

University of Kentucky

UKnowledge

Theses and Dissertations--Political Science

Political Science

2019

PERCEPTIONS OF FAIRNESS AND POLITICAL SUPPORT IN THE FACE OF ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

Gregory W. Saxton

University of Kentucky, gregory.saxton@uky.edu

Digital Object Identifier: <https://doi.org/10.13023/etd.2019.195>

[Right click to open a feedback form in a new tab to let us know how this document benefits you.](#)

Recommended Citation

Saxton, Gregory W., "PERCEPTIONS OF FAIRNESS AND POLITICAL SUPPORT IN THE FACE OF ECONOMIC INEQUALITY" (2019). *Theses and Dissertations--Political Science*. 28.

https://uknowledge.uky.edu/polysci_etds/28

This Doctoral Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Political Science at UKnowledge. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations--Political Science by an authorized administrator of UKnowledge. For more information, please contact UKnowledge@lsv.uky.edu.

STUDENT AGREEMENT:

I represent that my thesis or dissertation and abstract are my original work. Proper attribution has been given to all outside sources. I understand that I am solely responsible for obtaining any needed copyright permissions. I have obtained needed written permission statement(s) from the owner(s) of each third-party copyrighted matter to be included in my work, allowing electronic distribution (if such use is not permitted by the fair use doctrine) which will be submitted to UKnowledge as Additional File.

I hereby grant to The University of Kentucky and its agents the irrevocable, non-exclusive, and royalty-free license to archive and make accessible my work in whole or in part in all forms of media, now or hereafter known. I agree that the document mentioned above may be made available immediately for worldwide access unless an embargo applies.

I retain all other ownership rights to the copyright of my work. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of my work. I understand that I am free to register the copyright to my work.

REVIEW, APPROVAL AND ACCEPTANCE

The document mentioned above has been reviewed and accepted by the student's advisor, on behalf of the advisory committee, and by the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), on behalf of the program; we verify that this is the final, approved version of the student's thesis including all changes required by the advisory committee. The undersigned agree to abide by the statements above.

Gregory W. Saxton, Student

Dr. Tiffany D. Barnes, Major Professor

Dr. Justin Wedeking, Director of Graduate Studies

PERCEPTIONS OF FAIRNESS AND POLITICAL SUPPORT IN THE FACE OF
ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
College of Arts and Sciences
at the University of Kentucky

By
Gregory W. Saxton
Lexington, Kentucky
Director: Dr. Tiffany D. Barnes, Associate Professor of Political Science
Lexington, Kentucky
2019

Copyright © Gregory W. Saxton 2019

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

PERCEPTIONS OF FAIRNESS AND POLITICAL SUPPORT IN THE FACE OF ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

In this dissertation, I investigate two key questions: 1) What are the specific conditions under which economic inequality undermines democratic legitimacy; and 2) How does inequality map onto individuals' perceptions of fairness and subsequently affect satisfaction with democracy and trust in political institutions? I first argue that individuals' perceptions of distributive unfairness are key factors whereby economic inequality undermines democratic legitimacy. Inequality - and subsequent perceptions that the economic distribution is unfair - undermine political support by signaling that the democratic process is not functioning properly and by challenging people's normative expectations about what democracy should do in practice.

I next draw from a diverse literature on social and political psychology, as well as governance quality, to derive new hypotheses about how people form their fairness judgments and use them to evaluate democracy. Right-leaning and upper-class individuals should be less upset with inequality in the first place, but even when these individuals perceive distributive unfairness, they should be less likely to express political dissatisfaction as a result. Additionally, the context in which individuals form their fairness perceptions should condition the relationship between fairness judgments and political support. In a context of good governance, individuals should be less likely to perceive inequality as unfair, and subsequently less likely to express political dissatisfaction for any perceived distributive unfairness in society. Governance quality provides alternative evidence that democracy is in fact functioning properly and should allay citizens' concerns about inequality and distributive unfairness, at least when it comes to evaluating democratic legitimacy.

To test my theory and hypotheses, I take a mixed-methods approach that combines large-N analysis of public opinion data and original survey experiments. To contextualize my quantitative results, I draw on motivating examples from original open-ended surveys, newspapers, and elite interviews. In the first empirical chapter, I conduct a multilevel analysis of data from 18 Latin American and show that perceptions of distributive unfairness are negatively correlated with trust in government and satisfaction with democracy, yet good governance significantly mitigates this negative relationship. In the second empirical chapter, I use original survey experiments in Argentina, Mexico, and the US to show that perceptions of distributive unfairness are key causal factors

linking inequality to political dissatisfaction. In the third empirical chapter, I use a second set of survey experiments to investigate how governance quality moderates the relationship between inequality and political support. When individuals are presented with information about declining corruption, they are less likely to perceive their country's income distribution as unfair, and less likely to link inequality to political dissatisfaction.

KEYWORDS: Inequality, Distributive Fairness, Satisfaction with Democracy, Trust in Government, Corruption, Latin America

Gregory W. Saxton
(Name of Student)

April 15, 2019
Date

PERCEPTIONS OF FAIRNESS AND POLITICAL SUPPORT IN THE FACE OF
ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

By
Gregory W. Saxton

Dr. Tiffany D. Barnes

Director of Dissertation

Dr. Justin Wedeking

Director of Graduate Studies

April 15, 2019

Date

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are countless people whose support has made my dissertation and PhD journey possible. I could not have done it without each and every one of you. The acknowledgements below can only begin to summarize my gratitude. If I have neglected to mention anyone, I am deeply sorry. My endless thanks go out to all of you.

First, I have to thank my family. During the last five years, my mother (Annette) and sister (Callie) have proved to be endless sources of support and encouragement, celebrating my successes and encouraging me to keep my eye on the future during my low points. I also thank Craig for his unwavering support over the last five years, from moving to a new city so that I could start my PhD program at the University of Kentucky, to holding down our home when I spent months in the field. In many ways, I owe my successes to the three of you.

This dissertation would also not have been possible without the support of my committee. First, Tiffany Barnes, the chair of my dissertation committee, has had such an amazing impact not only on this dissertation project, but also on my development as a scholar. For every time I saw Dropbox updating at midnight because you were reading a draft of something I wrote, thank you. For pushing me to apply for an NSF grant and to make my first trip to Argentina, thank you. For persuading me not to be discouraged by an oftentimes discouraging academic job market, thank you. Your endless support and mentorship have shaped me into the scholar I always hoped I would be, and it has set me up well for what I hope will be a successful career.

Emily Beaulieu has been another constant source of support and encouragement, both professionally and personally, over the last five years. Her mentorship was especially instrumental in my first few years at UK, when she served as the initial chair of my dissertation committee. I would also like to thank Abby Córdova. It was in Abby's Comparative Political Behavior class, during my first year at UK, that I started thinking about the topic and research questions that would eventually become this dissertation. I thank Clayton Thyne, not only in his capacity as a committee member, but also as Chair of the Political Science department. Clayton has been a tireless advocate for my professional development, and without his advocacy, it is unlikely that I would have been able to spend as much time in the field as I ultimately spent. Thank you so much. Finally, I would like to thank Ana Liberato for carefully reading my work and always pushing me to engage with a broader, interdisciplinary audience.

Beyond the members of my dissertation, there are a number of other faculty members at UK that have supported me on this journey. Notably, Jesse Johnson, Mark Peffley, Ellen Riggle, Justin Wedeking, and Mike Zilis have all helped a great deal with the development of this project, and with my professional development more generally. And beyond UK, I am grateful to a number of political scientists who, already at this early stage in my career, have taken the time to read my research and job market materials, and to offer mentorship and advice. Notably, I am grateful to Nichole Bauer (Louisiana State University), Mirya Holman (Tulane University), and Yann Kerevel (Louisiana State University). Thank you all.

I gratefully acknowledge funding support from the National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant SES-1747436, the Ken and Mary Sue

Coleman Fellowship, and the UK Latin American, Caribbean, and Latino Studies program. There are also a number of people who facilitated my research during my three fieldwork trips to Argentina. In particular, I would like to thank Melina Levy and Florencia Tricio for excellent research assistance. When I say that I couldn't have done it without you, I literally mean it. Your help with setting up and conducting interviews in Buenos Aires was invaluable, so thank you.

Finally, I would like to thank a few friends that have surrounded me with support and positive energy during the last few years. Jaclyn Johnson, Anwar Mhajne, and Gabriela Rangel-Katz all finished their PhD journeys a bit before me and have continued to offer the best type of friendship I could ask for. Victoria Beall has been a great friend and fieldwork companion. I also extend a huge thanks to Jennifer Flinchum, Chip O'Connell and Gargi Vyas for their unwavering kindness and friendship. I hope that I will be able to offer all of you the same type of support and encouragement as you finish your PhD journeys that Jaclyn, Anwar, and Gabby have given me.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	x
CHAPTER 1. Introduction.....	1
1.1 Motivation.....	1
1.2 Democratic Stability and the Sources of Political Legitimacy	2
1.3 Why the Americas?.....	5
1.4 Overview of the Dissertation	11
CHAPTER 2. A Theory of Fairness Perceptions and Political Support in the Face of Inequality	15
2.1 Introduction.....	15
2.2 The Sources of Democratic Legitimacy and Political Support.....	16
2.3 Economic Inequality, Distributive Fairness, and Political Support.....	22
2.4 The Conditioning Effects of Class Status Political Ideology.....	24
2.4.1 Class Status	25
2.4.2 Political Ideology	27
2.5 Inequality, Fairness Perceptions, and Governance Quality	31
CHAPTER 3. Inequality, Fairness Perceptions, and Political Support: A Cross-National Analysis.....	37
3.1 Fairness Perceptions and Political Support in Latin America	39
3.2 Methods and Data	44
3.2.1 Dependent Variables	45
3.2.2 Independent Variables	47
3.2.3 Control Variables	50
3.3 Perceptions of Distributive Unfairness and Satisfaction with Democracy	51
3.3.1 Class, Fairness Perceptions, and Satisfaction with Democracy.....	56
3.3.2 Political Ideology, Fairness Perceptions, and Satisfaction with Democracy	56
3.3.3 Governance Quality, Fairness Perceptions, and Satisfaction with Democracy	59
3.4 Perceptions of Distributive Unfairness and Trust in Government.....	63

3.4.1	Class, Fairness Perceptions, and Trust in Government.....	67
3.4.2	Political Ideology, Fairness Perceptions, and Trust in Government.....	71
3.4.3	Governance Quality, Fairness Perceptions, and Trust in Government.....	74
3.5	Discussion and Conclusion.....	76
CHAPTER 4. Inequality and Fairness Frames: Experimental Evidence from Argentina, Mexico, and the United States		
4.1	Experimental Design.....	84
4.2	Results of a Survey Experiment in Argentina.....	87
4.2.1	Satisfaction with Democracy, Average Treatment Effects.....	87
4.2.2	Satisfaction with Democracy, Heterogeneous Effects by Political Ideology	90
4.2.3	Satisfaction with Democracy, Heterogeneous Treatment Effects by Class..	93
4.3	Results from a Survey Experiment in the United States.....	95
4.4	Results from a Survey Experiment in Mexico.....	101
4.5	Discussion and Conclusion.....	105
CHAPTER 5. An Experiment on Inequality, Corruption, and Political Support		
5.1	Introduction.....	108
5.2	Experimental Design.....	110
5.3	Results.....	111
5.3.1	Inequality, Corruption, and Satisfaction with Democracy.....	111
5.3.2	Inequality, Corruption, and Trust in Government	115
5.3.3	Inequality, Corruption, and Perceived Distributive Unfairness.....	118
5.4	Discussion Conclusion.....	121
CHAPTER 6. Conclusion		
6.1	Summary of the Argument and Main Findings	124
6.2	Contributions.....	129
6.3	Broader Implications.....	130
APPENDICES		
Appendix A.	Chapter 2 Supplementary Analysis	134
Appendix B.	Chapter 3 Supplementary Analysis	136
Appendix C:	Chapter 4 Experimental Design, Sample Characteristics, and Additional Information	140
Appendix D:	Chapter 5 Experimental Design and Sample Characteristics.....	146

References.....	150
VITA.....	161

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1 Summary of Hypotheses.....	35
Table 3.1 Perceived Distributive Unfairness and Satisfaction with Democracy, Baseline Models.....	53
Table 3.2 Perceived Distributive Unfairness and Satisfaction, Interactive Models	55
Table 3.3 Perceived Distributive Unfairness and Trust in Government, Baseline Models	65
Table 3.4 Perceived Distributive Unfairness and Trust in Government, Interactive Models.....	68
Table 3.5 Hypotheses and Empirical Support.....	77
Table 4.1 Average Treatment Effects, Satisfaction with Democracy in Argentina.....	88
Table 4.2 Trust in Government, Average Treatment Effects, U.S Experiment.....	96
Table 4.3 Average Treatment Effects, Mexico Distributive Fairness Experiment.....	102
Table 4.4 Average Treatment Effects by Political Ideology, Mexico Experiment.....	104
Table 5.1 Average Treatment Effects, Satisfaction with Democracy.....	112
Table 5.2 Average Treatment Effects, Trust in Government.....	116
Table 5.3 Average Treatment Effects, Perceived Distributive Unfairness.....	119
Table 6.1 Summary of Empirical Support for Hypotheses.....	126

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1 Support for the Political System in Latin America	3
Figure 1.2 Public Opinion in Mexico, Argentina, and the United States	7
Figure 3.1 Inequality and Fairness Perceptions in Latin America.....	41
Figure 3.2 Distribution of Key Measures Across Latin America	43
Figure 3.3 Distribution of Fairness Perceptions and Political Support, Pooled Sample...	47
Figure 3.4 Perceived Distributive Unfairness and Satisfaction with Democracy.....	54
Figure 3.5 Political Ideology, Perceived Distributive Unfairness, and Satisfaction.....	57
Figure 3.6 Governance Quality, Perceived Distributive Unfairness, and Satisfaction	61
Figure 3.7 Perceived Distributive Unfairness and Trust in Government.....	66
Figure 3.8 Class, Perceived Distributive Unfairness, and Trust in Government.....	69
Figure 3.9 Political Ideology, Perceived Distributive Unfairness, and Trust in Government.....	72
Figure 3.10 Governance Quality, Perceived Distributive Unfairness, and Trust	75
Figure 4.1 Inequality Information and Satisfaction with Democracy.....	89
Figure 4.2 Political Ideology, Fairness Perceptions, and Predicted Satisfaction.....	91
Figure 4.3 Class, Fairness Perceptions, and Predicted Satisfaction.....	94
Figure 4.4 Heterogeneous Treatment Effects by Political Ideology.....	100
Figure 5.1 Inequality, Corruption, and Satisfaction with Democracy	114
Figure 5.2 Inequality, Corruption, and Trust in Government	117
Figure 5.3 Inequality, Corruption, and Perceived Distributive Unfairness	121

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Motivation

The Americas host the highest levels of economic inequality in the world. Extreme levels of inequality challenge some of the core principles of democracy, such as “one person, one vote” by giving wealthy citizens undue political influence (Gilens 2012). High levels of inequality moreover pose serious challenges for the deepening and strengthening of democracy in regions such as the Americas. Not only does economic inequality challenge societal and democratic norms about equality of opportunity for all citizens, but it challenges citizens’ normative expectations about the outcomes that democracy is supposed to produce (Singh and Carlin 2015). In this dissertation, I investigate the specific conditions under which economic inequality erodes support for democratic institutions. In particular, I ask *how do individuals’ fairness judgments affect satisfaction with democracy and trust in political institutions?*

Prior research has demonstrated a robust empirical correlation between high levels of economic inequality and low levels of political support, such as support for democracy (Córdova and Seligson 2010; Krieckhaus et al. 2014), satisfaction with democracy (Anderson and Singer 2008); and political trust (Zmerli and Castillo 2015). Yet, our understanding of the relationship between these concepts remains incomplete. First, this research does not establish a causal mechanism linking inequality to evaluations of democracy. It is unclear, for instance, whether citizens blame the government for economic inequality, or which groups of citizens dislike inequality the most. It is also unclear how the quality of democratic procedures in a country – e.g., the extent of corruption – affects the relationship between economic inequality and citizens’

evaluations of the political system. My dissertation seeks to fill these scholarly voids by examining the conditions under which economic inequality leads to political dissatisfaction.

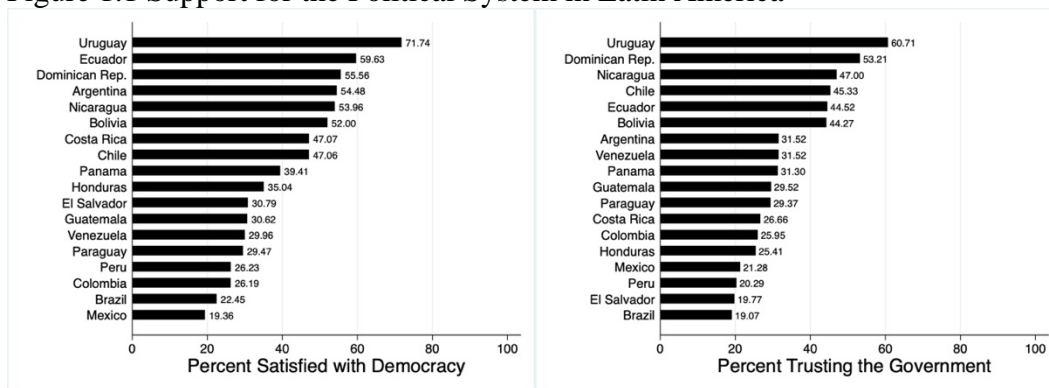
1.2 Democratic Stability and the Sources of Political Legitimacy

Democratic consolidation depends of the legitimacy of democratic government, and upon democracy becoming “the only game in town” for both masses and elites (Linz and Stepan 1996). In everyday language, we often think of legitimacy as the recognition that a political authority has the right to rule, or more generally as “citizen *support* for the government” (Booth and Seligson 2009, 8). Easton (1975, 451) defines legitimacy as “the conviction that it is right and proper...to accept and obey the authorities and abide by the requirements of the regime” (451), and extant literature argues that legitimacy, or political support, is important for citizen acquiescence, especially with regard to policies and political outcomes that people disagree with (Gibson, Caldeira, and Spence 2005; Tankebe 2013; Tyler 2004).

Despite its importance, however, public opinion data suggests that political support, such as trust in government and satisfaction with democracy, is at troubling low levels throughout the Americas. As Figure 1.1 illustrates, citizens in Mexico, Peru, El Salvador, and Brazil exhibit troubling low levels of trust in government – around 20 percent indicating that they trust the government “some” or “a lot” – compared to citizens in countries such as Uruguay or the Dominican Republic who exhibit higher levels of political support. Likewise, less than a quarter of respondents in Mexico and Brazil indicated in the 2015 Latinobarometer survey that they are satisfied with the way

democracy functions in their country. Granted, there is also substantial variation in these measures of political support across the region. Citizens in Uruguay, for instance, express overwhelming trust in government and satisfaction with democracy. Nevertheless, the low levels of political support observed in a number of these countries raise important questions about the democratic stability and the widespread “democratic buy in” that is vital for democracy to consolidate (Linz and Stepan 1996).

Figure 1.1 Support for the Political System in Latin America



Source: 2015 Latinobarometer. Figures represent the percentage of respondents in each country indicating at least some positive amount of trust in government or satisfaction with democracy.

In addition to citizens expressing general mistrust of and dissatisfaction with democratic institutions, a number of countries in the region are experiencing crises of representation (Mainwaring 2006), party system collapses (Morgan 2011; Tanaka 2006); and the rise of undemocratic populist leaders (Mayorga 2006). In Brazil, for instance, recent high-profile corruption scandals coupled with a severe economic recession and rising poverty and inequality have left citizens disillusioned with their democratic institutions.¹ In 2018, amid this growing dissatisfaction with democracy, Brazilian

¹ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/the_americas/in-brazil-nostalgia-grows-for-the-dictatorship--not-the-brutality-but-the-law-and-order/2018/03/14/bc58ded2-1cdd-11e8-98f5-ceecfa8741b6_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.c7fe0436d084

citizens turned to the far-right populist Jair Bolsonaro in the presidential election. Bolsonaro has expressed hostility toward civil rights and liberties, especially concerning indigenous and LGBT communities. He has even praised Brazil's brutal military dictatorship and indicated that in an effort to combat crime, Brazilian police should be given immunity to kill suspected criminals (Phillips 2018).

Scholars have grappled to understand why mass support for political institutions is so low in a number of countries throughout the Americas. Dissatisfaction with democracy has been linked to poor economic performance (Booth and Seligson 2009; Dalton 2004), majoritarian electoral systems (Anderson and Guillory 1997; Cho and Bratton 2006), and election scandals (Kumlin and Esaisson 2012). A growing body of literature further argues that poor governance and weak state capacity have resulted in a "crisis of representation," characterized by widespread disillusionment and disenchantment with democratic institutions (e.g., Mainwaring 2006), in a number of Latin American countries. Indeed, poor governance quality – i.e., a lack of impartiality in the exercise of political authority (Rothstein and Teorell 2008) – is associated with decreased satisfaction not only in Latin America (Weitz-Shapiro 2008), but in new and mature democracies more generally (Anderson and Tverdova 2003).

In this dissertation, I investigate another important factor that prior research has linked to low levels of trust in the national government and satisfaction with democracy: economic inequality (Anderson and Singer 2008; Zmerli and Castillo 2015). Specifically, I argue that citizens' perceptions of the income distribution are key factors whereby inequalities in society translate into political dissatisfaction. Individuals are generally less satisfied when democratic outcomes do not match their normative

expectations about what democracy should do in practice (Singh and Carlin 2015). When citizens perceive or experience *distributive unfairness* – for example, when they perceive their country’s income distribution as unfair – this signals that the democratic process is not producing the outcomes it was intended to produce (Meltzer and Richards 1981).

I also argue that the way in which economic inequality maps onto individuals’ perceptions of distributive unfairness and subsequent political evaluations depends upon individual-level factors such as political ideology and class-status, as well as the context of governance quality in a country. Although I expect that all individuals should, on average, be less likely to support their democratic institutions when they perceive distributive unfairness in society, this negative relationship should be weaker among upper-class individuals and those on the right of the political spectrum. Additionally, I argue that good governance should mitigate the negative influence of perceived distributive unfairness on support for the political system.

To test my theory, I rely on a mixed-methods approach that combines multilevel analyses of large-N, cross-national survey data, as well as original survey experiments from Argentina, Mexico, and the United States. I also draw on motivating examples from newspapers and elite interviews in Argentina, as well as original qualitative survey data from the U.S., to contextualize the quantitative results from my cross-national analyses and survey experiments.

1.3 Why the Americas?

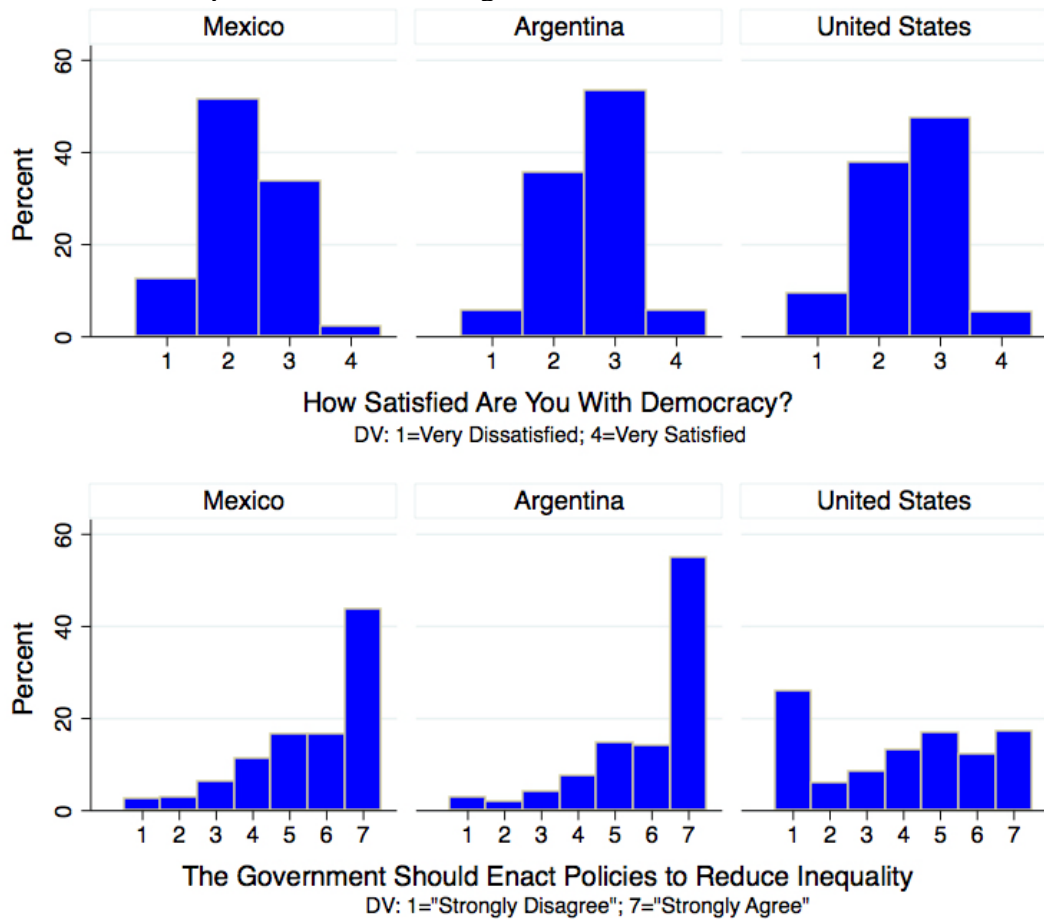
In terms of income inequality, Latin America is the most unequal region in the entire world (Lopez-Calva and Lustig 2010). Moreover, the three most unequal OECD

countries are in the Americas: Chile comes in first, followed by Mexico and the United States. Today, most countries in the Americas are democracies, but many countries in the region face a number of challenges with democratic consolidation. Particularly, I argue that the high levels of inequality in this region compromise both political support and the quality of democratic representation. Amid rising poverty, inequality, and violence in Mexico, for instance, voters reinstated the PRI in 2012, thus returning the party that undemocratically dominated Mexican politics for most of the 20th century.

The Americas can be thought of an ideal case to test the above theory and hypotheses. The first empirical chapter of this dissertation employs a large-N cross-national analysis of 18 Latin American countries, and the remaining two empirical chapters focus on the United States, Mexico, and Argentina. In many ways, this choice of three countries can be thought of as approximating a “most similar” research design, or a case selection technique that results in two or more cases that are similar on specified variables other than the outcome variable and key explanatory variables of interest (Mill 1872; Seawright and Gerring 2008). Seawright and Gerring (2008) explain that most similar cases that are broadly representative of the population and provide the strongest basis for generalization. From a simplified perspective, these cases can be thought of as “most similar” in that background factors such as actual levels of inequality are similar, yet there is significant variation on both beliefs about the government’s role in the economy – especially when it comes to addressing inequality – and support for the political system.

As Figure 1.2 shows, the United States and Argentina have similar levels of satisfaction with the way democracy works in each country, while Mexicans are

Figure 1.2 Public Opinion in Mexico, Argentina, and the United States



Source: Latin American Public Opinion Project's (LAPOP) 2014 AmericasBarometer

generally less satisfied with the way their democracy works in practice. Meanwhile, Figure 1.2 shows that Mexican and Argentine citizens believe that the government should play a much heavier role in addressing inequality, compared to citizens in the United States. Citizens in Mexico and Argentina also express some of the strongest preferences in Latin American for statist economic policies, such as those that reduce inequality, ensure citizens' economic and social wellbeing, and place important industries in state hands (Carnes and Lupu 2015). In many ways, this key difference makes the United States a hard test of my theory: if US citizens do not believe that the government should

address inequality, then it is less likely that these individuals will see inequality as unfair and/or blame the government for inequality and distributive unfairness.

In Chapter 2, I develop hypotheses that an individual's political ideology should condition the relationship between perceptions of inequality and fairness, and political support. Specifically, I theorize that left-leaning individuals are more likely to moralize unjust outcomes and are less likely to rely on legitimizing stereotypes that justify inequality, and hence should be more likely to blame the government for distributive unfairness. A typical component of left-right ideological placement is economic preferences. The classic understanding, based on ideological cleavages that formed the basis for party systems in Europe, is that people on the Left prefer more government involvement in the economy, whereas people on the Right prefer less. In some Latin American countries, however, economic preferences do not map onto ideological identification so clearly. In fact, economic preferences only predict left-right placement in 10 of the 18 Latin American countries and in Honduras, statist economic preferences predict Right self-placement, rather than Left (Zechmeister 2015). However, the relationship between economic preferences and political ideology is more or less similar in Mexico, Argentina, and the United States. Thus, these three cases are ideal for testing hypotheses derived from arguments about left-right semantics around individuals' economic preference.

In many ways, Argentina and the U.S. are ideal cases for testing my theory. First, Argentina and the United States have very similar levels of income inequality (as measured by the Gini coefficient), although I expect significant variation in citizens' perceptions of the fairness of the income distribution. According to the most recent

World Bank figures, the U.S. has a Gini Index 41.06, and Argentina has an index of 42.7. Although these Gini figures are high by worldwide standards, they are some of the lower figures in the Americas. Despite these common levels of inequality, however, there are theoretically important differences between the two countries. First, as mentioned above, the two countries have very different social norms about what role the government should play in the economy. This is important because it allows me to hold economic inequality relatively constant while leveraging significant variation in citizens' normative expectations about the outcomes that democracy is supposed to produce. In the United States, public opinion data show that a majority of US respondents recognize that inequality is increasing, yet they do not agree on how to address it (McCall and Kenworthy 2009; Pew 2014). For instance, Pew's 2014 report shows that less than half of all Americans believe that government aid to the poor does more harm than good. Meanwhile, the majority of citizens in Argentina believe the government should play a heavy role in the economy, such as addressing inequality (Lupu 2016). Therefore, Argentine citizens should be more likely than those in the US to expect the government to address inequality, and more likely to attribute blame for inequality to the government.

Argentina is also an ideal case for testing my expectations that right-leaning and upper-class citizens should be less likely to blame the government to economic inequalities and distributive unfairness in society. In Argentina, class is the dominant social cleavage (Lupu and Stokes 2009). Moreover, Argentina is relatively homogeneous country, and hence class cleavages are not as confounded by racial and ethnic divides as they are in the United States and Mexico. Finally, public opinion about inequality is

much more polarized along class lines in Argentina than in the United States (Blofield and Luna 2011).

Mexico is another ideal setting to test my theory and hypotheses. Mexico was a front-runner among Latin American governments trying to address poverty and inequality through conditional cash transfer programs, but Mexicans are very dissatisfied with the way democracy works in their country. More than three-quarters of Mexican respondents in the 2014 AmericasBarometer (Figure 1.2) indicated some level of agreement that the government should enact firm policies to reduce inequality. Thus, individuals in Mexico, just like individuals in Argentina, should be more likely than individuals in the US to blame the government for inequality. Like the US, however, Mexico also presents an opportunity for another hard test of my theory and hypothesis, especially using experiments that rely on manipulating people perceptions of fairness. First, class is not the dominant cleavage in Mexico, as it is often confounded with race and ethnicity. Furthermore, the baseline for political support is already low in Mexico. Democracy under 12 years of PAN leadership failed to deliver the economic promises Mexicans were hoping for and following a contested election in 2006 that left the country bitterly divided, drug-related violence spiked.

In 2012, Mexico reinstalled the PRI to power, yet high hopes for change and reform under President Peña Nieto quickly faded: poverty and inequality are increasing and the government's record regarding human rights, press freedom, and transparency is abysmal (Flores-Macías 2016). Also, despite pledges to rein in corruption, the PRI government is at best unable to deliver, and most likely, the president's inner circle is part of the problem (Flores-Macías 2016, 70). In another instance of electoral volatility

common through the region, Mexican citizens elected the populist leftist leader Andrés Manuel López Obrador as president in 2018. AMLO and his new MORENA party rose to power making a number of grand promises, such as combatting corruption and lifting Mexicans out of poverty, but it remains unlikely that this “mandate” will become a political reality.

Given the generally poor quality of governance in Mexico (high corruption, arbitrary violence by state actors, lack of rule of law) it may be harder than in the US or Argentina to manipulate people’s perceptions of fairness in experiments—i.e., to make people believe that inequality is a fair distributive outcome. As I elaborate in the next chapter, an implication of Fairness Heuristic Theory suggests people *substitute* judgments about governance quality and procedural justice for judgments about distributive fairness when deciding whether or not they can trust the authorities (van den Bos, Lind, and Wilke 2001; van den Bos, Wilke, and Lind 1998; Van Ryzin 2011). Hence, people’s daily experiences with procedural injustice may outweigh any new information they encounter about distributive fairness.

1.4 Overview of the Dissertation

In Chapter 2, I develop my theoretical argument and lay out a series of four testable implications of this theory, or hypotheses. First, I draw on a diverse body of research on psychology, social and procedural justice, and equity and fairness theories to argue that perceptions of distributive unfairness are key factors whereby economic inequality depresses support for the political system. A testable implication of this theoretical argument is that at in a context of inequality, when individuals perceive their country’s

income distribution to be unfair, they should be less likely to trust the government or be satisfied with the way their country's democracy functions. I also argue in Chapter 2 that upper-class individuals, as well as those on the right of the political spectrum, should be less likely to express political dissatisfaction for any perceived distributive unfairness that they experience as a result of inequality. Finally, I argue that governance quality in a country is vitally important for mitigating the negative influence of perceived distributive unfairness on support for the political system. Although inequality challenges individuals' normative expectations about the outcomes that democracy is supposed to produce, good governance provides citizens with alternative information that democracy is indeed functioning properly, thus allaying their political concerns about distributive injustice.

In Chapter 3, I use three waves of Latinobarometer survey data from 18 Latin American countries to test each of the four hypotheses that I developed in Chapter 2. As I explain in Chapter 3, Latinobarometer is ideal data for testing my theory because it regularly includes a question about citizens' perceptions of the *fairness* of the income distribution, which is fundamentally distinct from citizens' perceptions of trends in the income distribution. I use a multilevel analysis of this survey data, which allows me to examine how both individual-level factors, specifically class status and political ideology, as well as country-level factors, such as aggregate inequality and governance quality, affect the relationship between perceptions of distributive unfairness and support for the political system. Consistent with a number of my hypotheses, I find that when controlling for actual levels of inequality, perceptions of distributive unfairness are negatively and significantly correlated with predicted satisfaction with democracy and trust in

government. The cross-national analysis in Chapter 3 also shows that the negative relationship between perceived distributive unfairness and political support is weakest among right-leaning individuals, and that good governance mitigates this negative relationship as well.

In Chapter 4, I use original survey experiments in Argentina, Mexico, and the United States to isolate the causal effect of distributive fairness perceptions on political support. The majority of the analysis in Chapter 4 centers around a large nationally representative online survey I conducted in February 2019 in Argentina. I supplement this analysis with previous versions of this survey experiment that I fielded in Mexico on a student sample in 2018, and in 2017 in the United States using a convenience sample from Amazon.com's Mechanical Turk platform. Results from three different experiments, conducted over the course of two years in three different countries, are remarkably similar and consistent with my theoretical expectations. Compared to individuals who receive no information about inequality, learning that economic inequality is increasing only erodes political support when framed as an unfair distributive outcome. When given the opportunity to view inequality as a fair distributive outcome, however, support for the political system rebounds.

In Chapter 5, I use a second original survey experiment that I fielded in Argentina to investigate how governance quality – specifically, I manipulate information about the level of corruption – affects the manner in which economic inequality maps onto individuals' perceptions of distributive unfairness, satisfaction with democracy, and trust in government. Consistent with the theoretical expectations that I developed in Chapter 2, I find that participants are significantly less likely to say that the income distribution in

Argentina is unfair when they learn that despite increases in inequality, governance quality is improving (compared to when it remains unchanged or gets worse). Likewise, given the same information about increasing inequality, I find that individuals express higher levels of satisfaction with democracy and trust in government when they read that governance quality is improving.

CHAPTER 2. A THEORY OF FAIRNESS PERCEPTIONS AND POLITICAL SUPPORT IN THE FACE OF INEQUALITY

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I develop a theoretical framework that allows me to answer my main research questions: *what are the specific conditions under which economic inequality undermines democratic legitimacy*, and more specifically, *how does inequality map onto individuals' perceptions of fairness and subsequently affect satisfaction with democracy and trust in political institutions?* In order to develop my theoretical argument, I draw from a diverse body of literature on social and political psychology, as well as quality of governance, to derive new hypotheses about how people form their fairness judgments and use these judgments to evaluate democratic governments.

I argue that at the individual level, political ideology and class status condition both the way that economic inequality maps onto perceptions of distributive unfairness and the relationship between perceived distributive unfairness and political support. To preview the argument, individuals on the political Right, as well as upper-class individuals, should be less upset with economic inequality in the first place. Moreover, even when these individuals perceive or experience distributive unfairness, they should be less likely to express political dissatisfaction as a result. At the contextual level, I argue that governance quality, or what some scholars have referred to as procedural fairness (e.g., Linde 2012), conditions the relationship between economic inequality, perceptions of distributive unfairness, and political support. Although unfair distributive outcomes signal that democracy is not functioning properly, good governance, such as low corruption, impartiality in the exercise of public authority, and transparent

procedures that allow citizens to hold their elected officials accountable, provide alternative evidence that democracy is in fact functioning properly. As such, the presence of these fair democratic processes and procedures should allay citizens' concerns about inequality and distributive unfairness, at least when it comes to evaluating democratic legitimacy.

2.2 The Sources of Democratic Legitimacy and Political Support

Democratic consolidation depends on the legitimacy of democratic government and upon democracy becoming “the only game in town” for both masses and elites (Linz and Stepan 1996). In everyday language, we often think of legitimacy as the recognition that a political authority has the right to rule, or more generally as “citizen *support* for the government” (Booth and Seligson 2009, 8). Easton (1975, 451) defines legitimacy as “the conviction that it is right and proper...to accept and obey the authorities and abide by the requirements of the regime” (451), and extant literature argues that legitimacy, or political support, is important for citizen acquiescence, especially with regard to policies and political outcomes that people disagree with (Cleary and Stokes 2006; Gibson, Caldeira, and Spence 2005; Tankebe 2013; Tyler 2004).

Developments in the Americas during the last two decades suggest that political support, such as satisfaction with democracy or trust in representative institutions, is at troublingly low levels. In Mexico, for instance, less than 20 percent of the people interviewed in the 2015 Latinobarometer survey indicated they were satisfied with the way democracy works in their country, and in Brazil, barely 22 percent of respondents were satisfied with democracy. This stands in stark contrast to countries such as Ecuador

or Uruguay, where citizens' satisfaction with democracy ranges between 60 and 70 percent. The low levels of political support that we observe across the region are of particular concern, as a number of countries in the Americas are experiencing or have previously experienced crises of representation (Mainwaring 2006), party system collapses (Morgan 2011; Tanaka 2006) and the rise of illiberal populist leaders (Mayorga 2006).

Scholars have grappled to understand why political support is at troubling low levels throughout the Americas. The literature on political legitimacy posits a number of potential causes for widespread dissatisfaction with democracy and representation in some countries. One set of explanations focuses on political institutions and the representative outcomes they produce. Scholars have long argued that more consensual institutions lead to higher levels of satisfaction with democratic institutions (Lijphart 1999). Citizens are generally less satisfied with democracy when they are consistently on the losing side of elections (Anderson et al. 2005; Conroy-Krutz and Kerr 2015), but the satisfaction gap between electoral winners and losers is smaller in consensual systems than in majoritarian ones (Anderson and Guillory 1997; Cho and Bratton 2006). In addition to *how* people get into office, prior research also shows that *who* gets into office influences policymaking and citizens' feelings about representation. Citizens are more likely to positively evaluate the political system when they see representatives who "look like them" (Banducci, Donovan, and Karp 2004), and representatives from different groups bring different policy preferences to office (Barnes 2012; 2016). For instance, legislators from blue-collar backgrounds are more likely promote policies that benefit the working class, the majority of individuals in most countries, such as policies related to

labor and employment (Carnes 2013; Carnes and Lupu 2015). And, as a result, citizens are more satisfied with the representation they receive from political institutions when a greater number of legislators come from working-class backgrounds (Barnes and Saxton 2019.).

Another set of explanations for democratic legitimacy, such as political trust and satisfaction with the way democracy works in practice, focuses on citizens' evaluations of government performance, and suggests that the favorability of economic outcomes is key to understanding political support (Booth and Seligson 2009; Dalton 2004; McAllister 1999). Moreover, while negative evaluations of economic performance are shown to have a pernicious influence on political support in newer democracies, perceptions of corruption and "subjective feelings of being represented" have larger impacts on democratic satisfaction in more consolidated democracies (Dahlberg, Linde, and Holmberg 2015). Such findings further suggest that when evaluating the functioning of democratic governments, citizens care not only about political outputs, but about the fairness of democratic procedures as well. Indeed, poor governance quality – i.e., a lack of impartiality in the exercise of political authority (Rothstein and Teorell 2008) – is associated with decreased satisfaction with democracy, not only in Latin America (Weitz-Shapiro 2008), but also in new and mature democracies more generally (Anderson and Tverdova 2003; Kumlin and Esaisson 2012). For example, citizens are generally less satisfied with democracy when they live in countries with high corruption (Anderson and Tverdova 2003), as effective rule of law is critical for widespread citizens satisfaction with authorities (Tyler 2003). By contrast, individuals are more satisfied with the way their democracy functions when they perceive that elections guarantee the voices of all

voters are represented (Aarts and Thomassen 2008). Recent research even suggests that fair procedures attenuate the impact of government outputs on political dissatisfaction (Magalhães 2016).

A growing body of research has also shown that economic inequality undermines a whole host of political support indicators, including support for and satisfaction with democracy, as well as trust in government. Using survey data from 20 European countries, Anderson and Singer (2008) show that citizens in countries with high levels of income inequality are, on average, less satisfied with democracy, and that this negative relationship is strongest among those on the political left, or what they call the “sensitive left.” More recently, Krieckhaus et al. (2014) examine World Value Survey data from 40 democracies and find that income inequality depresses support for democracy. Krieckhaus et al. (2014, 150) explain that “citizens view economic inequality as a referendum on democracy,” and that support for democracy is determined in part by citizens’ evaluation of how inequality affects society as a whole. Zmerli & Castillo (2015) demonstrate that in Latin America, high levels of income inequality are associated with decreased trust in the national government. Furthermore, Córdova and Layton (2016) show that regardless of improvements to government performance in service provision, poor citizens in El Salvador are less likely to trust the municipal government when they live in neighborhoods with high levels of inequality.

Extant research in this field has also suggested several causal mechanisms by which economic inequality undermines political support. Given the well-documented connection between economic and political inequality in the United States (e.g. Bartels 2008; Gilens 2012; Hacker and Pierson 2010), it is perhaps unsurprising that the

concentration of wealth and income among a tiny percentage of the population would lead to disillusionment and disenchantment with democratic and representative institutions (Mainwaring 2006). Research from American politics, for instance, suggests that economic inequality undermines political support by eroding citizens' efficacy and attachments to representative institutions. High levels of economic inequality are shown to reduce participation in political campaigns (Ritter and Solt, forthcoming), voter turnout (Solt 2010), and political engagement more generally (Solt 2008). In other words, inequality undermines what scholars have called *symbolic representation*, or citizens' feelings of being fairly and effectively represented (Barnes and Burchard 2013; Barnes and Saxton 2019; Schwindt-Bayer 2010; Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler 2005).

Research on American politics during the last decade also has shown that policy outcomes across a range of issue areas reflect the preferences of the wealthiest citizens, preferences that are vastly different from those of low- and middle-income citizens (Gilens 2012). And moreover, policy outcomes over the last few decades in the US are themselves contributing to increasing economic inequality (Bartels 2008; Hacker and Pierson 2010). Thus, economic inequality violates the core democratic principle of one person, one vote, by giving a small group of wealthy citizens undue political influence.

While the above research on inequality in the United States does not necessarily imply that people accurately perceive or experience economic inequality, much of the comparative political behavior research on inequality assumes, at least implicitly, that individuals are aware of the economic disparities that exist in society, and that they view inequality unfavorably. For instance, Anderson and Singer (2008, 586) caveat their finding that economic inequality is associated with decreased satisfaction with democracy

by explaining: “these analyses assume that people experience inequality and perceive it accurately – an assumption that is open to interpretation.” In investigating the relationship between inequality and support for democracy, Krieckhaus et al. (2014) also implicitly assume that individuals experience and accurately perceive inequality. Economic voting and political economy literatures have produced competing expectations about the relationship between inequality and support for democracy. Political economy theories assume that democracy will reduce inequality (e.g., Acemoglu and Robinson 2006; Meltzer and Richards 1981) and hence the vast majority of (poor) citizens will support democracy as a means to even out the income distribution. Krieckhaus et al. (2014) draw on economic voting literature to make an alternative argument – and offer empirical support – that citizens look unfavorably upon inequality, and when they experience high levels of inequality, their retrospective and sociotropic evaluations of the economy lead them to support democracy less.

In these ways, *objective levels* of economic inequality certainly shape citizens’ political evaluations. Yet, when it comes to political support, such as satisfaction with democracy and trust in government, I argue that citizens’ *perceptions* of the income distribution are equally important. Not only do individuals sometimes misunderstand (Kim, Pedersen, and Mutz 2016) and underestimate the true magnitude of income disparities, especially at high levels of inequality (Osberg and Smeeding 2006), but they also tend to legitimize income differences (Trump 2018) and become less supportive of redistributive policies (Kelly and Enns 2010) as objective levels of inequality increase. Indeed, in Latin America, objective levels of inequality and citizens’ perceptions of the

fairness of the income distribution are only moderately correlated.² Below, I advance these scholarly lines of research by examining how economic inequality maps onto people's perceptions of distributive fairness and subsequent political evaluations, and how these relationships are conditioned by political ideology and class at the individual-level, as well as by contextual factors such as governance quality and the fairness of democratic procedures more generally.

2.3 Economic Inequality, Distributive Fairness, and Political Support

Inequality challenges a fundamental human motivation—people's desire to live in a just world (Kay and Jost 2003; Lerner and Miller 1978). Classic models of inequality and democratization assume that under democracy the poor will demand wealth redistribution, thus decreasing economic inequality (Acemoglu and Robinson 2006; Meltzer and Richard 1981). An implication of this “conventional wisdom” is that certain groups of people (i.e., the poor) dislike inequality, and they dislike it as a matter of resource attribution: resources are finite, economic resources are concentrated in the hands of the rich, and the poor want a larger share of these economic resources. Yet, psychological research on social justice suggests that *all* citizens—rich and poor alike—should dislike economic disparities, albeit for different reasons.

Drawing on equity theories that date back to Aristotle, this research suggests that people care deeply about proportionality, that is, whether the outcomes that people

² This figure is from the 2009-2015 Latinobarometer. The correlation ($r=.44$) represents the relationship between objective inequality (Gini coefficient) and the average response to the question “How fair is the income distribution in [country]?” in each country-year of the survey (high values indicate *more* perceived unfairness).

receive (income and other resources) are proportional to their inputs (e.g., time and effort) (Jost and Kay 2010). For instance, if a CEO is paid 300 times the salary of an average worker for what is perceived to be the same amount of time and effort, this outcome violates the distributive justice concept of *desert*, or deservingness (Miller 1999). Although this disproportionate outcome clearly disadvantages the worker, leaving her to feel angry or resentful, the CEO should feel guilty about being over-benefitted and should seek to restore equity (Waksalk et al. 2007).³

This is not to suggest that individuals want a perfectly egalitarian society. Indeed, the whole idea of class mobility implies that a certain amount of inequality in society is acceptable. It is not inequality, per se, that upsets people, but the unfairness of a system that disproportionately benefits the wealthy at the expense of everyone else. Drawing on Rawls, Jost and Kay (2010, 1129) explain, “Some degree of inequality in society is tolerable, but only to the extent that it benefits those who are relatively disadvantaged, for example by creating wealth so that everyone truly benefits.” There is no question that inequality is objectively high in the Americas, yet I argue that what matters for satisfaction with democracy and trust in political institutions is the extent to which citizens *perceive* the economic distribution in their country as *fair* or *unfair*. When people encounter information that challenges their desire to believe they live in a just world, they experience negative and uncomfortable cognitive reactions, and they often look for an individual or group – such as the government – to blame (Gurr 1986; Kay and Jost 2003;

³ Indeed, in Latin America, perceptions of distributive unfairness are remarkably similar across wealth quintiles (Latinobarometer 2009-2015), and wealth quintile is not a significant predictor of perceived distributive unfairness in multivariate models. Additionally, the correlation between respondents’ perceptions of distributive unfairness and class self-placement are extremely weak ($r=.10$).

Lerner and Miller 1978). In particular, when citizens perceive inequality as an unfair outcome resulting from the inaction of democratic governments, their political satisfaction is likely to suffer. In other words, perceptions of distributive unfairness are important factors linking inequality to political support. Given this I posit:

Hypothesis 1: On average, citizens who perceive the distribution of income in their country as unfair will express lower levels of political support than individuals who view the income distribution as fair.

2.4 The Conditioning Effects of Class Status Political Ideology

Although social justice theories predict that everyone should dislike inequality, for reasons related to the desire for proportionality and equity, not everyone will respond to inequality in the same manner. In this section, I develop a theoretical argument, as well as testable hypotheses from this theory, about how two important individual-level factors, class status and political ideology, condition the relationship between economic inequality, perceptions of distributive unfairness, and support for the political system. To preview the main argument in this section, I posit that upper-class individuals, as well as those on the right of the political spectrum (or conservatives in the US context) should be less upset by economic inequality in the first place. But, if and when these individuals perceive distributive unfairness when they witness or experience economic inequality, they should be less likely to experience political dissatisfaction as a result. To develop these arguments, I rely primarily on deductive reasoning and draw on literature from system justification theory, the moral foundations of political ideology, and left-right semantics.

2.4.1 Class Status

In the previous section, I argued that perceptions of distributive unfairness are key to explaining prior findings that inequality damages political support. Yet, perceptions of fairness and political support should vary by class status as well. For instance, more well-off individuals may witness the same levels of inequality as lower-class individuals, but because they do not experience the negative side of inequality, they should be less likely to perceive it as unfair. In the 2015 Latinobarometer, for instance, upper-class individuals were significantly more likely than lower-class individuals to say the income distribution in their country was either “fair” or “very fair” ($p < .01$). Yet even if and when upper-class individuals view inequality as problematic, they may nonetheless believe that it is not the government’s responsibility to correct for a skewed economic distribution.

Social justice research and equity theories argue that individuals rely on a variety of coping mechanisms for dealing with the distress that comes from experiencing inequality and subsequently distributive injustice. In particular, individuals can either respond to inequality behaviorally or cognitively (Jost and Kay 2010). That is, they could try to do something about inequality, such as protesting or seeking restorative justice, or they could try to rationalize inequality by denying or minimizing it (Jost et al. 2003). Cognitive reactions often manifest themselves in victim blaming (Hafer et al. 2005) or adopting legitimizing stereotypes that justify group differences (Cassese and Holman 2017; Kay and Jost 2003; Tyler 2006).

In his 2012 book, Martin Gilens shows that wealthy individuals in the United States use their disproportionate affluence and influence to secure more conservative economic policies, such as relaxed corporate regulation and more regressive tax policies.

At the same time, in order to adjust psychologically to inequality, as social justice research suggests all individuals do (Jost and Kay 2010), members of high-status groups like the upper class often rely on legitimizing myths about deservingness or meritocracy to understand inequality (Jost and Hunyady 2003), or on trait stereotypes that advantaged groups are more “competent” (Fiske et al. 2002). According to individuals drawing on such legitimizing myths, if inequality exists, blame rests with those disadvantaged by inequality for not working hard enough to overcome their economic situation. *All this suggests that given the same context of objective inequality, upper-class individuals will be less likely to perceive inequality as unfair in the first place.*

Yet, just because upper-class individuals are less likely than lower-class individuals to view inequality as problematic, this is not to say that the poor uniformly dislike inequality and the wealthy like it. Recall that in Latin America, upper-class individuals were significantly more likely (by about 10 percent) than lower-class individuals to say the income distribution in their country was either “fair” or “very fair.” Still, the vast majority of upper-class respondents, about 68 percent in 2015, still indicated that their country’s income distribution was either “unfair” or “very unfair.” But because upper-class individuals tend to have more pro-market views regarding the state’s role in the economy (Carnes 2013; Carnes and Lupu 2015; Gilens 2012), they should be less likely to express political dissatisfaction for any perceived distributive unfairness that they experience as a result of inequality. Hence, I posit the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: The negative relationship between perceived distributive unfairness and political support should be weakest among upper class citizens.

2.4.2 Political Ideology

As with class status, I also argue that political ideology will condition that way that inequality maps onto people's perceptions of distributive fairness and subsequent political evaluations. Specifically, people on the right of the political spectrum (also referred to as conservatives, especially in the US context) should be less distressed by economic inequality in the first place, but if and when they perceive distributive unfairness, they should be less likely to express dissatisfaction with the political system as a result. To develop this argument and corresponding hypothesis, I return to the literature on system justification, and I also incorporate insights from research on the moral foundations of political ideology and left-right semantics.

Anderson and Singer's (2008) seminal finding that high levels of income inequality are associated with low levels of satisfaction with democracy is mainly driven by individuals on the left of the political spectrum. This finding comports well with research on the moral foundations of political ideology, which suggests that left-leaning individuals are more likely to be upset with inequality and to view disproportionate economic outcomes as unfair, for reasons related to deep-seated cognitive processes. In particular, this research demonstrates that those on the left are more likely to moralize outcomes they perceive as unfair or harmful to others, whereas those on the right are more likely to moralize threats to order, authority, or the status quo (Graham et al 2009; 2012). Extending this logic, leftist citizens should be most distressed by high levels of economic inequality that have disproportionately negative impacts on the poor, and they should be more likely than right-leaning citizens to blame the government for an

economic distribution that is continually concentrated in the hands of a small group of wealthy citizens.

The above research suggests that those on the political right should be less concerned than those on the left with economic inequality in the first place, yet even when right-leaning individuals can acknowledge distributive unfairness, they should still be less likely than left-leaning individuals to express political dissatisfaction as a result.⁴ The propensity of those on the political right to moralize threats to order and authority (Graham et al 2009; 2012) should make them less likely to criticize the political status quo when looking for someone to blame. Moreover, given that political conservatism is itself a system-legitimizing ideology, with conservatives being more likely to stereotype and express hostility toward low-status out groups (Jost et al. 2003; Jost, Federico, and Napier 2009), those on the right of the political spectrum should rely on some of the same system justifying narratives as upper-class individuals (described in the previous section) to justify group differences.

Much of the literature on political conservatism as a system justifying ideology (e.g., Jost et al. 2003; Jost, Federico, and Napier 2009) is based on research from the United States, where distinct liberal and conservative political ideologies map onto the left-right political spectrum more cleanly than in Latin America. For instance, recent

⁴ Even though individuals on the right of the political spectrum should be less likely than those on the left to moralize and/or be upset by economic inequality, plenty of right-leaning individuals in both the US and Latin America view the status quo economic distribution as problematic. In the 2015 Latinobarometer, for instance, nearly three-quarters of all right-leaning respondents indicated that their country's income distribution was either "unfair" or "very unfair." In the 2017 MTurk study described above, about 51 percent of conservative participants indicated that the income distribution in the U.S. is "unfair" or "very unfair."

research on the 2016 U.S. presidential election has shown that that two key system justifying ideologies, hostile sexism and racial resentment, were significant predictors of voting for the Republican candidate (Cassese and Barnes 2018; Schaffner, MacWilliams, and Nteta 2018). Meanwhile, scholars have debated how well these ideological labels transport to Latin America (Zechmeister 2006). To ensure that the conceptual components of the arguments in this section actually travel from the United States to Latin America, I briefly turn to survey data to examine whether system-justifying attitudes correlate with left-right placement as they do in the United States.

The World Values Survey regularly measures a variety of system-justifying attitudes related to inequality and the economy. I examine five attitudes in particular:

- 1) “We need larger income differences as incentives for individual efforts
- 2) “People (as opposed to the government) should take more responsibility to provide for themselves.”
- 3) “Competition is good. It stimulates people to work hard and develop new ideas.”
- 4) “In the long run, hard work usually brings a better life.”
- 5) “Wealth can grow so there’s enough for everyone” (as opposed to “people only get rich at the expense of others”).

I first used principal components factor analysis to investigate how well these system-justifying attitudes scale together. Factor analysis reveals that the first two questions correlate with one underlying factor, while the last three questions correlate with a second underlying factor. I then used multivariate regression to investigate how well these different system-justifying attitudes predict left-right ideological placement in

the seven Latin American countries included in Wave 6 of the WVS (see Appendix Table A1 for OLS models with full controls and country-fixed effects). The questions about income differences, personal responsibility, and there being enough wealth for everyone are all significant ($p < .001$) predictors of rightist ideological placement. Saying that hard work pays off predicts right-wing placement at $p = .09$, meanwhile attitudes about competition being good are not associated with left-right placement in Latin America. Of particular interest here, the best predictor of right-wing placement is agreement that “we need larger income differences.” In substantive terms, moving from 1 (“incomes should be made more equal”) to 10 (“we need larger income differences as incentives for individual effort) is associated with a change in expected political ideology from 5.10 to 6.14 (on a 1 to 10 left-right scale). This statistically significant difference represents a full scale-point move toward the right. These results are also robust to indexing the questions about income differences and personal responsibility, which both correlate with a common underlying factor. A move from the least to most system-justifying attitudes is associated with a 1.3-point move to the right on the 1-10 left-right ideological scale.

In sum, political psychology research suggests that those on the left should be more upset with inequality in the first place, and more likely to moralize and perceive it as unfair, compared to those on the right. Yet, even when those on the right acknowledge that economic inequality represents a form of distributive unfairness, they should still be less likely than individuals on the left to express political dissatisfaction as a result. For right-leaning individuals, criticizing the government for unfair distributive outcomes poses a threat to the political and economic status quo. Moreover, when “cognitively adjusting” to inequality, those on the right should be more likely than those on the left to

blame the poor for perceived distributive injustice, than express dissatisfaction with the political system. Thus, I posit the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: The negative relationship between perceived distributive unfairness and political support should be weakest among right-leaning citizens.

2.5 Inequality, Fairness Perceptions, and Governance Quality

The above theory and hypothesis posit that citizens' evaluations of distributive outcomes shape their support for the political system. Yet, the context in which people form their perceptions of economic inequality and distributive fairness matters for their political evaluations as well. Specifically, insights from social psychology suggest that governance quality – i.e., impartiality in the exercise of political authority (Rothstein and Teorell 2008) – affects how citizens form judgments about inequality and distributive fairness and use these judgments to subsequently evaluate democratic governments.

People care deeply about the procedures by which political outcomes are produced (André and Depauw 2017; Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2001). In particular, good governance, which some scholars have also referred to as procedural fairness (Linde 2012), should diminish the extent to which distributive unfairness erodes political support, even in the face of economic inequality. An implication of research on the Fair Process Effect (e.g., Tyler and van der Toorn 2013; van den Bos, Wilke, Lind, and Vermunt 1998) is that governance quality shapes people's expectations about the outcomes they receive and their responses to any distributive unfairness they may experience. People desire fair procedures because they are perceived to produce fair outcomes (Thibaut and Walker 1975), and people are generally more satisfied with

outcomes—unfavorable or otherwise—when they are the result of fair and transparent processes (van den Bos 2005).

Individuals often draw on multiple sources of information when forming their judgments about fairness and democracy (André and Depauw 2017), and Fairness Heuristic Theory (FTH) further suggests that governance quality is especially important when people lack the information they need to make accurate social comparisons. People often underestimate the true magnitude of income disparities at high levels of inequality (Osberg and Smeeding 2006), and low status individuals tend to inflate their own position in the income distribution (Aalberg 2003). If and when such accurate social comparisons are lacking, FTH suggests that people use information about processes and procedures – such as the quality of governance – to help form perceptions of distributive fairness, and consequently evaluations of political support (Córdova and Layton 2016; Magalhães 2016; Van Ryzin 2011).

One important indicator of governance quality is corruption, which conveys important messages to citizens about the fairness of government policies and processes. Corruption on the part of government officials violates “the belief that the authority makes genuine attempts at being fair and ethical” (Magalhães 2016, 525; Tyler and Lind 1992). It sends a signal that certain people are above the law, and that all citizens are not treated equally (Linde 2012, 413).⁵ In addition to affecting citizens’ judgments about

⁵ Although there is good reason to expect that corruption or poor governance is an underlying cause of economic inequality (e.g., Uslaner 2008), the correlation between inequality (Gini coefficient) and corruption (World Bank’s WGI *control of corruption* measure) is virtually non-existent in Latin America ($r=.002$) during the period under investigation. Moreover, the correlation between inequality and other governance

fairness, corruption also impedes governance capacity (Graycar and Villa 2011), hinders women's political advancement (Stockemer and Sundström 2018; Sundström and Wängnerud 2016), and undermines electoral accountability and democratic legitimacy more generally (Alvarez, Hall, and Llewellyn 2008; Bauhr and Charron 2018; Booth and Seligson 2009; Kumlin and Esaisson 2012; Linde and Erlingsson 2013).

Corruption is salient and pervasive in a number of Latin American countries, at all levels of government. In the 2015 Latinobarometer, nearly 20 percent of all respondents indicated that they or a family member had personally witnessed an act of corruption or bribe taking by a politician or government official in the last year. Themes about corruption, inequality, and support for the political system are also evident in elite and media discourse in Latin America. An article in *Clarín*, a national newspaper in Argentina, reported in 2018: "It would seem that a kind of vicious circle has been generated between corruption, the unequal distribution of power in society and inequality in the distribution of wealth. Corruption is destroying the fabric of society and the confidence of the population in the political system and its leaders."⁶

Corruption can take many forms, including bribery and outright theft, and its scope ranges from petty corruption, generally on the part of low-level civil servants, to grand corruption orchestrated by high-level public officials (Bauhr 2017; Graycar and Villa 2011). In a context of high poverty and inequality, there is good reason to expect that governance indicators such as corruption shape citizens' judgments about distributive

indicators, such as WGI's *government effectiveness* ($r=.16$) or *rule of law* ($r=.14$) measures is equally weak.

⁶ https://www.clarin.com/economia/corruptcion-desigual-distribucion-riqueza_0_B1N55Roqz.html

fairness and their subsequent evaluations of the political system. Corruption-as-theft reduces the overall level of public resources that are necessary to successfully enact pro-egalitarian social welfare programs (Desierto 2019). And, although corruption-as-bribery does not diminish the total amount of public goods available for redistribution, it challenges societal norms about equality of economic opportunity (Rothstein and Uslaner 2005).

Although corruption is an important indicator of governance quality, or what some scholars have referred to as procedural fairness (e.g., Linde 2012), we can also think about governance quality in terms of electoral accountability or fair and transparent government decision-making procedures that give voice to a variety of groups and interests. People desire fair procedures because they are perceived to produce fair outcomes (Thibaut and Walker 1975). Much of the research on procedural and distributive fairness from psychology, for instance, demonstrates that that people are generally more satisfied with processes and outcomes – whether objectively favorable or unfavorable – when they are given a say in the decision-making process (e.g., van den Bos 2005). Research on descriptive representation of racial minorities in the U.S. finds that even when committees make decisions that go against minority interests, individuals – blacks and whites alike – are more likely to view the decision-making process as fair. Clayton, O’Brien, and Piscopo (2019) find that gender parity in decision-making bodies increases both the committee’s substantive and procedural legitimacy. Specifically, they find that when a gender-balanced panel makes a decision that restricts women’s rights, people are more likely to view both the decision-making process, as well as the outcome itself, as more legitimate.

Following the above logic, in a context of good governance, citizens should react less unfavorably to social and economic inequalities in the first place. Yet, even when citizens perceive or experience distributive unfairness, the presence of good governance, such as the impartial exercise of public power (Linde 2012; Rothstein and Teorell 2008) should make them less likely to express political dissatisfaction as a result. Thus, I posit the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: The negative relationship between perceptions of distributive unfairness and political support will be weakest in a context of good governance.

Table 2.1 Summary of Hypotheses

Inequality and Distributive Unfairness (average effects)	H1: On average, citizens who perceive the distribution of income in their country as unfair will express lower levels of political support than individuals who view the income distribution as fair.
Conditioning Effect of Class-Status	H2: The negative relationship between perceived distributive unfairness and political support will be weakest among upper-class individuals.
Conditioning Effect of Political Ideology	H3: The negative relationship between perceived distributive unfairness and political support will be weakest among right-leaning individuals.
Conditioning Effect of Governance Quality	H4: Good governance will weaken the negative relationship between perceived distributive unfairness and political support.

In this chapter, I have developed a series of arguments about the relationship between economic inequality, perceptions of distributive unfairness, and support for the political system. To recap, I argue that perceptions of distributive unfairness are key factors by which economic inequality undermines trust in government and satisfaction with democracy. I further argue that individuals' class status and political ideology, as

well as a country's governance quality, all condition this relationship in important ways. Table 2.1 summarizes the hypotheses I derived from each part of my theoretical framework. In the next chapters, I use cross-national survey data, as well as original survey experiments to empirically test the implications of the arguments I developed in this chapter.

CHAPTER 3. INEQUALITY, FAIRNESS PERCEPTIONS, AND POLITICAL SUPPORT: A CROSS-NATIONAL ANALYSIS

“The state gets money to invest in society, such as social development, education, public works, and health. This is the main activity that the state should do, but if the distribution is not progressive and in favor of all society, there will be consequences for inequality.”

-Argentine Legislative advisor, UCR, 2018

In Chapter 2, I developed a theoretical argument that individuals’ perceptions of distributive (un)fairness are key factors whereby inequalities in society translate into political dissatisfaction. Research on social justice and equity theories suggest that all individuals should be distressed by high levels of inequality, but just because individuals dislike inequality, it does not necessarily follow that they will blame the government for it. After all, inequality in the modern era is a natural product of capitalism and the free market, and class mobility depends in part on there being at least some degree of economic inequality in society (Jost and Kay 2010). Nevertheless, original qualitative survey data that I collected in the United States suggests that even though people may see inequality as resulting from the economic rather than the political system, many still think government could or should do something to address it.⁷ When asked about the causes of economic inequality in the United States, a number of survey respondents indicated sentiments similar to the following:

⁷ In March 2017, I administered a survey with embedded experimental manipulations and open-ended survey questions on Amazon’s MTurk platform. Although MTurk uses convenience samples, prior research has shown them to be more representative than traditional convenience sample – e.g., student samples (Buhrmester et al. 2011), MTurk samples have also been used to replicate existing political science studies remarkably well (Berinsky et al. 2012).

“One word...government.”

“The minimum wage is too low which generates a very low household income that the family has barely enough to support the family with the increasing cost of living, healthcare, and property.

“I think it’s mostly government policies that favor the rich. Also, middle class people don’t receive any help.”

“Market deregulation has ‘unreformed’ practices that have a history of creating bad behavior.”

Without prompting, people draw connections between factors such as government controls, the minimum wage, deregulation, or tax policies and economic inequality.

Taken together, these excerpts suggest that people understand how government *could* implement policies that reduce inequality, and they recognize that the government is not doing as much as it could to alleviate the problem.

There is also ample evidence from Latin America to suggest that individuals draw strong connections between government in(action) and economic inequalities in society. In Argentina, for instance, the vast majority of citizens believe the government should redistribute wealth to reduce economic inequality (Lupu, 2016). Elsewhere in Latin America, anywhere from 70 to 90 percent of citizens indicate that the government “should enact firm policies to reduce inequality” (Seligson, Smith, and Zechmeister 2012).

Similar themes about government (in)action and inequality in Latin America also appear in elite discourse. Consider, for example, the excerpt at the opening of this

chapter. In Summer 2018, I conducted several interviews on a convenience sample of political elites in Buenos Aires, Argentina. When asked about the causes and consequences of economic inequality in Argentina, a former advisor to the Buenos Aires City Legislature and party official in the Radical Civic Union (UCR) explained,

“The state gets money to invest in society, such as social development, education, public works, and health. This is the main activity that the state should do, but if the distribution is not progressive and in favor of all society, there will be consequences for inequality.”⁸

She went on to explain that the previous government of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner “did a lot for the distribution between rich and poor people.” In comparison to the current government of Mauricio Macri, Kirchner’s government did much more for a “fair distribution of wealth between rich and poor people,” but at the present time, inequality has returned “because poor people are not being promoted in politics.” These examples do not suggest that individuals want a perfectly egalitarian economic distribution. Rather, they are distressed by a skewed income distribution because they perceive it to be an unfair outcome resulting from government policies that disproportionately benefit one small group of citizens at the expense of the rest.

3.1 Fairness Perceptions and Political Support in Latin America

In this first empirical chapter, I use public opinion data from 18 Latin American countries from 2011 to 2015 as a first test all of the hypotheses I developed in Chapter 2. In many ways, Latin America is an ideal case for testing hypotheses related to

⁸ Author interview, June 2018.

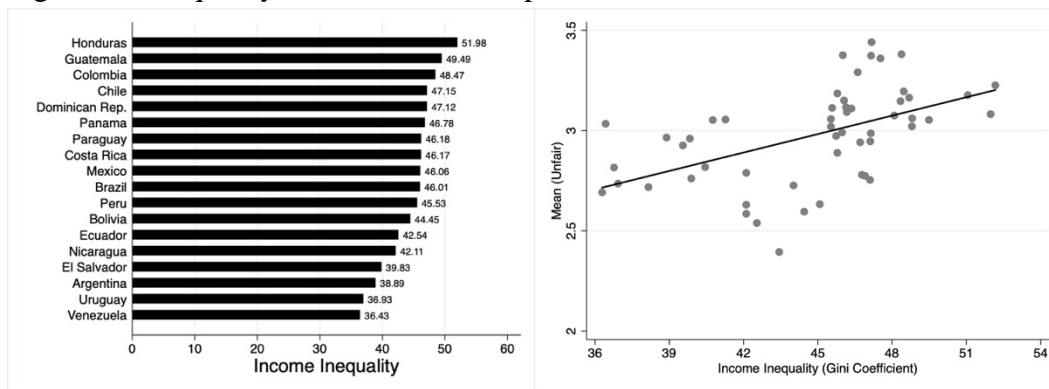
individuals' perceptions of the income distribution and support for the political system. First, while Latin America as a region has the highest levels of economic inequality in the world (Lopez-Calva and Lustig 2010), there is significant variation in the level of inequality between countries. In the period under investigation, the Gini coefficient for net income inequality (Solt 2016) ranges from a low of 36.5 in Venezuela to a high of 52.17 in Honduras.⁹ The left panel Figure 3.1 illustrates this trend using the most recently available inequality figures, sorted from highest to lowest income inequality. The right panel in Figure 3.1 is a scatterplot showing the correlation between aggregate levels of inequality and the mean response to the question "how fair is the income distribution in your country" for each Latinobarometer country-year in my cross-national sample (1=very fair to 4=very unfair), as well as the corresponding regression line. Although the slope of the regression line in Figure 3.1 is statistically significant, the aggregate correlation between inequality and perceptions of distributive unfairness is moderate ($r=.51$), indicating the actual inequality only explains part of the variance in individuals' judgments about the fairness of the income distribution.

Prior empirical research has demonstrated a robust correlation between high levels of income inequality and low levels of a host of political support indicators, from support for democracy (Krieckhaus et al. 2014) to satisfaction with democracy (Anderson and Singer 2008) and trust in government (Córdova and Layton 2016; Zmerli and Castillo 2015). Indeed, the patterns in Figure 3.1 and 3.2 are generally consistent with

⁹ The Gini coefficient for net income inequality is a measure of inequality accounting for income after taxes and transfers. Theoretically this measure goes from 0, representing perfect equality (all people have the same income), to 100, representing perfect inequality (one person has all the income in a country).

these findings. Countries with low levels of income inequality by Latin American standards, such as Uruguay and Argentina, have comparatively higher levels of satisfaction with democracy and trust in government (see Figure 3.2). A key part of my argument, however, is that individuals’ perceptions of distributive unfairness, which are only moderately correlated with actual levels of inequality are other important predictors of political support.

Figure 3.1 Inequality and Fairness Perceptions in Latin America



Note: The left panel shows the Gini coefficient for net income inequality (Solt 2016) for each Latin American country in the sample. The right panel shows the aggregate-level correlation between income inequality and each country’s average amount of perceived distributive unfairness along with the corresponding regression line.

The fact that actual inequality is an imperfect predictor of individuals’ fairness perceptions is fully consistent with qualitative data that I collected in the U.S. and Argentina, as well as with my theoretical argument that certain groups of people – i.e., upper-class (H2) and right-leaning (H3) citizens – are more likely to legitimize income differences. Consider this response to a question about the causes of economic inequality in the U.S.:

“There is always going to be income inequality in a capitalist system. Education and training are big contributors... I worked hard for my degree to get a decent

job with opportunities...People should make more effort to equalize their incomes on their own.”

Here, there is an acknowledgment that inequality exists, but this respondent also places the responsibility for addressing inequality on those individuals disadvantaged by the inequality, rather than the government. According to this view, inequality is natural, and it is fair.

Qualitative survey evidence shows that US respondents frequently engage in such system-justifying legitimization. When asked about the causes of economic inequality in the U.S., a common reply is that people are “lazy,” or,

“The rich stay rich because those people are smart and look for ways to maintain being rich. The poor look for ways to receive more handouts from the government and don't look to find ways to improve their situation like the rich do.”

“I think part of the problem is some people simply don't want to work hard to get ahead. Too many people rely on the government for help.”

“Some people simply work harder at earning a living than others do, some people would rather be lazy and rely on assistance.”

Again, similar sentiments appear outside the United States too. When discussing the topic of inequality in Argentina, a legislative aide to a national Deputy mentioned that poverty and inequality are “structural problems” in Argentina, in that they are self-reinforcing. This aide then elaborated that many poor people in Argentina suffer from a poor work ethic:

income distribution to be unfair. As Figure 3.2 illustrates, satisfaction with democracy ranges from a low of less than 20 percent indicating “satisfied” or “very satisfied” in Mexico to a high of more than 70 percent in Uruguay. Likewise, citizens in Mexico, Peru, El Salvador, and Brazil exhibit troubling low levels of trust in government – around 20 percent indicating that they trust the government “some” or “a lot” – compared to citizens in countries such as Uruguay or the Dominican Republic. Democratic legitimacy, as indicated in measures such as trust in government and satisfaction with democracy, are vital for democratic stability (Cleary and Stokes 2006), and the low levels of political support observed in a number of countries raise important questions about the state of democratic consolidation in the region. The results in Figure 3.2 appear consistent with my hypothesis that perceptions of distributive unfairness are associated with lower levels of political support. In countries such as Brazil and Colombia, the overwhelming majority of citizens, more than 90 percent, indicate that they perceive their country’s income distribution to be “unfair” or “very unfair.” These same countries also have some of the lowest levels of satisfaction with democracy and trust in government in the region. To fully test the hypotheses that I developed in Chapter 2, I turn to a multilevel analysis of Latinobarometer survey data.

3.2 Methods and Data

Despite the general patterns discussed above, prior research has documented a number of other individual-level and contextual predictors of political support like satisfaction with democracy, from the nature of a country’s electoral system (Anderson and Guillory 1997), to economic performance and citizens’ evaluations of the national economy (Booth and Seligson 2009; Dalton 2004; McAllister 1999), corruption

(Anderson and Tverdova), and support for the incumbent government (Anderson et al. 2005). To simultaneously account for a variety of predictors of political support, I turn to a multivariate, multilevel analysis of Latinobarometer survey data. I use three waves of data from 2011 to 2015, covering 18 Latin American countries, and I estimate a series of multilevel ordered logit models in Stata 15 to examine the relationship between individuals' fairness judgments and two measures of political support: satisfaction with democracy and trust in government. For each dependent variable, I first estimate a series of baseline models to test *Hypothesis 1* about the direct effect relationship between fairness perceptions and political support. I then estimate a series of models with individual-level and cross-level interactions to test *Hypotheses 2* through *4*.

3.2.1 Dependent Variables

My primary objective in this first empirical chapter is to investigate the relationship between perceptions of distributive unfairness and support for the political system. The empirical chapters in this dissertation employ two specific indicators of political support: satisfaction with democracy and trust in government. Neither of these measures are what Easton (1975) would refer to as “diffuse” measures of political support, yet they are stable enough to resist the short-term fluctuations of “specific” support that political authorities tend to face (Dalton, 2004; Hetherington 1998).

Prior research theorizes that political support is itself a multidimensional concept. Much of the contemporary work on political support builds upon Easton's (1975) distinction between *specific* and *diffuse* forms of political support. Easton explains that specific support is directed toward specific political institutions and authorities, whereas

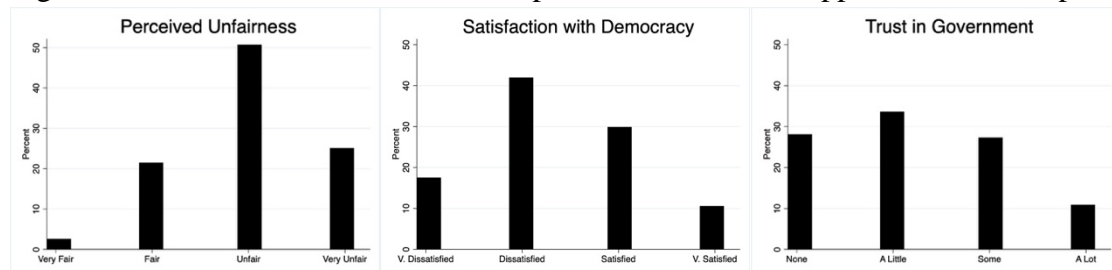
diffuse support is directed toward the ideas that these political authorities and intuitions represent. More recently, scholars have reimagined Easton's conceptualization of political support not as a dichotomy, but as a continuum that runs from specific to diffuse forms of support. Norris (1999; 2011) describes five objects of political support: political actors (most specific), regime institutions, regime performance, regime principles, and the political community (most diffuse). Booth and Seligson (2009) identify a sixth object of political support: local government. Although diffuse support for democratic norms is vital for democratic stability and consolidation, more specific forms of support are also important, as a prolonged period of democratic dissatisfaction or declining trust may have serious consequences for the stability and consolidation of democracies in the region.

Satisfaction with Democracy: Satisfaction with democracy represents an important dimension of state legitimacy (Norris 2011) that taps the level of support “for how the democratic regime works in practice” (Linde and Eckman 2003). To measure satisfaction with democracy, Latinobarometer asks respondents, “In general, would you say that you are very satisfied, quite satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the working of democracy in your country?” Responses in the analysis are coded such that “very dissatisfied” (coded 1); “dissatisfied” (2); “satisfied” (3); and “very satisfied” (4). As Figure 3.3 illustrates, the modal response to this question is “dissatisfied”, with 42 percent of all respondents in the pooled sample selecting this response outcome.

Trust in Government: Citizens need to trust their political institutions in order for democracy to function properly (Cleary and Stokes 2006; Hetherington 1998). Institutional trust is particularly important for citizens' acquiescence, especially regarding

policies and political outcomes that people disagree with (Gibson, Caldeira, and Spence 2005; Tankebe 2013). As with democratic satisfaction, however, trust in government is at troubling low levels in a number of Latin American countries. To measure trust in government, Latinobarometer asks respondents, “How much trust do you have in the national government? Would you say you have a lot (coded 1), some (2) a little (3), or no trust (4)?” For the analysis, responses to this question are recoded such that higher values indicate more trust. As Figure 3.3 illustrates, the modal response to this question in the pooled sample is “a little” (33 percent of respondents) followed closely by “not at all” (28 percent of respondents).

Figure 3.3 Distribution of Fairness Perceptions and Political Support, Pooled Sample



Note: Responses are pooled across all country-years in the 2011-2015 Latinobarometer waves.

3.2.2 Independent Variables

Perceptions of Distributive Unfairness The primary individual-level predictor of satisfaction with democracy and trust in government, perceptions of distributive unfairness, is based on the Latinobarometer question, “How fair do you think the income distribution is in your country?” This survey item is ideal for the research at hand: it maps onto the core theoretical concept—i.e., fairness perceptions, as opposed to assessments or evaluations of actual inequality—remarkably well. Cross-national public opinion surveys frequently ask respondents whether they think the gap between the rich

and poor is getting bigger or smaller, but just because individuals perceive inequality to be on the rise, they will not necessarily respond negatively to it (Trump 2018).

Latinobarometer is one of the few surveys that consistently asks this question about distributive fairness perceptions. Responses in the analysis range from “very fair” (coded 1) to “very unfair” (4), and as Figure 3.3 illustrates, the modal response to this question is 3 (“unfair”).

Political Ideology: Although I hypothesize that, on average, all individuals should be less likely to trust the government or be satisfied with democracy when they perceive their country’s income distribution to be unfair, I also argue that the extent of this relationship should be conditional on political ideology. Specifically, I explain that those on the political right should be less likely to view inequality as unfair in the first place, yet even when right-leaning individuals perceive distributive unfairness, as they do in Latin America (see Appendix Figure B1 for the distribution of distributive fairness perceptions across the ideological spectrum in the most recent Latinobarometer survey), they should be less likely to express political dissatisfaction as a result. *Political ideology* comes from the question, “in politics, people normally speak of “left” and “right.” On a scale where 0 is left and 10 is right, where would you place yourself?” The modal ideological response in the pooled data sample is a “5,” with about 32 percent of respondents indicating that they are in the middle of the ideological scale. The rest of respondents are fairly evenly distributed around the middle, with about 31 percent of respondents to the left and 37 of respondents to the right of the middle.

Subjective Class Status: I also hypothesize that individuals’ class status conditions the relationship between inequality, fairness perceptions, and subsequent evaluations of

the government. Prior research has operationalized “class” in a variety of ways, including socioeconomic status measures based on income (Gilens 2009; Llores, Rosset, and Wüest 2015) and education (Putnam 1976; Taylor-Robinson 2010), and more recently, occupational status (Carnes 2013; Carnes and Lupu 2015; Barnes and Saxton 2019). Occupational-based measure of class are ideal because the primary class cleavages in most societies revolve around the labor market and how individuals earn a living (Carnes 2013, 3). Unfortunately, Latinobarometro does not consistently ask about individuals’ occupations, Thus I cannot construct an occupation-based measure of social class. Instead, I rely on a class self-placement question that asks individuals whether they perceive themselves as belonging to the “lower” (coded 1), “lower middle” (2), “middle” (3), “upper middle” (4), or “upper” class (5). The modal *subjective social class* response is 3, with about 40 percent of respondents perceiving themselves as belonging to the middle class. Only about 5 percent of respondents perceive themselves as belonging to either the “upper middle” or “upper” class.¹⁰

Governance Quality: In addition to individual-level factors, I hypothesize that governance quality should ameliorate the negative influence of perceived distributive unfairness on political support. Previous research has identified a number of different ways for measuring governance quality, one of which is corruption. In the results below, I operationalize governance quality as *control of corruption*, using a measure from the World Bank’s Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) project (Kaufmann, Kraay, and

¹⁰ Subjective social class is only moderately correlated with either education ($r=.29$) or an asset-based measure of wealth ($r=.28$) in the pooled data sample. Latinobarometro does not ask about respondents’ income in the period under investigation.

Mastruzzi 2010).¹¹ *Control of corruption* captures “[expert] perceptions of the extent to which public power is exercised for private gain, including both petty and grand forms of corruption, as well as ‘capture’ of the state by elites and private interests.” The *control of corruption* figures used in this analysis correspond to the year immediately preceding the respective Latinobarometer wave. The *control of corruption* measure theoretically ranges from -2.5 to 2.5, with higher values indicating lower levels of corruption. In this sample, the *control of corruption* measure ranges from -1.38 (Venezuela in 2015) to 1.56 (Chile in 2013), with a mean value of -.30.¹² In Appendix Table B1 and B2, I demonstrate that the results are also robust to other measures of governance quality, including WGI measures of *rule of law*, *voice and accountability*, and *government effectiveness*.

3.2.3 Control Variables

To control for potential sources of spuriousness, I include a number of individual-level variables in the main analysis that existing research consistently shows to be important predictors of support for the political system and that theoretically could correlate with perceptions of distributive unfairness, particularly: support for the incumbent government and perceptions of the national economy. Individuals who approve of the incumbent and express favorable evaluations of the economy are more likely to support the political system (e.g., Anderson et al. 2005; McAllister 1999), and these individuals could be less likely to blame the government for unfavorable

¹¹ See <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/#doc> for methodology and information about *control of corruption* other WGI measures of governance quality.

¹² See Appendix Figure B2 for the distribution.

distributive outcomes. *Support for the incumbent* comes from the question, “Do you approve or not of the performance of the government led by President (name)?”

Responses are coded such that 0=Disapprove and 1=Approve. *Perceptions of the national economy* comes from the question, “Do you consider the country’s present economic situation to be better (coded 1), a little better (2), the same (3), a little worse (4), or much worse (5) than 12 months ago?” To rule out the possibility that socioeconomic factors are driving both political support and perceptions of distributive unfairness, I control for wealth quintile (Córdova 2009) and education, as well as respondent’s sex, age, and whether the respondent lives in a rural area.

In addition to individual-level covariates, I control for factors at the country-level that could theoretically correlate with fairness perceptions and political support, particularly aggregate levels of inequality. Although the focus here is on *perceptions* of fairness of the income distribution, as opposed to *objective levels* of inequality, there is reason to suspect that aggregate inequality could affect both perceptions of distributive unfairness (Trump 2018) and support for the political system (e.g., Anderson and Singer 2008; Zmerli and Castillo 2015). To account for this possibility, I include a measure of net national-level income inequality from the Standardized World Income Inequality Database (Solt, 2016). Inequality figures represent the most recent available Gini coefficients prior to the survey year.

3.3 Perceptions of Distributive Unfairness and Satisfaction with Democracy

To test *Hypothesis 1*, that individuals who perceive their country’s income distribution as unfair will be express lower levels of political support, I estimate a series

of multilevel ordered logit regressions in which satisfaction with democracy is the dependent variable. Table 3.1 includes a series of baseline models without any interactions. Models 1 and 2 include only individual-level covariates, Model 3 introduces governance quality (*control of corruption*), and Model 4 includes all individual-level and higher-order variables. Consistent with *Hypothesis 1*, the coefficient on perceived distributive unfairness is negative and statistically significant across model specifications.

In Figure 3.4, I present this relationship graphically by calculating and plotting the predicted probability of observing each *satisfaction with democracy* response outcome, for each value of *perceived distributive unfairness*. Consistent again with my main theoretical argument and *Hypothesis 1*, individuals who view the income distribution as unfair are more likely than those who perceive it as fair to be “very dissatisfied” or “dissatisfied” with democracy, and less likely to be “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with democracy. In substantive terms, individuals who view the income distribution in their country as “very fair” only have a .06 probability of being “very dissatisfied” with democracy (top-left panel in Figure 3.4), where as individuals who view the income distribution as “very unfair” have a .24 probability of being “very dissatisfied.” Turning to the bottom-right panel in Figure 3.4, individuals who perceive the income distribution as “very fair” have a .23 probability of being “very satisfied” with the way democracy works in their country, compared to a .06 probability for individuals who view the income distribution as “very unfair.”

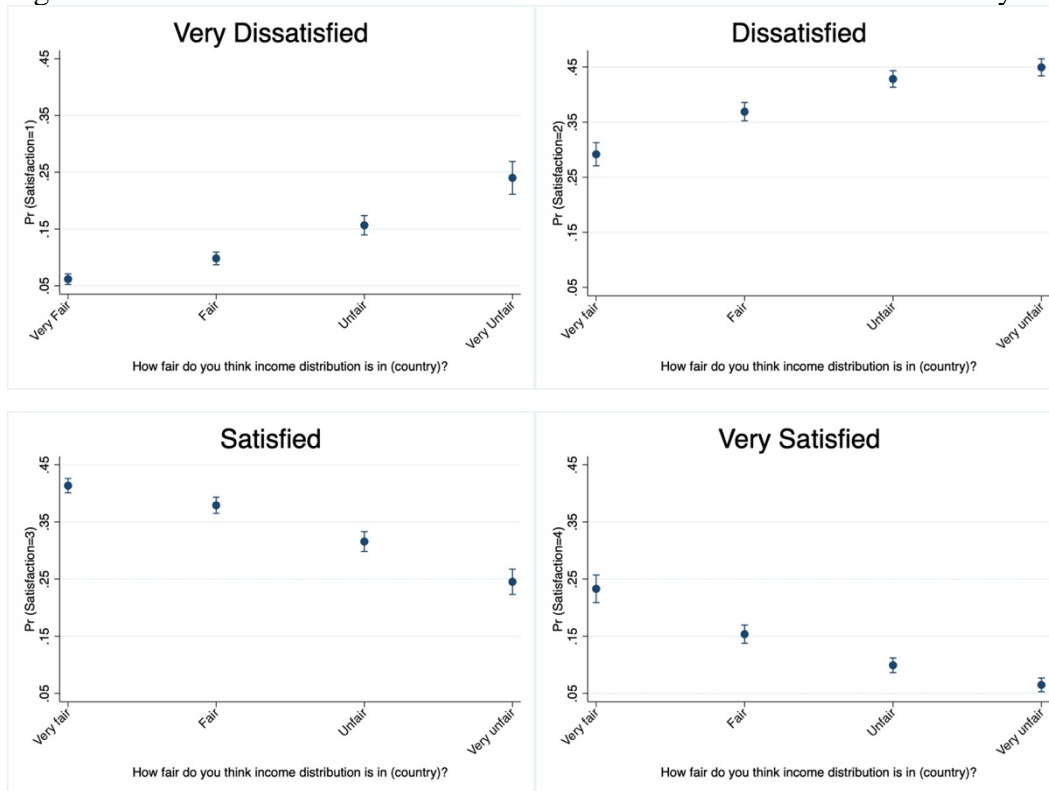
Table 3.1 Perceived Distributive Unfairness and Satisfaction with Democracy, Baseline Models

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Perceived Distributive Unfairness	-.82*** (.04)	-.58*** (.04)	-.58*** (.04)	-.57*** (.04)
Political Ideology 0-10=Right		.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Subjective social class		.07*** (.01)	.07*** (.01)	.07*** (.01)
Governance Quality			.45*** (.12)	.31** (.10)
<i>Individual-Level Control</i>				
Economic Perception (Worse)		-.42*** (.01)	-.42*** (.01)	-.42*** (.01)
Education		-.01*** (.00)	-.01*** (.00)	-.01*** (.00)
Rural		.04 (.03)	.04 (.03)	.04 (.03)
Incumbent Approval		.80*** (.02)	.80*** (.02)	.80*** (.02)
Wealth Quintile		.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)
Female		-.03 (.02)	-.03 (.02)	-.03 (.02)
<i>Country-Level Control</i>				
Income Inequality				-.10*** (.02)
Cut 1	-4.22*** (.14)	-4.44*** (.14)	-4.59*** (.16)	-9.07*** (.85)
Cut 2	-1.96*** (.14)	-2.03*** (.14)	-2.18*** (.15)	-6.66*** (.85)
Cut 3	.11 (.14)	.13 (.14)	-.02 (.15)	-4.50*** (.84)
Observations	54,516	40620	40620	40620
Country-Years	54	54	54	54
<i>Wald Chi</i> ²	371.49	3994.21	4012.23	4050.88

* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001 (standard errors), multilevel ordered logit coefficients.

DV: "How satisfied are you with the functioning of democracy in your country?" *very dissatisfied* (coded 1) to *very satisfied* (coded 4).

Figure 3.4 Perceived Distributive Unfairness and Satisfaction with Democracy



Note: Point estimates represent the predicted probability of observing a given outcome, bars represent 95% confidence intervals. Predicted probabilities were calculated using the results in Table 3.1, Model 4.

In the next section, I turn to the interactive models in Table 3.2 to examine how individuals' class and political ideology, as well as a country's governance quality, condition the relationship between perceptions of distributive unfairness and satisfaction with democracy. Model 1 in Table 3.2 includes an individual-level interaction between subjective social class and perceived unfairness (*H2*). Model 2 includes an individual-level interaction between political ideology and perceived unfairness (*H3*). Model 3 includes a cross-level interaction between governance quality and perceived unfairness (*H4*). Model 4 includes all interactions as a robustness check, but in the sections below, I focus on Models 1-3 for my discussion of the results.

Table 3.2 Perceived Distributive Unfairness and Satisfaction, Interactive Models

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Perceived Distributive Unfairness	-.57*** (.04)	-.70*** (.03)	-.52*** (.02)	-.60*** (.04)
Subjective Social Class	.10* (.04)	.07*** (.01)	.07*** (.01)	.11** (.04)
Unfair X Class	-.01 (.01)			-.02 (.01)
Political Ideology 0-10=Right	-.01* (.00)	-.06*** (.01)	-.00 (.00)	-.07*** (.01)
Unfair X Ideology		.02*** (.00)		.02*** (.00)
Governance Quality	.43*** (.09)	.43*** (.09)	-.22* (.11)	-.24* (.11)
Unfair X Governance			.21*** (.02)	.22*** (.02)
<i>Individual-Level Control</i>				
Economic Perception (Worse)	-.43*** (.01)	-.43*** (.01)	-.42*** (.01)	-.42*** (.01)
Education	-.01*** (.00)	-.01*** (.00)	-.01*** (.00)	-.01*** (.00)
Rural	.04 (.03)	.04 (.03)	.04 (.03)	.04 (.03)
Incumbent Approval	.82*** (.02)	.82*** (.02)	.82*** (.02)	.81*** (.02)
Wealth Quintile	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)
Female	-.03 (.02)	-.03 (.02)	-.03 (.02)	-.03 (.02)
<i>Country-Level Control</i>				
Income Inequality	-.07*** (.02)	-.07*** (.02)	-.08*** (.02)	-.07*** (.02)
Cut 1	-8.02*** (.77)	-8.32*** (.76)	-7.89*** (.77)	-8.04*** (.78)
Cut 2	-5.63*** (.76)	-5.93*** (.76)	-5.49*** (.77)	-5.64*** (.78)
Cut 3	-3.48*** (.76)	-3.78*** (.76)	-3.34*** (.77)	-3.49*** (.78)
Observations	40620	40620	40620	40620
Country-Years	54	54	54	54
Wald χ^2	7458.48	7471.94	7581.21	7601.81

* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001 (standard errors), multilevel ordered logit coefficients.

DV: "How satisfied are you with the functioning of democracy in your country?" *very dissatisfied* (coded 1) to *very satisfied* (4).

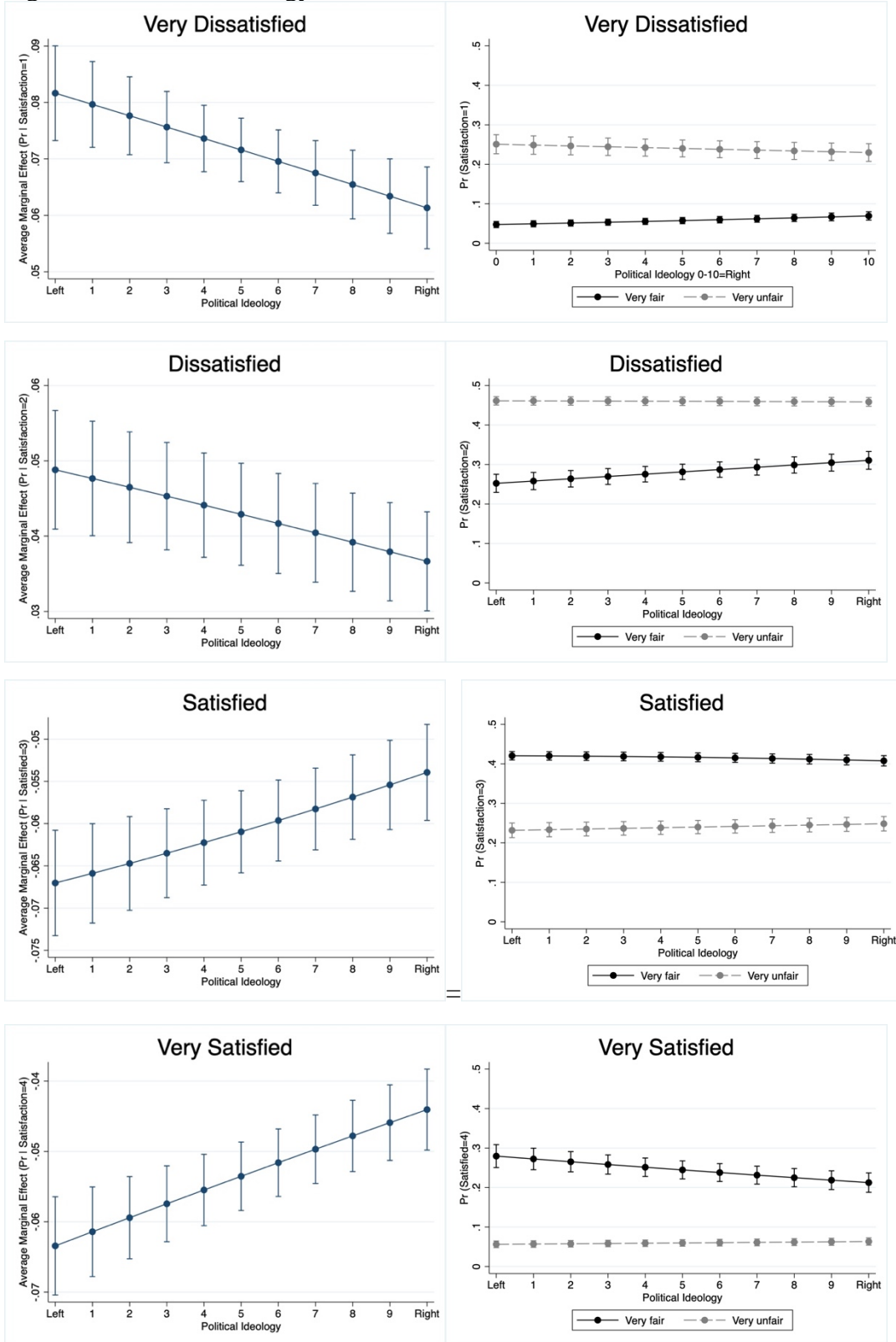
3.3.1 Class, Fairness Perceptions, and Satisfaction with Democracy

Hypothesis 2 posits that the relationship between perceived distributive unfairness and political support will be weakest among upper-class individuals. Although the relationship between subjective social class and satisfaction with democracy, on its own, is positive and significant in Table 3.1, the results in Table 3.2 Models 1 and 4 suggest that class does *not* condition relationship between fairness perceptions and political support. The interactions between subjective social class and perceived distributive unfairness in both models are insignificant. The marginal effect of an increase in perceived distributive unfairness on the probability of observing the “very dissatisfied” outcome is around .07, regardless of social class. Likewise, the marginal effect of an increase in perceived distributive unfairness on the probability of observing the “very dissatisfied” is consistently between -.05 and -.06, regardless of subjective social class. Although the negative effect of perceived distributive unfairness on observing the “very dissatisfied” outcome appears *slightly* stronger for upper-class compared to lower-class individuals, these differences are not statistically different. The results in Table 3.2, Models 1 and 4, do not lend support for *Hypothesis 2*: subjective social class has no discernable conditioning effect on the relationship between fairness perceptions and satisfaction with democracy.

3.3.2 Political Ideology, Fairness Perceptions, and Satisfaction with Democracy

Turning to Models 2 and 4 in Table 3.2, the positive and significant coefficient on the interaction term suggests, consistent with *Hypothesis 3*, that political ideology conditions the relationship between perceived distributive unfairness and satisfaction

Figure 3.5 Political Ideology, Perceived Distributive Unfairness, and Satisfaction



with democracy. Since *Hypothesis 3* posits that moving to the right on the political ideological spectrum should *weaken* the relationship between fairness perceptions and political support, I present two different graphical representations of the interaction in Model 2. The panels on the left side of Figure 3.5 show the marginal effect of an increase in perceived distributive unfairness on the probability of observing a given response outcome. When interpreting marginal effects, the further away a point estimate is from $y=0$, the stronger the relationship between the independent and dependent variable. Negative (positive) marginal effects mean that an increase in the independent variable is associated with a decrease (increase) in the dependent variable.

If *Hypothesis 3* is correct, we should observe the marginal effect estimates weakening, or becoming less positive or negative, as we move from left to right on the ideological spectrum. Indeed, this is exactly what the panels in the left column of Figure 3.5 show. Although the marginal effect of an increase in perceived unfairness is associated with an increase in the probability of being dissatisfied and a decrease in the probability of being satisfied with democracy for all individuals, this relationship is weakest on the right of the political spectrum. Yet, the right column of Figure 3.5 shows that this change in marginal effects is actually being driven by people who view the income distribution as “very fair.”

Predicted satisfaction, regardless of the response outcome, is relatively similar across the ideological spectrum for individuals who perceive the income distribution as “very unfair.” Yet, those on the right are more likely than those on the left to be “dissatisfied” with democracy when they perceive the income distribution as “very fair,” and less likely to be “very satisfied” when they view the income distribution as “very

fair.” The largest satisfaction gap between those who view the income distribution as “very unfair” compared to “very fair” exists among people on the left of the political spectrum. In this sense, the results in Figure 3.5 lend support to *Hypothesis 3*, in that fairness perceptions matter more for political support among left-leaning individuals. In one way, this finding is consistent with literature on the moral foundations of political ideology. Recall, this literature posits that those on the political left are more likely to moralize outcomes they perceive as unfair or harmful to others, whereas those on the political right care more about order, authority, and the political and economic status quo (Graham et al 2009; 2012). However, that the narrowing satisfaction gap as we move from left to right on the ideological spectrum is actually being driven by changes in perceptions of fairness, as opposed to perceptions of unfairness, is not consistent with my argument that individuals on the political right are more likely to rely on legitimizing narratives that allay their political concerns about inequality, at least when it comes to satisfaction with democracy. Perceptions of distributive fairness or unfairness simply matter less for those on the right than those on the left when it comes to evaluating the functioning of democracy.

3.3.3 Governance Quality, Fairness Perceptions, and Satisfaction with Democracy

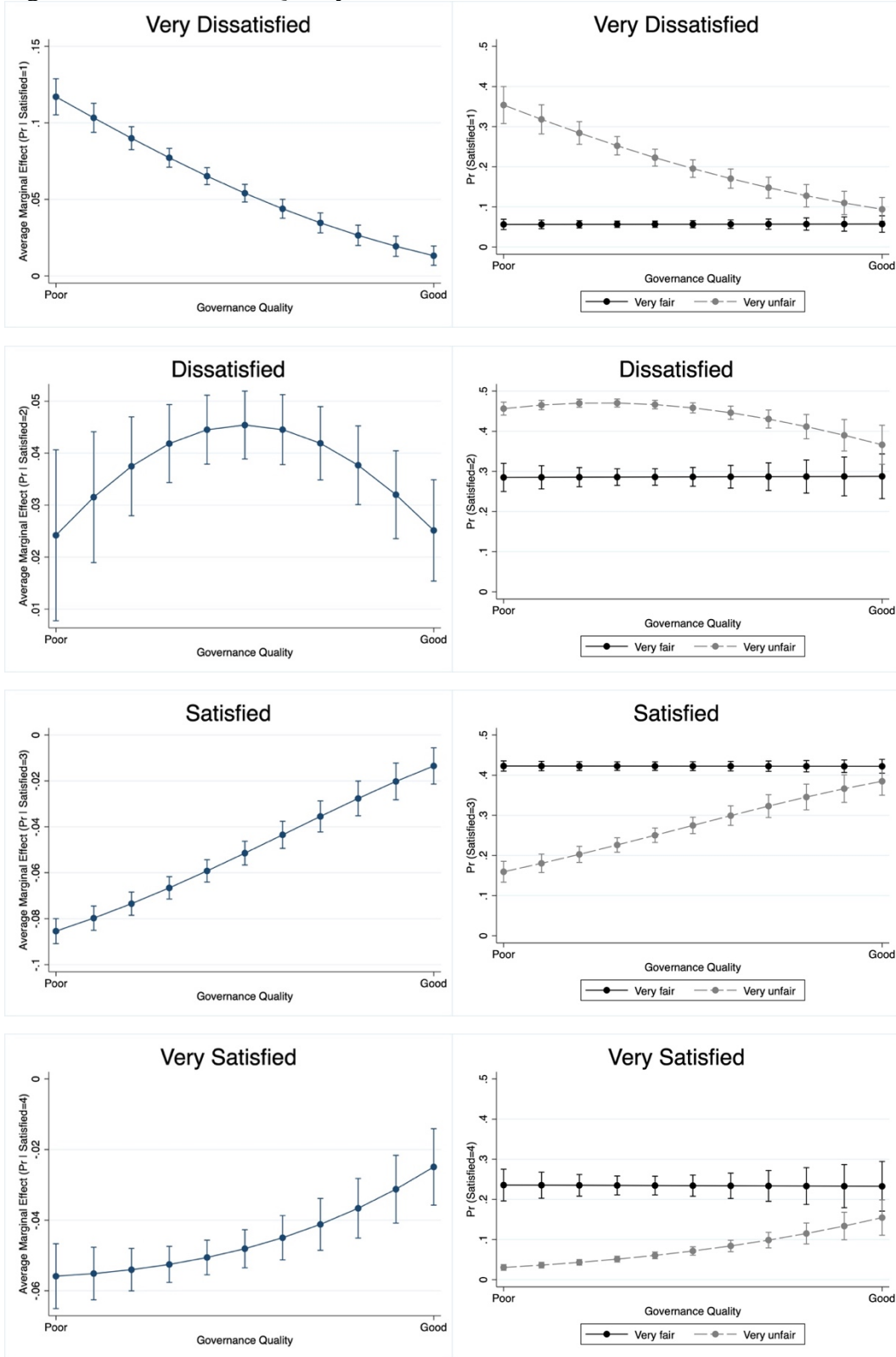
In Chapter 2, I also laid out expectations that governance quality will condition how citizens use their fairness judgments to evaluate the political system. Specifically, *Hypothesis 4* posits that good governance should weaken the negative relationship between perceived distributive unfairness and support for the political system. Although inequality and perceived distributive injustice should erode political support by challenging citizens’ normative expectations about the outcomes that democracy is

supposed to produce, the presence of good governance provides alternative information that the democratic process is functioning properly. However, weak state capacity and poor governance compound the damaging effects of inequality. Not only do citizens view as the unfair distributive outcome tied to government inaction, but bad governance, such as pervasive corruption, impedes governments' ability to enact effective pro-egalitarian reforms. As a legislative aid for a National Deputy in Argentina noted, "The state is promoting lots of policies and projects to reduce inequality, but resources like houses and money aren't being given to the right people; they're in the wrong hands because of corruption."¹³ When programs meant to reduce social and economic inequalities are not administered impartially, the democratic process is not affording all citizens equal opportunities for economic progress, and hence citizens should be more likely to express political dissatisfaction for what they perceive as an unfair economic distribution.

In Table 3.2, Model 3, I include a cross-level interaction between individuals' fairness perceptions and a country's governance quality, which I operationalize using a measure of *control of corruption* from the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) project (Kaufmann, Kraay, & Mastruzzi, 2010). The coefficient on the interaction term in Model 3 is positive and significant. In the left column of Figure 3.6, I

¹³ Author interview, June 2018. The interviews used in this dissertation are based on a convenience sample of Argentine political elites in Buenos Aires. Although not generalizable to all political elites in Argentina or Latin America, these interviews offer supporting examples of prior theoretical arguments and help contextualize empirical results from cross-national analysis.

Figure 3.6 Governance Quality, Perceived Distributive Unfairness, and Satisfaction



use the results from Table 3.2, Model 3 to calculate and plot the average marginal effect of an increase in perceived distributive unfairness on the probability of observing each *satisfaction with democracy* response outcome, across the range of governance quality (*control of corruption*) values in the sample. In the right panel of Figure 3.6, I do the same, but instead of marginal effects, I calculate and plot the predicted probability of observing each outcome, for individuals who view the income distribution as “very fair” (black solid line) and “very unfair (gray dashed line). Consistent with *Hypothesis 4*, the positive effect of an increase in perceived unfairness on the probability of observing the “very dissatisfied” outcome weakens as governance quality improves (top-left panel). Likewise, the negative effect of an increase in perceived unfairness on the probability of observing “satisfied” or “very satisfied” also weakens as governance quality improves. Although an increase in perceived distributive unfairness is associated with a decrease in the probability of being “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the way democracy is functioning, on average, this relationship is considerably weaker in a context of good governance than in a context of poor governance.

Turning to the right column in Figure 3.6, the conditioning effect of governance quality on the relationship between perceived distributive unfairness and satisfaction with democracy is most pronounced among citizens who perceive their country’s income distribution as “very unfair.” Individuals who perceive the income distribution as “very fair” have a consistently low baseline probability of being dissatisfied with democracy, and a consistently high probability of being satisfied. Yet, improvements in governance quality are associated with a narrowing of the “satisfaction gap” between people who perceive their country’s income distribution as “very fair” compared to “very unfair.” In

substantive terms, an individual who perceives her country's income as "very unfair" has a .35 probability of being "very dissatisfied" with democracy in a context of poor governance. In a context of good governance, however, that same individual would only have a .09 probability of being "very dissatisfied" with democracy. Conversely, an individual who views her country's income distribution as "very unfair" only has a .03 probability of being "very satisfied" with democracy in a context of poor governance. In a context of good governance, however, that same individual would have a .15 probability of being "very satisfied."

Consistent with my theoretical expectations, good governance significantly mitigates the negative influence of perceived distributive unfairness on satisfaction with democracy. Even when individuals perceive their country's income distribution to be fundamentally unfair, they are still less likely to be dissatisfied and more likely to be satisfied with the way their democracy functions when they live in a country with good governance. Taken together, the results in Table 3.2, Model 3, and Figure 3.6 are fully consistent with *Hypothesis 4*. Although poor governance signals to citizens that inequality cannot effectively be addressed through the democratic process, good governance significantly mitigates the negative influence of perceived distributive unfairness on satisfaction with democracy.

3.4 Perceptions of Distributive Unfairness and Trust in Government

In these final sections of Chapter 3, I investigate the relationship between individuals' perceptions of distributive unfairness and trust in government. As previously mentioned, trust in government is another important indicator of support for the political

system. Trust allows political institutions to function properly (Cleary and Stokes 2006; Hetherington 1998), and it helps ensure citizens' acquiescence, especially regarding policies and political outcomes that people disagree with (Gibson, Caldeira, and Spence 2005; Tankebe 2013). The discussion of results in this section will proceed like the *satisfaction with democracy* results. First, I will present a series of baseline multilevel ordered logit models and will use these models to discuss the relationship between perceived distributive unfairness and trust in government (*Hypothesis 1*). Next, I present a series of interactive models that allow me to test my hypotheses about the conditioning effect of class (*H2*), political ideology (*H3*), and governance quality (*H4*).

The results in Table 3.3 are consistent with my main theoretical argument that perceived distributive unfairness erodes support for the political system. Across model specifications, the coefficient on *perceived distributive unfairness* is negative and statistically significant, indicating that individuals are less likely to trust the national government when they perceive their country's income distribution as unfair. Turning briefly to some of the other independent variables in Table 3.3, subjective social class and governance quality are positively associated with trust, with upper-class individuals and people in countries with good governance being more likely to trust the government, on average. Individuals who approve of the incumbent president are also more likely to trust the government. Being on the right of the political spectrum is associated with decreased trust, as is expressing negative evaluations of the economy, having a higher level of education, being a woman, and living in a country with high income inequality.

Table 3.3 Perceived Distributive Unfairness and Trust in Government, Baseline Models

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Perceived Distributive Unfairness	-.76*** (.05)	-.50*** (.05)	-.50*** (.05)	-.50*** (.05)
Political Ideology 0-10=Right		-.01*** (.00)	-.01*** (.00)	-.01*** (.00)
Subjective Social Class		.06*** (.01)	.06*** (.01)	.06*** (.01)
Governance Quality			.21** (.07)	.17* (.07)
<i>Individual-Level Control</i>				
Economic Perception (Worse)		-.39*** (.01)	-.39*** (.01)	-.39*** (.01)
Education		-.01*** (.00)	-.01*** (.00)	-.01*** (.00)
Rural		.05* (.03)	.05* (.03)	.05* (.03)
Incumbent Approval		1.54*** (.02)	1.54*** (.02)	1.54*** (.02)
Wealth Quintile		.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)
Female		-.04* (.02)	-.04* (.02)	-.04* (.02)
<i>Country-Level Control</i>				
Income Inequality				-.04** (.02)
Cut 1	-3.41*** (.16)	-3.19*** (.16)	-3.26*** (.17)	-5.13*** (.72)
Cut 2	-1.77*** (.16)	-1.32*** (.16)	-1.39*** (.17)	-3.25*** (.72)
Cut 3	.05 (.16)	.72*** (.16)	.66*** (.17)	-1.21 (.72)
Observations	75926	41221	41221	41221
Country-Years	54	54	54	54
Wald χ^2	229.75	7502.38	7515.82	7523.87

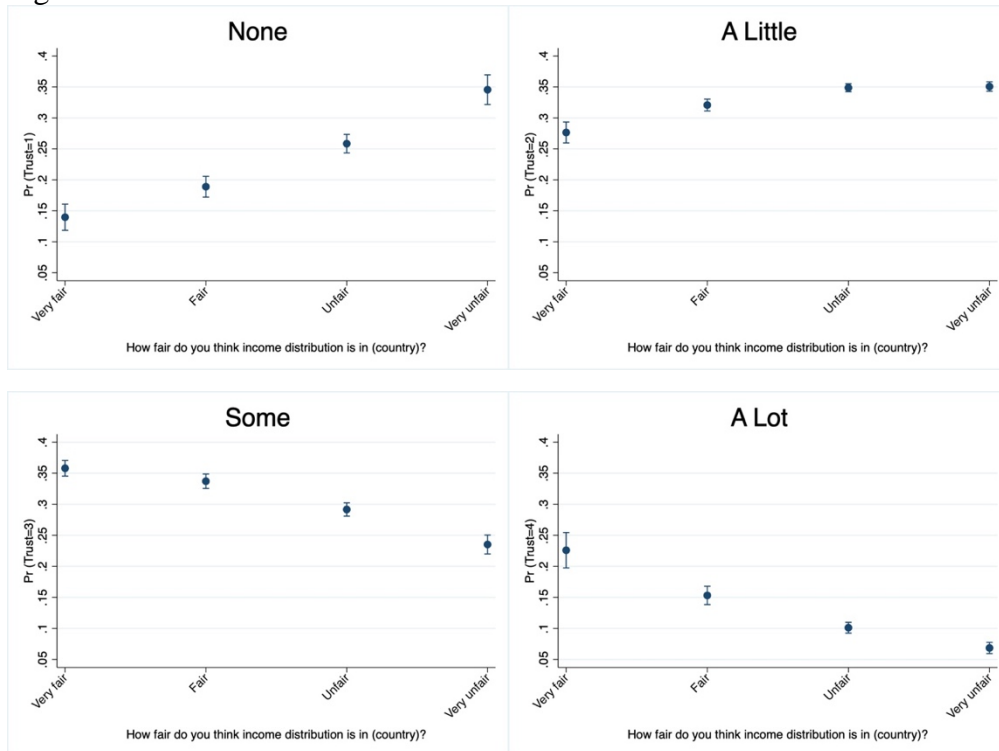
* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001 (standard errors), multilevel ordered logit coefficients.

DV: "How much trust do you have in the national government?" none (coded 1) to a lot (4).

Yet even after accounting for all of these other factors, individuals who perceive their country's income distribution as unfair are still discernibly less likely to trust the

national government. Figure 3.7 shows this direct effect graphically. In substantive terms, individuals who view their country’s income distribution as “very fair” have a .14 probability of saying the trust the national government “not at all,” whereas individuals who view the income distribution as “very unfair” have a .35 probability of indicating no trust in the government. Conversely, individuals who view the income distribution as “very fair” have a .23 probability of trusting the government “a lot,” compared to a .07 probability for people who view the income distribution as “very unfair.” Taken together, the results in Table 3.3 and Figure 3.7 are fully consistent with *Hypothesis 1*: people who perceive the income distribution in their country are less likely to support the political system, as indicated by their level of trust in the national government.

Figure 3.7 Perceived Distributive Unfairness and Trust in Government



Notes: Bars represent 95% CIs around point estimates. Calculated using Table 3.3, Model 4.

3.4.1 Class, Fairness Perceptions, and Trust in Government

Model 1 in Table 3.4 includes an individual-level interaction between subjective social class and fairness perceptions and allows me to test the hypothesis that the relationship between perceived distributive unfairness and political support will be weaker among upper-class compared to lower-class individuals. The interaction coefficient in Model 1 is negative and significant ($p=.02$). To aid in the interpretation of this interaction, I calculate and plot the marginal effect of an increase in perceived distributive unfairness on the probability of observing each *trust* outcome option, for each *subjective social class* value in the left column of Figure 3.8. In the right column of Figure 3.8, I do the same, except I plot predicted probabilities for individuals who perceive the income distribution as “very fair” and “very unfair.”

As Figure 3.8 shows, relationship between perceived distributive unfairness and trust in government is stronger for upper-class than for lower-class citizens. The marginal effect of an increase in perceived distributive unfairness on the probability of observing trust “none” or “a little” (two top-left panels) is positive and significantly different from zero for all individuals, although this effect strongest for self-identified upper-class individuals. Conversely, the average marginal effect of an increase in perceived unfairness on the probability of observing trust “some” or “a lot” (two bottom-left panels) is negative for all individuals, although strongest among the upper-class.

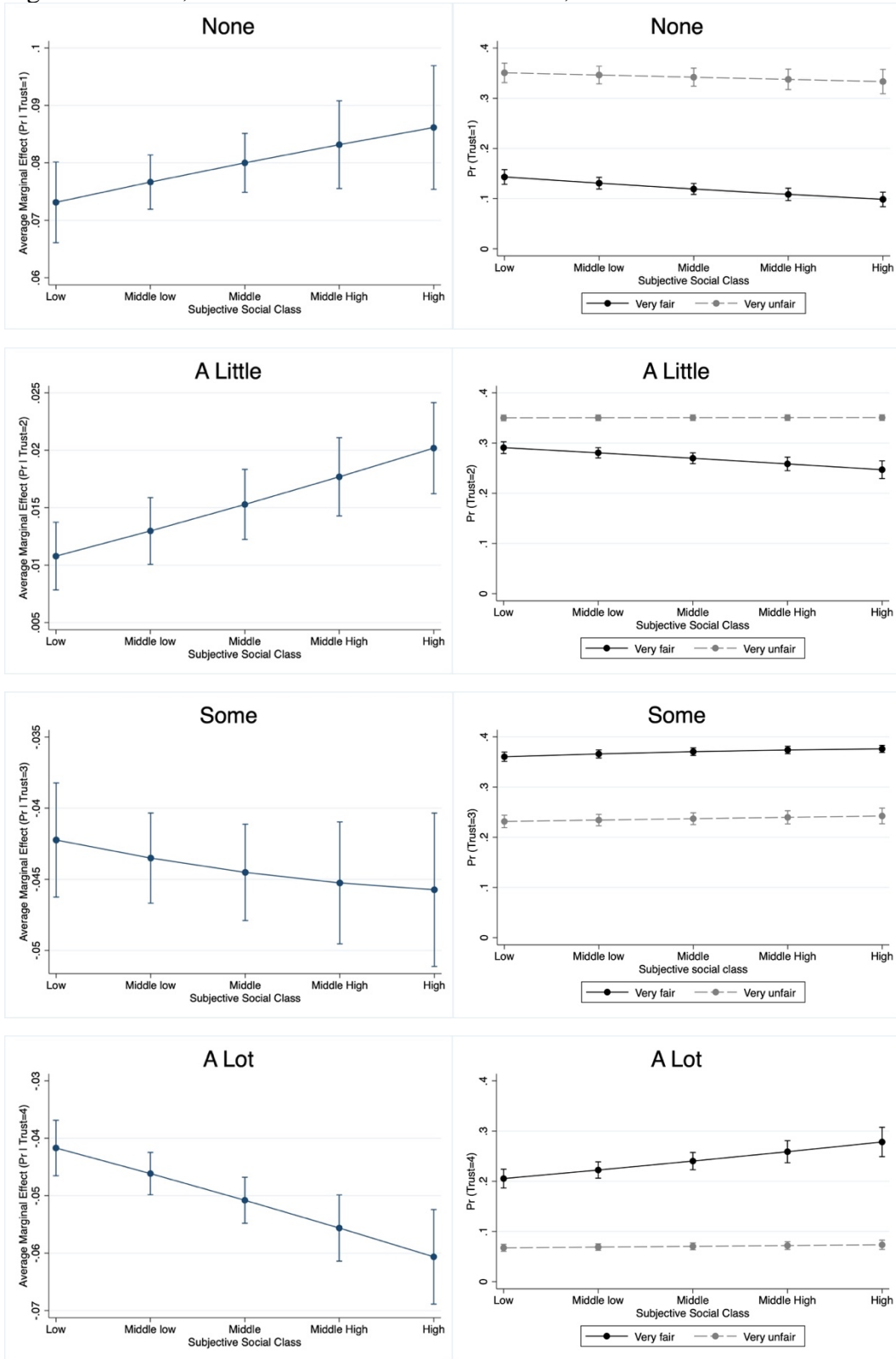
Table 3.4 Perceived Distributive Unfairness and Trust in Government, Interactive Models

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Perceived Distributive Unfairness	-.44*** (.03)	-.63*** (.03)	-.47*** (.02)	-.51*** (.04)
Subjective Social Class	.15*** (.04)	.06*** (.01)	.06*** (.01)	.16*** (.04)
Unfair X Social Class	-.03* (.01)			-.04** (.01)
Political Ideology 0-10=Right	-.03*** (.00)	-.09*** (.01)	-.03*** (.00)	-.10*** (.01)
Unfair X Ideology		.02*** (.00)		.03*** (.00)
Governance Quality	.14* (.06)	.15* (.07)	-.29*** (.08)	-.31*** (.08)
Unfair X Governance			.14*** (.02)	.15*** (.02)
<i>Individual-Level Control</i>				
Economic Perception (Worse)	-.40*** (.01)	-.40*** (.01)	-.40*** (.01)	-.39*** (.01)
Education	-.01*** (.00)	-.01*** (.00)	-.01*** (.00)	-.01*** (.00)
Rural	.05* (.03)	.05* (.03)	.06* (.03)	.05* (.03)
Incumbent Approval	1.59*** (.02)	1.58*** (.02)	1.58*** (.02)	1.58*** (.02)
Wealth Quintile	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)
Female	-.04* (.02)	-.04* (.02)	-.04* (.02)	-.04* (.02)
<i>Country-Level Control</i>				
Income Inequality	-.04*** (.01)	-.04*** (.01)	-.05*** (.01)	-.04*** (.01)
Cut 1	-5.17*** (.55)	-5.66*** (.55)	-5.25*** (.54)	-5.30*** (.55)
Cut 2	-3.30*** (.55)	-3.79*** (.55)	-3.39*** (.54)	-3.44*** (.55)
Cut 3	-1.29* (.55)	-1.78** (.55)	-1.38* (.54)	-1.42** (.55)
Observations	41221	41221	41221	41221
Country-Years	54	54	54	54
Wald χ^2	11096.09	11114.73	11137.34	11169.31

* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001 (standard errors), multilevel ordered logit coefficients.

DV: "How much trust do you have in the national government?" none (coded 1) to a lot (4).

Figure 3.8 Class, Perceived Distributive Unfairness, and Trust in Government



The panels on the right of Figure 3.8 show that most of the conditioning effect of class is evident among individuals who perceive the income distribution as “very fair,” and the differences between lower-class and upper-class individuals are most pronounced for the “little” and “a lot” outcome options. Among individuals who view their country’s income distribution as “very fair,” upper-class individuals have a lower probability, compared to lower-class individuals, of saying they trust the government only “a little,” and a higher probability of saying they trust the government “a lot” (nearly ten percentage points higher). Class, however, has a negligible conditioning effect on the relationship between “very unfair” perceptions of the income distribution and trust in government. All individuals, regardless of class, have a consistently high probability of saying they have no trust in the national government (around .35), and a relatively low probability of saying they trust the government “a lot” (around .07).

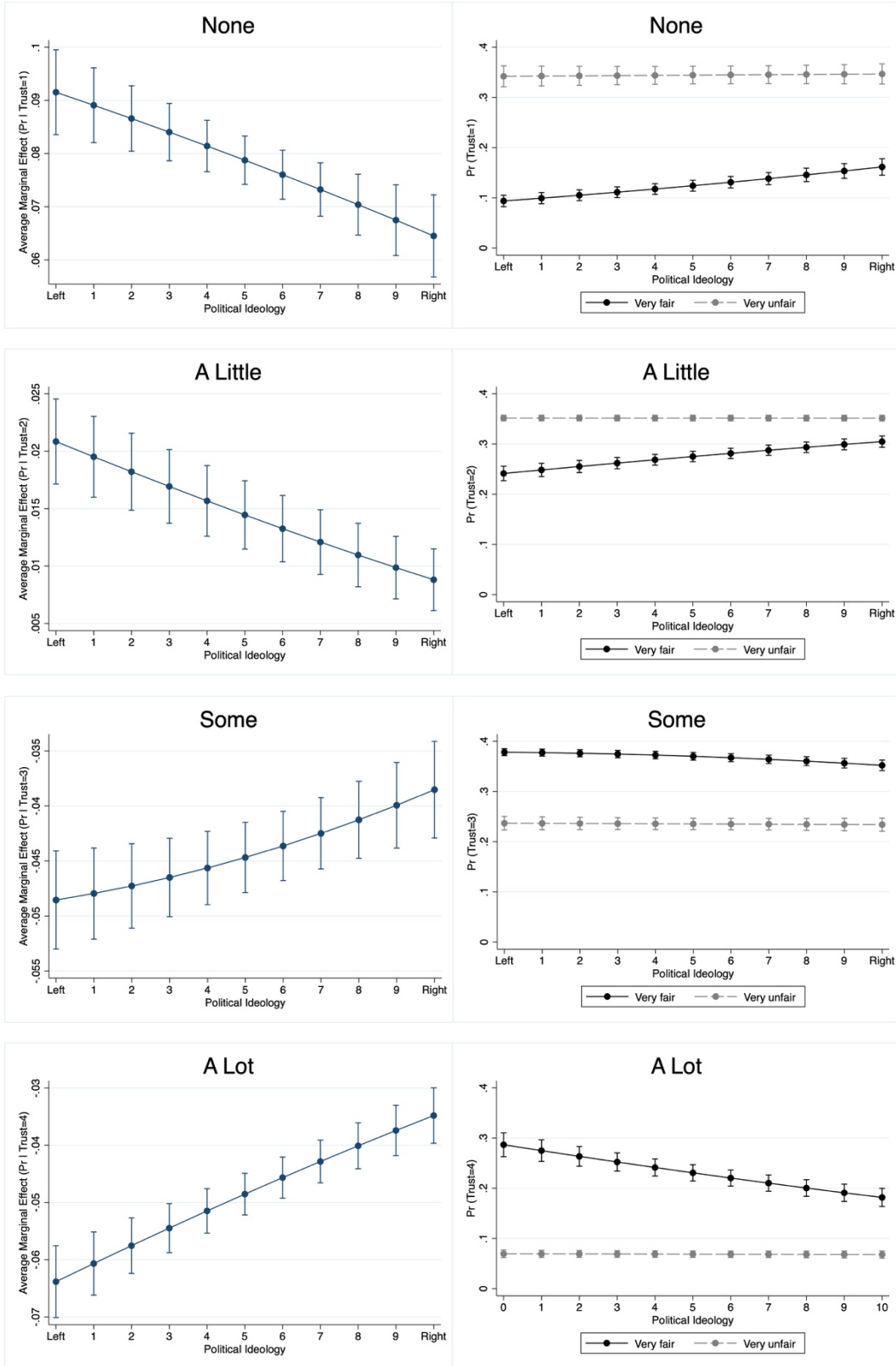
In sum, the results in this section are inconsistent with my argument that the relationship between perceived distributive unfairness and political support should be weaker among upper-class than lower-class individuals. Not only is the relationship between perceived distributive unfairness and trust stronger for upper-class than lower-class individuals, but the largest “trust gap” (where there is one in Figure 3.8) between “very fair” and “very unfair” perceptions of the income distribution is for those upper-class respondents in the sample. Moreover, the fact that I observe no difference in lower-class and upper-class individuals’ trust in government when they perceive the income distribution as unfair suggests that upper-class individuals, at least in this Latin American context, are not relying on system-justifying narratives to absolve the government of blame for any perceived distributive unfairness they experience.

3.4.2 Political Ideology, Fairness Perceptions, and Trust in Government

Model 2 in Table 3.4 includes an individual-level interaction between left-right political ideology and perceived distributive unfairness. The coefficient on the interaction term is positive and significant, indicating that political ideology conditions the relationship between individuals' perceptions of the income distribution and their trust in the national government. The marginal effects and predicted probabilities in Figure 3.9 are remarkably similar to the relationship between fairness perceptions, political ideology, and satisfaction with democracy discussed in the previous section. Consistent with *Hypothesis 3*, the relationship between perceived distributive unfairness and trust in government *weakens* with a move from left to right on the ideological spectrum. That is, the positive relationship between perceived unfairness and trusting the government “none” or “a little” is less positive among right-leaning individuals than left-leaning individuals, and the negative relationship between perceived unfairness and trusting the government “some” or “a lot” becomes less negative with a move to the right.

As the predicted probability panels on the right of Figure 3.9 illustrate, the conditioning effect of political ideology is most evident among people who perceive their country's income distribution as “very fair.” Whereas all individuals who perceive the income distribution as “very unfair”, regardless of political ideology, have a relatively high probability of saying the trust the government “none,” and a relatively low probability of indicating trust “a lot,” the relationship between “very fair” perceptions and trust varies considerably depending on political ideology. Turning first to the top-right panel in Figure 3.9, individuals who perceive their country's income distribution as

Figure 3.9 Political Ideology, Perceived Distributive Unfairness, and Trust in Government



“very unfair” have about a .35 probability of indicating they have no trust in the national government. Among individuals who perceive the income distribution as “very fair,” those on the left have a .09 probability of indicating no trust, compared to those on right who’s predicted probability is around .16, a nearly 80% higher probability. Turning to the bottom-right panel in Figure 3.9, individuals who perceive the income distribution as “very unfair” only have a .07 probability of saying they trust the government “a lot,” regardless of their political ideology.

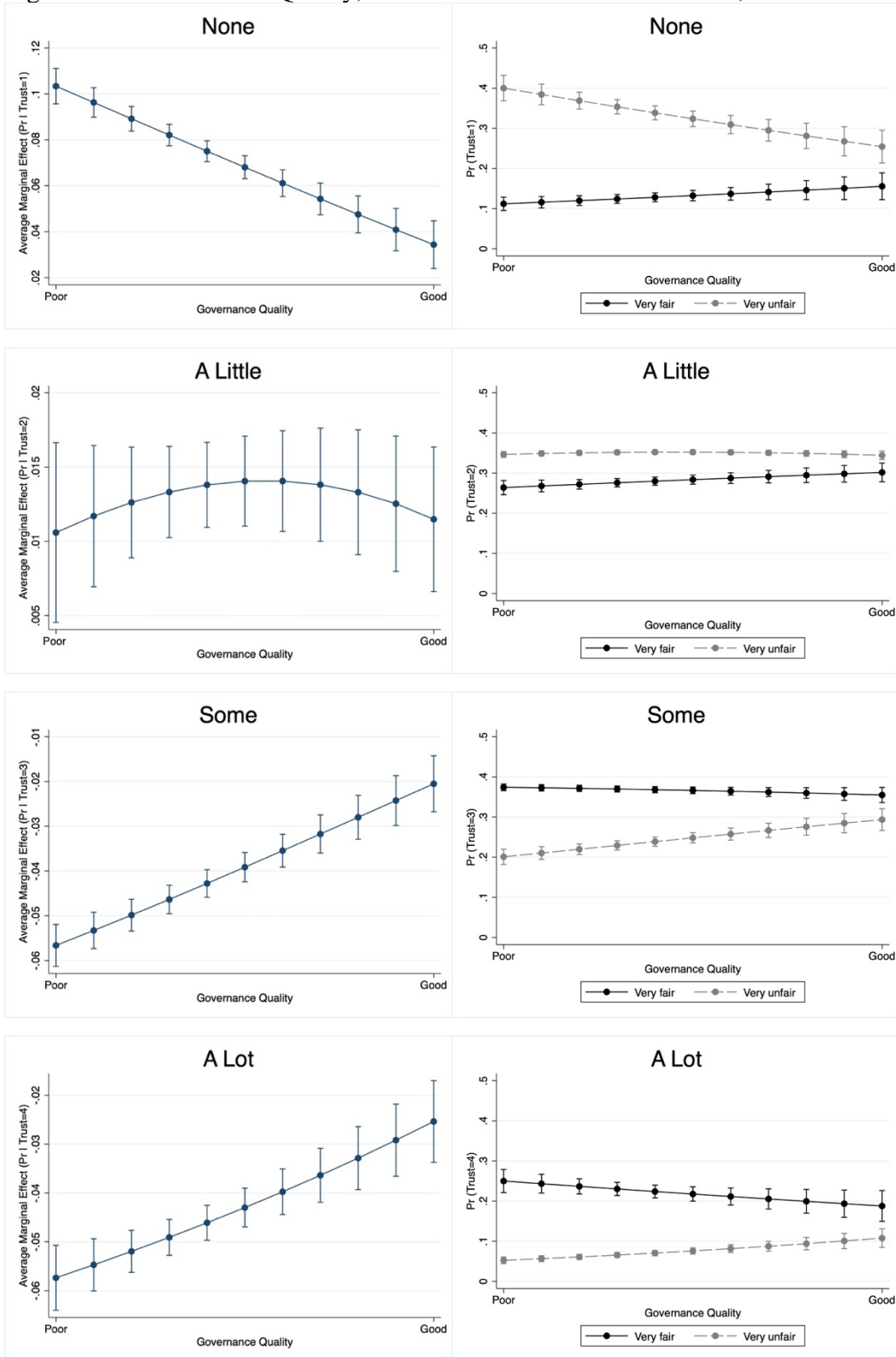
Yet, when those on the left perceive the income distribution as “very fair,” they have a .29 probability of saying they trust the government “a lot,” compared to a .19 probability for those on the right of the political spectrum. In sum, the results in Table 3.4, Model 2, and Figure 3.9 lend partial support to *Hypothesis 3*. The relationship between individuals’ fairness perceptions and trust in government is weaker among those on the right of the political spectrum, compared to those on the left. In this sense, the results in Figure 3.9 are consistent with *Hypothesis 3*. But, the conditioning effect of political ideology on this relationship is most evident among people who perceive the income distribution as “very fair.” Among people on the left, there is a large trust gap between those who perceive the income distribution as “very fair” versus “very unfair.” This trust gap is significantly smaller on the right of the political spectrum, but only because right-leaning individuals are more likely than left-leaning individuals to distrust the government, and less likely to trust the government, when they perceive the income distribution as fair.

3.4.3 Governance Quality, Fairness Perceptions, and Trust in Government

This section offers an additional test of *Hypothesis 4*, that governance quality will mitigate the negative effect of perceived distribution unfairness on political support. As the positive and significant coefficient on the cross-level interaction term in Table 3.4, Model 3 suggests, the relationship between individuals' fairness perceptions and trust in government is indeed conditional on the quality of governance in a country. Figure 3.10 presents this cross-level interaction graphically. As with democratic satisfaction, the positive relationship between an increase in perceived unfairness and the trust "none" outcome weakens considerably as governance quality improves (top left panel). Likewise, the negative relationship between perceived unfairness and the trust "some" and "a lot" outcomes weakens as governance quality improves (two bottom-left panels). Although perceiving the income distribution as increasingly unfair is associated with a decreased probability of trusting the national government, on average, this negative relationship is most pronounced in countries with poor governance quality.

As the right panels in Figure 3.10 illustrate, governance quality has the most pronounced conditioning effect for "very unfair" perceptions. Turning first to the top-right panel, individuals who view their country's income distribution as "very unfair" have a .40 probability of indicating they have no trust in the national government when they live in a country with poor governance quality. In countries with the best governance quality in the sample, however, these same individuals have a .24 probability of indicating no trust in the government. Turning to the "some" and "a lot" outcomes, Figure 3.10 illustrates the point that good governance mitigates the pernicious influence of perceived distributive unfairness on trust in government. Among individuals who

Figure 3.10 Governance Quality, Perceived Distributive Unfairness, and Trust



perceive their country's income distribution as "very unfair," the probability of observing the trust "a lot" outcome is only .05 in a context of poor governance. In countries with good governance, however, this probability more than doubles to .11. The conditioning effect of governance quality is likewise pronounced for the trust "some" (=3) outcome (which is nearly as common as the "none" outcome in the pooled sample, around 28 percent of respondents). In countries with poor governance quality, individuals who perceive the income distribution as "very unfair." have a .20 probability of saying the trust the national government "some" of the time. In countries with good governance quality, this probability increases by nearly .10.

In sum, the results in this section lend strong support to my hypothesis about fairness perceptions, governance quality, and political support (H4). Good governance significantly mitigates the negative influence of perceived distributive unfairness on political support. The "trust gap" between people who perceive their country's income distribution as "very fair" compared to "very unfair" is widest where governance quality is the worst in Latin America. As governance quality improves, this "trust gap" narrows, primarily because individuals who perceive high levels of distributive unfairness in society are nonetheless willing to express political trust. Although inequality in Latin America is likely to remain high by global standards for the foreseeable future, these results offer optimism for the prospects of democratic stability in the region.

3.5 Discussion and Conclusion

Political support is at troubling low levels and has been steadily declining during the last decade in a number of Latin American countries. In Brazil, for instance, recent

high-profile corruption scandals coupled with a severe economic recession have left citizens disillusioned with their democratic institutions.¹⁴ Prior research has linked dissatisfaction and disenchantment with democratic institutions to weak state capacity and poor governance (Anderson and Tverdova 2003; Kumlin and Esaisson 2012; Mainwaring 2006; Weitz-Shapiro 2008), legislative gridlock (Singh and Carlin 2015), and economic inequality (Anderson and Singer 2008). In this chapter, I advance these scholarly lines of inquiry by examining how individuals' perceptions of distributive (un)fairness in a region plagued by high inequality affects individuals' evaluations of the political system.

Table 3.5 Hypotheses and Empirical Support

Hypothesis	Supported?
H1: On average, citizens who perceive the distribution of income in their country as unfair will express lower levels of political support than individuals who view the income distribution as fair.	Yes
H2: The negative relationship between perceived distributive unfairness and political support will be weakest among upper-class individuals.	No
H3: The negative relationship between perceived distributive unfairness and political support will be weakest among right-leaning individuals.	Partially
H4: Good governance will weaken the negative relationship between perceived distributive unfairness and political support.	Yes

Using a multilevel analysis of public opinion data from 18 Latin American countries (2011-2015), I show that even when controlling for aggregate levels of income inequality, individuals are less likely to be satisfied with democracy or trust the

¹⁴ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/the_americas/in-brazil-nostalgia-grows-for-the-dictatorship--not-the-brutality-but-the-law-and-order/2018/03/14/bc58ded2-1cdd-11e8-98f5-ceecfa8741b6_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.c7fe0436d084

government when they perceive their country's income distribution to be unfair. This cross-national analysis also reveals that both of the aforementioned relationships are conditioned by individuals' political ideology, as well as the context of governance quality in a country. Table 3.5 summarizes the hypotheses that are tested in this chapter, and which of these hypotheses are consistent with the empirical results discussed in the preceding sections.

Although purely observations research designs such as the one in this chapter do not afford scholars an airtight exposition of causality, results from my multilevel analysis are consistent with my theory that individuals are, on average, less likely to be satisfied with democracy or trust the government when they perceive high levels of distributive unfairness. Moreover, this result holds even after controlling for other previously theorized determinants of political support, such as aggregate levels of income inequality, as well as approval of the incumbent government and retrospective evaluations of the economy. To further isolate the causal effects of inequality and perceptions of distributive unfairness, I have designed a series of survey experiment that will allow me to test my theorized causal mechanisms. In Chapter 4, I use a survey experiment to investigate how information about distributive (un)fairness affects support for the political system, as well as how these treatment effects vary by class and political ideology. In Chapter 5, I use another survey experiment to investigate how governance quality affects individuals' political evaluations of economic inequality.

CHAPTER 4. INEQUALITY AND FAIRNESS FRAMES: EXPERIMENTAL EVIDENCE FROM ARGENTINA, MEXICO, AND THE UNITED STATES

In the first empirical chapter of this dissertation, I used cross-national survey data from 18 Latin American countries to show that perceptions of distributive unfairness are negatively correlated with democratic satisfaction. Although the cross-national analysis in Chapter 3 is consistent with my theoretical argument that perceptions of distributive unfairness are a key factor whereby economic inequalities in society erodes support for the political system, such observational designs do not allow me to offer an airtight exposition of causality. Hence, I turn to an experimental design, which offers a number of advantages over purely observational studies when it comes to isolating causal effects. Experiments give researchers control over the data generating process—in particular, control over exposure to the independent variable, or treatment—thus allowing for greater certainty that an observed change in the dependent variable is the result of the independent variable.

In this chapter, I discuss the results of survey experiments from Argentina, Mexico, and the United States in which I present participants with information about rising economic inequality, frame this increase in inequality as either an unfair or fair distributive outcome, and then evaluate support for the political system. By conducting a series of single-country studies, I am able to hold actual levels of inequality constant in each experiment while simultaneously manipulating individuals' perceptions of distributive (un)fairness. Recall from Chapter 2 that while all individuals should be distressed by disproportionate economic outcomes (Jost and Kay 2010; Waksalk et al. 2007), they oftentimes “cognitively adjust” by rationalizing inequality (Jost et al. 2003,

Tyler 2006) or adopting legitimizing stereotypes that justify group differences (Cassese, Barnes, and Branton 2015; Cassese and Holman 2017; Kay and Jost 2003; Tyler 2006). Indeed, a constant theme that has come up in nearly every elite interview I conducted in Argentina, over the course of two years and with elites from across the political spectrum, is that a major cause of inequality is that Argentina lacks a “culture of work.” When I ask political elites – who by and large are now members of the upper-strata of society, regardless of their backgrounds – “what do you think are some of the causes of persistent inequality in Argentina,” common responses include:

“People don’t have a working culture, there’s an idea that life is easier than it actually is, we need to re-educate and create a commitment with work, for them to know what it is to wake up early, go to work, get the food to the table. All this culture has been lost on 1/3 of the population of Argentina.”¹⁵

“I believe the social policies have to help people work, rather than just giving them everything. They will become used to the state giving them everything and then they will stop working.”¹⁶

“I believe that we don’t have an employment culture, a culture related to work. People who can get a job aren’t interested in working because the state will give you lots of things like housing and food. There’s a great problem with employment...It’s very hard to find employees to work in your business if you’re a CEO. The system is complicated because people who get welfare benefits from the state lose these benefits if they start a job. So, they choose not to work so they can keep the social welfare benefits.”¹⁷

Although some individuals, in particular elites in society, are quick to blame inequality on a lack of work ethic among the lower classes – a clear example of stereotypes meant to legitimize inequality – others place the blame squarely on the

¹⁵ Author interview, Buenos Aires Provincial Deputy (UCR), March 2019.

¹⁶ Author interview, Buenos Aires Provincial Deputy (Frente Renovador), March 2019.

¹⁷ Author interview, aid to Argentine National Deputy (PRO), May 2018.

government. The notion that individuals view inequality as an unfair outcome inextricably linked to government (in)action is a theme that consistently emerged from a variety of qualitative data that I collected both in the United States and in Argentina. Individuals are generally less satisfied with the political system when the outcomes produced in a democracy do not match their normative expectations about what democracy should do in practice (Singh and Carlin 2015). When citizens perceive high levels of *distributive unfairness* – for example, they perceive the distribution of wealth or income in their country as unfair – this signals that the democratic process is not producing the outcomes it was intended to produce, such as a more equitable distribution of economic resources (Acemoglu and Robinson 2006; Meltzer and Richards 1981). In other words, individuals view inequality through a lens of distributive unfairness when they see their democratic governments failing to remedy economic disparities in society – for instance by enacting inadequate worker protections or tax policies that disproportionately benefit the wealthy – and they express political dissatisfaction and disillusionment as a result.

Indeed, a theme that consistently emerged from my qualitative data of survey respondents in the U.S. is that economic inequality is the result of unfair tax policies.

Consider the following responses:

“I think that unfair corporate tax policies play a major part in the unequal redistribution of wealth as the economy recovers. Corporate profits overpower the needs of the workers as well, leaving many people with unfair wages and benefits.”

“I think tax loop holes are a big part of it. The average citizen has to pay all their taxes or they will go to jail. Wealthy people always have ways around paying the taxes they are supposed to.”

“The loopholes and laws in place favor the wealthy to ultimately earn more. Taxes also favor the wealthy, keeping the wealth with the wealthy.”

Similar themes are evident in Brazil as well. Katia Maria, the director of the Brazilian institute of Geography and Statistics, recently noted:

“We pay a lot of taxes. But it is not that our taxation is excessive, in fact it is unfair. We are below the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) [in terms of tax burden] average. But it is a taxation where those who pay the most are the middle class and the poorest people.”¹⁸

In the above examples, respondents see the causes of inequality as resulting from government policies that disproportionately benefit one small group of citizens at the expense of the rest. Moreover, these unfair outcomes are the direct result of government action. Current political leaders, who many Americans see as being in the pocket of business leaders, are using the tax code unfairly to make sure “the rich keep getting richer” (Hacker and Pierson 2010).

Although the above discussion suggests that individuals in the US blame government because they perceive a lack of equality of outcome, they also blame the political system for a lack of equality of *opportunity*. Another common theme that emerged from my qualitative survey responses in the US is that the government is to blame for a lack of educational opportunities, which ultimately prevents upward class mobility:

¹⁸ <https://riotimesonline.com/brazil-news/rio-politics/more-than-25-million-brazilians-living-below-poverty-line/>

“Poor educational opportunities for the very poorest Americans, generational poverty, lack of ability for poor Americans to inherit from relatives, tax codes that strongly favor the wealthy.

“I think that education has a lot to do with inequality in the economy. Too many young people who live at a poverty level drop out of school, and with no education or training they are not able to get a job that pays a decent wage and a way to get ahead.”

“Poor social spending which doesn’t offer low income people the chance to climb up. Education is incredibly expensive and so is healthcare. These keep people locked in low end jobs with no chance of greater success.”

Similar themes surrounding government’s responsibility for inequalities in economic opportunities emerge in both elite and media discourse in Argentina, especially regarding education policy. During an elite interview, a legislative aid to a national Deputy from the PRO (a center-right party in Argentina that belongs to the Cambiemos coalition) explained that in addition to structural factors that create a cycle of poverty, education is a major problem in Argentina because of inequalities between public and private schools: “Children usually just go to public school to have lunch or a coffee because they are in real poverty, but they are not learning as much as the kids going to private schools.”

These sentiments are echoed in media discourse as well. An article in *La Nación*, a major national newspaper in Argentina, discusses how the public education system in Buenos Aires is basically divided in two, with well-equipped schools in wealthy northern Buenos Aires neighborhoods like Palermo, and poorly-equipped schools in the southern neighborhoods, where housing, employment, and health conditions are all worse as well.

The article goes on to explain that these inequalities in the public education system perpetuate other forms of socioeconomic inequality for students later in life.¹⁹

If my expectations surrounding *Hypothesis 1* are correct, I expect to see inequality undermine satisfaction with democracy when it is framed as an unfair distributive outcome, especially an outcome that impedes equality of opportunity for all citizens. Yet, offering individuals an opportunity to legitimize large income differences should mitigate the negative influence of economic inequality on political support that prior research has documented (Anderson and Singer 2008; Córdova and Layton 2016; Krieckhaus et al. 2014; Zmerli and Castillo 2015).

4.1 Experimental Design

The main analysis in this chapter centers around an online survey with embedded experimental treatments that I fielded in Argentina in February 2019. I supplement this analysis with data from previous versions of the same survey experiment that I administered to a student sample in Mexico in Spring 2018, and to a convenience sample in the United States using Amazon.com's Mechanical Turk Platform in Spring 2017. I choose to focus my analysis on the Argentina survey because the data are of higher quality and the sample was drawn to approximate national representativeness. As I discuss later in the chapter, the results from Argentina are largely supportive of the theoretical arguments I developed in Chapter 2. Importantly, the fact that experiments on convenience samples in Mexico and the United States are also fairly consistent with my

¹⁹ “La desigualdad en las escuelas públicas divide la ciudad en dos.” *La Nación*, Educación, Abril 2018.

results from Argentina speaks to both the replicability and generalizability of my findings.

The main experiment analyzed in this chapter was embedded in a survey using an online panel from the survey firm Netquest. The sample was drawn from a population of Netquest panelists over the age of 18, and quotas were used to ensure that the sample was nationally representative with regard to sex, age, and socioeconomic status (household income). In total, 3,040 participants took part in the survey. A subset of the sample (N=1,180) was randomly assigned to participate in the survey experiment analyzed in this chapter. This subset of participants was then randomly assigned to be in the control group or to receive one of three experimental treatments. Participants in the control group read a neutral statement about the size of the Argentine economy in relation to other Latin American countries. Participants receiving Treatment 1 also received information about increasing economic inequality. Participants in Treatments 2 and 3 received the same information, plus one additional sentence that was designed to frame inequality as either an unfair (Treatment 2) or fair (Treatment 3) distributive outcome. Of particular importance, the distributive (un)fairness frames that I used in the Argentina experiment are meant to tie information about inequality to (in)equality in *opportunities*, an important theme that emerges in qualitative data from multiple cases examined in this dissertation. The exact wording of each vignette is described below:

Control: Consistent with previous years, the Argentine economy was the 4th largest in Latin America.

Treatment 1: Consistent with previous years, the Argentine economy was the 4th largest in Latin America. However, the gap between the rich and poor in Argentina is larger than it has been in 12 years.

Treatment 2: Consistent with previous years, the Argentine economy was the 4th largest in Latin America. However, the gap between the rich and poor in Argentina is larger than it has been in 12 years. *Inequality is unfair* because it punishes children and prevents opportunities for success in the future.

Treatment 3: Consistent with previous years, the Argentine economy was the 4th largest in Latin America. However, the gap between the rich and poor in Argentina is larger than it has been in 12 years. *Inequality is fair* because it rewards hardworking people and creates opportunities for success in the future.

After reading one of these four vignettes, I asked participants about their support for the political system:

With this in mind, how satisfied are you with the functioning of democracy in Argentina? Are you very dissatisfied (coded 1), dissatisfied (2), neither dissatisfied nor satisfied (3), satisfied (4), or very satisfied (5)?

After the post-treatment questions, I also asked all of the participants in this experiment a “traditional” manipulation check question that was designed to ensure they received the information in the vignette they read.²⁰ Specifically, I asked respondent to how large Argentina’s economy was in the scenario they read: “In the previous question, how large was the Argentine economy? Was it the second largest (coded 1), third largest (2), fourth largest (3), or fifth largest (5) in Latin America?” At the end of the survey, all

²⁰ Although this kind of manipulation check is common, especially in political science and psychology experiments “to assess whether or not the subject was exposed to the treatment by asking them a question that could only be answered by reading the treatment” (Berinsky, Margolis, and Sances 2014), there is some debate about the effectiveness of this approach (e.g., Gerber et al. 2015).

participants read a debriefing statement thanking them for their participation and informing that all of the stories and scenarios they read were purely hypothetical. Unfortunately, less than half of the participants in this experiment correctly answered the manipulation check question (N=635). Table C1 in the Appendix shows the subsample demographic breakdown, along with political ideology, subjective social class, and educational attainment for the full sample, compared to the manipulation check subsample and each of the control and treatment groups. In Appendix Table C2, I also show none of a variety of demographic and cognitive variables predicts assignment to treatment groups in either the full sample or the reduced sample of participants who answered the manipulation check question correctly.²¹ The analysis presented in this chapter is based on responses from participants who answered the manipulation check question, although I show the average treatment effects for all participants in Appendix Table C3.

4.2 Results of a Survey Experiment in Argentina

4.2.1 Satisfaction with Democracy, Average Treatment Effects

Table 4.1 shows the average treatment effects, or the mean response to the post-treatment question about satisfaction with democracy, for each of the three treatment groups compared to the control. On average, when participants only read a neutral statement about the size of the economy in relation to other Latin American countries, the average *satisfaction with democracy* response was 2.85 on a 1 to 5 scale (5=very

²¹ The one exception is that in the reduced sample, women were slightly more likely to be assigned to Treatment 2 (Inequality framed as unfair) compared to the control in a multinomial logit model predicting treatment group.

satisfied). When individuals receive additional information that inequality in Argentina is increasing (Treatment 1), and that this increase in inequality represents an unfair distributive outcome (Treatment 2), they indicate an average level of democratic satisfaction that is significantly lower (10 and 6 percent changes, respectively) than the control group. Figure 4.1 shows these results graphically.

The average treatment effects presented in Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1 are consistent with prior research demonstrating that income inequality is associated with decreased satisfaction, and they are consistent with *Hypothesis 1*: individuals are less likely to support the political system when they perceive the income distribution in the country as unfair. Moreover, these results suggest that perceptions of distributive unfairness are key mechanisms linking economic inequality to political support. Compared to participants who are only told that inequality in Argentina is increasing (Treatment 1), providing additional information about distributive unfairness does not significantly diminish political support further. That is, lower levels of satisfaction with democracy, in a context of rising inequality, are the result of people perceiving distributive unfairness, and providing the extra information in Treatment 2 does not offer participants any new or conflicting information.

Table 4.1 Average Treatment Effects, Satisfaction with Democracy in Argentina

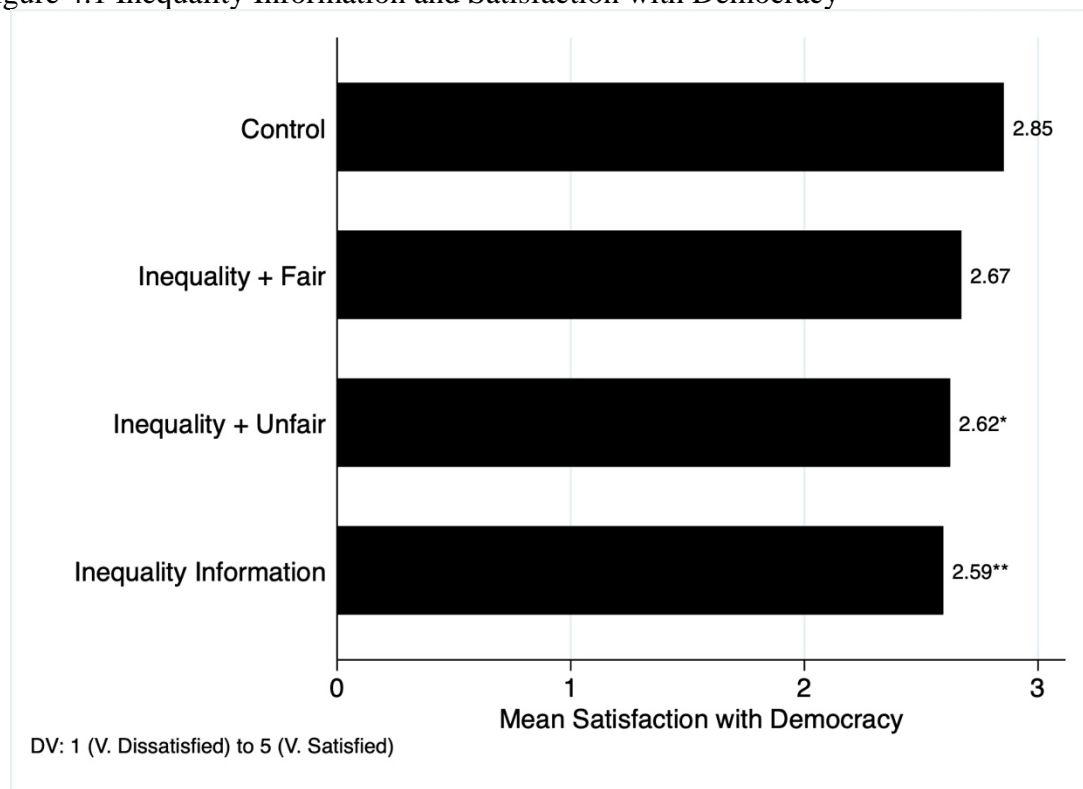
Control		
ATE=2.85		
N=157		
Inequality	Inequality + Unfair	Inequality + Fair
ATE=2.59	ATE=2.62	ATE=2.67
N=133	N=154	N=140
Diff= -.26**	Diff= -.23*	Diff= -.18

Note: Two-tailed t-tests comparing each treatment to the control group *p<.10, **p<.05, ***p<.01

DV: How satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Argentina? 1=Very dissatisfied to 5=Very satisfied

Yet, telling participants that rising inequality in Argentina represents a *fair* distributive outcome does affect political support differently, compared to only telling people that inequality is on the rise. In fact, participants receiving Treatment 3 expressed levels of satisfaction with democracy that were statistically indistinguishable from participants in the control group who received no information about inequality. Stated differently, on average, when people are given identical information about the economy and income inequality, political support does not suffer when rising inequality is framed as a fair distributive outcome.

Figure 4.1 Inequality Information and Satisfaction with Democracy



4.2.2 Satisfaction with Democracy, Heterogeneous Effects by Political Ideology

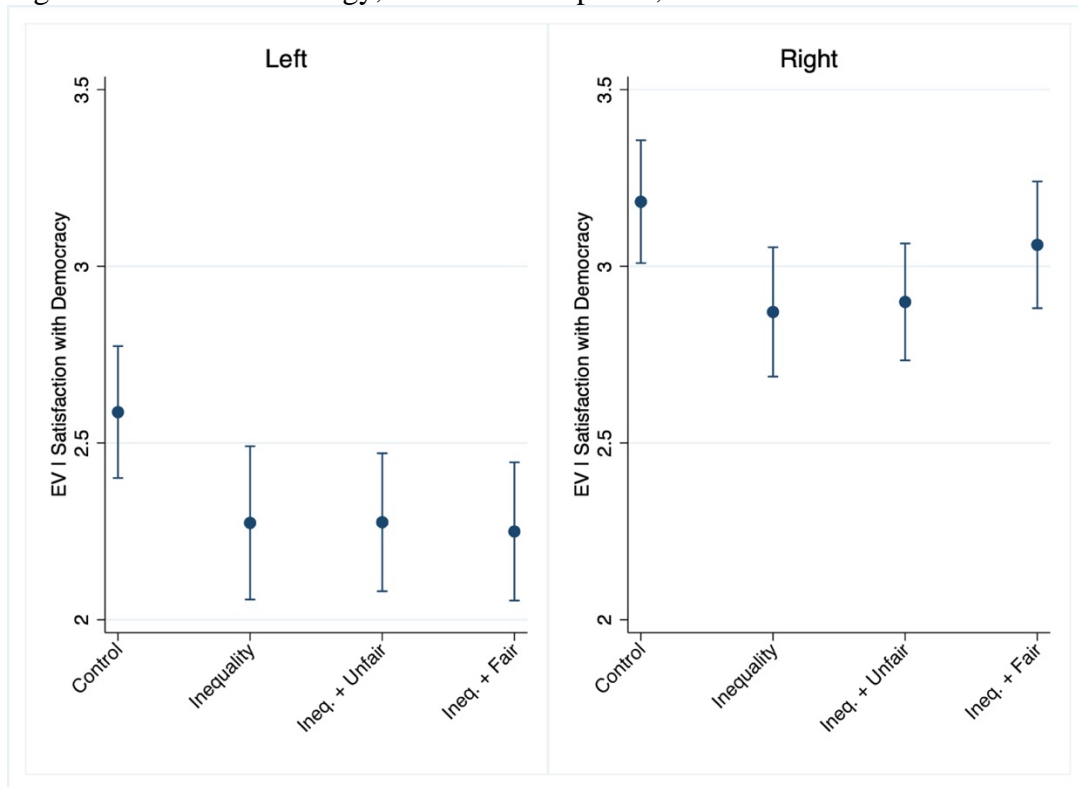
In Chapter 2, I also developed hypotheses that political ideology should condition the relationship between inequality, fairness perceptions, and political support. Insights from literature on the moral foundations of political ideology suggest that those on the political left should be more moralize outcomes they perceive as harmful or unfair to others (e.g., Graham et al 2009; 2012). Conversely, research on political ideology and system justification (Jost et al. 2003; Jost, Federico, and Napier 2009) suggests that those on the right should be more likely to rely on system legitimizing narratives that support the economic status quo, such as stereotypes that the poor are lazy and undeserving or economic wellbeing is a sign of hard work rather than luck. The fairness frames that I used in Treatments 2 and 3 were designed to tap these two different ideas. In Treatment 2, which should resonate more with people on the political left compared to the right, inequality is framed as *unfair* because it diminishes equality of opportunity and harms children, one of the most vulnerable groups in society. In Treatment 3, inequality is framed as *fair* because it rewards hardworking individuals and creates opportunities for economic success. I expect such narratives will appeal more to individuals on the right of the political spectrum compared to the left.

To investigate heterogeneous effects by political ideology, I turn to regression analysis. I create a dummy variable for each experimental treatment group, and then use these dummy variables (excluding the control group dummy as the reference category), to predict satisfaction with democracy. I then interact each of the treatment dummy variables with participants' political ideology. Additionally, I include controls for subjective social class, sex, political interest, preference for state involvement in the

economy, and education. Although including control variables can reduce the precision of my estimated treatment effects, Robinson and Jewell (1991) recommend this approach to increase the efficiency of hypothesis tests. Table C4, Models 1 and 2 in the appendix shows the results of the regression analysis for participants who answered the manipulation check question correctly. None of the coefficients on the interactions between treatment and ideology is significant in Table C4, but I nevertheless follow the advice of Brambor, Clark, and Golder (2006) and present the interactions graphically.

The point estimates in Figure 4.2 are expected values of the *satisfaction with democracy* dependent variable based on the OLS regression results in Appendix Table A.4.4. Overlapping bars around the point estimates indicate that predicted probabilities

Figure 4.2 Political Ideology, Fairness Perceptions, and Predicted Satisfaction



Note: Point estimated are predicted values from the OLS model in Appendix Table C4. Overlapping bars around point estimates indicate that predicted values are not significantly different at the 95% confidence level (Julious 2004).

are not significantly different at the 95 percent confidence level.²² Point estimates on the left are for participants who indicated that their political ideology is less than 5 on a 0 to 10 left-right scale. Estimates on the right are for participants who indicated an ideological placement greater than 5. Although the predicted values of the DV are not significantly different ($p < .05$) within each respective panel (most likely due to the small number of observations in each cell after participants who answered the manipulation check incorrectly are excluded from the analysis), some important patterns emerge that nonetheless are consistent with *Hypothesis 3*. When individuals on the left of the political spectrum are presented with information about inequality, their predicted satisfaction with democracy drops by .31 points compared to the control group (difference significant at $p = .12$). This drop in predicted satisfaction is almost the same whether inequality is framed as an unfair or fair outcome (differences from control are significant $p < .10$ for Treatment 2 and Treatment 3).²³

Although it is possible that that lack of statistically significant differences between predicted values in Figure 4.2 is the result of a small number of observations in each treatment-by-ideology group, it is also important to consider the possibility that left-right political ideology in Argentina does not function the same way as it does in the United States. Much of the literature I draw on in Chapter 2 to develop *Hypothesis 3* is

²² As Julious (2004) explains, overlapping 84% confidence intervals indicate that we cannot reject the null hypothesis of two predicted values being the same at the 95% confidence level.

²³ Tests of significantly different mean predicted values were conducted using the “margins contrast” commands in Stata 15.1.

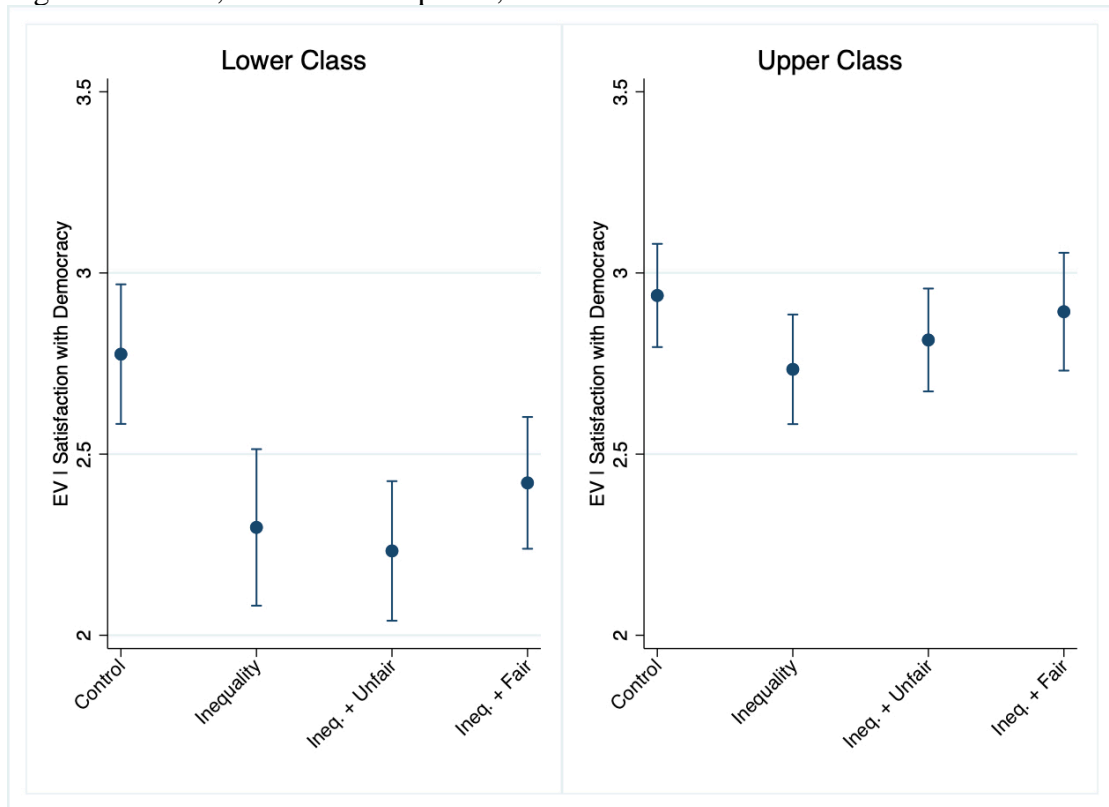
based on research in the United States, where left-right semantics are more stable than they are in many Latin American countries (Zechmeister 2006; 2015). Nevertheless, results from a survey experiment in United States, discussed in the next section, exhibit a similar overall pattern for heterogeneous treatments effects by political ideology, with statistically significant differences between predicted values.

4.2.3 Satisfaction with Democracy, Heterogeneous Treatment Effects by Class

In addition to political ideology, I also hypothesize that class-status should condition the relationship between inequality, fairness perceptions, and political support. In Chapter 2, I argue that upper-class individuals should be more likely to draw on system legitimizing narratives to justify economic inequality, and that even when upper-class individuals perceive distributive unfairness, they should still be less likely than lower-class individuals to express political dissatisfaction as a result. To test for heterogeneous treatment effects, I turn again to regression analysis. As before, I estimate an OLS regression model in which I use dummy variables for each experimental group (excluding the control group as the reference category) to predict satisfaction with democracy. I then interact each of these dummy variables with respondents' subjective social class, and include controls for political ideology, sex, political interest, and education. Models 3 and 4 in Appendix Table C4 show the results from the regression models that I used to generate and plot predicted democratic satisfaction for lower-class and upper-class individuals in each of the experimental groups.

For lower-class individuals (subjective social class < 3, or about 42 percent of respondents), predicted satisfaction is significantly lower compared to the control in each treatment mentioning inequality, regardless of whether inequality is framed as unfair or

Figure 4.3 Class, Fairness Perceptions, and Predicted Satisfaction



Note: Point estimates are predicted values from the OLS model in Appendix Table C4. Overlapping bars around point estimates indicate that predicted values are not significantly different at the 95% confidence level (Julious 2004).

fair. When just told that inequality is increasing, lower-class participants' predicted satisfaction drops by .49 points compared to the control (difference $p < .05$). When told that inequality is increasing and that this represents an unfair outcome, predicted satisfaction drops by .54 points compared to the control (difference $p < .01$). When given the opportunity to perceive inequality as a fair distributive outcome, lower-class participants' predicted satisfaction rebounds a bit, but is still .35 points lower than the control (difference $p = .06$). For middle and upper-class individuals (subjective social class ≥ 3 , or approximately 58% of respondents), information about inequality, framed as either an unfair or fair distributive outcome, has no discernable effect on predicted

satisfaction. As the right panel in Figure 4.3 illustrates, the none of the differences between predicted satisfaction in the control group and Treatment 1 (.20 decrease), Treatment 2 (.12 decrease), and Treatment 3 (.04 decrease) are significant at conventional levels.

These results are consistent with my expectation that upper-class individuals should be less likely to perceive the income distribution as unfair. And, while I did not find support for *Hypothesis 2* – that the effect of perceived distributive unfairness will be weaker among upper-class than lower-class individuals – in my cross-national analysis, the results from this survey do lend support to this hypothesis. Although I observe a drop in predicted satisfaction when all participants are presented with information about inequality and distributive unfairness, these differences are much larger (and only significant for) the lower-class individuals in the sample.

4.3 Results from a Survey Experiment in the United States

In the next two sections, I supplement my experimental results from Argentina with results of a similar survey experiment that I previously fielded in Mexico and the United States. The setup of this experiment was the same as in Argentina, with a control group and three treatments; however, the wording of vignettes was slightly different in the prior experiments. See Appendix 3 for the exact wording of each treatment from the 2017 U.S. experiment (in English) and the 2018 Mexico experiment (in Spanish). Also, although the post-treatment question in the Argentina experiment was about satisfaction with democracy, the U.S. and Mexico experiments ask about trust in government. While this means that results from these three experiments are not directly comparable, recall

from the cross-national analysis that when it comes to the relationship between inequality, perceived distributive unfairness, and political support, results were remarkable similar whether using trust in government or satisfaction with democracy as a dependent variable.

In March 2017, I administered a survey experiment to roughly 1,500 U.S. participants using Amazon’s Mechanical Turk (hereafter referred to as MTurk) platform. MTurk samples are increasingly used in the social sciences and they are shown to be just as (if not more) representative than other internet-based survey platforms (Buhrmester, Kwang, and Gosling 2011), and have been used to replicate a number of well-known political science experiments (Berinsky, Huber, and Lenz 2012).

Table 4.2 Trust in Government, Average Treatment Effects, U.S Experiment

Control Group: Only information about the economy (EI)		
Trust=2.38 N=355		
Treatment 1: EI+ Inequality	Treatment 2: EI + Inequality + Unfair	Treatment 3: EI + Inequality + Fair
Trust=2.21 Difference: -.17** N=350	Trust=2.21 Difference: -.17** N=361	Trust=2.29 Difference: -.09 N=346

Note: **p<.01, *p<.05. Two-tailed tests of significance. DV: 1-5, 5 = “Always” trust
T-tests represent a series of comparisons between the control group and each of the treatment groups. On average, individuals report significantly lower levels of trust in government (compared to the control group) when told that economic inequality is increasing (and that this is an unfair outcome). However, when told that inequality represents a “fair” outcome, average levels of trust are indistinguishable from those in the control group, who only receive information about the economic recovery.

Table 4.2 shows the average effect for each of the three treatments, compared to the control. On average, people expressed lower levels of trust in government when they perceive high inequality, that is, they attribute blame for inequality to the government.

These results are consistent with my main theoretical argument that perceived distributive

unfairness undermines support for the political system. Compared to people who are only told that inequality is increasing (Treatment 1), providing additional information about unfairness does not diminish political support. While this may appear counterintuitive, it is in line with my theoretical expectation that perceptions of distributive unfairness are causal factors linking inequality to political support. That is to say, the lower levels of government trust are the result of people perceiving distributive unfairness. High levels of inequality represent a system in which unfair government policies benefit a small group of wealthy citizens at the expense of everyone else. The results from this survey experiment are consistent with themes that emerged from qualitative survey data I collected in the US:

“[The cause of inequality is an] unfair income distribution. Programs that help the disadvantaged and the poor being cut to save money and lower taxes, which disproportionately helps the wealthy. Fewer and fewer programs being offered to help the poor.”

“The government not regulating things properly and taxing people unfairly.”

“Unfair wages matching current inflation. Greedy businessmen who cut corners by reducing employee benefits and pay. Rich people not paying their fair share of taxes.”

As in the Argentina experiment, providing the extra information in Treatment 2 does not offer participants any new or conflicting information. However, telling people that rising inequality is *fair* does have an additional effect on political support. People receiving Treatment 3 expressed slightly lower levels of trust in government compared to the control group, but the difference is not statistically significant ($p=.18$). Thus, on

average, when people are given identical information about economic performance and rising inequality, political support does not suffer nearly as much when people are told that inequality represents a fair distributive outcome.

The fact that I observe political support rising when individuals are offered an opportunity to perceive economic inequality as fair further supports the notion that fairness perceptions are key factors linking high inequality to political dissatisfaction, as well as research showing that individuals often rely on system justifying narratives when they encounter information about inequality and distributive unfairness (Cassese and Holman 2018; Jost et al. 2003; Kay and Jost 2003; Tyler 2006). Qualitative survey data from the US again helps to contextualize this finding. Responses such as the following appeared time and again in response to my open-ended question about the causes of economic inequality in the United States:

“Poor people do not do anything to try and get their children out of poverty. (some) Americans are lazy and believe that they can get by without applying themselves.”

“Looking at it from the poor side of people, I think that these poor in our society are lazy and complain a lot. They want to be spoon fed and blame everything on everyone e.g., government, years of slavery, lack of jobs etc. This is what most poor people think and believe. I think if they actually put their mind to it, they could pull themselves out of poverty without complaining or blaming anyone. That said, some of the rich are taking advantage of the poor in society and pinning them down by not paying them well enough even when they publicly announce the millions their companies make. I think the gap is so huge because the rich have become so greedy and the poor have refused to rise up and get themselves out of their predicament. It's really that simple. Thank you.”

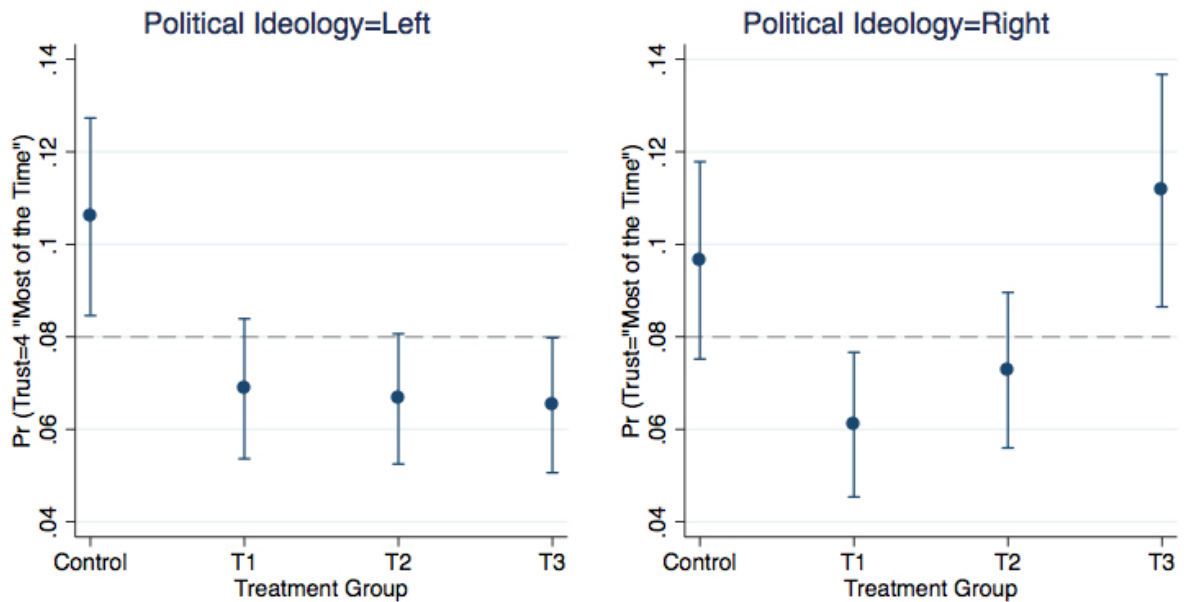
These individuals may well recognize that inequality exists in society, and they recognize that it can have negative consequences. However, human nature is largely to blame for

growing levels of inequality. The government is not to blame for inequality, except to the extent that it rewards laziness. If people would simply work harder, they could create more economic opportunities for their children and themselves.

Although the results in Table 4.2 are informative, I am also interested in heterogeneous treatment effects by political ideology (*Hypothesis 3*). As before, I estimate baseline model and an interactive models predicting trust in government (see Appendix Table C5). In each model, I include a dummy variable to indicate whether or not an individual received each treatment (excluding the control group as the reference category). I also include a measure for political ideology (coded 1-5; 5 = “Very Conservative”), and I control for class self-identification, education, sex (1 = “Female”), race (1= “White”; 0 = “Not White”), political interest, and personal economic situation (1-5; 5 = “Much worse than a year ago”).

In order to investigate the possibility of heterogeneous treatment effects, I interact each of the experimental treatment groups with the political ideology measure. I then use the results from the interactive model to estimate a series of predicted probabilities, given different combinations of experimental treatments and political ideology. I calculate and plot a series of predicted probabilities in Figure 4.4 to aid in the substantive interpretation of the heterogeneous treatment effects. Since so few individuals indicated that they can “always” trust the government, regardless of treatment group, I calculate and plot the probability of saying trust “most of the time” (response category 4) in Figure 4.4. Bars around the point estimates indicate whether differences between predicted probabilities are significant at the 95 percent level.

Figure 4.4 Heterogeneous Treatment Effects by Political Ideology



Note: Point estimates represent the predicted probability that an individual will indicate trust in government “most of the time” for individuals on the political left and right. Overlapping bars indicate that predicted probabilities are not significantly different at the 95% CI (Julious 2004).

The first thing to notice in Figure 4.4 is that those on the left and on the right respond similarly to Treatment 1. When told that inequality in the United States is rising, participants expressed significantly lower levels of trust compared to those in the control group. Yet, important differences arise regarding the treatments that mention fairness. Those on the left receiving Treatment 3 expressed significantly lower levels of trust, compared to those in the respective control group. For those on the right, however, individuals receiving the third treatment (inequality + fair outcome) expressed levels of trust that are indistinguishable from the control, and significantly higher than individuals receiving the first treatment (inequality information only). For individuals on the right receiving Treatment 1, their predicted probability of saying they trust the government “most of the time” is only .06, compared to .11 for those receiving Treatment 3.

Although I observe political support rising, on average, when people are given the opportunity to perceive economic inequality as fair, this finding appears to be driven by individuals on the right of the political spectrum. Recall, I theorized that conservatives, or those on the political right, should be the most likely to rely on system justifying ideologies and stereotypes in order to come to terms with objectively high levels of inequality. Indeed, these results suggest that individuals on the right are more likely to rely on legitimizing ideologies such as the “procedural fairness of the markets” (Tyler 2006) when forming their perceptions of distributive fairness and subsequent evaluations of political support. The results here also reinforce the finding from Chapter 3 and *Hypothesis 3* that perceptions of distributive unfairness have *less* of an impact on political support for those on the right, compared to those on the left.

4.4 Results from a Survey Experiment in Mexico

In February 2018, I administered a survey with embedded experimental manipulations, in Spanish, to roughly 300 undergraduate students at a large university in Mexico City. As with the U.S. experiment, the setup here consisted of a control and three treatments. The exact wording of each vignette can be found in Appendix 2.

Table 4.3 shows the average effect for each of the three treatments, compared to the control for my Mexico survey experiment. On average, participants expressed lower levels of trust in government when they are told that inequality in Mexico is increasing (Treatment 1) and that this represents an unfair distributive outcome (Treatment 2). These results lend additional support for *Hypothesis 1*. Moreover, compared to participants who are only told that inequality in Mexico is increasing (Treatment 1),

providing additional information about distributive unfairness does not significantly diminish political support further.

Table 4.3 Average Treatment Effects, Mexico Distributive Fairness Experiment

Control Group		
ATE=2.00		
N=57		
Treatment 1	Treatment 2	Treatment 3
Inequality Information	Inequality Information + Unfair	Inequality Information + Fair
ATE=1.77	ATE=1.74	ATE=1.97
N=78	N=72	N=61
Difference= -.23*	Difference= -.26*	Difference= -.03

Note: *p<.05, two-tailed t-tests with unequal variance comparing each treatment to the control group. When presented with information about increasing inequality and/or distributive unfairness, participants indicate significantly lower levels of trust in government compared to individuals who only received information about the economy.

This finding supports my theory that perceptions of distributive unfairness are the causal mechanisms linking economic inequality to political support. That is, lower levels of trust in government, in a context of rising inequality, are the result of people perceiving distributive unfairness, and providing the extra information in Treatment 2 does not offer participants any new or conflicting information. Yet, telling participants that rising inequality in Mexico represents a *fair* distributive outcome does affect political support differently, compared to only telling people that inequality is on the rise. In fact, participants receiving Treatment 3 expressed levels of trust in government that were nearly identical to participants in the control group who received no information about inequality. Stated differently, on average, when people are given identical information about the economy and income inequality, political support does not suffer when rising inequality is framed as a fair distributive outcome. The fact that I observe political trust rising when individuals are offered an opportunity to perceive economic inequality as *fair*

further supports the notion that perceptions of distributive unfairness are important causal factors linking high inequality to political dissatisfaction.

Turning one final time to my hypothesis about the conditioning effect of political ideology, Table 4.4 present the average treatment effects for each treatment and control group, broken down by ideological subsamples. As in the Argentina survey, I measure political ideology using the same 0 to 10 left-right scale. For this analysis, I classify participants who placed themselves between 0 and 4 on the scale as “left-leaning,” and between 6 and 10 as “right-leaning.” Turning first to the left-leaning participants in the top of Table 4.4, I show that the average treatment effects are all in a similar direction as those for the entire sample. Participants receiving Treatments 1 and 2 all express significantly lower levels of trust in government, compared to the control. Participants receiving Treatment 3 expressed slightly lower levels of trust compared to the control, but the difference is not statistically significant ($p < .05$). Although the difference between treatments and the control for those on the left are all in the same direction, compared to the full sample, the negative effect of perceived distributive unfairness is much stronger for left-leaning respondents, as evident by the larger magnitude of the effect size (-.34 and -.43 for left-respondents compared to -.23 and -.26 for the full sample).

Turning to right-leaning participants on the bottom of Table 4.4, I show a number of important differences compared to left-leaning participants. First, the magnitude of the effect sizes for each Treatments 1 and 2 are much smaller than they are for those on the left, or for the sample as a whole. Indeed, the differences between Treatments 1 and 2 are statistically indistinguishable from the control. Although any statistically significant results are difficult to detect with such a small sample size, power analysis indicates that I

would need roughly 1,100 participants in each treatment group (total N=4,400) to observe the even largest effect size as significant.

Table 4.4 Average Treatment Effects by Political Ideology, Mexico Experiment

Left-Leaning Participants (Ideology=0-4)		
Control Group ATE=1.97 N=35		
Treatment 1 Inequality Information ATE=1.63 N=44 Difference= -.34*	Treatment 2 Inequality Information + Unfair ATE=1.54 N=37 Difference= -.43*	Treatment 3 Inequality Information+ Fair ATE=1.75 N=28 Difference= -.19
Right-Leaning Participants (Ideology=6-10)		
Control Group ATE=2.08 N=12		
Treatment 1 Inequality Information ATE=2.05 N=19 Difference= -.03	Treatment 2 Inequality Information + Unfair ATE=2.00 N=17 Difference= -.08	Treatment 3 Inequality Information+ Fair ATE=2.18 N=16 Difference= .10

*p<.05, two-tailed t-tests with unequal variance comparing each treatment to the control group. The panel on the top shows average treatment effects for the left-leaning (ideology=0-4) subsample. Average treatment effects for the right-leaning (ideology=6-10) subsample are on the bottom.

The second thing to notice for right-leaning participants is that the average treatment effect for Treatment 3, where inequality is framed as a *fair* distributive outcome, is actually larger compared to the control group. Again, although it is difficult to detect statistically significant differences with such small samples, I also observe a similar effect among conservative respondents in the U.S. version of this survey, with a much larger sample size. Give the same finding in the U.S. and Argentina, I am more confident that the results for my right-leaning participants in the Mexico sample are not

the result of chance. Together, these findings lend support to *Hypothesis 3*, and they bolster the finding from my cross-national analysis that the effect of perceived distributive unfairness on trust is stronger for those on the left than those on the right. Moreover, the results from the right-leaning subsample suggest that, consistent with my theory, those on the right are more likely to rely on legitimizing ideologies such as the “procedural fairness of the free market” (Tyler 2006) when forming their perceptions of distributive fairness and subsequent evaluations of political support, and they reinforce the finding from Chapter 3 (H3) that perceptions of distributive unfairness have *less* of an impact on political support for those on the right, compared to those on the left.

4.5 Discussion and Conclusion

In this chapter, I used original survey experiments from Argentina, Mexico, and the United States to isolate the impact of information and inequality and distributive (un)fairness on support for the political system. Results from these survey experiments demonstrate that when inequality is framed as an unfair distributive outcome, satisfaction with democracy suffers. Yet, framing economic inequality as a fair distributive outcome mitigates its negative impact on democratic satisfaction. This finding is consistent with my main theoretical argument in Chapter 2, as well as with the cross-national relationship highlighted in Chapter 3, that perceptions of distributive unfairness are negatively and significantly associated with support for the political system.

Results from these survey experiments also reinforce my theoretical argument that economic inequality and fairness perceptions impact political support differently depending on individuals’ political ideology and class status. Turning first to

individuals' subjective social class, results from the regression analyses reveal that the negative impact of inequality and perceived distributive unfairness is most acute among lower-class individuals. Consistent with *Hypothesis 2*, however, information about economic inequality and distributive unfairness has a negligible impact on democratic satisfaction among individuals in the upper strata of society.

With regard to political ideology, the negative effect of information about inequality on satisfaction with democracy was larger for those on the political left compared to the right. And moreover, left-leaning individuals were not swayed by attempts to frame inequality as a fair distributive outcome. When told that inequality is increasing, regardless of whether framed as an unfair or fair distributive outcome, left-leaning individuals' satisfaction with democracy declines by about 13 percent. For individuals on the political right, however, information about inequality and distributive unfairness have a more muted effect on satisfaction with democracy. And, when given the opportunity to view inequality as a fair distributive outcome, right-leaning individuals express levels of democratic satisfaction that are comparable to the control condition that does not mention inequality at all. Taken together, these findings are consistent with *Hypothesis 3*: The negative relationship between perceived distributive unfairness and political support will be weakest among right-leaning individuals.

The fact that I observed *stronger* heterogenous treatment effects by political ideology in the United States than in Argentina does suggest that left-right ideological placement may work differently in Argentina compared to the U.S. Recall in Chapter 2 that I drew on three strands of literature to develop my hypothesis about the conditioning role of political ideology (H3): moral foundations of political ideology, economic

discourse about the role of the state in the economy, and system justification. Although survey data presented in Chapter 1 suggests that citizens in Argentina overwhelmingly believe the state should enact firm policies to reduce inequality, system justifying ideologies about inequality may not map onto left-right semantics in Argentina as well as they do in the United States.

My aim with the experiments in this chapter was to hold information about inequality constant, within the context of single-country studies, so that I could isolate the causal impact of fairness perceptions on satisfaction with democracy and trust in government. The average treatment effects from this experiment suggest that perceived distributive unfairness is one mechanism whereby inequality reduces support for the political system. If economic inequality and perceived distributive unfairness were unrelated phenomena that independently impact support for the political system, then we should expect that providing information about both of these things should have a compound negative effect on democratic satisfaction. This is not what we observe. In a context of rising inequality, telling people that the income distribution is unfair does not provide any new or conflicting information, on average. Yet, when individuals are given the opportunity to reevaluate their perceptions of the income distributive and view inequality through a lens of distributive unfairness, their support for the political system rebounds.

CHAPTER 5. AN EXPERIMENT ON INEQUALITY, CORRUPTION, AND POLITICAL SUPPORT

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2, I developed a theoretical argument that in a context of good governance, individuals should be less likely to perceive economic inequality as unfair, and less likely to express political dissatisfaction as a result of perceived distributive unfairness. The cross-national analysis in Chapter 3 was consistent with this argument. When looking across Latin America, the negative relationship between perceived distributive unfairness and different indicators of political support is weakest in a context of good governance. In other words, in a context of good governance – as indicated by low levels of corruption – individuals may well perceive their country's income distribution to be unfair, but the presence of good governance mitigates the negative relationship between perceived distributive unfairness and support for the political system.

In this chapter, I use an original survey experiment in Argentina to isolate the causal effect of governance quality on the relationship between inequality and support for the political system. This experiment was also embedded in the online survey described at the beginning of Chapter 4. All participants not assigned to take part in the experiment described in the previous chapter were assigned to take part in this experiment. In total, 1,577 participants from the online Netquest panel were assigned to receive one of the treatments in this experiment. After excluding participants who failed a manipulation check question later in the survey, the resulting sample size was $N=624$. As before, the analysis in this chapter is only based on the subsample of participants who answered the

manipulation check question correctly. I include the average treatment effects for the full sample in Appendix Tables D3 to D5.²⁴

My aim in designing the treatments for the present survey experiment was to hold information about economic inequality constant, within the context of a single-country study, and to vary information about two forms of corruption: bribery and theft of public resources. Although the empirical analysis in Chapter 3 employed a broad measure of governance quality that relies on expert perceptions of corruption, corruption can take many forms, including bribery and outright theft (Desierto 2019), and its scope ranges from petty corruption, generally on the part of low-level civil servants, to grand corruption orchestrated by high-level public officials (Bauhr 2017; Graycar and Villa 2011).

In a context of high inequality, there is good reason to expect that corruption, an important indicator of governance quality and procedural justice, shapes citizens' judgments about distributive fairness and their subsequent evaluations of the political system. Corruption-as-theft reduces the overall level of public resources that are necessary to successfully enact pro-egalitarian social welfare programs. And, although corruption-as-bribery does not diminish the total amount of public goods available for redistribution, it challenges societal norms about equality of opportunity: "Even in cases when governments cannot immediately reduce inequality, they can enact policies that offer greater *opportunities* for economic equality" (Rothstein and Uslaner 2005, 47). As an advisor to a National Deputy in Argentina noted, however, "The state is promoting

²⁴ Results discussed in this section do not hold when participants who failed the manipulation check are included in the analysis.

lots of policies and projects to reduce inequality, but resources like houses and money aren't being given to the right people; they're in the wrong hands because of corruption.”²⁵ When programs meant to reduce inequality are not administered impartially, the democratic government is not affording all citizens equal opportunities for economic progress, and hence citizens should be more likely to express political dissatisfaction for what they perceive as an unfair economic distribution.

5.2 Experimental Design

Individuals participating in this survey experiment were randomly assigned to read one of six vignettes. They read that the incidence of [bribery/theft of public resources] in Argentina has [remained the same/increased/decreased] in recent years, and at the same time, the gap between the rich and poor in Argentina continues to grow wider. The exact Spanish wording of each vignette can be found in Appendix Table D2. After presenting participants with one of these six vignettes, I then asked post treatment questions about satisfaction with democracy, trust in government, and perceptions of distributive fairness.

Satisfaction with democracy: With this in mind, how satisfied are you with the functioning of democracy in Argentina? Are you very dissatisfied (coded 1), dissatisfied (2), neither dissatisfied nor satisfied (3), satisfied (4), or very satisfied (5)?

Trust in government: And how much trust do you have in the national government? Do you trust it not at all (coded 1), a little (2), somewhat (3), or a lot (4)?

²⁵ Author interview, June 2018.

Perceptions of distributive unfairness: And how fair do you think the income distribution is in Argentina? Do you believe it's very fair (coded 1), fair (2), unfair (3), or very unfair (4)?

Later in the survey, I asked all participants a manipulation check question: "In a previous question, you read that corruption in Argentina has remained the same (coded 1), increased (2), or decreased (3). As mentioned above, only about 40 percent of participants in this experiment answered the manipulation check question correctly. The results discussed in the following sections are based on this subset of participations Appendix Tables D3 to D5 show the average treatment effects for the full sample. Appendix Tables D1 shows the sample characteristics for the full and reduced samples, as well as each treatment group. Finally, Appendix Tables D6 and D7 show the results from a multinomial logit predicting assignment to each treatment group.

5.3 Results

5.3.1 Inequality, Corruption, and Satisfaction with Democracy

In the next two sections, I use these experimental data to investigate the relationship between economic inequality, governance quality, and support for the political system. Although not a direct test of *Hypothesis 4* – that good governance will mitigate the negative influence of *perceived distributive unfairness* on political support – I take as my starting point in this experiment the assumption that most individuals will perceive increasing inequality as an unfair distributive outcome. Indeed, results from my cross-national analysis In Chapter 3, as well as the survey experiment ion Chapter 4, are consistent with this assumption. If my theoretical argument about inequality, governance

quality, and political support is correct, then an observable implication of this argument is that given the same information about inequality, individuals should be more satisfied with democracy when corruption is decreasing, and less satisfied when corruption is increasing.

Table 5.1 and Figure 5.1 show that average treatment effect, or average response to the post-treatment question about satisfaction with democracy, for each experimental group. Turning first to the participants who read about corruption-as-theft, the average *satisfaction with democracy* response in the control group was 2.65, the same as the baseline group that received no information about corruption or inequality. When individuals read that both inequality and theft of public resources in Argentina have been increasing in recent years, the average *satisfaction* response declines by .27 points to 2.38 (difference significant at $p=.06$ compared to the control).

Table 5.1 Average Treatment Effects, Satisfaction with Democracy

Baseline Satisfaction w/Democracy=2.65		
Theft of Resources		
Same	Increasing	Decreasing
ATE=2.65	ATE=2.38	ATE=3.22
N=93	N=117	N=85
	Diff= -.27*	Diff= .57***
Bribery		
Same	Increasing	Decreasing
ATE=2.39	ATE=2.25	ATE=2.91
N=95	N=139	N=95
	Diff= -.14	Diff=.53***

Note: Two-tailed T-tests comparing the corruption “increasing” and “decreasing” treatments to the “same” treatment, “* $p<.10$, ** $p<.05$, *** $p<.01$.”

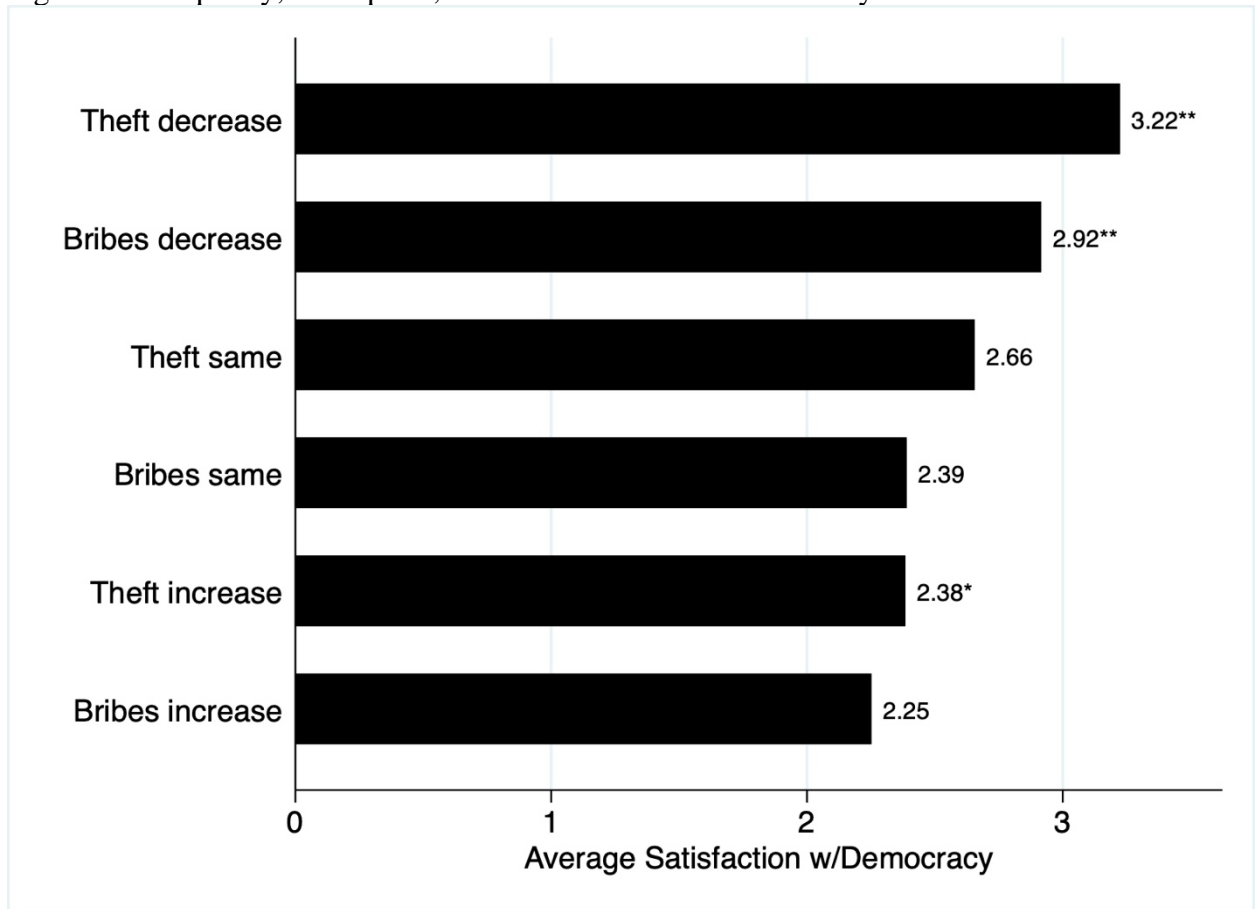
DV: Satisfaction with democracy 1= “Very Dissatisfied” to 5= “Very satisfied”

Given the same information about rising inequality, however, the average response to the question about satisfaction with democracy *increases* compared to the

baseline and the control by .57 points to 3.22. The difference between the “theft decreasing” and “theft increasing” experimental groups is perhaps even more impressive. Given the same information about increasing inequality, which the cross-national results in Chapter 3 consistently show is associated with perceived distributive unfairness, participants’ satisfaction with the functioning of democracy is .85 points higher (35 percent high) when they read that corruption is decreasing rather than increasing. This finding is consistent with my theoretical expectations about how governance quality mitigates the negative influence of perceived distributive unfairness on support for the political system. And moreover, this finding has important implications for democratic stability and consolidation, which I discuss later.

Turning next to the corruption-as-bribery treatments, Table 5.1 shows a similar pattern to the corruption-as-theft groups. Compared to the control group who read that incidence of bribery have remained unchanged in recent years at the same time that inequality is increasing, participants who read that both bribery and inequality were on the rise indicated an average level of satisfaction with democracy equal to 2.25, or slightly higher than “dissatisfied.” The difference in average treatment effects between the control group and the “bribery increasing” group (-.14), however, is not significantly different from 0 at conventional levels of significance ($p=.31$). A post-experiment power analysis reveals that to observe this difference as statistically significant ($p<.05$), I would have needed nearly 900 respondents per experimental group, well above the total number in either the reduced sample of participants who answered the manipulation check question correctly, or in the full sample which averaged about 250 respondents per experimental group.

Figure 5.1 Inequality, Corruption, and Satisfaction with Democracy



Note: * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, ATE is different from the respective “corruption same” group.
 DV: How satisfied are you with the way democracy functions? 1=V. dissatisfied, 5=V. satisfied.

The difference in average treatment effects between the control group and the group reading that inequality is increasing but incidences of bribery are declining, however, is statistically significant ($p < .01$) and in the expected direction. Indeed, this .53-point increase in satisfaction with democracy is quite similar to that observed among the corruption-as-theft participants. Also, compared to participants who read that both bribery and inequality are increasing, participants who received the same information about inequality but read that bribery is decreasing, satisfaction with democracy is .66 points higher, a roughly 30 percent and statistically significant ($p < .01$) increase. And again, these results consistent with my theoretical expectation that good governance (as

evidenced by declining levels of corruption) will mitigate the negative impact of inequality and perceived distributive unfairness on support for the political system.

Finally, comparing the differences between the two “corruption decreasing” and “corruption increasing” treatment effects suggests that when it comes to the relationship between inequality and satisfaction with democracy, theft of public resources has a stronger moderating effect on the relationship than bribery. As noted above, bribery challenges societal norms about the equality of opportunity, but theft of public resources directly hinders governments’ ability to enact pro-egalitarian reforms. Indeed, the increase in satisfaction with democracy that results from moving from the respective “corruption increasing” to the “corruption decreasing” treatment groups is .19 points greater for the participants who read about theft of public resources compared to those who read about bribery (differences significant $p < .01$).

5.3.2 Inequality, Corruption, and Trust in Government

In addition to satisfaction with democracy, I also asked participants in this experiment a post-treatment question about trust in government. Table 5.2 and Figure 5.2 show the average treatment effects for participants in each experimental group. The patterns in average treatment effects for the *trust in government* question are similar to those for *satisfaction* with democracy, although the differences are not directly comparable because the trust question uses a 4-point response scale, whereas the satisfaction question uses a 5-point scale. Nevertheless, the pattern displayed in Table 5.2 and Figure 5.2 is again consistent with my argument that good governance mitigates the negative influence of inequality and perceived distributive unfairness on support for the political system.

Table 5.2 Average Treatment Effects, Trust in Government

Theft of Resources		
Same	Increasing	Decreasing
ATE=2.16	ATE=1.62	ATE=3.13
N=93	N=117	N=85
	Diff= -.54***	Diff= .97***
Bribery		
Same	Increasing	Decreasing
ATE=2.03	ATE=1.84	ATE=2.67
N=95	N=139	N=95
	Diff= -.18	Diff= .64***

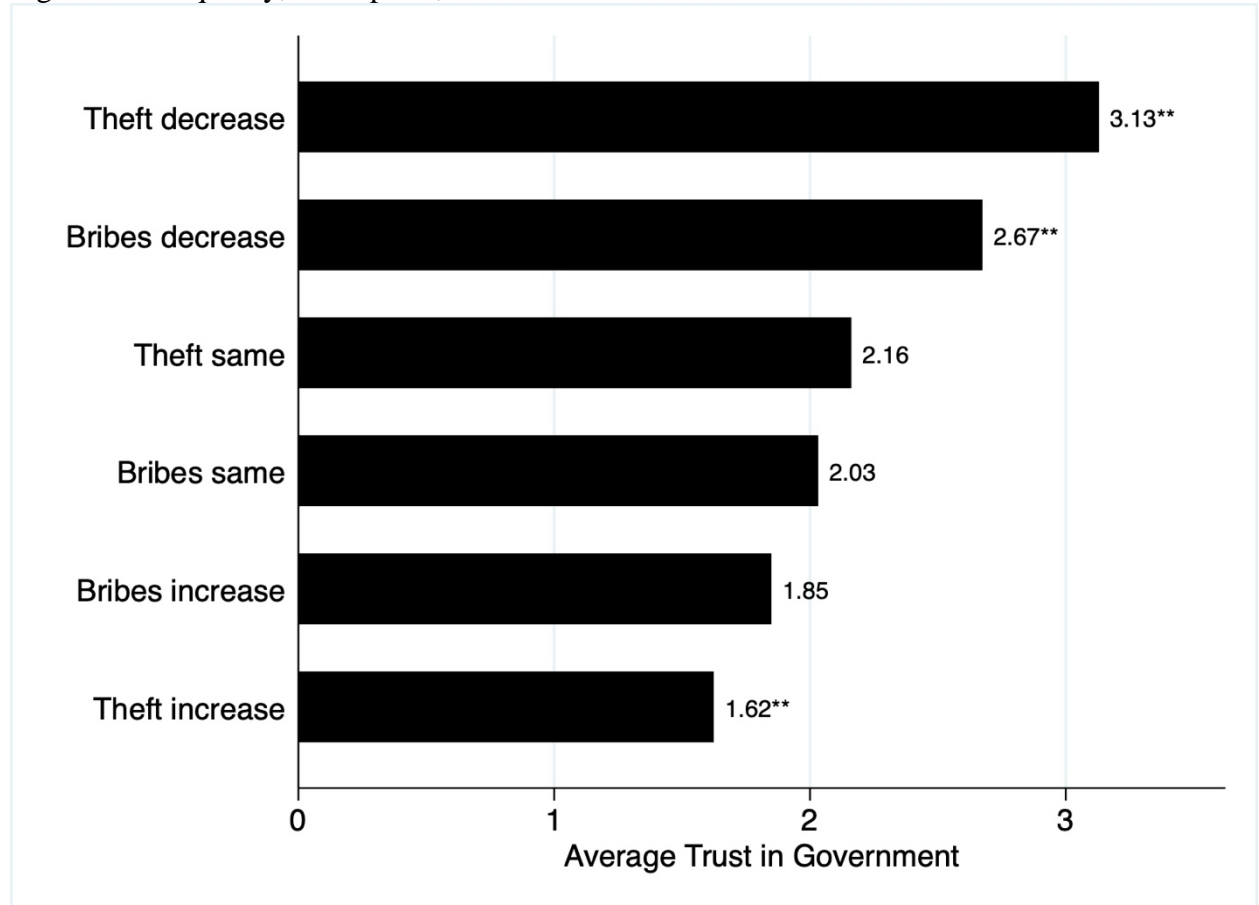
Note: Note: Two-tailed T-tests comparing the corruption “increasing” and “decreasing” treatments to the “same” treatment, “*p<.10, **p<.05, ***p<.01.

DV: Trust in government 1= “none” to 4= “a lot”

Turning first to the top panel in Table 5.2, when individuals read that theft of public resources in Argentina has remained unchanged in recent years at the same time that inequality is increasing, the average response to the question, “How much do you trust the National Government” was 2.16 on a 1 to 4 scale, or slightly above “a little.” When participants read that both corruption-as-theft and economic inequality have been increasing in recent years, their average level of trust in government declines .54 points to 1.62 (difference from control is significant $p<.01$), or between “none” and “a little” trust. When told that inequality is increasing but theft of resources is declining, the average response to the trust in government question, compared to the control, increases nearly one full scale point (difference from control is significant $p<.01$) to 3.13, between “some” and “a lot” of trust. Comparing the “theft increasing” to the “theft decreasing” average responses, the differences are even more striking. Given the same exact information and increasing inequality, the average trust in government response is more than 1.5 points – on a 4-point scale – when participants learn that corruption is decreasing compared to when it is increasing. This is again consistent with my theoretical argument that good

governance should mitigate the negative influence of inequality, and resulting perceptions of distributive unfairness, on political support.

Figure 5.2 Inequality, Corruption, and Trust in Government



Note: * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, ATE is different from the respective “corruption same” group.

The patterns in the bottom panel of Table 5.2 are also similar to the *satisfaction with democracy* results in Table 5.1 and Figure 5.1. When told that inequality is increasing and incidence of bribetaking have remained unchanged in recent years, the average *trust* response is 2.03, or “a little.” When told both inequality and bribery are increasing, trust in government declines to 1.85, although the difference compared to the control is not significant at conventional levels ($p = .11$). The average level of trust in government is 2.67 for participants reading that inequality is increasing but incidences of

bribery are on the decline, compared to 2.03 for those in the control group. This represent a .64 point increase in trust that is significantly different from the control ($p < .01$). And again, the largest differences in average treatment effects is between the “bribery decreasing” and “bribery increasing” groups. Given the same information about rising inequality, the average level of trust in government is .82 points higher ($p < .01$) when participants are told that bribery is decreasing, compared to when they are told bribery is increasing.

5.3.3 Inequality, Corruption, and Perceived Distributive Unfairness

I do not develop explicit hypotheses in Chapter 2 about how economic inequality and governance quality affect the formation of perceptions of distributive unfairness. Nevertheless, a key part of the theoretical argument leading up to *Hypothesis 4*, and an implication of literature on fairness and procedural justice theories (e.g., André and Depauw 2017; Córdova and Layton 2016), is that individuals should draw on multiple sources of information when forming their perceptions of distributive fairness. Thus, good governance should lead people to respond less negatively to inequality in the first place. To assess support for this part of my argument, I also included a post-treatment question about perceptions of the fairness of the income distribution in Argentina. If this part of my theoretical argument is correct, then in a context of rising inequality, individuals should be less likely to say the income distribution is unfair when they are presented with information about good governance, compared to a situation in which governance quality remains unchanged or actually gets worse.

Table 5.3 shows the average treatment effects, or mean response to the post-treatment question about perceived distributive unfairness in Argentina. Recall that this

question is coded such that 1 indicates “very fair” and 4 indicated “very unfair.” The average treatment effects in Table 5.3 are generally consistent with the fairness and procedural justice literature that I draw on in Chapter 2 to develop *Hypothesis 4*, although theft of public resources and bribery clearly influence perceived distributive unfairness differently.

Turning first to the vignettes that provide information about theft of public resources, when told that amount of corruption has remained unchanged in recent years at the same time that inequality is increasing (control), the average response to the question about perceived distributive unfairness is 3.25. (between “unfair” and “very unfair”). When told that both theft of public resources and inequality are increasing, the average response inches closer to “very unfair” by .14 points, although the difference between this mean response and the control is statistically insignificant at conventional levels ($p=.11$). When told that theft of public resources is decreasing, however, participants indicated that the income distribution is .35 points fairer compared to the control group that received similar information about rising inequality ($p<.01$).

Table 5.3 Average Treatment Effects, Perceived Distributive Unfairness

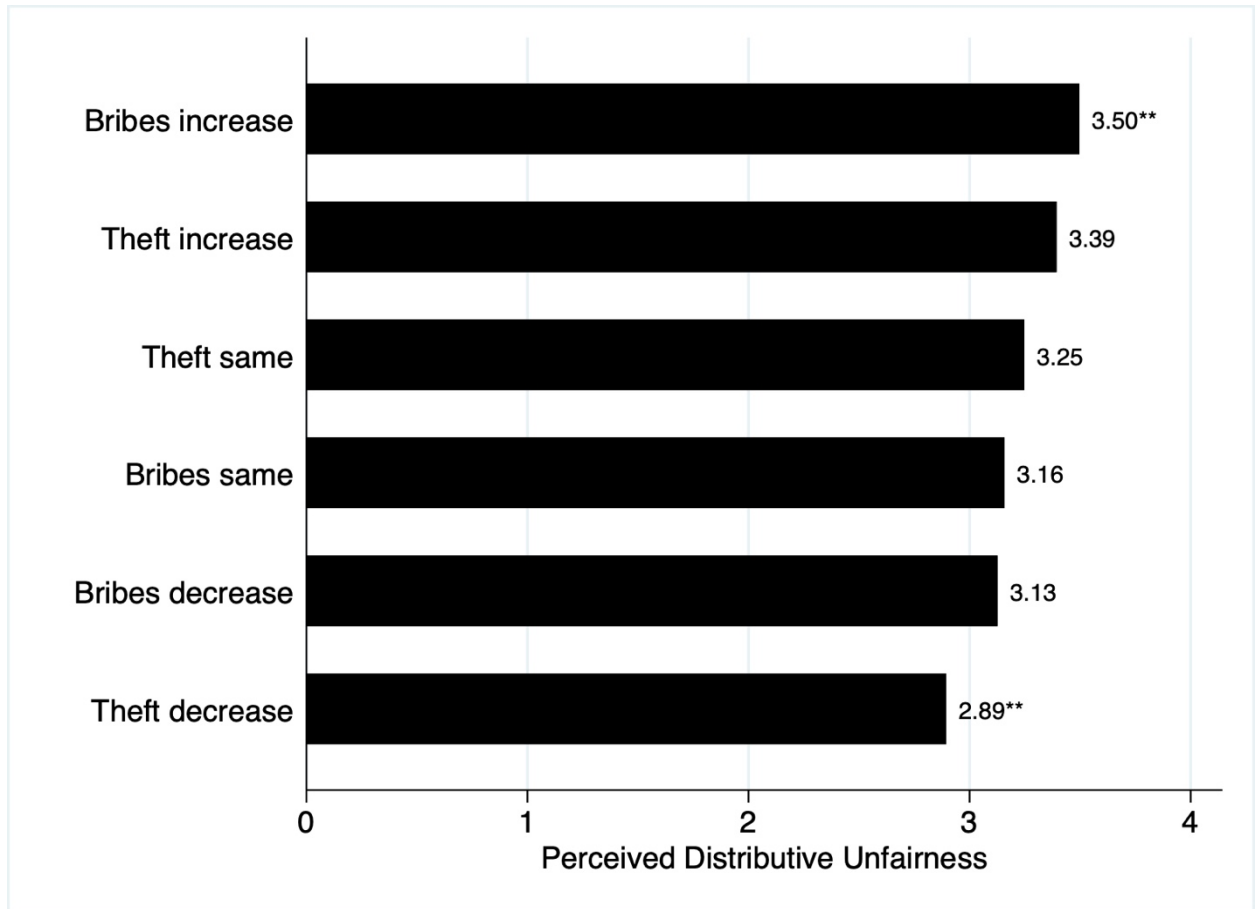
Theft of Resources		
Same	Increasing	Decreasing
ATE=3.25	ATE=3.39	ATE=2.89
N=93	N=117	N=85
	Diff= .14	Diff= -.35***
Bribery		
Same	Increasing	Decreasing
ATE=3.16	ATE=3.50	ATE=3.13
N=95	N=139	N=95
	Diff= .34***	Diff= -.03

Note: Note: Two-tailed T-tests comparing the corruption “increasing” and “decreasing” treatments to the “same” treatment, “* $p<.10$, ** $p<.05$, *** $p<.01$.”
 DV: How fair is the income distribution in Argentina? 1= “very fair” to 4= “very unfair”

Turning next to the bribery vignettes, Table 5.3 show a similar pattern to the theft vignettes. Compared to individuals who are told that inequality is increasing and that incidence of bribery have remained the same in recent years, participants indicate that the income distribution in Argentina is more unfair when told that incidence of bribery are increasing, and that the income distribution is fairer when instance of bribery are declining. Unlike in the “theft of resources” vignettes, however, the significant difference from the control group is for the “bribery” increasing treatment, with these participants indicating that the income distribution is .34 points more unfair compared to the control.

Figure 5.3 shows the average treatment effects from Table 5.3 graphically. The results in Figure 5.3 and Table 5.3 are wholly consistent with prior research on the Fair Process Effect (e.g., Tyler & van der Toorn, 2013; van den Bos, Wilke, Lind, & Vermunt, 1998), which implies that the relationship between inequality and perceived distributive unfairness should be weaker in a context of good governance than one of poor governance. In both sets of experiments, participants are the most likely to say that the income distribution in their country is unfair when inequality and corruption are simultaneously on the increase. Given the same context of rising inequality, however, participants are significantly less likely to say that the income distribution is unfair when corruption is declining, an indication that governance quality is better (i.e., the difference between the corruption increasing and corruption decreasing treatments is significantly different $p < .001$).

Figure 5.3 Inequality, Corruption, and Perceived Distributive Unfairness



Note: * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, ATE is different from the respective “corruption same” group. The difference between each corruption “increasing” and “decreasing” groups is significant ($p < .01$) as well. DV: How fair is the income distribution in Argentina? 1=Very Fair, 4=Very Unfair.

5.4 Discussion Conclusion

In this section, I discussed the results from an original survey experiment in Argentina in which I isolated the effect of corruption – the main indicator of governance quality that I use in this dissertation – on support for the political system. First, I showed that given identical information about rising inequality, individuals are less likely to say the income distribution is unfair when corruption is decreasing, as opposed to increasing or remaining unchanged. Although I did not develop hypotheses about the relationship between inequality and individuals’ perceptions of the income distribution in Chapter 2,

the findings in this survey experiment are consistent with a large body of literature on social justice and fairness theories. In particular, research on the Fair Process Effect (e.g., Tyler & van der Toorn, 2013; van den Bos, Wilke, Lind, & Vermunt, 1998) suggests that governance quality should shape people's expectations about the outcomes they receive and their responses to any distributive unfairness they may experience.

Results from this survey experiment also show that governance quality conditions the relationship between inequality and individuals' support for the political system. Given identical information about rising inequality in Argentina, participants in this experiment expressed higher levels of satisfaction with democracy and trust in government when they read that bribery and the theft of public resources have been on the decline in recent years, compared to those who read that corruption has been increasing or remaining constant.

While this finding is not an exact test of *Hypotheses 4*, that governance quality should mitigate the negative relationship between perceived distributive unfairness and political support, it is largely consistent with my theoretical arguments leading up to this hypothesis. Both cross-national survey data and qualitative data from the U.S. and Argentina support the assumption that most individuals view inequality through a lens of distributive unfairness, and that they attribute blame for this perceived unfair outcome to the government. In a context of good governance, the negative effect of inequality, and by extension perceptions of unfairness, is significantly reduced.

One limitation of this study is that I am not able to assess how different combinations of inequality and governance information affect support for the political system. The results discussion above assumes that the combination of good governance

and decreasing inequality should have the most positive impact on individuals' political evaluations, but I am not actually able to test this part of the argument with my experimental design. Indeed, it is possible that individuals in Argentina care more about corruption than inequality, and that improvements or shortcomings in governance quality outweigh any information about inequality, at least when it comes to satisfaction with democracy and trust in government. Although my theoretical arguments developed in Chapter 2 do not suggest that this should be the case, I cannot assess this part of the argument empirically at the current time.

The empirical results in this chapter advance prior scholarly work on the topic of inequality and political support. Prior research has demonstrated a robust cross-national correlation between economic inequality and satisfaction with democracy (Anderson and Singer 2008) and political trust (Cordova and Layton 2016; Zmerli and Castillo 2015). Results from this survey experiment shed new light on the specific contexts under which inequality can be expected to reduce trust with the political system. That good governance, such as declining levels of corruption, can offset the negative influence of inequality on support for democratic institutions has important implications for both policy and democratic stability more generally in the Americas. I discuss these broader implications in more detail in the final chapter of this dissertation.

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION

Political support, such as satisfaction with democracy and trust in government, is at troubling low levels and has been steadily declining during the last decade in a number of countries throughout the Americas. In Brazil, for instance, recent high-profile corruption scandals coupled with a severe economic recession have left citizens disillusioned with their democratic institutions.²⁶ Conversely, while systematic corruption in Latin America continues to “widen and deepen social fissures, exacerbate inequality, and impede the efficacy of both public and private investment,” recent efforts to crack down on corruption in Argentina have been accompanied by a modest uptick in institutional trust (World Economic Forum 2018, 7). Prior research has linked dissatisfaction and disenchantment with democratic institutions to weak state capacity and poor governance (Anderson and Tverdova 2003; Kumlin and Esaisson 2012; Mainwaring 2006; Weitz-Shapiro 2008), legislative gridlock (Singh and Carlin 2015), and economic inequality (Anderson and Singer 2008). I advance these scholarly lines of inquiry by using a mixed-methods approach to examine the conditions under which inequalities in society translate into political dissatisfaction.

6.1 Summary of the Argument and Main Findings

In Chapter 2 of this dissertation, I developed a theoretical argument that perceptions of distributive unfairness are key factors whereby inequalities in society

²⁶ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/the_americas/in-brazil-nostalgia-grows-for-the-dictatorship--not-the-brutality-but-the-law-and-order/2018/03/14/bc58ded2-1cdd-11e8-98f5-ceecfa8741b6_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.c7fe0436d084

translate into political dissatisfaction. Extreme inequality challenges citizens' normative expectations about the outcomes that democracy is supposed to deliver in practice (Singh and Carlin 2015; Meltzer and Richards 1981). When individuals view inequality as an unfair outcome resulting from the (in)action of democratic government, their political support is likely to suffer. In addition to my expectation that all individuals should be less satisfied with democracy and less likely to trust the government when they perceive high levels of distributive unfairness in society, I also expect that certain groups of individuals – i.e., upper-class citizens and those on the right of the political spectrum – are more likely to “cognitively adjust” to or rationalize inequality (Jost et al. 2003, Tyler 2006), and hence should be less likely to blame the government for any perceived distributive unfairness they experience. Additionally, I developed an argument that governance quality should mitigate the negative influence of perceived distributive unfairness on political support, albeit for different reasons than the individual-level factors that condition this relationship. In a context of good governance, as evidenced by low corruption, for example, citizens are presented with alternative evidence that the democratic process is functioning properly. Individuals may well perceive the income distribution to be unfair, but the presence of good governance should signal to citizens that democracy is nevertheless the most legitimate vehicle for addressing inequality.

To test my expectations, used a mixed-methods approach and leveraged large-N cross-national survey data and original survey experiments. Table 6.1 summarizes the support for each hypothesis offered by each empirical component of the dissertation. In Chapter 3, I used a multilevel analysis of Latinobarometer survey data from 18 Latin American countries between 2011 and 2015 to test the hypotheses I developed in Chapter

2. Consistent with my main theoretical argument and *Hypothesis 1*, I found that perceptions of distributive unfairness were significantly and negatively correlated with both satisfaction with democracy and trust in government.

Table 6.1 Summary of Empirical Support for Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Ch. 3	Ch. 4	Ch. 5
H1: On average, citizens who perceive the distribution of income in their country as unfair will express lower levels of political support than individuals who view the income distribution as fair.	Yes	Yes	
H2: The negative relationship between perceived distributive unfairness and political support will be weakest among upper-class individuals.		Partial	
H3: The negative relationship between perceived distributive unfairness and political support will be weakest among right-leaning individuals.	Partial	Partial	
H4: Good governance will weaken the negative relationship between perceived distributive unfairness and political support.	Yes		Yes

Although I did not find support for my expectation that individuals' class status should condition the relationship between fairness perceptions and political support (H2), I did find partial support for my argument that being on the right of the political spectrum (H3) should weaken the negative influence of perceived distributive unfairness on political support. *Hypothesis 3* was supported to the extent that when it comes to satisfaction with democracy and trust in government, fairness judgments simply matter less for those on the right of the political spectrum compared to the left. That the satisfaction and trust gaps between those who view the income distribution as "fair" compared to "unfair" narrows considerably on the right of the ideological spectrum is

consistent with research on the moral foundations of political ideology, which posits that liberals are more likely than conservatives to moralize outcomes that they perceive as unfair or harmful to others. However, the fact that predicted political support among individuals who perceive the income distribution as “very unfair” is the same across the political spectrum challenges my argument that right-leaning individuals rely on system justifying narratives when making political evaluations about inequality and distributive unfairness, at least in Latin America. Finally, results from my cross-national analysis were wholly consistent with my argument that good governance should mitigate the negative influence of perceived distributive unfairness on support for the political system (H4).

In Chapter 4, I used a original survey experiments in Argentina, Mexico, and the United States to isolate the causal effects of distributive (un)fairness on political support. Given identical information about rising inequality, individuals were much more supportive of the political system when inequality was framed as a fair distributive outcome. When participants were told that rising inequality represents an unfair distributive outcome, their satisfaction with democracy and trust in government declined, but to the same low level as participants who received information about inequality but no unfairness frame. This finding suggests that, consistent with my main theoretical argument, inequality leads to political dissatisfaction because individuals view inequality as an unfair distributive outcome resulting from the inaction of democratic government. Telling individuals that inequality is unfair does not provide them with any new or conflicting information. When using a system-justifying narrative to reframe inequality as a fair outcome, however, political support in the face of inequality rebounds. The

main analysis in Chapter 4 centered around a survey experiment I conducted in Argentina in February 2019. However, the fact that I find similar results across time and in Mexico as well as the United States speaks to the generalizability and external validity of my findings.

In Chapter 5, I turned to a second original survey experiment that I fielded in Argentina to examine how different forms of corruption – the main indicator of governance quality that I use in this dissertation – affect the relationship between inequality and political support. While not a direct test of the hypotheses I developed in Chapter 2, insights from qualitative survey data and the experiment in Chapter 4 lend support to my assumption that when presented with information about rising inequality, most individuals will perceive it to be an unfair distributive outcome. Results from Chapter 5 are consistent with my argument that good governance mitigates the negative influence of inequality and perceived distributive unfairness on support for the political system. Given identical information about rising inequality, participants indicated significantly higher levels of satisfaction with democracy and trust in government when they learn that corruption is decreasing rather than increasing or remaining unchanged. That good governance is able to mitigate the negative influence of distributive injustice on support for the political system has important policy implications for countries in Latin America, where inequality is persistent and higher than any other region in the world.

6.2 Contributions

This dissertation contributes to the literature on inequality and political support in two important ways, and beyond its theoretical and empirical contributions, has a number of broader implications for policy and democratic stability. One important contribution of this dissertation is that I investigate factors giving rise to the frequently documented connection between economic outcomes and political support. Although prior research has demonstrated a robust empirical correlation between economic inequality and support for the political system (e.g., Anderson and Singer 2008; Córdova and Seligson 2010; Córdova and Layton 2016; Krieckhaus et al. 2014; Zmerli and Castillo 2015), this research has yet to fully unpack the psychological mechanisms linking aggregate-level inequality to individual-level evaluations of democracy. In this dissertation, I argue that individuals' perceptions of distributive fairness are key to understanding the previously documented correlation between inequality and political support. Empirically, I use a combination of observational and original experimental research methods to test this theoretical argument.

Another contribution is that I draw upon social justice theories to derive new hypotheses about how people formulate fairness judgments and use these judgments to evaluate democratic governments. Specifically, I apply social psychology research on social justice and fairness theories to the study of political support and shows that citizens rely on information about distributive fairness (i.e., the fairness of economic *outcomes*) as well as noneconomic information about government policies and procedures, when evaluating the political system.

Beyond these theoretical contributions, my findings have a number of broader implications for policy and democratic stability. Given the tenuous levels of political support in countries suffering from high inequality, such as those in Latin America, understanding why inequality reduces political support is key to finding ways to restore trust in government and satisfaction with democracy.

6.3 Broader Implications

Poverty and distributive unfairness are widespread problems that have the potential to undermine not only support for the political system, but also political engagement and participation (Holzner, 2010; Solt, 2008). People care a great deal about fairness, and when they perceive patently unfair outcomes, such as an unfair distribution of wealth or income, they are less likely to be satisfied with their democratic government. On the one hand, this may be troubling for the prospects of democratic consolidation in regions such as the Americas: despite some recent declines in inequality, citizens across Latin America overwhelmingly perceive their countries' income distributions as unfair. As my research shows, high levels of perceived distributive unfairness harm satisfaction with democracy, and thus undermine the widespread democratic "buy-in" that is crucial for democracy to consolidate (Linz & Stepan, 1996).

Yet, my findings also provide some room for optimism, and they speak to broader themes in the literature on governance quality and corruption more generally. By delivering quality governance—for instance, by combatting corruption—political authorities in democracies can effectively offset the negative influence of perceived distributive unfairness on political support, even in a context of high inequality. One way

to effectively combat corruption is to enhance political accountability. A study of local governments in Brazil, for instance, found significantly less corruption in municipalities where mayors were eligible for reelection (Ferraz and Finan 2011). Political authorities can also establish independent oversight organizations, such as audit institutions (Melo, Pereira, and Figueiredo 2009).

Literature on governance quality and gender and politics has also suggested that incorporating more women into governmental office could prove a successful anti-corruption reform. There is a robust and negative correlation between the presence of women in government and corruption (Esarey and Chirillo 2013; Dollar, Fisman, and Gatti 2001; Swamy et al. 2001) that prior research has documented in legislative institutions (Stensöta, Wängnerud, and Svensson 2015) and in democracies with high electoral accountability (Esarey and Schwindt-Bayer 2018). Moreover, women's descriptive representation (Watson and Moreland 2014), as well as formal representation in the form of gender quotas (Schwindt-Bayer 2010), is associated with reduced suspicions of corruption among citizens. These findings are bolstered by more recent research showing women to be less corrupt than men (Bauhr, Charron, & Wängnerud, 2018; Wängnerud 2012), as well as evidence from survey experiments (Barnes, Beaulieu, & Saxton 2018) showing that citizens believe increasing women's presence in government is successful for reducing corruption. Beyond bolstering satisfaction with democracy, low levels of corruption signal to citizens that government is not dominated by elites, that the democratic process is functioning properly, and that policies are being made and administered via fair, impartial, and transparent procedures. In sum, democratic governments and political elites can foster accountability, transparency, and

rule of law. When fair procedures for governing are in place, citizens may still perceive unfair distributive outcomes, but they are more likely to also believe that democracy is the most legitimate vehicle for addressing their country's most pressing concerns. As such, my findings suggest that initiatives aimed at reducing corruption, such as increasing the presence of historically marginalized groups in politics, could help bolster political support in the face of unfair distributive outcomes.

My findings also have important implications for political elites and elite discourse in the Americas. The results in Chapter 4 demonstrate that when framed as a fair distributive outcome, inequality has *less* of a negative impact on political support than when framed as unfair or when individuals are left to make their own fairness judgments about rising inequality. This is not to suggest that if political elites simply tell the masses that rising inequality is justifiable and fair, ordinary citizens will readjust their expectations about democracy. Rather, it suggests that policy makers need to do a better job communicating to citizens what they are doing to try and combat poverty and inequality. When I was speaking with political elites in Argentina, for example, a frequent theme that emerged from my interviews was the ordinary citizens do not trust the legislature because they are not aware what their representatives actually do. As a senator from Buenos Aires Province told me,

“People don't know anything about the legislature. They don't even know what goes on in this building. But, things are getting much better with this government because they are trying to be transparent and communicate both the problems that the country is facing as well as what it's doing to solve them.”²⁷

²⁷ Author interview, Senator for Buenos Aires province (Cambiemos), March 2019.

It is hard for citizens to trust their democratic institutions, such as the legislature, in the face of economic inequality when they view the political class unfavorably and have no idea whether or not their representatives are promoting their policy interests. But, when political elites can credibly signal to ordinary citizens that they are committed to combatting persistent poverty and inequality in society, individuals may still perceive the income distribution to be unfair or even very unfair, yet their political concerns should be allayed when they see their democratic government as the most legitimate vehicle for addressing distributive injustice.

APPENDICES

Appendix A. Chapter 2 Supplementary Analysis

Table A1. System Justifying Attitudes Predict Ideology (0=Left, 10=Right)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Inequality is justified	.12*** (.01)				
People should take responsibility		.06*** (.01)			
Competition is good			.01 (.01)		
Hard work brings success				.02 (.01)	
Wealth accumulation is good					.03** (.01)
Statist economic preference	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.01)
Political Interest	-.01 (.03)	-.02 (.03)	-.02 (.03)	-.02 (.03)	-.02 (.03)
Religiosity	-.07*** (.01)	-.07*** (.01)	-.08*** (.01)	-.07*** (.01)	-.07*** (.01)
Income	.03* (.02)	.03* (.02)	.04** (.02)	.04* (.02)	.04* (.02)
Female	.08 (.06)	.07 (.06)	.05 (.06)	.06 (.06)	.07 (.06)
Age	.00* (.00)	.00* (.00)	.00* (.00)	.00* (.00)	.00* (.00)
Education	-.06*** (.01)	-.06*** (.01)	-.06*** (.01)	-.06*** (.01)	-.06*** (.01)
Support for Democracy	-.19*** (.04)	-.20*** (.04)	-.24*** (.04)	-.22*** (.04)	-.21*** (.04)
<i>Country Fixed Effects</i>					
Brazil	-.32** (.12)	-.22 (.12)	-.32** (.12)	-.28* (.12)	-.31* (.12)
Chile	-.01 (.14)	-.08 (.15)	-.11 (.15)	-.09 (.15)	-.09 (.15)
Ecuador	-.06 (.12)	-.00 (.12)	.00 (.12)	.03 (.12)	.03 (.12)
Mexico	.65*** (.11)	.74*** (.12)	.69*** (.12)	.72*** (.12)	.70*** (.12)
Peru	-.05	.06	.06	.08	.06

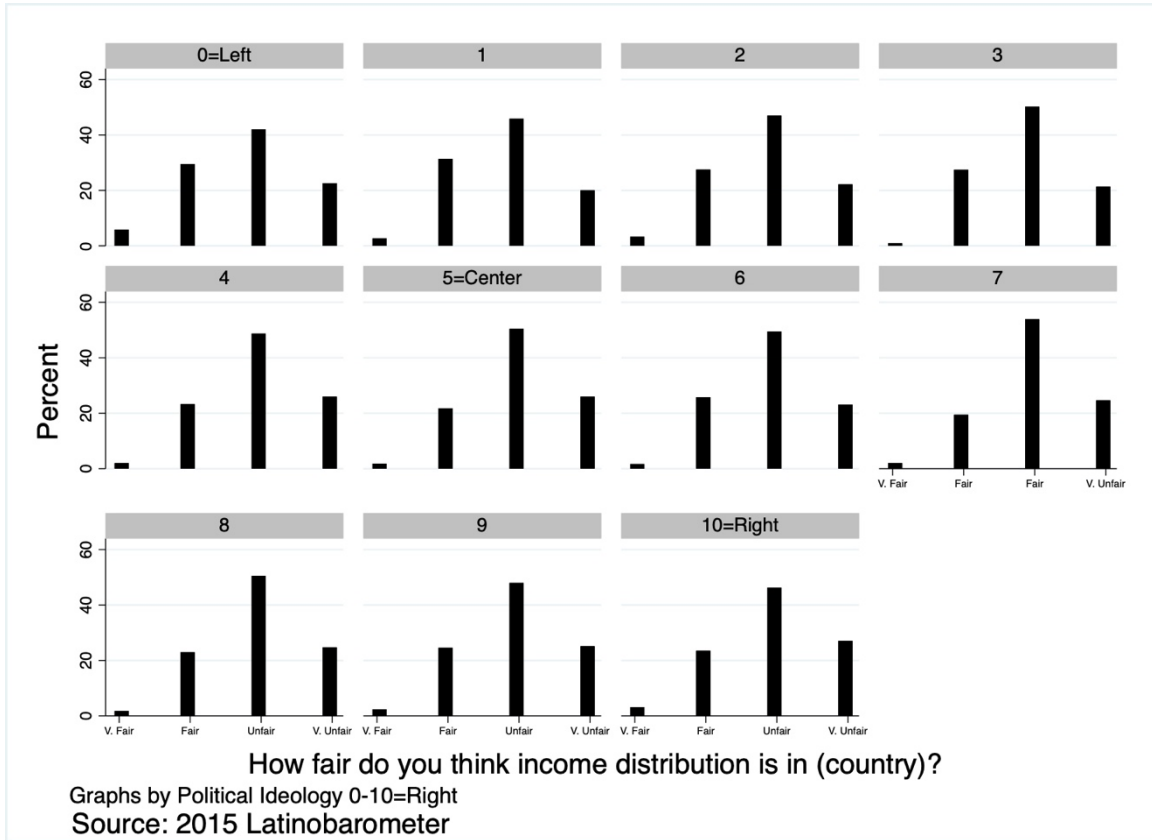
	(.12)	(.12)	(.12)	(.12)	(.12)
Uruguay	-.78***	-.74***	-.74***	-.69***	-.72***
	(.14)	(.14)	(.14)	(.14)	(.14)
Constant	5.71***	6.08***	6.46***	6.28***	6.14***
	(.25)	(.25)	(.25)	(.25)	(.26)
Observations	6881	6880	6831	6865	6814
R^2	.06	.05	.05	.04	.04

* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001 (standard errors). OLS regression coefficients predicting political ideology (0=left to 10=right). For country fixed effects, Argentina is excluded as the reference category.

Note: Three of the five system justifying attitudes are significant predictors of rightist political ideology.

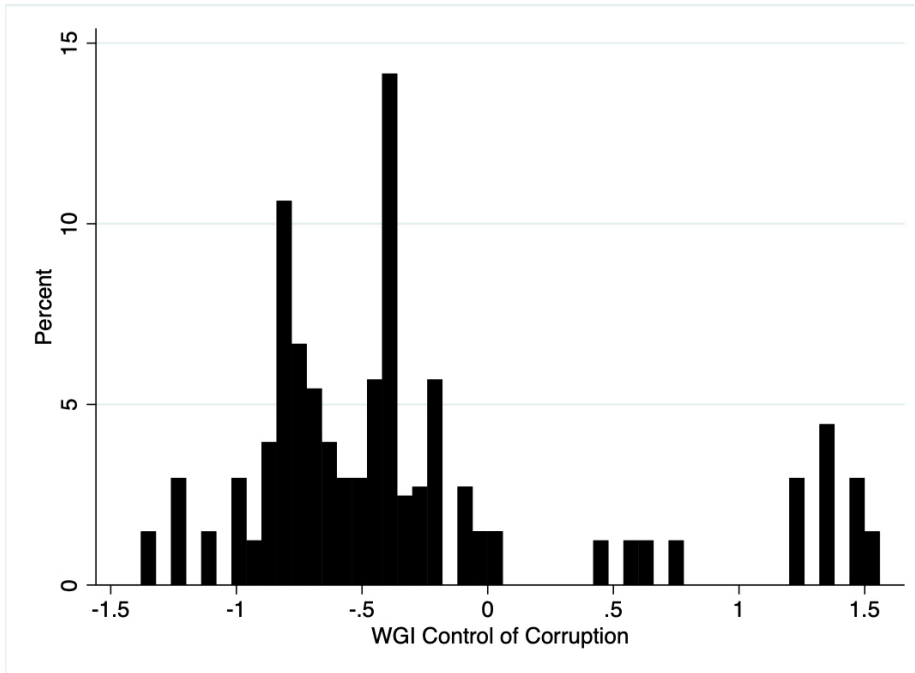
APPENDIX B. Chapter 3 Supplementary Analysis

Figure B1. Distribution of Unfairness Perceptions by Political Ideology



Note: This figure shows the distribution of perceived distributive unfairness across the political ideology spectrum. Responses are from the 2015 Latinobarometer and are pooled across all countries. Figure B1 suggests that those on the political right are just as likely as those on the left to perceive the income distribution as unfair in Latin America, although the cross-national analysis in this chapter shows that, consistent with *Hypothesis 3*, the relationship between perceived distributive unfairness and support for the political system is weaker on the right side of the political spectrum.

Figure B2. Distribution of Governance Quality in Latin America



Note: This figure shows the distribution of governance quality (*control of corruption* measure) in the Latin American countries in this sample. Higher values indicate better governance, or less corruption. Although the modal level of governance quality is on the “poor” side of the spectrum, there is still significant variation across the country-years being analyzed in Chapter 3.

Table B1. Perceived Unfairness and Satisfaction, Alternative Governance Measures

	Rule of Law		Voice and Accountability		Government Effectiveness	
Perceived Unfairness	-.57*** (.04)	-.48*** (.04)	-.57*** (.04)	-.60*** (.03)	-.57*** (.04)	-.54*** (.04)
Governance Quality	.27** (.10)	-.12 (.13)	.39** (.13)	-.11 (.17)	.25* (.12)	-.13 (.16)
Unfair X Governance		.19*** (.05)		.23*** (.06)		.19*** (.06)
<i>Individual-Level</i>						
Political Ideology 0-10=Right	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Subjective Social Class	.07*** (.01)	.07*** (.01)	.07*** (.01)	.07*** (.01)	.07*** (.01)	.07*** (.01)
Economic Perception Worse	-.42*** (.01)	-.42*** (.01)	-.42*** (.01)	-.42*** (.01)	-.42*** (.01)	-.42*** (.01)
Education	-.01*** (.00)	-.01*** (.00)	-.01*** (.00)	-.01*** (.00)	-.01*** (.00)	-.01*** (.00)
Rural	.04 (.03)	.04 (.03)	.04 (.03)	.04 (.03)	.04 (.03)	.05 (.03)
Incumbent Approval	.80*** (.02)	.80*** (.02)	.80*** (.02)	.80*** (.02)	.80*** (.02)	.80*** (.02)
Wealth Quintile	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)
Female	-.03 (.02)	-.03 (.02)	-.03 (.02)	-.03 (.02)	-.03 (.02)	-.03 (.02)
<i>Country-Level</i>						
Income Inequality	-.11*** (.02)	-.11*** (.02)	-.11*** (.02)	-.11*** (.02)	-.12*** (.02)	-.12*** (.02)
Observations	40620	40620	40620	40620	40620	40620
Country-Years	54	54	54	54	54	54
Wald Chi ²	4047.55	4197.03	4049.40	4179.57	4044.41	4145.95

* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001 (Standard errors). Multilevel ordered logit coefficients.

Note: Results in Table B1 show that the findings in Chapter 3 are robust to other measures of governance quality, including WGI measures of *Rule of Law*, *Voice and Accountability*, and *Government Effectiveness*.

DV: How satisfied are you with the way democracy functions in your country? 1=very dissatisfied to 4=very satisfied.

Table B2. Perceived Unfairness and Trust, Alternative Governance Measures

	Rule of Law		Voice and Accountability		Government Effectiveness	
Perceived Unfairness	-.50***	-.42***	-.50***	-.52***	-.50***	-.47***
Governance Quality	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)	(.04)	(.05)	(.05)
Unfair X Governance	.15*	-.30	.15	-.45	.18*	-.32
	(.07)	(.19)	(.10)	(.24)	(.09)	(.23)
		.16**		.21**		.17*
		(.06)		(.08)		(.07)
<i>Individual-Level</i>						
Political Ideology 0-10=Right	-.01***	-.01***	-.01***	-.01***	-.01***	-.01***
Subjective Social Class	.06***	.06***	.06***	.06***	.06***	.06***
Economic Perception Worse	-.39***	-.39***	-.39***	-.39***	-.39***	-.39***
Education	-.01***	-.01***	-.01***	-.01***	-.01***	-.01***
Rural	.05*	.05*	.05*	.05*	.05*	.05*
Incumbent Approval	1.54***	1.54***	1.54***	1.54***	1.54***	1.54***
Wealth Quintile	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Female	-.04*	-.04*	-.04*	-.04*	-.04*	-.04*
	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)
<i>Country-Level</i>						
Income Inequality	-.05**	-.05**	-.04**	-.04**	-.05**	-.05**
	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)
Observations	41221	41221	41221	41221	41221	41221
Country-Year	54	54	54	54	54	54
Wald Chi ²	7521.04	7564.39	7517.91	7561.94	7521.04	7556.20

* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001 (Standard errors). Multilevel ordered logit coefficients.

Note: Results in Table B2 show that the findings in Chapter 3 are robust to other measures of governance quality, including WGI measures of *Rule of Law*, *Voice and Accountability*, and *Government Effectiveness*.

DV: How much trust do you have in the national government? 1=none to 4=a lot.

Appendix C: Chapter 4 Experimental Design, Sample Characteristics, and Additional Information

Table C1. Sample Characteristics

	Full	Manipulation	Control	Treat 1	Treat 2	Treat 3
Age	40.93	39.60	39.34	40.87	40.55	38.87
Ideology	5.40	5.52	5.53	5.65	5.53	5.44
Class	2.30	2.65	2.67	2.74	2.67	2.57
Education	3.92	3.95	4.02	3.96	3.97	3.88
Female	.49	.45	.52	.41	.37	.46
Partisan	.31	.31	.35	.31	.29	.35

Note: This table shows the mean value for a variety of variables in the full sample (N=1,485), compared to the subsample who answered the manipulation check correctly (N=651), and each of the treatment and control groups who answered the manipulation check correctly. As Table C2 shows, none of these variables predict placement in the control or treatment group, whether among the full sample or among the manipulation check subsample (with the exception of sex in one instance).

Table C2. Multinomial Logit Predicting Treatment

	T1 Full	T2 Full	T3 Full	T1 Manipulation	T2 Manipulation	T3 Manipulation
Ideology	.02 (.04)	-.04 (.04)	-.06 (.04)	.02 (.06)	-.00 (.06)	-.01 (.06)
Class	.07 (.13)	.19 (.13)	-.01 (.13)	.07 (.20)	-.07 (.19)	-.26 (.19)
Education	-.13 (.10)	-.04 (.10)	-.08 (.10)	-.12 (.14)	-.04 (.14)	-.10 (.14)
Female	-.19 (.17)	-.24 (.17)	-.16 (.17)	-.47 (.25)	-.72** (.24)	-.39 (.24)
Political Interest	.09 (.10)	.04 (.10)	-.03 (.10)	.07 (.15)	-.05 (.14)	-.12 (.15)
Partisan	-.30 (.20)	-.29 (.20)	-.13 (.20)	-.20 (.27)	-.26 (.26)	.07 (.26)
Age	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	-.00 (.01)
Observations		1146			572	
Log Likelihood		19.5			19.5	

Note: Multinomial Logit Coefficients, Control group is the base category. With the exception of women in the manipulation check subsample being more likely to be assigned to T2 (Inequality + Unfair) compared to the control, none of the other variables predicts placement in treatment groups in either sample.

Table C.3 Average Treatment Effects, Satisfaction with Democracy, Full Sample

Control		
ATE=2.80		
N=281		
Inequality	Inequality + Unfair	Inequality + Fair
ATE=2.57	ATE=2.63	ATE=2.59
N=297	N=307	N=295
Diff= -.23**	Diff= -.17*	Diff= -.21**

Note: Two-tailed t-tests comparing each treatment to the control group *p<.10, **p<.05, ***p<.01

DV: How satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Argentina? 1=Very dissatisfied to 5=Very satisfied

Average treatment effects for the “Inequality” and “Inequality + Unfair” compared to the control group are generally consistent with those from the subsample that answered the manipulation check question correctly. However, participants in the full sample appear less likely to have successfully received the “Inequality + Fair” treatment.

Table C4. Inequality, Fairness Frames, & Satisfaction with Democracy

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Treatment 1 (Inequality)	-.26*	-.30*	-.21	-.83
	(.13)	(.13)	(.38)	(.58)
Treatment 2 (Ineq.+ Unfair)	-.23	-.26*	-.28	-1.29*
	(.13)	(.12)	(.37)	(.52)
Treatment 3 (Ineq. + Fair)	-.18	-.16	-.36	-.77
	(.13)	(.13)	(.36)	(.53)
Political Ideology (0=Left to 10=Right)		.12***	.12**	.12***
		(.02)	(.04)	(.02)
Treatment 1 X Ideology			-.02	
			(.06)	
Treatment 2 X Ideology			.00	
			(.06)	
Treatment 3 X Ideology			.04	
			(.06)	
Subjective Social Class		.25***	.25***	.04
		(.07)	(.07)	(.14)
Treatment 1 X Class				.20
				(.21)
Treatment 2 X Class				.39*
				(.19)
Treatment 3 X Class				.23
				(.20)
Female		.06	.06	.06
		(.09)	(.09)	(.09)
Political Interest		.01	.01	.01
		(.05)	(.05)	(.05)
Education		-.05	-.05	-.05
		(.05)	(.05)	(.05)
Role of the State		-.08*	-.08*	-.08*
		(.04)	(.04)	(.04)
Constant	2.85***	2.05***	2.10***	2.58***
	(.09)	(.41)	(.46)	(.53)
Observations	584	576	576	576
R^2	.01	.11	.11	.12

* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001 (standard errors) OLS regression coefficients. Control group excluded as reference category.

Experimental Setup, United States

Participants began by answering two pre-treatment questions meant to measure their perceptions of economic inequality and their perceptions of distributive unfairness in the United States. The question about inequality perceptions asked whether the gap between the rich and the poor in the United States had gotten “much smaller” (coded 1), “smaller” (2), “about the same” (3), “bigger” (4), or “much bigger” (5) in the last 20 years. The question about perceived distributive unfairness asked whether the income distribution in the United States was “very fair” (coded 1), “fair” (2), “unfair” (3), or “very unfair” (4). Next, I randomly assigned each of the 1,500 survey participants to receive one of three experimental treatments, or to be in the control group.²⁸ Specifically, each participant was randomly assigned to read one of the following vignettes:

“In 2008, the United States experienced the most severe economic crisis since the Great Depression. Today, both the stock market and the unemployment rate are back to pre-recession levels...”

Control: No sentence

Treatment 1 (Inequality Information): Still, many Americans’ economic situations have actually gotten worse. According to recent figures, the gap between the richest 5% and the poorest 25% is more than 6 times larger than it was before the recession.

Treatment 2: (Inequality + Unfair Outcome): Still, many Americans’ economic situations have actually gotten worse. According to recent figures, the gap between the richest 5% and the poorest 25% is more than 6 times larger than it was before the recession. An independent economic think-tank explained, *it is fundamentally unfair* that the recovery has disproportionately benefitted the wealthiest Americans.²⁹

Treatment 3: (Inequality + Fair Outcome): Still, many Americans’ economic situations have actually gotten worse. According to recent figures, the gap between the richest 5% and the poorest 25% is more than 6 times larger than it was before the recession. An independent economic think-tank explained, *it is fundamentally fair* that economic recoveries benefit some groups more than others, because that’s just the nature of capitalism.

After reading one of the above vignettes, each participant was asked to indicate their trust in the federal government: “How often can you trust the federal government in Washington to do what is right? Never (coded 1), Some of the time (2), About half the time (3), Most of the time (4), Always (5)?”

²⁸ I used the “question randomization” option in Qualtrics to randomly assign participants to treatments or the control group.

²⁹ Emphasis added – not italicized in the original vignette.

Table C5. Ordered Logit Predicting Trust in the Government, U.S. Experiment

	Model 1	Model 2
T1: Inequality Information	-.49*** (.15)	-.48 (.40)
T2: Inequality Information + Unfair	-.43** (.15)	-.67^ (.38)
T3: Inequality Information + Fair	-.23 (.15)	-1.04** (.40)
Political Ideology (Very Conservative=5)	.02 (.05)	-.07 (.09)
T1: Inequality X Ideology		-.01 (.13)
T2: Inequality + Unfair X Ideology		.08 (.12)
T3: Inequality + Fair X Ideology		.28* (.13)
Female	-.07 (.11)	-.05 (.11)
Education	-.08^ (.04)	-.08^ (.04)
Class Self-Identification	.42*** (.07)	.43*** (.07)
Race (White=1)	-.41** (.13)	-.43** (.13)
Political Interest	.24*** (.07)	.23*** (.07)
Economic Situation Worse	-.12* (.06)	-.12* (.06)
Cut 1	-1.57*** (.39)	-1.83*** (.44)
Cut 2	1.06** (.39)	.81^ (.44)
Cut 3	2.64*** (.40)	2.40*** (.45)
Cut 4	4.99*** (.47)	4.75*** (.52)
Observations	1,339	1,339
Log Likelihood	1569	1566

*** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05, + p<.10, Standard errors in parentheses.

Ordered logit coefficients, DV (1-5, 5= "Always" Trust). Control group excluded as the reference category.

Consistent with the results in Table 2, treatments 1 and 2 are associated with significantly lower levels of trust, compared to the control group, whereas treatment 3 is not.

Experimental Setup, Mexico

Participants were randomly assigned to read some version of the following vignette:

Control: La economía en México creció 2.3 por ciento en 2017.

T1: La economía en México creció 2.3 por ciento en 2017. A pesar del reciente crecimiento económico, la diferencia de ingresos entre ricos y pobres ha aumentado en México.

T2: La economía en México creció 2.3 por ciento en 2017. A pesar del reciente crecimiento económico, la diferencia de ingresos entre ricos y pobres ha aumentado en México. Según una organización independiente y sin fines de lucro, el aumento en la desigualdad de ingresos es un resultado injusto del crecimiento económico.

T3: La economía en México creció 2.3 por ciento en 2017. A pesar del reciente crecimiento económico, la diferencia de ingresos entre ricos y pobres ha aumentado en México. Según una organización independiente y sin fines de lucro, el aumento en la desigualdad de ingresos es un resultado justo del crecimiento económico.

Teniendo esto en cuenta, mire esta escala y dígame, cuánta confianza tiene usted en el Gobierno Nacional: mucha (1), algo (2), poco (3), o ninguna (4)

APPENDIX D: Chapter 5 Experimental Design and Sample Characteristics

Table D1. Sample Characteristics

	Full	Manip	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6
Age	40.93	40.67	40.44	37.98	37.58	47.82	39.25	43.03
Ideology	5.40	5.36	5.33	5.34	4.50	6.46	4.94	6.04
Class	2.60	2.56	2.54	2.53	2.42	2.82	2.46	2.67
Education	3.92	3.89	3.90	3.85	3.83	4.13	3.77	3.94
Female	.50	.54	.53	.49	.53	.58	.57	.52
Partisan	.31	.30	.24	.18	.30	.41	.28	.39

Note: This table shows the mean value for a variety of variables in the full sample (N=1,577), compared to the subsample who answered the manipulation check correctly (N=624), and each of the treatment and control groups who answered the manipulation check correctly. In Appendix Tables D6 and D7 I use these participant characteristics to predict assignment to treatment groups.

Table D2. Experimental Vignettes

Treatment 1: Theft Same	En años recientes, la prestación de servicios públicos en la Argentina ha permanecido igual, mientras que el uso de recursos públicos para fines indebidos por funcionarios del gobierno ha permanecido igual . Al mismo tiempo, la brecha en la distribución del ingreso entre ricos y pobres en la Argentina ha continuado creciendo.
Treatment 2: Bribes Same	Según analistas independientes, el número de funcionarios del gobierno que acepten las coimas ha permanecido igual en los últimos años . Al mismo tiempo, la brecha en la distribución del ingreso entre ricos y pobres en la Argentina ha continuado creciendo.
Treatment 3: Theft Increasing	En años recientes, la prestación de servicios públicos en la Argentina ha empeorado, mientras que el uso de recursos públicos para fines indebidos por funcionarios del gobierno ha ido en aumento . Además de estas deficiencias, la brecha en la distribución del ingreso entre ricos y pobres en la Argentina ha continuado creciendo.
Treatment 4: Theft Decreasing	En años recientes, la prestación de servicios públicos en la Argentina ha mejorado, mientras que el uso de recursos públicos para fines indebidos por funcionarios del gobierno ha declinado . A pesar de estos progresos, la brecha en la distribución del ingreso entre ricos y pobres en la Argentina ha continuado creciendo.
Treatment 5: Bribes Increasing	Según analistas independientes, el número de funcionarios del gobierno que acepten las coimas ha aumentado en los últimos años . Además de estas deficiencias, la brecha en la distribución del ingreso entre ricos y pobres en la Argentina ha continuado creciendo.
Treatment 6: Bribes Decreasing	Según analistas independientes, el número de funcionarios del gobierno que acepten las coimas ha disminuido en los últimos años . A pesar de estos progresos, la brecha en la distribución del ingreso entre ricos y pobres en la Argentina ha continuado creciendo.

Table D3. Average Treatment Effects, Perceived Unfairness, Full Sample

Theft of Resources		
Same	Increasing	Decreasing
ATE=3.27	ATE=3.20	ATE=3.34
N=280	N=248	N=297
	Diff= -.07	Diff= .06
Bribery		
Same	Increasing	Decreasing
ATE=3.26	ATE=3.31	ATE=3.31
N=235	N=259	N=254
	Diff= .05	Diff=.05

Note: Two-tailed T-tests comparing the corruption “increasing” and “decreasing” treatments to the “same” treatment, “*p<.10, **p<.05, ***p<.01.

DV: Perceived fairness of income distribution 1= “Very Fair” to 4= “Very Unfair”

Table D4. Average Treatment Effects, Satisfaction, Full Sample

Theft of Resources		
Same	Increasing	Decreasing
ATE=2.50	ATE=2.60	ATE=2.52
N=280	N=248	N=297
	Diff= .10	Diff= .02
Bribery		
Same	Increasing	Decreasing
ATE=2.35	ATE=2.50	ATE=2.54
N=235	N=259	N=254
	Diff= .15*	Diff=.19**

Note: Two-tailed T-tests comparing the corruption “increasing” and “decreasing” treatments to the “same” treatment, “*p<.10, **p<.05, ***p<.01.

DV: Satisfaction with democracy 1= “Very Dissatisfied” to 5= “Very satisfied”

Table D5. Average Treatment Effects, Trust, Full Sample

Theft of Resources		
Same	Increasing	Decreasing
ATE=2.15	ATE=2.18	ATE=2.18
N=280	N=248	N=297
	Diff= .03	Diff= .03
Bribery		
Same	Increasing	Decreasing
ATE=2.10	ATE=2.19	ATE=2.14
N=235	N=259	N=254
	Diff= .09	Diff= .04

Note: Two-tailed T-tests comparing the corruption “increasing” and “decreasing” treatments to the “same” treatment, “*p<.10, **p<.05, ***p<.01.

DV: Trust in the national government 1= “Very Fair” to 4= “Very Unfair”

Table D6. Multinomial Logit Predicting Treatment, Full Sample

	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6
Ideology	.01 (.05)	-.04 (.05)	.03 (.04)	.01 (.05)	.00 (.05)
Class	-.02 (.13)	.05 (.13)	.03 (.13)	-.05 (.13)	-.10 (.13)
Education	-.04 (.11)	-.01 (.10)	.05 (.10)	.03 (.10)	-.03 (.10)
Female	-.19 (.18)	-.14 (.18)	.10 (.17)	-.10 (.18)	-.08 (.18)
Political Interest	-.09 (.11)	-.20 (.10)	-.18 (.10)	-.05 (.10)	-.33** (.10)
Partisan	.05 (.21)	-.04 (.21)	-.02 (.20)	-.03 (.20)	.40* (.20)
Age	-.00 (.01)	-.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	-.00 (.01)	-.01 (.01)
Observations	1540				
Log Likelihood	-2739.29				

Table D7. Multinomial Logit Predicting Treatment, Manipulation Check

	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6
Ideology	.01 (.08)	-.25** (.08)	.25** (.08)	-.11 (.08)	.16 (.08)
Class	.02 (.22)	-.14 (.21)	.38 (.25)	-.11 (.20)	.21 (.23)
Education	.01 (.17)	.01 (.17)	.17 (.18)	-.12 (.16)	.03 (.17)
Female	-.25 (.30)	-.08 (.29)	.31 (.32)	.12 (.28)	-.05 (.30)
Political Interest	-.17 (.18)	-.30 (.17)	-.14 (.19)	-.01 (.16)	-.44* (.18)
Partisan	-.19 (.38)	.50 (.34)	.68 (.36)	.24 (.33)	.87* (.35)
Age	-.01 (.01)	-.01 (.01)	.03* (.01)	-.00 (.01)	.01 (.01)
Observations	609				
Log Likelihood	-1021.19				

Multinomial logit coefficients, “theft same” treatment is the base category. Generally speaking, none of these participant characteristics predict assignment to treatment groups. In both the full and reduced sample, politically interested individuals are slightly less likely to be assigned to the “bribery decreasing” treatment, compared to the “theft same” treatment. Those who identify with a political party are slightly more likely to be assigned to the “bribery decreasing treatment.” Political ideology also predicts assignment to Treatments 3 and 4 (compared to Treatment 1) in the reduced sample.

REFERENCES

- Aalberg, Toril. 2003. *Achieving Justice Comparative Public Opinion on Income Distribution*. Leiden: Brill.
- Aarts, Kees, and Jacques Thomassen. 2008. "Satisfaction with Democracy: Do Institutions Matter?". *Electoral Studies* 27: 5-18.
- Acemoglu, Daron, and James A. Robinson. 2006. *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Alvarez, R. Michael, Thad Hall, and Morgan Llewellyn. 2008. "Are Americans Confident Their Ballots Are Counted?". *Journal of Politics* 70: 754-66.
- Anderson, Christopher, André Blais, Shaun Bowler, Todd Donovan, and Ola Listaug. 2005. *Losers' Consent: Elections and Democratic Legitimacy*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Anderson, Christopher, and Christine A. Guillory. 1997. "Political Institutions and Satisfaction with Democracy: A Cross-National Analysis of Consensus and Majoritarian Systems." *American Political Science Review* 91: 66-81.
- Anderson, Christopher J., and Yuliya V. Tverdova. 2003. "Corruption, Political Allegiances, and Attitudes toward Government in Contemporary Democracies." *American Journal of Political Science* 47: 91-109.
- Anderson, Christopher, and Matthew Singer. 2008. "The Sensitive Left and the Impervious Right: Multilevel Models and the Politics of Inequality, Ideology, and Legitimacy in Europe." *Comparative Political Studies* 41 (4-5): 564-99.
- Andre, Audrey, and Sam Depauw. 2017. "The Quality of Representation and Satisfaction with Democracy: The Consequences of Citizen-Elite Policy and Process Congruence." *Political Behavior* 39: 377-97
- Banducci, Susan A., Todd Donovan, and Jeffrey A. Karp. 2004. "Minority Representation, Empowerment, and Participation." *Journal of Politics* 66: 534-56.
- Barnes, Tiffany. 2012. "Gender and Legislative Preferences: Evidence from the Argentine Provinces." *Politics & Gender* 8: 483-507.
- Barnes, Tiffany D. 2016. *Gendering Legislative Behavior: Institutional Constraints and Collaboration*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Barnes, Tiffany D, and Stephanie Burchard. 2013. "'Engendering Politics' the Impact of Descriptive Representation on Women's Political Engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa." *Comparative Political Studies* 46: 767-90.
- Barnes, Tiffany D., Emily Beaulieu, and Gregory W. Saxton. 2018. "Restoring Trust in the Police: How Female Officers Reduce Suspicions of Corruption." *Governance* 31: 143-61.
- Barnes, Tiffany D., and Gregory W. Saxton. 2019. "Working-Class Legislators and Perceptions of Representation in Latin America." *Political Research Quarterly* FirstView. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912919829583>
- Bartels, Larry M. 2008. *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Bauhr, Monika, Nicholas Charron, and Lena Wängnerud. 2018. "Exclusion or Interests? Why Females in Elected Office Reduce Petty and Grand Corruption." *European Journal of Political Research*. Early View doi:10.1111/1475-6765.12300.
- Bauhr, Monika. 2017. "Need or Greed? Conditions for Collective Action against Corruption." *Governance* 30: 561-81.
- Bauhr, Monika, and Nicholas Charron. 2018. "Insider or Outsider? Grand Corruption and Electoral Accountability." *Comparative Political Studies* 51: 415-46.
- Berinsky, Adam J, Gregory A Huber, and Gabriel S Lenz. 2012. "Evaluating Online Labor Markets for Experimental Research: Amazon.com's Mechanical Turk." *Political Analysis* 20: 351-68.
- Berinsky, Adam J., Michele F. Margolis, and Michael W. Sances. 2014. "Separating the Shirkers from the Workers? Making Sure Respondents Pay Attention on Self-Administered Surveys." *American Journal of Political Science* 58: 739-53.
- Booth, John A, and Mitchell A. Seligson. 2009. *The Legitimacy Puzzle in Latin America: Political Support and Democracy in Eight Nations*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Brambor, Thomas, William R. Clark, and Matt Golder. 2006. "Understanding Interaction Models: Improving Empirical Analyses." *Political Analysis* 14: 63-82.
- Buhrmester, Michael, Tracy Kwang, and Samuel D Gosling. 2011. "Amazon's Mechanical Turk a New Source of Inexpensive, yet High-Quality, Data?". *Perspectives on psychological science* 6: 3-5.

- Carnes, Nicholas. 2013. *White-Collar Government*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Carnes, Nicholas, and Noam Lupu. 2015. "Rethinking the Comparative Perspective on Class and Representation: Evidence from Latin America." *American Journal of Political Science* 59: 1-18.
- Cassese, Erin C., and Tiffany D. Barnes. 2018. "Reconciling Sexism and Women's Support for Republican Candidates: A Look at Gender, Class, and Whiteness in the 2012 and 2016 Presidential Races." *Political Behavior*: 1-24.
- Cassese, Erin C., Tiffany D. Barnes, and Regina P. Branton. 2015. "Racializing Gender: Public Opinion at the Intersection." *Politics & Gender* 11: 1-26.
- Cassese, Erin C., and Mirya Holman. 2018. "Party and Gender Stereotypes in Campaign Attacks." *Political Behavior* 40: 785-807.
- Cho, Wonbin., and Michael Bratton. 2006. "Electoral Institutions, Partisan Status, and Political Support in Lesotho." *Electoral studies* 25: 731-50.
- Clayton, Amanda, Diana Z. O'Brien, and Jennifer M. Piscopo. 2019. "All Male Panels? Representation and Democratic Legitimacy." *American Journal of Political Science* 63: 113-29.
- Cleary, Matthew R. 2006. *Democracy and the Culture of Skepticism: Political Trust in Argentina and Mexico*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Conroy-Krutz, Jeffrey, and Nicholas Kerr. 2015. "Dynamics of Democratic Satisfaction in Transitional Settings: Evidence from a Panel Study in Uganda." *Political Research Quarterly* 68: 593-606.
- Córdova, Abby. 2009. "Methodological Note: Measuring Relative Wealth Using Household Asset Indicators." *AmericasBarometer Insights*.
https://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights/I0806en_v2.pdf.
- Córdova, Abby, and Matthew Layton. 2016. "When Is "Delivering the Goods" Not Enough? How Economic Disparities in Latin American Neighborhoods Shape Citizen Trust in Local Government." *World Politics* 68: 74-110.
- Córdova, Abby, and Mitchell A. Seligson. 2010. "Economic Shocks and Democratic Vulnerabilities in Latin America and the Caribbean." *Latin American Politics and Society* 52: 1-35.
- Dahlberg, Stefan, Jonas Linde, and Sören Holmberg. 2015. "Democratic Discontent in Old and New Democracies: Assessing the Importance of Democratic Input and Governmental Output." *Political Studies* 63: 18-37.

- Desierto, Desiree A. 2019. "Grand Corruption by Public Officials: Measuring Theft and Bribery." Unpublished Manuscript.
<https://desireedesierto.files.wordpress.com/2019/03/jmpmarch2019.pdf>.
- Dalton, Russell. 2004. *Democratic Challenges, Democratic Choices: The Erosion of Political Support in Advanced Industrial Democracies*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Dollar, David, Raymond Fisman, and Roberta Gatti. 2001. "Are Women Really the "Fairer" Sex? Corruption and Women in Government." *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization* 46: 423-29.
- Easton, David. 1975. "A Re-Assessment of the Concept of Political Support." *British Journal of Political Science* 5: 435-57.
- Esarey, Justin, and Gina Chirillo. 2013. "'Fairer Sex' or Purity Myth? Corruption, Gender, and Institutional Context." *Politics & Gender* 9: 361-89.
- Esarey, Justin, and Leslie A. Schwindt-Bayer. 2018. "Women's Representation, Accountability and Corruption in Democracies." *British Journal of Political Science* 48: 659-90.
- Ferraz, Claudio, and Frederico Finan. 2011. "Electoral Accountability and Corruption: Evidence from the Audits of Local Governments." *American Economic Review* 101: 1274-311.
- Fiske, Susan T., Amy J. C. Cuddy, Peter Glick, and Jun Xu. 2002. "A Model of (Often Mixed) Stereotype Content: Competence and Warmth Respectively Follow From Perceived Status and Competition." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 82 (6): 878-902.
- Gerber, Alan S., Kevin Arceneaux, Cheryl Boudreau, Conor Dowling, and Sunshine Hillygus. 2015. "Reporting Balance Tables, Response Rates, and Manipulation Checks in Experimental Research: A Reply from the Committee that Prepared the Reporting Guidelines." *Journal of Experimental Political Science* 2: 216-29.
- Gibson, James, Gregory Caldeira, and Lester Spence. 2005. "Why Do People Accept Public Orders They Oppose? Testing Legitimacy Theory with a Survey-Based Experiment." *Political Research Quarterly* 58: 187-201.
- Gilens, Martin. 2012. *Affluence and Influence: Economic Inequality and Political Power in America*. Princeton, N.J : Princeton University Press.
- . 2009. "Preference Gaps and Inequality in Representation." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 42: 335-41.

- Graham, Jesse, Jonathan Haidt, and Brian A Nosek. 2009. "Liberals and Conservatives Rely on Different Sets of Moral Foundations." *Journal of personality and social psychology* 96: 1029-46.
- Graham, Jesse, Brian A Nosek, and Jonathan Haidt. 2012. "The Moral Stereotypes of Liberals and Conservatives: Exaggeration of Differences across the Political Spectrum." *PLoS ONE* 7: e50092.
- Graycar, Adam, and Diego Villa. 2011. "The Loss of Governance Capacity through Corruption." *Governance* 24: 419-38.
- Gurr, Ted. 1968. "Psychological Factors in Civil War." *World Politics* 20 (2): 245-78.
- Hacker, Jacob S. 2010. *Winner-Take-All Politics: How Washington Made the Rich Richer-and Turned Its Back on the Middle Class*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Hafer, Carolyn, Laurent Bègue, Becky Choma, and Julie Dempsey. 2005. "Belief in a Just World and Commitment to Long- Term Deserved Outcomes." *Soc Just Res* 18: 429-44.
- Hetherington, Marc J. 1998. "The Political Relevance of Political Trust." *American Political Science Review* 92: 791-808.
- Hibbing, John, and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse. 2001. "Process Preferences and American Politics: What the People Want Government to Be." *American Political Science Review* 95: 145-53.
- Holzner, Claudio A. 2010. *Poverty of Democracy: The Institutional Roots of Political Participation in Mexico*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Jost, John, and Orsolya Hunyady. 2003. "The Psychology of System Justification and the Palliative Function of Ideology." *European review of social psychology* 13: 111-53.
- Jost, John T, and Aaron C Kay. 2010. "Social Justice." In *Handbook of Social Psychology*, eds. Susan T Fiske, Daniel Todd Gilbert and Gardner Lindzey. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Jost, John T., Christopher M. Federico, and Jaime L. Napier. 2009. "Political Ideology: Its Structure, Functions, and Elective Affinities." *Annual Review of Psychology* 60: 307-37.
- Julious, Steven A. 2004. "Using Confidence Intervals around Individual Means to Assess Statistical Significance between Two Means." *Pharmaceutical Statistics* 3: 217-22.

- Kaufmann, D., Kray, A., & Mastruzzi, M. (2010). The worldwide governance indicators: Methodology and Analytical Issues. *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper*, No. 5430. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=1682130>.
- Kay, Aaron C., and John T. Jost. 2003. "Complementary Justice: Effects of "Poor but Happy" and "Poor but Honest" Stereotype Exemplars on System Justification and Implicit Activation of the Justice Motive." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 85: 823-37.
- Kelly, Nathan J., and Peter K. Enns. 2010. "Inequality and the Dynamics of Public Opinion: The Self-Reinforcing Link between Economic Inequality and Mass Preferences." *American Journal of Political Science* 54: 855-70.
- Kim, Eunji, Rasmus T Pedersen, and Diana Mutz. 2016. "What Do Americans Talk About When They Talk About Inequality?" Paper presented at the Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL.
- Krieckhaus, Jonathan, Byunghwan Son, Nisha Mukherjee Bellinger, and Jason M. Wells. 2014. "Economic Inequality and Democratic Support." *The Journal of Politics* 76: 139-51.
- Kumlin, Staffan, and Peter Esaiasson. 2012. "Scandal Fatigue? Scandal Elections and Satisfaction with Democracy in Western Europe, 1977-2007." *British Journal of Political Science* 42: 263-82.
- Lerner, Melvin J., and Dale T. Miller. 1978. "Just World Research and the Attribution Process: Looking Back and Ahead." *Psychological Bulletin* 85: 1030-51.
- Lijphart, Arend. 1999. *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Linde, J., and J. Ekman. 2003. "Satisfaction with Democracy: A Note on a Frequently Used Indicator in Comparative Politics." *European Journal of Political Research* 42: 391-408.
- Linde, Jonas. 2012. "Why Feed the Hand That Bites You? Perceptions of Procedural Fairness and System Support in Post-Communist Democracies." *European Journal of Political Research* 51: 410-34.
- Linde, Jonas, and Gissur Ó Erlingsson. 2013. "The Eroding Effect of Corruption on System Support in Sweden." *Governance* 26: 585-603.
- Linz, Juan J., and Alfred Stepan. 1996. *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

- Lloren, Anouk, Jan Rosset, and Reto Wüest. 2015. "Descriptive and Substantive Representation of Poor Citizens in Switzerland." *Swiss Political Science Review* 21: 254-60.
- Lupu, Noam. 2016. "The End of the Kirchner Era." *Journal of Democracy* 27: 35-49.
- Lupu, Noam, and Susan C Stokes. 2009. "The Social Bases of Political Parties in Argentina, 1912-2003." *Latin American Research Review* 44: 58-87.
- López-Calva, Luis Felipe, and Nora Lustig. 2010. "Explaining the Decline in Inequality in Latin America: Technological Change, Educational Upgrading, and Democracy." In *Declining Inequality in Latin America: A Decade of Progress?* eds. Luis Felipe López-Calva and Nora Lustig. Baltimore: Brookings Institution Press. 1-24.
- Magalhães, Pedro C. 2016. "Economic Evaluations, Procedural Fairness, and Satisfaction with Democracy." *Political Research Quarterly* 69: 522-34.
- Mainwaring, Scott. 2006. "The Crisis of Representation in the Andes." *Journal of Democracy* 17: 13-27.
- Mayorga, René Antonio. 2006. "Outsiders and Neopopulism: The Road to Plebiscitary." In *The Crisis of Democratic Representation in the Andes*, eds. Scott Mainwaring, Ana María Bejarano and Eduardo Pizarro Leongómez. Stanford: Stanford University Press. 132-67.
- McAllister, Ian. 1999. "The Economic Performance of Governments." In *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Governance*, ed. Pippa Norris. New York: Oxford University Press. 169-87.
- McCall, Leslie, and Lane Kenworthy. 2009. "Americans' Social Policy Preferences in the Era of Rising Inequality." *Perspectives on Politics* 7: 459-84.
- Melo, Marcus André, Carlos Pereira, and Carlos Mauricio Figueiredo. 2009. "Political and Institutional Checks on Corruption: Explaining the Performance of Brazilian Audit Institutions." *Comparative Political Studies* 42: 1217-44.
- Meltzer, Allan H, and Scott F Richard. 1981. "A Rational Theory of the Size of Government." *Journal of Political Economy* 89: 914-27.
- Mill, John Stuart. 1872. *System of Logic*. 8th ed. London: Longsman, Green.
- Miller, David. 1999. *Principles of Social Justice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Morgan, Jana. 2011. *Bankrupt Representation and Party System Collapse*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press.

- Norris, Pippa. 1999. *Critical Citizens : Global Support for Democratic Government*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- . 2011. *Democratic Deficit: Critical Citizens Revisited*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Osberg, Lars, and Timothy Smeeding. 2006. "'Fair' Inequality? Attitudes toward Pay Differentials: The United States in Comparative Perspective." *American Sociological Review* 71: 450-73.
- Philips, Tom. "Brazil's Far-right Frontrunner Bolsonaro Vows to Rule with 'Authority Not Authoritarianism'." *The Guardian* 09 October 2018.
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/oct/09/bolsonaro-brazil-election-authority-not-authoritarianism-latest-comments>
- Pitkin, Hanna. 1967. *The Concept of Representation*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Putnam, Robert D. 1976. *The Comparative Study of Political Elites*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Ritter, Michael, and Frederick Solt. Forthcoming. "Economic Inequality and Campaign Participation." *Social Science Quarterly*.
- Robinson, Laurence D., and Nicholas P. Jewell. 1991. "Some Surprising Results About Covariate Adjustment in Logistic Regression Models." *International Statistical Review / Revue Internationale de Statistique* 59: 227-40.
- Rothstein, Bo, and Jan Teorell. 2008. "What Is Quality of Government? A Theory of Impartial Government Institutions." *Governance* 21: 165-90.
- Rothstein, Bo, and Eric M. Uslaner. 2005. "All for All: Equality, Corruption, and Social Trust." *World Politics* 58: 41-72.
- Schaffner, Brian, Matthew Macwilliams, and Tatishe Nteta. 2018. "Understanding White Polarization in the 2016 Vote for President: The Sobering Role of Racism and Sexism." *Political Science Quarterly* 133: 9-34.
- Schwindt-Bayer, Leslie A. 2010. *Political Power and Women's Representation in Latin America*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Schwindt-Bayer, Leslie A., and William Mishler. 2005. "An Integrated Model of Women's Representation." *Journal of Politics* 67: 407-28.

- Seawright, Jason, and John Gerring. 2008. "Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options." *Political Research Quarterly* 61: 294-308.
- Seligson, Mitchell A., Amy Erica Smith, and Elizabeth J. Zechmeister. 2012. "The Political Culture of Democracy in the Americas, 2012: Towards Equality of Opportunity." <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/ab2012/AB2012-comparative-report-v3-PreliminaryVersion.pdf>
- Singh, Shane, and Ryan Carlin. 2015. "Happy Medium, Happy Citizens: Presidential Power and Democratic Regime Support." *Political Research Quarterly* 68: 3-17.
- Solt, Frederick. 2010. "Does Economic Inequality Depress Electoral Participation? Testing the Schattschneider Hypothesis." *Political Behavior* 32: 285-301.
- . 2008. "Economic Inequality and Democratic Political Engagement." *American Journal of Political Science* 52: 48-60.
- . 2016. "The Standardized World Income Inequality Database*." *Social Science Quarterly* 97: 1267-81.
- Stensöta, Helena, Lena Wängnerud, and Richard Svensson. 2015. "Gender and Corruption: The Mediating Power of Institutional Logics." *Governance* 28: 475-96.
- Stockemer, Daniel, and Aksel Sundström. 2019. "Corruption and Women in Cabinets: Informal Barriers to Recruitment in the Executive." *Governance* 32: 83-102.
- Sundström, Aksel, and Lena Wängnerud. 2016. "Corruption as an Obstacle to Women's Political Representation Evidence from Local Councils in 18 European Countries." *Party Politics* 22: 354-69.
- Swamy, Anand, Stephen Knack, Young Lee, and Omar Azfar. 2001. "Gender and Corruption." *Journal of development economics* 64: 25-55.
- Tanaka, Martín. 2006. "From Crisis to Collapse of the Party System and Dilemmas of Democratic Representation: Peru and Venezuela." In *The Crisis of Democratic Representation in the Andes*, eds. Scott Mainwaring, Ana María Bejarano and Eduardo Pizarro Leongómez. Stanford: Stanford University Press. 47-77.
- Tankebe, Justice. 2013. "Viewing Things Differently: The Dimensions of Public Perceptions of Police Legitimacy." *Criminology* 51: 103-35.
- Taylor-Robinson, Michelle M. 2010. *Do the Poor Count? Democratic Institutions and Accountability in a Context of Poverty*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press.

- Thibaut, John W., and Laurens Walker. 1975. *Procedural Justice: A Psychological Analysis*. Hillsdale, N.J.: L. Erlbaum.
- Trump, Kris-Stella. 2018. "Inequality Influences Perceptions of Legitimate Income Differences." *British Journal of Political Science* 48: 929-52.
- Tyler, Tom. 2006. "Psychological Perspectives on Legitimacy and Legitimation." *Annual Review of Psychology* 57: 375-400.
- Tyler, Tom R. 2004. "Enhancing Police Legitimacy." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 593: 84-99.
- Tyler, Tom R., and E. Allen Lind. 1992. "A Relational Model of Authority in Groups." *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* 25: 115-91.
- Tyler, Tom R. 2003. "Procedural Justice, Legitimacy, and the Effective Rule of Law." *Crimea and Justice: A Review Of Research, Vol 30* 30: 283-357.
- Tyler, Tom R., and Jojanneke Van der Toorn. 2013. "Social Justice." In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*, eds. Leonie Huddy, David O. Sears and Jack Levy. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Uslaner, Eric M. 2008. *Corruption, Inequality, and the Rule of Law: The Bulging Pocket Makes the Easy Life*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- van den Bos, Kees. 2005. "What Is Responsible for the Fair Process Effect?" In *The Handbook of Organization Justice: Fundamental Questions About Fairness in the Workplace*, eds. Jerald Greenberg and Jason A. Colquitt. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum & Associates. 273-300.
- Van Den Bos, Kees, Henk A. M. Wilke, E. Allan Lind, and Riël Vermunt. 1998. "Evaluating Outcomes by Means of the Fair Process Effect: Evidence for Different Processes in Fairness and Satisfaction Judgments." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 74: 1493-503.
- Van Ryzin, Gregg G. 2011. "Outcomes, Process, and Trust of Civil Servants." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 21: 745-60.
- Waksalk, Cheryl J, John T. Jost, Tom R Tyler, and Emmeline S Chen. 2007. "Moral Outrage Mediates the Dampening Effect of System Justification on Support for Redistribution." *Psychological Science* 18: 267-74.
- Watson, David, and Amy Moreland. 2014. "Perceptions of Corruption and the Dynamics of Women's Representation." *Politics & Gender* 10: 392-412.

- Weitz-Shapiro, Rebecca. 2008. "The Local Connection: Local Government Performance and Satisfaction with Democracy in Argentina." *Comparative Political Studies* 41: 285-308.
- Wängnerud, Lena. 2012. "Why Women Are Less Corrupt Than Men." In *Good Government: The Relevance of Political Science*, eds. Holmberg Sören and Rothstein Bo. Northampton: MA: Edward Elgar.
- World Economic Forum. 2018. "The Future of Trust and Integrity." *World Economic Forum Partnering Against Corruption Initiative*. White Paper.
http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_47529_The_Future_of_Trust_and_Integrity_report_2018.pdf
- Zechmeister, Elizabeth. 2006. "What's Left and Who's Right? A Q-Method Study of Individual and Contextual Influences on the Meaning of Ideological Labels." *Political Behavior* 28: 151-73.
- Zechmeister, Elizabeth J. 2015. "Left-Right Identifications and the Latin American Voter." In *The Latin American Voter: Pursuing Representation and Accountability in Challenging Contexts*, eds. Ryan E Carlin, Matthew M. Singer and Elizabeth J Zechmeister. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. 195-225.
- Zmerli, Sonja, and Juan Carlos Castillo. 2015. "Income Inequality, Distributive Fairness and Political Trust in Latin America." *Social Science Research* 52: 179-92.

VITA

Gregory W. Saxton

Curriculum Vitae

Spring 2019

Education

MA	University of Kentucky, Political Science	May 2018
MA	University of Cincinnati, Political Science	May 2014
BA	University of Cincinnati, Political Science (Honors)	June 2012

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

“Working-Class Legislators and Perceptions of Representation in Latin America.” *Political Research Quarterly*, Forthcoming (with Tiffany D. Barnes).

“Restoring Trust in the Police: Why Female Officers Reduce Suspicions of Corruption.” *Governance* 31 (1): 143-161, 2018 (with Tiffany D. Barnes and Emily Beaulieu).

“Sex and Corruption: How Sexism Shapes Voters’ Responses to Scandal.” *Politics, Groups, and Identities*. DOI 10.1080/21565503.2018.1441725, Forthcoming (with Tiffany D. Barnes and Emily Beaulieu).

Peer-Reviewed Book Chapters

“Women’s Representation in Governmental Office in Latin America.” In *Oxford Bibliographies in Political Science*. Ed. Sandy Maisel. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018 (with Tiffany D. Barnes and Dakota Thomas).

“Women’s Political Activism and Civil Society in Latin America.” In *Oxford Bibliographies in Political Science*. Ed. Sandy Maisel. New York: Oxford University Press, 2019 (with Tiffany D. Barnes, Victoria Beall, and Dakota Thomas).

“Los estudios sobre género y política en América Latina.” In *La política comparada en América Latina*. Eds. Simón Pachano and Santiago Basabe, Forthcoming (with Tiffany D. Barnes and Dakota Thomas).

Awards

- 2019 College of Arts & Sciences Dean's Competitive Fellowship, University of Kentucky
- 2018 National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant
- 2018, 2017 Ken and Mary Sue Coleman Graduate Student Summer Fellowship, University of Kentucky
- 2018 Malcolm E. Jewell Award for Outstanding Graduate Students in Political Science, University of Kentucky Department of Political Science
- 2018 Emerging Global Scholars Award, Comparative Politics, University of Kentucky Department of Political Science
- 2017 Karen Mingst Emerging Global Scholar Award, University of Kentucky Department of Political Science
- 2016 Best Paper by a Graduate Student in Political Science, Ohio Association of Economists and Political Scientists
- 2016 S. Sidney & Margaret Ulmer Award for Best Graduate Student Paper, University of Kentucky Political Science Department