

OA.2 Variable Definitions

Demographic variables:

Male: respondent is male.

Young: respondent is younger than 45 years old.

African-American: respondent is African-American (asked in the U.S. only).

Children: respondent has at least one child.

Rich: respondent's household income is above the 75th percentile of the respondents' household income distribution in the country.

College: respondent has college degree.

Left-wing: respondent's views on economic issues are liberal or very liberal.

Right-wing: respondent's views on economic issues are conservatives or very conservatives.

Moved up: dummy equal to one if the level of status of the respondent's job is higher than his father's one.

Immigrant: dummy equal to one if at least one of the respondent's parents is not born in the country.

Mobility Perceptions:

Q1 to Q[X]: perceived probability of being in the X th quintile as an adult for a child with parents in the first quintile.

Q1 to Q[X] Effort: perceived probability of being in the X th quintile as an adult for a hard-working child with parents in the first quintile.

Q1 to Q4 (Qual.): qualitative question on perceived chances, on a scale from 1 to 5, of moving from the first to the fourth quintile, where 1 is "Close to zero", 2 is "Low", 3 is "Fairly low", 4 is "Fairly high" and 5 is "High".

Q1 to Q5 (Qual.): qualitative question on perceived chances, on a scale from 1 to 5, of moving from the first to the fifth quintile, where 1 is "Close to zero", 2 is "Low", 3 is "Fairly low", 4 is "Fairly high" and 5 is "High".

Perceptions of Fairness:

Economic System Fair: dummy equal to one if respondent believes that the economic system in her country is basically fair, since all have an equal opportunity to succeed.

American Dream Alive: dummy equal to one if respondent agrees or strongly agrees with the statement "In [country] everybody has a chance to make it and be economically successful" (equal to zero if neither agrees nor disagrees, disagrees, or strongly disagrees).

Effort Reason Poor: dummy equal to one if respondent believes that "Lack of effort on his or her own part" is a more important determinant of why a person is poor than "Circumstances beyond his or her control".

Effort Reason Rich: dummy equal to one if respondent believes that "Because she or he worked harder than others" is a more important determinant of why a person is poor than "Because she or he had more advantages than others".

Unequal Opp. Problem: dummy equal to one if the respondent believes that if children from poor and rich backgrounds have unequal opportunities in life this is "A problem" or "A serious problem" or "A very serious problem" (equal to zero if it is "Not a problem" or "A small problem").

Unequal Opp. No Problem: dummy equal to one if the respondent believes that if children from poor and rich backgrounds have unequal opportunities in life this is "Not a problem" or "A small problem".

Unequal Opp. Very Serious Problem: dummy equal to one if the respondent believes that if children

from poor and rich backgrounds have unequal opportunities in life this is “A very serious problem”.

Policy Preferences and Role of Government:

Tax Rate Top 1: Average income tax rate for households in the top 1% of the income distribution.

Tax Rate Bottom 50: Average income tax rate for households in the bottom 50% of the income distribution.

Support Estate Tax: Dummy equal to one if respondent is in favor of the estate tax (defined as answering 4 or 5 on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means “do not support at all” and 5 means “strongly support”).

Budget Safety Net: share of current government budget that should be allocated to safety net policies.

Budget Opp.: share of current government budget that should be allocated to education and health.

Support Equality Opp. Policies: respondent’s support, on a scale from 1 to 5, for policies to increase the opportunities for children born in poor families and to foster more equality of opportunity. The respondent was told that “to finance an expansion of policies promoting equal opportunity, it would have to be the case that either other policies are scaled down or taxes are raised”.

Government Interv.: respondent’s support, on a scale from 1 to 7, for government intervention to make the opportunities for children from poor and rich families less unequal.

Lowering Taxes Better: dummy equal to one if the respondent believes that “lowering taxes on wealthy people and corporations to encourage more investment in economic growth” would do more to make the opportunities for children from poor and rich families less unequal than “raising taxes on wealthy people and corporations to expand programs for the poor”.

Trust Govt.: dummy equal to one if the respondent answers that she can trust the government to do what is right “Most of the time” or “Always” (it takes value zero if the answer is “Never” or “Only some of the time”).

Never trust government: dummy equal to one if the respondent answers that she can never trust the government to do what is right.

Govt. Tools: dummy equal to one if the respondent answers that to reduce the inequality of opportunities between children born in poor and rich families the government has the ability and the tools to do “Some” or “A lot” (it takes value zero if the answer is “Nothing at all” or “Not much”).

Government has no tools: dummy equal to one if the respondent answers that to reduce the inequality of opportunities between children born in poor and rich families the government has the ability and the tools to do “Nothing at all” or “Not much.”

Prefer Low Govt. Intervention: dummy equal to one if the respondent prefers a low degree of government intervention to make the opportunities for children from poor and rich families less unequal (at point 4 or below on the scale from 1 to 7).

Negative View of Government: dummy equal to one if the respondent answers that she can “never” trust the government, or that to reduce the inequality of opportunities between children born in poor and rich families the government has the ability and the tools to do “Nothing at all” or “Not much,” or that she supports little government intervention (less than 5 on the scale from 1 to 7 of the variable *Government Interv.*), or that “lowering taxes on wealthy people and corporations to encourage more investment in economic growth” would be the better way to equalize opportunities.

OA.3 Links to surveys

- Survey U.S.: https://harvard.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_5dxninfErZ246X3
- Survey U.K.: https://harvard.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_7TCttX32sJZGUnP
- Survey France: https://harvard.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_55Nxjd0VSEVnHBb
- Survey Italy: https://harvard.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_ezmyMMB21TJgoeh
- Survey Sweden: https://harvard.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_cZxXzaGNNjn6w5L

OA.4 Detailed Survey Questionnaires

Answer options are in *italic*, separated by a semicolon.

1. See Figure OA3
Yes, I would like to take part in this study, and confirm that I AM A U.S. RESIDENT and am 18 or older; No, I would not like to participate.
2. What is your gender?
Male; Female
3. What is your age?
4. What was your TOTAL household income, before taxes, last year (2015)?
\$0 - \$9,999; \$10,000 - \$14,999; \$15,000 - \$19,999; \$20,000 - \$29,999; \$30,000 - \$39,999; \$40,000 - \$49,999; \$50,000 - \$69,999; \$70,000 - \$89,999; \$90,000 - \$109,999; \$110,000 - \$149,999; \$150,000 - \$199,999; \$200,000 +
5. Please indicate your marital status
Single; Married; Other
6. How many children do you have?
I do not have children; 1; 2; 3; 4; 5 or more
7. How would you describe your ethnicity/race?
European American/White; African American/Black; Hispanic/Latino; Asian/Asian American; Other
8. Were you born in the United States?
Yes; No
9. Were both of your parents born in the United States?
Yes; No
10. Where was your father born?
Unites States; South or Central America, or Mexico; Canada; Europe; Asia; Africa; Oceania

11. In which state do you live?
12. In which ZIP code do you live?
13. Which category best describes your highest level of education?
Eighth Grade or less; Some High School; High School degree / GED; Some College; 2-year College Degree; 4-year College Degree; Master's Degree; Doctoral Degree; Professional Degree (JD, MD, MBA)
14. Which category best describes your father's highest level of education?
Eighth Grade or less; Some High School; High School degree / GED; Some College; 2-year College Degree; 4-year College Degree; Master's Degree; Doctoral Degree; Professional Degree (JD, MD, MBA); I come from a single-parent family and my father was not present
15. Which category best describes your mother's highest level of education?
Eighth Grade or less; Some High School; High School degree / GED; Some College; 2-year College Degree; 4-year College Degree; Master's Degree; Doctoral Degree; Professional Degree (JD, MD, MBA); I come from a single-parent family and my mother was not present
16. What is your current employment status?
Full-time employee; Part-time employee; Self-employed or small business owner; Unemployed and looking for work; Student; Not in labor force (for example: retired, or full-time parent)
17. If you compare your job (or your last job if you currently don't have a job) with the job your father had while you were growing up, would you say that the level of status of your job is:
Much higher than my father's; Higher than my father's; About equal to my father's; Lower than my father's; Much lower than my father's; My father did not have a job while I was growing up OR I come from a single-parent family
18. If you compare your job (or your last job if you currently don't have a job) with the job your mother had while you were growing up, would you say that the level of status of your job is:
Much higher than my mother's; Higher than my mother's; About equal to my mother's; Lower than my mother's; Much lower than my mother's; My mother did not have a job while I was growing up OR I come from a single-parent family
19. When you were growing up, compared with American families back then, would you say your family income was:
Far below average; Below average; Average; Above average; Far above average
20. Right now, compared with American families, would you say your own household income is:
Far below average; Below average; Average; Above average; Far above average
21. On economic policy matters, where do you see yourself on the liberal/conservative spectrum?
Very liberal; Liberal; Moderate; Conservative; Very conservative
22. Before proceeding to the next set of questions, we want to ask for your feedback about the responses you provided so far. It is vital to our study that we only include responses from people who devoted their full attention to this study. This will not affect in any way the

payment you will receive for taking this survey. In your honest opinion, should we use your responses, or should we discard your responses since you did not devote your full attention to the questions so far?

Yes, I have devoted full attention to the questions so far and I think you should use my responses for your study; No, I have not devoted full attention to the questions so far and I think you should not use my responses for your study.

23. Do you think the economic system in the United States is:

Basically fair, since all Americans have an equal opportunity to succeed; Basically unfair, since all Americans do not have an equal opportunity to succeed

24. Which has more to do with why a person is poor?

Lack of effort on his or her own part; Circumstances beyond his or her control

25. Which has more to do with why a person is rich?

Because she or he worked harder than others; Because she or he had more advantages than others

26. How much of the time do you think you can trust the government to do what is right?

Never; Only some of the time; Most of the time; Always

27. If children from poor and rich backgrounds have unequal opportunities in life, do you think this is:

Not a problem at all; A small problem; A problem; A serious problem; A very serious problem

28. To reduce the inequality of opportunities between children born in poor and rich families, the government has the ability and the tools to do:

Nothing at all; Not much; Some; A lot

29. We would now like to ask you what you think about the life opportunities of children from very poor families.

For the following questions, we focus on 500 families that represent the U.S. population. We divide them into five groups on the basis of their income, with each group containing 100 families. These groups are: the poorest 100 families, the second poorest 100 families, the middle 100 families, the second richest 100 families, and the richest 100 families.

In the following questions, we will ask you to evaluate the chances that children born in one of the poorest 100 families, once they grow up, will belong to any of these income groups.

Please fill out the entries to the right of the figure below to tell us, in your opinion, how many out of 100 children coming from the poorest 100 families will grow up to be in each income group.

From our experience, this question will take you at the very least 1 minute to answer.

Please note that your entries need to add up to 100 or you will not be able to move on to the next page.

Figure 1 here.

30. Do you think the chances that a child from the poorest 100 families will grow up to be among the richest 100 families are:

Close to zero; Low; Fairly low; Fairly high; High

31. Do you think the chances that a child from the poorest 100 families will grow up to be among the second richest 100 families are:

Close to zero; Low; Fairly low; Fairly high; High

32. We are still interested in the life opportunities of children from very poor families, but we now focus on a different group of poor children.

From our experience, this question will take you at the very least 45 seconds to answer.

Consider 100 children coming from the poorest 100 families.

These children are very determined and put in hard work both at school and, later in life, when finding a job and doing that job.

Please fill out the entries to the right of the figure below to tell us, in your opinion, how many out of these 100 children will grow up to be in each income group.

Please note that your entries need to add up to 100 or you will not be able to move on to the next page.

Figure 1 here.

33. Do you think the chances that one of these hard working children will grow up to be among the richest 100 families are:

Close to zero; Low; Fairly low; Fairly high; High

34. Do you think the chances that one of these hard working children will grow up to be among the second richest 100 families are:

Close to zero; Low; Fairly low; Fairly high; High

35. We are still interested in the life opportunities of children from very poor families, but we now focus on a different group of poor children.

From our experience, this question will take you at the very least 45 seconds to answer.

Consider 100 children coming from the poorest 100 families.

These children are very talented.

Please fill out the entries to the right of the figure below to tell us, in your opinion, how many out of these 100 children will grow up to be in each income group.

Please note that your entries need to add up to 100 or you will not be able to move on to the next page.

Figure 1 here.

36. Do you think the chances that one of these talented children will grow up to be among the richest 100 families are:

Close to zero; Low; Fairly low; Fairly high; High

37. Do you think the chances that one of these talented children will grow up to be among the second richest 100 families are:

Close to zero; Low; Fairly low; Fairly high; High

38. How do you feel about the following statement?

”In the United States everybody has a chance to make it and be economically successful.”

Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree

39. Some people think that the government should not concern itself with making the opportunities for children from poor and rich families less unequal. Others think that the government should do everything in its power to make the opportunities for children from poor and rich families less unequal. Think of a score of 1 as meaning that the government should not concern itself with making the opportunities for children from poor and rich families less unequal, and a score of 7 meaning that the government should do everything in its power to reduce this inequality of opportunities.

What score between 1 and 7 comes closest to the way you feel?

1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7

40. What do you think would do more to make the opportunities for children from poor and rich families less unequal?

Lowering taxes on wealthy people and corporations to encourage more investment in economic growth; Raising taxes on wealthy people and corporations to expand programs for the poor.

41. Do you support more policies to increase the opportunities for children born in poor families and to foster more equality of opportunity, such as education policies? Naturally, to finance an expansion of policies promoting equal opportunity, it would have to be the case that either other policies are scaled down or taxes are raised.

I very strongly oppose more policies promoting equality of opportunity; I oppose more policies promoting equality of opportunity; I am indifferent; I support more policies promoting equality of opportunity; I very strongly support more policies promoting equality of opportunity.

42. In the next two questions, we ask you to think about the total level of funds that the government raises and spends today on various policies. For the purpose of these questions, suppose that the level of government spending is fixed at its current level and cannot be changed. We will ask about your views on two aspects:

- First, on the fair split of the tax burden to raise this level of funds.
- Second, on how you think the government should spend this level of funds.

43. See Figure OA1

44. We now ask you how you would like to spend the total government budget. Suppose that you are the person deciding on the U.S. budget for the next year. You can choose how you want to divide the budget (in percent) between the following 6 categories:

See Figure OA2

45. The estate tax is a tax on the transfer of wealth from a deceased person to her heirs. This tax applies only to individuals with wealth above a certain threshold. On a scale from 1 to 5, how would you rate your support for the estate tax, where 1 means do not support at all and 5 means strongly support?

1; 2; 3; 4; 5

46. Do you feel that this survey was biased?

Yes, left-wing bias; Yes, right-wing bias; No, it did not feel bias

47. Please feel free to give us any feedback or impression regarding this survey.

FIGURE OA1: QUESTION ON PREFERRED INCOME TAX RATES FOR VARIOUS INCOME GROUPS

The government currently raises a certain amount of revenue through the income tax in order to sustain the current level of public spending. In your view, what would be the fair split of the tax burden to sustain public spending?

The income tax* rate is the percentage of your income that you pay in federal income tax. For example, if you earn \$30,000 and you pay \$3,000 in income taxes, your income tax rate is 10%.

Please use the sliders below to tell us how much you think each of the following groups should pay as a percentage of their total income.

While you adjust the four sliders for each group, the fifth bar at the bottom moves in order to show you how much of the current revenue you have been able to raise so far. The bar appears red as long as you have not raised enough revenue, or if you have raised more money than what is needed.

You will only be able to move to the next question when you meet the revenue target and the bar becomes green.

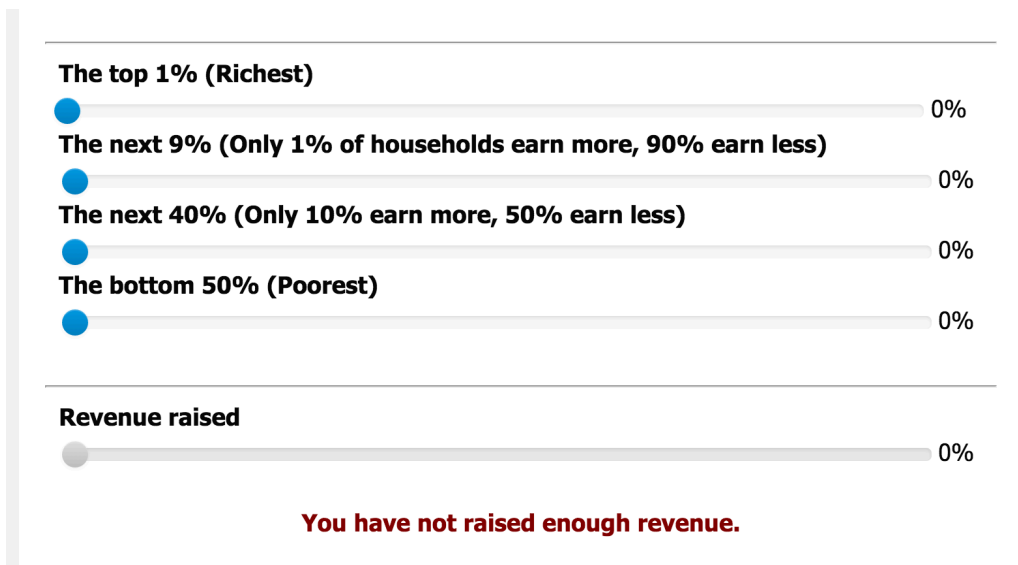


FIGURE OA2: QUESTION ON PREFERRED ALLOCATION OF GOVERNMENT BUDGET

- 1) **Defense and National Security**, which refers to the costs of the Defense department and the costs of supporting security operations in foreign countries.
- 2) **Public Infrastructure**, which includes, among others, transport infrastructure like roads, bridges and airports, and water infrastructure.
- 3) **Spending on Schooling and Higher Education**, including help for children from low income families to attend school and university.
- 4) **Social Security, Medicare, Disability Insurance and Supplementary Security Income (SSI)**, which provide income support and help with health care expenses to the elderly and the disabled.
- 5) **Social Insurance and Income Support Programs**. This covers help to the unemployed (through unemployment insurance) and help for low income families (such as through Food stamps or the earned income tax credit (EITC), a tax credit for low-income working families)
- 6) **Public Spending on Health**, such as Medicaid for the poor (a healthcare program for low income families) or tax subsidies to help families buy health insurance.

Please enter the percent of the budget you would assign to each spending category (the total must sum to 100):

Defense and National Security	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Public Infrastructure	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Spending on Schooling and Higher Education	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Social Security, Medicare, Disability Insurance and Supplementary Security Income (SSI)	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Social Insurance and Income Support Programs	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Public Spending on Health	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Total	<input type="text" value="0"/>

FIGURE OA3: FIRST PAGE OF THE SURVEY (ENGLISH VERSION)

We are a non-partisan group of academic researchers from Harvard. Our goal is to understand how information we see and hear in the media influences views on policies. No matter what your political views are, this is an important question and by completing this survey, you are contributing to our knowledge as a society. You might not agree with all the information presented, and that is perfectly fine. Our survey will give you an opportunity to express your own views.

It is very important for the success of our research that you **answer honestly** and **read the questions very carefully** before answering. Anytime you don't know an answer, just give your best guess. However, please be sure to spend enough time reading and understanding the question. To ensure the quality of survey data, your responses will be subject to sophisticated statistical control methods. **Responding without adequate effort may result in your responses being flagged for low quality.**

It is also very important for the success of our research project that you **complete the entire survey**, once you have started. This survey should take (on average) about 10 minutes to complete.

Notes: Your participation in this study is purely voluntary. Your name will never be recorded. Results may include summary data, but you will never be identified. If you have any question about this study, you may contact us at socialsciencesstudies@gmail.com

FIGURE OA4: TREATMENT ANIMATION - INTRODUCTION



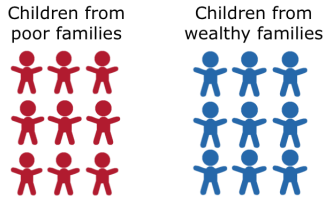
Recent academic research has been exploring the link between one's family background and one's chances of making it in life. These **recent academic studies** have leveraged new large-scale datasets to explore the opportunities available to children from different family backgrounds and their chances of making it in life.

We will now show you **two short animations** that summarize the two key findings of these studies. Please proceed to the next page when you are ready.

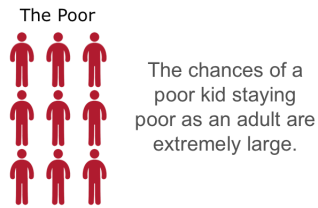
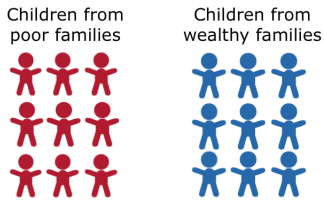


FIGURE OA5: TREATMENT ANIMATION

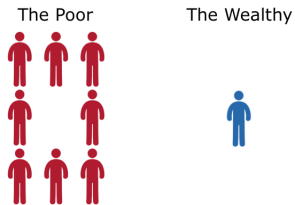
(a) First screen



What does recent research tell us about how children from poor families will do when they grow up?

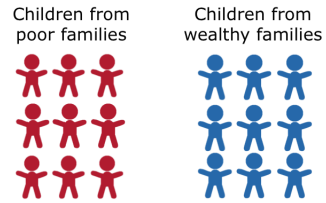


Only very few kids from poor families will ever make it and become rich.

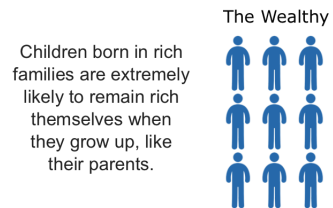
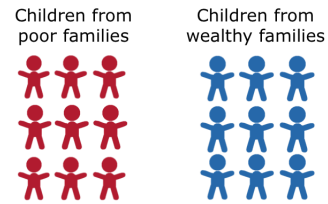


REPLAY

(b) Second screen



What does recent research tell us about how children from rich families will do when they grow up?



It is extremely rare for a child from a rich family to become poor later in life.

