Who's Out of Touch?
Media Misperception of Public Opinion on U.S. Foreign Policy

Thomas Gift
University College London

Jonathan Monten
University College London

Abstract

Although experts in the United States are often criticized as being "out of touch" for failing to understand the political views of average Americans, arguably no group has been more susceptible to this charge than the media. In this article, we exploit unique paired surveys to measure how accurately U.S. foreign policy media experts assesses public opinion compared to other foreign policy experts on the critical issue of American engagement in the world. We find that while experts, on average, substantially underestimate how favorable U.S. citizens are toward international engagement, the media is more inaccurate than other types of experts. We suggest potential reasons for these findings that may serve as the basis for future research. Overall, our study contributes to a growing literature on elite misperceptions of the public and underscores the particular inaccuracies of the media in understanding the attitudes of Americans.

Are U.S. foreign policy experts "out of touch" with the foreign policy views of the American public? Experts play an outsized role in shaping foreign policy debates and decision-making. Yet a common critique is that these elites not only hold different political opinions from most Americans, but also misunderstand what the public wants (Massing 2018; Stokes 2014; Winston 2018). Consequently, even their best efforts to grasp the political zeitgeist often result in flawed perceptions of average citizens. This claim was apparently exemplified by the failure of most experts to predict the 2016 election of Donald Trump, whose presidential campaign challenged a longstanding elite consensus around issues of immigration, trade, and the value of global security alliances.

In popular discussions, perhaps no class of experts is more maligned for being out of touch than the media (Grabowski 2016; Scarry 2016). According to Mathew Ingram of *Fortune* magazine (2016), for example, "[M]uch of the East Coast-based media establishment is arguably out of touch with the largely rural population that voted for Trump, the disenfranchised voters who looked past his cheesy exterior and his penchant for half-truths and heard a message of hope, however twisted." Writing in *The Hill*, Carrie Sheffield (2018) contends that "many journalists...are missing a great number of 'additional facts.'" A 2017 *Morning Consult* poll found that most U.S. citizens concur that "the national political media 'is out of touch with everyday Americans'" (Easley 2017).

Political scientists have made some progress in understanding the extent and causes of elite misperceptions of the American public's policy views. Yet studies have generally not looked at this question in the context of U.S. foreign policy. Understanding these assessments, however, is crucial because experts and other elites play a key role in shaping policy debates (Hafner-Bur-

ton, Hughes, and Victor 2013; Jacobs and Page 2005; Saunders 2015; Yarhi-Milo, Kertzer, and Renshon 2018). If U.S. foreign policy experts routinely misjudge what the public thinks about foreign policy, this may carry over into how policy debates are framed, what issues or viewpoints receive attention, the accuracy of current events analysis, and even U.S. foreign policy decisions.

In this research note, we examine whether U.S. foreign policy experts, and especially the media, misjudge the foreign policy opinions of the American public. To do so, we rely on unique paired surveys of the general public and U.S. foreign policy experts, comprised of the media, as well as academics, think tank scholars, interest group members, Congressional staff, and officials in executive branch agencies related to foreign policy. These surveys – fielded in 2018 by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs and the Texas National Security Network – ask identical questions of U.S. foreign policy experts and the American public, as well as how experts predict the public will respond. This enables a direct comparison of what experts expect the public to think and what the public actually thinks about how active the United States should be in international affairs.

Our results establish three key findings. First, large majorities of both foreign policy experts and the American public support active U.S. engagement abroad, although experts do so more, by a margin of 96 to 70 percent. Second, experts significantly underestimate the actual level of public support for active U.S. international engagement, by 20 percentage points on average. Third, experts differ widely in how accurately they estimate public attitudes. While all classes of foreign policy experts underestimate the true level of public support for active U.S. international engagement, the media misperceives public opinion the most. Specifically, mem-

bers of the media underestimate public support by 25 percentage points, or 25 percent more than experts overall.

We propose multiple potential explanations for these findings, which may serve as the basis for future research. Drawing on the political psychology literature, we suggest that one reason why experts underestimate public support for U.S. global engagement may be that individuals, when inferring the opinions of others, often stereotype people who are broadly different from themselves as holding different political views. Because experts support an active U.S. role abroad, they may assume that most Americans reject that view. Another possibility is that elite misperception of the U.S. public's support for international engagement is a more recent phenomenon. Since the mid- to late-2000s, certain conservative networks and activists have become especially effective in communicating their message in the public sphere. To the extent that these voices advocate pulling back from global commitments, experts might expect citizens to favor less U.S. global engagement than they do.

We also present possible arguments for why the media may be more prone than other experts to misperceive the public's foreign policy attitudes. One potential explanation is that media reporting of U.S. foreign policy is heavily "indexed" to elite viewpoints, so it rarely focuses on understanding the attitudes of the American public. The professional culture of the media may encourage journalists to fill that void by reporting on specific people and events that overweight unrepresentative anecdotes about average Americans being isolationist. Over time, the media may accept these views as accurate. An alternative explanation may be that, given the business pressures inherent in journalism, the media faces strong professional incentives to play up, sensa-

tionalize, and overinterpret small differences in elite-mass attitudes, which in turn could inform their perceptions of what the public wants.

Taken together, our study adds to a growing literature on elite misperceptions of public opinion (Hertel-Fernandez, Mildenberger, and Stokes 2019; Mildenberger and Tingley 2019; Broockman and Skovron 2018; Kull and Ramsay 2000; Kull and Destler 1999; Powlick 1995). We confirm that expert misperception of public opinion extends to U.S. foreign policy, and that of all classes of experts, the media is most vulnerable to misjudgment. Our study highlights the importance of disaggregating different classes or types of experts in understanding how and why elites misjudge public opinion. It also raises the critical question of whether the media contributes to a perceived deepening of polarization between experts and the public over the direction of U.S. foreign policy.

Data and Results

Our data were collected by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs and the Texas National Security Network.[1] These distinctive paired surveys capture both U.S. elite and public opinion bearing on U.S. foreign policy. The public survey was fielded online from July 12-31, 2018, reflecting a nationally-representative sample of U.S. adults. The expert survey was fielded online shortly afterwards, from August to October 2018.[2] 589 elites with expertise on U.S. foreign poli-

[1] For a full description of the public and elite survey methodologies, see Smeltz et al. (2018) and Smeltz et al. (embargoed), respectively.

[2] Despite a modest time discrepancy between when the public and elite surveys were carried out in 2018, it is unlikely that public opinion shifted so dramatically in the intervening time that it would alter our central results.

cy completed this survey, drawn from six core groups of experts: the media, academics, think tank scholars, interest group members, Congressional staff, and officials working in foreign policy-related executive branch agencies, such as the Department of State and the Department of Defense.

We leveraged two questions to examine how experts and the public think about U.S. international engagement, as well as how experts assess public opinion. First, both experts and the public were asked their own opinions about whether the United States should engage internationally: "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?" Second, to judge how accurately experts viewed public opinion on this question, experts were additionally presented with a sliding scale from 0-100 percent and asked: "If you had to guess, what percent of the American people do you think want to take an active part in world affairs?"

As shown in Figure 1, a total of 70 percent of the public agreed that the United States should take an active part in world affairs. An even larger majority of experts (96 percent) concurred with this statement. Support was high among all expert groups, including 94 percent of the media. This confirms that substantial majorities of both foreign policy experts and the public favor active U.S. engagement in the world, although experts are more supportive.

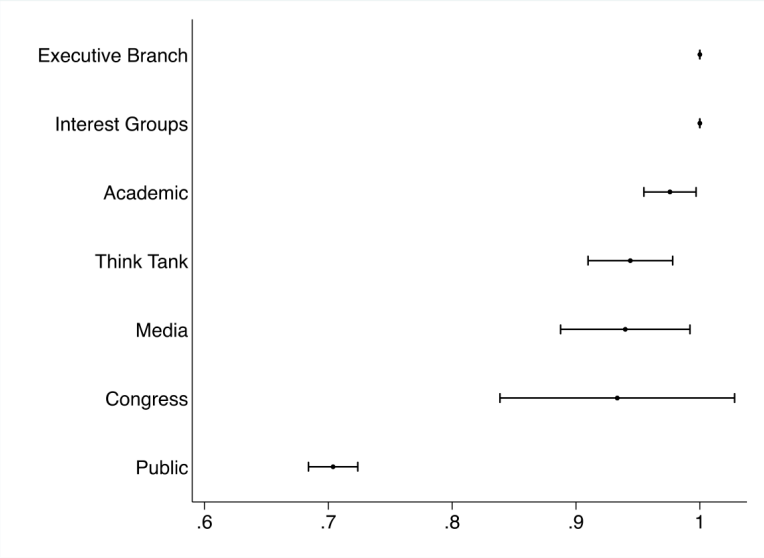

Figure 1. Average Support for U.S. International Engagement Among Experts and the Public. *Notes*: Figure depicts 95% CIs. Public sample is nationally representative.

Next, Figure 2 shows how accurately the media and other experts estimate public support for U.S. involvement around the world. When aggregating all expert classes in the sample, experts on average guessed that 50 percent of the public supported the United States playing an active global role, underestimating the true level of public support by 20 percentage points. Members of the media, who guessed the answer is 45 percent, were more inaccurate on average than other experts.[3]

[3] The mean estimate among media respondents is significantly different from the estimate of all other experts taken together at the $p < .05$ level.

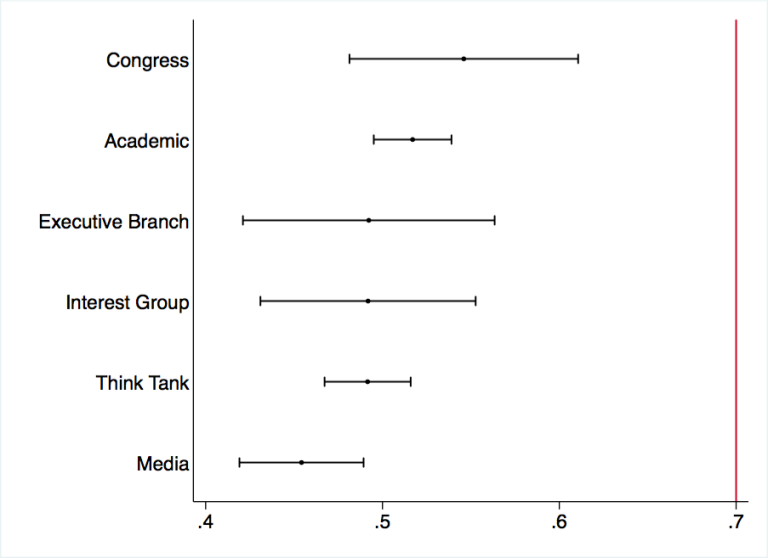

Figure 2. Expert Estimates of Public Support for International Engagement.
Notes: Figure depicts 95% CIs. Red line indicates the true level of public support.

While the above differences are instructive, taking the mean value of guesses could mask how well individual experts estimate public opinion. If responses are widely dispersed, each expert in a group could miss the mark significantly on the positive or negative "side" of the actual percentage of people that favors active U.S. engagement in the world. Yet these responses would in effect cancel out, yielding a group estimate closer to the actual average. For this reason, we also look at the average "distance" that experts are away from guessing true public support for U.S. global engagement.

We create a *Distance* variable that equals the absolute value of the total percentage points that each expert is off from estimating the actual percentage of the public that supports U.S. involvement in the world. This variable takes the form:

$$Distance_i = | E_i - A|,$$

where E_i is the percentage of the public that the expert guesses favors U.S. engagement abroad, and A is the actual percentage. This yields a mean *Distance* for each type of expert.

Figure 3 displays these results and reveals a substantively similar picture as in Figure 2. Although all types of experts markedly misestimate the true percentage of the public that supports U.S. engagement in the world, the media is significantly more out of touch. The average *Distance* for the media is 26 percentage points, while the average *Distance* for other experts is 21.[4]

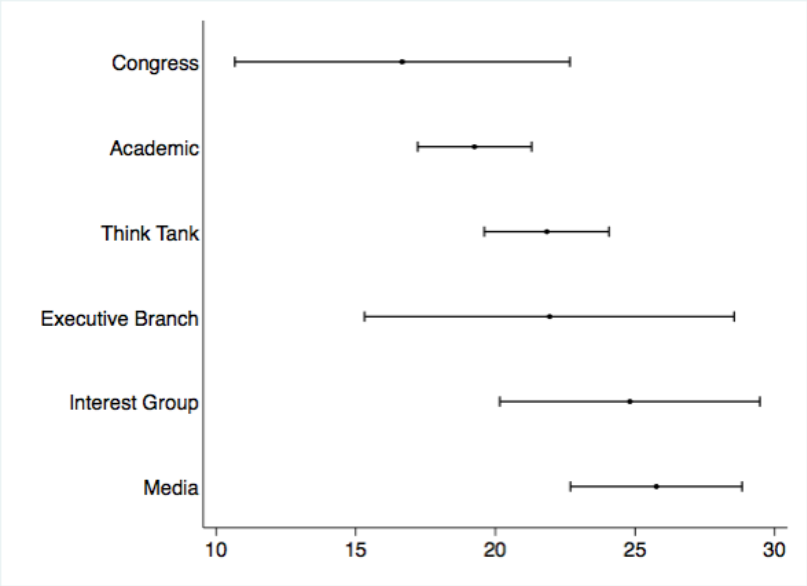

Figure 3. Expert "Distance" from Actual Public Support for International Engagement.
Note: Figure depicts 95% CIs.

To confirm that the difference between the media and other experts is not just a function of background traits correlated with particular types of experts, we estimate the following regression:

[4] The mean distance of the media group estimate is significantly different from the mean distance of all other experts at the $p < 0.05$ level.

$$Distance_i = a + a1T_i + a2Y_i + E_i$$

where *Distance* has the same definition as earlier, *T* denotes a particular expert type, *Y* comprises a set of expert background covariates,[5] and *E* is an error term.

Figure 4 plots coefficients from separate regressions for each expert type, when including an indicator for each group, respectively.[6] As anticipated, the coefficient on *T* when it denotes the media is positive and statistically significant. Relative to other experts on average, members of the media are approximately 5 percentage points more inaccurate in predicting the true percentage of the public that supports active U.S. engagement in the world. Other than the media, no class of expert is significantly different from the other aggregate groups.[7]

[5] These include variables for partisanship, age, education, gender, and race. See Appendix Table A1 for summary statistics.

[6] See Appendix Table A2 for the regression table. For completeness, we also compare the *Distance* of the media to other expert groups one by one. To do so, we estimate regressions on various subsamples comprising the media and the respective expert groups, where the media is the reference category. See Appendix Table A3.

[7] These results remain substantively unaffected when including a variable indicating the expert respondent's own preference for U.S. international engagement. See Appendix Table A4.

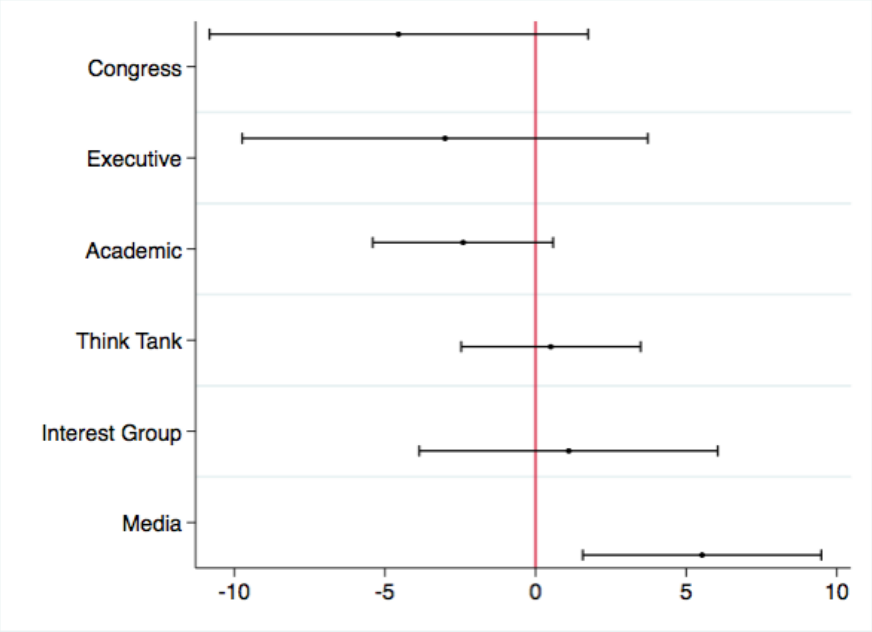

Figure 4. Effect of Expert Group on Distance from Actual Public Support for U.S. International Engagement.
Note: Figure depicts 95% CIs.

Explanations

Why do experts generally underestimate public support for U.S. global engagement? And why is the media most likely to make this miscalculation? While our data cannot definitively establish the answers, below we offer some possible reasons for our findings.

Why Do Experts Underestimate Public Support for U.S. Global Engagement?

One potential reason for why experts underestimate public support for U.S. global engagement relates to research in political psychology on how individuals infer the political attitudes of others (Mildenberger and Tingley 2019; Kertzer et al. 2019). Specifically, the "similarity contingency model" establishes that individuals evaluate whether the people whose views they are trying to infer are broadly like or unlike themselves (Ames 2004a; Ames 2004b). If they view

people as broadly like them, they are more apt to "project" onto others views that are similar to their own. If they view people as broadly unlike them, however, they are more apt to "stereotype" them as having the opposite views.

Experts are likely to perceive the masses as broadly unlike them across a number of different dimensions—for example, in where they live, their habits and mores, their educational backgrounds, their political choices, and their knowledge about politics. Given that—as we show in our data—elites themselves are strongly internationalist in orientation, experts may tend to stereotype the masses as holding dissimilar views to their own. Accordingly, they may judge that a considerable portion of Americans are reluctant to support the United States playing an active role in international affairs.

This argument mirrors common narratives that present experts and other elites as being at odds with the U.S. electorate on public policy (Foucks 2016; Gage 2017). This is true in domestic policy, but it may be especially so in foreign policy (Page and Bouton 2006). For example, a standard assumption is that many ordinary Americans generally favor more nationalist policies when it comes to areas such as trade, immigration, the environment, and security cooperation. By comparison, experts and other elites are often depicted as internationalists, who favor greater global integration in these policy areas (Brooks 2017; Huntington 2004; Rodrick 2017; Stelzer 2018).

Another possible reason why experts underestimate public support for U.S. involvement abroad relates to recent changes in the partisan landscape. Research finds that elites increasingly view Americans as more right of center than they are (Hertel-Fernandez, Mildenberger, and Stokes 2019; Broockman and Skovron 2018). Evidence suggests that certain conservative ac-

tivists have been especially effective in recent years in promulgating their message (Skocpol and Hertel-Fernandez 2016; Skocpol and Williamson 2011). This mobilization may be one reason why conservative politicians increasingly stake out more right-wing policies due to misjudging what their base wants (Hall 2015; McCarty 2015).

Analyses show that since at least the mid- to late-2000s, a network of influential conservatives—through channels such as grassroots activism, talk radio, and deep-pocketed donors—have made disproportionate headway in shaping American politics (Hertel-Fernandez, Tervo, and Skocpol 2018; Halpin et al. 2007). Scholars have focused on the consequences of this network for elite misperceptions on domestic policy, but similar effects might hold for elite misperceptions of U.S. foreign policy. With resurgent mobilization on the political right advocating restraint in the global arena (Gage 2019), experts may expect that more Americans support reducing the U.S. role abroad than they do.

Not all conservative leaders and activists, of course, advocate less international activism in U.S. foreign policy. For example, neoconservatives have supported using American military force to spread democracy abroad, while many congressional Republicans continue to support free trade. It is equally true that international retrenchment has garnered some support on the left. For example, 2016 presidential candidate Hillary Clinton has been critical of NAFTA (Merica and Bradner 2016). Similarly, several Democratic leaders have advocated reducing U.S. military commitments around the world by, for instance, calling for a withdrawal of U.S. combat forces from the Middle East (Burns 2019; CNBC 2015).

Nevertheless, Trump has significantly elevated the salience of conservative advocates of reducing U.S. international engagement on issues related to trade, security alliances, and military

interventions. His "America First" agenda, part of a distinctive brand of conservative nationalism, has been intent to withdraw from multilateral pacts and to pursue relative non-interventionism, including by extricating the United States from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (Baker 2017), the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (Seligman and Gramer 2019), the Paris Agreement (Shear 2017), and the Iran nuclear deal (Landler 2018). He has also imposed tariffs on allies and adversaries (Pramuk 2019) and reduced U.S. military deployments in Syria (Nissenbarum, Youssef, and Salama 2018). A central tenet of his foreign policy is projecting American power outside the boundaries of longstanding U.S. alliances (Ross 2019; Wright 2016).

Why Are the Media Especially Out of Touch?

There are also multiple potential explanations for why the media specifically may be more out of touch than other experts in judging public opinion on U.S. foreign policy. One reason may be that media reporting is heavily "indexed" to the views of elites (Bennett 1990; Bennett 1994; Althaus et al. 1996). An extensive literature in U.S. politics investigates the role of the media in covering global affairs (Baum and Potter 2008). This scholarship indicates that media depictions of U.S. foreign policy tend not only to lack depth, but are also uncritical of establishment views, deferential to top military and political figures, and prioritize largely what leaders do and say (Aday 2017; Fenton 2005).[8]

In this way, media reporting narrows the range of opinion that receives attention or coverage (Baum and Groeling 2009; Bennett 1990; Gans 1979). This range is likely to be narrower

[8] On the weight the news media places on "official" sources, and how this relates to perceived need for objectivity and balance, see Epstein (1973); Gans (1979); and Schudson (2001).

on issues of foreign affairs, which are less salient to the public, require more specialized knowledge, or where elite opinion itself may be narrow (Bennett 1990; 1994). Coverage of U.S. foreign policy thus tends to focus on elite opinion and intra-elite debates. This preoccupation with elite viewpoints may not only lead citizens to receive incomplete information about U.S. foreign policy (Zaller and Chiu 2000), but may also contribute to a lack of awareness about what the public thinks about issues.

Against this backdrop, the professional culture of the media may encourage journalists to fill these gaps with unrepresentative narratives about how ordinary Americans think. This is consistent with literature showing that the media often overweights anecdotes or highly visible events at the expense of analyzing systematic trends (Craig 2003; Iyengar 1991). If an image or story about the public becomes widespread—for example, that almost everyone in "middle America" supports Trump's "America First" foreign policy—the media might be disinclined to question it. Instead, the tendency may be to magnify these stories to fit a larger narrative (Smarsh 2016), which in turn may shape their own views of the public.

An additional possible explanation for why the media may be more apt than other experts to misjudge public opinion on U.S. foreign policy relates to professional incentives. Ultimately, media organizations are profit-driven enterprises that must compete for consumers by attracting and holding the attention of potential audiences to succeed (Epstein 1973). This task has, however, become more challenging amid the splintering of the mainstream media, the need to find new revenue streams, and the rise of increasingly rapid, 24-hour news cycles (Altheide 2002; Kalb 1998).

In the context of a hyper-competitive news market, these factors might lead the media to magnify or place greater weight on negative or conflict-driven stories because they attract a larger audience (Hester and Gibson 2003; van der Meer et al. 2018; Groeling and Baum 2009). Analyses, for example, show that the media tends to give disproportionate attention to pessimistic narratives and to underweight positive political trends (Pinker 2018). Regarding U.S. foreign policy, the media may have an incentive to magnify or increase the salience of any differences in the foreign policy views of elites and the public.

This conflict-driven approach may be appealing because it maps onto a wider narrative of a growing social, economic, and political divide between elites and the masses (Bartels 2008). This is particularly true given that polarization is often cited as a major problem in the United States, and much of this polarization is presumed to break down along the lines of elites versus the masses (Iyengar et al. 2019; Murray 2012). As a consequence of viewing U.S. foreign policy debates at least partly through the lens of elite-mass polarization, the media may tend to perceive Americans as less internationalist than they are.

Conclusion

The media, alongside other experts, are often accused of being "out of touch" with U.S. society insofar as they fail to comprehend the views of average Americans. The contention is that experts both differ from—and misunderstand—the policy views of regular citizens. In this research note, we developed and investigated the empirical validity of this assertion by assessing the accuracy of expert perceptions of public preferences over U.S. engagement in the world. Drawing on unique paired surveys of U.S. foreign policy experts and the public, we find that al-

though all classes of foreign policy experts significantly underestimate how much the public supports international engagement, the media is more out of touch than other experts.

We suggest that experts may underestimate public support for U.S. global engagement due to either stereotyping, which is a more durable phenomenon, or the amplification of less internationalist conservative voices, which is a more recent one. Future studies might adjudicate between these mechanisms by observing whether the accuracy of expert perceptions improves under a more pro-internationalist Republican (or Democratic) presidency in the post-Trump era, or if pro-internationalist activism becomes ascendant. We also suggest that the media may be less accurate than other experts in estimating public support for U.S. global engagement because of either elite "indexing" or the professional incentives of the media. Interviews and case studies could shed light on which of these dynamics is most responsible for these findings.

Although we focus on general attitudes toward international engagement, future research could further examine the degree or causes of expert misperception in specific U.S. foreign policy areas, such as the military, trade, foreign aid, or the environment.[9] Researchers could also unpack what makes experts more or less out of touch through more detailed data on variables such as their educational credentials, where they live, or where they work. Scholars might also explore how confident experts actually are in guessing public attitudes to grasp the certainty with which they predict the opinions of the American public.

An additional question raised by these findings is whether a sufficiently large segment of the public is informed enough about U.S. foreign policy to even have coherent attitudes on the topic. Early research on public foreign policy attitudes suggested that they were unstable or

[9] See, for example, Mildenberger and Tingley (2019).

lacked structure.[10] More recent research, however, finds that the public generally holds stable and internally coherent foreign policy views and that these attitudes can shape political behavior such as voting.[11] Future studies could increase confidence in these findings by confirming that a gap in expert perceptions of public opinion exists when using other survey questions or indicators for a pro-internationalist orientation.

Finally, our findings raise the question of whether the media contributes to misperceptions of the U.S. public among other classes of experts, given that other experts obtain information from the media. Foreign policy experts likely consume more news related to global affairs than the typical citizen. On the one hand, this might mitigate potential misperceptions by exposing them to a greater diversity of information. On the other hand, it could deepen misperceptions of the public if the media sources are themselves systematically biased or otherwise inaccurately portray how Americans want the U.S. government to act abroad. Future research might investigate whether and how the media reinforces perceptions of an elite-public divide over the fundamental direction of U.S. foreign policy.

---

[10] Almond 1950; and, more recently, Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996.

[11] See Aldrich et al. 2006; Page and Bouton 2006; Holsti 1992; Jentleson 1992; and Aldrich, Sullivan, and Borgida 1989.

References

Aday, Sean. 2017. “The US Media, Foreign Policy, and Public Support for War.” In *Oxford Handbook of Political Communication,* edited by Kate Kenski and Kathleen Hall Jamieson. New York: Oxford University Press.

Aldrich, John H., Christopher Gelpi, Peter Feaver, Jason Reifler, and Kristin Thompson Sharp. 2006. “Foreign Policy and the Electoral Connection.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 9: 477-502.

Aldrich, John H., John L. Sullivan, and Eugene Borgida. 1989. “Foreign Affairs and Issue Voting: Do Presidential Candidates ‘Waltz Before A Blind Audience?’” *The American Political Science Review* 83(1): 123-141.

Almond, Gabriel. 1950. *The American People and Foreign Policy*. New York: Harcourt Brace.

Althaus, Scott L., Jill A. Edy, Robert M. Entman, and Patricia Phalen. 1996. “Revising the Indexing Hypothesis: Officials, Media, and the Libya Crisis.” *Political Communication* 13(4): 407-421.

Ames, Daniel R. 2004a. “Inside the Mind Reader’s Tool Kit: Projection and Stereotyping in Mental State Inference.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 87(3): 340-353.

Ames, Daniel R. 2004b. “Strategies for Social Inference: A Similarity Contingency Model of Projection and Stereotyping in Attribute Prevalence Estimates.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 87(5): 573–585.

Baker, Peter. 2017. "Trump Abandons Trans-Pacific Partnership, Obama's Signature Trade Deal.

New York Times, January 23. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/23/us/politics/tpp-trump-trade-nafta.html.

Bartels, Larry. 2008. *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Baum, Matthew A., and Philip B.K. Potter. 2008. "Mass Media, Public Opinion, and Foreign Policy: Toward a Theoretical Synthesis." *Annual Review of Political Science* 11: 39-65.

Baum, Matthew A., and Tim J. Groeling. 2010. *War Stories: How Strategic Journalists, Citizens, and Politicians Shape the News about War*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Bennett, W. Lance. 1990. "Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations." *Journal of Communication* 40(2): 103–125.

Bennett, W. Lance. 1994. "The News about Foreign Policy." In *Taken by Storm: The Media, Public Opinion, and US Foreign Policy in the Gulf War*, edited by W. Lance Bennett and David L. Paletz. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Broockman, David E., and Christopher Skovron. 2018. "Bias in Perceptions of Public Opinion among Political Elites." *American Political Science Review* 112(3): 542-563.

Brooks, David. 2017. "The Existing Democratic Majority." *New York Times*, November 9. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/09/opinion/virginia-democratic-majority.html.

Burns, Robert. 2019. "Campaign: Warren's Call to Exit Mideast Means Combat Troops." *Associated Press*, October 16. https://apnews.com/63a265c232cd4b9e9d70d86f9b34de42.

Craig, David A. 2003. "The Promise and Peril of Anecdotes in News Coverage: An Ethical

Analysis." *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 80(4): 802-817.

CNBC. 2015. "President Obama: I Do Not Support Endless War." October 15. https://www.cnbc.com/video/2015/10/15/president-obama-i-do-not-support-endless-war.html.

Delli Carpini, Michael X., and Scott Keeter. 1996. *What Americans Know about Politics and Why It Matters*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1996.

Easley, Cameron. 2017. "Political Media Earns Poor Marks from Americans." *Morning Consult*, April 28. https://morningconsult.com/2017/04/28/political-media-earns-poor-marks-americans/.

Epstein, Edward Jay. 1973. *News From Nowhere: Television and the News*. New York: Random House.

Fenton, Tom. 2005. *Bad News: The Decline of Reporting, the Business of News, and the Danger to Us All*. New York: Collins.

Freedman, David H. 2010. *Wrong: Why Experts* Keep Failing Us--And How to Know When Not to Trust Them*. New York: Little, Brown, and Company.

Foucks, Nitzan David. 2016. "Why Are Elites Out of Touch? They Think Anyone Who Disagrees with Them Is Crazy." *National Interest*, August 6. https://nationalinterest.org/feature/why-are-elites-out-touch-look-what-theyre-saying-17258.

Gage, Beverly. 2017. "How 'Elites' Became One of the Nastiest Epithets in American Politics." *New York Times*, January 3. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/03/magazine/how-elites-became-one-of-the-nastiest-epithets-in-american-politics.html.

Gage, Beverly. 2019. “The Koch Foundation Is Trying to Reshape Foreign Policy. With Liberal Allies.” *New York Times*, September 10. https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/09/10/magazine/charles-koch-foundation-education.html.

Gans, Herbert J. 1979. *Deciding What's News: A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek and Time*. New York: Random House.

Grabowski, Mark. 2016. “Trump Win Is a Lesson for Media and Academia.” *Washington Examiner*, November 28. https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/trump-win-is-lesson-for-media-and-academia.

Groeling, Tim and Matthew A. Baum. 2009. “Journalists’ Incentives and Media Coverage of Elite Foreign Policy Evaluations.” *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 26(5) 437–470.

Hafner-Burton, Emilie M., D. Alex Hughes, and David G. Victor. 2013. “The Cognitive Revolution and the Political Psychology of Elite Decision Making.” *Perspectives on Politics* 11(2): 368-386.

Hall, Andrew B. 2015. “What Happens When Extremists Win Primaries?” *American Political Science Review* 109(1): 18-42.

Halpin, John, James Heidbreder, Mark Lloyd, Paul Woodhull, Ben Scott, Josh Silver, and S. Derek Turner. 2007. *The Structural Imbalance of Political Talk Radio*. Center for American Progress and Free Press. https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/issues/2007/06/pdf/talk_radio.pdf.

Hertel-Fernandez, Alexander, Matto Mildenberger, and Leah C. Stokes. 2019. “Legislative Staff

and Representation in Congress." *American Political Science Review* 113(1): 1-18.

Hertel-Fernandez, Alexander, Caroline Tervo, and Theda Skocpol. 2018. "How the Koch Brothers Built the Most Powerful Rightwing Group You've Never Hear of." *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/sep/26/koch-brothers-americans-for-prosperity-rightwing-political-group.

Hester, Joe Bob, and Rhonda Gibson. 2003. "The Economy and Second-Level Agenda Setting: A Time-Series Analysis of Economic News and Public Opinion About the Economy." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 80(1): 73-90.

Holsti, Ole R. 1992. "Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: Challenges to the Almond-Lippmann Consensus." *International Studies Quarterly* 36(4): 439-66.

Huntington, Samuel P. 2004. "Dead Souls: The Denationalization of the American Elite." *The National Interest* 75: 5-18.

Ingram, Mathew. 2016. "Here's Why the Media Failed to Predict a Donald Trump Victory." *Fortune*, November 9. fortune.com/2016/11/09/media-trump-failure/.

Iyengar, Shanto. 1991. *Is Anyone Responsible? How Television Frames Political Issues*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Iyengar, Shanto, Yphtach Lelkes, Matthew Levendusky, Neil Malhotra, and Sean J. Westwood. "The Origins and Consequences of Affective Polarization in the United States." *Annual Review of Political Science* 22: 129-146.

Jacobs, Lawrence R., and Benjamin I. Page. 2005. "Who Influences U.S. Foreign Policy?" *American Political Science Review* 99(1): 1-17.

Jentleson, Bruce W. 1992. “The Pretty Prudent Public: Post Post-Vietnam American Opinion on the Use of Military Force.” *International Studies Quarterly* 36(1): 49-74.

Kertzer, Joshua D., Joshua Busby, Jonathan Monten, Jordan Tama, and Craig Kafura. 2019. “Elite Misperceptions and the Domestic Politics of Conflict.” Working Paper.

Kull, Steven, and Clay Ramsay. 2000. “Elite Misperceptions of U.S. Public Opinion and Foreign Policy.” In *Decisionmaking in a Glass House*, edited by Brigitte L. Nacos, Robert Y. Shapiro, and Pierangelo Isernia. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Kull, Steven, and I. M. Destler. 1999. *Misreading the Public: The Myth of a New Isolationism*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution.

Mildenberger, Matto, and Dustin Tingley. 2019. “Beliefs about Climate Beliefs: The Importance of Second-Order Opinions for Climate Politics.” *British Journal of Political Science* 49(4): 1279-1307.

McCarty, Nolan. 2015. “What We Know and Do Not Know about Our Polarized Politics.” In *Political Polarization in American Politics*, edited by Daniel J. Hopkins and John Sides. London: Bloomsbury.

Massing, Michael. 2018. “America Is Plagued by Experts without Expertise.” *The Guardian*, April 21. https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/apr/21/media-experts-with-out-expertise.

Merica, Dan, and Eric Bradner. 2016. “Can Hillary Clinton Step Out of Bill's NAFTA Shadow?” *CNN*, September 26. https://www.cnn.com/2015/01/14/politics/hillary-clinton-trade/index.html.

Murray, Charles. 2012. *Coming Apart: The State of White America, 1960–2010*. New York: Crown Forum.

Neely, Bill. 2017. "Trump's 'America First' Policy Has Isolated U.S. from World Leaders." *NBC News*, December 29. https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/analysis-trump-s-america-first-foreign-policy-isolates-u-s-n833046.

Nissenbarum, Dion, Nancy A. Youssef, and Vivian Salama. 2018. "In Shift, Trump Orders U.S. Troops Out of Syria." *Wall Street Journal*, December 19. https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-military-preparing-for-a-full-withdrawal-of-its-forces-from-northeastern-syria-11545225641.

Page, Benjamin I., and Marshall M. Bouton. 2006. *The Foreign Policy Disconnect: What Americans Want From Our Leaders But Don't Get*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Pinker, Steven. 2018. *Enlightenment Now: The Case for Reason, Science, Humanism, and Progress*. New York: Penguin.

Powlick, Philip J. 1995. "The Sources of Public Opinion for American Foreign Policy Officials." *International Studies Quarterly* 39(4): 427-451.

Pramuk, Jacob. 2019. "It's Not Just China: Trump's Trade War is Raging on Several Fronts." *CNBC*, May 13. https://www.cnbc.com/2019/05/13/trump-carries-out-tariff-trade-wars-with-china-eu-canada-and-mexico.html.

Rodrik, Dani. 2017. "Populism and the Economics of Globalization." NBER Working Paper No. 23559.

Ross, Dennis. 2019. "What Trump Means by 'America First.'" *Wall Street Journal*, January 8.

https://www.wsj.com/articles/what-trump-means-by-america-first-11546992419.

Ross, Dennis. 2019. “What Trump Means by ‘America First.’” *Wall Street Journal*, January 8. https://www.wsj.com/articles/what-trump-means-by-america-first-11546992419.

Saunders, Elizabeth N. 2015. “War and the Inner Circle: Democratic Elites and the Politics of Using Force.” *Security Studies* 24(3): 466-501.

Scarry, Eddie. 2016. “How the Out-of-touch Media Missed Donald Trump's Rise.” *Washington Examiner*, April 23. https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/how-the-out-of-touch-media-missed-donald-trumps-rise.

Schudson, Michael. 2001. “The Objectivity Norm in American Journalism.*” *Journalism* 2(2): 149–170.

Seligman, Lara, and Robbie Gramer. 2019. “What Does the Demise of the INF Treaty Mean for Nuclear Arms Control?” *Foreign Policy*, August 2. https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/08/02/what-does-the-demise-of-the-i-n-f-treaty-mean-for-nuclear-arms-control-intermediate-nuclear-forces-new-start-strategic-arms-limitation-nonproliferation-trump-russia-arms-control-explained/.

Shafer, Jack and Tuck Doherty. 2017. “The Media Bubble Is Worse Than You Think.” *Politico* (May/June). https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/04/25/media-bubble-real-journalism-jobs-east-coast-215048.

Shear, Michael D. 2017. “Trump Will Withdraw U.S. from Climate Change Agreement.” *New York Times*, June 1. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/01/climate/trump-paris-climate-agreement.html.

Sheffield, Carrie. 2018. “American Media Lost Its Center of Gravity.” *The Hill*, May 4. https://thehill.com/opinion/civil-rights/386267-american-media-lost-its-center-of-gravity.

Skocpol, Theda and Alexander Hertel-Fernandez. 2016. “The Koch Network and Republican Party Extremism.” *Perspectives on Politics* 14(3): 681-699.

Skocpol, Theda and Vanessa Williamson. 2011. *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Smarsh, Sarah. 2016. “Dangerous Idiots: How the Liberal Media Elite Failed Working-Class Americans.” *The Guardian*, October 13. https://www.theguardian.com/media/2016/oct/13/liberal-media-bias-working-class-americans.

Smeltz, Dina, Ivo Daalder, Karl Friedhoff, Craig Kafura, and Lily Wojtowicz. 2018. *America Engaged: American Public Opinion and US Foreign Policy*. Chicago Council on Global Affairs.

Stelzer, Irwin M. 2018. “The Anywheres vs. the Somewheres.” *Weekly Standard*, June 30. https://www.weeklystandard.com/irwin-m-stelzer/the-anywhere-people-from-silicon-valley-vs-the-somewhere-folk-from-the-heartland.

Stokes, Bruce. 2014. “Killer Elite.” *Foreign Policy*, January. 6. https://foreignpolicy.com/2014/01/06/killer-elite/.

Tetlock, Philip E. 2005. *Expert Political Judgment How Good Is It? How Can We Know?* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

van der Meer, Toni G. L. A., Anne C. Kroon, Piet Verhoeven, and Jeroen Jonkman. 2018.

"Mediatization and the Disproportionate Attention to Negative News: The Case of Airplane Crashes." *Journalism Studies* 20(6): 783-803.

Winston, David. 2018. "Two Years Later, the Elites Are Still Disconnected from Voters." *Roll Call*, August 29. https://www.rollcall.com/news/opinion/elite-disconnect-voters-trump-2016.

Wright, Thomas. 2016. "Trump's 19th Century Foreign Policy." *Politico*, January 20.

Yarhi-Milo, Keren, Joshua D. Kertzer, and Jonathan Renshon. 2018. "Tying Hands, Sinking Costs, and Leader Attributes." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 62(10): 2150–2179.

Zaller, John R. and Dennis Chiu. 2000. "Government's Little Helper: U.S. Press Coverage of Foreign Policy Crises, 1946–1999." In *Decisionmaking in a Glass House*, edited by Brigitte L. Nacos, Robert Y. Shapiro, and Pierangelo Isernia. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.