

# The Consequences of Inequality: Beliefs and Redistributive Preferences\*

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## Abstract

Using two large-scale studies in the United States we document widespread public agreement that inequality leads to negative societal consequences, for example by increasing crime (74%), harming democratic institutions (57%), and weakening economic growth (52%). An information experiment establishes causal evidence that such *inequality externality beliefs* substantially influence redistributive preferences, with an importance approaching that of economic fairness views. Inequality externality beliefs are less polarized across income levels and political affiliations than fairness views, and have a particularly strong influence on high-income individuals. Our results demonstrate that these previously undocumented beliefs constitute a key determinant of redistributive preferences.

JEL Codes: D63, D72, H2, I3

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# 1 Introduction

What drives public support for redistributive policies? A substantial body of empirical literature has sought to address this question in recent decades, often converging on two key motives: economic self-interest and fairness views (Cappelen et al., 2007; Durante et al., 2014; Almås et al., 2020; Stantcheva, 2021; Enke et al., 2023). In this paper, we introduce an empirically unexplored motive that could rival these two ideas – individuals’ beliefs about inequality’s societal consequences. People may believe that inequality undermines democratic institutions, for example, or that inequality stimulates economic growth. Such consequences imply that inequality is an externality (Støstad and Cowell, 2024), and as such we describe the relevant beliefs as *inequality externality beliefs*.

Inequality externalities are often discussed in the public debate. Greenspan (2013) argues that “*you can see the deteriorating impact of [inequality] on our current political system*”, for example. They have also been the focus of extensive empirical research (e.g. Bergh et al., 2016; Breza et al., 2018), and have potentially large effects on optimal policy (Støstad and Cowell, 2024). It follows that inequality externality beliefs could affect the overall demand for redistribution across societies. If there is a societal consensus that large economic differences lead to violent revolutions, for example, then simply highlighting these risks could lead to broad support for redistributive policy.

Perhaps surprisingly, we know very little about people’s actual beliefs about inequality’s societal consequences. This contrasts to individuals’ other views on inequality, and particularly their fairness views – which we define as beliefs about the sources of inequality and resulting normative judgments. While it is well-documented that most U.S. citizens view their economic system as unfair, there is to the best of our knowledge no evidence on how they believe inequality influences outcomes such as crime rates, political polarization, or general trust between citizens. Inequality externality beliefs are also essentially absent from the extensive literature on redistributive preferences.

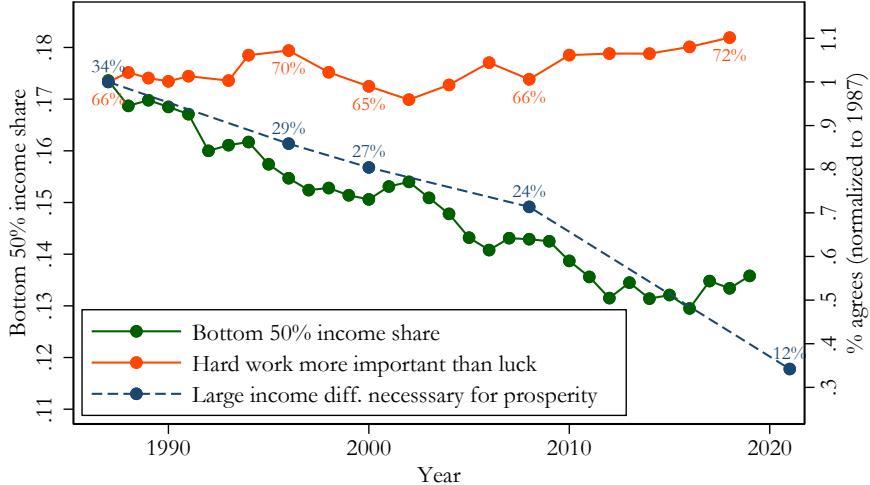
Given this lack of evidence, we pose three main questions. First, do U.S. citizens believe that inequality externalities exist – and if so, what are they? Second, are inequality externality beliefs a causal determinant of redistributive preferences? And third, in which salient ways do inequality externality beliefs differ from other determinants of redistributive support?

To motivate our study, we first examine the limited existing historical evidence. Figure 1 displays responses to one of the two pre-existing inequality externality questions that we know of in the United States, collected by the General Social Survey.<sup>1</sup> The question asks whether respondents agree that “*large differences in income are necessary for America’s prosperity*”. The belief in this positive inequality externality effect declined sharply from 34% in 1987 to 12% in 2021, a significant trend that has not previously been highlighted in the literature. This mirrors the increase in income inequality through the same time period (Saez and Zucman, 2020). In contrast, individuals’ fairness views have remained remarkably stable across these years; the example in Figure 1 uses the share of GSS respondents who agree that people get ahead due to hard work rather than luck.

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<sup>1</sup>See Appendix A for the other question, which was only collected in 1991.

Figure 1: Inequality Externality Beliefs, Fairness Views, and Income Inequality from 1987-2021



**Note.** This figure shows the share of U.S. respondents in the GSS who agree that (i) “Large income differences are necessary for prosperity”, and (ii) that “people get ahead by their own hard work [and not] lucky breaks or help from other people”. Also plotted: the bottom 50% pre-tax income share in the U.S. ([wid.world](#)). See Appendix A for details.

To examine U.S. citizens’ contemporary inequality externality beliefs we conducted two large-scale surveys of the U.S. population, sampling 4,371 and 3,292 distinct U.S. citizens with the professional survey providers Lucid and Dynata. These two surveys, which are representative on relevant dimensions, allow us to create the first comprehensive data sets of U.S. citizens’ inequality externality beliefs. We explore the link between these beliefs and redistributive preferences using several methods, the most important of which is a video-based information experiment which is designed to isolate the causal effect of inequality externality beliefs on redistributive preferences. We conclude the analysis by exploring inequality externality beliefs’ potentially unique features by comparing them to known determinants of redistributive support, particularly fairness views, on various dimensions.

Our first major finding is that most U.S. citizens believe that economic inequality leads to significant negative societal consequences. 74% of respondents think that more economic inequality increases the amount of crime, and 67% think it deteriorates the overall level of societal trust. 52% think that more economic inequality *decreases* the amount of economic growth and only 23% think the converse – that more economic inequality *increases* the amount of economic growth. Respondents have similarly negative beliefs about the effect of economic inequality on social unrest, the amount of innovation, the quality of democratic institutions, and more. Over 90% of individuals believe that economic inequality affects society in at least some way, and a clear majority describe these issues as “meaningful” or “serious”. We also find a striking consensus across demographic groups and political affiliations; Democrat- and Republican-leaning voters are both more likely to believe that more inequality leads to *less* and not *more* economic growth and innovation, for example. These results are strongly robust to various specifications and replicate across independent samples and survey providers. To explore the underlying thought processes we use ChatGPT to summarize 1,853 open-ended answers, and find cogent arguments that often approximate various seminal theories of inequality’s consequences from Plato, Aristotle, Keynes, and others.

Having established the existence of widespread negative inequality externality beliefs in the U.S. population we move to the implications of these beliefs. We first test whether such beliefs constitute a causal determinant of redistributive preferences. To establish this connection we use an information experiment which manipulates individuals' inequality externality beliefs through various short, randomly provided videos. The principal information we provide to (some) respondents highlights the strong cross-country correlations between economic inequality and (i) homicides and/or (ii) distrust between citizens. We obfuscate the purpose of the survey and include two control groups – one being shown a neutral inequality-based video, and one without stimuli – to minimize concerns of experimenter demand and priming. Being shown the video treatment containing the information on inequality externalities shifts individuals' inequality externality beliefs without shifting their economic fairness views. This, in turn, causally affects their redistributive preferences ( $p < 0.01$  for our main treatment). The result is robust to an array of different specifications, first-stage effects and further analysis strongly suggest that the treatment mechanism operates through learning about inequality externalities, and we find no evidence of experimenter demand. The second main contribution of the paper is thus to establish that inequality externality beliefs are a *causal* determinant of redistributive preferences.

We then estimate the importance of this novel determinant. We primarily do this through comparisons with economic fairness views, while also touching on other potential determinants of redistributive support where possible (most notably taxation-related efficiency concerns). We use three distinct methods to compare the determinants. First, we compare treatment effect sizes from comparable video information treatments. Second, we directly elicit respondents' beliefs about what drives their redistributive preferences. Third, we explore the predictive power of each determinant on redistributive preferences. Across all three methods, the influence of inequality externality beliefs is strikingly robust – coming impressively close to that of fairness views. They also significantly outperform taxation-related efficiency concerns when the comparison is possible. This represents our third main finding: inequality externality beliefs are a *sizable* determinant of redistributive preferences.

The remainder of the paper explores what could make inequality externality beliefs unique in the redistributive debate. We first note that income is uncorrelated to negative inequality externality beliefs. This contrasts to the tendency of high-income individuals to believe that the economic system is fair – both in our data and in the literature (Cohn et al., 2023). High-income respondents are also strongly affected by *new* information about inequality externalities; in the main inequality externality information treatment, a baseline 11 p.p. gap in redistributive preferences among low- and high-income groups (>\$100k/year) is essentially eliminated. For the comparable fairness treatment the same income-based preference gap increases. This aligns with a self-centering bias, where inequality externalities offer high-income individuals a uniquely self-interested motive to prefer redistribution.

We then repeat the same analysis across political affiliations. Inequality externality beliefs are significantly less polarized across political parties than fairness views, with the gap between Democrat- and Republican-leaning respondents being smaller for every inequality externality question than for every fairness question in either of our surveys. This does not translate to redistributive preferences, however, where Republican-leaning respondents appear more suscep-

tible to fairness-based arguments than inequality externality-based arguments. We hypothesize that Republican-leaning respondents, who are historically skeptical of government intervention (Kuziemko et al., 2015), may prefer targeted interventions such as crime prevention programs or anti-corruption measures to address the perceived negative consequences of inequality. These results culminate in our fourth main finding: although less polarized than economic fairness views, inequality externality beliefs have the greatest redistributive preference impact on top-income earners and left-leaning individuals.

In sum, our results suggest that inequality externality beliefs are a crucial determinant of redistributive preferences. We theorize that varying inequality externality beliefs across countries, or the varying *salience* of these beliefs, could help explain differing redistributive equilibria across the globe. We highlight specific cases where these beliefs may have shaped political landscapes, including the emergence of high-income Democratic voters in the U.S. (Gethin et al., 2022), and the recently diverging inequality trajectories of Europe and the United States (Saez and Zucman, 2020).

This paper provides the first comprehensive empirical documentation of individuals' inequality externality beliefs, and is the first to causally link any such beliefs to individuals' preferences for redistribution. Our analysis is informed by various studies theorizing that perceived consequences of inequality could influence redistributive preferences (Alesina and Giuliano, 2011; Rueda and Stegmüller, 2016; Støstad and Cowell, 2024). Among these, only the prominent Rueda and Stegmüller (2016) presents empirical evidence, showing an association between fear of crime and redistributive support among high-income individuals in Western Europe that they attribute to crime-based inequality externality beliefs. We extend their argument in three main ways. First, we expand the scope of possible inequality externalities beyond crime to also include the quality of democratic institutions, corruption, societal trust, economic growth, innovation, social unrest, political polarization, unemployment, the quality of local public goods, and overall quality of life. As such, we underscore the potentially broad economic and social significance of these beliefs. Second, we measure inequality externality beliefs directly, rather than relying on the indirect measure of individuals' fear of crime. Third, we use exogenous variation to establish a causal link from inequality externality beliefs to redistributive preferences. We also refine a key hypothesis of Rueda and Stegmüller (2016), which posits that inequality externality beliefs primarily affect the redistributive preferences of affluent individuals – while our findings confirm a stronger effect among high-income respondents, inequality externality beliefs meaningfully shape redistributive preferences across the entire income distribution.

An extensive literature has examined various other determinants of redistributive preferences, in particular the importance of individual income maximization, people's fairness views (including beliefs about the source of inequality), and concerns about the efficiency costs of redistribution. Examples include Fehr and Schmidt (1999); Bolton and Ockenfels (2000); Alesina and Angeletos (2005); Cappelen et al. (2007); Durante et al. (2014); Almås et al. (2020); Cappelen et al. (2022); and Enke et al. (2023). Income maximization and fairness views are usually found to be the strongest motivators in this literature. Other influential work has explored the connection between redistributive preferences and beliefs about one's relative position (Cruces et al., 2013; Karadja et al., 2017; Hvidberg et al., 2023), zero-sum thinking (Chinoy et al., 2023),

perceptions of the income distribution and tax systems (Norton and Ariely, 2011; Hauser and Norton, 2017; Ballard-Rosa et al., 2021; Stantcheva, 2021, 2024), racial attitudes and immigration (Alesina et al., 2001, 2023), governmental trust (Kuziemko et al., 2015), social and cultural identity (Luttmer, 2001; Klor and Shayo, 2010; Luttmer and Singhal, 2011), beliefs about social mobility (Alesina et al., 2018; Gärtner et al., 2019), and much more.

Before turning to the analysis, we briefly review the vast literature on the societal consequences of inequality. Various influential papers have developed theoretical frameworks in which inequality shapes societal outcomes (e.g. Persson and Tabellini, 1994; Bénabou, 1996; Alesina and Perotti, 1996; Bourguignon and Verdier, 2000). A substantial body of literature explores the related correlational evidence (Houle, 2009; Wilkinson and Pickett, 2011; Rufrancos et al., 2013; Bergh et al., 2016; Berg and Ostry, 2017, and more). Large-scale causal evidence is unlikely to be forthcoming, however, due to the lack of exogenous variation of economic inequality (among other issues). In smaller settings, causal evidence can be found; economic inequality has been convincingly shown to affect productivity and social connections in the workplace (Breza et al., 2018), trust in laboratory and survey experiments (Xu and Marandola, 2023), and more. While the present paper has little to say about which inequality externalities actually exist, we show that most U.S. citizens are sufficiently concerned about these issues to warrant further research on the topic.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 presents the survey methodology. Section 3 analyzes respondents' inequality externality beliefs. Section 4 presents the results from the information experiment, Section 5 empirically compares inequality externality beliefs to other determinants of redistributive support, and Section 6 concludes.

## 2 Survey Methodology

Our empirical results are based on two independent pre-specified surveys.<sup>2</sup> We will call these surveys Survey 1 ( $N_1=4,371$ ) and Survey 2 ( $N_2=2,360$ ). Survey respondents were collected through the survey providers Lucid (Survey 1) and Dynata (Survey 2). Both Lucid and Dynata are commonly used by economic researchers (see e.g. Haaland and Roth, 2021; Andre et al., 2022).<sup>3</sup> Methodological details, full questionnaires, attrition rates and screening methods for each survey can be found in Appendix B.

### 2.1 Survey 1

Data for Survey 1 were collected between December 6<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> 2021 through the survey provider Lucid. 5,007 subjects completed the survey, which is reduced to 4,371 after routine data quality checks. The average survey duration was 19 minutes and 11 seconds.

Survey 1 had two primary goals. First, to collect descriptive data on individuals' inequality externality beliefs. Second, to conduct an information experiment to connect these beliefs to individuals' redistributive preferences. To achieve these goals the survey was divided into three

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<sup>2</sup>We discuss how our analysis differs from the pre-analysis plan in Appendix B.4.

<sup>3</sup>Lucid and Dynata both collect respondents from several distinct sources. These sources are partly chosen to collect a wide variety of respondents to ensure representativity in surveys like ours. They include brand loyalty programs, targeted online advertisements, and institutional partnerships.

parts. Part 1 elicited standard demographic information. Part 2 randomized respondents into one of six groups to introduce the information experiment variation – four treatment groups (20% chance,  $\sim 875$  respondents each) and two control groups (10% chance each). Part 3 elicited redistributive preferences and various inequality externality beliefs. We show the survey flow in Figure 2.

We will describe the information experiment design in Section 4. Note that only respondents assigned to one of the two control groups are included in the descriptive analysis.

## 2.2 Survey 2

Data for Survey 2 were collected between August 8<sup>th</sup> and October 7<sup>th</sup> 2022 through the survey provider Dynata. 2,479 subjects completed the survey, which is reduced to 2,360 after routine data quality checks. The average survey duration was 20 minutes and 31 seconds.

Survey 2 was designed to further explore the descriptive results from Survey 1 with an independent sample and a distinct survey provider. It also collected more detailed inequality externality beliefs by randomizing respondents into one of eight survey arms, each exploring beliefs about inequality’s potential interaction with a specific outcome. Each survey arm included approximately 295 respondents. We show the survey flow in Figure 3.

**Merged descriptive sample** The descriptive data we present uses data from both Survey 1 (control groups) and Survey 2 (full sample) whenever a question was asked in both surveys. As results are very similar across samples, this does not significantly affect our results and is done to improve precision. The merged descriptive sample has a total of 3,292 respondents.

## 2.3 Respondent characteristics

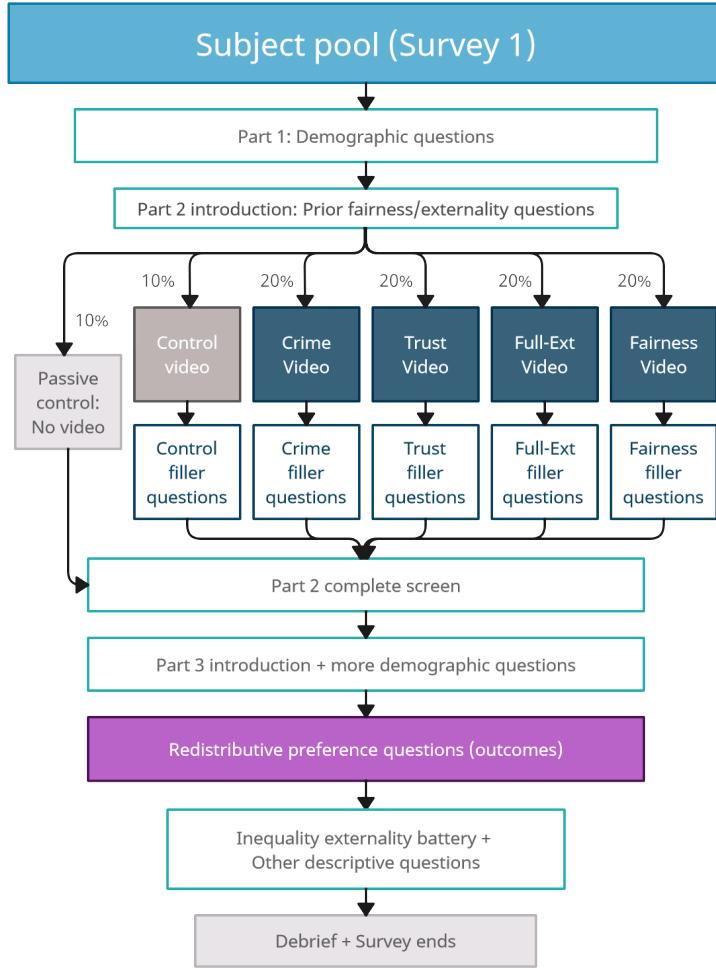
In both surveys we used quotas to achieve representativity along the dimensions of age, gender, geographical region and political affiliation (Democrat, Independent and Republican). These dimensions are therefore representative of the 2021 U.S. population by design. We also survey individuals with a wide range of incomes and educational backgrounds in both surveys. As with other studies using online access panels (e.g. [Stantcheva, 2021](#)), both surveys somewhat oversample white respondents and college-educated respondents. Reweighting respondents for full representativity on these dimensions does not change reported results significantly. We discuss sample representativity further in Appendix B.3.

## 2.4 Eliciting inequality externality beliefs

Formally, we define an inequality externality belief as a belief in economic inequality’s causal effect on a welfare-pertinent outcome. We also define an inequality externality as the welfare-pertinent outcome in question.

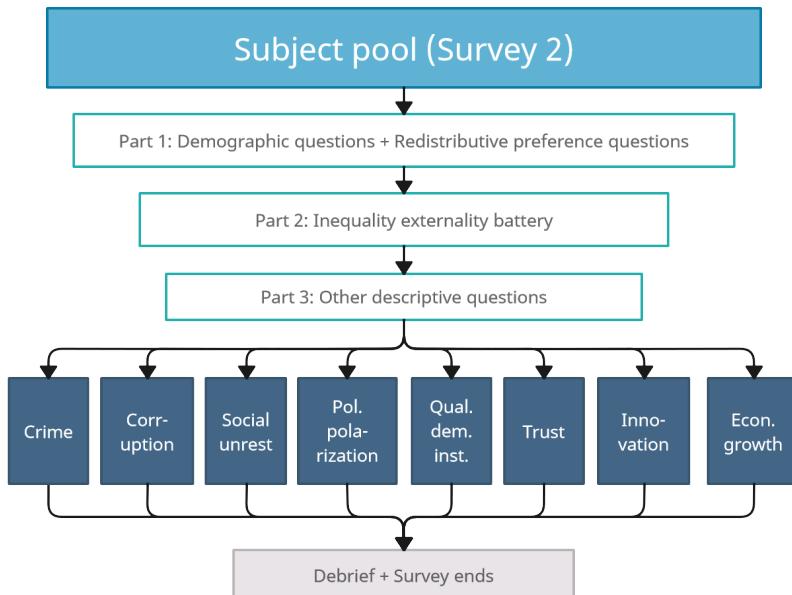
In both Survey 1 and Survey 2 we elicit individuals’ inequality externality beliefs, which allows us to create the first database of such beliefs among U.S. citizens. Our main battery of questions asks respondents how they think inequality changes different aspects of society. The baseline question asks: “*How does more economic inequality change the [amount of crime /*

Figure 2: Survey Flow of Survey 1



**Note.** This figure shows the survey flow of Survey 1 (containing the full video information provision experiment).

Figure 3: Survey Flow of Survey 2



**Note.** This figure shows the survey flow of Survey 2. Each of the eight treatment arms elicits further views on inequality's effect on the listed outcome.

*overall level of trust / ... ] in a country?*”, with five answer options ranging from “*Decreases a lot*” to “*Increases a lot*”. We selected outcomes based on their prominence in the public and academic debates regarding inequality’s societal effects, and elicit beliefs about whether inequality affects crime, corruption, political polarization, social unrest, unemployment, innovation, economic growth, the quality of local public goods (such as schools and local government services), people’s overall quality of life (comparing people with the same income in more or less unequal societies), the quality of democratic institutions, and generalized trust. We detail which respondents saw which questions in Appendix B.5; most notably, we only collect data for unemployment, the quality of local public goods, and overall quality of life in Survey 1, which means that certain analyses only have eight outcomes. We generally added short definitions to each outcome; we show the definitions in Tables H1-H2.

We elicit a variety of extensions and robustness checks to these beliefs. Our primary data source for the extensions is Survey 2, where we randomized respondents into one of eight different survey arms, each focusing on the relationship between inequality and one given outcome. Questions assess why respondents hold their stated inequality externality belief (open-ended), what they believe about the overall importance of the externality, whether inequalities near the top or bottom matters more for the externality, and more. We also randomize 40% of Survey 2 respondents into two phrasing treatments where we exchanged the words “more inequality” for “more equality” (20% of respondents) or “larger differences in income and wealth” (20% of respondents) for the entire survey. Data from all phrasing variations is merged for the descriptive analysis; this does not significantly affect results.

We discuss the methodology further in Appendix B.5, and list key variables in Appendix K.

**Limitations** There are specific limitations to our overall approach which we will discuss here. We do not aim to estimate beliefs in numerical values – which would indicate, for example, respondent beliefs about how a unit change of the Gini coefficient affects the economic growth rate. This is due to the intrinsic difficulty in forming such beliefs. Instead we elicit the direction of respondents’ inequality externality beliefs (whether more economic inequality *increases* or *decreases* economic growth, for example) and combine this with broad questions about how meaningful these channels are. We also focus on economic inequality loosely defined as “differences in income and wealth”, and thus abstract from other relevant dimensions such as gender inequality, racial inequality, and whether income or wealth inequality is more meaningful. We also abstract away from the origin of the inequality, the difference between perceived and actual inequality, and the difference between fair and unfair inequality. Finally, we do not incentivize respondents’ answers – we note that incentivization has not affected results in other recent studies, e.g. [Stantcheva \(2021\)](#).

Moving forward, it will often be useful to discuss inequality as having a positive or negative effect on society through a given outcome. To simplify the discussion we thus define a *negative inequality externality* as when inequality negatively affects society through a given outcome (that inequality increases crime or decreases innovation, for example). We similarly define a *positive inequality externality* as when inequality improves society through a given outcome (that inequality decreases crime or increases innovation, for example).

### 3 Inequality Externality Beliefs

The first main objective of this paper is to explore U.S. citizens' inequality externality beliefs.

#### 3.1 How does economic inequality change society?

Our first step towards reaching this goal is to explore whether people believe that economic inequality affects society at all, and if so, along what dimensions. To answer these questions we present the results from our main battery of inequality externality questions in Figure 4. For clarity we categorize outcomes as favorable (e.g. higher-quality democratic institutions) and unfavorable (e.g. social unrest) in Figure 4, although no such distinction was made to respondents.

Respondents are most likely to hold negative inequality externality beliefs for every outcome we survey. A majority of respondents think that more economic inequality leads to more crime (74%), more corruption (66%), more political polarization (66%), more social unrest (70%), and more unemployment (53%). Similarly, most respondents believe that more economic inequality leads to *less* trust (67%) and less economic growth (52%), and that more inequality *worsens* the quality of democratic institutions (57%), the quality of local public goods (58%), and people's overall quality of life (conditional on their income remaining the same, 59%). The only negative externality belief that does not reach a majority threshold is innovation, where 39% of respondents believe that more economic inequality leads to less innovation. This is still the most popular answer choice over inequality having no effect (35%) and that inequality leads to more innovation (26%). We discuss the strong robustness of these beliefs in Section 3.5; for now we note that 89% of respondents answer that inequality has no effect on a placebo outcome (the amount of daylight hours).

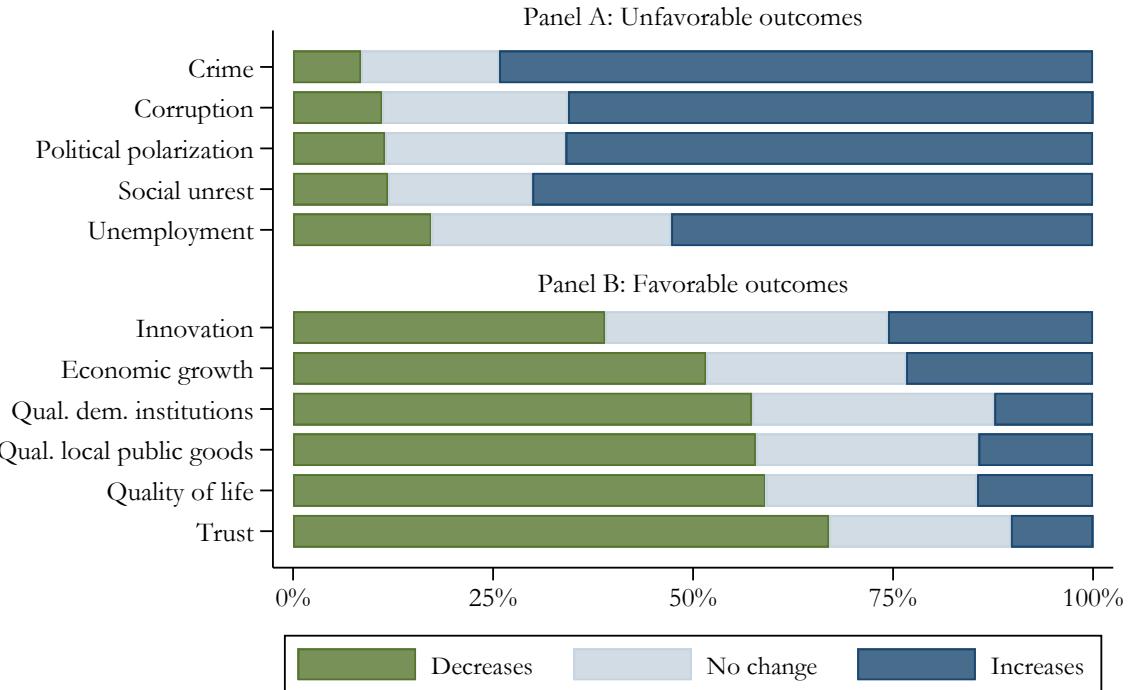
The immediate takeaway is that most Americans believe that economic inequality has a wide variety of negative consequences. Further, there is an almost-consensus agreement that inequality has at least some externality effects. In Survey 2, where eight outcomes were elicited per respondent, 90% hold at least one negative inequality externality belief and 96% hold at least one positive *or* one negative inequality externality belief. Among respondents who did not fail any attention checks the corresponding numbers were 91% and 97% respectively. It is thus extremely rare for respondents to believe that economic inequality has no associated externalities.

The widely-held beliefs in inequality's negative *economic* consequences are particularly noteworthy. The effect of economic inequality on economic growth, for example, is heavily debated within the academic literature. While versions of the equity-efficiency trade-off implies that inequality could lead to more economic growth – by strengthening the incentives to climb the income ladder, for example – the majority of respondents believe that more inequality leads to *less* (52%) and not *more* (23%) economic growth. Similarly negative externality beliefs are found for unemployment (53% against 17%) and to a lesser extent innovation (39% and 26%). Overall, most U.S. citizens appear to believe that more economic inequality leads to worsening macroeconomic conditions.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>We discuss why incentive effects are unlikely to affect this result in Appendix C.1.

Figure 4: Respondents' Beliefs About How More Economic Inequality Changes Society

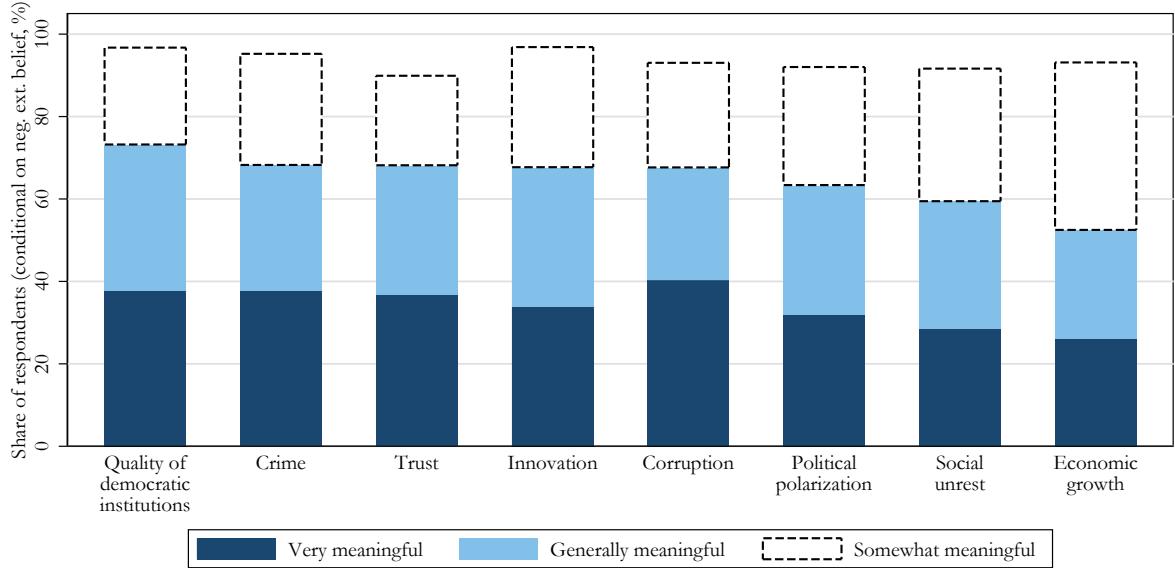


**Note.** This figure reports the share of U.S. citizens who believe more inequality increases or decreases the listed outcomes. Full question example: “How does more economic inequality change the amount of crime in a country?” Answer option example: “More inequality → a lot more crime”. The full question text for all outcomes are listed in Appendix K.2. The green (left) bars indicate the share of respondents who believe that inequality decreases the outcome in question, while the blue (right) bars indicate the share of respondents who believe that inequality increases the outcome in question. Outcomes are divided into positive and negative outcomes in the figure although no such distinction was made to respondents; question order was largely randomized and has no noticeable effect on results. Questions are listed according to which portion of respondents believe that inequality decreases the variable. Answers are pooled from Survey 1’s control groups and Survey 2 ( $N \in \{2990, 3292\}$ ), except for unemployment, quality of local public goods, and quality of life, which were only asked to a subset of respondents in Survey 1 ( $N \in \{628, 643\}$ ). Figures G1 and G2 show the corresponding data for Survey 1 and Survey 2 independently (excluding the other). Section 3.1 and Appendix B.5 discusses the design of the questions. Table H3 lists the exact shares of respondents who indicate “Decreases”, “No change”, and “Increases” for each outcome.

Within individuals, one negative externality belief strongly predicts another. Among the 70% of individuals who believe that more inequality leads to more social unrest, for example, 89% also believe that more inequality leads to more crime. More generally, conditional on holding any one negative externality belief the chance of holding another increases from 61.3% (the unconditional mean) to 75.9%.

**What is the overall effect of economic inequality on society?** We also elicit respondents’ beliefs about how more economic inequality *generally* changes society, all taken together. In Survey 1 respondents were asked whether “more economic inequality [generally] changes society for the better or for the worse”, elicited before the main externality battery. The results are consistent with what we have already shown; most respondents (60%) believe that inequality changes society somewhat or a lot for the worse, or constitutes a negative externality overall. Only a small minority (15%) states that inequality changes society somewhat or a lot for the better, or constitutes a positive externality overall. Different methodologies across surveys find similar results (see Appendix C.2).

Figure 5: Negative Inequality Externalities Are Considered “Meaningful”



**Note.** This figure reports the share of respondents who believe in the given negative externality who describe it as “meaningful”. Full question example (see Appendix K.4.1): “Previously you answered “More inequality → a lot more crime”. Do you think this effect is something politicians and policy-makers should be focused on, or is it ultimately not very important? In other words, do you think this effect is meaningful?” Respondents not shown in one of the three categories answered “Not very meaningful” or “Not meaningful at all”. Answers are from Survey 2 in a section where each respondent was asked follow-up questions for a specific externality.  $N \in \{127, 230\}$  per externality.

### 3.2 Are inequality externalities perceived as important?

While the above results illustrate the direction of individuals’ inequality externality beliefs, they say little about their perceived importance. An individual may think that inequality increases crime, for example, but that such an effect is negligibly small in practice. To qualitatively assess this issue, we ask whether a given externality channel is “[...] *something politicians and policy-makers should be focused on, or is it ultimately not important? [...] In other words, do you think this effect is meaningful?*”.

We show answers to this question in Figure 5, restricting to individuals who hold the relevant negative externality belief. Among these respondents, the answers “very meaningful”, “generally meaningful” or “somewhat meaningful” are chosen by almost every respondent (as opposed to “not very meaningful”, or “not meaningful at all”). 95% of respondents who believe that inequality worsens the quality of democratic institutions believes the effect is at least “somewhat meaningful”, for example – 25% “somewhat meaningful”, 36% “generally meaningful”, and 38% “very meaningful”.

Three further general externality beliefs underline these results. Respondents are asked (i) whether unequal countries generally function worse, (ii) whether inequality changing society for the worse through externality channels is a “very serious issue”, and (iii) whether extremely high inequality levels would “significantly increase the chances of a societal collapse”. A majority of respondents answer that more unequal countries generally function worse (60%), that inequality changing society through externality channels is a “serious” (29%) or “extremely serious” (22%) issue, and that extremely high levels of inequality would “maybe” (47%) or “definitely” (25%) “significantly increase the chances of a societal collapse”. We discuss these questions further in

### Appendix C.3.

When asked directly to rank the elicited negative inequality externalities in terms of importance, crime, corruption, and social unrest are weighted most heavily – although most choices except for innovation are scored similarly. Among the positive externalities, economic growth is clearly seen as the most important channel. See Appendix C.4 for details.

### 3.3 *Why* does economic inequality change society?

In Survey 2, respondents were also asked to elaborate on one of their stated inequality externality beliefs in an open-ended format. A respondent may be asked to explain why they stated that more economic inequality increases the amount of corruption, for example. Answers function both as a robustness test – ensuring that respondents understand and engage with our questions – and as a deeper exploration of why it is so common to think that economic inequality affects society.

There are approximately ~295 respondents per externality, and the average response length is 18 words. To illustrate the main arguments respondents make for each potential externality we prompt ChatGPT-4.0, accessed in February 2024, to summarize the open-ended responses for each externality belief (that inequality increases crime, for example) in two short arguments. For the negative externality beliefs the number of arguments ranges between 127 (innovation) and 230 (crime). This method prevents researcher bias, functions well through various robustness tests, and is in-line with ChatGPT’s core functionality of using a large data set for language prediction. Potential limitations include the stochastic nature of ChatGPT (which impedes replicability) and underlying model bias.

Below are ChatGPT’s unedited summaries of respondents’ arguments for the highlighted beliefs. Further summaries and discussions of limitations are provided in Appendix C.5, which also includes sets of representative arguments selected by ChatGPT.

**Economic inequality worsens democratic institutions because:** (i) Economic inequality enables the wealthy to exert disproportionate influence on political processes, marginalizing the majority and undermining the effectiveness of democracy. (ii) Economic disparity discourages participation in democratic processes, making those with fewer resources feel disenfranchised and less capable of affecting change.

**Economic inequality increases social unrest because:** (i) Economic inequality breeds frustration and resentment among those who feel marginalized, leading to increased social unrest as people demand fairness and opportunities. (ii) As the wealth gap widens, individuals at the lower end of the economic spectrum may resort to crime or protest as a means of expressing their dissatisfaction and challenging perceived injustices.

**Economic inequality reduces economic growth because:** (i) Economic inequality restricts the disposable income of the majority, reducing consumer spending and limiting overall economic growth. (ii) Concentration of wealth in the hands of a few limits the opportunities for the broader population to contribute to and benefit from economic activities, stifling innovation and growth potential.

**Economic inequality increases economic growth because:** (i) Economic inequality can lead to increased investments in innovation and business ventures by the wealthy, driving

economic growth. (ii) The desire to ascend from lower economic statuses can motivate individuals to innovate and work harder, potentially spurring economic growth.

These summaries are cogent, invoke concerns about both top and bottom incomes, and often approximate various seminal theories of inequality's influence on society. The discussion on social unrest is reminiscent of Marx' theory of class struggle, [Acemoglu and Robinson \(2005\)](#) on the origins of democracy, and [Gurr \(1970\)](#) on relative deprivation, for example. The arguments on democratic institutions relate to those made by Plato and Aristotle, both of whom warned about excessively large economic differences corrupting the political process in *the Republic* and *Politics* respectively, and the more modern [Gilens and Page \(2014\)](#). The arguments on economic inequality dampening economic growth echo [Galor and Zeira \(1993\)](#), [Persson and Tabellini \(1994\)](#), and even [Stiglitz \(2012\)](#), whereas the idea that inequality could *increase* economic growth through capital accumulation was pointed out by [Keynes \(1919\)](#). While respondents may not have read these authors, our results indicate that versions of their arguments are intuitive enough for many U.S. citizens to understand and discuss.

To further explore the cogency of respondents' arguments we show word clouds in Appendix C.6. These word clouds correspond well to the ChatGPT summaries and further indicate that respondents clearly understand the ideas we discuss above. Respondents discussing social unrest use words like "poor", "feel", and "angry", for example, whereas respondents discussing democratic institutions use "rich", "government", and "power".

Using a multiple choice question and open-ended text analysis we also examine whether respondents are more concerned with relative poverty (inequality near the bottom) or relative affluence (inequality near the top), as well as the extent to which "poverty externalities" could confound our findings (Appendix C.7). The evidence indicates that most respondents are concerned with income inequalities across the distribution, with little indication that absolute poverty meaningfully influences our overall results.

### 3.4 Who holds which inequality externality beliefs?

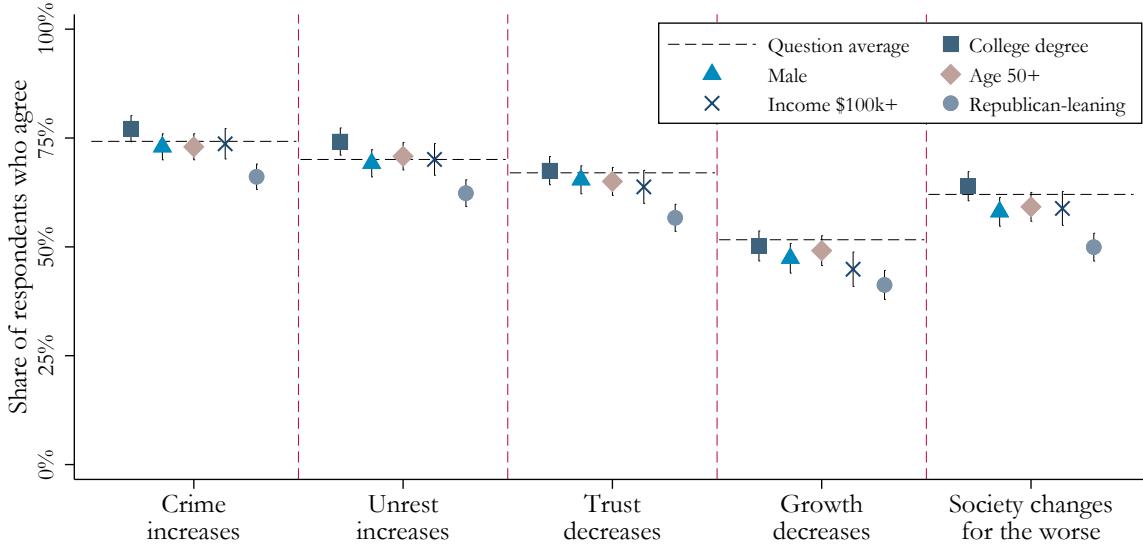
A large majority of respondents believe in the negative inequality externality dimension. But who are these respondents, exactly? In Figure 6 we show the shares of various groups that hold selected negative inequality externality beliefs. Associated regression analyses with a full set of demographic controls are shown in Tables H4-H6.

The largest differences appear in the political domain. Individuals who lean Republican are significantly less likely to believe in negative inequality externalities than individuals who lean Democrat, being on average  $\sim 19\text{p.p.}$  less likely to believe in any given negative inequality externality.<sup>5</sup> Though this difference is large, one might have expected it to be larger. To illustrate why, let us again divide answers into negative inequality externality beliefs, positive inequality externality beliefs, and the belief that there is no inequality externality for the given outcome. Self-reported Republicans are most likely to choose the negative externality option

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<sup>5</sup>We replicate Figure 4 for these two groups in Figure G3-G4, for very liberal or very conservative respondents in Figures G5-G6, and among respondents who feel closest to Bernie Sanders, Kamala Harris, Mitt Romney, or Donald Trump in Figures G7-G10.

Figure 6: Similar Beliefs about Inequality’s Consequences Across Groups



**Note.** This figure shows the share of respondents within various subgroups who hold various inequality externality beliefs. Questions are from Section 3.1, and are shown in full in Appendix K.2 (crime, unrest, trust, and growth) and C.2 (“Society changes for the worse”). Shares are averages per group (no controls) with 95% error bars. The groups not shown (e.g. respondents with an age below 50) are equal to the opposite data point (e.g. respondents above 50) reflected around the question average with a distance that is weighted by the ratio of respondents in each group. 53% of respondents are male, 55% have a college degree, 55% are aged above 50, 25% have a yearly income above \$100,000, and 51% lean Republican over Democrat. See Tables H4-H6 for a regression of inequality externality beliefs on a full set of demographic controls. Results across these methods are similar. The remaining inequality externalities from Figure 4 are shown in Figure G11.  $N = 3,290$  per externality.

for every outcome we elicit except for innovation, where the no-externality option is most likely (the negative externality option being second).

It is thus relatively rare, even among right-leaning respondents, to believe that economic inequality has positive societal benefits. Republican-leaning respondents are more likely to believe that more economic inequality *decreases* (41%) rather than *increases* (28%) economic growth, for example, and *decreases* (31%) rather than *increases* (29%) the amount of innovation. These results are surprising, but robust across our two surveys with distinct respondents and question methodology.<sup>6</sup>

To explore potential political divides in the *reasoning* behind negative inequality externality beliefs on the economic dimension we again use ChatGPT. With the same methodology as before we summarize Democratic-leaning and Republican-leaning respondents’ open-ended arguments for why economic inequality reduces the amount of innovation (Table 1) and economic growth (Table C2). We note both similarities and differences. Both groups argue that access to resources is necessary for broad-based innovation and that consumer spending at the bottom aids economic growth. Republican-leaning respondents also discuss the importance of motivation, efficiency, and work incentives (arguing that high inequality *reduces* incentives to work hard, presumably because of a perceived lack of mobility). Democratic-leaning respondents discuss education and broader societal challenges, and argue that high economic inequality “focuses innovation on the needs of the wealthy”. We will further contextualize these party differences by comparing them to the larger party differences in broad fairness views in Section 5.

Other demographic characteristics are rarely predictive of specific inequality externality be-

<sup>6</sup>We show this robustness in Figure G12 (methodology described in Section 3.5).

Table 1: ChatGPT Summaries: Why Does More Economic Inequality Reduce Innovation?

<b>Democratic-leaning respondents</b>	<b>Republican-leaning respondents</b>
(i) Economic inequality limits access to education and resources, reducing opportunities for innovation among those with potential but without means.	(i) Economic inequality reduces innovation because it diminishes the financial and motivational resources necessary for a broad range of individuals to contribute to innovation.
(ii) High economic inequality focuses innovation on the needs of the wealthy, neglecting broader societal challenges and stifling diverse innovative contributions.	(ii) The concentration of wealth limits access to opportunities and resources for innovation, disproportionately affecting those with less income and inhibiting their potential contributions.

**Note.** This table reports ChatGPT summaries of Democrat- and Republican-leaning respondents' open-ended text answers to why they believe inequality reduces innovation. Full question text (Appendix K.4.3): “*In the previous question you answered “More inequality → [Somewhat/A lot] less innovation”. Can you tell us, in your own words, why you think this?*”, where the only individuals included are those who (i) initially responded that they believe the stated causal channel, and (ii) were randomized into the innovation treatment arm in Survey 2. Sample sizes are relatively small ( $N=86$  and  $N=41$ ). Section 3.3 and Appendix C.5 show more ChatGPT summaries. We show the same data for economic growth in Table C2.

iefs. The gender and age of the respondent are generally not significantly predictive of any given externality belief. College-educated individuals are somewhat more likely to believe in negative externalities,<sup>7</sup> even though income and wealth are generally insignificant predictors for most outcomes (a significant finding that we will return to in Section 5). Moreover, income inequality on the state level does not correlate with externality beliefs.

Overall, the analysis shows that negative inequality externality beliefs are widely held across demographic groups. We compare this homogeneity to a contrasting heterogeneity in fairness views in Section 5.2.

### 3.5 Robustness of externality beliefs

We finally examine the robustness of respondents' stated inequality externality beliefs.

**Phrasing differences** We divided 40% of Survey 2 respondents into two phrasing treatments to investigate how our results depend on specific wording. These respondents never saw the phrase “more inequality” (or the word “inequality” at all), instead seeing “more equality” (20%) or “larger differences in incomes and wealth” (20%). An example of a negative inequality externality belief under the “equality” phrasing is “More equality → Less crime”. These changes do not meaningfully affect our conclusions; the negative externality option is the most popular for any combination of phrasing choice and outcome. We expand upon the phrasing treatments in Appendix C.8.

**Other robustness checks** The inequality externality beliefs we showed in Figure 4 are strongly robust to different specifications. This is illustrated in the Figures G13-G14, where we show both the effect of the phrasing changes and that results stay very similar when we

<sup>7</sup>Note that this exaggerates the descriptive results by roughly 1 p.p., as our data has a larger share of college graduates than a fully representative national sample. See Appendix B.3 (for calculation) and Figures G13-G14 (for data weighted for full representativity).

(i) weight respondents for full representativity to the 2021 U.S. population, (ii) restrict to only the distinct Survey 1 or Survey 2 samples, (iii) explain what “more inequality” and the initial reference point of inequality is through diagrams and words (see Appendix B.6), (iv) inform respondents that their answer is important and ask them to carefully consider their choice, while imposing a waiting period before an answer is possible, (v) restrict the sample to respondents who succeeded on every attention check, and (vi) restrict the sample to respondents who correctly answered a simple comprehension question on economic inequality. We also discuss potential non-monotonic relationships between inequality levels and externality effects in Appendix C.9.

Further, 98% of respondents confirm their choice when prompted, question ordering has no noticeable effect on results, and 93% and 94% of our final Survey 2 respondent sample succeeded on two simple attention checks designed to look similar to the specific externality questions.<sup>8</sup>

This represents the end of our main descriptive analysis. We summarize the above discussion in our first main result:

#### Result #1

U.S. citizens tend to perceive inequality as having severe negative consequences and few positive consequences. This holds across demographic groups and political affiliations.

We now move to study the effect of these inequality externality beliefs on individuals’ redistributive preferences.

## 4 Redistributive Preferences and Inequality Externality Beliefs: An Information Experiment

In this section we examine the relationship between inequality externality beliefs and redistributive preferences through a video-based information provision experiment, a widely used method in the behavioral economics literature (Haaland et al., 2023; Stantcheva, 2023).

### 4.1 Experimental design

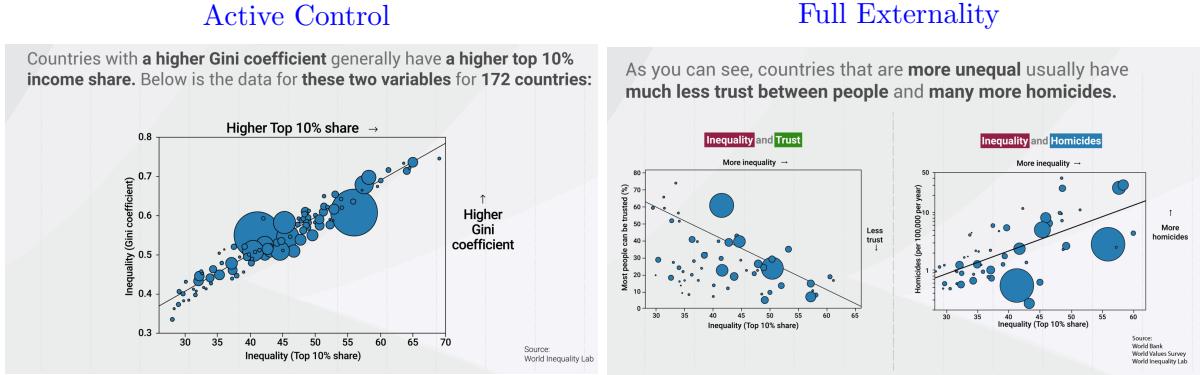
The information provision experiment was entirely contained in Survey 1 with 4,371 respondents. The structure of the experiment is as follows (Figure 2 provides an overview). We first measured pre-treatment beliefs about inequality externalities and views on economic fairness (Part 1). Similar beliefs were elicited pre- and post-treatment but no questions were repeated. We then randomized respondents into one of six groups (Part 2) – four treatment groups (20% chance, ~ 875 respondents each) and two control groups (10% chance each).

Three treatment groups received information on potential inequality externalities. We discuss the externality videos below. The last treatment group received information on the evolution of

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<sup>8</sup>This can be seen in Figure G2. Note that the result is partially by design, as we screened on failing too many attention checks (see Appendix B.2).

Figure 7: Treatment Videos, Example Screenshots



**Note.** This figure shows screenshots from the active control video (left) and the full externality video (right), two of the five videos used in the survey experiment. One video was shown to each respondent, except for the 10% of respondents in the passive control group. Appendix D.3 provides a detailed description of each video. Click the following links for the full videos: [Crime – Trust – Full externality – Fairness – Active control](#)

worker productivity, median wages, and the top 1% income share. This benchmark treatment on economic fairness is discussed in Section 5.1.

One control group saw a neutral video on inequality metrics, and one control group received no stimulus. We designed this *dual control group method* to minimize the intrinsic issues with either type of control (notably experimenter demand, priming, and attention effects). The control groups do not exhibit meaningful differences in outcomes and we merge them on pre-specified criteria. We discuss the dual control group method further in Appendix D.1.

We also design a within-survey version of the obfuscated follow-up survey methodology discussed in [Haaland et al. \(2023\)](#) to reduce concerns about experimenter demand and priming. Immediately after the treatment videos, respondents were asked questions relevant to the video but unrelated to our research objectives. They were then informed that Part 2 of the survey had ended. Part 3 was introduced using a new design, and respondents were asked various demographic queries. The actual outcomes (described further below) were elicited after this structural break. We thus separate the treatment information and outcome variables, while also providing a plausible rationale for the treatment itself. As respondents see a second version of the survey that hides the information experiment, we refer to this as the “secondary survey” approach, which we expand upon in Appendix D.2.

As expected from our research design, the groups are generally well-balanced and differential attrition is limited (see Appendix B.1). Including or excluding controls for respondent characteristics and pre-treatment beliefs has no effect on results.

#### 4.1.1 Video treatments

The information provided in the externality treatments focus on correlations between inequality and negative outcomes (more crime, less trust, or both). We use correlational data due to the absence of credible exogenous variation in macroeconomic inequality, which restricts the availability of robust causal evidence.<sup>9</sup> Respondents are explicitly informed that the correlations

<sup>9</sup>There is arguably no robust causal evidence on the externality effects of macroeconomic inequality. Macro-level inequality is jointly determined by multiple, difficult-to-isolate factors (e.g. policies, institutions, and culture), making exogenous variation challenging to locate. In the very rare cases where exogenous variation may hold – a

do not imply causation.<sup>10</sup> The lack of strong cross-country correlations between inequality and positive societal outcomes constrained our ability to design an equivalent treatment in the opposite direction.

The videos were designed with easily digestible animated motion graphics to prevent survey fatigue. Screenshots of two of the videos are shown in Figure 7. Each video was 1-2 minutes long. The below section briefly describes the externality and control videos; more details are presented in Appendix D.3.

**Treatment group 1: Crime as an inequality externality** The video shows the positive cross-country correlation between intentional homicides and inequality. The correlation is explained through graphics and simple statistics. Respondents are also informed that similar relationships hold for other types of crime. The data are from the World Bank and the World Inequality Database.

**Treatment group 2: Trust as an inequality externality** The video shows the negative cross-country correlation between generalized trust and inequality. The video is otherwise structurally identical to Treatment 1. The data are from the World Values Survey and the World Inequality Database.

**Treatment group 3: Full externality treatment** The video is designed as an all-encompassing externality treatment. It combines the information from Treatment 1 and 2 (see Figure 7) and also shows that inequality is not correlated to economic growth and innovation. It includes a short discussion on how inequality could change societies in other ways, noting that while there is disagreement among researchers, some believe inequality can increase social unrest, corruption, and political polarization (e.g. Bonica et al., 2013; You, 2014; Hochleitner et al., 2023). It also contains a quotation by Amartya Sen (“*I believe virtually all the problems in the world come from inequality in one way or another*”), cited as a Nobel-prize winning economist.

**Summary of the variation induced through the externality-based treatments** The three externality treatments provide information about inequality’s externality properties while attempting to avoid fairness-related topics (a testable hypothesis we will return to). Crime and trust were chosen due to the particularly strong cross-country correlations between these outcomes and income inequality.

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trade shock, for example – the exclusion restriction does not hold for any reasonable outcome.

<sup>10</sup>Our method relies on individuals interpreting correlations as suggestive evidence, as they are often used in the related literature (see e.g. Persson and Tabellini, 1994; Houle, 2009; Rufrancos et al., 2013; Bergh et al., 2016). We make no positive prescription of whether such correlational evidence should be used to inform the public; our contribution is simply documenting the relationship between a shift of negative inequality externality beliefs and redistributive preferences. A limitation of this method is that we cannot measure the extent to which individuals’ beliefs are corrected, as in a standard information experiment. Our method instead relies on how respondents use suggestive evidence to update their beliefs about an uncertain outcome. Our study was approved by the Paris School of Economics Institutional Review Board under the reference 2021-025.

#### 4.1.2 Redistributive preference outcomes

We measure individuals' redistributive preferences with four survey questions and a combined index of these questions. Note that survey questions regularly predict real-world outcomes in similar work ([Haaland and Roth, 2021](#); [Alesina et al., 2023](#)).<sup>11</sup>

The four questions are the following. First, a question on respondents' preferred level of redistribution on a scale from no redistribution to full redistribution. Second, a question from the European Social Survey which asks respondents whether the government should take measures to reduce inequality on a Likert scale. The main difference between the first two questions is the explicit presence of government. Third, a question about whether the respondent believes that inequality is a very serious issue in the United States (used in [Stantcheva, 2021](#), among others). And fourth, a specific policy preference question which asks respondents about their preferred average tax rate for the “Top 10%” over seven different options (e.g. “15-25%: *I want to tax them at a lower rate than now, but not very low.*”). Appendix K.5 lists the exact question text.

The combined index (“RP index”) is equal to the sum of dummy versions of all the four outcomes, standardized such that one unit is one population standard deviation. It was pre-specified as the primary outcome variable.

We note that our four survey measures cover only a portion of possible policy responses to inequality. Even among redistributive tools, there are many instruments we do not capture, and some respondents might instead favor non-redistributive interventions (crime prevention, for example). Consequently, our findings may underestimate the broader impact of inequality externality beliefs on policy preferences.

#### 4.1.3 First-stage outcomes

Our primary first-stage outcomes are elicited immediately after the redistributive preference questions. We first ask the following multiple-choice question (also mentioned in Section 3.1): “*Generally speaking, do you think more economic inequality changes society for the better or for the worse?*” Responses of “[Somewhat / A lot] for the worse” were coded as a negative inequality externality belief.

Respondents then answered the following question in an open-ended format: “*How do you think economic inequality changes society?*”. This provides a direct measure of beliefs about the societal effects of inequality, using the top-of-mind approach discussed in [Haaland et al. \(2024\)](#). Using the GPT-4o Mini API, we checked each response for references – positive or negative – to any of the eleven inequality externalities discussed earlier (e.g., suggesting that inequality increases or decreases crime). We also classify general fairness ideas and any hints of experimenter demand. We thus made 13 separate calls to the API for each of the 4,371 arguments, a total of 56,823 API calls. Appendix D.4 lists the full prompts. Each respondent also answered a subset of the battery of inequality externality questions we described in Section 3.1 after the treatment; these questions are used as secondary first-stage outcomes.

Two multiple-choice questions on fairness views are also used as first-stage outcomes. Here we aim to explore (and potentially exclude) spillover effects of the externality treatments on

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<sup>11</sup>Small-scale redistributive games, which are often used for similar purposes, cannot be used in our case as individuals' beliefs in macroeconomic inequality externalities should have no effect on microeconomic choices.

economic fairness views, broadly defined. The first fairness question asked whether the current distribution of income and wealth in the US is fair (or unfair) because people get what they are entitled to (or not). The second asked whether hard work or luck “has more to do with” why a person is rich.

## 4.2 Experimental results

Our main specification is the following, which we estimate using OLS:

$$y_i = \beta_0 + \boldsymbol{\beta}_1 \mathbf{T}_i + \boldsymbol{\beta}_2 \mathbf{x}_i + \epsilon_i \quad (1)$$

where  $y_i$  is the outcome of interest;  $\mathbf{T}_i$  is a vector of binary variables denoting which treatment (if any) the respondent received (where both control groups have  $\mathbf{T}_i = 0$ );  $\mathbf{x}_i$  is a vector of pre-specified controls; and  $\epsilon_i$  is an individual-specific error term.

### 4.2.1 First-stage outcomes

Figure 8 presents selected first-stage outcomes of the information treatments. In the multiple-choice question, the baseline probability of indicating that inequality changes society for the worse is 60%. All three treatments significantly increase this probability, with the crime and full externality treatments having a larger impact than the trust treatment (Crime: 9.2 p.p. 95% C.I. [4.8, 13.5];  $p < 0.001$ . Trust: 5.2 p.p. 95% C.I. [0.6, 9.7];  $p = 0.025$ . Full ext.: 8.8 p.p. 95% C.I. [4.3, 13.3];  $p < 0.001$ ).

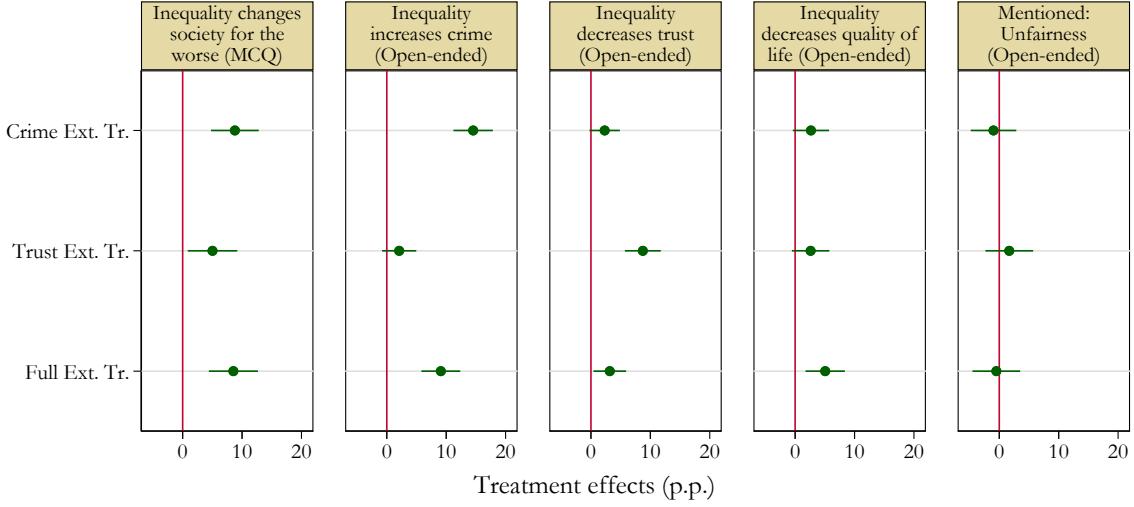
In the open-ended text question, each treatment significantly affects the likelihood that GPT-4o Mini classifies respondents’ open-ended answers as mentioning the targeted negative inequality externality. The crime treatment increases the share of respondents who discuss inequality as increasing crime from 10% to 24% (by 14.7 p.p., 95% C.I. [11.3, 18.0];  $p < 0.001$ ), and the trust treatment increases the share of respondents who discuss inequality as decreasing trust from 8% to 17% (by 8.8 p.p., 95% C.I. [5.7, 11.9];  $p < 0.001$ ). The full externality treatment increases the corresponding shares for crime from 10% to 19% (by 9.2 p.p., 95% C.I. [6.0, 12.5];  $p < 0.001$ ), and trust from 8% to 11% (by 3.4 p.p., 95% C.I. [0.6, 6.2];  $p = 0.016$ ). Appendix E.2 demonstrates that simple word searches for “crime” and “trust” yield very similar patterns. Most other potential externalities are not mentioned significantly more often than in the control group (Tables H7-H9). The most notable exception is that the full externality treatment significantly increases mentions of inequality as a factor reducing overall quality of life by 5.4 p.p.<sup>12</sup> Only 3% of respondents discussed any positive inequality externality in the baseline (not significantly affected by any treatment).

These first-stage outcomes indicate that the crime and trust interventions successfully targeted specific externalities, while the full externality treatment appears to have had a broader impact on negative inequality externality beliefs. Still, we note that all three treatments significantly affected most inequality externality beliefs measured in the multiple-choice format from Section 3.1. On one hand, this may indicate that the top-of-mind approach underestimates

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<sup>12</sup>The crime treatment significantly increases mentions of social unrest (2.6 p.p.) and decreases mentions of the quality of democratic institutions (-1.6 p.p. in what appears to be a crowd-out effect). The trust treatment significantly increases mentions of social unrest (2.5 p.p.) and political polarization (2.3 p.p.).

Figure 8: First-stage Effects of Treatments (MCQ + NLP Analysis of Open-ended Question)



**Note.** This figure reports selected first-stage treatment effects for the inequality externality videos. “*Ineq. changes society for the worse*” denotes a binary variable defined as one if the respondent answers “[Somewhat / A lot] for the worse” to the question “*Generally speaking, do you think more economic inequality changes society for the better or for the worse?*”. The remaining five columns denote binary variables defined as one if the respondent mentions how inequality negatively influences society through the given variable when answering the open-ended question “*How do you think economic inequality changes society?*”, defined by GPT-4o Mini with prompts shown in Appendix D.4. Full question texts are shown in Appendix K.3. Each treatment group is compared to the merged control group. Baseline values in the merged control group are 60% (ineq. changes society for the worse), 10% (crime), 8% (trust), 13% (quality of life), and 26% (unfairness). Table H7 presents point estimates and robust standard errors. Figures G15-G16 extend the methodology to the other inequality externalities discussed in Section 3, and to the share of respondents who mention at least one positive / negative inequality externality. Table E2 shows the prevalence of key words in each treatment’s open-ended answers (“crime”, “trust”, and “video”). Tables H10-H11 show first-stage outcomes from multiple-choice questions. Controls include political leaning, gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, geographic region, trust in government, and pre-treatment views on economic fairness (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Error bars characterize 95% confidence intervals. N=4,371.

treatment effects on non-targeted inequality externality beliefs. On the other hand, since the multiple-choice questions were asked after the redistributive preference outcomes – and introduced externality examples not previously considered by respondents – these apparent spillovers may have had limited influence on redistributive preferences. See Appendix E.3 for a further discussion.

Importantly, none of the externality treatments affect either open-ended mentions of broad economic fairness views (Figure 8) or responses to the two multiple-choice fairness questions (Table H10). This suggests limited spillovers to *other* determinants of redistributive preferences, an important step in isolating the causal effect of inequality externality beliefs on redistributive preferences. It also suggests that inequality externality beliefs may be largely independent of fairness views.

We also find no evidence of experimenter demand. As we discuss in Appendix E.4, GPT-4o Mini only classified 0.3% of open-ended responses as containing any trace of experimenter demand. Strong experimenter demand would also be expected to influence stated fairness views.

#### 4.2.2 Redistributive preferences: Main treatment effects

Table 2 shows how each treatment affects individuals’ redistributive preferences.

Most notably, the full externality treatment increased the redistributive preference index by 0.107 standard deviations (95% C.I. [0.034, 0.181];  $p=0.004$ ), a relatively large treatment

Table 2: Main Treatment Effects of Video Information Experiment

	(1) RP Index b/se	(2) Wants redistribution b/se	(3) Gov. reduce ineq. b/se	(4) Ineq. is serious issue b/se	(5) Increase top taxes b/se
Crime Ext. Tr.	0.037 (0.036)	0.031 (0.020)	0.007 (0.020)	0.020 (0.019)	-0.005 (0.021)
Trust Ext. Tr.	0.043 (0.037)	0.006 (0.021)	0.036* (0.020)	0.017 (0.020)	0.004 (0.022)
Full Ext. Tr.	0.107*** (0.037)	0.050** (0.021)	0.048** (0.020)	0.069*** (0.020)	-0.012 (0.022)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R2	0.391	0.169	0.293	0.313	0.170
Observations	4371	4371	4371	4371	4371

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression of different redistributive preference outcomes and the treatment dummies, as well as socio-economic control variables. The RP index is normalized on the sample and has units of the number of standard deviations. The remaining variables are binary (0-1) with full question texts displayed in Appendix K.5. Controls include political leaning, gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, geographic region, trust in government, and pre-treatment views on economic fairness (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Equivalent table without controls in Table H12. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

effect in these types of experiments (see [Haaland et al., 2023](#)). The share of respondents that prefer redistribution on three of our four outcome variables increases from 40.3% to 46%, which corresponds to approximately  $\frac{1}{7}$  of the difference between Republican- and Democratic-leaning subjects. The treatment also significantly shifted three of the four measures that make up the RP index at the 5% significance level. The only redistributive outcome that is not significantly shifted is preferences for top income taxation, where we hypothesize that respondents may not fully believe that higher top tax rates directly reduce the negative inequality externalities discussed. We also note that government trust may function as a mediator, as suggested by [Kuziemko et al. \(2015\)](#) and others; among respondents who express trust in the federal government, the full externality treatment increases top tax preferences at the 10% significance level (Table H13).

The crime and trust treatments have smaller and statistically insignificant effects on the RP index, although both are in the direction of larger preferences for redistribution and we cannot reject the hypothesis that their combined effect is equal to the full externality treatment effect. Across the individual outcomes, demand for government intervention is significant at the 10% level for the trust treatment, and seven of eight outcomes move in the expected direction. Still, none are shifted at the 5% significance level. We hypothesize that the crime treatment was too specific, and the trust treatment too weak, to meaningfully affect redistributive preferences.<sup>13</sup>

Overall, the most significant finding from the information experiment is the strongly signif-

<sup>13</sup>The crime treatment significantly increased general inequality externality concerns and mentions of crime, but generated minimal non-crime spillovers and even reduced mentions of democratic institutions (which, as we show in Table H14, was one of the first-stage outcomes most heavily correlated to stronger redistributive preferences). Respondents affected by the crime treatment may thus favor targeted interventions (e.g., crime-prevention programs) rather than broader redistributive policies. As an example, a Republican in the crime treatment opposing all four measures of redistribution wrote the following in the open-ended question; “*Economic inequality completely changes the way some people live and the way they interact with society as a whole. [...] I am in complete support for our law enforcement agencies concerning crime of ANY type.*” The treatment may also have contained limited new information for most respondents, as those who initially did not hold negative inequality externality beliefs showed a significant increase in their redistributive preference index at the 5% level (Table H15).

The trust treatment, on the other hand, modestly shifted general externality concerns and did not produce strong spillovers, likely making the net effect too small to significantly influence redistributive preferences.

icant effect of the full externality treatment on redistributive preferences. We now turn to the mechanism and robustness of this results.

#### 4.2.3 Mechanism

By shifting both general concerns and specific perceptions about crime, trust, and overall quality of life, the full externality treatment had a substantial impact on inequality externality beliefs. It did not affect fairness views. Mediation analysis strengthens the hypothesis that shifts in inequality externality beliefs drive the measured redistributive preference effect (Appendix E.5). The treatment effect is also strongest for individuals who did not hold negative inequality externality beliefs at the beginning of the survey (Table H15), and respondents who self-reported that they learned something new (Table H16). A hypothesis of experimenter demand is not supported in the data (Appendix E.4).

Based on the above, we conclude that respondents' redistributive preferences are shifted through a change in their inequality externality beliefs.

#### 4.2.4 Robustness of treatment effects

The conclusions from the information experiment are robust to various specifications. In Appendix E.6 we discuss the robustness of the treatment effects to (i) fully representative population weights, (ii) keeping respondents with very fast/slow survey completion times or unusual text answers, (iii) excluding all respondents who failed at least one attention check, (iv) using only one control group, (v) not controlling for observable characteristics, (vi) using different sets of control variables, (vii) using non-dichotomized outcome variables, and (viii) multiple hypothesis testing. Point estimates do not change in a noteworthy fashion to any of these checks.<sup>14</sup>

The above analysis can be summarized in our second main finding:

##### Result #2

Inequality externality beliefs are a causal determinant of U.S. citizens' redistributive preferences.

## 5 Inequality Externality Beliefs and Other Determinants of Redistributive Support

We have established that negative inequality externality beliefs are widely held in the United States and causally affect citizens' redistributive preferences. To assess the implications of these findings, we now compare them to other determinants of redistributive support, focusing on two main questions. First, are inequality externality beliefs a comparatively *large* determinant of redistributive preferences? Second, do they have any *unique properties*?

<sup>14</sup>In three cases the significance level of the full externality treatment drops to 10%, driven by the expected increases in standard errors from either substantial reductions in sample size (excluding the passive control group or excluding all attention check failures), or from the re-weighting required to match population demographics.

## 5.1 The importance of inequality externality beliefs

We first study the importance of inequality externality beliefs as determinants of redistributive preferences (the magnitude of the determinant). We primarily do so by comparing externality beliefs to broad economic fairness views. These views have been identified as a crucial motive behind individuals' preferences for redistribution (e.g. Cappelen et al., 2007; Durante et al., 2014; Almås et al., 2020), thus serving as a useful benchmark. We pre-specified three different approaches which we now go through in turn.

### 5.1.1 Comparing information treatments

As previously mentioned, the information experiment also included a fairness treatment. This treatment consisted of information the stagnation of U.S. manufacturing workers' wages while productivity increased between 1980-2019, using data from the Economic Policy Institute. This was contrasted to the growth of the top 1% income share in the U.S. from the World Inequality Database. We discuss the design and mechanism of the fairness video further in Appendix E.7.

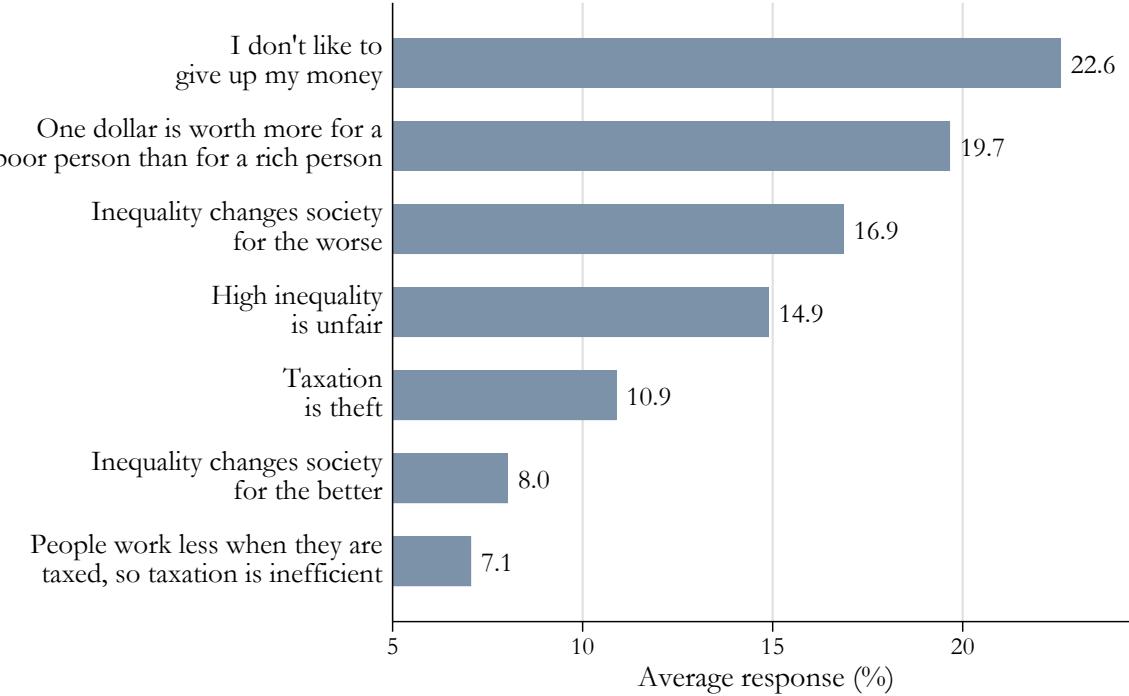
This video increased respondents' RP index by 0.208 of a standard deviation, which is about twice the effect of the full externality video (0.107 of a standard deviation, see Table H17, coefficient equality rejected at the 5% significance level). While this is suggestive about the relative importance of these determinants, we caution that these are marginal effects that are also dependent on baseline beliefs and the efficacy of the treatment video.

### 5.1.2 Directly ranking redistributive motives

In a more direct approach, subjects were asked to describe what "matters most" to them when thinking about their preferred level of redistribution. Respondents were asked to allocate 100 points across seven different motives (see Figure 9). Each choice aims to concisely outline a fundamental argument for or against redistribution. The seven choices are based on (i) negative inequality externalities, (ii) positive inequality externalities, (iii) individual income maximization, (iv) diminishing marginal utilities of income (DMUI), (v) concerns about inequality being unfair, (vi) concerns about taxation being unfair (a libertarian fairness motive), and (vii) traditional efficiency losses from the behavioral responses to taxation. The survey-item provides direct evidence of respondents' redistributive motives under the assumption that they are able to discern and report these motives. A limitation of the method is that related ideas can be difficult to completely separate in such a format.

The negative inequality externality motive receives broad support in this very direct approach, coming in third among the seven options (Figure 9). This is below income maximization and DMUI-based concerns. It is slightly above concerns about unfairness, and relatively high above the remaining three options (the libertarian motive, positive externality considerations, and traditional tax efficiency concerns). These results provide direct evidence that many U.S. citizens view inequality externalities as a major driver of their support for redistribution. Their average magnitude is above fairness concerns alone, and a sizable share of the combined influence of DMUI and fairness concerns. They are also seen as far more significant than taxation-based efficiency losses, a compelling finding given the extensive academic emphasis on such costs (Du-

Figure 9: Directly Elicited Motives of Preferences for Redistribution



**Note.** Question text: “*When thinking about your preferred level of redistribution, what matters most to you? Please indicate what dimensions matter by giving scores below that add up to 100.*” Answer option texts are identical to graph labels except for the positive and negative externality options, where the question labels also included “(more inequality → a better society through various ways)” and “(more inequality → a worse society through various ways)” respectively. Standard errors are approximately 0.6%. Sample is the merged descriptive sample ( $N=3,292$ ). Figure G17-G18 shows that results are similar across surveys.

rante et al., 2014; Almås et al., 2020; Stantcheva, 2021).

### 5.1.3 Predictive power on redistributive preferences

Do some U.S. citizens think that inequality is fair *and* that inequality is a serious issue? Our data indicates yes, as 44% of respondents who believe that the current income distribution is “somewhat/mostly fair” also answer that inequality is “an issue/a serious issue/a very serious issue”. This is puzzling if inequality is only problematic from an ethical point of view. Why do these respondents dislike inequality?

A potential reason is negative inequality externality beliefs. Indeed, 67% of these respondents agree that “countries with more economic inequality usually function worse”, which can be compared to 32% among respondents who think inequality is fair and do *not* think inequality is an issue. In other words, a subset of individuals may have low inequality acceptance primarily due to concerns about inequality externalities.

It thus seems possible that inequality externality beliefs may explain variation in redistributive preferences that cannot be explained by fairness views. To explore this issue systematically we pre-specified an analysis of the predictive power of externality beliefs and three other sets of variables on redistributive preferences. This analysis consists of regressions on the redistributive preference index that include regressors of respondents’ answers to two questions on, respectively: (i) fairness views, (ii) externality beliefs, (iii) political preferences, or (iv) taxation

Table 3: Horse-Race: Predictive Power of Beliefs on Redistributive Preferences

	(1) RP Index b/se	(2) RP Index b/se	(3) RP Index b/se	(4) RP Index b/se	(5) RP Index b/se	(6) RP Index b/se
Rich because of luck		0.624*** (0.062)				0.401*** (0.059)
Society is unfair		0.620*** (0.061)				0.416*** (0.057)
Belief uneq countr. worse.			0.434*** (0.058)			0.269*** (0.052)
Society changes for the worse			0.640*** (0.059)			0.272*** (0.054)
Leans Republican				-0.429*** (0.091)		-0.245*** (0.077)
Sanders/Harris-supporter				0.533*** (0.093)		0.260*** (0.082)
Trusts the government					0.436*** (0.065)	0.131** (0.058)
Taxation reduces work					-0.115* (0.061)	-0.004 (0.049)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adjusted R2	0.104	0.382	0.297	0.296	0.148	0.494
Observations	932	932	932	932	932	932

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression of different redistributive preference outcomes on fairness views, political views, externality beliefs and attitudes towards the government, as well as socio-economic control variables. Column 1 only includes demographic controls (to show the adjusted  $R^2$  before adding the relevant covariates). The predictive power is defined as the adjusted  $R^2$  in the relevant column minus the adjusted  $R^2$  in Column 1. Controls include gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, and geographic region (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. All question answers are in pre-specified binary form designed to for 50/50 splits. Survey 1 data – results in Survey 2 are similar (see Table H18). *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

efficiency losses and trust in government. We then compare the explanatory power of these models using the adjusted  $R^2$  in separate regressions. We note that we have previously discussed most of these questions (details in Appendix F.2), and that results are consistent when other or more questions are used.

We show the results in Table 3. The two inequality externality beliefs we include explain roughly 20% of the variation in redistributive preferences.<sup>15</sup> This is somewhat below the predictive power of fairness views (28%) and equal to that of political preferences (20%). The predictive power of determinants of redistributive support often found in the academic literature – governmental trust and a belief that taxation leads to less work – is very small (5%). When combining all determinants into one regression (Column 6), externality beliefs also remain highly significant.

This approach yields two main conclusions. First, the predictive power of inequality externality beliefs on redistributive preferences is strong; only somewhat less than that of fairness views, and roughly the same as that of political affiliation. Second, inequality externality beliefs appear to capture parts of individuals' redistributive preferences that are not captured by other determinants of redistributive support.

The three approaches discussed in this section all lead to the same qualitative conclusion: Inequality externality beliefs appear to be a major determinant of redistributive preferences,

<sup>15</sup>We net out the 10% of explanatory power from demographic controls, see Column (1).

approaching broad economic fairness views in importance while remaining somewhat less influential. Moreover, the two approaches where the comparison is possible find that inequality externality beliefs have a significantly greater impact than taxation-based efficiency concerns. Similar conclusions are also found when using a Gelbach decomposition to explore which survey questions explain the redistributive preference differences across Democrats and Republicans (Appendix F.2).

The above analysis can be summarized in our third main result:

### Result #3

Inequality externality beliefs are a *sizable* causal determinant of redistributive preferences, approaching broad economic fairness views in importance.

## 5.2 Unique properties of inequality externality beliefs

We now investigate whether inequality externality beliefs possess unique properties that distinguish them from other determinants of redistributive preferences.

### 5.2.1 Descriptive consensus across demographic groups

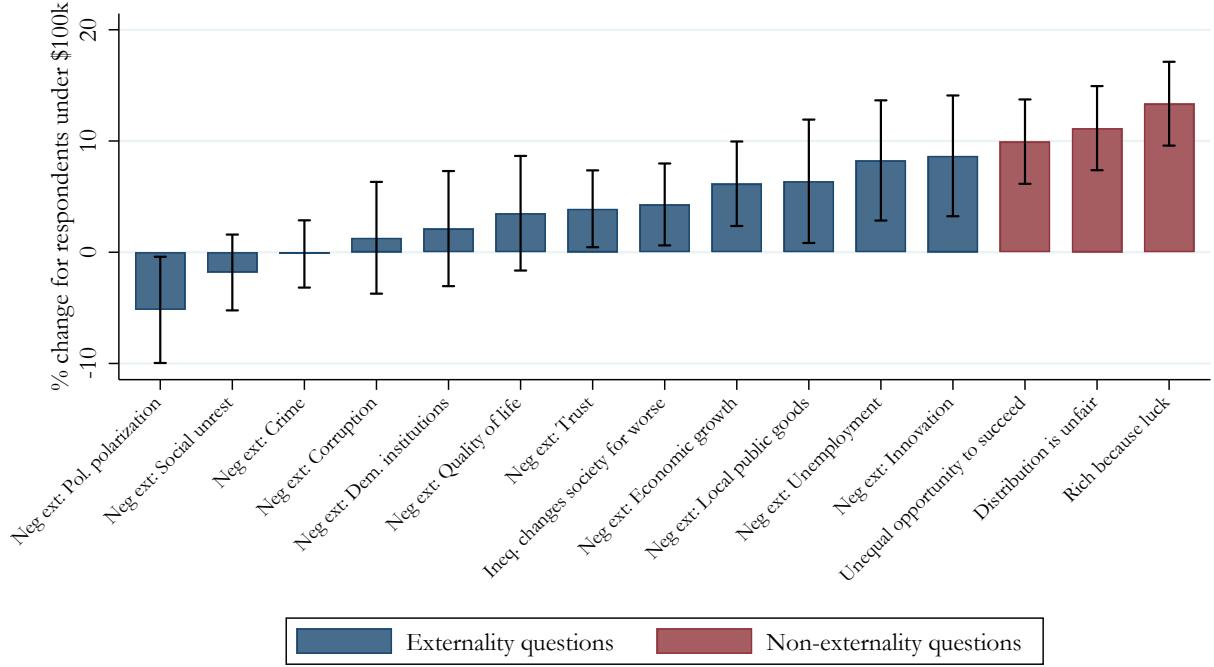
We first compare the degree of consensus about inequality externality beliefs across incomes and political affiliation to that of fairness views.

**Incomes** Figure 10 shows the variation in responses between individuals with annual incomes above and below \$100,000 for the main inequality externality and fairness questions in Survey 1. A clear pattern emerges, as every fairness question is more polarized by income than every externality question. The weak or non-existent negative correlations between incomes and negative inequality externality beliefs, mentioned in Section 3, contrasts with individuals' fairness views, where high-income individuals are much more likely to think the economic distribution is fair (consistent with the previous literature, see e.g. Hvidberg et al., 2023; Cohn et al., 2023). The same pattern is clear in Survey 2 (Figure F3) and when using wealth instead of income (Figure F4). In sum, while individuals' economic status strongly predicts fairness views, both rich and poor are overall likely to think inequality has negative consequences.

**Political affiliations** We find the same comparative lack of polarization of inequality externality beliefs across political affiliations. This is illustrated in Figure 11 for the same set of Survey 1 questions, where again every fairness-based question is more polarized than every inequality externality-based question. On average, the share of Republican-leaning respondents holding a given fairness view is  $\sim 30$  p.p. different from the share of Democratic-leaning respondents. For inequality externality beliefs, the same difference is approximately  $\sim 15$  p.p..

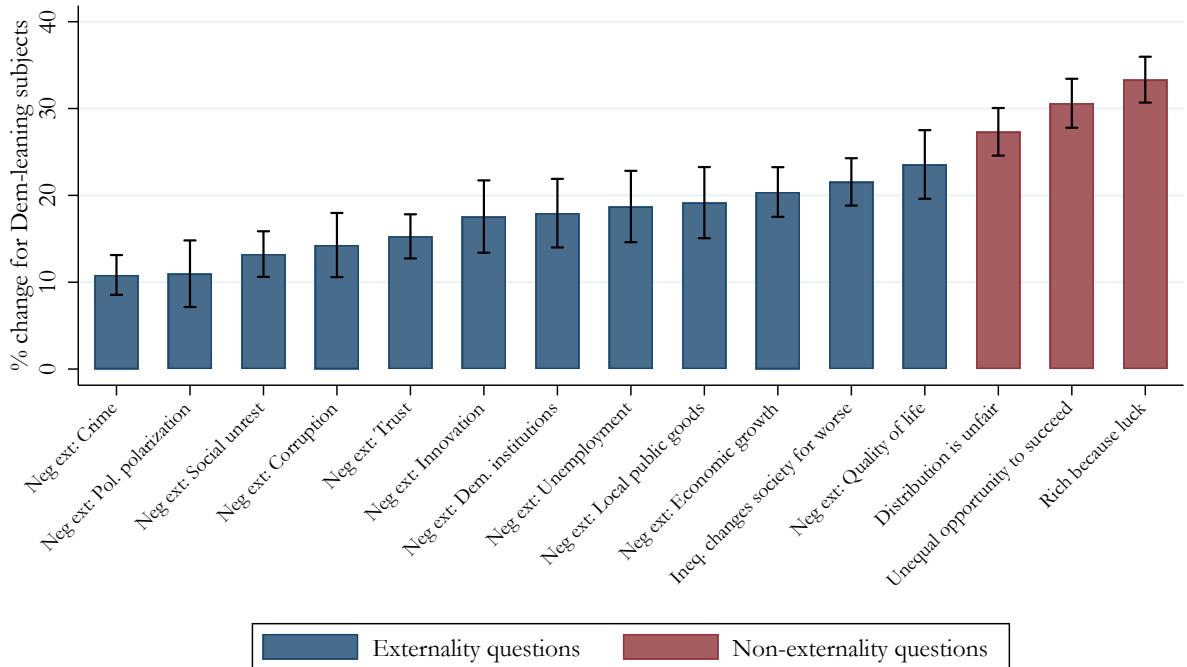
It follows that Republican- and Democratic-leaning respondents display considerably more similarities when asked about inequality externalities than when asked about traditional equity-based fairness ideas. The pattern replicates for Survey 2 (Table F5).

Figure 10: Fairness Views and Inequality Externality Beliefs Across Incomes



**Note.** Difference in pro-inequality sentiment (e.g. inequality does not increase crime, does not decrease trust, is fair) for respondents with incomes above \$100,000 across selected externality and non-externality (“fairness”) questions in Survey 1 where the only controls are for treatment groups. Results are similar when only using the control group, and in Survey 2 (Figure F3). Questions are largely split on pre-specified criteria or natural binary points (e.g. agree/disagree), keeping total shares close to 50% where possible. Error bars are 95% confidence intervals.  $N = 4,391$ .

Figure 11: Fairness Views and Inequality Externality Beliefs Across Political Affiliations



**Note.** Difference in pro-inequality sentiment (e.g. inequality does not increase crime, does not decrease trust, is fair) for Democratic-leaning respondents across selected externality and non-externality (“fairness”) questions in Survey 1 where the only controls are for treatment groups. Results are similar when only using the control group, and in Survey 2 (Figure F5). Questions are largely split on pre-specified criteria or natural binary points (e.g. agree/disagree), keeping total shares close to 50% where possible. Error bars are 95% confidence intervals.  $N = 4,391$ .

That fairness views are more income- and party-polarized than externality beliefs is an extremely consistent result in our data, which we discuss further in Appendix F.3. Taken together, the large agreement across demographic groups about inequality’s externality effects appears to be a unique feature of these types of arguments.

### 5.2.2 Heterogeneous effects on redistributive preferences

Could the demographic consensus on inequality externality beliefs also imply more agreement on redistribution? We investigate this possibility using the three approaches previously employed to analyze redistributive preferences – experimental treatment effects (Sections 4 and 5.1.1), direct questioning (Section 5.1.2), and predictive regressions (Section 5.1.3).

**Across incomes** At the baseline, respondents with above \$100,000 in annual income have a 11 p.p. lower probability of supporting redistribution (defined as supporting at least 3 of the 4 types of redistribution that make up the redistributive preference index). As we illustrate in Figure 12a, the full externality treatment significantly reduces this income-based gap in redistributive preferences to 2 p.p.. The fairness treatment, on the other hand, increases the gap to 12 p.p.; the difference across treatments is significant at the 1% level.<sup>16</sup> This is not driven by differential take-ups of relevant first-stage beliefs (Table H23), and is similar for other income thresholds (incomes above/below \$50,000 in Table H24).

We observe consistent patterns across the two other methods. When directly asked about the factors influencing their redistributive preferences, high-income respondents value negative inequality externalities as much as the rest of the population, but are less likely to value fairness considerations (Figure G20). Similarly, the predictive power of externality beliefs and fairness views on redistributive preferences is less different for high-income respondents than for other respondents (Tables H25-H26).

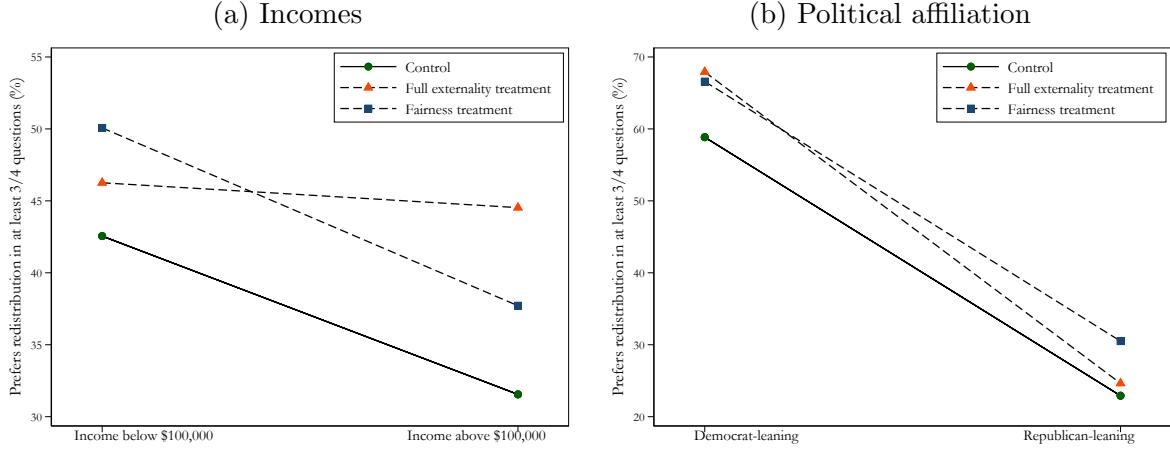
Why does a relative consensus on redistribution emerge across income groups? While there are many potential reasons, we follow Rueda and Stegmueller (2016) in suggesting that an important channel could be self-serving bias. In short, individuals’ preferences for redistribution are more likely to be high if the redistribution also benefits them personally. Negative inequality externalities may impact the whole population; although individuals may be motivated to reduce these externalities for the sake of society as a whole, they may also be motivated by simple self-preservation. This creates a novel self-serving motive to redistribute, even for those near the top of the income distribution. As self-centered individuals near the bottom already have a strong income motive to support redistribution (Meltzer and Richard, 1981), the overall effect may be stronger near the top – where self-centered individuals have few, if any, other motives to support redistribution. Influencing such individuals may be a particularly noteworthy property of inequality externality beliefs, and a key distinction from fairness views.

**Across political affiliations** At the baseline, Republican-leaning respondents have a 36 p.p. lower probability of supporting redistribution (defined as above). As we illustrate in Figure

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<sup>16</sup>We perform an F-test for  $(Fair_{Above\$100k} - Fair_{Below\$100k}) = (FullExt_{Above\$100k} - FullExt_{Below\$100k})$  where the coefficients are as in Table H21.

Figure 12: Heterogeneous Treatment Effects Across Incomes and Political Affiliation



**Note.** Heterogeneous treatment effects across income (left) and political affiliation (right) for the merged control groups, the full externality treatment, and the fairness treatment. Tables H19 and H20 correspond to the graphs. Tables H21 and H22 show the same interaction regressions with controls and a non-binary outcome index. Figure G19 replicates the graph with 95% CIs. Data from Survey 1,  $N=4,371$ .

12b, the full externality treatment *increases* this gap in redistributive preferences to 43 p.p.; Democrat-leaning respondents react, but Republican-leaning respondents do not. The fairness treatment, on the other hand, leaves the gap unchanged.<sup>17</sup> The difference is not driven by differential take-ups of relevant first-stage beliefs (Table H27). In short, increasing negative inequality externality beliefs significantly increases the redistributive preferences of Democratic-leaning respondents but have little to no effect on Republican-leaning respondents.

We again observe consistent patterns across the two other methods. When directly asked about the factors influencing their redistributive preferences, Republican-leaning respondents value negative inequality externalities far less than Democratic-leaning respondents; for the two fairness considerations, differences are less clear (Figure G21). Similarly, the predictive power of externality beliefs and fairness views on redistributive preferences are more similar for Democratic-leaning respondents than for Republican-leaning respondents. Governmental trust is also a much stronger predictor for Republican-leaning respondents (Tables H28-H29).

Why does a relative consensus on redistribution *not* emerge across political affiliations? Overall, our evidence indicates that less polarized beliefs do not necessarily produce less polarized policy outcomes. We suggest that Republican-leaning respondents' negative inequality externality beliefs may primarily impact policy through non-redistributive mechanisms, such as crime prevention and anti-corruption laws, if they are impactful at all. Low governmental trust may be one driving factor (Kuziemko et al., 2015), and skepticism to taxation on philosophical grounds may be another (Almås et al., 2020). Right-leaning respondents in other countries may or may not be similarly unaffected; we encourage further work on the topic.

In sum, our results indicate that U.S. political divides on redistributive policies are unlikely to be bridged by inequality externality beliefs. Divides across incomes, however, may be significantly affected – perhaps particularly for left-leaning and centrist citizens. This may, in turn,

<sup>17</sup>The difference in treatment effects is not statistically significant when using the F-test method from Footnote 16 (coefficients as in Table H22).

influence the debate on redistribution. Consider the decrease in positive inequality externality beliefs since 1987 that we illustrated in Figure 1, for example. Such changes may have increased support for redistribution among the upper classes – many of whom now vote for left-leaning parties (Piketty, 2020).

Taken together, the above discussion draws a strong contrast between inequality externality beliefs and other equity-based arguments for redistribution. This leads to our fourth and final result:

#### Result #4

Inequality externality beliefs are significantly less polarized than fairness views across incomes and political affiliations. Their effects on redistributive preferences are particularly strong for top-income individuals, and weak for Republican-leaning individuals.

More broadly, inequality externality beliefs have unique properties that likely influence the redistributive debate in both the United States and elsewhere. This result can be attributed to various theoretical explanations, most of which are based on the idea that inequality externalities are fundamentally consequentialist. If inequality in various dimensions leads to societal changes, these changes impose costs or benefits that may be orthogonal to normative preferences. It follows that inequality externalities could affect even completely self-interested individuals who receive no monetary or ethical benefits from redistribution. Further, redistributive decisions could be based on how to avoid these shared costs.

This differs from the philosophical ways in which we often think about inequality. When Amartya Sen asks *inequality of what?* (Sen, 1979), the point is that nearly all of us want equality on some dimension, although the dimension for which we want equality differs. Some may want equality in liberty, whereas others want equality in incomes. These are intrinsically normative views that lead to diverging policy preferences. There is a different dimension to this question, however, which is one of *costs*. Inequalities on various dimensions are likely to lead to societal changes, or externalities; these changes impose costs or benefits that may be orthogonal to our philosophical preferences.

Overall, then, inequality externality beliefs appear to represent a distinct pillar in the redistributive conversation with unique properties and implications. The prominence and salience of these beliefs are likely to shape redistributive policy outcomes.

Suppose, for example, that beliefs in the negative consequences of inequality are deeply ingrained in Western European countries. This, combined with the stronger effect of inequality externality beliefs on high-income voters (Section 5.2.2), might help explain why Western European countries – and particularly their wealthier citizens – resisted the sharp rise in income and wealth inequality that took hold in the United States after 1980. In the United States, the skepticism of Republican-leaning citizens to redistribute based on inequality externalities coupled with a historical belief in the *positive* consequences of inequality (Figure 1) may have led some Americans to accept and even hasten the rise in economic inequality. In addition, it is possible that the saliency of each type of redistributive argument differs across regions; a particularly strong focus on fairness in the United States may have fueled division between rich

and poor (Section 5.2.1) and evoked strong emotional reactions, leading to affective polarization (which we discuss further in Appendix E.8).

These are naturally speculative hypotheses around which there is considerable uncertainty. Our main purpose in this article is to propose inequality externality beliefs as a powerful determinant of redistributive preferences, constituting a distinct pillar in the redistributive conversation with unique properties. While this has intriguing ramifications for a wide variety of societal questions – on redistribution, affective polarization and more – we expect future work to more precisely examine these ideas.

## 6 Conclusion

This paper is the first positive analysis of individuals’ inequality externality beliefs and these beliefs’ role as a determinant of redistributive preferences. We find that individuals believe inequality affects society through various ways, and that individuals largely believe that inequality has *negative* rather than *positive* effects on society. A majority of individuals believe economic inequality increases crime, decreases trust, and reduces economic growth, for example. We have documented that these and other inequality externalities are seen as societally meaningful and that individuals’ underlying reasoning appears cogent. The collected data represents the first extensive data set of inequality externality beliefs in any country.

Using an information experiment, we have shown that these inequality externality beliefs constitute a causal determinant of redistributive preferences. Three separate methods indicate that the magnitude of this determinant is large; inequality externality beliefs are a sizable causal determinant of redistributive preferences, approaching broad economic fairness views in importance. They also appear orthogonal to fairness views in various ways. We find indicative evidence that inequality externality beliefs are stronger determinants of redistributive preferences than traditional efficiency concerns about the distortive effects of taxation. As such, this paper presents the first strong evidence that individuals’ beliefs about the consequences of inequality are impactful for their redistributive preferences. Future research could explore how other policy preferences are impacted by inequality externality concerns through studying policies that address the externalities more directly, such as crime prevention or measures to strengthen democratic institutions.

Finally, we have discussed how the consequentialist nature of inequality externalities could give rise to a unique conversation about redistribution. Inequality externality beliefs have a particularly large impact on top-income individuals, while descriptive beliefs on the topic are relatively similar across political groups and appear to have changed significantly over time. Overall, our conclusions could have broad implications for the redistributive equilibria across countries.

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## A Prior Questions about Inequality Externality Beliefs

As far as we know there are two prior questions in the United States on individuals' beliefs about inequality's externality effects. The first is a question in the General Social Survey asking respondents if they agree with the statement that "*large income differences are necessary for America's prosperity*". We interpret this as a question about positive inequality externality beliefs through the channel of economic growth. We show the trend of this question in Figure 1, overlaid with the bottom 50% income share and a measure of broad economic fairness views in the share of individuals who agree that "*hard work is more important than luck*".

While positive inequality externality beliefs decreased from 34% in 1987 to 12% in 2021, mirroring the increase in U.S. income inequality in the same period (Saez and Zucman, 2020), beliefs about what determines success have not changed significantly. Other questions related to economic fairness principles also show very little movement in the period.<sup>18</sup> Although caution is suggested in interpreting this data, the implications for belief malleability and changes in the redistributive debate over time are intriguing.

Among larger representative surveys, the International Social Justice Project has asked individuals whether they agree that "*There is an incentive for individual effort only if differences in income are large enough*". This question was also asked in the United States. In Table A1 we show the results from this question in their 1991 and 1996 waves (Wegener et al., 2010) across different countries.

Table A1: Inequality Externality Beliefs from the ISJP (1991-1996)

	Bulgaria	E. Ger	W. Ger	Hungary	Japan	N.lands	Poland	G.B.	U.S.	Russia	Slovenia	Cz. Rep.	Estonia	Slovakia
Does not agree	43%	38%	31%	68%	48%	47%	27%	34%	37%	38%	36%	35%	49%	38%
Agree	57%	62%	69%	32%	52%	53%	73%	66%	63%	62%	64%	65%	51%	62%
Respondents	2,628	2,063	1,787	1,837	708	2,532	1,389	1,246	1,370	2,816	1,294	1,987	1,930	345

**Note.** Percentage who agree or strongly agree with the statement that "*There is an incentive for individual effort only if differences in income are large enough*". Data from (Wegener et al., 2010). Data from the United States, Japan, Poland, Great Britain, Slovenia, and Slovakia is from 1991. Data from Bulgaria, E. Germany, W. Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Russia, the Czech Republic, and Estonia pool data collection from both 1991 and 1996. Options were "Strongly agree", "Somewhat agree", "Neither agree nor disagree", "Somewhat disagree", and "Strongly disagree". Respondents who answered "Don't know" were excluded (on average 6% of respondents).

Outside of the above questions there is scarce evidence on the topic. Surveys conducted in China by Whyte (2010) is the sole exception we know of, with three questions on the topic with the following results;

- 51% of respondents agree that "*income gaps threaten stability*",
- 20% of respondents agree that "*income gaps aid national wealth*", and
- 50% of respondents agree that "*income gaps foster hard work*".

<sup>18</sup>See, for example, this question from Gallup on whether "*the distribution of money and wealth [...] is fair*": <https://news.gallup.com/poll/182987/americans-continue-say-wealth-distribution-unfair.aspx>

## B Further Survey Details (Supplement to Section 2)

### B.1 Survey 1

The full Survey 1 questionnaire can be found in Appendix L. The survey flow is shown in Figure 2. The survey was divided into three main parts:

1. A demographic section, asking standard questions on gender, age, party affiliation and so on.
2. A video treatment section. This begins with our pre-treatment fairness and externality questions, then sends the respondents into one of six randomly assigned groups. Four of these are shown 1-2 minute treatment videos on externality concepts (3 videos) or fairness concepts (1 video). One group is shown a video on how academics measure inequality using the top 10% income share and the Gini index (active control video). One group does not receive any stimulus (passive control group). Each video group sees “filler questions” after the video.
3. A section including additional demographic questions, redistributive question questions (main treatment outcomes), and further descriptive questions (including first-stage outcomes).

#### B.1.1 Data quality and attrition

11,540 respondents land on our consent page. 10,992 respondents consented to taking the survey, and 8,551 pass the required U.S. citizen screening test. Of these, a total of 5,007 respondents (58.6% of initial U.S. respondents) finished the survey. Simple data quality checks remove 7.64% of these respondents from the sample during the demographic section.<sup>19</sup>

Further, 33.9% of respondents end the survey on their own before completion; we will now briefly discuss these respondents. 7.9% of respondents drop out before the information treatment. 17.9% of respondents drop out during the information treatment. The remaining 8.2% who dropped out did so after the treatment.

The attrition during the treatment is most likely due to either (i) technical issues from the Youtube video, for example accidentally exiting the survey screen, or (ii) inability or unwillingness to correctly answer the simple factual questions that we require respondents to correctly answer before continuing. We are not able to disentangle these two effects. While the passive control group had less attrition at this stage – as there is no video treatment and no required questions for these respondents – the differences in attrition between the active control and the

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<sup>19</sup>Respondents are required to pass two of three simple attention checks to continue past the demographic section. All attention check removals happened before any topic-specific questions. These attention checks are very simple and designed to sieve out individuals that do not read the questions at all. We believe relatively rigorous but simple attention check requirements are necessary to optimize the signal from online panel surveys, which are prone to inattentive and non-human respondents.

Individuals who failed one attention check but still finished the survey add weight to this argument. These respondents exhibit generally lower correlations across similar questions (e.g. similar externality questions or similar fairness questions) than respondents who did not fail any attention checks. Still, our overall results are similar whether including or excluding these individuals from the final sample. We discuss this for the treatment effect in E.6 and show it for the main descriptive results in Figures G13-G14.

remaining treatments are small. Individuals who dropped out during the treatment are not significantly more likely to be Democratically leaning or have prior externality beliefs across video groups, for example (not shown).

To clearly examine the issue of differential attrition we present Tables J3-J7, which show that demographic controls and pre-treatment questions are balanced across treatment groups. Notably, there are no significant differences in the amount of Republican-leaning respondents across any groups (which we did not enforce through quotas), and only two of twenty total pre-treatment beliefs are significant at the 5% level (and none at the 1% level). These limited differences contrast to the large shifts in post-treatment beliefs, where all externality beliefs are shifted on the 1% level for ten out of twelve inequality externality beliefs we show in Table H10, for example. Our primary analyses also control for pre-treatment fairness beliefs and demographics, which has no significant impact on results (see Tables H12 and J13). Controlling for prior externality beliefs also has no effect (Table H15, briefly discussed in Appendix E.6). Taken together, we find no evidence that differential attrition affects our findings.

This leaves the 5,007 respondents who finished the survey. We pre-specified to drop the fastest 5% of the fastest respondents at this stage, as is often done in the literature and by survey companies (see e.g. Bellani et al., 2021). Since different treatment groups watch different videos, we drop the 5% fastest subjects within each treatment group. We also exclude subjects that spend less time on the screen with the video treatment than the duration of the video, as well as those who were in treatment groups that nonetheless self-reported that they did not watch a video. We also added two extra data quality checks that were not pre-specified. First, we deleted 237 respondents that dropped out of the survey in the middle and then retook the survey, which we identify due to identical IP-addresses. Second, we drop 109 subjects that were flagged due to providing “nonsense” answers to text-based questions (e.g. spam, vulgar phrases or the same non-topical copy-pasted text to all answers). Our results are not fragile to these two steps (Tables J17 and J18), which were taken to improve overall data quality.

Overall, this leaves a final sample of 4,371 respondents.

## B.2 Survey 2

The full Survey 2 questionnaire can be found in Appendix M. The survey flow is shown in Figure 3.

We conducted Survey 2 as a secondary “robustness” survey with Dynata to ensure the validity of our original results with a distinct survey company, while further exploring beliefs about specific externality channels. The survey was conducted between August 8th and October 7th 2022. The main structure of the Survey 2 was a simple questionnaire, where towards the end of the survey respondents were funnelled into one of eight channels on a specific inequality externality.

The first part of the survey asked similar externality-based questions as to those in Survey 1 changed in various ways to explore the robustness of our initial results. We explain the concept of inequality in-depth to respondents, for example, and substitute any mention of “inequality” for “equality” or “differences in income and wealth” for two-fifths of respondents (one-fifth for each). We also asked respondents a simple question to gauge their understanding of inequality itself and explicitly specify our definition of “more inequality” (i.e. we set a reference level of inequality for the externality questions) for the entire survey.

In the latter part of the survey each individual was funneled into a channel focusing on one specific inequality externality. These externality-specific questions included re-asking a specific externality question to allow individuals more time to ensure a high-quality answer, asking respondents to explain their answer with an open-ended text question, asking whether top- or bottom-based inequalities matter more for the externality, several questions designed to find out whether the reference level changes the direction of the individuals’ externality beliefs, and a question which explores whether average income or income inequality is deemed a larger predictor of the outcome in question. The eight externality channels we elicit for in this study are crime, trust, economic growth, innovation, political polarization, corruption, the quality of democratic institutions, and social unrest.

### B.2.1 Data quality and attrition

The methodology in Survey 2 is similar to that of Survey 1. We use a similar attention check procedure to ensure high-quality responses. Respondents who fail either the U.S. citizen screening at the beginning of the survey or at least two later attention checks were removed from the survey. As before, these attention checks are very simple and designed to sieve out individuals that do not read the questions at all. Unlike Survey 1, we included two attention checks in the middle of the descriptive data collection to further ensure data quality.<sup>20</sup>

6,980 respondents landed on our survey consent page. A total of 6,471 respondents consented to taking the survey, and 5,474 move past the U.S. citizen screening. A total of 2,479 respondents

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<sup>20</sup>These questions were in the same format as other externality questions and asked respondents to answer a specific choice option. We added these questions to ensure that our descriptive statistics had the least amount of noise possible. The question text of the first question;

*This question is about the same increase in inequality. Here we just want you to click the answer option at the top. In other words, how do you think more inequality – could you please click the first answer option? Note: Here we just want you to choose the top option to show that you are reading the questions. Thank you.*

We note that, due to coding errors, the first 141 respondents of Survey 2 did not see either of these two attention checks. The next 274 did not see the second.

(45.3% of initial U.S. respondents) finish the survey. The data quality checks remove 30.9% of respondents from the sample. A further 23.9% of respondents end the survey on their own before completion. These numbers are likely inflated due to the repetitive nature of the survey. After dropping the fastest 5% of respondents per survey arm the final sample is 2,360 respondents.

### B.3 Representativity

Table B1 displays the observable characteristics of our two samples and the merged sample.

Both surveys explicitly targeted representative quotas for gender, age, political affiliation, and geographical region. These dimensions are therefore largely representative by design (with slight exceptions in Survey 2, see below).

We make a short note on political preferences, as they are crucial to our study. We used the same question that is used by Gallup to monitor political preferences in America.<sup>21</sup> All three final distributions mirror the November 2021 Gallup poll quite closely (31% Republican, 27% Democrat, 41% Independent). This poll was the most recent poll when the first survey was conducted.<sup>22</sup> Figures B1-B2 show that political affiliation is representative across the 50 U.S. states, although this was not explicitly targeted.

Survey 2 slightly oversamples men, older individuals, and those who live in the Census region *West*. These discrepancies as well as the undersampling of non-white respondents in Survey 2 come from a technical quota error on the survey providers' part. In short, the survey provider accidentally increased the sample size from 1,700 to 2,360 but did not keep quotas in mind for these extra respondents. This made the total sample from Survey 2 somewhat less representative, as the additional respondents were not subject to the designed quotas. We decided to keep the larger sample as it is balanced on political affiliation, and the over-sampled observables (male and white respondents, specifically) generally do not have large effects on our outcome variables. Our results are robust to reweighting for full representativity.

Though we did not explicitly target these dimensions, we are also interested in having diverse socio-economic representation. We have significant variation in household incomes, and particularly Survey 2 approximates the U.S. income distribution relatively well (with slight undersampling of highest-income individuals). Our surveys are less representative on racial dimensions, as they oversample white Americans. Hispanics and Latinos are particularly under-represented in our study (16.8% in the overall population versus 7.0% in our pooled sample). Similar to other studies using similar access-panels, our samples are more educated than the average American, as roughly half of the respondents have at least a college degree versus 36% in the overall population.

Note that the oversampling of college-educated individuals could affect our results, as such respondents are more likely to hold a negative externality viewpoint than non-college graduates. The net effect is relatively small, however. On average, a college-educated respondent is  $\sim 5$  p.p. more likely to hold negative externality beliefs. Our merged sample has 19 p.p. more college-graduates than a fully representative sample; taken at face value, the net effect of this oversampling is a roughly 1 p.p. increase in the share of negative externality beliefs in our data.

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<sup>21</sup> “In politics, as of today, do you consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat or an independent?”

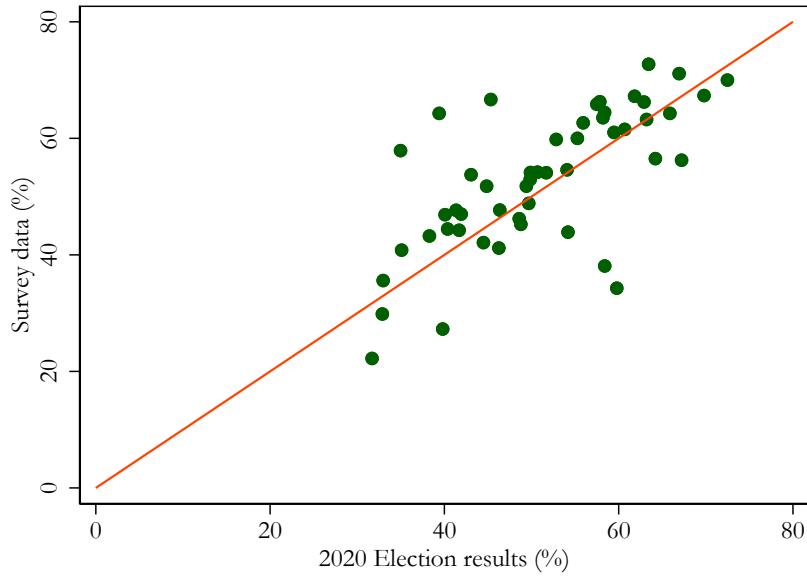
<sup>22</sup> Note that there is significant fluctuation in this distribution on a month-to-month basis (c.f. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/15370/party-affiliation.aspx>). The year-long average is 27% Republican, 30% Democrat, and 43% Independent.

Table B1: Survey demographics compared to the 2021 U.S. adult population

	2021 U.S. share	Survey 1	Survey 2	Merged sample
Republican	31%	32%	33%	32%
Democrat	27%	30%	28%	29%
Independent	41%	39%	39%	39%
Male	49%	50%	54%	53%
Female	51%	50%	45%	46%
White	64%	77%	75%	76%
Black	12%	9%	8%	8%
Neither black nor white	24%	14%	17%	16%
Income: 0-25k	18%	22%	18%	19%
Income: 25-50k	20%	29%	23%	25%
Income: 50-100k	29%	30%	33%	32%
Income: 100k and more	33%	19%	26%	25%
Age 18-29	18%	14%	11%	12%
Age 30-39	17%	17%	16%	17%
Age 40-49	16%	17%	17%	17%
Age 50-59	16%	14%	16%	16%
Age 60-69	17%	17%	22%	21%
Age 70 and above	17%	21%	17%	19%
4-year college degree or more	36%	50%	58%	55%
Employed	59%	47%	51%	50%
Unemployed	4%	9%	7%	8%
Outside the labor force	38%	43%	42%	43%
South	38%	38%	30%	32%
West	24%	24%	32%	30%
North-East	17%	16%	16%	16%
Midwest	21%	21%	22%	22%
Respondents	4371	2360	3922	

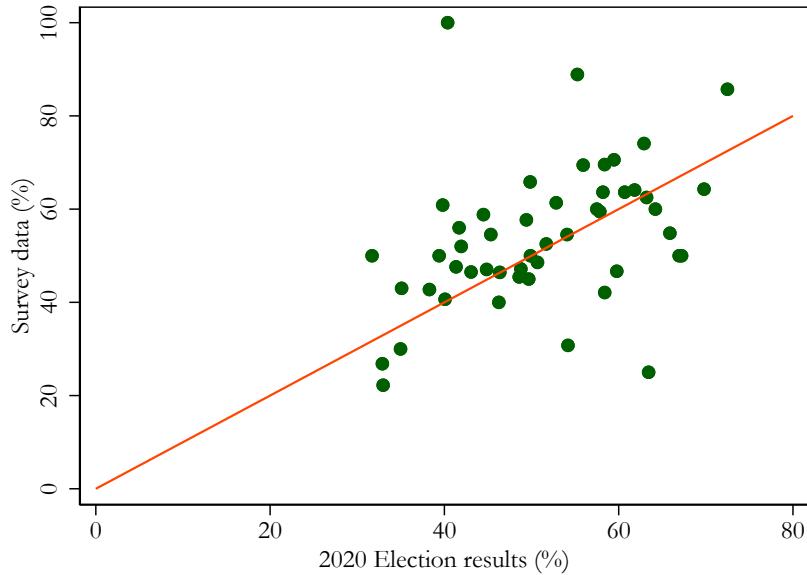
**Note.** This table represents respondent demographics of Survey 1 ( $N=4,371$ ), Survey 2 ( $N=2,360$ ), and the merged descriptive sample (the control group of Survey 1 and all of Survey 2) compared to the share among 2021 U.S. adults for the respective characteristic. Data on the U.S. population is from the U.S. Census Bureau, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, and Gallup.

Figure B1: Relationship between state-level political leaning in the survey and 2020 state-level election outcomes in Survey 1



**Note.** This figure plots state-level shares of respondents stating that they lean towards the Republican party in Survey 1 against the state-level share of votes going to the Republican party. Washington D.C. is included (the left-most data point). The diagonal line characterizes the points where both would coincide. 43 of 50 data points from the survey are within 1.96 standard errors to the 2020 election result. In making this comparison, note that we collect responses two years after the election and do not screen on likely voters.

Figure B2: Relationship between state-level political leaning in the survey and 2020 state-level election outcomes in Survey 2



**Note.** This figure plots state-level shares of respondents stating that they lean towards the Republican party in Survey 2 against the state-level share of votes going to the Republican party. Washington D.C. is included (the left-most data point). The diagonal line characterizes the points where both would coincide. 47 of 50 data points from the survey are within 1.96 standard errors to the 2020 election result. In making this comparison, note that we collect responses two years after the election and do not screen on likely voters. Note also that the sample size is significantly lower in this survey ( $N = 1873$ ), and that some data points have very few associated respondents. Delaware, the data point at 100% in survey share, has only two respondents.

## B.4 Differences to the pre-analysis plan

We follow the pre-analysis plan precisely, with certain exceptions we explain below.

- **First-stage outcomes:** Our pre-analysis plan did not include the open-ended text question or the GPT-4o mini method (Appendix E.2), focusing on the multiple-choice items (Appendix E.3, main text). We added the open-ended question following advances in NLP tools (e.g., ChatGPT), which were unavailable at the time. The open-ended question we use was intentionally placed early in the survey flow to obtain respondents' broad views without any priming about specific externalities, whereas later questions prompt specific externalities (e.g. *"How does more economic inequality change the amount of crime in a country?"*). As such we believe it is a cleaner measure of respondents' beliefs; if the required methodologies existed at the time we believe we would have pre-specified it as presented here. See Appendix E.3 for a further discussion.
- **ChatGPT summaries:** Similarly, we could not have pre-specified the ChatGPT summaries from Section 3.3.
- **Merging the descriptive sample:** We pre-specified that we would show descriptive results from Survey 1 and Survey 2 side-by-side. In practice this unnecessarily complicated the presentation for little gain, as descriptive results are almost identical across surveys. We show the main descriptive results for each survey in Tables J1 and J2.
- **Heterogeneous redistributive preferences:** We analyze heterogeneous effects on redistributive preferences in Section 5.2.2. We did not pre-specify the heterogeneous treatment effects across income groups, the heterogeneous effects across the “directly asking” question (from Section 5.1.2), and the heterogeneous effects in the predictive power analysis (from Section 5.1.3). We included these analyses when prompted by various sources to explore whether the descriptive consensus we find in Section 5.2.1 also implied a consensus in redistribution. Overall, we believe our findings are of sufficient interest and sufficiently consistent to merit presentation.
- **Other minor changes:** We did not pre-specify that we would only analyze negative inequality externality beliefs in the “meaningful” (Section 3.2) and the top-bottom questions (Appendix C.7), and creating word clouds (Appendix C.6). We also pre-specified to interact treatment effects with a gender dummy, which we show in Table J14.

## B.5 Eliciting externality beliefs

We elicit externality beliefs using various methods. Questions on individuals' *general* and *specific* inequality externality beliefs are asked in both Survey 1 and Survey 2 using both closed-form multiple choice questions and open-ended text questions. All variables used in the analysis are listed in Appendix K; Appendix K.2 lists all the closed-form specific externality questions.

In Survey 1, all respondents answer questions about how they believe inequality affects four main outcomes – crime, trust, social unrest, and economic growth. Crime and trust were elicited first, then social unrest and economic growth after two questions on fairness (see the questionnaire in Section L). Afterwards, we elicited seven additional outcomes in randomized order for respondents in the passive control group: corruption, political polarization, unemployment, innovation, the quality of democratic institutions, the quality of local public goods, and quality of life at a given income level. Respondents who viewed a video are instead randomly assigned three of these seven outcomes.

In Survey 2, we elicit beliefs on eight outcomes from the same original set of eleven, excluding unemployment, the quality of local public goods, and quality of life at a given income level. In addition, we ask two attention checks using the same format (see Appendix K.2.12-K.2.13), and one placebo question on daylight hours (see Appendix K.2.14). All respondents were elicited about all outcomes; to keep survey fatigue at a minimum we excluded the aforementioned three outcomes. The question order is completely randomized.

We also divide respondents into eight different survey strands, where each survey strand poses detailed questions on one specific externality channel. These questions include the respondent confirming their original inequality externality belief, an open-ended text question where they are asked to explain why they hold their stated belief, a question about whether they find the externality *meaningful*, questions about whether top- or bottom-based inequality matters more for the externality, and more. The full questionnaire is shown in Appendix M.

The basic externality beliefs questions can be found in Appendix K.2. These questions were designed to avoid biases arising from respondents misunderstanding the question, anchoring, or phrasing. All these questions were designed to be symmetric around a neutral answer option, with the order of multiple choice answers randomly flipped on the question level to avoid anchoring bias. We also varied the phrasing respondents face on a question-by-question basis in both surveys (see Appendix C.8). Survey 2 also rigorously defined inequality to respondents, including a small quiz which allows us to check respondent comprehension of distributional concepts.

In both surveys we also ask all respondents about their general externality beliefs. We discuss the methodology in Appendix C.2.

## B.6 Reference points

Survey 1 does not explicitly explain what “more inequality” means (to keep questions brief and simple). In Survey 2 we explicitly explain the level of inequality and the magnitude of the change in the first question on externalities, which is the general externality question.

The exact definition we give respondents in this question is shown in Appendix C.2. In short, this reference point describes that “more inequality” indicates the shift from a society with “*a large middle class and few with relatively small or large incomes, [where] the richest tenth of society earns 5 times as much as the poorest tenth of society*” to a society with “*a small middle class and many with relatively small or large incomes, [where] the richest tenth of society earns 30 times as much as the poorest tenth of society*”. These levels were designed to be similar to the pre-tax income inequality levels in Norway and the United States, respectively.

For the remaining externality questions in Survey 2 we randomize whether (1) the question uses the exact format from Survey 1 (where there is only a reference to “more inequality”), or (2) the question briefly recalls this previously-defined level change. Results within Survey 2 do not significantly differ when the reference point is mentioned or not. As previously discussed, we also find negligible differences between Survey 1 and Survey 2 in these questions overall. The full formats are shown in Appendix K.

## C Further Data and Analysis: Inequality Externality Beliefs (Supplement to Section 3)

### C.1 Economic outcomes and incentive effects

In Section 3 we discuss how most respondents answer that more economic growth leads to worsening economic outcomes – less innovation and economic growth, and more unemployment. A pertinent question is whether this finding is about inequality or classical tax or income incentives. We discuss this point here.

First, we note that the open-ended answer ChatGPT summaries in Section 3.3 and Appendix C.5 often indicate the “direct” inequality channel, dampening this concern (which is also true for the open-ended answers themselves). Inequality reduces innovation because “*economic inequality limits access to education, resources, and opportunities, essential for nurturing innovative minds across all societal segment*”, for example. Here individuals are directly affected by inequality, which affects the pertinent outcome (innovation).

Second, a discussion on income incentives. Respondents often believe that individuals are affected by their incomes, change their behavior, and that the net effect of this affects societal outcomes. An example comes from the ChatGPT summary for why economic inequality reduces innovation; “*when people are primarily focused on survival and meeting basic needs due to economic disparity, they have less bandwidth and motivation to engage in creative and innovative pursuits*”. Although the immediate causal channel on the individual’s innovative output is through their income, the net effect on innovation rates exists due to the disparity of incomes. We thus consider this an inequality externality within our framework, as individuals may prefer to reduce inequality to increase innovation due to this causal channel. We also note, as briefly discussed in Appendix C.7, that such concerns can only be classified as poverty concerns if they never disappear at any level of economic development.

Third, a note on tax incentives. Respondents may conflate more inequality with less taxation, and vice versa – and answer the question based on this misunderstanding (as no change in tax rates was specified). Following standard incentive theory, this causal chain would implies that less taxation (which the respondent may conflate with more inequality) → more economic growth. If this understanding of the question is common, we would expect the (rarely chosen) positive externality dimension to be overestimated in our results. We find limited evidence for such misunderstandings – the word “tax” is very infrequently used in open-ended answers for economic growth (3.7%) and innovation (2.0%).

## C.2 The general inequality externality question (“Society changes for the worse”)

Here we describe our method of eliciting an *overall* opinion on how inequality affects society in each survey. To explore various methods of eliciting this question, we used different approaches in Survey 1 and 2.

Due to the complex nature of the views we wish to elicit, the two questions of *does inequality affect society* and *is this effect positive or negative* were asked separately in both surveys. The order between these two questions was swapped between surveys. We also note that Survey 1 kept a concise explanation without using examples (to avoid priming), while Survey 2 discussed the idea at length and used randomized examples (to more clearly distinguish inequality externalities from fairness concerns).

**General inequality externality question: Survey 1** The Survey 1 question was short and designed to be easily understood. Respondents were first asked;

*This question is about what economic inequality does to society. Generally speaking, do you think more economic inequality changes society for the better or for the worse?*

[“A lot to the better”, “Somewhat for the better”, “Neither / no change”, “Somewhat for the worse”, “A lot for the worse.”]

If subjects chose “Neither / no change”, they were asked a follow-up question:

*“You said that inequality neither changes society for the worse, nor for the better. Is this because inequality does not affect society or because good and bad effects cancel each other out?”*

[“Inequality does not affect society”, “Good and bad effects cancel each other out”, “I made a mistake in the last question”].

We show the results in Table C1. The majority of respondents (59.6%) answer that inequality changes society somewhat or a lot for the worse. In the first question, 25.3% of individuals responded “Neither / No change”. Of these, the vast majority (a net 20.8%) answered the follow-up question with “Good and bad effects cancel each other out”. A net 3.2% of individuals answered “Inequality does not affect society”. 1.3% of individuals answered “I made a mistake in the last question”. We illustrate this in Table C1, where we pool “mistake” with “no effect”.

**General inequality externality question: Survey 2** In Survey 2, the question order was swapped; respondents were immediately asked a “Yes”/“No” question about whether inequality affected society. If subjects chose “Yes, economic inequality affects society”, they were then asked whether the changes would be overall positive or negative. As there is measurement error in all online survey panels, this order change can have material consequences, as individuals who mistakenly answer “no effect” in the first question were not asked the second question in Survey 2 and vice versa for Survey 1. We thus expected a somewhat larger share of respondents to end in the “no effect” group in Survey 2, an intentional design choice made to create an upper bound for the “no effect” group.

We also note that the question is longer and clarifies any unclear points explicitly (see Appendix C.2.1 for the question in verbatim). We aimed to specify (i) the initial inequality level,

Table C1: General Externality Beliefs: How Does More Economic Inequality Change Society?

	Survey 1	Survey 2
A lot for the better	4.1%	3.1%
Somewhat for the better	10.9%	7.6%
Good and bad effects cancel	20.8%	10.3%
Somewhat for the worse	34.8%	36.7%
A lot for the worse	24.8%	26.4%
Inequality does not affect society	4.5%	15.9%
Total respondents	919	2360

**Note.** For Survey 1, only data from the control group is shown. For Survey 2, the table contains data from all respondents (i.e. “inequality” phrasing, “differences” phrasing, and “equality” phrasing). See Appendix C.2.1 for the full question text.

shown through diagrams and words to be roughly at a Scandinavian level (without explicitly naming countries), (ii) the level of the change in inequality, which is an inequality increase to roughly the level of the United States, (iii) the exogenous nature of the inequality shock, (iv) that we are interested in changes in societal factors, using examples such as crime and economic growth, and (v) that the question is not about individual income concerns or fairness concerns.

We compare the results from Survey 2 to the results in Survey 1 in Table C1. In both Survey 1 and Survey 2 the overall amount of respondents who believe that inequality negatively affects society is roughly 60% (59.6% and 63.1%, respectively). The overall amount of respondents who believe that inequality positively affects society is roughly 10-15% (15.0% and 10.7% respectively).

While results are overall similar, there was as expected differences ( $\sim 10\%$ ) between surveys for respondents who answer “Good and bad effects cancel” and “Inequality does not affect society”. We believe this discrepancy is a combination of measurement error and intrinsic difficulty in framing such a question; for respondents who believe in very small effects, the choice of answer is likely a matter of degree.

We thus have three estimates of the share of respondents who believe that inequality has no externality properties; 15.9% and 4.5% from Table C1, and 4.0% from the share of respondents who consistently answer “No effect” in the battery of specific externality questions. Regardless of the estimate used, it appears that the vast majority of U.S. citizens believe that inequality has societal consequences. These overall results do not change depending on whether we use different phrasing (“inequality”, “equality” or “differences in income and wealth”), which we discuss in Appendix C.8.

### C.2.1 Survey 2 General externality belief question (Part 1)

*Note: Below is the general externality belief question in Survey 2 verbatim. This question comes directly after a question which introduces the distributional concept (inequality, equality, etc.)*

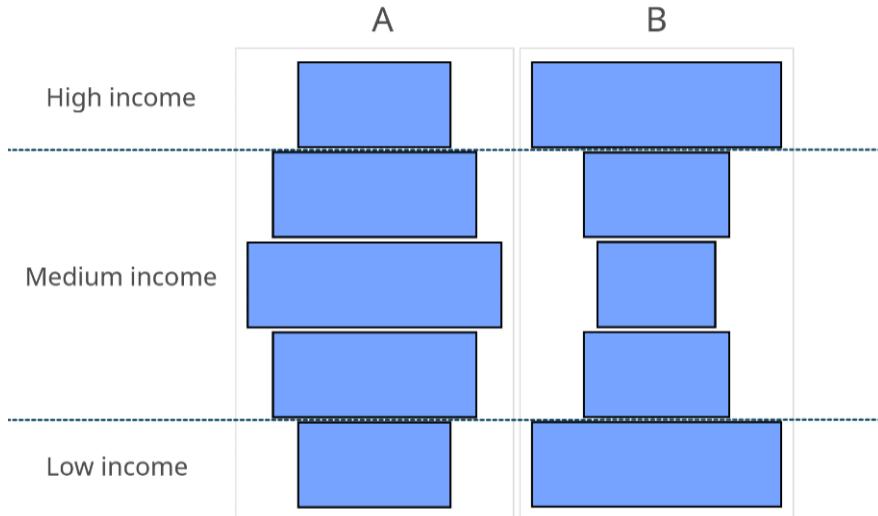
and asks an understanding question about the income distribution figures. Randomized phrasing is shown in brackets.

This question is about how **you think** economic [inequality/equality/differences in incomes and wealth] changes society.

Below we are showing you the same two income distributions as earlier. The correct answer was that society (B) [is more unequal/ is more equal<sup>23</sup>/has more economic differences].

[Figure C1 shown here]

Figure C1: Figure in Survey 2 general externality question



Here's some more information: **Society A** has a large middle class and few with relatively small or large incomes. The richest tenth of society earns 5 times as much as the poorest tenth of society.

**Society B** has a small middle class and many with relatively small or large incomes. The richest tenth of society earns 30 times as much as the poorest tenth of society.

There is a low amount of extreme poverty in both countries.

Now imagine that the income distribution in a society moves from (A) to (B). In other words, the society becomes [more economically unequal / more economically equal / has larger economic differences]. The change is because of something outside the society, such as technological change in another country.

One could imagine that this either **changes** or **does not change** factors in society - such as economic growth, crime, general trust, innovation, the quality of democratic institutions, and so on. Note that this question is not about whether you think the new distribution is more or less unfair, or about the direct changes in individuals' economic situation, but about **potential changes in how the society functions as a result of** [increased economic inequality / more economic equality / increased economic differences].

We are interested in whether you think **any** such changes occur (whether they are positive or negative).

<sup>23</sup>Order of the distributions is switched for the equality-phrasing.

All in all, do you think society would function differently **at all** after [becoming more economically unequal/becoming more economically equal/such an increase in economic differences within the population]?

- Yes, economic [inequality/equality/differences] affects society. The society would change.
- No, economic [inequality/equality/differences] does not affect society. The society would remain the same.

**Survey 2 General externality belief question (Part 2)** *Note: Randomized phrasing is shown in brackets. This question was only shown to respondents who clicked “Yes” in the previous question.*

This question is about the same increase in economic [inequality / equality / differences within society] (the transition from society A to B).

All in all, do you think that the changes in society as a result of such an increase in economic [inequality / equality / differences within society] would be positive or negative?

(When thinking about your answer, try to ignore the direct effects on individuals' economic situation and focus on changes to society as a whole. Also note that this question is not about whether new distribution is more or less unfair. If you do not believe economic [inequality / equality / differences within society] affects society, select the answer option in the middle here and in subsequent questions.)

- [More economic inequality / More economic equality / Larger differences in income and wealth] → Society functions **much better**
- [More economic inequality / More economic equality / Larger differences in income and wealth] → Society functions **somewhat better**
- [More economic inequality / More economic equality / Larger differences in income and wealth] → Society functions **as well as before**
- [More economic inequality / More economic equality / Larger differences in income and wealth] → Society functions **somewhat worse**
- [More economic inequality / More economic equality / Larger differences in income and wealth] → Society functions **much worse**

### C.3 Other inequality externality questions mentioned in Section 3.2

In this subsection we describe three questions on the net effect of inequality on society that were discussed at the end of Section 3.2.

**Do unequal countries generally function worse?** Full question text: “*How much do you agree with the following statement? Countries with more economic inequality usually function worse.*” The question was asked to all respondents in Survey 1; we show the data from the control group.

23% of individuals strongly agree. 35% of individuals agree. 27% of individuals neither agree nor disagree. 11% of individuals disagree. 4% of individuals strongly disagree.

**Is inequality changing society for the worse a serious issue?** Full question text: “Overall, do you think economic inequality changing society for the worse through one or more of the channels we discussed earlier - for example through increased crime / social unrest / corruption, or through decreased social cohesion - is a very serious issue?” The question was asked to 932 respondents in the control groups of Survey 1.

24% of individuals answer “Yes, it is an extremely serious issue”. 42% of individuals answer “Yes, it is a serious issue”. 26% of individuals answer “Somewhat. It is an issue, but not a very large one”. 6% answer “No, it is not really an issue”. 3% answer “No, it is not an issue at all”.

**Would extremely high inequality levels lead to a societal collapse?** Full question text: “Do you think extremely high inequality levels would significantly increase the chances of a societal collapse?” The question was asked to 932 respondents in the control groups of Survey 1.

25% of individuals answer “Yes, definitely”. 46% of individuals answer “Yes, maybe”. 24% of individuals answer “Not really”. 4% of individuals answer “No, not at all”.

#### C.4 Which externality channels matter the most?

In this subsection we discuss Figure C2, which shows respondents' beliefs about the relative magnitudes of each externality channel. We asked respondents to delegate 100 points to the externality channels that "matter the most".

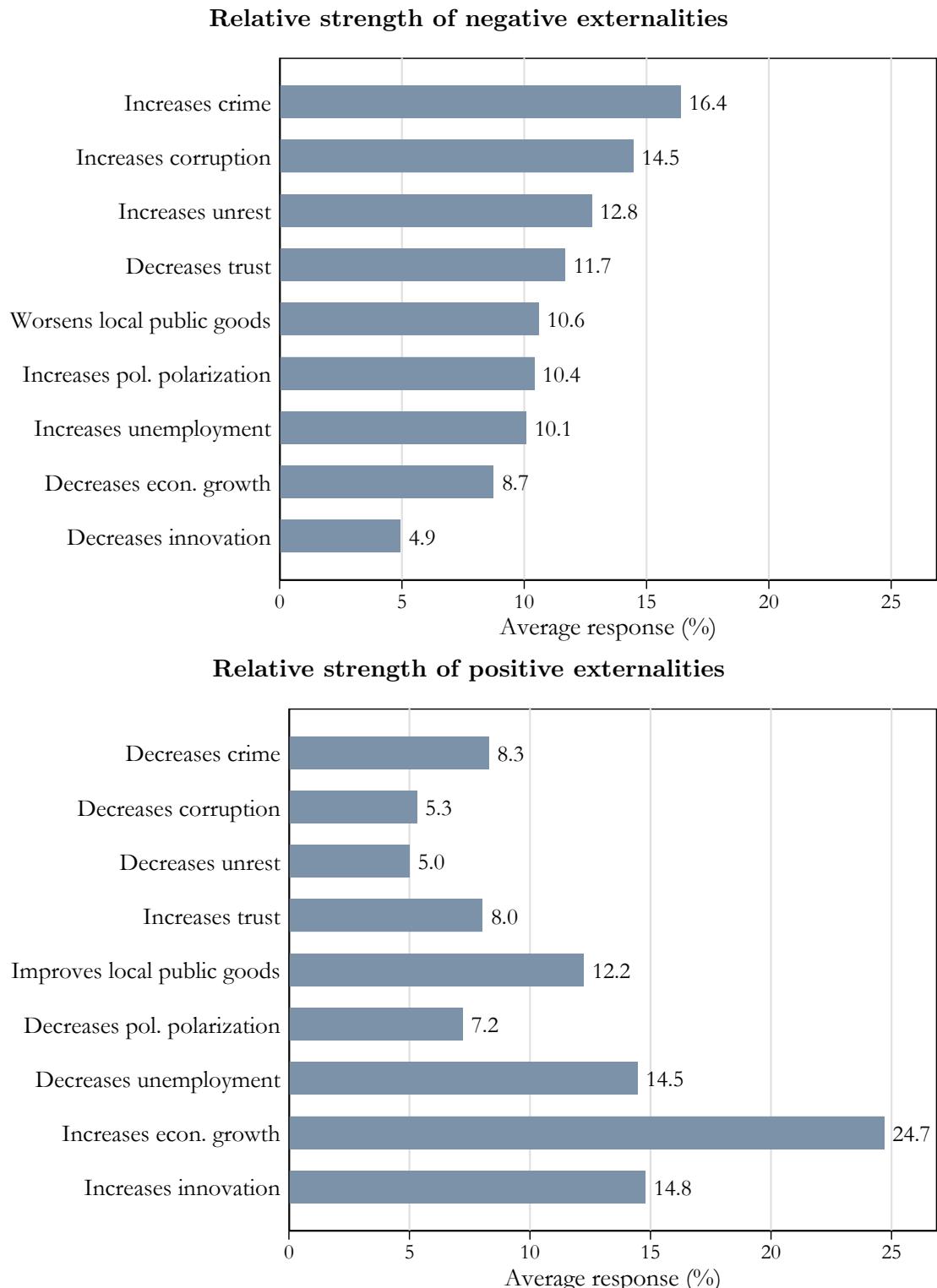
Full example question text:

*"When thinking about how inequality [negatively / positively] affects society, which dimensions do you think matter the most, generally speaking? Please indicate what dimensions you think matter the most by giving scores below that add up to 100".*

This question only makes sense if the respondent thinks inequality has at least one negative or positive externality, and thus we only ask the negative or positive externality version to those who answered that inequality generally affects society negatively or positively, respectively, in the general externality question shown in Table C1. We also allow respondents to self-select out of the question by stating that they changed their mind. There is thus a selection effect; each group should not be seen as a representative sample, but instead as the subsection of respondents who believe inequality affects society negatively or positively, respectively.

The average responses to this question are shown in Figures C2a-C2b. Respondents indicate that crime and corruption are the most important negative externalities, although we note that the quality of democratic institutions is not included due to a coding error. Economic growth is the most important positive externality.

Figure C2: Comparative Magnitudes of Externality Channels



**Note.** These questions were only asked to those in the control groups who also (i) answered that inequality is a negative (top) or positive (bottom) externality, and (ii) did not answer that they changed their mind when posed this question. Due to a coding error, we gave the choice of “Sustainability” (which received 5 points, not shown), instead of “The quality of democratic institutions”. Sample size is  $n = 472$  (negative externalities) and  $n = 100$  (positive externalities).

## C.5 ChatGPT summaries of open-ended questions

### C.5.1 Methodology

In Section 3.3 we discuss ChatGPT summaries of respondents' open-ended text question answers. Open-ended text answers are increasingly common in the survey literature, although decoding them without researcher bias is often a challenge (Ferrario and Stantcheva, 2022; Haaland et al., 2024).

The open-ended answers we discuss were elicited as follows. First, each Survey 2 respondent was randomized into a specific outcome for follow-up questions (see Figure 3). These respondents were first asked a multiple choice question on their overall inequality externality belief for this outcome. This question was identical to the questions from the battery of inequality externality questions described in Section 2.4, with the exception that respondents were given additional prompting to be careful in their response. This example for crime illustrates:

*Now we want you to focus particularly on the relationship between crime and economic inequality. First, we define crime as the overall crime rate, including homicides, robberies, property crime and more per 1000 inhabitants.*

*This question is important. We have asked it before but will ask more questions about this afterwards, so please take some time to think through your answer.*

*How does more economic inequality change the amount of crime in a country?*

*The button to proceed will arrive after 15 seconds. Meanwhile, please think about how you think more economic inequality changes the amount of crime.*

*[More inequality → a lot less crime / More inequality → somewhat less crime / More inequality does not affect the amount of crime / More inequality → somewhat more crime / More inequality → a lot more crime]*

As we show in Figures G13-G14, answers to this question are essentially identical to those from the main battery. Respondents were then asked to confirm their answers and to state how sure they were in their answer. After this brief interlude we ask respondents the relevant open-ended question:

*In the previous question, you answered “[ANSWER FROM Q1].”*

*Can you tell us, in your own words, why you think this?*

*[Text box]*

Note that respondents who answered that inequality has no effect on the given externality were not asked the open-ended question.

We fed all answers for the given inequality externality belief into ChatGPT. For an example of the ChatGPT prompt and method, see Figures C3-C4 where we show two ChatGPT screenshots for the belief that inequality increases political polarization. The exact ChatGPT prompt was;

*I will give you about 250 arguments, one on each line, for why economic inequality [increases/decreases] the amount of [outcome]. Each argument is from one person. I want to know what the most common arguments are. Summarize these arguments in two arguments. Each of these two summary arguments you give me should be one sentence at most. Each argument should*

*be concise and to the point. You should not give any additional information. You should use simple wording and intuitive language. The format should be:*

*(i) ARGUMENT1 (ii) ARGUMENT2*

*Below follow the arguments from my respondents. Thank you.*

We prompt ChatGPT with the identical text prompt in all cases – only changing the description of the externality, e.g. “increases the amount of political polarization” in Figure C3. We note that this addition was necessary because most answers did not re-state the topic (which was given in the question).

We add the open-ended text responses from all respondents who held the stated externality belief (e.g. that inequality increases the amount of political polarization). We do not edit the survey-taker responses in any way before showing them to ChatGPT. We only elicited the ChatGPT response once for each externality, and did not edit the ChatGPT responses in any way. Each ChatGPT iteration had no memory of any previous summaries or other user input.

We conduct various tests to check the robustness of the method. First, we asked ChatGPT to summarize arguments on why “economic inequality increases the amount of corruption” with the response data on how inequality increased the amount of economic growth. The ChatGPT response was,

*(i) Economic inequality is believed to spur motivation and competition, encouraging individuals to work harder and innovate, leading to economic growth. (ii) Concentrated wealth enables more investments in businesses and technology, creating jobs and fostering economic development.*

This summarizes the respondent arguments (on increased economic growth) and not our prompt (on more corruption).

Second, we check ChatGPT summaries for a large number of artificial arguments to explore whether ChatGPT accurately summarizes them. We have ran a large number of these tests. A qualitative summary of our results indicates both strengths and weaknesses of the method. In general, ChatGPT appears to accurately summarize the most common arguments given that the arguments themselves are on-topic. As an example we show below the ChatGPT summary of why respondents think more inequality worsens democratic institutions given 5 arguments about how the wealthy change the political process, 4 arguments about societal collapse, and 2 arguments about reduced participation of low-income voters:

*(i) Economic inequality allows the wealthy to exert undue influence over political processes.  
(ii) Economic inequality leads to social unrest and the breakdown of societal institutions.*

We were also concerned that ChatGPT would have a bias against nonsensical arguments (or arguments judged to be of worse quality overall). Due to the stochastic nature of ChatGPT it is challenging to explore whether this bias exists. Often even nonsensical arguments are summarized in our tests. We illustrate this below by showing a summary that reflects the same “respondent answers” as the previous summary under the condition that the 4 answers on societal collapse now pertain to how more economic inequality increases the amount of alligators:

*(i) Economic inequality enables the wealthy to exert excessive influence over political processes. (ii) Economic disparities lead to societal decay, metaphorically represented as “alliga-*

*tors*" undermining the stability of democratic institutions.

As such, we do not clearly detect any bias of high-quality arguments over low-quality arguments, but we caution that it may exist. The benefit of ChatGPT is that we can, at the very least, exclude *researcher* bias. We hope further work will continue to explore this issue, as we see this as an overall promising method to summarize open-ended text answers – which have historically been difficult to quantify.

As our third robustness test we varied the prompt itself to explore strong dependencies on specific phrasing. While small changes naturally exist, the ChatGPT summaries remain very similar across a range of similar prompts. Explicitly stating that the quality of the argument should be ignored does not significantly change the outcomes, for example. Similarly, explicitly requesting unbiased summaries and to exclude associations to training data does not appear to significantly change results. To avoid concerns about p-hacking the prompt, the summaries we present in the text are from the first full prompt we tested.

Below we show the remaining ChatGPT summaries (for corruption, crime, trust, political polarization, and increases/reduces innovation). All data is from Survey 2, where each respondent is shown additional questions (including the open-ended question we summarize here) for one externality. Roughly 295 respondents are shown each channel. As the summaries only include respondents with the stated belief, sample sizes range from 230 (crime) to 65 (increases economic growth).

### C.5.2 ChatGPT summaries

**Economic inequality increases corruption because:** (i) Economic inequality enables the wealthy to exert undue influence on political and legal systems to maintain and increase their wealth and power, often through corrupt means. (ii) The disparity in wealth creates conditions where those with less are more likely to resort to corruption as a means of survival or advancement due to perceived injustices and lack of opportunities.

**Economic inequality increases crime because:** (i) Economic inequality can lead to increased crime as individuals in lower economic statuses may feel forced to resort to illegal activities out of desperation or to meet basic needs. (ii) Perceptions of unfairness and frustration due to economic disparities can motivate people to commit crimes as a form of retaliation or to even the playing field.

**Economic inequality increases political polarization because:** (i) Economic inequality deepens divisions between social classes, leading to increased political polarization as each group advocates for policies that serve their own interests. (ii) The disparity in wealth amplifies distrust and resentment among those with less towards those with more, fueling political conflicts and driving parties to adopt more extreme positions to represent their constituencies' diverging interests.

**Economic inequality reduces trust because:** (i) Economic inequality fosters resentment and jealousy among those with less, leading to a decrease in trust towards those with more wealth and power. (ii) The perception that wealth is gained through unfair advantages or corruption erodes trust in societal systems and institutions among disadvantaged groups.

Table C2: ChatGPT Summaries: Why Does More Economic Inequality Reduce Growth?

Democratic-leaning respondents	Republican-leaning respondents
(i) Economic inequality hinders growth because it concentrates wealth at the top, reducing overall spending and investment opportunities across the broader population.	(i) Economic inequality reduces economic growth because it leads to decreased consumer spending and investment by limiting the financial capacity of the majority.
(ii) Reducing economic inequality increases disposable income for the majority, fostering more innovation, spending, and participation in the economy.	(ii) Higher economic inequality stifles innovation and work incentive, hindering overall economic development and efficiency.

**Note.** Additional information to Table 1, where the same data is shown for innovation. Data is only from individuals who initially responded that they believe in the negative externality dimension. Answers are from Survey 2 in a section where each respondent was asked follow-up questions for a specific externality. Sample sizes are relatively small (N=86 and N=74).

**Economic inequality reduces innovation because:** (i) Economic inequality limits access to education, resources, and opportunities, essential for nurturing innovative minds across all societal segments. (ii) When people are primarily focused on survival and meeting basic needs due to economic disparity, they have less bandwidth and motivation to engage in creative and innovative pursuits.

**Economic inequality increases innovation because:** (i) Economic inequality motivates individuals to innovate as a means to improve their financial status and escape poverty. (ii) Wealth concentration allows for significant investment in research and development, fostering innovation by providing the necessary resources for experimentation and breakthroughs.

We also show the summaries of Republican-leaning and Democratic-leaning arguments for economic growth in Table C2. We note that ChatGPT was given the exact same prompt for these summaries, and no indication of the political affiliation of the respondents. This accompanies Table 1.

### C.5.3 Summary respondent arguments

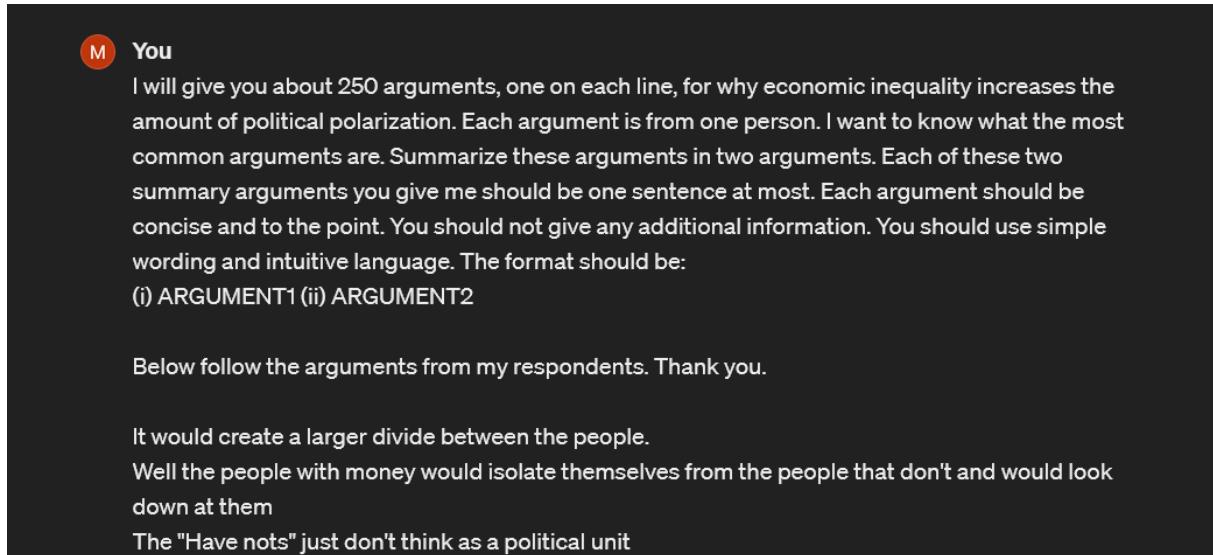
The ChatGPT summaries we have shown so far uses the syntax and vocabulary of ChatGPT itself. To explore the accuracy of these summaries we also ask ChatGPT to find the three most representative arguments from respondents themselves. This method illustrates the main themes in respondents' answers using respondents' own words. We use the same database of arguments as in the ChatGPT summaries with the following prompt:

*I will give you about 250 arguments, one on each line, for why economic inequality [increases/decreases] the amount of [outcome]. Each argument is from one person. I want you to the find the three most representative arguments for the body of arguments as a whole. Choose the three arguments which best summarize all the arguments. Only use lines in the text itself. Do not add or remove anything, or change any spelling. Choose three arguments which, together, best summarize the views of everyone. You should not give any additional information.*

*Below follow the arguments. Thank you.*

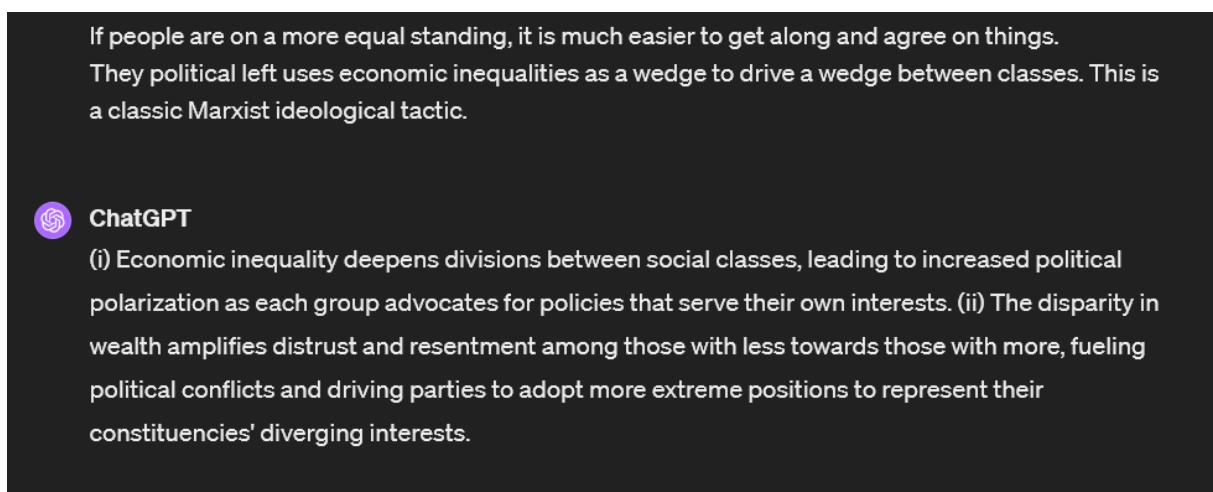
The model used was ChatGPT o1 on February 7th 2024. We otherwise follow the method-

Figure C3: ChatGPT: Prompt



**Note.** Prompt to ChatGPT-4.0 in the case of “Inequality increases political polarization”.

Figure C4: ChatGPT: Response



**Note.** Response from ChatGPT-4.0 in the case of “Inequality increases political polarization”.

ology used for the summaries themselves. Notably, each ChatGPT iteration had no memory of any previous summaries or other user input, we only elicited the ChatGPT response once for each externality, and we did not edit the ChatGPT responses in any way. In each case we have ensured that the arguments correspond exactly to arguments made by respondents, including possible grammatical mistakes.

We now list the three representative arguments chosen by ChatGPT for each channel.

#### **Economic inequality worsens democratic institutions:**

- *Because the richest people start buying political power by bribing politicians into keeping them wealthy. The politicians become wealthier because they are receiving addition money to what they are supposed to earn. If the rich keep giving the politicians money and the politicians keep helping the rich remain wealthy then no one will ever fix a broken system.*
- *I feel more economic inequality would make the democratic institutions worse because lower income people would not feel they have any power or say so in social issues or their rights as a citizen. The power would be for the wealthy.*
- *As people get more desperate and angry they can become violent and threaten democratic rules of law.*

#### **Economic inequality increases social unrest:**

- *Because in the real world the rich people gets richer and the poor people get stomped down so that's why I feel this way I'm not very good at this stuff but I'm trying my best*
- *The less money people have the more opportunities to commit crimes to survive.*
- *This has been true historically, although it can take many years for these situations to come to a head. I am thinking in particular of the French Enlightenment and the French (1789) and Russian (1918) Revolutions.*

#### **Economic inequality reduces economic growth:**

- *Since the top 1% holds most of the wealth and can only use so much, they mostly accumulate more wealth. More money in the hands of the rest of society means more products being bought and consumed, thus driving more economic growth.*
- *Because inventors and workers will have less resources available to them if they are poor. Causing technology to evolve less quickly. It's important that people who are capable have access to education and opportunities regardless of financial class.*
- *The middle class shrinking decreases the average citizen's ability to contribute to the economy, while the ultra wealthy continue to hoard wealth while exploiting the labor of the working class*

#### **Economic inequality increases economic growth:**

- *The capital to invest in the future of the country comes from the wealthiest so the greater amount of them the greater the investment in economic growth*

- *The difference in inequality causes competition which can be healthy for the economy. More competition, the more the drive to progress and earn money is there.*
- *Redistribution will involve taxation, which will put a damper on economic growth.*

#### **Economic inequality reduces innovation:**

- *Those that have less income might very well be able to contribute to innovation but are not given the opportunity, either educationally or otherwise, to move into areas that would allow them to innovate (scientific communities, etc). One can't assume that those in the top tier can just innovate on their own or pay others to innovate.*
- *Struggling to earn a living and pay the bills does not lead to creative thoughts or risk taking*
- *When people are not making enough money to meet their basic needs they cannot function at their best which means less innovation. And when the richest of the rush gets more and more money they hoard it for themselves.*

#### **Economic inequality increases innovation:**

- *I think with more concentration of wealth, there is more for R&D from motivated individuals. Plus, with more "poor" people, you might get more motivation to invent something to make themselves richer.*
- *When people get hand outs, they get lazy and do not work hard. Furthermore, highly successful innovative people will be less driven if a disproportionate amount of their earnings are "stolen" from them by the government to be redistributed to others*
- *Money motivates people so when there is more economic inequality people will be more innovated to get out of their station.*

#### **Economic inequality increases crime:**

- *People in desperate financial situations may resort to crime to pay their bills. Or, because they feel they're getting screwed by the system, they may want to even things out by taking from those who are better off.*
- *When people are forced into extreme poverty it becomes about doing what you need to in order to survive*
- *Larger differences in income and wealth create a large sense of unfair and unequal opportunities to the richest, and less opportunities and advantages to the rest, people are just trying to survive and will do what they must to do so therefore, larger differences will in fact create more crime*

#### **Economic inequality increases corruption:**

- *When there's a larger amount of income inequality, millionaires/billionaires and gigantic corporations can put more pressure on politicians and the government to get what they want. Politicians then begin paying more attention to them and creating loopholes in laws instead of working for the majority of the people who elected them.*

- *I think with more income equality there is less desperation for getting money any way you can. And I think with income equality people become more invested in the system so don't want to risk it by getting caught for corruption. I think there is always greed and corruption and those people will always exist; what changes with income equality is that more people don't need to turn to stealing money because their needs are being met*
- *The rich want to stay rich and will commit crimes to protect their wealth. The poor want to GET rich and will commit crimes to do so. Rich people will also use their wealth to get whatever they want.*

**Economic inequality increases political polarization:**

- *People that have less money will feel disenfranchised and feel that their point of view and needs are not being heard.*
- *Wealth buys political influence. Larger differences in income and wealth mean those at the top of the wealth ranking will have more political influence over those below.*
- *It leads to ongoing political battles between the people who have it and those that don't*

**Economic inequality decreases trust:**

- *I believe that when there is more economic inequality there is somewhat less trust because the "higher ups" in society - the wealthy and the government - can get away with a lot more if they have more money (which is basically influence). In this way, the people of society cannot fully trust those with more influence.*
- *When people can't make ends meet, they no longer trust the system to help them get ahead*
- *How can the lower parts of society trust fellow man when they allow suffering? How can the highest parts of society trust the lower man when they know the lower man is hungry and envious? How can the middle parts trust either side not to rob them? Everyone is afraid when inequality is largely felt.*

## C.6 Word clouds

In Figures [C5-C6](#) we show the most commonly used words for respondents who hold the shown externality belief.

We note that when asked about social unrest, respondents disproportionately use words like “poor”, “feel”, and “angry”. When asked about the quality of democratic institutions, respondents discuss “rich”, “politicians”, “power”, and “influence”. For respondents who believe inequality decreases the amount of innovation, we commonly find words such as “education”, “opportunities”, and “motivated”. And among the relatively few who believe inequality *increases* economic growth, there is a simple message; it makes people “work” “harder”.

Overall, the figures illustrate that most respondents understand the question topic and can rationalize their answers. On a qualitative basis we also note that respondents largely write arguments that causally explain their prior answers. An example for the case of the quality of democratic institutions; *“People who feel economically disadvantaged stop participating in a democratic society. This decreases the potential quality of democratic institutions.”*

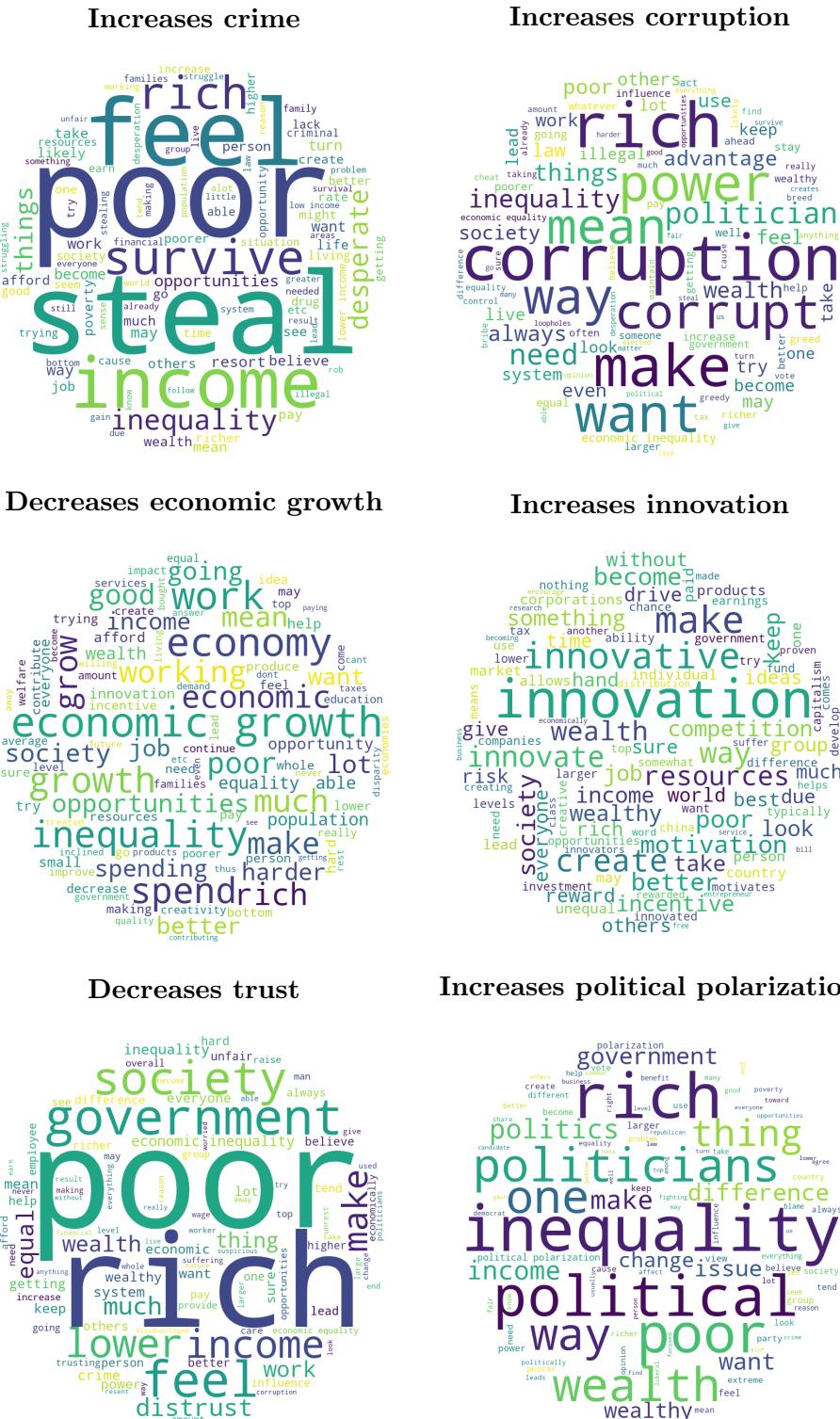
Finally, we note that this method also indicates whether top- or bottom-based inequalities matter more for individuals. For social unrest, trust, and crime, “poor” is clearly a popular word among respondents. For political polarization, the quality of democratic institutions, and corruption, “rich” is much more common. Overall this is similar to the multiple-choice evidence from the top- or bottom-inequality question discussed in Appendix [C.7](#).

Figure C5: Word clouds I: Why more economic inequality...



**Note.** This figure reports the most commonly stated words among individuals who stated that more economic inequality (i) increases the amount of social unrest (227 respondents), (ii) worsens the quality of democratic institutions (184 respondents), (iii) decreases the amount of innovation (127 respondents), and (iv) increases the amount of economic growth (65 respondents). Answers are from Survey 2 in a section where each respondent was asked follow-up questions for a specific externality. Full question text: *"In the previous question you answered "/Option/. Can you tell us, in your own words, why you think this?"* Common words ("I", "more", "people") are removed. The remaining externalities are shown in Figure C6.

Figure C6: Word clouds II: Why more economic inequality...



**Note.** Follow-up figure to Figure C5. This figure reports the most commonly stated words among individuals who stated that more economic inequality (i) increases the amount of crime (230 respondents), (ii) increases the amount of corruption (202 respondents), (iii) decreases the amount of economic growth (160 respondents), (iv) increases the amount of innovation (85 respondents), (v) decreases the amount of trust (198 respondents), and (vi) increases the amount of political polarization (214 respondents). Answers are from Survey 2 in a section where each respondent was asked follow-up questions for a specific externality. Full question text: *"In the previous question you answered "[Option]". Can you tell us, in your own words, why you think this?"* Common words ("I", "more", "people") are removed.

## C.7 Distinguishing inequality at the top, inequality at the bottom, and poverty

What type of economic inequality concern respondents most – relative poverty (inequality near the bottom) or relative affluence (inequality near the top)? Furthermore, could our results be influenced by concerns about *absolute* poverty?

### C.7.1 Is inequality near the top or bottom more impactful?

In Survey 2 we ask those who believe in a given inequality externality “*what matters more for how economic inequality changes [the given outcome]?*”, with options as “economic differences near the top”, “economic differences near the bottom”, or “both matter about the same”. The full question text is:

#### Survey 2:

What do you think matters more for how economic inequality changes [the given outcome]?

- Economic differences near the bottom, meaning how many relatively poor people there are and how little they have, or
- Economic differences near the top, meaning how many relatively rich people there are and how much they have.

[*Economic differences near the bottom (the resources and number of relatively poor people); Economic differences near the top (the resources and number of relatively rich people); I think both matter about the same; I'm really not sure. This is too complicated for me.*]

As shown in Table C3, responses are fairly evenly split between “economic differences near the bottom” and “both matter about the same”, with fewer indicating “economic differences near the top”. This pattern holds across various outcomes, though for corruption, top-based inequality is more prominent (32%) than bottom-based inequality (22%).

For economic growth and innovation, we show answers to the same question for individuals who hold positive externality beliefs in Table C4. We restrict to these two outcomes as all others have very small sample sizes ( $> 35$  individuals). Among respondents who believe that economic inequality increases growth or innovation, top- and bottom-based inequalities are both seen as roughly equally important.

### C.7.2 Poverty externalities

The above findings suggest that most respondents believe inequalities across the income distribution have societal consequences. There is a higher emphasis on differences affecting the relatively poor, however, and a discussion on whether our results are confounded with potential “poverty externalities” is appropriate.

**Absolute and relative poverty** First, we clarify that relative poverty, unlike absolute poverty, is an inequality metric (Mellish, 2016). This is because the relative poverty level of

a society depends on both the incomes near the bottom of the distribution and the incomes in the rest of society (which set the poverty level).

Any concern for poverty externalities as a distinct concept from inequality externalities must therefore relate to absolute poverty. A useful approach to discern whether the causal channel is absolute poverty is to consider whether the externality in question would disappear at some stage of development, assuming inequality remains identical. If so, the externality is most likely attributable to absolute poverty. If not, it is likely an inequality externality.

In line with this, many externalities that may be blamed on poverty are, in fact, about relative poverty and thus inequality. Suppose that individuals are frustrated due to others having more economic resources than themselves, and thus lash out in form of crime. While this effect could be blamed on poverty, it appears unlikely to disappear with development – making it an inequality externality.

**Distinguishing absolute poverty externalities from inequality externalities** Fully empirically disentangling absolute poverty externalities from inequality externalities is challenging. Still, compelling evidence indicates that our results are primarily driven by concerns about inequality itself.

First, as discussed above, the share of respondents who believe economic differences near the bottom “matters more” is in the minority for any given inequality externality belief, with the exception of societal unrest. This is a very conservative upper bound for concerns over absolute poverty externalities, as respondents may (i) believe other inequalities also “matter” although inequalities near the bottom “matter most”, or (ii) be primarily concerned about relative poverty.

Both are likely in the case of societal unrest, for example, which has the largest share of respondents believing that inequality “matters more” (Table C3). The ChatGPT summaries discussed in Appendix C.5 summarize respondents’ reasoning:

Economic inequality increases social unrest because: (i) Economic inequality breeds frustration and resentment among those who feel marginalized, leading to increased social unrest as people demand fairness and opportunities. (ii) As the wealth gap widens, individuals at the lower end of the economic spectrum may resort to crime or protest as a means of expressing their dissatisfaction and challenging perceived injustices.

These two causal channels are both clearly inequality externalities – even though differences near the bottom may matter most. We find similar dynamics for trust, where 45% think differences near the bottom matter most:

Economic inequality decreases trust because: (i) Economic inequality fosters resentment and jealousy among those with less, leading to a decrease in trust towards those with more wealth and power. (ii) The perception that wealth is gained through unfair advantages or corruption erodes trust in societal systems and institutions among disadvantaged groups.

These two channels are again examples of inequality externalities, with no clear influence from absolute poverty.

Further, respondents’ answers to open-ended questions indicate that inequality itself is a larger concern than poverty. Word clouds of open-ended answers (Appendix C.6) show words

associated with top-level inequalities (e.g. “rich”) about as prominently as words associated to bottom-level inequalities (“poor”), and “poverty” is seldom mentioned (only 22 of 1,853 answers use the word).

Overall, while we believe absolute poverty externalities are a confounder in our data, we also believe that this confounder is likely to be much less serious than one may assume at first glance. We also note that absolute poverty externality concerns are a distinct possible driver of redistributive preferences – which we hope further research will explore.

Table C3: What Matters for Negative Consequences: Inequalities Near the Top or Bottom?

	Pol. polar.	Crime	Corrup- tion	Inno- vation	Social unrest	Econ. growth	Trust	Dem. inst.
Top inequality	11%	7%	32%	9%	8%	10%	9%	17%
Bottom inequality	34%	49%	22%	46%	52%	40%	45%	39%
Both	48%	40%	39%	40%	35%	38%	35%	40%
Don't know	7%	5%	7%	6%	5%	13%	10%	4%
Sample size	213	230	201	127	227	160	198	183

**Note.** Data is only from individuals who initially responded that they believe in the negative externality dimension. Abbreviated question text: “*What do you think matters more for how economic inequality changes the amount of social unrest?*”. Answer options: “Economic differences near the bottom (the resources and number of relatively poor people)”, “Economic differences near the top (the resources and number of relatively rich people)”, “I think both matter about the same”, “I’m really not sure. This is too complicated for me.” Data is from the externality-specific branches in Survey 2.

Table C4: What Matters for Positive Consequences: Inequalities Near the Top or Bottom?

	Economic growth	Innovation
Top inequality	22%	25%
Bottom inequality	32%	27%
Both	34%	37%
Don't know	12%	11%
Sample size	65	84

**Note.** Data is only from individuals who initially responded that they believe in the positive externality dimension. Abbreviated question text: *What do you think matters more for how economic inequality changes the amount of economic growth?* · Economic differences near the bottom (the resources and number of relatively poor people), · Economic differences near the top (the resources and number of relatively rich people), · I think both matter about the same, · I’m really not sure. This is too complicated for me. Answers are from Survey 2 in a section where each respondent was asked follow-up questions for a specific externality.

## C.8 Phrasing results

We modify the word “inequality” in the survey for various subsets of respondents to explore whether the word itself (and its potentially loaded nature) affects results. Instead we use either “equality” or “differences in income and wealth” throughout the survey for 20% each of Survey 2 respondents, and “differences in income and wealth” for one-third of questions in Survey 1 on a question-by-question basis.

In Survey 1, one-third of respondents per question saw the phrasing “*How do larger differences in income and wealth within the population...*” instead of “*How does more economic inequality...*”. This phrasing was randomly assigned on a question-by-question basis with the goal of exploring whether the phrasing of the question significantly impacted answers.

In Survey 2, 20% of respondents were shown an “equality” phrasing and 20% were shown a “differences in income and wealth” phrasing throughout. Respondents in the “differences in income and wealth” phrasing strand, for example, do not see the word “inequality” anywhere in the survey. Respondents were explained each concept using the same diagrams.

Note that respondents who received the “equality” phrasing were asked how “more equality” changes the relevant factors, which changes the *direction* of the question. As an example, a negative externality belief under the “inequality” phrasing would be “*More inequality → More crime*”. The same belief under the “equality” phrasing would be “*More equality → Less crime*”.

**General externality beliefs** Neither the “differences” nor the “equality” phrasing had a significant effect on general externality beliefs (statistically insignificant > 2 p.p. changes).

**Specific externality beliefs** Specific externality beliefs are generally not constant across phrasing choices. We show this in Figures G13-G14 and detail the results below.

First, the “differences” phrasing. This phrasing choice has a small but non-negligible effect on results in Survey 1 (where it was used on a question-by-question basis). In most questions it shifts averages by roughly 2-4 percentage points, and the overall average is 3 percentage points. In Survey 2, where the phrasing change was employed throughout the survey, changes are similar or smaller.

The “more equality” phrasing has a larger effect. It particularly affects the inequality externality beliefs regarding political polarization and corruption, where the proportion of those believing in the negative externality change from 70% to 44% and 68% to 47% respectively when changing “more inequality” to “more equality” (a decrease of 26% and 21%).<sup>24</sup> Despite this, the negative externality belief is still held by close to a majority in both cases. Other shifts are always below 15%. Respondents are less likely to choose the negative externality option in this setting for six out of eight outcomes (with a small effect in the opposite direction for the economic growth and innovation). The share holding a specific negative inequality externality beliefs is on average  $\sim 12\%$  lower under this phrasing. This does not seem to be due to the word “inequality” itself, as using “differences in income and wealth” has a much smaller effect, but potentially due to the difference in the distributional change (the effect of “more equality”

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<sup>24</sup>Believing in the negative externality in this case implies that respondents answer that more equality leads to less political polarization or less corruption.

vs. “more inequality”).

Although phrasing choices have a significant effect on our results, the negative externality option is still the most popular for any combination of phrasing choice and outcome. It follows that our main results are robust to these changes. This exercise also implies that our results are not caused by the nature of the word “inequality” itself, as the “differences in income and wealth” phrasing do not change results in a noteworthy way. We hypothesize that the larger effect of the “equality” phrasing could be at least partly due to respondents thinking these problems are persistent and that an increase in economic equality – in other words, a reduction in economic inequality – is unlikely to solve them immediately or at all.

**Pre-specified merging across phrasings** The data we show in the main body includes all phrasing groups (merged on pre-specified criteria). Only using the “inequality” phrasing would increase the negative externality beliefs presented in the main body by  $\sim 2$  p.p..

We pre-specified the following merging criteria:

*If the results for each phrasing are sufficiently similar, we will merge them for the main analysis. This decision will be made upon not reaching any the two following criteria.*

- *The mean of the main dummy externality belief variable is more than 0.3 standard deviations apart between phrasing groups.*
- *The mean of at least six of the eight dummy externality belief variables are more than 0.3 standard deviations apart between phrasing groups.*

*The standard deviation will be taken from the pooled sample of the “inequality” phrasing and the relevant alternative phrasing. These analyses will be made without controls as long as there are no large statistical differences in relevant observables.*

*If one of these criteria are reached, we will exclude the relevant alternative phrasing from the main results and discuss these differences separately.*

Neither criteria was reached. As (i) merging the phrasing treatments does not significantly change our main results, and (ii) it is not clear which phrasing indicates “true” externality beliefs, we follow the pre-specification plan and merge the treatments.

## C.9 Consistent inequality externality beliefs across inequality levels

A key assumption for our main results to be easily interpretable is that the direction of individuals' inequality externality beliefs do not vary across the level of inequality. If they are not, a respondent might for example think that more economic inequality increases the amount of economic growth if inequality is low and decreases the amount of economic growth if inequality is high. To explore this we ask Survey 2 respondents directly whether they think the same relationship holds “*no matter whether the country is initially very equal, very unequal, or anything else*”. The externalities with the largest share of respondents holding inequality externality beliefs that change in the reference level of inequality are innovation (20%) and economic growth (18%), although we note that a substantial portion of respondents answer “Don’t know”. The full data is shown in Table J8. Among respondents who have changing beliefs in innovation and growth, follow-up questions indicate that they believe in a positive externality at low inequality levels and a negative externality at high inequality levels (not shown).

## C.10 Survey bias

At the end of the survey, respondents were asked whether they considered the survey biased in an either left-wing or right-wing fashion. The large majority of respondents (72.0%) did not think the survey was biased in either direction. More respondents answered that the survey was left-wing biased (21.6%) than right-wing biased (6.4%).

These statistics across treatments are shown in Table J31. There are no statistically significant treatment effects for the share of respondents who say the survey is left-wing biased. We also note that the main treatment effects are robust to including a dummy for left-wing bias as a control. The corresponding statistics in the Survey 2 is 19.2% left-wing biased, 4.9% right-wing biased, and 75.9% unbiased.

## D Further Details: Information Experiment (Supplement to Section 4)

The survey was divided into three parts; the structure is shown in Figure 2. In Part 1, we elicit pre-treatment beliefs and sociodemographic information that is needed to check for representativeness.<sup>25</sup> Part 2 presents subjects the intended information. Part 3 elicits respondents' preferences for redistribution and inequality externality beliefs, which constitute our main reduced-form and first-stage outcomes respectively.

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<sup>25</sup>We elicit views on whether the distribution of money and wealth in the U.S. is fair, respondents' trust in the federal government, and beliefs about whether people work less when taxed more. These latter attitudes have shown to be important drivers of redistributive policy preferences that are potentially independent of fairness concerns or externality beliefs. This information is also used to check for selective attrition across the treatment groups, which we do not find any significant evidence of and discuss in Section B.1.

## D.1 Dual control groups

We use two different control groups – one *active* (the video described in Appendix D.3) and one *passive* (where respondents skip the section). This choice was primarily made to reduce experimenter demand, priming, and general uncertainty about the origin of our results. We merge the two control groups on pre-specified criteria.

This method is, as far as we know, novel in the information experiment literature. The conventional approach has been to use one of the two types of control groups. There are clear drawbacks to each approach, however.

The main drawbacks of a passive control group are two-fold. First, if respondents see no stimuli/video, their overall attention and survey fatigue will likely differ from respondents who saw treatments in the post-treatment part of the survey. This could bias results due to attention issues and cause attrition problems. Second, priming from the information treatments – hearing the word “inequality” in our treatments, for example – could conceivably drive outcome differences. In surveys with only a passive control group these are untestable hypotheses.

An active control group, on the other hand, may always unintentionally convey information that affects the outcomes of interest. In experiments with only an active control group the existence of such unintentionally conveyed information is itself an untestable hypothesis. The supposed neutral stimuli could also affect respondents in unexpected ways.

Using both types of controls allows us to test for many of these hypotheses (under the assumption that only one of the control groups has been affected on the testing dimension). We compare main outcomes across the two control groups and check them against pre-specified merging criteria. In the case that there are no significant differences across the control groups, the two control groups are merged. We can thus test whether attention effects and priming about the relevant concept (inequality, in our case) have important effects, which presents an improvement over the uncertainty involved in single control groups (under the aforementioned assumption).

Outcome differences between the two control groups were largely small and satisfied the pre-specified merging criteria. The control groups were thus merged and are discussed as one larger control group in the remainder of the article. The merging criteria and further discussion can be found in Appendix E.1.

The idea of several control groups is not new; multiple control groups in observational studies have been discussed extensively (Rosenbaum, 2002). Intentionally designed dual control groups in information experiments, however, have to the best of our knowledge not been employed or formalized prior to this work.

## D.2 Secondary survey

We design a “secondary survey” to obfuscate the real purpose of our survey from respondents. This is a within-survey version of the obfuscated follow-up survey methodology discussed in Haaland et al. (2023). Obfuscated follow-up surveys are generally resource-heavy and assume the researcher has access to respondents over time with limited attrition. The main benefit of the secondary survey is that it functions as an obfuscated follow-up within a survey, significantly reducing resource costs and concerns about attrition.

We define a secondary survey as a logical flow of questions that explains the information treatment while disguising the true purpose of the survey. This relies on (i) separating the treatment and outcome variables as much as possible, and (ii) giving respondents a reason for having seen the provided information. The former is meant to reduce experimenter demand and priming; the latter is meant to avoid respondent confusion and suspicion. In the present experiment, the former is done by introducing a gap between the treatment video and outcomes, made particularly salient by dividing the survey into differently formatted sections. The latter is done by showing respondents “filler questions” immediately after the video that implicitly explain a potential purpose of the video.

**Separating the treatment and outcome variables** We immediately end Part 2 of the survey after the treatment videos and filler questions, notifying respondents of this. We then start Part 3 with an introduction screen, which has a different format than previous introduction screens for Part 1 and Part 2. We then continue with a set of unrelated demographic questions to create the appearance of each survey part being functionally independent. Only after this structural break do we present respondents with redistributive preference questions, and then first-stage outcomes.

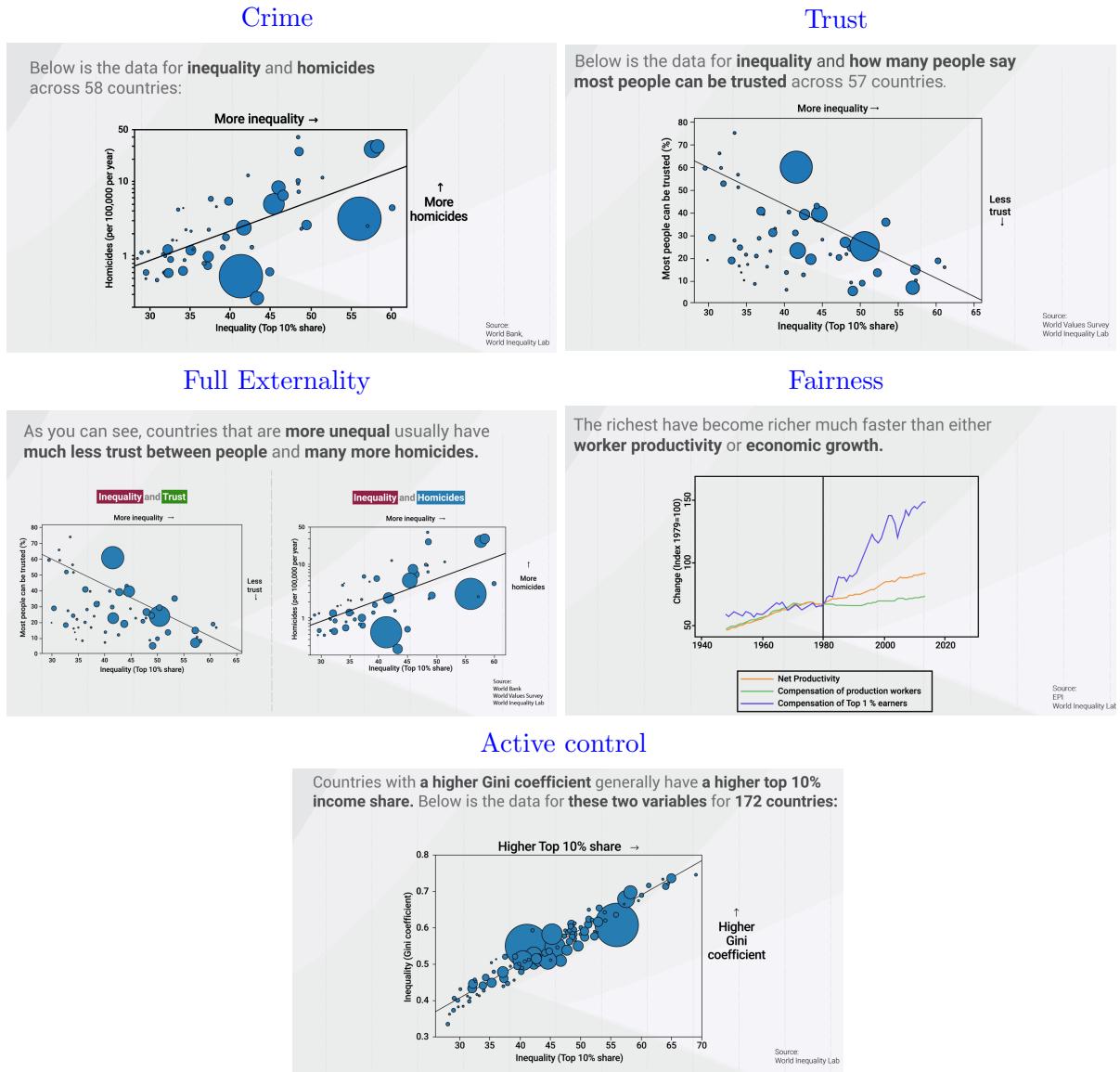
**Filler questions** While this creates a buffer between the treatment videos and our main outcomes, respondents may still be confused about *why* they saw the videos – itself leading to experimenter demand. We thus show respondents what we call “filler questions” immediately following the video. These questions are directly related to the video content and focus on personal experiences related to the video topic. In the crime treatment, an example of one such question is the following: *“Have you lived in more than one place in your life? If so, think back – do you think the places with more economic inequality had more crime, generally speaking?”*. Appendix D.3 describes the other filler questions. These questions are designed to hide the purpose of the study by being directly related to the videos (and so explaining why the respondents had to watch them) while being unrelated to the true intent of the survey. They thus create the impression that the videos are shown to lead into these filler questions and have no direct link with the rest of the survey.

We note that the filler questions themselves may change individuals’ beliefs about the video topic. The crime question above could conceivably change individuals’ beliefs about how economic inequality affects crime, for example. In the present case this is relatively unproblematic – whether respondents’ beliefs change due to the video or the filler questions is of second-order importance to our research question (whether inequality externality beliefs causally affect redis-

tributive preferences). The treatment mechanism appears to go through a shift of the intended beliefs (Section 4.2.3).

In total, respondents will see a video, respond to questions related to the video, move to a seemingly unrelated portion of the survey, and after a structural break answer our intended outcome questions. The respondents have thus seen a self-contained *secondary survey*, which should minimize experimenter demand and priming effects.

Figure D1: Treatment Video Screenshots



**Note.** These are screenshots from the five videos used in the survey experiment. One video was shown to each respondent, except for the 10% of respondents in the passive control group. Click the following links for the full videos: [Crime](#) – [Trust](#) – [Full externality](#) – [Fairness](#) – [Active control](#)

### D.3 Videos

This section describes the video content in each of the treatment arms and control groups. Note that after watching the video, respondents answer three very simple control questions to ensure that they understood the information provided in the video. We require respondents to answer these questions correctly to proceed with the survey. Respondents who answer incorrectly are able to change their answers after being presented the video screen again (with the option to re-watch). Afterwards, respondents are showed what we call filler questions, which are unrelated to our research goals but intend to explain to respondents the purpose of seeing the video (see the discussion on the “secondary survey” below).

We describe the different videos below.

**Treatment group 1: Crime as an inequality externality** This treatment group receives information on the relationship between crime and inequality using data from the World Bank and the World Inequality Database. As shown in the screenshot in Figure D1, the video first presents subjects with a scatter plot and a fitted line that characterizes the relationship between inequality and homicides. The next graphic characterizes the magnitude of the correlation. It shows that very equal countries have, on average, between one and two homicides per year per 100,000 people, while very unequal countries have, on average, between ten and twenty homicides per year per 100,000 people. The respondents are then told that researchers still argue about whether this means that inequality *causes* more crime – highlighting that these correlations need not imply causation. The video ends with a statement that most research on this topic has confirmed the correlational relationship and finds that it holds for alternative metrics of crime such as property crime and robberies.

The filler questions ask the respondents about whether they experienced or perceived more crime in places they lived or travelled to with higher levels of inequality. It thus creates a direct link to the video by asking the subjects whether they themselves experienced this relationship.

**Treatment group 2: Trust as an inequality externality** This treatment is structurally similar and uses a correlation between inequality and generalized trust (the number of individuals that say that most people can be trusted in their country) using data from the World Inequality Database and the World Value Survey. The remainder of the video and the filler questions are intentionally similar to the crime video; the style and phrasing remains the same (with modified numbers and alternative metrics) at all times.

**Treatment group 3: Full externality treatment** While treatment groups 1 and 2 tackle one externality channel each, treatment group 3 is designed as an all-encompassing externality treatment. It thus aims at providing more comprehensive information on whether societies with high economic inequality usually function better or worse. By presenting broad evidence that highlights the *negative* effects of inequality and by showing that the evidence for positive externalities is rather limited, the treatment makes the strongest case for the negative consequences of inequality between our three videos. As shown in the screenshot in Figure D1, the first part of the video shows the same information that we present in treatments 1 and 2. It then shows that there is no relationship between inequality and economic growth nor between inequality and innovation (measured by the number of patents).<sup>26</sup> Respondents are then told that these correlations need not imply any causal relationship, and that researchers disagree on the topic – some do not believe inequality causes society to function worse, while others believe economic inequality harms society through these and other channels (the video briefly mentions social unrest, corruption, and political polarization). The video ends with a quote from Amartya Sen, quoted as a nameless Nobel-winning economist, that “*virtually all the problems in the world come from inequality of one kind or another.*” Following the video, the filler questions in this treatment ask respondents whether they have generally experienced that more unequal places function better or worse than more equal places.

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<sup>26</sup>This was included due to our original assumption that individuals would believe in a positive association between these variables.

**Treatment group 4: Fairness treatment** The fourth treatment group receives information on how the wage-productivity gap has evolved since 1975, as shown in the screenshot in Figure D1, using data from the Economic Policy Institute. The stimulus includes information that blue-collars' wages stagnated while their productivity increased since the 1980s. The income share of the top 1% earners (from the World Inequality Database), on the other hand, increased sharply, indicating that the economic gains from the increase in productivity went for the most part to the richest Americans. The filler questions ask subjects to consider people they know that were employed in 1950 and 1980, and whether they thought these people were paid closer to what they produced than people with similar jobs today.

The treatment intends to give respondents information about the *fairness* of the economy, and functions as a semi-comparable benchmark to the inequality externality treatments.

**Control group 1: Active control** The active control group receives a video that is structured similarly to those on trust and crime. The general video topic is how economic inequality metrics differ and how this can affect research on economic inequality. The video informs subjects about the difference between the Gini index and the top 10% income share. It was designed with the aim of giving individuals stimuli about inequality itself while avoiding any information that is relevant for redistributive preferences. The comparison across this control group and the treatments thus seeks to isolate the role of information. Filler questions to this treatment ask subjects to reflect on whether they (i) have already thought about the measurement of inequality and (ii) whether they knew that researchers had different ways of measuring inequality before the survey began.

## D.4 Usage of GPT-4o Mini for first-stage results

Shortly after the main redistributive preference questions, respondents were asked the open-ended question “How do you think economic inequality changes society?” (full question text in Appendix K.3.2). Replies to this question were classified using the GPT-4o Mini API across multiple outcomes. Each outcome for each argument was classified independently, with argument order randomized before making API calls. In total, we made 56,823 separate API calls. In all cases, a long explanation with examples was used as a prompt. The following outcomes were classified:

**Specific inequality externalities:** For all the potential inequality externalities elicited in Survey 1, the text response was classified as not mentioning it (0), mentioning a negative inequality externality (1), or mentioning a positive inequality externality (2):

1. Crime
2. Trust
3. Economic growth
4. Democratic institutions
5. Corruption
6. Innovation
7. Political polarization
8. Social unrest
9. Unemployment
10. Quality of local public goods
11. Quality of life

**Fairness concerns:** We also classified the text response as not mentioning fairness (0), mentioning a link between inequality and unfairness (1), and mentioning a link between inequality and fairness (2):

- 12 Fairness concerns

**Experimenter demand:** And finally we classified the text response as having “any indication of experimenter demand”:

- 13 Experimenter demand

Below we list the full prompts for all 13 cases.

#### D.4.1 Prompt to GPT-4o Mini: Mention of crime as an inequality externality

Give this argument a score of either 0, 1, or 2, where:

- 0 indicates that the text does NOT discuss a link between inequality and crime,
- 1 indicates that the text DOES discuss how inequality INCREASES crime, or how equality DECREASES crime.
- 2 indicates that the text DOES discuss how inequality DECREASES crime, or how equality INCREASES crime.

An argument is considered to include a discussion of crime if it explicitly or implicitly mentions crime or related ideas (such as anything illegal or destructive, homicides, theft, corruption, or social unrest).

Even if these topics are referenced implicitly, the argument should be scored as 1. However, a discussion of related concepts that does not make a clear connection to criminal behavior should not be considered a discussion of crime.

Examples:

- If the text is "I think inequality leads to more crime," you should return '1' because it explicitly mentions crime.
- If the text is "It causes an increase in homicides and theft," you should return '1' due to the mention of homicides and theft.
- If the text is "I think inequality leads to more trust," you should return '0' because there is no mention of crime.
- If the text is "I think inequality is unfair," you should return '0' because it does not include any reference to crime or related behaviors.
- If the text is "It makes society less cohesive and vulnerable to destructive division," you should return '1' because although it includes a reference to destructive behavior.
- If the text is "it will lead to a revolution," you should return '1'.
- If the text is "Equality increases the amount of crime," you should return '2'.

Do not explain the score. DO NOT include any additional text, labels, or the word "Score:" before the number. Just return a single digit: either "0", "1", or "2".

Argument to evaluate: {myarg}

#### D.4.2 Prompt to GPT-4o Mini: Mention of trust as an inequality externality

Give this argument a score of either 0, 1, or 2, where:

- 0 indicates that the text does NOT discuss a link between inequality and trust,
- 1 indicates that the text DOES discuss how inequality DECREASES trust, or how equality INCREASES trust.
- 2 indicates that the text DOES discuss how inequality INCREASES trust, or how equality DECREASES trust.

An argument is considered to include a discussion of trust if it explicitly or implicitly mentions trust or related ideas (such as social cooperation, social division, credibility, or reliability).

Even if these topics are referenced indirectly, the argument should be scored as 1. However, a discussion of related concepts that does not make a clear connection to trust should not be considered a discussion of trust.

Examples:

- If the text is "I think inequality leads to less trust," you should return '1' because it explicitly mentions trust.
- If the text is "It splits people and communities apart," you should return '1' because it implies a breakdown of trust.
- If the text is "I think inequality leads to more crime," you should return '0' because it does not mention a decrease in trust.
- If the text is "I think inequality is unfair," you should return '0' because there is no reference to trust or related behaviors .
- If the text is "Inequality creates divisions between people," you should return '1' because it implies diminished trust.
- If the text is "It pulls the rich and poor further apart," you should return '1'.
- If the text is "Equality decreases the amount of trust," you should return '2'.

Do not explain the score. DO NOT include any additional text, labels, or the word "Score:" before the number. Just return a single digit: either "0", "1", or "2".

Argument to evaluate: {myarg}

#### D.4.3 Prompt to GPT-4o Mini: Mention of economic growth as an inequality externality

Give this argument a score of either 0, 1, or 2, where:

- 0 indicates that the text does NOT discuss a link between inequality and economic growth,
- 1 indicates that the text DOES discuss how inequality DECREASES economic growth, or how equality INCREASES economic growth.
- 2 indicates that the text DOES discuss how inequality INCREASES economic growth, or how equality DECREASES economic growth.

An argument is considered to include a discussion of economic growth if it explicitly or implicitly mentions economic growth or related ideas (such as productivity, rising incomes, or efficiency).

Even if these topics are referenced indirectly, the argument should be scored as 1. However, a discussion of related concepts that does not make a clear connection to economic growth should not be considered a discussion of economic growth.

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Examples:

If the text is "I think inequality leads to less economic growth ,," you should return '1' because it explicitly mentions economic growth.

If the text is "It makes low-income people consume less and the economy to struggle," you should return '1' because it implies a decline in economic growth.

If the text is "I think inequality leads to more crime," you should return '0' because it does not mention a decrease in economic growth.

If the text is "I think inequality is unfair," you should return '0' because there is no reference to economic growth or related indicators.

If the text is "It erodes people's will to put in effort at work ,," you should return '1' because it implies diminished economic growth.

If the text is "It makes people work harder," you should return '2'.

If the text is "Inequality increases the amount of economic growth ,," you should return '2'.

Do not explain the score. DO NOT include any additional text, labels, or the word "Score:" before the number. Just return a single digit: either "0", "1", or "2".

Argument to evaluate: {myarg}

#### D.4.4 Prompt to GPT-4o Mini: Mention of the quality of democratic institutions as an inequality externality

Give this argument a score of either 0, 1, or 2, where:

- 0 indicates that the text does NOT discuss a link between inequality and the quality of democratic institutions,
- 1 indicates that the text DOES discuss how inequality DECREASES the quality of democratic institutions, or how equality INCREASES the quality of democratic institutions.
- 2 indicates that the text DOES discuss how inequality INCREASES the quality of democratic institutions, or how equality DECREASES the quality of democratic institutions.

An argument is considered to include a discussion of the quality of democratic institutions if it explicitly or implicitly mentions the quality of democratic institutions or related ideas (such as democracy, political corruption, equality in front of the law, or poor leadership).

Even if these topics are referenced indirectly, the argument should be scored as 1. However, a discussion of related concepts that does not make a clear connection to democratic institutions should not be considered a discussion of democratic institutions.

Examples:

If the text is "I think inequality leads to worse democratic institutions," you should return '1' because it explicitly mentions democratic institutions.

If the text is "It makes low-income people stop voting," you should return '1' because it implies a less democratic participation.

If the text is "I think inequality leads to more crime," you should return '0' because it does not mention a decrease in the quality of democratic institutions.

If the text is "I think inequality is unfair," you should return '0' because there is no reference to democratic institutions.

If the text is "The rich will start getting away with everything," you should return '1' because it implies worse democratic institutions.

If the text is "Inequality leads to corruption and politicians being beholden to the rich and people on welfare," you should return '1'.

If the text is "Inequality increases the quality of democratic institutions," you should return '2'.

Do not explain the score. DO NOT include any additional text, labels, or the word "Score:" before the number. Just return a single digit: either "0", "1", or "2".

Argument to evaluate: {myarg}

#### D.4.5 Prompt to GPT-4o Mini: Mention of corruption as an inequality externality

Give this argument a score of either 0, 1, or 2, where:

- 0 indicates that the text does NOT discuss a link between inequality and corruption,
- 1 indicates that the text DOES discuss how inequality INCREASES corruption, or how equality DECREASES corruption,
- 2 indicates that the text DOES discuss how inequality DECREASES corruption, or how equality INCREASES corruption.

An argument is considered to include a discussion of corruption if it explicitly or implicitly mentions bribery, unethical political activity, corporate malfeasance, or other forms of corrupt behavior. However, a discussion of related concepts that does not make a clear connection to corrupt acts should not be considered a discussion of corruption.

Examples:

- If the text is "I think inequality leads to more corruption," you should return '1' because it explicitly mentions corruption.
- If the text is "It causes bribes and underhanded deals," you should return '1' due to the mention of bribery.
- If the text is "I think inequality leads to more crime," you should return '0' because there is no reference to corruption.
- If the text is "I think inequality is unfair," you should return '0' because it does not reference corruption or related behaviors.
- If the text is "When people have too much power over others, it leads to corrupt deals," you should return '1' because it implies more corruption.
- If the text is "Equality means less bribery," you should return '1' because it implies a decrease in corruption.
- If the text is "Inequality actually reduces corruption," you should return '2'.

Do not explain the score. DO NOT include any additional text, labels, or the word "Score:" before the number. Just return a single digit: either "0", "1", or "2".

Argument to evaluate: {myarg}

#### D.4.6 Prompt to GPT-4o Mini: Mention of innovation as an inequality externality

Give this argument a score of either 0, 1, or 2, where:

- 0 indicates that the text does NOT discuss a link between inequality and innovation,
- 1 indicates that the text DOES discuss how inequality DECREASES innovation, or how equality INCREASES innovation.
- 2 indicates that the text DOES discuss how inequality INCREASES innovation, or how equality DECREASES innovation.

An argument is considered to include a discussion of innovation if it explicitly or implicitly mentions innovation or related ideas (such as research and development, entrepreneurship, creativity, or technological progress).

Even if these topics are referenced indirectly, the argument should be scored as 1 (or 2) if it implies a connection to innovation. However, a discussion of related concepts that does not make a clear connection to innovation should not be considered a discussion of innovation.

Examples:

If the text is "I think inequality leads to less innovation," you should return '1' because it explicitly mentions innovation.

If the text is "When people have fewer resources, they can't invest in R&D," you should return '1' because it implies a decline in innovation.

If the text is "I think inequality leads to more crime," you should return '0' because it does not mention innovation.

If the text is "I think inequality is unfair," you should return '0' because there is no reference to innovation or related indicators.

If the text is "It erodes people's willingness to engage in creative endeavors," you should return '1' because it implies diminished innovation.

If the text is "It motivates individuals to create new products or ideas," you should return '2'.

If the text is "Inequality fosters greater technological breakthroughs," you should return '2'.

Do not explain the score. DO NOT include any additional text, labels, or the word "Score:" before the number. Just return a single digit: either "0", "1", or "2".

Argument to evaluate: {myarg}

#### D.4.7 Prompt to GPT-4o Mini: Mention of political polarization as an inequality externality

Give this argument a score of either 0, 1, or 2, where:

- 0 indicates that the text does NOT discuss a link between inequality and political polarization,
- 1 indicates that the text DOES discuss how inequality INCREASES political polarization, or how equality DECREASES political polarization,
- 2 indicates that the text DOES discuss how inequality DECREASES political polarization, or how equality INCREASES political polarization.

An argument is considered to include a discussion of political polarization if it explicitly or implicitly mentions deep divisions between political groups, extremes in political ideology, radicalization, or heightened partisan conflict. However, a discussion of related concepts that does not make a clear connection to polarization should not be considered a discussion of polarization.

Examples:

If the text is "I think inequality leads to more political polarization," you should return '1' because it explicitly mentions polarization.

If the text is "It causes extreme divisions between left and right," you should return '1' due to the reference to partisan divides.

If the text is "I think inequality leads to more crime," you should return '0' because there is no mention of polarization.

If the text is "I think inequality is unfair," you should return '0' because it does not reference polarization.

If the text is "When people have too much power, it leads to radical partisan conflict," you should return '1' because it implies more polarization.

If the text is "Equality means less tension between political factions," you should return '1' because it implies a decrease in polarization.

If the text is "Inequality reduces polarization," you should return '2'.

Do not explain the score. DO NOT include any additional text, labels, or the word "Score:" before the number. Just return a single digit: either "0", "1", or "2".

Argument to evaluate: {myarg}

#### D.4.8 Prompt to GPT-4o Mini: Mention of social unrest as an inequality externality

Give this argument a score of either 0, 1, or 2, where:

- 0 indicates that the text does NOT discuss a link between inequality and the presence of social unrest,
- 1 indicates that the text DOES discuss how inequality INCREASES social unrest, or how equality DECREASES social unrest,
- 2 indicates that the text DOES discuss how inequality DECREASES social unrest, or how equality INCREASES social unrest.

An argument is considered to include a discussion of social unrest if it explicitly or implicitly mentions social unrest or related ideas (such as protests, riots, civil disobedience, or large public discontent).

Even if these topics are referenced indirectly, the argument should be scored as 1. However, a discussion of related concepts that does not make a clear connection to social unrest should not be considered a discussion of social unrest.

Examples:

If the text is "I think inequality leads to more protests," you should return '1' because it explicitly mentions protests.

If the text is "It makes people feel hopeless and ready to fight back," you should return '1' because it implies public discontent and potential unrest.

If the text is "I think inequality leads to more crime," you should return '0' because it does not mention social unrest.

If the text is "I think inequality is unfair," you should return '0' because there is no reference to social unrest.

If the text is "The poor will start rioting," you should return '1' because it implies social unrest.

If the text is "Inequality leads to political instability and mass protests," you should return '1'.

If the text is "Inequality decreases social unrest," you should return '2'.

Do not explain the score. DO NOT include any additional text, labels, or the word "Score:" before the number. Just return a single digit: either "0", "1", or "2".

Argument to evaluate: {myarg}

#### D.4.9 Prompt to GPT-4o Mini: Mention of unemployment as an inequality externality

Give this argument a score of either 0, 1, or 2, where:

- 0 indicates that the text does NOT discuss a link between inequality and unemployment,
- 1 indicates that the text DOES discuss how inequality INCREASES unemployment, or how equality DECREASES unemployment,
- 2 indicates that the text DOES discuss how inequality DECREASES unemployment, or how equality INCREASES unemployment.

An argument is considered to include a discussion of unemployment if it explicitly or implicitly mentions joblessness, layoffs, lack of work opportunities, or difficulty finding employment. However, a discussion of related concepts that does not make a clear connection to unemployment should not be considered a discussion of unemployment.

Examples:

If the text is "I think inequality leads to more unemployment," you should return '1' because it explicitly mentions unemployment.

If the text is "It causes fewer job opportunities for the poor," you should return '1' because it implies higher unemployment.

If the text is "I think inequality leads to more crime," you should return '0' because there is no direct reference to unemployment.

If the text is "I think inequality is unfair," you should return '0' because it does not reference unemployment.

If the text is "Equality means fewer people end up jobless," you should return '1' because it implies a decrease in unemployment.

If the text is "Inequality helps spur new hiring," you should return '2'.

If the text is "Inequality reduces the number of people out of work," you should return '2'.

Do not explain the score. DO NOT include any additional text, labels, or the word "Score:" before the number. Just return a single digit: either "0", "1", or "2".

Argument to evaluate: {myarg}

#### D.4.10 Prompt to GPT-4o Mini: Mention of the quality of local public goods as an inequality externality

Give this argument a score of either 0, 1, or 2, where:

- 0 indicates that the text does NOT discuss a link between inequality and the quality of local public goods,
- 1 indicates that the text DOES discuss how inequality DECREASES the quality of local public goods, or how equality INCREASES the quality of local public goods,
- 2 indicates that the text DOES discuss how inequality INCREASES the quality of local public goods, or how equality DECREASES the quality of local public goods.

An argument is considered to include a discussion of local public goods if it explicitly or implicitly references the condition or availability of community-level resources such as public schools, roads, libraries, parks, or other civic infrastructure. However, a discussion of related concepts that does not connect to local public goods should not be considered a discussion of local public goods.

Examples:

- "I think inequality leads to neglected public schools and roads , " you should return '1' because it explicitly mentions a decline in public goods.
- "Equality means better libraries and local services," you should return '1' because it implies an improvement in local public goods.
- "I think inequality leads to more crime," you should return '0' because there is no reference to local public goods.
- "I think inequality is unfair," you should return '0' because it does not reference local public goods.
- "We can afford better community facilities because of inequality," you should return '2' because it implies an increase in the quality of local public goods.
- "Inequality boosts investment in local infrastructure," you should return '2'.

Do not explain the score. DO NOT include any additional text, labels, or the word "Score:" before the number. Just return a single digit: either "0", "1", or "2".

Argument to evaluate: {myarg}

#### D.4.11 Prompt to GPT-4o Mini: Mention of quality of life as an inequality externality

Give this argument a score of either 0, 1, or 2, where:

- 0 indicates that the text does NOT discuss a link between inequality and overall quality of life,
- 1 indicates that the text DOES discuss how inequality DECREASES the overall quality of life, or how equality INCREASES it,
- 2 indicates that the text DOES discuss how inequality INCREASES the overall quality of life, or how equality DECREASES it.

An argument is considered to include a discussion of overall quality of life if it explicitly or implicitly refers to the general well-being of individuals or communities, including health, happiness, living standards, or life satisfaction. However, a discussion of related concepts that does not connect to overall quality of life should not be considered a discussion of overall quality of life.

Examples:

- "I think inequality makes people less happy and healthy," you should return '1' because it implies a decline in overall quality of life.
- "Equality would improve living standards," you should return '1' because it implies a rise in overall quality of life.
- "I think inequality leads to more crime," you should return '0' if there is no mention of how it affects general well-being.
- "I think inequality is unfair," you should return '0' because there is no reference to overall life quality.
- "When there's inequality, people strive harder and have better lifestyles," you should return '2' because it implies an improvement in quality of life.
- "Inequality increases the overall satisfaction in society," you should return '2'.

Do not explain the score. DO NOT include any additional text, labels, or the word "Score:" before the number. Just return a single digit: either "0", "1", or "2".

Argument to evaluate: {myarg}

#### D.4.12 Prompt to GPT-4o Mini: Mention of fairness concerns

Give this argument a score of either 0, 1, or 2, where:

- 0 indicates that the text does NOT discuss a link between inequality and fairness,
- 1 indicates that the text DOES discuss how inequality DECREASES fairness, or how equality INCREASES fairness.
- 2 indicates that the text DOES discuss how inequality INCREASES fairness, or how equality DECREASES fairness.

An argument is considered to include a discussion of fairness if it explicitly or implicitly mentions fairness or related ideas (such as deservedness, justice, equality, or moral entitlement)

.

Even if these topics are referenced indirectly, the argument should be scored as 1. However, a discussion of related concepts that does not make a clear connection to fairness should not be considered a discussion of fairness.

Examples:

- If the text is "I think inequality is unfair," you should return '1' because it explicitly mentions fairness.
- If the text is "People at the top get more than they deserve," you should return '1' because it implies less fairness.
- If the text is "I think inequality leads to more crime," you should return '0' because it does not mention fairness.
- If the text is "The poor are suffering when they work hard," you should return '1' because it worse fairness.
- If the text is "Inequality is fair, the rich worked hard to get what they have," you should return '2'.

Do not explain the score. DO NOT include any additional text, labels, or the word "Score:" before the number. Just return a single digit: either "0", "1", or "2".

Argument to evaluate: {myarg}

#### D.4.13 Prompt to GPT-4o Mini: Mention of experimenter demand

Give this argument a score from 0-1, where:

- 0 indicates that the text DOES NOT include any indication of experimenter demand,
- 1 indicates that the text DOES include an indication of experimenter demand.

Experimenter demand is defined as changes in behavior by experimental subjects due to cues about what constitutes appropriate behavior.

To explain, the argument is an answer to the question: "How do you think economic inequality changes society?". Survey respondents answer this question after having seen a video about inequality. We are concerned that respondents may not answer truthfully, instead answering what they think we want.

Hints of experimenter demand include a discussion of the video (including mentions of Youtube or similar), phrases like "I think you'd want me to say...", any reference to the researchers or the study itself, and similar.

Examples:

- If the text is "Like the video said, inequality changes society for the worse." you should return '1'.
- If the text is "Inequality changes society for the worse." you should return '0'.
- If the text is "I should say that inequality is bad, right? That's probably what you're looking for." you should return '1'.
- If the text is "Inequality is bad." you should return '0'.
- If the text is "You just want me to say that inequality leads to crime" you should return '1'.
- If the text is "Inequality leads to crime" you should return '0'.

Do not explain the score. DO NOT include any additional text, labels, or the word "Score:" before the number. Just return a single digit: either "0", or "1".

Argument to evaluate: {myarg}

## E Further Data and Analysis: Information Experiment (Supplement to Section 4)

### E.1 Dual control groups

In this section, we compare the respondents' characteristics and outcomes across the two control groups. We pre-specified to merge these two groups conditional on being sufficiently similar. Specifically, we pre-specified the following decision rule:

"If the active and passive control group are sufficiently similar, we will merge them for the main analysis. This decision will be made upon not reaching all the three following criteria.

- There is no 1% statistical difference in the index outcome variable between the active and passive control.
- There is not a 5% statistical difference in at least three of the four redistribution dummy variables listed above.
- There is not a 5% statistical difference in at least three of the four externality dummy variables listed above.

If one of these criteria are reached, we will present regressions with both control groups as separate categories."

The redistributive preference outcomes referenced are the four main redistributive preference outcomes (Appendix K.5). The externality beliefs referenced are the multiple-choice questions on crime, trust, unrest, and growth (Appendix K.2).

As shown in Table E1 there are small differences across the two groups. From the redistributive preference variables, only the variable on top tax rates is significantly different across the two groups. None of the other pre-specified variables are significantly different between control groups. We also show that other relevant first-stage outcomes are insignificantly different across treatments. We also note that the insignificant differences are small and in opposing directions. As the pre-specified criteria for merging were reached, we thus merge the two groups for the main analysis.

It is unclear why the top tax preferences of the active control group are significantly higher than for the passive control group. We suggest either statistical noise, a priming effect, or that seeing perceived high top 10% income shares shift individuals' top tax rate preferences. It is possible that this result biases our main treatment effects on this variable downwards – which could explain the null result for the full externality treatment on this outcome. We note that such unexpected effects are a good motivation to use dual control groups.

As shown in Table J3, there are few significant differences between the two groups on pre-treatment demographics and beliefs. This also softens concerns of attrition. Including the few significant dimensions as controls has no effect on redistributive preferences or first-stage outcomes. Passive control group subjects are also not more or less likely to pass all three attention checks than active control groups. Neither are they more nor less likely to pass an attention check that was administered *after* the treatment.

Overall, the results show that the two control groups are sufficiently similar to be merged for the remainder of the analysis.

Table E1: Dual control: Balance table for redistributive preferences, inequality externality beliefs, and fairness views

Variable	(1) Passive Control	(2) Active Control	(3) Difference
RP Index	-0.111 (0.965)	-0.045 (0.984)	0.067 (0.065)
Wants redistribution	0.370 (0.483)	0.360 (0.481)	-0.009 (0.032)
Gov. reduce ineq.	0.480 (0.500)	0.508 (0.501)	0.028 (0.033)
Ineq. is serious issue	0.515 (0.500)	0.508 (0.501)	-0.007 (0.033)
Increase top taxes	0.537 (0.499)	0.622 (0.486)	0.085*** (0.033)
General neg. ext.	0.582 (0.494)	0.614 (0.487)	0.032 (0.032)
Ineq. incr. crime	0.757 (0.430)	0.761 (0.427)	0.005 (0.028)
Ineq. red. trust	0.669 (0.471)	0.698 (0.460)	0.029 (0.031)
Ineq. red. growth	0.509 (0.500)	0.533 (0.500)	0.024 (0.033)
Mention: Crime	0.100 (0.301)	0.089 (0.285)	-0.012 (0.019)
Mention: Trust	0.078 (0.269)	0.081 (0.274)	0.003 (0.018)
Mention: Unfairness	0.268 (0.443)	0.256 (0.437)	-0.011 (0.029)
Society is unfair (post)	0.587 (0.493)	0.609 (0.489)	0.022 (0.033)
Rich because of hard luck	0.608 (0.489)	0.617 (0.487)	0.009 (0.032)
Observations	538	394	932

**Note.** This table represents mean values (standard deviations for the RP index, binary values otherwise) for various outcomes for respondents in the Passive Control (column 1) and Active Control (column 2) groups. Column (3) characterizes the difference across the two. The pre-specified criteria to merge these two control groups for the main analysis is satisfied. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

## E.2 First-stage beliefs: Open-ended text question

The post-treatment open-ended text question in Survey 1 (shown in Appendix K.3) asks respondents to write about how they think inequality changes society without prompting them specifically in any further direction. We use answers to this question for various first-stage outcomes; see Figures 8, G15, and G16, Tables H7, H8, and H9, and the relevant GPT-4o Mini prompts in Appendix D.4.

In Table E2 we show that the share of answers that include the words “crime” or “trust” follow very similar patterns. The word “crime” is used by 17.0% and 13.2% of respondents in the crime and full externality treatments respectively, and an average of 4.4% in all other treatment and control groups. The word “trust” is used by 6.3% and 3.7% of respondents in the trust and full externality treatments respectively, and an average of 0.3% in all other treatment and control groups.

To ensure that this is not driven by respondents simply describing the video, and also improving the robustness of the experimenter demand check mentioned in the text, we check the equivalent for the word “video”, which is barely mentioned by respondents in any group (0.2% of all respondents). This also holds for other similar words (“Youtube”, “infographic”, and so on). This indicates the success of the secondary survey we describe in Section 4.1, and highlights that the video as such is barely discussed in the answers; instead respondents discuss the informational content itself.

Table E2: Share of subjects mentioning “crime”, “trust” or “video” in open-ended question

	Mentioned crime (%)	Mentioned trust (%)	Mentioned video (%)
Crime tr.	<b>17.04</b>	0.32	0.43
Trust tr.	4.48	<b>6.30</b>	0.12
Full ext tr.	<b>13.23</b>	<b>3.71</b>	0.37
Fairness tr.	4.13	0.23	0.00
Control (passive)	4.46	0.32	0.00
Control (active)	4.57	0.00	0.00

**Note.** This table reports the share of respondents who use the words “crime”, “trust”, or “video” in either treatment group.

### E.3 First-stage beliefs: Closed-form question

Here we describe the answers to the post-treatment closed-form multiple choice questions on inequality externality beliefs, which also function as first-stage beliefs for the information experiment.

As we show in Tables [H10-H11](#), each of the three externality treatments significantly change many of respondents' specific externality views when elicited in the multiple-choice format. Overall, the first stage treatment effects are strong as each video increases the share of several negative externality beliefs by roughly 5-10 percentage points from an already high baseline.

The targeted specific externality concern is most affected by the associated treatment(s). As an example, respondents' crime externality beliefs are more affected by the crime (76% → 85%) and full externality treatments (76% → 84%) than the trust treatment (76% → 81%).

Still, there are strongly significant effects on various non-targeted externalities, which indicates the potential presence of externality-specific spillovers. The full externality treatment, for example, significantly affects negative inequality beliefs on the following dimensions: crime, trust, economic growth, the quality of democratic institutions, corruption, social unrest, and quality of life. We do not take a firm position on whether these spillovers influence the redistributive preference outcomes for two key reasons.

First, the inclusion of questions about these externalities inevitably introduces the concept of these inequality externalities to respondents, which may not have been a factor in their thinking for earlier questions. Indeed, we designed the survey to avoid mentioning any specific inequality externalities for as long as possible to minimize the chance of specific examples affecting respondents' other beliefs or preferences. Following this logic, the spillovers we show in Tables [H10-H11](#) may not have affected the prior redistributive preference questions. We consider this possibility plausible, as respondents are not significantly more likely to mention many of the externalities that have significant treatment effects here in the prior open-ended text response ([Appendix E.2](#)).

Second, the first two multiple choice questions (on crime and trust) include a note to "Please pay very close attention to this question", seen by all respondents. While this note was originally included to improve respondent attention, it may also have inadvertently lead to experimenter demand to both these and later questions. We can exclude large experimenter demand effects in the baseline based on similar general inequality externality beliefs (which were elicited before the note) and similar Survey 2 results. We cannot exclude experimenter demand effects influencing treatment effects on these and subsequent questions, however, as any experimenter demand may be stronger for respondents who saw the videos and answered the post-video "filler questions" (see [Appendix D.3](#)). Note that all main treatment effects and first-stage outcomes were elicited before these questions, limiting the potential scope of any problematic experimenter demand (see [Appendix L](#) for the full questionnaire).

## E.4 Experimenter demand and priming in the information experiment

Experimenter demand and priming are potential concerns for all information experiments (Haaland et al., 2023). There are two reasons for why one might be particularly concerned about these issues in our case. First, given the politically charged nature of our topic – inequality and redistribution – respondents may be particularly aware of any potential experimenter cues. Second, our treatment variation is relatively strong, including stark correlations and, in the case of the full externality treatment, a broader discussion on inequality’s consequences and a quotation from Amartya Sen (credited as a “Nobel prize winning economist”) stating that “*I believe that virtually all the problems in the world come from inequality of one kind or another*”.

We made various design choices to minimize these issues, and conduct a set of post-survey analyses to assess the likelihood of experimenter demand or priming driving our results. We summarize both points here. In short, while we recognize that our design could in theory be susceptible to these issues, we make various novel methodological improvements on the prior literature that likely reduce any experimenter demand. More importantly, we find several pieces of evidence that contradict a hypothesis of strong experimenter demand.

### E.4.1 Design

We implemented two specific steps to reduce experimenter demand and priming.

**Dual control + Active control** The active control group sees a video on inequality metrics, designed as such to minimize any potential experimenter demand or priming issues. This approach also allows us to measure how simply showing a video on the topic of inequality influences experimenter demand and priming by comparing the active and passive control groups. These two groups are, in general, very similar; out of the treatment and first-stage outcomes listed in Table J3, we find no significant differences across the control groups in 13 of the 14 outcomes. It follows that we can rule out experimenter demand from showing a video on the topic of inequality as a significant confound for our main treatment effects. We discuss the dual control design in Appendix D.1, and the results in Appendix E.1.

**Secondary survey** The secondary survey, which is a within-survey version of the obfuscated follow-up survey methodology discussed in Haaland et al. (2023), was designed primarily to avoid the experimenter demand that is often a potential confounder in one-survey information experiment designs. We discuss it further in Appendix D.2.

### E.4.2 Analysis of results

Various analyses indicate that it is unlikely that experimenter demand drive our main results. We summarize these analyses here.

**Analysis of open-ended text questions** As discussed in the main text and Appendix E.2, we find an extremely low share of respondents (<0.3%) mentioning the video or giving any sign of experimenter demand in the open-ended text question. While this does not rule out the possibility of experimenter demand, it suggests that such effects are unlikely to be very large.

**Lack of treatment effects for fairness outcomes** If experimenter demand is a primary driver of the outcomes on redistributive preference, a substantial portion of respondents must have responded based on their perceptions of the experimenter’s expectations on topics related to inequality. Under these assumptions one would expect similar experimenter demand effects in other post-treatment questions related to inequality, specifically the questions on fairness views outlined in Appendices K.6.1 and K.6.2. These two questions are placed shortly after the redistributive preference questions, immediately after the inequality externality questions on crime and trust, and immediately preceding the inequality externality questions on social unrest and economic growth (all of which are generally affected by the externality treatments).<sup>27</sup> As shown in Table H10, we find no effect of any externality treatment on either these outcomes. Similarly, as we show in Figure 8, no externality treatment increases the likelihood of mentioning fairness-related topics in the open-ended answer.

This challenges the notion that experimenter demand is the main driver of the redistributive preference effects we observe. For the experimenter demand hypothesis to remain true, participants would need to selectively anticipate that the researchers would prefer them to answer in a certain way to questions on (i) inequality externalities, and (ii) redistributive preferences, but *not* questions on (iii) fairness views. This seems unlikely. Similarly, any priming would need to be very specifically targeted towards (i) and (ii), but not (iii).

**Equal bias across externality treatments** We find no significant treatment effects in the share of respondents who find the video left-wing biased (Table J32). Coefficients are also nearly identical across treatments. This stands in contrast to what one would expect under a strong experimenter demand hypothesis, particularly as such a hypothesis would also need to explain the difference in treatment effects on redistributive preferences across externality treatments.

Overall, our results strongly suggest that experimenter demand and priming are not significant drivers of the results discussed in the main body. Despite concerns over the politically charged nature of the topic and the strength of our treatment, several design features – such as the dual control group and secondary survey – mitigate potential bias. Empirical analysis indicate that these design choices were successful; an analysis of open-ended responses reveal no evidence of experimenter demand, the lack of significant treatment effects on fairness-related outcomes would be puzzling if experimenter demand played a large role, and we find no treatment effects for perceived survey bias. Taken together, these findings provide strong evidence that experimenter demand and priming are unlikely to be significant confounding factors in the analysis.

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<sup>27</sup>See Appendix L for the full survey flow.

## E.5 Mediation analysis

This section describes the mediation analysis results in Table J10. This table includes post-treatment first stage outcomes in the regression of redistributive preferences on treatment variables. Compared to the treatment effect of a regression without post-treatment beliefs, the coefficients of the treatment dummies decrease when the post-treatment first stage outcomes are included. For each treatment effect this effect is driven by the post-treatment belief in question (e.g. externality belief for the externality treatments). This provides evidence that our reduced-form effect is mediated through a shift in beliefs, as intended.

## E.6 Robustness of treatment effects

**Not controlling for observable characteristics** We replicate our main regressions without controlling for any observable characteristics. As shown in Tables H12 and J27 reduced form and first-stage treatment point-estimates are nearly identical to our main specification in magnitude and significance. This is expected given our randomized treatment design.

**Keeping all respondents** As prespecified, we dropped the 5% fastest and slowest respondents, as well as those that spent less time watching the video than the length of the video. Additionally, we dropped respondents with unusual or strange responses to open text questions. We replicate our main regressions keeping these respondents. As shown in Tables J17 and J18, we do not find any meaningful differences compared to the analyses using our main sample.

**Failing any attention check** We also replicate our main regressions while excluding all respondents that failed *at least* one attention check. While the first-stage effects and the horserace regressions remain very similar to our main specification (Table J21 and J22 respectively), the effect of the full externality treatment on RP index becomes marginally insignificant at the 5% level (see Table J19). Given that controlling for passing or failing an attention check does not result in any differences, as shown in Table J20, this is likely due to the lack of power that results from dropping one-third of our sample.

**Specifying only one control group** As detailed in Appendix E.1, we merge our two control groups because they are sufficiently similar based on pre-specified criteria. As a robustness check, we present regressions for first-stage and treatment effects where we drop either the active or the passive control group in Tables J23, J24, J25, and J26.

The treatment effects are slightly stronger when only considering the passive control group as the baseline compared to when only specifying the active control group as the baseline, indicating that simply discussing inequality in the active control may have caused some shift in redistributive preferences.

The treatment effect of the full externality treatment on the main RP Index is marginally insignificant at the 5% when comparing to only the active control. This is due to lower statistical power from the resulting smaller control group; when duplicating the observations in the active control group and excluding the passive control group, the full externality treatment effect is significant at the 5% level.

**Different sets of controls** We pre-specified a vector of control variables to evaluate the treatment effects. The results do not change significantly when we change this vector to any other reasonable permutation (as expected from our randomized experiment design). Notably, our results do not change if we include prior externality beliefs in the set of controls (Table H15). Due to the large number of such permutations we do not explicitly show these results.

**Using non-dichotomized outcome variables** In our main specifications, we dichotomize our outcomes and explanatory variables when applicable. In Table J28 we replicate our main

regressions without dichotomizing any outcomes or control variables and, furthermore, we recompute the RP index based on non-dichotomized beliefs. As shown in the table, the results are nearly identical to those presented previously.

**Multiple hypothesis testing** In the main regression tables (Table 2) we run a total of twenty tests for statistical significance. On this scale, Type I errors can become a serious problem and lead to erroneous inference of statistical significance. To correct for this we use the false discovery rate (FDR) sharpened q-values as described in [Anderson \(2008\)](#). FDR sharpened q-values are classical p-values that are corrected for the expected number of significant treatment effects that are truly null effects. Where a p-value threshold of 0.05 gives a false positive rate of 5% among all treatment effects that are truly null, a q-value threshold of 0.05 gives a false *discovery* rate of 5% among all *significant* treatment effects. This correction has no significant effect on our conclusions. None of the treatment effects with  $p < 0.05$  in our original specifications have q-values above 0.05, indicating that this is a negligible concern. The results of this correction are shown in Table [J30](#).

**Population weights** Even though we targeted representativity along several observable dimensions, we slightly over- or under-sample populations with some characteristics as described in Appendix B.3. To establish representativity ex-post, we replicate our key analyses by reweighting along gender, race, age-groups, party, holding a college degree, income group, and geographic region. Using population weights, Table [J12](#) shows the main redistributive preferences regression; Table [J11](#) the main first-stage beliefs regressions; and Table [J16](#) the horse-race regressions. Reweighting has only small effects on the magnitude of treatment effects, although as standard errors increase under the reweighting procedure, certain significant treatment effects in the original weighting are no longer 5% significant in the reweighted data.

## E.7 Fairness video

The fairness video is described in Appendix D.3.

As shown in Figure I2 and Table H10, the treatment has strong first-stage effects on broad economic fairness views. These first-stage effects are evenly distributed among party affiliations and incomes (not shown). The treatment also has a significant first-stage effect on general externality beliefs, however, which indicates at least mild spillovers – and that learning about income distribution dynamics could also affect individuals’ externality beliefs.

As shown in Table H17, the treatment has highly significant effects on redistributive preferences across all four redistribution outcomes, as well as the main index itself. This is in itself a meaningful result, as changing survey respondents’ redistributive preferences is often challenging (Kuziemko et al., 2015). The treatment effect is sizable at approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the difference between Republican-leaning and Democratic-leaning respondents.

We note that one of our outcomes – inequality being a serious issue – was also asked in Stantcheva (2021). The treatment effects of the videos in that work (2% - 9%) are similar to those we find (2% - 12%). The main redistribution treatment effect in Stantcheva (2021) is 9%, which is similar to the treatment effect in our fairness treatment (12%).

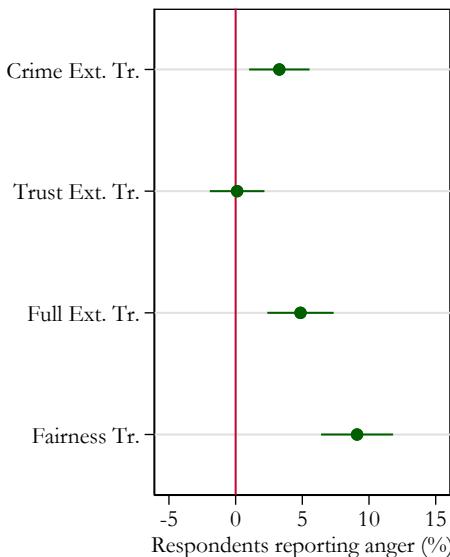
## E.8 Emotional reactions

We also explore the psychological channel through which inequality externality and fairness arguments operate. We do this through the video treatments.

Respondents who saw a video treatment were asked to self-report one or more of seven reactions to the video at the end of Survey 1. Respondents who were shown the fairness video were significantly more likely to report their reaction as *anger* than those who saw any other video. While the absolute percentage of such respondents is relatively small (11.7%), the share is nearly twice as large as that of any other video (7.8% for the full externality video, 6.1% for the crime video, 2.9% for the trust video, and 2.8% for the active control – see Figure E1). The difference between the fairness video and any other video is statistically significant on the 1% level.

This asymmetry is not carried over for other emotions. The equivalent differences between the fairness and externality videos for *concern*, *surprise*, *indifference* or *confusion* are generally not statistically significant (see Table J9). This leads us to hypothesize that part of the difference in efficacy between the videos, and thus potentially some of the differences in the types of arguments discussed above, come from the extent to which they invoke anger in respondents.

Figure E1: Treatment Effects on Anger



**Note.** Error bars depict 95% confident intervals. Reference is control group. The full distribution of emotional reactions by treatment is found in Table J9.  $N=4,371$ .

## F Further Data and Analysis: Inequality Externality Beliefs And Other Determinants of Redistributive Support (Supplement to Section 5)

### F.1 Ranking motives behind preferences for redistribution

This section discusses Figure 9, which provides direct evidence of respondent's redistributive motives under the assumption that they are able to discern and report these motives.

The motive that attains the highest average support is income maximization. This is closely followed by a diminished marginal utility (DMU) argument that a dollar is worth more to the rich than to the poor. Negative externalities ("Inequality changes society for the worse (more inequality → a worse society through various ways)") are the third most important motive, attaining an average of 16.9 points. An inequality-based fairness motive ("High inequality is unfair") actually ranks behind the inequality externality motive with 14.9 points ( $p = 0.001$ , t-test). A general aversion against taxation, positive externality concerns, and efficiency concerns attain only weak average support from our sample. This last point on efficiency concerns is consistent with the findings in Table 3 and in Stantcheva (2021), among others; efficiency concerns do not seem to be strong determinants of U.S. citizens' redistributive preferences.

What does this tell us about the relative importance of externality concerns and fairness views? First, we note that inequality externality concerns rank as one of the most important motives within our sample. This cannot be explained by experimenter demand given that this is essentially the first question about inequality externalities that respondents are faced with in the survey.<sup>28</sup> Second, negative externality concerns are similar in magnitude as broad but explicit inequality-based fairness views. When comparing a combining positive and negative externality grouping with a combined "broad" unfairness classification including both DMU and the inequality-based fairness motive, general externality concerns are about three-quarters (74%) as important as fairness motives as a determinant of redistributive support - thus echoing the results from the two other methods described in Section 5.1. If including "Taxation is theft" as a fairness motive, the equivalent number is 60%.

One may argue that respondents' main redistributive motive is the most relevant factor for their overall preferences. Figure I3 in the Appendix shows the share of subjects that weakly rank a given motive first for the same question; the distribution strongly resembles that in Figure 9.

We also explore whether respondents understand the question. To do so we create seven versions of Figure 9 which only include the sub-populations of subjects that rank a given motive first. This is presented in Figure I4. This decomposition shows both that subjects have consistent views – the positive externality answer is at the bottom for the negative externality group, for example – and that respondents can be described as having one primary motive and other secondary motives. Results across Survey 1 and Survey 2 remain very similar; we show the data restricted to Survey 2 respondents in Figure G18.

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<sup>28</sup>In Survey 1 (for which only the control group is included), respondents have been shown one pre-treatment externality question ("Do more equal countries function worse?"). It is the first time the concept is mentioned in Survey 2 (about 2/3 of the respondents in Figure 9). Results are very similar across samples, see Figure G18 for only Survey 2 data.

## F.2 The predictive power of externality beliefs

In the second method we explore the predictive power of each type of belief on redistributive preferences. We run descriptive pre-specified regressions that include either fairness views, externality beliefs, political preferences, or “economist determinants” – respondents’ trust in government and belief that higher taxes lead to efficiency losses – as regressors. We then compare the explanatory power of these models using the adjusted  $R^2$ .

Table 3 displays the results of these regressions. Column (1) characterizes a regression that only includes demographic controls; Column (2) includes our two main fairness variables, the belief that society is unfair because some get much more than they are entitled to and some get too little, and the belief that one gets rich due to luck rather than hard work; Column (3) includes our two main externality variables, the belief that unequal countries generally function worse, and the belief that inequality generally affects society in a negative way; Column (4) includes the strict political variables of whether the respondent leans Republican and whether the respondent supports Kamala Harris and Bernie Sanders (rather than Mitt Romney or Donald Trump); Column (5) includes two variables economists often consider as potential determinants for redistributive preferences, namely whether the respondent generally trusts the government to do the right thing and whether the respondent agrees that higher taxes make people work much less; Column (6) displays the results of a regression that includes all variables from regressions (1) through (5). Note that all regressions only include observations from the baseline control group.

Fairness variables have the most predictive power in this specification; demographic controls and two fairness survey questions explain 38% of the variance in respondents’ redistributive preferences. This is followed by the externality beliefs and political views, which are equally predictive at  $\sim 30\%$ . The “economist” regression has a relatively low predictive power of 15%, only slightly above the only-controls regression (10%). These results are similar in both Survey 1 and Survey 2 – see Table H18 for the latter.

We can also explore whether externality views provide any *additional* predictive power to a fairness-based model of preferences for redistribution. Model (5) indicates that it may; when including all variables into a single regression, all fairness- and externality-variables remain strong predictors of redistributive preferences with somewhat lower point estimates. This indicates that while these views are to some extent correlated to each other, each still captures independent correlation with redistributive preferences. Similar results hold when exploring three-variable versions of the fairness and externality modules. We note that the externality questions perform much better in this exercise than the “economist” determinants; the individual’s opinion on whether taxation reduces work effort is no longer significant in the combined regression, for example.

This method allows us to make two separate conclusions. First, the predictive power of inequality externality beliefs on redistributive preferences is strong; the total predictive power is only somewhat less than that of fairness views, and roughly the same as that of political affiliation.

Second, externality beliefs capture information on redistributive preferences that is not included in individuals’ fairness views. Fairness views are often used as a proxy for redistributive

preferences in academic work; if inequality externality beliefs capture independent and causal variation in individuals' redistributive preferences, future work focused on redistributive preferences may do well to measure these beliefs directly.

**Gelbach decomposition: Motives behind partisan redistributive split** One might also ask how much of the partisan split in redistributive beliefs is explained by variation in externality and fairness views respectively. To explore this question we employ a Gelbach decomposition ([Gelbach, 2016](#)). We use the decomposition to illustrate which portion of the partisan gap in the redistributive preference index goes through either the two main externality variables, the two main fairness variables, governmental trust, or efficiency concerns with the same variables as in Table 3. In total, 54% of Republicans' lower support for redistribution can be explained by these variables or a list of standard controls. About half of this can be accounted for by fairness views (27% of the partisan gap). Then comes externality beliefs (12%), demographic controls (10%), and governmental trust (5%). Efficiency concerns are not a relevant factor (~0%).

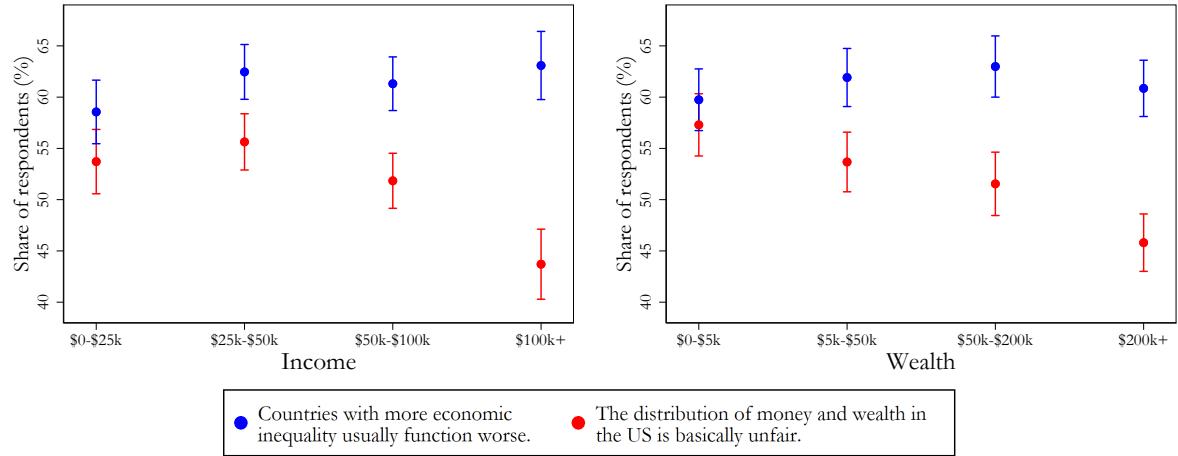
This analysis indicates that externality beliefs explain part of the partisan split in redistributive preferences, although a somewhat larger portion is driven by fairness views. This is consistent with the stronger partisan split across fairness views than externality beliefs shown in Figure F2. At the same time, it is also notable that externality beliefs explain more of the divide than trust in government and efficiency concerns.

### F.3 Consensus across groups

The results we discuss in Section 5.2.1 are extremely robust. We show the pattern for two example questions – using the pre-treatment externality and fairness questions in Survey 1 to maximize sample size – in Figures F1 (incomes and wealth) and F2 (political affiliation) for Survey 1. We also show the equivalent versions of Figures 10-11 for Survey 2 in Figures F3 and F5. We also note that these figures are shown without demographic controls; results are robust to adding them.

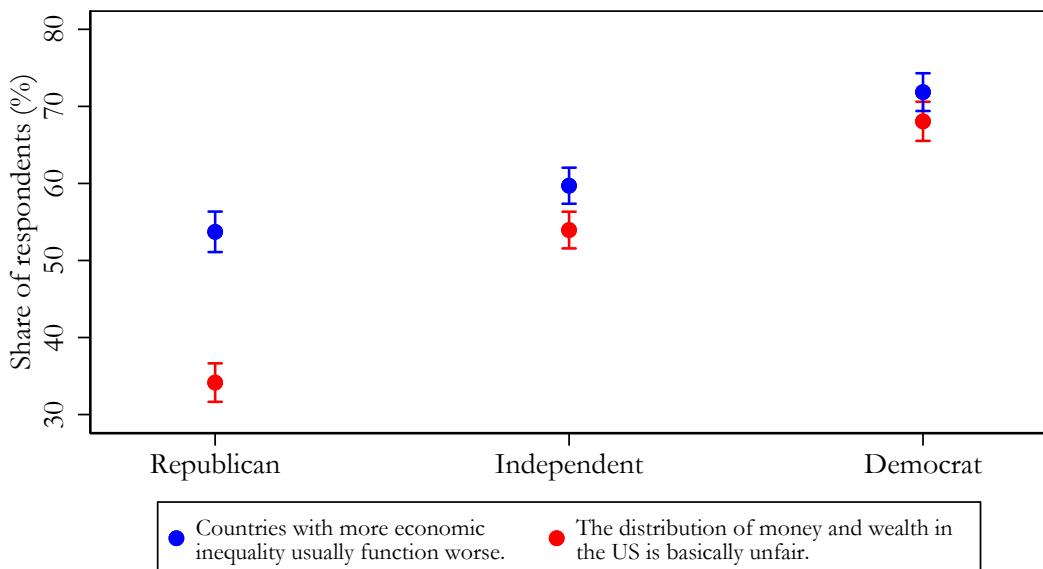
While these polarization results are very consistent, measurement error presents a potential caveat. Suppose there are systematic differences in the amount of measurement error in individuals' responses to these questions across question type. Individuals could be more familiar with fairness questions and thus answer these questions more accurately based on their genuine beliefs, for example. This could explain the low polarization of externality questions; in the extreme case where there is no signal in respondents' answers, one would expect no aggregate differences across groups. We find some evidence of larger measurement error in externality questions, as respondents' answers are less strongly correlated across externality questions than fairness questions. However, we also find that the vast majority of respondents confirm their externality beliefs when asked in a follow-up open-ended text question in Survey 2. The relatively small party and income differences for externality views persist across these open-ended text answers.

Figure F1: An Example of Externality Beliefs and Fairness Views over Income and Wealth (Survey 1)



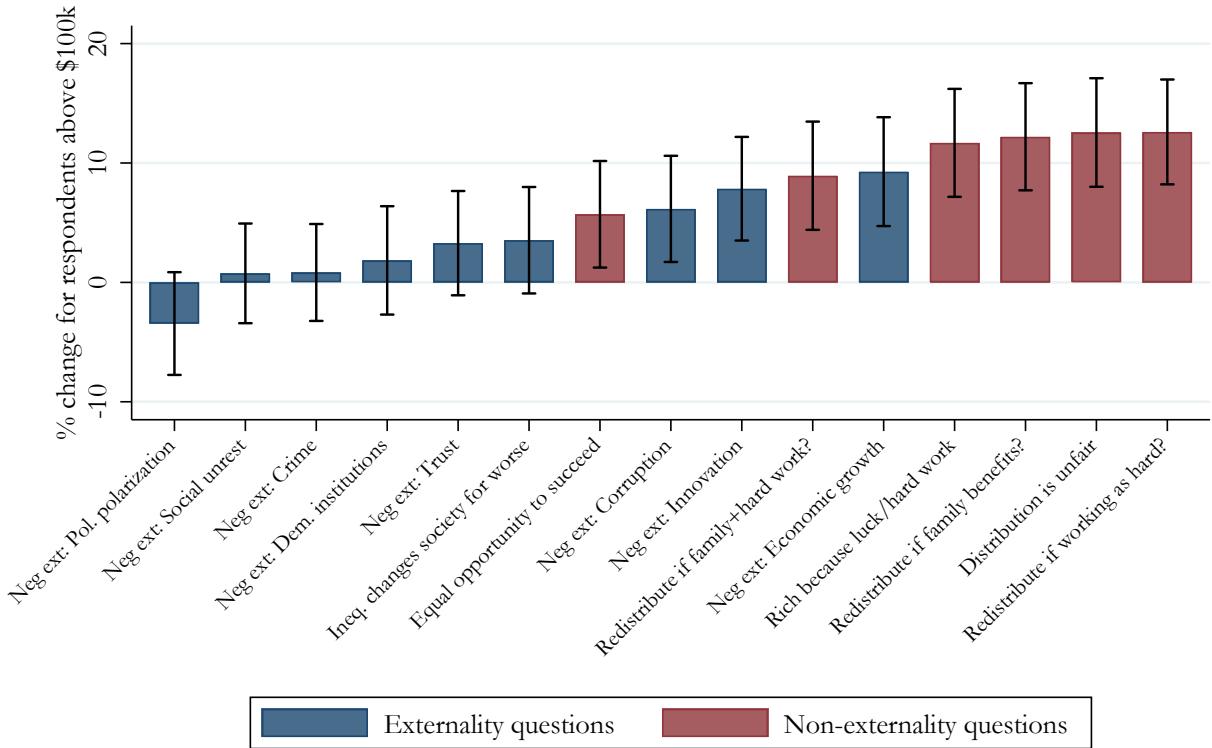
**Note.** These graphs use the pre-treatment externality and fairness questions with the full Survey 1 sample ( $N=4,371$ ). Respondents are asked whether they agree with the following statements: “*The distribution of money and wealth in the US is basically fair, because everybody has an equal opportunity to succeed.*” and “*Countries with more economic inequality usually function worse.*”.

Figure F2: An Example of Externality Beliefs and Fairness Views over Party Affiliation (Survey 1)



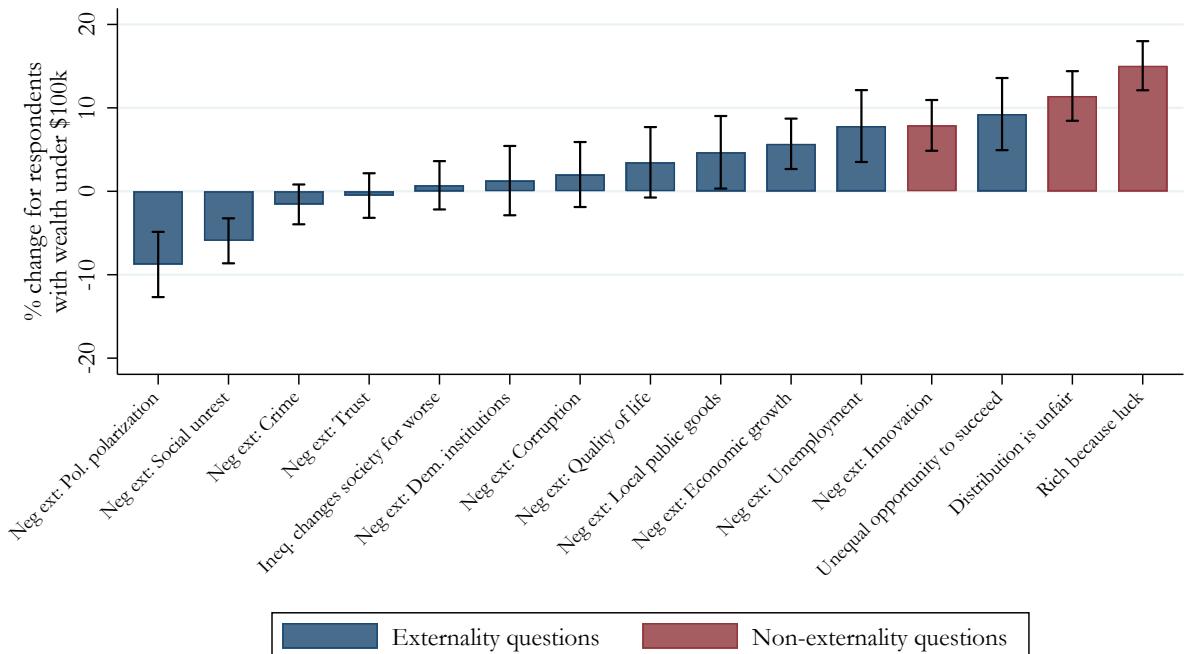
**Note.** This graph uses the pre-treatment externality and fairness questions with the full Survey 1 sample ( $N=4,371$ ). Respondents are asked to agree or disagree with the following two statements: “*The distribution of money and wealth in the US is basically fair, because everybody has an equal opportunity to succeed*” and “*Countries with more economic inequality usually function worse*”.

Figure F3: Income polarization across questions (Survey 2)



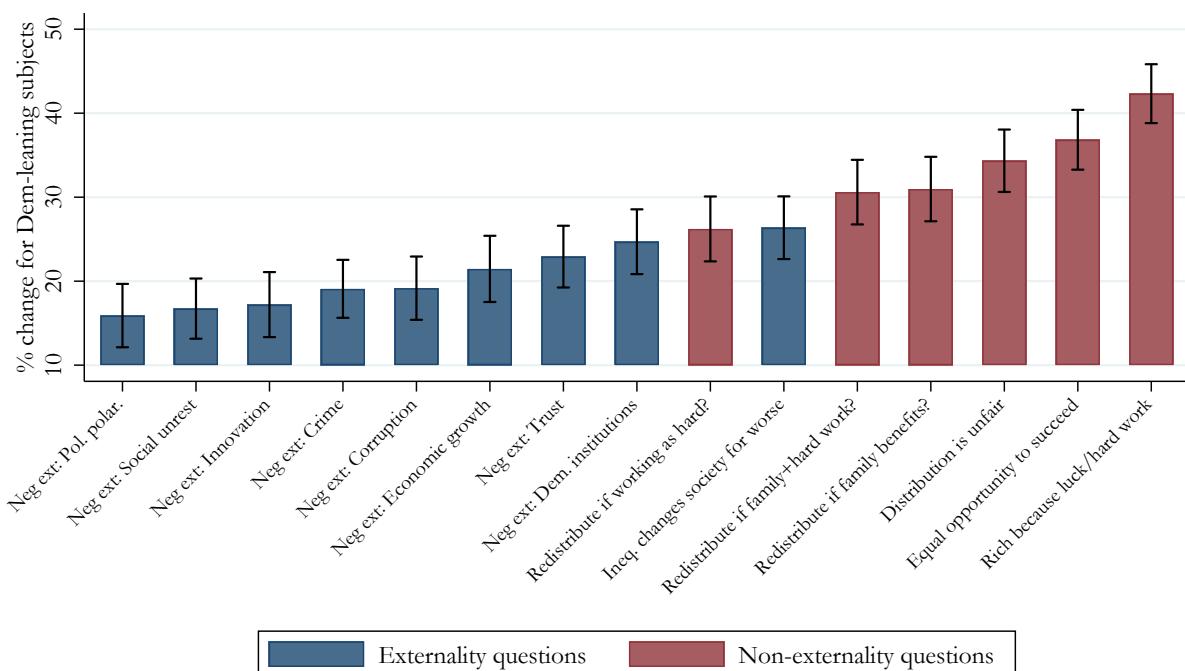
**Note.** Drop in anti-inequality sentiment for respondents with incomes above \$100,000 across every externality and fairness question in Survey 2 without any controls. With a standard set of controls there is more variation, although the average slope of the fairness questions stay significantly lower than that of the externality questions. Questions are largely split on pre-specified criteria or natural binary points (e.g. agree/disagree), keeping total shares close to 50% where possible.  $N=2,360$ .

Figure F4: Wealth polarization across questions (Survey 1)



**Note.** Drop in anti-inequality sentiment for respondents with wealth above \$100,000 across every externality and fairness question in Survey 1 without any controls. Questions are largely split on pre-specified criteria or natural binary points (e.g. agree/disagree), keeping total shares close to 50% where possible.  $N=932$ .

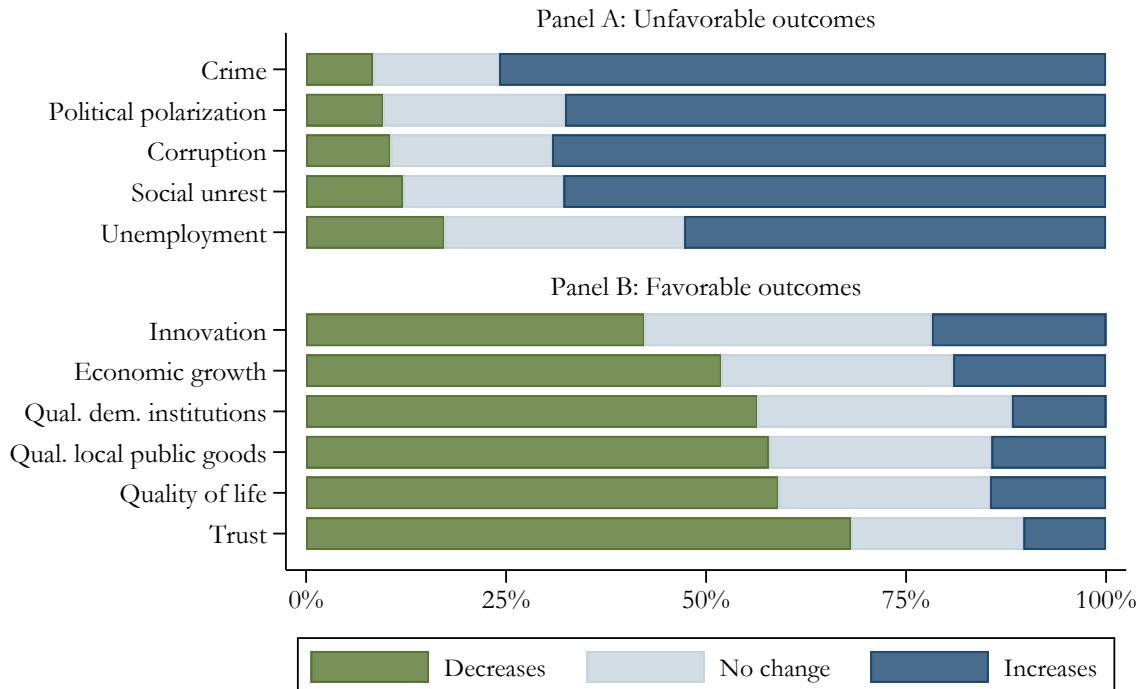
Figure F5: Party affiliation polarization across questions (Survey 2)



**Note.** Drop in anti-inequality sentiment for Republican-leaning respondents across every externality and fairness question in Survey 2 without any controls. With a standard set of controls the same relation holds (all fairness questions have larger polarization than any externality question). Questions are largely split on pre-specified criteria or natural binary points (e.g. agree/disagree), keeping total shares close to 50% where possible.  $N=2,360$ .

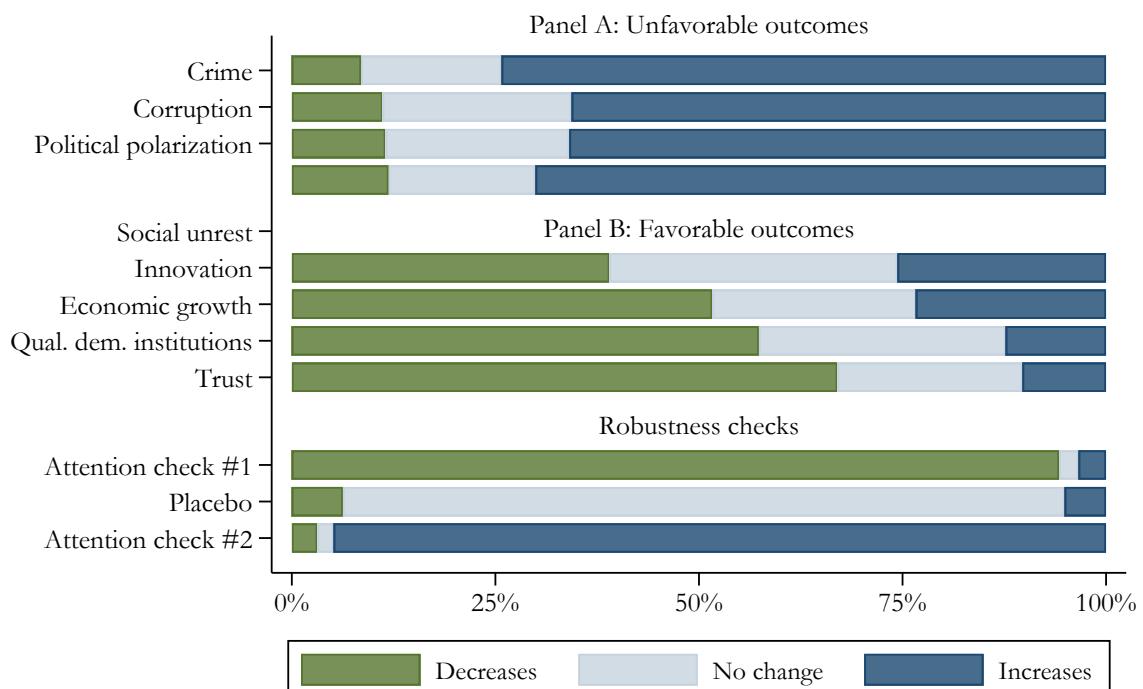
## G Appendix Figures

Figure G1: Distribution of Externality Beliefs in Survey 1 (supplement to Figure 4)



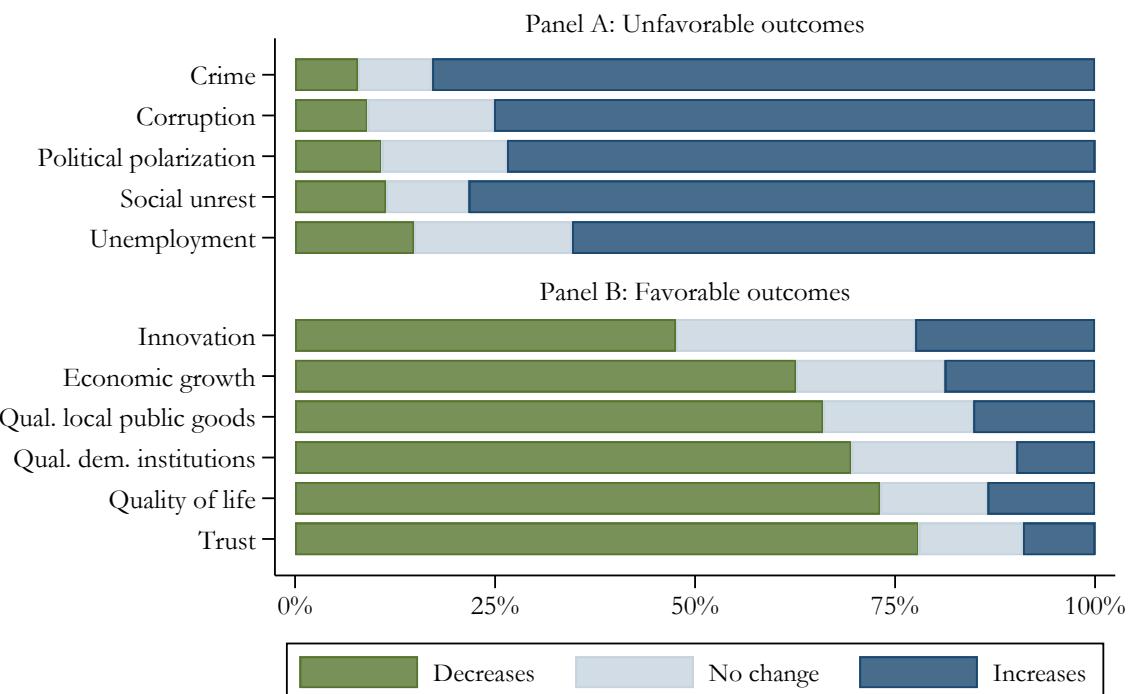
**Note.** Specific externality beliefs for control group in Survey 1. Questions are ordered according to which portion of respondents believe that inequality decreases the variable. Full question example: “How does more economic inequality change the amount of crime in a country?” Answer option example: “More inequality → a lot more crime”.  $N \in \{628, 3, 292\}$ . For the equivalent figure using pooled data or only data from Survey 2 respectively, see Figures 4 and G2.

Figure G2: Distribution of Externality Beliefs in Survey 2 (supplement to Figure 4)



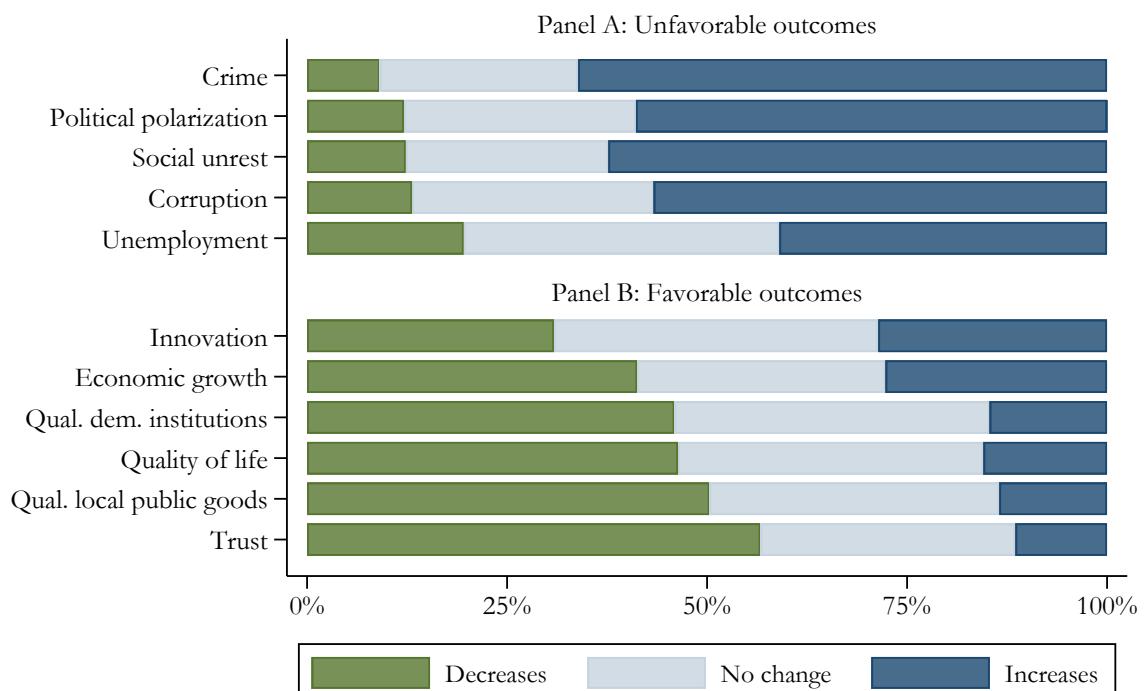
**Note.** Questions are ordered according to the net share of respondents who believe that inequality decreases the variable (except robustness checks). Full question example: “How does more economic inequality change the amount of crime in a country?” Answer option example: “More inequality → a lot more crime”. The placebo question asks respondents how they think more economic inequality would change the amount of daylight hours in a country. The two attention check questions ask the respondents explicitly to answer either “Decreases a lot” (Attention check #1) or “Increases a lot” (Attention check #2). The high share of respondents who correctly answer these questions is partly mechanical, as individuals who incorrectly answered at least two attention checks were removed from the sample.  $N=2,360$ . Order was fully randomized. For 20% of respondents, any mention of “more inequality” was substituted with “larger differences in income and wealth” throughout the survey. For 20% of respondents, any mention of “more inequality” was substituted with “more equality” throughout the survey. A respondent answering “decreases” to an equality-based question is coded as “increases” in the graph and vice versa. For the equivalent figures using pooled data or only data from Survey 1, see Figures 4 and G1 respectively.

Figure G3: Externality Beliefs for Democratic-leaning Respondents (supplement to Figure 4)



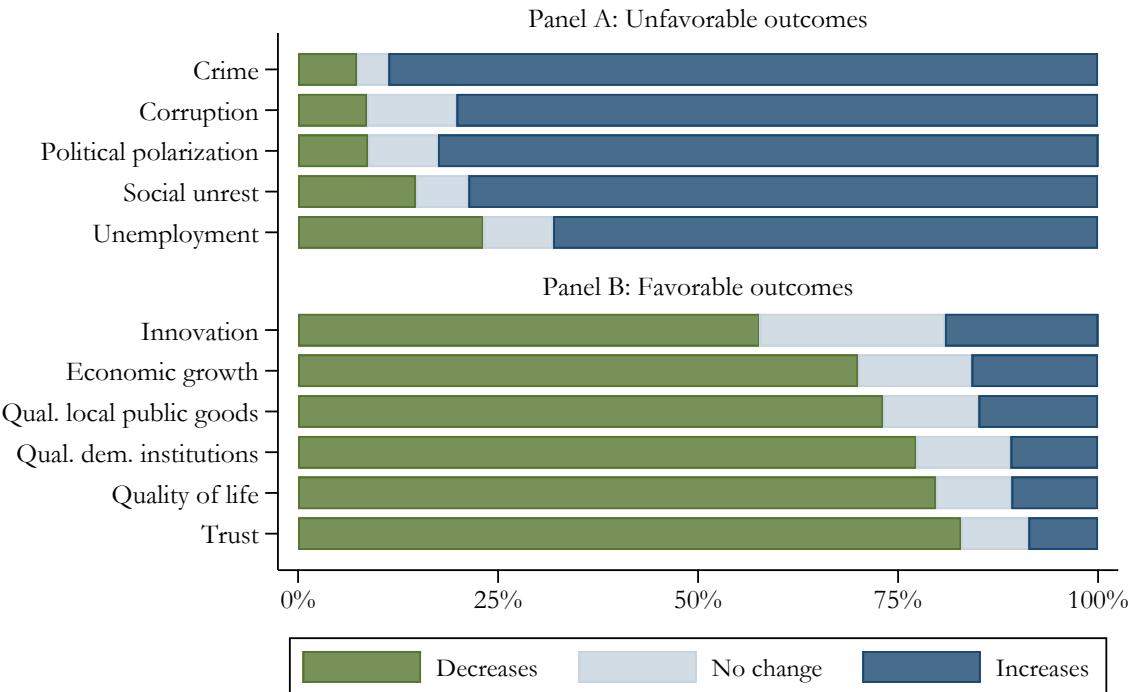
**Note.** Methodology as in Figure 4. Sample restricted to individuals who identify as Democrat or leaning Democrat. N=1,598.

Figure G4: Externality Beliefs for Republican-leaning Respondents (supplement to Figure 4)



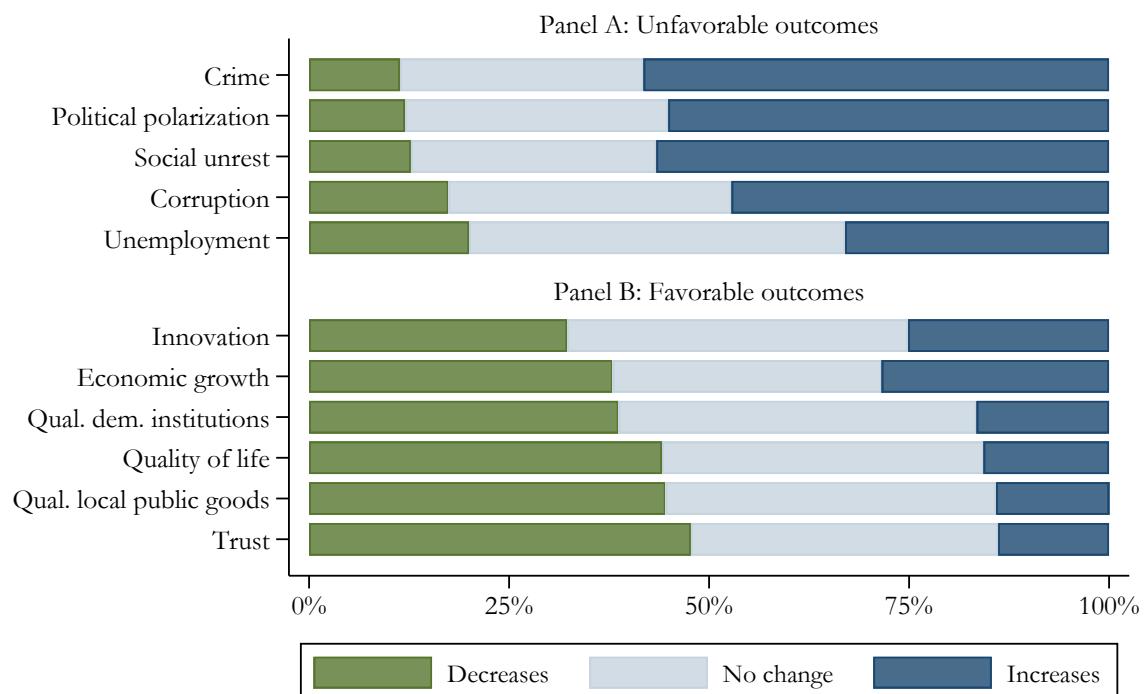
**Note.** Methodology as in Figure 4. Sample restricted to individuals who identify as Republican or leaning Republican. N=1,694.

Figure G5: Externality Beliefs for Very Liberal Respondents (supplement to Figure 4)



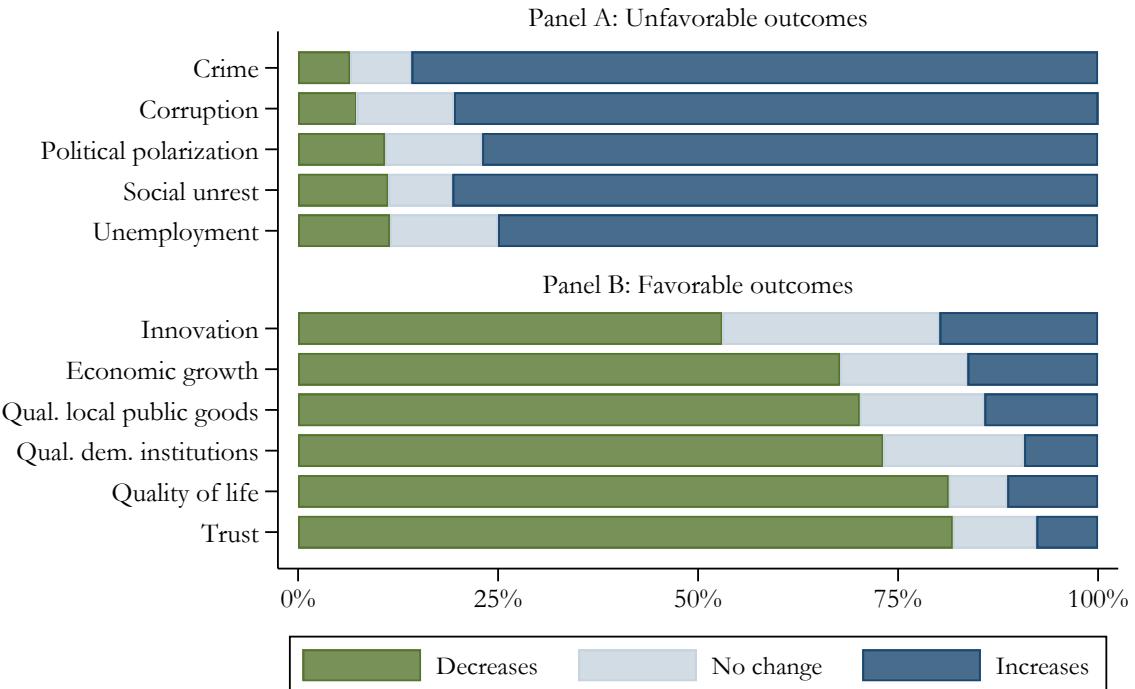
**Note.** Methodology as in Figure 4. Sample restricted to individuals who identify as very liberal.  $N = 380$ .

Figure G6: Externality Beliefs for Very Conservative Respondents (supplement to Figure 4)



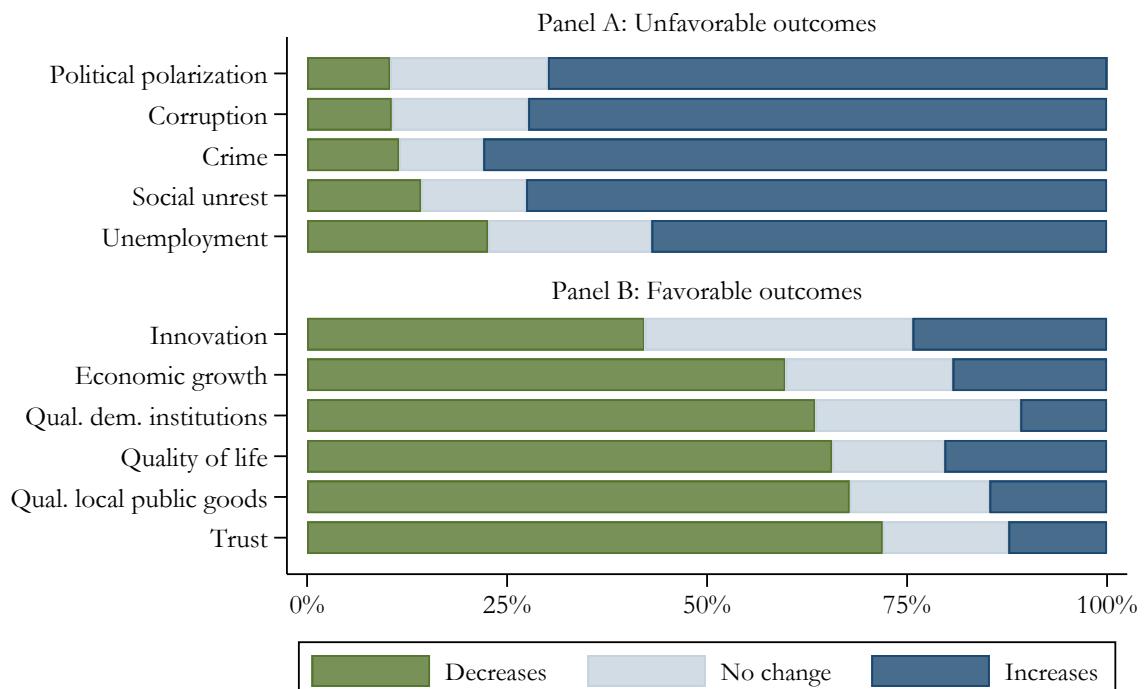
**Note.** Methodology as in Figure 4. Sample restricted to individuals who identify as very conservative.  $N = 440$ .

Figure G7: Externality Beliefs for Sanders supporters (supplement to Figure 4)



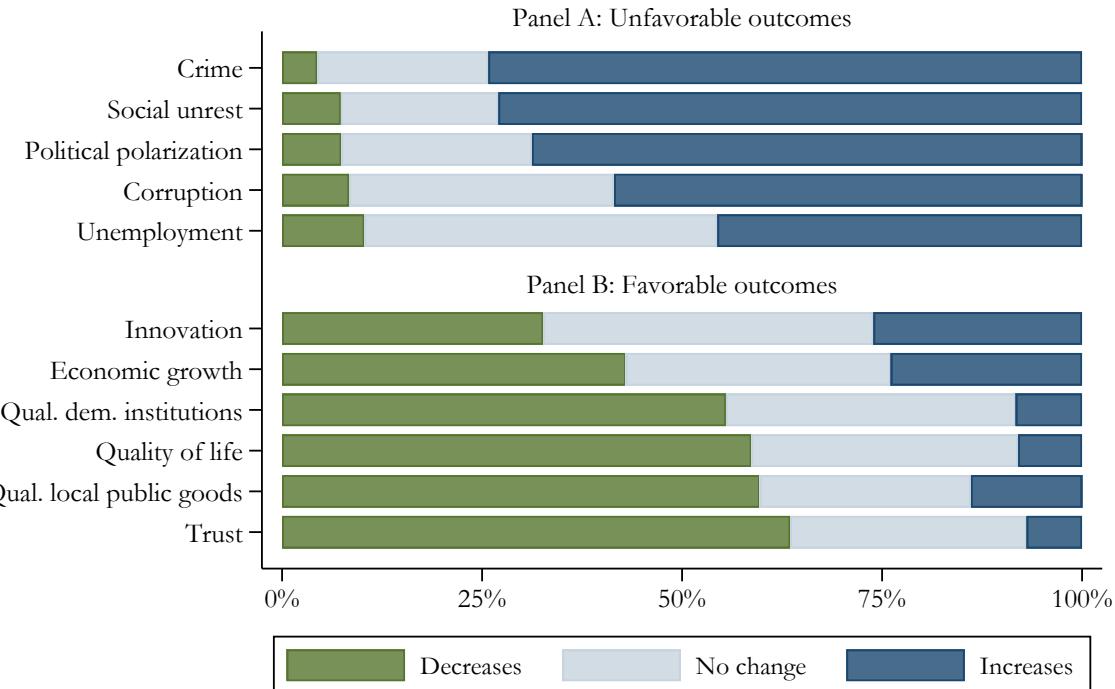
**Note.** Methodology as in Figure 4. Sample restricted to individuals who identify as closest to Bernie Sanders among four politicians (Donald Trump, Mitt Romney, Kamala Harris, and Bernie Sanders).  $N = 859$ .

Figure G8: Externality Beliefs for Harris supporters (supplement to Figure 4)



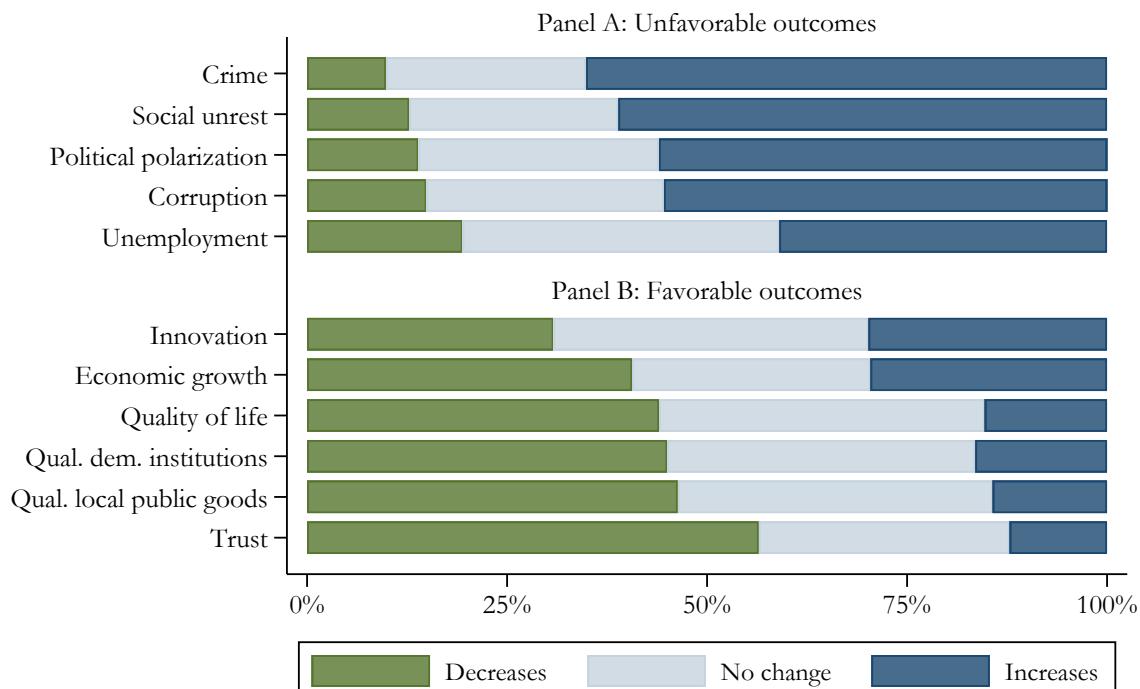
**Note.** Methodology as in Figure 4. Sample restricted to individuals who identify as closest to Kamala Harris among four politicians (Donald Trump, Mitt Romney, Kamala Harris, and Bernie Sanders).  $N = 617$ .

Figure G9: Externality Beliefs for Romney supporters (supplement to Figure 4)



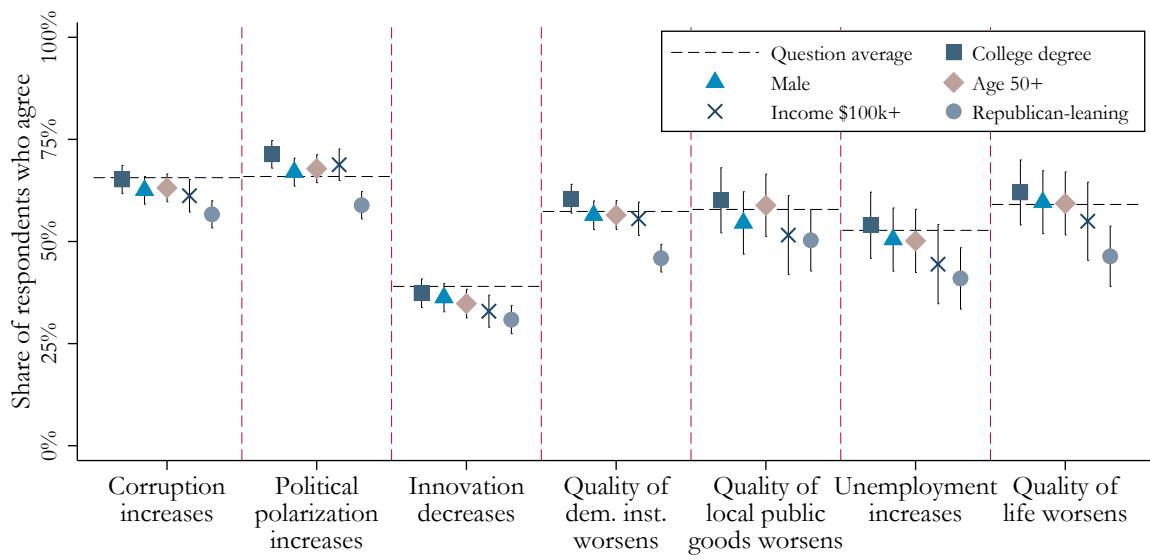
**Note.** Methodology as in Figure 4. Sample restricted to individuals who identify as closest to Mitt Romney among four politicians (Donald Trump, Mitt Romney, Kamala Harris, and Bernie Sanders).  $N=477$ .

Figure G10: Externality Beliefs for Trump supporters (supplement to Figure 4)



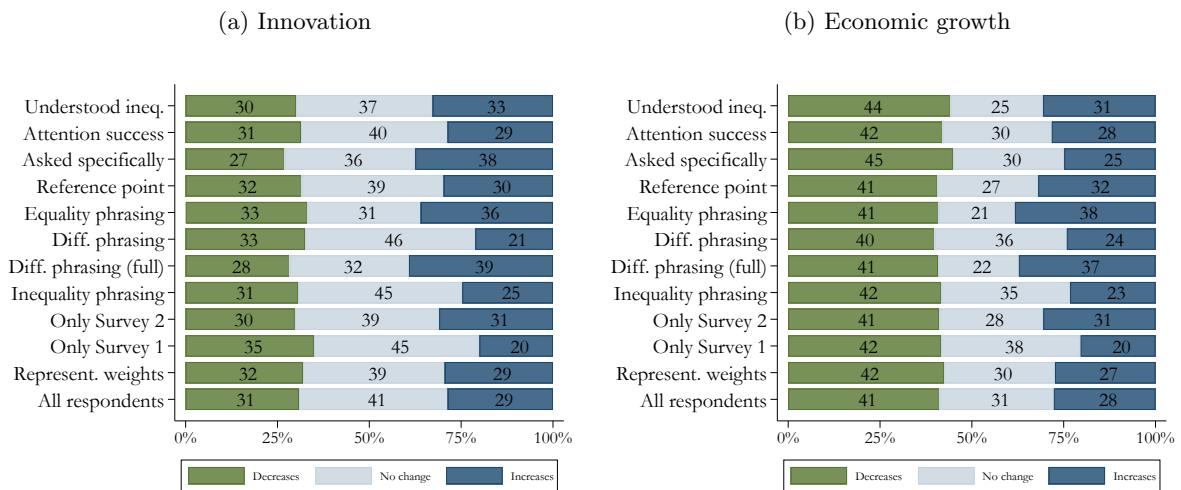
**Note.** Methodology as in Figure 4. Sample restricted to individuals who identify as closest to Donald Trump among four politicians (Donald Trump, Mitt Romney, Kamala Harris, and Bernie Sanders).  $N=1,339$ .

Figure G11: Heterogeneity in additional inequality externalities (Supplement to Figure 6)



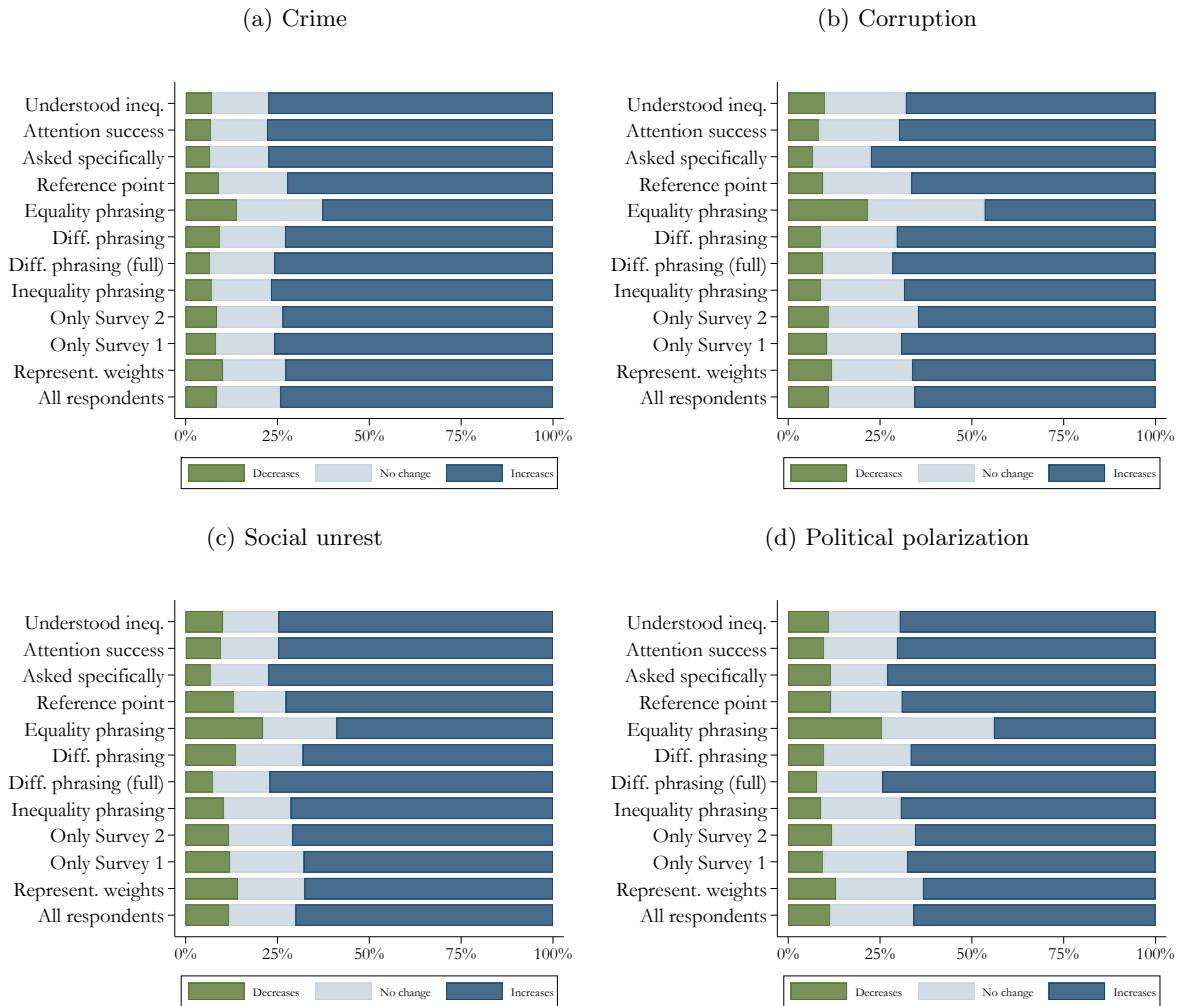
**Note.** Supplement to Figure 6. Questions are from Figures 4 and 11. Shares are averages per group (no controls) with 95% error bars. See Tables H4-H6 for correlations with controls. Results across these methods are similar. Sample size is smaller for the last three externalities, which were only asked in Survey 1.

Figure G12: Robustness: Innovation and economic growth for Republican-leaning respondents (supplement to Section 3.5)



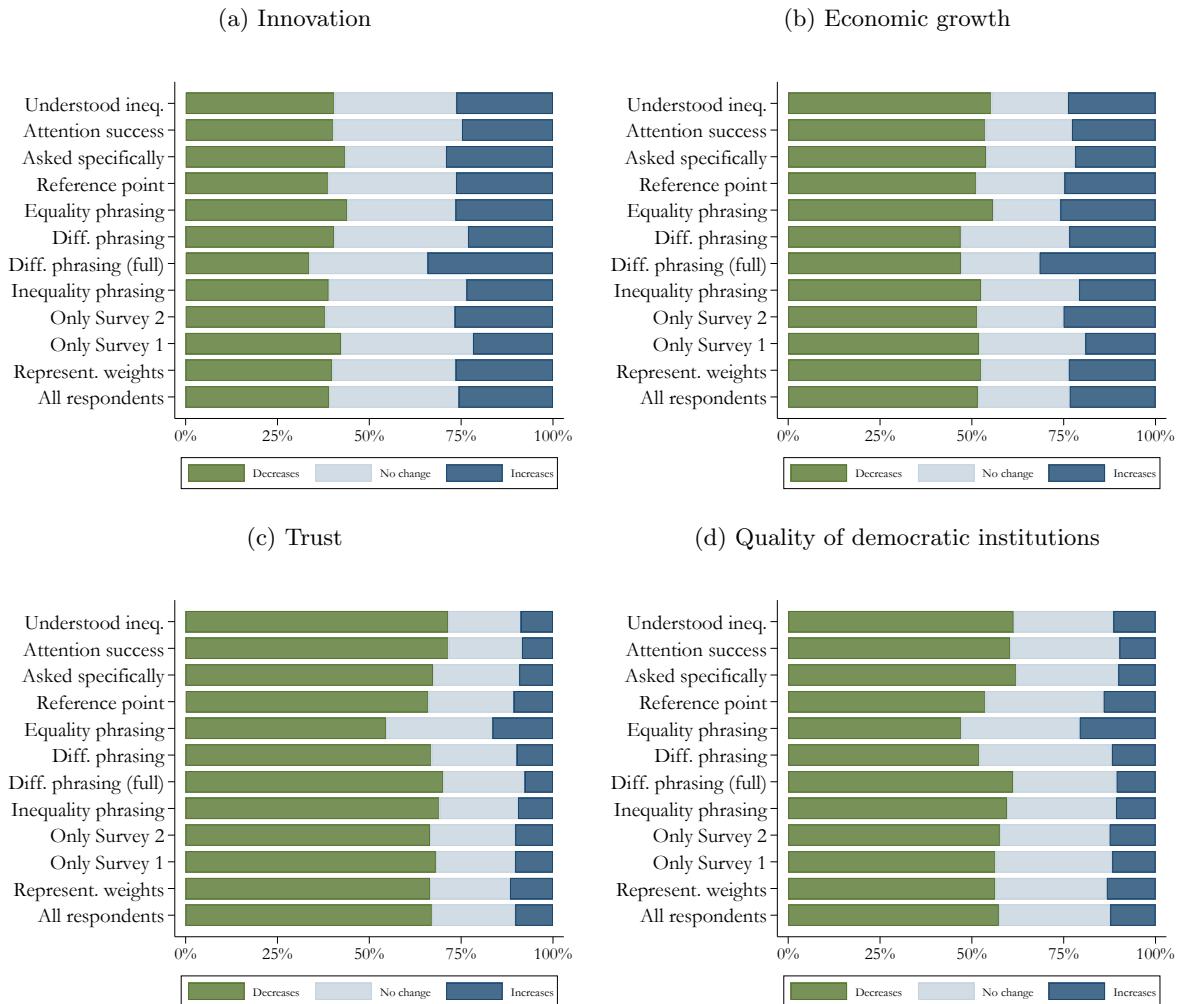
**Note.** Answers to *How does more economic inequality change the amount of [outcome] in a country?* for innovation and economic growth among Republican-leaning respondents across various specifications. The result that negative externality beliefs are more commonly held than positive externality beliefs among Republican-leaning respondents holds for economic growth in every robustness test. In the case of innovation, the same result does not hold for those who answer a question on understanding of distributional concerns correctly, those who are specifically asked to think through their answer and given time to do so (sample size  $N < 125$ ), the “equality” phrasing, and the “differences in income and wealth” phrasing. Note that “No change” is often the highest-scoring value for innovation. The different specifications are, from bottom to top, only including Republican-identified respondents; (i) All respondents and all phrasings in both surveys, (ii) All respondents weighted such that the full sample to have full representativity on age, gender, race, college attendance, income, region, and party affiliation, (iii) Only respondents from Survey 1, (iv) Only respondents from the Survey 2, (v) Only respondents who saw an “inequality” phrasing in either survey, (vi) Only respondents who saw a “differences in income and wealth” phrasing for the full survey (only in Survey 2), (vii) Only respondents who saw a “differences in income and wealth” phrasing for this question, but were generally asked about inequality otherwise (only in Survey 1), (viii) Only respondents who saw an “equality” phrasing for the full survey (only in Survey 2), (ix) Only respondents who were explicitly told the reference point of inequality and the magnitude of inequality change (only in Survey 2), (x) Only respondents who were explicitly asked to think through their answer and were given 15 seconds to do so, then asked to confirm their answer or change it, if they wished (only in Survey 2, and at the end of the survey) (xi) All respondents restricted to those who succeeded on every attention check, (xii) All respondents from Survey 2 who correctly answered a simple question on distributional concepts. Sample sizes in all cases are slightly less than one-third of those in Figure G13-G14. Treatment groups from Survey 1 are always excluded.

Figure G13: Robustness of externality beliefs I (supplement to Section 3.5)



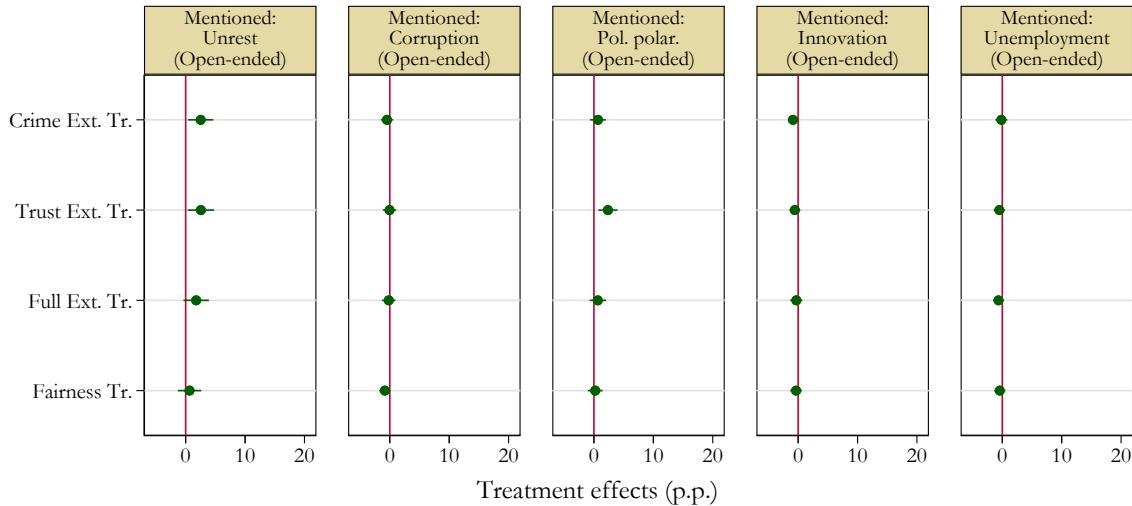
**Note.** Answers to *How does more economic inequality change the amount of [outcome] in a country?*, indicating inequality externality beliefs, across various specifications. The different specifications are, from bottom to top; (i) All respondents and all phrasings in both surveys,  $N \in \{2990, 3292\}$ , (ii) All respondents weighted for full representativity on age, gender, race, college attendance, income, region, and party affiliation,  $N \in \{2990, 3292\}$ , (iii) Only respondents from Survey 1  $N \in \{630, 932\}$ , (iv) Only respondents from the Survey 2  $N = 2,360$ , (v) Only respondents who saw an “inequality” phrasing in either survey,  $N \in \{2043, 2345\}$ , (vi) Only respondents who saw a “differences in income and wealth” phrasing for the full survey (only in Survey 2),  $N = 472$ , (vii) Only respondents who saw a “differences in income and wealth” phrasing for this question, but were generally asked about inequality otherwise (only in Survey 1),  $N \in \{219, 332\}$ , (viii) Only respondents who saw an “equality” phrasing for the full survey (only in Survey 2),  $N = 475$ , (ix) Only respondents who were explicitly told the reference point of inequality and the magnitude of inequality change (only in Survey 2),  $N = \{1748, 1777\}$ , (x) Only respondents who were explicitly asked to think through their answer and were given 15 seconds to do so, then asked to confirm their answer or change it, if they wished (only in Survey 2, and at the end of the survey),  $N \in \{292, 298\}$  (xi) All respondents restricted to those who succeeded on every attention check,  $N \in \{1677, 1873\}$ , (xii) All respondents from Survey 2 who correctly answered a simple question on distributional concepts  $N = 1571$ . Treatment groups from Survey 1 are always excluded.

Figure G14: Robustness of externality beliefs II (supplement to Section 3.5)



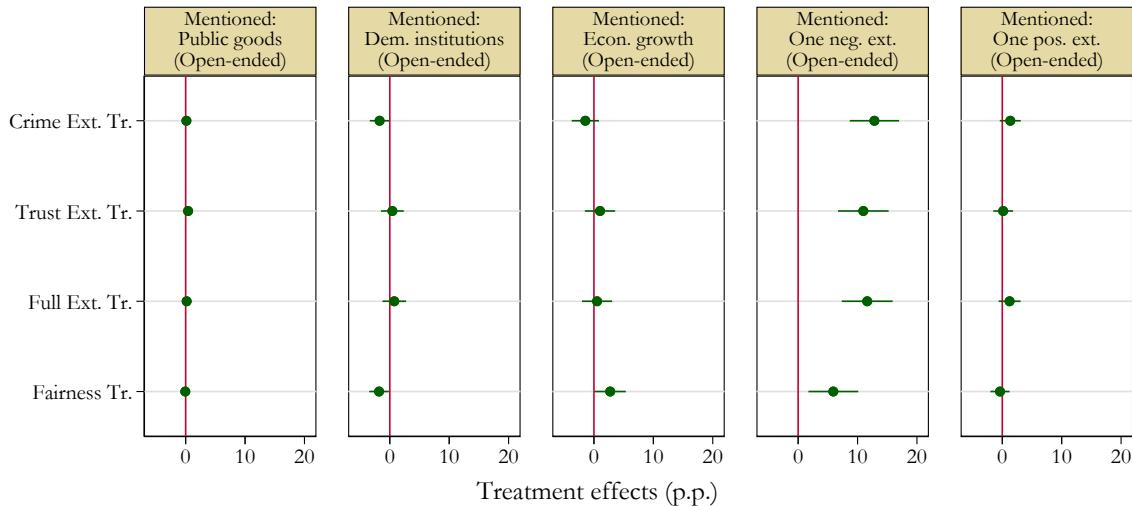
**Note.** Answers to *How does more economic inequality change the amount of [outcome] in a country?*, indicating inequality externality beliefs, across various specifications. The different specifications are, from bottom to top; (i) All respondents and all phrasings in both surveys,  $N \in \{2990, 3292\}$ , (ii) All respondents weighted for full representativity on age, gender, race, college attendance, income, region, and party affiliation,  $N \in \{2990, 3292\}$ , (iii) Only respondents from Survey 1  $N \in \{630, 932\}$ , (iv) Only respondents from the Survey 2  $N = 2,360$ , (v) Only respondents who saw an “inequality” phrasing in either survey,  $N \in \{2043, 2345\}$ , (vi) Only respondents who saw a “differences in income and wealth” phrasing for the full survey (only in Survey 2),  $N = 472$ , (vii) Only respondents who saw a “differences in income and wealth” phrasing for this question, but were generally asked about inequality otherwise (only in Survey 1),  $N \in \{219, 332\}$ , (viii) Only respondents who saw an “equality” phrasing for the full survey (only in Survey 2),  $N = 475$ , (ix) Only respondents who were explicitly told the reference point of inequality and the magnitude of inequality change (only in Survey 2),  $N = \{1748, 1777\}$ , (x) Only respondents who were explicitly asked to think through their answer and were given 15 seconds to do so, then asked to confirm their answer or change it, if they wished (only in Survey 2, and at the end of the survey),  $N \in \{292, 298\}$  (xi) All respondents restricted to those who succeeded on every attention check,  $N \in \{1677, 1873\}$ , (xii) All respondents from Survey 2 who correctly answered a simple question on distributional concepts  $N = 1571$ . Treatment groups from Survey 1 are always excluded.

Figure G15: First-stage Effects of Treatments II (NLP Analysis of Open-ended Question)



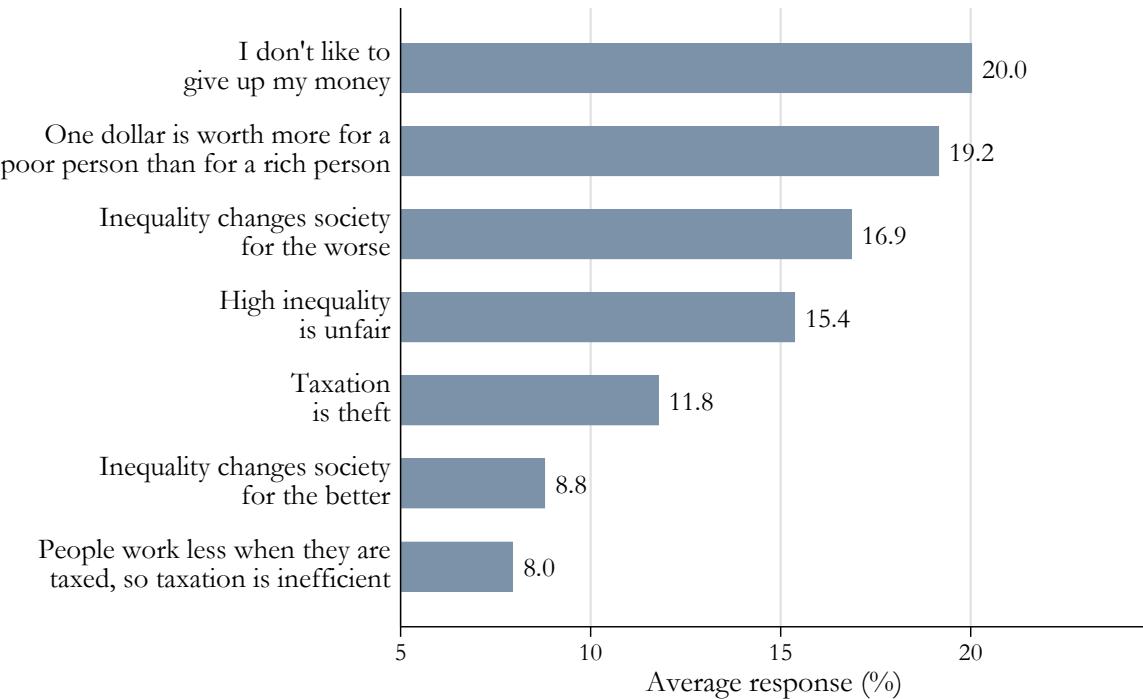
**Note.** This figure reports selected first-stage treatment effects for the inequality externality videos. Each column denote binary variables defined as one if the respondent mentions how inequality negatively influences society through the given variable when answering the open-ended question “How do you think economic inequality changes society?”, defined by GPT-4o Mini with prompts shown in Appendix D.4. The full survey question text is shown in Appendix K.3. Each treatment group is compared to the merged control group. Each treatment group is compared to the merged control group. Baseline values in the merged control group are 5% (unrest), 2% (corruption), 2% (political polarization), 1% (innovation), and 1% (unemployment). Table H8 presents point estimates and robust standard errors. Mentions of other externality beliefs are shown in Figures 8 and G16. Only mentions implying a negative inequality dimension are included. Controls include political leaning, gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, geographic region, trust in government, and pre-treatment views on economic fairness (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Error bars characterize 95% confidence intervals.

Figure G16: First-stage Effects of Treatments III (NLP Analysis of Open-ended Question)



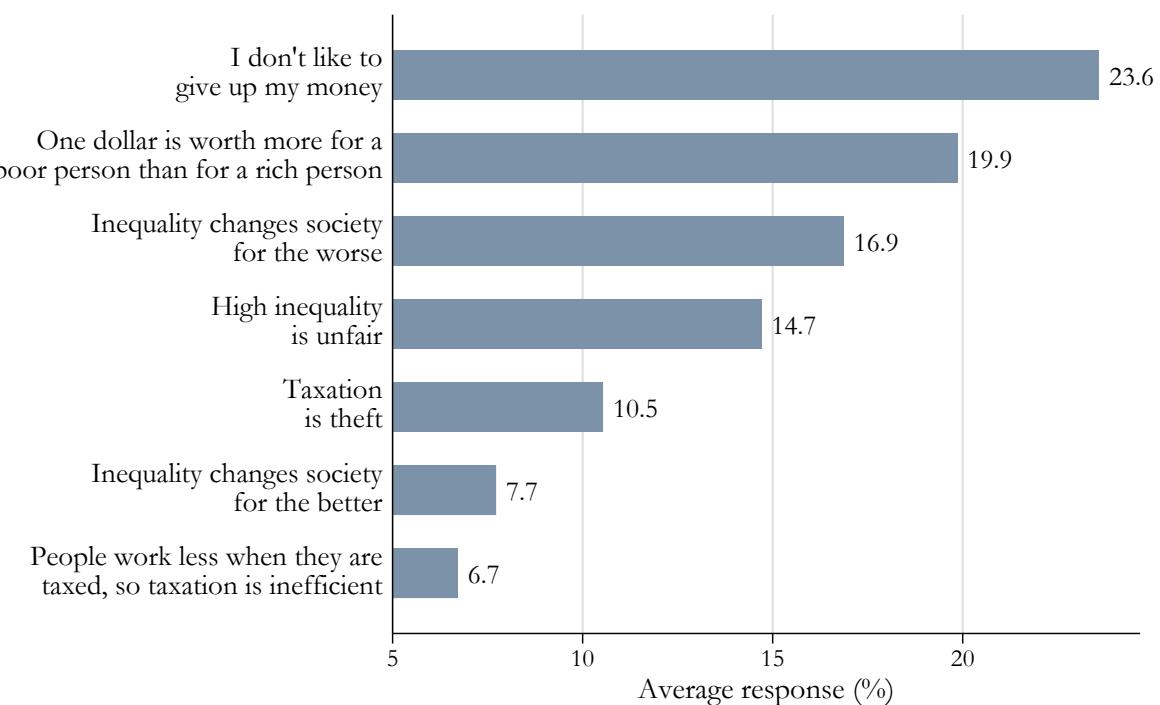
**Note.** This figure reports selected first-stage treatment effects for the inequality externality videos. Each column denote binary variables defined as one if the respondent mentions how inequality negatively influences society through the given variable when answering the open-ended question “How do you think economic inequality changes society?”, defined by GPT-4o Mini with prompts shown in Appendix D.4. The full survey question text is shown in Appendix K.3. Each treatment group is compared to the merged control group. Baseline values in the merged control group are 1% (quality of local public goods), 8% (growth), 4% (democratic institutions), 30% (mentioned one negative externality), and 3% (mentioned one positive externality). Table H8 presents point estimates and robust standard errors. Mentions of other externality beliefs are shown in Figures 8 and G15. Only mentions implying a negative inequality externality dimension are included. Controls include political leaning, gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, geographic region, trust in government, and pre-treatment views on economic fairness (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Error bars characterize 95% confidence intervals.

Figure G17: Mean share for each motive behind preferences for redistribution in Survey 1 (supplement to Figure 9)



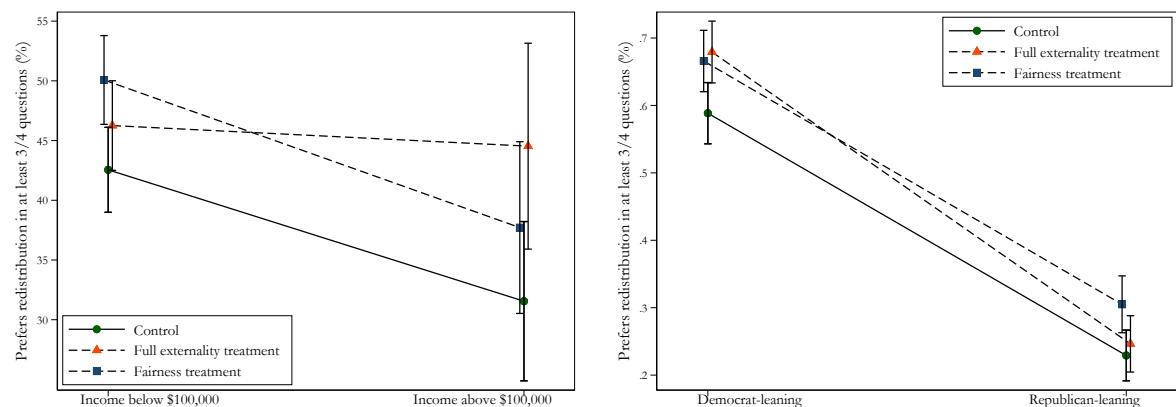
Question text: “*When thinking about your preferred level of redistribution, what matters most to you? Please indicate what dimensions matter by giving scores below that add up to 100.*” Answer option texts are identical to graph labels except for the positive and negative externality options, where the question labels also included “(more inequality → a better society through various ways)” and “(more inequality → a worse society through various ways)” respectively. Standard errors are approximately 0.5%. N=932.

Figure G18: Mean share for each motive behind preferences for redistribution in Survey 2 (supplement to Figure 9)



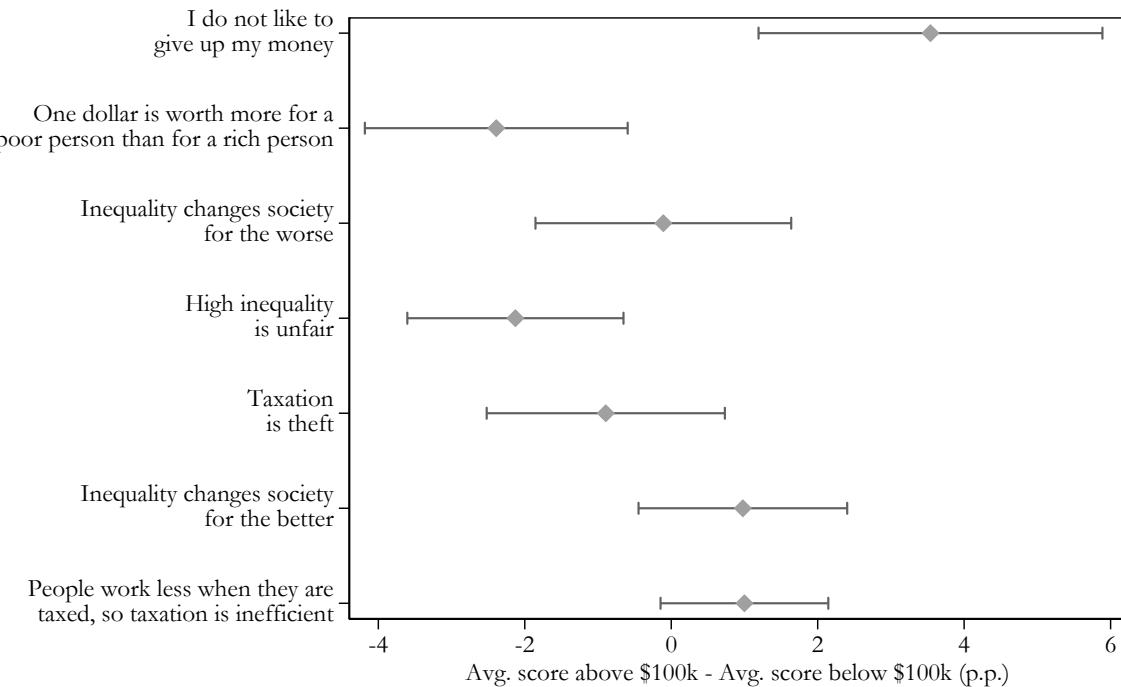
**Note.** Question text: “When thinking about your preferred level of redistribution, what matters most to you? Please indicate what dimensions matter by giving scores below that add up to 100.” Answer option texts are identical to graph labels except for the positive and negative externality options, where the question labels also included “(more inequality → a better society through various ways)” and “(more inequality → a worse society through various ways)” respectively. Standard errors are approximately 0.5%. N=2,360.

Figure G19: Heterogeneous treatment effects across incomes and political affiliation, 95% CIs



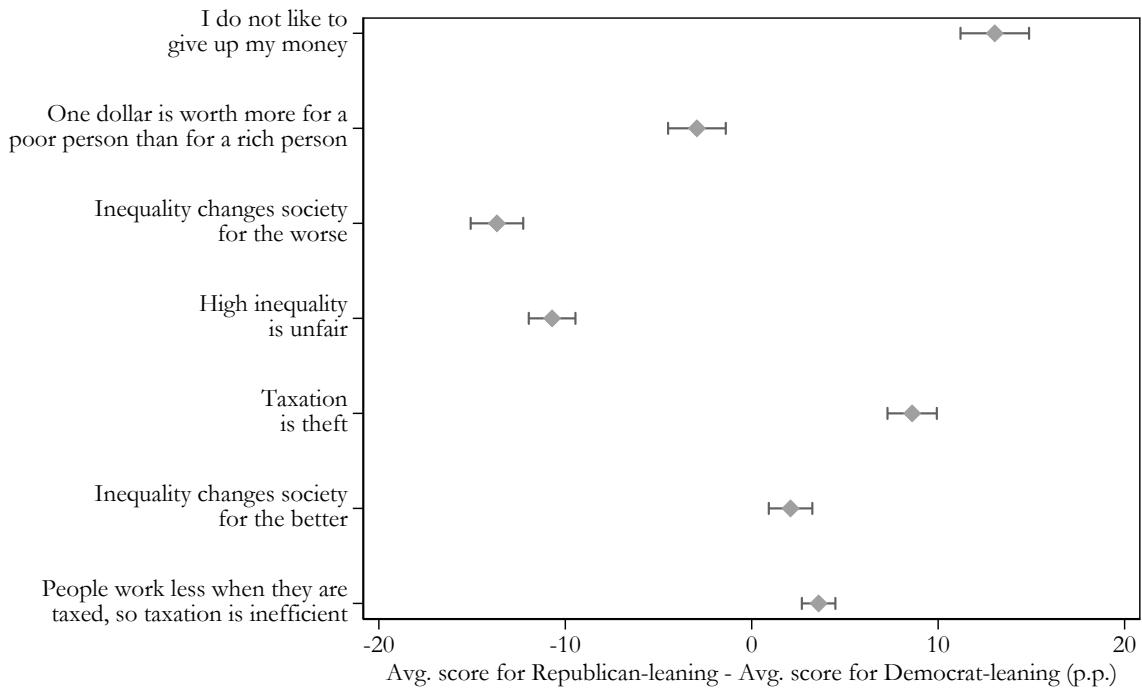
**Note.** Heterogeneous treatment effects across income (left) and political affiliation (right) for the merged control groups, the full externality treatment, and the fairness treatment, with standard errors. Supplement to Figure 12. The tables that correspond to the graphs are in Tables H19 and H20. Data from Survey 1,  $N=4,371$ .

Figure G20: Directly elicited motives of preferences for redistribution: Differences across incomes



**Note.** This figure shows the difference in answers of respondents with annual incomes above and below \$100,000 to the question: “*When thinking about your preferred level of redistribution, what matters most to you? Please indicate what dimensions matter by giving scores below that add up to 100.*” Answer option texts are identical to graph labels except for the positive and negative externality options, where the question labels also included “(more inequality → a better society through various ways)” and “(more inequality → a worse society through various ways)” respectively. See Figure 9 for the full population data. Error bars characterize 95% confidence intervals.  $N=3,292$ .

Figure G21: Directly elicited motives of preferences for redistribution: Differences across political affiliation



**Note.** This figure shows the difference in answers of Democratic-leaning and Republican-leaning respondents to the question: “*When thinking about your preferred level of redistribution, what matters most to you? Please indicate what dimensions matter by giving scores below that add up to 100.*” Answer option texts are identical to graph labels except for the positive and negative externality options, where the question labels also included “(more inequality → a better society through various ways)” and “(more inequality → a worse society through various ways)” respectively. See Figure 9 for the full population data. Error bars characterize 95% confidence intervals.  $N=3,292$ .

## H Appendix Tables

Table H1: Definitional text for externality questions

Externality	Additional definition
The amount of crime	<i>Note: When we say the amount of crime we mean the overall crime rate, including homicides, robberies, property crime and more.</i>
The overall level of trust	<i>Note: When we say the total level of trust we mean the strength of a country's social fabric. Some examples are whether most people trust others, whether people cooperate with each other, how many people return lost wallets, and so on.</i>
The amount of social unrest	None
The rate of economic growth	None
The amount of corruption	None
The overall amount of unemployment	None
The overall amount of innovation	None
The overall quality of life	<i>Note: Here we want you to compare between people <u>with the same incomes</u> living in more or less unequal societies.</i>
The overall amount of political polarization	<i>Note: When we say political polarization we mean to what extent people's and politicians' opinions are divided on political issues, as well as how strong these divisions are.</i>
The quality of democratic institutions	<i>Note: When we say the quality of democratic institutions we mean the capable and equitable functioning of the political system, the avoidance of abuses of power, the equality of the rule of law, whether civil liberties are respected, and so on.</i>
The quality of local public goods	<i>Note: When we say the quality of local public goods we mean the quality of things like schools, local government services, parks, youth centers and more.</i>

Table H2: Definitional text for externality questions, secondary study

Externality	Additional definition
The amount of crime	<i>Note: When we say the amount of crime we mean the overall crime rate, including homicides, robberies, property crime and more.</i>
The overall level of trust	<i>Note: When we say the total level of trust we mean the strength of a country's social fabric. Some examples are whether most people trust others, whether people cooperate with each other, and so on.</i>
The amount of social unrest	<i>Note: By social unrest we mean unconventional and sometimes violent forms of collective behavior that disrupt the typical social order in society.</i>
The rate of economic growth	<i>Note: By economic growth we mean the increase in the production of goods and services in the society.</i>
The amount of corruption	<i>Note: By corruption we mean dishonest or fraudulent acts committed by those in power, usually in the form of accepting bribes.</i>
The overall amount of innovation	<i>Note: By innovation we mean how many new technologies and products that are developed in the society.</i>
The overall amount of political polarization	<i>Note: When we say political polarization we mean the extent to which opinions are divided on political issues, both among most people and politicians, in addition to how strong these differences are and whether people with different views speak together. Increasing polarization means that there is generally less agreement in society.</i>
The quality of democratic institutions	<i>Note: When we say the quality of democratic institutions we mean the capable and equitable functioning of the political system, the avoidance of abuses of power, the equality of the rule of law, whether civil liberties are respected, and so on.</i>
Daylight hours (placebo)	<i>Note: By the number of daylight hours we mean the number of hours when the sun is visible within a country on an average day.</i>
Attention check #1	<i>Note: Here we just want you to choose the top option to show that you are reading the questions. Thank you.</i>
Attention check #2	<i>Note: Here we just want you to choose the bottom option to show that you are reading the questions. Thank you.</i>

Table H3: Distribution of Inequality Externality Beliefs

	Crime	Corr- ruption	Pol. polar.	Social unrest	Unemp- loyment	Inno- vation	Econ. growth	Public goods	Quality of life	Dem. inst.	Trust
Increases	74%	66%	66%	70%	53%	26%	23%	14%	14%	12%	10%
No change	17%	23%	23%	18%	30%	35%	25%	28%	26%	30%	23%
Decreases	9%	11%	12%	12%	17%	39%	52%	58%	59%	57%	67%
Respondents	3292	2994	2990	3292	641	3017	3292	643	628	3065	3292

**Note.** The corresponding table to Figure 4. Shows the distribution of specific externality beliefs for the full sample (control group of Survey 1 and all of Survey 2). “Increase” is the share of respondents that state that inequality “increases a lot” or “increases somewhat” the outcome. “No change” is the share of respondents that state that inequality does not induce a change on the outcome. “Decrease” is the share of respondents that state that inequality “decreases a lot” or “decreases somewhat” the outcome. Passive control respondents were asked every question, while active control respondents were asked the crime, trust, social unrest, and economic growth questions along with a random subset of three additional questions. This randomness explains the slightly different sample sizes. For the equivalent table using only data from Survey 1 see Tables J1 and J2.

Table H4: Main correlations of sociodemographic and externality beliefs

	(1) General neg. ext. b/se	(2) Ineq. incr. crime b/se	(3) Ineq. red. trust b/se	(4) Ineq. red. growth b/se
Leans Republican	-0.134*** (0.018)	-0.091*** (0.017)	-0.118*** (0.018)	-0.120*** (0.020)
Prior belief unfair	0.299*** (0.018)	0.193*** (0.016)	0.239*** (0.017)	0.210*** (0.019)
Trusts the government	0.037** (0.018)	0.051*** (0.017)	0.040** (0.018)	0.051** (0.020)
Male	-0.032* (0.017)	0.002 (0.016)	0.007 (0.017)	-0.044** (0.018)
Black	-0.072** (0.031)	-0.073** (0.029)	-0.016 (0.031)	-0.022 (0.034)
Neither black nor white	-0.047** (0.022)	-0.044** (0.021)	-0.016 (0.022)	0.027 (0.024)
Income: 25-50k	0.041 (0.025)	0.036 (0.023)	0.020 (0.025)	0.003 (0.027)
Income: 50-100k	0.034 (0.025)	0.031 (0.023)	0.015 (0.024)	-0.006 (0.027)
Income: 100k and more	-0.005 (0.027)	0.007 (0.026)	-0.030 (0.027)	-0.079*** (0.029)
Age 30-39	-0.013 (0.029)	-0.009 (0.028)	0.014 (0.030)	-0.017 (0.032)
Age 40-49	-0.026 (0.031)	-0.002 (0.029)	0.038 (0.030)	0.035 (0.033)
Age 50-59	0.016 (0.031)	0.003 (0.029)	0.043 (0.031)	0.058* (0.033)
Age 60-69	-0.053* (0.031)	-0.021 (0.030)	-0.004 (0.031)	-0.006 (0.034)
Age 70 and above	-0.052 (0.035)	-0.036 (0.032)	0.027 (0.035)	-0.003 (0.037)
4-year college degree or more	0.045** (0.018)	0.050*** (0.017)	0.042** (0.018)	0.010 (0.019)
Unemployed	-0.039 (0.031)	-0.040 (0.031)	0.002 (0.031)	-0.066* (0.034)
Outside the labor force	-0.000 (0.020)	0.000 (0.019)	-0.013 (0.020)	-0.019 (0.021)
West	0.041** (0.020)	0.043** (0.019)	0.046** (0.020)	0.015 (0.021)
North-East	0.032 (0.024)	0.030 (0.023)	-0.000 (0.025)	0.007 (0.026)
Midwest	-0.023 (0.022)	0.014 (0.021)	0.022 (0.022)	-0.036 (0.023)
Constant	0.527*** (0.038)	0.634*** (0.035)	0.539*** (0.038)	0.497*** (0.040)
Adjusted R2	0.160	0.087	0.111	0.094
Observations	3292	3292	3292	3292

**Note.** This table reports results from regressions that regress externality beliefs on sociodemographic variables. Sample is composed of Survey 1 control group respondents and Survey 2 respondents. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. Significance levels: \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table H5: Correlations of sociodemographic and externality beliefs, 2

	(1) Ineq. red. inno. b/se	(2) Ineq. incr. unrest b/se	(3) Ineq. worsens dem. insts b/se	(4) Ineq. worsens pub. goods b/se
Leans Republican	-0.093*** (0.020)	-0.082*** (0.018)	-0.159*** (0.020)	-0.098** (0.044)
Prior belief unfair	0.177*** (0.019)	0.211*** (0.017)	0.224*** (0.019)	0.200*** (0.041)
Trusts the government	0.028 (0.022)	0.062*** (0.018)	0.026 (0.020)	-0.035 (0.044)
Male	-0.007 (0.019)	-0.010 (0.016)	0.022 (0.018)	-0.059 (0.042)
Black	-0.081** (0.035)	-0.082*** (0.031)	-0.071** (0.034)	0.045 (0.074)
Neither black nor white	0.014 (0.025)	-0.061*** (0.022)	-0.034 (0.024)	0.073 (0.055)
Income: 25-50k	-0.021 (0.028)	0.008 (0.024)	0.009 (0.027)	-0.004 (0.053)
Income: 50-100k	-0.016 (0.028)	0.034 (0.024)	0.006 (0.027)	-0.012 (0.057)
Income: 100k and more	-0.086*** (0.030)	-0.007 (0.026)	-0.027 (0.030)	-0.088 (0.066)
Age 30-39	-0.026 (0.034)	-0.063** (0.029)	0.024 (0.033)	-0.066 (0.070)
Age 40-49	0.019 (0.035)	0.009 (0.030)	0.032 (0.033)	0.015 (0.069)
Age 50-59	-0.053 (0.035)	0.006 (0.030)	0.063* (0.034)	0.004 (0.078)
Age 60-69	-0.051 (0.035)	-0.002 (0.030)	0.040 (0.034)	0.004 (0.074)
Age 70 and above	-0.050 (0.039)	0.042 (0.033)	0.007 (0.038)	0.028 (0.076)
4-year college degree or more	0.021 (0.019)	0.068*** (0.017)	0.055*** (0.019)	0.094** (0.042)
Unemployed	0.028 (0.036)	-0.045 (0.032)	0.007 (0.035)	-0.130* (0.070)
Outside the labor force	-0.018 (0.022)	-0.020 (0.020)	0.002 (0.022)	0.022 (0.049)
West	0.010 (0.022)	0.064*** (0.020)	0.020 (0.022)	0.013 (0.050)
North-East	-0.001 (0.027)	0.039 (0.024)	-0.006 (0.027)	-0.028 (0.060)
Midwest	-0.038 (0.024)	0.030 (0.022)	-0.040* (0.024)	-0.057 (0.052)
Constant	0.407*** (0.043)	0.571*** (0.037)	0.478*** (0.041)	0.548*** (0.084)
Adjusted R2	0.067	0.095	0.105	0.070
Observations	3017	3292	3065	643

**Note.** This table reports results from regressions that regress externality beliefs on sociodemographic variables. Sample is composed of Survey 1 control group respondents and Survey 2 respondents. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. Significance levels: \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table H6: Correlations of sociodemographic and externality beliefs, 3

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Ineq. b/se	Incr. b/se	Ineq. b/se	Ineq. b/se
Leans Republican	-0.097*** (0.019)	-0.103*** (0.020)	-0.172*** (0.044)	-0.202*** (0.044)
Prior belief unfair	0.216*** (0.019)	0.159*** (0.019)	0.213*** (0.041)	0.242*** (0.041)
Trusts the government	0.023 (0.020)	0.032* (0.020)	0.020 (0.046)	0.063 (0.043)
Male	-0.019 (0.018)	0.032* (0.018)	-0.013 (0.041)	0.041 (0.040)
Black	-0.057* (0.032)	-0.130*** (0.034)	0.032 (0.078)	-0.140* (0.075)
Neither black nor white	0.012 (0.023)	-0.019 (0.023)	-0.029 (0.055)	-0.018 (0.056)
Income: 25-50k	-0.017 (0.026)	-0.005 (0.027)	0.007 (0.054)	0.024 (0.054)
Income: 50-100k	-0.034 (0.026)	0.041 (0.027)	-0.009 (0.060)	0.010 (0.058)
Income: 100k and more	-0.085*** (0.029)	0.024 (0.029)	-0.039 (0.068)	0.004 (0.067)
Age 30-39	-0.041 (0.032)	-0.035 (0.033)	0.008 (0.070)	0.103 (0.072)
Age 40-49	-0.013 (0.032)	-0.008 (0.033)	0.027 (0.068)	0.113 (0.071)
Age 50-59	0.027 (0.032)	0.035 (0.034)	0.005 (0.073)	0.037 (0.082)
Age 60-69	-0.038 (0.034)	0.022 (0.034)	-0.074 (0.072)	0.097 (0.074)
Age 70 and above	-0.026 (0.037)	0.027 (0.037)	-0.005 (0.075)	0.048 (0.080)
4-year college degree or more	0.040** (0.019)	0.075*** (0.019)	-0.028 (0.043)	0.034 (0.042)
Unemployed	-0.075** (0.034)	0.003 (0.035)	0.029 (0.070)	0.089 (0.072)
Outside the labor force	-0.045** (0.022)	-0.003 (0.021)	0.027 (0.050)	0.070 (0.049)
West	0.025 (0.021)	0.064*** (0.022)	0.111** (0.049)	-0.004 (0.050)
North-East	0.017 (0.026)	-0.010 (0.027)	-0.020 (0.064)	-0.059 (0.057)
Midwest	-0.039* (0.024)	0.013 (0.024)	0.051 (0.051)	0.001 (0.050)
Constant	0.656*** (0.040)	0.532*** (0.041)	0.485*** (0.084)	0.419*** (0.088)
Adjusted R2	0.092	0.069	0.095	0.128
Observations	2994	2990	641	628

**Note.** This table reports results from regressions that regress externality beliefs on sociodemographic variables. Sample is composed of Survey 1 control group respondents and Survey 2 respondents. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. Significance levels: \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table H7: First-stage Effects of Treatments (Supplement to Figure 8)

	(1) General neg. ext. b/se	(2) Mention: Crime b/se	(3) Mention: Trust b/se	(4) Mention: Quality of life b/se	(5) Mention: Unfairness b/se
Crime Ext. Tr.	0.088*** (0.021)	0.145*** (0.017)	0.023* (0.013)	0.027* (0.016)	-0.010 (0.020)
Trust Ext. Tr.	0.050** (0.021)	0.021 (0.015)	0.087*** (0.015)	0.026 (0.016)	0.017 (0.020)
Full Ext. Tr.	0.085*** (0.021)	0.091*** (0.017)	0.032** (0.014)	0.051*** (0.017)	-0.005 (0.020)
Fairness Tr.	0.075*** (0.021)	0.000 (0.014)	0.011 (0.013)	0.042** (0.016)	0.047** (0.021)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R2	0.159	0.052	0.053	0.057	0.070
Observations	4371	4371	4371	4371	4371

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression of the variables reported in Figure 8 on the treatment dummies, as well as socio-economic control variables. Only mentions implying a negative inequality externality dimension are included. Controls include political leaning, gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, geographic region, trust in government, and pre-treatment views on economic fairness (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table H8: First-stage Effects of Treatments II (Supplement to Figure G15)

	(1) Mention: Unrest b/se	(2) Mention: Corruption b/se	(3) Mention: Pol. polar. b/se	(4) Mention: Innovation b/se	(5) Mention: Unemployment b/se
Crime Ext. Tr.	0.025** (0.011)	-0.005 (0.005)	0.007 (0.007)	-0.009* (0.004)	-0.002 (0.005)
Trust Ext. Tr.	0.026** (0.011)	-0.000 (0.006)	0.024*** (0.008)	-0.006 (0.005)	-0.005 (0.005)
Full Ext. Tr.	0.018 (0.011)	-0.002 (0.006)	0.006 (0.007)	-0.003 (0.005)	-0.006 (0.005)
Fairness Tr.	0.007 (0.010)	-0.008* (0.005)	0.002 (0.006)	-0.003 (0.005)	-0.004 (0.005)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R2	0.023	0.009	0.015	0.011	0.007
Observations	4371	4371	4371	4371	4371

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression of the variables reported in Figure G15 on the treatment dummies, as well as socio-economic control variables. Only mentions implying a negative inequality externality dimension are included. Controls include political leaning, gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, geographic region, trust in government, and pre-treatment views on economic fairness (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table H9: First-stage Effects of Treatments III (Supplement to Figure G16)

	(1) Mention: Public goods b/se	(2) Mention: Dem. inst. b/se	(3) Mention: Growth b/se	(4) Mention: One neg. ext b/se	(5) Mention: One pos. ext b/se
Crime Ext. Tr.	0.001 (0.004)	-0.017** (0.008)	-0.015 (0.012)	0.128*** (0.021)	0.014 (0.009)
Trust Ext. Tr.	0.004 (0.004)	0.004 (0.010)	0.010 (0.013)	0.110*** (0.022)	0.002 (0.009)
Full Ext. Tr.	0.002 (0.004)	0.007 (0.010)	0.005 (0.013)	0.116*** (0.022)	0.012 (0.009)
Fairness Tr.	-0.001 (0.003)	-0.018** (0.008)	0.027** (0.013)	0.059*** (0.021)	-0.004 (0.008)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R2	0.012	0.030	0.020	0.098	0.020
Observations	4371	4371	4371	4371	4371

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression of the variables reported in Figure G16 on the treatment dummies, as well as socio-economic control variables. Only mentions implying a negative inequality externality dimension included (Column 5 excluded). Controls include political leaning, gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, geographic region, trust in government, and pre-treatment views on economic fairness (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table H10: First-stage effects of treatments (closed-form multiple choice questions)

	(1) Ineq. incr. crime b/se	(2) Ineq. red. trust b/se	(3) Ineq. red. growth b/se	(4) Ineq. qual. of dem. inst. b/se	(5) Society is unfair (post) b/se	(6) Rich because of hard luck b/se
Crime Ext. Tr.	0.093*** (0.018)	0.059*** (0.020)	0.086*** (0.022)	0.056* (0.029)	0.012 (0.020)	0.018 (0.020)
Trust Ext. Tr.	0.048** (0.019)	0.096*** (0.020)	0.076*** (0.023)	0.131*** (0.031)	0.025 (0.020)	0.028 (0.020)
Full Ext. Tr.	0.084*** (0.019)	0.097*** (0.020)	0.062*** (0.023)	0.118*** (0.030)	0.016 (0.020)	0.030 (0.020)
Fairness Tr.	0.017 (0.019)	0.037* (0.021)	0.033 (0.022)	0.085*** (0.029)	0.079*** (0.020)	0.079*** (0.020)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R2	0.084	0.093	0.102	0.114	0.239	0.241
Observations	4371	4371	4371	2177	4371	4371

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression of the the treatment dummies on different inequality externality beliefs, elicited in the multiple-choice format shown in Appendix K.2, and fairness views, elicited in the multiple-choice format shown in Appendix K.6.1 and K.6.2. Number of observations differ because respondents were shown a randomized subset of some inequality externalities (see Appendix B.5). Controls include political leaning, gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, geographic region, trust in government, and pre-treatment views on economic fairness (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table H11: First-stage effects of treatments on further externality beliefs (closed-form multiple choice questions)

	(1) Ineq. incr. corruption b/se	(2) Ineq. incr. pol. polar. b/se	(3) Ineq. incr. soc. unrest b/se	(4) Ineq. incr. unemp. b/se	(5) Ineq. red. innov. b/se	(6) Ineq. red. qual. publ. goods b/se	(7) Ineq. incr. qual. of life b/se
Crime Ext. Tr.	0.091*** (0.027)	0.020 (0.028)	0.044** (0.020)	0.099*** (0.030)	0.017 (0.030)	0.071** (0.030)	0.096*** (0.028)
Trust Ext. Tr.	0.039 (0.029)	0.047 (0.029)	0.023 (0.021)	0.066** (0.031)	0.056* (0.031)	0.028 (0.031)	0.061** (0.030)
Full Ext. Tr.	0.069** (0.029)	0.047 (0.029)	0.095*** (0.020)	0.020 (0.032)	0.058* (0.032)	0.015 (0.032)	0.065** (0.030)
Fairness Tr.	0.057** (0.027)	0.060** (0.028)	0.040* (0.020)	0.044 (0.031)	0.059* (0.031)	-0.010 (0.031)	0.074** (0.030)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R2	0.089	0.098	0.105	0.092	0.086	0.103	0.136
Observations	2096	2102	4371	2143	2135	2098	2104

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression of the the treatment dummies on different inequality externality beliefs, elicited in the multiple-choice format shown in Appendix K.2. Number of observations differ because respondents were shown a randomized subset of some inequality externalities (see Appendix B.5). Controls include political leaning, gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, geographic region, trust in government, and pre-treatment views on economic fairness (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table H12: Main Treatment effects, no controls

	(1) RP Index b/se	(2) Wants redistribution b/se	(3) Gov. reduce ineq. b/se	(4) Ineq. is serious issue b/se	(5) Increase top taxes b/se
Crime Ext. Tr.	0.036 (0.046)	0.031 (0.022)	0.005 (0.023)	0.022 (0.023)	-0.006 (0.023)
Trust Ext. Tr.	0.055 (0.047)	0.010 (0.023)	0.041* (0.024)	0.023 (0.024)	0.005 (0.024)
Full Ext. Tr.	0.124*** (0.048)	0.059** (0.023)	0.056** (0.024)	0.078*** (0.024)	-0.014 (0.024)
Fairness Tr.	0.173*** (0.047)	0.042* (0.023)	0.052** (0.024)	0.102*** (0.023)	0.053** (0.023)
Controls	No	No	No	No	No
R2	0.004	0.002	0.002	0.006	0.002
Observations	4371	4371	4371	4371	4371

**Note.** This table reports results from regressions that regress preferences for redistribution on treatment variables *without* controlling for other factors. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table H13: Main treatment effects, interacted with dummy indicating that the subject trusts government

	(1) RP Index b/se	(2) Wants redistribution b/se	(3) Gov. reduce ineq. b/se	(4) Ineq. is serious issue b/se	(5) Increase top taxes b/se
Crime Ext. Tr.	0.071 (0.043)	0.042* (0.023)	0.027 (0.023)	0.037* (0.022)	-0.003 (0.025)
Crime*GovTrust	-0.116 (0.080)	-0.035 (0.047)	-0.067 (0.045)	-0.059 (0.044)	-0.007 (0.046)
Trust Ext. Tr.	0.076* (0.045)	0.029 (0.025)	0.042* (0.024)	0.039* (0.024)	-0.002 (0.027)
Trust*GovTrust	-0.103 (0.080)	-0.075 (0.048)	-0.021 (0.044)	-0.071 (0.044)	0.019 (0.046)
Full Ext. Tr.	0.088** (0.044)	0.048* (0.025)	0.041* (0.024)	0.073*** (0.023)	-0.036 (0.026)
FullExt*GovTrust	0.065 (0.082)	0.008 (0.049)	0.021 (0.045)	-0.014 (0.045)	0.079* (0.046)
Fairness Tr.	0.248*** (0.043)	0.079*** (0.024)	0.078*** (0.023)	0.133*** (0.022)	0.067*** (0.025)
Fairness*GovTrust	-0.141* (0.081)	-0.094* (0.050)	-0.038 (0.045)	-0.063 (0.044)	-0.009 (0.047)
Trusts the government	0.234*** (0.056)	0.108*** (0.034)	0.136*** (0.032)	0.091*** (0.032)	0.001 (0.033)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R2	0.392	0.170	0.294	0.314	0.171
Observations	4371	4371	4371	4371	4371

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression of different redistributive preference outcomes on the treatment indicators and their interaction with pre-treatment trust in government. Controls include political leaning, gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, geographic region, trust in government, and pre-treatment views on economic fairness (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table H14: Correlation between redistributive preferences and open-ended mentions in control

	(1) RP Index b/se	(2) Wants redistribution b/se	(3) Gov. reduce ineq. b/se	(4) Ineq. is serious issue b/se	(5) Increase top taxes b/se
Mention: Crime	0.109 (0.118)	0.003 (0.063)	0.023 (0.061)	0.033 (0.061)	0.098* (0.057)
Mention: Trust	0.202 (0.125)	0.040 (0.072)	0.059 (0.069)	0.024 (0.071)	0.167*** (0.059)
Mention: Growth	0.202 (0.138)	0.076 (0.069)	0.086 (0.068)	0.083 (0.066)	0.046 (0.065)
Mention: Dem. inst.	0.419** (0.169)	0.147 (0.093)	0.160** (0.080)	0.140* (0.082)	0.157** (0.076)
Mention: Unrest	0.390** (0.159)	0.100 (0.089)	0.191** (0.083)	0.144* (0.082)	0.127 (0.078)
Mention: Corruption	0.487* (0.257)	-0.053 (0.149)	0.264** (0.118)	0.327*** (0.101)	0.164 (0.115)
Mention: Pol. polar.	0.061 (0.241)	0.027 (0.136)	0.194* (0.113)	0.037 (0.133)	-0.170 (0.136)
Mention: Innovation	-0.317 (0.272)	0.132 (0.141)	-0.190 (0.132)	-0.152 (0.126)	-0.245* (0.131)
Mention: Unemployment	-0.145 (0.261)	-0.079 (0.147)	0.076 (0.121)	0.050 (0.136)	-0.256** (0.125)
Mention: Public goods	0.028 (0.333)	-0.154 (0.238)	0.035 (0.186)	0.191** (0.083)	-0.031 (0.188)
Mention: Quality of life	0.429*** (0.095)	0.035 (0.054)	0.196*** (0.052)	0.237*** (0.049)	0.149*** (0.049)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R2	0.075	0.014	0.059	0.060	0.049
Observations	932	932	932	932	932

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression between different redistributive preference outcomes and mentioning various inequality externalities in the open-ended question. Controls include political leaning, gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, geographic region, trust in government, and pre-treatment views on economic fairness (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table H15: Main treatment effects, interacted with prior externality belief

	(1) RP Index b/se	(2) Wants redistribution b/se	(3) Gov. reduce ineq. b/se	(4) Ineq. is serious issue b/se	(5) Increase top taxes b/se
Crime Ext. Tr.	0.121** (0.059)	0.062* (0.032)	0.023 (0.032)	0.068** (0.031)	0.021 (0.035)
Trust Ext. Tr.	0.090 (0.059)	0.017 (0.033)	0.059* (0.032)	0.072** (0.032)	-0.018 (0.035)
Full Ext. Tr.	0.137** (0.058)	0.074** (0.033)	0.030 (0.032)	0.091*** (0.032)	0.001 (0.035)
Fairness Tr.	0.220*** (0.056)	0.045 (0.031)	0.063** (0.031)	0.139*** (0.030)	0.069** (0.034)
Belief uneq countr. worse.	0.314*** (0.051)	0.081*** (0.030)	0.102*** (0.028)	0.153*** (0.028)	0.116*** (0.031)
Crime*Unequal countries function worse	-0.153** (0.074)	-0.054 (0.042)	-0.031 (0.041)	-0.086** (0.040)	-0.049 (0.044)
Trust*Unequal countries function worse	-0.091 (0.075)	-0.022 (0.043)	-0.042 (0.041)	-0.096** (0.041)	0.028 (0.045)
FullExt*Unequal countries function worse	-0.056 (0.075)	-0.041 (0.043)	0.026 (0.041)	-0.040 (0.041)	-0.025 (0.044)
Fairness*Unequal countries function worse	-0.013 (0.073)	0.014 (0.043)	0.010 (0.040)	-0.038 (0.039)	-0.004 (0.043)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R2	0.405	0.173	0.302	0.323	0.181
Observations	4371	4371	4371	4371	4371

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression of different redistributive preference outcomes on the treatment indicators and their interaction with pre-treatment externality view. Controls include political leaning, gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, geographic region, trust in government, and pre-treatment views on economic fairness (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table H16: Main treatment effects, interacted with dummy for learning something new in the video

	(1) RP Index b/se	(2) Wants redistribution b/se	(3) Gov. reduce ineq. b/se	(4) Ineq. is serious issue b/se	(5) Increase top taxes b/se
Active*Learned something new	0.170* (0.098)	0.009 (0.054)	0.046 (0.053)	0.127** (0.053)	0.063 (0.051)
Crime Ext. Tr.	-0.084 (0.099)	-0.033 (0.053)	-0.052 (0.053)	0.041 (0.053)	-0.076 (0.051)
Crime*Learned something new	0.324*** (0.056)	0.113*** (0.029)	0.120*** (0.030)	0.124*** (0.029)	0.110*** (0.032)
Trust Ext. Tr.	0.023 (0.099)	-0.037 (0.054)	-0.012 (0.053)	0.074 (0.053)	0.009 (0.052)
Trust*Learned something new	0.180*** (0.059)	0.084*** (0.032)	0.102*** (0.031)	0.072** (0.031)	0.000 (0.035)
Full Ext. Tr.	0.014 (0.101)	-0.043 (0.054)	-0.012 (0.054)	0.108** (0.054)	-0.033 (0.054)
FullExt*Learned something new	0.275*** (0.061)	0.149*** (0.033)	0.116*** (0.032)	0.096*** (0.033)	0.035 (0.036)
Fairness Tr.	0.081 (0.100)	0.021 (0.054)	-0.040 (0.053)	0.132** (0.053)	0.003 (0.052)
Fairness*Learned something new	0.333*** (0.058)	0.065** (0.032)	0.190*** (0.030)	0.130*** (0.029)	0.095*** (0.033)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R2	0.404	0.178	0.308	0.323	0.181
Observations	3833	3833	3833	3833	3833

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression of different redistributive preference outcomes on the treatment indicators and their interaction with self-reported indicator to have learned something new. Respondents in the passive control group are excluded, as they did not view a video. Note that the learning variable was elicited after the treatment, making the estimated treatment effects suggestive rather than causal. Controls include political leaning, gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, geographic region, trust in government, and pre-treatment views on economic fairness (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table H17: Main Treatment Effects, with Fairness Video

	(1) RP Index b/se	(2) Wants redistribution b/se	(3) Gov. reduce ineq. b/se	(4) Ineq. is serious issue b/se	(5) Increase top taxes b/se
Crime Ext. Tr.	0.037 (0.036)	0.031 (0.020)	0.007 (0.020)	0.020 (0.019)	-0.005 (0.021)
Trust Ext. Tr.	0.043 (0.037)	0.006 (0.021)	0.036* (0.020)	0.017 (0.020)	0.004 (0.022)
Full Ext. Tr.	0.107*** (0.037)	0.050** (0.021)	0.048** (0.020)	0.069*** (0.020)	-0.012 (0.022)
Fairness Tr.	0.208*** (0.037)	0.052** (0.021)	0.067*** (0.020)	0.115*** (0.019)	0.065*** (0.021)
Leans Republican	-0.635*** (0.030)	-0.190*** (0.017)	-0.264*** (0.016)	-0.249*** (0.016)	-0.210*** (0.016)
Prior belief unfair	0.707*** (0.027)	0.146*** (0.015)	0.260*** (0.014)	0.350*** (0.015)	0.260*** (0.015)
Male	-0.138*** (0.026)	-0.056*** (0.015)	-0.036*** (0.014)	-0.046*** (0.013)	-0.061*** (0.015)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R2	0.391	0.169	0.293	0.313	0.170
Observations	4371	4371	4371	4371	4371

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression of different redistributive preference outcomes and the treatment dummies, as well as socio-economic control variables. The RP index is normalized on the sample and has units of the number of standard deviations. The remaining variables are binary (0-1) with full question texts displayed in Appendix K.5. Controls include political leaning, gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, geographic region, trust in government, and pre-treatment views on economic fairness (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. Significance levels: \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table H18: Predictive power of various beliefs in Survey 2 (complement to Table 3)

	(1) RP Index b/se	(2) RP Index b/se	(3) RP Index b/se	(4) RP Index b/se	(5) RP Index b/se	(6) RP Index b/se
Rich because of luck		0.681*** (0.044)				0.394*** (0.045)
Society is unfair		0.648*** (0.044)				0.500*** (0.043)
Neg ext: Crime			0.324*** (0.046)			0.102** (0.040)
Society changes for the worse			0.515*** (0.044)			0.151*** (0.039)
Leans Republican				-0.502*** (0.053)		-0.261*** (0.052)
Sanders/Harris-supporter				0.618*** (0.055)		0.415*** (0.052)
Trusts the government					0.370*** (0.047)	0.090** (0.039)
Taxation reduces work					-0.181*** (0.043)	0.028 (0.035)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adjusted R2	0.133	0.404	0.234	0.358	0.165	0.486
Observations	2360	2360	2360	2360	2360	2360

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression of different redistributive preference outcomes on fairness views, political views, externality beliefs and attitudes towards the government, as well as socio-economic control variables. Note that one of the externality beliefs from Table 3 is changed to a negative crime externality belief, as the corresponding belief was not elicited in Survey 2. This likely dampens the effect of the externality beliefs somewhat, and is also why we only show results from Survey 1 in the main text. Controls include gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, and geographic region (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. Observations are reweighted to match representativity by gender, race, age, political affiliation, college degree, income-group, and geographic region. Data is from Survey 2 only. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table H19: Main treatment effects, interacted with dummy for having a yearly income above \$100,000 (binary RP index, no controls, supplement to Figure 12)

	(1) RP Index (0-1) b/se	(2) Wants redistribution b/se	(3) Gov. reduce ineq. b/se	(4) Ineq. is serious issue b/se	(5) Increase top taxes b/se	(6) RP Index b/se
Crime Ext. Tr.	0.002 (0.026)	0.026 (0.025)	0.003 (0.026)	0.015 (0.026)	0.002 (0.026)	0.038 (0.041)
Crime*\$100,000	0.024 (0.055)	0.021 (0.055)	0.004 (0.058)	0.031 (0.058)	-0.045 (0.058)	-0.005 (0.087)
Trust Ext. Tr.	-0.007 (0.026)	-0.003 (0.026)	0.024 (0.026)	0.003 (0.026)	0.022 (0.026)	0.056 (0.042)
Trust*\$100,000	0.096 (0.060)	0.059 (0.059)	0.082 (0.061)	0.091 (0.061)	-0.107* (0.061)	-0.072 (0.092)
Full Ext. Tr.	0.037 (0.026)	0.052** (0.026)	0.044* (0.026)	0.060** (0.026)	-0.020 (0.026)	0.093** (0.042)
FullExt*\$100,000	0.093 (0.062)	0.026 (0.061)	0.052 (0.063)	0.076 (0.063)	0.030 (0.063)	0.095 (0.094)
Fairness Tr.	0.075*** (0.026)	0.052** (0.026)	0.055** (0.026)	0.106*** (0.026)	0.059** (0.026)	0.227*** (0.041)
Fairness*\$100,000	-0.014 (0.056)	-0.048 (0.055)	-0.016 (0.058)	-0.022 (0.058)	-0.027 (0.058)	-0.098 (0.089)
Income: 100k and more	-0.110*** (0.039)	-0.076** (0.038)	-0.100** (0.040)	-0.145*** (0.040)	-0.034 (0.041)	-0.112* (0.067)
Controls	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
R2	0.008	0.006	0.007	0.015	0.006	0.391
Observations	4371	4371	4371	4371	4371	4371

**Note.** This table is a supplement to Figure F1. It reports results from a regression of different redistributive preference outcomes on the treatment indicators and their interaction with having a yearly income above \$100,000. The RP Index in Column (1) is binary (0-1) based on whether the respondent agrees to 3 of 4 redistributive outcomes. Column (6) includes controls and uses the non-binary RP index used in Table 2 (used in the F-test). No controls. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table H20: Main treatment effects, interacted with Republican leaning dummy (binary RP index, no controls, supplement to Figure 12)

	(1) RP Index (0-1) b/se	(2) Wants redistribution b/se	(3) Gov. reduce ineq. b/se	(4) Ineq. is serious issue b/se	(5) Increase top taxes b/se	(6) RP Index b/se
Crime Ext. Tr.	0.010 (0.033)	0.082** (0.033)	-0.008 (0.031)	0.028 (0.030)	0.017 (0.030)	0.039 (0.051)
Crime*Rep-leaning	0.002 (0.043)	-0.093** (0.043)	0.033 (0.043)	-0.004 (0.042)	-0.038 (0.044)	-0.005 (0.073)
Trust Ext. Tr.	0.045 (0.034)	0.052 (0.035)	0.058* (0.031)	0.027 (0.031)	0.027 (0.031)	0.063 (0.052)
Trust*Rep-leaning	-0.053 (0.044)	-0.074* (0.045)	-0.023 (0.043)	0.002 (0.044)	-0.036 (0.045)	-0.039 (0.074)
Full Ext. Tr.	0.091*** (0.033)	0.125*** (0.034)	0.068** (0.030)	0.088*** (0.029)	0.016 (0.031)	0.192*** (0.051)
FullExt*Rep-leaning	-0.074* (0.044)	-0.133*** (0.045)	-0.030 (0.043)	-0.026 (0.043)	-0.063 (0.046)	-0.165** (0.074)
Fairness Tr.	0.077** (0.033)	0.058* (0.034)	0.052* (0.030)	0.099*** (0.029)	0.045 (0.030)	0.218*** (0.051)
Fairness*Rep-leaning	-0.002 (0.044)	-0.025 (0.045)	0.010 (0.043)	0.013 (0.042)	0.022 (0.045)	-0.020 (0.073)
Leans Republican	-0.359*** (0.030)	-0.235*** (0.031)	-0.408*** (0.030)	-0.398*** (0.030)	-0.254*** (0.031)	-0.592*** (0.053)
Controls	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
R2	0.154	0.097	0.170	0.168	0.081	0.391
Observations	4371	4371	4371	4371	4371	4371

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression of different redistributive preference outcomes on the treatment indicators and their interaction with an indicator that the respondent leans Republican. The RP Index in Column (1) is binary (0-1) based on whether the respondent agrees to 3 of 4 redistributive outcomes. Column (6) includes controls and uses the non-binary RP index used in Table 2 (used in the F-test). Otherwise no controls. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. Significance levels: \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table H21: Main treatment effects, interacted with dummy for having a yearly income above \$100,000

	(1) RP Index b/se	(2) Wants redistribution b/se	(3) Increase top taxes b/se	(4) Gov. reduce ineq. b/se	(5) Ineq. is serious issue b/se
Crime Ext. Tr.	0.038 (0.041)	0.027 (0.023)	0.006 (0.023)	0.007 (0.023)	0.015 (0.022)
Crime*\$100,000	-0.005 (0.087)	0.022 (0.049)	-0.052 (0.053)	0.001 (0.047)	0.022 (0.048)
Trust Ext. Tr.	0.056 (0.042)	0.003 (0.024)	0.033 (0.024)	0.033 (0.023)	0.012 (0.022)
Trust*\$100,000	-0.072 (0.092)	0.018 (0.052)	-0.157*** (0.056)	0.013 (0.049)	0.023 (0.051)
Full Ext. Tr.	0.093** (0.042)	0.047* (0.024)	-0.012 (0.024)	0.040* (0.023)	0.059*** (0.022)
FullExt*\$100,000	0.095 (0.094)	0.020 (0.055)	0.013 (0.055)	0.045 (0.050)	0.058 (0.051)
Fairness Tr.	0.227*** (0.041)	0.061** (0.024)	0.074*** (0.024)	0.071*** (0.022)	0.121*** (0.022)
Fairness*\$100,000	-0.098 (0.089)	-0.048 (0.050)	-0.044 (0.053)	-0.019 (0.048)	-0.030 (0.047)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R2	0.391	0.169	0.172	0.294	0.314
Observations	4371	4371	4371	4371	4371

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression of different redistributive preference outcomes on the treatment indicators and their interaction with having a yearly income above \$100,000. Controls include political leaning, gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, geographic region, trust in government, and pre-treatment views on economic fairness (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. Significance levels: \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table H22: Main treatment effects, interacted with Republican leaning dummy

	(1) RP Index b/se	(2) Wants redistribution b/se	(3) Gov. reduce ineq. b/se	(4) Ineq. is serious issue b/se	(5) Increase top taxes b/se
Crime Ext. Tr.	0.039 (0.051)	0.068** (0.032)	-0.026 (0.030)	0.006 (0.028)	0.009 (0.029)
Crime*Rep-leaning	-0.005 (0.073)	-0.071* (0.041)	0.065 (0.040)	0.027 (0.039)	-0.028 (0.042)
Trust Ext. Tr.	0.063 (0.052)	0.033 (0.034)	0.033 (0.030)	0.002 (0.029)	0.023 (0.029)
Trust*Rep-leaning	-0.039 (0.074)	-0.054 (0.043)	0.005 (0.040)	0.028 (0.040)	-0.035 (0.043)
Full Ext. Tr.	0.192*** (0.051)	0.116*** (0.033)	0.061** (0.029)	0.079*** (0.028)	0.020 (0.029)
FullExt*Rep-leaning	-0.165** (0.074)	-0.128*** (0.043)	-0.027 (0.040)	-0.020 (0.040)	-0.062 (0.043)
Fairness Tr.	0.218*** (0.051)	0.069** (0.033)	0.069** (0.029)	0.115*** (0.027)	0.061** (0.028)
Fairness*Rep-leaning	-0.020 (0.073)	-0.034 (0.043)	-0.003 (0.040)	0.000 (0.039)	0.008 (0.042)
Leans Republican	-0.592*** (0.053)	-0.135*** (0.031)	-0.273*** (0.029)	-0.256*** (0.029)	-0.188*** (0.031)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R2	0.391	0.171	0.294	0.313	0.171
Observations	4371	4371	4371	4371	4371

**Note.** This table replicates the main treatment effects (Table 2) with an indicator that the respondent leans Republican interacted with each treatment. Controls include political leaning, gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, geographic region, trust in government, and pre-treatment views on economic fairness (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table H23: First-stage outcomes: Treatment effects interacted with having a yearly income above \$100,000

	(1) General neg. ext. b/se	(2) Mention: Crime b/se	(3) Mention: Trust b/se	(4) Mention: Quality of life b/se	(5) Mention: Unfairness b/se
Crime Ext. Tr.	0.085*** (0.023)	0.144*** (0.019)	0.017 (0.015)	0.010 (0.017)	-0.031 (0.022)
Crime*\$100,000	0.016 (0.052)	0.008 (0.044)	0.033 (0.031)	0.086** (0.039)	0.108** (0.047)
Trust Ext. Tr.	0.052** (0.023)	0.032** (0.016)	0.084*** (0.017)	0.021 (0.018)	0.006 (0.023)
Trust*\$100,000	-0.015 (0.056)	-0.064* (0.037)	0.015 (0.038)	0.027 (0.040)	0.052 (0.051)
Full Ext. Tr.	0.082*** (0.023)	0.097*** (0.018)	0.031* (0.016)	0.048** (0.019)	-0.015 (0.023)
FullExt*\$100,000	0.018 (0.056)	-0.034 (0.044)	-0.001 (0.032)	0.012 (0.042)	0.050 (0.051)
Fairness Tr.	0.063*** (0.023)	-0.002 (0.015)	0.005 (0.015)	0.047** (0.019)	0.033 (0.024)
Fairness*\$100,000	0.059 (0.052)	0.014 (0.036)	0.028 (0.029)	-0.028 (0.036)	0.071 (0.049)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R2	0.159	0.053	0.053	0.059	0.071
Observations	4371	4371	4371	4371	4371

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression of the first-stage outcomes on the treatment dummies, where we have included the interaction of treatment dummies with the respondent having a yearly income above \$100,000. The relevant first-stage outcomes for the externality treatments (Row 1-6) are in Columns 1-4. The relevant first-stage outcomes for the fairness treatment (Row 7-8) are in Column 5. Controls include political leaning, gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, geographic region, trust in government, and pre-treatment views on economic fairness (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table H24: Main treatment effects, interacted with dummy for having a yearly income above \$50,000

	(1) RP Index b/se	(2) Wants redistribution b/se	(3) Increase top taxes b/se	(4) Gov. reduce ineq. b/se	(5) Ineq. is serious issue b/se
Crime Ext. Tr.	0.041 (0.052)	0.016 (0.030)	0.013 (0.029)	-0.006 (0.029)	0.035 (0.027)
Crime*\$50,000	-0.009 (0.073)	0.030 (0.041)	-0.037 (0.042)	0.027 (0.040)	-0.033 (0.039)
Trust Ext. Tr.	0.067 (0.053)	-0.001 (0.030)	0.030 (0.030)	0.024 (0.029)	0.043 (0.028)
Trust*\$50,000	-0.049 (0.074)	0.015 (0.043)	-0.055 (0.043)	0.026 (0.040)	-0.055 (0.040)
Full Ext. Tr.	0.099* (0.053)	0.041 (0.031)	-0.009 (0.031)	0.019 (0.029)	0.091*** (0.029)
FullExt*\$50,000	0.017 (0.074)	0.019 (0.043)	-0.007 (0.043)	0.058 (0.040)	-0.046 (0.040)
Fairness Tr.	0.308*** (0.054)	0.091*** (0.032)	0.106*** (0.030)	0.080*** (0.029)	0.168*** (0.028)
Fairness*\$50,000	-0.197*** (0.073)	-0.076* (0.043)	-0.080* (0.042)	-0.023 (0.040)	-0.105*** (0.039)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R2	0.392	0.170	0.171	0.294	0.314
Observations	4371	4371	4371	4371	4371

**Note.** This table replicates the main treatment effects (Table 2) with an indicator that the respondent has a yearly income above \$50,000 interacted with each treatment. Controls include political leaning, gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, geographic region, trust in government, and pre-treatment views on economic fairness (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table H25: Horse-Race: Predictive power of beliefs on redistributive preferences: Respondents with annual incomes above \$100,000

	(1) RP Index b/se	(2) RP Index b/se	(3) RP Index b/se	(4) RP Index b/se	(5) RP Index b/se	(6) RP Index b/se
Rich because of luck		0.417*** (0.136)				0.251** (0.120)
Society is unfair			0.600*** (0.140)			0.427*** (0.130)
Belief uneq countr. worse.				0.639*** (0.123)		0.371*** (0.116)
Society changes for the worse				0.264** (0.127)		0.026 (0.127)
Leans Republican					-0.411** (0.201)	-0.186 (0.183)
Sanders/Harris-supporter					0.558*** (0.206)	0.362* (0.194)
Trusts the government						0.568*** (0.142)
Taxation reduces work						-0.009 (0.137)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adjusted R2	0.170	0.359	0.327	0.344	0.238	0.484
Observations	187	187	187	187	187	187

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression of different redistributive preference outcomes on fairness views, political views, externality beliefs and attitudes towards the government, as well as socio-economic control variables, restricting the sample to respondents with annual incomes above \$100,000. Column 1 only includes demographic controls (to show the adjusted  $R^2$  before adding the relevant covariates). The predictive power is defined as the adjusted  $R^2$  in the relevant column minus the adjusted  $R^2$  in Column 1. Controls include gender, race, age-group, education, employment status, and geographic region (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. All question answers are in pre-specified binary form designed to for 50/50 splits. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table H26: Horse-Race: Predictive power of beliefs on redistributive preferences: Respondents with annual incomes below \$100,000

	(1) RP Index b/se	(2) RP Index b/se	(3) RP Index b/se	(4) RP Index b/se	(5) RP Index b/se	(6) RP Index b/se
Rich because of luck		0.671*** (0.070)				0.446*** (0.068)
Society is unfair			0.635*** (0.068)			0.431*** (0.066)
Belief uneq countr. worse.				0.384*** (0.066)		0.253*** (0.058)
Society changes for the worse				0.728*** (0.065)		0.328*** (0.061)
Leans Republican					-0.434*** (0.103)	-0.245*** (0.087)
Sanders/Harris-supporter					0.510*** (0.106)	0.206** (0.093)
Trusts the government						0.385*** (0.075)
Taxation reduces work						-0.143** (0.070)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adjusted R2	0.082	0.388	0.291	0.270	0.118	0.491
Observations	745	745	745	745	745	745

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression of different redistributive preference outcomes on fairness views, political views, externality beliefs and attitudes towards the government, as well as socio-economic control variables, restricting the sample to respondents with annual incomes below \$100,000. Column 1 only includes demographic controls (to show the adjusted  $R^2$  before adding the relevant covariates). The predictive power is defined as the adjusted  $R^2$  in the relevant column minus the adjusted  $R^2$  in Column 1. Controls include gender, race, age-group, education, employment status, and geographic region (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. All question answers are in pre-specified binary form designed to for 50/50 splits. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table H27: First-stage outcomes: Treatment effects interacted with being Republican-leaning

	(1) General neg. ext. b/se	(2) Mention: Crime b/se	(3) Mention: Trust b/se	(4) Mention: Quality of life b/se	(5) Mention: Unfairness b/se
Crime Ext. Tr.	0.072*** (0.027)	0.162*** (0.026)	0.013 (0.022)	0.022 (0.026)	-0.028 (0.030)
Crime*Rep-leaning	0.030 (0.041)	-0.032 (0.034)	0.018 (0.027)	0.009 (0.032)	0.034 (0.039)
Trust Ext. Tr.	0.032 (0.028)	0.031 (0.024)	0.088*** (0.025)	0.025 (0.027)	0.012 (0.032)
Trust*Rep-leaning	0.034 (0.042)	-0.020 (0.030)	-0.001 (0.031)	0.003 (0.033)	0.009 (0.041)
Full Ext. Tr.	0.104*** (0.026)	0.116*** (0.026)	0.031 (0.023)	0.060** (0.028)	-0.014 (0.031)
FullExt*Rep-leaning	-0.037 (0.042)	-0.048 (0.033)	0.002 (0.028)	-0.019 (0.034)	0.017 (0.041)
Fairness Tr.	0.099*** (0.026)	0.012 (0.022)	0.013 (0.022)	0.007 (0.026)	0.026 (0.032)
Fairness*Rep-leaning	-0.046 (0.041)	-0.023 (0.028)	-0.005 (0.026)	0.067** (0.033)	0.040 (0.042)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R2	0.160	0.052	0.053	0.059	0.070
Observations	4371	4371	4371	4371	4371

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression of the first-stage outcomes on the treatment dummies, where we have included the interaction of treatment dummies with the respondent self-reporting as leaning Republican. The relevant first-stage outcomes for the externality treatments (Row 1-6) are in Columns 1-4. The relevant first-stage outcomes for the fairness treatment (Row 7-8) are in Column 5. Controls include political leaning, gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, geographic region, trust in government, and pre-treatment views on economic fairness (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table H28: Horse-Race: Predictive power of beliefs on redistributive preferences: Democratic-leaning respondents

	(1) RP Index b/se	(2) RP Index b/se	(3) RP Index b/se	(4) RP Index b/se	(5) RP Index b/se
Rich because of luck	0.500*** (0.093)				0.457*** (0.089)
Society is unfair	0.475*** (0.086)				0.347*** (0.090)
Belief uneq countr. worse.		0.404*** (0.081)			0.381*** (0.080)
Society changes for the worse		0.480*** (0.084)			0.238*** (0.089)
Trusts the government			-0.038 (0.084)	0.011 (0.072)	
Taxation reduces work			-0.030 (0.082)	-0.062 (0.076)	
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adjusted R2	0.021	0.204	0.165	0.017	0.267
Observations	452	452	452	452	452

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression of different redistributive preference outcomes on fairness views, political views, externality beliefs and attitudes towards the government, as well as socio-economic control variables, restricting the sample to Democratic-leaning respondents. Column 1 only includes demographic controls (to show the adjusted  $R^2$  before adding the relevant covariates). The predictive power is defined as the adjusted  $R^2$  in the relevant column minus the adjusted  $R^2$  in Column 1. Controls include gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, and geographic region (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. All question answers are in pre-specified binary form designed to for 50/50 splits. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

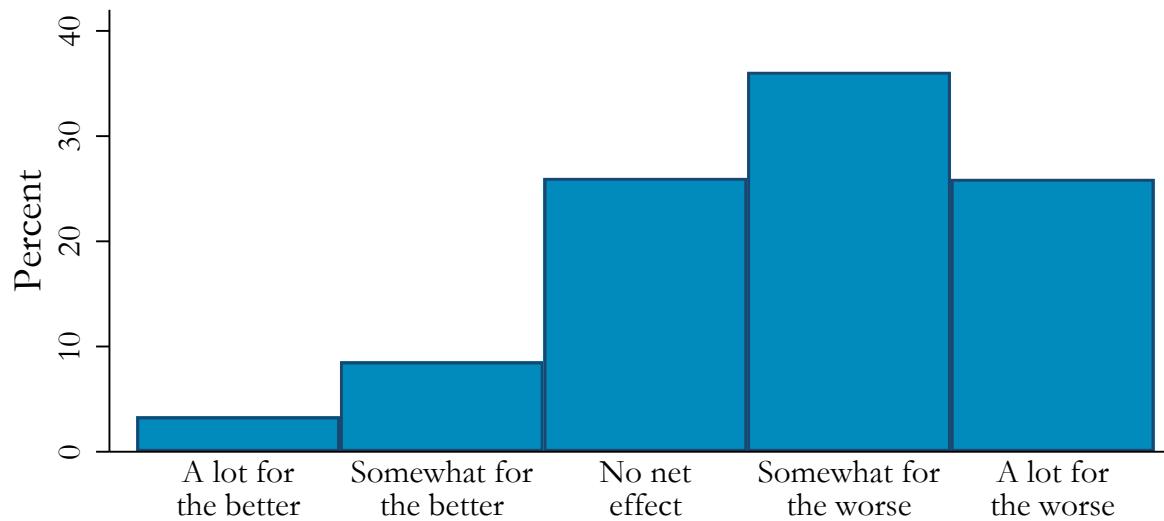
Table H29: Horse-Race: Predictive power of beliefs on redistributive preferences: Republican-leaning respondents

	(1) RP Index b/se	(2) RP Index b/se	(3) RP Index b/se	(4) RP Index b/se	(5) RP Index b/se
Rich because of luck	0.488*** (0.078)				0.395*** (0.077)
Society is unfair	0.548*** (0.079)				0.457*** (0.077)
Belief uneq countr. worse.		0.272*** (0.079)		0.185*** (0.070)	
Society changes for the worse		0.513*** (0.079)		0.272*** (0.071)	
Trusts the government			0.396*** (0.116)	0.317*** (0.103)	
Taxation reduces work			-0.006 (0.078)	0.034 (0.065)	
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adjusted R2	0.158	0.372	0.281	0.180	0.422
Observations	480	480	480	480	480

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression of different redistributive preference outcomes on fairness views, political views, externality beliefs and attitudes towards the government, as well as socio-economic control variables, restricting the sample to Democratic-leaning respondents. Column 1 only includes demographic controls (to show the adjusted  $R^2$  before adding the relevant covariates). The predictive power is defined as the adjusted  $R^2$  in the relevant column minus the adjusted  $R^2$  in Column 1. Controls include gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, and geographic region (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. All question answers are in pre-specified binary form designed to for 50/50 splits. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

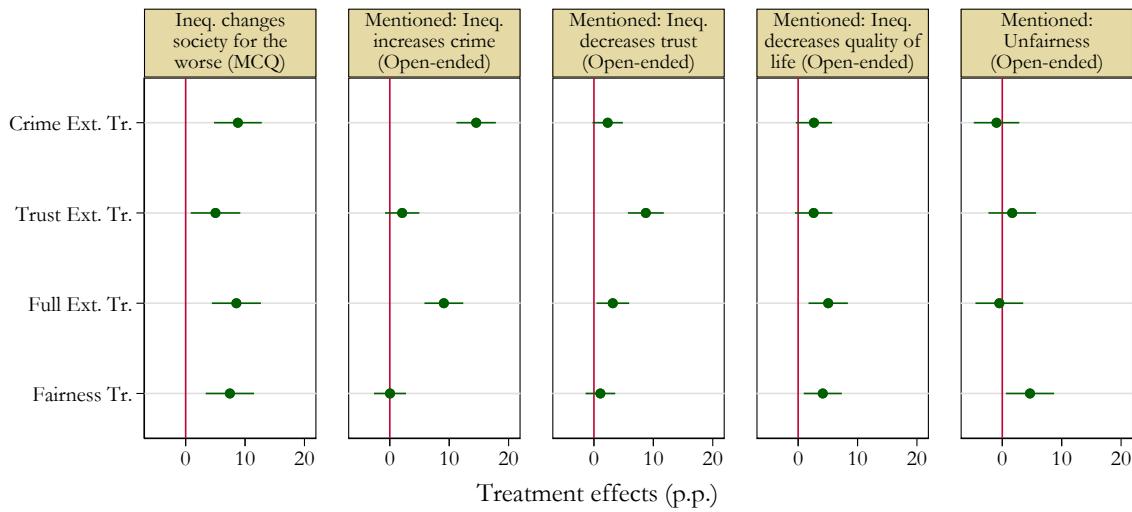
## I Appendix Figures: Not Referenced in Main Text

Figure I1: General inequality externality beliefs (supplement to Section 3)



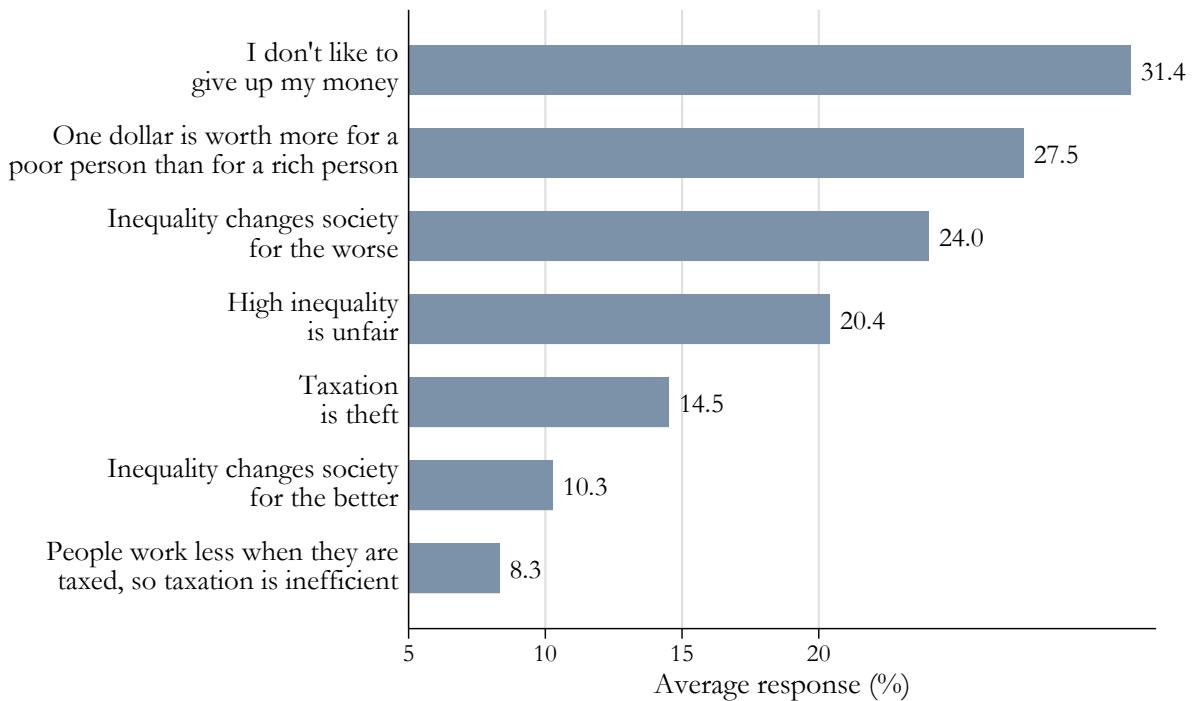
**Note.** Question text from Survey 1: “*Generally speaking, do you think more economic inequality changes society for the better or for the worse?*”.  $N = 3,292$  across Survey 1 and Survey 2 (pooled sample). Question text differs across surveys; see Appendix C.2 for more details. The accompanying data is shown in Table C1.

Figure I2: First-stage Effects With Fairness Treatment: Supplement to Figure 8



**Note.** This figure duplicates Figure 8 with the inclusion of the fairness treatment described in Appendix E.7. “Ineq. changes society for the worse” denotes a binary variable defined as one if the respondent answers “[Somewhat / A lot] for the worse” to the question “Generally speaking, do you think more economic inequality changes society for the better or for the worse?”. The remaining five columns denote binary variables defined as one if the respondent mentions how inequality negatively influences society through the given variable when answering the open-ended question “How do you think economic inequality changes society?”, defined by GPT-4o Mini with prompts shown in Appendix D.4. Only mentions implying a negative inequality externality dimension are included. Full question texts are shown in Appendix K.3. Each treatment group is compared to the merged control group. Table H7 presents point estimates and robust standard errors. Figures G15-G16 extend the methodology to the other inequality externalities discussed in Section 3, and to the share of respondents who mention at least one positive / negative inequality externality. Table E2 shows the prevalence of key words in each treatment’s open-ended answers (“crime”, “trust”, and “video”). Tables H10-H11 show first-stage outcomes from multiple-choice questions. Controls include political leaning, gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, geographic region, trust in government, and pre-treatment views on economic fairness (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Error bars characterize 95% confidence intervals.

Figure I3: Share of subjects that rank a given motive first (supplement to Figure 9)



**Note.** Share of respondents who ranked the given motive weakly first. When a respondent ranked several motives equally, all are counted (which means the total percentage is above 100%). Question text: “*When thinking about your preferred level of redistribution, what matters most to you? Please indicate what dimensions matter by giving scores below that add up to 100.*” Answer option texts are identical to graph labels except for the positive and negative externality options, where the question labels also included “(more inequality → a better society through various ways)” and “(more inequality → a worse society through various ways)” respectively. Data from merged sample. N=4,371.

## J Appendix Tables: Not Referenced in Main Text

Table J1: Distribution of Externality Beliefs in Survey 1 (Control Group)

	Crime	Corr- ruption	Pol. polar.	Social unrest	Unemp- loyment	Inno- vation	Econ. growth	Public goods	Quality of life	Dem. inst.	Trust
Increases	76%	69%	68%	68%	53%	22%	19%	14%	14%	12%	10%
No change	16%	20%	23%	20%	30%	36%	29%	28%	26%	32%	22%
Decreases	8%	11%	10%	12%	17%	42%	52%	58%	59%	56%	68%
Respondents	932	634	630	932	641	657	932	643	628	705	932

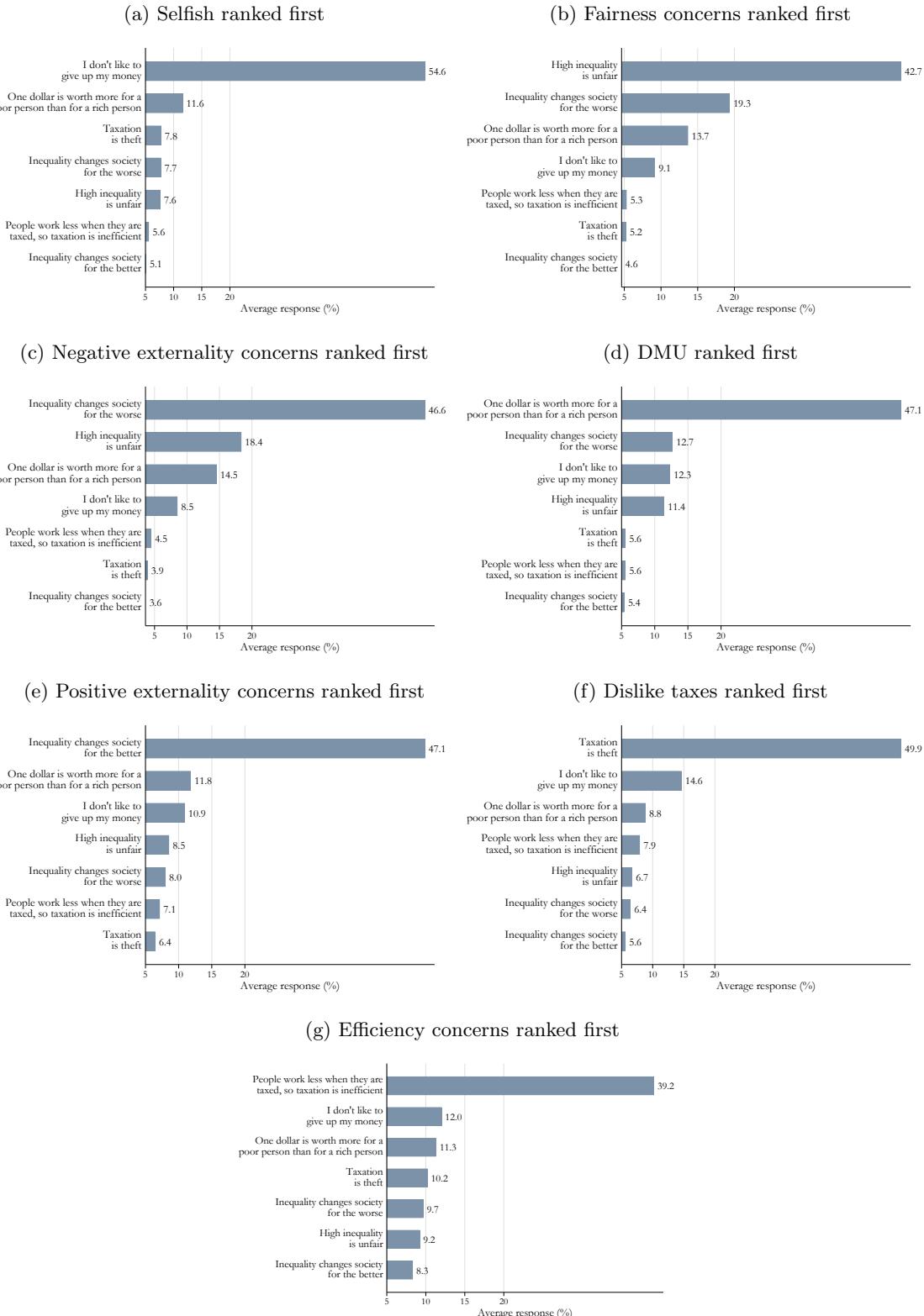
**Note.** This is the corresponding table to Table H3 for Survey 1 respondents, control group only. Shows the distribution of specific externality beliefs in Survey 1. “Increase” is the share of respondents that state that inequality “increases a lot” or “increases somewhat” the outcome. “No change” is the share of respondents that state that inequality does not induce a change on the outcome. “Decrease” is the share of respondents that state that inequality “decreases a lot” or “decreases somewhat” the societal outcome. Passive control respondents were asked every question, while active control respondents were asked the crime, trust, social unrest, and economic growth questions along with a random subset of three additional questions. This randomness explains the slightly different sample sizes. For the equivalent table in Survey 2 see Table J2.

Table J2: Distribution of Externality Beliefs in Survey 2

	Crime	Corr- ruption	Pol. polar.	Social unrest	Inno- vation	Econ. growth	Dem. inst.	Trust	Placebo	Attent. Incr.	Attent. Decr.
Increases	74%	65%	65%	71%	27%	25%	13%	10%	5%	3%	95%
No change	18%	24%	23%	17%	35%	23%	30%	23%	89%	2%	2%
Decreases	9%	11%	12%	12%	38%	52%	58%	67%	6%	94%	3%
Respondents	2360	2360	2360	2360	2360	2360	2360	2360	2360	2219	1945

**Note.** This is the corresponding table to Table H3 for Survey 2 respondents. Shows the distribution of specific externality beliefs in Survey 2. “Increase” is the share of respondents that state that inequality “increases a lot” or “increases somewhat” the outcome. “No change” is the share of respondents that state that inequality does not induce a change on the outcome. “Decrease” is the share of respondents that state that inequality “decreases a lot” or “decreases somewhat” the outcome. For the equivalent table in Survey 1 see Table J1.

Figure I4: Share of points going to each motive conditional on the given motive attaining the highest share of points (supplement to Figure 9)



**Note.** Question text: “When thinking about your preferred level of redistribution, what matters most to you? Please indicate what dimensions matter by giving scores below that add up to 100.” Answer option texts are identical to graph labels except for the positive and negative externality options, where the question labels also included “(more inequality → a better society through various ways)” and “(more inequality → a worse society through various ways)” respectively. Data is the merged descriptive sample.

Table J3: Balance table Passive vs. Active control

Variable	(1) Passive Control	(2) Active Control	(3) Difference
Leans Republican	0.532 (0.499)	0.492 (0.501)	-0.039 (0.033)
Prior belief unfair	0.519 (0.500)	0.508 (0.501)	-0.011 (0.033)
Trusts the government	0.288 (0.453)	0.327 (0.470)	0.039 (0.031)
Male	0.498 (0.500)	0.495 (0.501)	-0.003 (0.033)
Black	0.087 (0.283)	0.081 (0.274)	-0.006 (0.018)
Neither black or white	0.162 (0.369)	0.107 (0.309)	-0.055** (0.022)
Income: 25-50k	0.331 (0.471)	0.249 (0.433)	-0.082*** (0.030)
Income: 50-100k	0.257 (0.437)	0.312 (0.464)	0.056* (0.030)
Income: 100k and more	0.199 (0.400)	0.203 (0.403)	0.004 (0.027)
Age 30-39	0.164 (0.370)	0.188 (0.391)	0.024 (0.025)
Age 40-49	0.182 (0.386)	0.150 (0.357)	-0.032 (0.025)
Age 50-59	0.128 (0.335)	0.147 (0.355)	0.019 (0.023)
Age 60-69	0.175 (0.380)	0.162 (0.369)	-0.012 (0.025)
Age 70 and above	0.206 (0.405)	0.223 (0.417)	0.017 (0.027)
4-year college degree or more	0.459 (0.499)	0.513 (0.500)	0.054 (0.033)
Unemployed	0.099 (0.298)	0.107 (0.309)	0.008 (0.020)
Outside the labor force	0.457 (0.499)	0.431 (0.496)	-0.026 (0.033)
West	0.258 (0.438)	0.206 (0.405)	-0.053* (0.028)
North-East	0.138 (0.345)	0.190 (0.393)	0.053** (0.025)
Midwest	0.238 (0.426)	0.228 (0.420)	-0.009 (0.028)
Prior belief unfair	0.519 (0.500)	0.508 (0.501)	-0.011 (0.033)
Belief work less if tax	0.400 (0.490)	0.376 (0.485)	-0.024 (0.032)
Trusts the government	0.288 (0.453)	0.327 (0.470)	0.039 (0.031)
Belief pay less than prod.	0.723 (0.448)	0.742 (0.438)	0.020 (0.029)
Belief uneq countr. worse.	0.584 (0.493)	0.617 (0.487)	0.033 (0.032)
Observations	538	394	932

**Note.** This table represents mean (standard deviations) for pre-treatment beliefs and characteristics in the Passive Control (column 1) and Active Control (column 2) groups. Column (3) characterizes the difference across the two. Significance levels: \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table J4: Balance table Crime vs. Control

Variable	(1) Control	(2) Crime	(3) Difference
Leans Republican	0.515 (0.500)	0.525 (0.500)	0.010 (0.023)
Prior belief unfair	0.514 (0.500)	0.529 (0.499)	0.016 (0.023)
Trusts the government	0.305 (0.461)	0.285 (0.452)	-0.020 (0.021)
Male	0.497 (0.500)	0.466 (0.499)	-0.031 (0.023)
Black	0.085 (0.279)	0.095 (0.294)	0.011 (0.013)
Neither black or white	0.138 (0.346)	0.128 (0.334)	-0.011 (0.016)
Income: 25-50k	0.296 (0.457)	0.267 (0.443)	-0.029 (0.021)
Income: 50-100k	0.280 (0.449)	0.307 (0.461)	0.026 (0.021)
Income: 100k and more	0.201 (0.401)	0.192 (0.394)	-0.009 (0.018)
Age 30-39	0.174 (0.379)	0.158 (0.365)	-0.016 (0.017)
Age 40-49	0.168 (0.374)	0.166 (0.372)	-0.002 (0.017)
Age 50-59	0.136 (0.343)	0.144 (0.351)	0.007 (0.016)
Age 60-69	0.170 (0.375)	0.182 (0.386)	0.013 (0.018)
Age 70 and above	0.214 (0.410)	0.211 (0.408)	-0.002 (0.019)
4-year college degree or more	0.482 (0.500)	0.498 (0.500)	0.017 (0.023)
Unemployed	0.102 (0.303)	0.093 (0.291)	-0.009 (0.014)
Outside the labor force	0.446 (0.497)	0.426 (0.495)	-0.021 (0.023)
West	0.236 (0.425)	0.269 (0.444)	0.033 (0.020)
North-East	0.160 (0.367)	0.166 (0.372)	0.006 (0.017)
Midwest	0.234 (0.424)	0.175 (0.380)	-0.059*** (0.019)
Prior belief unfair	0.514 (0.500)	0.529 (0.499)	0.016 (0.023)
Belief work less if tax	0.389 (0.488)	0.372 (0.484)	-0.018 (0.022)
Trusts the government	0.305 (0.461)	0.285 (0.452)	-0.020 (0.021)
Belief pay less than prod.	0.731 (0.444)	0.738 (0.440)	0.007 (0.021)
Belief uneq countr. worse.	0.598 (0.491)	0.643 (0.479)	0.045** (0.022)
Observations	932	933	1,865

**Note.** This table represents mean (standard deviations) for pre-treatment beliefs and characteristics in the Control (column 1) and Crime (column 2) groups. Column (3) characterizes the difference across the two. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table J5: Balance table Trust vs. Control

Variable	(1) Control	(2) Trust	(3) Difference
Leans Republican	0.515 (0.500)	0.527 (0.500)	0.012 (0.024)
Prior belief unfair	0.514 (0.500)	0.526 (0.500)	0.012 (0.024)
Trusts the government	0.305 (0.461)	0.325 (0.469)	0.020 (0.022)
Male	0.497 (0.500)	0.476 (0.500)	-0.020 (0.024)
Black	0.085 (0.279)	0.103 (0.304)	0.018 (0.014)
Neither black or white	0.138 (0.346)	0.127 (0.333)	-0.011 (0.016)
Income: 25-50k	0.296 (0.457)	0.320 (0.467)	0.024 (0.022)
Income: 50-100k	0.280 (0.449)	0.282 (0.450)	0.002 (0.022)
Income: 100k and more	0.201 (0.401)	0.171 (0.377)	-0.030 (0.019)
Age 30-39	0.174 (0.379)	0.172 (0.378)	-0.002 (0.018)
Age 40-49	0.168 (0.374)	0.166 (0.372)	-0.002 (0.018)
Age 50-59	0.136 (0.343)	0.145 (0.353)	0.009 (0.017)
Age 60-69	0.170 (0.375)	0.164 (0.370)	-0.006 (0.018)
Age 70 and above	0.214 (0.410)	0.213 (0.410)	-0.000 (0.020)
4-year college degree or more	0.482 (0.500)	0.468 (0.499)	-0.014 (0.024)
Unemployed	0.102 (0.303)	0.099 (0.299)	-0.003 (0.014)
Outside the labor force	0.446 (0.497)	0.455 (0.498)	0.008 (0.024)
West	0.236 (0.425)	0.248 (0.432)	0.012 (0.021)
North-East	0.160 (0.367)	0.162 (0.369)	0.003 (0.018)
Midwest	0.234 (0.424)	0.215 (0.411)	-0.019 (0.020)
Prior belief unfair	0.514 (0.500)	0.526 (0.500)	0.012 (0.024)
Belief work less if tax	0.389 (0.488)	0.364 (0.481)	-0.026 (0.023)
Trusts the government	0.305 (0.461)	0.325 (0.469)	0.020 (0.022)
Belief pay less than prod.	0.731 (0.444)	0.769 (0.422)	0.038* (0.021)
Belief uneq countr. worse.	0.598 (0.491)	0.636 (0.481)	0.039* (0.023)
Observations	932	825	1,757

**Note.** This table represents mean (standard deviations) for pre-treatment beliefs and characteristics in the Control (column 1) and Trust (column 2) groups. Column (3) characterizes the difference across the two. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table J6: Balance table Full ext. vs. Control

Variable	(1) Control	(2) FullExt	(3) Difference
Leans Republican	0.515 (0.500)	0.507 (0.500)	-0.008 (0.024)
Prior belief unfair	0.514 (0.500)	0.523 (0.500)	0.009 (0.024)
Trusts the government	0.305 (0.461)	0.303 (0.460)	-0.002 (0.022)
Male	0.497 (0.500)	0.497 (0.500)	0.000 (0.024)
Black	0.085 (0.279)	0.091 (0.288)	0.007 (0.014)
Neither black or white	0.138 (0.346)	0.158 (0.365)	0.020 (0.017)
Income: 25-50k	0.296 (0.457)	0.290 (0.454)	-0.006 (0.022)
Income: 50-100k	0.280 (0.449)	0.335 (0.472)	0.055** (0.022)
Income: 100k and more	0.201 (0.401)	0.158 (0.365)	-0.042** (0.018)
Age 30-39	0.174 (0.379)	0.168 (0.374)	-0.006 (0.018)
Age 40-49	0.168 (0.374)	0.180 (0.385)	0.012 (0.018)
Age 50-59	0.136 (0.343)	0.133 (0.340)	-0.003 (0.016)
Age 60-69	0.170 (0.375)	0.177 (0.382)	0.007 (0.018)
Age 70 and above	0.214 (0.410)	0.188 (0.391)	-0.026 (0.019)
4-year college degree or more	0.482 (0.500)	0.533 (0.499)	0.051** (0.024)
Unemployed	0.102 (0.303)	0.083 (0.276)	-0.019 (0.014)
Outside the labor force	0.446 (0.497)	0.403 (0.491)	-0.043* (0.024)
West	0.236 (0.425)	0.245 (0.430)	0.009 (0.021)
North-East	0.160 (0.367)	0.153 (0.360)	-0.007 (0.017)
Midwest	0.234 (0.424)	0.227 (0.419)	-0.006 (0.020)
Prior belief unfair	0.514 (0.500)	0.523 (0.500)	0.009 (0.024)
Belief work less if tax	0.389 (0.488)	0.350 (0.477)	-0.040* (0.023)
Trusts the government	0.305 (0.461)	0.303 (0.460)	-0.002 (0.022)
Belief pay less than prod.	0.731 (0.444)	0.775 (0.418)	0.044** (0.021)
Belief uneq countr. worse.	0.598 (0.491)	0.616 (0.487)	0.018 (0.023)
Observations	932	809	1,741

**Note.** This table represents mean (standard deviations) for pre-treatment beliefs and characteristics in the Control (column 1) and Full Externality (column 2) groups. Column (3) characterizes the difference across the two. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table J7: Balance table Fairness vs. Control

Variable	(1) Control	(2) Fairness	(3) Difference
Leans Republican	0.515 (0.500)	0.526 (0.500)	0.011 (0.024)
Prior belief unfair	0.514 (0.500)	0.500 (0.500)	-0.014 (0.024)
Trusts the government	0.305 (0.461)	0.275 (0.447)	-0.029 (0.021)
Male	0.497 (0.500)	0.540 (0.499)	0.043* (0.024)
Black	0.085 (0.279)	0.096 (0.295)	0.012 (0.014)
Neither black or white	0.138 (0.346)	0.148 (0.355)	0.010 (0.017)
Income: 25-50k	0.296 (0.457)	0.271 (0.445)	-0.025 (0.021)
Income: 50-100k	0.280 (0.449)	0.321 (0.467)	0.041* (0.022)
Income: 100k and more	0.201 (0.401)	0.201 (0.401)	0.000 (0.019)
Age 30-39	0.174 (0.379)	0.159 (0.366)	-0.014 (0.018)
Age 40-49	0.168 (0.374)	0.175 (0.381)	0.007 (0.018)
Age 50-59	0.136 (0.343)	0.151 (0.359)	0.015 (0.017)
Age 60-69	0.170 (0.375)	0.178 (0.383)	0.008 (0.018)
Age 70 and above	0.214 (0.410)	0.206 (0.405)	-0.007 (0.019)
4-year college degree or more	0.482 (0.500)	0.514 (0.500)	0.032 (0.024)
Unemployed	0.102 (0.303)	0.094 (0.292)	-0.008 (0.014)
Outside the labor force	0.446 (0.497)	0.436 (0.496)	-0.011 (0.023)
West	0.236 (0.425)	0.221 (0.415)	-0.015 (0.020)
North-East	0.160 (0.367)	0.156 (0.363)	-0.004 (0.017)
Midwest	0.234 (0.424)	0.212 (0.409)	-0.022 (0.020)
Prior belief unfair	0.514 (0.500)	0.500 (0.500)	-0.014 (0.024)
Belief work less if tax	0.389 (0.488)	0.354 (0.479)	-0.035 (0.023)
Trusts the government	0.305 (0.461)	0.275 (0.447)	-0.029 (0.021)
Belief pay less than prod.	0.731 (0.444)	0.736 (0.441)	0.005 (0.021)
Belief uneq countr. worse.	0.598 (0.491)	0.576 (0.495)	-0.022 (0.023)
Observations	932	872	1,804

**Note.** This table represents mean (standard deviations) for pre-treatment beliefs and characteristics in the Control (column 1) and Fairness (column 2) groups. Column (3) characterizes the difference across the two. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table J8: Non-monotonic beliefs

	Crime	Corrup-tion	Pol. polar.	Social - unrest	Inno-vation	Econ. growth	Dem. inst.	Trust
Yes (monotonic)	71%	65%	67%	67%	59%	57%	63%	68%
No (non-monotonic)	11%	16%	14%	15%	20%	18%	17%	15%
Don't know	18%	18%	19%	18%	22%	25%	20%	18%
Respondents	297	298	293	293	292	297	296	294

**Note.** The share of respondents who think their expressed inequality externality is non-monotonic in inequality level. Full question text: *In the earlier question you answered that “[Answer]”. Do you think this is true in any kind of country – no matter whether the country is initially very equal, very unequal, or anything else?*

Table J9: Emotional reactions to treatments

	(1) Active control	(2) Crime	(3) Trust	(4) Full externality	(5) Fairness
Anger	2.8%	6.1%	2.9%	7.8%	11.8%
Concern	19.5%	37.2%	28.2%	32.0%	32.9%
Surprise	10.8%	13.9%	12.5%	13.0%	12.9%
Interest	41.5%	37.1%	42.2%	37.8%	34.0%
Indifference	17.7%	17.7%	19.2%	17.5%	17.9%
Confusion	16.9%	4.2%	6.0%	5.8%	4.5%
Observations	390	927	822	806	867

**Note.** This table reports the emotions self-reported at the end of the survey for each treatment. Full question text: *After watching the video, what was your immediate reaction(s) to it? [Anger; Interest; Surprise; Indifference; Confusion; Concern].*

Table J10: Mediation analysis: Treatment effects including first-stage outcomes as regressors

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	RP Index b/se	RP Index b/se	RP Index b/se	RP Index b/se
Crime Ext. Tr.	0.037 (0.036)	-0.017 (0.036)	0.024 (0.034)	-0.009 (0.033)
Trust Ext. Tr.	0.043 (0.037)	0.011 (0.036)	0.019 (0.034)	0.003 (0.034)
Full Ext. Tr.	0.107*** (0.037)	0.051 (0.036)	0.087** (0.034)	0.054 (0.034)
Fairness Tr.	0.208*** (0.037)	0.170*** (0.035)	0.135*** (0.034)	0.124*** (0.033)
General neg. ext.		0.472*** (0.028)		0.301*** (0.027)
Mention: Crime		0.074** (0.036)		0.056* (0.034)
Mention: Trust		0.025 (0.043)		0.019 (0.041)
Mention: Growth		0.024 (0.044)		0.002 (0.042)
Mention: Dem. inst.		0.254*** (0.059)		0.207*** (0.056)
Mention: Unrest		0.073 (0.049)		0.045 (0.048)
Mention: Corruption		-0.130 (0.092)		-0.142 (0.087)
Mention: Pol. polar.		-0.043 (0.075)		-0.045 (0.073)
Mention: Innovation		-0.063 (0.104)		-0.020 (0.098)
Mention: Unemployment		0.080 (0.142)		0.083 (0.137)
Mention: Public goods		-0.005 (0.103)		-0.043 (0.110)
Mention: Quality of life		0.109*** (0.035)		0.050 (0.033)
Society is unfair (post)			0.508*** (0.029)	0.414*** (0.030)
Rich because of hard luck			0.406*** (0.029)	0.366*** (0.029)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R2	0.391	0.445	0.489	0.509
Observations	4371	4371	4371	4371

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression of different redistributive preference outcomes on the treatment indicators and post-treatment first-stage outcomes, as well as socio-economic control variables. Controls include political leaning, gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, geographic region, trust in government, and pre-treatment views on economic fairness (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. Significance levels: \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table J11: First-stage effects of treatments with population weights

	(1) General neg. ext. b/se	(2) Mention: Crime b/se	(3) Mention: Trust b/se	(4) Mention: Quality of life b/se	(5) Mention: Unfairness b/se
Crime Ext. Tr.	0.081*** (0.025)	0.149*** (0.019)	0.042*** (0.016)	0.016 (0.016)	-0.015 (0.022)
Trust Ext. Tr.	0.024 (0.027)	0.026 (0.017)	0.084*** (0.017)	0.022 (0.018)	0.009 (0.024)
Full Ext. Tr.	0.082*** (0.025)	0.088*** (0.019)	0.046*** (0.017)	0.056*** (0.020)	0.015 (0.025)
Fairness Tr.	0.079*** (0.025)	-0.001 (0.015)	0.022 (0.014)	0.044** (0.019)	0.078*** (0.024)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R2	0.155	0.058	0.047	0.048	0.064
Observations	4363	4363	4363	4363	4363

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression of the first-stage outcomes on the treatment dummies, where observations are reweighted to match representativeness by gender, race, age, political affiliation, college degree, income-group, and geographic region. Controls include political leaning, gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, geographic region, trust in government, and pre-treatment views on economic fairness (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table J12: Main treatment effects with population weights

	(1) RP Index b/se	(2) Wants redistribution b/se	(3) Gov. reduce ineq. b/se	(4) Ineq. is serious issue b/se	(5) Increase top taxes b/se
Crime Ext. Tr.	0.015 (0.046)	0.021 (0.025)	-0.016 (0.025)	0.025 (0.023)	-0.009 (0.024)
Trust Ext. Tr.	0.025 (0.050)	0.004 (0.027)	0.029 (0.026)	0.006 (0.026)	-0.004 (0.026)
Full Ext. Tr.	0.087* (0.046)	0.055** (0.026)	0.035 (0.025)	0.053** (0.024)	-0.018 (0.026)
Fairness Tr.	0.186*** (0.045)	0.032 (0.026)	0.060** (0.024)	0.106*** (0.023)	0.070*** (0.025)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R2	0.361	0.168	0.256	0.289	0.166
Observations	4371	4371	4371	4371	4371

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression of different redistributive preference outcomes and the treatment dummies, as well as socio-economic control variables. Controls include political leaning, gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, geographic region, trust in government, and pre-treatment views on economic fairness (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. Observations are reweighted to match representativeness by gender, race, age, political affiliation, college degree, income-group, and geographic region. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table J13: Main treatment effects, all controls shown

	(1) RP Index b/se	(2) Wants redistribution b/se	(3) Gov. reduce ineq. b/se	(4) Ineq. is serious issue b/se	(5) Increase top taxes b/se
Crime Ext. Tr.	0.037 (0.036)	0.031 (0.020)	0.007 (0.020)	0.020 (0.019)	-0.005 (0.021)
Trust Ext. Tr.	0.043 (0.037)	0.006 (0.021)	0.036* (0.020)	0.017 (0.020)	0.004 (0.022)
Full Ext. Tr.	0.107*** (0.037)	0.050** (0.021)	0.048** (0.020)	0.069*** (0.020)	-0.012 (0.022)
Fairness Tr.	0.208*** (0.037)	0.052** (0.021)	0.067*** (0.020)	0.115*** (0.019)	0.065*** (0.021)
Leans Republican	-0.635*** (0.030)	-0.190*** (0.017)	-0.264*** (0.016)	-0.249*** (0.016)	-0.210*** (0.016)
Prior belief unfair	0.707*** (0.027)	0.146*** (0.015)	0.260*** (0.014)	0.350*** (0.015)	0.260*** (0.015)
Trusts the government	0.174*** (0.028)	0.070*** (0.017)	0.115*** (0.015)	0.050*** (0.015)	0.016 (0.016)
Male	-0.138*** (0.026)	-0.056*** (0.015)	-0.036*** (0.014)	-0.046*** (0.013)	-0.061*** (0.015)
Black	0.016 (0.045)	0.081*** (0.028)	0.000 (0.026)	0.066*** (0.023)	-0.124*** (0.026)
Neither black or white	0.077** (0.037)	0.060*** (0.021)	0.038* (0.020)	0.022 (0.019)	-0.009 (0.021)
Income: 25-50k	0.018 (0.036)	-0.011 (0.020)	0.009 (0.019)	-0.012 (0.018)	0.039* (0.020)
Income: 50-100k	-0.084** (0.036)	-0.038* (0.020)	-0.038** (0.019)	-0.052*** (0.019)	0.008 (0.020)
Income: 100k and more	-0.131*** (0.042)	-0.055** (0.024)	-0.048** (0.022)	-0.082*** (0.022)	-0.004 (0.024)
Age 30-39	0.103** (0.046)	0.021 (0.027)	0.060** (0.025)	0.018 (0.024)	0.050* (0.026)
Age 40-49	0.024 (0.046)	-0.014 (0.027)	-0.029 (0.025)	-0.013 (0.024)	0.091*** (0.026)
Age 50-59	-0.046 (0.049)	-0.090*** (0.028)	-0.055** (0.027)	-0.036 (0.026)	0.114*** (0.027)
Age 60-69	-0.170*** (0.048)	-0.147*** (0.028)	-0.132*** (0.026)	-0.084*** (0.025)	0.119*** (0.027)
Age 70 and above	-0.274*** (0.050)	-0.183*** (0.028)	-0.225*** (0.027)	-0.098*** (0.026)	0.112*** (0.027)
4-year college degree or more	-0.041 (0.027)	-0.001 (0.015)	-0.029** (0.014)	-0.018 (0.014)	-0.012 (0.015)
Unemployed	0.029 (0.047)	-0.003 (0.026)	0.000 (0.025)	0.012 (0.024)	0.032 (0.026)
Outside the labor force	-0.029 (0.030)	-0.024 (0.017)	-0.021 (0.016)	-0.042*** (0.016)	0.046*** (0.017)
West	-0.018 (0.032)	-0.016 (0.018)	0.000 (0.017)	-0.016 (0.017)	0.006 (0.018)
North-East	0.113*** (0.036)	0.033 (0.021)	0.051*** (0.019)	0.022 (0.019)	0.057*** (0.020)
Midwest	0.010 (0.032)	-0.017 (0.018)	-0.010 (0.017)	-0.003 (0.017)	0.044** (0.018)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R2	0.391	0.169	0.293	0.313	0.170
Observations	4371	4371	4371	4371	4371

**Note.** This table reports results from regressions that regress preferences for redistribution on treatment variables and reporting all controls. Standard errors are in parentheses. Significance levels: \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table J14: Main treatment effects, interacted with male dummy

	(1) RP Index b/se	(2) Wants redistribution b/se	(3) Gov. reduce ineq. b/se	(4) Ineq. is serious issue b/se	(5) Increase top taxes b/se
Crime Ext. Tr.	0.024 (0.051)	0.049* (0.030)	0.014 (0.028)	-0.010 (0.027)	-0.019 (0.029)
Crime*Male	0.024 (0.073)	-0.038 (0.041)	-0.015 (0.040)	0.060 (0.039)	0.027 (0.042)
Trust Ext. Tr.	0.012 (0.051)	0.005 (0.031)	0.036 (0.029)	-0.011 (0.028)	-0.012 (0.030)
Trust*Male	0.062 (0.075)	0.003 (0.043)	-0.001 (0.040)	0.056 (0.040)	0.032 (0.043)
Full Ext. Tr.	0.010 (0.052)	0.048 (0.032)	0.016 (0.029)	0.039 (0.028)	-0.088*** (0.030)
FullExt*Male	0.196*** (0.075)	0.004 (0.043)	0.065 (0.040)	0.060 (0.040)	0.153*** (0.043)
Fairness Tr.	0.194*** (0.053)	0.072** (0.032)	0.071** (0.029)	0.085*** (0.028)	0.052* (0.030)
Fairness*Male	0.030 (0.074)	-0.038 (0.043)	-0.006 (0.040)	0.059 (0.039)	0.029 (0.042)
Male	-0.198*** (0.051)	-0.041 (0.030)	-0.044 (0.028)	-0.092*** (0.028)	-0.108*** (0.030)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R2	0.392	0.169	0.294	0.314	0.173
Observations	4371	4371	4371	4371	4371

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression of different redistributive preference outcomes on the treatment indicators and their interaction with a male dummy. Controls include political leaning, gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, geographic region, trust in government, and pre-treatment views on economic fairness (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table J15: Main treatment effects, interacted with dummy indicating that the subject believes that the current economic system in the US is unfair

	(1) RP Index b/se	(2) Wants redistribution b/se	(3) Gov. reduce ineq. b/se	(4) Ineq. is serious issue b/se	(5) Increase top taxes b/se
Crime Ext. Tr.	0.022 (0.051)	-0.007 (0.027)	0.024 (0.028)	0.009 (0.028)	0.006 (0.032)
Crime*PriorUnfairBelief	0.030 (0.073)	0.073* (0.041)	-0.031 (0.040)	0.022 (0.039)	-0.021 (0.042)
Trust Ext. Tr.	0.039 (0.052)	-0.011 (0.028)	0.036 (0.028)	-0.004 (0.029)	0.036 (0.033)
Trust*PriorUnfairBelief	0.008 (0.074)	0.033 (0.042)	0.001 (0.040)	0.040 (0.040)	-0.062 (0.044)
Full Ext. Tr.	0.091* (0.053)	0.038 (0.028)	0.041 (0.029)	0.064** (0.030)	-0.011 (0.033)
FullExt*PriorUnfairBelief	0.031 (0.075)	0.024 (0.043)	0.013 (0.041)	0.010 (0.040)	-0.002 (0.043)
Fairness Tr.	0.147*** (0.052)	0.009 (0.028)	0.035 (0.028)	0.080*** (0.029)	0.088*** (0.032)
Fairness*PriorUnfairBelief	0.119 (0.073)	0.084** (0.042)	0.065* (0.039)	0.068* (0.039)	-0.046 (0.042)
Prior belief unfair	0.669*** (0.051)	0.103*** (0.030)	0.251*** (0.028)	0.322*** (0.028)	0.286*** (0.030)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R2	0.391	0.170	0.294	0.314	0.171
Observations	4371	4371	4371	4371	4371

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression of different redistributive preference outcomes on the treatment indicators and their interaction with pre-treatment fairness views. Controls include political leaning, gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, geographic region, trust in government, and pre-treatment views on economic fairness (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table J16: Predictive power of various beliefs with population weights

	(1) RP Index b/se	(2) RP Index b/se	(3) RP Index b/se	(4) RP Index b/se	(5) RP Index b/se	(6) RP Index b/se
Rich because of luck		0.613*** (0.079)				0.413*** (0.075)
Society is unfair		0.582*** (0.077)				0.392*** (0.074)
Belief uneq countr. worse.			0.474*** (0.072)			0.300*** (0.069)
Society changes for the worse			0.625*** (0.073)			0.279*** (0.076)
Leans Republican				-0.336*** (0.115)		-0.240*** (0.092)
Sanders/Harris-supporter				0.543*** (0.120)		0.364*** (0.098)
Trusts the government					0.326*** (0.087)	-0.002 (0.077)
Taxation reduces work					-0.089 (0.078)	0.018 (0.067)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adjusted R2	0.077	0.328	0.275	0.234	0.100	0.400
Observations	932	932	932	932	932	932

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression of different redistributive preference outcomes on fairness views, political views, externality beliefs and attitudes towards the government, as well as socio-economic control variables. Controls include gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, and geographic region (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. Observations are reweighted to match representativity by gender, race, age, political affiliation, college degree, income-group, and geographic region. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table J17: Main treatment effects, using all completed responses (no drops)

	(1) RP Index b/se	(2) Wants redistribution b/se	(3) Gov. reduce ineq. b/se	(4) Ineq. is serious issue b/se	(5) Increase top taxes b/se
Crime Ext. Tr.	0.039 (0.035)	0.034* (0.020)	0.013 (0.019)	0.023 (0.019)	-0.015 (0.020)
Trust Ext. Tr.	0.055 (0.036)	0.012 (0.021)	0.049** (0.019)	0.014 (0.020)	0.004 (0.021)
Full Ext. Tr.	0.098*** (0.036)	0.046** (0.020)	0.047** (0.019)	0.060*** (0.019)	-0.013 (0.021)
Fairness Tr.	0.202*** (0.036)	0.056*** (0.021)	0.070*** (0.019)	0.106*** (0.019)	0.056*** (0.020)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R2	0.360	0.169	0.272	0.277	0.159
Observations	4865	4865	4865	4865	4865

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression of different redistributive preference outcomes and the treatment dummies, as well as socio-economic control variables, when no respondents are excluded based on pre-specified criteria and post-survey quality checks. This includes respondents removed due to (i) being among the 5% fastest to finish the survey (238 respondents), (ii) moving past the video screen in less time than the video duration (152 respondents), and (iii) respondents who were manually classified as having low-quality answers (104 respondents). Controls include political leaning, gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, geographic region, trust in government, and pre-treatment views on economic fairness (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table J18: Predictive power of various beliefs using all completed responses

	(1) RP Index b/se	(2) RP Index b/se	(3) RP Index b/se	(4) RP Index b/se	(5) RP Index b/se	(6) RP Index b/se
Rich because of luck		0.567*** (0.061)				0.356*** (0.057)
Society is unfair		0.628*** (0.061)				0.440*** (0.058)
Belief uneq countr. worse.			0.455*** (0.059)			0.284*** (0.052)
Society changes for the worse			0.557*** (0.059)			0.167*** (0.055)
Leans Republican				-0.394*** (0.082)		-0.251*** (0.073)
Sanders/Harris-supporter				0.619*** (0.081)		0.400*** (0.075)
Trusts the government					0.352*** (0.061)	0.082 (0.054)
Taxation reduces work					-0.112* (0.061)	0.027 (0.050)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adjusted R2	0.000	0.273	0.169	0.237	0.031	0.412
Observations	1026	1026	1026	1026	1026	1026

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression of different redistributive preference outcomes on fairness views, political views, externality beliefs and attitudes towards the government, as well as socio-economic control variables. Controls include gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, and geographic region (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table J19: Main treatment effects, using only respondents that passed all attention checks

	(1) RP Index b/se	(2) Wants redistribution b/se	(3) Gov. reduce ineq. b/se	(4) Ineq. is serious issue b/se	(5) Increase top taxes b/se
Crime Ext. Tr.	0.029 (0.044)	0.036 (0.025)	0.009 (0.024)	0.008 (0.023)	-0.012 (0.025)
Trust Ext. Tr.	0.029 (0.046)	0.012 (0.026)	0.042* (0.024)	0.013 (0.024)	-0.024 (0.026)
Full Ext. Tr.	0.081* (0.045)	0.040 (0.026)	0.058** (0.024)	0.054** (0.024)	-0.035 (0.026)
Fairness Tr.	0.193*** (0.044)	0.052** (0.026)	0.079*** (0.024)	0.096*** (0.023)	0.052** (0.025)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R2	0.434	0.200	0.333	0.358	0.189
Observations	2950	2950	2950	2950	2950

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression of different redistributive preference outcomes and the treatment dummies, as well as socio-economic control variables. Controls include political leaning, gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, geographic region, trust in government, and pre-treatment views on economic fairness (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table J20: Main treatment effects, controlling for passing attention checks

	(1) RP Index b/se	(2) Wants redistribution b/se	(3) Gov. reduce ineq. b/se	(4) Ineq. is serious issue b/se	(5) Increase top taxes b/se
Crime Ext. Tr.	0.037 (0.036)	0.031 (0.020)	0.008 (0.020)	0.020 (0.019)	-0.005 (0.021)
Trust Ext. Tr.	0.042 (0.037)	0.005 (0.021)	0.036* (0.020)	0.017 (0.020)	0.003 (0.022)
Full Ext. Tr.	0.106*** (0.037)	0.050** (0.022)	0.048** (0.020)	0.070*** (0.020)	-0.015 (0.022)
Fairness Tr.	0.207*** (0.037)	0.051** (0.021)	0.068*** (0.020)	0.115*** (0.019)	0.064*** (0.021)
AllAttSuccess	0.021 (0.026)	0.010 (0.015)	-0.007 (0.014)	-0.011 (0.014)	0.039*** (0.015)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R2	0.391	0.169	0.293	0.313	0.172
Observations	4371.000	4371.000	4371.000	4371.000	4371.000

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression of different redistributive preference outcomes and the treatment dummies, as well as socio-economic control variables. Controls include political leaning, gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, geographic region, trust in government, and pre-treatment views on economic fairness (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. Interacting attention failures with treatments yield similar results. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table J21: First-stage effects, using only respondents that passed all attention checks

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	General neg. ext. b/se	Mention: Crime b/se	Mention: Trust b/se	Mention: Quality of life b/se	Mention: Unfairness b/se
Crime Ext. Tr.	0.099*** (0.025)	0.169*** (0.022)	0.022 (0.017)	0.023 (0.020)	-0.020 (0.025)
Trust Ext. Tr.	0.048* (0.025)	0.015 (0.019)	0.096*** (0.020)	0.010 (0.021)	0.007 (0.026)
Full Ext. Tr.	0.075*** (0.025)	0.110*** (0.022)	0.044** (0.019)	0.049** (0.022)	-0.003 (0.026)
Fairness Tr.	0.082*** (0.025)	-0.001 (0.018)	0.006 (0.017)	0.035* (0.021)	0.043 (0.026)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R2	0.166	0.059	0.057	0.059	0.072
Observations	2950	2950	2950	2950	2950

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression of the first-stage outcomes on the treatment dummies, where we have dropped any respondent who failed an attention check. Controls include political leaning, gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, geographic region, trust in government, and pre-treatment views on economic fairness (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table J22: Predictive power of various beliefs using only respondents that passed all attention checks

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	RP Index b/se	RP Index b/se	RP Index b/se	RP Index b/se	RP Index b/se	RP Index b/se
Rich because of luck		0.736*** (0.080)				0.451*** (0.077)
Society is unfair		0.667*** (0.080)				0.432*** (0.076)
Belief uneq countr. worse.			0.435*** (0.081)			0.265*** (0.070)
Society changes for the worse			0.753*** (0.080)			0.286*** (0.074)
Leans Republican				-0.458*** (0.111)		-0.289*** (0.098)
Sanders/Harris-supporter				0.644*** (0.111)		0.342*** (0.103)
Trusts the government					0.400*** (0.081)	-0.006 (0.075)
Taxation reduces work					-0.206** (0.084)	-0.032 (0.065)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Only Control Group	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adjusted R2	0.000	0.348	0.225	0.268	0.045	0.472
Observations	604.000	604.000	604.000	604.000	604.000	604.000

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression of different redistributive preference outcomes on fairness views, political views, externality beliefs and attitudes towards the government, as well as socio-economic control variables. Controls include gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, and geographic region (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table J23: Main treatment effects, dropping active control group

	(1) RP Index b/se	(2) Wants redistribution b/se	(3) Gov. reduce ineq. b/se	(4) Ineq. is serious issue b/se	(5) Increase top taxes b/se
Crime Ext. Tr.	0.058 (0.042)	0.024 (0.024)	0.016 (0.023)	0.014 (0.023)	0.029 (0.025)
Trust Ext. Tr.	0.064 (0.043)	-0.001 (0.025)	0.044* (0.023)	0.012 (0.023)	0.037 (0.026)
Full Ext. Tr.	0.127*** (0.043)	0.043* (0.025)	0.056** (0.024)	0.064*** (0.023)	0.021 (0.026)
Fairness Tr.	0.228*** (0.042)	0.045* (0.025)	0.076*** (0.023)	0.110*** (0.022)	0.099*** (0.025)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R2	0.392	0.172	0.292	0.317	0.167
Observations	3977	3977	3977	3977	3977

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression of different redistributive preference outcomes and the treatment dummies, as well as socio-economic control variables. Controls include political leaning, gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, geographic region, trust in government, and pre-treatment views on economic fairness (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table J24: First-stage effects, dropping active control group

	(1) Society changes for the worse b/se	(2) Mention: Crime b/se	(3) Mention: Trust b/se	(4) Mention: Quality of life b/se	(5) Mention: Unfairness b/se
Crime Ext. Tr.	0.098*** (0.024)	0.139*** (0.019)	0.024 (0.015)	0.025 (0.018)	-0.016 (0.023)
Trust Ext. Tr.	0.060** (0.025)	0.014 (0.017)	0.088*** (0.017)	0.025 (0.019)	0.011 (0.024)
Full Ext. Tr.	0.095*** (0.025)	0.084*** (0.019)	0.033** (0.016)	0.050** (0.019)	-0.011 (0.024)
Fairness Tr.	0.084*** (0.024)	-0.006 (0.016)	0.012 (0.015)	0.040** (0.019)	0.041* (0.024)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R2	0.158	0.052	0.054	0.056	0.070
Observations	3977	3977	3977	3977	3977

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression of the first-stage outcomes on the treatment dummies, where the active control group has been dropped. Controls include political leaning, gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, geographic region, trust in government, and pre-treatment views on economic fairness (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table J25: Main treatment effects, dropping passive control group

	(1) RP Index b/se	(2) Wants redistribution b/se	(3) Gov. reduce ineq. b/se	(4) Ineq. is serious issue b/se	(5) Increase top taxes b/se
Crime Ext. Tr.	0.010 (0.047)	0.039 (0.027)	-0.004 (0.025)	0.028 (0.026)	-0.049* (0.026)
Trust Ext. Tr.	0.016 (0.048)	0.014 (0.028)	0.024 (0.026)	0.025 (0.026)	-0.040 (0.027)
Full Ext. Tr.	0.081* (0.048)	0.058** (0.028)	0.036 (0.026)	0.079*** (0.026)	-0.056** (0.027)
Fairness Tr.	0.180*** (0.048)	0.060** (0.028)	0.055** (0.025)	0.123*** (0.025)	0.020 (0.027)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R2	0.390	0.170	0.294	0.314	0.176
Observations	3833	3833	3833	3833	3833

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression of different redistributive preference outcomes and the treatment dummies, as well as socio-economic control variables. Controls include political leaning, gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, geographic region, trust in government, and pre-treatment views on economic fairness (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table J26: First-stage effect, dropping passive control group

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Society changes for the worse b/se	Mention: Crime b/se	Mention: Trust b/se	Mention: Quality of life b/se	Mention: Unfairness b/se
Crime Ext. Tr.	0.075*** (0.027)	0.154*** (0.020)	0.022 (0.017)	0.028 (0.020)	-0.001 (0.025)
Trust Ext. Tr.	0.037 (0.027)	0.030 (0.018)	0.086*** (0.019)	0.028 (0.020)	0.026 (0.026)
Full Ext. Tr.	0.072*** (0.027)	0.100*** (0.020)	0.031* (0.017)	0.053** (0.021)	0.005 (0.026)
Fairness Tr.	0.061** (0.027)	0.010 (0.017)	0.010 (0.017)	0.044** (0.020)	0.056** (0.026)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R2	0.155	0.053	0.052	0.059	0.068
Observations	3833	3833	3833	3833	3833

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression of the first-stage outcomes on the treatment dummies, where the passive control group has been dropped. Controls include political leaning, gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, geographic region, trust in government, and pre-treatment views on economic fairness (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table J27: First-stage effects without controls

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Society changes for the worse b/se	Mention: Crime b/se	Mention: Trust b/se	Mention: Quality of life b/se	Mention: Unfairness b/se
Crime Ext. Tr.	0.092*** (0.022)	0.147*** (0.017)	0.022* (0.013)	0.030* (0.016)	-0.007 (0.020)
Trust Ext. Tr.	0.052** (0.023)	0.022 (0.015)	0.088*** (0.016)	0.028* (0.017)	0.017 (0.021)
Full Ext. Tr.	0.088*** (0.023)	0.092*** (0.017)	0.034** (0.014)	0.054*** (0.017)	-0.002 (0.021)
Fairness Tr.	0.068*** (0.023)	-0.001 (0.014)	0.005 (0.013)	0.036** (0.017)	0.040* (0.021)
Controls	No	No	No	No	No
R2	0.005	0.028	0.010	0.002	0.001
Observations	4371	4371	4371	4371	4371

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression of the first-stage outcomes on the treatment dummies, where we have not included any control variables. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table J28: Main treatment effects, using non-dichotomized variables

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	RP Index b/se	Wants redistribution (1-7) b/se	Gov. reduce ineq. (1-5) b/se	Ineq. is serious issue (1-5) b/se	Top tax preference (1-7) b/se
Crime Ext. Tr.	0.029 (0.036)	0.107 (0.069)	0.024 (0.048)	0.039 (0.044)	-0.043 (0.059)
Trust Ext. Tr.	0.030 (0.036)	-0.006 (0.071)	0.066 (0.049)	0.040 (0.045)	0.031 (0.061)
Full Ext. Tr.	0.098*** (0.036)	0.179** (0.071)	0.106** (0.049)	0.140*** (0.045)	0.007 (0.062)
Fairness Tr.	0.206*** (0.036)	0.288*** (0.071)	0.180*** (0.048)	0.263*** (0.044)	0.182*** (0.058)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R2	0.416	0.318	0.386	0.357	0.142
Observations	4371	4371	4371	4371	4371

**Note.** Main treatment effects with redistributive preference outcomes defined as in the questionnaire (without dichotomization). RP index is a standardized sum of all non-dichotomized questions. This table reports results from a regression of different redistributive preference outcomes and the treatment dummies, as well as socio-economic control variables. Controls include political leaning, gender, race, income-group, age-group, education, employment status, geographic region, trust in government, and pre-treatment views on economic fairness (see Appendix K.1 for definitions). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table J29: Predictive power of various beliefs without controls

	(1) RP Index b/se	(2) RP Index b/se	(3) RP Index b/se	(4) RP Index b/se	(5) RP Index b/se
Rich because of luck	-0.773*** (0.063)				-0.513*** (0.057)
Society is unfair	0.574*** (0.061)				0.364*** (0.058)
Belief uneq countr. worse.		0.407*** (0.063)			0.220*** (0.051)
Society changes for the worse		0.647*** (0.064)			0.229*** (0.055)
Leans Republican			-0.397*** (0.084)		-0.230*** (0.072)
Sanders/Harris-supporter			0.724*** (0.082)		0.453*** (0.072)
Trusts the government				0.448*** (0.060)	0.102* (0.052)
Taxation reduces work				-0.189*** (0.066)	-0.043 (0.049)
Controls	No	No	No	No	No
Adjusted R2	0.339	0.187	0.290	0.056	0.487
Observations	932	932	932	932	932

**Note.** This table reports results from a regression of different redistributive preference outcomes on fairness views, political views, externality beliefs and attitudes towards the government, as well as socio-economic control variables. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table J30: Main treatment effects, with FDR sharpened q-values

	(1) RP Index	(2) Wants redistribution	(3) Increase top taxes	(4) Gov. reduce ineq.	(5) Ineq. is serious issue
Crime Ext. Tr.	0.037	0.031	-0.005	0.007	0.020
p-value	(.308)	(.127)	(.817)	(.705)	(.313)
q-value	(.288)	(.147)	(.610)	(.597)	(.288)
Trust Ext. Tr.	0.043	0.006	0.004	0.036*	0.017
p-value	(.244)	(.800)	(.842)	(.075)	(.407)
q-value	(.256)	(.610)	(.610)	(.091)	(.324)
Full Ext. Tr.	0.107***	0.050**	-0.012	0.048**	0.069***
p-value	(.004)	(.019)	(.572)	(.018)	(.001)
q-value	(.011)	(.032)	(.475)	(.032)	(.004)
Fairness Tr.	0.208***	0.052**	0.065***	0.067***	0.115***
p-value	(.000)	(.015)	(.002)	(.001)	(.000)
q-value	(.001)	(.032)	(.007)	(.004)	(.001)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	4371	4371	4371	4371	4371

**Note.** This table reports FDR sharpened q-values from the regression in Table 2. p-values and q-values are in parentheses. *Significance levels:* \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

Table J31: Respondents' belief about Survey 1 bias by treatment group

	Right-Wing Bias (%)	No Bias (%)	Left-Wing Bias (%)
Crime tr.	5.68	71.49	22.83
Trust tr.	5.21	73.45	21.33
Full ext tr.	7.66	70.33	22.00
Fairness tr.	6.19	70.87	22.94
Control (passive)	7.81	73.98	18.22
Control (active)	6.85	72.84	20.30

Table J32: Treatment effects on right- and left-wing bias

	(1)
	LWB
	b/se
Crime Ext. Tr.	0.032*
	(0.018)
Trust Ext. Tr.	0.029
	(0.018)
Full Ext. Tr.	0.029
	(0.018)
Fairness Tr.	0.023
	(0.018)
Controls	Yes
R2	0.153
Observations	4371

**Note.** This table reports the treatment effect across respondents believing that the survey was left-wing biased. Full question text: *Thank you for answering the survey! Final question: Do you feel that this survey was biased? [Yes, left-wing biased; Yes, right-wing biased; No, it did not feel biased]* Robust standard errors are in parentheses. Significance levels: \* 10%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 1%.

## K List of Variables Used in the Main Body

### K.1 Demographics

All demographics are identical in Survey 1 and Survey 2.

#### K.1.1 Gender

What is your current gender? [Male; Female; Other / Not listed / Prefer not to answer]

#### K.1.2 Age

What is your age?

[18 - 100+]

#### K.1.3 Income

What was your total household income before taxes in 2019?

[\$0-\$5,000; \$5,000-\$15,000; \$15,000-\$24,999; \$25,000-\$34,999; \$35,000-\$49,999; \$50,000-\$74,999; \$75,000-\$99,999; \$100,000-\$149,999; \$150,000-\$199,999; \$200,000-\$1,000,000; \$1,000,000+]

#### K.1.4 Wealth

Please estimate your total household wealth. This means the total value of what your household owns, minus any debt or mortgages.

[Below \$0; \$0-\$1,000; \$1,000-\$5,000; \$5,000-\$10,000; \$10,000-\$25,000; \$25,000-\$50,000; \$50,000-\$100,000; \$100,000-\$200,000; \$200,000-\$500,000; \$500,000-\$1 million; \$1 million-\$5 million; \$5 million +]

#### K.1.5 Political Affiliation

In politics, as of today, do you consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat, or an independent?

[Republican; Democrat; Independent]

#### Independent Party Alignment [If Political Affiliation == Independent]

Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or the Democratic party?

[Republican Party; Democratic Party]

Note: Republican- and Democratic-leaning defined as Republicans (Democrats) and those who answer the Republican Party (Democratic Party) here.

#### K.1.6 Political Leaning

What political leaning best describes you?

[Very conservative; Somewhat conservative; In the center; Somewhat liberal; Very liberal; I don't follow politics]

### **K.1.7 Politician**

Which of these politicians do you agree with the most?

[*Bernie Sanders; Kamala Harris; Mitt Romney; Donald Trump*]

*Note: Sanders/Harris-supporter is defined as answering either Sanders or Harris to the above question.*

### **K.1.8 Race**

How would you describe your race?

[*European American/White; African American/Black; Hispanic/Latino; Native American; Asian/Asian American; Pacific Islander; Other*]

### **K.1.9 Education Level**

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)*]

*Note: Respondents defined as having a college degree if one of the following is indicated: 2-year College Degree; 4-year College Degree; Master's Degree; Doctoral Degree; Professional Degree (JD, MD, MBA)*

### **K.1.10 Employment Status**

Which 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)]*

### **K.1.11 Region**

In which state do you live in?

[Drop-down list]

*Note: For demographic controls we classify U.S. states into four regions, consistent with the U.S. Census Bureau's standard regional divisions:*

**South:** Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Arkansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Oklahoma, Texas, West Virginia, Washington D.C., Virginia.

**West:** Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming.

**Midwest:** Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin.

**Northeast:** Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont.

*The next two non-demographic variables are part of our standard set of controls.*

#### **K.1.12 Trust in government**

A dummy variable defined as answering “Almost always” or “A lot of the time” to the below question.

##### **Asked in both Survey 1 and Survey 2:**

How often do you think you can trust our federal government to do what is right?

[*Almost always; A lot of the time; Not very often; Almost never*]

#### **K.1.13 Pre-treatment fairness views / Unequal opportunity to succeed**

A dummy variable defined as answering “Totally agree” or “Somewhat agree” to the below question.

##### **Asked in both Survey 1 and Survey 2:**

How much do you agree with the following statement?

The distribution of money and wealth in the US is basically fair, because everybody has an equal opportunity to succeed.

[*Totally agree; Agree somewhat; Neither agree nor disagree; Somewhat disagree; Totally disagree*]

*Continues on next page*

## K.2 Specific inequality externality beliefs (Section 3.1 and throughout)

This subsection shows the full question text for all the specific externality questions in both surveys. See Section 2.4 and Appendix B.5 for additional details on the question design.

Note that we often analyze data with binary values indicating more or less of the given outcome. In Figure 6, for example, “Crime increases” is a binary value indicating “*More inequality → somewhat more crime*” or “*More inequality → a lot more crime*” for the questions described in Appendix K.2.1. These binary variables are also described as “Neg ext: Crime” and similar in Section 5.

A subset of respondents see the below questions with phrasing changes, which we discuss in Appendix C.8. Here we show the “inequality” phrasing.

### K.2.1 Inequality externality: Crime

Only Survey 1 data is used for analysis of the information experiment. We combine data from Survey 2 and the control group in Survey 1 for the descriptive analysis.

#### Survey 1:

**Please pay very close attention to this question.**

How does more economic inequality change **the amount of crime** in a country?

Note: When we say the amount of crime we mean the overall crime rate, including homicides, robberies, property crime and more.

[*More inequality → a lot less crime; More inequality → somewhat less crime; More inequality does not affect crime; More inequality → somewhat more crime; More inequality → a lot more crime*]

#### Survey 2:

This question is about the same increase in economic inequality. What do you think would happen to the amount of crime in the society?

In other words, **how do you think more economic inequality changes the amount of crime in a society?**

Note: When we say the amount of crime we mean the overall crime rate, including homicides, robberies, property crime and more.

[*More inequality → a lot less crime; More inequality → somewhat less crime; More inequality → No change in the amount of crime; More inequality → somewhat more crime; More inequality → a lot more crime*]

### K.2.2 Inequality externality: Corruption

Only Survey 1 data is used for analysis of the information experiment. We combine data from Survey 2 and the control group in Survey 1 for the descriptive analysis.

#### Survey 1:

**Please pay very close attention to this question.**

How does more economic inequality change **the amount of corruption** in a country?

[More inequality → **a lot less** corruption; More inequality → **somewhat less** corruption;  
More inequality **does not affect** corruption; More inequality → **somewhat more** corruption;  
More inequality → **a lot more** corruption]

### **Survey 2:**

This question is about the same increase in economic inequality. What do you think would happen to the amount of corruption in the society?

In other words, **how do you think more economic inequality changes the total amount of corruption in a society?**

Note: By corruption we mean dishonest or fraudulent acts committed by those in power, usually in the form of accepting bribes.

[More inequality → **a lot less** corruption; More inequality → **somewhat less** corruption;  
More inequality **does not affect** corruption; More inequality → **somewhat more** corruption;  
More inequality → **a lot more** corruption]

### **K.2.3 Inequality externality: Political polarization**

Only Survey 1 data is used for analysis of the information experiment. We combine data from Survey 2 and the control group in Survey 1 for the descriptive analysis.

### **Survey 1:**

How does more economic inequality change **the overall amount of political polarization** in a country?

Note: When we say political polarization we mean to what extent people's and politicians' opinions are divided on political issues, as well as how strong these divisions are.

[More inequality → **a lot less** political polarization; More inequality → **somewhat less** political polarization; More inequality **does not affect** the amount of political polarization;  
More inequality → **somewhat more** political polarization; More inequality → **a lot more** political polarization]

### **Survey 2:**

This question is about the same increase in economic inequality. What do you think would happen to the amount of political polarization in the society?

In other words, **how do you think more economic inequality changes the level of political polarization in a society?**

Note: When we say political polarization we mean the extent to which opinions are divided on political issues, both among most people and politicians, in addition to how strong these differences are and whether people with different views speak together. Increasing polarization means that there is generally less agreement in society.

[More inequality → **a lot less** political polarization; More inequality → **somewhat less** political polarization; More inequality → **No change** in the amount of political polarization;  
More inequality → **somewhat more** political polarization; More inequality → **a lot more** political polarization]

#### K.2.4 Inequality externality: Social unrest

Only Survey 1 data is used for analysis of the information experiment. We combine data from Survey 2 and the control group in Survey 1 for the descriptive analysis.

##### Survey 1:

How does more economic inequality change **the amount of social unrest** in a country?

[*More inequality → a lot less social unrest; More inequality → somewhat less social unrest; More inequality **does not affect** the amount of social unrest; More inequality → somewhat more social unrest; More inequality → a lot more social unrest*]

##### Survey 2:

This question is about the same increase in economic inequality. What do you think would happen to the amount of social unrest in the society?

In other words, **how do you think more economic inequality changes the total amount of social unrest in a society?**

Note: By social unrest we mean unconventional and sometimes violent forms of collective behavior that disrupt the typical social order in society.

[*More inequality → a lot less social unrest; More inequality → somewhat less social unrest; More inequality → No change in the amount of social unrest; More inequality → somewhat more social unrest; More inequality → a lot more social unrest*]

#### K.2.5 Inequality externality: Unemployment

This outcome is only asked in Survey 1.

##### Survey 1:

How does more economic inequality change **the overall amount of unemployment** in a country?

[*More inequality → a lot less unemployment; More inequality → somewhat less unemployment; More inequality **does not affect** the amount of unemployment; More inequality → somewhat more unemployment; More inequality → a lot more unemployment*]

#### K.2.6 Inequality externality: Innovation

Only Survey 1 data is used for analysis of the information experiment. We combine data from Survey 2 and the control group in Survey 1 for the descriptive analysis.

##### Survey 1:

How does more economic inequality change **the overall amount of innovation** in a country?

[*More inequality → a lot less innovation; More inequality → somewhat less innovation; More inequality **does not affect** the amount of innovation; More inequality → somewhat more innovation; More inequality → a lot more innovation*]

### **Survey 2:**

This question is about the same increase in economic inequality. What do you think would happen to the amount of innovation in the society?

In other words, **how do you think more economic inequality changes the total amount of innovation in a society?**

Note: By innovation we mean how many new technologies and products that are developed in the society.

[*More inequality → a lot less innovation; More inequality → somewhat less innovation; More inequality → No change in the amount of innovation; More inequality → somewhat more innovation; More inequality → a lot more innovation*]

### **K.2.7 Inequality externality: Economic growth**

Only Survey 1 data is used for analysis of the information experiment. We combine data from Survey 2 and the control group in Survey 1 for the descriptive analysis.

#### **Survey 1:**

How does more economic inequality change **the rate of economic growth** in a country?

[*More inequality → a lot less economic growth; More inequality → somewhat less economic growth; More inequality does not affect the rate of economic growth; More inequality → somewhat more economic growth; More inequality → a lot more economic growth*]

#### **Survey 2:**

This question is about the same increase in economic inequality. What do you think would happen to the rate of economic growth in the society?

In other words, **how do you think more economic inequality changes the rate of economic growth in a society?**

Note: By economic growth we mean the increase in the production of goods and services in the society.

[*More inequality → a lot less of economic growth; More inequality → somewhat less of economic growth; More inequality → No change in the amount of economic growth; More inequality → somewhat more of economic growth; More inequality → a lot more of economic growth*]

### **K.2.8 Inequality externality: Quality of democratic institutions**

Only Survey 1 data is used for analysis of the information experiment. We combine data from Survey 2 and the control group in Survey 1 for the descriptive analysis.

#### **Survey 1:**

How does more economic inequality change **the quality of democratic institutions** in a country?

Note: When we say the quality of democratic institutions we mean the capable and equitable functioning of the political system, the avoidance of abuses of power, the equality of the rule of

law, whether civil liberties are respected, and so on.

[More inequality → **a lot worse** democratic institutions; More inequality → **somewhat worse** democratic institutions; More inequality **does not affect** the overall quality of democratic institutions; More inequality → somewhat better democratic institutions; More inequality → a lot better democratic institutions]

#### **Survey 2:**

This question is about the same increase in economic inequality. What do you think would happen to the quality of the democratic institutions in the society?

In other words, **how do you think more economic inequality changes the quality of the democratic institutions in a society?**

Note: When we say the quality of democratic institutions we mean the capable and equitable functioning of the political system, the avoidance of abuses of power, the equality of the rule of law, whether civil liberties are respected, and so on.

[More inequality → **a lot worse** quality of democratic institutions; More inequality → **somewhat worse** quality of democratic institutions; More inequality → **No change** in the quality of democratic institutions; More inequality → somewhat better quality of democratic institutions; More inequality → a lot better quality of democratic institutions]

#### **K.2.9 Inequality externality: Quality of local public goods**

This outcome is only asked in Survey 1.

#### **Survey 1:**

How does more economic inequality change **the quality of local public goods** in a country?

Note: When we say the quality of local public goods we mean the quality of things like schools, local government services, parks, youth centers and more.

[More inequality → **a lot worse** local public goods; More inequality → **somewhat worse** local public goods; More inequality **does not affect** the overall quality of local public goods; More inequality → somewhat better local public goods; More inequality → a lot better local public goods]

#### **K.2.10 Inequality externality: Quality of life**

This outcome is only asked in Survey 1.

#### **Survey 1:**

How does more economic inequality change **the overall quality of life** of the people living in a country?

Note: Here we want you to compare between people with the same incomes living in more or less unequal societies.

[More inequality → **a lot worse** quality of life; More inequality → **somewhat worse** quality of life; More inequality **does not affect** the overall quality of life of people if their income is

*unchanged; More inequality → somewhat better quality of life; More inequality → a lot better quality of life]*

### K.2.11 Inequality externality: Trust

Only Survey 1 data is used for analysis of the information experiment. We combine data from Survey 2 and the control group in Survey 1 for the descriptive analysis.

#### Survey 1:

How does more economic inequality change **the overall level of trust** in a country?

Note: When we say the total level of trust we mean the strength of a country's social fabric. Some examples are whether most people trust others, whether people cooperate with each other, how many people return lost wallets, and so on.

[*More inequality → a lot less trust; More inequality → somewhat less trust; More inequality does not affect trust; More inequality → somewhat more trust; More inequality → a lot more trust*]

#### Survey 2:

This question is about the same increase in economic inequality. What do you think would happen to the general level of trust in the society?

In other words, **how do you think more economic inequality changes the general level of trust in a society?**

Note: When we say the total level of trust we mean the strength of a country's social fabric. Some examples are whether most people trust others, whether people cooperate with each other, and so on.

[*More inequality → a lot less trust; More inequality → somewhat less trust; More inequality → No change in the amount of trust; More inequality → somewhat more trust; More inequality → a lot more trust*]

### K.2.12 Inequality externality: Attention check #1

This outcome is only asked in Survey 2.

#### Survey 2:

This question is about the same increase in economic inequality. Here we just want you to click the answer option at the top.

In other words, how do you think more economic inequality changes – could you please click the first answer option?

Note: Here we just want you to choose the top option to show that you are reading the questions. Thank you.

[*More inequality → a lot less good answers; More inequality → somewhat less good answers; More inequality → No change in the amount of good answers; More inequality → somewhat more good answers; More inequality → a lot more good answers*]

### K.2.13 Inequality externality: Attention check #2

This outcome is only asked in Survey 2.

#### Survey 2:

This question is about the same increase in economic inequality. Here we just want you to click the answer option at the bottom.

In other words, how do you think more economic inequality changes – could you please click the last answer option?

Note: Here we just want you to choose the top option to show that you are reading the questions. Thank you.

[*More inequality → a lot less good answers; More inequality → somewhat less good answers; More inequality → No change in the amount of good answers; More inequality → somewhat more good answers; More inequality → a lot more good answers*]

### K.2.14 Inequality externality: Daylight hours (placebo)

This outcome is only asked in Survey 2.

#### Survey 2:

This question is about the same increase in economic inequality. What do you think would happen to the average number of daylight hours within a society?

In other words, **how do you think more economic inequality changes the number of daylight hours?**

Note: By the number of daylight hours we mean the number of hours when the sun is visible within a country on an average day.

[*More inequality → a lot less daylight; More inequality → somewhat less daylight; More inequality → No change in the amount of daylight; More inequality → somewhat more daylight; More inequality → a lot more daylight*]

*Continues on next page*

### K.3 Main first-stage outcomes

In addition to the below variables, the specific externality beliefs from Appendix K.2 were also used as first-stage outcomes (discussed in Appendix E.3).

#### K.3.1 Society changes for the worse / General inequality externality beliefs

Only Survey 1 data is used for analysis of the information experiment. We combine data from Survey 2 and the control group in Survey 1 for the analysis in Sections 3.1 and 5.

##### **Survey 1:**

This question is about what economic inequality does to society.

Generally speaking, do you think more economic inequality changes society for the better or for the worse?

[*A lot for the better; Somewhat for the better; Neither / no change; Somewhat for the worse; A lot for the worse*]

[*IF "Neither / no change":*]

You said that inequality neither changes society for the worse, nor for the better.

Is this because inequality does not affect society or because good and bad effects cancel each other out?

[*Inequality does not affect society; Good and bad effects cancel each other out; I made a mistake in the last question*]

##### **Survey 2:**

See Appendix C.2.

#### K.3.2 Open-ended text question

How do you think economic inequality changes society?

For this question we want to hear your ideas and opinions more broadly.

Some example answers would be "Society would become more/less \_\_\_" or "\_\_\_ would increase/decrease" (where you write whatever you think instead of \_\_\_). But these are just examples; feel free to use your own words! Remember that there are no wrong answers, and that we appreciate it if you put some thought into the response.

[*Text box*]

The following variables are defined based on respondents' open-ended answers to this question (see Appendix D.4 for prompts):

Mention: Corruption

Mention: Crime

Mention: Dem. inst.

Mention: Unfairness

Mention: Growth

Mention: Innovation

Mention: Pol. polar.

Mention: Public goods

Mention: Quality of life

Mention: Trust

Mention: Unemployment

Mention: Unrest

Mention: One neg. ext

Mention: One pos. ext

## K.4 Other variables introduced in Section 3: Descriptive analysis

### K.4.1 Importance / Meaningfulness of externalities (Section 3.2)

This outcome is only asked in Survey 2 for one of eight randomized outcomes, conditional on respondents believing that inequality affects the specified outcome (see Appendix K.4.4).

#### Survey 2:

Previously you answered “[ANSWER FROM QK.4.4]”. Do you think this effect is something politicians and policy-makers should be focused on, or is it ultimately not very important?

In other words, do you think this effect is meaningful?

[*Very meaningful, generally meaningful, somewhat meaningful, not very meaningful, not meaningful at all*]

### K.4.2 Further questions from Section 3.2

See Appendix C.3 and C.4.

### K.4.3 Open-ended inequality externality belief (ChatGPT analysis, Section 3.3)

This outcome is only asked in Survey 2 for one of eight randomized outcomes, conditional on respondents believing that inequality affects the specified outcome (see Appendix K.4.4).

#### Survey 2:

In the previous question, you answered “[ANSWER FROM QK.4.4]”.

Can you tell us, in your own words, why you think this?

[*Open-ended text response*]

### K.4.4 Question on specific externality with waiting period / Beginning of treatment arm in Survey 2 (Section 3.5)

*Note: This is the question described in Section 3.5 as “[informing] respondents that their answer is important and ask them to carefully consider their choice, while imposing a waiting period before an answer is possible”.*

This outcome is only asked in Survey 2, at the beginning of a treatment arm for one of the eight outcomes (randomized). It determines whether the respondent sees follow-up questions on importance, the open-ended question analyzed with ChatGPT in Section 3.3, and top- or bottom-inequalities.

#### Survey 2:

Now we want you to focus particularly on the relationship between [outcome] and economic inequality.

[Definition as shown in Table H2]

This question is important. We have asked it before but will ask more questions about this afterwards, so please take some time to think through your answer.

How does more economic inequality change the amount of [outcome] in a country?

The button to proceed will arrive after 15 seconds. Meanwhile, please think about how you think more economic inequality changes the amount of [outcome].

[More inequality → **a lot less** [outcome]; More inequality → **somewhat less** [outcome]; More inequality → **No change** in the amount of [outcome]; More inequality → **somewhat more** [outcome]; More inequality → **a lot more** [outcome]]

#### K.4.5 Confirmation of externality choice (Section 3.5)

*Note: This is the question described in Section 3.5 as “confirm their choice when prompted”.*

This question is shown immediately after the question in Appendix K.4.4.

#### Survey 2:

In the last question you answered “[ANSWER FROM QK.4.4]”. Can you confirm this choice to us?

[Yes; No, and I want to change my answer, No, I answered randomly.]

#### K.4.6 Comprehension question on economic inequality (Section 3.5)

*Note: This is the question described in Section 3.5 as “a simple comprehension question on economic inequality”.*

#### Survey 2:

Several of the following questions are about economic inequality.

By ”economic inequality” we mean the dissimilarities in people’s economic situations; specifically their income (after taxes) and wealth. Note that both rich and poor societies can have economic inequality.

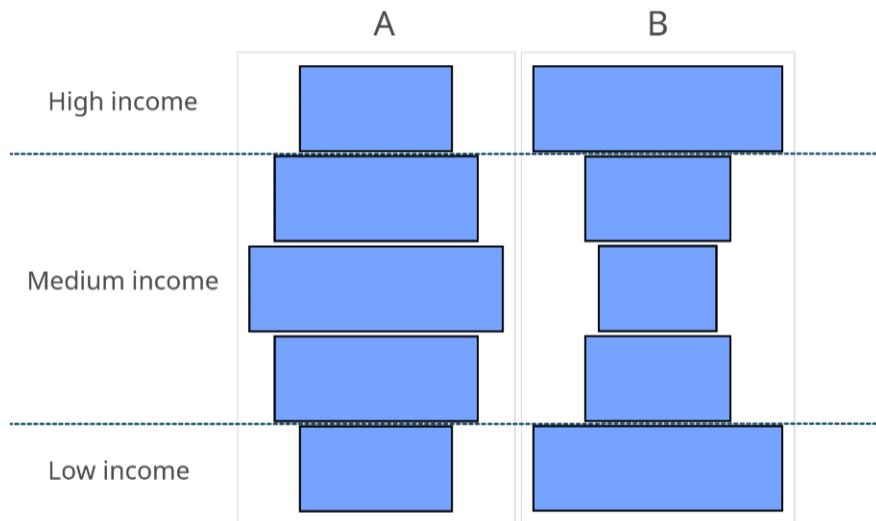
Very unequal societies = large differences in people’s incomes and wealth.

Very equal societies = small differences in people’s incomes and wealth.

The figure underneath shows two ways in which incomes can be split between people in a society.

[Insert Figure K1]

Figure K1: Figure in comprehension question (Appendix K.4.6)



The width of the boxes indicate how many people are in each group. A large box at the top means that many people earn a lot of money, for example. Each "society" has the same amount of people.

Which of these "societies" is more economically unequal?

[*Society A; Society B; They are the same*]

*Continues on next page*

## K.5 Redistributive preference outcomes (Section 4)

Below are the four redistributive preference outcome questions in full. The questions were presented in this order.

The redistributive preference index (“RP Index”) was pre-specified as the sum of dummy versions of these four outcomes. The binary split of each outcome was pre-specified with the goal of keeping even 50-50 splits. The index was then standardized such that the units in Table 2 are in population standard deviations. Main results are robust to using the full cardinal scale for both individual outcomes and the index.

### K.5.1 Wants redistribution

A dummy variable defined as answering 5 or above to the below question.

#### Asked in both Survey 1 and Survey 2:

How much redistribution of income do you prefer across citizens in the U.S.?

- No redistribution means that the initial level of inequality is kept.
- Full redistribution means that all citizens should have the same income.

[ “No redistribution” Slider 0-7 “Full redistribution” ]

### K.5.2 Increase top taxes

A dummy variable defined as answering 35-45% or above to the below question.

#### Asked in both Survey 1 and Survey 2:

In your view, which average income tax rate should the richest 10% of households in the U.S. pay?

- 0%: I don’t want to tax them at all.
- 0-15%: I want to tax them at a very low rate.
- 15-25%: I want to tax them at a lower rate than now, but not very low.
- 25-35%: I want to tax them at roughly what they are taxed now.
- 35-45%: I want to tax them at a higher rate than now, but not very high.
- 45-70%: I want to tax them at a very high rate.
- 70-100%: I want to tax them at extremely high rates.

### K.5.3 Gov. reduce ineq.

A dummy variable defined as answering “Agree strongly” or “Agree” to the below question.

#### Asked in both Survey 1 and Survey 2:

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

*The government should take measures to reduce differences in income levels.*

[Agree strongly; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Disagree strongly]

#### **K.5.4 Ineq. is serious issue**

A dummy variable defined as answering “A serious issue” or “A very serious issue” to the below question.

##### **Asked in both Survey 1 and Survey 2:**

How big of an issue do you think income inequality is in America?

[*Not an issue at all; A small issue; An issue; A serious issue; A very serious issue*]

#### **K.5.5 RP Index**

The measure is constructed by summing the above four binary indicators of redistributive preferences and then standardizing the sum such that one unit represents one population standard deviation within the survey sample.

*Continues on next page*

## K.6 Other variables introduced in Section 4 (information experiment)

Note that the analysis of the information experiment also uses the inequality externality belief variables listed in Appendix K.2.

### K.6.1 Unfairness / Society is unfair (Section 4.2.1)

A dummy variable defined as answering “Somewhat unfair” or “Mostly unfair” to the below question.

#### Asked in both Survey 1 and Survey 2:

Do you feel that the distribution of money and wealth in this country today is...

- fair, because everybody gets what they are entitled to

or

- unfair, because some get much more than they are entitled to, while others get too little?

[Mostly fair; Somewhat fair; Neither fair nor unfair; Somewhat unfair; Mostly unfair]

### K.6.2 Rich b/c luck / Rich because luck (Section 4.2.1)

A dummy variable defined as answering “Rich, because he/she had more advantages than others” to the below question.

#### Asked in both Survey 1 and Survey 2:

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

- Is someone rich because he or she worked harder than others

or

- because he or she had more advantages than others?

(Please pick the one closest to your views, even if it does not match your view perfectly.)

[*Rich, because he/she worked harder than others; Rich, because he/she had more advantages than others*]

### K.6.3 Trust in government (in set of controls)

A dummy variable defined as answering “Almost always” or “A lot of the time” to the below question.

#### Asked in both Survey 1 and Survey 2:

How often do you think you can trust our federal government to do what is right?

[*Almost always; A lot of the time; Not very often; Almost never*]

#### K.6.4 Belief uneq. countr. worse (Section 4.2.3)

This question is referred to as “inequality externality beliefs at the beginning of the survey” in Section 4.2.3. A dummy variable defined as answering “Totally agree” or “Somewhat agree” to the below question.

##### Asked in both Survey 1 and Survey 2:

How much do you agree with the following statement?

Countries with more economic inequality usually function worse.

[*Totally agree; Somewhat agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Somewhat disagree; Totally disagree* (*Additional box: I have absolutely no idea*)]

#### K.6.5 Learned something new (Section 4.2.3)

This question is referred to in “and respondents who self-reported that they learned something new” in Section 4.2.3. A dummy variable defined as answering “Yes” to the below question.

##### Survey 1:

Earlier in the survey, we showed you a short video containing information about economic inequality.

Did you learn anything new from the video?

[*Yes; No; I did not watch a video*]

*Continues on next page*

## K.7 Other variables used in the analysis in Section 5 (Other determinants)

### K.7.1 Redistributive preferences: Directly asking (100 points question, Section 5.1.2)

*Note: This question was asked in both Survey 1 and Survey 2. Respondents were required to write numbers that summarized to 100.*

When thinking about your preferred level of redistribution, what matters most to you?

Please indicate what dimensions matter by giving scores below that add up to 100.

- High inequality is unfair
- Inequality changes society for the better (more inequality → a better society through various ways)
- Inequality changes society for the worse (more inequality → a worse society through various ways)
- One dollar is worth more for a poor person than for a rich person
- Taxation is theft
- People work less when they're taxed, so taxation is inefficient
- I don't like to give up my money

### K.7.2 Taxation reduces work (Section 5.1.3)

A dummy variable defined as answering “Totally agree” or “Somewhat agree” to the below question.

#### Asked in both Survey 1 and Survey 2:

Do you agree with the following statement?

People work much less when they're taxed more.

[*Totally agree; Agree somewhat; Neither agree nor disagree; Somewhat disagree; Totally disagree*]

## **L Questionnaire: Study 1**

## Introduction

### 1. Participation information and informed consent form

Dear participant,

Thanks a lot for participating in this academic research survey. We are a non-partisan group of academic economists. Our goal is to learn about people's attitudes on several topical issues. Please read the information before consenting to begin the research study.

- This survey is voluntary. You have the right to not answer any question, and to stop the survey at any time or for any reason (to exit the survey, simply close this window). We expect that it will take about 15 minutes. You will likely learn a lot!
- In accordance with GDPR regulations, your data will be stored anonymously and then statistically analyzed. No conclusions about your person can be drawn from these results. All data is solely used for research purposes and with your consent.
- You have the right to obtain information about the personal data stored about you (Art. 15 GDPR). Should incorrect data be processed, you have the right to rectification (Art. 16 GDPR). When the legal requirements are met, you have the right to request the deletion or restriction of the processing and submit an objection against the processing of your data (Art. 17, 18 and 21 GDPR).
- The consent given here can be withdrawn at any time with effect for the future. However, if your data has already been anonymized, it can no longer be associated with you and "removed" from the results.

The researchers responsible for this survey are located at the economics department of the University of Konstanz and University Paris 1. If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you may contact the responsible researchers at [max.lobbeck@uni-konstanz.de](mailto:max.lobbeck@uni-konstanz.de).

Please note that it is very important for the success of our research that you **answer honestly and read the questions very carefully** before answering. If at any time you don't know an answer, please give your best guess **without consulting any external**

**sources.** However, please be sure to spend enough time reading and understanding the questions. Low quality responses might lead to respondents being dropped from the survey without reward.

Do you consent to participate in this research study?

*Yes, I would like to take part in this study and I am 18 or older; No, I would not like to participate*

2. Please complete the captcha below.

*[Insert Captcha]*

3. Are you currently a U.S. citizen?

Yes; No

4. Please answer this to the best of your knowledge: Where are you most likely to be able to get a corn dog?

*At the dog kennel; In the corn fields; At the county fair; At the veterinary's office*

5. Please explain: What is your opinion about the yearly switch to daylight saving time? Do you like or dislike it?

Please use about 10-15 words here to show that you read and understood the question.

*(Text box)*

6. The next question is about the following problem. In questionnaires like ours, sometimes there are participants who do not carefully read the questions and just quickly click through the survey. This compromises the results of research studies.

**To show that you are reading the survey carefully, please choose both "Very strongly interested" and "Not at all interested" as your answer to the next question.**

Given the above, how interested are you in politics?

*Very strongly interested; Very interested; A little bit interested; Not very interested; Not at all interested*

## Part 1: Demographics and first questions [All respondents]

## 1. Part 1

This survey consists of **three parts**.

You now enter Part 1 of the survey. The following screens will ask you some basic questions about your socio-economic background and political attitudes.

You can now start Part 1 by clicking on the button below.

2. In which state do you live in?

*(Drop-down list)*

3. What is your ZIP code?

4. What is your current gender?

*Male; Female; Other / Not listed / Prefer not to answer*

5. What is your age?

6. What was your total household income before taxes in 2019?

*\$0-\$5,000; \$5,000-\$15,000; \$15,000-\$24,999; \$25,000-\$34,999; \$35,000-\$49,999;  
\$50,000-\$74,999; \$75,000-\$99,999; \$100,000-\$149,999; \$150,000-\$199,999; \$200,000-\$1,000,000; \$1,000,000+*

7. Please estimate your total household wealth. This means the total value of what your household owns, minus any debt or mortgages.

*Below \$0; \$0-\$1,000; \$1,000-\$5,000; \$5,000-\$10,000; \$10,000-\$25,000; \$25,000-\$50,000; \$50,000-\$100,000; \$100,000-\$200,000; \$200,000-\$500,000; \$500,000-\$1 million; \$1 million-\$5 million; \$5 million +*

8. What political leaning best describes you?

*Very conservative; Somewhat conservative; In the center; Somewhat liberal; Very liberal;  
I don't follow politics*

9. In politics, as of today, do you consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat or an independent?

*Republican; Democrat; Independent*

10. [IF Q9==Independent] Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or the Democratic party?

*Republican Party; Democratic Party*

11. Where do you mainly get your news from? (Please click at most three news sources.)  
*Fox News; ABC News; MSNBC; CNN; Reddit; The Drudge Report; New York Times; USA Today; Twitter; Breitbart News; Facebook; I generally don't follow the news; Other*
12. Please answer the following question: Do you prefer pizza, salad, or ice cream?  
*Ice cream; Salad; Pizza; I don't have an opinion on this*
13. Please answer the same question again: Do you prefer pizza, salad, or ice cream?  
(Please be consistent in your answers to continue the survey.)  
*Pizza; I don't have an opinion on this; Salad; Ice cream*
14. How much do you agree with the following statement?

The distribution of money and wealth in the US is basically fair, because everybody has an equal opportunity to succeed.

*Totally agree; Agree somewhat; Neither agree nor disagree; Somewhat disagree; Totally disagree*

15. Do you agree with the following statement?

People work much less when they're taxed more.

*Totally agree; Agree somewhat; Neither agree nor disagree; Somewhat disagree; Totally disagree*

16. How often do you think you can trust our federal government to do what is right?

*Almost always; A lot of the time; Not very often; Almost never*

## Part 2: Treatment Videos

### 1. **Part 2**

After this page, you will begin Part 2 of the survey. This part will be about specific socioeconomic factors.

You can start Part 2 by clicking on the button below.

2. We will first ask you two questions on economic inequality. We define **economic inequality as the differences in income and wealth across people within a country.**

Please express your opinion on each of the following two items.

*[NOTE: Q3 THEN Q4 IF GROUP==CRIME, TRUST, FULLEXT. Q4 THEN Q3 IF GROUP==FAIRNESS. CONTROL GROUPS SHOWN RANDOMIZED ORDER.]*

3. How much do you agree with the following statement?

Working-class Americans are generally paid too little compared to what they deserve.

*Totally agree; Somewhat agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Somewhat disagree; Totally disagree (Additional box: I have absolutely no idea)*

4. How much do you agree with the following statement?

Countries with more economic inequality usually function worse.

*Totally agree; Somewhat agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Somewhat disagree; Totally disagree (Additional box: I have absolutely no idea)*

*[Q5-Q9 IF GROUP==CRIME]*

5. Thank you for answering these questions.

We will now show you some information related to the last question you answered.

Afterwards we will ask you how this information relates to your own life.

Please pay very careful attention to the video. It is **very important** for our research – we would be very grateful.

**Attention: Please do not close the survey browser window when you watch the video, as you will not be able to return if you accidentally leave the survey page.**

---

[INSERT CRIME VIDEO]

---

First, we **want to make sure you understood the content of the video.**

Note that you will only be able to proceed if you answer the following questions correctly. If you are not sure of an answer, feel free to watch the video again.

What information was shown in the video?

*More economic inequality is related to more crime; More economic inequality is related to less crime; Inequality metrics are usually inaccurate; Inequality metrics are usually accurate*

6. Per 100,000 people, an average **unequal** country has...

*10-20 homicides per year: Many more homicides than an average equal country; 1-2 homicides per year: About the same number of homicides as an average equal country; 5-10 homicides per year: More homicides than an average equal country; The video did not mention homicides*

7. Is this type of relationship also true for other types of crime?

*Yes – the video mentioned kidnappings and reported arrests; Yes – the video mentioned property crime and robberies; Yes – the video did not mention any other examples; No – it is only true for homicides*

8. We are specifically interested in **whether you have experienced this relationship between crime and inequality in your own life.**

Have you lived in **more than one place** in your life? If so, think back – do you think the **places with more economic inequality** had **more crime**, generally speaking?

*Yes, I have lived in different places, and yes, I felt this way; Yes, I have lived in different places, but no, I did not feel this way; Yes, I have lived in different places, but I really don't know; No, I have not lived in different places*

9. Have you **traveled** to different places in your life? If so, think back – do you think the **places with more economic inequality** had **more crime**, generally speaking?

*Yes, I have traveled to different places, and yes, I felt this way; Yes, I have traveled to different places, but no, I did not feel this way; Yes, I have traveled to different places, but I really don't know; No, I have not traveled much in my life*

*[Q10-Q14 IF GROUP==TRUST]*

10. Thank you for answering these questions.

We will now show you some information related to the last question you answered.

Afterwards we will ask you how this information relates to your own life.

Please pay very careful attention to the video. It is **very important** for our research – we would be very grateful.

**Attention: Please do not close the survey browser window when you watch the video, as you will not be able to return if you accidentally leave the survey page.**

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*[INSERT TRUST VIDEO]*

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First, we **want to make sure you understood the content of the video.**

Note that you will only be able to proceed if you answer the following questions correctly. If you are not sure of an answer, feel free to watch the video again.

What information was shown in the video?

**More economic inequality is related to more trust; More economic inequality is related to less trust; Inequality metrics are usually inaccurate; Inequality metrics are usually accurate**

11. Out of 100 people, an average **unequal** country has...

*15 people out of 100 saying they trust others: Much less social cohesion than an average equal country; 60 people out of 100 saying they trust others: About the same social cohesion as an average equal country; 35 people out of 100 saying they trust others: Less social cohesion than an average equal country; The video did not mention any numbers for trust*

12. Is this type of relationship also true for other measures of trust?

*Yes - the video mentioned trust in government and organizations; Yes - the video mentioned how cooperative people are and how many people returned lost wallets; Yes - the video did not mention any other examples; No - it is only true for survey answers*

13. We are specifically interested in **whether you have experienced these relationships in your own life.**

Have you lived in **more than one place** in your life? If so, think back – do you think the **places with more economic inequality** had **more trust between people**, generally speaking?

*Yes, I have lived in different places, and yes, I felt this way; Yes, I have lived in different places, but no, I did not feel this way; Yes, I have lived in different places, but I really don't know; No, I have not lived in different places*

14. Have you **traveled** to different places in your life? If so, think back – do you think the **places with more economic inequality** had **more trust between people**, generally speaking?

*Yes, I have traveled to different places, and yes, I felt this way; Yes, I have traveled to different places, but no, I did not feel this way; Yes, I have traveled to different places, but I really don't know; No, I have not traveled much in my life*

*[Q15-Q19 IF GROUP==FULLEXT]*

15. Thank you for answering these questions.

We will now show you some information related to the last question you answered.

Afterwards we will ask you how this information relates to your own life.

Please pay very careful attention to the video. It is **very important** for our research – we would be very grateful.

**Attention: Please do not close the survey browser window when you watch the video, as you will not be able to return if you accidentally leave the survey page.**

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*[INSERT FULLEXT VIDEO]*

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First, we **want to make sure you understood the content of the video.**

Note that you will only be able to proceed if you answer the following questions correctly. If you are not sure of an answer, feel free to watch the video again.

What information was shown in the video?

*More economic inequality is related to more trust and less crime; More economic inequality is related to less trust and more crime; Inequality metrics are usually inaccurate; Inequality metrics are usually accurate*

16. Per 100,000 people, an average **unequal** country has...

*10-20 homicides per year: Many more homicides than an average equal country; 1-2 homicides per year: About the same number of homicides as an average equal country; 5-10 homicides per year: More homicides than an average equal country; The video did not mention homicides*

17. Do more unequal countries usually have more innovation and economic growth?

*Yes - a lot more; Yes - some more; No - there is no such relationship between these variables; No - there is no such relationship between these variables*

18. We are specifically interested in **whether you have experienced these relationships in your own life.**

Have you lived in **more than one place** in your life? If so, think back – do you think the **places with more economic inequality functioned better**, generally speaking?

*Yes, I have lived in different places, and yes, I felt this way; Yes, I have lived in different places, but no, I did not feel this way; Yes, I have lived in different places, but I really don't know; No, I have not lived in different places*

19. Have you **traveled** to different places in your life? If so, think back – do you think the **places with more economic inequality functioned better**, generally speaking?

*Yes, I have traveled to different places, and yes, I felt this way; Yes, I have traveled to different places, but no, I did not feel this way; Yes, I have traveled to different places, but I really don't know; No, I have not traveled much in my life*

*[Q20-24 SHOWN TO FAIRNESS GROUP]*

20. Thank you for answering these questions.

We will now show you some information related to the last question you answered. Afterwards we will ask you how this information relates to your own life.

Please pay very careful attention to the video. It is **very important** for our research – we would be very grateful.

**Attention: Please do not close the survey browser window when you watch the video, as you will not be able to return if you accidentally leave the survey page.**

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[INSERT FAIRNESS VIDEO]

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First, we **want to make sure you understood the content of the video.**

Note that you will only be able to proceed if you answer the following questions correctly. If you are not sure of an answer, feel free to watch the video again.

Did workers' wages and their productivity move together **before 1980**?

*Yes, they increased at a similar pace; No. Wages increased quickly, but productivity didn't change much; No. Wages increased quickly, but productivity didn't change much*

21. Did workers' wages and their productivity move together **after 1980**?

*Yes, they increased at a similar pace; Yes, they increased at a similar pace; Yes, they increased at a similar pace*

22. Is the type of relationship we showed for **workers' wages** also true for the **wages of the top 1%**?

*No. Top wages (and inequality) have kept increasing, even more than productivity; No. Top wages (and inequality) have kept increasing, but not by very much; No. Top wages (and inequality) have decreased; Yes, the same relationship is true*

23. We are specifically interested in **whether you have experienced these relationships in your own life.**

Think about people you know that were employed in the 1950s. This could be you, your parents, your grandparents, or someone else you know. Think back – do you think they were paid closer to their productivity than people with similar jobs today, generally speaking?

*Yes, I think so; No, I don't think so; I can't think of anyone I know who were employed then*

24. Think about **people you know that were employed in the 1980s**. This could be you, your parents, your grandparents, or someone else you know. Think back – **do you think**

**they were paid closer to their productivity than people with similar jobs today, generally speaking?**

*Yes, I think so; No, I don't think so; I can't think of anyone I know who were employed then*

*[Q25-Q29 SHOWN TO ACTIVE CONTROL GROUP]*

25. Thank you for answering these questions.

We will now show you some information related to the last question you answered. Afterwards we will ask you how this information relates to your own life.

Please pay very careful attention to the video. It is **very important** for our research – we would be very grateful.

**Attention: Please do not close the survey browser window when you watch the video, as you will not be able to return if you accidentally leave the survey page.**

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*[INSERT CONTROL VIDEO]*

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First, we **want to make sure you understood the content of the video.**

Note that you will only be able to proceed if you answer the following questions correctly. If you are not sure of an answer, feel free to watch the video again.

What are the two most common ways to measure economic inequality?

*GDP and GNP; The Gini coefficient and the top 10% income share; The video did not talk about the measurement of inequality*

26. Countries with a higher Gini coefficient generally have...

*A higher Top 10% income share; A lower Top 10% income share*

27. What type of inequality does the top 10% income share focus on?

*Inequality coming from top incomes; Inequality around middle incomes; Inequality coming from lower incomes; The top 10% is not an accepted measure of income inequality*

28. We are specifically interested in **whether you have experienced these relationships in your own life.**

In your life, have you ever had to think about how one would try to measure economic inequality?

*Yes, I have thought about this.; No, I have thought about economic inequality, but I never really thought about how it's measured.; No, I never really thought about economic inequality.*

29. Before this survey, had you heard about the fact that researchers have different ways to measure economic inequality?

*Yes, I have heard about this previously.; No, I have never heard about this previously.; I am not sure whether I ever heard about this.*

*[SUBSEQUENT QUESTIONS TO ALL RESPONDENTS]*

30. Thank you for finishing the second part of the survey.

Please proceed with the final part of the survey by clicking on the button below.

### Part 3: More Demographics and Outcomes

1.

## **Part 3**

You are now entering Part 3 of the survey. The following questions will ask you about your personal characteristics, attitudes towards economic policies and your general understanding of economic relationships.

Clicking on the button below will start Part 3.

2. How would you describe your race?

*European American/White; African American/Black; Hispanic/Latino; Native American; Asian/Asian American; Pacific Islander; Other*

3. 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)*

4. [IF Q3=="Some College; 2-year College Degree; 4-year College Degree; Master's Degree; Doctoral Degree; Professional Degree (JD, MD, MBA)"] What is your major?

5. Which 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)*

6. To show that you are reading the text, please select the answer furthest away from this text (the answer at the bottom).

*Yes, definitely; Yes, maybe; No, not really; No, not at all*

7. How much redistribution of income do you prefer across citizens in the U.S.?

- No redistribution means that the initial level of inequality is kept.
- Full redistribution means that all citizens should have the same income.  
(“*No redistribution*” Slider 0-7 “*Full redistribution*”)

8. How big of an issue do you think income inequality is in America?

*Not an issue at all; A small issue; An issue; A serious issue; A very serious issue*

9. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

The government should take measures to reduce differences in income levels.

*Agree strongly; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Disagree strongly*

10. In your view, which average income tax rate should the richest 10% of households in the U.S. pay?

*0%: I don't want to tax them at all.; 0-15%: I want to tax them at a very low rate.; 15-25%: I want to tax them at a lower rate than now, but not very low.; 25-35%: I want to tax them at roughly what they are taxed now.; 35-45%: I want to tax them at a higher rate than now, but not very high.; 45-70%: I want to tax them at a very high rate.; 70-100%: I want to tax them at extremely high rates.*

11. When thinking about your preferred level of redistribution, what matters most to you?

Please indicate what dimensions matter by giving scores below that add up to 100.

*High inequality is unfair; Inequality changes society for the **better** (more inequality → a better society through various ways); Inequality changes society for the **worse** (more inequality → a worse society through various ways); One dollar is worth more for a poor person than for a rich person; Taxation is theft; People work less when they're taxed, so taxation is inefficient; I don't like to give up my money*

12. This question is about what economic inequality does to society.

Generally speaking, do you think **more economic inequality** changes society **for the better** or **for the worse**?

*A lot for the better; Somewhat for the better; Neither / no change; Somewhat for the worse; A lot for the worse*

13. [IF Q12==”Neither / no change”] You said that inequality neither changes society for the worse, nor for the better.

Is this because inequality **does not affect society** or because **good and bad effects cancel each other out**?

*Inequality does not affect society; Good and bad effects cancel each other out; I made a mistake in the last question*

14. How do you think economic inequality changes society?

For this question we want to hear your ideas and opinions more broadly.

Some example answers would be "Society would become more/less \_\_\_\_" or "\_\_\_\_ would increase/decrease" (where you write whatever you think instead of \_\_\_\_).

But these are just examples; feel free to use your own words! Remember that there are no wrong answers, and that we appreciate it if you put some thought into the response.

(Text box)

*[Q15, Q16, Q19-Q27: FOR 1/3 OF RESPONDENTS, RANDOMLY ASSIGNED PER QUESTION, “does more economic inequality” → “do larger differences in income and wealth within the population” AND “More inequality” → “Larger differences in income and wealth within the population”]  
[ORDER OF Q15, Q16 RANDOMIZED]*

**15. Please pay very close attention to this question.**

How does more economic inequality change **the amount of crime** in a country?

Note: When we say the amount of crime we mean the overall crime rate, including homicides, robberies, property crime and more.

*More inequality → a lot less crime; More inequality → somewhat less crime; More inequality does not affect crime; More inequality → somewhat more crime; More inequality → a lot more crime*

**16. Please pay very close attention to this question.**

How does more economic inequality change **the overall level of trust** in a country?

Note: When we say the total level of trust we mean the strength of a country's social fabric. Some examples are whether most people trust others, whether people cooperate with each other, how many people return lost wallets, and so on.

*More inequality → a lot less trust; More inequality → somewhat less trust; More inequality does not affect trust; More inequality → somewhat more trust; More inequality → a lot more trust*

17. Do you feel that the distribution of money and wealth in this country today is...

- fair, because everybody gets what they are entitled to

or

- unfair, because some get much more than they are entitled to, while others get too little?

*Mostly fair; Somewhat fair; Neither fair nor unfair; Somewhat unfair; Mostly unfair*

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

- Is someone rich because he or she worked harder than others

or

- because he or she had more advantages than others?

(Please pick the one closest to your views, even if it does not match your view perfectly.)

*Rich, because he/she worked harder than others; Rich, because he/she had more advantages than others*

*[ORDER OF Q19, Q20 RANDOMIZED]*

19. How does more economic inequality change **the amount of social unrest** in a country?

*More inequality → a lot less social unrest; More inequality → somewhat less social unrest; More inequality does not affect the amount of social unrest; More inequality → somewhat more social unrest; More inequality → a lot more social unrest*

20. How does more economic inequality change **the rate of economic growth** in a country?

*More inequality → a lot less economic growth; More inequality → somewhat less economic growth; More inequality does not affect the rate of economic growth; More inequality → somewhat more economic growth; More inequality → a lot more economic growth*

*[SHOW ALL Q21-Q27 IF GROUP==PASSIVE CONTROL. ALL OTHER GROUPS:  
SHOW 3 RANDOM QUESTIONS FROM Q21-Q27. FOR ALL RESPONDENTS,  
RANDOMIZE QUESTION ORDER]*

21. How does more economic inequality change **the amount of corruption** in a country?  
*More inequality → a lot less corruption; More inequality → somewhat less corruption;  
More inequality **does not affect** the amount of corruption; More inequality → somewhat more corruption; More inequality → a lot more corruption*
22. How does more economic inequality change **the overall amount of unemployment** in a country?  
*More inequality → a lot less unemployment; More inequality → somewhat less unemployment; More inequality **does not affect** the amount of unemployment; More inequality → somewhat more unemployment; More inequality → a lot more unemployment*
23. How does more economic inequality change **the overall amount of innovation** in a country?  
*More inequality → a lot less innovation; More inequality → somewhat less innovation;  
More inequality **does not affect** the amount of innovation; More inequality → somewhat more innovation; More inequality → a lot more innovation*
24. How does more economic inequality change **the overall quality of life** of the people living in a country?

Note: Here we want you to compare between people with the same incomes living in more or less unequal societies.

*More inequality → a lot worse quality of life; More inequality → somewhat worse quality of life; More inequality **does not affect** the overall quality of life of people if their income is unchanged; More inequality → somewhat better quality of life; More inequality → a lot better quality of life*

25. How does more economic inequality change **the overall amount of political polarization** in a country?

Note: When we say political polarization we mean to what extent people's and politicians' opinions are divided on political issues, as well as how strong these divisions are.

*More inequality → a lot less political polarization; More inequality → somewhat less political polarization; More inequality does not affect the amount of political polarization; More inequality → somewhat more political polarization; More inequality → a lot more political polarization*

26. How does more economic inequality change **the quality of democratic institutions** in a country?

Note: When we say the quality of democratic institutions we mean the capable and equitable functioning of the political system, the avoidance of abuses of power, the equality of the rule of law, whether civil liberties are respected, and so on.

*More inequality → a lot worse democratic institutions; More inequality → somewhat worse democratic institutions; More inequality does not affect the overall quality of democratic institutions; More inequality → somewhat better democratic institutions; More inequality → a lot better democratic institutions*

27. How does more economic inequality change **the quality of local public goods** in a country?

Note: When we say the quality of local public goods we mean the quality of things like schools, local government services, parks, youth centers and more.

*More inequality → a lot worse local public goods; More inequality → somewhat worse local public goods; More inequality does not affect the overall quality of local public goods; More inequality → somewhat better local public goods; More inequality → a lot better local public goods*

28. In the United States, 614 people currently possess wealth in excess of \$1 billion. Are you in favor or against a reform that would prevent wealth from being higher than \$1 billion?

*In favor; Against; It makes no difference to me*

29. Overall, do you think economic inequality **changing society for the worse** through one or more of the channels we discussed earlier - **for example through increased crime /**

**social unrest / corruption, or through decreased social cohesion** - is a very serious issue?

*Yes, it is an extremely serious issue; Yes, it is a serious issue; Somewhat. It is an issue, but not a very large one; No, it is not really an issue; No, it is not an issue at all*

*[Q30-Q33 SHOWN TO CONTROL GROUPS ONLY]*

*[Q30: FOR 1/3 OF RESPONDENTS, “extremely high inequality levels” → “extremely large differences in income and wealth within the population”]*

30. Do you think extremely high inequality levels would significantly increase the chances of a societal collapse?

*Yes, definitely; Yes, maybe; No, not really; No, not at all*

*[Q31: FOR 1/3 OF RESPONDENTS, “very high inequality levels” → “very large differences in income and wealth within the population”]*

31. Do you think very high inequality levels is necessary to be competitive with other countries?

*Yes, definitely; Yes, maybe; No, not really; No, not at all*

32. [IF Q12==”A lot for the worse” OR “Somewhat for the worse”] You stated that inequality **negatively affects society**. When thinking about how inequality **negatively affects society**, which dimensions do you think matter the most, generally speaking?

Please indicate what dimensions **you think matter the most** by giving scores below that add up to 100. If you don't think inequality negatively affects society after all, please give "I changed my mind" 100 points.

*More crime; Less trust / social cohesion; More social unrest; More political polarization; More corruption; More unemployment; Worse local public goods such as schools, roads, and libraries; Less economic growth; Less innovation; Less sustainability; I changed my mind*

33. [IF Q12=="A lot for the better" OR "Somewhat for the better"] You stated that inequality **positively affects society**. When thinking about how inequality **positively affects society**, which dimensions do you think matter the most, generally speaking?

Please indicate **what dimensions you think matter the most** by giving scores below that add up to 100. If you don't think inequality positively affects society after all, please give "I changed my mind" 100 points.

*Less crime; More trust / social cohesion; Less social unrest; Less political polarization; Less corruption; Less unemployment; Better local public goods such as schools, roads, and libraries; More economic growth; More innovation; More sustainability; I changed my mind*

### Final Demographics and Feedback

1. Which of these politicians do you agree with the most?  
*Bernie Sanders; Kamala Harris; Mitt Romney; Donald Trump*
2. On which type of device did you complete the survey?  
*Smartphone; Tablet; Laptop or desktop computer*

*[Q3-4 SHOWN IF GROUP IS NOT PASSIVE CONTROL]*

3. Earlier in the survey, we showed you a short video containing information about economic inequality.

Did you learn anything new from the video?

Yes; No; I did not watch a video

4. [IF Q3!="I did not watch a video"] After watching the video, what was your immediate reaction(s) to it?  
*Anger; Interest; Surprise; Indifference; Confusion; Concern*
5. Thank you for participating in the survey!

Before answering the final question, please let us know below if you want to give us any feedback, if you saw any mistakes, or if anything confused you. It would be very helpful for us.

*(Text box)*

6. Thank you for answering the survey! Final question: Do you feel that this survey was biased?

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

## M Questionnaire: Study 2

## Notes

Several features of the survey are randomized on the respondent level throughout the whole survey:

- Order of the answer options
- The phrasing “economic inequality” was randomized in Parts 2 and 3
  - o 75% answered questions using the classical “economic inequality” phrasing
    - In this document, we will only use this classical phrasing
  - o 25% answered questions using the “differences in income and wealth” phrasing
  - o 25% answered questions using the “economic equality” phrasing (i.e. they answered questions about a decrease in inequality, rather than an increase)

## Introduction [All respondents]

### **1. Participation information and informed consent form**

Dear participant,

Thanks a lot for participating in this academic research survey. We are a non-partisan group of academic economists. Our goal is to learn about people's attitudes on several topical issues. Please read the information before consenting to begin the research study.

- This survey is voluntary. You have the right to not answer any question, and to stop the survey at any time or for any reason (to exit the survey, simply close this window). We expect that it will take about 15 minutes. You will likely learn a lot!
- In accordance with GDPR regulations, your data will be stored anonymously and then statistically analyzed. No conclusions about your person can be drawn from these results. All data is solely used for research purposes and with your consent.
- You have the right to obtain information about the personal data stored about you (Art. 15 GDPR). Should incorrect data be processed, you have the right to rectification (Art. 16 GDPR). When the legal requirements are met, you have

the right to request the deletion or restriction of the processing and submit an objection against the processing of your data (Art. 17, 18 and 21 GDPR).

- The consent given here can be withdrawn at any time with effect for the future. However, if your data has already been anonymized, it can no longer be associated with you and "removed" from the results.

The researchers responsible for this survey are located at the economics department of the University of Konstanz and University Paris 1. If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you may contact the responsible researchers at max.lobeck@uni-konstanz.de.

Please note that it is very important for the success of our research that you **answer honestly** and **read the questions very carefully** before answering. If at any time you don't know an answer, please give your best guess **without consulting any external sources**. However, please be sure to spend enough time reading and understanding the questions. Low quality responses might lead to respondents being dropped from the survey without reward.

Do you consent to participate in this research study?

*Yes, I would like to take part in this study and I am 18 or older; No, I would not like to participate*

2. Please complete the captcha below.

*[Insert Captcha]*

3. Are you currently a U.S. citizen?

Yes; No

4. Please answer this to the best of your knowledge: Where are you most likely to be able to get a corn dog?

*At the dog kennel; In the corn fields; At the county fair; At the veterinary's office*

5. The next question is about the following problem. In questionnaires like ours, sometimes there are participants who do not carefully read the questions and just quickly click through the survey. This compromises the results of research studies. **To show that you are reading the survey carefully, please choose both "Very strongly interested" and "Not at all interested" as your answer to the next question.**

Given the above, how interested are you in politics?

*Very strongly interested; Very interested; A little bit interested; Not very interested;  
Not at all interested*

## Part 1: Demographics and first questions [All respondents]

### 1. **Part 1**

This survey consists of four parts.

You now enter Part 1 of the survey. The following screens will ask you some basic questions about your background and political attitudes.

You can now start Part 1 by clicking on the button below.

2. In which state do you live in?  
*(Drop-down list)*
3. What is your ZIP code?
4. What is your current gender?

*Male; Female; Other / Not listed / Prefer not to answer*

5. What is your age?
6. What was your total household income before taxes in 2019?  
*\$0-\$5,000; \$5,000-\$15,000; \$15,000-\$24,999; \$25,000-\$34,999; \$35,000-\$49,999;  
\$50,000-\$74,999; \$75,000-\$99,999; \$100,000-\$149,999; \$150,000-\$199,999;  
\$200,000-\$1,000,000; \$1,000,000+*
7. What do you think your total household income before tax will be in fifteen years, so in 2037, if everything continues more or less as expected? We are interested in how you think their income changes over time - think of the household you have now, and do not include minors.  
*\$0-\$5,000; \$5,000-\$15,000; \$15,000-\$24,999; \$25,000-\$34,999; \$35,000-\$49,999;  
\$50,000-\$74,999; \$75,000-\$99,999; \$100,000-\$149,999; \$150,000-\$199,999;  
\$200,000-\$1,000,000; \$1,000,000+*
8. Please estimate your total household wealth. This means the total value of what your household owns, minus any debt or mortgages.  
*Below \$0; \$0-\$1,000; \$1,000-\$5,000; \$5,000-\$10,000; \$10,000-\$25,000; \$25,000-\$50,000; \$50,000-\$100,000; \$100,000-\$200,000; \$200,000-\$500,000; \$500,000-\$1 million; \$1 million-\$5 million; \$5 million +*

9. What political leaning best describes you?

*Very conservative; Somewhat conservative; In the center; Somewhat liberal; Very liberal; I don't follow politics*

10. In politics, as of today, do you consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat or an independent?

*Republican; Democrat; Independent*

11. [IF Q9==Independent] Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or the Democratic party?

*Republican Party; Democratic Party*

12. How would you describe your race?

*European American/White; African American/Black; Hispanic/Latino; Native American; Asian/Asian American; Pacific Islander; Other*

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. [IF Q12=="Some College; 2-year College Degree; 4-year College Degree; Master's Degree; Doctoral Degree; Professional Degree (JD, MD, MBA)"] What is your major?

15. Which 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)*

16. Please answer the following question: Do you prefer pizza, salad, or ice cream?

*Ice cream; Salad; Pizza; I don't have an opinion on this*

17. Please answer the same question again: Do you prefer pizza, salad, or ice cream?

(Please be consistent in your answers to continue the survey.)

*Pizza; I don't have an opinion on this; Salad; Ice cream*

[ORDER OF Q18-Q21 IS RANDOMIZED]

18. How much redistribution of income do you prefer across citizens in the U.S.?

- No redistribution means that the initial level of inequality is kept.

- Full redistribution means that all citizens should have the same income.  
("No redistribution" Slider 0-7 "Full redistribution")

19. How big of an issue do you think income inequality is in America?

*Not an issue at all; A small issue; An issue; A serious issue; A very serious issue*

20. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

The government should take measures to reduce differences in income levels.

*Agree strongly; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Disagree strongly*

21. In your view, which average income tax rate should the richest 10% of households in the U.S. pay?

*0%: I don't want to tax them at all.; 0-15%: I want to tax them at a very low rate.; 15-25%: I want to tax them at a lower rate than now, but not very low.; 25-35%: I want to tax them at roughly what they are taxed now.; 35-45%: I want to tax them at a higher rate than now, but not very high.; 45-70%: I want to tax them at a very high rate.; 70-100%: I want to tax them at extremely high rates.*

22. When thinking about your preferred level of redistribution, what matters most to you?

Please indicate what dimensions matter by giving scores below that add up to 100.

*High inequality is unfair; Inequality changes society for the **better** (more inequality → a better society through various ways); Inequality changes society for the **worse** (more inequality → a worse society through various ways); One dollar is worth more for a poor person than for a rich person; Taxation is theft; People work less when they're taxed, so taxation is inefficient; I don't like to give up my money*

## Part 2: General inequality externality beliefs and fairness views [All respondents]

### 1. **Part 2**

The next part of the survey is about your general attitudes around socio-economic topics. These questions are not specifically about the US.

Some questions will be complicated. Your opinions are very important to our research project, so we would appreciate if you answered as best you can.

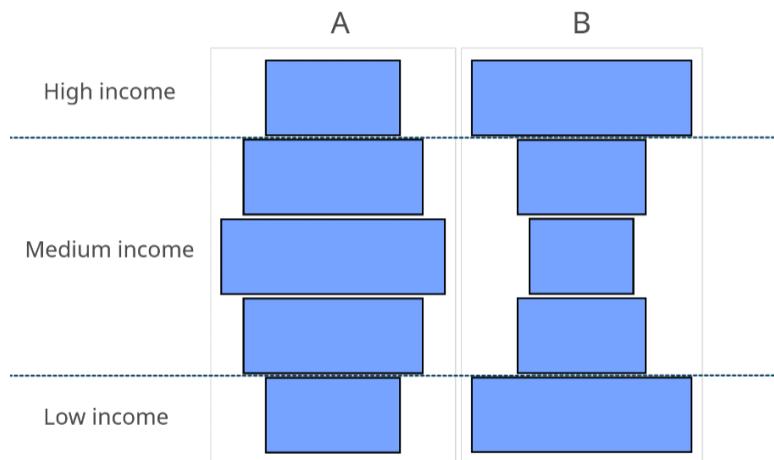
You can start Part 2 by clicking on the button below.

**[ORDER BETWEEN Q2-Q20 and Q21-Q23 IS RANDOMIZED ON THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL]**

2. Several of the following questions are about economic inequality. By "economic inequality" we mean the dissimilarities in people's economic situations; specifically their income (after taxes) and wealth. Note that both rich and poor societies can have economic inequality.

Very unequal societies = large differences in people's incomes and wealth.  
Very equal societies = small differences in people's incomes and wealth.

The figure underneath shows two ways in which incomes can be split between people in a society.



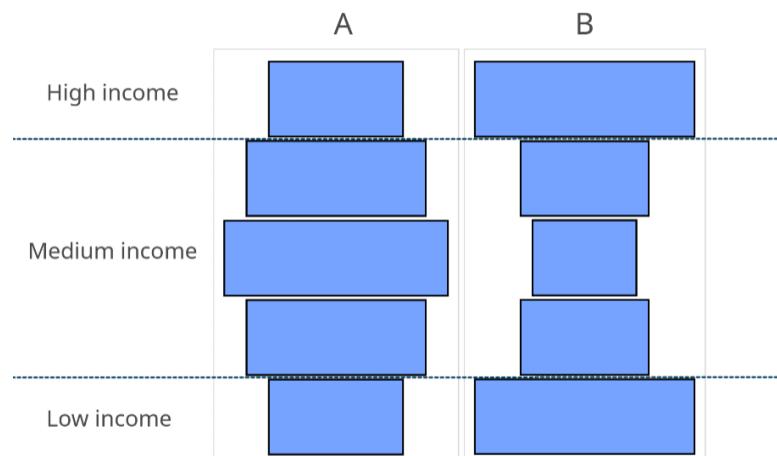
The width of the boxes indicate how many people are in each group. A large box at the top means that many people earn a lot of money, for example. Each "society" has the same amount of people.

Which of these "societies" is more **economically unequal**?

*Society A; Society B; They are the same*

3. This question is about how you think **economic inequality changes society**.

Below we are showing you the same two income distributions as earlier. The correct answer was that society (B) is more unequal.



Here's some more information:

**Society A** has a large middle class and few with relatively small or large incomes. The richest tenth of society earns 5 times as much as the poorest tenth of society.

**Society B** has a small middle class and many with relatively small or large incomes. The richest tenth of society earns 30 times as much as the poorest tenth of society.

There is a low amount of extreme poverty in both countries.

Now imagine that the income distribution in a society moves from (A) to (B). In other words, the society becomes **more economically unequal**. The change is because of something outside the society, such as technological change in another country.

One could imagine that this either **changes** or **does not change factors** in society - such as economic growth, crime, general trust, innovation, the quality of democratic institutions, and so on. Note that this question is not about whether you think the new distribution is more or less unfair, or about the direct changes in individuals' economic situation, but about **potential changes in how the society functions as a result of increased economic inequality**.

We are interested in whether you think **any** such changes occur (whether they are positive or negative).

All in all, do you think society would function differently **at all** after becoming more economically unequal?

*Yes, economic inequality affects society. The society would change; No, economic inequality does not affect society. The society would remain the same*

4. In the previous question, you answered “[ANSWER FROM Q3].” Can you confirm this choice?

*Yes; No, and I want to change my answer; No, I answered randomly*

**[IF RESPONDENTS DEMAND TO CHANGE THEIR ANSWER, THEY ANSWER Q3 AGAIN]**

5. [IF Q3= “Yes, economic inequality affects society. The society would change”] This question is about the same increase in economic inequality (the transition from society A to B).

**All in all**, do you think that the changes in society as a result of such an increase in economic inequality would be **positive** or **negative**?

(When thinking about your answer, try to ignore the direct effects on individuals' economic situation and focus on changes to society as a whole. Also note that this question is not about whether new distribution is more or less unfair. If you do not believe economic inequality affects society, select the answer option in the middle here and in subsequent questions.)

*More economic inequality → Society functions **much better**; More economic inequality → Society functions **somewhat better**; More economic inequality → Society works **as well as before**; More economic inequality → Society functions **somewhat worse**; More economic inequality → Society functions **much worse***

6. In the previous question, you answered “[ANSWER FROM Q3].”

How sure are you of this?

*Not sure at all; Neither sure nor unsure; Somewhat sure; Largely sure; Completely sure*

7. Have you thought about the question of whether economic inequality affects society **before this survey**?

*Yes, many times; Yes, once or twice; Almost, I've thought of something similar; No I do not think so*

8. Please describe to us how you think more economic inequality would (or would not) change society.

For example you could write "There would be more / less \_\_\_ in society" or "\_\_\_ would become more important / less important" (where you write whatever you think instead of \_\_\_).

But these are just examples; feel free to use your own words! Remember that there are no wrong answers, and that we appreciate if you think a little about the

answer.

(text box)

### [ORDER OF Q9-Q20 IS RANDOMIZED ON THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL]

9. This question is about the same increase in economic inequality. What do you think would happen to the amount of crime in the society?

In other words, **how do you think more economic inequality changes the amount of crime in a society?**

Note: When we say the amount of crime we mean the overall crime rate, including homicides, robberies, property crime and more.

*More inequality → a lot less crime; More inequality → somewhat less crime;  
More inequality → No change in the amount of crime; More inequality → somewhat more crime; More inequality → a lot more crime*

10. This question is about the same increase in economic inequality. What do you think would happen to the general level of trust in the society?

In other words, **how do you think more economic inequality changes the general level of trust in a society?**

Note: When we say the total level of trust we mean the strength of a country's social fabric. Some examples are whether most people trust others, whether people cooperate with each other, and so on.

*More inequality → a lot less trust; More inequality → somewhat less trust; More inequality → No change in the amount of trust; More inequality → somewhat more trust; More inequality → a lot more trust*

11. This question is about the same increase in economic inequality. What do you think would happen to the amount of innovation in the society?

In other words, **how do you think more economic inequality changes the total amount of innovation in a society?**

Note: By innovation we mean how many new technologies and products that are developed in the society.

*More inequality → a lot less innovation; More inequality → somewhat less innovation; More inequality → No change in the amount of innovation; More inequality → somewhat more innovation; More inequality → a lot more innovation*

12. This question is about the same increase in economic inequality. What do you think would happen to the amount of corruption in the society?

In other words, **how do you think more economic inequality changes the total amount of corruption in a society?**

Note: By corruption we mean dishonest or fraudulent acts committed by those in power, usually in the form of accepting bribes.

*More inequality → a lot less corruption; More inequality → somewhat less corruption; More inequality → No change in the amount of corruption; More inequality → somewhat more corruption; More inequality → a lot more corruption*

13. This question is about the same increase in economic inequality. What do you think would happen to the amount of social unrest in the society?

In other words, **how do you think more economic inequality changes the total amount of social unrest in a society?**

Note: By social unrest we mean unconventional and sometimes violent forms of collective behavior that disrupt the typical social order in society.

*More inequality → a lot less social unrest; More inequality → somewhat less social unrest; More inequality → No change in the amount of social unrest; More inequality → somewhat more social unrest; More inequality → a lot more social unrest*

14. This question is about the same increase in economic inequality. What do you think would happen to the quality of the democratic institutions in the society?

In other words, **how do you think more economic inequality changes the quality of the democratic institutions in a society?**

Note: When we say the quality of democratic institutions we mean the capable

and equitable functioning of the political system, the avoidance of abuses of power, the equality of the rule of law, whether civil liberties are respected, and so on.

*More inequality → a lot worse quality of democratic institutions; More inequality → somewhat worse quality of democratic institutions; More inequality → No change in the quality of democratic institutions; More inequality → somewhat better quality of democratic institutions; More inequality → a lot better quality of democratic institutions*

15. This question is about the same increase in economic inequality. What do you think would happen to the amount of political polarization in the society?

In other words, **how do you think more economic inequality changes the level of political polarization in a society?**

Note: When we say political polarization we mean the extent to which opinions are divided on political issues, both among most people and politicians, in addition to how strong these differences are and whether people with different views speak together. Increasing polarization means that there is generally less agreement in society.

*More inequality → a lot less political polarization; More inequality → somewhat less political polarization; More inequality → No change in the amount of political polarization; More inequality → somewhat more political polarization; More inequality → a lot more political polarization*

16. This question is about the same increase in economic inequality. What do you think would happen to the rate of economic growth in the society?

In other words, **how do you think more economic inequality changes the rate of economic growth in a society?**

Note: By economic growth we mean the increase in the production of goods and services in the society.

*More inequality → a lot less of economic growth; More inequality → somewhat less of economic growth; More inequality → No change in the amount of economic growth; More inequality → somewhat more of economic growth; More inequality → a lot more of economic growth*

17. This question is about the same increase in economic inequality. What do you think would happen to the average number of daylight hours within a society?

In other words, **how do you think more economic inequality changes the**

**number of daylight hours?**

Note: By the number of daylight hours we mean the number of hours when the sun is visible within a country on an average day.

*More inequality → a lot less daylight; More inequality → somewhat less daylight; More inequality → No change in the amount of daylight; More inequality → somewhat more daylight; More inequality → a lot more daylight*

18. [ALWAYS SHOWN DIRECTLY AFTER Q17] If you thought the last question was a bit strange, don't worry, you can safely ignore it.
19. This question is about the same increase in economic inequality. Here we just want you to click the answer option at the top.

In other words, **how do you think more economic inequality changes -- could you please click the first answer option?**

Note: Here we just want you to choose the top option to show that you are reading the questions. Thank you.

*More inequality → a lot less good answers; More inequality → somewhat less good answers; More inequality → No change in the amount of good answers; More inequality → somewhat more good answers; More inequality → a lot more good answers*

20. This question is about the same increase in economic inequality. Here we just want you to click the answer option at the bottom.

In other words, **how do you think more economic inequality changes -- could you please click the last answer option?**

Note: Here we just want you to choose the top option to show that you are reading the questions. Thank you.

*More inequality → a lot less good answers; More inequality → somewhat less good answers; More inequality → No change in the amount of good answers; More inequality → somewhat more good answers; More inequality → a lot more good answers*

21. Imagine two **otherwise identical people** who **have different incomes** because:

\* **One works harder** than the other.

In such a situation one could try to either (a) **let both keep what they earn**, or (b)

**even out the differences in income.** Overall, which do you think is more fair?

(“*Let both keep what they earn*” Slider 0-7 “Even out income differences”)

22. Now imagine **two equally hard-working** people who have different incomes because:

- \* One learned several job-relevant skills as a result of having **had more opportunities and resources** growing up.

In such a situation one could try to either (a) **let both keep what they earn**, or (b) **even out the differences in income**. Overall, which do you think is more fair?

(“*Let both keep what they earn*” Slider 0-7 “Even out income differences”)

23. Now consider a **combination of the two previous questions**.

Imagine **two relatively similar** people. One **has a higher income** because:

- \* **they work harder than the other**, and
- \* **they had more opportunities and resources** growing up.

In such a situation one could try to either (a) **let both keep what they earn**, or (b) **even out the differences in income**. Overall, which do you think is more fair?

(“*Let both keep what they earn*” Slider 0-7 “Even out income differences”)

### Part 3: General inequality externality beliefs and fairness views [All respondents]

#### 1. **Part 3**

The next part of the survey is about your general attitudes around socio-economic topics in the United States.

You can start Part 3 by clicking on the button below.

2. To show that you are reading the text, please select the answer furthest away from this text (the answer at the bottom).

*Yes, definitely; Yes, maybe; No, not really; No, not at all*

3. On which type of device did you complete the survey?

*Smartphone; Tablet; Laptop or desktop computer*

**[HALF OF RESPONDENTS FIRST ANSWER Q3-Q6 AND THEN Q7, VICE VERSA FOR THE OTHER HALF OF RESPONDENTS]**

**[ORDER OF Q3-Q6 IS RANDOMIZED ON THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL]**

4. How much do you agree with the following statement?

The distribution of money and wealth in the United States is basically fair, because everybody has an equal opportunity to succeed.

*Totally agree; Agree somewhat; Neither agree nor disagree; Somewhat disagree;  
Totally disagree*

5. Do you feel that the distribution of money and wealth in this country today is...

- fair, because everybody gets what they are entitled to

or

- unfair, because some get much more than they are entitled to, while others get too little?

*Mostly fair; Somewhat fair; Neither fair nor unfair; Somewhat unfair; Mostly unfair*

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

- Is someone rich because he or she worked harder than others

or

- because he or she had more advantages than others?

(Please pick the one closest to your views, even if it does not match your view perfectly.)

*Rich, because he/she worked harder than others; Rich, because he/she had more advantages than others*

7. Imagine a moderate increase in economic inequality **in the U.S.** As in the previous questions, one could imagine that society could change in different ways.

All in all, do you think **more economic inequality would change the U.S. at all --** and if so in an overall positive or negative way?

(Try to disregard the direct effects on individuals' economic situation and focus on changes in American society as a whole. Also note that this question is not about whether the new distribution is more or less unfair. If you do not believe economic inequality affects society, select the answer option in the middle here and in subsequent questions.)

*More inequality → American society would function a lot better; More inequality →*

*American society would function somewhat better; More inequality → American society would function about the same; More inequality → American society would function somewhat worse; More inequality → American society would function a lot worse*

8. Do you agree with the following statement?

*People work much less when they're taxed more*

*Totally agree; Agree somewhat; Neither agree nor disagree; Somewhat disagree;*

*Totally disagree*

9. How often do you think you can trust our federal government to do what is right?

*Almost always; A lot of the time; Not very often; Almost never*

10. Imagine the United States was made up of 10 people and that there was only \$100 to go around in total income. This \$100 in income would be distributed as in today's United States. How much do you think **the richest person** of the ten would earn?

*( Slider 0-100)*

#### Part 4: Follow up on one specific externality belief

**[Respondents are asked follow-up questions for one specific externality belief. This belief is randomly chosen from the following set: crime, trust, innovation, corruption, social unrest, quality of democratic institutions, political polarization, economic growth.]**

**Here we will show the questionnaire for a respondent that received crime.]**

1. Now we want you to focus particularly on the relationship between crime and economic inequality.

First, we define crime as the overall crime rate, including homicides, robberies, property crime and more per 1000 inhabitants.

This question is important. We have asked it before but will ask more questions about this afterwards, so please take some time to think through your answer.

How does more economic inequality change **the amount of crime** in a country?

**The button to proceed will arrive after 15 seconds.** Meanwhile, please think about how you think more economic inequality changes the amount of crime.

*More inequality → a lot less crime; More inequality → somewhat less crime; More inequality does not affect the amount of crime; More inequality → somewhat more crime; More inequality → a lot more crime*

2. In the last question you answered "[Answer of Q1]" Can you confirm this choice to us?  
*Yes; No, and I want to change my answer, No, I answered randomly.*

[*IF RESPONDENTS DEMAND TO CHANGE THEIR ANSWER, THEY ANSWER Q1 AGAIN*]

3. In the previous question, you answered “[ANSWER FROM Q1].”

How sure are you of this?

*Not sure at all; Neither sure nor unsure; Somewhat sure; Largely sure; Completely sure*

4. In the previous question, you answered “[ANSWER FROM Q1].”

Can you tell us, in your own words, why you think this?

*[Text box]*

5. Previously you answered “[ANSWER FROM Q1]”. Do you think this effect is something politicians and policy-makers should be focused on, or is it ultimately not very important?

In other words, do you think this effect is *meaningful*?

*Very meaningful, generally meaningful, somewhat meaningful, not very meaningful, not meaningful at all*

6. In the earlier question you answered that “[ANSWER FROM Q1]”.  
Do you think this is true in any kind of country -- no matter whether the country is initially very equal, very unequal, or anything else?

*I'm really not sure. This is too complicated for me.; No; Yes*

[RESPONDENTS ANSWERR Q7-Q9 IF Q6="YES"]

7. How **does more economic inequality** change **crime** in a **very economically equal** country?

*More economic inequality → less crime; More economic inequality → the same crime level of crime; More economic inequality → more crime*

8. How **does more economic inequality** change **crime** in country that is **neither economically equal nor unequal**?

*More economic inequality → less crime; More economic inequality → the same crime level of crime; More economic inequality → more crime*

9. How **does more economic inequality** change **crime** in a **very economically unequal** country?

*More economic inequality → less crime; More economic inequality → the same crime level of crime; More economic inequality → more crime*

10. [IF Q1 != Not affect] What do you think matters more for how economic inequality changes the level of crime?

**Economic differences near the bottom**, meaning how many relatively poor people there are and how little they have, or **Economic differences near the top**, meaning how many relatively rich people there are and how much they have.

*Economic differences near the bottom (the resources and number of relatively poor people); Economic differences near the top (the resources and number of relatively rich people); I think both matter about the same; I'm really not sure. This is too complicated for me.*

11. Do you think an average society with a **low level of average income** and a **low level of economic inequality** would have (compared to other countries):

*A very low level of crime; a low level of crime; an average level of crime; a high level of crime; a very high level of crime*

12. Do you think an average society with a **low level of average income** and a **high level of economic inequality** would have (compared to other countries):

*A very low level of crime; a low level of crime; an average level of crime; a high level of crime; a very high level of crime*

13. Do you think an average society with a **high level of average income** and a **low level of economic** would have (compared to other countries):

*A very low level of crime; a low level of crime; an average level of crime; a high level of crime; a very high level of crime*

14. Do you think an average society with a **high level of average income** and a **high level of economic** would have (compared to other countries):

*A very low level of crime; a low level of crime; an average level of crime; a high level of crime; a very high level of crime*

15. Which of these politicians do you agree with the most?

*Bernie Sanders; Kamala Harris; Mitt Romney; Donald Trump*

16. Thank you for participating in the survey!

Before answering the final question, please let us know below if you want to give us any feedback, if you saw any mistakes, or if anything confused you. It would be very helpful for us.

*(Text box)*

17. Thank you for answering the survey! Final question: Do you feel that this survey was biased?

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

