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Public opinion and policy liberalism in Louisiana: does political trust have an effect?

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PUBLIC OPINION AND POLICY LIBERALISM IN LOUISIANA:
DOES POLITICAL TRUST HAVE AN EFFECT?

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<u>Dedication</u>

This thesis is dedicated to my family, my parents, my husband, my two children, and my granddaughter in particular. First, this work is dedicated to my parents, Jane and Louis Quinn. I cannot express how blessed I am to be their child. They have loved me unconditionally, have sacrificed for my well-being, and have supported me in all of my endeavors. They instilled in me the desire to learn and have encouraged me to continually grow as a person. As a child they allowed me to make mistakes and to learn from them. They permitted me to find my way and to become the person God has called me to be. I am eternally grateful for their love and support and pray that I can be the exemplary role model for my children that they have been for me.

Secondly, this thesis is also dedicated to my beloved husband, John Lemieux, whom I could have never accomplished this feat without. He has always been my biggest fan and I can not adequately explain how incredible it is to have a spouse that truly believes in you. It is because of his faith in me that I have developed the confidence to venture out of the box I am so comfortable in. He has always wanted what is best for me, regardless of how it affects him. He is always willing to sacrifice so that I may grow and find joy and purpose in life. This has been blatantly apparent the past few weeks. He has taken over all household responsibilities and has assumed the role of primary caregiver while I completed this work. Moreover, he has never complained about it. John is also a very perceptive man. He knew when I needed to be left alone, when I needed encouragement, and when I needed to escape.

This work is dedicated to my children, Marcie and Quinn, as well. Their support and patience have been a source of strength for me. I must apologize for basically being a nonexistent parent over the last few weeks. It's not all bad—my son has learned to cook! Although unintentionally, I may have prepared him for college. Seriously, I am grateful for their

encouragement and their understanding and I do believe that this experience has brought us closer. We, all being students, certainly empathize better with each others' situation. Quinn is passionate about learning, and that has inspired me. It truly excites him. You can see it in his eyes and hear it in his speech. His thirst for knowledge is contagious. He has pushed me in many ways, for which I am truly indebted. Marcie has inspired me as well. She is a strong and capable young woman—a single mother that manages to attend class, study, volunteer, be a friend to all, take care of her home, and still put the needs of her child first. She has shown me that I can develop as an individual without sacrificing my role as a wife, mother, friend, and community advocate. Lastly, I can not forget about my granddaughter, Ella. As I read book after book to her, seeing her eyes light us with enthusiasm, I am reminded of the joys of learning.

Without the love and support from those mentioned above, the completion of this journey may not have been possible and I am certain, it would not have been as rewarding.

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In addition, I would like to thank my committee members, Dr. Robert Hogan and Dr. William Clark. Both exude a zeal for their profession; both have great insight into the realities of the political world. As a result I have been challenged to think critically, differently than I am accustomed to, and to view the world in a more objective manner. I greatly appreciate their patience with me and the time and effort they put into assisting me in this academic endeavor.

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Abstract

Representative democracy is based on the principle that government should be responsive to citizen wishes; thus government policy should reflect those wishes. Research on public opinion supports this (Erikson, Wright, and McIver 1987). While many scholars agree that public opinion affects policy outcomes, they disagree as to which aspect of public opinion policy outcomes emerge.

Hetherington (2005) argues political trust explains policy liberalism. Using national-level data he demonstrates that decreased support for progressive policy results from decreased trust in government. Moreover, he finds that trust affects support for spending only when individuals are asked to sacrifice their self-interests and when the sacrifice entails a perceived risk. But does trust matter at the state level? To answer this I replicate his study using state-level data. Through OLS regression, using survey data from the 2002 Louisiana Survey, I model policy liberalism in Louisiana as a function of trust in state government, and the other political, demographic and socioeconomic variables examined in Hetherington's study to determine if trust affects support for government spending and if its effect is conditioned by ideology, beneficiary status, and attitudes towards the perceived beneficiaries of state spending. Assuming that citizens connect taxes paid to the funding of state policy, I also consider if trust affects support for state taxation.

I find political trust affects support for welfare spending; a policy, according to Hetherington, that entails sacrifice and perceived risk. Its effect is mediated by ideology and racial attitudes, but not by beneficiary status. Regarding support for taxation, I find the effect of trust is accentuated. However, it is not conditioned by ideology, beneficiary status, or racial affect.

In Louisiana, trust in government does affect citizen support for progressive policy. Moreover, it affects their support for taxation; thus, it shapes their willingness to pay for certain policy. Because many liberal policies require individuals to support government spending when it does not operate in accordance with their self-interest, trust in government to deliver policies ethically, efficiently, and without waste is vital. Without it, government may be unable to implement policy to solve social ills and ensure representation of minority interests.

Introduction

Central to democratic theory is the belief that citizens, through the electoral process, have a say in their government. Democratic representation, however, requires that elected officials be responsive to their constituents' preferences. Wright, Erikson, and McIver (1987), examining state-level data, find this to be the case. Wright et al. find that citizen ideology, their measure of public opinion, is more important than social or economic variables in determining policy liberalism of the states, and they conclude that public opinion does in fact shape public policy. Hetherington (2005) comes to the same conclusion that public opinion does shape public policy; yet, although he argues that ideology affects public opinion, it is political trust that plays the greatest role in shaping public opinion. Examining national level data to explain change in support for liberal policy over time, he demonstrates that the ideology of the electorate has not changed substantially over the past 30 years. What has changed, he argues, is the level of political trust. From this he concludes that decreased support for progressive public policy results from decreased trust in federal government, rather than from a conservative shift in the electorate as posited by conventional wisdom.

Seemingly, with Wright et. al (1987) finding conservative policy at the state level results from a more conservative electorate and Hetherington (2005) finding conservative policy at the national level increases in the absence of an increase in conservatism of the electorate, these two studies appear to contradict each other. Perhaps because citizens perceive state government as more responsive and efficient than the federal government (Blendon et.al 1997), it is the level of trust that is responsible for increases in conservative policy of the state, not simply the conservatism of the electorate. Although Wright, Erikson, and McIver do not consider the effect of political trust on policy liberalism of the states, it is conceivable that it contributes to the

explanation of policy preference by which policy outcomes, in part, are derived. Moreover, it is plausible that the effect of political trust effect is mediated by ideology, beneficiary status, and attitudes toward the perceived beneficiaries of government spending, thus it matters more for support for certain policies than it does for others.

Scholarly research reveals that political trust has significant attitudinal and behavioral consequences. First, trust affects the degree of citizen approval of political leaders (Citrin 1974), which in turn affects leaders' ability to secure resources required for problem solving (Gamson 1968). Because of this political trust is necessary to generate support needed to ensure proper representation of all interests, particularly those of the minority and those of the economically disadvantaged. Second, a lack of political trust increases citizens' likelihood of voting for challengers and third-party candidates (Hetherington 1999), suggesting it has the potential to influence the behavior of political elites. In the absence of political trust, political leaders may not pursue aggressive involvement to ameliorate social ills for fear of voter reprisal. Lastly, political trust affects compliance with policies produced, with those lacking trust in their government being less likely to follow its laws (Scholz and Lubell, 1998, Tyler and Degoey, 1995). Research clearly demonstrates that political trust affects citizens, political leaders, and policy; however, these findings are based on national-level data, so the effect of political trust at the state level remains to be seen.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the degree to which the level of citizen trust in state government has an effect on support for liberal policy of the state. I replicate Hetherington's study using individual-level data from the 2002 Louisiana Survey to determine if political trust affects support for state government spending on distributive and redistributive programs and if its effect is conditioned by ideology, beneficiary status, and attitudes towards the

perceived beneficiaries of state spending. Under the assumption that citizens connect state taxes paid to the funding of state policy, I also consider if political trust affects support for state sales and personal income taxation.

This analysis is warranted for two reasons. First, no study to date has addressed the effect of public trust on support for government spending at the state level. The majority of the literature focuses primarily on the effect of citizen ideology. Secondly, the majority of previous work on state policy preference is based on aggregate level data; therefore the role an individual's level of trust plays on support for specific government policies remains unanswered. The findings of this study will shed light on how trust influences individuals' decision-making process, discerning if perceptions of government performance shape support for its policy agenda and support for taxes needed to fund that agenda.   Furthermore, this study will demonstrate if ideology, beneficiary status, and attitudes toward the perceived beneficiaries of government spending enhance, diminish, or negate the effect of political trust on support for government spending on public policy.

Literature Review

The American public holds vastly different views regarding the scope and magnitude of government activity. While the majority of citizens believe that government should provide citizens with peace and prosperity, many disagree as to how much assistance government should provide to the disadvantaged. Representative democracy is based on the principle that government should be responsive to citizen wishes; thus government policy, both in scope and magnitude, should reflect those wishes. Research on public opinion strongly supports this, both at the federal level (Page and Shapiro 1983) and at the state level (Erikson, Right, and McIver 1987, 1993). While many scholars agree that public opinion affects public policy outcomes, they disagree as to which aspect of public opinion is reflected in policy preference from which policy outcomes emerge.

Wright, Erikson, and McIver (1987) assert that public opinion is manifested in citizen ideology, and that it is citizen ideology that shapes public policy of the state. Examining aggregate-level data, they find that although state income is the best socioeconomic predictor of public opinion and state policy, citizen ideology is more important than social or economic variables in determining policy liberalism in the states. However, Brace, Arceneaux, and Johnson (2002) declare that their general measure of ideology can not fully explain how specific attitudes affect specific policy outcomes. Stimson's (1999) conception of public opinion speaks to this concern. He argues that "policy mood", related to ideology in that it ebbs and flows in ostensibly ideological directions over time but defined as preferences that are contingent upon the issue at hand and the desired degree of government intervention regarding the issue, is paramount in influencing policy.

It seems reasonable to accept that elected representatives, acting strategically, respond to citizen preference for electoral security by adopting policy congruent with constituent ideology. Undoubtedly, public policy reflects ideological beliefs concerning the proper role of government involvement (Jacoby 2000). From this it is rational to conclude that progressive policy should reflect liberals' desire for public sector expansion to improve the lives of citizens, given that they typically believe that the government is responsible for solving societal problems. Conversely, it is rational to conclude that restrained policy should reflect conservatives' opposition to public sector expansion, given that they generally deem government inferior to the private market as a means of distributing society's resources to combat the problems facing society. Nonetheless, because fewer than 15% of Americans organize their thoughts about politics ideologically (Converse 1964) and ideological thinking has not increased substantially despite vast increases in education (Caprini and Keeter 1996), the role that ideology plays in policy determination is suspect.

Hetherington (2005) challenges Wright, Erikson, and McIver's (1987) contention that citizen ideology shapes public policy. First, he claims that their measure of public opinion is simply a measure of issue preference, not a measure of philosophical ideology. Second, the frequency of changes in policy signifies that ideology, because it is a strong and established attitude and one not quick to change, is not the correct aspect of public opinion that influences the direction of policy. In the aggregate, Hetherington finds that national policies have become more conservative, even though the electorate has not. Through individual-level analysis he finds that Americans continue to support government spending on distributive policies, as well as on those in which the costs and the benefits are distributed universally (Wilson 1973), such as social security, Medicaid, and domestic security. Because there has not been a substantial

increase in conservatism of the electorate and because a shift in ideology toward conservatism

would result in less support for government involvement in all areas, including distributive

policy, he concludes that something other than ideology is at the core of policy desires. He

concludes that political trust—i.e. "the degree to which people perceive that government is

producing outcomes consistent with their expectations" (2005: 9)—is the aspect of public

opinion that accounts for the direction of public policy. Moreover, it results in changes in policy

mood (Jacoby 1994; Chanley, Rudolph, and Rahn 2000) for which Stimson asserts is responsible

for the direction of public policy.

Hetherington claims that political trust functions as a heuristic device to facilitate

individuals' decisions about whether or not to support government spending. He asserts that

individuals who trust the government to distribute services are more supportive of government

spending to fund those services. However, he finds that trust is triggered as a cue, and thus

effects support for redistributive spending only when individuals are asked to sacrifice their self-

interest and when that sacrifice entails a perceived risk. From this perspective political trust

bridges the division in public opinion, ideologically speaking, between support for distributive

and redistributive spending.

Rudolph and Evans (2005) demonstrate support for Hetherington's (2005) contention that

trust affects support for spending on redistributive policy; however, contrary to Hetherington,

they find that trust affects support for spending on distributive policy as well. Furthermore, they

find that political trust is conditioned by ideology, having a larger effect on spending preferences

among conservatives than among liberals.

Theory and Expectations

      Hetherington (2005) and Rudolph and Evans (2005) clearly demonstrate that trust matters at the national level, but does it matter at the state level? I argue that it does for the same theoretical reasons upon which Hetherington's argument is based. Because individuals can connect state government with state programs, their assessment of the government's competency in administering and monitoring those programs affects their opinion of those programs, and thus, their support of them as well. Citizens are more willing to invest their individual resources in state programs if they believe their investment will pay off, if they believe that it will positively affect the outcome for themselves and/or for their community as a whole. Therefore, people who trust their state government and who view it as ethical, representative, and capable are more likely to support the programs it advocates; conversely, those who do not trust it, believing it to be corrupt or incompetent, are less likely to do so.

      Secondly, based on Hetherington's finding that support for progressive national policy has ebbed and flowed over time, I conclude that something other than ideology is responsible for the policy preferences that are needed to affect policy outcomes. Ideology is considered a strong and established attitude, one not apt to change easily or quickly (Jennings and Niemi 1968). I believe this holds true at the state level. Although ideology is a heuristic tool commonly relied upon for political decision-making considerations, I posit that political trust, a different aspect of public opinion and cognitive shortcut as well, is also influential in policy preference determination. This is because political trust is a symbolic attitude that is instinctive, does not require political knowledge, relates to self-interest and, because of the media's negative portrayal of government activity, is usually at the forefront of citizens' minds when evaluating governmental policy and making decisions regarding support or rejection of those policies.

Not only does political trust affect support for public policy of the states, and hence state policy outcomes, its effect may be accentuated at this level because citizens, being more familiar with the personalities of state elected officials and possibly more concerned with state policies, are considered to be more connected to their state government than to the federal government. [1]

Louisiana is an ideal state to examine the effect of political trust on support for public policy for two reasons. One, it has a long history of government corruption (Parent 2004; Bridges 2001; Cortner 1996). Corruption is defined as "the misuse of public office for private gain" (Sandholtz and Koetzle 2000, 32). It is found to affect evaluation of government performance (Anderson and Tverdova 2003), something Hetherington (2005) argues has an effect on political trust. According to V.O. Key, Louisiana has an unparalleled record of corruption (Parent 2004). This assertion can hardly be disputed given that so many elected officials in Louisiana have been convicted of crimes, including a governor, an attorney general, an election commissioner, an agriculture commissioner, three insurance commissioners, a congressman, a federal judge, a State Senate president, six state legislators, numerous appointed officials, local sheriffs, city councilmen, and parish police jurors. Moreover, the FBI reports that more people were indicted on public corruption charges in Louisiana (in 1999) than in any other state (Bridges 2001). Ulsaner (2006) finds that the level of corruption affects the level of trust and reports that Louisiana, in the 1990s, ranked in the bottom fourth for trust estimates. If trust truly has an effect at the state level one would expect to find it in the state of Louisiana.

The second reason why I believe Louisiana is an ideal state for this study is because of Hetherington's contention that political trust affects support for redistributive policy, which individuals perceive as disproportionately benefiting African Americans (Gilens 1995). David

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[1] According to data, people are more knowledgeable of state political leaders than they are of national ones (Louisiana Survey, 2002).

Duke's candidacy, the Jena Six incident, and the concerns about the large number of African Americans left in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, to name a few examples, have created the impression that Louisiana has racialized politics.

Although the 2002 Louisiana Survey does not provide data that would allow for an examination of the effect of trust on support for government spending over time, I am able to replicate Hetherington's individual-level analysis of the effect of trust on public preferences for both distributive and redistributive spending in one year. Because citizens connect their tax dollars with government spending, I also consider the effect of trust on support for state sales and personal income taxation.

I speculate that Louisiana citizens who trust the government to do the right things, and to do them fairly, effectively, and efficiently are more likely to support government spending and increased taxation to fund that spending. Based on Hetherington's (2005) conclusion that trust is vital for citizens to support policies that require them to pay the cost of services they will not directly benefit from, particularly for services that distribute resources to beneficiaries toward whom they have negative feelings, political trust will affect support for government spending in Louisiana on programs that call for sacrifice and entail a measure of risk. I hypothesize that political trust has a significant effect on support for government spending in Louisiana on education, welfare, and healthcare policy but not on highway and environmental protection policy. Furthermore, I believe that the effect of trust is conditioned by beneficiary status and racial attitudes. I hypothesize that trust matters less for program beneficiaries, those not asked to sacrifice material interests, and for those with positive feelings towards black Americans, the perceived beneficiaries of government spending.

Based on the findings of Rudolph and Evans (2005) I hypothesize that the effect of political trust is also mediated by ideology. I suggest that trust is salient when individuals are asked to sacrifice their ideological principles as well as when they are asked to sacrifice their material interests.   Because appeals for increased government spending call for greater ideological sacrifice among conservatives I hypothesize that the effect of trust is greater for conservatives than it is for liberals. However, it is possible that trust is irrelevant for conservatives, given that they typically oppose government spending; I may find that trust matters more for liberals, for those typically more supportive of government intervention to remedy societal ills but perhaps needing trust in order to do so.

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Data and Methods

      This study uses data from the 2002 Louisiana Survey to explore whether citizen trust

affects support for public policy in the state of Louisiana. The survey was sponsored by The

Reilly Center for Media and Public Affairs Manship School of Mass Communication at

Louisiana State University. Information was collected in June 2002 by the Public Policy

Research Laboratory. The survey provides individual-level data on a wide range of topics,

including demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, partisan and ideological attitudes,

political knowledge and engagement, beliefs concerning the size and scope of state government,

including feelings towards taxes and spending, the perceived quality of government goods and

services in Louisiana, and evaluations of political figures and impressions of the state and

national economy. The population is defined to include Louisiana residents 18 years of age or

older. The total sample size for the survey conducted in 2002 is 1103, though missing data

reduces this number for certain analyses. Although Hetherington (2005) restricts his analysis to

white respondents, assuming that, in general, it is white Americans who are being asked to

sacrifice to support redistributive programs, I include all racial groups together in my analysis.

      I model support for public policy in Louisiana as a function of political trust in state

government and the political, demographic, and socioeconomic variables examined in

Hetherington's study. I estimate models of support for spending on programs that distribute

benefits universally and require no sacrifice from individuals, of support for spending on

programs that distribute benefits widely and where sacrifice is asked of a small group of

individuals, and of support for spending on programs that distribute benefits narrowly and where

sacrifice is asked of a large group of people. Unlike previous studies, I also estimate models of

support for sales tax and support for personal income tax in Louisiana.   Moreover, I use

interaction variables to consider whether the effect of trust on support for state spending and state taxation is mediated by ideology and, with respect to support for state spending, by beneficiary status and racial attitudes as well.

In summary, I produce models that should account for the effect of political trust on support for government spending on public policies and on support for state taxation. I believe that political trust is a significant determinant of both spending and taxation. Furthermore, I deem it to be conditioned by ideology and, with regard to support for state spending, by beneficiary status and attitudes toward perceived beneficiaries of government policies as well.

Dependent Variable: Support for Government Spending

The dependent variable in the models for support for government spending pertain to support for spending on programs that afford statewide benefits as opposed to national ones examined by Hetherington. Support for spending on five programs is examined. These include two programs that distribute benefits universally and require no sacrifice (i.e. highway and environmental protection), one program that distributes benefits widely and sacrifice is asked of a small group of people (i.e. education), and two programs that distribute benefits narrowly and sacrifice is asked of a large group of people (i.e. welfare and healthcare). The dependent variables are measured based on responses to the questions "Do you think spending on education (highways, welfare, healthcare, and environment respectively) in Louisiana should be increased, decreased, or kept the same?" Responses are coded on a 5-point scale, ranging from 0 (decreased a lot) to 4 (increased a lot).

Dependent Variable: Support for Taxation

The dependent variables in the models for support for state taxation include support for both sales tax and personal income tax. These variables are measured based on responses to the

question "Do you think sales taxes in Louisiana should be increased, decreased, or kept the same?" and "Do you think personal income taxes should be increased, decreased, or kept the same?" Responses are coded on a 5-point scale, ranging from 0 (decreased a lot) to 4 (increased a lot).

Independent Variable: Political Trust

The primary independent variable in this study is political trust. It is measured by factor analysis of responses to four questions, (1) "Do you think people in state government waste a lot of the money we pay in taxes, waste some of it, or don't waste very much of it?", (2) "How many people do you think running state government are crooked—quite a few, not very many, or hardly any?", (3) "Over the years, how much attention do you feel that Louisiana government pays to what people think when it decides what to do—a good deal, some, or not much?", and (4) "How much of the time do you think you can trust state government to do what is right—just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time?". Factor analysis is used to create a scale of trust that is based on the commonality among the four items (eigenvalue = 1.791, variance explained = 0.448). With respect to support for spending, I hypothesize that the effect of this variable is conditioned by perceived sacrifice and risk; therefore, I expect the coefficient for this variable to be positive and most significant in the model estimating support for spending on programs that distribute benefits narrowly and solicits sacrifice from a large group of people. Regarding support for taxation, I theorize that the coefficient in both models will be positive and significant.

In my models I use several control variables considered to be related to citizen support for spending on specific policies. I also expect these variables to be related to support for taxes since individuals perceive their tax dollars as the source of funding for public policy.

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Independent Variables: Partisan Identification and Ideological Orientation

      Partisan Identification- I include a measure of partisan identification, measured on a 7-point scale, ranging from 0 (strong Democrat) to 6 (strong Republican), because, in general, Republicans are more likely to oppose government spending and increased taxation whereas Democrats are more likely to support both (Converse and Marcus 1979; Page and Jones 1979). Given this, I expect the coefficient for this variable to be negative.

      Ideological orientation- Previous work reveals that ideological identification plays an important role in influencing spending and taxation attitudes (Sears et. al 1980). Liberal citizens are found to be more supportive than conservative citizens of government intervention (Jacoby 1994; Pan and Kosicki 1996), thus liberals should be more supportive of government spending. Similarly, liberals should be more supportive of taxation, given that it is through tax dollars that public policy programs are funded. This variable is measured based on respondents' self placement on a 7-point scale ranging from 0 (strong liberal) to 6 (strong conservative). I expect the coefficient for this variable to be negative.

Independent Variables: Self-interest

Hetherington argues that trust is influenced by perceived sacrifice; therefore, I have included variables considered to affect self-interest.

      Sociotropic Economic Evaluations- I suggest that how individuals view the state economy should have an effect on their support for spending and taxation. Given this, I consider the effect of sociotropic economic evaluation, since previous work finds that when the economy is perceived to have improved people are more supportive of government spending and helping the disadvantaged (Rhodebeck 1993; Skitka and Tetlock 1992). This is measured based on the responses to the question "Would you say that over the past year the economy in Louisiana has

gotten better, stayed about the same, or gotten worse?" The variable is coded on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (gotten much worse) to 4 (gotten much better). I expect the coefficient for this variable to be positive.

Beneficiary Status- Hetherington asserts that effect of political trust is conditioned by perceived sacrifice. If this is the case trust should matter more when individuals perceive sacrifice to be high, when they are paying the costs without receiving the benefits. For this reason I have included a measure of beneficiary status in the models estimating support for spending on education and welfare, on policies that distribute benefits both widely and narrowly but ask sacrifice of individuals. The effect of being a beneficiary of healthcare spending is not estimated in the models because of data limitations.

With respect to education policy, beneficiary status is measured based on responses to a question concerning whether or not the individual has children who attend public school. Responses are coded 1 for those with children attending public schools, and 0 otherwise. Concerning welfare policy, beneficiary status is measured based on the question of whether the respondent or a member of his/her family has ever received welfare benefits. Responses in the affirmative are coded 1; they are coded 0 otherwise. I hypothesize that the coefficients for these variables will be positive, indicating that program beneficiaries are more supportive of government spending in those areas.

I have also, as a control, included a measure of beneficiary status in the model estimating support for highway spending, a program that distributes benefits universally and requires no sacrifice. Beneficiary status of highway spending is measured based on responses to the question "If you drive a car, approximately how many miles do you drive per week?" The variable is coded on a 5-point scale, ranging from 0 ("I do not drive" or "I do not own a car") to

4 (driving in excess of 300 miles per week). Given Hetherington's (2005) finding that trust does not affect support for policies that distribute benefits universally, for those that do not require sacrifice, I do not expect the coefficient for this variable to be significant. Beneficiary status regarding environmental policy is not addressed because of data limitations.

Independent Variable: Racial Attitude

Hetherington asserts that the effect of trust is conditioned by perceived risk. He argues that individuals who deem recipients of government spending as undeserving and likely to waste whatever resources the government provides them will perceive a significant risk to spending in those areas. Because of this trust in the government to effectively monitor beneficiaries considered unworthy is vital for support for spending. For this reason I include a variable to consider the effect of negative feelings toward blacks in the model estimating support for government spending on welfare and healthcare, on programs many perceive to serve African Americans disproportionately (Gilens 1995). Moreover, research suggests that attitudes towards blacks substantially influence support for spending on redistributive programs (Kinder and Sanders 1996). The Louisiana Survey does not ask questions concerning negative stereotyping in relation to blacks' industriousness; therefore this concept is measured using a 100-point feeling thermometer score. The score ranges from 0, indicating extreme negative feelings toward blacks, to 100, signifying strong positive feelings toward them. I expect the coefficient for this variable to be positive, indicating that the more a person likes black Americans the more supportive they are of government spending in areas they perceive blacks to be the primary beneficiaries of.

Independent Variables: Demographic and Socioeconomic

Gender- A variable for gender is included because previous work finds that women are more supportive of redistributive spending (Elliot, Seldon, and Regens 1997). This variable is

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dichotomous, coded 1 for women and 0 for men.   I expect this coefficient for this variable to be positive, indicating that women are more supportive of government spending on public policy.

Age- A variable for age is included in the models to capture the potential effects of age. Older citizens are often recipients of government programs (Garand and Blais 2003), hence I would expect support for spending to increase with age; however, because previous studies find older citizens to be less supportive of spending on programs they do not perceive as beneficial for themselves (Rhodebeck 1993) the effect of age may be contingent upon specific policy. Age is coded by chronological age in years.

Race- The effect of race is included because it is hypothesized that blacks are more likely to favor spending on public policies that they perceive will benefit themselves (Pan and Kosicki 1996). They also are recognized as being among the most loyal Democratic supporters (Miller and Shanks, 1996), suggesting that they favor government spending in general. This variable is coded 1 for blacks and 0 otherwise. I hypothesize that the coefficient for this variable will be positive.

Educational Attainment- Although the effect of educational attainment on support for spending and taxation is unclear, I include this variable in my models as a control to capture any possible effects across different levels of education. It is measured on a seven-point scale signifying the highest level completed in school, coded from 1 (the completion of 8th grade or less) to 7 (the attainment of an advanced degree).

Family Income- Studies also demonstrate that individuals with higher incomes are less supportive of redistributive spending (Evans 1992; Inniss and Sittig 1996). In addition, it is argued that those with high incomes identify more with the Republican Party because of their stances on economic issues (Miller and Shanks, 1996); therefore I estimate that individuals with

higher incomes are less supportive of government spending and taxation in general. Family income is coded based on an 8-point scale representing increased levels of yearly income. 1 represents an annual income of below $ 10,000 per year and 8 represents an annual income of $70,000 or greater. I expect the coefficient for this variable to be negative, indicating lower support for government spending and taxation as income increases.

Interaction Variables: Interaction Effect

Political Trust and Ideology- In both the models of support for government spending and support for taxation I include a variable to estimate the changing effect of trust on the dependent variable as a function of ideology. I create an interaction variable by multiplying political trust by ideology. I expect this coefficient to be positive, indicating that as an individual becomes more conservative the effect of trust is greater; the reason for this is because requests for increased government spending/taxation requires a greater ideological sacrifice for conservatives than it does for liberals. In short, the more conservative an individual is, the more trust matters regarding support for government spending. Conversely, the more liberal an individual is the less trust matters.

Political Trust and Beneficiary Status- In the models for support for spending, the only models where recipient standing is applicable, I include a variable to estimate the changing effect of political trust on support for spending as a function of beneficiary status. I create an interaction variable by multiplying trust by beneficiary status. I expect the coefficient for this variable to be negative, signifying that the effect of trust is smaller for program beneficiaries. In sum, trust is not as important in shaping support for government spending among program beneficiaries.

Political Trust and Racial Attitudes- In the models for support for spending on welfare and healthcare I include a variable to estimate the changing effect of trust on support for spending as a function of feelings towards blacks. I create an interaction variable by multiplying trust by feelings towards blacks. I expect this coefficient to be negative, demonstrating that the more favorable an individual feels towards black Americans the lower the effect of trust will be on support for government spending on redistributive policy. In short, for citizens who like blacks, trust in government is not as important in influencing their support for spending as it is for those who hold more negative feelings towards blacks.

Results

Estimates for Models of Support for Spending on Individual Policy Areas

The coefficients for the models of support for spending on five policy areas are reported in Table 1 (see page 21). Support for spending in the individual areas is depicted as a function of several variables: political trust, partisan and ideological orientation, economic self interest, and demographic and socioeconomic attributes. Ordered logit is used to estimate the models because the dependent variable is measured as an orderable discrete one (Long 1997). The pseudo R^2 of each model is quite low, indicating that they do not fit the data well; however, all models are significant according to the probability of χ^2, with the exception of the models of support for highway spending that include racial affect, beneficiary status, and the interaction variables. Although there are some exceptions, the majority of the coefficients in the models anticipated to be significant are, and in the expected direction.

The coefficient for political trust, the independent variable of primary interest, is insignificant in the models estimating support for environmental protection, education, and healthcare spending, negative and significant in the model estimating support for highway spending (b = -0.0178, t = -2.18), and positive and highly significant in the model estimating support for welfare spending (b = 0.276, t = 3.31). This indicates that trust does not considerably affect support for government spending on environmental protection, education, or healthcare policy. This is not surprising, given that Hetherington demonstrates that trust is irrelevant for citizen support of policy where benefits are distributed universally and no sacrifice is required (environmental) and where benefits are distributed widely and sacrifice is required of but a small group of people (education). Although Hetherington did not assess the effect of trust on healthcare, one can hypothesize that its effect is insignificant because Louisiana citizens think of

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Table 1. Ordered logit results for support for spending in five policy areas, with trust as the key independent variable

	(1) Highway		(2) Environmental Protection		(3) Education		(4) Welfare		(5) Healthcare	
	b	t	b	t	b	t	b	t	b	t
Political Trust [+]	-0.178	-2.18**	-0.015	-0.18	-0.082	-0.080	0.276	3.31**	0.007	0.09
Partisan Identification [-]	-0.006	-0.16	-0.134	-3.43*	-0.058	-1.19	-0.166	-4.10**	-0.163	-4.11**
Ideological Orientation [-]	0.025	0.55	-0.081	-1.80*	-0.233	-3.56**	-0.079	-1.70*	-0.085	-1.82*
Sociotropic Economic Self Interest Variable										
Economic Evaluation [+]	0.086	0.89	-0.066	-0.07	0.001	0.01	0.289	3.03**	-0.151	-1.55
Demographic & Socioeconomic Attributes										
Age [+/-]	0.015	2.95**	-0.012	-2.37**	-0.011	-1.84*	0.006	1.19	0.003	0.52
Race [+/-]	-0.120	-0.56	-0.138	-0.66	0.466	1.51	0.532	2.49**	0.778	3.31**
Gender [+]	0.043	0.26	-0.109	-0.68	0.331	1.64	-0.117	-0.72	0.701	4.24**
Education [-]	-0.092	-1.59	0.108	1.91*	0.152	2.06*	-0.089	-1.54	0.008	0.14
Family Income [-]	-0.019	-0.49	-0.095	-2.44**	-0.029	-0.59	-0.072	-1.85*	-0.023	-0.59
N	611		610		609		588		605	
Pseudo R^2	0.0142		0.0287		0.0504		0.0511		0.0702	
LR CHI^2	20.08		43.09		47.60		82.52		101.54	
Prob CHI^2	0.0174		0.0000		0.0000		0.0000		0.0000	

Note: The intercepts are excluded from the table for the sake of brevity. Symbols in brackets represent the expected direction of the coefficient.

**   prob < .01   *   prob < .05

healthcare as a broader issue, not simply one that benefits the poor. Therefore, healthcare is not perceived as a state program that distributes benefits narrowly and requires sacrifice of many.

Contrary to expectations, with respect to highway spending, the results suggest that as citizens' trust in government increases, their support for highway spending decreases. This is surprising and begs future research.

The analysis also demonstrates that an increase in citizen trust results in an increase in support for government spending on welfare policy. This finding is congruent with that of Hetherington, and confirms his assertion that support for government spending is predicated on the perception of perceived sacrifice and risk.

To illustrate the effect of trust on support for welfare spending, I generate predicted probabilities for different values on the trust scale holding the values of all other independent variables constant at their means. The predicted probabilities are presented in Figure 1 (see page 23). As one can see, as trust in government increases, so does the likelihood that an individual would advocate an increase in welfare spending. When trust is at its lowest value, the chance that a person would support "a lot" greater welfare spending is about 4%; however, when is at its highest value, that chance increases to about 13%. Likewise, as trust increases, the likelihood of citizens' desiring a decrease in government spending on welfare decreases. When trust is at its lowest point, the chance that an individual would support "a lot" less welfare spending is about 29%, whereas when trust us at its highest that chance decreases to about 10%. Although the chance that an individual will advocate an increase in spending based on increased trust is minimal, increases in trust does weaken the opposition to increased spending.

With respect to the other variables, Table 1 demonstrates that partisan identification and ideology exert a negative and highly significant effect on support for spending on environmental

Figure 1. Predicted probabilities of support for welfare spending, by trust

Note: The thin green line represents probabilities that respondents advocate keeping the amount of welfare spending in Louisiana the same. The orange dashed line represents probabilities that respondents advocate a decrease in welfare spending in Louisiana. The thin blue line represents probabilities that respondents advocate decreasing the amount of welfare spending in Louisiana by a lot. The red dashed line represents probabilities that respondents advocate an increase in welfare spending in Louisiana. The heavy blue line represents probabilities that respondents advocate increasing the amount of welfare spending in Louisiana by a lot.

protection, welfare, and healthcare. This reveals that as one identifies himself/herself more strongly as a Republican or as a conservative, support for spending in these areas decreases. Ideology also negatively affects support for spending on education; therefore, conservatives are less supportive of public education spending as well. These findings are not surprising, given that conservatives, who typically identify with the Republican Party, are less supportive of government spending in general. The effect of sociotrophic economic evaluations, surprisingly, is only significant with regard to support for spending on welfare policy ($b = 0.289$, $t = 3.03$), suggesting that Louisiana citizens who believe the economy is doing well are more supportive of welfare spending.

The significance of the coefficients for the demographic and socioeconomic variables differs across the models with no consistent effect. Age is positively and significantly related to support for highway spending ($b = 0.015$. $t = 2.95$), with older individuals being more supportive of it, but negatively and significantly related to support for spending on environmental protection ($b = -0.012$, -2.37) and education ($b = -0.011$, -1.84), signifying that older individuals are less supportive of government spending in those areas. Race is positively and significantly related to support for spending on welfare ($b = 0.532$, $t = 2.19$) and healthcare policy ($b = 0.778$, $t = 3.31$), illustrating that blacks are more supportive of government spending in these areas. Gender is found to significantly shape support for healthcare spending only: women are more supportive of healthcare spending than men ($b = 0.701$, $t = 4.24$). Unlike Hetherington, I find that increased educational attainment results in increased support of spending on education ($b = 0.152$, $t = 2.06$) and environmental protection ($b = 0.108$, $t = 1.91$). That the highly educated would be more supportive of education spending seems intuitive, given that highly educated people probably value education to a greater extent. Had the coefficient for education been negative I would have

concluded that increased levels of educated resulted in increased conservatism, as previous work suggests, or that highly educated individuals may not perceive government funded education systems as the most effective. Regarding the increase in support for environmental spending, perhaps increased levels of education inform individuals of environmental problems and the need to remedy them. Lastly, increases in an individual's family incomes results in a decrease in support for environmental (b = -0.095, t = -2.44) and welfare spending (b = -0.072, t = -1.85).

Table 2 (see page 27) presents the estimates for the models of support for spending in the policy areas with the inclusion of variables that assess the effect of racial affect and, when applicable, beneficiary status. Political trust is negatively and significantly related to support for highway spending (b = -0.165, t = -1.82), although, based on the probability of χ^2, the overall model is not significant. However, political trust is positively and significantly related to support for welfare spending (b = 0.269, t = 2.93). Again, results illustrate that as an individual's trust in government increases, so does his/her support for government spending on welfare policy. It is noteworthy that the effect of trust on support for welfare spending remains significant after controlling for the effect of other variables found to have an effect—namely, racial affect, beneficiary status, partisan identification, ideology, and sociotropic economic evaluations.

To illustrate the effect of trust on support for welfare spending, in relation to the effect of the other variables that have a significant effect, I generate predicted probabilities for different values of each independent variable, holding the values of all others at their mean. The predicted probabilities are presented in Table 3 (see page 28). As one can see, trust has the largest effect on the probability of supporting increasing welfare spending by a lot. With respect to the probability of supporting decreasing welfare spending by a lot, its effect is similar to that of the other variables.

Consistent with Hetherington's contention, perceived risk does significantly affect citizens' attitudes towards government spending. Hetherington defines a perceived risk of investment as the "support of spending on programs that have beneficiaries relatively small in number and not well thought of" (Hetherington, 91). He deems that support of assistance to blacks, food stamps, and welfare fits this category. Because assistance to blacks and food stamps are federal programs, within this category I am only able to assess the effect of trust, racial affect, and the interaction between trust and racial affect on support for spending on welfare. Nonetheless, I analyze the effect of these variables on support for spending in other areas as well. Racial affect is irrelevant with respect to support for government spending on highways, the environment, education, and healthcare—on policy that is not traditionally equated with disproportionately benefiting black Americans—but it has a positive and highly significant effect on support for welfare spending (b = 0.015, t = 3.86). In short, the more favorable an individual feels towards blacks, the more supportive he/she is of government spending on welfare policy. Conversely, the more negative an individual feels towards blacks, the less supportive he/she is of government spending. In fact, Table 3 illustrates that those who give blacks a 0 are much more likely (0.43) to support a large decrease in welfare spending than those who give blacks a 100 (0.14). Those giving blacks a 0 are also much less likely (0.04) to support a large increase in spending than those who give blacks a 100 (0.08).

Regarding perceived sacrifice, here too Hetherington's findings are confirmed. Beneficiary status is positively and significantly related to support for welfare spending (b = 0.651, t = 2.58), with beneficiaries of welfare being more supportive of government spending on welfare policy. In effect, Table 3 suggests that program beneficiaries are much less likely (0.13) to support large decreases in welfare spending than those who do not benefit from the program.

Table 2. Ordered logit results for support for spending in five policy areas, with trust, racial affect, and beneficiary status as the key independent variables

	(1) Highway		(2) Environmental Protection		(3) Education		(4) Welfare		(5) Healthcare	
	b	t	b	t	b	t	b	t	b	t
Political Trust [+]	-0.165	-1.82**	-0.666	-0.75	-0.113	-0.98	0.269	2.93**	0.019	0.20
Racial Affect [+]	-0.005	-1.28	0.005	1.44	0.005	1.06	0.015	3.86**	0.003	0.66
Beneficiary Status [+]	0.168	1.96*	------	------	0.123	0.49	0.651	2.58**	------	------
Partisan Identification [-]	-0.021	-0.47	-0.081	-1.86*	-0.094	-1.67*	-0.151	-3.37**	-0.127	-2.87*
Ideological Orientation [-]	0.059	1.61	-0.097	-1.94*	-0.217	-3.00**	-0.081	-1.60	-0.121	-2.33*
Sociotropic Economic Self Interest Variable										
Economic Evaluation [+]	0.135	1.24	-0.014	-0.13	0.075	0.54	0.322	3.03**	-0.097	-0.88
Demographic & Socioeconomic Attributes										
Age [+/-]	0.009	1.58	-0.011	-1.97*	-0.019	-2.60**	0.010	1.73*	0.001	0.22
Race [+/-]	0.054	0.22	-0.009	-0.04	0.387	1.09	0.418	1.76*	0.929	3.54*
Gender [+]	0.047	0.25	-0.122	-0.69	0.140	0.61	-0.086	-0.48	0.571	3.15*
Education [-]	-0.075	-1.12	0.068	1.07	0.145	1.68*	-0.082	-1.22	-0.023	-0.35
Family Income [-]	-0.027	-0.64	-0.079	-1.86*	-0.004	-0.06	-0.076	-1.75*	-0.012	-0.28
N	500		505		501		488		503	
Pseudo R^2	0.0150		0.0238		0.0594		0.0748		0.0680	
LR CHI^2	17.35		29.23		44.85		100.67		81.50	
Prob CHI^2	0.0978		0.0011		0.0000		0.0000		0.0000	

Note: The intercepts are excluded from the table for the sake of brevity. Due to data limitations there are no coefficients for beneficiary status regarding environmental protection and healthcare. Symbols in brackets represent the expected direction of the coefficient.

**   prob < .01   *   prob < .05

Table 3. Predicted probabilities of support for welfare spending

	Probability of Decrease a lot		Probability of Keep the same		Probability Increase a lot	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Political trust	0.29	0.10	0.46	0.52	0.04	0.13
Racial Affect	0.43	0.14	0.36	0.55	0.02	0.08
Beneficiary Status	0.22	0.13	0.52	0.54	0.05	0.09
Partisan identification	0.15	0.30	0.55	0.46	0.08	0.03
Ideological orientation	0.16	0.24	0.54	0.51	0.07	0.05
Sociotropic Economic Evaluation	0.31	0.11	0.46	0.53	0.03	0.11
Age	0.24	0.13	0.50	0.54	0.04	0.09
Race	0.22	0.16	0.52	0.54	0.05	0.07
Family Income	0.16	0.25	0.54	0.50	0.07	0.04

Moreover, program beneficiaries are much more likely (0.09) to support large increases in welfare spending than non-beneficiaries of welfare spending (0.05). The only other coefficient for beneficiary status to reach the conventional level of significance is for support of highway spending (b = 0.168, t = 1.96) but again, as determined by the probability of χ^2, the model is not significant. Oddly, the direction of the coefficient suggests that beneficiaries of highway spending are less supportive of government spending in the policy area. Note, however, the model is insignificant.

Other variables included in the model, partisan identification, ideological orientation, sociotropic economic evaluation, and the demographic and socioeconomic attributes, exert relatively the same effect as shown in Table 1. In terms of the predicted probability of support for increasing government spending on welfare, Table 3 demonstrates that the likelihood that a strong Republican will support large increases is much less (0.03) than that of a strong Democrat (0.08). The effect of ideology is similar, with a strong conservative being less likely to support great increases in welfare spending (0.05) than a strong liberal (0.07). Table 3 also illustrates that

the probability that an individual who perceives Louisiana's economy as gotten much worse will support large increases in welfare spending are less (0.03) than those who believe it has gotten much better (0.11). However, the probability that the oldest individuals (0.09) and black individuals (0.07) will support big increases in welfare spending is greater than that of the youngest (0.24) and white (0.22) individuals. Lastly, those earning $70,000 or above are much less likely to advocate greater increases in welfare spending (0.04) than those earning $10, 000 or less (0.07).

Hetherington's speculates that two perceptions condition the effect of trust. One is perceived sacrifice. He argues that the effect of trust is greatest on the attitudes of individuals who pay the costs of the policy but do not benefit from it. He tests this through an examination of the interaction between trust and beneficiary status with respect to support for education spending, among others. I examine the effect of the interaction on support for spending on highways, a policy that distributes benefits universally and requires no sacrifice, and on welfare, a policy that distributes benefits narrowly where sacrifice is required of a large group of people, in addition to those that distribute benefits widely where sacrifice is asked of a small group of people, on education. My analysis provides no evidentiary support for Hetherington's assertion. In Table 4 (see page 31), the coefficient for the interaction effect in each model is not significant; therefore, the effect of trust is not affected by beneficiary status.

The second perception Hetherington believes to condition the effect of trust is the perceived risk. The findings presented in Table 4 confirm this. The interaction between trust and racial affect is significant concerning support for welfare and healthcare spending. The coefficient for the interaction is negative and significant in the model for support for welfare (b = -0.007, t = -1.87) as well as in the model for support for healthcare (b = -0.128, t = -2.89),

indicating that more favorable perceptions of blacks make trust less important in supporting

welfare and healthcare spending. However, the effect of the interaction between trust and racial

affect is also negative and significant for the support of government spending on education (b =

-0.011, t = -2.23), a type of program Hetherington believes it would not.

Lastly, although not part of Hetherington's argument, I examine the possible mediating

effect of ideology on trust in support of government spending. I hypothesize that trust would

matter more for those with a conservative ideological orientation, given that increased

government spending requires a greater ideological sacrifice for conservatives than it does for

liberals. The results listed in Table 4 demonstrate this is not the case, except with respect for

support for environmental protection (b = -0.079, t = -1.73) and welfare spending (0.050, t =

1.73). Strangely, the coefficient for the interaction in the model estimating support for

environmental spending is negative, suggesting that as the conservatism of the individual

increases, the effect of trust on support for spending decreases. Conversely, the positive and

significant coefficient for the effect of the interaction in that model for support for welfare

spending is positive and significant (b = 0.050, t = 1.73), signifying that that the effect of trust is

greater for strong conservatives. Although the effect of partisanship and ideology drop out in the

insignificant model estimating support for highway spending, the effects of the other variables

are relatively the same as depicted in Table 3.

Estimates for Models of Support for Taxation

The coefficients for the models of support for taxation on two areas are reported in Table

5 (see page 34). Support for both sales and income taxation is depicted as a function of the same

variables included in the models for support for spending in five policy areas: political trust,

partisan and ideological orientation, economic self interest, and demographic and socioeconomic

attributes. Again, because the dependent variable is ordered and discrete, ordered logit is used to

Table 4. Ordered logit results for support for spending in five policy areas, with interactions

	(1) Highway		(2) Environmental Protection		(3) Education		(4) Welfare		(5) Healthcare	
	b	t	b	t	b	t	b	t	b	t
Political Trust [+]	-0.031	-0.08	0.143	0.43	0.703	1.56	0.587	1.73*	-0.211	-0.64
Ideological Orientation [-]	0.060	1.17	-0.097	-1.95*	-0.212	-2.91**	-0.080	-1.57	-0.124	-2.37**
Racial Affect [+]	-0.005	-1.21	0.006	1.49	0.004	0.85	0.015	3.74**	0.003	0.65
Beneficiary Status [+]	0.166	1.93**	------	------	0.130	0.52	0.625	2.46**	------	------
Political Trust x Ideology [+]	-0.010	-0.21	-0.079	-1.73*	-0.012	-0.19	0.050	1.73*	0.048	1.03
Political Trust x Racial Affect [-]	0.001	0.17	0.001	0.25	-0.011	-2.23**	-0.007	-1.87*	-0.013	-2.89**
Political Trust x Beneficiary Status [-]	-.069	-0.84	------	------	-0.087	-0.37	0.118	0.46	------	------
N	500		505		501		488		503	
Pseudo R^2	0.0156		0.0264		0.0664		0.0785		0.0689	
LR CHI^2	18.12		32.42		50.13		105.70		82.56	
Prob CHI^2	0.2012		0.0012		0.0000		0.0000		0.0000	

Note: The intercepts and the coefficients for partisan identification, economic evaluation, and demographics are excluded from the table for the sake of brevity. Symbols in brackets represent the expected direction of the coefficient.

** prob < .01   * prob < .05

estimate the models. The pseudo R^2 of these models are quite low as well, indicating that they do not fit the data well; however, all models are significant according to the probability of χ^2. With few exceptions the coefficients in the model estimating support for both sales and income taxes are in the expected direction as predicted. The results in Table 5 indicate that political trust has a positive and significant effect on support for both sales (b = 0.300, t = 3.47) and income (b = 0.149, t = 1.83) taxation, although its effect is greater for support of the former. Why this is the case is indeterminate by this analysis and awaits future research, but the bottom line is that increases in citizens' trust in government equates to increases in support for sales and income taxation.

I generate predicted probabilities for different values on the trust scale holding the values of all other independent variables constant at their means to illustrate the effect of trust on support for both sales and income taxation. The predicted probabilities are presented in Figure 2 (see page 35) and in Figure 3 (see page 36). As one can see, as trust in government increases, so does the likelihood that an individual would advocate an increase in both forms of taxation. When trust is at its lowest value, the chance that a person would support "a lot" greater sales tax is about 2%; the chance that a person would support "a lot" greater income tax, about 6%. However, when trust is at its highest value that chance increases to about 7% and 11% respectively. Likewise, as trust increases, the likelihood of citizens' advocating a decrease in sales and income taxation decreases. When trust is at its lowest point, the chance that an individual would support "a lot" less sales tax is about 30% and the chance a person would support "a lot" less income tax, about 24%, whereas when trust is at its highest value that chance decreases to about 9% and 14% respectively. Although the chance that an individual will advocate an increase in taxation based on increased trust is minimal, increases in trust does

weaken the opposition to increased taxation. Of particular interest, one can note that two lines in both Figure 2 and Figure 3, the probability that an individual will support increasing the amount of taxation by a lot and the probability that an individual will support decreasing the amount of taxation by a lot, never cross as they do in the Figure 1 which depicts the probability of support for spending. This suggests that more trust is required to attain individuals' support for increased taxation than it does to attain their support for increased spending. It appears that greater trust is needed for individuals to be willing to pay for increased spending than to simply support it.

Contrary to expectations, Table 5 reveals that partisan identification does not significantly affect support for taxation; however, compatible with expectations, ideological orientation does (b = -0.142, t = -3.01 in the sales model; b = -0.084, t = -1.85 in the income model), with those holding more conservative views being less supportive of taxation. The coefficient for sociotropic economic evaluation reaches statistical significance only in the model for support for sales taxation (b = 0.160, t = 1.64), with those perceiving the economy as gotten better being more supportive of it.

Examining the effect of demographic and socioeconomic variables, race (b = -0.432, t = -2.17) is the only one to significantly affect support for sales tax, with blacks being less likely to do so. This does not hold up in the model estimating support for income taxation. The negative coefficient that misses reaching a conventional level of significance by a hair (b = 0.352, t = 1.61) indicates that blacks are more likely to support income taxation. It is plausible that the reason for this finding relates to the nature of the tax, with sales tax being a regressive one and income tax being a progressive one. With respect to support for income taxation, the coefficients for education and family income are significant. This demonstrates that those with higher

Table 5. Ordered logit results for support for two taxation areas, with trust as the key independent variable

	(1)		(2)	
	Sales		Income	
	b	t	b	t
Political Trust [+]	0.300	3.47**	0.149	1.83*
Partisan Identification [-]	-0.047	-1.20	-0.050	-1.29
Ideological Orientation [-]	-0.142	-3.01**	-0.084	-1.85*
Sociotropic Economic Self Interest Variable				
Economic Evaluations [+]	0.160	1.65*	0.027	0.27
Demographic & Socioeconomic Attributes				
Age [+/-]	-0.004	-0.77	-0.004	-0.08
Race [+/-]	-0.432	-2.17*	0.352	1.61
Gender [+]	0.111	0.67	-0.098	-0.60
Education [-]	0.025	0.43	0.120	2.03*
Family Income [-]	0.028	0.71	-0.111	-2.82**
N	606		595	
Pseudo R^2	0.0247		0.0189	
LR Chi^2	37.83		31.24	
Prob Chi^2	0.0000		0.0000	

Note: The intercepts are excluded from the table for the sake of brevity. Symbols in brackets represent the expected direction of the coefficient.

**   prob < .01   * prob < .05

Figure 2. Predicted probabilities for support for sales tax, by trust

Note: The thin green line represents probabilities that respondents advocate keeping the amount of sales tax the same. The orange dashed line represents probabilities that respondents advocate a decrease in sales tax. The thin blue line represents probabilities that respondents advocate decreasing the amount of sales tax by a lot. The red dashed line represents probabilities that respondents advocate an increase in sales tax. The heavy blue line represents probabilities that respondents advocate increasing the amount of sales tax by a lot.
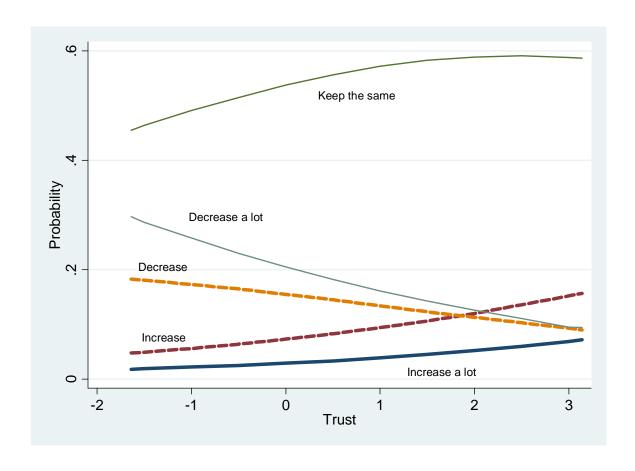
Figure 3. Predicted probabilities of support for income tax, by trust

Note: The thin green line represents probabilities that respondents advocate keeping the amount of income tax the same. The orange dashed line represents probabilities that respondents advocate a decrease in income tax. The thin blue line represents probabilities that respondents advocate decreasing the amount of income tax by a lot. The red dashed line represents probabilities that respondents advocate an increase in income tax. The heavy blue line represents probabilities that respondents advocate increasing the amount of income tax by a lot.
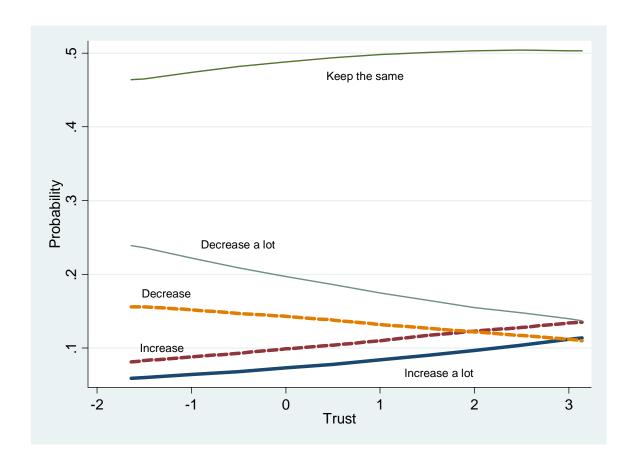
levels of education are more supportive of increasing income taxes (b = 0.120, t = 2.03), while those with greater incomes are less supportive of doing so (b = -0.111, -2.82).

Table 6 (see page 39) presents the estimates of support for the two taxation areas with the inclusion of the racial affect variable. Being that sales and income tax paid carries no individual, direct benefits, a measure of beneficiary status is not included in the model. Again, political trust positively and significantly affects support for both sales (b = 0.325, t = 3.43) and income taxation (b = 0.152, t = 1.69). The results are the same, if not stronger, in the model estimating support for white individuals only (results not shown). Why the effect of political trust is greater with respect to support for sales tax is unclear but nonetheless, the results indicate that trusting citizens are more supportive of both types of taxation.

The coefficient for racial affect, in both models, fails to reach significance, meaning that the way an individual feels about blacks has no bearing on his/her support for taxation. Ideological orientation has a negative and significant effect on support for sales taxation (b = -0.121, t = -2.35), with conservatives being less likely to support it, but does not significantly affect support for income tax. The other variables in the models exert a similar influence on taxation attitudes as in the models estimating support without the inclusion of the racial affect variable.

To illustrate the effect of trust on support for sales and income taxation, in relation to the effect of the other variables, I generate predicted probabilities of support for the variables found to have a significant effect in Table 6. These are presented in Table 7 and Table 8 (see page 40).

Regarding the probability of supporting great decreases in sales taxation, political trust has the greatest effect. Table 7 illustrates that the most trusting individuals (0.08) are less likely to support great decreases in sales taxation than the least trusting ones (0.20). Sociotropic

economic evaluations affect both the probability of supporting large decreases and large increases in sales taxation; however, its effect is greater with respect to the former. Those who perceive Louisiana's economy as gotten much better (0.14) are much less likely to support great decreases than those who perceive the state's economy as gotten much worse (0.25).

Regarding the probability of supporting great increases in sales tax, the effect of trust is discernable; however, it is of lesser magnitude than the effect of race and ideology. Table 7 demonstrates that the probability that a black individual (0.24) will support a large increase in sales taxation is much less than that of a white individual (0.47). Although the probability that a strong conservative (0.24) will support a large increase in sales taxation is greater than that of a strong liberal (0.05), the probability that a strong conservative (0.25) will support a large decrease in sales taxation is also greater than that of a strong liberal (0.14).

Concerning the probability of support for income taxation, Table 8 illustrates that the effect of trust is also greater with respect to depressing opposition to it than it is for supporting increases in it. As with the probability of support for sales taxation, the effect of trust is greater than that of the other variables. Table 8 illustrates that the most trusting individuals (0.13) are less likely to support great decreases in sales taxation than the least trusting ones (0.23) are. In addition, the probability that individuals with an advanced degree (0.14) will support a large decrease in income taxation is less that that of those with less than a ninth grade education (0.29). Table 8 also suggests that a strong conservative (0.22) is more likely to support a large decrease in income taxation than a strong liberal (0.16) is, as are those earning $70,000 or greater (0.25) as opposed to those earning $10,000 or less (0.14).

Table 6. Ordered logit results for support for two taxation areas, with trust and racial affect as the key independent variables

	(1)		(2)	
	Sales		Income	
	b	t	b	t
Political Trust [+]	0.325	3.43**	0.152	1.69*
Racial Affect [+]	0.004	0.97	0.002	0.44
Partisan Identification [-]	-0.061	-1.38	-0.066	-1.54
Ideological Orientation [-]	-0.121	-2.35**	-0.061	-1.25*
Sociotropic Economic Self Interest Variable				
Economic Evaluations [+]	0.178	1.65*	0.088	0.83
Demographic & Socioeconomic Attributes				
Age [+/-]	-0.004	-0.65	-0.002	-0.41
Race [+/-]	-0.512	-2.15*	0.247	1.04
Gender [+]	0.026	0.15	-0.104	-0.08
Education [-]	0.055	0.83	0.150	2.27*
Family Income [-]	0.010	0.23	-0.099	-2.31**
N	505		494	
Pseudo R^2	0.0282		0.0184	
LR Chi^2	36.87		25.20	
Prob Chi^2	0.0001		0.0050	

Note: The intercepts are excluded from the table for the sake of brevity. Symbols in brackets represent the expected direction of the coefficient.

**   prob < .01   * prob < .05

Table 7. Predicted probabilities of support for sales taxation

	Probability of Decrease a lot		Probability of Keep the same		Probability Increase a lot	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Political trust	0.20	0.08	0.45	0.56	0.02	0.09
Ideological orientation	0.14	0.25	0.57	0.49	0.05	0.25
Sociotropic Economic Evaluation	0.25	0.14	0.49	0.56	0.03	0.05
Race	0.18	0.27	0.55	0.47	0.47	0.24

Table 8. Predicted probabilities for support for income taxation

	Probability of Decrease a lot		Probability of Keep the same		Probability Increase a lot	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Political trust	0.23	0.13	0.46	0.50	0.06	0.12
Ideological orientation	0.16	0.22	0.50	0.47	0.09	0.07
Education	0.29	0.14	0.43	0.50	0.05	0.11
Family Income	0.14	0.25	0.50	0.45	0.10	0.06

Lastly, Table 9 (see page 41) presents the results of the model for support for taxation that includes the interaction variables. Neither the interaction between trust and racial affect or trust and ideology has a significant effect on individuals' support for taxation. Furthermore, the effect political trust is no longer significant with respect to support for either type of tax. Moreover, although insignificant, the coefficient for trust in the model estimating support for sales taxation is in the unexpected direction (b = -0.013, t = -0.29). All other variables behave as indicated in the other taxation models, the exception being that the coefficients for ideology and education are no longer significant in the model estimating support for income taxes.

Table 9. Ordered logit results for support for two taxation areas, with interactions

	(1)		(2)	
	Sales		Income	
	b	t	b	t
Political Trust [+]	-0.013	-0.29	0.371	1.11
Racial Affect [+]	0.005	1.24	0.001	0.33
Ideological Orientation [-]	-0.118	-1.30**	-0.061	-1.25
Political Trust x Ideology [+]	0.018	0.38	-0.018	-0.38
Political Trust x Racial Affect [-]	0.005	1.31	-0.002	-0.58
N	505		494	
Pseudo R^2	0.0296		0.0187	
LR Chi^2	38.67		25.67	
Prob Chi^2	0.0001		0.0120	

Note: The intercepts and the coefficients for partisan identification, economic evaluation, and demographics are excluded from the table for the sake of brevity. Symbols in brackets represent the expected direction of the coefficient.

**   prob < .01   * prob < .05

Conclusion

Hetherington, examining national level data to explain the change in support for liberal policy over time, finds that decreased support for progressive policy is a consequence of decreased citizen trust in the federal government. Moreover, he finds that political trust has the greatest effect on support for policy that requires individuals to sacrifice for others, especially if the "others" called to sacrifice for are viewed negatively. In exploring whether citizen trust in state government, Louisiana government specifically, affects support for spending in various policy areas, my findings are mixed. With the exception of highway spending, I, like Hetherington, find that political trust has no significant effect on support for government spending on programs that distribute benefits universally, thus requiring no sacrifice from any group of people. Also consistent with Hetherington's work, my results indicate that political trust, even when controlling for the effects of other variables, has a positive and significant effect on support for redistributive spending, namely welfare, where benefits are distributed narrowly and require a sacrifice of a large group of individuals. I find its effect is greater in depressing opposition to government spending than it is in increasing support for it. However, my findings diverge from Hetherington with regard to the effect of trust on programs that distribute benefits widely, requiring sacrifice from a small group of people: he finds that trust affects support for education spending, while I do not. I speculate that welfare is an area that citizens perceive as corrupt possibly because the benefits are given to those deemed, justifiably or not, undeserving; on the other hand, they do not perceive policy such as education in the same light, possibly because the beneficiary group of education policy is perceived favorably or as both inclusive and large.

Regarding the effect of beneficiary status on support for spending, we both find that beneficiaries of welfare spending are significantly more supportive of government spending in that policy area. We reach the same conclusion regarding the effect of racial affect: individuals who hold more favorable views of blacks are more supportive of spending on redistributive programs, that is to say welfare.

Concerning the effect of the interaction between trust and beneficiary status, neither Hetherington nor I find that the interaction significantly affects support for spending on education. However, Hetherington does find that the interaction has a negative, significant effect on support for financial aid, a program he considers, like education, to disperse benefits widely but require sacrifice of but a small group of individuals. With respect to the effect of the interaction between trust and racial affect, our findings converge: more favorable feelings towards blacks make trust matter less for support of welfare spending. I find this to be the case regarding support for spending on healthcare and education as well. Lastly, my belief that ideology conditions the effect of trust is confirmed, but only on support for welfare spending. Trust, indeed, has a greater effect on strong conservatives.

Most importantly, in my estimation, is the finding that political trust significantly affects support for state taxation, particularly in regard to depressing opposition to it. This implies that trust shapes citizens' willingness to pay for certain policies. This, as Hetherington would argue, is particularly important given that economic evaluations also significantly influence taxation attitudes. A bad economy decreases political trust which, in turn, decreases not only support for programs that assist those most in need, but also support for the levying of money required to do just that.

Discussion

Many progressive policies require support from individuals who perceive themselves as having to make sacrifices for the few. They require individuals to support their government even when it does not operate in accordance with their self-interests. Because of this, trust that government will deliver policies ethically, fairly, efficiently, and without waste is vital. If citizens do not trust their government to do what is right and what is best they will be less likely to support its proposed public policies, policies designed to solve social problems and ensure representation of minority interests.

If political trust is found to affect support for government spending the implications are numerous, not only for policy, but also for political elite behavior, minority representation, and reform efforts as well. First, with respect to policy, if distrust in government undermines support for liberal policies, then members of the community that rely most on the government will be disadvantaged, especially given that institutions other than the government, such as churches and volunteer organizations, have been unable to combat the problems that redistributive programs are designed to alleviate in a substantial and sustained manner. Moreover, because some redistributive programs, especially welfare and health care, benefit minorities to a greater extent, lower levels of trust could obstruct efforts to promote material equality between the races. This could potentially affect race relations as well as result in social manifestations typically associated with minority and disadvantaged status, such as increased crime and health problems, namely that of substance abuse (Pew Research Center 1998). Lastly, if political trust is found to be mediated by ideology, what could result is the moderation of policy. Trust among conservatives is typically greater under Republican leadership, thus it is in this situation that they may support increased government intervention; it is in this situation that Republican leaders

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may feel pressured to expand government, something they generally try to avoid. In contrast, with conservatives being typically less trustful of government under Democratic leadership, political leaders in this situation may be constrained from expanding government activity, something they are generally inclined to do.

Secondly, if political trust is found to shape support for progressive policy it can influence the behavior of political elites. When polls indicate a decline of trust in government, political elites may shy away from pursuing government solutions to social problems, fearing reprisal from voters for advocating such policies. When elected officials fail to openly and aggressively advocate redistributive policy as a remedy to social ills they signal to voters that the government is not capable of solving problems. This indirectly results in further erosion citizen confidence; hence the vicious cycle is perpetuated.

Third, political trust can have a bearing on minority representation and the representation of those with limited resources. If Schattschneider is correct that the "pressure group system sings with a decidedly upper-class accent" (Hetherington 2005: 151), then government will be more responsive to those with greater means as well as to those in the majority. From this we can conclude that if the wealthy distrust the government and consequently do not support spending on programs that require sacrifice to help those with limited resources, the interests of the needy will be underrepresented, especially given that the majority of citizens are not recipients of benefits afforded by redistributive programs.

Lastly, information on the effect of trust on support for policy and thus policy implementation can be useful for debates concerning ethics reform in Louisiana. If, as expected, trust is low among citizens in Louisiana and is negatively related to support for spending, advocates of ethics reform can use this information as ammunition.

This study is a first attempt at understanding the role political trust plays on support for policy at the state level; however, there is much work to be done. First, because states differ in context with respect to level of trust and degree of corruption, this analysis needs to be replicated using data from other states to discover cross state variation. Secondly, the effect of citizen trust needs to be examined in the state legislature as a whole, in individual legislators, in the governor, and in other elected officials. In addition, the effect of political knowledge on political trust should be studied, for perhaps it is the degree of political knowledge a citizen possesses that dictates their level of trust and thus mediates its effect. Finally, future research should discern how trust works in explaining policies other than those requiring spending.

If political trust, in state government in general, in the state legislature, or in elected officials as individuals, is found to affect support for government spending, efforts to increase the trust citizens have in their government should be intensified to strengthen the government's ability to contend with problems facing the community. A first step would be to improve the government's image, possibly by making use of the media to correct misperceptions of the costs of public programs and beneficiaries of the programs, to inform the public of program successes, and to highlight the effect of those successes on the community as a whole. If elected officials are successful in altering citizen attitudes toward government performance and increasing public confidence in it, they will be more likely to attain the support needed for policy implementation, benefiting not only individual recipients but the community as a whole. Perhaps, now that Louisiana is headed by a governor considered absent of ill repute, by one who fights for ethics reform, two attributes that create the potential for increasing citizen trust in the state, we will see some evidence of this.

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Appendix: Variable Description

Variable	Description
Support for Government Spending on:	
Highways-	Five-point scale based on responses to the question, "Do you think spending on highways (in Louisiana) should be increased, decreased, or kept the same?" 0= decreased a lot; 1 = decreased a little; 2 = maintaining the current level of spending; 3 = increased a little; 4 = increased a lot.
Environment-	Five-point scale based on responses to the question, "Do you think spending on the environment respect (in Louisiana) should be increased, decreased, or kept the same?" 0= decreased a lot; 1 = decreased a little; 2 = maintaining the current level of spending; 3 = increased a little; 4 = increased a lot.
Education-	Five-point scale based on responses to the question, "Do you think that spending on education in Louisiana should be increased, decreased, or kept the same?" 0= decreased a lot; 1 = decreased a little; 2 = maintaining the current level of spending; 3 = increased a little; 4 = increased a lot.
Welfare-	Five-point scale based on responses to the question, "Do you think spending on welfare (in Louisiana) should be increased, decreased, or kept the same?" 0= decreased a lot; 1 = decreased a little; 2 = maintaining the current level of spending; 3 = increased a little; 4 = increased a lot.
Healthcare-	Five-point scale based on responses to the question, "Do you think spending on healthcare (in Louisiana) should be increased, decreased, or kept the same?" 0= decreased a lot; 1 = decreased a little; 2 = maintaining the current level of spending; 3 = increased a little; 4 = increased a lot.

Variable	Description
Support for State sales taxes	Five-point scales based on response to the question "Do you think sales taxes in Louisiana should be increased, decreased, or kept the same?" 0= decreased a lot; 1 = decreased a little; 2 = maintaining the current level of taxation; 3 = increased a little; 4 = increased a lot.
Support for state personal incomes taxes	Five-point scales based on response to the question "Do you think personal income taxes should be increased, decreased, or kept the same?" 0= decreased a lot; 1 = decreased a little; 2 = maintaining the current level of taxation; 3 = increased a little; 4 = increased a lot.
Political trust	Scale based on factor analysis of responses to four questions: "Do you think people in state government waste a lot of the money we pay in taxes, waste some of it, or don't waste very much of it?", "How many people do you think running state government are crooked—quite a few, not very many, or hardly any?", "Over the years, how much attention do you feel that Louisiana government pays to what people think when it decides what to do—a good deal, some, or not much?", and "How much of the time do you think you can trust state government to do what is right—just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time?". (eigenvalue = 1.791, variance explained = 0.448)
Partisan identification	Seven-point scale of partisan identification, ranging from 0 (strong Democrat) to 6 (strong Republican).
Ideological Orientation	Seven-point scale of ideology, ranging from 0 (strong liberal) to 6 (strong conservative).

Variable	Description
Sociotropic Economic evaluation	Five-point scale, based on responses to the question "Would you say that over the past year the economy in Louisiana has gotten better, stayed about the same, or gotten worse?", ranging from 0 (gotten much worse) to 4 (gotten much better).
Beneficiary status	
Highway-	Four-point scale of reported miles driven per week. 0 = respondents reporting not owning a car or not driving; 1 = those driving < 50 miles; 2 = those driving between 50 and 150 miles; 3 = those driving between 150 and 300 miles; 4 = those driving in excess of 300 miles per week.
Education-	1 = respondents with children attending public school; 0 = otherwise.
Welfare-	1 = respondent or a member of respondent's family is a beneficiary of welfare spending; 0 = otherwise.
Racial attitudes	100-point evaluative score of feeling towards blacks, with scores ranging from 0 (extremely negative feelings toward blacks) to 100 (extremely favorable feelings toward blacks).
Gender	1 = women respondents; 0 = men respondents.
Age	Respondent's chronological age (in years)
Race: Black	1 = black respondents; 0 = all other respondents.

Variable	Description
Education	Seven-point scale of educational attainment, ranging from 1 (less than 9th grade education) to 7 (advanced degree).
Family income	Eight-point scale of family income, ranging from 1 (income under $10,000 per year) to 8 (income $70,000 or greater).

Vita

Susan Q. Lemieux was born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana in June, 1968. She graduated from University Laboratory School in 1986. Majoring in psychology, with a minor in religion, she earned a Bachelor of Arts and Sciences degree from Louisiana State University in 1990. Following graduation Susie committed her time and efforts to being a loving and supportive wife while her husband completed medical school and residency, raising their two children, and serving her community. It was through working at Healthy Families Temple and volunteering for her children's school, their church, the Junior League, the Junior Auxiliary, and the Iberia Parish Medical Auxiliary that Susie came to appreciate the importance of government in building a strong and healthy community. With the support and encouragement of her husband, John Lemieux, she enrolled at University of Louisiana Lafayette in 2005. Majoring in political science, with a minor in philosophy, she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree two years later. Susie then returned to LSU to obtain her master's degree in political science, specializing in American politics. Her interests include state politics, electoral politics, and public opinion and political behavior as it relates to policy.