"Mass Attitudes about International Trade Agreements: Positive Messages and the Trans-Pacific Partnership"

by

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Abstract: Starting from the understanding that the mass public knows little about the benefits of international trade agreements but nonetheless oppose them with this opposition representing a problem for domestic ratification, this short paper explores if and what messages about the Trans-Pacific Partnership might increase American support. The experimental results show that providing more accurate background information alone does not increase support. However, adding a positive economic message about how this international trade agreement could lower prices or a security message about how it helps the United States counter China does increase support. These significant effects appear not only within societal groups that may be easier to persuade in this issue-area but also within groups that start as more opposed, namely less educated citizens and partisan Republicans. Thus, it may be possible to rally broad support for this international trade agreement, making membership in the Trans-Pacific Partnership a more viable option for the United States to execute its Indo-Pacific pivot.

 The Indo-Pacific pivot shifts American attention and resources away from the Middle East, consistent with declining U.S. dependence on foreign oil, towards the Far East to counter the rise of China through increased cooperation with friendly countries in this region. If the turn towards Asia represents the new strategy, then its potential tactics include trade restrictions on China and membership in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). While this pivot is most closely associated with the Obama administration, the Trump administration's steps towards the military withdrawal from Afghanistan and its launch of the trade war against China arguably accord with this foreign policy shift.

 Increasing cooperation with allies in Asia to contain China certainly stands as a primary objective for the Biden administration's foreign policy. However, its tactical options to execute this strategy are currently limited. While the United States started negotiations in 2008, signing the TPP in 2016, the Obama administration did not take this international trade agreement before Congress for domestic ratification expecting that it would fail (McKinney and Gilliland 2021), and the Trump administration withdrew the United States from the TPP in 2017. Despite the American withdrawal, 11 other countries continued with this economic arrangement, now renamed the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).[1] In 2021, China applied to join, and the United States could also try to (re)join.

 However, U.S. efforts to enter this international agreement (before China) face a major obstacle as domestic ratification remains unlikely given opposition within American society. While many members of Congress from both parties may favor rejoining,[2] they stand to face electoral

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[1] We will use the acronyms of TPP and CPTPP as effective synonyms, choosing the one that is most appropriate to the temporal context.

[2] For example, discussing the Biden administration's plans for an Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) as an alternative to the CPTPP, Senator "Mike Crapo (R-ID) said 'IPEF may be a positive first step to engagement in Asia, but it is no substitute for comprehensive trade agreements [like the TPP].'

punishment in voting to ratify the CPTPP with only a minority of Americans in favor of this international trade agreement, including strong opposition from less educated citizens and partisan Republicans (McBride, Chatzky, and Siripurapu 2021).[3] Indeed, there is also opposition from the left side of American society, helping to explain why Hillary Clinton ran against the TPP during the 2016 Presidential campaign despite supporting it while serving as Secretary of State. Likewise, while Biden supported the TPP as Vice-President, he has been silent about rejoining the CPTPP since becoming President (Alden 2021).[4]

These examples highlight the *democratic globalization dilemma*: how to pursue what many decision-makers believe to be beneficial international policies (e.g., opening domestic markets through international trade agreements) given what appears to be majoritarian opposition within domestic society. With regards to trade politics in the United States, Guisinger (2017, 189-90) reported how the "political ads concerning trade have been overwhelmingly negative, focusing on trade as a source of employment losses rather than on gains." Based on the understanding that globalization advocates

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Senator Bob Menendez (D-NJ) [similarly] stated that the IPEF is not 'as robust as we need. We missed an opportunity in TPP'" (https://www.americanactionforum.org/insight/success-unlikely-in-indo-pacific-economic-framework-without-new-market-access/).

[3] This ratification problem helps explain why the United States, despite being a leading advocate for free trade post-WWII, has concluded preferential trading arrangements with only 20 countries. Since the U.S. tariff rate tends to be relatively low in most product categories, the lack of such arrangements means that American exporters usually face higher tariffs than foreign producers seeking to enter the U.S. market, contributing to the American trade deficit.

[4] In May 2022, President Biden unveiled his Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) as an executive action not requiring Congressional ratification. It was quickly identified as a "second-best option to the United States joining the CPTPP" (Goodman and Arasasingham 2022, 2) that "fall[s] short of expectations in the region" (Natalegawa and Poling 2022, 13) since it offers no preferential market access. However, IPEF may be seen as a prelude to entering the CPTPP, or "the starting point for future, more comprehensive efforts" to "facilitate future trade agreements with market access provisions when the political winds shift in Washington" (ibid). Thus, even with the IPEF, the question remains about how to shift the political winds in the United States about the CPTPP, which is our focus in this paper.

have done little outside of the college classroom to communicate the benefits of open trade and other forms of international cooperation (e.g., Hainmueller and Hiscox 2006, Popper 2016), this paper explores if and what messages can make American attitudes more favorable towards the Trans-Pacific Partnership. While a quantitative case study, this messaging experiment sheds light on how to increase popular support for international trade and associated cross-border arrangements, an important consideration given widespread popular skepticism about international organizations and trade in many countries (e.g., Bearce and Jolliff Scott 2019, Bearce and Moya 2020).

This paper also addresses the important question in comparative/international political economy about whether individual-level economic policy preferences tend to be static based on material endowments like education and/or ideational factors like party identification. And if preferences are not so fixed, then how might they be shifted? Can they be moved simply with greater information, suggesting that they are formed largely out of ignorance? Or do preference shifts require persuasion, suggesting that they could be moved even in directions that appear contrary to expectations based on one's material endowments (e.g., less educated Americans coming to favor international trade agreements)?

Our results indicate that preferences about the Trans-Pacific Partnership cannot be shifted by information alone. However, adding a positive message about the economic or security benefits potentially associated with this international agreement is effective in making mass attitudes more supportive. Indeed, these broadly targeted messages are effective not only for those who might be easier to persuade in this issue-area (e.g., more educated citizens and partisan Democrats), they are also effective in persuading those who are currently more opposed to this international agreement (e.g., less educated citizens and partisan Republicans).

1. Popular Support for the TPP

Survey research about the Trans-Pacific Partnership shows what appears to be weak popular support in the United States.[5] Perhaps the highest-profile survey making this demonstration was conducted by Politico and Harvard (2016), reporting that 70 percent of respondents had never heard or read anything about this international trade agreement, but among those who had, 63 percent opposed it. These stylized facts (ignorance coupled with opposition) accord with the Almond-Lippmann consensus (Almond 1960, Lippmann 1955). In terms of ignorance, only 39 percent of the respondents in this survey could correctly report that China was not a member-state in 2016. In terms of opposition, less educated citizens and individuals who identify as Republicans report as especially opposed to this international trade agreement (Stokes 2015, Politico and Harvard 2016; Smeltz, Kafura, and Wojtowicz 2016).[6]

From the logic underlying the Almond-Lippmann consensus, it might be argued that opposition to the Trans-Pacific Partnership could be reduced simply by providing more accurate background information. Perhaps if Americans understood that China is not a member-state, then they would be more inclined to support it. Indeed, research has shown that American form their trade preferences based in part on who are the partners, favoring more democratic countries (e.g., Chen, Pevehouse, and Powers forthcoming). However, one should be skeptical that opposition stems *only* from inaccurate information about member-states because citizens also appear to hold certain basic beliefs, or heuristics (Hurwitz and Peffley 1987), about international trade agreements: they cost jobs

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[5] There has been limited academic work on American TPP attitudes likely due to the U.S. withdrawal. Correspondingly, there has been more academic work on TPP attitudes in Canada (e.g., Tuxhorn 2019) and Japan (e.g., Naoi and Urata 2013).

[6] The former represents a common result in trade policy surveys (e.g., Scheve and Slaughter 2001), while the latter represents a partisan reversal in terms of trade policy preferences (e.g., Schonfeld 2021) as the political right in the United States was more favorable towards free trade agreements (e.g., NAFTA and the WTO) in the 1990s.

and limit American independence, potentially harming national security. On this basis, the mass public needs to be persuaded about the potential value of this international agreement. But what messages might be persuasive?

To the extent that many Americans oppose joining the CPTPP because they believe that it would hurt the national economy, this preference might be shifted with a message (defined as information packaged with a persuasive frame) about how membership would help reduce consumer prices (i.e., an economic message). Indeed, this message identifies the primary reason why economists tend to believe that free trade produces net benefits for the national economy: while open markets may hurt *some* domestic producers, it helps *all* consumers with the surplus gain for consumers being greater than the surplus loss for producers.[7] The proposition that free trade helps to stabilize and lower prices also represents an argument that many Americans appear not to understand (e.g., Pew Research Center 2004, Bearce and Moya 2020), so being informed about this relationship may boost support for this international trade agreement.

However, Bearce and Moya (2020) in their survey experiment to shift American trade attitudes found no significant effect for a message about free trade and lower prices perhaps because inflation was a relatively non-salient economic issue in 2018 (when their experiment was conducted) with an annual inflation rate of about two percent. But this same logic also suggests why a similar economic message may be *presently* effective: the inflation surge that hit the United States in 2021 raised the salience of this macroeconomic issue, providing a shock that may motivate Americans to think more positively about policies that could help them as consumers (e.g., Baker 2009).

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[7] The surplus for consumers is the difference between what they would be willing to pay and the lower price that they must pay. The surplus for producers is the difference between what they would be willing to accept and the price that they receive.

It may also be possible to increase support for this international trade agreement using a message about national *security*. Led by the United States, TPP negotiations were motivated by American security concerns about growing Chinese power. As Biden (2016, 50) wrote as Vice-President: "This deal [the TPP] is as much about geopolitics as economics: when it comes to trade, maritime security in the South China Sea, or nuclear nonproliferation in Northeast Asia, the United States has to take the lead in writing and enforcing the rules of the road, or else we will leave a vacuum that our competitors will surely rush to fill." Indeed, in "selling the Trans Pacific Partnership (TTP) trade pact, the administration [quietly] touted its *strategic* importance — as a geopolitical counterweight to Beijing — rather than its economic benefits" (Layne 2015, 3 *emphasis in original*).

However, while the Obama administration made little effort to sell the TPP using an economic message, it was also careful about promoting the same using a national security message. The underlying logic for this caution was to conclude the TPP negotiations, which did not include China, without triggering China.[8] However, with the subsequent launch of the trade war by the Trump administration, China has effectively been triggered if it was not so before. And since many Americans appear concerned about a rising China (e.g., Younis 2021), a message about how CPTPP membership could enhance U.S. national security might be expected to increase its support.

Following the logic advanced above, we offer the following set of hypotheses. Background information (about the Trans-Pacific Partnership's purpose, history, and membership) *alone* will not increase its favorability (H1). But adding a positive message about how U.S. membership would help lower consumer prices will increase its favorability (H2a). Likewise, adding a positive message about how U.S. membership would help counter China will increase its favorability (H2b). Given that these

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[8] As U.S. Trade Representative Michael Froman publicly stated in 2016: "We've been very open with the Chinese from the start of this negotiation. This isn't directed against them. It's not an effort to contain them" https://www.cfr.org/event/future-us-trade-and-trans-pacific-partnership-conversation-michael-froman.

messages are written to appeal broadly (i.e., they are not deliberately targeted towards specific societal groups), we hypothesize that their positive effects can be observed even within societal groups that are more opposed to this international trade agreement, namely less educated citizens (H3a) and more partisan Republicans (H3b).

2. Research Design

To test these hypotheses, we randomly presented a sample of 2,025 voting-age American citizens with different information/message treatments about the Trans-Pacific Partnership in June 2022 using Lucid Theorem facilities. This sample is nationally-representative based on age, gender, ethnicity, and geographic region.

Our experiment includes three treated groups compared to a fourth untreated control group. The first treatment (labeled *InfoOnly*) provided information about the TPP's purpose, history, and membership, but no message about how this international agreement might benefit the United States. The second treatment package (labeled *LowerPrices*) included this same background information followed by an economic message about how the TPP would lower prices for American consumers. The third treatment package also began with the background information adding a security message about how the TPP would counter the rise of China (*CounterChina*). The text with map image for each treatment is provided in Appendix 1.[9]

Following the randomized treatment, each respondent received three questions about membership in the TPP; one asked about rejoining this international trade agreement (*RejoinTPP*), a second about Congress ratifying the same (*RatifyTPP*), and a third about whether the United States

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[9] Our messages are paired with the background information for greater external validity. They are also deliberately short, providing content that could be delivered in a brief political ad, either in print, on television, or online. Finally, they are broadly targeted (i.e., not directed towards any particular group).

should have withdrawn from it (*WithdrawalBad*). Since responses to all three questions are coded on the same five-point ordinal scale and in a consistent direction, we combine them to create a quasi-continuous measure of support (*FavorTPP*). This serves as our primary dependent variable, regressed on the three dichotomous treatment variables in equation (1) below. H1 predicts that B_1 should be indistinguishable from zero, H2a posits a significant positive coefficient for B_2, while H2b does the same for B_3. H3a (H3b) posits this same set of results in the sub-sample of less educated citizens (partisan Republicans). *Education* and party identification (*Republican*) are included in our set of control variables, described in Appendix 2. Descriptive statistics and their balance across treatments groups appear in Appendix 3.

$$FavorTPP = B_0 + B_1 InfoOnly + B_2 LowerPrices + B_3 CounterChina + B_X Controls + e \quad (1)$$

3. Results

Table 1 presents a series of *FavorTPP* models. The first includes only our set of control variables, including state fixed effects. While this model does not test any hypothesis, we nonetheless include it to demonstrate that our sample's variation in support for the Trans-Pacific Partnership appears consistent with earlier surveys: most notably, less educated citizens and more partisan Republicans are less supportive of this international trade agreement. We will return to these demographic considerations when testing H3a and H3b below.

Table 1: Models of *FavorTPP*.

Specification:	Controls Only	Add Treatments	Drop Controls	Passed TC
InfoOnly		0.12	0.14	0.25*
		(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.10)
LowerPrices		0.36*	0.36*	0.56*
		(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.09)
CounterChina		0.28*	0.32*	0.52*
		(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.08)
Age	0.005*	0.004*		
	(0.002)	(0.002)		

Female	-0.01	-0.01		
	(0.05)	(0.05)		
Education	0.03*	0.03*		
	(0.01)	(0.01)		
Income	-0.002	-0.001		
	(0.004)	(0.004)		
White	0.03	0.03		
	(0.08)	(0.08)		
Black	-0.01	-0.01		
	(0.09)	(0.08)		
Hispanic	-0.09	-0.11		
	(0.08)	(0.08)		
Republican	-0.18*	-0.18*		
	(0.01)	(0.01)		
R^2	0.16	0.18	0.02	0.04
N	1975	1975	2025	1263

Controls include state fixed effects, which are not reported for space considerations. OLS coefficients with robust standard errors clustered on the state in parentheses. *$p < 0.05$ (two-tailed).

In the second model, we add the treatment variables to our specification, finding results consistent with H1, H2a, and H2b. While *InfoOnly* enters with a positive coefficient, its point estimate is not statistically different from zero.[10] However, both *LowerPrices* and *CounterChina* are positively signed and statistically significant. Indeed, not only are these two coefficients significantly different from zero, both are also significantly different from *InfoOnly*'s positive coefficient. *LowerPrices* and *CounterChina* are not, however, significantly different from each other; both messages appear equally effective. With successful randomization, one should also be able to observe that there are no significant changes in the treatment coefficients either with or without the demographic and ideational controls. And in the third model, we drop these controls and observe no significant changes.[11]

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[10] The result that correct information *by itself* does not change preferences accords with the results offered by Hopkins, Sides, and Citrin (2019).

[11] When dropping the controls, our sample size increases by 50 individuals due to non-reporting, namely on *Income*.

In the fourth model, we drop the respondents who failed a check associated with either their information or message treatments. This restriction moves from an intention to treat (ITT) to an average treatment effect on the treated (ATT), reducing our sample size by more than one-third. But this drop in sample size is not surprising given that those receiving the message treatments had to pass two checks: one associated with the background information and a second with the message. Furthermore, the message treatments, while short (148 words for both the economic and security message text), communicate arguments about the value of TPP membership that may appear as complex especially for less motivated respondents. When considering the ATT sample in the fourth model, the positive message effects (*LowerPrices* and *CounterChina*) become significantly larger when compared to those in the ITT sample (0.36→0.56 and 0.32→0.52).[12] On this basis, the message effects in the larger ITT sample are conversative; we thus use this sample for the remainder of our analysis.

Table 2: Disaggregating *FavorTPP*.

DV:	*RejoinTPP*	*RatifyTPP*	*WithdrawalBad*
InfoOnly	0.12	0.15	0.15
	(0.09)	(0.08)	(0.10)
LowerPrices	0.30*	0.39*	0.39*
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)
CounterChina	0.23*	0.36*	0.37*
	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.07)
R^2	0.008	0.018	0.014

N=2025. OLS coefficients with robust standard errors clustered on the state in parentheses. $^*p < 0.05$ (two-tailed).

While the *LowerPrices* and *CounterChina* messages estimate as statistically significant, it is also important to consider their *substantive* significance. We do this in Table 2 by disaggregating our composite measure of support (*FavorTPP*) into its three component measures (*RejoinTPP*, *RatifyTPP*, and *WithdrawalBad*) with separate models for each dependent variable. As a robustness check, it is

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[12] While the *InfoOnly* coefficient becomes statistically significant in the ATT model, it is not significantly larger than the same in the ITT model.

useful to note that H1, H2a, and H2b receive support in all three models. But our analysis of substantive significance focuses on the two prospective questions (*RejoinTPP* and *RatifyTPP*), comparing the percentage of respondents favoring (either weakly or strongly) the United States re-joining and agreeing (either weakly or strongly) that Congress should ratify this international trade agreement in the untreated/unsuccessfully treated groups (control and *InfoOnly*) with the same in the successfully treated groups (*LowerPrices* and *CounterChina*).

When considering *RejoinTPP*, only 46 percent of the respondents in the former favored rejoining versus 56 percent in the latter (a 10 percent increase). And when considering *RatifyTPP*, only 49 percent agreed with ratification in the untreated/unsuccessfully treated groups compared to 59 percent in the successfully treated groups (another 10 percent increase). Thus, for both questions about future membership in the Trans-Pacific Partnership, while only a minority are supportive without a message about its benefits, *a majority become supportive with a positive message*, thus crossing this critical threshold within democratic political regimes.[13]

In Table 3, we test the final set of hypotheses that our positive message effects can be observed *even within societal groups that are more opposed to the TPP*, namely less educated citizens (H3a) and more partisan Republicans (H3b). We test H3a using split sample regressions, dividing the full sample into two parts: those with less education (defined as having less than a Bachelor's degree, or *Education*≤4) and those with more education (at least a Bachelor's degree, or *Education*>4). While the treatment effects for both *LowerPrices* and *CounterChina* are greater in the more educated sub-sample, which is not surprisingly given that those with greater educational attainment in the United States tend to benefit from open trade both as consumers and as producers, statistically significant positive effects

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[13] If we compare the successfully treated groups against *only the untreated control group*, then the increase is even larger (14 percent): from 42 to 56 percent for *RejoinTPP* and from 45 to 59 percent for *RatifyTPP*.

also appear in the less educated sub-sample, showing how our messages successfully reached this societal group with greater opposition to this international trade agreement (see Table 1). This latter result is important because open trade tends to hurt those with lesser educational attainment at least as producers in developed national economies; yet less educated American citizens can be persuaded to become more supportive of this international trade agreement despite any contrary material incentives as producers.

Table 3: Split Sample Models of *FavorTPP*.

Sample:	Full	Less Education	More Education	Republicans	Independents	Democrats
InfoOnly	0.12	0.10	0.17	-0.08	0.17	0.26*
	(0.09)	(0.07)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.11)	(0.11)
LowerPrices	0.30*	0.31*	0.42*	0.32*	0.36*	0.39*
	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.13)	(0.15)	(0.09)	(0.09)
CounterChina	0.23*	0.27*	0.38*	0.30*	0.20*	0.45*
	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.12)	(0.15)	(0.09)	(0.08)
F	13.90	10.41	5.61	6.18	6.41	11.30
N	2025	1160	865	471	859	695

OLS coefficients with robust standard errors clustered on the state in parentheses.
* $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed).

We test H3b also using split sample regressions, dividing the full sample into three parts: Republicans (*Republican*>4), Independents, and Democrats (*Republican*<2). While both *LowerPrices* and *CounterChina* appear to have a stronger effect on Democrats compared to Republicans possibly because the Biden administration would likely get credit for this beneficial (at least according to our messages) policy choice,[14] these two messages also show a significant effect in boosting support for the Trans-Pacific Partnership *among Republicans*.

We recognize that the broad effects associated with our *non*-directed messages (i.e., they were not deliberately targeted towards any specific societal group) would likely be different with a targeted message; for example, an endorsement experiment where prominent Democrats describe the benefits

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[14] Even *InfoOnly* takes on a significant positive coefficient in the Democrats sub-sample.

of joining the CPTPP might not be expected to increase support among Republicans (Guisinger and Saunders 2017). However, there may be ways to boost support specifically among Republicans, including a message about how President Trump reconsidered his withdrawal from the TPP.[15] We do not consider such targeted experiments in this paper, but they as an important next step in the research program about how to reduce societal opposition to international trade agreements.

4. Conclusion

Based on the understanding that a large portion of the mass public knows little about the benefits of international trade agreements but nonetheless oppose them with this opposition representing a problem for domestic ratification in a democratic society, this short paper explored if and what messages about the Trans-Pacific Partnership might increase American support. Our experiment showed that providing more accurate background information alone did not increase support. However, it demonstrated that adding an economic message about how this international trade agreement could lower consumer prices did increase support, as did a security message about how it could help the United States counter the rise of China. Indeed, these experimental effects appeared not only within societal groups that might be easier to persuade in this issue-area (e.g., more educated citizens and partisan Democrats) but also within groups that start as more opposed: less educated citizens and partisan Republicans. These results show how it may be possible to rally *broad* support for this international trade agreement, and with reduced societal opposition, rejoining the CPTPP becomes a more viable tactical option for the United States to execute its Indo-Pacific pivot.

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[15]   https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/trump-weighs-rejoining-trans-pacific-partnership/2018/04/12/37d59500-3e71-11e8-8d53-eba0ed2371cc_story.html

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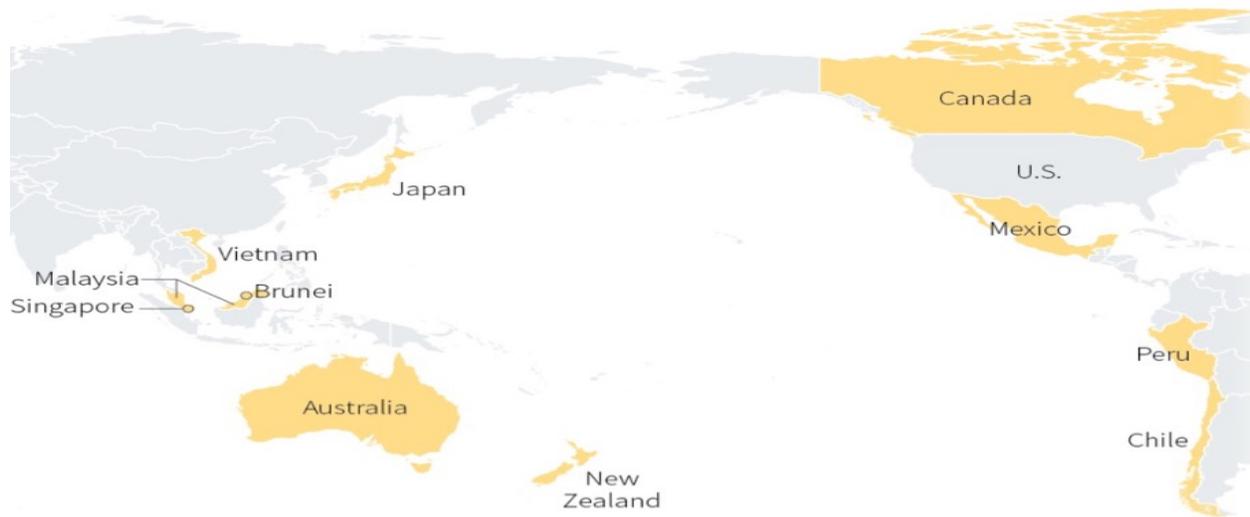
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Appendix 1: Treatments

InfoOnly treatment:

The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is an agreement among certain countries along the Pacific Ocean to reduce trade barriers and increase cross-border commerce.

In 2008, President Bush began negotiations to form the TPP. President Obama continued the negotiations, and the United States signed the TPP in February 2016. However, it was not presented to Congress for ratification. During the 2016 Presidential campaign, both candidates stated their opposition to the agreement. But Donald Trump voiced stronger opposition than Hillary Clinton. In January 2017, President Trump withdrew the United States from the TPP.

The TPP currently has 11 members: Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam. China was not involved in the negotiations and is not currently a member of the TPP. But China recently applied to join the TPP.

After the US withdrawal, this agreement was renamed as the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership. But we will continue to refer to the agreement as the TPP to avoid confusion.

Based on the information provided above, which of the following statements is NOT true?
[presented in randomized order]
Increased trade among member-countries is a goal of the Trans-Pacific Partnership.
China is currently participating within the Trans-Pacific Partnership.
The United States exited the Trans-Pacific Partnership in 2017.

LowerPrices treatment:
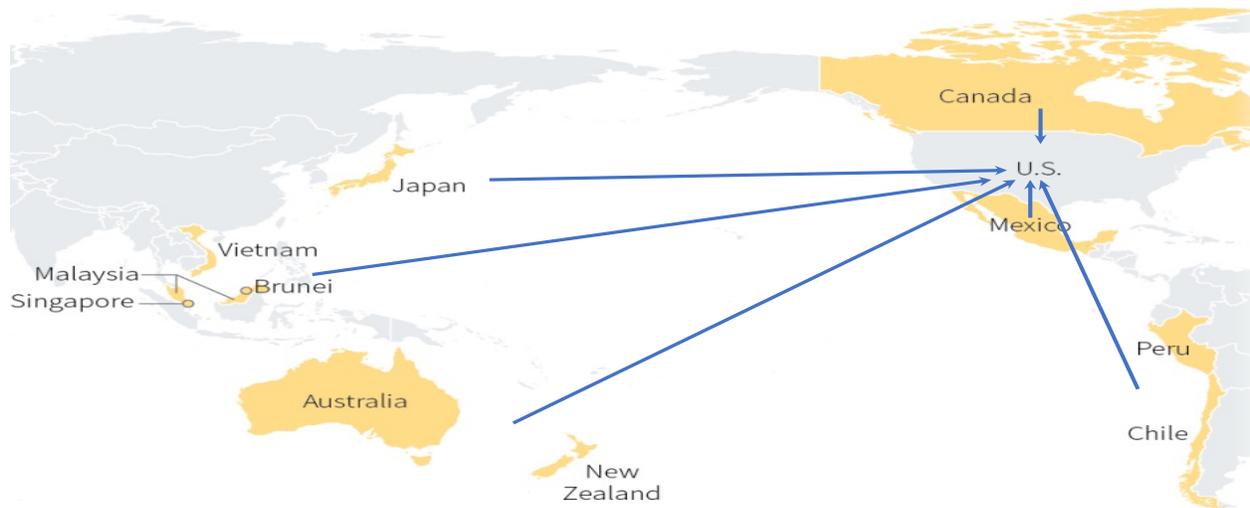
Inflation can be defined as the loss of purchasing power due to rising prices for various goods and services. Stated differently, inflation means that one can buy less with the same amount of money. U.S. inflation has recently increased with prices rising at their fastest rate since the early 1980s.

However, trade agreements like the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) could reduce inflation by increasing import competition within participating countries, leading producers to lower the price that they charge to consumers. Consequently, joining the TPP should help to decrease inflation in the United States.

Indeed, economists have demonstrated that trade agreements reduce the inflation rate in the counties that join them. With lower prices, working-class Americans can better afford essential goods and services. With greater purchasing power, middle-class citizens can buy more goods and services if they so desire. Lower inflation also helps to preserve the savings of wealthier Americans.

Based on the information provided above, which of the following statements is NOT true?
[randomize order]
Inflation is rising in the United States.
If the United States joined the TPP, then consumer prices would increase.
Trade agreements like the TPP reduce inflation.

CounterChina treatment:

China's rising economic and military power potentially threatens American national security. However, joining the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) may offer a way for the United States to counter this growing threat from China.

If the United States joined the TPP before China, then it would gain the economic benefits projected for this agreement along with several military allies, who are already TPP members. American allies within the TPP include Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan. And China would be left on the outside without these same benefits. Thus, the United States could gain power relative to China.

Joining the TPP ahead of China could also provide the United States with leverage to force trade reform in China. If the United States were already a member of the TPP, then it could block China from also joining unless China first agreed to reduce its trade barriers that hurt American exporters.

Based on the information provided above, which of the following statements is NOT true?
[randomize order]
US military allies are among the current TPP member-countries.
If the United States were to join the TPP, then China could also join without US permission.
If the United States were to join the TPP ahead of China, then it could gain economic benefits not available to China.

Appendix 2: Variables

RejoinTPP: While the United States withdrew from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) in 2017, it could re-join this economic agreement. What is your opinion about this possible policy choice?

>   I strongly favor the United States re-joining the Trans-Pacific Partnership=2
>   I weakly favor the United States re-joining the Trans-Pacific Partnership=1
>   I have no opinion about the United States re-joining the Trans-Pacific Partnership=0
>   I weakly oppose the United States re-joining the Trans-Pacific Partnership=-1
>   I strongly oppose the United States re-joining the Trans-Pacific Partnership=-2

RatifyTPP: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "The U.S. Congress should vote to ratify, or approve, American membership within the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)?"

>   Agree strongly=2
>   Agree weakly=1
>   Neither agree nor disagree=0
>   Disagree weakly=-1
>   Disagree strongly=-2

WithdrawalBad: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "The United States' withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) in 2017 was a good policy decision?"

>   Disagree strongly=2
>   Disagree weakly=1
>   Neither agree nor disagree=0
>   Agree weakly=-1
>   Agree strongly=-2

Age: Years (in round numbers)

Female: Female=1, Male or other=0

Education: Some high school or less=0, High school graduate=1, Post high school vocational training=2, Some college but no degree=3, Associate's degree=4, Bachelor's degree=5, Master's or professional degree=6, Doctorate=7

Income: Less than $14,999=0 ($4,999 increments until)
$100,000-$124,999=18 ($24,999 increments until)
$250,000 and above=23

White: White=1, Other race=0

Black: Black, or African-American=1, Other race=0

Hispanic: Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin=1, Otherwise=0

Republican: Strongly Republican=6, Weakly Republican=5, Independent leaning Republican=4 Independent=3, Independent leaning Democrat=-2, Weakly Democrat=1, Strongly Democrat=0

Appendix 3: Descriptive Statistics

	Full Sample	Control	*InfoOnly*	*LowerPrices*	*CounterChina*
FavorTPP	0.43	0.23	0.37	0.59	0.55
	(1.07)	(0.97)	(1.08)	(1.14)	(1.06)
RejoinTPP	0.58	0.42	0.54	0.72	0.66
	(1.31)	(1.26)	(1.33)	(1.32)	(1.30)
RatifyTPP	0.61	0.39	0.54	0.78	0.75
	(1.21)	(1.17)	(1.25)	(1.22)	(1.17)
WithdrawalBad	0.10	-0.13	0.03	0.26	0.24
	(1.34)	(1.19)	(1.36)	(1.41)	(1.35)
Age	45.36	45.03	44.63	45.26	45.56
	(16.97)	(16.82)	(16.96)	(16.75)	(17.34)
Female	0.52	0.51	0.53	0.49	0.54
	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.50)
Education	3.58	3.49	3.67	3.49	3.66
	(2.06)	(2.07)	(2.01)	(2.13)	(2.02)
Income	7.51	7.82	7.73	7.26	7.23
	(6.85)	(6.83)	(7.11)	(6.81)	(6.63)
White	0.72	0.71	0.77	0.69	0.72
	(0.45)	(0.46)	(0.42)	(0.46)	(0.45)
Black	0.13	0.13	0.10	0.15	0.13
	(0.33)	(0.34)	(0.31)	(0.36)	(0.33)
Hispanic	0.11	0.10	0.10	0.31	0.11
	(0.31)	(0.30)	(0.30)	(0.34)	(0.32)
Republican	2.71	2.70	2.79	2.69	2.64
	(2.10)	(2.06)	(2.11)	(2.09)	(2.14)
N	2025	515	517	500	493

Mean value with standard deviation in parentheses.