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### Recommended Citation

Jorgensen, Paul and Jones, Michael and Song, Geoboo, Prospects for Campaign Finance Reform: The Role of Policy Narratives, Cultural Predispositions, and Political Knowledge in Collective Policy Preference Formation (September 25, 2015). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2665538> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2665538>

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**Prospects for Campaign Finance Reform: The Role of Policy Narratives, Cultural Predispositions, and Political Knowledge in Collective Policy Preference Formation\***

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## **Prospects for Campaign Finance Reform: The Role of Policy Narratives, Cultural Predispositions, and Political Knowledge in Collective Policy Preference Formation**

### **Abstract**

*Objective:* Although campaign finance is a growing concern, pollsters rarely ask the public about reform. We use the variation in public support for campaign finance reform to determine factors important to collective policy preference formation. *Methods:* Using a national survey, we factor analyze the latent dimensions of various reforms, and rely on an experimental design to explain the role cultural theory, policy narratives, and political knowledge plays in preference formation. *Results:* The reform debate groups along two dimensions: adding or removing limitations, or ending the dependence on money altogether. We show policy narratives are most influential, and cultural theory has more explanatory value, among those with higher levels of political knowledge, and policy narratives tend to increase support among those who already support reform, and mitigate the opposition from other cultural types. *Conclusion:* If it were up to the public, prospects for campaign finance reform, even public financing, would be high.

**Keywords:** Campaign finance reform, narrative policy framework, cultural theory, political knowledge, public opinion

*For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption.*

~Acts 2:27~<sup>1</sup>

### **Campaign Finance Reform for Whom?**

The current conservative majority on the Supreme Court has created regulatory purgatory in election policy. Steadfast assertions that money equals speech, and that corruption is nothing more than *quid pro quo*, have marked this era of deregulation in campaign finance. Coupled with declines in voter turnout, the warning signs of the *Citizens United Era* are quite dire. Walter Dean Burnham (2010: 26) was an early voice calling our attention to these trends: “In the domain of money in elections, of buying America, *Citizens United* is not the first step, but the last. Welcome to 1895 everybody!” Finding a majoritarian voice on this subject will prove difficult, but collective judgment remains.

By January of 2012, large donors could not stay away from national television. Foster Friess, trained as a skillful money manager, gave one million dollars to the pro-Santorum Super PAC, the Red White and Blue Fund, between early November 2011 and the end of January 2012. Ted Koppel commented:

You talk to most Americans out there and say meet my friend Foster here and he just gave a million or more dollars to Rick Santorum and he says he doesn’t expect anything back in return, and they’re going to look at each other and say ‘yeah sure’ and roll their eyes.

Foster Friess replied, “No, I expect a lot in return.”<sup>2</sup> Putting aside Friess’s flirtations with *quid pro quo* corruption, Koppel’s perception of the American public is telling. Could it be that most Americans know something that only a select group of political scientists are willing to admit?

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<sup>1</sup> English Standard Version translation

<sup>2</sup> Not even Brian Williams could fabricate this story. It appeared on *Rock Center with Brian Williams*, 16 January 2012.

Studies identifying the influence of moneyed interests in policy formulation are not as rare as some in the profession would like to believe (Baumgartner and Leech, 1998: 45). Using over two centuries of data, scholars find that coalitions of political elites, operating within institutions, do the bidding of wealthy individuals and groups (e.g., Beard, 1935; Ferguson, 1995; Ferguson, Jorgensen, and Chen, 2013; Ferguson and Rogers, 1986; Winters and Page, 2009). The U.S. public has shown the capacity to operate outside electoral and party processes to propel action (Piven, 2006). Occupy Wall Street, and to a much lesser extent, the Tea Party, drew attention to the need of working outside existing institutions to change policy, and it may be a sign of things to come. Alas, campaign finance does not appear on the radar of most public opinion pollsters.

Using a national survey focused solely on campaign finance reform, we seek answers to the following questions: (1) what is the range, and dimensions, of public support for various campaign finance proposals, and (2) what policy narratives are more persuasive and why? Using exploratory factor analysis, we show the two conceptual dimensions of reform proposals are *restriction* and *dependence*. Some proposals simply limit or expand the use of private money in campaigns, while others seek to end the dependence on private money altogether. With advocacy on this second dimension increasing in this *Citizens United* era (e.g., Lessig, 2011), we use an experimental design to determine if this advocacy can place robust campaign finance reform on the public agenda.

In this experimental design, we combine the Narrative Policy Framework of agenda setting (Jones, McBeth, and Shanahan, 2014; Stone, 1989) with cultural theory (Thompson, Ellis, and Wildavsky, 1990) and political knowledge to understand the nuance of collective preference formation. One of the drawbacks of the agenda setting literature is that it rarely accounts for the predispositions of the audience to accept one policy narrative over the other (e.g., Stone, 1989: 293). Utilizing Ordinary Least Squares regressions and Bayesian posterior simulations, we show (1) policy narratives are most influential, and cultural theory has more explanatory value, among those with

higher levels of political knowledge, and (2) policy narratives tend to increase support among those cultural types who already support reform, and mitigate the opposition from other cultural types. The mood in the U.S. is to prevent the decay and corruption of its laws, but the future of our campaign finance laws is unknown.

### **Data: Asking the Public about Campaign Finance Reform**

Reports on the public opinion on campaign finance are rare. To help fill this void, one of us working with the Cultural Cognition Project at Yale University, with funding from the Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics at Harvard University, wrote and administered a nationally representative survey (census balanced) of 2,450 respondents focused exclusively on campaign finance reform. It was fielded between March 30 and April 9, 2012. YouGov, a commonly subcontracted data procurer for social science research of this nature, collected the responses, and like many other Internet survey companies (e.g., Survey Sampling Inc., Harris Interactive), maintains a large pool of Internet respondents from which to draw. This pool is sufficiently diverse and numerous that census balanced is achieved based upon random draws filtered by census-based demographics (e.g., race, gender, income, etc.) (for a discussion of the appropriateness of this type of sample, please see Best *et al.*, 2001 and Berrens *et al.*, 2003).

In this article, we analyze part of the survey's experimental design. We measured each respondent's answers to cultural-type questions, then subjected some of them to different treatments, or policy narratives, about the harm caused by our campaign finance system. After these treatments, each respondent registered their level of support on fourteen different campaign finance reform proposals. In the following two sections, we discuss how we constructed our dependent variable and independent variables. Our dependent variable is the variation in support for an index of reform proposals seeking to end the dependence on private money in campaigns. Our independent variables of interest are individuals' cultural orientations (e.g., individualism,

egalitarianism, and hierarchism) and levels of political knowledge, both measured from a battery of questions. Among other independent variables of our primary concern is policy narrative on campaign finance reform, which was embedded into “narrative” experimental design. We will discuss these variables and measures in more detail in the following sections.

### **Constructing the Dependent Variable: The Dimensions of Campaign Finance Reform**

Despite ranking low on the public’s list of concerns, respondents still want to reform the U.S. campaign finance system. When asked in the spring of 2012 to rank the importance of campaign finance on a scale of 1 (most important) to 10 (least important), the mean response for campaign finance was 8.28, and only .5 percent of respondents ranked it first in importance, compared to 50 percent for economy and jobs. Over 90 percent of respondents ranked the issue in the bottom half of all issues, with nearly 40 percent ranking it last; however, when asked if the system needs to be changed, over 80 percent of respondents agreed with changing the system because it is either “broken,” or “has some problems.”<sup>3</sup>

We asked respondents to rank fourteen reform ideas on a scale of 1 (strongly oppose) to 6 (strongly support), and then determined the latent dimensions of these responses using exploratory factor analysis. We asked specifically about: spending limits on congressional candidates (*Spending Limits*); television advertising limits on congressional candidates (*Advertising Limits*); banning political action committee (PAC) contributions to congressional candidates (*PAC Ban*); prohibiting corporations from spending money in elections using a constitutional amendment (*Corporation Amendment*); limiting independent expenditures by corporations and individuals using a constitutional amendment (*Independent Expenditure Amendment*); requiring congressional candidates to raise a certain

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<sup>3</sup> We obtained these figures from the control groups across two of our surveys,  $n=650$ . Since our surveys incorporate experimental designs, it can be difficult to obtain this type of descriptive data without the experimental treatments tainting the responses.

percentage of funds from their own states (*Raise Money in Home State*); banning foreign corporations from spending money in U.S. elections (*Ban Foreign Corporate Contributions*); requiring shareholder approval before corporations can spend money in elections (*Shareholder Approval*); raising limits for individuals (*Raise Limits for Individuals*); removing all limits for all individuals, corporations, and unions (*Remove Limits*); raising limits for political parties (*Raise Limits for Parties*); providing public funding for congressional candidates (*public funding*); providing free media time and free postage to candidates (*Free Media Time*); and providing public matching funds for candidates (*Matching Funds*).

In order to understand the underlying dimensionality of the campaign finance reform debate, we used exploratory factor analysis to obtain the shared variance among our respondents' level of support for reforms. Since some of these items have a non-normal distribution and the underlying factors might be highly correlated, we performed combinations of principal axis and maximum likelihood extractions with oblique and orthogonal rotations. We report our two-factor solution using the maximum likelihood extraction with an orthogonal rotation because the principal axis extraction produced no substantial differences to our factor solution reported here, and the correlation between these two factors is minimal. Our analytical results meet the basic specifications for a "clean" factor solution: no double-loaders and no loadings below .3 on both dimensions.

#### TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

In Table 1, Factor 1 represents the *restriction* dimension of campaign finance reform. The positive loadings represent more limitations on spending (e.g., advertising limits, banning PACs, banning corporate money), while the negative loadings represent increasing the amount of money in politics and easing existing restrictions (e.g., removing all limits). While an exploratory factor analysis can force these negative loadings into its own factor, the underlying dimensionality is the same as the positive loaders. Factor 2 represents the *dependence* dimension. Reforming the system to include



public funding, free media time, or a matching funds system would reduce the dependency on private money, not just limiting the amount.

We construct our dependent variable from the dependence dimension for the analyses that follow, which we name the Campaign Finance Reform (CFR) Policy Preference Index (Cronbach's  $\alpha=0.72$ ), for two reasons. First, it is timely. More campaign finance reform advocates prefer these types of solutions in the *Citizens United* era (e.g., Lessig, 2011). Second, it is theoretically interesting. It represents the most difficult case to show the influence of policy narratives, cultural theory, and political knowledge. In our analysis, based on the mean response, respondents ranked free media time and public funding in the bottom three of all reform ideas, only above removing all limits.<sup>4</sup> Our index has a mean of 2.67 (on a scale ranging from 1 to 6), but does exhibit a fair amount of variation, with a standard deviation of 1.34. Can policy narratives increase support to end the dependence on money in politics? If so, who can or cannot be convinced? Does the influence of policy narratives and cultural theory require political knowledge?

### **Experimental Design: Cultural Theory, Policy Narratives, and Political Knowledge**

We construct a model of collective policy preference formation from two sets of variables, one endogenous to the individual and the other exogenous. Missing from much of the analysis on agenda setting is the cultural predispositions of those who political actors are trying to influence (Stone 1989: 293). Culture is widely recognized as an important input in helping individuals understand and make sense of the world around them (e.g., Thompson, Ellis, and Wildavsky, 1990). For largely practical reasons (as opposed to taking a philosophical stance on the appropriateness of quantifying culture), we use the Cultural Theory (CT) of Mary Douglas and Aaron Wildavsky to operationalize culture (see Mamadouh, 1999 and Swedlow, 2011 for an overview of this material), which understands an individual's cultural orientation to fall along two conceptual dimensions of

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<sup>4</sup> Based on our control group analysis across two surveys (n=650), see footnote 4.

sociality. The first dimension – group – captures the extent to which individuals prefer operating and living within groups. The second dimension – grid – captures the extent to which groups prescribe and/or constrain individual behavior. Intersected, the two dimensions produce four prototypical cultural types: Individualists, egalitarians, hierarchs and fatalists. In our survey, we operationalize these categories using survey questions designed by the Cultural Cognition Project at Yale University, asking a series of randomly ordered questions on a 6-point agreement scale.

Individualists have low group and low grid and thus prefer to operate in environments and social systems where exchange, competition, markets and the like are the norm. Strong individualists score high in agreement to the following questions: the government interferes far too much in our everyday lives; it is not the government's business to try to protect people from themselves; the government should stop telling people how to live their lives.

Egalitarians have low grid, but high group. These individuals prefer a world devoid of hierarchies and seek to minimize differences, commonly defining themselves in reference to outsiders (usually the other cultural types). Strong egalitarians score high in agreement to the following questions: our society would be better off if the distribution of wealth was more equal; we need to dramatically reduce inequalities between the rich and the poor, whites and people of color, and men and women; discrimination against minorities is still a very serious problem in our society.

Hierarchs have high grid and high group. They prefer a world where people submit to their proper roles, defined in a myriad of ways from expertise, social class, profession, etc. Strong hierarchs score high in agreement to the following questions: sometimes government needs to make laws that keep people from hurting themselves; the government should do more to advance society's goals, even if that means limiting the freedom and choices of individuals; government should put limits on the choices individuals can make so they do not get in the way of what is good for society.

Using the data from these nine CT items, we conducted a factor analysis from which three latent dimensions were extracted. The rotated factor structure matrix (generated using an orthogonal rotation) showed that the three relevant CT survey items were loaded high (greater than .5) on each related cultural orientation dimension while loaded low (less than .5) on the remaining two unrelated dimensions. We use this factor score as an index for the corresponding cultural orientation: individualism (Cronbach's  $\alpha=0.84$ ), egalitarianism (Cronbach's  $\alpha=0.86$ ), and hierarchism (Cronbach's  $\alpha=0.76$ ). We expect strong individualists to favor removing limits to campaign finance contributions and spending, while we expect strong egalitarians and hierarchs to support restrictions on campaign finance, and perhaps support ending the dependence on money altogether. These CT measures have proven a staple in helping explain individual policy preferences across a host of policy issues ranging from climate change (Jones, 2014) to childhood vaccinations (Song, 2014).<sup>5</sup>

Our second set of variables of interest relates to exogenous influences on individual preference formation and change – or how information is communicated or delivered. Recent scholarship and research within public policy has shown narrative communication to be an important explanatory variable for policy preferences<sup>6</sup> (e.g., Jones and Song, 2014). Consequently, we focus here on how narrative communications about campaign finance reform might influence how individuals process campaign finance information. To operationalize narrative, we rely on the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF) (McBeth *et al.*, 2014 for an overview of the NPF).

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<sup>5</sup> Fatalists have low group but high grid. These individuals are subjected to hierarchies (high grid), but have little ability or mobility within (hence the low group). For the fatalist, life is often seen as random, they view most situations as out of their control, and consequently engage in a strategy of survival and withdrawal. We do not try to identify these individuals in this survey.

<sup>6</sup> See Jones *et al.* (2014) for an overview of this literature.

The NPF is a structural take on narrative communication that disaggregates narratives into subcomponents amenable to quantification and the design of experimental treatments such as the one presented here (Jones and McBeth, 2010). The NPF identifies four policy narrative elements: 1) setting, 2) characters (hero, villain, victim), 3) plot and, 4) a moral of the story (i.e., policy solution). Several studies have shown that subcomponents are helpful in explaining individual policy preferences. For example, Jones (2014) finds that individual affect for a story's protagonist or hero is positively associated with policy solutions depicted in policy stories about climate change; similarly, Shanahan et al., (2014) finds that plots where a villain is shown to act intentionally to do harm is more powerful in persuading than when a villain is portrayed as inadvertently causing harm. The research presented here focuses on this plot dimension examining intentional villains (where blame can be directly attributed to a clear individual or group) versus systematic villains (where a large inhuman and abstract system is to blame for harm) (for further discussion of these mechanisms see Stone, 1989).

We use two different narratives as treatments ( $n=700$ ), and compare the effect of those treatments to a control group ( $n=350$ ). The control group saw an info-graphic, see Figure 1, with facts about U.S. campaign finance. The treatment groups, in addition to viewing the info-graphic, were exposed randomly to one of two narratives that situate the campaign finance system into a larger narrative about harm as a consequence of this system.

#### FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

Our narrative treatments begin with the same first clause: “Why do most members of Congress refuse to engage in behavior that would fix the economy, lower the budget deficit, and provide jobs for everyday Americans? Not because normal Americans aren’t still out of work and desperately in need of such fixes.” The Generic Mechanical (GM) narrative treatment follows the first clause with, *but because the system is broken and members of Congress must spend the majority of their time begging for money that*

*they need to get reelected.* The Generic Intentional (GI) narrative treatment follows the first clause with, *but because special interests contribute billions to their campaigns to make sure their self-interested needs are met at the expense of the rest of us.*

To examine the effect of general political knowledge, we create a knowledge index and then perform a subgroup analysis on the influences of cultural predispositions and policy narratives on individuals' preferences toward campaign finance reform for respondents with low levels (below the index mean) and high levels (above the index mean) of political knowledge. For that end, we asked the following five multiple-choice questions: which party currently has the most members in the House of Representatives; what public office is now held by Joe Biden; how much of a majority is required for the U.S. Senate and House to override a presidential veto; whose responsibility is it to nominate judges to the federal courts; which party would you say is more conservative than the other at the national level? We generated a knowledge index (0 to 5), essentially the number of correct answers, with a mean of 4.01.

We include age, education, income, sex, and race as control variables. Race is a dichotomous measure, coded 1 for non-Hispanic Whites and 0 for non-White (including Hispanic). Gender is also a nominal scale measure, coded 1 for male and 0 for female. Age is measured as age in years. Education indicates individual's level of education and was measured on a 6-point scale ranging from 1 (=Did not graduate from high school) to 6 (=Postgraduate degree (MA, MBA, MD, JD, PhD, etc.) with higher scores indicating a higher level of education held by an individual. Finally, income (i.e., estimated annual family income) is measured on a 12-point scale ranging from 1 (=Less than \$10,000) to 12 (=\$150,000 or more). On average, survey respondents were approximately 50 years old with a median annual family income of between \$40,000 and \$50,000. Out of 2,450 survey participants, 73% were non-Hispanic Whites and 48% were male, while 59% held at least a college degree (or greater).

## Empirical Findings: The Power of Policy Narratives and Political Knowledge

We run six models using Ordinary Least Square (OLS) regression<sup>7</sup>. Table 2 presents the first three models using the GM treatment group, and Table 3 presents the last three models using the GI treatment group. In Model 1 of Table 2, those who display strong egalitarianism (+0.392,  $p < 0.01$ ) and strong hierarchism (+0.399,  $p < 0.01$ ) tend to support CFR policy, while strong individualists oppose CFR policy (-0.371,  $p < 0.01$ ). In addition, there is a fair degree of treatment effect of the generic mechanical CFR narrative on the formation of mass opinion regarding CFR policy. Those who were exposed to the GM narrative treatment are more supportive of CFR policy by a sizable margin when compared to those who were in the control group and exposed only to the info-graphic (+0.179,  $p < 0.1$ ). However, when we examine the exact same relationships (between variables) among those who possess low levels of political knowledge in Model 2, such relationships are not as strong or become statistically insignificant. The GM treatment has no effect within the low political knowledge group and the overall explanatory power of the model decreases significantly (from *adjusted*  $R^2$  of 0.190 in Model 1 to *adjusted*  $R^2$  of 0.082 in Model 2). Contrastingly, when we investigate the same relationships between variables of our primary concern among those

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<sup>7</sup> One could argue that double-sided tobit regression is a more appropriate approach in data analysis of this sort where the measure of the dependent variable can be thought of as being censored on both sides (i.e., left and right sides). Accordingly, while utilizing maximum likelihood estimation, we implemented the tobit regression analysis using the exact same model specifications employed for the OLS regression discussed here, and found that the results are consistent with those from the OLS regression (See Appendices 1 and 2 for more detailed results from tobit regression). Mainly due to the simplicity of interpretation, our discussion that follows will focus on the results from OLS regression.

who possess high levels of political knowledge in Model 3, we found that such relationships become much stronger in comparison with Model 1 or Model 2, with overall explanatory power of the model increased significantly (from *adjusted R*<sup>2</sup> of 0.190 in Model 1 or *adjusted R*<sup>2</sup> of 0.082 in Model 2 to *adjusted R*<sup>2</sup> of 0.342 in Model 3).

#### TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

Turning to Table 3, the specification of Models 4, 5, and 6 are similar to those in Table 2, but Table 3 reports the findings of the GI narrative treatment. *Ceteris paribus*, individuals' cultural predispositions contribute to the formation of their preference for CFR policy. Strong egalitarians (+0.379,  $p < 0.01$ ) and strong hierarchs (+0.394,  $p < 0.01$ ) are more supportive of CFR policy, while strong individualists are less supportive of CFR policy (−0.383,  $p < 0.01$ ). However, we found no discernable treatment effect of the GI narrative on the dependent variable. When we estimate the exact same regression model among those who are less knowledgeable about politics (Model 5), the associations between variables we found in Model 4 become blurry or weakened; the regression coefficient for individualism is not statistically significant, and the *adjusted R*<sup>2</sup> of 0.140 is significantly smaller than the *adjusted R*<sup>2</sup> of 0.210 in Model 4. One notable finding is that even though there was no direct significant treatment effect of the GI narrative treatment on CFR policy preferences, such narrative treatment mediates the relationship between low-knowledge hierarchs and the dependent variable. That is, as mentioned earlier, hierarchism is positively associated with the dependent variable and this positive relationship grows stronger among members of the GI narrative treatment group in comparison with those in the control group (+0.230,  $p < 0.1$ ). When we estimated the same model among politically sophisticated individuals in Model 6, we found that the estimated relationships of our primary concern becomes much stronger in comparison with Model 4 or Model 5, along with a significant increase of *adjusted R*<sup>2</sup> of 0.340 from that of 0.210 in Model 4 or 0.140 in Model 5. It is also noteworthy that though there is no statistically significant direct treatment effect

of the GI narrative treatment, the GI treatment mediates the relationship between individualism and CFR policy preference among members of the high political knowledge group; the negative relationship between individualism and CFR policy preference is weaker among those who were exposed to the GI narrative treatment when compared to those in the control group (+0.327,  $p < 0.05$ ).

#### TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

We end our analysis with a Bayesian posterior simulation to approximate the distributions of the predicted CFR policy preference by prototypical cultural type, narrative treatment, and political knowledge (e.g., King, Tomz, and Wittenberg, 2000; Moyer and Song, 2015; Ripberger, Jenkins-Smith and Herron, 2011; Song, Silva, and Jenkins-Smith, 2014). First, we ran simplified (no controls of race, gender, education, income) OLS regressions similar to those Tables 2 and 3. Second, using the estimated parameters of the aforementioned models and the related variance-covariance matrices, we conducted 1,000 iterative simulations (Gelman and Hill, 2007), which resulted in 1,000 different vectors of simulated coefficients for each model discussed in the first step of analytical procedure. Third, we constructed prototypical cultural types of “hypothetical” individuals as those to be assumed to score one standard deviation above the mean of a particular cultural orientation index and one standard deviation below the mean of the remaining two cultural orientation indices (e.g., Moyer and Song, 2015; Kester and Song, 2015; Ripberger, Jenkins-Smith and Herron, 2011; Song, Silva, and Jenkins-Smith, 2014). Finally, in each of the two sets of 1,000 different simulated regression equations fitted for the low and high political knowledge groups obtained from the second step of this analytical procedure, we imputed the combination of cultural theory index scores characterizing three prototypical cultural types and appropriate values representing the membership of experimental groups (i.e., control group (=0) vs. GM treatment group (=1) or control group (=0) vs. GI treatment group (=1)) for remaining terms on the right side of the simulated regression



equations. From this procedure, we acquired distributions of predicted CFR policy preference by three distinctive cultural types and three CFR narrative treatment groups (including control group) in two different subsets of the original sample (i.e., low political knowledge group vs. high political knowledge group).

Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the distributions of predicted CFR policy preference by cultural type (i.e., egalitarian, hierarch, and individualist) and CFR narrative experimental treatment group (i.e., Control group, GM treatment group, and GI treatment group) obtained from this simulation analysis. The horizontal axis represents predicted CFR policy preference ranging from 1 to 6 with higher scores indicating greater support, while the vertical axis indicates the probability density function of distribution of such preference with high scores meaning greater predicted frequency. Blue, gray, and red represent egalitarian, hierarch, and individualist, respectively, while histograms filled with each of these colors show the distributions for treatment groups, whereas empty histograms outlined with those colors represent distributions for the control group.

#### FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE

Figure 2 displays the distributions of predicted CFR policy preference by cultural type and GM narrative treatment. When examining such distributions among those who hold a low level of political knowledge (i.e., panel (a)), overall, individualists tend to oppose CFR policy, followed by egalitarians and hierarchs, while the effects of GM narrative treatment is not particularly discernable. When evaluating the same distributions among those who hold a high level of political knowledge (i.e., panel (b)), the overall distributional pattern of a cultural divide on the CFR policy issue is sustained; egalitarians are the strongest supporters for CFR policy followed by hierarchs, but individualists remain against such policies. However, it is noteworthy that this attitudinal divide on CFR policy between different cultural types is much deeper among politically sophisticated people when compared to politically less sophisticated people. Another interesting finding is that within this

high political knowledge group, the GM narrative treatment holds sizable effects in strengthening individuals' support for CFR policy across different cultural types.

### FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE

Figure 3 visualizes the distributions of predicted CFR policy preference by cultural type and GI narrative treatment. In general, the distributional patterns are quite similar with the results shown in Figure 2. Regardless of levels of political knowledge, individualists hold the strongest opposition to CFR policy in relation to egalitarians and hierarchs, even though the high political knowledge group (i.e., panel (b)) exhibits more of a gap in terms of CFR policy preference between different cultural types when compared to the low political knowledge group (i.e., panel (a)), especially when the gaps between individualists and egalitarians are concerned. Pertaining to the effect of GI narrative treatment on CFR policy preference, it is clear that such effects exist to a certain degree only among those who are highly knowledgeable about general politics, with the exception of hierarchs.

### **Implications: Prospects for Campaign Finance Reform**

In June 2013, Gallup released a poll showing 50 percent of all respondents favored a public financing system for federal elections (41 percent of Republicans), and 79 percent of all respondents would favor raising and spending limits (78 percent of Republicans). While we do not show quite that level of support for a publicly financed system, we do show how the support could build into an agenda item. Targeted attempts to push an *intentional* policy narrative of organized interests benefitting at the cost of the public would likely mitigate opposition among politically knowledgeable individualists. Mass appeals using a *mechanical* policy narrative of congressional members working within a flawed system would likely increase support for public finance among politically knowledgeable egalitarians and hierarchs, while curbing dissent among knowledgeable

individualists. The continued use of these policy narratives, along with skyrocketing campaign spending numbers, will likely increase support for reform. If it were up to the public, prospects for campaign finance reform, even public financing, would be high.

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**Table 1: Two-Factor Solution of Campaign Finance Reform Proposals\***

Reform Proposal	Factor 1	Factor 2
Spending Limits	.745	
Advertising Limits	.656	
PAC Ban	.656	
Corporation Amendment	.731	
Independent Expenditure Amendment	.708	
Raise Money in Home State	.428	
Ban Foreign Corporate Contributions	.435	
Shareholder Approval	.523	
Raise Limits for Individuals	-.428	
Remove Limits	-.595	
Raise Limits for Parties	-.439	
Public Funding		.681
Free Media Time		.610
Matching Funds		.722

\*Results are the Rotated Factor Matrix, from a Maximum Likelihood Estimation and Varimax

Rotation; n=2264; factor loadings of below .3 in absolute value are suppressed; Raise Limits for Individuals, Raise Limits for Parties, Raise Money in Home State, Ban Foreign Corporate Contributions, and Shareholder Approval all had extracted communalities less than .300.



**Table 2: OLS Regression Results for GM Treatment**

	<i>Dependent variable:</i> CFR Policy Preference Index		
	All (1)	Low political knowledge group (2)	High political knowledge group (3)
Egalitarianism	0.392*** (0.077)	0.239* (0.123)	0.422*** (0.115)
Individualism	-0.371*** (0.077)	-0.091 (0.117)	-0.620*** (0.123)
Hierarchism	0.399*** (0.076)	0.277** (0.108)	0.482*** (0.119)
Treatment (1=GM treatment)	0.179* (0.103)	0.007 (0.152)	0.327** (0.161)
Egalitarianism×Treatment	-0.027 (0.102)	-0.017 (0.161)	0.051 (0.151)
Individualism×Treatment	0.051 (0.103)	-0.064 (0.150)	0.158 (0.165)
Hierarchism×Treatment	-0.057 (0.106)	0.119 (0.145)	-0.161 (0.172)
Race (1=White)	0.101 (0.121)	-0.175 (0.171)	0.359* (0.198)
Gender (1=Male)	0.203* (0.107)	-0.034 (0.157)	0.209 (0.165)
Age	0.003 (0.004)	0.002 (0.005)	0.008 (0.005)
Education	0.057 (0.039)	0.079 (0.060)	0.015 (0.057)
Income	-0.007 (0.019)	-0.012 (0.029)	-0.017 (0.026)
(Constant)	2.145*** (0.238)	2.441*** (0.353)	1.947*** (0.388)
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.190	0.082	0.342
F statistic	12.34***	3.14***	11.51***
<i>n</i>	583	290	244

*Note:*

\*p&lt;0.1; \*\*p&lt;0.05; \*\*\*p&lt;0.01

**Table 3: OLS Regression Results for GI Treatment**

	<i>Dependent variable:</i> CFR Policy Preference Index		
	All (4)	Low political knowledge group (5)	High political knowledge group (6)
Egalitarianism	0.379*** (0.073)	0.211* (0.112)	0.426*** (0.113)
Individualism	-0.383*** (0.073)	-0.090 (0.107)	-0.637*** (0.121)
Hierarchism	0.394*** (0.072)	0.253** (0.098)	0.477*** (0.117)
Treatment (1=GI treatment)	-0.076 (0.098)	-0.152 (0.139)	0.094 (0.158)
Egalitarianism×Treatment	-0.023 (0.100)	-0.057 (0.147)	0.208 (0.157)
Individualism×Treatment	0.091 (0.102)	0.006 (0.147)	0.327** (0.163)
Hierarchism×Treatment	-0.021 (0.100)	0.230* (0.137)	-0.266 (0.163)
Race (1=White)	-0.170 (0.116)	-0.360** (0.163)	-0.012 (0.186)
Gender (1=Male)	0.339*** (0.102)	0.134 (0.147)	0.402** (0.159)
Age	0.006* (0.003)	0.001 (0.005)	0.010** (0.005)
Education	0.044 (0.036)	0.085 (0.055)	-0.018 (0.054)
Income	-0.025 (0.017)	-0.062** (0.026)	-0.019 (0.025)
(Constant)	2.287*** (0.225)	2.776*** (0.308)	2.151*** (0.419)
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.210	0.140	0.340
F Statistic	13.81***	4.87***	11.51***
<i>n</i>	580	287	246

*Note:*

\*p&lt;0.1; \*\*p&lt;0.05; \*\*\*p&lt;0.01

Figure 1: Info-Graphic about U.S. Campaign Finance

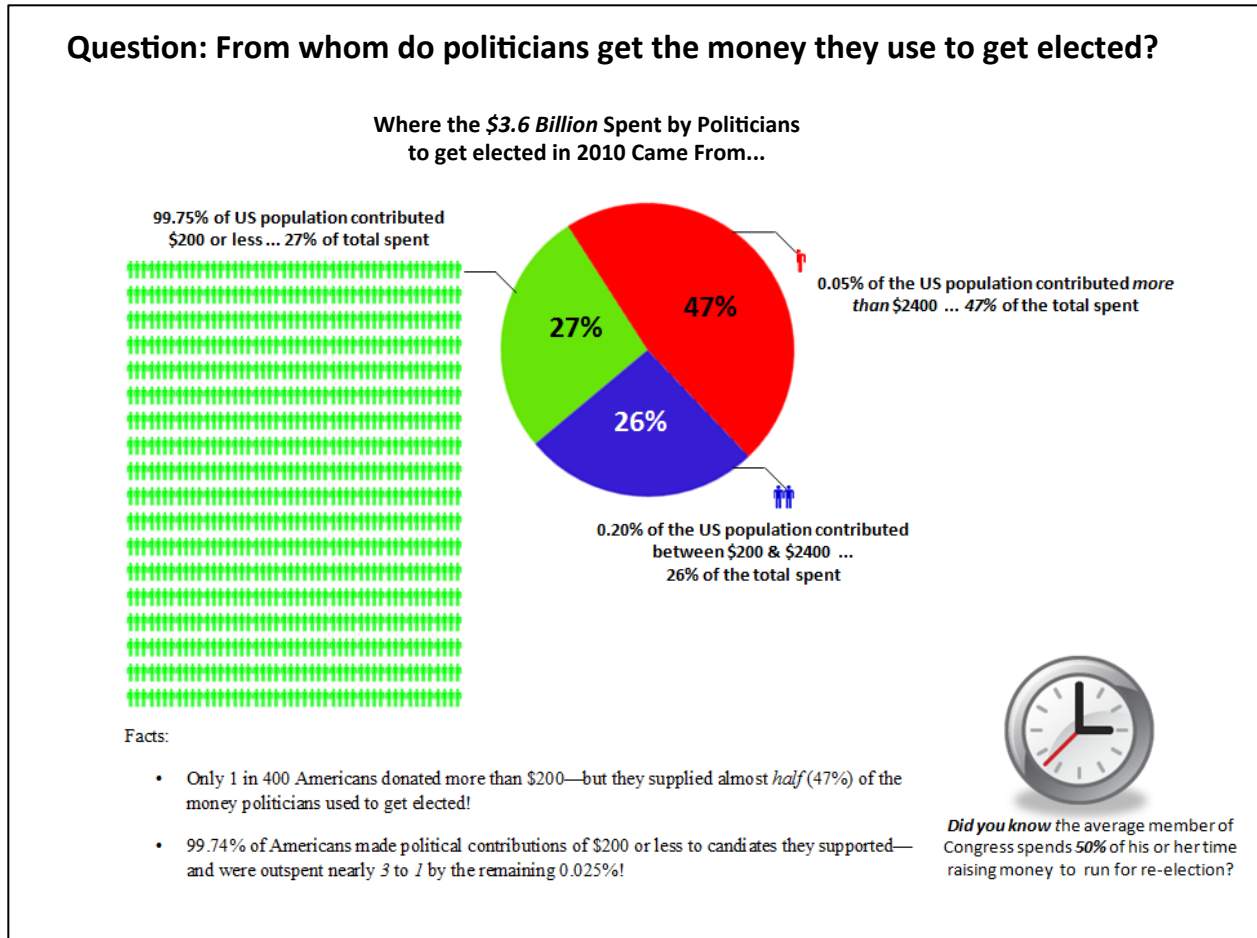
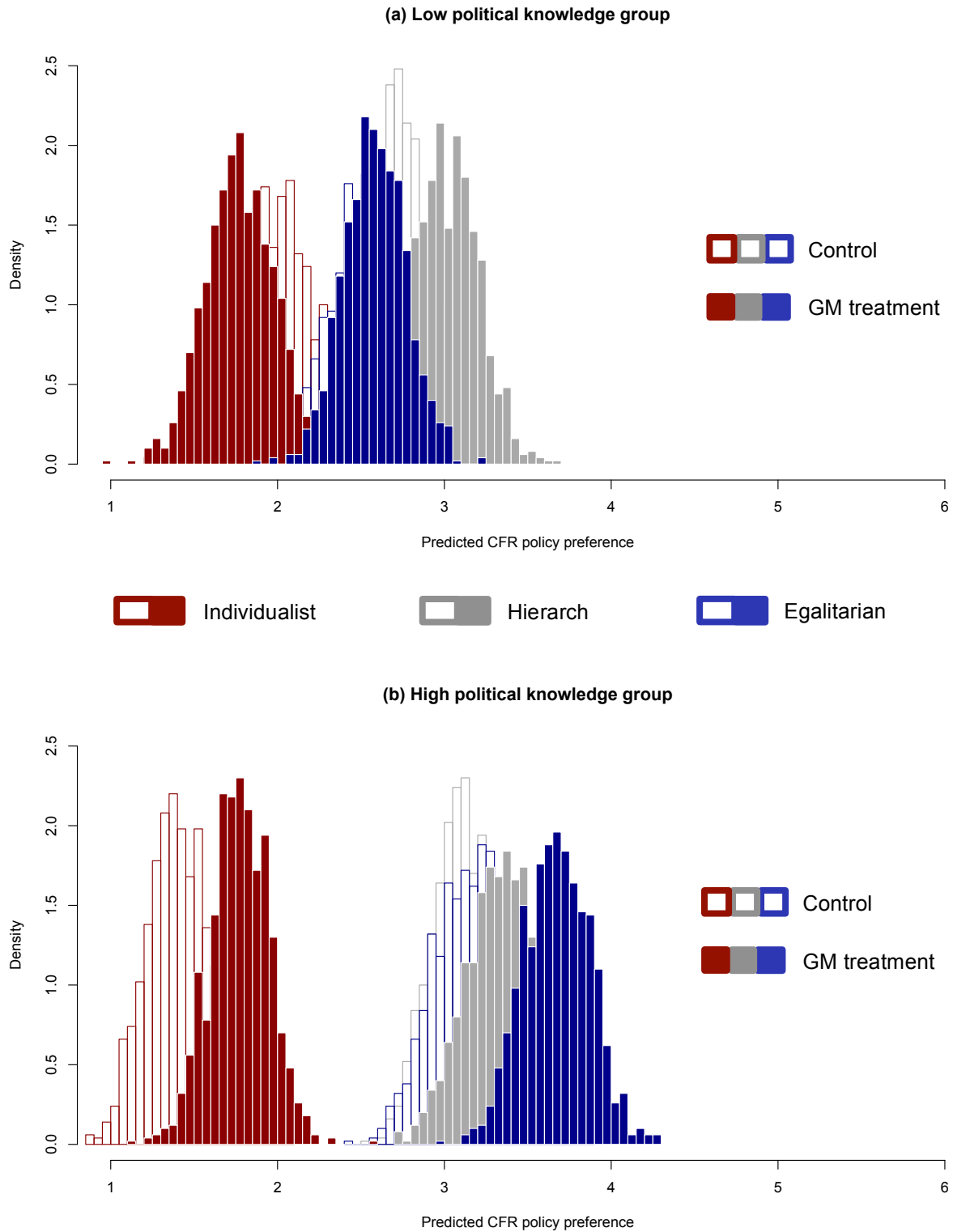
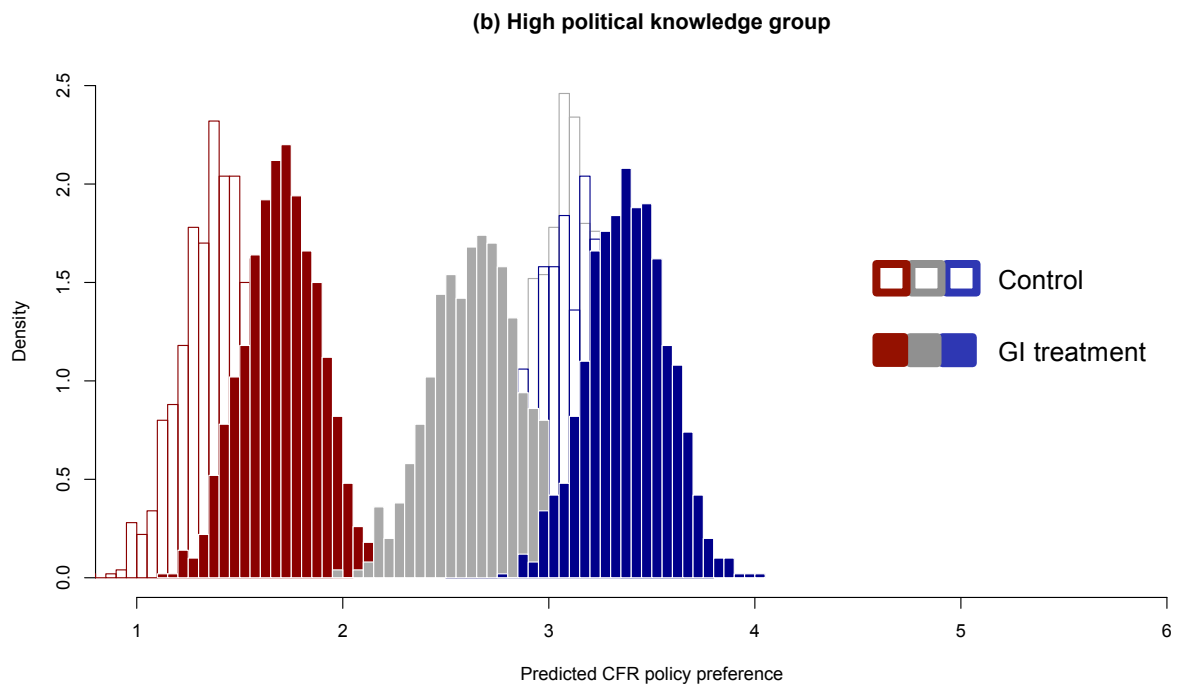
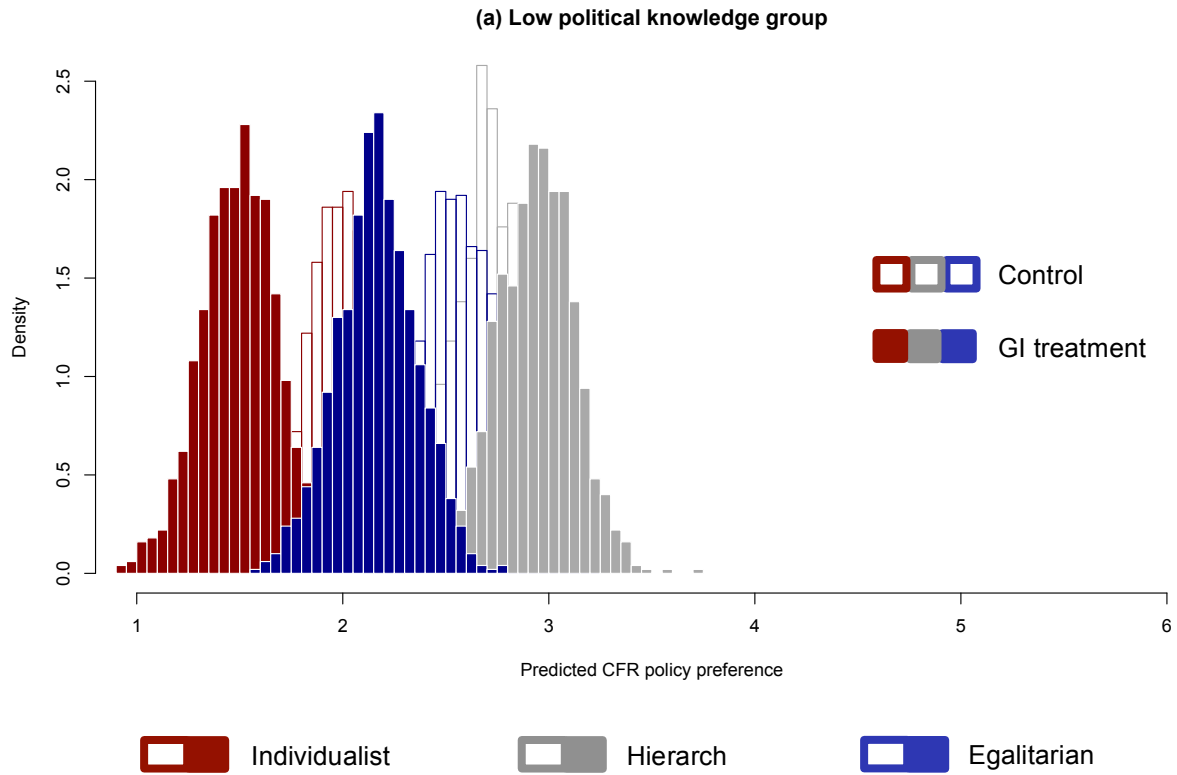


Figure 2: Predicting CFR Policy Preference by Cultural Type and GM Narrative Treatment



**Figure 3: Predicted CFR Policy Preference by Cultural Type and GI Narrative Treatment**



## Appendix 1: Tobit Regression Results for GM Treatment

	<i>Dependent variable:</i> CFR Policy Preference Index		
	All (1)	Low political knowledge group (2)	High political knowledge group (3)
Egalitarianism	0.495*** (0.097)	0.231 (0.149)	0.609*** (0.143)
Individualism	-0.460*** (0.097)	-0.130 (0.142)	-0.717*** (0.152)
Hierarchism	0.510*** (0.095)	0.327** (0.130)	0.651*** (0.148)
Treatment (1=GM treatment)	0.219* (0.130)	-0.073 (0.187)	0.429** (0.199)
Egalitarianism×Treatment	-0.054 (0.128)	0.050 (0.197)	-0.031 (0.188)
Individualism×Treatment	0.071 (0.129)	-0.067 (0.183)	0.177 (0.204)
Hierarchism×Treatment	-0.073 (0.132)	0.209 (0.176)	-0.277 (0.211)
Race (1=White)	0.136 (0.151)	-0.160 (0.208)	0.450* (0.247)
Gender (1=Male)	0.250* (0.134)	-0.046 (0.192)	0.264 (0.207)
Age	0.004 (0.004)	0.002 (0.001)	0.010 (0.006)
Education	0.058 (0.049)	0.081 (0.073)	0.018 (0.070)
Income	-0.007 (0.023)	-0.015 (0.035)	-0.015 (0.033)
Log-likelihood	-959.56	-479.47	-384.18
Wald-statistic	138.7***	36.9***	127.2***
<i>n</i>	583	290	244

*Note:*

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

## Appendix 2: Tobit Regression Results for GI Treatment

	<i>Dependent variable:</i> CFR Policy Preference Index		
	All (4)	Low political knowledge group (5)	High political knowledge group (6)
Egalitarianism	0.472*** (0.093)	0.203 (0.137)	0.603*** (0.145)
Individualism	-0.475*** (0.092)	-0.124 (0.130)	-0.747*** (0.154)
Hierarchism	0.496*** (0.091)	0.294** (0.119)	0.650*** (0.151)
Treatment (1=GI treatment)	-0.121 (0.125)	-0.271 (0.171)	0.125 (0.200)
Egalitarianism×Treatment	-0.042 (0.128)	0.006 (0.181)	0.169 (0.199)
Individualism×Treatment	0.086 (0.128)	-0.049 (0.180)	0.389* (0.206)
Hierarchism×Treatment	-0.014 (0.127)	0.326* (0.169)	-0.397* (0.163)
Race (1=White)	-0.199 (0.146)	-0.405* (0.199)	0.013 (0.235)
Gender (1=Male)	0.447*** (0.129)	0.210 (0.180)	0.509** (0.205)
Age	0.006 (0.004)	0.001 (0.006)	0.012* (0.007)
Education	0.037 (0.046)	0.089 (0.067)	-0.035 (0.069)
Income	-0.035 (0.022)	-0.073** (0.032)	-0.033 (0.031)
Log-likelihood	-923.92	-451.69	-382.29
Wald-statistic	155.5***	57.18***	123.3***
<i>n</i>	580	287	246

Note:

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01