AJPS AMERICAN JOURNAL of POLITICAL SCIENCE

College Socialization and the Economic Views of Affluent Americans

Tali Mendelberg Princeton University
Katherine T. McCabe Princeton University
Adam Thal Princeton University

Abstract: *Affluent Americans support more conservative economic policies than the nonaffluent, and government responds disproportionately to these views. Yet little is known about the emergence of these consequential views. We develop, test, and find support for a theory of class cultural norms: These preferences are partly traceable to socialization that occurs on predominantly affluent college campuses, especially those with norms of financial gain, and especially among socially embedded students. The economic views of the student's cohort also matter, in part independently of affluence. We use a large panel data set with a high response rate and more rigorous causal inference strategies than previous socialization studies. The affluent campus effect holds with matching, among students with limited school choice, and in a natural experiment; and it passes placebo tests. College socialization partly explains why affluent Americans support economically conservative policies.*

Replication Materials: The data, code, and any additional materials required to replicate all analyses in this article are available on the *American Journal of Political Science* Dataverse within the Harvard Dataverse Network, at: http://dx.doi.org/10.7910/DVN/FS90RJ.

Affluent Americans are more likely to hold pro-wealth policy preferences than most Americans, and those views matter, because they influence policy disproportionately (Bartels 2008; Carnes 2013; Gilens 2012; Page, Bartels, and Seawright 2013). Given that these preferences are so important in policymaking, a relevant question is how affluent citizens come by more economically conservative views. This question has received little attention to date. Gilens (2012) and Page, Bartels, and Seawright (2013) document that the views of affluent Americans tend to be much more economically conservative than the median American, but they do not focus on explaining this gap. Similarly, after reporting that affluent Americans with profit-oriented occupations disproportionately shape conservative economic policy, Carnes suggests, but does not develop, the notion that this "may be because they were exposed to stronger cultures of conservative economic thought" (2013, 22).

What and where are these "cultures of conservative economic thought"? Why would these cultures specifically conservatize people from affluent backgrounds? Do they in fact do so? These are key but unexplored questions for understanding opinion formation in the New Gilded Age, when the wealth and power of the top income brackets have grown exponentially (Gilens and Page 2014). Bartels laments "the remarkable fact . . . that political scientists have done little to illuminate how the economic and social changes of the New Gilded Age have affected American democracy" (2008, 285). We explore a potential, neglected consequence of high income inequality: affluent campuses. The college campus is the social environment in which affluent individuals are

Tali Mendelberg is Professor, Department of Politics, Princeton University, 130 Corwin Hall, Princeton, NJ 08544 (talim@princeton.edu). Katherine T. McCabe is Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Politics, Princeton University, 130 Corwin Hall, Princeton, NJ 08544 (ktmccabe@princeton.edu). Adam Thal is Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Politics, Princeton University, 130 Corwin Hall, Princeton, NJ 08544 (thal@princeton.edu).

We thank Ye Eun Chun, Masha Krupenkin, Ashesh Rambachan, Tanika Raychaudhuri, Hannah Schoen, Sarah Sifuentes, and Lauren Ullmann for their assistance, and for their feedback and suggestions, we are grateful to Chris Achen, David Broockman, Martin Gilens, Amaney Jamal, Jonathan Olmsted, and Markus Prior. We also gratefully acknowledge data from UCLA's CIRP at HERI and the Mellon Foundation, and funding from the Russell Sage Foundation and Princeton University's Bobst Center for Peace and Justice, Center for the Study of Democratic Politics, and University Center for Human Values.

American Journal of Political Science, Vol. 00, No. 0, xxxx 2016, Pp. 1–18

 DOI: 10.1111/ajps.12265

immersed during the impressionable years of young adulthood. In the New Gilded Age, college attendance is heavily conditional on high parental income, leading many campuses to be populated mostly by affluent students (Bowen et al. 2005; Reardon 2011). Concentrated affluence has not been studied in political science, either in or outside campuses, but the findings here suggest that it can lead to more economically conservative policies.

Our investigation draws on studies of norms in key institutions of society. A norm refers to behaviors, understandings, or attitudes widely shared in a social setting (Paluck 2009). College's power as a site of political socialization may be due to norms (Newcomb 1943; Pascarella and Terenzini 1991; Sidanius et al. 2008). These norms shape attitudes that remain stable over decades (Alwin, Cohen, and Newcomb 1991).

However, those studies have not attended to the effects of concentrated affluence, or to norms that conservatize. Consequently, they conclude that college liberalizes. We find that college can also conservatize. We draw on norms theory and on class culture theory to explain these findings. Class culture theory predicts that class status is perpetuated over generations ("social reproduction") through affluent social environments that develop latent class tastes and interests ("cultural reproduction"; Bourdieu and Passeron 1990, 54). We argue that affluent campuses produce an affluent class culture involving expensive consumption patterns and leisure activities. When this culture combines with cohort norms of financial gain, it socializes affluent students to conceive of their class interests in a way that favors pro-wealth views. Economic status has a propensity to inform policy preferences, but that propensity typically remains latent unless activated by a situational trigger (Newman, Johnston, and Lown 2015; Sears and Funk 1990). A financially oriented affluent culture can be such a trigger.

This study also attempts to advance existing literature methodologically. No study of formative institutions has examined individual change over time across a large number of institutions that vary in their norms. This study uses a far larger data et than previous studies (64,924 college students, including 29,113 affluent students, and hundreds of schools), with freshman-senior reinterviews, and a nearly universal freshman response rate at most institutions. Studies of the effects of college characteristics have also not utilized college-level natural experiments, matching, or quasi-exogenous variation to address selection into particular colleges. This study uses all three.

We find that in campuses with many affluent students, affluent students (and only affluent students) become more economically conservative (and not socially conservative), especially where financial gain is also the norm, in line with a class culture explanation. The latter effect is nearly as large as the 20-point gap in economic policy preferences between median income and affluent adults observed by Gilens (2012). The campus affluence effect is strongest among students most likely to absorb the norm. Finally, political norms also matter; the cohort's opposition to wealth taxation has an effect, in part as a mediator for campus affluence, and in part independently. In sum, economic preferences are in part socially learned cultural products, and they are endogenous, malleable, and set by social institutions.

What Are the Effects of Concentrated Affluence on Campus?

Affluent Americans have distinctively conservative views on policies that implicate their financial gain (Gilens 2012, 114). Differences approximating 20 points between the 90th and 50th income percentiles show up on cutting the capital gains tax (which increases investment profits), expanding unemployment benefits (which reduce workers' incentives to accept low pay, thereby cutting profits), and increasing government regulation of the oil and gas industry (indirectly reducing profits). On two of these three issues, the affluent and middle class are on opposite sides.

Where do affluent Americans develop these distinctive views? We test the hypothesis that concentrated affluence creates norms that activate affluent students' latent class identity and interests, leaving a durable impact on policy views. A central finding of the literature on agents of socialization is that parents do not transmit their policy views directly to children; instead, children form views in peer environments, such as college (Newcomb 1943; Stoker and Bass 2011). College may socialize specifically by shaping the political meaning of social identities. Young adulthood is a time when politicized identities and a sense of group interest likely form, and what happens during those years can leave a lasting effect (Sears 1981; Stoker and Jennings 2008). Thus, understanding how college might affect class identities and subjective interests can contribute to an understanding of the evolution of adults' economic policy views.

Our argument also builds on a specific part of the socialization literature: Newcomb's (1943) theory about norms. Newcomb found that college liberalized affluent students from conservative families by making social approval conditional on liberal views. Newcomb inferred the effect of college norms by showing that it was the students who were most socially embedded who liberalized. These students were most exposed to the majority view

on how one should think and act, and they also wanted to be socially accepted by the college community. This theory provides an influential explanation of how college affects students' economic views.

While this literature offers important hypotheses, it retains several gaps. First, the liberalizing effect of college is inconsistent. Although the effects of college on tolerance are well replicated, by contrast, "the results for economic attitudes have generally been weaker" (Hastie 2007, 262).

We attempt to explain the inconsistent effects by showing that college can liberalize or conservatize depending on campus and student characteristics, with class important among these.

Second, the few large panel studies of college focus on interracial contact (Gurin et al. 2002; Sidanius et al. 2008) or political engagement (Hillygus 2005). Yet college may also shape views of class. Recent sociological studies find that class is among the most important dimensions of identity formation on campus and that affluent campus environments are a key to understanding the emergence of affluent class identities (Armstrong and Hamilton 2013). Our study broadens the potential routes and outcomes of college socialization by exploring how class environments interact with class background to shape views of economic policy. Because the views of affluent Americans are so consequential, we focus on those views.

Finally, to our knowledge, no study asks about the effects of campus class composition, or of class-related social norms, on political preferences. Yet class composition matters in adult environments (Huckfeldt 1986; Newman, Johnston, and Lown 2015; Oliver and Mendelberg 2000), and it may matter still more in the social environments of young adults. Exploring class composition in formative environments offers another avenue for research on class and politics.

We build on existing research by considering economic policy views as a potential expression of latent class-based identities and interests. Economic position creates a latent propensity to adopt preferences that support objective class interests (Newman, Johnston, and Lown 2015). This propensity remains latent unless activated by a contextual trigger. Below, we draw on class culture theory to explain why affluent campuses may act as such a trigger for affluent students.

How Affluent Campuses Activate Affluent Interests

According to class culture theory, the policy views, politicized identities, and subjective interests implicated in social class develop as individuals observe the social dynamics of their environment and find their place within it. Thus, class is in part a form of culture, a set of habits of mind and behavior developed by observing social norms practiced by a community within which one is embedded and with which one identifies, which confer status in a system of economic exchange. These habits seem natural and right to the individual when most people who share one's identity and are in one's environment enact them (Gelfand, Nishii, and Raver 2006). The greater the proportion of individuals, the more their habits pervade the social environment and signal the legitimacy of these practices and attitudes (Cialdini, Trost, and Gilbert 1998). The descriptive norms (i.e., what people do) become internalized injunctive norms (i.e., what one should do; Paluck 2009).

Schools act as an important site for this process and specifically link family class background to the student's subjective sense of class (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990). Affluent individuals learn and internalize affluent mores and develop class awareness in predominantly affluent schools (Khan 2012). Armstrong and Hamilton (2013) specifically document how campus affluence contributes to the social reproduction of affluent households through the cultural reproduction of class. They find that concentrated affluence places affluent lifestyles at the top of the social hierarchy, making the desirability of affluence highly salient to students. These lifestyles consist of elements such as "sorority and fraternity [membership], late-model cars ... dining at restaurants, spring break vacations, study abroad, fashionable clothing and accessories, and the grooming necessary to achieve the right personal style" (2013, 10–11). Students obtained high social status by displaying these elements, whereas those who failed to do so were "relegated ... to the bottom" and "consistently found themselves on the receiving end of social rejection" (2013, 159). The benefits of conforming are not only social approval, but also enhanced stores of cultural capital that come into play later in the labor or marriage markets. Thus, parents pass affluence on to their children by sending them to institutions where affluent lifestyles are prevalent, salient, and socially rewarded, and where they internalize affluent norms that facilitate their ability—and motivation—to obtain high incomes after college. In this way, affluent campuses may lead affluent individuals to seek to become personally affluent and to adopt affluent norms.

However, even if affluent campuses form an affluent culture, the culture may not necessarily trigger latent conservative preferences on economic issues. A class culture framework would hypothesize that it does so especially when the social norm promotes and legitimizes financial gain. Such norms are common on American college

campuses. As income inequality grew in the United States, college students increasingly indicated financial gain as a motivation for attending college (Pryor et al. 2007). We predict that, in the New Gilded Age, when many affluent campuses also have a norm of financial gain, the resulting culture may tilt affluent students toward economic policies aligned with their financial interests. In this way, norms may encourage affluent individuals to weight the acquisition and maintenance of wealth more heavily when forming their political beliefs, activating an otherwise latent connection between their objective economic interests and their preferences.

In addition to conservatizing by creating a cultural norm of affluent financial gain, affluent campuses may conservatize by creating an explicitly political norm. They may collect students with preexisting political views that protect financial gain from government interference. That is, the initial level of peer opinion on economic issues may serve as an additional, political norm that can explain when and how campus affluence affects individual student opinion. According to Newcomb (1943), the prevalence of a particular political opinion on campus inclines students toward that opinion. Therefore, affluent environments may conservatize partly by assembling many students who begin with a more conservative opinion, with that central tendency acting as a norm that socially motivates students to conform to a conservative view.

Our theory thus focuses on two distinct norms that may explain how predominantly affluent campuses act as conservative environments. One norm is the cultural practices of affluence, which signal the legitimacy of affluence, especially in combination with the salience of financial gain. This norm is directly established by concentrated affluence, and we refer to it as a cultural or affluent norm. The other norm, which is potentially an outgrowth of concentrated affluence, is the aggregate political opinion held by the majority. Affluent campuses may collect student bodies with a central tendency against interference with affluent financial gain, and this tendency may shape individual political views. We refer to it as a political or opinion norm. Each of these norms can crystallize an otherwise latent connection between a person's economic interests and policy preferences.

There is, however, an alternative view of political norms that separates them from class culture. That is, political norms may affect views independently of class. Newcomb's (1943) view of social norms did not regard them as an outgrowth of affluent family background, and others have found that political norms have effects without taking class into account (Dey 1996). A norms framework may thus predict that the central tendency of students' political views affects individual students regardless of class composition. We test this view of the political norm against the view above that regards the political norm as mostly an outgrowth of the cultural norm.

This alternative view also highlights an important distinctive prediction of class culture theory. Because class culture theory views political norms as derivative of class culture, it predicts that affluent students in particular are the ones to develop distinctively conservative economic views (see also Newman, Johnston, and Lown 2015). Class culture theory argues that affluent environments crystallize subjective interests in line with the class with which students already feel comfortable. If affluence is cultural, then students from affluent backgrounds will most readily absorb affluent cultural norms. Conversely, students from nonaffluent class backgrounds may not feel as identified with and integrated into an affluent culture, and they may be less likely to develop the tastes and habits of their affluent peers. First off, they often cannot afford to join expensive social activities and affluent cultural contexts or to devote much time to the socializing that exposes students to norms (Armstrong and Hamilton 2013). Furthermore, nonaffluent students disidentify with affluent campuses' upper-class norms of individual success (Stephens et al. 2012). Finally, on an affluent campus, affluent students were found to have higher occupational aspirations, and to be more aware of the personal benefits of affluence, than lower-class students (Aries and Seider 2007). Affluent campuses may thus prompt conservative economic views primarily among affluent students. Even if norms of financial gain or economic conservatism are salient for nonaffluent students, these students tend to lack a latent affluent identity and therefore will not view themselves as the affluent beneficiaries of economically conservative policies. Affluent campus effects may similarly be conditional on affluent background, affecting affluent more than nonaffluent students.

This class culture framework is also distinct from a network perspective. As Campbell put it, "contexts should not be confused with networks" (2013, 42). A network perspective has produced important relevant findings. For example, having an economically distressed friend is associated with economic liberalism, especially among politically talkative respondents (Newman 2014). More generally, the balance of political attitudes among one's regular discussants may have consequences for political attitudes (Huckfeldt et al. 1995; Mutz 2006). A network perspective might thus expect that people are influenced by one-on-one communication with specific discussants holding particular political views. Since its focus is on political messages exchanged among a small

set of dyads, a network perspective might predict that this communication effect would be enhanced among those who discuss politics more frequently. Finally, in light of Newman's (2014) findings that economic views are associated with political discussion with an economically distressed friend, a network perspective may also predict that campus affluence matters by limiting contact with poorer peers and enhancing contact with rich peers.

Although we test these network predictions, there is reason to put more stock in the class culture perspective. What happens among student dyads does not necessarily affect political attitudes (Visser and Levitan 2009). The most rigorous study yet of dyads on campus finds no attitudinal effects from randomized assignment to a politically talkative roommate (Nickerson 2009). Furthermore, even when behavior is contagious within a dyad (or household), it does not spread to a community (Sinclair, McConnell, and Green 2012). Huckfeldt specifically found that the class composition of the environment matters despite the class composition of one's intimate associates (1986, 132). That is, interaction among dyads of friends or acquaintances may not explain views in communities, such as affluent campuses, and the community may override dyads.

How would a norm disseminate if not through political discussion with specific individuals? A class culture perspective, drawing on norms, specifically predicts that individuals develop conservative views by exposure to and a desire to fit with the central tendency of the community. They look to the community's notion of the right way to think and behave, a notion signaled by the majority (Binder and Wood 2013). The signal is absorbed primarily by individuals who are both exposed and motivated to conform to the standards that generate more social acceptance in the campus community—the socially embedded (Newcomb 1943). While a network perspective might expect students to acquire policy views through regular exposure to a small set of specific individuals who communicate those views, students might instead develop those views by observing what the community as a whole widely practices and approves. When it practices and approves of an affluent way of life oriented to financial success, it makes that way of life seem both salient and desirable. The students who most wish to find favor in the eyes of the community consequently crystallize their latent identities into greater support for the ability of affluent people such as themselves to keep financial gains. As Armstrong and Hamilton (2013) found, the cultural reproduction of affluence happens through "full immersion" in the campus's affluent class culture. A class culture framework implies that students learn from this immersion that affluence and its material rewards are desirable and deserve protection without explicitly being told this message in political conversation. The more active they are in campus life, the more they observe, care about, and internalize this norm and the more likely they are to endorse its political implications. In sum, network theory offers a potential—but unnecessary—mediator of class culture and social norms.

A final alternative to the class culture perspective is that campuses matter not because of social norms, but because of their direct institutional practices. As an agent of socialization, educational institutions may affect views through their faculty or curriculum (Dey 1996; Jennings and Niemi 1974). While these hypotheses receive mixed support at best (Pascarella and Terenzini 1991), we examine the effect of faculty political views and of majoring in business.

In sum, we have developed a theory of class culture and its associated norms to explain what shapes affluent Americans' economic views in college. The theory predicts that affluent students' family backgrounds provide a latent potential to develop political views in line with affluent interests. The potential is activated in environments populated largely by affluent students, especially when the norm is to seek financial gain. College acts as an agent of socialization indirectly, by assembling students who are both affluent and financially oriented. The effect of affluent cultural norms may be partly mediated by a political norm consisting of the cohort's economic views. We distinguish this theory of affluent cultural norms from a theory of political norms wherein cohort policy views operate independently of class, on students of all class backgrounds; from a network theory of dyadic transmission of attitudes wherein affluent campuses influence those who talk about politics and interact with individuals from particular class backgrounds; and from a socialization theory wherein institutions act as direct agents of socialization through their personnel or curriculum. The main agent of socialization in our theory is thus the school's affluent class culture combined with social norms of financial gain, working in part through political norms of economic conservatism, and its mechanism is the student's embeddedness in campus social life.

Specifically, we test the following predictions: Senior year views are more conservative in affluent than nonaffluent campuses, conditional on views in freshman year—especially among the socially embedded, and especially among individuals from affluent backgrounds. We expect the affluent campus effect particularly when views on campus tilt toward financial gain, and to work in part through peers' conservative views on economic

policy. We also test the alternative predictions that the cohort's preexisting views on economic policy work independently of affluence, that norms diffuse through dyadic contact or political talk, and that schools affect views directly through faculty or curriculum rather than indirectly through assembling particular cohorts.

Data and Methods

We analyze data collected by the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP), housed at the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI). CIRP partners with schools to survey students about various attitudes and experiences at the beginning (freshman wave) and end of college (senior wave). The response rate is extremely high, typically above 75%. Respondents in the two-wave panel are similar to respondents who only took the freshman wave on variables of interest (supporting information [SI], 3). The sample consists of 64,924 students, including 29,113 affluent students. It spans 1989–98 in the freshman waves and 1996–2001 in the reinterview waves. The affluent sample includes 359 schools that vary considerably in size, public or private status, geographic location, selectivity, and student demographics. When calculating cohort- and school-level predictors, we pool consecutive pairs of freshman cohorts, drawing from a larger, supplementary freshman CIRP sample with approximately three million respondents. We conduct additional tests on students from CIRP's 1989 freshman cohort who were reinterviewed 4 years postgraduation as part of the College and Beyond (CB) project.[1]

We use a lagged dependent variable (LDV) model that controls on the respondent's freshman wave opinion. The data are multilevel: Respondents are nested in school-years (cohorts), which are nested within schools and within years. We control on pretreatment covariates at all levels and replicate the primary model with matching. We use multilevel models with random intercepts for schools and cohorts, and fixed effects for senior year (Gelman and Hill 2007). (See SI, 5, for all wording, coding, and descriptive information.)

***Independent Variable* (Affluence).** We measure individual affluence with self-reported parental income, and, following Gilens (2012), set the cutoff for affluent at the 90th percentile of the national distribution during the respondent's freshman year (SI, 3). We conduct robustness checks with alternative measures (SI, 4). The primary independent variable is the proportion of affluent students at the school, described below.

Dependent Variables. The main outcome of interest is the available question most squarely tapping support for government policy that protects affluence. The question asks respondents' level of agreement with the statement, "Wealthy people should pay a larger share of taxes than they do now" (*Tax the wealthy*). Responses are *Agree Strongly* (0), *Agree Somewhat* (.333), *Disagree Somewhat* (.667), and *Disagree Strongly* (1). The CB data set allows us to replicate with a different item tapping views on "economic issues," a 5-point scale ranging from *Very Liberal* (0) to *Very Conservative* (1).

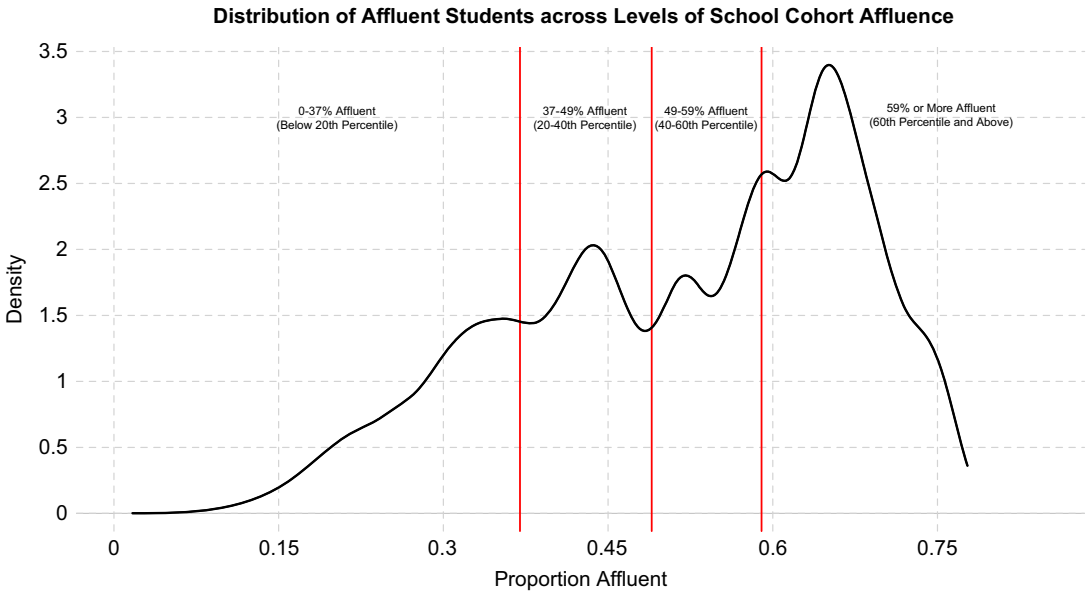
Control Variables. Individual-level controls include dummies for *Latino*, *Black*, *Other race*, *Female*, *Evangelical*, *Jewish*, *Other or no religion*, *High standardized test score*, and *High H.S. GPA*.[2] We also control for students' motivations for attending college at the individual and freshman cohort levels. These include a nonmaterialistic goal—whether the student is attending college to "learn more about things that interest me" (*Attend to gain knowledge*, coded 1 if *very important*, 0 otherwise, aggregated to *Proportion attending to gain knowledge*)—and a materialistic goal—whether the student is attending college to "be able to make more money" (*Attend to make money*, coded 1 if *very important*, 0 otherwise, aggregated to *Proportion attending to make money*). At the cohort level, we also control for selectivity with the proportion of students scoring above 1360 on the SAT or equivalent (*Proportion high standardized test score*) and the proportion of students with high school GPAs of A– or above (*Proportion high H.S. GPA*). We also control for *Proportion Evangelical*, *Proportion Jewish*, *Proportion other or no religion*, *Proportion Latino*, and *Proportion other race*. At the school level, we use dummy variables to control for the school's region (*Northeast, South*), size (*Large student body*), public versus private (*Public college or university*), and whether the school is *Mostly female* or *Mostly black*.We add controls for graduating cohort year to capture time trends from events.

Placebo Outcome Variables. As a placebo test, we assess whether affluent campuses conservatize on preferences toward three social issues: *Abortion*, "*Homosexual*" *relationships*, and *Racial discrimination*.

[1] See SI (12–13) for survey information.

[2] Asian or white and Catholic or Protestant are omitted categories.

FIGURE 1 Distribution of Proportion of Affluent Students



Results

Measuring Campus Affluence

We first document the premise that campuses have a high level of affluence. About half of the affluent students in the sample attend schools where most students are affluent. In about one-quarter of the schools, most students are affluent. The data thus provide sufficient variation on *Proportion affluent.*

We code campus affluence specifically to measure the theoretically relevant context: schools where affluent students are a clear majority and thus where norms of affluence would exhibit their effect most clearly. First, we divide affluent students into quintiles based on the proportion of affluent students in the respondent's freshman cohort and the school's freshman cohort directly preceding the respondent's cohort, where available (Figure 1). Then we combine the top two quintiles, forming a total of four categories. The lowest category, consisting of the bottom 20% of the affluent distribution, has less than 37% affluent students in a respondent's cohort. This setting represents weak and unclear affluent class norms. The highest category, consisting of the top 40% of the affluent distribution, consists of cohorts in which 59% or more of the students are affluent. This category represents a strong "dosage" of affluent norms. We combined the top two quintiles in order to have enough statistical power in the category highlighted by the affluent norms argument.

The Conservatizing Effect of Campus Affluence

Table 1 (column 1) presents the basic model of an affluent student's senior year opposition to wealth taxation, holding constant the student's freshman opinion and the controls explained above. Relative to students in schools with a small proportion of affluent students, students in schools with 59% or more affluent students are 5.5 percentage points more conservative ($p < .001$). Students in schools with between 49% and 59% affluent students also hold more conservative opinions compared to students in the least affluent schools, at half the magnitude of the effect at the most affluent schools ($p < .01$). These findings are consistent with a norms explanation, which holds that norms are most powerful when set by a large majority.[3]

Campus affluence is among the most powerful predictors of economic attitudes. It is more powerful than region, public versus private status, ethnic composition (*Latino, Other race*), religious denomination composition (except *Evangelical*), mostly female schools, size, and selectivity. It is also more powerful than all the individual-level predictors except *Black*, including *Latino, Other race, Female, Evangelical, Jewish, Other or no religion,* academic achievement, motivation to make money, and motivation

[3]Instead of shifting attitudes, affluent campus cultures may foster greater norm compliance in reporting attitudes. Both are consistent with a norms theory.

TABLE 1 Taxing the Wealthy: Main Random Effects Models

	Lagged DV	Faculty Views	Intended Business Major	Matching	Lives within 100 Miles	Attends Because Close
Intercept	0.234***	0.102	0.224**	0.015	0.273**	0.081
	(0.068)	(0.127)	(0.069)	(0.056)	(0.102)	(0.191)
Lagged DV	0.462***	0.468***	0.460***	0.481***	0.474***	0.478***
	(0.005)	(0.007)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.010)	(0.020)
37–49% affluent	0.007	0.025	0.005	—	0.012	0.040
	(0.008)	(0.013)	(0.008)		(0.012)	(0.023)
49–59% affluent	0.029**	0.030	0.027**	—	0.045**	0.054*
	(0.010)	(0.018)	(0.010)		(0.014)	(0.024)
More than 59% affluent	0.055***	0.055*	0.049***	0.051***	0.049**	0.089**
	(0.012)	(0.024)	(0.012)	(0.007)	(0.017)	(0.029)
Mean faculty tax view		0.185*				
		(0.076)				
Intended business major			0.056***			
			(0.005)			
Individual Controls						
High standardized test score	−0.019***	−0.015*	−0.015**	−0.006	−0.015	0.013
	(0.005)	(0.007)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.012)	(0.029)
High H.S. GPA	−0.014***	−0.016**	−0.012**	−0.015***	−0.012	−0.024
	(0.004)	(0.006)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.007)	(0.014)
Attend to gain knowledge	−0.021***	−0.018**	−0.019***	−0.027***	−0.021**	0.005
	(0.004)	(0.006)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.008)	(0.017)
Attend to make money	0.039***	0.038***	0.035***	0.043***	0.032***	0.020
	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.007)	(0.015)
Female	−0.010**	−0.007	−0.006	−0.014***	−0.011	−0.027
	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.007)	(0.015)
Latino	−0.042**	−0.069***	−0.044***	−0.067***	−0.039	−0.072
	(0.013)	(0.018)	(0.013)	(0.015)	(0.027)	(0.054)
Black	−0.083***	−0.066**	−0.084***	−0.066**	−0.121***	−0.101
	(0.016)	(0.023)	(0.017)	(0.022)	(0.028)	(0.068)
Other race	−0.034***	−0.050***	−0.032***	−0.053***	−0.033	−0.052
	(0.008)	(0.012)	(0.008)	(0.011)	(0.017)	(0.035)
Evangelical	0.003	−0.003	0.004	0.011	0.007	−0.019
	(0.007)	(0.010)	(0.007)	(0.010)	(0.012)	(0.024)
Jewish	−0.002	−0.020	−0.001	−0.017	−0.030	0.004
	(0.012)	(0.018)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.030)	(0.065)
Other or no religion	−0.033***	−0.028***	−0.032***	−0.036***	−0.037***	−0.020
	(0.005)	(0.008)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.010)	(0.023)
Freshman Cohort Controls						
Proportion high standardized test score	0.050	0.017	0.053	0.033	0.077	0.052
	(0.042)	(0.087)	(0.042)	(0.028)	(0.069)	(0.128)
Proportion high H.S. GPA	0.012	−0.019	0.015	0.023	0.003	−0.056
	(0.029)	(0.053)	(0.029)	(0.021)	(0.042)	(0.078)
Proportion attending to gain knowledge	−0.074	0.034	−0.071	0.073	−0.151	0.178
	(0.075)	(0.145)	(0.075)	(0.058)	(0.110)	(0.206)

(Continued)

TABLE 1 Continued

	Lagged DV	Faculty Views	Intended Business Major	Matching	Lives within 100 Miles	Attends Because Close
Proportion attending to make money	0.146***	0.173*	0.142***	0.293***	0.165*	0.105
	(0.043)	(0.076)	(0.043)	(0.036)	(0.067)	(0.130)
Proportion Latino	0.024**	0.025	0.022*	0.022***	0.034*	0.008
	(0.009)	(0.014)	(0.009)	(0.006)	(0.014)	(0.023)
Proportion other race	−0.007	−0.029	−0.010	−0.001	−0.016	−0.026
	(0.009)	(0.015)	(0.009)	(0.007)	(0.015)	(0.027)
Proportion Evangelical	0.079***	0.081***	0.076***	0.090***	0.085***	0.112**
	(0.014)	(0.024)	(0.014)	(0.011)	(0.021)	(0.040)
Proportion Jewish	0.001	0.021	−0.003	−0.002	−0.019	−0.034
	(0.011)	(0.021)	(0.011)	(0.007)	(0.017)	(0.031)
Proportion other or no religion	−0.006	−0.017	−0.003	0.004	0.018	−0.002
	(0.012)	(0.020)	(0.012)	(0.008)	(0.018)	(0.033)
School Controls						
Mostly female	0.017	0.022	0.021	0.012	0.013	−0.060
	(0.018)	(0.030)	(0.018)	(0.016)	(0.027)	(0.049)
Mostly black	−0.067*	−0.104*	−0.064*	−0.192***	−0.014	−0.134
	(0.031)	(0.048)	(0.031)	(0.036)	(0.053)	(0.104)
Large student body	−0.001	0.012	−0.002	−0.022**	−0.001	−0.061
	(0.013)	(0.017)	(0.013)	(0.007)	(0.019)	(0.031)
Public college or university	0.004	0.001	0.007	0.027**	−0.002	0.059
	(0.013)	(0.018)	(0.013)	(0.008)	(0.018)	(0.034)
Northeast	−0.022*	−0.031	−0.019*	−0.017**	−0.027*	−0.031
	(0.009)	(0.017)	(0.009)	(0.006)	(0.012)	(0.020)
South	−0.005	0.004	−0.003	0.007	−0.014	0.002
	(0.010)	(0.016)	(0.010)	(0.007)	(0.014)	(0.025)
Graduation Year Fixed Effects						
1997	−0.017*	−0.020	−0.016*	−0.008	−0.011	−0.010
	(0.008)	(0.013)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.013)	(0.023)
1998	−0.028***	−0.043**	−0.027**	−0.020**	−0.030*	−0.008
	(0.008)	(0.014)	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.013)	(0.022)
1999	−0.001	−0.008	−0.003	−0.009	0.009	−0.001
	(0.009)	(0.015)	(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.014)	(0.024)
2000	0.002	−0.007	−0.000	−0.003		
	(0.009)	(0.015)	(0.009)	(0.010)		
2001	−0.004	−0.008	−0.004	−0.014	0.001	
	(0.009)	(0.015)	(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.013)	
Log likelihood	–3778.828	–1556.073	–3582.089		–1150.288	–339.790
Observations	29,113	12,588	28,319	21,879	7,446	1,819
Number of freshman year cohorts	827	268	823		624	375
Number of schools	359	117	359		311	215
Adjusted R^2				0.286		

Note: ***p < .001, **p < .01, *p < .05.

to gain knowledge. It is similar in magnitude to the liberalizing effect of *Mostly Black*.[4] That is, attending a predominantly affluent school predicts conservatism nearly as much as attending a predominantly African American school predicts liberalism. A school-level analysis yields a similar effect (SI, 18–19).

Schools as Direct Agents of Socialization?

An alternative account to class culture and socialization by campus norms is that schools carry a direct effect as educational institutions, regardless of norms they inadvertently generate. They may shape political views by hiring faculty who are economically conservative or liberal, or by encouraging students to specialize in particular majors and curricular tracks. What may appear as an affluence effect may be the result of faculty or curricular effects. To test these hypotheses, we examine a subset of schools with data from a faculty survey, adding a measure of the school's average faculty opinion on the dependent variable (Table 1, column 2). Although the coefficient on faculty views is 0.185, the substantive effect when moving from the 10th to 90th percentile of faculty views is only 0.03, about half the magnitude of campus affluence. Furthermore, the campus affluence effect remains virtually unchanged. Neither does campus affluence work through curricular tracks, though those do matter; adding *Intended business major* leaves the effect of campus affluence substantially unchanged (Table 1, column 3). While schools carry direct effects through their faculty or their academic tracks, these variables do not explain the affluent campus effect.[5]

Robustness Checks and Selection Artifacts

The affluent campus effect could be due not to exposure to campus norms, but, instead, to a selection effect. Students more inclined to become conservative may be more likely to select into affluent schools. While the panel design and lagged dependent variable provide some reassurance, we conduct a number of robustness checks. First, we replicate the campus affluence effect using genetic matching on all individual-level covariates through MatchIt in R (Ho et al. 2011). For manageability, we dichotomize treatment into affluent (59% or more) versus nonaffluent schools (49% or fewer). Matching reduces the differences in means to less than 0.01 for all individual-level covariates (on a 0 to 1 scale; SI, 20). We then use weighted least squares regression with controls at the individual, cohort, and school levels. The campus affluence effect holds (Table 1, column 4).

To further account for selection bias, we test the campus affluence effect only among students who select schools near their homes, following the literature on instrumental variables in college choice (Card 1995). These students are less likely to select into schools for reasons correlated with both campus affluence and conservative change. We estimate the effect of affluent campuses among students who indicate it was "very important" to them to attend a school near home and, separately, among students who attend a school within 100 miles of home. The affluent campus effect remains similar (Table 1, columns 5–6).[6]

We ran another set of robustness checks on a subset of students reinterviewed 4 years after college. This College and Beyond (CB) subsample tests the longevity of the effect and contains an additional dependent variable (self-reported views on "economic issues," a 5-point scale ranging from *Very Liberal* [0] to *Very Conservative* [1]).[7] It also identifies schools to which respondents applied and from which they were rejected (SI, 12–13).

Table 2 (column 1) replicates the affluence effect after controlling for the affluence of schools to which students applied, thereby holding constant a taste for affluent schools.[8] Column 2 replicates the effect among a subset who applied to both affluent and less affluent schools, thus exhibiting a willingness to attend either type, and who were also rejected from one and not the other (affluence-only admits, non-affluence-only admits). That is, these students could not choose to attend a school based on

[4]It holds when including only white or only nonwhite students, in a multilevel ordered logistic regression, and when subsetting by freshman year opinion (results available from authors). It also holds with a more robust measure of affluence using home zip codes in addition to self-reported income (SI, 4), and when accounting for cross-regional variation in income (SI, 4) and the local economic context surrounding campuses (SI, 19).

[5]Adding the endogenous actual business major (becoming a business major by senior year or switching away from majoring in business), or proportion intended business majors, does not change the results (SI, 20). The faculty result is similar when using faculty political ideology (available from the authors).

[6]The effect remains with an instrumental variable regression using college distance from home as the instrument (available from the authors).

[7]This data set lacks a lagged dependent variable. We approximate it with freshman year overall ideology and "raise taxes to reduce the deficit." Excluding these controls increases the campus affluence effect (available from the authors).

[8]In the CB sample, the top category for campus affluence is *More than 64% affluent*. The liberalizing effect of *Application median percent affluence* is driven by its correlation with application to selective schools; it becomes small and insignificant when controlling on the latter.

TABLE 2 Economic Views: College and Beyond Results

	Main Model	Subset Model
Intercept	0.307***	0.299
	(0.079)	(0.237)
50–64% affluent	−0.015	
	(0.029)	
More than 64% affluent	0.066*	
	(0.031)	
Only rejected from nonaffluent schools		0.148***
		(0.041)
Individual Controls		
Application median percent affluent	−0.145*	−0.180
	(0.064)	(0.339)
Ideological conservatism	0.450***	0.532***
	(0.033)	(0.087)
Raise tax to reduce deficit	−0.060**	−0.064
	(0.023)	(0.062)
Important career with high earnings	0.126***	0.080
	(0.026)	(0.070)
High test score	−0.014	−0.049
	(0.014)	(0.039)
High H.S. GPA	−0.009	0.002
	(0.015)	(0.041)
Missing H.S. GPA	0.022	0.121
	(0.030)	(0.078)
Attend to gain knowledge	−0.011	−0.001
	(0.018)	(0.056)
Attend to make money	0.018	0.024
	(0.015)	(0.040)
Female	−0.069***	−0.050
	(0.013)	(0.035)
Latino	−0.064	0.108
	(0.047)	(0.224)
Black	−0.083**	−0.020
	(0.030)	(0.136)
Other race	0.009	−0.100
	(0.035)	(0.111)
Evangelical	−0.000	−0.040
	(0.021)	(0.062)
Jewish	−0.028	0.055
	(0.022)	(0.052)
Other or no religion	−0.039**	0.043
	(0.015)	(0.037)
School Controls		
Proportion high standardized test score	−0.113	−0.038
	(0.065)	(0.121)
Proportion high H.S. GPA	0.178	0.009
	(0.101)	(0.191)
All female	0.071*	0.177
	(0.031)	(0.092)
All black	0.019	
	(0.069)	
Log likelihood	16.564	–20.717
Deviance	–33.128	41.434
Observations	1469	226
Number of schools	15	12

Note: ***p < .001, **p < .01, *p < .05.

its high or low affluence. They were assigned their treatment status by the school. This is a strong test because it both accounts for preexisting taste for (or against) affluent schools and severely limits selection into treatment or control. The campus affluence effect is strong and significant despite the small sample size.

A Natural Experiment

A final check on selection comes from a school that experienced a substantial change over time in its affluent percentage, allowing us to replicate the affluence effect within a school. Local news sources suggest that this change was imposed on students by the administration rather than driven by student choice, and it occurred within a very short time frame. Thus, it is unlikely to be correlated with unobservable covariates, representing a discrete shock to affluent composition not caused by self-selection. The 1992 and 1993 freshman cohorts had more than 55% affluent students (*Affluent years*), whereas the 1996 and 1997 freshman cohorts (*Nonaffluent years*) had fewer than 40% affluent students.[9] The case meets Dunning's causal-process observation approach to validating as-if randomization by the fact that 1996 freshmen applied in 1995, prior to the implementation of the new policy (Dunning 2012). This timing considerably lowers the chance that students self-selected based on treatment status. Between the high- and low-affluence periods, the university experienced a significant change in leadership. The new leadership was characterized as able at fundraising and interested in increasing student diversity, plausibly causing the increase in nonaffluent students. Supporting the inference that this specific event, rather than

[9]We examine class composition in multiple ways (SI, 22).

TABLE 3 School Case Study: Taxing the Wealthy—Affluent versus Nonaffluent Years

	No Controls	Controls
Intercept	0.239***	0.137*
	(0.044)	(0.057)
Lagged DV	0.375***	0.414***
	(0.080)	(0.066)
Affluent years 1992–93	0.073***	0.101***
	(0.019)	(0.025)
High standardized test score		−0.228***
		(0.049)
High H.S. GPA		0.094***
		(0.026)
Attend to gain knowledge		0.034
		(0.031)
Attend to make money		−0.013
		(0.023)
Female		0.041
		(0.045)
Latino		−0.194**
		(0.063)
Black		0.061
		(0.051)
Other race		0.181***
		(0.037)
Evangelical		0.388**
		(0.125)
Other or no religion		−0.114
		(0.090)
R^2	0.191	0.307
Adjusted R^2	0.181	0.250
Observations	159	159

Note: Clustered standard errors by freshman cohort year. ***p < .001, **p < .01, *p < .05.

student self-selection, moved student affluence, the years leading up to 1994 have consistently high levels of affluent students, and the years after 1996 have consistently low levels of affluent students. To further validate this case as a natural experiment using Dunning's (2012) criteria, we establish pretreatment equivalence: Affluent and nonaffluent years are largely balanced on observable cohort-level characteristics (SI, 24). Using a least squares LDV model with standard errors clustered by freshman cohort, we find that affluent students in the affluent years adopt views toward taxing the wealthy in senior year that are 10 percentage points more conservative than affluent students from the less affluent years ($p < .001$; Table 3).

Placebo Tests

Affluent campuses should not affect outcomes irrelevant to the affluent culture framework: opinions on social issues. That is, if campus affluence works by setting in motion norms of affluence and activating latent class interests, it would not affect opinion on issues that do not implicate those interests. Table 4 (columns 1–3) shows that campus affluence does not affect affluent students' opinion on restricting abortion, prohibiting "homosexual" relationships, or denying that racial discrimination is still a problem.[10] Affluent colleges only conservatize on the dimension that implicates class-interested norms.

Finally, if affluent campuses matter by socializing students to cultural norms that activate their affluent identities and financial interests, as hypothesized, then affluent campuses would not affect those whose class identities and interests are not affluent. That is, affluent schools would conservatize only affluent students. Accordingly, Table 4 (column 4) shows the null effects of campus affluence on the economic views of the nonaffluent.

Mechanisms: Mediators and Moderators

Social Embeddedness

A prediction of the class culture argument is that affluent norms especially affect affluent individuals who are embedded in campus life, who would be most exposed and receptive to the social environment that promulgates the norm. The indicators of embeddedness are socializing with friends for more than 20 hours per week (*Frequent socializer*) and belonging to a fraternity or sorority (*Greek life*; Armstrong and Hamilton 2013).

Table 5 (column 1) provides the estimates, and Figure 2 shows the predicted campus affluence effect. Affluent schools have a stronger conservative effect on embedded students (evidenced by the steeper slope in Figure 2 and the significant interaction term on the highest campus affluence dummy and *Greek life*). Greek organizations boost conservative economic views much more in affluent than nonaffluent schools, and they make little difference in nonaffluent schools. Put differently, what Greek organizations do is to act as a carrier for the effect of campus affluence, not so much conservatize per se. Embedded students do not grow conservative because

[10]Models in Table 4 onward contain all covariates in Table 1 (SI, beginning p. 28).

TABLE 4 Placebo Tests

	Abortion	Homosexual Relationships	Racial Discrimination	Taxes: Nonaffluent Respondents
Intercept	0.511***	0.508***	0.129**	0.252***
	(0.073)	(0.063)	(0.049)	(0.049)
Lagged DV	0.556***	0.325***	0.240***	0.387***
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
37–49% affluent	−0.014	−0.011	0.001	−0.003
	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.006)
49–59% affluent	−0.017	−0.010	−0.006	0.009
	(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.007)	(0.008)
More than 59% affluent	−0.020	−0.019	−0.002	0.011
	(0.013)	(0.011)	(0.008)	(0.010)
Controls included	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Log likelihood	–3930.534	–1254.689	2445.993	–3541.844
Observations	29,449	29,341	29,505	35,419
Number of freshman year cohorts	885	888	883	891
Number of schools	361	361	360	378

Note: ***p < .001, **p < .01, *p < .05.

they are embedded types of people, but rather because they are embedded in affluent environments. These findings lend support to the class culture and affluent norms framework.

Table 5 (column 2) shows a similar pattern for the alternate form of embeddedness, socializing. This variable has no conservatizing effect in less affluent schools, but it does significantly affect views in schools with moderate or high levels of affluence. Those who socialize more than average become the most conservative only in environments where affluent students approach or exceed the numerical majority, supporting the class culture and affluent norms explanation.

Norm of Financial Gain

An additional testable implication from the class culture argument is that campus affluence matters most in schools with a norm of financial gain. We measure this norm by first calculating the proportion of students who indicate making money was very important to their decision to attend school (*Proportion attending to make money*). We then divide this proportion into the bottom 20%, middle 60%, and top 20% of the affluent distribution. Table 5 (column 3) and Figure 3 show a significant interactive effect of affluent campuses and the most financially oriented campuses. These results reinforce the affluent norms argument: The effects of affluent campus culture are most pronounced where a clear majority of students are motivated by financial gain.[11]

The magnitude of the interactive effect is informative. Students who emerge from schools where a large majority of students are affluent and motivated to make money are 17 points more economically conservative than students in schools with a minority of affluent and money-oriented students (adding the coefficients from the highest campus affluence category, the highest school-level money category, and their interaction). This 17-point gap approaches the 20-point gap between median income and affluent adults in the studies reviewed earlier. A school-level analysis yields a similar effect (SI, 19–20).

Cohort Political Opinion Norm

The class culture argument also expects that the effect of affluent campus norms would be mediated by the political norm, namely, the majority opinion on wealth taxation. That is, affluent campuses may also collect many students who are already more economically conservative in their freshman year, and individuals will conform to this majority opinion. We average the freshman response to the

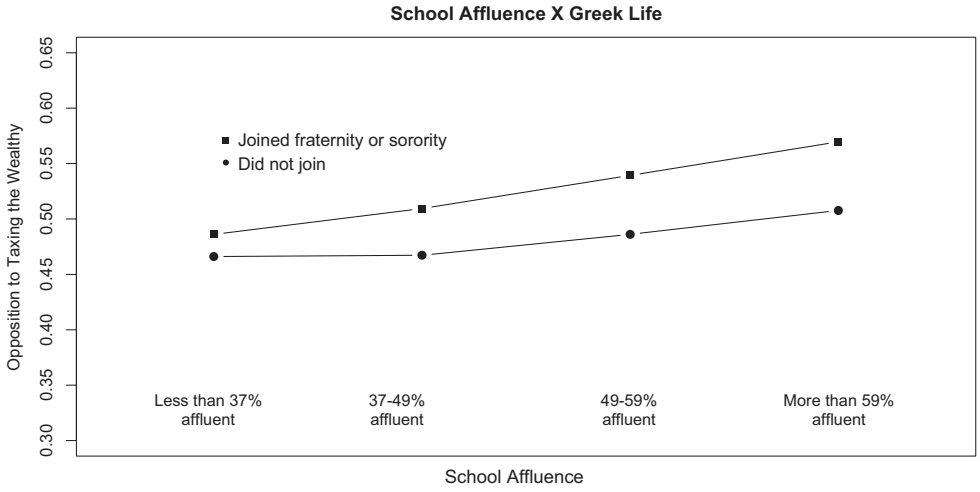
[11] Likewise, the affluence effect is mediated by the proportion of students whose fathers are in occupations primarily oriented toward profit, such as business managers and executives (available from the authors).

TABLE 5 Social Embeddedness and Financial Gain Interactions

	Joined Greek Life	Socialize 20+ Hours per Week	Cohort Make Money
Intercept	0.264***	0.230***	0.314***
	(0.067)	(0.069)	(0.055)
Lagged DV	0.459***	0.461***	0.462***
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
37–49% wealthy	0.001	−0.002	0.007
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.016)
49–59% wealthy	0.020*	0.020*	0.024
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.019)
More than 59% wealthy	0.042***	0.048***	0.056**
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.020)
Greek life	0.020*		
	(0.009)		
Frequent socializer		−0.013	
		(0.009)	
58–70% attend to make money			0.021
			(0.016)
70% or more attend to make money			0.046**
			(0.016)
37–49% Wealthy × Greek Life	0.022		
	(0.013)		
49–59% Wealthy × Greek Life	0.033*		
	(0.014)		
More than 59% Wealthy × Greek Life	0.042***		
	(0.011)		
37–49% Wealthy × Frequent Socializer		0.028*	
		(0.013)	
49–59% Wealthy × Frequent Socializer		0.029*	
		(0.013)	
More than 59% Wealthy × Frequent Socializer		0.025*	
		(0.011)	
37–49% Wealthy × 58–70% Attend to Make Money			0.001
			(0.019)
49–59% Wealthy × 58–70% Attend to Make Money			0.008
			(0.021)
More than 59% Wealthy × 58–70% Attend to Make Money			−0.006
			(0.019)
37–49% Wealthy × 70% or More Attend to Make Money			−0.001
			(0.020)
49–59% Wealthy × 70% or More Attend to Make Money			−0.000
			(0.024)
More than 59% Wealthy × 70% or More Attend to Make Money			0.066*
			(0.029)
Controls included	Yes	Yes	Yes
Log likelihood	–3730.699	–3733.282	–3794.601
Observations	29,113	28,849	29,113
Number of freshman year cohorts	827	826	827
Number of schools	359	358	359

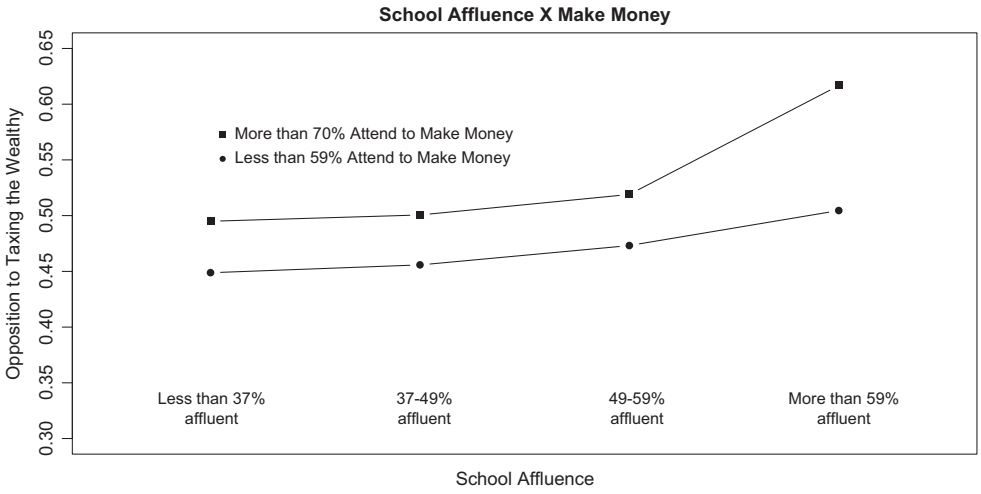
Note: ***p < .001, **p < .01, *p < .05.

FIGURE 2 Predicted Effect of Campus Affluence Conditional on Social Embeddedness



Note: Covariates held at observed values.

FIGURE 3 Predicted Effect of Campus Affluence Conditional on Norm of Financial Gain



Note: Covariates held at observed values.

tax item among the students in a respondent's freshman cohort and preceding cohort, where available. Table 6 reports that *Cohort opposition to taxation* has a positive and significant effect, and the affluent campus effect becomes indistinguishable from zero.[12] Moving between the 10th and 90th percentiles of cohort opposition results in a 0.07 impact on student views, similar in magnitude to the total effect of campus affluence.[13] Thus, the relationship between campus affluence and senior year views can be attributed at least in part to the political opinion norm on campus.[14]

However, an alternative explanation competing against an affluent norms perspective is that the cohort's

[12]Formal mediation tests similarly find both that the cohort opinion norm significantly mediates the campus affluence effect and that the average direct effect of campus affluence becomes indistinguishable from zero when accounting for the cohort opinion norm (SI, 24).

[13]Though the coefficient is large, the empirical range of this variable is narrow.

[14]The cohort opinion norm reduces the interactive effect of campus affluence with financial gain by about 40%. It does not reduce the interactive effect with social embeddedness (SI, 24).

Table 6 Taxing the Wealthy: Opinion Norm Mediation

	Lagged DV	Cohort Lagged DV
Intercept	0.234***	0.100
	(0.068)	(0.067)
Lagged DV	0.462***	0.460***
	(0.005)	(0.005)
37–49% affluent	0.007	−0.008
	(0.008)	(0.008)
49–59% affluent	0.029**	0.002
	(0.010)	(0.010)
More than 59% affluent	0.055***	0.012
	(0.012)	(0.013)
Cohort opposition to taxation		0.447***
		(0.068)
Controls included	Yes	Yes
Log likelihood	–3778.828	–3750.632
Observations	29,113	29,017
Number of freshman year cohorts	827	821
Number of schools	359	357

Note: ***p < .001, **p < .01, *p < .05.

political norm works independently of class, not as a mechanism of class culture. Evidence in support of this nonclass view of the political opinion norm is that cohort opposition also affects nonaffluent students, by a similar magnitude (SI, 24).Cohort opinion on economic policy, then, may not only operate as a mechanism for campus affluence. Cohort political norms are another important factor in shaping views, operating not only as a conduit of, but also alongside, affluent campuses. Political norms and class cultural norms each testify to the importance of social norms, one through less and the other through more class-specific paths.

Alternative Mechanism: Networks

A network perspective could also explain many of these findings, and it makes additional predictions. These predictions center on contact and on political discussion. To test these, we first examine whether the campus affluence effect is moderated by political discussion, using a 3-point variable asking how often a student "discussed politics" in the previous year. Political discussion has no interactive effects with campus affluence (SI, 26). Norms on affluent campuses are not disseminated through conversations about politics. Next, we use CB data to test the network prediction that contact with particular students explains the affluence effect, using the binary question asking students whether they got to know two or more students "from a family much poorer than yours" while in college. Enough students (66%) report such contact that we can gauge its effects. However, we find that this contact has no significant interactive effects with campus affluence (SI, 27). That is, affluent students develop more conservative economic views at affluent campuses regardless of how little contact they had with poor students; lack of contact does not explain the affluent school effect. Nor does contact with poor students have an effect at nonaffluent schools, so a high level of such contact cannot explain why students at nonaffluent schools hold relatively more liberal views. Finally, we run the parallel test using a similar measure of contact with students "from a family much wealthier than yours," which also provides sufficient variation. We also find no conservatizing interactive effects from such contact (SI, 27).

Thus, contrary to the network perspective, there is little evidence that direct communication among particular types of peers transmits views on economic policy. Affluent students do not learn economic views by talking with peers of other class backgrounds or having political discussions. These null findings are consistent with the notion that students absorb norms by being socially embedded—exposed to campus norms and seeking social approval by adopting those norms.

Conclusion

As Newcomb (1943) found more than 70 years earlier in one college, so too we find that the college social environment shapes the political attitudes of students. However, unlike Newcomb's findings, students do not become more economically liberal. This holds among affluent and nonaffluent students and in affluent and nonaffluent colleges. In an era of income inequality, as affluent students spend years immersed in a social environment oriented to affluence, they emerge with more economically conservative views relative to peers in other environments. The mechanisms lie with social norms of financial gain and of political opinion. These conclusions rest on methodological features that contribute to existing research: a much larger set of panel data on individuals and institutions, including an unusually large sample of affluent individuals, and more exogenous strategies for causal inference. The results pass various robustness checks—including matching, restricted individual selection into schools, a natural experiment, and placebo tests—and point specifically to social norms.

These results reinforce the utility of the classic line of research on how institutions in society shape citizens. Institutions, including schools, do more than aggregate or sort preferences. They can affect a person's politicized social identity: its perceived interests, rights, and obligations (Walsh 2012). This study suggests that institutions and norms shape the political meaning of advantage, not only of disadvantage.

These findings also contribute to the literature on the political consequences of rising income inequality, demonstrating the downstream effects of unequal access to institutions designed to be a route to upward mobility. Increasingly unequal access to college begets student bodies with a high-income skew. This compositional tilt may turn the college experience into an avenue for social and cultural reproduction by creating norms that affect the opinions of affluent adults. These opinions tend to be substantially more economically conservative than the median, and they shape policy in an era when affluent Americans exercise far more political influence than other Americans. This political inequality in turn reinforces economic inequality (Bartels 2008; McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006). Nonaffluent students are also affected by their campus's political norm, but not by its affluence. It is the process of affluent cultural reproduction that renders campuses into sites of class socialization, and this process is noteworthy given that the views of affluent Americans carry disproportionate influence.

More generally, these findings imply that government-supported institutions can play an important role in political socialization, that class interests are transmitted across generations partly through the institutions to which parents send their children, and that the social environments that adults inhabit in their formative years can shape their views to be in line with their parents' economic class interests. Thus, the economic views that affect policy are partly shaped by institutionalized social forces.

References

Alwin, Duane F., Ronald L. Cohen, and Theodore M. Newcomb. 1991. *Political Attitudes over the Life Span: The Bennington Women after Fifty Years.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Aries, Elizabeth J., and Maynard Seider. 2007. "The Role of Social Class in the Formation of Identity: A Study of Public and Elite Private College Students." *Journal of Social Psychology* 147(2): 137–57.

Armstrong, Elizabeth A., and Laura T. Hamilton. 2013. *Paying for the Party: How College Maintains Inequality.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bartels, Larry M. 2008. *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Binder, Amy, and Kate Wood. 2013. *Becoming Right: How Campuses Shape Young Conservatives.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre, and Jean-Claude Passeron. 1990. *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture.* 2nd ed. London: Sage.

Bowen, William G., Martin A. Kurzweil, Eugene M. Tobin, and Susanne C. Pichler. 2005. *Equity and Excellence in American Higher Education.* Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.

Campbell, David E. 2013. "Social Networks and Political Participation." *Annual Review of Political Science* 16: 33–48.

Card, David. 1995. "Using Geographic Variation in College Proximity to Estimate the Return to Schooling." In *Aspects of Labor Market Behaviour: Essays in Honour of John Vanderkamp*, ed. Loizos Nicolaou Christofides, E. Kenneth Grant, and R. Swidinsky. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 201–222.

Carnes, Nicholas. 2013. *White-Collar Government.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Cialdini, Robert B., Melanie R. Trost, and Daniel T. Gilbert. 1998. "Social Influence: Social Norms, Conformity, and Compliance." In *The Handbook of Social Psychology*, ed. Susan T. Fiske and Gardner Lindzey. New York: Oxford University Press, 151–93.

Dey, Eric L. 1996. "Undergraduate Political Attitudes: An Examination of Peer, Faculty, and Social Influences." *Research in Higher Education* 37(5): 535–54.

Dunning, Thad. 2012. *Natural Experiments in the Social Sciences: A Design-Based Approach.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gelfand, Michele J., Lisa H. Nishii, and Jana L. Raver. 2006. "On the Nature and Importance of Cultural Tightness-Looseness." *Journal of Applied Psychology* 91(6): 1225–44.

Gelman, Andrew, and Jennifer Hill. 2007. *Data Analysis Using Regression and Multilevel/Hierarchical Models.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gilens, Martin. 2012. *Affluence and Influence: Economic Inequality and Political Power in America.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Gilens, Martin, and Benjamin I. Page. 2014. "Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens." *Perspectives on Politics* 12(3): 564–81.

Gurin, Patricia, Eric L. Dey, Sylvia Hurtado, and Gerald Gurin. 2002. "Diversity and Higher Education: Theory and Impact on Educational Outcomes." *Harvard Educational Review* 72(3): 330–66.

Hastie, Brianne. 2007. "Higher Education and Sociopolitical Orientation: The Role of Social Influence in the Liberalisation of Students." *European Journal of Psychology of Education* 22(3): 259–74.

Hillygus, D. Sunshine. 2005. "The Missing Link: Exploring the Relationship between Higher Education and Political Engagement." *Political Behavior* 27(1): 25–47.

Ho, Daniel, Kosuke Imai, Gary King, and Elizabeth Stuart. 2011. "MatchIt: Nonparametric Preprocessing for

Parametric Causal Inference." *Journal of Statistical Software* 42(8): 1–28.

Huckfeldt, Robert. 1986. *Politics in Context: Assimilation and Conflict in Urban Neighborhoods*. New York: Algora.

Huckfeldt, Robert, Paul Allen Beck, Russell J. Dalton, and Jeffrey Levine. 1995. "Political Environments, Cohesive Social Groups, and the Communication of Public Opinion." *American Journal of Political Science* 39(4): 1025–46.

Jennings, M. Kent, and Richard G. Niemi. 1974. *The Political Character of Adolescence*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Khan, Shamus Rahman. 2012. *Privilege: The Making of an Adolescent Elite at St. Paul's School*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

McCarty, Nolan, Keith T. Poole, and Howard Rosenthal. 2006. *Polarized America: The Dance of Ideology and Unequal Riches*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Mutz, Diana C. 2006. *Hearing the Other Side: Deliberative versus Participatory Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Newcomb, Theodore M. 1943. *Personality and Social Change: Attitude and Social Formation in a Student Community*. New York: Dryden.

Newman, Benjamin J. 2014. "My Poor Friend: Financial Distress in One's Social Network, the Perceived Power of the Rich, and Support for Redistribution." *Journal of Politics* 76(1): 126–38.

Newman, Benjamin J., Christopher D. Johnston, and Patrick L. Lown. 2015. "False Consciousness or Class Awareness? Local Income Inequality, Personal Economic Position, and Belief in American Meritocracy." *American Journal of Political Science* 59(2): 326–40.

Nickerson, David W. 2009. "Experimental Approaches to the Diffusion of Norms." In *Social Capital: Reaching Out, Reaching In*, ed. Viva Ona Bartkus and James H. Davis. Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 186–204.

Oliver, J. Eric, and Tali Mendelberg. 2000. "Reconsidering the Environmental Determinants of White Racial Attitudes." *American Journal of Political Science* 44(3): 574–89.

Page, Benjamin I., Larry M. Bartels, and Jason Seawright. 2013. "Democracy and the Policy Preferences of Wealthy Americans." *Perspectives on Politics* 11(1): 51–73.

Paluck, Elizabeth Levy. 2009. "Reducing Intergroup Prejudice and Conflict Using the Media: A Field Experiment in Rwanda." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 96(3): 574–87.

Pascarella, Ernest T., and Patrick T. Terenzini. 1991. *How College Affects Students: Findings and Insights from Twenty Years of Research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Pryor, John H., Sylvia Hurtado, Victor B. Saenz, Jose Luis Santos, and William S. Korn. 2007. *The American Freshman: Forty Year Trends*. Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute.

Reardon, Sean F. 2011. "The Widening Academic Achievement Gap between the Rich and the Poor: New Evidence and Possible Explanations." In *Whither Opportunity: Rising Inequality, Schools, and Children's Life Chances*, ed. Greg J. Duncan and Richard J. Murnane. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 91–116.

Sears, David O. 1981. "Life-Stage Effects on Attitude Change, Especially among the Elderly." In *Aging: Social Change*, ed. Sara B. Kiesler, James N. Morgan, and Valerie Kincade Oppenheimer. Ann Arbor, MI: Academic Press, 183–204.

Sears, David O., and Carolyn L. Funk. 1990. "Self-Interest in Americans' Political Opinions." In *Beyond Self-Interest*, ed. Jane J. Mansbridge. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 147–71.

Sidanius, Jim, Shana Levin, Colette Van Laar, and David O. Sears. 2008. *The Diversity Challenge: Social Identity and Intergroup Relations on the College Campus*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Sinclair, Betsy, Margaret McConnell, and Donald P. Green. 2012. "Detecting Spillover Effects: Design and Analysis of Multilevel Experiments." *American Journal of Political Science* 56(4): 1055–69.

Stephens, Nicole M., Stephanie A. Fryberg, Hazel Rose Markus, Camille S. Johnson, and Rebecca Covarrubius. 2012. "Unseen Disadvantage: How American Universities' Focus on Independence Undermines the Academic Performance of First-Generation College Students." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 102(6): 1178–97.

Stoker, Laura, and Jackie Bass. 2011. "Political Socialization: Ongoing Questions and New Directions." In *The Oxford Handbook of American Public Opinion and the Media*, ed. George C. Edwards III, Lawrence R. Jacobs, and Robert Y. Shapiro. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 453–71.

Stoker, Laura, and M. Kent Jennings. 2008. "Of Time and the Development of Partisan Polarization." *American Journal of Political Science* 52(3): 619–35.

Visser, Lindsey C., and Penny S. Levitan. 2009. "Social Network Composition and Attitude Strength: Exploring the Dynamics within Newly Formed Social Networks." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 45(5): 1057–67.

Walsh, Katherine Cramer. 2012. "Putting Inequality in Its Place: Rural Consciousness and the Power of Perspective." *American Political Science Review* 106(3): 517–32.

Supporting Information

Additional Supporting Information may be found in the online version of this article at the publisher's website:

- Description of the Sample
- Missing Data
- Attrition
- Software for Estimation
- Measuring Affluence
- Zip Code Based Affluence Measure
- Variable Wording, Coding, and Distributions
- Auxiliary Analyses and Robustness Checks