



**AMERICANS ON GLOBALIZATION:
A Study of US Public Attitudes
March 28, 2000**

Appendix D: Demographics

Summary

In most cases, there were minimal variations between different demographic groups in attitudes toward globalization issues. With a few rare exceptions, the majority positions in all demographic groups were the same, though the size of the majority did vary substantially in some cases. The demographic category that showed the strongest variation was education, with those at higher educational levels having more-positive attitudes toward globalization and trade. Higher income levels also were associated with more-positive attitudes, but this effect often was attributable to the higher educational levels among those with higher incomes. Younger people, racial minorities and Democrats also showed somewhat more-positive attitudes. Women showed a bit more skepticism about the benefits of trade and more concern about its effect on workers. Those who had suffered a recent job loss were distinctly more dubious about the benefits of trade. Regional differences were virtually nonexistent.

Education

Education was the demographic variable that showed the strongest variation.

On general questions about globalization and trade, there was a tendency for those with higher levels of education to be more positive, although this was not pervasive. In only a few cases did the majority of any educational subgroup vary from the dominant trend. The most-striking cases were ones that asked about how high a priority it should be to protect those who might lose their jobs, with those of higher education giving it a lower priority. This latter difference is not hard to understand, given that despite good economic times those without a high school diploma feel their economic security has diminished during the last decade, and barely a majority of those with a high school diploma feels it has improved. Individuals at all levels of education on average felt positively about globalization, both in general and in terms of its effect on their own lives; however, people with higher levels of education felt more positively. Individuals with a bachelor's degree or higher rated globalization 6.4 out of 10, while those without a high school diploma gave it a mildly positive 5.3. Those with a college degree or higher rated the effect they expect further globalization to have on them personally as 6.4, those with some college education rated it 5.6, high school graduates rated it 5.3 and those without a diploma 5.4. These differences were reflected in the support for various strategies these groups evinced.

While individuals with an advanced degree rated international trade very favorably (6.2 out of 10), this rating declines with less educational attainment to a mildly positive 5.3 for those with a high school diploma or less. Similarly, those with advanced degrees rated the impact of trade on themselves as 5.7 of 10, while those with less education saw the impact as increasingly less positive, and those with a high school diploma or less saw it as mildly negative (4.8). However, the higher positive ratings of the personal impact of increased trade are mostly attributable to the individual's household income, that is, people with higher incomes felt trade's impact on themselves was more positive and these same individuals also

tended to have more education.

Attitudes about NAFTA and fast track followed this same pattern. A majority of those with advanced degrees (58%) and college degrees (52%) thought NAFTA had been good for the US. However, only pluralities of those with some college education (44%), high school graduates (41%) and those without a high school diploma (40%) considered NAFTA to have been good. While a majority at every education level opposed “fast track” legislation, opposition rises strongly as education level declines. Two-thirds (66%) of those who did not graduate from high school opposed “fast track” legislation, while a bare majority (51%) of those with high school or higher opposed such legislation.

One case in which a plurality of a demographic group did vary from the dominant trend was on the question of what the government should do about globalization. An overwhelming majority of respondents with a college degree or higher (75%) felt that the government should either simply allow the present process of globalization to continue or actively promote it. There was declining consensus for those with some college (65%) and with a high school diploma (57%). However, among those who did not finish high school, just 42% wanted the government to pursue this policy, while 46% favored having the government try to slow down or stop globalization.

Attitudes about free trade followed this pattern as well. While a bare majority of the sample as a whole said free trade was a good idea because it can lead to lower prices and long-term economic growth, a strong majority of those with advanced degrees (69%) felt this way. High school graduates split (47% to 48%) on whether free trade is a good idea or a bad idea, and just 37% of respondents without a high school diploma thought free trade was a good idea, while 57% said it was a bad idea.

Attitudes about foreign investment also showed such variation. A majority of those without a college degree (56%) thought that that foreign investment might be dangerous because it allows outsiders too much control over US affairs; however, just 37% of those with college degrees or higher levels of education thought it might be dangerous.

The sharpest differences between educational levels was on questions that addressed the priority to be given to the vulnerability of American workers. Those with the lowest levels of education were much more sensitive to the disruptive costs of job loss. A strong majority of individuals without a high school diploma (66%) and high school graduates (65%) felt that even the creation of higher-paying jobs was not worth the disruption caused by people losing their jobs because of freer trade. By contrast, just one-third (33%) of those with a college degree or higher thought the new jobs were not worth the disruption, while 60% of them said it was better to have the higher paying jobs.

Those with less education were much less ready to accept the loss of jobs as part of a trade agreement that leads to lower consumer prices. When asked about a possible scenario in which a worker in an American shoe factory loses his or her job as a result of a trade agreement, a very strong majority (72%) of those with a high school diploma or less said they thought such an agreement would be a mistake if it resulted in American workers ending up in lower paying jobs. A strong majority (63%) of those with some college education also thought it would be a mistake. On the other hand, just 43% of those with a college degree or higher thought the agreement was a mistake, while 51% thought the trade agreement was the right thing to do.

These differences in response are not hard to understand, given that less-educated Americans have a much-less positive view of their own economic security. Despite recent economic boom times, a plurality (43%) of those without a high school diploma says economic security has worsened during the last ten years, and only a bare majority of high school graduates (53%) says it has improved. However, solid

majorities of those with some college (63%), college degrees (70%) or advanced degrees (72%) say their economic security has improved.

Those with lower levels of education also felt they were more vulnerable to the changes that would come with increasing international trade. Those with a high school education or less rated their vulnerability as 5.4 on a scale from 0 to 10; this average declines with education level, reaching 3.7 for people with an advanced degree. A similar but attenuated pattern emerges for ratings of the average American's vulnerability to the changes that come with increasing international trade. Those with a high school diploma or less rated the average American at 6.0, while those with an advanced degree rated the average American's vulnerability at 5.4.

Likewise, while a plurality (50%) of those at the highest levels of education thought that the growth of international trade has increased the gap between rich and poor in the US, this perception grows in size with decreasing education. A majority of those with some college (53%) or a high school diploma (55%), and a very strong majority (70%) of those without a high school diploma said the growth of trade has increased the gap.

The more-negative responses of less-educated Americans to globalization and the growth of trade seems to be embedded in a less-positive view of the general US economy and a much-less positive view of the respondent's own position in it. Eighty-five percent of individuals with advanced degrees felt the US economy was staying the same or getting better, but this percentage declines with education, to 66% of non-high school graduates.

There also was a relationship between education levels and attitudes about environmental issues. People with more education supported international agreements on environmental standards in greater numbers and more strongly. Eighty-three percent of those with some college education or higher favored such agreements (53% strongly favored them); 75% of high school graduates favored environmental agreements (39% strongly); while 65% of those without a high school diploma also favored such agreements (48% strongly). This greater emphasis on environmental issues also was reflected in the way the groups felt about how trade negotiations were carried out. While a majority at all levels of education felt that the government officials who make decisions about US trade policy considered the environment too little, this was strongest at the higher levels of education. Sixty-eight percent of those with a college degree or higher said the environment was considered "too little," and the percentage declines with lower education level, with 51% of those without a high school diploma saying the environment was considered "too little."

Some critics of efforts to include environmental concerns in trade negotiations have argued that such efforts are largely a cover for protecting the jobs of American through obstructing the growth of trade. However, this argument is weakened by the fact that among the more educated, who clearly feel less vulnerable to the growth of trade and who place a lower priority on protecting American workers, support for including environmental issues is higher.

One of the main purposes of education is to aid us in understanding the world around us, which may well lead to an expansion of one's sphere of moral concern and elicit more-positive responses about US global activism. Indeed, an overwhelming majority (73%) of those with advanced degrees disagreed with the argument that the world is so big and complex that international efforts make only a minimal difference with little benefit to the United States. Large majorities of respondents with some college (68%) and a high school diploma (56%) also disagreed with this statement, but just 34% of those who did not finish high school disagreed with it while 62% agreed with it. Groups with the most education are also more likely to favor helping poor countries by allowing in more of their products. Seventy-eight percent of those

with a college degree or higher thought this was a good idea, compared to 56% of those with a high school diploma or less.

It should, of course, be reemphasized that while there were numerous poll questions, reviewed here, in which there were notable variations according to educational level, there were also numerous questions on these issues that did not elicit significant differences.

Party Identification

Differences based on political affiliation were more limited than might have been expected, given the role trade and global issues have played in recent political debates. Differences between the groups primarily were matters of degree of support, rather than support for competing policies. There were no reliable differences between individuals with different party affiliations in their ratings of increasing international trade on a 0 to 10 scale, both overall and in terms of trade's affect on them personally.

Fast track was an outstanding exception to this rule. A strong majority of Republicans (77%) opposed fast track legislation, and a majority of independents (59%) also were opposed, while a plurality (50%) of Democrats favored it. This is particularly interesting given that the votes in Congress went in the opposite direction, with most Republicans favoring it and most Democrats opposed.

On the whole, Democrats felt more positive both about globalization overall and about its effect on them personally. Asked to rate globalization in general on a scale of 0 to 10, among Democrats the mean score was 6.4 and for them personally globalization was rated 6.1. Republicans gave lower ratings (5.8 overall, 5.5 personally), while independents were in between (6.1 overall, 5.5 personally).

The consensus statement in favor of free trade in conjunction with government programs for workers elicited a majority in all partisan groups, but was stronger among Democrats and independents. Seventy-three percent of Democrats and 70% of independents favored this position, while 58% of Republicans felt this way. But though majorities of Democrats (60%) and independents (55%) approved of slightly increasing taxes to support programs to help displaced workers, just 40% of Republicans would support such a tax increase. Strong majorities of Democrats (77%) and independents (70%) supported greater investment in worker retraining and education, while a bare majority of Republicans (51%) did so.

Majorities of all three groups supported allowing environmental and labor issues to be considered in trade decisions, but support was stronger among Democrats and independents than among Republicans. An overwhelming majority of independents (80%) favored allowing countries to restrict products if their production damages the environment, compared to strong majority support from Democrats (71%) and Republicans (68%). When asked if the WTO should consider issues like labor standards and the environment when it makes decisions on trade, 86% of Democrats felt that it should, compared to 77% of independents and 69% of Republicans.

While Democrats tended to feel even more frequently than independents or Republicans that trade involved some obligation to the poorer countries in the world, majorities of all groups felt this way. Hence, while very strong majorities of Democrats (74%) and independents (70%) were likely to agree that the US has a moral responsibility toward poor nations to help them develop economically and improve their people's lives, a smaller majority of Republicans (60%) agreed with this statement. Seventy-eight percent of Democrats also supported allowing more products from poor countries into the US to help these countries get on their feet. Support for this proposition was not quite as high among independents (73% favored it) or among Republicans (66% supported). As in earlier studies, Democrats in this study showed consistently higher levels than Republicans did of support for international organizations, with

independents usually falling between the two. On the general principle of whether it will be necessary for the US to work through international institutions to solve problems, a majority of all three groups thought this would be the case. More Democrats expected this to be necessary, however, with 66% taking this point of view compared to 54% of independents and 51% of Republicans. Eighty-four percent of Democrats wanted to strengthen the UN, as did a strong majority of independents (61%) and a majority of Republicans (56%). A plurality of Democrats (48%) and independents (45%) supported strengthening the International Monetary Fund, while just 39% of Republicans wanted it strengthened. Reflecting this pattern of support, Democrats (69%) and independents (71%) were more likely to consider it worthwhile for international organizations to intervene when there is instability in the world economy (as in the recent crisis in Asia) than were Republicans (55%). A strong majority of both Democrats (60%) and independents (66%) wanted to see the World Court strengthened, but only a plurality (46%) of Republicans did. A strong majority of Democrats (61%) also felt the US should make a commitment to accept the decisions of the World Court. Fifty-three percent of independents supported such a commitment as well, but just 43% of Republicans supported such a commitment, while 52% were opposed. Democrats also supported the proposed International Criminal Court at slightly higher levels. Sixty-nine percent of Democrats supported the formation of the Court, as did 64% of independents and 62% of Republicans.

Gender

Examining the differences between men and women in this study suggests a picture of women as more skeptical of the benefits of free trade and more sensitized to its costs. While a majority of men (55%) said free trade is a good idea, leading to lower prices and long-term economic growth, women were split on this question, with 47% saying it is a good idea and 48% agreeing that it is not a good idea because it can lead to lower wages and people losing their jobs. When asked what the goal of the US should be regarding international trade, women's support for continuing or promoting the growth of international trade was more tepid (52%) than men's support (64%).

Women tended to show slightly more concern about the potential loss of jobs. A majority of women (55%) favored a slight increase in taxes to support programs to help displaced workers get new jobs if trade barriers are lowered, while men were split, with 48% favoring this proposal. A strong majority of women (61%) said that even if freer trade results in new jobs that pay higher wages, overall this is not worth the disruption of people losing their jobs, while only a bare majority of men (51%) felt this way.

Not only do more women see the costs of lost jobs as greater than the benefits of gained jobs, but fewer women believe that jobs will be gained as the result of freer trade. A plurality of women (49%) said they thought more jobs were lost from imports (39% said more gained), while a plurality of men (49%) thought that more jobs were gained from exports (42% said more lost).

Although a majority of both men and women felt the same way about labor-related issues, women shared a slightly higher degree of consensus about labor standards for imported products than men did. This appears to stem from a more-prevalent sense on the part of women (81% as compared to 67%) that they have a moral obligation to make efforts to ensure that the people making the products are not working in harsh or unsafe conditions. Similarly, while majorities of men and women thought that the WTO should consider issues like the environment and labor standards in trade decisions, women endorsed this concept even more overwhelmingly (81%) than did men (74%). More women also said they would pay more for a clothing item that was certified as not having been manufactured in a sweatshop (80%) than did men (71%).

When asked about using trade as a tool for pressuring regimes with poor human rights records, a majority of Americans of both sexes thought this was a reasonable approach. However, when presented with

specific instances, women supported more so than men limiting trade with other countries that violate international human rights standards. Seventy-nine percent of women supported limiting trade with China on this basis, compared to 71% of men. Seventy-five percent of women supported limiting trade with Cuba versus 66% of men.

As in previous studies, women in this poll showed consistently higher levels of support for cooperative engagement and for international organizations. More women (81%) than men (75%) felt that because the world is so interconnected the US should participate in efforts to maintain peace, protect human rights and promote development. Asked whether global problems will require international institutions to intervene in the internal affairs of a country, 67% of women felt this would be the case, as compared to 56% of men. While both men and women generally favor strengthening international organizations, women tend to do so in greater numbers. Seventy-two percent of women felt strengthening the UN was needed, compared to 61% of men. Similarly, 60% of women wanted to strengthen the World Court, as did 51% of men; a plurality of women (48%) felt the IMF should be strengthened, while just 38% of men felt this way.

Age

Younger Americans were the most upbeat about globalization and trade. They were also more positive than Americans in the middle-age ranges about the way in which trade negotiations are formulated. In these areas at least, young Americans appear to feel hopeful about their future and place in the world.

Clearly, those 18 to 29 years of age felt the most positive about globalization. Both in terms of their rating of globalization overall (6.7 of 10) and in terms of the effect of the process on them personally (6.3), they are much more positive than Americans 30 and older (globalization overall at 5.8, for themselves 5.5).

Consistent with this more-positive view of globalization, an overwhelming majority of younger Americans wanted the government to either allow globalization process to continue or to actively promote it (74%). The size of this consensus declines with age, with 64% of those 30 to 45 taking this position, 56% of those 46 to 65, and only a plurality (41%) of those over 65 supporting these options.

Younger Americans have a much-more positive view of international trade. Those under 30 felt that increasing international trade had a positive effect on them personally (5.9 of 10), while those 30 and older rated it as having a mildly negative effect on them personally (4.8). Not surprisingly, this youngest group was strongly for the government promoting or continuing the growth in international trade (71%). Support for this position declines to a simple majority among those 30 to 45 (58%) and 46 to 65 (58%), and a plurality among those over 65 (48%). The youngest group also had the weakest majority (51%) for maintaining trade barriers for clothing imports, while a solid majority of those over 30 (65%) thought trade barriers should be kept at their current levels

Young people also are less apt to believe that other countries benefit from trade more than the US. While a plurality of those 30 and older (49%) felt this way, only 27% of those 18 to 29 thought other countries benefited more than the US.

Those 30 to 65 were the most unhappy with the way that government officials make decisions about trade policy. A solid majority of those 30 to 65 (63%) said that officials were too focused on the concerns of multinational corporations, and that officials focused too little on the concerns of the American public (78%) and people like themselves (80%). Only 42% of the youngest group and 41% of those over 65 felt the concerns of multinationals were given too much weight. And while a majority of both the youngest (56%) and oldest (54%) felt the general public was considered too little, this was not as pervasive a point of view as it was with those in the middle-age range. Similarly, while a strong majority of the youngest

(69%) and the oldest (57%) felt the concerns of people like them were considered too little, this feeling is not at the overwhelming levels shown by those 30 to 65.

Race

Minorities had a more positive view of trade than whites. Asked to rate trade on a 0-to-10 scale, the mean response among minorities was 6.0, while it was 5.4 for whites. Consistent with this rating, a majority of nonwhite Americans (52%) thought more jobs were gained from exports than were lost from imports. Only 42% of white Americans thought that this was the case.

At the same time, minorities showed more concern about the consequences of trade for themselves and others. Minorities rated themselves as more vulnerable (5.4 of 10) to the changes increasing international trade might bring than did white Americans (4.8). Similarly, they rated the average American as more vulnerable to such changes (6.2) than white Americans did (5.7).

Given this combination of a more positive view of trade and a greater sense of vulnerability, it makes sense that minorities would then place greater emphasis on measures meant to help Americans adapt to increased trade. And in fact, minorities were much-more likely to favor increasing taxes to support programs to help workers displaced by further lowering of trade barriers (65%), while white Americans were evenly split on such a proposal (47% in favor, 48% opposed). Similarly, while a majority of both groups said the federal government should invest more in worker retraining and education to help workers adapt to changes in the economy, this point of view was more pervasive among minorities (78%) than among white Americans (63%).

International action and international organizations generally received slightly stronger support among minority groups. Asked whether the international community should intervene with force if a government is committing atrocities against its people, an overwhelming percentage of minorities (85%) thought so, compared to 75% of white Americans. Similarly, while both a large number of whites and minorities supported strengthening the United Nations, 79% of minorities took this position, compared to 63% of white Americans. Sixty-five percent of minorities favored strengthening the World Court versus 54% of white Americans. Finally, while only 39% of white Americans wanted a stronger IMF, a majority of nonwhite Americans (59%) did want it to be stronger.

On issues involving aid to other countries, minorities tended to be even more favorable toward aiding others than were white Americans. While both a majority of white and nonwhite Americans supported the idea of allotting more import quotas to poor countries, an overwhelming 82% of minorities favored this proposal, compared to 69% of white Americans. And while a majority of both groups felt the US has a moral responsibility toward poor nations to help them develop economically, this was strongest among minorities, with 74% endorsing this argument; 66% of white Americans agreed.

Interestingly, minorities showed even-less concern about the potential Americanization of world culture than whites. While a majority of nonwhite Americans (52%) believed American culture was “not at all a threat” to other cultures in the world, 38% of white Americans felt this way. Similarly, when asked about whether France should be able to put limits on the showing of American films, a majority of both white and nonwhite Americans felt that France should not, but this majority was larger for nonwhites (69%) than for whites (51%).

Parents

While it is reasonable to presume that parents of children under 18 might have unique concerns about globalization, we were unable to discern such an effect. The only reliable difference between parents and those without children under 18 was in their sense of preparedness to cope with the global economy. Perhaps because they feel less able to move to follow new jobs, parents rated themselves as less prepared (5.0 out of 10) than did those without children (5.6).

Household Income

There were a number of questions that showed significant variation by income level. However, in many cases, the differences were better explained by the level of education -- i.e., when education level was controlled for, these differences between income groups disappeared. There were, however, a number of cases in which income did show an independent effect. With higher income, attitudes toward free trade and increasing international trade become more positive. Individuals with higher household incomes are much more likely to consider free trade a good idea. A strong majority (67%) of those with household incomes over \$100,000 thought free trade was a good idea. The size of this majority declines with decreasing income; those with incomes between \$15,000 and \$45,000 were split (49% to 47%), and among those with incomes of \$15,000 or below just 36% thought free trade is a good idea. This is consistent with the finding that a majority (53%) of those who make more than \$70,000 a year thought that the drop in tariffs since 1940 is a good thing, as did a plurality of those making mid-level incomes (45%), but just 28% of those making up to \$25,000 a year thought so. Similarly, in a scenario in which workers had to find new jobs due to a trade agreement, but consumer prices were lowered, a strong majority (75%) of those making \$25,000 or less thought that such an agreement would be a mistake. This majority declines with rising income, and just 36% of those making more than \$70,000 thought it was a mistake, while 56% of this group thought it would be the right thing to do.

Those with higher incomes felt more positively about both international trade overall and its effect on them personally. Individuals with household incomes over \$70,000 rated international trade overall at 6.4 of 10, and for themselves personally at 6.3. Ratings declined with income, and for individuals making \$25,000 and under reached a slightly positive rating for trade overall of 5.2, and a slightly negative rating of 4.6 for themselves personally.

This positive view of trade translated into greater support among those with higher incomes for the government actively promoting the growth of trade or allowing it to continue. A strong majority of those with incomes over \$70,000 (79%) thought this should be a goal of the US, but this majority declines to a plurality (49%) among those with household incomes less than \$15,000. Similarly, a majority of respondents with incomes of \$45,000 or less (58%) thought foreign investment was dangerous, a plurality (50%) of those with incomes between \$45,000 and \$70,000 considered it dangerous, while just 34% of those with incomes over \$70,000 considered it dangerous.

Job Loss

One inevitable result of increased trade is the loss of some jobs in certain areas of the economy. While the workers displaced in such situations may find new jobs, the experience will no doubt impact their attitudes toward globalization and free trade. (Their attitudes may also suggest views that might become more widely held in the event of a future recession.) Fourteen percent of respondents reported having lost or left a job in the last three years, because their plant or company closed or moved or because of insufficient work. These individuals did have a somewhat less-positive point of view regarding issues of trade.

Individuals who had experienced job disruption were a bit more dubious of the benefits of free trade, in contrast to the costs. While a majority of individuals who had not lost a job (52%) thought free trade was a

good thing, just 46% of those who had lost a job thought free trade's benefits outweighed its costs. Indeed, a majority of those who left jobs due to lack of work (59%) thought that more jobs were lost from imports than were gained from exports, while those who had not had to leave a job were split (44% to 45%) on whether more jobs were lost or gained from trade. A plurality (48%) of individuals who had had to find new jobs said that the pace of lowering trade barriers was going too fast, while just 27% of those who had not lost jobs thought the pace was too fast. A majority of those who lost jobs (57%) thought that other countries benefited more than the US from international trade, as did a plurality (43%) of those who had not lost jobs.

On average, people who had experienced job disruption felt both themselves (5.5 out of 10) and average Americans (6.4 of 10) to be more vulnerable to the changes that come with international trade than those who had not (self 4.8, average Americans 5.7). When presented with a scenario in which workers had to find new jobs due to a trade agreement, strong majorities of both groups (63%) said the trade agreement was a mistake. However, a majority (62%) of those who lost jobs thought that such an agreement would still be a mistake, even if there was government help to retrain displaced workers. In contrast, those who had not lost jobs were split (47% to 47%) on whether the agreement would have been a mistake if efforts were made to retrain workers.

Individuals who had experienced job disruption were much more suspicious of foreign investment, with 70% saying it is dangerous; individuals who had not were divided, with 48% saying foreign investment was dangerous.

Region

There were only minimal differences among regions of the US regarding aspects of globalization. On the overwhelming majority of economic issues, there were surprisingly few meaningful differences among the regions. The only issue on which a clear pattern emerged was attitudes toward foreign investment. A majority of Americans in the South (58%) and West (51%), and a plurality in the Midwest (50%), felt that foreign investment is dangerous, although just 43% of those in the East felt this way.

While Americans in all regions thought it would be increasingly necessary for the US to work with international organizations, this point of view was more common in the West (68%) and East (59%) than in the South (52%) and Midwest (51%). There were no significant differences between the regions, however, in support for strengthening various international organizations, such as the UN and the World Court.