

**Mapping the Boundaries of Elite Cues:
How Elites Shape Mass Opinion Across International Issues**

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Forthcoming, *International Studies Quarterly*

Abstract:

Despite intense interest in the nature and malleability of public opinion about foreign policy, there remains debate over when and how elite messages shape mass opinion on international issues, especially whether the informational or partisan components of elite cues dominate. The rise of survey experiments has offered conflicting insights. We argue that the single-issue nature of most survey experiments masks systematic variation in elite cue effects across international issues, and that these effects depend on the baseline distribution of mass opinion on the issues themselves. Two characteristics of underlying opinion are crucial: the share of those not aligned with expert opinion, and the degree of partisan polarization. Where polarization is limited, information effects should dominate, but where issues are polarized, information intake should be limited by partisan attribution. We test these hypotheses using nine survey experiments across a range of issues, including the rise of China, climate change, international institutions, and the use of force. At one extreme, all messages, even those endorsed by generic or opposition experts, can shift opinion; at the other, only partisan-attributed messages matter. The findings are important not only for understanding public opinion about international issues, but also for mobilizing opinion in a democratic setting.

Mapping the Boundaries of Elite Cues: How Elites Shape Mass Opinion Across International Issues

When do elite messages move public opinion? Thanks in part to the rise of the survey experiment, there has been a surge of research on the determinants of public attitudes about a wide range of international issues.¹ The degree to which different messages and messengers can shift opinion is an important concern for policymakers seeking to mobilize domestic coalitions around a policy, particularly on international issues which are by nature distant from most voters' everyday concerns and thus especially ripe for cue-giving by elite actors.

As evidence from survey experiments accumulates, however, an important concern is that survey experiments usually proceed issue-by-issue and rarely address issue characteristics (for an exception, see Albertson and Gadarian 2015). Issues may vary across many dimensions, however, including their relatability to voter concerns (or conversely, their technocratic obscurity), or the extent and nature of past public debate on the issue. For example, some issues may be more politically polarized at the time of a survey, while others may simply have received less attention. Variation across issue context is potentially crucial for understanding the effectiveness of different messengers on public attitudes. Indeed, this variation may at least partially explain divergent findings in the existing literature. Despite wide agreement that elite cues matter, there remains debate about whether cues convey information for the benefit of the voter (e.g., Gilens 2001; Hiscox 2006), or whether voters use the identity of cue-givers—most commonly, their partisanship—as a shortcut (e.g., Zaller 1992; Berinsky 2009). Each view finds support in specific issue areas even as other issues have been understudied or excluded, either because scholars employ research designs that privilege movability in attitudes, or because they wish to study issues where attitudes are already formed.

Differences in issue context suggest an important real-world consequence for those hoping to shift public opinion on a given issue: there may be systematic variation across issues in the extent to which public attitudes are movable, and, in turn, when particular messengers are

¹ The recent surge has covered a broad range of issues, but these studies tend to be issue-specific and remain relatively unintegrated. For example, survey experiments have allowed scholars to explore the determinants of public attitudes on trade (e.g., Herrmann, Tetlock, and Diascro 2001; Hiscox 2006), security (e.g., Berinsky 2009; Tomz and Weeks 2013; Kreps 2014), and transnational issues such as climate change and international organizations (Bechtel and Scheve 2013; Tingley and Tomz 2014).

most effective in eliciting movement. If elites—be they politicians, bureaucrats, or nongovernmental experts—wish to move public attitudes toward a generally held expert view, the issue context may affect the malleability of public opinion, as well as which endorsement of that view is most valuable: a non-partisan expert, or a partisan affiliate. In some cases, the public may look mainly to partisan elites (a view that resonates in an era of political polarization), while in others, voters may instead respond to information conveyed by a wider set of elites, including politically unaffiliated experts. If elite messages have differential effects, then efforts to mobilize public opinion in favor of a policy may sometimes be broadly effective, but under other conditions will only exacerbate divisions within the public, even if there is some agreement at the elite level.

These potentially different effects raise an important external validity concern for survey experiments that we believe the existing literature has not addressed: survey experiments may yield cuing effects that depend on the context of the issue on which they are conducted. For example, if we observe little movement in response to an elite message, it is difficult to know if the message itself is ineffective, or if opinion has already shifted and there remains little scope for changes in attitudes. Similarly, the existing literature is fragmented with contradictory results, but it is impossible to know whether the differences are due to topic areas, question wording, samples, or other parts of the research design. These concerns are relevant not only for scholarship on public opinion—and especially for how we interpret the results of any given survey experiment—but also for policymakers interested in mobilizing public opinion in a democratic setting.

This paper uses data explicitly designed to test the role of issue context by looking across a range of topics using a common experimental design and framework. This research design allows us to study the conditions under which mass opinion follows the lead of experts and the conditions under which it does not. We analyze a set of nine similarly-designed survey experiments across a range of international issues—including the rise of China, climate change, international institutions, and the use of military force—to address systematic variation in the degree to which elite messages can shape public opinion. Notably, these issues include both economic and security topics that are rarely studied in parallel.

We contend that the degree to which public attitudes are malleable and the importance of partisan attribution depends on the existing distribution of mass opinion on the issue itself. Two

characteristics of baseline attitudes are crucial: first, the share of the population not already aligned with elite opinion (defined as those who either have no opinion or who hold an opinion contrary to an elite view); and second, the degree to which respondents are already polarized along partisan lines. If polarization is limited, the information contained in the message itself should outweigh the effect of the messenger—suggesting that many different elites can carry the message persuasively, and that individuals do not always view elite statements through partisan filters. But as issues become divided along party lines, intake of information should be increasingly limited as citizens listen only to those who share their partisan affiliation, sidelining the effectiveness of non-partisan experts as cue-givers and exacerbating existing polarization.

We use a multi-issue experimental setup that allows us to leverage the advantages of survey experiments, holding the basic experimental framework—with its internal validity—constant across issues. Our experiments explore how the same substantive information, in the form of a widely-held “expert view,” can have differing effects depending on how it is attributed. For each issue, we present a basic description, then vary whether expert-endorsed information is presented with a politically unaffiliated (or what we call “generic”) expert attribution, a Republican expert attribution, or a Democratic expert attribution. While there is significant debate on all these issues, we deliberately chose areas in which there is expert agreement on at least some aspect of the issue. We use “expert view” as a shorthand for a position held by a substantial number of experts or by elites knowledgeable about the issue, with at least some, but not necessarily universal, support from both parties. Experts can be outside government (e.g., economists); elites such as members of Congress or government officials who have taken a longstanding interest in an issue would also be considered part of the “expert view.”

We find strong support for the conditional effects of elite messages across issue context. For each issue, at least one version of the message moved opinion, but different messengers were more effective depending on the distribution of public opinion on a given issue. For issues where a high proportion of the public is not aligned with elite opinion, but partisan polarization is low, all messages, even those from opposition experts, are effective in moving opinion toward the expert view. In contrast, for issues that exhibit baseline partisan polarization, respondents see the issue through the lens of partisanship—resisting information endorsed by generic experts—resulting only in further polarization.

These findings highlight the conditional nature of “movability” in attitudes toward foreign policy issues. Moreover, the tendency to examine cuing effects issue-by-issue can mask variation in the conditions under which certain messages or messengers will—or will not—shift attitudes. For example, despite recent emphasis on the role of partisanship in a time of polarization, under some conditions even generic information can be effective in shifting attitudes. Additionally, observing small or insignificant cuing effects may lead to the erroneous conclusion that cues are unimportant when in fact there is simply no more room for public opinion to move. We also demonstrate that the nature and malleability of public attitudes on foreign policy cut across the traditional divide between security and economic issues and that partisan polarization does not affect all issues in uniform fashion.

Information, Partisanship, and Public Opinion on Foreign Policy

The burgeoning literature on public opinion and foreign policy differs along many dimensions, but a few points of agreement are notable. After World War II, the consensus was that public opinion was fickle or incoherent (see Holsti 2004, ch. 2 for a review). Subsequent scholarship has found that the public does have coherent foreign policy attitudes (e.g., Hurwitz and Peffley 1987; Holsti 2004, ch. 3), even though the public remains relatively uninformed about politics in general and foreign policy in particular (Holsti 2004, 55; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996, 82-89). A natural question that has preoccupied scholars is the source of attitude change. Does the public update its views in response to new information or the flow of events, or does it respond to messages conveyed by those with whom it shares predispositions (or partisan affiliations)?

In line with scholarship on American political behavior (Zaller 1992; Berinsky 2009), much of the literature on public opinion and foreign policy recognizes that on specific issues, the public takes cues from elites. Gathering political information is costly (Downs 1957), and an elite cue can serve as a convenient shortcut. For voters, partisanship is a particularly powerful and convenient shortcut for identifying elites from whom to take a cue. In John Zaller’s seminal model, extended by Adam Berinsky in the domain of wartime attitudes for the post-World War II period, elite consensus increases public support for government policy among well-informed respondents, but when elites divide, respondents will tend to follow those who share their political predispositions (Zaller 1992; Berinsky 2009). Even those who see public attitudes as an independent force acknowledge the importance of elites. For example, Aldrich and colleagues

argue that foreign policy attitudes can affect vote choice, but “candidates can manipulate the degree to which particular attitudes are activated” (Aldrich, Sullivan, and Borgida 1989, 135). In a more recent review, Aldrich et al. again argue that “the public hold attitudes about foreign policy, but determining which aspects of those attitudes will get expressed is neither straightforward nor automatic. Elites appear to retain some leeway in shaping the expression of public opinion, but the mechanisms that give them that leeway are still little understood” (Aldrich et al. 2006, 487).

The conditions under which elite cues will shift attitudes remains a central question. One source of debate is whether the message or the messenger is more important: Do elites convey substantive information, or do they instead signal partisan positions that respondents can simply adopt without considering policy details? As John Bullock (2011, 497) notes, there are many claims about but few actual tests of the relative strengths of these two factors. The dominant claim in the broader political behavior literature is that partisanship trumps exposure to information (see, e.g., Cohen 2003), but others see voters as responsive to policy information as well (in the context of foreign policy, see Aldrich, Sullivan, and Borgida 1989; see Bullock 2011, 497-498 and Guardino and Hayes 2013 for useful reviews). Others have found mixed results (e.g., Bullock 2011; Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus 2013).

The debate over the role of information and partisanship remains largely unresolved in the literature on public opinion and foreign policy. On the security side, for example, the literature on public opinion and war has seen a contentious debate over the role of information about casualties. John Mueller has argued that public support for war declines with the logarithm of casualties, suggesting the public responds to information (Mueller 1973), though he also acknowledges the importance of elite debate (1973, 116-121). In an experimental setting, however, Berinsky finds that partisan cues are important determinants of support for a hypothetical military intervention in South Korea, while information about casualties has no statistically significant effect (2009, 118-123). Others have found that the public responds both to objective factors and to partisan cues in a security context (see, for example, Trager and Vavreck 2011, 542), as well as to elite consensus (Kreps 2010).

The literature on public attitudes toward international economic issues and international organizations has tended to emphasize the informational (rather than the partisan) role of elites. In terms of attitudes on trade, survey evidence suggests demographic and skill profiles shape the

public's views (see, among others, Mayda and Rodrik 2005), with less support for partisanship as a significant determinant of attitudes, perhaps because of cross-party coalitions (Herrmann, Tetlock, and Diascro 2001, 196; see also Kaltenthaler, Gelleny, and Ceccoli 2004). In an experimental setting, Hiscox (2006) finds that anti-trade rhetoric increases support for protectionism. In a subsequent experiment, he finds that an endorsement by Nobel Prize-winning economists raises support for trade overall and mitigates anti-trade framing effects (Hiscox 2006, 775-776). Yet Hiscox himself notes that it remains unclear which experts or elites voters turn to as trusted sources of information, leaving room for the possibility of partisan effects (2006, 776). Some research on human rights has explored how information from human rights organizations, and variation in issue frames (including information-based frames) can shape opinion or mobilize attitudes around a consensus (Davis, Murdie and Steinmetz 2012; McEntire, Leiby and Krain Forthcoming) but is less concerned with partisan- or messenger-based effects. Research on public attitudes toward international institutions like the World Trade Organization is rare. For example, Herrmann et al. (2001, 193) do not include the WTO in their survey experiment on mass attitudes on the grounds that the public was still unfamiliar with the WTO.² As discussed further below, omitting issues because the public may not know much about them risks selecting out issues for which expert-endorsed informational cues might be effective.

We argue that the lack of consensus about what kinds of elite cues matter has arisen in part from the fragmented state of the literature. Recent evidence in the broader public opinion literature suggests that both informational content and partisan cue-taking are important in shifting mass attitudes (see, for example, Malhotra and Kuo 2008; Bullock 2011; Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus 2013). Some scholarship has hinted that the issue domain may be an important factor in how cues matter. As Bullock (2011, 509-510) notes, the few studies that explicitly test both informational and party cues focus on domestic policy and vary significantly in their findings, possibly because of variation in the nature of the issues involved (although he focuses on individuals' priors, rather than the distribution of opinion). But research has not examined systematic variation across issues, much less across issues in an international or foreign policy context, where cue-taking is especially likely. A single-event, single-issue, or even

² Furthermore, McEntire, Leiby and Krain (Forthcoming) deliberately conduct their experiment on issue framing in human rights by choosing a relatively anonymous organization, Human Rights Initiative, so as to avoid reputational effects of the organization (19-20).

a single-policy area focus can mask important differences in the underlying distribution of public opinion.³ Indeed, Druckman and colleagues (2013, 75) write that they “suspect citizen polarization occurs issue by issue.”

The Message or the Messenger?

When can an expert message shift public opinion? Is the content of the message persuasive, suggesting that any messenger can carry it regardless of partisanship, or are some messengers, particularly those who share the respondent’s partisan identity, more effective than others? We contend that the way expert messages interact with attitudes depends critically on the distribution of underlying public opinion. While the public is poorly informed about foreign policy, it is not a completely blank slate. At the individual level, there is a large literature focusing on the links between predispositions, information environments, and the malleability of opinions. Some, like Zaller, posit that “every opinion is a marriage of information and predisposition” (1992, 6; see also Zaller and Feldman 1992). Others focus on the “pretreatment environment,” which can expose individuals to information about a given issue and lead some who are motivated to form strong attitudes to retain that information (Druckman and Leeper 2012). Our argument operates at a higher level of aggregation, and starts from the assumption that the “control” group in a survey experiment is not a *tabula rasa*. We therefore examine the baseline distribution of mass opinion and subsequent shifts in this distribution in the face of different messengers carrying the same information.

Most elite messages convey both informational content and the identity, whether implicit or explicit, of those who carry it. The question is the extent to which the informational content is effective on its own, regardless of who endorses it, or whether it is a partisan endorsement of that same information that does more work in shifting opinion. We argue that for a given issue, the extent to which the informational content of a message or a partisan endorsement move opinion depends on two aspects of the underlying distribution of opinion on that issue: the share of the population not already in alignment with elite opinion and the degree of underlying polarization. When an elite message interacts with this baseline distribution, there will be some room for new

³ Of course, there may be other sources of systematic variation in context. As discussed below, opinion on a given issue may vary over time; there may also be variation in the distribution of opinion on an issue across countries (for example, on cross-national variation in public support for war, focusing on different levels of vengefulness, see Stein 2015). This paper focuses on issue context at a given moment as one source of variation.

information and some interaction with underlying predispositions or effects from prior exposure to information. If an issue is not particularly polarized and there is room for movement, we expect the informational content of the message to dominate, and any messenger can be effective. If opinion is polarized, however, only partisan endorsements of a message will result in shifts in opinion. Thus, across issues with different characteristics, we expect that a similarly-attributed cue (for example, one endorsed by a non-partisan elite) might have different effects. Our theory therefore comes with the built-in expectation that we should observe differential findings for similarly-attributed cues across issues.

To build this argument, we start by noting that our approach does not make assumptions about the sources of and influences on baseline opinion, and allows for multiple factors to shape it. One set of sources relate to characteristics of the issue itself. For example, aggregate effects that manifest in the baseline distribution of opinion can come from predispositions: while the public may not have “true” attitudes about particular issues (Zaller 1992), individuals have “considerations” (Zaller and Feldman 1992) that can lead to predispositions that are reflected in aggregate public preferences. Alternatively, on technocratic or obscure issues, few citizens may have well-defined opinions at all. A second source of influences on the baseline public opinion is the history of debate and discourse on the issue, which can shape the distribution of attitudes on an issue at a given moment. Certain issues receive more media coverage or have simply been around longer, and may have been more polarized in elite discourse, leading to potential aggregate “pretreatment effects” (Druckman and Leeper 2012). Indeed, Berinsky highlights the polarized nature of underlying opinion at the time of his Korean intervention experiment—June 2006, when the Iraq War was at a low point. He finds a large partisan gap in support for a hypothetical intervention in Korea in all conditions (Berinsky 2009, 121; see also Gelpi 2010).

Since we chose issues on which there is at least some degree of elite agreement on both sides of the aisle, one might expect that public opinion would follow this view through the familiar cue-taking mechanism highlighted by Zaller (1992) and Berinsky (2009). Why, then, do we expect variation in movement in response to these elites cues? Even when elite views are somewhat or widely shared, the substance of the view itself is distinct from the flow of discourse about that view, or about the issue more generally. We chose issues for which there exists elite opinion based on expert views, but this view need not be universal among elites, and can vary in strength, elites’ willingness to discuss it, and the existence of residual elite disagreement.

Albertson and Gadarian (2015, 20-25), for example, distinguish between “unframed threats, where the cause of harm is widely agreed, and “framed” threats, where the cause or extent of harm is debated, and thus more subject to elite messaging, often along partisan lines. As they note, there can be overlap within an issue: an issue like climate change “has much in common with unframed threats” because there is consensus within the scientific community that would lead one to expect an issue would be “unframed,” but “climate change is experienced as a framed threat” because “the parties differ both on the nature of the problem and on policy solutions” (2015, 29). Furthermore, the composition of those who endorse or propound the expert opinion can also change over time: for example, the Cap and Trade proposal for curbing climate change originated as a Republican idea with widespread support, but among political elites Cap and Trade now has support primarily from Democrats even as it retains support among non-governmental experts (on the increasing polarization of attitudes about climate change more generally, see McCright and Dunlap 2011, 175-178; Guber 2013). Even if elite discourse generally supports an expert opinion, characteristics of the issue itself may mean that some messages may be more difficult to convey than others (see, e.g., Hiscox 2006, 774). The public may also have underlying predispositions that differ from those of elites (see, e.g., Page and Bouton 2006). Thus even issues on which experts or elites share some degree of agreement may pose different challenges to those who wish to shift opinion, depending on how polarized the issue already is, and how many citizens already agree with the dominant expert view.

Turning to the details of the baseline distribution, the first dimension—partisan polarization—is most likely to result from the existing flow of messages. Even when an elite consensus has arguably emerged, the actual flow of elite discourse may not fully reflect the consensus. Previous opinions may still circulate, and some elites may still state alternative positions. If discourse has been particularly limited or absent on an issue, respondents may rely on analogous issue areas or predispositions and thus import partisan disagreements. These mechanisms may lead some respondents to view the issue through a partisan lens even absent our treatments.

The second dimension—non-agreement—captures the degree to which the public’s aggregate views differ from the dominant expert view (which, in our experimental design, will be presented in the treatment conditions). The proportion of those not in agreement with expert opinion is not completely independent of partisan polarization. If polarization is low or nearly

absent, there are two possibilities.⁴ Most intuitively, if elite discourse is united behind a bipartisan elite view on an issue, then public opinion may consolidate in favor of the expert view (which in this case would verge on consensus). But as discussed, this process is not automatic.

Even in the absence of polarized discourse (for example, from an alternative elite message endorsed by another party), divergence from a widely held elite position can arise from several mechanisms related to the issue itself. The public may be poorly informed about an issue and simply lack knowledge about it; similarly, some issues may be difficult to communicate effectively. Such cases might result in a high percentage of “don’t know” responses, or reliance on heuristics that allow respondents to give an opinion that diverges from the expert position (but such views may be weak). If the relevant heuristic is not one that readily fits into a set of liberal or conservative beliefs, then responses may not cluster along party lines. Alternatively, some predispositions may be independent of political ideology—such as cross-cutting coalitions on trade—allowing people to resist certain messages even if a widely held elite view is transmitted through the media.

Since we are interested in the conditions under which information- or partisan-based cues move attitudes toward a dominant expert view, when measuring polarization and degree of non-agreement, we consider those who have no opinion (i.e., a “don’t know” response) and those who are already opposed to the expert position as part of the same group of those who are not already aligned with this expert view. Especially on issues that are “cognitively complex” like foreign policy questions, many who express no opinion may be avoiding the mental costs of thinking through the issue (Berinsky 2004), but may be moved by subsequent information. Even some of those who express opposition in the baseline may not have thought much about the issue, and may be receptive to further information about it. Whether a subsequent cue moves those not in agreement with experts is likely to be a function of how polarized the issue has been thus far: for non-polarized issues, those whose opposition to the expert view is only weakly held and those in the “don’t know” group are likely to be moved by any cue, whereas for polarized issues, both types of respondents will tend to be moved by cues only from their own party, and perhaps more narrowly, cues that resonate with their understanding of their party. For purposes

⁴ In extreme cases of polarization, public opinion is by definition bimodal, and some segment of public opinion will naturally fall closer to expert opinion. Thus cases of high polarization and either a very large or very small degree of non-agreement with experts are logically excluded.

of defining the dimension of the baseline opinion that explores how much the public is already in line with the expert view, we treat these two types of respondents as one group of those in “non-agreement.” In our empirical analysis and the discussion below, however, we take advantage of the flexibility of a multinomial logit model to independently estimate the determinants of a “don’t know” and an “agree” response, to allow for the possibility that the “don’t knows” may react differently to the elite cue. Furthermore, this flexibility allows us to test the effect of “don’t knows” and address the possibility that a small number of “don’t know” responses introduces a ceiling effect on subsequent opinion movement (or, conversely, that a large number of “don’t know” responses generates more movement).

We can now generate hypotheses about how an elite message containing both expert-endorsed information and an elite endorsement interacts with the two dimensions of public opinion we identify. If public opinion starts from a baseline that is not particularly polarized and already largely in line with the expert view, there is little room for movement. If initial preferences are not highly polarized but are consolidated relatively far from the expert opinion, however, then messages can potentially move attitudes. Indeed, in an experiment involving attitudes about oil drilling and immigration, Druckman et al. (2013) find that when polarization is low, opinions can move in the direction of the stronger frame (that is, the stronger source of policy information). In this case, we expect that the information contained in a message will be the primary driver of attitude shifts, regardless of who carries the message. The same information, whether endorsed by non-partisan (or “generic”) experts or those with a partisan affiliation, will result in attitude shifts, in the same direction, regardless of the partisan affiliation of the respondent. This argument leads to the following hypothesis:

Information Hypothesis: For issues where non-agreement is high but baseline opinion is not strongly polarized along partisan lines, both generic and partisan endorsements of expert information will shift attitudes toward agreement with an expert view.

In contrast, if the issue is already politically polarized, then new information, even if endorsed by experts, is not likely to move attitudes in the absence of a specific partisan signal. Generic, non-partisan endorsements are therefore likely to be ineffective on these issues. Instead, movement comes from partisan attributions, but they only exacerbate existing polarization (as Druckman et al. 2013 find for their high-polarization conditions; see also Darmofal 2005). If the message fits with partisan predispositions (for example, a message about Cap and Trade as a way

to control climate change conforms to Democratic predispositions), then we would expect opinions for those partisans to shift toward the expert view when the cue comes from their own party, and be unresponsive to out-party cues. Our second hypothesis therefore posits:

Partisan Hypothesis: For issues where the baseline distribution shows that attitudes are already polarized along partisan lines, only partisan endorsements of expert information will shift attitudes toward an expert view, for those who share the partisanship of the endorser.

Of course, some issues will exhibit moderate levels along both dimensions. In these cases, we expect mixed effects. Generic experts may be effective, but partisan endorsements may work most effectively on those respondents who share the partisanship of the endorser. Thus we have a third hypothesis:

Mixed Hypothesis: For issues where the baseline distribution shows moderate levels of polarization and non-agreement, both generic and partisan expert endorsements of information can shift attitudes toward an expert view, but partisan effects will be limited by individuals' party affiliation.

Thus we expect variation in the conditions under which different types of experts can use the same information to shift public attitudes. Furthermore, pulling back to consider the broader implications for public opinion and foreign policy, looking at these common factors allows us to take a more holistic view across issue domains. For example, studying only polarized issues or excluding issues where the public is assumed to lack knowledge of the issue (as in the case of the WTO in Herrmann, Tetlock, and Diascro 2001) risks selecting out significant potential movement in attitudes from expert-endorsed information. Conversely, selecting issues to ensure that attitudes move will mask issues on which attitudes have hardened. For example, Druckman et al. (2013, 61) note that they follow others in choosing issues where “the public’s opinions on them are not crystallized and, indeed, are somewhat conflicted,” because it leaves “room for movement” in the experiments. If, however, the context of opinion formation varies across issues, as Druckman et al. (2013, 75) themselves suggest, selecting issues where movement is likely may miss important variation in how issue context matters (see also Druckman and Leeper 2012, 888-889).

Data and Baseline Distributions

To test our hypotheses, we embedded nine survey experiments in the 2012 Cooperative Congressional Election Study, a 50,000-person national stratified sample survey administered by YouGov/Polimetrix (Ansolabehere 2012). We combined two unique sub-samples of 1,000 individuals, each drawn from the larger population.⁵ This relatively large combined sample size of 2,000 allows for multiple treatments as well as comparison across party affiliation.⁶

A significant strength of our approach is that it maximizes issue coverage while using the same experimental setup for all issues. Directly comparing nine similarly-designed experiments conducted at the same time provides, to our knowledge, a breadth of issue context not usually explored in studies of public opinion and foreign policy. Harnessing the internal validity of each individual experiment, repeated across nine issues on the same sample, is an important first step in the assessment of issue context on the manipulability of public opinion (and in the broader understanding of survey experiments on foreign policy, given the single-issue nature of most studies).

Our aim was to choose issues that spanned a broad range of substantive topics as well as several potentially important factors. We chose issues that varied in terms of visibility, and in some cases, known polarization (as on the issue of climate change, where we had good reason to believe the issue was polarized). We also chose a set of issues that varied across security, economic, and international institutional issues. Where possible, we tried to have “mirror” issues, for example by choosing two issues related to China, one on security and one on economics, and

⁵ The CCES survey consists of the common content, asked of all respondents, and the group content, asked of a sub-sample of 1000 individuals. We asked all questions on two sub-samples for a sample size of 2000, except ICSID which was excluded from one module due to space constraints.

⁶ We present and analyze the unweighted responses from the CCES. As discussed in detail in Supplement C, the CCES itself is reasonably representative in its unweighted form, and weighting corrects mainly for an oversample on battle-ground congressional districts. While weighting data can lead to more representative estimates, weighting data in survey experiments can introduce imbalances across treatment assignments (Gelman 2007). In our sample, the trade-off was severe: weighting observations to adjust for geographic oversampling generated comparison groups that were less, not more, representative of the general population on other important demographic characteristics. In particular, Supplement C, Table 1 shows the negative consequence of weighting to correct for the geographic imbalance on the balance of women in our sub-samples. The text of Supplement C provides additional detail concerning the trade-offs and the choice to use the unweighted data.

two related to climate change, one framed in economic and one in security terms, so that we could assess the alternative hypothesis that public opinion would behave differently across security and economic issues. We included questions on international institutions because, as noted, they tend to be more technocratic issues that are rarely studied precisely because few in the public have opinions on them, and yet leaving out this type of issue might lead to biased inferences about how, and how much, public opinion on foreign policy can be influenced by elites. We included a question about the WTO, but given that this institution has a higher profile relative to others, we also deliberately included a question related to an obscure institution, the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) with which few respondents were likely to be familiar, as a kind of robustness check.

Respondents were asked the following nine foreign policy questions, randomly ordered to guard against spillover effects (Gaines, Kuklinski, and Quirk 2007, 17-18; Transue, Lee, and Aldrich 2009, 160):

- What do you think should be the official response by the U.S. government to accusations of currency manipulation by China? (“China Currency”)
- Do you support the new strategy to pivot the U.S. military’s focus to China? (“China Pivot”)
- Should the U.S. increase or decrease its use of the World Trade Organization’s dispute mechanism? (“WTO”)
- Should U.S. citizens and corporations be subject to international court rulings from the ICSID [International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes]? (“ICSID”)
- Do you think the United States should institute a system like “Cap and Trade” to limit greenhouse gas emissions and address climate change? (“Cap & Trade”)
- Do you think the United States should invest in technology to reduce the military’s dependence on fossil fuels? (“Climate Security”)
- Do you support a U.S. airstrike against the Iranian nuclear program? (“Iran”)
- Do you support a U.S. military intervention in Syria? (“Syria”)
- Should the United States complete ratification of the ICC treaty? (“ICC”)

Prior to each question, respondents were randomly assigned to one of four categories: the control group, the generic treatment group, the Democratic treatment group, and the Republican treatment group. Individuals in the control group received background details to identify the policy but no additional information prior to being asked their opinion. For example, the lead-in to the question about the ICC provided the founding date, a quotation from its mandate, and an explanation of its purpose. The lead-in for the Syria question noted the humanitarian crisis.

In addition to these background details, individuals in each of the three treatment groups received additional information about expert opinion on these policies. Those in the generic treatment group received information attributed to experts, but without reference to any partisan affiliation. Those in the Democratic treatment group and Republican treatment group received the same information attributed to Democratic experts and Republican experts, respectively. The information content was identical; only the attribution varied. The full question wording is available in Supplement B.

Several aspects of the questions differed across issue areas, but as discussed below, looking across a wide variety of issues helps address concerns about these differences. For instance, using the Republican condition as an example, terms to describe experts included “Many Republican economists” for the “Cap & Trade” question; “Many Republican national security experts” for the “Iran” question; and “Many Republicans in Congress” for the “ICC” question. Each attribution was truthful, albeit nebulously. While the GOP and the Democratic Party do differ on many of these issues, in each case we were able to find partisans on either side of the issue. One might object that the cues are not purely factual and read more as opinions. But the design is closer to the type of cue voters are likely to encounter in the real world. Furthermore, political “facts” themselves are nearly always contested (Kuklinski, Quirk, Schwieder and Rich 1998). Partisanship can be a powerful filter, shaping perceptions even in the face of expert knowledge or basic facts, as research demonstrating partisan bias in perceptions of numerical facts like the number of casualties in the Iraq War illustrates (Berinsky 2009, 76-77; see also Darmofal 2005). We thus isolated an expert view on each issue where some partisans on both sides of the aisle had endorsed that view, and varied how different endorsements affected the way voters received the information about this expert opinion.

Each question had a set of appropriate response options specific to the issue. We then recoded individuals’ responses—including those in the control group—on the basis of whether or

not individuals matched the expert opinion provided in the treatment or responded “don’t know.” As part of the common content portion of the survey, respondents were asked how they identified themselves politically. We coded all self-identified Republicans and those Independents who lean toward the Republican Party as Republicans and all self-identified Democrats and Democratic leaners as Democrats. Since our primary concern here is partisan cuing versus expert-endorsed informational content, we exclude the approximately 250 individuals who did not identify with or lean toward either party (for a similar approach, see Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus 2013; Guardino and Hayes 2013). Our final sample contained more than 1,750 observations for all issues besides ICSID, three times the size of similar surveys such as those by Herrmann et al. (2001); the ICSID sample size was 884.

With our nine-issue setup, a significant question is how to classify these issues along our two dimensions—non-agreement, and polarization. We use an empirical approach at the level of public opinion, drawing measures directly from the survey. This approach offers several advantages. It provides the snapshot or backdrop against which the malleability of public opinion—the ultimate question in which we are interested—is measured. It also provides a measure of baseline public opinion that makes no assumptions about the issues *ex ante*, and is comparable across issues. It is this distribution of public opinion at a given moment in time that elites hoping to shift the distribution of opinion confront. While discourse at the elite level might have shaped the distribution, given variation in framing and discourse across issues and the extent of our nine-issue setup, it would be difficult to generate an analytically comparable, cross-issue measure of elite discourse as it existed prior to the experiment, and challenging to execute.⁷ Furthermore, potential variation in the flow of messages about expert views makes it prudent to avoid making assumptions about individuals’ prior exposure to messages concerning the issues. Individuals may have encountered little information, may retain outdated information, or may have been exposed to alternative messages. Instead we directly measure the baseline distribution of public opinion in the survey and expect it to vary across issues despite the presence of at least some degree of expert agreement.

⁷ In the case of Druckman and Leeper (2012), for example, the experimental portion of the analysis involves two issues, and the observational analysis in which they directly measure elite framing involves one issue. In Druckman et al. (2013), two issues are involved.

Responses from the control group—individuals who received only a basic description of the policy issue—thus provide the baseline measure of the distribution of public opinion for each issue. Based on this data, the left panel of Figure 1 displays, for each issue, two dimensions of public opinion. The x-axis, labeled “Non-Agreement with Expert Opinion,” measures the percentage of respondents from the control group who responded either with explicit opposition to the expert view, or “don’t know” (as mentioned, these two categories are disaggregated later in the multinomial analysis and descriptions of predicted probabilities to allow for the possibility that messages have heterogeneous effects on these two types of non-agreement). The y-axis, labeled “Polarization,” measures the absolute difference in the percentage of Republicans whose responses are not in agreement with the expert opinion from the percentage of Democrats whose responses are not in agreement with the expert opinion.

Displayed on these two dimensions, the issues fall into three broad groupings. In the lower right corner lie a set of issues in which partisan divisions are minimal, especially relative to the extremely high proportion of respondents who are not aligned with the expert opinion. In all four cases—“Syria,” “WTO,” “China Currency,” and “ICC”—more than 80% of those surveyed have opinions that are not in agreement with the elite view. The particular source of this disagreement varies. For “WTO,” a large portion (69%) of this non-agreement comes in the form of a non-opinion, but for “Syria,” “China Currency,” and the “ICC” the majority of individuals (from 55% to 62%) are in direct disagreement. But all four share the characteristic of high levels of disagreement regardless of the party identification of respondents. For “Syria,” “WTO,” and “China Currency,” polarization is very low (<10%). Polarization is higher for the “ICC,” but still less than “Iran” or “Cap & Trade.”⁸ These latter two issues stand out at the top of the panel as policy realms in which partisan division dominates. Their share of respondents who are “non-agreers” is moderate compared to other issues; in both cases, just below 60% of those

⁸ The scale of the y-axis on figure 1 highlights the notably higher levels of partisan disagreement on ICC relative to other issues classified as “Primarily Informational” and may raise concerns that ICC should instead be classified as “Mixed.” Given its extremely high levels of non-agreement, however (compare for example the 32% non-agreement for the “Mixed” issue of Climate Security to the 87% non-agreement for ICC), ICC falls more naturally in the “Primarily Information” group. Clustering analysis supports this classification. We note also that shifting ICC to the “Mixed” category would not overthrow the results, since its behavior would be driven by its pull toward the high non-agreer end of the spectrum.

surveyed offered responses not in agreement with the expert opinion. It is the characteristics of being highly divided along partisan lines (with a forty and thirty percentage-point difference respectively) that differentiates them from the other issues.⁹ A third set of issues falls to the left of these two more clearly defined groups: “Climate Security” and “China Pivot.” Both share moderate levels of polarization but do differ in terms of the proportion of respondents in non-agreement with the expert opinion; of all the issues, “Climate Security” received the highest proportion of baseline support for the policy also commonly supported by experts. “ICSID” (in grey given its lower N) stands out as a centerpoint in the distribution—as baseline responses show only a moderate partisan divide and moderate non-agreement with the expert policy recommendation.

Our theory suggest that for issues with strong initial polarization, message content will be viewed primarily through a partisan lens—either negatively or positively. Thus, as illustrated in the right panel of Figure 1, we group the issues at the top, “Iran” and “Cap & Trade, and for simplicity here and in later analysis label these issues as “Primarily Partisan” in terms of the expected elite cue influence. For issues with high levels of non-agreement but low partisanship, we predict that the informational content of the elite message will be stronger. As shown in the right panel, we thus group “WTO,” “Syria,” “China Currency,” and the “ICC” together and label this set of issues “Primarily Informational.” Finally our theory predicts mixed effects of messages for issues in which both non-agreement and partisan division is low to moderate. Here we group together “Climate Security,” “China Pivot,” and “ICSID” and label them “Mixed.” While “ICSID” is centrally located in the issues, its placement suggests that neither partisan nor non-agreement dimensions predominate. On this characteristic, it is closer to “Climate Security” and “China Pivot” than to the other issues, although we would expect differences between the issues in this “Mixed” category. In this category, both partisan and informational cues should influence opinion, but information may start to weigh more heavily for “ICSID,” which of all the “Mixed” issues starts out furthest from expert opinion (because non-agreement is highest for ICSID among those issues classified as “Mixed,” though it is slightly more polarized). In

⁹ Although Syria and Iran are both cases of potential military intervention, Iran has been framed as a national security threat, whereas Syria has been discussed in primarily humanitarian terms (as reflected in our question wording). It is possible, as we note below, that bipartisan war-weariness accounts for the lack of polarization on a less threat-driven potential intervention such as Syria as opposed to Iran.

Figure 1: Distribution of issues by initial polarization and non-agreement with expert opinion (left panel) and clustering by expected message influence (right panel)

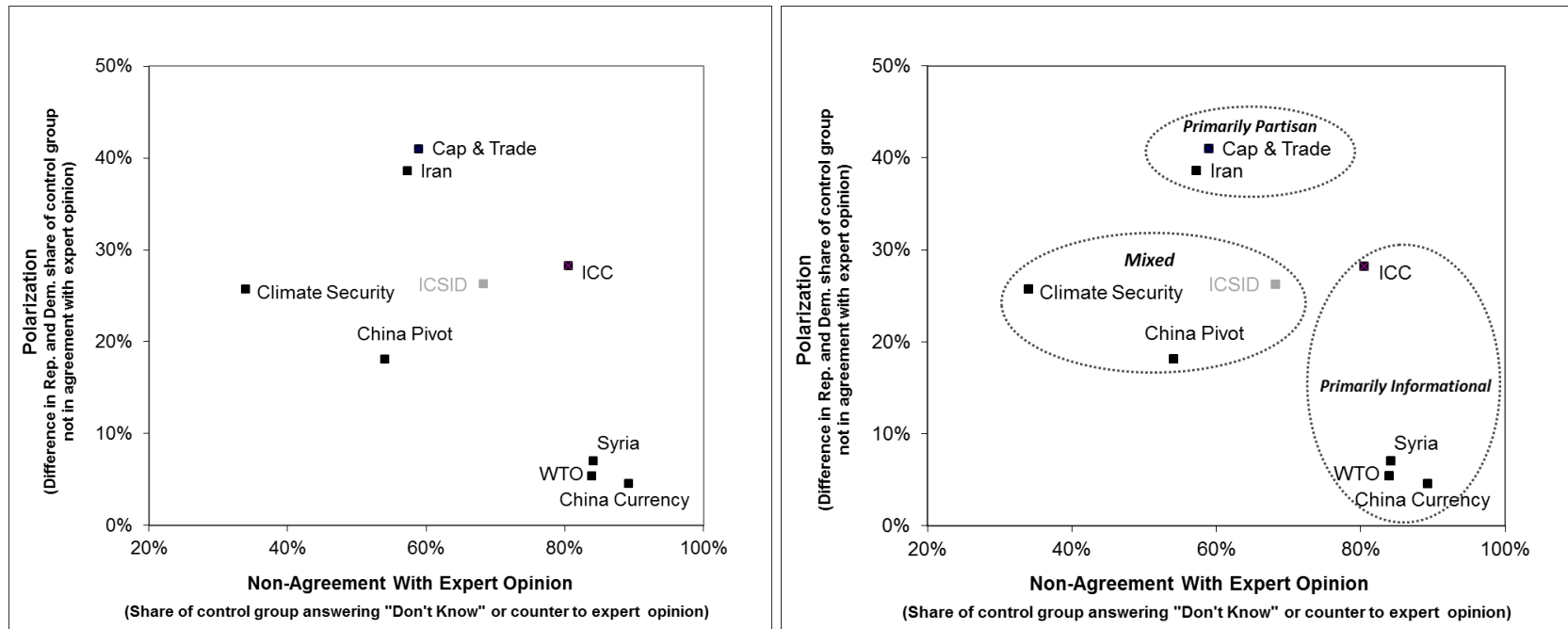


Table 1: Baseline opinion by issue and expert view

Cluster	Issue	Expert View	% Against Expert View		% Don't Know		% In Agreement with Expert	
			Baseline Democrat	Baseline Republican	Baseline Democrat	Baseline Republican	Baseline Democrat	Baseline Republican
Primarily Informational	ICC	<i>Ratify treaty</i>	66%	42%	27%	23%	7%	36%
	Syria	<i>Support intervention</i>	63%	59%	25%	21%	13%	20%
	Currency	<i>Keep policy of non-retaliation unchanged</i>	55%	68%	32%	24%	13%	8%
	WTO	<i>Increase use of dispute mechanism</i>	7%	26%	75%	61%	18%	13%
Mixed	Climate Sec	<i>Invest in tech to reduce military fuel dependence</i>	5%	31%	17%	17%	78%	52%
	China Pivot	<i>Support relocation of naval force</i>	26%	16%	37%	28%	38%	56%
	ICSID	<i>US citizens and corporations subject to rulings</i>	17%	45%	40%	38%	43%	17%
Primarily Partisan	Cap & Trade	<i>Institute a Cap and Trade system</i>	11%	62%	30%	20%	59%	18%
	Iran	<i>Oppose airstrike against nuclear program</i>	17%	58%	23%	20%	60%	22%

contrast, “Climate Security,” where admittedly the question wording lends itself to agreement with the expert opinion, should have smaller effects overall.¹⁰ In fact, the initial distribution for “Climate Security” already falls so close to the expert view that there is limited room for movement. Table 1 offers a summary of each issue’s classification, expert view, and (by partisan type) the baseline distribution of responses to the issue specific policy question (full text available in Supplement B).

The grouping of issues—especially the incorporation of “ICSID” in the “Mixed” category and ICC in the “Primarily Informational” category—is further supported by the results of clustering analysis. Clustering is a technique for grouping data (Kaufman and Rousseeuw 1990; Everitt, Landau, Leese, and Stahl 2010). This technique returns the same three clusters, both with or without the inclusion of ICSID (see Supplement A, Table 6).¹¹ Additionally, the distribution of issues across our categories alleviates concerns about question wording, including variation in the complexity of the issue or the identity of the cue-giver. Complexity cuts across our categories: for example, Syria and Iran are relatively simple questions, but one falls into the “Primarily Partisan” category and the other in “Primarily Informational.” Similarly, “China Currency,” “Cap & Trade,” and “ICSID” are all relatively complex, but fall into three different categories. One might be concerned that cues that mention Congress might function differently than those mentioning non-political experts; but, for example, the ICC question, which mentions Congress, exhibits a similar pattern to other questions in the “Primarily Informational” category.

Analysis

We test our predictions using a multinomial logit analysis split by partisanship (alternative tests and results are described below). Splitting the sample between Democrats and

¹⁰ The information treatment in this question highlighted climate change as a potential threat to national security (see Supplement B for full question wording). On the security implications of climate change, see Busby 2008. We sought to ask a security-framed reference to climate change. Although the security effects on this issue are usually discussed in terms of how climate change contributes to instability and conflict, we chose not to ask a question about using force to intervene where climate change led to conflict, because views about the use of force might confound the results. Thus we chose a more technocratic, but still security-based, question, asking respondents if they supported investment in technology to make the military more independent of fossil fuels. Since it is likely that many people would see investment in technology that gives the military more leeway as a good thing, however, the proportion of those in agreement is likely to be relatively high.

¹¹ We used the STATA `kmedians` cluster command.

Republicans allows for fully independent estimation of partisan responses to the different types of expert attribution—generic, Democratic, and Republican.

The use of the multinomial logit offers particular advantages given our theoretical setup. A multinomial logit allows the dependent variable to take three values: an opinion that matches the provided expert opinion, an opinion explicitly against that opinion, or “don’t know,” allowing for independent estimates of the influence of the treatments on the different responses. Recall that in our theoretical framework, respondents can be initial “non-agreers” either by disagreeing, or by simply having no opinion on the issue. Shifts in responses could take several forms—for example, from “don’t know” to “agree,” or from “disagree” to “agree,” or from “disagree” to “don’t know”—but the effect of a message on a move from a non-opinion to an opinion might differ from the effect on a move between opinions (i.e., for or against experts). A multinomial logit approach does not impose a specific structure on the relationship of responses to each other. The two primary alternative model choices assume a particular relationship between response categories. For example, use of a logit would require generating a binary dependent variable, either by excluding “don’t knows,” or by assuming that “don’t knows” are equivalent to one or the other response categories and collapsing them in with that category. While the former strategy ignores a politically interesting and potentially influential portion of the public, the latter assumes that those willing to state “don’t know” will be similarly moved as those who already state a positive opinion. Using a multinomial logit thus avoids both ignoring sections of the public and making unsupported assumptions about their behavior. Alternatively, use of an ordered logit would assume a strict progression and equidistant spacing between responses categories; or in other words, that moving from non-support to “don’t know” is equivalent to moving from “don’t know” to support. Given that we have no theoretical reason to make such assumptions—the imposition of which could result in biased estimates if, in fact, the underlying response effect were not ordered as an ordered logit model assumes—the multinomial logit offers the necessary flexibility to avoid imposing those assumptions.¹² Barring clear

¹² If the underlying response effect were ordered, the multinomial logit estimates would still be correct, albeit less efficient. However, the reverse is not true. If the underlying response effect were not ordered, estimates from an ordered logit would not only be inefficient, they would also be potentially biased and possibly “nonsensical” (Long 1997). According to Long (1997, 149), “if there is any question about the ordinality of the dependent variable, the

theoretical expectations of ordering, the multinomial logit is the most conservative modeling choice (for a similar argument about the analytical importance of “don’t know” responses and for the use of multinomial logit in an analysis of foreign policy attitudes across several issue areas, see Fordham and Kleinberg 2015: 14-15; in the context of war, see also Berinsky 2009: 299; also 251-254).

Overview of Results

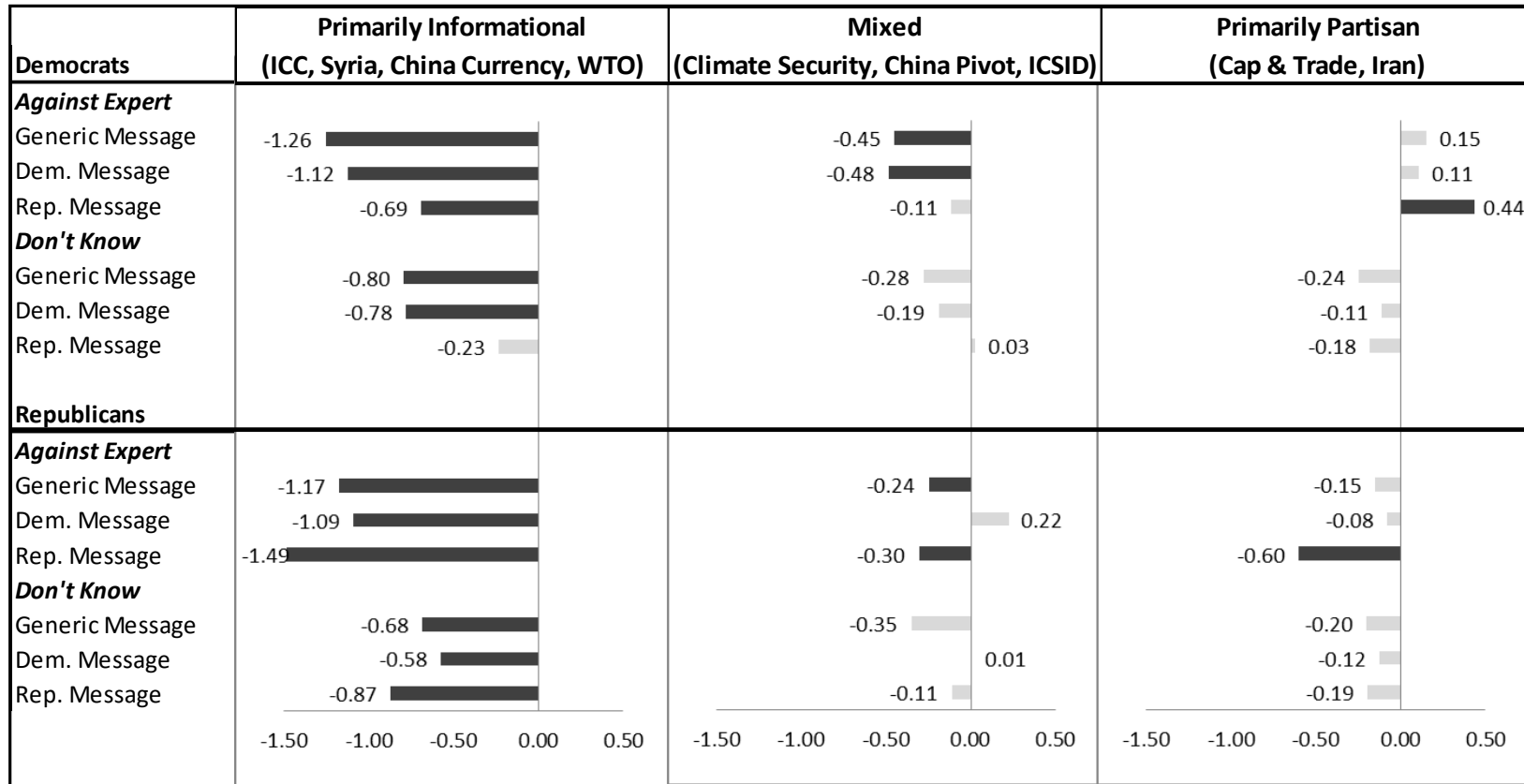
Before delving into the details of the results, it is useful to keep in mind the broad pattern we expect across issues. Our hypotheses predict differential effects according to issue context; for issues with high non-agreement and low polarization we expect all information-rich messages, even those with cross-party attribution, to be shift opinion in the same direction; for highly polarized issues we expect only partisan endorsements, in line with partisan expectations, to be effective; and for those issues in between, we expect informational-rich messages with either generic or partisan attribution to be effect, but not across partisan lines. As a first test of the importance of context on the varied efficacy of expert messages, we pool issues according to the two dimensions of non-agreement and polarization as displayed in Figure 1: “Primarily Informational” (“ICC,” “Syria,” “China Currency,” and “WTO”), “Mixed” (“China Security,” “China Pivot,” and “ICSID”), and “Primarily Partisan” (“Cap & Trade” and “Iran”). The multinomial analysis of these pooled survey responses (full results in Supplement A, Table 4) include issue-specific fixed effects and clustered standard errors.¹³ Figure 2 offers an overview of the results by depicting the direction, size, and significance of the coefficients for each message type. Here the dark grey bars represent significant coefficients ($p < .10$), light gray bars insignificant coefficients.

The results in Figure 2 yield a striking pattern. On the left side, the large dark grey bars,

potential loss of efficiency in using models for nominal outcomes is outweighed by avoiding potential bias.” See also Williams 2006.

¹³ It is important to note that because our categorization of the issues is empirical (that is, based on measured baseline opinion), there is an imbalance in the issue areas and thus observations in each category when the issues are pooled. The pooled results are intended to give a broad overview, but the individual results broken down by issue area in Tables 1 and 2 are the more demanding and complete test of our hypotheses. For example, the individual issue results indicate that the generic movement seen in the “Primarily Informational” category, for example, still stands when these issues are not pooled.

Figure 2: Multinomial analysis of survey responses by issue category
 (Dark grey bars represent significant coefficients (p<.10), light gray bars insignificant coefficients)



all moving in the same direction, show the effectiveness of all versions of the message on opinion. For “Primarily Informational” issues, generic and partisan messages have a large and similar influence on opinion, regardless of partisan identification. In contrast, on the right hand side, results from analysis of survey responses on “Primarily Partisan” issues suggest just that: only the partisan message matters and in countervailing ways for Republicans and Democrats. In the middle “Mixed” category, generic messages work as well as Democratic messages for Democrats and Republican messages for Republicans, but no longer can partisan messages “cross the aisle” in terms of moving opinion in the desired direction.¹⁴ Note that such systematic variation in treatment effects could muddy interpretation of the results from single issue analysis. Lacking consideration of context, analysis of issues falling into the latter two categories might seem to provide evidence that cross-party messaging is ineffective or that only partisan attribution, not the information itself, matters. Instead, we argue that for some issues, generic elite cues have reached their limits.

Although pooling responses by issue category offers a convenient way to summarize the findings, analysis at the individual issue level offers the strongest test of the robustness of our predictions. Table 2 reports the multinomial logit results by issue category, and stacks results for Democrats on top of the results for Republicans. The base message serves as the omitted explanatory variable and responses in agreement with the provided expert opinion serve as the omitted response category. For each issue, we examine the size and direction of treatment effects, comparing the generically-attributed message versus the partisan-attributed messages. To illustrate the effects, we use the Clarify package (Tomz, Wittenberg, and King 2003) to estimate predicted probabilities for each condition and present the predicted shift in opinion, for both Democrats and Republicans, in Table 3 (a similar table using raw response data appears in

¹⁴ The supplemental appendix presents a variety of alternative modeling choices including a multi-level model perspective using issue groups. Supplement A provides not only results from a multi-level multinomial logit including all 9 issues and 3 clusters (Table 7a) but also variants which exclude ICSID or the WTO (Tables 7b and 7c respectively) and also (with caveats) a multi-level ordered logit (Table 8) and multi-level logit (Table 9). These different models may identify weakness in one or another particular effect but the overarching story holds across the three issue clusters (all messages effective for “Primarily Informational”; only partisan messages effective for “Primarily Partisan”; and some generic messages effective, though not consistently so, for the “Mixed”). Furthermore, as noted above, the multinomial logit is the most appropriate model for this data.

Supplement A, Table 3). In all cases, tests of significance use the more conservative two-tailed test. Although theoretically our expectations for the generic and same-party messages point in one direction, we allow for the possibility that respondents could move in the opposite direction of a cue. Finally, below we offer three graphical examples, one drawn from each category, to illustrate the effect of the differently attributed messages on opinion.

Although Table 2 contains a sea of coefficients, looking broadly across the categories in the table provides an overall picture of how the effect of messages varies in accordance with our predictions. On the left side of Table 2, issues in the “Primarily Informational” category show substantial and significant effects for most treatment effects, for both types of partisans, with all treatments moving respondents in the same direction. As we move from left to right, both the strength and consistency of treatments diminish, particularly the strength of the generic expert-attributed messages, until only partisan treatment effects remain for the “Primarily Partisan” category. For these issues, treatments move partisans in opposite directions. Note also that while message effects systematically vary across each individual issue, the message remained the same within each treatment and only attribution varied. Thus, “null” findings for some attributions are unlikely to be the result of an ineffective informational content but instead the result of the attribution itself in the context of issue type. Indeed, at least one version of the message moved attitudes for each issue. We now discuss the details of how messages operate in each category of issues.

“Primarily Informational” Issues

In the “Primarily Informational” category, the “ICC,” “Syria,” “China Currency,” and the “WTO” shared two characteristics. First, control group responses showed that the majority were not in agreement with the expert opinion that would be offered in the survey treatments. Second, polarization was relatively low. Here, our theory predicts that both generic and partisan attributions of expert opinion will be strongly influential; and indeed, with just a few exceptions noted below, both generic and partisan treatments significantly moved individuals in the same direction, towards the provided expert opinion. The treatments either decreased the probability of a response directly counter to the expert view, decreased the probability of a “don’t know” response, or both.

Consider, for example, the estimated treatment effects for “China Currency.” As denoted by the negative, significant coefficients for all three treatments (generic, Democratic, and

Table 2: Issue-specific multinomial analyses of survey responses

Democrats	Primarily Informational				Mixed			Primarily Partisan	
	ICC	Syria	China Currency	WTO	Climate Security	China Pivot	ICSID	Cap & Trade	Iran
Against Expert	Coef. s.e.	Coef. s.e.	Coef. s.e.	Coef. s.e.	Coef. s.e.	Coef. s.e.	Coef. s.e.	Coef. s.e.	Coef. s.e.
Generic Message	-1.40 0.31 ***	-0.62 0.26 **	-1.69 0.26 ***	-1.26 0.46 ***	0.02 0.39	-0.38 0.24	-1.19 0.46 ***	0.35 0.27	-0.02 0.25
Dem. Message	-1.48 0.31 ***	-0.50 0.26 *	-1.15 0.26 ***	-0.72 0.39 *	-0.13 0.42	-0.51 0.25 **	-0.84 0.42 **	0.12 0.29	0.07 0.24
Rep. Message	-0.82 0.33 **	-0.07 0.28	-1.16 0.26 ***	-0.26 0.42	-0.50 0.46	0.04 0.23	-0.23 0.41	1.06 0.27 ***	-0.16 0.26
Constant	2.18 0.26 ***	1.60 0.20 ***	1.46 0.20 ***	-0.99 0.29 ***	-2.66 0.29 ***	-0.39 0.16 **	-0.92 0.26 ***	-1.63 0.21 ***	-1.27 0.18 ***
Don't Know									
Generic Message	-0.60 0.33 *	-0.85 0.31 ***	-0.92 0.26 ***	-0.83 0.22 ***	-0.41 0.26	-0.25 0.21	-0.24 0.28	-0.25 0.21	-0.23 0.24
Dem. Message	-0.66 0.32 **	-0.29 0.30	-0.86 0.27 ***	-1.07 0.22 ***	-0.09 0.25	-0.31 0.21	-0.11 0.28	-0.02 0.21	-0.23 0.23
Rep. Message	0.02 0.35	-0.19 0.32	-0.43 0.27	-0.25 0.24	-0.17 0.26	0.03 0.21	0.31 0.29	0.07 0.22	-0.42 0.24 *
Constant	1.28 0.27 ***	0.66 0.23 ***	0.92 0.21 ***	1.40 0.17 ***	-1.53 0.17 ***	-0.03 0.15	-0.08 0.20	-0.67 0.14 ***	-0.96 0.16 ***
Obs.	941	942	943	940	945	940	479	942	940
Republicans	ICC	Syria	China Currency	WTO	Climate Security	China Pivot	ICSID	Cap & Trade	Iran
Against Expert	Coef. s.e.	Coef. s.e.	Coef. s.e.	Coef. s.e.	Coef. s.e.	Coef. s.e.	Coef. s.e.	Coef. s.e.	Coef. s.e.
Generic Message	-1.41 0.26 ***	-0.16 0.27	-1.43 0.33 ***	-1.95 0.36 ***	-0.34 0.24	-0.28 0.30	-0.10 0.41	0.04 0.28	-0.34 0.26
Dem. Message	-1.32 0.28 ***	-0.06 0.26	-1.61 0.33 ***	-2.01 0.37 ***	0.08 0.23	0.47 0.28 *	0.01 0.42	0.03 0.28	-0.17 0.26
Rep. Message	-1.51 0.26 ***	-0.51 0.26 *	-1.70 0.32 ***	-2.93 0.42 ***	-0.17 0.24	-0.36 0.31	-0.62 0.40	-0.70 0.26 ***	-0.51 0.25 *
Constant	0.15 0.17	1.10 0.19 ***	2.12 0.27 ***	0.72 0.26 ***	-0.52 0.16 ***	-1.26 0.20 ***	0.98 0.30 ***	1.26 0.20 ***	1.00 0.18 ***
Don't Know									
Generic Message	-0.73 0.28 ***	0.10 0.32	-0.87 0.36 ***	-1.17 0.28 ***	-0.13 0.29	-0.41 0.25 *	-0.47 0.43	-0.24 0.35	-0.15 0.32
Dem. Message	-0.08 0.27	-0.28 0.32	-0.93 0.36 ***	-1.16 0.28 ***	0.02 0.29	0.10 0.24	-0.28 0.44	-0.03 0.34	-0.21 0.32
Rep. Message	-0.66 0.27 **	-0.19 0.31	-1.07 0.36 ***	-1.52 0.28 ***	0.00 0.28	-0.13 0.24	-0.40 0.40	-0.51 0.32	0.08 0.29
Constant	-0.45 0.21 **	0.05 0.23	1.05 0.30 ***	1.54 0.23 ***	-1.11 0.20 ***	-0.68 0.16 ***	0.82 0.31 ***	0.15 0.24	-0.08 0.23
Obs.	735	738	736	736	735	734	372	735	738

Omitted category: response matches provided expert opinion. Asterisks denote the following p-values: * < .10, ** < .05, and *** < .01. Two-tailed test of significance.

Table 3: Predicted effect of generic, Democratic, and Republican-attributed messages on survey responses

	Primarily Informational				Mixed			Primarily Partisan	
	ICC	Syria	China Currency	WTO	Climate Security	China Pivot	ICSID	Cap & Trade	Iran
% Against Expert									
Base Democrat	66%	62%	55%	7%	6%	26%	18%	12%	17%
Δ Dem. Receiving Generic Message	-23% ***	-3%	-26% ***	-3%	1%	-5%	-11% **	5%	1%
Δ Dem. Receiving Democratic Message	-24% ***	-8% *	-15% ***	0%	-1%	-6% *	-9% *	1%	2%
Δ Dem. Receiving Republican Message	-20% ***	1%	-21% ***	0%	-2%	0%	-5%	15% ***	-1%
Base Republican	41%	59%	68%	27%	31%	16%	45%	62%	58%
Δ Rep. Receiving Generic Message	-23% ***	-5%	-21% ***	-16% ***	-6%	-2%	5%	4%	-7%
Δ Rep. Receiving Democratic Message	-25% ***	2%	-24% ***	-16% ***	1%	7%	5%	1%	-2%
Δ Rep. Receiving Republican Message	-25% ***	-10% *	-25% ***	-21% ***	-4%	-4%	-8%	-11% **	-14% ***
	Primarily Informational				Mixed			Primarily Partisan	
	ICC	Syria	China Currency	WTO	Climate Security	China Pivot	ICSID	Cap & Trade	Iran
% Don't Know									
Base Democrat	27%	25%	32%	74%	17%	37%	39%	30%	23%
Δ Dem. Receiving Generic Message	12% ***	-6%	3%	-13% ***	-5%	-2%	0%	-6%	-4%
Δ Dem. Receiving Democratic Message	11% ***	2%	-1%	-21% ***	-1%	-3%	2%	-1%	-4%
Δ Dem. Receiving Republican Message	16% ***	-2%	9% **	-3%	-2%	0%	10%	-4%	-6%
Base Republican	23%	21%	24%	60%	17%	28%	38%	20%	20%
Δ Rep. Receiving Generic Message	-4%	4%	5%	-7%	0%	-6%	-9%	-4%	2%
Δ Rep. Receiving Democratic Message	8% *	-3%	6%	-7%	0%	0%	-7%	-1%	-1%
Δ Rep. Receiving Republican Message	-2%	3%	5%	-12% **	1%	-1%	0%	0%	8% *
	Primarily Informational				Mixed			Primarily Partisan	
	ICC	Syria	China Currency	WTO	Climate Security	China Pivot	ICSID	Cap & Trade	Iran
% In Agreement with Expert Opinion									
Base Democrat	8%	13%	13%	19%	78%	38%	43%	58%	60%
Δ Dem. Receiving Generic Message	12% ***	9% ***	23% ***	16% ***	4%	7% *	11%	1%	3%
Δ Dem. Receiving Democratic Message	13% ***	5%	16% ***	20% ***	2%	9% **	6%	0%	2%
Δ Dem. Receiving Republican Message	4%	1%	12% ***	4%	4%	-1%	-4%	-11% **	7%
Base Republican	36%	20%	8%	13%	52%	56%	17%	18%	22%
Δ Rep. Receiving Generic Message	27% ***	1%	16% ***	23% ***	6%	9% *	4%	0%	5%
Δ Rep. Receiving Democratic Message	17% ***	2%	18% ***	23% ***	-1%	-6%	1%	0%	3%
Δ Rep. Receiving Republican Message	27% ***	7%	20% ***	34% ***	3%	5%	8%	11% **	6%

Asterisks denote the following p-values: * < .10, ** < .05, and *** < .01. Two-tailed test of significance.

Republican), the provision of additional information, regardless of attribution, significantly decreased the probability of providing a response counter to expert opinion among both Democrats and Republicans. With one exception (Republican treatment on Democrats), treatments also decreased the probability of answering “don’t know.” The predicted shift from the treatments was substantial, with 12 to 23 percentage point increases in support for the expert view that current U.S. policy should be continued (see Table 3). Notably, the generic treatment “outperformed” partisan treatments for Democrats and was on par for Republicans in terms of moving individuals to support the expert opinion. Partisan attribution added little to the shift in the distribution of responses. For example, the probability that a Republican would recommend imposing tariffs in response to China’s currency manipulation was .68 among the control group. This probability dropped to .47 (a 21 percentage point decline) among those receiving the generic expert information treatment. Predicted declines were only slightly larger among those receiving information attributed to Democratic experts (24 percentage point drop) or Republican experts (a 25 percentage point drop). To summarize, support for imposing tariffs dropped by almost a third due to information provision, regardless of attribution. Democrats were similarly moved, albeit primarily by the generic treatment which resulted in a predicted 26 percentage point drop compared to 15 percentage points and 21 percentage points for the Democratic-attributed and Republican-attributed messages, respectively. Results from ICC responses follow a similar pattern. Base disagreement with the provided expert opinion was high among Democrats and Republicans (66% and 41%, respectively), but all three messages— generic, Democratic, and Republican—resulted in substantial declines (ranging from -20 to -25 percentage points) in the proportions of Democrats and Republicans in disagreement with the provided expert opinion. Fewer than 8% of Democrats in the control group provided a response aligned with elite opinion. Both the generic and Democratic-attributed treatment raised the percentage by 12 and 13 percentage points, respectively. Republicans were already more closely aligned with elite opinion, with 36% of the control group providing a response in line with the experts. Yet, again the generic and Republican-attributed messages dramatically increase support by 27 percentage points, and even the Democrat-attributed message increased support by 17 percentage points.

In the case of the WTO, the source of non-alignment with experts was primarily from non-opinion. Only 7% of Democrats in the control group directly expressed opposition to

increased use of the WTO mechanism, with 74% responding “don’t know”; yet the multinomial results in Table 2 show that both the generic-attributed message and the Democratic-attributed message lowered the likelihood of responding against the provided expert opinion and the likelihood of responding “don’t know.” For Republicans, 27% of the control group expressed opposition and 60% responded “don’t know”; the results in Table 2 show that all three treatments significantly and similarly diminished the likelihood of both types of response. The net result in terms of predicted probability was to increase support for the use of the WTO between 16 and 20 percentage points for Democrats (excluding the insignificant effect of the Republican-attributed message) and between 23 and 34 percentage points for Republicans. Public opinion on relatively obscure policies often goes unstudied. Because of the very high percentage of non-opinion holders in the control group, this experiment offers some insight into the effect of the treatments on the “don’t knows.” The results suggest that non-opinion does not necessarily exclude individuals from responding to generic or even counter-partisan information, nor do partisans without strong opinions automatically follow the endorsements of their co-partisans.

The one outlier in the “Primarily Informational” category was Syria. Treatment effects for Syria were much smaller compared to “China Currency,” the “ICC,” and the “WTO.” However, even on the issue of intervention—an issue with a salient recent history—a generic message results in a small shift in opinion. Notably, the generic message is strongest among Democrats and leads to a significant increase (9 percentage points) in support for intervention in Syria, despite strong opposition to intervention in the control group.¹⁵ As a matter of substantive interest and as a check on external validity, we reran the Syria question during the August 2013 crisis over the Assad regime’s alleged use of chemical weapons. The follow-up experiment was run by the GfK Group between August 30 and September 4, after the chemical attack became public and when it seemed that the US was on the verge of airstrikes. For comparability, we employed the same question wording even though the crisis was no longer framed in humanitarian terms. Comparison of the control groups shows a slight change in the baseline distribution. While this baseline was unchanged among Republicans, Democrats in 2013

¹⁵ It is important to note that the information treatment for Syria, which stressed the potential utility of air strikes and aid in bringing down the Assad regime and ending the humanitarian crisis, was crafted in the context of the crisis in 2012.

expressed less direct opposition to intervention in Syria and more uncertainty than Democrats in 2012. The net result served to diminish partisan polarization to nearly zero, while retaining widespread (>80%) non-alignment with the expert opinion. But while treatment effects are similar for all types of messages, they are statistically and substantively close to zero (results available in Supplement A, Tables 2 and 3).

Given the possibility that respondents might encounter information about Syria in the real world that might contaminate the experiment (Gaines, Kuklinski, and Quirk 2007, 12), the similarity between our Syria findings in a low-salience period (fall 2012) and a high-salience period (August 2013) suggests that either respondents were not particularly influenced by news about Syria in August 2013, or that they held strong predispositions. In the wake of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, one might expect that bipartisan war-weariness makes it difficult to move attitudes about another military intervention (and that rally effects during crises are not automatic). We explore this issue further in Supplement A, Table 5 (and accompanying discussion), and find that war-weariness is indeed a significant factor for responses concerning Iran and Syria, and affects Democrats and Republicans quite similarly in the Syria case. Thus war-weariness may explain the lack of movement for Syria especially. Such an effect suggests that other dimensions of issue context that can be important for understanding the effect of cues, although we bracket these for future research.

“Primarily Partisan” Issues

Where the “Primarily Informational” issues showed strong generic-attribution effects, the “Primarily Partisan” issues on the right side of Table 2—“Cap & Trade” and “Iran”—show only partisan-based responses, as expected. In the case of “Cap & Trade,” Democrats responded strongly to the Republican-attributed expert message, but in a manner which increased, rather than decreased, disagreement with the provided expert opinion. For Democrats, the multinomial results show a positive and significant relationship (+1.06, s.e. .27) between the likelihood of providing a response against the provided expert opinion, while the same relationship is negative and significant (-0.70, s.e. .26) for Republicans. Translated into predicted probabilities, the gain in support from Republicans hearing the Republican-attributed message (an 11 percentage point increase) is almost exactly negated by the loss in support from Democrats hearing the same Republican-attributed message (11 percentage point decline). In other words, in the face of a Republican cue, Democrats are far more likely to hold an opposing opinion despite Cap and

Trade's affinity with Democratic predispositions. This out-party "backlash" effect among Democrats is stronger than expected and perhaps the result of the extreme polarization of this issue. But this result merits further exploration since it is somewhat curious to see Democrats turn against their own predispositions merely because of a Republican endorsement of an elite view that conforms to those predispositions.¹⁶ In the case of "Iran," responses were more tempered. Democrats' responses did not statistically change between the control group and various treatment groups, but Republican opposition to the expert position declined substantially (-0.42, s.e. .24, or a predicted drop of 14 percentage points) among the group which received Republican expert-attributed information.

"Mixed" Issues

Finally, the "Mixed" category of issues ("Climate Security," "China Pivot," and "ICSID"), characterized by medium levels of both polarization and proportion in non-agreement with experts, shows a combination of partisan, informational effects, and null effects. For "Climate Security," no treatment had a significant effect on the probability of providing an answer against the provided expert opinion, using the more conservative two-tailed test. For Democrats, the generic message did diminish the probability of answering "don't know," but the effect is small and only significant using a one-tailed test. "China Pivot" showed some informational effects for both Republicans and Democrats. Information attributed to a generic expert directly diminished the propensity to respond "don't know" among Republicans (-0.41, s.e. .25). More subtly, among Democrats, the combined decline—albeit slight—in non-opinion and "against expert" responses generated a significant, positive shift in support for the provided expert opinion (the omitted category in the multinomial logit analysis). In terms of predicted probabilities, the generic message resulted in a 9 percentage point increase in Republican agreement with expert opinion and a 7 percentage point increase among Democrats. Partisan effects were stronger, both among Democrats and Republicans. Information provided by a Democratic-attributed expert slightly diminished the likelihood of responding counter to the provided expert view among Democrats (-0.51, s.e. .25), but increased the likelihood among

¹⁶ Interestingly, Berinsky's Korea experiment found that Democratic partisan cues did not increase support among Democrats (2009, 123), and Republican support prompted a negative response among Democrats. Democrats' predispositions were already against intervention, whereas here Democrats are naturally more supportive of Cap and Trade.

Republicans (+0.47, s.e. .28). That Democrats and Republicans were moved in opposing directions by the same message is another instance of an out-party “backlash” effect, although a more surprising result given that “China Pivot” (unlike “Cap & Trade”) does not exhibit particularly high levels of polarization. However, Republican backlash appears negligible in terms of predicted probabilities. Most of the movement is among Democrats: Democratic-attribution results in a 6 percentage point decline in responses against expert opinion and a 9 percentage point increase in responses in agreement with experts.

“ICSID” similarly shows a mix of partisan and informational aspects, but only among Democrats. Both the generic message and the Democrat-attributed message lowered the likelihood of responses counter to expert opinion (-1.19, s.e. .46 and -0.84, s.e. .42, respectively), but the same message attributed to Republican experts did not shift opinion significantly. Democrats were already less likely to provide a response counter to elite opinion (only 18% of the control group did so). But the generic message and the Democratic-attributed message lowered the percentage even more (by 11 percentage points and 9 percentage points, respectively) leaving few Democrats in those treatments groups directly opposed to the elite position.

Summary

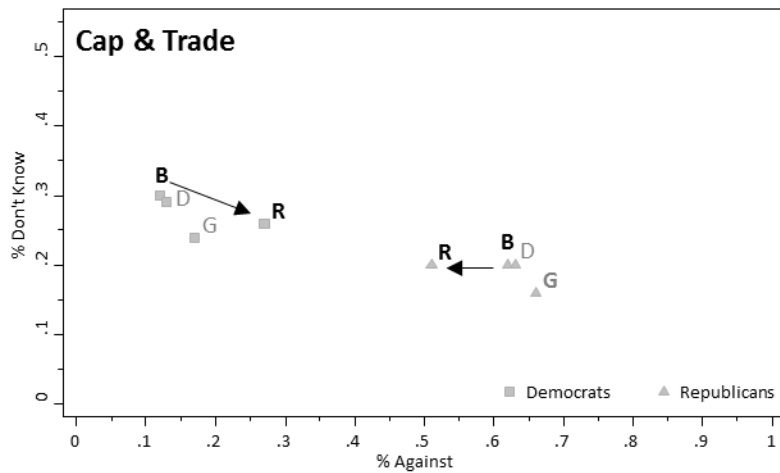
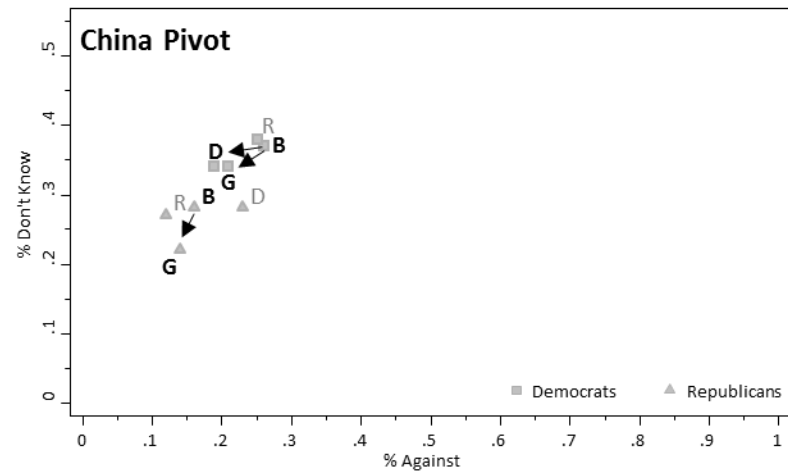
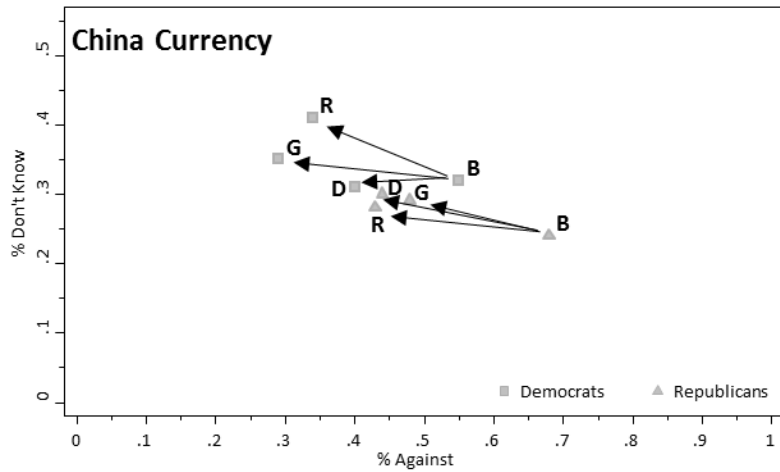
Pulling back to consider the results as a whole, the strength and consistency of treatment effects varied across issues, generally according to our expectation. The broad pattern of the results conforms to the predictions in the hypotheses: for the “Primarily Informational” cluster, generic and partisan messages are effective at moving public opinion for both Republicans and Democrats; for the “Mixed” cluster, some generic messages move individuals but such messages are no longer consistently effective; and for the “Primarily Partisan” cluster, only partisan messages are effective (and may in fact create counter-effects). Overall, information attributed to generic experts has a role to play, but its importance diminishes in the face of already-present divides.

To illustrate visually the pattern of cuing effects across issues, Figure 3 offers a pictorial representation of the substantive differences across categories using three representative issues: “China Currency” for the “Primarily Informational,” “China Pivot” for “Mixed,” and “Cap & Trade” for “Primarily Partisan.”¹⁷ Democratic respondents are depicted with squares; Republican

¹⁷ Supplement A, Figures 1-3 provide illustrations for each of the 9 issues.

Figure 3: Movement in predicted probability of responses for China Currency (“Primarily Informational”); China Pivot (“Mixed”); and Cap & Trade (“Primarily Partisan”)

Note: Bold letters represent significant difference between base control group (B) and treatment group: Generic (G), Democratic (D), or Republican (R). ■=Democrats; ▲=Republicans. For ease of comparison, figures are similarly scaled.



respondents with triangles. The arrows denote a significant change in the predicted probabilities between the base (B) and the generic (G), Democratic (D), or Republican (R) expert treatments. Shifts towards the lower left corner denote movement in the distribution to opinion towards the expert position: (0,0) would represent the absence of “don’t knows” (y-axis) as well as the absence of individuals stating positions counter to the provided expert opinion (x-axis). For “China Currency,” the arrows are long, numerous, and pointing left. In other words, each attribution treatment—generic, Democratic, or Republican—results in a significant and substantive shift towards expert opinion. In comparison, on the issue of reorienting U.S. naval resources (“China Pivot”), our prediction was “Mixed.” The generic message results in a significant, but much smaller, shift in opinion toward experts among both Democrats and Republicans. However, only Democrats are moved by Democratic-attributed information. Finally, in the case of support for “Cap & Trade,” as predicted, only partisan attribution matters. The two clashing arrows represent the effect of the Republican-attributed message which led Republicans towards expert opinion and Democrats away.

There are alternative hypotheses for how expert information and endorsements would shape attitudes across international issues. First, one might expect the pattern to fall along a security-economic axis. Perhaps security issues are more polarized and thus subject to partisan cue-taking, whereas international economic or institutional issues tend to be more cross-cutting or technocratic. Yet variation in the effects of elite cues does not appear to fall along this dimension: some issues like Iran exhibit far greater partisan-based effects than an issue like Syria, where there is less polarization to begin with. Similarly, “Cap & Trade” showed highly partisan effects while other economic or international institutional issues did not. Another alternative is the expectation that partisanship is pervasive. But the pervasiveness of partisan-based effects is belied by the issues that showed movement in the same direction in the face of generic and partisan-based cues.

Conclusion

Existing research on public opinion and international relations tends to focus on single issue areas, and usually treats information- and partisan-based cues as separate, or potentially rival, determinants of mass attitudes. Using survey experiments that employ a common design, but range widely across international issues, we have been able to explore the conditions under which these different aspects of elite cues shape public opinion. The common design of the

experiments, and the internal validity that each experiment provides, highlights an important concern about external validity in survey experiments: the effect of elite cues varies across issues, and any one experiment on a given issue may be capturing effects that are specific to the issue at a given moment. But while our approach has these advantages, we acknowledge that our analysis is only one step. The breadth of issues addressed here and the data and analytical requirements for doing so impose limits on how far we can push the data. Future research should be attentive to issue context and can further probe the limits of elite cue-giving.

In the real world, the systematic variation in the effect of elite messages across issues helps explain why elites can sometimes use expert information to lead public opinion—but often cannot. On some issues, partisan polarization generates headwinds that dampen the effect of information and amplify the role of partisan messengers. We also find suggestive evidence for two issues—“Cap & Trade,” a highly polarized issue, and “China Pivot,” which does not yet exhibit such a high degree of polarization—that there may be an “out-party backlash” effect, whereby respondents react negatively to information provided by the other party, even if the information conforms to the view more generally ascribed to their own party. These effects seem curious and deserve further exploration. But such effects may suggest extreme instances of partisan cue-taking.

For policymakers who aim to shift public opinion, or more concretely, to mobilize support for legislation to address policy problems, the era of highly polarized politics often makes it seem futile to try to use insights from experts to sway public attitudes. Yet providing information stemming from an expert view can influence mass attitudes on international issues, as long as polarization on that issue is low. Of course, raising an issue in elite discourse may increase its salience to the point that it becomes more polarized. A delicate balancing act may be required to ensure information effects remain broadly effective across a politically diverse population. Conversely, those hoping to keep an expert opinion from taking hold in the public consciousness would do well to polarize it (as the Cap and Trade example illustrates). But while challenging, the possibility of “educating” or moving the public is not hopeless. Both researchers and policymakers must remember, however, that messages are not communicated in a vacuum, and their effects will depend on aspects of public opinion that vary across foreign policy issues.

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**Mapping the Boundaries of Elite Cues:
How Elites Shape Mass Opinion Across International Issues**

Supplemental Material

Supplement A contains the following supplementary tables and figures:

Figure 1:	Movement in predicted probability of responses for “Primarily Informational” issues
Figure 2:	Movement in predicted probability of responses for “Mixed” issues
Figure 3:	Movement in predicted probability of responses for “Primarily Partisan” issues
Table 1:	Comparison of Syria experiments, 2012 vs. 2013
Table 2:	Predicted effect of messages about Syria, 2012 vs. 2013
Table 3:	Raw survey responses (baseline distribution vs. other conditions)
Table 4:	Multinomial analysis of survey responses by issue cluster
Text 1:	Discussion of war-weariness analysis
Table 5:	Influence of war-weariness on messages about Syria and Iran
Table 6:	Issue clustering
Table 7a:	Multi-level multinomial logit results (9 issues, 3 clusters)
Table 7b:	Multi-level multinomial logit results excluding ICSID (8 issues, 3 clusters)
Table 7c:	Multi-level multinomial logit results excluding WTO (8 issues, 3 clusters)
Table 8:	Multi-level ordered logit results (9 issues, 3 clusters)
Table 9:	Multi-level logit results (9 issues, 3 clusters)

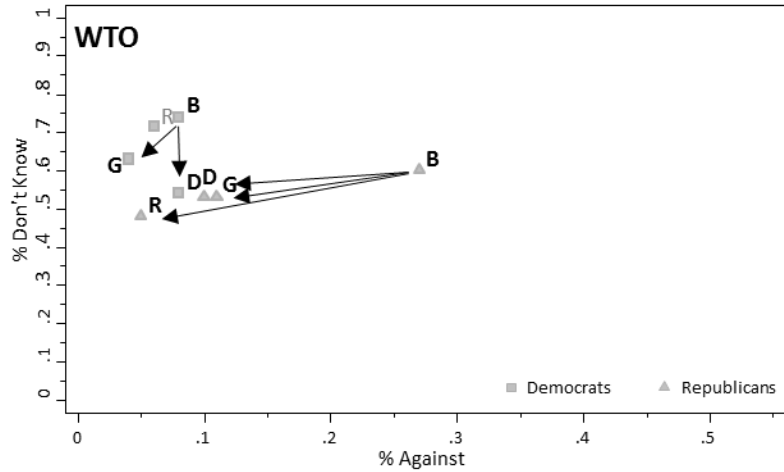
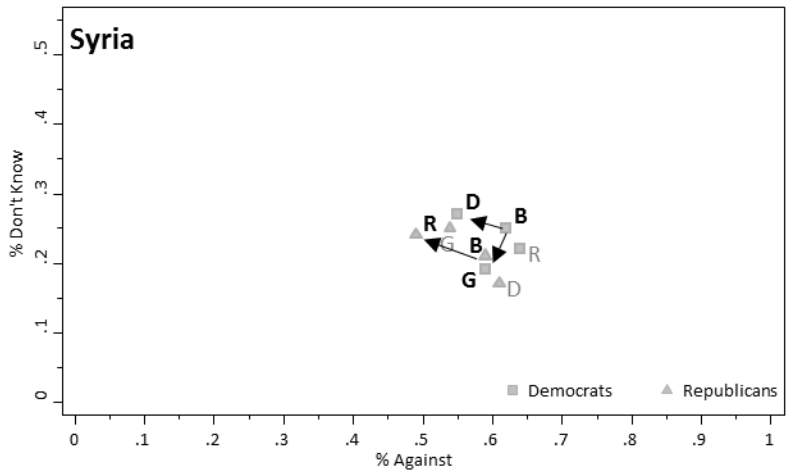
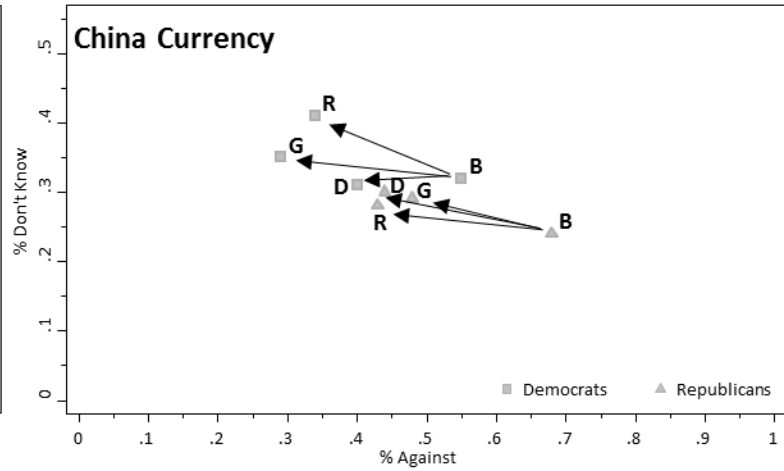
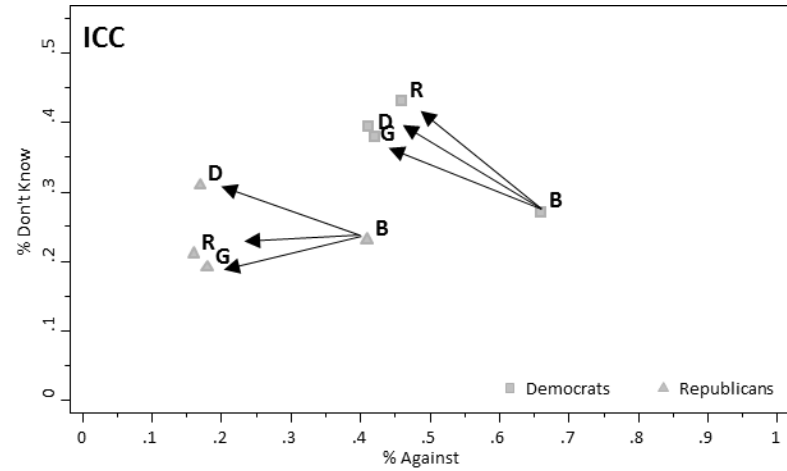
Supplement B contains full question wording for all survey questions, across all conditions.

Supplement C contains a discussion of the impact of survey weights on the analysis of survey experiments fielded in the 2012 CCES. It also contains the following table:

Table 1:	Proportion of women in each sub-sample (by partisan self-identification)
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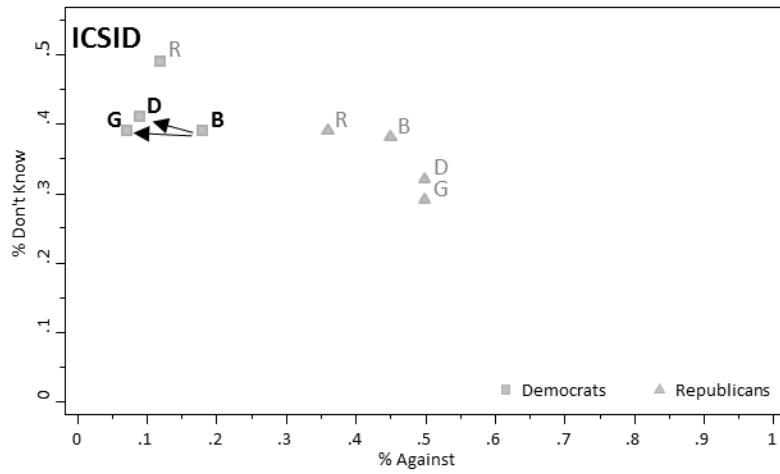
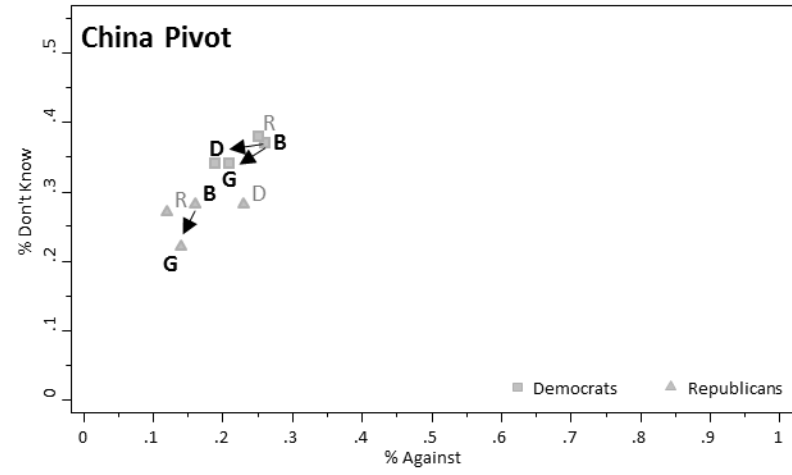
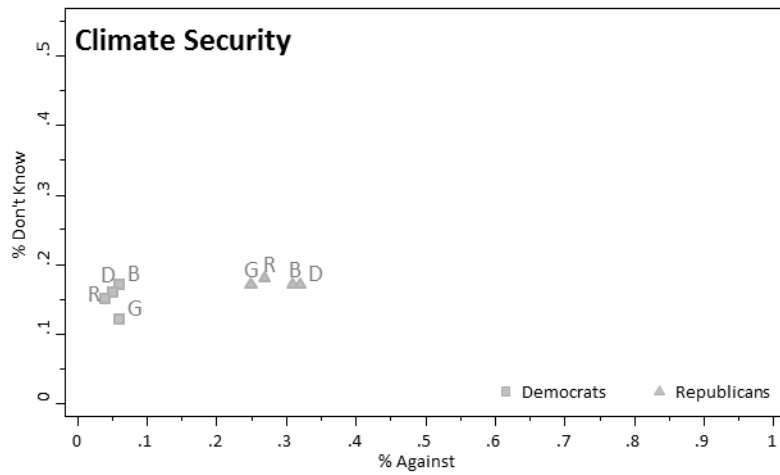
Supplement A, Figure 1: Movement in predicted probability of responses for “Primarily Informational” issues: WTO, China Currency, Syria, and ICC

Note: Bold letters represent significant difference between base control group (B) and treatment group: Generic (G), Democratic (D), or Republican (R). ■=Democrats; ▲=Republicans. For ease of comparison, figures are similarly scaled, except for the WTO for which the scale is adjusted (0 to 1 on the y-axis, and 0 to .55 on the x-axis) due to the high proportion of “Don’t Know” responses.



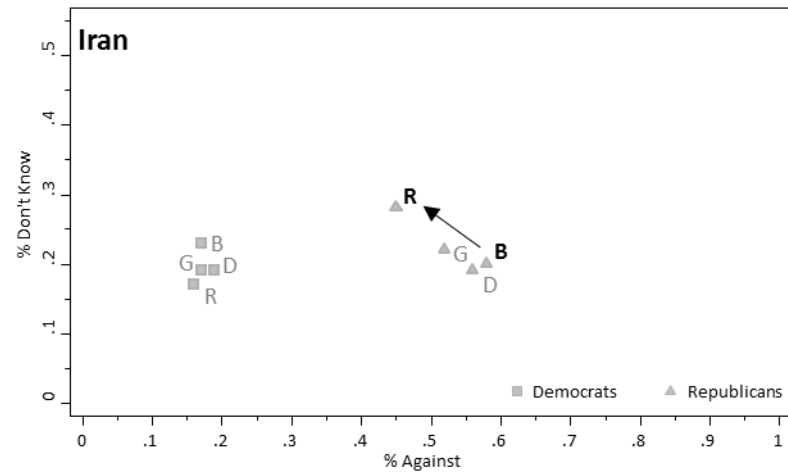
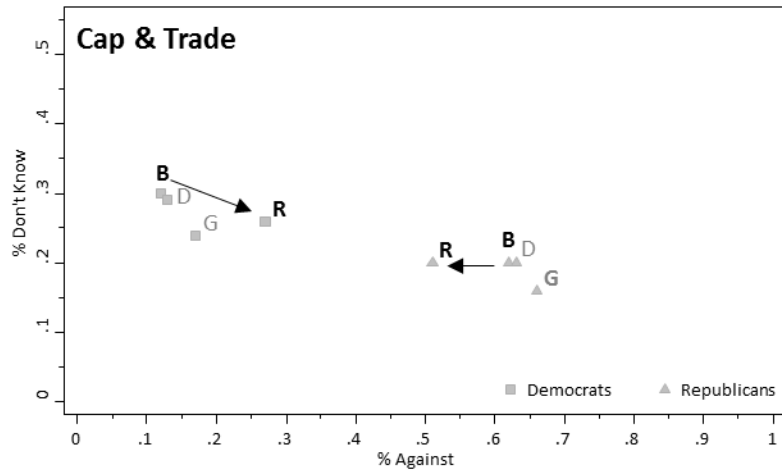
Supplement A, Figure 2: Movement in predicted probability of responses for “Mixed” issues: Climate Security, China Pivot, and ICSID

Note: Bold letters represent significant difference between base control group (B) and treatment group: Generic (G), Democratic (D), or Republican (R). ■=Democrats; ▲=Republicans. For ease of comparison, figures are similarly scaled.



Supplement A, Figure 3: Movement in predicted probability of responses for “Primarily Partisan” issues: “Cap & Trade” and “Iran”

Note: Bold letters represent significant difference between base control group (B) and treatment group: Generic (G), Democratic (D), or Republican (R). ■=Democrats; ▲=Republicans. For ease of comparison, figures are similarly scaled.



Supplement A, Table 1: Comparison of Syria experiments, 2012 vs. 2013

Democrats	Syria 2012		Syria 2013	
<i>Against Expert</i>	<i>Coef.</i>	<i>s.e.</i>	<i>Coef.</i>	<i>s.e.</i>
Generic Message	-0.62	0.26 **	0.30	0.32
Dem. Message	-0.50	0.26 *	-0.14	0.30
Rep. Message	-0.07	0.28	-0.22	0.30
Constant	1.60	0.20 ***	0.84	0.21 ***
<i>Don't Know</i>				
Generic Message	-0.85	0.31 ***	0.03	0.35
Dem. Message	-0.29	0.30	-0.23	0.32
Rep. Message	-0.19	0.32	-0.35	0.32
Constant	0.66	0.23 ***	0.50	0.23 ***
<i>Obs.</i>	942		593	
Republicans	Syria 2012		Syria 2013	
<i>Against Expert</i>	<i>Coef.</i>	<i>s.e.</i>	<i>Coef.</i>	<i>s.e.</i>
Generic Message	-0.16	0.27	-0.08	0.31
Dem. Message	-0.06	0.26	-0.24	0.32
Rep. Message	-0.51	0.26 *	-0.26	0.31
Constant	1.10	0.19 ***	1.06	0.22 ***
<i>Don't Know</i>				
Generic Message	0.10	0.32	0.04	0.36
Dem. Message	-0.28	0.32	0.14	0.36
Rep. Message	-0.19	0.31	-0.37	0.37
Constant	0.05	0.23	0.16	0.25
<i>Obs.</i>	738		524	

*Omitted category: response matches provided expert opinion. Asterisks denote the following p-values: *<.10, **<.05, and ***<.01. Two-tailed test of significance.*

Supplement A, Table 2: Predicted effect of messages about Syria, 2012 vs. 2013

% Against Expert	Syria 2012	Syria 2013
Base Democrat	62%	47%
Δ Dem. Receiving Generic Message	-3%	7%
Δ Dem. Receiving Democratic Message	-8% *	0%
Δ Dem. Receiving Republican Message	1%	0%
Base Republican	59%	57%
Δ Rep. Receiving Generic Message	-5%	-2%
Δ Rep. Receiving Democratic Message	2%	-8%
Δ Rep. Receiving Republican Message	-10% *	-2%

% Don't Know	Syria 2012	Syria 2013
Base Democrat	25%	33%
Δ Dem. Receiving Generic Message	-6%	-4%
Δ Dem. Receiving Democratic Message	2%	-3%
Δ Dem. Receiving Republican Message	-2%	-4%
Base Republican	21%	23%
Δ Rep. Receiving Generic Message	4%	2%
Δ Rep. Receiving Democratic Message	-3%	6%
Δ Rep. Receiving Republican Message	3%	-3%

% In Agreement with Expert Opinion	Syria 2012	Syria 2013
Base Democrat	13%	20%
Δ Dem. Receiving Generic Message	9% ***	-3%
Δ Dem. Receiving Democratic Message	5%	3%
Δ Dem. Receiving Republican Message	1%	5%
Base Republican	20%	20%
Δ Rep. Receiving Generic Message	1%	1%
Δ Rep. Receiving Democratic Message	2%	2%
Δ Rep. Receiving Republican Message	7%	5%

*Asterisks denote the following p-values: *<.10, **<.05, and ***<.01. Two-tailed test of significance.*

Supplement A, Table 3: Raw survey responses (baseline distribution vs. other conditions)

% Against Expert	Primarily Informational				Mixed			Primarily Partisan	
	ICC	Syria	China Currency	WTO	Climate Security	China Pivot	ICSID	Cap & Trade	Iran
Base Democrat	66%	63%	55%	7%	5%	26%	17%	11%	17%
Δ Dem. Receiving Generic Message	-24%	-4%	-27%	-3%	0%	-5%	-11%	5%	1%
Δ Dem. Receiving Democratic Message	-24%	-8%	-15%	0%	-1%	-6%	-9%	1%	2%
Δ Dem. Receiving Republican Message	-20%	1%	-21%	0%	-2%	0%	-5%	15%	-1%
Base Republican	42%	59%	68%	26%	31%	16%	45%	62%	58%
Δ Rep. Receiving Generic Message	-24%	-5%	-21%	-16%	-6%	-2%	5%	4%	-7%
Δ Rep. Receiving Democratic Message	-25%	2%	-24%	-17%	2%	7%	5%	1%	-2%
Δ Rep. Receiving Republican Message	-25%	-10%	-25%	-21%	-3%	-4%	-9%	-11%	-14%

% Don't Know	Primarily Informational				Mixed			Primarily Partisan	
	ICC	Syria	China Currency	WTO	Climate Security	China Pivot	ICSID	Cap & Trade	Iran
Base Democrat	27%	25%	32%	75%	17%	37%	40%	30%	23%
Δ Dem. Receiving Generic Message	12%	-6%	4%	-13%	-5%	-3%	0%	-6%	-4%
Δ Dem. Receiving Democratic Message	11%	2%	-1%	-21%	-1%	-3%	2%	-1%	-4%
Δ Dem. Receiving Republican Message	16%	-2%	9%	-4%	-2%	0%	9%	-4%	-6%
Base Republican	23%	21%	24%	61%	17%	28%	38%	20%	20%
Δ Rep. Receiving Generic Message	-3%	4%	5%	-8%	0%	-7%	-9%	-4%	1%
Δ Rep. Receiving Democratic Message	8%	-4%	6%	-7%	0%	-1%	-7%	-1%	-1%
Δ Rep. Receiving Republican Message	-2%	3%	5%	-13%	1%	-1%	0%	0%	8%

% In Agreement with Expert Opinion	Primarily Informational				Mixed			Primarily Partisan	
	ICC	Syria	China Currency	WTO	Climate Security	China Pivot	ICSID	Cap & Trade	Iran
Base Democrat	7%	13%	13%	18%	78%	38%	43%	59%	60%
Δ Dem. Receiving Generic Message	12%	10%	23%	16%	5%	7%	11%	1%	3%
Δ Dem. Receiving Democratic Message	13%	6%	16%	20%	2%	9%	7%	-1%	2%
Δ Dem. Receiving Republican Message	4%	1%	12%	4%	4%	-1%	-4%	-11%	7%
Base Republican	36%	20%	8%	13%	52%	56%	17%	18%	22%
Δ Rep. Receiving Generic Message	27%	1%	16%	24%	6%	9%	4%	0%	5%
Δ Rep. Receiving Democratic Message	17%	2%	18%	24%	-1%	-6%	2%	0%	3%
Δ Rep. Receiving Republican Message	27%	7%	20%	34%	3%	5%	8%	12%	6%

Supplement A, Table 4: Multinomial analysis of survey responses by issue cluster

Democrats	Primarily Informational		Mixed		Primarily Partisan	
	ICC, Syria, China Currency, WTO		Climate Security, China Pivot, ICSID		Cap & Trade, Iran	
Against Expert	<i>Coef.</i>	<i>s.e.</i>	<i>Coef.</i>	<i>s.e.</i>	<i>Coef.</i>	<i>s.e.</i>
Generic Message	-1.26	0.14 ***	-0.45	0.19 **	0.15	0.18
Dem. Message	-1.12	0.14 ***	-0.48	0.19 **	0.11	0.19
Rep. Message	-0.69	0.15 ***	-0.11	0.18	0.44	0.18 **
Constant	-0.80	0.17 ***	-1.18	0.20 ***	-1.47	0.15 ***
Don't Know						
Generic Message	-0.80	0.13 ***	-0.28	0.14 **	-0.24	0.16
Dem. Message	-0.78	0.14 ***	-0.19	0.14	-0.11	0.15
Rep. Message	-0.23	0.14 *	0.03	0.14	-0.18	0.17
Constant	1.31	0.12 ***	0.01	0.13	-1.05	0.13 ***
<i>Obs.</i>	3766		2364		1882	
Republicans	ICC, Syria, China Currency, WTO		Climate Security, China Pivot, ICSID		Cap & Trade, Iran	
Against Expert	<i>Coef.</i>	<i>s.e.</i>	<i>Coef.</i>	<i>s.e.</i>	<i>Coef.</i>	<i>s.e.</i>
Generic Message	-1.17	0.15 ***	-0.24	0.17	-0.15	0.19
Dem. Message	-1.09	0.16 ***	0.22	0.16	-0.08	0.19
Rep. Message	-1.49	0.15 ***	-0.30	0.17 **	-0.60	0.19 ***
Constant	-0.04	0.15	0.88	0.17 ***	0.96	0.15 ***
Don't Know						
Generic Message	-0.68	0.14 ***	-0.35	0.17 **	-0.20	0.24
Dem. Message	-0.58	0.15 ***	0.01	0.17	-0.12	0.24
Rep. Message	-0.87	0.14 ***	-0.11	0.16	-0.19	0.22
Constant	1.04	0.12 ***	0.64	0.18 ***	0.00	0.18
<i>Obs.</i>	2945		1841		1473	

Issue fixed effects not shown; Standard errors clustered by respondent.

Supplement A, Text 1: Influence of war-weariness on messages about Syria and Iran

The 2012 CCES common content contained questions about whether respondents viewed the Iraq War and (separately) the war in Afghanistan as a mistake (these questions were not available in our 2013 follow-up Syria experiment, which was much more limited in scope). We used these questions to construct a “war-weary” variable, ranging from 0 if respondents thought neither war was a mistake, to 3 if both were a mistake (intermediate values were 1 if respondents were unsure for both wars, and 2 if they thought only one or the other was a mistake). When war-weariness is included in the analysis for Iran and Syria, its coefficient is substantial and significant for both Democrats and Republicans (see table below). In the control group, comparing the least war-weary to the most war-weary, the new model predicts a 34 percentage point increase in opposition to action in Syria: 38 percent v. 72 percent among Democrats and 46 percent to 80 percent among Republicans. Similarly comparing the least war-weary to the most war-weary, the new model predicts a 30 percentage point drop in support for military action in Iran (in the control group): 39 percent v. 9 percent among Democrats and 71 percent to 41 percent among Republicans. War-weariness thus may crowd out movement, especially in the Syria case which shows less partisan asymmetry.

Supplement A, Table 5: Influence of war-weariness on messages about Syria and Iran

Democrats	Primarily Informational				Primarily Partisan			
	Syria		Syria v2		Iran		Iran v2	
Against Expert	<i>Coef.</i>	<i>s.e.</i>	<i>Coef.</i>	<i>s.e.</i>	<i>Coef.</i>	<i>s.e.</i>	<i>Coef.</i>	<i>s.e.</i>
Generic Message	-0.62	0.26 **	-0.65	0.28 **	-0.02	0.25	-0.10	0.28
Dem. Message	-0.50	0.26 *	-0.51	0.28 *	0.07	0.24	-0.05	0.26
Rep. Message	-0.07	0.28	0.00	0.29	-0.16	0.26	-0.22	0.28
War-weariness			0.65	0.09 ***			-0.81	0.09 ***
Constant	1.60	0.20 ***	0.33	0.27	-1.27	0.18 ***	0.34	0.26
Don't Know								
Generic Message	-0.85	0.31 ***	-0.90	0.32 ***	-0.23	0.24	-0.30	0.25
Dem. Message	-0.29	0.30	-0.28	0.31	-0.23	0.23	-0.28	0.24
Rep. Message	-0.19	0.32	-0.21	0.33	-0.42	0.24 *	-0.50	0.26 *
War-weariness			0.25	0.10 **			-0.56	0.09 ***
Constant	0.66	0.23 ***	0.22	0.29	-0.96	0.16 ***	0.19	0.25
<i>Obs.</i>	942		901		940		899	
Republicans	Syria		Syria v2		Iran		Iran v2	
Against Expert	<i>Coef.</i>	<i>s.e.</i>	<i>Coef.</i>	<i>s.e.</i>	<i>Coef.</i>	<i>s.e.</i>	<i>Coef.</i>	<i>s.e.</i>
Generic Message	-0.16	0.27	-0.19	0.30	-0.34	0.26	-0.51	0.28 *
Dem. Message	-0.06	0.26	-0.03	0.28	-0.17	0.26	-0.21	0.28
Rep. Message	-0.51	0.26 *	-0.62	0.29 **	-0.51	0.25 *	-0.56	0.27 **
War-weariness			0.67	0.10 ***			-0.54	0.08 ***
Constant	1.10	0.19 ***	0.47	0.21 **	1.00	0.18 ***	1.75	0.24 ***
Don't Know								
Generic Message	0.10	0.32	0.12	0.34	-0.15	0.32	-0.11	0.34
Dem. Message	-0.28	0.32	-0.37	0.35	-0.21	0.32	-0.21	0.35
Rep. Message	-0.19	0.31	-0.24	0.33	0.08	0.29	0.10	0.32
War-weariness			0.28	0.12 **			-0.27	0.10 ***
Constant	0.05	0.23	-0.19	0.25	-0.08	0.23	0.28	0.29
<i>Obs.</i>	738		660		738		660	

Omitted category: response matches provided expert opinion. Asterisks denote the following p-values: * < .10, ** < .05, and *** < .01. Two-tailed test of significance.

Supplement A, Table 6: Issue clustering

<i>Issue</i>	All 9 Issues			Without ICSID		
	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3
Cap & Trade	0	0	1	0	0	1
China Currency	1	0	0	1	0	0
China Pivot	0	1	0	0	1	0
Climate Security	0	1	0	0	1	0
ICC	1	0	0	1	0	0
ICSID	0	1	0			
Iran	0	0	1	0	0	1
Syria	1	0	0	1	0	0
WTO	1	0	0	1	0	0
Total	4	3	2	4	2	2

Clustering using "kmedians"

Supplement A, Table 7a: Multi-level multinomial logit results (9 issues, 3 clusters)

Democrats (obs. 8012)							
<i>Disagree</i>	Coef.	s.e.	P> z 	<i>Don't Know</i>	Coef.	s.e.	P> z
Cluster 1 Generic Attribution Dem	-1.16	0.14	0.00 ***	Cluster 1 Generic Attribution Dem	-0.81	0.13	0.00 ***
Cluster 1 Democratic Attribution Dem	-1.00	0.13	0.00 ***	Cluster 1 Democratic Attribution Dem	-0.78	0.13	0.00 ***
Cluster 1 Republican Attribution Dem	-0.58	0.14	0.00 ***	Cluster 1 Republican Attribution Dem	-0.25	0.14	0.08 *
Cluster 1 Base	1.31	0.10	0.00 ***	Cluster 1 Base	1.13	0.11	0.00 ***
Cluster 2 Generic Attribution Dem	-0.45	0.17	0.01 **	Cluster 2 Generic Attribution Dem	-0.27	0.13	0.05 **
Cluster 2 Democratic Attribution Dem	-0.45	0.17	0.01 **	Cluster 2 Democratic Attribution Dem	-0.14	0.13	0.30
Cluster 2 Republican Attribution Dem	-0.09	0.17	0.59	Cluster 2 Republican Attribution Dem	0.04	0.13	0.76
Cluster 2 Base	-1.23	0.12	0.00 ***	Cluster 2 Base	-0.62	0.09	0.00 ***
Cluster 3 Generic Attribution Dem	0.15	0.18	0.40	Cluster 3 Generic Attribution Dem	-0.24	0.15	0.12
Cluster 3 Democratic Attribution Dem	0.11	0.19	0.57	Cluster 3 Democratic Attribution Dem	-0.12	0.15	0.42
Cluster 3 Republican Attribution Dem	-0.60	0.19	0.00 ***	Cluster 3 Republican Attribution Dem	-0.19	0.22	0.38
Cluster 3 Base	-1.44	0.14	0.00 ***	Cluster 3 Base	-0.81	0.11	0.00 ***
Republicans (obs. 6259)							
<i>Disagree</i>	Coef.	s.e.	P> z 	<i>Don't Know</i>	Coef.	s.e.	P> z
Cluster 1 Generic Attribution Rep	-1.09	0.14	0.00 ***	Cluster 1 Generic Attribution Rep	-0.66	0.14	0.00 ***
Cluster 1 Democratic Attribution Rep	-0.96	0.14	0.00 ***	Cluster 1 Democratic Attribution Rep	-0.96	0.14	0.00 ***
Cluster 1 Republican Attribution Rep	-1.37	0.14	0.00 ***	Cluster 1 Republican Attribution Rep	-0.83	0.14	0.00 ***
Cluster 1 Base	0.96	0.10	0.00 ***	Cluster 1 Base	0.51	0.11	0.00 ***
Cluster 2 Generic Attribution Rep	-0.18	0.16	0.26	Cluster 2 Generic Attribution Rep	-0.30	0.17	0.07 *
Cluster 2 Democratic Attribution Rep	0.25	0.15	0.10	Cluster 2 Democratic Attribution Rep	0.03	0.17	0.87
Cluster 2 Republican Attribution Rep	-0.22	0.16	0.17	Cluster 2 Republican Attribution Rep	-0.06	0.15	0.71
Cluster 2 Base	-0.55	0.11	0.00 ***	Cluster 2 Base	-0.61	0.12	0.00 ***
Cluster 3 Generic Attribution Rep	-0.14	0.19	0.46	Cluster 3 Generic Attribution Rep	-0.20	0.24	0.40
Cluster 3 Democratic Attribution Rep	-0.07	0.19	0.71	Cluster 3 Democratic Attribution Rep	-0.12	0.24	0.61
Cluster 3 Republican Attribution Rep	-0.60	0.19	0.00 ***	Cluster 3 Republican Attribution Rep	-0.19	0.22	0.38
Cluster 3 Base	1.12	0.14	0.00 ***	Cluster 3 Base	0.03	0.16	0.87

Cluster 1: Primarily Informational (WTO, China Currency, Syria, and ICC)

Cluster 2 Mixed (Climate Security, China Pivot, and ICSID)

Cluster 3: Primarily Partisan (Cap and Trade and Iran)

Supplement A, Table 7b: Multi-level multinomial logit results without ICSID (8 issues, 3 clusters)

Democrats (obs. 7533)				Don't Know			
<i>Disagree</i>	Coef.	s.e.	P> z 		Coef.	s.e.	P> z
Cluster 1 Generic Attribution Dem	-1.16	0.14	0.00 ***	Cluster 1 Generic Attribution Dem	-0.81	0.13	0.00 ***
Cluster 1 Democratic Attribution Dem	-1.00	0.13	0.00 ***	Cluster 1 Democratic Attribution Dem	-0.78	0.13	0.00 ***
Cluster 1 Republican Attribution Dem	-0.58	0.14	0.00 ***	Cluster 1 Republican Attribution Dem	-0.25	0.14	0.08 *
Cluster 1 Base	1.31	0.10	0.00 ***	Cluster 1 Base	1.13	0.11	0.00 ***
Cluster 2 Generic Attribution Dem	-0.31	0.19	0.11	Cluster 2 Generic Attribution Dem	-0.30	0.15	0.05 **
Cluster 2 Democratic Attribution Dem	-0.37	0.20	0.07 *	Cluster 2 Democratic Attribution Dem	-0.20	0.16	0.21
Cluster 2 Republican Attribution Dem	-0.05	0.18	0.77	Cluster 2 Republican Attribution Dem	-0.04	0.15	0.80
Cluster 2 Base	-1.30	0.13	0.00 ***	Cluster 2 Base	-0.76	0.11	0.00 ***
Cluster 3 Generic Attribution Dem	0.15	0.18	0.40	Cluster 3 Generic Attribution Dem	-0.24	0.15	0.12
Cluster 3 Democratic Attribution Dem	0.11	0.19	0.57	Cluster 3 Democratic Attribution Dem	-0.12	0.15	0.42
Cluster 3 Republican Attribution Dem	0.44	0.18	0.02 **	Cluster 3 Republican Attribution Dem	-0.19	0.17	0.24
Cluster 3 Base	-1.44	0.14	0.00 ***	Cluster 3 Base	-0.81	0.11	0.00 ***
Republicans (obs. 5887)				Don't Know			
<i>Disagree</i>	Coef.	s.e.	P> z 		Coef.	s.e.	P> z
Cluster 1 Generic Attribution Rep	-1.09	0.14	0.00 ***	Cluster 1 Generic Attribution Rep	-0.66	0.14	0.00 ***
Cluster 1 Democratic Attribution Rep	-0.96	0.14	0.00 ***	Cluster 1 Democratic Attribution Rep	-0.54	0.14	0.00 ***
Cluster 1 Republican Attribution Rep	-1.37	0.14	0.00 ***	Cluster 1 Republican Attribution Rep	-0.83	0.14	0.00 ***
Cluster 1 Base	0.96	0.10	0.00 ***	Cluster 1 Base	0.51	0.11	0.00 ***
Cluster 2 Generic Attribution Rep	-0.32	0.19	0.09 *	Cluster 2 Generic Attribution Rep	-0.30	0.18	0.10
Cluster 2 Democratic Attribution Rep	0.24	0.18	0.18	Cluster 2 Democratic Attribution Rep	0.06	0.18	0.75
Cluster 2 Republican Attribution Rep	-0.22	0.19	0.23	Cluster 2 Republican Attribution Rep	-0.08	0.18	0.64
Cluster 2 Base	-0.84	0.13	0.00 ***	Cluster 2 Base	-0.86	0.13	0.00 ***
Cluster 3 Generic Attribution Rep	-0.14	0.19	0.46	Cluster 3 Generic Attribution Rep	-0.20	0.24	0.40
Cluster 3 Democratic Attribution Rep	-0.07	0.19	0.71	Cluster 3 Democratic Attribution Rep	-0.12	0.24	0.61
Cluster 3 Republican Attribution Rep	-0.60	0.19	0.00 ***	Cluster 3 Republican Attribution Rep	-0.19	0.22	0.38
Cluster 3 Base	1.12	0.14	0.00 ***	Cluster 3 Base	0.03	0.16	0.87

Cluster 1: Primarily Informational (WTO, China Currency, Syria, and ICC)

Cluster 2 Mixed (Climate Security and China Pivot)

Cluster 3: Primarily Partisan (Cap and Trade and Iran)

Supplement A, Table 7c: Multi-level multinomial logit results without WTO (8 issues, 3 clusters)

Democrats (obs. 7072)					Don't Know				
<i>Disagree</i>	Coef.	s.e.	P> z 		<i>Don't Know</i>	Coef.	s.e.	P> z 	
Cluster 1 Generic Attribution Dem	-1.21	0.15	0.00 ***		Cluster 1 Generic Attribution Dem	-0.76	0.17	0.00 ***	
Cluster 1 Democratic Attribution Dem	-1.00	0.16	0.00 ***		Cluster 1 Democratic Attribution Dem	-0.58	0.17	0.00 ***	
Cluster 1 Republican Attribution Dem	-0.68	0.16	0.00 ***		Cluster 1 Republican Attribution Dem	-0.19	0.18	0.27	
Cluster 1 Base	1.72	0.12	0.00 ***		Cluster 1 Base	0.93	0.14	0.00 ***	
Cluster 2 Generic Attribution Dem	-0.45	0.17	0.01 **		Cluster 2 Generic Attribution Dem	-0.27	0.13	0.05 **	
Cluster 2 Democratic Attribution Dem	-0.46	0.18	0.01 **		Cluster 2 Democratic Attribution Dem	-0.14	0.13	0.30	
Cluster 2 Republican Attribution Dem	-0.09	0.17	0.59		Cluster 2 Republican Attribution Dem	0.04	0.13	0.76	
Cluster 2 Base	-1.23	0.12	0.00 ***		Cluster 2 Base	-0.62	0.09	0.00 ***	
Cluster 3 Generic Attribution Dem	0.15	0.18	0.40		Cluster 3 Generic Attribution Dem	-0.24	0.15	0.12	
Cluster 3 Democratic Attribution Dem	0.11	0.19	0.57		Cluster 3 Democratic Attribution Dem	-0.12	0.15	0.42	
Cluster 3 Republican Attribution Dem	0.44	0.18	0.02 **		Cluster 3 Republican Attribution Dem	-0.19	0.17	0.24	
Cluster 3 Base	-1.44	0.14	0.00 ***		Cluster 3 Base	-0.81	0.11	0.00 ***	
Republicans (obs. 5523)					Don't Know				
<i>Disagree</i>	Coef.	s.e.	P> z 		<i>Don't Know</i>	Coef.	s.e.	P> z 	
Cluster 1 Generic Attribution Rep	-0.92	0.15	0.00 ***		Cluster 1 Generic Attribution Rep	-0.48	0.17	0.00 ***	
Cluster 1 Democratic Attribution Rep	-0.76	0.15	0.00 ***		Cluster 1 Democratic Attribution Rep	-0.32	0.17	0.06 *	
Cluster 1 Republican Attribution Rep	-1.12	0.15	0.00 ***		Cluster 1 Republican Attribution Rep	-0.58	0.18	0.00 ***	
Cluster 1 Base	1.00	0.11	0.00 ***		Cluster 1 Base	0.07	0.14	0.61	
Cluster 2 Generic Attribution Rep	-0.18	0.16	0.26		Cluster 2 Generic Attribution Rep	-0.30	0.17	0.07 *	
Cluster 2 Democratic Attribution Rep	0.25	0.15	0.11		Cluster 2 Democratic Attribution Rep	0.03	0.17	0.87	
Cluster 2 Republican Attribution Rep	-0.22	0.16	0.17		Cluster 2 Republican Attribution Rep	-0.06	0.15	0.71	
Cluster 2 Base	-0.55	0.11	0.00 ***		Cluster 2 Base	-0.61	0.12	0.00 ***	
Cluster 3 Generic Attribution Rep	-0.14	0.19	0.46		Cluster 3 Generic Attribution Rep	-0.20	0.24	0.40	
Cluster 3 Democratic Attribution Rep	-0.07	0.19	0.71		Cluster 3 Democratic Attribution Rep	-0.12	0.24	0.61	
Cluster 3 Republican Attribution Rep	-0.60	0.19	0.00 ***		Cluster 3 Republican Attribution Rep	-0.19	0.22	0.38	
Cluster 3 Base	1.12	0.14	0.00 ***		Cluster 3 Base	0.03	0.16	0.87	

Cluster 1: Primarily Informational (China Currency, Syria, and ICC)

Cluster 2 Mixed (Climate Security, China Pivot, and ICSID)

Cluster 3: Primarily Partisan (Cap and Trade and Iran)

Supplement A, Table 8: Multi-level ordered logit results (9 issues, 3 clusters)

Ordered Logit (Disagree, Don't Know, Agree)				
<i>Democrats (obs. 8012)</i>	Coef.	s.e.	P> z 	
Cluster 1 Generic Attribution Dem	0.69	0.08	0.00	***
Cluster 1 Democratic Attribution Dem	0.57	0.08	0.00	***
Cluster 1 Republican Attribution Dem	0.36	0.08	0.00	***
Cluster 1 Base	-1.94	0.11	0.00	***
Cluster 2 Generic Attribution Dem	0.34	0.12	0.00	***
Cluster 2 Democratic Attribution Dem	0.27	0.12	0.02	**
Cluster 2 Republican Attribution Dem	0.03	0.12	0.82	
Cluster 2 Base	-0.19	0.12	0.12	
Cluster 3 Generic Attribution Dem	0.03	0.14	0.85	
Cluster 3 Democratic Attribution Dem	0.00	0.13	0.99	
Cluster 3 Republican Attribution Dem	-0.18	0.14	0.19	
Cluster 3 Base	(omitted)			
<i>Republicans (obs. 5523)</i>	Coef.	s.e.	P> z 	
Cluster 1 Generic Attribution Rep	0.75	0.09	0.00	***
Cluster 1 Democratic Attribution Rep	0.65	0.10	0.00	***
Cluster 1 Republican Attribution Rep	0.96	0.09	0.00	***
Cluster 1 Base	0.31	0.13	0.02	**
Cluster 2 Generic Attribution Rep	0.20	0.13	0.14	
Cluster 2 Democratic Attribution Rep	-0.19	0.13	0.13	
Cluster 2 Republican Attribution Rep	0.16	0.12	0.19	
Cluster 2 Base	1.41	0.13	0.00	***
Cluster 3 Generic Attribution Rep	0.08	0.16	0.62	
Cluster 3 Democratic Attribution Rep	0.03	0.15	0.84	
Cluster 3 Republican Attribution Rep	0.52	0.15	0.00	***
Cluster 3 Base	(omitted)			

Cluster 1: Primarily Informational (WTO, China Currency, Syria, and ICC)

Cluster 2 Mixed (Climate Security, China Pivot, and ICSID)

Cluster 3: Primarily Partisan (Cap and Trade and Iran)

Supplement A, Table 9: Multi-level logit results (9 issues, 3 clusters)

Logit (Agree=1, Disagree=0)				
Democrats (obs. 5397)				
	Coef.	s.e.	P> z 	
Cluster 1 Generic Attribution Dem	1.16	0.14	0.00	***
Cluster 1 Democratic Attribution Dem	1.00	0.13	0.00	***
Cluster 1 Republican Attribution Dem	0.58	0.14	0.00	***
Cluster 1 Base	-2.75	0.17	0.00	***
Cluster 2 Generic Attribution Dem	0.45	0.17	0.01	**
Cluster 2 Democratic Attribution Dem	0.46	0.18	0.01	**
Cluster 2 Republican Attribution Dem	0.09	0.17	0.59	
Cluster 2 Base	-0.21	0.18	0.23	
Cluster 3 Generic Attribution Dem	-0.15	0.18	0.40	
Cluster 3 Democratic Attribution Dem	-0.11	0.19	0.57	
Cluster 3 Republican Attribution Dem	-0.44	0.18	0.02	**
Cluster 3 Base	1.44	0.14	0.00	***
Republicans (obs. 4584)				
	Coef.	s.e.	P> z 	
Cluster 1 Generic Attribution Rep	1.09	0.14	0.00	***
Cluster 1 Democratic Attribution Rep	0.96	0.14	0.00	***
Cluster 1 Republican Attribution Rep	1.37	0.14	0.00	***
Cluster 1 Base	0.16	0.18	0.36	
Cluster 2 Generic Attribution Rep	0.18	0.16	0.26	
Cluster 2 Democratic Attribution Rep	-0.25	0.15	0.11	
Cluster 2 Republican Attribution Rep	0.22	0.16	0.17	
Cluster 2 Base	1.67	0.17	0.00	***
Cluster 3 Generic Attribution Rep	0.14	0.19	0.46	
Cluster 3 Democratic Attribution Rep	0.07	0.19	0.71	
Cluster 3 Republican Attribution Rep	0.60	0.19	0.00	***
Cluster 3 Base	-1.12	0.14	0.00	***

Cluster 1: Primarily Informational (WTO, China Currency, Syria, and ICC)

Cluster 2 Mixed (Climate Security, China Pivot, and ICSID)

Cluster 3: Primarily Partisan (Cap and Trade and Iran)

Supplement B: Text of survey questions—base and treatment variations

China Currency

[Base] The Chinese Government has been accused of manipulating exchange rates to keep the price of Chinese exports to the United States artificially low. What do you think should be the official response by the U.S. government?

[Additional Information Treatments]Since there is little head-to-head competition between Chinese manufactured goods and American manufactured goods, [many | Democratic | Republican] trade experts believe that unilaterally imposing tariffs on China would not stimulate U.S. employment but instead would endanger export trade to China. China is the third largest importer of U.S. goods and American exports to China are growing at a rate double that of exports to the rest of the world. What do you think should be the official response by the U.S. government?

[Response Options] Keep current policies unchanged; Impose tariffs on Chinese goods as punishment; Don't Know

China Pivot

[Base] The U.S. government has been debating how to allocate military forces in light of rising Chinese power. Currently Navy forces are split 50/50 between the Atlantic and Pacific bases. The Pentagon recently announced that it will expand the U.S. military presence in the Asia-Pacific region by shifting 60 percent of naval ships to Pacific Ocean bases by 2020. Do you support this new strategy to pivot the U.S. military's focus to Asia?

[Additional Information Treatments] [National | Democratic-leaning national | Republican-leaning national] security experts have highlighted rising security risks, especially an increasingly powerful China, as reasons why the U.S. must increase its capabilities in Asia. They note that the Chinese Army, traditionally a land force, has been investing heavily in its naval forces. Last year, China launched its first aircraft carrier and has also expanded its fleet of

nuclear-powered submarines and warships. Do you support this new strategy to pivot the U.S. military's focus to Asia?

[Response Options] Yes; No; Don't Know

WTO

[Base] The U.S. has participated in the dispute settlement process of the World Trade Organization since its founding in 1995. The United States has filed 100 complaints against other member countries and has had 116 complaints filed against it. Should the U.S. increase or decrease its use of the WTO dispute mechanism?

[Additional Information Treatments]The U.S. wins more than 80% of disputes that it initiates at the WTO, opening markets to U.S. goods. However, the U.S. has primarily focused complaints against its main trading partners: Europe, Japan, Korea, Canada and Mexico. [Many | Democratic | Republican] trade representatives argue that the U.S. should systematically expand its use of the WTO and file complaints against a broad range of countries to address trade barriers and other violations including currency manipulation. Ensuring fair trade practices and transparent currency markets will help the U.S. economy stay competitive. Should the U.S. increase or decrease its use of the WTO dispute mechanism?

[Response Options] Increase; Decrease; Stay about the same; Don't Know

ICSID

[Base] The International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) was established in 1965 to facilitate the settlement of disputes between countries and foreign investors. Use of ICSID courts is voluntary but binding when a provision for ICSID arbitration is written into investment contracts. Should U.S. citizens and corporations be subject to international court rulings from the ICSID?

[Additional Information Treatments]To dispel any concern that ICSID awards would be overridden in the U.S. court system, [Congress enacted, on a bipartisan basis | Congressional Democrats helped to enact | Congressional Republicans helped to enact], a statute obligating

U.S. courts to give ICSID awards “the same full faith and credit” as if the award was a judgment of a court in the United States. Ensuring compliance with ICSID awards reduces uncertainty for foreign companies. This agreement to abide by common rules makes the U.S. more competitive for foreign direct investment dollars, which create jobs in the United States. Should U.S. citizens and corporations be subject to international court rulings from the ICSID?

[Response Options] Yes; No; Don’t Know

Cap & Trade

[Base] A broad body of scientific evidence points to the influence of human activity on the climate, mainly through greenhouse gas emissions. “Cap and trade” is a system where businesses can trade emission permits. Do you think the United States should institute a system like “cap and trade” to limit greenhouse gas emissions and address climate change?

[Additional Information Treatments] [Many | Many Democratic | Many Republican] economists argue that an effective and market-based means of addressing climate change without damaging the economy is to institute a “cap and trade” system where businesses can trade emission permits. This ability to trade the right to pollute allows businesses to figure out the most economically efficient way to limit greenhouse gases. Do you think the United States should institute a system like “cap and trade” to limit greenhouse gas emissions and address climate change?

[Response Options] Yes; No; Don’t Know

Climate Security

[Base] Some people are concerned that it is becoming increasingly difficult and expensive to supply the military with fuel in war zones. Do you think the United States should invest in technology to reduce the military’s dependence on fossil fuels?

[Additional Information Treatments] [Many former | Some former Democratic | Some former Republican] national security officials and military leaders have cited climate change as a potential threat to national security, because it could lead to more instability and conflict

abroad and make it harder for the military to purchase and safely access oil. As a result, despite budget cuts the military has launched a major initiative to reduce its dependence on fossil fuels through new technology. Do you think the United States should invest in technology to reduce the military's dependence on fossil fuels?

[Response Options] Yes; No; Don't Know

Iran

[Base] The United States government has been debating whether to initiate a military strike against Iran's nuclear weapons program. Do you support a U.S. airstrike against the Iranian nuclear program?

[Additional Information Treatments] [Many | Many Democratic | Many Republican] national security experts believe that a credible threat to use military force increases the chance that Iran will agree diplomatically to freeze its nuclear program, but they do not believe that actually bombing Iranian facilities would be effective in stopping the nuclear program itself. They further fear that military action will lead to increased tensions across the region. Do you support a U.S. airstrike against the Iranian nuclear program?

[Response Options] Yes; No; Don't Know

Syria

[Base] The United States government has been debating whether to undertake a military intervention to address the humanitarian crisis in Syria. Do you support a U.S. military intervention in Syria?

[Additional Information Treatments] [Many | Many Democratically-oriented | Many Republican-oriented] foreign policy observers believe that military intervention, in the form of air strikes and aid to the rebel forces fighting the Assad regime, would help bring down the regime and end the crisis. Do you support a U.S. military intervention in Syria?

[Response Options] Yes; No; Don't Know

ICC

[Base] The International Criminal Court (the ICC) is a permanent international criminal court, founded in 2002, to “bring to justice the perpetrators of the worst crimes known to humankind -- war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide.” A primary role is to bring accused war criminals to trial when national courts are unwilling or unable to do so. The U.S. has signed but not ratified the ICC treaty. Should the United States complete ratification of the ICC treaty?

[Additional Information Treatments] [Many members of Congress on both sides of the aisle | Many Democrats in Congress | Many Republicans in Congress] have argued that without safeguards U.S. soldiers would be vulnerable to prosecution by the International Criminal Court. Given the violent and often confusing nature of combat, it is possible that U.S. soldiers could be tried in a foreign court for following orders. Should the United States complete ratification of the ICC treaty?

[Response Options] Yes; No; Don't Know

Supplement C: Survey weights, the 2012 CCES, and analysis of survey experiments

After extensive analysis we concluded that the unweighted data is more appropriate for this particular study. As we discuss and empirically show below, in this particular case, the CCES does reasonably well in terms of representativeness without weights; weighting creates an imbalance in our experiment treatment groups; and weighting makes our partisan subsamples less representative of the national partisan subgroups and thus less rather than more representative of the partisan divide in public opinion. Thus there is a trade-off between small corrections for overall representativeness and introducing imbalance in the treatment groups. This type of trade-off between the costs and benefits of weighting survey data exists for all experiments (Gelman 2007) and even arguably regression analysis (Winship and Radbill 1994). Here, given the representativeness of the initial CCES matched sample; the minimal impact for our study of an oversampling of voters in competitive districts; and the potentially larger impact of weighting distorting the distribution of important demographic considerations such as gender, we have opted to present the unweighted data.

Experiments achieve internal validity by randomly assigning subjects to treatment conditions, which in expectation provides balance across observed and unobserved determinants of the outcome. In some cases, internal validity is the sole concern, but for our purposes, external validity is also important. Survey weights can be used to achieve external validity in terms of the representativeness of the overall sample by giving specific respondents more or less weight when calculating averages in the survey and to adjust for oversampled populations. However, by overemphasizing certain individuals, survey weights can imbalance randomly assigned treatment conditions. In expectation, all covariates will be balanced across treatment conditions, but small differences will appear in any given randomization. These differences can be magnified by survey weights as observations (individuals) within subpopulations are multiplied by numbers greater than one. In this case, the relatively slight improvement in external validity in the overall sample would come at a substantial cost to the observed balance among treatments and generate less representative comparison groups.

Note that the CCES draws from a matched random sample that is representative of the national population, with the exception that in 2012 there was an oversampling of voters in battle-ground congressional districts (<http://projects.iq.harvard.edu/cces/book/sample-design>). In terms of demographic characteristics—age, income, race, and gender—the unweighted data

closely mirrors the Census. For example, women comprise 54 percent of our CCES sample and 52 percent of the Census. Blacks comprise 12 percent of both our sample and the CCES sample. Our sample from the CCES even has 4 percent of respondents between the age of 18 and 20 years, very close to the 5 percent of the voting age populace reported by the Census. Our sample does diverge from the Census in that it has fewer than expected 21 to 44 year olds and more than expected 45 to 65 year olds, likely because of the focus on voters, but age is not a primary concern in our model. Thus we start with a reasonably representative sample. Furthermore, when the sample is randomly assigned treatment conditions, the sub-samples are balanced and similarly representative (accounting for small cell variability).

If we weight the survey to de-emphasize battle ground voters, our treatment conditions are no longer quite as comparable. For much larger cell sizes, these differences would average out not just in expectation but in reality and these weight covariates would achieve balance. But with a sample of 2000 it is important to consider the cost of weighting. For this experiment, not only are there four experimental conditions (baseline plus three different treatments) but the sample must also be split by partisan identification into 3 subgroups (Democrats, Republicans, and Independents). As a result, cell sizes are less than 200 individuals and thus susceptible to the weights creating an imbalance. Given that we start with a reasonably representative sample, the decision about whether to use weights involves a trade-off between the benefit of small corrections to geographic representativeness and the cost of introducing imbalances in the treatment groups.

To clarify the actual implications of weighting for our analysis, in Table 1 below we show the effect of weighting on a well understood characteristic: gender. For both the pool of self-identified Democrats and self-identified Republicans, the table compares the gender distribution across treatments (baseline, T1, T2, T3) using first the data in its unweighted form and then the data transformed by weights. Two points are important here. First, the weighted data is more imbalanced across treatments than the unweighted data: the proportion of women in each cell differs more for the weighted than unweighted data. The calculation of the standard deviation of the proportion of women in each treatment cell for each issue provides a more quantitative measure of this observation. In the Democratic pool (top panel), for only two cases (WTO and Climate Security) does the weighted data offer better balance than the unweighted, but in both cases the standard deviations are small. In contrast, for the remaining cases, the

weighted data creates substantial imbalances, with standard deviations on average twice as large. Note in particular Syria. The unweighted data provides a balance of gender across each treatment. But the weighted version of the same data creates a 20 percentage point imbalance between T1 and T3. This same pattern of the unweighted data provided more balanced treatment groups is similar for the Republican pool (bottom panel). For a couple of cases, the weighted data provides a minimally improved balance, but for the remainder, weighting creates strong imbalances. For our purposes, a balanced distribution of demographic characteristics is more important than imbalance in voting geography, the problem which the weights are attempting to correct.

Second, and arguably more problematic, weighting minimizes known gender differences in the pool of Democrats and Republicans. Using the weighted data results in a Democratic sample with 54 percent of women and a Republican sample with 53 percent of women, basically identical proportions in both sample sets. Yet in 2012, Pew Research Center reports that only 36% of women identified or leaned Republican while 51% identified or leaned Democratic (<http://www.people-press.org/2015/04/07/party-identification-trends-1992-2014/>). The 2012 American National Election Study (ANES) survey estimates that women constituted 59% of self-identified Democrats and leaners and only 52% of self-identified Republicans or leaners. Thus weighting makes our poll of self-identified Democrats more male and our pool of self-identified Republican more female than commonly understood and quantitatively estimated by other surveys. For our purposes, weighting would distort the representation of the external political divide by suppressing the impact of the proportion of women identifying as Democrats and exaggerating the impact of women identifying as Republicans.

Supplement C, Table 1: Proportion of women in each sub-sample (by partisan self-identification)

Dem. Sample Prop. Women	Unweighted					Weighted					Ratio
	Baseline	T1	T2	T3	St.Dev.	Baseline	T1	T2	T3	St.Dev.	St. Dev
China Currency	53%	60%	62%	65%	0.05	51%	52%	51%	60%	0.04	0.8
China Pivot	66%	58%	56%	60%	0.04	63%	49%	51%	52%	0.06	1.4
WTO	62%	61%	57%	61%	0.02	54%	52%	54%	54%	0.01	0.3
ICSID	58%	58%	68%	62%	0.05	47%	54%	67%	49%	0.09	1.9
Cap and Trade	59%	60%	61%	60%	0.01	57%	51%	50%	57%	0.04	7.1
Climate Security	62%	59%	57%	63%	0.03	57%	53%	53%	52%	0.02	0.8
Iran	57%	60%	63%	60%	0.02	48%	53%	58%	55%	0.04	1.7
Syria	59%	57%	60%	64%	0.03	57%	44%	51%	65%	0.09	2.9
ICC	60%	62%	61%	58%	0.02	58%	47%	55%	53%	0.05	2.7
<i>Average</i>	60%					54%					

Rep. Sample Prop. Women	Unweighted					Weighted					Ratio
	Baseline	T1	T2	T3	St.Dev.	Baseline	T1	T2	T3	St.Dev.	St. Dev
China Currency	48%	47%	47%	47%	0.01	62%	49%	51%	47%	0.07	9.5
China Pivot	46%	50%	45%	49%	0.03	51%	53%	52%	54%	0.01	0.4
WTO	46%	40%	49%	54%	0.06	43%	53%	56%	60%	0.07	1.2
ICSID	52%	43%	39%	52%	0.06	53%	59%	49%	57%	0.04	0.7
Cap and Trade	49%	53%	43%	44%	0.04	52%	61%	51%	47%	0.06	1.4
Climate Security	48%	41%	49%	50%	0.04	50%	50%	51%	57%	0.03	0.7
Iran	45%	51%	49%	45%	0.03	49%	57%	53%	50%	0.04	1.3
Syria	51%	48%	47%	43%	0.03	52%	56%	48%	53%	0.03	1.1
ICC	48%	47%	47%	47%	0.01	55%	52%	54%	49%	0.03	5.3
<i>Average</i>	47%					53%					