A Political Disconnect?
Evidence From Voting on Trade Agreements*

Paola Conconi
University of Oxford, CEP, CESifo, and CEPR
Florin Cucu
Université Libre de Bruxelles (ECARES)
Federico Gallina
Université Libre de Bruxelles (ECARES)
Mattia Nardotto
Université Libre de Bruxelles (ECARES) and CEPR

January 2026
Click here for the most recent version

Abstract

We study votes of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) on the approval of free trade agreements (FTAs). Against widespread Eurosceptic arguments, we find that MEPs are responsive to the interests of their electorate and their re-election chances increase with the extent to which their votes on trade agreements are aligned with their constituents' interests. By contrast, US legislators' votes on FTAs are disconnected from their electorate's interests and do not impact their re-election chances. Our results suggest that legislators' accountability on a policy issue may depend on its salience relative to other policies in the legislators' sphere of competence.

JEL Classifications: F13, D72.
Keywords: Electoral Accountability, Trade Agreements, EU and US legislators.

* We wish to thank for their helpful comments Toke Aidt, Davin Chor, Italo Colantone, Peter Egger, Gene Grossman, Ekkehard Köhler, Georg Kirchsteiger, Lars Nilsson, Gianluca Orefice, Giacomo Ponzetto, André Sapir, Alessandro Sforza, Tommaso Sonno, participants at the Silvaplana Political Economy Workshop and the CEPR ERWIT conference, and seminar participants at ECARES, Paris Dauphine, Southampton University, Nottingham University, the Bank of Italy, Bologna University, the Paris Trade Seminar, and at the DG TRADE Chief economist seminar. Paola Conconi gratefully acknowledges funding from the European Research Council (Advanced ERC Grant No. 834253). Correspondence should be addressed to Paola Conconi, paola.conconi@economics.ox.ac.uk.

1 Introduction

Recent studies argue that public engagement in democracies has declined over the last decades due to a growing disconnect between citizens and their representatives (e.g., Flinders, 2015; Foa and Mounk, 2016; Fisher, 2018). These views are also commonly invoked by populist politicians, who promote a denigratory vision of elites and depict them as disconnected from the interests of the people they should represent (e.g., Guriev and Papaioannou, 2022; Bellodi et al., 2023).

The European Union (EU) is a prominent example of an institution seen as suffering from a "democratic deficit." Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) are often portrayed in the media and the academic literature as unresponsive to the interests of their electorate and unaccountable.[1] It has been argued that an important reason for this disconnect is the second-order nature of European elections: instead of being shaped by EU policies, these are fought in the shadow of (first-order) national elections (e.g., Hobolt and Franklin, 2011). These arguments can have important political implications, as illustrated by the pro-Brexit campaign.[2]

In this paper, we assess the validity of these Eurosceptic arguments by studying whether MEPs respond to the interests of their electorate when voting on key EU policies. We further examine whether the extent to which MEPs votes are aligned with their electorate's interest affects their chances of being re-elected. In our analysis, we focus on MEPs' votes on the approval of free trade agreements (FTAs). Three main reasons justify this choice.

First, the negotiation and ratification of trade agreements falls under the common commercial policy, which is one of the few policy areas of exclusive competence of the EU.[3] We would thus expect EU voters to pay more attention to MEPs' choices in these policy areas.

Second, since the 2009 Lisbon Treaty, a trade agreement negotiated by the European

[1] See, for example, the article "Elected, yet strangely unaccountable" (*The Economist*, May 15, 2014). Figures A-1 and A-2 in the Appendix show an increase in mentions of "EU democratic deficit" and Euroscepticism in the media and the academic literature during the last decades.

[2] "Britain's self-ejection from Europe is the culmination not just of four months of heady campaigning but four decades of latent Euroscepticism. (...) It has become a tenet of Euroscepticism that the union is too remote from the people it is governing" ("How did UK end up voting to leave the European Union?" *The Guardian*, June 24, 2016). See De Vries (2018) for an extensive analysis of the different forms Euroscepticism can take.

[3] Pursuant to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), there are three categories of competences within the EU: exclusive competences, in which the EU alone has power; shared competences, in which the Union and its member states share competences; and supporting competences, in which the EU can only intervene to support the actions of the member states. Beyond the common commercial policy, the areas of exclusive EU competence include the customs union, competition rules, monetary policy for the eurozone countries, and the common fisheries policy.

Commission and signed by the European Council can only enter into force if a majority of MEPs approve it.[4] During the negotiation process, the European Commission anticipates the need for MEPs' consent and works in close cooperation with the EP's International Trade (INTA) committee. As a result, only FTAs that have broad political support reach the EP's floor.

Finally, trade agreements are increasingly salient to EU citizens: the volume of internet searches on trade agreements, their coverage in the media, and the share of European parties that mention trade policy in their electoral program have all significantly increased in recent years (see Figure A-3 in the Appendix). The salience of EU trade agreements is also apparent from the heated debate surrounding the FTA negotiated between the EU and the Mercosur countries (Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay), which was approved by the European Council on January 9, 2026. To enter into force, the agreement still requires the approval of the EP. If ratified, it will cut almost all tariffs in a market of 700 million people. The deal has been strongly opposed by European farmers, who "have staged violent demonstrations against it,"[5] but strongly supported by European carmakers and pharmaceutical manufacturers, who "have been eager to access Mercosur's huge market."[6]

To carry out the analysis, we construct a novel dataset on the determinants of MEPs' votes on the approval of 16 FTAs negotiated by the EU since the Lisbon Treaty. To capture the trade policy interests of legislators' constituencies, we proceed in two steps. We first compute the share of workers in a region that would benefit from the entry into force of a trade agreement. Importantly, this share is defined at the bilateral level: it measures the share of workers who are employed in sectors that should expand if tariffs are eliminated between the EU and the partner(s) of a specific FTA. Given that EU elections are based on a proportional system, we aggregate regional shares at the level of an MEP's constituency, using as weights the number of votes their national party obtained in the previous European elections. We employ the same aggregation method to measure socio-economic and political characteristics of constituencies (e.g., education, unemployment, ideological position). We also collect information on the MEPs (e.g., affiliation to EP political groups, gender, age, tenure in the EP, previous positions in national or regional parliaments) and several characteristics of the FTA partners (e.g., GDP, population, distance, diplomatic disagreement with the EU) that may affect MEPs' votes on trade agreements. To assess whether trade

[4]Before 2009, the EP had a very limited role in the adoption of trade legislation and EP's approval was not mandatory for trade agreements to enter into force.

[5]See "EU member states back Mercosur trade deal" (*Financial Times*, January 9, 2026).

[6]See "E.U. and South America to Form Free-Trade Zone With 700 Million People" (*New York Times*, January 9, 2026).

votes matter for MEPs' re-election, we code whether they retain their seats at the end of a term and the extent to which their trade votes have aligned with their electorate's interests during the previous term.

Our empirical findings provide evidence against the above mentioned Eurosceptic claims. We first examine the determinants of MEPs' votes on trade agreements and find that EU legislators *do* respond to their electorate's interests: they are more likely to vote in favor of an FTA when a higher share of their electorate is employed in sectors that should benefit from the entry into force of the agreement. The results hold when we include different controls and fixed effects (e.g., for individual MEPs or FTAs) and when we use alternative econometric methodologies. In terms of magnitude, our baseline estimates imply that a 10 percentage point increase in the share of the electorate that should benefit from the entry into force of an FTA raises the probability of a vote in favor of the agreement by 0.92 percentage points.

These results show that MEPs are responsive to the trade policy interests of their constituencies. We rule out alternative explanations for our findings. The estimated effects are not driven by local favoritism (e.g., Brollo and Nannicini, 2012; Hodler and Raschky, 2014; Burgess et al., 2015). EU legislators' support for an FTA increases with the export share of their constituency, even when the export share is constructed after excluding the region of birth of MEPs, the region they ran in or represented in their national or regional parliament. We also rule out lobbying by large firms as a potential mechanism. Although there is evidence that large firms dominate lobbying on trade policy (e.g., Kim, 2017; Blanga-Gubbay et al., 2025), our estimates are unaffected when we control for the presence of large firms in MEPs' constituencies.

As already mentioned, since the Lisbon Treaty, the EP has the power to vote down trade agreements negotiated by the Commission. Consequently, agreements that reach the floor of the EP tend to pass by a large margin. Using our estimates, we perform counterfactual exercises that highlight the legislative power of MEPs. For these exercises, we predict the outcome assuming that the votes took place in 2020 and were cast by the same MEPs who voted on the EU-Vietnam FTA (the last agreement in our sample). We first predict the outcome of a vote on the approval of the FTA between the EU and Mercosur. Negotiations for this trade agreement were finalized in June 2019.[7] As mentioned before, the agreement has recently been approved by the European Council, but has not yet been presented to MEPs for ratification. Our estimates imply that the outcome of this vote would be much

[7]This version of the trade agreement was opposed by some Member States, so further negotiations took place between March 2023 and December 2024, leading to an updated version. See this website from the European Commission for information on the negotiations of the EU-Mercosur agreement.

closer (54.87% of votes in favor) than those of previous FTAs (e.g., 65.57% votes in favor of the EU-Vietnam FTA), which can help explain the delay in ratification.[8] This is in line with the outcome of a recent "show of hands" vote, in which EU legislators narrowly rejected a paragraph supporting the conclusion of the Mercosur agreement.[9] Our estimates can also help explain why some agreements are not being negotiated. For example, we predict that an agreement with China would be opposed by a majority of MEPs.

A second set of results is related to the drivers of MEPs' re-election. We find that the probability that EU legislators retain their seats at the end of a term increases with the share of their electorate that should agree with their votes on trade agreements during the previous term. In terms of magnitude, an increase of 10 percentage points in this measure of congruence between MEPs' trade votes and their constituency interests leads to a 2 percentage point increase in the probability of being re-elected to the EP. Our results suggest that MEPs expect that their electorate will hold them accountable for their trade policy choices, rewarding them (i.e., re-electing them for another term) if they have voted in the interests of their constituents or punishing them (i.e., not re-electing them for another term) if they did not. Against the argument that EU policies do not shape European elections, these findings show that MEPs' votes on the approval of EU trade agreements — a key policy in their sphere of competence — inform voters' choice on whether to re-elect them.

These results suggest that EU voters reward representatives who have made policy choices in line with their preferences. As shown by Cho (2009), this behavior can be rationalized in an incomplete information model in which voters are prospectively rational and strategic, even when a legislator's vote may not be decisive in determining the policy outcome. The results are also compatible with a model of reciprocal behavior, i.e., voters may want to reward politicians who have been kind to them and punish politicians who have been unkind (e.g., Hahn, 2009; Finan and Schechter, 2012; Conconi et al., 2017), irrespective of whether they believe their vote is going to matter for future policy outcomes.

Finally, we compare the behavior of EU and US legislators. To this purpose, we collect votes by members of the US Congress on the ratification of FTAs and measure the share of their electorate that should benefit from the entry into force of a given agreement. We focus on members of the Senate, whose constituencies (the 50 US states) do not change over time. We also collect information on various characteristics of US legislators, their constituencies,

[8] When looking at the our entire sample, the share of votes in favor out of all votes cast ranges between 61.70% (for EU-Canada) and 89.56% (for EU-Georgia FTAs).

[9] See this article from Euronews for coverage of the "show of hands" vote.

and the FTA partner(s). Using a similar methodology to the one applied for EU legislators, we obtain results that are sharply different. US legislators do not respond to the trade policy interests of their electorate when voting on the approval of FTAs. Such voting patterns are consistent with a scenario in which legislators do not expect to be held accountable by their constituents for their trade policy choices. In line with this hypothesis, we find that the probability that US legislators are re-elected at the end of their terms is not affected by the extent to which their trade votes have been congruent with the interests of their constituency.

The asymmetry between the results for the EU and the United States may partly be due to the fact that members of the US Congress legislate on a broader set of policies (e.g., Stevens-Finlayson, 2019; Rosenberger, 2022). In particular, they can shape healthcare, education, and social security, which are highly salient to voters (Guisinger, 2009). In the EU, Member States have instead sole jurisdiction over these policies. Whether legislators are accountable to their electorate on a policy issue may thus depend on how important the issue is for voters relative to other policies in the legislators' sphere of competence.

Our paper contributes to several strands in the literature. The first examines whether elected representatives are sensitive to the interests of their electorate. This has been a central concern in normative democratic theory (e.g., Arrow, 1963; Sen, 1970). Several studies examine the relationship between public opinion and policies in the United States (e.g., Page and Shapiro, 1983; Stimson et al., 1995; Lax and Phillips, 2012). Some studies show that limited information imply that elected representatives are less responsive to public preferences (e.g., Besley and Burgess, 2002; Snyder and Strömberg, 2008). Besley and Coate (2008) emphasize that, in representative democracies, voters are limited in their ability to make politicians accountable, since they have only one vote to punish or reward politicians on a bundle of issues. We contribute to this literature by examining whether EU and US legislators respond to the interest of their electorate when voting on trade agreements and whether these choices affect their re-election chances.

Notwithstanding the Eurosceptic claims widespread in the media and academic literature, little is actually known about the responsiveness of MEPs to their voters' interests. Some early studies consider votes in the EP before the Lisbon Treaty — when the EP had more limited powers.[10] A few recent studies consider votes on EU trade agreements in the Post-Lisbon period (Kang, 2019; Stiller, 2023; Basedow and Hoerner, 2024). Our paper differs from this literature along two fundamental dimensions. First, we are the first to measure the

[10]For example, Hix and Noury (2007) examine the determinants of votes on six migration bills in the fifth European Parliament (1999-2004) and find that MEPs respond to the economic interests of their constituents when voting on legislation directly related to the economic rights of migrants.

trade interests of MEP's constituencies at the bilateral level. This allows us to accurately measure the interests of a constituency with respect to specific FTA partner(s).[11] Second, we are the first to study the drivers of MEPs' re-election probability and to show that EU legislators who are more responsive to their electorate are more likely to retain their seats.

Our analysis is also related to the vast literature on the political economy of trade policy. Most studies focus on political determinants of trade policy in the United States, including lobbying (e.g., Goldberg and Maggi, 1999; Kim, 2017; Blanga-Gubbay et al., 2025), electoral incentives (e.g., Conconi et al., 2014) and ratification procedures (e.g., Conconi et al., 2012). Several studies show that trade shocks affect political outcomes (e.g., Colantone and Stanig, 2018a,b; Autor et al., 2020; Che et al., 2022). Our paper is the first to systematically examine whether legislators (in the EU and the United States) are responsive to the interests of their constituencies when voting on the ratification of trade agreements and whether these trade votes matter for the legislators' chances of being re-elected.[12]

2 Data and variables

2.1 Roll-call votes on EU trade agreements

In our main analysis, we study roll-call votes on 16 FTAs negotiated by the EU after the Lisbon Treaty, which made the entry into force of trade agreements conditional on MEPs' approval. More information on these votes can be found in Section B-2 in the Online Appendix. The final sample comprises 10,542 votes (580 of which were abstentions) and 1,715 MEPs (14 of whom always abstained).

Figure A-4 in the Appendix displays the FTAs included in our sample. This figure highlights the broad support for trade agreements in the EP: 76.4% of the votes cast (excluding abstentions) were in favor of approving an FTA. This pattern aligns with the strong pro-trade views of EU citizens during our sample period: Eurobarometer data show that an

[11] Kang (2019) examines the determinants of MEPs' votes on two FTAs in our sample (those with Korea and Colombia/Peru). In his analysis, the variables used to capture the interests of an MEP's electorate are defined at the country (rather than MEP-constituency) level. Stiller (2023) investigates the likelihood of legislators' rebellion to their parties on the ratification of trade agreements in 20 different countries. Basedow and Hoerner (2024) study MEP's trade votes on the ratification of FTAs and other trade policies (e.g., trade defense and screening mechanisms, sector-specific agreements). They construct measures of the economic interests of an MEP's home region rather than of his/her EU constituency. None of the variables used in these papers captures the trade policy interests of MEPs' constituencies vis-à-vis specific FTA partners.

[12] A few studies examine the determinants of trade votes in the US Congress (e.g., Conconi et al., 2012, 2014). These studies do not measure the interests of legislators' constituencies vis-à-vis specific FTA partners and do not examine whether trade votes affect legislators' re-election chances.

average of 78.6% of respondents reported being in favor of "free trade" (see Figure A-5 in the Appendix). The roll-call vote data also reveal that MEPs from the same EP political group tend to vote alike.[13] There are, however, deviations from the party line: out of 9,962 votes, 990 (9.9%) do not conform to the view of the majority of their EP political group. Lastly, there is variation in the voting behavior of individual MEPs over time: 1,010 always voted in favor, 280 always voted against, while 411 switched (see Figure B-2 in the Online Appendix).

2.2 Constituency variables

While most EU Member States operate as single constituencies that elect their MEPs in nationwide elections, several countries are divided into sub-national constituencies. Figure A-6 in Appendix illustrates the constituencies of the EP during the seventh (2009-2014), eighth (2014-2019), and ninth legislatures (2019-2024).

By EU law, all Member States are required to use a proportional electoral system in European elections (see Table B-1 of the Online Appendix for details of how this system is implemented across EU Member States). As a result, an MEP's electorate is made up by all citizens who vote for his or her national party across the different regions within the relevant (national or sub-national) EP constituency. As discussed below, for each MEP i, belonging to national party np and elected in constituency c, we measure various socio-economic and political characteristics of his/her electorate by collecting information on the (NUTS-2) regions included in their constituency, and then aggregate the data at the constituency level using as weights the share of votes obtained by the MEP's party in the most recent elections.

The main variable of interest is the export share of an MEP's constituency, which captures the share of his/her electorate that stands to gain from the entry into force of a particular trade agreement. To construct this variable, we follow a four-step procedure (see Section B-3 of the Online Appendix for more details).

In the first step, we use data on trade flows to classify a sector j as being export-oriented or import-competing for each EU Member State k relative to the partner(s) of agreement a in year t.[14] For example, Figure 1 shows that sector C29 (motor vehicles, trailers and

[13] EP political groups are the officially recognized parliamentary groups consisting of MEPs of aligned ideologies. Each EP political group must include at least 23 MEPs representing one quarter of the EU Member States.

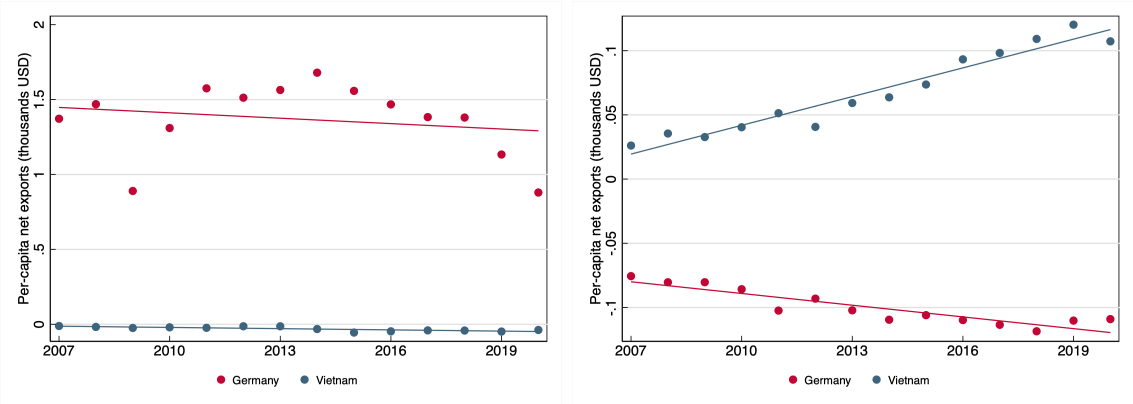
[14] We focus on tradable goods (i.e., agriculture, mining, and manufacturing), for which reliable data on trade flows are available. We define per-capita net exports of Member State k in sector j in year t as $NX_{j,k,t} = \frac{Exports_{j,k,t} - Imports_{j,k,t}}{Population_k}$, where $Exports_{j,k,t}$ ($Imports_{j,k,t}$) are aggregate exports (imports), and $Population_k$ is the population of country k in 2008. Per-capita net exports of FTA partner(s) a, $NX_{j,a,t}$,

semi-trailers) is classified as export-oriented for Germany relative to Vietnam throughout our sample period. By contrast, sector C14 (wearing apparel) is always classified as import-competing for Germany relative to Vietnam.

Figure 1

Examples of industry classification

(a) C29: Motor vehicles (b) C14: Wearing apparel



Notes: The figure plots per-capita net exports of Germany and Vietnam in two manufacturing sectors. The dots are the actual per-capita net exports, while the lines represent predicted trends in per-capita net exports. In sector C29 (motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers), predicted per-capita net exports of Germany always dominate those of Vietnam. In sector C14 (manufacture of wearing apparel), predicted per-capita net exports of Vietnam always dominate those of Germany.

In the second step, we use data on employment at the sector-region level and data on pre-agreement tariffs to construct the variable $\Omega^X_{j,r(k),a,t}$ ($\Omega^M_{j,r(k),a,t}$), which captures the number of citizens in region r working in export-oriented (import-competing) sectors that would experience reductions in export (import) tariffs if FTA a entered into force, and should thus benefit (suffer) from the agreement.

The third step involves constructing the following variable capturing the trade policy interests of voters in region r vis-à-vis the FTA with partner(s) a:

$$\textit{Regional Export Share}_{r(k),a,t} \equiv \frac{\Omega^X_{j,r(k),a,t}}{\Omega^X_{j,r(k),a,t} + \Omega^M_{j,r(k),a,t}}. \tag{1}$$

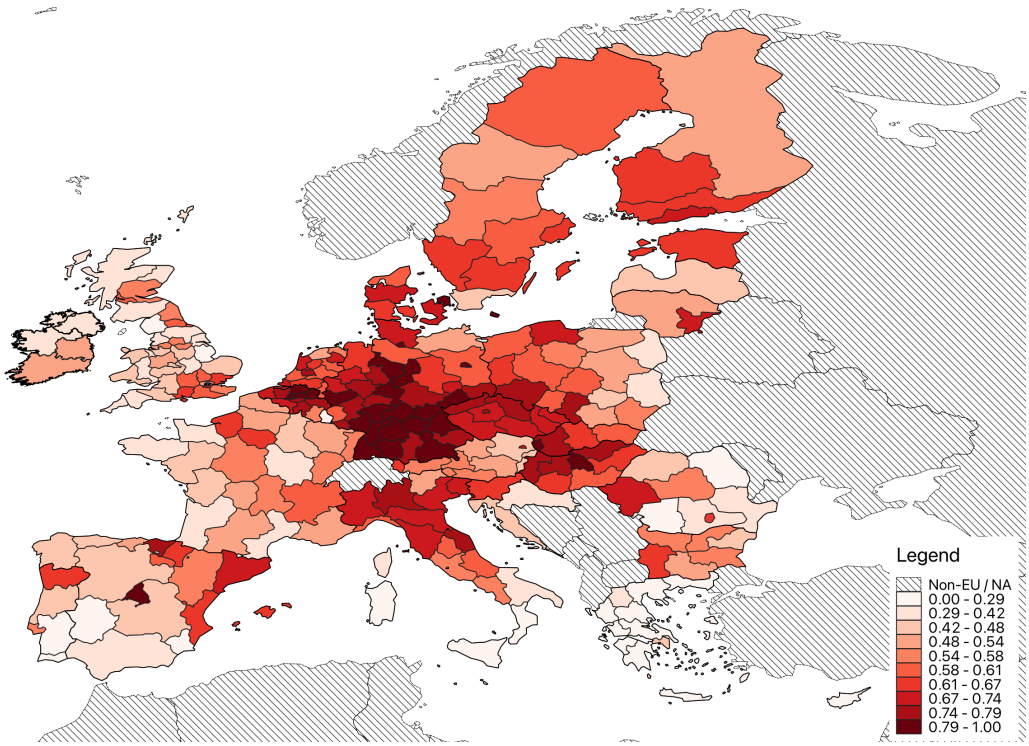
The higher this variable, the higher the share of workers in region r who should benefit from the entry into force of the agreement. Figure 2 illustrates the spatial distribution of

are defined in a similar way. We classify a sector j as export-oriented for EU Member State k relative to the partner(s) of agreement a in year t if $NX_{j,k,t} > NX_{j,a,t}$. To account for potential measurement error, we fit linear time trends to trade flows and use the predicted values to construct $NX_{j,k,t}$. The results are unaffected if we use actual rather than predicted trade values.

the regional export share relative to Canada in 2016 (i.e., the year before the vote on the ratification of CETA).

Figure 2

Regional variation in export share vis-à-vis Canada



The figure illustrates the spatial distribution of *Regional Export Share*$_{r(k),a,t}$ relative to Canada across all EU NUTS-2 regions in 2016 (the year before the vote on the ratification of the CETA agreement).

In the final step, we aggregate the regional export shares at the level of MEPs' electorate. As mentioned before, an MEP's effective electorate is made up by all citizens who voted for his/her national party across the different regions within the relevant EP constituency. For each MEP i, belonging to national party np and elected in constituency c, the trade interests of his/her electorate are captured by the average of the regional export shares, weighted by the share of votes obtained by his/her party in the most recent elections:[15]

$$\textit{Export Share}_{i(c(k),np),a,t} \equiv \sum_{r \in c(k)} \textit{Regional Export Share}_{r(k),a,t} \times \phi_{r(k),np,T}. \tag{2}$$

[15] As an example, consider Sergio Cofferati, an MEP elected on the Democratic Party's list in 2009 and representing voters in the EU constituency Italy North-West. The export share of his electorate is the average of *Regional Export Share*$_{r(k),a,t}$ across the NUTS-2 regions in Italy's North-West, weighted by the Democratic Party's vote share in these regions.

The party share variable $\phi_{r(k),np,T}$ is constructed using data on the results of the EP elections that took place at the start of each EP term T. This variable captures the share of an MEP's electorate that would benefit from the entry into force of agreement a.

The variables capturing other socio-economic and political characteristics of MEPs' constituencies are constructed in a similar way.[16] In particular, we use data from Eurostat to code the following socio-economic characteristics: the unemployment rate, the share of high-skilled residents (i.e., those who have completed some form of tertiary education), and the urbanization rate (i.e., the share of households who live in cities, towns, and suburbs). We use data from Eurobarometer surveys to code various political characteristic of MEPs' constituencies. First, we measure the ideological positioning of voters on the left-right political spectrum. Every Eurobarometer survey asks respondents to place their political views on a left-right political scale, with "1" denoting the most left-wing views and "10" the most right-wing views. We compute the average position of an MEP's electorate. Second, the Eurobarometer tracks whether respondents trust political parties and the EU (among other institutions). We use the answers to these questions to calculate the share of individuals who tend to trust political parties and the EU, respectively. Table A-1 provides summary statistics of the constituency variables.

2.3 MEP variables

We collect data on a large set of MEP characteristics. The top panel of Table A-2 provides summary statistics for the main variables of interest. First, we use Gender API to construct an indicator variable that takes the value 1 if MEP i is female, and 0 otherwise.[17] Second, we scrape official EU websites to collect data on MEPs' date of birth. This allows us to compute their age at the time of each FTA vote. Third, we use information on an MEP's previous experience in the EP from Michon and Wiest (2021) to calculate his/her tenure.

We also extract from Michon and Wiest (2021) the place of birth of each MEP. We geocode these locations using Google's API service and match their geographic coordinates to a NUTS-2 region. We note that the region of birth cannot be coded for MEPs born outside the EU. Overall, we identify the region of birth for 1,468 MEPs (see Table B-2 of

[16] We collect information on pre-determined (measured in 2008) characteristics of NUTS-2 regions and use the vote shares of national parties in the most recent EP elections to aggregate the data at the MEP-constituency level. For example, $\textit{Unemployment}_{i(c(k),np),t} \equiv \sum_{r \in c(k)} \textit{Regional Unemployment}_{r(k),2008} \times \phi_{r(k),np,T}$.

[17] Gender API is an AI-powered service that takes as inputs the first and last names and the two-digit ISO code of a country of birth to return a gender prediction and an associated accuracy score. The service is available here. We manually checked the results of the process.

the Online Appendix for a breakdown by Member State).[18]

We use different sources to determine whether MEPs had a previous career in national politics. Specifically, we consult the official website of each EU Member State's electoral office and compile an exhaustive list of the politicians who ran in a general election since the late 1990s.[19] We can thus identify 682 MEPs (51.43% of the sample of MEPs) who sought to represent a domestic constituency in their national parliament. Among them, 470 (27.4%) were elected. We also gather data on MEPs who held office in regional parliaments (in Belgium, Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom). Incorporating this information, we find that 543 MEPs (31.7%) were members of national or regional Parliaments.

Finally, we construct three variables to study the determinants of the probability than an MEP is re-elected to the EP. The bottom panel of Table A-2 provides descriptive statistics of this probability and its determinants. First, we define the indicator variable $\textit{Re-elected}_{i(c(k),np,ep),T}$, which is equal to 1 if MEP i, elected in constituency c in country k, from national party np, and affiliated with the EP political group ep is also an MEP in term $T+1$.

Second, for each MEP i who voted on agreement a, we define $\textit{Congruence}_{i(c(k),np),T}$ as the share of the electorate whose interests align with his/her vote. For example, when considering agreement a, if 60% of MEP i's constituency is employed in export-oriented industries, then $\textit{Congruence}_{i(c(k),np),T}$ is 0.6 if i voted in favor of this FTA and 0.4 if he/she voted against it. We compute an aggregate measure of congruence at the MEP-term level, denoted by $\textit{Congruence Trade Votes}_{i,T}$, by averaging across all votes cast by MEP i during term T. To account for the heterogeneous impact and salience of trade agreements, we weight each vote by the size of the trading partner (i.e., its GDP).

Third, we measure the extent to which an MEP has been loyal to his or her "national political group" (i.e., MEPs from the same Member State who are affiliated with the same EP political group). To this purpose, we use our dataset on all roll-call votes between 2009 and 2020 and follow a methodology similar to Frech (2016): we identify a set of "controversial" votes;[20] for each of these votes, we code whether an individual MEP votes in line with his/her national political group; we then compute the variable $\textit{Party Loyalty}_{i,T}$ as the share of controversial votes in which MEP i has sided with his/her national party group.

[18] This figure does not include MEPs from countries that consist of a unique NUTS-2 region.

[19] When available, we use already existing election data from Kollman et al. (2019).

[20] These are votes in which the position of the majority of a national political group differs from that of the majority of the remaining legislators in the EP. We exclude cases in which there is no clear majority within a national political group (ties and instances in which only one MEP casts a vote).

2.4 Agreement variables

We use Conte et al. (2022)'s gravity database to obtain information on the partner(s) of trade agreement a and on the relationship between EU Member State k and agreement partner(s) a. Some of these variables are continuous: GDP, population, distance between capitals, and diplomatic disagreement. For FTAs that include multiple trade partners, we sum GDP and population across all participants, while for distance and diplomatic disagreement, we compute simple averages. The remaining variables are dichotomous: contiguity, colonial linkages, and common language. All variables are constructed using pre-sample data (measured in 2008). When aggregating at the level of an FTA with several countries, we compute the share of partners for whom the indicator variables are equal to 1. Table A-3 reports summary statistics of all FTA variables.

3 Are MEPs responsive to their electorate's interests?

In this section, we study whether MEPs are responsive to the interests of their electorate when voting on trade agreements. To this purpose, we estimate the following logit model:

$$\begin{aligned} P\Big(Vote_{i(c(k),np,ep),a,t}=1\Big) \;=\; & F\Big(\beta_0+\beta_1 Export\ Share_{i(c(k),np),a,t-1}+\beta_2 Z_{i,t}+\beta_{3,t} Z_{c(k),np,T} \\ & +\beta_4 Z_{k,a}+\delta_t+\delta_{ep}+\delta_c+\varepsilon_{i(c(k),np,ep),a,t}\Big), \end{aligned} \tag{3}$$

where $Vote_{i(c(k),np,ep),a,t}$ is an indicator variable equal to 1 if MEP i, elected in EU constituency c (in country k) from national party np and belonging to EP political group ep, votes in favor of agreement a in year t, and 0 if he/she votes against it. In the baseline specification, we disregard abstentions. Given that the dependent variable is binary, we estimate a standard discrete choice logit model (F denotes the cumulative standard logistic distribution).

The key variable of interest is $Export\ Share_{i(c(k),np),a,t-1}$ defined in equation (2), which captures the share of MEP i's electorate that would benefit from the entry into force of agreement a. We use the value of this variable in the year preceding the vote on the agreement to address concerns about reverse causality. We report robust standard errors clustered at the constituency $\times$ national party level (the level of variation of our key regressor within a trade agreement).

We control for various characteristics of EU legislators, their constituencies, and the trade agreements. $Z_{i,t}$ is a vector of MEP characteristics that include age, gender, and tenure in the EP. $Z_{c(k),np,T}$ is a vector of pre-determined socio-economic (the share of the population with

tertiary education, the unemployment rate, the urbanization rate) and political characteristics (ideological positioning, trust in political parties, trust in the EU) at the constituency level, interacted with year-specific fixed effects. The socio-economic and political controls are constructed by combining pre-determined (in 2008) regional characteristics with the shares of votes obtained by national parties across different regions in the previous European elections. $Z_{k,a}$ is a vector of agreement controls measured before the start of the sample period. Some are defined at the agreement (a) level (e.g., GDP, population, WTO membership), while others are defined at the bilateral ($k-a$) level (e.g., distance, contiguity, colonial ties, common language, diplomatic disagreement).

We include year-specific fixed-effects (δ_t), which flexibly account for time-varying macroeconomic and political conditions. Including fixed effects for EP political groups (δ_{ep}) allows us to control for MEPs' ideology.[21] The EP constituency fixed effects (δ_c) account for time-invariant characteristics of EP constituencies (e.g., the type of proportional electoral rule used in European elections) that may affect their representatives' voting behavior on trade agreements. In robustness checks, we consider specifications that include MEP fixed effects to account for the role of time-invariant characteristics of individual legislators (e.g., their personal policy preferences), and FTA fixed effects to fully capture the heterogeneity of agreement partners.[22]

3.1 Results

Table 1 reports the marginal effects of the export share when we estimate equation (3). The point estimate in column 1 corresponds to the most parsimonious specification and includes only year and EP political group fixed effects. We find that higher export shares are associated with a higher probability of voting in favor of an FTA. The specification in column 2 adds MEP controls (age, gender, and tenure). In column 3, we include pre-determined socio-economic controls interacted with year fixed effects. In column 4, we further add pre-determined political controls interacted with year fixed effects. Column 5 is our baseline specification, which includes constituency fixed effects.[23]

[21] As mentioned before, EP political groups are the officially recognized parliamentary groups consisting of MEPs of aligned ideologies. If we replace δ_{ep} with δ_{np}, the logit model does not identify the fixed effects for 161 of the 285 national parties due to lack of switchers. In turn, this results in a substantial reduction in the number of observations used for identification (6,621 instead of 9,848) in column 5 of Table 1.

[22] When we include MEP fixed effects, the vector of legislator characteristics $Z_{i,t}$ is dropped due to collinearity. The a-specific controls are dropped when we include FTA fixed effects.

[23] The number of observations is smaller than in columns 1-4. This is because the logit estimator drops EP constituencies that have no variation in the voting patterns of the MEPs representing them.

Table 1

Responsiveness of EU legislators to the trade interests of their electorate

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Export Share$_{i(c(k),np),a,t-1}$	0.081***	0.080***	0.071**	0.075***	0.092**
	(0.029)	(0.028)	(0.029)	(0.028)	(0.036)
Agreement controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic constituency controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political constituency controls	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	No	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	9,962	9,962	9,962	9,962	9,848
Estimation method	logit	logit	logit	logit	logit
Pred. probability	0.751	0.751	0.751	0.752	0.749

This table reports the marginal effects of logit regressions, evaluated at sample means. The dependent variable is the indicator variable *Vote*$_{i(c(k),np,ep),a,t}$, which is equal to 1 if MEP i (elected in constituency c of country k from national party np, belonging to EP political group ep) votes in favor of agreement a in year t, and 0 if he/she votes against it. The variable *Export Share*$_{i(c(k),np),a,t-1}$ captures the trade policy interest of MEP i's electorate vis-à-vis the FTA with partner(s) a in the year before the vote. The agreement controls capture characteristics of the trading partner(s) in agreement a (GDP, population, and an indicator for WTO membership) and of the relationship between EU country k and the partner(s) of agreement a (distance, common language, common border, colonial ties, and UN diplomatic disagreement score). All the agreement variables are measured in 2008. The legislator controls include gender, age, and tenure of the MEP. The socioeconomic controls include the share of people with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, and the urbanization rate. The political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU. Socio-economic and political controls are constructed combining pre-determined (measured in 2008) regional characteristics with the vote shares of national parties in the previous European elections, and are interacted with year-specific fixed effects. Party fixed effects are defined at the EP political group level. Robust standard errors, clustered at the constituency × national party level, are reported in parentheses. * significant at the 10% level, ** significant at the 5% level, *** significant at the 1% level.

In all specifications, the marginal effect of the export share is positive and statistically significant. In terms of magnitude, our baseline specification in column 5 implies that a 10 p.p. increase in the export share raises the probability of a vote in favor of an FTA by 0.9 percentage points.

3.2 Robustness checks

We estimate a series of additional models to verify the robustness of the results in Table 1. The results are reported in Section B-6 of the Online Appendix.

To mitigate concerns about confounding factors, the baseline specification includes a

rich set of covariates and fixed effects. Nevertheless, the point estimates could still suffer from omitted variable bias if the export share variable is correlated with other unobserved, time-varying factors that influence MEPs' votes on trade agreements. To address such a concern, we implement an instrumental variable strategy, outlined in Section B-3 of the Online Appendix. The results are reported in Table B-7. All marginal effects are positive and statistically significant, confirming that MEPs are responsive to the trade policy interests of their electorate. We further conduct Wald tests to verify whether these coefficients are significantly different from their logit counterparts. We do not find evidence of statistically significant differences.[24] These comparisons suggest that our baseline estimates do not suffer from omitted variable bias.

In Table B-8, we report the results from conditional logit regressions that include MEP fixed effects. This approach allows us to account for any characteristic of an EU legislator (such as personal policy preferences or background) that may affect their voting behavior. In these regressions, the coefficient of the export share is identified only by within-MEP variation over time. The sample thus includes only MEPs who voted both in favor and against FTAs during our sample period.[25] Despite the significant reduction in sample size, the coefficients on the export share remain positive and highly significant.

Table B-9 shows that the results hold even if we include FTA fixed effects to control for agreement-specific determinants of MEPs' trade votes. Notice that, in these specifications, the a-specific controls and the year fixed effects are absorbed by the agreement fixed effects. Lastly, the main findings are also robust if we include abstentions and code them either as negative votes (Table B-10) or positive votes (Table B-11).

3.3 Ruling out alternative interpretations

Against widespread Eurosceptic arguments, the results above show that MEPs' votes on the approval of trade agreements are sensitive to the interests of their electorate. In this section, we discuss and rule out two alternative interpretations of our findings.

[24] We further compare the marginal fixed effects implied by the two sets of coefficients using the procedure described in Mize et al. (2019) and fail to find statistically significant differences.

[25] We further exclude from the sample MEPs that switch constituency and/or national party over their career to have MEPs nested within that level of clustering of standard errors. The results remain positive and statistically significant if we cluster standard errors at the MEP level to avoid losing observations.

Regional favoritism

A large literature shows that politicians tend to favor the regions to which they have some form of attachment — for example, the regions in which they were born or where they held previous political office (e.g., Brollo and Nannicini, 2012; Hodler and Raschky, 2014; Burgess et al., 2015). One may be concerned that, rather than responding to the interests of their electorate, MEPs' voting behavior reflects the "parochial" interests of some specific regions within them. To address this concern, we construct versions of the export share variable that exclude the regions an MEP may be connected with. Notice that, in this case, the export share variable becomes MEP-specific rather than national-party specific.

We first consider the region in which an EU legislator was born. Anecdotal evidence suggests that MEPs' votes may reflect the interests of their birthplace.[26] To rule out such a possibility, we define the indicator variable $Birth_{i,r(k)}$ that takes the value 1 if MEP i was born in NUTS-2 region r and 0 otherwise. We then construct a version of the export share variable that excludes the NUTS-2 region for which $Birth_{i,r(k)} = 1$.[27]

Similarly, MEPs' votes may reflect the interests of the regions within their EP constituency to which they are politically attached.[28] To rules out this mechanism, we collect detailed information on national and regional parliaments in EU Member States (see Section B-4 of the Online Appendix) and trace all MEP who held a seat (or ran to hold a seat) in them. As previously mentioned, around 51% of the MEPs in our sample ran in national elections and 32% held a seat in a national or regional parliament. We define two indicator variables: $Candidate_{i,r(k)}$, which is equal to 1 if MEP i ran to represent represent region r in the national parliament of country k; and $Elected_{i,r(k)}$, which is equal to 1 if MEP i represented region r in the national/regional parliament of country k. We then construct

[26] Claudio Morganti, an MEP elected on the list of the Lega Nord (part of the EFD political group) in the Central Italy EP constituency, declared after voting against the EU-South Korea FTA: "I come from Prato, a town that was once considered one of the most important textile areas of Europe. Today, unfair competition from Asia has turned it into a ghost town, because business in Prato has been utterly devastated" (from the minutes of the debate in the European Parliament on February 17, 2011).

[27] Most of the time, this region is contained within an MEP's EP constituency. This is always true for countries that have a single EP constituency; for the other countries, it is true in around 65% of the cases. Going back to the example of Claudio Morganti, his region of birth (Toscana) is contained within the EU constituency he represented in the European Parliament (Central Italy).

[28] Esteban González Pons, an MEP elected on the list of the Partido Popular (part of the PPE political group) in the Spain EP constituency and who previously represented Valencia in the Spanish parliament, declared after voting against the EU-South Africa FTA: "I am pleased to say that all the Valencian MEPs voted against the agreement with South Africa. And, I would add that in all matters that affect us, the MEPs representing the Valencian Community have always voted putting the interests of the people of Valencia before those of our parties" (interview for Valencia Plaza on 16/05/2019, translated from original language).

versions of the export share variable that exclude these regions.

Table B-12 of the Online Appendix shows that the results of Table 1 are not driven by "parochial" interests. Column 1 reproduces the baseline specification of Table 1 using the export share variable that discards an MEPs' region of birth. The export share in columns 2 and 3 excludes the region an MEP sought to represent in national elections and represented in national/regional parliaments. The coefficient of $Export\ Share_{i(c(k),np),a,t-1}$ is always positive and significant, indicating that our baseline findings are not driven by regional favoritism.

Lobbying by large firms

Another possible concern is that our results are driven by lobbying pressure from large firms. Several studies show that these firms dominate lobbying on trade policy (e.g., Kim, 2017; Blanga-Gubbay et al., 2025). These studies exploit detailed information available under the US Lobbying Disclosure Act (LDA), which requires individuals and organizations to file semi-annual reports providing detailed information on their lobbying activities at the federal level.

Unfortunately, lobbying data in the EU are much more limited.[29] As an alternative, we check whether our results are robust to controlling for the number of large firms in an MEP's constituency. Table B-13 of the Online Appendix shows that our results are unaffected when including this additional covariate.

3.4 Counterfactual votes

As discussed before, since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, an FTA negotiated by the Commission and signed by the Council goes into effect only after the EP has approved it. The EP's power to reject trade deals can help explain why only agreements that have broad political support among MEPs reach the floor.

To illustrate this, we carry out counterfactual exercises to predict how MEPs would vote on agreements that are not in our sample. We consider two agreements: one that has already been negotiated, but has not been put forward for ratification; and another that is not even being negotiated. Specifically, we use the baseline estimates from column 5 in Table 1 to compute the counterfactual outcomes for the following agreements: the EU-Mercosur FTA, which was finalized in June 2019 but has not yet reached the EP floor; and a potential FTA

[29] The EP, the EU Council, and the European Commission have adopted an inter-institutional agreement to make certain lobbying activities conditional upon registration. However, this agreement does not have a formal basis in EU treaties and the registration itself remains voluntary. This limits the collection of systematic data on lobbying within EU institutions.

with China, which is not currently under consideration. For both exercises, we predict the outcome assuming that the votes on the agreements took place in 2020 and were cast by the same MEPs who voted on the EU-Vietnam FTA (the last agreement in our sample).[30] Figure A-7 shows the expected share of votes in favor of these agreements by Member State.

For the EU-Mercosur FTA, we predict a close outcome, with 321 MEPs voting in favor and 264 voting against. This may help explain the delay in the ratification of this agreement. The close predicted outcome is in line with the outcome of a recent "show of hands" vote, in which 269 (259) legislators rejected (approved) the introduction of a paragraph supporting the conclusion of the Mercosur agreement in a resolution of the EP.[31]

In the second counterfactual exercise, an EU-China FTA would be rejected by a majority of MEPs: 303 would vote against it, and 282 in favor. It is perhaps not surprising that such an agreement is not currently under negotiation. These results mitigate claims that the EP lacks real power: only legislation that has broad support among MEPs reaches the floor for a final vote or is considered by the European Commission.

4 Does MEPs' responsiveness affect their re-election?

The results presented in the previous section demonstrate that EU legislators are responsive to the interests of their electorate when voting on the approval of FTAs. In this section, we show that MEPs' re-election probability depends on the extent to which their votes on trade agreements align with the interests of their electorate.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that MEPs whose trade votes are more in line with their constituency's interest are more likely to get re-elected. As an example, the two Italian MEPs Sergio Cofferati and Mario Pirillo were elected on the Democratic Party's list in 2009 and represented Italy's North-West and South constituencies, respectively. At the end of the term, the variable *Congruence Trade Votes*$_{i,T}$ described in Section 2.3 was high for Cofferati and low for Pirillo.[32] While both legislators ran for re-election, only Cofferati succeeded in

[30] We compute predicted probabilities only for MEPs who did not abstain. We also exclude MEPs from constituencies without switchers, as we cannot compute predicted probabilities (see footnote 23).

[31] As mentioned in the Introduction, the EU-Mercosur agreement has been approved by EU Member States on January 9, 2026. If this agreement is put forward for ratification during the tenth legislature of the EP, we could compare MEPs' actual votes to those predicted by our model.

[32] Cofferati voted in favor of four FTAs (EU-Central America, EU-Colombia and Peru, EU-Eastern and Southern Africa States Interim EPA, and EU-South Korea). His constituency's export share was approximately 0.60 relative to all trade partners. Pirillo voted in favor of two agreements (EU-Central America and EU-Colombia and Peru) and against one (EU-South Korea). The export shares relative to the first two agreements were 0.38 and 0.42, respectively, while the export share was 0.78 relative to South Korea. Cofferati's votes thus aligned with the interests of a majority of his electorate (his value of *Congruence Trade Votes*$_{i,T}$

keeping his seat in the EP.

To assess whether MEPs' voting behavior on trade agreements affects their re-election probability, we estimate the following logit model:

$$\begin{aligned} P(\textit{Re-elected}_{i(c(k),np,ep),T} = 1) \;\; = \;\; & F\big(\alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \textit{Congruence Trade Votes}_{i,T} \\ & + X_{i,T} + X_{c(k),np,T} + \delta_T + \delta_{ep} + \delta_{c(k)} + \varepsilon_{i(c(k),np,ep),T}\big). \end{aligned} \quad (4)$$

The dependent variable is an indicator variable equal to 1 if MEP i (elected in constituency c of country k on the list of national party np, belonging to European party ep) is re-elected at the end of term T. Note that, to be re-elected, an MEP must first be included on a party list or run as an independent. Conditional on running, the party or the candidate has to obtain a sufficiently high number of votes. The coefficient α_1 thus captures the effect of congruence on the overall probability that MEPs continue to hold their seats. We report robust standard errors clustered at the MEP level (the level of variation of our key regressor).

The MEP controls, $X_{i,T}$, include gender, as well as age and tenure at the end of the term. The socio-economic and political controls ($X_{c(k),np,T}$) are constructed by aggregating pre-determined regional characteristics, at the MEP constituency level using as weights the share of votes obtained by national parties in the previous European elections. We include fixed effects for EP terms, δ_T, EP political groups, δ_{ep}, and constituencies, $\delta_{c(k)}$. In some specifications, we also include proxies for party loyalty, which should also affect MEPs' re-election chances.

Table 2 presents the results. The specification in column 1 includes MEP controls and European party and term fixed effects. Columns 2 and 3 sequentially add socio-economic and political controls. Column 4 also includes constituency fixed effects. In all specifications, the coefficient on *Congruence Trade Votes*$_{i,T}$ is positive and significant. These results indicate that MEPs have a higher chance of being re-elected at the end of a term if their voting on EU trade agreements has been in line with their electorate's trade policy interests. In Column 5, we further include the variable *Party Loyalty*$_{i,T}$, which measures the extent to which the MEP has been loyal to his/her national party group during the previous term. The coefficient of this variable is positive and highly significant, indicating that MEPs who side with their national political group are more likely to retain their seat. The coefficient of *Congruence Trade Votes*$_{i,T}$ remains positive and highly significant. In terms of magnitude, the estimates in column 5 imply that increasing congruence by 10 percentage points leads to

was 0.62), while Pirillo systematically voted against the interests of the majority of his electorate (his value of *Congruence Trade Votes*$_{i,T}$ was 0.29).

a 2.15 percentage point increase in the probability that an MEP retains his/her seat. This effect accounts for 4.88% of the average probability of re-election in the sample (44.02%).[33]

Table 2

Trade responsiveness of EU legislators and their re-election

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Congruence Trade Votes$_{i,T}$	0.136**	0.163**	0.186***	0.184**	0.215***
	(0.064)	(0.065)	(0.065)	(0.072)	(0.076)
Party Loyalty$_{i,T}$					0.458***
					(0.156)
Legislator controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic constituency controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political constituency controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Term FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Observations	2,083	2,083	2,083	2,077	1,971
Estimation method	logit	logit	logit	logit	logit
Pred. probability	0.440	0.440	0.440	0.440	0.441

This table reports the marginal effects of logit regressions, evaluated at sample means. The dependent variable is *Re-elected*$_{i(c(k),np,ep),T}$, an indicator variable equal to 1 if MEP i (elected in constituency c of country k on the list of national party np, belonging to EP political group ep) is re-elected at the end of term T. *Congruence Trade Votes*$_{i,T}$ is the share of the electorate whose interests align with MEP i's trade votes during term T. *Party Loyalty*$_{i,T}$ captures the extent to which MEP i has been loyal to his/her national party group. The legislator controls include age, gender, and tenure of the MEP. The socio-economic controls include the share of people with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, and the urbanization rate. The political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU. Socio-economic and political controls are constructed combining pre-determined (measured in 2008) regional characteristics with the vote shares of national parties in the previous European elections. Party fixed effects are defined at the EP political group level. Robust standard errors, clustered at the MEP level, are reported in parentheses. * significant at the 10% level, ** significant at the 5% level, *** significant at the 1% level.

Our baseline measure of congruence takes into account differences in the importance of trade agreements (i.e., a vote on an FTA with a small trading partner like Ghana should matter less for the electorate than a vote on an FTA with a larger trading partner like Canada). Table B-14 of the Online Appendix reports the results when we disregard such heterogeneity.[34] Not surprisingly, the coefficients on *Congruence Trade Votes*$_{i,T}$ are less pre-

[33]If we replace EP political group fixed effects with national party fixed effects in this specification, the coefficient of *Congruence Trade Votes*$_{i,T}$ is very similar (0.251) and remains significant (at the 10% level). The results are also unaffected if we further control for MEPs' legislative effort using information on their participation in roll-call votes; the coefficient of this variable is positive and statistically significant. The results of these additional robustness checks are available upon request.

[34]In Table B-14, *Congruence Trade Votes*$_{i,T}$ is the simple average of *Congruence*$_{i,np,c(k),a,t}$ across the

cisely estimated compared to Table 2.

These findings provide further evidence against the argument that EU legislators are not accountable to their constituencies due to the second-order nature of European elections. They show that MEPs' votes on trade agreements — a policy of exclusive competence of the EU — significantly impact the outcome of European elections.

5 Comparison with US legislators

In this section, we compare the behavior of EU and US legislators. As mentioned before, it has only been since 2009 that the entry into force of trade agreements negotiated by the European Commission requires the approval of MEPs. By contrast, US legislators have always had the power to accept or reject trade agreements negotiated by the President. This is because Congress has primary responsibility for matters dealing with taxation, including tariffs on foreign imports. Indeed, Article 1 of the US Constitution gives the legislative branch the power to "regulate commerce with foreign nations" and to "lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts, and excises."

To this aim, we collect data on votes on the ratification of 12 FTAs negotiated by the US during the last decades. The first is the agreement with Canada, which was ratified in 1988. The last is the agreement with Panama, which was ratified in 2011. No new FTAs have since been put forward for ratification in the US Congress.[35] Section B-5 of the Online Appendix provides more information on these votes.

We focus on the FTA votes cast by members of the Senate. There are two main reasons for this choice. First, the constituencies of US senators (the 50 states) do not change over time. In contrast, the constituencies of the members of the House of Representatives (435 congressional districts) change over time: their geographic definition changes with each decennial Census, when districts are re-apportioned following changes in population. This implies that we cannot reproduce the baseline specification that includes fixed effects to control for any time-invariant constituency characteristics.[36] Second, and most importantly,

agreements voted by MEP i during term T.

[35]The only ratification vote since 2011 was on the agreement between the United States, Mexico, and Canada (USMCA), which replaced the previous FTA between these three countries (NAFTA). The negotiations of some FTAs have failed, as in the case of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). In the case of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), the agreement was signed by President Obama in February 2016, but did not reach the Congress floor as President Trump withdrew from the agreement during his first term. Recent trade deals negotiated by President Trump during his second term (e.g., with the United Kingdom and the EU) are not FTAs and have not been put forward for ratification in Congress.

[36]If we estimate the most demanding specification without constituency fixed effects (column 4 of Table

it has long been known that the boundaries of the districts are manipulated by political parties through gerrymandering (e.g., Erikson, 1972). This implies that, for House members, socio-economic and political characteristics of their constituencies are endogenous.

Like for EU legislators, we use data on US trade flows and sectoral employment to construct an export share variable to capture the interests of the constituents of US senators vis-à-vis specific FTA partners. We also measure the extent to which their trade votes during a term align with the interests of their constituents' interests. Our dataset on US trade votes also contains information on: other socio-economic and political characteristics of legislators' constituencies (e.g., education, unemployment, ideological position; characteristics of legislators (e.g., party affiliation, gender, age, tenure; margin of victory, campaign contributions received). Tables B-4, B-5 and B-6 of the Online Appendix provide descriptive statistics of the key variables in our US dataset.

We first examine whether US legislators respond to the interests of their constituents when voting on the ratification of trade agreements. Table 3 follows the same structure as Table 1. In column 1, we report a specification that includes the export share variable, pre-determined agreement controls interacted with year fixed effects, as well as year and party fixed effects. In columns 2, we add legislator controls. These include the same covariates used for EU legislators (age, gender, and tenure) and two additional controls specific to US legislators:[37] indicator variables to keep track of the "generation" a legislator belongs to at the time of a vote, capturing his/her proximity to re-election;[38] and their margin of victory compared to the runner up.[39]

In column 3, we include pre-determined socio-economic controls (share of high-skill workers, unemployment rate, urbanization rate) interacted with year fixed effects. In column 4, we further control for the ideological positioning of the constituency, interacted with year fixed effects. Column 5 corresponds to our baseline specification, which includes constituency-specific fixed effects. The results reported in Table 3 are in stark contrast with those in the corresponding specifications of Table 1 for EU legislators: the coefficient of $Export\ Share_{i(c),a,t-1}$ is never statistically significant, indicating that US legislators' sup-

1) for House members, the coefficient of the export share variable is statistically insignificant and the results are similar to those obtained for senators.

[37]The results of Table 3 are unaffected if we exclude these additional variables.

[38]The US Senate has a staggered structure: all members serve six-year terms, with of third of them being re-elected every two years. Whenever a vote is cast in the Senate, members can thus be divided in three generations, depending if they are in the first two, middle two, of last two years of their terms.

[39]US legislators are elected based on a majoritarian rather than proportional system. We measure the margin of victory of each senator as the difference between his/her vote share and the vote share of the runner up in the previous elections.

Table 3

Responsiveness of US legislators to the trade interests of their electorate

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Export Share$_{i(c),a,t-1}$	-0.054	-0.013	-0.019	-0.030	0.232
	(0.172)	(0.162)	(0.187)	(0.193)	(0.213)
Agreement controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic constituency controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political constituency controls	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	No	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	1,118	1,118	1,118	1,118	957
Estimation method	logit	logit	logit	logit	logit
Pred. probability	0.737	0.737	0.737	0.737	0.693

This table reports marginal effects of logit regressions, evaluated at sample means. The dependent variable is the indicator variable *Vote*$_{i(c,p),a,t}$, which is equal to 1 if US senator i (elected in constituency c from party p) votes in favor of agreement a in year t, and 0 if he/she votes against it. The variable *Export Share*$_{i(c),a,t-1}$ captures the trade policy interest of i's electorate vis-à-vis the FTA with a in the year before the vote. The agreement controls capture characteristics of the trading partner(s) in agreement a (GDP, population, and an indicator for GATT membership) and of the relationship between the United States and the partner(s) of agreement a (distance, common language, common border, colonial ties, and UN diplomatic disagreement score). All the agreement variables are measured pre-sample (in 1987). The legislator controls include gender, age, tenure, margin of victory, and the "generation" of each senator. The socioeconomic controls include the share of people with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, and the urbanization rate. The political controls include the share of votes for candidates of the Democratic party in the previous mid-term elections. Socio-economic and political controls are measured at the beginning of each decade (1980, 1990 and 2000) and are interacted with year fixed effects. Robust standard errors, clustered at the constituency (state) level, are reported in parentheses. * significant at the 10% level, ** significant at the 5% level, *** significant at the 1% level.

port for trade agreements does not depend on the share of voters in their constituencies that stand to gain from these agreements. If we interact *Export Share*$_{i(c),a,t-1}$ with different bins of *Margin of Victory*$_{i,t-1}$, the coefficients of these interactions are never significant, indicating that US legislators' lack of responsiveness does not depend on the safety of their seats.

An important difference between EU and US legislators is that only the latter can receive contributions to fund their campaigns. Table B-15 of the Online Appendix shows that the results of Table 3 are unaffected if we control for the campaign contributions received by each senator in the previous elections: the coefficient of *Export Share*$_{i(c),a,t-1}$ remains statistically insignificant in all specifications, confirming that US legislators do not respond to the trade policy interest of their electorate when voting on the approval of FTAs.

The lack of responsiveness of US legislators to the interests of their constituents when

voting on trade agreements may be rationalized if they do not expect their trade votes to matter for their re-election. Table 4 shows that this is indeed the case: in all specifications, the coefficient of *Congruence Trade Votes*$_{i,T}$ is not statistically significant, indicating that the probability of re-election of US legislators at the end of a term does not depend on the extent to which their trade votes during the previous term align with their constituencies' interests.

Table 4

Trade responsiveness of US legislators and their re-election

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Congruence Trade Votes$_{i,T}$	-0.173	-0.179	-0.171	-0.291	-0.301
	(0.173)	(0.180)	(0.182)	(0.199)	(0.196)
Party Loyalty$_{i,T}$					0.508
					(0.478)
Legislator controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic constituency controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political constituency controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Term FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Observations	408	408	408	401	401
Estimation method	logit	logit	logit	logit	logit
Pred. probability	0.672	0.672	0.672	0.666	0.666

This table reports the marginal effects from logit regressions, evaluated at sample means. The dependent variable is *Re-elected*$_{i(c,p),T}$, an indicator variable equal to 1 if senator i (elected in constituency c from party p) is re-elected at the end of term T. *Congruence Trade Votes*$_{i,T}$ is the share of the legislator's electorate whose interests align with his/her trade votes during term T. *Party Loyalty*$_{i,T}$ captures the extent to which the legislator has been loyal to his/her party. The other legislator controls include gender, age, tenure, margin of victory, and the generation of each senator. The socioeconomic controls include the share of people with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, and the urbanization rate. The political controls include the share of votes for candidates of the Democratic party in previous midterm elections. Socio-economic and political controls are measured at the beginning of each decade (1980, 1990 and 2000) and are interacted with fixed effects for the six-year term of the legislators. Robust standard errors, clustered at the legislator level, are reported in parentheses. * significant at the 10% level, ** significant at the 5% level, *** significant at the 1% level.

We also check that the results of Table 4 are robust if we control for the amount of campaign contributions received by each legislator. Table B-16 of the Online Appendix shows that the coefficient of *Congruence Trade Votes*$_{i,T}$ remains insignificant. By contrast, the coefficient of *Campaign Contributions*$_{i,T}$ is positive and highly significant, which underscores the role of campaign financing in US elections. In terms of magnitude, the estimates in column 5 imply that increasing campaign contributions by 10% leads to a 0.63 percentage

point increase in the probability that a senator retains his/her seat. This effect accounts for 0.94% of the average probability of re-election in the sample (67.20%).

Overall, our results suggest that the approval of trade agreements matters more for EU voters than their US counterparts when deciding whether or not to re-elect their representatives. A possible explanation for this asymmetry lies in the different set of policies EU and US legislators are in charge of. As mentioned before, trade policy is one of the few areas of exclusive competence of the EU, while many other policy areas (e.g., health care, education, social security, taxes) are decided by Member States. Thus, MEPs know that trade policy is one of the few areas in which they can expect to be held accountable by their voters. On the other hand, US legislators are in charge of a broader set of policies, many of which are more salient to voters than trade policy, as illustrated by (Guisinger, 2009). Using information from the 2006 Cooperative Congressional Election Study, she finds that only 16% of respondents considered trade to be an "extremely" important issue in determining their voting decisions. The corresponding share was 51% for health care, 45% for education, 44% for social security, and 43% for taxes. As she points out, this implies that US legislators may have "more leeway for deviations from constituent preferences" when it comes to trade policy.[40]

The asymmetry between the results for EU and US legislators may also partly reflect differences in the periods covered by the analysis. For the EU, the sample includes votes cast between 2011 and 2020 on the ratification of 16 FTAs negotiated after the Lisbon Treaty. For the US, the sample includes votes cast between 1988 and 2011 on the ratification of 10 FTAs. The finding that MEPs are more responsive to their electorate's interests may reflect the fact that trade has become a more important policy issue in recent years (see Figure A-3).

6 Conclusions

European legislators are often portrayed as disconnected from their electorate, partly due to the second-order nature of European elections, which are fought in the shadow of national elections rather than being shaped by EU policies. In this paper, we assess the validity of Eurosceptic arguments, which are widespread in the media and scholarly debates, have become an integral part of the populist rhetoric, and played an important role during the

[40]The findings of Conconi et al. (2014) and Bouton et al. (2021) suggest that, when it comes to policy issues that are not salient to the majority of the electorate, US legislators respond to the interests of vocal minorities, who care intensely about these issues.

Brexit campaign. We focus on a key policy choice in the hands of MEPs: the approval of EU trade agreements. We construct a novel dataset on the determinants of MEPs' votes on the approval of 16 agreements negotiated by the EU since the Lisbon Treaty. To capture the trade policy interests of MEPs' constituencies, we measure the share of their electorate that stands to gain from the entry into force of each trade agreement. We also collect information on several other characteristics of MEPs' constituencies (e.g., education, unemployment, ideological position), FTA partners (e.g., GDP, population, distance, diplomatic disagreement with the EU) and legislators (e.g., affiliation to EP political groups, gender, age, tenure, career in national or regional parliaments) that may affect votes on trade agreements.

We find that, rather than being disconnected, EU legislators are responsive to the economic interests of their electorate when voting on the approval of EU FTAs: MEPs who represent constituencies with a higher share of jobs in export-oriented industries are more likely to vote in favor of these agreements. The results are robust to controlling for a rich set of covariates, including different types of fixed effects, and using an IV strategy to address any remaining endogeneity concerns. They also hold when we account for more "parochial" trade policy interests (those of the regions in which the MEPs were born or which they have run to represent/have represented in national parliaments) and for the presence of large lobbying firms. We use our estimates to predict how MEPs would vote on agreements not in our sample (because they have been negotiated but not yet been put forward for ratification in the EP or have not been negotiated). The results of these counterfactual exercises suggest that the EP's power to reject trade deals negotiated by the European Commission can help explain why only agreements with broad political support among MEPs reach the ratification stage.

If MEPs's responsiveness is driven by electoral incentives, we would expect their re-election chances to be affected by the extent to which their trade votes are congruent with the interests of their constituencies. In line with this presumption, we show that MEPs are accountable to their electorate: the probability that they retain their seat at the end of a term increases with the extent to which they have voted in favor of (against) FTAs when a higher share of their electorate was expected to gain (lose) from the agreements. Against the argument that European elections are only shaped by national politics, these findings show that MEPs' choices on the approval of EU trade agreements affects voters' choice on whether to re-elect them.

When we perform a similar analysis for members of the US Congress, the results are in stark contrast to those obtained for MEPs: US legislators do not respond to the trade

policy interest of their electorate when voting on the approval of FTAs, and their votes on trade agreements do not affect their re-election probability. Our results suggest that, at least for the sample periods considered, trade agreements were a more important policy issue for EU voters than for US voters when deciding whether to re-elect their representatives. As discussed above, this may be due to the fact that trade is one of the few policies of exclusive EU competence; many other policies (e.g., health care, education, social security, taxes) are primarily determined by national legislators. The broader set of competences of US legislators implies that they may be accountable to their electorate on policies other than trade.

It has been argued that, in representative democracies, voters are limited in their ability to make politicians accountable for their policy choices. This is because citizens have only one vote to punish or reward politicians on a bundle of issues (Besley and Coate, 2008). Electoral accountability has thus no bite, especially for policy issues that are of secondary importance to most voters. Our analysis suggests that EU voters make their EU representatives accountable on trade policy, one of the key policy issues they are in charge of. An important avenue for future research is to study whether MEPs are equally responsive to their constituencies' interests when deciding on policies that are not of exclusive competence of the EU (e.g., migration, environment).

References

Arrow, K. J. (1963): *Social Choice and Individual Values*, New York: John Wiley and Sons, originally published in 1951.

Autor, D., D. Dorn, G. Hanson, and K. Majlesi (2020): "Importing Political Polarization? The Electoral Consequences of Rising Trade Exposure," *American Economic Review*, 110, 3139–3183.

Balassa, B. (1965): "Trade Liberalization and Revealed Comparative Advantage," *Manchester School of Economic and Social Studies*, 33, 99–123.

Basedow, R. and J. M. Hoerner (2024): "Trading Votes: What Drives MEP Support for Trade Liberalisation?" *Journal of European Public Policy*, 31, 20–53.

Bellodi, L., M. Morelli, and M. Vannoni (2023): "A Costly Commitment: Populism, Economic Performance, and the Quality of Bureaucracy," *American Journal of Political Science*, 0, 1–17.

Besley, T. and R. Burgess (2002): "The Political Economy of Government Responsiveness: Theory and Evidence From India," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 117, 1415–1451.

Besley, T. and S. Coate (2008): "Issue Unbundling via Citizens' Initiatives," *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, 3, 379–397.

Blanga-Gubbay, M., P. Conconi, and M. Parenti (2025): "Lobbying for Globalisation," *The Economic Journal*, 135, 487–518.

Bonica, A. (2024): "Database on Ideology, Money in Politics, and Elections: Public version 4.0 [Computer File]," .

Bouton, L., P. Conconi, F. Pino, and M. Zanardi (2021): "The Tyranny of the Single-Minded: Guns, Environment, and Abortion," *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 103, 48–59.

Brollo, F. and T. Nannicini (2012): "Tying Your Enemy's Hands in Close Races: The Politics of Federal Transfers in Brazil," *American Political Science Review*, 106, 742–761.

Burgess, R., R. Jedwab, E. Miguel, A. Morjaria, and G. Padró i Miquel (2015): "The Value of Democracy: Evidence from Road Building in Kenya," *American Economic Review*, 105, 1817–1851.

Che, Y., Y. Lu, J. Pierce, P. Schott, and Z. Tao (2022): "Did Trade Liberalization with China Influence U.S. Elections?" *Journal of International Economics*, 139.

Cho, S.-J. (2009): "Retrospective Voting and Political Representation," *American Journal of Political Science*, 53, 276–291.

Colantone, I. and P. Stanig (2018a): "Global Competition and Brexit," *American Political Science Review*, 112, 201–218.

——— (2018b): "The Trade Origins of Economic Nationalism: Import Competition and Voting Behavior in Western Europe," *American Journal of Political Science*, 62, 936–953.

Conconi, P., D. deRemer, G. Kirchsteiger, L. Trimarchi, and M. Zanardi (2017): "Suspiciously Timed Trade Disputes," *Journal of International Economics*, 105, 57–76.

Conconi, P., G. Facchini, and M. Zanardi (2012): "Fast Track Authority and International Trade Negotiations," *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, 4, 146–189.

——— (2014): "Policymakers' Horizon and Trade Reforms: The Protectionist Effect of Elections," *Journal of International Economics*, 94, 102–118.

Conconi, P., M. García-Santana, L. Puccio, and R. Venturini (2018): "From Final Goods to Inputs: The Protectionist Effect of Preferential Rules of Origin," *American Economic Review*, 108, 2335–2365.

Conte, M., P. Cotterlaz, and T. Mayer (2022): "The CEPII Gravity Database," Working Paper 2022-05, CEPII.

Costinot, A., D. Donaldson, and I. Komunjer (2012): "What Goods Do Countries Trade? A Quantitative Exploration of Ricardo's Ideas," *Review of Economic Studies*, 581–608.

De Vries, C. E. (2018): *Euroscepticism and the Future of European Integration*, Oxford University Press.

Eckert, F., T. C. Fort, P. K. Schott, and N. J. Yang (2020): "Imputing Missing Values in the US Census Bureau's County Business Patterns," Working Paper 26632, National Bureau of Economic Research.

Erikson, R. S. (1972): "Malapportionment, Gerrymandering, and Party Fortunes in Congressional Elections," *American Political Science Review*, 66, 1234–1245.

Finan, F. and L. Schechter (2012): "Vote-Buying and Reciprocity," *Econometrica*, 80, 863–882.

Fisher, P. (2018): *Insufficient Representation: The Disconnect Between Congress and Its Citizens*, Rowman & Littlefield.

Flinders, M. (2015): "The Problem with Democracy," *Parliamentary Affairs*, 69, 181–203.

Foa, R. S. and Y. Mounk (2016): "The Democratic Disconnect," *Journal of Democracy*, 27, 5–17.

Frech, E. (2016): "Re-electing MEPs: The Factors Determining Re-Election Probabilities," *European Union Politics*, 17, 69–90.

Gaulier, G. and S. Zignago (2010): "BACI: International Trade Database at the Product-Level," .

Goldberg, P. K. and G. Maggi (1999): "Protection for Sale: An Empirical Investigation," *American Economic Review*, 89, 1135–1155.

Guisinger, A. (2009): "Determining Trade Policy: Do Voters Hold Politicians Accountable?" *International Organization*, 63, 533–557.

Guriev, S. and E. Papaioannou (2022): "The Political Economy of Populism," *Journal of Economic Literature*, 60, 753–832.

Hahn, V. (2009): "Reciprocity and Voting," *Games and Economic Behavior*, 67, 467–480.

Hix, S. and A. Noury (2007): "Politics, Not Economic Interests: Determinants of Migration Policies in the European Union," *International Migration Review*, 41, 182–205.

Hobolt, S. B. and M. N. Franklin (2011): "Introduction: Electoral Democracy in the European Union," *Electoral Studies*, 30, 1–3.

Hodler, R. and P. A. Raschky (2014): "Regional Favoritism," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 129, 995–1033.

Kang, Y.-D. (2019): "European Affiliations or National Interests? Analyses of Voting Patterns on Trade Policy in European Parliament," *TalTech Journal of European Studies*, 9, 19–48.

Kim, I. S. (2017): "Political Cleavages Within Industry: Firm-level Lobbying for Trade Liberalization," *American Political Science Review*, 111, 1–20.

Kollman, K., A. Hicken, D. Caramani, D. Backer, and D. Lublin (2019): "Constituency-level Elections Archive [Data File and Codebook]," Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Political Studies, University of Michigan [producer and distributor].

Lax, J. R. and J. H. Phillips (2012): "The Democratic Deficit in the States," *American Journal of Political Science*, 56, 148–166.

Malgouyres, C. (2017): "The Impact of Chinese Import Competition on the Local Structure of Employment and Wages: Evidence from France," *Journal of Regional Science*, 57, 411–441.

Michon, S. and E. Wiest (2021): "A Database about the Members of European Parliament: Contributions and Limitations of Automated Data Collection in the Study of European Political Elites," *Bulletin of Sociological Methodology/Bulletin de Méthodologie Sociologique*, 152, 125–141.

Mize, T., L. Doan, and S. J. Long (2019): "A General Framework for Comparing Predictions and Marginal Effects across Models," *Sociological Methodology*, 49, 008117501985276.

Page, B. and R. Shapiro (1983): "Effects of Public Opinion on Policy," *American Political Science Review*, 77, 175–190.

Roberts, J., D. Rohde, and M. H. Crespin (2021): "Political Institutions and Public Choice Senate Roll-Call Database," .

Rosenberger, T. J. J. (2022): "The Distribution of Competences in the EU and US: A Comparative Study," *European Union Law Working Papers*, 63, 533–557.

Sen, A. K. (1970): *Collective Choice and Social Welfare*, San Francisco: Holden-Day.

Snyder, J. M. and D. Strömberg (2008): "Press Coverage and Political Accountability," *Journal of Political Economy*, 118, 355–408.

Stevens-Finlayson, B. (2019): "EU v. US Comparing the EU and US Federal Systems: Two Similar Systems of Governance," *Gold Mercury International*, 5, 3139–3183.

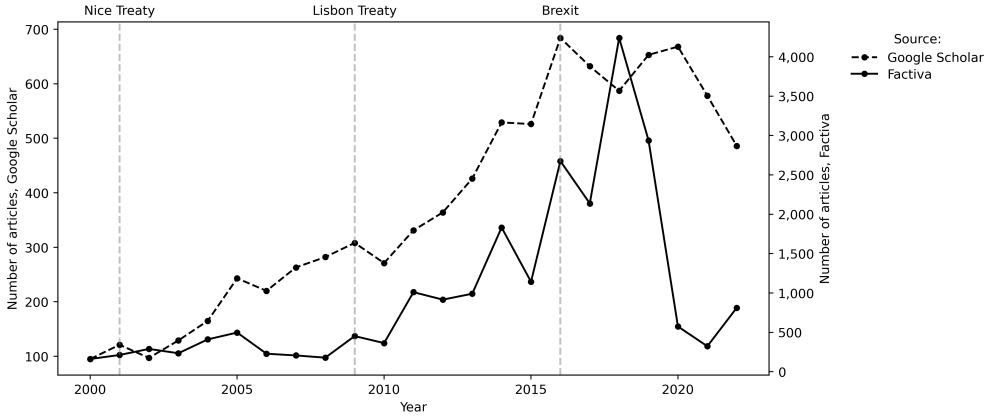
Stiller, Y. (2023): "Why do Legislators Rebel on Trade Agreements? The Effect of Constituencies' Economic Interests," *European Political Science Review*, 15, 272–290.

Stimson, J. A., M. B. MacKuen, and R. S. Erikson (1995): "Dynamic Representation," *American Political Science Review*, 89, 543–565.

Appendix

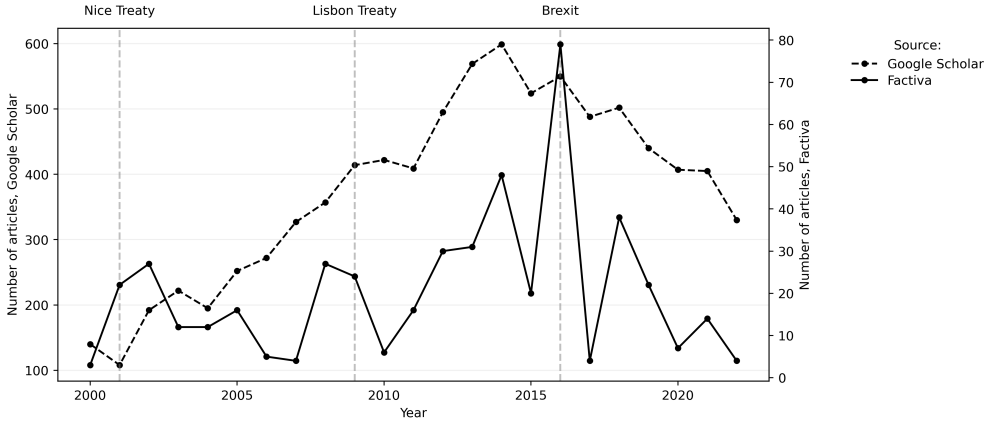
A-1 Figures

Figure A-1
Articles on Euroscepticism



Notes: This figure shows the number of articles on Google Scholar and Factiva mentioning at least one of the following phrases: "Eurosceptic," "Euroscepticism," "Euro-sceptic," or "Euro-scepticism."

Figure A-2
Articles on the democratic deficit of the EU

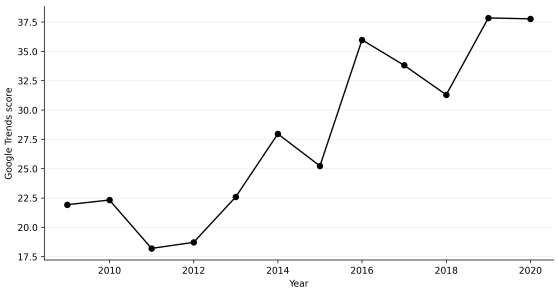


Notes: This figure shows the number of articles on Google Scholar and Factiva mentioning at least one of the following phrases: "Democratic deficit of the EU," "Democratic deficit in the EU," "EU democratic deficit," "Democratic deficit of the European Union," "Democratic deficit in the European Union," or "European Union democratic deficit."

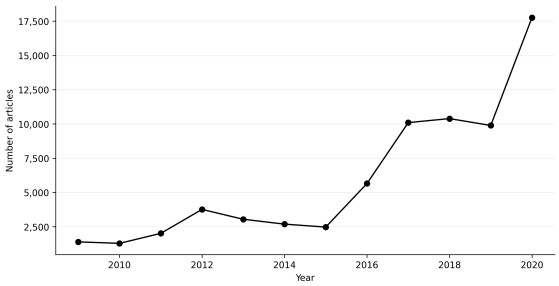
Figure A-3

Salience of trade policy

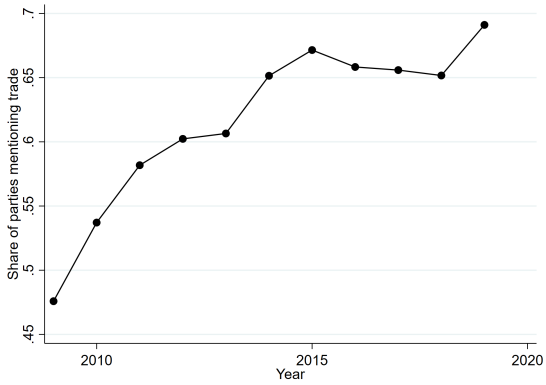
(a) Internet searches on trade agreements (Google Trends)



(b) Media coverage of trade agreements (Factiva)



(c) Coverage of Trade in Parties' Manifestos (Manifesto Project)



Notes: Panel (a) reports the volume of internet searches on trade agreements in EU member states. This is a weighted average of the yearly Google Trends score for each member state (using population as weights). Panel (b) shows the media coverage of trade agreements in EU member states, using data from Factiva. Panel (c) plots the share of European parties that mention trade in their electoral program, using data from the Manifesto Project. This figure is constructed using information on the trade-related codes of the Manifesto Project (406 and 407). To smooth electoral cycles, we report the 5-years moving average of the share of European parties that mention trade in their program.

Figure A-4

Roll-call votes on the approval of EU trade agreements

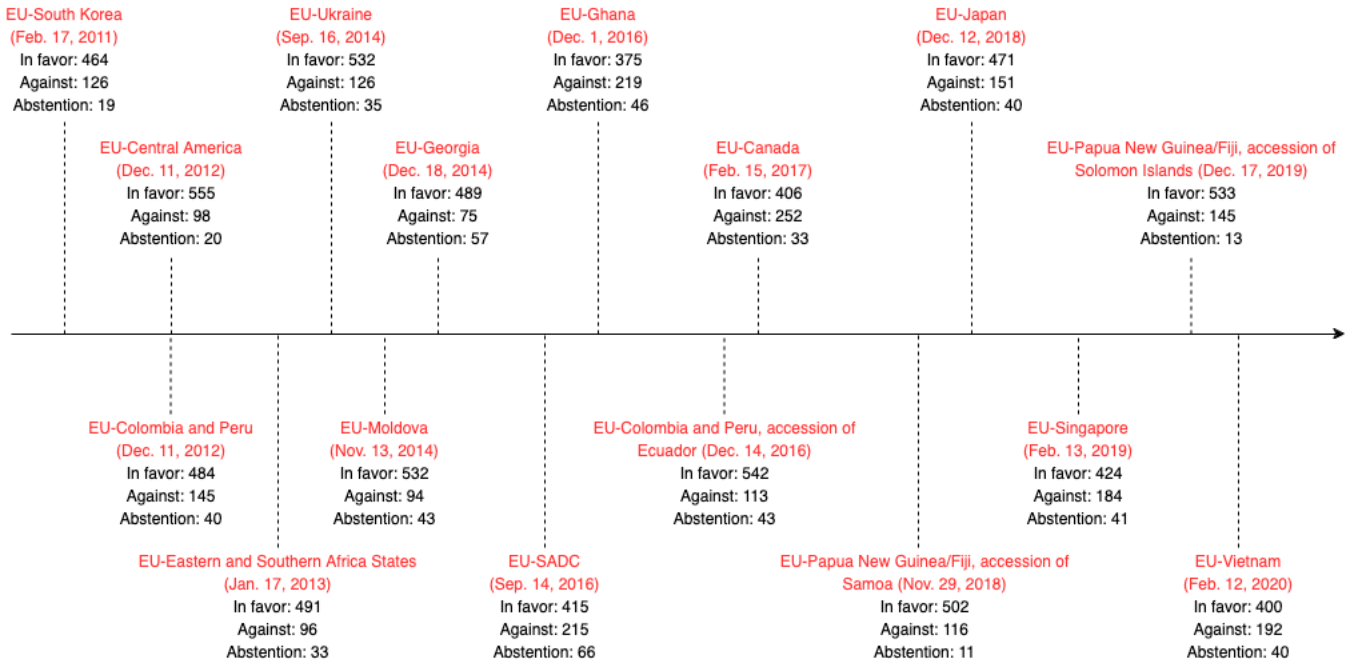
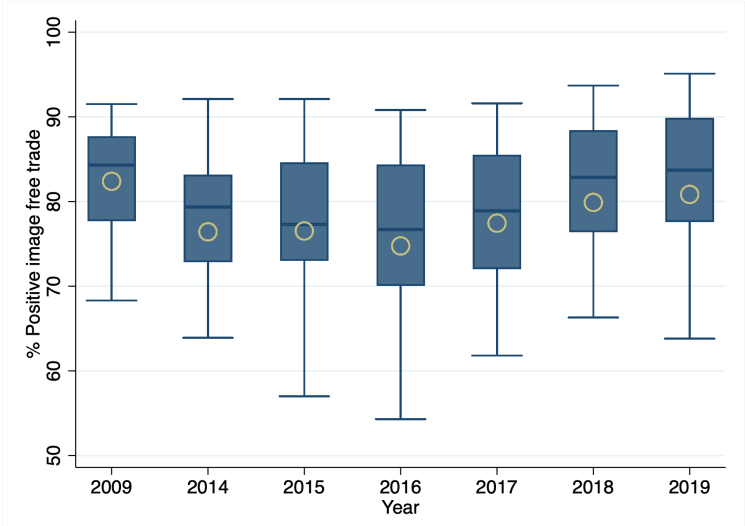


Figure A-5

Pro-trade opinions of EU citizens

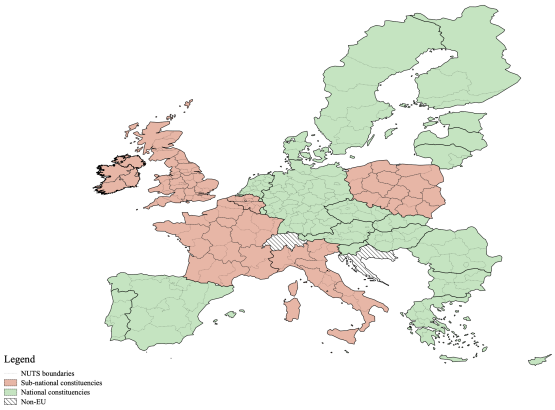


Notes: This figure illustrates the share of EU citizens for whom the concept of "free trade" brings to mind something very positive or fairly positive. The yellow circle indicates the population-weighted average, the dark blue line indicates the median, the sides of the box indicate the 25th and 75th percentiles and the two whiskers indicate the maximum and the minimum.

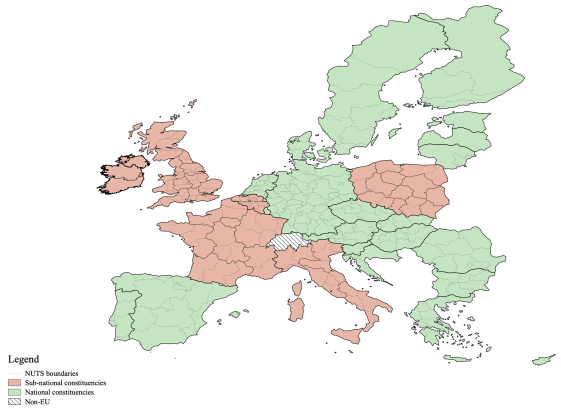
Figure A-6

EP constituencies and NUTS-2 regions

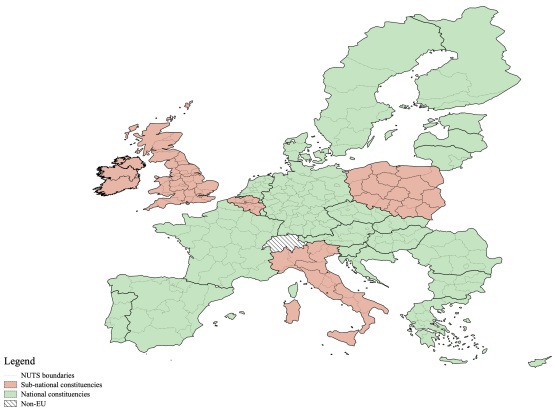
(a) Seven legislature



(b) Eighth legislature



(c) Ninth legislature

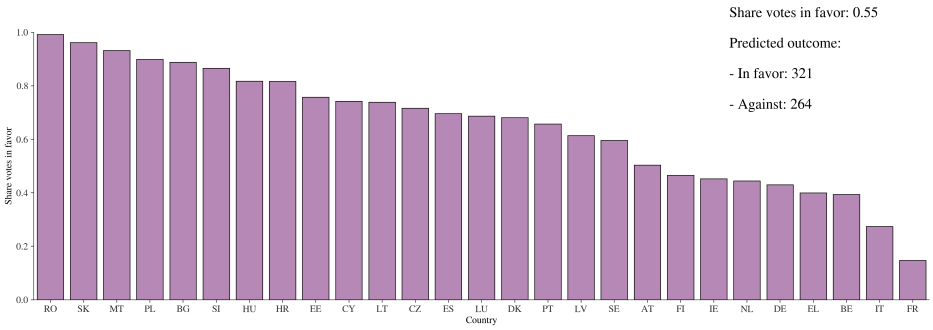


Notes: The figure shows the constituencies in which MEPs were elected during the seventh, eight, and ninth legislatures of the EP. Belgium, Ireland, Italy, Poland, the United Kingdom, and France (until the ninth legislature) were divided in sub-national constituencies; all other member states had a national constituency. With the exception of Ireland, all EP constituencies are aggregates of (or overlap with) NUTS-2 regions.

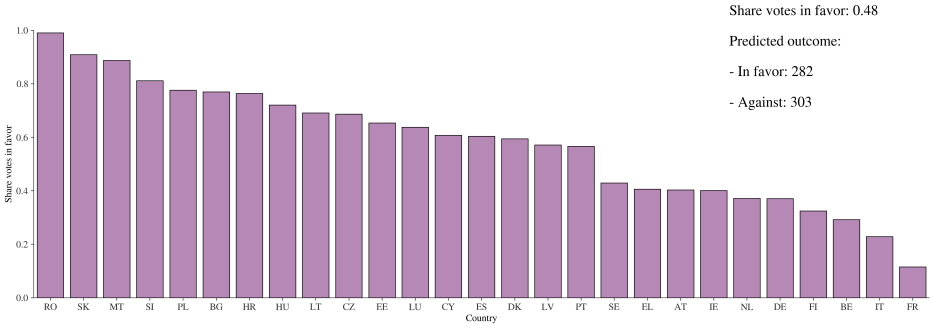
Figure A-7

Counterfactual vote on EU-Mercosur and EU-China in 2020

(a) EU-Mercosur



(b) EU-China



Notes: The figure illustrates the counterfactual outcomes of votes on two trade agreements, assuming they were cast on the same day as the vote on the EU-Vietnam FTA. The top figure illustrates the counterfactual outcome of a vote on an FTA between the EU and the four founding member countries of Mercosur (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay). The bottom figure illustrates the counterfactual outcome of a vote on an FTA between the EU and China. The bars represent the share of MEPs predicted to vote in favor by country, computed using our baseline estimates (from column 5 of Table 1). The notes to the right of the plot report the share of votes in favor across all countries, and the number of MEPs that would vote in favor or against based on the predicted probability of each legislator.

A-2 Descriptive statistics

Table A-1
Constituency variables

	N	Mean	Std. dev.	Min.	Max.
Export Share$_{i(c(k),np),a,t}$	6,332	0.41	0.24	0.00	0.95
Tertiary Education$_{i(c(k),np),T}$	1,152	24.80	7.19	11.59	39.32
Unemployment$_{i(c(k),np),T}$	1,152	6.97	2.52	2.87	17.32
Urban$_{i(c(k),np),T}$	1,152	70.56	19.86	10.40	99.98
Left-Right Index$_{i(c(k),np),T}$	1,152	5.38	0.53	3.51	6.51
Trust in Political Parties$_{i(c(k),np),T}$	1,152	17.84	11.61	2.50	55.22
Trust in EU$_{i(c(k),np,),T}$	1,152	56.02	15.38	16.41	79.98

Notes: The table provides descriptive statistics on various socio-economic and political characteristics of MEP i (from national party np)'s constituency c in country k in year t or term T. See Section 2 for details on the sources of the data and the construction of the variables.

Table A-2
Legislator variables

	N	Mean	Std. dev.	Min.	Max.
Vote$_{i,a,t}$	9,962	0.76	0.42	0.00	1.00
Female$_i$	1,715	0.37	0.48	0.00	1.00
Age$_{i,t}$	10,542	53.37	10.93	21.81	92.31
Tenure$_{i,t}$	10,542	5.94	5.57	0.00	38.70
Re-elected$_{i,T}$	2,083	0.44	0.50	0.00	1.00
Congruence Trade Votes$_{i,T}$	2,083	0.53	0.18	0.02	0.98
Party Loyalty$_{i,T}$	1,981	0.95	0.10	0.29	1.00

The table provides descriptive statistics on MEPs' votes on the ratification of EU trade agreements and various characteristics of MEP i in a year t or term T. See Section 2 for details on the sources of the data and the construction of the variables.

Table A-3
Agreement variables

	N	Mean	Std. dev.	Min.	Max.
log *GDP*$_a$	16	18.13	2.54	13.32	22.30
log *Population*$_a$	16	9.69	1.90	5.21	11.76
WTO membership$_a$	16	0.92	0.26	0.00	1.00
log *Distance*$_{k,a}$	448	8.81	0.76	5.88	9.77
Common Language$_{k,a}$	448	0.06	0.23	0.00	1.00
Colonial Ties$_{k,a}$	448	0.03	0.16	0.00	1.00
Diplomatic Disagreement$_{k,a}$	448	1.01	0.65	0.00	2.90

The table provides descriptive statistics on various pre-determined characteristics of the partner(s) of trade agreement a or on the relationship between them and EU member state k. See Section 2 for details on the sources of the data and the construction of the variables.

Online Appendix

B-1 EU geographical areas

NUTS regions

The NUTS classification has three levels. NUTS-1 regions correspond to major socio-economic regions with a population between 3 and 7 million, NUTS-2 regions to basic regions with a population between 800,000 and 3 million, and NUTS-3 regions to small regions with a population between 150,000 and 800,000. As most data are only available at the NUTS-2 level, we use this level of aggregation. Not all member states have distinct regions for every NUTS level. Cyprus, Estonia, Luxembourg, Latvia, and Malta, for instance, consist of one NUTS-2 region only. For the remaining member states, the number of NUTS-2 regions varies from two (Croatia and Slovenia) to 38 (Germany). Overall, our dataset includes 262 NUTS-2 regions.

Eurostat and Eurobarometer publications report data at different levels of aggregation over time. For consistency, we fix the boundaries of NUTS-2 regions over time:

- The capital regions of Hungary and Poland were split into two NUTS-2 regions in 2016. Because data for these sub-regions are unavailable prior to this date, we use pre-2016 NUTS-2 regions.
- In Eurobarometer publications, several Italian NUTS-2 regions are reported jointly. We use the same aggregation in our analysis.[41]
- Ireland went from dividing its territory into two NUTS-2 regions to three NUTS-2 regions in 2016. In both versions, NUTS-2 regions are aggregates of historical counties. We thus use county-level population data to construct fixed-boundary NUTS-2 regions over time.[42]
- Slovenia's NUTS-2 borders changed in the 2013 version of the NUTS classification. There is no clear method of converting 2010 NUTS-2 regions into 2013 NUTS-2 regions, so we treat Slovenia as a single NUTS-2 region.
- Several NUTS-2 regions are not covered in the Eurobarometer data and are dropped from the sample.[43]

[41] The aggregation concerns the following regions: Piemonte (ITC1) and Valle d'Aosta (ITC2), Abruzzo (ITF1) and Molise (ITF2), Puglia (ITF4) and Basilicata (ITF5), Trentino (ITH1) and Alto Adige (ITH2).

[42] We first use Census data to obtain population counts at the county level. We then compute the share of every old NUTS-2 region that belongs to a new NUTS-2 region. We finally use these shares to split old NUTS-2 regions across new NUTS-2 regions.

[43] The following NUTS-2 regions are not included in Eurobarometer surveys: North Aegean (EL41), South Aegean (EL42), Ionian Islands (EL62), Ceuta (ES63), Melilla (ES64), Åland (FI20), Corsica (FRM0), the French Overseas (FRY1-FRY5), Açores (PT20), and Madeira (PT30).

EP constituencies and elections

In European elections, most member states choose to operate a single, national constituency. There are only six countries that, during the period we study, are divided into sub-national constituencies.

Belgium has three constituencies organized by linguistic community: a Dutch-speaking electoral college, a French-speaking electoral college, and a German-speaking electoral college. The German-speaking college elects only one representative and is fully contained within the Liège Province (the corresponding NUTS-2 region is BE33). Residents of the Brussels-Capital Region can vote either for the Dutch- or the French-speaking candidate list. When constructing measures for these constituencies, we split Brussels using the vote share allocated to each list.

France is divided into eight constituencies during the seventh and eighth legislatures, before becoming a national constituency in 2019. All French sub-national constituencies are aggregates of NUTS-2 regions. As Eurobarometer is not conducted in the Overseas Territories, we drop the Overseas constituency.

Italy is divided into five sub-national constituencies, which are aggregates of NUTS-2 regions. Poland is divided into 13 constituencies which correspond to or are aggregates of NUTS-2 regions.

Poland is divided into 13 constituencies. Given that Eurobarometer and Eurostat (until 2016) report only aggregate data for the Masovian Voivodeship (NUTS-1 region PL9), we treat the Warsaw and Masovian constituencies as one constituency.

Ireland is divided into two constituencies during the seventh legislature and three constituencies during the eighth and ninth legislatures. The boundaries of the constituencies change from one legislature to another, and they do not correspond to NUTS-2 regions. We construct measures at the constituency level in several steps using the same procedure as for creating fixed-border NUTS-2 regions.

While it a member of the EU, the United Kingdom was divided into 12 constituencies, all of which were aggregates of NUTS-2 regions.

Table B-1
Organization of EP elections across member states

Country	Constituencies	Electoral system	Allocation method	Threshold	Source
Austria	Single constituency	Open-list proportional representation	D'Hondt method	5%	link
Belgium	Three sub-national constituencies	Open-list proportional representation	D'Hondt method	None	link
Bulgaria	Single constituency	Open-list proportional representation	Hare quota method	None	link
Croatia	Single constituency	Open-list proportional representation	D'Hondt method	5%	link
Cyprus	Single constituency	Open-list proportional representation	Hare quota method	1.8%	link
Czech Republic	Single constituency	Open-list proportional representation	D'Hondt method	5%	link
Denmark	Single constituency	Open-list proportional representation	D'Hondt method	None	link
Estonia	Single constituency	Open-list proportional representation	D'Hondt method	None	link
Finland	Single constituency	Open-list proportional representation	D'Hondt method	None	link
France	Eight sub-national constituencies (2009-19); Single constituency (2019-)	Closed-list proportional representation	D'Hondt method	5%	link
Germany	Single constituency	Closed-list proportional representation	Sainte-Haguë method	5%	link
Greece	Single constituency	Open-list proportional representation	Hare quota method	3%	link
Hungary	Single constituency	Closed-list proportional representation	D'Hondt method	5%	link
Ireland	Two sub-national constituencies (2009-14); Three sub-national constituencies (2014-)	Single-transferable voting	Droop quota, random apportionment	None	link
Italy	Five sub-national constituencies	Open-list proportional representation	Hare quota method	4%	link
Latvia	Single constituency	Open-list proportional representation	Sainte-Haguë method	4%	link
Lithuania	Single constituency	Open-list proportional representation	Hare quota	5%	link
Luxembourg	Single constituency	Open-list proportional representation	D'Hondt method	None	link
Malta	Single constituency	Single-transferable voting	Droop quota, random apportionment	None	link
Netherlands	Single constituency	Open-list proportional representation	D'Hondt method	None	link
Poland	Thirteen sub-national constituencies	Open-list proportional representation	D'Hondt method	5%	link
Portugal	Single constituency	Closed-list proportional representation	D'Hondt method	None	link
Romania	Single constituency	Closed-list proportional representation	D'Hondt method	5%	link
Slovakia	Single constituency	Open-list proportional representation	Droop quota method	5%	link
Slovenia	Single constituency	Open-list proportional representation	D'Hondt method	None	link
Spain	Single constituency	Closed-list proportional representation	D'Hondt method	None	link
Sweden	Single constituency	Open-list proportional representation	Scandinavian method	4%	link
United Kingdom	Twelve sub-national constituencies	Closed-list proportional representation	D'Hondt method	None	link

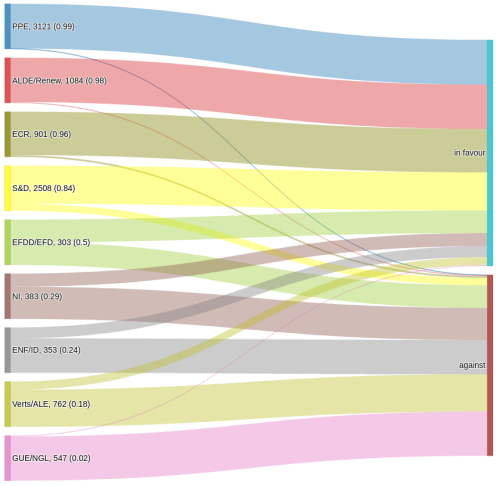
Notes: The table presents information on how EP elections are organized across EU members states.

B-2 Roll-call votes on EU trade agreements

We use web automation to collect the official documents reporting the outcome of all roll-call votes between July 14, 2009 and July 23, 2020. For each vote, we extract the names of the MEPs attending it, how they voted (i.e., in favor, against, or abstained), and the EP political group with which they were affiliated.[44] We restrict the analysis to roll-call votes on the 16 FTAs ratified between 2011 and 2020.[45] The final sample comprises 10,542 votes (580 of which were abstentions) and 1,715 MEPs (14 of whom always abstained).[46] Overall, there is broad support for trade agreements in the EP: 76.4% of the votes cast (excluding abstentions) were in favor of approving an FTA.

Figure B-1

Variation within European Parliament political groups



Notes: The figure shows how EP political groups vote on FTAs (excluding abstentions). The numbers next to the party name indicate the number of votes, while the numbers in brackets indicate the share of votes in favor of FTAs. The acronyms used stand for: European People's Party (PPE), Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE), European Conservatives and Reformists Party (ECR), Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D), Europe of Freedom and Democracy (EFD), Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD), Non-attached members (NI), Europe of Nations and Freedom (ENF), Identity and Democracy (ID), Greens/European Free Alliance (Verts/ALE), European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL).

[44] We use the Python library *Scrapy* to iterate over all EP webpages that report roll-call votes. An example of a report can be accessed here. We also use the library *Pandoc* to convert the downloaded documents into a format compatible with the library *BeautifulSoup*. We use the latter to parse the documents and extract the necessary information.

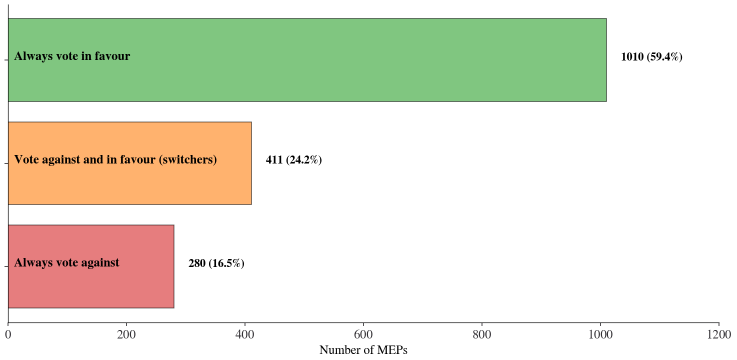
[45] We exclude trade agreements that were voted by show of hands: Serbia (January 19, 2011), Papua New Guinea/Fiji (January 19, 2011), and Cameroon (June 13, 2013).

[46] We drop legislators who were elected in different countries during the sample period (2 MEPs) and those who represented constituencies for which we lack socio-economic and political covariates (4 MEPs).

MEPs within a EP political group tend to vote alike, as seen in Figure B-1. There are, however, deviations from the party line: out of 9,962 votes, 990 (9.9%) do not conform to the majoritarian view of the EP political group of the MEP casting the vote.

There is also variation in the voting behavior of individual MEPs over time: 1,010 always voted in favor, 280 always voted against, while 411 switched (see Figure B-2). In our analysis, we exploit both cross-legislator and within-legislator variation in voting behavior when analyzing MEPs' responsiveness to the trade policy interests of their constituents.

Figure B-2
Variation within MEPs



Notes: The figure shows how individual MEPs vote on FTAs (excluding abstentions).

B-3 Construction of bilateral export share

In what follows, we describe the procedure to construct the export share of an MEP's constituency. This variable captures the share of his or her electorate that would benefit from the entry into force of a given FTA.[47]

Sector classification In the first step, we classify sectors as export-oriented or import-competing relative to the partner(s) of trade agreement a. To this end, we use information on trade flows from the BACI dataset (Gaulier and Zignago, 2010) covering 230 countries from 2007 to 2020. Trade flows are reported at the six-digit level using the 2007 Harmonized System (HS) classification. We use correspondence tables to match the HS codes to two-digit industries in the Statistical Classification of Economic Activities in the European Community

[47]This variable is similar to the export ratio used by Conconi et al. (2012, 2014) to capture the trade policy interests of US constituencies. The main difference is that our measure is constructed at the bilateral level, allowing us to study constituencies' preferences vis-à-vis specific trade partners.

nomenclature (NACE Rev. 2).[48]

We use the trade data to construct the per-capita net exports of EU member state k and those of agreement partner(s) a, respectively:

$$NX_{j,k,t} = \frac{Exports_{j,k,t} - Imports_{j,k,t}}{Population_k},$$

$$NX_{j,a,t} = \frac{Exports_{j,a,t} - Imports_{j,a,t}}{Population_a},$$

where $Exports_{j,k,t}$ ($Imports_{j,k,t}$) are the aggregate exports (imports) of country k in sector j and year t; $Population_k$ is the population of country k in 2008. To account for potential measurement error and better gauge trends in trade flows, we fit linear time trends to $Exports_{j,k,t}$ and $Imports_{j,k,t}$ and use the predicted values to construct $NX_{j,k,t}$ and $NX_{j,a,t}$.[49]

Finally, we define the indicator variable $X_{j,k,a,t}$ to identify comparative advantage sectors at the bilateral level.[50] Specifically, the variable takes the value 1 if sector j in country k is export-oriented with respect to partner a in year t and 0 if it is import-competing:

$$X_{j,k,a,t} = 1 \textit{(j is export-oriented) iff } NX_{j,k,t} > NX_{j,a,t},$$

$$X_{j,k,a,t} = 0 \textit{(j is import-competing) iff } NX_{j,k,t} < NX_{j,a,t}.$$

Figure 1 shows that sector C29 (motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers) is classified as export-oriented for Germany relative to Vietnam throughout our sample period. By contrast, sector C14 (wearing apparel) is always classified as import-competing for Germany relative to Vietnam.

Notice that our classification of industries into comparative advantage ($X_{j,k,a,t} = 1$) or disadvantage ($X_{j,k,a,t} = 0$) sectors is based on comparing overall trade patterns of k and a rather than looking at trade flows between them. The evolution of bilateral trade flows between FTA partners may provide a more noisy classification, since it is contaminated by differences in pre-agreement tariffs of k and a and by the introduction of rules of origin (Conconi et al., 2018).

[48] We proceed in several steps. First, we match 2007 six-digit HS codes to their counterparts in the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC) Rev. 3 (the correspondence table is available here). We then use correspondence tables from ISIC Rev. 3 to ISIC Rev. 3.1 and from ISIC Rev. 3.1 to ISIC Rev. 4. Finally, we map ISIC Rev. 4 codes to two-digit NACE Rev. 2 codes (the correspondence tables for the different ISIC revisions and from ISIC Rev. 4 to the NACE Rev. 2 are available here). We further use Malgouyres (2017)'s correspondence tables for products that cannot be matched in the previous steps.

[49] For FTAs involving multiple partners, we use the sum of exports (imports) and population.

[50] Like the well-known Balassa (1965)'s index of "revealed comparative advantage" and its theoretically consistent alternative by Costinot et al. (2012), this classification abstracts from trade in intermediate goods.

Tariffs Article I of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)/WTO forbids members to discriminate between trading partners: the same tariffs — the so-called most favored nation (MFN) tariffs — must be applied to all imports, irrespective of their origin. An exception to this principle of non-discrimination is Article XXIV, which allows members to conclude preferential trade agreements (FTAs or customs unions).[51] However, members of these agreements must reciprocally eliminate "duties and other restrictive regulations of commerce" on "substantially all the trade."

The entry into force of an FTA between the EU and trading partner(s) a thus implies the following: when exporting to a, EU producers no longer face the MFN tariff applied by a to other WTO members; similarly, when exporting to the EU, producers in a no longer face the MFN tariff applied by all EU member states k to other WTO members.[52] Using data from the WITS-TRAINS database, we construct the following pre-agreement tariffs:[53]

$\tau_{j,k}$: *average MFN tariff applied by all EU member states k on imports in sector j,*

$\tau_{j,a}$: *average MFN tariff applied by non-EU partner a on imports in sector j.*

In some sectors, these tariffs are equal to 0. This is, for example, the case for the EU in sector B05 (mining of coal and lignite) and for Singapore in sector C10 (manufacture of food products). In these cases, the entry into force of the FTA should not affect EU producers.[54]

Sector employment We collect data on employment in each region r. From Eurostat's Structural Business Statistics (SBS) series, we extract the number of persons employed in 67 two-digit NACE Rev. 2 sectors.[55] Because the SBS series does not report data for all sectors of activity, we also use employment data in ten aggregate sectors from the Labor

[51] The other exception is the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), legalized in the Enabling Clause of 1979. This allows GATT/WTO members to offer lower-than-MFN tariffs to developing countries without extending the same treatment to developed trade partners.

[52] Some countries were already granted preferential tariff treatment in some sectors before signing an FTA with the EU. For example, Vietnam participated in the EU's GSP program. Unlike FTAs, GSP programs do not cover all sectors. Moreover, while FTAs lead to the permanent removal of tariffs, GSP preferences are uncertain: beneficiary countries can lose them in sectors in which they are considered to be sufficiently competitive or when they do not fulfill the conditions set out by the donor countries. Our baseline results are robust to restricting the analysis to FTAs between the EU and developed trading partners.

[53] Tariffs are expressed as ad-valorem duties (i.e., as a percentage of the value of the imports) and are reported at the six-digit HS level. To obtain a measure at the two-digit NACE Rev. 2 level, we take the simple average of the tariff rates across all products in that sector. We use pre-sample data from 2008 (2007 for Seychelles and Zimbabwe, due to the lack of data in 2008) to construct the tariff variables. For FTAs involving multiple trade partners, we compute the average tariff weighting each member by its GDP in 2008.

[54] Export-oriented sectors ($X_{j,k,a,t} = 1$) should benefit from the entry into force of the FTA only if $\tau_{j,a} > 0$; import-competing sectors ($X_{j,k,a,t} = 0$) should be negatively affected by the FTA only if $\tau_{j,k} > 0$.

[55] The original dataset has an important number of missing values (17.9%). Whenever possible, we use linear interpolation to fill in the gaps, reducing the share of missing observations to 1.7%.

Force Survey's (LFS) regional series.

To harmonize the two datasets, we apply two-digit SBS sector shares to LFS aggregates. Specifically, the level of employment in sector j in region r (in country k) is:

$$L_{j,r(k),t} = \frac{L^{SBS}_{j,r,t}}{\sum_i L^{SBS}_{i,r,t}} L^{LFS}_{j,r,t},$$

where the summation is over all two-digit SBS sectors contained within a given LFS sector. Overall, we compute employment in 67 two-digit sectors and 4 aggregate sectors.

Export share The number of employees in region r (in country k) working in export-oriented sectors that would experience tariff reductions following the entry into force of an FTA with partner(s) a in year t is:[56]

$$\Omega^X_{j,r(k),a,t} \equiv \sum_j X_{j,k,a,t} \times L_{j,r(k),t} \times \mathbb{1}\{\tau_{j,a} > 0\}. \tag{B-1}$$

Similarly, the number of employees in region r (in country k) working in import-competing sectors that would experience tariff reductions due to FTA a in year t is:

$$\Omega^M_{j,r(k),a,t} \equiv \sum_j (1 - X_{j,k,a,t}) \times L_{j,r(k),t} \times \mathbb{1}\{\tau_{j,k} > 0\}. \tag{B-2}$$

The trade policy interests of the voters in region r relative to an agreement with a are then given by:

$$\textit{Regional Export Share}_{r(k),a,t} \equiv \frac{\Omega^X_{j,r(k),a,t}}{\Omega^X_{j,r(k),a,t} + \Omega^M_{j,r(k),a,t}}. \tag{B-3}$$

The higher the export share defined above, the higher the share of employment in region r that may benefit from the entry into force of an agreement with trading partner a.

In the final step, we aggregate the regional export shares at the level of MEPs' electorate. For each MEP i, belonging to national party np and elected in EP constituency c, the interests of his or her electorate are thus captured by the average of the regional export shares, weighted by the share of votes obtained by his or her party in the most recent elections:

$$\textit{Export Share}_{i(c(k),np),t} \equiv \sum_{r \in c(k)} \textit{Regional Export Share}_{r(k),a,t} \times \phi_{r(k),np,T}. \tag{B-4}$$

[56] Using the extensive margin of tariffs to construct $\Omega^X_{j,r(k),a,t}$ and $\Omega^M_{j,r(k),a,t}$ allows us to compute the share of workers in a region employed in sectors that should expand following the entry into force of an FTA.

The party share variable $\phi_{r(k),np,T}$ is constructed using data on the results of all EP elections that took place at the start of each EP term T.[57,58]

This variable captures the share of an MEP's electorate that would benefit from the entry into force of agreement a.

Instrumental variable Even though we include a rich set of covariates and fixed effects, we cannot rule out the possibility that export shares are correlated with unobserved characteristics of MEPs' constituencies that may shape their voting patterns. To address this concern, we adopt an instrumental variable (IV) strategy.

To understand our approach, recall that the export share of an MEP's constituency defined in equation (2) is constructed by combining four variables: $X_{j,k,a,t}$, which is used to classify industries into export-oriented or import-competing; $L_{j,r(k),t}$, which measures industry-level employment; the indicator variables $\mathbb{1}\{\tau_{j,k} > 0\}$ and $\mathbb{1}\{\tau_{j,a} > 0\}$, which identify sectors in which the FTA would lead to tariff reductions; and $\phi_{r(k),np,T}$, the national party vote shares. The tariff indicators can be taken as exogenous since they are constructed using data on non-discriminatory MFN tariffs before the start of our sample period. The same is true for the party shares, as they are computed based on the EP elections before the approval of an FTA. As discussed below, one may instead be concerned about the other two components of the export share variable.

Concerning the indicator $X_{j,k,a,t}$, one potential concern is that the net export variables $NX_{j,k,t}$ and $NX_{j,a,t}$ are computed using aggregate exports and imports and thus include flows between EU member state k and FTA partner(s) a. Given that the negotiation of trade agreements usually lasts several years, our bilateral classification of comparative advantage sectors may thus be confounded by anticipatory effects.[59] We construct an alternative industry indicator, $\tilde{X}_{j,k,a,t}$, excluding bilateral trade flows between k and a.

The allocation of employment across sectors can be subject to local shocks, which MEPs may consider when deciding whether to vote in favor or against a trade agreement. To address this concern, we follow an approach similar to Autor et al. (2020) and Colantone and Stanig (2018b) and use data on changes in the allocation of employment in other OECD countries. The underlying assumption is that these changes capture trends in the global economy (e.g., technological shocks), which are unlikely to be correlated with local shocks in the EU. We restrict the list of non-EU OECD countries to Iceland, Japan, Mexico, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey, and the United States, for which employment data are available at the

[57] Specifically, $\phi_{r(k),np,T} \equiv \frac{Party\ Votes_{r(k),np,T}}{\sum_{r \in c(k)} Party\ Votes_{r(k),np,T}}$. For ease of exposition, we omit the subscript denoting the EP term T from the notation of the export share variable.

[58] We could not find electoral data at the regional level for Ireland. As a result, we use aggregate constituency export shares for Irish MEPs, irrespective of the national party with which they are affiliated.

[59] Another confounder may be the use of post-FTA trade flows when fitting linear time trends.

required level of aggregation from the International Labour Organization.

For each region r, we construct the counterfactual employment variable $\tilde{L}_{j,r(k),t}$ by multiplying the aggregate regional employment ($L_{r(k),t} \equiv \sum_j L_{j,r(k),t}$) with the employment share of sector j in the non-EU OECD country that is closest to r in terms of pre-sample GDP per-capita.[60] In other words, we assume that the sectoral allocation of employment in r is the same as that of a similarly developed OECD country.[61]

We can then construct an instrument for the export share of region r:

$$\textit{Regional Export Share IV}_{r(k),a,t} \equiv \frac{\tilde{\Omega}^X_{j,r(k),a,t}}{\tilde{\Omega}^X_{j,r(k),a,t} + \tilde{\Omega}^M_{j,r(k),a,t}}, \tag{B-5}$$

where $\tilde{\Omega}^X_{j,r(k),a,t}$ and $\tilde{\Omega}^M_{j,r(k),a,t}$ are defined as:

$$\tilde{\Omega}^X_{j,r(k),a,t} \equiv \sum_j \tilde{X}_{j,k,a,t} \times \tilde{L}_{j,r(k),t} \times \mathbb{1}\{\tau_{j,a} > 0\},$$

$$\tilde{\Omega}^M_{j,r(k),a,t} \equiv \sum_j (1 - \tilde{X}_{j,k,a,t}) \times \tilde{L}_{j,r(k),t} \times \mathbb{1}\{\tau_{j,k} > 0\}.$$

Variation over time in the instrument comes both from changes in the allocation of labor across industries (i.e., $\tilde{L}_{j,r(k),t}$) and changes in the industry classification (i.e., $\tilde{X}_{j,k,a,t,}$).

As in equation (2), we use vote shares in the previous European elections to construct the instrument at the level of an MEP's constituency. For a legislator affiliated to national party np elected in constituency c, the IV for the export share of his/her constituency is:

$$\textit{Export Share IV}_{np,c(k),a,t} \equiv \sum_{r \in c(k)} \textit{Regional Export Share IV}_{r(k),a,t} \times \phi_{r(k),np,T}. \tag{B-6}$$

Our baseline model features a non-linear outcome equation. We thus implement our IV strategy using a control function approach: we first estimate a linear regression of the potentially endogenous export shares on the instrument and the set of covariates and fixed effects; we then add the residuals from the first step to equation (3).

[60] E.g., Northern Ireland (UKN0) and Cheshire (UKD6) are respectively matched with Japan and Iceland.

[61] Data on GDP per-capita of OECD countries (in USD) is from the World Bank. We obtain data on GDP of EU-27 regions from Eurostat, and on UK regions from here, which we convert to USD using annual exchange rates from Eurostat. We then obtain per-capita GDP values using population data from here. Sectoral shares for non-EU OECD countries and total EU regional employment are computed using data on tradable good sectors (i.e., from A to C33 of NACE Rev. 2).

B-4 National and Regional Parliaments

National parliaments

Country	Chamber	# seats	Electoral rule	Constituencies	Election years	Source
Austria	The National Council (Nationalrat)	183	Open-list proportional representation	39 (43 before 2013) local electoral districts contained within NUTS-2 districts; seats not allocated at the local level are allocated to candidates running on 9 state lists, each corresponding to a NUTS-2 region; any remaining seats are allocated to candidates running on national lists	1999, 2002, 2006, 2008, 2013, 2017, 2019	link
Austria	The Federal Council (Bundesrat)	61	Appointment by the state legislatures according to proportional representation	9 states	Not collected	–
Belgium	Chamber of Representatives (Kamer van Volksvertegenwoordigers, Chambre des Représentants)	150	Open-list proportional representation	11 electoral districts: 10 provinces (5 Dutch-speaking, 5 French-speaking) and Brussels; the electoral districts overlap with NUTS-2 regions	2003, 2007, 2010, 2014, 2019	link1; link2
Belgium	Senate (Senaat, Sénat, Senat)	50	Since 2014, 50 senators are appointed by and from the Parliaments of the federated entities; 10 are co-opted by their peers; before 2014; 40 senators were directly elected	4 federated entities	Not collected	–
Bulgaria	National Assembly (Narodno sabranie)	240	Open-list proportional representation; in 2009, 31 MPs were elected in single-member constituencies using first-past-the-post voting	31 constituencies: 27 provinces that overlap with NUTS-2 regions; Sofia is divided into three constituencies, and Plovdiv into two	2001, 2005, 2009, 2013, 2014, 2017, 2021 (Apr), 2021 (Jul), 2021 (Nov), 2022, 2023	link
Croatia	Croatian Parliament (Sabor)	151	Partly open-list proportional representation	10 electoral districts in continental Croatia: none districts are contained within a NUTS-2 region; one district spans over both NUTS-2 regions; 3 seats are reserved for Croatians living abroad, and 8 seats are reserved for minorities	2015, 2016, 2020	CLEA
Cyprus	House of Representatives	80	Open-list proportional representation	6 electoral districts	Not collected	–
Czech Republic	Chamber of Deputies (Poslanecká Sněmovna)	200	Open-list proportional representation	14 multi-member constituencies, which correspond to NUTS-3 regions	2002, 2006, 2010, 2013, 2017, 2021	link
Czech Republic	Senate (Senát)	81	Two-round system	81 single-seat constituencies that may span over distinct NUTS-2 regions	2002, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2022	link
Denmark	Danish Parliament (Folketing)	179	Open-list proportional representation	10 constituencies (17 before 2007) that overlap with NUTS-2 regions, with the exception of Aarhus (DK04 and DK05), Vejle (DK03 and DK04), and Viborg (DK03 and DK04)	2001, 2005, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019, 2022	link
Estonia	Parliament of Estonia (Riigikogu)	101	Open-list proportional representation	12 constituencies	Not collected	–
Finland	Parliament of Finland (Suomen eduskunta)	200	Open-list proportional representation	13 multi-member districts and Åland; constituencies are contained within a NUTS-2 region, with the exception of South-Eastern Finland (FI1C4, FI1C5, and FI1D1) and Vaasa (FI1D5, FI195, and FI194)	1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019	link
France	National Assembly (Assemblée nationale)	577	Two-round system	577 constituencies contained within a département (NUTS-3 region)	1997, 2002, 2007, 2012, 2017, 2022	link1; link2; CLEA
France	Senate (Sénat)	348	Indirectly elected 150,000 officials (*grands électeurs*) using both a two-round system and proportional representation	109 constituencies	Not collected	–
Germany	Bundestag	598 nominal members	Mixed-member proportional representation: 299 (328 in 1998) seats in single-member constituencies; remaining seats by open-list at the federal level	Most single-member constituencies are contained within NUTS2 regions, with some exceptions; party lists are submitted at the state level (NUTS1 regions)	1998, 2002, 2005, 2009, 2013, 2017, 2021	link
Germany	Bundesrat	69	Appointed by state governments	Federal states	Not collected	–

National parliaments (cont.)

Country	Chamber	# seats	Electoral rule	Constituencies	Election years	Source
Greece	Hellenic Parliament (Ellinikó Koinovoúlio)	300	250 seats by open-list proportional representation; 50 seats are allocated as a bonus to the party receiving the largest share of votes	56 constituencies overlapping with NUTS-3 regions	2007, 2009, 2012 (May), 2012 (June), 2015 (January), 2015 (September), 2019	link
Hungary	National Assembly (Országgyülés)	386 (1998-2014); 199 (2014-)	Mixed-member proportional representation; 1998-2010: 176 MPs elected in single-member constituencies; 210 MPs elected on territorial and national lists; 2014-2022: 106 MPs elected in single-member constituencies by plurality; 93 MPs elected on party lists	Single-member constituencies and territorial lists are contained within NUTS-2 regions	1998; 2002; 2006; 2010; 2014; 2018; 2022	link; CLEA
Ireland	Lower Chamber (Dáil Éireann)	166 (2002-2016); 158 (2016-2020); 160 (2020-)	Single-transferable voting	Most constituencies are contained within NUTS-2 regions with the exception of Longford-Roscommon (IE04 and IE06)	2002; 2007; 2011; 2016; 2020	link; CLEA
Ireland	Upper Chamber (Seanad Éireann)	60	Single-transferable voting; not directly elected	–	Not collected	–
Italy	Senate (Senato)	315 (2001-2006); 307 (2006-2018); 315 (2018-2022); 200 (2022-)	2001-2006, 2018 - : Mixed member proportional representation: 232 (116 between 2018 and 2022, 74 since 2022) seats in single-member constituencies; remaining seats are allocated to minority parties by a proportional method between 2001 and 2006; between 2018 and 2022, the remaining seats are elected in 37 (30 since 2022) multi-member constituencies; 2006-2018: Closed-list proportional representation, 1 seat by first-past-the-post voting in Aosta Valley	2001-2006: 232 single-member constituencies; 2006-2018: 22 multiple-member constituencies, 7 single-member constituencies; 2018-2022: 116 single-member constituencies, 37 multi-member constituencies; 2022 - 74 single-member constituencies; 30 multi-member constituencies; all constituencies are contained within a unique NUTS-2 region	2001; 2006; 2008; 2013; 2018; 2022	link
Italy	Chamber of Deputies (Camera dei deputati)	630 (2001-2006); 617 (2006-2018); 630 (2018-2022); 400 (2022-)	2001-2006, 2018 - : Mixed member proportional representation: 475 (232 between 2018 and 2022, 147 since 2022) seats in single-member constituencies; remaining seats are elected in 26 (67 between 2018 and 2022, 53 since 2022) multi-member constituencies; 2006-2018: Closed-list proportional representation, 1 seat by first-past-the-post voting in Aosta Valley, 12 seas by open-list proportional representation for Italians living abroad	2001-2006: 475 single-member constituencies, 26 multiple-member constituencies; 2006-2018: 30 multiple-member constituencies, 1 single-member constituency; 2018-2022: 232 single-member constituencies, 67 multi-member constituencies; 2022 - 147 single-member constituencies; 53 multi-member constituencies	2001; 2006; 2008; 2013; 2018; 2022; all constituencies are contained within a unique NUTS-2 region	link1; link2
Latvia	Parliament (Saeima)	100	Open-list proportional representation	5 constituencies	Not collected	–
Lithuania	Parliament (Seimas)	141	Mixed member proportional representation: 71 seats are elected in single-member constituencies; 70 seats are elected at the national level by open-list proportional representation	71 electoral districts; their boundaries may not overall with NUTS-2 regions	2000; 2004; 2008; 2012; 2016; 2020	CLEA
Luxembourg	Chamber of Deputies	60	Open-list proportional representation	4 constituencies	Not collected	–
Malta	Parliament (Il-Parlament ta' Malta)	65+	Single-transferable voting; additional seats may be allocated to achieve proportional representation	13 electoral districts	Not collected	–
Netherlands	House of Representatives (Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal)	150	Open-list proportional representation	Unique constituency	Not collected	–
Netherlands	Senate (Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal)	75	Elected by the members of the States-Provincial and electoral colleges in the Caribbean Netherlands by proportional representation	Unique constituency	Not collected	–
Poland	Lower Chamber (Sejm)	460	Open-list proportional representation	41 electoral constituencies, contained within NUTS-2 regions	2001; 2005; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019	link; CLEA
Poland	Upper Chamber (Senate)	100	2001-2011: plurality bloc voting – two or more candidates with the highest support are elected from each constituency; 2011 - : senators are elected in single-member constituencies by first-past-the-post voting	2001-2011: 36 multi-member constituencies; 2011 - : 100 single-member constituencies; all constituencies are contained within a unique NUTS-2 region	2001; 2005; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019	link; CLEA

National parliaments (cont.)

Country	Chamber	# seats	Electoral rule	Constituencies	Election years	Source
Portugal	Assembly of the Republic (Assembleia da República)	230	Closed list proportional representation	22 electoral districts; some electoral districts spread over several NUTS-2 regions: Aveiro (PT11 and PT16), Guarda (PT11 and PT16), Lisboa (PT16, PT17, and PT18), Santarem (PT16 and PT18), Setubal (PT17 and PT19), Viseu (PT11 and PT16)	2005, 2009, 2011, 2015, 2019, 2022	link
Romania	Chamber of Deputies (Camera Deputaților)	345 (2000-2004); 332 (2004-2008); 334 (2008-2012); 412 (2012-2016); 329 (2016-)	2000-2008, 2016-2020: Closed-list proportional representation; 2008-2016: Mixed member proportional representation (a candidate wins a seat in his constituency is (s)he won more than 50% of votes; non-allocated seats are allocated using the d'Hondt system); additional seats may be added	2002-2008: 42 multi-member constituencies; 2008-2012: 315 single-member constituencies; 2012-2016: 316 single-member constituencies; 2016 - : 43 multi-member constituencies	2000; 2004; 2008; 2012; 2016; 2020	link1; link2; link3; link4; CLEA
Romania	Senate (Senat)	140 (2000-2004); 137 (2004-2012); 176 (2012-)	2000-2008, 2016-2020: Closed-list proportional representation; 2008-2016: Mixed member proportional representation (a candidate wins a seat in his constituency is (s)he won more than 50% of votes; non-allocated seats are allocated using the d'Hondt system); additional seats may be added	2002-2008: 42 multi-member constituencies; 2008-2012: 315 single-member constituencies; 2012-2016: 137 single-member constituencies; 2016 - : 43 multi-member constituencies	2000; 2004; 2008; 2012; 2016; 2020	link1; link2; link3; link4; CLEA
Slovakia	National Council (Národná rada Slovenskej republiky)	150	Open-list proportional representation	Unique constituency	Not collected	–
Slovenia	National Assembly (Državni zbor Republike Slovenije)	90	Open-list proportional representation	11 constituencies, that may not overlap with NUTS-2 boundaries	Not collected	–
Slovenia	National Council (Državni svet)	40	Indirectly elected by local council and functional constituencies	–	Not collected	–
Spain	Congress of Deputies (Congreso de los Diputados)	350	Closed-list proportional representation	52 constituencies that are contained within NUTS2 regions	2000; 2004; 2008; 2011; 2015; 2016; 2019 (Apr); 2019 (Nov)	link1; link2; link3
Spain	Senate (Senado)	266	208 senators directly elected by closed-list proportional representation; 58 additional senators designated by regional legislatures	52 constituencies that are contained within NUTS2 regions	2000; 2004; 2008; 2011; 2015; 2016; 2019 (Apr); 2019 (Nov)	link1; link2; link3
Sweden	Riksdag	349	310 MPs are elected through open-list proportional representation on multi-member party lists that are either regional or national; remaining seats are elected by proportional balancing	29 constituencies that are contained within NUTS-2 regions	2002; 2006; 2010; 2014; 2018; 2022	link
United Kingdom	House of Commons	659 (1997-2001); 646 (2005); 650 (2010-2019)	First-past-the-post voting method	Constituencies may spread across several NUTS-2 regions	1997; 2001; 2005; 2010; 2015; 2017; 2019	CLEA
United Kingdom	House of Lords	Varies	Spiritual and Temporal Lords, not directly elected	None	Not collected	–

Notes: We also collect data on substitutes.

Regional parliaments in Belgium

Region	# seats	Electoral rule	Constituencies	Election years	Source
Brussels	75 (1999-2004); 89 (2004-)	Open-list proportional voting	Single constituency	1999; 2004; 2009; 2014; 2019	link
Flanders	124	Open-list proportional voting	12 constituencies (1999-2004); 6 constituencies (2004-)	1999; 2004; 2009; 2014; 2019	link
German-speaking region	25	Open list proportional representation	Single constituency	1999; 2004; 2009; 2014; 2019	link
Wallonia	75	Open-list proportional voting	13 constituencies (1999-2019); 11 constituencies (2019-)	1999; 2004; 2009; 2014; 2019	link

Notes: We also collect data on substitutes.

Regional parliaments in Germany

Region	# seats	Electoral rule	Constituencies	Election years	Source
Baden-Württemberg (DE1)	120+	Mixed-member proportional representation: 70 seats in single-member constituencies; 50 seats by proportional representation; additional leveling and overhang seats	70 constituencies	1996; 2001; 2006; 2011; 2016; 2021	link
Bavaria (DE2)	204 (1998-2003); 180+ (2003-)	Mixed-member proportional representation: 91 (102 in 1998, 92 in 2003) seats in single-member electoral districts; remaining seats using open lists in seven constituencies; additional leveling and overhang seats	91 (102 in 1998, 92 in 2003) electoral districts; 7 constituencies	1998; 2003; 2008; 2013; 2018	link
Berlin (DE3)	130+	Mixed-member proportional representation: 78 seats in single-member constituencies; remaining seats by proportional representation using regional or state lists; additional leveling and overhang seats	78 electoral districts; 12 (23 in 1999) regional lists	1999; 2001; 2006; 2011; 2016; 2021	link
Brandenburg (DE4)	89 (1999-2004); 88 (2004-)	Mixed-member proportional representation: 44 seats in single-member constituencies; remaining seats by proportional representation using state lists	44 electoral districts	1999; 2004; 2009; 2014; 2019	link
Bremen (DE5)	83	Open-list proportional representation	2 constituencies	1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019	link
Hamburg (DE6)	121+	Mixed-member proportional representation: 71 seats in multi-member constituencies via open lists; 50 additional seats elected at the state level via open lists; additional leveling and overhang seats	17 electoral districts	1997; 2001; 2004; 2008; 2011; 2015; 2020	link
Hesse (DE7)	110+	Mixed-member proportional representation: 55 seats in single-member constituencies; remaining seats at the state level via closed lists; additional leveling and overhang seats	55 constituencies	1999; 2003; 2008; 2009; 2013; 2018	link
Lower Saxony (DE8)	135+	Mixed-member proportional representation: 87 (100 before 2008) seats in single-member constituencies; remaining seats by proportional representation using state lists; additional leveling and overhang seats	100 constituencies (1998-2008); 87 constituencies (2008-)	1998; 2003; 2008; 2013; 2017; 2022	link
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (DE9)	71+	Mixed-member proportional representation: 36 seats in single-member constituencies; remaining seats by proportional representation using state lists; additional leveling and overhang seats	36 constituencies	1998; 2002; 2006; 2011; 2016; 2021	link
North Rhine-Westphalia (DEA)	181+	Mixed-member proportional representation: 128 (151 before 2005) seats in single-member constituencies; remaining seats by proportional representation using state lists; additional leveling and overhang seats	151 constituencies (2000-2005); 128 constituencies (2005-)	2000; 2005; 2010; 2012; 2017; 2022	link
Rhineland-Palatinate (DEB)	101+	Mixed-member proportional representation: 52 (51 before 2021) seats in single-member constituencies; remaining seats by proportional representation using state lists; additional leveling and overhang seats	51 constituencies (1996-2021); 52 constituencies (2021-)	1996; 2001; 2006; 2011; 2016; 2021	link
Saarland (DEC)	51	Proportional representation	3 constituencies	1999; 2004; 2009; 2012; 2017; 2022	link
Saxony (DED)	120+	Mixed-member proportional representation: 60 seats in single-member constituencies; remaining seats by proportional representation using state lists; additional leveling and overhang seats	60 constituencies	1999; 2004; 2009; 2014; 2019	link
Saxony-Anhalt (DEE)	83+	Mixed-member proportional representation: 41-49 seats in single-member constituencies; remaining seats by proportional representation using state lists; additional leveling and overhang seats	49 constituencies (1998-2006); 45 constituencies (2006-2016); 43 constituencies (2016-2021); 41 constituencies (2021-)	1998; 2002; 2006; 2011; 2016; 2021	link
Schleswig-Holstein (DEF)	69+	Mixed-member proportional representation: 35 seats in single-member constituencies; remaining seats by proportional representation using state lists; additional leveling and overhang seats	45 constituencies (1996-2005); 40 constituencies (2005-2012); 35 constituencies (2012-)	1996; 2000; 2005; 2009; 2012; 2017; 2022	link
Thuringia (DEG)	88+	Mixed-member proportional representation: 44 seats in single-member constituencies; remaining seats by proportional representation using state lists; additional leveling and overhang seats	44 constituencies	1999; 2004; 2009; 2014; 2019	link

Notes: We also collect data on substitutes.

Regional parliaments in Spain

Region	# seats	Electoral rule	Constituencies	Election years	Source
Andalusia (ES61)	109	Closed-list proportional representation	8 constituencies	2000; 2004; 2008; 2012; 2015; 2018; 2022	link
Aragon (ES24)	67	Closed-list proportional representation	3 constituencies	1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019; 2023	link
Asturias (ES12)	45	Closed-list proportional representation	3 electoral districts	1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2012; 2015; 2019; 2023	link
Balearic Islands (ES53)	59	Closed-list proportional representation	4 constituencies	1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019; 2023	link
Basque Country (ES21)	75	Closed-list proportional representation	3 constituencies	1998; 2001; 2005; 2009; 2012; 2016; 2020	link
Canary Islands (ES70)	60 (1999-2019); 70 (2019-)	Closed-list proportional representation	8 constituencies	1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019; 2023	link
Cantabria (ES13)	39 (1999-2015) 35 (2015-)	Closed-list proportional representation	Single constituency	1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019; 2023	link
Castile–La Mancha (ES42)	47 (1999-2011); 49 (2011-2015); 33 (2015-)	Closed-list proportional representation	5 constituencies	1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019; 2023	link
Castile and Leon (ES41)	83 (1999-2003); 82 (2003-2007); 84 (2007-2019); 81 (2019-)	Closed-list proportional representation	9 constituencies	1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019; 2022	link
Catalonia (ES51)	135	Closed-list proportional representation	4 constituencies	1999; 2003; 2006; 2010; 2012; 2015; 2017; 2021	link
Extremadura (ES43)	65	Closed-list proportional representation	3 constituencies	1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019; 2023	link
Galicia (ES11)	75	Closed-list proportional representation	4 constituencies	1997; 2001; 2005; 2009; 2012; 2016; 2020	link
La Rioja (ES23)	33	Closed-list proportional representation	Single constituency	1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019; 2023	link
Madrid (ES30)	102 (1999-2003); 111 (2003-2007); 120 (2007-2011); 129 (2011-2019); 132 (2019-2021); 136 (2021-2023); 135 (2023-)	Closed-list proportional representation	Single constituency	1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019; 2021; 2023	link
Region of Murcia (ES62)	45	Closed-list proportional representation	Single constituency	1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019; 2023	NA
Navarre (ES22)	50	Closed-list proportional representation	Single constituency	1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019; 2023	NA
Valencian Community (ES52)	89 (1999-2007); 99 (2007-)	Closed-list proportional representation	3 constituencies	1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019; 2023	link
Ceuta (ES63)	25	Closed-list proportional representation	Single constituency	1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019; 2023	NA
Melilla (ES64)	25	Closed-list proportional representation	Single constituency	1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019; 2023	NA

Notes: PDFs with the results in each region are also available at this link. Whenever possible, we also collect data on substitutes, except for the following regions: Navarre, Ceuta, and Melilla.

Regional parliaments in the United Kingdom

Region	# seats	Electoral rule	Constituencies	Election years	Source
Northern Ireland	108 (1998-2017); 90 (2017-)	Single transferable vote	18 constituencies	1998; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2016; 2017; 2022	link
Scotland	129	Mixed-member proportional representation: 73 seats in single-member constituencies; remaining seats by proportional representation using regional lists	73 constituencies and 8 regions	1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2016; 2021	link
Wales	60	Mixed-member proportional representation: 40 seats in single-member constituencies; remaining seats by proportional representation using regional lists	40 constituencies and 5 regions	1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2016; 2021	link

Notes: We also collect data on substitutes.

Table B-2
MEPs' birthplace and political attachment

Country	# MEPs	Birthplace available	Candidate national parliament	Elected national parliament	Elected regional parliament
Austria	43	42 (97.67%)	30 (69.77%)	13 (30.23%)	– –
Belgium	46	44 (95.65%)	31 (67.39%)	13 (28.26%)	23 (50.00%)
Bulgaria	41	38 (92.68%)	30 (73.17%)	22 (53.66%)	– –
Croatia	20	15 (75.00%)	10 (50.00%)	9 (45.00%)	– –
Cyprus	15	– –	– –	– –	– –
Czech Republic	48	46 (95.83%)	32 (66.67%)	19 (39.58%)	– –
Denmark	29	29 (100%)	20 (68.97%)	15 (51.72%)	– –
Estonia	16	– –	– –	– –	– –
Finland	33	33 (100%)	32 (96.97%)	27 (81.82%)	– –
France	173	155 (89.60%)	95 (54.91%)	27 (15.61%)	– –
Germany	184	176 (95.65%)	66 (35.87%)	19 (10.33%)	54 (29.35%)
Greece	56	48 (85.71%)	22 (39.29%)	14 (25.00%)	– –
Hungary	42	35 (83.33%)	33 (78.57%)	18 (42.86%)	– –
Ireland	26	24 (92.31%)	19 (73.08%)	15 (57.69%)	– –
Italy	173	168 (97.11%)	93 (53.76%)	49 (28.32%)	– –
Latvia	17	– –	– –	– –	– –
Lithuania	24	21 (87.50%)	21 (87.50%)	13 (54.17%)	– –
Luxembourg	13	– –	– –	– –	– –
Malta	13	– –	– –	– –	– –
Netherlands	56	52 (92.86%)	– –	– –	– –
Poland	114	111 (97.37%)	96 (84.21%)	85 (74.56%)	– –
Portugal	50	40 (80.00%)	27 (54.00%)	18 (36.00%)	– –
Romania	68	67 (98.53%)	44 (64.71%)	33 (48.53%)	– –
Slovakia	29	28 (96.55%)	– –	– –	– –
Slovenia	17	– –	– –	– –	– –
Spain	133	122 (91.73%)	65 (48.87%)	39 (29.32%)	61 (45.86%)
Sweden	50	44 (88.00%)	37 (74.00%)	24 (48.00%)	– –
United Kingdom	117	106 (90.60%)	68 (58.12%)	6 (5.13%)	10 (8.55%)
Total	1,646	1,444 (87.72%)	871 (52.91%)	478 (29.04%)	549 (33.35%)

Notes: We drop from the final sample MEPs who did not vote on any trade agreements during the period (2 MEPs), MEPs who were elected in different countries during their tenure in the EP (2 MEPs), and MEPs who were only elected in the French Overseas constituency (4 MEPs). In identifying the region of birth, we discard MEPs who were born in a different country than the one where they were elected in the EP (103 MEPs), MEPs born in regions for which we lack data on covariates (11 MEPs), MEPs born in the French Overseas constituencies (2 MEPs), and MEPs from countries that are not divided into several NUTS-2 regions, including Slovenia (86 MEPs). In identifying the region where MEPs ran and/or were elected to national parliaments, we do not consider countries that are not divided into several NUTS-2 regions, including Slovenia. We further discard the Netherlands and Slovakia as their national parliaments have a single national constituency. We also drop MEPs who ran or were elected in regions for which we lack data on covariates.

B-5 Dataset on US legislators

B-1 Votes on the ratification of trade agreements

We collect all votes on the ratification of 12 FTAs negotiated by the United States during the last decades. The first is the agreement with Canada, which was ratified in 1988. The last is the agreement with Panama, which was ratified in 2011. Since then, no new FTA has been put forward for ratification in the US Congress.[62] We collect the roll-call votes for the FTAs of interest from Govtrack. As mentioned in the paper, we focus on votes by members of the Senate, whose constituency does not change over time.

Table B-3
US FTAs

FTA	Senate vote date	In favor	Against	Abstention
US - Canada	Sep. 19, 1988	83	9	8
US - Canada - Mexico	Nov. 20, 1993	61	38	1
US - Chile	Jul. 31, 2003	65	32	3
US - Singapore	Jul. 31, 2003	66	32	2
US - Australia	Jul. 15, 2004	80	16	4
US - Morocco	Jul. 22, 2004	85	13	2
US - Central America - Dominican Republic	Jul. 28, 2005	55	45	0
US - Oman	Sep. 19, 2006	62	32	6
US - Peru	Dec. 4, 2007	77	18	5
US - South Korea	Oct. 12, 2011	83	15	2
US - Colombia	Oct. 12, 2011	66	33	1
US - Panama	Oct. 12, 2011	77	22	1

B-2 Constituency variables

Similarly to the EU, to capture the share of electorate of senator i from State c that stands to gain from the entry into force of an FTA a at time t we construct the variable *Export Share*$_{i(c),a,t}$. However, given the differences in the electoral systems, and the level of aggregation of the data, we require fewer steps in the procedure to construct our variable of interest.

In the first step, we use trade data from 1983 to 2019 published by UN Comtrade to categorize each sector j as being export- or import-competing for the US as a whole relative to the partner(s) of agreement a in year t. When computing the per-capita net exports we use population data from 1987, which is the last pre-sample year available. The original data use

[62] The only vote after 2011 was on the ratification of the USMCA agreement between the United States, Mexico, and Canada, which replaced the previous FTA between these three countries (NAFTA).

4-digit Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) version 2 product codes, which we transform to 3-digit North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) version 2012 using crosswalks.[63]

In the second step, we use county-level data on employment from 1975 to 2018 in NAICS 2012 industries published by Eckert et al. (2020).[64] Since the relevant constituencies for senators are US states, we aggregate employment data at that administrative level. The tariffs data for the US and its trade partners are from the WITS-TRAINS database. Like for the EU, we collect information on MFN rates applied by the US and its FTA partners before the entry into force of the agreement.[65] We then construct the variable $Export\ Share_{i(c),a,t}$. Like equation (1) for MEPs, this captures the share of voters in the constituency of legislator i that stand to gain from the entry into force of agreement a.

To construct the socio-economic characteristics of senators' constituencies, we aggregate at the state level county level data for the census years 1980, 1990, 2000 from IPUMS National Historical Geographic Information System (NHGIS). We construct the following variables: the unemployment rate, the share of high-skilled residents (i.e., those who have completed some form of tertiary education), and the urbanization rate (i.e., the share of households who live in cities, towns, and suburbs). We also measure ideological leaning of senators' constituencies using data from the MIT Election Data & Science Lab on the outcome of elections to the US House of Representatives.[66] We interact socio-economic and political characteristics of US legislators' constituencies with year or term fixed effects when examining the determinants of their trade votes and of their probability of re-election.

Table B-4 shows descriptive statistics for the constituency variables.

[63] We chain multiple concordance tables to obtain a crosswalk from SITC-2 to NAICS 2012. The first concordance we use, from SITC-2 to NAICS 1997, is published by the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) and is available here. Then, we obtain concordance tables between different NAICS versions over time from the United States Census Bureau (USCB).

[64] We exclude the NAICS 3-digit codes 111 and 112, which belong to "Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting", since data for these industries are not available after 1997.

[65] The only exception is the agreement between Canada and the United States, for which we use MFN rates from 1989 (the first year available in the WITS-TRAINS database). For Mexico, we use MFN tariff rates from 1991. For the remaining FTAs, which have been introduced after the conclusion of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations, we use MFN rates from 1996 for the US and from 1996 or 1997 for the FTA partners, depending on data availability. For FTAs that involve multiple partners, we use GDP values from 1987 to capture a weighted average of the partners' MFN tariffs.

[66] For each senator i representing state s, we compute the variable $Liberal_{i(c),T}$ as the share of votes received by candidates from the Democratic party in the House elections. For the US-Canada FTA, we use data for the elections of 1986 (the year before the ratification of the FTA). All remaining FTAs use the outcome of the first House elections after the 1990 and 2000 US Census.

Table B-4
Constituency variables (States)

	N	Mean	Std. dev.	Min.	Max.
Export Share$_{i(c),a,t}$	600	0.40	0.24	0.00	0.92
Tertiary Education$_{i(c),T}$	150	0.20	0.05	0.10	0.33
Unemployment$_{i(c),T}$	150	0.06	0.01	0.04	0.11
Urban$_{i(c),T}$	150	0.69	0.15	0.32	0.94
Liberal$_{i(c),T}$	150	0.51	0.12	0.00	0.78

Notes: the table provides descriptive statistics on various socio-economic and political characteristics senator' i's constituency c in year t or term T.

B-3 Legislator variables

We construct legislator variables using data from the Bibliographical Directory of the United States Congress. This dataset includes information on the legislators' date of birth, which we use to compute their age at the time of each FTA vote, and on their career in Congress, which we use to compute their tenure and party affiliation. We supplement this dataset with h information from the congress-legislators open-source project. This provides us with the GovTrack IDs (which allows us to link the data to the legislators' roll-call votes) and the gender of each legislator.

We use data from the MIT Election Data & Science Lab to construct the indicator variable *Re-elected*$_{i,T}$, which is equal to 1 if senator i retains his or her seat at the end of term T.[67] We use the same electoral data to construct the following variables: indicator variables to keep track of the "generation" a legislator belongs to at the time of a vote, reflecting the staggered structure of the Senate;[68] and a senator's margin of victory in an election, measured as the difference in the share of votes obtained by the senator and the runner-up.

From the Database on Ideology, Money in Politics, and Elections (DIME) by Bonica (2024), we retrieve information to compute contributions raised by senator i. To construct log *Campaign contributions*$_{i,t}$ we use the contributions raised by senator i in the elections prior to year t. Instead, for log *Campaign contributions*$_{i,T}$ we use contributions raise by

[67] We exclude special elections. As an example, consider senator Daniel K. Akaka: he was appointed in April 1990 to one of Hawaii's Senate seats by the governor. A special election followed in November of the same year, in which senator Akaka secured the seat for the remaining four years of the six-years term for which is predecessor was elected. In 1994 senator Akaka ran in the non-special elections to the Senate and retained his seat. Since we exclude special elections, the six-year term for senator Akaka starts in 1994 in our dataset, and not in 1990 as that was not an election to a full six-years term.

[68] Considering the example of senator Akaka mentioned in footnote 67, we code *1st Generation*$_{i,t}$ as equal to 1 the first two years of the six-years term that started in 1994 and the the variables *2nd Generation*$_{i,t}$ and *3rd Generation*$_{i,t}$ as equal to 1 in the middle two and last two years of his term, respectively.

senator i during the term T. The database does not include the GovTrack ID to directly match senators to the rest of our data so we apply fuzzy-matching based on the name, state, and year of the contributions.

The variable *Congruence Trade Votes*$_{i,T}$ is computed in a similar way to the respective measure for MEPs. For each senator i, we compute the share of his/her electorate whose interests align with his or her vote on the FTA a. Then, we aggregate the measure at the senator-term level, *Congruence Trade Votes*$_{i,T}$, by averaging across all votes cast by senator i during the six-year term T. To account for the heterogeneous impact and salience of trade agreements, we weight each vote by the size of the trading partner in a pre-sample year (i.e., its GDP in 1987).

We obtain additional roll-call votes on final passage votes cast on legislations in the Senate from Govtrack to track the activity of senators on non-FTA bills. For the 100th and 101st US Congresses we complement the Govtrack data with passage votes from the Political Institutions and Public Choice (PIPC) Roll-Call Database by Roberts et al. (2021). Using these votes we compute *Party Loyalty*$_{i,T}$ as the share of votes that senator i expressed during his or her six-years term T for which the senator voted in line with his or her party majority.

Table B-5 shows summary statistics for the senator level variables.

Table B-5
Legislator variables (senators)

	N	Mean	Std. dev.	Min.	Max.
Vote$_{i(c,p),a,t}$	1,165	0.74	0.44	0.00	1.00
Female$_i$	227	0.10	0.30	0.00	1.00
Age$_{i,t}$	1,165	61.08	10.03	39.00	91.00
Tenure$_{i,t}$	1,165	16.13	10.87	0.00	54.00
Democrat$_{i,t}$	1,165	0.50	0.50	0.00	1.00
1st Generation$_{i,t}$	1,165	0.37	0.48	0.00	1.00
2nd Generation$_{i,t}$	1,165	0.33	0.47	0.00	1.00
3rd Generation$_{i,t}$	1,165	0.30	0.46	0.00	1.00
Margin of Victory$_{i,t}$	1,118	0.24	0.19	0.00	1.00
log *Campaign contributions*$_{i,t}$	1,138	12.49	4.76	0.00	16.89
Re-elected$_{i,T}$	408	0.67	0.47	0.00	1.00
Congruence Trade Votes$_{i,T}$	408	0.50	0.17	0.10	0.90
log *Campaign contributions*$_{i,T}$	396	9.55	6.99	0.00	17.50
Party Loyalty$_{i,T}$	408	0.90	0.07	0.60	0.99

Notes: the table provides descriptive statistics on US senators' votes on the ratification of US trade agreements and various characteristics of the legislator i in a year t or term T.

B-4 Agreement variables

We use Conte et al. (2022)'s gravity database to obtain information on FTA partner(s) a (GDP, population, and GATT membership). We further extract bilateral characteristics of the relationship between the United States and agreement partner(s) a (distance between their capitals, contiguity, colonial linkages, common language, and diplomatic disagreement in the UN General Assembly). For all variables, we use pre-sample data (from 1987).[69]

Some of the characteristics are continuous: GDP and population, distance, and diplomatic disagreement. For FTAs that include multiple trade partners, we sum GDP and population across all participants to the agreement. Concerning distance and diplomatic disagreement, we compute the simple average. The remaining variables are dichotomous. When aggregating at the level of a multi-country FTA, we compute the share of partners for whom the indicator variables are equal to 1. Table B-6 displays summary statistics.

Table B-6
Agreement variables

	N	Mean	Std. dev.	Min.	Max.
log GDP_a	12	17.50	1.34	15.55	19.88
log $Population_a$	12	9.59	1.24	7.39	11.30
$WTO\ Membership_a$	12	0.78	0.41	0.00	0.00
log $Distance_a$	12	8.61	0.93	6.32	9.68
$Common\ Language_a$	12	0.83	0.39	0.00	1.00
$Colonial\ Ties_a$	12	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
$Diplomatic\ Disagreement_a$	12	2.83	0.67	1.39	3.59

Notes: the table provides descriptive statistics on various pre-determined characteristics of the partner(s) of trade agreement a.

[69] For the diplomatic disagreement in the UN General Assembly we use the value from 1991 for South Korea as this variable is not available in 1987.

B-6 Additional results and robustness checks

Table B-7

MEPs' responsiveness to the trade interests of their electorate (IV)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Export Share$_{i(c(k),np),t-1}$	0.098***	0.096***	0.076**	0.076**	0.114**
	(0.035)	(0.034)	(0.033)	(0.033)	(0.045)
Agreement controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic constituency controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political constituency controls	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	No	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	9,962	9,962	9,962	9,962	9,848
Estimation method	IV logit	IV logit	IV logit	IV logit	IV logit
Pred. probability	0.751	0.751	0.751	0.752	0.749

Notes: This table reports the marginal effects of the export share estimated using an IV logit model and evaluated at sample means. In the first step, we regress *Export Share*$_{i(c(k),np),t-1}$ on *Export Share IV*$_{i(c(k),np),t-1}$, as defined in equation (B-6), and the remaining control variables specified in each column. In the second step, we use the residuals from the first stage as an additional control in equation (3) in the main body of the paper). *Vote*$_{i(c(k),np,ep),a,t}$ is equal to 1 if MEP i (elected in constituency c of country k from national party np, belonging to EP political group ep) votes in favor of agreement a in year t, and 0 if (s)he votes against it. The variable *Export Share*$_{i(c(k),np),t-1}$ defined in equation (2) captures the trade policy interest of MEP i's EU electorate vis-à-vis the FTA with a in the year before the vote. The agreement controls capture characteristics of the trading partner(s) in agreement a (GDP, population, and an indicator for WTO membership) and of the relationship between EU country k and the partner(s) of agreement a (distance, common language, common border, colonial ties, and UN diplomatic disagreement score). All the agreement variables are measured in 2008. The legislator controls include gender, age, and tenure of the MEP. The socioeconomic controls include the share of people with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, and the urbanization rate, while the political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU. Socio-economic and political controls are constructed combining pre-determined (measured in 2008) regional characteristics with the vote shares of national parties in the previous European elections, and are interacted with year-specific fixed effects. Party fixed effects defined at the EP political group level. Robust standard errors, clustered at the constituency × national party level, are reported in parentheses. * significant at the 10% level, ** significant at the 5% level, *** significant at the 1% level.

Table B-8

MEPs' responsiveness to the trade interests of their electorate
(including MEP fixed effects)

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Export Share$_{i(c(k),np),t-1}$	3.274***	3.883***	3.988***
	(1.144)	(1.197)	(1.245)
Agreement controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic constituency controls	No	Yes	Yes
Political constituency controls	No	No	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
MEP FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	2,979	2,979	2,979
Estimation method	c. logit	c. logit	c.logit

Notes: This table reports the marginal effects of the export share estimated using a conditional logit model and evaluated at sample means. The dependent variable is the indicator variable $Vote_{i(c(k),np,ep),a,t}$, which is equal to 1 if MEP i (elected in constituency c of country k from national party np belonging to EP political group ep) votes in favor of agreement a in year t, and 0 if (s)he votes against it. The variable *Export Share*$_{i(c(k),np),t-1}$ defined in equation (2) captures the trade policy interest of MEP i's EU electorate vis-à-vis the FTA with a in the year before the vote. The agreement controls capture characteristics of the trading partner(s) in agreement a (GDP, population, and an indicator for WTO membership) and of the relationship between EU country k and the partner(s) of agreement a (distance, common language, common border, colonial ties, and UN diplomatic disagreement score). All the agreement variables are measured in 2008. The socioeconomic controls include the share of people with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, and the urbanization rate, while the political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU. Socio-economic and political controls are constructed combining pre-determined (measured in 2008) regional characteristics with the vote shares of national parties in the previous European elections, and are interacted with year-specific fixed effects. Robust standard errors, clustered at the constituency × national party level, are reported in parentheses. * significant at the 10% level, ** significant at the 5% level, *** significant at the 1% level.

Table B-9

MEPs' responsiveness to the trade interests of their electorate
(including FTA fixed effects)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Export Share$_{i(c(k),np),t-1}$	0.066**	0.064**	0.057**	0.061**	0.067**
	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.025)	(0.029)
Agreement controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic constituency controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political constituency controls	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
FTA FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	No	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	9,962	9,962	9,962	9,962	9,848
Estimation method	logit	logit	logit	logit	logit
Pred. probability	0.751	0.751	0.750	0.751	0.749

Notes: This table reports the marginal effects of the export share from logit regressions, evaluated at sample means. The dependent variable is the indicator variable $Vote_{i(c(k),np,ep),a,t}$, which is equal to 1 if MEP i (elected in constituency c of country k from national party np belonging to EP political group ep) votes in favor of agreement a in year t, and 0 if (s)he votes against it. The variable *Export Share*$_{i(c(k),np),t-1}$ defined in equation (2) captures the trade policy interest of MEP i's EU electorate vis-à-vis the FTA with a in the year before the vote. The agreement controls capture characteristics of the trading partner(s) in agreement a (GDP, population, and an indicator for WTO membership) and of the relationship between EU country k and the partner(s) of agreement a (distance, common language, common border, colonial ties, and UN diplomatic disagreement score). All the agreement variables are measured in 2008. The legislator controls include gender, age, and tenure of the MEP. The socioeconomic controls include the share of people with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, and the urbanization rate, while the political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU. Socio-economic and political controls are constructed combining pre-determined (measured in 2008) regional characteristics with the vote shares of national parties in the previous European elections, and are interacted with year-specific fixed effects. Party fixed effects defined at the EP political group level. Robust standard errors, clustered at the constituency × national party level, are reported in parentheses. * significant at the 10% level, ** significant at the 5% level, *** significant at the 1% level.

Table B-10

MEPs' responsiveness to the trade interests of their electorate
(abstentions as negative votes)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Export Share$_{i(c(k),np),t-1}$	0.101**	0.098**	0.090*	0.112**	0.152*
	(0.042)	(0.040)	(0.048)	(0.051)	(0.079)
Agreement controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic constituency controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political constituency controls	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	No	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	10,542	10,542	10,542	10,542	10,501
Estimation method	logit	logit	logit	logit	logit
Pred. probability	0.722	0.722	0.722	0.722	0.721

Notes: This table reports the marginal effects of the export share from logit regressions, evaluated at sample means. The dependent variable is the indicator variable $Vote_{i(c(k),np,ep),a,t}$, which is equal to 1 if MEP i (elected in constituency c of country k from national party np belonging to EP political group ep) votes in favor of agreement a in year t, and 0 if (s)he votes against it or abstains. The variable *Export Share*$_{i(c(k),np),a,t-1}$ defined in equation (2) captures the trade policy interest of MEP i's EU electorate vis-à-vis the FTA with a in the year before the vote. The agreement controls capture characteristics of the trading partner(s) in agreement a (GDP, population, and an indicator for WTO membership) and of the relationship between EU country k and the partner(s) of agreement a (distance, common language, common border, colonial ties, and UN diplomatic disagreement score). All the agreement variables are measured in 2008. The legislator controls include gender, age, and tenure of the MEP. The socioeconomic controls include the share of people with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, and the urbanization rate, while the political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU. Socio-economic and political controls are constructed combining pre-determined (measured in 2008) regional characteristics with the vote shares of national parties in the previous European elections, and are interacted with year-specific fixed effects. Party fixed effects defined at the EP political group level. Robust standard errors, clustered at the constituency × national party level, are reported in parentheses. * significant at the 10% level, ** significant at the 5% level, *** significant at the 1% level.

Table B-11

MEPs' responsiveness to the trade interests of their electorate
(abstentions as positive votes)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Export Share$_{i(c(k),np),t-1}$	0.057**	0.056**	0.051*	0.059**	0.072**
	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.026)	(0.025)	(0.036)
Agreement controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic constituency controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political constituency controls	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	No	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	10,542	10,542	10,542	10,542	10,426
Estimation method	logit	logit	logit	logit	logit
Pred. probability	0.777	0.777	0.777	0.777	0.775

Notes: This table reports the marginal effects of the export share from logit regressions, evaluated at sample means. The dependent variable is the indicator variable $Vote_{i(c(k),np,ep),a,t}$, which is equal to 1 if MEP i (elected in constituency c of country k from national party np belonging to EP political group ep) votes in favor of agreement a in year t or abstains, and 0 if (s)he votes against it. The variable *Export Share*$_{i(c(k),np),t-1}$ defined in equation (2) captures the trade policy interest of MEP i's EU electorate vis-à-vis the FTA with a in the year before the vote. The agreement controls capture characteristics of the trading partner(s) in agreement a (GDP, population, and an indicator for WTO membership) and of the relationship between EU country k and the partner(s) of agreement a (distance, common language, common border, colonial ties, and UN diplomatic disagreement score). All the agreement variables are measured in 2008. The legislator controls include gender, age, and tenure of the MEP. The socioeconomic controls include the share of people with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, and the urbanization rate, while the political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU. Socio-economic and political controls are constructed combining pre-determined (measured in 2008) regional characteristics with the vote shares of national parties in the previous European elections, and are interacted with year-specific fixed effects. Party fixed effects defined at the EP political group level. Robust standard errors, clustered at the constituency × national party level, are reported in parentheses. * significant at the 10% level, ** significant at the 5% level, *** significant at the 1% level.

Table B-12

MEPs' responsiveness to the trade interests of their electorate
(excluding domestic regional interests)

	Region of birth (1)	Region of candidacy (2)	Domestic constituency (3)
Export Share$_{i(c(k),np),t-1}$	0.092**	0.099**	0.100**
	(0.039)	(0.041)	(0.044)
Agreement controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
MEP controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic constituency controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political constituency controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	8,472	8,677	8,738
Estimation method	logit	logit	logit
Pred. probability	0.742	0.740	0.737

Notes: This table reports the marginal effects of the export share from logit regressions, evaluated at sample means. The dependent variable is the indicator variable $Vote_{i(c(k),np,ep),a,t}$, which is equal to 1 if MEP i (elected in constituency c of country k from national party np belonging to EP political group ep) votes in favor of agreement a in year t, and 0 if (s)he votes against it. *Export Share*$_{i(c(k),np),t-1}$ captures the trade policy interests of the MEP's constituency as defined in equation (2), but excludes regions to which the legislator may be attached. In column 1, the variable excludes the MEP's region of birth; in column 2, it excludes the region he/she ran to represent in national elections; in column 3, it excludes the region he/she represented in the national or regional parliament. The agreement controls capture characteristics of the trading partner(s) in agreement a (GDP, population, and an indicator for WTO membership) and of the relationship between EU country k and the partner(s) of agreement a (distance, common language, common border, colonial ties, and UN diplomatic disagreement score). All the agreement variables are measured in 2008. The legislator controls include gender, age, and tenure of the MEP. The socioeconomic controls include the share of people with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, and the urbanization rate, while the political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU. Socio-economic and political controls are constructed combining pre-determined (measured in 2008) regional characteristics with the vote shares of national parties in the previous European elections, and are interacted with year-specific fixed effects. Party fixed effects defined at the EP political group level. Robust standard errors, clustered at the constituency × national party level, are reported in parentheses. * significant at the 10% level, ** significant at the 5% level, *** significant at the 1% level.

Table B-13

MEPs' responsiveness to the trade interests of their electorate
(controlling for large firms)

	Employment > 250	Employment > 50
	(1)	(2)
Export Share$_{i(c(k),np),t-1}$	0.092**	0.092**
	(0.036)	(0.036)
Large Firms$_{k,t-1}$	0.069	0.116
	(0.061)	(0.074)
Agreement controls	Yes	Yes
MEP controls	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic constituency controls	Yes	Yes
Political constituency controls	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes
Party FE	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	Yes	Yes
Observations	9,848	9,848
Estimation method	logit	logit
Pred. probability	0.749	0.749

Notes: This table reports the marginal effects of the export share from logit regressions, evaluated at sample means. The dependent variable is the indicator variable *Vote*$_{i(c(k),np,ep),a,t}$ is equal to 1 if MEP i (elected in constituency c of country k from national party np belonging to EP political group ep) votes in favor of agreement a in year t, and 0 if (s)he votes against it. The variable *Export Share*$_{i(c(k),np),t-1}$ defined in equation (2) captures the interest of national party np in constituency c vis-à-vis agreement a in the year before the vote. The variable *Large Firms*$_{k,t-1}$ is the logarithm of one plus the number of firms with more than 250 employees (column 1) or above 50 employees (column 2) in country k and year $t-1$. The agreement controls capture characteristics of the trading partner(s) in agreement a (GDP, population, and an indicator for WTO membership) and of the relationship between EU country k and the partner(s) of agreement a (distance, common language, common border, colonial ties, and UN diplomatic disagreement score). All the agreement variables are measured in 2008. The legislator controls include gender, age, and tenure of the MEP. The socioeconomic controls include the share of people with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, and the urbanization rate, while the political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU. Socio-economic and political controls are constructed combining pre-determined (measured in 2008) regional characteristics with the vote shares of national parties in the previous European elections, and are interacted with year-specific fixed effects. Party fixed effects defined at the EP political group level. Robust standard errors, clustered at the constituency × national party level, are reported in parentheses. * significant at the 10% level, ** significant at the 5% level, *** significant at the 1% level.

Table B-14

MEPs' trade responsiveness and re-election
(abstracting from differences in the size of trade agreements)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Congruence Trade Votes$_{i,T}$	0.115*	0.127**	0.146**	0.126*	0.150*
	(0.065)	(0.065)	(0.064)	(0.076)	(0.080)
Party Loyalty$_{i,T}$					0.454***
					(0.156)
MEP controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic constituency controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political constituency controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Term FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Observations	2,083	2,083	2,083	2,077	1,971
Estimation method	logit	logit	logit	logit	logit
Pred. probability	0.440	0.440	0.440	0.440	0.441

Notes: This table reports the marginal effects of logit regressions, evaluated at sample means. The dependent variable is an indicator variable equal to 1 if MEP i (elected in constituency c of country k from national party np, belonging to EP political group ep) is re-elected at the end of the term. *Congruence Trade Votes*$_{i,T}$ is the simple average of the shares of the electorate whose interests align with i's trade votes during term T. *Party Loyalty*$_{i,T}$ captures the extent to which an MEP has been loyal to his/her national party group. The legislator controls include age, gender, and tenure in the MEP. The socio-economic controls include the share of people with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, and the urbanization rate, while the political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU. Socio-economic and political controls are constructed combining pre-determined (measured in 2008) regional characteristics with the vote shares of national parties in the previous European elections. Party fixed effects defined at the EP political group level. Robust standard errors, clustered at the MEP level, are reported in parentheses. * significant at the 10% level, ** significant at the 5% level, *** significant at the 1% level.

Table B-15

Responsiveness of US legislators to the trade interests of their electorate
(controlling for campaign contributions)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Export Share$_{i(c),a,t-1}$	-0.032	0.011	0.023	0.012	0.287
	(0.173)	(0.164)	(0.191)	(0.196)	(0.210)
Campaign Contributions$_{i(c),a,t}$	0.001	0.001	0.001	-0.000	0.002
	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.008)
Agreement controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic constituency controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political constituency controls	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	No	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	1,098	1,098	1,098	1,098	937
Estimation method	logit	logit	logit	logit	logit
Pred. probability	0.736	0.736	0.736	0.736	0.691

Notes: This table reports marginal effects of logit regressions, evaluated at sample means. The dependent variable is the indicator variable $Vote_{i(c,p),a,t}$, which is equal to 1 if US senator i (elected in constituency c from party p) votes in favor of agreement a in year t, and 0 if (s)he votes against it. The variable *Export Share*$_{i(c),a,t-1}$ captures the trade policy interest of i's electorate vis-à-vis the FTA with a in the year before the vote. The agreement controls capture characteristics of the trading partner(s) in agreement a (GDP, population, and an indicator for WTO membership) and of the relationship between the United States and the partner(s) of agreement a (distance, common language, common border, colonial ties, and UN diplomatic disagreement score). The agreement controls capture characteristics of the trading partner(s) in agreement a (GDP, population, and an indicator for WTO membership) and of the relationship between the United States and the partner(s) of agreement a (distance, common language, common border, colonial ties, and UN diplomatic disagreement score). All the agreement variables are measured pre sample (in 1987). The legislator controls include gender, age, tenure, margin of victory, and the generation of each senator. The socioeconomic controls include the share of people with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, and the urbanization rate, while the political controls include the share of votes for candidates of the Democratic party in previous elections to the House of Representatives. Socio-economic and political controls are measured at the start of each US Census (1980, 1990 and 2000) and interacted with year fixed effects. Robust standard errors, clustered at the constituency (state) level, are reported in parentheses. * significant at the 10% level, ** significant at the 5% level, *** significant at the 1% level.

Table B-16

Trade responsiveness of US legislators and their re-election
(controlling for campaign contributions)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Congruence Trade Votes$_{i,T}$	-0.134	-0.154	-0.132	-0.235	-0.249
	(0.177)	(0.181)	(0.183)	(0.198)	(0.198)
Party Loyalty$_{i,T}$					0.286
					(0.511)
Campaign Contributions$_{i,T}$	0.064***	0.064***	0.065***	0.063***	0.063***
	(0.018)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.019)	(0.019)
Legislator controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic constituency controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political constituency controls	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Term FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	No	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	396	396	396	390	390
Estimation method	logit	logit	logit	logit	logit
Pred. probability	0.677	0.677	0.677	0.672	0.672

Notes: This table reports the marginal effects from logit regressions, evaluated at sample means. The dependent variable is *Re-elected*$_{i(c,p),T}$, an indicator variable equal to 1 if legislator i (elected in constituency c from party p) is re-elected at the end of term T. *Congruence Trade Votes*$_{i,T}$ is the share of the legislator's electorate whose interests align with his/her trade votes during term T. *Party Loyalty*$_{i,T}$ captures the extent to which the legislator has been loyal to his/her party. The other legislator controls include gender, age, tenure, margin of victory. The socioeconomic controls include the share of people with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, and the urbanization rate, while the political controls include the share of votes for candidates of the Democratic party in previous elections to the House of Representatives. Socio-economic and political controls are measured at the start of each US Census (1980, 1990 and 2000) and interacted with fixed effects for the six-year term of the legislators. Robust standard errors, clustered at the legislator level, are reported in parentheses. * significant at the 10% level, ** significant at the 5% level, *** significant at the 1% level.