

PROTOCOL TITLE:

Knowledge of Job Insecurities and Policy Preferences

Protocol VERSION DATE: 4/17/2024

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:

ANON

CO-INVESTIGATORS:

ANON

STUDENT INVESTIGATORS: N/A

Is this study is part of a dissertation or thesis:

☒ Yes☐ No

Check any **applicable** boxes in the table below – you will be asked for further detail on these topics later in the protocol form:

<input type="checkbox"/> International Research (check this box if you will collect data from individuals located outside the United States) List the locations:
<input type="checkbox"/> Research involving external collaborators (Non-TAMU personnel). List any external personnel and their organization:
<input type="checkbox"/> This research has U.S. Federal government funding via one or more direct awards or a sub-award. Provide the source of federal support:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All other sources of funding:

1.0 Purpose of the Study:

Advances in automation and communication technology threaten occupations. Walking robots are replacing warehouse workers (Delfanti 2021); artificial intelligence developments threaten high-skilled labor such as legal aids (Chouhan 2019; Grennan and Michaely 2020), and advances in communication technology ease firms' outsourcing of offshorable occupations to states with lower labor costs (Mageo 2022; Grossman and Helpman 2005).

Whereas previous trends in job insecurity were largely driven by exposure to trade across industries (Farber, Hall, and Pencavel 1993; Kletzer et al. 2005), sectors (Wood 1986; Broersma and Gautier 1997), or skill levels (Farber 2004; DeFrank and Ivancevich 1986), many modern economic threats apply to the specific tasks of a worker's occupation (David 2013; Acemoglu and Autor 2011; Acemoglu, Ticchi, and Vindigni 2011). As these threats move from larger groups of workers, such as high-skilled workers, to smaller groups, such as medical transcriptionists, it may be more difficult for workers to collect accurate information about their job insecurity¹. In fact, several recent studies find evidence that ill-informed workers misattribute occupational-level job insecurity from automation or offshoring to migrant labor (Wu 2022, 2023; Kaihovaara and Im 2020).

This research asks how do workers react to job insecurity to form policy preferences and how accurate are workers' perceptions of job insecurity? The existing scholarship is split. While some scholars find evidence of misattribution, many political economists assume that workers correctly attribute the source of their job insecurity and these scholars find evidence that workers oppose the options that threaten them (Owen and Johnston 2017; Im 2021; Im et al. 2019; Casabianca, Lo Turco, and Pignini 2019). Notably, neither group of scholars directly observe workers' perceptions of job insecurity but rather assume correct or incorrect perceptions based on their occupations.

My dissertation can theoretically consolidate these disparate findings and will observe workers' perceptions of job insecurity directly. My dissertation's theory examines how job insecurities influence workers' policy preferences, contingent on workers' perceptions. Following prospect theory, this project expects workers' policy opinions to be driven by loss aversion and should oppose the options they believe may threaten them (Barberis 2013; Camerer et al. 2004).

The current iteration of this project will focus primarily on exploring what effects knowledge of job insecurities should have on workers' policy opinions. There are two types of workers within this theory: knowledgeable and unknowledgeable. A **knowledgeable** worker has accurate perceptions of their job insecurities and is expected to oppose the options that threaten him and to have a lower opposition to the options that do not.

On the contrary, I assume that **unknowledgeable** workers receive a noisy signal of threat and do not have clear perceptions of their job insecurities. For example, they may witness layoffs in similar occupations. Under this noisy signal, unknowledgeable workers may think that their job is insecure but cannot attribute it to a particular source. In this case, workers are expected to oppose any option that could threaten their employment. An unknowledgeable worker in this theory facing an offshoring risk would oppose offshoring, migration, automation, and import penetration. This theory expects that the opposition of knowledgeable workers to an option that

threatens them should be greater than the opposition of an unknowledgeable worker, as a knowledgeable should know that a particular option threatens them with certainty, while an unknowledgeable worker should not. The general logic of this theory is shown below in Table 1.

TABLE 1. *Expectations of How Workers React to Signals of Job Insecurity*

	Opposition to options that threaten them	Opposition to options that do not threaten them
Can Attribute Source	Greatly Increased	Baseline
Cannot Attribute Source	Increased	Increased

The logic from this table will be tested using the following five hypotheses. Additionally, to test whether workers are more likely to blame migrants when they cannot attribute the source of their job insecurity—following the misattribution literature—a sixth hypothesis is included.

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.

To ensure that the treatments effectively instill senses of job insecurity, a pilot experiment will be conducted prior to the full experiment.

2.0 Background / Literature Review / Rationale for the study:

The proposed project joins a recent wave of political economy literature that utilizes the task approach to predict policy opinions (Wu 2022; Owen and Johnston 2017; Kaihovaara and Im 2020.). The task approach looks at units of work activities conducted in occupations, as the types of workplace tasks determine how susceptible a worker's occupation is to replacement from certain economic processes (David 2013). For example, occupations with tasks requiring work from a particular domestic location are less susceptible to offshoring (Blinder et al. 2009). The logic of the task approach is that if workers' economic policy opinions are driven by a desire to maintain their employment and maximize their wages, then the unique susceptibilities of an individual's occupation to different economic processes should influence their policy preferences.

This project will contribute to this literature in two ways. The first contribution of this project will be to settle the debate regarding whether workers properly attribute the source of their occupation-level job insecurity. This project's theory examines how job insecurities influence workers' policy preferences, contingent on workers' perceptions. Following prospect theory, this project expects workers' policy opinions to be driven by loss aversion and expects workers to oppose the economic processes they perceive as threatening their labor (Barberis 2013; Camerer et al. 2004).

In addition, novel data will be collected as the second contribution of this project. Very few political science surveys include occupation questions detailed enough to utilize the task approach. The few surveys that collect detailed occupation data do not collect data on workers' perceptions of occupation-level job insecurity. This lack of data leaves scholars to make divergent assumptions regarding whether workers can correctly attribute the source of their job insecurity rather than simply collecting workers' perceptions of these risks. Determining whether workers are genuinely aware of their occupation-level job insecurities is a critical first step if scholars seek to make causal claims regarding how job insecurity drives policy preferences.

ANON

3.0 Inclusion and exclusion criteria:

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.

Chapter_2_Survey_Screener

Current Country of Residence
United States

Fluent languages
English

Country of Birth
United States

Employment Status
Full-Time, Part-Time

Student Status
No

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.

4.0 Procedures Involved:

Please check the boxes for all applicable data collection procedures you plan to use:

- ☐ One-on-one interviews
- ☐ Focus Groups
- ☒ Questionnaires/surveys
- ☐ Secondary Data Analysis (medical record data, educational records, government or private sector datasets, etc.)
- ☐ Ethnographic observation
- ☐ Physiological measurements (e.g., EEG, EKG, MRI)
- ☐ Biospecimen collection (saliva samples, blood draws, hair samples, etc.)
- ☐ Mobile applications/data collection devices (e.g., Fitbits, actigraphs, etc.)
- ☐ Behavioral decision making tasks (e.g., puzzles, interactive games, etc.)
- ☐ Physical activities such as walking and other forms of exercise
- ☐ Other procedures (briefly list types of procedures here if not covered by the check-boxes above): _____

Study Setting:

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.

Experiment Design:

Groups	Heightened Risk	Lowered Risk	Migrant Opposition	Offshoring Opposition	Automation Opposition	Imports Opposition
1	Control	Control	post \approx pre	post \approx pre	post \approx pre	post \approx pre
2	Control	Migration	post < pre	post \approx pre	post \approx pre	post \approx pre
3	Unspecified	Control	post > pre	post > pre	post > pre	post > pre
4	Unspecified	Migration	post < pre	post > pre	post > pre	post > pre
5	Automation	Control	post \approx pre	post \approx pre	post > pre	post \approx pre
6	Automation	Migration	post < pre	post \approx pre	post > pre	post \approx pre

TABLE 2. *Experimental Groups and Expectations*

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.

Groups	Treatment	Migrant Opposition	Offshoring Opposition	Automation Opposition	Imports Opposition
1	Control	-	-	-	-
2	Migration	↓	-	-	-
3	Unspecified	↑	↑	↑	↑
4	Automation	↑	-	-	-

Table 2B: Pilot Experiment Conditions

All Research Procedures and Activities:

After collecting this experimental data, t-tests and linear regression models will be utilized to test the study's hypotheses.

Participant Monitoring/Safety:

There are no direct risks to participants of this study. Since the experiment is conducted online, they will not be monitored while they complete the experiment. However, they can leave the experiment anytime if it makes them uncomfortable.

Study Timelines:

The pilot experiment will occur on June 11th and close on June 18th or whenever a full sample of responses has been collected, whichever occurs first. Respondents are expected to complete the experiment in five minutes and be reimbursed following their completion.

The experiment will be available to take on Prolific starting on June 25th and will either close on July 2nd or whenever a full sample of responses has been collected, whichever occurs first. Respondents are expected to complete the experiment in ten minutes and be reimbursed following their completion of the experiment.

Following data collection—**using a completely anonymized version of the dataset**—automatic software will code respondents' occupations into 428 ISCO-08 categories using the open-ended occupation questions included in the experiment. This is done as respondents' actual full-time and part-time occupations may moderate the treatment effect sizes of the experimental conditions. This coding will occur during the Summer of 2024 and should conclude by the end of July 2024. An example of the anonymized version of the dataset that will be used in the automatic coding is shown below:

Variable Name	Example Response	Description
ISCO_08-1	Ph.D. Candidate	Open-ended, title of main job
ISCO_08-2	IRB material making	Open ended, tasks of main job
ISCO_08-3	A whole lot of school	Open ended, training of main job
respondent_id	8263	A randomly generated I.D. to tie this anonymized dataset to the real dataset
ISCO_08_final	324	The ISCO-08 category of a worker's occupation.

Following this, the statistical analysis of the experimental results should be completed by August 2024. Ideally, this paper will be submitted to academic journals during the following academic year.

Actual Data:

Qualtrics collects respondents' I.P. addresses and longitude and latitude data by default. **I have turned this setting off for this experiment so that this identifying data is not collected.**

Below is a table of the actual variables that will be collected from respondents:

Variable Name	Example Response	Description
StartDate	2024-04-17 10:10:09	Date/Time of beginning the experiment
EndDate	2024-04-17 10:11:27	Date/Time of concluding the experiment
Progress	100	Percent of experiment completed
Duration (in seconds)	77	Experiment duration in seconds
Finished	True	Whether respondents finished the experiment
RecordedDate	2024-04-17 10:11:28	Date of Experiment Completion
pre-auto-dv	Entirely Restrict Automation	Pre-Treatment Automation Opinion
pre-mig-dv	Entirely Restrict Migration	Pre-Treatment Migration Opinion
pre-imp-dv	Entirely Restrict Imports	Pre-Treatment Import Opinion
pre-off-dv	Entirely Restrict Offshoring	Pre-Treatment Offshoring Opinion
post-auto-dv	Entirely Restrict Automation	Post-Treatment Automation Opinion
post-mig-dv	Entirely Restrict Migration	Post-Treatment Migration Opinion
post-imp-dv	Entirely Restrict Imports	Post-Treatment Import Opinion
post-off-dv	Entirely Restrict Offshoring	Post-Treatment Offshoring Opinion
att_check	Inflation,Migration,Imports,	Response to the Attention Check
employ	Working part-time	Respondent's Employment Status
income	\$50,000-\$74,999	Respondent's Income range
union	Yes	Whether a respondent is a member of a union
ISCO_08-1	Ph.D. Candidate	Open-ended, title of main job
ISCO_08-2	IRB material making	Open ended, tasks of main job
ISCO_08-3	A whole lot of school	Open ended, training of main job
hisp	No	Respondent's ethnicity
race	White or Caucasian	Respondent's Race
edu	Graduate or professional degree	Respondent's Education
age	25-34 years old	Respondent's Age Range
gender	Male	Respondent's Gender
gender_TEXT		Open-ended "Other" category for gender
state	Texas	State of residence for respondent
county	Brazos	Open-ended country of resident for respondent
lrscale	9	Respondent's partisanship from (0) conservative to (10) liberal
party	Democratic Party	Which political party respondent most supports
party_TEXT		Open-ended response if respondent chose "Other" party
prolific_id	example_123	Self-Reported Respondent Prolific ID
treatment	6	Which treatment condition respondents were placed in

Table 3: Variables to be Collected in the Experiment

Variable Name	Example Response	Description
StartDate	2024-04-17 10:10:09	Date/Time of beginning the experiment
EndDate	2024-04-17 10:11:27	Date/Time of concluding the experiment
Progress	100	Percent of experiment completed
Duration (in seconds)	77	Experiment duration in seconds
Finished	True	Whether respondents finished the experiment
RecordedDate	2024-04-17 10:11:28	Date of Experiment Completion
post-auto-dv	At risk	Post-Treatment Automation Opinion
post-mig-dv	At risk	Post-Treatment Migration Opinion
post-imp-dv	At risk	Post-Treatment Import Opinion
post-off-dv	At risk	Post-Treatment Offshoring Opinion
hisp	No	Respondent's ethnicity
race	White or Caucasian	Respondent's Race
edu	Graduate or professional degree	Respondent's Education
age	25-34 years old	Respondent's Age Range
gender	Male	Respondent's Gender
gender_TEXT		Open-ended "Other" category for gender
state	Texas	State of residence for respondent
county	Brazos	Open-ended country of resident for respondent
prolific_id	example_123	Self-Reported Respondent Prolific ID
treatment	3	Which treatment condition respondents were placed in

Table 4: Variables to be collected in the Pilot Experiment

Experiment URL:

https://tamu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cUthIdUrpcvWBL0

Pilot Experiment URL:

https://tamu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eyvLKvLZvL9NhA2

External Approvals and Vulnerable Populations:

Neither the experiment nor the pilot experiment will require any external approvals, and will not include vulnerable populations.

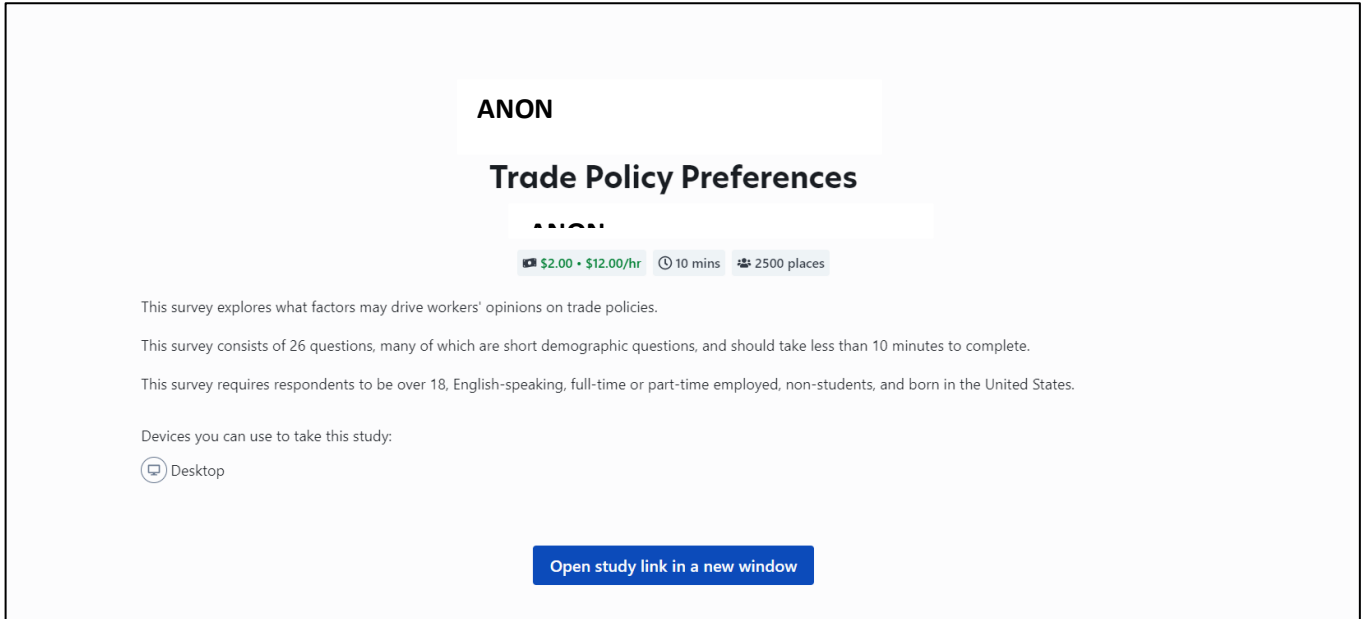
5.0 Incomplete Disclosure or Deception:

This research will not contain deception.

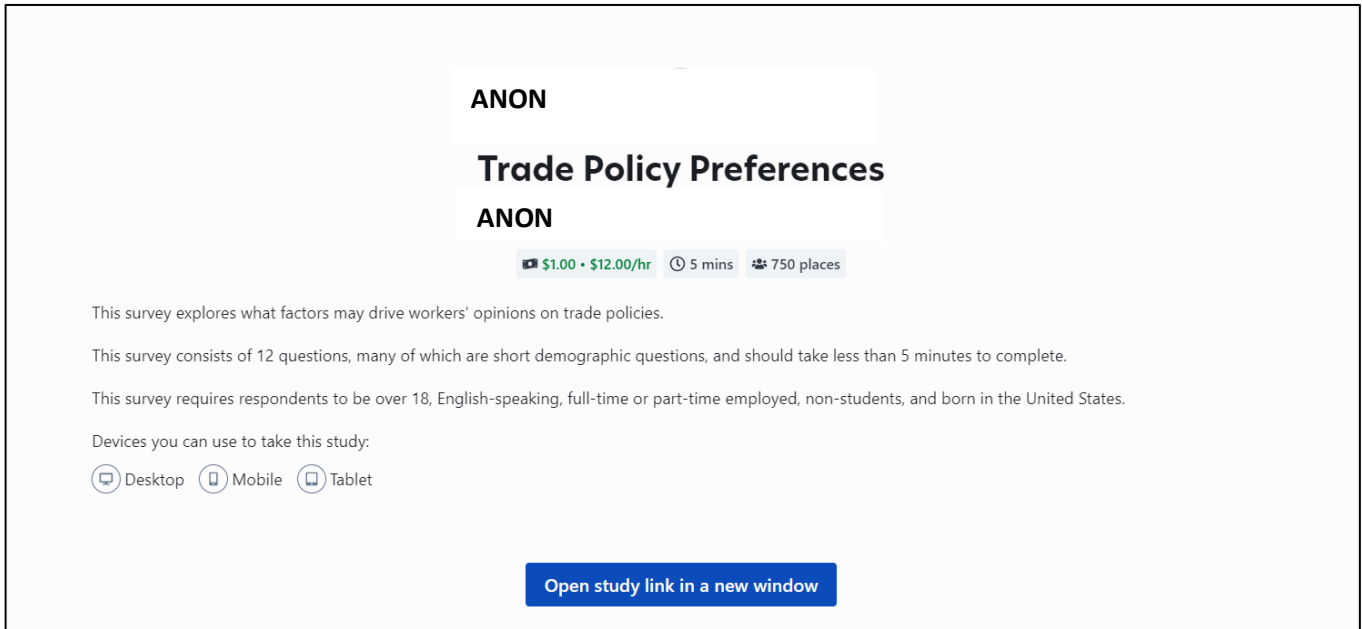
6.0 Recruitment:

Recruitment will occur entirely online through the online survey provider Prolific. Prolific will email a random subset of respondents who fit my sampling criteria upon the experiment becoming live. Additional respondents will be emailed every 48 hours until enough respondents have completed the experiment.

Alternatively, Prolific includes a "studies" page that details all of the studies that participants are eligible for (given their demographics and the survey's sampling criteria). This survey will be available to participants to view on this page. All of the information available to participants before the begin the experiment are shown in the screenshot below:



The recruitment materials are identical for the pilot experiment, except the expected duration is 5 minutes, there are only 12 questions in the pilot, and the needed sample is 750. The study profile that will be seen on Prolific is shown in the following screenshot:



7.0 Consent Process

Consent will occur entirely online. The consent process will occur before the start of the experiment at Screen 0. Respondents will read the consent form and have the option to continue with the experiment

or not participate in the experiment from there. All participants will be English-speaking, so nonEnglish-speaking samples have no alternative consent processes. Vulnerable populations will not be included in the sample of this research, so special consent processes for these populations are not included. Since the experiment is only ten minutes in duration and poses no risks to participants, no ongoing consent processes are utilized after the initial consent form. The consent process is identical in the pilot experiment.

8.0 Process to Document Consent:

I will obtain consent but will not document it in writing. The consent script was given in full under the Screen 0: Information Sheet section, but it will also be uploaded as an additional document. I utilized the Simple Survey Consent script provided by the university to establish this document and check HRP-411 to ensure sufficient information was provided on the consent script. This consent is identical for the pilot experiment.

9.0 Risks to Participants:

There are no risks to participants in this study. Participants engage in the experiment willingly and can leave it whenever they feel uncomfortable. While the treatments are designed to instill a temporary sense of job insecurity, the prompts are no more severe than a participant may see on the evening news. They may make respondents feel more insecure about their occupation in the short term.

Job insecurity has several notable negative consequences on respondents' physical and mental wellbeing. However, a respondent's opinions on job insecurity are driven by various political, economic, and job-level attributes. As such, it is incredibly unlikely that the general descriptions of job insecurity may hold lasting effects on participants in this sample.

10.0 Potential Benefits to Participants:

The only potential benefit to participants is to potentially encourage respondents to learn how their occupations may or may not be susceptible to the economic processes described in this experiment. Informed workers are key to power balance in the labor market, and this experiment has the potential (albeit small) to encourage workers to become informed about what economic processes may threaten their labor.

11.0 Financial Compensation:

Participants will be paid using a \$12.00 per hour rate at an expected \$2 per participant (assuming a 10 minute completion time) following the completion of the experiment. The pilot experiment participants will be paid at the same rate (\$12.00 per hour) but are only expected to participate for 5 minutes, for an expected \$1.00 per respondent. To receive payment, respondents must have completed the experiment/pilot experiment within Qualtrics and provided their Prolific I.D. on the final page of the experiment/pilot experiment. If they do not do this, they will not receive compensation. There are no costs that participants may be responsible for as a result of participation in this experiment/pilot experiment.

12.0 Provisions to Protect the Privacy Interests of Participants:

At no point in the data collection process will the respondents' names, contact information, or addresses be collected. Location data (a participant's state and county of residence) will be collected to merge in the county and state-level economic attributes (e.g., county-level unemployment rates) to account for their influence on policy opinions in the experiment. **This location data will not be available in the final iteration of this data.** Once this location data is used to collect respondents' state and county-level economic data, the state and county columns will be removed.

The only other identifying information that will be collected is a respondent's prolific I.D., **which cannot be used to find a participant's identity.** This prolific I.D. data will not be available in this dataset's final, publicly available version. Rather, this I.D. column is only collected to ensure that participants receive compensation for the experiment/pilot experiment participation.

13.0 Confidentiality and Data Management:

The only other data that will be collected from respondents—outside of the variables listed in Tables 3 and 4 above—are whether or not they agreed to the consent form at the onset of the experiment and whether they received their payment for their participation. This data on consent and payment will **not** be included in the publicly available version of this data and is only used to ensure compliance with the IRB and that participants are compensated for their participation in the experiment.

The data for this experiment/pilot experiment will be stored on an encrypted folder held on **ANON's** office computer in the **ANON**. Specifically, this folder will not be saved to any shared drives (e.g., OneDrive), and will only be available in an encrypted folder on the H: Drive of **ANON's** office computer. The raw dataset provided by Prolific does not contain identifying information from respondents outside of their county, state of residence, or occupation. Once it has been confirmed that all respondents have been paid for their participation in the experiment, the version of the data with identifying information will be double encrypted and archived, as no identifying information will be needed to test the hypotheses of this study.

The non-anonymized version of the data will be encrypted and archived for three years after the completion of the study. The only individuals with access to the non-anonymized versions of the data will be **ANON**.

14.0 Data Monitoring Plan to Ensure the Safety of Participants:

There will be no ongoing participation or harm to participants following their engagement with the experiment/pilot experiment. As a result, there is no ongoing data monitoring plan to ensure the safety of participants following their participation.

15.0 Data and if applicable, Specimen Banking:

N/A

16.0 Qualifications to Conduct Research and Resources Available:

The only individuals with access to sensitive information are **ANON**, who have completed the required CITI training on conducting Social and Behavioral Research Investigators. The data that the student

researchers will be coding are entirely anonymized and contain no means to retrieve sensitive information from respondents.

17.0 Multiple sites:

N/A

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