#### RESEARCH NOTE



# The Impact of Subjective Social Position on Attitudes Regarding the Government's Role in Addressing Economic Inequality

Regina Branton<sup>1</sup> and Valerie Martinez-Ebers<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of North Carolina at Charlotte, USA and <sup>2</sup>University of North Texas, USA Corresponding author: Regina Branton; Email: rbranton@uncc.edu

(Received 30 January 2024; revised 9 August 2024; accepted 26 November 2024)

#### Abstract

We examine factors that explain differences in opinions among Asian Americans and Latinos regarding the government's responsibility in addressing economic inequality. We utilize a subjective social position framework to better understand variations in attitudes about the role the government should play in addressing the differences in income between people with high and low incomes. We use ordered logit models to assess 2020 Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey data. Respondent's age, feelings of marginalization, perceptions of local context, and use of alternative financial services are more important for predicting support or opposition to the government addressing income inequality. Taken together, the subjective social position of individuals goes a long way in explaining individuals' attitudes regarding this matter.

Keywords: Subjective social position; economic inequality; public opinion

#### Introduction

This research note aims to revisit the *subjective social position framework* introduced by Martinez-Ebers, Branton, and Calfano (2021) and originally used to predict differences in evaluations of policing. Specifically, we assess the framework's applicability in another debated policy matter by examining Asian American and Latino attitudes<sup>1</sup> toward the government's role in addressing income inequality. Extant research commonly notes the correlation between attitudes regarding policing and income inequality (e.g. Algan et al. 2017; Foster and Frieden 2017). If the framework functions as found in Martinez-Ebers et al. (2021), it seems reasonable to expect it should explain attitudes regarding redistributive policy. In essence, this is a test of the construct validity of the framework. The findings herein indicate those in lower subjective social positions are more likely to express support for governmental policy addressing income inequality than those in higher subjective social positions, which lends further support for the construct validity of the subjective social position framework.

© The Author(s), 2025. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of The Race, Ethnicity, and Politics Section of the American Political Science Association. This is an Open Access article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution licence (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits unrestricted re-use, distribution and reproduction, provided the original article is properly cited.

# A Subjective Social Position Framework

In its original formulation, the *subjective social position framework* synthesized three competing explanations for varying evaluations of police performance: ascribed characteristics, psychological mindset, and personal experiences. It successfully predicted more negative evaluations of police performance from persons with lower subjective social positioning. Subjective social position refers to the individual's self-identified location in the social hierarchy and this plays a key role in how the individual perceives the world (Adler et al. 2000; Brown-Iannuzzi et al. 2015; Duman 2020; Lindemann 2007). An individual's subjective social position not only depends on objective characteristics but also on how she experiences society and perceives her situation in comparison to others. Herein, using the framework, we expect persons in lower subjective social positioning will be more supportive of government intervention to assist those in poverty than those who see themselves in higher subjective positions.

#### **Ascribed Characteristics**

According to Omi and Winant (2015), minority classification is the primary factor animating social perception and relations. Though interracial marriage is gradually altering the racial hierarchy, Anglos remain at the top of the hierarchy, while African Americans remain at the bottom (Gans 2012). Asians and Latinos are located somewhere between Anglos and African Americans, with Asians usually positioned closer to Anglos and Latinos positioned closer to African Americans (Bonilla-Silva 2002). However, Latinos are viewed by Whites as "more American" than Asians when immigrant populations increase (Fouka and Tabellini 2022). Class and gender distinctions are also important in social position construction, but in this application are secondary, particularly given Hero's (1992) two-tiered pluralism argument about the US socio-political structure (with its lack of substantive equality for racial/ethnic minorities). We hypothesize people of color, especially Latinos who are closest to African Americans in the racial hierarchy, will be more supportive of redistributive policy than Asians but the difference should be small at best given their middling position in the racial hierarchy.

 $H_1$ : Latinos will be more likely to agree it is the government's responsibility for addressing income inequality than compared to Asian Americans.

Regarding the expectations for age, younger people are commonly seen as being more progressive or liberal while seniors are more conservative regarding the role of government. Indeed, studies show as individuals age they become significantly less supportive of redistributive policies (Lin, Kamo, and Slack 2018; Pittau, Farcomeni, and Zelli 2016). Theoretically, we expect age, to matter in assessments of the role of the government in addressing income inequality, even when other individual attributes are controlled for. Specifically, younger individuals who are at the lower end of the social order will be more supportive of redistributive policy than older people.

 $H_2$ : Younger respondents will be more likely to agree it is the government's responsibility for addressing income inequality than compared to older respondents.

## **Psychological Mindset**

One's psychological mindset includes feelings of social marginalization, the process of pushing a particular group or multiple groups to the edge of society by not allowing them an active voice, identity, or place in it. Through both direct and indirect processes, individuals are relegated to a secondary position and made to feel as if they are less important than those who hold more power or privilege in society (Kagan, Tindall, and Robinson 2010; Silva et al. 2022). This suggests individuals who feel marginalized—of not being accepted or respected by society—will be more supportive of policy helping a marginalized group, i.e. poor people.

 $H_3$ : Socially marginalized individuals will be more likely to agree it is the government's responsibility for addressing income inequality.

# **Personal Experiences**

A key experiential factor associated with support for government action to address income inequality is personal experiences of income insecurity, such as a reduction or loss in wages or increased living expenses without an increase in salary (ILO 2016). Income insecurity poses challenges for daily life, such as the inability to pay for rent/mortgage, adequate food, utilities, healthcare, childcare, etc. Those who have experienced income insecurity are expected to be more supportive of the government addressing economic inequality than individuals who have not experienced income insecurity (Melcher 2023).

 $H_4$ : Those who are income insecure will be more likely to agree it is the government's responsibility for addressing income inequality than those who are not income insecure.

#### **Data and Methods**

To evaluate Asian American and Latino attitudes<sup>3</sup> regarding one's perception of the government's responsibility for addressing income inequality, we use data from the 2020 Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey (CMPS). The CMPS includes interviews collected online in a respondent self-administered format between December 3, 2020 and February 15, 2020. The sample used in this study includes 3,003 Latinos and 3,006 Asians (Barreto et al. 2017). The survey was available in multiple languages including English, Chinese (simplified and traditional), Korean, Spanish, and Vietnamese. The CMPS features survey weights for the U.S. adult population based on age, ancestry, education, gender, nativity, and voter registration status.

The dependent variable measures respondent attitudes regarding the perceived responsibility of the government in addressing income inequality. The respondents were asked: It is the responsibility of the government to reduce the differences in income between people with high incomes and those with low incomes? (Responses: 1-"Strongly Disagree," 2-"Somewhat Disagree," 3-"Neither Agree or Disagree," and 4-"Somewhat Agree," and 5-"Strongly Agree"). Given the dependent variable is based on a 5-point Likert scale measure, we utilize ordered logistic regression to estimate the models. Further, we estimate two sets of models to

# 4 Regina Branton and Valerie Martinez-Ebers

evaluate both intergroup and intragroup differences in public opinion regarding the government's responsibility for addressing income inequality. First, the pooled model considers the differences in evaluations of the government's responsibility for addressing income inequality across Asian Americans and Latinos. Second, the subgroup models examine the factors that predict evaluations of attitudes about the government's responsibility for addressing income inequality among Asian Americans and Latinos.

In terms of the subjective social position framework, the key objective (i.e., ascribed) characteristics included in the pooled model are a respondent's race/ethnicity and age. To account for racial/ethnic differences in evaluations of the government's role in addressing inequality, we include a variable reflecting the respondents' race/ethnicity category. The model includes a dichotomous variable denoting if a respondent is Latino with Asian serving as the baseline (or omitted) category. To account for the influence of age on attitudes about the government's responsibility for addressing income inequality, both the pooled and subgroup models include a continuous measure of respondent age ranging from 17 to 108.

The key psychological factor is marginalization, which is measured using the following four items: "How much do you believe that you belong in the United States?" "How much do you believe you are an insider/outsider in the United States?" "How much you believe that others in U.S. society value and respect you?" and "How much you believe that you are accepted and included by others in U.S. society who are not like you?" The response options for each item range from 1 ("A lot") to 3 ("Not at all"), where higher values reflect greater marginalization. We factored and analyzed the four items and then created the index using the factor scores. The factor score-based marginalization index ranges from -1.20 to 2.48, with higher values reflecting greater levels of marginalization from society. The Cronbach alpha score containing all four measures of marginalization is .72.

The key experiential measure is a respondent's income insecurity. Income insecurity is measured using responses to the following item: "Please indicate whether any of the circumstances apply to you or someone in your household": (1) lost job, (2) Had work hours cut, or pay cut, but kept job, (3) Had to temporarily or permanently close my business or my self-employment, (4) Currently unemployed and looking for work (5) Lost access to healthcare, and (6) Was not able to pay monthly rent or mortgage. The response options for each item are (1) "Yes, me," (2) "Yes, someone else in my household," and (3) "No, nobody in my household." We factored and analyzed the six items and then created the index using the factor scores. The factor score-based income insecurity measure ranges from —.63 to 5.91, with higher values reflecting greater levels of income insecurity. The Cronbach alpha for the income insecurity measure is .73.

The models also include five individual-level control variables: female, education, income, partisanship, foreign-born, and political interest. Female is coded 1 if the respondent is female. Education is measured using a categorical variable ranging from 1 (eighth grade or less) to 4 (post-graduate education). Income is measured using a categorical variable ranging from 1 (less than \$20,000) to 12 (\$200,000 or more). The model also includes *No Income*, which is coded "1" if respondents did not report their income. Partisan affiliation is measured by two binary variables: Democrat and Independent (coded 1 in each case). Republican identification serves

Table 1. Government role in addressing income inequality: Pooled model

	Coef.	SE
Ascribed Factors		
Latino	-0.14*	(0.06)
Age	-0.01***	(0.00)
Psychological Factors		
Marginalization	0.11***	(0.03)
Experiential Factor		
Income Insecurity	0.08*	(0.03)
Control Variables		
Democrat	1.23***	(0.08)
Independent	0.76***	(0.09)
Female	0.00	(0.05)
Political Interest	0.20***	(0.03)
Education	0.05	(0.04)
Income	-0.06***	(0.01)
Foreign Born	0.18***	(0.05)
Cut-Point 1	-1.78***	(0.17)
Cut-Point 2	-0.76	(0.17)
Cut-Point 3	0.66***	(0.17)
Cut-Point 4	2.10***	(0.18)
N Cases	7424	
Wald X <sup>2</sup>	464.86**	

<sup>\*\*\*</sup>p < 0.001;

as the baseline (omitted) category. Foreign-born is coded 1. Political interest is measured by: "Some people are very interested in politics while other people can't stand politics, how about you? Are you: Very interested in politics, Somewhat interested, Not that interested in politics, Not at all interested in politics." Higher values reflect heightened interest in politics.

# **Results**

Given the ordered categorical nature of the dependent variable, we use ordered logit to estimate the income inequality models.<sup>8</sup> The results for the pooled model are presented in Table 1 and the results for the subgroup models are presented in Table 2.

<sup>\*\*</sup>p < 0.01;

 $<sup>\</sup>star p <$  0.05. Coefficients are ordered logistic regression coefficients with standard errors clustered on the zip code.

Table 2. Government role in addressing income inequality: Subgroup models

	Asian Respo	Asian Respondents		Latino Respondents	
	Coef.	SE	Coef.	SE	
Ascribed Factors					
Age	-0.02***	(0.00)	-0.01***	(0.00)	
Psychological Factors					
Marginalization	0.10*	(0.04)	0.13***	(0.04)	
Experiential Factor					
Income Insecurity	0.01	(0.05)	0.12***	(0.03)	
Control Variables					
Democrat	1.37***	(0.12)	1.14***	(0.11)	
Independent	0.68***	(0.13)	0.84***	(0.12)	
Female	-0.05	(0.08)	0.04	(0.07)	
Political Interest	0.22***	(0.05)	0.19***	(0.04)	
Education	0.07	(0.05)	0.01	(0.05)	
Income	-0.08***	(0.01)	-0.04***	(0.01)	
Foreign Born	0.29***	(0.08)	0.09	(0.08)	
Cut-Point 1	-1.83***	(0.25)	-1.59***	(0.20)	
Cut-Point 2	-0.71**	(0.25)	-0.67***	(0.20)	
Cut-Point 3	0.67*	(0.25)	0.80***	(0.20)	
Cut-Point 4	2.22***	(0.26)	2.17***	(0.21)	
N Cases	3497		3927		
Wald X <sup>2</sup>	230.76***		280.89***		

<sup>\*\*\*</sup>p < 0.001;

#### **Pooled Model**

The first column in Table 1 presents the coefficients; the second column shows the standard errors. We begin by discussing the impact of the first of the objective (i.e., ascribed) characteristics—respondent race/ethnicity—on attitudes about the government's responsibility for addressing income inequality. The findings indicate there are *slight*, yet significant differences across racial/ethnic groups. Asian Americans are significantly *less likely to disagree* and significantly *more likely to agree* it is the government's responsibility to address income inequality than Latino respondents, although the differences are marginal. The probability of an Asian American strongly disagreeing it's the government's responsibility to address income inequality is .08, while the probability for a Latino is .09 ( $\Delta = -.01$ ). The probability of an Asian American strongly agreeing it's the government's responsibility to address

<sup>\*\*</sup>p < 0.01;

 $<sup>^\</sup>star p <$  0.05. Coefficients are ordered logistic regression coefficients with standard errors clustered on the zip code.

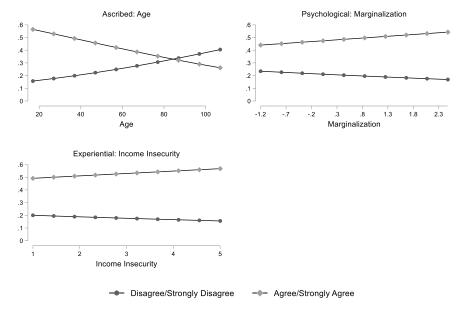


Figure 1. Subjective social framework: Pooled model.

income inequality is .19, while the probability for a Latino is .17 ( $\Delta = .02$ ). Substantively, this finding, while muted, is not consistent with  $H_1$ .

Next, we turn to the other variables that are key components of the subjective social framework. To assist with the interpretation, we present the change in predicted probabilities for each of the remaining variables that comprise the subjective social framework (holding all other variables at their means) as they increase from their minimum to maximum values in Figure 1. The top left graph presents the probabilities for the second ascribed factor: age. The top right graph presents the probabilities for the first psychological factor: marginalization. The bottom left graph presents the probabilities for the experiential factor: income insecurity. The lines with the circle represent disagree/strongly disagree and the lines with the square symbol represent agree/strongly agree the government is responsible for addressing income inequality.

First, we consider the impact of the second objective (ascribed) characteristic—respondent age—on attitudes about the government's responsibility for addressing income inequality. Older respondents are significantly *more likely to disagree* and significantly *less likely to agree* it's the government's responsibility to address income inequality, lending evidence for  $H_2$ . As age increases from minimum to maximum value, the probability of agreeing it's the government's responsibility to address income inequality decreases from .56 to .26 ( $\Delta = -.30$ ). Further, as age increases from minimum to maximum value, the probability of disagreeing it's the government's responsibility to address income inequality increases from .16 to .41 ( $\Delta = .25$ ).

Next, the findings indicate the psychological factor—marginalization—is associated with attitudes about the government's responsibility for addressing income inequality. Individuals who feel the most socially marginalized are significantly *less likely to disagree* 

and significantly *more likely to agree* the government is responsible for addressing income inequality, lending evidence to support  $H_3$ . For example, as marginalization increases from minimum to maximum value, the probability of agreeing it's the government's responsibility to address income inequality increases from .44 to .54 ( $\Delta = .10$ ). Further, as marginalization increases from minimum to maximum value, the probability of disagreeing it's the government's responsibility to address income inequality decreases from .24 to .17 ( $\Delta = -.07$ ).

Finally, the results indicate the experiential factor—income insecurity—influences attitudes about the government's responsibility for addressing inequality. Respondents with greater income insecurity were significantly *more likely to agree* and significantly *less likely to disagree* the government is responsible for addressing income inequality than compared to respondents with less income insecurity, lending evidence to support  $H_4$ . Specifically, as income insecurity increases from minimum to maximum value the probability of agreeing it's the government's responsibility to address income inequality increases from .46 to .55 ( $\Delta$  = .09), while the probability of disagreeing it's the government's responsibility to address income inequality decreases from .22 to .15 ( $\Delta$  = -.07).

# Subgroup Models

We now turn to the subgroup models in Table 2 to determine if the subjective social position influences attitudes about the role of the government in addressing income inequality within racial/ethnic groups. The first two columns reflect the results for the Asian American respondents and the last two columns reflect the results for Latino respondents.

### Asian American Respondents

Figure 2 presents the change in probabilities across the income inequality measure for each of the remaining variables that comprise the subjective social framework (holding all other variables at their means) as they increase from their minimum to maximum values for Asian Americans. The layout of the graphs and the symbols are consistent with the layout of Figure 1.

First, we consider the impact of the (ascribed) characteristic—respondent age—on attitudes about the role of the government in addressing income inequality. Older Asian respondents are significantly *more likely to disagree* and significantly *less likely to agree* it's the government's responsibility to address income inequality, lending evidence to support  $H_2$ . For example, as age increases from minimum to maximum value, the probability of agreeing it's the government's responsibility to address income inequality decreases from .57 to .25 ( $\Delta = -.32$ ). Further, as age increases from minimum to maximum value, the probability of disagreeing it's the government's responsibility to address income inequality increases from .16 to .43 ( $\Delta = .27$ ).

Next, the findings indicate the psychological factor—marginalization—is associated with Asian Americans' perceived role of government in addressing income inequality. Asians who feel the most socially marginalized are significantly *less likely to disagree* and significantly *more likely to agree* it's the government's responsibility to address income inequality, lending evidence to support H<sub>3</sub>. For example, as marginalization increases from minimum to maximum value, the probability of an Asian respondent agreeing it's

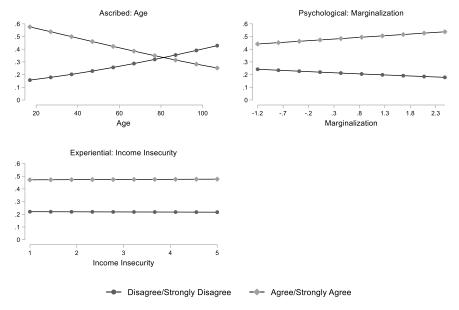


Figure 2. Subjective social framework: Asian American model.

the government's responsibility to address income inequality increases from .43 to .55 ( $\Delta=.12$ ). Further, as Asian American marginalization increases from minimum to maximum value, the probability of disagreeing it's the government's responsibility to address income inequality decreases from .24 to .18 ( $\Delta=-.06$ ).

Finally, the results indicate the experiential factor—income insecurity—is not associated with Asian American attitudes about the government's responsibility for addressing income inequality. This indicates that Asian American perception of the attitudes about the government's responsibility for addressing income inequality is not associated with the experiential component of the subjective social framework, lending no evidence to support H<sub>4</sub>.

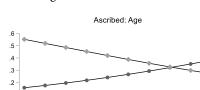
#### Latino Respondents

Next, we turn to the results for Latino respondents, which are presented in Figure 3. First, we consider the impact of the (ascribed) characteristic—respondent age—on attitudes about the role of the government in addressing income inequality. Older Latino respondents are significantly *more likely to disagree* and significantly *less likely to agree* it's the government's responsibility to address income inequality, lending evidence to support  $H_2$ . For example, as age increases from minimum to maximum value, the probability of a Latino agreeing it's the government's responsibility to address income inequality decreases from .55 to .31 ( $\Delta = -.24$ ). Further, as age increases from minimum to maximum value, the probability of a Latino disagreeing it's the government's responsibility to address income inequality increases from .15 to .34 ( $\Delta = .18$ ).

Next, the findings indicate the psychological factor—marginalization—is associated with Latinos' attitudes about the role of the government in addressing income inequality.

80

100



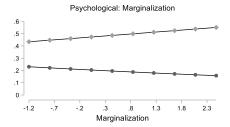
10

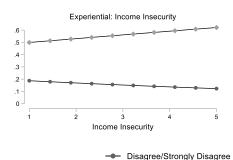
.1

0

20

40





60

Age

- Agree/Strongly Agree

Figure 3. Subjective social framework: Latino model.

Latinos who feel the most socially marginalized are significantly *less likely to disagree* and significantly *more likely to agree* it's the government's responsibility to address income inequality, lending evidence to support  $H_3$ . As marginalization increases from minimum to maximum value, the probability of a Latino respondent agreeing it's the government's responsibility to address income inequality increases from .43 to .55 ( $\Delta = .12$ ). Further, as Latino marginalization increases from minimum to maximum, the probability of disagreeing it's the government's responsibility to address income inequality decreases from .23 to .16 ( $\Delta = -.07$ ).

Finally, the results indicate the experiential factor—income insecurity—influences Latino attitudes about the government's responsibility for addressing income inequality. Latino respondents with greater income insecurity are significantly *more likely to agree* and significantly *less likely to disagree* the government is responsible for addressing income inequality than compared to those with less income insecurity, lending evidence to support  $H_4$ . Specifically, as income insecurity increases from minimum to maximum value the probability of a Latino respondent agreeing it's the government's responsibility to address income inequality increases from .45 to .63 ( $\Delta = .18$ ), while the probability of disagreeing it's the government's responsibility to address income inequality decreases from .22 to .12 ( $\Delta = -.10$ ).

#### Conclusions

Our study advances the literature in three ways. First, we show that the subjective social framework effectively explains individual attitudes beyond evaluations of local police. This framework highlights how ascribed characteristics, psychological mindset, and personal experiences shape one's views on the

government's responsibility for addressing income inequality. By focusing on personal perspectives rather than just solely on objective conditions, this approach provides a deeper understanding of how attitudes are formed.

Second, we observe differences in the applicability of the subjective social framework in predicting Latino and Asian American perceptions of the federal government's role in addressing income inequality. All three components—ascribe, psychological, and experiential—work in the expected manner for Latinos, while only the ascribe and psychological components function as expected for Asian Americans. This difference prompts questions about the underlying reasons for these variations, particularly whether there are within-group differences among Asian American respondents that contribute to the findings.

Third, this study contributes to the research on public support for redistributive policies. Despite decades of rising income inequality, the public remains largely opposed to greater redistribution, likely due to a lack of knowledge or indifference (Condon and Wichowsky 2019; Shaw and Gaffey 2012). Research finds concern about inequality has a trivial impact on beliefs in economic meritocracy (Hayes 2014; Trump 2018; Trump and White 2018). However, Condon and Wichowsky (2019) suggest support for redistribution is contingent on one's social standing relative to others, indicating factors associated with attitudes regarding income inequality may extend beyond objective factors. We propose applying a subjective social framework, which includes additional elements, that could provide a more comprehensive explanation of attitudes regarding the government's role in addressing inequality.

In future research, we hope to include all major ethnic/racial groups in our analysis to further test the applicability of subjective social framework. Future research should also further consider the intragroup applicability of the framework regarding attitudes toward the government's role in addressing income inequality. Extant research highlights differences within the Asian American population with regard to public opinion, which may emerge in the applicability of the subjective social framework (Wong et al. 2011). Finally, future search should also seek to test our framework on more policy topics and dealing with different levels and functions of government.

Funding statement. This research did not receive any specific financial support.

Competing interests. None.

#### **Notes**

- 1 The analysis is limited to Asian and Latino respondents due to the fact that the CMPS 2020 did not ask the marginalization question of White and Black respondents and the marginalization measure is a key component of the social subject position framework.
- 2 We recognize there are distinctions between race and ethnicity; however, in the U.S., Latinos have been racialized (see Massey 2013; Fraga et al. 2012; U.S. Census 2020). Thus, we utilize the single construct in our analysis.
- 3 Appendix A presents the ordered logit results including White and African American respondents minus the marginalization measure. Although the model lacks a key psychological factor of the subjective social framework, the results indicate the other factors generally support the applicability of the framework to White and African American attitudes regarding the government's responsibility for addressing income inequality.
- 4 Summary statistics for the variables are presented in Appendix B.
- 5 This question is part of a split sample in which half the respondents were asked: "How much do you believe you are an insider in the United States?" and half were asked: "How much do you believe you are an

12

- outsider in the United States?" We flipped the coding of the sample asked: "How much do you believe you are an outsider in the United States?" such that measure ranges from 1 ("Not at all") to 3 ("A lot").
- **6** We use principal component factor analysis with a varimax rotation to create the marginalization measure. The variables loaded on one factor, which produced an eigenvalue of 2.20.
- 7 We use principal component factor analysis with a varimax rotation to create the income insecurity measure. The variables loaded on one factor, which produced an eigenvalue of 3.15.
- 8 As a robustness check and to ease the interpretation of the results, we estimated the models using OLS regression. The OLS results are presented in Appendix C. Substantively and statistically, the OLS results are consistent with the ordered logit results presented in Tables 1 and 2.
- **9** To facilitate the interpretation of the results, we present cumulative predicted probabilities for the agree/strongly agree categories and the disagree/strongly disagree categories.

# References

Adler NE et al. (2000) Relationship of subjective and objective social status with psychological and physiological functioning: preliminary data in healthy, White women. Health Psychology 19, 586–592.

**Algan Y, Guriev S, Papaioannou E and Passari E** (2017) The European trust crisis and the rise of populism. *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity* **2**, 309–400.

Barreto MA et al. (2017) The Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey (CMPS), Los Angeles, CA.

Bonilla-Silva E (2002) We are all Americans: the Latin Americanization of racial stratification in the USA. *Race and Society* 5, 3–16. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.racsoc.2003.12.008

Brown-Iannuzzi JL et al. (2015) Subjective status shapes political preferences. Psychological Science 26, 15–26.

Condon M and Wichowsky A (2019) Inequality in the social mind: perceptions of status and support for redistribution. *Journal of Politics* 18, 149–161.

Duman A (2020) Subjective social class and individual preferences for redistribution: cross-country empirical analysis. *International Journal of Social Economics* 47, 173–189.

Foster C and Frieden J (2017) Crisis of trust: socio-economic determinants of Europeans' confidence in government. European Union Politics 18, 511–535.

Fouka V and Tabellini M (2022) Changing in-group boundaries: the effect of immigration on race relations in the United States. American Political Science Review 116, 968–984.

Fraga R et al. (2012) Latinos in the New Millennium: An Almanac of Opinion, Behavior and Policy Preferences. New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gans HJ (2012) Whitening" and the changing American racial hierarchy. Du Bois Review 9, 267-279.

Hayes TJ (2014) Do citizens link attitudes with preferences? Economic inequality and government spending in the "New Gilded Age". Social Science Quarterly 95, 468–485.

**Hero R** (1992) Latinos and the US Political System: Two-Tiered Pluralism. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

ILO (International Labour Organisation) (2016) Non-Standard Employment Around the World: Understanding Challenges, Shaping Prospects, Vol. 44. Geneva: International Labour Office.

Kagan C, Tindall C and Robinson J (2010) Community psychology: Linking the individual with the community. In *Handbook of Counselling Psychology*. London, United Kingdom: Sage.

Lin Y-F, Kamo Y and Slack T (2018) Is it the government's responsibility to reduce income inequality? An age-period-cohort analysis of public opinion toward redistributive policy in the United States, 1978 to 2016. Sociological Spectrum 38, 162–173.

Lindemann K (2007) The impact of objective characteristics on subjective social position. *Trames* 11, 54–68.
Martinez-Ebers V, Branton R and Calfano B (2021) The impact of subjective social position on public evaluations of police. *Social Science Quarterly* 102, 1719–1742.

Massey DS (2013) Immigration enforcement as a race-making institution. In Card D and Raphael S (eds), Immigration, Poverty, and Socioeconomic Inequality. Russell Sage Foundation, pp. 257–81.

Melcher CR (2023) Economic self-interest and Americans' redistributive, class, and racial attitudes: the case of economic insecurity. *Political Behavior* 45, 175–196.

Omi M and Winant H (2015) Racial Formation in the United States, 4th Edn. New York: Routledge.

Pittau MG, Farcomeni A and Zelli R (2016) Has the attitude of US citizens towards redistribution changed over time? *Economic Modelling* 52, 714–724. Shaw GM and Gaffey L (2012) Trends: American public opinion on economic inequality, taxes, and mobility: 1990–2011. Public Opinion Quarterly 76, 576–596.

Silva A, Esparza D, Martinez-Ebers V and Branton R (2022) Perceived police performance, racial experiences, and trust in local government. *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 10, 343–366.

Trump K-S (2018) Income inequality influences perceptions of legitimate income differences. *British Journal of Political Science* 48, 929–952.

Trump K-S and White A (2018) Does inequality beget inequality? Experimental tests of the prediction that inequality increases system justification motivation. *Journal of Experimental Political Science* 5, 206–216.
 U.S. Census Bureau (2020) Available at https://www.census.gov/topics/population/race.html

Wong JS, Ramakrishnan SK, Lee T, Junn J and Wong J (2011) Asian American Political Participation: Emerging Constituents and Their Political Identities. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.

# Appendix A: Government Role in Addressing Income Inequality: Including White and Black Respondents

The model presented in Appendix A presents the results of the model predicting attitudes about the role of the government in addressing income inequality including African American and White respondents. Note, the model does not include the marginalization measure as the 2020 CMPS did not ask African American and White respondents the related questions.

	Coef.	SE
Ascribed Factors		
Latino	0.19**	(0.05)
Black	0.38***	(0.05)
Asian	0.29***	(0.05)
Age	-0.01***	(0.00)
Experiential Factor		
Income Insecurity	0.07***	(0.02)
Control Variables		
Democrat	1.31***	(0.05)
Independent	0.87***	(0.05)
Female	0.10**	(0.04)
Political Interest	0.09***	(0.02)
Education	0.05	(0.03)
Income	-0.06***	(0.01)
Foreign Born	0.13**	(0.04)
Cut Point 1	-0.78***	(0.11)
Cut Point 2	0.16	(0.11)
Cut Point 3	1.60***	(0.11)
Cut Point 4	2.99***	(0.11)
N Cases	15841	
Wald X <sup>2</sup>	1754.75***	

# 14 Regina Branton and Valerie Martinez-Ebers

The results indicate there are significant differences in attitudes regarding the role of the government in addressing income inequality as a function of the ascribed factors of the subjective social framework. For instance, uniformly minority respondents are significantly more likely to agree and significantly less likely to disagree the government is responsible for addressing income inequality than compared to White respondents. Further, African American and Asian American respondents are significantly more likely to agree and less likely to disagree the government is responsible for addressing income inequality than compared to Latino respondents. Finally, there is no difference in attitudes about the role of the government in addressing income inequality when comparing African American and Asian American respondents. Additionally, the findings indicate older respondents are significantly less likely to agree and significantly more likely to disagree it is the government's responsibility to address income inequality than compared to younger respondents.

Finally, the findings indicate there are significant differences in attitudes regarding the role of the government in addressing income inequality as a function of the experiential factor of the subjective social framework—income insecurity. Substantively, the findings indicate those who experience income insecurity are significantly more likely to agree and significantly less likely to disagree the government is responsible for addressing income inequality than compared to those did not experience income inequality.

Taken together, the findings in the model including African American and White respondents are largely consistent with the results presented in Table 1 which includes only Asian American and Latino respondents.

**Appendix B: Descriptive Statistics** 

	Min	Max	Mean	S D
Dependent Variable Income Inequality	1	5	3.33	1.22
Independent Variables				
Latino	0	1	0.52	0.50
Age	17	108	42.32	16.45
Marginalization	-0.02	2.48	-0.02	1.00
Income Insecurity	0.04	5.91	-0.63	1.01
Democrat	0	1	0.48	0.50
Independent	0	1	0.34	0.47
Female	0	1	0.58	0.49
Political Interest	1	4	2.77	0.91
Education	1	4	2.71	0.86
Income	0	12	5.68	3.93
Income Refuse	0	1	0.10	0.30
Foreign Born	0	1	0.37	0.48

# Appendix C: Government Role in Addressing Income Inequality: OLS Model

The models presented in Appendix C present the OLS pooled and subgroup models predicting attitudes about the role of the government in addressing income inequality. Substantively and statistically, the results are consistent with the ordered logit results presented in Tables 1 and 2.

	Pooled Model		Asian Respondents		Latino Respondents	
	Coef.	SE	Coef.	SE	Coef.	SE
Ascribed Factors						
Latino	-0.08*	(0.04)	_		_	
Age	-0.01***	(0.00)	-0.01***	(0.00)	-0.01***	(0.00)
Psychological Factors						
Marginalization	0.08***	(0.02)	0.07**	(0.03)	0.09***	(0.02)
Experiential Factor						
Income Insecurity	0.05**	(0.02)	-0.01	(0.03)	0.07**	(0.02)
Control Variables						
Democrat	0.79***	(0.05)	0.86***	(0.07)	0.74***	(0.07)
Independent	0.47***	(0.05)	0.41***	(0.08)	0.52***	(0.07)
Female	0.01	(0.03)	-0.02	(0.05)	0.03	(0.05)
Political Interest	0.11***	(0.02)	0.12***	(0.03)	0.10***	(0.03)
Education	0.03	(0.02)	0.04	(0.03)	0.00	(0.03)
Income	-0.04***	(0.01)	-0.05***	(0.01)	-0.03***	(0.01)
Foreign Born	0.11***	(0.03)	0.17***	(0.05)	0.06	(0.04)
Intercept	3.06***	(0.11)	3.02***	(0.16)	3.01***	(0.13)
N Cases	7424		3497		3927	
F-test	52.60***		28.39***		35.44***	
$R^2$	0.12		0.14		0.11	

<sup>\*\*\*</sup>p < 0.001; \*\*p < 0.01; \*p < 0.05. Coefficients are OLS regression coefficient with standard errors clustered on the zip code.

Cite this article: Branton R, and Martinez-Ebers V (2025). The Impact of Subjective Social Position on Attitudes Regarding the Government's Role in Addressing Economic Inequality. *The Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics*, 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1017/rep.2024.33