

How the Affluent Explain Inequality, & Why It Matters

Elizabeth Suhay
American University

Marko Klašnja
Georgetown University

Gonzalo Rivero
Westat

June 5, 2017

Abstract

As economic inequality continues to grow, how do Americans at the top explain inequality? Some researchers argue affluent individuals are especially likely to attribute inequality to factors that justify income and wealth differences, for example, by arguing that inequality is rooted “within the person” as opposed to “within society.” Others argue the affluent are not unique in this regard. This debate remains unresolved because the affluent represent a “hard to reach” population. We examine the relationship between affluence and hierarchy-affirming beliefs with data from an original survey in which half of respondents were drawn from the top 5% of the income/wealth distribution. We find that the least affluent Americans are most likely to reject the idea that economic success (or failure) is due to individual merit, while the top 1% are most likely to say specific meritorious qualities (drive, IQ) are the product of a person’s choices in life or their genetic inheritance. Finally, we provide suggestive evidence that these beliefs justify economic conservatism among the affluent.

1. INTRODUCTION

The contemporary United States has entered a “New Gilded Age,” experiencing unprecedented economic inequality (Bartels, 2016; Hacker and Pierson, 2010) that far exceeds that of European nations (Atkinson et al., 2011). It’s a phenomenon, and for many people a problem, that calls out for explanation. Why are some people earning high incomes and amassing great wealth while others struggle simply to make ends meet?

It is not only scholars who are interested in this question. Lay people are as well, routinely offering up their own explanations. Citizens’ causal attributions for inequality are important because they tend to justify different patterns of response (Weiner et al., 2011). Attributions tend to establish blame (or innocence) and suggest what type of remedy, if any, is likely to succeed. Yet, while such causal attributions enjoy the patina of a fact, their origins are far from the scientific method—influenced by first-hand observation, culturally available scripts, and cognitive biases (Levy et al., 2006).

In this paper, we examine Americans’ causal attributions for socioeconomic inequality with an eye toward their political implications. We certainly are not the first to do so, with numerous works since at least the mid-twentieth century tackling this subject (Alesina et al., 2001; Hochschild, 1981; Huber and Form, 1973; Kluegel and Smith, 1986; Lane, 1959; McClosky and Zaller, 1984; Weber, 1958). However, our particular interest is more unique. We ask: do affluent Americans’ causal attributions for inequality differ from others? And are these attributions aligned with their political attitudes? To our knowledge, no previous published work has singularly focused on causal attributions for socioeconomic inequality among the affluent, perhaps because obtaining a large sample of such individuals is a difficult endeavor.

There are many reasons to expect the affluent tend to have a relatively unique perspective on what causes inequality. In particular, we might expect the affluent to be more likely than others to rest responsibility for economic outcomes with individuals, as opposed to broader societal forces. Such an argument would certainly serve their interests well. Arguments that the economic system is meritocratic render unequal outcomes fair, providing a moral case against wealth redistribution (Hochschild, 1981; Kluegel and Smith, 1986). Further, arguments that economic inequality is not only fair but *natural*—rooted in innate differences between people—provides a pragmatic case against government efforts to try to ameliorate inequality (Hofstadter, 2006; Lewontin et al., 1984). Of course, it is also possible that the rich do *not* explain inequality all that differently from other people. Among other things, the idea that capitalism distributes rewards commensurate with effort and skill has long been a central pillar of American political culture and, thus, popular across economic classes (Hochschild, 1981; Lane, 1959; McClosky and Zaller, 1984).

This study is important for two reasons. First, Americans with more income and wealth hold more political power due to their relative influence on politicians’ actions (Bartels, 2016; Gilens, 2012) and their greater likelihood of being politicians themselves (Carnes, 2013). Any belief that directly or indirectly influences affluent citizens’ political preferences by extension likely influences political outcomes in the United States. In this case,

if a tendency among the affluent to blame individuals for economic inequality indeed justifies anti-redistributive policy stances, then this tendency likely serves to reinforce actual economic inequality. Second, it has been argued for some time that economic and political elites play an outsized role in shaping any society’s dominant ideology, including both its values and closely associated factual claims about how the world works (Marx, 1936; McClosky and Zaller, 1984). For this reason, studying the ideology of the affluent may help us to better understand the surprising popularity of the belief that the U.S. is meritocratic—a belief that undercuts the vast majority of Americans’ claim to a better life.

Below, we flesh out this theoretical framework in more detail. We say more about what causal attributions are and why they are politically relevant. We then explore social scientific theories that offer up different predictions as to how affluent people’s causal attributions may differ from those of others. In response to this literature, we propose a number of hypotheses. We then go on to describe the survey data on which we draw, paying particular attention to the characteristics of our oversample of the affluent. In the results section, we first discuss how affluent individuals differ from others in terms of how they explain inequality. We follow this with a discussion of the results, which seeks to draw out both the scholarly and more applied implications of our findings.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Causal Attributions for Economic Inequality

Why do some people make higher incomes and accumulate more wealth than others? Social scientists have spent considerable time trying to answer this question, but they are not the only ones. Lay people too routinely offer up explanations for differences in economic success, referred to as *causal attributions* for economic inequality. Causal attributions are a type of “lay theory,” factual beliefs about the world that serve epistemological, personal, social, and value needs (Levy et al., 2006).

Scholars tend to divide common attributions for social, economic, and political inequality into two categories: dispositional attributions (i.e., individuals’ characteristics, such as whether they work hard) and situational attributions (i.e., context, such as a person’s connections or good luck) (Kluegel and Smith, 1986; Morgan et al., 2010; Skitka et al., 2002). This organizational scheme reflects now decades-old wisdom that people reflexively code others’ actions as being the result of either “internal” or “external” causes. People—at least in the U.S. and other Anglo-Saxon countries—gravitate toward the former category (van Oorschot and Halman, 2000) and do so to such a degree that this bias has earned the label “the fundamental attribution error” (Ross, 1977).

Dispositional attributions are not all of the same type, however. Not unlike scientists, lay people often consider *why* characteristics vary at the individual level. Do people act in different ways because of innate (e.g., genetic) differences, differences in socialization, different types of choices made in life, or some combination (Weiner et al., 2011)? For example, a

person might ask: are lazy people *choosing* to be lazy, did their parents raise them poorly, or did they inherit this predisposition? Explanations that emphasize individual agency are particularly popular in the United States (McClosky and Zaller, 1984; Weber, 1958).

However, Americans are also drawn to innate explanations for people’s predispositions—the notion that important characteristics are inherited from one’s parents and immutable (unchanging) over the life span. There is abundant evidence for this in old and new survey research on causal attributions for inequality (Bartels, 2016; Kluegel and Smith, 1986; McClosky and Zaller, 1984) and psychological research on genetic determinism and essentialism in the public generally (Dar-Nimrod and Heine, 2011). There are also reasons to believe that locating inequality in natural differences has become more popular in recent years. First, scientific findings on the broad impacts of human genetics have accumulated in the wake of the “genomic revolution,” opening the door for lay people to make such claims (Duster, 2003). Second, historical and cross-cultural research suggests that people are more likely to posit biological theories of human difference during periods (Hofstadter, 2006) and in social contexts (Kunst et al., 2017) marked by high levels of inequality.

People’s explanations for societal inequality have consequential moral and empirical implications that ultimately make them politically relevant. First, as if they were judges in a courtroom, people not only seek to explain why a social problem exists (i.e., establish the facts of the case) but they also link those explanations to judgments about whether the problem is just or unjust and who any guilty parties may be (i.e., render a verdict) (Weiner et al., 2011). If we observe a person experiencing a problem and believe he or she is at fault, this suggests no injustice has occurred. If *someone else* is responsible for the problem, however, this suggests an injustice has occurred (Weiner et al., 2011).

Second, causal attributions for inequality also have embedded within them ideas about how fundamentally different unequal groups are from one another and how stable group differences are over time. Those who believe economic inequality is driven not only by dispositional characteristics (e.g., drive, IQ) but also that these characteristics are rooted in people’s genomes—as opposed to socialization or free will—likely believe these differences permanent.¹ Social scientists refer to this as “genetic essentialism” (Dar-Nimrod and Heine, 2011; Haslam et al., 2006; Suhay, 2017). In a nutshell, this is the belief that members of social categories (such as socioeconomic classes) have well-defined boundaries and homogeneous traits that are ultimately determined by shared DNA.

These ideas about justice as well as about how unavoidable inequality may be are both bound up with whether people believe government should strive to ameliorate inequality. First, if circumstances are thought to be fair—because economic outcomes are determined by individual efforts and characteristics alone—then there is little moral justification for addressing inequality. In fact, trying to reduce inequality that has resulted from fair processes might be considered by some to be quite *unfair*. Second, the assumption that socioeconomic inequality is not only based in individual differences but is also *natural* carries a more

¹It is common for people to assume that any “biological” trait, particularly if thought to be genetic, is immutable. In fact, many biological influences, including genetic ones, are flexible over time and reactive to a person’s experiences in life.

pragmatic political implication: because people tend to assume that “natural” differences are permanent, this suggests that government intervention would be pointless (Hofstadter, 2006; Lewontin et al., 1984). Numerous studies in the U.S. and elsewhere have established that explaining inequality and poverty in societal terms as opposed to individualistic ones is associated with support for redistribution and social spending on the poor (Alesina et al., 2001; Kluegel and Smith, 1986; Morgan et al., 2010; Skitka et al., 2002).

2.2. Why Socioeconomic Classes May Disagree about the Causes of Inequality

Where do these consequential beliefs about inequality come from? Below, we discuss relevant research from Political Science, Economics, Psychology, and Sociology on the myriad sources of people’s causal attributions. In many—but not all—cases, the processes described suggest different outcomes for affluent individuals versus those of more modest means.

We begin by discussing the importance of direct observation. All people’s lay theories of the world rely to some extent on observation, just as scientists’ do; however, ordinary people’s observations are quite informal, consisting of everyday life experiences (Levy et al., 2006; Piketty, 1995). There is little question that such experiences differ sharply between economic classes. The overwhelming advantages and freedoms affluent people experience today and their relative social isolation from people experiencing hardship (Thal, 2016) alone may lead them to emphasize internal characteristics more than others (Piff and Keltner, 2012). Simply put, the affluent likely see fewer barriers to success for those who work hard and are skilled. Those at the lower end of the economic spectrum will have a different collection of experiences: they are likely aware of many people (maybe themselves) who work hard and are smart but who have nevertheless failed to advance; they probably know people who have faced serious set-backs due to a bad break because they had no savings or social connections to fall back on (Putnam, 2015).

People also learn about cause-and-effect in the world from other people. Cultural “scripts” (standard narratives) tend to be widely circulated in formal and informal communication as well as embedded in institutions, such as schools. In the U.S., the most common cultural script related to inequality is the “myth of meritocracy” (Frank, 2016). This is the notion that equality of opportunity exists and, therefore, that any inequality in outcomes stems from differences in individual merit (Hochschild, 1981; Huber and Form, 1973; Kluegel and Smith, 1986; Lane, 1959). The American myth of meritocracy tends to particularly fasten on the importance of hard work, an ideal that is deeply rooted in the nation’s Protestant past (McClosky and Zaller, 1984; Weber, 1958). This myth even influences how the U.S. news media frames stories about social problems. Media tend to use “episodic” frames, which focus on the unique circumstances of individuals suffering problems, rather than frames that emphasize common patterns of disadvantage in society (Iyengar, 1994). Generally speaking, these cultural influences should dampen—possibly even erase—differences between the affluent and others in how they explain inequality.

This said, cultural influences are nowhere near uniform throughout the U.S. Recent research indicates that affluent communities—particularly via private educational institutions—are

especially likely to emphasize the myth of meritocracy. While affluent children learn that status based on inheritance alone is unjust, they are also taught that the American economy’s rewards are merit-based and fair (Khan, 2011). By way of contrast, some scholars who study poor communities have described a “culture of poverty” that is deeply pessimistic about the possibilities for advancement and may be transmitted between generations (Lewis, 1975; Wilson, 2010). In sum, while it is common for Americans to believe that economic outcomes are tied to individual merit, it may be the case that this belief is relatively more popular at the top of the economic ladder and relatively less popular at the bottom.

Finally, common psychological biases are crucial to understanding why people explain inequality as they do. As with culture, some biases increase belief uniformity across economic classes while others encourage divergence. To begin, there are two common mistakes of perception that bias most people toward explaining inequality in terms of individual merit—the previously discussed “fundamental attribution error” (Ross, 1977) as well as an automatic tendency to interpret people’s success as resulting from competence (Fiske, 2011). More generally, people have a strong motivation to view the world as just (Lerner, 1980). Even lower status individuals will often gravitate toward such “just world” beliefs as a coping mechanism (Jost et al., 2001; Lane, 1959) and, at least in the U.S. context, as an expression of patriotic allegiance to shared national values (Shayo, 2009).

Other biases would seem to drive economic classes apart in their explanations for inequality, however. Generally speaking, people often engage in motivated reasoning processes that serve their interests and values (Kunda, 1990). All else equal, people should gravitate toward self-serving causal attributions for socioeconomic inequality that bolster their moral claim to resources as well as their egos (Kluegel and Smith, 1986; Sidanius et al., 2001). With this in mind, affluent Americans should be biased toward explanations for inequality that suggest their economic status is an outcome of their superior efforts and characteristics whereas the less affluent should be biased in the opposite direction. This difference may be most pronounced with respect to explanations that emphasize *innate* differences between social classes, with higher status individuals being more likely than others to espouse class-based genetic essentialism (Krause and Keltner, 2013). Biological explanations for inequality advance three narratives that serve affluent people’s interests. Such narratives suggest the affluent are innately superior to others, justify their moral claim to affluence, and bolster arguments that the current economic hierarchy is unavoidable.

Table 1 summarizes the theories discussed above and whether they suggest convergence or divergence between the affluent and others with respect to explanations for economic inequality.

Despite the voluminous scholarly literature on the subject of inequality, there has been relatively little systematic empirical inquiry into the specific question of whether explanations for inequality vary according to income and wealth. Further, in our reading of the evidence, the results of those investigations are as inconclusive as the theories just discussed. Well-known qualitative studies have argued both that lower class individuals mainly internalize the myth of meritocracy (Hochschild, 1981; Lane, 1959) and that they resoundingly reject it (Huber and Form, 1973). Quantitative, survey-based studies examining the correlation

Table 1: Whether Affluent Explain Inequality Differently According to Extant Theories

| Attribution Source | Theories | Affluent | Rest |
|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Experience | | Dispositional | Situational |
| Culture | Myth of meritocracy | Dispositional | Dispositional |
| Culture | Class culture | Dispositional | Situational |
| Biases | Motivated reasoning | Dispositional | Situational |
| Biases | System justification | Dispositional | Dispositional |

between income and causal attributions for inequality also have varying results, with some finding income to be positively associated with individual-level attributions, as is generally expected (Kluegel and Smith, 1986; Krause and Keltner, 2013) and others finding null (Shostak et al., 2009) or even negative results (Bartels, 2016). Further adding to the lack of clarity is the fact that no scholars of whom we are aware have linked income or wealth to causal attributions in a study that oversamples affluent people. General trends as income increases in the population are useful but will obscure patterns associated with small subgroups in the population, such as the very affluent.

2.3. Connecting Causal Attributions to Political Attitudes

Although the relationship between income and economic conservatism is relatively weak in general population samples (e.g., Page and Jacobs, 2009), findings from recent work focused on the affluent specifically indicates that, relative to most Americans, they are considerably more economically conservative—i.e., opposed to government efforts to redistribute wealth, provide a safety net, and regulate the economy (Gilens, 2012; Page et al., 2013a). Recent research suggests these attitudes are influenced in part by a combination of self-interest and social norms in affluent neighborhoods (Bramlett et al., 2011) and higher education settings (Mendelberg et al., 2017). We examine whether causal attributions for inequality may also play a role in the development and/or justification of economically conservative attitudes among the affluent.

As mentioned above, previous empirical work suggests that, at least in the general population, *dispositional* attributions for inequality are strongly associated with conservative political preferences and *situational* attributions with liberal political preferences (Alesina et al., 2001; Kluegel and Smith, 1986; Morgan et al., 2010; Skitka et al., 2002). These findings are relevant to preferences for policies aimed at economic equality in general as well as to policies intended to help specific marginalized groups, such as black Americans (Hunt, 2007).

What is less well-established from an empirical perspective, however, is whether the correlation between attributions and political attitudes changes as we move between the different explanations for dispositional difference. Believing important dispositions (e.g., drive to succeed) are the product of free will would appear to map to contemporary political

conservatism, and believing they are the product of a person’s social environment maps well to contemporary liberalism. However, believing that individual characteristics are the product of biological inheritance complicates matters. Genetic explanations certainly *can* serve to justify socioeconomic inequality and, therefore, economic conservatism. At the same time, mainstream contemporary conservatism emphasizes the importance of personal agency (Brewer and Stonecash, 2015), which would seem to suggest any in-born differences are of little import to economic outcomes. It is also important to note that some research suggests that believing the less affluent are innately inferior could generate sympathy and support for limited government assistance (Weiner et al., 2011). Findings from a recent study that systematically investigates the empirical association between conservative self-identification and genetic explanations for success-linked characteristics are nuanced: self-identified conservatives were *not* more likely than liberals to see characteristics (such as IQ) as “genetic” generally speaking; however, they *were* somewhat more likely than liberals to say such characteristics were genetic when class and race differences were mentioned (Suhay and Jayaratne, 2013).

Before we conclude this section, let us point out that prior research is inconclusive as to the causal direction of the attribution-attitude relationship, and this question is not one that we can address with our survey data. Some people may form causal attributions for inequality and then apply them to the political arena; however, research on motivated reasoning indicates that to some extent causal attributions serve as post-hoc justifications for policy preferences (Morgan et al., 2010; Skitka et al., 2002). This said, even if the latter is the dominant empirical explanation for the attribution-attitude relationship, such justifications likely play an important role in buttressing political preferences. In other words, they are an integral part of people’s political ideologies.

2.4. Hypotheses

Drawing on the above literature, we offer the following hypotheses with respect to Americans’ causal attributions, how the affluent are likely to differ from others in how they explain inequality, and how attributions are likely associated with political attitudes.

Dispositional versus Contextual Explanations for Socioeconomic Inequality

Hypothesis 1: On average, dispositional explanations for getting ahead in life will be more popular than contextual explanations.

Hypothesis 2: The affluent will be (a) more likely than others to adhere to dispositional explanations for getting ahead and (b) less likely than others to adhere to contextual explanations.²

²Prior literature provides little guidance as to whether we should expect a linear relationship between incremental increases in relative affluence and the various dependent variables or a nonlinear relationship, with the association between affluence and the dependent variable changing substantially at one or more

Sources of Dispositional Differences

Hypothesis 3: The affluent will be (a) more likely than others to say that characteristics associated with success in life (drive, IQ) stem from people’s choices and innate biology and (b) less likely than others to say they stem from environmental factors. These patterns will (c) extend to perceived class differences in such characteristics.

The Association between Explanations for Inequality and Political Attitudes

Hypothesis 4: (a) Linking drive and IQ to choice or genes will be correlated with economically conservative values/policy positions, and (b) linking these characteristics to the environment will be correlated with economically liberal values/policy positions.

3. DATA AND METHODS

3.1. Survey design

We analyze data from a survey (N=900) conducted with two subsamples of 450 Americans drawn from YouGov’s large, opt-in panel. The survey instrument was programmed and fielded by YouGov between December 29th, 2016 and February 22nd, 2017.

The first subsample is a general sample of the American adult population that has been matched, following YouGov’s usual procedure, to U.S. census data. The second subsample includes members of the American economic elite. To reach this group of rich Americans, we take advantage of the fact that YouGov regularly asks panelists for economic and financial information and has increased its capacity to survey affluent Americans in recent years. Respondents from the YouGov U.S. panel with a household income above \$350,000 or non-real estate gross investible assets above two million dollars were invited to participate in our study.³ To increase the representativeness of the data, we utilize weights provided by YouGov that account for age, race, education, and political ideology. The weights for the affluent subsample were designed especially for this study by YouGov using the Survey of Consumer Finances. Weights for the general population sample use the American Community Survey (of the U.S. Census).

To our knowledge, no political opinion study has come as close as this to a representative survey of affluent Americans. YouGov has conducted successful surveys of some of the affluent panelists we study (see [YouGov, 2016](#), for instance); however, to this point, the sample has mainly been used for the purposes of consumer research. With respect to other scholarship in Political Science, previous studies of the economic elite have relied

cut-points. For this reason, we make no *a priori* assumption on this point and analyze the data in such a way that either trend can be easily observed.

³This includes all cash, savings, mutual funds, stocks, bonds, retirement accounts, and other types of investments but does *not* include real estate or business assets.

Table 2: Sample Breakdown, by Income

| | Number of respondents | Percent of total |
|------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| <\$20K | 81 | 9.77 |
| \$20-40K | 97 | 11.7 |
| \$40-60K | 72 | 8.69 |
| \$60-100K | 101 | 12.18 |
| \$100-150K | 89 | 10.74 |
| \$150-250K | 109 | 13.15 |
| 250-500K | 101 | 12.18 |
| \$500-750K | 89 | 10.74 |
| \$750K-1M | 38 | 4.58 |
| >\$1M | 52 | 6.27 |
| Did not disclose | 70 | 7.79 |

Table 3: Sample Breakdown, by Wealth

| | Number of respondents | Percent of total |
|------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| <\$250K | 276 | 30.7 |
| \$250-500K | 46 | 5.12 |
| \$500-750K | 24 | 2.67 |
| \$750-1M | 19 | 2.11 |
| \$1-2M | 44 | 4.89 |
| \$2-5M | 170 | 18.91 |
| \$5-10M | 118 | 13.13 |
| \$10-25M | 44 | 4.89 |
| \$25-50M | 11 | 1.22 |
| >\$50M | 20 | 2.22 |
| Did not disclose | 127 | 14.13 |

on community samples (such as [Page et al., 2013a](#)) or samples of voluntary organizations ([Verba and Orren, 1985](#)). More representative studies of the political attitudes of affluent Americans have depended on samples coming from general population surveys, like the American National Election Studies or the General Social Survey ([Gilens, 2012](#); [Page and Hennessy, 2010](#)). As a consequence, in order to build large enough samples for a quantitative analysis, previous studies used relatively low thresholds in their definition of affluent, like the top quintile ([Gilens, 2005](#)) or tercile ([Bartels, 2009](#)) of the income distribution. Instead, our sample contains considerably larger numbers of those close to the top of the income and wealth distributions. As we show below, those with very high incomes (e.g. more than \$750,000) can be quite different from respondents most other studies consider affluent (e.g. those earning more than \$150,000). Tables 2 and 3 show the breakdown of our combined sample in terms of income and wealth, respectively.

The quality of our data depends critically on the veracity of the economic and financial information provided by panelists to YouGov. Eliciting information about personal finances has long been recognized as a sensitive topic in survey research ([Tourangeau and Yan, 2007](#)), prone to high rates of item nonresponse ([Juster and Smith, 1997](#); [Riphahn and Serfling, 2005](#); [Essig and Winter, 2009](#); [Yan et al., 2010](#)) and with potential for misreporting and thus

measurement error (Marquis et al., 1993; Moore and Welniak, 2000; Johnson and Moore, 2005).

However, we offer several reasons why we believe our self-reported data are trustworthy. First, self-administered questionnaires, and web surveys in particular, have been shown to decrease social desirability bias, and, as a result, reduce item nonresponse compared to other modes of interview (Denscombe, 2009). Self-administered surveys are also more likely to elicit truthful and precise answers from respondents on sensitive questions in general (Tourangeau and Yan, 2007; Kreuter et al., 2008; Chang and Krosnick, 2009) and in the particular case of economic surveys (Hsu and McFall, 2015). Moreover, repeated participation in surveys, as in the YouGov online panel, has also been shown to reduce measurement error in general (Struminskaya, 2016) and in terms of self-reporting of sensitive behaviors in particular (Halpern-Manners et al., 2014). Hence, both the administration mode and the panel structure of our data source alleviate some of the most common issues associated with surveys that rely on self-reported financial information.

Second, YouGov used a rigorous procedure to screen the affluent respondents. Our questionnaire contained the same income and wealth questions YouGov periodically asks of their panelists. Among the affluent, only those respondents who provided the same information in our survey as in YouGov’s existing records were allowed to complete the survey. This likely reduced the number of observations with intentionally misreported (as opposed to unreported) income or wealth. Based on zipcode information, YouGov also paid close attention to geographical diversity in the affluent sample. Further, we performed a number of manual checks in the dataset and flagged a small number of cases with suspicious response patterns. We then worked with YouGov to investigate the behavior of these panelists in other surveys and replaced those respondents deemed likely to have provided untruthful answers.

Another potential concern about our sample comes from the fact that our dataset was collected from an opt-in online panel rather than a probability sample (see Baker et al., 2010, for a detailed summary). Online surveys have recently become a widely popular method for collecting data in social research, due to their comparatively low cost and quick turnaround time. As a result, the methodological literature has devoted considerable attention to how online panels (and opt-in panels more specifically) perform when compared to more traditional probability studies using RDD or face-to-face interviews. The consensus is that *prevalence* estimates from opt-in panels are biased before weighting (Brüggen et al., 2016; Karp and Lühiste, 2016; Malhotra and Krosnick, 2007; Yeager et al., 2011). However, unweighted estimates using nonprobability panels have been shown to match probabilistic benchmarks like the American Trends Panel data when analysts are interested in *relations between variables*, with the notable exception of the estimation of the marginal effects of race and ethnicity (Kennedy et al., 2016). We employ weights in all of the analyses reported in the Results section to further improve the precision of the estimates.

It is also important to note that a study of affluent Americans attempting to draw a probability sample of this population would face two very significant obstacles. First, there is the high cost of building a sampling frame with an enumeration of individuals on a

Table 4: Affluent Sample – Descriptives

| | More than \$10M in liabilities | Business owner | Non-managerial employee | Age | Share of women | Share of non-whites | Conservative ideology | Share Republican | Charitable donations |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|------|-------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Working class | 0.00 | 0.03 | 0.22 | 0.66 | 47.92 | 0.34 | 0.21 | 0.15 | 1,446.53 |
| Lower middle class | 0.00 | 0.03 | 0.25 | 0.60 | 49.91 | 0.20 | 0.31 | 0.21 | 2,981.46 |
| Middle class | 0.01 | 0.07 | 0.33 | 0.47 | 48.35 | 0.22 | 0.33 | 0.33 | 2,580.05 |
| Upper middle class | 0.02 | 0.14 | 0.09 | 0.26 | 63.12 | 0.07 | 0.39 | 0.33 | 13,053.13 |
| Affluent (top 5%) | 0.04 | 0.28 | 0.05 | 0.18 | 63.51 | 0.07 | 0.41 | 0.34 | 20,661.80 |
| Top 1% | 0.09 | 0.38 | 0.01 | 0.26 | 63.04 | 0.09 | 0.48 | 0.41 | 71,813.60 |

sensitive variable like income. Second, there is the overall downward trend in response rates to all survey modes (Massey et al., 2013), which, for the case of a difficult-to-reach population like affluent Americans, could potentially have a very significant impact on final estimates (Heffetz and Reeves, 2016; Hellevik, 2016). As a result, a survey of a true probability sample of the affluent would likely cost researchers several million dollars.

Finally, note that, while there is wide variation in the quality of opt-in panels across different providers based on how sampling and weighting is performed, YouGov’s opt-in panel has been shown to be of high quality (Kennedy et al., 2016). Its quasi-randomization approach (Rivers, 2007; Brick, 2011) has been shown to outperform other vendors (Rivers, 2016). YouGov runs the data collection of staple data sources in public opinion research, such as the Cooperative Congressional Election Studies (Ansolabehere and Rivers, 2013), as well as high quality, general interest outlets, such as *The Economist*.

As a way of double-checking the quality of our affluent sample, we collected additional information from all respondents that would allow us to assess the sample vis-a-vis known characteristics of affluent Americans. Table 4 shows descriptive statistics based on a number of such variables. These data provide reassurance as to the quality of our sample. Those with higher incomes also hold more valuable assets (column 1), tend to have greater liabilities (column 2), are more likely to own a business (column 3), are less likely to be a non-managerial employee (column 4), are less likely to be female or non-white (columns 5 and 6), are on average more conservative ideologically (column 7), and give greater amounts to charity (column 8). All of these patterns accord with established priors about the affluent.⁴

3.1.1 Questionnaire

The survey included two types of question batteries focused on respondents’ explanations for economic inequality. One standard battery asked respondents about how important different factors were for “getting ahead” in life. Respondents were asked to score on a seven-point scale the importance of A) coming from a wealthy family, B) being intelligent, C) being lucky, D) working hard, and E) having connections.

⁴Other characteristics of the affluent sample are as follows: They are older on average than those of ordinary means. They are more likely to list inheritance as a main source of wealth (19%). Note that affluent males in the sample are *not* any more or less likely to be employed than others.

The second battery asked respondents to assess explanations for why people might differ in their drive to succeed or IQ (Suhay and Jayaratne, 2013). More specifically, the questions asked the respondents to evaluate the extent to which the difference between people who have a strong drive to succeed and those who do not are due to innate causes, environmental factors, or individual choices.⁵ The instrument included a variation of the same question asking about differences in IQ.⁶ Next, using slightly different wording, the instrument gauged perceptions of whether genes, the environment, or choices influenced differences in drive and IQ between economic classes (the wealthy versus the poor).⁷

Respondents also answered a battery of attitudinal items, including egalitarian values⁸ and positions on various public policies oriented toward either redistributing income⁹ or providing government benefits to lower-income people.¹⁰ The questions were selected from well-known surveys on inequality, like the International Social Survey Program (see Scholz et al., 2017, Pew Research Center, 2015, or Page et al., 2013b).

So that we could control for the fact that individuals may resort to genetic explanations as a result of different levels of trust in science or religiosity (Singer et al., 2010), we included questions about the respondent's belief in evolution,¹¹ and trust in the scientific community.¹² Given the fact that, historically, genetic beliefs have been a core component

⁵The specific wording was: "To what extent is the difference between people who have a strong drive to succeed and those who don't have any drive to succeed at all due to . . .," and respondents were offered the response options: A) "People's genes or other in-born characteristics," B) "The way people are raised, their experiences, or other aspects of their environment," and C) "People's free will, i.e., the independent choices they make in life," evaluated on a seven-point scale.

⁶The wording for the question was "To what extent is the difference between people who have high IQ's and those who have low IQ's due to . . ."

⁷While some readers may be concerned about social desirability bias in response to such questions, we do not think this is much of a concern. First, as noted above, anonymous, on-line surveys have a good track record with respect to participant honesty. Second, new research documents a marked decline in Americans' sensitivity to openly expressing bias against marginalized groups. For example, see Valentino et al., 2017.

⁸"Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements. The differences in incomes in the US are too large. A society should aim to equalize incomes."

⁹"The effective income tax rate for the top category of annual household income above \$467,000 is currently 33%. That means, for example, that a family earning \$500,000 pays \$165,000 in taxes. In your opinion, should the top income tax rate be higher, the same, or lower?" "The Federal Estate Tax applies when a deceased person leaves more than \$5.45 million in wealth to his or her heirs. Currently, the effective federal estate tax rate is 17%. That means, for example, that on an inheritance worth \$10 million, an heir pays \$1.7 million in taxes. In your opinion, should the federal estate tax rate be higher, the same, or lower?"

¹⁰"Please indicate on a scale from 1 to 7 how much responsibility you think government should have. To ensure that all children can go to good schools. To ensure a job for everyone who wants one. To ensure adequate health care."

¹¹We asked respondents to pick which statement was closer to their view A) "Humans and other living things have evolved over time" or B) "Humans and other living things have existed in their present form since the beginning of time." If they chose the first option, respondents were then asked to indicate whether A) "Humans and other living things have evolved over time due to natural processes such as natural selection" or B) "A supreme being guided the evolution of living things for the purpose of creating humans and other life in the form it exists today."

¹²The question was "How much confidence do you have in the scientific community?" with answers on a four-point scale.

of old-fashioned racism, we also include two questions for the purposes of control that tap racial prejudice: whether the individual states a preference for living in a racially/ethnically homogeneous community¹³ and the strength of the individual’s white racial identity.¹⁴

The final section of the questionnaire contained a standard battery of sociodemographic questions, including age, gender, education, marital status, employment status, partisanship, and ideology. In this section, we also asked individuals to report again (as verification) their household income, gross investible assets, liabilities, and main source of wealth.¹⁵ To account for the possibility that upwardly mobile affluent individuals may hold different beliefs and attitudes than second-generation affluent people, we included two questions to measure a person’s self-assessed economic mobility. We asked respondents to assess the relative income position of the household in which they grew up, and of their current household, on a 100-point scale.

4. RESULTS

In this section, we present our results. In Section 4.1, we begin by examining the explanations for “getting ahead” in life. We test hypothesis *H1* by evaluating the weight our respondents place on individual characteristics (hard work, intelligence) relative to contextual factors (luck, family background, and connections), as well as hypothesis *H2* by examining to what extent the affluent differ from the rest. We then proceed in Section 4.2 to explore attributions for individual and group characteristics associated with success in climbing the socioeconomic ladder. We evaluate *H3* by examining whether the affluent are more likely than others to view characteristics associated with success as rooted in internal (innate or choice) versus external (environment) factors. Finally, in Section 4.3 we examine *H4*: whether explanations for individual and group success are associated with survey respondents’ political values and attitudes vis-a-vis economic equality.

4.1. Attributions for Socioeconomic Inequality

In this section, we focus on the “getting ahead” battery of questions. Given the expectations outlined in *H1* above, we explore whether explanations for socioeconomic inequality that focus on individual characteristics are more popular than explanations that focus on characteristics external to the individual, such as luck, family background, or connections. Also, in line with our expectations in *H2*, we ask if any propensity to favor individual characteristics is more pronounced among the rich than among the rest of the population.

¹³“Imagine for a moment that you are moving to another community. In deciding where to live, how important would it be to you to live in a place where most people were of the same race and ethnicity as you?”

¹⁴“In your opinion, how important is it that white Americans work together to change laws that are unfair to whites?”

¹⁵The income and asset questions were designed in an unfolding structure (i.e. with a pop-up for the 5 highest categories), which has been shown to reduce item nonresponse (Yan et al., 2010).

To evaluate the first hypothesis, we simply generate the average predicted importance of each of the five characteristics for getting ahead in life. Because we expect some differences among categories of affluence, we show results separately for the top 1%, the remaining individuals in the affluent sample (approximately top 5%), and the non-affluent sample.¹⁶ See Figure 1. Responses were on a 1-7 scale, with 1 being “Not important at all” and 7 being “Very important.” While all five characteristics were on average deemed important—the lowest predicted average importance, for luck, is still above 4—the results are clearly in line with *H1*. Namely, individual-level factors—working hard and being intelligent—are considered significantly more important on average than external factors. We might also point out that, in line with the “Protestant ethic,” hard work is the most popular explanation for success in life. It is also worth noting the surprising popularity of “connections,” particularly compared to the other two external factors, “wealthy family” and “luck.” Moving across the panels from left (less affluent) to right (more affluent), individual characteristics grow more popular relative to contextual ones, a trend we examine more systematically below.

To test *H2*, we model the responses to each of the five questions as a function of respondents’ household income and wealth, employing six categories. We created these categories by first dividing participants according to income: working class (less than 30K/bottom 30%), lower middle class (30-60K/30-50%), middle class (60-120K/50-80%), upper middle class (120-250K/80-95%), affluent (250-750K/95-99%), and top 1% (more than 750K). These categories were then adjusted somewhat according to household wealth.¹⁷ In this and all subsequent analyses, we control for age, gender, race (white vs. non-white), marital and retirement status, education, region, attitudes toward evolution, trust in scientists, and racial prejudice. We fit a linear model and treat the ordinal responses as quasi-continuous.¹⁸ Hereafter, we present the key results graphically. The corresponding full results are shown in the Appendix.

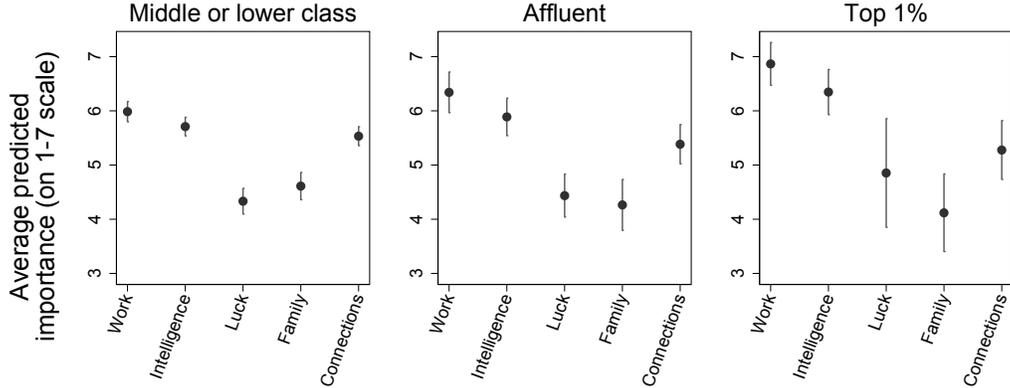
Figure 2 examines the association between respondent affluence and expressed importance of each factor for getting ahead in life. Each panel shows one characteristic, and plots the coefficients for each class category; the effects are relative to the lowest category (“working class”). The results show a positive association between affluence and propensity to favor internal attributions for socioeconomic inequality: more affluent respondents assign greater importance to work and intelligence and less importance to family relative to less affluent respondents (this pattern is absent for “luck” and “connections”). In each of these three cases, the effect for the top 1% is statistically significant ($p < .05$). However, it is also

¹⁶Note that the general population sample originally included a handful of individuals whose income and/or wealth were comparable to those in the affluent sample. We recategorized these individuals accordingly.

¹⁷Respondents were moved down one level if their wealth did not match their income percentile (e.g., “top 1%” people had to have at least 5 million in investible assets). Individuals were moved up one level if their household wealth matched those two levels above. For example, a person designated “upper middle class” by income would be moved to the “affluent” level if their wealth placed them in the top 1%.

¹⁸Because all five questions were presented on a single screen and were part of the same battery, we also modelled results with a seemingly unrelated regression approach (Zellner, 1962), allowing for the errors associated with the five characteristics to be correlated. The Breusch-Pagan test (Breusch and Pagan, 1980) suggests that the errors across the five outcomes are indeed correlated. This said, the results are substantively entirely unchanged with this method. These results available upon request.

Figure 1: Support for “Getting Ahead” Attributions



notable that the middle income/wealth categories are more similar to the top category than they are to the bottom-most category; i.e., the beliefs of the working class are more unique than those of the top 1%.

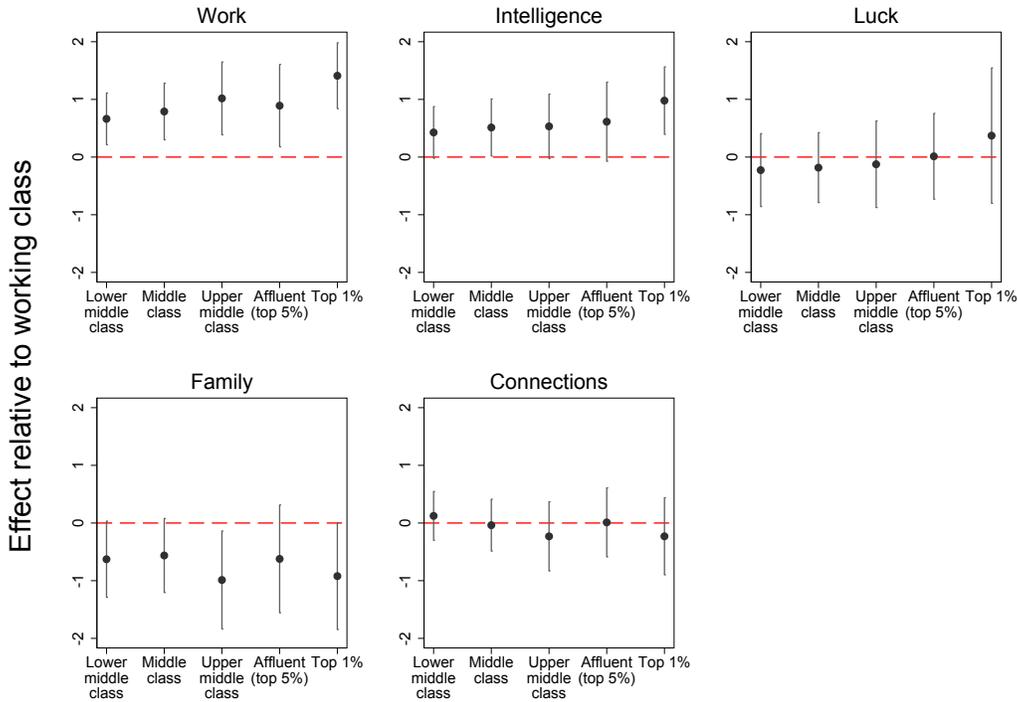
With this in mind, our results offer only partial support for *H2*. As income/wealth increase, there is a pattern of increasing support for individualistic attributions and decreasing support for one of the three contextual attributions. However, those at the low end of the economic spectrum stand out in their disbelief in meritocracy more than those at the top stand out in their belief in it.

4.2. Attributions for Characteristics Related to Success

The previous analysis suggests that the very rich are only marginally different from middle and upper-middle class Americans with respect to what it takes to get ahead in life. Nonetheless, as discussed above, it may be the case that affluent people still think differently from others about the sources of success-linked characteristics. After all, it is at the micro-level of analysis that citizens can more precisely distinguish between causes rooted in nature, agency, or a person’s upbringing.

As in the previous analysis, we model responses to questions about the sources of a person’s drive to succeed and IQ as a function of economic class and the same set of control vari-

Figure 2: Support for “Getting Ahead” Attributions across Income



ables.¹⁹ Figure 3 shows the results for drive. The three attributions—genes, environment, and choice—are shown in separate panels; each panel once again plots the coefficients for each income/wealth category, and the effects are relative to the lowest income category.

The results in Figure 3 suggest that the very rich—the top one percent in fact—are noticeably more inclined than others to attribute individual differences in drive to succeed to genes. The trend is close to linear across the income/asset bins with respect to “choice.” There is no clear trend for “environment.”

We next examine explanations for individual variation in IQ, the other characteristic widely thought to be important for success in climbing the economic ladder. The results for IQ are similar to the above (see Figure 4), although the top 1% stands out even further. Again, however, results are null for environmental attributions. With this exception noted, these results are in keeping with *H3*.

Previous analyses focused on respondents’ explanations for *individual* differences in drive to succeed and IQ. These questions are admittedly somewhat at a remove from socioeconomic inequality. Thus, we followed these questions up with two related questions: whether

¹⁹We once again ran a seemingly unrelated regression model, given that these attribution questions were also shown on a single screen. Again, the results were unchanged.

Figure 3: Results for Individual Drive Attributions

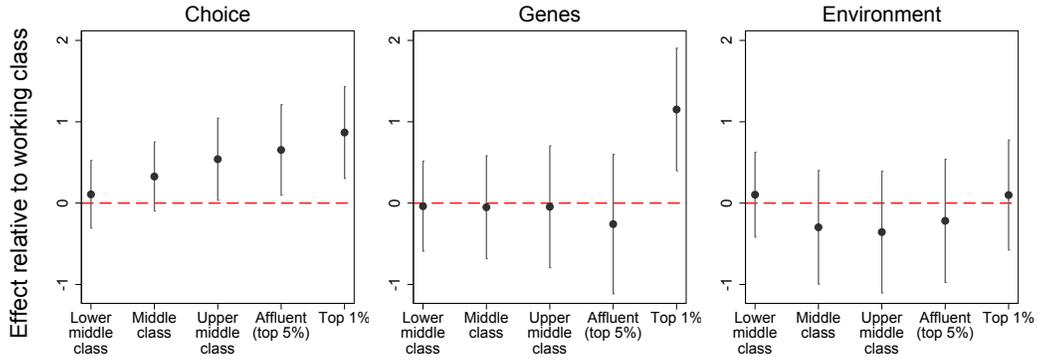
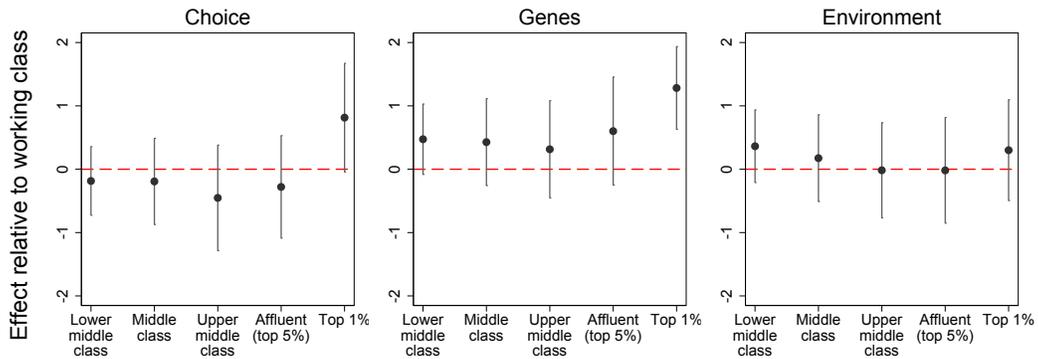


Figure 4: Results for Individual IQ Attributions

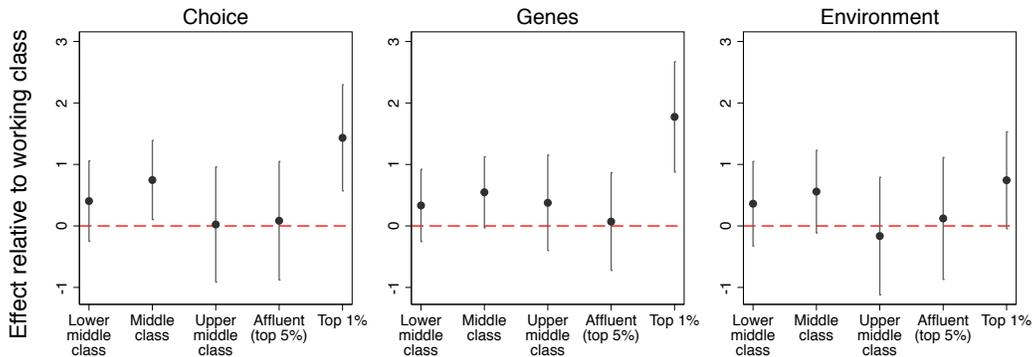


perceived differences in drive and IQ across classes (wealthy versus poor) were attributable to class differences in choices, genes, or social environments.²⁰

²⁰Because these questions required the respondent to first accept that these groups differ in these characteristics on average, we gave respondents the option of stating that there exists “no difference” between classes. This creates a sequential response: those who state their beliefs about *why* these groups differ on

Figure 5 shows the associations between respondent income/wealth and attributions for perceived class differences in drive to succeed. The patterns are similar to those for individual differences: the top 1% are more inclined than others to attribute class differences in drive to succeed to choice and, especially, genetics. This said, these results do *not* appear in the IQ analyses. See Figure 6. And, across both sets of analyses, there are (again) no clear patterns for environmental attributions.

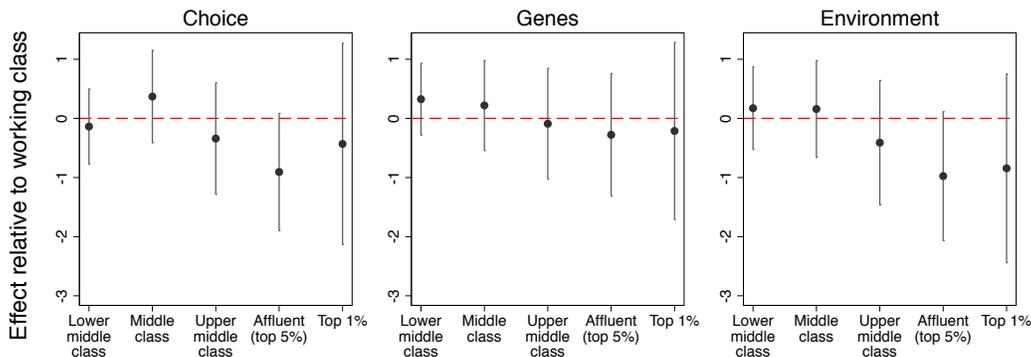
Figure 5: Results for Class Drive Attributions



Taken in total, these results provide additional support for $H3$, although they are not perfectly consistent nor relevant to all affluent individuals. In these data, the most consistent pattern shows the top 1% to be especially likely to say that success-linked characteristics are either the result of individual agency or genetics (although they were not *less* likely than others to “blame” the social environment). On average, survey respondents in the other income/asset bins were less inclined to locate the cause of these characteristics “in the person.”

these traits have accepted the premise that these differences exist. This set-up creates the possibility of selection effects: respondents with different incomes may be differently inclined to choose the “no difference” option. To accommodate these issues, we rely on the Cragg linear hurdle model (Cragg, 1971). This model combines a selection model for the “no-difference” option and an outcome model for the stated attribution attitudes, both as a function of income and the same set of control variables as in the previous analyses. This approach is closely related to the perhaps more widely known hurdle models for count data (Zorn, 1998) and sequential and nested discrete choice models (Train, 2007).

Figure 6: Results for Class IQ Attributions



4.3. Attributions and Political Attitudes

The preceding results indicate that the very affluent are more likely than others to attribute drive to succeed and intelligence to genes; however, the question remains whether these distinct views held by the affluent are politically consequential. In line with *H4*, we ask whether a greater or lesser tendency to locate the causes of these characteristics “in the person” is associated with relative inegalitarianism.²¹

To examine this question, we conduct a series of regression analyses. The outcomes of interest are three short attitude scales: (1) the average of “whether differences in income in the U.S. are too large” and “society should aim to equalize incomes” (range: 1-7), (2) the average of whether the government should ensure people a job and provide affordable healthcare (range: 1-7), and (3) the average of whether the government should increase the top income tax rate and the estate tax rate (range: 1-5). These variables are coded such that the more egalitarian response has the higher value. The independent variables in each of the three models are “choice,” “genetic,” and “environment” explanations for drive to succeed and IQ (assessed in separate models). The same set of control variables are included as the previous analyses. Given our interest in the affluent, results are subsetting: we examine results for the top 1%, the remaining affluent individuals (top 5%), and the rest of the sample.

The figures below plot regression coefficients. The first set of plots, in Figure 7, represents coefficients on the “choice” explanation for individual differences in drive and IQ. The sec-

²¹This final empirical section is very much in progress. Suggestions especially welcome.

ond set of plots, in Figure 8, represents coefficients on the “genes” explanation for these characteristics.

Figure 7: Results for Choice

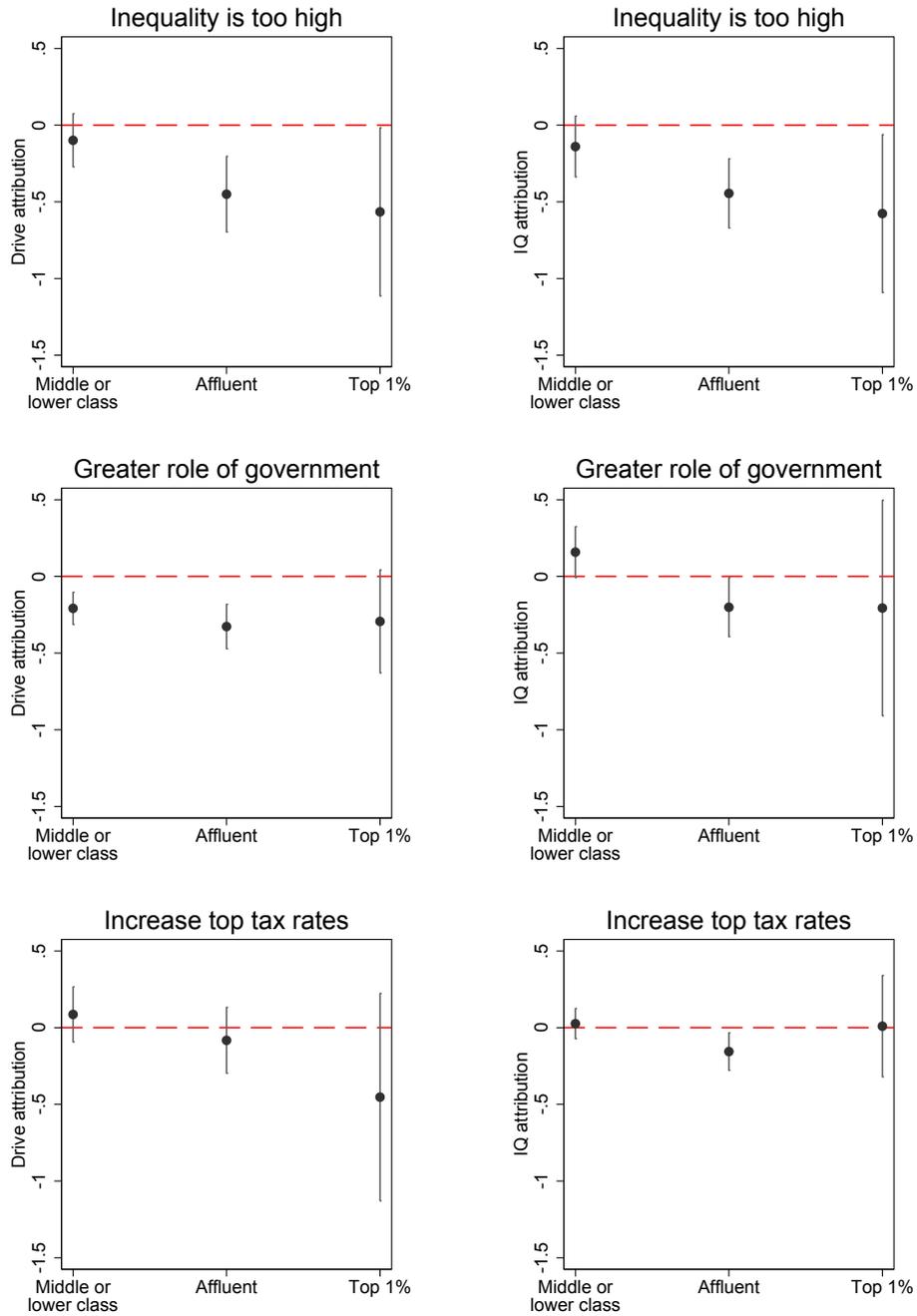
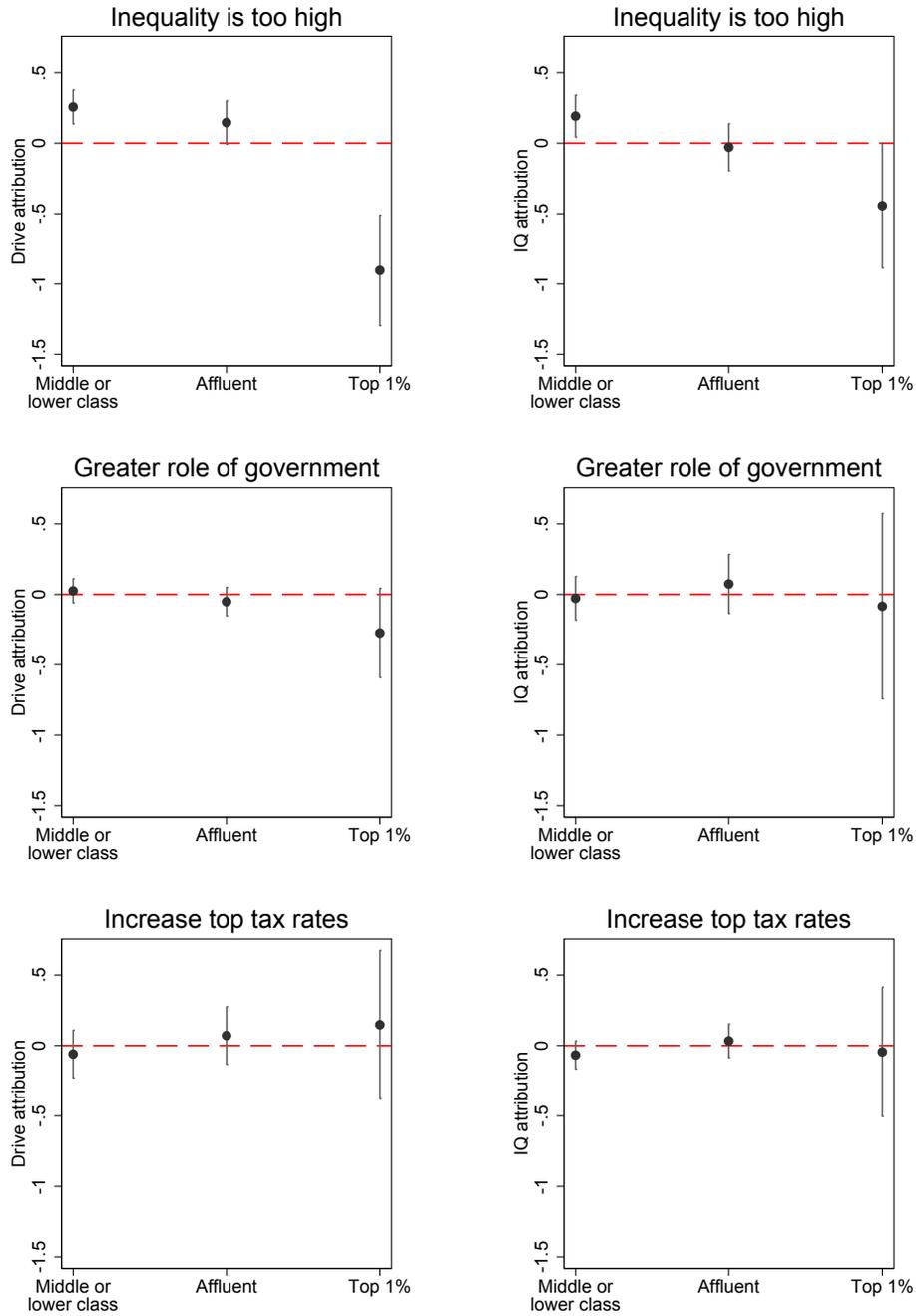


Figure 8: Results for Genes



Across the analyses, the results with respect to the income/estate tax DV are null, and so we leave those to the side. Believing that drive or IQ is the product of people's choices in life

is negatively associated with egalitarianism, as one would expect, although the association is consistently negative only among individuals in the affluent subsamples. Believing these characteristics to be innate is negatively associated with egalitarianism *only* among the top 1% and with respect to broad value beliefs (differences in income are too large and society should address them) as opposed to more specific policy preferences.

5. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

This study has been conducted, first and foremost, to clarify the empirical relationship between relative affluence and beliefs about the sources of economic inequality. In particular, a variety of theories—relating to different experiences between the affluent and others, exposure to different cultural scripts, and self-serving cognitive biases—suggest the affluent will be more likely to explain inequality by resting responsibility for economic outcomes with individuals as opposed to broader societal forces. Previous scholarship has been inconclusive on this point, largely because scholars have neglected to survey large numbers of affluent citizens. By including a large oversample of affluent Americans in our study, we feel confident in the following conclusions.

First, highly affluent individuals differ only somewhat from middle and upper-middle class individuals with respect to attributing success to individual characteristics (versus factors external to the individual); however, Americans well-below median income *did* differ markedly from the rest of the populace, preferring to locate the causes of success outside the person. As our first set of analyses showed, the “myth of meritocracy” is exceedingly popular in the United States; however, those struggling to make ends meet are more likely to reject that myth. Whether this is due to first-hand experience and observation or to protect their self-esteem, we cannot be sure.

Second, the highly affluent—in particular, individuals whose incomes place them in the top 1% of American earners—were unique in their relative endorsement of the belief that “meritorious” characteristics, such as drive and intelligence, were shaped either by individual agency or by innate biology. This pattern was similar whether we asked about the source of drive and intelligence generally, or whether we asked about the source of perceived class-linked differences in drive. (With respect to the class analysis, results were null for IQ differences.) Unfortunately, our data do not allow us to adjudicate among the theoretical frameworks presented earlier in the paper—this pattern may be driven by affluent people’s unusually unfettered lives, the different cultural influences to which they are exposed, and/or self-serving cognitive bias. We leave to future study the development of a better understanding of how these beliefs originate.

Third, and finally, we also investigated whether these beliefs that were so much more common among the affluent were associated with economic conservatism. Our working hypothesis was that these factual beliefs may directly or indirectly bolster economic conservatism. In general, we found a stronger relationship between believing in “choice” and economic conservatism than between “genes” and conservatism, although there were several impor-

tant caveats. Most notably, relationships between attributions and economic conservatism were consistently stronger among those in the top two income/wealth groups (top 5% and top 1%) than the rest of the sample (those respondents representing the vast majority of Americans). We did not hypothesize such an interactive effect and are not certain as to the reason, beyond the obvious possibility that attributions are playing a greater role in justifying political attitudes among the affluent than others. We also wish to point out that associations between genetic attributions and attitudes were more inconsistent than the associations between choice attributions and attitudes. This is not unexpected, as we previously noted that, while believing inequality to be “natural” certainly justifies libertarian economic views, mainstream conservative rhetoric emphasizes the importance of individual agency in economic outcomes almost exclusively. This said, among the top 1% subsample, there was a strong relationship between believing drive to succeed is genetic and being comfortable with current levels of inequality.

To conclude, this study adds to a quickly growing area of study in Political Science: the unique beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of affluent Americans (e.g [Fisman et al., 2015](#); [Keister, 2014](#); [Mendelberg et al., 2017](#); [Thal, 2016](#)). The uniqueness of the affluent is of interest given their outsized influence on the American economy, political system, and culture more generally. While it is outside the purview of this paper to trace how the beliefs we have identified may directly or indirectly influence everyday life for Americans with lesser means, we presume these beliefs generally work in the direction of reinforcing and legitimizing class-based hierarchy in these various domains.

REFERENCES

- Alesina, A., E. Glaeser, and B. Sacerdote (2001). Why doesn't the us have a european-style welfare system? *Brookings Paper on Economic Activity 2001* (2), 187–254.
- Ansolabehere, S. and D. Rivers (2013). Cooperative survey research. *Annual Review of Political Science* 16(1), 307–329.
- Atkinson, A. B., T. Piketty, and E. Saez (2011). Top incomes in the long run of history. *Journal of Economic Literature* 49(1), 3–71.
- 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. Groves, C. Kennedy, J. Krosnick, P. J. Lavrakas, S. Lee, M. Link, L. Piekarski, K. Rao, R. K. Thomas, and D. Zahs (2010, January). AAPOR Report on Online Panels. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 74(4), 711–781.
- Bartels, L. M. (2009). *Unequal democracy: The political economy of the new gilded age*. Princeton University Press.
- Bartels, L. M. (2016). *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age*. Russell Sage & Princeton University Press.
- Bramlett, B. H., J. G. Gimpel, and F. E. Lee (2011). The political ecology of opinion in big-donor neighborhoods. *Political Behavior* 33(4).
- Breusch, T. S. and A. R. Pagan (1980). The lagrange multiplier test and its applications to model specification in econometrics. *The Review of Economic Studies* 47(1), 239–253.
- Brewer, M. D. and J. M. Stonecash (2015). *Polarization and the Politics of Personal Responsibility*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Brick, J. M. (2011). The future of survey sampling. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 75(5), 872–888.
- Brüggen, E., J. van den Brakel, and J. Krosnick (2016). “Establishing the accuracy of online panels for survey research. *forthcoming paper*.”
- Carnes, N. (2013). *White-Collar Government: The Hidden Role of Class in Economic Policy Making*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Chang, L. and J. A. Krosnick (2009). National surveys via rdd telephone interviewing versus the internet comparing sample representativeness and response quality. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 73(4), 641–678.
- Cragg, J. G. (1971). Some statistical models for limited dependent variables with application to the demand for durable goods. *Econometrica* 39(5), 829–844.
- Dar-Nimrod, I. and S. J. Heine (2011). Genetic essentialism: on the deceptive determinism of dna. *Psychological bulletin* 137(5), 800–18.
- Denscombe, M. (2009). Item non-response rates: a comparison of online and paper questionnaires. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 12(4), 281–291.
- Duster, T. (2003). *Backdoor to Eugenics* (2 ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Essig, L. and J. K. Winter (2009). Item non-response to financial questions in household surveys: An experimental study of interviewer and mode effects. *Fiscal Studies* 30(3-4), 367–390.
- Fiske, S. T. (2011). *Envy Up, Scorn Down*. New York: Russell Sage.

- Fisman, R., P. Jakiela, S. Kariv, and D. Markovits (2015). The distributional preferences of an elite. *Science* 349(6254), aab0096.
- Frank, R. H. (2016). *Success and Luck: Good Fortune and the Myth of Meritocracy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Gilens, M. (2005). Inequality and democratic responsiveness. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 69(5), 778–796.
- Gilens, M. (2012). *Affluence & Influence: Economic Inequality and Political Power in America*. New York: Russell Sage & Princeton University Press.
- Hacker, J. S. and P. Pierson (2010). *Winner-Take-All Politics: How Washington Made the Rich Richer—And Turned Its Back on the Middle Class*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Halpern-Manners, A., J. R. Warren, and F. Torche (2014). Panel conditioning in a longitudinal study of illicit behaviors. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 78(3), 565–590.
- Haslam, N., B. Bastian, P. Bain, and Y. Kashima (2006). Psychological essentialism, implicit theories, and intergroup relations. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* 9(1), 63–76.
- Heffetz, O. and D. Reeves (2016). Difficulty to Reach Respondents and Nonresponse Bias: Evidence from Large Government Surveys. Technical report.
- Hellevik, O. (2016). Extreme nonresponse and response bias. *Quality & Quantity* 50(5), 1969–1991.
- Hochschild, J. L. (1981). *What’s Fair? American Beliefs about Distributive Justice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Hofstadter, R. (2006). *Social Darwinism in American Thought*. Beacon Press [1944].
- Hsu, J. W. and B. H. McFall (2015). Mode effects in mixed-mode economic surveys: Insights from a randomized experiment. *Finance and Economics Discussion Series* 2015(008), 1–35.
- Huber, J. and W. H. Form (1973). *Income and Ideology: An Analysis of the American Political Formula*. New York: Free Press.
- Hunt, M. O. (2007). African american, hispanic, and white beliefs about black/white inequality, 1977-2004. *American Sociological Review* 72(3), 390–415.
- Iyengar, S. (1994). *Is Anyone Responsible?: How Television Frames Political Issues*. University of Chicago Press.
- Johnson, B. and K. Moore (2005). *Consider the source: Differences in estimates of income and wealth from survey and tax data*. Internal Revenue Service.
- Jost, J. T., D. Burgess, and C. O. Masso (2001). *The Psychology of Legitimacy: Emerging Perspectives on Ideology, Justice, and Intergroup Relations*, Chapter Conflicts of Legitimation among Self, Group, and System: The Integrative Potential of System Justification Theory, pp. 363–388. Cambridge.
- Juster, F. T. and J. P. Smith (1997). Improving the quality of economic data: Lessons from the hrs and ahead. *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 92(440), 1268–1278.
- Karp, J. A. and M. Lühiste (2016). Explaining Political Engagement with Online Panels Comparing the British and American Election Studies. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 80(3), 666–693.
- Keister, L. A. (2014, July). The One Percent. *Annual Review of Sociology* 40(1), 347–367.

- Kennedy, C., A. Mercer, S. Keeter, N. Hatley, and K. McGeeney (2016). *Evaluating online nonprobability surveys*. . . . -nonprobability-surveys/(. . . .
- Khan, S. R. (2011). *Privilege: The Making of an Adolescent Elite at St. Paul's School*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton.
- Kluegel, J. R. and E. R. Smith (1986). *Beliefs about Inequality: Americans' Views of What Is and What Ought to Be*. Aldine de Gruyter.
- Krause, M. W. and D. Keltner (2013). Social class rank, essentialism, and punitive judgment. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 105(2), 247–261.
- Kreuter, F., S. Presser, and R. Tourangeau (2008). Social desirability bias in CATI, IVR, and Web surveys the effects of mode and question sensitivity. *Public Opinion Quarterly*.
- Kunda, Z. (1990). The case for motivated reasoning. *Psychological Bulletin* 108(3), 480–498.
- Kunst, J. R., R. Fischer, J. Sidanius, and L. Thomsen (2017). Preferences for group dominance track and mediate the effects of macro-level social inequality and violence across societies. *PNAS* 114(21), 5407–5412.
- Lane, R. E. (1959). The fear of equality. *The American Political Science Review* 53(1).
- Lerner, M. (1980). *The Belief in a Just World: A Fundamental Delusion*. Springer.
- Levy, S. R., C. yue Chiu, and Y. yi Hong (2006). Lay theories and intergroup relations. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* 9(1), 5–24.
- Lewis, O. (1975). *Five Families: Mexican Case Studies in the Culture of Poverty*. New York: Basic Books.
- Lewontin, R., S. Rose, and L. J. Kamin (1984). *Not in Our Genes: Biology, Ideology, and Human Nature*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Malhotra, N. and J. A. Krosnick (2007). The effect of survey mode and sampling on inferences about political attitudes and behavior: Comparing the 2000 and 2004 ANES to Internet surveys with *Political Analysis* 15(03), 286–323.
- Marquis, K., J. Moore, and K. Bogen (1993). Effects of a Cognitive Interviewing Approach on Response Quality in a Pretest for the SIPP. . . . *on Survey Research Methods*.
- Marx, K. ([1906] 1936). *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. New York: The Modern Library.
- Massey, D. S., R. Tourangeau, D. S. Massey, and R. Tourangeau (2013). Where do we go from here? nonresponse and social measurement. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 645(1), 222–236.
- McClosky, H. and J. R. Zaller (1984). *The American Ethos: Public Attitudes Toward Capitalism and Democracy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Mendelberg, T., K. T. McCabe, and A. Thal (2017). College socialization and the economic views of affluent americans. *American Journal of Political Science First View*.
- Moore, J. C. and E. J. Welniak (2000). Income measurement error in surveys: A review. *Journal of Official Statistics* 16(4), 331.
- Morgan, G. S., E. Mullen, and L. J. Skitka (2010). When values and attributions collide: Liberals' and conservatives' values motivate attributions for alleged misdeeds. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 36, 1241–1254.
- Page, B. and C. L. Hennessy (2010). What affluent americans want from politics?

- Page, B. I., L. M. Bartels, and J. Seawright (2013a). Democracy and the policy preferences of wealthy americans. *Perspectives on Politics* 11(1), 51–73.
- Page, B. I., L. M. Bartels, and J. Seawright (2013b). Democracy and the policy preferences of wealthy americans. *Perspectives on Politics* 11(01), 51–73.
- Page, B. I. and L. R. Jacobs (2009). *Class War? What Americans Really Think about Economic Inequality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Pew Research Center (2015). February 2015 political survey.
- Piff, Paul K., D. M. S. S. C. R. M.-D. and D. Keltner (2012). Higher social class predicts increased unethical behavior. *PNAS* 109, 4086–4091.
- Piketty, T. (1995, August). Social Mobility and Redistributive Politics. *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 110(3), 551–584.
- Putnam, R. P. (2015). *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Riphahn, R. T. and O. Serfling (2005). Item non-response on income and wealth questions. *Empirical Economics* 30(2), 521–538.
- Rivers, D. (2007). Sampling for web surveys. In *Joint Statistical Meetings*.
- Rivers, D. (2016). Pew research: Yougov consistently outperforms competitors on accuracy. <https://today.yougov.com/news/2016/05/13/pew-research-yougov/>.
- Ross, L. (1977). Advances in experimental social psychology, vol. 10. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *The Intuitive Psychologist and His Shortcomings: Distortions in the Attribution Process*, pp. 173–220. New York, NY: Academic Press.
- Scholz, E., R. Jutz, J. H. Pammett, and M. Hadler (2017). ISSP and the ISSP 2014 Citizenship II Module: An Introduction. *International Journal of Sociology* 47(1), 1–9.
- Shayo, M. (2009). A model of social identity with an application to political economy: Nation, class, and redistribution. *American Political science review* 103(02), 147–174.
- Shostak, S., J. Freese, B. G. Link, and J. C. Phelan (2009). The politics of the gene: Social status and beliefs about genetics for individual outcomes. *Social Psychology Quarterly* 72, 77–93.
- Sidanius, J., S. Levin, C. M. Federico, and F. Pratto (2001). *The Psychology of Legitimacy: Emerging Perspectives on Ideology, Justice, and Intergroup Relations*, Chapter Legitimizing Ideologies: The Social Dominance Approach, pp. 307–331. Cambridge.
- Singer, E., M. P. Couper, and T. E. Raghunathan (2010). The effect of question framing and response options on the relationship between racial attitudes and beliefs about genes as causes of behavior. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 74(3), 460–476.
- Skitka, L. J., E. Mullen, T. Griffin, S. Hutchinson, and B. Chamberlin (2002). Dispositions, scripts, or motivated correction? understanding ideological differences in explanations for social problems. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 83(2), 470–87.
- Struminskaya, B. (2016). Respondent Conditioning in Online Panel Surveys: Results of Two Field Experiments. *Social Science Computer Review* 34(1), 95–115.
- Suhay, E. (2017). Genetic essentialism. In F. Moghaddam (Ed.), *The Sage Handbook of Political Behavior*. Sage.
- Suhay, E. and T. E. Jayaratne (2013). Does biology justify ideology? the politics of genetic attribution. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 77(2), 497–521.

- Thal, A. (2016). Class isolation and affluent americans' perception of social conditions. *Political Behavior DOI 10.1007/s11109-016-9361-9*.
- Tourangeau, R. and T. Yan (2007). Sensitive questions in surveys. *Psychological bulletin 133*(5), 859.
- Train, K. E. (2007). *Discrete Choice Methods with Simulation*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Valentino, N. A., F. G. Neuner, and L. M. Vandebroek (2017). The changing norms of racial political rhetoric and the end of racial priming. *Working manuscript*.
- van Oorschoot, W. and L. Halman (2000). Blame or fate, individual or social? an international comparison of popular explanations for poverty. *European Societies 2*(1), 1–28.
- Verba, S. and G. R. Orren (1985). *Equality in American: The View from the Top*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard.
- Weber, M. (1958). *Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Volume 163. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Weiner, B., D. Osborne, and U. Rudolph (2011). An attributional analysis of reactions to poverty: The political ideology of the giver and the perceived morality of the receiver. *Personality and Social Psychology Review 15*, 199–213.
- Wilson, W. J. (2010). *More than Just Race: Being Black and Poor in the Inner City*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Yan, T., R. Curtin, and M. Jans (2010). Trends in income nonresponse over two decades. *Journal of Official Statistics 26*(1), 145.
- Yeager, D. S., J. A. Krosnick, L. C. Chang, and H. S. Javitz (2011). Comparing the accuracy of RDD telephone surveys and internet surveys conducted with probability and non-probability samples. *Public Opinion Quarterly 75*(4), 709–747.
- YouGov (2016). Yougov reveals results of inaugural affluent perspective global study. <https://today.yougov.com/news/2016/05/03/yougov-releases-results-inaugural-affluent-perspec/>.
- Zellner, A. (1962). An efficient method of estimating seemingly unrelated regressions and tests for aggregation bias. *Journal of the American Statistical Association 57*(298), 348–368.
- Zorn, C. J. (1998). An analytic and empirical examination of zero-inflated and hurdle poisson specifications. *Sociological Methods & Research 26*(3), 368–400.

APPENDIX

Table A1: Full Results – Getting Ahead Questions

| | Work | | IQ | | Luck | | Family | | Connections | |
|---------------------------|----------|-------|----------|-------|---------|-------|----------|-------|-------------|-------|
| | Coef | SE | Coef | SE | Coef | SE | Coef | SE | Coef | SE |
| Lower middle class | 0.663** | 0.228 | 0.427+ | 0.228 | -0.226 | 0.322 | -0.628+ | 0.337 | 0.124 | 0.215 |
| Middle class | 0.790** | 0.250 | 0.513* | 0.252 | -0.184 | 0.309 | -0.563+ | 0.327 | -0.037 | 0.229 |
| Upper middle class | 1.018** | 0.322 | 0.533+ | 0.285 | -0.125 | 0.383 | -0.988* | 0.432 | -0.231 | 0.305 |
| Affluent (top 5%) | 0.891* | 0.364 | 0.613+ | 0.350 | 0.013 | 0.379 | -0.622 | 0.476 | 0.011 | 0.305 |
| Top 1% | 1.410** | 0.290 | 0.979** | 0.298 | 0.372 | 0.598 | -0.921+ | 0.472 | -0.231 | 0.340 |
| Age | 0.008 | 0.006 | 0.007 | 0.006 | 0.003 | 0.008 | -0.024** | 0.008 | -0.020** | 0.006 |
| Female | 0.395** | 0.151 | 0.236 | 0.146 | 0.105 | 0.205 | 0.200 | 0.212 | 0.382** | 0.148 |
| White | 0.120 | 0.190 | -0.012 | 0.192 | 0.210 | 0.214 | 0.459+ | 0.260 | 0.033 | 0.166 |
| Retired | 0.015 | 0.197 | -0.071 | 0.193 | -0.503+ | 0.258 | 0.553+ | 0.293 | 0.118 | 0.213 |
| Married | 0.020 | 0.155 | -0.047 | 0.151 | 0.014 | 0.223 | -0.325 | 0.255 | -0.091 | 0.159 |
| High school | -0.936** | 0.262 | -0.525+ | 0.283 | -0.176 | 0.529 | -0.406 | 0.414 | -0.479 | 0.340 |
| Some college | -0.870** | 0.273 | -0.313 | 0.279 | -0.721 | 0.542 | -0.669 | 0.451 | -0.675* | 0.338 |
| 2-year college | -0.985** | 0.291 | -0.765* | 0.339 | -1.010+ | 0.581 | 0.046 | 0.506 | -0.505 | 0.425 |
| 4-year college | -0.722* | 0.287 | -0.862** | 0.285 | -0.701 | 0.531 | -0.239 | 0.469 | -0.564+ | 0.336 |
| Post-grad | -1.016** | 0.285 | -0.934** | 0.293 | -0.812 | 0.548 | -0.072 | 0.462 | -0.871* | 0.345 |
| Northeast | -0.503* | 0.240 | -0.786** | 0.243 | -0.338 | 0.261 | -0.365 | 0.307 | -0.045 | 0.220 |
| Midwest | -0.143 | 0.167 | -0.203 | 0.160 | -0.349 | 0.265 | -0.433 | 0.284 | -0.548** | 0.209 |
| West | -0.506** | 0.193 | -0.142 | 0.160 | 0.236 | 0.250 | 0.111 | 0.263 | 0.385* | 0.186 |
| Evolved-natural selection | 0.017 | 0.238 | 0.203 | 0.227 | 0.374 | 0.339 | -0.052 | 0.313 | 0.712** | 0.275 |
| Evolved-supreme being | 0.221 | 0.267 | 0.364 | 0.255 | 0.167 | 0.331 | 0.083 | 0.340 | 0.614* | 0.291 |
| Existed in present state | 0.369 | 0.234 | 0.356 | 0.240 | -0.177 | 0.345 | 0.070 | 0.349 | 0.350 | 0.286 |
| Trust in science | 0.004 | 0.108 | 0.190+ | 0.107 | 0.478** | 0.138 | 0.521** | 0.147 | 0.157 | 0.110 |
| Racial segregation | -0.045 | 0.081 | 0.004 | 0.074 | -0.094 | 0.093 | 0.156 | 0.113 | -0.029 | 0.074 |
| Fairness to whites | 0.071 | 0.066 | 0.018 | 0.064 | -0.021 | 0.079 | -0.157+ | 0.092 | 0.001 | 0.063 |
| Intercept | 5.611** | 0.636 | 4.887** | 0.594 | 3.498** | 0.801 | 4.705** | 0.760 | 5.942** | 0.587 |

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.

Table A2: Full Results – Individual Drive Attributions

| | Choice | | Genes | | Environment | |
|---------------------------|---------|-------|---------|-------|-------------|-------|
| | Coef | SE | Coef | SE | Coef | SE |
| Lower middle class | 0.108 | 0.212 | -0.038 | 0.282 | 0.104 | 0.265 |
| Middle class | 0.327 | 0.216 | -0.050 | 0.322 | -0.297 | 0.356 |
| Upper middle class | 0.540* | 0.257 | -0.045 | 0.381 | -0.356 | 0.381 |
| Affluent (top 5%) | 0.654* | 0.283 | -0.258 | 0.436 | -0.218 | 0.386 |
| Top 1% | 0.868** | 0.288 | 1.151** | 0.384 | 0.099 | 0.344 |
| Age | 0.004 | 0.005 | 0.012+ | 0.007 | -0.003 | 0.006 |
| Female | 0.261+ | 0.139 | 0.024 | 0.201 | -0.158 | 0.173 |
| White | 0.075 | 0.165 | -0.124 | 0.228 | -0.080 | 0.193 |
| Retired | -0.036 | 0.179 | -0.487* | 0.244 | 0.229 | 0.193 |
| Married | -0.114 | 0.152 | -0.246 | 0.201 | 0.029 | 0.187 |
| High school | -0.179 | 0.299 | -0.315 | 0.557 | 0.243 | 0.530 |
| Some college | -0.233 | 0.317 | -0.033 | 0.592 | 0.330 | 0.560 |
| 2-year college | 0.006 | 0.334 | -0.612 | 0.633 | 0.034 | 0.600 |
| 4-year college | -0.208 | 0.318 | -0.474 | 0.620 | 0.798 | 0.612 |
| Post-grad | -0.546 | 0.381 | -0.478 | 0.649 | 0.651 | 0.630 |
| Northeast | -0.440* | 0.174 | -0.102 | 0.237 | -0.336+ | 0.200 |
| Midwest | -0.459* | 0.193 | -0.325 | 0.235 | -0.139 | 0.209 |
| West | -0.276 | 0.173 | 0.000 | 0.234 | -0.121 | 0.169 |
| Evolved-natural selection | 0.233 | 0.227 | -0.500+ | 0.274 | 0.288 | 0.248 |
| Evolved-supreme being | 0.209 | 0.262 | 0.112 | 0.246 | 0.385 | 0.245 |
| Existed in present state | 0.305 | 0.234 | 0.242 | 0.285 | 0.227 | 0.264 |
| Trust in science | -0.081 | 0.082 | 0.120 | 0.134 | 0.024 | 0.106 |
| Racial segregation | -0.044 | 0.053 | 0.224* | 0.096 | 0.135 | 0.083 |
| Fairness to whites | 0.080 | 0.054 | 0.135+ | 0.077 | 0.020 | 0.064 |
| Intercept | 5.674** | 0.536 | 3.581** | 0.853 | 5.263** | 0.820 |

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.

Table A3: Full Results – Individual IQ Attributions

| | Choice | | Genes | | Environment | |
|---------------------------|---------|-------|---------|-------|-------------|-------|
| | Coef | SE | Coef | SE | Coef | SE |
| Lower middle class | -0.185 | 0.276 | 0.473+ | 0.283 | 0.363 | 0.292 |
| Middle class | -0.193 | 0.347 | 0.428 | 0.350 | 0.175 | 0.349 |
| Upper middle class | -0.453 | 0.425 | 0.315 | 0.391 | -0.017 | 0.383 |
| Affluent (top 5%) | -0.279 | 0.412 | 0.602 | 0.435 | -0.018 | 0.425 |
| Top 1% | 0.814+ | 0.437 | 1.283** | 0.332 | 0.301 | 0.405 |
| Age | 0.007 | 0.007 | -0.000 | 0.007 | 0.000 | 0.007 |
| Female | 0.205 | 0.201 | 0.025 | 0.190 | -0.065 | 0.185 |
| White | 0.184 | 0.224 | 0.242 | 0.222 | 0.072 | 0.227 |
| Retired | -0.193 | 0.256 | -0.217 | 0.233 | -0.117 | 0.259 |
| Married | 0.016 | 0.198 | -0.101 | 0.201 | -0.158 | 0.218 |
| High school | 0.582 | 0.511 | 0.388 | 0.447 | 0.607 | 0.566 |
| Some college | 0.472 | 0.544 | 0.678 | 0.494 | 0.807 | 0.578 |
| 2-year college | 0.460 | 0.567 | 0.608 | 0.518 | 0.145 | 0.618 |
| 4-year college | 0.247 | 0.582 | 0.374 | 0.545 | 0.942 | 0.626 |
| Post-grad | 0.313 | 0.623 | 0.375 | 0.558 | 1.028 | 0.640 |
| Northeast | -0.558* | 0.249 | -0.214 | 0.267 | -0.269 | 0.229 |
| Midwest | -0.451+ | 0.256 | 0.001 | 0.214 | -0.280 | 0.247 |
| West | -0.264 | 0.233 | 0.291 | 0.210 | 0.098 | 0.218 |
| Evolved-natural selection | -0.224 | 0.295 | -0.179 | 0.277 | -0.212 | 0.262 |
| Evolved-supreme being | 0.177 | 0.288 | 0.190 | 0.277 | 0.128 | 0.263 |
| Existed in present state | 0.216 | 0.303 | -0.061 | 0.298 | 0.125 | 0.296 |
| Trust in science | -0.056 | 0.128 | 0.041 | 0.122 | 0.057 | 0.134 |
| Racial segregation | 0.072 | 0.104 | 0.215** | 0.082 | 0.134 | 0.097 |
| Fairness to whites | 0.016 | 0.080 | 0.096 | 0.072 | -0.018 | 0.066 |
| Intercept | 4.269** | 0.804 | 3.538** | 0.771 | 4.219** | 0.780 |

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.

Table A4: Full Results – Class Drive Attributions

| | Choice | | Genes | | Environment | |
|---------------------------|---------|-------|---------|-------|-------------|-------|
| | Coef | SE | Coef | SE | Coef | SE |
| Lower middle class | 0.404 | 0.334 | 0.333 | 0.300 | 0.362 | 0.351 |
| Middle class | 0.746* | 0.328 | 0.547+ | 0.295 | 0.558 | 0.343 |
| Upper middle class | 0.024 | 0.477 | 0.376 | 0.396 | -0.164 | 0.488 |
| Affluent (top 5%) | 0.084 | 0.492 | 0.070 | 0.405 | 0.122 | 0.506 |
| Top 1% | 1.432** | 0.440 | 1.774** | 0.457 | 0.743+ | 0.402 |
| Age | 0.003 | 0.009 | 0.018* | 0.008 | -0.013 | 0.009 |
| Female | 0.080 | 0.220 | -0.103 | 0.204 | -0.110 | 0.224 |
| White | -0.434+ | 0.251 | -0.394+ | 0.239 | -0.228 | 0.277 |
| Retired | 0.214 | 0.300 | -0.331 | 0.257 | 0.628* | 0.300 |
| Married | 0.444+ | 0.234 | -0.022 | 0.218 | 0.304 | 0.232 |
| High school | 0.053 | 0.639 | -0.197 | 0.607 | 0.679 | 0.626 |
| Some college | 0.540 | 0.690 | -0.003 | 0.644 | 0.748 | 0.685 |
| 2-year college | 0.377 | 0.704 | 0.033 | 0.641 | 0.881 | 0.677 |
| 4-year college | 0.572 | 0.682 | -0.608 | 0.629 | 1.187+ | 0.676 |
| Post-grad | 0.516 | 0.696 | -0.189 | 0.642 | 1.227+ | 0.687 |
| Northeast | -0.007 | 0.313 | 0.196 | 0.257 | 0.531+ | 0.312 |
| Midwest | 0.022 | 0.297 | 0.022 | 0.280 | 0.051 | 0.330 |
| West | 0.455 | 0.301 | 0.361 | 0.262 | 0.654* | 0.282 |
| Evolved-natural selection | 0.108 | 0.383 | -0.314 | 0.379 | 0.333 | 0.400 |
| Evolved-supreme being | 0.659+ | 0.391 | 0.225 | 0.368 | 0.757+ | 0.399 |
| Existed in present state | 0.408 | 0.386 | 0.599 | 0.378 | 0.413 | 0.394 |
| Trust in science | -0.331* | 0.166 | 0.025 | 0.172 | 0.035 | 0.167 |
| Racial segregation | 0.363** | 0.104 | 0.418** | 0.099 | 0.350** | 0.101 |
| Fairness to whites | -0.040 | 0.086 | 0.120 | 0.084 | -0.132 | 0.085 |

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.

Table A5: Full Results – Class IQ Attributions

| | Choice | | Genes | | Environment | |
|---------------------------|---------|-------|---------|-------|-------------|-------|
| | Coef | SE | Coef | SE | Coef | SE |
| Lower middle class | -0.138 | 0.324 | 0.324 | 0.310 | 0.172 | 0.356 |
| Middle class | 0.369 | 0.399 | 0.219 | 0.388 | 0.159 | 0.417 |
| Upper middle class | -0.341 | 0.480 | -0.090 | 0.478 | -0.410 | 0.536 |
| Affluent (top 5%) | -0.906+ | 0.505 | -0.278 | 0.529 | -0.976+ | 0.556 |
| Top 1% | -0.431 | 0.868 | -0.213 | 0.764 | -0.845 | 0.814 |
| Age | -0.015 | 0.010 | -0.018+ | 0.010 | -0.019+ | 0.011 |
| Female | -0.360 | 0.259 | -0.298 | 0.244 | -0.561* | 0.262 |
| White | -0.079 | 0.324 | -0.187 | 0.312 | -0.240 | 0.331 |
| Retired | 0.656+ | 0.360 | 0.418 | 0.348 | 0.745+ | 0.388 |
| Married | 0.288 | 0.266 | -0.027 | 0.253 | 0.206 | 0.285 |
| High school | -0.991 | 0.604 | -0.720 | 0.517 | -1.135+ | 0.645 |
| Some college | -0.127 | 0.620 | -0.048 | 0.535 | 0.173 | 0.665 |
| 2-year college | 0.379 | 0.686 | 0.271 | 0.597 | 0.225 | 0.719 |
| 4-year college | 0.387 | 0.606 | 0.391 | 0.551 | 0.772 | 0.667 |
| Post-grad | 0.626 | 0.601 | 0.388 | 0.542 | 1.264+ | 0.646 |
| Northeast | -0.148 | 0.337 | 0.624+ | 0.331 | 0.246 | 0.360 |
| Midwest | -0.131 | 0.344 | 0.481 | 0.312 | 0.266 | 0.366 |
| West | 0.098 | 0.342 | 0.707* | 0.325 | 0.328 | 0.358 |
| Evolved-natural selection | -0.453 | 0.432 | -0.217 | 0.418 | -0.160 | 0.460 |
| Evolved-supreme being | 0.386 | 0.431 | 0.620 | 0.418 | 0.659 | 0.445 |
| Existed in present state | -0.004 | 0.447 | 0.220 | 0.425 | -0.239 | 0.467 |
| Trust in science | -0.284 | 0.187 | -0.108 | 0.179 | -0.064 | 0.192 |
| Racial segregation | 0.571** | 0.118 | 0.565** | 0.114 | 0.615** | 0.128 |
| Fairness to whites | 0.002 | 0.099 | 0.160+ | 0.096 | -0.090 | 0.100 |

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.