Knowledge of Job Insecurity and Policy Preferences

Study Information

Hypotheses

Hypotheses:
1. Workers with the knowledge that a particular option threatens them more will oppose that option more than workers without this knowledge.

2. Workers with the knowledge that a particular option threatens them less will oppose that option less than workers without this knowledge.

3. Workers that receive a noisy signal of threat will oppose all options more than workers that do not receive a noisy signal of threat.

4. Workers that receive a noisy signal of threat and have knowledge that a particular option threatens them less will oppose that option less than workers who only receive a noisy signal of threat.

5. Workers with the knowledge that a particular option threatens them more will oppose that option more than workers who only receive a noisy threat signal.

6. An unspecified signal of threat will cause heightened opposition towards migration, in comparison to automation, offshoring, and import penetration.

Design Plan

Study type

Experiment - A researcher randomly assigns treatments to study subjects, this includes field or lab experiments. This is also known as an intervention experiment and includes randomized controlled trials.

Blinding

For studies that involve human subjects, they will not know the treatment group to which they have been assigned.

Personnel who interact directly with the study subjects (either human or non-human subjects) will not be aware of the assigned treatments. (Commonly known as “double blind”)

Is there any additional blinding in this study?

When the open-ended occupation questions from respondents are being used to automatically code occupation groups, the dataset used in this automatic coding will not included any variables other than an identifying I.D. variables an a workers responses to the open-ended occupation questions.

Study design

This experiment and the pilot study will be conducted online through Prolific's survey platform. The full experiment will be conducted after the pilot experiment. If the pilot experiment finds that the treatments do not effectively induce a sense of job insecurity, the treatment design of the full experiment will be updated, and an IRB addendum will be submitted to reflect the new material. If the pilot experiment finds that the treatments are effective at inducing a sense of job insecurity, the experiment will occur as detailed by this protocol following the pilot experiment.

For the experiment, respondents will be given a survey experiment that is expected to take less than ten minutes of their time. Respondents will be asked to describe their policy opinions towards automation, migration, offshoring, and imports. They will be exposed to a treatment, asked a series of demographic questions, and then asked their opinions on automation, migration, offshoring, and imports again.

For the pilot experiment, respondents will be given the treatments and asked about their feelings of job insecurity, and a series of demographics will be collected. The pilot experiment should take less than 5 minutes of a respondent's time.

This experiment will be a 3x2 pre-post experiment. It will temporarily manipulate respondents' perceptions of occupation-level job insecurity by prompting them to consider how certain economic processes may or may not threaten their occupation. The unspecified heightened risk condition aims to instill a general sense of job insecurity that respondents cannot attribute to a particular source. The expectation is that respondents who receive this unspecified signal of threat will be more likely to oppose all options. The purpose of the automation heightened risk condition is to instill a heightened sense of job insecurity towards automation. The expectation in this condition is that respondents' posttreatment opinion towards automation should be lower than their pre-treatment opinion towards automation. Lastly, the lowered risk of migration treatment is designed to reduce the perceived job insecurity caused by migration to participants. The expectation is that respondents in this condition will hold less opposition towards migration following their treatment.

The pilot experiment aims to determine whether the treatments effectively induce feelings of occupation-level job insecurity. In the general experiment, we only observed the treatment and policy preferences of the respondents. This pilot ensures that the treatments genuinely induce feelings of job insecurity and will be conducted before the experiment in case the treatments are ineffective at inducing feelings of job insecurity. In that instance, an addendum to the IRB application will be filed with new treatment designs, and an additional pilot experiment will be conducted with the new treatment designs.

The pilot experiment will only have four conditions and will be a 4x1 between-subject experiment. It will include the same treatments as the general experiment.

The full anonymized pilot experiment and experiment materials are attached below, as well as an anonymized version of the IRB proposal submitted for the experiment and pilot experiment.

- Experiment_Protocol_ANON.pdf
- Experiment_Full_anon.pdf
- Pilot_Experiment_Full_ANON.pdf

Randomization

For the experiment and the pilot experiment, simple random assignment will be used to assign participants to one of six conditions. Each respondent has a 1 out of 6 chance of being assigned to any particular treatment condition. For the pilot experiment, respondents have a 1 out of 4 change of being assigned to any particular treatment condition.

Sampling Plan

Existing Data

Registration prior to creation of data

Explanation of existing data

No response

Data collection procedures

The data will be collected entirely online through the survey platform Prolific.

Experiment:
Inclusion Criteria: This experiment will require 2500 respondents. These respondents will be over 18 and English speaking and can take the survey through Prolific's online platform.
Since this experiment is designed to instill a sense of job insecurity, the sample will only include respondents who are employed full-time or part-time and non-students.
Exclusion Criteria : Since one of the treatments is designed to reduce job insecurity towards migrants, migrant populations are excluded from the sample to focus on the political opinions of native-born labor.

Respondents will be screened before the experiment through the Prolific platform to exclude participants who do not meet these criteria. A screenshot of the experiment screener is shown below. This screener will ensure that only participants who meet this criteria can take the survey. This experiment will not include children or adults unable to consent.

Pilot Experiment
Inclusion Criteria: This pilot experiment will require 750 respondents. These respondents will be over 18 and English speaking and can take the survey through Prolific's online platform.
Since this pilot experiment is designed to instill a sense of job insecurity, the sample will only include respondents who are employed full-time or part-time and non-students.

Exclusion Criteria : Since one of the treatments is designed to reduce job insecurity towards migrants, migrant populations are excluded from the sample to focus on the political opinions of native-born labor. Respondents will be screened before the experiment through the Prolific platform to exclude participants who do not meet these criteria. A screenshot of the experiment screener is shown above. This screener will ensure that only participants who meet this criteria can take the survey. This experiment will not include children or adults unable to consent.

No files selected

Sample size

A sample of 2500 individuals will be collected for the experiment. A sample of 750 will be collected for the pilot experiment.

Sample size rationale

The sample size for the pilot experiment and the experiment are taken from a power analysis. The power analyses for these are shown in full in the power analysis pdf document.

Stopping rule

No response

Variables

Manipulated variables

The treatments will manipulate the perceived occupational susceptibly towards a particular option. The automation treatment increases the perceived risk towards automation, the migration treatment reduces the perceived risk towards migration, and the general risk treatment increase the perceived risk towards all processes.

No files selected

Measured variables

The first variables that will be collected from this experiment are variables regarding survey completion. Specifically, the survey will collect data on when an individual started the experiment and ended the experiment, the percentage of the experiment that was completed by a respondent, and how long a respondent took to completed the experiment. The experiment also collects respondents support for restricting automation, offshoring, migration, and imports on a 1. Not at all Restrict ___ to 5. Entirely Restrict ___ scale. Respondents will also be asked about their employment status, their income levels, their union membership, and their occupation. Lastly their race, education, ethnicity, age, gender, county, and state will be collected. Lastly, their party membership and partisanship will be collected, as well as which treatment condition a respondent was assigned to. Two variables will also be collected on whether a respondent passed the two attention checks of the study.

Refer to the attached full experiment materials to see the question wording for all options.

No files selected

Indices

This study's independent variables are the workers' objective occupational risk, perceived occupational risks, and certainty in these perceptions. To measure workers' objective occupational risks, this research project will utilize risk indexes created by previous researchers (Acemoglu and Johnson 2005; Blinder et al. 2009; Frey and Osborne 2017; Casabianca, Lo Turco, and Pigini 2019). These indexes are created from expert coding of occupations based on O*Net descriptions of job tasks and measure how susceptible an occupation is to certain economic processes. These indexes are commonly used in political science research to test the effects of the risk of migration, offshoring, automation, and trade on workers' opinions and behaviors (Kaihovaara and Im 2020; Owen and Johnston 2017; Goos, Manning, and Salomons 2014; Wu 2022; Wan et al. 2023; Casabianca, Lo Turco, and Pigini 2019). To use these indexes, occupation data on the ISCO-08 level will be collected using three open-ended occupation questions. To code these open-ended occupation questions into ISCO-08 occupation categories, automatic coding software will be utilized. Three such automatic software to automatically code open-ended occupation questions are AUTONOC, CASCOT (Computer-Assisted Structured Coding Tool), and LabourR. However, some authors have found disagreement in the automatic coding of occupation between these programs (Wan et al. 2023). To address this concern, the main results of this study will be conducted using each of these separate coding programs as robustness checks, as well as on a subset of occupation codings that have the highest agreement across these alternative programs.

References

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Analysis Plan

Statistical models

The results of this experiment will be tested using t-tests and ordinal regression. Specifically, these models will test whether the differences in the pre and post outcome opinions between between treatment groups are statistically significant and in the expected directions based on the hypotheses. The main models will be t-tests. The main models will not include control variables, but additional models will be conducted testing whether the treatment effect results hold while controlling for the sociodemographic variables included in the experiment and pilot experiment. These supplementary models will be conducted using ordinal regression. Lastly, some exploratory models will conducted exploring how the treatment effects may be moderated across demographics, occupations, income groups, and regions.

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Transformations

The county-level economic variables will be coded into septiles.

Inference criteria

This project uses the standard $p<.05$ criteria for determine if the t-tests and ordinal regression models are statistically significant.

Data exclusion

Two attention checks will be utilized in the study. The main results will remove respondents who fail both attention checks. Models including the full sample without any removal will be including in the Appendix.

Missing data

Additionally, if a subject does not include responses to the pre and post outcome variables, they will not be included in the analysis.

Exploratory analysis

This study will explore whether there are differences in the treatment effect across occupational groups, regions, or demographic groups.

Other

Other

No response