

"Revisionism" Reconsidered: Exports and American Intervention in the First World War

Abstract

Why did the United States intervene in the First World War, breaking with its long tradition of avoiding involvement in European political and military conflicts? During the 1920s and 1930s, many "revisionist" scholars argued that American trade with the belligerent powers gave the United States a growing economic stake in the war that ultimately prompted intervention. After World War II, this line of argument fell from favor with historians, who have since focused mainly on Woodrow Wilson's strategic concerns and idealistic goals. Using data on the impact of the wartime export boom on the United States, this paper presents evidence that the revisionist argument should be reconsidered. The export boom was so large that it would have been difficult to ignore, and its progress corresponds to the timing of important decisions leading to the war. The distributive impact of wartime exports also had an important effect of the political environment in which the decision to go to war was made.

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Why did the United States intervene in the First World War? American leaders had shown little inclination to involve the nation in previous conflicts among the European powers. Moreover, by the time the Congress voted to declare war in April 1917, Americans could have few illusions about the catastrophic nature of the conflict. The usual reasons given for intervention only deepen the puzzle. The prospect that the Central Powers could sustain a direct military attack on the United States, a larger and economically more powerful state, across thousands of miles of ocean, scarcely merits discussion. German submarines were a major threat to commerce, but their activity had cost only 236 American lives by April 1917, all but 14 embarked on ships flying the flags of belligerent states when they were attacked (Grattan 1929, 163). From the perspective of December 7, 1941 or September 11, 2001—not to mention the 53,402 American combat deaths sustained in the war itself—these losses are not especially large. Were Americans simply swept away with enthusiasm for Woodrow Wilson's idealistic crusade to make the world safe for democracy? It is worth remembering that this rhetoric would not be enough to obtain Senate approval for the Versailles Treaty three years later. Had American elites adopted a broader conception of the country's national security interests that gave them a stake in the outcome of the war? Perhaps, but this new understanding of the national interest did not stop them from abandoning a larger role in European political and military affairs during the 1920s and 1930s.

One potential explanation is almost universally dismissed by contemporary historians of American foreign relations: that American trade with the Allied powers gave the United States a stake in the conflict. This "revisionist" explanation was widely accepted during the interwar period, and provided the intellectual justification for the neutrality legislation of the 1930s. Largely for this reason, it became deeply unfashionable after Pearl Harbor. Today, the historians who made the case for this line of argument during the 1920s and 1930s, when they are remembered at all, tend to be lumped together with the isolationist politicians who resisted American intervention in World War II. This paper will make a case for reconsidering their argument about the influence of economic interests on American involvement in the war. The academic revisionists' economic argument was subtler and more convincing than the conspiracy theories about influential "merchants of death" that publicists and politicians promoted during the interwar period. Moreover, an analysis of data on the wartime export boom and congressional voting offers substantial evidence that economic factors shaped the political environment in which the war was debated.

The revisionists' theoretical claims are important not only for understanding the important case of American intervention in World War I, but also for answering many broader questions. For example, their argument bears on the way powerful states in general, and the United States in particular, develop "national interests" in conflicts far beyond their borders. It could also add insights to recent research about the linkage between trade and military conflict (e.g., Mansfield and Pollins 2003). The revisionists' arguments suggest that, just as states have an incentive to avoid military conflict with their trading partners, so the benefits of trade may also give states a reason to consider military action in order to protect them. To the extent that they find empirical support, the revisionists' theoretical arguments deserve the attention of political scientists who are interested in these questions, as well as from historians seeking to understand American entry into the First World War.

This paper proceeds in four sections. The first reviews the revisionist argument and its role in the historiography of American intervention. The second evaluates the plausibility of the revisionists' claims by examining the available data on the aggregate economic impact of the war on the United States before intervention. The third tests the economic interests hypothesis more rigorously using congressional roll-call votes on war-related measures. A final section concludes.

The Historiography of American Intervention

The causes of World War I were the subject of vigorous public and scholarly debate during the 1920s and 1930s. While most of this debate focused on the question of German responsibility for the war, some scholars turned their attention to the reasons for American intervention. As in the broader debate about the causes of the war, answers to this question hinged on the extent to which American involvement could be attributed to German actions. During the war, the Wilson administration had argued that intolerable German violations of neutral rights had required American intervention. "Revisionist" scholars challenged this official explanation. In doing so, they made both empirical claims and normative judgments about American intervention in the war. Empirically, they held that wartime trade with the Entente powers created the political circumstances leading to American intervention. Normatively, they claimed that intervention was a mistake, and that the U.S. should avoid involvement in subsequent European wars. Although these normative and empirical positions do not logically imply one another, they rose and fell together in the historiography because they were made by the same group of people. Widely accepted during the interwar period, the revisionist understanding of American intervention was even more widely rejected after the United States entered World War II, and especially after it accepted a much more ambitious world role in the aftermath of that war.¹

Because the subsequent historiography has not always correctly understood the revisionist argument about the economic sources of American intervention, it makes sense to review it briefly here. The revisionists' central empirical claim was that the wartime export boom generated pressures for American intervention. Grattan (1929, 133-7), one of the earliest revisionist accounts focused primarily on American intervention, stressed the large increase in American exports to the Allied powers. He pointed out that this trade was not primarily in munitions, but affected many parts of the American economy. Due to the British blockade, trade with the Central Powers declined sharply. Grattan pointed out that American officials had gradually revised their prohibitions on lending to belligerent powers in order to facilitate this trade. German submarine warfare was a threat because it endangered this trade, not because of its relatively small toll in American lives.

It was to Germany's interest to sink the vessels of her enemies. It was to America's interest that nothing be placed in the way of landing her goods in Allied countries. When the two interests clashed, we followed the

¹ Cohen (1967) discusses the rise and fall of revisionist historiography. The overview offered by Leopold (1950), which is largely devoted to economic arguments about the war, also makes the prevalence of this perspective through the late 1930s quite clear.

direction of our economic interests. We tried to prevent the Germans using their submarines (Grattan 1929, 164).

Subsequent revisionist accounts added more details as further documentary evidence became available, but they told the same essential story (e.g., Beard 1936; Millis 1935; Tansill 1938).

How did economic interests influence the decision to go to war? While some claimed that this decision was heavily influenced by a cabal of financiers and munitions manufacturers with close ties to the Allies, more sophisticated revisionists were skeptical of this line of argument (Cohen 1967, 48). Indeed, Charles Beard, perhaps the best known revisionist of all, sought to discredit this "devil theory of war" in his 1936 book of that name. Beard (1936, 22-3) stressed that pressures for war in 1917 stemmed from ordinary commercial activity and the political climate it generated, not the action of a few evil bankers and politicians.

Neither bankers nor politicians operate in a vacuum. They do not intrude upon the people from some magic world or their own. The politician seldom if ever conjures up any measure of scheme of action from the vasty deeps of his own mind. He works on suggestions from people engaged in one or more pursuits of peace, or on threats, pressures and orders from them. Whether he keeps the peace or goes to war he is acting on the stimulus of demands from groups, classes and interests. His strokes of state do not come out of an empty sky. He dwells in no ivory tower. He reflects the ideas and wishes of his constituents. The banker also lives right down in the middle of things, amid the pushing and shoving of the market-place. He too doesn't play pinochle in an ivory tower. He watches for chances to speed up the business of making goods and selling them at a profit—this being the great peacetime pursuit of the nation at large.

Beard's main point—one that has been misunderstood in much of the postwar historiography concerning the revisionists—is that the influence of wartime trade on U.S. intervention did not stem from any special relationship between the administration and interested financiers or munitions makers. To be sure, the House of Morgan was intimately involved in the British effort to obtain a wide range of exports from the United States. From January 1915 through the American entry into the war, the Morgan Bank arranged financing and acted as the primary purchasing agent for the British government, and eventually its allies as well (Burk 1984, 6). Beard and Tansill used the records published by the Nye Committee in 1935 in order to show that the Morgan representatives successfully sought to persuade the administration to lift its restrictions on lending to belligerent states. However, what made these contacts successful was not the Morgan representatives' extraordinary influence on the administration, but the fact that they pointed out genuine economic stakes that the administration could not ignore. Without expanded American lending after Allied financial resources were exhausted, further trade would not have been possible. The importance of the trade for the American economy, not the political influence of the lenders, carried the day with the Wilson administration. Indeed, Beard (1936, 97) suggests that Woodrow Wilson might well have acted as he did even if the letters published by the Nye committee had never been sent. "They did not have to 'see' him personally about the issue. Since President Wilson

was a man of intelligence and knowledge, it is reasonably certain that he was then aware of the economic dilemma before him."

In spite of the general rejection of the revisionist argument in subsequent historiography, not all historians have ignored the economic stakes the revisionists emphasized. Interpretations stressing the broad national security interests justifying intervention in the war often include them along with many other concerns (e.g., Buehrig 1950; Cooper 1965, 9-12; Kennedy 2001; Leopold 1950, 422-3; May 1959).² What distinguishes the revisionist position is that these later accounts do not specify how economic considerations related to the other concerns they discuss, such as national prestige, the long-run German military threat, the prospects of reforming the international system, or sympathy with Britain and France. Because they lump many diverse considerations together without specifying how or when they might influence the decision making process, the "national security" accounts of the war defy efforts to falsify their claims. In essence they simply argue that many things mattered. This perspective has provided the basis for many interesting historical narratives, but provides little help with the underlying theoretical questions. In the end, it offers no real explanation for the decision to go to war. From a social-scientific perspective, the revisionist argument has the considerable advantage of implying a testable argument about American intervention.

The revisionists coupled their case for the economic sources of the war with a normative argument that the war was unwise and unnecessary. As Cohen (1967) explains, revisionist scholars felt this way for many different reasons. Some, such as Harry Elmer Barnes, felt that the ideals Wilson had proclaimed during the war had been betrayed. Barnes' thinking was strongly influenced by postwar revelations about the secret treaties among the Allied powers, and implementation of many of these agreements in the Versailles Treaty (Cohen 1967, 33, 36-7). For those who thought the outcome of the war fell far short of Woodrow Wilson's wartime promises, Wilson appeared to be either a fool, taken in by shrewder European leaders, or a liar, exaggerating the extent to which the war would advance liberal ideas in order to obtain domestic support. Other revisionists, such as Charles Beard, were more concerned about the impact that becoming a great power would have on the internal character of the United States (Cohen 1967, 133-4). Beard believed that heavy American involvement in international commerce, especially the military actions necessary to protect commercial interests in cases like the First World War, would undermine democracy at home. Cohen (1967, 194-5) suggests that other revisionists, such as Charles Tansill, were sympathetic to the German cause during the war.

Whatever the reasons for their disenchantment, most revisionists hoped the United States would keep out of future European conflicts. Although their argument about the economic sources of American involvement in the war did not logically imply their normative position on the war, it did imply a way to avoid involvement in future such wars. Barnes, Beard, Tansill, Grattan and others vigorously supported the neutrality legislation of the 1930s, which sharply limited trade and lending to belligerent states.

² See Leffler (1991) for a general account of historiography stressing national security interests. Osgood (1953) argues reasonably that accounts stressing these broader interests inappropriately project an understanding of the world more appropriate to the Cold War era back onto the First World War.

The political baggage the revisionists acquired through their association with the isolationism of the interwar period is probably the most important reason for the rejection of their arguments during the postwar era. After the United States entered World War II, and especially after it accepted a greatly enlarged role in the postwar world, most scholars came to view the concerns of Barnes and Beard as quaint and irrelevant at best. Writing in 1947, Samuel Flagg Bemis essentially blamed the revisionists of the 1930s for the war.

This disillusionist historiography resulted in the complete repudiation of Woodrow Wilson's foreign policy and the neutrality legislation of 1935-37. As everybody can now see, that legislation assisted the rise of Hitler's power and his onslaught on Western civilization (Bemis 1947, 55).

Subsequent historians have rarely condemned the revisionists so harshly, but do not take them very seriously either. While it might be an overstatement to characterize the claim that economic interests played relatively little role in the American decision to intervene in the First World War as a stylized fact, it is certainly repeated very frequently. Even during the 1960s and 1970s, when economic interpretations of the Cold War were common, there was little evidence of a resurgence in support for the revisionist interpretation of American intervention in 1917. Cooper (1965, 7) summed up the revisionist argument by noting that "[a]lthough the Wilson administration was seriously concerned with the health of the American economy and defended the war trade as legitimate, it never contemplated hostilities to ensure continued prosperity or to protect the American stake in the Allies." Stromberg (1977, 441), quipped that "[o]nce the essential accessory of the well-equipped mind, the 'economic interpretation' has become as antiquated as monophonic recording." At the conclusion of his careful and balanced history of the revisionists, Cohen (1967, 240) acknowledged that "[t]oday, when the revisionist interpretation of American intervention is in disrepute, the revisionist studies of America's road to war from 1914 to 1917 are considered of little use to students of American diplomatic history." The revisionist position receives little attention in reviews of recent writing on the topic, which are generally preoccupied with the relative importance of ideological and strategic concerns in Woodrow Wilson's thinking (e.g., Kennedy 2001; Steigerwald 2000).

Although the revisionists' normative arguments about American foreign policy are crucial for understanding the historiography, they are logically unconnected to their empirical claim about U.S. intervention in World War I. The revisionists' opposition to intervention in both world wars stemmed from their beliefs about the proper goals of American foreign policy, and their assessment of the likely results of intervention, not from their claim about the role of economic interests. One could agree that the war was fought principally to protect economic interests, yet still believe that these interests were important enough to justify it. As the evidence in the next section will show, the economic stakes were very large indeed. Moreover, many contemporary scholars have argued that the political, economic, and military leadership of the United States has been crucial to securing the benefits of an open international economy in the post-World War II era (e.g., Keohane 1984; Kindleberger 1973; Krasner 1976). From this perspective, the great tragedy is not that the United States intervened in the war, but rather that it did not

sustain Wilson's efforts to secure a leading role for the United States in the postwar world.

It is time to put aside the politics of the 1930s and 1940s when assessing whether economic interests influenced the American decision to intervene in the First World War. The remainder of this paper is intended to show that their argument deserves to be taken seriously by examining the evidence for it in the case it was originally intended to explain.

The Economic Impact of the First World War on the Neutral United States

A first step in assessing the revisionist argument is to examine the impact of the wartime export boom on the American economy. Neither the revisionists of the 1930s nor any of their critics presented much more than a few aggregate trade statistics. These sufficed to show that American exports to the Allies increased substantially during the war, but did not put this increase in perspective of historical trading patterns or the size of the U.S. economy at the time.

The Aggregate Impact of the Export Boom

Figure 1 shows the export and import share of American gross national product from 1869 through 2004. The export boom associated with the First World War is readily apparent. Its size, in proportion of the economy as a whole, is enormous. Merchandise exports comprised nearly 12 percent of gross national product in 1916, roughly double their share in 1914, and more than in any other year for which data are available. This generalization includes the "globalization" of the last thirty years, although the United States currently brings in substantially more imports, as well as maintaining an extensive trade in services, something for which no early twentieth century data are available. The scope of the export boom demonstrates the plausibility of the revisionist argument. It is difficult to believe that any president's assessment of the submarine threat would be unaffected by the fact that it menaced such a substantial part of the American economy. Expertise in economics—something recent historians have argued that Wilson lacked (e.g., Smith 1994, 93; Kennedy 2001, 23-4)—would not have been necessary to appreciate an effect so large. Subsequent economic events, such as the oil shocks of the 1970s, are universally regarded as seminal events that produced strong political responses, even though they involved a smaller share of the economy.

[Figure 1 about here.]

The progress of the export boom maps onto the timing of the German submarine campaign in ways that provide more circumstantial evidence for the revisionist argument. Figure 2 shows these two processes together on a monthly basis. There were three distinct U-boat campaigns, each eliciting a greater American response (Hardach 1977, 35-43). The response roughly corresponded to the effectiveness of the submarines and the value of the commerce at stake. The Germans launched the first campaign in February 1915, announcing that they would sink without warning any vessel traveling in a war zone around the British Isles. As Figure 2 indicates, the export boom was not yet fully underway at this point. In any event, because of the limited number of U-boats available, their attacks had only a limited impact on Allied shipping. Even though the majority of Americans killed by U-boats died during this period—most in the sinking of

the *Lusitania* on May 7, 1915—American reaction was relatively muted. President Wilson sent a protest note concerning the *Lusitania*, but the Secretary of State, William Jennings Bryan, resigned in protest over this response, arguing that it was inconsistent with genuine neutrality. When two more Americans died in the sinking of the *Arabic* in August, the Germans agreed to limit U-boat activity, avoiding passenger liners entirely, warning potential targets in order to allow the crew to escape, and checking for contraband before sinking any of them. Adherence to these rules greatly limited the effectiveness of the U-boats, and made them vulnerable to Allied merchant ships with concealed weaponry.

[Figure 2 about here.]

The second submarine campaign began in February 1916, when the German navy launched an "intensified" effort within the U.S.-approved rules of engagement, ostensibly intended to sink armed merchant vessels (Hardach 1977, 41). In practice, this campaign was difficult to distinguish from unrestricted submarine warfare. As Figure 2 indicates, the export boom in manufacturing was well underway by this time. Although passenger ships were not supposed to be targeted, several were nevertheless sunk, including the *Sussex* in March. No Americans were actually killed on the *Sussex*—several were injured—but the American response to the second submarine campaign was stronger than to the first. The administration threatened to break diplomatic relations with Germany, and introduced a range of military preparedness measures in Congress (Cooper 1969, 99-117). Concerned about possible American entry into the war, the Germans ended the campaign in May, agreeing to a range of American demands for limits on submarine activity.

The third and final submarine campaign began with the resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare on February 1, 1917, and extended through the end of the war. As Figure 2 indicates, it was preceded by a period of several months during which the German navy intensified its campaign within the constraints of the rules of engagement, with substantial results (Hardach 1977, 41-2). An expanded submarine fleet sank an unprecedented monthly average of 630,000 tons of shipping in the following six months. The first two submarine campaigns had averaged only 116,000 and 183,000 tons per month, respectively. In April 1917, roughly one in every four merchant vessels departing the United Kingdom failed to return. Allied prospects for stopping the submarines did not improve until the widespread use of the convoy system began in August 1917 (Hardach 1977, 41-3). This time, with the export boom at its peak, the United States broke diplomatic relations in February, then declared war in April after the Germans refused to halt their latest U-boat campaign.

The Distributive Impact of the Export Boom

Figure 3 provides a disaggregated look at the export boom. It is clear that the biggest beneficiaries were exporters of finished manufactures. Exports of crude foodstuffs, primarily meat and wheat, increased sharply during the first year of the war, particularly in proportion to their prewar volume. However, they were soon overtaken by finished manufactures, as the general belief that the war would be short was dispelled, and the Allies, especially Britain, began to mobilize their industries for war and to call on those in the United States. While exports of crude and manufactured foodstuffs and

semi-manufactures all increased substantially during the war, finished manufactures constituted the bulk of wartime exports. Exports of raw materials, especially cotton, were seriously disrupted, and consistently failed to reach their regular prewar seasonal peak, clearly visible in the prewar portion of Figure 3.

[Figure 3 about here.]

The case of cotton illustrates the fact that the benefits of the export boom were not even distributed across the American economy. Raw cotton had accounted for roughly 25 percent of the value of U.S. exports in the five years before the beginning of the war. After the war began, the Allies concentrated on procuring war-related goods, and restricted the shipping capacity available for other things (Hardach 1977, 48-51). Cotton imports were held below their peacetime level and the output of British textile factories was regulated accordingly (Fowler 2000). To make matters worse, the British began detaining American cargoes of cotton bound for the Central Powers or neutral countries soon after the war began, and placed cotton on the list of contraband material on August 20, 1915, just before the fall harvest for that year. President Wilson had suggested that any such move be followed by a British effort to buy an "unusual amount" of cotton in order to maintain its price (Tansill 1938, 221-3). Nevertheless, as Table 1 indicates, its relative price remained below its 1913 level until 1916. The value of cotton exports did not return to its peacetime level until 1917, and the quantity did not recover until after the war had ended. Indeed, Bense (1984, 120) notes that the proportion of the cotton crop exported never again reached its prewar level.

[Table 1 about here.]

The regional concentration of major economic activities like the growing of cotton makes it possible to estimate roughly the value of the export boom to each state. In order to facilitate this estimate, annual exports listed in the 1920 *Statistical Abstract of the United States* were divided into the 69 categories listed in Table 2. These categories were chosen to correspond as closely as possible with the industrial sectors, and mineral and agricultural commodities for which state-level production data are available in prewar economic censuses. (A more detailed concordance of the categories into which each listed export commodity and industrial sector was placed is available from the author.) A portion of the value of exports for each year in each of these categories was allocated to each state based on its share of production in that category in the prewar economic censuses. After summing the total value each state's share of all export categories, per capita shares of the export income were calculated using data on total population from the 1910 population census.

[Table 2 about here.]

Although these estimates correspond to qualitative impressions about the impact of the export boom on different parts of the nation, they are far from perfect. The economic censuses did not provide production figures for every industry in every state. For confidentiality reasons, the censuses typically did not report data in cases where a particular sector had only a few establishments in a given state. Prewar production and population data also do not reflect changes in states' populations and output of traded goods during the war. These and other sources of measurement error mean that the estimates of per capita export income used here should be treated with caution. At the

same time, the shortcomings of the data do not render the patterns they suggest meaningless. Indeed, because measurement error makes the discovery of such patterns more difficult, those that do emerge from these data are likely to have been very strong in reality.

Per capita export income does not necessarily reflect each state's commercial stake in the war. The European share of American exports had been declining in the years before the war, dropping from 75 percent in 1900 to about 60 percent in 1913. Export income from trade with Europe would provide a better indicator of the economic stake in the war. Unfortunately, data on the destination of particular export commodities for this period are not readily available. Lacking these data, the change in export income compared to prewar levels provides a reasonable indicator of the stake states had in trade with Europe. Although U.S. exports to other areas of the world expanded during the war, Europe received an unusually large share of American exports during the 1915-17 period, averaging nearly 70 percent of U.S. exports during these years. States' gains in export income during this period are thus more closely related to their stake in the war than their level of export income.

Figure 4 illustrates the regional trends in export income.³ (The fact that per capita GNP in 1913 was roughly \$400 is relevant in assessing the magnitude of the numbers in Figure 4.) Several patterns deserve comment. Manufacturing was highly concentrated in the Northeast during the early 20th century. Not surprisingly, this part of the country—the New England, the Middle Atlantic, and East North Central census regions—gained the most from the wartime export boom, which was dominated by finished manufactures. Although exports of wheat rose dramatically during the war, the wheat-producing states of the West North Central region did not benefit as much as the Northeast did. The cotton-exporting South, which had the highest per capita export income before the war, gained least of all. Indeed, Mississippi and Arkansas actually lost export income during the 1915-17 period compared to their prewar average. Finally, the largest per capita beneficiary of the export boom was Arizona. The fourth least populous state in 1910 was responsible for roughly half the copper ore and a third of the refined copper produced in the United States. Vast quantities of the metal were exported during the war. In fact, it accounted for just over four percent of all U.S. exports in 1916.

[Figure 4 about here.]

³ The states in each census region are as follows.

New England: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont

Middle Atlantic: New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania

East North Central: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin

West North Central: Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota

South Atlantic: Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia

East South Central: Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee

West South Central: Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas

Mountain: Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming

Pacific: California, Oregon, Washington

Because it is an extreme outlier, Arizona is listed separately in Figure 4.

The regional differences in export income roughly correspond to common understandings of regional tendencies in public support and opposition to the war. Public figures from the Northeast generally favored a hard line on German submarine warfare, and other measures leading to eventual intervention in the war. Those from the South and West more often opposed such measures. Cooper (1969) pays particularly close attention to these regional differences, although he attributes them primarily to ideology or differences in the national origin of the population in each state. The revisionist argument, which Cooper scarcely mentions, suggests a different explanation. If the benefits of the export boom really shaped the political environment concerning American involvement in the war, as Beard and other revisionists argued, then regional differences in these benefits should predict congressional voting and public opinion. No public opinion data are available for this period, but Congress considered a range of measures related to intervention, including voting on whether to declare war in April 1917. The next section of the paper turns to an analysis of several of these votes.

Export Income and Support for War-Related Measures in Congress

In testing hypotheses about the role of economic interests in shaping congressional support for intervention, several alternative explanations must also be considered. One of the most commonly discussed reasons for differences over war-related measures are the ethnic or national loyalties of Americans to various belligerent states. During the war, Theodore Roosevelt famously questioned the loyalty of "hyphenated Americans" who allegedly put the interests of their native or ancestral country ahead of the United States. Wilson made similar comments both before and after the United States entered the war. Subsequent historians have proposed ethnic and national loyalties as an explanation for opposition to Wilson's preparedness measures and eventually to intervention in the war (e.g., Cooper 1969; Smith 1965).

Although it is tempting to dismiss Roosevelt's and Wilson's comments about immigrants as reflections of the two men's well-known racist attitudes, there is reason to take seriously the possibility that ethnic and national loyalties might have influenced attitudes toward the war. In 1910, 14.7 percent of the population was born outside the United States, the vast majority in European countries that were involved in the war. Roughly 6.0 percent of the total population was born in the Allied states, and 6.0 percent in the Central Powers or Ireland. Although no statistics on ancestry are available, it is possible that not only those born in belligerent states, but also some of their descendents, felt some loyalty to one side or the other during the war. By comparison, the Census Bureau estimates that 11.7 percent of the population was born outside the United States in 2003, but only 13.7 percent of them were born in Europe (Larsen 2004). Naturalization was also substantially easier before the changes in immigration laws during the 1920s—in some states, non-citizens were even allowed to vote—so the foreign-born population was arguably more politically salient during World War I than it is today. Events during the war also point to the plausibility of this argument. For example, politicians from states with large Irish populations were especially outspoken after the British executed several leaders of the Easter Rising in 1916, ignoring a Senate resolution urging clemency (Devlin 1975, 502-3). Both during the war and in the subsequent historiography, most attention has been focused on German- and Irish-Americans as groups with reason to favor the German side, or at least to oppose the

British. A similar argument might be made about Americans with potential ethnic or national loyalties to the Allies, though.

The reason the national-origins hypothesis must be considered when testing the influence of economic interests is that the same features of the economy that led some states to benefit more or less from the export boom also shaped patterns of European immigration to the United States. For this reason, if the national-origins hypothesis is correct, it is a potential confounding influence. For example, in five states, all clustered in the industrialized Northeast, more than three percent of the total population were born in Ireland: Connecticut (5.2%), Massachusetts (6.6%), New Hampshire (5.5%), New York (3.3%), and New Jersey (4.0%). If politicians in these states responded to Irish-American hostility to Britain by tempering their support for war-related measures in Congress, their voting records might differ from those of politicians from states that enjoyed similar benefits from the export boom but contained fewer voters of Irish origin, such as Ohio (0.8%). Failing to account for these differences could produce a specification error in the models of congressional voting.

Table 3 presents the results of three regressions indicating that such a specification error is likely. The first two indicate that a state's production of cotton, wheat, and manufactured goods predict both its export income during the 1911-14 period and the 1915 change over this prewar average. Considering the composition of the export boom, it is not surprising that these three variables explain more than 85 percent of the variance in the 1915 change in export income. The third and fourth models indicate that these same variables explain a substantial portion of the variance in the percentage of the population born in belligerent states on both sides. The dependent variables from the latter two regressions will be included in the models of congressional voting that follow.

[Table 3 about here.]

For similar reasons, a model of congressional voting must include party affiliation in order to estimate the effect of export income. The two major parties had distinctive regional bases, and represented the interests of the prevailing economic interests in those regions. The Democrats, based in the South, tended to favor more liberal trade policies, particularly toward industrialized countries that imported the agricultural commodities grown there. The Republicans, strongest in the industrial Northeast, preferred protection against manufactured imports (Weingast, Goldstein, and Bailey 1997; Trubowitz 1998). Although generalizations about the regional bases of the two parties admitted some exceptions, particularly the Northeastern cities controlled by the Democrats, they suggest that economic structure produced a relationship between party and export income similar to the one linking immigrant population and export income. The results presented in Table 4, which parallel those shown in Table 3, confirm that this is indeed the case. The three features of economic structure that predicted export income in Table 3 predict between 67 and 77 percent of Senators and House members' party affiliations in the two congresses examined here.

[Table 4 about here.]

The Gore and McLemore Resolutions, March 1916

Until the Germans launched their second submarine campaign in the spring of 1916, Congress did not debate American entry into the war. Both the House and Senate took up measures related to trade with the belligerents, as well as the usual appropriations measures for the armed forces. However, the debate over these measures did not focus on the prospect of intervention. Such a course of action was utterly unprecedented in American history at the time, and it simply was not taken very seriously during the first year of the war.

Things began to change in the fall of 1915, when President Wilson proposed increases in the size of the army and navy. Theodore Roosevelt and other Northeastern Republicans had been speaking out in favor of greater military preparedness, and even intervention in the war. Wilson's proposals may have been an effort to undercut their attacks on him. Although the President emphasized repeatedly that his preparedness measures did not mean that he favored entering the war, controversy over them continued to build through the winter of 1915-16. Opponents of increased military preparedness, who were mainly members of Wilson's own party, argued that such measures were an unacceptable concession to those who wanted eventually to involve the United States in the war (Cooper 1969, 92-5). The conflict came to a head after the Germans launched their second U-boat campaign in February. In January, Senator Thomas Gore (D-OK) had introduced a resolution to prohibit passports from being issued for Americans who planned to travel on belligerent ships. A similar measure was introduced in the House by Jeff McLemore (D-TX) in late February. Wilson reacted sharply, demanding prompt votes to repudiate both these resolutions, and putting substantial pressure on members of his own party to support him.

Table 5 presents the results of two probit models of the votes to table (i.e., kill) the Gore resolution in the Senate and the McLemore resolution in the House. Theoretical expectations concerning each variable in the model are clear. In light of the pressure President Wilson placed on members of his own party, Democrats should be more likely to vote to table these measures. Members from states that received greater per capita gains from wartime trade, as well as those from states with relatively large populations born in Entente countries, should also be more likely to vote to table these resolutions. Those from states that received relatively small per capita gains from wartime trade, or that had relatively large immigrant populations predisposed to favor the Central Powers, should be more likely to vote against the motion to table.

[Table 5 about here.]

The results support both the revisionist and national-origins arguments. Because of the larger number of observations, results are somewhat clearer for the House of Representatives than for the Senate. President Wilson's appeal to members of his party in the House was generally successful, although 34 of the 217 Democrats present nevertheless voted against tabling the measure. These members were more likely to be from states that had made relatively small gains from wartime trade. The predicted probabilities presented at the foot of the table show this more intuitively than do the probit coefficients. For example, holding other variables at their mean value, a Democratic member from the cotton-producing West South Central region, which had the

smallest stake in wartime trade, had a 0.37 probability of voting against the motion to table. A member from an average New England or the Middle Atlantic region, which received the largest share of export income, had only a 0.02 probability of casting such a vote. Among Republicans, who were much more evenly divided on the measure, the model suggests that gains from wartime trade could be decisive. There were no Republican members of Congress from the southern regions with the smallest stakes in the war, but a member from an average state had a 0.39 probability of voting to table the McLemore resolution. By contrast, a member from a typical New England or Middle Atlantic state had a 0.72 probability of casting this vote.

The patterns in Senate voting on the Gore resolution were generally similar to those observed in the House, although the effect of party was somewhat larger. As the predicted probabilities at the foot of the table suggest, Democrats responded overwhelmingly to Wilson's call for support. All but two voted to table the resolution, including Gore himself. As in the House, Republicans were more evenly split, and the effect of their states' stake in the war was somewhat larger.

The national origin of a state's population also influenced how its representatives voted on the Gore and McLemore resolutions. (Because the effects of populations from Ireland and the Central powers had the largest effects, they will be used for illustrative purposes here. Immigration from the Allied states also influenced the way their representatives voted, however.) Holding other variables at their mean value, members of both parties were likely to vote against the motion to table if they came from the region with largest share of these immigrants, the Middle Atlantic states. Although the political effects of immigrant populations are substantial, the magnitude suggested by the predicted probabilities in Table 5 is somewhat misleading. Very large immigrant populations were only observed in states with very large manufacturing sectors that also had relatively large stakes in wartime trade. (The reverse was not true, since manufacturing states such as Michigan and Ohio had immigrant populations near the national average.) Moreover, the fact that immigrants from all the belligerents were concentrated in the same areas of the United States meant that their political effects partially offset one another.

The Armed Ship Bill, February 1917

For several months after the defeat of the Gore and McLemore resolutions, as well as German acceptance of U.S. demands for limits on submarine warfare, there was little further congressional debate over the war. Wilson sought unsuccessfully to mediate an end to the war, and was re-elected in November as the candidate who "kept us out of war." (Wilson apparently never liked the slogan.) Nevertheless, the U.S. began moving rapidly toward entry into the war after the Germans announced in January that they would resume unrestricted submarine warfare on February 1st.

Although Wilson promptly severed diplomatic relations with Germany, he did not immediately move to declare war. Instead, he considered ways of defending American shipping without actually entering the war, hoping the Germans would reconsider the submarine campaign as they had in 1915 and 1916 (May 1959, 418-22; Devlin 1975, 638-9). American shippers who hesitated to sail in the face of the U-boat threat requested

naval protection, or at least defensive weapons for firing at submarines on the surface.⁴ After discovering that it was impractical for merchant ships to privately acquire these weapons and personnel qualified to operate them, the administration asked Congress to give the Navy authority to do so. May (1959, 422-3) points out that Wilson believed he had the authority to do this on his own, but wanted to demonstrate American national unity to the Germans, hoping that this would bring them to their senses. Events came to Wilson's assistance. On February 25th, a German submarine sank the British liner *Laconia*, taking the lives of two American passengers. On February 28th, the day before the House was to vote on the bill, the State Department released the Zimmerman telegram, outlining a German proposal to form an alliance with Mexico in the event of war with the United States.

The armed ship bill provides a more difficult test of the revisionist argument about the political environment than do the Gore and McLemore resolutions. If events indeed erase economically motivated differences over security issues, failure to reject the null hypothesis with respect to export income should be very likely in this case. The House vote in support of the bill on March 1 was overwhelming, 402-13. Opponents of intervention did not disappear, however. Representative Henry Allen Cooper (R-WI) offered an amendment that would have prohibited the shipment of contraband material on armed ships. It was defeated more narrowly, 125-292. In the Senate, opponents of the armed ship bill were unable to block it from being brought to the floor on a 76-14 vote, but managed to filibuster the bill until the congressional session ended on March 3rd. Although the Senate never acted, Wilson moved to arm the merchant ships without their authorization. Denied his show of national unity, Wilson reacted bitterly that "[a] little group of willful men, representing no opinion but their own, have rendered the great government of the United States helpless and contemptible" (Devlin 1975, 657).

Table 6 presents the results of probit models of the three votes mentioned in the last paragraph. They offer additional support for the revisionist claim that the economic stakes shaped the political environment, as well as for the argument that national origins of the U.S. population exerted a major influence. The models generate less decisive results in the case of very lopsided votes to consider the armed ship bill in the Senate and to pass it in the House. As the amount of variation in the dependent variable declines, it becomes more difficult to discern a statistical association with any of the independent variables, particularly given the relatively small number of observations available here. Nevertheless, there is still a statistically significant relationship between export income and support for the bill in both the House and Senate. As the predicted probabilities suggest, the effects are smaller than they were in the case of the Gore and McLemore resolutions.

[Table 6 about here.]

In the case of the Cooper amendment, the vote with the greatest proportion of members on the losing side, the results closely resemble those concerning the Gore and

⁴ The provision of these weapons was not as futile as it would be against modern submarines. The U-boats of the First World War carried only a few torpedoes and could not remain submerged for very long periods of time. Whenever possible, U-boat commanders preferred to engage merchant ships on the surface with their guns.

McLemore resolutions. Unless they came from a state that had a relatively large population with national loyalties opposed to the Allied cause, Democrats tended to vote against the amendment. Lacking the motive of loyalty to the President, Republicans supported the amendment if their state received less-than-average benefits from the export boom, or had a high proportion of its population born in the Central Powers or Ireland.

The Declaration of War, April 1917

Wilson was inaugurated for his second term on March 5th. Complaining of a severe cold, he sequestered himself in the White House two days later, and saw few members of his administration until March 20th (Devlin 1975, 658-9; May 1959, 424-5). No peace overtures arrived from Germany, but Wilson received news of several American ships sunk by the U-boats. (As the data in Figure 2 indicate, the U-boat campaign took a heavy toll in March, largely because the Allies had not yet decided to use the convoy system.) At some point during this period, he made the decision to summon the new Congress early—it would not normally have convened until December—and ask for a declaration of war. He addressed Congress on April 2. The Senate approved the declaration of war two days later, 82-6. The House followed suit on April 5, 373-50.

Table 7 presents the results of probit models of these two votes. Export income was not a statistically significant predictor of the lopsided Senate vote, although the national origin of Senators' home state population was. In the House, however, both were statistically significantly related to the probability of supporting the war resolution. As in the other votes examined so far, the effects of both wartime trade and the national origins of their state's population were larger on Republicans than on Democrats, who were constrained by party loyalty.

[Table 7 about here.]

Overall, congressional voting on these seven war-related measures provides strong evidence for the revisionist claim that export income played an important role in shaping support and opposition to intervention. In spite of the various sources of measurement error in the indicators of export income used here, they have statistically significant and substantively important effects on a range of votes concerning the war. At the same time, the results presented here indicate that economic interests were not the only consideration that mattered. The national origins of the population in different regions of the country also strongly influenced congressional voting. Loyalty to Woodrow Wilson also influenced Democrats in key instances such as the votes on the Gore and McLemore resolutions.

Conclusion

This evidence reviewed here suggests that the revisionist claim that the export boom associated with the war influenced the American decision to intervene deserves to be reconsidered. First, given its size relative to the U.S. economy, the export boom, like an elephant in the room, would have been difficult for any politician to ignore. Some important accounts of U.S. entry into the war miss this point. Dismissing economic concerns in Woodrow Wilson's March 1917 deliberations over a possible declaration of

war, May (1959, 426) writes that "[t]here was no longer a compelling economic reason for resisting the German blockade. American had become so prosperous that she could afford to lose part of her trade with the Allies."⁵ Statements like this one rest uneasily with evidence that exports comprised nearly 11 percent of GNP in 1917, and that nearly 70 percent of them were bound for Europe. The United States economy would certainly have recovered from the loss of a substantial part of this trade, but the political fortunes of the politicians who permitted it to happen might not have.

Second, the U.S. response to the German submarine threat paralleled the size of the export boom and the German success in destroying shipping. In the spring of 1915, when the export boom was just beginning, the American response was relatively low-key, in spite of the deaths of a relatively large number of Americans in the sinking of the *Lusitania*. In 1916, when exports were much greater, so was the U.S. response. Woodrow Wilson threatened to sever diplomatic relations with Germany if submarine warfare were not restricted. In 1917, the refusal of the Germans to curtail their largest submarine campaign led to war.

Third, differences in export income across the 48 states strongly influenced support for war-related measures in Congress. This evidence is particularly important for the revisionist case, because their argument hinges on the effect of exports on the political environment. Woodrow Wilson may have made the ultimate decision for war, but he did not do so in a vacuum. Even historians who dismiss the role of the export boom emphasize Wilson's concerns about the political environment when he decided to ask for a declaration of war (e.g., May 1959, 430). The results concerning congressional voting suggest that differences in export income were one major source of pressure for war. Export income was clearly not the only consideration that influenced congressional voting, but its effects were substantial.

This paper has not exhausted the testable generalizations implied by the revisionist argument. For example, it has not considered the role of import-competing portions of the United States economy. Interests that were sheltered from foreign competition by the war might have viewed it very differently from those with a major stake in exports. Similarly, exporters who displaced European goods in Latin American and Asian markets during the war had much less stake in the war than those exporting to Europe. Although records of these exports are not available in published sources, they may yet exist. If the revisionist argument about the political environment is correct, then members of congress whose voting record was at odds with the economic interests of their constituents should be more likely to be removed from office. The results of the 1916 and 1918 elections might provide the evidence needed to test this hypothesis. Finally, the revisionist argument suggests that the sharp drop in trade after the end of the war should have affected support for the postwar role of the United States in the world. Frieden (1988) offers some preliminary evidence that this is indeed the case. Other such generalizations are possible.

The evidence reviewed here strongly suggests that the revisionist argument should be reconsidered, but it does not exclude other possible explanations for the decision to

⁵ May follows this comment by noting that "[t]he unrestricted submarine campaign had seemed thus far to be relatively ineffective." As the evidence presented in Figure 2 indicates, this assertion is incorrect.

intervene. Indeed, the voting analysis might provide the basis for a stronger argument concerning the role of ethnic politics in the decision. Ultimately, evidence supporting the revisionist claim must be weighed against that supporting alternative accounts. Before such a comparison can be undertaken, however, the alternative arguments must be specified in a clear and falsifiable way. Just as the revisionist claim about the role of economic interests implied testable generalizations about the size of the export boom, and the political effects of differences in income from it, so generalizations from other arguments should be set out and tested against empirical evidence.

Many contemporary explanations for U.S. entry into World War I imply few such testable generalizations. For example, accounts stressing security interests define these considerations in very vague terms, encompassing not only observable conditions, such as the military strength of rival states, but also considerations of national prestige, ideological goals for world order, and the like.⁶ Such definitions make it difficult to say when "security concerns," as a particular author understands them, are actually at stake so that one can attempt to observe their expected effects on the policy making process. This problem is even more acute for accounts focusing principally on the mind of Woodrow Wilson, since this adds yet another set of unobservable intervening variables between causes and outcomes.⁷ In addition to the difficulties of specifying the environmental conditions that influenced Wilson, these works confront the problem of parsing the enormous volume of things he said and wrote in order to determine which of these statements reflected his real views, and which were intended mainly to sell his policies to various domestic or international audiences.

An emphasis on the empirical testing of theoretical arguments is not the approach most diplomatic historians have adopted. For reasons of disciplinary tradition, it is not likely to appeal to them. Nevertheless, empirically substantiated theoretical arguments are indispensable in the development of convincing accounts of any historical process. Because historical processes cannot be fully observed, even by those who lived through them, they must be reconstructed from the fragmentary bits of evidence they leave behind. Theoretical generalizations are the only available means for linking some observation from the census data with a letter found in the archives, as well as filling in the many gaps in the evidence, in order to produce a coherent story of what happened. Those who use historical evidence, regardless of what kind, must have in mind the outlines of some process that produced the outcome they want to explain. Otherwise, they would not only not know where to look for evidence, they would not even know what counted as evidence at all. Of course, it is possible to construct a historical narrative without self-consciously constructing a theoretical argument first. Unfortunately, this course of action leaves the researcher open to the influence not only of his or her unexamined presuppositions about the process being reconstructed, but also to the effects of chance and circumstance on the body of evidence he or she has chosen to

⁶ Examples include May 1959 and Cooper 1965. For a review of recent works making this type of argument, see Kennedy 2001.

⁷ Notable examples include Devlin 1975 and George and George 1964. Even Sigmund Freud himself wrote a psychological study of Wilson (Freud and Bullitt 1967).

study out of habit or custom. In quantitative research, this procedure is analogous to performing a stepwise regression on a dataset selected because everyone else uses it.

More than just practical tools for reconstructing the past, theoretical generalizations give historical accounts some of their value. People who are not particularly interested in the American role in the First World War may be very interested in how decisions to intervene in overseas conflicts are made more generally. The revisionist account of American entry into the First World War has broader implications of this sort. Ironically, these broader implications are probably the reason it was so important in the 1930s, and has been so widely shunned since that time. Regardless of how one feels about the merits of American intervention in the two world wars, the revisionist argument about the origins of American "national interests" deserves renewed attention.

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Table 1.
Wartime Cotton Prices and Cotton Exports

Year	Price Index (1913=100)	Export Quantity Index (1913=100)	Export Value (millions of dollars)
1913	100.0	100.0	575.5
1914	81.5	73.3	343.9
1915	74.4	97.3	417.0
1916	116.5	81.3	545.5
1917	180.9	55.2	575.3
1918	247.9	47.3	674.1
1919	263.0	75.1	1,137.4

Source: Lipsey (1963, 251, 256, 261)

Table 2.
Categories of Production and Export in Manufacturing, Mining, and Agriculture

Food and kindred products	Tobacco manufactures
Dairy	Vehicles for land transportation
Meat	Automobiles
Canned seafood	Railway cars
Preserved fruits and vegetables	Other land vehicles
Chocolate	Miscellaneous industries
Coffee and spices	Aeroplanes and parts
Confections	Agricultural implements
Flour	Dental goods
Bread	Furs and products
Glucose and starch	Electrical machinery
Peanut processing	Instruments, professional and scientific
Rice processing	Musical instruments
Sugar	Pens and pencils
Vinegar and cider	Perfumery and cosmetics
Textiles	Phonographs and gramophones
Textile fabrics	Photographic goods
Apparel	Rubber
Other textiles	Mineral products
Iron and steel products	Coal
Steel mill products	Oil, crude
Irons and steel manufactures	Iron ore
Lumber and its remanufactures	Copper ore
Lumber and timber	Farm products
Wood manufactures	Cattle
Leather and its finished products	Swine
Leather	Horses
Leather manufactures	Mules
Paper and printing	Sheep
Paper and wood pulp	Wool
Manufactures of paper	Wheat
Printing and publishing	Corn
Liquors and beverages	Oats
Chemicals and related products	Barley
Chemicals	Rye
Refined gas and oil	Rice
Stone, clay, and glass products	Cotton
Stone and manufactures	Tobacco
Clay and manufactures	Hay
Glass and manufactures	Potatoes
Metals and metal products, other than iron and steel	
Metals other than iron and steel	
Metal products, not iron and steel	

Sources: Exports—*Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1920*, table 294; Value-added in manufacturing by state and industry—*Abstract of the Census of Manufactures, 1914*, table 223; Agricultural production—*Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1922*, tables 96, 106, 115-24; Mineral production—*Census of the United States, 1920, Volume XI: Mines and Quarries, 1919*.

Table 3.
Economic Structure, Export Income, and Foreign-Born Population

	Dependent Variable			
	Annual export income per capita, 1911-14	Change in annual export income through 1915	Percentage of population born in Entente countries	Percentage of population born in Central Powers or Ireland
Manufacturing, per capita value added in thousands of dollars	0.15* (0.02)	0.11* (0.01)	0.05* (0.01)	0.04* (0.01)
Cotton production, bales per capita	32.45* (3.58)	-10.17* (2.56)	-4.31 (2.70)	-3.36 (1.79)
Wheat production, bushels per capita	0.12* (0.04)	0.34* (0.03)	0.03 (0.03)	0.03 (0.02)
Constant	7.15* (1.86)	2.27* (1.34)	2.81 (1.41)	1.95* (0.93)
Adjusted R-squared	0.67	0.86	0.30	0.42
Observations	47	47	48	48

Note: The unit of analysis is the state. Arizona was excluded from the models of annual export income. All independent variables are measured in 1914. The asterisk indicates statistical significance at the $p < 0.05$ level in a two-tailed test.

Table 4.
Economic Structure and Party Affiliation in Congress

	Democratic Party Affiliation			
	64th Congress		65th Congress	
	House	Senate	House	Senate
Manufacturing, per capita value added in thousands of dollars	-0.007* (0.003)	-0.008* (0.004)	-0.007* (0.003)	-0.014* (0.003)
Cotton production, bales per capita	2.40* (0.50)	3.14* (1.49)	2.32* (0.58)	2.66* (1.24)
Wheat production, bushels per capita	-0.014* (0.007)	-0.017* (0.008)	-0.016* (0.008)	-0.020* (0.007)
Constant	0.568 (0.349)	0.747 (0.444)	0.470 (0.383)	1.063* (0.353)
Number of observations	444	100	457	111
Percent correctly predicted	71.4	67.0	74.6	76.6

Note: The 64th Congress, elected in November 1914, began meeting in December 1915, and adjourned in March 1917. It cast all the votes modeled here except the declaration of war, which was the first vote taken by the 65th Congress, elected in November 1916. The independent variables are measured in 1914. Robust standard errors adjusted for clustering on the state are in parentheses. The asterisk indicates statistical significance at the $p < 0.05$ level in a two-tailed test.

Table 5.
Probit Models of Voting on the Gore and McLemore Resolutions, March 1916

	Senate motion to table the Gore resolution (Passed, 73-14)	House motion to table the McLemore resolution (Passed, 277-144)
Change in annual export income through 1916	0.03* (0.02)	0.04* (0.01)
Percentage of population born in Entente countries	0.03 (0.05)	0.11* (0.06)
Percentage of population born in Central Powers or Ireland	-0.18* (0.06)	-0.25* (0.07)
Democrat	1.51* (0.48)	1.17* (0.24)
Constant	0.36 (0.48)	-0.25* (0.25)
Observations	85	421
Percent Correctly Predicted	84.7	74.1

Note: The Gore and McLemore resolutions would have prohibited the issuing of passports for travel on ships owned by belligerent states. Paired votes and announced positions are treated as "yes" or "no" votes, so the margins indicated here may differ slightly from those in the *Congressional Record*. The successful motion to table killed these resolutions. Robust standard errors adjusted for clustering on the state are in parentheses. The asterisk indicates statistical significance at the $p < 0.05$ level in a one-tailed test.

Predicted Probability of a "Yes" Vote

	Table Gore Resolution		Table McLemore Resolution	
	Democrat	Republican	Democrat	Republican
Change in annual export income through 1916:				
Regional minimum (7)	0.93	0.48	0.63	0.20
Mean: (21)	0.97	0.67	0.82	0.40
Regional maximum (44)	>0.99	0.88	0.96	0.72
Percentage of population born in Central Powers or Ireland:				
Regional minimum (0.5)	>0.99	0.88	0.98	0.81
Mean: (4.5)	0.98	0.68	0.93	0.62
Regional maximum (11.3)	0.76	0.21	0.39	0.07

Table 6.
Probit Models of Voting on the Armed Ship Bill, March 1917

	Senate		House	
	Motion to consider armed ship bill (Passed, 76-14)	Cooper amendment (Defeated, 125- 292)	Passage of armed ship bill (Passed, 402-13)	
Change in annual export income through 1917	0.04* (0.02)	-0.03* (0.01)	0.03* (0.01)	
Percentage of population born in Entente countries	0.08 (0.06)	-0.14* (0.05)	0.06 (0.05)	
Percentage of population born in Central Powers or Ireland	-0.29* (0.08)	0.18* (0.04)	-0.17* (0.05)	
Democrat	1.46* (0.51)	-0.71* (0.17)	0.41 (0.38)	
Constant	0.82 (0.54)	0.15 (0.22)	1.89* (0.35)	
Observations	90	417	415	
Percent correctly predicted	90.0	75.3	96.9	

Note: The armed ship bill would have authorized the Navy to provide defensive weapons to American merchant ships bound for Europe. The Cooper amendment would have prohibited the shipment of contraband material on these ships. The Senate vote brought the armed ship bill to the floor, where opponents successfully blocked its passage with a filibuster. Paired votes and announced positions are treated as "yes" or "no" votes, so the margins indicated here may differ slightly from those in the *Congressional Record*. Robust standard errors adjusted for clustering on the state are in parentheses. The asterisk indicates statistical significance at the $p < 0.05$ level in a one-tailed test.

	Predicted Probability of a "Yes" Vote					
	Senate motion to consider bill		Cooper amendment to House bill		Passage of House bill	
	Dem.	Repub.	Dem.	Repub.	Dem.	Repub.
Change in annual export income through 1917:						
Regional minimum (3)	0.93	0.51	0.34	0.61	0.96	0.91
Mean: (19)	0.98	0.73	0.21	0.45	0.98	0.96
Regional maximum (40)	>0.99	0.92	0.09	0.26	>0.99	>0.99
Percentage of population born in Central Powers or Ireland:						
Regional minimum (0.5)	>0.99	0.97	0.02	0.11	>0.99	>0.99
Mean: (4.5)	0.98	0.74	0.11	0.31	0.99	0.98
Regional maximum (11.3)	0.53	0.08	0.52	0.77	0.91	0.83

Table 7.
Probit Models of Votes to Declare War on Germany, April 1917

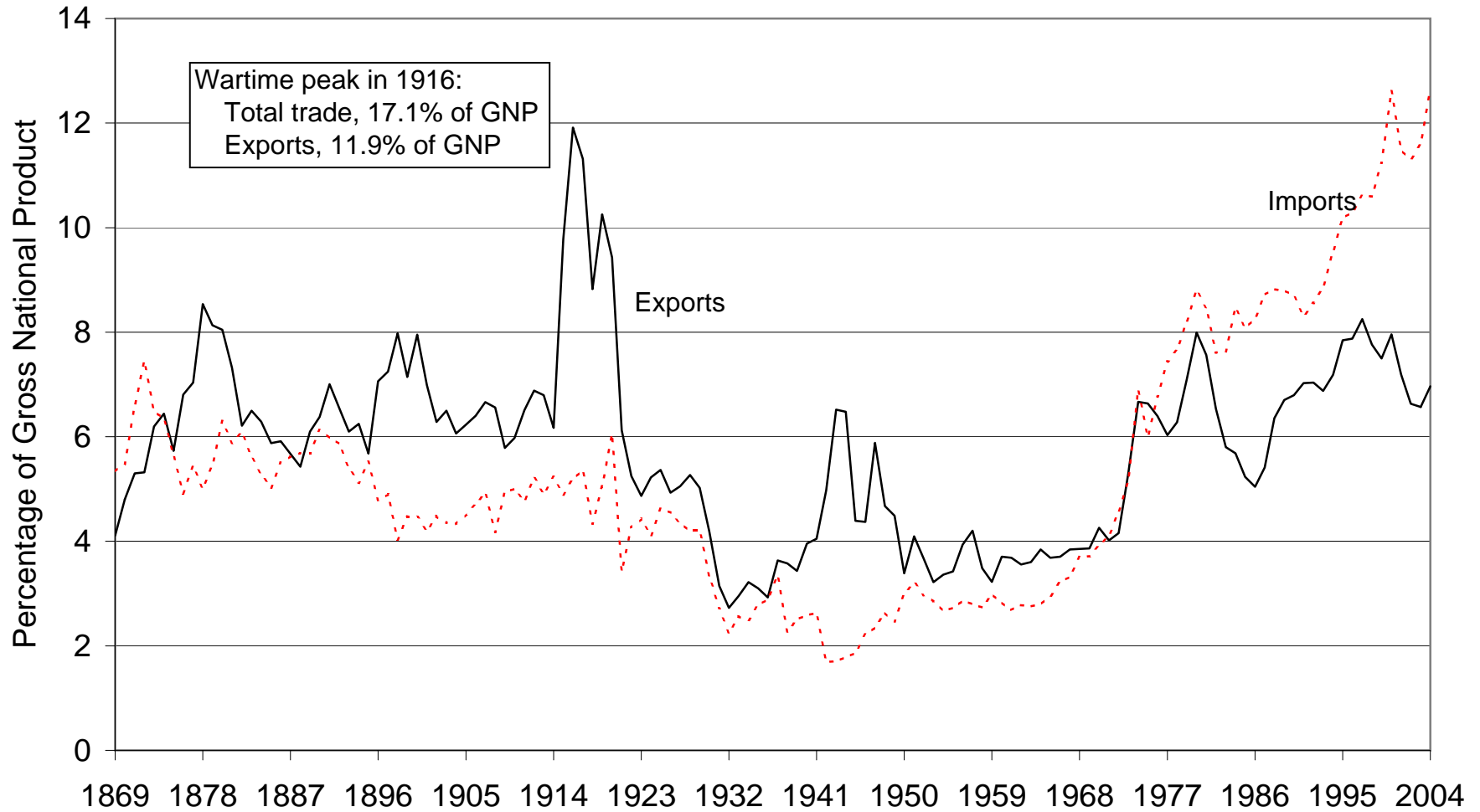
	Senate declaration of war resolution (Passed, 87-6)	House declaration of war resolution (Passed, 374-50)
Change in annual export income through 1917	0.02 (0.02)	0.05* (0.01)
Percentage of population born in Entente countries	0.16* (0.07)	0.11* (0.05)
Percentage of population born in Central Powers or Ireland	-0.17* (0.07)	-0.24* (0.04)
Democrat	0.30 (0.46)	0.37* (0.24)
Constant	1.12* (0.48)	0.87 (0.27)
Observations	93	424
Percent correctly predicted	93.6	89.9

Note: Paired votes and announced positions are treated as "yes" or "no" votes, so the margins indicated here may differ slightly from those in the *Congressional Record*. Robust standard errors adjusted for clustering on the state are in parentheses. The asterisk indicates statistical significance at the $p < 0.05$ level in a one-tailed test.

Predicted Probability of a "Yes" Vote

	Senate war resolution		House war resolution	
	Democrat	Republican	Democrat	Republican
Change in annual export income through 1916:				
Regional minimum (3)	--	--	0.72	0.59
Mean: (19)	--	--	0.91	0.83
Regional maximum (40)	--	--	0.98	0.97
Percentage of population born in Central Powers or Ireland:				
Regional minimum (0.5)	>0.99	0.99	>0.99	0.99
Mean: (4.5)	0.97	0.95	0.97	0.94
Regional maximum (11.3)	0.95	0.76	0.61	0.47

Figure 1.
Trade and the American Economy, 1869-2004



Sources--GNP, 1869-1928: Balke and Gordon (1989); 1929-2004: Department of Commerce; Exports and Imports, 1869-1966: NBER Macrohistory Database, series m07023 and m07028; 1967-2004: Department of Commerce

Figure 2.
The Export Boom and the U-Boat Campaign

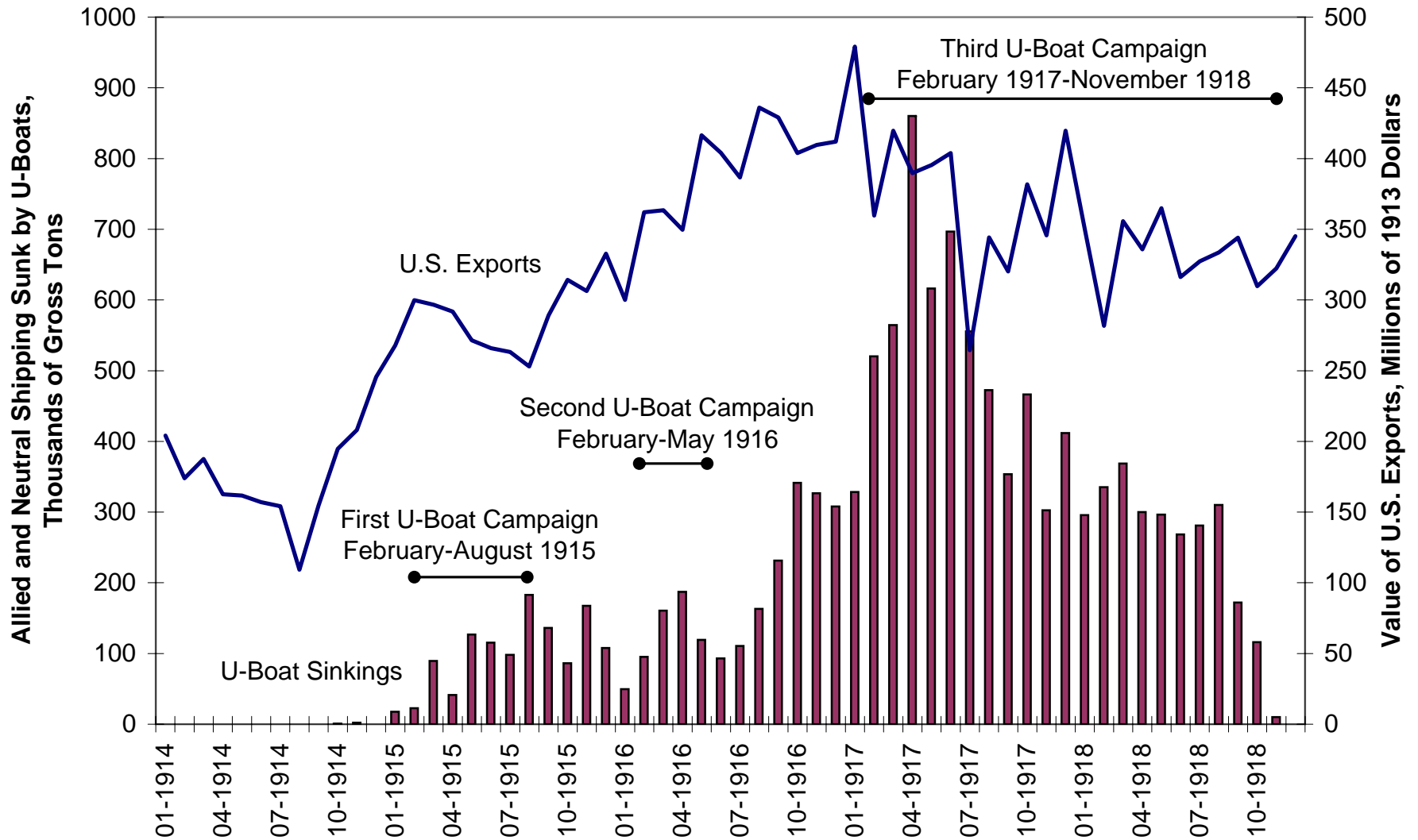
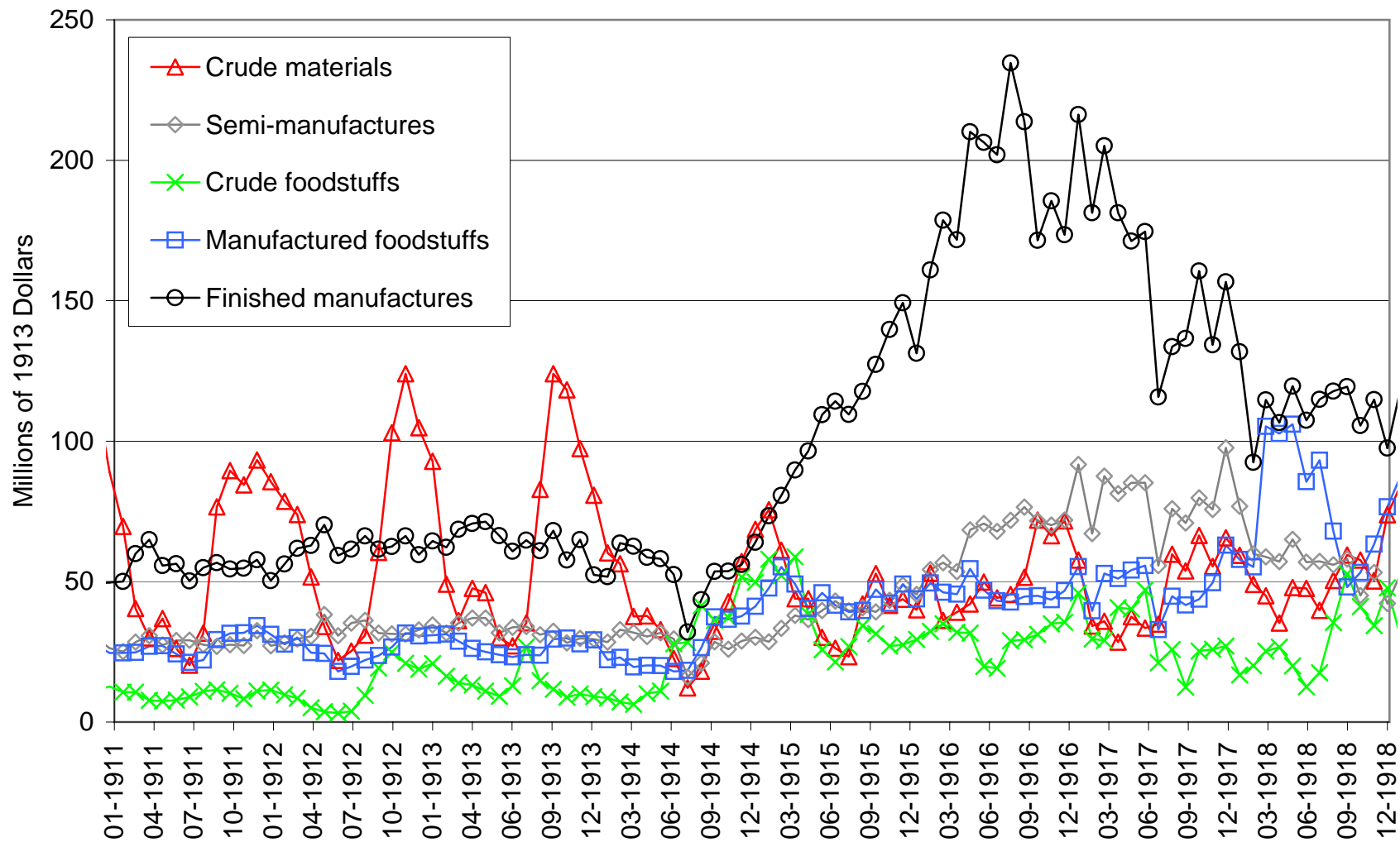


Figure 3.
Monthly US Exports by Class, 1911-18



Source: NBER Macrohistory Database, export data: series m07001, m07002, m07003, m07004, m07005; general price level: series m04051

Figure 4.
Regional Export Income and Gains from Wartime Trade

