

# ELITE MISPERCEPTIONS IN FOREIGN POLICY

## *Supplementary Appendix*

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# 1 Sample information

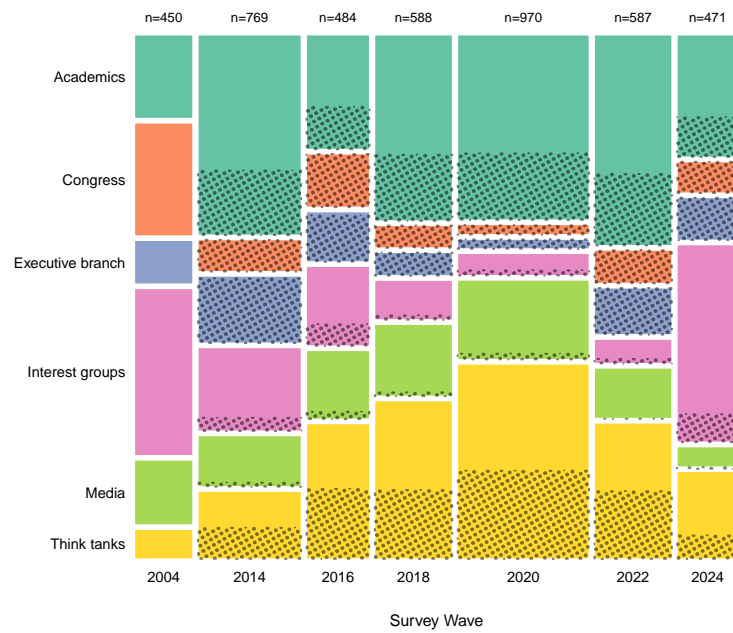
As noted in the main text, the Chicago Council Foreign Policy Opinion Leader surveys sample “foreign policy opinion leaders”, including members of executive branch agencies, Congress, academia, think tanks, the media, and interest groups. We describe the sampling methodology for the 2018 elite sample in detail in Appendix 1.1 below, but we note three points here. First, this is a “heterogeneous elite” sample (Kertzer and Renshon, 2022), which has a number of advantages for understanding elite perception and democratic responsiveness in the context of foreign policy. It draws from the broader foreign policy establishment in the United States, which forms the pool of experts from which government officials are largely drawn. As Furnas and LaPira argue, unelected elites “are important to democratic responsiveness in their own right because they influence the policy agenda, craft and implement policy, promote and critique policy decisions... and frame the rhetoric that reelection-motivated politicians use to justify the policy positions they take” (Furnas and LaPira, 2024, 959). Second, many respondents from the sample who are not currently serving in government have previous government experience, even in high-level roles: for example, respondents include Agency heads, Ambassadors, Assistant and Associate Directors, Chiefs and Deputy Chiefs of Staff, Deputy National Security Advisors, Deputy Secretaries, senior NSC directors, members of Policy Planning, Undersecretaries, and Senior and Special Advisors in a variety of roles. Figure A1 presents a mosaic plot breaking the foreign policy opinion leader sample down over time by elite type (on the y axis), and government experience (with the proportion of respondents with government service represented by the small circles).

Finally, since one might be interested in whether respondents who are the closest to policy principals more accurately perceive public preferences in foreign policy, both the observational and experimental analysis disaggregate the results based on i) whether respondents come from the Executive or Legislative branches, and ii) whether respondents have government experience (including specific types of government experience as a political appointee, Schedule B employee, etc.), always failing to find evidence of heterogeneous results by elite subtype or experience.

## 1.1 Description of the elite survey methodology

We compiled the Chicago Council of Global Affairs leadership survey distribution list using a variety of sources. We relied heavily on Leadership Library (LL), a subscription-based online database, which includes contact information for elites in various sectors, including businesses, Congress, the executive branch, interest groups, labor unions, the media, non-governmental organizations, and think tanks. We supplemented the information from LL with information from several other sources, since LL has limited information for elites in some sectors and does not cover other sectors we wished to survey, particularly academics, military officers,

Figure A1: Composition of elite samples over time



Note: The mosaic plot illustrates the composition of the foreign policy opinion leader sample based on elite type and government experience. Each vertical column represents one survey wave, with the width of each column proportional to the total sample size (shown at the top). Within each column, the height of each colored segment denotes the proportion of respondents of a given elite type (labeled on the y axis). The overlaid dotted pattern denotes the proportion of each subgroup who served in government. Note that government experience data was not collected in the 2004 wave. The 2014 sample also included n=533 military personnel who are omitted from the plot for presentational purposes.

and religious leaders. In what follows, we provide more detail on how we compiled the distribution list using these sources. Given appendix constraints, we describe the 2018 data collection effort here in detail (the most central wave in the paper, since it features in both the observational and the experimental analysis), but information about all waves of the survey are available online at the CCGA website.

*Academics:* A list of academics from 35 institutions in the United States was compiled and shared with us by the Teaching, Research & International Policy (TRIP) project at the College of William and Mary. The list included scholars from the top 25 US-based International Relations PhD programs from the 2018 Foreign Policy list and all US-based Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs (APSIA) Schools. It contains 918 individuals, consisting of both scholar-practitioners and tenure-track academics.

*Congressional aides:* Using LL, we obtained contact information for congressional employees in the database who are classified as having the expertise of “international affairs/foreign affairs” or “defense,” and who have one of the following job titles: Chief Counsel, Chief of Staff, Clerk, Committee Staff Member, Deputy Chief of Staff, Legislative Assistant, Legislative Director, or Professional Staff Member. This resulted in a list of 1575 congressional aides.<sup>1</sup>

*Executive branch officials:* Using LL, we obtained contact information for the following sets of people in the database: employees of the Defense Department, Homeland Security Department, or State Department who hold the position of special assistant, deputy assistant secretary, assistant secretary, undersecretary, or deputy secretary, or have the word “senior” in their title; employees of any other federal department who hold the position of deputy assistant secretary, assistant secretary, undersecretary, or deputy secretary and also are listed as having a job function that is classified as “international;” members of the White House National Security Staff who hold the position of assistant to the president, special assistant to the president, senior director, or director; and U.S. Ambassadors. This resulted in a list of 595 executive branch officials.

*Members of the media:* Using LL, we obtained contact information for people in the database who are employed by news media organizations and are classified as having the expertise of “international affairs/foreign affairs” or “defense.” We then supplemented that list with a similar search of CISION, a media database containing contact information and areas of focus for media personnel around the world. Media personnel sourced from CISION were listed as working on international issues and/or foreign policy. This resulted in a list of 786 members of the media.

*Interest group leaders:* We used several sources to compile a list of interest group leaders, including leaders in business associations, labor unions, NGOs, and religious groups whose responsibilities include international matters. Collectively, this generated a list of 1098 leaders from these sectors.

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<sup>1</sup>This differs from the sample in the 2004 Chicago Council elite survey, where the sampling frame was not limited to staffers, and “included 100 Congressional members or their senior staff, 31 from the Senate and 69 from the House. See Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, *Global Views 2004: American Public Opinion and Foreign Policy*, p. 56.

For business leaders, we used LL to obtain contact information for individuals employed by one of the 1000 largest U.S. companies, who have a position of vice president, president, or CEO, and who have a job function that is classified as “international.” To supplement the labor list generated by LL, we used the Department of Labor’s list of labor unions in the United States with more than 100,000 members and added the presidents, vice-presidents, legislative affairs, governmental affairs, policy or political directors, chiefs of staff, advocacy, and general counsels of each union meeting these criteria and for whom contact information was available.

For leaders of NGOs and other interest groups, we obtained contact information for individuals holding the position of vice president or president at an organization classified by LL as an “international affairs/foreign affairs” or “defense” NGO or interest group, as well as for any NGO or interest group employee whose job function is listed as “international” or whose expertise is classified as “international affairs/foreign affairs” or “defense.” To supplement this list, we used the online Charity Navigator database to develop a list of leading nonprofit organizations focused on international issues with a budget above \$13.5 million. We identified organizations in the categories of international peace, security and affairs, development and relief services, and humanitarian relief supplies. A number of these organizations from international peace and security were already represented on the think tank list and were removed. Presidents and vice-presidents at these organizations were targeted for inclusion in the survey list, though vice-presidents for administration, fundraising, and other non-policy fields were excluded.

Finally, the religious leader list is based on the CCGA’s original 2004 list of religious leaders in the United States, with contacts updated to account for changes in positions in the intervening period. This was supplemented with a list provided by Valerie Nash of Religions for Peace, as well as names from Time’s 2013 list of the 25 most influential evangelicals in America. We judged the representativeness of this list based on the broader patterns of American religious life, as reported by Pew’s Religious Landscape Survey, part of the Pew Religion and Public Life Project. As the original combination of lists under-represented Catholic leaders, we manually added the heads of archdiocese within the United States. This brought the sample list into balance with Pew’s Religious Landscape Survey data.

*Think tank experts:* Using LL, we obtained contact information for people in the database who are employed by think tanks and are classified as having the expertise of “international affairs/foreign affairs” or “defense.”

This think tank list was supplemented with a targeted strategy based on the University of Pennsylvania’s 2017 Think Tank Rankings, selecting for top US think tanks in Defense and National Security, Foreign Policy, International Development, and International Economics. This produced a list of 37 institutions. Of these,

four were excluded.<sup>2</sup> We included in our list the fellows, vice-presidents, and presidents of these think tanks. Vice-presidents for administration or fundraising were excluded, as were fellows whose research was primarily focused on domestic policy. These methods resulted in a list of 1363 think tank experts. Survey solicitations came from Ivo Daalder, President of the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, and William H. McRaven, Chancellor of the University of Texas System.

## 1.2 Fielding the elite surveys

As in previous surveys of foreign policy elites conducted for the Chicago Council, nine categories of foreign policy elites were targeted using lists developed from Leadership Library and building on previous years' survey lists. Those nine categories included leaders from business, congress, the executive branch, labor, media, NGOs, religious groups, scholars, and think tank experts. In the elite subgroup analysis from the paired experiment in the main text, we have consolidated business, labor, NGO, and religious groups in a single interest group category.

The fielding period for the 2018 elite survey opened on August 3, 2018. During the fielding period, four reminder emails were sent, and the survey request email was resent to some individuals by request. The final fielding email was sent on September 26, 2018. The survey was closed one month later on October 23, 2018. See Table A1 for a list of the numbers of emails sent per group per wave, and Table A2 for a complete listing of email dates and delivery rates. Survey solicitations came from Ivo Daalder, President of the Chicago Council on Global Affairs.

Table A1: Email recruitment by group

Group	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5
Business	456	384	370	364	356
Congress	1575	1,536	1,508	1,493	1,480
Executive Branch	595	523	508	493	481
Labor	239	214	206	198	191
Media	786	696	664	629	614
NGO	176	126	118	109	104
Religious	227	179	171	167	163
Scholars	918	742	683	645	620
Think Tanks	1363	1,130	1,073	1,028	990

<sup>2</sup>The excluded institutions were the Atlas Network, the Berkeley Roundtable on the International Economy (BRIE), and the National Bureau for Economic Research (NBER). Atlas and NBER are networks, rather than think-tanks; BRIE is a research project, but not a research institution.

Table A2: Email delivery rates by wave

Date	Groups	Recipients	Bounces	Delivery Rate	Opens	Clicks
August 3, 2018	All	6335	510	91.95%	1540	278
August 20, 2018	All	5530	65	98.82%	1523	177
August 29, 2018	All	5301	39	99.26%	1442	150
September 12, 2018	All	5126	40	99.22%	1073	87
September 26, 2018	All	4999	75	98.50%	999	64

### 1.3 Sample representativeness

“Eliteness” in political science is usually conceptualized in terms of possessing domain-specific expertise and experience (Hafner-Burton, Hughes and Victor, 2013; Kertzer and Renshon, 2022), and is operationalized through sample selection in elite experiments a wide number of ways, including samples of state legislators (Butler and Kousser, 2015), bureaucrats (Slough, 2018), military officers (Mintz, Redd and Vedlitz, 2006), and academics (Fatas, Neugebauer and Tamborero, 2007). Our elite sample of foreign policy opinion leaders, however, is a broader and more heterogeneous group, seeking to capture a “foreign policy establishment” (sometimes referred to colloquially as “the blob”) stretching from Capitol Hill to Foggy Bottom, the Ivory Tower to Wall Street (Busby and Monten, 2008). In this sense, our study is similar to other recent articles studying perceptions of, or responsiveness to, public opinion by unelected political elites (Lin-Greenberg, 2021; Furnas and LaPira, 2024).

We therefore adopt the same sampling strategy as previous Chicago Council studies of foreign policy elites,<sup>3</sup> obtaining a heterogeneous elite sample that encompasses multiple types of foreign policy elites, rather than just focusing on a single segment of the foreign policy establishment. The downside of this breadth, however, is the absence of a well-defined population to serve as a benchmark, which precludes the possibility of assessing the representativeness of the elite sample. Following best practices with elite experiments (Kertzer and Renshon, 2022), to assuage potential concerns about self-selection effects (as might be the case if the types of foreign policy elites most likely to participate in our study were also the types less likely to accurately perceive public opinion), in both the main paper and the appendix we show that our results are robust to the composition of the elite sample: it is not the case, for example, that certain types of elites are systematically less likely to misperceive public opinion than others, or have systematically different stereotypes about the public.

<sup>3</sup>There have been two major longitudinal studies of foreign policy opinion leaders in the United States: the Foreign Policy Leadership Project (1976-1996) led by Holsti and Rosenau, and the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations (now Chicago Council on Global Affairs) studies (1975 to the present), which this study is a part of.

## 1.4 Fielding the public surveys

From July 24, 2018 to August 1, 2018, the authors fielded a nationally representative survey with the market research firm YouGov. YouGov interviewed 1,153 respondents who were matched down to a sample of 1,000 to produce the final dataset. The respondents were matched to a sampling frame on gender, age, race, education, party identification, ideology, and political affiliation. The frame was constructed by stratified sampling from the full 2016 American Community Survey (ACS) sample with selection within strata by weighted sampling with replacements (using the person weights on the public use file). The margin of error is 3.73%. As is standard in contemporary survey research, respondents in the mass public sample were compensated for their time. The elite study was declared exempt by our Institutional Review Board (IRB). The same fielding approach was used in the other waves of the public survey, except the 2004 survey, which utilized Knowledge Networks as the provider. More information about the public surveys are available on the CCGA website.

The matched cases were weighted to the sampling frame using propensity scores. The matched cases and the frame were combined and a logistic regression was estimated for inclusion in the frame. The propensity score function included age, gender, race/ethnicity, years of education, geographic region, voter registration status, and ideology. The propensity scores were grouped into deciles of the estimated propensity score in the frame and post-stratified according to these deciles. The weights were post-stratified on a 4-way stratification of gender, four-category age, four-category race, and four-category education, to produce the final weights. Consistent with best practices in survey experimental research (e.g. [Franco et al., 2017](#)), the observational results for the public data reported in the paper use survey weights, while the experimental results are unweighted, although the results are unchanged if survey weights are added.

## 2 Observational data supplementary information

In the observational data portion of the main text, we measure elite misperceptions in a three step process consistent with the existing literature, in which we i) measure the public's level of agreement with a given policy statement; ii) measure elites' estimates of the public's level of support towards that policy, and then iii) examine how closely the latter tracks the former using a variety of different estimands. Below are the policy statements, sorted chronologically:

- *UN Peacekeeping*: In general, when the United States is asked to be part of a United Nations international peacekeeping force in a troubled part of the world, do you think we should take part, or should we leave this job to other countries? [Should take part / Should leave this job to other countries] (2004)

- *Support UN tax*: Thinking about specific steps that could be taken to strengthen the UN (United Nations), here are some options that have been proposed. For each one, tell me if you would favor or oppose this step: Giving the UN the power to fund its activities by imposing a small tax on such things as the international sale of arms or oil. [Favor / Oppose] (2004)
- *Scenario: Stop genocide*: There has been some discussion about the circumstances that might justify using U.S. troops in other parts of the world. I'd like to ask your opinion about some situations. Would you favor or oppose the use of U.S. troops: to stop a government from committing genocide and killing large numbers of its own people [Favor / Oppose] (2004)
- *Scenario: Protect oil*: Would you favor or oppose the use of U.S. troops: To ensure the oil supply [Favor / Oppose] (2004)
- *Participate in Kyoto agreement*: Based on what you know, do you think the U.S. should or should not participate in the following treaties and agreements? The Kyoto agreement to reduce global warming [Should / Should not] (2004)
- *Participate in ICC* : Based on what you know, do you think the U.S. should or should not participate in the following treaties and agreements? The agreement on the International Criminal Court that can try individuals for war crimes, genocide, or crimes against humanity if their own country won't try them. [Should / Should not] (2004)
- *Make decisions through UN*: When dealing with international problems, the U.S. should be more willing to make decisions within the United Nations even if this means that the United States will sometimes have to go along with a policy that is not its first choice. [Agree / Disagree] (2004)
- *Comply with WTO ruling*: The World Trade Organization was established to rule on disputes over trade treaties. If another country files a complaint with the World Trade Organization and it rules against the U.S., as a general rule, should the U.S. (United States) comply with that decision or not? [Yes / No] (2004)
- *Active role*: Do you think it will be best for the future of the country if we take an active part in world affairs or if we stay out of world affairs? [Active part / Stay out] (2014)
- *Active role*: Do you think it will be best for the future of the country if we take an active part in world affairs or if we stay out of world affairs? [Active part / Stay out] (2016)
- *International trade* Overall, do you think international trade is good or bad for the US economy? [Good / Bad] (2018)

- *Active role*: Do you think it will be best for the future of the country if we take an active part in world affairs or if we stay out of world affairs? [Active part / Stay out] (2018)
- *International trade*: Overall, do you think international trade is good or bad for the US economy? [Good / Bad] (2020)
- *Decrease NATO commitment*: Do you feel we should increase our commitment to NATO, keep our commitment what it is now, decrease our commitment to NATO, or withdraw from NATO entirely? [Increase commitment / Keep commitment same / Decrease commitment / Withdraw entirely] (2020)
- *Decrease immigration*: Should legal immigration into the United States be kept at its present level, increased, or decreased? [Kept at present level / Increased / Decreased] (2020)
- *Active role*: Do you think it will be best for the future of the country if we take an active part in world affairs or if we stay out of world affairs? [Active part / Stay out] (2020)
- *Weapons to Ukraine*: In response to the situation involving Russia and Ukraine, would you support or oppose the United States: Sending additional arms and military supplies to the Ukrainian government [Support / Oppose] (2022)
- *Decrease immigration*: Should legal immigration into the United States be kept at its present level, increased, or decreased? [Kept at present level / Increased / Decreased] (2022)
- *Anti-friendshoring*: Which is the bigger priority for the United States when it comes to international supply chains, meaning the network between suppliers and companies to produce and distribute goods to consumers: [Ensuring that supply chains run through countries that are friendly toward the United States, even if this means higher prices for goods at home / Keeping prices as low as possible, even if this means that supply chains run through countries that are unfriendly toward the United States] (2022)
- *Active role*: Do you think it will be best for the future of the country if we take an active part in world affairs or if we stay out of world affairs? [Active part / Stay out] (2022)

In the elite surveys, we measure respondents' estimates of the public's agreement as follows:

- *UN Peacekeeping*: Do you think that more Americans would say that in general, when the United States is asked to be part of a United Nations international peacekeeping force in a troubled part of the world, the U.S. should take part, or that we should leave this job to other countries? Do you think that more than 60% would feel that way? Or do you think views would be about evenly divided?

[Agree - more than 60% / Agree - not more than 60% / About evenly divided / Disagree - not more than 60% / Disagree - more than 60%] (2004)

- *Support UN tax*: Thinking about specific steps that could be taken to strengthen the UN do you think more Americans would favor or oppose giving the UN the power to fund its activities by imposing a small tax on such things as the international sale of arms or oil? Do you think that more than 60% would feel that way? Or do you think views would be about evenly divided? [Favor - more than 60% / Favor - not more than 60% / About evenly divided / Oppose - not more than 60% / Oppose - more than 60%] (2004)
- *Scenario: Stop genocide*: Do you think that more Americans would favor the use of U.S. troops to stop a government from committing genocide and killing large numbers of its own people? Do you think that more than 60% would feel that way? Or do you think views would be about evenly divided? [Favor - more than 60% / Favor - not more than 60% / About evenly divided / Oppose - not more than 60% / Oppose - more than 60%] (2004)
- *Scenario: Protect oil*: Do you think that more Americans would favor the use of U.S. troops to ensure the supply of oil? Do you think that more than 60% would feel that way? Or do you think views would be about evenly divided? [Favor - more than 60% / Favor - not more than 60% / About evenly divided / Oppose - not more than 60% / Oppose - more than 60%] (2004)
- *Participate in Kyoto agreement*: Do you think more Americans would say that the U.S. should or should not participate in the Kyoto agreement to reduce global warming? Do you think that more than 60% would feel that way? Or do you think views would be about evenly divided? [Agree - more than 60% / Agree - not more than 60% / About evenly divided / Disagree - not more than 60% / Disagree - more than 60%] (2004)
- *Participate in ICC*: Do you think more Americans would say that the U.S. should or should not participate in the International Criminal Court that can try individuals for war crimes, genocide, or crimes against humanity if their own country won't try them? Do you think that more than 60% would feel that way? Or do you think views would be about evenly divided? [Agree - more than 60% / Agree - not more than 60% / About evenly divided / Disagree - not more than 60% / Disagree - more than 60%] (2004)
- *Make decisions through UN*: Do you think that more Americans would agree or disagree that: When dealing with international problems, the U.S. should be more willing to make decisions within the

United Nations even if this means that the United States will sometimes have to go along with a policy that is not its first choice. Do you think that more than 60% would feel that way? Or do you think views would be about evenly divided? [Agree - more than 60% / Agree - not more than 60% / About evenly divided / Disagree - not more than 60% / Disagree - more than 60%] (2004)

- *Comply with WTO ruling*: Do you think more Americans would say that if another country files a complaint with the World Trade Organization and it rules against the U.S., as a general rule, the U.S. should comply with that decision or not? Do you think that more than 60% would feel that way? Or do you think views would be about evenly divided? [Agree - more than 60% / Agree - not more than 60% / About evenly divided / Disagree - not more than 60% / Disagree - more than 60%] (2004)
- *Active role*: What percentage of the public do you think favors taking an active part in world affairs? [Open-ended text box] (2014)
- *Active role*: What percentage of the public do you think favors taking an active part in world affairs? [Open-ended text box] (2016)
- *International trade*: If you had to guess, what percent of the American people think international trade is good for the U.S. economy? [Slider from 0-100] (2018)
- *Active role*: If you had to guess, what percent of the American people do you think want to take an active part in world affairs? [Slider from 0-100] (2018)
- *International trade*: If you had to guess, what percent of the American people think international trade is *good* for the U.S. economy? [Slider from 0-100] (2020)
- *Decrease NATO commitment*: If you had to guess, what percent of the American people do you think want our commitment to NATO to be *decreased*? [Slider from 0-100] (2020)
- *Decrease immigration*: If you had to guess, what percent of the American people do you think want legal immigration into the United States to be *decreased*? [Slider from 0-100] (2020)
- *Active role*: If you had to guess, what percent of the American people do you think want to take an *active part* in world affairs? [Slider from 0-100] (2020)
- *Weapons to Ukraine*: If you had to guess, what percent of the American people do you think support sending additional arms and military supplies to the Ukrainian government? [Slider from 0-100] (2022)
- *Decrease immigration*: If you had to guess, what percent of the American people do you think want legal immigration into the United States to be *decreased*? [Slider from 0-100] (2022)

- *Anti-friendshoring*: If you had to guess, what percent of the American people prefer to keep prices as low as possible, even if this means that supply chains run through countries that are unfriendly toward the United States? [Slider from 0-100] (2022)
- *Active role*: If you had to guess, what percent of the American people do you think want to take an *active part* in world affairs? [Slider from 0-100] (2022)

We then calculate misperceptions by calculating the congruence between the public’s level of support for each issue, versus elites’ estimates of the public’s support, using three estimands: the *average* estimated percentage of public support for each issue provided by the elite respondents, alongside the mean percentage of public support for that issue provided by the mass public respondents (weighted based on survey weights); the proportion of elite respondents who *underestimate* the level of public support for each issue, and in supplementary analysis, the *absolute mean error*, which assesses the overall accuracy of the elite perception without taking into account whether elite respondents were under- or -over-estimating.

In most cases, these calculations are relatively straightforward. There are three exceptions. First, in 2004, respondents in the mass public survey were also allowed to indicate they were “Not sure”. For those items, consistent with other studies of elite misperception (e.g. [Pilet et al., 2023](#)), we omit these responses from the denominator when estimating the proportion of public support, although the proportion of respondents who selected those answers is relatively small and their inclusion does not substantively affect our results. Second, for the Decrease NATO commitment item in 2020, we calculate the proportion of respondents in the public sample who indicated they either wanted to decrease commitment, or to withdraw entirely. This offers a more conservative test for detecting elite misperceptions. Third, in 2004, rather than being asked to provide a direct estimate of the public’s level of support for each statement, respondents in the elite survey were given an ordinal scale, with each response option referring to a different range of percentages (e.g. “Agree - more than 60%”). This means that for two of our estimands (the average, and absolute mean error), we convert these elite responses to percentage form by imputing the midpoint percentage within each estimated range of support. Thus, for example, an elite respondent who indicated that the American public would agree with a statement but “not more than 60%”, would have their estimate translated to a 55% (since the theoretical range varies from 50%-60%). Crucially though, our findings are similar regardless of whether these items are included. For our third estimand ( $\text{pr}(\text{Underestimate})$ ), we simply utilize the thresholds provided by the response scale itself. This results in a more conservative test for elite misperceptions, since if the true level of public support for a policy is, e.g. 75%, any elite respondent who selected the “Agree - more than 60%” category would be coded as providing an accurate estimate.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Note that in 2004, as Figure 2 in the main text shows, the average level of support was above the 60% level for 6 of the 8 items, and never dropped below 50%, making  $\text{pr}(\text{Underestimate})$  a conservative estimate of the magnitude of misperception.

## 2.1 Meta-analysis of existing studies of elite misperception

To compare our results in the foreign policy domain with those of other recent studies documenting elite misperceptions of public opinion, we conduct an informal meta-analysis using data from [Broockman and Skovron \(2018\)](#), [Hertel-Fernandez, Mildenerger and Stokes \(2019\)](#), the POLPOP project ([Pilet et al., 2023](#); [Sevenans et al., 2023](#); [Walgrave et al., 2023](#)), and [Furnas and LaPira \(2024\)](#). While differing in terms of the issues they study, the types of elites they sample, and the countries they collect data from, the studies are useful for our purposes because like our studies, they: i) include measures of elites’ perceptions of national-level public opinion (rather than just constituency-level opinion), ii) measure elite perceptions using a percentage estimate.<sup>5</sup> Figure A2, like Figure 2 in the main text, presents the actual level of public support for each policy statement on the x axis, and elites’ estimated level of public support for each policy statement on the y axis, with a linear smoother superimposed in blue.<sup>6</sup>

Figure A2 shows that the scope and nature of the misperceptions varies across studies. In [Furnas and LaPira \(2024\)](#), for example, the degree of misperception at the aggregate level appears to be relatively modest, with the items clustered around the dashed diagonal line. In [Hertel-Fernandez, Mildenerger and Stokes \(2019\)](#), the items are further away from the diagonal, but relatively consistently so, suggesting that respondents tended to underestimate national-level public opinion in their study by a fairly similar amount. Yet in comparison to the data presented in the main text, the slopes of the linear fits are steeper here, and the correlations between actual public opinion and estimated elite opinion in these four studies are significantly stronger ( $r = 0.575$  for [Broockman and Skovron \(2018\)](#),  $r = 0.868$  for [Furnas and LaPira \(2024\)](#),  $r = 0.974$  for [Hertel-Fernandez, Mildenerger and Stokes \(2019\)](#), and  $r = 0.824$  for [Pilet et al. \(2023\)](#)). This analysis suggests that while political elites misperceive public opinion in foreign policy just as they do in domestic political issues, the dynamics of the misperceptions are somewhat different — differences we explore in the main text.

## 2.2 Disentangling stereotyping from projection

### 2.2.1 Formalization of the theory

Under what conditions are observers likely to rely on stereotyping rather than projection? Drawing on the similarity contingency model of social inference from social psychology ([Ames, 2004](#)), we argue misperceptions in public opinion can be attributed to two different strategies of social inference, which observers rely upon

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<sup>5</sup>See, e.g. [Pereira \(2021\)](#) for a different measurement strategy, which asks elite respondents to identify whether an issue is supported by a majority of the public or not.

<sup>6</sup>We focus our analysis on national-level public support (and elites’ estimates thereof), to facilitate direct comparability with our study.

Figure A2: Comparison of the relationship between public opinion and elite perceptions of public opinion in existing studies

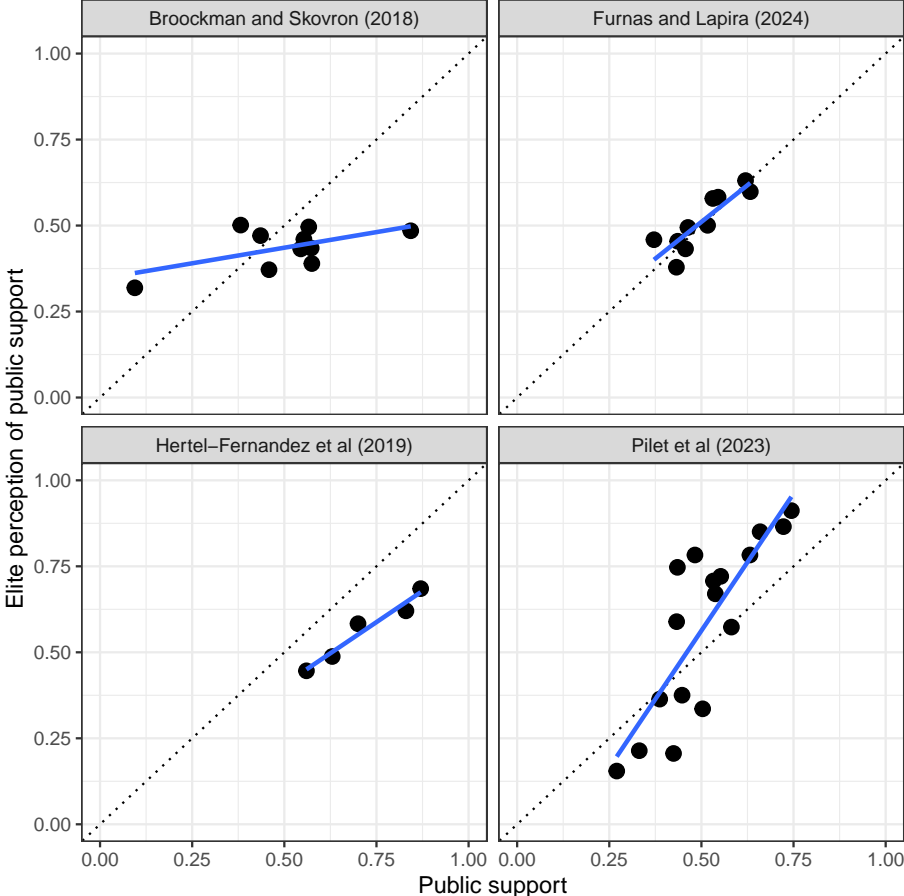
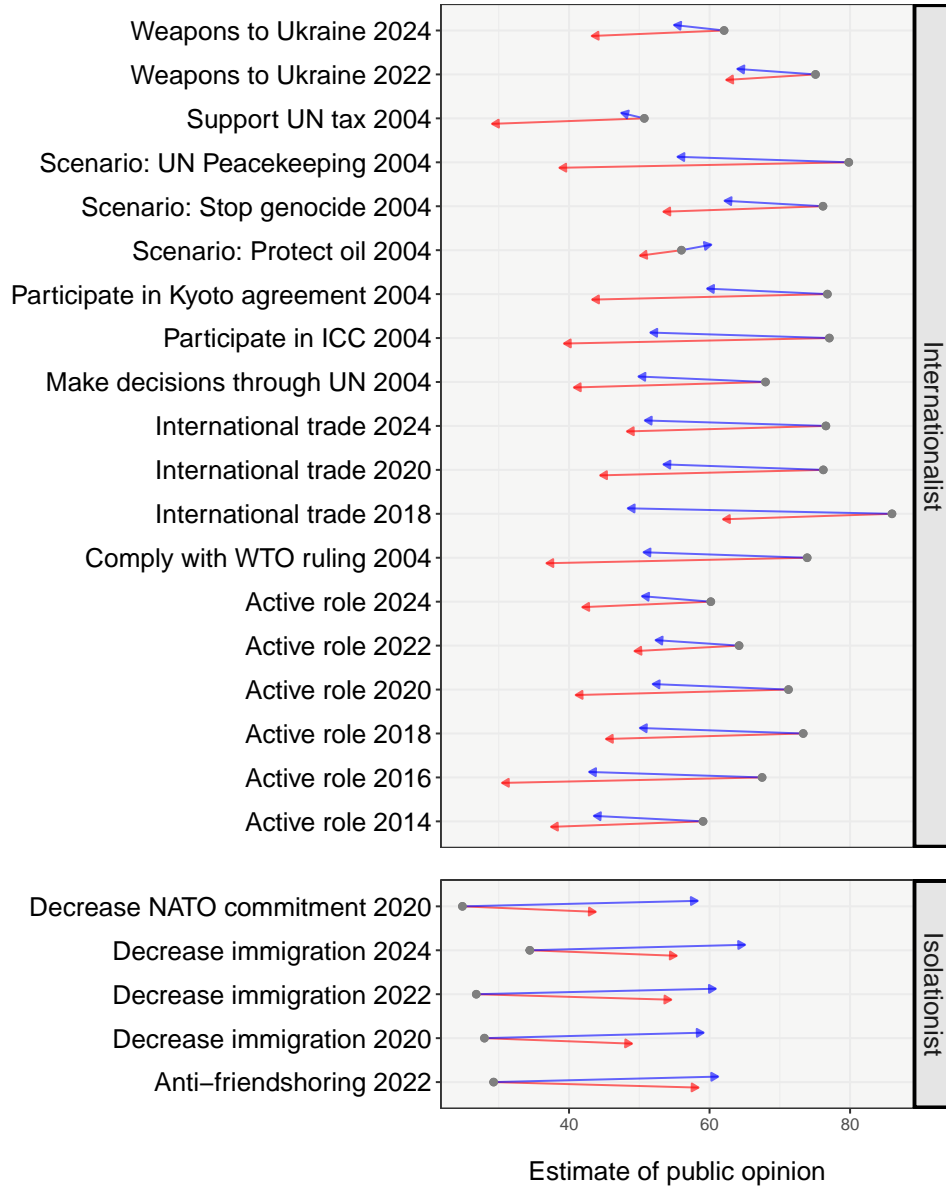


Figure A3: Phase plot comparing misperceptions between supporters and opponents



Note: Figure A3 replicates the radar plots in Figure 3 in the main text as a phase plot instead; actual public opinion is represented by the grey dots, with the blue and red arrows illustrating the average estimates of public opinion provided by elite supporters (in blue) and opponents (in red). The longer the arrows, the greater the misperception. The figure shows that although supporters generally perceive higher levels of public support than opponents do, even supporters underestimate support for internationalist policies, and even opponents overestimate support for isolationist policies, suggesting that stereotyping is also in play.

in different contexts: projection (in which observers presume targets share their views), and stereotyping (in which observers anchor their estimates on prior beliefs about the characteristics or attributes of the group). Which strategy dominates depends on the observer’s perceived distance from the target: projection should dominate when observers perceive targets as being similar to themselves, and stereotyping should dominate when observers perceive targets as being different from themselves.

We can formalize the theory as  $Y_{it} = D_t \times E_i + (1 - D_t) \times S_{It} + \epsilon_i$ , where:

- $Y_{it}$ : observed estimate of target  $t$ ’s preference, by individual  $i$
- $E_i$ : observer  $i$ ’s own preference ( support:  $E_i = 1$ , oppose:  $E_i = 0$ )
- $P_t$ : true level of support by the target
- $D_t$ : perceived similarity between the estimator and target groups, where  $D \in [0, 1]$
- $S_{It}$ : shared stereotype about the target group’s preference, which depends on the policy type ( $I$ ):
  - $S_{1t}$ : Stereotype about the target’s preference for internationalist policies ( $I = 1$ )
  - $S_{0t}$ : Stereotype about the target’s preference for isolationist policies ( $I = 0$ )
- $\epsilon_i \sim N(0, \sigma^2)$ : random error

To apply the framework to the study of misperceptions, the dependent variable changes to  $M_{it}$ , equivalent to  $Y_{it} - P_t$ : if  $M_{it} > 0$ , it indicates overestimating the target’s support; if  $M_{it} < 0$ , it indicates underestimating the target’s support. Our theory presumes that  $D_t < 0.5$ , whereupon stereotyping will dominate projection.

### 2.2.2 Hierarchical modeling approach

This formalization suggests two limitations to the analysis in the main text. First, it is largely at the aggregate level, whereas many of the core assumptions of the theory itself are at the individual-level. Second, although the analysis in the main text focuses on a unidimensional internationalism-isolationism axis, when the public opinion literature in foreign policy raises the prospect of a more nuanced and multidimensional analysis that looks not just at internationalism-isolationism, but specific types of internationalism: militant internationalism (involving the United States engaging with the world through military means) and cooperative internationalism (involving the United States working with allies, partners and through international institutions to solve global problems) (Wittkopf, 1990; Holsti, 2004).<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup>In this sense, cooperative internationalism (CI) encompasses both support for engagement with the international system through cooperative means (e.g. trade, foreign aid) and support for multilateral approaches. In some other work (e.g. Wittkopf, 1986; Chittick, Billingsley and Travis, 1995), unilateralism-multilateralism might be understood as a separate construct or face of internationalism, distinct from cooperative internationalism. For our purposes, however, we follow the dominant perspective in the field and bundle the two together.

We thus study the relative prevalence of projection versus stereotyping at the individual-level in our data by estimating a multilevel model, taking into account the fact that we have respondents providing estimates about multiple issues, nested in multiple years. Formally, we can estimate a set of hierarchical models of the form  $M_{ij} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 E_{ij} + \beta_2 S_{I[j]} + u_{individual[i]} + v_{policy[j]} + w_{year[j]} + \epsilon_{ij}$ , with  $\beta_1$  capturing the weight of projection, and  $\beta_2$  capturing the weight of stereotyping, and  $u_{individual[i]}$ ,  $v_{policy[j]}$ , and  $w_{year[j]}$  denoting individual-specific, policy-specific, and year-specific random effects, respectively.

We already have measures of  $M_{ij}$  (misperception) and  $E_{ij}$  (the elite observer’s own preference). To generate  $S_{I[j]}$ , we code each of the 24 policies along three dimensions, consistent with the three dimensions of foreign policy attitudes in the classic [Holsti](#) and [Wittkopf](#) framework. The first is *internationalism*, defined as outward-looking policies in which the United States is engaged with the rest of the world — using the same codings as in [Figure 2](#) in the main text. The second is *militant internationalism*, referring to policies in which the United States is engaged militarily, either by using force or by sending weapons. The third is *cooperative internationalism*, referring to policies in which the United States is working with partners or through international institutions to solve global problems. Coding policies along all three dimensions allows us to determine whether elites are relying on general stereotypes about the public along an internationalism-isolationism continuum, versus more nuanced stereotypes relating to internationalism’s specific “faces” ([Wittkopf, 1990](#)).

Table A3: Multilevel models: determinants of misperception ( $M_{ij}$ )

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Elite support			9.705*** (0.534)	6.017*** (1.179)	9.898*** (1.166)
Internationalist		-40.641*** (5.059)	-48.009*** (5.957)	-49.245*** (6.072)	-48.227*** (5.389)
MI		4.064 (3.709)	4.543 (4.430)	4.434 (4.515)	3.097 (4.167)
CI		-8.791** (4.172)	-8.196* (4.902)	-8.283* (4.988)	-16.146*** (4.596)
Support x Internationalist				4.673*** (1.331)	
Intercept	-7.837 (5.730)	21.787*** (5.021)	20.671*** (5.791)	21.132*** (5.887)	26.131*** (5.275)
N	13,758	13,758	13,535	13,535	13,535
Log Likelihood	-58,732.510	-58,711.660	-57,571.780	-57,564.420	-57,555.630
AIC	117,475.000	117,439.300	115,161.600	115,148.800	115,133.300
BIC	117,512.700	117,499.600	115,229.200	115,224.000	115,215.900
Model type	One-way ANOVA	Random Intercept	Random Intercept	Random Intercept	Random Slope

\*p < .1; \*\*p < .05; \*\*\*p < .01

Table A3 presents the results. Model 1 presents the results from a simple one-way ANOVA (e.g.  $M_{ij} = \beta_0 + u_{individual[i]} + v_{policy[j]} + w_{year[j]} + \epsilon_{ij}$ ), to simply partition the variation in misperception between individuals, policies, and years. Estimating intraclass correlations on the model parameters suggests that 3.8% of the variation in misperception is at the respondent level, 44.1% from the issue level, and 7.9% from the year-level; in other words, there is 11.6 times more variation in misperception across issues than across respondents. This speaks to the merit of including issue-specific covariates, which we introduce in Model 2; as a result, the remaining variation in misperception at the issue level drops to 11.1%, which is a sign these covariates do a good (although not exhaustive) job of capturing issue-specific characteristics. We see statistically significant negative coefficients for multilateral and internationalist policies, with a substantial effect size for internationalist policies in particular. Since positive values of  $M_{ij}$  correspond to overestimates, this implies that respondents underestimate public support for internationalist policies by 41 percentage points compared to isolationist ones. Model 2 thus finds strong evidence in favor of stereotyping. Model 3 tests if this evidence holds when we add our projection measure. The projection measure is statistically significant and positive: supporters overestimate by 9.7 percentage points compared to opponents. Yet the internationalism coefficient remains significant as well, and increases in size: respondents underestimate public support for internationalist policies by 48 percentage points compared to isolationist ones. Thus, although respondents appear to be utilizing both stereotyping and projection strategies, the effects of stereotyping swamp that of projection. Models 4 and 5 complicate the analysis (with model 4 adding an interaction between projection and our internationalist issue type, and model 5 letting the effects of projection vary across policies by adding a random slope on  $E_{ij}$ ), but the central intuition remains the same.

As Kertzer and Renshon (2022, 538) note, surveys and experiments on elite samples in IR inherently involve some degree of “extrapolation” given that most elite respondents “are still removed from the high-ranking members of the executive branch who are the primary decision makers in most instances of foreign policy decision-making.” Nonetheless, we can exploit the variation of types of elites and elite experience in our data to test whether respondents from the executive or legislative branch samples, or who have experience working for the US government, display significantly different patterns of misperception. Table A4 explores this question in five steps. Model 1 simply replicates Model 3 from Table A3 as a baseline from which to interpret the results that follow. Model 2 adds dichotomous variables indicating whether respondents come from the executive or legislative branch subsamples of our data. Both coefficient estimates are substantively small and not statistically significant. Model 3 tests for interaction effects between these subsample dummy variables and the internationalist measure, thereby testing whether the degree of misperception on internationalist items significantly differs between respondents from these elite subsamples versus respondents

from the broader elite subsamples. The interaction terms are not statistically significant. Model 4 adds a dichotomous variable indicating whether respondents have had experience working in the US government – an important consideration given that, as noted in Appendix §1, many of the respondents in our sample who are currently in positions out of government previously held high-level government positions. It is not statistically significant, indicating that government experience is not associated with reduced misperceptions.<sup>8</sup> Model 5 interacts the government experience dummy variable with the the internationalism measure. As before, we fail to find heterogeneous effects. In sum, then, we find no evidence that elite misperceptions vary with the type of foreign policy elite, or whether the respondent has US government experience.

Table A4: Multilevel models measuring misperception by elite type and experience

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Elite support	9.705*** (0.534)	9.677*** (0.534)	9.673*** (0.534)	6.690*** (0.760)	6.705*** (0.761)
Internationalist	-48.009*** (5.957)	-47.939*** (5.961)	-47.864*** (5.962)	-47.954*** (5.892)	-47.797*** (5.898)
MI	4.543 (4.430)	4.547 (4.432)	4.559 (4.433)	8.126 (7.171)	8.130 (7.170)
CI	-8.196* (4.902)	-8.157* (4.905)	-8.143* (4.905)	-10.854 (10.161)	-10.847 (10.160)
Executive		-1.028 (0.649)	-0.071 (1.344)		
Legislative		-0.921 (0.609)	-1.013 (1.516)		
Executive x Internationalist			-1.193 (1.468)		
Legislative x Internationalist			0.094 (1.608)		
Gov. Exp.				0.211 (0.360)	0.489 (0.616)
Gov. Exp. x Internationalist					-0.400 (0.719)
Intercept	20.671*** (5.791)	20.801*** (5.796)	20.741*** (5.796)	19.751*** (4.911)	19.631*** (4.915)
N	13,535	13,535	13,535	9,764	9,764
Log Likelihood	-57,571.780	-57,568.700	-57,565.670	-41,232.680	-41,231.940
AIC	115,161.600	115,159.400	115,157.300	82,485.370	82,485.880
BIC	115,229.200	115,242.000	115,255.000	82,557.230	82,564.930

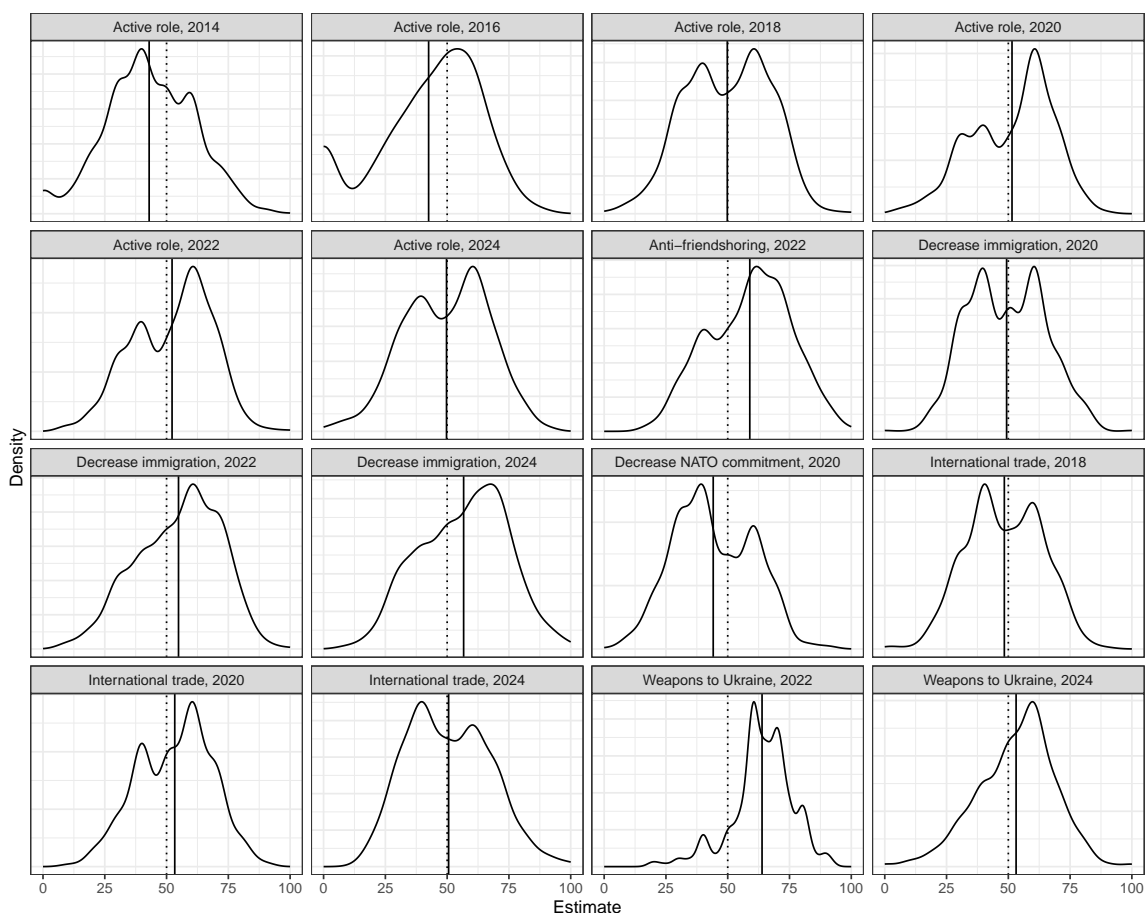
\*p < .1; \*\*p < .05; \*\*\*p < .01

<sup>8</sup>The sample sizes in Models 4-5 are smaller due to the absence of a government experience variable in the 2004 survey wave.

### 2.3 Results not due to satisficing

Figure 2 shows that elite estimates of public opinion are less extreme than actual levels of public support, with elites overestimating support for isolationist policies and underestimating support for internationalist ones. One alternative interpretation of these results are that elite respondents don't actually have an isolationist stereotype of the public, but rather, simply perceive the public as being split down the middle. A related interpretation is that our elite respondents are not taking the study seriously and are simply satisficing, such that their estimates are peaking around 50% (which would be functionally equivalent to a "Don't Know" response).

Figure A4: Elite estimates of public opinion are not peaked at 50%



Note: the dotted vertical line denotes estimates of 50%; the solid vertical line denotes the mean estimate

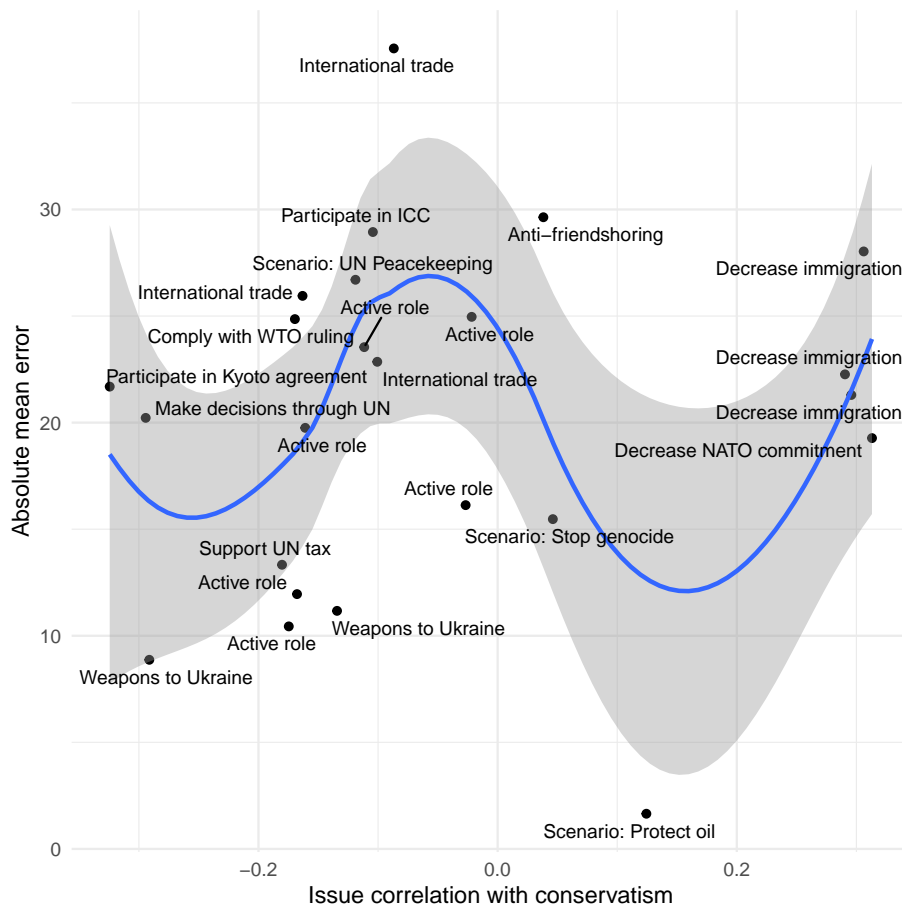
An examination of the actual distributions of elite estimates for the continuous items in Figure A4, however, reveals that the distributions are not peaked at 50%. In fact, many of the distributions of estimates appear to be multimodal. More formally, we can use Shapiro-Wilks tests to formally reject the null hypothesis of normality for each of the items, and Silverman's test for multimodality rejects the null hypothesis of 1 or

fewer modes at the 95% level for 6 of the 16 items, and at the 90% level for 10 of the 16. This multimodality showcases the value of the individual-level stereotype measure in the experiment: although elites tend to overestimate support for isolationist policies and underestimate support for internationalist policies, elites vary in this regard, and the analysis in the experiment uses this individual-variation in elites' stereotypes of the public to explain variation in the accuracy of elite perceptions of public opinion.

Finally, it does not appear that these patterns are the result of satisficing, in which 50% estimates are a simply "Don't Know" answer in disguise. Respondents were allowed to skip questions, which we can treat as a proxy for a Don't Know response. On average, the proportion of respondents who skipped questions is quite low (mean: 6%), and the answers shown here are from the respondents who did answer. This, it does not appear that elites consistently see the public as being split down the middle in foreign policy, or are simply engaging in satisficing.

## 2.4 Misperceptions in foreign policy are not biased in a conservative direction

Figure A5: No significant association between prediction accuracy and issue conservatism



The analysis in the main text interprets these results as evidence of elites holding an isolationist stereotype about the public. Another potential interpretation is that elites perceive the public as more conservative than it actually is, much as previous studies have found that elites hold a conservative view of the American public in domestic politics. While it is true that three of the questions where elites overestimate public support the most are policies associated with Donald Trump, there are some limits to that interpretation here. For each of the twenty questions about which we have measures of elite estimates of public opinion, we estimate  $cor(X_{m,i}, Ideology_m)$ , the correlation between the public’s views about issue  $i$ , and the public’s self-identified political ideology, coded such that higher values indicate more conservative views. Consistent with foreign policy being less ideologically sorted than domestic policy, most of the questions here display relatively modest correlations with ideology: nearly three-quarters of the items have ideological correlations  $-0.2 < r < 0.2$ . In contrast, of the items [Broockman and Skovron \(2018\)](#) study in the 2014 CCES, none display ideological correlations this weak, and the median correlation is three times stronger ( $r = -0.4$ ). The issues we study here therefore do not fall as cleanly on ideological lines as the domestic social issues showcased in prior work. Moreover, [Figure A5](#) plots issue correlations with political ideology on the x-axis, and the absolute mean error on the y-axis.<sup>9</sup> Interestingly, there appears to be no clear association between the correlation coefficients and the absolute mean error: it is not the case that elite perceptions become more accurate on conservative policies and less accurate on liberal ones, for example.

### 3 Survey experiment supplementary results

Supplementary analysis in [Tables A5-A6](#) reveal a striking degree of consensus about NATO among our respondents, showing that the effect of a NATO endorsement doesn’t significantly differ between Trump supporters and non-Trump supporters; even individuals who want to withdraw from NATO are nonetheless more likely to support an intervention if it receives NATO’s seal of approval!<sup>10</sup> The only heterogeneous effects evident in our results are in the first two columns of [Table A5](#), and refer not to the content of respondents’ partisan or foreign policy preferences, but their level of political interest and knowledge: more politically sophisticated members of the public respond more to the NATO endorsement than do less politically sophisticated members of the public.

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<sup>9</sup>More formally, the y-axis captures the overall level of accuracy of the elite perception without taking its directionality into account ( $|\frac{\sum_{j=1}^n Y_{e,i,j}}{N} - 100 \frac{\sum_{j=1}^n w_j X_{m,i,j}}{\sum_{j=1}^n w_j}|$ ).

<sup>10</sup>This provides one reason why our findings differ from an innovative study by [Dellmuth et al. \(2022\)](#), who compare observational data from elites and publics to show that citizens express less confidence in IOs than political elites do. Our experiment suggests that even respondents who have less confidence in IOs are nonetheless no less sensitive to IO cues. See also [Appendix §3.4](#), which presents supplementary results on perceptions of legitimacy.

Table A5: Heterogeneous treatment effects: public sample

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
NATO Endorsement	0.033 (0.049)	0.054 (0.041)	0.133*** (0.031)	0.133*** (0.026)	0.105*** (0.036)	0.068 (0.052)	0.079 (0.063)
Age 30-44	0.044 (0.030)	0.035 (0.029)	0.046 (0.030)	0.031 (0.029)	0.042 (0.028)	0.034 (0.029)	0.027 (0.028)
Age 45-59	0.030 (0.030)	0.053* (0.029)	0.047 (0.030)	0.044 (0.030)	0.040 (0.028)	0.043 (0.029)	0.053* (0.029)
Age 60-74	0.030 (0.032)	0.044 (0.030)	0.049 (0.031)	0.039 (0.031)	0.014 (0.029)	0.043 (0.030)	0.045 (0.030)
Age 75+	0.064 (0.041)	0.100** (0.040)	0.099** (0.041)	0.089** (0.041)	0.040 (0.038)	0.082** (0.040)	0.109*** (0.039)
Some college	0.012 (0.026)	0.018 (0.025)	0.024 (0.026)	0.012 (0.025)	0.005 (0.024)	0.022 (0.025)	0.012 (0.025)
College/university	-0.050** (0.024)	-0.031 (0.023)	-0.036 (0.024)	-0.034 (0.023)	-0.041* (0.022)	-0.035 (0.023)	-0.051** (0.022)
Postgraduate	-0.011 (0.032)	0.003 (0.032)	0.016 (0.032)	0.004 (0.032)	-0.009 (0.029)	0.012 (0.031)	-0.004 (0.030)
Male	0.004 (0.019)	0.020 (0.019)	0.025 (0.019)	0.028 (0.019)	-0.010 (0.018)	0.018 (0.018)	0.037** (0.018)
White	-0.059*** (0.021)	-0.050** (0.020)	-0.047** (0.021)	-0.054*** (0.021)	-0.060*** (0.019)	-0.058*** (0.020)	-0.051*** (0.020)
Political interest	-0.012 (0.045)						
Political interest x NATO+	0.158*** (0.060)						
Political knowledge		-0.013 (0.037)					
Political knowledge x NATO+		0.113** (0.051)					
Party ID			-0.026 (0.038)				
Party ID x NATO+			0.024 (0.053)				
Trump favorability				-0.006 (0.031)			
Trump favorability x NATO+				0.012 (0.043)			
MI					0.286*** (0.042)		
MI x NATO+					0.052 (0.057)		
CI						0.068* (0.040)	
CI x NATO+						0.079 (0.056)	
NATO support							0.072*** (0.016)
NATO support x NATO+							0.022 (0.021)
Intercept	0.586*** (0.041)	0.550*** (0.037)	0.546*** (0.035)	0.554*** (0.033)	0.432*** (0.035)	0.494*** (0.045)	0.341*** (0.055)
N	925	996	943	967	968	973	976
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.089	0.068	0.069	0.063	0.167	0.077	0.117

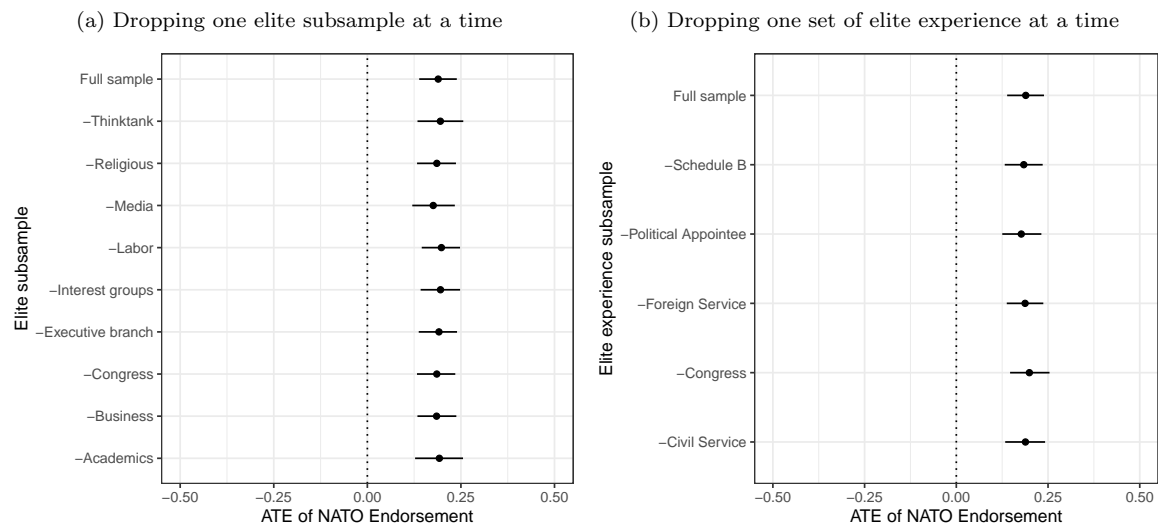
\*p &lt; .1; \*\*p &lt; .05; \*\*\*p &lt; .01

Table A6: Heterogeneous treatment effects: elite sample

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)		
NATO Endorsement	0.204*** (0.038)	0.191*** (0.030)	0.134** (0.067)	0.311 (0.207)	0.162 (0.145)	0.186*** (0.028)	0.182*** (0.028)
Age 30-44	0.051 (0.081)	0.083 (0.077)	0.082 (0.073)	0.089 (0.077)	0.099 (0.074)	0.086 (0.077)	0.082 (0.078)
Age 45-59	0.072 (0.080)	0.078 (0.077)	0.068 (0.072)	0.086 (0.077)	0.086 (0.074)	0.089 (0.077)	0.080 (0.079)
Age 60-74	0.037 (0.080)	0.027 (0.077)	0.029 (0.072)	0.039 (0.077)	0.047 (0.074)	0.035 (0.077)	0.027 (0.079)
Age 75+	0.007 (0.095)	0.008 (0.092)	0.010 (0.086)	0.010 (0.091)	0.049 (0.088)	0.011 (0.092)	0.006 (0.093)
Some college	0.303** (0.132)	0.184 (0.320)	0.076 (0.297)	0.175 (0.315)	0.174 (0.303)	0.183 (0.317)	0.182 (0.317)
College/university	0.052 (0.046)	-0.056 (0.299)	-0.090 (0.278)	-0.048 (0.295)	-0.081 (0.283)	-0.041 (0.296)	-0.046 (0.297)
Postgraduate		-0.104 (0.298)	-0.167 (0.276)	-0.105 (0.293)	-0.143 (0.281)	-0.098 (0.294)	-0.104 (0.295)
Male	0.013 (0.033)	0.020 (0.031)	-0.024 (0.029)	0.016 (0.030)	0.025 (0.029)	0.014 (0.030)	0.013 (0.031)
White	-0.032 (0.045)	-0.032 (0.042)	-0.026 (0.039)	-0.020 (0.042)	-0.020 (0.040)	-0.027 (0.042)	-0.028 (0.042)
Party ID	-0.025 (0.064)						
Party ID x NATO+	-0.079 (0.093)						
Trump favorability		0.006 (0.092)					
Trump favorability x NATO+		-0.015 (0.119)					
MI			0.395*** (0.071)				
MI x NATO+			0.078 (0.106)				
CI				0.248 (0.169)			
CI x Endorsement				-0.120 (0.209)			
NATO Support					0.149*** (0.029)		
NATO Support x NATO+					0.009 (0.045)		
Executive						-0.063 (0.083)	
Executive x NATO+						-0.029 (0.134)	
Legislative							-0.063 (0.088)
Legislative x NATO+							0.077 (0.118)
Intercept	0.438*** (0.091)	0.517* (0.306)	0.383 (0.288)	0.260 (0.345)	0.054 (0.305)	0.510* (0.304)	0.525* (0.304)
N	420	472	475	477	478	479	479
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.091	0.101	0.212	0.107	0.180	0.100	0.099

\*p &lt; .1; \*\*p &lt; .05; \*\*\*p &lt; .01

Figure A6: Elite results robust to composition of elite sample



Panel (a) shows the average treatment effect of a NATO endorsement for the full elite sample, along with the average treatment effect when a given subsample of elites (e.g. academics, business leaders, etc.) are dropped from the analysis, showing the results are highly stable. Panel (b) presents a similar analysis, but this time dropping elites with particular types of experiences (e.g. those who served in the civil service, those who served as political appointees, etc.) from the analysis, once again showing the stability of the results. The two analyses differ in that the elite subsamples listed in panel a are mutually exclusive categories (because of the CCGA sampling strategy described above), whereas the elite experiences listed in panel b are not, such that some elites have experience in multiple categories. All estimates shown with 95% bootstrapped confidence intervals.

Figure A7: Elite misperceptions of elite opinion

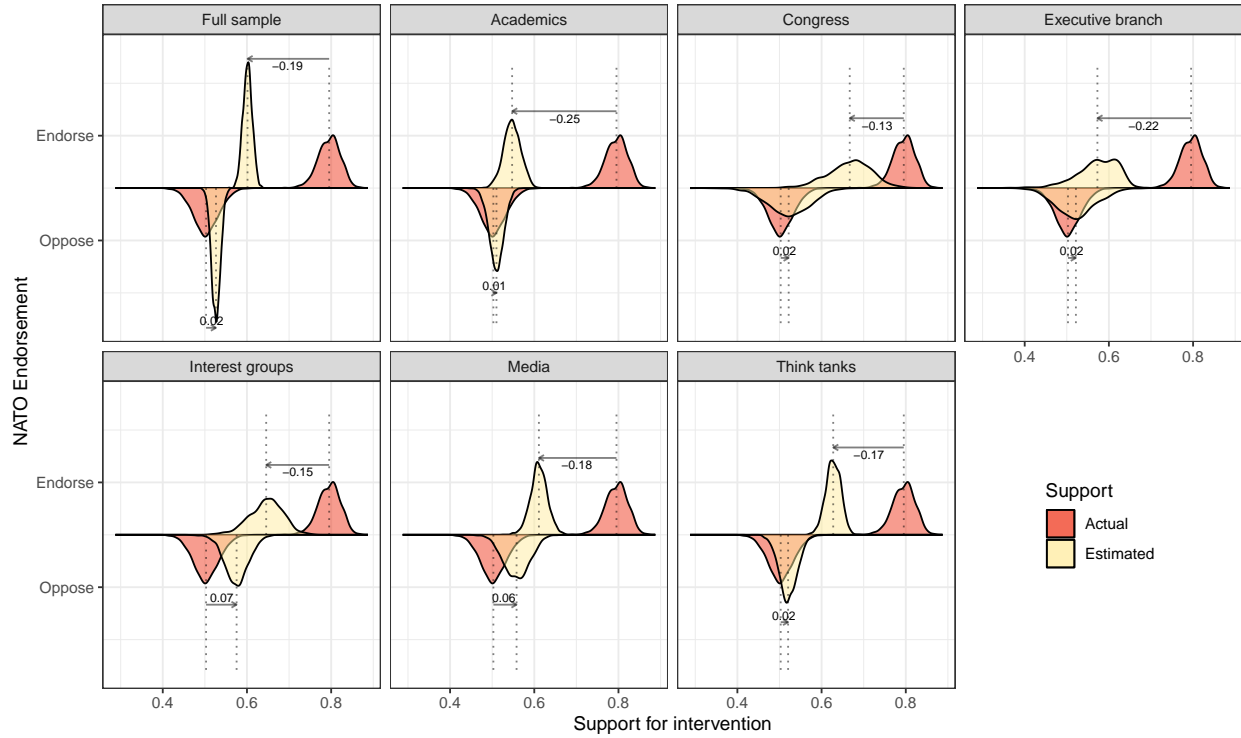
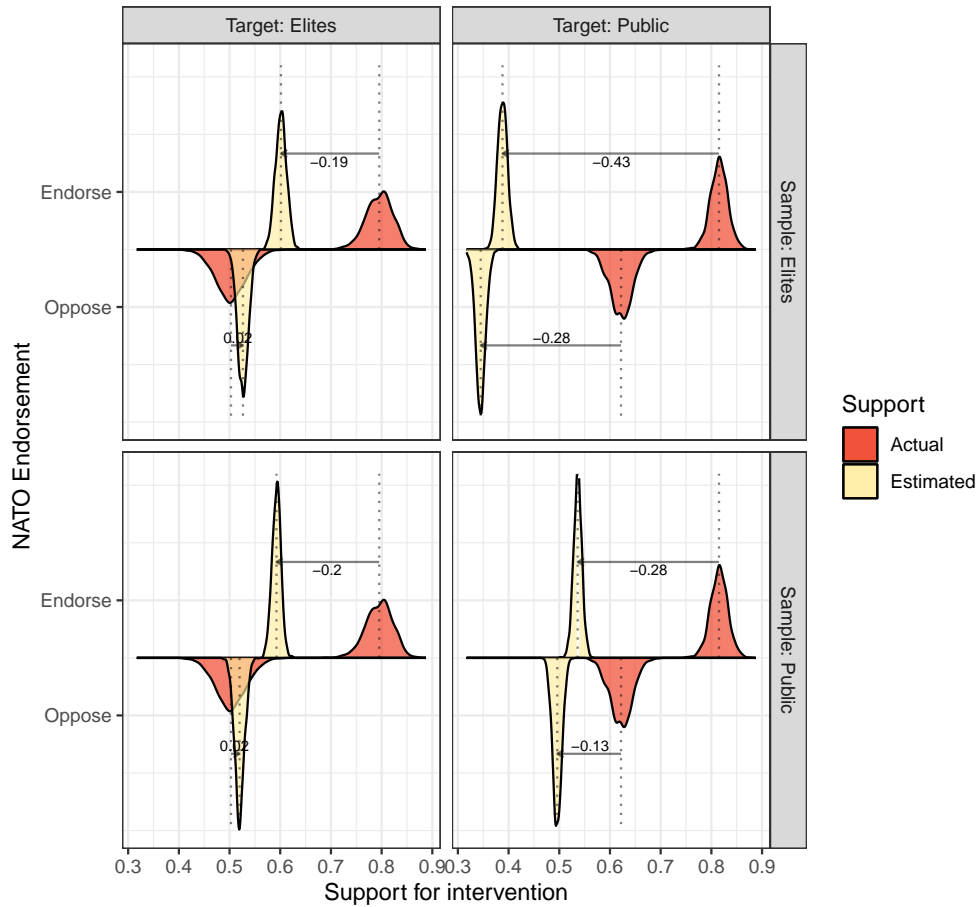


Figure A7 presents split-density distributions of the average actual level of elite support for the intervention (in red), and elites' estimated level of elite support for the intervention (in turquoise), calculated using  $B = 1500$  bootstraps. The distributions in the top half of each panel depict results from the NATO Endorse condition, and the distributions in the bottom half of each panel depict results in the NATO Oppose condition. The arrows indicate the difference between the actual level of elite support in a given condition, and elites' estimated level of elite support. The results show that across all subsamples of elites, elites estimate the level of elite support in the NATO Oppose condition fairly accurately, but underestimate the level of elite support in the NATO Endorse condition. As a result, because elites misperceive public opinion in both the treatment *and* control conditions, and misperceive elite opinion only in the treatment condition, the ATE on elite misperceptions for elites is actually larger than for the public, even though the absolute level of misperception within each treatment condition is larger in the public samples.

Figure A8: Elites misperceive public opinion more than the public itself does



The split-density plots in Figure A8 compare elite and public misperceptions of public opinion. The top-right hand panel replicates the results from the main text, showing that elites greatly misperceive NATO’s effect on the public, and that this misperception is largely driven by underestimating the popularity of the intervention when NATO endorses it. However, the other three panels let us put this misperception in comparative context. They show two interesting findings: first, as a comparison of the top and bottom panels in the right-hand column show, elites misperceive public opinion to a greater extent than the public itself does (the public’s perceptions of public opinion are 15 percentage points closer in each treatment condition than elites’ perceptions are). It is therefore unlikely to be the case that our elite results are simply an artifact of second-order beliefs being difficult to accurately estimate, but reflect a broader disconnect. Second, both elites and the public share strikingly similar perceptions about elite opinion; they both underestimate the popularity of the mission in the NATO endorse condition among elites, but not by as much as they misperceive public opinion.

Figure A9 replicates the results from the main text, but this time presenting cell means rather than average treatment effects: the top half of each panel shows results for the NATO endorse condition, and the bottom half of each panel for the NATO oppose condition; the average level of the public’s support in a given condition is once again displayed in red, and elites’ estimate of the level of public support in a given condition is shown in light yellow. Beginning with the full sample results in the top-left panel, the plot shows that elites significantly underestimate the popularity of the intervention in both the NATO Endorse and NATO Oppose conditions (consistent with elites underestimating how internationalist the public is in general), but that the degree of misperception is larger in the NATO Endorse condition than the NATO

Oppose. On average, elites underestimate the popularity of an intervention with NATO’s blessing by 43 percentage points, while underestimating the popularity of an intervention without NATO’s blessing by 28 percentage points. These findings suggest that elites underestimate both the public’s internationalism, but also its multilateralism.

### 3.1 Generating the stereotype measure

As discussed in the text, we generate our stereotype measure using two items from the 2018 elite survey. The first asks respondents to estimate the proportion of Americans who believe the United States should play an active role in world politics. Foreign policy elites in our sample significantly underestimate just how internationalist the public is more generally, with 97% of our elite sample as a whole assuming the public is less supportive of internationalism than our data suggests; less than half (45%) of elites in our sample correctly perceive that a majority of the public is internationalist. We find similar results within each of our elite subsamples: 100% of our executive branch sample, and 90% of our congressional sample, for example, underestimate the public’s level of support for internationalism. It is therefore not the case that elites who are incentivized to more accurately perceive public opinion have more accurate assessments of it than those who don’t.

The second item asks respondents to estimate the proportion of Americans who agree that international trade is good for the United States. Foreign policy elites in our sample also significantly underestimate just how supportive Americans are of international trade, with over 99% of our elite sample as a whole assuming the public is less supportive of trade than our data suggests; only 44% of elites in our sample correctly perceive that a majority of the public sees trade as benefiting the U.S. economy. As before, since elites are heavily supportive of trade (99% of our foreign policy opinion leaders agree trade helps the economy as a whole), we once again find evidence of a strong pluralistic ignorance effect. To produce our internationalist stereotype measure for the analyses below, we simply calculate the mean of each of these two proportion estimates. The two estimates are moderately correlated with one another ( $r = 0.45$ ), and thus appear to tap into the same latent construct; if we re-estimate the models in Appendix §2.3.2 below, but using just the active role estimate, or just the international trade estimate, as our proxy for elites’ stereotypes, the model fit is inferior to when the additive scale is used, suggesting that the results are not being driven by one of these items rather than the other. Although both indicator measures used to generate the stereotype variable are scaled in same direction, the results are unlikely to simply be an artifact of acquiescence bias or survey response styles, given that we obtain similar findings in the observational data analysis in the main text that also includes items scaled in the opposite direction.

Figure A9: Elites underestimate the power of NATO endorsements more than the power of NATO opposition

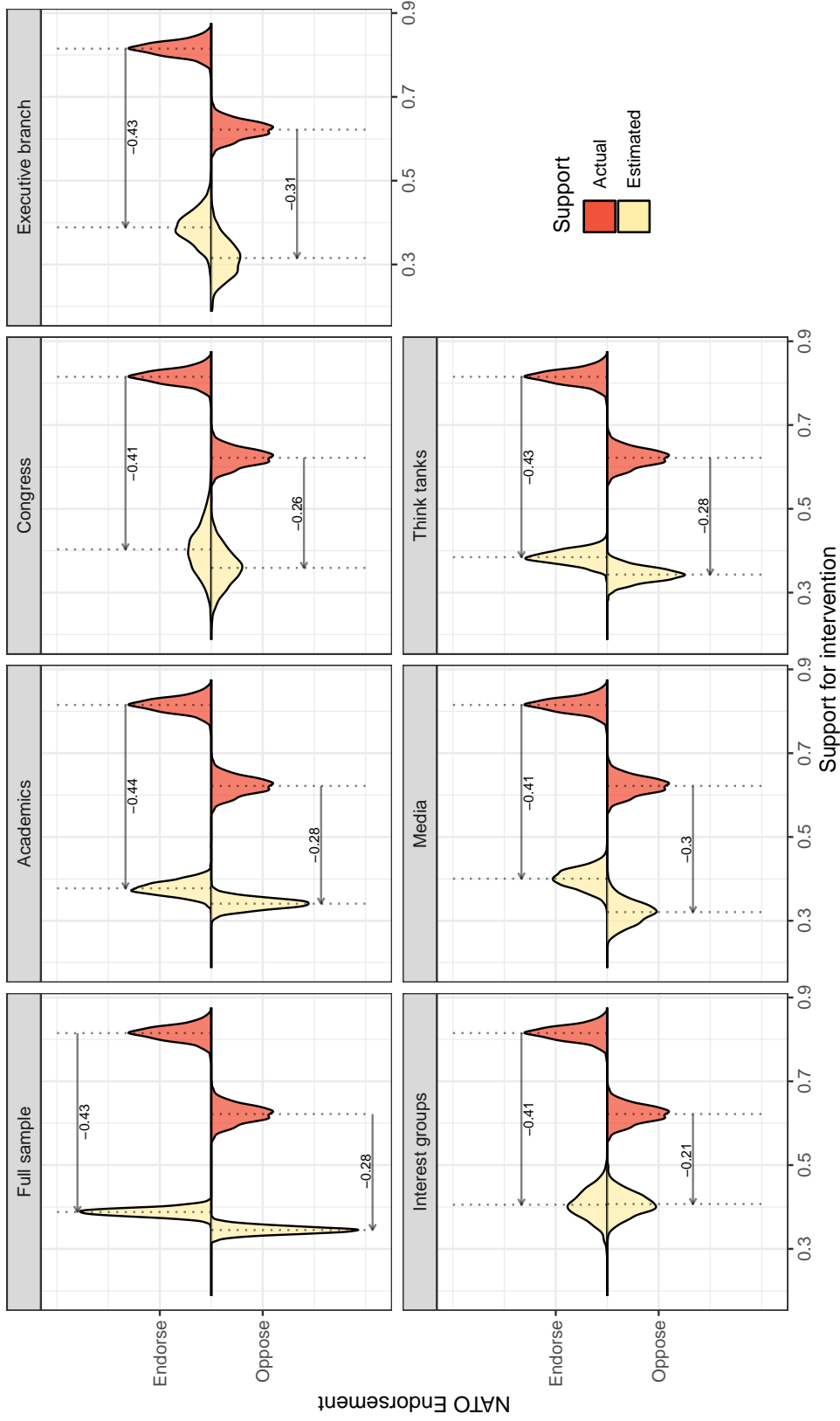


Figure A9 presents splint-density distributions of the average actual level of public support for the intervention (in red), and elites' estimated level of public support for the intervention (in yellow). The results show that across all subsamples of elites, elites significantly underestimate the popularity of the intervention within both treatment conditions, but the degree of misperception is larger in the NATO Endorse condition, suggesting elites particularly underestimate the popularity of NATO endorsements. These findings suggest that elites underestimate both the public's internationalism and its multilateralism.

### 3.2 Studying elite misperceptions in a multivariate context

To study elite misperceptions in a multivariate context, we therefore estimate a series of linear regression models, estimating the individual-level correlates of elite misperceptions of public support for the intervention. Since misperception can occur both because of misperceptions in the NATO endorse condition, and misperceptions in the NATO oppose condition, we estimate separate models within each treatment condition, in Table A7; the dependent variable in each model is the degree of misperception, calculated by taking the absolute value of the difference between the average level of public support in each treatment condition, and elites' estimates of the level of public support in each treatment condition. Although misperceptions here are calculated using the absolute value (such that they can refer to both over- and under-estimates), as Figure 4 in the main text shows, for most of our respondents it refers to underestimates.

Models 1 and 4 in Table A7 present the effects of basic demographic characteristics. It shows that more educated elites tend to misperceive public opinion to a greater degree; because of the skewed distribution of education in our elite sample, education is operationalized here using a system of dummy variables, where the reference category are elites who had some college or less. Respondents with university degrees significantly misperceive the level of public support in the NATO oppose condition, and respondents with graduate degrees significantly misperceive the level of public support in both treatment conditions. Men slightly more accurately perceive public opinion in the NATO Endorse condition than women do, and our dummy variable shows that White respondents tend to be relatively more accurate in the NATO Oppose condition and relatively less accurate in the NATO Endorse condition. Models 2 and 5 add a series of theoretically relevant individual differences, capturing respondents' preferred level of US commitment to NATO, their level of militant internationalism (MI), their level of cooperative internationalism (CI), and their attitudes towards Donald Trump.<sup>11</sup> There's some evidence that respondents who want the US to be more committed to NATO more accurately estimate the popularity of the intervention under a NATO endorsement, but the effect is substantively small. More hawkish respondents, who are higher in MI, similarly more accurately estimate the popularity of the mission in the control. Models 3 and 6 add a series of dichotomous variables for each elite subsample (using the executive branch subsample as the reference category), reconfirming the analyses from the main text showing all of the elite subsamples misperceive public opinion at a similar rate. A Wald test confirms that the inclusion of these elite subsample covariates does not significantly improve model fit ( $F = 0.972$ ,  $p < 0.44$  in NATO oppose condition;  $F = 0.247$ ,  $p < 0.94$  in NATO endorse condition).

In Table 1 of the main text, we conduct a similar analysis, but including an isolationist stereotype

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<sup>11</sup>Militant internationalism (MI) is calculated here using factor scores from an Item Response Theory (IRT) model capturing respondents' expressed willingness to send US troops across a range of eight intervention scenarios, and cooperative internationalism (CI) from an item asking respondents whether it's more effective for the US to work with other countries and agreements when trying to its achieve foreign policy goals, rather than tackling them on its own.

measure. Two points here are important to note. First, Wald tests confirm the importance of this variable ( $F = 18.79$ ,  $p < 0.01$  in the NATO oppose condition;  $F = 38.62$ ,  $p < 0.001$  in the NATO endorse condition). Second, an alternate Bayesian-inspired theoretical model from [Chaudoin \(2014\)](#) argues that IO cues should have the greatest effect among individuals with the weakest priors: individuals who are strong internationalists will want to intervene even without an IO cue, and individuals who are strong isolationists won't want to intervene even with an IO cue, whereas individuals in the middle will be the most likely to be moved. To test whether this alternative framework about the public's first-order preferences also applies here with respect to elites' second-order beliefs, we replicate models 3 and 6 from Table 1, but adding a quadratic term for elites' stereotypes, since elites' images of the public's general orientation towards internationalism or isolationism can be thought of as equivalent to elites' priors about the public's preferences. The quadratic terms are not statistically significant, suggesting that this alternative framework does not apply to elites' second-order beliefs – perhaps consistent with arguments by [Mercer \(2012\)](#) about the cognitive challenges associated with higher-order beliefs.

### 3.3 Stereotyping dominates projection in the experiment

The analysis in Table 1 finds strong individual-level evidence in favor of our proposed stereotyping mechanism: the more an isolationist stereotype of the public that elite respondents have, the more they misperceive public opinion in the experiment. We can also test for projection effects. Table A8 regresses elites' degree of misperception of public opinion on a set of demographic controls, as well as two key focal variables: our isolationist stereotype measure (i.e.  $S_{it}$  from our earlier formalization), and whether respondents themselves supported the intervention or not (i.e.  $E_i$ ). The first two columns operationalize misperception as we do in Table A7 and Table 1: as an absolute value, such that larger values indicate greater errors. To render the projection results more interpretable, the last two columns operationalize misperception directionally as the extent to which respondents underestimate public support, such that larger values indicate greater levels of underestimation, and negative values indicate lower levels. The results in Table A8 show that although our respondents display projection effects (supporters make more accurate estimates of public opinion than opponents do, because they underestimate public support to a lesser degree), the effects of projection are swamped by that of the isolationism stereotype – consistent with our findings from the observational analysis in the main text.

Table A7: Correlates of elite misperception of public support for the intervention

	NATO Oppose			NATO Endorse		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Age 30-44	0.140 (5.066)	-0.110 (5.064)	-0.132 (5.118)	-5.463 (5.904)	-3.303 (6.003)	-5.853 (6.172)
Age 45-59	0.411 (5.022)	-0.970 (5.042)	0.961 (5.187)	1.637 (5.866)	2.317 (5.862)	0.934 (6.319)
Age 60-74	6.340 (5.035)	5.975 (5.040)	6.440 (5.169)	-2.830 (5.869)	-0.861 (5.870)	-3.596 (6.349)
Age 75+	3.609 (6.020)	3.754 (6.032)	3.093 (6.157)	1.062 (7.038)	1.171 (6.973)	0.470 (7.466)
College/university	35.793*** (10.608)	32.719*** (10.664)	35.552*** (10.702)	11.972 (8.437)	14.610* (8.376)	12.448 (8.587)
Postgraduate	33.231*** (10.282)	30.849*** (10.302)	31.666*** (10.360)	16.493** (7.913)	16.620** (7.821)	17.478** (8.315)
Male	-1.846 (2.173)	-0.932 (2.229)	-2.339 (2.192)	-6.952*** (2.384)	-6.926*** (2.486)	-7.163*** (2.440)
White	-6.573** (3.167)	-6.076* (3.246)	-6.827** (3.194)	9.415*** (2.976)	9.312*** (3.056)	9.514*** (3.035)
Party ID	1.422 (3.194)	2.367 (4.144)	2.193 (3.320)	1.347 (3.219)	4.956 (4.233)	1.185 (3.369)
NATO commitment		1.612 (1.703)			-3.452* (1.951)	
MI		-8.580** (4.249)			-1.520 (4.669)	
CI		-3.111 (8.343)			9.657 (5.923)	
Trump favorability		2.351 (5.877)			-2.470 (5.334)	
Academic			-0.425 (4.363)			2.546 (5.185)
Congress			-2.572 (5.907)			1.693 (6.518)
Interest groups			-7.378 (4.927)			5.817 (6.054)
Media			-1.827 (5.019)			3.285 (5.523)
Think Tanks			-2.997 (4.438)			3.601 (5.212)
Intercept	0.572 (11.222)	4.688 (14.829)	4.308 (12.158)	26.506** (10.606)	26.809* (13.731)	23.250* (12.304)
N	242	236	242	175	170	175
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.047	0.048	0.046	0.119	0.105	0.099

\*p < .1; \*\*p < .05; \*\*\*p < .01. Positive values = greater misperceptions.

Reference categories: some college or less, executive branch sample

Table A8: Comparing stereotyping and projection effects

	Abs. Misperception		Underestimation	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Age 30-44	1.937 (4.763)	-10.211* (5.319)	1.766 (5.126)	-10.300* (5.328)
Age 45-59	1.912 (4.719)	-2.003 (5.275)	1.259 (5.079)	-2.022 (5.284)
Age 60-74	6.777 (4.724)	-5.857 (5.249)	6.519 (5.085)	-5.899 (5.258)
Age 75+	6.766 (5.680)	-1.529 (6.282)	6.445 (6.113)	-1.576 (6.293)
College/university	29.960*** (10.004)	11.146 (7.491)	29.253*** (10.766)	11.062 (7.504)
Postgraduate	27.743*** (9.697)	14.841** (7.040)	26.840** (10.437)	14.864** (7.053)
Male	-1.791 (2.042)	-5.359** (2.129)	-0.670 (2.198)	-5.368** (2.133)
White	-7.153** (2.980)	7.241*** (2.675)	-7.685** (3.207)	7.319*** (2.680)
Party ID	0.059 (3.006)	-0.263 (2.909)	0.798 (3.235)	-0.291 (2.914)
Isolationist stereotype	27.078*** (6.279)	46.368*** (7.139)	26.886*** (6.758)	46.559*** (7.152)
Elite supporter	-6.390*** (1.723)	-5.912*** (2.242)	-6.254*** (1.854)	-5.927*** (2.246)
Intercept	-4.893 (11.087)	14.382 (9.909)	-4.603 (11.932)	14.269 (9.927)
N	242	174	242	174
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.161	0.310	0.138	0.312
NATO Condition	Oppose	Endorse	Oppose	Endorse

\*p &lt; .1; \*\*p &lt; .05; \*\*\*p &lt; .01

### 3.4 Causal mediation results

#### 3.4.1 Causal mediation analysis

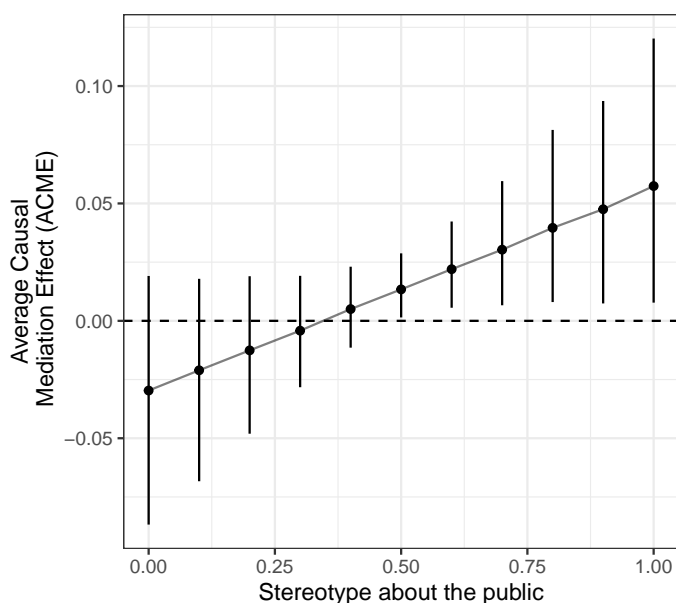
The analysis in the main text shows that foreign policy elites effectively underestimate the effects of NATO endorsements on support for the use of force in our experiment, just as they underestimated the popularity of global engagement more broadly in our observational data. From a theoretical perspective the results are noteworthy because although IR scholars have paid considerable attention to how misperceptions complicate the international side of the two-level game that leaders play in foreign policy, they have thus far neglected to appreciate the potential for misperceptions to complicate our models of the domestic politics in IR as well.

Yet these findings can also be consequential for another reason. If foreign policy leaders care about public opinion in foreign policy (Tomz, Weeks and Yarhi-Milo, 2020), it implies that the more supportive of the intervention elites perceive the public to be, the more they themselves will support it. This is consistent with Thompson's (2009) argument that leaders will choose to intervene multilaterally *because* of its presumed effects on domestic support. We can test this proposition by turning to nonparametric causal mediation analyses, testing whether the effect of NATO endorsements on support for the use of force is mediated by perceptions of domestic support for the intervention more broadly. As with all mediation analyses, this analysis rests on a sequential ignorability assumption (Imai et al., 2011), so caution should be taken in the interpretation of the results below, but controlling for a wide range of demographic covariates, the Average Causal Mediation Effect (ACME) of perceived public support remains statistically significant ( $p < 0.03$ ). At the same time, however, the proportion of the total effect mediated by perceived public support is relatively modest (6.5%), suggesting that much of the effect of NATO endorsements on elites' support for the use of force is channeled through other pathways.

Yet these modest effects of the domestic support mechanism are partially a function of elites' isolationist stereotypes about the public. As Figure A10 shows, the magnitude of the ACME depends on how isolationist elites perceive the public to be more generally (as noted by a formal test of moderated mediation:  $p < 0.015$ ). For those foreign policy leaders who have isolationist stereotypes about the public, the ACME is not statistically significant; the less isolationist an image foreign policy leaders have of the public, the larger the ACME of perceived public support, and the larger the proportion of the total effect the mediator explains: for respondents with an internationalism stereotype score of 0.5, 6.8% of the total effect is channeled through perceived public support; for respondents with an internationalism stereotype score of 0.7, 20.1% of the total effect is channeled through perceived public support. This analysis suggests that if the foreign policy establishment were to shed their isolationist image of the public, the perceived domestic support

mechanism would increase in importance. Elites' stereotypes about the public therefore not only affect how they anticipate the public will react to IO cues, but also shape how much elites weigh domestic political considerations: leaders with isolationist stereotypes of the public prefer NATO endorsements *in spite* of the negligible effect they anticipate NATO cues will have on public opinion, while leaders with internationalist stereotypes of the public prefer NATO endorsements *because* of the effects they anticipate it will have on public opinion. Much like how the postwar realists argued foreign policy should be insulated from public opinion because they assumed the public was hostile to their views (Kennan, 1951), we see here that foreign policy elites attend to public opinion more when they believe the public shares their own views more generally.

Figure A10: Perceptions of public support mediate the effect of NATO endorsements on support for the intervention



A moderated mediation model shows that the effect of NATO endorsements on support for the intervention through perceived levels of public support is significantly larger for those foreign policy leaders with less isolationist stereotypes about the public ( $p < 0.015$ ). See Appendix §3.4 for additional mediation analyses using a broader set of causal mechanisms.

However, although perceived public support is one mechanism that can explain why NATO endorsements bolster support for the use of force, it is not the only one. In addition to measuring perceived public and elite support for the intervention, we also administered an additional set of mechanism questions, capturing a wide range of other reasons why NATO endorsements might increase support for the use of force. These range from normative considerations (perhaps respondents perceived interventions blessed by NATO as more morally right, or having more salutary effects on America's reputation in the eyes of the international community), to material considerations (perhaps respondents perceived interventions blessed by NATO as having a higher likelihood of success, or better serving America's national interests). Figure A11 below presents the effect of NATO endorsements on each of these potential mechanisms, in turn, for both the public sample (in red) and

sample of foreign policy leaders (in green). This plot shows that interventions endorsed by NATO are indeed perceived as more moral, as having more positive reputational consequences, as more legitimate, as better serving American national interests, as more likely to be successful, as more likely to produce burden sharing, and as more popular at home. In general, we see similar patterns for the elite and mass sample, although NATO endorsements appear to exert more powerful effects on perceived likelihood of success among elites than among masses.

Figure A11: Effect of NATO endorsements on causal mechanisms

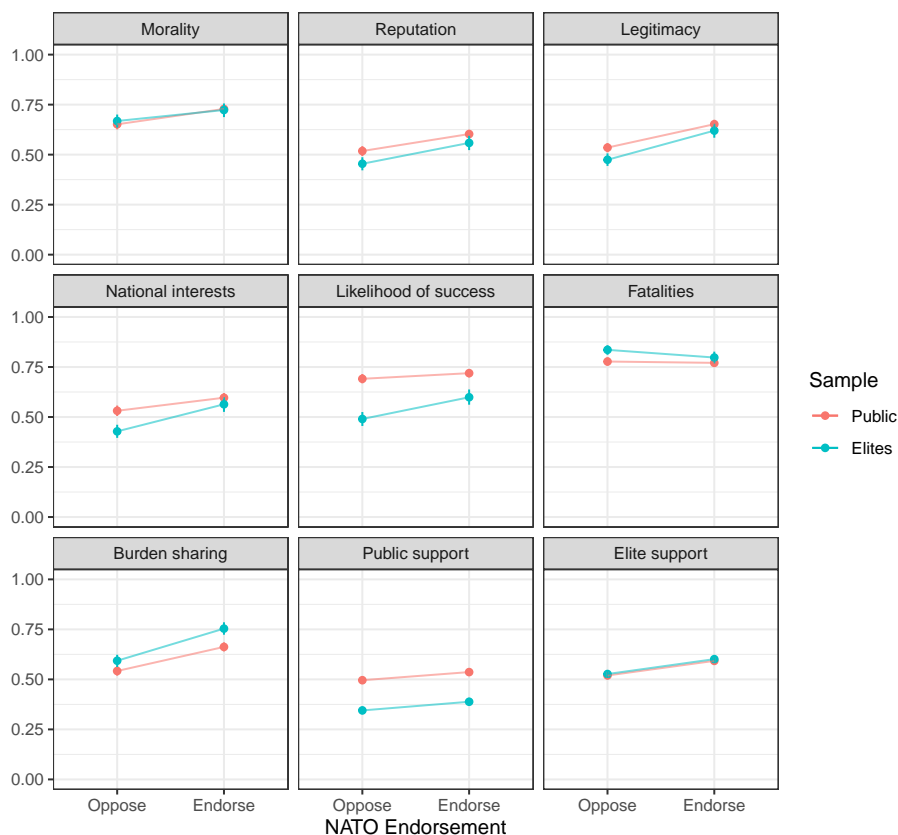


Figure A11 presents the effects of NATO endorsements on a range of causal mechanisms, ranging from normative considerations, to instrumental ones, alongside the domestic support mechanisms that are the subject of the analysis in the main paper.

To provide a sense of the substantive roles of each of these potential mechanisms on support for the intervention, we therefore estimate a series of nonparametric causal mediation analyses (Imai et al., 2011), similar to that estimated above for perceived public support. There are several reasons why we should be cautious in our interpretation of causal mediation results here. Most importantly, the sequential ignorability assumption implies that the mediators must be independent from one another; this is unlikely in this case given the overlap between the litany of interrelated mechanisms discussed here. We therefore employ a data reduction approach, which does not obviate concerns about non-independence altogether, but improves

the credibility of the analysis. Parallel analysis suggests a four factor solution for these mechanisms in the public data, and a three factor solution in the elite data; exploratory factor analysis with principal axis factoring and oblimin rotation suggests these respective models fit well (for the public sample: RMSEA: 0.011, RMSEA.LB: 0.000, TLI: 0.999, BIC: -34.76; for the elite sample RMSEA: 0.047, RMSEA.LB: 0.024, TLI: 0.969, BIC: -49.1). Based on loadings from factor analyses, and to balance parsimony and interpretability, we generate a set of additive scales, pooling together mechanisms relating to the reactions of the *international community* (burden sharing, and legitimacy), mechanisms relating to *domestic support* (public support, and elite support), mechanisms relating to *normative considerations* (morality, and reputation), and mechanisms relating to *instrumental considerations* (success, and national interests); due to the results of the factor analysis models, we retain *fatalities* as a separate item. We therefore estimate a series of nonparametric causal mediation models, controlling for a battery of demographic variables, the results of which are displayed in Figure A12 below.

Figure A12: Causal mediation analysis, multiple mediators

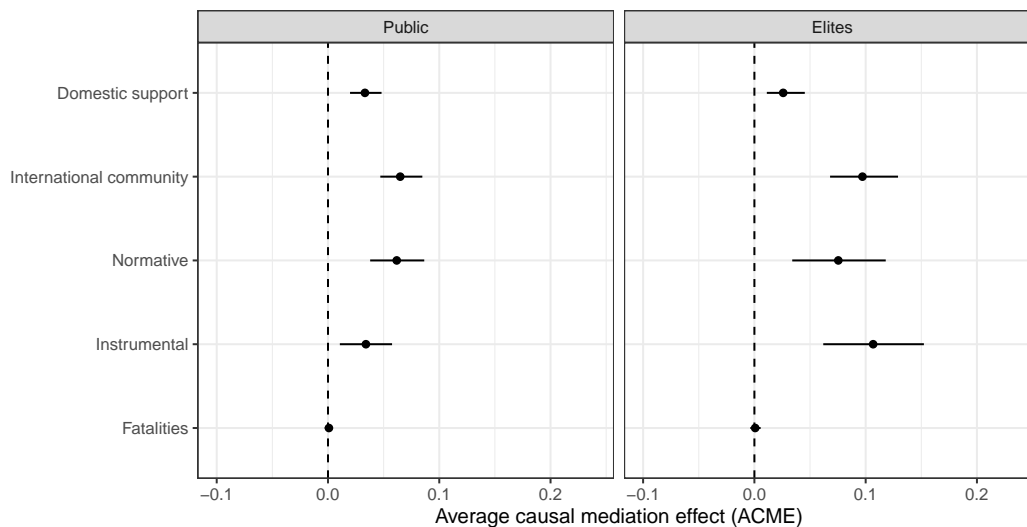


Figure A12 presents the Average Causal Mediation Effects (ACMEs) from a series of nonparametric causal mediation models.

As noted in public support mediation results above, although domestic support significantly mediates the effect of NATO endorsements on support for the use of force for both the mass public and political elites alike, its substantive effect size is smaller than that of at least two of the other families of mediators: the reactions of the international community, and normative considerations. Instrumental considerations display a larger mediation effect for elites than the mass public. This is to say, then, that although the salutary effects of IO endorsements on domestic support may be one reason why foreign policy leaders pursue multilateralism, these results suggest it is neither the only nor the most important reason. Indeed, the moderated mediation analysis above suggests that if elites were to shed their isolationist stereotypes of the public, the perceived

domestic support mechanism would increase in importance.

### **3.5 Alternative misperception threshold**

The analysis in the main text studies misperceptions by comparing respondents' estimates for the percentage of respondents who support the mission, with the actual percentage of respondents who indicated they supported the mission. Because the dependent variable measuring support is a six-point Likert scale ranging from "Oppose a great deal" to "Support a great deal", any respondent who indicated they supported the mission either a great deal, a moderate amount, or a little, is coded as supporting, and any respondent who indicated they opposed the mission either a great deal, a moderate amount, or a little, is coded as opposing. As a robustness check, we replicate the misperception analyses, but raising the threshold for what counts as "support" to those respondents who indicated they supported the intervention at least a moderate amount (thereby coding the weakest supporters as de facto opponents). Figure A13 replicates Figure 7 from the main text and Figure A9 from the supplementary appendix, showing that although the cell means change (once you raise the threshold of what counts as support, elites no longer significantly underestimate public support in the NATO oppose condition), the average treatment effects remain strikingly similar: although NATO bolsters support for the use of force in the public by an average of 20 percentage points, elites generally assume NATO has no significant effect on public support, and these misperceptions are of similar magnitude for all elite subsamples.

### **3.6 Analogical reasoning: the Libya intervention?**

Given the volume of work on analogical reasoning in foreign policy decision-making (e.g. [Khong, 1992](#); [Houghton, 1996](#)) an alternative interpretation of our results is that elites are estimating public support for the intervention by anchoring on the public's level of support for similar recent military interventions. In this case, one relevant recent military intervention respondents might be thinking of is the Libya intervention in 2011, in which the US joined with its NATO allies in an operation that was successful in deterring Muammar Gaddafi's threats to civilian populations but also led to regime change as the country subsequently devolved into violence. Three points here are thus worth noting. First, even if our elite respondents have Libya in mind when completing the study, a comparison of public opinion data from the beginning of the intervention with the experimental results here suggest that elites are nonetheless underestimating the baseline level of support: in March 2011, just days after the US joined the military campaign against Gaddafi, Gallup found that 47% of the public supported the strikes compared to 37% opposed and another 16% with no opinion; in the NATO support condition in our experiment, leaders estimated only 39% of the public would be on

Figure A13: Elite misperceptions robust to alternative support thresholds

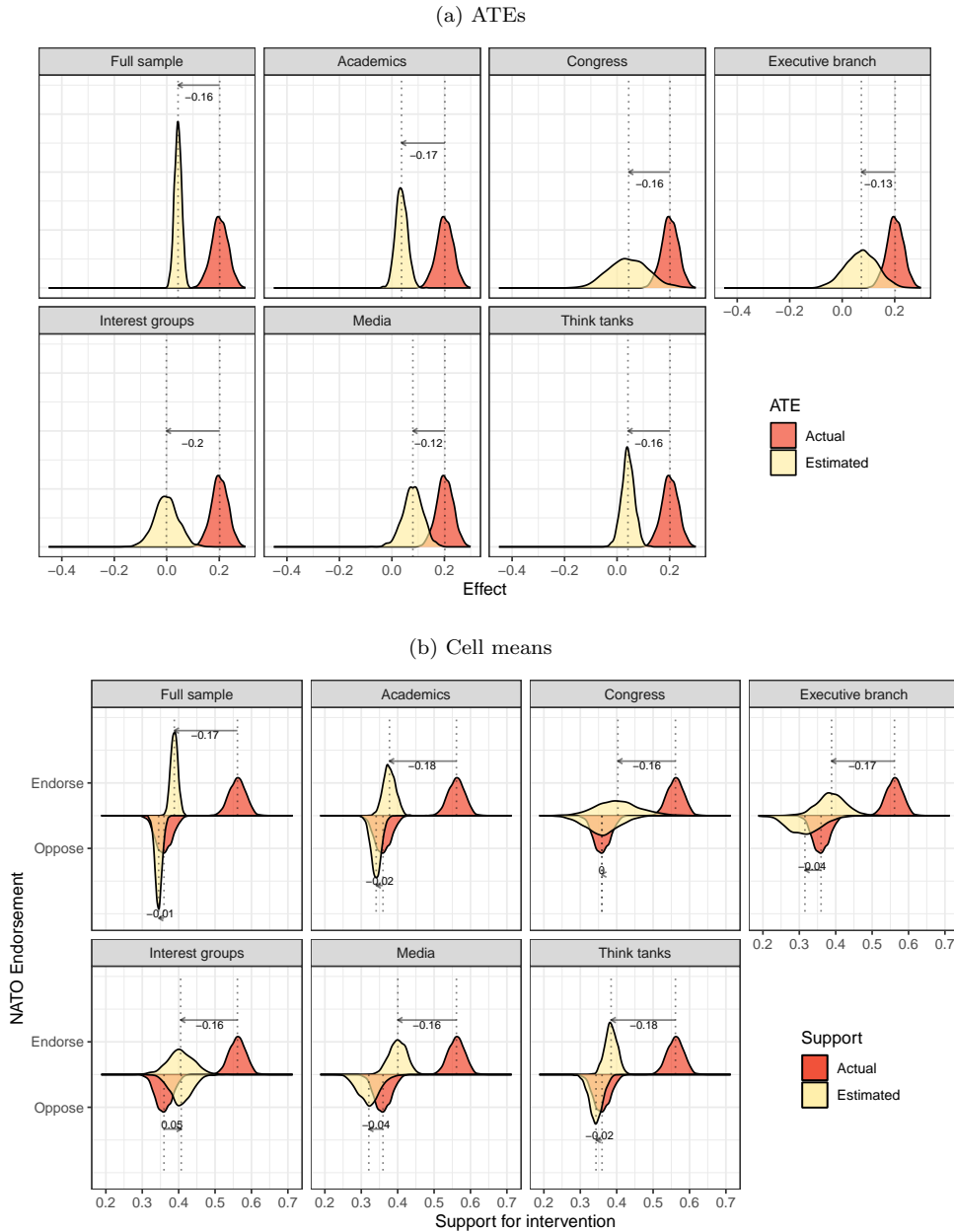


Figure A13(a) presents density distributions of bootstrapped average treatment effects of NATO endorsements on the public’s support for the use of force (in dark grey), along with density distributions of bootstrapped average treatment effects of NATO endorsements on elites’ estimates of the public’s support for the use of force (in light grey), replicating Figure 3 in the main text, but raising the threshold for what counts as a sufficient level of “support”, from “support a little”, to “support a moderate amount.” Figure A13(b) does the same, but for cell means instead, replicating Figure 4 in the main text utilizing the higher threshold for support described above. As before, the arrow in each panel indicates the difference between the actual NATO endorsement effect, and the estimated NATO endorsement effect. Panel a shows similar results as that in the main text: although NATO bolsters support for the use of force in the public by an average of nearly 20 percentage points, elites generally assume NATO has no significant effect on public support, and that these misperceptions are of similar magnitude for all elite subsamples. Panel b shows slightly different results: once you count weak supporters as de facto opponents, elites no longer consistently underestimate public support in the NATO oppose condition. As before, however, the general conclusion remains the same: elite misperceptions are largely concentrated in the NATO endorse condition.

board. Second, one way to reconcile this disconnect might be to explore the extent to which elites think about public opinion not in terms of instantaneous reactions, but long-term reactions. Indeed, the following Gallup poll conducted in June 2011 found that public support had dropped from 47% to 39%, consistent with our experimental findings. Yet all of the experimental studies of public opinion in IR that we are aware of operationalizes public opinion as instantaneous reactions to information (e.g. [Herrmann, Tetlock and Visser, 1999](#); [Press, Sagan and Valentino, 2013](#); [Tomz, Weeks and Yarhi-Milo, 2020](#)). If it is the case that elites have a different time horizon or quantity of interest in mind when they think about public opinion than the one political scientists have been analyzing, this makes elite perceptions of public opinion an even more important topic of study. This is also striking because our results show that elites do not misperceive elite opinion to the same extent as they do public opinion: if elites think about public opinion in terms of long-term reactions rather than instantaneous ones, it raises questions about why they do not employ a similar time horizon when estimating elite opinion.

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