Experience of social mobility and support for redistribution: Beating the odds or blaming the system?

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Abstract

How does the experience of social mobility affect people's distributive preferences? Using cross-country survey data and a survey experiment, I examine the effects of experienced social mobility on support for redistribution. The results indicate an asymmetric relationship - experiencing downward mobility increases support for redistribution while experiencing upward mobility does not affect distributive preferences. In line with a common attribution bias, the self-serving bias, those with negative mobility experiences 'blame the system' and extrapolate from their negative experience onto society at large, which increases their demand for redistribution. Conversely, those who experienced positive mobility believe they 'beat the odds' and do not extrapolate from their experience onto perceptions of societal mobility, leading to no less support for redistribution. This finding suggests significant implications at the aggregate and a potential demand-side explanation for the Great Gatsby Curve: As overall absolute mobility decreases (increases), ceteris paribus, demand for redistribution also decreases (increases).

Keywords: social mobility, redistribution, attribution bias, self-serving bias

JEL Codes: D31, D91, D63, H24

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1 Introduction

The level of social mobility in a society, or how much of a person's income and education can be predicted by that of their parents, is an important measure of economic opportunities within that society. Social mobility has therefore received much attention as a potential factor in explaining distributive preferences: If social mobility is high, economic outcomes appear to be the result of effort rather than a person's background and so demand for redistribution should be low (Alesina et al., 2004; Alesina and Angeletos, 2005; Cappelen et al., 2013). While there is now substantial evidence that individuals' perceptions of societal mobility indeed affect their support for redistributive policies in this way (Corneo and Grüner, 2002; Bjørnskov et al., 2013; Davidai and Gilovich, 2015; Shariff et al., 2016; Alesina et al., 2018), less is known about how one's own experience of mobility affects these preferences. In fact, the limited existing evidence on the effects of personal mobility experience on distributive preferences suggests that there is no clear relationship between the two (Corneo and Grüner, 2002; Alesina and Angeletos, 2005; Clark et al., 2010; Guillaud, 2013).

Using cross-country survey data from 26 countries collected across four waves and a survey experiment, I test a potential behavioural explanation for the previously missing link between own mobility experience and support for redistribution – the self-serving bias. This attribution bias states that people tend to blame external circumstances for their failures and take excessive personal credit for successes (Campbell and Sedikides, 1999; Gilovich et al., 2002; Hestermann and Le Yaouanq, 2021). Applying this bias to the case of social mobility experience suggests that people who have experienced upward mobility may be more likely to believe that they 'beat the odds' and to not extrapolate from their own experience onto society at large. On the other hand, those who experienced downward mobility may be more likely to 'blame the system' and, therefore, to extrapolate from their experience onto society. This would suggest that the experience of social mobility has an asymmetric relationship with perceptions of societal social mobility and, in turn, distributive preferences.

Using the ISSP Social Inequality Cumulative (ISSP, 2014), I find that such an asymmet-

ric relationship between the experience of social mobility and distributive preferences indeed exists in observational cross-country data. Importantly, this relationship is not driven by personal income levels which are well known to affect distributive preferences (Alesina and Giuliano, 2011). I further find that this asymmetric relationship also holds between the experience of social mobility and perceptions of societal mobility, suggesting that the mechanism through which mobility experience affects distributive preferences might be how it shapes beliefs about opportunities in society.

In an information provision experiment, I test the causality of this finding by providing subjects with an experimental shock to their mobility experience. The basic design of the experiment is similar to Karadja et al. (2017) and Cruces et al. (2013) who each provide subjects with a shock to their relative income position. Subjects in my experiment are asked to identify their own occupation and that of their parents when growing up. They are also asked to subjectively estimate their own mobility experience relative to their parents. I then calculate an experimental mobility measure for each subject equal to the difference between the subjective estimate and an objective mobility estimate based on income and education data for each occupation type. Holding this measure constant, I test the effect of being informed of one's objectively calculated mobility in the treatment condition relative to a control condition where subjects receive unrelated but similarly framed information.

I find that subjects who experience a negative mobility shock, by being informed of an objective mobility experience that is lower than their subjective estimate during the treatment condition, increase their support for redistribution significantly compared to subjects with the same experimental mobility score in the control group. Especially support for higher governmental spending on the poor and higher taxes on the rich increases for these subjects. Those who experience a positive mobility shock in the treatment condition do not change their distributive preferences relative to comparable subjects in the control group.

In line with the self-serving bias, only those who experience a negative mobility shock also change their perceptions of social mobility in society. However, neither group change their

perceived personal benefits from redistribution, suggesting that this change in distributive preferences is not due to a rational change in perceived benefits.

I probe the robustness of the experimental results in a number of ways. First, I run a placebo test to account for the possibility that merely over- or underestimating something and being informed of it has an effect on perceptions and preferences. I do this by asking all subjects to estimate the difference in length between two rivers in North America and inform those in the control group about whether they over- or underestimated the length. I find no effects of this information on either preferences or perceptions.

Second, I check whether the experimental mobility measure I calculate, which is essentially a measure of misperception, is associated with any particular preferences, beliefs or demographics. I also test whether subjects who correctly identify their own mobility experience, and therefore do not experience a shock during the treatment, differ from the other subjects on any relevant measure. Neither is the case.

Third, I exclude subjects who do not believe the information they are provided with in both, the treatment and control group, and check whether those subjects (49 out of 1,100) differ on any relevant measure. They do not, except that subjects in the treatment group are somewhat more likely to not believe the information than those in the control, which is not surprising. I also restrict the main analysis to subjects who spent enough time on the treatment and control screens to read the information.[1]

Fourth, I test two plausible alternative models for the relationship between mobility experience and distributive preferences. I first run models with a continuous experimental mobility measure allowing for a linear relationship between the experienced mobility shock during the experiment and the outcome variables of interest. All preference coefficients hereby remain insignificant and near zero. Only overall mobility perceptions are positively related to the continuous experimental mobility measure but with a smaller coefficient than in the main models. I also test for the possibility that subjects' reference point is a weakly

[1]I also report the main results for all subjects, irrespective of time spent on the treatment and control screens and find no notable differences.

positive mobility experience rather than no mobility experience. The experimental results do not support this.

Finally, I report models with various alternative measures of mobility experience, such as only looking at subjects who experienced extreme mobility shocks during the experiment, using different measures of parents' income and education levels, and using simple information treatment effects without calculating the experimental mobility measure. The main results remain robust to all of these tests: Subjects who experience negative mobility increase their support for redistribution and decrease their perception of social mobility in society. Subjects who experience no mobility or positive mobility do not change their preferences or perceptions.

These findings are important for three main reasons. First, the new mechanism considered here can explain a puzzling observation which directly contradicts standard political economy models of redistribution (Meltzer and Richard, 1981): Despite the increase in inequality over the past decades (Dabla-Norris et al., 2015) and the fall in social mobility, especially in the United States (Chetty et al., 2014a), there has been no significant increase in support for redistribution (Kenworthy and McCall, 2008). Given that the results of this study suggest that only those with downward mobility experiences adjust their demand for redistribution, a decrease in absolute mobility, which means that there are both, less people with upward and less people with downward mobility experiences, ceteris paribus, then leads to less demand for redistribution overall. This somewhat counter-intuitive relationship is entirely consistent with the self-serving bias and supported by the descriptive and experimental evidence provided in this paper.

Second, the suggested relationship between people's experience of social mobility and distributive preferences allows to make predictions about changes in distributive preferences across time. This is more difficult when only looking at people's perceptions of societal mobility, given that little is known about how these perceptions are formed or affected by real-world events.

Third, this paper suggests a demand-side explanation for the Great Gatsby Curve with a different causal direction than the mechanisms usually discussed (e.g. see Jerrim and Macmillan, 2015 and Sakamoto et al., 2014) - countries with lower levels of social mobility may see higher levels of inequality because, as the findings of this paper suggest, the lacking experience of mobility decreases demand for redistribution.

The outline of this paper is as follows. Section 2 provides a short overview of the relevant literature and theory, section 3 uses descriptive data to look at aggregate correlations between mobility experience and distributive preferences and section 4 describes the survey experiment and the experimental results. Section 5 concludes.

2 Theory

This paper builds on the substantial existing literature on determinants of preferences for redistribution at the individual level (e.g. Corneo and Grüner, 2002; Klor and Shayo, 2010; Alesina and Giuliano, 2011; Durante et al., 2014; Kuziemko et al., 2015); specifically, on the growing literature on the relationship between social mobility and demand for redistribution (e.g. Piketty, 1995; Benabou and Ok, 2001; Alesina and Angeletos, 2005; Clark et al., 2010; Esarey et al., 2012; Bjørnskov et al., 2013; Alesina et al., 2018; Fehr et al., 2020) and on the literature on the effects of procedural fairness on distributive preferences (e.g. Alesina et al., 2004; Alesina and Angeletos, 2005; Cappelen et al., 2013). I also follow other studies looking at the effects of personal experiences on economic preferences more broadly (e.g. Malmendier and Nagel, 2011; Fuchs-Schündeln and Schündeln, 2015; Malmendier and Nagel, 2016; Roth and Wohlfart, 2018).

Prior to reviewing some of the findings of these studies in more detail, I briefly discuss how social mobility has been conceptualized in the literature. Both, social mobility experience and perceptions of societal social mobility, are generally defined across two dimensions: absolute versus relative mobility and inter- versus intragenerational mobility. Absolute mobility, as

I define it in this paper, is commonly measured as the correlation between children's and parents' income or, more broadly, the elasticity of income from one generation to the next. Relative mobility tends to be measured as the opportunity of a child born into the bottom quintile to rise to the top quintile (Chetty et al., 2014a,b, 2017).

A second dimension to take into consideration when discussing social mobility is inter- versus intragenerational mobility. While intergenerational mobility captures the effect of upbringing and family background on a person's socio-economic status, intragenerational mobility captures fluctuations in socio-economic status across a person's lifetime. Both, empirical estimates of real social mobility in society and studies of perceptions of mobility, tend to focus on intergenerational mobility. This is at least partly due to data limitations, as intragenerational mobility measures require long-term panels of individuals including their income fluctuations across time.[2] In this paper, I will include measures of both, absolute and relative mobility, but follow previous research by focusing on intergenerational as opposed to intragenerational mobility.

The idea that mobility experience affects distributive preferences is not new. As argued by Piketty (1995), mobility experience may affect distributive preferences at the individual level by shaping beliefs about societal mobility. That is because learning about the actual level of mobility in society by experimenting with effort levels is too costly. Few papers have so far however empirically examined how mobility experience affects distributive preferences. Alesina and Angeletos (2005) and Corneo and Grüner (2002) find that upward experienced mobility is associated with reduced support for redistribution. In contrast, Clark et al. (2010) and Guillaud (2013) find the exact opposite. These studies measure mobility experience as a binary variable capturing whether a person believes to be better off than their parents or not. In other words, they do not differentiate between people who experienced negative or no mobility. They also only report self-assessed mobility experience and none use experimental methods to test the causality of the relationship.

[2] An example of an empirical study that uses intragenerational mobility measures is Kopczuk et al. (2010).

This mixed and somewhat contradictory existing descriptive evidence can easily be explained by applying the self-serving bias to the relationship between mobility experience and distributive preferences. The self-serving bias states that people blame external circumstances for their failures and take excessive personal credit for successes (Campbell and Sedikides, 1999; Gilovich et al., 2002). Applying this bias to the case of social mobility experience suggests that people who have experienced upward mobility may believe that they 'beat the odds' and do not extrapolate from their own experience onto society at large. On the other hand, those who experienced downward mobility may 'blame the system' and therefore extrapolate from their experience onto society.

This then suggests that, ceteris paribus, the experience of upward mobility does not actually have a particular effect on support for redistribution, which would explain the contradictory evidence in the existing literature. There may, of course, be other factors influencing distributive preferences for this group but the experience of mobility itself would not affect distributive preferences. On the other hand, the experience of downward mobility would lead to an increase in support for redistribution, holding other factors constant. This leads to my first two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Individuals who have experienced upward social mobility, ceteris paribus, do not change their support for redistribution.
Hypothesis 2: Individuals who have experienced downward social mobility, ceteris paribus, increase their support for redistribution.

If both, H1 and H2, can be supported, it would provide evidence in line with the proposed relationship between experience of social mobility and support for redistribution. The self-serving bias suggests that the mechanism underlying this relationship is how the experience of mobility affects perceptions of overall mobility in society. There is however a plausible alternative mechanism which would also be consistent with H2 and, potentially,

H1: Differences in distributive preferences could be explained by differences in beliefs about marginal benefits from taxation. As one experiences downward mobility, perceived marginal benefits from redistribution rise and vice versa, leading to more (less) demand for redistribution. This would however not be consistent with H1, as it predicts a linear relationship between mobility experience and distributive preferences. If the perceived marginal benefits from redistribution for those with downward mobility experiences however outweigh the perceived marginal costs of those who moved up, H1 would be consistent. Such an asymmetric relationship is entirely plausible if one takes loss aversion (Gilovich et al., 2002) into account. Given this possibility, merely testing H1 and H2 does not provide conclusive evidence for the self-serving bias explanation. Testing the two suggested mechanisms is therefore the secondary aim of this paper. Hypotheses 3 and 4 follow:

Hypothesis 3: Personal social mobility experience asymmetrically affects perceptions of societal mobility.
Hypothesis 4: Personal social mobility experience asymmetrically affects perceived marginal gains from redistribution.

In the following, I first look at descriptive cross-country data to test whether hypotheses 1 and 2 hold in the aggregate. To then get at the causality of the relationship and to test hypotheses 3 and 4, I report the results of an information provision experiment.

3 Descriptive Data

The descriptive dataset used in this study is the ISSP Social Inequality Cumulative (ISSP, 2014) which includes individual-level, representative data for all countries that participated in at least two waves of the ISSP Social Inequality Module, a total of 26. The individual waves of the module were conducted in 1987, 1992, 1999 and 2009, respectively and variables

included in the cumulative dataset were included in at least two waves of the Social Inequality module. Out of these four waves, three can be used for the analysis as they include data on all the variables of interest for each individual respondent.[3] Overall, there are 103,538 respondents included in the dataset of which 26,866 respondents have provided responses to all the relevant questions for this estimation.[4]

Support for Redistribution: The main dependent variable, support for redistribution, is based on indicator V33 in the cumulative dataset of the ISSP Social Inequality Module. The indicator reports respondents' agreement with the statement "It is the responsibility of the government to reduce the differences in income between people with high incomes and those with low incomes". Respondents can indicate that they either "Strongly agree", "Agree", "Neither agree nor disagree", "Disagree" or "Strongly disagree".

Following Alesina and Giuliano (2011), I also look at support for redistribution as a binary variable given that differences between individual points on the scale (e.g. "Strongly agree" versus "Agree") may not be as meaningful for some respondents as the difference between overall agreeing or disagreeing with the statement.[5]

Additionally, I look at respondents' agreement with the statements "Government should spend less on benefits for the poor", "Income differences in (R's country) are too large" and "Government should provide basic income for all", also coded as binary variables. Lastly, I include item V40 which asks respondents about taxes in their country for those with high incomes. Possible answers range from "much too high" to "much too low" on a scale from 1 to 5.

Perceptions of Social Mobility: I measure perceptions of social mobility by generating an indicator based on individuals' answers to three questions, focused on the relative importance

[3]Data for West Germany and East Germany were collected separately in all waves but will not be treated separately in the main regression estimations. The data available for Slovakia in 1992 was in fact collected for the whole of Czechoslovakia, which had not yet split into Slovakia and the Czech Republic at that point.

[4]Some relevant questions were not asked in all countries and waves which significantly reduces the available sample size.

[5]To transform item V33 into a binary variable I have followed the methodology of Corneo and Grüner (2002) and have coded respondents who answered with "Strongly agree" or "Agree" as 1 and respondents who answered with "Neither agree nor disagree", "Disagree" or "Strongly disagree" as 0.

of family wealth, education and social connections in determining people's success in life using principle component analysis (PCA).[6] The resulting index ranges from 0 to 100 with a higher value indicating a higher level of perceived upward social mobility.[7]

Experienced social mobility: To measure people's own mobility experience I generate three indicators. First, I match the occupations of respondents and their parents, which are included as ISCO88 codes in the ISSP survey (ILO, 1990), to the ISEI index of socio-economic status (Ganzeboom et al., 1992; Ganzeboom and Treiman, 1996; Ganzeboom, 2010), following in particular Yaish and Andersen (2012). This index captures the mean education and mean income of each occupation while controlling for age. The resulting scale ranges from 16 to 90 with a higher score indicating a higher level of socio-economic status. The individual-level experienced social mobility values (eSM) are then derived by subtracting the parental ISEI score ($ISEI_p$) from the respondents ISEI score ($ISEI_r$):

$$eSM_r = ISEI_r - ISEI_p \tag{1}$$

Whereby the parental ISEI score is derived based on the below equation:

$$ISEI_p = \max\{ISEI_f, ISEI_m\} \tag{2}$$

Hereby, $ISEI_f$ is the father's ISEI score and $ISEI_m$ the mother's score. The parental ISEI score ($ISEI_p$) is always equal to the score of the parent with the higher socio-economic status and the formula (1) used to derive the index ensures that the sign of the generated social mobility scale is equivalent to the direction of the experienced social mobility.[8] The

[6]There is an ongoing debate in the literature about how to best measure people's perceptions of social mobility. A common measure of perceived social mobility is asking respondents about the likelihood of a person born into one quintile moving to another quintile within an income distribution, most commonly from the bottom to the top quintile. The ISSP does not include such a question but I have included it in the survey experiment.

[7]A detailed description of the individual components and the distribution of the generated index can be found in appendix section A.1. Country-year-level estimates of the generated index can be found in table A3 also in section A.1 of the appendix.

[8]Taking the average of the sum of the scores of both parents would decrease the score of a respondent with two working parents relative to a respondent with one working parent, where the scores of the respective

generated index then ranges from -72, very negative mobility, to 72, very positive mobility, with $eSM_r = 0$ indicating no social mobility.[9]

Second, I follow previous research (e.g. Corneo and Grüner, 2002) and use item V67 in the ISSP Social Inequality Cumulative which asks respondents about their relative occupational status compared to their father: "Please think of your present job (or your last one if you don't have one now). If you compare this job with the job your father had when you were [14/15/16], would you say that the level or status of your job is (or was)...". Respondents can then answer with "Much higher than your father's", "Higher", "About equal", "Lower" or "Much lower than your father's". I have coded respondents who did not know how or could not answer the question as missing variables. The resulting index then ranges from -2 to 2 with negative values indicating a subjective negative experience of social mobility and vice versa.

Third, I match country-level average hourly earnings from the Luxembourg Income Study (LIS, 2019) with the ISSP Social Inequality Cumulative based on the ten major groups of the ISCO88 job classifications. I aggregated the ISCO88 classifications for the respondents, the mother, and the father in the ISSP survey to the ten major groups and match the average hourly earnings with the respective group of respondents' in their country and year of surveying.[10] Unfortunately, the LIS does not go back far enough to provide accurate income data for the parents of respondents in the ISSP survey. I have therefore estimated the income of parents in the same way as that of respondents by matching the average hourly earnings at the time of surveying with the ISCO88 classification of each individual parent.

parents with the higher status are equal. Given that the comparison is made to an individual respondent, the sum of the scores of both parents can also not be used.

[9]Further details of the matching procedure can be found in appendix section A.2.

[10]The waves available in the LIS database do not match directly onto the waves of the ISSP dataset. Appendix section A.3 therefore provides an overview of the waves used for matching by country and year.

3.1 ISEI elasticity

To check the validity of the individual-level social mobility scores of respondents and to provide country-level social mobility estimates, I calculate the intergenerational elasticity of ISEI scores for each country and wave available in the dataset. I estimate the intergenerational mobility of the ISEI score by using the Poisson Pseudo Maximum Likelihood (PPML) estimator, which has been identified as one of the most robust estimators for mobility research (Mitnik, 2017). The following model is generally used to estimate the IGE (intergenerational elasticity) of income which I adapt for the ISEI scores following Andrews and Leigh (2009):

$$y_r = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_p + AGE_r + AGE_r^2 + \epsilon \tag{3}$$

Whereby y_r denotes the ISEI score of the respondent and X_p the ISEI score of the parents. A polynomial for age is included as a control in the equation. β_1 is then the estimate of the intergenerational elasticity of the ISEI score. To ensure that only respondents of working age are included in the estimation, I restrict the model to respondents between the ages of 25 and 55.

Table 1 reports this estimate of the intergenerational elasticity of the ISEI score for each country and wave included in the sample. A low elasticity score indicates more social mobility and vice versa. For example, the elasticity score of 0.27 for the US in 2009 indicates that 27% of the difference between the average ISEI score in the US and that of a respondents' parents will be transferred to the respondent.

Several patterns can be observed in table 1. First, across all countries, social mobility increased from 1987 to 1992 but has since then steadily decreased. This trend can already be observed in the 1999 wave but is further increased in the 2009 wave which, of course, also coincided with the financial crisis. There are further large differences across countries with Canada having the highest average level of social mobility with an elasticity value of 0.19

Table 1: ISEI elasticity by year (including age 25 to 55)

	1987	1992	1999	2009	Average
Country					
Australia		0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20
Austria	0.45	0.42	0.39	0.37	0.41
Bulgaria				0.38	0.38
Canada			0.19		0.19
Chile			0.47	0.45	0.46
Cyprus			0.36	0.32	0.34
Czech Republic		0.25	0.33	0.35	0.31
France			0.19	0.37	0.28
Germany (East)		0.30	0.27	0.47	0.35
Germany (West)	0.35	0.37	0.40	0.36	0.37
Hungary	0.32	0.33	0.25	0.42	0.33
Israel				0.31	0.31
Italy				0.35	0.35
Japan				0.16	0.16
Latvia			0.20	0.24	0.22
New Zealand		0.25	0.19		0.22
Norway		0.26	0.29	0.28	0.28
Philippines				0.23	0.23
Poland		0.39	0.37	0.35	0.37
Portugal			0.47	0.38	0.43
Russia		0.18	0.28	0.28	0.24
Slovak Republic		0.37	0.25	0.27	0.29
Slovenia			0.42	0.39	0.41
Spain			0.43	0.34	0.39
Sweden			0.28	0.34	0.31
Switzerland	0.24			0.38	0.31
United States		0.20	0.23	0.27	0.23
Average	0.34	0.29	0.31	0.34	0.32

Table 2: Income elasticity by year (including age 25 to 55)

	1987	1992	1999	2009	Average
Country					
Austria			0.32	0.39	0.36
Canada			0.16		0.16
Czech Republic			0.28	0.24	0.26
Germany (West)	0.24	0.23	0.39	0.36	0.31
Israel				0.26	0.26
Slovak Republic				0.25	0.25
Spain			0.38	0.33	0.36
Switzerland				0.33	0.33
United States		0.19	0.19	0.24	0.21
Average	0.24	0.21	0.29	0.30	0.28

and Chile and Portugal having the lowest levels of mobility averaged across all waves.

As a preliminary robustness check of the ISEI indicator, I compare the derived estimates to the values obtained by Yaish and Andersen (2012) who equally match the ISEI indicator to the ISCO88 codes of respondents; however, for the 1992 and 1999 waves only. They further compare the scores of respondents and their fathers only and use a Full Maximum-Likelihood estimation model. The correlation of 0.96 suggests that the generated dataset including two more waves and parental occupational status rather than the father's status only, is a suitable expansion of this existing dataset.

3.2 Income elasticity

I estimate the income elasticity similarly to the ISEI elasticity by using the PPML estimator and the model outlined in Section 3.1. Income elasticity estimators are given in table 2.

Unfortunately, the LIS income data is only available for nine out of the 26 countries. These countries show a similar trend for the income data as for the ISEI data discussed before: From 1987 to 1992, income mobility appears to have improved on average but since then has significantly decreased again with the 2009 wave having, on average, the lowest level of income mobility.

3.3 Descriptive results

I estimate the correlation between social mobility experience eSM_i and respondent i's support for redistribution SfR_i:

$$SfR_i = eSM_i + \gamma_i + yearFE + countryFE + \epsilon_i \tag{4}$$

I include a vector of controls, γ_i, including own and parental ISEI scores, political orientation, education, gender, and age, as well as year- and country-fixed effects to account for any macroeconomic events that may have occured at the national level or between waves

and could influence support for redistribution. Standard errors are clustered at the country-year level. As I am estimating multiple outcome variables, I account for multiple hypothesis testing by reporting adjusted p-values based on Anderson (2008).

The main descriptive results, which are all relative to respondents who experienced no mobility, are reported in table 3. In the first part of the table, I report the results for self-assessed mobility experience with the father. Based on this measure, there are 7,447 respondents who experienced negative mobility and 16,625 respondents who experienced positive mobility. No mobility is hereby defined as a self-assessed mobility score of 0 on a scale from -2 to 2. The second part uses objective personal mobility experience based on the ISEI score. Here, 8,553 respondents experienced negative mobility and 14,982 respondents experienced positive mobility. No mobility, on this measure, is defined as an ISEI mobility score between -7.2 and 7.2 on a scale from -72 to 72. The third part uses the same objective mobility experience but excludes subjects who misperceive the direction of their objective mobility experience. This leaves 3,131 respondents who experienced negative mobility and 9,087 respondents who experienced positive mobility. The final part of the table reports the results for income mobility using the LIS data. Based on this measure, there are 6,790 respondents who experienced negative income mobility and 29,359 respondents who experienced positive income mobility. This income mobility measure uses standardized earnings by occupation and no mobility is defined as a standardized earnings difference within +/- 5% of the mean.

There is a clear pattern observable in table 3. Using the self-reported mobility measure, a negative mobility experience is consistently associated with stronger support for redistribution on all measures, as well as a significantly more negative perception of societal social mobility. Specifically, having experienced negative mobility as opposed to no mobility on the self-reported measure increases support for redistribution on the binary outcome variable by 13.5 percentage points and on the ordered one by 3.2 percentage points. Additionally, agreement with the statement that income differences are too large increases by 20.3 percentage

Table 3: Support for Redistributive Policies

	Support for Redistribution (binary)	Support for Redistribution (ordered)	Income Differences too large	More spending on Poor	Universal Basic Income	Higher Tax Share for Rich	Perception of Social mobility
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Self-reported mobility experience							
Negative	0.135***	0.159***	0.203***	0.140**	0.203**	0.122***	-2.397***
	(0.047)	(0.040)	(0.047)	(0.064)	(0.105)	(0.043)	(0.382)
	[0.004]	[0.001]	[0.001]	[0.010]	[0.016]	[0.004]	[0.001]
Positive	0.020	0.007	0.023	0.027	0.025	0.041	-0.458
	(0.042)	(0.034)	(0.059)	(0.078)	(0.043)	(0.037)	(0.474)
	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	24,986	24,986	25,265	12,189	6,738	24,971	16,633
ISEI mobility experience							
Negative	0.159**	0.116*	0.010	0.100	0.007	0.018	-0.477
	(0.054)	(0.052)	(0.057)	(0.092)	(0.114)	(0.037)	(0.592)
	[0.022]	[0.082]	[1.000]	[0.852]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]
Positive	-0.098	-0.057	0.095	-0.116	-0.040	-0.023	0.497
	(0.040)	(0.031)	(0.054)	(0.090)	(0.086)	(0.044)	(0.499)
	[0.118]	[0.191]	[0.191]	[0.243]	[0.519]	[0.519]	[0.361]
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	26,056	26,056	26,360	12,823	6,902	26,027	17,400
ISEI mobility experience (if aware of direction)							
Negative	0.260***	0.230***	0.169**	0.180*	0.217**	0.121**	-2.867**
	(0.070)	(0.062)	(0.087)	(0.157)	(0.084)	(0.070)	(1.005)
	[0.001]	[0.001]	[0.033]	[0.079]	[0.013]	[0.045]	[0.013]
Positive	-0.080	-0.049	0.007	-0.049	-0.139	0.024	0.097
	(0.066)	(0.059)	(0.087)	(0.129)	(0.138)	(0.056)	(0.951)
	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	12,525	12,525	12,637	5,995	3,471	12,514	8,260
Income mobility experience							
Negative	-0.070	-0.109	-0.153	0.174	0.052	-0.080	0.279
	(0.075)	(0.062)	(0.094)	(0.094)	(0.151)	(0.062)	(0.843)
	[0.394]	[0.329]	[0.329]	[0.329]	[0.527]	[0.329]	[0.527]
Positive	0.021	-0.006	-0.136	0.052	0.295	-0.070	-0.226
	(0.099)	(0.092)	(0.124)	(0.099)	(0.250)	(0.060)	(0.757)
	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	26,056	26,056	26,360	12,823	6,902	26,027	17,400

Notes: Estimates come from logistic (models (1), (3), (4) and (5)), ordered logit (models (2) and 6)) and linear (model (7)) regressions. Robust standard errors are clustered on a country-year level are presented in parentheses. Adjusted p-values for multiple hypothesis testing (Anderson, 2008) are presented in brackets. No mobility is defined as either a self-reported score of 0 on a scale from -2 to 2, as an ISEI mobility score of -7.2 to 7.2 on a scale from -72 to 72 or as a standardised average earnings difference within +/- 5% of the mean. Positive and Negative mobility are then defined as above or below the no mobility threshold of the respective measure. Controls include the personal ISEI score, the parental score, political orientation, education, gender and age. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05 , * p<0.1.

points, support for more spending on the poor by 14 percentage points, support for UBI by 20.3 percentage points and higher taxes on the rich by 2.4 percentage points. Finally, perceived societal mobility decreases by 2.4 percentage points. The same is not the case for those respondents who experienced upward mobility. These estimates are all relative to respondents who have experienced no mobility. The results for the objective ISEI mobility measure are less striking but, at least in the first two models, reveal the same pattern.

Using the objective measure only for respondents who are aware of the general direction of their mobility experience also results in a highly significant relationship between negative mobility experience and distributive preferences as well as mobility perceptions.[11] There is again no significant relationship between positive mobility experiences and preferences or perceptions. Finally, the LIS income measure shows no significant results at all.[12]

Overall, these descriptive results suggest that an asymmetric relationship between mobility experience and distributive preferences as well as societal mobility perceptions indeed exists. However, and maybe unsurprisingly, this relationship is particularly strong for the self-assessed measure of mobility and for the objective mobility measure when respondents are aware of the direction of their mobility experience. If mobility experience was affecting preferences through, for example, some intergenerational transmission of beliefs as proposed, amongst others, by Piketty (1995), then one would not necessarily have to be aware of the direction of the own mobility experience. The results in table 3 do not support such an explanation.

Arguably, respondents who experienced positive or negative social mobility differ in other aspects besides their mobility experience, which may influence their preferences for redistribution and perceptions of social mobility at the societal level.[13]

[11]Tables B2 and B3 in appendix section B.3.1. report the same regressions for respondents who experienced very high or very low mobility on both, the subjective and the objective ISEI mobility measures. The results show the same pattern. The effect sizes are even larger however than those in table 3 for respondents who experienced very negative objective mobility and are aware of the direction.

[12]I also report the results of the main regressions with an alternative threshold for upward and downward income mobility in table B4 in appendix section B.3.2. The results are identical - income mobility, based on the LIS data, is not correlated with preferences or perceptions.

[13]Details of which factors are associated with upward and downward mobility in the ISSP dataset can be

While these preliminary results indicate significant and robust correlations in line with hypotheses 1,2 and 3, they do not allow for any causal statements about the effects of mobility experience on distributive preferences. The ISSP also does not include a question on perceived personal benefits from redistribution and so hypothesis 4 cannot be tested with this dataset.

Specifically, there are two important issues with using observational data to make inferences about the relationship between mobility experience and preferences. First, using mobility experience as an explanatory variable means that one has to disentangle the effect of mobility experience from that of a change in personal income and education-levels, which are both known to affect distributive preferences. Controlling for personal income therefore means that the social mobility measure captures parental income and education-levels. Vice versa, if one were to control for parental income levels the social mobility measure would capture own income. Arguably, the latter of these two options makes little sense. The benefit of an experimental test is that the experience of mobility can be affected by changing perceptions of own experiences, without actually changing personal or parental income or education levels. It therefore isolates the experience of mobility from these factors as much as possible, which is not feasible when using observational data.

The second fundamental issue with using observational data in this case is that there are good reasons to believe that the relationship between social mobility experience and distributive preferences suffers from reverse causality. In particular, if the mechanism underlying the relationship is the perception of societal mobility, then it is plausible that mobility experience does not just affect perceptions of societal mobility, but that the reverse is also true: Beliefs about opportunities in society could impact people's effort-levels which, in turn, might influence their mobility experience. There is, in fact, evidence in the existing literature that the perceived fairness of reward structures in workplace environments impacts people's willingness to exert effort (e.g. Janssen, 2000). Whether such a relationship exists at the

found in appendix section B.1.

societal level between perceived social mobility and exerted effort-levels has, as far as I am aware, not been tested yet. Nonetheless, this poses a fundamental issue to any inference using observational data only.

4 Survey Experiment

To account for these conceptual issues and to test the causality of the proposed relationship, I conducted a survey experiment in April 2021 with a sample of 1,100 subjects from the United States.[14] The United States hereby provides a particularly strong test of the self-serving bias as the US is a prime example of an individualistic country (Alesina et al., 2004). Subjects might therefore be less likely to 'blame the system' and to extrapolate from their own experience onto society, which provides an additional hurdle to finding a significant relationship.

The aim of the survey experiment is to isolate the causal effect of social mobility experience on support for redistribution and perceptions of society. Therefore, the social mobility experience of subjects has to be changed exogenously. Given that the intergenerational aspect of the mobility experience studied in this paper is difficult to model experimentally, an information provision experiment appears to be the best option. While I cannot change the real mobility experience of subjects, I can make use of the fact that about 50% of respondents in the ISSP survey are somewhat misinformed about the degree of their own mobility experience.[15] In particular, I provide subjects with information on their personal intergenerational mobility experience and test how this information, if contradictory to their previously held beliefs, changes their support for redistribution. In other words, I provide subjects with a

[14]The experiment was pre-registered via the American Economic Association registry for Randomized Controlled Trials (Weber, 2021) and was granted ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Committee at King's College London (reference number MRSP-19/20-21021).

[15]Table B1 in section B.2 and table C4 in section C.2 of the appendix test for differences between respondents who misperceive and correctly perceive their own mobility experience in the ISSP dataset and the experimental data, respectively. While there are notable differences in the ISSP dataset, this is not the case in the experimental data. In both datasets, perceived societal mobility also does not differ between the two groups.

shock to their personal mobility experience. Given that the descriptive results indicate that it is the mobility experience one is aware of that affects preferences and perceptions, this experimental design allows me to change the part of mobility experience that appears to be most important for the purpose of this study - the mobility experience one is aware of. The basic design of the experiment is similar to Karadja et al. (2017) and Cruces et al. (2013) who each provide subjects with a shock to their relative income position.

To avoid deception and to ensure that the information provided is believable, I use subjects' real experienced social mobility to tailor the information provision conditional on the actual experience. I also ask subjects whether they find the information provided believable and exclude those from the analysis who do not find it believable (49 out of 1,100).[16] The basic structure of the experiment is outlined below:[17]

Part I: Subjects state their own occupation and that of their parents when they were growing up. Based on the given answers, each subject is assigned an ISCO88 code for their occupation and one for the occupation of each parent. They also state how they personally assess their social mobility experience to date, relative to their parents.

Part II: Subjects are divided into control and treatment group. The treatment group is given a short paragraph describing the person's mobility experience and the data used to calculate the mobility experience. To provide subjects with information about their mobility experience, the ISEI value of the parent with the highest ISEI score is subtracted from the subject's ISEI score. The ISEI scores used during the experiment for each ISCO88 code are available in Ganzeboom (2010). The control group is given similarly framed information about the difference in length between two rivers in the US, the Missouri and the Arkansas river.

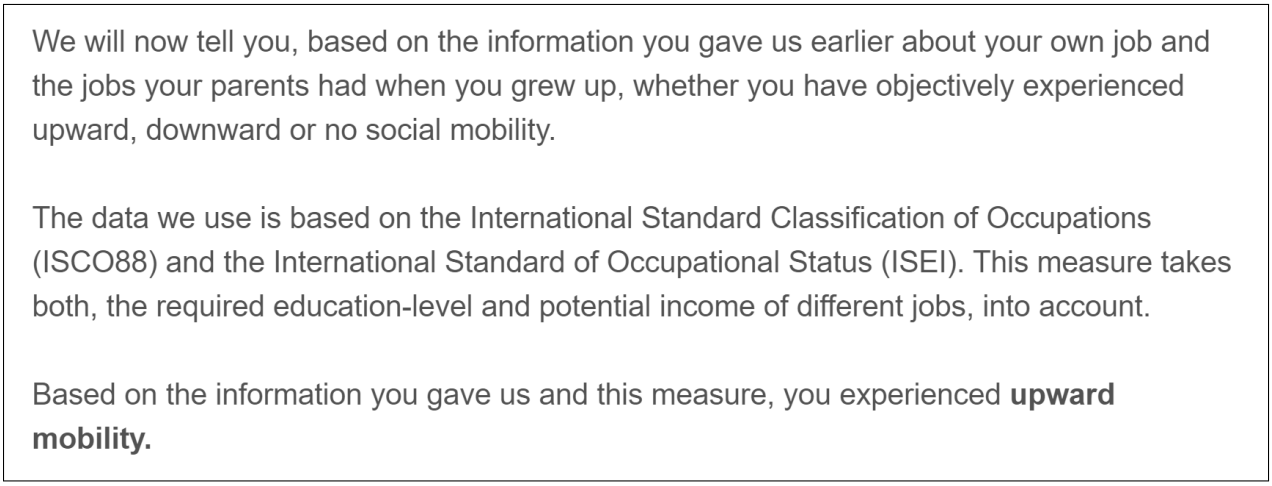
Part III: Post-treatment questions about distributive preferences and beliefs about social

[16]Table C6 reports a balance test of subjects who did and did not believe the provided information. There are no significant differences between the two groups; however, subjects assigned to the control condition were somewhat more likely to believe the provided information than those in the treatment condition.

[17]The full survey instrument can be found in appendix D.

mobility.

Figure 1: Example Treatment Information Screen



To provide subjects with the information during the treatment condition, the experiment was coded to automatically calculate an objective mobility measure using subjects' responses and to then display a text based on the calculated value. Figure 1 displays the text given to a subject who experienced upward mobility and is randomly assigned to the treatment group.

To make the analysis as comparable as possible to the descriptive analysis using the ISSP data, I only sampled subjects between 25 and 55 years old who were not studying full-time towards a University degree at the time the experiment was conducted.

4.1 Empirical strategy

Similar to the descriptive analysis, I estimate the following model, whereby SfR_i is subject i's support for governmental redistribution measured by a series of survey questions, eSM_i is the experimental mobility score of subject i, D is the treatment assignment, γ is a vector of controls and ϵ is the error term:

$$SfR_i = eSM_i \times D_i + \gamma_i + \epsilon_i \tag{5}$$

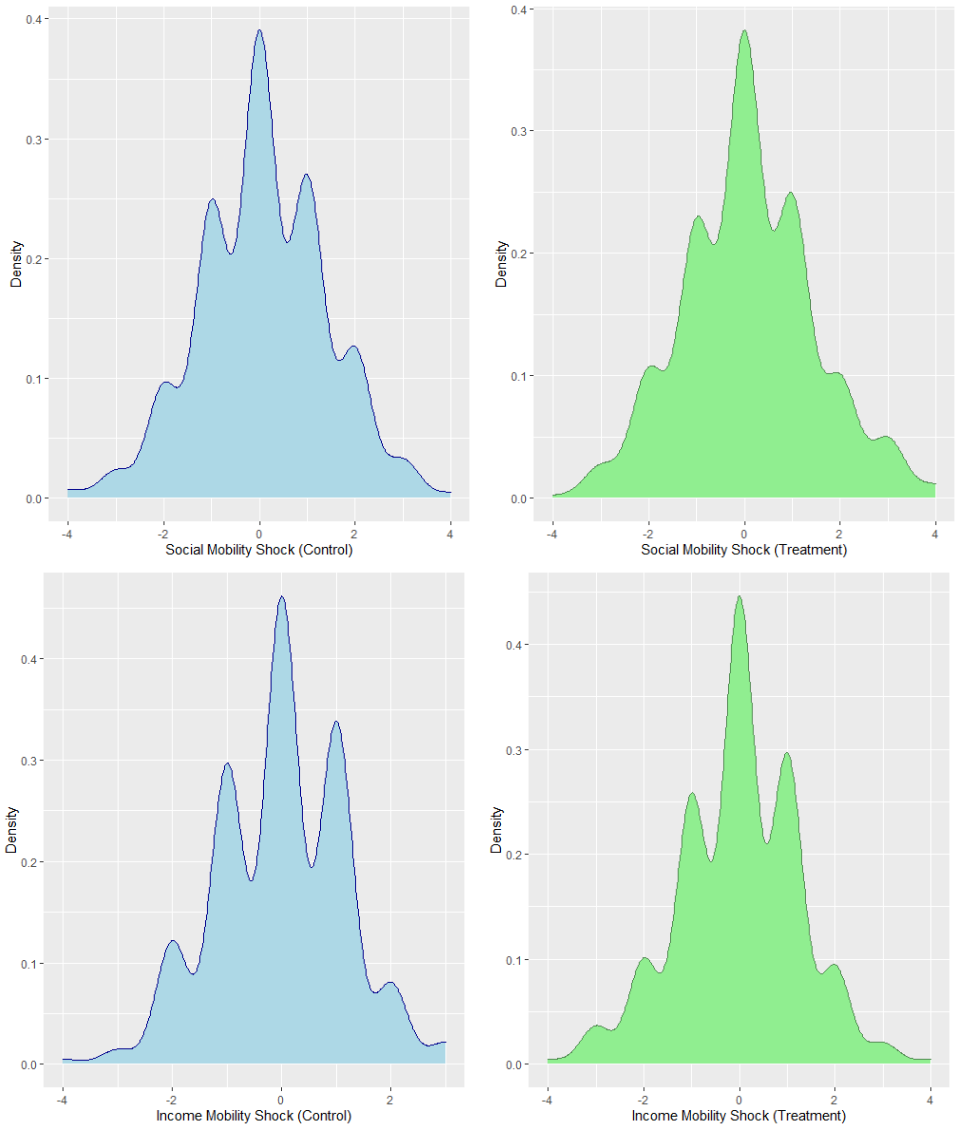
The experimental mobility score (eSM) is thereby defined as the difference between self-assessed mobility experience compared with the father (identical to item V67 in the ISSP) and the objective mobility experience, calculated using the ISSP and ISEI scores. For the calculation of the experimental mobility score, the objective mobility experience is aggregated into five groups ranging from -2 to 2, equal to the self-assessed mobility scores. The experimental mobility measure can therefore range from -4 to 4 with a higher value indicating a more positive experience. It is important to emphasize that this measure is calculated for all subjects, irrespective of treatment assignment. Treatment effects are therefore measuring the effects of being informed of the objective mobility experience, in other words *experiencing a mobility shock*, while holding the underlying experimental mobility measure constant. This ensures that both the subjective as well as the objective mobility experience of subjects is controlled for and not confounding the estimation.[18]

Given that the assumption that subjects will compare the treatment information to their experienced mobility with the father is quite strong, I also look at an additional measure of mobility experience, based on household income, in the experimental results. Hereby, I subtract the family income of the subject when growing up from the current household income. Figure 2 reports density plots of both measures by control (blue) and treatment group (green). There are no notable differences between the two groups and both measures show approximately normal distributions.

Hypothesis 1 would predict that the interaction term $eSM_i \times D_i$ is positive for those who have a negative eSM value and were assigned to the treatment as opposed to the control group, while hypothesis 2 would predict this to not be the case for those with a positive eSM value.

[18] A balance test by random treatment assignment is reported in table C5 in section C.3 of the appendix. There is no variable that differs significantly between the treatment and control group, suggesting that randomization was successful.

Figure 2: Distribution of Mobility Shock by Treatment and Control



To answer the secondary research question, I then regress the same set of explanatory variables on both, perceived societal mobility in the United States, and perceived personal gain from governmental redistribution:

$$Y_i = eSM_i \times D_i + \gamma_i + \epsilon_i \tag{6}$$

Hypothesis 3 would predict the interaction term to be negative for those who have a negative eSM value and were assigned to the treatment as opposed to the control group when

perceived societal mobility is the outcome variable. Hypothesis 4 would predict the interaction term to be positive for the same group when perceived personal gain from governmental redistribution is the outcome variable.

This experimental test is, of course, by no means a perfect test of the effect of mobility experience on distributive preferences. However, if a short piece of information about own mobility experience can significantly change preferences and perceptions, it would suggest that real changes in mobility experience likely have quite a substantial impact.

4.2 Experimental Results

Table 4: Experiment: Support for Redistribution

	Support for Redistribution (binary)	Support for Redistribution (ordered)	Income Differences too large	More spending on Poor	Universal Basic Income	Higher Tax Share for Rich
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Treatment						
Upward mobility	0.130	0.249*	0.133	0.138	0.198	0.054
	(0.275)	(0.131)	(0.106)	(0.101)	(0.141)	(0.040)
	[0.340]	[0.340]	[0.340]	[0.340]	[0.340]	[0.340]
No mobility	0.185	0.118	0.116	0.047	0.134	-0.022
	(0.272)	(0.126)	(0.106)	(0.122)	(0.132)	(0.048)
	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]
Downward mobility	0.518*	0.247*	0.140	0.275***	0.015	0.133***
	(0.293)	(0.149)	(0.113)	(0.102)	(0.159)	(0.039)
	[0.109]	[0.109]	[0.173]	[0.018]	[0.348]	[0.007]
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	596	592	593	582	590	593
Treatment						
Upward income mobility	-0.206	0.083	0.216	0.219*	0.271	0.070
	(0.363)	(0.166)	(0.142)	(0.127)	(0.173)	(0.055)
	[0.447]	[0.447]	[0.348]	[0.348]	[0.348]	[0.348]
No income mobility	0.502	0.347	0.125	-0.057	0.248	0.053
	(0.772)	(0.266)	(0.151)	(0.265)	(0.318)	(0.105)
	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]
Downward income mobility	0.323	0.268	0.210	0.400***	-0.003	0.186***
	(0.361)	(0.184)	(0.143)	(0.137)	(0.204)	(0.053)
	[0.278]	[0.170]	[0.170]	[0.011]	[0.492]	[0.007]
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	283	283	283	279	282	283

Notes: Estimates come from logit (model (1)) and linear regressions. The effects are treatment effects relative to subjects with the same experimental mobility score in the control group. Robust standard errors are presented in parentheses. Adjusted p-values for multiple hypothesis testing (Anderson, 2008) are presented in brackets. Controls include self-assessed mobility experience, household income and political party affiliation. The analysis is restricted to subjects who indicated that they believed the provided information and remained on the treatment and placebo screen for more than 8 seconds. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05 , * p<0.1.

Table 4 reports the main experimental results using the two different measures of exper-

imental mobility experience. The first part of the table reports the effect of being in the treatment group as opposed to being in the control group for subjects depending on the experimental mobility score based on the comparison with the father, as previously defined. Using this measure, there are 322 subjects with a negative score, 455 subjects with a positive score, and 342 subjects with a score of zero.

The second part uses the difference between current household income and family income when subjects grew up to calculate the experimental mobility measure. Here, 175 subjects have a negative score, 253 subjects have a positive score, and 61 subjects have a score of zero.[19]

While less striking than the descriptive results, which may be due to the significantly smaller sample size, for four of the outcome variables the pattern of the experimental data is the same. The effects of two measures even survive when adjusting the p-values for multiple hypothesis testing, despite the small sample size: Those who experienced a downward mobility shock in the treatment condition are significantly more likely to support more spending on the poor and higher taxes on the rich. The coefficients are also not negligible - being in the treatment as opposed to the control group as someone with a negative mobility score, increases support for more spending on the poor by 5 percentage points and support for higher taxes on the rich by 13 percentage points. Using the income measure, these effect sizes are even larger - support for more spending on the poor is increased by 8 percentage points and support for higher taxes on the rich by 19 percentage points for those with negative mobility scores in the treatment group.

General support for governmental redistribution is only weakly affected by the treatment with a weakly significant positive effect for those who experienced a downward mobility shock on the first measure. A possible reason for this might be that the question explicitly asks about whether it is the *responsibility of the government* to reduce differences in income. This

[19] As these values are self-reported and I am interested in the experimental mobility shock, I do not adjust family income when growing up for inflation. Rather, I assume that subjects compared their responses to D8 and D9 directly. The full survey experiment including the exact wording of these items can be found in appendix section D.

may be viewed more negatively in the US than in some of the other, especially European, countries (Alesina et al., 2004) included in the descriptive ISSP dataset.

Result 1: Experiencing a positive experimental mobility shock does not significantly increase support for redistribution on any of the measures (in support of H1).
Result 2: Experiencing a negative experimental mobility shock significantly increases support for governmental spending on the poor and higher taxes on the rich on both measures (in support of H2).

4.3 Mechanisms

To test the secondary research question and hypotheses 3 and 4, I look at the treatment effects on perceptions of societal mobility and perceived personal benefits from redistribution. The results are reported in table 5. As the models included in the table test different hypotheses I have not adjust the p-values for multiple hypothesis testing.

While neither those who experienced an upward mobility shock, no shock, or a downward shock in the treatment condition adjust their perception of the personal benefits from redistribution in either of the specifications, those who experienced a negative shock clearly changed their perception of overall social mobility in society compared to those in the control group. This is the case for both mobility measures. Being in the treatment as opposed to the control group as someone with a negative experimental mobility score decreases perceived overall societal mobility by 7 percentage points on the first measure and 10 percentage points on the second measure. Interestingly, the perceived mobility of the lowest quintile is only weakly significantly affected for those who experienced a downward shock on the first measure and beliefs about whether income differences are due to effort or luck in society are not at all affected by the treatment. This suggests that the experimental mobility shock affects overall beliefs about social mobility in society but that these beliefs do not translate into

Table 5: Experiment: Mobility and societal perceptions

	Mobility of lowest quintile	Overall mobility	Differences due to effort	Personal benefit
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Treatment				
Upward mobility	-0.061	0.048	-0.054	0.197
	(0.134)	(0.142)	(0.135)	(0.334)
No mobility	-0.122	-0.014	0.126	0.464
	(0.121)	(0.137)	(0.140)	(0.352)
Downward mobility	-0.252*	-0.359**	-0.077	0.311
	(0.148)	(0.152)	(0.155)	(0.358)
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	590	588	586	558
Treatment				
Upward income mobility	-0.066	-0.015	-0.064	0.675
	(0.160)	(0.170)	(0.166)	(0.413)
No income mobility	0.327	0.087	0.162	1.040
	(0.350)	(0.297)	(0.300)	(0.743)
Downward income mobility	-0.178	-0.493**	-0.041	-0.185
	(0.171)	(0.199)	(0.183)	(0.462)
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	281	282	282	264

Notes: Estimates come from linear regressions. Robust standard errors are presented in parentheses. The effects are treatment effects relative to subjects with the same experimental mobility score in the control group. Controls include self-assessed mobility experience, household income and political party affiliation. The analysis is restricted to subjects who indicated that they believed the provided information and remained on the treatment and placebo screen for more than 8 seconds. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05 , * p<0.1.

fairness perceptions as they are usually defined in the economics literature (Alesina et al., 2004; Alesina and Angeletos, 2005; Cappelen et al., 2013). These findings nonetheless provide support for hypothesis 3 and against hypothesis 4.

Result 3: Experiencing a negative experimental mobility shock on both measures significantly decreases perceptions of overall mobility in society while experiencing none or a positive experimental shock has no effect on perceptions (in support of H3).

Result 4: Positive and negative experimental mobility shocks have no significant effect on

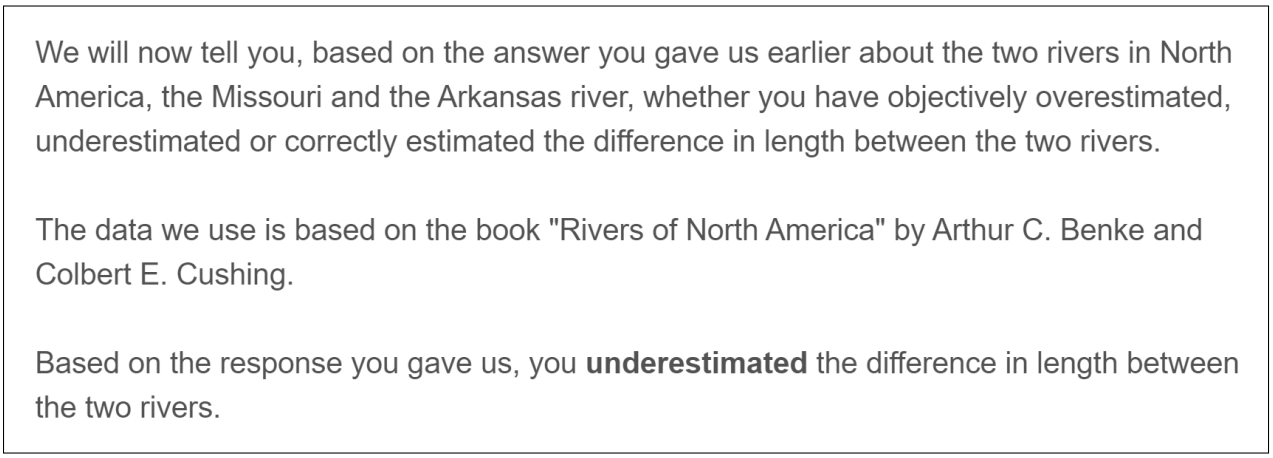
beliefs about personal benefits from redistribution (against H4).

4.4 Robustness

Given that the experiment does not change real social mobility experience but only creates an experimental mobility shock for those in the treatment condition, I test the robustness of the results in multiple ways.

A first possible concern of the experimental design is that rather than the change in subjective personal mobility experience causing a difference in preferences, it may be the case that simply under- or overestimating something, such as the own mobility experience, causes some negative reaction that could affect preferences. To account for this possibility, subjects in the control group were given a placebo treatment which asked them to estimate the difference between two of the longest rivers in North America and then gave them information framed similar to the treatment information, telling them whether they over- or underestimated the difference in length between the rivers. Figure 3 displays the text given to a subject who underestimated the difference in length between the two rivers and was randomly assigned to the control group.

Figure 3: Control Information Screen



Tables C1 and C2 in appendix section C.1 test the effect of the placebo information on preferences for redistribution, perceptions of societal mobility and perceived personal benefit

from redistribution. Neither over-, nor underestimating the difference between the two rivers and being informed of the false estimation affect any of the preferences or perceptions.

A further concern is that having a negative experimental mobility score as opposed to a positive score may be correlated with individual characteristics that could also predict the outcome variables of interest. Section C.2 in the appendix tests for potential differences in individual-level characteristics of subjects depending on their experimental mobility scores for both, the income and ISEI mobility measures. There are no concerning differences between those with positive and negative scores that would affect the main results. Neither is the case for those with experimental mobility scores of zero.

A significant factor influencing the results of information provision experiments is whether subjects believe and pay attention to the provided information (Haaland et al., 2020). While I was able to ask subjects directly about the believably of the information, measuring whether subjects actually read the provided text is more difficult. A potential proxy of paid attention is however the time spent on the treatment and control screens. The average time spent on these across all subjects was 14.5 seconds.[20] In the main estimations, I therefore exclude subjects who spent less than 8 seconds on the screens to ensure that I only include subjects who actually paid enough attention to fully read the provided information. This number is, of course, somewhat arbitrary and so I report main treatment effects for all subjects, irrespective of time spent on the treatment and control screens in section C.4 of the appendix. The main results remain the same although the treatment effect on perceived social mobility in society for those with negative experimental mobility scores is even stronger.

A strong assumption made by the main experimental models in tables 4 and 5 is that subjects' reference point for evaluating their own mobility experience is no mobility relative to their parents. It is however entirely plausible that subjects actually expect to be better or worse off than their parents and so dividing the sample into groups of positive, negative, and no mobility may not be be most accurate. I test this possibility in multiple ways

[20]Section C.4 in the appendix provides further analysis of respondents who did and did not believe the information provided.

by looking at the effects of only extreme experimental mobility shocks and by aggregating subjects assuming a positive reference point.[21] I find no evidence that would suggest the main models reported in tables 4 and 5 are not suitable.

Finally, I test three alternative measures of the experimental mobility measure. First, I calculate mobility only with the parent who the subject believes themselves to have experienced the highest mobility with and then with the parent the subjects believes themselves to have experienced the least mobility with. Both are plausible alternatives for a comparison with the father.[22] I do not find evidence that would suggest these models are better estimates than the main models reported in tables 4 and 5. Second, I test treatment effects without calculating the experimental mobility measure but instead look at simple information effects while controlling for pre-treatment beliefs about the own mobility experience. The main results remain the same, however, the effects on preferences for redistribution are only weakly significant in these models. The effects on societal mobility beliefs are somewhat stronger than the main models which differentiate between the effects of positive and negative mobility.[23] Third, I test whether a continuous mobility measure better predicts preferences and beliefs. This is not the case.[24] In fact, when using the continuous measure none of the effects on preferences for redistribution remain.

5 Conclusion

How does the experience of social mobility affect distributive preferences? The results of this paper suggest that the experience of social mobility is asymmetrically related to distributive preferences and mediated by perceptions of overall mobility within society. While negative mobility experience increases support for redistribution by changing perceptions of social mobility in society, positive mobility experience neither changes perceptions nor preferences.

[21] The results of these tests can be found in tables C9 and C10 in section C.5.1 and tables C21 and C22 in section C.6 of the appendix.

[22] Section C.5.2 in the appendix.

[23] Section C.5.3 in the appendix.

[24] Section C.5.4 in the appendix.

Therefore, as absolute social mobility decreases, which has been the case over the past couple of decades (see tables 1 and 2), ceteris paribus, demand for redistribution also decreases. This somewhat counter-intuitive finding is entirely consistent with a common attribution bias, the self-serving bias. Those with negative mobility experiences 'blame the system' and extrapolate from their negative experience onto society at large, which increases their demand for redistribution. On the other hand, those with positive mobility experiences believe they 'beat the odds' and, do not extrapolate from their experience onto perceptions of societal mobility, leading to no less support for redistribution.

In this paper, I have first estimated the correlation between personal mobility experience and distributive preferences with observational data from 26 countries collected across four waves spanning three decades. I have calculated three different measures of mobility experience for each individual respondent and found that experiencing negative mobility, if one is aware of the direction of the own mobility experience, significantly increases support for redistribution and decreases perceptions of societal mobility. This is not the case for those who experienced upward mobility. In the survey experiment, I find a similar patter. Experiencing a negative mobility shock during the experiment significantly increases support for governmental spending on the poor and higher taxes on the rich. The mechanism driving this effect appears to be a change in perceptions of societal mobility. Experiencing the negative experimental mobility shock significantly decreases perceptions of overall social mobility in society while experiencing a positive mobility shock does not.

Given the nature of the research question, this study has, of course, some limitations. An information provision experiment can only provide a weak, short term shock to personal mobility experience and not all subjects believed the information provided. Given this, it is however even more surprising that the experiment resulted in any significant changes in preferences and beliefs. Future research in this area may be able to do more to simulate the experience of intergenerational social mobility, for example, in the laboratory.

An aspect that may also be addressed in future research is that of potential differential

effects for men and for women. While I have followed previous research by using a question on personal mobility experience with the father as one of my main explanatory variables (Corneo and Grüner, 2002), this may not be the best measure for everyone. Specifically, women might compare their own income or status to that of their mothers, rather than their fathers. This possibility is supported by the fact that women are more likely to misperceive their own mobility experience in the ISSP dataset.[25]. Given that this measure of misperception uses mobility with the father, it may be the case that women do not actually misperceive their mobility but simply do not compare themselves too their fathers, but their mothers. Unfortunately, many participants in the survey experiment stated that their mothers did not work when they were growing up and so such a comparison is difficult due to a lack of available data, at least with this sample.

Finally, there is an important qualification to the results of this paper. While objective mobility experience matters, it primarily does so when respondents are aware of the direction of their own experience. This may be unsurprising (e.g. see Gugushvili (2016) who finds that perceptions matter more than experience) but potentially also makes it more difficult to use the results of this study to make predictions about distributive preferences across time when only objective mobility measures are available. About half of the respondents in the ISSP and in the experimental data are however, in fact, aware of their own mobility experience. Additionally, given that the relationship between objective experience and preferences is weak for those that are unaware of their experience, the predictions should still hold in the aggregate.

Despite these qualifications, the implications of the findings reported in this paper are significant. As the descriptive data reveals, social mobility has decreased in the majority of countries included in the ISSP dataset over the last decades. Ample research has also shown that income inequalities have increased over the same time period (Dabla-Norris et al., 2015). This paper provides a potential explanation for why these trends have not resulted in an

[25]See table B1 in section B.2 in the appendix.

increased demand for governmental redistribution. That is, because mobility experience is not linearly related to distributive preferences but asymmetrically. A decrease in absolute mobility therefore leads, ceteris paribus, to less demand for redistribution. This finding also provides a potential demand-side explanation for the Great Gatsby Curve – countries with lower levels of social mobility may see higher levels of inequality because the lacking experience of mobility decreases demand for redistribution.

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Appendix

Part A: Data and Methodology

A.1 Perception of Social Mobility Indicator

To capture the perception of social mobility of respondents as accurately as possible, I generated an indicator based on individuals' answers to three separate questions focused on different aspects of mobility within society using principle component analysis (PCA). Indicator V8 in the cumulative dataset of the ISSP Social Inequality Module asks respondents "How important is coming from a wealthy family for getting ahead in life?". Respondents can respond with either "Essential", "Very important", "Fairly important", "Not very important" or "Not important at all".

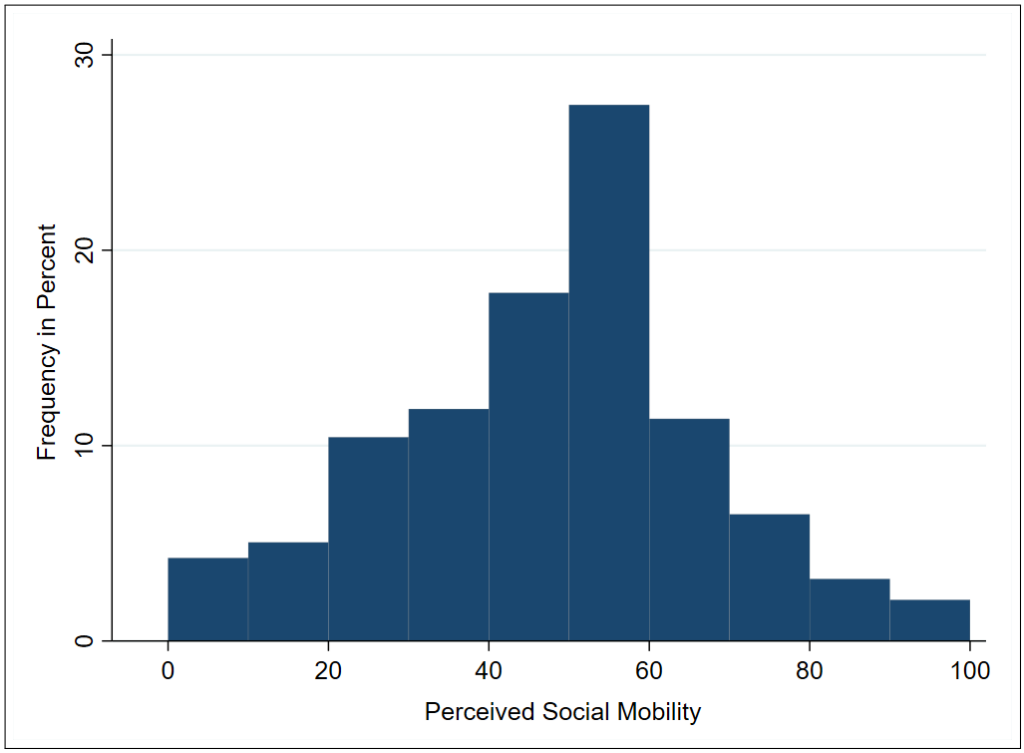
Table A1: Distribution of Components of the Perceived Social Mobility Index

	Essential	Very Important	Fairly Important	Not very important	Not important at all	Total
Indicator						
How important is coming from a wealthy family for getting ahead in life?	8.59%	20.50%	30.91%	27.29%	12.72%	100%
How important is having well-educated parents for getting ahead in life?	7.96%	27.78%	36.60%	20.28%	7.37%	100%
How important is knowing the right people for getting ahead in life?	16.52%	34.20%	33.62%	12.36%	3.29%	100%

Indicator V9 asks respondents "How important is having well-educated parents for getting ahead in life?". Respondents can again respond with either "Essential", "Very important", "Fairly important", "Not very important" or "Not important at all". Finally, indicator V14 asks respondents "How important is knowing the right people for getting ahead in life?". Respondents can again respond with either "Essential", "Very important", "Fairly important", "Not very important" or "Not important at all". The distribution of responses to all three indicators is reported in table A1. The correlation between indicator V8 and V9 is 0.46, between V8 and V14 0.36 and between V9 and V14 0.24. These three indicators each ask about a different aspect of social mobility – parental wealth, parental education and personal connections – which correspond to the three forms of capital as defined by Bourdieu (1986).

To combine the three questions into one indicator, I have used principal component analysis (PCA) following Esarey et al. (2012) who also use PCA to generate an index of individual-level 'conservatism' based on survey data. This method allows me to isolate the underlying common component of perceived social mobility in individuals' responses to these three separate questions.

Figure A1: Distribution of Perceived Social Mobility Index



The first principal component has by far the largest Eigenvalue of all three potential components and is the only component that is correlated with all three indicators in the correct direction. The compositions of the different components can be found in table A2.

Table A2: Principal Components

	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3
Variable			
V8	0.6308	-0.1546	-0.7604
V9	0.5822	-0.5537	0.5954
V14	0.5130	0.8183	0.2592

To make the interpretation of the values more intuitive I normalised the index and multiplied each value by 100. The resulting index then ranges from 0 to 100 with a higher value indicating a higher level of perceived social mobility. Figure A1 shows the distribution of the generated index in percent. An overview of country-level mean values of the generated index by waves can be found in table A3.

Table A3: Perceived Social Mobility Index by year (mean)

	1987	1992	1999	2009	Average
Country					
Australia	55.42	49.65		49.10	51.39
Austria	41.26	44.12		42.91	42.76
Bulgaria		42.93		36.73	39.83
Canada		52.95			52.95
Chile				43.73	43.73
Cyprus				47.21	47.21
Czech Republic		57.57		51.03	54.30
France				54.34	54.34
Germany (East)		48.08		40.61	44.35
Germany (West)	45.47	49.08		41.43	45.33
Hungary	49.81	49.77		42.15	47.24
Israel				41.82	41.82
Italy	40.84	41.81		42.50	41.71
Japan				59.28	59.28
Latvia				42.77	42.77
New Zealand		52.16		57.00	54.58
Norway		57.93		55.87	56.90
Philippines		37.28		42.86	40.07
Poland		38.86		35.58	37.22
Portugal				46.39	46.39
Russia		42.94		42.24	42.59
Slovak Republic		50.10		41.21	45.66
Slovenia		51.27		42.81	47.04
Spain				43.29	43.29
Sweden		53.43		53.93	53.68
Switzerland	49.08			51.07	50.08
United Kingdom	51.15	52.63		53.36	52.38
United States	48.34	48.83		44.31	47.16
Average	47.67	51.19		47.91	49.11

A.2 Matching Procedure for the socio-economic index of social mobility

The ISEI is available for 533 of the individual ISCO88 occupation types (Ganzeboom and Treiman, 1996, Appendix A 221-37). Respondents in the ISSP dataset indicated a total of 566 different ISCO88 occupation types, leading to a total of 670 respondents for which no

status score is available based on the ISEI. On top of that 1,059 ISEI values are missing for fathers of respondents and 25 values are missing for respondents' mothers. Most of these respondents are armed forces personnel (347 of respondents, 802 of respondents' fathers and 15 of respondents' mothers) which the ISEI treats differently depending on the role of the individual within the armed forces (Ganzeboom and Treiman, 1996, 209). For example, an ordinary soldier has an ISEI score of 40 whilst a non-commissioned officer has a score of 56. Given that the ISSP does not provide any further information on the role of respondents within the military, no ISEI score can reasonably be included for these respondents without biasing the estimate given the large disparity of ISEI scores for different armed forces personnel. Another group of respondents which do not match directly onto the ISEI scores are middle school teachers, as these are divided into those on an academic track and those on a vocational track in their ISEI ranking. The ISEI score difference between the two groups is only four points and so I decided to match respondents and their parents with the occupation 'middle school teacher' to ISEI code 2322 which is the vocational track-subgroup. This covers all ten remaining missing values for respondents' mothers. The remaining 272 missing ISEI values for respondents and 234 missing values for respondents' fathers are all country-specific classifications from Norway and New Zealand that cannot reasonably be assigned to existing ISEI codes without any further information. These respondents are therefore also excluded from the analysis.

Table A4: Luxembourg Income Waves used by Country and Year

	1987	1992	1999	2009
Country				
Austria			at00p	at10p
Canada			ca98p	
Czech Republic			cz96p	cz10p
Germany (West)	de87p	de91p	de98p	de09p
Israel				il10p
Slovak Republic				sk10p
Spain			es00p	es10p
Switzerland				ch10p
United States		us91p	us00p	us10p

A.3 Luxembourg Income Study - Matching Procedure

To match the Luxembourg Income Data to ISSP respondents' occupations I retrieved average gross hourly wages for people between the ages of 25 and 55 by ISCO88 occupation type,

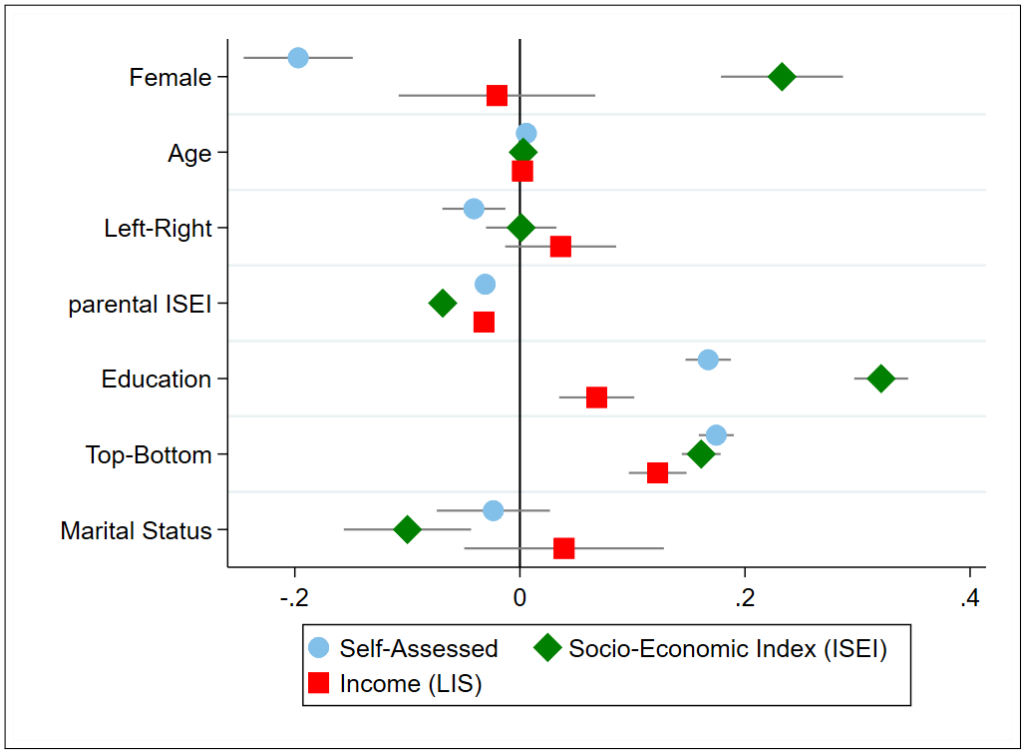
country and year. Where average gross hourly wages were not available, I used average net hourly wages. Table A4 lists the individual LIS waves used by country and year.

Part B: Additional Analysis of Descriptive Data

B.1 Likelihood of experiencing upward social mobility

Figure B1 reports the likelihood of having experienced positive social mobility by basic demographic characteristics, using the three available measures of social mobility experience: self-assessed, socio-economic and income mobility.

Figure B1: Likelihood of a positive social mobility experience by demographic characteristics



As Figure B1 illustrates, there are some differences between the three alternative indicators. The three demographic factors which have a uniform and significant relationship with respondents' likelihood of having experienced positive mobility are parental ISEI scores, which are negatively associated with a positive mobility experience, as well as education and self-placement on the income distribution, which are both positively associated with experiencing upward mobility. The direction of the correlation between social mobility experience and these three factors is not surprising.

Interestingly, women are significantly more likely to have experienced upward mobility when using the socio-economic scale but assess themselves to have experienced more negative or stagnating mobility than men. Age and marital status mostly do not appear to matter significantly to the likelihood of having experienced upward mobility.

Political orientation does not significantly differ between those who experienced positive and those who experienced negative or stagnating mobility when looking at the two objective measures. There is a slight but significant negative relationship between the self-assessed measure and political orientation which suggests that those who believe themselves to have experienced negative or stagnating mobility are slightly more left-wing. However, this effect is minimal and only exists for one of the three indicators. This is encouraging for the interpretation of the effect of the left-right indicator on perceptions of social mobility. The other factors which differ between the two groups are controlled for in the main estimation.

B.2 Balance Test of Misinformation

Table B2 reports mean values of individual-level characteristics for respondents who are misinformed and correctly informed about the direction of their own mobility experience in the ISSP Cumulative, as well as t-statistics for differences in means. Unsurprisingly, there are a lot of significant differences between the two groups. Given that this dataset is not used to make any causal claims, this is however not a significant issue. The same balance test for the experimental data reported in part C.2 illustrates that almost none of these differences can be found in the experimental data. Additionally, there are no significant differences in perceived social mobility between those who are misinformed and correctly informed about the direction of their own mobility experience in the ISSP Cumulative.

Table B2 shows that those who are misinformed are both, more likely to overestimate their own mobility experience with the father and to have a lower ISEI mobility score themselves. While there are some significant differences on the main preference variables of interest, these do not point into a consistent direction - those who misperceive their own mobility are more supportive of redistribution in general but less likely to support more spending on the poor. The demographics show that misperception is not driven by parental ISEI scores but by own ISEI scores - those who are more likely to misperceive have a somewhat lower ISEI score than those who perceive the direction of their mobility experience correctly. Interestingly, there are no party differences but those who misperceive are somewhat less educated and more likely to be women.

Table B1: Balance Test by Misinformation

	ISEI Mobility		
	Correct	Misinformed	t-statistic
Mobility Experience			
Self-assessed	0.47	0.55	-8.43***
	(1.07)	(0.96)	(45,398)
ISEI	8.39	5.42	16.85***
	(20.33)	(15.54)	(45,398)
Income	0.03	0.02	1.05
	(0.73)	(0.62)	(16,430)
Beliefs and Preferences			
SfR (binary)	0.66	0.68	-4.27***
	(0.47)	(0.47)	(44,043)
SfR (ordered)	3.71	3.76	-5.00***
	(1.18)	(1.16)	(44,043)
Inc. Diff too large	0.82	0.83	-2.92***
	(0.39)	(0.38)	(44,494)
More on poor	0.69	0.67	3.91***
	(0.46)	(0.47)	(22,772)
UBI	0.67	0.67	-0.66
	(0.47)	(0.47)	(12,665)
Higher Tax on rich	4.00	4.01	-0.84
	(0.76)	(0.77)	(43,395)
Overall Mobility	47.26	47.15	0.45
	(19.77)	(20.24)	(31,151)
Demographics			
ISEI score	45.75	42.59	20.09***
	(17.09)	(15.72)	(45,398)
Parents' ISEI score	37.36	37.17	1.29
	(16.48)	(14.86)	(45,398)
Party affiliation	2.91	2.91	0.05
	(0.88)	(0.86)	(22,180)
Education	2.86	2.67	14.27***
	(1.44)	(1.41)	(45,091)
Gender	0.49	0.51	-2.90***
	(0.50)	(0.50)	(45,345)
Age	46.38	46.56	-1.20
	(15.60)	(15.73)	(45,237)

Notes: Table reports the mean values for respondents based on whether they perceived the direction of their own mobility experience correctly or not. Definitions of the variables are identical to table 3 in the main text. Asterisks indicate significant differences in mean values between samples from a Wald test of significance (with degrees of freedom in parentheses). Standard deviations are below the means, in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05 , * p<0.1.

B.3 Alternative Definitions of Mobility Experience

B.3.1 High Mobility Experiences

Tables B2 and B3 report main results of the ISSP Cumulative survey data for respondents who experienced very high or very low mobility on the self-assessed measure (table B2) and the ISEI mobility score (table B3). As the self-assessed measure ranges from -2 to 2 with higher values indicating more upward mobility relative to the father, table B2 simply reports results for those with values of 2 or -2 relative to those with no mobility (a score of 0).

The ISEI mobility score ranges from -72 to 72 with higher values also indicating more positive mobility. For comparison these values are reduced into 5 groups with values also ranging from -2 to 2. ISEI mobility scores within 10% of 0 are labelled as no mobility, values between 10% and 25% are labelled as upward or downward mobility and anything above the 25% threshold is labelled as high downward or upward mobility. Table B3 reports results for only those respondents who are above the 25% threshold. In other words, respondents with an ISEI mobility score above 18 or below -18 compared to those with an ISEI mobility score between 7.2 and -7.2.

The results in table B2 are consistent with the main results reported in table 3: Those who experienced very negative mobility express more support for redistribution on all measures and also perceive social mobility within society as significantly more negative. Those who experienced very positive mobility show no increase in support for redistribution except for one measure - a higher tax share for the rich. This is surprising as this is not the case in the main models.

In the first panel of table B3, none of the coefficients are significant. Neither those who experienced very high upward nor those who experienced very high downward mobility adjust their preferences for redistribution compared to those with no mobility experience. This is mostly consistent with the main results as mobility experience, when not accounting for those who misperceive their own mobility, does not have a consistent significant effect on preferences or beliefs. The second panel of table B3 reports the effect of very high downward and upward mobility experience for those who are aware of the direction of their mobility experience. Consistent with table 3 in the main text, mobility experience now has a significant effect on all reported preferences except for more spending on the poor, as well as a significant and negative effect on social mobility perceptions.

Table B2: Support for Redistribution - High Self-assessed Mobility

	Support for Redistribution (binary)	Support for Redistribution (ordered)	Income Differences too large	More spending on Poor	Universal Basic Income	Higher Tax Share for Rich	Perception of Social mobility
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Self-reported mobility experience							
Very Negative	0.081*	0.173**	0.354***	0.317***	0.332**	0.204**	-3.672***
	(0.083)	(0.069)	(0.074)	(0.099)	(0.142)	(0.086)	(0.799)
	[0.050]	[0.013]	[0.001]	[0.002]	[0.013]	[0.013]	[0.001]
Very Positive	-0.012	0.005	0.003	0.146	-0.007	0.151***	-0.542
	(0.074)	(0.062)	(0.080)	(0.073)	(0.089)	(0.047)	(0.718)
	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[0.161]	[1.000]	[0.008]	[1.000]
Control	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	12,826	12,826	12,960	6,333	3,591	12,821	8,681

Notes: Estimates come from logistic (models (1), (3), (4) and (5)), ordered logit (models (2) and 6)) and linear (model (7)) regressions. Robust standard errors clustered on a country-year level are presented in parentheses. Adjusted p-values for multiple hypothesis testing (Anderson, 2008) are presented in brackets. Very positive mobility is a score of 2 and very negative mobility is a score of -2 on the self-assessed mobility scale. All models are relative to respondents with a score of 0 on the self-assessed mobility scale. Controls include the personal ISEI score, the parental score, political orientation, education, gender and age. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05 , * p<0.1.

Table B3: Support for Redistribution - High ISEI Mobility

	Support for Redistribution (binary)	Support for Redistribution (ordered)	Income Differences too large	More spending on Poor	Universal Basic Income	Higher Tax Share for Rich	Perception of Social mobility
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
ISEI mobility experience							
Very Negative	0.182	0.158	0.064	-0.095	0.131	0.107	-1.010
	(0.096)	(0.079)	(0.111)	(0.113)	(0.155)	(0.070)	(1.206)
	[0.261]	[0.261]	[0.477]	[0.412]	[0.412]	[0.264]	[0.412]
Very Positive	-0.129	-0.038	0.069	0.056	-0.032	-0.094	1.015
	(0.088)	(0.070)	(0.109)	(0.119)	(0.122)	(0.083)	(1.028)
	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]
Control	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	17,744	17,744	17,938	8,622	4,575	17,717	11,630
ISEI mobility experience (if aware of direction)							
Very Negative	0.341**	0.243**	0.326**	0.037	0.609**	0.327**	-3.275**
	(0.111)	(0.099)	(0.186)	(0.162)	(0.215)	(0.130)	(1.578)
	[0.015]	[0.020]	[0.042]	[0.133]	[0.016]	[0.020]	[0.031]
Very Positive	-0.116	-0.017	-0.063	0.085	-0.256	-0.114	0.516
	(0.114)	(0.097)	(0.169)	(0.155)	(0.217)	(0.102)	(1.470)
	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]
Control	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	8,774	8,774	8,850	4,181	2,402	8,768	5,723

Notes: Estimates come from logistic (models (1), (3), (4) and (5)), ordered logit (models (2) and 6)) and linear (model (7)) regressions. Robust standard errors clustered on a country-year level are presented in parentheses. Adjusted p-values for multiple hypothesis testing (Anderson, 2008) are presented in brackets. Very positive mobility is a score of 2 and very negative mobility is a score of -2 on the reduced ISEI mobility scale. All models are relative to respondents with a score of 0 on the reduced ISEI mobility scale. Controls include the personal ISEI score, the parental score, political orientation, education, gender and age. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05 , * p<0.1.

B.3.2 Different Definition of Income Mobility Experience

While the income mobility measure based on the LIS dataset reported in table 3 of the main text did not show any significant effects on preferences or beliefs, this could be due to how the income mobility groups are calculated.

Income mobility is defined as the difference in standardised average earnings between the respondent and the parent with the highest standardised average earnings. The income mobility measure then defines no mobility as being within +/- 5% of the mean standardised average earnings difference. A difference above that as defined as upward mobility and a difference below that is defined as downward mobility. Given that this threshold of +/- 5% of the mean is somewhat arbitrary, table B4 reports income mobility models based on the LIS dataset using a +/- 10% threshold to define no mobility. This, effectively, increases the number of respondents who are defined as having experienced no mobility and increases the threshold to define a respondent as having experienced upward or downward mobility.

Again, consistent with the findings in table 3 of the main text, upward or downward income mobility has no effect on preferences and beliefs in table B4. Neither those who experienced upward income mobility nor those who experienced downward income mobility show any significant difference in distributive preferences and mobility beliefs compared to those who experienced no income mobility based on this measure.

Table B4: Support for Redistribution - LIS Income Measure

	Support for Redistribution (binary)	Support for Redistribution (ordered)	Income Differences too large	More spending on Poor	Universal Basic Income	Higher Tax Share for Rich	Perception of Social mobility
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Income mobility experience							
Negative	-0.008	-0.057	-0.011	0.028	0.069	-0.016	0.102
	(0.075)	(0.066)	(0.089)	(0.068)	(0.123)	(0.076)	(0.835)
	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]
Positive	0.100	0.079	0.024	-0.090	0.455	0.014	-0.533
	(0.111)	(0.106)	(0.133)	(0.070)	(0.266)	(0.074)	(0.638)
	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]
Control	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	26,056	26,056	26,360	12,823	6,902	26,027	17,400

Notes: Estimates come from logistic (models (1), (3), (4) and (5)), ordered logit (models (2) and 6)) and linear (model (7)) regressions. Robust standard errors clustered on a country-year level are presented in parentheses. Adjusted p-values for multiple hypothesis testing (Anderson, 2008) are presented in brackets. The income mobility measure defines no mobility as being within +/- 10% of the mean standardised average earnings difference. Controls include the personal ISEI score, the parental score, political orientation, education, gender and age. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05 , * p<0.1.

Part C: Additional Analysis of Experimental Data

C.1 Placebo Test

To account for the possibility that simply under- or overestimating something causes some negative reaction that might affect preferences, subjects in the control group of the survey experiment were given a placebo treatment. During the demographics part of the experiment, subjects were asked how long they believe the difference in length between the longest river in North America, the Missouri river, and the fifth longest river in North America, the Arkansas river to be. If randomly assigned to the placebo treatment, subjects were then told whether you objectively under-, over-, or correctly estimated the difference in length between the two rivers. Overall, there were 797 subjects who underestimated, 303 who overestimated and 19 who correctly estimated the difference in length of the two rivers, allowing for a margin of error of +/- 15 miles. After a first initial pilot using two different rivers, I changed the placebo to the Missouri and the Arkansas river as I wanted to ensure that a significant enough number of subjects would underestimate the difference (given that the group I am primarily interested in for the main estimations are the under-estimators).

Table C1 and table C2 report the results for the placebo group. As none of the coefficients reach conventional levels of significance, the placebo test suggests that simply under- or overestimating something does not affect the outcome variables of interest.

Table C1: Placebo: Support for Redistribution

	Support for Redistribution (binary)	Support for Redistribution (ordered)	Income Differences too large	More spending on Poor	Universal Basic Income	Higher Tax Share for Rich
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Placebo Treatment						
Underestimate	-0.199	-0.159*	-0.012	0.128	-0.122	-0.040
	(0.147)	(0.091)	(0.080)	(0.079)	(0.098)	(0.028)
Overestimate	-0.041	0.096	0.041	-0.003	0.106	-0.015
	(0.210)	(0.125)	(0.117)	(0.108)	(0.129)	(0.039)
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	895	895	896	873	890	897

Notes: Estimates come from logit (model (1)) and linear regressions. The effects are placebo treatment effects relative to comparable subjects in the treatment group. Robust standard errors are presented in parentheses. The analysis is restricted to subjects who indicated that they believed the provided information. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05 , * p<0.1.

Table C2: Placebo: Mobility and Societal Perceptions

	Mobility of lowest quintile	Overall mobility	Differences due to effort	Personal benefit
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Treatment				
Underestimate	-0.120	-0.059	0.044	0.035
	(0.087)	(0.097)	(0.092)	(0.215)
Overestimate	-0.027	0.094	0.179	-0.016
	(0.119)	(0.129)	(0.125)	(0.301)
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	886	887	886	842

Notes: Estimates come from linear regressions. Robust standard errors are presented in parentheses. The effects are placebo treatment effects relative to comparable subjects in the treatment group. The analysis is restricted to subjects who indicated that they believed the provided information. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05 , * p<0.1.

C.2 Individual-level characteristics by mobility experience

Table C3 reports mean values of individual-level characteristics for subjects who experienced an effective downward mobility shock as opposed to an upward mobility shock during the survey experiment, as well as t-statistics for differences in means. Importantly, these mean values include subjects who were in the treatment as well as in the control groups. In other words, the values include subjects who were informed and not informed of the respective shocks. The two measures reported are ISEI and income mobility shocks as defined in table 4 in the main text.

While there are obvious differences in the variables used to generate the mobility measures between those who experienced upward and downward shocks, there is a striking lack of significant differences in any of the other variables. The only variable not used for the generation of the measures with significant differences is the personal benefit variable. Here, those who experienced an upward mobility shock on both measures are more likely to think that they personally benefit from redistribution. This may be due to the fact that those in control and treatment group are included in the mean values and those who experienced an upward shock are more likely to believe themselves to be worse off relative to others prior to receiving the treatment.

The differences in relative and household income between those who experienced an upward- and downward-mobility shock, while seemingly counter-intuitive at first, merely reflect that those that considered themselves to be worse off prior to receiving the treatment are more likely to experience an upward mobility shock when being informed of their objective

Table C3: Balance Test by Mobility Shock

	ISEI Mobility			Income Mobility		
	Upward Shock	Downward Shock	t-statistic	Upward Shock	Downward Shock	t-statistic
ISEI Data						
Treatment assignment	0.50	0.50	0.00	0.53	0.54	-0.23
	(0.51)	(0.51)	(762)	(0.50)	(0.50)	(426)
Mobility experience	9.49	-13.67	16.87***	16.38	-12.75	21.04***
	(20.92)	(15.11)	(755)	(12.55)	(15.82)	(419)
ISEI	55.76	45.44	7.67***	62.55	45.23	11.23***
	(19.86)	(15.96)	(755)	(13.28)	(18.35)	(419)
father's ISEI	40.23	50.19	-6.12***	40.68	48.48	-3.61***
	(22.69)	(21.38)	(755)	(21.30)	(22.67)	(419)
mother's ISEI	29.33	40.74	-6.59***	29.77	38.15	-3.63***
	(23.10)	(24.14)	(755)	(22.49)	(24.57)	(419)
Perceptions						
seSM with father	-0.58	0.41	-12.24***	0.00	0.21	-1.73*
	(1.09)	(1.02)	(687)	(1.11)	(1.20)	(391)
seSM with mother	0.258	0.435	-1.93*	0.57	0.52	0.39
	(1.18)	(1.13)	(646)	(1.11)	(1.15)	(373)
Relative past income	-0.01	-0.07	0.88	0.27	-0.51	10.25***
	(0.91)	(0.85)	(762)	(0.78)	(0.76)	(426)
Relative income	-0.16	0.15	-4.50***	-0.24	0.70	-11.66***
	(0.96)	(0.86)	(762)	(0.89)	(0.72)	(426)
Demographics						
Age	35.65	35.48	0.32	36.11	35.17	1.30
	(7.62)	(7.19)	(762)	(7.51)	(7.26)	(426)
Gender	0.49	0.52	-0.81	0.56	0.44	2.31**
	(0.50)	(0.50)	(753)	(0.50)	(0.50)	(422)
Education	2.97	2.94	0.42	3.19	2.92	3.03***
	(0.92)	(0.89)	(762)	(0.92)	(0.92)	(426)
Household Income	6.28	6.79	-2.60***	6.57	7.47	-3.59***
	(2.71)	(2.59)	(749)	(2.47)	(2.58)	(418)
Party affiliation	1.22	1.21	0.23	1.24	1.22	0.31
	(0.41)	(0.41)	(609)	(0.43)	(0.42)	(328)
Beliefs and Preferences						
SfR (binary)	0.56	0.55	0.20	0.54	0.54	-0.01
	(0.50)	(0.50)	(757)	(0.50)	(0.50)	(424)
SfR (ordered)	0.40	0.29	1.09	0.30	0.30	-0.06
	(1.30)	(1.29)	(757)	(1.25)	(1.33)	(424)
Inc. Diff too large	1.14	1.17	-0.34	1.06	1.16	-0.91
	(1.16)	(1.05)	(759)	(1.16)	(1.05)	(424)
More on poor	1.21	1.17	0.43	1.21	1.16	0.43
	(1.08)	(1.08)	(739)	(1.02)	(1.08)	(419)
UBI	0.52	0.46	0.66	0.42	0.30	0.83
	(1.37)	(1.35)	(755)	(1.35)	(1.39)	(424)
Higher Tax on rich	1.20	1.15	0.90	1.12	1.05	0.92
	(0.76)	(0.78)	(752)	(0.75)	(0.89)	(418)
Mob. lowest quintile	-0.57	-0.57	0.02	-0.58	-0.51	-0.59
	(1.21)	(1.17)	(752)	(1.15)	(1.18)	(422)
Overall mobility	-0.33	-0.31	-0.15	-0.24	-0.25	0.14
	(1.30)	(1.29)	(750)	(1.32)	(1.32)	(421)
Diff. due to effort	-0.60	-0.59	-0.07	-0.59	-0.60	0.07
	(1.26)	(1.21)	(752)	(1.21)	(1.22)	(423)
Personal benefit	3.87	3.29	2.72***	3.91	3.08	2.97***
	(2.90)	(2.70)	(704)	(2.79)	(2.65)	(392)

Notes: The table reports mean values for subjects based on their experienced mobility shock during the experiment, irrespective of treatment assignment. Definitions of the variables are identical to tables 4 and 5 in the main text. Asterisks indicate significant differences in mean values between samples from a Wald test of significance (with degrees of freedom in parentheses). Standard deviations are below the means, in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05 , * p<0.1.

Table C4: Balance Test by Mobility Shock vs. No Shock

	ISEI Mobility			Income Mobility		
	Shock	No Shock	t-statistic	Shock	No Shock	t-statistic
ISEI Data						
Treatment assignment	0.50	0.50	0.09	0.51	0.47	-1.05
	(0.50)	(0.50)	(1,102)	(0.50)	(0.50)	(1,102)
Mobility experience	-0.36	-5.38	-3.41***	-2.27	-0.69	0.96
	(21.89)	(24.01)	(1,095)	(23.73)	(18.51)	(1,095)
ISEI	51.37	51.24	-0.11	50.89	52.88	1.48
	(19.00)	(17.67)	(1,095)	(18.82)	(17.68)	(1,095)
father's ISEI	44.46	51.75	5.05***	46.55	47.32	0.47
	(22.67)	(20.88)	(1,095)	(22.65)	(21.42)	(1,095)
mother's ISEI	34.18	34.46	0.18	33.98	35.27	0.73
	(24.20)	(24.54)	(1,095)	(24.13)	(24.88)	(1,095)
Perceptions						
seSM with father	-0.12	-0.26	-1.66*	-0.18	-0.10	0.83
	(1.17)	(1.43)	(1,029)	(1.25)	(1.30)	(1,029)
seSM with mother	0.34	0.33	-0.16	0.33	0.36	0.30
	(1.16)	(1.35)	(944)	(1.23)	(1.22)	(944)
Relative past income	-0.04	0.10	2.36**	-0.01	0.07	1.31
	(0.88)	(0.92)	(1,104)	(0.89)	(0.93)	(1,104)
Relative income	-0.03	0.01	0.61	-0.026	0.012	0.55
	(0.93)	(1.00)	(1,104)	(0.96)	(0.93)	(1,104)
Demographics						
Age	35.58	35.74	0.34	35.50	36.09	1.09
	(7.44)	(7.37)	(1,104)	(7.42)	(7.38)	(1,104)
Gender	0.50	0.46	-1.27	0.49	0.49	0.00
	(0.50)	(0.50)	(1,090)	(0.50)	(0.50)	(1,090)
Education	2.95	3.07	2.05**	2.98	3.02	0.67
	(0.91)	(0.85)	(1,104)	(0.90)	(0.86)	(1,104)
Household Income	6.49	6.47	-0.11	6.48	6.52	0.23
	(2.67)	(2.63)	(1,085)	(2.64)	(2.71)	(1,085)
Party affiliation	1.22	1.23	0.39	1.21	1.24	0.66
	(0.41)	(0.42)	(881)	(0.41)	(0.43)	(881)
Beliefs and Preferences						
SfR (binary)	0.56	0.53	-0.69	0.56	0.53	-0.79
	(0.50)	(0.50)	(1,098)	(0.50)	(0.50)	(1,098)
SfR (ordered)	0.35	0.27	-1.02	0.33	0.30	-0.40
	(1.30)	(1.23)	(1,098)	(1.27)	(1.29)	(1,098)
Inc. Diff too large	1.16	1.16	0.04	1.17	1.11	-0.67
	(1.11)	(1.09)	(1,101)	(1.10)	(1.12)	(1,101)
More on poor	1.19	1.17	0.37	1.22	1.05	2.10**
	(1.08)	(1.06)	(1,072)	(1.05)	(1.14)	(1,072)
UBI	0.49	0.41	-0.91	0.47	0.46	-0.17
	(1.36)	(1.32)	(1,093)	(1.35)	(1.34)	(1,093)
Higher Tax on rich	1.18	1.11	-1.50	1.16	1.16	0.08
	(0.77)	(0.77)	(1,083)	(0.77)	(0.76)	(1,083)
Mob. lowest quintile	-0.57	-0.47	1.27	-0.58	-0.40	2.04**
	(1.19)	(1.16)	(1,091)	(1.16)	(1.25)	(1,091)
Overall mobility	-0.32	-0.24	0.98	-0.34	-0.14	2.11**
	(1.30)	(1.30)	(1,091)	(1.29)	(1.31)	(1,091)
Diff. due to effort	-0.60	-0.59	0.08	-0.63	-0.47	1.71*
	(1.24)	(1.24)	(1,090)	(1.24)	(1.23)	(1,090)
Personal benefit	3.61	3.99	1.96*	3.74	3.70	-0.22
	(2.82)	(2.92)	(1,027)	(2.83)	(2.94)	(1,027)

Notes: The table reports mean values for subjects based on whether they received a mobility shock during the experiment or not. Definitions of the variables are identical to tables 4 and 5 in the main text. Asterisks indicate significant differences in mean values between samples from a Wald test of significance (with degrees of freedom in parentheses). Standard deviations are below the means, in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05 , * p<0.1.

mobility experience.

Table C4 reports mean values of individual-level characteristics for subjects who experienced any mobility shock as opposed to no mobility shock during the survey experiment, as well as t-statistics for differences in means. Importantly, these mean values include subjects who were in the treatment as well as in the control groups. In other words, the values include subjects who were informed and not informed of the respective shocks. The two measures reported are ISEI and income mobility shocks as defined in table 4 in the main text.

As in table C3 most of the variables where significant differences in means can be observed are those variables used to generate the shock variables. Using the ISEI mobility measure, none of the other variables show significant differences between those who experienced no shock and those who experienced either a positive or negative shock. A few more differences are observable when using the income mobility measure. Specifically, those who experienced no mobility shock are significantly less likely to support less government spending on the poor, have a slightly more negative view of the mobility of the lowest quintile in society and slightly lower overall perceived mobility. These differences make the main finding, that those who experience a negative mobility shock and are informed of that shock reduce their mobility perception and certain preferences, even more striking.

C.3 Balance Test by Treatment Assignment

Table C5 reports mean values of individual-level characteristics by random treatment assignment, as well as t-statistics for differences in means. None of the variables reported show significant differences between the treatment and control group, suggesting that the random assignment was successful.

C.4 Information Provision Tests

Table C6 reports mean values of individual-level characteristics grouped by whether the subject believed the information provided during the experiment or not, as well as t-statistics for differences in means. There is, strikingly, only one variable which shows significant differences in means: treatment assignment. Maybe somewhat unsurprisingly, subjects who were randomly assigned to be in the treatment as opposed to the control group are more likely to state that they do not believe the information provided. Given that the treatment information directly relates to the personal experiences of subjects while the placebo information does not, this is a reasonable difference. Given that there are no other significant differences between the two groups, there do not appear to be fundamental differences between those who believed the information and those who did not (which are excluded in the

Table C5: Balance Test by Treatment Assignment

	Treatment Group	Control Group	t-statistic
ISEI Data			
Mobility experience	-1.72	-2.10	-0.28
	(23.16)	(22.24)	(1,093)
ISEI	51.39	51.22	-0.15
	(19.01)	(18.18)	(1,093)
father's ISEI	46.36	47.00	0.47
	(22.65)	(22.11)	(1,093)
mother's ISEI	35.45	33.21	-1.52
	(23.61)	(24.89)	(1,093)
Perceptions			
seSM with father	-0.152	-0.174	-0.28
	(1.29)	(1.24)	(1,027)
seSM with mother	0.33	0.34	0.09
	(1.21)	(1.25)	(944)
Relative past income	0.02	-0.01	-0.64
	(0.88)	(0.91)	(1,102)
Relative income	0.01	-0.04	-0.79
	(0.96)	(0.94)	(1,102)
Demographics			
Age	35.37	35.88	1.13
	(7.11)	(7.71)	(1,102)
Gender	0.51	0.47	-1.52
	(0.50)	(0.50)	(1,088)
Education	3.00	2.98	-0.30
	(0.87)	(0.92)	(1,102)
Household Income	6.54	6.43	-0.65
	(2.68)	(2.63)	(1,083)
Party affiliation	1.23	1.21	-0.59
	(0.42)	(0.41)	(880)
Beliefs and Preferences			
SfR (binary)	0.57	0.53	-1.45
	(0.50)	(0.50)	(1,096)
SfR (ordered)	0.37	0.28	-1.29
	(1.28)	(1.27)	(1,096)
Inc. Diff too large	1.18	1.13	-0.75
	(1.05)	(1.15)	(1,099)
More on poor	1.23	1.14	1.40
	(1.05)	(1.10)	(1,070)
UBI	0.50	0.44	-0.64
	(1.35)	(1.34)	(1,091)
Higher Tax on rich	1.18	1.14	-0.90
	(0.75)	(0.79)	(1,082)
Mob. lowest quintile	-0.59	-0.49	1.47
	(1.16)	(1.20)	(1,089)
Overall mobility	-0.32	-0.28	0.50
	(1.30)	(1.30)	(1,089)
Diff. due to effort	-0.57	-0.62	-0.59
	(1.27)	(1.20)	(1,088)
Personal benefit	3.75	3.71	-0.19
	(2.89)	(2.83)	(1,025)

Notes: Table reports the mean values for subjects based on their treatment assignment. Definitions of the variables are identical to tables 4 and 5 in the main text. Asterisks indicate significant differences in mean values between samples from a Wald test of significance (with degrees of freedom in parentheses). Standard deviations are below the means, in parentheses. *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$.

Table C6: Balance Test by Info Belief

	Yes	No	t-statistic
ISEI Data			
Treatment assignment	0.50	0.73	3.24**
	(0.50)	(0.45)	(944)
Mobility experience	-2.03	-0.12	0.57
	(22.95)	(18.06)	(937)
ISEI	51.84	52.33	0.18
	(18.59)	(18.01)	(937)
father's ISEI	47.15	47.22	0.02
	(22.30)	(26.02)	(937)
mother's ISEI	34.63	36.14	0.42
	(24.24)	(26.57)	(937)
Perceptions			
seSM with father	-0.16	0.02	0.91
	(1.26)	(1.26)	(881)
seSM with mother	0.34	0.46	0.61
	(1.22)	(1.31)	(810)
Relative past income	0.02	0.00	-0.16
	(0.89)	(1.00)	(945)
Relative income	-0.01	0.31	2.32
	(0.94)	(0.94)	(945)
Demographics			
Age	35.46	37.02	1.44
	(7.39)	(7.35)	(945)
Gender	0.50	0.38	-1.59
	(0.50)	(0.49)	(931)
Education	3.00	3.08	0.59
	(0.90)	(1.06)	(945)
Household Income	6.49	7.04	1.41
	(2.64)	(2.87)	(932)
Party affiliation	1.21	1.25	0.55
	(0.41)	(0.44)	(772)
Beliefs and Preferences			
SfR (binary)	0.57	0.49	-1.05
	(0.50)	(0.51)	(941)
SfR (ordered)	0.39	0.13	-1.37
	(1.25)	(1.48)	(941)
Inc. Diff too large	1.18	1.11	-0.45
	(1.09)	(1.17)	(942)
More on poor	1.23	1.02	1.36
	(1.05)	(1.31)	(920)
UBI	0.51	0.50	-0.04
	(1.32)	(1.47)	(937)
Higher Tax on rich	1.17	1.10	-0.58
	(0.76)	(0.95)	(929)
Mob. lowest quintile	-0.54	-0.50	0.21
	(1.18)	(1.43)	(933)
Overall mobility	-0.29	-0.27	0.10
	(1.30)	(1.65)	(934)
Diff. due to effort	-0.61	-0.44	0.95
	(1.22)	(1.50)	(933)
Personal benefit	3.79	3.56	-0.54
	(2.83)	(2.94)	(886)

Notes: Table reports the mean values for subjects based on whether subjects believed the information provided or not. Definitions of the variables are identical to tables 4 and 5 in the main text. Asterisks indicate significant differences in mean values between samples from a Wald test of significance (with degrees of freedom in parentheses). Standard deviations are below the means, in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05 , * p<0.1.

main analysis).

Apart from whether or not subjects believed the provided information, how careful the information was read may also influence treatment effects. While this cannot directly be measured, I can measure the time subjects spent on the treatment and placebo screens as a proxy for attention paid to the provided information. The average time spent was 14.5 seconds. Table 4 in the main text reports main treatment effects for subjects who spent more than 8 seconds on the treatment and placebo screens. While this length is somewhat arbitrary, it is roughly enough time to carefully read through the provided paragraph. Table C7 below reports treatment effects for all subjects, irrespective of the time spent on the treatment and placebo screens. The results are consistent with the findings reported in table 4 although more noisy. On both measures included in the table, those who experienced a downward mobility shock show again significantly more support for more spending on the poor and for higher taxes on the rich.

Table C7: Experiment: Support for Redistribution

	Support for Redistribution (binary)	Support for Redistribution (ordered)	Income Differences too large	More spending on Poor	Universal Basic Income	Higher Tax Share for Rich
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Treatment						
Upward mobility	0.305	0.255*	0.042	0.110	0.209*	0.056
	(0.215)	(0.100)	(0.089)	(0.084)	(0.111)	(0.031)
	[0.169]	[0.071]	[0.294]	[0.169]	[0.137]	[0.137]
No mobility	0.289	0.060	0.074	0.101	0.022	0.005
	(0.219)	(0.104)	(0.085)	(0.097)	(0.110)	(0.037)
	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]
Downward mobility	0.321	0.215	0.158	0.220**	0.036	0.094**
	(0.244)	(0.125)	(0.094)	(0.091)	(0.131)	(0.035)
	[0.163]	[0.103]	[0.103]	[0.045]	[0.294]	[0.038]
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	817	808	809	787	804	810
Treatment						
Upward income mobility	-0.012	0.066	0.031	0.093	0.087	0.030
	(0.284)	(0.131)	(0.120)	(0.109)	(0.144)	(0.046)
	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]
No income mobility	0.017	0.063	-0.158	-0.133	0.179	0.069
	(0.545)	(0.240)	(0.183)	(0.226)	(0.259)	(0.082)
	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]
Downward income mobility	0.340	0.307*	0.219*	0.334**	0.082	0.164***
	(0.331)	(0.167)	(0.127)	(0.126)	(0.185)	(0.050)
	[0.149]	[0.095]	[0.095]	[0.021]	[0.282]	[0.007]
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	369	369	369	362	366	369

Notes: Estimates come from logit (model (1)) and linear regressions. The effects are treatment effects relative to subjects with the same experimental mobility score in the control group. Robust standard errors are presented in parentheses. Adjusted p-values are not reported for these estimations as the sample size is quite small compared to the descriptive data. Controls include self-assessed mobility experience, household income and political party affiliation. The analysis is restricted to subjects who indicated that they believed the provided information. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05 , * p<0.1.

Table C8 reports main treatment effects on the mobility perception variables for subjects

irrespective of the time spent on the treatment and placebo screens. Here, the results are also consistent with those reported in 5 of the main text where subjects who spent less than 8 seconds on the treatment and placebo screens are excluded. There is a significant negative effect on overall perceived mobility for those who experienced a downward mobility shock on both measures. Additionally, those who experienced a downward mobility shock are now also perceiving the mobility of the lowest quintile significantly more negatively.

Table C8: Experiment: Mobility and societal perceptions

	Mobility of lowest quintile	Overall mobility	Differences due to effort	Personal benefit
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Treatment				
Upward mobility	-0.105	-0.037	-0.013	-0.019
	(0.101)	(0.113)	(0.104)	(0.261)
No mobility	-0.082	-0.014	0.056	0.439
	(0.095)	(0.107)	(0.107)	(0.278)
Downward mobility	-0.330***	-0.338***	-0.096	0.232
	(0.121)	(0.129)	(0.129)	(0.298)
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	808	800	799	763
Treatment				
Upward income mobility	-0.101	-0.045	0.076	0.001
	(0.131)	(0.144)	(0.135)	(0.333)
No income mobility	0.242	0.147	0.088	0.418
	(0.279)	(0.232)	(0.231)	(0.633)
Downward income mobility	-0.193	-0.477***	-0.055	-0.292
	(0.159)	(0.182)	(0.163)	(0.416)
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	365	365	366	347

Notes: Estimates come from linear regressions. Robust standard errors are presented in parentheses. The effects are treatment effects relative to subjects with the same experimental mobility score in the control group. Controls include self-assessed mobility experience, household income and political party affiliation. The analysis is restricted to subjects who indicated that they believed the provided information. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05 , * p<0.1.

C.5 Main analysis with alternative definitions of Mobility Experience

C.5.1 Extreme mobility shocks

Table C9 reports main treatment effects for subjects who experienced extreme mobility shocks during the experiment. This is defined as either a mobility shock score of -2 and less or +2 and more. Given that restricting the models to subjects with such extreme values significantly reduces the sample size, unsurprisingly, almost none of the results remain when accounting for multiple hypothesis testing. Only on the income mobility measure do the main results survive, although only with weak significance: those who experienced a downward shock significantly increase their support for more spending on the poor and higher taxes on the rich.

Table C9: Experiment: Support for Redistribution

	Support for Redistribution (binary)	Support for Redistribution (ordered)	Income Differences too large	More spending on Poor	Universal Basic Income	Higher Tax Share for Rich
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Treatment						
Upward mobility	0.511	0.281	0.099	0.276	0.206	0.020
	(0.353)	(0.167)	(0.151)	(0.130)	(0.191)	(0.051)
	[0.325]	[0.308]	[0.445]	[0.257]	[0.393]	[0.534]
No mobility	0.467	0.089	0.082	0.163	0.078	0.001
	(0.240)	(0.114)	(0.093)	(0.106)	(0.122)	(0.041)
	[0.441]	[0.725]	[0.725]	[0.455]	[0.725]	[1.000]
Downward mobility	0.495	0.319	0.324	0.233	0.115	0.053
	(0.393)	(0.197)	(0.149)	(0.157)	(0.198)	(0.065)
	[0.350]	[0.302]	[0.220]	[0.302]	[0.390]	[0.386]
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	475	468	468	457	465	469
Treatment						
Upward income mobility	0.187	0.175	0.041	0.065	0.092	0.142
	(0.464)	(0.218)	(0.210)	(0.196)	(0.238)	(0.063)
	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[0.194]
No income mobility	0.100	0.052	-0.189	-0.083	0.162	0.067
	(0.566)	(0.249)	(0.195)	(0.237)	(0.266)	(0.087)
	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]
Downward income mobility	0.064	0.149	0.102	0.373*	-0.061	0.156*
	(0.426)	(0.222)	(0.169)	(0.162)	(0.251)	(0.061)
	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[0.071]	[1.000]	[0.071]
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	193	193	193	190	190	193

Notes: Estimates come from logit (model (1)) and linear regressions. The effects are treatment effects relative to subjects with the same experimental mobility score in the control group. Robust standard errors are presented in parentheses. Adjusted p-values are not reported for these estimations as the sample size is quite small compared to the descriptive data. Controls include self-assessed mobility experience, household income and political party affiliation. The analysis is restricted to subjects who indicated that they believed the provided information and remained on the treatment and placebo screen for more than 8 seconds. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05 , * p<0.1.

The fact that the results for those who experienced extreme mobility shocks during the experiment are not vastly different to the main results, merely somewhat less significant, is

however encouraging.

Table C10 reports main treatment effects on the mobility perception variables for subjects who experienced extreme mobility shocks during the experiment. The results are very similar to those reported in 5 of the main text: On both measures, those who experienced downward mobility shocks have a significantly more negative overall perception of mobility. In addition, on the first measure, those subjects also have a significantly more negative perception of the mobility of the lowest quintile.

Table C10: Experiment: Mobility and societal perceptions

	Mobility of lowest quintile	Overall mobility	Differences due to effort	Personal benefit
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Treatment				
Upward mobility	0.041	0.072	0.099	-0.315
	(0.167)	(0.182)	(0.170)	(0.403)
No mobility	-0.110	-0.089	0.034	0.262
	(0.107)	(0.119)	(0.119)	(0.303)
Downward mobility	-0.466***	-0.573***	-0.270	-0.416
	(0.174)	(0.198)	(0.206)	(0.469)
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	469	466	463	448
Treatment				
Upward income mobility	-0.053	0.011	0.267	-0.417
	(0.217)	(0.250)	(0.239)	(0.503)
No income mobility	0.368	0.273	0.124	0.209
	(0.300)	(0.260)	(0.239)	(0.657)
Downward income mobility	-0.196	-0.631**	0.066	-0.271
	(0.210)	(0.251)	(0.235)	(0.558)
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	181	178	179	173

Notes: Estimates come from linear regressions. Robust standard errors are presented in parentheses. The effects are treatment effects relative to subjects with the same experimental mobility score in the control group. Controls include self-assessed mobility experience, household income and political party affiliation. The analysis is restricted to subjects who indicated that they believed the provided information and remained on the treatment and placebo screen for more than 8 seconds. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05 , * p<0.1.

C.5.2 Main treatment effects using mobility with parents

A strong assumption made for the first measure of the models reported in table 4 and 5 in the main text is that subjects will use their self-reported mobility with their father as a pre-treatment reference point. All the models using the first measure in the main text therefore report mobility shocks based on item Q1 from the survey instrument. It is however not unlikely that subjects will use a combination of Q1 and Q2 (mobility relative to the mother) to assess their self-assessed mobility. As self-assessed mobility with the mother was not asked during the ISSP Cumulative, I have only used mobility with the father in the main text. Tables C11 to C14 below report the main treatment effects using two alternative measures of self-assessed mobility to calculate the mobility shock: First, the maximum of Q1 and Q2 and second the minimum of Q1 and Q2. In other words, tables C11 and C12 report the results using the parent who the subject believes themselves to have experienced the most mobility in comparison to and tables C13 and C14 report the results using the parent who the subject believes themselves to have experienced the least mobility in comparison to.

Table C11: Support for Redistribution - Maximum Mobility Measure

	Support for Redistribution (binary)	Support for Redistribution (ordered)	Income Differences too large	More spending on Poor	Universal Basic Income	Higher Tax Share for Rich
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Treatment						
Upward mobility	0.570*	0.422**	0.082	0.179*	0.391**	0.047
	(0.307)	(0.136)	(0.122)	(0.102)	(0.147)	(0.046)
	[0.087]	[0.013]	[0.201]	[0.087]	[0.021]	[0.138]
No mobility	-0.146	0.020	0.159	0.195	0.078	0.005
	(0.311)	(0.151)	(0.119)	(0.126)	(0.152)	(0.052)
	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]
Downward mobility	0.341	0.178	0.142	0.112	-0.018	0.085
	(0.241)	(0.119)	(0.091)	(0.100)	(0.129)	(0.035)
	[0.245]	[0.245]	[0.245]	[0.309]	[0.421]	[0.107]
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	596	592	593	582	590	593

Notes: Estimates come from logit (model (1)) and linear regressions. The effects are treatment effects relative to subjects with the same experimental mobility score in the control group. Robust standard errors are presented in parentheses. Adjusted p-values are not reported for these estimations as the sample size is quite small compared to the descriptive data. Controls include self-assessed mobility experience, household income and political party affiliation. The analysis is restricted to subjects who indicated that they believed the provided information and remained on the treatment and placebo screen for more than 8 seconds.. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05 , * p<0.1.

Looking first at the models using the maximum mobility value of both parents, the only significant effects that remain after accounting for multiple hypothesis testing are that those who experienced an upward mobility shock based on this alternative specification are more likely to support redistribution and Universal Basic Income. This is inconsistent with any of the other results reported in the main text and appendix. Interestingly, these findings from table C11 also do not match the null-results in table C12. In other words, it seems

that these effects are not driven by particular changes in mobility perceptions or perceived personal benefit from redistribution. It may be worth noting that this alternative measure is more likely to pick up on perceived mobility with the mother as many mothers of subjects in the experiment did not work (26%). It may therefore pick up on a difference between subjects whose mothers are or were part of the workforce and those who were/are not. What drives these effects when using the maximum mobility score of the parents may therefore be an avenue for future research.

Table C12: Mobility and societal perceptions - Maximum Mobility Measure

	Mobility of lowest quintile	Overall mobility	Differences due to effort	Personal benefit
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Treatment				
Upward mobility	-0.153	-0.055	-0.046	0.414
	(0.149)	(0.159)	(0.155)	(0.383)
No mobility	-0.092	-0.108	0.077	0.618
	(0.140)	(0.157)	(0.159)	(0.387)
Downward mobility	-0.164	-0.127	-0.018	0.107
	(0.118)	(0.126)	(0.123)	(0.297)
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	590	588	586	558

Notes: Estimates come from linear regressions. Robust standard errors are presented in parentheses. The effects are treatment effects relative to subjects with the same experimental mobility score in the control group. Controls include self-assessed mobility experience, household income and political party affiliation. The analysis is restricted to subjects who indicated that they believed the provided information and remained on the treatment and placebo screen for more than 8 seconds. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05 , * p<0.1.

Tables C13 and C14 report models using the minimum mobility value of both parents. One of the two main results survives here (those who experienced a downward mobility shock are more likely to support higher taxes on the rich) and no other coefficients are significant. This is consistent with the main results in table 4. Equally, a downward mobility shock significantly reduces the perception of overall mobility in society, although only weakly using this measure. Again, these results are consistent with those in table 5 in the main text.

Table C13: Support for Redistribution - Minimum Mobility Measure

	Support for Redistribution (binary)	Support for Redistribution (ordered)	Income Differences too large	More spending on Poor	Universal Basic Income	Higher Tax Share for Rich
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Treatment						
Upward mobility	0.116	0.237	0.124	0.150	0.159	0.033
	(0.259)	(0.125)	(0.102)	(0.094)	(0.132)	(0.040)
	[0.527]	[0.513]	[0.513]	[0.513]	[0.513]	[0.513]
No mobility	0.201	0.124	0.162	0.119	0.072	0.026
	(0.268)	(0.123)	(0.102)	(0.115)	(0.130)	(0.043)
	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]
Downward mobility	0.643	0.276	0.089	0.201	0.119	0.132**
	(0.321)	(0.168)	(0.120)	(0.119)	(0.181)	(0.045)
	[0.127]	[0.145]	[0.206]	[0.145]	[0.206]	[0.019]
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	596	592	593	582	590	593

Notes: Estimates come from logit (model (1)) and linear regressions. The effects are treatment effects relative to subjects with the same experimental mobility score in the control group. Robust standard errors are presented in parentheses. Adjusted p-values are not reported for these estimations as the sample size is quite small compared to the descriptive data. Controls include self-assessed mobility experience, household income and political party affiliation. The analysis is restricted to subjects who indicated that they believed the provided information and remained on the treatment and placebo screen for more than 8 seconds.. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05 , * p<0.1.

Table C14: Mobility and societal perceptions - Minimum Mobility Measure

	Mobility of lowest quintile	Overall mobility	Differences due to effort	Personal benefit
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Treatment				
Upward mobility	-0.094	-0.005	-0.062	0.430
	(0.127)	(0.134)	(0.126)	(0.329)
No mobility	-0.132	-0.077	0.064	0.341
	(0.116)	(0.134)	(0.141)	(0.335)
Downward mobility	-0.236	-0.297*	-0.002	0.117
	(0.170)	(0.172)	(0.169)	(0.380)
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	590	588	586	558

Notes: Estimates come from linear regressions. Robust standard errors are presented in parentheses. The effects are treatment effects relative to subjects with the same experimental mobility score in the control group. Controls include self-assessed mobility experience, household income and political party affiliation. The analysis is restricted to subjects who indicated that they believed the provided information and remained on the treatment and placebo screen for more than 8 seconds. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05 , * p<0.1.

C.5.3 Main treatment effects using mobility information

While the models used to report the main treatment effects in tables 4 and 5 of the main text look at the difference between pre-treatment beliefs about own mobility experience and

Table C15: Support for Redistribution - Information Effects

	Support for Redistribution (binary)	Support for Redistribution (ordered)	Income Differences too large	More spending on Poor	Universal Basic Income	Higher Tax Share for Rich
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Treatment						
Upward mobility	0.264	0.207	0.130	0.076	0.181	0.017
	(0.263)	(0.124)	(0.109)	(0.102)	(0.134)	(0.042)
	[0.873]	[0.873]	[0.873]	[0.873]	[0.873]	[0.873]
No mobility	0.484	0.347	0.133	0.173	0.074	0.046
	(0.431)	(0.183)	(0.134)	(0.170)	(0.201)	(0.060)
	[0.671]	[0.534]	[0.671]	[0.671]	[0.929]	[0.799]
Downward mobility	0.209	0.151	0.128	0.211*	0.078	0.091*
	(0.243)	(0.125)	(0.094)	(0.094)	(0.129)	(0.037)
	[0.457]	[0.294]	[0.294]	[0.085]	[0.517]	[0.085]
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	596	592	593	582	590	593

Notes: Estimates come from logit (model (1)) and linear regressions. The effects are treatment effects relative to subjects with the same experimental mobility score in the control group. Robust standard errors are presented in parentheses. Adjusted p-values are not reported for these estimations as the sample size is quite small compared to the descriptive data. Controls include self-assessed mobility experience, household income and political party affiliation. The analysis is restricted to subjects who indicated that they believed the provided information and remained on the treatment and placebo screen for more than 8 seconds.. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05 , * p<0.1.

Table C16: Mobility and societal perceptions - Information Effects

	Mobility of lowest quintile	Overall mobility	Differences due to effort	Personal benefit
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Treatment				
Upward mobility	0.030	0.074	0.056	0.405
	(0.126)	(0.131)	(0.133)	(0.313)
No mobility	-0.003	-0.054	-0.101	0.165
	(0.194)	(0.202)	(0.168)	(0.475)
Downward mobility	-0.349***	-0.277**	-0.017	0.303
	(0.117)	(0.131)	(0.134)	(0.320)
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	590	588	586	558

Notes: Estimates come from linear regressions. Robust standard errors are presented in parentheses. The effects are treatment effects relative to subjects with the same experimental mobility score in the control group. Controls include self-assessed mobility experience, household income and political party affiliation. The analysis is restricted to subjects who indicated that they believed the provided information and remained on the treatment and placebo screen for more than 8 seconds. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05 , * p<0.1.

treatment information, another way of measuring treatment effects is by simply looking at the effects of receiving a certain treatment information on its own. This is what I report in tables C15 to C18. Tables C15 and C16 look at overall information effects of receiving a positive, negative or neutral information about one's own mobility experience compared

to someone in the control group with the same mobility experience. Tables C17 and C18 report the same but only for subjects who received very positive or very negative mobility information.

Table C17: Support for Redistribution - High Information Effects

	Support for Redistribution (binary)	Support for Redistribution (ordered)	Income Differences too large	More spending on Poor	Universal Basic Income	Higher Tax Share for Rich
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Treatment						
Upward mobility	0.192	0.237	0.093	0.117	0.233	0.052
	(0.394)	(0.191)	(0.195)	(0.162)	(0.214)	(0.064)
	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]
No mobility	0.414	0.359	0.135	0.188	0.053	0.044
	(0.431)	(0.187)	(0.145)	(0.179)	(0.210)	(0.064)
	[0.790]	[0.507]	[0.790]	[0.790]	[1.000]	[0.957]
Downward mobility	0.469	0.186	0.039	0.252	0.108	0.021
	(0.352)	(0.187)	(0.133)	(0.147)	(0.201)	(0.058)
	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	327	324	324	319	321	324

Notes: Estimates come from logit (model (1)) and linear regressions. The effects are treatment effects relative to subjects with the same experimental mobility score in the control group. Robust standard errors are presented in parentheses. Adjusted p-values are not reported for these estimations as the sample size is quite small compared to the descriptive data. Controls include self-assessed mobility experience, household income and political party affiliation. The analysis is restricted to subjects who indicated that they believed the provided information and remained on the treatment and placebo screen for more than 8 seconds.. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05 , * p<0.1.

Table C18: Mobility and societal perceptions - High Information Effects

	Mobility of lowest quintile	Overall mobility	Differences due to effort	Personal benefit
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Treatment				
Upward mobility	0.020	0.031	0.240	0.587
	(0.208)	(0.217)	(0.228)	(0.491)
No mobility	0.026	-0.021	-0.103	0.076
	(0.205)	(0.217)	(0.180)	(0.497)
Downward mobility	-0.302*	-0.174	-0.079	0.500
	(0.171)	(0.200)	(0.187)	(0.493)
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	323	320	321	302

Notes: Estimates come from linear regressions. Robust standard errors are presented in parentheses. The effects are treatment effects relative to subjects with the same experimental mobility score in the control group. Controls include self-assessed mobility experience, household income and political party affiliation. The analysis is restricted to subjects who indicated that they believed the provided information and remained on the treatment and placebo screen for more than 8 seconds. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05 , * p<0.1.

The results in table C15 are entirely consistent with those in table 4 of the main text but are only weakly significant when accounting for multiple hypothesis testing (the two main variables of interest reach standard levels of significance when not using adjusted p-values). Those who received a negative mobility information significantly increased their support for more spending on the poor and higher taxes on the rich compared to subjects with the same mobility experience but no information provision in the control group. Neither those who received neutral nor those who received positive information adjusted their preferences in any significant way.

The results in table C16 are also entirely consistent with those in table 5 of the main text. Those who received a negative mobility information significantly decreased their perception of overall mobility in society and their perception of the mobility of the lowest quintile.

Overall, these information treatment effects are encouragingly consistent with the main results using the shock measures. Unsurprisingly, when taking pre-treatment beliefs into account, as I do in the main models in tables 4 and 5, the effects are somewhat stronger and more robust (at least for the models looking at preferences rather than beliefs).

When looking at only those subjects who were told that they experienced very high or very low mobility during treatment, as I do in tables C17 and C18, almost none of the results survive. This is most likely due to the much larger sample size as the signs of the coefficients remain largely the same.

C.5.4 Main treatment effects using a continuous mobility measure

Rather than splitting up subjects in those with negative, neutral or positive experiences, tables C19 and C20 report treatment effects using a continuous shock measure. The coefficients in these two tables indicate the effect of a one-point increase in the experienced mobility shock in the treatment compared to the control group. A larger value on the shock measure is hereby associated with a more positive shock. As is evident, none of the preferences are affected by the shock in a continuous way. This is unsurprising given the earlier discussion about a lacking relationship between mobility experience and preferences in the main text. Only one variable is significantly affected by the continuous measure in table C20: Overall mobility. Here, a more positive mobility shock is associated with an increase in perceived societal mobility. Again, this is somewhat unsurprising given the existing literature discussed earlier. Overall, the results in tables C19 and C20 suggest that continuous models are not helpful in understanding the effects of mobility experience on redistributive preferences.

Table C19: Support for Redistribution - Continuous Shock

	Support for Redistribution (binary)	Support for Redistribution (ordered)	Income Differences too large	More spending on Poor	Universal Basic Income	Higher Tax Share for Rich
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Treatment						
Mobility	-0.085	0.010	0.001	0.013	0.071	-0.010
	(0.115)	(0.059)	(0.046)	(0.041)	(0.060)	(0.017)
	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	596	592	593	582	590	593

Notes: Estimates come from logit (model (1)) and linear regressions. The effects are treatment effects relative to subjects with the same experimental mobility score in the control group. Robust standard errors are presented in parentheses. Adjusted p-values are not reported for these estimations as the sample size is quite small compared to the descriptive data. Controls include self-assessed mobility experience, household income and political party affiliation. The analysis is restricted to subjects who indicated that they believed the provided information and remained on the treatment and placebo screen for more than 8 seconds.. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05 , * p<0.1.

Table C20: Mobility and societal perceptions - Continuous Shock

	Mobility of lowest quintile	Overall mobility	Differences due to effort	Personal benefit
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Treatment				
Mobility	0.086	0.124**	0.025	0.028
	(0.053)	(0.057)	(0.056)	(0.136)
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	590	588	586	558

Notes: Estimates come from linear regressions. Robust standard errors are presented in parentheses. The effects are treatment effects relative to subjects with the same experimental mobility score in the control group. Controls include self-assessed mobility experience, household income and political party affiliation. The analysis is restricted to subjects who indicated that they believed the provided information and remained on the treatment and placebo screen for more than 8 seconds. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05 , * p<0.1.

C.6 Main analysis assuming positive mobility expectations

A possibility not previous discussed is that subjects may expect to have experienced some upward mobility and that the reference point should therefore not be those who experienced no mobility but those who experienced weakly positive mobility. This would suggest that subjects who are told that they experienced no mobility similarly adjust their preferences and beliefs as those who are told that they experienced downward mobility. Tables C21 and C22 test this possibility for both, preferences and beliefs. Evidently, as none of the coefficients reach any level of significance when accounting for multiple hypothesis testing, there is no evidence for this explanation. It does not seem to be the case that subjects expect

to be better off than their parents but instead, that no mobility, is a reasonable reference point to use.

Table C21: Support for Redistribution - Upward Expectations

	Support for Redistribution (binary)	Support for Redistribution (ordered)	Income Differences too large	More spending on Poor	Universal Basic Income	Higher Tax Share for Rich
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Treatment						
High upward mobility	0.140	0.308	0.244	0.335	0.300	0.041
	(0.469)	(0.217)	(0.191)	(0.147)	(0.244)	(0.060)
	[0.490]	[0.377]	[0.377]	[0.161]	[0.377]	[0.490]
Upward mobility	0.132	0.223	0.080	0.046	0.146	0.064
	(0.321)	(0.155)	(0.116)	(0.122)	(0.162)	(0.047)
	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]	[1.000]
Downward & no mobility	0.345	0.180	0.126	0.154	0.075	0.054
	(0.215)	(0.104)	(0.085)	(0.088)	(0.110)	(0.034)
	[0.197]	[0.197]	[0.197]	[0.197]	[0.197]	[0.197]
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	596	592	593	582	590	593

Notes: Estimates come from logit (model (1)) and linear regressions. The effects are treatment effects relative to subjects with the same experimental mobility score in the control group. Robust standard errors are presented in parentheses. Adjusted p-values are not reported for these estimations as the sample size is quite small compared to the descriptive data. Controls include self-assessed mobility experience, household income and political party affiliation. The analysis is restricted to subjects who indicated that they believed the provided information and remained on the treatment and placebo screen for more than 8 seconds.. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05 , * p<0.1.

Table C22: Mobility and societal perceptions - Upward Expectations

	Mobility of lowest quintile	Overall mobility	Differences due to effort	Personal benefit
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Treatment				
High upward mobility	0.068	0.084	-0.064	-0.196
	(0.205)	(0.215)	(0.210)	(0.541)
Upward mobility	-0.128	0.022	-0.055	0.393
	(0.161)	(0.173)	(0.163)	(0.394)
Downward & no mobility	-0.186	-0.180	0.028	0.395
	(0.104)	(0.112)	(0.111)	(0.270)
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	590	588	586	558

Notes: Estimates come from linear regressions. Robust standard errors are presented in parentheses. The effects are treatment effects relative to subjects with the same experimental mobility score in the control group. Controls include self-assessed mobility experience, household income and political party affiliation. The analysis is restricted to subjects who indicated that they believed the provided information and remained on the treatment and placebo screen for more than 8 seconds. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05 , * p<0.1.

Part D: Survey Instrument

Thank you for participating in this study. In the following, you will be asked a series of questions about your own social mobility experience. Please read the questions very carefully and answer honestly.

Part I: Demographics

D1: How old are you?
D2: What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Other
- Prefer not to say

D3: How many children do you have?

- I do not have children
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 or more

D4: Please indicate your marital status:

- Single
- Married
- Cohabiting with a partner
- Other

D5: What is your highest level of educational attainment?

- No formal qualification
- Primary education
- Secondary education
- Undergraduate degree or equivalent (e.g. bachelor's degree)
- Graduate degree or equivalent (e.g. master's degree)
- Doctoral Degree (e.g. PhD)

D6: What is your father's highest level of educational attainment?

- No formal qualification
- Primary education
- Secondary education
- Undergraduate degree or equivalent (e.g. bachelor's degree)
- Graduate degree or equivalent (e.g. master's degree)
- Doctoral Degree (e.g. PhD)

D7: What is your mother's highest level of educational attainment?

- No formal qualification
- Primary education
- Secondary education
- Undergraduate degree or equivalent (e.g. bachelor's degree)
- Graduate degree or equivalent (e.g. master's degree)
- Doctoral Degree (e.g. PhD)

D8: What is your total household income before tax?

- Under $10,000
- $10,000 - $20,000
- $20,001 - $30,000

- $30,001 - $40,000
- $40,001 - $50,000
- $50,001 - $60,000
- $60,001 - $80,000
- $80,001 - $100,000
- $100,001 - $150,000
- $150,001 - $200,000
- Above $200,000
- Don't know
- Prefer not to answer

D9: To the best of your knowledge, what was your family's household income when growing up (not accounting for inflation)?

- Under $10,000
- $10,000 - $20,000
- $20,001 - $30,000
- $30,001 - $40,000
- $40,001 - $50,000
- $50,001 - $60,000
- $60,001 - $80,000
- $80,001 - $100,000
- $100,001 - $150,000
- $150,001 - $200,000
- Above $200,000
- Don't know

- Prefer not to answer

D10: What is your current employment status?

- Full-time employee
- Part-time employee
- Self-employed or small business owner
- Unemployed and looking for work
- Student
- Not in labour force (for example: retired, or full-time parent)

D11: To which of these groups do you consider you belong? You can choose more than one group.

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African-American
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- Spanish, Hispanic or Latino
- White
- Other group
- Prefer not to answer

D12: How much of the time do you think you can trust the government to do what is right?

- Never
- Only some of the time
- Most of the time
- Always

D13: In politics people sometimes talk of left and right. Where would you place yourself on the following scale? (Scale from 0 - left to 10 - right)
D14: Please select your current job from the below dropdown menu (or your last one if you don't have one now).
D19: Which party do you feel closest to?[26]

- Democratic Party
- Republican Party
- Other
- Don't know

D20: Who did you vote for in the recent 2020 Presidential Election?

- Joe Biden
- Donald Trump
- Other candidate
- Didn't vote
- Don't remember
- Prefer not to say

D15: Please select your fathers' job when you were about 14 years old from the below dropdown menu.
D16: Please select your mothers' job when you were about 14 years old from the below dropdown menu.
D17: What do you think is the difference in length in miles between the longest river in North America, the Missouri river, and the fifth longest river in North America, the Arkansas river?[27]
D18: Before proceeding to the next set of questions, we want to ask for your feedback about the responses you provided so far. It is vital to our study that we only include responses

[26]Item D19 and item D20 were not included in the pre-analysis plan but added prior to running the main study.

[27]In the original pre-analysis plan this question asked about the Missouri and the Mississippi river. After an initial pilot I changed the Mississippi to the Arkansas river as too many people had underestimated the difference between the other two rivers and so a placebo analysis based on the original question would not have been useful.

from people who devoted their full attention to this study. This will not affect in any way the payment you will receive for taking this survey. In your honest opinion, should we use your responses, or should we discard your responses since you did not devote your full attention to the questions so far?

- Yes, I have devoted full attention to the questions so far and I think you should use my responses for your study.
- No, I have not devoted full attention to the questions so far and I think you should not use my responses for your study.

Part II: Pre-treatment experience of Social Mobility

Q1: Please think about your present job (or your last one if you don't have one now). If you compare this job to the job your father had when you were growing up, would you say that the status of your job is:

- Much higher than your father's
- Higher
- About equal
- Lower
- Much lower than your father's
- I never had a job
- My father did not have a job while I was growing up
- I don't know

Q2: Please now think again about your present job (or your last one if you don't have one now). If you compare this job to the job your mother had when you were growing up, would you say that the status of your job is:

- Much higher than your mother's
- Higher
- About equal
- Lower

- Much lower than your mother's
- I never had a job
- My mother did not have a job while I was growing up
- I don't know

Q3: When you were growing up, compared with other families back then, would you say your family income was:

- Far below average
- Below average
- Average
- Above average
- Far above average

Q4: Right now, compared with other households, would you say your household income is:

- Far below average
- Below average
- Average
- Above average
- Far above average

Part III: Treatment & Control

Treatment:

We will now tell you, based on the information you gave us earlier about your own job and the jobs your parents had when you grew up, whether you have objectively experienced upward, downward or no social mobility.

The data we use is based on the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO88) and the International Standard of Occupational Status (ISEI).

Based on the information you gave us, you experienced high upward mobility/upward mobility/no mobility/ downward mobility/high downward mobility.

Control:

We will now tell you, based on the answer you gave us earlier about the two rivers in North America, the Missouri and the Arkansas river, whether you have objectively overestimated, underestimated or correctly estimated the difference in length between the two rivers.

The data we use is based on the book "Rivers of North America" by Arthur C. Benke and Colbert E. Cushing.

Based on the response you gave us, you overestimated/correctly estimated/underestimated the difference in length between the two rivers.

Part IV: Post-treatment preferences for redistribution and beliefs

Q5: Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements:

1. It is the responsibility of the government to reduce the differences in income between people with high incomes and those with low incomes.
2. Differences in income in your country are too large.
3. The government should spend less on benefits for the poor.
4. The government should provide basic income for all.
5. In your country, a person born into the lowest income quintile has a good chance of improving their standard of living as an adult.
6. In your country, everybody has a chance to make it and be economically successful.
7. In your country, income differences are the result of differences in effort rather than luck.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree

- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Can't choose

Q6: Please tick one box for each of these to show how important you think it is for getting ahead in life...

1. How important is coming from a wealthy family?
2. How important is having well-educated parents?
3. How important is knowing the right people?

- Essential
- Very important
- Fairly important
- Not very important
- Not important at all
- Can't choose

Q7: Do you think people with high incomes should pay a larger share of their income in taxes than those with low incomes, the same share, or a smaller share?

- Much larger share
- Larger
- The same share
- Smaller Much smaller share
- Can't choose

Q8: To what extent do you believe that income differences arise from luck and to what extent from differences in efforts and skills? (Scale from 0 - 'from luck' to 10 - 'from effort and skills')
Q9: To what extent do you think it is acceptable for income differences to exist if they arise from luck? (Scale from 0 - 'not acceptable at all' to 10 - 'completely acceptable')

Q10: Do you think you personally benefit from redistribution by the government? (Scale from 0 - 'Not at all to my benefit' to 10 - 'Completely to my benefit')

Part V: End

C1: Do you feel that this survey was biased?

- Yes, left-wing bias
- Yes, right-wing bias
- No, it did not feel biased

C2: Did you find the information we provided you with believable?
C3: Do you have any feedback or impressions regarding this survey?