

Why No Confiscation in America?

Political Participation, Political Parties, and the Median Voter Theorem

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ABSTRACT

Why No Confiscation in America? Political Participation, Political Parties, and the Median Voter Model

Why don't the lower and middle classes vote to confiscate the wealth of the affluent in political systems where the franchise is universal and each citizen has one vote? Anthony Downs argued that confiscation would occur because "the equality of franchise in a democratic society creates a tendency for government action to equalize incomes by redistributing them from a few wealthy persons to many less wealthy ones." In an effort to appeal to the electoral majority who are at the lower end of the income distribution, we should find governments engaging in substantial redistribution from rich to poor through government spending. Yet we do not see this happening in America.

To understand the impact of citizen politics on income redistribution one needs to take into account several additional features of the American political system:

- The citizen with the median income is not the median participant -- Citizens may have equal voting rights, but they are not equal participants. The median participant is not the median voter and the median voter is not the person with the median income in the society. Some people do not vote at all, and some engage in activities such as giving money that have much more clout than the one vote allocated to each individual.
- Objective economic position and economic preferences may differ -- In addition to placing the median analysis in a broader participatory context, we also show that the relevant median point may be on a scale of preferences (in particular, preferences for economic policy) that differs dramatically from objective economic position (in particular, family income).
- Political parties may not offer median policies based upon the objective circumstances of the median income -- And lastly, we show that political parties do not choose to position themselves at the median voter (in particular, making the relevant median, in some circumstance, the median position within the support base of one or the other party).

Our analysis does not so much question the logic of the median voter model, as it adds additional considerations about the context in which it is applied.

Activists, Parties, and Medians: Bringing Data to Downsian Puzzles

In his classic exposition of An Economic Theory of Democracy, Anthony Downs elaborated with elegant simplicity various expected political outcomes in a democracy. Two of his predictions, both predicated on the pivotal position of the median voter in a democracy in which votes weigh equally, have generated particular attention and discussion. First, he argued that, where the principle of one person, one vote obtains, redistributive economic policies are likely to ensue:

The equality of franchise in a democratic society creates a tendency for government action to equalize incomes by redistributing them from a few wealthy persons to many less wealthy ones . . . government need not regard everyone's money income as given because it has the power to redistribute incomes. In our model, it makes use of this power whenever doing so helps it maximize votes. Clearly, in a society where every citizen has one and only one vote, the best way to gain votes via redistribution is to deprive a few persons of income—thereby incurring their hostility—and make this income available to many persons—thereby gaining their support. Since the pretax distribution of income in almost every society gives large incomes to a few persons and relatively small incomes to many persons, a redistribution tending toward equality accomplishes the very political end government desires. Thus the equality of franchise in a democratic society creates a tendency for government action to equalize incomes by redistributing them from a few wealthy persons to many less wealthy ones.¹

In addition, unless voters are polarized in their opinions, rational, vote-maximizing parties -- and, presumably, their candidates -- in two-party systems have incentives to converge at the preferences of the median voter and to obfuscate by making their platforms "vague and ambiguous."²

¹ Anthony Downs, An Economic Theory of Democracy, (New York: Harper and Row, 1957) p. 198.

² Downs, Economic Theory of Democracy, p. 115.

Downs's model and its implications for politics and policy have engendered a great deal of scholarly attention. They have been the subject of general discussion;³ they have been elaborated in formal models;⁴ and they have been subject to empirical test.⁵ Without modification, however, they have not fared well empirically as explanations of political outcomes in America. Our policies are not especially redistributive and our parties do differ. Moreover, the tide is not running in Downs's direction: two important trends over the past generation contradict the predictions that emanate from the median voter model. Income has become more unequally distributed in the United States and tax policies have done little or nothing to overcome the trend.

³ A succinct and clear general statement that argues that "the median voter model has a very good empirical track record" can be found in Roger D. Congleton, "The Median Voter Model," in Charles K. Rowley and Friedrich Schneider, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Public Choice* (Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004), pp. 382-386. Less sanguine about how well the median voter model stands up empirically are the extended discussions in Ian Shapiro, *The State of Democratic Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), chap. 5; and Morris P. Fiorina, "Whatever Happened to the Median Voter?" paper prepared for the MIT Conference on Parties and Congress, Cambridge, MA, October, 1999. These works contain numerous helpful references.

⁴ Thomas Romer, "Individual Welfare, Majority Voting, and the Properties of the Linear Income Tax," *Journal of Public Economics*, 4 (1975), 163-185; and Allan H. Meltzer and Scott F. Richard, "A Rational Theory of the Size of Government," *Journal of Political Economy*, 89 (1981), 914-927, both present formal models that investigate the implications of Downs's model for taxation and redistribution. Gary Cox, "Centripetal and Centrifugal Incentives in Electoral Systems," *American Journal of Political Science*, 34 (1990), 903-935, explores the impact of political structures and electoral arrangements on the tendencies of parties and candidates to converge or diverge.

⁵ Among the many empirical investigations that examine size of government and redistribution are William F. Bassett, John P. Burkett, and Louis Putterman, "Income distribution, government transfers, and the problem of unequal influence," *European Journal of Political Economy*, 15 (1999), 207-228; Phillip Nelson, "Redistribution and the income of the median voter," *Public Choice*, 98 (1999), 187-194; Sultan Ahmed and Kenneth V. Greene, "Is the median voter a clear-cut winner?: Comparing the median voter theory and competing theories in explaining local government spending," *Public Choice*, 105 (2000), 207-230; Branko Milanovic, "The median-voter hypothesis, income inequality, and income redistribution: an empirical test with the required data," *European Journal of Political Economy*, 16 (2000), 367-410; Tony Addison and Aminur Rahman, "Why Is So Little Spent on Educating the Poor?" Helsinki: United Nations University, World Institute for Development Economics Research, Discussion Paper No. 2001/29; Torben Iversen and David Soskice, "An Asset Theory of Social Policy Preferences," *American Political Science Review*, 95 (2001), 875-893. Among those that investigate party or candidate convergence at the median voter are Stephen Ansolabehere, James M. Snyder, Jr., and Charles Stewart III, "Candidate Positioning in U.S. House Elections," *American Journal of Political Science*, 45 (2001), 136-159; David C. King, "Political Party Competition and Fidelity to the Median Voter in the U.S. Congress," manuscript, February, 2001; Edward L. Glaeser, Giacomo A.M. Ponzetto, Jesse M. Shapiro, "Strategic Extremism: Why Republicans and Democrats Divide on Religious Values," manuscript, February, 2005.

In addition, the ideological gap separating Republican and Democratic party elites, and the policies they espouse, has widened.

In this paper we argue that Downs's failure to consider the way that the equality among voters is balanced by inequalities in political activity undermines his fundamental insights. Citizens may have equal voting rights, but they are not equally likely to take part in politics and they are not equally active when they do. Some people do not vote at all while others engage in activities such as working in campaigns and making campaign contributions for which the volume can be multiplied beyond the single vote allocated to each individual. When we take these participatory differences into account, it is apparent that the median participant is not the median voter and the median voter is not the person with the median income in the society.

We are not the first to observe that disparities in political activity might have implications for the inferences that can be drawn from the logic of the median voter. In fact, Downs himself noted that "usually voters with the highest incomes also have the most political power, since in an uncertain world they can use their financial resources to create influence for themselves" -- that is, the median participant has a much higher income than the median for all citizens.⁶ Others have noted that, since turnout in the United States is hardly universal and since the poor are less likely to go the polls than those with higher incomes, the median voter would have a higher income than the median citizen.⁷ Economists who have considered these matters have tended to construe

⁶ Downs, Economic Theory of Democracy, pp. 200-201. Shapiro discusses this theme in State of Democratic Theory, chap. 5.

⁷ For an analysis that takes into account differential political activity as a modification of the standard median voter approach in relation to income inequality, see Jonathan Swabish, Timothy Smeeding, and Lars Osberg, "Income Distribution and Social Expenditures: A Cross-National Perspective", Luxembourg Income Studies: Working Papers

political activity in terms of market transactions. According to Addison and Rahman, “Economic power and the wealth associated with it enable the affluent to buy favorable policies from policies.”⁸ These suggestions have never been followed up in a systematic way -- in particular, with systematic data. In this paper we use survey data to investigate the consequences of the distribution of electoral participation by voting, working in campaigns, or making campaign contributions for the predictions from the median voter model about income redistribution and party convergence.

ELECTIONS AND THE MEDIAN VOTER

Let us state more explicitly the assumptions that drive the median voter model and the ways that we find those assumptions to be unrealistic or incomplete. The median voter model of elections applied to income distribution or to party convergence assumes:

- Votes are apportioned on the basis of one person, one vote, and elections, which are determined by who gets the most votes, determine who occupies public office and makes policy.
- The median voter is the pivot for the election: the outcome is determined by whether the median voter sides with those to the left or to the right on whatever continuum voters are arrayed.
- Candidates know that the median voter is pivotal and confront no obstacles to learning the

Series, # 352, May 2003. We draw on their data later to frame the issue in this paper. See, also, Iversen and David Soskice, “An Asset Theory of Social Policy Preferences,” p. 878. Others have argued that the tendency for parties and candidates to converge on the median voter would cause those with extreme opinions to abstain. This conjecture receives no empirical support. See, Melvin Hinich and Peter Ordeshook, “Abstention and Equilibrium in the Electoral Process,” *Public Choice*, 7 (1969), 81-106; and Fiorina, “Whatever Happened to the Median Voter?” pp. 8-10.

median voter's concerns. Candidates adopt these concerns as their policy positions.

- Citizens are rational maximizers and will vote for the proximate candidate with respect to any issue. With respect to income distribution, voters seek to maximize their income and will make vote choices so as to do so.
- Candidates for office are rational campaigners who seek only to gain enough votes (50% + 1) to win the election. Hence, they ignore their own policy views and opt for the policy position of the median voter.

Our analysis of elections, which considers variations in both the population whose median position is taken into account and the dimension on which the median position falls, modifies these assumptions in several ways:

- Citizens are not equal as voters. Votes are decisive, but not on a one-person, one vote basis. Some people do not even go to the polls. And others multiply their votes by virtue of their activity as campaign workers or donors.⁹ In consequence, the relevant median pivotal point may not be located at the center of the citizenry, or even at the center of the voters; rather the pivot point in determining the impact of the citizenry on incomes policy is the median "activity point" on a distribution of political activities weighted by the clout of various activities and the information they carry. Citizens who stay home have a voting weight of zero in determining the outcome of an election; in abstaining, they convey little

⁸ "Why Is So Little Spent on Educating the Poor?" p. 2.

⁹ Votes can be unequal in other ways -- if there is variation in the size of the voting unit (for example, for the U.S. Senate), the competitiveness of the district, or the ways that votes are counted. In a safe district in which one party has a large advantage, the important election may be the primary, and relevant median that of the median majority party voter.

or no information about their economic circumstances or their policy preferences. The voting clout of folks who limit their participation to voting is equal to 1, but the information conveyed by that vote is relatively limited. Finally, those citizens who work in or contribute to campaigns, and thereby potentially influence the votes of others, may have an electoral weight greater than the one vote to which they are entitled by law; as we shall see, they can convey much more detailed information about their needs and preferences.

- The median voter is not necessarily pivotal. A rational office seeker would take participatory differences into account in calculating which voters to court, weighing more heavily the positions of those whose support is crucial for gaining a nomination and running a campaign. Such calculations would affect the determination of the pivot in the median model. Those who seek to hold or retain office would, we assume, pay attention to the “participation-weighted” median, a point that is very different from the median based on all citizens or all voters.
- Candidates may not have sufficient information to know the policy positions of the median voter.¹⁰ Because the vote is a blunt tool that conveys very little information, elites must obtain information about the needs and preferences of the public from many other sources: polls; analyses of the sources of votes; the media; and messages communicated by the

¹⁰ The need for information about the needs and preferences (the objective and subjective positions) of voters applies not only to prospective models of election control where elected officials try to do what the voters want or what they need. Even retrospective voting assumptions depend on information about voter’s needs and preferences. Incumbents may not follow the specific prospective desires of the electorate, but rather try to perform in ways that will maximize votes at the next election. But they need information as to what might be considered successful performance when the next round comes along. Even the “trustee” who does what is “best” for the constituency, not what the constituency wants, needs information about the citizens to know what is best.

citizens with whom they come into contact. We focus on how citizen activity provides information. The rational office seeker's perception of the location of the median voter will depend, at least in some part, on the information conveyed by such activity. We consider the entire information-carrying process associated with elections, from the many individual citizens who neither do nor say anything and, thus, have little or no voice; to the voters whose voice in the aggregate is loud but not clear; to those citizen activists who in some manner make their wishes known during elections. By communicating their preferences directly, these activists may provide a clearer impression of what the public wants than do ordinary voters. The power of the electorate in determining who wins office catches and holds the attention of candidates and makes them want to be responsive, but the accompanying buzz of citizens sending messages -- often in conjunction with political activity such as campaign work or campaign contributions -- may be what tells them what they must do to be responsive.¹¹

- Citizens may prefer economic policies that are not in accord with their objective income position -- perhaps out of ignorance, perhaps out of ideological conviction. The participation-weighted median points on an income dimension and on their economic preferences are both relevant.¹²

¹¹ Elections are often juxtaposed against other means of citizen activism. They may work together, however. The vote is low on information but high in influence -- at least in the aggregate. The more information-rich activities -- a letter to a public official, for instance, may receive more attention because the recipient is uneasy about the outcome of an upcoming election. For an illustration of how elections and other means of activity reinforce each other, see Sidney Verba and Norman Nie, *Participation in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), chap. 18.

¹² In addition, citizens have preferences on other matters such as social and religious issues.

- Political parties and their candidates may not choose policies solely to maximize their chance of winning. They may be guided by their own policy preferences, local concerns, or such institutional constraints as candidate selection processes with the result that they would not inevitably converge on the median voter.

In sum, we hope to show how the logic of the median model, when adjusted for citizen activity and a more realistic understanding of politics, offers a more complete understanding of the relationship between electoral behavior and political outcomes.

WHY NO CONFISCATION IN AMERICA?

Where the franchise is universal and each citizen has one vote, why don't the lower and middle classes vote to confiscate the wealth of the affluent in political systems? If politics is about income, then why doesn't the person with the median income get together with all those with lesser incomes and tax away some of the income of those at the higher end of the income distribution who have, in the aggregate, much more than those further down in the income distribution? The Meltzer-Richard model¹³ of spending formalized this possibility by arguing that support for government spending should be proportional to the size of the gap between the average income of all voters and the typically lower income of the median voter. Because income distributions are skewed such that a small number of people have very large incomes and a large number of people have small ones, the mean income for the population typically exceeds the median income.

For two reasons, one might expect the combination of an equal polity and an unequal market economy to lead to more redistribution where inequality of income is most pronounced and

to greater redistribution as inequality of income grows: first, the more inequality, the more wealth there is at the top to redistribute downward; second, the more income inequality, the more one might expect those at the bottom of the income distribution to feel relatively deprived and resentful of the affluence above.¹⁴

Yet, in the United States, we do not see massive redistribution. Government policy is less downwardly redistributive in the United States than it is elsewhere and has become even less downwardly redistributive as income inequality has grown. Figure 1 presents striking evidence about over-time changes in the level of income inequality in the United States. The data, which were calculated from tax returns, demonstrate that income inequality fell substantially during the Depression and World War II and then leveled out until the late 1970's. Inequality then began to rise and increased steadily through the next two decades.

What is more, the extent of inequality in the United States is not typical of all developed democracies. Table 1 contains data on three measures of inequality: the Gini index; the ratio of the share of a nation's income earned by the top quintile of earners to the middle quintile; and, perhaps even more importantly, the ratio of the share of income earned by the top two quintiles to the share of earnings of the middle, a figure that shows how much there is above the middle to redistribute downwards.¹⁵ The data, organized from the lowest to the highest Gini index, confirm

¹³ "A Rational Theory of the Size of Government."

¹⁴ In fact, empirical analyses come to differing conclusions with respect to the question of whether inequality begets redistribution. Contrast the findings in Milanovic, "The median-voter hypothesis, income inequality, and income redistribution" with those in Addison and Rahman, "Why Is So Little Spent on Educating the Poor?" or Swabish, Smeeding, and Osberg, "Income Distribution and Social Expenditures."

¹⁵ The data are from The World Resources Institute, derived from various national and international sources. See http://earthtrends.wri.org/text/ECN/data_tables/data_table2.htm.

the consensus of most cross-national studies that the distribution of incomes is less equal in the U.S. than in other comparable countries. The Scandinavian countries exhibit the least inequality, other European countries come next, and the United States stands out as the most unequal. Thus, there is plenty of room for redistribution in the United States, and by the logic of the median voter model, the impulse to use the political clout of voting to equalize incomes should be greater there than elsewhere.

Although we might expect more political pressure for downward redistribution in the United States than elsewhere, just the opposite is the case. Table 2 presents data on the impact of tax and transfer policies on poverty rates across the same democracies. Poverty is measured relative to the median income for each country: after adjustments for household size, those with incomes below 40 percent of the median income within each country are considered to be in poverty. The first column shows the “market” poverty rate before government intervention through taxes and transfers.¹⁶ The second column shows the impact on the poverty rate of government interventions. The last column contains a measure of the proportion of the pre-tax-and-transfer poor who remain in poverty even after government action and shows considerable variation in rates of residual poverty. Comparing the relative poverty rates before taxes and transfers (Column 1) with relative poverty rates after taxes and transfers (Column 2) shows that government intervention reduces the rate of poverty in each of the countries. It is interesting to note that, while the United States is in the middle of the pack when it comes to market-derived

¹⁶ We should note that the pre-tax and transfer poverty rate is not purely the result of market forces, since markets are also affected by government policies on such matters as rights of unions or wage policies.

rates of poverty, it is the outlier when it comes to the proportion who remain poor after taxes and transfers. Government intervention reduces the poverty rate by less than half in the United States -- and by at least two-thirds everywhere else.

Income, Activity, and the Pivotal Citizen

We have suggested that the assumption in the median voter model of equality among voters does not stand up to empirical test. In the remainder of the paper we use data from the Citizen Participation Study which includes in-depth questions about citizen attitudes and political participation to examine the consequences of the unequal political weight of citizens in America. We use this survey, which was conducted in 1990, because it is the only one that includes measures not only of whether respondents had undertaken particular political activities but also of how much they did when they took part. As will become clear, disparities in the volume of activity are a critical to a more nuanced understanding of the role of the median voter.

Median voter models require that voters can be lined up along some single dimension. In order to investigate the assumption of the equality among voters, we assume for the moment that arraying voters according to their incomes is politically relevant so that the person with the median income is the median voter. Is the median income earner really pivotal in the electoral process? The electoral process would hinge on the mean earner only if the median earner -- and all other eligible earners -- voted and if all voters were endowed with a single vote. But, as is well known, not all eligible citizens vote. And some members of the electorate, in essence, have multiple votes by virtue of the influence on the outcome of the election that they exercise by being active in a

campaign or by making campaign donations.¹⁷ That is, after all, one reason why people work for or contribute to campaigns; if they are effective, they may be thought to control more votes than the single one allocated to them by the democratic process.

In addition, this circumstance creates incentives for office seekers who wish to maximize votes. To do so, candidates need resources -- campaign workers and campaign money. Every hour or dollar contributed to the campaign may help to deliver votes.¹⁸ In seeking to maximize votes, the rational campaigner would look not to the median person in the population or to the median of the set of individual voters, but rather to the weighted electoral strength of the population that is electorally active. The location of the pivotal citizen (the person to whom electoral appeals and policies would be directed) would be determined by the relative positions of those who do nothing but vote (who are weighted as a single unit), campaign workers whose political weight is the sum of the single unit for their own vote plus the number of votes that their

¹⁷ Differential voting strength can also be because of differences in district size (for, say, U.S. Senate races) or because districts differ in their competitiveness. In a safe district in which one party has a large advantage, the important election may be the primary, and relevant median that of the median majority party voter. We will not consider the role of district size, but will focus on participation as it affects voting power: looking at those who exercise and don't exercise their voting right, as well as those who may influence more votes through their additional activity. We will consider whether the "correct" median earner is located in the eligible voter pool at large or in the majority party.

¹⁸ There is no consensus as to how much campaign contributions influence votes and the outcome of elections or influence incumbents more directly by buying access or influence. For a review of the literature on various sides of this subject, see Lawrence R. Jacobs and Theda Skocpol, eds., *Inequality and American Democracy* (New York: Russell Sage, 2005). For an analysis that suggests a smaller impact for campaign contributions than is often assumed, see Stephen Ansolabehere, John M. de Figueredo, and James M. Snyder Jr., "Why Is There So Little Money in US Politics," *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 17 (2003), 105-130. For all the difficulties in estimating the connection between money and votes, it is clear that candidates believe there is such a connection. Otherwise, why would they put some much time and effort into fund raising? And from the point of view of citizen influence, the belief may be enough. How many votes are influenced by campaign work would be even more difficult to study. Although their views have no bearing whatever on whether campaign work actually produces votes, we find it interesting that more than a third of those who work in campaigns -- 37 percent, including 43 percent of the

work produces, and campaign contributors whose weight is the single unit for their own vote plus the number of votes their contributions deliver. Since they do not contribute to the voting total, non-voters, of whom there are many in the United States, would be weighted as zero -- a fact that makes clear how far the median voter model, not to mention the weighted participatory median model, is from the median citizen model. Because the number of votes delivered by an hour of campaign work or a dollar contributed cannot be known with any precision, any calculations by rational office seekers -- which, we assume, would be made only implicitly -- would have an impact on campaign strategies.

In light of these considerations, the data in Figure 2 help us to think about the position of the pivotal voter in an electoral world in which turnout is not universal and some citizens multiply the weight of their vote by working in and, especially, making donations to campaigns. Figure 2 uses data from the Citizen Participation Study to show the location of the median family income and the mean family income for all respondents.¹⁹ The mean income (\$44,200) is one-third again larger than the median (\$32,500) indicating that there is clearly room for redistribution from those above the median to those below.²⁰ Reflecting the widely observed correlation between income

Democratic workers and 26 percent of the Republicans -- that their efforts made some or a great deal of difference in terms of how many voted and for whom.

¹⁹ Census data would have more accurate and finely grained information, but the census does not include the other measures needed for our analysis. Indeed, the CITPART Study has two critical features that allow us to undertake this analysis: it contains measures not simply of having made a campaign contribution but of the amount of the contribution; the study design included oversampling those who made large donations. (With appropriate sample weights, the sample can be treated as a national random sample. See Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady, Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995], Appendix A.)

²⁰ Those below the median income, who would be the beneficiaries of the redistribution, have a mean income of \$22,000. In contrast, those above the median, whose income would be redistributed, have a mean of \$68,600 -- suggesting that they are a tempting target indeed.

and the likelihood of voting, the median voter has an income (\$34,000) somewhat, but not much, above that of the median respondent.²¹ The median voter is still located well below the mean income of the sample of respondents -- suggesting that, in spite of the extent to which income is associated with turnout, voters might still opt to elect policy makers who would redistribute downward. The situation changes somewhat if we look at those who can influence more votes than the single vote allocated to them by acting as campaign workers or, especially, campaign donors. The median incomes for these groups of activists are higher than the mean for the population: the median income for campaign workers is \$45,000, and for campaign contributors, it is even higher, \$46,000.

What is more, in contrast to voters who are limited to a single vote, campaign activists can multiply the amount of time or money they give with implications for the amount of political influence. A worker who gives many hours a week during a campaign would, presumably, have greater impact than a worker who gives only a few. Similarly, a large check would have more impact than a small one. That activists can increase the volume of their input is an especially important consideration when it comes to campaign contributions. Because the number of spare dollars that the wealthy can devote to politics is much larger than the number of available hours that the leisured can give, it is possible to multiply the amount of money donated to campaigns to

²¹ See, among others, Raymond E. Wolfinger and Steven J. Rosenstone, *Who Votes?* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), chap. 2; and Richard B. Freeman, "What, Me Vote?" in Kathryn M. Neckerman, ed., *Social Inequality* (New York: Russell Sage, 2004), chap. 18. Note that it does not matter whether income is a causal factor for voting. Evidence shows that a major reason that the affluent are more likely to vote is their higher education level. What counts here is "Who votes?" not why they do so.

an extent that is impossible with the amount of time worked. That is, even with campaign finance restrictions, the most generous financial donor writes checks that are far larger in relative terms than what the most active campaign worker can give in hours. Moreover, among campaign workers, there is no relationship between income and the number of hours volunteered. In contrast, when it comes to making financial contributions, there is a very strong association between income and the size of the gift. Not surprisingly, wealthy campaign donors make much larger donations than do less affluent contributors.²²

In recognition of these patterns, we show on Figure 2 the location of the contributor of the median dollar, a figure determined by weighting each campaign donor by the magnitude of his or her contributions. The median dollar is contributed by someone whose family income is \$81,000 - not exactly a billionaire, but far from the median voter. In short, the pivotal dollar comes from a donor with a family income almost twice the mean income in the population. Clearly, we can make no inference about the rate at which campaign dollars are converted into political influence. Still, the data in Figure 2 cast in a very different light the expectation that the tendency of the rational, vote-maximizing office seeker to aim for the median voter will produce downwardly redistributive economic policies. The data suggest instead that, insofar as contributions have a significant influence on the distribution of votes, the impulse for redistribution towards the less affluent will be attenuated.

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²² For an elaboration of this argument and supporting data, see Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady, Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), chap. 7.

What is more, the median voter has very different needs for government assistance than does the median activist. In the Citizen Participation Survey, we asked respondents a series of questions that would measure, not simply their income, but their level of actual need. One set of questions asked about economic problems they had in the previous year in relation to adequate food, shelter, medical care, employment, or finding day care, which were summed to build a scale of needs. We also asked whether any family member in the household received means-tested benefits: public assistance, food stamps, rent subsidies, or Medicaid.²³ Table 3 compares the needs and the reliance on means-tested benefits for several groups defined by their involvement in politics: all respondents, voters, campaign workers, campaign contributors, and campaign contributors weighted by the size of their contributions. The data make clear that those who are involved with the political process -- as voters, campaign workers, and campaign donors -- are less likely than those in the population at large to demonstrate economic need or, especially, to receive government benefits. Those who give large donations are, however, particularly distinctive -- less than half as likely to indicate economic need and about one-tenth as likely to receive government benefits.

Income thus plays a dual role in this extension of the median voter model. It is at once the motivating force that determines preferences for economic policies and a resource that can be used to influence policy in relation to redistribution. If donor of the median dollar is relatively affluent, that person has, presumably, a motivation to act to dampen redistributive policies and the resources

²³ The item asked about "public assistance" and then listed several current programs including AFDC, the predecessor to TANF.

to influence outcomes in that direction. However, just as we used data to question the assumption in the median voter model that citizens have equal political weight, our data allow us to investigate empirically the assumption that their preferences and needs can be inferred from their economic position and that their policy positions are inevitably economically self-interested. One need not be poor to favor policies that aid the poor – or, for that matter, be rich to favor policies that favor the rich. In Downsian models, it is the median policy position, not the median income earner, that exerts the pull to the center. Figure 3 presents data for those in several activity groups about median economic policy positions on a scale measuring whether the government in Washington ought to see to it that every person has a job and a good standard of living or whether the government should let each person get ahead on his or her own; and whether the respondent prefers reduced taxes or reduced services. In Figure 3 economic policy positions of the median citizen, the median voter, the median campaign worker, and even the median campaign donor are fairly similar. However, the median dollar arises from a source that is much more conservative. [[What proportion of people in the mass public have attitudes to the right of the median dollar. Add data about social and cultural issues as well?]] Not only is the median campaign contributor not descriptively representative of the population in terms of income, receipt of government benefits, and economic needs, but the median campaign contributor has substantially different policy preferences from the rest of the population.

What Political Leaders Hear

We have made clear that the logic of the median voter model requires that those who seek public office know what is on the minds of voters. Unless accompanied by supplementary

information from exit or other public opinion polls, the vote is a notoriously weak instrument for conveying detailed information to public officials about citizen preferences. The concept of “mandate uncertainty” captures the difficulties confronted by winning candidates in drawing inferences about voters’ policy preferences. In contrast, those who work for, or contribute to, candidates or parties often do attach messages about the problems or concerns that lie behind their political activity. The Citizen Participation Study contains unique data about what is actually communicated during electoral campaigns. In that survey, we asked those who had undertaken participatory acts direct questions about the concerns and issues that animated their activity. In response to these questions activists mention a broad range of political concerns. Furthermore, we asked campaign workers and campaign contributors, but not ordinary voters, whether they had communicated to the candidate or to someone involved in running the campaign their views on an issue of public policy.

Table 4 permits us to compare campaign workers to campaign donors with respect to the substance of the messages they communicate to candidates about economic issues. We group these activists’ economic concerns under two broad rubrics: matters of basic human needs -- poverty, jobs, housing, health, and the like -- whether as policy issues or matters of immediate personal relevance; and economic issues -- taxes, economic performance, and the like. These messages should be thought of as concerns communicated, though not necessarily as preferred solutions to the problems mentioned.²⁴ In most cases, mere mention of a problem implies a

²⁴ Answers coded as human needs were various government benefits (welfare, AFDC, food stamps, housing subsidies, Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid), unemployment (either as an economic issue or in terms of the respondent’s own circumstances) housing or homelessness, health or health care, poverty or hunger, aid to the

direction of preference: anyone mentioning a concern with “inflation” or “joblessness” or “the budget deficit” can be assumed not to want more of it. The exception is a mention of a government assistance program. That is, a mention of “welfare” does not indicate whether the preference is for more, or less, spending on welfare. Table 4 presents data about the concerns of those campaign workers and campaign contributors who both mentioned an issue or problem in conjunction with their campaign activity and communicated with the candidate about a policy matter. Campaign workers were more likely to convey a message about basic needs than about taxes and other economic matters. For campaign contributors, equal proportions mentioned issues of basic needs and other economic issues. However, when the data are weighted to take account of the size of donations, the proportion who send messages about basic human needs is considerably lower than the proportion who send messages about other economic issues. These data are consistent with Figures 2 and 3, which showed the pivotal campaign dollar to be located higher on the income scale and at a more conservative location on the policy spectrum. Here we find that the pivotal campaign dollar is more likely to send a message about economic issues than about basic needs while campaign workers are more likely to send messages about basic needs. Campaign contributors and campaign workers not only differ in their objective circumstances and their subjective preferences, they also differ in the concerns that animate their activity.

WHY NO CONVERGENCE IN AMERICA? PARTIES, ACTIVITY, AND THE PIVOTAL CITIZEN

handicapped or handicapped rights. Answers coded as economic issues included: taxes (at any governmental level), local or national economic performance, inflation, budget issues or the budget deficit, government spending, other economic issues. We did not explicitly ask for the “direction” of their answers – e.g., whether someone mentioning housing needs thought more ought to be done about such needs.

The discussion so far makes clear how our expectations might change once we modify the median voter model to take into account inequalities in political activity. The median voter model would predict that, in a country in which income is distributed as unequally as it is in the United States, a bare majority of earners at the bottom of the income ladder would join together to redistribute downward from those at the top. However, if the median is located, not at the position of the median citizen or, even, the median voter, but instead at a position that gives greater weight to the circumstances, needs, and preferences of those activists, especially contributors, whose support is required to run for office, then we would expect political aspirants to converge somewhere to the right of the median voter on a policy of mild redistribution rather than either confiscation or, even, the extent of redistribution characteristic of other democracies. While this expectation articulates with what we saw in Table 2 about the extent of economic redistribution in America, the notion of parties and candidates converging on this policy is at variance with what we know about party polarization in contemporary American politics.

Why Parties Might Diverge from the Median

Earlier we outlined the axioms of the Downsian model. The assumption that parties and candidates choose policy positions solely with an eye towards maximizing votes on a national basis and winning two-party elections seems quite unrealistic. Rather than focusing single-mindedly on winning, political parties and their candidates are guided by their own policy preferences, local concerns, or such institutional constraints as candidate selection processes with the result that they would not inevitably converge on the median voter. Besides, they may not know with any precision what voters, especially the silent ones, actually want. In order to

understand why the parties, and their candidates, are more ideologically polarized than what the median voter model would predict, we must consider such additional factors.

Some of these additional considerations are fully consistent with a more refined understanding of the median voter model. With respect to geographic variation, the median voter differs substantially from political jurisdiction to political jurisdiction; that is, the median voter in Wyoming or Houston is very different from the median voter in Massachusetts or San Francisco. By the logic of the median voter model, only a presidential candidate would adopt the position of the national median voter; others would gravitate to the position of the median voter in the constituency, which might be quite different from the national median. Besides, all candidates have to get nominated as well as elected, and nomination processes that would be likely to produce candidates with less moderate views.²⁵ Since party nomination is tantamount to election in a constituency with a stable one-party majority, the nominee of the majority party in such a circumstance would be expected to reflect the views of the median voter from the majority party, not the median voter of the constituency as a whole. Even in competitive districts, nomination processes contain centrifugal tendencies. Turnout in party primaries is notoriously low, and primary voters tend to be more party loyal, and less ideologically moderate, than the electorate as a whole. Moreover, the party activists and campaign donors whose support is essential for fielding a

²⁵ See John Aldrich, Before the Convention: Strategies and Choices in Presidential Nominating Campaigns (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); and Larry Bartels, Presidential Primaries and the Dynamics of Public Choice (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

campaign and attaining a party nomination tend to be still less moderate.²⁶ These factors would be likely to push rational, vote-seeking candidates away from the median.

Other considerations require that we question the underlying premises of the Downsian model. For example, how voters make up their minds is a much-discussed matter in political science, but the assumption that voters inevitably cast their ballots for the ideologically proximate candidate is far too simple. Instead, a number of factors -- ranging from assessments of that candidate's honesty or experience to retrospective evaluations of the performance in office of the incumbent party -- may take precedence. Moreover, if there are multiple issues at stake in an election, the candidate who is closer on one issue may be more distant on another. In addition, party identification plays a well-known role in voting: voters' standing loyalties to one of the parties predispose them to vote for its candidate, even if that candidate is further from preferred policy positions than the candidate of the opposing party.²⁷ As a result, a candidate can move away from the median but still win the election. Moreover, the assumption that politicians pursue office relentlessly and ignore their own policy views might have been realistic in the era of the machine boss. Although the question of the extent to which politicians pander to -- or, in contrast, seek to mold -- public opinion is a serious one for political scientists, it is difficult to argue that today's politicians have no policy preferences of their own that guide their actions. Given the

²⁶ Herbert McClosky et al., "Issue Conflict and Consensus Among American Party Leaders and Followers, *American Political Science Review*, 54 (1960), 406-427 demonstrated that, in the 1950s, Republican Party activists were more conservative than the Republican rank and file, but Democratic Party activists were actually more moderate than the Democratic rank and file. According to Norman H. Nie, Sidney Verba, and John Petrocik, *The Changing American Voter* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), pp. 200-209, during the 1960s, the pattern reversed for Democrats, and Democratic activists became more liberal than the Democratic rank and file. Since then, activists in both parties have outflanked their respective identifiers ideologically.

uncertainty of ascertaining where the median voter is located,²⁸ candidates with policy commitments have incentives to shade away from the median voter -- thus reducing very slightly the chance of winning but increasing the possibility of being able to implement preferred policies if victorious.

In sum, these various factors work together to push parties, and their candidates, away from the median. Variations among political jurisdictions and the processes by which candidates are selected interact with candidate policy preferences in the first instance to create parties whose candidates have disparate preferences. Candidate uncertainty as to the location of the median and the propensity of voters to adduce factors other than ideological proximity in casting ballots then provide mechanisms whereby these differences can be indulged in a two-party system. Nevertheless, these preferences are not totally undisciplined. Within a party the median voter -- or median intense participant -- holds substantial power.

Parties and their Medians

In order to investigate these considerations empirically, let us reproduce the forgoing data analyses while differentiating Republicans from Democrats. Figure 4 makes clear that the parties are somewhat different with respect to family income. Not unexpectedly, the median Republican identifier, voter, campaign worker, and campaign donor are more affluent than their Democratic counterparts. However, in both parties the donor of the median campaign dollar has an income far

²⁷ Melvin Hinich and Michael Munger, Ideology and the Theory of Political Choice (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994).

²⁸ Donald Wittman ("Parties as Utility Maximizers," American Political Science Review, [1973] 490-498) was the first to consider politicians with policy preferences; and John Roemer (Political Competition: Theory and

above the mean income for the population and far above the median incomes for all the partisan activists. Indeed, what is most noteworthy is not the difference the Republicans and the Democrats but the similarities when it comes to the source of the median partisan dollar.²⁹ These patterns persist in Table 5, which compares the partisans in terms of their economic needs. Overall, Democrats demonstrate greater economic need and greater reliance on government benefits than their Republican counterparts. What is equally striking, however, is the shape of the results when we take the size of contributions into account. In both parties, campaign dollars represent citizens with little financial need or reliance on government benefits. This is certainly not unexpected; the poor do not and cannot make campaign contributions. These data suggest that, if the pivotal partisan to whom candidates and public officials pay attention is determined by dollars given, we would not expect much pressure for redistribution downward or for dealing with basic needs from either party.

When we considered their policy preferences, we found relative similarity among the various activist groups. However, the donor of the median dollar represented a considerably more conservative policy position. The data in Figure 5, which add political parties to the mix, show that the seeming convergence across types of activists is somewhat misleading. [[We should probably add social issues to Figure 5. Note that, contrary to all the delegate studies and the like Democratic activists are to the right of their voters.]] Regardless of their level of activity, the

Applications [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001]) considers the consequences of having both politicians with policy preferences and politicians who are uncertain about where the median voter stands.

²⁹ In fact, the donor of the median Democratic dollar is more affluent than the donor of the median Republican dollar. This finding should be interpreted in light of the understanding that our survey does not handle

partisans are quite far apart, with Democrats more liberal than Republicans. The two parties may be differentiated in terms of the economic needs of their supporters, but they are much more sharply divided by political ideology. It is noteworthy that, for each set of partisans, the median worker, the median donor and, especially, the median dollar donated are situated at a position on the scale considerably to the right of their fellow partisans. Nevertheless, the median Democratic dollar -- while to the right of Democratic identifiers, voters, and activists -- are at a point to the left of, and much further from, any of the Republican groups. The median Republican dollar is far to the right on the economic scale. To summarize, while each party's contributors pull it in a more conservative direction on economic policy, we see no evidence of party convergence on these matters.³⁰

Finally, in Table 6, we compare the parties in terms of the concerns that actually accompany political activity. As in Table 4, we focus on those who contributed either campaign time or money and communicated their policy concerns during the campaign. The data show that the principal difference is not between the kinds of activists but rather between Democratic and Republican activists. The former are more likely to have mentioned issues surrounding such basic human needs as jobs, food, or health care than other economic issues like taxes or economic performance. For the latter, the pattern is reversed. Republican activists are more likely to have discussed economic issues than concerns about basic human needs.

very well information about the very small proportion of very large incomes or contributions and that these data are easily affected by a few outlying numbers.

³⁰ It is interesting to note that when it comes to non-economic attitudes on issues such as abortion or prayer in the schools, the pivotal Democratic dollar is located to the left of Democratic votes and dollars. The economic data

CONCLUSION

This paper presents evidence that sheds light on two puzzles: In a two-party system with equal voting why, contrary to the logic of the median voter model, does the majority who have incomes at the lower end of the economic ladder not use its voting power to foster public policies that redistribute wealth from those above the median? And why do the two parties and their candidates not converge at the preferences of the median voter but instead offer genuine policy alternatives? We have shown that voters are not equal in their voting strength. Instead, those who work in or donate to campaigns -- whose economic position, economic needs, and policy preferences do not reflect those of the median voter -- are in a position both to have additional influence on the outcome of an election and to send direct messages to candidates about their preferences. Vote-seeking candidates will, therefore, not converge on the median voter. Instead, the requirements of running and funding a campaign force parties and candidates to be responsive to political activists -- whose circumstances and perspectives have been communicated to them. Refining our understanding to take into account the size of campaign contributions -- that is, considering the median dollar rather than the median citizen, the median voter, or the median activist -- exacerbates the extent of the gravitational pull away from the median income, the median level of economic need or dependence on means-tested government benefits, or the median policy position. This pull in the direction of activists who have higher incomes, fewer economic needs, and more conservative attitudes on economic policy helps us to understand why those

for Democrats seem to reflect the countervailing pulls of ideology and economic self-interest. We will return to non-economic issues in later papers.

below the median income are unable to join together against those at the top in support of policies of redistribution.

We find, however, that parties and candidates do not converge at the position of either the median voter or some weighted average that accounts for differences in activity and political voice. Instead -- reflecting the constraints imposed by a variety of factors including differences among geographical constituencies, processes of candidate selection, the need to appeal to party activists with strong and not always mainstream views, and the fact that office seekers do not inevitably place their desire to maximize votes before their ideological commitments -- the parties differ. When we considered the data for Democrats and Republicans separately, several regularities emerged. First, whether inactive identifiers, voters, campaign workers, or campaign contributors, the partisans differ in their policy attitudes -- with Republicans to the right of the median voter and Democrats to the left. Second, compared to the median party identifier, voter, and worker among their fellow partisans, the contributors of the median dollar in both parties are notably more conservative in economic policy preferences. Finally, whether Republican or Democratic, the contributors of the median partisan dollar are, in spite of their policy differences, much more affluent than the identifiers, voters, or workers in either party. In fact, the contributor of the median Democratic dollar has a higher income than the contributor of the median Republican dollar.

These findings about the affluence of the contributors of the median dollar in both parties and their conservatism relative to their fellow partisans bring us back to the initial puzzle of why, the Downsian model to the contrary, no confiscation in America. The attempt to understand the

failure to redistribute income and the weakness of the welfare state in America is an old and continuing quest.³¹ Some of the multiple explanations of American exceptionalism focus on characteristics of the citizenry: an American ideology that stresses individual opportunity to succeed and is, thus, tolerant of economic inequality;³² citizen misunderstanding of economics and who benefits from governmental policies;³³ and conflict and division within a multi-ethnic and historically racially divided society.³⁴ Others emphasize institutions: the weakness of labor unions

³¹ A general account is in Seymour Martin Lipset and Gary Marks, It Didn't Happen Here: Why Socialism Failed in the United States (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000).

³² Americans tend to more accepting of income inequality than elsewhere. They believe some or all of the following: that hard work is the source of income differentials, that in any case it is wrong to take money from some to give to others, and that America does not have social classes that are in conflict with each other. The literature on American attitudes towards equality is vast. See, for instance, Herbert McClosky and John Zaller, The American Ethos: Public Attitudes Toward Capitalism and Democracy (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984); Jennifer Hochschild, What's Fair? American Beliefs about Distributive Justice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981); and Sidney Verba and Gary Orren, Equality in America: The View from the Top (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985). For cross national comparisons of attitudes towards equality see Lars Osberg and Timothy Smeeding, "An International Comparison of Preferences for Leveling," paper prepared for the Russell Sage Foundation, March 12, 2003; and Toril Aalberg, "Reaction Against Public Policies or Adjusting Preferences?: Egalitarian Values in a Comparative Perspective," paper presented at the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, April, 2003. See also Alberto Alesina, Edward Glaeser, and Bruce Sacerdote, "Why Doesn't the United States Have a European Style Welfare State" Brookings Papers on Economic Activity, 2001. Interestingly, this paper by three economists, concludes that economic factors do not offer much of an explanation. Rather, they write (p. 247) that "The bottom line is that Americans redistribute less than Europeans for three reasons: because the majority of Americans believe that redistribution favors racial minorities, because Americans believe that they have an open and fair society and that, if someone is poor, it is his or her own fault, and because the political system is geared toward preventing redistribution." See also, Alberto Alesina and Eliana La Ferrara, "Preferences for Redistribution in the Land of Opportunities," NBER Working Paper #7155, Cambridge, MA., National Bureau of Economic Research, May, 2001.

³³ The argument here is that few Americans understand fully the nature of tax and transfer policies. They may believe policies will benefit them when in fact they will not. Or they may have eternal hope that, though they are not rich today, they may be in the future – and do not want their new wealth to be confiscated. See, Larry Bartels, "Homer Gets a Tax Break," Working Paper, Princeton University, 2004.

³⁴ For two reasons, redistributive politics is likely to be inhibited in a multi-racial and multi-ethnic society: first, although united by their poverty, less advantaged citizens may be divided by race or ethnicity and, therefore, less able to work in concert to influence public policy; and, second, better off citizens may be less willing to support redistributive policies that benefit people who are very different from them in racial and ethnic terms. See, for instance, Alesina, Glaeser, and Sacerdote, "Why Doesn't the United States Have a European Style Welfare State," and Martin Gilens, Why Americans Hate Welfare: Race, Media, and the Politics of Antipoverty Policy (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999). Recently, the argument has also been applied to differing life styles and experiences between the affluent and poorer citizens. As income inequality increases and more public services become privatized, there is less comity across social classes that might motivate the more affluent to support for the

and the absence of a labor or social democratic party;³⁵ and the nature of governmental structures and policy processes that inhibit both substantial policy change and coordination among labor, capital, and government.³⁶

Our analysis suggests still another perspective, one that supplements, but does not replace, these venerable explanations: the impact of inequalities in citizen activity -- especially, inequalities in political contributions -- on the calculations of those who seek public office. Cross-national data about political participation are rare in our discipline, but it seems that that the class gradient of political participation is more pronounced in the United States than in other democracies.³⁷ Political aspirants seeking the political support needed to be nominated by their parties and to run an effective campaign will be drawn away from the median voter into territory where activists, especially donors, are both more affluent and more conservative on economic policy with implications for distinctive policy outcomes.

poor. See Swabish, Smeeding, and Osberg, "Income Distribution and Social Expenditures."

³⁵ See, for example, Lipset and Marks, It Didn't Happen Here; and Sidney Verba, Norman Nie and Jae-on Kim, Participation and Political Equality: A Seven Nation Study (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

³⁶ Madison's solution to the dangers to property of mass political power was to establish governmental institutions that make it easier to block than to make policy change. Recent literature has focused on the packaging of policies -- in particular the Bush tax policies following the 2000 election -- in ways that mask the effects on distribution. Policies that may redistribute upwards are made to sound like their opposite. See Jacob Hacker and Paul Pierson, "Abandoning the Middle: The Revealing Case of the Bush Tax Cut of 2001," paper prepared for the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, August 28 - 31, 2003. Torben and Soskice, "An Asset Theory of Social Policy Preferences," argue that more coordinated economies (where labor, capital, and the government coordinate investment and labor policies, in contrast with more liberal economies where the various parts are more in competition) are more likely to develop policies that serve the interests of the poorer segments of society.

³⁷ See Verba, Nie, and Kim, Participation and Political Equality.

Table 1

Income Inequality Comparative

	Gini Index	INCOME GAPS	
		Ratio of Share of Total Income of <u>Top Quintile</u> to Share of <u>Middle Quintile</u>	Ratio of Share of Total Income of <u>Top Two Quintiles</u> to Share of <u>Middle Quintiles</u>
Denmark	25	1.9	3.1
Sweden	25	1.9	3.2
Finland	26	2.0	3.3
Norway	26	2.0	3.2
Italy	27	2.0	3.3
Belgium	29	2.1	3.3
Germany	30	2.2	3.5
Austria	31	2.1	3.4
Canada	32	2.3	3.6
Netherlands	33	2.3	3.6
France	33	2.3	3.7
Switzerland	33	2.3	3.6
Ireland	36	2.6	4.0
United Kingdom	37	2.6	4.1
United States	41	3.0	4.4

Source: World Resources Institute,
http://earthtrends.wri.org/text/ECN/data_tables/data_table2.htm

Table 12

Governmental Policies and Poverty Rates: Relative Poverty Rates (Percent), circa 1991

	Pretax/Pretransfer Relative Poverty	Posttax/Posttransfer Relative Poverty	Residual Poverty: Percent of Market Poverty Rate Remaining After Government Intervention
Denmark	23.9	3.5	15%
Sweden	20.6	3.8	18%
Finland	9.8	2.3	26%
Norway	9.3	1.7	18%
Italy	21.8	5.0	23%
Belgium	23.9	2.2	9%
Germany	14.1	2.4	17%
Canada	21.6	5.6	26%
Netherlands	20.5	4.3	21%
France	27.5	4.8	17%
Switzerland	12.8	4.3	33%
Ireland	25.8	4.7	18%
United Kingdom	25.7	5.3	21%
Australia	21.3	6.4	30%
United States	21.0	11.7	56%

Source: Adapted from Lane Kenworthy, "Do Social Welfare Policies Reduce Poverty: A Cross-National Assessment," *Social Forces*, 1999, 1119-1131.

Note: Data are Kenworthy's calculations from the LIS database. Relative poverty is defined as the percentage of individuals in households with incomes (adjusted for household size) below 40% of the median within each country. For year see Table 1. (Last column calculated by authors.)

Table 3

Economic Need and the Receipt of Government Benefits

	Percent Reporting An Economic Need Needs*	Percent Receiving a Means Tested Benefit**
All Respondents	48.8%	11.5%
Voters	44.0%	8.5%
Campaign workers	45.2%	7.2%
Campaign donors	40.1%	3.4%
Campaign donors (weighted by dollars given)	22.9%	1.2%

*** Problem with adequate housing, finding a job, paying for medical care, paying rent, adequate food, or needed to work extra hours.**

**** Receives foodstamps, AFDC, housing subsidies, Medicaid.**

Source: Citizen Participation Study , 1990

Table 4

**Verbatim Replies
Percent Mentioning Aiding the Needy or Conservative Economic Issues
(among those who gave a codeable answer to the issue associated with activity)**

	Campaign Workers Who Sent a Message¹	Campaign Donors Who Sent a Message²	Campaign Donors (Weighted by \$'s Given)³
Aiding Needy ³	20.2%	20.2%	15.1%
Economic Issues ⁴	18.1%	18.1%	23.3%

1. Campaign workers who sent a codeable message accompanying their campaign work or contacted an official with a codeable message.
2. Campaign donors who sent a codeable message accompanying their campaign work or contacted an official with a codeable message.
3. Campaign donors who sent a codeable message accompanying their campaign contribution or contacted an official with a codeable message. Answers weighted by dollars given.
4. Answers coded as human needs: various government benefits (welfare, AFDC, foodstamps, housing subsidies, Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, unemployment (either as an economic issue or in terms of the respondent's own circumstances) housing or homelessness, health or health care, poverty or hunger, aid to the handicapped or handicapped rights.,
5. Answers coded as economic issues: Taxes (at any governmental level), local or national economic performance, inflation, budget issues or the budget deficit, government spending, other economic issues.

Source: Citizen Participation Study , 1990

Table 5

Percent Reporting Economic Need* or Receiving Means Tested Benefit**s by

Party and Activity

	Reporting Needs		Receiving Benefits	
	Democrats	Republicans	Democrats	Republicans
Identifiers	53%	43%	16%	7%
Voters	48%	38%	13%	5%
Campaign Workers	50%	32%	11%	4%
Campaign Donors	44%	33%	5%	3%
Campaign Donors (weighted by \$'s given)	20%	29%	1%	2%

* Problem with adequate housing, finding a job, paying for medical care, paying rent, adequate food, or needed to work extra hours.

** Receives foodstamps, AFDC, housing subsidies, medicaid.

Source: Citizen Participation Study Data, 1990

Table 6

Verbatim Replies: Percent Mentioning Various Concerns in Connection with Activity, by Party:
(among those who gave a codeable answer to the issue associated with activity)

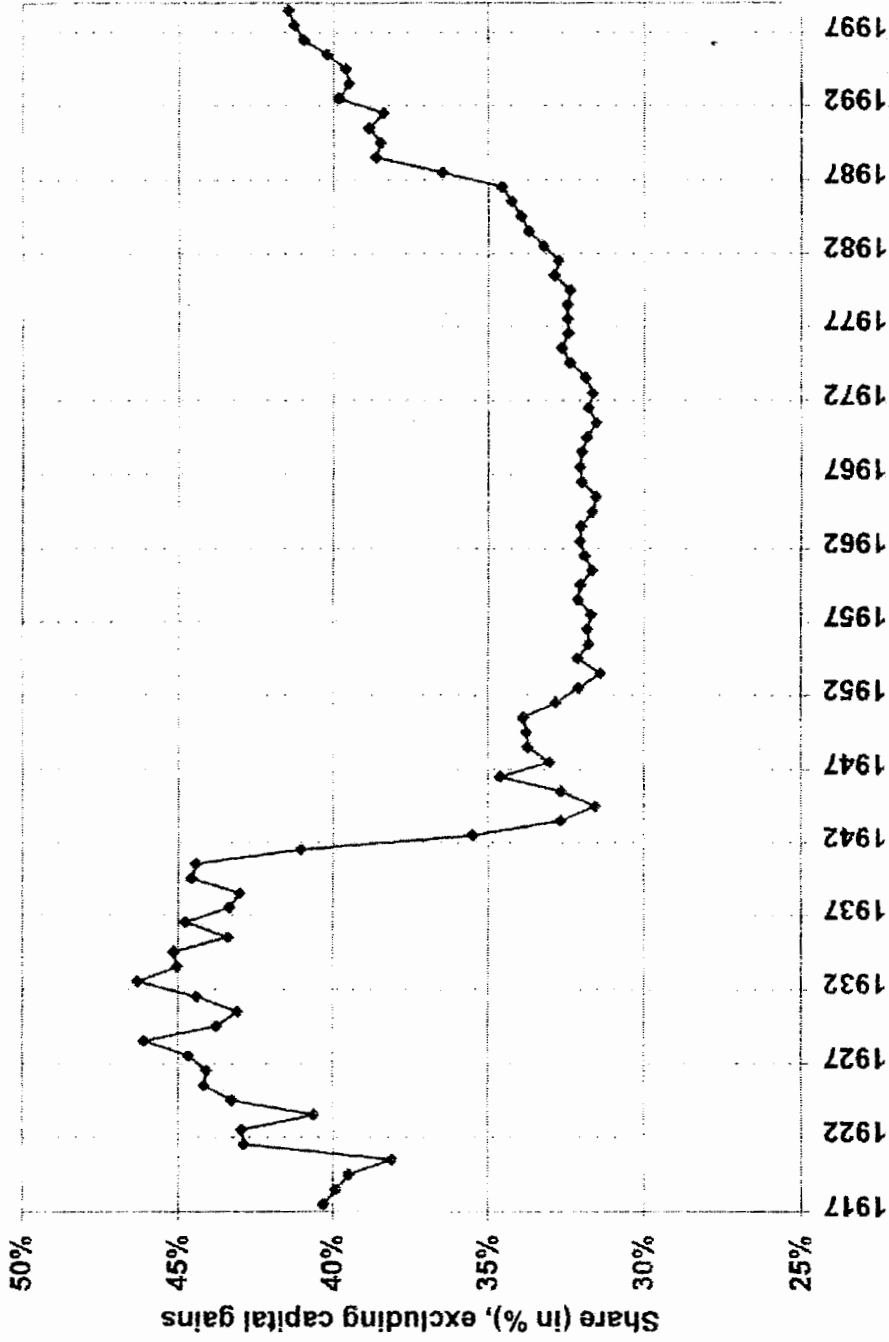
	Basic Needs*		Economic Issues**	
	Democrats	Republicans	Democrats	Republicans
Campaign Workers	28%	9%	15%	21%
Campaign Donors	29%	12%	17%	19%
Campaign Donors (weighted by \$'s given)	20%	12%	11%	19%

* Problem with adequate housing, finding a job, paying for medical care, paying rent, adequate food, or needed to work extra hours.

** Receives foodstamps, AFDC, housing subsidies, medicaid.

Source: Citizen Participation Study Data, 1990

Figure 1: The top decile income share in the U.S., 1917-1998



Source: Thomas Piketty and Emmanuel Saez, National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper W 8467 "Income Inequality in the United States, 1913-1998"

Figure 2

Median Family Income by Activity (Mean Family Income for all: \$44.2K)

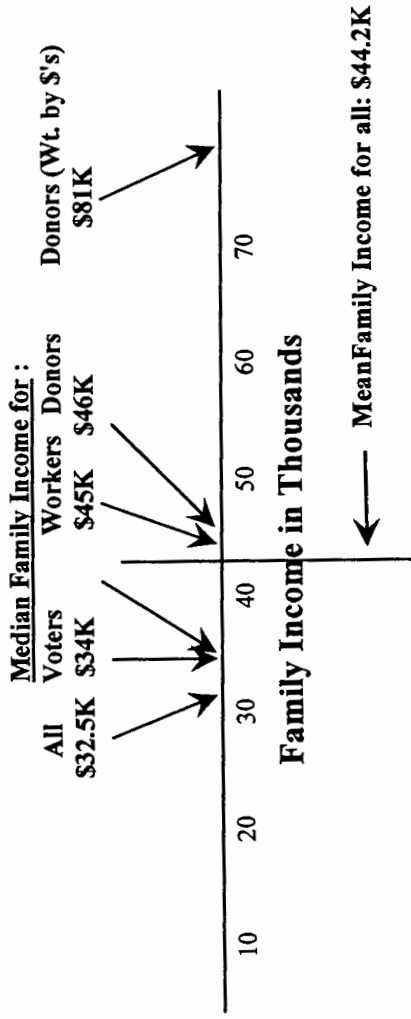


Figure 3

Economic Attitudes

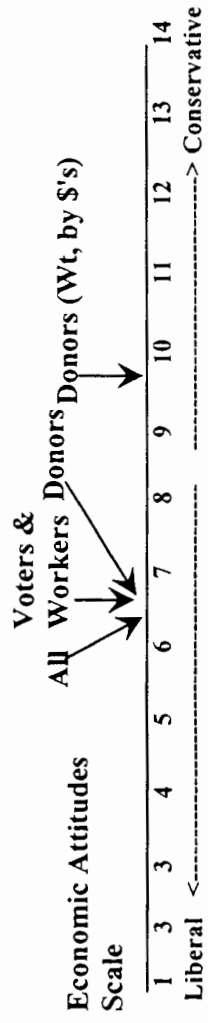


Figure 4

Median Family Income by Activity and Party

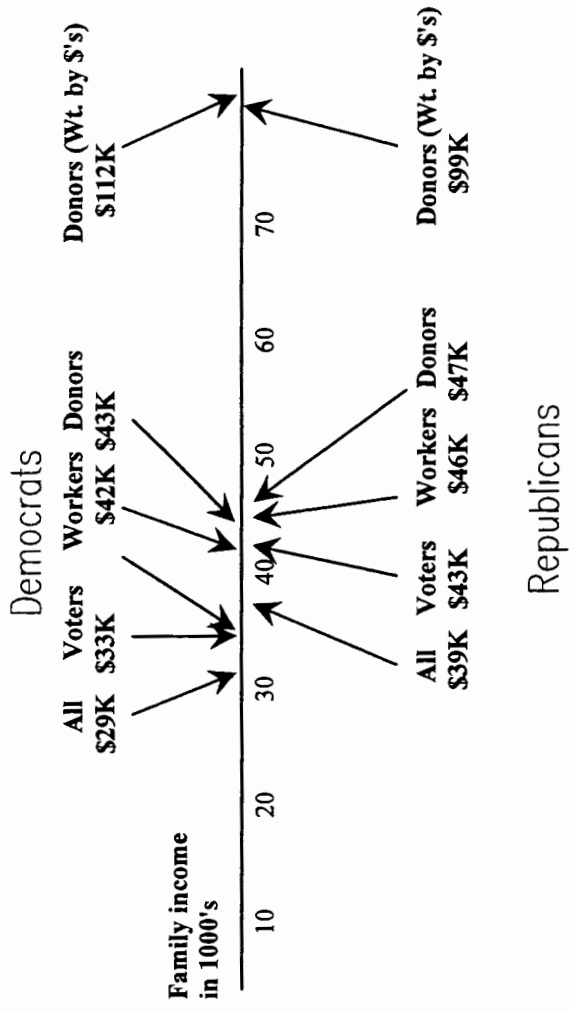


Figure 5

Economic Attitudes by Party

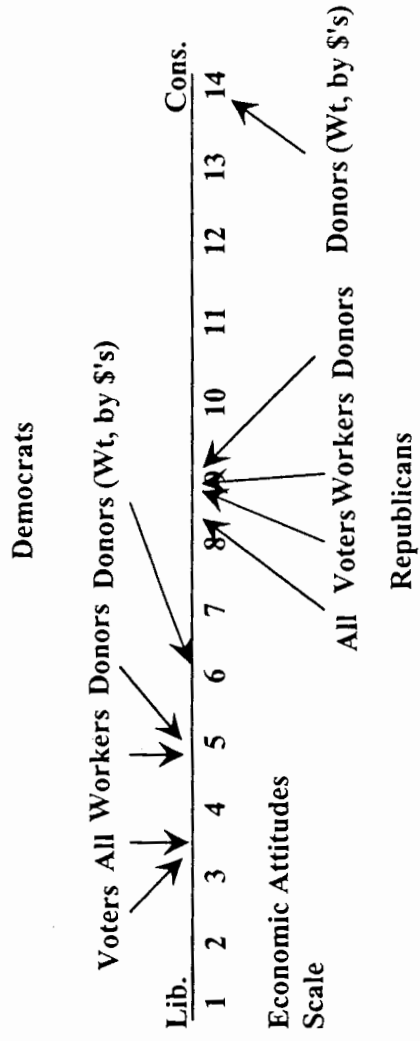


Table 6

Verbatim Replies: Percent Mentioning Various Concerns in Connection with Activity, by Party:

(among those who gave a codeable answer to the issue associated with activity)

	Basic Needs*		Economic Issues**	
	Democrats	Republicans	Democrats	Republicans
Campaign Workers	28%	9%	15%	21%
Campaign Donors	29%	12%	17%	19%
Campaign Donors (weighted by \$'s given)	20%	12%	11%	19%

* Problem with adequate housing, finding a job, paying for medical care, paying rent, adequate food, or needed to work extra hours.

** Receives foodstamps, AFDC, housing subsidies, medicaid.

Source: Citizen Participation Study Data, 1990

Table 5

Percent Reporting Economic Need* or Receiving Means Tested Benefit**s by

Party and Activity

	Reporting Needs		Receiving Benefits	
	Democrats	Republicans	Democrats	Republicans
Identifiers	53%	43%	16%	7%
Voters	48%	38%	13%	5%
Campaign Workers	50%	32%	11%	4%
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* Problem with adequate housing, finding a job, paying for medical care, paying rent, adequate food, or needed to work extra hours.

** Receives foodstamps, AFDC, housing subsidies, medicaid.

Source: Citizen Participation Study Data, 1990

Table 4

**Verbatim Replies
Percent Mentioning Aiding the Needy or Conservative Economic Issues
(among those who gave a codeable answer to the issue associated with activity)**

	Campaign Workers Who Sent a Message¹	Campaign Donors Who Sent a Message²	Campaign Donors (Weighted by \$'s Given)³
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3. Campaign donors who sent a codeable message accompanying their campaign contribution or contacted an official with a codeable message. Answers weighted by dollars given.
4. Answers coded as human needs: various government benefits (welfare, AFDC, foodstamps, housing subsidies, Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, unemployment (either as an economic issue or in terms of the respondent's own circumstances) housing or homelessness, health or health care, poverty or hunger, aid to the handicapped or handicapped rights.,
5. Answers coded as economic issues: Taxes (at any governmental level), local or national economic performance, inflation, budget issues or the budget deficit, government spending, other economic issues.

Source: Citizen Participation Study , 1990

Table 3

Economic Need and the Receipt of Government Benefits

	Percent Reporting An Economic Need Needs*	Percent Receiving a Means Tested Benefit**
All Respondents	48.8%	11.5%
Voters	44.0%	8.5%
Campaign workers	45.2%	7.2%
Campaign donors	40.1%	3.4%
Campaign donors (weighted by dollars given)	22.9%	1.2%

*** Problem with adequate housing, finding a job, paying for medical care, paying rent, adequate food, or needed to work extra hours.**

**** Receives foodstamps, AFDC, housing subsidies, Medicaid.**

Source: Citizen Participation Study , 1990