Online Appendix for "The Desire for Social Status and Economic Conservatism Among Affluent Americans"

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A Test 1: Observational Analysis

A.1 Sample Description and Weighting

In this section I describe the steps taken to assemble a representative sample of affluent Americans for Test 1. I began by constructing a statistical portrait of all adult citizens living in affluent households using the Current Population Survey (CPS) (see Column 3 of Table A1). I then employed quota sampling in conjunction with the survey research firm Cint to create a sample of affluent Americans that matched this baseline on age, gender, race/ethnicity, occupational status, and income.[1] The resulting unweighted Cint sample is shown in Column 5 of Table A1.

I asses the representativeness of the Cint sample by contrasting it to the actual population of affluent Americans as measured in the CPS (Column 3 of Table A1). To provide a comparison, I also show the affluent sample found in the Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES) (Column 4 of Table A1), which has been used by others to study the affluent (Gilens and Page 2014; Rhodes and Schaffner 2017).

Both the Cint and CCES samples show some discrepancies from the actual population of affluent Americans. The more highly educated are overrepresented in my unweighted Cint sample, while older white men are overrepresented in the CCES. Overall, however, the Cint sample closely matches the population demographics of affluent Americans as a whole as measured in the CPS, and can be said to do so with a level of accuracy that equals that of the CCES.

I use post-stratification weighting to overcome the remaining discrepancies between the Cint sample and the CPS demographics. Weights are constructed using Iterative Proportional Fitting, and are constrained to take on a minimum value of 0.3 and a maximum value of 3. The characteristics of the weighted sample used in the main analysis are provided in Column 6 of Table A1. Identical steps were taken to ensure a representative sample of the non-affluent, which is described in Table A2 below.

Table A1: Affluent Sample Description for Test 1

		CPS	CCES Unweighted	Cint Unweighted	Cint Weighted
Sex	Male	52%	64%	47%	49%
	Female	48%	36%	53%	51%
Age	18-29	13%	8%	7%	12%
	30-44	27%	17%	29%	27%
	45-54	26%	24%	29%	26%
	55 and up	34%	52%	35%	34%
Race/Ethnicity	Non-Hispanic White	78%	80%	80%	79%
	Non-Hispanic Black	6%	7%	3%	5%
	Hispanic	7%	6%	7%	7%
	Asian	7%	3%	9%	7%
	Other	2%	4%	1%	2%
Occupational Status	Working	86%	76%	91%	90%
	Retired	7%	16%	4%	4%
	Stay at Home Parent	4%	4%	4%	4%
	Other	2%	4%	1%	2%
Income	$150,000-$199,999	50%	57%	48%	50%
	$200,000-$249,999	24%	19%	27%	26%
	$250,000 or more	26%	24%	24%	24%
Education	Less than College	37%	24%	17%	36%
	College Degree	35%	37%	40%	36%
	Graduate Degree	28%	39%	43%	29%

Note: Column 6 provides the characteristics of the weighted Cint sample used in the main analysis of affluent Americans.

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[1] I was not able to pre-stratify on education. Doing so would have required dropping a different pre-stratification criterion.

Table A2: Non-Affluent Sample Description for Test 1

		CPS	Cint Unweighted	Cint Weighted
Sex	Male	47%	43%	47%
	Female	53%	57%	53%
Age	18-29	16%	10%	15%
	30-44	25%	28%	25%
	45-54	18%	19%	18%
	55 and up	42%	43%	42%
Race/Ethnicity	Non-Hispanic White	69%	81%	69%
	Non-Hispanic Black	13%	6%	13%
	Hispanic	12%	8%	13%
	Asian	4%	3%	4%
	Other	2%	2%	2%
Occupational Status	Working	64%	63%	60%
	Retired	20%	17%	18%
	Stay at home parent	5%	8%	9%
	Other	11%	15%	13%
Income	Less than $25,000	20%	16%	20%
	$25,000-$49,999	24%	27%	32%
	$50,000-$74,999	21%	21%	20%
	$75,000-$99,999	16%	17%	14%
	$100,000-$149,999	20%	19%	15%
Education	Less than college	73%	55%	73%
	College Degree	18%	31%	18%
	Graduate Degree	9%	14%	9%

Note: Column 5 provides the characteristics of the weighted Cint sample used in the analysis of non-affluent Americans.

A.2 Item Wording and Descriptive Statistics for the Economic Conservatism Index

In this section I detail the construction of the *Economic Conservatism Index*, and provide descriptive statistics for the index and the individual items that compose it. The *Economic Conservatism Index* averages the three policy items in the list below. All three items have the following responses, which are coded to range from 0 to 1: "Strongly oppose" (0), "Somewhat oppose" (.25), "Neither favor nor oppose" (.5), "Somewhat favor" (.75), and "Strongly favor" (1). Among affluent respondents, the *Economic Conservatism Index* has a mean of .64, a standard deviation of .26, and a Cronbach's α of .73. Below I provide the question wording and descriptive statistics for each individual policy based on the affluent sample.

Next we will ask you about some proposed laws and regulations. For each one, we'd like you to tell us whether you would favor or oppose that law or regulation.

1. Would you favor or oppose a proposal to decrease the taxes on households making $150,000 or more a year? [Mean=.68, S.D.=.32]

2. Would you favor or oppose a proposal to decrease the taxes on money people make from selling investments, also referred to as capital gains? [Mean=.64, S.D.=.33]

3. Would you favor or oppose a proposal to decrease government regulation of business and industry? [Mean=.60, S.D.=.34]

A.3   Income Motives Scale

A.3.1   Item Wording

Respondents are asked to "Please indicate how important each of the following is as a reason for <u>you to make money</u>." Response options are: "Not at all important", "Slightly Important", "Moderately Important", "Very Important", and "Extremely Important." The order of the ten subscales is randomized, as is the order of the three items within each subscale. None of the *italicized text* is shown to respondents.

1. *Social Approval*

   (a) To keep up with my friends financially

   (b) To earn the respect of my loved ones

   (c) To let others know that I am competent

2. *Self-Esteem*

   (a) To feel proud of myself

   (b) To feel successful

   (c) To feel like I am doing well in life

3. *Conspicuous Consumption*

   (a) To be able to live in a beautiful home

   (b) To be able to drive a nice car

   (c) To be able to eat out at popular restaurants once in a while

4. *Leisure*

   (a) To be able to afford taking time off from work

   (b) To spend time and money on my hobbies

   (c) To spend time and money on activities with my loved ones

5. *Hard Work*

   (a) To get just compensation for my hard work

   (b) To get what I earned as a result of my thinking and effort

   (c) To be fairly paid for my work achievements

6. *Philanthropy*

   (a) To donate money to those who need it

   (b) To support charities that are important to me

   (c) To have enough spare time to devote to volunteer activities

7. *Anxiety*

   (a) To feel financially secure

   (b) To avoid having to worry about the future

   (c) To know that I will be as well-off in the coming years as I am now

8. *Family Support*

   (a) To be able to support a family
   (b) To take care of my children's education
   (c) To leave behind enough money for my spouse and kids when I die

9. *Financial Security*

   (a) To maintain a reasonable balance in my savings account
   (b) To have a rainy day fund in case of an emergency
   (c) To be able to afford the cost of insurance

10. *Basic Needs*

   (a) To afford the cost of housing
   (b) To afford the cost of transportation
   (c) To afford the cost of food

A.3.2   Descriptive Statistics

Table A3 provides descriptive statistics for each of the subscales in the Income Motives scale for affluent and non-affluent respondents. The response options for the items in each subscale are coded from 1 to 5 as follows: "Not at all important" (1), "Slightly Important" (2), "Moderately Important" (3), "Very Important" (4), "Extremely Important" (5).

Table A3: Income Motive Descriptives

Motive	Affluent		Non-Affluent	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Social Approval	2.3	1.1	2.4	1.1
Self-Esteem	3.3	1.1	3.3	1.2
Conspicuous Consumption	2.8	1.1	2.7	1.1
Leisure	3.7	0.9	3.5	1.0
Hard Work	4.1	0.8	4.1	0.9
Philanthropy	2.9	1.1	2.8	1.1
Anxiety	4.3	0.8	4.2	0.8
Family Support	3.9	1.1	3.8	1.2
Financial Security	4.1	0.9	4.0	0.8
Basic Needs	4.2	0.9	4.3	0.7

Overall, affluent and non-affluent Americans' motivations are very similar. At the same time, I note that there are some small but statistically significant differences between the mean scores for the affluent and non-affluent ($p < .05$). First, I observe that the affluent are less motivated than the non-affluent to pursue money as a means of fulfilling *Basic Needs* (e.g., "To afford the cost of food"). This aligns with the idea of diminishing marginal utility in economics, which suggests that people should have a diminishing need for money to meet their basic needs as they grow richer and become more financially secure (e.g., Horowitz, List, and McConnell 2007). Second, I observe that the affluent are more motivated than the non-affluent by the pursuit of *Leisure* (e.g., "To spend time and money on my hobbies") and *Conspicuous Consumption* (e.g., "To be able to drive a nice car"). This aligns with Thorstein Veblen's *Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899), which depicts the affluent as being focused on the enjoyment of leisure time and the conspicuous consumption of luxury goods. Finally, I observe that the affluent are more motivated by *Anxiety* (e.g., "To know that I will be as well-off in the coming years as I am now"). This aligns with recent literature on the "Anxieties of Affluence," which shows how affluent Americans are often anxious about their finances despite their relatively high incomes (Sherman 2017). The affluent also assign more importance to *Family Support*, but this difference disappears once I account for the fact that affluent respondents are more likely to be married and have children.

A.3.3 Comparing Conspicuous Consumption and Basic Needs

The items measuring *Conspicuous Consumption* capture three types of consumption that Heffetz (2011) finds to be highly conspicuous within affluent social networks: living in a beautiful home, driving a nice car, and eating out at popular restaurants. The *Basic Needs* measures correspond to the needs that underlie these purchases – housing, transportation, and food (see Table A4).

Table A4: Conspicuous Consumption and Basic Needs Subscales

Consumption Type	Conspicuous Consumption	Basic Needs
Housing	"To be able to live in a beautiful home"	"To afford the cost of housing"
Transportation	"To be able to drive a nice car"	"To afford the cost of transportation"
Food	"To be able to eat out at popular restaurants once in a while"	"To afford the cost of food"

This design is intended to allow me to empirically separate conspicuous consumption from the basic needs that may also motivate these purchases. Specifically, the *Conspicuous Consumption* subscale is meant to capture affluent Americans' desire to engage in consumption as a means of "keeping up with the Joneses," while the *Basic Needs* subscale is meant to capture the desire to engage in consumption for reasons that are unrelated to social status. To see whether this was successful, I look at how the *Conspicuous Consumption* and *Basic Needs* subscales relate to affluent Americans' desire for money "to keep up with my friends financially," which was measured as part of the *Social Approval* subscale.[2]

First I create scales measuring the *Conspicuous Consumption* (Cronbach's α of .85) and *Basic Needs* (Cronbach's α of .87) motives by averaging together the three items included in the Income Motives scale for each of these motives (the three items included in the scale for each motive are shown in Table A4 above). Then I run an OLS model where the outcome is affluent Americans' desire for money to keep up with their friends financially (as measured by the item from the *Social Approval* subscale) and the scales measuring the *Conspicuous Consumption* and *Basic Needs* motives are included as independent variables. This model also includes the same controls for regional cost of living, race/ethnicity, age, and education included in the regression analyses for Test 1.[3] Table A5 shows the results. As expected, the *Conspicuous Consumption* scale is strongly related to affluent Americans' desire to keep up with their friends financially, while the *Basic Needs* scale has no relationship with affluent Americans' desire to keep up with their friends financially.

Table A5: Comparing Conspicuous Consumption and Basic Needs

	DV: Desire to Keep Up With Friends
Intercept	-0.21^{***}
	(0.06)
Conspicuous Consumption	0.13^{***}
	(0.01)
Basic Needs	0.00
	(0.01)
Controls Included?	Yes
R^2	0.33
Num. obs.	1207

$^{***}p < 0.001$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{*}p < 0.05$

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[2]This variable is coded to range from 0 to 1 as follows: "Not at all important" (0), "Slightly important" (.25), "Moderately Important" (.5), "Very Important" (.75), and "Extremely Important" (1).

[3]The results are the same when no controls are included.

A.3.4   List Experiments

Several of the motives being measured carry the potential to biased by social desirability. In particular, several rounds of pre-testing revealed that respondents were generally less willing to ascribe importance to *Conspicuous Consumption* and *Social Approval* than they were to the other income motives. This could be an accurate reflection of their motives for making money, or it could represent a desire to avoid presenting oneself as being influenced by social pressure (Kim and Pettit 2015). To help distinguish between these possibilities, a series of list experiments was embedded in the survey to gauge whether the measures of *Conspicuous Consumption* and *Social Approval* were influenced by social desirability.

All respondents participated in two separate list experiments embedded in the survey for Test 1, the first of which assesses *Conspicuous Consumption* and the second of which assesses *Social Approval.* The two list experiments have four conditions each: a single control condition with four items, as well as three treatment conditions which add a fifth item drawn from the subscale corresponding to either *Conspicuous Consumption* or *Social Approval* (see question text below). Each condition contains approximately 300 affluent respondents. Following the recommendation of Aronow et al. (2015), the order in which respondents completed the list experiments and the direct survey scale was randomized to avoid question ordering effects.

The list experiments are used to gain an estimate of the percentage of respondents who feel that each motive is at least "moderately important" using a method that prevents the recovery of individual responses. This allows respondents to feel that their responses are more fully anonymous, reducing the need to provide socially desirable answers (Kuklinski, Cobb, and Gilens 1997). The recovered estimate of the percentage of respondents who feel a motive is "at least moderately important" in the list experiment can then be compared to the percentage of respondents who indicated that the motive is at least moderately important in the direct question, as indicated by selecting "moderately important", "very important", or "extremely important."

Column 5 in Table A6 below shows the difference between estimates recovered in the list experiment and estimates recovered through direct questioning. Large *positive* differences would be indicative of social desirability bias. No such differences appear for any of the questions, providing evidence that social desirability bias does not influence the importance respondents attach to *Conspicuous Consumption* and *Social Approval* in the Income Motives scale.

Table A6: List Experiment Results for Affluent Respondents

Motive	Item	List Experiment	Direct Questioning	Difference
Conspicuous Consumption	To be able to live in a beautiful home	66%	69%	-3%
	To be able to drive a nice car	39%	53%	-14%
	To be able to eat out at popular restaurants once in a while	57%	58%	-1%
Social Approval	To keep up with my friends financially	29%	28%	1%
	To earn the respect of my loved ones	38%	48%	-10%
	To let others know that I am competent	39%	48%	-9%

List experiment question text

All respondents participate in both the Conspicuous Consumption and Social Approval list experiments. In each experiment they are assigned to either the control condition or one of the three treatment conditions.

Conspicuous Consumption

Control

Below is a list of four reasons why you may be motivated to make money. Please tell us how many of these are at least moderately important reasons for you to make money. We don't need to know which ones, just HOW MANY:

- To avoid having to worry about the future

- To feel proud of myself

- To donate money to those who need it

- To support social and political causes that are important to me

Treatments A, B, & C

Below is a list of five reasons why you may be motivated to make money. Please tell us how many of these are at least moderately important reasons for you to make money. We don't need to know which ones, just HOW MANY:

- To avoid having to worry about the future

- To feel proud of myself

- To donate money to those who need it

- To support social and political causes that are important to me

- To be able to live in a beautiful home
  To be able to drive a nice car
  To be able to eat out at popular restaurants once in a while

Social Approval

Control

Below is a list of four reasons why you may be motivated to make money. Please tell us how many of these are at least moderately important reasons for you to make money. We don't need to know which ones, just HOW MANY:

- To know that I will be as well-off in the coming years as I am now

- To feel successful

- To have enough spare time to devote to volunteer activities

- To make donations to candidates during elections

Treatments A, B, & C

Below is a list of five reasons why you may be motivated to make money. Please tell us how many of these are at least moderately important reasons for you to make money. We don't need to know which ones, just HOW MANY:

- To know that I will be as well-off in the coming years as I am now

- To feel successful

- To have enough spare time to devote to volunteer activities

- To make donations to candidates during elections

- To keep up with my friends financially
  To earn the respect of my loved ones
  To let others know that I am competent

A.3.5 Inter-Motive Correlation Matrix

Table A7: Affluent Respondent Inter-Motive Correlations

	Social Approval	Self-Esteem	Conspicuous Consumption	Leisure	Hard Work	Philanthropy	Anxiety	Family Support	Financial Security	Basic Needs
Social Approval	1.00	0.62	0.57	0.38	0.31	0.21	0.27	0.23	0.24	0.23
Self-Esteem	0.62	1.00	0.61	0.44	0.45	0.15	0.43	0.23	0.34	0.29
Conspicuous Consumption	0.57	0.61	1.00	0.51	0.39	0.15	0.38	0.26	0.33	0.33
Leisure	0.38	0.44	0.51	1.00	0.44	0.24	0.48	0.29	0.44	0.39
Hard Work	0.31	0.45	0.39	0.44	1.00	0.17	0.51	0.26	0.44	0.42
Philanthropy	0.21	0.15	0.15	0.24	0.17	1.00	0.10	0.25	0.25	0.16
Anxiety	0.27	0.43	0.38	0.48	0.51	0.10	1.00	0.29	0.59	0.47
Family Support	0.23	0.23	0.26	0.29	0.26	0.25	0.29	1.00	0.35	0.34
Financial Security	0.24	0.34	0.33	0.44	0.44	0.25	0.59	0.35	1.00	0.58
Basic Needs	0.23	0.29	0.33	0.39	0.42	0.16	0.47	0.34	0.58	1.00

A.3.6 Component Loadings

Table A8 below shows the component loadings that are visualized in Figure 1 of the main paper.

Table A8: Component Loadings for Affluent Respondents

Motive	Sample Item	Status	Concrete
Social Approval	"To keep up with my friends financially"	0.94	-0.19
Self-Esteem	"To feel successful"	0.87	-0.01
Conspicuous Consumption	"To be able to live in a beautiful home"	0.83	0.01
Leisure	"To spend time and money on my hobbies"	0.39	0.43
Hard Work	"To get just compensation for my hard work"	0.21	0.56
Anxiety	"To avoid having to worry about the future"	0.06	0.73
Philanthropy	"To donate money to those who need it"	0.04	0.33
Family Support	"To take care of my children's education"	-0.04	0.59
Basic Needs	"To afford the cost of housing"	-0.14	0.85
Financial Security	"To maintain a reasonable balance in my savings account"	-0.15	0.91

A.3.7 Extracting Principal Component Scores

Individual-level component scores are computed using the regression method recommended by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007, 650-1). In this method, regression-like weights are computed for weighting each of the ten income motives to produce individual-level component scores. These weights are obtained by multiplying the inverse of the income motive correlation matrix by the matrix of component loadings, producing weights which correspond to each income motive's independent contribution to the *Status* and *Concrete* components of income motivation. Individual-level components scores are then obtained by multiplying each respondent's score on an income motive by the weight assigned to that motive, and then summing the resulting values over each of the ten income motives. This is represented by the following equation:

$$Score_{ik} = \sum_{j=1}^{10} D_{ij} W_{jk}$$

where D_{ij} is the standardized value for respondent i on motive j and W_{jk} is the weight assigned to motive j in producing component k.

Table A9 below shows the weight assigned to each income motive in producing the principal component scores for affluent respondents.

Table A9: Motive Weights for Producing Affluent Principal Component Scores

Motive	Sample Item	Motive Weight	
		Status	Concrete
Social Approval	"To keep up with my friends financially"	0.36	-0.05
Self-Esteem	"To feel successful"	0.34	0.01
Conspicuous Consumption	"To be able to live in a beautiful home"	0.32	0.02
Leisure	"To spend time and money on my hobbies"	0.16	0.15
Hard Work	"To get just compensation for my hard work"	0.09	0.18
Anxiety	"To avoid having to worry about the future"	0.03	0.24
Philanthropy	"To donate money to those who need it"	0.02	0.11
Family Support	"To take care of my children's education"	-0.01	0.19
Basic Needs	"To afford the cost of housing"	-0.04	0.27
Financial Security	"To maintain a reasonable balance in my savings account"	-0.04	0.29

While this regression-based approach is recommended in the literature, I note that alternative methods produce substantively indistinguishable results. One alternative methodology calls for using the component loadings themselves as weights for producing respondent-level component scores (Langbein and Felbinger 2006). Following this procedure produces substantively identical results to those presented in the main paper. Similarly, I find substantively identical results when I use scales produced through Exploratory Factor Analysis to assess the effects of *Status* and *Concrete* income motivation on the affluent's economic policy preferences (see next section). These robustness checks make clear that the main results are not contingent on using any one methodology for extracting measures of *Status* and *Concrete* motivation from the Income Motives scale.

A.3.8   Exploratory Factor Analysis Results

To examine whether the results for affluent respondents are an artifact of using Principal Component Analysis to measure *Status* and *Concrete* motivation, I rerun the analysis using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) as an alternative methodology. Promax-rotated EFA is used to measure the factor loadings shown in Table A10 below. Following standard practice (e.g., Cavaille and Trump 2015), loadings in excess of .40 are combined into scales. The resulting *Concrete* scale averages respondents' scores on *Financial Security, Basic Needs, Anxiety, Hard Work, Family Support,* and *Leisure*, and has a Cronbach's α of .81. The resulting *Status* scale averages respondents' scores on *Social Approval, Self-Esteem* and *Conspicuous Consumption*, and has a Cronbach's α of .90. Table A11 below shows that the results remain consistent after replacing the component scores with these scales.

Table A10: Affluent Factor Analysis

Motive	Sample Item	Factor Loadings	
		Status	Concrete
Social Approval	"To keep up with my friends financially"	**.85**	-.15
Self-Esteem	"To feel successful"	**.81**	.01
Conspicuous Consumption	"To be able to live in a beautiful home"	**.73**	.05
Leisure	"To spend time and money on my hobbies"	.31	**.42**
Hard Work	"To get just compensation for my hard work"	.18	**.50**
Philanthropy	"To donate money to those who need it"	.08	.22
Family Support	"To take care of my children's education"	.05	**.41**
Anxiety	"To avoid having to worry about the future"	.02	**.72**
Basic Needs	"To afford the cost of housing"	-.12	**.76**
Financial Security	"To maintain a reasonable balance in my savings account"	-.20	**.93**

Table A11: Factor Analysis Models

	Main Model	Gender Interaction Model
Intercept	0.69***	0.68***
	(0.05)	(0.05)
Status Scale	0.09***	0.06*
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Concrete Scale	0.01	0.06*
	(0.02)	(0.03)
Male	–	0.02
	–	(0.01)
Status Scale X Male	–	0.07*
	–	(0.03)
Concrete Scale X Male	–	−0.09**
	–	(0.03)
Controls Included?	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.05	0.05
Num. obs.	1207	1207

***$p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$

A.4   Additional Results for Affluent Respondents

A.4.1   State-Level Affluence Measure

This analysis uses an alternative state-level measure of affluence, which considers respondents to be affluent if they are in the top 10% of their state's income distribution. The results are substantively indistinguishable from those obtained with the national affluence measure in the main analysis.

Table A12: State-Level Affluence Measure

	Main Model	Gender Interaction Model
Intercept	0.69***	0.68***
	(0.06)	(0.06)
Status	0.10***	0.04
	(0.02)	(0.03)
Concrete	−0.01	0.06
	(0.02)	(0.03)
Male	–	0.02
	–	(0.02)
Status X Male	–	0.11**
	–	(0.04)
Concrete X Male	–	−0.10*
	–	(0.04)
Controls Included?	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.04	0.05
Num. obs.	946	946

***$p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$

A.4.2 Results for Individual Policy Outcomes

This analysis replicates the main model with the individual policy outcomes used in place of the *Economic Conservatism Index*. I consistently find positive and significant coefficients for *Status* motivation, but no such effects for *Concrete* motivation.

Table A13: Results for Individual Policy Outcomes

	Reduce Taxes Over $150,000	*Reduce Capital Gains Taxes*	*Reduce Business Regulation*
Intercept	0.66***	0.62***	0.80***
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Status	0.10***	0.12***	0.07**
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Concrete	0.01	−0.01	−0.03
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Controls Included?	Yes	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.03	0.03	0.03
Num. obs.	1207	1207	1207

***$p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$

A.4.3 Models Without Controls

This analysis removes all control variables from the models. The results are substantively indistinguishable from those obtained with the controls included.

Table A14: Models Without Controls

	Main Model	Gender Interaction Model
Intercept	0.61***	0.60***
	(0.01)	(0.01)
Status	0.09***	0.04
	(0.02)	(0.03)
Concrete	−0.01	0.06*
	(0.02)	(0.03)
Male	–	0.02
	–	(0.01)
Status X Male	–	0.08*
	–	(0.04)
Concrete X Male	–	−0.10**
	–	(0.04)
Controls Included?	No	No
R^2	0.03	0.03
Num. obs.	1207	1207

***$p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$

A.4.4 Models Controlling for Partisanship

This analysis adds additional controls for partisanship. Respondents are coded as *Republican* if they self-identify as either a "Strong Republican" or "Not very strong Republican", *Independent* if they self-identify as either "Independent" or "Something else" (even if they lean closer to one party or the other), and *Democrat* (the excluded category) if they self-identify as a "Strong Democrat" or "Not very strong Democrat." The results remain the same when independents who lean "Closer to the Republican Party" are coded as Republican and independents who lean "Closer to the Democratic Party" are coded as Democrats.

Table A15: Models Controlling for Partisanship

	Main Model	Gender Interaction Model
Intercept	0.50***	0.49***
	(0.05)	(0.05)
Status	0.09***	0.05*
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Concrete	−0.00	0.06*
	(0.02)	(0.03)
Independent	0.13***	0.12***
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Republican	0.21***	0.21***
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Male	–	0.02
	–	(0.01)
Status X Male	–	0.07*
	–	(0.03)
Concrete X Male	–	−0.10**
	–	(0.03)
Controls Included?	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.16	0.16
Num. obs.	1207	1207

$^{***}p < 0.001$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{*}p < 0.05$

A.4.5   Models Controlling for Occupation, Income, and Primary Earner Status

This analysis adds controls for having a *Business Occupation*, having a high *Personal Income*, and being the *Primary Earner* in one's household to the models reported in the main paper. *Business Occupation* is a binary variable coded 1 for respondents who report being a business manager, business owner, or finance professional, and 0 for all other respondents. *Personal Income* is an ordinal variable with ten categories ranging from having no personal income (1) to having a personal income of "More than $300,000" (10). *Primary Earner* is a binary variable coded 1 for married respondents who report that they are the "primary wage earner in my household", and 0 for all other respondents. Table A16 adds these controls to the main model in Column 1 of Table 2. Table A17 adds these controls to the gender interaction model in Column 2 of Table 2. In both cases the results persist when these additional controls are added to the models. There is always a significant effect of *Status* motivation in Table A16 and a significant interaction between *Status* motivation and *Male* in Table A17.

Table A16: Main Models With Controls for Economic Characteristics

	Business Occupation	Personal Income	Primary Earner
Intercept	0.70***	0.67***	0.70***
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Status	0.10***	0.10***	0.10***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Concrete	−0.01	−0.01	−0.01
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Business Occupation	0.08**	–	–
	(0.03)	–	–
Personal Income	–	0.03*	–
	–	(0.02)	–
Primary Earner	–	–	0.05**
	–	–	(0.02)
Controls Included?	Yes	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.05	0.05	0.05
Num. obs.	1207	1207	1207

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

Table A17: Gender Interaction Models With Controls for Economic Characteristics

	Business Occupation	Personal Income	Primary Earner
Intercept	0.68***	0.66***	0.69***
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Status	0.05*	0.04	0.05
	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.03)
Concrete	0.06*	0.08	0.07*
	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Male	0.01	0.01	0.00
	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Status X Male	0.09*	0.08*	0.08*
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Concrete X Male	−0.11**	−0.10**	−0.09*
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Business Occupation	0.08**	–	–
	(0.03)	–	–
Status X Business Occupation	−0.06	–	–
	(0.06)	–	–
Concrete X Business Occupation	0.01	–	–
	(0.06)	–	–
Personal Income	–	0.03	–
	–	(0.02)	–
Status X Personal Income	–	0.01	–
	–	(0.04)	–
Concrete X Personal Income	–	−0.02	–
	–	(0.03)	–
Primary Earner	–	–	0.05**
	–	–	(0.02)
Status X Primary Earner	–	–	0.03
	–	–	(0.04)
Concrete X Primary Earner	–	–	−0.06
	–	–	(0.04)
Controls Included?	Yes	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.06	0.05	0.06
Num. obs.	1207	1207	1207

***$p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$

A.5 Non-Affluent Placebo Test

In Test 1 I find evidence that *Status* motivation is positively associated with affluent Americans' level of support for economic policies that benefit themselves financially. As a placebo test, I ask whether *Status* motivation is also positively associated with non-affluent Americans' level of support for economic policies that benefit themselves financially. To do so, I examine the factors that predict non-affluent Americans' support for lowering their own income taxes.

Non-affluent Americans' support for lowering their own taxes is measured using an item that is identically worded to the policy question about lowering affluent Americans' taxes, with the exception that it asks about lowering non-affluent Americans' taxes: "Would you favor or oppose a proposal to decrease the taxes on households making less than \$150,000 a year?" Response options are the same as well, and coded to range from 0 to 1: "Strongly oppose" (0), "Somewhat oppose" (.25), "Neither favor nor oppose" (.5), "Somewhat favor" (.75), and "Strongly favor" (1). I note that this policy is strongly favored by non-affluent Americans, with 75% either "strongly" or "somewhat" favoring this policy change.[4]

As a first step, I conduct a principal component analysis using non-affluent Americans' responses to the Income Motives scale, which reveals two similar components of *Status* and *Concrete* Motivation (see Table A18 for component loadings).[5] I then extract individual-level component scores for non-affluent respondents on the *Status* and *Concrete* components of income motivation, and examine the relationship between these scores and non-affluent Americans' level of support for reducing taxes on themselves.

The pattern of results shown in Table A19 is the opposite of what I observed for affluent Americans in Column 1 of Table 2 in the main paper: For non-affluent Americans, *Concrete* motivation is positively related to support for economic policies that serve their financial interests, while *Status* motivation is not. This suggests that non-affluent Americans do not pursue their financial interests in politics out of a desire for social status.

Table A18: Comparison of Affluent & Non-Affluent Component Loadings

Motive	Sample Item	Affluent		Non-Affluent	
		Status	Concrete	Status	Concrete
Social Approval	"To keep up with my friends financially"	0.94	-0.19	0.96	-0.23
Self-Esteem	"To feel successful"	0.87	-0.01	0.73	0.11
Conspicuous Consumption	"To be able to live in a beautiful home"	0.83	0.01	0.84	-0.04
Leisure	"To spend time and money on my hobbies"	0.39	0.43	0.55	0.28
Hard Work	"To get just compensation for my hard work"	0.21	0.56	0.08	0.69
Anxiety	"To avoid having to worry about the future"	0.06	0.73	-0.01	0.8
Philanthropy	"To donate money to those who need it"	0.04	0.33	0.54	-0.04
Family Support	"To take care of my children's education"	-0.04	0.59	0.42	0.23
Basic Needs	"To afford the cost of housing"	-0.14	0.85	-0.25	0.91
Financial Security	"To maintain a reasonable balance in my savings account"	-0.15	0.91	0.03	0.8

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[4]The response distribution among non-affluent Americans is as follows: "Strongly oppose" (7%), "Somewhat oppose" (8%), "Neither favor nor oppose" (10%), "Somewhat favor" (24%), and "Strongly favor" (51%)

[5]I note that I find substantively indistinguishable results when I conduct a principal component analysis on the combined sample of affluent and non-affluent respondents, thus holding the measures of *Status* and *Concrete* motivation constant across the two groups.

Table A19: OLS Regression Predicting Non-Affluent Americans' Support for Reducing Their Own Taxes

	Reduce Taxes Under $150,000
Intercept	0.65***
	(0.09)
Status	−0.03
	(0.03)
Concrete	0.07*
	(0.03)
Regional Cost of Living	0.02
	(0.03)
Male	0.03
	(0.03)
Asian	0.01
	(0.06)
Latino	−0.03
	(0.04)
Black	0.03
	(0.04)
Other	−0.06
	(0.09)
Age 30-44	0.10*
	(0.04)
Age 45-54	0.10*
	(0.05)
Age 55 and up	0.06
	(0.04)
College degree	−0.06
	(0.03)
Graduate degree	−0.04
	(0.05)
R^2	0.03
Num. obs.	602

***$p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$

B   Test 2: Social Media Experiment

B.1   Pre-analysis Plan

This document describes a pre-analysis plan for a survey experimental test of the effects of status concerns on affluent Americans' economic policy preferences. The study uses altered Facebook posts to exogenously manipulate the affluent's desire for money to gain esteem, and then measures the effects of this manipulation on the affluent's economic policy preferences. This document was finalized before the data were analyzed.

Background

Rising economic inequality is widely regarded as one of the defining challenges of the 21st century. Existing explanations for rising inequality maintain a structural focus on the role of technology, trade, and institutions. In doing so, they may neglect the role of cultural change in facilitating the rise of inequality in the United States and elsewhere. The proposed experiment is part of a larger project that traces inequality to a rising culture of self-interest in the United States, and its effects on the decision-making of the United States' most powerful citizens.

The past half century has seen a dramatic rise in Americans' desire to be financially successful. This change in societal norms has created cultural incentives for the pursuit of self-interest among affluent Americans, who have disproportionate influence over policymaking in the United States. The pursuit of self-interest may be either materially motivated – i.e. rooted in the desire for concrete material rewards – or culturally motivated – i.e. rooted in the desire for symbolic social rewards. In previous research (Thal n.d.), I provide observational evidence that affluence allows the luxury of pursuing one's self-interest in politics for cultural reasons, particularly the belief that financial success leads to esteem.

This experiment aims to test the causal effects of symbolic incentives for the pursuit of money on affluent Americans' economic policy preferences. It does so through the medium of Facebook posts, an externally valid stimuli that mimics how people learn about the sources of esteem in everyday life.

Subjects

The subjects of the experiment are survey respondents recruited through Cint, an online survey firm. In the initial survey, N = 2,000 respondents will be recruited for the survey. All respondents will have household incomes above $150,000, which is approximately the 90th percentile of the income distribution.[6] All respondents will be U.S. citizens who are currently employed. The sample will be collected such that respondents will be 50% male and 50% female.

Design

The experiment randomly assigns affluent respondents to one of five conditions in which they view a series of Facebook posts. Figure A1 shows example posts from each of the five conditions, which consist of four treatment conditions and one placebo condition. Each of the four treatment conditions primes a different motivation for making money through variations in otherwise identical Facebook posts announcing a financial success (e.g., "I'll be getting a big raise next year."). In the *Social Approval* condition, the posters' announcements of their financial achievements lead to public praise from Facebook friends. In the *Self-Esteem* condition, the posters' announcements of their financial achievements are accompanied by indications of respondents' increased self-esteem, which are transmitted using a Facebook feature that allows posters to communicate how they are "feeling" using preset emoticons and text. In the *Conspicuous Consumption* condition, the posters' announcements of their financial achievements are accompanied by indications of their intention to use their increased income to fund conspicuous consumption. In the *Concrete* condition, the posters' announcements of their financial achievements are accompanied by indicators that they need the money to fulfill concrete material needs. In a fifth *Placebo* condition, respondents are exposed to Facebook

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[6]A follow-up survey may also be conducted for non-affluent respondents. A separate pre-analysis plan will be submitted should I conduct another survey on the non-affluent.

posts that announce athletic achievements (e.g., "I just finished my first half marathon"). These posts are designed to have no effect on economic policy preferences.

In each condition, respondents are shown three similar posts simultaneously. The gender composition of the Facebook posters is randomized.

After viewing the posts, respondents answer three questions aimed at highlighting the theoretically important components of the Facebook posts. For example, respondents in the *Social Approval* treatment are asked a series of three questions aimed at getting them to (1) recall the presence of positive feedback from Facebook friends in the posts, (2) provide the first names of three people who would be proud of them if they experienced financial success, and (3) write 2-3 sentences about why these three people would be proud of them if they experienced financial success. The questions are designed in a way to maintain symmetry across conditions while also priming the theoretically relevant construct.

Figure A1: Example Posts from Experimental Conditions

Social Approval

Self-Esteem

Conspicuous Consumption

Concrete

Placebo
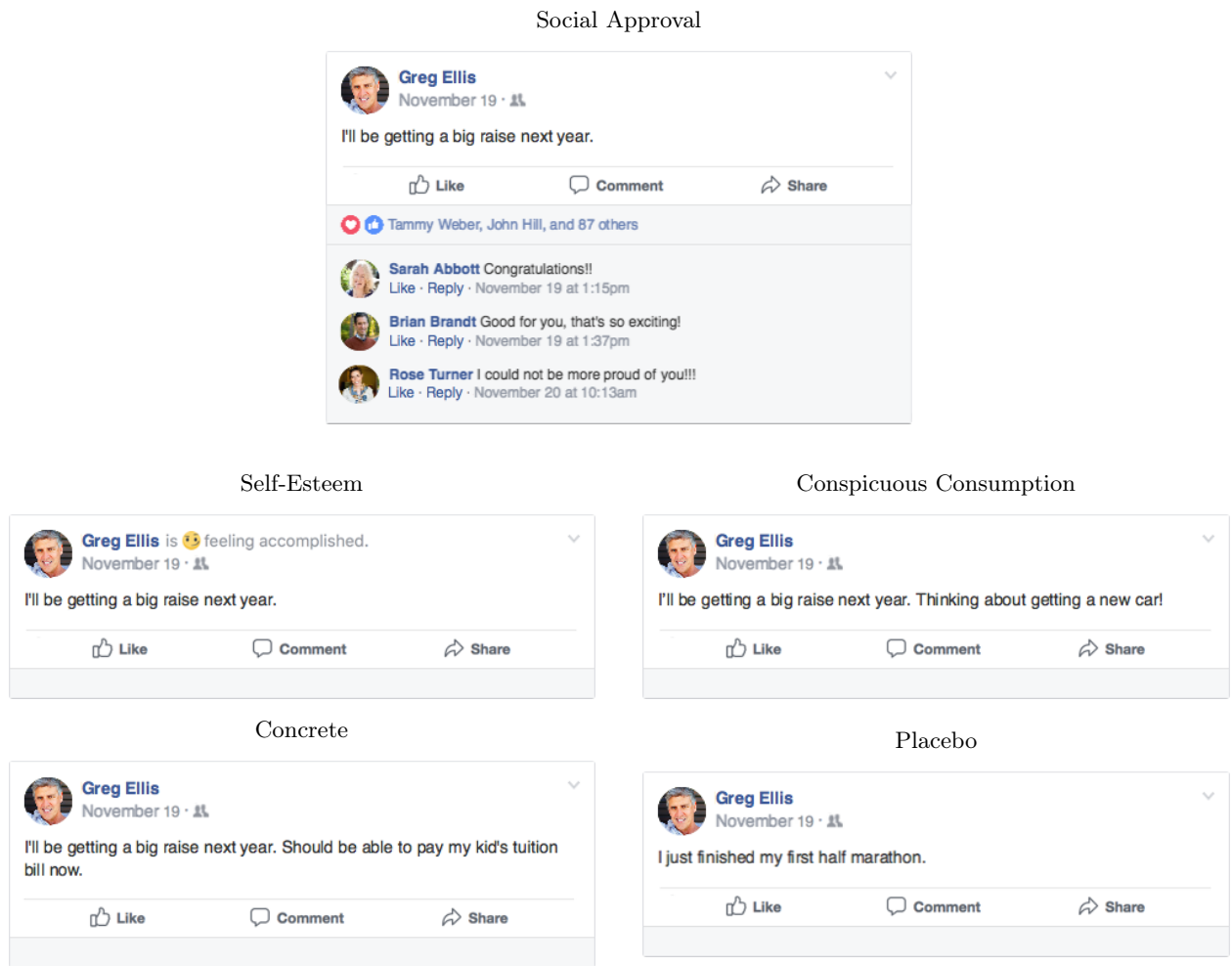
Outcome Measures

The survey includes outcome measures measured after the Facebook posts that are meant to gauge the effects of the treatment on affluent Americans' policy preferences. The three outcomes below are identical to those in Thal (n.d.), where the desire for money to gain esteem was found to be associated with stronger support of these policies.

1. Would you favor or oppose a proposal to decrease the taxes on households making $150,000 or more a year? [Strongly oppose; Somewhat oppose; Neither favor nor oppose; Somewhat favor; Strongly favor. Prediction: more in favor]

2. Would you favor or oppose a proposal to decrease the taxes on money people make from selling investments, also referred to as capital gains? [Strongly oppose; Somewhat oppose; Neither favor nor oppose; Somewhat favor; Strongly favor. Prediction: more in favor]

3. Would you favor or oppose a proposal to decrease government regulation of business and industry? [Strongly oppose; Somewhat oppose; Neither favor nor oppose; Somewhat favor; Strongly favor. Prediction: more in favor]

Moderating Variables

Gender: In line with the theory developed in Thal (n.d.) I expect that the effects of the treatments will be larger for affluent men than they are for affluent women. This expectation is supported by prior observational research, in which I found that the desire for money to attain esteem has particularly strong conservatizing effects on the economic policy preferences of affluent men.

Analysis

The main analysis will compare each of the four treatment groups (*Social Approval, Self-Esteem, Conspicuous Consumption*, and *Concrete*) to the *Placebo* condition. The secondary analysis will compare the three esteem conditions (*Social Approval, Self-Esteem*, and *Conspicuous Consumption*) to the *Concrete* condition.[7] These comparisons will be made by comparing differences in means across the conditions, as well as with OLS regression.[8] The moderating effect of gender will be tested by analyzing affluent men and affluent women separately, as well as by interacting the treatment conditions with an indicator for being a male in an OLS regression. One-sided hypothesis tests will be used in the main analysis given the strong a priori expectation of positive (i.e. conservatizing) effects of the esteem conditions relative to the placebo and concrete conditions. Regression analyses will be conducted with and without adjustment for standard demographic covariates. As an additional robustness check, the analysis will be performed with and without weighting for differences between the sample and the real world population of affluent Americans.

Exploratory Analysis

I will likely engage in further exploratory analyses of the data in addition to the pre-registered analyses specified above. This will entail analyses for which I do not have strong a priori expectations on the basis of either theory or prior observational evidence. In writing up the results I will clearly specify if a particular analysis was exploratory in nature and not included in the pre-registered set of analyses specified above.

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[7]Prior observational evidence suggests that *Social Approval, Self-Esteem,* and *Conspicuous Consumption* are highly correlated constructs measuring the desire for money to achieve esteem (Thal n.d.). For this reason, they will be analyzed both individually and in the form of a pooled esteem treatment condition.

[8]Other standard approaches, such as randomization inference, may also be implemented.

Potential Issues

I note that while I have requested a sample of 2,000 affluent respondents from the survey research company, the exact sample size may vary depending on whether or not they are actually able to recruit 2,000 affluent respondents for my survey.

References

Thal, Adam. n.d. "The Meaning of Money and the Origin of Affluent Class Interests." Working Paper.

B.2   Sample Description

Table A20 compares the demographic characteristics of the affluent and non-affluent survey samples used in Test 2 to the actual population of affluent and non-affluent adults as measured in the Current Population Survey (CPS).

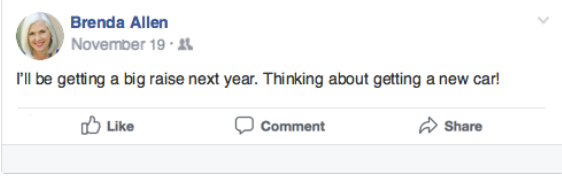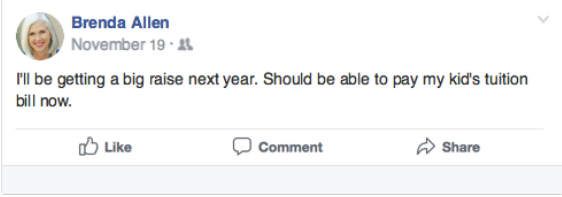Table A20: Description of Affluent and Non-Affluent Samples in Test 2
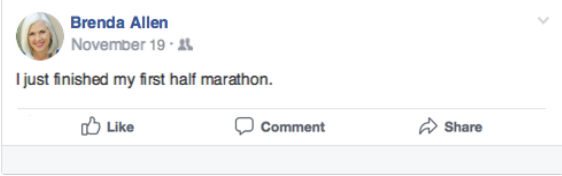
		Affluent CPS	Affluent Cint Data	Non-Affluent CPS	Non-Affluent Cint Data
Sex	Male	52%	45%	47%	54%
	Female	48%	55%	53%	46%
Age	18-29	13%	12%	16%	18%
	30-44	27%	44%	25%	40%
	45-54	26%	23%	18%	20%
	55 and up	34%	22%	35%	23%
Race/Ethnicity	Non-Hispanic White	78%	76%	69%	77%
	Non-Hispanic Black	6%	4%	13%	7%
	Hispanic	7%	11%	12%	9%
	Asian	7%	7%	4%	4%
	Other	2%	3%	2%	3%
Income	Less than $25,000	-	-	20%	11%
	$25,000-$49,999	-	-	24%	24%
	$50,000-$74,999	-	-	21%	27%
	$75,000-$99,999	-	-	16%	20%
	$100,000-$149,999	-	-	20%	19%
	$150,000-$199,999	50%	53%	-	-
	$200,000-$249,999	24%	22%	-	-
	$250,000 or more	26%	24%	-	-
Education	Less than College	37%	17%	73%	48%
	College Degree	35%	34%	18%	32%
	Graduate Degree	28%	49%	9%	19%

Note: A comparison of the demographic characteristics of the affluent and non-affluent Cint samples used in Test 2 to those of the full population of affluent and non-affluent Americans adults as measured in the Current Population Survey (CPS).

B.3 Experimental Design

B.3.1 Female Versions of Example Posts in Table 3

Table A21: Female Versions of Example Posts in Table 3

Condition Name & Sample Size	Variation	Example Post
Status I: **Social Approval** Affluent $n=375$ Non-Affluent $n=205$	Added "Likes" and positive comments from Facebook friends.	
Status II: **Self-Esteem** Affluent $n=390$ Non-Affluent $n=210$	Added emoji and text signaling feelings of self-esteem.	
Status III: **Conspicuous Consumption** Affluent $n=392$ Non-Affluent $n=213$	Added announcement of luxury purchase.	
Concrete Affluent $n=391$ Non-Affluent $n=209$	Added indication of concrete material need.	
Placebo Affluent $n=394$ Non-Affluent $n=208$	Replaced announcement of economic success with announcement of non-economic success.	

B.3.2 Respondents' View of Experimental Conditions

Figure A2: Example of Respondent View in Self-Esteem Condition

Please take a moment to study the Facebook posts below, which are taken from the Facebook pages of people living in your area. **We will ask you some questions about these posts later on in the survey, so please pay careful attention to the details of each post.**

Figure A3: Example of Respondent View in Conspicuous Consumption Condition

Please take a moment to study the Facebook posts below, which are taken from the Facebook pages of people living in your area. **We will ask you some questions about these posts later on in the survey, so please pay careful attention to the details of each post.**

Maxine Whitley
October 30 ·

I got an offer for a new higher-paying job. I am going to get some new clothes!

Like   Comment   Share

Mary Reid
November 6 ·

I'm going to get a performance bonus at work. I think it's time to buy some new furniture!

Like   Comment   Share

Greg Ellis
November 19 ·

I'll be getting a big raise next year. Thinking about getting a new car!

Like   Comment   Share

Figure A4: Example of Respondent View in Concrete Condition

Please take a moment to study the Facebook posts below, which are taken from the Facebook pages of people living in your area. **We will ask you some questions about these posts later on in the survey, so please pay careful attention to the details of each post.**

Maxine Whitley
October 30 ·

I got an offer for a new higher-paying job. Now I can afford to pay my rent.

Like   Comment   Share

Mary Reid
November 6 ·

I'm going to get a performance bonus at work. I think I'll add it to my savings account.

Like   Comment   Share

Greg Ellis
November 19 ·

I'll be getting a big raise next year. Should be able to pay my kid's tuition bill now.

Like   Comment   Share

Figure A5: Example of Respondent View in Placebo Condition

Please take a moment to study the Facebook posts below, which are taken from the Facebook pages of people living in your area. **We will ask you some questions about these posts later on in the survey, so please pay careful attention to the details of each post.**

Maxine Whitley
October 30 ·

I exercised every day this week.

Like   Comment   Share

Mary Reid
November 6 ·

I've been eating healthier this year.

Like   Comment   Share

Greg Ellis
November 19 ·

I just finished my first half marathon.

Like   Comment   Share

B.3.3 Reinforcing Questions Asked After Facebook Posts

After viewing the posts, respondents were asked a series of three questions that were designed to get them to pay attention to the theoretically-relevant parts of the treatment: the praise the Facebook posters get from friends in the *Social Approval* condition, the Facebook posters' emotions in the *Self-Esteem* condition, the Facebook posters' purchase of visible luxury goods in the *Conspicuous Consumption* condition, and the Facebook posters' concrete material needs in the *Concrete* condition. Similar questions were asked in the *Placebo* condition to preserve symmetry across conditions. These questions are designed to be as similar as possible across conditions while still drawing respondents' attention to the theoretically relevant parts of the condition to which they were assigned. These questions are shown in Table A22 on the following page. Response options are shown in brackets.

Table A22: Reinforcing Questions

Condition	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3
Social Approval	What happened when the Facebook posters shared the news that they would soon be making more money? (you may select more than one) [They received "likes" from Facebook friends; They received positive comments from Facebook friends; Their Facebook friends were proud of what they had accomplished; None of the above].	Imagine you learned that you are about to start making more money. Please provide the first names of several people who would be proud of you if you told them about it. [Text box]	In 2-3 sentences, please tell us why [Person 1], [Person 2], and [Person 3] would feel proud of you if you told them that you are about to start making more money. [Text box]
Self-Esteem	What emotions were the Facebook posters feeling when they found out that they would soon be making more money? (you may select more than one) [Successful; Proud; Accomplished; None of the above]	Imagine you learned that you are about to start making more money. Which of these emotions would you be most likely to feel? (you may select more than one) [Successful; Proud; Accomplished]	In 2-3 sentences, please tell us why you would feel [Selected Emotion 1], [Selected Emotion 2], and [Selected Emotion 3] if you found out that you are about to start making more money. [Text box]
Conspicuous Consumption	What did the Facebook posters say they were going to buy after they found out that they would soon be making more money? (you may select more than one) [New clothes; New furniture; A new car; None of the above]	Imagine you learned that you are about to start making more money. Which of these things would you be most likely to consider buying? (you may select more than one) [New clothes; New furniture; A new car]	In 2-3 sentences, please tell us why you would consider buying [Selected Purchase 1], [Selected Purchase 2], and [Selected Purchase 3] if you found out that you are about to start making more money. [Text box]
Concrete	What did the Facebook posters say they were going to do after they found out that they would soon be making more money? (you may select more than one) [Pay their rent; Add money to their savings account; Pay their child's tuition; None of the above]	Imagine you learned that you are about to start making more money. Which of these things would you be most likely to consider doing? (you may select more than one) [Pay your rent or other debts; Add money to your savings account; Pay your child's tuition]	In 2-3 sentences, please tell us why you would consider [Taking Selected Action 1], [Taking Selected Action 2], and [Taking Selected Action 3] if you found out that you are about to start making more money. [Text box]
Placebo	What did the Facebook posters say they had done to improve their health? (you may select more than one) [Exercise frequently; Eat healthier; Run a half marathon; None of the above]	Imagine that you were going to improve your health. Which of these things would you be most likely to consider doing? (you may select more than one) [Exercise frequently; Eat healthier; Run a half marathon]	In 2-3 sentences, please tell us why you would consider [Taking Selected Action 1], [Taking Selected Action 2], and [Taking Selected Action 3] if you were going to improve your health. [Text box]

B.4 Attrition

Overall, there was very little attrition between the random assignment of subjects to conditions at the beginning of the experiment and when respondents filled out the outcome measures. Of the 3,096 respondents who were assigned a condition at the beginning of the survey, 4% dropped out before providing their views of conservative economic policies. I observe the following attrition rates across the conditions: *Placebo =* 3%, *Concrete =* 3%; *Conspicuous Consumption =* 2%; *Self-Esteem =* 3%, *Conspicuous Consumption =* 2%, *Social Approval =* 6%.

While attrition is not high in any condition, it is slightly higher in the *Social Approval* condition than in the other conditions. I conduct a balance check to see whether differential attrition led to imbalances across the treatment groups on pre-treatment observable characteristics (see Table A23 below). I find no evidence that this is the case: the pre-treatment variables are balanced across all five categories. Further analysis shows that there is no instance in which there is a statistically significant difference between the *Placebo* conditions and any of the other four conditions on any of these pre-treatment variables. This suggests that the small amount of differential attrition that did occur did not interfere with the random assignment of subjects to conditions.

Table A23: Balance Check for Affluent Respondents

Variable	Placebo	Concrete	Cons. Consump.	Self-Esteem	Social Approval
Male	48%	47%	48%	51%	47%
Non-White	77%	73%	80%	74%	78%
Age	43	43	44	43	43
College Degree	32%	34%	37%	30%	34%
Graduate Degree	39%	37%	35%	42%	39%
Household Income (1-9 Scale)	5.6	5.5	5.5	5.6	5.5
Personal Income (1-9 Scale)	4.5	4.3	4.3	4.5	4.5

B.5 Treatment Effects Relative to Concrete Condition

Table A24 shows the results of an OLS model that regresses the *Economic Conservatism Index* on indicator variables for being randomly assigned to each of the *Status* conditions, with the *Concrete* condition serving as the omitted category. The results show that none of the three *Status* conditions causes a statistically significant increase in affluent Americans' level of economic conservatism relative to the *Concrete* condition.

Table A24: Effects of Status Conditions on Affluent Americans' Level of Economic Conservatism Relative to the Concrete Condition

	DV: Economic Conservatism
Intercept	0.66***
	(0.01)
Conspicuous Consumption	0.01
	(0.02)
Self-Esteem	−0.01
	(0.02)
Social Approval	0.03
	(0.02)
R^2	0.00
Num. obs.	1548

***$p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$ (one-sided)

B.6 Interpreting Null Effects Relative to the Concrete Condition

Table A24 above shows that none of the *Status* conditions have statistically significant effects on economic conservatism relative to the *Concrete* condition. These null effects are only theoretically informative if the *Status* conditions actually increased respondents' desire for social status relative to the *Concrete* condition (see Mutz and Pemantle 2015, 196). I run a series of manipulation checks to see whether this occurred.

First, I analyze the open-ended responses given by affluent respondents as part of the reinforcing questions. These questions were meant to encourage respondents in the *Status* conditions to think about money as a source of social status, and respondents in the *Concrete* condition to think about money as a way to meet material needs (see "Question 3" in Table A22 on page 31 for the text of the open-ended questions). To see if these questions successfully manipulated how respondents were thinking about money, I read through the 1,548 responses given by affluent respondents in the *Status* and *Concrete* conditions and coded them for mentions of social status.[9] To analyze the resulting data, I created a variable measuring *Status Mentions*, which is coded 1 for respondents who mentioned money in relation to social status in their open-ended response, and 0 for respondents who did not. Table A25 shows the results from an OLS model that regresses this *Status Mentions* variable on indicator variables for being randomly assigned to each of the three *Status* conditions, with the *Concrete* condition serving as the omitted category.[10] The results show that respondents in all three *Status* conditions were far more likely to write (and thus think) about money as a source of social status than respondents in the *Concrete* condition.

Table A25: Analysis Using Open-Ended Reinforcing Questions

	DV: Status Mentions
Intercept	0.01
	(0.02)
Conspicuous Consumption	0.56***
	(0.03)
Self-Esteem	0.65***
	(0.03)
Social Approval	0.70***
	(0.03)
R^2	0.00
Num. obs.	1548

***$p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$

Second, I ask whether the *Status* conditions increased affluent respondents' self-reported level of status motivation relative to the *Concrete* condition. Respondents' self-reported level of status motivation is measured using the Income Motives scale, which was included post-treatment in the survey for Test 2. To measure status motivation, I average together the subscales measuring *Social Approval*, *Self-Esteem*, and *Conspicuous Consumption* to construct a *Status Motivation Scale* (Cronbach's α = .91). The nine items in the scale are shown in Table A26 below. Each item has five response options coded to range from 0 to 1: "Not at all important" (0), "Slightly important" (.25), "Moderately Important" (.5), "Very Important" (.75), and "Extremely Important" (1). This second manipulation check is a difficult test, as an individual's motivations for making money are likely to be relatively stable, and thus difficult to manipulate (e.g., Mitchell and Mickel 1999).

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[9]Mentions of social status included any instance in which a respondent wrote about money in relation to gaining approval from others (i.e., *Social Approval*), feeling positively about themselves (i.e., *Self-Esteem*), or buying a conspicuous luxury good (i.e., *Conspicuous Consumption*).

[10]The results are substantively indistinguishable when a logit model is used.

Table A26: Items Used to Create the Status Motivation Scale

Motivation	Item
Social Approval	"To keep up with my friends financially"
	"To earn the respect of my loved ones"
	"To let others know that I am competent"
Self-Esteem	"To feel successful"
	"To feel proud"
	"To feel like I am doing well in life"
Conspicuous Consumption	"To be able to drive a nice car"
	"To be able to live in a beautiful home"
	"To be able to eat out at popular restaurants once in a while"

Note: Items in status motivation scale. Respondents are asked to "indicate how important each of the following is as a reason for you to make money."

Table A27 shows the results of an OLS model that regresses the *Status Motivation Scale* on indicator variables for being randomly assigned to each of the three *Status* conditions, with the *Concrete* condition serving as the omitted category. I find that one of the three *Status* conditions – *Social Approval* – caused a statistically significant increase in affluent respondents' self-reported level of status motivation relative to the *Concrete* condition. By contrast, the *Self-Esteem* and *Conspicuous Consumption* conditions did not increase affluent respondents' self-reported level of status motivation relative to the *Concrete* condition.

Table A27: Analysis Using Income Motives Scale

	DV: Status Motivation Scale
Intercept	0.47***
	(0.01)
Conspicuous Consumption	0.00
	(0.02)
Self-Esteem	0.01
	(0.02)
Social Approval	0.04*
	(0.02)
R^2	0.00
Num. obs.	1246

***$p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$

These results improve our ability to interpret the pattern of null effects in Table A24 above, and suggest that – at least in the case of the *Social Approval* condition – these null effects cannot be attributed to an insufficiently powerful treatment. All three *Status* conditions made respondents more likely to write and think about money as a source of social status relative to the *Concrete* condition. Moreover, the *Social Approval* condition increased respondents' self-reported level of status motivation relative to the *Concrete* condition. Because the *Social Approval* condition passed both manipulation checks, its null effect on economic conservatism relative to the *Concrete* condition is theoretically informative, and provides particularly clear evidence against my hypothesis that status motivation is more important than concrete motivation in shaping affluent Americans' level of economic conservatism.

B.7 Additional Results for Affluent Respondents

B.7.1 Results with Pooled Status Condition

This analysis pools the three *Status* conditions – *Social Approval*, *Self-Esteem*, and *Conspicuous Consumption* – into a single *Pooled Status* condition. The results remain substantively indistinguishable.

Table A28: Results with Pooled Status Condition

	Main Model
Intercept	0.63***
	(0.01)
Concrete	0.03
	(0.02)
Pooled Status	0.04**
	(0.02)
R^2	0.00
Num. obs.	1942

$^{***}p < 0.001$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{*}p < 0.05$

B.7.2 Results for Individual Policy Outcomes

This analysis reruns the main model with the individual policy outcomes used in place of the *Economic Conservatism Index*. In this alternative specification, I observe the strongest effects for the *Social Approval* condition, which causes increases in support for two of the three conservative economic policies: reducing taxes on the affluent and reducing business regulations.

Table A29: Results for Individual Policy Outcomes

	Reduce Taxes Over $150,000	Reduce Capital Gains Taxes	Reduce Business Regulation
Intercept	0.68***	0.64***	0.58***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Concrete	0.04*	0.03	0.02
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Conspicuous Consumption	0.06**	0.03	0.03
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Self-Esteem	0.04*	0.02	0.00
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Social Approval	0.06**	0.03	0.07**
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
R^2	0.01	0.00	0.01
Num. obs.	1942	1942	1942

$^{***}p < 0.001$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{*}p < 0.05$

B.7.3   Results with Sample Weights

   This analysis reruns the main model using sample weights, which are constructed using the same procedure used in Test 1 (see Appendix A.1). In this analysis I continue to find significant treatment effects for *Conspicuous Consumption* and *Social Approval*. Here I find significant treatment effects for *Concrete* and *Self-Esteem* as well, though they remain smaller than the treatment effects observed for *Conspicuous Consumption* and *Social Approval*.

Table A30: Results with Sample Weights

	Main Model
Intercept	0.62***
	(0.01)
Concrete	0.04*
	(0.02)
Conspicuous Consumption	0.06***
	(0.02)
Self-Esteem	0.04*
	(0.02)
Social Approval	0.06**
	(0.02)
R^2	0.00
Num. obs.	1940

***$p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$

B.7.4 Results with Control Variables

This analysis adds controls to the main model for basic demographic characteristics. In this analysis I continue to find significant treatment effects for *Conspicuous Consumption* and *Social Approval*.

Table A31: Results with Control Variables

	Main Model
Intercept	0.63***
	(0.02)
Experimental Treatments	
Concrete	0.03
	(0.02)
Conspicuous Consumption	0.04*
	(0.02)
Self-Esteem	0.02
	(0.02)
Social Approval	0.05**
	(0.02)
Control Variables	
Male	0.06***
	(0.01)
Asian	−0.07
	(0.02)
Latino	0.07***
	(0.02)
Black	−0.08
	(0.03)
Other	−0.05
	(0.04)
Age 30-44	0.00
	(0.02)
Age 45-54	−0.00
	(0.02)
Age 55 and up	−0.02
	(0.02)
College degree	−0.01
	(0.02)
Graduate degree	−0.02
	(0.02)
R^2	0.03
Num. obs.	1940

$^{***}p < 0.001$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{*}p < 0.05$

B.7.5 Results for Respondents Paying Attention

As an additional robustness check, I look at the results separately for respondents paying close attention. I do so using Question 1 from the reinforcing questions (see Table A22 on pg. 31 above for the text of the reinforcing questions). These questions asked respondents to recall details about the posts. For example, respondents in the *Social Approval* condition were first asked, "What happened when the Facebook posters shared the news that they would soon be making more money?", with the following response options (respondents were allowed to select more than one): "They received 'Likes' from Facebook friends", "They received positive comments from Facebook friends", "Their Facebook friends were proud of what they had accomplished", and "None of the above." The first three answers are correct. Across conditions, 99% of respondents selected at least one of the three correct response options, 75% selected at least two of the three correct response options, and 59% selected all three correct response options. Table A32 presents the results for affluent respondents who selected two of the three correct response options, and were thus paying a reasonably high level of attention during the survey. The effects of the *Conspicuous Consumption* and *Social Approval* conditions persist among this subset. The effects of these conditions also persist among those who selected one of the three correct response options or all three correct response options.

Table A32: Results Among Respondents Paying Attention

	Affluent
Intercept	0.61***
	(0.01)
Concrete	0.04
	(0.02)
Conspicuous Consumption	0.05**
	(0.02)
Self-Esteem	0.00
	(0.02)
Social Approval	0.05*
	(0.02)
R^2	0.01
Num. obs.	1435

$^{***}p < 0.001$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{*}p < 0.05$

B.7.6 Results for Top 5%

Table A33 compares the results for the full affluent sample consisting of the top 10% of the income distribution (Columns 1 and 2) to the results for the subset of affluent respondents within the top 5% of the income distribution (Columns 3 and 4).[11] Respondents in the full affluent sample are all in households earning at least $150,000 a year, while respondents within the top 5% subsample are all in households earning at least $250,000 a year. In general, the results are stronger among the top 5% than they are among the top 10% as a whole. This is especially clear when the effects of the *Status* conditions are measured relative to the *Concrete* condition. While none of the *Status* conditions have effects relative to the *Concrete* condition among the top 10% as a whole (Column 2), the *Conspicuous Consumption* and *Social Approval* conditions both cause statistically significant increases in economic conservatism relative to the *Concrete* condition among the top 5% (Column 4).

Table A33: Results Separately for Top 10% and Top 5%

	Top 10%		Top 5%	
	Relative to *Placebo*	Relative to *Concrete*	Relative to *Placebo*	Relative to *Concrete*
Intercept	0.63***	0.66***	0.63***	0.64***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Concrete	0.03	–	0.00	–
	(0.02)	–	(0.04)	–
Conspicuous Consumption	0.04*	0.01	0.08*	0.08*
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Self-Esteem	0.02	−0.01	0.05	0.05
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Social Approval	0.06**	0.03	0.12**	0.12**
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.04)
R^2	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.02
Num. obs.	1942	1548	475	374

***$p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$

These results suggest that the effects of the *Status* conditions may grow stronger as affluent Americans grow richer. To further assess this possibility, I run OLS models that interact the indicator variables for being randomly assigned to each condition with a variable measuring affluent Americans' household income.[12] Column 1 of Table A34 shows the results with the *Placebo* condition as the baseline. Here I observe that the *Social Approval* condition has increasingly powerful effects relative to the *Placebo* condition as affluent Americans grow richer. Column 2 of Table A34 shows the results with the *Concrete* condition as the baseline. Here I observe that the *Conspicuous Consumption* and *Social Approval* conditions have increasingly powerful effects relative to the *Concrete* condition as affluent Americans grow richer. This second result is consistent with the concept of diminishing marginal utility in economics (e.g., Horowitz, List, and McConnell 2007), which suggests that affluent Americans should have a diminishing need for money to meet concrete material needs as they grow richer and become more financially secure. This seems likely to be one of a number of factors that explain why the effects of the *Status* conditions grow stronger relative to the *Concrete* condition as affluent Americans grow richer.

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[11]Columns 1 and 3 show the results of OLS models that regress the *Economic Conservatism Index* on indicator variables for being randomly assigned to the *Conspicuous Consumption*, *Self-Esteem*, *Social Approval*, and *Concrete* conditions, leaving the *Placebo* condition as the omitted category. Columns 2 and 4 show the results of OLS models that regress the *Economic Conservatism Index* on indicator variables for being randomly assigned to the *Conspicuous Consumption*, *Self-Esteem*, and *Social Approval* conditions, leaving the *Concrete* condition as the omitted category.

[12]The *Income* variable ranges from 1 to 4 and is coded as follows: $150,000-$199,999 (1), $200,000-$249,999 (2), $250,000-$299,999 (3), $300,000 or more (4).

Table A34: Affluent Income Interaction Models

	Relative to Placebo	Relative to Concrete
Intercept	0.59***	0.74***
	(0.08)	(0.09)
Concrete	0.15	−
	(0.12)	−
Conspicuous Consumption	−0.09	−0.24
	(0.12)	(0.12)
Self-Esteem	−0.04	−0.20
	(0.12)	(0.12)
Social Approval	−0.16	−0.31
	(0.12)	(0.13)
Income	0.01	−0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)
Concrete X Income	−0.02	−
	(0.02)	−
Conspicuous Consumption X Income	0.02	0.04*
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Self-Esteem X Income	0.01	0.03
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Social Approval X Income	0.03*	0.05**
	(0.02)	(0.02)
R^2	0.01	0.01
Num. obs.	1942	1548

***$p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$

B.7.7   The Moderating Effect of Race and Ethnicity

While I randomized the gender of the posters in the experiment to account for the important role of gender in the theory, I did not randomize their race. I examine the implications of this decision by considering how the treatments may effect white and non-white respondents differently. As is the case in the actual population of affluent Americans, the majority of affluent respondents in my sample are white (76%). To see whether white respondents responded differently to the treatments than non-white respondents, I run an interaction model for affluent respondents where the indicator variables for each condition are interacted with an indicator variable for being white. This variable codes non-Hispanic white affluent respondents as 1 and all other affluent respondents as 0. The results are in Table A35.

Two of the treatments have stronger effects on white affluent respondents than on non-white affluent respondents: *Concrete* and *Social Approval*. The most theoretically interesting of these interaction effects is the one for *Social Approval*. In this condition, respondents saw three white posters receiving positive feedback from Facebook friends, all of whom were also white (see Figure 5 in the main paper). This treatment has substantially larger effects on white affluent respondents than it does on non-white affluent respondents.

Non-white affluent respondents may have rejected this treatment for a number of reasons. For example, the imagery in this treatment may have led them to think about how the pro-affluent policies asked about after the experiment disproportionately benefit whites, who are more likely than others to be affluent. Future research can explore these and other possibilities with an alternative version of my design that randomizes the race of the poster to either match or not match the race of the respondent.

Table A35: Affluent Race Interaction Model

	Model
Intercept	0.68***
	(0.03)
Concrete	−0.04
	(0.04)
Conspicuous Consumption	−0.01
	(0.04)
Self-Esteem	−0.02
	(0.04)
Social Approval	−0.05
	(0.04)
Male	−0.06
	(0.03)
Concrete X White	0.10*
	(0.04)
Conspicuous Consumption X White	0.07
	(0.05)
Self-Esteem X White	0.06
	(0.04)
Social Approval X White	0.14**
	(0.05)
R^2	0.01
Num. obs.	1942

$^{***}p < 0.001$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{*}p < 0.05$

B.8 Perceived Class of Poster

In this section I assess the possibility that the *Concrete* posts shifted the perceived social class of the Facebook posters. This may have occurred because the *Concrete* posts featured indications that the posters required money to take care of concrete material needs (see Figure A4 on pg. 28 above).[13] I conducted two tests to assess whether this shifted the perceived social class of the poster in ways that were consequential for the analysis.

First, I read through the 391 open-ended responses that affluent respondents in the *Concrete* condition gave as part of the reinforcing questions (see Table A22 on pg. 31 above for the text of the reinforcing questions). I found that none of the respondents in the *Concrete* condition mentioned the social class of the Facebook posters in their open-ended responses. This provides a first piece of evidence that respondents were not focused on the social class of the poster.

Second, I conducted an empirical test based on the idea that concerns about social status are typically not activated when people compare themselves to individuals who are poorer than themselves (see Fiske 2011). According to this logic, if the *Concrete* poster was perceived as lower class, it should have increased status motivation more strongly among the non-affluent (who would have perceived the *Concrete* poster as an economic equal) than it did among the affluent (who would have perceived the *Concrete* poster as poor relative to themselves). To see whether this is the case, I create a *Status Motivation Scale* that averages together the subscales measuring *Social Approval*, *Self-Esteem*, and *Conspicuous Consumption* from the Income Motives scale, which was included post-treatment in the survey for Test 2 (Cronbach's $\alpha = .91$). The nine items in the scale are shown in Table A36. Each item has five response options that are coded to range from 0 to 1: "Not at all important" (0), "Slightly important" (.25), "Moderately Important" (.5), "Very Important" (.75), and "Extremely Important" (1).

Table A36: Items Used to Create the Status Motivation Scale

Motivation	Item
Social Approval	"To keep up with my friends financially"
	"To earn the respect of my loved ones"
	"To let others know that I am competent"
Self-Esteem	"To feel successful"
	"To feel proud"
	"To feel like I am doing well in life"
Conspicuous Consumption	"To be able to drive a nice car"
	"To be able to live in a beautiful home"
	"To be able to eat out at popular restaurants once in a while"

Note: Items in status motivation scale. Respondents are asked to "indicate how important each of the following is as a reason for you to make money."

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[13]I note that I strived as much as possible to make the *Concrete* posters appear to have the same social class (and be identical in all other ways) to the *Status* posters. The posts in these conditions feature identical people making identical announcements about economic successes that are not commonly experienced by the non-affluent, such as getting a big raise at work. In addition, the reinforcing questions asked after the *Concrete* posts guided respondents to think about their own concrete material needs, rather than other details of the posts such as the posters' social class. These design choices should have limited the extent to which respondents were focused on the posters' social class.

Table A37 shows the effects of the *Concrete* condition on status motivation relative to the *Placebo* condition for non-affluent (Column 1) and affluent (Column 2) respondents. These effects are measured with OLS models that regress the *Status Motivation Scale* on an indicator variable for being randomly assigned to the *Concrete* condition, which is coded 1 for respondents in the *Concrete* condition and 0 for respondents in the *Placebo* condition. There is no evidence that the *Concrete* condition increased status motivation more strongly among the non-affluent than it did among the affluent. Indeed, as intended, the *Concrete* condition did not increase status motivation among either income group. While this test is imperfect, it provides further evidence that the *Concrete* condition did not meaningfully shift the perceived social class of the Facebook posters, at least in ways that were consequential for respondents' income motives.

Table A37: Effect of the *Concrete* Condition on Status Motivation

	Non-Affluent	Affluent
(Intercept)	0.45***	0.46***
	(0.02)	(0.01)
Concrete	0.00	0.01
	(0.03)	(0.02)
R^2	0.00	0.00
Num. obs.	332	634

***$p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$

B.9   Non-Affluent Placebo Test

In Test 2 I found that exposure to Facebook posts linking economic success and social status causes affluent Americans to pursue their self-interest in politics. As a placebo test, I ask whether the same is true for non-affluent Americans. I do so here by examining the effects of the experimental treatments from Test 2 on non-affluent Americans' support for reducing taxes on themselves. This outcome is measured using an item that is identically worded to the policy question about lowering affluent Americans' taxes, with the exception that it asks about lowering non-affluent Americans' taxes: "Would you favor or oppose a proposal to decrease the taxes on households making less than \$150,000 a year?" Response options are the same as well, and coded to range from 0 to 1: "Strongly oppose" (0), "Somewhat oppose" (.25), "Neither favor nor oppose" (.5), "Somewhat favor" (.75), and "Strongly favor" (1) (this same item is used for the non-affluent placebo test for Test 1 above). Table A38 shows the results of an OLS model that regresses non-affluent Americans' support for lowering their own taxes on indicator variables for being randomly assigned to the *Status* and *Concrete* conditions, with the *Placebo* condition serving as the omitted category. The pattern of results reveals no evidence that any of the treatments increased non-affluent Americans' level of support for reducing their own taxes.

Table A38: Treatment Effects on Non-Affluent Americans' Support For Reducing Their Own Taxes

	Reduce Taxes Under \$150,000
Intercept	0.73***
	(0.02)
Concrete	−0.02
	(0.03)
Conspicuous Consumption	−0.03
	(0.03)
Self-Esteem	0.00
	(0.03)
Social Approval	0.01
	(0.03)
R^2	0.00
Num. obs.	1032

***$p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$

B.10   Observational Facebook Analysis

Test 2 provides experimental evidence that encountering evidence of others' economic success on Face-book causes affluent Americans to become more economically conservative. One question that follows from this analysis is whether these effects occur as affluent Americans use Facebook in the course of their daily lives. In this section I provide an observational test of this possibility. I use data from Test 2 to measure the relationship between the amount of time affluent Americans spend on Facebook, the strength of their desire for social status, and their level of support for conservative economic policies. The results provide suggestive evidence that the effects I observe in the experiment do occur as affluent Americans use Facebook in the course of their daily lives: The more time affluent Americans spend on Facebook, the more strongly they tend to desire social status, and the more strongly they tend to support conservative economic policies.

Data and Measures

Data

This analysis draws from the survey of n = 2,010 affluent respondents used in Test 2. I focus on the subsample of 1,252 affluent respondents who are (1) Facebook users and (2) completed all the items required for this analysis. For this subsample I measure three quantities: the amount of time respondents spend on Facebook, respondents' level of status motivation, and respondents' level of support for conservative economic policies.

Amount of Time Spent on Facebook

I measure Facebook usage as the number of hours that respondents spend on Facebook in the average week. This quantity is measured in the following way: First, respondents are asked, "Do you currently have a Facebook account?" Eighty-two percent of respondents answered "Yes." These respondents were then asked: "Approximately how many hours do you spend on Facebook each week?", with the following response options: "None", "Less than 1 hour a week", "1-2 hours a week", "3-6 hours a week", "7-14 hours a week", and "More than 14 hours a week."

Among Facebook users, time spent on Facebook is distributed as follows: None (3%), Less than 1 hour a week (20%), 1-2 hours a week (26%), 3-6 hours a week (27%), 7-14 hours a week (16%), and More than 14 hours a week (8%). There are very few respondents who use Facebook either not at all (i.e., "None") or "More than 14 hours a week." Accordingly, I collapse the bottom two and top two categories, leaving me with four categories that roughly correspond to the quartiles of the response distribution: Less than 1 hour a week (23%), 1-2 hours a week (26%), 3-6 hours a week (27%), and More than 7 hours a week (24%).

Status Motivation

I measure respondents' level of *Status* motivation using the Income Motives scale developed in Test 1. Specifically, I construct a scale measuring *Status* motivation by averaging together the subscales measuring *Social Approval*, *Self-Esteem*, and *Conspicuous Consumption*. The items composing these three subscales are shown in Table A26. Each of the items has five response options, which I code to range from 0 to 1: "Not at all important" (0), "Slightly important" (.25), "Moderately Important" (.5), "Very Important" (.75), and "Extremely Important" (1). I average the nine items in Table A39 together to create a measure of *Status Motivation* that has a very high level of internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .91$).

Table A39: Items Used to Measure Status Motivation

Motivation	Item
Social Approval	"To keep up with my friends financially"
	"To earn the respect of my loved ones"
	"To let others know that I am competent"
Self-Esteem	"To feel successful"
	"To feel proud"
	"To feel like I am doing well in life"
Conspicuous Consumption	"To be able to drive a nice car"
	"To be able to live in a beautiful home"
	"To be able to eat out at popular restaurants once in a while"

Note: Respondents are asked to "indicate how important each of the following is as a reason for you to make money," before rating these nine motivations on a five-point scale ranging from "Not at all important" to "Extremely important."

Support for Conservative Economic Policies

I measure support for conservative economic policies using the same *Economic Conservatism Index* used in Tests 1 and 2 in the main paper. The index averages together respondents' support for (1) decreasing "taxes on households making $150,000 or more a year," (2) decreasing the "taxes on money people make from selling investments, also referred to as capital gains," and (3) decreasing "government regulation of business and industry." All three items have the same response options, which are coded to range from 0 (the most liberal response) to 1 (the most conservative response): "Strongly oppose" (0), "Somewhat oppose" (.25), "Neither favor nor oppose" (.5), "Somewhat favor" (.75), and "Strongly favor" (1). The three items are averaged together to form the *Economic Conservatism Index* (Cronbach's $\alpha = .73$).

Statistical Methods

As a first step, I measure the bivariate relationship between the amount of time affluent respondents spend on Facebook and their level of *Status Motivation*, as well as between the amount of time affluent respondents spend on Facebook and their level of economic conservatism. I then extend these results using regressions with controls and mediation analysis.

Results

The left panel of Figure A6 looks at the bivariate relationship between the amount of time affluent Americans spend on Facebook and their level of *Status Motivation*. As the number of hours affluent Americans spend on Facebook increases, so too does their level of *Status Motivation*. Affluent Americans who spend more than seven hours a week on Facebook have a level of *Status Motivation* that is 18 percentage points higher than that of affluent Americans who spend less than one hour a week on Facebook.

The right panel of Figure A6 looks at the bivariate relationship between the amount of time affluent Americans spend on Facebook and their level of economic conservatism. As the number of hours affluent Americans spend on Facebook increases, so too does their level of economic conservatism, though the strength of this relationship is weaker than that observed for *Status* motivation in the left panel. Affluent Americans who spend more than seven hours a week on Facebook are six percentage points more economically conservative than affluent Americans who spend less than one hour a week on Facebook.

Figure A6: Facebook Use, Status Motivation, and Economic Conservatism Among Affluent Americans
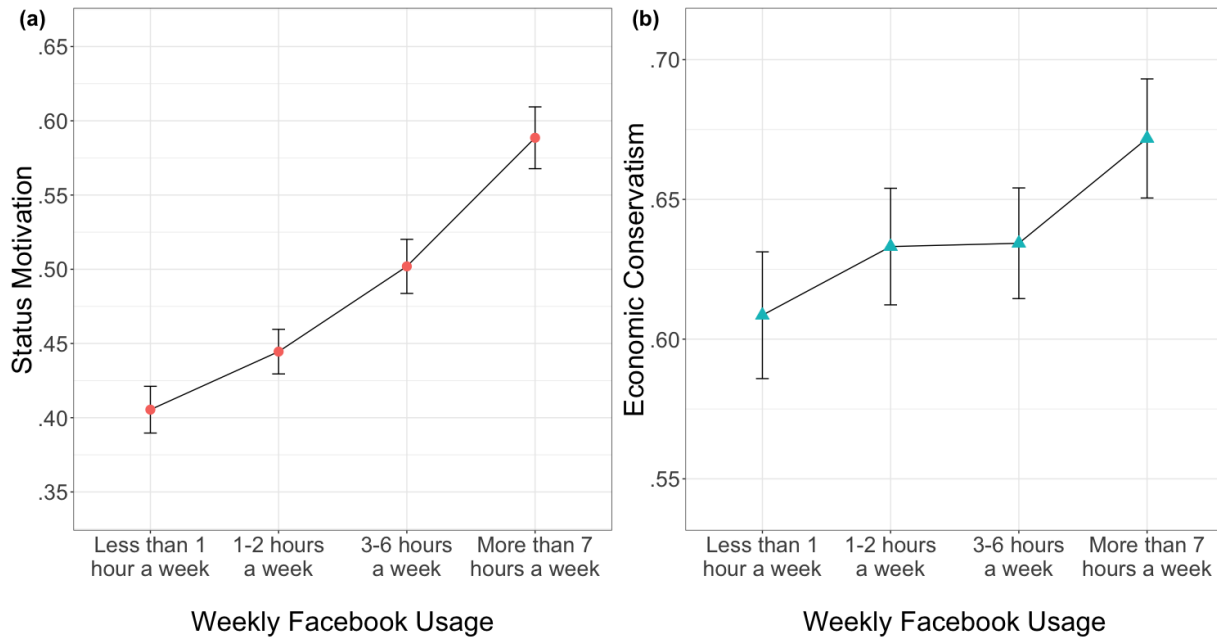
Note: Figure (a) shows the bivariate relationship between weekly Facebook usage and *Status* motivation for affluent Americans. Figure (b) shows the bivariate relationship between weekly Facebook usage and support for conservative economic policies for affluent Americans. Point estimates are shown with 84% confidence intervals, such that non-overlapping confidence intervals are indicative of statistically significant differences between point estimates at $p < 0.05$ (Schenker and Gentleman 2001).

These results provide suggestive evidence that spending time on Facebook increases affluent Americans' desire for social status, as well as their level of economic conservatism. I further assess this possibility below using regressions with controls and mediation analysis. Before proceeding, I note that these bivariate results are also consistent with a number of other interpretations. For example, while spending time on Facebook may cause affluent Americans to become more concerned about social status, it may also be the case that being highly concerned about social status causes affluent Americans to spend more time on Facebook. These causal pathways are not mutually exclusive, and they may operate simultaneously to produce the patterns observed in Figure A6. While I am ultimately unable to distinguish between these causal pathways using these observational data, this analysis can still provide a useful complement to the experimental results presented in the main paper.

Table A40 extends this analysis with OLS regressions that control for basic demographic characteristics. The first column of Table A40 shows the results for a model in which *Status Motivation* is regressed on Facebook usage with controls for gender, race/ethnicity, age, and education. I continue to find effects for Facebook usage that are similar in size to those observed in the bivariate analysis in Figure A6. The second column of Table A40 shows the results for a model in which the *Economic Conservatism Index* is regressed on Facebook usage with the same controls. Once again, I continue to find effects for Facebook usage that are similarly sized to those observed in the bivariate analysis in Figure A6. I note that these results persist when partisanship is included as a control.

Table A40: Regression Analysis of Facebook Use, Status Motivation, and Support for Conservative Economic Policies

	DV: Status Motivation	DV: Economic Conservatism
Intercept	0.54***	0.54***
	(0.03)	(0.04)
Weekly Facebook Usage		
1-2 hours	0.04*	0.03
	(0.02)	(0.02)
3-6 hours	0.07***	0.04
	(0.02)	(0.02)
More than 7 hours	0.16***	0.07**
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Controls		
Male	0.02*	0.06***
	(0.01)	(0.02)
White	−0.04**	0.03
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Age 30-44	−0.11***	0.01
	(0.02)	(0.03)
Age 45-54	−0.19***	0.04
	(0.02)	(0.03)
Age 55 and up	−0.21***	0.01
	(0.02)	(0.03)
College Degree	0.04*	−0.00
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Graduate Degree	0.05**	−0.02
	(0.02)	(0.02)
R^2	0.19	0.02
Num. obs.	1252	1252

$^{***}p < 0.001$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{*}p < 0.05$

Finally, we may ask whether *Status Motivation* mediates the positive effect of Facebook usage on affluent Americans' level of support for conservative economic policies. I assess mediation using the regression method developed by Baron and Kenny (1986). To facilitate this analysis, I recode *Facebook Usage* as a continuous variable, which I code to range from 0 to 1 in the following way: Less than 1 hour a week (0), 1-2 hours a week (.33), 3-6 hours a week (.67), and More than 7 hours a week (1).

Column 1 of Table A41 regresses affluent Americans' levels of economic conservatism on *Facebook Usage* with the same controls used above, and finds a significant five percentage point effect of *Facebook Usage*. Column 2 of Table A41 adds a control for *Status Motivation*. *Status Motivation* has a significant 14 percentage point effect, and including it in the model leads the coefficient for *Facebook Usage* to lose nearly all its value and become insignificant. This is consistent with a model of mediation in which *Status Motivation* mediates the positive effect of *Facebook Usage* on affluent Americans' level of support for conservative economic policies. These results also replicate using the **mediation** package in R (Tingley et al. 2014).

While there are limits to what this observational data can establish, they provide a useful complement to the experimental results presented in Test 2. The experiment in Test 2 shows that exposure to Facebook posts in which others broadcast their economic success causes affluent Americans to become more economically conservative. The observational results presented here suggest that this may be occurring as affluent Americans use Facebook in their daily lives. The more time affluent Americans spend on Facebook, the more they tend to desire social status, and the more they tend to support conservative economic policies.

Table A41: Mediation Analysis of Facebook Use, Status Motivation, and Support for Conservative Economic Policies

	DV: Economic Conservatism	
	Without Status Motivation	With Status Motivation
Intercept	0.54***	0.38***
	(0.03)	(0.04)
Facebook Usage	0.05**	0.01
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Status Motivation	–	0.14***
	–	(0.02)
Male	0.06***	0.05***
	(0.02)	(0.01)
White	0.03	0.05*
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Age 30-44	0.01	0.04
	(0.03)	(0.02)
Age 45-54	0.04	0.10***
	(0.03)	(0.03)
Age 55 and up	0.02	0.08**
	(0.03)	(0.03)
College Degree	−0.00	−0.02
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Graduate Degree	−0.02	−0.03
	(0.02)	(0.02)
R^2	0.02	0.08
Num. obs.	1252	1252

***$p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$

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