

# Study: Rich more likely to take candy from babies

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By Ezra Klein February 27, 2012

*The “upper class,” as defined by the study, were more likely to break the law while driving, take candy from children, lie in negotiation, cheat to increase their odds of winning a prize and endorse unethical behavior at work, researchers reported today in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.*

*[...]In the candy test, 129 undergraduates were manipulated to view themselves as wealthy or poor. They were then presented with a jar of individually wrapped candy, which researchers said would go to children in a nearby lab, though they could take some if they wanted. The undergraduates believing themselves to be upper income took more than those believing themselves to be low income, the study found.*

It wasn't just the candy experiment, either. In a game where a computer rolled dice and any score above 12 got the user a \$50 gift certificate, those making more than \$250,000 were more likely to lie to researchers than those making less than \$250,000. “A \$50 prize is a measly sum to people who make \$250,000 a year,” Berkeley's Paul Piff told Bloomberg. “So why are they more inclined to cheat?”

In another test, researchers observed cars at a busy intersection. Drivers in pricey vehicles were more likely to cut off other drivers and less likely to stop for pedestrians than drivers in cheaper cars.

Researchers also asked study participants to go on an employment Web site and negotiate salaries with people seeking permanent employment. The participants were told the position they were filling would soon be eliminated. Higher net-worth participants were less likely to pass this information along than lower net-worth participants.

Bloomberg has more details on the findings [here](#), including interviews with the authors. They also note that the study isn't alone. It “builds on previous research that has shown wealthy people are worse at recognizing how others feel and are more likely to be disengaged during social interactions than others.”

Of course, left unanswered is a key correlation/causation question: Are rich people more likely to be jerks, or are jerks more likely to get rich?