INTRODUCTION

- Income inequality in the United States has been increasing since the 1970s.
- The wealthiest individuals donate the largest share of campaign contributions.
- Government policy reflects the attitudes of the wealthy ruling class.
- The United States Supreme Court has codified unlimited campaign contributions from corporations and individuals.
- Consistent with conflict theory, the wealthy have a vested interest in the maintenance of income inequality.

HYPOTHESIS

- As an individual’s income increases, so too does their opposition to the federal government addressing income inequality.

SAMPLE: 2008 General Social Survey

- Geographic Region: The continental United States
- Mode of Data Collection: Randomized Computer assisted interviews, face-to-face interviews and telephone interviews.
- N= 3559
- Unit of Analyses: Non-institutionalized, English and Spanish speaking persons 18 years of age or older, living in the United States.
- Response Rate: ~70%.

FIGURE 1: Impact of Income on Perceptions of Income Inequality

- The higher one’s income the more likely one is to oppose government intervention to reduce the income gap between the rich and the poor.

TABLE 1

Impact of Income on Opposition to the Federal Government Reducing Income Inequality: Ordinal Logit Regression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>South Atlantic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.180**</td>
<td>.012**</td>
<td>-.238**</td>
<td>.298*</td>
<td>-.440*</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.088</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N= 2,390

RESULTS

- Income inequality has risen over the last forty years as evidenced by rapidly increasing income in the upper quintile and flat income growth for the rest of the population.
- Changes to campaign finance law and the dwindling political capital of labor limit influence on government to the wealthiest individuals and corporations.
- Elected officials, financed by wealthy individuals and corporations, craft economic policies that protect and perpetuate income inequality.
- Consistent with conflict theory, it is sensible that wealthy are more supportive of status quo of non-governmental involvement in efforts to create equal opportunities for upward income mobility.

DISCUSSION