The Impact of Unions on Workers' Political Preferences

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Abstract

To what extent, and in what way, do labor unions shape workers' political preferences? Despite decades of research on the impacts of unions, the interpretation of the finding that union members often hold distinct political views from other workers remains contested. It may result from union communications that influence the members, but could also reflect a selection mechanism whereby workers with certain political preferences sort into union membership. We address this issue by combining a unique targeted survey of American workers and a set of inferential strategies that exploit two sources of variation: differences in the legal choice that workers face in joining or opting out of unions, and an abrupt U-turn in a union's policy position. Focusing on workers' stance on trade, our analysis offers evidence that unions shape the preferences of their members in a significant and theoretically predictable manner. Moreover, the 'union effect' on preferences is shown to be larger than factors widely recognized in the literature as consequential, such as college education. The results have implications for our understanding of the political impact of unions and also offer insight on the broader mechanisms by which voters form policy preferences.

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1 Introduction

To what extent, and in what way, do labor unions shape workers' political preferences? The importance of unions is often attributed to their role in advancing the interests of workers, allowing them to overcome problems of collective action and to generate an effective "voice". Much has therefore been made of the ongoing decline in union power over the past several decades, and the impact of this trend on the representation of the political interests of the disadvantaged and the less well-off.

Yet despite the decline in membership, union members still represent significant shares in the electorates of many advanced economies: 26% of all workers in Britain, 36% in Italy, and over 54% of the workforce in Norway. Even in the U.S, a prime example of shrinking unionization rates, enlisted union members still account for almost fifteen million workers (about 11% of the workforce), a conservative figure that does not include non-members who are covered by union agreements, nor family members whose livelihoods often depend on a unionized wage earner (OECD, 2013).[1] In other words, labor unions are, even today, an institution with a potentially wide reaching role in shaping and channeling the political preferences of workers.

Notably, the voluminous literature on unions has to date made substantial progress in studying the impact of unions on various economic and social outcomes, but arguably less on political ones. Invigorated by the seminal *What Do Unions Do?* (Freeman and Medoff, 1984), scholars have explored questions such as unions' effect on wages, on employee benefits, on firm performance, or on worker satisfaction. In contrast, the study of unions' political impact has been relatively less developed.[2] While the bulk of analysis on union's political impact has focused on their campaign contributions and ability to advance pro-union legislation (Burns, Francia, and Herrnson, 2000;

[1] Data is from: OECD and J.Visser, ICTWSS database (Institutional Characteristics of Trade Unions, Wage Setting, State Intervention and Social Pacts, 1960-2010), version 3.0 (http://www.uva-aias.net/).

[2] Illustrative examples of the relative neglect of union's political impact can be gleaned from some of the major studies in recent decades that provide comprehensive assessments of unions' effects. Of the 19 chapters in Freeman and Medoff (1984)'s *What Do Unions Do?*, only a single chapter analyzes their political role. Similarly, Bennett and Kaufman (2011)'s 20-year retrospective volume includes 20 articles by different authors assessing union's effects on various outcomes and again, only one of the articles deals with unions' political impact. Addison and Schnabel (2003)'s *International Handbook of Trade Unions* dedicates only one of its 14 chapters to union's role as "political actors". While these emphases at least partly reflects the authors' own substantive interests and methodological backgrounds, they are instructive of a broader phenomenon.

Masters and Delaney, 1984; Neustadtl, 1990; Saltzman, 1987), and on their impact on mobilization and turnout (Leighley and Nagler, 2007; Radcliff and Davis, 2000), exploration of unions' effects on the political preferences of workers has remained remarkably scant. As a recent study summarizing the state of the research on the topic concluded, "After 60 years of research on American unions, we still lack convincing evidence of whether or how union membership affects political attitudes" (Ahlquist, Clayton, and Levi, N.d.).

This lacuna is at least partially due to a number of empirical challenges that make addressing the question of union's political influence on its members difficult. The first issue is the lack of the right type of data. To detect the influence of unions on the political preferences of their members, one would want to compare the political views of union members with other workers who are otherwise similar in all respects but union membership itself. Yet standard national surveys do not include sizable samples of both union members and non-members from within the same industry, arguably the most natural comparison group for this type of analysis. Researchers are thus forced to compare aggregated groupings from different sectors of union members to those of non-members. As a result, one cannot tell whether differences observed in the political preferences of these two aggregated groups arise from the effect of union membership itself, or whether the differences simply reflect divergent interests of workers employed in different industries. A second empirical callenge arises from the fact that even if one overcame the data availability problem and found that union members in a given industry hold policy positions that differ from those of their non-unionized counterparts, its interpretation would still be unclear. It may be that participation in the union itself causes workers to adopt certain preferences (i.e., a 'treatment' effect), but could also be because workers that choose to join a union differ from non-unionized workers in other characteristics that also account for their divergent political stance (i.e., a 'selection' effect).

We address these empirical challenges by combining a unique original survey that includes large samples of workers in a targeted set of industries together with a set of inferential strategies that allow us to test the relative strength of the two explanations. Our analysis focuses on the policy preferences of workers toward trade openness, one of the few issues on which there is significant variation in the positions and strength of preferences of unions operating in different industries.

To explore this link between the unions' stance on trade and the preferences of their workers, we generate a new metric of each union's position on trade policy that is based on its lobbying efforts on all trade-related bills in the years preceding the study.

Our findings provide support for the 'treatment' effect of unions, namely to the argument that unions exert influence on their members in a clear and systematic fashion. In contrast, the evidence suggests that self-selection into unions cannot account for the observed patterns in worker preferences. More specifically, the analysis points to the important role of unions as information providers, demonstrating a strong and systematic relationship between the intensity of unions' correspondence with the members, the degree of information that members possess about the issues at hand, and the degree of alignment between the unions and their members' policy stance.

Exploiting differences across the U.S in the legal choice that workers face in joining or opting out of unions (a.k.a the 'Right-to-Work' law), we show that preferences of union members and their non-unionized counterparts are inconsistent with the legal differences in selection mechanisms into unions. We estimate that union membership accounts for about a 21% increase above the baseline rate in workers' likelihood of opposing trade liberalization, an effect almost 1.6 times greater than the effect associated with obtaining a college degree, one of the most studied and established predictors of trade policy preferences (Scheve and Slaughter, 2001*a*; Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2006). Furthermore, we leverage the sudden reversal in the United Auto Worker's stance toward free trade and use pre- and post-shift data to show that members became more supportive of trade expansion when exposed to their union's pro-trade message, while the same shift had no discernible effect on non-members working in the same industry.

Most directly, this paper contributes to our understanding of the political impact of unions, demonstrating and analyzing their effect in shaping members' policy positions. Beyond influencing political outcomes via Political Action Committees (PACs) and lobbying efforts (Masters and Delaney, 2005), we show that unions are also able to influence the views of their membership in a theoretically predictable and meaningful way. Facing the often competing influence of the church and with the growing flow into politics of money representing business interests, unions as the voice of workers has faced major challenges that threaten to diminish and trivialize its impact (Baum-

gartner and Leech, 2001; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, 1995). In these changing circumstances, assessing and quantifying the effect that unions still exert on their members' political preferences contributes to our understanding of the relative forces shaping the current electoral landscape.

More broadly, the paper also adds to the vast research on the sources and mechanisms of voters' formation of preferences. In particular, a prominent strand in the political economy literature attributes the positions that individuals take on various policies – e.g. trade, immigration, taxation – to their expectations regarding the likely impact of the policy on their wellbeing (Mayda, 2006; Scheve and Slaughter, 2001*a*). Yet notably, most studies typically *assume* this link between perceived interests and policy preferences, without explaining how those interests come to be crystallized by voters. By providing substantial new evidence on the role and impact of unions as information providers, the paper illuminates one important mechanism that helps substantiate this key assumption.

The rest of the paper proceeds as follows. Section II reviews the main insights from the literature and draw a set of expectations about the influence of unions on their members. In section III we describe our data and empirical approach. Sections IV and V present the findings and a set of robustness tests. The final section concludes.

2 Preference Formation, Information and the Impact of Unions

The determinants of individuals' policy preferences are a major source of ongoing study. The answers provided to date can be crudely classified into two: arguments emphasizing the influence of voters' self-interested considerations and arguments focused on the impact of ideational factors.

Interest-based explanations suggest that people's attitudes on a policy are largely determined by the utilities they expect to derive from it. For example, individuals whose employment is less secure are expected to be more supportive of a policy of that provides more generous unemployment insurance or greater spending on active labor programs (Alesina and La Ferrara, 2005; Burgoon, 2001; Iversen and Soskice, 2001) In the same vein, other studies contend that people's exposure to foreign competition in the labor market are more likely to oppose policies liberalizing immigration or trade (Scheve and Slaughter, 2001*a*; Mayda and Rodrik, 2005).

Studies emphasizing the role of ideational factors stress the importance of value orientations and partisan attachments in shaping individuals' policy preferences (Campbell et al., 1960; Green, Palmquist, and Shickler, 2002; McClosky and Zaller, 1984). For example, people's beliefs about deservingness and the plight of the poor are shown to affect the level of support for welfare policy (Fong, 2001; Feldman and Steenbergen, 2001). Others show that cosmopolitan inclinations or nationalistic attitudes are closely tied to voters' preferences on trade and immigration (Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2007; Margalit, 2012).

Critiques of the interest-based approach to explaining political preferences center not only on the empirical support (or lack thereof) for some of its predictions, but also on the mechanism underlying its core logic. In particular, some question the basic, often implicit, assumption that individuals understand how their personal well-being is influenced by government policy (Sears and Funk, 1990; Mansfield and Mutz, 2009).[3] The notion that voters can tease out the implications of a complex policy, which at times is a matter of debate even among the experts, seems questionable, particularly given the wealth of evidence demonstrating citizens' lack of knowledge or grasp of very basic political and economic facts (Bennett, 1988; Campbell et al., 1960; Converse, 1962; Ferejohn, 1990; Neuman, 1986).

One response to this critique focuses on voters' learning. The claim is that learning could arise in several ways, without having to make the (probably, heroic) assumption that voters actively seek out and process policy-relevant information. For example, voters may draw on their everyday experiences to form policy opinions that largely accord with their interests. Indeed, some studies show that voters update their political preferences leftwards – even if only temporarily – in response to the experience of various hardships such as loss of employment or of health care (Hacker, Rehm, and Schlesinger, 2013; Margalit, 2013). Another source of learning is through exposure to information or cues. By this view, citizens acquire pertinent knowledge about the rationale and preferences of friends, co-workers, or other groups that they believe to share interests with them, and subsequently infer how a policy is likely to affect their own interests (Lupia, 1994). It is within

[3]Sears and Funk (1990: 164) argue that "ordinary people simply do not often perceive government as offering them very clear or substantial personal costs or benefits." Mansfield and Mutz (2009: 432) also contend that self-interest has only a limited influence on shaping policy preferences because "citizens have a difficult time linking their personal economic situations to public policies."

this strand of arguments that the role of unions is often touted, since unions have close access to their members via regular meetings, direct mailings or mobilization drives. Unions are thus able – at least in theory – to communicate to their members facts and opinions over a range of policy issues. These communications, in turn, could help union members crystalize their interests and subsequently form or update their preferences (Fordham and Kleinberg, 2012; Leighley and Nagler, 2007).

Indeed, several studies have documented unions' engagement in a variety of activities aimed at advancing their policy goals. Such activities include drives to increase voter turnout among union members and their families (Asher et al., 2001; Masters and Delaney, 1984; Leighley and Nagler, 2007), efforts to encourage voting for candidates endorsed by unions (Sousa, 1993; Dark, 1999; Clark and Masters, 2001), mobilization of members to become more politically active and engage in PAC contribution campaigns and lobbying activities aimed at affecting pro-union legislation (Freeman and Medoff, 1984; Masters and Delaney, 1987). Yet, a basic question remains: what do unions do in terms of shaping the preferences of their own members? Despite the sizable literature on unions' operations, there is a striking paucity of evidence regarding the effectiveness of unions in influencing the political stance of their members.

Research on citizens' preferences on trade policy may provide some insight on this question. A number of earlier studies have found that union membership is, on average, associated with lower support for free trade (Balistreri, 1997; Mayda and Rodrik, 2005; Scheve and Slaughter, 2001*b*). When discussing this empirical association, the authors often conjecture that it may be the outcome of unions' ongoing communications on the matter with their membership (e.g. Mansfield and Mutz (2009: 431,436)). Yet, other than a conjecture, those studies provide no evidence regarding the intensity of this communication of information, nor that this communication has any causal impact on shaping members' attitudes.

Beginning to deal with this deficiency, Ahlquist, Clayton, and Levi (N.d.) provide what is arguably the most careful and nuanced new set of insights on this matter. Focusing on a case study of a dockworkers' union (The International Longshore and Warehouse Union, or ILWU) and using a survey of workers in three localities (Los Angeles, Seattle and Tacoma), the authors

employ a method of matching of union members and non-members to get an estimate of the "union effect". Overall, they find that members of the ILWU were more willing than non-members to support a protectionist stance on trade, even though trade openness was highly beneficial to their own employment. The authors conjecture that this seemingly puzzling result is evidence that the union was able to influence its members to adopt a "class based" position, i.e. to oppose a policy that was injurious to the broader class of union members in the country. While the study offers impressive insight on the ILWU, it remains in question whether the findings from this single case can be generalized with respect to the impact of unions on workers' policy preferences in the broader economy. Is it the case, as the authors suggest, that union membership instills a class-based approach to trade policy and thus has a largely homogenizing effect on workers' preferences, or alternatively, do preferences of unionized workers vary systematically in a way that reflects the divergent interests of each industry.

To address this question, one needs not only to investigate the impact of unions on a broader set of sectors, but also to explore the mechanism underlying union influence. If unions are a source of crystallizing interests and affecting preferences of members, one would need to see more systematic evidence that members: (a) are aware of the information provided by their unions; (b) correctly interpret the unions' stance on the matter; (c) adopt the position touted by the unions. While these conjectures are at least *ex ante* plausible, this review indicates that the extant research on all three questions is lacking. In the next sections of this paper we aim to provide new insights that address each of these contentions in turn.

3 Data and Empirical Strategy

Our analysis uses novel survey data of more than 4,000 American workers in selected industries. The survey design followed a customized two-stage sampling approach. First, a set of 12 key industries were identified based on several criteria reflecting variation in their exposure to the impacts of globalization (e.g., factor intensity, value-added per worker, trade balance, and exposure to offshoring activity). Then, from each of those targeted industries, a sizable number of currently employed native workers were recruited by YouGov/Polimetrix to participate in an online survey

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Selected Industries

Industry:	Total Employed (1000s)	Output per Worker ($)	Trade Balance (B$)	Share BA Degree	Median Income ($)	Sample Size (#)
Manufacturing						
Food products	1,485	292,093	8,400	22%	51,000	218
Chemical	850	546,482	-3,100	40%	88,945	225
Transportation equipment	1,607	362,878	-14,000	24%	76,005	270
Computer electronics	1,248	412,519	-110,000	48%	96,004	349
Fabricated metal products	1,528	163,973	-9,900	15%	61,570	352
Services						
Data processing and internet	395	359,059	0	45%	82,557	320
Financial	858	507,517	41	65%	110,067	375
Telecommunications	1,022	470,191	2	34%	83,000	375
Construction	7,215	119,281	0	15%	55,197	393
Nursing and residential care	3,008	43,584	0	18%	4,590	382
Ambulatory health care	5,661	112,263	0	48%	73,067	446
Education	3,037	51,309	13	65%	79,235	607

Source: March Supplement of Current Population Survey 2009;
2010 United States International Trade Commission data on imports and exports

that was fielded between September 2010 and February 2011.[4]

To gain greater variation in the industries' exposure to international commerce, the survey included firms in both manufacturing and services. The manufacturing industries were: food manufacturing, chemical manufacturing, computer and electronic product manufacturing, transportation equipment manufacturing, and fabricated metal product manufacturing. The service industries sampled in the survey were: construction, telecommunications, educational services, ambulatory health care services, nursing and residential care, financial services, and Internet and data processing services.[5] As Table 1 shows, the industries provide wide variation of values along a set of pertinent dimensions. For example, as measured by the value added per worker, the sample includes highly skill-intensive industries (e.g., chemical manufacturing and financial services), industries with a mediocre level of skill-intensity (e.g., transportation equipment and and computer electronics manufacturing), and industries with very low skill intensity (e.g., construction and nursing). With respect to trade balance, the selected industries include import-competing

[4]The data was collected as part of the Harvard Globalization Survey in which Margalit was a co-PI. See Hainmueller, Hiscox, and Margalit (2013) for a more detailed description of the survey.

[5]Industries are classified at the 3 digit NAICS level.

industries (e.g., transportation equipment and computer electronics manufacturing), non-tradables (e.g., health services, education services) and export-oriented industries (e.g., food manufacturing).

The data include responses from 497 union members, which represent about 12% of the sample. However, union membership rates differ quite substantially across industries, ranging from less than one percent in the financial services sector to over 35% in educational services. As Figure 1 shows, the union membership rate obtained in the sample corresponds quite well with the actual rate of union membership.[6]

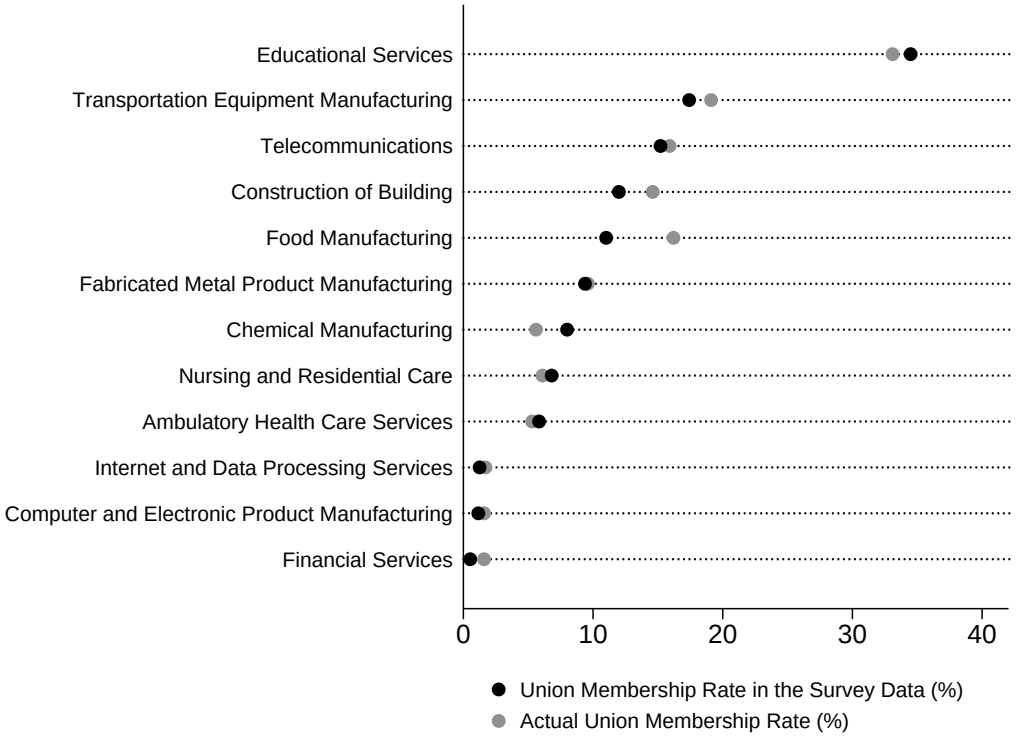

Figure 1: Union Membership Rate, by Industry

The tone and exact wording of questions on trade policy could have a sizable effect on the answers that respondents provide (Hiscox, 2006). The survey therefore asks a series of questions that tap into potentially different aspects of workers' views on trade policy. The analysis we present below relies on responses to all of these four questions:

[6]The estimated union membership data are from the Union Membership and Coverage Database available at `www.unionstats.com`.

We would like to learn about your views on trade with other countries - by trade we mean American businesses and individuals buying goods from other countries or selling goods to other countries.

- Overall, do you think trade with other countries should be expanded, reduced, or kept at its current level?
- Do you think that restrictions on buying goods made in other countries should be increased, decreased or kept at the current level?
- Do you think that trade with other countries is good or bad for you and your family?
- Do you think that trade with other countries is good or bad for the United States as a whole?

To explore the link between union membership and views on trade, the survey also contains questions regarding the intensity of communication initiated by the union on trade policy, as well as question pertaining to the degree of information that the union members possess about the unions' position on the issue (see Appendix for exact question wording).

To examine the correspondence between members' assessment of their union's stance and the union's actual position, we generated a new measure of the unions' "revealed preference" using information on their lobbying activities and official announcements regarding trade policy legislation. Focusing on union activities in the eighteen months prior to our study, we coded the positions the unions took on a wide range of trade-related bills and used those codes to place the unions along a protectionist-liberalizer scale.[7] In total, we coded the activities of 13 labor unions that represent 70% of the unionized survey respondents who provided the name of their affiliated unions.[8]

We examine each union's position on all the major trade-related bills during this period that had potential application across industries.[9] These bills include: The TRADE Act of 2009, the U.S.-

[7]Of the 497 surveyed union members, 299 respondents provided the names of their unions. For those respondents who gave codes of local branches (e.g. local 101, local 58, SEIU 1021), we inferred their union membership based on their location of residence and industry.

[8]Among the other remaining unionized workers not represented by this sample of unions, 37% belong to other education unions which presumably hold similar stance on policy issues with other education unions we examine, the National Education Union and the American Federation of Teachers, and the other 63% belong to 46 different organizations which often have only one member in our sample.

[9]Given the labor intensive effort needed to code each union's position on each of the bills, we focus on all trade bills on which at least one of the unions carried out an official (i.e. registered) lobbying effort. This criterion thus excludes bills that deal with permissions regarding very specific products or bills that deal with relatively minor trading partners (e.g. A Bill to Authorize the Extension of Non-Discriminatory Treatment to the Products of Azerbaijan). We obtained each union's lobbying reports filed under the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 through the Lobbying Disclosure Act Database available at `http://www.senate.gov/legislative/Public_Disclosure/LDA_reports.htm`.

Colombia Free Trade Agreement, the U.S.-South Korea Free Trade Agreement, the U.S.-Panama Free Trade Agreement, the extension of Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program, currency manipulation, and trade with China (See Appendix Table A2 for more detail). For every bill, we code each union's position along a seven-point scale that ranges from 'strongly protectionist' (+3) to 'strongly pro-trade' (-3). The coding is based on the position expressed by the union (i.e. pro- or anti-liberalization) and the number of quarters it registered lobbying activity for or against the bill.[10] For example, on bills on which a union lobbied against liberalization over four quarters or more, the union's position is coded as 'strongly protectionist'. If the lobbying took place for a shorter period of only 1 to 3 quarters, we assign a 'protectionist': (+2) score, and a 'weakly protectionist' (+1) score if the labor union did not lobby on the bill but had expressed a protectionist stance on the issue in its official pronouncements. Conversely, we assign scores between -1 and -3 using the same coding criteria when the union takes a pro-liberalization stance. Finally, a 'neutral position' (0) is assigned if the labor union had not expressed any view on the issue.[11]

Table 2 summarizes each union's score on the trade protectionism scale. Since we examine each union's position on 7 different trade issues, the score could range from a low of -21 (pro-free trade) to a high of +21 (protectionist). As expected, the table indicates that labor unions operating in the import competing sectors – fabricated metal manufacturing, transportation equipment manufacturing, and chemical manufacturing – exhibit the most protectionist stance. Unsurprisingly, we find the least protectionist labor unions in the export oriented sector, food manufacturing, as well as in the non-tradeable service sectors of education, nursing, and ambulatory health services. Somewhat surprisingly, labor unions in the building construction and the telecommunication sectors, which are not significantly affected by the flows of international trade, are found to take a relatively protectionist stance on the trade bills.

Since not all union members in the sample provided the name of the union to which they

We then examined all the lobbied issues classified as trade issues according to the general issue area code in the lobbying report.

[10] Lobbying reports often do not contain information on the lobbying organization's position on the lobbied issues. We identify each labor organization's position on the lobbied issues based on their official letters to the Congress or statements on the issue.

[11] In the Appendix we discuss the selection criteria of the bills in more detail and provide additional information on the coding scheme.

Table 2: Union's Position on Each Issue and Calculated Protectionism Score

		TAA	TRADE	Korea	Colombia	Panama	China	Currency	Total
1)	United Steelworkers	+1	+3	+2	+3	+3	+3	+3	+18
	IAM: Machinists	+1	+3	+3	+3	+3	+1	+2	+16
	United Auto Workers	+2	0	+3	+3	0	+3	+3	+14
2)	Intl Brotherhood of Teamsters*	+3	+3	+3	+3	+3	+1	+3	+19
	United Brotherhood of Carpenters	0	+3	+3	+3	+3	+1	+1	+14
	Intl Brotherhood of Electrical Workers	0	+1	+1	+1	+1	+2	+2	+8
3)	Communication Workers of America	+1	+2	+2	+2	+2	+1	+2	+12
4)	State/County/Municipal Employees	+1	+2	+1	+1	+1	1	+2	+9
	American Federation of Teachers	0	0	+2	+1	0	0	+1	+4
	Service Employees Intl Union	0	+1	0	+1	0	0	+1	+3
	National Education Association	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5)	United Food and Commercial Workers	0	+3	−1	+1	0	0	+1	+4
	Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers	0	0	0	0	0	0	+1	+1

1) Import competing industries: fabricated metal manufacturing, transportation equipment manufacturing, chemical manufacturing.

2) Building construction; * Intl Brotherhood of Teamsters also encompasses educational service, ambulatory service, and food manufacturing sectors.

3) Telecommunication

4) Education services, nursing, and ambulatory health

5) Export oriented industry: food manufacturing

belong, we also generate an *average protectionism score* for each industry. For instance, among workers who reported that they belong to one of the thirteen examined unions in the transportation equipment manufacturing industry, 70% are members of the United Autoworkers (protectionism score: +14), 15% are members of the United Steelworkers (protectionism score: +18), and 15% are members of the International Association of Machinists (protectionism score: +16). We therefore average the protectionism score in proportion to the share of members in each union and assign the transportation equipment manufacturing industry an average score of +14.9. We conduct this calculation of the average protectionism score for the other industries.[12]

4 Results

4.1 Do Union Members Have Different Preferences?

We begin by presenting an unconditional comparison of union members' trade policy preferences and those of non-members working in the same industry. Having constructed binary measures from the 5-point scale responses to the four questions on trade described earlier, the panels in Figure 2 present a comparison of the share of respondents in each group who: i) support trade reduction, ii) support more restrictions on buying goods made in other countries, iii) have a negative perception of trade's impact on their family, and iv) have a negative perception of trade's impact on the United States as a whole.

The graphs show that union members' policy preferences are different from those of non-members, but the impact of union membership is not uniform across industries. Broadly speaking, union members in the manufacturing industries – transportation equipment, fabricated metal, chemical manufacturing, and food manufacturing – tend to have more negative attitudes toward international trade than non-members. Yet, the impact of union membership is not homogeneous among workers in service industries. For example, union members employed in building construction are more opposed to trade expansion than non-members, but the opposite pattern is registered in nursing and residential care, as well as is in the ambulatory health care industries, where union-

[12] We do not look at the sectors of data processing, securities, and computer and electronic manufacturing because the share of workers who belong to a labor union (<10) is too small to be meaningful for analysis.

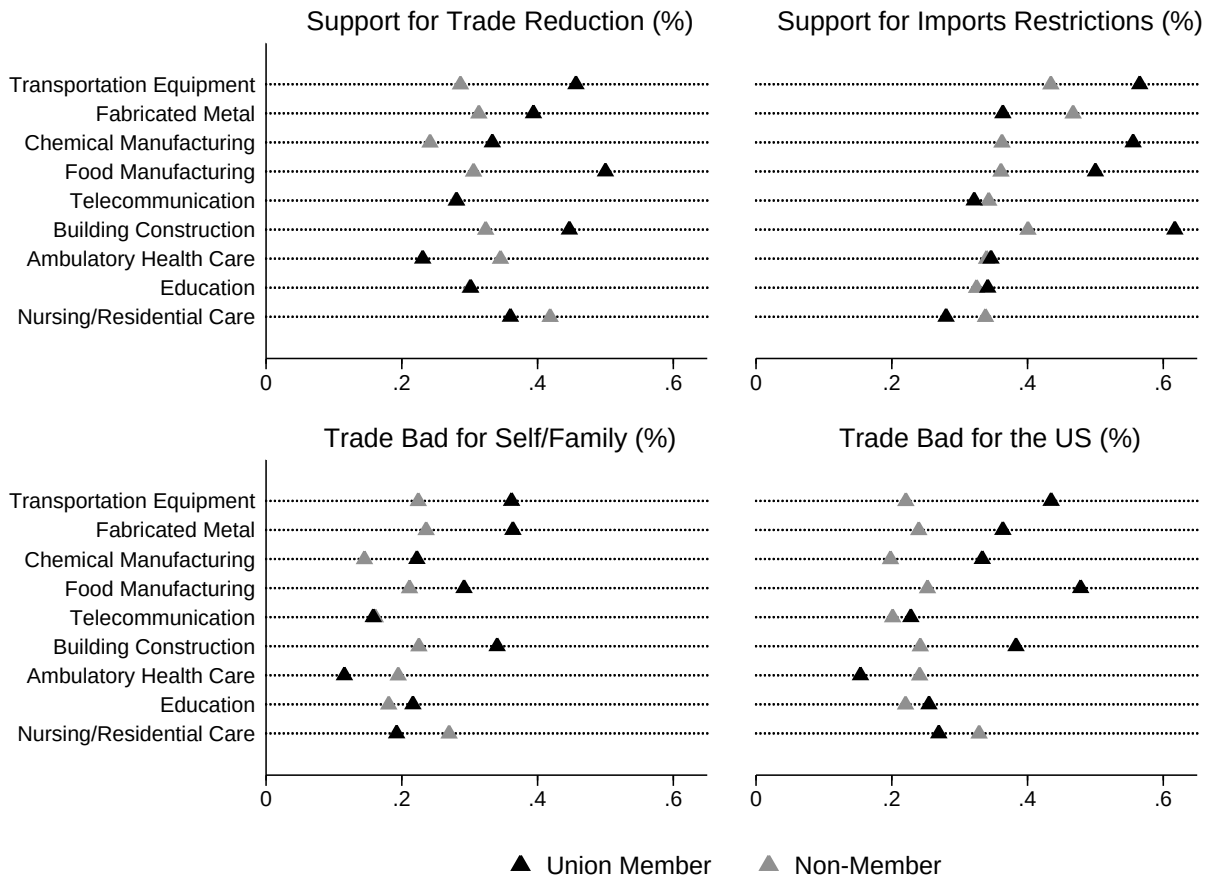

Figure 2: Trade Policy Views of Union Members vs Non-Members, by Industry

ized workers are less protectionist. Finally, we find little difference between the preferences of union members and non-members in both the telecommunication and education sectors.

To get a better sense of the overall 'union effect' across all industries, while taking account of the main potential confounders, we conduct a nearest-neighbor matching exercise. In this exercise we match each union member in our sample with a non-unionized worker who is employed in the same industry and is also of the same gender, ethnicity and education level as the union member.[13] After the requirement for exact matching on these four criteria is fulfilled, the matching algorithm is instructed to seek the closest observation in terms of income level and age.[14] With the matched data,

[13]Education is measured as 4-year college degree indicator.

[14]We do not match on the respondent's party identification which could arguably be influenced by union membership.

we estimate a probit regression model calculating the average treatment effect of union membership on all four dependent variables. The results, presented in Figure 3, show that the average 'union effect' is indeed considerable: union members are about 6 percentage points more likely to support reduction in levels of trade than similar workers employed in the same industry who do not belong to a union. A similar union effect is associated also with support for placing more restrictions on imports and with the perception that trade is adversely the respondents family (5 percentage points). With respect to the view that trade is harming the U.S. as whole, the estimated effect is slightly larger: an increase of 8 percentage points. As the figure shows, even taking account of the uncertainty in the estimate, the union effect is statistically distinguishable from zero at the 95% for three of the dependent variables (the effect on supporting reduction in levels of trade is significant at the 90% level).

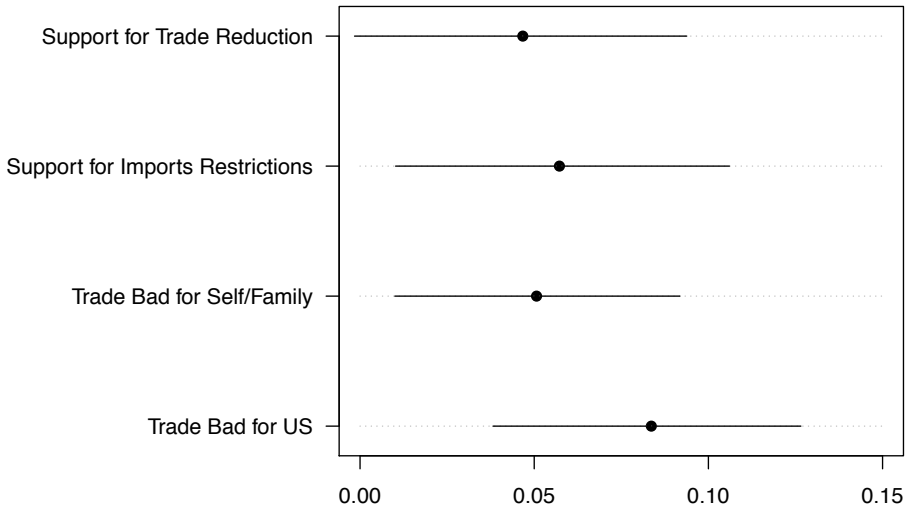

Figure 3: Average Treatment Effects (ATEs) of Union Membership

The question, of course, is what accounts for this 'union effect' and for the variation in the effect across industries (Figure 2). Conditional on the impact of trade openness on different sectors of the economy, when should we expect differences in the trade attitudes of union members and other workers in the same industry? Two plausible mechanisms come to mind. The first is that unionized workers belong to different organizations, and thus are exposed to different (organization-specific) ideas regarding the merits of trade liberalization. Surely, some labor unions might be

more strongly opposed to trade expansion and more active in communicating their views with their members than other unions. Alternatively, the variation we observe across industries could perhaps be explained by the unions' stance leading to different sorting effects. Since labor unions across industries represent different interests and advocate different policy positions, they may attract as members those individuals who, to begin with, hold similar views to those of the unions (i.e. self-selection mechanism). In other words, the first mechanism holds that unions shape the views of their members through communication and information provision, while the second mechanism suggests that unions merely echo the preferences of their members, not shape them. The following sections present a number of empirical tests that evaluate the relative validity of these two lines of explanation.

4.2 Mechanism: Unions as Information Providers?

To evaluate the validity of the 'information provision' mechanism, we begin by examining the basic expectation that unions do in fact communicate with their members on issues regarding trade. We then explore whether members are at all familiar with their union's policy stance.

We first examine a range of issues that unions emphasize in their communications with their members. In the survey, union members were asked to list up to three issues that their union discussed most frequently with them. We then coded their responses to this open ended questions. The results are presented in Figure 4, which shows that some unions indeed prioritize trade issues in their discussion with members. In some industries, a considerable number of the unionized respondents described trade as one the most three frequently discussed issues by the union: 63% of the respondents belonging to the United Auto Workers, 33% from the International Association of Machinists, and 20% from the United Steelworkers. In sharp contrast, none of the respondents from two of the least protectionist unions – the American Federation of Teachers and the Service Employees International Union – listed trade as a frequently discussed issue. This finding is not only consistent with the notion that labor unions serve as information providers on trade issues to their members, but also suggests that the positive relationship between the intensity of communication on trade issues and our measure of unions' protectionist stance is valid.

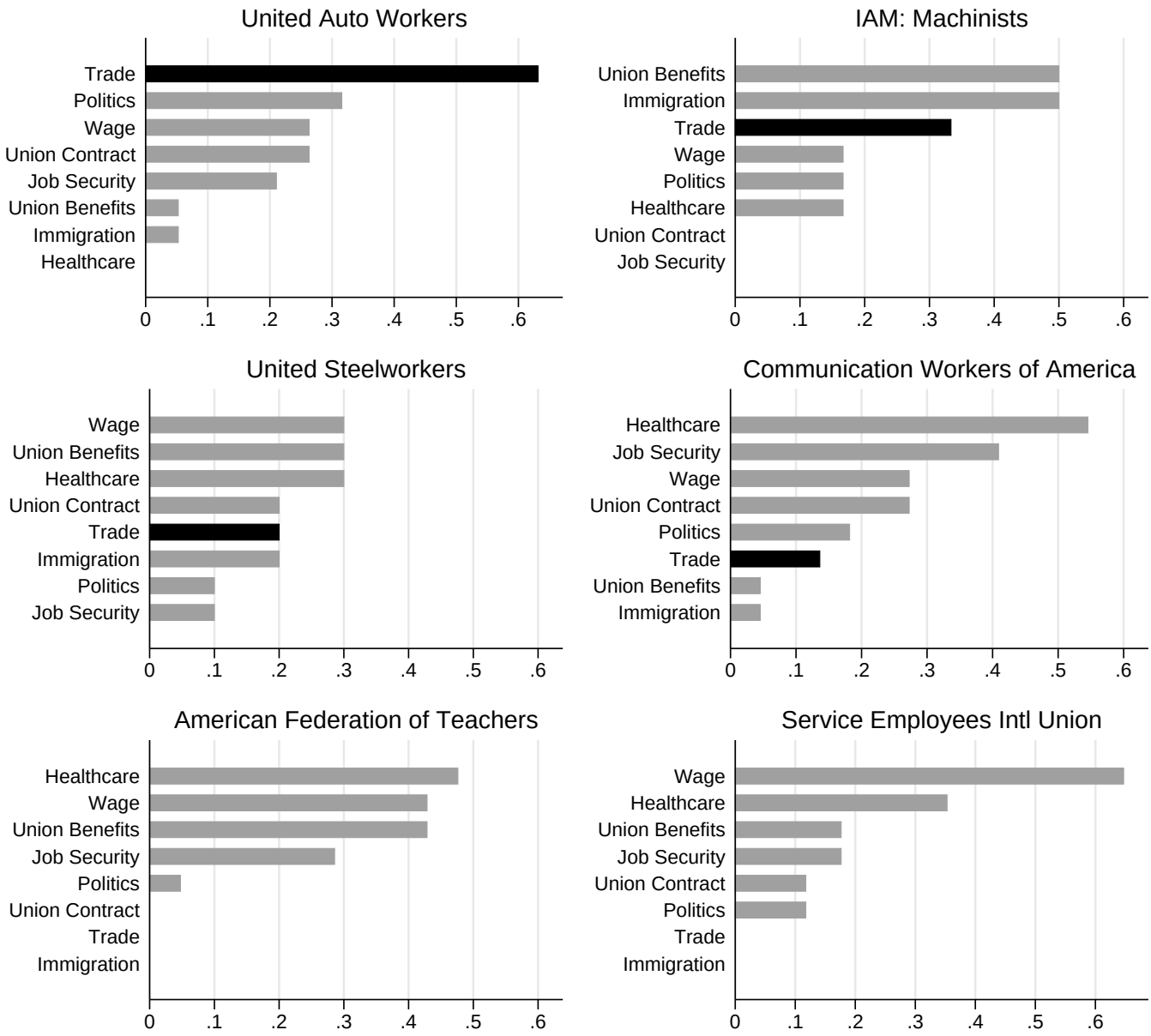

Figure 4: Issues Unions Discuss Most Frequently

Note: The unionized respondents were asked to list up to three issues that their union discussed most frequently in its communications to the respondent. We reclassified open-ended responses to eight categories presented in the figure, leaving out some answers that appear only rarely in the responses.

Next, we move to explore the degree to which workers are familiar with their union's policy stance on trade. The upper panels in Figure 5 present the share of members who: i) answered that they had received at least one communication from their union in the past year on the issue of trade; ii) are either somewhat, or very familiar with the union's position on trade; and iii) think that their union advocates reducing trade. The unions are sorted along the vertical axis by their protectionism score which, as described earlier, is based on their lobbying activity and official statements.

The top left panel indicates that members of more protectionist unions tend to have received more communication from their organization on trade-related issues. Accordingly, those members also tend to express greater familiarity with their union's stance on the issue of trade (top-center), and to describe their union as protectionist (top-right). In the case of the more protectionist unions, such as the United Auto Workers, the United Steelworkers, or the United Brotherhood of Carpenters, over 70% of the members note (correctly) that their union supports reduction of trade levels. In contrast, in the National Education Association – the least protectionist union in our sample – only a fraction describe the union as protectionist, while the large majority thinks their union is either in favor of keeping trade at its current level (58%) or expanding it (17%).

The lower panels of the graph examine a similar set of relationships, but this time present the data by industry rather than by union. Again, the same empirical patterns are evident: The protectionism scores of the different industries are positively and strongly associated with the familiarity of the members with their union's view, the frequency of the union's communication with the members on the topic, as well as with members' perception of the union as advocating a protectionist stance.

The findings that Figure 5 highlights clearly lend support to the 'information provision' mechanism laid out above. Indeed, we find that union members, especially those belonging to protectionist unions, do receive correspondence on trade issues from the unions and learn about the organization's policy stance on the issue. Yet does learning about the union's policy position have any impact on the members' own attitudes? The next section explores this question in some detail.

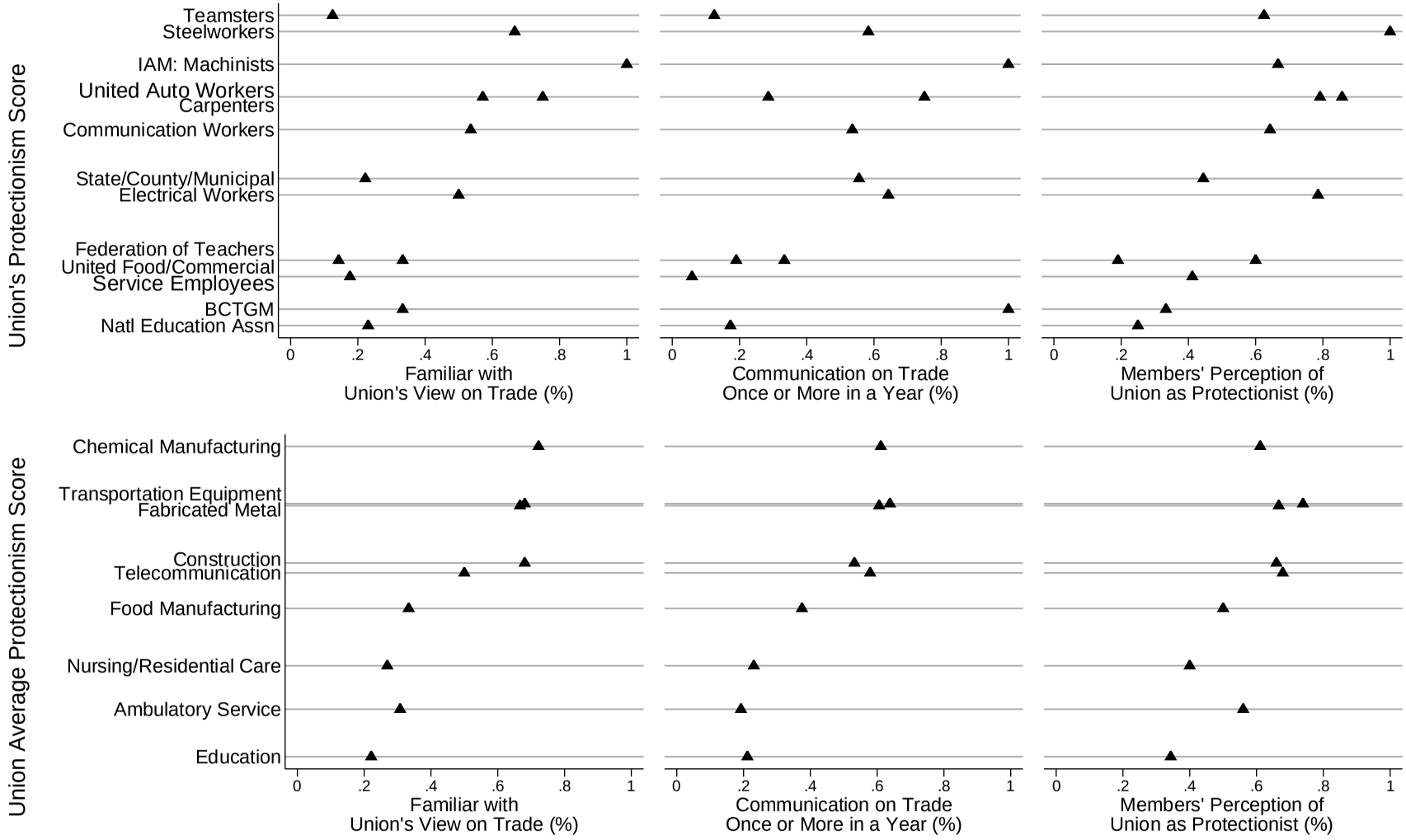

Figure 5: Union Communications on Trade and Members' Knowledge

4.3 Do Members Internalize Information from the Union?

To assess whether communication from unions affects the preferences of workers on the policy, we examine the alignment between the stance of the union and its members' own attitudes toward trade openness. Figure 6 compares the stance of each union with the views of its members, utilizing in each sub-graphs the responses to one of the four dependent variables questions. The graph shows quite vividly that members' own attitudes on the issue of trade are positively associated with the protectionism score of their union. Indeed, the positive association appears across all four measures of individual trade preferences.

This finding, however, is subject to an obvious concern about endogeneity and potential spuriousness: The association might be simply driven by a third factor that shapes both the unions' stance as well as that of its members. For example, workers and unions in import competing sectors might be more protectionist than others simply because of the adverse consequences that exposure to foreign competition poses to them. As a first way of dealing with this possibility, we compare the trade preferences of union members with those of non-union workers employed in the same industry. If the association is driven by some industry-level characteristic, we should observe the same pattern within an industry among both union and non-union members. Yet empirically, that does not appear to be the case.

Figure 7 presents the share of union members and non-members holding negative views toward international trade, and plots them against the industry's protectionism score. The graphs highlight that the average protectionism score of unions in each industry is positively correlated with union members' trade preferences, but not with those of non-members. While members from an industry represented by more protectionist unions appear to be more likely to hold negative views on trade openness, this relationship does not hold among non-members. This suggests that workers *from the same industry* not only differ in their views on trade as a function of whether or not they belong to a union, but also that the differences reveal a distinct pattern: the former hold views that correspond to those of the union while those of the latter group do not.

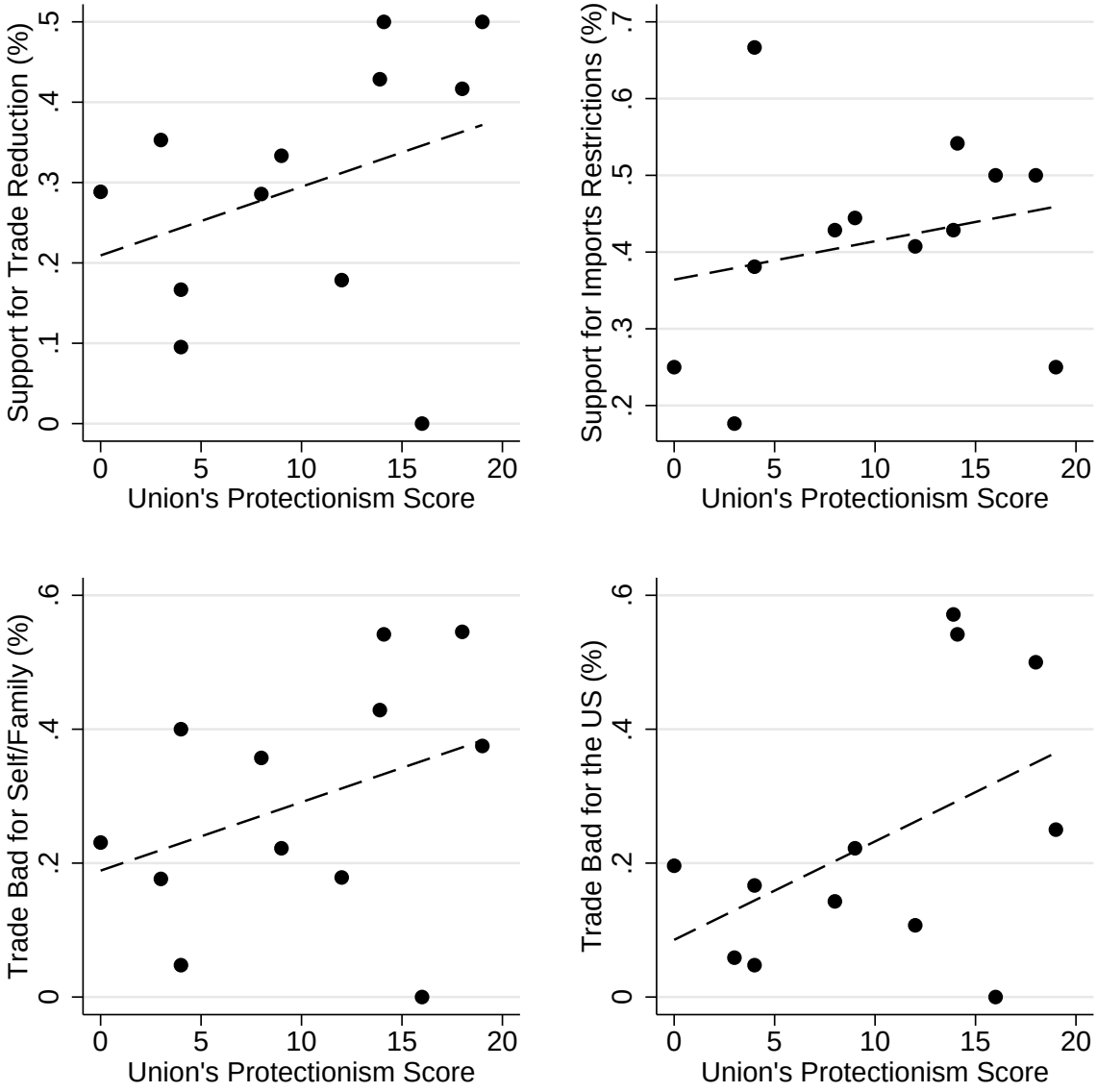

Figure 6: Alignment between Union's Stance and Workers' Policy Preferences across Unions

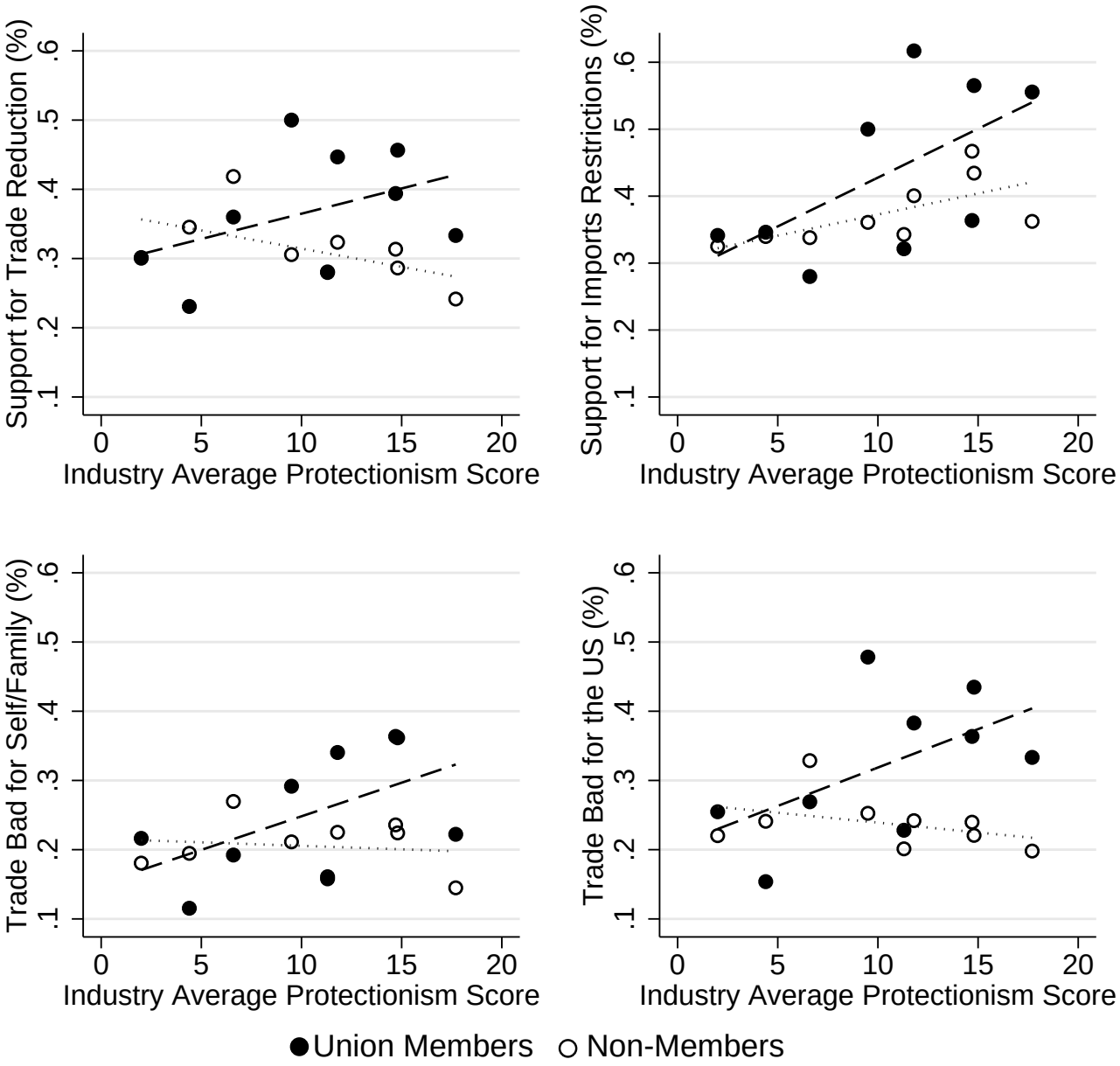

Figure 7: Alignment between Union's Stance and Workers' Policy Preferences across Industries

5 Treatment or Selection?

The results presented so far are consistent with the notion that, among other functions, unions are information providers that exert effective influence on their members' policy preferences. Yet, as noted above, these findings may also reflect a self-selection process: If workers' decision to join a union takes into account the position of the union on trade-related issues, and if those who join protectionist unions are also more engaged in reading the communications they receive on the topic, the results in Figure 6 could be an outcome of a reverse causal process. To address this possibility and test the 'selection effect' explanation, this section presents a number of inferential tests designed to help tease out between the two explanations.

5.1 Exploiting Cross-State Legal Differences

To address the possibility of a 'selection' effect accounting for the 'union effect' on preferences, we leverage state-level differences in their "Right-to-Work" laws, which refer to the legal conditions that govern the ability of workers to join or opt out of a union. Since the introduction of the Right-to-Work provision in 1947, as part of the Taft-Hartley Act, individual states in the U.S. have had the option of enacting a law that prohibits union "security agreements". This means that in states that adopt the Right-to-Work law, labor unions cannot legally require workers to pay union dues. The implication is that union membership in those states depends much more on individual workers' own discretion and is less a function of an institutional requirement to do so.[15] This difference in regulation across states allows us to test the possibility of a 'selection' effect in the following way: If self-selection accounts for members' preferences, the effect of union membership should be larger in those states in which membership is more likely to arise from a worker's choice.

To test this proposition, we estimate the following ordered probit model:

$$Y_i^* = \alpha + \beta_1 Union_i + \beta_2 RTW_i + \beta_3 Union * RTW_i + \gamma Industry_i + \theta Demographics_i + \epsilon_i,$$

where Y_i^* is a latent and continuous transformation of Y_i, a 5-point scale measure of respondents'

[15] For an overview of the Right-to-Work law, see Collins (2012).

attitudes toward international trade. As dependent variables, we test all four measures of trade attitudes described earlier. *Union* is a binary indicator for an individual i's union membership, and *RTW* is a binary variable that takes the value 1 if i resides in a state that had adopted the 'right-to-work' law at the time of the survey. The key parameter of interest is the coefficient β_3 on the interaction term *Union * RTW*. If we find that the interaction term is sizable and significant, that would point strongly toward a selection-based explanation, as it would indicate that the 'union effect' – the difference in attitudes of union members and non-members in their industry – are less pronounced when workers are "pushed" into their union membership status.

The model also includes fixed effects for *Industry* as well as *Demographics*, a vector of individual characteristics (income, gender, race, age, education, and martial status).[16] In some models we also include a measure of party identification (an ordinal scale ranging from strong democrat (1) to strong republican (7)). In the last column of each set of specifications, we also include the demographic variables interacted with *RTW*, to control for the possibility that individual characteristics may also have varying effects in the different legal settings.

We expect labor unions to affect the policy preferences of their members when they actively disseminate policy-related information to their membership. Thus, to provide a clearer test of the "treatment mechanism", we conduct a split-sample analysis, estimating the model separately for industries in which the average protectionism score is high – transportation equipment, chemical, and fabricated metal manufacturing, telecommunication and building construction industries – and the rest of the sample, i.e. industries that score low on the protectionism score.

We present the estimation results in Tables 3 and 4 and in the Appendix. Table 3 shows the results of estimations predicting support for increasing restrictions on imports. We begin by including only a set of basic covariates. The coefficient on *Union Member* is positive and statistically significant in the industry groups represented by the protectionist unions (column [1]), yet it is not significant in the less protectionist industries (column [5]). This result, which holds across all the model specifications, suggests that the effect of union membership is conditional on the firmness of the union's stance on the policy issue in question, perhaps because those unions communicate their

[16] Income is a 14-level ordinal variable, ranging from less than $10,000 (1) to more than $150,000 (14); education is 6-level ordinal variable, ranging from no high school education (1) to a graduate degree (6).

Table 3: Support for Increased Restrictions on Imports

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	More Protectionist Unions				Less Protectionist Unions			
Union Member	0.214**	0.212**	0.182*	0.189*	0.084	0.075	0.078	0.068
	(0.088)	(0.101)	(0.102)	(0.103)	(0.071)	(0.081)	(0.081)	(0.081)
RTW	0.005	0.004	0.045	0.181	0.005	0.002	0.017	-0.039
	(0.054)	(0.056)	(0.057)	(0.423)	(0.042)	(0.044)	(0.044)	(0.300)
RTW*Union Member		0.008	0.014	0.006		0.042	0.033	0.052
		(0.200)	(0.201)	(0.209)		(0.152)	(0.152)	(0.156)
Education	-0.045**	-0.045**	-0.050**	-0.042	-0.019	-0.019	-0.023	-0.019
	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.028)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.023)
Age	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.001	-0.000	-0.000	-0.000	0.002
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Family Income	-0.010	-0.010	-0.005	0.011	-0.019***	-0.019***	-0.021***	-0.028***
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.013)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.009)
Female	0.005	0.005	-0.032	-0.024	0.007	0.007	-0.009	-0.038
	(0.066)	(0.066)	(0.068)	(0.089)	(0.046)	(0.046)	(0.047)	(0.059)
White	-0.066	-0.065	-0.074	-0.127	0.050	0.050	0.049	0.071
	(0.118)	(0.118)	(0.120)	(0.153)	(0.077)	(0.077)	(0.078)	(0.098)
Black	-0.363**	-0.363**	-0.501***	-0.480*	0.052	0.051	-0.020	-0.073
	(0.158)	(0.158)	(0.165)	(0.258)	(0.107)	(0.107)	(0.110)	(0.156)
Hispanic	-0.000	-0.000	-0.075	-0.209	-0.012	-0.011	-0.024	0.007
	(0.163)	(0.163)	(0.170)	(0.212)	(0.114)	(0.114)	(0.115)	(0.155)
Married	-0.059	-0.059	-0.039	-0.008	0.004	0.004	0.040	0.040
	(0.063)	(0.063)	(0.064)	(0.080)	(0.046)	(0.046)	(0.046)	(0.061)
Party ID (7-Scale)			-0.071***	-0.076***			-0.037***	-0.051***
			(0.013)	(0.017)			(0.010)	(0.013)
RTW*Education				-0.035				-0.009
				(0.044)				(0.036)
RTW*Age				0.006				-0.004
				(0.006)				(0.004)
RTW*Income				-0.040*				0.016
				(0.020)				(0.014)
RTW*Female				-0.005				0.074
				(0.140)				(0.090)
RTW*White				0.165				-0.072
				(0.249)				(0.162)
RTW*Black				-0.028				0.101
				(0.349)				(0.226)
RTW*Hispanic				0.348				-0.081
				(0.344)				(0.232)
RTW*Married				-0.094				0.004
				(0.135)				(0.094)
RTW*Party ID				0.010				0.038*
				(0.028)				(0.020)
Industry FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	1608	1608	1581	1581	2690	2690	2644	2644

Robust standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table 4: Perception of Bad Trade Impact on Self/Family

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	More Protectionist Unions				Less Protectionist Unions			
Union Member	0.238***	0.258***	0.260***	0.282***	0.032	0.034	0.024	0.001
	(0.086)	(0.099)	(0.098)	(0.099)	(0.069)	(0.078)	(0.078)	(0.079)
RTW	0.005	0.013	0.049	0.438	-0.032	-0.032	-0.038	0.609**
	(0.055)	(0.057)	(0.058)	(0.407)	(0.043)	(0.045)	(0.046)	(0.310)
RTW*Union Member		-0.085	-0.157	-0.196		-0.006	0.007	0.086
		(0.194)	(0.197)	(0.199)		(0.143)	(0.143)	(0.145)
Education	-0.172***	-0.172***	-0.176***	-0.163***	-0.148***	-0.148***	-0.152***	-0.134***
	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.029)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.023)
Age	0.000	0.000	0.000	-0.001	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.006***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Family Income	-0.015	-0.015	-0.011	-0.008	-0.035***	-0.035***	-0.034***	-0.038***
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.014)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.009)
Female	0.352***	0.352***	0.318***	0.331***	0.416***	0.416***	0.409***	0.466***
	(0.064)	(0.064)	(0.065)	(0.087)	(0.047)	(0.047)	(0.048)	(0.058)
White	-0.012	-0.013	-0.031	0.030	0.105	0.105	0.099	0.149
	(0.114)	(0.114)	(0.116)	(0.146)	(0.082)	(0.082)	(0.084)	(0.107)
Black	-0.233	-0.234	-0.387**	-0.548**	0.212*	0.212*	0.197*	0.355**
	(0.170)	(0.170)	(0.165)	(0.236)	(0.109)	(0.109)	(0.112)	(0.157)
Hispanic	-0.104	-0.105	-0.168	-0.088	0.162	0.162	0.153	0.106
	(0.170)	(0.170)	(0.174)	(0.224)	(0.122)	(0.122)	(0.123)	(0.160)
Married	-0.093	-0.092	-0.073	0.034	-0.019	-0.019	-0.011	-0.045
	(0.064)	(0.064)	(0.065)	(0.085)	(0.046)	(0.046)	(0.047)	(0.060)
Party ID (7-Scale)			-0.047***	-0.050***			-0.011	-0.017
			(0.014)	(0.017)			(0.010)	(0.013)
RTW*Education				-0.050				-0.054
				(0.045)				(0.036)
RTW*Age				0.003				-0.009**
				(0.005)				(0.004)
RTW*Income				-0.004				0.010
				(0.020)				(0.015)
RTW*Female				-0.023				-0.147
				(0.132)				(0.091)
RTW*White				-0.187				-0.144
				(0.236)				(0.170)
RTW*Black				0.160				-0.311
				(0.336)				(0.227)
RTW*Hispanic				-0.197				0.055
				(0.360)				(0.252)
RTW*Married				-0.310**				0.089
				(0.134)				(0.097)
RTW*Party ID				0.013				0.012
				(0.028)				(0.020)
Industry FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	1610	1610	1583	1583	2684	2684	2638	2638

Robust standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

stance on the issue more intensely to their membership.

Yet as explained above, the key coefficient of interest is the interaction term *Union Member * RTW*. Notably, this interaction term is not statistically significant in any of the specifications: when we include only the basic set of covariates, when we add controls also for the respondent's partisan affiliation, and when we interact the RTW condition with all other covariates. In none of the specifications does the coefficient on the interaction term even approach statistical significance. This result clearly goes against the prediction that arises if a selection mechanism accounts for the distinct trade policy preferences of union members.

Table 4 replicates the analysis, this time using respondent's perception of trade's impact on the U.S. Again, the same patterns are observed: union membership is positively associated with an attitude skeptical of trade, but significant only in industries with protectionist unions. As before, the effect of union membership is not different in states with RTW legislation and those without. The results are substantively similar with respect to the two other dependent variables (see Appendix), albeit the coefficient of union membership drops below statistical significance when predicting support for reduction of trade. Yet even then, the coefficient of the interaction term with RTW remains statistically indistinguishable from zero.

We assess the substantive effect of union membership on the probability that a worker supports increasing restrictions on imports. To do so, we estimate the probability that a worker with characteristics of the sample median supports increasing restrictions on imports either somewhat or greatly.[17] A non-union member with such characteristics is, on average, 41% likely to support a more protectionist measure, but union membership increases the probability by 8 percentage points to above 49%. This represents about a 21% increase over the baseline level. Note that this effect is comparable, or even stronger, than education, a variable that is widely documented as an important determinant of trade preferences:[18] a change from a high school diploma to a 4-year college graduate is associated with a decrease in the predicted probability of tariff supports by only

[17] We estimate the predicted probability based on model [2] and [6] and set *age* at its mean value and all other categorical variables at their median values, assuming a white male, married, with 4 years of college education. The industry is set to *transportation equipment industry* when estimating the model for more protectionist group of industries (model [2]).

[18] See, for example, (Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2006)

5 percentage points. We also examine the effect of union membership in less protectionist group of industries.[19]

5.2 Following the Union? The UAW's Shift toward Free Trade

If unions affect the policy positions of their members by providing policy relevant information, we would expect that following a change in the policy stance of the union, a corresponding change in the view of their members would also take place. In contrast, we would not expect this to occur if members join the union because of their affiliation with its (original) stance on trade. In this section we examine the effect of exact such type of reversal in a union stance, the sudden and fairly dramatic shift in the United Auto Workers (UAW) position toward a major trade liberalization deal.

For many years, the UAW, a labor union representing workers primarily in the auto manufacturing and auto part industries, had been consistently and strongly opposed to the expansion of U.S. trade. It was also part of a vocal opposition to the signing of trade agreements with Colombia and with Korea, agreements that were debated around the time of the survey. With respect to the latter, the UAW's official statement from April 2010 summarized its position as follows: "The UAW strongly opposes the free-trade deal negotiated by President Bush with South Korea (KORUS FTA) in April 2007, and has reiterated that opposition to the Obama administration and to Congress. The poorly negotiated and misguided auto provisions of the KORUS FTA would further open the U.S. market to increased automotive imports from Korea, while allowing the Korean government to continue to use a variety of non-tariff barriers to keep their market effectively closed to U.S.-built products..." The statement ended by calling the union members to "Urge Congress to oppose the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement, and to insist that the auto provisions of this agreement must be renegotiated. Tell Congress that this free-trade deal would lead to a surge in automotive imports from South Korea, worsening our lopsided auto trade deficit and threatening the jobs of tens of thousands of American workers."[20]

[19] We estimate the probability based on model [6], setting the industry category to *ambulatory health care industry* In this case, union membership increases the predicted probability of supporting trade restrictions by 3 percentage points on average, yet the point estimate is below conventional levels of statistical significance.

[20] For the full statement, see `http://www.uaw.org/page/international-trade-and-investment-policy`

Yet, following intense lobbying and negotiations with the Obama administration, a set of changes advocated by the union were incorporated into the revised agreement, changes pertaining to issues such as the timing of tariff reductions, an introduction of safegaurd provisions against Korean exports, and the dismantling of some Korean non-tariff barriers imposed on automotive products built in the U.S. These changes in the agreement led to a U-turn in the union's stance. On December 6th of that same year, the union made an official statement pronouncing that "the changes announced to the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement today are a dramatic step toward changing from a one-way street to a two-way street for trade between the U.S. and South Korea. These changes represent an important opportunity to break open the Korean market for U.S. businesses and workers and boost American manufacturing jobs, particularly in the automotive sector." The announcement went on to detail the advantages of the revised trade deal and commended the Obama administration for giving "the labor movement, and particularly the UAW, an opportunity to be part of the discussions about this agreement... we believe an agreement was achieved that will protect current American auto jobs, that will grow more American auto jobs, that includes labor and environmental commitments, and that has important enforcement mechanisms."[21]

How did this shift in the union's position influence the views of the auto workers on trade? We examine the impact of the UAW's pro-trade message by focusing on our sample of auto industry workers. The survey includes 106 respondents from the auto industry, a quarter of which participated in the survey *after* the UAW announced its support for the free trade agreement.[22] Using this sample, we compare the views of union members with those of non-members before and after the UAW's endorsement of the free trade agreement. Figure 8 clearly demonstrates that union members working in the auto industry were significantly more protectionist than non-members before the shift, yet the level of support for trade restrictions significantly decreased after the UAW endorsed the free trade agreement. This change in attitudes toward trade liberalization is not observed among non-members working in the same auto industry.

Turning to a multivariate analysis, we examine whether union members' pro-trade shift is

[21]For the full statement, see `http://www.uaw.org/category/tags/korus`

[22]The survey includes 270 respondents working in the transportation equipment industry, which encompasses aircraft manufacturing and aerospace manufacturing industries as well as automobile industry.

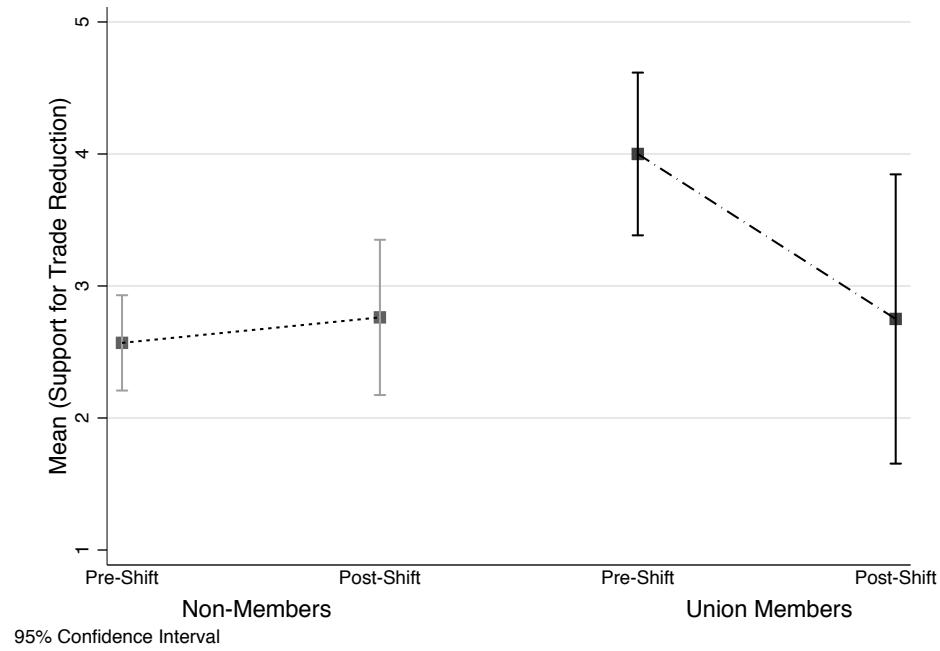

Figure 8: Support for Reducing Trade by Union Membership before and after the UAW Shift

narrowly specified even after controlling for confounding factors. We estimate the following model:

$$Y_i^* = \alpha + \beta_1 Union_i + \beta_2 Post\text{-}Shift_i + \beta_3 Union * Post\text{-}Shift_i + \theta Demographics_i + \epsilon_i.$$

Note that the model specification is similar to those estimated in the previous section, only this time we include a *Post-Shift* indicator instead of a binary variable denoting an *RTW* state. The *Post-Shift* indicator variable takes the value 1 if individual i was interviewed after the UAW announced its support for the KORUS FTA and the value 0 if interviewed before.[23] In some models, we also include separate indicators for the three states – *Indiana*, *Michigan*, and *Ohio* – in which the auto industry is concentrated, as well as their interaction terms with a binary indicator for post-shift survey. This is necessary is to ensure that a finding is not driven simply by state specific characteristics. Of key interest in this analysis is of course the effect associated with *Union* membership and the interaction term *Union*Post-shift*. We expect union members interviewed

[23]For the auto industry workers in our sample, the latest interview conducted before the shift took place on November 22, 2010 and the earliest interview after the shift took place on January 2, 2011.

before December 2010 to exhibit more intense protectionist attitudes than non-members because the former were exposed to the union's message opposing the free trade deal. In addition, we expect that union members interviewed after the shift – and who presumably were exposed to the pro-trade message from the union – to be less protectionist.

The estimation results are presented in Table 5. The results are in line with the expectations: The coefficient on *Union Member* is positive and statistically significant at the 0.05 level or higher in all specifications estimating support for trade reduction. In addition, the coeffficient on *Union Member*Post-Shift* is negative and significant at 0.1 or higher in all models. Given that this result is estimated with a fairly small sub-sample of 106 auto workers, the consistency of the result, even when controlling for a host of demographic factors, is quite striking. Turning to the right panel of the table in which we analyze respondents' view of trade as harmful to themselves and their families, we find that union membership was again associated with a sizable and significant effect on the perception of trade as adversely affecting one's family. However, in this case we observe a much weaker change following the union's u-turn in the pro-trade direction. Taken together, these results suggest that the union was able to quite effectively influence the policy stance of its members after it publicly changed its position on the signing of the KORUS agreement, but this shift did not reverse the members' overall perception that trade has harmed them and their families.

6 Conclusion

The stated aim of labor unions is conventionally described as fighting for "better rights, wages and benefits for workers". While these objectives are generally a source of agreement among scholars of unions, the methods used to obtain those objectives and the consequences of their deployment are often deeply contested. This paper examines one route by which labor unions pursue their objectives, namely through emboldening support for the organization's stance by communicating information to the union's membership. To date, not much systematic information exists about the degree to which unions communicate with their members on specific policy issues, nor about the impact of these communications.

Addressing these issues, this paper has shown that unions do indeed communicate policy-

Table 5: The UAW Effects

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Support for Trade Reduction				Trade Bad for Self/Family			
Union Member	1.095***	1.001***	1.083***	1.140***	1.065***	0.837**	0.953**	1.007**
	(0.331)	(0.354)	(0.376)	(0.397)	(0.328)	(0.345)	(0.371)	(0.394)
Post-Shift	0.140	0.006	-0.017	0.648	-0.049	-0.113	-0.116	0.444
	(0.270)	(0.279)	(0.280)	(0.423)	(0.271)	(0.278)	(0.279)	(0.419)
Post-Shift*Union Member	-1.032*	-1.158**	-1.104*	-1.527**	-0.367	-0.226	-0.188	-0.393
	(0.552)	(0.568)	(0.571)	(0.616)	(0.542)	(0.559)	(0.561)	(0.605)
Age		-0.008	-0.009	-0.017		0.007	0.007	0.003
		(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)		(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)
Family Income		-0.079	-0.073	-0.152**		-0.036	-0.034	-0.093
		(0.051)	(0.052)	(0.059)		(0.049)	(0.049)	(0.056)
Female		0.192	0.204	-0.149		0.097	0.117	-0.316
		(0.341)	(0.342)	(0.374)		(0.342)	(0.343)	(0.380)
White		1.063	1.101	1.156		0.320	0.358	0.476
		(0.789)	(0.785)	(0.777)		(0.673)	(0.676)	(0.676)
Black		1.990*	2.046**	2.002*		-0.481	-0.391	-0.548
		(1.026)	(1.024)	(1.025)		(1.002)	(1.005)	(1.029)
Hispanic		1.279	1.395	1.489		0.202	0.360	0.481
		(0.958)	(0.968)	(0.975)		(0.858)	(0.878)	(0.899)
Education		-0.199**	-0.199**	-0.216**		-0.200**	-0.202**	-0.270***
		(0.094)	(0.095)	(0.100)		(0.093)	(0.094)	(0.101)
Married		0.283	0.265	0.518		0.077	0.037	0.256
		(0.317)	(0.319)	(0.336)		(0.300)	(0.304)	(0.323)
Party ID (7-Scale)			0.044	0.044			0.054	0.058
			(0.061)	(0.063)			(0.062)	(0.064)
Indiana				-0.532				-0.895**
				(0.426)				(0.445)
Post-Shift*Indiana				-2.208**				-1.263
				(0.967)				(0.934)
Michigan				0.729**				0.878**
				(0.368)				(0.368)
Post-Shift*Michigan				-1.160*				-1.068*
				(0.620)				(0.612)
Ohio				-0.000				-0.338
				(0.552)				(0.524)
Post-Shift * Ohio				0.023				-0.539
				(0.876)				(0.857)
Observations	101	101	100	100	102	102	101	101

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

relevant information to their membership on a regular basis, but that the frequency and nature of these communications varies quite significantly across unions. Focusing on the issue of trade policy, we find that unions that engage in substantial lobbying on trade-related bills tend also to communicate regularly on the matter with their members. In fact, in some cases, communication of information on trade policy eclipses correspondence even on "traditional" union issues, such as wages or healthcare. Beyond documenting these patterns of communication, we provide evidence that those unions that engage in substantial communication of information to their members are also able to influence their attitudes toward the union-held position. Thus, it appears that unions' are not merely a "voice" of workers' preferences, but also an effective institution that is able to systematically shape and cohere that voice toward a given policy objective.

Another implication of this finding relates to the distinction between union density and union coverage. Whereas the former term refers only to actual union members, the latter term includes also workers who do not belong to a union but whose employment contracts are tied to a union-led collective bargaining. It is often said that in evaluating the impact of unions, one must focus on their coverage since that measure provides a better indication of the union's actual reach. The findings we present here provide fairly strong evidence that unions' political influence is significantly greater on their enlisted members than on other workers, even those who operate in the same industry but who are not members. Our evidence suggests that this difference in influence is a result of the communications that unions are able to, and routinely do, conduct with their membership. By providing information even on complex policy issues, members are able to learn about the union's position and tend also to adopt that stance more than other workers not exposed to those communications. Put differently it appears that union membership, rather than union coverage, is the more apt measure for assessing a union's political clout.

Our findings pertain to the impact of unions in the U.S., one of the countries with the sharpest declines in union density and with the lowest current rates of membership. One obvious extension of this study would be to examine the same question but in countries that enjoy much higher union density rates, such as Denmark, Norway, or even Canada. One might conjecture that the "union effect" we would find in those other countries would be even larger than the one we identify

in this study, since the strength of the unions outside the U.S. allows them to invest more in communicating and educating their members. Whether that is the case is of course an empirical question that hopefully future research would illuminate.

In prior research on public opinion, any consideration of a "union effect" on attitudes has almost exclusively relied on the inclusion of an indicator variable denoting whether or not the respondent belongs to a union. This approach assumes a homogeneous effect across unions. Yet our study, which utilizes information not only on membership but also on the specific unions respondents' belong to, highlights the significant variation both in the position that unions take on the same issue and in the intensity in which they correspond with their members on the issue. By estimating only the average union effect, as most prior research has done, scholars have underestimated the impact of the more active unions on the preferences of their members. This suggests that for addressing some questions about the political consequences of unions, particularly those that seek to go beyond their overall effect on the electorate, collecting information not just on membership but also the specific union affiliation could be both important and productive.

In recent years, perhaps due to the consistent decline in union membership, the focus in much research has shifted to exploring the influence of other institutions - e.g. organized religion, business interests - on various political and electoral outcomes (Green, 2007; Smith and Walker, 2013; Baumgartner et al., 2009). Yet even today, few organizations have the broad reach and regular access to such sizable portions of the electorate as labor unions do. Indeed, as the findings of this paper suggest, for an accurate account of the major influences in today's political landscape, taking account of unions' impact is still very much of import.

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Appendix

1 Data Description

1.1 Survey Questionnaire

- The specific questions asked for union members to gauge their knowledge about union activities are as follows:
  - Overall, where do you think the union stands on the question of whether trade with other countries should be expanded, reduced or kept at its current level?
  - How familiar would you say you are with the union's view on trade with other countries? Do you think that trade with other countries is good or bad for you and your family?
  - During the past year, approximately how often would you estimate the union has communicated with you about trade with other countries?

1.2 List of Selected Labor Unions

- Table A1 presents the list of selected labor unions. We examined their lobbying activities and official statements on major trade issues and developed a measure of protectionist stance for each union.

Table A1: List of Selected Labor Unions

Union	**Industry**
United Auto Workers	transportation equipment; fabricated metal
United Steelworkers	transportation equipment; fabricated metal; chemical
International Association of Machinists	transportation equipment; fabricated metal; chemical
United Food and Commercial Workers	food products; ambulatory health
Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers	food products
International Brotherhood of Teamsters	food products; construction; ambulatory health
United Brotherhood of Carpenters	construction
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers	construction
Service Employees International Union	data processing; education; nursing; ambulatory health
National Education Association	education
American Federation of Teachers	education
American Federation of State/County/Municipal Employees	nursing
Communication Workers of America	telecommunication

1.3 Coding Rule of Union Protectionism Score

- Table A2 describes the list of selected bills for measuring union protectionism score along with the list of excluded bills.
- Our detailed coding scheme is as follows:
  - We assign 'strong protectionism' (+3)/'strong support for free trade' (-3) if the labor union lobbied on a given issue for four quarters or more out of eight quarters in 2009-10 and had expressed a protectionist view/pro-free trade view on the issue. While we set four quarters of lobbying as the threshold distinguishing 'strong protectionism' from 'protectionism' and 'strong support for free trade' from 'support for free trade,' our threshold is not very sensitive to the threshold.
  - We assign 'protectionism' (+2)/'support for free trade' (-2) if the labor union lobbied on a given issue at least once and had expressed a protectionist view/pro-free trade view on the issue.
  - We assign 'weak protectionism' (+1)/'weak support for free trade' (-1) if the labor union did not lobby on a given issue, yet had expressed a protectionist view/pro-free trade view on the issue.
  - We assign 'neutral position' (0) if the labor union had not expressed any view on the issue.

Table A2: Classification of Congressional Bills on Foreign Trade and International Finance

Classification	#[a]	**Example**	**Coding**
Included Issues			
US-Colombia Free Trade Agreement	3	Resolution on Passing FTAs with Colombia, South Korea, and Panama	free trade
US-South Korea Free Trade Agreement			free trade
US-Panama Free Trade Agreement			free trade
Currency Manipulation	4	Currency Exchange Rate Oversight Reform Act of 2009	protectionist
TRADE Act of 2009	2	Trade Act of 2009	protectionist
Trade Adjustment Assistance Program	1	A Bill to Change the Eligibility for the TAA Program	protectionist
Trade with China	5	Emergency China Trade Act of 2010	protectionist
Excluded Issues			
Specific Products	944	A Bill to Remove the Additional Tariff on Ethanol.	
Specific Industries	10	Agriculture Smart Trade Act	
Reciprocal Market Access Act	2	Reciprocal Market Access Act of 2009	
Export Promotion/Trade Deficit	5	Small Business Export Support Act of 2010	
Trade Enforcement	6	Customs Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Reauthorization Act	
Free Trade Agreement	10	A Bill to Pursue FTA with the ASEAN	
Non-Major Trade Partners	12	Renewing Hope for Haitian Trade and Investment Act	
International Finance	10	Foreign-Held Debt Transparency and Threat Assessment Act	
Foreign Investment	3	Overseas Private Investment Corporation Reauthorization Act	
Administrative Issues	5	A Bill to Terminate the Authorities of the Trade and Development Agency	
Irrelevant or Minor Bills	7	Imported Food Safety Improvement Act	

[a]Number of bills classified in each category

2 Results from Additional Analyses

- Tables A3 and A4 present the estimation results of our main models, replacing the dependent variable with *Support for Trade Reduction* and *Bad Trade Impact on the US*, respectively.

Table A3: Support for Trade Reduction

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	More Protectionist Unions				Less Protectionist Unions			
Union Member	0.145	0.141	0.152	0.162	0.045	0.091	0.090	0.060
	(0.089)	(0.102)	(0.102)	(0.104)	(0.069)	(0.080)	(0.081)	(0.082)
RTW	0.052	0.051	0.074	0.349	0.035	0.050	0.040	0.171
	(0.055)	(0.057)	(0.058)	(0.412)	(0.043)	(0.045)	(0.046)	(0.313)
RTW*Union Member		0.016	-0.062	-0.081		-0.202	-0.191	-0.126
		(0.198)	(0.198)	(0.200)		(0.132)	(0.132)	(0.134)
Education	-0.193***	-0.193***	-0.197***	-0.197***	-0.151***	-0.150***	-0.155***	-0.165***
	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.028)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.019)	(0.023)
Age	-0.004	-0.004	-0.004	-0.004	-0.003	-0.003	-0.003*	-0.001
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Family Income	-0.002	-0.002	0.002	-0.000	-0.019**	-0.019***	-0.019**	-0.016*
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.013)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.009)
Female	0.352***	0.352***	0.337***	0.394***	0.520***	0.522***	0.518***	0.602***
	(0.063)	(0.063)	(0.064)	(0.085)	(0.048)	(0.048)	(0.048)	(0.060)
White	0.033	0.033	0.002	0.039	0.154*	0.154*	0.167**	0.134
	(0.114)	(0.114)	(0.116)	(0.145)	(0.081)	(0.081)	(0.082)	(0.102)
Black	-0.020	-0.020	-0.138	-0.217	0.079	0.083	0.119	0.201
	(0.162)	(0.162)	(0.159)	(0.235)	(0.113)	(0.113)	(0.116)	(0.167)
Hispanic	-0.120	-0.120	-0.172	-0.243	0.117	0.115	0.134	0.161
	(0.179)	(0.179)	(0.185)	(0.240)	(0.127)	(0.127)	(0.128)	(0.162)
Married	-0.167***	-0.167***	-0.165***	-0.059	0.027	0.028	0.017	-0.017
	(0.063)	(0.063)	(0.064)	(0.083)	(0.046)	(0.046)	(0.047)	(0.059)
Party ID (7-Scale)			-0.027**	-0.033*			0.011	-0.004
			(0.013)	(0.017)			(0.010)	(0.013)
RTW*Education				-0.012				0.024
				(0.045)				(0.037)
RTW*Age				-0.001				-0.006*
				(0.005)				(0.004)
RTW*Income				0.009				-0.008
				(0.020)				(0.015)
RTW*Female				-0.147				-0.205**
				(0.132)				(0.091)
RTW*White				-0.138				0.061
				(0.243)				(0.173)
RTW*Black				0.071				-0.085
				(0.333)				(0.240)
RTW*Hispanic				0.110				-0.101
				(0.383)				(0.267)
RTW*Married				-0.307**				0.102
				(0.132)				(0.096)
RTW*Party ID				0.021				0.036*
				(0.028)				(0.020)
Industry FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	1606	1606	1579	1579	2688	2688	2642	2642

Robust tandard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table A4: Perception of Bad Trade Impact on the US

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	More Protectionist Unions				Less Protectionist Unions			
Union Member	0.277***	0.307***	0.313***	0.344***	0.039	0.064	0.059	0.038
	(0.090)	(0.104)	(0.104)	(0.106)	(0.068)	(0.077)	(0.077)	(0.078)
RTW	0.008	0.019	0.057	0.191	-0.020	-0.011	-0.017	0.477
	(0.055)	(0.057)	(0.058)	(0.408)	(0.044)	(0.046)	(0.046)	(0.327)
RTW*Union Member		-0.129	-0.230	-0.276		-0.114	-0.103	-0.033
		(0.195)	(0.194)	(0.196)		(0.147)	(0.148)	(0.148)
Education	-0.153***	-0.153***	-0.160***	-0.142***	-0.155***	-0.154***	-0.158***	-0.140***
	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.029)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.019)	(0.023)
Age	-0.003	-0.003	-0.003	-0.004	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.002
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Family Income	-0.015	-0.015	-0.011	-0.010	-0.034***	-0.034***	-0.034***	-0.033***
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.014)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.009)
Female	0.367***	0.367***	0.327***	0.371***	0.442***	0.443***	0.440***	0.511***
	(0.064)	(0.064)	(0.066)	(0.089)	(0.049)	(0.049)	(0.049)	(0.060)
White	0.025	0.023	-0.003	-0.015	0.083	0.083	0.103	0.184*
	(0.112)	(0.112)	(0.114)	(0.151)	(0.085)	(0.085)	(0.086)	(0.107)
Black	-0.205	-0.206	-0.356**	-0.686***	0.112	0.114	0.140	0.247
	(0.170)	(0.170)	(0.166)	(0.258)	(0.114)	(0.114)	(0.117)	(0.160)
Hispanic	0.006	0.004	-0.062	-0.051	0.078	0.077	0.094	0.080
	(0.162)	(0.162)	(0.167)	(0.231)	(0.133)	(0.133)	(0.133)	(0.182)
Married	-0.072	-0.070	-0.053	0.055	-0.017	-0.017	-0.017	-0.043
	(0.065)	(0.065)	(0.066)	(0.087)	(0.047)	(0.047)	(0.048)	(0.062)
Party ID (7-Scale)			-0.047***	-0.052***			-0.007	-0.017
			(0.014)	(0.017)			(0.010)	(0.013)
RTW*Education				-0.060				-0.051
				(0.046)				(0.036)
RTW*Age				0.004				-0.003
				(0.005)				(0.004)
RTW*Income				0.004				-0.001
				(0.020)				(0.015)
RTW*Female				-0.081				-0.183**
				(0.134)				(0.092)
RTW*White				0.012				-0.221
				(0.223)				(0.179)
RTW*Black				0.535				-0.221
				(0.337)				(0.237)
RTW*Hispanic				-0.001				-0.040
				(0.333)				(0.273)
RTW*Married				-0.313**				0.071
				(0.133)				(0.099)
RTW*Party ID				0.019				0.026
				(0.028)				(0.021)
Industry FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	1609	1609	1582	1582	2690	2690	2644	2644

Robust standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

3 Matching Results

- Table A5 presents the results of an ordered probit estimation with the matched data. We conduct this estimation on each of the four devepndent variabe questions. The average treatment effect for all industries is presented in Figure 3 of the main text. Here, we conduct an additional analysis with the matched data, splitting the sample into more protectionist industries and less protectionist industries.

Table A5: Estimating the Impact of Union Membership, Matched Data

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	More Protectionist Industries				Less Protectionist Industries			
	Trade Reduction	Imports Restriction	Bad for Self	Bad for US	Trade Reduction	Imports Restriction	Bad for Self	Bad for US
Union Member	0.196*	0.178	0.252**	0.275**	0.088	0.102	0.087	0.123
	(0.117)	(0.117)	(0.118)	(0.119)	(0.094)	(0.094)	(0.095)	(0.096)
Age	-0.005	-0.001	0.005	0.000	-0.001	-0.001	0.005	0.005
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.005)
Party ID (7-Scale)	-0.049*	-0.048*	-0.055**	-0.055**	-0.001	-0.053**	-0.007	-0.017
	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.027)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.022)
Family Income	-0.032	0.025	-0.030	-0.022	-0.071***	-0.009	-0.082***	-0.073***
	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.016)
Observations	338	338	338	338	502	502	502	502

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$