Supplementary Appendix for: Promises or Policies? An Experimental Analysis of International Agreements and Audience Reactions

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This appendix describes two follow-up surveys that were not in the published paper, but were referenced in footnotes. I owe particular appreciation to Christina Davis, who suggested the first follow up approach.

Follow Up Survey: Primed vs. Elicited Preferences

In the above analyses, I first conducted the main experiment and then elicited respondents' preferences over free trade policy. I then checked whether the treatment administered in the experiment "contaminated" respondents' elicited preferences, and did not find any evidence of these effects. To further ensure that the treatment administered did not affect respondents' expressed preferences, I conducted a follow-up experiment in July of 2012 in which respondents were *primed* with anti-free trade preferences, rather than asked about their preferences. I randomly assigned half of the respondents to the "primed" group and half to the "un-primed" group. Respondents in the unprimed group took the same survey as above, with random assignment to only the IA and null treatments. Respondents in the primed group also took the same survey, but before reading the vignette about tariffs and being randomly assigned to the IA or null treatment, they answered a series of questions that primed them to dislike free trade. Specifically, they first answered whether they were employed or unemployed and whether they had been unemployed at any time over the past five years. I then asked them to estimate the U.S. unemployment rate as in the main analysis, with the additional prime that "As you may know, the U.S. economy has performed poorly over the last few years." Finally, I asked an intentionally-loaded question that linked employment with trade policy: "As you may know, international trade has increased substantially in recent years. Some people argue that increased international trade causes some U.S. workers to lose their jobs because of increased competition from cheap foreign labor. Do

you think it is best to... (A) Raise barriers to trade in order keep U.S. workers from losing their jobs in the first place. (B) Provide additional assistance to those workers to find new jobs. (C) Ensure that the U.S. doesn't make any international commitments which limit our flexibility in dealing with these issues. or (D) All of the above."[1]

The follow-up survey allows me to compare the effects of the IA treatment by whether the respondent was primed or unprimed. I expect that the IA treatment will have a weaker effect on primed respondents, since the priming questions heighten the weight that the respondent places on policy as opposed to consistency. Unprimed respondents should behave similarly to those analyzed in the main experiment above.

The results are very consistent with this prediction and are displayed in Figure 1 and Table 1.[2] For the unprimed group, the IA treatment has an almost identical treatment effect as before. The approval rate for unprimed respondents who received the null treatment was 70.2% compared with 60.3% for unprimed respondents who received the IA treatment. The treatment effect for unprimed respondents was thus approximately -10% which is almost identical to the effect found in the main analysis. For primed respondents, the null approval rate was 65.8% compared with 63.4% for primed respondents who received the IA treatment, a difference of only -2.4%. In other words, the priming questions both decreased the null approval rate and substantially dampened the effect of the IA treatment.

Follow Up Survey: Why Support International Agreements?

So far, this analysis has built on existing work assuming that a preference for consistency was a key reason that audiences opposed the breaking of international agreements. The international agreement treatment used in the main experiment was designed to tap into

[1]This also provides a built-in manipulation check that the priming is indeed influencing respondents' opinions on free trade. 40% answered "All of the above" to this question, which is high considering that only approximately 18% expressed anti-free trade preferences in the main analysis.

[2]Confidence intervals and statistical tests conducted identically to those in the main experiment.

this concept. Respondents did indeed express lower levels of approval for policymakers whose actions were inconsistent with international agreements.

This treatment, however, could have also tapped into other reasons why respondents support international agreements, apart from their penchant for consistency. For example, respondents could also disapprove of breaking international agreements because they fear retaliation from other members of the agreement. If the respondent thinks that they or their community or country could be harmed by foreign punishment resulting from the breaking of an agreement, then the respondent could disapprove regardless of their desire for consistency. In 2002, orange growers and textile manufacturers in the United States were acutely aware that they were likely targets should the European Union decide to retaliate against U.S. steel tariffs. Similarly, some respondents might simply support the rule of law and dislike any action that is perceived to be illegal. None of these reasons for disapproval- consistency, retaliation, or rule of law- are mutually exclusive. Audiences might disapprove of breaking international agreements for any subset of those three reasons.

To analyze which of these three factors most influenced respondent approval, I conducted a follow-up survey experiment of approximately 500 respondents in July of 2012. The experiment was conducted in the exact same way as the main experiment above, except it employed three treatments that were specific to particular reasons why a respondent might disapprove of breaking international agreements. Each respondent was randomly assigned to one of three treatments pertaining to international agreements or a null treatment, as above. The three international agreement treatments each began with "Some analysts have lobbied the president against restricting imports of metal brackets from Europe. They argue that import restrictions violate free trade agreements between the U.S. and Europe..." They differed by the reason given for disapproving of breaking the international agreement. The three specific international agreement treatments were:

- **Consistency**: ... As a result, the restrictions would break a promise made to Europe,

and we would be going back on our word.

- **Retaliation**: ... As a result, Europe would retaliate by imposing restrictions against U.S. products, which would hurt the U.S. economy.

- **Legality**: ... As a result, the court at the World Trade Organization would rule that these restrictions violate international law.

As in the main experiment, all three were very similar in word count, sentence structure, and the forcefulness of language used. By comparing approval levels for each of the three treatments against the null treatment, I can asses the relative treatment effects of each as reasons for disapproving of breaking international agreements.

Which of the three treatments affected respondents' approval levels? In short, all three, though retaliation and legality had slightly stronger and more significant effects than consistency, as shown in Figure 2 and Table 2.[3] All three treatments lowered approval relative to the null treatment by $10 - 12\%$. The difference in mean approval levels between the retaliation and legality treatments and the null treatment were statistically significant, though the difference between the consistency and null treatments just missed conventional significance (p value $= 0.109$).[4]

These results indicate that respondents' reasons for disapproving of violations of international agreements are likely to be multifaceted, not simply based on a dislike of inconsistency. Respondents were most influenced by the possibility of foreign retaliation, which is a cooperation-facilitating mechanism that, ironically, does not require an international agreement. Countries can use the threat of punishment and retaliation as inducements for cooperation even outside of the purview of international law or agreements.

[3]Confidence intervals and statistical tests conducted identically to those in the main experiment.
[4]The treatment effects were also very similar to those found in the main experiment.

Figure 1: International Agreement Treatment Effects, Unprimed vs. Primed Respondents

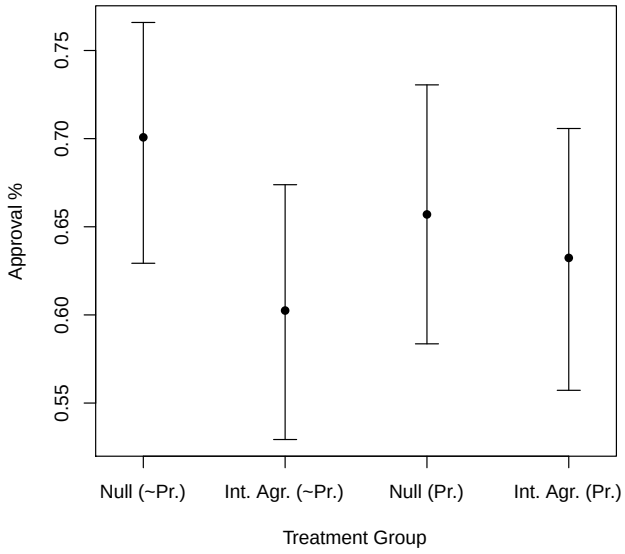

Figure 2: Specific International Agreement Treatment Effects, All Respondents

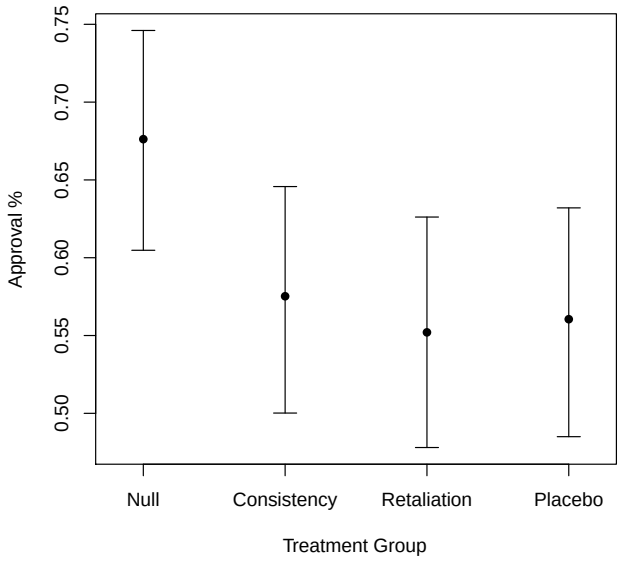

Table 1: Approval Rates by Treatment Group: Primed vs. Unprimed Respondents

Treatment Group	N	Proportion Approv.	Difference	SE	t stat	p value
$\sim$ Primed: Null	121	0.702				
$\sim$ Primed: Int. Agr.	121	0.603	-0.099	0.061	-1.62	0.106
Primed: Null	114	0.658				
Primed: Int. Agr.	112	0.634	-0.024	0.064	-0.38	0.708

Table 2: Approval Rates by Treatment Group: Why Support International Agreements?

Treatment Group	N	Proportion Approv.	Difference	SE	t stat	p value
Null	115	0.687				
Consistency	118	0.576	-0.102	0.063	-1.61	0.109
Retaliation	121	0.554	-0.125	0.063	-1.97	0.050
Legality	116	0.560	-0.118	0.064	-1.85	0.065