Do Electoral Campaigns Influence Public Support for Trade?

Evidence from the 2016 US Presidential Election

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The open-economy politics of trade presumes that elections, as a political institution, aggregate preferences of individual voters to resolve a salient trade cleavage in a democratic society. This presumption, despite being widely applied to analytical narratives of trade politics in the existing literature, has not been empirically tested. The 2016 US presidential election is unique in this regard; trade policy became a politically salient issue, and was treated as such during the electoral campaign. We exploit two waves of a nationally-representative panel survey conducted before and after the 2016 US presidential election to identify the effect of electoral campaigns on the change in public support for trade in general and trade agreements in particular. In contrast with the conventional wisdom, we find that the election and presidential campaigns not only aggregate preexisting individual preferences for trade, but also affect public support for trade. Our main result helps explain why political candidates continue to include trade as an electoral plank when campaigning. It also suggests that trade preferences of individual voters are more endogenous to domestic political institutions and contemporary political dynamics -- in this case, the presidential election and campaigns -- than previously assumed in the literature.

The open-economy politics of trade presumes that elections, as a political institution, aggregate preferences of individual voters to resolve a salient trade cleavage in a democratic society. This expectation has served as a central motivation for the large and vibrant body of research into individual-level trade-policy preferences. However, the salience of trade policy has not been successfully incorporated into most existing empirical studies.[1] Most work approaches trade policy in a relative vacuum; we take advantage of the unique role played by trade policy in the 2016 US presidential election. As with the Brexit referendum in the United Kingdom earlier in the year, international trade and trade-related issues took center stage in the campaign, with rhetoric and popular opinion influenced by the heightened economic inequality and sluggish economic growth that has characterized the recovery from the Great Recession.

We argue that voter preferences on trade policy are conditioned by information from politicians. Consequently, when trade policy becomes politically salient, conventional models of trade-policy preferences – material and sociotropic interests – need to be extended to account for issue framing to explain and predict patterns in trade-policy preferences.

We exploit two waves of a nationally-representative survey conducted before and after the 2016 US presidential election to identify the effect of electoral campaigns on public support for trade and trade agreements. In contrast with the conventional wisdom, we find that the election and presidential campaigns not only aggregate preexisting individual preferences for trade, but also directly influence public support for trade themselves.

Trade Preferences and the Logic of the Anti-Trade Campaign

Research on the formation of individual-level trade preferences in international political economy is based upon the material interests associated with the Stolper-Samuelson and Ricardo-Viner models.[2] Depending on the mobility of factors of production, skilled workers or individuals employed in export-oriented industries are most likely to favor open trade. The preponderance of evidence points towards a world in which factors of production are relatively mobile,[3] although this may also reflect the effects of obtaining an education and possessing a willingness to evaluate trade policy.[4] Training in skills often increases an individual's complex interactions with the world around them, enabling the development of appreciation for the benefits accrued to international trade.

An emerging body of research has also demonstrated the importance of employer characteristics in shaping the material consequences of trade for individuals. Firms vary significantly within and across industries, which has consequences for their political and international economic engagement.[5] Unsurprisingly, this leads to redistributive consequences across firms, as well as heterogeneity in firm-

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[1] Taylor 2015 provides an interesting exploration into some micro-level factors influencing trade-policy salience.
[2] Kuo and Naoi 2015 discuss this body of research in much greater detail.
[3] Scheve and Slaughter 2001; Hiscox 2002a; Hiscox 2002b; Mayda and Rodrik 2005; Blonigen 2011.
[4] Hainmueller and Hiscox 2006; Blonigen 2011.
[5] See Bernard et al. 2007 for an overview of the economic effects, and Plouffe 2015 for the political implications.

specific trade-policy stances.[6] These influences then filter down to employees, who may see their employer harmed by trade dynamics that bolster the positions of their domestic competitors.

While material sources form a basis for understanding individual trade preferences, recent research has focused on non-material sources of attitudes. Trade preferences are not formed in a vacuum, and people are concerned with their interpretations of trade's broader socio-economic effects, either locally, for specific industries, or for a country or region as a whole.[7] These preferences can be further tempered by concerns for related issues, such as economic inequality, environmental protection, or welfare spending, leading to observed patterns in opinion that diverge from the predictions of models treating trade as an isolated concern.[8]

Research that places these preferences over trade policy in a policy-making context tends to focus on politician incentives to cater to narrow interests, sometimes at the expense of greater welfare concerns. Most work focuses on the junction between interest groups and political institutions.[9] For example, industries are often geographically concentrated, and a declining industry in an electoral district is likely to lead to protectionist campaigning.[10] Even where industry concentration is not a key determinant of politicians' platforms, they may offer particularistic trade policy as a platform plank when given institutionalized incentives to pursue a personalist vote.[11] However, the American presidency is often upheld as an example of a position where candidates have incentives to wholly pursue welfare-enhancing policies, like free trade.

Political Campaigns and Trade-Policy Preferences

The existing literature does raise questions regarding the consistency with which political candidates pursue protectionist platforms in institutional settings where this behavior is not expected to be rewarded. This is particularly true of the 2016 US presidential campaign. Three potential explanations for this sort of campaigning behavior arise: the negative impacts of trade's distributional effects are more visible to voters than the benefits; voters are concerned about the wider impacts of trade beyond their material interests; and trade policy's complexity causes distrust among voters who trust policies they understand.[12]

While open trade is associated with welfare gains and improvements in product variety and productivity, these benefits are not particularly visible. They are also not costless, which is why voters are likely to understand trade through the relatively highly visible losses from import competition. These range from the decline in a range of manufacturing industries and formerly lucrative career options, to laments for the decline of domestically produced consumer nondurables. Even if these

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[6] Jensen et al. 2017; Plouffe 2017.

[7] Baker 2005; Mansfield and Mutz 2009; Naoi and Kume 2011; Mutz and Kim 2017; Rho and Tomz 2017.

[8] Hanson et al. 2007; Bechtel et al. 2012; Lu et al. 2012; Schaeffer and Spilker 2016; Nguyen 2017; Jungherr et al. 2018.

[9] Rickard 2015 provides a good overview of the literature.

[10] McGillivray 1997; Rickard 2015.

[11] Betz 2017; Wagner and Plouffe 2017.

[12] For references to these explanations, see Naoi and Kume 2011; Baker 2005, Mansfield and Mutz 2009, and Guisinger 2017; and Kono 2006.

negative aspects of trade-induced redistribution are not experienced firsthand, voters will take heuristic cues of trade's influence from news of its impacts around them, either locally, regionally, or nationally. For example, the American auto industry's restructuring and consequent decline of Detroit are more tangible to the average voter than the economics of productivity or industry output improvements. Finally, complex policy-making processes and tools tend to foster distrust among voters, who may believe governments to be using complexity as a way to hide a policy's actual scope and aims.

Political candidates can use these visible losses from trade to frame public discourse on the issue. While the effects of political framing have largely gone unexamined in the context of trade policy, a prominent body of research in public opinion has demonstrated the power of elite position-taking.[13] As Kuno and Naoi have demonstrated among firm decision makers in Japan, even those who would expect to gain from an FTA view liberalization skeptically when the issue is negatively framed by the local government.[14] One might expect these framing effects to be even more successful against relatively naïve voters, especially from a national platform.

Voter preferences over trade policy can be depicted as a simple utility function. Equation 1, below, depicts this following the development of the literature, with trade-policy preference (T) a function (F) of material interests (M), non-material interests (N), and sociotropic concerns (S). Material interests are a function of income or skill-specific returns (w), industry or sector effects (s), and employer characteristics (e), while non-material interests reflect concerns for human rights (h) and environmental protection (v). In general, the literature assumes perfect information across all voters along with some ability to maximize individual utility, although some scholars have demonstrated the shortcomings of these assumptions.[15]

$$U[trade\ policy] = F[M(w, s, e) + N(v, h) + S] \qquad 1$$

We argue that voters' trade-policy preferences are not immutable, and can be shaped by contemporary political discourse. Because assessing trade's influence can be difficult, especially where low information is concerned – either due to a lack of clear information, or an inability to effectively process and assess it – individuals are likely to rely on heuristic cues to assist with preference formation. In many cases, no preference is still a likely to be a reported outcome.[16] While media reporting of expert assessments can form one source of heuristic cues, statements by policy makers and political campaigns by candidates for public office can form another.[17] We focus on the last of these, taking advantage of the high salience of trade policy and FTAs in the 2016 US presidential election, and the divided stances between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, the two leading

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[13] See, for example, Leeper and Slothuus 2014; Broockman and Butler 2015.
[14] Kuno and Naoi 2015.
[15] In particular, see Guisinger 2009, 2017; Blonigen 2011.
[16] Guisinger 2017; Plouffe 2017.
[17] Partisan differences in media cues, such as Fox News versus MSNBC in the US, or the print-media divide in the UK could provide a foundation for futher exploration.

candidates. Ultimately, the ability to successfully frame partisan or ideological voter preferences on an issue incentivizes candidates to continue to rely on that issue as a platform plank.

In her discussion of the influence of information on trade-policy preferences, Guisinger presents a model in which voters assess the costs and benefits of trade to themselves, their community, and the country or world.[18] These components are presented in a simple linear fashion:

$$U[trade\ policy] = b_i + w_o b_o$$
$$w_o b_o = w_c b_c + w_n b_n$$

2

Utility of trade policy is then determined by the individual benefit (b_i) along with weighted community benefits (b_c) and national benefits (b_n), combined as benefits to others (b_o). The sign on each of these categories of benefits can be positive or negative, depending on the individual's beliefs. The weights (w_c, w_n) on the community and national terms may vary across individuals depending on how important they consider these aspects of trade in their determinations of its effects. For example, if w = 1, the individual views trade's effects on others to be as important as its effects on herself when establishing trade-policy preferences.[19]

By distinguishing trade's influence at the personal, local/community, and national/global levels, Guisinger moves away from the subject-specific framework of much of the existing literature described in Equation 1. The various sources of preferences can often apply at multiple levels of concern (for example, both b_i and b_c), and map onto discussion of trade effects with reference to the self and others.

Indecision is a frequent response to questions of trade policy, so clear policy preferences are not formed unless the benefits are sufficiently positive (or negative). The decision rule can then be depicted as follows:

$$U[trade\ policy] > d, \text{support open trade}$$
$$U[trade\ policy] < -d, \text{support trade protection}$$
$$-d \leq U[trade\ policy] \leq d, \text{no response or don't know}$$

3

Because we are addressing the informational environment in which these policies are formed the utility function can be modified as follows:

$$U[trade\ policy] = p(b_i + w_o b_o)$$

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[18] Guisinger 2017, page 55.
[19] In the original presentation of the model, w is unconstrained, leaving open the possibility where w < 0, indicating that a voter actually desires trade-induced harm to others. This highly unlikely outcome potentially causes undesirable effects in the model, so we assume w is constrained as w ≥ 0.

First, we must constrain the benefits of trade (b_i, b_o) to b ≥ 0.[20] The new term (p) represents the effects of political campaigning on the formation of beliefs about trade's effects. In normal times, when trade policy is not a salient issue, p = 1; this provides a baseline for comparison. When a candidate prominently campaigns in favor of open trade, espousing all of its benefits, voters may shift their own beliefs in a direction that is more favorable to trade liberalization (p > 1). In contrast, when a candidate vociferously denounces trade, voters may take this as a cue that their own beliefs are overly positive and revise them downward (p < 0). Candidates who downplay trade's importance (in terms of both its positive and negative effects), or an election where otherwise similar viable candidates take diametrically opposing views on trade may reduce undecided voters' certainty of their own beliefs ($0 \leq p < 1$). To summarize:

$$p > 1, \text{Voter views trade policy more favorably}$$
$$p = 1, \text{Voter's views on trade policy are unaffected}$$
$$0 \leq p < 1, \text{Voter becomes less certain about trade-policy beliefs} \qquad 5$$
$$p < 0, \text{Voter views trade policy less favorably}$$

What happens when a disliked candidate – or the one opposing a voter's preferred candidate – makes trade policy salient? This is likely to have the opposite effect on p from that of the preferred candidate's position. For example, a progressive Democrat observing Donald Trump's anti-trade and anti-FTA rhetoric during the 2016 US presidential campaign might establish more pro-trade beliefs than she previously held, especially after his electoral victory. It is perhaps more likely that the views of the non-preferred candidate have no significant impact on the voter's trade-policy preferences.

To summarize, we argue that individuals' trade-policy attitudes are malleable, a result of both the complexity of the issue and its effects, and the lack of attention that it often receives in politics. While trade policy is not often a salient issue in political campaigns, when it does become salient, it is likely to cause voters to reassess their trade-policy preferences in the light of campaign-sourced information. During the 2016 US presidential campaign and election, the Republican nominee, Donald Trump, campaigned vigorously against trade and FTAs, particularly NAFTA and the TPP. This antagonism toward trade was likely to lead potential Republican voters to reassess their prior trade-policy beliefs to more protectionist stances (p < 0), while likely Democrat voters would have been more likely to view open trade more positively in response to Trump's anti-trade agenda (p > 1).

American Public Opinion on Trade after the Great Recession

The 2016 US presidential election is somewhat unique in the respect that the issue of trade policy played a central role in the campaigns and for the vividly protectionist populism that reared its head. The economic basis for this has been debated, with early commentary identifying factors such as the

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[20] Alternatively, we could leave b unconstrained and introduce p as two (or more) competing linear transformations representing candidate positions. However, this formulation lacks the desirable interaction between individual beliefs and campaign framing.

slow recovery from the Great Recession, the supposed decline of the American manufacturing sector, and persistently high levels of inequality and unemployment.

**Figure 1 – Public Opinion on Trade, Gallup Polls[21]**
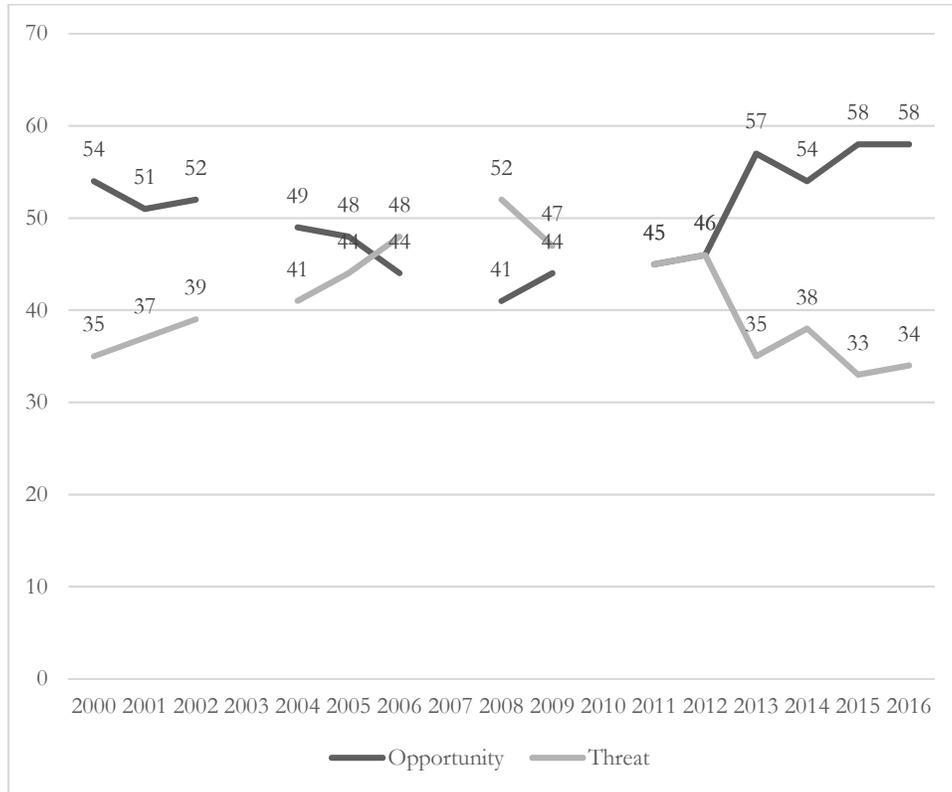
American public opinion on trade over the past twenty years has largely been divided, with a fairly even divide between adults viewing trade favorably and those perceiving it negatively. Gallup's first poll of trade attitudes, taken in 1993, demonstrated a slight aggregate preference for protectionism as the country pulled out of the 1992 recession. This disappeared by the next poll, two years later, which followed the ratification of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Favorable views prevailed for the next decade, until the mid-oughts, when negative views became more prevalent, preceding the 2008 financial crisis, as illustrated in Figure 1. As economic growth slowly returned, so too did pro-trade attitudes, which reached 58% of respondents in 2015 and remained there in the February 2016 round of polling.[22]

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[21] Percentages of respondents to the question: 'What do you think foreign trade means for America? Do you see foreign trade more as an opportunity for economic growth through increased US exports or a threat to the economy from foreign imports?'

[22] Interestingly enough, pro-trade attitudes recovered to 72% of respondents in the February 2017 poll. http://news.gallup.com/poll/204044/record-high-foreign-trade-opportunity.aspx?g_source=TRADE&g_medium=topic&g_campaign=tiles

**Figure 2 – Partisan Attitudes towards FTAs, Pew Polls[23]**
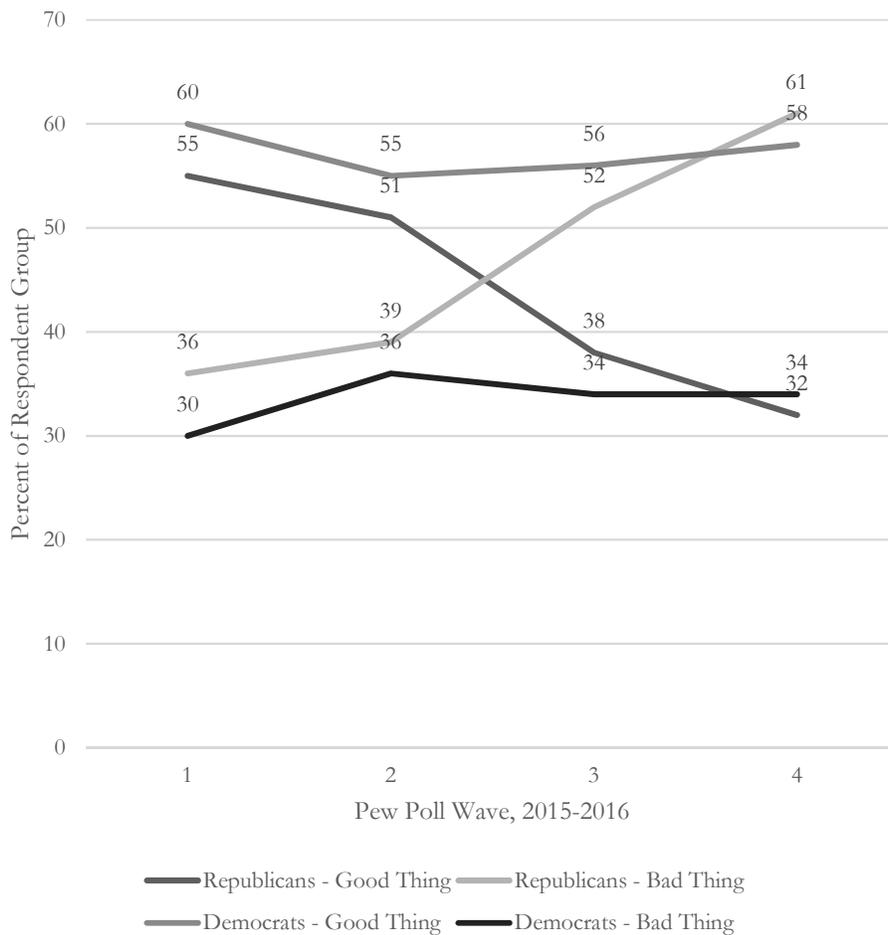
Pew's analysis of trade opinion during the 2016 campaign reveals stark partisan differences. In August, a few months before the election, Clinton supporters were much more likely to support both the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which had become a hot election issue, and free trade agreements (FTAs) more generally, than those who supported Trump. What is particularly striking is the fact that, in the four Pew polls through August 2016, likely Democrat voters remained somewhat favorable towards FTAs, while the sentiment of likely Republican voters shifted from a position comparable to that among likely Democrats to one far more negative on FTAs, as illustrated in Figure 2, with the Republican shift on the issue coming between the January and March 2016 waves of polling. The timing of this shift coincides with the start of the Republican primaries, during which Trump quickly emerged as a serious contender for the party's nomination.

From an economic standpoint, this emerging partisan divide is somewhat puzzling, as economic growth was recovering. However, these figures on FTAs in general are clearly reflected in split opinion

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[23] Percent of registered voters who say FTAs have been a _____ for the US. The Pew Political Survey waves depicted here are December 2015, January 2016, March 2016, and August 2016.

between Clinton and Trump supporters over the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which emerged as a salient campaign issue, with Trump vociferously opposing the proposed agreement and Clinton slower to take a position against it, despite favoring FTAs more generally. Figure 3 presents the comparison between supporters of each candidate: the divided opinions on both FTAs and the TPP among all voters mask clear differences along partisan lines.

Figure 3 – Partisan Opinion on FTAs and the TPP, Pew Poll[24]
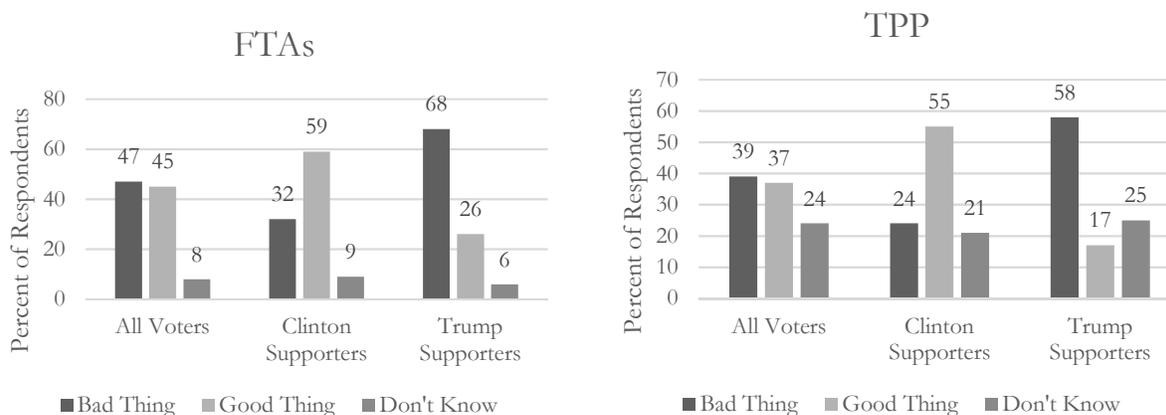
To some extent, the Republican-Democrat divide over trade reflects underlying demographic differences between supporters of each party, with younger and more highly educated individuals more likely to view FTAs favorably. It is obvious that these demographic cohorts crosscut partisan affiliations, yet while they do explain patterns of attitudes towards FTAs, they do nothing to explain the dramatic decline in support for FTAs or free trade among Republican supporters. Figure 4 presents material attitudes towards FTAs in August 2016 by different demographic cohorts. Here, material interests are framed as the impact of FTAs on the respondent's 'family financial situation', which includes income, wealth, and consumption effects. Figure 4 illustrates the stark divide between Clinton and Trump supporters, with the latter far more likely to view FTAs as having harmed their family financial situation. When divided into age and education cohorts, younger and more highly educated groups are more likely to respond that FTAs have had a positive impact on their financial situations. In the context of political-economy models of trade-policy preferences, the education effect is established and unsurprising, whether the mechanism at play is the development of career-enhancing skills or simply that of exposure to a larger world.[25] The age effect could reflect generational differences in consumption preferences, with older individuals more likely to prefer domestically-produced goods and services over those imported from trading partners.[26] This is also likely to reflect generational differences in consumption behaviors: younger people are more likely to purchase goods and services online and may be less deterred by the prospect of purchases crossing international
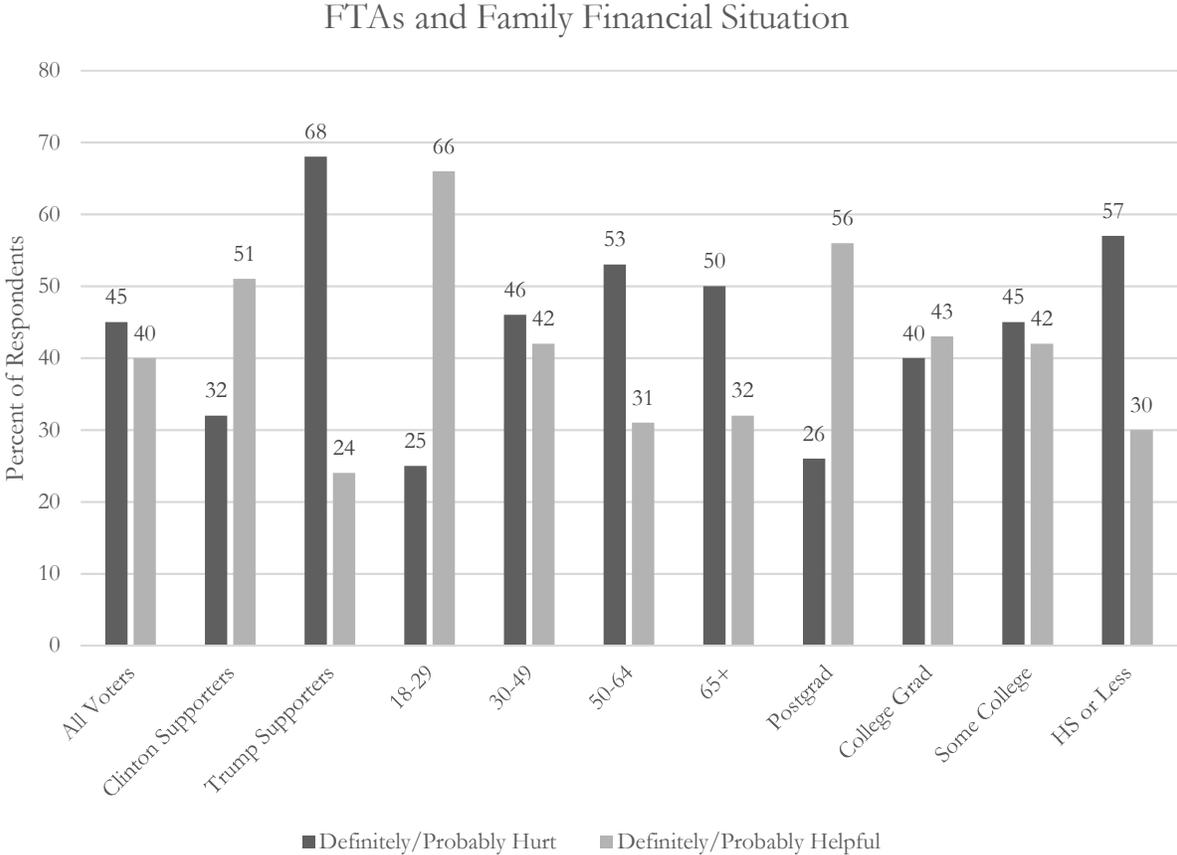
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[24] Percent of registered voters who say FTAs have been a _____ for the US; percent of registered voters who say the TPP would be a _____ for the US.
[25] See, for example, Hainmuller and Hiscox 2006.
[26] See Baker 2005.

borders than their older counterparts. However, these demographic differences do not explain the stark partisan differences that emerged during the 2016 campaign. In the next section, we lay out the data we analyze to assess the impact of issue framing on trade-policy preferences during the 2016 US presidential campaign.

Figure 4 – Demographic Breakdowns of FTA Opinion and Personal Finances, Pew Poll[27]

FTAs and Family Financial Situation

■ Definitely/Probably Hurt   ■ Definitely/Probably Helpful

The Data: 2016 American National Election Study

We use data from the 2016 time-series survey of the American National Election Study (ANES) combining the pilot study and the post-election panel to capture the influence of the presidential campaign. The survey was conducted using in-person interviews and internet questionnaires, and was conducted in two waves. The pre-election wave had field dates of 1 January through 28 January 2016, while the post-election survey's field dates were 9 November 2016 through 8 January 2017. The pre-election wave of the 2016 ANES time-series survey is omitted for two reasons: first, it does not include the trade-policy questions central to our study; second, it took place during the campaign, with sampling running up to the election, making it impossible to cleanly identify the campaign effects.

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[27] Percent of registered voters who say FTAs have _____ family's financial situation.

More details on the sampling method and techniques can be found on the ANES website. Focusing on respondent attributes and responses addressed in both waves limits the scope of our study somewhat. For example, a question on attitudes towards FTAs is present on both questionnaires, but a general trade-preference question is only available on the post-election survey. Table 1 presents summary statistics of the demographic characteristics of respondents in both waves. Partisanship and an indicator for self-declared progressives (liberals in American political terminology) are also present for the pre- and post-election panels.

Table 1 – Summary Statistics

	Pre-Election Panel					Post-Election Panel				
	Obs	Mean	St. Dev	Min	Max	Obs	Mean	St. Dev	Min	Max
Strict Opp. FTA	1200	0.64	0.44	0	1	3553	0.16	0.37	0	1
Oppose FTA	1200	0.27	0.44	0	1	3553	0.19	0.39	0	1
Republican	1200	0.32	0.48	0	1	3553	0.16	0.37	0	1
Progressive	1200	0.29	0.47	0	1	3553	0.28	0.45	0	1
College	1200	0.27	0.45	0	1	3553	0.39	0.49	0	1
Female	1200	0.53	0.49	0	1	3553	0.53	0.49	0	1
Ethnic Minority	1200	0.27	0.44	0	1	3553	0.28	0.45	0	1
Single	1200	0.30	0.46	0	1	3553	0.25	0.43	0	1
Age	1200	49.06	16.98	20	96	3553	50.48	17.60	19	91
Field Dates: 1-28 Jan 2016.						Field Dates: 9 Nov 2016 to 8 Jan 2017.				

We assess the influence of the 2016 presidential campaigns across responses on the ANES FTA question: *Do you favor, oppose, or neither favor nor oppose the U.S. making free trade agreements with other countries?* Responses take the form of a seven-point Likert scale. *Strictly oppose FTA* (Strict Opp FTA) takes a value of one when respondents indicate a clear directional preference against FTAs; *oppose FTA* includes non-directional preferences as well, to capture any losses from those favoring FTAs or declining to respond in the preceding (or following) panel.

The post-election ANES utilizes a complex random sampling strategy consisting of stratified cluster sampling, meaning observations then must be weighted to account for the differential probability of selection among potential units, as well as variations in response rates. Standard errors must also be calculated to account for the survey strategy; details on this can be found in the extensive ANES documentation.

Campaign Influence on Trade-Policy Preferences

We first assess the influence of the 2016 presidential campaigns on preferences by examining opposition to FTAs. *Oppose FTA* is a binary variable constructed from the FTA question, with the middle category (neither favor nor oppose) treated as opposition. Table 2 presents the average marginal effects (AMEs) estimated from linear probability models on the appropriately weighted data. The results demonstrate the sharp contrast in public opposition to FTAs between the two periods. While college-educated voters are less likely to oppose FTAs than those without a university degree, the marginal effect drops in the post-election panel, nearly halving from 14% to 7%. Both female and ethnic minority voters become more likely to view FTAs favorable following the election; the shift

among female voters is particularly marked, with females 7% more likely to oppose FTAs prior to the campaign, and 3% less likely than males to oppose them after the election.

Table 2: Republican Identification and Attitudes toward FTAs

	Model 1	Model 2
Sample	Pre-election Survey	Post-election Survey
DV	Oppose FTA	Oppose FTA
Republican	0.008	0.035+
	(0.042)	(0.021)
Progressive	0.037	-0.033*
	(0.044)	(0.016)
College	-0.142***	-0.070***
	(0.039)	(0.016)
Female	0.072*	-0.031+
	(0.037)	(0.017)
Ethnic Minority	-0.003	-0.029+
	(0.043)	(0.017)
Single	-0.067	0.001
	(0.045)	(0.020)
Age	-9.23×10^{-4}	7.67×10^{-4}
	(0.001)	(4.73×10^{-4})
Obs	1,200	3,553

Note: The table reports OLS point estimates for AMEs and their standard errors (in parentheses). The significance level: $+p<0.1$, $*p<0.05$, $**p<0.01$, $***p<0.001$.

The top two terms in Table 2, *Republican* and *Progressive*, address the core components of our argument on partisan affiliation and campaign framing. We find effects in the expected direction for both terms. While Republicans are just as likely to oppose FTAs as Democrats and independents in the pre-campaign panel, following the election, they are 3.5% more likely to oppose FTAs than other voters. Self-identified progressives in the pre-campaign panel are indistinguishable from other voters, but are 3% less likely to oppose FTAs following the election. This sharp contrast suggests that electoral campaigns may have made trade a more salient issue to voters and led voters to think about trade more along party lines and ideological spectrum. The non-political demographic shifts also suggest the emergence of an identity component in the formation of trade-policy preferences following the presidential election.

In order to directly model the political dynamics, we further provide difference-in-difference estimates for effects of electoral campaigns on *Oppose FTA* in Table 3. The negative OLS estimates of *Wave* suggest that American voters are less likely to oppose free trade agreements in the post-election survey than in the pre-election survey by 40%. More importantly, electoral campaigns make ideologically progressive voters relatively less likely to oppose free trade agreements in the post-election survey than in the pre-election survey by about 10% even though progressive voters are more likely to oppose FTAs than other voters by 13% about eight months prior to the presidential election.

Table 3: Republican Identification and Attitudes toward FTAs, Diff-in-Diff

	Model 3	Model 4
Sample	Combined	Combined
DV	Oppose FTA	Oppose FTA
Wave	-0.471***	-0.461***
	(0.014)	(0.020)
Republican	0.018	-0.093
	(0.016)	(0.057)
Republican*Wave		0.071*
		(0.033)
Progressive	-0.032*	0.132*
	(0.014)	(0.057)
Progressive*Wave		-0.095**
		(0.031)
College	-0.086***	-0.083***
	(0.012)	(0.012)
Female	0.006	0.006
	(0.012)	(0.012)
Ethnic Minority	-0.022	-0.022+
	(0.013)	(0.013)
Single	-0.016	-0.016
	(0.015)	(0.015)
Age	4.13×10^{-4}	4.10×10^{-4}
	(3.77×10^{-4})	(3.76×10^{-4})
Obs	4,753	4,753

Note: The table reports OLS point estimates for AMEs and their standard errors (in parentheses). The significance level: $+p<0.1$, $*p<0.05$, $**p<0.01$, $***p<0.001$.

Surprisingly, however, we find less evidence that Republican voters significantly change their position on FTAs using the difference-in-difference design. As Model 4 demonstrates, the interaction term, *Republican*Wave*, indicates that Republican voters become 7% more likely to oppose FTAs; however, the coefficient estimate of *Republican* alone cannot be statistically distinguished from zero. While this does demonstrate a shift among Republican voters, unlike *progressives*, Republican voters do not significantly differ from the rest of the electorate in opposition to FTAs.

As for the other demographic covariates, it is worthwhile to note that the trade cleavage between college graduates and non-college graduate remains salient despite the electoral campaigns. This is in line with the earlier finding about effects of college education on support for FTA in Table 2. The influence of *female* disappears, while ethnic minorities remain less likely to oppose FTAs, as in the post-election wave presented in Table 2.

We also assess the influence of the electoral campaigns on strict opposition to FTAs, where respondents indicate clear directional stances of varying degrees against FTAs. Table 4 presents these results. Models 5 and 6 replicate the models from Table 2. In the pre-election panel, only *female* and *age* present significant ties to strict FTA opposition. Female voters are 5% less likely to strictly oppose FTAs; a comparison between this result and that of Model 1 indicates that much of the Model 1 relationship is dependent on female voters indicating no directional preference over FTAs. The link between older voters and strict FTA opposition reflects similar age-related trends illustrated in Figure 4. In Model 6, the major difference from Model 2 is that *Republican* loses significance, falling just below

the 90% confidence interval. Other significant terms from Model 2 retain significance and sign, exhibiting similar magnitudes, indicating that progressives, highly educated voters, females, and ethnic minorities are all less likely to take stances strictly opposing FTAs.

Models 7 and 8 present the diff-in-diff models replicating those from Table 3, again using unweighted data. The *wave* effect here disappears, indicating that the large change in FTA opinions displayed in Table 3 is largely driven by shifts from pro-FTA attitudes to uncertain or undirected preferences. Between January 2016 and the post-election panel, self-identified progressives become more than 11% less likely to strictly oppose FTAs, despite progressives being 16% more likely than other voters to strictly oppose FTAs. Strangely though, despite the anti-FTA rhetoric from Trump's campaign, there is no link between Republican voters and strict FTA opposition. University-educated voters, females, and minorities are all less likely to hold strictly anti-FTA preferences.

Table 4: Strict Opposition to FTAs

	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
Sample	Pre-election	Post-election	Combined	Combined
DV	Strictly Oppose	Strictly Oppose	Strictly Oppose	Strictly Oppose
Wave			-0.060***	-0.028
			(0.014)	(0.021)
Republican*Wave				0.008
				(0.034)
Progressive*Wave				-0.114***
				(0.032)
Republican	0.042	0.035	0.031+	0.025
	(0.040)	(0.022)	(0.016)	(0.058)
Progressive	0.019	-0.038*	-0.038**	0.161**
	(0.037)	(0.018)	(0.014)	(0.059)
College	-0.054	-0.075***	-0.075***	-0.072***
	(0.033)	(0.017)	(0.013)	(0.013)
Female	-0.053+	-0.032+	-0.035**	-0.035**
	(0.031)	(0.018)	(0.012)	(0.012)
Ethnic Minority	-0.055	-0.038*	-0.026+	-0.026+
	(0.034)	(0.019)	(0.014)	(0.014)
Single	-0.020	0.008	-0.018	-0.018
	(0.036)	(0.021)	(0.016)	(0.016)
Age	0.003**	-1.09×10^{-4}	4.59×10^{-4}	4.63×10^{-4}
	(0.065)	(4.93×10^{-4})	(3.88×10^{-4})	(3.88×10^{-4})
Obs	1,200	3,553	4,753	4,753

Note: The table reports OLS point estimates for AMEs and their standard errors (in parentheses). The significance level: +p<0.1, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001.

We further test the robustness of these results by focusing on the neutral FTA attitudes – cases where respondents indicate neither favoring nor opposing FTAs. Table 5 presents the results. In the pre-election panel, both *Republicans* and *progressives* are not more or less likely to take neutral attitudes toward FTAs than other voters. University-educated voters and older voters are less likely to hold neutral attitudes, while females are 12.5% more likely than male voters to hold neutral FTA attitudes. Most of these results differ substantially from the post-election panel. Here, Republicans are 5% and progressives 10% less likely to hold neutral attitudes than other voters, indicating centrist voters are likely leading the increase in neutral FTA attitudes between the two waves (37% of all responses in

the pre-election panel and 40% in the post-election panel). Female voters remain 8% more likely to hold neutral attitudes than males, but this represents a large reduction from the pre-campaign panel.

Table 5: Neutral Attitudes Toward FTAs

	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
Sample	Pre-election	Post-election	Combined	Combined
DV	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Wave			0.030+	0.054*
			(0.017)	(0.024)
Republican*Wave				-0.006
				(0.040)
Progressive*Wave				-0.077*
				(0.038)
Republican	-0.033	-0.050+	-0.046*	-0.033
	(0.043)	(0.028)	(0.019)	(0.069)
Progressive	0.017	-0.104***	-0.070***	0.066
	(0.046)	(0.022)	(0.017)	(0.069)
College	-0.088*	-0.109***	-0.083***	-0.081***
	(0.037)	(0.020)	(0.015)	(0.015)
Female	0.125**	0.083***	0.107***	0.107***
	(0.037)	(0.021)	(0.014)	(0.014)
Ethnic Minority	0.053	0.020	8.20×10^{-4}	7.81×10^{-4}
	(0.046)	(0.023)	(0.016)	(0.016)
Single	-0.047	-0.026	0.005	0.004
	(0.045)	(0.027)	(0.018)	(0.018)
Age	-0.004***	-0.002**	-0.002***	-0.002***
	(0.001)	(6.35×10^{-4})	(4.58×10^{-4})	(4.58×10^{-4})
Obs	1,200	3,553	4,753	4,753

Note: The table reports OLS point estimates for AMEs and their standard errors (in parentheses). The significance level: $+p<0.1$, $*p<0.05$, $**p<0.01$, $***p<0.001$.

Models 11 and 12 present difference-in-difference results for neutral FTA attitudes. Neutral attitudes are more common in the post-election panel, as indicated by the positive effect of *wave* in both models. The independent effects of *Republican* and *progressive* disappear, although *progressives* become nearly 8% less likely to report neutral attitudes in the post-election panel. The effects of *college*, *female*, and *age* are all comparable to those in Models 9 and 10.

To compare FTA attitudes with greater concerns about economic globalization, we extend our examination of the post-election panel to two other issues directly related to the debate: general trade sentiments and attitudes to outsourcing. Unfortunately, neither of these items is available on the pre-campaign questionnaire, limiting our analysis to the post-election panel. The *protectionist* variable is a binary indicator for voters responding 'favor' to the question: *Do you favor or oppose limits on foreign imports?*. This widely used item has formed the basis for a range of existing studies on trade-policy preferences.[28] We expect these general trade-policy preferences to largely reflect patterns in FTA attitudes.

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[28] See, for example, Scheve and Slaughter 2001 or Hainmuller and Hiscox 2006.

Our second alternative measure is *anti-outsourcing*, a binary variable recording responses of 'discourage' to the question: *Should government encourage or discourage outsourcing?*.[29] While there may be similar patterns in responses to those we observe in questions relating to international trade, offshore-outsourcing is likely to differ significantly from trade in its conceptualization among respondents. While trade is often framed as trade in goods, offshoring relates to services trade and has been linked to fears over jobs, particularly among skilled workers.[30] Existing research points to less opposition to offshore-outsourcing from progressives than from conservative voters.[31]

Table 6: Attitudes toward Alternative Globalization Measures

	Model 13	Model 14
Sample	Post-election Survey	Post-election Survey
DV	Protectionism	Anti-Outsourcing
Republican	0.089**	-0.022
	(0.027)	(0.027)
Progressive	-0.112***	0.100***
	(0.022)	(0.020)
College	-0.062**	-0.041*
	(0.019)	(0.017)
Female	-0.038+	0.002
	(0.019)	(0.018)
Ethnic Minority	-0.056*	-0.104***
	(0.024)	(0.024)
Single	-0.024	-0.054*
	(0.023)	(0.025)
Age	0.001+	8.98×10^{-4}
	(7.43×10^{-4})	(6.55×10^{-4})
Home Ownership	0.047	-9.34×10^{-4}
	(0.031)	(0.025)
Patriotism	0.118***	0.058*
	(0.025)	(0.026)
Obs	3,553	3,553

Note: The table reports OLS point estimates for AMEs and their standard errors (in parentheses). District-level fixed effects are included. The significance level: $+p<0.1$, $*p<0.05$, $**p<0.01$, $***p<0.001$.

Table 6 presents models for both of these outcome variables. Because the post-election panel contains a wider range of variables than the pre-election panel, we add an indicator for home ownership and district-level fixed effects to our standard specification. The results presented in Model 13 are largely similar to those from our previous models. Republican voters are nearly 9% more likely to support trade protectionism, while progressive voters are 11% less likely to be protectionist. University-educated voters, females, and minorities are all less likely to be protectionist, while older and patriotic voters are more likely to favor trade protection. In Model 14, the largest change from the trade-related questions is the switch in sign among progressive voters, who are 10% more likely to oppose government encouragement of offshore-outsourcing activities, likely reflecting the direct link to

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[29] We assume this refers to offshoring and offshore-outsourcing, rather than domestic outsourcing, given its placement on the questionnaire.
[30] Mankiw and Swagel 2006.
[31] Mansfield and Mutz 2013.

concerns over jobs. Minorities, university-educated voters, and single voters are all less likely to oppose outsourcing, perhaps reflecting its stronger link to foreign cultures.

Trade-Preference Endogeneity and Campaigns

The 2016 US presidential election stands out as a rare instance in which trade policy became a core campaign issue. This gives us the unique opportunity to study the potential effects of campaign issue framing with respect to international trade. While public-opinion research has long studied the influence of elite stances and political campaigns on voter attitudes, individual-level trade-policy preferences have largely been treated as exogenous in international political economy. This is largely due to both trade policy's typical lack of political salience and its inherent complexity.

However, individuals often rely on heuristic cues when forming their attitudes toward policy issues. We argue that political campaigns can influence these attitudes. With the Trump campaign's anti-trade plank, this meant that likely Republican voters would become more protectionist or anti-FTA, while progressive voters might become more pro-trade in response to the negative opposition framing. We find qualified evidence to support our argument. Some results point to increasing protectionism among Republican voters following the campaign; however, these are specification dependent, potentially picking up a general trend toward protectionism or neutral trade-policy attitudes. Self-identified progressives are the most responsive to the campaign and election, becoming strongly more pro-trade. In line with existing research, highly educated voters are less likely to favor protection, even after the election. We also identify a potential identity-politics link to trade policy, with women and ethnic minorities, groups that were less likely to support Trump, taking favorable views of FTAs and trade more generally. Finally, even if the Trump campaign may or may not have been successful in turning Republicans protectionist, it did manage to increase either uncertainty or neutrality among many potential voters when it came to trade policy.

We find that political campaigns do not simply aggregate exogenous preferences, but also shape them endogenously. This helps to explain why politicians campaign on protectionist platforms even when conventional international political economy theory would expect them to campaign for free trade. And yet, politicians campaigning on protectionism may encounter increased resistance from pro-trade constituencies, which become even more entrenched in response to electoral campaigns.

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