

Abstract: What are the effect of foreign news exposure on voter policy preferences? The proportion of news reports about foreign government actions, relative to domestic government actions, has increased dramatically during the past decades. This paper tests three hypotheses on what voters learn from foreign news in forming their opinions on a forthcoming trade agreement: self-interests, socio-tropic inference and the extraction of government competence signal. We designed and conducted two-waves of coordinated survey experiments in Japan and Taiwan in 2015, which randomly assigned different but factual news reports of their neighboring countries (Korea and China) signing a trade agreement, and solicit support for their own government signing an agreement with China. The results suggest that exposure to foreign news increases opposition to PTA with China around 7% points in Japan and decreases opposition by 6%-7% points in Taiwan.? In both countries, socio-tropic inference shapes respondent attitudes and respondents did not seem to learn self-interests or sectoral distributional implications from the foreign news reports. The findings shed new lights on the voter-based mechanisms underlying diffusion of economic policies across countries.?