

NCCR Trade Regulation Brown Bag Series

Patrick Wagner, PhD candidate, World Trade Institute, University of Bern

TAKING TRADE PERSONALLY: THE EFFECTS OF PERSONAL-VOTE CULTIVATION ON BARRIERS TO INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACIES

Tuesday, 28 February 2017, 12.30 – 13.30

Anna Nussbaum Auditorium, World Trade Institute, University of Bern
Hallerstrasse 6, 3012 Bern, Switzerland

Abstract

The benefits of free trade are well-established and widely accepted. Yet, despite the theoretical and empirical evidence of these benefits, trade liberalisation is not pursued with the vigour that the discourse its proponents use would imply. Many states maintain protectionist barriers to varying degrees, some of them relatively quite high. Why is this? Within most countries there are political forces which advocate both for protectionist and liberal trade policies. In each, there are also political institutions through which these competing preferences are aggregated, shaping policy outcomes. In this paper I propose a parsimonious approach to studying one such institutional mechanism particular to democracies: electoral systems, and the effect they have on trade policy. In past research electoral institutions have been simplistically modelled with a binary PR/plurality variable that is divorced from comparative institutional theory. Reliance on a binary variable has led to contradictory, inconclusive results. I construct a 13-point institutional index which models the personal-vote cultivation incentives of different electoral systems and propose a correlation between higher personal-vote incentives and higher protectionist trade policy. The results of within-between

random effects (REWB) panel data regressions support my hypothesis and contention that political economic researchers should rethink their reliance on binary institutional variables and seek more nuanced institutional models.

Biography of the Speaker

Patrick Wagner is currently a PhD candidate at the World Trade Institute and works as part of the BRICs Globalization and Labour Protections project. He graduated magna cum laude from University of California, Davis with a bachelor's in International Relations and recently finished a Master's degree with Distinction in International Public Policy from University College London. Patrick Wagner's research has so far focused on the effects of democratic institutional variation on electoral competition and personnel strategies and, most recently, electoral system variation and international trade policy outcomes. Some of his areas of theoretical and empirical interest are (though certainly are not limited to) the policy and distributional effects of democratic institutions, the subnational causes and effects of international trade and investment policies, modern money theory, and the causes of popular perceptions of redistributive and other economic policies.

**Participation is free of charge, no registration is needed.
We warmly welcome you to join our seminar at the World Trade Institute!**

NCCR Trade Regulation Brown Bag Seminars are 30-minute presentations, given by external or in-house researchers. The presentations are followed by a 30-minute Q&A session. The Brown Bag concept comes from the US; it means that people bring their own lunch and eat it during the presentation.