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State Visits and International Trade*

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Abstract

Politicians travel extensively abroad, for various reasons. One purpose of external visits is to improve bilateral economic relations. In this paper, I examine the effect of state visits on international trade. I use a large data set covering the travel activities of the heads of state of France, Germany and the United States between 1948 and 2003. My results indicate that state and official visits are indeed positively correlated with exports.

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Keywords: head; president; government; politics; gravity

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