PROTOCOL TITLE:

Accuracy of Perceived Job Insecurity
Protocol VERSION DATE: 4/17/2024

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:

ANON

   ANON

   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:

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

1.0 Purpose of the Study:

The proposed research will answer two questions: How do workers react to job insecurity to form policy preferences and how accurate are workers' perceptions of job insecurity? These questions are of both scholarly interest and have interesting societal implications. For scholars, determining how accurate an average worker's perception of their occupational job insecurities is will allow researchers to make more accurate assumptions regarding how these insecurities should drive policy opinions. More generally, this project will also contribute to recent international political economy literature that finds that providing workers with accurate information on economic processes encourages self-interested policy preferences (Bearce and Tuxhorn 2017; Rho and Tomz 2017; Alfaro, Chen, and Chor 2023). Notably, of this recent literature exploring the role of information in egocentric policy opinions, this research project will be the first to empirically test which factors cause workers to have more accurate perceptions of how these economic processes affect them. It is critical to address this gap in knowledge if practitioners want to understand how best to enable American workers to support policies that are in their economic self-interest.

This research is critical in the social realm as well. If individuals cannot accurately determine their economic self-interest, they may support policies that are misaligned with their economic self-interest. This can cause workers to support policies that actively degrade their economic interests and quality of life (Walter, 2021). This proposed project seeks funding for a nationally representative survey of 3850 individuals to determine how objective job insecurities and perceived job insecurities drive policy opinions, which groups of workers have the most accurate/inaccurate perceptions of their job insecurity, and what factors lead to more accurate perceptions of job insecurity.

Hypothesis 1: Workers who have greater objective occupational risk towards an economic process should oppose it more than workers with lower objective risk.

Information as a Precondition for Egotropism

The expectation that workers should oppose the economic processes that threaten them becomes more complicated when considering workers' awareness of economic threats. Some researchers assume that workers have perfectly informed preferences (Owen and Johnston 2017) , while other researchers assume that workers are unaware of their risks and misattribute job insecurity caused by one factor (automation, outsourcing) to other factors (migration) (Wu 2022; Kaihovaara and Im 2020.) Specifically, these misattribution researchers argue that in a limited information environment, it is easier for workers to blame their job insecurity on outgroups and foreigners than it is for them to blame more amorphous concepts such as trade or automation.

This debate raises the distinction between the objective risks that workers face and their perceptions of these risks, with some assuming that perceived risks are reflective of objective risks for the average worker, and others assuming that they are not. Regardless of whether these perceived risks are accurate, a self-interested worker should oppose the processes that they perceive to be threatening to them. In the case where workers' perceived risk may be misaligned with their objective risk, workers' policy

opinions should be driven more by their perceived risks, rather than the objective risks they may be unaware of.

Hypothesis 2: Workers who have greater perceived risk towards an economic process should oppose it more than workers with lower risk.

Hypothesis 3: Perceived risk towards an option should have a greater effect on policy support than objective risk.

This distinction between perceived and objective risks, while useful, is not able to predict when a worker may or may not misattribute the job insecurity caused by one economic process towards another. To account for this, the proposed research also considers the role of belief certainty in regards to perceived risk. The expectation is that workers who are more uncertain about the source of their job insecurity should be more likely to misattribute the source of their job insecurity onto other policies. For example, following the logic of Wu (2022), workers who are uncertain about how automation can threaten their occupation should be more likely to attribute the job insecurity caused by automation to other sources.

While Wu (2022) and Kaihovaara and Im (2020) only consider how uncertainty can cause policy opposition spillovers onto migration, the proposed research explores whether this is a more general phenomenon. Specifically, this project argues that self-interested worker who is unsure about the source of their job insecurity should be more likely to oppose any option they perceive as potentially threatening to their labor. However, to account for the arguments of Kaihovaara and Im (2020) and Wu (2022), this project will test whether it is easier for workers who are uncertain about the sources of their economic insecurity to blame migrant labor as a racially dissimilar outgroup. These expectations are reflected in the hypotheses below.

Hypothesis 4: Workers who are more uncertain about the risks to their occupation should be more likely to oppose all options than workers who are certain about their risks.

Hypothesis 5: Workers who are more uncertain about the risks to their occupation should be more likely to oppose migration than other policies.

Hypothesis 6: Workers with greater certainty in their perceived individual risk will oppose a policy more than a less certain worker with similar risk.

Accuracy of Perceived Risk

The second objective of the proposed research is to determine which factors are associated with greater accuracy in workers' perceived risks. The primary factor that will be tested is union membership. Unions protect workers' wages and employment through collective action and act as information brokers, distributing politically relevant information on job insecurity so that members can vote to promote their collective interests (Ahlquist et al. 2017; MacDonald 2019; Macdonald 2021.). As a result, union members should have more accurate perceptions of their job insecurity than nonunion members.

Hypothesis 7: Union members should have more accurate perceptions of job insecurity than nonunion members.

Additionally, since this dissertation project is one of the first articles in international political

economy to explore this type of accuracy in perceptions, much of the analysis of this accuracy will be descriptive. A series of maps and plots will demonstrate how the accuracy of workers' perceived threats vary by age, gender, race, industry, skill level, state, and education. Additionally, sample-wide statistics on workers' perception accuracy will be reported so that future researchers can make more informed theoretical assumptions regarding how objective occupational risks may or may not drive policy opinions.

2.0 Background / Literature **Review / Rationale for the study:**

The proposed project joins a recent wave of political economy literature that uses the task approach to predict policy opinions (David 2013; 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. For example, occupations with tasks that require work in a particular domestic location are less susceptible to offshoring (Blinder, 2009). Assuming that workers' economic policy opinions are driven by a desire to maintain their employment and maximize their wages, then the unique risks of an individual's occupation to different economic processes should influence their policy preferences.

Most task approach research tends to be egocentric and expects individual's policy preferences to stem from their economic self-interest (Tufte, 1978). The proposed project uses Sears and Funks' (1990) definition of self-interest and expects the short-term impact of a political issue on the material well-being of the individual's life or their families to drive workers' policy preferences Importantly, this project does not seek to disprove sociotropic drivers of policy opinions. Although researchers have argued that it is primarily egocentrism that drives trade policy opinions (Lake, 2009) and other researchers have argued in favor of sociotropic drivers (Mansfield and Mutz 2009; Edwards 2006; Fordham and Kleinberg 2012), much of the recent scholarship in international political economy has recognized that in practice individuals' opinions are driven by both (Bearce, 2017). As a result, although this project proposes an egocentric theory towards economic policy opinions, it recognizes that sociotropism should also influence policies and will control for its influence methodologically in the research design.
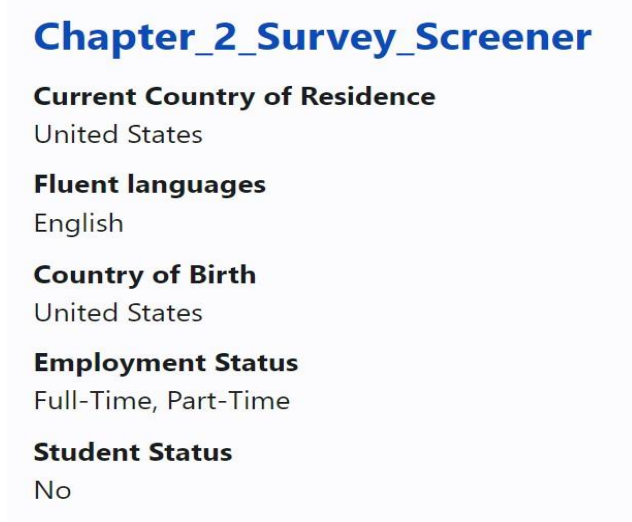
Following prospect theory, the proposed work expects workers' policy opinions to be driven by loss aversion (Barberis 2013; Camerer et al. 2004.) Rather than being influenced by the potential way these processes can complement their labor, the average worker should be more concerned with the ways these processes can threaten their current wages and employment. As a result, workers susceptible to job loss or replacement due to automation, off-shoring, migration, or import penetration should be more likely to oppose these processes. This expectation leads to the primary hypothesis of this project:

3.0 Inclusion and exclusion criteria:

Inclusion Criteria: This survey will require 3850 respondents. These respondents will be over 18 and English speaking and can take the survey through Prolific's online platform.

Since this survey is designed to collect perceptions of job insecurity, the sample will only include respondents who are employed full-time or part-time and non-students.

Respondents will be screened before the survey through the Prolific platform to exclude participants who do not meet these criteria. A screenshot of the survey screener is shown below. This screener will ensure that only participants who meet this criteria can take the survey. This survey 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
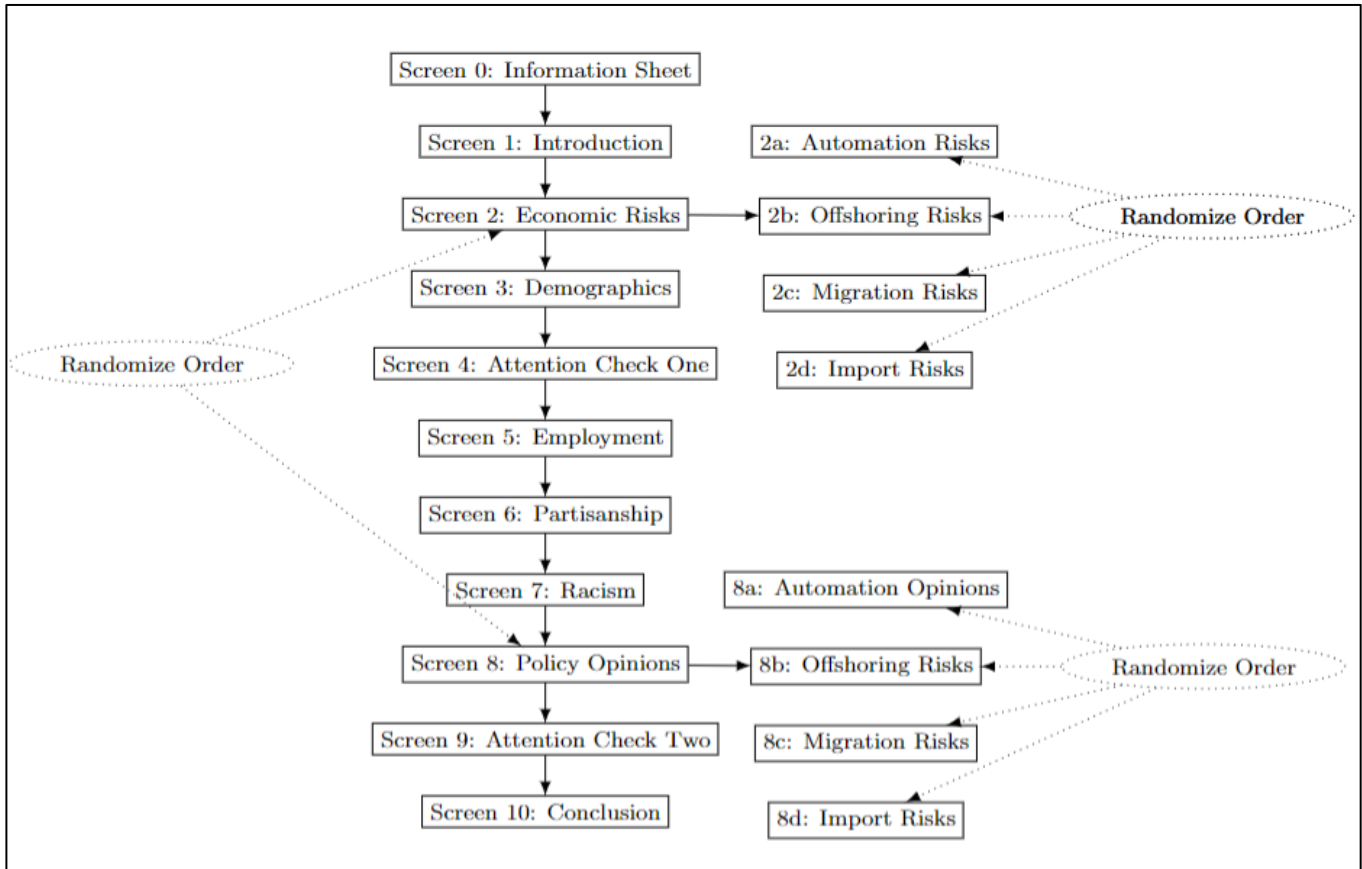
Student Status
No

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 survey will be conducted online through Prolific's survey platform. Respondents will be given a survey that is expected to take less than ten minutes of their time. Respondents will be asked to describe their opinion of policy regarding automation, migration, offshoring, and imports. They will also be asked a series of demographic questions, their perceived risk and certainty towards offshoring automation migration and imports, their beliefs of how these processes affect society as a whole,

Survey Design:

The survey will ask respondents a series of questions on the perceived risk of certain economic processes, both individually to themselves and broadly to the Average American. Then, respondents will answer a series of demographic questions to account for how these perceptions may vary across demographic groups. Then, occupation, firm, and industry data will be collected on each respondent. This data will be used to determine the objective risk respondents face to each of these economic processes. Afterwards, partisanship, political parties, and racist attitudes will be collected to account for their influence on policy opinions. Lastly, worker policy opinions towards these economic processes will be collected. The survey will randomize whether respondents are asked about the their policy opinions or perceived risk first, and the order of the options will be randomized within each of these sections.

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All Research Procedures and Activities:

After collecting this survey 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 survey is conducted online, they will not be monitored while they complete the survey. However, they can leave the survey any time if it makes them uncomfortable.

Study Timelines:

The survey will open on October 7th and close on October 14th or whenever a full sample of responses has been collected, whichever occurs first. Respondents are expected to complete the survey in ten minutes and be reimbursed following their completion.

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 survey.. This coding will occur during the end of October 2024 and should conclude by November 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 survey results should be completed by December 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 survey so that this identifying data is not collected.**

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

Table 1: Variables to be Collected in the Survey

Variable Name	Example Response	Description
StartDate	2024-04-17 10:10:09	Date/Time of beginning the Survey
EndDate	2024-04-17 10:11:27	Date/Time of concluding the Survey
Progress	100	Percent of Survey completed
Duration (in seconds)	77	Survey duration in seconds
Finished	True	Whether respondents finished the survey
RecordedDate	2024-04-17 10:11:28	Date of Experiment Completion
off-risk-perception	Entirely at Risk	Perception of Occupational Risk Towards Offshoring
auto-risk-perception	Entirely at Risk	Perception of Occupational Risk Towards Automation
mig-risk-perception	Entirely at Risk	Perception of Occupational Risk Towards Migration
imp-risk-perception	Entirely at Risk	Perception of Occupational Risk Towards Imports
off-risk-socio	Entirely at Risk	Perception of Societal Risk Towards Offshoring
auto-risk-socio	Entirely at Risk	Perception of Societal Risk Towards Automation
mig-risk-socio	Entirely at Risk	Perception of Societal Risk Towards Migration
imp-risk-socio	Entirely at Risk	Perception of Societal Risk Towards Imports
off-risk-certainty	Entirely Confident	Confidence in Perceived Offshoring risk
auto-risk-certainty	Entirely Confident	Confidence in Perceived Automation risk
mig-risk-certainty	Entirely Confident	Confidence in Perceived Migration risk
imp-risk-certainty	Entirely Confident	Confidence in Perceived Import risk
off-dv	Entirely Restrict Offshoring	Pre-Treatment Offshoring Opinion
auto-dv	Entirely Restrict Automation	Post-Treatment Automation Opinion
mig-dv	Entirely Restrict Migration	Post-Treatment Migration Opinion
imp-dv	Entirely Restrict Imports	Post-Treatment Import Opinion
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
Firm	ExxonMobil	Open ended, firm of employment
Industry	Construction	NAIC worker industry
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
racial resentment	Strongly Agree	Multiple Choice question used to measure racial resentment
old fashioned racism	Strongly Disagree	Multiple Choice question used to measure old fashioned racism
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

Survey URL:

ANON

External Approvals and Vulnerable Populations:

The survey will not require any external approvals will not include vulnerable populations.
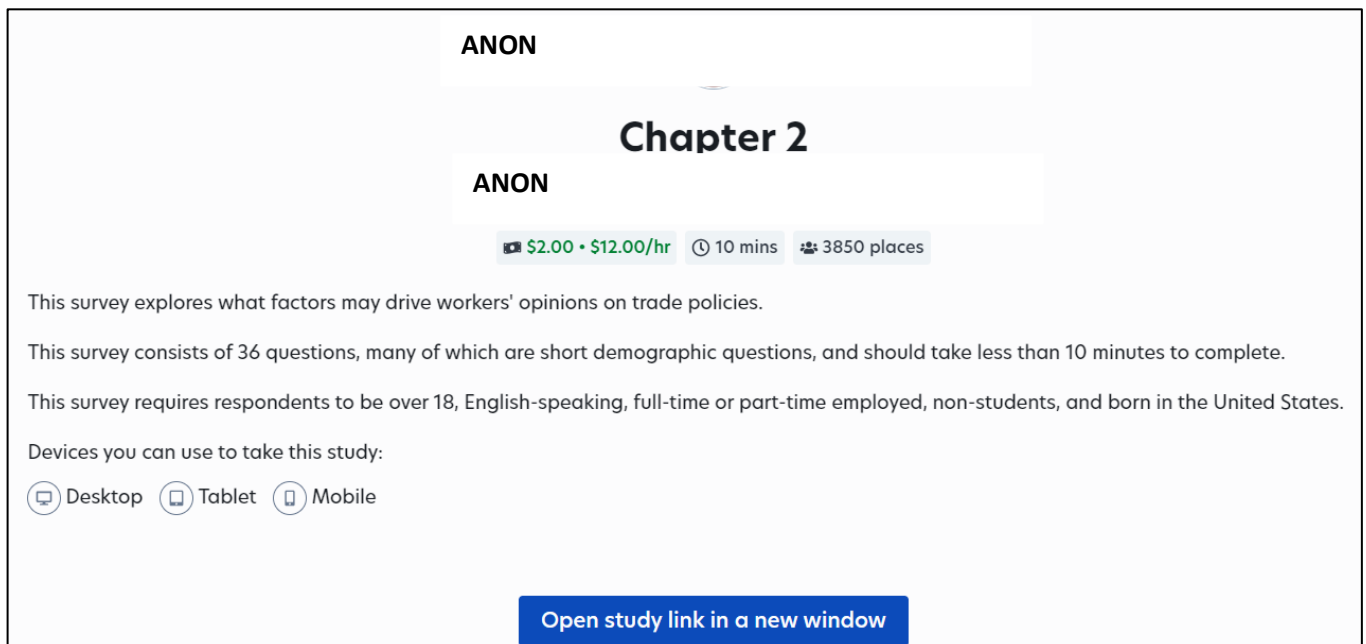
5.0 Incomplete Disclosure or Deception:

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 survey 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:

7.0 Consent Process

Consent will occur entirely online. The consent process will occur before the start of the survey 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 non English-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.

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.

9.0 Risks to Participants:

There are no risks to participants in this study. Participants engage in the survey willingly and can leave it whenever they feel uncomfortable. Specifically asking respondents how economic processes may threaten their occupation 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 survey. Informed workers are key to power balance in the labor market, and this survey 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 survey. To receive payment, respondents must have completed the survey within Qualtrics and provided their Prolific I.D. on the final page of the survey. 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 participation in the survey.

13.0 Confidentiality and Data Management:

The only other data that will be collected from respondents—outside of the variables listed in Table 1 above—are whether or not they agreed to the consent form at the onset of the survey 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 survey.

The data for this survey will be stored on an encrypted folder held on **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 survey, 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 survey. 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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