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Trading policy: Constituents and party in U.S. trade policy

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Abstract Studies of US trade policy legislation focus on the effect of constituents on trade policy voting and give less weight to institutions such as political parties. To demonstrate that political parties affect voting, I compare the votes of politicians who share constituency characteristics but differ in political party affiliation. This approach requires less reliance on assumptions about, or empirical measures of, constituents' trade preferences. The results demonstrate that political parties play a significant role in legislative voting on trade policy. Theories of political economy therefore should incorporate how constituency interests and partisan pressures affect legislative voting.

Keywords Trade policy · Congressional voting · Political party

Political scientists have long been concerned with the determinants of congressional trade policy voting in the United States. Trade policy is one of a government's primary foreign economic policies, and it can have significant effects on both the total amount and the distribution of income. At various times, trade policy has also played a significant role in national political debates. The dominant explanations for U.S. trade policy focus on the role constituents play in determining congressional policy outcomes and minimize the influence of political parties on congressional voting.

The existing research does not allow us to conclude whether parties have an independent effect on trade policy voting. In this paper I demonstrate how matching politicians based on shared constituencies can help determine whether party affects congressional voting in both the U.S. Senate and House. The empirical results demonstrate that partisan forces are highly important to trade policy voting in both houses of Congress. Therefore, ignoring or minimizing the role of political parties in the policy process may lead to an incomplete picture of the political economy of trade policy.

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The paper proceeds as follows. In the next section I briefly outline the different arguments about the determinants of congressional voting on trade policy. In Sect. 2 I discuss why the existing literature does not allow us to conclude if partisan forces have an independent effect on trade policy voting. Section 3 describes how I remedy these flaws to study trade policy voting in the U.S. Senate and in Sect. 4 I present empirical results from the Senate analysis. In Sect. 5 I describe the research design for the U.S. House and in Sect. 6 I present the results from the corresponding analysis. In Sect. 7 I discuss and conclude.

1 Situating the debate about voting on trade policy

Two primary approaches have been used to explain legislative voting. The first approach identifies the primary source of public policy as constituent interests that translate into the ideology or preferences of the key policymakers (Schattschneider 1935; Mayhew 1974; Fiorina 1977; Poole and Rosenthal 1997; Kalt and Zupan 1984; Peltzman 1983, 1984; Mitchell and Munger 1991; Becker 1993; Meltzer and Richards 1981).[1] Those who focus specifically on trade voting typically build on economic theories that relate changes in economic policy (such as tariff rates) to distributional effects on different sectors of the economy and therefore to voters or businesses in those sectors (Grossman and Helpman 1994; Hiscox 2002a, 2002b; Gilligan 1997; Frieden 1997; Rogowski 1987, 1989; Schonhardt-Bailey 2003).[2] Scholars working in this vein share a materialist view of the political process in which the economic characteristics of voters translate into political preferences that then affect the voting behavior of political representatives.[3] This view of the political process does not completely ignore the influence of non-material factors (such as political party or ideology), but the overwhelming focus is on how economic factors translate into policy making in Congress.

The second primary approach to understanding political outcomes has been termed New Institutionalism for its focus on the institutions that structure the policy making process. One branch of this paradigm includes scholars who focus on the role of political parties (Cox and McCubbins 2001, 1993; Kiewiet and McCubbins 1991; Rohde 1991; Aldrich 1995; Sinclair 1983, 1995, 2002).[4]

Scholars of trade policy have also found evidence that political parties took distinct positions on trade policy and used the tools at their disposal to influence voting (Fetter 1933; Taussig 1966; Sundquist 1983; Epstein and O'Halloran 1996; Lohmann and O'Halloran 1994; Bailey et al. 1997; McGillvary 1997). The mechanism by which partisan forces affect trade policy differs, but political parties are seen to have an effect on policy outcomes independent of constituency forces.[5]

[1] Scholars vary in the emphasis they place on interest groups versus overall constituent pressures, but the primary determinant of congressional policy is constituency demand.

[2] Following Rogowski's (1987) seminal work, scholars have used the Stolper-Samuelson theory to explain the relationship between economic factors and foreign economic policy.

[3] The recent literature on constituency and U.S. foreign economic policy is a sophisticated version of pressure group theory (i.e., Schattschneider 1935).

[4] Scholars also studied institutions such as congressional committees (Fenno 1973; Shepsle and Weingast 1984, 1987; Krehbiel 1991) and interaction between different branches of government (Krehbiel 1998; Cox and McCubbins 2001; Tsebelis 2002).

[5] The institutional analysis of trade policy voting may begin with an economic explanation of constituent preferences, but tariffs can serve other purposes such as generating government revenue for redistribution. For

To better understand how partisan and constituent forces affect trade policy I utilize a research design that allows me to determine whether partisan forces exert an independent effect on trade policy voting. I do so by comparing senators and representatives to those who share nearly identical observable constituents, but differ in the political party they represent. This allows me to disentangle constituency and party pressures on trade policy voting. The results may help us to refine theories of interests and institutions to account for the conditions under which different explanations are more powerful.

2 Research design: The Achilles heel of existing trade policy studies

The empirical literature on trade policy voting largely relies on cross-sectional regression analyses of individual votes or analysis of the partisan divide on final passage votes. Regardless of the specific covariates utilized in these regressions one cannot interpret the coefficients as causing the observed vote, because there may be other, unmeasured variables that correlate with voting. For example, if different levels of factor mobility are the hypothesized cause of a vote, then the existing empirical approaches often do not make sure that the observed politicians are identical in other aspects that could affect voting (i.e. political party or other constituency pressures). This is not simply a question about how to measure different covariates, but rather about how to ensure suitable overlap within the data to draw inferences about one's key variable of interest.

The standard empirical approach has been to compare the voting decisions of senators using a variety of economic control variables to make the senators comparable.[6] Empirical analyses seek to make individuals comparable by using regression techniques to "hold constant" lots of different factors that could affect voting, but this basic approach does not account for whether the data itself contain the appropriate observations from which to draw inferences about a key variable (Ho et al. 2007; Greiner 2006; Rosenbaum 1995).

To determine whether party affiliation has an impact on legislative voting, I need to observe senators who share constituency demands but differ in their partisan affiliation. If there are no senators who share industry type but differ in party affiliation (that is have overlap on one dimension but not the others), then I cannot make claims about how either variable affects trade voting. To learn about the independent effect of party requires observing politicians who share constituency but differ in their party affiliation.

2.1 Matching requires fewer assumptions about constituency influence

Empirical analyses of trade policy voting all begin with a model of how trade affects individual preferences. One approach assumes that individual trade preferences relate to factor endowment (Stolper-Samuelson) and another approach assumes preferences come from the industry of employment (Ricardo-Viner). Hiscox (2002a, 2002b) shows that each model's explanatory power differs based on the time period under consideration, because of changes in factor mobility over time. Furthermore, the existing literature suggests that many factors affect individual trade preferences (Scheve and Slaughter 2001; Hainmueller and Hiscox

example, Bensel (2000) argues that 19th century Republicans advocated high tariffs as well as larger, more active government spending. Therefore preferences over tariffs may also reflect constituents' and parties' preferences for the size of government in general.

[6] Throughout I assume that voting is driven by either constituent pressure or party pressure. These are the primary approaches used in the trade policy literature.

2006), which means that to understand constituent demands we would want to take account of all these possible sources of preference. An empirical approach that attempts to measure and "control for" these various factors seems unlikely to do an adequate job, because often times there is considerable difference between the theoretical construct and the actual measure of that construct. For many historical periods we also lack data on constituency characteristics so if we rely on measuring these factors we simply ignore these time periods.

Unlike much of the existing literature on the determinants of congressional voting, my empirical approach does not require me to take a side (perhaps incorrectly) on the source of trade policy preferences. Rather my approach requires me to assume that a politician's constituents are those in his or her geographic district, which is a common assumption in congressional voting studies. My approach is agnostic about whether constituents affect legislators' preferences via materialist, ideological, educational or other mechanisms. This means that my results are not driven by assumptions about which variables capture constituents' policy preferences. The flexibility of this approach also imposes a significant hurdle to finding partisan effects, because I do not limit my empirical results to a particular type of constituency influence. As a result, my empirical analysis allows constituency influence to flow through any number of channels and not just those typically identified in the political economy literature, which should make it harder to find partisan influences and therefore more compelling if I do find them.

2.2 The limits of matching

Although matching politicians on shared constituency and differing party affiliation allows me to investigate the debate between constituency and party based theories of legislative voting, the approach may not be applicable to all research questions and datasets. For example, there may be insufficient overlap between politicians with the same constituency but different political party to draw statistical inferences. The lack of overlap is likely to be more problematic as the number of causal variables expands. For instance, if theory suggested matching politicians who share constituency and seniority, but differ in political party, then I would quickly determine that I could not find enough politicians with overlapping constituency and seniority. It is clear that this problem will only become worse as theories become less parsimonious and more variables are incorporated into politicians' voting. The key empirical contribution of this paper is to use one-to-one matching to investigate a core debate in political economy about the source of trade votes.

3 Disentangling party and constituency in the U.S. Senate

For cross-sectional analyses a matching research design allows us to create the conditions for causal inference by comparing politicians who are theorized to be comparable except on the treatment variable under investigation (Rosenbaum 1995; Greiner 2006; Ho et al. 2007). In this section I examine the effect that partisan affiliation has on trade policy voting in the U.S. Senate. A similar approach has been used by other scholars to analyze how often politicians who share a constituency vote together (Glazer and Robbins 1985; Schiller 2000, 2002; Poole and Rosenthal 1984; Cox 1987; Bullock and Brady 1983). To disentangle party and constituency I focus on states where senators face similar constituency forces but different partisan forces—that is in states with split Senate delegations. The structure of the U.S. Senate makes it possible to design a cross-sectional study that matches politicians based on district factors while varying partisan affiliation.

Each state elects two senators who share the same statewide district, and therefore also face similar economic and social pressures from their geographic constituents as emphasized by preference-based explanations of policy outcomes.[7] By matching senators who are elected from the same state but differ in party affiliation, this research design allows us to control for constituency factors that could affect trade policy and then investigate partisan effects. This amounts to one-to-one exact matching, which is one approach to pre-processing data (Ho et al. 2007). This research design obviates the need to rely on measures of constituent demands or interests. It is difficult to measure directly the interests of constituents so there is some unspecified amount of error between the construct of constituency demands and the actual measures used in empirical analysis.[8] It is unknown how different possible measures of constituents' demands may affect the empirical results.

One possible concern about this research design is that the geographic constituency (the state) may not be the relevant constituency. Fiorina (1974) and Fenno (1978) point out that a politician's geographic constituency (all district members) may differ from his electoral constituency (those who support him). It is empirically difficult to address this potential problem, and the argument also implies that two Democratic senators elected from the same state may not share the same constituency. If perceived constituencies are politician-specific it will be nearly impossible to perform empirical analyses of constituency influence.[9]

Two theoretical arguments suggest the multiple constituency problem is not fatal to this research design. First, the median voter model fits well with trade policy, because the policy choices fall largely along a single dimension involving more or less protection for U.S. industries. This may take the place of higher tariff levels for industries currently covered by the tariff or expanding the coverage of tariffs to new industries. In a standard unidimensional spatial model (Downs 1957; Black 1958) the median voter will determine policy choices. The standard spatial model assumes that policy choices can be represented as points on a line and that the actor occupying the position of the median voter will determine the policy that is chosen because no winning coalition can be assembled without that voter. Voters are likely to fall along a continuum of preferences regarding trade policy, because in most states there will be voters that represent a variety of industries or different factors of production. Therefore, if the same voters vote in both a state's Senate elections, then the same voter (or very similar) will be the median voter and should affect the elected senator's choice of trade policy. Even if a Republican senator draws his support from the right-leaning voters and a Democratic senator from the left-leaning voters, the median voter for both senators should be the same (or nearly the same) in terms of preferences for protection, and therefore

[7] Goff and Grier (1993) argue that there is no Condorcet winning platform in a district, because voters' interests cannot be represented by a single dimension related to average policy/economic preferences and therefore split voting will occur. This does not affect the analysis in this paper. First, I am concerned only with voting differences on a single issue rather than across multiple issues. Therefore, there is likely to be a winning policy from the point of view of the district. Second, there is no reason that the idiosyncratic reasons should correlate with party across all of the states in a given analysis unless party has some effect on voting, which is consistent with a partisan influence on voting.

[8] Scheve and Slaughter (2001) show that voters' preferences respond to economic factors but also to a host of other factors which theories and empirical analyses often do not utilize in predicting the preferences of a politician's constituents.

[9] Bailey and Brady (1997) break states into two groups based on homogeneity of constituent interests. They argue that in heterogeneous states we will overstate the importance of political party. This may be true, but for vast periods in American history there is essentially no non-partisan trade voting and therefore it is hard to argue that this analytical technique leads to overstating party effects. Also, it's not clear that a state will be heterogeneous with respect to a specific issue, in this case trade policy, as opposed to across a variety of issues.

the constituency-based models would predict that the senators should have identical policy preferences. This argument suggests that the concerns raised by Fiorina and Fenno should be minimized in the case of trade policy.

Second, the staggered nature of Senate elections makes it difficult for candidates and voters to successfully carve the electorate into multiple, non-overlapping constituencies. To partition the electorate requires that politicians do not or cannot appeal to voters in the other politician's constituency. Politicians may also attempt to attract an oversized coalition of voters so they can still win if a few voters defect from the group. Creating multiple, non-overlapping pieces also requires that voters can credibly commit to not becoming a part of another senator's constituency. If voters receive some benefits (policy or otherwise) from being a part of a senator's constituents, then voters have an incentive to be in the constituency of both senators, and there is no credible way for them to commit to only being in one candidate's constituency. For the empirical and theoretical reasons outlined here I continue to adopt empirical approach that focuses on geographic constituency (see Aldrich et al. 2007 for another justification for focusing on statewide factors when comparing senators from the same state).

4 Trade votes in the U.S. Senate

In Table 1 I list the trade policy votes that I analyze in the U.S. Senate and the states in which there is a split delegation. Data on individual senator's votes were drawn from Poole and Rosenthal's VoteView program. For the Senate analysis I utilized the list of important trade votes in Hiscox (2002a, 2002b) that occurred between 1832 and 1994. I used this time period because 1832 is generally when it is argued that political parties begin to have a national identity and platform (McCormick 1966), and therefore this is when I can identify a party with a consistent policy preference across regions. Between 1832 and 1970 the Republicans, Whigs and Anti-Jacksonians are coded as the protectionist party and the Democrats and Jacksonians are coded as the liberal party. After 1970, the Republican party is the liberal trade party and the Democrats the protectionist party. I follow the coding of votes as used by Hiscox (2002a, 2002b) so that a vote is coded 1 if it is a protectionist vote and 0 if it is a liberal vote, and I code the votes in this analysis the same as done by Hiscox for Senate votes.

To determine whether political party has an effect on voting I estimate the following regression for the matched pairs of senators and discard the votes of senators for whom I lack a match. This regression allows us to estimate the effect of party on trade policy voting independent of state-specific factors which are accounted for using the matching design.

$$\Pr(\text{ProtectionVote} = 1) = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{ProtectionParty} + \varepsilon.$$

In Table 2 I present the overall results for the regression above when I include all of the pieces of legislation, and in later tables I analyze different time periods within the overall sample. The overall regression suggests that party has a significant effect on whether or not a senator casts a protectionist vote. I estimate how a change in party from the liberal to the protectionist party affects the probability of a protectionist trade policy vote using Clarify (King et al. 2000). In the overall cross section a politician switching from the liberal to the protectionist political party increases the probability of a protectionist vote by 0.48.

Table 1 States with a split U.S. Senate delegation

Legislation	States with two voting senators from different parties
1832 Tariff	Indiana, New Jersey, New Hampshire
1842 Tariff	Maine, New York, Connecticut, South Carolina
1846 Tariff	Virginia, Michigan, Maine, Connecticut, Ohio, Georgia, New Hampshire, Tennessee
1861 Morill Tariff	Indiana, Maryland, Minnesota
1888 Mills Bill	Ohio
1890 McKinley Tariff	Delaware
1894 Gorman Tarifff	Delaware, Illinois, Nebraska, North Dakota, California
1897 Dingley Tariff	Indiana, Wisconsin, Kansas, Kentucky, West Virginia, Utah, California,
1913 Underwood Tariff	New Hampshire, New York, Illinois, Kansas, Nebraska, Kentucky, Maryland, Washington
1930 Smoot Hawley Tariff	Massachusetts, Iowa, Missouri, Kentucky, Maryland, Oklahoma, Nevada, Wyoming, Washington
1934 RTAA	Connecticut, New Hampshire, Ohio, Wisconsin, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, South Dakota, Maryland, Idaho, New Mexico, Wyoming
1937 RTA extension	Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Kansas, Nebraska,
1945 RTAA extension	Massachusetts, Wisconsin, Missouri, Oklahoma, West Virginia, Colorado, Wyoming
1955 RTAA Extension	New York, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Arizona, Nevada, Wyoming, Oregon
1974 Tariff	Delaware, New Jersey, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Virginia, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, Colorado, Idaho, Utah, Wyoming, Alaska, Hawaii
1994 NAFTA	Maine, Rhode Island, Vermont, Delaware, New York, Pennsylvania, Iowa, Minnesota, South Dakota, Virginia, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Arizona, Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, Washington
1994 GATT	Maine, Rhode Island, Vermont, Delaware, New York, Pennsylvania, Iowa, Minnesota, South Dakota, Virginia, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, Kentucky, Arizona, Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, Washington

I also analyzed the data after splitting it into two different time periods.[10] The first time period covers from the earliest vote in 1832 up to the votes in the 1970s. I group all of these votes together because the political parties maintain a consistent position on trade policy over this period. During the 1970s, however, partisan positions switch and the Democrats become the party of protectionism and the Republicans the free trade party. Between 1832 and 1970 political party continues to be a significant factor in trade policy voting. During this period the probability that a member of the protectionist party casts a protectionist vote is 0.69 with a 95% confidence interval between 0.57 and 0.79. The results also show that after 1970 there is no relationship between political party and protectionist voting. During the post-1970 period I only analyze three votes, two of which take place in 1994 (the GATT and NAFTA votes) so there is little opportunity to find that party is statistically significant.

[10] The substantive results do not change based on when the data are divided.

Table 2 Party effect on protectionist Voting 1832–1994

	Coefficient (S.E.)	Estimated change in protectionist voting if member switches from liberal to protectionist party [95% C.I.]
Protectionist party	1.24 (0.17)**	0.44 (0.34, 0.54)
Constant	−0.93 (0.12)**	
Log likelihood	−155.77	
N	278	

** = significant at 0.01 level

The votes analyzed in this time period may reflect a lack of partisan forces although party forces have been argued to be important on trade policy during the last 30 years (see Ladewig 2005 for a discussion of partisan forces and trade policy).

The GATT and NAFTA votes appear non-partisan, but in actuality the politics behind both are highly partisan, but they are not partisan in a way that I can discover through regression analysis. Democratic senators who voted against their party's position in 1994 (by voting for NAFTA and GATT) do not uniformly come from states where their constituents were particularly likely to demand free trade. It does appear that the Democrats who voted for NAFTA were often more senior Democrats who came from relatively safe seats (Khan 2005). This is not a surprise, as NAFTA was one of President Clinton's major policy proposals (although it was originally negotiated by a Republican president) and there was tenuous Democratic support for the legislation especially among marginal Democrats. In fact, the passage of NAFTA is one of the significant examples of failed majority party agenda control discussed by Cox and McCubbins (2005). Cox and McCubbins (2005) describe the bargain between President Clinton and Democratic Party leaders that led to the passage of NAFTA despite the majority of the Democrats opposing its passage. The bargain involved Democratic leaders delivering enough votes to garner NAFTA's passage and support President Clinton despite the party membership's opposition to free trade.[11] Although the final outcome suggests the vote was non-partisan, underlying the outcome was a distinctly party-driven political story.[12]

There are also reasons to believe that the NAFTA and GATT votes are truly anomalous rather than part of a larger pattern. First, as I mentioned earlier the NAFTA votes are an unusual set of votes not just within trade policy but within all congressional final passage votes over more than 100 years. Cox and McCubbins (2005) find that among the thousands of votes they analyze the NAFTA vote sticks out as one of a few dozen times where the majority party's agenda control breaks down and a bill the majority opposes passes against

[11] Uslaner (1998) shows that contacts from President Clinton are correlated with support among Democrats for NAFTA's passage, which is further evidence about the role of the president in the passage of NAFTA. Furthermore Uslaner shows that Clinton's contacts were only helpful among members of his own party suggesting some form of partisan influence.

[12] As suggested previously, re-election and electoral safety also both played a role in whether a legislator supported NAFTA. Schoalrs have found that proximity to reelection and electoral vulnerability is correlated with opposition to NAFTA and that pro-NAFTA Democrats were punished by labor PACs in the next election cycle (Engel and Jackson 1998). This explanation does not detract from my claim in this paper, because it can only confound my analysis if proximity to election was highly correlated with partisan affiliation of a Senator.

the majority's wishes. Second, scholars of American politics have found that the political parties have become more polarized in the last 30 years so the NAFTA vote appears unusual in that context (McCarty et al. 2006). Third, the strength of partisan forces between 1832 and 1970 fits with the historical evidence about parties taking disparate positions on trade policy (Taussig 1966; Fetter 1933; Stanwood 1903). These three reasons suggest that the overall partisan findings do not reflect a buried constituency explanation.

4.1 Are there states with particularly protectionist/liberal constituents?

The addition of state-level economic variables can help determine whether there are states in which constituency factors swamp party among pairs of matched senators. To perform this analysis I utilize economic data collected by Hiscox (2002a, 2002b) in which he computes the importance of import-competing industries and export industries in each state. Based on standard economic theories the predictions for the import and export variables are:

Imports: increase the probability of a protectionist vote by a senator
Exports: decrease the probability of a protectionist vote by a senator

To estimate whether or not the economic variables have an effect on voting in the matched group of senators I estimate the following regression:

$$\Pr(\text{ProtectionVote} = 1) = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{ProtectionParty} + \beta_2 \text{Imports} + \beta_3 \text{Exports} + \varepsilon.$$

I expect that even with the addition of the economic variables the coefficient on Protection Party will remain positive and significant. I expect that the constituency characteristics, as captured by the coefficients on Imports and Exports, will not be statistically significant in the regression. The regression covering the period from 1832–1994 is reported below with significant (0.01 level) coefficients in italics.

$$\begin{aligned}\Pr(\text{ProtectionVote} = 1) = {} & \mathit{-0.99(0.16)} + \mathit{1.19(0.17)ProtectionParty} \\ & + 1.36(1.29)\text{Imports} - 0.14(0.45)\text{Exports}.\end{aligned}$$

As expected, membership in the protectionist party is highly significant and the economic variables are largely insignificant.[13] Overall the results in this section confirm the previous analysis that found political parties to be highly significant when senators are matched on their constituency characteristics.

5 House of Representatives research design

Unlike the U.S. Senate, members elected to the House of Representatives in a given year typically do not come from the same electoral district.[14] However, the close temporal proximity of elections in the House of Representatives makes it possible for us to match the representative from a given district at time t to the representative from the same district at

[13] In unreported results I find that between 1970 and 1994 neither economic nor political variables are significant. This is consistent with the earlier findings, and suggests a substantial degree of parameter instability in the regressions.

[14] With the exception of states where multiple Representatives are elected at-large in a given year. For now we exclude these Representatives from our time-series analysis.

time $t+1$, and then investigate whether a change in party affiliation, holding the district constant, correlates with a change in trade policy votes. This is equivalent to asking whether the representative from Michigan's 1st Congressional District votes the same whether he is a Republican or Democrat.

To conduct this analysis I compare the voting decisions of representatives from the same congressional district on votes that occur close in time to minimize changes in a district's economic characteristics.[15] This approach does not require me to make any additional assumptions about how to measure constituency interests other than the standard assumption that geographic constituency is relevant to politicians. There are three possible ways that party affiliation in a district can change.

- Districts where the partisan affiliation does not change.
- Districts where a Republican represents the district at time t and a Democrat at time $t+1$.
- Districts where a Democrat represents the district at time t and a Republican at time $t+1$.

If constituency characteristics dominate voting decisions, then I should observe that representatives from a district vote the same on both pieces of legislation regardless of changes in party affiliation. However, if partisan factors affect voting, then I expect that changes in partisan affiliation, holding the district constant, will lead to changes in voting. Based on the proposed relationship between political party and congressional votes I offer the following hypotheses:

H1: If a district switches from Democratic to Republican it will increase the probability of a vote switching from liberal to protectionist.

H2: If a district switches from Republican to Democratic it will increase the probability of a vote switching from protectionist to liberal.

In each district where the partisan affiliation of the district changed either a politician lost an election to a candidate from a different party, chose not to run and a politician from a different party won, or the politician switched parties. There are two possible ways that the results could indicate partisan influence. First, a politician (say a Democrat) may vote with his district's liberal preferences on trade policy, and then lose to a Republican in the next election who votes against the district's trade policy preferences (by voting protectionist) but with his party. The second vote suggests partisan forces trumped district constituency forces. Second, a politician (again, presume a Democrat) may vote against the district's protectionist preferences on trade policy and then lose to a Republican who votes with the district's protectionist preferences on trade policy. In this second example the partisan effect reveals itself when the Democrat votes with his party but against his constituency in the initial vote. The methodology I utilize does not discriminate between the two ways that partisan influence could operate, but either explanation is consistent with partisan influence on trade policy voting.

In the analysis of voting in the U.S. House of Representatives I focus on votes regarding the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act (RTAA) and its subsequent extensions. The RTAA constituted a delegation from Congress to the President of the authority to negotiate reciprocal trade agreements (see O'Halloran 1994 for a discussion). I examine six votes on the RTAA that occur between 1934 and 1945. I compare the following pairs of votes: the RTAA authorization in 1933–35 and the reauthorization in 1937–39; the 1937–39 reauthorization

[15] One possible advantage to analyzing votes in the House is that the smaller size of congressional districts makes it less likely that there is a considerable difference between a politician's geographic and electoral constituency.

and the 1939–41 reauthorization; and the 1943–45 reauthorization and the 1945–47 reauthorization. Any pair of votes is separated by no more than four years, which is close enough that I do not expect major demographic, economic or social changes within a congressional district. Standard empirical measures of economic factors are collected every few years; therefore, this technique is at least as sensitive to temporal changes as the approach used in other empirical scholarship. The votes I compare do not involve any changes in the party of the U.S. president, which could affect voting on the RTAA because it is an issue of congressional delegation to the president. These comparisons are also not affected by redistricting or reapportionment because neither action occurs between the first and second vote within any given pair of votes.

6 Trade policy voting in the House of Representatives

To determine the effect of partisan and constituent factors I estimate two probit regressions for each vote comparison to estimate how changes in the partisan affiliation of a given district correlate with voting.[16] Voting for the RTAA or one of its extensions is coded as a liberal vote and voting against it is coded as a protectionist vote.

To test these hypotheses I estimate the following two regressions for each of the paired vote comparisons.

$$\Pr(\text{Liberal vote}_t \mid \text{Protectionist vote}_{t+1}) = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{DemToRep}_{t+1} + \beta_2 \text{RepToDem}_{t+1} + \varepsilon,$$

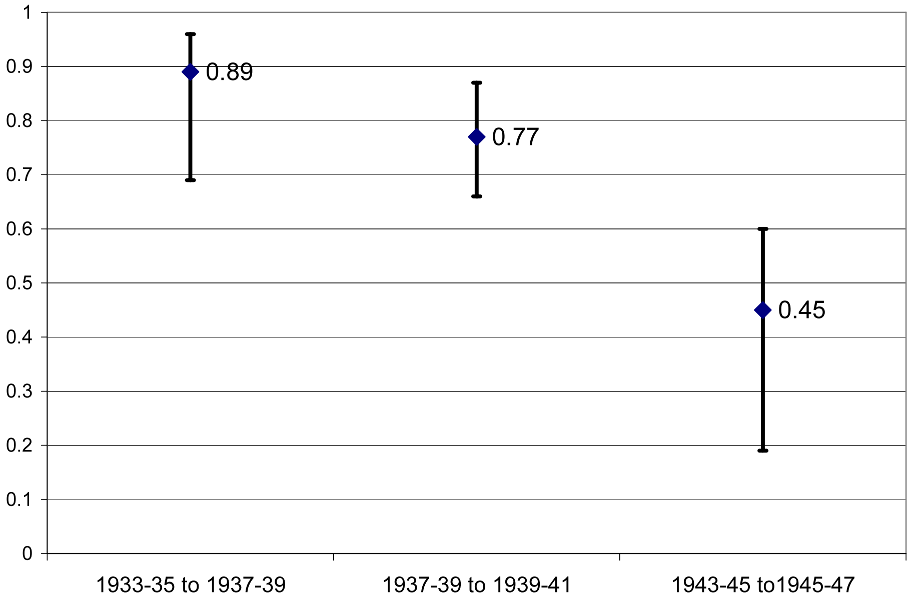
$$\Pr(\text{Protectionist vote}_t \mid \text{Liberal vote}_{t+1}) = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{DemToRep}_{t+1} + \beta_2 \text{RepToDem}_{t+1} + \varepsilon.$$

In each regression the excluded category is districts where there is no change in the partisan affiliation of the district's representative. This allows us to interpret the coefficients relative to a baseline probability of a vote switching.

Rather than presenting the regression coefficients I utilized Clarify (King et al. 2000) to generate predicted probabilities of a vote change based on the regressions described above. The results are presented in Figs. 1 and 2. Figure 1 presents the predicted effect of a district switching from Democratic to Republican on voting outcomes. Figure 2 displays the predicted effects of a district switching from Republican to Democratic on voting outcomes. As expected when districts change from Democratic to Republican the probability of a vote switching from liberal to protectionist increases significantly.

Changes in the party affiliation of a congressional district are highly significant predictors of changes in voting behavior. The effect of a partisan switch varies considerably from vote to vote, but the magnitude of the effect is often quite large. For instance, a switch in party affiliation from Democrat to Republican increases the probability of a vote switching from liberal to protectionist by 0.89 when comparing the vote congressional session of 1937–39 and the vote from the 1939–41 session. Substantively this is very important as it means that in almost all of districts in which the representative switched from a Democrat to Republican the vote switched from liberal to protectionist, as predicted by a party-based explanation. Figure 2 shows that a change from Republican to Democrat likewise increases

[16] The empirical literature on constituents and economic factors such as that by Hiscox (2002a, 2002b) and Gilligan (1997) only has economic data at five year intervals. Therefore, these scholars also implicitly assume that the relevant economic factors do not change significantly during the five year intervals between observations. This is essentially the same as the assumption we make about the changes in constituency factors between votes.



Bars indicate 95% confidence interval

Fig. 1 Probability of a vote switching from liberal to protectionist when the district representative switches from democrat to republican

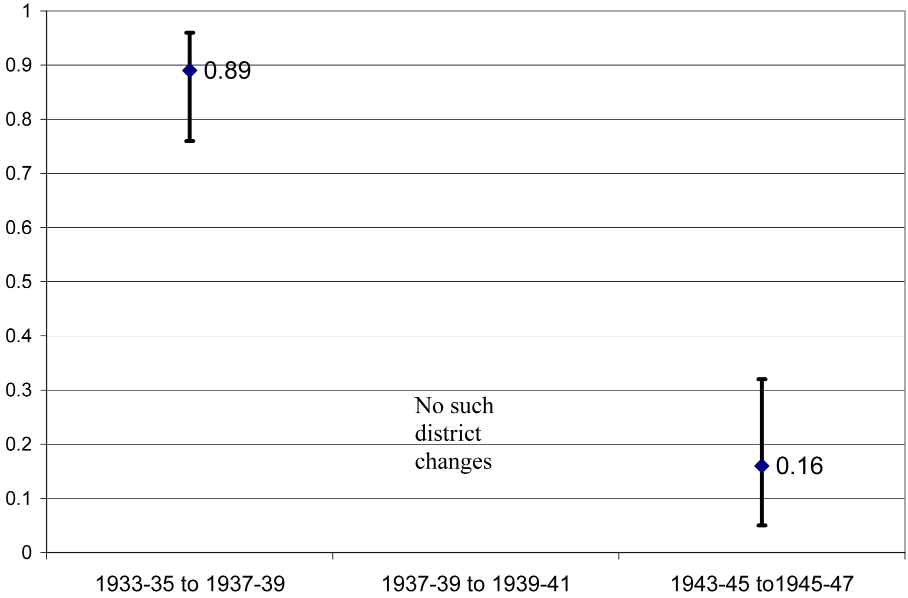
the probability of a vote switching from protectionist to liberal by 0.89. These are the largest effects, but among the votes in this analysis the results were always significant and in the predicted direction.

The analysis presented in these figures shows that by and large when district party affiliation changes votes change as well, which is consistent with the partisan explanation for voting and inconsistent with constituency-determined voting.

7 Conclusion

In this paper I identified the effect of political parties on trade policy voting in the U.S. Senate and House. My empirical methods make relatively few assumptions about the nature of constituency demands and do not require measuring the various constructs that constituency-based theories predict influence congressional voting. This approach also does not presuppose a particular pathway by which constituents influence legislative voting. The empirical results suggest that in the U.S. Senate party has been a significant factor in trade policy voting for most of U.S. history. Only in the last 30 years does the influence of party appear to have waned, but closer analysis of the votes taken during that period suggest that partisan forces may still influence trade policy votes. The analysis of the votes in the House of Representatives on the RTAA also suggests that political parties played a large role in determining the voting decisions of representatives.

The empirical results in the paper should give us pause in theorizing about the determinants of trade policy, because these results suggest that political parties are highly important to legislative voting in both the House and Senate. Therefore, the dominant focus



Bars indicate 95% confidence interval

Fig. 2 Probability of a vote switching from protectionist to liberal when the district representative switches from republican to democrat

on demand-side explanations may miss a considerable aspect of trade policy, because these theories ignore the highly influential role of U.S. political parties and fail to account for the interaction between parties and constituents.

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