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„Perception of European Union trade policies – what does the Austrian public know about it? A quantitative analysis of opinion-shaping factors and public awareness of international trade"

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Abstract

In Austria, public salience of European Union trade policies and negotiations has increased substantially within recent years. Both opponents as well as advocates of such trade agreements, or the EU in general, do nowadays find simple ways to express their opinion via certain interest groups or online media channels. However, we neither know to what extent prevalent public opinions are based on sound expertise, nor how the latter is composed and shaped by individual external or internal factors, such as education, environment or personal values. Furthermore, despite great public excitement and outcries about certain EU trade negotiations, a frequent claim predominates existing research: a great majority of people apparently seems to be rather unaware of the crucial role international trade plays in our globalized world. Through the means of an online survey, this thesis aims at proving this hypothesis and drawing attention to public perceptions of European Union trade policy as well as individual opinion-shaping factors. It rejects the assumption of an interest gap prevailing among the Austrian population regarding international trade policy making. On the contrary, strong evidence for a high desire of getting informed about European trade policies can be observed - which surprisingly stands in stark contrast to a very low level of knowledge considering exactly those aspects. Furthermore, while the news media's anticipated key role in shaping public opinions is clearly outlined, the assumed relevance of formal education can be neglected.

Zusammenfassung

Im EU Mitgliedstaat Österreich hat die öffentliche Aufmerksamkeit auf die Handelspolitik und die internationalen Handelsverträge der Europäischen Union in den letzten Jahren erheblich zugenommen. Sowohl Gegner als auch Befürworter solcher Handelsabkommen - oder der EU im Allgemeinen - finden heutzutage einfache Möglichkeiten, ihre Meinung durch bestimmte Interessensgruppen oder Online-Medienkanäle zu äußern. Wir wissen jedoch nicht inwieweit die vorherrschenden öffentlichen Meinungen auf fundiertem Fachwissen beruhen, noch, wie sich diese Meinungen überhaupt zusammensetzen und von welchen einzelnen externen oder internen Faktoren wie Bildung, Umwelt oder persönlichen Werten geprägt werden. Darüber hinaus dominiert, trotz großer öffentlicher Aufregung und Aufschreie über bestimmte EU-Handelsabkommen, eine häufige Behauptung die bestehende Forschung: Die Mehrheit der Menschen ist sich der entscheidenden Rolle des internationalen Handels in unserer globalisierten Welt angeblich gar nicht bewusst. Ziel dieser Arbeit ist mittels einer Online-Umfrage diese Hypothese zu prüfen sowie auf die öffentliche Wahrnehmung der Handelspolitik der Europäischen Union und auf individuelle meinungsbildende Faktoren aufmerksam zu machen Die Annahme einer Interessenslücke in der österreichischen Bevölkerung hinsichtlich der europäischen Handelspolitik wird klar verworfen. Die Studie verdeutlicht das Gegenteil: es gibt starke Anzeichen für einen hohen Wunsch, sich darüber zu informieren - was überraschenderweise in starkem Kontrast zu einem sehr geringen Wissensstand über die Handelspolitik steht. Während die Nachrichtenmedien ihrer Schlüsselrolle bei der Gestaltung der öffentlichen Meinung klar gerecht werden, kann die vorweggenommene Relevanz der formalen Bildung jedoch vernachlässigt werden.

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List of abbreviations

ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
CETA	Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EU	European Union
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ISDS	Investor State Dispute Settlement
JEFTA	Japan – EU Free Trade Agreement
MERCOSUR	Mercado Común del Sur
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PTA	Preferential Trade Agreement
RTA	Regional Trade Agreement
TTIP	Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership
US	United States
WTO	World Trade Organization

1. Introduction

Trade in the late 20th century was one of the initial drivers, which helped create the peaceful Europe we have today (Díez Medrano & Braun, 2011). The immense proliferation of regional, preferential and free trade agreements (RTA / PTA / FTA) around the globe represents one of the most notable developments in the world economy (Umana et al, 2013). In the course of the past twenty years the number of FTA's notified is considered to have multiplied exponentially, culminating in September 2019 with over 300 Trade Agreements in force worldwide. Over 40% of these agreements are concluded by the European Union, who finds herself therefore on top of the list of the biggest RTA 'users', closely followed by the EFTA states (WTO, 2019).

However, the questions of what the broad public does think of these agreements and if the EU citizens even are aware of any ongoing negotiations, are often taken out of consideration (Kono, 2008; Jedinger & Schön, 2017). Even though the majority of the world population considers growing trade and business ties between their home country and other countries as a very good thing and supports trade in principle, many still question its benefits (Pew Research Center, 2018). Especially publics in advanced economies (such as the EU or the US) heavily doubt trade's role in boosting wages – according to a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2018, only about a third of the participants subscribe to this view. Slightly more believe that trade lowers prices and helps generating new jobs (28% and 47%, respectively). In addition to that, people in emerging markets tend to be even more sceptical of trade's impact on prices – a median of just 18% in these countries agree on trade's ability to lower prices. However, they are somewhat enthusiastic about its other economic benefits: A median of 56% think trade leads to more jobs and 47% say it improves wages.

Even though public opinion does not play a key role in shaping trade policy, the general perception of international commercial activities can nonetheless have the power to influence political outcomes to a certain degree (Baker, 2005; Kono, 2008), which is why its specific examination is so pertinent. Referring to a study of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas (2011, p.21) "history teaches us that perception often matters much more than reality in shaping public opinion. Accordingly, perception is crucial to understanding the outcomes of globalization, from increased free trade and the breakdown of political and economic

barriers to technological integration, greater capital flows and worker migration. Ideally, the public's evaluations are sound and closely reflect reality. Polling data, however, indicate this is often not the case. Misplaced perceptions may profoundly affect the course of globalization policies". Jedinger & Schön (2017, p.2) further argue that "standard economic theory suggests that attitudes toward international trade depend on how integration into the world market affects individual economic welfare", so, in brief, the higher one's probability of losing from free trade the more protectionist attitudes one will have and vice versa (Mayda & Rodrik, 2005).

Regarding these statements and numbers, possible explanations for people's support and opposition for free trade and European trade policies merit greater attention. In the EU member state Austria this topic has not been particularly tackled yet and thus represents a major research gap, which is why the following thesis concentrates specifically on this country. Focus is first of all put on the crucial factors on which public opinion is based in general – this represents the foundation of my entire research. Here the reliance will be on Blinder and Krueger's 2004 study and their definition of public opinion determinants. Descriptive statistics and a slightly adapted model of their analytical framework aim at providing answers to the questions of what exactly the Austrian public thinks of recent European trade strategies, how they personally perceive European trade policy and how much they know about the common commercial policy and the agreements – in short, their opinion on international trade. Moreover, this paper also aims at examining whether there exists a significant lack of information as well as interest among the Austrian citizens concerning European trade – related issues. Additionally, since personal opinions are clearly influenced and determined by certain factors, the aspect of what shapes these public opinions necessarily needs to be discussed as well, i.e. the influence factors and reasons why some people might agree, whereas some others might disagree with certain commercial EU activities and where they primarily get their information from. All this information should be gathered and provided by the help of the already mentioned specific framework, which was established by Blinder and Krueger in their 2004 study about American public opinion on public policy issues. They define public opinion as a function of a person's self-interest in the topic, their respective political orientation or the ideology of the party they vote for, the individual knowledge on the concerned topic as well as the person's general level of education. Furthermore, personal variables such as gender affiliation, age, income level and

the area of residency are taken into account as well which are assumed as exogenous (Blinder & Krueger, 2004, p.330f.).

1.1 Hypotheses and Research Questions

To sum up the above introduced aspects, this thesis aims at finding an answer to the following research question:

'How does the Austrian public perceive the European Union's trade policy – which image prevails and what shapes these opinions? Is there a significant information gap?'

Despite the already mentioned lack of studies specifically dealing with the aspect of current public opinions of European trade policies in Austria, there has already been done a lot of research in related fields. The general global public's interests and attitudes toward international trade and how commercial activities as well as bilateral and multilateral trade negotiations are perceived around the world, have already been subject of numerous scientific examinations (Cobb, 1990; Hainmueller & Hiscox, 2006; Mansfield et al., 2015; Mansfield & Mutz, 2009; Scheve & Slaughter, 1998; as well as Wolfe, 2005). Above that, opinion polls, for instance the Eurobarometer polls, asking about the satisfaction levels of EU citizens concerning EU policies in general and how the study participants rate their subjective knowledge have been published.

In particular, a significantly large number of studies about US trade agreements and public policies with explicit focus on the American citizen's view is available in online research databases (Bostrom, 1999; Manza & Cook, 2002). Regarding the unpredictable and constantly changing US trade relations nowadays, this is of course not surprising. I believe, however, that lots of the findings related to the US or other countries' public opinion, also do make sense when being applied in Austria. Bostrom found already in the year 1999 that "while a majority of Americans (59%) say they approve of free trade agreements with other countries, they also consistently indicate that they believe the United States has not been treated fairly in most of these agreements" (p. 26). Referring to Jedinger & Schön's (2017) research about the public perception of the failed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) negotiations between the EU and the US, it can be said that the majority

of Europeans also generally approves with free trade and that Austria has one of the highest trust rates in the EU among all member states. However, they figured that resistance to TTIP is nevertheless strongest in Germany and Austria, where 52% and 72%, respectively, oppose to the agreement. Despite high trust in the EU institutions, the Eurobarometer study in 2018 sheds light on a more and more opposing view on trade agreements within Austria: only 68% judge the term 'free trade' as rather positive, which is one of the lowest percentages and far below the EU28 average of 74%. On top of that also the approval with a common European trade policy and the internal market is in Austria below the EU28 average. Hübner et al. argued that support for trade agreements increasingly dwindled among EU citizens and explained that through the rise of a "vehement anti – FTA sentiment across the EU" (p.843). From prior research, the Eurobarometer opinion poll as well as from the Pew Research Centre's indications, it can be concluded that even though Austrians are in general open to international trade and trust the EU institutions, the advocacy of further free trade agreements is slightly declining, which leads to my first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Even though most Austrians predominantly trust the European institutions and consider themselves as supporters of the European Union, the general approval of the current foreign trade policy including the growing number of recently negotiated trade agreements (CETA/ MERCOSUR/ FTA Vietnam) is rather decreasing in Austria.

My next argument is backed by the outcomes of Díez Medrano and Braun's (2011) survey aiming at figuring out if better informed individuals are more able to position themselves for or against free trade. Through the investigation of the number of information sources the participants read in the week prior to the survey, they demonstrate that "the respondents' answers about the consequences of free trade are not grounded on serious reflection" (p.458) and that "knowledge about the consequences of free trade is much less pervasive than assumed in the literature" (p.458). Considering the European Union's activities in terms of public policy, the Eurobarometer 2018 survey agrees with her findings, as only 42% of the asked Europeans claim that they feel well – informed about current European processes. These outcomes are, in particular regarding trade policy, further supported by the 2016 opinion poll of the Austrian Society for European Politics (ÖGfE), where Austrian citizens were asked about their opinion towards the CETA agreement: more than the majority stated that they are in general opposers of free trade deals, 45% admit not being interested in

trade – related aspects in general and even 78% say that they are not informed enough about CETA. Based on these results, my goal is to prove if a significant lack of information prevails within the Austrian population when it comes to positions for or against international trade. Derived from these aspects, I further claim that in Austria people tend to classify these topics as rather irrelevant for their everyday life and might neglect the personal consequences of free trade agreements. O'Rourke et al. (2001), for example, focus within their work on the determinants of the individual's trade policy preferences – they distinguish between protectionist and liberal preferences - and find that these are heavily influenced by noneconomic factors such as ideology or cultural traditions. They furthermore test if skills and education have an impact on a person's opinion and approve with their hypothesis as "high skills are generally associated with a preference for free trade, and this effect is stronger in richer countries than in poorer countries" (p. 185).

The argument of education playing a key role in a person's attitude toward free trade has also already been subject to research by a high number of other researchers. Not only Mansfield and Mutz (2009), but also Hiscox (2006), Scheve and Slaughter (1998) as well as Hainmueller and Hiscox (2006) observe a significant, positively – correlated relationship between higher education and a growing interest in trade as well as an increased open-mindedness toward free trade agreements. All their findings were observed within US citizens or people permanently residing in the US, so they can certainly be applied to the Austrian citizens as well, given the country's relatively comparable economic, social and political structure according to GDP, provision of public utilities and implementation of democratic principles (Statistik Austria, 2018). Regarding the above introduced outcomes of former studies conducted globally or in the United States as well as the existing literature about the image of trade agreements, the second and third hypotheses of this thesis can be formulated as the following:

Hypothesis 2: The majority of Austrians classifies international trade and its consequences as not relevant for their work, lives and future.

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant information and interest gap within the Austrian population concerning topics related to international trade (especially among lower skilled / educated).

Moreover, the goal of this research is not only to provide information about the current image and to reveal a possible lack of knowledge of European trade policy among the Austrian population, but also to figure out where all the information stems from and what shapes public opinion. Blinder and Krueger (2004) define the formation of a person's opinion, so in our case whether one has rather liberal or protectionist attitudes toward trade, as being dependent on specific variables such as individual knowledge and self – interest concerning the issue, general formal education, political ideology and certain personal variables such as age, gender and income levels. In a next step they go further and identify the individual knowledge, besides education and personal variables, as being dependent on the different sources of information one uses, the intensity ("quality") to which these sources are used as well as the personal desire of getting informed. Apart from Blinder and Krueger's (2004) study, there is lots of prior research dealing with the analysis of which medium and which information sources shape public opinion (Díez Medrano & Gray, 2010; Guerra & Trenz, 2019; McCombs, 2011). Key roles play factors such as the individual's social environment, consisting of personal communication and discussions, the mass media, like newspapers, TV or social media, interest groups, as for instance political parties or NGOs, but also education and educational tools, such as lectures (Blinder & Krueger, 2004). However, the 2018 Eurobarometer poll indicates that only around 19% of the interviewed Austrians discuss European affairs and politics with friends or relatives, whereas the consultation of mass media represents a significantly more common tool in order to obtain information. According to McCombs (2011) awareness should especially be raised to the news media, as it focuses the public's attention on certain personalities and issues, leading many people to form opinions about them. In other words, the mass media play an indispensable role by letting individuals know what other people think and by giving political leaders large audiences. In this way the media make it possible to reach out to large numbers of individuals and wide geographic areas. Similarly, Guerra and Trenz (2019) stress out the importance of media, "as only few citizens experience the EU directly, the way media and journalists select and interpret European news can be held responsible for the formation of public opinion" (p. 227). To the essential components concerning the usage of mass media in order to get informed about European matters, can once more the level of education be counted, as higher educated audiences seek information more regularly (Norris, 2006) and, as already described above, tend to have rather liberal attitudes. Blinder

and Krueger (2004) furthermore found that the intensity of usage and source of information have a significant impact on one's knowledge about public policy matters. All these arguments lead to the assumption of mass media being the most influential tool when it comes to fathoming the formation of public rationales. Based on these outcomes, my last hypothesis can be described as following:

Hypothesis 4: The sources of information, and also the intensity of usage thereof, play a key role regarding the individual's knowledge about trade policy. People with higher knowledge tend to inform themselves more regularly and more actively through the news media or other sources of information and tend to rather support free trade.

In order to find plausible answers to the research question and to prove the indicated claims, a quantitative study in the form of an anonymous online survey was conducted. The questionnaire was completed by 350 Austrian citizens or persons who have once been living in Austria for more than 10 consecutive years, respectively, of various age groups, gender affiliation, education, income levels and residing in different geographical regions. Through this method an insight into the Austrian public perception of European trade – policy is provided and the composition of factors which shape public opinion can be analysed. Consequently, the descriptive statistics and the application of Blinder and Krueger's (2004) econometric models allow not only the testing for the hypotheses through examinations of self – interest and information / knowledge but also shed light on how public opinion regarding trade policy and international trade is shaped and which factors play a significant role in this opinion-shaping process.

All in all, the main objective is to figure out whether the Austrians are aware of their daily contact with international commercial transactions, be it a quick purchase of African bananas in the supermarket or a conversation with the Italian colleague, and whether rather liberal or rather protectionist attitudes prevail. Focus is put primarily on public opinion and awareness of European trade agreements (e.g. CETA, etc.) or trade-related issues like European integration or the European single market. The subjective and personal role trade plays for Austrian citizens will be analysed and a deeper insight into the understanding thereof will be provided.

A further crucial key aspect with which this research thesis deals is the question of information: Do Austrian citizens personally consider the access to information related to

trade policy as rather easy or difficult? How do they judge their subjective knowledge about this topic, and, in comparison, how much do they know for real? The general intention is thus to find a suitable answer to all these issues and to examine whether the trade- related work of the European Commission reaches the citizens and what they think of it or whether there is a significant information gap.

1.2 Structure of the thesis

A lot of effort has been put into establishing the EU as the economic and trade superpower it is today. The impact of international trade and flourishing trade relations around the world and in the EU are therefore described in the first part of the thesis, which aims at introducing some relevant background information. Moreover, the European Union's trade policy is explained and some of the recently closed trade deals are discussed in more detail with specific focus on the public salience and perception thereof. The second and main part is then dedicated to the description of the research method and the setting up of the econometric model which aims at finding a definition for public opinion in European integration studies by mostly relying on Blinder and Krueger's (2004) framework. Some straight facts are provided by descriptive statistics, followed by the analysis and discussion of the model's results, while the last part concludes and sheds light on potential bias and limitations of the study.

2. Background - International trade, the European Union's commercial policy and public perception

2.1 Why do countries even engage in commercial activities? Consequences and effects of international (free) trade

"If there is a point on which most economists agree, it is that trade among nations makes the world better off. Yet, international trade can be one of the most contentious of political issues, both domestically and between governments" (McDonald, 2009, p.48). The cornerstone for nearly all trade theories existing today was already established in 1776, when the Scottish economist Adam Smith published his ideas of absolute advantage and the monetary gain a nation could achieve from the engagement in trade with other economies. Based on his arguments, numerous other designated economists, like David Ricardo, Eli Heckscher or Bertil Ohlin, contributed to the fundamental basics of trade theories and explain through models of comparative advantage and factor endowments, respectively, why countries engage in cross-border trade (Mayda & Rodrik, 2005). Further empirical studies show that globalization - and thus also the development of international trade - has a positive overall impact on the growth of the global economy and the reduction of poverty (Aiginger, 2017). The positive correlation between economic growth and international trade was specifically examined by Singh in 2010, who conducted a comprehensive literature analysis and concluded that an overwhelming majority of studies approves the positive influence of trade volume on economic growth.

According to the 2018 Annual Activity Report of the Directorate – General for Trade in the European Union, international trade leads among many other aspects to increased economic growth, consumer benefits, labour effects in terms of higher employment rates, and poverty reduction. The traditional and main arguments for free foreign trade are the realization of a trade profit and a potential specialization gain, which apply to both the exporting and importing country. The basis for these profits is, as Ricardo already claimed in 1817, the concentration of the trading partners on their comparative cost advantages, which also changes the country's production structure. The concerned nations will thus concentrate on the production of the goods for which they have relatively lower costs (specialization gain),

so that they can export more of these goods in exchange for various other goods which cannot be efficiently produced domestically. This consumer demand - either because the goods and services from abroad are cheaper or because they differ from those produced in the domestic market – is the major reason why cross-border flows of goods and services have arisen at all and increased enormously since the beginning of the 20th century (Singh, 2010). Through free or facilitated flows in trade and investment, new technologies and innovation can be easily exchanged between economies, research is fostered and thus, as a result, improvements in products and services for the individual consumer are ensured. Therefore, not only more jobs, higher salaries and better living standards, but also a greater variety of consumer goods at lower prices are entailed by boosted and facilitated trading activities (World Bank, 2019).

There is ample evidence that free trade – so trading without artificial barriers such as tariffs or quotas – or at least facilitated trade, which might be regulated through certain agreements, can offer real benefits, as it enables production to take place where it is cheapest and consumption where the demand is greatest. However, according to the IMF (2017), foreign trade is far from social. Although in the vast majority of cases a net win-win situation for everyone involved is established, there are also situations in which some people gain while others lose from trade. Many people are against trade liberalization and point out the negative effects it might have on production and employment in their home country (IMF et al., 2017; Schmid, 2018; Singh 2010). International trade influences the demand for workers and their qualifications and thus clearly also the wages. Coming back to the model of Heckscher and Ohlin, Mayda and Rodrik (2005) outline possible drawbacks of free trade. They argue that since economies differ in the availability of input factors of the production (labor and capital) of certain goods or services, the relative expansion of production in, for instance, a capital-intensive sector also leads to an increase in demand of this factor. At the same time, the demand for the other production factor, so in this case labor, decreases, leading to possible negative effects on employment in the capital-abundant economy. On the other side, in the labor-abundant country the effects would be the reversed ones. In addition to the technological change primarily responsible for this, the reason for such developments can also be explained by foreign supply and competition due to international trade (IMF et al., 2017; Schmid, 2018). This described adjustment process can lead to huge regional or structural unemployment, especially for low-skilled workers or employees who

are only partially mobile. Restricted or partial mobility addresses the costs which occur if the change of employment in another economic sector or in a different region is necessary. In particular, women, older people and people with a low level of education, due to their often times replaceable skills, show limited mobility and are therefore increasingly affected by international trade - adjustment processes (McDonald, 2009; Schmid, 2018). In contrast, while low-skilled workers face an increased risk of unemployment and lower wages due to cheap imports, workers with higher levels of education benefit more from the positive effects of export growth and technological progress. Although it can be concluded that globalization and thus international trade create more jobs than they demolish, the negative effects of the adjustment processes can be noticeable and long-lasting for certain regions.

When now looking at the data, it can clearly be seen that cross-border and international commercial activities grew exponentially within the last ten to fifteen years: while in 2005 global exports reached an amount of 10.42 billion US dollars, this number could nearly be doubled until 2018, when exports climbed up to 19.29 billion US dollars and thus achieved an overall growth rate of around 85% (WTO, 2019). As a result of this immense relative increase in trade in goods compared to world goods production (BPB, 2018), the importance of foreign trade policies for the individual economies is growing. Regarding all this evidence it is highly comprehensible that international trade, its development and its effects on society constitute a field of great relevance for politics, business and the general public and are sometimes discussed very emotionally. The nowadays gigantic flow of goods, which is steadily increasing, represents one of the most essential and simultaneously one of the most heavily debated elements of our globalized economy (Schmid, 2018).

2.2 The European Union's trade policy – how it works

External trade and investments have always played a key role for the European Union's economy and policy making, as the EU represents the world's largest trading bloc – 16% of the entire global transactions in merchandise are handled by the European Union (DG for Trade in the EU, 2018). In 2018 goods worth more than 1,95 billion euro were exported to third countries, and vice versa the amount of imports into the European Union even exceeded 1,98 billion euros, resulting in a small deficit in the balance of trade after 5 years of

consecutive surpluses (Eurostat, 2019). In order to handle these huge transactions and to encourage further commercial activities, the EU manages its trade relations with third countries in the form of trade agreements. They aim not only at creating better trading opportunities for EU companies and at overcoming potential barriers to trade, like tariffs or custom duties, but also at promoting the European principles and democratic values (Young & Peterson, 2014; Damen & Igler, 2019).

In autumn 2015, the European Commission introduced its new 'Trade for All' strategy, a future-oriented strategy based on a balanced, transparent and effective trade policy – a modernized version of the 'Global Europe' strategy of 2006 with focus on the transmission of values and sustainability principles (European Commission, 2015). The main intention is to improve standards for all people, inside as well as outside the EU. This "value-based trade policy aims to combine economic growth with social justice, human rights standards and norms in the areas of occupational health and safety, environmental protection and security, and to promote the rule of law and good governance" (Council of the European Union, 2019).

With trade policy being an exclusive, supranational responsibility of the EU, the Commission has the right and the obligation to negotiate international trade agreements on behalf of the entire Union. This general unity on the international stage bestows the EU with a strong position in world trade (Council of the European Union, 2019). Trade policy making is carried out by the Commission's Directorate-General for Trade under the authority of the Trade Commissioner and decided by qualified majority in the Council of Ministers and with the consent of the European Parliament (European Commission, 2012). In case of a mixed agreement falling within the competence of both the EU and the Member States, the Council may not adopt it until it has been ratified by all Member States. In principle, when negotiating free trade agreements, the Commission must adhere to the mandate of the member states and the legislation of the Lisbon Treaty. It must be ensured that national authorities are not restricted and can continue to individually decide their regulation of public services. This also applies to the maintenance of the high European security and social standards (European Commission, 2015). The Lisbon Treaty, however, did not only amend and renew EU law in terms of legislative processes (keyword 'ordinary legislative procedure'), but also highly strengthened the role of the European Parliament and thus the

active involvement of European citizens. Additionally, the EU Member-State's national Parliaments were indirectly empowered due to the creation of so-called 'yellow card' - vetoes allowing the objection of the Commission's legislative proposals when the concerned Parliament considers the principle of subsidiarity as undermined (Kreilinger, 2018). Yet, Gostynska – Jakubowska (2019) mentions in her report that "yellow cards do not automatically compel the commission to ditch proposals, they allow national parliaments to convey public concerns about the EU's intervention into what the citizens and their parliamentarians might see as domestic matters" (para. 4). Since the Lisbon treaty came into force much more public attention has been put on decision-making processes at European level, which significantly contributed to the increasing politicization of trade negotiations and agreements. An example for increased parliamentary activity would be the case of Wallonia's regional Parliament initially blocking Belgium's consent of CETA and therefore preventing the EU from gathering all 28 member-state signatures in order to ratify the agreement (Bollen et al., 2016). A quite similar debate took place in the Austrian Parliament as well, with former Chancellor Christian Kern and his social-democratic party strongly rejecting CETA. It can be assumed that these controversies and active politicization of trade deals in the parliament have had massive impact on Austrian public opinion regarding international trade policies. Non-profit organizations recalled that, according to surveys, a majority of Austrians spoke out against CETA and that a petition against the agreement was signed by more than 560.000 Austrian citizens. Notwithstanding these public outcries, the Austrian Parliament terminated discussions and ended up giving approval to the agreement (Der Standard, 2018).

Four main areas are covered by the EU trade policy: besides trade in goods and services, also foreign direct investments, public procurement and commercial aspects of intellectual property are regulated (European Commission, 2015). Furthermore, the main elements and tasks of the DG for Trade can be divided into three parts, namely the administration of the EU membership of the World Trade Organization, trade regulations in order to protect EU producers from inequitable competition as well as the negotiation and conclusion of trade agreements with non-EU-countries in order to open new markets and increase trading opportunities for EU companies (DG for Trade in the EU, 2018). The classification of these different agreements can vary according to their content: so-called Economic Partnership Agreements intend to promote the development of trading partners from Africa, the

Caribbean or the Asia Pacific region, i.e. developing countries. Free trade agreements, on the other hand, enable the opening of a mutual market with industrialized and emerging countries by granting preferential or free access to the domestic market and thus fostering economic exchange. Association agreements and Partnership and Cooperation Agreements support broader political agreements or might be concluded in the frame of such a broader agreement, respectively (Council of the European Union, 2019).

Despite the Commission's efforts and promotion of such a trade policy 'for all', the broad European public seems to not show great advocacy of its recent decisions. Even though, according to opinion polls (Eurobarometer, 2018), European citizens tend to support their country's membership in the EU and associate a rather positive connotation to the terms 'free trade', 'globalization' as well as 'competition' too, the general approval of certain trade-related policies and agreements is steadily declining. Especially the recent ratification of the trade agreements with Canada (CETA) and Mercosur were, just like the failed TTIP negotiations with the US, subject to massive public attention and controversies (Jedinger & Schön, 2017). What hence represents further milestones for the European Union in the pursuit of its trade policies (DG for Trade in the EU, 2018) on the one side, is quite heavily debated and discussed, on the other side, by the European citizens. In this context, it is quite remarkable that they do not seem to complain about the free trade regime that rules within the European Union, i.e. the single market. This development might be traced back to the fact that the economical composition of EU countries is rather homogenous in comparison with the set of all countries in the world. With reference to Paul Krugman's (1983) new trade theory, this implies that the gains from trade associated to intra-industry trade, so in this case to trade within EU borders, might not be based on comparative advantage but rather on increasing overall returns triggered by economies of scale and network effects - with the latter in turn being triggered by the comparable industry structures within the EU-member states. He claims that similar countries gain from trade despite the absence of comparative advantage, since income distribution effects are not strong enough or do not occur at all (Ahmed, 2012; Krugman, 1983; Neary, 2009). While the theory of comparative advantage assumes important differences across countries leading to income redistribution within those countries after trade liberalization (see HO model discussed above), this is not the case when it comes to very similar economies. Here the network effects of the intra-industry monopolistic competition significantly outweigh comparative advantage and thus lead to

overall welfare gains for all economies involved. It can therefore be presumed that intra-EU trade might not bother citizens because it is less likely to cause income redistributions and according to Krugman (1983) nevertheless leads to an overall welfare gain from trade. Besides this universally applicable economic theory, in case of the EU, it might also be worth mentioning an additional reinforcing factor: due to the establishment of the EU single market along with its principles of mutual recognition and free movement of goods, a certain degree of product quality and similar production standards is guaranteed for the entire European economic area (European Commission, 2020). Referring to these regulations, it could be claimed that EU citizens trust in high intra-EU product quality and are therefore less sceptical concerning trade within EU borders.

2.3 Overview of the EU's FTA/PTA landscape and public opinions

The number of EU trading partners is impressive: 41 trade agreements with in total 72 countries are the status quo of 2019, which makes the EU lead the way compared to other large economies like Japan (17), China (15), the US (14), Canada (14) and Australia (13) (WLG, 2019). So, not only is the EU today the world's largest trading bloc, but also displays the most ambitious trade agenda globally. While FTAs in force covered less than a quarter of EU trade around 10 years ago, they nowadays account for more than a third of it. Albeit initially focused on internal trade and the single market, the European policy became, not only through increasing globalization but also due to technological progress and foreign competition (Young, 2006), forced to take a turn towards the negotiation of "'next generation' trade agreements with an expanded scope. The aim of these new agreements is to suppress tariff and non-tariff barriers globally and thus promote international trade" (WLG, 2019, p.14). Additionally, this novel comprehensive character of agreements also comprises a number of regulatory practices across a broad range of non-trade-specific social and business activities. The previously mentioned rules and regulations on public procurement, intellectual property, foreign direct investment practices as well as the intended transmission of democratic values serve as an example of this approach towards such more comprehensive and liberalized agreements (Hübner et al., 2017; Laursen & Roederer-Rynning, 2017). Several important agreements were already concluded under the

patronage of this policy, in particular the CETA (Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement) with Canada and the JEFTA (Japan-EU Free Trade Agreement) which entered into force in 2017 and 2019, respectively. Likewise, negotiations with Mercosur were finally successful and led to a deal in 2019 and agreements with Singapore and Vietnam are also in the process of being ratified. The commercial strategy is further expanding as additional agreements are under negotiation with Mexico, Australia, New Zealand, and Indonesia as well. However, certain trade agreements provoked more public salience and media attention than others (Meunier & Czesana, 2019), which had for instance in the case of TTIP even an impact on the termination of negotiations between the EU and the US (Eliasson & Garcia-Duran Huet, 2018). The most influential EU trading partners and recently concluded agreements along with their public perception and awareness are discussed now below.

2.3.1 Canada (CETA)

The Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between the European Union and Canada had quite a long time coming. Albeit discussion of first concrete ideas already paved the way in 2007, formal negotiations between the Canadian government and the European Commission did not start until 2009. Yet, despite the rising pressure on DG Trade and the Commission due to the emergence of massive civil society protests during the final phase of the policy-making process, the landmark agreement was signed and finally came into force in 2017 (Hübner et al., 2017; Government of Canada, 2017).

For unambiguous reasons Canada had quite huge economic interests in the establishment of a free trade agreement with the EU, as the Union constitutes, after the US, its second largest trading partner and as it also enables further independency of the US market. In contrast, with Canada merely being the EU's twelfth largest foreign trade partner, European intentions were not as evident. Hübner et al. (2017) justified the step with Canada being an "opportunistic choice to begin the more export-driven trade principles laid out in 'Global Europe', as there is clear room for growth between the two entities as well as a place to test procurement outside of Europe, laying it as a foundation for future FTAs" (p. 847).

Public salience and strong political opposition of European civil society groups played an immense role in the CETA policy-making process, which almost led to the termination of

negotiations. Meunier and Czesana (2019) mention a general rising skepticism along with discontent among the civil society towards both globalization as well as international trade as key reasons for this development. Especially the traditionally used Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) clause, which can be found in more than 3000 international investment agreements (EPRS, 2014), was subject to enormous public outcries. Literature confirms that besides Germany and France also Austria counts among the most opposing member states to CETA with its civil society mobilizing particularly against the ISDS clause as well as certain transparency issues (von Nordheim et al., 2018; Gheyle, 2016; Eliasson & Garcia-Duran Huet, 2018; Meunier & Czesana, 2019; Hübner et al., 2017). Protests even achieved a re-drafting of the original CETA text and the eventual replacement of the controversial ISDS with a newly introduced so-called Investment Court System.

Despite several measures to appease European public, a major part - 73% - of the Austrian population was against a free trade agreement with Canada according to the result of an Austria-wide poll conducted by the Austrian Society for European Policy in 2016 (ÖGfE, 2016). Moreover, when asked about the general attitude to free trade, it becomes clear that skepticism prevails here too. 51% describe themselves “more as opponents”. The discussion about possible advantages and disadvantages of CETA is of relatively divided interest among Austrians: 51% indicated to be very interested, whereas almost as many stated otherwise. An additional striking factor was the alarmingly high percentage (78%) of people who indicated not feeling sufficiently informed about the content and consequences of CETA (ÖGFE, 2016).

2.3.2 USA (TTIP) – Reasons why it failed

Just like CETA, TTIP negotiations started with the aim of contributing to the political shaping of economic globalization. The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) harbored the chance that Europe and the United States, so the two largest trading blocs in the world, will set higher standards for advanced trade rules. The long-term goal of TTIP was thus to design more compatible regulations and rules for the economies of both the European Union and the US in a way leading to simplified trade and investment opportunities. The aim of the negotiations was to open markets on both sides of the Atlantic

and reduce restrictions on commercial services, improve security of investment and equality of competition and simplify access to public contracts at all levels of government (BMWI, 2019; Akhtar & Jones, 2014).

Even though several quantitative models and studies (Aichele et al., 2014; Engler & Tervala, 2016) were able to predict the highly positive trade and welfare effects a successfully implemented TTIP could have triggered off, not only on both economies involved but also on the entire world trade, negotiations were frozen at the end of 2016. After, in total, fifteen rounds of TTIP talks, still no agreement on any single one of the 27 to 30 chapters of the trade deal had been reached by that date.

Albeit the change in US government at that time as well as the election of Donald Trump for US president clearly led US trade policy towards more protectionist approaches, yet this development could not be given as the decisive reason for the abolishment of TTIP negotiations (Eliasson & Garcia-Duran Huet, 2018). Comparable to CETA, it was much more the massive mobilization of civil society and public salience against TTIP, which could be held responsible for it. Again, the main area of public concern encompassed transparency issues along with the controversial ISDS, already mentioned in the CETA case (Gheyle 2016; Gheyle 2017; von Nordheim et al., 2018; Laursen & Roederer-Rynning, 2017). Furthermore, Eliasson and Garcia-Duran Huet (2018) explain the initial suspicion towards TTIP with a publicly perceived threat to European food and safety standards stemming from the fear of a 'race to the bottom' in consumer product's quality.

Altogether, an immense anti-TTIP sentiment was conveyed to the public via social media and news media coverage during the years 2014 – 2016, mostly triggered off by a European Citizens Initiative with more than one million European signatures petitioning the Commission to remove the ISDS clause (Eliasson & Garcia – Duran Huet, 2018; von Nordheim et al., 2018). Notably is once more the fact that Austria, just like Germany, has again been explicitly mentioned several times in existing research as counting among the most TTIP-opposing EU members (Gheyle, 2016; Eliasson & Garcia-Duran Huet, 2018; von Nordheim et al., 2018; Meunier & Czesana, 2019).

2.3.3 Mercosur

“Austria blocks EU-Mercosur trade deal with South America” titled the BBC online news page in 2019. However, notwithstanding this anew obvious skepticism of certain member state’s governments and following two decades of intense and partly interrupted trade negotiations, the EU – Mercosur comprehensive trade agreement was ratified in July 2019 by the Commission.

Due to the just recently successfully concluded negotiations, not a lot of scientific studies examining the potential impacts the deal could have are available in online sources. According to a 2000 paper by Bulmer-Thomas the agreement could lead to increased imports by Mercosur in the long – term and “the PTA will put EU exporters in a strong position to increase market share. With the increase in trade will go an increase in exports of services and direct foreign investment. These three - trade in goods, trade in services, and direct foreign investment - appear to be more and more complementary” (p.19). Likewise, a quantitative examination of potential welfare gains through growing EU – Mercosur trade by Martinez-Zarzoso & Nowak-Lehman (2003) as well as a policy evaluation by Arana (2017) further backed the previous argument. Additionally, the European Commission (2019) enumerated a list of facts and potential consequences – certainly in favor of the deal – claiming that the comprehensive agreement “will cover a population of 780 million and cement the close political and economic relations between the EU and Mercosur countries. It represents a clear commitment from both regions to rules based international trade and will give European companies an important head start into a market with an enormous economic potential. It will anchor important economic reforms and modernisation undergoing in Mercosur countries” (para. 1).

Regarding the EU – Mercosur agreement, particularly agricultural aspects together with highly doubted food safety standards provoked most public salience across the European Union. Once more it was the Republic of Austria, besides six other EU members, who already expressed dissatisfaction in 2010, when DG Trade announced a relaunch of negotiations concerning agricultural product regulations within the agreement (Arana, 2017). Years later, as a result of the precedent public outcry already caused by TTIP and CETA, negotiations with Mercosur also came under mass and social media attacks and were thus put in the center of public attention. Although not being as omnipresent as the two prior discussed

agreements, the EU – Mercosur deal was nevertheless subject to a myriad of headlines and tweets haunting the internet, a lot of them evoking rather negative connotations (Kronenzeitung, 2019; Die Presse, 2019; Spiegel Online, 2019; ORF, 2019; OE24, 2019). A pan-European opinion poll conducted in September 2019 by YouGov and commissioned by the consumer group SumOfUs, reveals that the overwhelming majority of citizens in EU member states want to call off the deal. According to the survey's outcome, over three-quarters of respondents (82%) said the trade agreement should be stopped, notably in Austria opposition reached nearly 90%. However, it is important to outline that the poll might be significantly biased due to the utterly negative wording used in the introduction claiming that "the Mercosur deal proposes importing 100,000 tonnes of meat into the EU over 5 years, tax-free. This deal could lead to cheaper beef in Europe, but the increase in production of beef in the region could contribute to increased deforestation in the Amazon" (SumOfUs, 2019, p.2). Set aside this possible distortion, the Austrian public again stands out with massive public rejection of the agreement.

2.3.4 Japan (JEFTA)

In contrast to all the previously discussed commercial agreements, the EU Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (JEFTA), which applies since 1 February 2019, has received almost no critics from civil society organization or the general public. One possible explanation for the astonishing absence of public attention might be the "relative lack of innovative proposals compared to those found in the TTIP and the CETA" (Suzuki, 2017, p. 886). Japan represents one of the top EU trading partners, albeit the total share of goods and services being exported to the country barely reaches the 3% mark (DG for Trade in the EU, 2018). This is especially notable since, for instance, Canada does not even appear on the list of the top 10 European trading partners and yet had the power to trigger off such massive public protests. Meunier and Czesana (2019) argue that missing civil mobilization in the case of JEFTA might even be derived from the entire protests against CETA, which led to the desired split between trade and investor protection in EU trade policy making and is thus now already included in the JEFTA agreement.

What is more, is the media attention devoted to the EU – Japan trade deal. For example, the twitter presence of prior trade negotiations did by far outreach the JEFTA discussion in social media. The hashtag #mercosur was used around 85% more often in tweets than #jefta. This could lead to the somewhat daring assumption that civil society was simply not aware of any ongoing negotiations with Japan and did therefore not mobilize.

2.3.5 Vietnam and Singapore (ASEAN markets)

Standard political economy theories of trade policy making principally assume a rather challenging process of trade liberalization between differently developed nations in terms of economic output (Manger, 2012), yet the EU increasingly engages in trade negotiations with economically much weaker partners. Irrespective of this assumption, substantial undiscovered potential trade between the EU and the ASEAN countries has already been scientifically proven as being existent by Kabir and Salim (2011). Furthermore, Eckhardt outlines the importance of Asian imports for certain companies and thus (2015, p. 14) adds that the "EU's decision to launch trade negotiations with a number of key Asian partners can be plausibly accounted for by considering the role played by import-dependent firms in the policy-making process". Hence, trade and investment protection agreements between the European Union and Singapore as well as Vietnam, both members of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), were concluded in 2017 and 2019, respectively.

Since Singapore represents the EU's largest commercial partner in ASEAN, European companies can now not only benefit from facilitated access to the extremely fast-growing market itself, but also use the city as a hub to serve the entire South Pacific region. However, besides several economic advantages for both the European Union as well as Singapore, McKenzie and Meissner (2016) claim that the Commission's initial intention of transferring and fostering democratic values through trade agreements in the partner country failed in this case due to the predominance of commercial interests over human rights promotion. They further mention the relative passivity of the European Parliament along with a lack of public salience, potentially reflecting very little public awareness of any negotiations going on between the EU and Singapore.

In this context, the exact same issue was also revealed in literature dealing with the case of trade negotiations with Vietnam. Certainly, FTAs support developing countries such as Vietnam in strengthening their exports and political relations with trading partners as well as contribute to efficiency and welfare gains for the whole economy (Duong, 2016). Moreover, Sicurelli (2015, p. 231f) explains that "the EU has the potential to be a distinctive promoter of human and social rights in Vietnam for two main reasons. First, it is the first trade partner to include commitment to international labour and human rights law on the agenda of PTA negotiations with the country. Second, it can rely on considerable bargaining power. In fact, the Vietnamese economy is heavily dependent on trade with the EU, which is the most important export market for Vietnamese products […]". Nonetheless, the EU once more shows a relative lack of consistency concerning human rights promotion within the Vietnam free trade agreement and again subordinates development goals to commercial objectives due to "the growing interests of European exporters, import-dependent groups and investors in the South East Asian region" (Hoang & Sicurelli, 2017, p. 15).

Despite this highly essential issue, free trade negotiations with both Singapore and Vietnam were a long way off from achieving the same extent of public awareness than those previously mentioned (Meunier & Czesana, 2019). Whether the reason for this lies in greater public fear of the so-called ISDS or simply in missing information about human rights and inferior working conditions, remains open.

2.3.6 Turkey and the customs union

Since 1995, Turkey is tightly connected to the EU through a different, even closer linkage than the free trade contracts introduced above. They share the same external tariffs and are thus linked by a Customs Union agreement, which means that apart from certain exceptions, like regulations on agricultural products, the two economies maintain the same external commercial policy. Yet, even though the EU by far remains Turkey's most important trading partner, bilateral relations have deteriorated strongly after the reprisals that followed the coup attempt in Turkey, in November 2016. Indeed, after almost 20 years of EU accession negotiations, the majority of MEPs voted to freeze talks – since summer 2017 all accession plans were put on hold.

Numerous studies analyze the EU – Turkey trade relations in consideration of the impact of the Customs Union and a distinct majority also demands renegotiations or reforms of the obsolete agreement. Dawar et al. (2018) even mention this necessity in the abstract of their paper, as they claim that "in its current form, the Customs Union no longer meets the requirements of a 21st century trade agreement. Its modernization should include the signing of a free trade agreement covering agriculture, services, public procurement, investment protection, dispute settlement, and sustainable development. While difficult to achieve for Turkey, these are necessary steps if the country wants to remain a competitive player in the world economy and increase its exports and FDI inflows" (p.129). However, despite a potentially necessary extension of the agreement, it can be said that the Customs Union definitely has made a significant contribution to trade integration, liberalization and overall productivity gains within the Turkish economy (Erzan, 2018). A further study points out the massive influence the CU had not only on general trading activities and Turkish exports but also on GDP per capita, which would have been around 38% and 13% less, respectively, in the absence of the agreement (Aytug et al., 2016). Notwithstanding the obvious success of the Customs Union, as illustrated by these figures, Turkey's EU accession is subject to strong controversies within the EU population. Likewise, the Turkish public opinion is shaped by a strong ambivalence towards the EU, according to a poll around 50% of the population would advocate Turkey's EU accession (Center for American Progress, 2018).

3. Methodology

3.1 Determinants of public opinion - Blinder and Krueger (2004)

The foundation for this entire study lies in Blinder and Krueger's (2004) research about public knowledge and opinion concerning general public policy issues in the United States. Due to the exceptional similarity of research, their approach could be easily adapted for the analysis of the Austrian's opinion on European trade policy. Whereas Blinder and Krueger focus on a broad variety of different economic policies, this study will solely deal with trade policy and several critical aspects thereof. However, since the definition of public opinion remains the same regardless the 'type' of public policy under investigation, the determinants for this definition necessarily also remain unchanged. According to the authors (2004), an individual's position (OP_i) on a specific topic is based on the person's self-interest (SI_i), her intrinsic ideology (her 'values' V_i), her factual knowledge about the issue (K_i), her level of education (ED_i) and certain demographic or personal variables (X_i), such as age, gender affiliation or income. The basic econometric model can thus be formulated as the following function, including an error term e_i:

$$OP_i = f(SI_i, V_i, K_i, ED_i, X_i) + e_{1i}$$

Subsequently, Blinder and Krueger continue with an explanation concerning their definition of K_i, which again depends on determining factors, simply because "the amount and kind of knowledge a person has on any particular economic issue ought to depend on the costs and benefits of acquiring such knowledge" (2004, p. 330). Under this assumption, K_i ought to be:

$$K_i = g(ED_i, D_i, S_i, Q_i, X_i) + e_{2i}$$

Consequently, ED_i and X_i are taken over from the previous equation and measure education level and personal variables, respectively. D_i represents the extent of individual desire of getting informed about EU trade policy, whereas S_i and Q_i are indicators about the different sources of information one uses and the respective quantity (in this case frequency and intensity) of usage thereof.

In their final step they show the strong interdependence of the model's variables and try to find reasons why people chose to inform themselves and how they do so:

$S_i = h_1 (ED_i, D_i, SI_i, V_i, X_i) + e_{3i}$

$Q_i = h_2 (ED_i, D_i, SI_i, V_i, X_i) + e_{4i}$

$D_i = h_3 (ED_i, SI_i, V_i, X_i) + e_{5i}$

Summarizing these newly introduced three equations, the authors claim "that people's self-interest, ideology, education, and desire to be informed combine to determine how much information they acquire—and what kinds of information" (Blinder & Krueger, 2004, p. 5). Now coming back to the Austrian opinion about EU trade policy, this model is perfectly applicable, as it allows the quantitative examination of public knowledge, public opinion and the factors influencing the latter.

3.2 The sample

An online survey of a random sample of the Austrian population aged 15 and older was conducted in winter 2019/2020, using the German online survey platform 'soscisurvey.de'. On average around 8,73 minutes were needed to completely fill out the survey, which comprised a total of 34 questions. It was restricted to Austrian citizens and people who already have or had once been living for more than 10 consecutive years in the country, respectively. Due to the nature of research, which is focused explicitly on Austria and its inhabitants, this restriction was necessary. A total number of 522 people participated in the survey, however only 363 of them finished it - the drop-out rate thus amounted to 30,46%. A further deduction of all invalid results (i.e. non-Austrian citizens) led to a final total of exactly 350 evaluable, completed questionnaires. When now taking a deeper look at the demographic variables, the sample's average age turned out to be 39,8 years (with a median of 40, maximum of 77 and minimum of 16) and a surprisingly balanced distribution of sex could be reported (48% male, 48,3% female and 3,7% other, respectively). Yet, the sample did not adequately represent the total Austrian population with regard to the following respects: education level (e.g. 50,6% had obtained at least a first cycle university degree compared to the low percentage of 11,6% of the Austrian population holding such a degree in 2017), main residential area (e.g. 55,7% said they mainly reside in urban areas, whereas only 31,4% of the Austrians actually lived in cities) and age when divided into different age

groups (e.g. only 5% of the sample were over 60 years old - in reality this percentage climbed up to almost 30%). Therefore, in order to nevertheless justify the sample's significance, to reduce statistical bias and to be able to provide meaningful research, the responses were weighted to the total Austrian population aged over 15 as indicated in Statistik Austria's Demographic Yearbook 2018 concerning age, sex and geographical region. By that time, Austria comprised a total population of 7.580.083 people being 15 and older (Statistik Austria, 2019). Due to a lack of available data for the year 2018, the education level was weighted to the total Austrian population of 2017 being 15 and older, which amounted up to 7.538.181 (Statistik Austria, 2020). Principally, respective weights were always applied in the following research. Yet, for the sake of completeness, the unweighted frequency distributions will be provided in the appendix (Appendix A) in order to allow for comparisons.

3.3 The survey

The survey started with an introductory text and was followed by a few opinion-based questions about personal attitudes and ideologies. Afterwards the participants were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with several statements and to fill out a short knowledge quiz consisting of factual data and questions. The questionnaire thereafter continued with a section dedicated to the enumeration of personal sources of information together with the intensity of usage thereof and the general feeling of access to and availability of information. The last part consisted of questions devoted to personal data and thus asked about all exogenous variables.

The short introductory text aimed at providing the study participants with a brief overview of what is understood under European trade policy. The intention behind it was the impartial and neutral supply of concrete information together with a rough idea of the questionnaire's content. The full text can be found in the appendix (Appendix B). After reading it, the participants were first asked to fill out a 7x5 matrix-question consisting of 7 different questions about their personal approval and the importance of the EU and its trade policy, each with a scale of 4 answer options ranging from 'yes, absolutely' to 'no, not at all' and the evasive answer 'I haven't thought about it'. At the very beginning, participants had to classify

their support for the EU and trust in the EU – institutions according to the scale. This data is necessary to investigate whether an individual who generally approves to the EU also tends to approve to the common commercial policy or whether there exists no significant correlation. Additionally, the answer to this question should indicate the degree of 'Euroscepticism' one has and how personal values (V_i) regarding the EU are perceived. Contrary to Blinder and Krueger's research, which focused on ideology in the sense of political partisanship or voting behaviour, my definition of ideology rather identifies the extent of personal approval of the EU and its activities and should therefore provide necessary information concerning subjective sentiments about European integration incentives and in particular trade policy. Due to this specific investigation, and with regards to the Austrian political landscape, I claim that the general political ideology or a certain partisanship can be neglected for this research as they would perhaps rather distort than support any results. Indeed, in this context, the directly questioned level of Euroscepticism will be a better indicator than general political ideology because Austrian political parties have showed somewhat contradicting opinions or position changes concerning trade policy in the past. Furthermore, also a small trend towards frequently altering a party's attitude towards the EU, in terms of approving to certain EU policies whereas disagreeing with others, can be identified (Dolezal, 2005; Grimm, 2018; Lichtenberger, 2016; Pollak & Slominski, 2002; Schultz, 1992). Principally, national political parties do not put an explicit focus on trade policy in their agenda, as the national parliaments become only involved in the question of multilateral trade agreements in the final ratification phase. At this point it might be important to again emphasize the centralized legislation of trade policy being exclusively regulated by the Commission and thus not being primarily incumbent upon national party's responsibilities. Therefore, in order to avoid distortions, the aspect of political ideology will be omitted and directly transformed into the more meaningful inquiry of personal approval of EU policies.

The next two columns of the matrix addressed self – interest in the topic (our variable SI_i) along with the subjective assessment of one's level of knowledge, so if the participant feels well-informed about trade-related European issues. The accuracy of these subjective feelings would then later be verified through the knowledge test. The matrix' last three columns were devoted to the assigned level of importance of trade agreements. An example would be: 'Do you think that EU trade agreements are relevant for the EU's economy?'. The same

pattern was used to ask about the assigned relevance for the Austrian economy and for the participant him/herself, his/her work or his/her everyday life, respectively.

Subsequently, in order to get more detailed ideas about which image prevails and how international trade is perceived the participants were asked to assess the term 'free trade' as well as the EU's strategy of increasingly creating FTA's/PTA's with other countries in accordance with a scale from positive to negative, again leaving the option of choosing 'I haven't thought about it'.

The ensuing three questions were devoted to the personal desire of getting informed (D_i). With reference to the introductory text, the participants were not only asked about how important it is to them to be informed about European commercial policy but also if they actively inform themselves about such topics. Finally, in order to explain the personal need of being up to date, a multiple-choice selection of potential reasons was provided. Apart from the obvious ones, such as 'could affect my personal finances' and 'could affect my work or education' also other reasons like 'could affect my voting decision' or 'to be a responsible citizen / I just like to be informed' could be chosen. Alternatively, also the options 'occasionally I perceive information, but I do not inform myself actively', 'I am not interested and do not need to be informed' as well as 'other reasons' were possible.

The next section consisted of six simple statements, which again had to be classified on a scale in terms of the personal approval or disapproval with the proposition. With respect to content, the focus was on international trade agreements in general and what consequences these might have on a nation's economy. Thus, the respondents' opinion on trade-related topics is finally revealed. One statement, for instance, read as follows: 'International trade agreements improve or raise salaries'. The ranking according to which the statements could be classified ranged from 1 to 5, with 1 meaning complete approval and 5 the opposite. Some of the statements evoked a rather positive connotation, whereas others were more negatively formulated, such as for example 'International trade agreements lead to low standards and worse quality in consumer goods'. The subjective assessment of these propositions helps us with the identification of the general Austrian attitude towards EU trade policy and which image prevails on the individual level.

In contrast to the precedent questions, which solely dealt with personal opinions, the middle section of the questionnaire was devoted to a short knowledge quiz. 7 specific questions

concerning the European Union's trade policy were posed in a single – choice format, ergo one out of mostly five answer possibilities was correct. A short explanatory instruction prior to the questions was provided in order to prepare the participants for the upcoming section ("Now please answer the following short, very specific knowledge questions about the EU's trade policy. These are deliberately very difficult, which is why it is important that you do not guess the answers. If you are uncertain, please simply select the option 'I don't know'"). The degree of the quiz' difficulty was especially described as 'very difficult', in order to avoid any premature survey terminations of discouraged study participants, who might not be able to figure out the correct response to certain questions. Furthermore, the necessity of choosing the option 'I don't know' instead of arbitrarily guessing an answer was outlined in the introduction text as well, so that potential distortions in the final study results are optimally prevented. All seven questions dealt with different European Union trade policy matters, most of them already briefly addressed in the previous chapter, and were carefully chosen with respect to certain criteria such as, for instance, current actuality, media presence, public mobilization or general relevance for the public. Table 1 provides an overview of these knowledge questions and their corresponding possible answer choices. The number of the correct response can be read off the right column.

In order to examine the level of knowledge (K_i) among the Austrian population, the quiz part was analysed like an exam. That means a point was awarded to each correct answer, while false answers were worth zero. Likewise, the option 'I don't know' did not deliver any points either. This approach allows to verify whether there exists a positive correlation between a study participant's subjective feeling of being well-informed and his/her actual knowledge about the topic. Furthermore, the calculation of the general average amount of points achieved, also enables the examination of a possible significant lack of relevant information among the Austrian population.

Table 1: Knowledge questions concerning EU trade policy

Answer possiblities: / Questions:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Correct answer
1.) Is Turkey part of the European Customs Union?	Yes	Only the European part / Istanbul	No	I don't know				1
2.) The MERCOSUR trade deal consists of a deal between the EU and ..	Certain North – American states	Certain Latin American states	Certain Asia – Pacific states	Other states as the above mentioned	I don't know			2
3.) The abbreviation CETA stands for..	Canadian – European Trade Association	Comprehensive and Economic Trade Agreement	Central European Trade Agreement	Other	I don't know			2
4.) Who negotiates and signs trade agreements on behalf of the EU?	The national governments of the EU member states	The European Commission	The World Trade Organization (WTO)	Other	I don't know			2
5.) Which of the following economies has the highest share of world trade, i.e. is the world's largest trading bloc?	USA	Japan	EU	China	Australia	None of the above mentioned	I don't know	3
6.) Have you ever heard of the so-called 'Investor - State Dispute Settlement' (ISDS), which is part of many trade agreements? If so, what does it mean?	Yes, I have heard of it, but I don't know what it means exactly	No, I have not heard of it	System through which investors can sue states for alleged discriminatory practices	Legal system protecting states from discriminatory practices of foreign investors	System screening the credit risk of foreign investors			3
7.) In 2018 the European Union's balance of trade showed off a..	Surplus	Deficit	relatively balanced budget	I don't know				2

The penultimate part of the survey aimed at figuring out what the different sources of information (S_i) the Austrians consult are, along with the individual view on access and availability thereof. Reasons for individual knowledge are manifold and might for instance be rooted in a person's education or membership in certain organizations as well as in the simple consultation of certain news media or discussions with friends and family. Consequently, a table consisting of a selection of such various possible tools in terms of information gathering was provided. The probands thus had to indicate for each option their personal frequency of usage (Q_i), ranging from 'regularly or often' to 'rarely or never'. Alternatively, also the option 'in the past' could be chosen, in case knowledge hailed from certain previous activities as for example former education. After the provision of data as for sources of knowledge and frequency of their consultation, the questionnaire continued with the inquiry of the personal assessment of sufficiency as well as availability. The transition question therefor read as follows: 'Do you think that there is enough easily accessible information in order to get properly informed about European Union trade policy?'. The corresponding answer possibilities differed in terms of the amount of information and their availability, respectively. Hence, distinctions were made between relatively good and bad access together with relatively adequate or inadequate sufficiency ('There is enough information and also easy to find', 'Enough information, but rather hard to access', 'Not enough information, but easy to access', 'Not enough information and also hard to access').

The very last eight questions served then to discover the exogenous variables of the study participants, such as age, gender affiliation or level of formal education (X_i). For each question the possibility of 'no answer' was provided. In addition to the before mentioned, also professional position and industry field or field of study, respectively, were asked. In order to get an idea whether the personal environment does also play a role when it comes to attitudes towards international trade, similarly the population density of the main area of residency was inquired. Ultimately, the study participants had once again to verify their Austrian citizenship or, in case this was not applicable, that their length of stay in Austria has already exceeded 10 years.

4. Analysis of data / Findings

4.1 Some straight facts and descriptive statistics

Before delving into Blinder and Krueger's regression models, I will stick to the author's procedure (2004, p.333ff) and successively describe the basic facts supported by some crosstabs without imposing any interpretation or identifying structure on them – apart from the weights, of course. Detailed calculations for each weight factor can be found in the appendix (Appendix C), however in order to nevertheless provide a better understanding of the now following analysis, a brief overview is given: I worked with 5 different weight categories, namely as previously mentioned the variables of main residential area, sex, age, education and a total weight factor consisting of the sum of the products for each individual case. So, let's take a random example of a female respondent being under 25 years old, living in a very rural area and having obtained a high school diploma. The respective weight factors for each of the variables are in our case 1,06 (female), 0,72 (age under 25), 1,96 (very rural area) and 0,59 (high school education), respectively - resulting in a total weight factor of 0,88. As a conclusion we can say that this person is overrepresented in the sample and her opinion should thus only count to 88% in order to better represent the general Austrian population. Within the following thesis, each of the 350 cases will always be weighted either with the respective single variable weights (i.e. for instance only the weight for 'area') or with their individual total weight. This depends on the sought output and will be indicated.
Clearly, valid rejections of this approach could be raised at this point, as mistakes in survey weighting might lead to the absolute opposite of the intended goal and distort study results. To tackle this issue, several authors (Gelman, 2007; Franco et al., 2017; Mutz, 2011) already conducted specific research dealing with the matter of using weights in statistics and regression analysis concerning population estimates. However, most of their conclusions are ambiguous and interpretable in many ways. Gelman (2007) starts his research right away by encouragingly anticipating that "survey weighting is a mess" (p. 153), whereas Franco et al. (2017) do support weighting in the examination of a broader population provided weighting techniques are disclosed and transparent. Despite certainly many objections, I will proceed with my already explained method and always use weights (if not explicitly stated

otherwise), simply because my entire research would not be of significant relevance without their application.

4.1.1 The desire (Di) for information on trade policy

Let's start with variable D_i - the personal desire of getting informed about EU trade policy. Surprisingly more than half of the probands (53,4%) stated that it is at least 'important' for them to be well-informed about this topic. In addition, a total of 16,6% of the sample even chose 'very important'. Slightly more (18%) however expressed their indifference by selecting 'I don't care', whereas 'rather not important' and 'not important' was only indicated by a cumulative total of 12%. Summarizing this data, it can be assumed that a rather strong desire of getting informed prevails among the Austrians.

Concerning the weighted subgroups of this population, when applying χ^2-tests of independence the answers do not vary significantly by sex or main residential area (p-values above 5% level). Yet, evidence of differences by education level is observed (χ^2=37,4, p=0.000194), and some relation between D_i and age can be assumed as well with older people putting somewhat more importance on their desire to be informed about EU trade policy (χ^2=34,8, p<0,0001).

In a next step, a possible dependence between the desire of being informed and personal attitudes / values towards the EU, i.e. variable V_i indicating the degree of Euroscepticism, is examined. Therefore, I looked at the answers to the question of how much one is in favour of the EU or not ('would you describe yourself as advocate of the European Union?') and found that the cumulative majority of the sample tends to support the EU with 36,4% and 30,7% saying 'yes, absolutely' and 'rather yes', respectively. On the contrary, 25% answered in the (rather) negative and 7,8% stated that they 'haven't thought about it'. As might expected, the crosstabulation shows significant evidence of differences in Euroscepticism and the desire of being well-informed with advocates of the EU placing more value on keeping informed (χ^2=135, p<0,001). A very similar conclusion can be deduced when testing the level of trust in the EU's institutions: a higher desire of being well-informed correlates significantly with a higher level of trust in the institutions (χ^2=109,6, p<0,001).

Additionally, very strong evidence of variations was found between D_i and the individual self-interest (SI_i) in EU trade policy - the latter being examined through the inquiry of 'would

you describe yourself as interested in EU trade policy?'. A perhaps rather unexpected quite high total of 54,8% affirmed the question ('rather yes' and 'yes, absolutely') compared to 42,7% describing themselves as rather not or not interested in the topic. Analyses of crosstabulation and χ^2-test showed that there are significant relations between D_i and SI_i, as high desire of being well-informed positively correlates with high interest in the issue (χ^2=211,7, p<0,001).

When analysing the individual desire of being well-informed about EU trade policy, it would of course also be interesting to see whether this desire reflects reality or real engagement. So, whether study participants indeed feel like they are well-informed and whether they chose to actively inform themselves about the topic. According to the results only a third of the respondents (32,2%) answered with 'rather yes' or 'yes, absolutely' to the question of whether they feel well-informed about EU trade policy - vice versa a stunningly high cumulative percentage of 64,8% negated to this question ('rather no' and 'no'; leaving 2,9% with 'I haven't thought about it). An interesting and quite contradictory fact here is that indeed 39,2% (out of the 64,8% who do not feel well-informed) yet claimed having a high desire of being informed.
I then continued with the investigation of the 'active information'-criteria: my analysis shows that only 20,4% of the sample actively inform themselves about current trade policy issues, whereas the large majority (49,4%) sometimes searches information and 30,2% do not actively do so at all. Evidence between differences in D_i and whether one actively looks out for information can be observed (χ^2=95,2, p<0,0001) in a way of those considering getting well-informed less important rather tend to not actively informing themselves.

Following Blinder and Krueger's approach (2004, p. 335), I estimated an ordinal regression model with the dependent variable D_i using all the significant regressors from the previous simple crosstab analyses: Age, acquired formal education, level of Euroscepticism and trust in the EU as well as personal interest in the topic. However, only self-interest and the two measures of EU advocacy established themselves as highly significant for predicting the outcome variable. In brief, less interest and less EU advocacy imply lower desires of getting informed about trade policy.

After having analysed the individual importance assigned to the demand for information, I proceeded with the investigation of the main drivers thereof. The survey asked each respondent to state reasons why they acquire information about trade policy - for this, they could select several options out of a given list or, in case none of the proposed reasons fit, write their personal statement in a box. In order to simplify things and to improve meaningfulness, I only considered the responses of people classifying their desire of information at least 'important' (more than 70% of the sample) for the now following analysis.

Table 2: Reasons for wanting to be informed about trade policy[1]

Reason	Percent of respondents
Could affect my personal financial situation (stock market prices, investments, etc)	35,70%
Could affect my work / my education / other of my duties	52,80%
Could be important for my voting decision	50,40%
To be a responsible citizen; I like to be informed	60,60%
Other reasons	5,50%

Note: Data from author's survey described in the text (table based on Blinder & Krueger, 2004).

[1] Numbers sum to more than 100% as multiple answer choices were possible.

Table 2 shows that affection of profession or business (the second reason in the list), political reasons (third in the list) and simply the feeling of responsibility as citizen (fourth) were chosen by more than half of the respondents. The open answers from 'other reasons' either cohere to a large extent with the already existing categorization of reasons (e.g. answers such as "I am interested in which new agreements have been adopted" or "To be able to raise any concerns" could go with "to be a responsible citizen") or express other things not asked in the question such as opinions about trade in general or criticism (e.g. "The EU trade policy can also have disadvantages, for us or for the trade partners, if e.g. local productions or markets are destroyed or eco-social standards are violated" or "Our politicians, especially the EU politicians, only act in the interests of the big lobbyists. This is not in the interests of ordinary EU citizens!") and are therefore not further reported here.

Regarding demographic distribution and education, the differences in the selection of individual reasons were principally modest and reflected the data provided in table 2.

Notable distinctions between sex and age could be worth mentioning as men put slightly more value on the aspect of personal finances compared to women (respondents who chose this answer were 68.7% male) and as older people substantially more often chose 'to be a responsible citizen' whereas 'could affect my work/education' was most frequently chosen by younger respondents. Differences by education were quite surprising with college-educated primarily indicating the most common answer of being a responsible citizen while less-educated were more likely to be concerned about work or education and their political voting decision. Differences by main residential geographic area, self-interest or values towards the EU were generally negligible and are thus not further discussed.

Quite at the end of the survey participants were asked whether they think that sufficiently transparent information tools exist in order to build an opinion and get informed about trade policy and whether this information is generally easily accessible. Frequency distribution outcomes are summarized in table 3. An entire quarter of the sample has not thought much about this issue, whereas another quarter affirms the question with choosing the last answer option. Yet, it is important to note that almost half of the Austrian population raises objections, since they either have difficulties in accessing specific information or they feel like it is not detailed enough or even both.

Table 3: Frequency distribution of respondents' answers when asked about the access to information

Answers	share of sample
I haven't thought about it much	25,1%
Information is easily accessible, but not sufficient and detailed enough	9,4%
No, not enough information available and also very difficult to access	20,2%
Sufficient information out there, but rather difficult to get it	19,4%
Yes, enough information and also easy to access	25,9%

Note: Data from author's survey described in the text.

4.1.2 The sources (S_i) of information and their intensity of usage (Q_i)

A large part of the questionnaire was dedicated to the sources one uses in order to keep informed. Referring again to Blinder and Krueger (2004, p. 337ff.), a table consisting of eleven different possible sources was provided in a way that the frequency of usage of each of them could be categorized as either 'regularly or often', 'sometimes' or 'rarely or never'. Additionally, in contrast to Blinder and Krueger's study, also the option of 'in the past' was offered, in case someone gained their information from past occasions which were not repeatable. Table 4 displays the sources in descending order according to the percentage of the respective usage.

Table 4: Sources of information about trade policy by frequency of usage

Source	Regularly or often	Sometimes	Rarely or never	In the past
News or other TV / radio programs	26,8%	56,1%	14,8%	0,8%
Internet / certain websites	22,9%	36,5%	22%	1,2%
Newspapers or magazines	19,8%	46,7%	18%	2,6%
Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc)	14,8%	44,3%	34,1%	0,5%
Communication / discussion with friends or family	4%	58,9%	28,7%	1%
My work	3,7%	24,2%	46,3%	1,7%
Education (school, university, apprenticeship, etc)	3,5%	32,7%	35,1%	10,5%
Books	2,2%	23,1%	53%	3,4%
Membership in certain organizations (political parties, interest groups, clubs, etc)	1,7%	20,5%	69,1%	1,7%
Other sources	1,3%	4,8%	51%	9,5%
Workshops, courses, etc.	0,9%	9%	71,1%	1,2%

Note: Data from author's survey described in the text (table based on Blinder & Krueger, 2004).

We can see that the news on TV or radio represents the source which is most frequently used by a large part of the sample (26,8%), closely followed by the internet (22,9%). The third and fourth most common sources were printed newspapers and social media, respectively. The relatively low percentage of people indicating social media as their most used form of getting information might come as a surprise with regards to the omnipresence of social media nowadays (especially when looking at the counterpart of 34,1% claiming that

they rarely use it as source of information). Moreover, a drop of over ten percentage points can be observed between the fourth and fifth source, which is discussion with friends and family. The latter yet ranks highest among the sources being used only sometimes. Workshops or courses together with membership in organizations were by far the most unused tools of acquiring information. At this point it might also be interesting to shed light on the fact that a cumulated rounded percentage of 36% of the sample at least sometimes gets informed about trade policy through means of their education. Adding those who claimed that they gained their knowledge about the topic through their education in the past, we find a relatively high percentage of Austrians (64,9%) who can / could at least sometimes make use of their formal education in order to get informed about trade policy.

Analysis of crosstabulations show that, apart from certain exceptions, demographic factors and personal values do not matter much for the choice of individual sources. Men generally used a higher number of different sources regularly or often. In fact, social media was the only source where the number of female respondents saying 'regularly or often' outweighed. On the other hand, men made significantly greater use of tools requiring somewhat active involvement such as communication or membership in organization and additionally consulted books or the internet more often. Differences in sex could furthermore be reported in terms of information acquisition through one's work with again men more frequently using their work as source. Main residential area turned out to hardly play a role concerning the choice of information sources. Solely people living in urban areas showed a slightly greater tendency towards indicating their work as most intensely used source of information about trade policy, which might root in fact that jobs in urban areas do have a higher probability of being somehow related to international trade than professional activities on the countryside. Differences in age were relatively ambiguous and harder to interpret, although almost all sources showed statistical significance with p-values lower than 0,05. Yet, strong positive correlations between older people and the usage of printed media (newspapers) as well as vice versa between younger people and the usage of social media as regularly used information source were observed.

Despite much evidence of the influence of individual formal education level on the opted sources of information, quite the same diffuse pattern of non-revealing data emerged if examined for correlations. However, expectations were met for those believing that higher

education leads to more intense usage of the latter as source for information. Moreover, the study results permit the assumption of the tool of discussion / communication and consultation of the internet being more intensely used by less educated.

Results with respect to Euroscepticism were unequivocally and significantly directing towards the trend of less Eurosceptic people using a way higher number of different sources more often. While the most common sources used regularly by respondents rather not being in favor of the European Union were classical media such as internet, TV or newspapers, people advocating to the EU reported a slightly greater use of social media in order to get informed about trade policy.

After the inquiry of frequency of usage of the main source categories, respondents were offered the possibility of going into a little more detail and further describing which sources precisely they use. The median answer was by far the various options provided by the Austrian broadcasting corporation ('ORF') including either their news website ('orf.at'), their daily newscast ('ZIB') or their podcasts. The second most frequently named source was Facebook, closely followed by various daily newspapers – here the Austrian daily paper 'derStandard' was the one cited the most. A relatively noticeable amount of people indicated the usage of certain international news media such as 'The New York Times' or 'BBC'. However, since the option of further listing precise, personal sources was not mandatory in the survey, these outcomes can clearly not be named as the general Austrian preferences. I therefore do explicitly not claim that for instance 'derStandard' is the most used printed source for getting information in Austria.

Leaving aside the sources for now, I will move on with the analysis of the theoretical variable Q_i representing the quantity, i.e. intensity, of information used. Once again reference is made to Blinder and Krueger's method when calculating the numerical value of Q_i: "Let s_1, s_2 and s_3 be, respectively, the number of sources a respondent reported using 'regularly or often', 'occasionally' and 'rarely or never', and let the total number of sources, s, equal $s_1 + s_2 + s_3$. (Note that s can be less than eleven because of item nonresponse.)" (2004, p.341). I was forced to somewhat adapt this approach due to the fact that my survey had a fourth option – 'in the past' was therefore labelled s_4 and was also included in the total number of sources s. Coming back to the authors model, I continued with the definition of Q_H ('quantity high') and Q_L ('quantity low') as s_1/s and s_3/s, respectively. These variables thus allow to

measure the intensity of information use (Blinder & Krueger, 2004, p.341f) in a way of a higher Q_H standing for greater personal intensity of usage of one's individual sources and a higher Q_L, in contrast, representing less intensity. Table 5 shows the frequency distributions of the weighted sample.

Table 5: Frequencies of different intensities in the usage of information sources

	Percentage of respondents with Q - high and Q - low	
Range	Quantity high	Quantity low
$0,0 \leq Q < 0,1$	67,6%	18,5%
$0,1 \leq Q < 0,2$	4,9%	2,6%
$0,2 \leq Q < 0,3$	10,7%	16%
$0,3 \leq Q < 0,4$	10,6%	13,2%
$0,4 \leq Q < 0,5$	1,2%	10,6%
$0,5 \leq Q < 0,6$	2%	9%
$0,6 \leq Q < 0,7$	0,1%	13,2%
$0,7 \leq Q < 0,8$	–	4,9%
$0,8 \leq Q < 0,9$	–	3,7%
$0,9 \leq Q < 1,0$	3%	8,3%

Note: Data from author's survey described in the text (table based on Blinder & Krueger, 2004).

As we can see in table 5, frequencies of Q_H accrue as the numerical value of the range approaches zero. Concluding from these numbers, over a third (67,6%) of the Austrian population tends to rather not excessively use their information sources. Conversely this leads to the assumption that 'extreme' information users are relatively rare in Austria (only cumulated 6,3% have a Q_H over 0,4). The still quite high 3% at the top end might seem surprising for some, but can be easily explained: let's say a respondent chose only one single source and claimed to regularly use it, then of course this results in a very high Q_H for this person simply because only one source is used 'excessively'. At the same time, the distribution of Q_L only reflects the previously taken assumptions to a certain extent, for the majority (50,3%) of the sample has a Q_L lower than 0,4. Information sources are thus used to a greater intensity than one might has expected. Examinations across demographics and personal characteristics concerning differences in intensity of usage of sources were not very

revealing. Evidence could only be found for older, less Eurosceptic or, respectively, more interested people in a way that they have slightly higher levels of Q_H, so use their sources more intensely. However, we do not know which sources or media exactly are heavily used by each individual respondent, nor how much information these sources really contain. Having in mind this aspect, of course valid objections of the whole procedure of measuring the intensity of usage of information sources can be raised.

4.1.3 Knowledge (K_i) about EU trade policy

The perhaps most essential variable of this entire study is the knowledge score achieved by each survey participant. As already briefly mentioned, 7 factual questions about topics concerning trade policy were posed. Table 6 summarizes the most important outcome of this knowledge test.

Table 6: Summary of knowledge testing

Question	Correct answer	Percentage of respondents chosing the correct answer	Median answer
1.) Is Turkey part of the European Customs Union?	Yes	18,1%	No
2.) The MERCOSUR trade deal consists of a deal between the EU and ..	Certain Latin American states	48,3%	Certain Latin American states
3.) The abbreviation CETA stands for..	Comprehensive and Economic Trade Agreement	25,5%	Canadian - European Trade Association
4.) Who negotiates and signs trade agreements on behalf of the EU?	The European Commission	39,6%	The European Commission
5.) Which of the following economies has the highest share of world trade, i.e. is the world's largest trading bloc?	EU	4,1%	China
6.) Have you ever heard of the so-called 'Investor - State Dispute Settlement' (ISDS), which is part of many trade agreements? If so, what does it mean?	System through which investors can sue states for alleged discriminatory practices	11,8%	No, I have not heard of it
7.) In 2018 the European Union's balance of trade showed off a..	Deficit	19,2%	I don't know

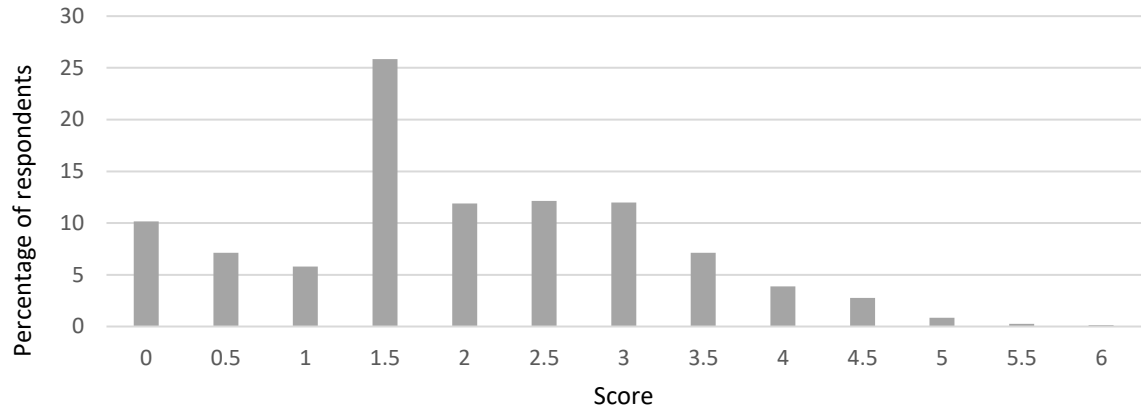
Note: Data from author's survey described in the text (table based on Blinder & Krueger, 2004).

With regards to table 6 and the immense variations in percentage distribution of correct responses, it becomes obvious that some questions might have been easier to answer than others. As illustrated, question 5 was apparently a lot more difficult (only 4,1% replied correctly) than for example question 2 (almost half of the respondents knew about the MERCOSUR trade deal).

In the context of somehow summarizing the data of this short quiz, an individual knowledge score for each case (Blinder & Krueger, 2004, p.346f) was calculated. Therefore, every correct answer was awarded with one point, whereas each false or unanswered question was worth zero. Exceptions were made only for questions number three ('The abbreviation CETA stands for..') and seven ('In 2018 the European Union's balance of trade showed off a..'), for the proposed single choice answer possibilities could have been somewhat misleading. Although the correct answer to question three is without doubt 'Comprehensive and Economic Trade Agreement', each respondent choosing 'Canadian – European Trade Association' were given 0,5 points - simply because this term is often used in colloquial language or the news and thus being aware of it also presumes a certain degree of knowledge. Likewise, in question seven the option 'relatively balanced budget' was awarded with 0,5 points, since the deficit in 2018 was not very high and as a result this would have also been an appropriate answer. To sum up, the maximum and minimum scores one could obtain were thus seven or zero points, respectively.

Calculations revealed an average knowledge score of 1,98 points (with a standard deviation of 1,21) and a median of 2 correct answers meaning that half of the respondents achieved scores less than 2 points whereas the other half stood out with more than 2 correct answers. Additionally, the largest part of respondents (25,9%), achieved a score of 1,5 points (the mode). Figure 1 provides a detailed illustration of the frequency distributions.

Figure 1: Distribution of knowledge score



Note: Data from author's survey described in the text.

I now want to come back to the equation introduced at the beginning of my thesis and test whether, and if so, in what way, knowledge scores are influenced by personal characteristics, by education or by individual engagement such as the desire of being well-informed, the various sources used and the frequency of consultation of these sources.

χ^2 - tests of independence reported relatively strong evidence in differences by demographic variables, apart from main area of residence, as well as by Euroscepticism (all p- values significantly below the 5% level). With an approximate average of 2,48 points, men achieved significantly higher knowledge scores than women (1,9 points). Moreover, in terms of the respective scores, college-educated substantially outscored high school graduates, which in turn outscored people having completed apprenticeships and compulsory schooling. The same linear development could be observed within variations of age, for the older the respondents the higher their knowledge about trade policy (people aged over 60 even fetched up to 2,78 points compared to only 1,62 by young adults under 25). Perhaps somewhat unexpected outcomes were revealed with relation to Euroscepticism. Those being absolutely and rather supportive of the EU scored on average 2,19 and 1,61 points, respectively, whereas those rather not advocating to the Union stood out with an extraordinary score of 2,49. Likewise, comparison between subjective assessments of one's knowledge and the actual score turned out somehow striking. Although the basic assumption of people claiming feeling very well-informed also achieving a higher amount of points can be verified, the overall average knowledge score still sheds a different light on this issue. Despite almost a cumulative third of the respondents said that they feel rather

well-informed, only 1,98 points out of seven were reached on average. I dare thus claiming that the Austrian population not only knows little about European Union trade policies, but also tends to strongly overestimate their personal knowledge of it. Indeed, when making such a profound claim, certain limitations and relevant arguments concerning quality and style of the quiz should not be forgotten. Since the used factual questions were completely arbitrarily chosen and not further tested for their meaningfulness or information content, I am very aware of the fact that simply selecting a correct answer does not represent any form of real knowledge. However, as this method is the only applicable form of testing any kind of factual knowledge within the scope of this study, the thus gained knowledge score will nevertheless continue to serve as indicator.

After having examined whether subjective feelings of level of knowledge cohere with reality, a closer look at the Austrian's desire to acquire the former with regards to their mean knowledge score was taken. Table 7 shows a solid positively correlated trend between higher scores and more expressed value on the importance of being well-informed, albeit those selecting 'very important' achieved a slightly lower score than those saying just 'important'.

Table 7: Knowledge score by desire of being well-informed

Stated importance of being well-informed	Mean knowledge score	Share of sample
Not important	0,71	5,69%
Rather not important	1,07	6,29%
I don't care	1,43	17,66%
Important	2,33	53,59%
Very important	2,20	16,77%

Note: Data from author's survey described in the text (table based on Blinder & Krueger, 2004).

In a next step, I investigated whether the choice of regularly consulted sources did play a role in differences of K_i (table 8). The results were quite noticeable, since many of the rather uncommon sources yet seemed to contain a substantial amount of information. For instance, those 0,9% of the respondents who often participate in workshops or certain courses and count these activities among their frequently used sources in order to gain information about international trade achieved the highest average knowledge score.

Table 8: Knowledge score by sources consulted regularly or often

Source	Mean knowledge score	Share of sample[1]
Workshops, courses, etc.	3,5	0,9%
Communication / discussion with friends or family	3,38	4%
Newspapers or magazines	2,86	19,8%
My work	2,71	3,7%
Membership in certain organizations (political parties, interest groups, clubs, etc)	2,67	1,7%
Books	2,63	2,2%
Other sources	2,5	1,3%
News or other TV / radio programs	2,38	26,8%
Internet / certain websites	2,33	22,9%
Education (school, university, apprenticeship, etc)	1,82	3,5%
Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc)	1,77	14,8%

Note: Data from author's survey described in the text (table based on Blinder & Krueger, 2004).

[1] Numbers do not sum to 100% as only the choice of 'regularly or often' is represented.

The same can be applied to the tool of 'communication'. An extraordinary high amount of average points (3,38) was reached by respondents who discuss such topics with either friends or family on a regular basis. However, only around 4% of the sample – ergo of the Austrian population – claimed doing so. Above average mean knowledge scores were also achieved by people who frequently read newspapers, who deal with trade related topics through means of their work or who uphold memberships in certain organizations. A comprehensible, logical explanation for these relatively high scores could be the different dimensions of transmitted information qualities and quantities. Some sources for sure are more informative, reliable and serious than others. In this context, it might seem obvious that someone attending workshops related to trade policy or even working in the field has more expertise than someone scrolling through social media pages. Please note, that I would never call the latter unreliable or even untrustworthy, however it is important to consider their somewhat shady reputation when it comes to filtering and spreading fake and real news. The very low knowledge scores of regular social media users might subscribe to this view and highlight the issue. Moreover, concerning the bottom end of table 8 and the

corresponding low scores, I found evidence for education not contributing so much to knowledge about trade policy than expected. In fact, people who indicated using means of their education as main knowledge source performed well below the average in the test (1,82 points).

Subsequent to the possible impact of consultation of different sources, I was also curious about how the intensity of usage of these sources might has influenced knowledge scores. Therefore table 9 presents the reported number of different sources used regularly or often and the corresponding mean knowledge scores in order to see whether higher variety in sources also leads to greater knowledge.

Table 9: Knowledge score by number of regularly or often used sources

Number of sources	Mean knowledge score	Share of sample
None	1,71	60%
1	2,21	9,85%
2	2,63	8,06%
3	2,11	15,82%
4 or more	2,95	6,27%

Note: Data from author's survey described in the text (table based on Blinder & Krueger, 2004).

Albeit an increasing number of sources used can be connected to higher scores, the relationship is not strictly monotonic.

4.1.4 Opinions on international trade and European Union trade policy (O_i)

The following subsection is dedicated to a detailed, descriptive analysis of the Austrian public perception of international trade. As mentioned at the beginning, five questions based on personal opinions and attitudes towards EU trade policy were asked and six different statements about the general impact of international trade had to be assessed.

The first short series of questions required a subjective ranking of the relevance of EU trade agreements for the EU's economy, for Austria's economy as well as for one-self, respectively. Frequency distributions show that an overwhelmingly high share of the sample considers trade agreements as either 'rather' or 'absolutely' important for not only the European Union's economy (accumulated 93,3%), but also for Austria's (accumulated

83,2%). Compared to these high percentages, it might be somehow striking to see that only 42,1% of the sample said trade deals were at least 'rather important' for their everyday life. Regarding demography, in all three cases χ^2-tests of independence did not reject the null-hypothesis of any relation between assigned importance degree and sex or main residential area (p-values well above 0,05). In contrast, significant evidence of differences in terms of age and education could be reported. Furthermore, levels of Euroscepticism and self-interest seemed to have very strong impact on how the respondents classified the importance of trade agreements. Crosstabulations allowed the assumption of the less Eurosceptic and the more interested in the topic, the higher the approval of the latter (p-values well below the 5% level in all three cases again).

Subsequently, respondents were asked to categorize their subjective assessment of the EU's strategy of establishing more and more FTA's / PTA's with third countries as well as their association with the term 'free trade' according to the given ranking. Results showed a distinct tendency towards approval of increasing Free Trade Areas (at least 57,4% called this development 'rather positive'). Moreover, the outstanding majority of the sample connects either rather positive (49,6%) or positive (15,6%) sentiments with the term 'free trade', while 27,1% said the opposite. Only 7,7% had never thought about it. In both cases, differences by all demographic variables (except main residential area), Euroscepticism and self-interest were significant, yet did not allow for a premature forecast of any correlations (rejection of null-hypothesis, p-values < 0,05). Education, however, stood out from the rest in a way that no significant relations between the association with the term 'free trade' and level of education could be observed.

Leaving aside the specific aspect of trade policy in the European Union, the survey further inquired attitudes towards international commercial agreements and trade in general. Therefore, participants were asked to rank their approval with certain statements according to a scale, where 1 means 'I totally agree'. Table 10 provides an overview of these statements and their respective frequency distributions.

Table 10: Frequency distribution of opinions about international trade in percentages according to the ranking[1]

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
International trade agreements help generating jobs	17,26%	41,39%	31,58%	8,11%	1,66%
International trade agreements improve or secure wages	3,8%	16,5%	35,5%	38,7%	5,6%
International trade agreements lead to decreased standards and worse quality in consumer goods	11,20%	33,40%	29,80%	11,30%	14,30%
International trade agreements lead to increased economic activity	21,68%	35,03%	26,91%	16,22%	0,15%
Austria's economy depends on international trade and trade agreements	19,50%	45,50%	24,30%	8,80%	2,10%
It would be better for Austria if the EU stopped the establishment of more FTA's	4,20%	22,10%	25,80%	31,00%	17,00%

Note: Data from author's survey described in the text.

[1]1 = I totally agree, 5 = I totally disagree.

The numbers in table 10 reveal a relatively ambivalent support of international trade agreements among the Austrian population. On the one hand a quite high share of the sample at least agrees (accumulated 58,65%) to the proposition of international trade generating jobs, but on the other hand scepticism grows when it comes to trade's role in securing wages or ensuring the quality of consumer goods. Yet, observations allow for the assumption of a weak trend towards more approval of trade when introducing a broader picture about the overall development of an economy on a macroeconomic level. In particular, respondents tended to rather agree to international trade's importance in fostering economic activity and they also mostly consent to a certain degree of dependence of Austria's economy on trade agreements. Only 4,2% said it would be better for Austria if the EU stopped the establishment of further FTA's.

Next, I tested all 6 statements for evidence of any variation in ranking distribution with regards to personal characteristics such as self-interest and Euroscepticism, education as well as demographics. χ^2-tests of independence turned out to be extremely significant in almost all cases (p-values well below the 5% threshold). Exceptions to this observation could

merely be found in 8 of the 36 crosstabulations: χ^2-tests between the degree of approval to the claim that international trade agreements lead to decreased standards and worse quality in consumer goods and age as well as sex were not significant (p – values greater than 0,05 in both cases). Furthermore, gender affiliation seemed also not to matter much when respondents assessed whether they agreed with the statement of international trade agreements improving or securing wages ($p = 0,11$). In contrast, levels of education generally seemed to play a big role when evaluating the different statements – indeed, only for the last statement an insignificantly high p-value of 0,217 was reported. Once again, the variable of main residential area stood out from the crowd through no substantial differences in the distribution of replies ($p > 0,05$) in all 6 cases and thus allowing the confirmation of the null hypothesis of no dependence.

Now being aware of all insignificant cases, I wanted to delve a little bit more into the examination of the far larger number of significantly related variables. Simple crosstab analysis permit to assume strong evidence of positive correlations between indicated self-interest in trade policy and the personal attitude towards trade agreements. Moreover, a relatively unambiguous – and probably not very surprising - trend connected to Euroscepticism was detected in a way that Eurosceptic respondents were more likely to disagree with those statements which put trade in a better light than non-Eurosceptics. Considering demographic variables, some evidence was found for men being slightly more positive about and open to international trade than women, for a higher percentage of male respondents totally agreed with the first (27,5% male compared to 14% female), the fourth (30% male, 17,7% female) and the fifth (37% male, 21,2% female) statement. A similar pattern can be recognized in terms of age, as crosstabulation estimates presume younger respondents being less likely to believe that international trade agreements help generating jobs, secure wages or lead to increased GDP growth. Despite very significant p-values rejecting the null hypothesis, mere crosstabulations did not allow for any early guesses in correlation patterns with regards to differences in rankings and education levels.

4.2 The model – Determinants of public opinion

Like Blinder and Krueger (2004, p.358ff), I will proceed with coming back to the five-equation regression model introduced at the beginning of my thesis. The now following part aims not only at examining which factors shape people's opinion and their knowledge on trade-related topics outlined in the previous chapters, but also at figuring out to which extent those factors influence final perceptions. This analysis thus goes beyond the scope of simple descriptive crosstabulations reported up to now. As already pointed out in the introduction, all regression estimates contain respective weights in order to represent the Austrian population. For completing the picture, unweighted regressions were implemented as well and can be found in the appendix (Appendix D). Previous anticipations of the unweighted regression models' minor role, however, proved to be accurate, since they either seem to be statistically insignificant in their entireness or simply reflect the relatively same outcome of the respective weighted model.

4.2.1 Where does knowledge stem from?

In order to approximately measure the underlying origins of my respondent's individual knowledge scores, I again refer to Blinder and Krueger's work (2004) who identified one's knowledge as a result of individual information sources (in terms of quality and quantity) used, the actual desire of getting informed, education and certain demographic factors. They furthermore estimated information sources not only through the above established variables Q_H and Q_L, but also with the help of a set of 22 dummy variables, one for each source being used 'regularly or often' or 'sometimes' (Blinder & Krueger, 2004, p. 359f), which is exactly what I did as well (see table 11 on the next page). Table 11 shows four different linear regression models, each of them taking an additional variable into account. On the left side the independent variables are listed. Column 11-1 represents the first model, which shows significant coefficients for Q_H and Q_L once demographics were controlled for. I continued with the addition of the desire to be informed in the next model (column 11-2) and after that with testing for Euroscepticism (column 11-3) and for the 22 dummy variables representing the different information sources (column 11-4). Before

adding these dummy variables, significant evidence for higher knowledge scores with regards to education, main residential area, intensity of source usage and the desire to be informed could be reported. Albeit prior descriptive crosstabulations did not allow for the assumption of any crucial relation between the respondent's main residential area and the respective knowledge score, the regression outcome nevertheless shows evidence for people living in rural and urban areas achieving significantly higher scores than the control group, i.e. people living in very rural areas. Furthermore, not very surprising might be the result that higher educated and those expressing more importance on being informed indeed scored substantially higher. As we can see in table 11, results were enormously altered after having added the large number of information source dummy variables. However, significant values barely changed. To sum up, model four proves that a higher desire of getting informed about trade policy affects the knowledge score positively (one step up in the regressor's ordinal ranking raises knowledge scores by 0,306 points or by 6,8% of the standard deviation). Moreover, concerning the quantity variables, I found evidence at the 10% level that also the intensity of source usage matters. The pattern of the negative Q_L coefficient means that the higher the value of the latter, the lower the knowledge score, which might seem confusing, but makes sense considering the fact that Q_L represents the sources used 'rarely or never' and thus a higher Q_L actually indicates a lower general usage of sources. In other words, one unit increase of Q_L leads to a 0,55 points lower knowledge test result on average. Respondents watching the news on TV or listening to them on radio at least sometimes achieved significantly higher knowledge scores than those who do not. The same can be applied for those regularly reading newspapers, often discussing the issues with close relatives or people who work in the field. Somehow noticeable is the negative coefficient of the dummy variable representing people who sometimes read the newspapers. It seems as if respondents who sometimes read the newspaper or magazines achieved less points in the knowledge test than those who never consult newspapers at all. It thus becomes obvious that not all sources transmit the same amount of reliable, verified information, so, in brief, this could be interpreted as an additional hint towards further study limitations. Even though significant impact on knowledge scores could be observed in the usage and nature of some sources, this does not directly mean superiority of their quality.

However, according to the model, knowledge scores are substantially influenced by the individual desire of getting informed, the intensity of use as well as the nature of certain sources and, surprisingly, also rural main residential area.

Table 11: Multiple linear regression examining respondents' knowledge score[1]

Independent variable	11-1: B	11-1: Std. Error	11-2: B	11-2: Std. Error	11-3: B	11-3: Std. Error	11-4: B	11-4: Std. Error
Demographics								
Age	0,097	0,066	0,044	0,065	0,020	0,067	0,007	0,074
Sex (male)[2]	0,143	0,149	0,174	0,145	0,176	0,145	0,167	0,141
Level of education	0,114**	0,051	0,093*	0,050	0,106**	0,053	0,019	0,058
Rural area[3]	0,616***	0,186	0,547***	0,181	0,536***	0,181	0,488**	0,196
Suburban area	0,480	0,391	0,334	0,381	0,290	0,382	0,542	0,385
Urban area	0,321**	0,144	0,329**	0,140	0,304**	0,141	0,135	0,147
Intensity of source use								
QH	0,839**	0,329	0,549*	0,326	0,668**	0,332	-0,693	0,600
QL	- 1,033***	0,274	-0,901***	0,268	-0,788***	0,273	-0,550*	0,333
Desire to be informed								
Importance of desire to be informed			0,282***	0,063	0,307***	0,067	0,306***	0,068
Advocate of the EU?								
Rather yes[4]					-0,320*	0,1632	-0,210	0,166
Yes, absolutely					-0,153	0,168	0,180	0,188
Sources								
Education sometimes[5]							-0,055	0,161
Education regularly or often							0,171	0,350
Workshops, courses sometimes							-0,487	0,302
Workshops, courses regularly or often							0,447	0,628
Work sometimes							-0,158	0,158
Work regularly or often							0,794*	0,413
Membership in organizations sometimes							0,067	0,223
Membership in organizations regularly or often							-0,017	0,514
Social media sometimes							-0,134	0,149
Social media regularly or often							-0,395	0,280
News on TV or Radio sometimes							0,573***	0,212
News on TV or Radio regularly							0,616**	0,271

or often					
Discussion with others sometimes				0,050	0,155
Discussion with others regularly or often				0,660*	0,357
Newspapers sometimes				-0,338**	0,166
Newspapers regularly or often				0,974***	0,267
Books sometimes				0,071	0,188
Books regularly or often				-0,158	0,462
Internet sometimes				-0,025	0,164
Internet regularly or often				-0,168	0,263
Other sources sometimes				-0,182	0,289
Other sources regularly or often				-0,021	0,542
Adjusted R²	0,199	0,243	0,247	0,377	

Note: Data from author's survey described in the text (table based on Blinder & Krueger, 2004).

[1] dependent variable is the knowledge score (continuous scale, see text for definition). *** denotes significantly different from zero at the 1 percent level, ** at the 5 percent level, * at the 10 percent level.

[2] the omitted category is "female".

[3] the omitted category is "very rural area".

[4] the omitted categories are "rather no", "no" and "I haven't thought about it".

[5] the omitted categories for each dummy source variable are "rarely or never", "in the past" and system missing.

4.2.2 What shapes public perceptions?

The now following last section of this analysis will finally concentrate on the study's centerpiece, namely the formation of public opinion. Equation 1 claimed opinions on EU trade policy as dependent on a function of individual personal values regarding the EU, formal education along with knowledge about and self-interest in the corresponding topic as well as demographics. All eleven opinion-based trade policy questions and statements are thus analysed through regression estimates. Ordered probit models were used in all cases, since, comparable to Blinder and Krueger (2004), the dependent variables' frequencies were approximately normally distributed. Even though ordered logit models in some exceptional cases proved to be a better fit of the data (higher pseudo – R^2 values), significant outcomes barely changed. Therefore, to keep the common thread, Blinder and Krueger's regression approach will be further pursued (p. 362ff).

The first regression illustrated in table 12 deals with the question whether EU trade agreements were considered as important for the economy of the European Union by the

study participants. For this specific inquiry answer options on an ordinal scale ranking from the lowest category 'I haven't thought about it' over 'No', 'Rather no', 'Rather yes' up to 'Yes, absolutely' were provided. These response categories were coded in ascending order meaning that positive coefficients in table 12 indicate higher likeliness to rate trade agreements as more relevant for the EU's economy (i.e. an increase in the z-score of the underlying probabilities of the predicted variable's normal distribution). The reverse applies to negative values. Comparable to the procedure with knowledge score, several regression estimates were implemented, each of them taking additional independent variables into account, in order to demonstrate variations in coefficients. Column 12-1 tries to explain the classification of trade agreement's importance on the EU's economy by mere demographics. Pseudo R-squared shows that this model already fits the data relatively well (19,8% of the variance in outcome can be explained by the used regressors). Very significant coefficients (at the 1% level) are reported in terms of age and education. Respondents who obtained other formal education than the possible forms available in the study considered trade agreements significantly less important for the EU's economy than the reference category of college-educated people. In other words, having obtained 'other education' decreases the z-score by 1,014 compared to those holding a college degree. Slightly the same can be said about the age variable.

The pattern in coefficients tells us that the younger a respondent the more likely he or she would consider trade agreements as less important for the EU economy. Crucial values could be found in the specific age group of under 25-year olds and those aged from 25 to 44. Moreover, significant values did not substantially change when knowledge score was added as predictor (column 12-2), except for the latter itself being strongly significant. The coefficient can be interpreted as the following: one unit increase in knowledge score increases the z-score of the underlying normal distribution of the predicted variable by 0,194, which directly leads to higher odds of crossing the latent variable's threshold of entering into the next ordered ranking category and thus of classifying trade agreements as more important. In brief, if all regressors of model 12-2 are held constant, knowledge score significantly influences respondents' opinion on this topic. Also gender suddenly seems to play a role in predicting the outcome variable. Evidently, women demonstrate higher odds of selecting a higher ranked category.

Table 12: Ordinal probit regression for "Do you consider EU trade agreements as important for the EU's economy?"[1]

Independent variable	12-1: B	12-1: Std. Error	12-2: B	12-2: Std. Error	12-3: B	12-3: Std. Error
Demographics						
Other education[2]	-1,014***	0,245	-1,039***	0,246	-0,571**	0,282
Compulsory schooling	-0,504*	0,274	-0,318	0,281	0,503	0,347
Apprenticeship diploma	0,223	0,210	0,353	0,215	0,572**	0,256
High school diploma	-0,391	0,255	-0,359	0,256	-0,264	0,278
Under 25[3]	-0,746***	0,220	-0,633***	0,223	-0,145	0,291
25 - 44	-0,667***	0,207	-0,682***	0,208	-0,060	0,264
45 - 59	-0,157	0,203	-0,184	0,204	0,150	0,266
Sex (female)[4]	0,261	0,163	0,361**	0,167	0,405**	0,185
Very rural area[5]	0,183	0,175	0,238	0,177	0,289	0,191
Rural area	0,326	0,224	0,321	0,225	0,527**	0,258
Suburban area	0,802*	0,442	0,742*	0,445	0,743	0,474
Knowledge score						
Test result knowledge test			0,194***	0,064	0,089	0,076
Advocate of the EU[6]						
I haven't thought about it					-0,655**	0,332
No					-3,045***	0,542
Rather no					-1,141***	0,263
Rather yes					-0,924***	0,200
Self - interest in the topic[7]						
I haven't thought about it					-2,152***	0,547
No					-1,626***	0,376
Rather no					-1,284***	0,328
Rather yes					-0,860***	0,299
Pseudo R^2 (Nagelkerke)	0,198		0,226		0,492	

Note: Data from author's survey described in the text (table based on Blinder & Krueger, 2004).

[1] dependent variable is the respondents' opinion on trade agreement's importance on the EU's economy, where "I haven't thought about it" = 1, "No" = 2, "Rather no" = 3, "Rather yes" = 4 and "Yes, absolutely" = 5. *** denotes significantly different from zero at the 1 percent level, ** at the 5 percent level, * at the 10 percent level.

[2] the reference category is "at least first level college degree".

[3] the reference category is "over 60".

[4] the reference category is "male".

[5] the reference category is "urban area".

[6, 7] the reference category is "Yes, absolutely".

Column 12-3 finally presents the intended target model. When adapted to Euroscepticism and self – interest measures, the model's adjusted R squared records an erratic rise (0,492) – nearly half of the dependent variable's variance can be explained by the regressors now. While age completely lost its impact, some crucial coefficients were found in education and area in a way that apprenticeship diploma holders and those living in rural areas put more value on the importance of EU trade agreements for the economy. Their effect on the underlying probabilities is almost the same (0,572 vs 0,527, respectively). As can be observed in table 12, the most recently added independent variables proved to have major influence on the outcome. Again, coefficients describe a clear trend: the less interest in the topic and the less advocacy of the EU in general, the lower the assigned relevance of EU trade agreements for the economy.

The next two regression estimates dealt with the public perception of the importance of EU trade agreements for Austria's economy and for the everyday life of the respondents themselves, respectively. Coefficient tables are not further reported here since the significant values and patterns in regression outcomes approximately reflect those already observed in table 12. Regarding the equal nature of those three opinion-based questions the similar regression results are highly comprehensible, if not even definitely expected. Stark contrasts to those numbers reported in table 12 were only observed in the age predictor in both cases. Coefficients for people aged under 25 and for those being 45 – 59 years old were positive, and in case of 'Do you consider EU trade agreements as important for you personally, your work or your everyday life?' even highly significant (at the 1% level). Compared to the reference category ('over 60'), evidence for younger people being more likely to classify international trade processes as important for themselves was thus found. Another striking distinction with regards to the previous estimate is the now recognizable significance in knowledge score regressors. Both regression estimates agree on the fact that higher knowledge scores lead to greater likeliness of classifying trade agreements as important for not only the Austrian economy, but also for one-self.

The other two opinion-based questions have a slightly different ordinal scale. The survey asked to assess the term 'free trade' and the EU's strategy of establishing more and more FTA's and PTA's. Provided answer categories are now ranked in ascending order from 'negative' to 'positive'. 'I haven't thought about it' once again was coded as the lowest

ordinal answer option, since every respondent at least had to have thought about any of the asked issues in order to build an opinion on them. Apart from this small exception, the regression's structure principally resembles the previous models. Table 13 shows coefficients, standard errors as well as adjusted R-square values for the subjective assessment of the term 'free trade'. Despite the stepwise addition of further independent variables to the model, consistent significances and no dramatic changes in coefficient patterns could be determined, which allows to solely concentrate on column 13-3. We see that the odds of assessing free trade in a more negative way are higher for people who obtained other forms of education or completed compulsory schooling, who are between 25 and 44 years old, who live in very rural areas or who are female. However, it is important to keep in mind that those coefficients always refer to the omitted reference category. Consequently, we can only say, for instance, study participants living in a very rural area are more likely to choose a lower ranking on the ordinal answer scale only compared to those living in urban areas. Bearing in mind the z-scores of the underlying normally distributed probabilities, this result means that z-scores decline by the value of the coefficient compared to the entire regressor's corresponding reference category. The interpretation becomes especially important when analysing for example the Euroscepticism variable. In this case the omitted category is the part of the sample which considered themselves as absolutely advocating to the EU. The composition of negative, significant coefficients thus allows for a very comprehensible interpretation: Even though respondents who chose to describe themselves as rather supportive of the EU and might even classified free trade as very positive, they still did not assign as positive sentiments to the term as those who absolutely agreed to the European Union did (i.e. their z-score declines by 0,797 compared to the z-score of the base category). Coming back to the analysis of noticeable significant results, likewise, considering the previous regressions, it might be stunning to see that area variables influence opinions a lot – albeit not anticipated by the previously implemented tests of independence. Self-interest and knowledge score seemed not to matter much concerning the evaluation of the term free trade. Reasons for this development might lie within the nature of the question. In order to assess subjective sentiments concerning a simple term, no specific expertise or particular interest in the topic is required.

Table 13: Ordinal probit regression for "How would you assess the term 'Free Trade'?"[1]

Independent variable	13-1: B	13-1: Std. Error	13-2: B	13-2: Std. Error	13-3: B	13-3: Std. Error
Demographics						
Other education[2]	-1,397***	0,233	-1,409***	0,234	-1,152***	0,255
Compulsory schooling	-0,960***	0,263	-0,873***	0,268	-0,553*	0,310
Apprenticeship diploma	-0,087	0,195	-0,022	0,199	0,141	0,218
High school diploma	-0,032	0,240	-0,007	0,241	0,093	0,250
Under 25[3]	-0,295	0,204	-0,240	0,207	-0,075	0,256
25 - 44	-0,699***	0,194	-0,713***	0,194	-0,543**	0,236
45 - 59	0,169	0,189	0,155	0,190	0,363	0,232
Sex (female)[4]	-0,693***	0,155	-0,650***	0,158	-0,756***	0,169
Very rural area[5]	-0,409**	0,167	-0,38**	0,167	-0,418**	0,172
Rural area	-0,277	0,210	-0,288	0,210	-0,191	0,220
Suburban area	1,472***	0,441	1,446***	0,442	1,627***	0,456
Knowledge score						
Test result knowledge test			0,095	0,059	0,099	0,068
Advocate of the EU[6]						
I haven't thought about it					-0,235	0,296
No					-1,767***	0,497
Rather no					-0,818***	0,230
Rather yes					-0,797***	0,177
Self - interest in the topic[7]						
I haven't thought about it					0,138	0,494
No					-0,187	0,318
Rather no					-0,201	0,273
Rather yes					-0,247	0,242
Pseudo R^2 (Nagelkerke)	0,3		0,306		0,405	

Note: Data from author's survey described in the text (table based on Blinder & Krueger, 2004).

[1] dependent variable is the respondents' evaluation of the term 'free trade', where "I haven't thought about it" = 1, "Negative" = 2, "Rather negative" = 3, "Rather positive" = 4 and "Positive" = 5. *** denotes significantly different from zero at the 1 percent level, ** at the 5 percent level, * at the 10 percent level.

[2] the reference category is "at least first level college degree".

[3] the reference category is "over 60".

[4] the reference category is "male".

[5] the reference category is "urban area".

[6, 7] the reference category is "Yes, absolutely".

Quite the opposite can be observed when looking at table 14, which represents regression coefficients for the individual assessment of the EU's current strategy of establishing more FTA's. As soon as added to the model, both knowledge score and self-interest proved to influence the predicted variable to a highly significant extent. One additional unit in knowledge score increases the z-score of the underlying distribution, and therefore the probability of falling into a higher ranked category, by 0,175 on average. Furthermore, age, other education and being female play a role when evaluating the EU's trade strategy (the latter two cases are more likely to negatively assess it). However, in the process of extending the model and adding regressors to it, age significantly loses its relevance. Coefficient patterns once more reveal the negative relation of Euroscepticism with approval of EU activities. The odds of considering the examined strategy as rather negative rise with a growing level of Euroscepticism. The same can be applied to self-interest in a way that the less interested people tend to select a lower ranked, and thus negative, assessment than those who stated to be absolutely interested in European trade policy.

Table 14: Ordinal probit regression for "How do you assess the EU's strategy of establishing more and more FTA's and PTA's with third country partners?"[1]

Independent variable	14-1: B	14-1: Std. Error	14-2: B	14-2: Std. Error	14-3: B	14-3: Std. Error
Demographics						
Other education[2]	-1,155***	0,223	-1,202***	0,225	-0,886***	0,244
Compulsory schooling	-0,376	0,250	-0,129	0,258	0,585*	0,300
Apprenticeship diploma	-0,012	0,189	0,165	0,193	0,311	0,212
High school diploma	-0,409*	0,231	-0,362	0,233	-0,347	0,241
Under 25[3]	-0,251***	0,198	-0,109	0,201	0,267	0,248
25 - 44	-0,628	0,186	-0,682***	0,187	-0,266	0,226
45 - 59	0,196	0,184	0,154	0,185	0,411*	0,225
Sex (female)[4]	-0,494***	0,149	-0,379**	0,151	-0,316**	0,159
Very rural area[5]	-0,088	0,160	-0,028	0,162	-0,020	0,165
Rural area	0,003	0,203	-0,023	0,204	0,125	0,214
Suburban area	0,186	0,396	0,085	0,402	0,102	0,408
Knowledge score						
Test result knowledge test			0,259***	0,058	0,175***	0,066
Advocate of the EU[6]						
I haven't thought about it					-1,211***	0,299
No					-1,652***	0,487
Rather no					-0,796***	0,221
Rather yes					-0,735***	0,170
Self - interest in the topic[7]						
I haven't thought about it					0,207	0,477
No					-0,752**	0,310
Rather no					-0,557**	0,266
Rather yes					-0,227	0,236
Pseudo R^2 (Nagelkerke)	0,225		0,274		0,402	

Note: Data from author's survey described in the text (table based on Blinder & Krueger, 2004).

[1] dependent variable is the respondents evaluation of the EU's strategy of establishing more FTA's, where "I haven't thought about it" = 1 , "Negative" = 2, "Rather negative" = 3, "Rather positive" = 4 and "Positive" = 5. *** denotes significantly different from zero at the 1 percent level, ** at the 5 percent level, * at the 10 percent level.

[2] the reference category is "at least first level college degree".

[3] the reference category is "over 60".

[4] the reference category is "male".

[5] the reference category is "urban area".

[6, 7] the reference category is "Yes, absolutely".

After having analysed opinion-shaping factors when it comes to individual perceptions and assessments of the EU's trade-related activities, let us now turn to the Austrian's general attitude towards international trade agreements. Therefore, six ordered probit regression estimates for the statements introduced in chapter 4.1.4 were established (again approximations to an underlying normal distribution of the dependent variable could be reported if examined for frequencies). Table 15 displays coefficients for the final regressions of the first three statements. Estimates including only demographic variables and knowledge score did not provide any substantial changes in coefficient patterns and significances, which is why they are not shown in the table. The dependent variable is the respondents' evaluation of the respective statement according to a Likert scale, where 'I totally agree' was coded with 1 and 'I totally disagree' with 5. Consequently, higher numbers indicate more disagreement. Signs and directions of coefficients thus also have to be interpreted slightly different in a way that positive coefficients now represent a tendency towards disapproval (i.e. an increase in the z-score, which means higher odds of surpassing the dependent variable's different thresholds and ending up in a higher ranked category), whereas the negative values signify rather approval to the concerning statement compared to the predictor's base category.

As already anticipated in the associated crosstabulation analyses, table 15 demonstrates quite uniform, consistent patterns of coefficients and significances throughout all three statements. A possible explanation for this phenomenon would be their similar nature in terms of their relatively positive connotation to international commercial activities. According to the regression estimates, study participants who obtained other forms of education or belong to the generation of 25- to 44-year olds are more likely to disagree with all three statements, while the opposite can be claimed for those living in suburban areas. Regarding the coefficient pattern of the main residential area variables, it could be concluded that living in more densely populated areas leads to a more positive image of trade in terms of higher agreement with the three statements. Yet, most of the coefficients are not significant and thus interpretations have to be handled carefully. Apart from the significant values mentioned above, neither education nor age or knowledge score leave room for any unambiguous assumptions. The latter's regressor shows weak evidence (at the 10% level) of higher knowledge scores leading to more approval of the statements in column 15-1 and 15-2, but not for 15-3.

Table 15: Ordinal probit regression for opinions on the effect of international trade[1]

International trade agreements..	.. help generating jobs		.. improve or secure wages		.. lead to increased economic activity	
Independent variable	15-1: B	15-1: Std. Error	15-2: B	15-2: Std. Error	15-3: B	15-3: Std. Error
Demographics						
Other education[2]	1,156***	0,246	1,760***	0,258	1,039***	0,255
Compulsory schooling	-0,068	0,298	0,746**	0,302	0,000	0,305
Apprenticeship diploma	-0,100	0,210	0,281	0,209	-0,410*	0,221
High school diploma	0,196	0,240	0,473**	0,240	-0,211	0,247
Under 25[3]	-0,169	0,248	-0,350	0,248	0,595**	0,259
25 - 44	0,556**	0,227	0,741**	0,229	0,577**	0,237
45 - 59	0,144	0,222	0,106	0,221	0,089	0,235
Sex (female)[4]	0,212	0,159	-0,011	0,161	0,268	0,163
Very rural area[5]	0,245	0,164	-0,128	0,165	0,115	0,169
Rural area	-0,308	0,213	-0,340	0,211	0,508**	0,222
Suburban area	-1,557***	0,451	-1,413***	0,423	-1,953***	0,451
Knowledge score						
Test result knowledge test	-0,020*	0,065	-0,118*	0,066	0,066	0,067
Advocate of the EU[6]						
I haven't thought about it	0,600**	0,290	-1,099***	0,294	0,997***	0,294
No	1,608***	0,480	-0,083	0,480	0,942*	0,483
Rather no	0,870***	0,221	0,838***	0,225	1,665***	0,236
Rather yes	0,742***	0,170	0,195	0,168	1,163***	0,178
Self - interest in the topic[7]						
I haven't thought about it	0,596	0,469	0,859*	0,477	1,469***	0,487
No	0,019	0,307	0,649**	0,307	1,342***	0,327
Rather no	0,028	0,262	0,613**	0,263	0,748***	0,284
Rather yes	0,241	0,231	0,331	0,228	1,335***	0,257
Pseudo R^2 (Nagelkerke)	0,346		0,446		0,605	

Note: Data from author's survey described in the text (table based on Blinder & Krueger, 2004).

[1] dependent variable is the respondents' evaluation of the corresponding statement according to a Likert scale from 1 to 5, where "I totally agree " = 1 and "I totally disagree" = 5. *** denotes significantly different from zero at the 1 percent level, ** at the 5 percent level, * at the 10 percent level.

[2] the reference category is "at least first level college degree".

[3] the reference category is "over 60".

[4] the reference category is "male".

[5] the reference category is "urban area".

[6, 7] the reference category is "Yes, absolutely".

Albeit the Euroscepticism variable displays high significance in all three models, the direction of coefficients leaves room for ambiguous interpretations due to its inconsistency. The only unequivocal assumption permitted is the fact that growing Euroscepticism evidently leads to higher likeliness of disagreeing with trade's important role in the generation of jobs. The same can be applied for self – interest. Superficial interpretation might allow to claim that lower interest in EU trade policy increases the odds of disapproving with trade's positive impact on wages and GDP growth. However, the relatively high, positive and very significant coefficient for 'Rather yes' in column 15-3 violates this interpretation.

Table 16 concentrates on a very interesting statement insofar as its wording suggests rather negative effects of trade ('International trade agreements lead to decreased standards and worse quality of consumer goods'). Consequently, since the condition of positive coefficients represents a general tendency towards more disagreement, opposite interpretations are required: more disapproval reflects being rather in favour of international trade in the context of the statement. The first two regression estimates are almost identical (column 16-1 and 16-2), coefficients only minimally differ from each other. Highly significant values can be observed for all age groups. We see that young adults' and middle-aged peoples' opinion (25 to 44 year olds) deviates to the highest extent from the base category of respondents being older than 60. As soon as regressors for Euroscepticism and self-interest were added, however, p-values of all age categories increased above the ten percent mark. Column 16-3 presents this new model and reveals a perhaps already relatively familiar picture of significant coefficients. Less interest and more scepticism towards the EU go along with higher odds of agreeing to international trade's negative influence on consumer goods' quality. Very noticeable development is found within the education predictor. According to the model, less educated people (compared to those having obtained at least a first level college-degree) are more likely to disagree with the statement, which indirectly implies a more positive underlying attitude towards international trade – an admittedly not expected outcome.

Table 16: Ordinal probit regression for opinions on the statement "International trade agreements lead to decreased standards and worse quality in consumer goods"[1]

Independent variable	16-1: B	16-1: Std. Error	16-2: B	16-2: Std. Error	16-3: B	16-3: Std. Error
Demographics						
Other education[2]	-0,841***	0,218	-0,845***	0,218	-0,168	0,237
Compulsory schooling	-0,135	0,244	-0,099	0,250	0,769***	0,293
Apprenticeship diploma	0,454**	0,184	0,482**	0,189	0,698***	0,209
High school diploma	-0,070	0,226	-0,060	0,226	0,143	0,234
Under 25[3]	-0,506***	0,195	-0,482**	0,198	-0,272	0,244
25 - 44	-0,718***	0,184	-0,721***	0,184	-0,335	0,222
45 - 59	-0,375**	0,180	-0,381**	0,180	-0,254	0,218
Sex (female)[4]	-0,036	0,145	-0,017	0,148	0,069	0,156
Very rural area[5]	0,269*	0,157	0,279*	0,158	0,308*	0,162
Rural area	0,227	0,199	0,225	0,199	0,507**	0,212
Suburban area	0,687*	0,387	0,675*	0,388	0,793**	0,394
Knowledge score						
Test result knowledge test			0,039	0,056	-0,031	0,064
Advocate of the EU[6]						
I haven't thought about it					-0,627**	0,282
No					-1,387***	0,480
Rather no					-1,318***	0,222
Rather yes					-0,808***	0,166
Self - interest in the topic[7]						
I haven't thought about it					-0,719	0,462
No					-1,442***	0,308
Rather no					-1,461***	0,266
Rather yes					-1,218***	0,235
Pseudo R^2 (Nagelkerke)	0,199		0,2		0,454	

Note: Data from author's survey described in the text (table based on Blinder & Krueger, 2004).

[1] dependent variable is the respondents evaluation of the statement according to a Likert scale from 1 to 5, where "I totally agree " = 1 and "I totally disagree" = 5. *** denotes significantly different from zero at the 1 percent level, ** at the 5 percent level, * at the 10 percent level.

[2] the reference category is "at least first level college degree".

[3] the reference category is "over 60".

[4] the reference category is "male".

[5] the reference category is "urban area".

[6, 7] the reference category is "Yes, absolutely".

The last two ordinal regression models (table 17 and 18) deal with opinions on Austria's role in and dependency on international trade. In principle, they largely correspond and complement each other in terms of their content. Once more, evidence can be observed within both tables for people belonging to the lower middle age group (25 to 44) being the most sceptical about trade's importance for Austria's economy. They not only significantly oppose to the view that Austria depends on international trade agreements, but also tend to go a step further in claiming that it would even be better for Austria if the EU stopped establishing more free trade areas. Apart from a few outliners, in both cases variables for knowledge score, self-interest, area and education seemed not to matter very much, whereas Euroscepticism indeed does. Yet, despite the latter's highly crucial coefficients, their pattern does not allow for any unambiguous interpretation. Interestingly, high evidence could be reported for women being more likely to oppose to the assumption of Austria's economy depending on trade deals with other countries than men.

Table 17: Ordinal probit regression for opinions on the statement "Austria's economy depends on international trade agreements"[1]

Independent variable	17-1: B	17-1: Std. Error	17-2: B	17-2: Std. Error	17-3: B	17-3: Std. Error
Demographics						
Other education[2]	0,725***	0,223	0,743***	0,224	0,394	0,243
Compulsory schooling	0,812***	0,257	0,686***	0,262	-0,043	0,299
Apprenticeship diploma	0,253	0,192	0,160	0,196	0,138	0,212
High school diploma	0,043	0,235	0,006	0,236	-0,097	0,242
Under 25[3]	0,832***	0,202	0,755***	0,205	0,637**	0,250
25 - 44	0,915***	0,192	0,939***	0,193	0,617***	0,230
45 - 59	0,307	0,186	0,335*	0,188	0,320	0,225
Sex (female)[4]	0,581***	0,150	0,520***	0,152	0,450***	0,160
Very rural area[5]	0,431***	0,163	0,401**	0,164	0,400**	0,166
Rural area	0,314	0,206	0,333	0,207	0,252	0,214
Suburban area	0,151	0,392	0,201	0,393	0,302	0,398
Knowledge score						
Test result knowledge test			-0,143**	0,058	-0,039	0,066
Advocate of the EU[6]						
I haven't thought about it					1,228***	0,290
No					-0,215	0,489
Rather no					0,651***	0,220
Rather yes					0,383**	0,168
Self - interest in the topic[7]						
I haven't thought about it					0,908*	0,467
No					0,346	0,308
Rather no					0,449*	0,265
Rather yes					0,010	0,234
Pseudo R^2 (Nagelkerke)	0,254		0,268		0,35	

Note: Data from author's survey described in the text (table based on Blinder & Krueger, 2004).

[1] dependent variable is the respondents' evaluation of the statement according to a Likert scale from 1 to 5, where "I totally agree " = 1 and "I totally disagree" = 5. *** denotes significantly different from zero at the 1 percent level, ** at the 5 percent level, * at the 10 percent level.

[2] the reference category is "at least first level college degree".

[3] the reference category is "over 60".

[4] the reference category is "male".

[5] the reference category is "urban area".

[6, 7] the reference category is "Yes, absolutely".

Table 18: Ordinal probit regression for opinions on the statement "It would be better for Austria if the EU stopped the establishment of more FTA's"[1]

Independent variable	18-1: B	18-1: Std. Error	18-2: B	18-2: Std. Error	18-3: B	18-3: Std. Error
Demographics						
Other education[2]	-0,889***	0,216	-0,888***	0,216	-0,203	0,236
Compulsory schooling	-0,083	0,246	-0,092	0,251	1,108***	0,296
Apprenticeship diploma	-0,033	0,184	-0,040	0,188	0,329	0,206
High school diploma	-0,079	0,227	-0,082	0,227	0,174	0,235
Under 25[3]	-0,242	0,194	-0,248	0,197	-0,393	0,243
25 - 44	-0,645***	0,183	-0,644***	0,183	-0,537**	0,223
45 - 59	0,056	0,179	0,057	0,179	-0,122	0,218
Sex (female)[4]	-0,147	0,145	-0,151	0,147	-0,059	0,157
Very rural area[5]	-0,102	0,157	-0,105	0,157	-0,113	0,161
Rural area	-0,290	0,198	-0,289	0,198	-0,056	0,208
Suburban area	0,685	0,398	0,687*	0,398	0,907**	0,407
Knowledge score						
Test result knowledge test			-0,010	0,056	-0,064	0,065
Advocate of the EU[6]						
I haven't thought about it					-0,963***	0,287
No					-1,523***	0,480
Rather no					-1,910***	0,230
Rather yes					-0,679***	0,166
Self - interest in the topic[7]						
I haven't thought about it					0,649	0,481
No					-0,902***	0,303
Rather no					-0,339	0,259
Rather yes					-0,225	0,227
Pseudo R^2 (Nagelkerke)	0,155		0,155		0,435	

Note: Data from author's survey described in the text (table based on Blinder & Krueger, 2004).

[1] dependent variable is the respondents' evaluation of the statement according to a Likert scale from 1 to 5, where "I totally agree " = 1 and "I totally disagree" = 5. *** denotes significantly different from zero at the 1 percent level, ** at the 5 percent level, * at the 10 percent level.

[2] the reference category is "at least first level college degree".

[3] the reference category is "over 60".

[4] the reference category is "male".

[5] the reference category is "urban area".

[6, 7] the reference category is "Yes, absolutely".

5. Discussion of results

Although admittedly imperfect, ordered probit models, χ^2 - tests and analysis of descriptive statistics delivered enough evidence in order to answer the research questions and to either reject or support the four hypotheses this study is based on.

To sum up, the image of international trade agreements and European Union trade policy proved to have a much more positive reputation among the Austrian population than anticipated beforehand. High shares of the study sample agreed to the important role international trade plays in fostering the Austrian economy's welfare and having a positive impact on GDP-growth, the labour market and wages. Moreover, the study reveals an extremely high advocacy to the European Union, trust in its institutions and approval of further extending free trade areas. Regarding all those aspects, it is only logical to reject hypothesis 1, despite the accuracy of its first part (*Hypothesis 1: Even though most Austrians predominantly trust the European institutions and consider themselves as supporters of the European Union, the general approval of the current foreign trade policy including the growing number of recently negotiated trade agreements (CETA/ MERCOSUR/ FTA Vietnam) is rather decreasing in Austria*).

Contrary to the Austrians evident perception of commercial agreements as a highly important contributor to the country's overall welfare, a very different picture comes up when they were specifically asked for personal relevance. Since only 41% of the sample considered international trade and its consequences at least 'rather important' for their everyday life, the second hypothesis is clearly backed by the outcome of this research (*Hypothesis 2: The majority of Austrians classifies international trade and its consequences as not relevant for their work, lives and future).* Therefore, I dare claiming that even though people tend to comprehend the immense effect international trade directly exerts on almost every transaction implemented on macroeconomic levels, they seem to be unaware of the former's strong, in most cases indirect, impact on their own living circumstances.

Not exactly comparable, but similarly strong evidence for the support of hypothesis 3 is provided by the study results, albeit some aspects have to be denied *(Hypothesis 3: There is a significant information and interest gap within the Austrian population concerning topics*

related to international trade (especially among lower skilled / educated). The extremely low average knowledge scores achieved when asked about trade related topics, draw attention to an enormous information gap within the Austrian population, regardless of socio-demographics, education or other factors. Concerning the fact that some trade agreements led to immense public outcries and objections in the past, for the principal reason of their inclusion of the already prior addressed ISDS legislation, only 11,8% of the study sample were able to define the correct meaning of such a clause. Moreover, not even half of the respondents could name the partner countries involved in the EU – MERCOSUR trade negotiations, despite its persistent presence in all forms of news media and many public protests against the agreement's final ratification. Somewhat alarming for all trade and European public policy analysts might as well be the strikingly high percentages of respondents not knowing about the EU's powerful role in world trade and not being aware of the resulting financial implications. In stark contrast to this lack of relevant information, a surprisingly strong interest in the topic could be reported. High self-interest and high desire of getting informed about trade policy imply the rejection of a significant interest gap among the Austrian population.

This interest in turn depicts one of the main drivers of high knowledge scores, along with the consultation of certain news media, which brings us to hypothesis 4 (*Hypothesis 4: The sources of information and also the intensity of usage thereof play a key role regarding the individual's knowledge about trade policy. People with higher knowledge tend to inform themselves more regularly and more actively through the news media or other sources of information and tend to rather support free trade).* Even though only little evidence for the intensity of source usage could be found, the nature of the respective source very well proved to significantly influence individual knowledge. Readers of newspapers and people listening to news broadcasts on television or radio achieved substantially higher knowledge scores. Remarkably, the causation of the above hypothesis turned out to be the exact opposite. Instead of higher knowledgeable people consulting certain information sources more often, it seems the other way around: knowledge stems from regularly searching for information within the scope of certain sources. However, these higher scores seemed to only partially and rather rarely contribute to more open-minded and positive attitudes towards international trade according to the regression models (k-scores barely showed any

crucial significances). Considering all these aspects, this thesis only partially and under certain reservations supports hypothesis 4.

The most astonishing result concerning the examination of factors influencing knowledge scores is certainly the minor role education plays in this aspect. Hence, we do not have enough proof for the hypothesis of lower educated people being less interested in or less informed about international trade agreements. Whether this outcome can be interpreted as a hint towards a clear lack of missing school subjects in terms of economic education when attending higher education or represents a simple coincidence remains subject to further research. Nevertheless, education indeed impacts general attitudes towards international trade, but not in a way anticipated beforehand. The expected result of more years of education leading to more positive minds towards free trade is not supported by this research. Instead coefficients showed very ambivalent patterns, the only clear picture can be observed for those who obtained 'other forms of education' since their opinion almost always significantly deviated from the base group. This might be derived from the fact that 'other education' leaves great room for interpretation, as this term comprises a wide variety of educational qualifications and degrees. It is simply impossible to know how many years of studying and which level of education the addressed obtained degree reflects. Against all possible study distortions, for reason of the great choice of different education options being offered in Austria, adding this answer option to the questionnaire was unavoidable.

Other substantial opinion – shaping factors when asked about trade policy were the individual values concerning the EU and, in some cases (clearly not in all), self-interest in the topic. Rising approval of the former and growing interest shape public perceptions of trade to an enormous extent. Furthermore, evidence was reported for age, main residential area and gender in some cases. A basic summary derived from the demographic regression results reads as follows: respondents either belonging to the second age group (25 – 44), living in less densely populated areas or being female do not have such strong advocacy of international trade and trade agreements than their respective counterparts, i.e. show more conservative attitudes. This development might come as a surprise in terms of age and turns out to be very hard to interpret. A potential reason might be a certain fear of these persons of losing their jobs due to trade's impact on increased competition from abroad. Very young

generations are usually described as flexible and open-minded to globalisation and digitalisation and thus might not view foreign competition as threat but rather as chance to grow and develop. However, this interpretation is extremely vague and not completely justifiable, not only because the older age group's seemingly fierce advocacy of international trade completely violates the entire assumption, but also due to missing evidence. However, giving profound reasons for why exactly certain answers were selected by people with certain socio-demographic characteristics goes beyond the scope of this research, whose objective is already reached by merely being able to list these personal characteristics.

6. Conclusion and limitations

Contrary to the reputation of free trade of being a motor of prosperity and promoter of a nation's economy, the public perception thereof frequently deviates. Reasons behind this phenomenon are as manifold as the research and studies dealing with it. This thesis, however, delivered evidence of a slightly different picture. In Austria the effects of international trade agreements are principally recognized and appreciated, even though merely in terms of advantages for the state and the business sector rather than for the individual citizens. Accordingly, the Austrian population seems to be unaware of the important impact international trade agreements could very well have on their personal development or even their behaviour, for example regarding aspects of work or purchase decisions, respectively.

Although it is gratifying to acknowledge the Austrian's high desire of getting and keeping informed about global trade related activities and European Union trade policies, this affirmation ends up standing in stark contradiction to their low knowledge about it, which in turn represents a massive lack of essential information among the population. In order to reduce this gap, more transparent and easily accessible information should be available, since approximately half of the Austrian population claims having too little access to verified information. Good and reliable sources proved to be newspapers and news on TV or radio, whereas social media turned out as a rather shady source of knowledge. However, in any case this can of course not be generalized, as the correct understanding, handling and reproduction of information always lies within the power and responsibility of the individual person.

Finally, a variety of factors, which influence public opinions on European trade policy was found. Demographics, individual values towards the EU in general, self – interest in the topic and some forms of education all proved to affect public opinion in a certain way. However, given the results of all previously presented regression and crosstabulation estimates, interpretation possibilities of deduced conclusions are quite manifold. Not only do we have to deal with a wide variety of significant independent variables when it comes to opinion-shaping factors, but also patterns and directions of relevant regression coefficients are not always clear and consistent. In addition to that, valid doubts regarding the general

meaningfulness of this research can certainly be raised considering the myriad of limitations it faces. Albeit the study sample has been weighted in order to reduce bias, it is still too small and not representative of an entire country's population. Furthermore, the admittedly imperfect method of measuring knowledge through a random quiz certainly leaves room for improvement and further research as well.

Yet, and despite all these concerns, this thesis accomplished to address a major research gap not only in Austrian, but also in European Union public policy-making: namely the crucial aspect of the examination of citizen's perceptions and how their general opinion is shaped and influenced. Knowledge concerning such factors will not only allow for facilitated selection of suitable communication tools, but also for smoother engagement with the public. The significant outcomes of my survey should act as an eye-opener with special regards to the demonstrated information gap and thus serve to raise more awareness on European trade policy and all international activities related to commerce and its enormous consequences.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Unweighted frequency distributions

Table 19: Unweighted frequency distribution of answers for "How important is it for you to be well informed about topics concerning the EU's trade policy, such as for example elaborated in the introductory text?"

Answer options	Percent
Not important	2,6%
Rather not important	8,6%
I don't care	17,7%
Important	54,0%
Very important	17,1%

Note: Data from author's survey (table based on Blinder & Krueger, 2004).

Table 20: Unweighted frequency distribution of answers for "Would you describe yourself as advocate of the European Union?"

Answer options	Percent
I haven't thought about it	4,6%
No	3,4%
Rather no	7,7%
Rather yes	32,6%
Yes, absolutely	51,7%

Note: Data from author's survey (table based on Blinder & Krueger, 2004).

Table 21: Unweighted frequency distribution of answers for "Do you trust the EU institutions?"

Answer options	Percent
I haven't thought about it	2,9%
No	9,1%
Rather no	16,9%
Rather yes	58,3%
Yes, absolutely	12,9%

Note: Data from author's survey (table based on Blinder & Krueger, 2004).

Table 22: Unweighted frequency distribution of answers for "Would you describe yourself as interested in EU trade policy?"

Answer options	Percent
I haven't thought about it	4,0%
No	14,6%
Rather no	28,9%
Rather yes	40,6%
Yes, absolutely	12,0%

Note: Data from author's survey (table based on Blinder & Krueger, 2004).

Table 23: Unweighted frequency distribution of answers for "Do you actively inform yourself about EU trade policy?"

Answer options	Percent
No	32,6%
Sometimes	55,1%
Yes	12,3%

Note: Data from author's survey (table based on Blinder & Krueger, 2004).

Appendix B: The survey questionnaire

1.) Introduction

Hello and welcome to the survey for my master thesis!
Please only fill out the questionnaire if you are either an Austrian citizen or have lived in Austria for more than 10 consecutive years. It only takes 10 minutes and is completely anonymous.
The questions deal with your personal attitudes and your views on European trade policy. Please do not use a search engine and answer the questions based on your opinion.
Please read the following introduction carefully in order to get an idea about the topic of the questionnaire:

"In 2018, 16% of total world trade was borne by the European Union. In order to control and manage these huge transactions, the EU is constantly negotiating free trade agreements or so-called 'preferential trade agreements' with third countries. The intentions behind this are, for example, the reduction of tariffs or other trade barriers, the guaranteed access to foreign markets and open investment opportunities for European companies that are operating abroad or vice versa for foreign companies that want to gain a foothold in the EU. In 2018, 31%, i.e. around a third, of the total EU exports and imports in goods took place with the trading partner countries. In 2019 alone, negotiations were held with around 22 different states or customs unions and new contracts or partnerships were concluded with, for example, Vietnam, Singapore and Japan."

2.) Would you describe yourself as advocate of the European Union?	O I haven't thought about it O No O Rather no O Rather yes O Yes, absolutely
3.) Do you trust the EU institutions?	O I haven't thought about it O No O Rather no O Rather yes

	O Yes, absolutely
4.) Would you describe yourself as interested in EU trade policy?	O I haven’t thought about it O No O Rather no O Rather yes O Yes, absolutely
5.) Do you personally feel well-informed about EU trade policy?	O I haven’t thought about it O No O Rather no O Rather yes O Yes, absolutely
6.) Do you consider EU trade agreements as important for the EU's economy?	O I haven’t thought about it O No O Rather no O Rather yes O Yes, absolutely
7.) Do you consider EU trade agreements as important for Austria's economy?	O I haven’t thought about it O No O Rather no O Rather yes O Yes, absolutely
8.) Do you consider EU trade agreements as important for you personally, your work or your everyday life?	O I haven’t thought about it O No O Rather no O Rather yes O Yes, absolutely
9.) How would you assess the term 'free trade'?	O I haven’t thought about it O Negative O Rather negative

	O Rather positive O Positive
10.) How do you assess the EU's strategy of establishing more and more Free or Preferential Trade Areas with third countries?	O I haven’t thought about it O Negative O Rather negative O Rather positive O Positive
11.) How important is it for you to be well-informed about topics concerning the EU's trade policy, such as for example elaborated in the introductory text?	O Not important O Rather not important O I don’t care O Important O Very important
12.) Do you actively inform yourself about EU trade policy?	O Yes O Sometimes O No
13.) Please state reasons why you would like to be informed about EU trade policy	O Could affect my personal financial situation (stock market prices, investments, etc) O Could affect my work / my education / other of my duties O Could be important for my voting decision O To be a responsible citizen; I like to be informed O Occasionally I receive information, but I do not actively search for it O I am not interested and do not need information O Other reasons

In case you have chosen 'other reasons', please feel free to further explain them here:

Please indicate - according to the scale - how much you agree with the following statements, whereby 1 stands for 'I absolutely agree' and 5 for 'I totally disagree':

14.) International trade agreements help generating jobs	O 1 O 2 O 3 O 4 O 5
15.) International trade agreements improve or secure wages	O 1 O 2 O 3 O 4 O 5
16.) International trade agreements lead to increased economic activity in the concerned countries and contribute to their GDP growth	O 1 O 2 O 3 O 4 O 5
17.) International trade agreements lead to decreased standards and worse quality in consumer goods	O 1 O 2 O 3 O 4 O 5
18.) Austria's economy depends on international trade and trade agreements	O 1 O 2 O 3 O 4 O 5
19.) It would be better for Austria if the EU stops the establishment of more FTA's	O 1 O 2 O 3 O 4 O 5

Now 7 short, very specific knowledge questions about EU trade policy are following. These are deliberately very difficult, which is why it is important that you do not guess the answers. If you are uncertain, please simply select the 'I don't know' option.

20.) Is Turkey part of the European Customs Union?	O Yes O Only the European part / Istanbul O No O I don't know
21.) The MERCOSUR trade deal consists of a deal between the EU and ..	O Certain North – American states O Certain Latin American states O Certain Asia – Pacific states

	O None of the above mentioned O I don’t know
22.) The abbreviation CETA stands for..	O Canadian – European Trade Association O Comprehensive and Economic Trade Agreement O Central European Trade Agreement O Other O I don’t know
23.) Who negotiates and signs trade agreements on behalf of the EU?	O The national governments of the EU member states O The European Commission O The World Trade Organization (WTO) O Other O I don’t know
24.) Which of the following economies has the highest share of world trade, i.e. is the world's largest trading bloc?	O USA O Japan O EU O China O Australia O None of the above mentioned O I don’t know
25.) Have you ever heard of the so-called 'Investor-State Dispute Settlement' (ISDS), which is part of many trade agreements? If so, what does it mean?	O Yes, I have heard of it, but I don't know what it means exactly O No, I have not heard of it O System through which investors can sue states for alleged discriminatory practices O Legal system protecting states from discriminatory practices of foreign investors O System screening the credit risk of foreign investors

26.) In 2018 the European Union’s balance of trade showed off a..	O Surplus O Deficit O Relatively balanced budget O I don't know
27.) How did you acquire your knowledge of European trade policy? Please indicate how often you are currently using these ‘tools' or in case you no longer use it, whether you have used it in the past. If you think you have no knowledge at all, please always select 'rarely or never’.	O through my education (school, university, courses, etc.) O through my participation in certain workshops, courses etc. O through my work O through my membership in certain organizations (political parties, interest groups, clubs..) O through social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc) O through the news or other programs in TV or radio O through communication or discussion with friends or family O through newspapers or magazines O through books through the internet / certain websites O through other, not here mentioned options
28.) Do you think that there is enough easily accessible information in order to get informed about European trade policy?	O I haven't thought about it O Information is easily accessible, but not sufficient and detailed enough O No, not enough information available and also very difficult to access O Sufficient information out there, but rather difficult to get it O Yes, enough information and also easy to access

29.) If you have acquired your knowledge through websites, television, social media or certain newspapers, you can now enter here the names of the programs, websites, apps or newspapers concerned:

Please take a minute to answer the following anonymous questions. You can always choose the 'no answer' option if you don't want to answer a question.

30.) Which gender do you assign yourself to?

O Male
O Female
O Other
O No answer

31.) Please indicate your highest level of formal education

O Compulsory schooling
O Apprenticeship diploma
O High school diploma (Matura)
O At least first level college degree
O Other education
O No answer

32.) Please indicate your age

33.) How would you describe the area in which you mostly reside or have your main residence?

O Very rural area (under 10.000 inhabitants)
O Rural area (10.000 – 50.000 inhabitants)
O Suburban area (50.000 – 100.000 inhabitants)
O Urban area (over 100.000 inhabitants)
O No answer

34.) Are you an Austrian citizen or have you been living / once lived in Austria for more than 10 consecutive years?

O Yes
O No
O No answer

Appendix C: Calculations of weight factors

Table 24: Respective weight factors for different areas of main residence in Austria

Area of main residence:	Very rural area (under 10.000 inhabitants)	Rural area (10.000 - 50.000 inhabitants)	Suburban area (50.000 - 100.000 inhabitants)	Urban area (over 100.000 inhabitants)
Percent sample[1]	26,57%	10,57%	5,14%	55,71%
Percent Austrian population (end 2018)	52,11%	14,49%	2,02%	31,37%
Weight factor[2]	1,96	1,37	0,39	0,56

Note: Data from author's survey and Statistik Austria (2019).

[1] Does not sum to 100% because of option 'no answer'.
[2] Quotient of the share of the Austrian population divided by the share of the sample.

Table 25: Respective weight factors for different levels of formal education in Austria

Level of formal education acquired:	Mandatory schooling	Apprentice ship Diploma	High School Diploma	At least first cycle college degree	Other education
Percent sample[1]	4,00%	15,43%	24,57%	50,57%	3,43%
Percent Austrian population 15 and older (end 2017)	25,74%	31,77%	14,44%	11,59%	16,46%
Weight factor[2]	6,44	2,06	0,59	0,23	4,8

Note: Data from author's survey and Statistik Austria (2020).

[1] Does not sum to 100% because of answer option 'no answer'.

[2] Quotient of the share of the Austrian population divided by the share of the sample.

Table 26: Respective weight factors for the different age groups in Austria

Age groups:	under 25	25 - 44	45 - 59	over 60
Percent sample[1]	17,71%	34%	32,57%	5,71%
Percent Austrian population 15 and older (end 2018)	12,79%	31,31%	26,72%	29,18%
Weight factor[2]	0,72	0,92	0,82	5,11

Note: Data from author's survey and Statistik Austria (2019).

[1] Does not sum to 100% because of answer option 'no answer'.

[2] Quotient of the share of the Austrian population divided by the share of the sample.

Table 27: Respective weight factors for different sex in Austria

Sex:	male	female
Percent sample[1]	48,00%	48%
Percent Austrian population 15 and older (end 2018)	48,81%	51,19%
Weight factor[2]	1,02	1,06

Note: Data from author's survey and Statistik Austria (2019).

[1] Does not sum to 100% because of answer option 'no answer'.

[2] Quotient of the share of the Austrian population divided by the share of the sample.

The total weight factor is represented by the product of the sum of each individual factor for each individual study participant. In brief, this study has been carried out with the support and usage of 350 (= N, i.e. total amount of valid responses) different weight factors.

Appendix D: Unweighted regression estimates

Table 28: Unweighted multiple linear regression examining respondent's knowledge scores[1]

Independent variable	28-1: B	28-1: Std. Error	28-2: B	28-2: Std. Error	28-3: B	28-3: Std. Error	28-4: B	28-4: Std. Error
Demographics								
Age	0,219**	0,086	0,18**	0,085	0,173**	0,085	0,062	0,093
Sex (male)[2]	0,348**	0,147	0,336**	0,145	0,32**	0,145	0,287*	0,148
Level of education	0,231***	0,068	0,206***	0,068	0,177**	0,072	0,137*	0,072
Rural area[3]	-0,069	0,257	-0,141	0,254	-0,136	0,254	0,031	0,252
Suburban area	0,471	0,324	0,409	0,320	0,439	0,321	0,464	0,331
Urban area	0,243	0,161	0,186	0,160	0,184	0,160	0,162	0,163
Intensity of source use								
QH	0,843**	0,424	0,691	0,420	0,692*	0,420	-0,964	0,770
QL	-1,188***	0,322	-0,975***	0,325	-0,957***	0,325	-1,104**	0,452
Desire to be informed								
Importance of desire to be informed			0,256***	0,082	0,253***	0,082	0,228***	0,083
Advocate of the EU?								
Rather yes[4]					-0,121	0,221	-0,157	0,225
Yes, absolutely					0,150	0,220	0,024	0,223
Sources								
Education sometimes[5]							0,226	0,173
Education regularly or often							-0,105	0,321
Workshops, courses sometimes							-0,497*	0,294
Workshops, courses regularly or often							0,495	0,735
Work sometimes							-0,224	0,177
Work regularly or often							0,884***	0,324
Membership in organizations sometimes							0,426*	0,248
Membership in organizations regularly or often							0,405	0,428
Social media sometimes							-0,31*	0,172
Social media regularly or often							0,159	0,343
News on TV or Radio sometimes							0,287	0,231
News on TV or Radio regularly or often							0,446	0,290
Discussion with others							-0,004	0,164

sometimes					
Discussion with others regularly or often				-0,056	0,317
Newspapers sometimes				0,206	0,184
Newspapers regularly or often				0,714**	0,274
Books sometimes				0,028	0,211
Books regularly or often				0,098	0,399
Internet sometimes				-0,151	0,178
Internet regularly or often				0,052	0,268
Other sources sometimes				-0,501*	0,286
Other sources regularly or often				-0,286	0,738
Adjusted R²	0,204	0,226	0,229	0,269	

Note: Data from author's survey described in the text (table based on Blinder & Krueger, 2004).

[1] dependent variable is the knowledge score (continuous scale, see text for definition). *** denotes significantly different from zero at the 1 percent level, ** at the 5 percent level, * at the 10 percent level.

[2] the omitted category is "female".

[3] the omitted category is "very rural area".

[4] the omitted categories are "rather no", "no" and "I haven't thought about it".

[5] the omitted categories for each dummy source variable are "rarely or never", "in the past" and system missing.

Table 29: Unweighted ordinal probit regression for "Do you consider EU trade agreements as important for the EU's economy?"[1]

Independent variable	29-1: B	29-1: Std. Error	29-2: B	29-2: Std. Error	29-3: B	29-3: Std. Error
Demographics						
Other education[2]	-0,757**	0,372	-0,724*	0,373	-0,500	0,389
Compulsory schooling	-0,562	0,387	-0,443	0,391	0,028	0,433
Apprenticeship diploma	-0,369*	0,189	-0,286	0,192	0,009	0,211
High school diploma	-0,356**	0,167	-0,323*	0,168	-0,219	0,175
Under 25[3]	0,017	0,307	0,111	0,311	0,296	0,324
25 - 44	-0,328	0,276	-0,264	0,278	-0,056	0,289
45 - 59	0,025	0,279	0,042	0,280	0,105	0,290
Sex (female)[4]	-0,226	0,142	-0,163	0,144	-0,042	0,151
Very rural area[5]	-0,030	0,156	0,007	0,157	0,058	0,163
Rural area	0,076	0,231	0,110	0,231	0,059	0,238
Suburban area	0,003	0,299	-0,019	0,301	0,078	0,312
Knowledge score						
Test result knowledge test			0,136**	0,054	0,057	0,061
Advocate of the EU[6]						
I haven't thought about it					-0,607	0,380
No					-1,513***	0,464
Rather no					-0,697**	0,273
Rather yes					-0,522***	0,162
Self - interest in the topic[7]						
I haven't thought about it					-1,118**	0,440
No					-1,053***	0,323
Rather no					-0,827***	0,277
Rather yes					-0,46*	0,247
Pseudo R^2 (Nagelkerke)	0,7		0,93		0,224	

Note: Data from author's survey described in the text (table based on Blinder & Krueger, 2004).

[1] dependent variable is the respondents' opinion on trade agreement's importance on the EU's economy, where "I haven't thought about it" = 1, "No" = 2, "Rather no" = 3, "Rather yes" = 4 and "Yes, absolutely" = 5. *** denotes significantly different from zero at the 1 percent level, ** at the 5 percent level, * at the 10 percent level.

[2] the reference category is "at least first level college degree".

[3] the reference category is "over 60".

[4] the reference category is "male".

[5] the reference category is "urban area".

[6, 7] the reference category is "Yes, absolutely".

Table 30: Unweighted ordinal probit regression for "How would you assess the term 'Free Trade'?"[1]

Independent variable	30-1: B	30-1: Std. Error	30-2: B	30-2: Std. Error	30-3: B	30-3: Std. Error
Demographics						
Other education[2]	-0,752**	0,355	-0,731**	0,356	-0,544	0,365
Compulsory schooling	-0,745**	0,368	-0,669*	0,371	-0,421	0,404
Apprenticeship diploma	-0,246	0,178	-0,186	0,181	0,058	0,196
High school diploma	-0,058	0,158	-0,030	0,159	0,065	0,163
Under 25[3]	-0,170	0,288	-0,105	0,290	-0,035	0,298
25 - 44	-0,367	0,259	-0,321	0,261	-0,215	0,266
45 - 59	0,004	0,261	0,019	0,262	0,092	0,267
Sex (female)[4]	-0,514***	0,135	-0,474***	0,137	-0,417***	0,141
Very rural area[5]	-0,279*	0,147	-0,255*	0,148	-0,279*	0,151
Rural area	-0,145*	0,216	-0,122	0,216	-0,108	0,219
Suburban area	0,495*	0,293	0,485*	0,295	0,63*	0,303
Knowledge score						
Test result knowledge test			0,091*	0,050	0,040	0,056
Advocate of the EU[6]						
I haven't thought about it					-0,413	0,358
No					-0,928**	0,441
Rather no					-0,509**	0,257
Rather yes					-0,628***	0,151
Self - interest in the topic[7]						
I haven't thought about it					0,065	0,412
No					-0,487*	0,291
Rather no					-0,448*	0,246
Rather yes					-0,311	0,217
Pseudo R^2 (Nagelkerke)	0,132		0,142		0,221	

Note: Data from author's survey described in the text (table based on Blinder & Krueger, 2004).

[1] dependent variable is the respondents evaluation of the term 'free trade', where "I haven't thought about it" = 1 , "Negative" = 2, "Rather negative" = 3, "Rather positive" = 4 and "Positive" = 5. *** denotes significantly different from zero at the 1 percent level, ** at the 5 percent level, * at the 10 percent level.

[2] the reference category is "at least first level college degree".

[3] the reference category is "over 60".

[4] the reference category is "male".

[5] the reference category is "urban area".

[6, 7] the reference category is "Yes, absolutely".

Table 31: Unweighted ordinal probit regression for "How do you assess the EU's strategy of establishing more and more FTA's and PTA's with third country partners?"[1]

Independent variable	31-1: B	31-1: Std. Error	31-2: B	31-2: Std. Error	31-3: B	31-3: Std. Error
Demographics						
Other education[2]	-0,911**	0,356	-0,886**	0,357	-0,65*	0,365
Compulsory schooling	-0,418	0,364	-0,285	0,368	0,264	0,405
Apprenticeship diploma	-0,271	0,176	-0,172	0,179	0,118	0,194
High school diploma	-0,324**	0,156	-0,286*	0,156	-0,166	0,160
Under 25[3]	-0,145	0,283	-0,038	0,285	0,068	0,294
25 - 44	-0,396	0,254	-0,323	0,256	-0,181	0,261
45 - 59	0,039	0,256	0,063	0,257	0,127	0,262
Sex (female)[4]	-0,401***	0,132	-0,333**	0,134	-0,249*	0,138
Very rural area[5]	-0,166	0,145	-0,128	0,146	-0,125	0,149
Rural area	-0,021	0,213	0,024	0,213	0,034	0,217
Suburban area	0,144	0,280	0,125	0,282	0,275	0,289
Knowledge score						
Test result knowledge test			0,153***	0,050	0,081	0,056
Advocate of the EU[6]						
I haven't thought about it					-1,029***	0,370
No					-1,00**	0,441
Rather no					-0,634**	0,253
Rather yes					-0,494***	0,148
Self - interest in the topic[7]						
I haven't thought about it					-0,301	0,405
No					-0,878***	0,291
Rather no					-0,708***	0,246
Rather yes					-0,561**	0,218
Pseudo R^2 (Nagelkerke)	0,114		0,143		0,237	

Note: Data from author's survey described in the text (table based on Blinder & Krueger, 2004).

[1] dependent variable is the respondents' evaluation of the EU's strategy of establishing more FTA's, where "I haven't thought about it" = 1, "Negative" = 2, "Rather negative" = 3, "Rather positive" = 4 and "Positive" = 5. *** denotes significantly different from zero at the 1 percent level, ** at the 5 percent level, * at the 10 percent level.

[2] the reference category is "at least first level college degree".

[3] the reference category is "over 60".

[4] the reference category is "male".

[5] the reference category is "urban area".

[6, 7] the reference category is "Yes, absolutely".

Table 32: Unweighted ordinal probit regression for opinions on the effect of international trade[1]

International trade agreements..	.. help generating jobs		.. improve or secure wages		.. lead to increased economic activity	
Independent variable	32-1: B	32-1: Std. Error	32-2: B	32-2: Std. Error	32-3: B	32-3: Std. Error
Demographics						
Other education[2]	0,439	0,358	0,984***	0,368	0,497	0,361
Compulsory schooling	-0,435	0,401	-0,111	0,396	0,361	0,397
Apprenticeship diploma	-0,202	0,192	-0,020	0,190	-0,016	0,193
High school diploma	0,115	0,158	0,148	0,158	0,132	0,161
Under 25[3]	0,068	0,290	-0,110	0,284	0,026	0,293
25 - 44	0,334	0,258	0,345	0,253	0,164	0,261
45 - 59	0,167	0,258	0,158	0,251	-0,086	0,261
Sex (female)[4]	0,107	0,136	0,110	0,135	0,098	0,138
Very rural area[5]	-0,146	0,147	-0,177	0,146	-0,025	0,149
Rural area	-0,236	0,215	0,030	0,212	0,074	0,216
Suburban area	-0,697**	0,288	-0,679**	0,280	-0,827***	0,298
Knowledge score						
Test result knowledge test	0,021	0,055	0,013	0,054	0,050	0,055
Advocate of the EU[6]						
I haven't thought about it	0,359	0,353	-0,200	0,350	0,401	0,353
No	0,695	0,430	-0,014	0,430	0,381	0,436
Rather no	0,973***	0,252	1,202***	0,258	1,179***	0,255
Rather yes	0,58***	0,147	0,548***	0,146	0,748***	0,150
Self - interest in the topic[7]						
I haven't thought about it	0,397	0,397	0,377	0,394	0,507	0,403
No	0,513*	0,283	0,405	0,279	0,752***	0,289
Rather no	0,292	0,239	0,387	0,235	0,417*	0,244
Rather yes	0,329	0,209	0,200	0,204	0,457**	0,215
Pseudo R^2 (Nagelkerke)	0,152		0,204		0,209	

Note: Data from author's survey described in the text (table based on Blinder & Krueger, 2004).

[1] dependent variable is the respondents' evaluation of the corresponding statement according to a Likert scale from 1 to 5, where "I totally agree " = 1 and "I totally disagree" = 5. *** denotes significantly different from zero at the 1 percent level, ** at the 5 percent level, * at the 10 percent level.

[2] the reference category is "at least first level college degree".

[3] the reference category is "over 60".

[4] the reference category is "male".

[5] the reference category is "urban area".

[6, 7] the reference category is "Yes, absolutely".

Table 33: Unweighted ordinal probit regression for opinions on the statement "International trade agreements lead to decreased standards and worse quality in consumer goods"[1]

Independent variable	33-1: B	33-1: Std. Error	33-2: B	33-2: Std. Error	33-3: B	33-3: Std. Error
Demographics						
Other education[2]	-0,637*	0,349	-0,614*	0,349	-0,370	0,358
Compulsory schooling	-0,007	0,354	0,063	0,357	0,497	0,390
Apprenticeship diploma	-0,250	0,171	-0,198	0,174	0,073	0,187
High school diploma	-0,192	0,151	-0,169	0,152	-0,045	0,155
Under 25[3]	0,121	0,272	0,175	0,274	0,207	0,280
25 - 44	-0,101	0,243	-0,059	0,244	0,070	0,248
45 - 59	-0,037	0,244	-0,029	0,244	0,008	0,247
Sex (female)[4]	-0,058	0,128	-0,020	0,130	0,033	0,133
Very rural area[5]	0,070	0,141	0,092	0,142	0,112	0,143
Rural area	0,256	0,206	0,281	0,207	0,288	0,209
Suburban area	0,156	0,268	0,139	0,269	0,291	0,274
Knowledge score						
Test result knowledge test			0,08*	0,048	0,050	0,053
Advocate of the EU[6]						
I haven't thought about it					-0,687**	0,348
No					-1,238***	0,442
Rather no					-0,854***	0,251
Rather yes					-0,413***	0,143
Self - interest in the topic[7]						
I haven't thought about it					-0,303	0,388
No					-0,279	0,275
Rather no					-0,471**	0,232
Rather yes					-0,368*	0,202
Pseudo R^2 (Nagelkerke)	0,028		0,378		0,121	

Note: Data from author's survey described in the text (table based on Blinder & Krueger, 2004).

[1] dependent variable is the respondents' evaluation of the statement according to a Likert scale from 1 to 5, where "I totally agree " = 1 and "I totally disagree" = 5. *** denotes significantly different from zero at the 1 percent level, ** at the 5 percent level, * at the 10 percent level.

[2] the reference category is "at least first level college degree".

[3] the reference category is "over 60".

[4] the reference category is "male".

[5] the reference category is "urban area".

[6, 7] the reference category is "Yes, absolutely".

Table 34: Unweighted ordinal probit regression for opinions on the statement "Austria's economy depends on international trade agreements"[1]

Independent variable	34-1: B	34-1: Std. Error	34-2: B	34-2: Std. Error	34-3: B	34-3: Std. Error
Demographics						
Other education[2]	0,643*	0,348	0,623*	0,348	0,402	0,358
Compulsory schooling	0,674*	0,359	0,613*	0,362	-0,157	0,397
Apprenticeship diploma	0,369**	0,175	0,324*	0,178	0,080	0,191
High school diploma	0,081	0,155	0,061	0,156	-0,072	0,161
Under 25[3]	0,369	0,286	0,327	0,288	0,269	0,295
25 - 44	0,579**	0,258	0,549**	0,260	0,431	0,264
45 - 59	0,013	0,261	0,008	0,261	0,061	0,264
Sex (female)[4]	0,343***	0,132	0,313**	0,134	0,243*	0,138
Very rural area[5]	0,222	0,145	0,202	0,146	0,142	0,148
Rural area	0,339	0,211	0,320	0,211	0,349	0,214
Suburban area	0,178	0,277	0,188	0,278	0,033	0,283
Knowledge score						
Test result knowledge test			-0,068	0,049	0,009	0,055
Advocate of the EU[6]						
I haven't thought about it					1,379***	0,358
No					-0,148	0,444
Rather no					0,862***	0,250
Rather yes					0,293**	0,147
Self - interest in the topic[7]						
I haven't thought about it					0,344	0,395
No					0,574**	0,284
Rather no					0,223	0,240
Rather yes					-0,006	0,211
Pseudo R^2 (Nagelkerke)	0,131		0,137		0,228	

Note: Data from author's survey described in the text (table based on Blinder & Krueger, 2004).

[1] dependent variable is the respondents' evaluation of the statement according to a Likert scale from 1 to 5, where "I totally agree " = 1 and "I totally disagree" = 5. *** denotes significantly different from zero at the 1 percent level, ** at the 5 percent level, * at the 10 percent level.

[2] the reference category is "at least first level college degree".

[3] the reference category is "over 60".

[4] the reference category is "male".

[5] the reference category is "urban area".

[6, 7] the reference category is "Yes, absolutely".

Table 35: Unweighted ordinal probit regression for opinions on the statement "It would be better for Austria if the EU stopped the establishment of more FTA's"[1]

Independent variable	35-1: B	35-1: Std. Error	35-2: B	35-2: Std. Error	35-3: B	35-3: Std. Error
Demographics						
Other education[2]	-0,134	0,346	-0,110	0,346	0,188	0,357
Compulsory schooling	-0,192	0,357	-0,112	0,360	0,479	0,394
Apprenticeship diploma	-0,366**	0,172	-0,308	0,174	0,123	0,189
High school diploma	-0,169	0,152	-0,141*	0,152	0,016	0,157
Under 25[3]	-0,106	0,276	-0,050	0,278	-0,096	0,286
25 - 44	-0,324	0,248	-0,282	0,249	-0,147	0,254
45 - 59	-0,223	0,249	-0,217	0,249	-0,224	0,254
Sex (female)[4]	-0,172	0,128	-0,132	0,130	-0,071	0,135
Very rural area[5]	-0,015	0,142	0,010	0,142	0,019	0,145
Rural area	0,121	0,208	0,148	0,209	0,150	0,211
Suburban area	0,303	0,273	0,291	0,274	0,614**	0,284
Knowledge score						
Test result knowledge test			0,088*	0,048	0,034	0,054
Advocate of the EU[6]						
I haven't thought about it					-0,712**	0,348
No					-1,424***	0,434
Rather no					-1,578***	0,257
Rather yes					-0,573***	0,145
Self - interest in the topic[7]						
I haven't thought about it					0,342	0,403
No					-0,597**	0,280
Rather no					-0,380	0,236
Rather yes					-0,278	0,206
Pseudo R^2 (Nagelkerke)	0,04		0,051		0,227	

Note: Data from author's survey described in the text (table based on Blinder & Krueger, 2004).

[1] dependent variable is the respondents' evaluation of the statement according to a Likert scale from 1 to 5, where "I totally agree " = 1 and "I totally disagree" = 5. *** denotes significantly different from zero at the 1 percent level, ** at the 5 percent level, * at the 10 percent level.

[2] the reference category is "at least first level college degree".

[3] the reference category is "over 60".

[4] the reference category is "male".

[5] the reference category is "urban area".

[6, 7] the reference category is "Yes, absolutely".