

**The American Public and the Room to Maneuver:
Responsibility Attributions and Policy Efficacy in an Era of Globalization**

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Abstract

Despite the increasing integration of markets, most political scientists contend that governments retain much policy “room to maneuver.” Moreover, citizens presumably agree to further economic integration because they believe their governments can cushion the impacts of market forces. In this sense, globalization is compatible with democracy. Rarely, however, are data provided that demonstrate citizens’ appreciation for the room to maneuver, let alone their positive evaluation of it. Who do citizens identify as most responsible for the performance of the U.S. economy, elected officials or national and international market forces? What are the consequences of judgments about the room to maneuver for attitudes towards democracy?

This paper reports the results of an original experiment designed to answer these questions. We find that a good number of Americans believe that their government retains the room to maneuver. However, there exists a substantial minority that does not. This minority is defined primarily by their partisanship and level of education. Republican partisans and more educated citizens believe there is less room to maneuver more than Democratic partisans and less educated citizens. Also, while priming subjects to think about economic globalization does not affect their responsibility attributions, the choice set matters: When provided the option, a significant number of respondents assign responsibility to market forces rather than elected officials.

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1. Introduction

Most political economists today agree that, despite the increasing integration of world markets, governments retain much “room to maneuver.” According to this conventional wisdom, there remain major differences in monetary, tax, and spending policies and, concomitantly, significant differences across countries in prices, employment, and other macroeconomic outcomes (e.g., Bearce, 2007; Franzese, 2002; Iversen, 1999; 2005; Garrett, 1998; Mosley, 2000; Steinmo, 2002). Some scholars explain the openness of advanced industrial economies in terms of this room to maneuver. Citizens presumably agree to increased trade and direct foreign investment because they believe that through economic policies their governments can cushion the impacts of international economic forces (Ruggie, 1982, Scheve and Slaughter, 2001). In this sense, economic globalization is compatible with democracy.

However, current studies merely assume the public’s appreciation for the room to maneuver. Scholars *assert* citizens’ understanding and positive evaluation of their government’s capacity for managing the macroeconomy. In fact, no micro-level evidence has been produced that demonstrate such appreciation and(or) reasoning on the part of the American public. Yet evidence from other economically open democracies yields disturbing results. Illustrative are the findings of a 2001 British public opinion survey. When asked, “In today’s worldwide economy, how much influence do you think British governments have on the British economy?,” almost half (43%) answered either “not very much” or “hardly any.” (Heath *et al.*, 2002). A similar question asked in France in 1997 found that 53% thought their government had either “not very much” or “very little” room to maneuver (CEVIPOF *et al.*, 2001). And a 2001 poll of citizens in 15 European countries found that twice as many agreed with the statement “globalization cannot be controlled by governments” as disagreed with it (Christensen, 2003). Such results are

inconsistent with the conventional wisdom. They suggest that citizens do not appreciate the policy and macroeconomic divergence scholars have found and(or) that they do not attribute the performance of their economies to decisions made by their elected officials.

This paper provides the first analysis of citizen perceptions of the room to maneuver in the United States. Parting from the spatially aggregated analyses of previous studies, we analyze data from an original TESS (Time-Sharing Experiments for the Social Sciences) survey experiment. We address three sets of questions. First, who do citizens identify as most responsible for the state of the American economy, domestic actors or national and international market forces? Second, do understandings of the room to maneuver affect (reflect) attitudes toward political parties? And third, do perceptions of no room to maneuver reduce levels of satisfaction with democracy in the United States?

Unlike European publics, we find that many Americans believe their governments retain the room to maneuver. However, there exists a substantial minority—mostly Republican identifiers and more educated citizens—that does not. Contrary to current scholarship in American political economy, nonbelievers in the room to maneuver think national and international market forces discipline government. Methodologically, our experiment shows that priming subjects to think explicitly about economic globalization does *not* affect their responsibility attributions. However, when provided the option of attributing economic conditions to national and international business cycles, over one-third of respondents assign responsibility to those market forces—far more than attribute outcomes to the policies of the president or to Congress.

This presentation divided into four parts. The next section surveys the relevant scholarship in political economy and public opinion. Neither body of research provides adequate

insights into the causes and consequences of public perceptions of the room to maneuver. We therefore turn to the public opinion scholarship—particularly recent developments on the role of partisan reasoning—to help shed light on how citizens reason about the impact of policy in the face of economic globalization. Section 3 reports findings from a set of experiments designed to assess the effect of international market integration on policy efficacy. Finding that a sizeable share of the population believes that government influence over outcomes is limited, section 4 explores the individual bases for and political consequences of such beliefs. We conclude by calling for more study of the connection between partisan attachments and policy preferences in open economies both in the United States and in comparative perspective.

2. The International Economy, Public Opinion, and Policy Responsibility

This study is informed by political economy research on the domestic consequences of global markets and by public opinion research on responsibility attributions and attitudes toward democracy. Regarding the former, the political consequences of open markets continues to be a topic of much investigation. One argument is that globalization creates a “race-to-the-bottom” in the state’s regulatory and spending powers, leaving elected officials with little policy flexibility. In a world where the rules increasingly are set by impersonal and unaccountable financial markets, the argument goes, states must compete with one another. To attract capital, national policies converge, characterized by spending cuts, lower taxes, and a general weakening of the state’s productive and redistributive capacity (e.g., Clark, 2003; Korpi and Palme, 2003; Mishra, 1999; Moses, 2000; Strange, 1996).

Despite the logic of this “globalization thesis,” most scholars now agree that the effects of market integration on politics is small in scope and limited in range. In spite of economic

globalization, governments can implement distinct economic policies and create distinct macroeconomic outcomes. Some of these researchers point to particular path-dependent trajectories which insulate states from global pressures. Others focus on how domestic institutions or welfare-production regimes diffuse global economic forces, or combine with partisan politics to produce specific policy outcomes. Through adjustment assistance, investment in human capital, and other reforms, policymakers in developed welfare states still can take action to counter social dislocations associated with market integration (Bearce, 2007; Garrett, 1998; Hall and Soskice, 2001; Iversen, 2005; Swank, 2002). According to this revisionist perspective, the welfare consequences—and *by implication*, democratic consequences—of globalization are innocuous.

While these arguments have different implications for political representation and political accountability, neither considers how the international economy shapes *public perceptions of the room to maneuver*. A sense of the public's perceptions, however, is essential for understanding how international markets matter for the health of mass politics. If citizens perceive the constraints imposed by economic globalization to be severe, their support for economic policies is hard to justify. If citizens believe that there is room to maneuver, their support for policies should be based on an understanding that macroeconomic outcomes are produced by their government's policies and not by forces beyond the control of their elected officials (see, e.g., Hellwig and Samuels, 2007; Sattler *et al.*, 2007; Sattler *et al.*, forthcoming).

Studies that bear more directly on issues of policy efficacy and democratic accountability are found in the public opinion literature.¹ A common argument is that voters retrospectively

¹ While a growing number of studies on globalization have employed public opinion data, these works focus on narrower questions such as preferences for protectionism (Baker, 2005;

evaluate the state of the economy and then use this information to reward or punish the incumbent executive. This reward-punishment model of economic voting, though attractive in its parsimony, has been challenged on several grounds. One body of work contends that individual attributes condition the effect of policy evaluations. Sources of heterogeneity include political sophistication, social class, political interest, and partisan attachments (Duch *et al.*, 2000; Evans and Andersen, 2006; Gomez and Wilson, 2001). According to these studies, the relationship between performance outcomes and political evaluations varies systematically across individuals. A second critique focuses on variation in the *target* of evaluation and emphasizes the extent to which voters spread credit and blame among elected officials, public agencies, and private-sector actors (Abramowitz *et al.*, 1988; Peffley, 1985; Peffley and Williams, 1985; Rudolph, 2003a; 2003b; 2006). These studies improve on simple referendum models by acknowledging that “before economic discontents can take on political significance, people must believe that it is the government’s job to remedy them” (Peffley, 1985: 192). A third approach also considers the attribution target. However, instead of considering multiple targets, it examines the target’s policy preferences and policy competencies (Budge and Farlie, 1983; Hibbs, 1977). For example, in the U.S., Republican politicians are thought to be more concerned

Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2006; Hiscox, 2006; Kaltenthaler *et al.*, 2004; Mayda and Rodrik, 2005) and feelings of worker insecurity (Mughan, 2007; Mughan *et al.*, 2003; Scheve and Slaughter, 2004). These studies provide useful insights into political attitudes. However, they do not address the issues that lie at the heart of the functioning of democracy, such as policy efficacy and democratic accountability. And some, though motivated by globalization, lack the necessary data to actually test the effects of (perceptions) of the world economy for mass political behavior (e.g., Mughan, 2007; Mughan *et al.*, 2003).

with—and therefore more competent at—creating a stable environment for investment than Democrats. Perceived competency advantages, in turn, presumably shape the public’s propensity to the parties to accounts. Finally, an important new body of research stresses citizens’ cognitive abilities and tendencies to make “systematic attribution errors” (Achen and Bartels, 2004; 2005; 2006). This literature finds that citizens do not know basic facts about such things as the size of budget deficits and recent economic performance. Voters do not make retrospective assessments or choose between competing ideologies, they simply react to economic conditions at the time of elections. If times are bad on election day, people simply throw out incumbents--sometimes even when conditions are the result of natural disasters.²

These critiques of how elected officials are held to accounts are relevant to how citizens might perceive and evaluate the room to maneuver. Insofar as it relies on temporally and spatially aggregated analyses of economic aggregates like factor endowments and factor specificity (Hiscox, 2002) and on political institutions like the nature of electoral systems (Rogowski, 1989), current political economy research is ill-equipped to teach us how citizens appreciate or understand any constraints on policy or to link policy choices to macroeconomic outcomes. But the literature on individual heterogeneity suggests that some citizens will be more focused on certain policies in making such evaluations. For instance, some will be more concerned with whether governments continued capacity to fight inflation than others (Scheve, 2004). Political psychology research indicates that one’s partisan identity, in particular, will bias political attitudes. According to theories of motivated political reasoning, individual behavior is

² Achen and Bartels (2004) show, for instance, that in the early 20th century a substantial number of New Jersey voters appear to have blamed their state government for shark attacks. For a more salutary evaluation of state level voting, see Ebeid and Rodden (2006).

motivated by accuracy goals, that is, the desire to reach the most accurate conclusion, and by directional goals, which pertain to the desire to reach a preferred conclusion. When motivated by directional goals, individuals process information in a more biased manner, favoring confirming evidence at the expense of disconfirming evidence (Lodge and Taber, 2000; Redlawsk, 2002; Rudolph, 2006). In this way, partisanship can account for the way citizens perceive facts about the budget and economic performance (Achen and Bartels, 2006).

Situational context may provide incentives for political attitudes to be motivated by directional goals rather than accuracy goals (Lodge and Taber, 2000). The integration of world markets, we contend, provides just such a context, one which biases citizens' perceptions of the policy room to maneuver. If citizens believe governments have some capacity to influence economic outcomes—even when primed about economic globalization—then they ought to attribute performance to elected officials. But, again, this attribution may be colored by partisan reasoning. Their most preferred party may get more credit for using policy levers to cope with globalization; their least preferred party may be perceived either not to have used the levers at all or to have used them less effectively. In the U.S., Democratic identifiers ought to be especially prone to this kind of reasoning because the “folklore” of their party stresses the capacity of government to change economic conditions, viz., the history of Keynesian policies adopted by Democratic governments in the previous century (Achen and Bartels, 2005).

In sum, substantively, the literatures on responsibility attribution and public opinion lead us to expect that partisanship will affect citizens judgments about the room to maneuver. Democratic identifiers should be most prone to answer in the affirmative when asked about this issue. The expected responses of Republicans are less clear because, among other things, the folklore of recent Republican administrations is far less associated with the “fine-tuning” in the

economy thought necessary for Keynesian demand-management. As for independents, they should be less prone to partisan motivated reasoning. The assessment of the room to maneuver might be the most accurate among non-partisans (Kuklinski *et al.*, 2006). Demographic variables also should be correlated with the responses citizens give when asked about the room to maneuver. More educated people and those who are active participants in the labor market should be more informed about market constraints. The most highly educated should be especially able to provide an accurate assessment of the U.S. governments room to maneuver (see Achen and Bartels, 2006).

Methodologically, the literatures on responsibility attribution and on motivated reasoning remind us that the way questions are asked may shape what respondents say about the room to maneuver. Priming subjects with reference to economic globalization may elicit different responses than simply including new items in an existing attribution question. But by including national and international market forces from among the options they can choose also may elicit a different responsibility attributions.

We next analyze the individual and partisan factors shaping responsibility attributions relative to economic globalization. We first investigate the possibility that question wording affects citizens' beliefs about who is responsibility for economic conditions. We then analyze how citizens' beliefs about room to maneuver affects (reflects) their political attitudes.

3. Who's Responsible for the Economy? The Effect of Market Integration on Responsibility Attributions

Our data are from a survey module conducted through the Time-Sharing Experiments for the Social Sciences (TESS) project.³ The national, random-sample survey was administered to 514 American adults between November 2005 and February 2006 by the Center for Survey Research at Indiana University. The instrument underwent an extensive pretesting in order to improve response rate and item reliability. The sample compares well to the U.S. population at the time.⁴ The first part of our module analyzes whether priming and a response option for national and international business cycles affects subjects' attributions responsibility for national economic performance.

3.1. Responsibility Attribution Experiment 1: The effects of priming subjects for economic globalization

In the first experiment half the sample was randomly assigned to four groups. These groups then were questioned about who is responsible for the economy. In order to determine whether responses are influenced by how questions are worded, we varied question primes and

³ The telephone time for the module was awarded to AUTHOR. *Time-Sharing Experiments for the Social Sciences*, is supported by a grant from the N.S.F., Diana C. Mutz and Arthur Lupia, Principal Investigators. The questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1, available online at www.polsci.uh.edu/hellwig [Note to reviewers: Appendices 1, 2, and 3 are in a separate file available from the Editor]. Additional information on the TESS program is available at www.experimentcentral.org.

⁴ See Appendix 2, Table A1 for a comparison between the TESS sample and the national population in January 2006.

response options for each group.⁵ Group 1 received a question identical to one asked in the 1998 American National Election Study (ANES): “Please tell me who you feel is most responsible for the economic conditions in the United States in the past few years, the Congress, the President, working people, or business people.” This question allows us to analyze whether citizens attribute outcomes to elected officials or to private-sector actors. It also has the desirable property of leaving it up to the respondent as to whether “economic conditions in the past few years” have been either good or bad. However, this survey item limits the response options to domestic and non-market factors alone. A related question was asked in a 2001 NBC/*Wall Street Journal* poll. It explicitly asked about the influence of “cycles” on economic performance.⁶ Following this question, respondents in Group 2 were given a fifth response option: “national and international business cycles.”

⁵ In this way, we inquire as to whether changes in wording or in the closed-ended response options causes respondents to select different options (see, e.g., Druckman, 2001).

⁶ The NBC/WSJ poll was conducted by Hart and Teeter Research Companies between January 13 and 15 in 2001. The question was: “Through much of the 1990s, America enjoyed a strong economy. Which one of the following do you think was most responsible for the economy’s success? Productivity of businesses and workers, the Clinton administration, Alan Greenspan and the Federal Reserve, the national and international business cycles, or the Republican Congress’ policies?” We added only the item about national and international business cycles to the list in the ANES attribution of responsibility question. It should be emphasized that we maintained the language of “*who* is most responsible,” despite the inanimate nature of markets. We did this for reasons of consistency and to avoid priming respondents to think about inanimate forces more than they otherwise would.

Neither the ANES nor the NBC/WSJ polls, however, make any reference to the constraints imposed on our government by the world economy. To determine if priming respondents with a reference to these constraints would alter their responses, we included two additional treatments. A third group was primed with the following: “In terms of trade and finance, the United States is now deeply involved in the world economy. In view of this, who is most responsible for the economic conditions in our country in the last few years, the Congress, the President, working people, or business people.” Finally, a fourth group received both the same prime about U.S. involvement in the world economy and the additional response option from the NBC/WSJ poll.⁷

Table 1 reports the frequencies for each of the four groups.⁸ For sake of comparison, we also report frequencies from the 1998 ANES question, as reported in Rudolph (2003b). Several

⁷ The questions are included in Appendix 1. Groups 1, 2, 3, and 4 were assigned randomly to questions 1.11, 1.12, 1.21, and 1.22, respectively.

⁸ To prevent any response ordering effects from systematically biasing the results, the order in which response options were presented to subjects was randomized for the attribution question. To test for ordering effects, we conducted difference of means tests comparing the mean for respondents who received the business cycles option first to the mean of the rest of the sample ($t = -0.513$, $p = 0.608$), the mean for respondents who received the business cycles option last to the mean for the remaining respondents ($t = 0.535$, $p = 0.593$), and the mean for respondents who received the business cycles option first or last with the mean for those who received it second, third, or fourth ($t = 0.004$, $p = 0.997$). None of the three comparisons are statistically significant, indicating that the randomization of the response options was effective in preventing systematic bias. We also performed a cross-tabulation of question responses about who is responsible for

results are of note. First, while responses for TESS Group 1 generally match closely with the ANES survey, more respondents in the former identified the president as responsible (31.1% versus 21.5%), while fewer attributed economic conditions to working people (6.8% compared to 16.1% for the ANES sample). The first difference may be attributable to the divided government, present in 1998 but not 2005-06, and which researchers have shown to moderate accountability (Norpoth, 2001; Rudolph, 2003a). The second difference might be due to partisanship of the presidency and perceived primary constituencies, which was Democratic in 1998 and Republican in 2005. Second, contra previous research (Hiscox, 2006), the world economy primes have no effect on the distribution of responses. A χ^2 statistic for the effect of priming for those groups which received it (Groups 3 and 4) against those which did not (Groups 1 and 2) fails to reject the null of no difference due to priming effects.⁹ Third, a substantial number of respondents attribute responsibility to national and international business cycles *if*

economic conditions and whether they received the “national and international business cycles” option first, fifth, or second through fourth. The resulting chi-square statistic failed to reject the null of no relationship between response ordering and the respondents’ answers to who is responsible for economic conditions ($\chi^2= 7.99$, $p=0.435$). This again suggests that the randomization was effective.

⁹ A χ^2 test reveals no significant relationship between priming and the results to the ANES attribution question with four response options in Groups 1 and 3 ($\chi^2 = 2.00$, $p\text{-value} = 0.571$). Similarly, χ^2 test with Groups 2 and 4 fails to reject the null of no relationship between the attribution question—with five choices, including “national and international business cycles”—and the priming language ($\chi^2 = 1.709$, $p\text{-value} = 0.789$).

given the opportunity to do so. When given the option (as in Groups 2 and 4), about one-third of respondents identified national and international business cycles as chiefly responsible for economic conditions.

<Table 1 about here>

Given the lack of priming effects, we pool subjects from Groups 1 and 3 and from Groups 2 and 4 to examine whether responses to attribution questions varies from the null hypothesis of an equal distribution across response options. For those subjects receiving four response options (Groups 1 and 3), the null expectation is a frequency of 25 percent for each response option. We reject this null of an equal distribution ($\chi^2 = 22.64, p < 0.001$).

Specifically, the size of the working people response is below its expected value while those for Congress, business people, and the President response appear at greater than expected rates. We also reject the null of an equal distribution for the five response option groups (Groups 2 and 4) ($\chi^2 = 20.21, p < 0.001$). For these subjects, the sizes of the Congress and working people responses are below the expected values while those for the President, business people, and business cycles options are above the expected values. Both sets of results indicate that responses are not randomly distributed across response options provided. This indicates that a substantial share of Americans attribute economic performance to national and international market forces and not to policymakers. Any model of the attribution process that omits consideration of the role of national and international market forces (e.g., Rudolph, 2003b) appears to be incomplete.

These findings motivate us to examine the determinants of responsibility attributions. Is responsibility for the economy randomly assigned or are certain individuals more likely to assign credit or blame to certain targets? To address this question, we combine respondents in TESS

Groups 2 and 4 to estimate a model of multinomial choice with five response options.¹⁰

Informed by research on motivated political reasoning, our primary interest pertains to the effects of partisanship. We include dummy variables for Republican identifiers, Democratic identifiers, and independents.¹¹ We also examine whether a respondent's position in the labor market affects how she or he assigns policy responsibility. This was done by including a variable coded 1 for those who are employed full time and 0 for everyone else. Again, we expect that full time workers will be more likely to attribute responsibility for economic outcomes to market actors and cycles. Un- and under-employed respondents should be more likely to assign economic outcomes to political elites (the President and the Congress). We also include a variable for formal education, measured as a four-category scale (less than high school, high school diploma, some training beyond high school, college degree). Those with more education might be better able to recognize the connections between policy decisions and economic outcomes and, therefore, be less to attribute responsibility to market forces. Finally, in order to account for any remaining (unexpected) priming effects, we include a dummy variable indicating whether or not respondents received the prime.¹²

¹⁰ We also estimated a four-choice model which excludes the “national and international business cycles” option. These coefficient estimates are reported in Appendix 3.

¹¹ Republicans (Democrats) are those identifying as strong or moderate Republicans (Democrats) on the standard ANES multi-item seven-point party identification scale. Pure independents and leaners are coded as Independent.

¹² We considered several other variables, including age, gender, income, and ideology, but found that they did not affect parameter estimates or model fit. We also examined alternative codings

Table 2 reports estimates from a multinomial logit model.¹³ “The President” is the reference outcome category. Estimates show Republicans are more likely than Democrats (the reference category) to attribute responsibility to business people and to working people. Full time workers are more likely than others to assign responsibility to business cycles than to the President. In addition, more educated respondents are more likely to attribute responsibility to business people relative to the chief executive.

<Table 2 about here>

for occupational status (e.g., employed/unemployed). Use of these alternative specifications and measures did not change the results reported in the text.

¹³ Multinomial logit (MNL) makes the assumption of independence of irrelevant alternatives (IIA). To test this assumption, we performed seemingly unrelated estimation tests, a generalization of the Hausman test which relaxes the assumption of no correlation between the unrestricted and restricted estimates and therefore is appropriate for small sample sizes. To perform the test we first estimate the full unrestricted MNL model and retain parameter estimates. We then exclude one of the response options and reestimate the model and again retain parameter estimates. Finally, a hypothesis test is conducted to assess whether the coefficients vary statistically across the two models. Since the model has five response options, five simultaneous tests with the null that all corresponding beta coefficients are equal across the two models are necessary to compare the full model to a model with one of the response options excluded. The null hypothesis is that the MNL coefficients are statistically indistinguishable across the two models, indicating that IIA holds. The alternative hypothesis is that the MNL coefficients are statistically different when one category of the dependent variable is excluded, suggesting violation of IIA. We fail to reject the null hypothesis in all cases (all p -values >0.95).

To more fully assess the effects of these predictors, Table 3 reports expected choice probabilities for a hypothetical respondent who, unless otherwise noted, is a political independent, employed full time, and has some post-secondary education. This exercise illustrates several points. First, we see that Republican identifiers are far more likely to attribute responsibility to markets actors and markets than any other target. The probability that a Republican attributes responsibility to national and international business cycles is .41, followed by business people (.24) and working people (.16). Among Republican partisans, the propensity to assign responsibility to the President is just .08. This result is particularly notable when we recall that the president at the time, George W. Bush, was Republican *and* that most Republican partisans approved of Bush's performance on the economy (see below). Democrats, on the other hand, assign responsibility to the chief executive with a much higher probability (.30), even when given the option of responding with "national and international business cycles." In contrast, they are unlikely to identify either working people or business people as responsible.¹⁴ Democrats, that is, are much more willing to punish the president for what they perceived as a poor economy than Republicans are to reward him for what they believed to be a healthy state of affairs.

<Table 3 about here>

¹⁴Compare this to the case the 4-choice model probabilities (Appendix 3, Table A3), where Democrats are predicted to assign responsibility for the economy to business people with a probability of .26, second only to their propensity to select the president (.46). The "national and international business cycles" response option leads us to draw new conclusions for how partisanship structures one's belief which actors influence policy outcomes.

Table 3 also shows that position in the labor market shapes one's target of responsibility. Full time workers are less likely than part-time workers and the unemployed to attribute responsibility to the president and more likely to select national and international business cycles as chiefly responsible for economic conditions. Moreover, this result is contingent on the response set: when not provided a "business cycle" option, employment status has no bearing at all on respondent choice (see Appendix 3). Finally, a comparison of high school and college-plus educated suggests that the latter may be more likely to target national and international business cycles and less likely to target elected officials (Congress and the President).

In finding that the propensity to attribute economic conditions to national and international markets is substantial, and in demonstrating that it varies with individual attributes, results reported in Tables 1, 2 and 3 provide grounds for questioning received wisdoms in the political economy and public opinion literatures. In particular, we find that partisan attachments strongly influences the assignment of policy responsibility.¹⁵ An alternative explanation, however, might be that certain individuals are more or less likely to attribute markets not because of their partisan attachments but due to their general ideological disposition. To explore this conjecture, we re-estimated the model in Table 2, replacing the partisanship variables with a single seven-point ideology scale.¹⁶ Estimates show that conservative ideologues are more likely to attribute responsibility to business people or Congress. Ideology, however, has no effect on

¹⁵ This conclusion stands when we estimate a model using data from subjects receiving the four-response attributions item (TESS Groups 1 and 3). See Appendix 3, Tables A1 and A2.

¹⁶ The measure is taken from the standard ANES branching question which begins, "In general when it comes to politics, do you usually think of yourself as a liberal, conservative, moderate, or haven't you thought much about this?" The item then asks about the strength of ideology.

choosing the “national and international business cycles” target. And when ideology and partisanship are included in the same model, only the latter has a statistically significant effect on attributing responsibility to business cycles. A second conjecture relates to incumbency effects. It could be that Republican partisans did not assign responsibility to the chief executive because they did not wish to blame George W. Bush for what they perceived as poor economic conditions. Although the TESS module did not include an item on perceptions of economic conditions, corroborating evidence strongly cautions against this incumbency explanation. According to a ABC/*Washington Post* poll in the field at the same time as our experiment (December 2005), 84% of Republican partisans—compared to 47% overall and only 14% of Democratic partisans—*approved* of the way Bush was handling the economy. There is little evidence, therefore, for attributing our findings to either ideology or incumbency instead of partisanship.

3.2. Responsibility Attribution Experiment 2: The international economy and perceptions of policy efficacy

As noted, surveys conducted in Europe indicate that large segments of the public doubt their governments have much capacity to influence their economies. To determine how Americans respond to questions of capacity, we randomly constructed four more groups. These groups were presented with versions of two questions, one asked in 2001 by the British Election Panel Study (BEPS, Heath *et al.* 2002) and the other asked in the 1986 British Social Survey (BSS). The former is, “In today’s world-wide economy, how much influence do you think British governments have on Britain’s economy?” We substitute “American government” and “America’s economy” in place of the British references. In one version of the question, posed to TESS Group 5, we omitted the opening reference to “today’s world-wide economy.” This prime

was left in for TESS Group 6. The BSS item was more complex: “Some people say that British governments nowadays—of whichever party—can actually do very little to change things. Others say they can do quite a bit. Do you think British governments nowadays can do very little or quite a bit to a) keep prices down, b) reduce unemployment c) reduce taxes d) improve the standard of living e) improve health and human services and f) control wage and price increases?” We asked only a) and b). In light of evidence that Americans support training programs for displaced workers (Scheve and Slaughter 2001), we also added a third item: “World trade causes some American workers to lose their jobs. Do you think the American government can do very little or quite a bit to help these workers?” The identity of governments once more was changed from British to American, and we again varied the prime the groups received. TESS Group 7 received no priming while TESS Group 8 was primed with a lead-in of “Some say that because of the world economy...”¹⁷

These results are reported in Tables 4 and 5. Priming again appears to have little effect. Adding a reference to the world economy in the “how much influence” question decreased the frequency of the “A Great Deal” response given by Group 6. A χ^2 test for differences between Group 6’s responses and those of Group 5, however, is not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 4.281$, $p = 0.233$). Perhaps more important, however, is the comparison with both TESS groups to the 2001 BEPS results. As shown in Table 4, American respondents are much more convinced than their British counterparts that their government still has the capacity to influence the economy; a full 90% of the American groups respond positively to this question compared to only 53% of British respondents.

¹⁷ Groups 5, 6, 7, and 8 were randomly assigned to questions 1.31, 1.32, 1.41 and 1.42 respectively (see Appendix 1).

<Tables 4 and 5 about here>

Turning to the replication of the British Social Survey item, responses regarding the government's ability to keep prices down, reduce unemployment, and help workers are very similar across TESS Groups 7 and 8 (see Table 5). There appears some evidence of question wording effects on the unemployment item. Adding the reference to the world economy increases the percent of respondents who answer "Very Little" from 32% to 41%. However, a test for differences in the responses of the two groups is not statistically significant.¹⁸ Once again, there is no evidence that priming affects respondents views about the capacity of American governments to help displaced workers. A strong majority of respondents believe U.S. policymakers have this capacity.

Results from these responsibility attributions experiments indicate that Americans are more willing to assign responsibility for policy outcomes to elected officials compared to publics in some European democracies.¹⁹ Given the United States' large domestic market and its status

¹⁸ This is true of all three sets of questions for Groups 7 and 8. For prices: $\chi^2 = 0.0062$, p-value = 0.937; for unemployment: $\chi^2 = 1.054$, p-value = 0.305; for worker aid: $\chi^2 = 0.394$, p-value = 0.530.

¹⁹ In fact, the American public may lie somewhere in between citizens of these developed welfare states and publics in less-developed democracies. Duckett and Miller (2006) report that about 70% of publics in Vietnam, South Korea, Ukraine, and Czech Republic say that economic trends are due to domestic factors, while less than 20% identify "foreign businesses and international organizations" as mainly responsible. Unfortunately, from the perspective of testing expectations about globalization in lesser-developed economies (e.g., Wibbels, 2006), Duckett and Miller do not ask respondents about the effect of business cycles.

as world's largest economy, and considering the growth of regional economic integration in Europe, this result may not be a surprise. At the same time, we find that a sizable minority of Americans believe there is little their governments can do to influence market outcomes. About four in ten respondents claim there is “very little” the American government can do to affect prices or unemployment levels. And, when given the option, fully one-third of respondents identify national and international business cycles—not public- or private-sector actors—as chiefly responsible for national economic conditions. These findings raise important questions. What are the consequences of such beliefs for policymaker support? How do perceptions of constrained policy latitude affect public satisfaction with democracy in the United States? These questions are the focus of the experiments we report in the next section.

4. The Room to Maneuver, Party Competencies, and Democratic Accountability

4.1. Who Thinks the Government's Hands are Tied?

This part of our experiment has three objectives. First, we seek to identify what separates the “non-believers” in the room to maneuver from the public at large. Second, we want to determine how membership in this non-believing minority affects political attitudes. And third, we want to ascertain whether “believers” and “non-believers” differ in how they reason about the world economy and about the choices confronting their government.

The first task is to separate those individuals who are convinced government does not have the capacity to influence the economy from those who do. To do this, we used the following design. We assigned the following subjects to a subset we label *Believers in Room to Maneuver*:

- 1) Subjects from TESS Groups 1-4 who, regardless of priming and(or) response itemization, attributed responsibility for the economy to the Congress or the President or
- 2) Subjects from TESS Groups 5 and 6 who responded to the questions about government influence with “A great deal” or “Quite a lot”; or
- 3) Subjects from TESS Groups 7 and 8 who answered in the affirmative to the each of the questions about government influence over prices, unemployment, and worker assistance.²⁰

This amounted to 296 subjects.

The subset of respondents who are *Non-Believers in Room to Maneuver* was taken only from those groups of subjects which received the primes for the world economy.²¹ These subjects had to satisfy *each* of the following conditions:

- 1) Subjects in TESS Groups 3 and 4 who, after hearing a reference to the world economy in the opening to their question, attributed responsibility for the economy to business people, working people, or national and economic business cycles; *and*

²⁰ As regards Groups 7 and 8, by affirmative, we mean gave the answer “Quite a bit” to one or all three parts *and* otherwise did not reply “Very little” to any part of these questions (to the parts not answered “Quite a bit,” a “Don’t Know” response was permissible for assignment to the *Believers in Room to Maneuver* group).

²¹ At the time the TESS experiment was designed, it was not clear that priming would have little effect. To ensure that its composition was not an artifact of question wording, the Nonbeliever group was constructed only from groups who received questions that referenced the world economy.

2) Subjects in TESS Group 6 who said the American government had “Not very much” or “Hardly any influence” over America’s economy, *and*

3) Subjects in TESS Group 8 who answered in the negative to the multi-part question.²²

By this assignment rule, a total of 82 subjects were identified as not believing in the room to maneuver.²³

Having assigned subjects into the two categories, our objective now is to examine the determinants of individual room to maneuver beliefs. To do so, we estimate a binary choice model to predict the probability that a respondent is a non-believer (1) or a believer in the room to maneuver (0). We include the same set of independent variables as in Table 2—*Republican, Independent, Education, and Employed full time*.²⁴ To account for the possibility that a subject’s assignment to the non-believer group is affected by the questions they randomly received from

²² For a member of Group 8 to be assigned to the non-believer subset, she would have to answer “Very little” to all three parts or else answer “Very little” only one or two of the parts with a “Don’t Know” response for the remaining part(s).

²³ This design isolates those who are solidly non-believers. It produces a conservative estimate of the proportion of the American public who does not believe in the room to maneuver. We have reason to expect that the segment of the public that perceives elected officials as having little to no policy room to maneuver will grow in the future. Findings from relatively more open economies, such as Britain and France, support this expectation. Results using an alternative classification of subjects are very similar. See Appendix 3.

²⁴ Additional demographic indicators were examined, including gender, employment status, age, income, and liberal-conservative ideology. But none contributed to model fit or to individual parameter estimates.

Part I of the experiment, we include dummy variables for membership in TESS Groups 3, 4, and 8, with Group 6 set as the reference category.

Table 6 reports these results from a probit model.²⁵ Results show that partisanship strongly affects beliefs in the room to maneuver. Relative to Democrats (the reference category), Republicans as well as Independents are more likely to believe that their government no longer retains the room to maneuver. To assess the substantive impact of partisanship, we hold all other variables constant and observe that, compared to an Democratic partisan, a Republican is 22% more likely to be a non-believer in government policy control.²⁶ We also find that the more educated are more likely to perceive that their government's hands are tied—for each unit increase in the 4-category education variable, the probability of being classified as a non-believer increases, on average, by about 8%. These findings are consistent with the idea that Republicans—more so than Democrats--believe that government intervention in the economy is more harmful than beneficial (Achen and Bartels, 2004; 2005). These results also are consistent with the idea that more educated citizens are aware of the constraints the world economy impose on governments (Hellwig 2001). So, while taken from separate samples, results reported in Table 6 complement those reported in section 3 above.

²⁵ We report alternative model specifications in Appendix 3 and find that inferences are not sensitive to the choice of specification.

²⁶ See column labeled “marginal impact” in Table 6. The marginal impact for the row labeled Republican compares the change in predicted probability that a Republican is a non-believer relative to that of a Democrat. The marginal impact for the row labeled Independent compares the change in predicted probability that an Independent is a non-believer relative to that of a Democrat.

<Table 6 about here>

4.2. *The Consequences of Room to Maneuver Beliefs for Political Attitudes*

We next turn to the effects of room to maneuver beliefs on political attitudes. The TESS module included the following item designed to gauge perceptions of policy efficacy: “Which political party do you think does the best job of making economic policy for the world economy? Would you say the Democrats, the Republicans, or do both parties do an equally good job?” This question confronts an important implication of the room to maneuver debate in the international and comparative political economy: If it is the case that domestic political influence over the economy remains strong, then we would expect partisan preferences to reflect differences over policy. For example, Mosley (2000: 751) asserts that even though world markets imposed constraints on governments management of prices and spending, British elections during the 1990s were meaningful contests over economic policy. If this is true for the U.S. as well, then citizens’ evaluations of Democrats and Republicans should vary according to their policy (partisan) preferences, but only for those who maintain a belief in the room to maneuver.

We assess this expectation by simply stratifying subjects according to their room to maneuver classification and to their beliefs about which party does the best job of making policy. Results, presented in Table 7, demonstrate a relationship between (non)beliefs in government capacity and perceptions of which party is the more competent manager of economic globalization ($\chi^2 = 9.03$, statistically significant at $p = 0.01$). Among the non-believers, more said Republicans do the best job making economic policy than Democrats. Alternatively, among the believers in the room to maneuver, more said Democrats do the best job making economic policy than Republicans.

<Table 7 about here>

Together, tables 6 and 7 tell a story in which Republicans are more likely to be skeptical of government intervention in today’s economy while, at the same time, these non-believers are more likely to point to Republican politicians as the more competent leaders. In short, Republican partisans tend to see the room to maneuver as *undesirable*—perhaps because less room to maneuver is equivalent to less government intervention in the economy—and therefore they entrust Republican politicians to keep government involvement at a minimum. So, when we see that Republican partisans approve *en masse* of how President Bush is handling the economy as was the case in late 2005 (see page 16 above), we should take this to mean that they approved of what the Bush Administration was *not* doing; the administration was adhering to national and international market constraints.

We also investigated whether perceptions of the room to maneuver affect satisfaction with political accountability. We posed the question: “How satisfied are you when it comes to the way our democracy works in holding our officials accountable for the way they manage our economy through elections?”²⁷ As displayed in Table 8, however, we find no relationship between perceptions of the room to maneuver (non-believer/believer) and satisfaction with how

²⁷ This version of the question was posed to the *Believer in Room to Maneuver* group (Question 2.14). The *Non-Believers* group received a slightly different, though very similar, question: “When it comes to holding our elected officials accountable for the way they handle issues like trade—say through elections, are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not too satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the way our democracy works in holding officials accountable for the way they manage our economy.” (Question 2.24)

democratic systems hold officials accountable for the economy.²⁸ Here it is important to recall the context in which the question was asked: The survey was conducted during the winter of 2005-6, a period in which Republicans were firmly in control of the executive and legislative branches of the federal government. And, according to many observers, they were much less interventionist than the Democrats might have been. Results regarding satisfaction with democracy can be interpreted to say that nonbelievers in the room to maneuver (many of which were Republican partisans), were happy that their elected officials were sensitive to the constraints imposed by market forces. At the same time, believers in the room to maneuver (more likely to be Democrats than Republicans or non-partisans) were confident that their most preferred party would return to office and exploit the government's capacity to influence prices and jobs as well as to help displaced workers.

<Table 8 about here>

4.3 The Reasoning of Believers and Nonbelievers in the Room to Maneuver

Finally, believers and nonbelievers were asked a pair of tailored questions designed to better understand how they conceived of government capacity to affect the economy.²⁹ To check

²⁸ A χ^2 test statistic for independence (1.89 with 3 df) is not statistically significant ($p = 0.60$).

Since the satisfaction variable is ordinal, we also employed Kendall's tau-b statistic. This too failed to reject the null of that the rows and columns are independent ($\tau = 0.019$, $p = 0.70$) We also collapsed the four-category response into two ("satisfied" and "not satisfied"). Results were qualitatively identical to those in Table 8.

²⁹ By "tailored" we mean a pair of questions based on the knowledge that they had been assigned as a result of their response in the first stage of the experiment to either the believer or non-believer group. (Questions 2.11 and 2.13; Questions 2.21 and 2.23)

that they are convinced of government's capacity to influence the macroeconomy, believers were asked, "Some people say in response to international economic forces, our government should do more to manage prices, create jobs, and help people whose livelihood is affected by trade. Others say that government does too much already. Which of these responses best describes what you think: A) Our government should do more nationally, B) The amount of government involvement in the national economy is about right, or C) The government does too much already."³⁰ Reflecting their belief in room to maneuver, 76% of these 296 respondents in this category chose A or B. The extent of their belief in the desirability of and commitment to government intervention was reflected in these subjects' responses to a second question about the accountability of the Federal Reserve Chairman, Alan Greenspan. When asked if Greenspan should be elected rather than appointed, 46% of the believers in the room to maneuver answered that he should be elected.³¹ This is remarkable because Greenspan is widely considered to have performed well as Fed Chair and the idea that monetary policy should be insulated from electoral politics is taken as virtually axiomatic in both economics and political science (see Freeman, 2002; forthcoming).

Turning to the nonbelievers in the room to maneuver, these subjects were queried about the notion of market discipline. They were presented with the following: "Some people say that the world economy strongly encourages our government to make good policies. Others say that the world economy strongly encourages our government to make policies that harm the

³⁰ As in all the questions in the experiment, subjects were allowed to respond with 'don't know' or to refuse an answer, though these options were not prompted by interviewers.

³¹ This is question Q2.13. See the Appendix 1 for details about how this question was worded and asked.

American people. Which is closer to your opinion: Number one: The world economy strongly encourages our government to make good policies, Number two: The world economy strongly encourages our government to make policies that harm the American people.” 56% chose number one; 44% chose number 2. This shows that nonbelievers in the room to maneuver tend to ascribe to the idea of market discipline. In sum, these results of these final two items comport with our expectations that public perceptions about the room to maneuver reflect very different beliefs about the scope of government.³²

5. Conclusion

This paper shows that, in contrast to many Europeans, a substantial number of Americans believe that their government has the capacity to influence macroeconomic outcomes. Democratic partisans and the less educated stand out in this regard. Republican identifiers and the more educated citizens not only see national and international market forces as more influential on macroeconomic outcomes, they actually prefer it this way. In their mind, national and international market forces discipline governments. These different beliefs about the room to maneuver are likely to become the bases of new electoral cleavages and future policy debates; students of American electoral behavior and political economy must become more attuned the implications of this heterogeneity.

Our results speak to the central role of economic evaluations in mass politics in the United States. The workhorse model of electoral accountability asserts that when economic conditions deteriorate, the public holds the government responsible and removes the executive

³² Though beyond the scope of this paper, this suggests that this research has implications for the larger literature on public opinion and the welfare state (e.g., Borre and Scarbrough, 1995).

from office. However, in order for this sanctioning device to work, people must first believe that it is the government's job to ensure a stable and buoyant national economy. This point has not been lost on students of political behavior (Peffley, 1985; Peffley and Williams, 1985; Rudolph, 2003b). Anderson (2007: 289) has recently criticized the practice among scholars of equating economic voting with accountability model, asking whether it is useful to expect that politicians can affect economic performance. Yet we find that perceptions of economic conditions continue to matter in American elections—the economy matters for voting and other forms of political participation because, as we show, a majority of citizens believe in the American government's capacity to influence the open economy.³³

Our investigation raises at least two important topics for future research. The first is to more fully chart and then explain the contrasts between American and European beliefs about the room to maneuver. The first task would be to show that priming also is not a factor in the European setting: for example, that the high level of non-belief in the room to maneuver observed in Britain and other European countries are not driven by the wordings of the questions we used from the BEPS and BSS but tap genuine attitudes about policy capacity. If this proves to the case, we need to learn if it is the rightward-leaning, more educated Europeans who tend not to believe in the room to maneuver, and if they too believe in the idea of national and international market discipline. In order to provide policy prescriptions, it is also essential to learn whether relative size and economic strength of countries like the U.S. produce greater

³³ This is not to say that these beliefs are sophisticated. The connection between the room to maneuver and retrospective voting can be based on (Keynesian) folklore and amounts to little more than “blind retrospection.” On these points see Achen and Bartels (2004; 2006).

propensities to believe in the room to maneuver compared to mass publics in smaller countries such as Austria or Denmark (Christensen, 2003).

This brings us to the second, and more complex, issue of partisan bias. Are the links we have found between partisanship and beliefs in the room to maneuver the result of motivated perception (reasoning) or accurate assessments of the situation faced by governments? Recent research on Americans perceptions of economic policy and performance yield conflicting results (see footnote 2). A well-established line of work in economics argues that monetary policy innovations have little impact on the real economy; any impact occurs only through the “systematic part” of such policies. This systematic part normally is represented in monetary policy reaction function. But even then, much of the variance in output, jobs and other variables is due to things like technological change and not to monetary policy. And, of course, economists do not include a variable for popular evaluations of macroeconomic outcomes in these reaction functions (Sims and Zha, 2006). The relevant political science research falls into two camps. One emphasizes political accountability in nonelectoral periods; it links policy and economic variables to support for incumbents over time. But this research never attempts to show that there are causal links from popular support for incumbents to policy choices to economic outcomes and back to popular support. The other genre focuses on electorally induced fiscal cycles. But in emphasizing how contextual conditions like trade openness and policy transparency mute such cycles, this work rarely analyzes how(if) electorally induced policies affect real macroeconomies. So there is little evidence to date that government actually is held accountable for its policies and that those policies have significant (lasting) affects on the real economy. Until this evidence is produced, we won’t know which of the perceptions illuminated in this paper are biased by partisan screens or whether they reflect accurate assessments of policymakers capacity

to manage open economies.³⁴

³⁴ Two recent studies of the British case—a country with high clarity of responsibility and fiscal transparency—revealed a link between popular evaluations of policy and government policy innovations (Sattler *et al.* 2007; forthcoming). But these investigations also found little impact of the policy innovations on the real economy. They imply that people’s perceptions of no room to maneuver in Britain are unbiased.

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Table 1. Responsibility Attributions for National Economic Conditions

	ANES 1998 N = 1121	TESS Group 1 N = 74	TESS Group 2 (Fifth Option) N = 56	TESS Group 3 (Prime) N = 64	TESS Group 4 (Fifth Option & Prime) N = 60
Congress	30.5	33.8	16.1	32.3	13.3
President	21.5	31.1	19.6	21.5	23.3
Working People	16.1	6.8	10.7	9.4	6.7
Business People	31.8	28.4	17.8	35.9	25.0
Nat'l & Int'l Business Cycles	NA	NA	35.7	NA	31.7

Sources: 1998 American National Election Study and 2005-06 TESS Study.

Note: Cells report percentages. Respondents who refused to answer, who answered “Don’t know,” or who volunteered other responses are not reported. This equaled less than two percent of TESS respondents.

Table 2. MNL Estimates of Responsibility with National and International Business Cycles response option

	Congress / President	Working People / President	Business People / President	National & Int'l Business Cycles/ President
Republican	1.523* (.900)	1.870* (1.022)	2.050** (.796)	1.703** (.754)
Independent	1.197 (.892)	1.183 (1.065)	1.180 (.806)	1.408 (.729)
Employed Full Time	.395 (.739)	1.464 (.858)	.934 (.655)	1.433** (.621)
Education	-.134 (.377)	.180 (.432)	.650* (.345)	.502 (.323)
World Economy Prime	-.186 (.726)	-.065 (.820)	.618 (.645)	.030 (.607)
Constant	-1.214 (1.080)	-2.908** (1.310)	-3.063** (1.060)	-2.360** (.965)
N	106			
LR statistic	27.78			
Pseudo R2	0.09			

Source: 2005-06 TESS study

Note: Data are from TESS Groups 2 and 4. Cells report multinomial logit estimates with standard errors in parentheses. The President is the reference category. * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, 2-tailed test

Table 3. Expected Probabilities of Responsibility Attributions

	Congress	President	Working People	Business People	National and Int'l Business Cycles
Republican	.12** (.06)	.08* (.05)	.16** (.07)	.24** (.08)	.41** (.10)
Democrat	.12 (.08)	.30** (.11)	.12 (.09)	.14* (.08)	.32** (.11)
Employed full time	.13* (.07)	.12** (.06)	.13 (.08)	.16** (.07)	.46** (.11)
Not employed full time	.21* (.10)	.27** (.11)	.08 (.07)	.16** (.08)	.27** (.10)
High school graduate	.20* (.11)	.16 (.09)	.15 (.10)	.12** (.06)	.37** (.12)
College degree or more	.08 (.06)	.08 (.06)	.11 (.08)	.21** (.09)	.51** (.12)

Note: Table entries are the expected probabilities of each responsibility attribution given specified row variable with standard errors in parentheses. Cell entries are obtained by manipulating the value of the row variable while holding all other variable values to the following: world economy prime = 0, Republican = 0, Independent = 1, Education = 2 (some post-secondary education), Employed full time = 1. Using CLARIFY (King et al 2000), we then calculate the mean and standard deviation of the predicted probabilities by taking 1000 draws from the multivariate normal distribution of the estimated parameters from Table 2. ** $p < .05$, * $p < .10$.

Table 4. Influence of Government on National Economy

	BEPS 2001 (Prime) N = 2333	TESS Group 5 (No prime) N = 71	TESS Group 6 (Prime) N = 61
A Great Deal	9.0	47.9	32.8
Quite A Lot	44.4	42.3	57.4
Not Very Much	38.2	8.5	9.8
Hardly Any	5.2	1.4	-
Don't Know	3.1	-	-

Sources: 2001 British Election Panel Study and 2005-06 TESS Study

Note: Cells report percentages. The BEPS question wording is, "In today's world-wide economy, how much influence do you think British governments have on the Britain's economy." Both TESS groups were asked about the influence of the American government on America's economy. TESS Group 6 heard the same wording used the British survey. The prime "In today's world-wide economy" was omitted from the question posed to the individuals in TESS Group 5.

Table 5. Effectiveness of Government's Economic Policy

Ability of Government to:		BSS 1986 (No prime) N = 1000	TESS Group 7 (No prime) N = 63	TESS Group 8 (prime) N = 59
Keep prices down	Quite A Bit	62.0	60.3	61.0
	Very Little	33.0	39.7	39.0
	Don't Know	5.0	-	-
Reduce unemployment	Quite A Bit	61.0	68.3	59.3
	Very Little	34.0	31.7	40.7
	Don't Know	5.0	-	-
Help workers	Quite A Bit	-	76.2	71.2
	Very Little	-	23.8	28.8
	Don't Know	-	-	-

Sources: 1986 British Social Survey and 2005-06 TESS Study

Notes: Cells report percentages. The size of the British survey is given as approximate; the percents for the BSS column therefore also are approximate. The question used in the British Social Survey is, "Some people say that British Governments nowadays—of whichever party—can actually do very little to change things. Others say they can do quite a bit. Do you think that British governments nowadays can do very little or quite a bit: to keep prices down, to reduce unemployment, to reduce taxes, to improve the general standard of living, to improve the health and social services and to control wages and salary increases." For the TESS study, we only asked about prices and unemployment and added an additional item, "World trade causes some American workers to lose their jobs. Do you think the American government can do very little or quite a bit to help these workers?" For both TESS groups respondents were asked about the capacity of American governments to achieve these three outcomes. The wording for TESS Group 7 was otherwise identical to the BSS. TESS Group 8 was primed with the opening: "Some people say that because of the influence of the world economy..."

Table 6. Probit Model for Non-Believers in Room to Maneuver

	Parameter Estimate	Marginal Impact
Republican	.557** (.240)	+.22** [.039, .400]
Independent	.568** (.253)	+.22** [.033, .414]
Education	.226** (.099)	+.08** [.031, .145]
Employed full time	.220 (.201)	+.08 [-.065, .230]
Group 3	1.996** (.276)	--
Group 4	2.517** (.271)	--
Group 8	1.460** (.318)	--
Constant	-2.996** (.363)	--
Wald Chisqr	104.62**	
Pseudo R ²	.41	
N	356	

Note: Dependent variable equals 1 for Non-Believers in Room to Maneuver and 0 for Believers in Room to Maneuver. Figures in parentheses report robust standard errors. * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, two-tailed test. Marginal Impacts report calculated as the change in predicted probabilities given a discrete change from 0 to 1 for dichotomous variables (Republican, Independent, Employed full time) and a +1 unit change for ordinal variables (Education) while holding all other variables to the following: Republican = 0, Independent = 0, Education = 2 (high school diploma), Employed full time = 1. Group 6 is the reference category. Figures in brackets report 95% confidence intervals.

Table 7. Which Party does Best Job of Making Economic Policy for the World Economy?

	Democrats do best job	Republicans do best job	Both Parties do good job	Totals
Non-Believers in Room to Maneuver	18 (27.7)	26 (18.0)	35 (33.3)	79
Believers in Room to Maneuver	110 (100.3)	57 (65.0)	119 (120.7)	286
Totals	128	83	154	365

Pearson chi2(2) test of hypothesis that rows and columns are independent = 9.03, $p = 0.01$.

Note: Cells report frequency of subjects in each category. Numbers in parentheses are expected frequencies. Don't know and no answer responses not included.

Table 8. Satisfaction with Holding Elected Officials Accountable for Managing the Economy

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Not Too Satisfied	Not At All Satisfied	Totals
Non-Believers in Room to Maneuver	4 (5.0)	34 (32.8)	32 (28.6)	12 (15.6)	82
Believers in Room to Maneuver	19 (18.0)	117 (118.2)	100 (103.4)	60 (56.4)	296
Totals	23	151	132	72	365

Pearson chi2(3) test of hypothesis that rows and columns are independent = 1.89, $p = 0.60$.

Note: Cells report frequency of subjects in each category. Numbers in parentheses are expected frequencies. Don't know and no answer responses not included.