The Effect of Momentary Changes of Individual Subjective Socioeconomic Status on Preferences for Redistributive Policies

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Abstract

Support for redistributive policies is often thought to be stable over time. However, the current research seeks to investigate whether situational influences could lead to changes in preferences for redistribution. Because economic self-interest is a predictor of policy preference, we were interested in investigating if subjective understandings of social standing could change support for redistributive policies. We manipulated individuals' subjective SES and then tested how this influenced attitudes towards redistributive policies. We found that subjective SES did affect policy preferences; participants in the high subjective SES condition were less likely to support redistributive policies than participants in the low subjective SES condition. This suggests that perceived self-interest influences voting behaviors. Furthermore, our manipulation affected participants' self-report of how conservative they are and attitudes towards social policy. Thus, voting behaviors are not as stable as previously believed. Rather, feeling relatively richer or poorer effects policy preference.

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Voting behaviors are commonly assumed to be stable. The swing vote of the political moderate is shrinking as political parties and active voters are becoming more polarized (McCarty, Poole, & Rosenthal, 2006; Abramowitz & Saunders, 2008). Thus, politicians and voters are becoming more set in their own beliefs. In addition, when children grow up, they are more likely to vote in the way that their parents vote than to switch political parties (Lyons, 2005). All of this information suggests individuals' support for political policies and ideologies are stable. However, we were interested to see if there are circumstances and situations that can affect individuals' policy preference.

This paper looks at whether temporary changes in social class perceptions can influence individuals' support for redistributive policies, or policies that transfer wealth and opportunity from those who have more to those who have less. We manipulated individuals' subjective socioeconomic status (SES) and then tested resulting policy preferences. We wanted to investigate how momentary feelings of wealth (or lack of wealth) could influence support for redistributive policies.

Social Class

Social class can be operationalized in three different ways. Each way leads to different assumptions and conclusions about social class. First and most basic, social class can be thought of as a number. Usually, this number is defined as an individual's income. This allows for a ranking of individuals from richest to poorest. However, this understanding of social class is overly simplistic, as it does not address other aspects that encompass an individual's social standing. In fact, income level is more indicative of voting behavior in poor states than in rich

states (Gelman, 2008). Thus, rich voters in red America vote differently than rich voters in blue America. This suggests that there are other aspects related to an individual's social standing and policy preference than just income.

A more comprehensive understanding of social class is socioeconomic status (SES). SES is the most commonly used indicator of social class in research. It is conceptualized as a combination of many factors, including income, education level, occupation, and health, to create a more broad understanding of class distinctions. Extensive research has been conducted on the effect of SES on behavioral and health outcomes. This research has stressed the structural factors that affect individuals' outcomes, including the effects of social position, poverty, wealth, job security and unemployment, stress, education, family and social networks, and social organization (Wilkinson, 1996). Understanding class distinctions in this way show us how society affects an individual.

However, newer research has shown that social class can also be a subjective psychological perception (e.g. Adler, Epel, Castellazzo, & Ickovics, 2000; Kraus, Piff, & Keltner, 2009). Subjective status decisions can be thought of as a personal cognitive summation of many factors of social standing (Singh-Manoux, Adler, & Marmot, 2003). This includes measures of objective SES, as well as the individual's perceived financial security, understanding of future prospects, and their own position on the social hierarchy (Singh-Manoux, Marmot, & Adler, 2005). In fact, research using the MacArthur Scale has shown that subjective SES ratings are actually better predictors of health behaviors than objective SES or income (Singh-Manoux et al., 2005).

Individuals' subjective SES can be measured using the MacArthur Scale of Subjective Social Status (Adler et al., 2000). In this measure, individuals are presented with a graphic of a

ten-rung ladder and are told that it represents where people stand on the social ladder in the U.S. The top of the ladder is said to represent those who are "best off" – people with the most money, the most respected jobs, and the most education. The bottom of the ladder is said to represent those who are "worst off" – people with the least money, the least respecting jobs, and the least education. Individuals are asked to place themselves on the ladder by placing an "x" on the rung that they believe best describes their social status compared to others.

Interestingly, an individual's perception of his or her social class standing is malleable and can be manipulated based on social comparison to others (Adler et al., 2000; Kraus et al., 2009; Piff, Kraus, Cote, Cheng, & Keltner, 2010). Manipulating subjective SES can in turn change behavioral responses. One such example is how individuals and groups respond to relative deprivation, or the feeling of being denied positive outcomes enjoyed by comparable others. Individuals are more likely to engage in impulsive behaviors like gambling to alleviate the negative emotions that arise after experiencing personal relative deprivation (Callan, Shead, & Olson, 2011). Additionally, after experiencing fraternal relative deprivation, members of disadvantaged groups are more likely to engage in intergroup competition from their motivation to not fall behind (Halevy, Chou, Cohen, & Bornstein, 2010). Based off of this research, we were interested to investigate how manipulating an individual's perceived social standing through social comparison would influence his or her political beliefs and voting behaviors.

Voting Patterns

Over the past 40 years, partisan stratification based on income has steadily increased (McCarty et al., 2006). In other words, more rich people are voting Republican and supporting conservative policies, while more people are voting Democratic and supporting liberal policies. In fact, high-income individuals are about 15% more likely to vote Republican than low-income

individuals (Gelman, Kenworthy, & Su, 2010). Rich people, then, are less likely to support liberal redistributive polices than poor people.

This is not surprising given the economic self-interest of both high and low SES individuals. After all, redistributive policies attempt to correct contextual and structural disadvantage in society by taking money from high SES individuals and giving it to low SES individuals. It is in high SES individuals' self-interest to not support redistributive policies, while it is in low SES individuals' self-interest to support redistributive policies, which were specifically designed to help them.

Thus, economic self-interest predicts that there is a dispositional difference between poor and rich individuals. That is, lacking money leads to support for redistribution. However, because objective SES is often not the best predictor of behavior, we wanted to understand whether momentary changes in subjective SES would also influence support for redistribution. This would suggest that situational influences, not just dispositional differences, could lead to support for redistributive policies.

Present Research

With the present work, we examined the conditions under which individuals are more or less likely to support redistributive policies. To investigate this, we randomly assigned participants to receive feedback that they had either more or less disposable income than comparable others after filling out a financial spending habits survey, as previously used in research by Callan and colleagues (2011). Participants who received feedback that they had more disposable income were in the high subjective SES condition, and participants who received feedback that they had less disposable income were in the low subjective SES condition. All participants then answered a series of questionnaires regarding their attitudes towards

redistributive policies. We measured whether support for redistribution differed as a result of subjective SES.

Based on the previous research, we hypothesized that when manipulated to be in the high subjective SES condition, individuals would be less likely to support liberal redistributive policies. Conversely, when manipulated to be in the low subjective SES condition, individuals would be more likely to support liberal redistributive policies. If our hypotheses are correct, they will show that situation and context affect individual's policy preferences. Self-interest is a determining factor in support for redistributive policies. These findings would contradict previous assumptions that political beliefs are stable over time, and that individuals not only know, but also are good predictors of, where they stand on the social ladder.

Method

Participants

We recruited 183 participants using Amazon mTurk. 147 participants completed all of the variables of interest (81= female; 65= male). The sample included 118 White participants, 15 Black participants, 11 Asian participants, and 11 other (Hispanic, Native American, and Other). The average age of the participants was 34.7 years old, *sd* =12.67*; min* = 18*, max* = 65. The average income of the participants ranged from less than $5,000 to $175,000 or more, with 65% of participants indicating between $20,000 and $74,999. 13% indicated having a high school degree, 33.6% indicated completing some college, 8.2% indicated having a two-year college degree, 31.5% indicated having a four-year college degree, 10.3% indicating having a master's degree, and 3.4% indicated having a doctorate degree. Participants were compensated $0.50 for their time.

Materials

All of the questions asked in these questionnaires can be found in the Appendix.

MacArthur Scale of Subjective Social Status. This self-anchoring scale measured individuals' subjective social standing. Participants were presented with a graphic of a ten-rung ladder. The ladder was explained as representing where people stand on the social ladder in the U.S. The top of the ladder was said to represent those who are "best off" – people with the most money, the most respected jobs, and the most education. The bottom of the ladder was said to represent those who are "worst off" – people with the least money, the least respecting jobs, and the least education. Participants were asked to place an "x" on the rung that they believe best describes their social status compared to others. This allowed us to measure participants' sense of where they stand on the social ladder.

Redistribution Questionnaire. This eleven-item questionnaire gauged the participants' attitudes towards financial redistributive policies, including raising federal income taxes to support public services and health care systems. Questions included items like, "How do you feel about raising federal income taxes for people who make more than $200,000 per year" and "How do you feel about a policy that cuts public services for low income individuals to reduce the federal deficit?" These questions also assessed to what extent participants agree or disagree with different forms of redistribution. For example, the items make distinctions between raising income taxes for those who make over $200,000 per year, raising income taxes for those who make over $200,000 per year to benefit low-income individuals, and raising income taxes for those who make over $200,000 per year to benefit senior citizens. Participants indicated how much they oppose or favor these statements using a six-point Likert-type scale, (1= I Greatly Oppose this Policy; 6= I Greatly Favor this Policy). This measure also included four questions

that assess participants' opinions about taxation. Questions included items like, "In general, the wealthy should be taxed to provide benefits for the poor" and "People should be able to keep the money they earn without government taxation." Participants indicated how much they agree or disagree with each statement using a six point Likert-type scale, (1= Strongly Disagree; 6= Strongly Agree). Finally, this measure was highly reliable (α = .91).

Political Orientation. This one question asked how politically liberal or conservative participants considered themselves (1= Very liberal; 5= Very conservative).

Procedure and Design

Participants were told that they were to be a part of an ongoing study focusing on the relationship between discretionary income and financial behavior. To create a sense of credibility for our story, participants filled out a series of surveys regarding their spending habits, personality, and demographics. They were also told that upon completing these surveys, they would receive feedback about their discretionary income as it compares to the discretionary income of others who had taken the survey. This feedback was presented in terms of a positive or negative "Comparative Discretionary Income index score," or CDI index score. This process was previously used by Callan et al. (2011) to manipulate individual's perception of his or her socioeconomic status.

Participants began by answering a 19-item Financial Conscientiousness Survey (Ellard, 2007). This included items like, "I make sure that I'm getting the best deal for my money before I buy" and "When I withdraw money from the bank, I don't pay much attention to my account balance." Then, participants answered ten questions about their personality and how much particular traits and characteristics apply to them. Finally, participants provided demographic information and some basic information about the average amount of money they spend on

housing, food, clothing, transportation, and debt payments. After completing these surveys, participants were shown a screen that explained that their answers were now to be analyzed and compared to others' who had taken the surveys.

The computer then "calculated" each participant's CDI index score. The screen showed an animated progress bar that showed the computer's "progress" in analyzing and calculating the CDI index score. The text switched from "Calculating. Please wait" to "Accessing database. Please wait" and finally to "Calculating CDI index score. Please wait." Each participant was randomly assigned either a CDI index score of –C$523 (perceived low class condition) or +C$87 (perceived high class condition). Following the presentation of the score, each participant read the following explanation of the CDI score:

> Your CDI index score was derived from statistical analyses using both the information from your profile and the information in our database from people who matched your profile. Your CDI index score represents on average how much monthly discretionary income you have relative to people who matched your profile. A *negative* (-) CDI index score means that you have on average *less* discretionary income than similar others. A *positive* (+) CDI index score means you have on average *more* discretionary income than similar others.

To ensure that participants understood their CDI index score, all participants were instructed to write few sentences explaining why they believe they received the score that they did. All participants then indicated where they believed they belonged on the MacArthur Scale of Subjective Social Status.

Then, participants completed the redistribution and conservative questionnaires, and filled out more demographic information including age, gender, race, and household income and

education levels. Finally, each participant was debriefed and told that his or her CDI index score was randomly assigned and had nothing to do with the information that he or she provided in the initial Financial Conscientiousness Survey.

Although participants took the Belief in a Just World scale (Rubin & Peplau, 1975), System Justification scale (Kay & Jost, 2003), and wealth distribution questionnaire, these scales were not influenced by the social class manipulation. Therefore, they are not discussed further. The results discussed below are only based on answers of participants who passed an attention check at the beginning of the study.

Results

Descriptive findings

We first assessed the correlational relationships among the key variables (see Table 1). These variables include participants' randomly assigned condition (high or low subjective SES), self-reported ratings of subjective social standing (using the MacArthur Scale), support for redistributive policies (labeled Redistribution), self-reported annual income (labeled Income), and self-reported political orientation (labeled Conservative). Of interest, we found a negative correlation between self-reports of subjective SES and support for redistribution ($r = -.189$, $p < .05$), suggesting that participants who self-reported high subjective SES were less likely to support redistribution that participants who self-reported low subjective SES. In addition, we found a positive correlation between self-reports of subjective SES and participant's income ($r = .613$, $p < .01$). Participants with more income reported higher subjective SES than participants with less income. In addition, we found a negative correlation between participants' income and support for redistribution ($r = -.173$, $p < .05$), suggesting that participants with more income were less likely to support redistribution that participants with less income. Finally, we found a

negative correlation between support for redistribution and self-reported levels of conservatism ($r = -.594$, $p < .01$). Participants who supported redistribution were less likely to self-identify as conservative than participants who did not support redistribution.

Manipulation Check. We hypothesized that when they received feedback that they had relatively less discretionary income than similar others (thus, in the low subjective SES condition), participants would also report a lower subjective SES level on the MacArthur Scale. To confirm that the manipulation successfully influenced subjects' perception of their own social standing, we first analyzed whether subjective SES ratings differed as a function of condition. As expected, participants who received feedback that they had relatively more discretionary income (thus, were in the high subjective SES condition) reported having higher subjective SES on the MacArthur Scale ($M = 5.17$, $SD = 1.64$) than participants who received feedback that they had relatively less discretionary income ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 1.61$), $F(1, 176) = 22.47$, $p < .001$. (See Table 2 for means and standard deviations between conditions).

Main effect of condition on support of redistributive policies. Our critical question was whether feeling whether feeling relatively wealthier or poorer than others influenced support for redistributive policies. We hypothesized participants in the high subjective SES condition would be less supportive of redistributive policies than participants in the low subjective SES condition. Supporting our hypothesis, participants in the high subjective SES condition were less supportive of redistribution ($M = -.096$, $SD = .079$) than participants in the low subjective SES condition ($M = .215$, $SD = .083$), $F(1, 144) = 7.29$, $p = .008$. Furthermore, we found that this effect remained significant when controlling for participants' reported annual income, $F(1, 143) = 4.34$, $p = .04$. These means were standardized as z-scores because questions in the redistribution questionnaire were measured on different scales.

Finally, we were interested in whether feeling relatively wealthier or poorer than others influenced participants' self-reported political orientation. Because conservative ideology aligns with lack of support of redistribution, we hypothesized that participants in the high subjective SES condition would be more likely to self-identify as a conservative than participants in the low subjective SES condition. Our results support this hypothesis, $F(1,144) = 3.97$, $p = .048$. Participants in the high subjective SES condition were more likely to self-identify as conservative ($M = 2.57$, $SD = 1.13$) than participants in the low subjective SES condition ($M = 2.21$, $SD = 1.07$). Additionally, this effect remains significant when controlling for participants' income, $F(1, 143) = 4.05$, $p = .046$.

Discussion

In summary, our analyses show that our manipulation of perceived social standing did in fact lead participants to feel subjectively wealthy or subjectively poorer. Furthermore, the temporary feeling of high or low subjective SES affected participants' support of redistributive policies. Those in the low subjective SES condition were more likely to support redistributive policies, as well as were more likely to believe that the wealthy should be taxed to support the poor. On the other hand, those in the high subjective SES condition were less likely to support redistributive policies, and were less likely to believe that the wealthy should be taxed to support the poor.

These findings show that short-term feelings about and understandings of wealth can change individuals' political beliefs. We found this to be true using a range of ways of asking about support for redistributive policies. For example, the redistribution questionnaire included items about attitudes towards wealth and health equality. Our results show that our manipulation not only influenced how much participants supported equal access to wealth, but also how much

participants supported equal opportunity for health. Thus, the manipulation affected beliefs about both economic and social policy.

Furthermore, the questionnaire included items that gauged attitudes toward raising taxes on the rich to benefit the poor as a way to fix inequality in society. Some questions gauged attitudes towards raising taxes with specific anchors. That is, support for raising taxes for people who make over a certain amount of money per year to support the poor. Other questions, however, gauged attitudes towards raising taxes with non-specific anchors, or general support for raising taxes for those with more money to support those with less money. Participants in the low subjective SES condition supported increased taxation with both specific and non-specific anchors.

These findings contradict the belief that people are opposed to raising taxes. Within just a few minutes, we were able to make some participants support taxation through a simple manipulation. However, participants in the high subjective SES condition did not support taxing the wealthy to benefit the poor. These findings suggest that self-interest does in fact play a role in support for economic policies despite the fact that most Americans are quick to assert that it does not affect their voting patterns. Participants supported the policy that would most benefit them and their perceived class. This is surprising given previous understandings that political beliefs are stable. However, we were able to alter these beliefs with a fairly simple, quick manipulation.

At the end of the study, we asked participants to self-report their political ideology. Interestingly, this self-report was influenced by the participant's condition; those in the high subjective SES condition were more likely to self-report being conservative, while those in the

low subjective SES condition were more likely to self-report being liberal. This suggests that the manipulation may have actually effected participants' perception of their own political ideology.

In summary, our findings suggest that support for redistribution is motivated by perceived self-interest. Each participant still had the same amount of money before and after the manipulation. Therefore, the self-interest was not based on a change in objective wealth, but rather the support for redistribution was motivated by how rich or poor the participants felt compared to others. Participants were more likely to support policies that benefited their own perceived self-interest based on their subjective SES.

Limitations and Future Directions

As this research is just beginning, it is uncertain whether the effects of subjective SES on policy preference could be replicated in a more "real life" situation, rather than just a survey-based experiment. For example, although our manipulation was quite simple, it is uncertain whether a less direct manipulation of subjective wealth could influence policy preference in a similar way. Further research could investigate how attitudes towards redistribution differ after less direct experiences of relative deprivation, like social interactions with individuals who are given desirable opportunities or items. This research would expand upon understandings of how much relative deprivation one must feel to affect support for redistributive policies.

It is also unclear as to whether it is possible to manipulate subjective SES for longer than just a short survey. That is, if the effects of social comparison can influence individuals' preferences over time. By adding a distractor task after the manipulation, we could investigate how salient feeling relatively richer or poorer than others must be to influence support for redistributive policies. Further replications of this study and our manipulation could address these methodological questions.

Our study briefly mentioned the relationship between subjective SES and support for health policies. However, future research could examine the relationship between subjective SES and a wide range of political policies including support for social policies, like women's rights, education, or stricter gun control. Using our same method, future research could manipulate subjective SES and then see how social policy preference answers on questionnaires differ based on condition. Such research could expand upon the question of whether political ideology itself, rather than just policy preference, can be manipulated. Furthermore, it could lead to a better understanding of the role of perceived economic self-interest on social policy.

All of these suggested future directions would expand upon the understanding the effects of subjective SES, and continue to show how context and situation affect preferences previously assumed to be stable in individuals.

General Conclusion

We were able to manipulate subjective SES and measure how this affected policy preference of redistributive policies. Participants in the high subjective SES condition were less likely to support redistributive policies than participants in the low subjective SES condition. In addition, participants in the high subjective SES condition were more likely to self-report as conservatives than participants in the low subjective SES condition. Our findings show that feeling relatively richer or poorer than others influences policy preference, particularly regarding redistributive policies. Thus, perceived self-interest, situation, and context affect these policy preferences, showing that these preferences are malleable not stable as previously assumed.

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TABLE 1.

Correlations Between Variables of Interest

	MacArthur	Redistribution	Conservative
MacArthur			
Redistribution	-.189*		
Conservative	.028	-.594**	
Income	.613**	-.173*	-.017

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

TABLE 2.

Means and standard deviations in each condition for variables of interest

Condition	MacArthur	Redistribution	Conservative
Low Subjective SES	4.06 (1.61)	.215 (.083)	2.21 (1.07)
High Subjective SES	5.17 (1.64)	-.096 (.079)	2.57 (1.13)

Note: Standard deviations are in parentheses

APPENDIX.

Social Class Manipulation:

Instructions: The following questionnaire is part of an ongoing project examining discretionary income. Discretionary income is defined as the amount of a person's income available for spending after the essentials (i.e., food, clothing, shelter, transportation, and debt) have been taken care of. This project is interested in examining trends in discretionary income and financial behavior.

In the following sections, you'll be asked questions about your financial behaviors, personality, income, spending, and demographics. It is important that you be as accurate as you can. At the end of this study, using statistical analyses, we will provide you with feedback about your discretionary income as it compares to the discretionary income of people who match your particular profile (which will be determined by the information you provide). This information will also be used as a part of this project.

Please read each of the following statements carefully and decide how often you engage in each of the specified behaviors. Select the option that best corresponds to your judgment using the scale below.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always

1. I buy lots of little things without paying much attention to how much I'm spending
2. I keep a close watch on how much money is in my bank account
3. I pay close attention to my credit card balance
4. I spend a lot of time on stores and shopping malls
5. I try to regularly put away a little bit of money so I have some savings to fall back on
6. At the end of the month, I'm surprised by how high my credit card balance is
7. I don't worry about whether I can afford a purchase until after I buy
8. I evaluate carefully whether I can afford a purchase before I'm willing to go ahead with it
9. I mull over a potential purchase for a while instead of making a decision in the heat of the moment
10. I make sure that I'm getting the best deal for my money before I buy
11. My friends and family would say that I am financially responsible.
12. I enjoy browsing in stores to consider purchases I might like to make in the future
13. I don't pay too much attention to my spending patterns because it all seems to work out in the end anyhow
14. I don't go shopping unless I have a specific purchase I need to make
15. When I withdraw money from the bank, I don't pay much attention to my account balance.
16. I don't find shopping fun and prefer to entertain myself in other ways.
17. I prefer not to think about my overall financial picture when I'm thinking about making a purchase
18. I derive a lot of enjoyment from buying things

19. Shopping is a form of entertainment for me

Instructions: Here are a number of personality traits that may or may not apply to you. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement. You should rate the extent to which the pair of trait applies to you, even if one characteristic applies more strongly than the other.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree

1. Extraverted, enthusiastic
2. Critical, quarrelsome
3. Dependable, self-disciplined
4. Anxious, easily upset
5. Open to new experiences, complex
6. Reserved, quiet
7. Sympathetic, warm
8. Disorganized, careless
9. Calm, emotionally stable
10. Conventional, uncreative

Instructions: Please provide the following demographic information about yourself

1. What is your gender? (Male; Female)
2. How old are you in years?
3. Do you currently live at home? (Yes; No)
4. What is your marital status? (Married; Living Common Law; Widowed; Divorced; Separated; Single)
5. In the space provided, please report your AVERAGE monthly income over the last 6 months. Your AVERAGE income can come from employment, family, and/or other relevant sources.
6. In the space provided, please report the percentage of your average monthly income that came from employment.

Instructions: In the following section, you'll be asked to provide the AVERAGE amount you have spent each month on housing, food, clothing, transportation, and debt over the previous 6 months. Please remember to provide your AVERAGE monthly spending for each item.

1. How much did you spend on HOUSING costs (including utilities)? If you live in a dormitory, try to estimate how much money the dormitory living costs for 6 months.
2. How much did you spend on FOOD?
3. How much did you spend on CLOTHING?
4. How much did you spend on TRANSPORTATION?
5. How much did you spend on DEBT PAYMENTS?

Instructions: On the basis of the information you provided, we will now calculate your Comparative Discretionary Income Index (CDI Index) Score. The CDI index measures a person's standing in terms of his/her own average monthly discretionary income relative to the discretionary income of similar others. Based on the information you provided, the index will produce a score using your profile and the information in our database from people who match your profile. The score will tell you in dollars how much monthly discretionary income you have relative to people who match your profile. Depending on current database activities, the process may take up to a minute to complete. Please click 'continue' to calculate your CDI index score.

Condition 1 (Upper Class): Based on your profile, your Comparative Discretionary Income Index Score is $+144. *How to interpret your CDI Index Score:*Your CDI Index Score was derived from statistical analyses using both the information from your profile and the information in our database from people who matched your profile. Your CDI Index Score represents on average how much monthly discretionary income you have relative to people who matched your profile. A *negative* (-) CDI Index Score means that you have on average *less* discretionary income than similar others. A *positive* (+) CDI Index Score means you have on average *more* discretionary income than similar others.

In the space below, please take a few minutes to explain why you think you have received this score. Please write a few sentences about why you have received this score.

Condition 2 (Lower Class): Based on your profile, your Comparative Discretionary Income Index Score is $-523. *How to interpret your CDI Index Score:*Your CDI Index Score was derived from statistical analyses using both the information from your profile and the information in our database from people who matched your profile. Your CDI Index Score represents on average how much monthly discretionary income you have relative to people who matched your profile. A *negative* (-) CDI Index Score means that you have on average *less* discretionary income than similar others. A *positive* (+) CDI Index Score means you have on average *more* discretionary income than similar others.

In the space below, please take a few minutes to explain why you think you have received this score. Please write a few sentences about why you have received this score.

MacArthur Scale of Subjective Social Status

Think of this ladder as representing where people stand in the United States.

At the **top** of the ladder are the people who are the best off – those who have the most money, the most education and the most respected jobs. At the **bottom** are the people who are the worst off – who have the least money, least education, and the least respected jobs or no job. The higher up you are on this ladder, the closer you are to the people at the very top; the lower you are, the closer you are to the people at the very bottom.

Where would you place yourself on this ladder?

Please place a large "**X**" on the rung where you think you stand at this time in your life, relative to other people in the United States.

Redistribution Questionnaire

Instructions: Now we would like to ask you some questions about social class in the U.S.

1. Some people think the distribution of money and wealth in this country is fair, while others think the money and wealth in this country should be more evenly distributed. What do you think about the distribution of money and wealth in this country?
   A. The distribution of money and wealth is completely FAIR
   B. The distribution of money and wealth is slightly fair
   C. The distribution of money and wealth is slightly unfair
   D. The distribution of money and wealth is completely UNFAIR

2. The American households with incomes in the top 20% earn an average of $170,000 per year, and households with incomes in the bottom 20% earn an average of less than $11,000 per year. Should this difference be smaller, about what it is now, or bigger?
   A. A great deal smaller
   B. Moderately smaller
   C. A little smaller
   D. About what it is now
   E. A little bigger
   F. Moderately bigger
   G. A great deal bigger

3. How do you feel about raising federal income taxes for people who make MORE THAN $200,000 per year?
   A. I greatly OPPOSE this policy
   B. I moderately OPPOSE this policy
   C. I slightly OPPOSE this policy
   D. I slightly FAVOR this policy
   E. I moderately FAVOR this policy
   F. I greatly FAVOR this policy

4. How do you feel about raising federal income taxes for people who make more than $200,000 per year to benefit public services for low income individuals?
   A. I greatly OPPOSE this policy
   B. I moderately OPPOSE this policy
   C. I slightly OPPOSE this policy
   D. I slightly FAVOR this policy
   E. I moderately FAVOR this policy
   F. I greatly FAVOR this policy

5. How do you feel about cutting public services for low income individuals in order to cut federal income taxes for people who make more than $200,000?
   A. I greatly OPPOSE this policy
   B. I moderately OPPOSE this policy
   C. I slightly OPPOSE this policy
   D. I slightly FAVOR this policy
   E. I moderately FAVOR this policy
   F. I greatly FAVOR this policy

6. To reduce the federal deficit some people think that taxes on people who make more than $250,000 annually should be raised. How would you feel about a policy that raises taxes on people who make more than $250,000 annually to reduce the federal deficit?
   A. I greatly OPPOSE this policy
   B. I moderately OPPOSE this policy
   C. I slightly OPPOSE this policy
   D. I slightly FAVOR this policy
   E. I moderately FAVOR this policy
   F. I greatly FAVOR this policy

7. To reduce the federal deficit some people think that public services for low income individuals should be cut. How would you feel about a policy that cuts public services for low income individuals to reduce the federal deficit?
   A. I greatly OPPOSE this policy
   B. I moderately OPPOSE this policy
   C. I slightly OPPOSE this policy
   D. I slightly FAVOR this policy
   E. I moderately FAVOR this policy
   F. I greatly FAVOR this policy

8. How do you feel about the U.S. government paying for necessary medical care for <u>senior citizens</u> who are living on very little income?
   A. I greatly OPPOSE this policy
   B. I moderately OPPOSE this policy
   C. I slightly OPPOSE this policy
   D. I slightly FAVOR this policy
   E. I moderately FAVOR this policy
   F. I greatly FAVOR this policy

9. How do you feel about the U.S. government paying for all necessary medical care for <u>all Americans living on very little income</u>?

A. I greatly OPPOSE this policy
B. I moderately OPPOSE this policy
C. I slightly OPPOSE this policy
D. I slightly FAVOR this policy
E. I moderately FAVOR this policy
F. I greatly FAVOR this policy

Instructions: Below you will see some opinions about taxation. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each statement?

1. In general, the wealthy should be taxed to provide benefits to the poor.
   A. Strongly Disagree
   B. Moderately Disagree
   C. Slightly Disagree
   D. Slightly Agree
   E. Moderately Agree
   F. Strongly Agree

2. In general, the wealthy should be taxed more than they are now to provide greater benefits to the poor.
   A. Strongly Disagree
   B. Moderately Disagree
   C. Slightly Disagree
   D. Slightly Agree
   E. Moderately Agree
   F. Strongly Agree

3. The wealthy should be taxed at a higher rate than the middle class.
   A. Strongly Disagree
   B. Moderately Disagree
   C. Slightly Disagree
   D. Slightly Agree
   E. Moderately Agree
   F. Strongly Agree

4. People should be able to keep the money they earn without government taxation.
   A. Strongly Disagree
   B. Moderately Disagree
   C. Slightly Disagree
   D. Slightly Agree
   E. Moderately Agree
   F. Strongly Agree

Demographic Questions

Instructions: We are now going to ask you some questions about yourself.

1. How old are you? (Please type your response below in years)
2. What gender are you?
   A. Male
   B. Female

The following questions 3-8 use the scale below.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Moderately Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

3. My family usually had enough money for things when I was growing up
4. I grew up in a relatively wealthy neighborhood
5. I felt relatively wealthy compared to the other kids in my school
6. Now, I have enough money to buy things
7. I don't worry too much about paying my bills
8. I don't think I'll have to worry about money too much in the future

9. What is your yearly household income?
   A. Less than $5,000
   B. $7,500 to $7,499
   C. $7,500 to $9,999
   D. $10,000 to $12,499
   E. $12,500 to $14,999
   F. $15,000 to $19,999
   G. $20,000 to $24,999
   H. $25,000 to $29,999
   I. $30,000 to $34,999
   J. $35,000 to $39,999
   K. $40,000 to $49,999
   L. $50,000 to $59,999
   M. $60,000 to $74,999
   N. $75,000 to $84,999
   O. $85,000 to $99,999
   P. $100,000 to $124,999
   Q. $125,000 to $149,999
   R. $150,000 to $174,999
   S. $175,000 or more

10. What was your household income growing up? If you are not sure, please make your best guess.
    A. Less than $5,000
    B. $7,500 to $7,499
    C. $7,500 to $9,999
    D. $10,000 to $12,499
    E. $12,500 to $14,999
    F. $15,000 to $19,999
    G. $20,000 to $24,999
    H. $25,000 to $29,999
    I. $30,000 to $34,999
    J. $35,000 to $39,999
    K. $40,000 to $49,999
    L. $50,000 to $59,999
    M. $60,000 to $74,999
    N. $75,000 to $84,999
    O. $85,000 to $99,999
    P. $100,000 to $124,999
    Q. $125,000 to $149,999
    R. $150,000 to $174,999
    S. $175,000 or more

11. Which statement best describes your current employment status?
    A. Working as a paid employee
    B. Working -- self-employed
    C. Not working -- on temporary layoff from a job
    D. Not working -- looking for work
    E. Not working – not looking for work

12. What is your highest level of education?
    A. Less than a high school degree
    B. High school degree
    C. Some college (no degree)
    D. 2-year college degree
    E. 4-year college degree
    F. Masters level degree (for example M.S. or M.A.)
    G. Doctorate level degree (for example PhD, MD, JDS)

13. What is the highest level of education attained by your MOTHER?
    A. Less than a high school degree
    B. High school degree
    C. Some college (no degree)
    D. 2-year college degree
    E. 4-year college degree
    F. Masters level degree (for example M.S. or M.A.)
    G. Doctorate level degree (for example PhD, MD, JDS)
    H. Not Applicable

14. What is the highest level of education attained by your FATHER?
    A. Less than a high school degree
    B. High school degree
    C. Some college (no degree)
    D. 2-year college degree
    E. 4-year college degree
    F. Masters level degree (for example M.S. or M.A.)
    G. Doctorate level degree (for example PhD, MD, JDS)
    H. Not Applicable

15. What is your political orientation?
    A. Democrat
    B. Independent
    C. Republican
    D. Other

16. How politically liberal or conservative are you?
    A. Very Liberal
    B. Somewhat Liberal
    C. Neither Liberal nor Conservative
    D. Somewhat Conservative
    E. Very Conservative

17. What is your race or ethnicity? (Please check all that apply)
    A. White or Caucasian
    B. Hispanic
    C. Black or African American
    D. Native American or Pacific Islander
    E. Asian
    F. Other