scheve, Kenneth F. and Matthew J. Slaughter. 2001. "What Determines Individual Trade-Policy Preferences?" *Journal of International Economics* 54(2):267–292.

Sears, David O. and Carolyn L. Funk. 1990. *Self-interest in Americans' Political Opinions.* University of Chicago Press.

Sears, David O. and Richard R. Lau. 1983. "Inducing Apparently Self-interested Political Preferences." *American Journal of Political Science* pp. 223–252.

Sears, David O., Richard R. Lau, Tom R. Tyler and Harris M. Allen Jr. 1980. "Self-interest vs. Symbolic Politics in Policy Attitudes and Presidential Voting." *The American Political Science Review* pp. 670–684.

Sniderman, Paul M, Richard A Brody and Philip E Tetlock. 1991. "Reasoning and Choice. Explorations in Social Psychology.".

Steenbergen, Marco R, Erica E Edwards and Catherine E De Vries. 2007. "Who's Cueing Whom? Mass-Elite Linkages and the Future of European Integration." *European Union Politics* 8(1):13–35.

Tingley, Dustin, Teppei Yamamoto, Kentaro Hirose, Luke Keele and Kosuke Imai. 2014. "mediation: R Package for Causal Mediation Analysis." *Journal of Statistical Software* 59(5).
URL: *http://www.jstatsoft.org/v59/i05*

Valeri, Linda and Tyler J. VanderWeele. 2013. "Mediation Analysis Allowing for Exposure-Mediator Interactions and Causal Interpretation: Theoretical Assumptions and Implementation with SAS and SPSS Macros." *Psychological Methods* 18(2):137.

Zaller, J. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion.* Cambridge Studies in Political Psychology Series Cambridge University Press.

Zaller, John. 1994. Elite Leadership of Mass Opinion. In *Taken by Storm: The Media, Public Opinion, and US Foreign Policy in the Gulf War*, ed. W.L. Bennett and D.L. Paletz. University Of Chicago Press.

Zaller, John. 2012. "What Nature and Origins Leaves Out." *Critical Review* 24(4):569–642.

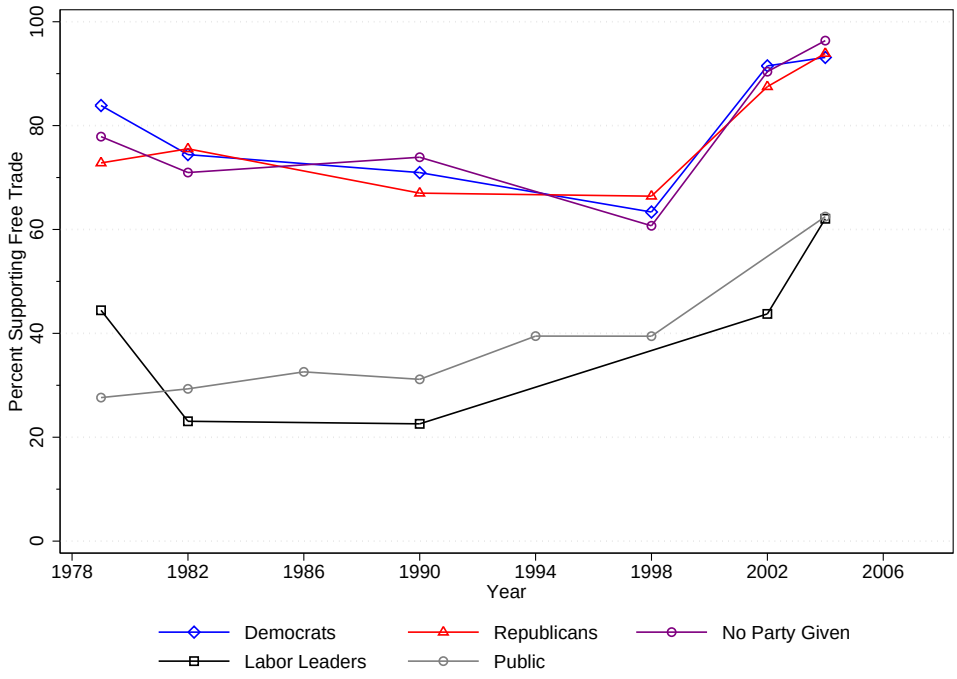


Figure 1: Elite Support for Free Trade Policies by Affiliation. Note that the question asked changes beginning in 2002. However, while the absolute levels of support for free trade policy change with the new question formulation, the overall pattern remains consistent.

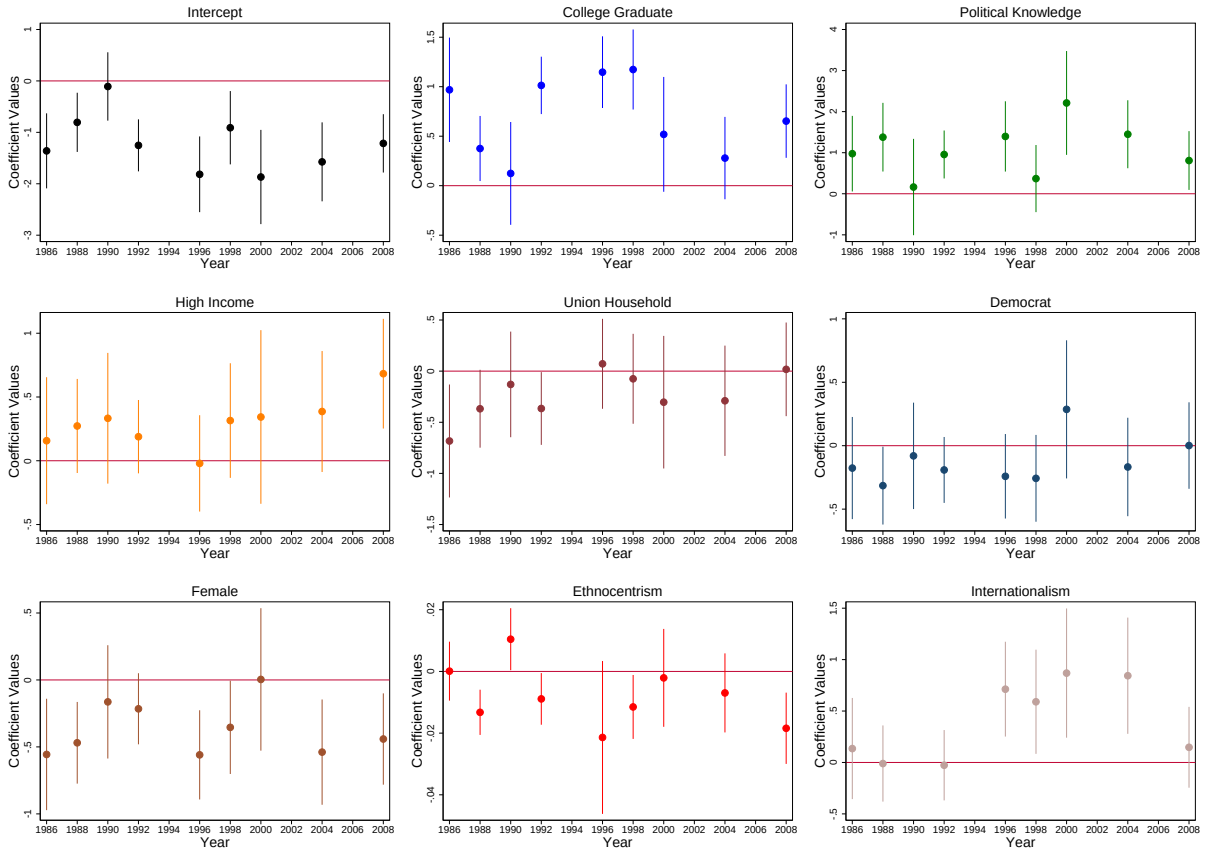


Figure 2: Robustness of Predictors over Time (ANES Data 1986-2008). Each panel depicts coefficient values for an individual predictor in successive ANES cross-sections. Point predictions are shown with 95% confidence intervals.

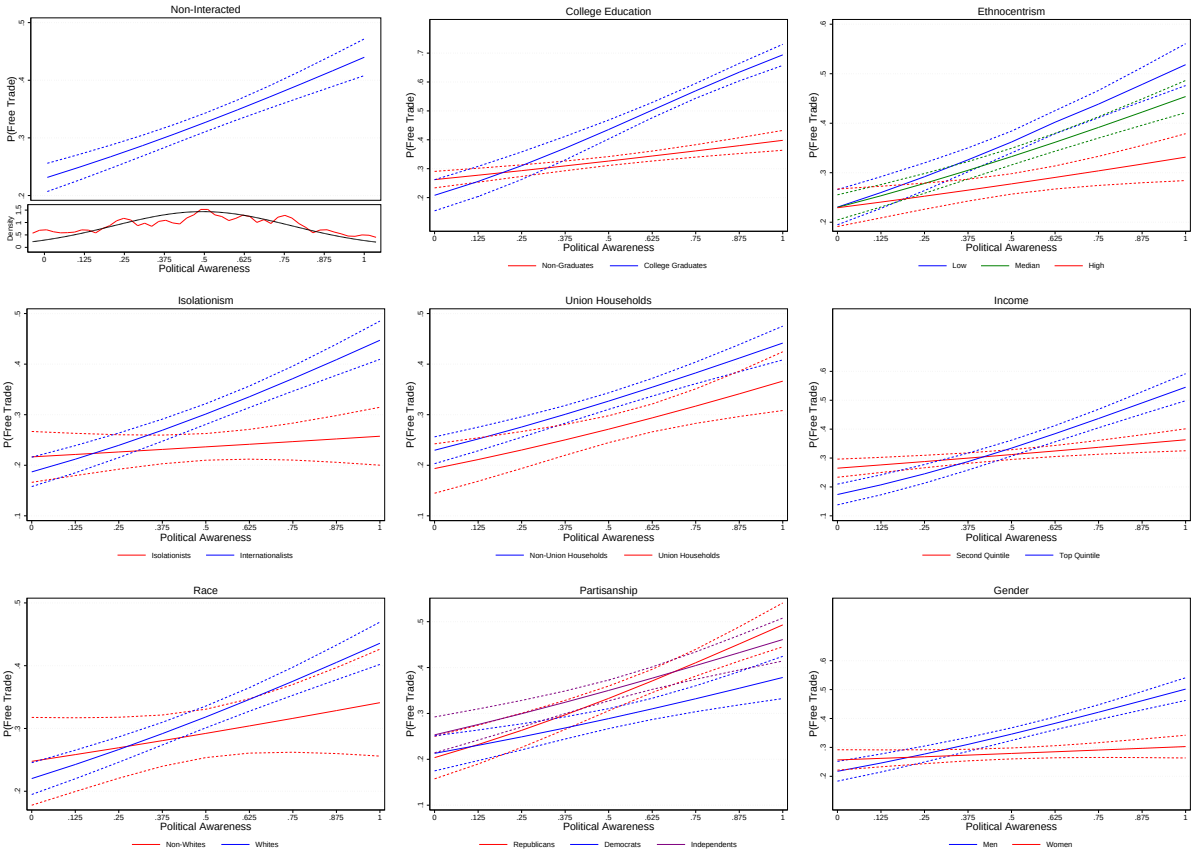
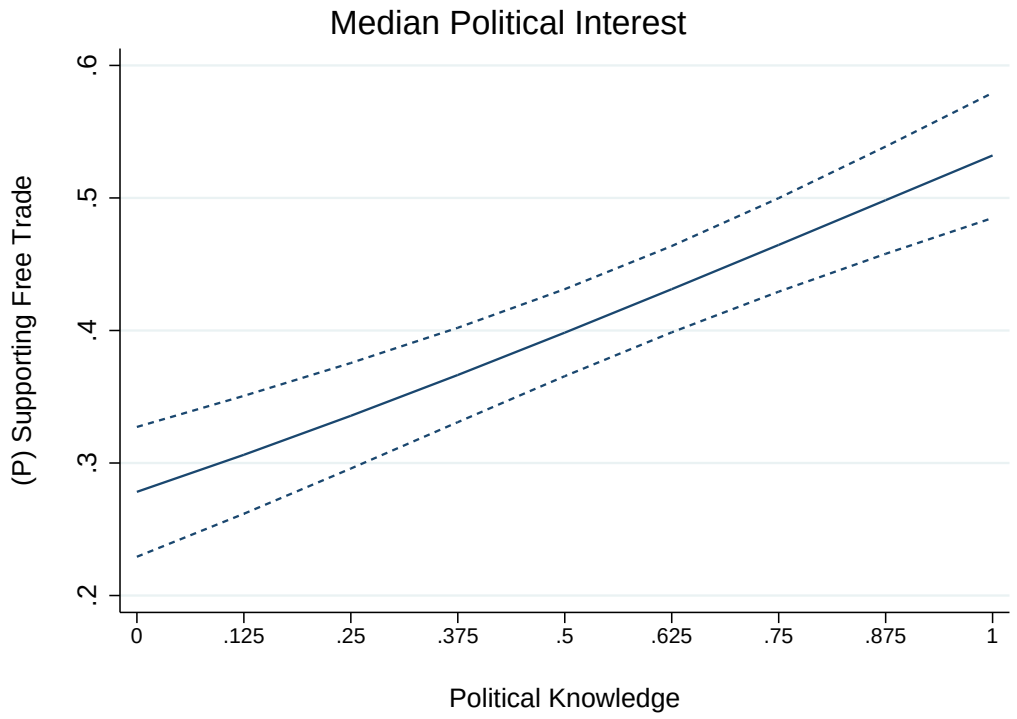
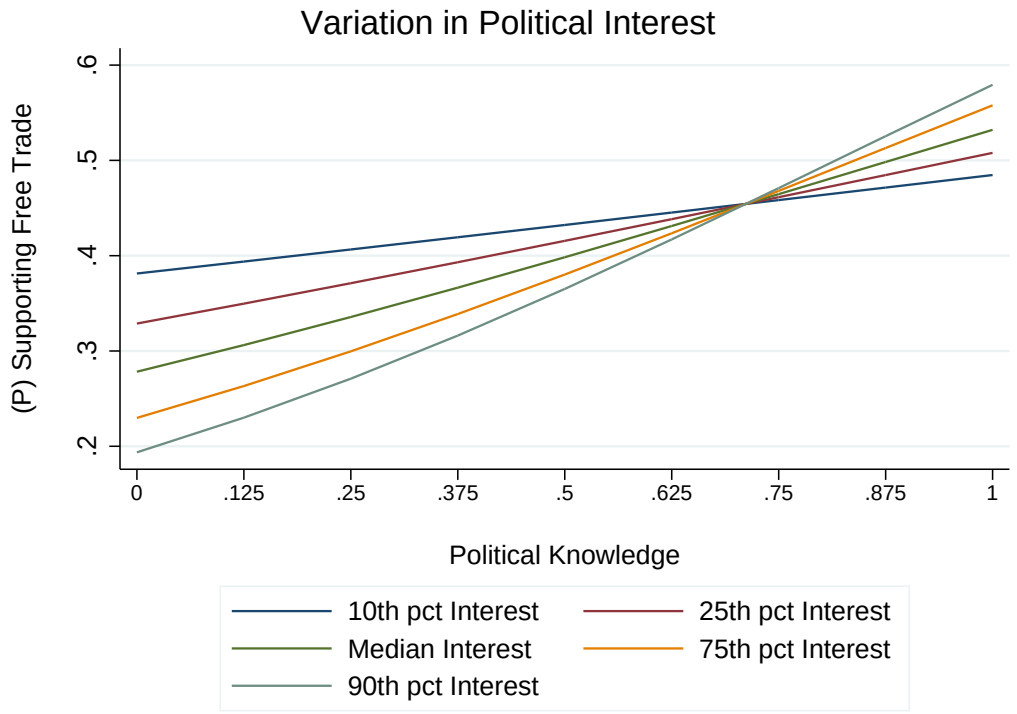


Figure 3: Political Knowledge Interactions (ANES Data 1986-2008). Each panel depicts predicted probabilities of supporting free trade plotted over levels of poltiical awareness. At top left, Panel 1 (top) depicts the "main" effect of political knowledge. Panel 1 (bottom) shows a kernel density plot (with normal curve overlaid) of political sophistication. Subsequent panels show separate plots for (2) College Graduates and Non-Graduates, (3) High, Median, and Low levels of Ethnocentrism, (4) Isolationists and Internationalists, (5) Union and Non-Union Households (6) Top and Second Income Quintiles, (7) Whites and Non-Whites, (8) Republicans, Democrats, and Independents, and (9) Men and Women, respectively.

Figure 4: Political Knowledge - Political Interest Interaction Model



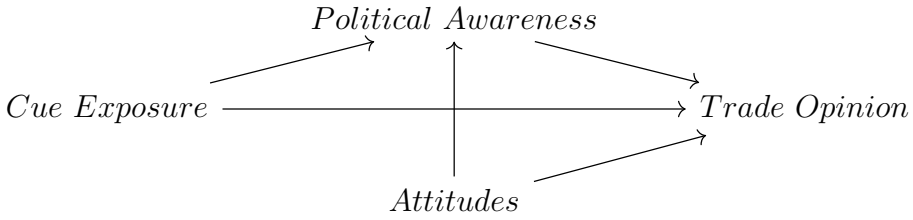
(a) Median Political Interest



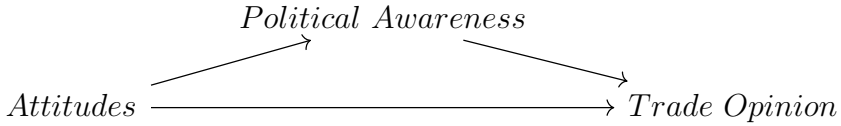
(b) Variation in Political Interest

Figure 5: Elite Influence Theory of Trade Opinion

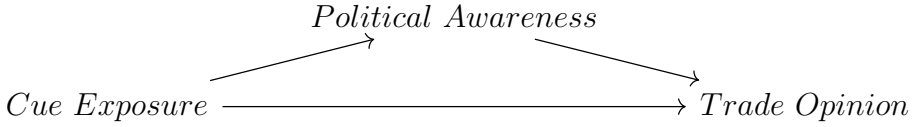
(a) Elite Influence Theory



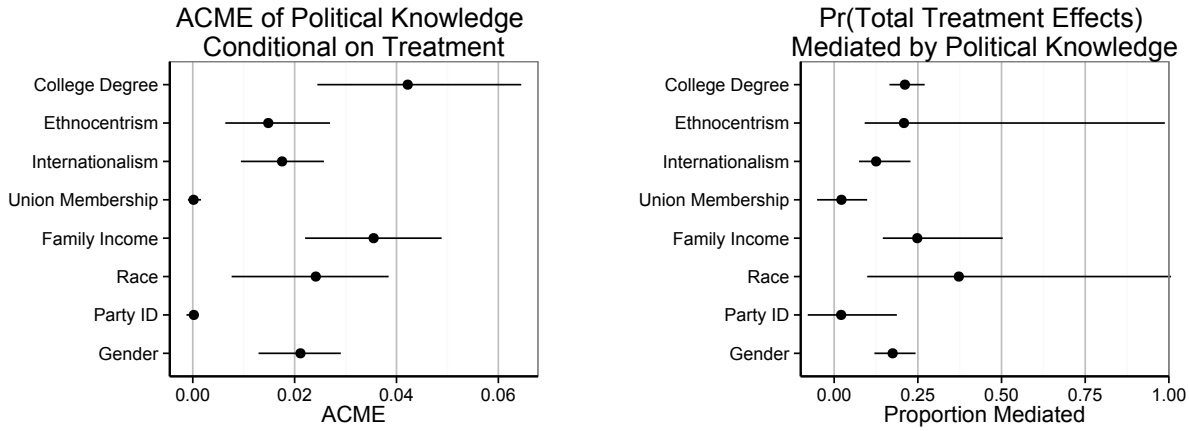
(b) Cue Acceptance Mechanism



(c) Cue Recognition Mechanism



Note how the causal mechanism linking Elite Cues with Trade Opinion shown in Figure 5a implies the existence of subsidiary mechanisms shown in Figure 5b and Figure 5c. Conversely, these latter mechanisms together comprise the overall mechanism shown in Figure 5a.



(a) ACME (b) Proportion Mediated

Figure 6: Average causal mediation effects and proportion of total effect mediated by political knowledge of interests and attitudes on support for free trade.

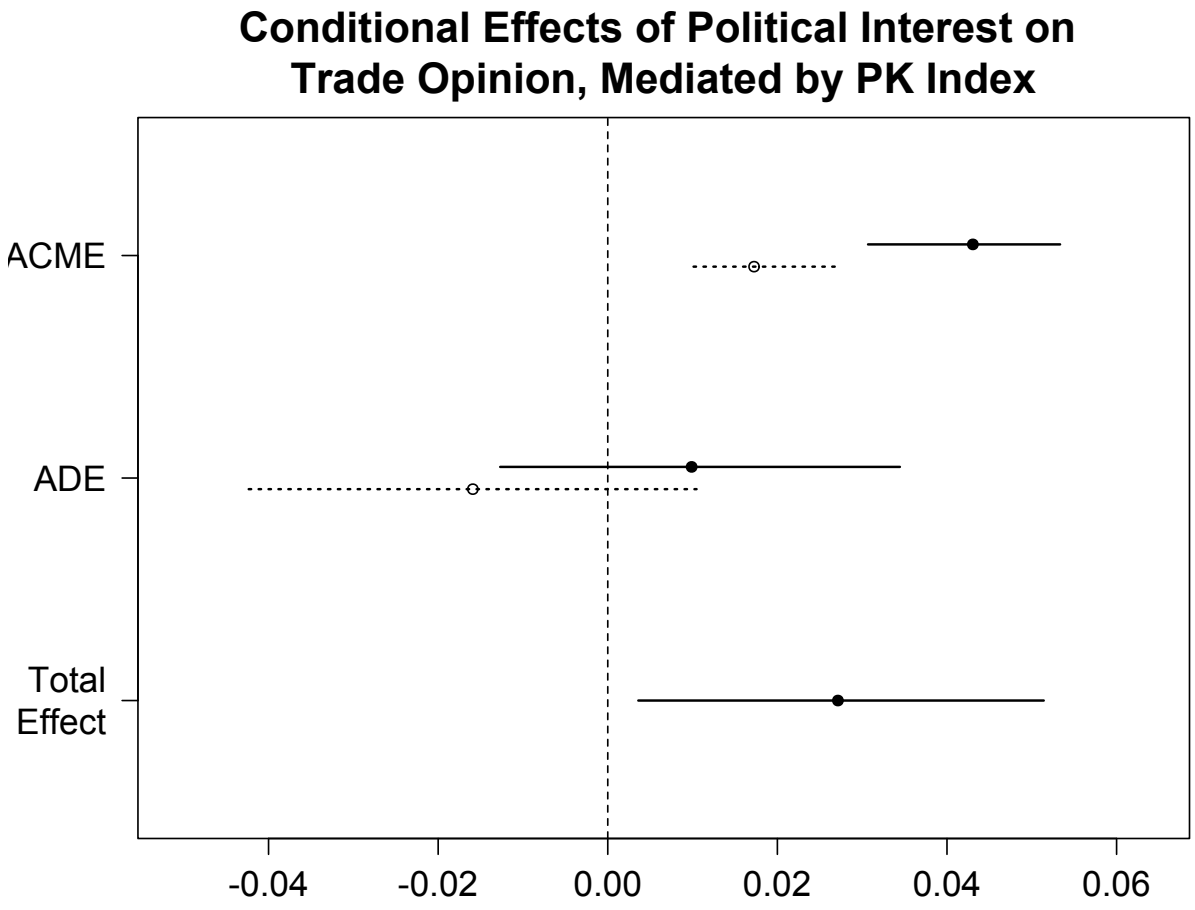


Figure 7: The conditional effect of POLITICAL INTEREST on FREE TRADE, as mediated by POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE. Solid markers indicate the effect on the treated (those with high political interest), while hollow markers indicate the effect on the untreated (those without high political interest). Note that $ACME$s and ADEs corresponding to "opposite" treatment conditions sum to the ATE (*i.e.*, $ACME_c + ADE_t = ATE = ACME_t + ADE_c$). Point estimates are displayed with 95 % confidence intervals.

Table 1: Political Knowledge - ANES 1986-2008

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
FREE TRADE								
DEMOCRAT	-0.136	-0.143	0.0661	-0.133	-0.137	-0.136	-0.158	-0.139
	(0.0628)	(0.0630)	(0.158)	(0.0630)	(0.0628)	(0.0628)	(0.0625)	(0.0629)
COLLEGE GRADUATE	0.799	0.0886	0.801	0.789	0.794	0.799	0.802	0.793
	(0.0681)	(0.205)	(0.0681)	(0.0683)	(0.0681)	(0.0681)	(0.0680)	(0.0682)
POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE	0.992	0.722	1.154	1.490	0.879	1.005	1.166	0.241
	(0.135)	(0.152)	(0.179)	(0.177)	(0.147)	(0.145)	(0.147)	(0.258)
TOP INCOME	0.291	0.281	0.288	0.295	-0.0841	0.291	0.261	0.286
	(0.0730)	(0.0735)	(0.0731)	(0.0734)	(0.215)	(0.0730)	(0.0727)	(0.0733)
UNION HOUSEHOLD	-0.249	-0.243	-0.246	-0.247	-0.245	-0.202		-0.241
	(0.0794)	(0.0796)	(0.0794)	(0.0797)	(0.0796)	(0.207)		(0.0796)
ETHNOCENTRISM	-0.00904	-0.00891	-0.00906	-0.00915	-0.00902	-0.00905	0.00181	-0.00912
	(0.00183)	(0.00183)	(0.00183)	(0.00184)	(0.00183)	(0.00183)	(0.00398)	(0.00183)
INTERNATIONALISM	0.313	0.323	0.314	0.315	0.315	0.312	0.315	-0.210
	(0.0786)	(0.0786)	(0.0786)	(0.0787)	(0.0786)	(0.0786)	(0.0785)	(0.172)
FEMALE	-0.403	-0.387	-0.403	0.245	-0.403	-0.403	-0.398	-0.400
	(0.0617)	(0.0619)	(0.0617)	(0.157)	(0.0617)	(0.0617)	(0.0616)	(0.0618)
WHITE	0.0886	0.0865	0.0972	0.102	0.0944	0.0882	0.0872	0.0847
	(0.102)	(0.102)	(0.102)	(0.102)	(0.102)	(0.102)	(0.102)	(0.102)
COLLEGE GRADUATE × POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE		1.067						
		(0.290)						
DEMOCRAT × POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE			-0.334					
			(0.240)					
FEMALE × POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE				-1.094				
				(0.244)				
TOP INCOME × POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE					0.565			
					(0.305)			
UNION HOUSEHOLD × POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE						-0.0768		
						(0.319)		
ETHNOCENTRISM × POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE							-0.0206	
							(0.00676)	
INTERNATIONALISM × POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE								0.976
								(0.289)
N	5373	5373	5373	5373	5373	5373	5381	5373

Standard errors in parentheses
Shown with Year-Level Fixed Effects

Table 2: Post-Matching Regression Results: ANES 1986-2008

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
FREE TRADE								
DEMOCRAT	-0.171	-0.142	-0.130	0.0237	-0.138	-0.142	-0.144	-0.139
	(0.0616)	(0.0621)	(0.0623)	(0.161)	(0.0621)	(0.0622)	(0.0622)	(0.0621)
COLLEGE GRADUATE	0.957	0.651	0.926	0.940	0.937	0.920	0.935	0.933
	(0.0665)	(0.195)	(0.0671)	(0.0669)	(0.0669)	(0.0671)	(0.0670)	(0.0670)
POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE	0.975	0.923	1.622	1.191	1.090	1.309	0.175	0.899
	(0.133)	(0.157)	(0.178)	(0.185)	(0.146)	(0.146)	(0.277)	(0.149)
TOP INCOME	0.197	0.165	0.178	0.168	0.171	0.168	0.164	-0.301
	(0.0722)	(0.0727)	(0.0729)	(0.0726)	(0.0725)	(0.0728)	(0.0727)	(0.217)
UNION HOUSEHOLD	-0.124	-0.134	-0.136	-0.139	-0.0135	-0.143	-0.132	-0.136
	(0.0776)	(0.0781)	(0.0782)	(0.0779)	(0.208)	(0.0781)	(0.0781)	(0.0781)
ETHNOCENTRISM	-0.00679	-0.00593	-0.00643	-0.00612	-0.00617	0.0116	-0.00618	-0.00607
	(0.00178)	(0.00179)	(0.00179)	(0.00179)	(0.00179)	(0.00411)	(0.00179)	(0.00179)
INTERNATIONALISM	0.219	0.229	0.218	0.227	0.224	0.230	-0.367	0.227
	(0.0771)	(0.0775)	(0.0776)	(0.0776)	(0.0775)	(0.0777)	(0.180)	(0.0775)
FEMALE	-0.305	-0.286	0.449	-0.291	-0.292	-0.299	-0.286	-0.295
	(0.0607)	(0.0612)	(0.159)	(0.0611)	(0.0611)	(0.0612)	(0.0612)	(0.0611)
WHITE	0.194	0.238	0.253	0.243	0.235	0.217	0.232	0.248
	(0.0962)	(0.0968)	(0.0970)	(0.0970)	(0.0968)	(0.0968)	(0.0969)	(0.0969)
AGE		-0.0126	-0.0124	-0.0128	-0.0127	-0.0125	-0.0127	-0.0129
		(0.00183)	(0.00184)	(0.00184)	(0.00183)	(0.00184)	(0.00184)	(0.00183)
COLLEGE GRADUATE × POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE		0.447						
		(0.285)						
FEMALE × POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE			-1.273					
			(0.253)					
DEMOCRAT × POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE				-0.272				
				(0.250)				
UNION HOUSEHOLD × POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE					-0.215			
					(0.327)			
ETHNOCENTRISM × POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE						-0.0332		
						(0.00705)		
INTERNATIONALISM × POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE							1.106	
							(0.307)	
TOP INCOME × POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE								0.721
								(0.312)
N	5018	5008	5008	5008	5008	5008	5008	5008

Standard errors in parentheses
Matched by Media Consumption and Interest