

International Trust and Public Opinion about World Affairs

Author(s): Paul R. Brewer, Kimberly Gross, Sean Aday and Lars Willnat

Source: *American Journal of Political Science*, Jan., 2004, Vol. 48, No. 1 (Jan., 2004), pp. 93-109

Published by: Midwest Political Science Association

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1519899>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



Midwest Political Science Association is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *American Journal of Political Science*

JSTOR

International Trust and Public Opinion

About World Affairs

Paul R. Brewer University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Kimberly Gross George Washington University
Sean Aday George Washington University
Lars Willnat George Washington University

This study argues that citizens base their opinions about world affairs in part on generalized beliefs about how much their nation can trust other nations. Using original data from a two-wave panel survey and a cross-sectional survey, we show that Americans hold stable, internally consistent, and largely pessimistic generalized beliefs about whether the United States can trust other nations. We find that social trust, political trust, partisanship, and age influence this form of trust, which we call international trust. We then demonstrate that international trust shapes whether Americans prefer internationalism to isolationism, perceive specific foreign nations as unfriendly and threatening, and favor military action against Iraq. The role of international trust in shaping opinion may be consistent with theories of low-information rationality, but competing interpretations are also plausible.

The problem is that the international arena . . . is a jungle. It is a state of nature.

Charles Krauthammer (2002, A29)

Although scholars have long been interested in connections between trust and politics, only lately have they begun to examine whether trust shapes public opinion. Thus far this line of research has focused on two forms of trust: political trust (i.e., generalized trust in government) and social trust (i.e., generalized trust in other people). Recent studies have argued that citizens use each of these as a heuristic, or information shortcut, in forming political judgments across a range of topics (e.g., Hetherington and Globetti 2002; Rahn and Transue 1998). It may be, however, that other forms of generalized trust also play important roles in shaping public opinion. In the present study, we argue that citizens use generalized beliefs about how much their nation can trust other nations to form judgments about world affairs. Specif-

ically, we hypothesize that this form of trust, which we call international trust, influences how citizens perceive specific nations, whether they endorse internationalism or isolationism, and whether they favor specific foreign interventions.

Evidence for this argument would carry important implications, particularly given that public opinion about world affairs may influence voting behavior (Aldrich, Sullivan, and Borgida 1989) and public policy (Chanley 1999; Page and Shapiro 1992; Shapiro and Jacobs 2000). To begin with, findings of effects for international trust on mass beliefs about world affairs would add a new layer to our theoretical understanding of how citizens form foreign policy opinions. Recent accounts have shown that citizens base such opinions on abstract principles (e.g., preferences for internationalism or isolationism) and images of specific foreign nations (Herrmann, Tetlock, and Visser 1999; Hurwitz and Peffley 1987; Peffley and Hurwitz 1992; Witkopf 1990), yet these principles and

Paul R. Brewer is Assistant Professor of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 117 Johnston Hall, P.O. Box 413, Milwaukee, WI, 53201 (prbrewer@uwm.edu). Kimberly Gross is Assistant Professor of Media and Public Affairs at the George Washington University, 805 21st Street, NW, Washington, DC 20052 (kimgross@gwu.edu). Sean Aday is Assistant Professor of Media and Public Affairs at the George Washington University, 805 21st Street, NW, Washington, DC 20052 (seanaday@gwu.edu). Lars Willnat is Associate Professor of Media and Public Affairs at the George Washington University, 805 21st Street, NW, Washington, DC 20052 (lwillnat@gwu.edu).

A previous version of this article was presented at the 2003 meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association. The authors thank Barbara Ley, Jarol Manheim, Lee Sigelman, Erik Voeten, and the anonymous reviewers for helpful suggestions. This research was funded by a grant from the National Science Foundation (SES 0201511).

American Journal of Political Science, Vol. 48, No. 1, January 2004, Pp. 93–109

©2004 by the Midwest Political Science Association

ISSN 0092-5853

images may themselves have roots in international trust. Evidence for our argument would also add a new dimension to the debate over whether public opinion about world affairs is better characterized as irrational (Almond 1950) or reasonable (Holsti 1992; Hurwitz and Peffley 1987, 1990; Page and Shapiro 1992; Shapiro and Page 1988; Witkopf 1990). On the one hand, the use of international trust as a heuristic may be consistent with theories of low-information rationality which argue that citizens “can be knowledgeable in their reasoning about political choices without necessarily possessing a large body of knowledge about politics” (Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1991, 19; see also Popkin 1991). On the other, reasoning about world affairs on the basis of international trust may not necessarily lead citizens to form the same judgments as they would given full information.

Moreover, evidence for our argument would speak to the literature on trust and public opinion by suggesting that scholars should cast their attention not just on the familiar forms of trust, political and social trust, but on other forms of trust as well. In the account that follows, we present international trust as a distinct theoretical construct worthy of study in its own right. This is not to suggest that political and social trust are inconsequential; indeed, we argue that each may influence international trust. By examining whether this is so, we revise and expand previous claims about the impact of political and social trust on public opinion about world affairs (see Brewer and Steenbergen 2002; Popkin and Dimock 2000; Uslaner 2002).

To date, no research has directly studied international trust. With this in mind, we lay out a theoretical framework that defines international trust, considers what may influence it, and explains how and why it should influence key beliefs about world affairs. Using original data collected through a two-wave panel survey and a complementary cross-sectional survey, we then develop measures of international trust that allows us to establish its nature, causes, and consequences among the American public.

Trust as a Shortcut in Reasoning About World Affairs

Initial accounts portrayed mass opinion about world affairs not only as uninformed (Erskine 1963) but also as fundamentally irrational and lacking any foundation in abstract reasoning (Almond 1950). “Mood theory” remained the conventional wisdom until it was challenged

in the late 1980s and early 1990s by studies arguing that “there is no reason to fear” public opinion in the realm of foreign policy (Shapiro and Page 1988, 244; see also Holsti 1992; Hurwitz and Peffley 1987, 1990; Witkopf 1990). A key assumption in this revisionist literature was that citizens behave according to the principles of low-information rationality: They use information shortcuts to form political judgments, rather than engaging in more effortful information gathering and processing (Hurwitz and Peffley 1987). By doing so, citizens are able to form “perfectly reasonable” (Peffley and Hurwitz 1992, 454) and even “rational” (Page and Shapiro 1992) views about world affairs even though they lack extensive knowledge about the subject. Much of this research proceeded from the further assumption that citizens engage in theory-driven processing when thinking about world affairs: They “cope with an extraordinarily confusing world (with limited resources to pay information costs) by structuring views about specific foreign policies according to their more general and abstract beliefs” (Hurwitz and Peffley 1987, 114; see also Hurwitz and Peffley 1990; Peffley and Hurwitz 1992).

Scholars have identified two sorts of beliefs that serve as bases for foreign policy opinions: Principles and images of particular nations. Among the American public, the divide between the principles of isolationism (i.e., the belief that the United States should avoid getting involved in other nation’s problems) and internationalism (i.e., the belief the United States should play an active role in world affairs) plays a particularly important role in structuring foreign policy opinions. For example, preferences between isolationism and internationalism influence opinion about defense spending, trade policy, humanitarian and economic aid to foreign countries, and military intervention in Latin America, the Persian Gulf, and East Asia (Bartels 1994; Herrmann, Tetlock, and Visser 1999; Hurwitz and Peffley 1987). According to Witkopf (1990; see also Chanley 1999), citizens further organize their foreign policy views around their orientations toward two “faces” of internationalism, militant internationalism (i.e., support for intervention through military force), and cooperative internationalism (i.e., support for intervention through cooperative methods such as foreign aid). Research has likewise shown that citizens use images of specific foreign nations to reason about world affairs. During the Cold War, for example, Americans’ beliefs about whether an “enemy nation,” the Soviet Union, was trustworthy and nonbelligerent influenced their opinions about defense spending, nuclear weapon development, aid to the Contras, and willingness to use force to contain Communism (Hurwitz and Peffley 1990; Peffley and Hurwitz 1992).

If such beliefs play crucial roles in shaping mass opinion about foreign policy, then a logical next question to ask is what shapes them. To some extent, no doubt, learning through education and media exposure influences what principles and images of specific foreign nations citizens form. We know, for instance, that support for internationalism among the American public increases with education, presumably because education brings citizens into contact with the prointernationalism consensus among American political elites (Page and Shapiro 1992). Along the same lines, whether citizens believe that a particular nation is friendly or threatening should depend in part on the nature of the information that citizens receive about that nation (Peffley and Hurwitz 1992). To cite an obvious example, we would expect Americans to see Great Britain as being friendlier and less threatening than Iraq given the well-publicized histories of relations between the United States and these two nations. Yet there may also be a deeper level of structure to mass beliefs about world affairs, one that is built on generalized trust. Indeed, several recent studies have suggested that citizens base political judgments—including opinions about world affairs—on social trust and political trust.

Social trust—also known as interpersonal trust or, in its negative form, misanthropy (see Rosenberg 1956)—is, at its core, a generalized belief that one can trust strangers (Uslaner 2002). According to Rahn and Transue (1998) people use this form of trust as a shortcut for deciding whether or not to trust particular people in particular situations. Put another way, social trust is a “standing decision’ to give most people—even those whom one does not know from direct experience—the benefit of the doubt,” an assumption that most people “are of good will and benign intentions” (Rahn and Transue 1998, 545). Recent studies have found that citizens apply this decision to many different contexts, including political ones (e.g., Brehm and Rahn 1997; Scholz and Lubell 1998; Uslaner 2002). Most importantly for our purposes, several recent works have argued that social trust fosters a general preference for internationalism. According to Popkin and Dimock “beliefs about the helpfulness of the people around us” should translate “into beliefs about the likelihood of international cooperation” (2000, 225)—and, in turn, support for international involvement, particularly through cooperative internationalism (see Brewer and Steenbergen 2002). Similarly, Uslaner concluded that people with faith in others are particularly likely to favor international involvement because of their “greater comfort level with people unlike [themselves]” (2002, 196).

Citizens also use political trust to form political judgments (Hetherington 1999). Scholars have defined this

form of trust as a “general orientation toward the government predicated upon people’s normative expectations of government operation” (Hetherington and Globetti 2002, 254; see also Miller 1974; Stokes 1962). To some extent, political trust is a reflection of citizens’ evaluations of specific government institutions, particularly their economic performance (Citrin 1974; Citrin and Green 1986). At the same time, it is a distinct construct that not only influences evaluations of such institutions but also provides a basis for deciding how much leeway one should grant government (Hetherington 1998). For example, political trust may “act as a simple decision rule for supporting or rejecting government activity” in instances where the costs of the activity accrue to the citizen making the judgment and the benefits accrue to others (Hetherington and Globetti 2002, 254). Of particular importance to our account is Popkin and Dimock’s (2000) argument that citizens use political trust as a heuristic for judging whether to favor internationalism. According to the authors, politically trusting citizens should be more confident than the politically cynical that their government can act effectively in the international arena; as a result, such citizens should grant it more latitude to involve itself in other nations’ problems through both cooperative and military means.¹

We take recent accounts of how social and political trust may influence public opinion about world affairs as starting points for our own investigation. Yet these works have neglected the role that another form of generalized trust, international trust, may play not only in shaping public opinion but also in connecting social and political trust to the international arena. In the following section we consider international trust as a distinct theoretical construct—a form of generalized trust revolving not around people or government, but nations.

A Theoretical Framework for Studying International Trust

George Washington’s 1796 presidential farewell address is often remembered for its recommendation against “permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world.” The logic behind his advice, although not as famous, is also worth recalling: He opposed such alliances because “it is folly in one nation to look for disinterested favors

¹Popkin and Dimock (2002) found a relationship between political trust and internationalism even controlling for evaluations of personal and national economic circumstances. Of course, if such evaluations influence political trust then they may exert indirect effects through it.

from another . . . There can be no greater error than to expect or calculate upon real favors from nation to nation.” Thus, Washington derived an opinion about world affairs from a generalized belief about how much faith his nation should place in other nations. Nor has he been the only political observer to do so. For example, in the column quoted at the beginning of this article Krauthammer concluded that because international relations is a “state of nature”—that is, the sort of “war of all against all” described by Thomas Hobbes (1985 [1651])—agreements with North Korea, Iraq, and the Palestinian Authority are “not worth the paper they are written on” (2002, A29).

Just as Washington and Krauthammer held broad assumptions about how much their nation could trust other nations, so too may ordinary citizens hold such assumptions. We conceptualize international trust as a generalized belief about whether most foreign countries behave in accordance with normative expectations regarding the conduct of nations. Citizens with high levels of international trust see the realm of world affairs as a friendly environment where trust and cooperation among nations are the norms; in contrast, citizens with low levels of international trust see the same realm as a hostile environment where all nations strive against one another for advantage and readily defect from cooperative efforts. Put another way, international trust is a standing decision to give other nations the benefit of the doubt, an assumption that most countries are of good will and benign intentions. The first goal of our analysis will be to demonstrate that Americans form such standing decisions: that is, they hold coherent, stable beliefs about how much the United States should generally trust other countries.

Our second goal is to examine what influences international trust, beginning with the international environment facing one’s country.² Previous research indicates that major collective experiences influence social trust and political trust (e.g., Markus 1979; Uslander 2002). By a similar logic, experiencing a dangerous international environment may erode international trust, whereas experiencing a benign international environment may foster international trust. For example, it is not surprising that Washington expressed little generalized trust in other nations given that his nation was relatively young, relatively weak, and had recently fought a war with a major power (i.e., Great Britain). Similarly, it stands to reason that the international environments confronting the

United States during World War II (when it faced the hostile Axis Powers) and the early Cold War (when it faced a hostile Soviet Union, its Warsaw Pact allies, and Communist China) may have encouraged generalized distrust in other nations among the American public. By contrast, the United States-dominated “New World Order” that followed the end of the Cold War should have been relatively likely to foster international trust.

Given that no previous study has measured international trust, we lack the means to test these claims directly by examining the historical trajectory of international trust among the American public. We can, however, use our understanding of the political socialization process to derive an expectation about the relationship between age and international trust. Given that collective experiences typically exert their most powerful effects on the social and political attitudes of the young (see, e.g., Markus 1979), shifts in the nature of the international environment should produce generational differences in international trust. For example, one would expect lower levels of international trust among Americans who came of age in the 1940s and 1950s—the era of World War II and the height of the Cold War—than among those who came of age in the relatively secure world of *détente* and the post-Cold War (but pre-September 11, 2001) era. Thus, we expect a negative relationship between age and international trust.

Just as the international environment may influence international trust, so too may the domestic political environment. Research indicates that citizens follow signals from political elites, particularly signals from elites on their end of a partisan or ideological spectrum (Zaller 1992). In the American context, opinion leadership might produce differences in international trust between Democrats and liberals, on the one hand, and Republicans and conservatives, on the other. For example, in recent years the signals from Republican and conservative political elites regarding the nature of international relations have tended to be more pessimistic than those from Democratic and liberal elites (see, e.g., Krauthammer 2002; Mufson 2002). As a result, American citizens may diverge along similar lines, with Democrats and liberals expressing greater international trust than Republicans and conservatives.

In addition, citizens may derive their generalized beliefs about whether to trust other nations from even more general forms of trust. For example, citizens may base their assumptions about other nations in part on their assumptions about other people, thereby making the link between trust in individual strangers and trust in foreign (or “strange,” in the original meaning of the word) nations. Brewer and Steenbergen suggested that citizens

²Ultimately, beliefs about how much one’s nation can trust other nations may be rooted partly in personality syndromes such as authoritarianism and ethnocentrism (see, e.g., McClosky 1967; Sinderman and Citrin 1971). Our account, however, is agnostic on this point.

who generally trust other people may infer from this standing decision that other nations are “typically benign, cooperative, and honest” (2002, 44), whereas citizens who generally distrust other people may infer that other nations are typically hostile, uncooperative, and dishonest. Along similar lines, Uslaner argued that socially trusting citizens should be less “xenophobic” (2002, 196) than distrusters. If so, then Americans high in social trust should be more likely than those low in social trust to believe that the United States can generally trust other nations.

Political trust may also influence international trust, with citizens who are cynical about domestic politics inferring that they should be cynical about international relations as well. Put another way, those who believe that their own government does not fulfill their normative expectations may reason that other nations are unlikely to do so either. Given that the conceptual linkage between one’s own government and other nations may not be as clear as the linkage between strangers and other nations, we do not necessarily expect the effect of political trust on international trust to be as strong as the effect of social trust. We do hypothesize, however, that Americans high in political trust will be more likely than those low in political trust to believe that the United States can generally trust other nations.

If our account is correct, then international trust may provide citizens with a construct through which they can link social trust and political trust to world affairs, thereby mediating the effects of each on public opinion in this domain. Yet our account also suggests that international trust may follow its own unique trajectory. A large body of research indicates that both social trust and political trust have declined over the past four decades among the American public (albeit at different trajectories and for different reasons; see, e.g., Citrin 1974; Hetherington 1998; Putnam 2000; Uslaner 2002). If these forms of trust influence international trust, then they may have exerted downward pressures on it as well. On the other hand, the American people’s collective experiences of the international environment should have pushed international trust in the opposite direction over the same time span. In particular, as we will show, the trajectory of international trust over the generations appears to contrast with the largely downward trend in social trust among successive generations (see Rahn and Transue 1998; Uslaner 2002).

Having considered the nature and causes of international trust, we now turn to its consequences. In the realm of world affairs, international trust could be a particularly useful heuristic for organizing one’s beliefs: citizens low in international trust may draw one set of inferences

about what principles they should hold and what they should expect from specific foreign nations, whereas citizens high in international trust may draw a different set of inferences about the same things. For instance, international trust may shape general preferences between isolationism and internationalism. Americans high in international trust may infer that other nations will generally aid, cooperate with, or at least not interfere with United States efforts to solve problems in other parts of the world. Thus, they may be more likely to favor such involvement in principle than those low in international trust, who should tend to reach a different conclusion—namely, that other nations will typically oppose, exploit, or free ride on United States efforts to solve problems. A reciprocal effect is possible as well: Citizens may reason from their principles to international trust, with isolationists drawing more pessimistic inferences about trusting other nations than internationalists. We believe, however, that international trust is likely to be the more fundamental of the two predispositions.

In addition to shaping general preferences between internationalism and isolationism, international trust may shape more specific beliefs about cooperative and militant internationalism. One would expect international trust to generate support for cooperative forms of intervention such as giving humanitarian aid to other nations: Citizens high in international trust should be more likely than citizens low in international trust to infer that such aid will go to good use rather than be exploited or wasted. The expectation for militant internationalism, however, is not as clear. Citizens low in international trust may be more likely than others to see the world as threatening place; as a result, they may be more likely to infer that the use of force is a necessary means of self-defense. Then again, citizens low in international trust may be particularly wary of military intervention given that it could provide other nations with the opportunity to exploit or betray the United States. Additionally, international trust could influence support for the two faces of internationalism indirectly through its impact on general preferences between internationalism and isolationism, which in turn may influence support for both cooperative and militant internationalism (Bartels 1994; Brewer and Steenbergen 2002).

International trust may also influence other sorts of beliefs about world affairs that have thus far not been the focus of research on trust and mass opinion. In particular, as a standing decision about whether nations are generally trustworthy, international trust could shape another set of building blocks for public opinion about world affairs—namely, images of specific foreign nations. For example, international trust may influence the extent

to which Americans believe that particular nations are friendly toward and threatening to the United States. To be sure, Americans are likely to see some nations as friendlier and less threatening than others, based on what they know about each nation and its relations with the United States. At the same time, citizens high in international trust may be more likely than citizens low in international trust to see any given nation as friendly and unthreatening.

International trust may influence opinions about specific foreign policy decisions, as well—for example, whether to use military force to prevent Iraq from gaining weapons of mass destruction (perhaps the most important issue in United States foreign policy at the time of our study). As with militant internationalism in the abstract, however, international trust could serve as a basis for opposing or supporting specific military interventions. For example, Americans who generally distrust other nations may infer that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is threatening to the United States; if so, then one might expect them to be more likely than those high in international trust to support military action to prevent such proliferation. Then again, Americans who generally distrust other nations may infer that military interventions against “rogue” nations are dangerous adventures into a hostile world; by this logic, one might expect support for such interventions to be greater among those high in international trust than among those low in international trust.

Of course, other political predispositions also exert effects on public opinion about world affairs. Our purpose is not to claim that international trust provides the sole explanation for how citizens form beliefs about world affairs, but rather to show that it plays an important role in shaping mass opinion that has previously gone unrecognized.

Data and Measures

Our data come from a two-wave panel survey and a cross-sectional survey, both conducted through random-digit-dialing telephone interviews. Respondents were selected from the adult American population, with the samples for the panel survey and the cross-sectional survey being drawn independently from one another. The first wave of the panel survey, in which 1,235 respondents were interviewed, was conducted from October 24 to November 5, 2001. The second wave was in the field from February 28 to March 26, 2002. Sixty-one percent (758) of the respondents from the first wave were reinterviewed. The cross-sectional survey, in which 646 respondents were inter-

viewed, was conducted from March 28 to April 24, 2002. The appendix describes the nature of our samples. Our measures were as follows.

International trust. We modeled our strategy for measuring international trust on previous efforts to measure social trust, replacing people with nations. One common approach for measuring social trust has been to construct an index from responses to questions about whether “most people can be trusted” or “you can’t be too careful in dealing with people,” whether “most of the time people try to be helpful” or “are mostly looking out for themselves,” and whether “most people would try to take advantage of you if they got the chance” or “would try to be fair” (e.g., Brehm and Rahn 1997). The logic behind this strategy is “that multiple indicators of the same concept improve statistical reliability” (Uslaner 2002, 69). Uslaner, however, concluded that such an index is “more complicated than it needs—and ought—to be” (2002, 72), arguing that a single-item measure based on the question explicitly invoking trust is superior. Rather than arbitrating between these two approaches, we simply employed variants of each.

The cross-sectional survey and both waves of the panel survey included two items designed to measure international trust, each modeled on a standard social trust item.³ Table 1 presents their wordings, as well as four frequency distributions for each item: One for the entire set of first-wave responses from the panel survey, one for the first-wave responses from those who completed both waves, one for the second-wave responses from the panel survey, and one for the responses from the cross-sectional survey. As the table shows, the results were highly consistent across all four distributions, with generalized cynicism about other nations being more common than generalized faith in other nations. About one-in-four respondents said that “generally speaking . . . the United States can trust other nations,” whereas almost three times as many said that “the United States can’t be too careful in dealing with other nations.” Likewise, slightly less than one-third said that “most of the time other nations try to be helpful to the United States,” whereas two in three said that other nations “are just looking out for themselves.”

At the individual level, these beliefs were stable. Among respondents interviewed in both waves of the panel survey, 79% chose the same response option for the first item in each wave, and 78% chose the same response

³Although the items we used to measure international trust were patterned on standard social trust measures, the distributions we observed for the former differed dramatically from the distributions we observed for the latter—reinforcing the point that the two constructs are distinct.

TABLE 1 Frequency Distributions and Correlations for International Trust Items

	Panel Study Wave 1 All Oct.-Nov. 01	Panel Study Wave 1 Both Waves Only Oct.-Nov. 01	Panel Study Wave 2 Both Waves Only Feb.-March 02	Cross-Sectional Study All March-April 02
Generally speaking, would you say that the United States can trust other nations, or that the United States can't be too careful in dealing with other nations?				
U.S. can trust other nations	24%	26%	25%	23%
U.S. can't be too careful	71%	70%	72%	73%
Don't know/no answer	5%	5%	3%	4%
Would you say that most of the time other nations try to be helpful to the United States, or that they are just looking out for themselves?				
Other nations try to be helpful	30%	30%	26%	29%
Just looking out for themselves	65%	65%	68%	66%
Don't know/no answer	6%	5%	5%	6%
Correlation (polychoric) between items	.60	.61	.65	.46
Reliability of international trust index	.75	.76	.79	.63
Trusting response for both items	16%	17%	16%	13%
Trusting response for one item	25%	25%	22%	29%
Trusting response for neither item	59%	58%	62%	59%
Number of observations	1,235	758	758	646

Note: Due to rounding, some percentages do not add up to 100.

option for the second item in each wave.⁴ Responses to the two items were also correlated with one another (see Table 1). Thus, we were able to construct an index for international trust that captured whether respondents provided trusting responses for both items, one item, or neither item.⁵ Table 1 reports its frequency distributions and reliabilities. The analyses that follow are based on this index; however, we also estimated each of our models using a single-item measure based on responses to the “trust other nations” item. Doing so did not substantively alter our key findings.

⁴To be sure, that also means that for each item about one-in-five respondents chose a different option in each wave. For the most part, however, the changes balanced out in the aggregate—a pattern more consistent with the effects of measurement error than with true belief change. To the extent that there is a trend in the aggregate and at the individual level, it is a slight one toward greater distrust of other nations. Such a trend would not be surprising given that both social trust and political trust declined over the same time period (following a post-9/11 surge; see Horowitz 2002; Mackenzie and Labiner 2002) and that each may influence international trust.

⁵The index was coded so that trusting response to neither item = 0, trusting response to one = .5, and trusting response to both = 1. Among panel respondents, the polychoric correlation across waves for the index was .70.

Social trust and political trust. We used standard measures for social trust and political trust from the first wave of the panel study.⁶

Principles. The cross-sectional survey and both waves of the panel survey included an item tapping preferences between internationalism and isolationism: “Do you think this country would be better off if we just stayed home and did not concern ourselves with problems in other parts of the world, or do you think that this country would be better off trying to solve some problems in other parts of the world?”⁷

⁶In the analyses below, we used a two-item index for social trust based on the standard “trust” and “helpful” items (reliability = .81). When we used the alternative single-item measure of international trust, we also used a single-item measure of social trust (the “trust” item; see Usalner 2002). We used the traditional four-item American National Election Studies index to measure political trust (reliability = .79; see Miller 1974; Stokes 1962). We transformed each index to range from 0 to 1, with 1 indicating maximum trust.

⁷Respondents tended to favor internationalism over isolationism, with support for the former (coded as 1) ranging from 80% to 85% and support for the latter (coded as 0) ranging from 15% to 20% depending on the sample in question.

Support for the two faces of internationalism. The second wave of the panel survey included items asking respondents how willing the United States should be in the future to intervene through a cooperative approach (“give humanitarian aid like food and medicine to foreign countries even if they don’t stand for the same things we do”) and a militant approach (“use military force to solve international problems”).⁸

Images of specific foreign nations. In the cross-sectional survey, each respondent was asked to rate how friendly and how threatening 25 nations are toward the United States.⁹ We included countries in the Americas, Europe, the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa, and Asia, randomizing the order in which the nations were presented.¹⁰

Support for military intervention against Iraq. The cross-sectional survey included an item asking respondents whether they favored or opposed the United States taking military action to prevent Iraq “from gaining weapons of mass destruction.”¹¹

Party identification and ideology. Both the cross-sectional survey and the first wave of the panel survey included the traditional branching-question measure for party identification.¹² The latter also included a branching-question measure for ideology.¹³

Demographic variables. Both the cross-sectional survey and the first wave of the panel survey included mea-

asures for age and four other demographic variables that previous studies have identified as possible influences on public opinion about world affairs (e.g., Page and Shapiro 1992; Popkin and Dimock 2000): Gender, race, education, and income.¹⁴

A Model of International Trust and Internationalism

We began our analyses by using the panel data to estimate a model that captured the effects of social trust, political trust, partisanship, ideology, and age on international trust, the effects of international trust and internationalism on one another, and the effects of international trust on willingness to give humanitarian aid and use military force (see Figure 1). In this model, social trust, political trust, party identification, and ideology—along with age and the other demographic variables—were allowed to affect international trust and internationalism in wave one, as well as willingness to give humanitarian aid and willingness to use force in wave two. Following our theoretical account, we expected Republican partisanship, conservative ideology, and age to exert negative effects on international trust. In contrast, we expected positive effects for both social trust and political trust on international trust. Drawing on previous research, we further hypothesized that social trust would have positive effects on internationalism and willingness to give aid (Brewer and Steenbergen 2002; Popkin and Dimock 2000; Uslaner 2002) whereas political trust would have positive effects on internationalism, willingness to give aid, and willingness to use force (Popkin and Dimock 2000).¹⁵ Our analysis differed from previous research, however, by allowing the effects of social trust and political trust on each of the endogenous variables to follow either direct or indirect paths.

To test for causal relationships between international trust and internationalism, we included the cross-lagged effects for these variables in our model. We allowed international trust in wave one to influence both international trust and internationalism in wave two; similarly, we allowed internationalism in wave one to influence both international trust and internationalism in wave two. We

⁸Twenty-two percent were extremely willing to give aid (coded as 1), 35% were very willing, 34% were somewhat willing, 8% were not very willing, and 2% were never willing (coded as 0). For willingness to use force the percentages were 13%, 31%, 49%, 6%, and 1%, respectively. The polychoric correlation between willingness to give aid and willingness to use force was .02.

⁹The question wording was as follows: “Please tell me whether you think each country is very friendly, mostly friendly, mostly unfriendly or very unfriendly toward the United States. . . . Now could you please tell me how threatening you think each of the following countries is toward the United States. Would you say the country is very threatening, somewhat threatening, not very threatening or not at all threatening?”

¹⁰The 25 countries were Argentina, Brazil, Great Britain, Canada, China, Cuba, Egypt, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Pakistan, the Philippines, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, South Korea, South Africa, and Turkey.

¹¹Fifty-three percent strongly favored action against Iraq, with 30% favoring, 12% opposing, and 5% strongly opposing such action.

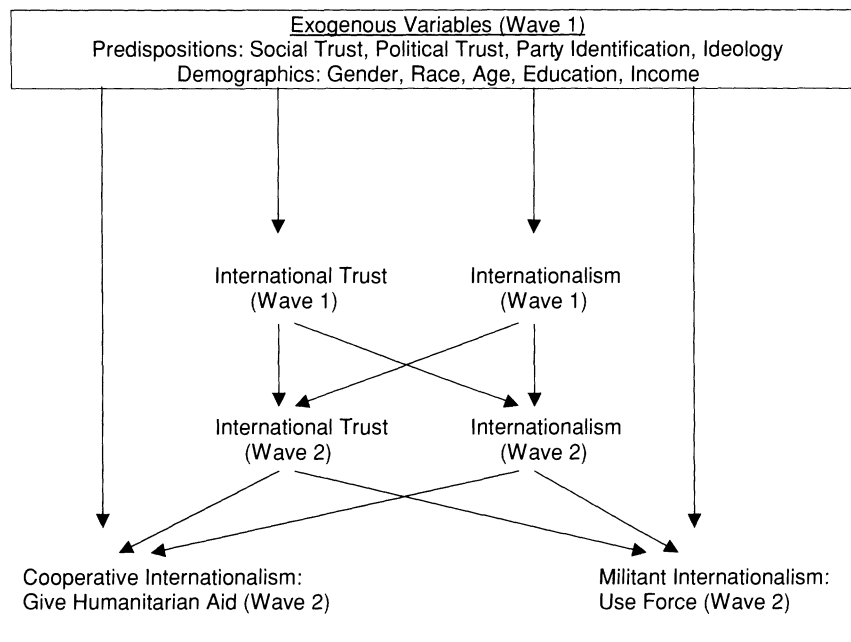
¹²This produced a seven-category scale, transformed to range from 0 (strong Democrat) to 1 (strong Republican).

¹³This produced another seven-category scale, transformed to range from 0 (strong liberal) to 1 (strong conservative). Some caution may be in order when interpreting the results of the analyses that did not include ideology as a predictor (see Tables 4 and 5); note also, however, that ideology was not significantly related to international trust once the effects of other key variables were taken into account (see Table 3).

¹⁴We created dummy variables for gender (1 if female and 0 if male) and race (1 if African American and 0 otherwise). Our measure of age was in years/100. Education and income were measured on seven-category scales transformed to range from 0 to 1.

¹⁵We had no clear expectation for the effect of social trust on willingness to use force (see Bartels 1994, but also Brewer and Steenbergen 2002).

FIGURE 1 A Model of International Trust, Internationalism, Willingness to Give Humanitarian Aid, and Willingness to Use Force



expected international trust in wave one to have a positive effect on internationalism in wave two and internationalism in wave one to have a positive effect on international trust in wave two.

Lastly, we allowed international trust and internationalism in wave two to influence willingness to give aid and willingness to use force in wave two. This enabled us to estimate not only the direct effects of international trust on support for the two faces of internationalism but also its indirect effects through its impact on general internationalism, which we expected to have positive effects on support for both faces (Bartels 1994; Brewer and Steenbergen 2002). We expected the total effect of international trust on willingness to give aid to be positive but had no clear expectation for the total effect of international trust on willingness to use force.

Table 2 presents the results for the model, estimated through Weighted Least Squares (see Joreskog 1990).¹⁶ The negative effect of age on international trust provides indirect support for our argument that the international environment experienced by older Americans during their formative years should have been more likely to foster generalized distrust of other nations than the international environment experienced by younger Americans

¹⁶In all of our analyses, we used one-tailed significance tests for directional hypotheses.

early in their lives.¹⁷ Similarly, the negative effect of Republican partisanship on international trust suggests that elite opinion leadership may have produced a partisan divide among the mass public here.¹⁸ The effect of conservative ideology also had the expected negative sign but fell short of significance.

As predicted, both social trust and political trust exerted positive and statistically significant effects on international trust, with the effect of the former being twice as large as the effect of the latter. It may be that the effect of social trust was the greater of the two because the link between trust in strangers and international trust was clearer to respondents than the link between faith in government and international trust. Social trust and political trust also had significant and positive direct effects on internationalism. Here, though, the impact of political trust was greater than the impact of social trust, perhaps because the decision on whether to favor involvement in world affairs more directly implicated activity on the part

¹⁷An examination of international trust by age cohort (based on the decade in which the respondent came of age) indicated that this relationship was largely a linear one. It may be that life-cycle effects accounted for part of the impact of age on international trust, but an explanation based on generational effects strikes us as more intuitive and plausible.

¹⁸Age and party identification produced similar effects within the cross-sectional sample.

TABLE 2 Influences on International Trust, Internationalism, Willingness to Give Humanitarian Aid, and Willingness to Use Force among Panel Respondents

	International Trust (Wave 1)	Internationalism (Wave 1)	International Trust (Wave 2)	Internationalism (Wave 2)	Humanitarian Aid (Wave 2)	Use Force (Wave 2)
Social trust	.34** (.07)	.18* (.08)	–	–	.09 (.07)	–.10 (.08)
Political trust	.17** (.06)	.31** (.08)	–	–	–.02 (.06)	.12* (.06)
Party ID	–.30* (.14)	–.11 (.14)	–	–	.06 (.11)	.28* (.12)
Ideology	–.10 (.09)	–.11 (.09)	–	–	–.10 (.07)	.01 (.09)
Female	–.03 (.07)	–.04 (.09)	–	–	–.05 (.06)	.00 (.07)
Black	–.33 (.18)	–.17 (.20)	–	–	.15 (.14)	.21 (.16)
Age	–.24** (.05)	.12* (.04)	–	–	.07 (.05)	–.04 (.21)
Education	.09 (.06)	.16* (.08)	–	–	–.03 (.06)	–.30** (.06)
Income	–.10 (.09)	.02 (.10)	–	–	–.03 (.07)	.16* (.08)
International trust (Wave 1)	–	–	.81** (.05)	.31** (.06)	–	–
Internationalism (Wave 1)	–	–	.10 (.06)	.59** (.06)	–	–
International trust (Wave 2)	–	–	–	–	.08 (.07)	.01 (.09)
Internationalism (Wave 2)	–	–	–	–	.42** (.08)	.28** (.09)
Number of observations		523				
Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index		.98				
χ^2 (25 degrees of freedom)		46.66				

Note: Table entries are Weighted Least Squares estimates.

* $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$ (one-tailed tests for directional hypotheses specified in text; two-tailed tests otherwise).

of the respondents' own government and, thus, evaluations of that government.

The results of the cross-lagged effects component of the model indicated that international trust influenced internationalism. Consistent with our expectation, the effect of international trust in wave one on internationalism in wave two was positive, significant, and substantial. In contrast, the effect of internationalism in wave one on international trust in wave two was much smaller, although it was positive and marginally significant ($p \leq .10$). Thus, we found evidence that international trust shaped internationalism and perhaps that internationalism shaped

international trust; the former effect, however, was the dominant one.¹⁹

Of the key variables in the model, only general internationalism exerted significant direct effects on both willingness to give humanitarian aid and willingness to use force; its effects on each were positive, as expected. The total effect of international trust in wave one on willingness to give aid, however, was also positive and significant

¹⁹We reached a similar conclusion when we estimated a cross-lagged effects model that allowed all of the exogenous variables, as well as international trust and internationalism in wave one, to influence international trust and internationalism in wave two.

(.20, $p \leq .01$), consistent with our prediction. The total effect of international trust in wave one on willingness to use force failed to attain statistical significance, which is not surprising given that two mutually contradictory effects were both plausible here. The effects of social trust and political trust on cooperative internationalism were largely indirect: Neither exerted a direct effect on willingness to give humanitarian aid, but each had a positive and significant total effect here (.21, $p \leq .01$ for social trust; .09, $p \leq .05$ for political trust). In addition, political trust exerted a positive and significant total effect on willingness to use force (.18, $p \leq .01$), some of which was direct (.12, $p \leq .05$) and some of which was indirect.

Taken as a whole, the results support previous arguments regarding trust and public opinion about world affairs while also supporting a number of novel hypotheses about the causes and consequences of international trust. The effects of age and party identification provide circumstantial evidence that international and domestic environmental factors shape international trust. We also found evidence that people reason from generalized trust in other people and generalized trust in government to international trust. Moreover, we found that international trust plays a crucial role in shaping orientations toward world affairs: respondents reasoned from international trust to general preferences between internationalism and isolationism, as well from international trust to support for cooperative internationalism (in the form of humanitarian aid) along a path that ran through support for internationalism as a general principle. As a consequence, international trust partly mediated the effects of social trust and political trust on opinion about world affairs. We did not find evidence that international trust shapes support for militant internationalism in the abstract; as we will show in the following section, however, international trust may sometimes shape support for particular military interventions.

International Trust, Images of Nations, and Support for Military Interventions

Having tested whether international trust shapes citizens' abstract principles regarding world affairs, we then tested whether it shapes another set of foundations for public opinion in this domain: citizens' images of specific foreign nations. To do so, we analyzed data from the cross-sectional survey. We estimated two ordered probit models for each of the 25 nations presented to respondents:

one for beliefs about whether the nation is friendly and the other for beliefs about whether the nation is threatening. The key independent variable in each model was international trust. We expected positive effects for international trust on perceptions of friendliness and negative effects for international trust on perceptions of threat. Each model controlled for internationalism, party identification, and demographics.²⁰

For each of the 25 nations, the effect of international trust on perceptions of friendliness had the expected positive sign. Its effect was significant at the .10 level in 23 of the cases and at the .05 level or better in 21. To evaluate the magnitude of these effects, we estimated the predicted probability of choosing each response option for two hypothetical respondents: One who chose the trusting option for both international trust items and one who chose the distrusting option for both international trust items (see King, Tomz, and Wittenberg 2000; all other independent variables were set at their means). In most cases, the impact of international trust on these probabilities was sizable (see Table 3 for selected cases). For example, all else being equal a respondent high in international trust had a 68% probability of seeing Great Britain as very friendly, whereas a respondent low in international trust had only a 48% chance of seeing the same nation as very friendly. Similarly, a respondent high in international trust had a 44% chance of seeing Iraq as very unfriendly, whereas the corresponding probability for a respondent low in international trust was 67%.

The picture was the same when we examined perceptions of nations as threatening. Again, the effect of international trust had the expected sign (here, negative) for all 25 nations. In 23 of the cases its effect was significant at the .10 level or better, and in 21 of the cases its effect reached the .05 level or better. As before, we estimated the probabilities of choosing each response option for hypothetical respondents high in international trust and low in international trust, setting all other independent variables at their means (see Table 3 for selected cases). In the few cases where almost nobody perceived the target nation as threatening (e.g., Canada, Great Britain), the impact of international trust was (not surprisingly) slight. More often, however, the effects of international trust on perceptions of specific nations as threatening were substantial. For example, all else being equal a respondent high in international trust had a 36% probability of seeing Iran as very threatening, whereas a respondent low

²⁰The number of observations ranged from 474 to 334. The results reported below did not differ substantively when we excluded internationalism from the model.

TABLE 3 International Trust and Perceptions of Selected Foreign Nations

Perceptions of Friendliness		Low International Trust				High International Trust			
		Probability of Seeing Nation as . . .				Probability of Seeing Nation as . . .			
p for Effect of International Trust		Very Friendly		Very Unfriendly		Very Friendly		Very Unfriendly	
Canada	≤.05	59	37	2	2	72	26	1	1
Britain	≤.01	48	46	4	2	68	30	2	1
Germany	≤.01	24	67	7	2	38	58	4	1
France	≤.05	23	60	16	2	32	56	11	1
Japan	≤.05	22	67	9	2	32	61	5	1
Russia	≤.01	6	67	21	5	21	70	8	1
China	≤.01	4	46	40	10	9	57	29	4
Cuba	≤.05	2	21	45	31	5	29	44	22
Iran	≤.01	1	6	41	53	2	13	51	34
Iraq	≤.01	1	3	29	67	3	8	44	44

Perceptions of Threat		Low International Trust				High International Trust			
		Probability of Seeing Nation as . . .				Probability of Seeing Nation as . . .			
p for Effect of International Trust		Very Threatening		Not at All Threatening		Very Threatening		Not at All Threatening	
Canada	>.10	1	1	13	85	0	1	9	90
Britain	≤.10	0	4	14	82	0	2	9	89
Germany	≤.01	3	11	32	54	0	4	18	78
France	≤.01	1	7	27	65	0	3	15	82
Japan	≤.01	5	22	34	39	1	8	23	68
Russia	≤.01	8	44	28	20	1	21	29	49
China	≤.01	21	51	17	11	7	39	25	28
Cuba	≤.01	19	44	19	18	8	34	23	35
Iran	≤.01	59	31	7	2	36	41	15	9
Iraq	≤.01	72	24	2	2	49	38	5	8

Note: Significance tests in the first column were for the effect of international trust on respondents' perceptions of the nation as friendly (in the upper part of the table) or threatening (in the lower part of the table). Results were based on an ordered probit model that included gender, race, age, education, income, party identification, and internationalism. All significant effects were in the expected direction. Significance levels were based on one-tailed tests. The remaining columns present predicted probabilities of choosing each response option by level of international trust. Low international trust was defined as a distrusting response to both international trust items; high international trust was defined as a trusting response to both items. Predicted probabilities were calculated with all other variables set at their means.

in international trust had a 59% probability of doing so. Likewise, a respondent high in international trust had a 68% probability of seeing Japan as not at all threatening, whereas a respondent low in international trust had only a 39% chance of doing so.

To be sure, there is an alternative explanation for the findings in Table 3: respondents could have derived their generalized beliefs about whether to trust other nations from pieces of information about specific nations that they received through recent exposure to public discourse,

particularly mass media discourse. For example, exposure to stories about Iraq's alleged violations of United Nations resolutions regarding weapons of mass destruction could have led them reduce their generalized level of trust in other nations. Yet previous research suggests that specific information of this sort will have little impact on international trust even when citizens acquire it. As Peffley and Hurwitz demonstrated, top-down (i.e., general to specific), rather than bottom-up (i.e., general to specific), linkages are "the norm for international belief systems,

TABLE 4 Influences on Support for Military Action Against Iraq

International trust	-.38*
	(.16)
Internationalism	.52**
	(.15)
Party identification	.49**
	(.16)
Female	-.03
	(.11)
Black	-.09
	(.19)
Age	-1.03**
	(.34)
Education	-.64**
	(.24)
Income	.26
	(.22)
Cut 1	-1.97
	(.28)
Cut 2	-1.31
	(.27)
Cut 3	-.34
	(.26)
Number of observations	473
Log likelihood	-483.50
χ^2	43.41**

Note: Table entries are ordered probit coefficients. Standard errors are in parentheses. Given that we had no clear directional hypothesis for the effect of international trust in this model, we used two-tailed significance tests for this effect and the others in the table.

* $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$.

given the great complexity of the domain and the sheer volume of international information" (1993, 66).²¹

Our final analysis examined the consequences of international trust for public opinion within a specific and substantively important foreign policy domain: The use of military force to prevent Iraq from gaining weapons

²¹To test this conclusion in the case of international trust, one of the authors conducted an experiment in which participants were exposed to newspaper articles casting a foreign nation (either Russia or China) as either cooperating with or being in conflict with the United States. Although these treatments influenced trust in the individual nation covered by the story, they did not influence international trust. Thus, the results reinforced our assumption that people reason from international trust to more specific views, rather than the other way around. This is not to say that the real world should have no impact on international trust; rather, our argument is that the impact of the international environment on international trust is more holistic and particularly pronounced among those in their formative years.

of mass destruction. Using the cross-sectional data set, we estimated the impact of international trust on support for such action.²² The results indicated that international trust had a negative effect on support, controlling for the effects of internationalism, party identification, and demographics (see Table 4). Put another way, respondents who generally trusted other nations were less likely than those who generally distrusted other nations to favor action against Iraq to prevent that nation from gaining weapons of mass destruction. Thus, our results point to an intriguing contrast: whereas international trust did not shape general support for military intervention into "international problems" (a phrase that may recall cases such as Somalia, Bosnia, and Kosovo), the absence of such trust fostered support for action against a nation perceived by many Americans—particularly those low in international trust—to threaten the United States itself.

Conclusion

Our results lead us to conclude that international trust deserves the attention of researchers who study public opinion and international relations. Most basically, we found that citizens hold stable and internally coherent beliefs about how much their nation can generally trust other nations. Some Americans believe the United States is surrounded by trustworthy and helpful nations. Many more, however, believe that the United States is surrounded by untrustworthy nations seeking their own advantage. Thus, most Americans see the realm of international relations as resembling the "state of nature" described by Hobbes (1985 [1651]). Put more simply, they see it as a "dog-eat-dog" world.

Such beliefs have important consequences. We found that survey respondents who generally trusted other nations were more likely than those who did not to perceive a wide range of specific nations as friendly and unthreatening, as well as to favor internationalism as a general principle. Thus, our evidence suggests that people use this form of trust as a heuristic when reasoning about world affairs. The effects of international trust on images of specific nations are particularly interesting in light of recent studies which suggest that perceptions of local danger can influence social trust (e.g., Brehm and Rahn 1997, 1016; Uslaner 2002, 109). Here, we have shown that another form of trust—international trust—can shape perceptions of international danger. Put simply, international trust helps dictate whether citizens approach

²²Our model here was the same as the model for images of specific nations.

international politics with fear of a bad world or faith in working together for a better one. In keeping with this, we found that international trust affects public opinion in two major domains of foreign policy. Respondents who generally trusted other nations were more likely than citizens who did not to favor humanitarian aid, an archetypal form of cooperative internationalism, and to oppose military action against Iraq to prevent that nation from gaining weapons of mass destruction, a timely exemplar of militant internationalism. Taken as a whole, our findings support the claim that international trust shapes opinions about world affairs (though, again, we do not mean to imply that it is the only determinant of such opinions). Nor have we exhausted the potential consequences of international trust. For example, it may influence confidence in international institutions such as the United Nations and NATO, each of which has received considerable attention in recent debates over world affairs.²³

Our results also speak to the growing literatures on social and political trust. We found that generalized trust in other people and, to a lesser extent, generalized trust in government shaped international trust. Thus, our results corroborate recent arguments (e.g., Hetherington and Globetti 2002; Rahn and Transue 1998) that social trust and political trust have important consequences for mass political judgment, including opinion about world affairs (Brewer and Steenbergen 2002; Popkin and Dimock 2000; Uslaner 2002). At the same time, our findings also suggest that international trust may follow a different trajectory than social trust or political trust, reinforcing our point that it is distinct from either. In broader terms, our findings indicate that social trust and political trust are not the only forms of trust that future research on mass opinion should study. We have expanded the existing line of research to include international trust, but there may be other politically important forms of generalized trust as well. Just as international trust plays a key role in shaping mass opinion about one domain—in some cases, linking even more general forms of trust to domain-specific judgments—so too may similar constructs in other domains.

We should note that nature of international trust may differ from the American public to other nations—in fact, our theoretical account implies that it is likely to do so when those other nations face different international and domestic environments—and that its consequences may differ from one point in time to another even among the American public. Our data come from a

period that is particularly interesting but potentially atypical: The seven months following the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The external shock of 9/11 could have changed the role that international trust played in the political judgment processes of individual citizens, given that exposure to new information—for example, media coverage of political events such as 9/11—can alter the accessibility of a construct within memory (Zaller 1992), as well as its subjective importance (Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley 1997). Given our argument that major shifts in the international environment can shape international trust, particularly among those in their impressionable years, it may also be that the events on and after 9/11 will shape the future trajectory of Americans' generalized beliefs about other nations. More generally, it will be useful to examine how international trust and its effects on public opinion about world affairs vary over time, across nations, with exposure to different sorts of information, and across decision-making contexts (e.g., specific interventions other than the ones examined here).

Another potentially useful direction would be to examine more closely the nature of international trust. Although our measures for this construct have several desirable properties—face validity, efficiency, and stability over time—their simplicity may limit their capacity to capture complexity in generalized trust in other nations among mass publics. For example, such trust could be multidimensional, with citizens forming one set of generalized beliefs about how much their nation can trust democracies and a related but distinct set of generalized beliefs about how much their nation can trust nondemocracies. Similarly, citizens could distinguish between generalized trust in leaders of other nations and generalized trust in citizens of other nations.

All in all, one could interpret our findings as providing further support for the revisionist view of public opinion about world affairs. The finding that international trust structures opinion in this domain is consistent with the argument that citizens engage in theory-driven processing when forming judgments about world affairs (Hurwitz and Peffley 1987, 1990; Peffley and Hurwitz 1992). It may also be consistent with the argument that citizens can form reasonable and even rational judgments about this subject by using information shortcuts (Page and Shapiro 1992; Peffley and Hurwitz 1992; Popkin and Dimock 2000). Yet one could also cast the use of international trust as an information shortcut in a less normatively appealing light. Some recent studies (e.g., Fishkin 1996; Kuklinski and Hurley 1994) argue that the use of heuristics may produce distorted judgments rather than sound ones. In the case at hand, it may be that mass beliefs about the general trustworthiness of other nations

²³Indeed, additional analyses using data from the panel study indicated that this is the case.

are uninformed or misinformed—which, in turn, could lead citizens to form opinions about world affairs that they would not hold with full (or fuller) information. For example, one might argue that the low levels of international trust among the mass public lead citizens to form unrealistically cynical views of international involvement, humanitarian aid, and international institutions. This might help explain why the American public is typically more isolationist and pessimistic about world affairs than informed elites (see Holsti 1996; Page and Barabas 2000).

Of course, differences of opinion between elites and ordinary citizens do not always mean that the latter are wrong (Page and Barabas 2000). Moreover, research indicates that foreign policy elites use an array of information shortcuts (e.g., Jervis 1976) and engage in theory-driven processing (e.g., Tetlock 1999) to overcome the incomplete information and costs of effortful processing that they, too, confront. Thus, it is plausible that elites would use generalized beliefs about the trustworthiness of other nations as bases for judgments about world affairs, just as ordinary citizens do. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this is sometimes the case. For example, recent accounts have reported that United States leaders such as President George W. Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney, and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld based major foreign policy decisions in part on their shared belief that international relations is a “Hobbesian affair” (Daalder and Lindsay 2002, B3) and that the world is “a bad place with a lot of bad people who can do us harm” (Mufson 2002, B3). In the present study, however, we merely present the argument that elites use international trust to form judgments as a hypothesis for future consideration—a potential corollary to our central claim that at the mass level, international trust is both real and consequential.

Appendix

Sample Characteristics

For the panel survey, the average length of the first interview was around 15 minutes; the average length of the second was around 10. Of the 758 respondents interviewed in both waves, half were women. Twenty-nine percent had a high school education or less; another 29% had some education beyond high school but no college degree; 24% had earned a college degree, and 18% had postgraduate education. Family income broke down as follows: Less than \$30,000, 26%; between \$30,000 and \$50,000, 23%; between \$50,000 and \$75,000, 25%, between \$75,000 and \$100,000, 14%; and over \$100,000, 14%. Fifteen percent

came of age (i.e., turned 18) in the 1990s or later, 18% came of age during the 1980s, 22% during the 1970s, 22% during the 1960s, 13% during the 1950s, and 9% during the 1940s or before. African Americans and Hispanics were underrepresented within the sample (under 5% for each). These distributions followed similar patterns within the entire set of 1,235 first-wave respondents.

For the cross-sectional survey, the average length of the first interview was around 16 minutes. Of the 646 respondents interviewed in both waves, 55% were women. Twenty-eight percent had a high school education or less; another 29% had some education beyond high school but no college degree; 29% had earned a college degree, and 15% had postgraduate education. Family income broke down as follows: Less than \$30,000, 29%; between \$30,000 and \$50,000, 23%; between \$50,000 and \$75,000, 21%, between \$75,000 and \$100,000, 12%; and over \$100,000, 15%. Eighteen percent came of age (i.e., turned 18) in the 1990s or later, 18% came of age during the 1980s, 26% during the 1970s, 16% during the 1960s, 11% during the 1950s, and 12% during the 1940s or before. African Americans were slightly underrepresented within the sample (9%), Hispanics more so (4%).

We computed response rate using AAPOR guidelines as follows: Response rate = completed interviews/completed interviews + partial interviews + refusals + language problems + unknown eligibility. We estimated the percentage of those numbers of unknown eligibility that would have been eligible by using the same proportion as we found to be eligible in those numbers we did reach. The response rate for the first wave of the panel survey was 16%, with a reinterview rate of 61%. The response rate for the cross-sectional study was 19%. These low response rates necessitate caution in generalizing our results to the American public. Note, however, that the distributions for the international trust and internationalism items are highly similar across the two independently drawn samples (see Table 1 and note 7), implying that our samples accurately captured distributions for these items among the population.

References

- Aldrich, John H., John L. Sullivan, and Eugene Borgida. 1989. “Foreign Affairs and Issue Voting: Do Presidential Candidates ‘Waltz before a Blind Audience?’” *American Political Science Review* 83(1):123–41.
- Almond, Gabriel A. 1950. *The American People and Foreign Policy*. New York: Harcourt Brace.
- Bartels, Larry M. 1994. “The American Public’s Defense Spending Preferences in the Post-Cold War Era.” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 58(4):479–508.

- Brehm, John, and Wendy Rahn. 1997. "Individual-Level Evidence for the Causes and Consequences of Social Capital." *American Journal of Political Science* 41(3):999–1023.
- Brewer, Paul R., and Marco R. Steenbergen. 2002. "All Against All: How Beliefs about Human Nature Shape Foreign Policy Opinions." *Political Psychology* 23(1):39–58.
- Chanley, Virginia. 1999. "U.S. Public Views of General and Militant Internationalism." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 43(1):24–44.
- Citrin, Jack. 1974. "Comment: The Political Relevance of Trust in Government." *American Political Science Review* 68(3):973–88.
- Citrin, Jack, and Donald Philip Green. 1986. "Presidential Leadership and the Resurgence of Trust in Government." *British Journal of Political Science* 16(4):431–53.
- Daalder, Ivo H., and James M. Lindsay. 2002. "It's Hawk vs. Hawk in the Bush Administration." *Washington Post*, 27 October: Sect. B.
- Erskine, Hazel G. 1963. "The Polls: Exposure to International Information." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 27(4):658–62.
- Fishkin, James S. 1996. *Voice of the People: Public Opinion and Democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Hermann, Richard K., Philip E. Tetlock, and Penny S. Visser. 1999. "Mass Public Decisions to Go to War: A Cognitive-Interactionist Framework." *American Political Science Review* 93(3):553–71.
- Hetherington, Marc J. 1998. "The Political Relevance of Political Trust." *American Political Science Review* 92(4):791–808.
- Hetherington, Marc J. 1999. "The Effect of Political Trust on the Presidential Vote, 1968–96." *American Political Science Review* 93(2):311–26.
- Hetherington, Marc J., and Suzanne Globetti. 2002. "Political Trust and Racial Policy Preferences." *American Journal of Political Science* 46(2):253–75.
- Hobbes, Thomas. 1985 [1651]. *Leviathan*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Holsti, Ole R. 1992. "Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: Challenges to the Almond-Lippman Consensus." *International Studies Quarterly*, 36(4):439–66.
- Holsti, Ole R. 1996. *Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Horowitz, Bruce. 2002. "Trust in Corporations Wanes in Wake of Scandals." *USA Today*, July 16.
- Hurwitz, Jon, and Mark Peffley. 1987. "How Are Foreign Policy Attitudes Structured? A Hierarchical Model." *American Political Science Review* 81(4):1099–120.
- Hurwitz, Jon, and Mark Peffley. 1990. "Public Images of the Soviet Union: The Impact on Foreign Policy Attitudes." *Journal of Politics* 52(1):3–28.
- Jervis, Robert. 1976. *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Joreskog, Karl G. 1990. "New Developments in LISREL: Analysis of Ordinal Variables Using Polychoric Correlations and Weighted Least Squares." *Quality and Quantity* 24(4):387–404.
- King, Gary, Michael Tomz, and Jason Wittenberg. 2000. "Making the Most of Statistical Analyses: Improving Interpretation and Presentation." *American Journal of Political Science* 44(2):347–61.
- Krauthammer, Charles. 2002. "The Clinton Paper Chase." *Washington Post*, 25 October: Sect. A.
- Kuklinski, James H., and Norman L. Hurley. 1994. "On Hearing and Interpreting Political Messages: A Cautionary Tale of Citizen Cue-Taking." *Journal of Politics* 56(3):729–51.
- Mackenzie, G. Calvin, and Judith M. Labiner. 2002. "Opportunity Lost: The Rise and Fall of Trust and Confidence in Government After September 11." Washington: Brookings Institution.
- Markus, Gregory B. 1979. "The Political Environment and the Dynamics of Public Attitudes: A Panel Study." *American Journal of Political Science* 23(2):338–59.
- McClosky, Herbert. 1967. "Personality and Attitude Correlates of Foreign Policy Orientation." *Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy*, ed. James N. Rosenau. New York: Free Press, pp. 51–109.
- Miller, Arthur H. 1974. "Political Issues and Trust in Government: 1964–1970." *American Political Science Review* 68(3):951–72.
- Mufson, Steven. 2002. "The Way Bush Sees the World." *Washington Post*, 17 February: Sect. B.
- Nelson, Thomas E., Rosalee A. Clawson, and Zoe M. Oxley. 1997. "Media Framing of a Civil Liberties Conflict and its Effect on Tolerance." *American Political Science Review* 91(3):567–83.
- Page, Benjamin I., and Jason Barabas. 2000. "Foreign Policy Gaps Between Citizens and Leaders." *International Studies Quarterly* 44(3):339–64.
- Page, Benjamin I., and Robert Y. Shapiro. 1992. *The Rational Public: Fifty Years of Trends in Americans' Policy Preferences*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Peffley, Mark, and Jon Hurwitz. 1992. "International Events and Foreign Policy Beliefs: Public Responses to Changing Soviet-U.S. Relations." *American Journal of Political Science* 36(2):431–61.
- Peffley, Mark, and Jon Hurwitz. 1993. "Models of Attitude Constraint in Foreign Affairs." *Political Behavior* 15(1):61–90.
- Popkin, Samuel L. 1991. *The Reasoning Voter*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Popkin, Samuel L., and Michael A. Dimock. 2000. "Knowledge, Trust, and International Reasoning." In *Elements of Reason: Cognition, Choice, and the Bounds of Rationality*, ed. Arthur Lupia, Matthew D. McCubbins, and Samuel L. Popkin. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 214–38.
- Putnam, Robert D. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Rahn, Wendy, and John Transue. 1998. "Social Trust and Value Change: The Decline of Social Capital in American Youth, 1976–1995." *Political Psychology* 19(3):545–65.
- Rosenberg, Morris. 1956. "Misanthropy and Political Ideology." *American Sociological Review* 21(6):690–95.
- Scholz, John T., and Mark Lubell. 1998. "Trust and Taxpaying: Testing the Heuristic Approach to Collective Action." *American Journal of Political Science* 42(2):398–417.
- Shapiro, Robert Y., and Lawrence W. Jacobs. 2000. "Who Leads and Who Follows? U.S. Presidents, Public Opinion, and Foreign Policy." In *Decision-Making in a Glass House: Mass Media, Public Opinion, and American and European Foreign*

- Policy in the 21st Century*, ed. Brigitte L. Nacos, Robert Y. Shapiro, and Peirangelo Isernia. New York: Rowan and Littlefield, pp. 223–45.
- Shapiro, Robert Y., and Benjamin I. Page. 1988. "Foreign Policy and the Rational Public." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 32(2):211–47.
- Sniderman, Paul M., and Jack Citrin. 1971. "Psychological Sources of Political Beliefs: Self-Esteem and Isolationist Attitudes." *American Political Science Review* 65(2):401–17.
- Sniderman, Paul M., Richard A. Brody, and Philip E. Tetlock. 1991. *Reasoning and Choice: Explorations in Political Psychology*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Stokes, Donald E. 1962. "Popular Evaluations of Government: An Empirical Assessment." In *Ethics and Bigness: Scientific, Academic, Religious, Political, and Military*, ed. Harlan Cleveland and Harold D. Lasswell. New York: Harper and Brothers, pp. 61–72.
- Tetlock, Philip E. 1999. "Theory-Driven Reasoning about Plausible Pasts and Probable Futures in World Politics: Are We Prisoners of Our Preconceptions?" *American Journal of Political Science* 43(2):335–66.
- Uslaner, Eric M. 2002. *The Moral Foundations of Trust*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Witkopf, Eugene R. 1990. *Faces of Internationalism: Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. New York: Cambridge University Press.