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John Aldrich
Duke University

Victoria DeFrancesco Soto
Northwestern University

Gregory A. Petrow
University of Nebraska at Omaha, gpetrow@unomaha.edu

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The Human Face of Economic Globalization: Mexican Migrants and their Support for Free Trade*

John H. Aldrich
Department of Political Science
Duke University
Victoria M. DeFrancesco Soto
Institute for Policy Research
Northwestern University
and
Gregory A. Petrow
Department of Political Science
University of Nebraska, Omaha

Abstract

This paper presents the results from a focus group and an experiment conducted with Mexican immigrant farm workers as participants. The idea is to investigate free trade attitudes among a group little studied in the debate over immigration and its role in globalization. We can readily illustrate, as we do via our focus group participants, that many of these migrants understand their political situation. Our focus then turns to the political psychology of these workers: how does this understanding manifest itself in their political attitudes? The experiment exposes them to a standard set of arguments for and against economic globalization drawn from actual newspaper accounts. We find that this experimental design did prime the issue of economic globalization among those with a sense of self interest in the issue, implying that they held attitudes that the treatment brought to the “tops of their heads,” as it were. This implication is further supported by the finding that a political value (in this case, valuing an active government) mediates the relationship between globalization messages and support for free trade, indicating that there is at least some structuring to their political opinions in this area.

Keywords: Mexican farmworkers, political participation, globalization, competitive advantage, free trade

Economic globalization is loosely defined as lowering international barriers to the movement of economic goods and services (including capital and labor). The standard argument since political economist David Ricardo is that lowering such barriers improves everyone’s circumstances due to the ability to capitalize on each nation’s comparative advantages (e.g. Ricardo 1895). He demonstrated that, even if one nation is more efficient at producing

everything than some other nation, even then it is still Pareto superior to exchange on comparative advantage. It is this basic notion that leads to the implication that increased flows of goods and services, of capital and labor alike, lead to Pareto improvements: that is, these increased flows make at least some (and in principle all) better off, and no one worse off. However, labor flows, and especially the lowering of barriers to entry of labor, remain highly contentious.

While lowering barriers to trades and goods yields widely dispersed benefits (such as lower costs for consumers), the costs can be highly concentrated (e.g. the demise of the U.S. textile industry). A key strategy advanced industrialized nations can use to adapt to these costs is to open borders: that is, to lower barriers to flows of labor, permitting cheaper labor to migrate. In the U.S., the relative permeability of borders has led millions of Latinos to migrate to the U.S. to take jobs that both pay better and are more plentiful here than in their home countries (Massey and Espinoza 1997). The “human face” of this policy has created a pool of between three and five million agricultural migrant workers in the U.S., 80% of whom are foreign immigrants (and 90% of these foreign workers are Mexican, Magana and Hovey 2003).

Mexican farm workers who immigrate to the U.S. provide an interesting setting for thinking about these issues. They move here for economic reasons. Typically, they come here to earn higher wages than they could receive at home, with the intention of sending any excess above living costs back to their families. While this is a palpable benefit to these workers, some in the U.S. are concerned that the workers seem to be exploited when one compares their fortunes to those of typical Americans. Indeed, the farm workers themselves are very clear that their standard of living, especially in the migrant farm worker communities, is low in absolute terms.

Given that many immigrants are undocumented, the more unscrupulous among their employers are able to exploit the workers’ situation by not providing decent housing or safe working conditions. They know that it is unlikely that the farm workers themselves will be in a situation to complain. They are not in that position because there are barriers to entry (that is, they need governmental approval and documentation to legally enter the U.S. and its work force), and if they avoid such barriers by undocumented entry, they are vulnerable to this exploitation. In the usual economic sense, the entire set of partners to this set of exchanges are made better off nonetheless; and so, this is a strictly Pareto superior outcome, even if many might conclude that there is clearly a system of exploitation here as well. As Amartya Sen once pointed out (1970, p.22), “In short, a society or an economy can be Pareto-optimal and still be perfectly disgusting.”

In this context, it seems particularly important to understand the attitudes and choices made by those at the front lines of the issues, as it were. And thus, we return to the question of how Latino migrant workers react to economic globalization – do they tend to support it or oppose it, and why? One could simply measure their support for globalization. However, an even more useful way to evaluate this question is to study how these workers react to the globalization debate itself: the pro- and con- messages which constitute that debate. Gauging how they react to these messages will first reveal if their support for free trade increases or decreases depending on the type of message, but it will also reveal the magnitude of the changes, demonstrating how susceptible the workers’ free trade attitudes are to persuasion. These workers confront a potential paradox: they have sacrificed and risked a great deal to immigrate to the U.S. in pursuit of a better livelihood and a brighter future. However, once they arrive, many enter a system of exploitation.

This contradiction suggests two possible views of the migrant workers' support for free trade. On the one hand, perhaps they take advantage of the opportunities that present themselves as a result of globalization without embracing the policy itself. Given this view, workers enter the U.S. (legally or illegally) because the opportunity presents itself to work here for higher wages than in Mexico, but they are innocent as to how globalization leads to this opportunity. In addition, resulting exploitation provides a counter weight to the economic benefits that the greater labor opportunities bring. This view implies that workers should be persuadable as to the pros- and cons- of globalization because they have not linked their actions to the policy, and they personally experience both the advantages and disadvantages.

Alternatively, perhaps workers possess awareness that globalization allows them access to the U.S. labor market, and they see valuable economic benefit accruing from that. This view implies that workers' free trade attitudes should be resistant to persuasion because they link those attitudes with the act of taking advantage of resulting opportunities. As a result, any kind of free trade message will prime considerations of the policy and lead to greater support for it because, in the mind of the migrant worker, the strong benefits of the policy are evoked. This conceptual approach, then, should reveal "where workers are at" in the globalization debate.

This question matters because migrant workers have a right for their voices to be heard, even if they are not citizens in a formal sense. By living in the U.S. and contributing their labor to the economy, they earn the right for their voices to be heard. Indeed, political theorists wrestle with the question of where immigrants in democracies stand, given democratic theory (e.g. Heisler 2005, Benhabib 2005 and Baucock 2005). Some argue that the division between "citizen" and "non-citizen" should fall away and that we should recognize their right to representation. Given this view, we will conclude by considering what the views of the workers we studied were concerning free trade.

In addition to its relevance to democratic theory, our study is of course also relevant to the political opinions of Latino migrants. We ask readers to consider that political scientists are only now beginning to develop a literature on the political opinions of Latinos in general and of Latino immigrants in particular (de la Garza 2004, Uhlaner and Garcia 2001). To date **no studies at all** consider Latino attitudes toward globalization, nor do the determinants of Latino's support for free trade policies. Given their place in the global economic marketplace, this is an especially crucial question for Latino migrant workers.

In this paper we seek to further this line of research by considering how Latino migrant workers process information on globalization and how this information influences their support for trade policy. The focus group will literally speak for itself. We need, however, to develop the theory underlying our experiment. We do so by developing a model of Latino migrant workers' support for free trade. Our analysis begins by developing our theory of direct, mediated, and moderated effects of pro- and con- free trade messages.¹ We apply an information-processing model developed in political psychology to consider whether factors moderate this relationship, and we examine political values as a possible mediating variable. We then turn to discuss our results.

Theory and Research Design

Theory: Direct Effects

We seek to explain how media messages about trade policies affect preferences for free trade. The treatment, therefore, is exposure to positive or negative messages about free trade, or to no experimental messages at all in the control condition. We consider two possibilities. The

first is that receiving *any* message serves to prime attitudes already held in the trade policy domain, making existing attitudes more accessible. The immigrant/migrant population we studied is directly affected by free trade, and with such a vested interest, they may well have firm attitudes about this topic. Their choice to come to the U.S. is rooted in precisely the kinds of economic considerations about which the U.S. and Mexico contest politically. If our subjects have firm attitudes toward free trade, the treatment should prime those attitudes. Thus, the treatment will bring to the fore already existent attitudes, without (necessarily) affecting the content or evaluative stance of those attitudes.

The second possibility is that, because our prime is valenced, we also are able to test whether the message is persuasive: exposure to the positive treatment would, in that case, increase support for freer trade, while the negative treatment would decrease support. The persuasion hypothesis begins with the observation that this population has low levels of education and other cognitive resources often associated with poorly formed or even non-existent attitudes (e.g. Zaller 1992). There are two possibilities, in turn, that emerge from this fact. One is that only some will have anything to prime. Thus, those more invested in the issue or those more generally engaged in political considerations might hold attitudes, while others do not. In this case, we would expect a moderating relationship, which we turn to below.²

We might also expect the valenced nature of the prime to be persuasive. While there is some evidence that those without attitudes on the subject at all might find a valenced prime sufficient to create new attitudes out of whole cloth (e.g. Petty and Wegener 1998), others expect that only those with at least some attitude structure in the general domain will be able to assimilate the information sufficiently to be persuaded by the message. It is this position that leads Zaller, for example, to argue that those in the middle ranges of political sophistication will be those whose attitudes are most affected by persuasive messages. People with more cognitive resources, such as those with greater education or political knowledge, have an easier time understanding political messages and thinking about them (e.g. Zaller 1992). Those at the bottom have too little information and structure to be able to be persuaded, while those (few) at the top end have sufficiently strongly developed attitudes that they are able to counter argue against a potentially persuasive message. We will test both of the possibilities: that the messages may operate simply as primes, or as persuasive valences. Hence, for direct effects, we will test the following hypotheses:

H1: Direct Effects

H1a: Priming: The exposure to the treatment variable will directly prime existing attitudes on trade.

H1b: Persuasion: The positive [negative] free trade message should increase [decrease] support for free trade directly.

Theory: Mediating Effects

A relationship between two factors is mediated when the effect of an independent variable on a dependent measure occurs through, or in combination with, a third, mediator, and variable. “Mediators explain how external physical events take on internal psychological significance” (Baron and Kenny 1986, 1176). The internal psychological significance that we are interested in

here is that of relevant political values, and how they may shape the way in which the treatment affects the outcome.

In general and theoretical terms, political values have been shown to be strong predictors of political behavior in a variety of contexts (e.g. Kinder and Winters 2001, Feldman and Steenburgen 2001), typically in a hierarchical fashion; that is, reasoning seems to proceed from more general and abstract values to more specific and concrete policies. The particular value most implicated as a possible mediator in our case is that of having a more or less active government. That is, of course, the issue at question – changing the level of activity of the government. Lower trade barriers result from reduced government activity, while higher barriers result from increased activity. In this case, the value pertains to the degree of government intervention in the economy.³ Of course, that is precisely the reason that this value may be expected to have an important effect on support or opposition to any particular trade policy proposal.

Evocation of free trade in the treatment may well prime this value for many subjects, simply by discussing whether the government should be more or less actively involved. Based on the economic consequences predicted by positive and negative free trade arguments, workers may also be persuaded to support either more or less active government. Thus, just as with the effect that the treatment might have on support for trade policy as a specific issue, the treatment may serve as either a prime or a persuasive argument in shaping the value. This treatment effect then would have a mediating effect by its role in shaping the valuing of active government and its effect in turn on support or opposition to the particular policy of free trade.

H2: Mediation Effects

H2a: Priming: Exposure to the treatment will either prime the value of active government, or it will prime the relationship between valuing an active government and preferences over trade policy.

H2b: Persuasion: Pro- [anti-] free trade messages will decrease [increase] valuing active government, and/or affect the relationship between the valuation of an active government and support for [opposition to] free trade.

We cannot, of course, make direct inferences about the role of valuing an active government on the policy, because the experimental design gives us randomization over treatments and not randomization over subjects (a point we discuss shortly). However, we need to establish prima facie evidence that the value is relevant to subjects' attitudes toward free trade policy. We expect that valuing active government will cause opposition to free trade, given the assumed effect of values on policies (e.g. Sears and Funk 1999, Feldman and Steenburgen 2001).

Theory: Moderating Effects

A relationship between two factors is moderated when it becomes stronger if a person is in one group, compared to another (Baron and Kenny 1986). One particularly important class of moderator variables are those that divide the population into those with lesser or no developed attitude structures about the topic and those with stronger or more developed attitudes and attitudinal structures. We consider the two most commonly employed indicators of this class. Political sophistication is a set of measures (such as level of education, political interest and

involvement, etc.) designed to order subjects by engagement in and knowledge about politics, assuming then that those higher in political sophistication are more likely to hold relevant political attitudes. The second major indicator is self-interest. Higher self-interest in the content of the political issue is presumed to be related to the probability that an individual holds developed attitudes toward that political issue. In sum, we propose that attitudes and preferences on economic globalization issues are due in part to an individual's level of political experience, skills and abilities they bring to the task (political sophistication) and their motivation for engaging the task (self-interest with respect to the policy).

The priming effect should be directly tapped by these divisions. Such variables divide the group into those having attitudes sufficiently developed to be accessible in the first place, and those possessing less developed structures or even no attitudes at all to be accessed. We employ the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty and Cacioppo 1986; Petty and Wegener 1998) to consider differential message processing and, thus, persuasion. In their model, persuasion is more likely to occur (and with more lasting effects) when processing information via the central route, and this in turn happens when individuals have the ability (sophistication) and the motivation (self-interest) to process the information. Thus, this model provides a mechanism to lead us to expect a possible moderation effect on persuasion.

Moderating Factor, Political Sophistication:

Education is a critical component of political sophistication, as it leads to greater verbal and written skills that make it easier for people to process, understand, and utilize political messages (Nie et al. 1996). But education is not sufficient for specifically political sophistication. Rather, political knowledge reflects an engagement in politics deep enough to lead to political learning. As a result, we conceive of political sophistication as combining education and political knowledge, in this case about U.S. politics. In practice, we have a homogenous subject population and therefore limited variation in levels of attained education. We observe greater variation on political knowledge.

Moderating Factor, Self-Interest:

Peoples' attitudes regarding self-interest should be of paramount importance because they are attitudes with the two most important cognitive constructs – self and ego (Sears and Funk 1991). Self-interested attitudes should become salient when, "... [they are] related to the attainment of desired material goods or behavioral opportunities" (Boninger et al. 1995). Such attitudes should be especially powerful because they are both hedonically relevant (related to happiness) and are perceived to have important consequences. People should pay closer attention to the details of arguments regarding such issues, resulting in greater thought about the topic, development of stronger attitudes with greater complexity and with greater openness to being persuaded (Petty and Cacioppo 1986).

By self-interest we mean "vested interests," a theory that defines self interest as the individual's perception that the attitude object has personal consequences. This is drawn from William Crano's theory (1995) which requires that the attitude object be perceived to be hedonically relevant and consequential (Lehman and Crano 2002). Vested interests stand in contrast to the traditional conceptualization of self-interest, which is that a person's mere membership in a group that would benefit from a policy would constitute self-interest (e.g. Sears and Funk 1991).

Some immigrant/migrant workers will have a vested interest in free trade and many of them perceive that they do. After all, millions of workers have traveled to the U.S., making

harrowing journeys for the promise of economic benefit. However, a relationship to trade policy is neither immediate nor transparent. Thus, some, but not all migrant workers will make the connection. Those who do perceive a vested interest in free trade will be more likely to have developed stronger attitudes and to process free trade messages via the central route. Hence, as throughout, the effect may be priming or persuasion. We expect that in the case of those workers who believe they benefit from free trade, a priming effect (that is, the effect of both the negative and positive messages) should increase support for free trade. In other words, among workers who believe they benefit from free trade, priming the topic should increase their support for the policy.

H3: Moderation

H3a: Priming: Trade messages will have a greater effect among more sophisticated workers, compared to the less sophisticated.

H3b: Persuasion: Trade messages will be more persuasive among those who are more politically sophisticated and/or are higher in vested self-interest compared to those who are not.

Research Procedures: Experiment

The experiment was conducted at a religious community center in New Hope, North Carolina, on April 28, 2002. This is an Episcopalian center that serves farm workers in the area. In all, 73 individuals participated in the study. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the three experimental groups. The positive treatment group had 25 individuals, while the negative and control groups each had 24.⁴ The experimental treatment, newspaper articles, and surveys were all in Spanish.

Procedure: At the beginning of each session, the experiment moderator greeted the group and explained that this was a study concerning attitudes toward current events, keeping our exact purpose unclear. Next, the moderator for each group read aloud three newspaper articles. The positive and negative treatments were embedded in the middle of two neutral articles. The positive treatment described how the forces of globalization would combine to propel the United States toward greater prosperity. The negative treatment presented a much bleaker picture, one where employment opportunities were being taken from Americans.⁵ The control group was read three neutral articles. The globalization articles were based on actual newspaper stories, taken from local newspapers and translated into Spanish. We include the articles in appendix A.

After the articles were read, the participants filled out a survey. This first portion consisted of a set of demographic questions, thus also serving as a distracter task. The second portion of the survey dealt with questions on current events, policy preferences, and the various measures used in our analysis. Upon the completion of the survey, each participant was debriefed and compensated with an amount of \$10.

Obviously, the study participants do not represent a random sample of migrant farm workers. Indeed, scholars rarely have access to such samples of this population because of the extraordinary logistical problems. As a result, we cannot claim that our results can be generalized to the population of migrant farm workers. We do, however, make two points about the strength of the design. First, while we cannot generalize our results to the population, the

randomization of the treatment does allow us to make definitive statements about how our treatments caused certain effects among the migrant workers we study here. In other words, we are clear that the positive and negative messages had certain effects, and these effects can be used to falsify our theory, as it applies to these workers.

Second, the participants in our study are similar to the wider community of migrant workers in a number of important ways Table 1 compares a few of the key demographic characteristics of the experimental participants to the same characteristics of all migrant workers in the U.S. One can see that in many aspects the demographic characteristics of the workers we studied are similar to the characteristics of migrant workers in the U.S. The participants in our study are 78% male, while 80% of all migrant workers are male. The median number of years of schooling is identical. The annual household income is similar as well. Two thirds of the participants in the experiment had household incomes below \$14,000, while two thirds of all migrant workers in the U.S had household incomes below \$12,500 (as of 1998). In addition, 3% of the migrant workers who completed the experiment lived with their parents, while 4% of migrant workers nationally live with their parents. One difference between the two groups is that the participants in the experiment had been in the U.S. a short amount of time, compared to migrant workers as a whole (this reflects North Carolina serving as a new destination for migrants). As a whole, however, the research participants are similar to farm workers nationally, suggesting that our results may serve as a good approximation of the results that would be obtained had we drawn the participants from a national sample.

Table 1.
North Carolina Migrant Worker Participant Pool Demographics Compared to National Migrant Worker Demographics

	<i>North Carolina Participant Pool^a</i>	<i>National Demographics^b</i>
Gender	76% male	80% male
Median years of schooling	7	7
Annual Household income	2/3 below \$14,000	2/3 below \$12,500
Lives with parents	3%	4%
Median number of years in the U.S.	3	10

^a The demographic characteristics of the participants in the experiment conducted in New Hope, N.C.

^b The demographic characteristics of all migrant workers as of 1998 (Mehta et al 2000).

Research Design: Focus Group

We also conducted a focus group on November 15, 2003 to better understand how immigrant/migrant farm workers conceive of free trade, their self interest, and the role of government, as explained in their own words. The focus group was conducted at the same site as the experiment. None of the focus group participants had been subjects in the experiment. Four

men and one woman participated in the focus group, all of whom were Mexican farm laborers working in the surrounding area. We did not ask for further individuating demographic information. Upon the completion of the focus group each participant received \$20.

Results

Focus Group

One major purpose of the focus group is to enable participants to speak directly to these issues, demonstrating an awareness of them and, thus, the existence of a set of beliefs in this domain. That they do have such beliefs is apparent as we report specific responses. We hypothesize, for example, that the relationship between the experimental treatment and support for free trade is mediated by valuation of active government. Support or opposition to government intervention is a value that should influence subsequent economic considerations. The desire to see a less active American government was voiced throughout the focus group session. "I believe there are more opportunities, and wanting to we could make it in all levels like knowing more English...and we would have more opportunities if we could *work freely*" [emphasis added]. More specifically, the participants highlighted the desire of the American government to remove restrictions on citizenship documentation. "I think the government should give more opportunities to Hispanics, like more freedom. Having more freedom, we could go to the airports and take planes from one place to another." The general sentiment among the participants was opposition to American governmental intervention regarding work opportunities. However, at one point a participant did state that, "we need a steady salary plus some *compensations* to have more stability" [emphasis added].

Another theoretically germane topic of discussion concerned whether the participants felt that they had benefited from free trade policies. In other words, is free trade in their self-interest? In response to this direct query, the assessment was not very positive. Most of the participants focused on their present hardships, rather than on the relationship between free trade and their general situation. "People in Mexico think that we come here and we have a great life, but that is not true because we come here to suffer and not eat well. This is because we don't earn enough to live as they say." One participant joked about the negative response of another participant who said he did not like the United States, by saying, "the thing is that he hasn't met a girl here." This anecdote is illustrative of the personal hardships that these immigrant/migrant workers must endure. In addition to economic considerations, there are also personal considerations that factor into a general evaluation of free trade, and the belief that it has or has not benefited one.

The consensus was that free trade was not beneficial. Three out of the five participants specifically mentioned that it is big business that benefits from free trade in response to the question, "Do you feel that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has benefited you somehow?" However, when the group was asked to compare their present situation to their past situation in Mexico, they concluded that being in the United States is essentially the lesser of two evils. "I feel we have to work to make it. It's hard but possible...Here there are more opportunities. In Mexico, you can be the most hard worker and not make it because there is no work." The wage differential between Mexico and the United States was pointed out at various points, specifically with regards to the lower purchasing power of Mexican wages. "In Mexico? No, over there I worked for 6 years and could not even buy a radio!" Another participant stated, "Even if there is work [in Mexico] the things are expensive. Yes, well, a two-liter soda is 25 pesos, and if I'm earning 100 pesos, I only have left 75 pesos."

We will return to this evidence below because some of the focus group discussion directly mirrors the experimental evidence and helps bring it to life. For now, we conclude that the results from this focus group provide a better understanding of the experimental results we present below. More importantly, the focus group contributes to seeing the human face of globalization without filters. Because this is an understudied population, qualitative research is necessary for informing theoretical frameworks and empirical results. The focus group participants live hard lives; however, it is implicit that their hard lives were harder in Mexico where there are fewer job opportunities and wages are a fraction of those in the United States. This issue provides preliminary evidence of the existence of a vested interest in free trade. Opposition to government intervention in the specific area of job opportunities, in contrast, was a clear theme among the focus group participants. This is an important value and one that we further consider below as a possible mediator.

Experiment

We now turn to the experimental results by testing the three hypotheses developed above, each of the three being further divided into priming and persuasion effects. The first concerns direct effects of the experimental treatment on support for free trade. The second is whether valuing an active government mediates that direct effect. The third examines whether the effects of the treatment are moderated by political sophistication or by vested interest.

We randomly assigned the research participants to the three experimental conditions (positive message, negative message, and no message [the control condition]). We compared the participants' demographic characteristics between the three groups to assess whether the randomization appeared to "work" (that is, involved no major instances of a randomly induced but unexpected empirical correlation; these results are not reported but available on request). The design with apparently successful randomization allows us to claim, with confidence, that any observed treatment effect is causal.

As we pointed out, the participants in the experiment were not a randomly selected subset of migrant farm workers, and therefore we cannot make statistical inferences about any but the treatment variables. Nonetheless, we report the results, including inferential statistics, which is what we would have estimated if there had been randomization over subject participants. We use the inferential statistics as a guide in determining whether we should accept or reject the null hypothesis, but with respect to these research participants only.

To test the first two hypotheses we estimate each model (treatment as prime and treatment as valence) for the full sample. The priming tests compare those receiving a treatment to the control group that received none. The persuasion tests contrast those receiving the positive treatment with those receiving the negative messages (and of course, we compare each group to the control group also). The second hypothesis is tested by the addition of the mediator variable, valuing active government, presented in Figure 1.

The final set of hypotheses repeats the above analyses separately for those who reported that they believed that they benefited from or did not benefit from free trade and for those high and those low in political sophistication, with both classifications determined by median splits. Vested self-interest was measured by a question that asked, "Do you think you personally benefited from free trade agreements between countries, for example the North American Free Trade Agreement between the United States and Mexico?" The political sophistication scale is the combination of general sophistication (years of formal education) and of relevant political knowledge (recognition of the names of the two U.S. political parties). The estimate of the

effects of the treatment-as-prime variable for each of the three hypotheses is presented in Table 2. Table 3 likewise reports for all hypotheses the effects of the positive and of the negative treatment variables as persuasive messages for the direct, mediated, and moderated effects.

Note that the coefficients provide only part of the information needed to test the mediation effects hypotheses because they represent only the direct effects: the indirect effects that operate through active government are ascertained by conducting additional analyses. However, the coefficients reported in Tables 2 and 3 are sufficient for testing the other two sets of hypotheses. We therefore review the evidence for the first and third hypotheses first, and then turn to the more complex inferences that we need to make to test the second, mediation, and hypothesis. All estimates were conducted via OLS unless indicated otherwise. We utilize one-tailed tests for the directional hypotheses, and two-tailed tests for the priming tests, with one exception. In the case of those who believe they benefited from free trade, we expect that if the messages operate as a prime, then both messages will increase support for free trade, because they would prime those having a self-interest, which in our context is necessarily perceiving benefits from free trade. As a result, we utilize one-tailed hypothesis tests for the impact of the treatment on support for free trade among this group.

Table 2
Free Trade Messages as a Prime: OLS Regression
Estimates for Support for Free Trade

	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Prime</i>	-.073 (.530)	1.23* (.860)	-.292 (.708)	-.608 (.732)	-.096 (.927)
Constant	5.02** (.434)	3.98** (.741)	5.72** (.477)	5.58** (.622)	4.70** (.722)
F-Statistic	.02	2.04	.17	.69	.01
R ²	.00	.03	.01	.02	.00
N	73	35	22	36	28

* $p < .10$ one-tailed, ** $p < .01$ two-tailed

Model 1 includes all experiment participants. Model 2 includes participants with high vested interest. Model 3 includes participants with low vested interest. Model 4 includes participants high in political sophistication. Model 5 includes participants low in political sophistication.

Table 3
Free Trade Messages as Valences: OLS Regression Estimates
for Support for Free Trade

	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Positive Message</i>	-.236 (.610)	1.28* (.921)	.777 (1.26)	-.897 (.819)	-.573 (1.12)
<i>Negative Message</i>	.097 (.616)	1.12 (1.10)	-.560 (.753)	-.270 (.847)	.327 (1.08)
Constant	5.02** (.436)	3.98** (.752)	5.72** (.476)	5.58** (.626)	4.70** (.727)
F-Statistic	.16	1.00	.61	.67	.30
R ²	.00	.06	.06	.04	.02
N	73	35	22	36	28

* $p < .10$ one-tailed, ** $p < .01$ two-tailed

Model 1 includes all experiment participants. Model 2 includes participants with high vested interest. Model 3 includes participants with low vested interest. Model 4 includes participants high in political sophistication. Model 5 includes participants low in political sophistication.

Turning to column 1 in Tables 2 and 3, one observes that we can reject the hypothesis of direct effects of the treatment on support for free trade policy.⁶ Neither of the messages served as a prime, nor did the messages have different effects due to their acting as persuasive messages.⁷

There is support for the third hypothesis, however (we return to the second hypothesis below). For those high in self interest, turning to column 2 reveals that the treatment variable is significant at $p < .1$ level when tested as a prime.⁸ That is, compared to the control group, those who were high in vested self-interest were significantly more likely to favor free trade. Notice, in Table 3, this effect is significant for those receiving the pro-free trade message. The evidence is not consistent with persuasion, however, as the negative treatment had nearly the same-sized coefficient, with the same and thus wrong sign. Indeed, that the two treatments are essentially the same is precisely what we would expect if the treatment was a prime and not persuasive. The obvious interpretation is that those who felt they benefited from free trade responded to either message by having their vested interest in free trade made more accessible, and that accessing these attitudes about benefiting personally from free trade led them, in turn, to be more supportive of policies that make trade freer.

These results speak to the structure of the workers' free trade attitudes. The fact that the positive and negative messages did not move the workers' support for free trade in the positive and negative directions suggests that their free trade attitudes are too crystallized to be affected by these messages. Given that many of these workers made dramatic choices to leave their families and travel to the U.S. to work, if they link these choices to free trade policy, then it is probably an issue they have given some thought to. This is certainly the case among the migrant workers who believe that they have personally benefited from free trade: the messages do not

have a persuasive effect, but they do prime their notions of having benefited, indicated by their increased support for free trade when receiving either the positive or negative message.

As one can see by turning to columns 4 and 5 in Tables 2 and 3, there was no role for the political sophistication variable as moderator. Column 4 reveals that among migrant workers high in sophistication, the free trade message as prime was statistically insignificant (in Table 3), as was the message as valence (in Table 4). The same pattern of results is apparent in Column 5 of these two tables, where the same pattern holds for the workers low in sophistication.⁹

Our focus-group discussions reinforce these findings. During the course of a discussion that centered on the topics of free trade, the workers' hardships, and immigration, most of the workers indicated that they live and work in the U.S. because they have more economic opportunities here. Also, two of the workers attributed the NAFTA free trade agreement to affecting their lives in the U.S. directly. One participant said that it generated more money for them: "What is the free trade agreement? I believe it gives more freedom so that all countries can enter with their products and that gives [workers] more money." Another said that NAFTA was the direct cause of why (s) he immigrated to the U.S. to work. We asked, "How has NAFTA affected you?" One worker said, "Well, the fact that I'm here is how much it has affected me." Finally, another participant summed these points up well when (s) he said:

NAFTA has affected us so much that we are here, precisely because we can't compete with the cattle raising and agriculture because the technology is very rudimentary in our country [Mexico] and here technology is better. We are badly paid, but any way, it's better than over there." (Farm worker – interview; translated from Spanish)

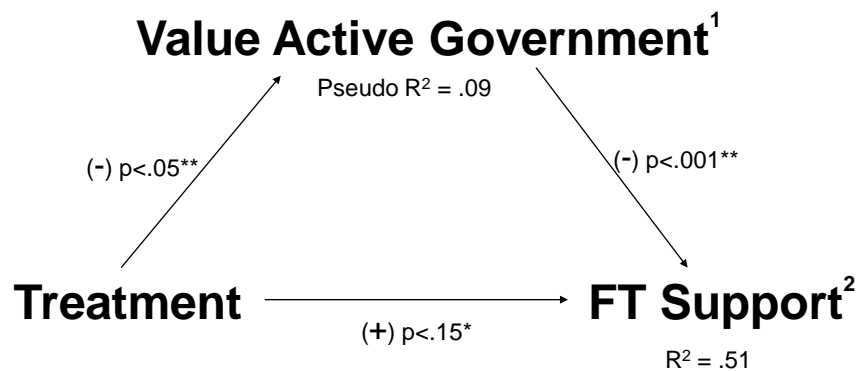
The focus group results suggest an important reason as to why vested interest would condition the relationship: some of the workers hold NAFTA responsible for their economic choices. The results from the focus group reinforce our findings of vested interest as a moderator variable, suggesting that some of the workers associate their own livelihoods, and life-altering immigration choices, with trade policy. The workers tell of the very dramatic choices they have made to make better economic lives for themselves and their families, and some of them clearly associate these dramatic decisions with free trade policies. This link, and the life-altering nature of the decisions, suggests that perhaps the type of worker who does make this link will also be the one who pays most attention to free trade messages.

Let us return to the second hypothesis concerning mediation. In this case, we are hypothesizing that the experimental messages do not only affect views about free trade policies, but that they are also mediated by the valuing of a more or a less active government. The Sobel test (1982) provides a formal test of mediation. The estimation of this test is based on OLS for each component of the test (Sobel 1982). In our analysis, we can not use OLS for all model estimations because the active government value variable is an ordinal, three-category variable for which ordered logit is a superior estimation procedure. As a result, we use a modified version of the Sobel test, substituting the ordered logit for the OLS estimates.

Given the results for hypotheses one and three reported above, we test the mediation hypotheses only for the case of priming among those high in vested self interest. We present the results in Figure 1. The coefficient for the positive treatment among those with high vested self-interest is statistically significant in its relationship to the valuing of active government, and there is a strong relationship between that value and position on the trade policy, even controlling

for the direct effect of the treatment on trade policy.¹⁰ Those with high vested interest who were primed by the treatment had a lower valuing of active government. As we expected, our OLS estimates for the trade policy variable revealed that the more workers valued having an active government, the lower their support for free trade policy. The treatment operated as a prime, increasing the workers' support for free trade.¹¹

Figure 1:
Free Trade Support among "Self-Interested" Latino Farm Workers



** *p-values for two-tailed tests*

* *p-value for one-tailed test*

¹ The effect of the treatment on value active government is estimated using ordered logit.

² The effect of the treatment and value active government on support for free trade is estimated using OLS.

While we could only conduct an analogue of the Sobel test, we did find that our model results met the criteria for when a variable mediates between two other factors (Sobel 1982). First, the treatment variable did significantly affect the valuing of an active government. Expressed as a difference in means, the treatment *decreased* support for active government by .95 (on a three point scale) at the .05 two-tailed level of statistical significance.¹² Second, the treatment was, as required by the test, significantly related to trade policy in the absence of the mediator: we find that the treatment increased support for free trade by 1.23 (on a seven-point scale) at the .10 one-tailed level of statistical significance in the absence of the values variable (as reported in Table 1). Third, the mediating variable was, as necessary, substantially related to the dependent variable in the absence of the treatment variable: we find that the value active government variable *decreased* support for free trade by 1.98 points, at the .001 level of statistical significance, without controlling for the treatment. Finally, the effect of the treatment on trade policy was, in fact, reduced when controlling for the values variable. Once the political value of active government was included in the model, the effect of the treatment dropped to 1.19 at the .15 one-tailed level of statistical significance. In turn, support for active government *decreased* support for free trade policies by 1.75 points at the .001 level of statistical significance.¹³

Conclusion

Our results provide support for one specific complex of results. We find a significant mediated and moderated effect of the experimental treatment serving as a prime on support for free trade policies. Thus we find evidence in support of the priming version of hypotheses two and three. Latino migrant workers' beliefs about the benefits they received from free trade made all of the difference in terms of how they processed free trade messages and applied them to policy considerations. The vested interest condition clearly tapped an underlying motivational factor. While the messages did not affect the free trade preferences of the workers as a whole, when we restricted the analysis to those high in vested interest the messages primed the concept and increased their support for free trade. There are, of course, several reasons why this might be true, but one of the most promising of these is that only those who were vested in the issue via self-interest had sufficiently strong attitudes (or even had attitudes at all) in this domain for the prime to increase their accessibility. This view is also consistent with our positive findings with respect to priming but not to persuasion.

We began with the question of "where Latino migrant workers are at" with respect to free trade policy. We cannot generalize our results to all migrant workers in the U.S., but the results do speak to the beliefs of these migrant workers, in particular. First off, 61% of workers supported increasing free trade while just 30% supported restricting free trade. The experimental results suggest that the workers we studied have a fairly firm opinion about their support for free trade. While the positive and negative messages did move support, the only group for whom the change was statistically significant was among those who believe they benefit from free trade. This priming effect suggests that, because they believe they benefit from such policies, exposure to any kind of message about free trade (be it positive or negative) reminds them of their belief in this benefit and increases support for the policy. Among the other groups of workers we considered, the changes were too small to be considered significant in a statistical sense.

This brings us to our final point -- about the implications of our results for democratic theory. Scholars are increasingly addressing the fact that Western democracies are home to millions and millions of immigrants who lead long and productive lives in these nations, and yet are excluded from the rights and privileges of citizenship (e.g. Heisler 2005, Benhabib 2005, and Baubock 2005). Even though the subjects of our research are not American citizens, our results matter in terms of their consequences for democracy. Democratic theory demands that we take account of the opinions of everyone who is affected by public policy. While these Latino migrant workers cannot vote, a robust view of democracy calls for their voices to be heard. The trade policies of the U.S. are policies that impact these worker's lives in a direct and powerful way, as the workers themselves attested in the focus group. Our results indicate that the migrant workers we studied tend to support such policies, and their attitudes on this subject are pretty firm. Their voices and the effects of policy on their lives need to be heard beyond the confines of scholarly focus groups and statistical analyses.

**Appendix A:
Neutral Articles and Treatment Articles**

Neutral Articles

“Mexico to Destroy Tunnel”

The Mexican authorities began the destruction of a secret drug tunnel. The tunnel is located at the border and was utilized by one of the most feared bands of Mexican drug traffickers. Tons of cocaine and marijuana were smuggled into the United States through this border.

Both workers and soldiers entered the 335 meter long tunnel to begin its demolition. They have destroyed various support sections. They will then proceed to fill the tunnel with cement. The entrance of the tunnel will also be blocked off with an earth filling.

Assistant prosecutor, Jose Jorge Camps, said that engineers inspected portions of the tunnel in an effort to gather as much information as possible about the construction of the tunnel.

The existence of the tunnel was made known to American drug enforcement agents through an anonymous tip-off. The tunnel was 1.3 meters wide and 1.3 meters tall. The tunnel began under a private residence in the mountains east of San Diego and ran 100 kilometers to Tecate, a Mexican border town.

“El Niño could drown out the Korea-Japan World Cup”

Experts assure that the meteorological phenomenon of “El Niño” could ravage the Asian continent during the 2002 Korea-Japan World Cup. These experts also stated that the first signs of the storm will be seen during the first days of June. These dates coincide with the first games of the World Cup

The 2002 World Cup will take place in both South Korea and Japan. Events begin May 31 and will conclude June 30. A total of 32 national soccer teams will participate in the tournament.

“Los Angeles Cardinal denies sexual abuse accusation”

In an unexpected declaration, the head of one of the largest Catholic archdiocese in the United States, stated that he was accused of sexual abuse. The incident is said to have taken place 32 years ago.

Cardinal Mahoney, himself, revealed the charges-and he energetically denied them-in a three page statement.

The woman, who is now 51 years old, said she was knocked unconscious in a fight with other students at Joaquin Memorial Catholic junior high in Fresno, California. When she awoke, she was not wearing any underwear and Cardinal Mahoney was standing beside her.

The woman states that she is now unable to work and take anti-depressants. She added, that a psychiatrist diagnosed her as a paranoid schizophrenic.

Cardinal Mahoney has denied any accusation. He has stated that he will take the necessary measures in order to defend his integrity and personal reputation.
personal.

Positive Article

“Unshakable U.S. prosperity”

Washington, D.C. -- Over the next 20 years, the forces of globalization will combine to propel the American economy past inevitable obstacles. America won't relive the Golden Age, but this pattern of long-run progress will recur. A key factor in this recipe for success is the United States' involvement in cross-national trade agreements, such as NAFTA.

Recently, business and government leaders discussed the strategies and successes of American companies under NAFTA during a major conference organized by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, “NAFTA: Five Years Later.” At the conference, executives and government officials explained how Mexican companies have been able to source materials in the United States – rather than Asia or Europe – because NAFTA makes U.S. products more competitive.

“The successes of NAFTA are impossible to ignore,” said Charlie Smith, vice-president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. He cited U.S. Commerce Department figures that show that, under NAFTA, the number of export-related jobs has increased by 1.7 million. In addition, more than 11.5 million U.S. jobs are in the export sector, and these jobs pay an average of 15 percent more than non-trade-related jobs. In 1997, 46 out of 50 U.S. States had experienced growth in export sales to Mexico since NAFTA's enactment.

“The results have paid off for American corporations, workers and consumers as companies find a dynamic market for exports, as wages increase and unemployment falls, and as the cost of goods decreases while quality increases,” Smith said.

U.S. exports directly account for more than a third of the United States' economic growth. As Kenneth H. “Buddy” McKay, special envoy of President Clinton, noted at the Chamber's conference, economic integration throughout the world is a key to the United States' continued economic prosperity.

Negative Article

“Globalization hits hard, American, Southern workers”

Greensboro – American workers today are feeling more insecure about their economic future. This persistent worker insecurity is due in large part to our increased integration in the world economy.

In this globalized world, U.S. corporations are increasingly setting up shop in low-wage countries, leaving American workers out in the cold. For example, Nike sneakers now subcontracts all its production to companies operating in low-wage, non-union countries. GM recently signed a contract with a developing Asian country to build another production facility overseas.

A recent study by the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) found that the South has accounted for over a third of the U.S. jobs lost to NAFTA, more than any other part of the country.

Economic woes in North Carolina mirror developments in other areas of the country with large chunks of their economies invested in sectors threatened by globalization. Last year, 32,000 jobs disappeared because of plant closings and layoffs – 43 percent more than in 1988.

In Columbus County, North Carolina, people are in turmoil. “It would be an understatement to say that our county has been damaged by NAFTA,” said Bill Johnson, a county employee. More appropriate, he said, “would be to say that we were devastated. Two years ago, we had 2,500 to 3,000 textile jobs. Today they’re all gone – they all went South to Mexico ... That’s a \$20 million payroll loss.”

Even when plants do not shut down, increased economic activity negatively affects workers because employers threaten to shut the plant down and leave the country if they don’t comply with bad work practices. According to the EPI study, workers are increasingly reluctant to file unfair labor practice charges in response to plant closing threats. As expected, Mexico was the country most often mentioned in plant closing threats.

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Endnotes

¹ Mediation is defined as the effect of free trade messages on support for free trade operating through a political value. Moderation is defined as globalization messages having greater effects among the more politically sophisticated workers, or among workers who believe they have a high degree of self-interest in free trade, compared to other workers.

² In other words, the pro- and con- free trade messages may have greater effects on support for free trade among some workers compared to others.

³ We recognize that the view that values can be influenced by messages such as our treatment is controversial (e.g. Sears and Funk 1991, 1999). However, we adopt a less rigid view of values. James McCann (1997) argues that values are not more stable than other attitudes and presents evidence that values are unstable over time. Furthermore, Boninger et al. (1995) present evidence that self-interest causes people to think of their political values, and Baron and Leshner (2000) find that protected values are labile and amenable to change when challenged

⁴ Experimental treatment groups with 25 participants (or less, frequently) are common in psychology and political psychology. The goal is to have enough participants to detect treatment effects. Treatment groups of 25 are of sufficient size to detect treatment effects of large or moderate size (Keppel 1991).

⁵ We realize that these articles treated effects to the U.S. and this may not exert as strong an influence on the Mexican participant pool. We also recognize the possibility that some of the respondents in the negative treatment may have recognized that the job loss of Americans may actually be good for them. However, we are concentrating on the cueing of negative outcomes, and the economic insecurity that the negative treatment presented.

⁶ We measured support for free trade with the question: "Some people think the government should restrict trade between the United States and other nations. Other people feel that it is important to increase trade, without imposing any restrictions, between the United States and other nations. Where a one indicates that government should restrict trade, and a seven indicates that government should increase trade, where would you place yourself?"

⁷ Support for free trade was higher than opposition: 61% of study participants desired to increase trade, while just 30% wished to decrease it.

⁸ While $p < .10$, one-tailed test, is below the traditional p-value of .05, we provide two reasons as to why we view this more relaxed standard as sufficient. First, as is typical with experimental designs, we employ relatively few participants. Even without a random sample, we found access to large numbers of this population hard to come by. As a result of the limited cases, it is more difficult to obtain statistical significance. Second, the tradition in empirical social science is to relax empirical standards with the first study on a given topic in the effort to broaden the topics and questions entertained by social scientists (e.g. Pan 2004). As we alluded to earlier, ours is the first study to consider the free trade attitudes of migrant workers in the U.S.

⁹ We suspect that these results are due to the lack of questions with meaningful variance on sophistication within a group as homogenous as this set of subjects. While we observed a good deal of variance in the degree to which the migrant workers believe they benefit from free trade policy, the variance in their sophistication (formal years of education and recognition of the names of the two U.S. political parties) is much more limited.

¹⁰ We cannot, of course, infer that the effect of active government on trade policy also occurs in the population.

¹¹ These results are available from the authors upon request.

¹² One would imagine that among workers who believe they benefit from free trade, causing them to think about it would cause their support for active government (the value that is counter to free trade) to decrease.

¹³ We do not report these results in table, but they are available from the authors upon request.