

Sympathy for the Poor, Resentment of the Rich, and their Political Consequences

by
Spencer C. Piston

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Political Science)
in the University of Michigan
2014

Doctoral Committee:

Professor Vincent L. Hutchings, Co-chair
Professor Arthur Lupia, Co-chair
Professor Mary E. Corcoran
Professor Donald R. Kinder
Associate Professor Robert W. Mickey

Acknowledgments

I thank, first and foremost, the co-chairs of my dissertation committee: Vince Hutchings and Skip Lupia. Their contributions to this project began prior even to its beginning; that is, before I had even thought about what my dissertation might be about, I started a research paper on a separate topic and each of them met with me weekly (and sometimes more) over the winter semester of 2009. They haven't slowed down since. For the rest of my life I will be grateful to their contributions to that paper, to this dissertation, and most of all to my development as a scholar. I would be remiss if I did not also mention the downside to having the two of them for advisors; for years I have been denied the opportunity to join in the graduate student ritual of complaining about faculty, which has kept me from fully bonding with my peers.

Perhaps the most precious resource in graduate school is faculty time. It is only from faculty that graduate students can learn the art and science of conducting research, and there is no substitute for hours upon hours in their company, figuring out how they think. By this measure, Vince's generosity ranks above all other faculty I have known (or heard of). My estimate is that he spends about thirty hours per week with graduate students, although I do not follow him around enough to be sure. Still, I have taken up a greater portion of those hours than I could have imagined, and every one has been well spent.

Vince has also funded much of my time in graduate school, allowing me to pursue research projects in addition to my dissertation, for which I am especially grateful. Finally, Vince's attention to detail, his professionalism, and above all his skepticism set an example that I

hope to follow for the rest of my career. More than anything, I hope that as a professor I can be as kind and as generous to graduate students as he has been to me.

I first met Skip in his game theory course in 2008, and I was immediately impressed by the values that guide him as a researcher and a teacher: transparency, logic, rigor, and above all the production of knowledge of use to an audience. It has taken years to internalize these goals, but I have done so, and I am glad. Skip also has the ability, upon listening to a description of a research project, to immediately pick out what is best about it and discard the rest. What he calls “just repeating back to you what you told me” has always in fact been a critical contribution to my research.

In addition, Skip has spent many hours helping me develop that skill which is so important yet often overlooked: how to give a research talk. We met more than ten times to practice my job talk alone. Only rarely have I gone against his advice – the many indices of survey questions in this project notwithstanding – and when I have done so, I have nearly always been sorry for it and ended up reversing course. Finally, Skip has invited me on many occasions to participate in the process of research production, and hasn’t held anything back: learning how he approaches the thorny problems associated with taking a research project from start to finish has been among the most valuable experiences of my graduate student career. In short, while Skip thinks very differently than I do, I am happy and proud to say that after my time with him, I will never think the same way again.

Don was someone I never thought I’d have the chance to work with, as he was either chair of the department or on sabbatical while I was taking classes. Yet he took a chance on me, showing (possibly formerly untapped) patience in discussing my initial ramblings that

fortunately never made it into the dissertation. It is no stretch to say that his scholarship has influenced my own more than anyone else's, as every paper I have published cites him more than any other author. Yet because his research is so widely lauded, I sometimes fear that his strengths as a mentor do not get enough emphasis. Don somehow sees not only what is wrong with a project but also what could be right about it; at numerous presentations I have seen him give a single constructive comment that, if followed, would take a project from good to great. I have rarely been able to live up to his high standards for research, but I plan to get there.

Sadly, Don's heroic mentorship contains a tragic flaw: most of his opinions have already been published, but he is too polite to mention where. After our meetings I would dig through a seemingly endless series of Kinder publications in order to figure out what he had been saying. This was time-consuming, but along the way I ended up reading quite a bit of his scholarship, which caused me to learn more than a little and was perhaps the plan all along.

Rob may be the most well-read person I know, and because of knowing him I am much more well-read than I thought I would ever be; for that by itself I am grateful. His perspective on politics is mind-boggling. It is refreshing and more than a little intimidating to have a discussion with someone who truly thinks historically and globally. I'll never forget the day I brought him a claim that I thought to be ground-breaking and provocative, only to hear him respond indifferently, "Well, sure, maybe *here and now*." From his vantage point, I fear that this dissertation is thin and shallow: yet it is both broader and deeper than it would have been without him.

I caution graduate students that Rob appears to remember not only every piece of scholarship he has read but also every class for which he assigned it and every graduate student

who didn't read it. Given his intellect, it is surprising that he doesn't value his own comments more: he is the only person I've ever known who told me *not* to write down something he was saying. He did so because it was something that had just come to mind: yet his top-of-the-head considerations are more profound than most political scientists' research agendas.

A number of additional people made key contributions to this project. Mary Corcoran gamely joined the committee at a late date and I am grateful for her suggestions: I suspect they will be especially helpful as the dissertation becomes a book. Ted Brader, John Jackson, and Chuck Shipan each played an important role in my development at the early stages of graduate school and beyond. Yanna Krupnikov and Adam Seth Levine provided valuable mentorship and friendship throughout the course of this project (and many others). Davin L. Phoenix made research fun. Davin, we should really finish that paper, or at least that level.

Portions of this research have also benefited from comments from participants at the 2012 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, especially Philip Paolino, the 2013, 2012 and 2011 Annual Meetings of the Midwest Political Science Association, especially Chris Ellis, Nathan Kelly, Gary Segura, and Taeku Lee, the 2012 Annual Meeting of the International Society of Political Psychology, especially Erin Paige Hennes, the University of Michigan's Center for Political Studies Workshop, especially Graeme Boushey, Nancy Burns, Jowei Chen, William Roberts Clark, W. Abraham Gong, David Magleby, C. Daniel Myers, Paul Poast, Gary Uzonyi, and Nicholas A. Valentino, and participants in a graduate course taught by Ted Brader: Matias A. Bargsted, Katie Brown, Allison Dale-Riddle, Nathan P. Kalmoe, Kristyn L. Karl, Ashley Jardina, Yioryos Nardis, and Timothy J. Ryan. Logan S. Casey, Jennifer Y.

Chudy, Daniel Mintz, Joshua Shipper, Christopher Skovron, and William Zimmerman also provided helpful comments.

Zac Hardwick, Tara Lanigan, Laura Meyer, Troy Schott, and especially Hakeem Jefferson provided valuable research assistance.

Finally, for love and support above and beyond the world of political science, I thank my friends Ben, Brian, and Nadav, and my family: my parents Rob and Jane, my brother Drew, my sister Eliza, my daughter Maya Bergom, and my wife, partner and best friend Inger Bergom.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments.....	ii
List of Figures.....	viii
List of Tables	ix
Abstract.....	x
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Chapter Two: Previous Research: Public Opinion about Inequality and Redistribution	5
Chapter Three: Attitudes toward the Poor, the Rich, and Opinion about Inequality and Redistribution.....	19
Chapter Four: How Do Americans View the Poor and the Rich?	31
Chapter Five: Why Americans Love Welfare State Programs	55
Chapter Six: The Effects of Sympathy for the Poor and Resentment of the Rich on Candidate Evaluations.....	69
Chapter Seven: Conclusion: Revisiting American Reactions to Economic Inequality	93
References.....	99

List of Figures

FIGURE 2.1A. SUPPORT FOR GOVERNMENT AID TO THE POOR, BY INCOME, 1992-2008	17
FIGURE 2.1B. SUPPORT FOR GOVERNMENT AID TO THE HOMELESS, BY INCOME, 1988-1996	17
FIGURE 2.1C. SUPPORT FOR GOVERNMENT INCREASING FOREIGN AID, BY INCOME, 1990-2008... 18	18
FIGURE 2.1D. SUPPORT FOR GOVERNMENT INCREASING AID TO BLACKS, BY INCOME, 1970-2008	18
FIGURE 3.1 MEDIA DEPICTIONS OF THE POOR AND THE RICH	30
FIGURE 4.1. OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES TO PARTY LIKE, DISLIKE QUESTIONS	43
FIGURE 4.2. QUESTION WORDING OF SYMPATHY FOR THE POOR AND RESENTMENT OF THE RICH... 44	44
FIGURE 4.3. DISTRIBUTION OF ATTITUDES TOWARD THE RICH AND POOR.....	46
FIGURE 4.4. AFFECT TOWARD THE RICH AND POOR OVER TIME.....	51
FIGURE 4.5. DISTRIBUTION OF INDICES.....	52
APPENDIX 4.1. PERCENT RESPONDING TO OPEN-ENDED PARTY LIKE, DISLIKE QUESTIONS.....	53
FIGURE 5.1 EFFECT OF RESENTMENT OF THE RICH ON ESTATE TAX APPROVAL, BY PERCEPTIONS OF HOW MANY HOUSEHOLDS ARE AFFECTED BY THE TAX	68
FIGURE 6.1 EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN	82
FIGURE 6.2. EFFECTS OF CANDIDATE’S RECORD ON MEAN SUPPORT FOR THE CANDIDATE	83
FIGURE 6.3 MARGINAL EFFECT OF CANDIDATE’S RECORD ON SUPPORT FOR THE CANDIDATE, BY SYMPATHY FOR THE POOR (CANDIDATE IS NON-PARTISAN).....	84
FIGURE 6.4. MARGINAL EFFECT OF CANDIDATE’S RECORD ON SUPPORT FOR THE CANDIDATE, BY SYMPATHY FOR THE POOR (CANDIDATE IS PARTISAN).....	85
FIGURE 6.5. MARGINAL EFFECT OF CANDIDATE’S RECORD ON SUPPORT FOR THE CANDIDATE, BY SYMPATHY FOR THE POOR (CANDIDATE IS NON-PARTISAN).....	86
FIGURE 6.6. MARGINAL EFFECT OF CANDIDATE’S RECORD ON SUPPORT FOR THE CANDIDATE, BY SYMPATHY FOR THE POOR (CANDIDATE IS NON-PARTISAN).....	87

List of Tables

TABLE 4.1. PREDICTORS OF ATTITUDES TOWARD THE POOR, THE RICH.....	42
TABLE 5.1 RESENTMENT OF THE RICH AND SYMPATHY FOR THE POOR PREDICT POLICY OPINION WHEN AFFECTED GROUP IS CLEAR.	65
TABLE 5.2. THE EFFECT OF CLASS GROUP ATTITUDES ON POLICY OPINION DEPENDS ON INFORMATION ABOUT DISTRIBUTIVE BENEFITS.	67
TABLE 6.1. ATTITUDES TOWARD THE RICH AND POOR AND EVALUATIONS OF POLITICAL ENTITIES	80
TABLE 6.2. CLASS ATTITUDES, PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE EVALUATIONS, AND VOTE CHOICE OVER TIME	81
APPENDIX 6.1. EXPERIMENTAL CONDITIONS AND RESPONSES TO CLASS ATTITUDE QUESTIONS ..	88
APPENDIX 6.2 EXPERIMENTAL CONDITION AND SUPPORT FOR THE CANDIDATE, BY SYMPATHY FOR THE POOR.....	89
APPENDIX 6.3 EXPERIMENTAL CONDITION AND SUPPORT FOR THE CANDIDATE, BY SYMPATHY FOR THE POOR.....	90
APPENDIX 6.4 EXPERIMENTAL CONDITION AND SUPPORT FOR THE CANDIDATE, BY SYMPATHY FOR THE POOR.....	91
APPENDIX 6.5 EXPERIMENTAL CONDITION AND SUPPORT FOR THE CANDIDATE, BY SYMPATHY FOR THE POOR.....	92

Abstract

Sympathy for the Poor, Resentment of the Rich, and their Political Consequences

by
Spencer Piston

Co-Chairs: Vincent L. Hutchings and Arthur Lupia

In the midst of a large and widening gap between the poor and the rich in the United States, many scholars and political observers argue that Americans are tolerant of economic inequality. I argue, to the contrary, that Americans are unhappy with the fact that the poor have so little while the rich have so much, and that these attitudes shape their political behavior and public opinion. First I raise questions about the evidence base for this conventional understanding of American reactions to economic inequality; for example, some scholars rely on complicated survey questions about abstract concepts that Americans rarely use. Next, I show that on balance, Americans believe the poor to have too little, and accordingly view them with sympathy; the rich, meanwhile, are viewed to have too much, and are therefore targets of resentment. Moreover, sympathy for the poor and the rich underpin support for downwardly redistributive policies, at least when the groups affected by the policies are clear. Finally, I find that Americans seek to reward candidates who help the poor, and punish candidates who help the rich, in the voting booth. Taken together, these results show that contrary to many accounts, Americans are

opposed to increasing economic inequality, and they attempt to mitigate economic inequality when forming policy opinions and selecting candidates for public office.

Chapter One

Introduction

This dissertation examines public opinion in an age of widespread – and growing – economic inequality. Many scholars and political pundits claim that the American public is tolerant of economic inequality. To the contrary, I argue that on balance, Americans are opposed to economic inequality; furthermore, they attempt to mitigate economic inequality when selecting candidates for public office and when forming their opinion about public policy.

Existing research, as discussed in Chapter 2, typically approaches this topic by either examining responses to survey questions about inequality or downward redistribution or examining responses to questions about redistributive policies. But I argue that these approaches are insufficient. Questions about the abstract concepts of “inequality” and “redistribution” are too complicated and abstract for most ordinary Americans, while questions about policy opinions cannot by themselves demonstrate *why* Americans hold the policy opinions they do.

Accordingly, I employ a different strategy, examining attitudes toward two class groups at the extremes of the economic distribution: the poor and the rich. I next examine the political consequences of these attitudes, meeting individuals on their own terms rather than assuming they employ the same concepts as intellectual elites. In Chapter 3, I draw on research in social psychology to develop competing theoretical expectations about the nature and effects of attitudes toward the poor and the rich.

Next, I conduct a series of empirical tests. I begin by developing and validating survey measures. Next, I collect and analyze original survey data using these questions, and supplement these analyses with an examination of American National Election Studies data over time. Finally, my research includes a survey experiment in order to obtain analytical leverage on questions of causation.

Shifting the approach from questions about abstract concepts such as “inequality” and “redistribution” to questions about what individuals think about these specific groups – the poor and the rich – yields findings that challenge extant accounts of American views about economic inequality. In particular, the findings of this more realistic approach suggest that ordinary Americans are more opposed to economic inequality than many scholars have suggested, although they do not put it in those terms.

I find in Chapter 4 that on balance, Americans believe the poor to have too little, and accordingly view them with sympathy; the rich, meanwhile, are viewed to have too much, and are therefore targets of resentment. In Chapter 5, I show that Americans seek to reward candidates who help the poor, and punish candidates who help the rich, in the voting booth. Finally, in Chapter 6, I argue that sympathy for the poor and resentment of the rich also help provide the solution to a puzzle that has bedeviled many scholars: why downwardly redistributive welfare state programs, even those that appear to exclusively benefit the poor, are so popular among the American public. In sum, contrary to conventional accounts of American indifference, opposition to economic inequality powerfully shapes vote choice and public opinion in the United States.

One might ask, if Americans are sympathetic to the poor and resentful of the rich, why is there not more public support for downward redistribution? But such a question would rely on an errant premise: that the public rarely supports downwardly redistributive policies. In fact, decades of research by political scientists and sociologists have shown that support for downwardly redistributive policies is more common than is often believed. For example, majorities of Americans support not only inclusive welfare programs (for which everyone is eligible) such as Social Security but also means-tested programs (for which one has to demonstrate a lack of means to be eligible) such as Supplemental Security Income, Head Start, and the Earned Income Tax Credit. Political scientists have often wondered why such programs are so popular: my research reveals that sympathy for the poor is an important piece of this puzzle, one that has been previously overlooked.

Of course, some downwardly redistributive policies are relatively unpopular. For example, there is substantial opposition to what is commonly known as “welfare,” due in large part to another group-based attitude: racial prejudice. But it is also true that non-trivial proportions of Americans do support welfare, and I find that their support is in large part driven by sympathy for the poor. Moreover, in other cases opposition to downwardly redistributive policies, such as the estate tax, is largely a function of ignorance; Americans are often unaware who pays the cost – and who reaps the benefits – of the policies. When Americans are made aware of the distributive consequences, sympathy for the poor and resentment of the rich are activated, increasing support for downward redistribution.

In addition, I provide evidence that these class group attitudes are genuine, rather than fleeting responses based on top-of-the-head considerations. First, and most importantly, the class

group attitudes predict vote choice, a real-world, politically consequential behavior. Second, the attitudes predict policy opinion, and both cross-national and within-U.S. studies show that policy opinion matters; it affects public policy, and concomitantly distributional outcomes. Third, an additional set of analyses suggests that the responses to the class group attitude questions are unaffected by social desirability pressures. Fourth, and finally, responses to the class group attitude questions are stable over time.

In sum, the findings of this project contribute to a vibrant debate about the extent to which Americans are tolerant of “inequality” or opposed to “redistribution.” While Americans do not often use these concepts, they do on balance believe that the poor have less than they deserve, and therefore view the poor with sympathy. They also believe, on average, that the rich have more than they deserve, and therefore view the rich with resentment. Furthermore, these attitudes lead Americans to support candidates, and policies, that benefit the poor, and to oppose candidates and policies that benefit the rich. Given that economic inequality shows no signs of slowing down in the midst of the recovery from the recent recession, the findings raise an important question: why are government policies so often out of step with public opinion, punishing the poor and rewarding the rich?

Chapter Two

Previous Research: Public Opinion about Inequality and Redistribution

In this chapter, I first argue that while many scholars believe that Americans are approving of – or at minimum, tolerant of – inequality, the evidence for this belief is weak. Second, while many think that Americans disapprove of government-led redistribution, the survey research actually supports the opposing view, with some important exceptions.

American Views of Economic Inequality

Both the income gap and the wealth gap between the poor and the rich in the United States are increasing, and they have been for decades (Page and Jacobs 2009; Soss, Hacker, and Mettler 2007). How have Americans responded? As sociologist Leslie McCall (2013) notes, the belief that “Americans simply don’t care about economic inequality” is the “dominant” understanding in both scholarly and media accounts. As an example of this understanding of American political culture, consider the following claim from political scientists Schlozman, Verba, and Brady (2012): “Americans are most definitely not economic egalitarians. In contrast to their embrace of equality of political influence is their willingness to condone inequalities in economic rewards.” The authors go on to describe the American public’s stance as a “rejection of economic equality” and “an endorsement of economic inequality.” Economists Alesina, Di Tella, and MacCulloch (2004) concur: “Americans are willing to tolerate quite large disparities in wealth as long as they perceive that wealth is the result of effort and that everyone can make it

if enough effort and talent is devoted to the task.” Media accounts also reinforce this conventional wisdom.¹

The empirical basis for this contention is scant, however. Some point to continuing economic inequality itself as evidence for American tolerance of a wide gap between the poor and the rich. Hochschild (1981),² for example, writes, “the American poor apparently do not support the downward redistribution of wealth. The United States does not now have, and seldom ever has had, a political movement among the poor seeking greater economic equality...never has the poorer majority of the population, not to speak of the poorest minority, voted itself out of its economic disadvantage.” But this argument wrongly assumes a one-to-one correspondence between public opinion and political outcomes, ignoring the role of other factors such as institutions. To understand the problem with this argument, consider government spending on foreign aid; it is higher than most Americans would prefer, and has been for decades. The majority does not always rule; indeed, the majority does not always create a social movement. We therefore cannot reasonably infer public opinion from political outcomes.

Other scholars examine public opinion data rather than political outcomes. But some, particularly economists, do so by analyzing attitudes about subjects that are not directly related to economic inequality. These researchers examine a variety of factors, such as happiness (Alesina, DiTella, and MacCulloch 2004), beliefs about economic mobility (Benabou and Ok

¹ The following are examples: “[T]he U.S. has a pretty high tolerance for inequality.” (*New York Times Magazine*. “The Inequality Conundrum.” Roger Lowenstein. June 10, 2007.) “[T]he gap between the rich and poor is bigger than in any other advanced country, but most people are unconcerned. (*The Economist*. “The Rich, the Poor, and the Growing Gap Between Them.” June 17, 2006.)

² Hochschild also examines public opinion data and conducts interviews with fourteen people, eventually concluding that the American public is ambivalent about, rather than tolerant of, economic inequality.

2001), attributions for economic success (Alesina and Glaeser 2004), and the tendency to support left- or right-wing parties (Piketty 1995). While these studies have made valuable contributions, the inferences they make about American tolerance for economic inequality rely on indirect evidence. Levels of happiness, for example, are not the same thing as tolerance for economic inequality. Moreover, it is possible to believe economic mobility to be high and still disapprove of the widening gap between the poor and the rich. I concur with McCall (2013), therefore, that much of this research “takes for granted that Americans are sanguine about economic opportunity and tolerant of income inequality, but it does so without actually probing about perceptions of inequality itself.”

Among those scholars who do analyze survey questions about topics directly related to economic inequality and government-led redistribution, interpretations of the data vary widely. Some interpret the distribution of survey responses as support for the claim that Americans are either tolerant of or ambivalent about economic inequality, as in the case of Schlozman, Verba, and Brady’s contention referenced above (see also Hochschild 1981; Kluegel and Smith 1986). But other researchers examine responses to similar questions and reach the opposite interpretation. For example, Page and Jacobs’ (2009) analysis of survey data concludes that “most Americans are well aware of the extreme and rising inequality that has developed since the 1970s...Americans are not happy about this. Most want income and wealth to be more evenly distributed” (see also McCall 2013).

It is difficult to adjudicate between these competing perspectives, particularly as scholars on both sides of the debate often rely on complicated survey questions that ask respondents about

abstract concepts such as “inequality” and “redistribution.”³ These concepts take considerable effort to grapple with even for those intellectuals who make their living doing so (e.g., Hochschild 1981; Rae and Yates 1981). Indeed, and perhaps for this reason, findings presented below suggest that the concepts of “inequality” and “redistribution” are rarely an important component of the “toolkit” (Swidler 1986) Americans use to make sense of economic issues in the United States.

A final set of scholars (e.g., Hochschild 1981; Newman and Jacobs 2010; Page and Jacobs 2009) examine responses to survey questions about policy attitudes in order to assess American opinion as the gap between the poor and the rich continues to widen. Again interpretations vary, depending in part on which policy questions are emphasized. Those who believe Americans to be supportive of economic inequality often cite public opinion about welfare and estate tax repeal, which are relatively unpopular. Meanwhile, those who believe Americans to be opposed to economic equality point to public opinion about government spending on the poor, increased taxes on the rich, and specific policy programs such as Supplemental Security Income, the Earned Income Tax Credit, and Head Start, all of which are relatively popular.

In my view, the problem with this approach is both larger than and prior to the pitfalls

³ Examples: “Do you think that our government should or should not redistribute wealth by heavy taxes on the rich?” (Hochschild 1981, pg. 18); “Some people say that incomes should be completely equal, with every family making roughly the same amount of money; others say that things should stay about the same as they are now; and still others think incomes should be less equal than they are now. Ideally do you think there should be...” (Schlozman, Verba, and Brady 2012; from Kluegel and Smith 1986); “Do you feel that the distribution of money and wealth in this country today is fair, or do you feel that the money and wealth in this country should be more evenly distributed among a larger percentage of the people?” (Page and Jacobs 2009); “Do you agree or disagree: Inequality continues to exist because it benefits the rich and powerful” (McCall 2013).

associated with selective emphasis. The problem is that examining the distribution of responses to policy questions tells us what public opinion *is* but does not tell us what public opinion *means* (n.b., Kinder and Sanders 1996). Opinion about a given policy might be driven by a number of factors in addition to, or instead of, reactions to the widening gap between the poor and the rich. For example, citizens might form their policy opinions by taking cues from political elites sharing their partisanship (Bartels 2008). Therefore, I argue that in order to understand American opinion about economic inequality, it is insufficient to examine the distribution of policy opinions: we also need to know *why* Americans take the policy positions they take.

In this vein, both Bartels (2008) and McCall (2013; see also McCall and Kenworthy 2009) examine associations between norms about inequality and policy attitudes. Here too the authors reach conclusions somewhat at odds with each other: Bartels (2008) argues that, “the *political* significance of economic inequality is mostly lost on many Americans. Although they may express genuine allegiance to egalitarian values, they are not sufficiently attuned to the political debate to see how those values are implicated in major policy choices” such as the Bush tax cuts and estate tax repeal. McCall, in contrast, argues that, “rising inequality *did* appear to produce an increase in desire for some kind of government response to reduce income differences... dissatisfaction with inequality is almost uniformly associated with significantly greater support for all of the equalizing social policies that we examined,” including support for progressive taxation, assistance to the poor, and government spending on public education. While the interpretations of these two studies vary, the results are potentially reconcilable, given that the authors examine opinion about different policies, and as the methodological approaches of the two studies differ substantially. The important point for my purposes is that both authors

use beliefs about inequality as the key independent variable – an approach that presumes that Americans make use of the concept of “inequality” to make sense of the political economy. As I will argue, this presumption is a questionable one.

American Views of Downwardly Redistributive Welfare State Programs

“Public support for social welfare programs in the United States has never been easy to understand.”

-Feldman and Steenbergen (2001, pg. 658)

As Feldman and Steenbergen acknowledge, political scientists have yet to provide a compelling account of support for downward redistribution in the United States.⁴ To be sure, social scientists have conducted valuable analyses of the determinants of public attitudes about economic inequality and government-led downward redistribution (Bartels 2008; Feldman 1983; Feldman and Zaller 1992; Gilens 1999; Hacker and Pierson 2005; Hochschild 1981; Kluegel and Smith 1986; Lane 1960; McCall and Kenworthy 2009; Page and Jacobs 2009). However, this line of research has been more productive at explaining *opposition* to downwardly redistributive policies than the phenomenon of *support* for such policies. Indeed, thorough analyses of nationally representative survey data have found that support for downward redistribution is higher than is commonly believed (Cook and Barrett 1992; Gilens 1999; Page and Jacobs 2009). However, these findings appear inconsistent with opposing patterns for other policies; Americans sometimes appear to support policies that are upwardly distributive, such as the estate tax, the home mortgage interest deduction, and the retirement savings deduction (see Bartels 2008;

⁴ However, Feldman and Steenbergen themselves make valuable progress toward this goal, as will be discussed later.

Mettler 2011). In short, substantial work remains to be done if scholars are to understand both the pattern of support for downward redistribution and the exceptions to this pattern.

The Role of Self-Interest

Some may not believe that support for downward redistribution requires explanation, arguing as follows: the majority of Americans would benefit from taking resources from the rich, and therefore should be expected to support government-led downward redistribution (Bartels 2008; Hochschild 1981). This argument rests on a self-interest premise: that people will support policies that materially benefit them and oppose those that do not. However, the extent to which self-interest influences public opinion is the subject of continuing debate.⁵

Moreover, the following patterns suggest that the role of self-interest should not be taken for granted. Consider opinions about government spending held by those in the top third and the bottom third of the income distribution, taken from the American National Election Studies' (ANES) nationally representative survey data from 1992 to 2008. Responses to these questions are scaled from 0 to 1, where 1 represents the most extreme position in favor of increasing spending, 0 represents the most extreme position in favor of decreasing spending, and 0.5

⁵ A plethora of research findings, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s, suggested that in many cases self-interest is a weak predictor of public opinion and political behavior across a wide variety of domains (Feldman 1982; Fong 2001; Kinder 1986; Kinder and Kiewiet 1979, 1981; Kinder and Sanders 1996; Mansbridge 1990; Sears et al. 1980). However, methodological advances in a couple of recent studies have enabled scholars to detect more self-interest effects than had been previously evident (Bergan 2009; Doherty, Gerber, and Green 2006). Since this initial wave of research, scholars have broadened the concept of self-interest – to include longer time-horizons, for example (Alesina and Ferrara 2005) – or accepted that self-interest sometimes does not predict public opinion or political behavior well and begun the search for the conditions under which self-interest matters most (Chong et al. 2001; Hunt et al. 2010; Sears and Funk 1991).

represents the position that spending should be kept the same. Mean responses, weighted to approximate national representativeness, are presented in Figure 2.1a-d.

[Insert Figure 2.1a-d about here]

Aggregate support for increasing federal spending on aid to the poor seems quite high, and stable over a sixteen year time period, in the face of claims such as the following: “the American poor apparently do not support the downward redistribution of wealth” (Hochschild 1981, 1). Indeed, even well-off Americans appear to support increased aid to the poor: further analyses, which pool across this time period, show that Americans in the top third of the income distribution are nearly four times as likely to say that federal spending on aid to the poor should be increased (44 percent) as to say it should be decreased (12 percent; the remainder say funding levels should not be changed). Restricting the analysis to the top five percent of income earners yields similar results: respondents are nearly three times as likely to say aid to the poor should be increased (39 percent) as to say it should be decreased (15 percent). Finally, while an income gap in support for downward redistribution is evident, suggesting some role for self-interest, this effect is quite small. Indeed, as Figure 2.1b shows, even the homeless are generally viewed as deserving of increased government aid, again with very little differences across income levels. These patterns cannot be written off to a general pattern of support for increased government spending, as government aid to groups other than the poor – foreigners (Figure 2.1c) and blacks (Figure 2.1d) – is not nearly as popular.

These findings are consistent with those of Page and Jacobs (2009), whose original, nationally representative survey uncovers substantial support for a wide variety of policies that would downwardly redistribute wealth even when the respondent would have to pay increased

taxes, and even when the respondent is relatively well-off. Yet scholars subscribing to the self-interest premise rarely address this kind of apparent violation.

The Role of Principles

Another potential factor affecting public opinion about downward redistribution is “core values” or “principles.” In particular, scholars have long focused on *individualism*, a concept that encompasses a range of principles such as economic self-reliance, laissez-faire capitalism, and a limited role for government. Kluegel and Smith (1986, 5) refer to these principles, taken together, as the “dominant ideology” – not in the sense of a coherent belief system (Converse 1964) but rather a widespread belief that “opportunity for economic advancement based on hard work is plentiful” and the concomitant judgment that individuals ought to be “personally responsible for their own economic fate.” Individualistic principles have a long tradition in American political thought (Arieli 1964; Bellah et al. 1985; Hofstadter 1948; Huntington 1981; Weber 1930) and undergird public opposition to many forms of downward redistribution (Feldman and Zaller 1992; Kluegel and Smith 1986; Kinder and Sanders 1996; Markus 2001; McClosky and Zaller 1984; Shen and Edwards 2005). The prevalence of individualism and its strong ties to public opinion deepens the puzzle presented here. If “[a]dherence to the dominant ideology” of individualism is so “widespread” (Kluegel and Smith 1986, 289) why, and under what conditions, does support for downward redistribution persist?

A different principle (or core value), egalitarianism, has more promise to address the puzzle of support for downward redistribution. Like individualism, the concept of egalitarianism, or support for equality, has a long history in the United States (e.g., de Tocqueville 1835; Lipset

1979), and its deceptive appeal can conceal a variety of meanings (Rae et al. 1981). Analyses of survey data indicate that at least in some cases, those Americans subscribing to egalitarian ideals are more likely to support downward redistribution (Feldman 1988; Kinder and Sanders 1996).

However, other studies give reason to doubt the ability of an explanation based on egalitarianism to account for American support for downward redistribution. Feldman and Zaller's (1992, 285) examination of open-ended responses to "stop-and-think" prompts on the ANES finds that "supporters of social welfare are hardly more likely to invoke egalitarian values than welfare opponents." Similarly, Bartels' (2008, 161) extensive analysis of public opinion about economic inequality and public policy argues, "the *political* significance of economic inequality is mostly lost on many Americans. Although they may express genuine allegiance to egalitarian values, they are not sufficiently attuned to the political debate to see how those values are implicated in major policy choices."⁶

In response to the limitations of an egalitarianism explanation for public support for downward redistribution, one study, conducted by Feldman and Steenbergen (2001, 659) identifies another principle that might underpin support for social welfare policies, humanitarianism: "the belief that people have responsibilities toward their fellow human beings and should come to the assistance of others in need." Their analysis of survey data indicates that humanitarianism predicts support for poverty relief and other forms of aid for those in need but does not explain the (less common) belief that government should take a more active role by "intervening" in the economy.

⁶ Bartels does find a powerful association between egalitarianism and policy opinion in some domains, however.

It seems clear that principles are an important part of the story of American opinion about downward redistribution. But if Kinder and Sanders (1996, 159) are correct that the effects of principles “have a contingency and specificity about them that are out of keeping with the common portrayal of principles as unstoppable forces that level all opposition,” what factors account for their “contingency and specificity”? On this point, Wong (2010, 197) persuasively argues that the principles of egalitarianism and humanitarianism “often operate corralled by community boundaries.” Kinder and Sanders (159) frame the question as follows: “When Americans say that they are unhappy that not everyone is given an equal chance, do they really have an abstract “everyone” in mind, or just some particular ones? When Americans say that the nation would be better off if people were treated more equally, are they thinking of people in general, or particular kinds of people?” Wong’s answer, anticipated by Kinder and Sanders, is that principles are applied differentially depending on the social group under consideration. For example, neighbors are seen as more deserving of humanitarian aid than denizens of distant lands: “Contributing help to ease distant suffering, such that little time or money remains to help a neighbor, would be strongly sanctioned by most of the most common value systems” (pg. xviii).

Extrapolating from this logic, it seems reasonable that in order to come to terms with both the pattern of support for downward redistribution and the exceptions to this pattern, we need to know more about the social groups people believe to be affected by redistributive policies. I argue, in short, for a “group-centric” perspective on public opinion about downward redistribution (Nelson and Kinder 1996). As will be explained in the next chapter, I believe that a

group-centric approach promises to contribute to our understanding of public opinion about economic inequality as well.

Figure 2.1a. Support for Government Aid to the Poor, by Income, 1992-2008

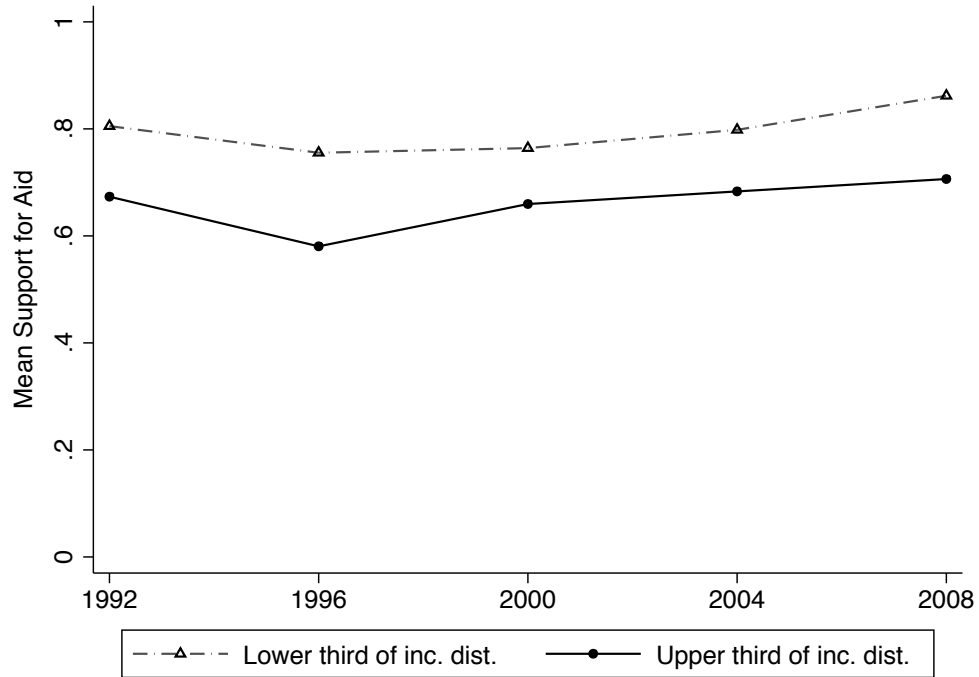


Figure 2.1b. Support for Government Aid to the Homeless, by Income, 1988-1996

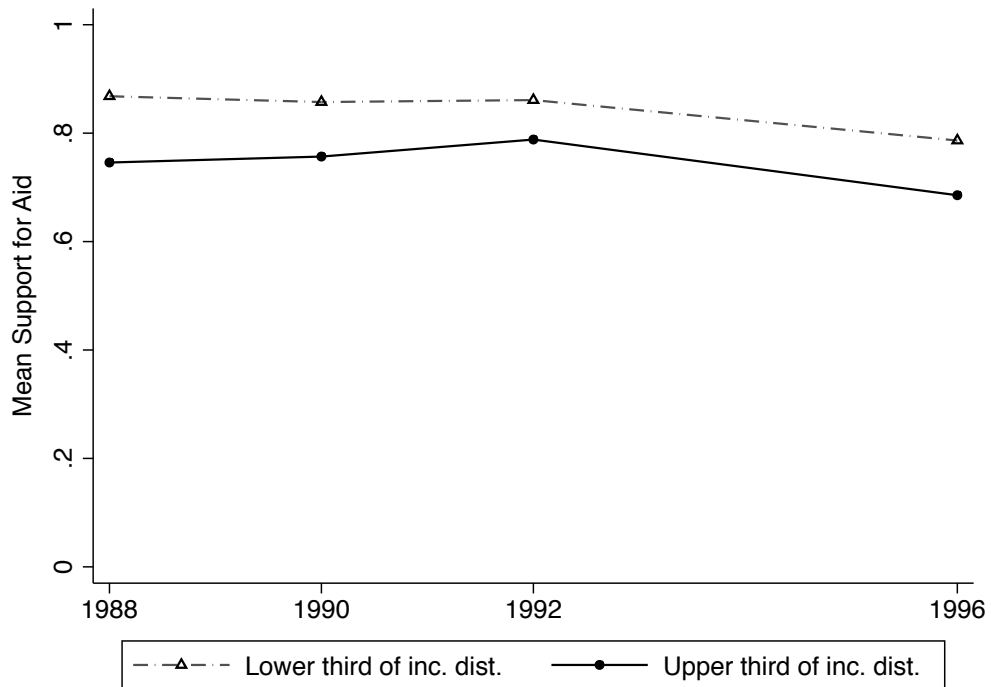


Figure 2.1c. Support for Government Increasing Foreign Aid, by Income, 1990-2008

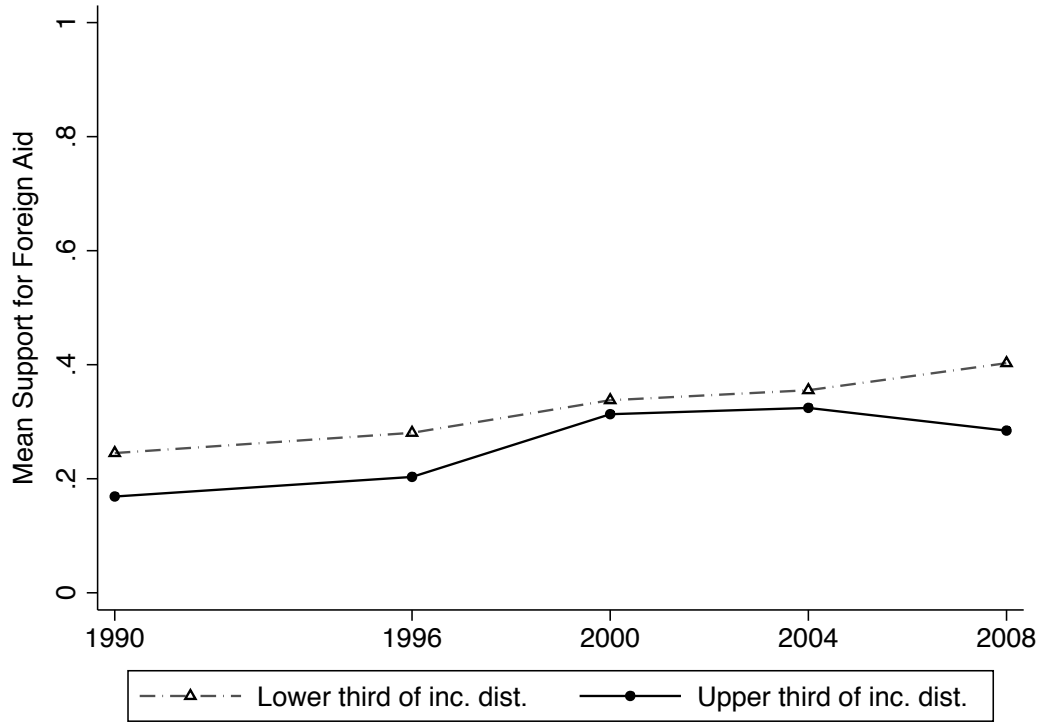
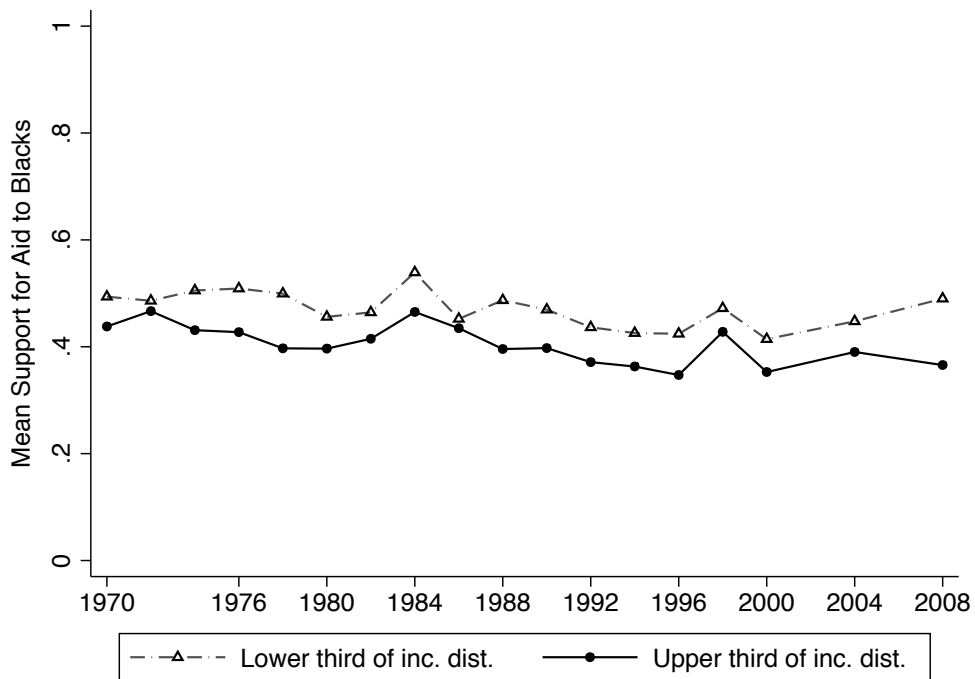


Figure 2.1d. Support for Government Increasing Aid to Blacks, by Income, 1970-2008



Chapter Three

Attitudes toward the poor, the rich, and opinion about inequality and redistribution

This chapter begins by developing the theoretical framework regarding how the poor and the rich are viewed in the United States – in particular, whether the poor should be viewed more or less favorably than the rich. Next I lay out expectations about the consequences of attitudes toward the poor and the rich in two domains: policy attitudes and candidate evaluations.

Are the Poor Viewed More or Less Favorably than the Rich?

I begin with the hypothesis that the poor are viewed unfavorably relative to the rich. This expectation is consistent with sociologists Kluegel and Smith's (1986) contention that individualism is the "dominant ideology" in the United States. That is, if most Americans believe that individuals are "personally responsible for their own economic fate," they should derogate the poor for their purported deficiencies and celebrate the rich for their virtues.⁷

Another reason to expect the poor to be viewed unfavorably is racial prejudice: given that many whites are prejudiced against blacks (e.g., Feldman and Huddy 2009; Hutchings 2009) and given that media coverage has often associated poverty with blackness (e.g., Gilens 1999), we might expect that racial prejudice results in negative evaluations of the poor relative to the rich.

⁷ Some scholars take a more moderate view, arguing on the basis of studies of convenience samples that both the poor and rich are viewed ambivalently (e.g., Cuddy, Fiske, and Glick 2008; Hochschild 1981). Kluegel and Smith themselves argue that forces such as self-interest curtail the dominant ideology of individualism, albeit weakly.

Leading theories in social psychology might also lead us to expect that the poor are viewed negatively relative to the rich. According to social dominance theory (Sidanius and Pratto 1999), for example, high-status groups maintain their position in the social hierarchy through “legitimizing myths,” widely shared cultural ideologies extolling high-status groups (such as the rich) and denigrating low-status groups (such as the poor). Relatedly, both just world theory (Lerner 1981) and system justification theory (Jost, Banaji and Nosek 2004) argue that individuals possess a psychological motivation to view existing social arrangements as just, leading them to view high-status groups as worthy of their privilege and low-status groups as deserving of their inferior position.

One hypothesis, then, is that together, these forces – individualism, racial prejudice, legitimizing myths, and the motivation to believe in a just world – produce negative views of the poor and positive views of the rich. Scholarly titles such as *The War Against the Poor* (Gans 1995), *The Undeserving Poor* (Katz 1989), and *Pity the Billionaire* (Frank 2012) are consistent with this contention. Media accounts often share a similar outlook: *The Economist*⁸ (2006) claims that “Americans want to join the rich, not soak them,” and a recent *New York Times* (2011) article⁹ writes of a “*New Resentment of the Poor.*”

However, there are also reasons to doubt the hypothesis that the poor are viewed less favorably than the rich. First, the argument that individualism dominates political thinking in the United States may go too far. As noted above, Kinder and Sanders (1996, 159) argue that the effects of principles such as individualism “have a contingency and specificity about them that

⁸ From “The Rich, the Poor, and the Growing Gap Between Them,” June 17, 2006.

⁹ August 30, 2011. Last accessed at:

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/31/opinion/the-new-resentment-of-the-poor.html?_r=0

are out of keeping with the common portrayal of principles as unstoppable forces that level all opposition.” For example, research has shown that racially prejudiced whites may hold blacks to a higher standard of individualism than they would hold members of their own group, expecting blacks – but not whites – to work hard to get ahead rather than receiving government aid (e.g., Sears and Henry 2003). Whether a given class group is held to a high standard of individualism, then, may depend on whether the class group is viewed positively.

Furthermore, the contention that racial prejudice leads to negative attitudes toward the poor may also be overstated, due to a common misreading of Gilens’ (1999) landmark book, *Why Americans Hate Welfare*. As an example, consider sociologists Newman and Jacobs’ (2010) interpretation of Gilens’ findings: “Gilens finds that as the image of the poor got blacker, willingness to support expenditures for the poor fell through the floorboards.” To the contrary: Gilens finds high levels of public *support* for a wide variety government measures to aid the poor, including Supplemental Security Income, the Earned Income Tax Credit, and Head Start. He also finds that support for aid to the poor extends beyond particular policy programs to general propositions. To be sure, Gilens concludes that racial prejudice underpins negative evaluations of a particular subgroup of the poor: welfare recipients. But this does not imply that the poor *writ large* are viewed negatively.

Finally, while political scientists have been quick to draw on strands of research in social psychology that explains why individuals might derogate low-status groups and extol high-status groups, other research in social psychology has been often ignored. In particular, political scientists have made comparatively few attempts to incorporate research in social psychology that is suggestive of the power of *sympathy* for low-status groups (n.b., Conover 1988) and

resentment of high-status groups. Here I rely on such research to develop a competing expectation, examining the possibility that the poor are viewed with sympathy while the rich are viewed with resentment.

Sympathy for the Poor

Sympathy, often referred to as “empathic concern” in social psychology,¹⁰ is defined as the belief that some person or group has suffered “undeserved misfortune” coupled with the feeling that this is a bad thing (Nussbaum 2001).¹¹ Sympathy for others is a widespread phenomenon that motivates a wide variety of helping behaviors (e.g., Batson 1991, 2011; Hoffman 1984, 1987; Toi and Batson 1982; Vaish, Carpenter, and Tomisello 2009).

Some research suggests that sympathy for low-status social groups can be a politically consequential phenomenon, motivating individuals to support policies intended to aid such groups (Conover 1988). Consider Feldman and Zaller’s (1992) analysis of the justifications that supporters of social welfare policies gave for their position in open-ended responses on the ANES. Social welfare policy supporters did not appear to rely on the core value of egalitarianism; they were “hardly more likely to invoke egalitarian values than welfare opponents” (pg. 285). But they did often provide an “indication that certain people need assistance” (pg. 282), suggesting that many welfare policy supporters may view the poor

¹⁰ “Empathic concern” is defined as an “affective outcome” consisting of “feelings of sympathy and compassion for unfortunate others” (Davis 1994, pgs. 17-19, 57). Some definitions of “empathy” are also consistent with this perspective (e.g., Hoffman 1984, 1987).

¹¹ Nussbaum often uses the term “compassion,” but argues that the difference between the two is minimal.

sympathetically – in need and deserving of government aid. A depiction of sympathy for the poor can be seen in the political cartoon in Figure 3.1a.

[Insert Figure 3.1 about here]

Resentment of the Rich

As Feather and Sherman (2002, pg. 954) write, “central to resentment is a feeling of injustice”: a feeling of hostility based on the judgment that some person or group enjoys advantage that is undeserved (see also Ben-Ze-ev 2000; Parrott 1991; Rawls 1971; Smith et al. 1996).¹² Resentment, and concomitantly the desire to “pull down” members of a successful outgroup, is a common phenomenon (Feather and Nairn 2005; Leach and Spears 2008); When high-status outgroups suffer misfortune, *schadenfreude*, pleasure resulting from the misfortune of others, often occurs (Cikara and Fiske 2012; Feather and Sherman 2002).

Consider the recent “Millionaires’ March” in New York, an example of the influence of resentment of the rich on public opinion and political behavior. Several hundred people, protesting the expiration of a state tax on those making over \$250,000 per year, marched to the homes of several wealthy individuals in New York City, chanting “hey mister millionaire, time to pay your fair share!”¹³ One protestor was quoted as saying, “I’m out here because we’re tired of a tiny number of Americans stealing off of us and not giving us our due.” To be sure, this example comes from a time period during which resentment of the rich may have been especially high, in the midst of the Occupy Wall Street movement. Yet Bartels’ (2008) analysis of feeling

¹² Some social psychologists restrict resentment to public, sanctioned feelings that another person or group has undeserved advantage, referring to privately held feelings of this kind as “hostile envy” (e.g., Smith et al. 1996).

¹³ From “Protestors Target NY’s Richest in Millionaires March,” Andrew Siff, October 13, 2011. <http://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local/Millionaires-March-1-Percent-99-Percent-Occupy-Wall-Street-131528853.html>

thermometer scores in the American National Election Studies show that even in 2004, when the economy was performing well, a nationally representative sample of Americans rated the rich unfavorably in comparison to many social groups, including the poor, who were rated relatively favorably. A depiction of resentment of the rich can be found in the political cartoon presented in Figure 3.1b. In sum, I hypothesize that the poor are viewed more favorably than the rich: the poor with sympathy, and the rich with resentment.

Of course, it is also possible that the poor and the rich are viewed equally favorably, or, perhaps more plausibly, equally unfavorably. After all, for the vast majority of Americans, who consider themselves to be either middle class or working class, the poor and the rich are both outgroups. Given that theories of ethnocentrism postulate that humans are predisposed to evaluate ingroups favorably and outgroups unfavorably (Kinder and Kam 2009), it is possible that both the poor and the rich are viewed negatively. Finally, it could be that Americans simply do not think about the poor and the rich enough to possess meaningful attitudes about them. We shall see.

The Conditional Influence of Class Attitudes on Policy Opinion

“Scores of studies show that public opinion on matters of policy is group-centric: that is, shaped in powerful ways by the attitudes citizens harbor toward the social groups they see as the principal beneficiaries or victims of the policy.”

-Kinder and Dale-Riddle (2012)

Social groups are critical to the way humans make sense out of everyday experience, according to predominant theories of human psychology and behavior, including social identity theory (Hogg and Abrams 1988; Tajfel 1981; Tajfel and Turner 1979), social dominance (Sidanius and Pratto 1999), system justification theory (Jost and Banaji 1994; Jost, Banaji, and

Nosek 2004), ethnocentrism (Kinder and Kam 2009; Sumner 1906), and reference group theory (Hyman 1960; Hyman 1968; Merton 1968), It should not be surprising, therefore, that political scientists have found that evaluations of social groups influence public opinion across a wide variety of domains (Kinder and Dale-Riddle 2012; Nelson and Kinder 1996).

Attitudes about social groups are so important to public opinion in part because they provide an efficient means to sort through a complicated information environment to reach a decision. The masses' level of knowledge about political affairs is low relative to political elites (Converse 1975; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Lippman 1902). Furthermore, given demands on the public's time and the fact that the public is largely non-ideological (Converse 1964; Kinder and Kalmoe 2010), even if levels of information were high it would take a long time to sort through that information to reach a considered judgment. As a result, individuals tend to satisfice (Simon 1979, 1985). That is, constraints on information and time cause individuals to rely on time-saving decision strategies – heuristics – and group evaluations are an especially reliable and efficient heuristic (Nelson and Kinder 1996; Popkin 1991; Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1991). Rather than putting in the time to obtain information, sort through it, and apply abstract ideological principles to reach a decision, one can reach an opinion more efficiently by thinking about which social group might constitute the “principal beneficiaries or victims” of a proposed policy and figuring out whether one likes that social group. From there the decision about whether to support the policy is relatively simple.

Indeed, attitudes about social groups are strongly linked to opinions about policies that would affect these groups. For example, negative stereotypes about Blacks are associated with opinion about miscegenation laws, housing integration policies, and punitive criminal justice

policies (Feldman et al. 2009; Kinder and McConaughy 2006; Hurwitz and Peffley 2005). Similarly, support for civil liberties of a wide variety of social groups is powerfully influenced by evaluations of the groups under consideration (Chong 1993; Kuklinski et al. 1991; Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus 1982). In short, a plethora of research findings demonstrate the “group-centric” nature of public opinion (Nelson and Kinder 1996; see also Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1991).

Yet for the most part research about the determinants of public opinion about policies related to downward economic redistribution ignores the possibility that group evaluations are influential. To some extent scholars have examined the effect of attitudes about the poor; however, the interpretation attached to such findings emphasizes other factors such as racial attitudes (e.g., Gilens 1999) or individualism (Feldman 1983; Feldman and Zaller 1992). Attitudes about the rich have been examined by a few studies in psychology (Cuddy, Fiske and Glick 2008; Fiske et al. 2002), political science (Bartels 2008) and sociology (McCall 2007), but the political consequences of these attitudes have not been analyzed. The present research is in line with a long tradition of scholarship on group-centrism. Specifically, I argue that attitudes about *social class groups* underlie public support for economic redistribution – at least under certain conditions.

An alternative possibility is that class might be a social rather than a political distinction. That is, given that “politics is a sideshow in the great circus of life” (Dahl 1961) and that citizens generally “morselize” (Lane 1962), leaving thoughts about politics disconnected from each other and from their private lives (see also Hochschild 1981), it is possible that class is sometimes salient in social life but rarely, if ever, in political life. Indeed, to take a group-centric perspective

on public opinion is not to argue that attitudes about all social groups are brought to bear on policy opinions all the time. Rather, social groups must be linked to specific policies in the public mind for views about these groups to influence public opinion (Nelson and Kinder 1996). As Converse's (1964) seminal article on group-centrism argues, in those situations in which "the link is not made explicit by the very nature of the situation...the individual must be endowed with some cognitions of the group as an entity and with some interstitial 'linking' information indicating why a given party or policy is relevant to the group."

The question becomes whether a given redistributive policy is seen as such by the public; whether, that is, it is perceived to benefit the rich or the poor. In such cases, the class group attitudes of sympathy for the poor and resentment of the rich will be brought to bear on public opinion about the policy. In contrast, in cases in which it is unclear who reaps a benefit of a given policy or who pays a cost, class group attitudes will be irrelevant to views of the policy. In short, I argue that the relationship between class group attitudes and policy opinion is *conditional* on whether it is clear how the poor and the rich are affected by the policy.

It follows from this discussion that providing information indicating that the primary beneficiaries of a given policy are the poor should make the policy more popular, as the poor are generally viewed sympathetically, while providing information indicating that the primary beneficiaries of a policy are the rich should make it less popular, on average, due to the fact that the rich are generally viewed resentfully.

Attitudes toward the Poor and the Rich Shape Candidate Evaluations

I argue that attitudes toward the poor and rich shape reactions to political entities, including candidates for public office. After all, research about the impact of social groups on public opinion and political behavior suggests that social groups become relevant to politics when they are “sites of persistent inequality” (Kinder and Dale-Riddle 2011). Given limited economic mobility in the United States (Bowles, Gintis and Groves 2005), class clearly qualifies as a site of “persistent inequality.”

Attitudes toward the poor and the rich influence candidate evaluations as follows. Kinder and Dale-Riddle’s theory of attitudes toward social groups as “short-term forces” in elections holds that when “candidates are seen as standing for or against certain social groups, voters will be attracted or driven away, depending on their attitude toward the groups in question.” Accordingly, the key consideration may be the extent to which it is clear that a candidate for public office benefits (or victimizes) a class group.

To the extent, then, that Democrats are viewed to more likely than Republicans to help the poor (Petrocik 1996), reactions to Democratic candidates may be in part a function of whether one likes or dislikes the poor. Similarly, to the extent that the actions of the Republican Party are perceived to benefit the rich,¹⁴ meanwhile, reactions to Republican candidates may be in part a function of whether one likes or dislikes the rich. It may be, in sum, that attitudes about class groups influence voter reactions to candidates. Indeed, if political entities (parties, social movements) on the left are associated with the poor while political entities on the right are

¹⁴ See, for example, a Bloomberg News Poll finding that 60% of Americans report that “Republicans have put too much emphasis on protecting the wealthy.” <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-12-13/republicans-deemed-too-pro-rich-57-in-poll-want-change.html>

associated with the rich, these patterns may extend beyond candidates to political entities more generally.

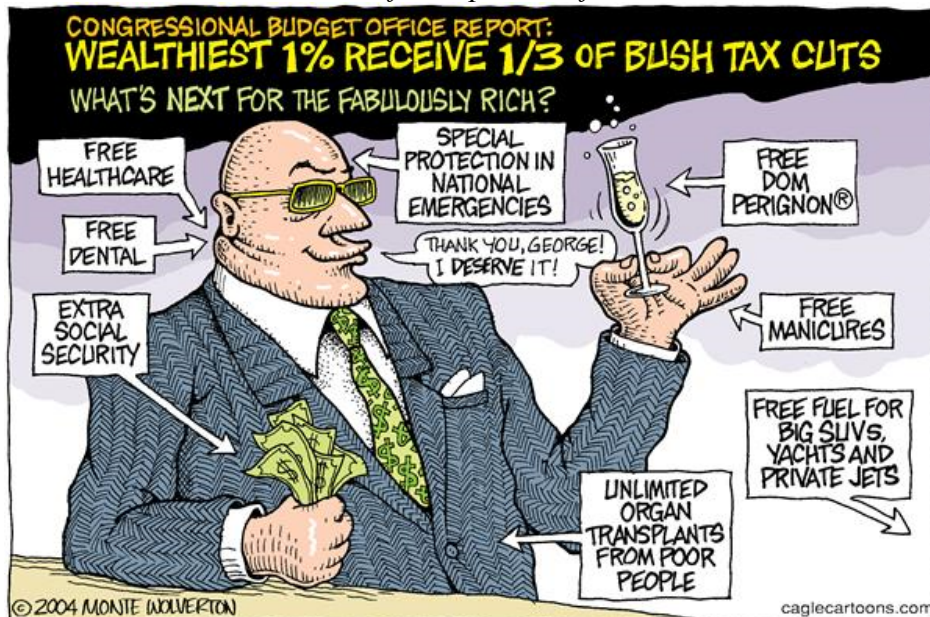
This chapter has set out competing theoretical expectations about the direction of attitudes toward the poor and the rich: while earlier work supports the expectation that the poor are viewed less favorably than the rich, I have drawn on largely-overlooked research in social psychology to develop the expectation that the poor are actually viewed more favorably than the rich. Finally, I have argued that attitudes toward the poor and the rich are likely to influence attitudes toward both public policy and candidates for public office – but only when it is clear whether a given policy or candidate is likely to help or hurt the poor or the rich.

Figure 3.1 Media Depictions of the Poor and the Rich

3.1a. Sympathetic Depiction of the Poor



3.1b. Resentful Depiction of the Rich



Chapter Four

How Do Americans View the Poor and the Rich?

This chapter examines the nature of American attitudes toward the poor and the rich in the United States. It begins with an exercise in face validity: if I am correct that evaluations of these class groups figure into political preferences, it may be that open-ended evaluations of the major political parties include mentions of the poor and rich. After examining this possibility, I briefly attempt to get a sense of what the admittedly ambiguous terms “poor” and “rich” mean to people. Next, moving to the heart of the empirical analyses in this chapter, I examine the distribution of responses to original survey questions capturing attitudes toward the poor and the rich in the United States. Finally, these questions are used to construct indices of sympathy toward the poor and resentment of the rich; the chapter concludes by examining the properties of these measures. As will be seen, it appears that Americans have meaningful, stable, and reliable attitudes toward the poor and the rich. Furthermore, contrary to common accounts that Americans are approving of economic inequality, the poor are generally viewed sympathetically, and the rich with resentment.

Taking Americans at their Word

The gap between the richest and the rest in the United States has been growing for decades, and recent research examines American reactions to what scholars define as inequality and American attitudes about government-led downward redistribution (e.g., Bartels 2008;

McCall 2013; Page and Jacobs 2009). But do Americans even use the terms “inequality” and “redistribution” to make sense of our changing political economy? Or do they think of the polity in different class terms entirely?

I hypothesize that political thinking in a period of economic inequality includes attitudes toward class groups: in this section, I focus on groups at the two extremes of the economic distribution – the poor and the rich. This hypothesis is based on a vibrant tradition of research, largely inspired by Converse’s (1964) seminal research, demonstrating that public opinion and political behavior is dominated by attitudes toward social groups (e.g., Nelson and Kinder 1996).

As discussed above, existing survey research typically asks respondents closed-ended questions about “inequality” and “redistribution” – here, I take respondents at their word, examining whether these terms are used as often as terms about which we less often ask Americans: the poor and the rich. I conduct a content analysis (with the assistance of a team of undergraduate students¹⁵) of responses to open-ended questions in the 2008 American National Election Studies time series survey. The questions examined ask respondents what, if anything, they like – and subsequently what, if anything, they dislike – about each of the two major parties. The benefit of this approach is that it meets individuals on their own terms, examining the language they use rather than prescribing options to them in a closed-ended survey. Moreover, for purposes of comparison, I also examine mentions of social groups related to white/black racial terms, since racial attitudes represent an important cleavage in American public opinion (Hutchings and Valentino 2004; Kinder and Sanders 1996).” Response rates to the questions can be found in Appendix 4.1; the full list of terms used in the content analysis is in Appendix 4.2.

¹⁵ Four undergraduate students blind to the hypotheses of the study independently coded all of the responses and then met to resolve discrepancies.

The results, presented in Figure 4.1, reveal that while terms related to “inequality” and “redistribution” are not often mentioned, terms related to two class groups frequently appear, those at the extremes of the economic distribution: “the poor” and “the rich.” Indeed, these class terms are more frequently used than racial terms, although that may be in part due to social taboos regarding talking about race. Finally, it appears that class considerations figure prominently in what respondents *dislike* about Republicans and what they *do like* about Democrats. This finding will be revisited later in the manuscript.

[Insert Figure 4.1 about here]

On the basis of these findings, I argue that to understand public opinion about economic inequality – as it exists in the minds of ordinary Americans, that is, rather than elites – we must come to terms with American views of class groups. In particular, what do Americans think about the two class groups at the extremes of the distribution: the poor and the rich? First, however, I take a brief detour in order to get a sense of what survey respondents intend these terms – the “poor” and the “rich” – to mean.

Who Counts as Poor? As Rich?

Terms referring to social groups, at least as they are referred to in everyday conversation, are not clearly bounded categories. While the analyst might construct social group terms by specifying a bright line between the poor and the middle class – for example, the official federal poverty line – the point of this part of the project is not to impose categories on the thinking of ordinary Americans but rather to examine the categories that individuals already use. Indeed, it would be silly to ask the following survey question: “How often do you feel sympathy for those

below the official poverty line set by the federal government?” This question would assume an attitude that respondents are unlikely to possess. Yet it is clear from the open-ended analyses above that respondents do have attitudes toward groups related to the “poor” and “rich,” and it is these that I seek to examine. While these terms are admittedly ambiguous – indeed, they may derive power *because of*, not in spite of, their ambiguity – it is possible that they encompass a range of shared meaning. It is this range I (briefly) examine in this section.

I do so using a survey on Mechanical Turk (Berinsky, Huber, and Lenz 2012), with 502 adult U.S. citizen respondents, conducted in January 2014. First respondents are asked, “Suppose there is a person about whom you know ONLY ONE THING: the amount of money per year this person makes. How MUCH money would this person have to earn per year for you to conclude that the person is definitely POOR?” Respondents are next asked the same question except the word “poor” is replaced with “rich.” This question elicited a range of responses, perhaps because – as some respondents pointed out in an open-ended section at the end of the survey – income is insufficient in the absence of information about wealth. Still, the median response for the “poor” question was \$15,000, while the median response for the “rich” question was \$200,000. Moreover, the 5th-95th percentile ranges were non-overlapping: for the poor, the range was from \$50,000 to \$1 million, while for the rich, the range was from \$1000 to \$35,670. This suggests that while respondents may not have had the exact same bright lines for the poor/rich categories, there was little overlap: if one respondent viewed a person as poor, no other respondent was likely to view that person as rich.

Similar results were obtained for an additional question: “Now suppose there is a different person about whom you know ONLY ONE THING: the amount of money this person

HAS IN THE BANK. How MUCH money would this person have to HAVE IN THE BANK for you to conclude that the person is definitely POOR?” Again, an additional question was asked with the term “RICH” replacing poor, and the purpose of these questions was to move beyond income, to begin to get at the possibility that perceptions of wealth also influence perceptions of who counts as poor or rich. Here too, however, as some respondents pointed out, the utility of the question is limited, as it is possible to be rich without having *any* money in the bank (e.g., all the money could be in stocks). Still, the medians for poor (\$100) and rich (\$250,000) were far apart. And the 5th-95th percentile ranges were once again non-overlapping: \$10,000 to \$5 million for the rich, and \$100 to \$7,066 for the poor.

It may also prove instructive to examine the perceived racial composition of the “poor” – in particular, if I find that many Americans view the poor positively, it is possible that this term “poor” is used to refer not to all those at the bottom of the economic distribution but a particular subgroup of the poor: perhaps the white poor, for example, who may be viewed to be more deserving than the black poor. The final questions on the survey, therefore, ask: “Approximately what percentage of POOR people do you think are WHITE/BLACK?” Consistent with research showing that media depictions of poverty have overrepresented blacks, I find that the mean percentage of poor people perceived to be black was 52, while the mean percentage of poor people perceived to be white was 41.

In sum, while respondents to this Mechanical Turk survey do not appear to agree exactly on who counts as poor and rich, and while these preliminary survey questions ought to be refined in future research, it does appear that the terms “poor” and “rich” encompass a range of shared meaning. In particular, it is rare that one person’s “poor” is another person’s “rich”; moreover,

the poor are disproportionately viewed to be black. Now that we have a sense that the terms “poor” and “rich” are used by individuals in reference to the two major political parties, and now that we have at least a crude sense of what individuals mean by these terms, in the next section I examine American attitudes toward these groups at the two extremes of the economic distribution.

American Attitudes toward the Poor and the Rich

High-quality measures of attitudes toward the poor and the rich do not exist in available data, as political scientists have not systematically engaged the possibility that these attitudes are consequential. The American National Election Studies includes feeling thermometer scores about these class groups; these measures are adequate but not ideal. The main problem with these measures is the potential for interpersonal incomparability (Brady 1988) and, relatedly, systematic error resulting from unlabeled interior response options (Pasek and Krosnick 2010).

Accordingly, in this section I present the results of development and validation of survey measures of attitudes toward the poor and the rich. I began with a pilot study in April 2012, in which an adult sample (n = 135) was recruited through Amazon.com’s Mechanical Turk platform (Berinsky, Huber, and Lenz 2012). Subjects responded to a variety of open-ended questions about class and politics in the United States. I studied the responses to determine the vernacular through which attitudes toward the rich and poor are expressed in order to develop question batteries. Following Conover’s (1988) “cognitive-affective model of the role of social groups in political thinking,” I developed questions about *deservingness* – whether the poor and the rich have more or less money than they deserve – and questions reflecting *emotions* expressed toward these class groups, including sympathy, compassion, anger, and resentment.

The questions are listed in Figure 4.2, and the performance of these questions was examined through two separate studies, each of which is described below.

Two original survey datasets are analyzed: a study conducted through Amazon.com's Mechanical Turk platform (Berinsky, Huber and Lenz 2012) in the summer of 2012 and a survey conducted by YouGov-Polimetrix in early 2013. The Mechanical Turk study is a two-wave panel study of a convenience sample of 1,387 adults¹⁶: wave 1 was conducted in June 2012; wave 2 was conducted in August 2012. The YouGov-Polimetrix study was conducted on a national sample of 800 adults from Feb. 8-14, 2013. The benefit of the Mechanical Turk study is that the lower cost in obtaining respondents allows for a panel design, allowing me to assess the stability of attitudes toward the poor and the rich. The YouGov-Polimetrix study, meanwhile, has a more diverse sample, including weights that allow the analyses to approximate national representativeness.¹⁷ These datasets are supplemented with the American National Election time series surveys in order to assess class group attitudes and their effects over time.

[Insert Figure 4.2 about here]

Conover (1988) writes that political thinking about social groups is dominated by “the desire to know who is getting what and whether they deserve it.” If the logic of individualism dominates public thinking – if, that is, Kluegel and Smith (1986) are correct that individuals are held “personally responsible” for their “economic fate,” we should expect that both the poor and

¹⁶ Attrition is substantial, as is common with Mechanical Turk panel studies: only 537 completed both waves.

¹⁷ YouGov-Polimetrix used a matching algorithm with respect to gender, age, race, education, party identification, ideology, and political interest to produce an internet sample that closely approximates the demographic makeup of known marginals for the general population of the United States from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2008 American Community Survey. Scholars differ with respect to whether this approach of applying weights to opt-in samples yields “nationally representative” datasets (Baker et al. 2010; Rivers 2006; Vavreck and Rivers 2008)

the rich will be perceived to have about what they deserve: no more, no less. Or, if Americans agree with the *Wall Street Journal*'s¹⁸ description of the poor as “lucky duckies” (since they pay no federal income tax), and if they view the rich as “job creators” unfairly penalized by government by progressive taxation, they should actually expect the poor to have *more* than they deserve and the rich to have *less*.

But as Figure 4.3 shows, the majority of respondents in the YouGov-Polimetrix (analyses weighted to approximate national representativeness) say the rich have more money than they deserve (58%) while very few say the rich have less than they deserve (4%; the remainder say they have about the right amount). In contrast, respondents are much *less likely* to say the poor have more money than they deserve (8%) than to say they have less than they deserve (59%; the remainder say they have the right amount).

Figure 4.3 also shows the distribution of affective tags applied to these class groups. When interpreting these results, it is important to remember that negative attitudes toward an outgroup are often not expressed through unfavorable evaluations but rather through the denial of favorable evaluations (Meertens and Pettigrew 1997). It is not surprising, therefore, that subjects report feeling sympathy more often on average than resentment. Bearing this in mind, the comparisons between attitudes toward the poor and attitudes toward the rich are instructive. Almost four times as many subjects express sympathy toward the poor (79%) as toward the rich (21%), while about twice as many subjects express resentment toward the rich (29%) as toward the poor (15%). Additional emotions questions (compassion, anger) show similar distributions, and these patterns are even more pronounced in the Mechanical Turk survey (not shown).

¹⁸ From “The Non-Taxpaying Class: Those lucky duckies!” November 20, 2002.

[Insert Figure 4.3 about here]

Finally, I examine whether these findings extend beyond the current historical moment, which follows one of the biggest recessions in American history as well as the Occupy Wall Street movement. Making use of American National Election Time Series cross-sectional surveys dating back to 1993 (the earliest year containing a thermometer score for the rich), I compare feeling thermometer scores toward the poor and the rich in Figure 4.4.

[Insert Figure 4.4 about here]

While there is some evidence that the rich are viewed slightly more negatively in 2012 than in previous years, more important for my purposes is that the poor are viewed more favorably than the rich across the period of examination, even during the period of welfare reform in the early- to mid-1990s. It is also important to note that while at first it might seem that the rich are still viewed somewhat favorably – above the midpoint of “50” in all years – this appears to reflect a general tendency for respondents to resist reporting cold feelings toward groups. As Bartels (2008) has noted, placing these attitudes in context with attitudes toward other groups reveals that the poor are rated relatively high, on par with other popular groups such as Christians and the military, while the rich are rated relatively low, in company with other unpopular groups such as feminists and Hindus (see also Bartels 2008).

Measuring Sympathy for the Poor and Resentment of the Rich: Constructing Indices

It is important to be sure that the measures reliably capture attitudes toward the poor and the rich rather than fleeting responses of the moment in the artificial context of a survey interview. To do so, I combine the questions about deservingness and affective tags (weighted

equally) into two separate indices, one measuring sympathy for the poor and another measuring resentment of the rich; the indices differ slightly across the two surveys, as the lower cost of the Mechanical Turk sample allowed for the incorporation of more questions (Figure 4.2). I might have constructed the indices somewhat differently, including the exact same questions for both attitudes toward the poor and attitudes toward the rich in order to obtain balance. I do not do so because the distributions indicate that the dominant perspective of the poor is one of sympathy, while the dominant perspective of the rich is one of resentment, and I construct the indices to reflect this finding. But it is important to note that the following results do not change if the alternative, more balanced approach is adopted. Frequency distributions of the indices can be found in Figure 4.5.

[Insert Figure 4.5 about here]

The indices hang together well: the Cronbach's alpha for the index of sympathy for the poor ranges from 0.74 (YouGov-Polimetrix) to 0.78 (Mechanical Turk), while the Cronbach's alpha for the index of resentment of the rich ranges from 0.79 (YouGov-Polimetrix) to 0.83 (Mechanical Turk). Moreover, responses to the class group attitude questions are stable over time. The panel study conducted through Mechanical Turk reveals that for the sympathy for the poor index, the wave 1-wave 2 correlation¹⁹ is 0.73, and the correlation for the resentment of the rich index is 0.69. By comparison, the correlation for a standard ANES index of questions measuring an aspect of individualism, the value of limited government (Markus 2001) is 0.73.

These results place us in a position to reassess the conventional wisdom about American beliefs about our age of economic inequality. McCall (2013) summarizes this account (without

¹⁹ Pearson's correlation coefficient: the time in between the waves varied from 6-12 weeks.

endorsement) as follows: “The rich reap the rewards they deserve for being smart, working hard, and producing prosperity for the rest of us. Meanwhile, the poor get what they deserve for not availing themselves of the opportunities America lavishes...” The findings challenge this common description of American political thought. The modal belief is to view the poor to have less than they deserve, and the rich to have less; moreover, this pattern appears to extend beyond the current historical moment. Finally, these attitudes can be measured reliably, and they are stable over time.

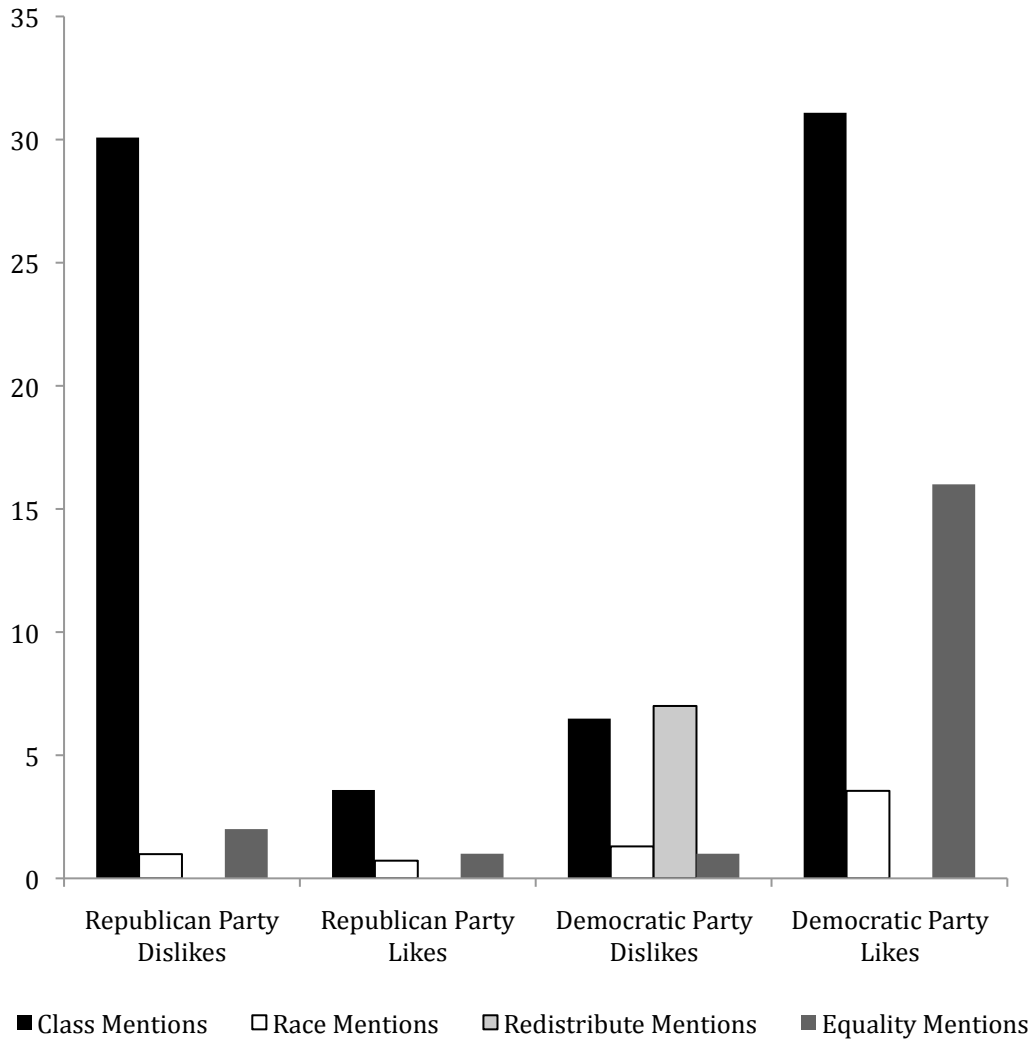
Of course, these analyses do not by themselves establish whether class group attitudes have political consequences. That is, it is possible that even though Americans have meaningful attitudes toward the poor and the rich, when they enter the political arena these class group attitudes are crowded out by other considerations. In order to assess this possibility, the next chapter examines whether class group attitudes affects policy opinion, while the subsequent chapter examines whether class group attitudes affect voter reactions to candidates for public office.

Table 4.1. Predictors of Attitudes toward the Poor, the Rich

	<i>Sympathy for the Poor</i>		<i>Resentment of the Rich</i>	
	Coefficient	S.E.	Coefficient	S.E.
Party ID (Rep.)	-0.15***	(0.03)	-0.13***	(0.03)
Ideology (Cons.)	-0.09**	(0.04)	0.01	(0.03)
Black Stereotypes	-0.22***	(0.07)	-0.06	(0.07)
Age	0.03	(0.04)	-0.15***	(0.03)
Female	0.04**	(0.02)	-0.02	(0.01)
South	0.02	(0.02)	0.00	(0.02)
Education	0.00	(0.02)	-0.01	(0.02)
Poor	0.10***	(0.02)	0.05**	(0.02)
Constant	0.84***	(0.05)	0.44***	(0.04)
N	781		760	
R-squared	0.19		0.12	

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$; ordinary least squares regression coefficients. All variables coded 0 to 1. YouGov-Polimetrix Study. All variables coded 0-1.

Figure 4.1. Open-ended Responses to Party Like, Dislike Questions



Y-axis values are percentages. From the 2008 American National Election Studies Time Series survey (unweighted). Only those who responded to the question are included in the graph (see Appendix 4.1 for response rates). Full list of the terminology that is counted as “class,” “race,” “redistribution,” or “equality” mentions is included in Appendix 4.2.

Figure 4.2. Question wording of sympathy for the poor and resentment of the rich

4.2a. YouGov-Polimetrix Study

For each of the following groups, please say whether most people in the group have more money than they deserve, less money than they deserve, or about the right amount of money.

POOR PEOPLE

RICH PEOPLE

- A LOT MORE money than they deserve
- SOMEWHAT MORE money than they deserve
- SLIGHTLY MORE money than they deserve
- About the right amount of money
- SLIGHTLY LESS money than they deserve
- SOMEWHAT LESS money than they deserve
- A LOT LESS money than they deserve

How often have you felt each of the following toward POOR PEOPLE?

Compassion

Sympathy

[Anger and resentment were also asked for comparative purposes]

How often have you felt each of the following toward RICH PEOPLE?

Anger

Resentment

[Compassion and sympathy were also asked for comparative purposes]

[Response options: Always, Most of the time, About half the time, Once in a while, Never]

4.2b. Mechanical Turk study

Resentment of the Rich

In the United States, how often are the rich unfairly punished for their success?

[Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never]

Which of the following comes closest to your opinion?

Most rich people:

-Get A LOT/SOME/ONLY A FEW/NO special breaks from government

Would you say that most rich people have more money than they deserve, or less money than they deserve?

-A LOT MORE/A LITTLE MORE/About the right amount of money/A LITTLE LESS/A LOT LESS than they deserve

Do you think that THE RICH have too much influence in American life and politics, not enough influence, or about the right amount of influence?

[If too much:] Would you say that THE RICH have a great deal too much influence in American life and politics, moderately too much, or slightly too much?

[If too little:] Would you say that THE RICH have a great deal too little influence in American life and politics, moderately too little, or slightly too little?

How do you feel when you read or hear about RICH people?

(1-7 scale; 1 = Not at all; 7 = Very strongly)

Anger; Disgust; Contempt

Sympathy for the Poor

In the United States, how often do people unfairly look down on the poor?

[Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never]

Which of the following statements comes closest to your opinion?

Most poor people:

-Get A LOT/SOME/ONLY A FEW/NO special breaks from government

Would you say that most poor people have more money than they deserve, or less money than they deserve?

-A LOT MORE/A LITTLE MORE/About the right amount of money/A LITTLE LESS/A LOT LESS than they deserve

Do you think that THE POOR have too much influence in American life and politics, not enough influence, or about the right amount of influence?

[If too much:] Would you say that THE POOR have a great deal too much influence in American life and politics, moderately too much, or slightly too much?

[If too little:] Would you say that THE POOR have a great deal too little influence in American life and politics, moderately too little, or slightly too little?

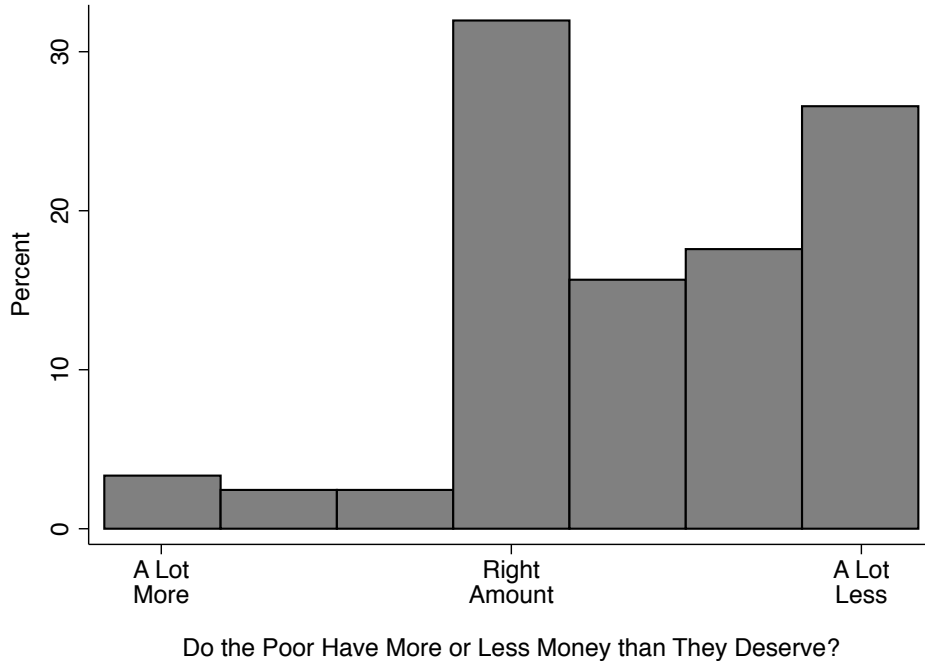
How do you feel when you read or hear about POOR people?

(1-7 scale; 1 = Not at all; 7 = Very strongly)

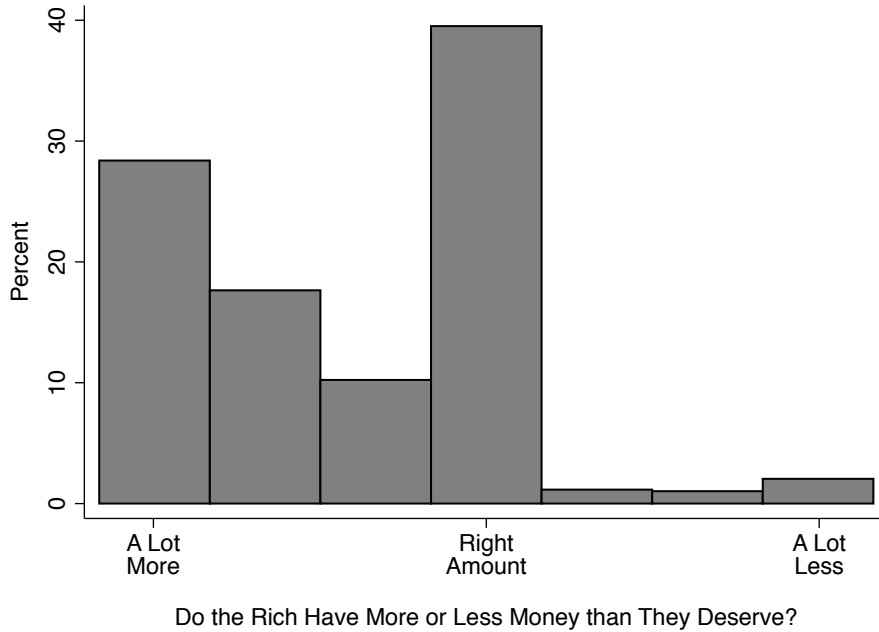
-Compassion; Sympathy

Figure 4.3. Distribution of Attitudes toward the Rich and Poor
YouGov-Polimetrix Study (weighted); Y-axis values are percentages; N = 800;

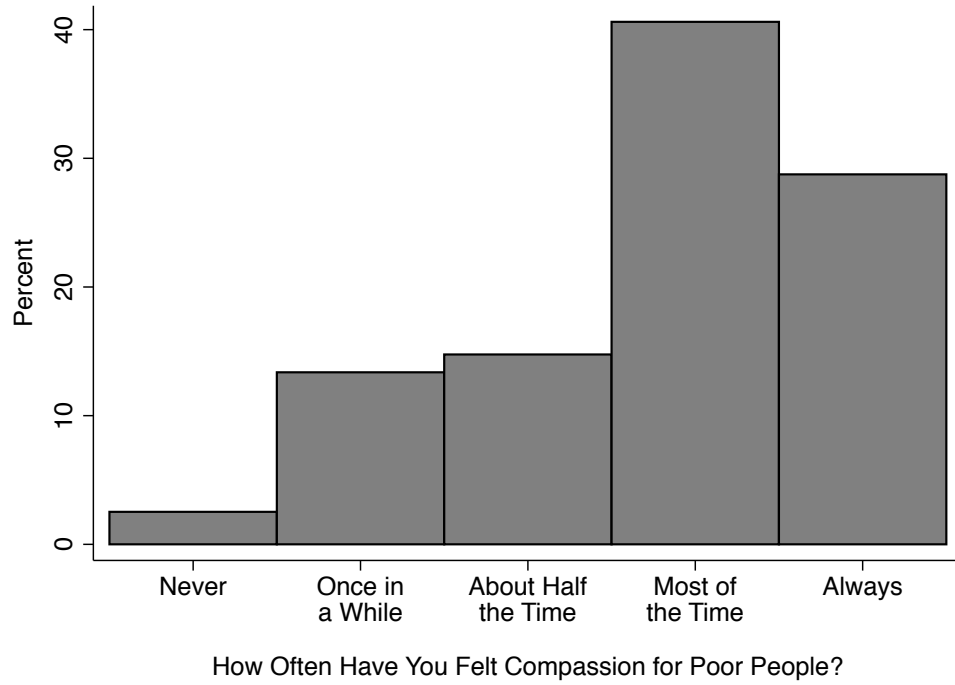
4.3a. Deservingness - Poor



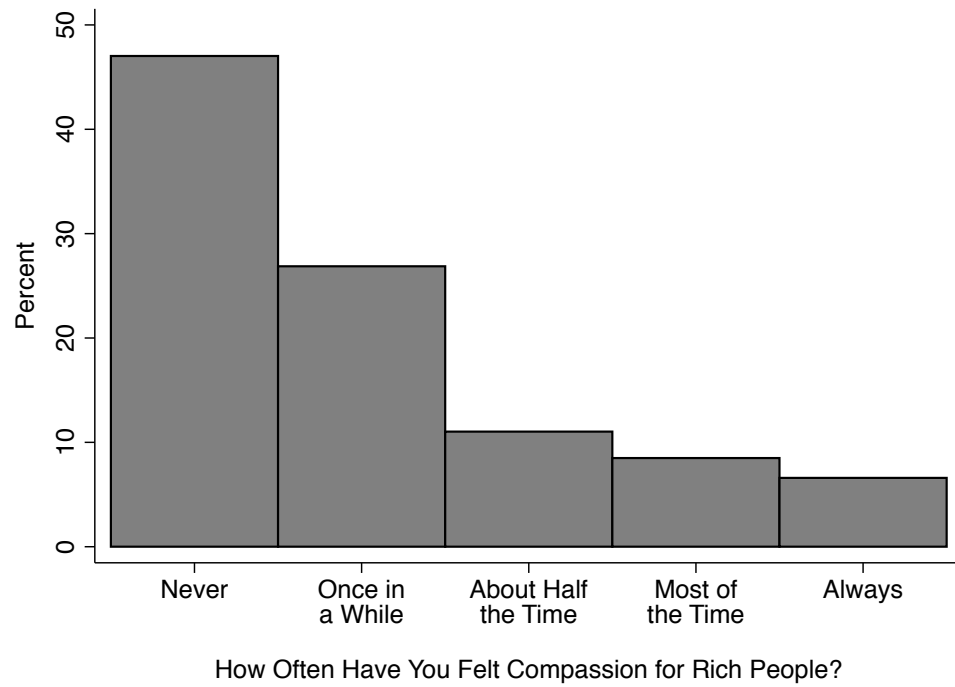
4.3b. Deservingness - Rich



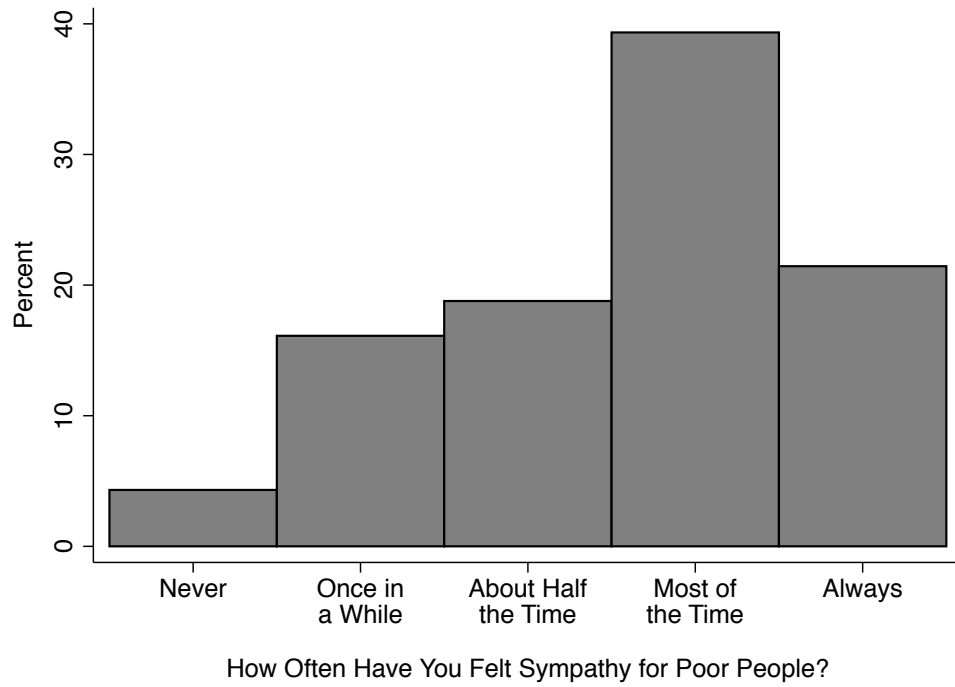
4.3c. Compassion - Poor



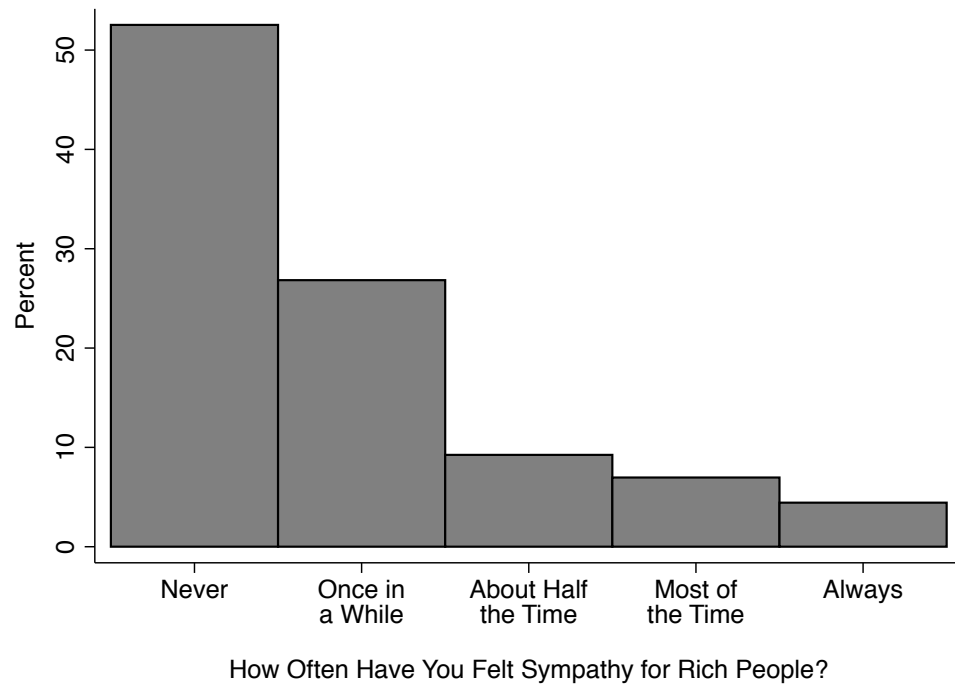
4.3d. Compassion - Rich



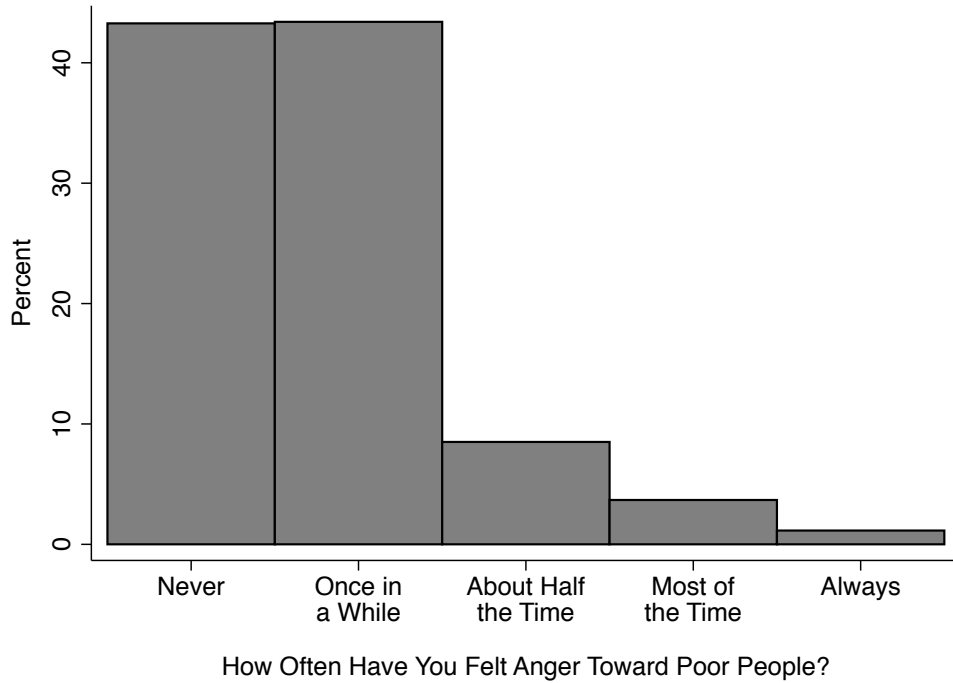
4.3e. Sympathy - Poor



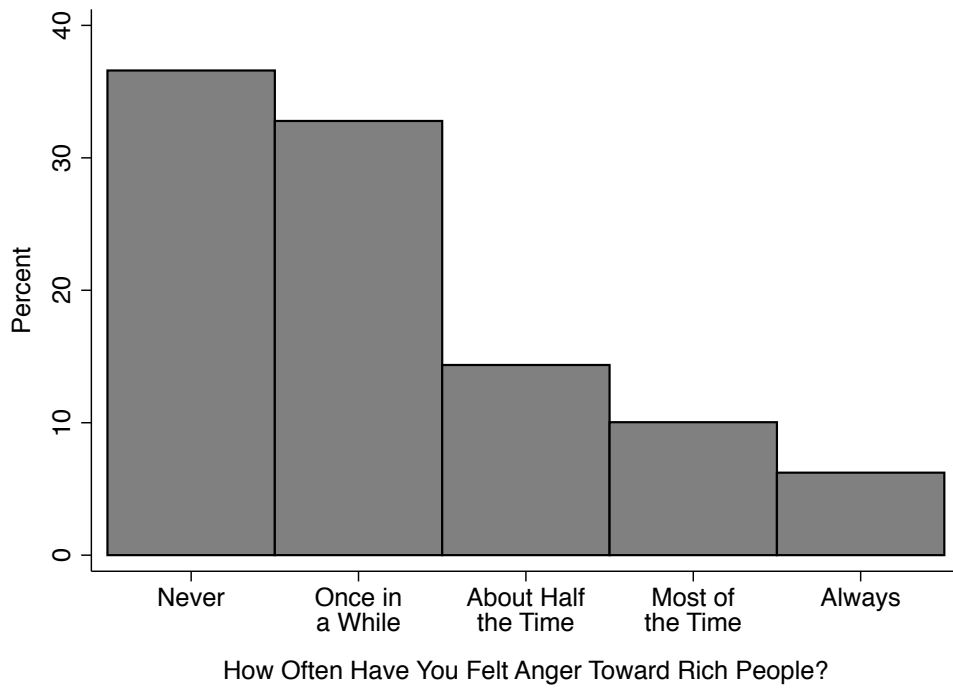
4.3f. Sympathy - Rich



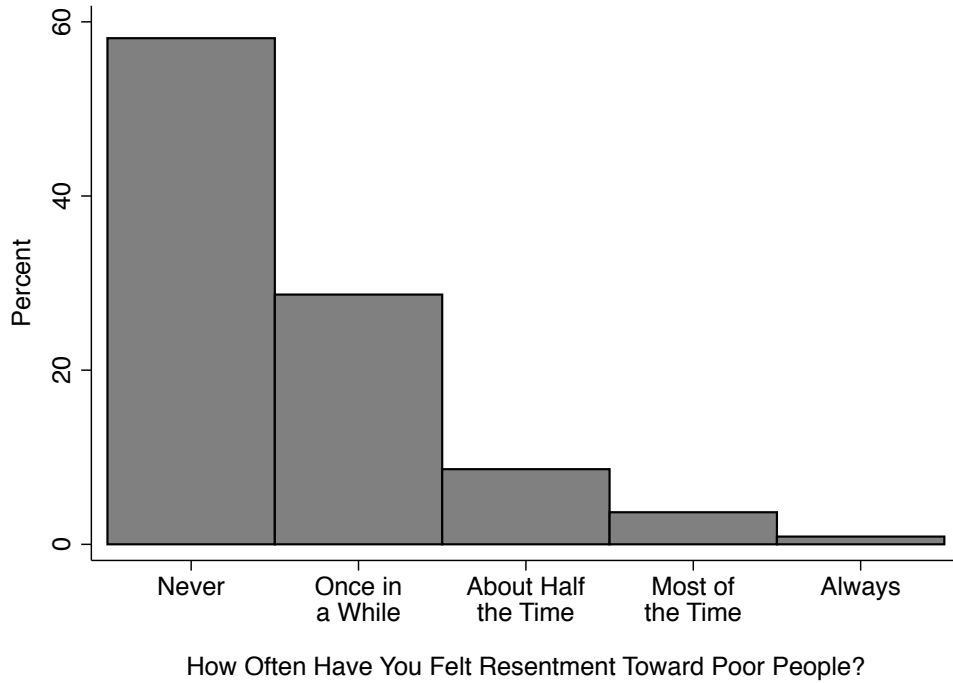
4.3g. Anger - Poor



4.3h. Anger - Rich



4.3i. Resentment - Poor



4.3j. Resentment - Rich

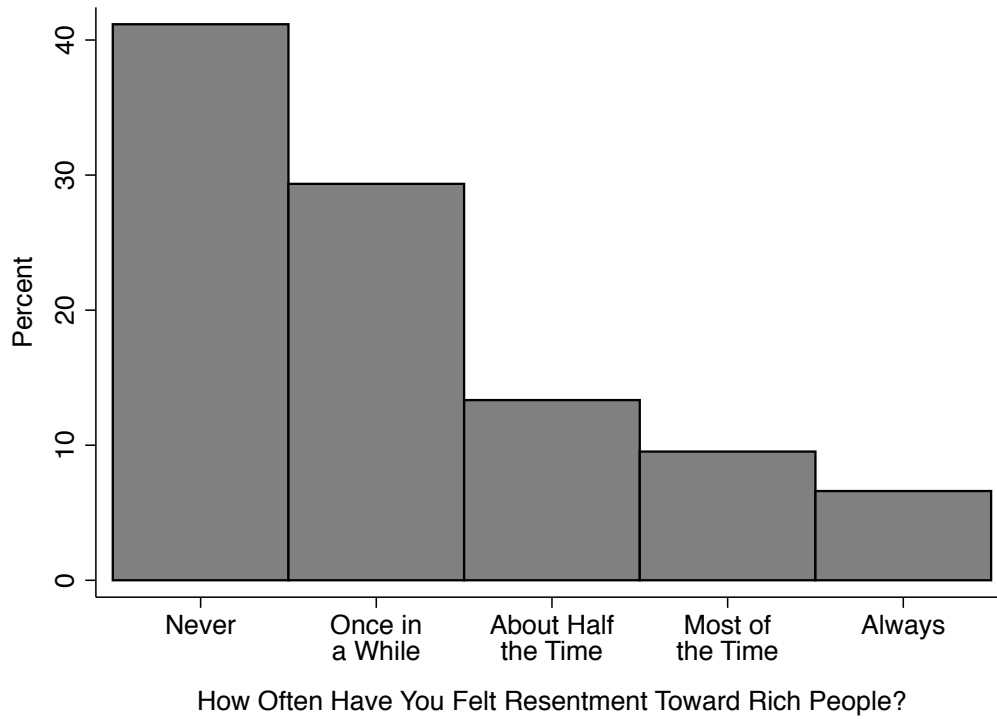
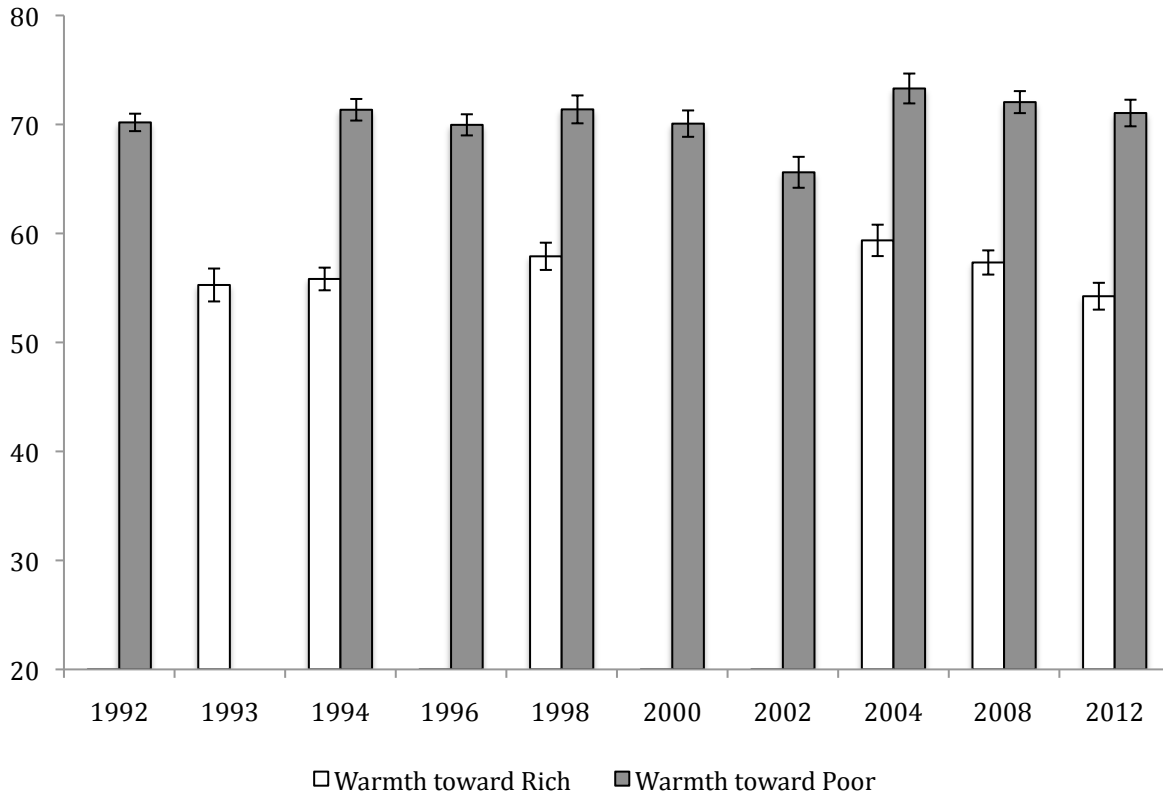


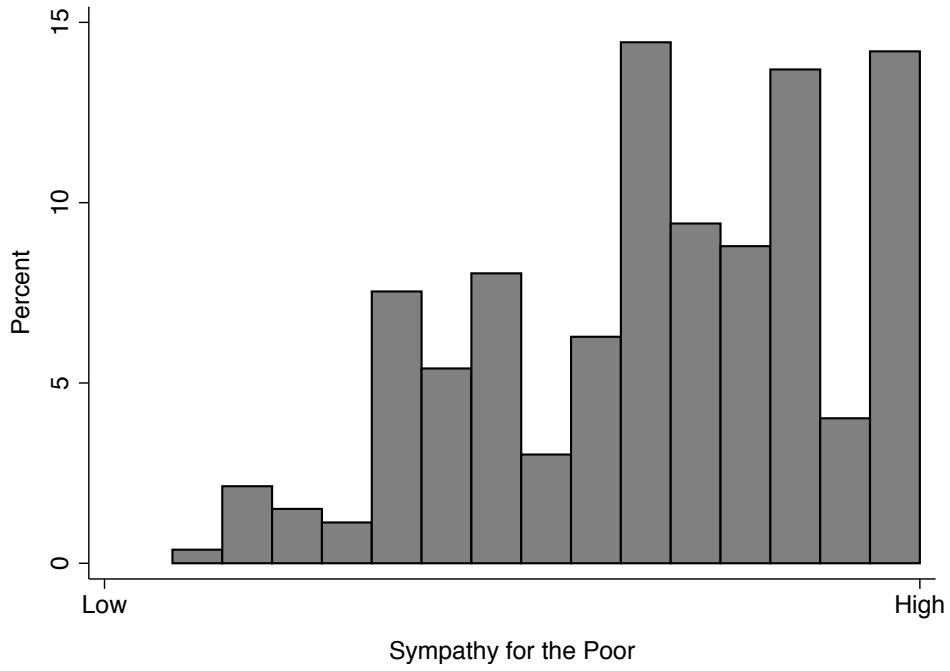
Figure 4.4. Affect toward the Rich and Poor Over Time



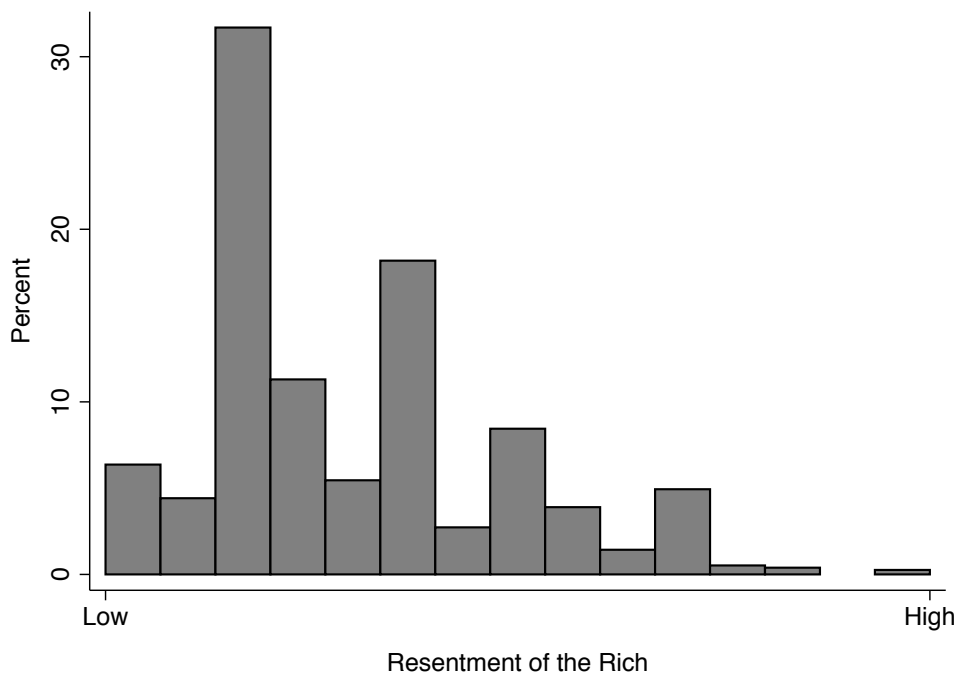
Source: American National Election Time Series Surveys. Bars represent average feeling thermometer scores (0-100; high scores indicate greater warmth) for all respondents in a given year; analyses are weighted to approximate national representativeness. Missing bars indicate that feeling thermometer questions about the group were not asked in that year. Also, terminology varies somewhat across years for the rich: in 1993 and 1994, the term “wealthy” is used, while in the other years, the term “rich” is used.

Figure 4.5. Distribution of Indices

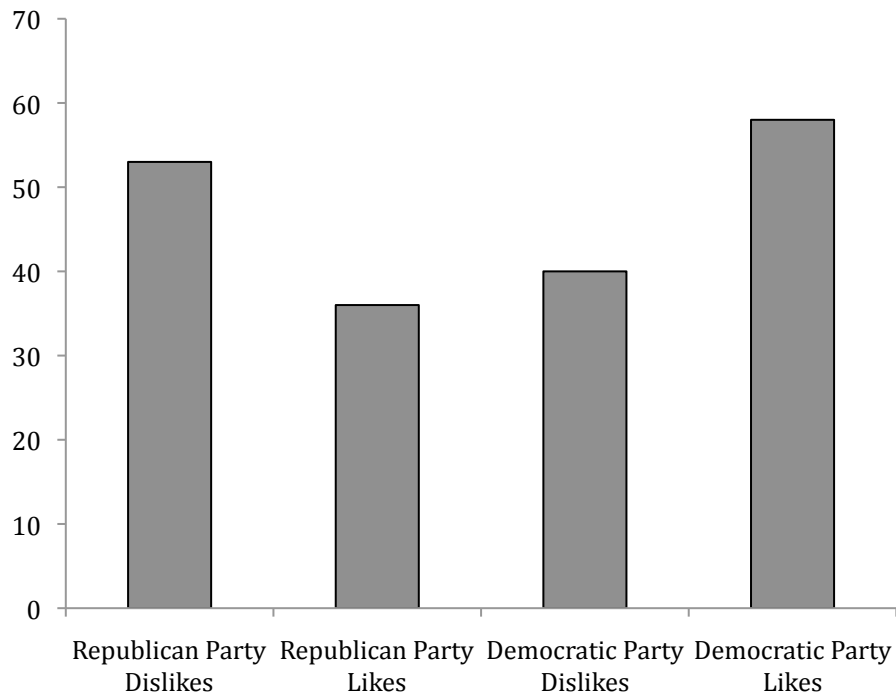
4.5a. Index of Desert, Compassion, Sympathy - Poor



4.5b. Index of Desert, Anger, Resentment - Rich



Appendix 4.1. Percent Responding to Open-Ended Party Like, Dislike Questions



From the 2008 American National Election Studies Time Series survey (unweighted). Y-axis values are percentages.

Appendix 4.2. Coding terminology for class, race, redistribution, inequality mentions

Poor terms

Poor
Have-nots
Little people
Poverty
Lower class
Underclass
Low income (or lower income)
Welfare
Needy

Rich terms

Rich
The wealthy (or “wealth”)
Haves
Upper class
High income (or “higher” or “upper” income)
Millionaires/gazillionaires
Big money

(White/black) Race terms

Racism
White
Diversity
Multiracial
African American
Black
Minority

Redistribution terms

Distribute
Redistribute
Redistributive
Redistribution, downward redistribution, upward redistribution

Inequality terms

Equal
Unequal
Equality
Inequality
Equivalent

Chapter Five

Why Americans Love Welfare State Programs

For decades, scholars have debated the extent to which Americans support government-led economic distribution. In this chapter, I take a new perspective on this debate; I draw on the concepts of sympathy for the poor and resentment of the rich to explain both the broad pattern of support for downwardly redistributive policies and the notable exceptions to this pattern. I do so as follows: in general, the rich are resented while the poor are viewed sympathetically. When it is clear whether the rich or the poor either reap benefits or pay costs as a result of a given policy, resentment of the rich and sympathy for the poor profoundly influence public opinion, driving support for downward redistribution. However, for some policies – particularly upwardly redistributive policies – it is not clear how class groups are affected; in these cases the public is unable to bring resentment of the rich and sympathy for the poor to bear on policy opinion.

Introduction

Public opinion about government redistribution matters; it affects public policy, and concomitantly distributional outcomes in the United States (Brooks and Manza 2007; Kelly 2011; Pacheco 2009; Page and Shapiro 1992). Coming to terms with public opinion about government redistribution would help scholars answer the central question of political science: “who gets what, when and how” (Lasswell 1936).

Interestingly, as pointed out in Chapter 2, scholars express considerable disagreement about the extent to which Americans support downward redistribution – defined for the purposes of this project as government policies that are intended either to aid those at the bottom of the economic distribution, to take from those at the top of the economic distribution, or both. Some scholars motivate their research from the starting point that American support for downward redistribution is low (Hochschild 1981; see also Bartels 2008), while others argue that support for downward redistribution, while low in comparison to Europe (e.g., Alesina and Glaeser 2004; Manza and Brooks 2007; Smith 1987; Svallfors 2004) is higher than is commonly believed (Cook and Barrett 1992; Gilens 1999; Page and Jacobs 2009).

Both sides of the debate have some explaining to do. Those who argue that American support for downward redistribution is low face many counterexamples: majorities of Americans support not only inclusive welfare programs (for which everyone is eligible) such as Social Security but also means-tested programs (for which one has to demonstrate a lack of means to be eligible) such as Supplemental Security Income, Head Start, and the Earned Income Tax Credit (e.g., Cook and Barrett 1992; Gilens 1999). Moreover, support for many downwardly redistributive programs remains high even when respondents are asked whether they would be willing to pay more taxes in order to fund these programs (Page and Jacobs 2009). Such responses cannot be easily dismissed as “cheap talk” in a cost-free survey environment, since both cross-national and within-U.S. studies show that public opinion patterns are associated with redistributive policy (Brooks and Manza 2007; Kelly 2011; Pacheco 2009; Page and Shapiro 1992).

At the same time, those who argue that American support for downward redistribution is high also face important counterexamples. If majorities of Americans believe that the wealthy do not pay their fair share in taxes,²⁰ why is the estate tax, which only affects the wealthy, so unpopular (Bartels 2008; Hochschild 1981)? Similarly, why do policies that disproportionately benefit the rich, such as the home mortgage interest tax deduction and the retirement savings deduction, enjoy so much support (Howard 2004; Mettler 2011)?

In this chapter, I seek to explain both the broad pattern of support for downward redistribution and some notable exceptions to this pattern. I do so by focusing on a very different explainer from that examined by previous scholarship: attitudes toward the class groups of the rich and the poor. The previous chapter demonstrated that on balance, Americans view the rich with resentment and the poor with sympathy. In this chapter, I show that these powerful class group attitudes lead large proportions of Americans to support policies that are perceived to incur costs on the rich and provide benefits to the poor. Critically, however, for some policies it is not clear who pays the costs and who reaps the benefits; in these cases many Americans do not bring their class group attitudes to bear on their policy opinions, resulting in policy positions inconsistent with the general pattern of support for downward redistribution.

I make my case through a series of empirical analyses, each of which examines the results of a 2012 two-wave survey of a Mechanical Turk sample of 1,384 adults (Berinsky et al 2012). I begin by examining associations between sympathy for the poor, resentment of the rich, and opinion about redistributive policy. Next, I examine differences in perceptions of who pays the cost of the estate tax, in order to assess whether resentment of the rich bolsters support for the

²⁰ See Pew polls from March 2003 and December 2011 at: <http://www.people-press.org/2011/12/20/tax-system-seen-as-unfair-in-need-of-overhaul/>

estate tax among those who realize that only a small percentage of Americans are affected by the tax. Finally, capitalizing on a within-subjects design, I examine the effects of providing subjects with information about who benefits from a given policy.

Relationships between Class Group Attitudes and Policy Opinion

Do sympathy for the poor and resentment of the rich predict public opinion? As argued in Chapter 3, this depends on whether a given redistributive policy is seen as such by the public; whether, that is, it is perceived to benefit the rich or the poor. In such cases, I hypothesize that sympathy for the poor and resentment of the rich will be brought to bear on public opinion about the policy.

In this section, I present the results of a series of ordinary least squares regression models (results are robust to an ordered logistic specification) in which the dependent variables are answers to questions measuring opinion about a variety of redistributive policies. The first set of policies consists of either government assistance to a group (poor, homeless) or increased taxes on a group (those making more than \$250,000/year). While these policies potentially have redistributive consequences, it is not made explicit where the money is coming from, in the case of government assistance, or where the money is going, in the case of increased taxes. The next two policies, in contrast, explicitly mention redistribution: the first entails redistribution through heavy taxes on the rich, and the second involves government taking an active role in reducing the gap between rich and poor. The final policy question brings self-interest into the mix, examining

whether the respondent would be willing to pay increased taxes to ensure that no one lives under the poverty line. Notably, for all policy attitudes in this set of analyses, at least one class group is explicitly named as a potential beneficiary (or victim).

Across this variation in policy type, we see a robust, substantively large, and statistically significant relationship between resentment of the rich, sympathy for the poor, and policy opinion; critically, these relationships are evident even after controlling for principles, partisanship, ideology, and demographics. Effect sizes range from one-tenth to more than one-half of the scale. As expected, the role of sympathy for the poor is greatest for the policies explicitly naming the poor or the homeless as recipients, while the role of resentment of the rich is greatest for those policies targeting the relatively well off. Interestingly, however, resentment of the rich and sympathy for the poor have an effect that is independent of each other in nearly every case. In general, the associations are greater between resentment of the rich and policy opinion than between sympathy for the poor and policy opinion, although the difference between the two disappears when egalitarianism and humanitarianism – which are highly correlated with sympathy for the poor – are dropped from the model.

[Insert Table 5.1 about here]

The Mystery of Opposition to the Estate Tax Revisited

I next turn to an important exception to the pattern of support for downward redistribution: the puzzling unpopularity of the estate tax (e.g., Bartels 2008). One possible explanation for this unpopularity is political ignorance – but existing efforts have uncovered mixed evidence in support of this proposition (e.g., Bartels 2008; Krupnikov et al. 2006; Slemrod

2006). I depart from previous research in three ways. First, I ask about support for the estate tax rather than support for estate tax repeal, potentially decreasing confusion eliminating from double negatives; what it means to “not support estate tax repeal” may be hard to parse, increasing error in the measure of the dependent variable, which would make it more difficult for scholars to find effects. Second, I employ a more nuanced measure of perceptions about eligibility for the estate tax; previous research either relied on general measures of political knowledge (Bartels 2008) or a five-category measure of perceptions of eligibility that may have discarded important variation (Slemrod 2006). In contrast, I ask respondents to enter the percentage of households they think hold large enough estates to be eligible for the estate tax; consistent with previous findings of public ignorance about the tax, only 9% of respondents correctly gave a response that was less than 5%.²¹

The account presented here would suggest that those respondents who believe that the estate tax affects only the wealthiest of households would oppose the tax due to resentment of the rich. As a test of this hypothesis, another ordinary least squares regression is estimated, identical to the above model except that perceptions of estate tax eligibility are interacted with resentment of the rich. Indeed, the marginal effects plot presented in Figure 5.1 shows that resentment of the rich is a powerful predictor of opposition to the estate tax, accounting for over half the scale at the extreme in which only the smallest percentage of households are eligible for the tax – but,

²¹ This may be an underestimate of respondents’ knowledge, given that Krupnikov and colleagues (2006) find that monetary incentives for correct answers, which were not provided in the survey presented here, increase the proportion of correct answers.

consistent with expectations, resentment of the rich does *not* predict opinion at the other end of the scale.²²

[Insert Figure 5.1 about here]

In short, the results presented here suggest that opposition to the estate tax can be explained as follows: the vast majority of people do not understand that only the wealthiest households are affected by this tax. Among those who do understand this, resentment of the rich leads them to oppose the tax.

A Within-Subjects Approach

The above analyses suggest that Americans support downwardly redistributive policies when it is clear how the rich and poor are affected by such policies, due to resentment of the rich and sympathy for the poor, but that when it is not clear how these groups are affected, American support for downward redistribution is more tenuous. However, these analyses rely on cross-sectional data, limiting the confidence in the causal inferences that can be drawn. Therefore, I now employ a within-subjects design, replicating and extending the research of Mettler (2011). In wave 1, respondents were asked to report their opinion about three policies for which the affected class groups may not be clear: the home mortgage interest tax deduction (HMITD), the retirement savings tax deduction (RSTD), and the earned income tax credit (EITC). In wave 2 (approximately two weeks later), respondents were again asked their opinion about these policies, but only after being presented with graphs describing the distributive benefits of these

²² This interactive effect is sizable for both Democrats and Republicans, although it is somewhat larger for Republicans.

policies (available from Mettler 2011) – in short, the HMITD and the RSTD primarily benefit the rich, while the EITC benefits the poor.

Mettler finds that information about the impact of these policies on class groups leads respondents to take a position that is more consistent with broad patterns of support for downward redistribution. Of particular interest to the current project is *why* information should have this effect. I test the hypothesis that information allows respondents to bring their class group attitudes to bear on policy opinion in Table 5.2.

[Table 5.2 about here]

The table presents the results of ordinary least squares regressions: for each column in the table, the dependent variable is policy opinion. Each policy has three columns of regression coefficients: in the first column, the dependent variable is responses to the policy question at wave 1; in the second column, the dependent variable is responses at wave 2; and in the third column, capitalizing on the within-subjects design, the dependent variable is the difference between wave 2 opinion and wave 1 opinion. As expected, the effect of resentment of the rich is significantly greater after information is presented for the HMITD and the RSTD; the effect of sympathy for the poor on EITC opinion is also greater in wave 2, but the relationship is not statistically significant. This null finding is attributable to sympathy for the poor's high correlation with humanitarianism (which does significantly increase when information is presented); when humanitarianism is removed from the equation, the association between sympathy for the poor and opinion about the EITC increases substantially between wave 1 and wave 2. In short, I find that information about distributive benefits leads individuals to take a more progressive position on policy opinions because this information allows them to bring class

group attitudes to bear on their judgments, leading to greater support for downward redistribution.

Conclusion

Scholars have long struggled to explain public support for downwardly redistributive policies (Feldman and Steenbergen 2001), which is more widespread than many believe (Cook and Barrett 1992; Gilens 1999; Page and Jacobs 2009). This is a problem given the consequences of public opinion for distributive outcomes (Brooks and Manza 2007; Kelly 2011; Pacheco 2009; Page and Shapiro 1992). After all, as Cook and Barrett (1992, pg. 7) point out, “in 1900...neither the government nor industry offered citizens any protection against the normal risks of life. Should ordinary workers become sick, disabled, unemployed, or even unable to work merely because of age, their families would be forced to live in poverty and to depend on charity.” Today, in contrast, the United States has, to name a few, “national systems of old age insurance, unemployment insurance, sanitation mandates for tenements and factories, maximum work hour laws, minimum wage laws, and child labor legislation.” Indeed, many Americans depend on such programs as Supplemental Security Income, Social Security, and the Earned Income Tax Credit to keep financial crisis at bay: in the absence of such programs, the poverty rate would climb significantly (U.S. Census Bureau 2011). Public support for downward redistribution, in short plays a key role in propping up the welfare state, and therefore warrants explanation.

At the same time, there are some notable exceptions to the general tendency for majorities of Americans to favor downward redistribution: in particular, the estate tax, which is downwardly redistributive, is relatively unpopular (Bartels 2008) while the home mortgage tax

deduction and the retirement savings tax deduction, upwardly distributive policies, are relatively popular (Mettler 2011).

In an attempt to explain both the broad pattern of public support for downward redistribution and the notable exceptions to this pattern, I develop and test a theory of the effects of attitudes toward the rich and poor. Relying on a two-wave panel study, I begin by validating measures of these concepts, and next examine their relationships with policy opinion. I find first that the broad pattern of support for downward redistribution is the result of resentment of the rich and sympathy for the poor. However, this pattern is only evident for policies for which it is clear how these class groups are affected. For policies for which the beneficiaries/victims of a policy are unclear, such as the estate tax, the home mortgage tax deduction, and the retirement savings tax deduction, the public is less likely to take a position in favor of downward redistribution than they would if they possessed more information about the distributive benefits.

Table 5.1 Resentment of the Rich and Sympathy for the Poor Predict Policy Opinion When Affected Group is Clear.

	<i>Aid to Poor</i>	<i>Aid to Homeless</i>	<i>Tax 250k+</i>	<i>Redist. by Taxing Rich</i>	<i>Reduce Rich/Poor Gap</i>	<i>Resp. Pay Taxes to Reduce Poverty</i>
Resent. Rich	0.07** (0.03)	0.10* (0.05)	0.51*** (0.04)	0.60*** (0.06)	0.43*** (0.06)	0.16*** (0.06)
Symp. Poor	0.43*** (0.04)	0.31*** (0.06)	0.08* (0.05)	0.12 (0.08)	0.11 (0.07)	0.20*** (0.07)
Humanitarianism	-0.02 (0.04)	0.08 (0.06)	0.05 (0.04)	-0.09 (0.07)	-0.01 (0.07)	0.06 (0.07)
Limited Govt.	-0.13*** (0.02)	-0.08*** (0.02)	-0.11*** (0.02)	-0.16*** (0.03)	-0.18*** (0.03)	-0.10*** (0.03)
Egalitarianism	0.13*** (0.03)	0.21*** (0.05)	0.13*** (0.04)	0.24*** (0.06)	0.33*** (0.06)	0.34*** (0.06)
Rac. Resentment	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.03)	0.07*** (0.02)	0.06* (0.04)	-0.01 (0.04)	-0.07* (0.04)
Stereotypes	-0.11* (0.06)	-0.04 (0.09)	0.20*** (0.07)	-0.00 (0.12)	-0.02 (0.11)	0.06 (0.11)
Party ID (Rep)	-0.05* (0.03)	0.03 (0.05)	-0.11*** (0.03)	0.04 (0.06)	-0.08 (0.05)	-0.01 (0.06)
Ideology (Cons)	-0.07** (0.03)	-0.10** (0.05)	-0.18*** (0.03)	-0.15** (0.06)	-0.10* (0.05)	0.00 (0.06)
Latino	0.02 (0.02)	0.01 (0.03)	-0.05** (0.02)	-0.02 (0.04)	-0.02 (0.04)	0.00 (0.04)
Black	0.05** (0.02)	-0.04 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.06 (0.04)	-0.00 (0.04)	-0.06 (0.04)
Other Race	0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	0.05* (0.03)	0.04 (0.03)	-0.02 (0.03)
Male	0.00 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)
Some Grad Sch.	-0.06*** (0.02)	-0.09*** (0.03)	0.02 (0.02)	-0.08** (0.04)	-0.12*** (0.04)	-0.02 (0.04)
College Grad	-0.03* (0.02)	-0.03 (0.03)	0.02 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.04)	-0.07** (0.03)	0.00 (0.03)
Some College	-0.03* (0.02)	-0.04 (0.03)	0.03 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.04)	-0.09*** (0.03)	0.00 (0.03)
Inc: 20-35k	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)	0.04 (0.03)
Inc: 25-50k	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.03)	0.01 (0.02)	-0.04 (0.03)	-0.03 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.03)
Inc: 50-75k	-0.04** (0.02)	-0.03 (0.03)	0.02 (0.02)	0.01 (0.03)	-0.00 (0.03)	0.01 (0.03)
Inc: 75k+	-0.07*** (0.02)	-0.05* (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.04 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)

Unemployed	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.03)	0.02 (0.02)	0.04 (0.03)	0.04 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.03)
Constant	0.43*** (0.06)	0.35*** (0.09)	0.26*** (0.06)	0.24** (0.11)	0.37*** (0.10)	0.12 (0.10)
N	1,384	521	1,385	521	521	521
R-squared	0.46	0.47	0.44	0.50	0.59	0.43

Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients (standard errors in parentheses). The N's vary depending on whether the question was asked in Wave 1 or Wave 2; ***p<0.01; **p<0.05; *p<0.10 (two-tailed); all variables coded 0 to 1.

Table 5.2. The Effect of Class Group Attitudes on Policy Opinion Depends on Information about Distributive Benefits.

	MITD at wave 1	MITD at wave 2	MITD Diff.	RSTD at wave 1	RSTD at wave 2	RSTD Diff.	EITC at wave 1	EITC at wave 2	EITC Diff.
Resent. Rich	-0.03 (0.06)	-0.27*** (0.08)	-0.12*** (0.04)	-0.07 (0.06)	-0.29*** (0.08)	-0.11*** (0.04)	0.13* (0.07)	0.24*** (0.06)	0.06 (0.04)
Symp. Poor	0.06 (0.08)	-0.05 (0.09)	-0.06 (0.05)	0.05 (0.07)	-0.10 (0.09)	-0.08 (0.05)	0.02 (0.08)	0.07 (0.07)	0.02 (0.04)
Humanitarianism	0.19*** (0.07)	-0.03 (0.09)	-0.11** (0.04)	0.18*** (0.07)	0.06 (0.08)	-0.06 (0.05)	0.12* (0.07)	0.30*** (0.07)	0.09** (0.04)
Egalitarianism	-0.02 (0.03)	0.05 (0.04)	0.03* (0.02)	-0.01 (0.03)	0.04 (0.04)	0.02 (0.02)	-0.06* (0.03)	-0.07** (0.03)	-0.00 (0.02)
Limited Govt.	-0.07 (0.06)	-0.08 (0.08)	-0.00 (0.04)	0.05 (0.06)	0.00 (0.07)	-0.02 (0.04)	0.09 (0.06)	0.14** (0.06)	0.02 (0.03)
Racial Resentment	0.07* (0.04)	0.02 (0.05)	-0.03 (0.02)	0.04 (0.04)	0.00 (0.05)	-0.02 (0.03)	0.09** (0.04)	-0.01 (0.04)	-0.05** (0.02)
Stereotype Index	0.05 (0.12)	0.06 (0.15)	0.01 (0.07)	0.13 (0.11)	0.05 (0.14)	-0.04 (0.08)	0.10 (0.12)	0.11 (0.11)	0.00 (0.07)
Party ID (Rep.)	-0.06 (0.06)	-0.08 (0.07)	-0.01 (0.04)	-0.08 (0.05)	-0.12* (0.07)	-0.02 (0.04)	-0.04 (0.06)	-0.05 (0.06)	-0.00 (0.03)
Ideology (Cons.)	0.04 (0.06)	-0.02 (0.07)	-0.03 (0.04)	0.06 (0.05)	0.04 (0.07)	-0.01 (0.04)	-0.02 (0.06)	-0.01 (0.06)	0.00 (0.03)
Constant	0.40*** (0.11)	0.67*** (0.14)	0.63*** (0.07)	0.37*** (0.10)	0.73*** (0.13)	0.68*** (0.07)	0.39*** (0.11)	0.29*** (0.10)	0.45*** (0.06)
N	519	519	519	520	520	520	520	520	520
R-squared	0.06	0.15	0.17	0.06	0.13	0.11	0.12	0.34	0.13

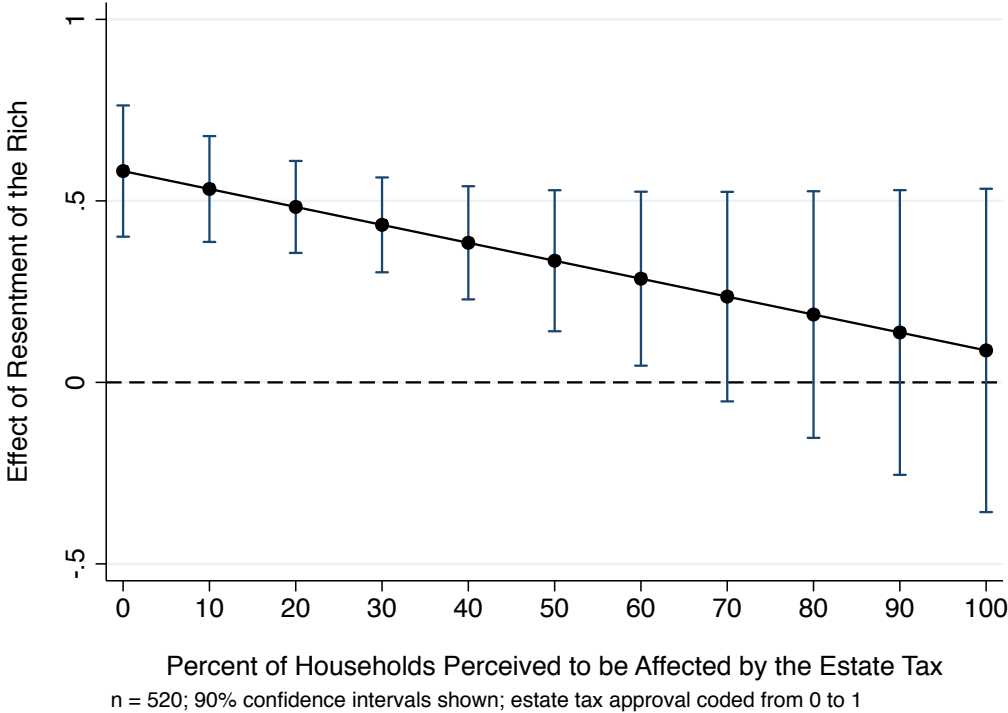
Cell entries are ordinary least squares regression coefficients (standard errors in parentheses);

***p<0.01; **p<0.05; *p<0.10 (two-tailed); all variables coded 0 to 1;

“MITD” signifies support for the Mortgage Interest Tax Deduction; “RSTD” signifies support for the Retirement Savings Tax Deduction; “EITC” signifies support for the Earned Income Tax Credit; “Diff.” signifies the within-individual difference in policy opinion: wave 2 opinion minus wave 1 opinion.

Coefficients on demographic control variables (same as those in Table 2) suppressed.

Figure 5.1 Effect of Resentment of the Rich on Estate Tax Approval, by Perceptions of How Many Households are Affected by the Tax



Chapter Six

The Effects of Sympathy for the Poor and Resentment of the Rich on Candidate Evaluations

Introduction

While many scholars have argued that Americans are opposed to economic inequality, I demonstrated in Chapter 4 that on balance, Americans believe the poor to have too little, and accordingly view them with sympathy; the rich, meanwhile, are viewed to have too much, and are therefore targets of resentment. Furthermore, in Chapter 5, I showed that sympathy for the poor and resentment of the rich also bolster public support for many downwardly redistributive policies. In this chapter, I present evidence in support of the contention that Americans seek to reward candidates who help the poor, and punish candidates who help the rich, in the voting booth. Contrary to conventional accounts of American indifference, opposition to economic inequality powerfully shapes candidate evaluations in the United States.

Observational Analyses: Class Group Attitudes and Candidate Support

I begin this section with an analysis of the associations between class group attitudes and evaluations of the two-major party nominees in the 2012 presidential election. Furthermore, in order to assess the extent to which any patterns apply more generally to evaluations of political entities on the left and the right, I extend the scope of the analyses to include the two major parties and two social movements. A series of ordinary least squares regression models are estimated in which the dependent variables are feeling thermometers for Obama, Romney,

Democrats, Republicans, the Tea Party, and Occupy Wall Street. The independent variables of interest are sympathy for the poor and resentment of the rich, and the controls include partisanship, ideology, racial stereotypes, and demographics. The coefficient estimates are presented in Table 6.1; all variables are coded 0 to 1.

Before examining the results, it is worth remembering that the United States is closely on the heels of a presidential election in which both major-party candidates largely avoided pledging to help the poor (Herbert 2012). Indeed, during a CNN interview²³ Romney made it a point to claim that he was “not concerned about the very poor.” Although he later backtracked, it is unlikely that the statement was a slip of the tongue; in the same interview, Romney said, “We will hear from the Democrat Party, the plight of the poor...You can focus on the very poor, that's not my focus.” Romney appeared to be making a strategic decision to contrast himself with Obama, calculating that whichever one of the two was perceived to help the poor more would be more likely to lose the votes of the “90-95 percent of Americans” with whom Romney professed to be more concerned.

In retrospect, it appears that Romney might have done well to associate himself with the poor: Table 6.1 shows that sympathy for the poor is positively associated with warmth toward Obama, and the magnitude of the effect is almost one-quarter of the scale and statistically significant ($p < 0.01$, two-tailed). Furthermore, as might be expected given that Democrats are perceived to “own” the issue of helping the poor (Petrocik 1996), sympathy for the poor is also positively associated with warmth toward Democrats; the magnitude of the effect is nearly one-fifth of the scale of the dependent variable and statistically significant ($p < 0.01$, two-tailed).

²³ Last accessed March 16, 2013: <http://cnnpressroom.blogs.cnn.com/2012/02/01/mitt-romney-middle-income-americans-are-focus-not-very-poor/>

Sympathy for the poor does not predict evaluations of Romney or the Republican Party. Turning to evaluations of social movements, a somewhat more modest association with attitudes about the poor is evident, ranging from 6-7 percentage points; sympathy for the poor is negatively associated with warmth toward the Tea Party ($p < 0.05$, two-tailed) and positively associated with warmth toward the Occupy Wall Street Movement ($p < 0.05$, two-tailed).

Resentment of the rich is also implicated in evaluations of political entities. While it does not predict evaluations of the Democratic Party, it is positively associated with warmth toward Obama and negatively associated with warmth toward Romney and the Republican Party. In all three cases the magnitude of the association is substantively large, ranging from 16 to 21 percentage points and statistically significant ($p < 0.05$, two-tailed). Turning again to evaluations of social movements, we see that resentment of the rich is not associated with warmth toward the Tea Party, but it is positively associated with warmth toward the Occupy Wall Street movement – as might be expected, given that this movement explicitly singled out the “1 percent” as undeserving. The magnitude of the relationship is again large, at about one-fifth of the scale, and the coefficient is statistically distinguishable from zero ($p < 0.01$, two-tailed). These results, which are robust to a variety of specifications, support the contention that attitudes about the poor and the rich are implicated in political judgments.

[Insert Table 6.1 about here]

To what extent are these associations time-bound? In the aftermath of the Great Recession and Occupy Wall Street, it is possible that political rhetoric about class is more common than it was in previous years, potentially raising the relevance of class group attitudes to evaluations of political entities. Furthermore, Romney’s reputation for vast personal wealth

might have made him uniquely vulnerable to the effects of resentment of the rich. To assess these possibilities, I again turn to the ANES and examine associations between feeling thermometers toward the poor and the rich and two sets of dependent variables. The first set consists of presidential candidate evaluations: the thermometer score for the Republican candidate is subtracted from the score for the Democratic candidate. Accordingly, the models with these dependent variables are ordinary least squares regressions. The second set of dependent variables is vote choice in presidential elections: “0” if the respondent voted for the Democratic candidate, and “1” if the respondent voted for the Republican (all others excluded). Due to the structure of the dependent variable, these models are binomial logistic regressions.

I conduct these analyses for the only three presidential election years in which thermometers about both the poor and the rich are included in the same survey: 2004, 2008, and 2012. The key independent variable is constructed as follows: in order to deal with the problem of “interpersonal incomparability” in feeling thermometer scores (Brady 1988), I subtract the rich thermometer from the poor thermometer; using this differential as the independent variable of interest corrects for the tendency for a given respondent to rate *any* group positively or negatively (see Kinder and McConaughy 2006 for a similar approach in the domain of racial attitudes). Control variables²⁴ include party identification, racial stereotypes, sociotropic evaluations of the economy, and demographics. As in previous analyses, all variables are coded from 0 to 1; the coefficient estimates are presented in Table 6.2.

I first examine the results of the models in which the dependent variables are candidate feeling thermometer scores. Here the relationships can be interpreted easily, as I use ordinary

²⁴ Ideology is not included in specifications using ANES data, as the question wording invites many respondents not to answer, leading to a substantial decrease in sample size.

least squares regression models; in all three election years, rating the poor more favorably than the rich is positively associated with preference for the Democratic candidate over the Republican candidate. The magnitude of this relationship ranges from 13 to 17 percentage points, and is statistically significant all three years at $p < 0.01$ (two-tailed).

Turning to the vote choice models, we see that in all three election years, rating the poor more favorably than the rich is positively associated with vote choice for the Democratic presidential candidate over the Republican, although this association is only statistically significant in 2004 and 2012. The magnitude of the effect is not easily interpretable from the coefficient table, given the ordered logit specifications; predicted probabilities, in which control variables are set to their mean, are required. These reveal that movement from the lowest to the highest point on the poor/rich differential scale is associated with a 23 percentage point increase in the likelihood of voting for the Democratic candidate in 2004, a 4 percentage point (statistically indistinguishable from zero) increase in the likelihood of voting Democrat in 2008, and a 32 percentage point increase in the likelihood of voting Democrat in 2012.

[Insert Table 6.2 about here]

To be sure, it is difficult to determine the direction of causation in any observational analysis. Accordingly, in the next section I present the results of a survey experiment addressing the relationship between candidate evaluations and one of the two class group attitudes examined so far: sympathy for the poor. In future research, I will conduct a similar experiment examining the role of resentment of the rich.

Experimental Analysis: Activating Class Group Attitudes Across Partisan Lines

The survey experiment presented here builds on the observational analyses as follows. First, the experimental design has a key advantage: experiments are well-suited to test hypotheses about causation, as they are designed to isolate effects (Kinder and Palfrey 1993). Second, the experiment is constructed to test the strength of the Democratic advantage with respect to sympathy for the poor (putting resentment of the rich aside for the moment) noted above. That is, the analyses so far suggest that Democrats appear to benefit from sympathy for the poor (see Tables 6.1 and 6.2), due to their “ownership” of this issue (Petrocik 1996; see also Figure 4.1 in Chapter 4). But are there any conditions under which Republican candidates could benefit from sympathy for the poor? What if a Republican candidate were to signal that if elected, his/her actions would benefit the poor? Such a strategy might marshal the powerful force of sympathy for the poor on the Republican candidate’s behalf; alternatively, it might be that the Democrats’ ownership of this issue is too strong for such a strategy to be effective.

Respondents (YouGov-Polimetrix dataset) were exposed to a description of a fictitious candidate (they were not informed that the candidate is fictitious) for U.S. Congress named Bob Taylor and then asked their level of support for the candidate. Afterward, measures of sympathy for the poor and questions measuring control variables were asked, with the exception of demographics, which were already included as part of YouGov-Polimetrix’s respondent profile. As with any experiment in which attitude questions are asked after the manipulation, it is important to assess whether experimental condition affected responses to the questions: ordinary least squares regression analyses of class group attitudes on experimental conditions revealed no evidence that this was the case (Appendix 6.1).

The logic behind the experimental design is straightforward: Kinder and Dale-Riddle (2011) argue that if candidates “are seen as standing for or against certain social groups, voters will be attracted or driven away, depending on their attitude toward the groups in question.” Accordingly, the experimental component of the survey manipulates whether the description of a hypothetical candidate for U.S. Congress indicates that he would be likely to “help” rather than “hurt” the poor, based on his record in the state legislature. The candidate’s partisanship is also manipulated: no partisan cue is provided, the candidate is a Democrat, or the candidate is a Republican. One potential problem with this design is that any effects of the manipulation might reflect respondent reactions to the words “help” and “hurt” rather than respondent attitudes about the poor; therefore, as a control, two conditions are included that suggest that the candidate might “help” or “hurt” the district as a whole. The experimental conditions and sample text from the stimuli are presented in Figure 6.1; all of the following analyses are weighted to approximate national representativeness.

[Insert Figure 6.1 about here]

If the poor are objects of resentment, as some argue,²⁵ we might expect that a candidate would be rewarded in conditions in which he would be likely to decrease aid to the poor. Alternatively, if Americans are ambivalent about helping the poor (Hochschild 1981; Newman and Jacobs 2010), or indifferent to class when making political judgments, the candidate might be evaluated similarly across conditions.

²⁵ From “The New Resentment of the Poor.” *The New York Times*, August 30, 2011. Last accessed at: http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/31/opinion/the-new-resentment-of-the-poor.html?_r=0

But the findings are inconsistent with these expectations. Figure 6.2, which presents mean support for candidate Taylor (recoded on a 0-1 scale), shows that the candidate is more popular when his record indicates that he would be likely to help the poor. Since, in the non-partisan condition, there is little additional information about the candidate, I also examine the two partisan conditions, finding that the candidate is preferred when he is likely to help the poor regardless of whether he is a Democrat or a Republican. The magnitude of this effect is substantively meaningful, ranging from 6 to 13 percentage points,²⁶ and statistically significant at conventional levels ($p < 0.05$, two-tailed).

[Insert Figure 6.2 about here]

If my argument is correct that sympathy for the poor is responsible for these results, it should be those respondents who score high on sympathy for the poor that are driving the effects. Therefore, I estimate a series of ordinary least squares regressions in which the dependent variable is support for the candidate, and experimental conditions are interacted with sympathy for the poor. Furthermore, in order to address a potential alternative explanation, in each of the models I include two additional interactions: one between experimental condition and partisanship, and another between experimental condition and subscription to the principle of limited government (Markus 2001). The reason for this decision is that even if those who are sympathetic to the poor are more likely to support a candidate who would help the poor, this could result from inferences respondents make about the candidate. For example, respondents who are sympathetic to the poor are more likely to be Democrats (Table 4.1, Chapter 4), and they might infer that a candidate who would help the poor is a Democrat as well. This might result in

²⁶ The effect is more than twice as large for the Democratic candidate as for the Republican candidate, but this difference-in-differences is not statistically significant ($p < 0.30$, two-tailed).

a spurious relationship between sympathy for the poor and candidate support. Including the interaction between partisanship and experimental condition controls for this possibility.

In analyses with interaction terms, as Brambor, Clark, and Golder (2006) write, “the typical results table often conveys very little information of interest.” Moreover, accurate interpretation of interactions requires the examination of marginal effects of the interaction components. Marginal effects plots are therefore presented in Figures 6.3 and 6.4; for those interested, the tables of coefficient estimates are provided in Appendices 6.2-6.5.

[Insert Figure 6.3 about here]

Figure 6.3a examines the conditions in which the candidate is non-partisan and the candidate’s association with the poor is manipulated. As expected, it is only among those at the high end of the sympathy scale that support for the candidate is higher in the condition in which the candidate would help the poor. Among those at the low end of the scale, support for the candidate is actually lower in the condition in which the candidate would help the poor, but this association does not reach conventional standards of statistical significance.

In order to address an additional alternative explanation, the conditions in which the candidate would either “help” or “hurt” the district are examined in Figure 6.3b. A markedly different pattern is evident: sympathy for the poor is not associated with support for the candidate when the help/hurt manipulation refers to “the district” rather than “the poor.” This suggests that it is not the candidate’s stance toward “helping” in general, but rather helping the poor in particular, which drives the differences in candidate support across conditions.

But does the interactive relationship between sympathy for the poor and experimental condition persist in the presence of a partisan cue? Indeed it does, as Figure 6.4a (Democrat) and

6.4b (Republican) reveal. The patterns are virtually identical to that observed in the non-partisan conditions; these results suggest that Republican candidates have the potential to activate sympathy for the poor on their behalf.

[Insert Figure 6.4 about here]

An additional potential alternative explanation for the results is the possibility that social desirability pressures bias self-reporting. That is, a subset of respondents might feel compelled by social norms to report that they are sympathetic to the poor even if they really are not, and that same subset might, for the same reason, report that they would support a candidate who would help the poor even if they really would not. In order to assess this possibility, I employ a self-monitoring scale that identifies people who are more (or less) likely to monitor their behavior to ensure it is consistent with social norms; for example, high self-monitors are less likely to report racial prejudice than low self-monitors (Berinsky 2004; Berinsky and Lavine 2012). Splitting the sample at the median, I find that the results for high and low self-monitors are virtually identical; the results do not appear to be moderated by social desirability pressures.

[Insert Figure 6.5 about here]

I next assess the possibility that the effects of sympathy for the poor differ by partisan group; perhaps, for example, those Republicans who sympathize with the poor prefer to help the poor by donating to charity rather than supporting candidates who would increase government aid to the poor. To the contrary: the patterns are virtually identical across partisan lines. Among Republicans as well as Democrats, those high in sympathy for the poor are more likely to support candidates who would help the poor.

[Insert Figure 6.6 about here]

Conclusion

The observational analyses presented in this section suggest that sympathy for the poor and resentment of the rich underpin support for political entities on the left, Obama, the Democratic Party, and the Occupy Wall Street movement, and bolster opposition to political entities on the right: Romney, the Republican Party, and the Tea Party. Moreover, these class group attitudes are associated with vote choice, yielding a net advantage for the Democrats; this pattern extends beyond the present historical moment, preceding the “Great Recession” and Occupy Wall Street.

The experiment demonstrates that at least in the case of sympathy for the poor, the Democratic advantage is not inevitable. Candidates who help the poor are more popular than candidates who hurt the poor, and sympathy for the poor moderates this effect – these patterns extend to both Democratic and Republican candidates. Moreover, these results cannot be explained away by respondent partisanship, ideology, the “help/hurt” terminology employed in the experiment, or social desirability pressures. The findings suggest that sympathy for the poor is a powerful force shaping candidate evaluations; furthermore, both Democratic and Republican candidates have the potential to activate sympathy for the poor to their benefit.

Sympathy for the poor and resentment of the rich, then, are powerful forces that underpin not only opinion about policy but also evaluations of candidates for public office. In the final chapter, I return to the broad questions motivating this dissertation: how do Americans feel about economic inequality and government-led downward redistribution?

Table 6.1. Attitudes toward the Rich and Poor and Evaluations of Political Entities

YouGov-Polimetrix Study

	Obama	Romney	Democrats	Republicans
Sympathy for the Poor	0.23*** (0.06)	-0.05 (0.06)	0.18*** (0.05)	-0.07 (0.05)
Resentment of the Rich	0.16** (0.07)	-0.21*** (0.06)	0.09 (0.06)	-0.17*** (0.06)
Party ID (Rep.)	-0.57*** (0.05)	0.38*** (0.04)	-0.57*** (0.04)	0.40*** (0.04)
Ideology (Cons.)	-0.31*** (0.06)	0.38*** (0.05)	-0.26*** (0.05)	0.26*** (0.05)
Neg. Black Stereotypes	-0.12 (0.09)	0.16** (0.08)	0.04 (0.08)	0.08 (0.07)
Constant	0.80*** (0.09)	-0.04 (0.08)	0.78*** (0.07)	0.11 (0.07)
N	698	714	714	727
R-squared	0.59	0.49	0.61	0.46

Mechanical Turk Study

	Tea Party	Occupy Wall Street
Sympathy for the Poor	-0.06** (0.03)	0.07** (0.03)
Resentment of the Rich	-0.02 (0.03)	0.20*** (0.03)
Party ID (Rep)	0.23*** (0.04)	-0.11*** (0.04)
Ideology (Cons)	0.21*** (0.04)	0.00 (0.04)
Limited Government	0.09*** (0.02)	-0.06*** (0.02)
Neg. Black Stereotypes	0.05 (0.07)	0.10 (0.08)
Racial Resentment	0.17*** (0.02)	-0.05** (0.03)
Constant	0.07 (0.05)	0.67*** (0.05)
N	1,386	1,387
R-squared	0.37	0.33

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$; ordinary least squares regression coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses. All variables coded 0 to 1. Dependent variables are feeling thermometer scores (column heading). In the YouGov-Polimetrix analysis, coefficients on the following control variables are suppressed due to space limitations: age, gender, marital status, region, education, race, class identity. In the Mechanical Turk analyses, the suppressed coefficients are: gender, education, race, income, and labor force participation. In the YouGov-Polimetrix study, the analyses are weighted to approximate national representativeness.

Table 6.2. Class Attitudes, Presidential Candidate Evaluations, and Vote Choice Over Time

	<u>2004</u>		<u>2008</u>		<u>2012</u>	
	Dem./Rep. Therm. Differential	Dem. Vote Choice	Dem./Rep. Therm. Differential	Dem. Vote Choice	Dem./Rep. Therm. Differential	Dem. Vote Choice
Poor/Rich Thermometer Differential	0.17*** (0.06)	2.49* (1.35)	0.17*** (0.04)	0.42 (1.15)	0.13*** (0.05)	3.46** (1.49)
Party ID (Rep.)	-0.45*** (0.02)	-5.80*** (0.55)	-0.41*** (0.02)	-5.87*** (0.42)	-0.57*** (0.02)	-7.10*** (0.69)
Age	-0.07** (0.03)	-0.29 (0.68)	-0.09*** (0.02)	-1.02** (0.48)	-0.06** (0.03)	-0.35 (0.54)
Education	0.06** (0.03)	0.38 (0.59)	-0.05 (0.04)	-2.09** (0.87)	-0.00 (0.02)	1.02* (0.58)
Male	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.30 (0.29)	0.00 (0.01)	-0.11 (0.23)	-0.01 (0.01)	0.16 (0.30)
South	-0.04*** (0.01)	-0.11 (0.33)	-0.03*** (0.01)	-0.52** (0.22)	-0.00 (0.01)	0.48 (0.30)
Income	0.04 (0.03)	0.05 (0.56)	0.02 (0.02)	0.33 (0.46)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.37 (0.59)
Married	-0.03** (0.01)	0.21 (0.30)	-0.02** (0.01)	-0.47** (0.21)	-0.02 (0.01)	-0.60** (0.30)
White	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.80** (0.36)	-0.04*** (0.01)	-1.23*** (0.22)	-0.03** (0.01)	-0.83*** (0.29)
Racial Attitudes	-0.19** (0.08)	-3.96** (1.59)	-0.27*** (0.05)	-3.92*** (1.38)	-0.11** (0.05)	-2.70** (1.32)
Economy Worse	0.23*** (0.03)	3.23*** (0.62)	0.09*** (0.03)	0.78 (0.66)	-0.09*** (0.02)	-1.51*** (0.53)
Constant	0.61*** (0.06)	2.27* (1.29)	0.81*** (0.05)	7.65*** (1.38)	0.93*** (0.05)	4.33*** (1.29)
N	1,049	855	2,028	1,612	1456	1062
R-squared/F-stat	0.62	14.07	0.54	23.79	0.64	14.07

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$; cell entries are regression coefficients; standard errors are in parentheses.

Column heading indicates the dependent variables: "Dem./Rep. Therm. Differential" indicates that the dependent variable is coded as follows: the feeling thermometer score for the Republican presidential candidate is subtracted from the feeling thermometer score for the Democratic presidential candidate; ordinary least squares regressions are used to estimate models with these dependent variables. "Dem. Vote Choice" indicates that the dependent variable is "1" if the respondent reported voting for the Democratic candidate, "0" if the respondent reported voting for the Republican candidate. All variables coded 0 to 1. Data are from American National Election Studies time series surveys.

Figure 6.1 Experimental Design

Figure 6.1a. Conditions

	No party cue	Democrat	Republican
Helped poor	X	X	X
Hurt poor	X	X	X
Helped district	X	--	--
Hurt district	X	--	--

The experiment is not fully factorial; those conditions that are included in the survey are marked with an "X."

Figure 6.1b. Sample Text

Help Poor/Republican Condition

Would Bob Taylor help the poor in our district?

Bob Taylor is a member of his state's House of Representatives who is planning to run for the United States Congress in 2014. A member of the Republican Party, and a practicing attorney, Taylor describes himself as a family man: he has two daughters.

While in the state legislature, Taylor's initiatives were often designed to increase government aid to the poor, attracting both praise and criticism.

Hurt Poor/Non-Partisan Condition

Would Bob Taylor hurt the poor in our district?

Bob Taylor is a member of his state's House of Representatives who is planning to run for the United States Congress in 2014. A practicing attorney, Taylor describes himself as a family man: he has two daughters.

While in the state legislature, Taylor's initiatives were often designed to decrease government aid to the poor, attracting both praise and criticism.

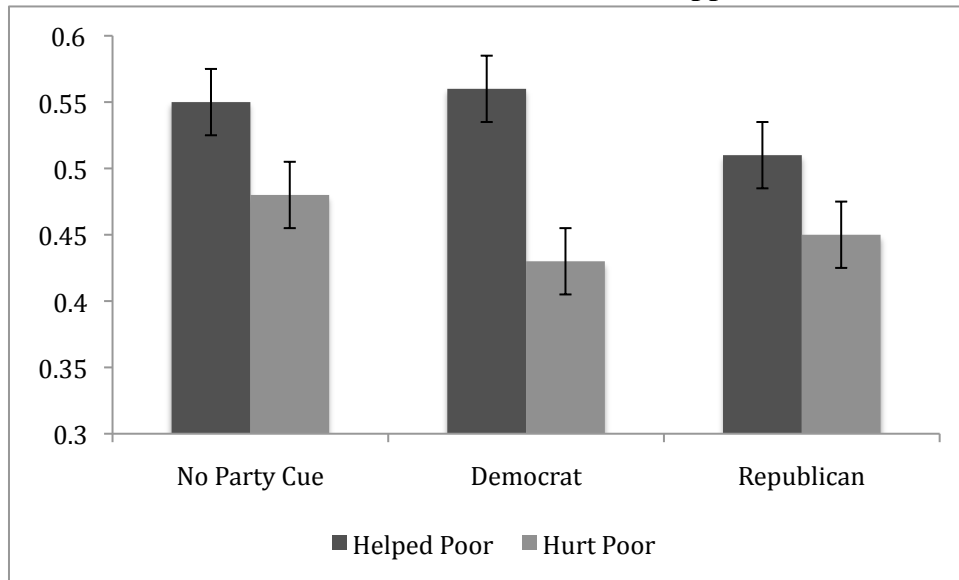
Help District/Non-Partisan Condition

Would Bob Taylor help our district?

Bob Taylor is a member of his state's House of Representatives who is planning to run for the United States Congress in 2014. A practicing attorney, Taylor describes himself as a family man: he has two daughters.

While in the state legislature, Taylor's initiatives attracted both praise and criticism.

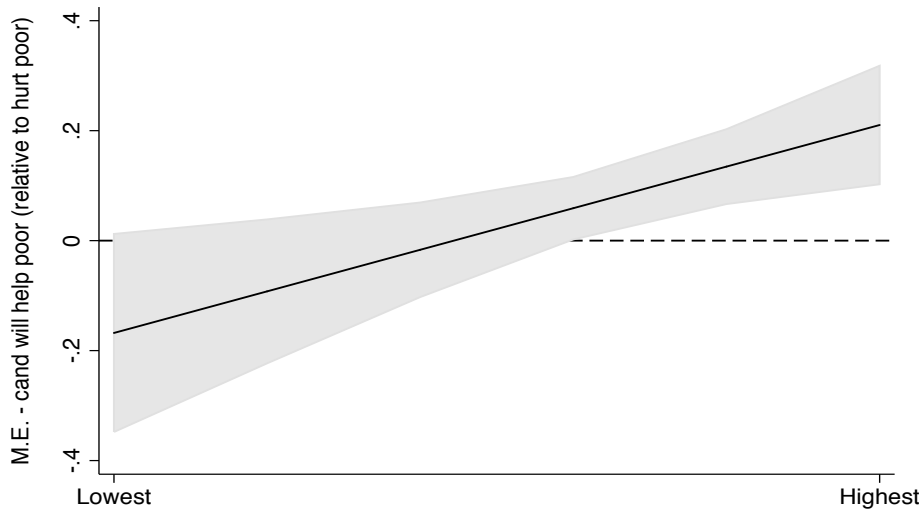
Figure 6.2. Effects of Candidate's Record on Mean Support for the Candidate



Support for the Congressional candidate (coded from 0 to 1) is on the y-axis. Regardless of the candidate's party, support for the candidate is higher if the candidate's record includes initiatives designed to help the poor.

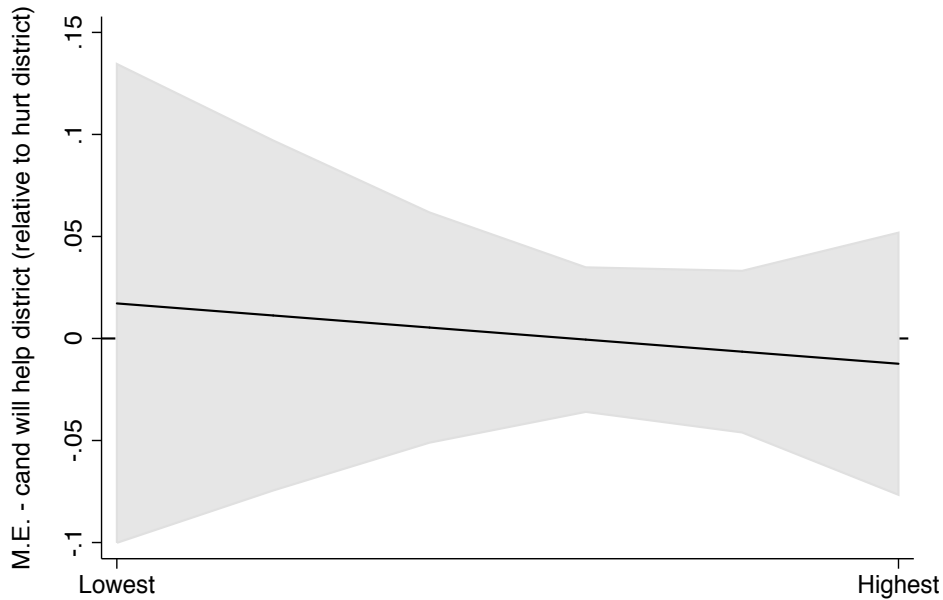
Figure 6.3 Marginal Effect of Candidate's Record on Support for the Candidate, by Sympathy for the Poor (Candidate is non-Partisan)

Figure 6.3a. Marginal Effect of Candidate Helping the Poor (See Appendix 6.2 for the table of coefficient estimates.)



Sympathy for the Poor
 n = 204; 90% confidence intervals shown; all variables coded from 0 to 1

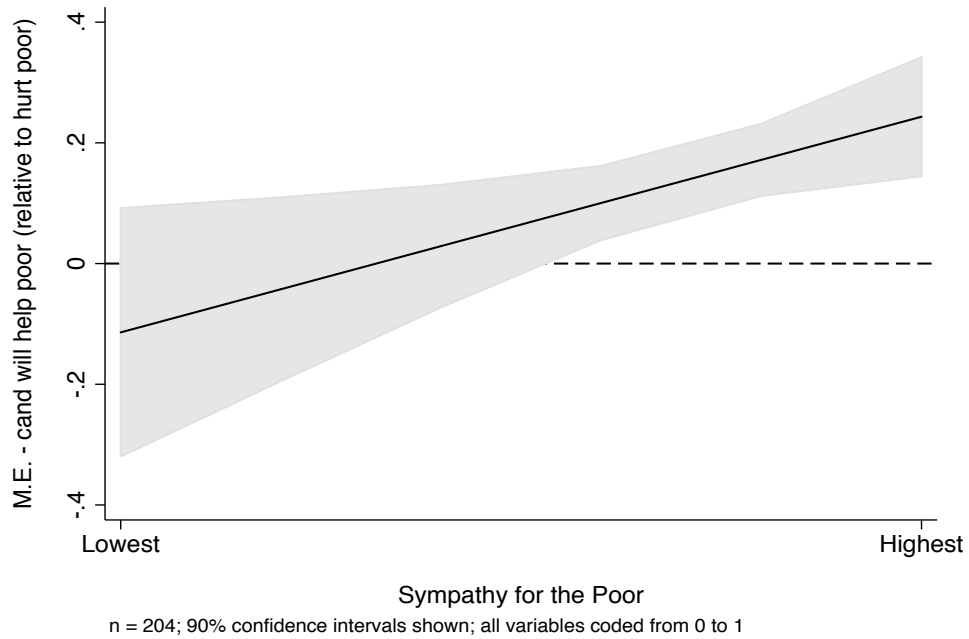
Figure 6.3b. Marginal Effect of Candidate Helping the District (See Appendix 6.3 for the table of coefficient estimates.)



Sympathy for the Poor
 n = 184; 90% confidence intervals shown; all variables coded from 0 to 1

Figure 6.4. Marginal Effect of Candidate's Record on Support for the Candidate, by Sympathy for the Poor (Candidate is Partisan)

*Figure 6.4a. Candidate is a Democrat
(See Appendix 6.4 for the table of coefficient estimates.)*



*Figure 6.4b. Candidate is a Republican
(See Appendix 6.5 for the table of coefficient estimates.)*

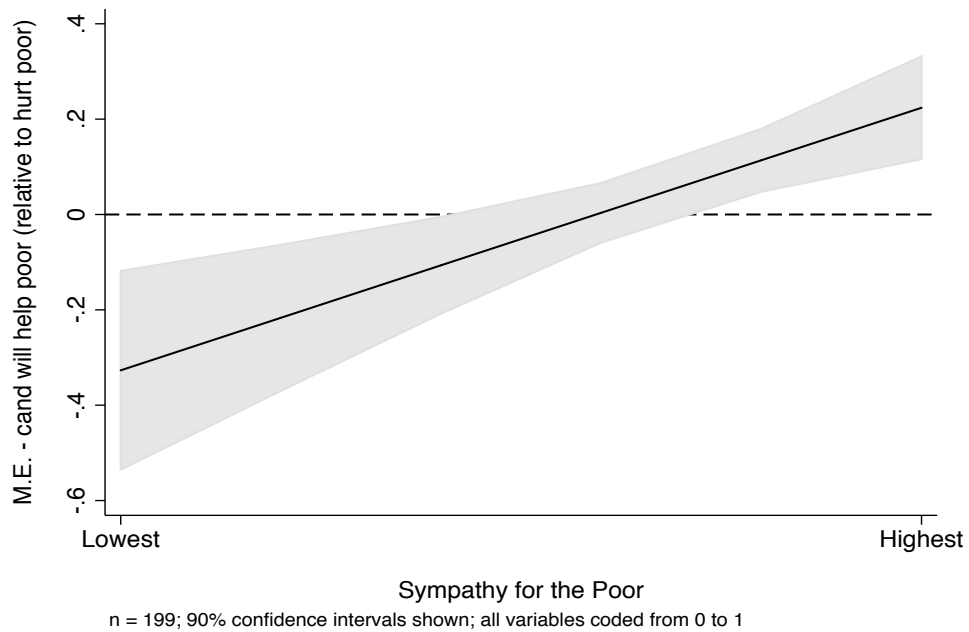
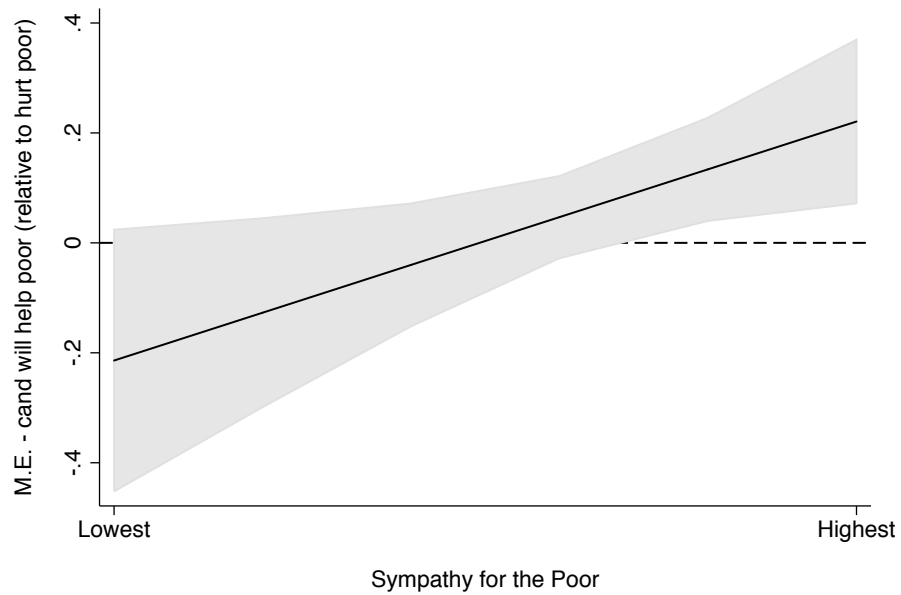


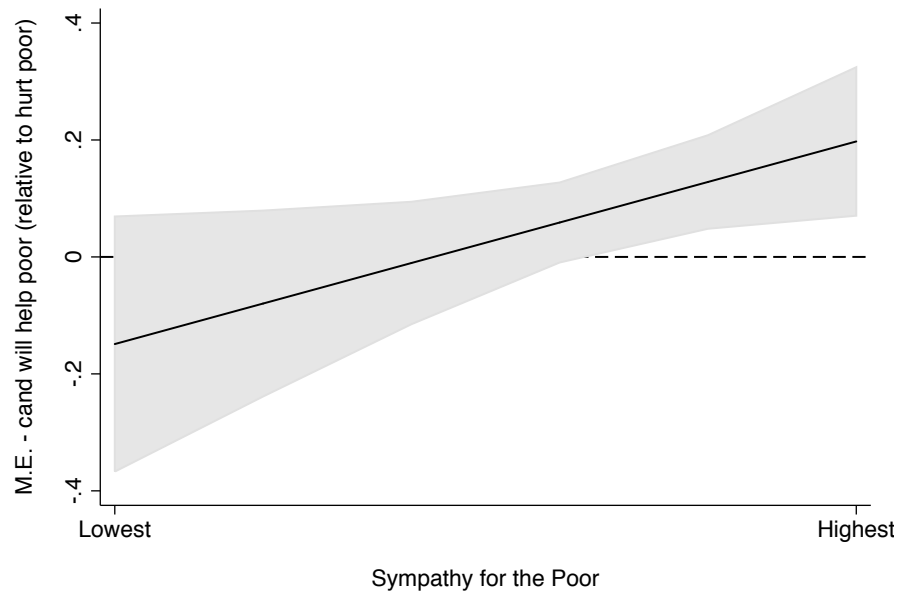
Figure 6.5. Marginal Effect of Candidate's Record on Support for the Candidate, by Sympathy for the Poor (Candidate is non-Partisan)

6.5a. Marginal Effect of Candidate Helping the Poor (High Self-Monitoring Respondents only)



n = 204; 90% confidence intervals shown; all variables coded from 0 to 1

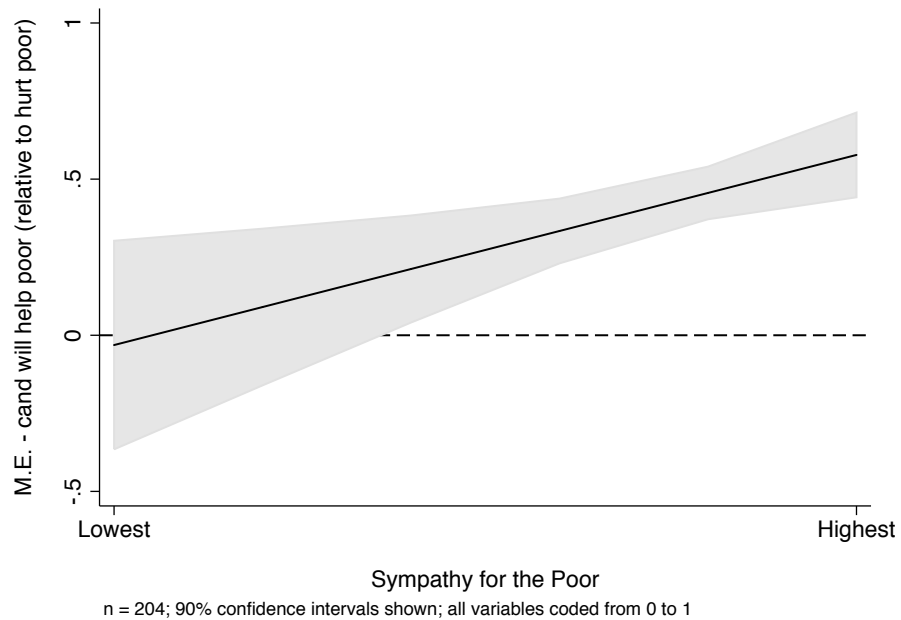
6.5b. Marginal Effect of Candidate Helping the Poor (Low Self-Monitoring Respondents only)



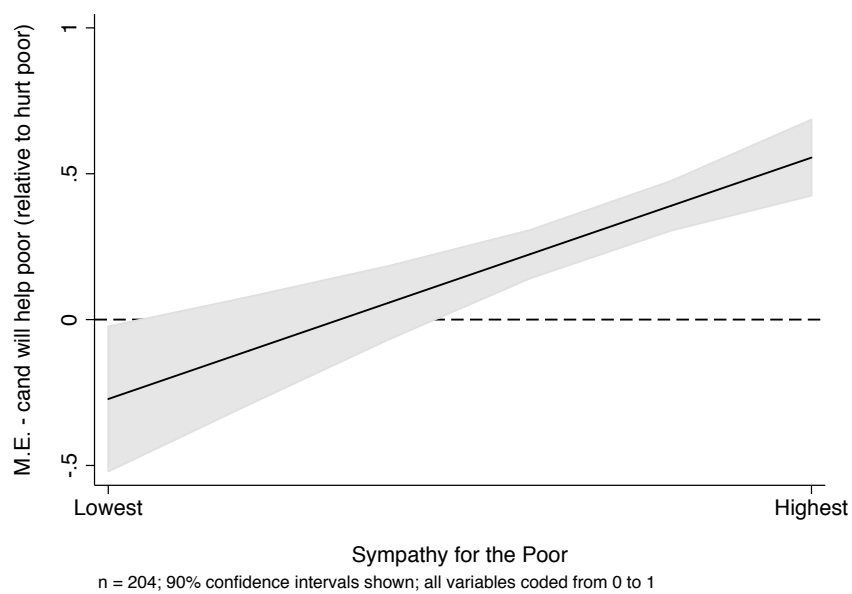
n = 204; 90% confidence intervals shown; all variables coded from 0 to 1

Figure 6.6. Marginal Effect of Candidate's Record on Support for the Candidate, by Sympathy for the Poor (Candidate is non-Partisan)

6.6a. Marginal Effect of Candidate Helping the Poor (Democratic Respondents only)



6.6b. Marginal Effect of Candidate Helping the Poor (Republican Respondents only)



Appendix 6.1. Experimental Conditions and Responses to Class Attitude Questions

	Sympathy for the Poor	Resentment of the Rich
Hurt Poor – Non-Partisan	0.01 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.03)
Helped Poor – Democrat	0.03 (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)
Hurt Poor – Democrat	0.01 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.03)
Helped Poor – Republican	-0.02 (0.03)	0.01 (0.03)
Hurt Poor – Republican	-0.05 (0.03)	-0.03 (0.03)
Helped District – Non-Partisan	0.02 (0.03)	0.04 (0.03)
Hurt District – Non-Partisan	-0.05 (0.03)	0.01 (0.03)
Constant	0.68*** (0.02)	0.29*** (0.02)
N	796	770
R-squared	0.02	0.01

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$; ordinary least squares regression coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses. All variables coded 0 to 1. Column headings identify the dependent variables. Omitted category is Candidate Helped Poor – Non-Partisan Condition. YouGov-Polimetrix study; analyses are unweighted (results are robust to weighting).

**Appendix 6.2 Experimental Condition and Support for the Candidate,
by Sympathy for the Poor**

Candidate is Non-Partisan

Variables	Coefficients
Help Poor Condition	0.39*** (0.15)
Sympathy for the Poor	-0.15 (0.11)
Help Poor Condition X Sympathy for the Poor	0.38** (0.16)
Party ID (Rep.)	0.15* (0.09)
Help Poor Condition X Party ID	-0.48*** (0.12)
Ideology (Cons.)	0.44*** (0.10)
Help Poor Condition X Ideology	-0.59*** (0.15)
Constant	0.24** (0.10)
N	204
R-squared	0.38

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$; ordinary least squares regression coefficients (results are robust to ordered logit specification). Standard errors in parentheses. All variables coded 0 to 1. The dependent variable is support for the candidate. YouGov-Polimetrix study; analyses are unweighted (results are robust to weighting). Results are substantively identical when additional control variables are included (see Table 6.1 notes for the list) and when those identifying as “poor” are excluded.

**Appendix 6.3 Experimental Condition and Support for the Candidate,
by Sympathy for the Poor**

Candidate is Non-Partisan

Variables	Coefficients
Help District Condition	-0.00 (0.09)
Sympathy for the Poor	-0.03 (0.07)
Help District Condition X Sympathy for the Poor	-0.03 (0.10)
Party ID (Rep.)	-0.09 (0.05)
Help District Condition X Party ID	0.06 (0.08)
Ideology (Cons.)	0.08 (0.06)
Help District Condition X Ideology	-0.01 (0.08)
Constant	0.55*** (0.07)
N	184
R-squared	0.03

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$; ordinary least squares regression coefficients (results are robust to ordered logit specification). Standard errors in parentheses. All variables coded 0 to 1. The dependent variable is support for the candidate. YouGov-Polimetrix study; analyses are unweighted (results are robust to weighting). Results are substantively identical when additional control variables are included (see Table 6.1 notes for the list) and when those identifying as “poor” are excluded.

**Appendix 6.4 Experimental Condition and Support for the Candidate,
by Sympathy for the Poor**

Candidate is a Democrat

Variables	Coefficients
Help Poor Condition	0.46*** (0.16)
Sympathy for the Poor	-0.12 (0.11)
Help Poor Condition X Sympathy for the Poor	0.36** (0.17)
Party ID (Rep.)	0.16* (0.08)
Help Poor Condition X Party ID	-0.59*** (0.14)
Ideology (Cons.)	0.13 (0.10)
Help Poor Condition X Ideology	-0.62*** (0.15)
Constant	0.37*** (0.10)
N	204
R-squared	0.51

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$; ordinary least squares regression coefficients (results are robust to ordered logit specification). Standard errors in parentheses. All variables coded 0 to 1. The dependent variable is support for the candidate. YouGov-Polimetrix study; analyses are unweighted (results are robust to weighting). Results are substantively identical when additional control variables are included (see Table 6.1 notes for the list) and when those identifying as “poor” are excluded.

**Appendix 6.5 Experimental Condition and Support for the Candidate,
by Sympathy for the Poor**

Candidate is a Republican

Variables	Coefficients
Help Poor Condition	-0.04 (0.17)
Sympathy for the Poor	-0.36*** (0.12)
Help Poor Condition X Sympathy for the Poor	0.55*** (0.18)
Party ID (Rep.)	0.33*** (0.11)
Help Poor Condition X Party ID	-0.11 (0.15)
Ideology (Cons.)	0.33*** (0.12)
Help Poor Condition X Ideology	-0.46*** (0.16)
Constant	0.39*** (0.12)
N	199
R-squared	0.37

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$; ordinary least squares regression coefficients (results are robust to ordered logit specification). Standard errors in parentheses. All variables coded 0 to 1. The dependent variable is support for the candidate. YouGov-Polimetrix study; analyses are unweighted (results are robust to weighting). Results are substantively identical when additional control variables are included (see Table 6.1 notes for the list) and when those identifying as “poor” are excluded.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion: Revisiting American Reactions to Economic Inequality

The research presented in this dissertation challenges conventional accounts of American opinion in an age of entrenched – and widening – economic inequality. While some scholars argue that Americans are tolerant of or indifferent to inequality, this argument is often based on evidence that rarely meets ordinary individuals on their own terms. That is, rather than using the concepts that Americans themselves use to make sense of economic issues in politics, existing survey research often relies on complicated questions referring to abstract concepts more familiar to intellectual elites than members of the mass public, such as “inequality” and “redistribution.” Another strand of research examines responses to survey questions about policies: but this approach is also insufficient, as it is unclear from these analyses *why* Americans support or oppose a given policy.

Accordingly, I take a different approach, examining open-ended responses of survey questions in order to discover the conceptual toolkit (Swidler 1986) Americans bring to bear on their considerations of economic issues in the political arena. As expected, I find that discussion of “inequality” and “redistribution” is rare. That said, two class groups at the extremes of the economic distribution, the poor and the rich, are frequently mentioned, suggesting that attitudes toward these groups inform the opinion and political behavior of Americans.

I therefore develop and validate measures of attitudes toward these two class groups; the results challenge the common account of indifference to economic inequality. On balance,

Americans view the poor to have too little and therefore view them with sympathy, while the rich are perceived to have too much and are therefore viewed with resentment. Furthermore, positive views of the poor and negative views of the rich are not limited to the current historical moment in the aftermath of the Great Recession and Occupy Wall Street, dating back at least until 1994. Furthermore, sympathy for the poor and resentment of the rich, despite a non-trivial negative correlation with self-identification as Republican and conservative, exist throughout the social strata – they are widespread attitudes held by the old and the young, men and women, throughout all regions of the country.

I also find that these attitudes influence American policy opinion – as long as the beneficiaries and victims of the policy are clear. Powerful associations between these class group attitudes and opinion about a variety of public policies persist, across separate datasets, even after controls for economic self-interest, partisanship and ideology, core values such as egalitarianism and humanitarianism, and demographics. Critically, such associations are *not* evident for those policies for which most Americans do not know the distributive consequences, such as the estate tax, the earned income tax credit, the home mortgage interest deduction, and the retirement savings deduction. However, among those Americans who *are* aware that only the very richest households are affected by the estate tax, resentment of the rich is brought to bear on their opinions about the estate tax, increasing support for the tax. Furthermore, informing individuals about the distributive consequences of the earned income tax credit, the home mortgage interest deduction, and the retirement savings deduction shifts public opinion in favor of the first policy and in opposition to the other two – activating sympathy for the poor and

resentment of the rich, and making the public more supportive of downward redistribution and less supportive of upward redistribution.

Finally, I find that sympathy for the poor and resentment of the rich influence Americans' choices of candidates for public office. First, warmth toward the poor relative to the rich is associated with preference for the Democratic presidential candidate in 2004 and 2012 (although not in 2008) in the nationally representative data of the American National Election Time Series. Second, an original experiment finds that a candidate who is likely to help the poor is actually *more popular* – contrary to the claims of previous scholarship – than an otherwise identical candidate who is likely to hurt the poor. This is true regardless of whether the candidate is a Democrat, a Republican, or non-partisan; it is true for both Democratic and Republican respondents; and it is those high on sympathy for the poor that drive this effect, even after controlling for the interaction of experimental condition and ideological self-identification. Critically, it is not merely the “help/hurt” terminology that is driving these effects, as they are absent in additional conditions in which the candidate is likely to help or hurt the district (rather than the poor). Finally, these results cannot be easily written off as an artifact of social desirability pressures – they are nearly identical among those who are and those who are not likely to modify their responses in accordance with social norms.

The findings of this project raise an important question about the politics of economic inequality in the contemporary United States. If politics determines “who gets what, when and how” (Lasswell 1936), it is striking that although a majority of the public believes that the poor have less than they deserve while the rich have more, many government activities over the past few decades have exacerbated economic inequality (Bartels 2008; Mettler 2011). What are we to

make of this apparent disconnect between public opinion and political outcomes, particularly given that many Americans bring their class attitudes to bear on their evaluations of political entities? One possibility is that wealthy Americans are able to secure disproportionate representation, locking in their superior economic position (Bartels 2008; Gilens 2012; Jacobs and Skocpol 2005). This may be true under Democratic as well as Republican presidential administrations: one recent study concludes that 93% of the income gains in the economic recovery in 2010 went to the top 1% of earners (Saez 2012).

The results also reinforce Hochschild and Weaver's (2007) contention that "American politics and scholarship are impoverished by paying too little attention to class." To be sure, existing scholarship has made important inroads, particularly in examining the effects of socioeconomic status on participation (e.g., Rosenstone and Hansen 1993) or voting behavior (e.g., Bartels 2006). I shift the focus from class *position* to *attitudes* about class groups; this approach yields the discovery that class plays a more important role in American politics than was previously evident.

Much work remains to be done. Do certain types of political communication activate, or suppress, the connection between attitudes toward these class groups and political preferences? Have elite appeals to sympathy for the poor or resentment of the rich waxed and waned along with changes in the economic distribution in American history? What types of people are likely to feel sympathy for the poor and resentment of the rich, and what conditions change the extent to which one views class groups in this way? Future scholarship might examine these questions.

Future research might also examine attitudes toward subgroups of the poor and the rich; while the present project shows that the poor are viewed sympathetically, previous research

shows that certain subgroups of the poor, such as “welfare recipients,” are viewed unfavorably, in part due to whites’ racial prejudice (e.g., Gilens 1999). It is possible that many individuals think of the rich in meaningful subcategories as well; perhaps some rich are considered “vulture capitalists” while others are “job creators.” Furthermore, this project has exclusively examined “outgroup” class attitudes; that is, the vast majority of Americans consider themselves to be neither poor nor rich. Future research might do more to examine class as an ingroup attitude; to what extent do “middle class” and “working class” constitute meaningful identities? Is there such a thing as “middle class consciousness,” and does it shape public opinion or political behavior? As economic inequality in the United States proceeds apace, much more work needs to be done if scholars are to come to terms with the political consequences of attitudes toward class groups.

The findings of this project also open questions for the study of group attitudes more generally. The dominant paradigm in this approach to American political behavior has been to focus on outgroup prejudice: yet in the domain of class we see that one outgroup, the rich, is viewed more negatively than another outgroup, the poor, with important political consequences. Are other high-status groups viewed with resentment? For example, do some women resent men due to continuing gender discrimination, and do some blacks resent whites due to ongoing racial inequality? If so, what are the political consequences of these attitudes? Sympathy for additional low-status groups, such as the disabled or racial minorities, might also be a potent political force. In order to come to terms with the power of group attitudes, we need to accept – and study – the wide variety of group attitudes that exist.

Finally, the manuscript contributes to a broader question in the study of democratic politics: the question of why individuals behave as they do in the political arena. Some scholars

portray individuals as self-interested utility maximizers, while others characterize individuals as ideologues weighting competing considerations of principle. This research contributes to an alternative account: that public opinion and political behavior are dominated by attitudes toward social groups. Previous scholarship in this “group-centric” tradition has yielded important findings, and the results presented in this dissertation expand this account of mass politics considerably, drawing attention to a critical but often-overlooked factor: attitudes about class groups. When citizens choose among candidates for public office, they think: who is getting what? Do they deserve it? Americans’ policy opinions and votes indicate that on balance, they believe the poor to have too little, and the rich too much.

References

Alesina, Alberto, Rafael Di Tella, and Robert MacCulloch. 2004. "Inequality and Happiness: Are Europeans and Americans Different?" *Journal of Public Economics* 88: 2009-2042.

Alesina, Alberto, and Edward L. Glaeser. 2004. *Fighting Poverty in the U.S. and Europe: A World of Difference*. Oxford University Press.

Baker, R., S.J. Blumberg, J.M. Brick, M.P. Couper, M. Courtright, J.M. Dennis, D. Dillman, M.R. Frankel, P. Garland, R.M. Grovers, C. Kennedy, J. Krosnick, and P.J. Lavrakas. Research Synthesis: AAPOR Report on Online Panels. 2010. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 74: 711-781.

Barnes, Lucy. "The Facts about Tax Progressivity." *The Monkey Cage*. Feb. 16, 2012. Last accessed at: <http://themonkeycage.org/blog/2012/02/16/the-facts-about-tax-progressivity/>

Bartels, Larry M. 2006. "What's the Matter with What's the Matter with Kansas?" *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 1: 201-26.

Bartels, Larry M. 2008. *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Batson, C. D. 1991. *The altruism question: Toward a social-psychological answer*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Batson, C. Daniel. 2011. *Altruism in Humans*. Oxford University Press.

Benabou, Roland and Efe A. Ok. 2001. "Social Mobility and the Demand for Redistribution: The POUM Hypothesis." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 16: 447-87.

Ben-Ze'ev, A. 2000. *The Subtlety of Emotions*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Berinsky, Adam J. 2004. "Can We Talk? Self-Presentation and the Survey Response." *Political Psychology* 25: 643-659.

Berinsky, Adam J., Gregory A. Huber, and Gabriel S. Lenz. 2012. "Evaluating Online Markets for Experimental Research: Amazon.com's Mechanical Turk." *Political Analysis* 20: 351-368.

Berinsky, Adam J., and Howard Lavine. 2012. "Self-Monitoring and Political Attitudes." In Alrich, John H., and Kathleen M. McGraw, Eds. Princeton University Press.

Bobo, Lawrence, and Vincent L. Hutchings. 1996. "Perceptions of Racial Group Competition: Extending Blumer's Theory of Group Position to a Multiracial Social Context." *American Sociological Review* 61(6): 951-972.

Bowles, Samuel, Herbert Gintis, and Melissa Osborne Groves, eds. *Unequal chances: Family background and economic success*. Princeton University Press, 2009.

Brady, Henry, 1988, The Perils of Survey Research: Interpersonally Incomparable Responses." *Political Methodology* 11: 269-291.

Brambor, Thomas, Clark, William Roberts, and Matt Golder. 2006. "Understanding Interaction Models: Improving Empirical Analyses." *Political Analysis* 14: 63-82.

Brooks, Clem, and Jeff Manza. 2007. *Why Welfare States Persist: The Importance of Public Opinion in Democracies*. University of Chicago Press.

Burns, Nancy, and Katherine Gallagher. 2010. "Public Opinion on Gender Issues: The Politics of Equity and Roles." *Annual Review of Political Science* 13: 425-443.

Campbell, Andrea Louise. *How policies make citizens: Senior political activism and the American welfare state*. Princeton University Press, 2003.

Campbell, Donald T., and Donald W. Fiske. 1959. "Convergent and Discriminant Validation by the Multitrait-Multimethod Matrix." *Psychological Bulletin* 56: 81-105.

Charities Aid Foundation. 2011. "World Giving Index 2011: A Global View of Giving Trends."

Last accessed at: http://www.cafonline.org/pdf/World_Giving_Index_2011_191211.pdf

Chong, Dennis. 1993. "How People Think, Reason, and Feel About Rights and Liberties."

American Journal of Political Science 37: 867-899.

Chong, Dennis, and Jamie Druckman. 2007. "Framing Public Opinion in Competitive

Democracies." *American Political Science Review* 101: 637-655.

Cikara, Mina, and Susan T. Fiske. 2012. "Stereotypes and Schadenfreude: Affective and

Physiological Markers of Pleasure at Outgroup Misfortunes." *Social Psychological and*

Personality Science 3: 63-71.

Conover, Pamela J. 1988. "The Role of Social Groups in Political Thinking." *British Journal of*

Political Science 18: 51-76.

Converse, Philip E. (1964.) "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics." In *Ideology and*

Discontent, David Apter, ed. New York: The Free Press.

Cook, Fay Lomax, and Edith J. Barrett. 1992. *Support for the American Welfare State: The*

Views of Congress and the Public. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Craemer, Thomas. 2008. "Nonconscious Feelings of Closeness Toward African-Americans and Support for Pro-Black Policies." *Political Psychology* 29: 407-436.

Cuddy, Amy C., Susan T. Fiske, and Peter Glick. 2008. "Warmth and Competence as Universal Dimensions of Social Perception: The Stereotype Content Model and the BIAS Map." *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* 40: 62-149.

Dahl, Robert A. 1961. *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Davis, Mark H. 1994. *Empathy: A Social Psychological Approach*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, Inc.

Eagly, Alice Hendrikson, and Shelly Chaiken. 1993. *The Psychology of Attitudes*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers.

The Economist. "The Rich, the Poor, and the Growing Gap Between Them." June 17, 2006.

Feather, N.T., and Katherine Nairn. 2005. "Resentment, Envy, *Schadenfreude*, and Sympathy: Effects of Own and Other's Deserved and Undeserved Status." *Australian Journal of Psychology* 57: 87-102.

Feather, N.T., and Rebecca Sherman. 2002. "Envy, Resentment, Schadenfreude, and Sympathy: Reactions to Deserved and Undeserved Achievement and Subsequent Failure." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 7: 953-961.

Federico, Christopher M. 2004. "When do Welfare Attitudes Become Racialized? The Paradoxical Effects of Education." *American Journal of Political Science* 48: 374-391.

Feldman, Stanley. 1983. "Economic Individualism and American Public Opinion." *American Politics Research* 11: 3-29.

Feldman, Stanley. 1988. "Structure and Consistency in Public Opinion: The Role of Core Beliefs and Values." *American Journal of Political Science* 31: 416-440.

Feldman, Stanley, and Marco R. Steenbergen. 2001. "The Humanitarian Foundation of Support for Social Welfare." *American Journal of Political Science* 45: 658-677.

Feldman, Stanley, and John Zaller. 1992. "The Political Culture of Ambivalence: Ideological Responses to the Welfare State." *American Journal of Political Science* 36: 268-307.

Fiske, Susan T., Amy C. Cuddy, Peter Glick, and Jun Xu. 2002. "A Model of (Often Mixed) Stereotype Content: Competence and Warmth Respectively Follow From Perceived Status and Competition." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 82: 878-902.

Frank, Thomas. 2012. *Pity the Billionaire: The Hard-Times Swindle and the Unlikely Comeback of the Right*. New York, NY: Metropolitan Books.

Fraser, Nancy. 1992. "Sex, Lies, and the Public Sphere: Some Reflections on the Confirmation of Clarence Thomas." *Critical Inquiry* 18: 595-612.

Gans, Herbert J. 1995. *The War Against the Poor: The Underclass and Antipoverty Policy*. New York, NY: BasicBooks.

Gay, Claudine, and Jennifer Hochschild. "Is Racial Linked Fate Unique? Comparing Race, Ethnicity, Class, Gender, and Religion." Presented at the 2020 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association.

Gilens, Martin. 1999. *Why Americans Hate Welfare*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Gilens, Martin. 2012. *Affluence and Influence: Economic Inequality and Political Power in America*. Princeton University Press.

Grant, J. Tobin, and Thomas J. Rudolph. 2003. "Value conflict, group affect, and the issue of campaign finance." *American Journal of Political Science* 47: 453-469.

Handler, Joel F., and Yeheskel Hasenfeld. 1991. *The Moral Construction of Poverty*. Sage Publications.

Handler, Joel F., and Ellen Jane Hollingsworth. 1971. *The "Deserving Poor": A Study of Welfare Administration*. Markham Publishing Company.

Herbert, Bob. "Obama, Romney both shy away from the plight of poor kids." *NBC News: The Grio*. May 21, 2012. Last accessed on March 16, 2013 at:
<http://thegrio.com/2012/05/21/obama-romney-both-shy-away-from-the-plight-of-poor-kids/>

Hochschild, Jennifer L. 1981. *What's Fair? American Beliefs about Distributive Justice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Hochschild, Jennifer L., and Vesla Weaver. 2007. "Policies of Racial Classification and the Politics of Racial Inequality." In: *Remaking America: Democracy and Public Policy in an Age of Inequality* (Eds. Joe Soss, Jacob Hacker, and Suzanne Mettler), pgs. 159-182. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Hoffman, M.L. 1984. "Interaction of Affect and Cognition in Empathy." In C.E. Izard, J. Kagan, and R. B. Zajonc (Eds.), *Emotions, Cognition, and Behavior*, pgs. 103-131. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hoffman, M.L. 1987. "The Contribution of Empathy to Justice and Moral Judgment." In N. Eisenberg and J. Strayer (Eds.), *Empathy and its Development*, pgs. 47-80. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Howard, Christopher. *The Hidden Welfare State*. 1997. Princeton University Press.

Hurwitz, Jon, and Mark Peffley. 2005. "Explaining the Great Racial Divide." *Journal of Politics* 67(3): 762-783.

Hutchings, Vincent L., and Nicholas A. Valentino. 2004. "The Centrality of Race in American Politics." *Annual Review of Political Science* 7: 383-408.

Kinder, Donald R., and Corrine M. McConaughy. 2006. "Military Triumph, Racial Transcendence, and Colin Powell." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 70: 139-165.

Jackman, Mary R. 1994. *The Velvet Glove: Paternalism and Conflict in Gender, Class, and Race Relations*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Jackman, Mary R., and Robert W. Jackman. 1983. *Class Awareness in the United States*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.

Jacobs, Lawrence R., and Theda Skocpol. 2005. *Inequality and American Democracy: What We Know and What We Need to Learn*. New York, New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Johnson, Sarah E., Jennifer A. Richeson, and Eli J. Finkel. "Middle Class and Marginal? Socioeconomic Status, Stigma, and Self-Regulation at an Elite University." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 100: 838-852.

Jost, J. T., & Banaji, M. R. (1994). The role of stereotyping in system-justification and the production of false consciousness. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 33, 1-27.

Jost, John T., Mahzarin R. Banaji, and Brian A. Nosek. 2004. "A Decade of System Justification Theory: Accumulated Evidence of Conscious and Unconscious Bolstering of the Status Quo." *Political Psychology* 25(6): 881-919.

Katz, Michael B. 1989. *The Undeserving Poor: from the War on Poverty to the War on Welfare*. New York, NY: Random House, Inc.

Kelly, Nathan J. 2011. *The Politics of Income Inequality in the United States*. Cambridge University Press.

Kendall, Diana. 2011. *Framing Class: Media Representations of Wealth and Poverty in America*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Kinder, Donald R. 2003. "Communication and Politics in the Age of Information." In *Handbook of Political Psychology*, eds. David O. Sears, Leonie Huddy, and Robert L. Jervis, pgs. 357-393. Oxford University Press.

Kinder, Donald R., and Allison Dale-Riddle. 2011. *The End of Race? Obama, 2008, and Racial Politics in America*. Yale University Press.

Kinder, Donald R. and Nathan P. Kalmoe. "The Nature of Ideological Identification in Mass Publics Part III: Consequences." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association: Chicago, Illinois, April 22, 2010.

Kinder, Donald R., and Cindy D. Kam. 2009. *Us Against Them: Ethnocentric Foundations of American Opinion*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Kinder, Donald R., and Thomas R. Palfrey. 1993. *Experimental Foundations of Political Science*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press.

Kinder, Donald R., and Lynn M. Sanders. 1996. *Divided by Color: Racial Politics and Democratic Ideals*. University of Chicago Press.

Kluegel, James R., and Eliot R. Smith. 1986. *Beliefs about Inequality: Americans' Views of What Is and What Ought to Be*. Piscataway, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

Kuklinski, J.H., Ellen Riggle, Victor Ottati, Norbert Schwarz, et al. 1991. "The cognitive and affective bases of political tolerance judgments." *American Journal of Political Science* 35: 1–27.

Lane, Robert E. 1962. *Political Ideology*. New York: Free Press.

Lasswell, Harold. 1936. *Politics: Who Gets What, When, How*. Whittlesey House.

Leach, Colin Wayne, and Russell Spears. 2008. "'A Vengefulness of the Impotent': The Pain of In-Group Inferiority and Schadenfreude Toward Successful Out-Groups." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 95: 1383-1396.

Lipset, Seymour Martin. 1981. *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics*, 2nd ed. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Manza, Jeff, and Clem Brooks. 2007. "Class and Politics." In Annette Lareau, Dalton Conley (Eds.), *Social Class: How Does It Work?* New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.

Markus, Gregory B. 2001. "American Individualism Reconsidered." In *Citizens and Politics*, Ed. James

H. Kuklinski. Cambridge University Press.

Mazzella, Ronald, and Alan Feingold. 1994. The Effects of Physical Attractiveness, Ethnicity, Socioeconomic Status, and Gender of Defendants and Victims on Judgments of Mock Jurors: A Meta-Analysis." *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 24: 1315-1344.

McCall, Leslie. "The Undeserving Rich: American Beliefs about Inequality, Opportunity, and Redistribution." Forthcoming at Cambridge University Press.

McCall, Leslie, and Lane Kenworthy. 2009. "Americans' Social Policy Preferences in the Era of Rising Inequality." *Perspectives on Politics* 7: 459-484.

McClosky, Herbert, and John Zaller. 1984. *The American Ethos: Public Attitudes toward Capitalism and Democracy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Meertens, Roel W., and Thomas F. Pettigrew. "Is subtle prejudice really prejudice?." *Public Opinion Quarterly* (1997).

Merton, Robert K., and Alice Kitt Rossi. 1950. "Contributions to the Theory of Reference Group Behavior." In Robert K. Merton and Paul F. Lazarsfeld, eds. *Continuities in Social Research*. New York: The Free Press, pgs. 40-105.

Mettler, Suzanne. 2011. *The Submerged State: How Invisible Government Policies Undermine American Democracy*. University of Chicago Press.

Miller, Arthur H., Patricia Gurin, Gerald Gurin, and Oksana Malanchuk. 1981. "Group Consciousness and Political Participation." *American Journal of Political Science* 25: 494-511.

Miller, Arthur H., Christopher Wlezien, and Anne Hildreth. 1991. "A Reference Group Theory of Partisan Coalitions." *Journal of Politics* 53: 1134-1149.

Nelson, Thomas E., and Donald R. Kinder. 1996. "Issue Frames and Group-Centrism in American Public Opinion." *Journal of Politics* 58: 1055-1078.

Newman, Katherine S., and Elisabeth S. Jacobs. 2010. *Who Cares? Public Ambivalence and New Deal Activism from the New Deal to the Second Gilded Age*. Princeton University Press.

Nisbet, Robert A. 1970. "The Decline and Fall of Social Class." In *The Logic of Social Hierarchies*, ed. Edward O. Laumann, Paul M. Siegel, and Robert W. Hodge, pgs. 570-574. Chicago: Markham.

Nussbaum, Martha. 2001. *Upheavals of Thought*. Cambridge University Press.

Pacheco, Julianna. "Thermostatic Policy Responsiveness in the American States." Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association in Toronto, Canada. Sept. 3-6, 2009.

Page, Benjamin I., and Lawrence R. Jacobs. 2009. *Class War? What Americans Really Think about Economic Inequality*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Page, Benjamin I., and Robert Y. Shapiro. 1992. *The Rational Public: Fifty Years of Trends in Americans' Policy Preferences*. University of Chicago Press.

Pakulski, Jan, and Malcolm Waters. 1996. *The Death of Class*. Sage Publishers.

Parrott, W. G. (1991). The emotional experiences of envy and jealousy. In P. Salovey (Ed.), *The psychology of envy and jealousy* (pp. 3-30). New York: Guilford.

Pasek, Josh, and Jon A. Krosnick. 2010. "Optimizing Survey Questionnaire Design in Political Science: Insights from Psychology." In *Oxford Handbook of American Elections and Political Behavior* (Leighley, Jan E., and J.C. Edwards, eds.). Oxford University Press, pgs. 27-50.

Petrocik, John R. 1996. "Issue ownership in presidential elections, with a 1980 case study." *American Journal of Political Science*: 825-850.

Piketty, Thomas. 1995. "Social Mobility and Redistributive Politics." *Quarterly Journal of*

Economics 110: 551-84.

Piston, Spencer. 2010. "How Explicit Racial Prejudice Hurt Obama in the 2008 Election."

Political Behavior 32: 431-451.

Polsby, Nelson W. 1980. *Community Power and Political Theory*, 2nd ed. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Prasad, Monica, and Yingying Deng. 2009. "Taxation and the Worlds of Welfare."

Socioeconomic Review 7(3): 431-457.

Rae, Douglas Whiting, and Douglas Yates. *Equalities*. Harvard University Press, 1981.

Rawls, J. 1971. *A theory of justice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Rivers, Douglas. 2006. "Sample Matching: Representative Sampling from Internet Panels."

Polimetrix White Paper Series.

Rosenstone, Steven J. and Hansen, John Mark. 1993. *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America*. Macmillan Publishing Company.

Schlozman, Kay Lehman, Sidney Verba, and Henry E. Brady. 2012. *The Unheavenly Chorus: Unequal Political Voice and the Broken Promise of American Democracy*. Princeton University Press.

Saez, Emmanuel. 2012. "Striking it Richer: The Evolution of Top Incomes in the United States (Updated with 2009 and 2010 Estimates)." Unpublished Manuscript.

Sidanius, Jim, and Felicia Pratto. 1999. *Social Dominance: An Intergroup Theory of Social Hierachy and Oppression*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Smith, R. H., Turner, T. J., Garonzik, R., Leach, C. W., Urch-Druskat, V., & Weston, C. M. 1996. Envy and *schadenfreude*. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 22, 158-168.

Smith, Tom W. 1987. "The Welfare State in Cross-National Perspective." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 51: 404-21.

Sniderman, Paul M., Richard A. Brody, and Philip Tetlock. 1991. *Reasoning and Choice: Explorations in Political Psychology*. Cambridge University Press.

Sniderman, Paul M., and Edward H. Stiglitz. (2008). "Race and the Moral Character of the Modern American Experience." *The Berkeley Electronic Press* 6(4): Article 1.

Soss, Joe, Jacob S. Hacker, and Suzanne Mettler. 2007. *Remaking America: Democracy and Public Policy in an Age of Inequality*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.

Spencer, Bettina, and Emanuele Castano. "Social Class is Dead, Long Live Social Class! Stereotype Threat among Low Socioeconomic Status Individuals." *Social Justice Research* 20: 418-432.

Sullivan, John L., James E. Piereson, and George E. Marcus. 1982. *Political Tolerance and American Democracy*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Sumner, William G. 1906. *Folkways: A Study of the Sociological Importance of Usages, Manners, Customs, Mores, and Morals*. New York: New American Library.

Svallfors, Stefan. 2004. *The Moral Economy of Class*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Swidler, A. 2001. *Talk of Love: How Culture Matters*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Tajfel, Henri. 1982. "Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations." *Annual Review of Psychology* 33:1-39.

Tesler, Michael, and David O. Sears. 2010. *Obama's Race: The 2008 Election and the Dream of a Post-Racial America*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Toi, Miho, and C. Daniel Batson. 1982. "More evidence that empathy is a source of altruistic motivation." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 43: 281-292.

U.S. Census Bureau. 2011. "The Research Supplemental Poverty Measure: 2010." Last accessed on March 27, 2011 at: <http://www.census.gov/prod/2011pubs/p60-241.pdf>

Vaish, Amrisha, Malinda Carpenter, and Michael Tomasello. "Sympathy through Affective Perspective Taking and its Relation to Prosocial Behavior in Toddlers." *Developmental Psychology* 45: 534-543.

Vavreck, Lynn and Douglas Rivers. 2008. "The 2006 Cooperative Congressional Election Study." *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion, and Policy*, November.

Wilensky, Harold L. 1970. "Class, Class Consciousness, and American Workers." In *American Society, Inc.*, ed. Maurice Zeitlin, pgs. 450-462. Chicago: Rand McNally.

Wolff, Edward N. 2010. "Recent Trends in Household Wealth in the United States: Rising Debt and the Middle-Class Squeeze—an Update to 2007." Working Paper No. 589: Levy Economics Institute of Bard College.