

HAVING OUR CAKE AND EATING IT TOO:
AMERICANS' AMBIVALENCE ABOUT SOCIAL WELFARE

By

JASON GAINOUS

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This document is dedicated to my family.

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I thank my parents, grandparents, wife, dissertation committee, and Frank and Associates for their patience and support.

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By

Jason Gainous

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Chair: Stephen C. Craig
Cochair: Michael D. Martinez
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Behavioral research has begun to embrace the idea that people's attitudes are made up of a range of considerations and are not necessarily bipolar. People can simultaneously feel positive and negative about a single object. These people are ambivalent. This study explores Americans' ambivalence when it comes to social welfare policy. Using a statewide telephone survey, a series of hypotheses are tested. The findings indicate that the measure of ambivalence developed here is more valid than those previously designed to measure social welfare ambivalence, ambivalence is fairly common, it is rooted in the conflict of cognitive and affective elements, the prevalence of ambivalence varies across ideology, gender, and race, and finally, social welfare ambivalence has only minimal consequences on voting behavior.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION AND BRIEF OVERVIEW OF STUDY

Since the founding of the United States, the politics of each era has been defined by some issue. In the early years debate was centered on the struggle for the ratification of the Constitution between the Federalists and the anti-Federalists. This struggle evolved into the battle between northern commercial interests and southern agricultural interests eventually resulting in the Civil War. Following the Civil War, issues related to industrialization were the primary focus. Since the New Deal, issues that have involved the government's economic role in providing for the welfare of its citizens have been the primary driving force behind politics. For over seven decades, these social welfare policy issues have created a divide in the United States that has been a defining characteristic of party politics at both the elite (Sinclair 1978; Barrett and Cook 1991; Ansolabehere *et al.* 2001) and mass levels (Berelson *et al.* 1954; Campbell *et al.* 1960; more recently, see Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002; Stonecash 2000; Layman and Carsey 2002).

This study focuses on social welfare policy. Specifically, the concentration is on the nature of public opinion surrounding this controversial set of issues. Most people probably think of social welfare policy as government checks or food stamps, but it really includes many issues. While checks and food stamps are certainly part of it, social welfare policy in general can be thought of more broadly. It has been defined as policy that provides for government programs in an effort to ameliorate social and economic disadvantages (Sniderman and Piazza 1993). By this definition, assistance for the poor is not the only type of social welfare policy. Areas such as social security, public education,

government provided health insurance, and government provided jobs could also be thought of as social welfare. While various programs may fall under the broad umbrella of “social welfare policy,” public opinion on these various issues is certainly not consistent across dimensions. Simply, many may support one type of welfare program (e.g., increased spending on public education), but not support another (e.g., food stamps).

The earliest polls that focused on the public’s position on the social welfare policies associated with the New Deal suggested that there was great support for programs such as Social Security and wages-and-hours legislation, but not much support for the National Recovery Administration and the Agricultural Adjustment Administration (Bennett and Bennett 1990). Using survey data from the American National Election Studies (NES) and the General Social Survey (GSS), Bardes and Oldendick (2003) explored the distribution of public opinion across several domains of social welfare policy for the last 50 years. Their results suggested that the public is fairly evenly split on the general question of whether or not the government should provide more or fewer services.

While the public is evenly split on the general question, as described above, support does indeed vary significantly according to the nature of the program. For example, public support is high for Social Security, spending for schools, and many also think that the government should help people get doctors and hospital care. But on the other hand, the public is fairly evenly divided on the question of whether this country should have a government health insurance plan. Programs that seek to ensure that everyone has a good standard of living (e.g., food stamps) are generally less well supported. Their results suggest also that the distribution of attitudes surrounding these issues remained stable for

the last 30 years. Whether divided evenly or less so, the public has been split up along these lines for some time.

The problem with Bardes and Oldendick's (2003) inferences and others that have used NES or GSS is that they employed survey indicators that fail to account for the possibility that many are *ambivalent*, that is, they simultaneously possess positive and negative evaluations (see Klopfer and Madden 1980; Katz, Wackenhut, and Hass 1986; Cacioppo and Berntson 1994; Thompson, Zanna, and Griffin 1995; Priester and Petty 1996; Alvarez and Brehm 1995, 1997, 1998; Craig, Kane, and Martinez 2002; McGraw, Hasecke, and Conger 2003) about social welfare policy. If it is the case that many are torn internally between the contending sides of governmental activism versus governmental restraint with regard to such programs, then polls that are standard in the discipline are not the most accurate representations of public opinion regarding these issues. Most standard survey indicators used across academia (NES and GSS) force respondents to choose one side or the other, or choose the moderate or neutral response.

With no response category that captures those who are torn on the issue, many respondents may simply choose whatever response comes the closest to their attitude. They may choose a positive or negative response based on what they have most recently thought about it (see Zaller 1992). So, where do the ambivalent go? The "middle response" seems to be the safe response for someone for whom the other responses do not fit. Perhaps those who are ambivalent are choosing the middle response category for attitudes about social welfare. Evidence suggests that elevated middle response frequencies are often a result of nonattitudes, where people have no real position on the issue (Asher 2004), and they choose this response because it is non-committal. It also

seems that the most logical response for one with both positive and negative feelings is the middle response. If we overestimate true moderate positions on policy, then our understanding of social welfare issues is faulty.

The present study designed a measure to capture such ambivalence. Among the many details that will be discussed throughout, the findings show, amazingly enough, that a significant number of those surveyed said they had extremely positive feelings about some social welfare issue, and then just a few minutes later, when asked about their negative feelings toward the same issue, they said they had extremely negative feelings toward the same thing. Again, standard survey measures used in the discipline are forcing respondents to choose one side or the other, and based on the magnitude of those who expressed mixed feelings about various social welfare issues when given the opportunity, it would appear that standard indicators are missing this perhaps consequential detail.

The idea that many Americans may be ambivalent about social welfare is not novel. Research has offered mixed results with regards to its prevalence, but the measures of ambivalence on both sides of the argument have had problems that will be described in detail later. Thus, the question is not resolved. Nonetheless, some suggest that ambivalence about social welfare is fairly prevalent (Feldman and Zaller 1992; Cantril and Cantril 1999; Hodson, Maio, and Esses 2001), while others argue that the public is “not-so” ambivalent (Steenbergen and Brewer 2000; Jacoby 2002, 2005). The conceptualization and measurement of ambivalence have not been standard across political science or other disciplines. Thus, evidence of the prevalence, sources and consequences of such ambivalence is also inconsistent. The present study suggests that because the conclusions that have been drawn on both sides of these arguments were

based on data that do not offer adequate measures of ambivalence, further examination is needed.

The contention here is also that loose conceptualizations of ambivalence in political science research have contributed to less than optimal measurement strategies. As previously mentioned, this study offers a fresh approach to measuring ambivalence about social welfare policy. This approach is adapted from earlier work (Craig, Kane, and Martinez 2002; Craig *et al.* 2005). A comparison of construct validity between this approach and those used by other researchers suggests that it is higher in construct validity. With this in mind, this study revisits some of the theoretical puzzles of earlier research. Specifically, the questions addressed here are as follows: 1) Among the previous approaches to measuring ambivalence using survey indicators, which has the highest validity? 2) How prevalent is ambivalence surrounding social welfare policy? 3) What are the potential sources of such ambivalence? 4) Who is more likely to be ambivalent and why? 5) What is the relationship between ambivalence about social welfare, social welfare policy preferences, and evaluations of political candidates and institutions? In answering these questions, the present study is organized as described below.

Chapter 2 offers an extensive overview of the research that addresses the phenomenon of ambivalence. This overview lays out the theoretical foundation for this study. First, problems in the literature associated with the conceptualization of ambivalence and related measurement issues are discussed. Second, evidence of the prevalence and potential sources of ambivalence is covered. Third, the consequences of ambivalence across a range of attitude objects are explored. Fourth, the literature

specifically addressing social welfare ambivalence is discussed in light of these measurement and specification issues. Finally, a series of hypotheses are offered based on the preceding review of the literature.

Chapter 3 explains all of the specifics concerning the measurement of the dependent and independent variables employed here. This includes four different approaches to measuring ambivalence about social welfare policy. This specification includes descriptive statistics across all indicators. These descriptive statistics lay the empirical foundation for the rest of the study addressing the prevalence of ambivalence. The findings suggest that many are ambivalent across a range of social welfare issues, including government spending on medical insurance, assistance for the homeless, education, programs to improve the standard of living for poor Americans, providing jobs for citizens, child care programs, and finally, retirement benefits.

Chapter 4 has two goals. The first is to test the validity of the four approaches to measuring ambivalence described in the previous chapter. In this test, the sources of such ambivalence are also explored. Previous research has suggested that ambivalence may result when individuals have conflicting thoughts or beliefs (*cognitive conflict*), conflicting feelings (*affective conflict*), or beliefs in conflict with feelings (*cognitive-affective conflict*) (Steenbergen and Brewer 2000). This chapter argues, first, that all three types of conflict stimulate ambivalence about all of the social welfare issues mentioned above; and second, that we can assess the construct validity of each of the different measures of ambivalence by comparing how well the theoretical sources of ambivalence predict each respectively. The findings indicate that an approach adapted from experimental work by social psychologists for use in large-sample surveys (Craig, Kane,

and Martinez 2002; Craig *et al.* 2005) that forces respondents to rate their positive and negative feelings separately is the most valid.

After settling on the best measure, Chapter 5 revisits previous research that addresses the question of who is most likely to be ambivalent. The findings presented here challenge previous assertions that liberals are more likely to be ambivalent about social welfare (Feldman and Zaller 1992; see also Jacoby 2002). In addition, the results suggest that not only self-identified liberals, but also females and African Americans are less ambivalent about social welfare policy than males and whites respectively. This chapter builds on the findings of the previous chapter to sort out the underlying cause of these differences across ideology, gender, and race. It argues that we can get a better understanding of why members across these groups would be more or less ambivalent about social welfare by teasing out the differences across these groups when it comes to the potential sources of such ambivalence.

Chapter 6 focuses on the political consequences of ambivalence. Specifically, it explores the relationships among social welfare ambivalence, social welfare policy preference, and evaluations of George W. Bush, the U.S. Congress, and the Supreme Court. The findings indicate that in some cases ambivalence weakens the relationship between social welfare policy preferences and these evaluations. This mediating effect of ambivalence is strong for evaluations of Bush, but not for Congress and the Supreme Court. Further, where this mediating effect does exist (evaluations of Bush), it is strongest for conservatives and whites as opposed to liberals and blacks.

Chapter 7 summarizes the findings presented here. In doing so, the results of the tests of the hypotheses formalized in Chapter 3 are discussed. This discussion is based on

how these conclusions speak toward our understanding of the conceptualization, measurement, prevalence, sources and consequences of ambivalence about social welfare. Finally, a discussion is offered about how this study adds to our understanding of Americans' feelings about social welfare and what it means for politics in the United States today.

CHAPTER 2

ATTITUDINAL AMBIVALENCE: CONCEPTUALIZATION, MEASUREMENT APPROACHES, PREVALENCE, SOURCES, CONSEQUENCES, AND SOME HYPOTHESES

Behavioral researchers have begun to embrace the idea that people do not necessarily have a single “true” attitude on issues, but rather a store of multiple and sometimes conflicting attitudes that they might draw upon at any given time (Hochschild 1981; Feldman and Zaller 1992; Zaller 1992; Eagly and Chaiken 1993; Alvarez and Brehm 1995; Thompson, Zanna, and Griffin 1995; Priester and Petty 1996; Armitage and Connor 2000; Meffert, Guge, and Lodge 2000; Wilson, Lindsey, and Schooler 2000; Lavine 2001; Newby-Clark, McGregor, and Zanna 2002; McGraw, Hasecke, and Conger 2003; see Craig and Martinez 2005a, 2005b for a review). The idea that individuals are often *ambivalent*, or that they simultaneously possess positive and negative evaluations of a single attitude object (Alvarez and Brehm 1995; Zaller 1992; Zaller and Feldman 1992; Eagly and Chaiken 1993), has been extensively researched across disciplines. However, previous large-sample work attempting to measure and explain such ambivalence has two recurring problems.

The first, and perhaps largest, problem is that most survey research focused on ambivalence uses survey indicators of questionable validity. This, in large part, is due to the inappropriate conceptualization of ambivalence. Second, models of ambivalence are often underspecified because they fail to incorporate important potential sources of ambivalence. Most studies focus on one particular source rather than a range of potential sources. Failure to control for alternative explanations brings the findings about the

respective focus into question. As a result of these problems, it is unclear just how divided the American public is on the issues that shape elections and politics in general.

This chapter reviews the literature with regards to the *conceptualization*, *measurement*, *prevalence*, *sources* and *consequences* of ambivalence. Following this broad review, previous research focused specifically on social welfare ambivalence is discussed. This is followed by a summary that formally asserts the hypotheses that are tested in the present study.

Ambivalence as It Has Been Conceptualized and Measured

The concept of ambivalence is not new (Kaplan 1972; Scott 1969). It was initially observed empirically by social psychologists using experimental data (Katz and Hass 1988; Katz, Wackenhut, and Hass 1986; Klopfer and Madden 1980; Priester and Petty 1996; Thompson, Zanna, and Griffin 1995). While ambivalence is often considered in attitudinal research generally (see Ajzen 2001), the empirical evidence of ambivalence surrounding political issues has only blossomed as of late (see Craig and Martinez 2005a, 2005b). Again, the problem is that there has been little agreement in the literature as to what constitutes ambivalence.

Traditionally, researchers have measured people's attitudes on a bipolar continuum that ranges from positive to negative with a neutral point in between (Eagly and Chaiken 1993; Thurstone 1928; Thurstone and Chave 1929). At first glance, this theory of attitudes seems appropriate. Simply, we classify our assessments as good, bad, or so-so, hence, positive, negative, or neutral. The problem is with the assumption that attitudes are uni-dimensional. Individuals sometimes feel good and bad about an object simultaneously. Just as we would suspect that some people possess good and bad feelings about both political parties, it makes sense to describe something as both good and bad,

or even an ideology as both liberal and conservative. Politicians are seen as being liberal on some issues and conservative on others (Abelson *et al.* 1982).

As noted above, behavioral researchers have begun to take note of such phenomena, but conceptualizations and operational definitions have varied across studies and disciplines. Generally the psychology literature conceptualizes ambivalence in more narrow terms than does political science (at least early political science studies). The present study concurs with the psychology literature and some of the more contemporary political science research that argues that ambivalence is strong internalized conflict occurring wherever individuals possess positive and negative evaluations of a single attitude object (see Cacioppo and Berntson 1994; Bassili 1998; Craig, Kane, and Martinez 2002; Albertson, Brehm, and Alvarez 2005; Gainous and Martinez 2005). The contention here is that political science has typically not measured ambivalence in a way that is consistent with the definition given above. Therefore, these measures are not valid. They are, simply, capturing something other than the simultaneous possession of positive and negative evaluations of a single attitude object.

For instance, some political science studies have treated value conflict and ambivalence synonymously (Hochschild 1981; Feldman and Zaller 1992). This is problematic because the conflict of separate values is not the same thing as having positive and negative evaluations of a single object. While this may be a source of conflicting evaluations (to be discussed below), it is certainly not an appropriate operational definition if we look to psychology's conception of ambivalence. Others suggest that the presence of inconsistent positions across separate attitude objects is reflective of ambivalence (Cantril and Cantril 1999). This does not necessarily signify

ambivalence either. For example, if someone was supportive of spending for the poor but not supportive of food stamps, he or she is not necessarily ambivalent about social welfare. This may be a lack of constraint (Converse 1964), non-attitude, or the result of a host of other reasons. Again, ambivalence refers to *conflicting* positive and negative evaluations regarding a *single attitude object* (see Gainous and Martinez 2005).

Perhaps the loose conceptualizations offered by political science are a result of the early work that addressed this phenomenon. Hochschild (1981) said ambivalence exists when an individual cannot resolve conflict between values. Based on these findings combined with their own results, Zaller and Feldman (1992) concluded that “[m]ost people possess opposing considerations on most issues, that is, considerations that might lead them to decide the issue either way” (p. 585). By this definition, the conflict of values or inconsistent positions across separate attitude objects could constitute ambivalence. This misleading conceptualization contributed to measurement strategies that were either not focused on single attitude objects or were centered on the potential sources of ambivalence, like value conflict, rather than the actual phenomenon itself.

Using responses to open ended questions contained in NES data, Feldman and Zaller (1992) measured ambivalence by counting the number of conflicting considerations, spontaneous statements of ambivalence, and two-sided remarks (i.e., “Although I think X, I nevertheless favor Y”), finding strong support for the presence of ambivalence in many of the respondents. Although the substantive argument may be compelling, other scholars also note that this approach is not valid (Craig, Kane, and Martinez 2002; Alvarez and Brehm 1995). Alvarez and Brehm (1995) point out that an individual's ability to express reasons for permitting and prohibiting abortion does not

necessarily signify the presence of an underlying conflict, whether between core values (Katz and Hass 1988; Schnell 1993) or other idea elements.

“Opposing considerations” may in fact indicate the presence of factors such as equivocation (when someone is trying not to make a bad impression on the interviewer), uncertainty (when he/she is unsure of which side of the issue to choose), informedness (where the respondent has sufficient information to cite both sides evenly while clearly favoring one or neither), nonattitude (where the respondent has no real position on the issue), or the questions may be ambiguous making them insufficient as indicators of preference (see Alvarez and Brehm 1995; Alvarez and Brehm 1997; Alvarez and Brehm 1998). To resolve the validity problem in Feldman and Zaller’s work, Alvarez and Brehm, as does this study, define ambivalence as strong internalized conflict about a single attitude object.

The problem for Alvarez and Brehm (1995) is not that a loose conceptualization of ambivalence led to an invalid measure of ambivalence. Instead, they defined it appropriately but used a measure that does not accurately represent its conceptualization. They inferred ambivalence from patterns of error variance in heteroskedastic probit models of binary choice by suggesting that error variance across individuals indicates the presence of ambivalence within individuals. However, such inferences about an individual-level concept (ambivalence) based upon aggregate-level data (error variance in binary choices) are problematic. Error variance is high, by definition, when a larger proportion of people are not predicted accurately by the binary choice model, whereas ambivalence exists when an individual person holds both positive and negative feelings about an issue. High error variance may indeed be, in part, a result of ambivalence, and

Alvarez and Brehm's findings give us reason to believe that they probably are to some degree. But this still does not allow us to infer if any one individual is ambivalent. Also, error variances are an accumulation of errors in the binary choice model and may be a function of nonattitudes, uncertainty, equivocation, or a host of other factors as well. While Alvarez and Brehm get it right by tightening up the conceptual definition, their measure fails to distinguish ambivalence from the very things they suggest are problematic with the Feldman and Zaller study. As a result, the validity of their measure is questionable.

A distinction can be made between types of measures. Bassili (1996) suggested that attitude strength has been measured using *meta-attitudinal* and *operative* indexes of strength. Defined, "meta-attitudinal indexes are based on respondents' impressions of their own attitudes, whereas operative indexes are linked to the judgment processes responsible for attitude responses" (Bassili 1996, p. 638). The same principle is applied to measuring the attribute of ambivalence. To simplify the terminology for the remainder of the present study, *meta-attitudinal* and *operative* measures are referred to as *direct* and *indirect* measures, respectively. Alvarez and Brehm's measure of ambivalence is considered an *indirect* measure of ambivalence because it attempts to ascertain the degree to which ambivalence is present without making the respondent aware. Thus, it is "indirect." Others have used *direct* measures of ambivalence which simply ask respondents, using various wording strategies, to report the extent to which they are torn. For instance, Priester and Petty (1996) had respondents report on an 11-point scale the degree to which they felt conflict, indecision, or mixed with regards to a host of attitude objects. Employing a similar approach, Thompson, Zanna, and Griffin (1995) used ten

questions developed by Jamieson (1988) to probe whether people were “confused” or “torn.” Cacioppo and his colleagues asked people to report the extent to which their reactions to an object were muddled, divided, tense, contradictory, jumbled, conflicted, consistent, uniform, and harmonious (Cacioppo, Gardner, and Berntson 1997).

Many studies, including the Priester and Petty (1996) and Thompson, Zanna, and Griffin (1995), have explored the relationship between indirect and direct measures of ambivalence, finding only a modest relationship. Holbrook and Krosnick (2005) suggest this is because they are separate constructs.¹ While it is not their focus, they also suggest that direct measures may be indirectly tapping the underlying conflict that results in polarized evaluations of a single attitude object. They go on to define each of these constructs as different types of ambivalence. This approach, again, reflects that lack of consensus as to what actually constitutes ambivalence. The contention that these are separate constructs makes sense, but allowing measures to define the concept is problematic. Having a clear conceptualization of the concept makes measurement design easier.

Craig and his colleagues created an indirect measure of ambivalence using large-sample surveys that focused on single attitude objects while making fewer assumptions than the inferential measure employed by Alvarez and Brehm or the direct measures discussed. They asked respondents to rate positive and negative evaluations separately; ambivalence was then calculated using an algorithm that captures the intensity of these

¹ They refer to direct measures as meta-psychological (MP) measures and indirect measures as operative (OP) measures.

feelings and the similarity between the two.² Using this approach, any inconsistencies observed are based on a single attitude object. Also, with this measure, it is not necessary to make assumptions based on the variability of responses. Of course this approach does not completely isolate ambivalence because respondents may bounce around on the separate positive and negative components as a result of nonattitude or uncertainty, but it definitely requires fewer assumptions than the latent measure employed by Alvarez and Brehm.

Clearly, explorations into ambivalence and political attitudes have had some conceptual problems but the theoretical insights they offer are still useful, assuming that we can get around the problems with validity. For instance, Hochschild's (1981), Zaller's (1992), and Zaller and Feldman's (1992) misconceptualization of ambivalence as value conflict led to studies that suggested it was a source of ambivalence rather than the phenomenon itself (see Martinez *et al.* 2005 for a review). Zaller and Feldman also contend that ambivalence can help to account for the response instability so often associated with surveys of ordinary citizens (see Converse 1964). The ideas that value conflict is a source of ambivalence and that ambivalence may be related to response instability are reasonable theoretical expectations. The executions of all these studies just lack appropriate measures.

The present study concurs with the conceptualization of ambivalence that is predominant in psychology and has been co-opted by more contemporary political science (see Cacioppo and Berntson 1994; Bassili 1998; Craig, Kane, and Martinez 2002; Albertson, Brehm, and Alvarez 2005). Simply, the term ambivalence should be restricted

² Thompson, Zanna, and Griffin (1995) created this algorithm (Ambivalence = $[(P + N)/2] - |P - N|$) to measure ambivalence by modifying an earlier version (Kaplan 1972).

to instances of strong internalized conflict where individuals clearly possess positive and negative evaluations of a single attitude object. The measure employed by Craig and his colleagues is the most consistent with this conceptualization. The present study uses an adapted version of this measure. Now that the shortcomings of previous work pertaining to the conceptualization and measurement of ambivalence have been described, we can move on to discussing the prevalence of such ambivalence.

The Prevalence of Ambivalent Political Attitudes

The study of ambivalence is growing across disciplines. In an extensive review of attitude research from 1996-1999, Azjen (2001) devoted an entire section to ambivalence indicating its growing pervasiveness. Ambivalence research has reached into many substantive areas including health studies, marketing, and many other areas (Armitage and Conner 2000; Conner *et al.* 2002; Jewell 2003). Studies have even gone as far as to use brain-imaging technology to identify the neurological activity associated with ambivalence (Cunningham *et al.* 2003). However, the empirical evidence of ambivalence centered on political attitudes and the implications therein is still limited, but growing. It is fair to say that the concept of ambivalence is standard in the psychology literature; and, while the idea that ambivalence is a component of political attitudes is not debated, its prevalence and consequences are another question. The results have been mixed when it comes to these questions (see Jacoby 2005; Steenbergen and Brewer 2000), but coupled with the measurement issues across the literature, there is just not enough evidence to draw any definitive conclusions.

Research concerning the prevalence of ambivalence has suggested that many Americans are ambivalent about a host of different things including *abortion* (Alvarez and Brehm 1995; Craig, Kane, and Martinez 2002), *gay rights* (Craig *et al.* 2005), *social*

welfare (Feldman and Zaller 1992; Cantril and Cantril 1999; Gainous and Martinez 2005), *the environment* (Chong and Wolinsky-Nahmias 2005), and *American institutions* such as Congress, the president, and the Supreme Court (McGraw and Bartels 2005). Others suggest that ambivalence is not widespread (Steenbergen and Brewer 2000; Jacoby 2002, 2005), at least when it comes to several policy domains.³ There certainly seems to be more research suggesting the former.⁴

Potential Sources of Ambivalence

With regard to the sources or stimulants of ambivalence, theory has offered several primary suspects including the conflict of core values (Craig *et al.* 2005; Martinez *et al.* 2005; Feldman and Zaller 1992; Alvarez and Brehm 1995; Eagly and Chaiken 1993; Katz and Hass 1988) the conflict of feelings (Lavine and Steenbergen 2005; Steenbergen and Brewer 2000), and conflict between the former and latter (Lavine *et al.* 1998; Steenbergen and Brewer 2000).

Value conflict is the most frequently cited source of ambivalence (Feldman and Zaller 1992; Alvarez and Brehm 1995; Eagly and Chaiken 1993; Zaller 1992; Katz and Hass 1988). *Values* are overarching normative principles and belief assumptions about government, citizenship, and society (McCann 1997; see also Jacoby 2002; Feldman and Zaller 1992; Feldman 1988). Egalitarianism, individualism, humanitarianism, and moral traditionalism are all examples of values people have and rely on to form opinions.

³ Steenbergen and Brewer (2000) explore ambivalence about social welfare, gay rights, affirmative action, and abortion. Jacoby (2002, 2005) focuses only on attitudes about government spending.

⁴ For a complete discussion of the prevalence of ambivalence across policy domains and various objects see various chapters contained in a two volume set of books focused on ambivalence and politics edited by Craig and Martinez (2005a, 2005b).

Ambivalence is believed to result when an issue crosscuts an individual's values. For instance, research has indicated that egalitarian and individualist values structure attitudes about social welfare (Feldman 1988; Feldman and Zaller 1992; McCann 1997; Feldman and Steenbergen 2001; Goren 2001; also see Gilens 1995). If an individual places equal importance on each, social welfare pits them against each other, ambivalence may result. Following the work of Steenbergen and Brewer (2000), the present study contends that such value conflict is a cognitive process. Because values are overarching normative principles and belief assumptions about government, citizenship, and society, and beliefs are cognitive orientations, the conflict between values can be conceptualized as *cognitive conflict*.

Although it is generally believed that ambivalence occurs when there is a conflict involving a person's core values (Alvarez and Brehm 1995; Eagly and Chaiken 1993; Katz and Hass 1988), the evidence showing this to be the case is limited. In their study of political tolerance, Peffley and his colleagues (2001) assumed that value conflict and ambivalence are interchangeable terms yet failed to demonstrate an actual link between the two using either indirect or direct measures of ambivalence. As previously discussed, Alvarez and Brehm (1995) inferred the presence of ambivalence in citizens' attitudes about abortion from patterns of error variance in heteroskedastic probit models of binary choice- an approach to measuring ambivalence that is problematic. Although Alvarez and Brehm can compare the level of ambivalence in the general public across issues, the relationship between ambivalence on any given issue and value conflict is assumed rather than tested directly at the individual level.

Jacoby (2002) also explored the effects of value conflict on ambivalence. He refers to “value conflict” as “value ambivalence” which further muddies what actually constitutes ambivalence. In an ordinary least squares equation, he used his measure of value ambivalence to predict attitudes about government spending. His argument was that the equation’s fit to the data should be significantly worse among those with value ambivalence, as opposed to those who are not conflicted, if value conflict is indeed a source of ambivalence about government spending. His findings provided only minimal support for the hypothesis. Again, the lack of significant findings may be a product of his measure of ambivalence. As previously discussed, variance between predicted and observed values *may* result from a host of other factors such as nonattitude or uncertainty. There is no reason to believe that value conflict is associated with either, so this may explain why the relationship between response variance and value conflict is small.

Armitage and Conner (2005) assert that empirical evidence suggesting that value conflict is a source of ambivalence is mixed simply because, first, the values researchers explore are, in fact, not diametrically opposed (see Albertson, Brehm, and Alvarez 2005). Second, these values may not be as stable as theory suggests because most people do not feel intensely about them; hence, it is possible that value structures are malleable. They assert that findings supporting the contention that value conflict is a source of ambivalence have demonstrated only moderate support for the hypothesis at best (see Craig *et al.* 2005; Gainous and Martinez 2005). They note that despite the fact that value conflict is often mentioned as a source of ambivalence, very few studies have actually explored this possibility. This makes their conclusions a bit premature. Clearly more work needs to be done before this question is resolved.

There is also, potentially, another interpretation of the previous research Armitage and Conner use to draw their conclusions. They suggest that this research often fails to consider the personal importance individuals place on values and as result felt conflict may be overestimated. They note that Gainous and Martinez (2005) contend that value importance is negatively related to ambivalence but assert that, because value importance is a stronger predictor of ambivalence than value conflict, such a relationship provides only weak support for the value conflict hypothesis. Another interpretation of the results is that the findings of positive effects are more convincing than previous studies because Gainous and Martinez controlled for value importance while most models overlook this factor. So in this instance, cognitive conflict between values may indeed have an effect on ambivalence that is independent of the personal importance people place on their values.

Armitage and Conner's (2005) suggestion that values are not always diametrically opposed can be extended to suggest a conclusion different from theirs. It is possible that the degree to which values are brought into opposition is dependent on the particular attitude object. Craig and his colleagues found virtually no zero-order relationship between value conflict and ambivalence about gay rights, and multivariate analyses revealed statistically significant associations but small effect sizes. Gainous and Martinez did find a significant zero order relationship between value conflict and social welfare ambivalence. The Craig study looks at conflict between egalitarianism, individualism, and moral traditionalism, and the Gainous/Martinez study at egalitarianism and economic individualism. The relationship between these latter values and attitudes about social welfare is stronger than the relationship between egalitarianism, individualism, and

attitudes about gay rights. At the least, these discrepancies suggest more inquiry is necessary concerning value conflict as a cognitive source of ambivalence.

It has also been suggested that affective orientations may clash to produce ambivalence surrounding a particular attitude object (Lavine and Steenbergen 2005; Steenbergen and Brewer 2000). An individual's feelings with regard to some attitude object may be mixed. If these affective orientations structure attitudes about another object, mixed feelings may result in ambivalence about that object. This process can be thought of as *affective conflict*. It is important to note that affect and cognition are distinct from each other.⁵ This is not meant to imply that there is no relationship between the two, but rather to suggest that they may have independent effects on the stimulation of ambivalence.

If affect can structure attitudes independently of cognition (Breckler 1984), it is reasonable to expect conflicting affective orientations to produce ambivalence (see Lavine and Steenbergen 2005). Studies across a range of disciplines have demonstrated that these orientations do indeed structure attitudes centered on a host of various objects (see Marcus 2003 for a review). For instance, group-affect, or how individuals feel about the members of particular groups (i.e., sexual orientation, race, etc.) is a structural component of attitudes about *gay rights* (Wilcox and Norrande 2002; Wilcox and Wolpert 2000; Nelson and Kinder 1996), *affirmative action* (Kinder and Winter 2001; Nelson 1999; Alvarez and Brehm 1997; Kinder and Sanders 1996; Nelson and Kinder

⁵ In current psychological conceptions, cognition is a surface phenomenon of the neocortex and affect is thought to be located in the older regions of the brain (MacLean 1990). While the present study is neither concerned with the neurological differences between cognition and affect nor with the primacy of one over another, it is important to recognize them as two separate constructs.

1996; McConahay 1986) and *social welfare* (Kinder and Winter 2001; Nelson 1999; Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1991; Cook and Barrett 1992; Bobo and Kluegel 1993; Gilens 1995; see also Jacoby 2005).⁶ If attitudes about these policies are structured by how individuals feel about the perceived beneficiaries, and these individuals have conflicting feelings, then it makes sense that this affective conflict could stimulate ambivalence.

Lavine and Steenbergen (2005) demonstrate that conflict between feelings about conservative and liberal groups has consistent effects on a variety of behaviors and attitudes. Most significantly, people who are most conflicted about group evaluations tend to decide later whom to support for president, are more likely to split their ticket on election day, and are less likely to utilize their issue preferences when deciding how to vote in presidential elections. Their findings suggest that affective conflict is a source of ambivalence equally across ideology, party identification, and presidential vote choice but again, due to the limitations of the data (NES), they are forced to infer ambivalence from the error variance in each respective model.

If cognitive orientations and affective orientations structure attitudes, it is also reasonable to expect that conflict between the two may stimulate ambivalence (Lavine *et al.* 1998; Steenbergen and Brewer 2000). Research has embraced the idea that individuals' attitudes are likely shaped by both feelings and cognitions (Breckler and Wiggins 1989; Esses, Haddock, and Zanna 1993; Millar and Tesser 1989). Some contend that emotions undermine an individual's ability to make reasoned decisions (Sears 2000;

⁶ Nelson (1999) does suggest that cognitive elements of outgroup attitudes dominate affect in their influence on policy opinion but this study does not focus on the primacy of one effect over another.

Sears *et al.* 1980), while others have suggested that the affective and cognitive bases of attitudes are generally consistent (Breckler 1984; Festinger 1957; Rosenberg and Hovland 1960). Lavine and his colleagues (1998) argue, first, that cognition and affect are not always consistent; second, that affect has a stronger influence on attitudes among those who have conflicting cognitions, while there is no primacy effect among those with similarly valenced affect and cognition. While the present study does not address the primacy of affect vs. cognition, these findings do indicate that *cognitive-affective conflict* occurs (see also Steenbergen and Brewer 2000).

Thus, the evidence suggests that there are various potential sources of ambivalence including *cognitive conflict*, *affective conflict*, and *cognitive-affective conflict*. The problem is that researchers fail to build models that incorporate all of these theoretical explanations. Most models are underspecified and, as a result, the findings they generate are questionable. Steenbergen and Brewer (2000) built a model that incorporates all of these factors and they found very little ambivalence; however, the validity of their measure of ambivalence is dubious. The authors note potential weaknesses with regard to their measure, leaving the door open for further research.

The Consequences of Ambivalent Political Attitudes

Early research suggested that ambivalence plays a role in shaping citizens' feelings about their national leaders. Abelson and his colleagues (1982) found that positive and negative affective reactions toward candidates clustered on separate factors; or, in other words, their reactions formed two factors that were not significantly correlated with one another. Thus, having good feelings toward a candidate did not necessarily imply an absence of bad feelings toward him. Subsequent research suggests that ambivalence also affects the manner in which attitudes are translated into behavior (Armitage and Connor

2000). Lavine and Steenbergen (2005) present evidence of this by showing that conflict rooted in feelings toward liberal and conservative social groups can influence citizens' voting decisions.

Evidence also suggests that ambivalence mediates political evaluations (McGraw *et al.* 2003), and the relationship between a person's policy preferences and his or her evaluations of political leaders and institutions (Craig *et al.* 2005). For example, in an experiment, Haddock (2003) tests the degree to which candidate and party evaluations are linked among those that are ambivalent about British politics in general. He used a direct measure of ambivalence that simply asked subjects if they were mixed or ambivalent. The results indicated that the correlation between evaluations of the Prime Minister and the party were highest when participants evaluated them together rather than separately, and that this correlation was strongest for those who were ambivalent. Other studies have demonstrated that more negative evaluations of candidates are associated with ambivalence (Craig *et al.* 2005; McGraw, Hasecke, and Conger 2003).

Research has suggested that consequences of ambivalence extend beyond individual-level evaluative effects. Ambivalence can be thought of as an attribute of an attitude. It has been hypothesized that ambivalence, like other attributes such as importance, extremity, and certainty, will moderate the stability of attitudes over time (Armitage and Conner 2000; Bassili 1996; Craig, Martinez, and Kane 2005). The evidence, however, is decidedly mixed. Some have concluded that ambivalence does contribute to attitude instability or susceptibility (Zaller and Feldman 1992; Bargh *et al.* 1992; Hill and Kriesi 2001; Craig, Martinez, and Kane 2005; Fournier 2005), while other

research has failed to uncover such a link (Bassili 1996; Armitage and Conner 2000, 2005).

Craig and Martinez's (2005a, 2005b) two edited volumes offer, perhaps, the most complete examination of the prevalence of ambivalence and its political consequences to date. The fact that these are the only books other than Cantril and Cantril (1999) that focus entirely on ambivalence and its consequences for politics suggests that there is clearly room for more inquiry. Further, mixed findings concerning prevalence and consequences indicate that the matter is not settled. Much the same can be said when it comes to research that focuses on social welfare ambivalence.

Ambivalence and Attitudes About Social Welfare

Whereas some assert that many Americans are ambivalent about social welfare (Feldman and Zaller 1992; Cantril and Cantril 1999; Hodson, Maio, and Esses 2001; Gainous and Martinez 2005), others counter that conflicting attitudes are relatively uncommon among the general public (Steenbergen and Brewer 2000; Jacoby 2002, 2005). The contention here is that conclusions drawn on both sides of the argument suffer from the same limitations as other studies of ambivalence: invalid measures and underspecified models. The details of the findings of each of these respective studies will be discussed in more detail in later chapters. For now, let us address the validity of the measures used and the specification of the models.

First, concerning the validity of the measures, Feldman and Zaller (1992), Cantril and Cantril (1999), Steenbergen and Brewer (2000), and Jacoby (2002, 2005) all use measures that could be capturing phenomena other than ambivalence. Feldman and Zaller (1992) found that social welfare ambivalence is fairly common, but this finding may be a function of the indicators they employed. They measured ambivalence by counting the

number of conflicting considerations (e.g., a mix of liberal and conservative comments), spontaneous statements of ambivalence (e.g., “I see merit in both sides”), and two-sided remarks (e.g., “People should try to get ahead on their own, but government should help when necessary”) that were offered in response to open-ended probes about social welfare attitudes in the 1987 NES Pilot Study. The problem is that any or all of these comments might be offered without ambivalence necessarily being present. For example, research suggests that many African Americans would probably agree with the statement, “Although I think people are responsible for their financial conditions, I nevertheless support social welfare” (see Kinder and Sanders 1996). Under the coding scheme employed by Feldman and Zaller, black respondents who make such a statement would be categorized as ambivalent when in fact they may not be. Instead, they may not connect the two ideas.

Cantril and Cantril (1999; also see Free and Cantril 1967) simply *assumed* that ambivalence is present whenever an individual expresses inconsistent opinions about the size of government on the one hand, and spending for social programs on the other, that is, when she/he expresses support for both smaller government and higher spending, or vice versa. As a result of this loose conceptualization, defining ambivalence as *inconsistent* positions about government size and government spending, their measure is not valid.

Jacoby (2005) also questioned the work of Cantril and Cantril, but for different reasons. He argued that the seemingly contradictory (or inconsistent) attitudes identified in that study are not a product of ambivalence; rather, they represent distinctions made by citizens between different types of government spending. While Jacoby is probably

correct in asserting that ambivalence about one social welfare issue does not necessarily signify ambivalence about another, he also contends that “ambivalence is signaled most clearly by the existence of seemingly contradictory patterns of opinion” (2005, p. 153). His findings differ from those of Cantril and Cantril, but his measure suffers from the same problem; *inconsistent* positions are not the same as having *conflicting* positive and negative evaluations regarding a *single attitude object* (see Gainous and Martinez 2005).

Steenbergen and Brewer’s (2000) examination of the 1992 NES led them to conclude that the American public is “not-so” ambivalent about social welfare but their measure of ambivalence is also problematic. Like Alvarez and Brehm (1996), they inferred ambivalence from patterns of error variance in a heteroskedastic probit model. As previously discussed, this is problematic because error variance may signify other things in addition to ambivalence.

Measurement has clearly been a problem, but it is not the only one. The models developed by Feldman and Zaller (1992), Cantril and Cantril (1999), Gainous and Martinez (2005), and Jacoby (2002, 2005) all omit important potential sources of ambivalence. Steenbergen and Brewer (2000) offer the most complete model of the sources of ambivalence, but, the findings again are questionable because of their measure of ambivalence. According to Steenbergen and Brewer, studies that assume ambivalence and value conflict to be synonymous are defining ambivalence too narrowly and, consequently, overlooking other types of conflict such as that which may involve a clash between cognition and affect. By looking under every rock when including *cognitive-cognitive* (value vs. value), *affective-affective* (group affect vs. group affect), and *cognitive-affective* (value vs. group affect) conflict in their analysis, these authors

attempted to give ambivalence the benefit of the doubt; in the end, they found little evidence of conflict and assumed low levels of ambivalence. While their model was more complete than most, the results may, in fact, be a product of the inappropriate measure. Gainous and Martinez (2005) attempted to remedy this problem by using the previously discussed indirect approach to measuring ambivalence developed by Craig and his colleagues (2002, 2005) but, like the models developed by Feldman and Zaller (1992) and Jacoby (2002), their model only includes a measure of cognitive conflict.

In summary, the existing literature does not provide a definitive answer either way regarding the prevalence, sources, and consequences of social welfare ambivalence. Each study makes its own contribution, either theoretically or methodologically, but no one study integrates each of these contributions. Craig and his colleagues (2002, 2005; see also Gainous and Martinez 2005) offer a measure that is consistent with the more narrowly defined conception of ambivalence. Most studies only look to value conflict as a potential source of ambivalence about social welfare (Feldman and Zaller 1992; Steenbergen and Brewer 2000; Jacoby 2002; Gainous and Martinez 2005). Steenbergen and Brewer suggest that affective and cognitive-affective may also be a source of ambivalence surrounding this issue but no one study integrates all of these potential sources. The present study does so in an effort to build a more integrative model of ambivalence based on the idea that ambivalence involves strong internalized conflict regarding a related set of objects.

Putting it All Together with Some Hypotheses

Because there have been conceptual and operational problems surrounding the study of ambivalence in general and specific to social welfare, it is reasonable to revisit some of the questions addressed by prior research, but perhaps with a better approach to

measuring ambivalence. There are a series of hypotheses that will be tested throughout the chapters in this study. The theory underlying these hypotheses is briefly described here and elaborated on throughout the study:

H₁ Cognitive, cognitive-affective, and affective conflict are positively related to ambivalence about social welfare.

Value conflict is the most cited potential source of ambivalence (Katz and Hass 1988; Feldman and Zaller 1992; Eagly and Chaiken 1993; Alvarez and Brehm 1995; Craig *et al.* 2005; Martinez *et al.* 2005). As covered earlier in this chapter, the literature indicated that egalitarian and individualist values structure attitudes about social welfare (Feldman 1988; Feldman and Zaller 1992; McCann 1997; Feldman and Steenbergen 2001; Goren 2001; also see Gilens 1995), and therefore, these are the values focused on here. Values have been conceptualized as a cognitive construct (see Steenbergen and Brewer 2000). By thinking of this broadly as a *cognitive* process rather than simply conflict between values, the door is opened to think of potential *affective* sources of ambivalence. Theory has suggested, first, that the conflict of feelings (Lavine and Steenbergen 2005; Steenbergen and Brewer 2000) and conflict between cognitive and affective elements (Lavine *et al.* 1998; Steenbergen and Brewer 2000) may stimulate ambivalence, and second, that attitudes about social welfare programs are structured, in part, by people's feelings about the perceived beneficiaries of such programs. Therefore, we should expect cognitive-affective and affective conflict to create ambivalence.

H₂ As individuals place more importance on one value as opposed to another they are less likely to be ambivalent about social welfare.

Even if cognitive conflict in the form of value conflict is a source of ambivalence, it is possible that *value hierarchies* (Rokeach 1973; Schwartz 1992; Jacoby 2002) exist and are structured in ways that sometimes serve to reduce the likelihood of ambivalence

occurring. If someone places more importance on individualism than egalitarianism, and an issue arises that happens to pit these values against each other, the conflict will not necessarily matter for the preferred value will prevail and determine the person's response to the issue in question. Jacoby (2002) presents evidence suggesting that most citizens can, in fact, place their values in some rank order of importance.

H₃ Between the indirect and direct approaches to measuring ambivalence, the relationship between the above sources of conflict and ambivalence about social welfare is strongest for indirect measures that gauge positive and negative evaluations separately.

As described in this chapter, the conceptualization and operational definitions of ambivalence have varied. As a result, evidence of the sources of ambivalence has been mixed. If the theory is right that all of these types of conflict are sources of ambivalence, then the mixed findings are most likely a result of inappropriate measures. The strictest definition of ambivalence refers to the simultaneous possession of positive and negative evaluations of a single attitude object as ambivalence (see Klopfer and Madden 1980; Katz, Wackenhut, and Hass 1986; Cacioppo and Berntson 1994; Thompson, Zanna, and Griffin 1995; Priester and Petty 1996; Alvarez and Brehm 1995, 1997, 1998; Craig, Kane, and Martinez 2002; McGraw, Hasecke, and Conger 2003). Indirect measures that gauge positive and negative evaluations separately are most consistent with this strict conceptualization of ambivalence. For this reason, the theoretical predictors of ambivalence about social welfare should perform best when using a measure that captures the essence of concept of ambivalence from which the theory of sources was originally derived (of course this assumes that measures of conflict are good). So, whichever measure of ambivalence is best predicted by the sources of ambivalence

(cognitive, cognitive-affective, and affective conflict) has the highest construct validity, assuming that the theory of the sources of ambivalence is accurate.

H₄ Liberals are less ambivalent about social welfare policy than conservatives.

H₅ Females are less ambivalent about social welfare policy than males.

H₆ African Americans are less ambivalent about social welfare policy than whites.

H₇ The variation in ambivalence across groups is a result of variation in the sources of such ambivalence across groups.

Feldman and Zaller (1992) concluded that social welfare liberals, who tend to place a high value on both egalitarianism and individualism, are more prone to ambivalence than conservatives. According to them, liberals are more likely to experience value conflict because while equality and individualism are of roughly equal importance for liberals, conservatives tend to place more emphasis on individualism. Thus, individualism usually trumps egalitarianism for conservatives, while it is fair fight between the two values among liberals – a fight that supposedly leads to higher levels of social welfare ambivalence. However, evidence from a number of studies raises questions about key aspects of the Feldman-Zaller argument. Women and blacks, for example, generally support social welfare programs in disproportionate numbers (Kaufmann and Petrocik 1999; Goren 2001; Gilens 1988, 1995; Bobo and Kluegel 1993; Tate 1994; Kinder and Winter 2001), but the relative importance of equality and individualism do *not* appear to be roughly equivalent among women and blacks, as Feldman and Zaller might lead us to expect (Kinder and Sanders 1996; Feather 2004; also see Jacoby 2002).

Because women and blacks are generally thought of as social welfare liberals, and the evidence suggests that their values are not distributed the way in which Feldman and Zaller assert, we should not expect liberals to be more ambivalent than conservatives. In

fact, the distribution of values across these groups evidenced in the literature should lead us to expect the opposite of Feldman and Zaller. Their logic holds up but from the other direction. It is conservatives that should be more likely to be in conflict because liberals prioritize values of equality over individualism, and therefore, their values are not as likely to come into conflict. While conservatives are more likely to be individualist as opposed to egalitarian (Feldman and Zaller 1992), the predominance of one value over the other is not as great for conservatives.

H₈ Ambivalence about social welfare policy weakens the relationship between social welfare policy preferences and evaluations of candidates.

Research has extensively explored the *consequences* of attributes of attitudes such as *importance* (Krosnick and Abelson 1992; Krosnick 1988a, 1988b; Boninger *et al.* 1995), *extremity* (Abelson 1995; Krosnick and Abelson 1992; Krosnick *et al.* 1993), *certainty* (Budd 1986; Krosnick and Schuman 1988), and *accessibility* (Fazio 1986) to name a few, but there has not been nearly as much research centered on the potential political consequences of ambivalence. If ambivalence is an attribute of attitudes, and research indicates that every other attribute of attitudes is consequential, there is every reason to believe that ambivalence is too. Research has suggested that the relationship between policy preferences and evaluations of political candidates and institutions is weaker for someone who is ambivalent about the policy (see Craig *et al.* 2005); hence, this hypothesis is tested here.

H₉ The mediating effect of ambivalence about social welfare is stronger for conservatives, men, and whites.

This is really an exploratory hypothesis. Research has suggested that ambivalence has a mediating effect, and that its prevalence varies across groups, so it seems reasonable to see if the mediating effect varies across groups. If conservatives, men, and

whites are more ambivalent about social welfare than their respective counterparts, the intuitive expectation concerning the mediating effect across these groups is to expect the effect to be stronger among those who are more ambivalent. Again, this is an exploratory hypothesis. With no real literature to draw from, this just seems to be the most reasonable expectation. What's more, the question is one worth answering. Is the mediating effect of social welfare ambivalence stronger for some?

Conclusion

In the next chapter, all of the variables used in this study are described theoretically and operationally. The adapted survey measure of ambivalence will be discussed in further detail, as will other measures of ambivalence. Up to this point, the discussion of the sources of ambivalence has been broad and not specific to social welfare. The next chapter will cover the details of the cognitive and affective components that shape attitudes about social welfare. The discussion focuses on how values shape attitudes generally as well as specifically about social welfare, and on how group affect can serve to shape these attitudes.

CHAPTER 3

SOCIAL WELFARE AMBIVALENCE: OPERATIONALIZATION AND DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

This chapter describes all of the measures used to explore the prevalence, sources and consequences of ambivalence. Four different measures of social welfare ambivalence, indicators of the potential sources of ambivalence, and a host of controls are detailed. These measures are used, first, to determine the most valid approach to measuring ambivalence (Chapter 4). Next, they are used to explore the distribution of social welfare ambivalence across ideology, gender, and race (Chapter 5). Finally, they are used to examine the consequences of such ambivalence regarding candidate and government evaluations (Chapter 6).

The data come from a telephone poll conducted between May 10-22, 2004 by the *Florida Voter* survey organization. Six hundred and seven respondents were chosen randomly from a list of all registered voters in the state of Florida. Only those whose names were drawn from the list were actually interviewed. Up to four callbacks were attempted on all working numbers and initial refusals. The margin of error is plus or minus four percentage points. The survey itself included indicators that can be used to build direct and indirect measures of ambivalence, values, value importance, feelings about the perceived beneficiaries, attitudes about social welfare in general, and a variety of control variables.¹

¹ Additional information can be obtained from the author, or from Florida Voter directly (954-584-0204). I address the pervasive problem of missing data in analyses of survey research by using a multiple imputation process. Using this procedure, I created five

The details of all these survey measures are explicated here. They include question wording and response distributions across all independent and dependent variables. First, the direct and indirect measures of ambivalence about social welfare policy are described. Then the hypothesized sources of ambivalence (cognitive conflict, cognitive-affective conflict, and affective conflict) concerning attitudes about social welfare policy are detailed. Finally, all other variables are described including demographics and controls. The distributions described here suggest that many are ambivalent about social welfare. Also, many possess conflicting values (cognitive), conflicting feelings about the perceived beneficiaries of social welfare (affective), and conflict between the two (cognitive-affective).

Direct and Indirect Measures of Ambivalence

As discussed in the preceding chapter, researchers have employed two broad strategies for measuring ambivalence. One approach involves using *direct* measures of ambivalence where respondents are simply asked to state if they are torn or mixed concerning the issue at hand. These are classified as direct measures because they are based on the self-assessment of the respondent.

The other approach is *indirect* and involves ascertaining the degree to which respondents are ambivalent without making them aware that a measurement of ambivalence is being conducted. Obviously these approaches are classified as indirect because their intent is to remove the subjectivity of the respondent.

replicate datasets based on the data, where the missing data in each replication are substituted with draws from the posterior distribution of the missing value conditional on observed values (Little and Rubin 1987; see also Horton and Lipsitz 2001). Analyses which follow are based on the mean results of the five replicate imputed datasets.

The two direct measures of *social welfare ambivalence* employed in this study are only used in Chapter 4. These measures are derived from a split-sample experimental question contained in the instrument. Half of the sample was randomly assigned the following question:

Some people think the government should provide fewer services, even in areas such as health and education, in order to reduce spending. Others feel it is important for the government to provide more services to citizens even if it means an increase in spending. Which of these positions is closest to your own views, or are you *torn* between the two?

The other half of the sample was asked the following question:

Some people think the government should provide fewer services, even in areas such as health and education, in order to reduce spending. Others feel it is important for the government to provide more services to citizens even if it means an increase in spending. Which of these positions is closest to your own views?

After each question, respondents were asked how strongly they felt about their position. On the first question, a 5-point scale was created ranging from fewer services/strongly to more services strongly with torn between the two in the middle. In the second question, interviewers were instructed to record any volunteered response that indicated the respondent was mixed or torn as mixed/in-between. This also made a 5-point scale after respondents rated how strongly they felt about their position. Dummy variables were constructed from each of these indicators. If respondents chose the “torn between two sides” response in the former indicator they were coded as a 1 and all other responses were coded as a 0. The same was done for the latter whenever respondents volunteered a mixed response. Therefore, there are two direct measures of social welfare ambivalence.

The response distributions on these indicators are as expected (see Table 3-1). Respondents were more likely to choose the “torn between sides” response (24.0 %) than

to volunteer a mixed response (12.5 %) (t-test $p < 0.001$). It makes perfect sense that people would be more likely to choose a response that is offered as opposed to volunteering one (see Bishop, Oldendick, and Tuchfarber 1980). Again these measures depend on the direct assessment of the respondents. This is problematic if we strictly treat ambivalence as the simultaneous possession of positive and negative evaluations because people may choose or volunteer a mixed response for other reasons. Allowing respondents to assess the degree to which they possess these evaluations may distort the measure. For example, research has suggested that those without any real attitude on a given issue may select the “safe” response (see Asher 2004 for a review). Often the safe response is the middle or neutral response in a standard survey indicator. A response of “both good and bad” equates to a middle/neutral or “safe” response.

The first *indirect measure* of ambivalence uses a similar method to that of Alvarez and Brehm (1995, 1997, 1998, and 2002) and Jacoby (2002). Again, this measurement strategy involves analyzing the residuals of a model of the attitude object under examination. Residuals are the difference between the predicted value from the equation and the actual observed response of that individual. The idea here is that the fit of the equation to the data should be worse among individuals who are ambivalent because the range of acceptable responses for them is greater. Because they have both positive and negative feelings, their responses may bounce from side to side. This increases the variance of their responses to the indicator of the dependent variable, and therefore, the model will perform poorly at predicting their responses.

The present study extracts the residuals from a model of attitudes about social welfare using ordered logit as opposed to probit (Alvarez and Brehm 1995, 1997, 1998,

2002) or ordinary least squares (Jacoby 2002) because *social welfare policy preference* is measured using the ordinal scale described above for the direct measures of ambivalence. Both groups (those who chose the torn response and those who offered a mixed response) are combined for purposes of the analysis here.²

Table 3-1 Distribution of Responses on Two Direct Measures of Ambivalence

	Total	Percentage
Offered "Torn" Response		
Fewer Services-Strongly	52	17.1 %
Fewer Services-Not Strongly	23	7.6 %
More Services-Not Strongly	48	15.8 %
More Services- Strongly	108	35.5 %
<i>Torn Between Sides</i>	73	24.0 %
Total	304	100.0 %
Volunteered "Mixed" Response		
Fewer Services-Strongly	51	16.8
Fewer Services-Not Strongly	37	12.2
More Services-Not Strongly	59	19.5
More Services- Strongly	118	38.9
<i>Mixed/In Between</i>	38	12.5
Total	303	100.0

Note: Data are from a *Florida Voter* survey of registered voters conducted in May 2004. Missing values were replaced using multiple imputation.

Social welfare policy preference is modeled as a function of individualism, egalitarianism, feelings about the beneficiaries, party identification, race, gender, and income (these variables are described below).³ Then, the residuals from the ordered logit

² A dummy variable is added for the question form to the multivariate analysis presented below to control for any question format effect. The coefficient for the form dummy was trivial. For the sake of parsimony, this variable is omitted from the model as reported in Table 3-2.

³ These variables were selected because they are the primary ones in the literature used to explain attitudes about social welfare (see Goren 2001; Feldman and Zaller 1992; Kaufmann and Petrocik 1999; Gilens 1988, 1995; Bobo and Kluegel 1993; Tate 1994; Kinder and Winter 2001).

estimates are extracted to create a new variable. The model does not perform well (see Table 3-2). Only 3 of the seven independent variables reach traditional levels of statistical significance ($p \leq 0.05$). Those who are more individualist are less likely to feel positively about social welfare. Conversely, egalitarianism is positively associated with support for social welfare. Republicans are less likely to feel positive than are independents or Democrats. Neither race, gender nor income is significant. The pseudo R^2 is 0.13.⁴

In the analysis of residuals, the strategy employed here parts from that of Alvarez and Brehm, and Jacoby. They each analyze the variance of the residuals across different groups that theory suggests should be more or less ambivalent. The problem is that their analysis is aggregate in nature because it does nothing to explain why the model would be a bad fit for any one individual. To remedy this problem, this study will simply use the absolute value of the individual residuals and model them as a function of a set of individual-level predictors.⁵ This allows us to infer why the predicted value is close or not close to the observed value for each individual.

While exploring residuals at the individual-level may alleviate the problem of previous studies that did aggregate analyses, this approach presents a problem of its own. This measure is not consistent with the psychological conception of ambivalence as the simultaneous possession of positive and negative evaluations of a single attitude object. It may be the case that model fit will be worse for those that are conflicted, but poor model

⁴ Nagelkerke's R-Square is a modification of the Cox and Snell coefficient to assure that it can vary from 0 to 1. That is, Nagelkerke's R^2 divides Cox and Snell's R^2 by its maximum in order to achieve a measure that ranges from 0 to 1. Therefore Nagelkerke's R^2 will normally be higher than the Cox and Snell measure but will tend to run lower than the corresponding OLS R^2 .

⁵ For an example of the same method using ordinary least squares regression see Marks *et al.* (2004).

Table 3-2 Model of Attitudes about Social Welfare

	<u>Coefficient</u>	<u>Standard Error</u>	<u>95 % Confidence Interval</u>	
Economic Individualism	-0.11	0.03	-0.18	-0.05
Egalitarianism	0.17	0.03	0.11	0.24
Feelings/Beneficiaries	-0.01	0.05	-0.10	0.09
Democrat	0.19	0.20	-0.21	0.59
Republican	-0.49	0.20	-0.89	-0.09
Black	0.28	0.29	-0.28	0.84
Female	0.18	0.15	-0.12	0.48
Income	0.03	0.08	-0.13	0.18
-2 log likelihood	1738.56			
Nagelkerke Pseudo R ²	0.13			
N	607			

Note: Data are from a *Florida Voter* survey of registered voters conducted in May 2004. Table entries are ordered logit coefficients, associated standard errors, and 95% confidence intervals (threshold levels are not shown). Missing values were replaced using multiple imputation.

fit could also result from other factors. For instance, if someone has non-attitude or no real position on the issue they may guess which could certainly result in a poor prediction.

This next indirect measure was modeled after that used by Craig and his colleagues (2002, 2005). Respondents were asked to indicate how positively they viewed several aspects of social welfare policy, using a battery of questions that was introduced as follows:

I'm now going to read you a series of *statements* about the kinds of things some people think the government should be doing to address certain problems that are facing the country. After each, I'd like you to rate the statement on a 4-point scale to indicate how *positively* you feel toward it. If you do not have any positive feelings, give it the lowest rating of 1; if you have some positive feelings, rate it a 2; if you have generally positive feelings, rate it a 3; and if you have extremely positive feelings, rate it a 4. Please rate each statement based solely on how positively you feel about it, *while ignoring or setting aside for the moment any negative feelings you may have*. The first statement is. . . .

The statements were then read and respondents were asked to rate each one separately. If a person seemed unsure or confused at any point, interviewers were told to repeat the instructions as many times as necessary.

The specific aspects of social welfare policy (based on questions from the NES as well as recent news stories) that respondents were asked to evaluate are as follows: The government should. . . .

- ensure that every citizen has adequate medical insurance;
- provide programs to help homeless people find a place to live;
- ensure that every child has access to a good education;
- provide programs that improve the standard of living of poor Americans;
- see to it that everyone who wants a job has one;
- provide childcare programs to assist working parents;
- ensure that the retirement benefits that citizens have built up over the years are protected.

After this battery was given to respondents, they were given a number of filler questions (party identification, political trust, and values indicators). Then the introduction was repeated except with the words “positive” and “positively” replaced by “negative” and “negatively.” Following this introduction, respondents were read the same battery of items as before.

Next, indicators of *social welfare ambivalence* were calculated for each item using an algorithm developed by Thompson and her colleagues (1995; also see Kaplan 1972).⁶

This algorithm is:

⁶ This model is derived from a version of the semantic differential (Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum 1957), as modified by Kaplan (1972) in an effort to show that people's overall attitudes are made up of both positive and negative elements. Thompson and her

$$\text{Ambivalence} = [(P+ N)/2] - |P - N|$$

where P is the positive reaction score and N is the negative reaction score. The range of scores for each of the seven items described above is -0.5 through 4.0 , with intervals of 0.5 .

We can see that this algorithm is sensitive to the intensity of positive and negative sentiments (see Table 3-3). For instance, consider a person who reports “some” positive feelings (score of 2), as well as no negative feelings (score of 1), with regard to one of the social welfare items; that individual would be characterized by the model as experiencing a modest amount of ambivalence (overall score of 0.5). If, in contrast, the same respondent were to express “generally” positive feelings (score of 3) and no negative feelings (score of 1), his or her score would fall to zero, i.e., no ambivalence at all. Looking at the extremes, we would expect someone who reported “extremely” positive and negative feelings (score of 4 and 4 respectively) to be the most ambivalent. The algorithm produces the highest score possible (4) for these respondents. Conversely, those with “extremely” positive feelings and “no” negative feelings or vice versa get the lowest possible score (-0.5).

Next, an additive index of the seven separate items was created. Principal components factor analysis confirmed that all seven load on a single factor, and the reliability of an additive index constructed from them is very good ($\alpha = .860$). It is important to note that people’s attitudes about social welfare policies may be multi-

colleagues (1995) adjusted the model to better account for the presence of polarized beliefs. See Craig, Kane, and Martinez (2002) for a more complete discussion of this measure as employed in a large-sample survey.

dimensional (see Jacoby 1994), but as confirmatory factor analysis indicates here, ambivalence about such policies appears to be on one dimension. In other words, people that are ambivalent about one aspect of social welfare policy are often ambivalent about others.

Table 3-3 Logic of the Algorithm

<u>Negative Reactions Score</u>	<u>Positive Reactions Score</u>			
	One	Two	Three	Four
No Negative Feelings	1.0	0.5	0.0	-0.5
Some Negative Feelings	0.5	2.0	1.5	1.0
Generally Negative Feelings	0.0	1.5	3.0	2.5
Extremely Negative Feelings	-0.5	1.0	2.5	4.0

Note: Table is in Craig, Kane, and Martinez (2002). Table entries are overall ambivalence scores assigned to individuals with the indicated mix of positive and negative reactions.

The results shown in Table 3-4 suggest that there is some degree of variability in the levels of ambivalence observed across the seven program areas that form the basis for the social welfare ambivalence index, and that these levels are far from trivial. For the sample as a whole, mean ambivalence scores are higher on policies that would assist the homeless, improve the standard of living of poor Americans, ensure full employment, and provide childcare programs to assist working parents; on each of these issues, more than half of those in the sample have ambivalence scores greater than zero. Ambivalence is less common with regard to universal medical insurance, programs to ensure that all children receive a good education, and protecting retirement benefits. Overall, despite the variation that is evident here, a single seven-item social welfare ambivalence index scales well (see above) and will be used for the bulk of this study.

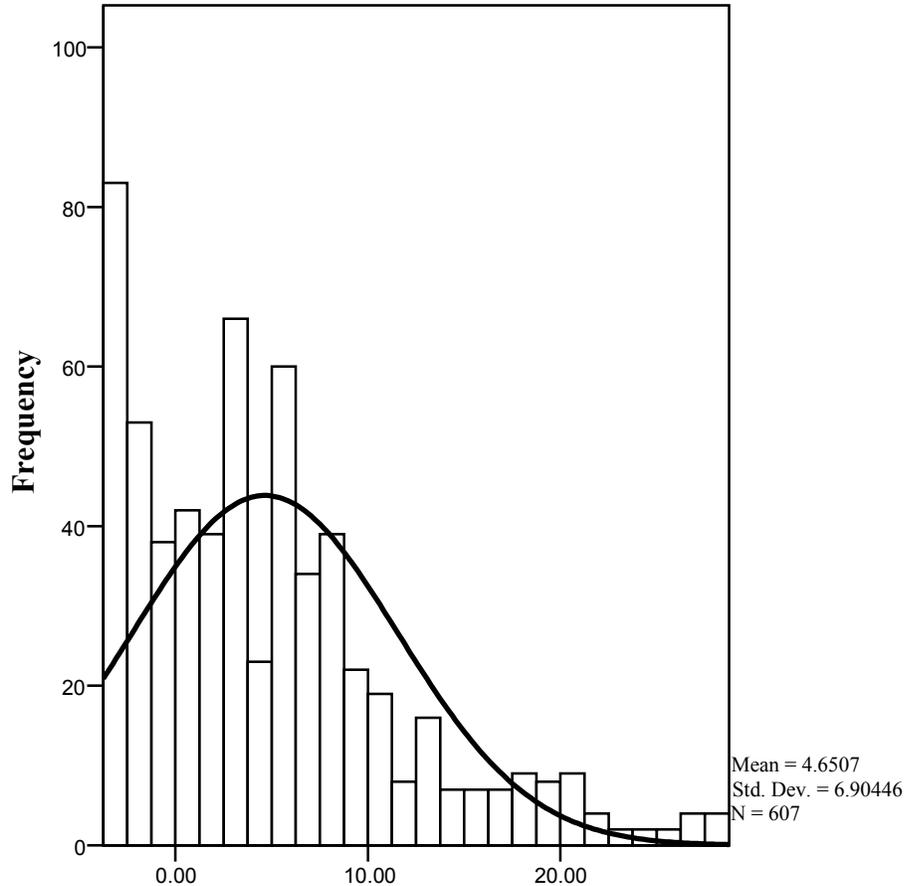
Table 3-4 Frequency and Intensity of Ambivalence about Social Welfare

<u>Condition</u>	<u>Mean Score</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>	<u>Percent Ambivalent</u>
Medical Insurance	0.41	1.32	35.4%
Homeless	0.95	1.27	61.4%
Education	0.31	1.40	27.3%
Standard of Living	0.97	1.26	61.4%
Job Guarantee	0.89	1.36	56.5%
Child Care	0.76	1.29	52.6%
Retirement Benefits	0.36	1.46	28.0%
Ambivalence Index	4.65	6.90	48.3%

Number of Cases = 607

Note: Data are from a *Florida Voter* survey of registered voters conducted in May 2004. Table entries indicate the (a) mean ambivalence score for each item (scores ranging from -0.5 to +4.0), and for the combined scale (scores from -3.5 to +28.0); (b) associated standard deviation; and (c) percentage of respondents with scores greater than zero for a given item (this threshold is arbitrary but it gives a sense of how many people offered responses that are at least somewhat conflicted (see Table 3-3).

The distribution on this index is contained in Figure 3-1. The mean response is well over 0 at 4.65. While the distribution is skewed left there are many scores to the right of the mean indicating that many are ambivalent about social welfare (based on this measure). Of course, the threshold that constitutes whether or not someone is ambivalent is arbitrary (Craig *et al.* 2005). Nonetheless, these results indicate that many simultaneously offered positive and negative responses. Before the inference can be comfortably made that ambivalence is common, the relative construct validity of each of these direct and indirect measures of ambivalence must be compared. This involves seeing how well the theoretical sources of ambivalence predict each.



Note: Data are from a Florida Voter survey of registered voters conducted in May 2004.

Figure 3-1 Distribution of Social Welfare Ambivalence

Sources of Ambivalence in General and About Social Welfare

Cognitive Conflict

Since it was asserted in *The American Voter* that citizens have a cognitive map of politics (Campbell *et al.* 1960) and that psychological forces shape political behavior, research focusing on political cognition burgeoned (see Popkin 1991; Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1991; see Iyengar and McGuire 1993 and Lau and Sears 1986 for a review). The basic idea is simple. People make decisions and form attitudes by using cognitive shortcuts such as party identification, media cues, and values, among many others. These shortcuts permit individuals to make reasonable decisions with minimal effort (Popkin

1991; Fiske and Taylor 1991). As for values being a cognitive shortcut, the idea is that individuals do not need a sophisticated ideology to determine their political preferences. Their preferences or political evaluations may be based on how consistent or inconsistent policies or political actions are with certain beliefs they possess (Feldman 1988). Policies and actions may be judged as right or wrong based on their congruence with deeply held values (see Rokeach 1973).

What happens when an issue pits opposing values against each other? Cognitive conflict such as this may result in ambivalence. In fact, value conflict is the most often mentioned source of ambivalence in the literature (Katz, Wackenhut, and Hass 1986; Katz and Hass 1988; Eagly and Chaiken 1993; Alvarez and Brehm 1995; Martinez *et al.* 2005; Newby-Clark, McGregor, and Zanna 2005). The contention here is the possibility that varying *value hierarchies* (Rokeach 1973; Schwartz 1992; Jacoby 2002) could be structured in such a way as to reduce the likelihood of ambivalence surrounding social welfare (Gaius and Martinez 2005). If an individual places more importance on one value as opposed to another, and social welfare issues pit these values against each other (Feldman and Zaller 1992; Feldman 1988; Goren 2001), the conflict will not necessarily matter. Simply, the preferred value will prevail and determine the person's response to the issue in question. So, the effect of value conflict is dependent on the personal importance people place on their values.

The literature suggests that values such as *egalitarianism* (Feldman 1988; Feldman and Zaller 1992; McCann 1997; Feldman and Steenbergen 2001; Goren 2001; also see Gilens 1995) and *economic individualism* (Feldman 1988; Feldman and Zaller 1992; McCann 1997; Goren 2001; also see Gilens 1995) are related to citizens' attitudes about

social welfare.⁷ Egalitarianism can be thought of as a general belief in equality and economic individualism as a belief in the freedom to accumulate wealth. Although different studies may conceptualize, operationalize, and label the values in different ways, there is broad agreement that greater individualism is associated with less support and greater egalitarianism with higher support for social welfare programs and spending. Theory suggests that cognitive conflict between individualism and egalitarianism is *potentially* a source of ambivalence about social welfare policy.

To build a measure of conflict between individualist and egalitarian values, separate indicators of each value were first constructed. Respondents were read a series of companion statements and asked to say which came closer to their own opinion. For individualism,⁸ the item pairs were:

- The government should see to it that every person has a job and a good standard of living; or, the government should just let each person get ahead on their own.
- We need a strong government to handle today's complex economic problems; or, the free market can handle these problems without government being involved.

For egalitarianism, the item pairs were:

- We have gone too far in pushing equal rights in this country; or, we should do more to make sure that everyone is treated equally.
- If people were treated more equally in this country, we would have many fewer problems; or, this country would be better off if we worried less about how equal people are.

⁷ Feldman and Steenbergen (2001) contend that "humanitarianism" also is important as a predictor of citizens' attitudes about social welfare.

⁸ These questions were designed to tap support for *economic* individualism, or a belief in the freedom to accumulate wealth. Scholars with a different substantive focus might prefer to measure individualism differently, for example, conceptualizing it in terms of a belief in freedom of expression.

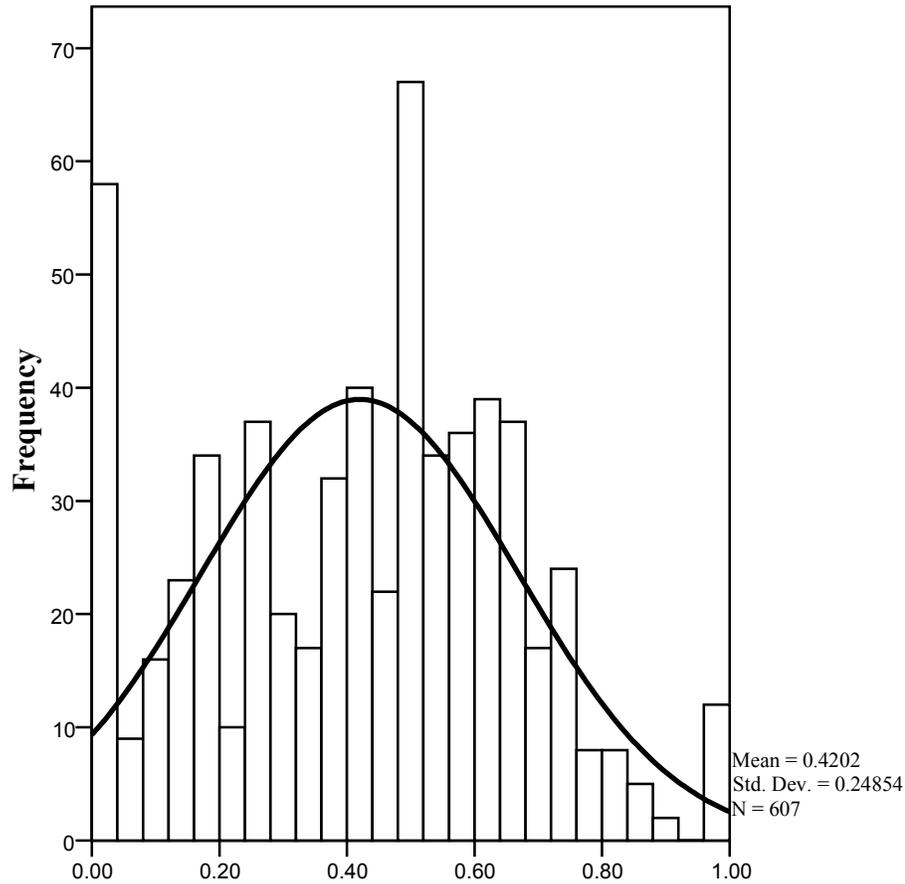
In all cases, responses were coded from 1 (strong support for the first statement in the pair) to 5 (strong support for the second statement); for the second egalitarianism pair, this scoring was reversed to provide consistency in direction of wording. The two sets of items were then combined into indices with scores ranging from 2 to 10 (high values reflecting stronger support for individualist or egalitarian values). These items did not scale that well together ($\tau_b = 0.16$, $p < 0.05$ for the individualist items and $\tau_b = 0.22$, $p < 0.05$ for the egalitarian items). These items were based on measures from NES and they scale well together in those data but the approach here varies slightly. The companion statements used here in each indicator are derived from two separate indicators from NES. This allowed for the use of multiple measures with fewer questions on the survey. Perhaps collapsing two items into each indicator decreased the validity, as opposed to having four separate questions for each.

A measure of *cognitive conflict*, which captures the magnitude of the difference between them, was calculated using the same algorithm as the one described earlier for measuring social welfare ambivalence; that is,

$$\text{Cognitive Conflict} = [\text{individualism} + \text{egalitarianism}]/2 - |\text{individualism} - \text{egalitarianism}|$$

with higher values representing more conflict. This item was rescaled to have values between 0 and 1. The distribution of this measure is displayed in Figure 3-2. Apparent from the normal curve superimposed on the histogram, cognitive conflict is not normally distributed. In fact, nearly 60 respondents indicate no conflict at all. On the other hand,

most of those in the sample demonstrate at least some conflict.



Note: Data are from a Florida Voter survey of registered voters conducted in May 2004.

Figure 3-2 Distribution of Cognitive Conflict

The present study proposes that the effects of value conflict on ambivalence are dependent on the personal importance people place on their values respectively. *Value importance* is based on responses to two separate items, introduced as follows: “As you know, not everyone agrees on the different goals or values that our nation ought to pursue. I'm going to list three⁹ different goals and have you tell me how important each of

⁹ The survey included a measure of the importance of traditional moral values, which was asked in between the two indicators used here.

them is to you personally.” The importance of egalitarianism and individualism was then determined based on answers to a pair of questions:

- The first goal is *equality*, by which we mean a narrowing of the gap in wealth and power between rich and poor. How important is equality to you – extremely important, important, only somewhat important, or not important at all? . . .
- And the third goal is a *free marketplace*, by which we mean all citizens having a chance to get ahead on their own without the government getting involved. How important is a free marketplace to you – extremely important, important, only somewhat important, or not important at all?

Responses were recoded so that higher values represent greater importance. In addition, the *relative* importance of one value as opposed to the other was calculated as the absolute value of individualism importance subtracted from egalitarianism importance; higher numbers indicate that one of these values has priority over the other for the individual. For instance, someone who said one value was extremely important and the other was not important at all would get a score of 3 while someone who said both were extremely important would get a score of 0. So, the further the distance of importance between values, the higher the score.

The distribution of responses displayed in Table 3-5 is skewed toward finding both individualism and egalitarianism important. Near 70% of the respondents selected important or extremely important for both values. Concerning differences, it appears that more people think egalitarianism is not important at all than think individualism is not important at all. The values are certainly in opposition to each other substantively, so it is unlikely that the respondents are distributed in the same way for each separate value.

Cognitive-Affective Conflict

As described in Chapter 2, research has embraced the idea that individuals’ attitudes are likely shaped by individuals’ feelings as well as cognitions (Breckler and

Table 3-5 Distribution of Responses on Value Importance Indicators

	Total	Percentage
Individualism Importance		
Not Important at All	14	2.3 %
Only Somewhat Important	177	29.2 %
Important	195	32.1 %
Extremely Important	221	36.4 %
N	607	100.0 %
Egalitarianism Importance		
Not Important at All	38	6.3 %
Only Somewhat Important	135	22.2 %
Important	225	37.1 %
Extremely Important	209	34.4 %
N	607	100.0 %

Note: Data are from a *Florida Voter* survey of registered voters conducted in May 2004. Missing values were replaced using multiple imputation.

Wiggins 1989; Esses, Haddock, and Zanna 1993; Millar and Tesser 1989). If we know that values are a cognitive base of attitudes about social welfare (Feldman and Zaller 1992; Feldman 1988; Goren 2001) and feelings about the beneficiaries of social welfare are an affective base (Kinder and Winter 2001; Nelson 1999; Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1991; Cook and Barrett 1992; Bobo and Kluegel 1993; Gilens 1995; see also Jacoby 2005), then it is reasonable to expect that conflict between these two components would stimulate ambivalence about this issue. Apart from the obvious (poor people), many citizens think of African Americans as being among the principal beneficiaries of governmental welfare policies (Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1991; Cook and Barrett 1992; Bobo and Kluegel 1993; Gilens 1995; see also Jacoby 2005). Accordingly, *feelings about welfare beneficiaries* are measured with two additive indices, one for positive feelings and another for negative feelings. These indices are based on answers to two

questions tapping respondents' affect toward “poor people” and “blacks.” Respondents were read the following introduction:

Next, I'd like to do the same thing except with a list of different *government institutions* and *groups* that are active in politics. Once again: If you do not have *any positive* feelings toward the institution or group, give it the lowest rating of 1; if you have *some positive* feelings, rate it a 2; if you have *generally positive* feelings, rate it a 3; and if you have *extremely positive* feelings, rate it a 4. Please rate each institution or group based solely on how positively you feel about it, *while ignoring or setting aside for the moment any negative feelings you may have*. The first group is...

The names of the groups and institutions were then read (including poor people and blacks) and respondents were asked to rate each one separately. Then, as with social welfare items, the introduction was repeated except with the words “positive” and “positively” replaced by “negative” and “negatively” following a number of filler questions. As before, scores range from 1 (no positive/negative feelings) to 4 (extremely positive/negative feelings) and from 2-8 after summing each respectively. The positive items and negative items scaled well together indicating that people shared similar feeling across these two groups (positive feelings $\alpha = .772$; negative feelings $\alpha = .868$).

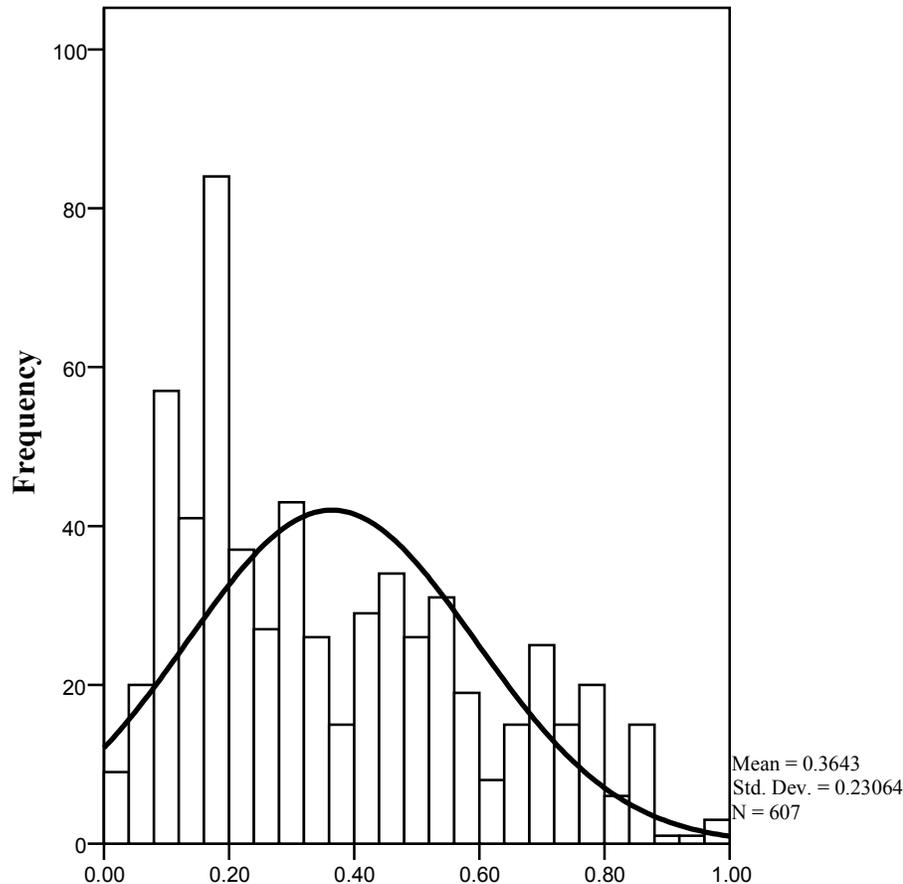
These indices were used in combination with the values indicators described in the previous section to construct a measure of *cognitive-affective conflict*. The idea here is that we should expect conflict between individualist values and positive feelings about the perceived beneficiaries and between egalitarian values and negative feelings about the perceived beneficiaries to stimulate ambivalence. It is not logical to suggest that individualist values will come into conflict with negative feelings about the beneficiaries or for egalitarian values to conflict with positive feelings because each has the same directional effect on attitude about social welfare (see Table 3-2). Rather than doing separate measures for each, the scale for positive feelings about the beneficiary and

individualist values is inverted and each is added to negative feelings about the beneficiary and egalitarian values respectively. Flipping them gives them the same directional effect on attitudes about social welfare. Because there is no reason to expect that conflict is more likely to stimulate ambivalence for individualist/positive feelings or egalitarian/negative feelings conflict, inverting the scales permits one measure of cognitive-affective conflict. After summing the inverted scales with the non-inverted scales, each is rescaled so that all values fall between 0 and 1. The summed values scale and the affective scale are then run through the same algorithm used to create scales of cognitive conflict and ambivalence about welfare. The scale that it creates is also rescaled to have values between 0 and 1.

The distribution of this scale of cognitive-affective conflict is displayed in Figure 3-3. It is not normally distributed. The distribution is skewed to the left indicating that most people do not experience a large amount of this type of conflict. On the other hand, very few people demonstrate no conflict in contrast to the distribution of cognitive conflict (see Figure 3-2) but the average level of conflict is still lower for cognitive-affective (0.36) as opposed to cognitive conflict (0.42). All in all, it appears that people are more likely to experience cognitive conflict. Nonetheless, this does not mean that cognitive-affective conflict is not a potential source of social welfare ambivalence.

Affective-Affective Conflict

As described in Chapter 2, affective orientations may clash independently of cognition to produce ambivalence surrounding a particular attitude object (Lavine and Steenbergen 2005; Steenbergen and Brewer 2000). Simply, if an individual has mixed feelings about something, and these affective orientations structure attitudes about another object, ambivalence may be the result. This process can be thought of as *affective*



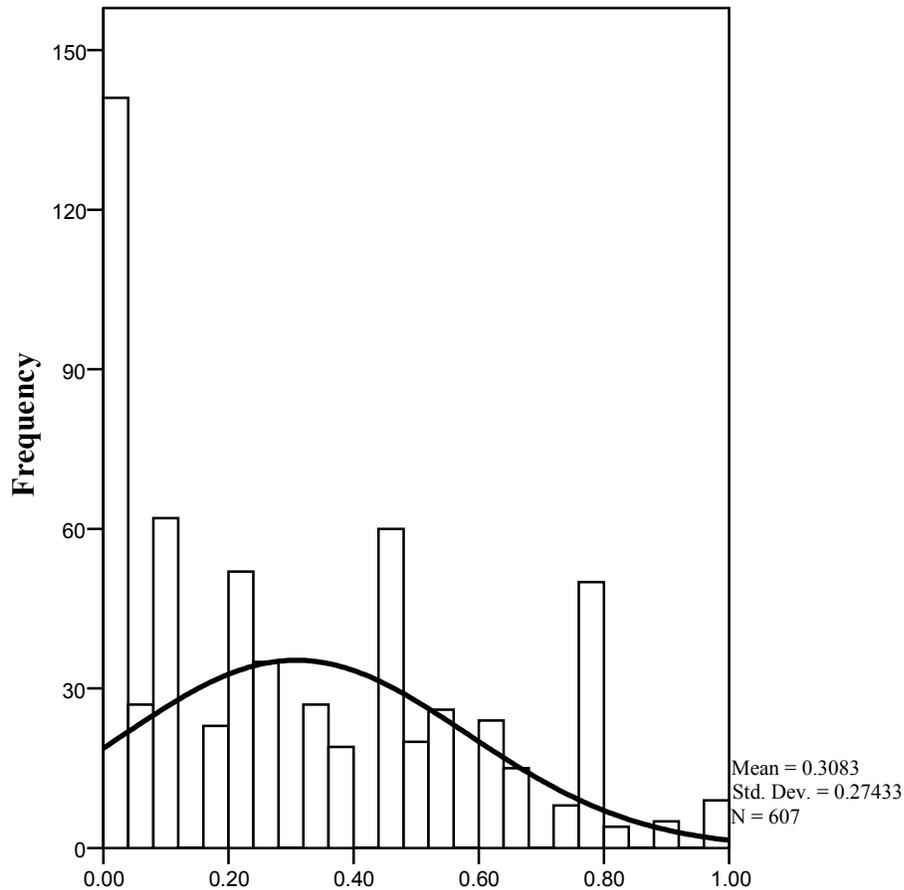
Note: Data are from a Florida Voter survey of registered voters conducted in May 2004.

Figure 3-3 Distribution of Cognitive-Affective Conflict

conflict. A measure of affective conflict is created by summing the positive responses to poor people and blacks, summing the negative responses to poor people and blacks, then running this through the same algorithm used above juxtaposing positive responses against negative responses. Next, this scale is recoded to have values that range between 0 and 1.

It is apparent in Figure 3-4 that affective conflict is also not normally distributed. Like cognitive conflict, a significant proportion of respondents demonstrate no conflict at all. In fact, more than twice the number of respondents demonstrates no affective conflict as when compared to those who demonstrate no cognitive conflict. So, this type of

conflict is less frequent than cognitive conflict and cognitive-affective conflict. The average score is lower (0.31) than both cognitive conflict (0.42) and cognitive-affective conflict (0.36). Clearly this type of conflict is not widespread, but again, this does not mean it is not a source of social welfare ambivalence when present.



Note: Data are from a Florida Voter survey of registered voters conducted in May 2004.

Figure 3-4 Distribution of Affective-Affective Conflict

Dependent Variables for Consequences of Social Welfare Ambivalence

Policy preferences are often related to evaluations of political candidates (Aldrich, Sullivan, and Borgida 1989; Miller and Shanks 1996). Evidence has suggested that the link between preferences and evaluations of candidates and institutions may be mediated by ambivalence (Craig *et al.* 2005). We should expect that the relationship between

policy preferences and evaluations would be weaker among those who are ambivalent.

Chapter 6 examines this possibility in relation to attitudes about social welfare.

Accordingly, evaluations of George W. Bush, the U.S. Congress, and the Supreme Court are measured. To measure these evaluations respondents were asked the following questions:

- Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as president?
- Do you approve or disapprove of the way Congress is handling its job?
- And do you approve or disapprove of the way the U. S. Supreme Court is handling its job?

After each question they were asked if they approved/disapproved strongly or not so strongly. A five-point scale was created for each ranging from disapprove strongly to approve strongly with those who volunteered a mixed response coded in the middle.

The distribution of responses on all three of these evaluations is included in Table 3-6. The George W. Bush evaluation indicator is bi-modal with the largest percentages falling in disapprove strongly (37.6 %) and approve strongly (37.2 %). The distributions of the U.S. Congress and Supreme Court indicators are more even across responses.

Other Independent and Control Variables

Policy Preferences

Previous research has suggested that the probability of an individual feeling ambivalent about a policy issue may be related to the person's position on that issue (Craig *et al.* 2002; Craig *et al.* 2005; Gainous and Martinez 2005). Pro-life voters, for example, tend to be more ambivalent about whether abortion should be legal under “traumatic” circumstances, while pro-choice voters are more ambivalent about the legality of “elective” abortions (Craig *et al.* 2002). Also, people with more positive views

about homosexuality in general are less ambivalent about gay rights on issues that do *not* directly involve children or marriage (Craig *et al.* 2005). Finally, Gainous and Martinez (2005) show that supporters of social welfare policy are less likely to be ambivalent.

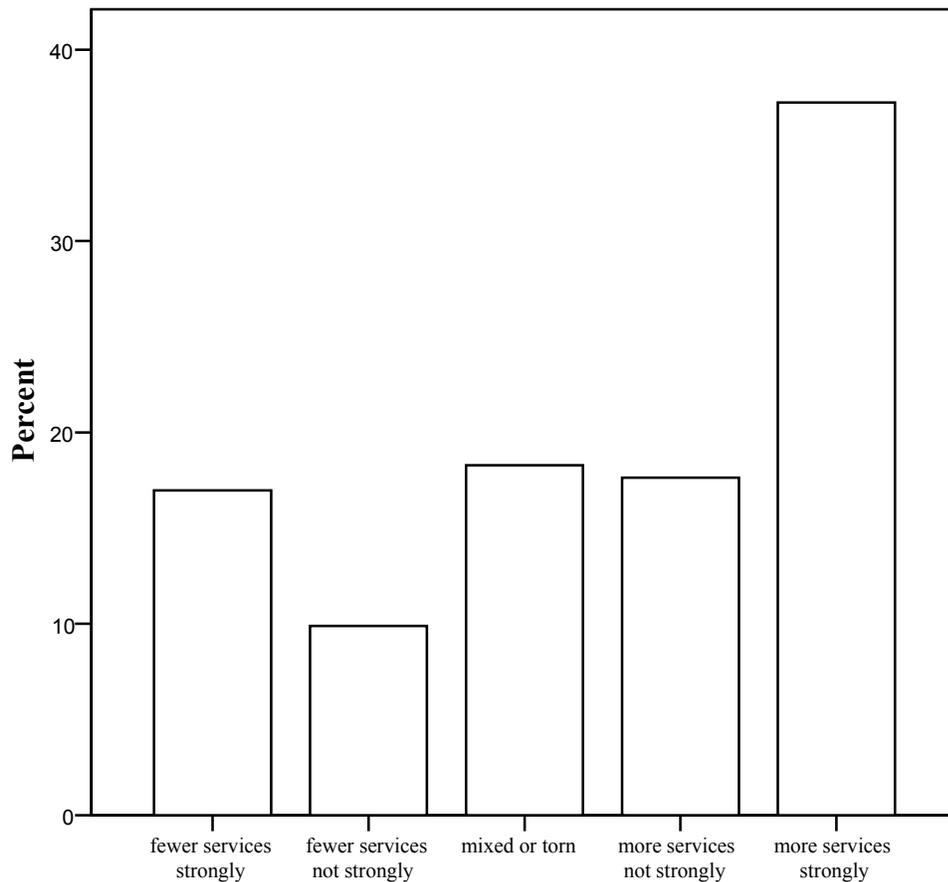
Table 3-6 Distribution of Responses on Government Evaluations Indicators

	Total	Percentage
Evaluation of George W. Bush		
Disapprove strongly	228	37.6 %
Disapprove not strongly	76	12.5 %
Mixed/In-between	19	3.1 %
Approve not strongly	58	9.6 %
Approve strongly	226	37.2 %
N	607	100.0 %
Evaluation of U.S. Congress		
Disapprove strongly	134	22.1 %
Disapprove not strongly	146	24.1 %
Mixed/In-between	69	11.4 %
Approve not strongly	157	25.9 %
Approve strongly	101	16.6 %
N	607	100.0 %
Evaluation of the Supreme Court		
Disapprove strongly	103	17.0 %
Disapprove not strongly	126	20.8 %
Mixed/In-between	83	13.7 %
Approve not strongly	151	24.9 %
Approve strongly	144	23.7 %
N	607	100.0 %

Note: Data are from a *Florida Voter* survey of registered voters conducted in May 2004. Missing values were replaced using multiple imputation.

Accordingly *social welfare policy preference* is measured using the same indicator that contains the direct measure of ambivalence. The split-samples are pooled where those that chose “torn between sides” or volunteered a “mixed” response are in the same response category. This creates a 5-point scale that ranges from extremely strong feelings that fewer services should be offered if it means increasing spending to extremely strong feelings that the government should provide more services even if it means increasing

spending, with those who are torn or mixed in-between. The percentage of responses by category is displayed in Figure 3-5. Interestingly the response selected most often was for more services even if it means an increase in government spending (nearing 40%). Roughly equal percentages (just below 20%) selected fewer services strongly, mixed or torn, and more services not strongly, while only about 10% chose fewer services not strongly.



Note: Data are from a Florida Voter survey of registered voters conducted in May 2004.

Figure 3-5 Social Welfare Policy Preferences

Ideology, Party Identification, Race, Gender, and Income

A series of control variables are also employed in this study. These variables are used to explore differences across groups, particularly, differences in the prevalence of

ambivalence across ideology, gender, and race. As noted earlier, Feldman and Zaller (1992) concluded that social welfare liberals, who tend to place a high value on both egalitarianism and individualism, are more prone to ambivalence than conservatives. This proposition is revisited with the new measure of ambivalence previously described. To measure ideology, a traditional seven-point indicator is used here. Respondents were read the following statement:

We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. On a scale of one through seven, where “1” is *very liberal* and “7” is *very conservative*, where would you place yourself on this scale or haven’t you thought much about this?

For the purpose of this analysis this measure was collapsed where those who reported a score of 1 through 3 were categorized as liberals, 4 as moderates, and 5 through 7 as conservatives.

Party identification is also used. It was measured a multipart indicator. First, respondents were asked:

Generally speaking, do you usually *think* of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?

Then the strength of their partisanship was gauged with a follow-up question. This created a traditional 7-point party identification scale ranging from strong Democrat to Strong Republican. Dummy variables were created for Democrat and Republican identification (0 = not Democrat and 1 = Democrat, 0 = not Republican and 1 = Republican, 0 = all Independents and Independent leaners).

Variables are also created for *race* (0 = nonblack, 1 = black), *gender* (0 = male, 1 = female), *self-reported income* (collapsed into 5 categories- Between \$0 and \$10,000, between \$10,000 and \$30,000, between \$30,000 and \$50,000, between \$50,000 and \$70,000, \$70,000 or more) are included. The particular importance of social welfare

issues in defining both the gender gap (Gilens 1988; Kaufman and Petrocik 1999; Goren 2001) and the racial cleavage (Bobo and Kluegel 1993; Tate 1994; Gilens 1995; Kinder and Winter 2001) in American politics suggests that gender and race are important predictors of attitudes about social, and therefore, there may be differences in ambivalence across these groups.¹⁰ Because income is important in structuring attitudes about social welfare (Goren 2001) it is also included as predictor of social welfare ambivalence. The distribution across all of these variables is contained in Table 3-7.

Political Knowledge

Evidence has suggested that there is a relationship between ambivalence and levels of political sophistication. Zaller (1992) proposes that individuals can reliably *resist* the arguments to which they are exposed only to the extent that they possess information about these arguments. He asserts that, in combination with the idea that most Americans are not very politically aware, citizens will be unlikely to exhibit high levels of resistance due to low levels of information. Thus, in an environment wherein communications on both sides of the issues is evenly distributed, it is likely that individual attitudinal ambivalence will arise. Alvarez and Brehm (1995, 1997, and 1998) also argue that those

¹⁰ Since Latinos in the aggregate are more liberal, at least on certain issues, than whites (Welch and Sigelman 1993; DeSipio 1996; Uhlener, Gray, and Garcia 2000; Alvarez and Bedolla 2003; also see de la Garza, Falcon, and Garcia 1996), we might normally expect their level of social welfare ambivalence to be similar to that found among blacks and women. Unfortunately, this proposition cannot be tested because the race indicator used here does not make distinctions among different groups of Latino citizens. In particular, we know that Cubans tend to be more conservative than other Latinos (especially Puerto Ricans, but also Mexicans; see de la Garza *et al.* 1992) and there is a large Cuban population in Florida. As a result, it is not surprising to learn that the Latinos in the *Florida Voter* survey do not, on average, differ significantly from whites in terms of the variables that are most critical to our analysis.

Table 3-7 Distribution of Ideology, Party Identification, Race, Gender, and Income

	Total	Percentage
Ideology		
Liberal	127	20.9 %
Moderate	108	17.8 %
Conservative	372	61.3 %
N	607	100.0 %
Party Identification		
Democrat	233	38.4 %
Republican	242	39.9 %
Independent	124	20.4 %
Other	8	1.3 %
N	607	100.0 %
Race		
White	515	84.8 %
Black	51	8.4 %
Hispanic	23	3.8 %
Other	18	3.0 %
N	607	100.0 %
Gender		
Female	360	59.3 %
Male	247	40.7 %
N	607	100.0 %
Income		
Between \$10,000 and \$30,000	213	35.1 %
Between \$30,000 and \$50,000	217	35.7 %
Between \$50,000 and \$70,000	113	18.6 %
\$70,000 or more	64	10.5 %
N	607	100.0 %

Note: Data are from a *Florida Voter* survey of registered voters conducted in May 2004. Missing values were replaced using multiple imputation.

who are least informed are more likely to be ambivalent across several policy domains.

They ask political knowledge questions in each study to measure information levels.

The present study also employs a measure of *political knowledge*. Respondents were read the following introduction:

Here are a few questions about the government in Washington. Many people don't know the answers to these questions, but even if you're not sure I'd like you to tell me your best guess.

Then they were asked the following questions:

- First, do you happen to know what job or political office is currently held by John Ashcroft?
- Who has the final responsibility to decide if a law is constitutional or not – is it the president, Congress, or the Supreme Court?
- Would you say that one of the parties is more conservative than the other at the national level? If yes: Which party is more conservative?¹¹

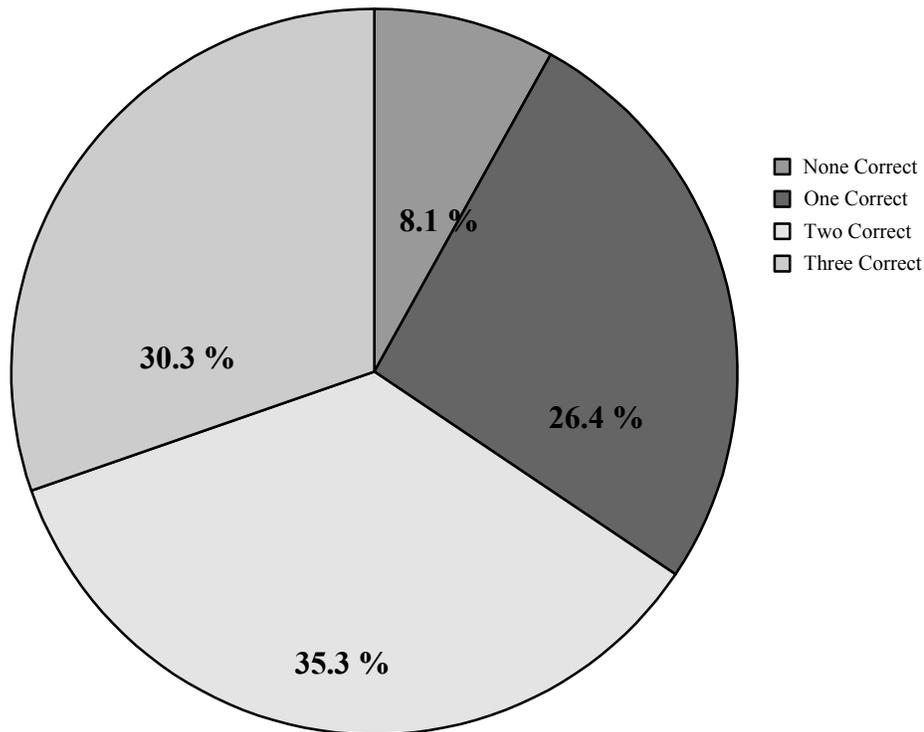
Dummy variables were created for each correct response (0 = incorrect, 1 = correct). Those who responded with “don’t know” were also counted as incorrect. Then an additive index was constructed by adding the three together ($\alpha = 0.36$). Higher values represent more political knowledge.

The distribution of correctly answered questions is contained in Figure 3-6. Most of sample is moderately informed. Only around 8 percent of the sample was unable to answer any of the questions. 26.4 percent got one correct, 35.3 percent got two correct, and 30.3 percent got all three correct. This is a considerable amount of variance making this a good measure of political knowledge.

Summary

The preceding chapter focused on the measures used in this study. All of the specifics concerning the measurement of the dependent and independent variables used in this study have been explained. This included four different approaches to measuring ambivalence about social welfare policy. The distribution across the primary indirect

¹¹ “No” responses to the first part of the question were coded as incorrect.



Note: Data are from a Florida Voter survey of registered voters conducted in May 2004.

Figure 3-6 Political Knowledge Distribution

measure used here suggests that many are ambivalent across a range of social welfare issues, including government spending on medical insurance, assistance for the homeless, education, programs to improve the standard of living for poor Americans, providing jobs for citizens, child care programs, and finally, retirement benefits. The potential sources of social welfare ambivalence have also been defined theoretically and operationally. The distributions across all of these measures indicate that many are conflicted, whether it is between cognitive or affective elements.

In the next chapter, the relative construct validity of each of the measures of ambivalence is compared and the results will suggest that the measure adapted from the indirect approach used by Craig and his colleagues (2002, 2005) is superior. The findings also suggest that all of the above-described potential sources of social welfare ambivalence are, in fact, reliable predictors of such.

CHAPTER 4
A TEST OF MEASUREMENT VALIDITY: THE SOURCES OF AMBIVALENCE
ABOUT SOCIAL WELFARE

The idea that people's attitudes about issues are a mix of considerations that may result in ambivalence is becoming accepted across disciplines. The problem today is that survey research is still treating attitudes as if they are uni-polar. Simply, standard survey indicators do not offer any systematic way of separating those who have both positive and negative evaluations of a given object from those who have a clear position. This chapter evaluates the *direct* and *indirect* measures of social welfare ambivalence that were described in the previous chapter. The findings indicate that the indirect measure of social welfare ambivalence that forces respondents to rate their positive and negative feelings separately performs better than any of the other approaches currently offered in the literature. A fully specified model of social welfare ambivalence is presented following this analysis.

While survey researchers have begun to accept that *ambivalence* is a standard attribute of attitudes (Feldman and Zaller 1992; Zaller 1992; Alvarez and Brehm 1995; Craig, Kane, and Martinez 2002), they have not perfected a way to capture this phenomenon. Our measures have not caught up with theory. In addition, there is considerable disagreement concerning both how we conceptualize ambivalence and how we measure it. If ambivalence is a standard attribute of attitudes such as *attitude importance* (Krosnick and Abelson 1992; Krosnick 1988a, 1988b; Boninger, Krosnick, Berent 1995), *intensity* (Krosnick and Abelson 1992; Krosnick *et al.* 1993), *extremity* and

certainty (Alvarez and Brehm 1995), and these attributes are consequential to our understanding of attitudes in general (see Bassili 1996 for a review), it seems logical that we should settle on an approach to measure the attribute of ambivalence. We have standard approaches in survey research to capture these other phenomena, so it seems imperative to our understanding to develop such a measure for ambivalence.

If standard indicators used in the major surveys utilized in the discipline (American National Election Studies, General Social Survey, etc.) offer no systematic way of distinguishing those who are ambivalent from those who are not, it is likely that the results of many of the studies that used these data are questionable, especially when it comes to those that focus on attitudes about issues where ambivalence may be prevalent. For example, let's assume that social welfare ambivalence is widespread and that social welfare policy preferences are related to candidate evaluations. If a model of these evaluations accounts for policy preferences but not for ambivalence about the policy, the estimate for the effect of policy preferences will be biased. The relationship may appear to be stronger or weaker than it actually is. The exclusion of ambivalence does not mean that previous research results are completely without merit, but it certainly suggests that some studies may need fine-tuning.

As described in Chapters 1 and 2, researchers have employed *direct measures of ambivalence* that simply ask respondents in some way to state whether they are torn between sides on the issue at hand and *indirect measures of ambivalence* that employ some means to ascertain the degree to which individuals are ambivalent without making respondents aware that this phenomenon is being measured. Prior research indicates that the correlations between direct and indirect measures of ambivalence are modest in

magnitude (Newby–Clark, McGregor, and Zanna 2002; Priester and Petty 2001). This implies that they are capturing distinct phenomena. The direct measures may be capturing a generally “unsure” feeling, which in common vernacular is often described as ambivalence. If ambivalence is a standard attribute of attitudes such as direction or intensity, then it is just the way thoughts are organized generally rather than an individual's subjective experience.

This chapter discusses the strengths and weaknesses of these two approaches. It offers an empirical test of the validity of each using the four previously described direct and indirect measures of ambivalence (Chapter 3). If a measure is valid, or at least has construct validity, the theoretical correlates of the measure should serve as reliable predictors. Accordingly, this chapter compares how well the theoretical sources of ambivalence including *cognitive conflict*, *affective conflict*, and *cognitive-affective conflict* predict each measure of ambivalence. This test has two obvious assumptions: first, that theory suggesting that these are sources of ambivalence is accurate, and second, that the measures of these concepts are valid. As for the first assumption, theory in these regards is fairly developed, it is just that measures that have not caught up. Concerning the validity of the measures, the indicators used were adapted from NES and GSS, and research has repeatedly demonstrated their efficacy when it comes to predicting dependent variables that theory suggests it should. If we accept this as a test of their validity, it seems a reasonable test to compare the validity of the measures of ambivalence employed here.

The findings indicate that the theoretical sources of ambivalence perform best as predictors of the indirect measure that has respondents rate positive and negative feelings

separately. While this indirect measure may be the most valid, the present study contends that it is not the most practical because of financial cost. Clearly more work needs to be done, but the evidence presented here suggests that this is an endeavor that needs undertaking. Before moving on to the analysis, direct and indirect approaches are critiqued in more detail than previous chapters. This chapter concludes with the presentation and discussion of a fully specified model of social welfare ambivalence using the most valid indirect measure.

Critique of Previous Approaches to Measuring Ambivalence

Direct Measures

Direct measures of ambivalence require respondents to state their direct feelings. For example, respondents may be asked whether their attitudes are one-sided or mixed or whether they agree with statements like “I have positive and negative feelings about” For example, Priester and Petty (1996, 2001) asked respondents¹ to complete a series of 10-point scales designed to assess the extent to which their reactions were conflicted, mixed, and indecisive with respect to the attitude objects under observation. Using a typical large-sample survey, Mulligan and McGraw (2002) also employed a direct measure of ambivalence using the following indicator:

Some people feel that there are only good things or bad things about this issue (a. government wiretapping, b. social welfare spending). Their feelings are consistent. Other people feel that there are both good things and bad things about this issue. Their feelings are inconsistent. Thinking about your own views, would you say that your feelings about this issue are extremely consistent, very consistent, somewhat consistent, somewhat inconsistent, very inconsistent, or extremely inconsistent?

¹ Their study was based on an experiment but the booklets participants were asked to complete are comparable to surveys. Of course the sample is different than that in a typical survey (completely random), but as far as question wording goes, it was set up like a survey.

While other researchers have used slightly different wording, these two examples exemplify the direct approach, at least broadly.

The strengths of the direct approach are, first, that it is practical. It requires one simple question that allows respondents to state if they are conflicted, mixed, etc. In practice, we are often faced with trade-offs in survey research because of financial and research limitations. We can only have so many questions on any given instrument. With the direct approach, there is no need to have multiple questions gauging positive and negative responses separately, thus, it is the least costly method.

On the other hand, the direct approach treats ambivalence as a subjective experience rather than as an attribute of attitudes in general. If ambivalence is an attribute of attitudes in general, then perhaps respondents are not in the best position to make a diagnosis. A medical doctor asks patients what their symptoms are and then makes a diagnosis. The direct approach essentially asks respondents to diagnose themselves. This is probably not the best way to capture the phenomenon of an individual simultaneously possessing positive and negative evaluations of a single attitude object (Newby-Clark, McGregor, and Zanna 2002; Armitage and Connor 2000; Cacioppo, Gardner, and Berntson 1997; Priester and Petty 1996; Craig, Kane, and Martinez 2002; McGraw, Hasecke, and Conger 2003; Albertson, Brehm, and Alvarez 2005; Gainous and Martinez 2005). Allowing respondents to assess the degree to which they possess these evaluations may allow extraneous factors to distort the measure. Bassili (1996) compares the validity of indirect and direct measures of attitude strength², arguing the indirect measures have more predictive validity. He suggests that two realms of psychological functioning exist:

² Again, the author refers to these as operative and meta-attitudinal measures.

one comprised of operative psychological processes and the other comprised of impressions of these processes. So, direct measures may be picking up people's reaction to feeling ambivalent rather than the actual phenomena. If reactions vary, then the direct measure is capturing something other than the phenomena itself. Rather, it may be the byproduct of ambivalence.

Indirect Measures

Indirect measures of ambivalence involve some method of gauging the extent to which ambivalence exists without depending on an individual's personal assessment. While there have been several strategies employed, they all share this common thread. The big difference from early attempts in political science as compared to later attempts is that they involved the subjectivity of the researchers. For example, Feldman and Zaller (1992) asked survey respondents to state whatever thoughts came to mind as they answered two traditional closed-ended policy questions. Then they measured ambivalence by counting the number of conflicting considerations, spontaneous statements of ambivalence, and two-sided remarks (i.e., "Although I think X, I nevertheless favor Y"), finding strong support for the presence of ambivalence in many of the respondents. This can be thought of as an indirect measure of ambivalence because respondents were not asked to assess their own degree of ambivalence, but this approach certainly required the direct assessment of the researchers. Of course there are always direct decisions made in research, but perhaps some are more consequential than others.

As described in Chapters 2 and 3, Alvarez and Brehm (1995, 1997, and 1998) and Jacoby (2002) employ another variation of the indirect approach. They inferred the presence of ambivalence in respondents' attitudes from patterns of error variance in heteroskedastic probit and ordinary least squares regression models respectively. This

measurement strategy involves analyzing the residuals of a model of the attitude object under examination. Residuals are the difference between the value for each respondent predicted from the probit equation and the actual observed response of that individual. They contend that the variance of these residuals should be higher among those who are ambivalent. Essentially, Jacoby and Alvarez and Brehm each test to see if the residual variance is higher among those whom theory suggests should be ambivalent (e.g., those with values in conflict).

Also previously discussed, others have used another indirect approach to measuring ambivalence where respondents are asked to rate how positively they feel toward an attitude object and then asked separately to rate how negatively they feel toward the object (Craig, Kane, and Martinez 2002; Craig, Martinez, and Kane 2005; Gainous and Martinez 2005; Martinez *et al.* 2005). The responses are then combined via a mathematical algorithm yielding an ordinal measure of ambivalence.

As for the strength of all three of these indirect approaches to measuring ambivalence, they all treat ambivalence as an attribute of attitudes in general as opposed to a subjective experience. In this case, attitudes are a mix of multiple considerations (Zaller 1992), and the Feldman and Zaller approach as well as the strategy used by Craig and his colleagues give respondents the opportunity to explicitly express these multiple considerations. Alvarez and Brehm clearly separate the respondent's direct assessments of how mixed they are from the measurement. But they do not give them the opportunity to rate, *simultaneously*, how positively and negatively they feel toward the object at hand. This is where the approach used by Craig and his colleagues is the strongest. The

operational definition they use most closely fits the conceptual definition offered in the psychology literature.

Concerning the weaknesses of these indirect approaches, we can address each individually. Concerning Feldman and Zaller's approach, while attitudes are a mix of considerations, the possession of "opposing considerations" may in fact indicate the presence of factors such as *equivocation* (when someone is trying not to make a bad impression on the interviewer), *uncertainty* (when they are unsure of which side of the issue to choose), *informedness* (where the respondent has sufficient information to cite both sides evenly while clearly favoring one or neither), or *nonattitude* (where the respondent has no real position on the issue), or the questions may be ambiguous making them insufficient as indicators of preference (see Alvarez and Brehm 1995, 1997, 1998). Therefore, the possession of opposing considerations is not necessarily a product of or representative of ambivalence. Remember that ambivalence defined as an attribute of attitudes refers to conflict about a single attitude object. Expressing conflicting viewpoints that are not explicitly about the same object is not ambivalence.

Alvarez and Brehm (1995) and Jacoby (2002) define ambivalence appropriately but use a measure that does not accurately represent their conceptualization. Inferring ambivalence from patterns of residual variance is problematic on two levels. First, ambivalence is an individual-level concept (ambivalence) and their inferences are essentially based upon aggregate-level data (error variance in a predictive model across groups). Second, these measures fail to distinguish ambivalence from the very things Alvarez and Brehm suggest are problematic with the Feldman and Zaller study (equivocation, uncertainty, informedness, and nonattitude). Error variance could be a

result of these factors. They control for levels of political knowledge to account for such, but this approach still requires more assumptions than the other indirect approach.

There are a couple of obvious weaknesses with the measure used by Craig and his colleagues as well as Gainous and Martinez. The first problem is that the question is rather complicated which may confuse respondents. The next problem is a practical one. For each attitude object, they ask two questions. Surveys are expensive and if it is necessary to ask two questions for every one attitude object the cost will potentially double. This may limit the number of objects or issues that can be included. Also, because it makes the survey longer, response rates would likely significantly drop off. Aside from this practical problem, this approach seems to be the closest representation of ambivalence, properly defined.

Analysis

Empirically Comparing Measurement Approaches

Before moving on to the models that compare the performance of each of the direct and indirect measures of ambivalence, let us take a look at the relationship between each. Table 4-1 contains the zero-order correlations between each of the measures of social welfare ambivalence (detailed in Chapter 3). There is not a strong relationship between any of these measures. There is a very weak positive relationship between the two indirect measures (0.13). There is a significant correlation between the direct measures and the residuals, but this relationship is suspect because the residuals and the direct measures are based on the same indicator. There was no other measure in these data. Nonetheless, it appears that these direct and indirect measures certainly are not all capturing ambivalence. These results mirror the findings of previous research that suggested there was not a strong relationship between direct and indirect ambivalence

(Priester and Petty 2001; Mulligan and McGraw 2002; Newby-Clark, McGregor, and Zanna 2002), but also demonstrates that there is not much of a relationship between the two indirect measures. It appears that each is capturing a distinct phenomenon.

Table 4-1 Correlations across Direct and Indirect Measures of Ambivalence

	Direct "Torn"	Direct "Volunteered"	Indirect Residuals	Indirect Pos/Neg
Direct "Torn"	1.00	--	--	--
Direct "Volunteered"	--	1.00	--	--
Indirect Residuals	0.31*	0.23*	1.00	--
Indirect Pos/Neg	0.06	-0.08	0.13*	1.00

Note: Data are from a *Florida Voter* survey of registered voters conducted in May 2004. The two direct variables cannot be correlated because they are each part of the same split-sample indicator. Table entries are Kendall's Tau τ_b correlation coefficients. 2-tailed test * $p \leq 0.05$.

Table 4-2 contains the zero-order correlations between the potential sources of ambivalence (detailed in Chapter 3) and each measure of social welfare ambivalence evaluated here. First, the indirect measure that had respondents rate their positive and negative feelings separately is most strongly correlated to each of source of conflict. There is a significant positive relationship between each source of ambivalence and this indirect measure. There is also a positive relationship between cognitive conflict and the indirect residuals measure as well as the offered "torn" response direct measure. Oddly, there is a significant negative relationship between cognitive-affective conflict and the offered "torn" response direct measure. There are no significant relationships between sources and the "volunteered" direct measure. These preliminary findings suggest that the indirect measure has the highest construct validity. This makes sense, again, because it is operationalized in a way that is consistent with the psychological conceptualization of ambivalence (simultaneous possession of positive and negative evaluations). So, in this

case, face validity leads to construct validity. Researchers have used this conceptualization to build theories about the potential sources of ambivalence. So perhaps, this measure is better suited to test the existing theory (conflict of cognitive and affective elements). If ambivalence is properly defined as simultaneously possessing positive and negative feelings about social welfare, then the theoretical sources of such ambivalence should predict the measure.

Table 4-2 Correlations between Sources and Four Ambivalence Measures

	Direct “Torn”	Direct “Volunteered”	Indirect Residuals	Indirect Pos/Neg
Cognitive Conflict	0.06	0.17*	0.05	0.20*
Cognitive-Affective Conflict	-0.03	-0.13*	0.08*	0.46*
Affective Conflict	-0.00	-0.09	0.06*	0.55*

Note: Data are from a *Florida Voter* survey of registered voters conducted in May 2004. Table entries are Kendall’s Tau τ_b correlation coefficients. 2-tailed test * $p \leq 0.05$.

Before moving to a multivariate analysis of each of the measures, the approach to analyzing the indirect residuals measure employed by Alvarez and Brehm (1995, 1997, 1998, and 2002) is replicated. This involves comparing the variance across levels of cognitive, cognitive-affective, and affective conflict. The idea is that the variance should be higher among those with more conflict. Again, the problem with this approach is two-fold. First, the measure of ambivalence is error variance. This variance could be high for reasons other than ambivalence (non-attitude, uncertainty). Second, the analysis only gives us aggregate inferences and ambivalence is an individual-level phenomenon. The latter problem is resolved later by modeling the individual-level residuals. Nonetheless, this approach has been used; so replicating it may verify that this approach is problematic.

For this analysis a dummy variable is created for each source of ambivalence that represents above-average conflict (0 = below mean, 1 = above mean). Next, the between-group variance is analyzed. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) is done testing for the homogeneity of variance across groups (below mean, above mean). This involves getting a Levene statistic (the test statistic for a homogeneity of variances test) and the associated probability. This probability tells us the likelihood with which we can confidently reject the null and accept the hypothesis that there is higher error variance when predicting attitudes about social welfare for those with higher levels of conflict as opposed to those with lower levels.

The results of the analysis in Table 4-3 indicate that, other than cognitive conflict, the sources of ambivalence are not strong predictors of the error variance from the model of attitudes about social welfare in Chapter 3 (Table 3-2). For that matter, the effect of cognitive conflict is in the opposite of the expected direction. These findings suggest that those who are less conflicted when it comes to values are actually more ambivalent. Further, the variance is higher for those with below average cognitive-affective and affective conflict but this difference is not significant. If anything, this analysis tells us that the residuals are not a good measure of ambivalence (assuming that these measures of conflict are sources of ambivalence). This just confirms the results presented in Table 4-2.

It is important that we look at the relationship between the sources of ambivalence before moving on to the multivariate analysis of the residuals and other measures of ambivalence. Because each of these measures uses overlapping items to create scales, multicollinearity is potentially an issue. If these scales correlate highly, they contribute

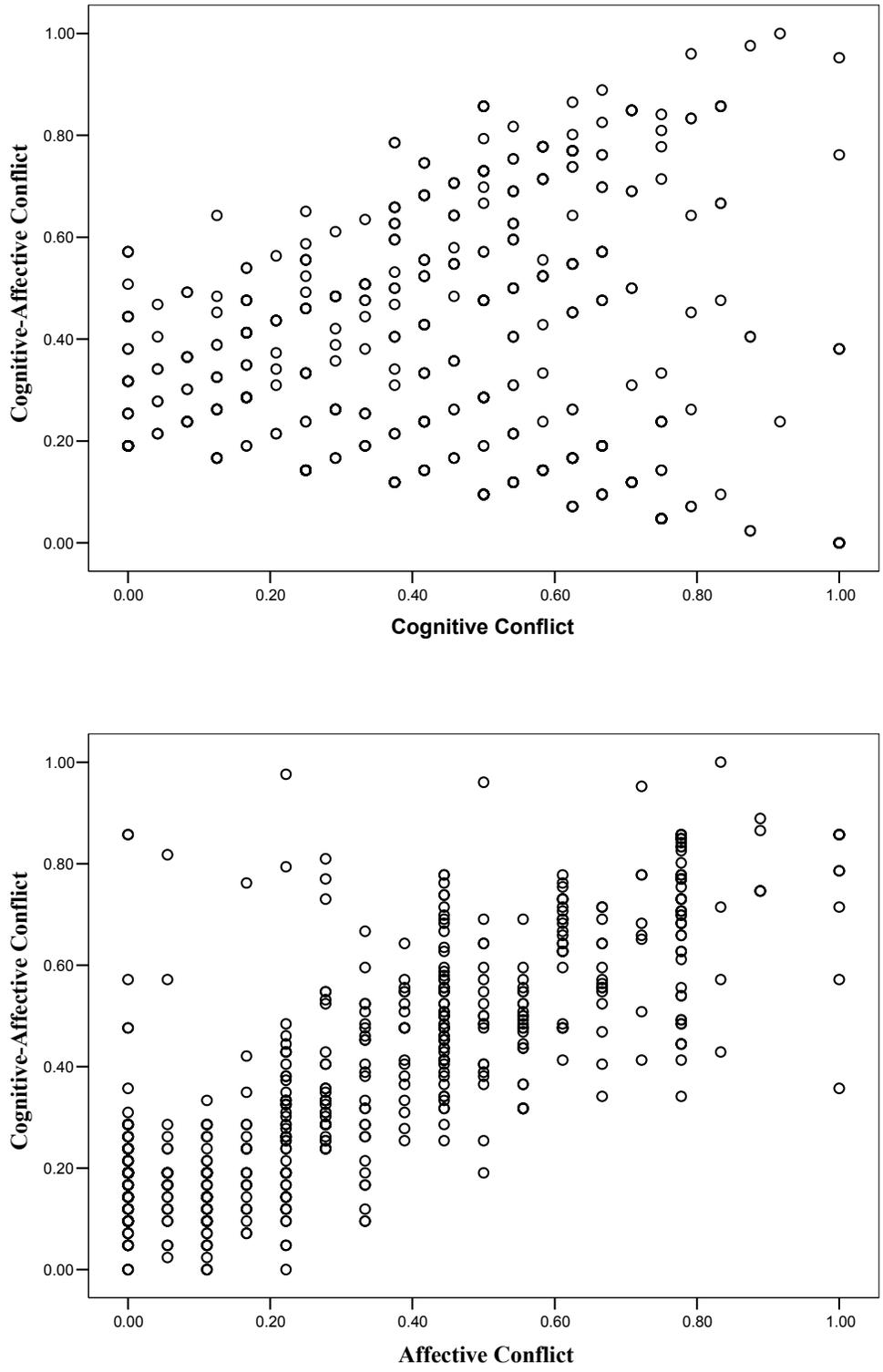
Table 4-3 Analysis of Residuals from Model of Attitudes about Social Welfare

	Variance of Residuals	Levene Statistic	Probability
<i>Comparison 1</i>			
Above-average Cognitive Conflict	1.90	7.05	0.01
Below-average Cognitive Conflict	2.29		
<i>Comparison 2</i>			
Above-average Cognitive-Affective Conflict	1.99	0.00	0.99
Below-average Cognitive-Affective Conflict	2.02		
<i>Comparison 3</i>			
Above-average Affective Conflict	1.90	1.39	0.24
Below-average Affective Conflict	2.11		

Note: Data are from a *Florida Voter* survey of registered voters conducted in May 2004. The first column gives the within-group variances of the Ordered-Logit equation in Table 3-2. The second column gives the Levene statistic (the test statistic for a homogeneity of variances test). The observed probability value from this test is in the third column.

redundant information and can cause other variables to appear to be less important than they really are. The scatterplots contained in Figure 4-1 of cognitive-affective conflict with cognitive conflict and then cognitive-affective conflict with affective conflict suggest there is a relationship between the cognitive-affective conflict scale and the affective scale but not with cognitive conflict scale. The results contained in Table 4-4 confirm the significance of these relationships. As the scatterplots suggested, the only concern is the relationship between cognitive-affective and affective conflict ($\tau_b = 0.62, p \leq 0.05$).

To address the problem of multicollinearity in all of the models constructed in the remainder of this study, two separate models will be estimated for each dependent variable- one with cognitive-affective conflict, and another with affective conflict.



Note: Data are from a Florida Voter survey of registered voters conducted in May 2004.

Figure 4-1 Scatterplots of Overlapping Sources

Table 4-4 Correlations between Sources of Ambivalence about Social Welfare

	Cognitive Conflict	Cognitive-Affective Conflict	Affective Conflict
Cognitive Conflict	1.00	--	--
Cognitive-Affective Conflict	0.04	1.00	--
Affective Conflict	0.07*	0.62*	1.00

Note: Data are from a *Florida Voter* survey of registered voters conducted in May 2004. Table entries are Kendall's Tau τ_b correlation coefficients. 2-tailed test * $p \leq 0.05$.

Concerning the present models that are used to compare the relative construct validity of the four ambivalence measures, they are as follows:

Model 1

$$\text{Social Welfare Ambivalence} = a + \beta_1 \text{ Cognitive Conflict} + \beta_2 \text{ Egalitarianism Importance} + \beta_3 \text{ Individualism Importance} + \beta_4 \text{ Relative Importance of Values} + \beta_5 \text{ Cognitive-Affective Conflict} + \beta_7 \text{ Female} + \beta_8 \text{ Black} + \text{Income} + \beta_9 \text{ Political Knowledge} + e$$

Model 2

$$\text{Social Welfare Ambivalence} = a + \beta_1 \text{ Cognitive Conflict} + \beta_2 \text{ Egalitarianism Importance} + \beta_3 \text{ Individualism Importance} + \beta_4 \text{ Relative Importance of Values} + \beta_5 \text{ Affective Conflict} + \beta_7 \text{ Female} + \beta_8 \text{ Black} + \text{Income} + \beta_9 \text{ Political Knowledge} + e$$

While this prevents the simultaneous estimation of the relationship between cognitive-affective conflict, affective conflict, and social welfare ambivalence, it does resolve the problem with multicollinearity.

By looking at how well these models perform across all four measures of ambivalence, we get a better test of construct validity than the bivariate relationships presented above (Table 3-2). Tables 3.5 and 3.6 contain the results of the equations that model each of the four measures of ambivalence as a function of the potential sources of ambivalence with a set of controls. The direct models where respondents "volunteered" mixed responses perform better than those where they were given the "torn between

Table 4-5 Comparing Direct Ambivalence Measurement Approaches

	Torn <u>Model 1</u>	<u>Model 2</u>	Volunteered <u>Model 1</u>	<u>Model 2</u>
Cognitive Conflict	0.77 (0.56)	0.73 (0.56)	2.13* (0.78)	2.16* (0.79)
Cognitive-Affective Conflict	0.62 (0.33)	-- --	3.41* (0.34)	-- --
Affective Conflict	-- --	0.35 (0.28)	-- --	3.92* (0.30)
Egalitarianism Importance	-0.10 (0.09)	-0.10 (0.09)	-0.37* (0.09)	-0.25* (0.09)
Individualism Importance	0.12 (0.09)	0.17 (0.09)	-0.38* (0.09)	-0.28* (0.09)
Relative Difference	0.04 (0.18)	0.04 (0.18)	-0.05 (0.22)	-0.01 (0.22)
Black	-1.12 (0.65)	-1.12 (0.65)	0.86 (0.60)	0.84 (0.60)
Female	0.83* (0.30)	0.83* (0.30)	-0.26 (0.38)	-0.28 (0.38)
Income	0.02 (0.15)	0.02 (0.15)	0.33 (0.20)	0.33 (0.19)
Political Knowledge	-0.21 (0.15)	-0.20 (0.15)	-0.16 (0.20)	-0.16 (0.20)
Constant	1.91 (1.00)	2.02* (1.01)	0.93 (1.37)	0.93 (1.37)
-2 log likelihood	317.76	318.15	200.40	202.66
Nagelkerke Pseudo R ²	0.08	0.08	0.17	0.16
N	304	304	303	303

Note: Data are from 2004 *Florida Voter* survey. Table entries are logit estimates. 2-tailed test * $p \leq 0.05$. Standard errors are in parentheses. Missing values were replaced using multiple imputation

sides” option (Table 4-5). Cognitive conflict and egalitarianism importance are significant and in the expected direction in the volunteered model, but cognitive-affective conflict is significant and not in the expected direction. The findings here suggest that ambivalence goes down as this type of conflict goes up, *ceteris paribus*.

If cognitive, cognitive-affective, and affective conflict are indeed sources of social welfare ambivalence, this direct measure must be capturing something other than ambivalence (assuming the measures of conflict are valid). Basilli (1996) might suggest that the direct measures are capturing people's direct reaction to possessing positive and negative evaluations about social welfare. Obviously these reactions are not correlated with the sources of ambivalence, or the model would pick that up. In the "torn between sides" response model nothing is significant. In sum, the lack of findings across the direct measures suggests that they are not good measures of ambivalence.

There are no significant estimated effects (Table 4-6) in the model of the residuals. These findings suggest that this is a poor measure of ambivalence. The final model that uses the combined positive and negative evaluations performs the best. Cognitive conflict, value importance and the relative difference, cognitive-affective conflict, affective conflict, race, and gender are all significant and in the expected direction (Table 4-6). This makes sense if we think of ambivalence as an attribute of attitudes. If ambivalence is the simultaneous possession of positive and negative evaluations of a single attitude object, then this measure makes the most intuitive sense.

Fully Specified Models of Social Welfare Ambivalence

Now that the most valid measure of ambivalence has been selected, this indirect measure comprised of positive and negative evaluations is used for the remainder of the study. This section presents fully specified models of ambivalence using this measure. The models presented above did not include "general policy preferences" as an explanatory variable because that indicator was used to construct the two direct

Table 4-6 Comparing Indirect Ambivalence Measurement Approaches

	Indirect-Residuals		Indirect-Pos/Neg	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Cognitive Conflict	0.47 (0.30)	0.51 (0.30)	1.31* (0.29)	1.52* (0.29)
Cognitive-Affective Conflict	0.62 (0.33)	-- --	3.41* (0.34)	-- --
Affective Conflict	-- --	0.35 (0.28)	-- --	3.92* (0.30)
Egalitarianism Importance	-0.10 (0.09)	-0.10 (0.09)	-0.37* (0.09)	-0.25* (0.09)
Individualism Importance	0.12 (0.09)	0.17 (0.09)	-0.38* (0.09)	-0.28* (0.09)
Relative Difference	-0.12 (0.09)	-0.13 (0.09)	-0.17 (0.09)	-0.17* (0.09)
Black	-0.19 (0.28)	-0.18 (0.28)	-1.03* (0.26)	-0.98* (0.27)
Female	-0.16 (0.15)	-0.17 (0.15)	-0.20 (0.15)	-0.26 (0.15)
Income	-0.08 (0.08)	-0.08 (0.08)	0.02 (0.08)	0.06 (0.08)
Political Knowledge	-0.12 (0.08)	-0.12 (0.08)	0.08 (0.08)	0.03 (0.08)
-2 log likelihood	1759.00	1762.48	4239.78	4164.25
Nagelkerke Pseudo R ²	0.03	0.03	0.29	0.37
N	607	607	607	607

Note: Data are from 2004 *Florida Voter* survey. Table entries are ordered-logit estimates (threshold levels are not shown). 2-tailed test * $p \leq 0.05$. Standard errors are in parentheses. Missing values were replaced using multiple imputation.

ambivalence measures. Therefore, it could not be included and still draw conclusions by comparing results across models. The models are as follows:

Model 1

$$\text{Indirect (Pos/Neg) Social Welfare Ambivalence} = a + \beta_1 \text{ Cognitive Conflict} + \beta_2 \text{ Egalitarianism Importance} + \beta_3 \text{ Individualism Importance} + \beta_4 \text{ Relative Importance of Values} + \beta_5 \text{ Cognitive-Affective Conflict} + \beta_6 \text{ Social Welfare Policy Preference} + \beta_7 \text{ Female} + \beta_8 \text{ Black} + \beta_9 \text{ Political Knowledge} + e$$

Model 2

$$\text{Indirect (Pos/Neg) Social Welfare Ambivalence} = a + \beta_1 \text{ Cognitive Conflict} + \beta_2 \text{ Egalitarianism Importance} + \beta_3 \text{ Individualism Importance} + \beta_4 \text{ Relative Importance of Values} + \beta_5 \text{ Affective Conflict} + \beta_6 \text{ Social Welfare Policy Preference} + \beta_7 \text{ Female} + \beta_8 \text{ Black} + \beta_9 \text{ Political Knowledge} + e$$

The results contained in Table 4-7 are not much different from those in Table 4-6, but the new variable (social welfare policy preference) is added. As the ambivalence index is best seen as an ordinal variable, an ordered logit procedure is employed to estimate the multivariate model. Table 4-7 shows that there are multiple sources of ambivalence about social welfare policy among respondents in the sample. Much of the existing literature focuses on the relevance of value conflict as a precursor to ambivalence, and that is borne out in these findings. The positive and significant coefficient on the cognitive conflict variable indicates that people who expressed higher levels of both individualism *and* egalitarianism also exhibited higher levels of ambivalence, *ceteris paribus*. That is hardly surprising, of course, in light of previous research on ambivalence in other policy areas (including abortion, gay rights, and race).

We also see from Table 4-7 that value importance accounts for a portion of the variation in social welfare ambivalence: Respondents who regarded either egalitarianism or individualism as important were less likely to be ambivalent, which suggests the importance one attaches to core values can sometimes block out conflicting feelings about social welfare. This is especially so among those who score high in relative importance (rating one of the values above the other); that is, a larger *difference* between the importance attached to individualism and egalitarianism is negatively and significantly associated with ambivalence, even when controlling for the levels of importance accorded to the values themselves. Thus, while value conflict normally tends

Table 4-7 Multivariate Models of Social Welfare Ambivalence

	<u>Coefficient</u>	<u>Standard Error</u>	<u>95 % Confidence Intervals</u>	
<u>Model 1</u>				
Cognitive Conflict	1.31	0.29	0.73	1.88
Cognitive-Affective Conflict	3.39	0.34	2.73	4.05
Egalitarianism Importance	-0.34	0.09	-0.51	-0.17
Individualism Importance	-0.42	0.09	-0.59	-0.25
Relative Difference	-0.17	0.09	-0.34	-0.00
Policy Preference	-0.13	0.05	-0.23	-0.03
Black	-0.98	0.26	-1.50	-0.46
Female	-0.18	0.15	-0.47	0.11
Income	0.09	0.08	-0.13	0.18
Political Knowledge	0.07	0.08	-0.09	0.22
-2 log likelihood	4245.39			
Nagelkerke Pseudo R ²	0.30			
<u>Model 2</u>				
Cognitive Conflict	1.52	0.29	0.95	2.09
Affective Conflict	3.93	0.31	3.33	4.53
Egalitarianism Importance	-0.23	0.09	-0.40	-0.06
Individualism Importance	-0.33	0.09	-0.50	-0.16
Relative Difference	-0.18	0.09	-0.35	-0.01
Policy Preference	-0.15	0.05	-0.25	-0.05
Black	-0.92	0.27	-1.44	-0.40
Female	-0.24	0.15	-0.52	0.05
Income	0.06	0.08	-0.09	0.21
Political Knowledge	0.01	0.08	-0.15	0.17
-2 log likelihood	4180.05			
Nagelkerke Pseudo R ²	0.38			
N	607	607	607	607

Note: Data are from a *Florida Voter* survey of registered voters conducted in May 2004. Table entries are ordered logit coefficients, associated standard errors, and 95% confidence intervals; threshold levels are not shown. Missing values were replaced using multiple imputation.

to heighten ambivalence, ambivalence becomes less likely to occur when one value is held more dearly than the other.

The estimates for cognitive-affective and affective conflict are both significant, demonstrating a positive relationship between these sources and social welfare ambivalence (Table 4-7, models 1 and 2 respectively). In fact, the magnitude of these effects is larger than any other across both models. The estimate for affective conflict (3.93) is larger than that for cognitive-affective conflict suggesting that affective elements are a predominant source of attitudes about social welfare (see Table 3-2) and ambivalence about social welfare. This is consistent with literature that suggests feelings about the perceived beneficiaries is one the best predictors of attitudes about social welfare (Kinder and Winter 2001; Nelson 1999; Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1991; Sniderman and Piazza 1993; Cook and Barrett 1992; Bobo and Kluegel 1993; Gilens 1995; see also Jacoby 2005).

Ambivalence also is asymmetric with respect to policy preferences. The significant and negative coefficients in Table 4-7 indicate that respondents who are more supportive of higher levels of government services and spending tend to be less ambivalent about social welfare policy as a whole. Since ambivalence is related to attitudinal pliability (e.g., Craig, Martinez, and Kane 2005), this finding has the important political implication that conservatives may be more likely than liberals to be “talked out of” their general opposition to social welfare in specific circumstances and conditions. Whereas Feldman and Zaller (1992) maintained that social welfare liberals are more conflicted than conservatives, hence more ambivalent, these results suggest that (controlling for value importance and value conflict), liberals, measured as those with liberal social welfare preferences are actually *less* torn between the pros and cons of social welfare policy (this is explored further in Chapter 5).

Finally, gender, income, and political knowledge are not significant. The insignificance of these variables does not mean that there are not patterns of ambivalence across them, but rather, it may mean that other variables in the model do a better job of explaining the variance explained by these variables. This proposition is explored in the next chapter. Concerning race, the coefficient indicates that black respondents tend to be significantly less ambivalent than non-blacks, *ceteris paribus*.

Summary

Chapter 4 has accomplished two goals. First, it assessed the construct validity of each of the different measures of ambivalence by comparing how well the theoretical sources of ambivalence predict each respectively. The findings indicate that the approach adapted from earlier work (Craig, Kane, and Martinez 2002; Craig *et al.* 2005) that forces respondents to rate their positive and negative feelings separately is the most valid. In this test, the sources of such ambivalence were also explored. The evidence presented in this chapter also provides support to previous research that suggested ambivalence may result when individuals have conflicting thoughts or beliefs (*cognitive conflict*), conflicting feelings (*affective conflict*), or beliefs in conflict with feelings (*cognitive-affective conflict*). In addition value importance, policy preferences, and race all shape social welfare ambivalence.

After settling on the best measure, the next chapter revisits previous research that addresses the question of who is most likely to be ambivalent among liberals and conservatives, among men and women, and across race. The findings presented there challenge previous assertions that liberals are more likely to be ambivalent about social welfare (Feldman and Zaller 1992; see also Jacoby 2002). The results indicate that self-

identified liberals, females, and African Americans are less ambivalent about social welfare policy than their respective counterparts. Chapter 5 builds on the findings of the present chapter to sort out the underlying cause of these differences. It argues that we can get a better understanding of why members across these groups would be more or less likely to be ambivalent about social welfare by teasing out the differences across these groups when it comes to the potential sources of ambivalence. The findings indicate that the variance across ideology and gender can be accounted for by the sources of ambivalence discussed above, but they do not explain why African Americans are less ambivalent than their counterparts. Some conjecture is offered as to why this may be the case.

CHAPTER 5
PREVALENCE: SOCIAL WELFARE AMBIVALENCE ACROSS IDEOLOGY,
GENDER, AND RACE

When we talk about liberals and conservatives in the United States, *social welfare policy* is often at the center of the discussion. The popular conception and empirical evidence suggests that liberals generally support welfare programs while conservatives generally do not (see Cook and Barrett 1992; Jacoby 1991). This broad generalization may be accurate, but research has also suggested that social welfare ambivalence varies across ideology (Feldman and Zaller 1992; Steenbergen and Brewer 2000; Jacoby 2002). If this is the case, and females (Gilens 1988; Kaufmann and Petrocik 1999; Goren 2001) and African Americans (Kinder and Winter 2001; Gilens 1995; Tate 1994; Bobo and Kluegel 1993) tend to be social welfare liberals, we should expect ambivalence to vary for them as well. The specific questions addressed in this chapter are, first, who is more torn when it comes to this controversial issue- liberals or conservatives, males or females, blacks or whites? And second, why?

Previous literature has offered varying descriptions of the distribution of social welfare ambivalence. Feldman and Zaller (1992) pioneered exploration into the varying prevalence of social welfare ambivalence across ideology. They argue that conservatives are less ambivalent about social welfare because liberals are more likely to experience *value conflict*, or what this study refers to as *cognitive conflict*. They contend that conservatives prioritize individualist over egalitarian values while liberals place roughly equal importance on each. As a result, the values of a liberal are more likely to come into

conflict, stimulating ambivalence about social welfare. These arguments are contrary to findings presented here. The argument is extended here to include differences concerning feelings about the perceived beneficiaries (*cognitive-affective* and *affective conflict*) suggesting that Feldman and Zaller did not get it right in their explanation of the difference in the sources of ambivalence across ideology. Their measure of ambivalence is suspect (see Chapter 2 and 4), they missed important sources of ambivalence about social welfare, and finally, their characterization of liberals' and conservatives' values was inaccurate. As a result of these reasons, their conclusions are incorrect when it comes to who is most ambivalent.

Jacoby (2002) also finds support for the contention that conservatives are less ambivalent than liberals. On the other hand, he does not find any significant differences regarding the individual ranking of values across ideology. Contrary to the findings here and of Feldman and Zaller (1992), he suggests that social welfare ambivalence is not common (see also Jacoby 2005). In addition, he fails to look for differences concerning feelings about the perceived beneficiaries (*cognitive-affective* and *affective conflict*). His measurement approach is also less than adequate (see Chapter 2 and 4).

Steenbergen and Brewer (2000) do include all of these sources of ambivalence and, contrary to Feldman and Zaller as well as Jacoby, argue that liberals are less ambivalent than conservatives. They also suggest that such ambivalence is not widespread. On the other hand, they contend that liberals are less likely to experience conflict between cognitive items such as values (*cognitive conflict*), affective items such as positive and negative feelings about the perceived beneficiaries (*affective conflict*), and conflict

between values and feelings (*cognitive-affective conflict*).¹ This is contrary to Jacoby's results that suggested there were no differences pertaining to value conflict and the opposite of Feldman and Zaller's findings. The problem with all of these studies is that their measures of ambivalence are suspect.

Because of the limitations in all of these studies, the question of who is more ambivalent is yet to be resolved. Using the previously described valid indirect approach to measuring ambivalence while looking at differences across all sources can provide a more accurate explanation of the variation across ideology. The findings presented here lend support to Feldman and Zaller's (1992) contention that social welfare ambivalence is prevalent but contradict it, along with Jacoby's (2002), when it comes to the question of who is more ambivalent. On this point, the evidence concurs with Steenbergen and Brewer (2000). Liberals, females, and blacks are all less ambivalent than their respective counterparts.

The data also suggest that varying levels of cognitive, cognitive-affective, and affective conflict explain these differences across ideology and gender but offer no explanation as to why African Americans are less ambivalent. Some conjecture is offered with regards to this finding. First, this chapter discusses how values and feelings about the perceived beneficiaries vary by group, and how this leads to varied levels of psychological conflict, which may result in more or less ambivalence by group.

¹ Steenbergen and Brewer (2000) refer to cognitive conflict as cognitive-cognitive and affective as affective-affective.

Ideology, Gender, and Race: Potential Sources of Social Welfare Ambivalence Differences

Cognitive Conflict

Varying *value hierarchies* (Rokeach 1973; Schwartz 1992; Jacoby 2002) across ideology could be structured in such a way as to reduce the likelihood of ambivalence surrounding social welfare (Gainous and Martinez 2005). If liberals and conservatives, males and females, and blacks and whites each respectively place more importance on one value as opposed to another (e.g., egalitarianism for liberals and individualism for conservatives), there should be no difference in the level of conflict across ideology, gender, or race. If liberals prioritize egalitarian values over individualist ones, and conservatives prioritize individualism over egalitarianism, the conflict would be no more or less for either because they each have a dominant value. Again, Feldman and Zaller (1992) contend that this is not the case, but research discussed below suggests that they were not right.

Jacoby (2002) presents evidence suggesting that most citizens can, in fact, place their values in some rank order of importance. Further, he contends that liberals are no more likely to place equal importance on values of equality and liberty than are conservatives. His findings also indicate that self-identified liberals generally prioritize egalitarianism over liberty (akin to individualism) while for conservatives it is the reverse.

Much the same can be said concerning gender. Feather (2004) found that women scored higher on universalism and benevolence than did men. Egalitarianism fits under the umbrella of universalism. Conversely, men are generally less egalitarian and more individualist. Jacoby (2002) confirms these findings (see also Matland 1998; Norris

1987; Studlar and McAllister 2002; Grendstad and Sundback 2003). Likewise, Anderson and Johnson (2003) found that women were more egalitarian than men with regards to attitudes about the role of women in the workplace. Altogether, the evidence suggests that women are particularly egalitarian in their views.

Kinder and Sanders (1996) offer an in-depth exploration of value differences among blacks and whites (see also Hochschild 1990), and conclude that blacks are more egalitarian than whites but the two groups are similar with regards to individualism. Using survey data, they find that roughly equal proportions of blacks and whites strongly agree that people who do not get ahead have only themselves to blame. Hochschild (1990) also finds that roughly three-fourths or more of both races agree that skill rather than need should determine wages. While they virtually find no significant differences among blacks and whites in regards to economic individualism, Kinder and Sanders contend that whites are far less favorable of a strong government than are blacks.

Kinder and Sanders (1996) found more stark differences among blacks and whites on the egalitarianism indicators than they found regarding economic individualism. There are big differences in the marginal distributions on survey indicators that address equal opportunity, equal rights, and several other equality indicators, with African Americans exhibiting higher levels of egalitarianism (see also Hochschild 1990). Overall, the extant literature suggests that blacks prioritize egalitarian values over individualist values.

We should not expect this cognitive conflict to explain differences in ambivalence across ideology, gender, or race if differing value priorities balance the level of conflict. If cognitive conflict between egalitarianism and individualism is a source of ambivalence

about social welfare policy, and there are no real differences in conflict across ideology, gender, and race, this is an unlikely source of differences.

Affective Conflict

Affective conflict is the most likely source of differences in ambivalence across ideology. If liberals are generally more supportive of social welfare policy than conservatives (Cook and Barrett 1992) and people's feelings about the perceived beneficiaries of such policies structure their attitudes about these programs (Kinder and Winter 2001; Nelson 1999; Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1991; Cook and Barrett 1992; Bobo and Kluegel 1993; Gilens 1995; see also Jacoby 2005), we can assume that liberals generally have positive affective responses toward the perceived beneficiaries (Craig, Martinez, and Kane 1999). Therefore, we should not expect much of this type of conflict among liberals. Further, Federico's (2005) analysis of the 1991 National Race and Politics Study suggests that white conservatives are more ambivalent about race than are white liberals.² If many think of African Americans as the perceived beneficiaries (Kinder and Winter 2001; Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1991; Cook and Barrett 1992; Bobo and Kluegel 1993), and conservatives are more mixed concerning race, they should be more likely to be ambivalent.

This argument can be extended to gender, and certainly to race. We certainly should expect more positive responses toward black people and most likely poor people from blacks as opposed to whites. Concerning gender, research suggests that women have a greater compassion for the less fortunate in society (Clark and Clark 1999) and have more nurturing attitudes (Burns and Schumaker 1987, 1988; Conover 1988; Carroll 1988;

² While the measures employed by Federico are not specifically centered on affect, they are group-centered.

Gidengil 1995). If females are more nurturing in their attitudes than males, and they think of blacks and poor people as the less fortunate in society, then their affective responses toward these groups should be less mixed than their male counterparts. Males may also think that blacks and poor people are less fortunate, but males are generally less nurturing. If someone wants to nurture something, we can assume they, generally, have positive feelings about it. The evidence certainly indicates that females are more likely to support social welfare than males (Clark and Clark 1999; Gidengil 1995; Carroll 1988). In sum, liberals, females, and blacks should be less likely to experience affective conflict when it comes to how they feel about African Americans and poor people, and as a result, be less ambivalent about social welfare than their respective counterparts.

Cognitive-Affective Conflict

Levels of cognitive-affective conflict could certainly differ across ideology, gender, and race primarily as a result of the differences concerning the affective element. Because liberals, females, and blacks are primarily egalitarian and generally express positive feelings towards the perceived beneficiaries of welfare programs, it is unlikely that these two will come into conflict for liberals. Also, it is unlikely that individualist values and feelings about the beneficiaries will come into conflict for liberals because they generally do not prioritize these values (see Jacoby 2002). Conflict would exist among those who placed high importance on individualism while simultaneously having positive feelings about the beneficiaries or placed high importance on egalitarian values and had negative feelings about the beneficiaries.

Because conservatives consistently prioritize individualist over egalitarian values (Jacoby 2002) and their feelings about race are generally more mixed than liberals (Federico 2005), we should expect some conflict of individualist values with the positive

side of the mixed feelings concerning race. Again, we should not expect differences across each group of the same magnitude as affective conflict due to the consistency of value priorities across these groups. This consistency balances the potential conflict out for most. Cognitive-affective conflict is certainly a plausible theoretical explanation of ambivalence (Lavine *et al.* 1998) but it is probably not as good an explanation as affective conflict when it comes to why liberals would be less ambivalent than conservatives.

Results

Differences in the Prevalence of Ambivalence across Ideology, Gender, and Race

The results shown in Table 5-1 suggest several important points. First, liberals are less ambivalent than conservatives when it comes to how they evaluate social welfare programs. Next, while liberals may be less ambivalent than conservatives, it appears that they experience a fair amount of ambivalence as well. Finally, there is some degree of variability in the levels of ambivalence observed across the seven program areas that form the basis for the social welfare ambivalence index and this variation is far from trivial.

Mean ambivalence scores for liberals are lower across all seven policy areas. As a result, liberals have a lower score on the index. These differences are significant at 0.01 level concerning ambivalence about universal medical insurance and improving the standard of living of poor Americans. The probability that there is no difference across ideology regarding ambivalence about programs to ensure that all children receive a good education is 0.09, 0.12 for protecting retirement benefits, and 0.15 for programs to protect the homeless. The difference concerning ensuring full employment and providing childcare programs is relatively higher than the other policy areas (0.36 for childcare and

Table 5-1 Prevalence of Social Welfare Ambivalence across Ideology

	<i>Mean Ambivalence</i>			<i>Percent Ambivalent</i>	
	<u>Liberals</u>	<u>Conservatives</u>	<u>P-Value</u>	<u>Liberals</u>	<u>Conservatives</u>
Standard of Living	0.67	1.05	0.00	48.8 %	64.2 %
Homeless	0.79	0.95	0.15	57.5 %	60.8 %
Job Guarantee	0.79	0.92	0.27	54.3 %	57.0 %
Child Care	0.67	0.77	0.36	51.2 %	52.2 %
Medical Insurance	0.06	0.54	0.00	21.3 %	40.3 %
Retirement Benefits	0.21	0.41	0.12	22.0 %	30.6 %
Education	0.13	0.33	0.09	20.5 %	29.0 %
7-item Index	3.32	4.98	0.01	39.4 %	46.4 %
Number of Cases	127	372			

Note: Data are from a *Florida Voter* survey of registered voters conducted in May 2004. P-value represents the probability that we cannot reject the null hypothesis that there is no difference among liberals and conservatives across these items (T-tests- equal variances assumed). “Percent Ambivalent” entries in the table indicate the proportion who have ambivalence scores greater than zero. Percentages for the 7-item index are an average of the 7 individual percentages.

0.27 for the job guarantee item). Most importantly the difference across ideology on the index of social welfare ambivalence is significant with a p-value of 0.01 suggesting that there is a clear overall pattern where liberals are less ambivalent than conservatives.

While liberals may be less ambivalent than conservatives, it appears that ambivalence is fairly common in both. If we consider a score of higher than zero as evidence of some degree of ambivalence (see Craig, Kane, and Martinez 2002), the percentage of those in the sample that are ambivalent ranges from 29.0 percent (ensuring that every child has access to a good education) for conservatives to 64.2 percent (programs to improve the standard of living for poor Americans), and from 20.5 percent to 57.5 percent for liberals on the same policy areas. Again this variation across policy areas, for both liberals and conservatives, is not trivial. The percentage of those who are ambivalent is higher on policies that would assist the homeless, improve the standard of

living of poor Americans, ensure full employment, and provide childcare programs to assist working parents. On each of these issues, more than half of the Florida sample, liberals and conservatives, have ambivalence scores greater than zero. Ambivalence is less common with regard to universal medical insurance, programs to ensure that all children receive a good education, and protecting retirement benefits.

Table 5-2 contains the mean ambivalence scores across gender and race, as well as the percentage of ambivalent (defined as ambivalence scores greater than zero). The results contained in Table 5-2 lend support to the expectations that females and blacks are generally less ambivalent about social welfare than males and whites respectively. The average ambivalence score for blacks and females is lower than their counterparts' scores across every item. For blacks, these differences are statistically significant for every item except retirement benefits. While the differences between males and females on the individual items are significant only for the medical insurance, education, and retirement benefits items, most important to this study, the mean additive index score of social welfare ambivalence is significantly different ($p = 0.02$). Likewise, as expected the difference in overall social welfare ambivalence is significantly different across race ($p < 0.00$).

Also, the percentage of those who are ambivalent is quite a bit lower for females and blacks than their counterparts. First, the percentage of ambivalence is lower for females and blacks than their respective counterparts on each of the 7 items and the 7-item index. Next, they are all the most ambivalent about programs that help out the homeless. On average 43.0 percent of females in the sample are ambivalent across these 7 items while males are at 50.6 percent. Females are least ambivalent about education and

Table 5-2 Prevalence of Social Welfare Ambivalence across Gender and Race

	Mean Ambivalence			Percent Ambivalent	
	<u>Females</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>P-Value</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Males</u>
Medical Insurance	0.29	0.59	0.01	30.8 %	42.1 %
Homeless	0.91	1.01	0.31	58.6 %	65.6 %
Education	0.20	0.46	0.02	24.7 %	31.2 %
Standard of Living	0.91	1.05	0.21	58.3 %	66.0 %
Job Guarantee	0.84	0.97	0.25	55.0 %	58.7 %
Child Care	0.69	0.85	0.14	49.2 %	57.5 %
Retirement Benefits	0.26	0.52	0.03	24.7 %	32.8 %
7-item Index	4.11	5.44	0.02	43.0 %	50.6 %
Number of Cases	360	247			
	<u>Blacks</u>	<u>Whites</u>		<u>Blacks</u>	<u>Whites</u>
Medical Insurance	-0.13	0.48	0.00	15.7 %	38.4 %
Homeless	0.32	1.04	0.00	35.3 %	65.2 %
Education	-0.11	0.36	0.02	13.7 %	29.3 %
Standard of Living	0.48	1.02	0.00	37.3 %	64.5 %
Job Guarantee	0.38	0.97	0.00	37.3 %	59.8 %
Child Care	0.07	0.83	0.00	21.6 %	55.9 %
Retirement Benefits	0.26	0.39	0.53	21.6 %	29.1 %
7-item Index	1.27	5.09	0.00	26.1 %	48.9 %
Number of Cases	51	515			

Note: Data are from a *Florida Voter* survey of registered voters conducted in May 2004. P-value represents the probability that we cannot reject the null hypothesis that there is no difference among liberals and conservatives across these items (T-tests- equal variances assumed). “Percent Ambivalent” entries in the table indicate the proportion who have ambivalence scores greater than zero. Percentages for the 7-item index are an average of the 7 individual percentages.

retirement benefits and males are least ambivalent about education. For blacks, their scores range from 13.7 percent on education to 37.3 percent on improving the standard of living for poor Americans and guaranteeing jobs to those who want one. For whites, they range from 29.3 percent on education to 64.5 percent on improving the standard of living for poor Americans. When considered all together, an average of these 7 items indicates 26.1 percent of blacks in the sample are ambivalent about social welfare in general, while

on average 48.9 percent of the whites in the sample are ambivalent. Clearly blacks are far less ambivalent than whites.

Now we can address the potential sources of the differences between liberals and conservatives. Table 5-3 contains each of their mean scores for cognitive conflict, affective, conflict, and cognitive-affective conflict. Means scores for values, value importance, the relative difference of importance, and positive and negative group affect are also included. As expected, liberals are generally more egalitarian and less individualist than conservatives. Liberals are more likely than conservatives to rate egalitarianism highly. While they rate individualism lower, the difference is not significant. The difference across ideology concerning the relative difference of the importance of these values is not significant either. Interestingly, it appears that conservatives are slightly more likely to have cognitive conflict. When it comes to affective conflict and cognitive-affective conflict, liberals are slightly less likely to experience these types of conflict but these differences are not significant. Unexpectedly, conservatives have more positive feelings about blacks and poor people than liberals. While these bivariate descriptions are illustrative, we can not determine if any of these types of conflict are good explanations for why conservatives appear to be more ambivalent than liberals until we test this proposition in a multivariate setting.

The results in Table 5-4 indicate that there is a gender difference across both values with women being both more egalitarian ($p = 0.01$) and less individualist than men ($p = 0.07$), contradicting what we would expect according to Feldman and Zaller (1992). Remember, they suggest that social welfare liberals place roughly equal importance on both and evidence suggests that females are more likely to be social welfare liberals

Table 5-3 Differences across Ideology: Sources of Ambivalence about Social Welfare

	<u>Liberals</u>	<u>Conservatives</u>	<u>P-Value</u>
<i>Cognitive Items</i>			
Egalitarianism (0-1)	0.79	0.66	0.00
Individualism (0-1)	0.37	0.46	0.00
Egalitarianism Importance (1-4)	3.31	2.85	0.00
Individualism Importance (1-4)	2.98	3.09	0.22
Relative Difference (0-3)	0.88	0.95	0.48
Cognitive Conflict (0-1)	0.39	0.43	0.08
<i>Affective Items</i>			
Positive Group Affect (0-1)	0.27	0.33	0.02
Negative Group Affect (0-1)	0.21	0.25	0.15
Affective Conflict (0-1)	0.29	0.32	0.24
Cognitive-Affective Conflict (0-1)	0.34	0.37	0.17
Number of Cases	127	372	

Note: Data are from a Florida Voter survey of registered voters conducted in May 2004. P-value represents the probability that we cannot reject the null hypothesis that there is no difference among liberals and conservatives across these items (T-tests- equal variances assumed).

(Gilens 1988; Kaufmann and Petrocik 1999; Goren 2001). As for value salience, it appears that women find equality to be a more important value than do men ($p = 0.02$), but individualism is not any more salient to men or women (women score higher but the difference is not significant). Females are only slightly less likely to experience cognitive conflict ($p = 0.13$). There are no significant gender differences across any of the affective items or cognitive-affective conflict.

Blacks are generally more egalitarian than whites ($p = 0.04$), and for individualism they are not significantly different. This is also the opposite of what Feldman and Zaller (1992) suggest. The average score for egalitarianism is much higher than individualism for blacks (0.77 and 0.40 respectively). The average scores for the importance of values and the relative difference also contradicts their argument (3.29 and

Table 5-4 Differences across Gender and Race: Sources of Ambivalence about Social Welfare

	Female	Male	P-value	Black	White	P-value
Cognitive Items						
Egalitarianism (0-1)	0.72	0.66	0.01	0.77	0.69	0.04
Individualism (0-1)	0.41	0.46	0.07	0.40	0.44	0.31
Egalitarianism Importance (1-4)	3.06	2.91	0.05	3.29	2.95	0.01
Individualism Importance (1-4)	3.00	3.07	0.32	2.78	3.04	0.05
Relative Difference (0-3)	0.91	0.92	0.94	0.98	0.92	0.65
Cognitive Conflict (0-1)	0.41	0.44	0.13	0.42	0.43	0.88
Affective Items						
Positive Group Affect (0-1)	0.31	0.33	0.27	0.20	0.34	0.00
Negative Group Affect (0-1)	0.23	0.24	0.55	0.15	0.24	0.02
Affective Conflict (0-1)	0.30	0.31	0.71	0.22	0.32	0.01
Cognitive-Affective Conflict (0-1)	0.36	0.37	0.54	0.32	0.37	0.13
Number of Cases	360	247		51	515	

Note: Data are from a Florida Voter survey of registered voters conducted in May 2004. P-value represents the probability that we cannot reject the null hypothesis that there is no difference among liberals and conservatives across these items (T-tests- equal variances assumed).

2.78 respectively). The evidence also indicates that blacks' value structures have a greater range. The difference between blacks' egalitarian and individualist values is much greater than it is for whites. Concerning the affective items, surprisingly, blacks have fewer positive feelings about blacks and poor people than whites (0.20 and 0.34 respectively). On the other hand, they do have fewer negative feelings than whites (0.15 and 0.24 respectively). As result, blacks exhibit less affective conflict than whites (0.22 and 0.32 respectively). They also exhibit slightly less cognitive-affective conflict ($p = 0.13$). Again, these differences do not definitively tell us why there are observable differences in ambivalence across race, but they do provide hints as to what we should expect in a multivariate model of the differences in ambivalence.

Multivariate Test of Difference across Ideology, Gender, and Race

The results of the test of the likely source of the difference in ambivalence across ideology are in Table 5-5. They lend support to the contention that affective conflict, when controlling for cognitive conflict and value importance, is the best explanation of why conservatives are more ambivalent than liberals about social welfare, and that cognitive-affective conflict explains some of the variance. The test involves comparing results across a series of ordered logit models of social welfare ambivalence. If cognitive, affective, or cognitive-affective conflict were the *best* explanation of the difference in ambivalence across ideology, we would expect ideology to become an unreliable predictor of ambivalence about social welfare when the explanation of the variance across ideology is introduced to the model. The first model (Model I) includes only ideology as an explanatory variable excluding conservatives as the reference category. Model II adds the control variables general policy preferences, income, and political knowledge. This is followed by introducing the cognitive conflict item (Model III) and the value importance indicators, the cognitive-affective conflict items (Model IV), and then the affective conflict item (Model V). The affective and cognitive-affective conflict measures are again in separate models to avoid multicollinearity. This process allows us to determine if these sources of conflict, and which ones, explain the variance across ideology, gender, and race.

First, in Model I the estimate of the relationship between being liberal and social welfare ambivalence is significant and negative. Because the dummy variable for conservatives is excluded as the reference category this suggests that compared to conservatives liberals are less ambivalent. The reliability of ideology is consistent when the controls are introduced to the models (Model II), so they do not account for the

Table 5-5 Source of Differences in Social Welfare Ambivalence across Ideology

	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV	Model V
Liberal	-0.54* (0.18)	-0.48* (0.18)	-0.36 (0.18)	-0.27 (0.18)	-0.21 (0.19)
Moderate	0.01 (0.19)	0.08 (0.19)	0.09 (0.19)	0.20 (0.19)	0.25 (0.19)
Cognitive Conflict	--	--	1.49* (0.30)	1.33* (0.29)	1.54* (0.29)
Egalitarianism Importance	--	--	-0.45* (0.09)	-0.37* (0.09)	-0.25* (0.09)
Individualism Importance	--	--	-0.42* (0.09)	-0.39* (0.09)	-0.30* (0.09)
Relative Difference	--	--	-0.24* (0.09)	-0.18* (0.09)	-0.18* (0.09)
Cognitive Affective Conflict	--	--	--	3.43* (0.34)	--
Affective Conflict	--	--	--	--	3.96* (0.30)
Policy Preferences	--	-0.13* (0.05)	-0.14* (0.05)	-0.15* (0.05)	-0.17* (0.05)
Income	--	-0.06 (0.07)	-0.04 (0.08)	0.01 (0.08)	0.05 (0.08)
Political Knowledge	--	0.09 (0.08)	0.12 (0.08)	0.11 (0.08)	0.06 (0.08)
-2 log likelihood	516.371	3269.49	4346.35	4258.55	4192.59
Nagelkerke Pseudo R ²	0.02	0.03	0.15	0.29	0.37
Number of Cases	607	607	607	607	607

Note: Data are from a Florida Voter survey of registered voters conducted in May 2004. Table entries are ordered logit estimates obtained using maximum likelihood estimation. 2-tailed test $*p \leq 0.05$. Standard errors are in parentheses. Threshold levels are not shown. Missing values were replaced using multiple imputation.

variance explained by ideology. Next, Model III suggests that cognitive conflict in the form of opposing values is a reliable predictor of social welfare ambivalence when controlling for the personal importance individuals place on both individualist and egalitarian values and the relative difference therein. Each of these is significant and negative indicating that ambivalence is lower as one value becomes more important and

as one becomes more important relative to the other. While these cognitive items appear to structure ambivalence about social welfare, they do not completely explain the difference across ideology. It remains a somewhat reliable predictor of ambivalence ($p < 0.10$).

After introducing the cognitive-affect conflict items in Model IV, it would appear that conflict between values and feelings toward the perceived beneficiaries of welfare explains some of the variance across ideology. Next in Model V, the results confirm the expectations that affective conflict is the best explanation of why liberals seem to be less ambivalent about social welfare than conservatives. The reliability and magnitude of the estimate for ideology dissipates even further than when cognitive-affective conflict was introduced, and the Pseudo R^2 is highest in this model.

The results concerning gender indicate that variation in cognitive conflict is the best explanation of the variance in ambivalence (see Table 5-6). The reliability of the estimate for ideology falls out when cognitive conflict is introduced and does not significantly dissipate when either cognitive-affective or affective conflict are introduced into the model. This finding lends support to Feldman and Zaller's (1992) theory that value conflict or cognitive conflict explains who would be most ambivalent among social welfare liberals, but it suggests they had the logic behind the value priorities backwards. As a result of this error, in combination with measurement problems, they were wrong about who is most ambivalent. The results here also suggest that the social welfare policy preferences are important in explaining why women are less ambivalent. When this variable is introduced, the reliability of the estimate dissipates (still significant at $p < 0.10$).

Table 5-6 Source of Differences in Social Welfare Ambivalence across Gender

	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV	Model V
Female	-0.32* (0.14)	-0.27 (0.15)	-0.19 (0.15)	-0.18 (0.15)	-0.23 (0.15)
Cognitive Conflict	--	--	1.51* (0.29)	1.31* (0.29)	1.52* (0.29)
Egalitarianism Importance	--	--	-0.46* (0.09)	-0.37* (0.09)	-0.25* (0.09)
Individualism Importance	--	--	-0.43* (0.09)	-0.40* (0.09)	-0.31* (0.09)
Relative Difference	--	--	-0.26* (0.09)	-0.18* (0.09)	-0.18* (0.09)
Cognitive Affective Conflict	--	--	--	3.43* (0.34)	--
Affective Conflict	--	--	--	--	3.98 (0.30)
Policy Preferences	--	-0.14* (0.05)	-0.16* (0.05)	-0.14* (0.05)	-0.16* (0.05)
Income	--	-0.06 (0.07)	-0.03 (0.08)	-0.01 (0.08)	-0.05 (0.08)
Political Knowledge	--	0.06 (0.08)	0.09 (0.08)	0.09 (0.08)	0.04 (0.08)
-2 log likelihood	416.15	3138.13	4351.40	4258.57	4191.30
Nagelkerke Pseudo R ²	0.01	0.02	0.15	0.29	0.36
Number of Cases	607	607	607	607	607

Note: Data are from a Florida Voter survey of registered voters conducted in May 2004. Table entries are ordered logit estimates obtained using maximum likelihood estimation. 2-tailed test * $p \leq 0.05$. Standard errors are in parentheses. Threshold levels are not shown. Missing values were replaced using multiple imputation.

The results do not provide any explanation as to why African Americans are less ambivalent about social welfare (see Table 5-7). This result may reflect the impact of cultural factors, with the longstanding support of blacks, in the aggregate, for social welfare programs having perhaps become a part of their political identity. While the data employed here do not permit a test of that argument, the pattern for blacks raises further

Table 5-7 Source of Differences in Social Welfare Ambivalence across Race

	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV	Model V
African American	-1.26* (0.26)	-1.18* (0.26)	-1.11* (0.27)	-1.02* (0.27)	-0.94* (0.27)
Other Race	-0.74* (0.28)	-0.65* (0.29)	-0.50 (0.29)	-0.37 (0.29)	-0.31 (0.29)
White	--	--	--	--	--
Cognitive Conflict	--	--	1.50* (0.29)	1.31* (0.29)	1.52* (0.29)
Egalitarianism Importance	--	--	-0.42* (0.09)	-0.35* (0.09)	-0.24* (0.09)
Individualism Importance	--	--	-0.45* (0.09)	-0.42* (0.09)	-0.33* (0.09)
Relative Difference	--	--	-0.24* (0.09)	-0.17* (0.09)	-0.18* (0.09)
Cognitive Affective Conflict	--	--	--	3.38* (0.34)	--
Affective Conflict	--	--	--	--	3.90 (0.30)
Policy Preferences	--	-0.11* (0.05)	-0.14* (0.05)	-0.13* (0.05)	-0.15* (0.05)
Income	--	-0.06 (0.07)	-0.02 (0.08)	-0.02 (0.08)	-0.06 (0.08)
Political Knowledge	--	0.02 (0.08)	0.06 (0.08)	0.07 (0.08)	0.02 (0.08)
-2 log likelihood	397.42	2922.02	4322.32	4243.89	4181.51
Nagelkerke Pseudo R2	0.04	0.05	0.17	0.30	0.37
Number of Cases	607	607	607	607	607

Note: Data are from a Florida Voter survey of registered voters conducted in May 2004. Table entries are ordered logit estimates obtained using maximum likelihood estimation. 2-tailed test * $p \leq 0.05$. Standard errors are in parentheses. Threshold levels are not shown. Missing values were replaced using multiple imputation.

questions about the assertion that liberals are more ambivalent about social welfare than conservatives.

Summary

The findings presented in this chapter offer several conclusions. First, self-identified liberals, females, and blacks are less ambivalent about social welfare than their respective counterparts. Next, the source of this difference varies for each. Primarily, affective and cognitive-affective conflict explains the variance across ideology, cognitive conflict across gender, and the data do not offer an explanation of why blacks are less ambivalent than whites. The findings do indicate that there are value differences and differences concerning how blacks feel about the perceived beneficiaries of social welfare, but this variation does not account for the variation in ambivalence while it does for self-identified ideology and gender.

Chapter 6 focuses on the political consequences of social welfare ambivalence. Specifically, the relationship between ambivalence about social welfare, policy preference regarding social welfare, and evaluations of George W. Bush, the U.S. Congress, and the Supreme Court is explored. The findings indicate that ambivalence weakens the relationship between policy preferences and evaluations of Bush but do not do so when it comes to evaluating Congress and the Supreme Court.

CHAPTER 6
THE CONSEQUENCES: THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF SOCIAL WELFARE
AMBIVALENCE

While research has extensively explored the *consequences* of attributes of attitudes such as *importance* (Krosnick and Abelson 1992; Krosnick 1988a, 1988b; Boninger *et al.* 1995), *extremity* (Abelson 1995; Krosnick and Abelson 1992; Krosnick *et al.* 1993), *certainty* (Budd 1986; Krosnick and Schuman 1988), and *accessibility* (Fazio 1986) to name a few,¹ there has not been nearly as much research centered on the potential political consequences of ambivalence. When it comes to understanding what ambivalent attitudes mean for politics (see Craig *et al.* 2005, Lavine 2001; McGraw, Hasecke, and Conger 2003), research has only begun to scratch the surface. This dearth of research is evidenced by the absence of any published studies concerning the potential consequences of social welfare ambivalence. This chapter takes a first look. It is important to explore these consequences to gain a clear understanding of the nature of the relationship between policy preferences and evaluations of political leaders and institutions.

First, what exactly is meant by *consequences* is clarified by describing previous research which focused on the attributes listed above. Second, the relationship between policy preferences, ambivalence, and political evaluations is covered. Third, the hypotheses outlined in Chapter 2 regarding the consequences of social welfare

¹ This study discusses only these four attributes because they are the most prevalent in the literature, and this is sufficient to provide a theoretical framework for understanding the potential consequences of ambivalence. For a review other attributes of attitudes including intensity, interest in relevant information, knowledge, direct experience, latitudes of rejection and noncommitment, and affective-cognitive consistency see Krosnick *et al.* (1993).

ambivalence on the relationship between policy preferences and political valuations are restated. Fourth, a series of models are estimated to test these expectations. These findings are discussed before moving on to the concluding chapter of this study.

Attributes of Attitudes: The Consequences

While the fact that people's orientations toward political issues can have both positive and negative dimensions certainly implies that ambivalence is an important attribute of attitudes, its importance cannot be fully understood without considering the consequences of such phenomena. Consequences of an attribute of an attitude essentially refer to this attribute having a relationship with behavior. For example, the effect policy preferences have on vote preferences may be dependent on the importance one places on the policy, how extreme or certain one feels about it, or on the accessibility of the policy preference. While these attributes are distinct from ambivalence (see Martinez, Craig, and Kane 2005 for a review), ambivalence research focused on such consequences has been directed by those who have concentrated on attributes such as importance, extremity, certainty, and accessibility.

Attitude *importance* refers to the degree to which people care deeply about an issue and its significance to their daily lives (Krosnick and Abelson 1992; Krosnick 1988a, 1988b; Boninger *et al.* 1995). *Extremity* connotes distance from the midpoint on traditional attitude scales (Abelson 1995; Krosnick and Abelson 1992; Krosnick *et al.* 1993). Attitude *certainty* refers to the degree to which an individual is confident that his or her attitude toward an object is correct (Budd 1986; Krosnick and Schuman 1988). *Accessibility* is the strength of the object evaluation link in memory (Fazio 1986; Fazio and Williams 1995).

Research has suggested that these attributes may have several consequences. For instance, the consistency of attitude reports over time is positively related to importance (Krosnick 1988b; Schuman and Presser 1981) and certainty (Pelham 1991). Resistance to change is positively related to extremity (Ewing 1942; Osgood, Suci and Tannenbaum 1957), certainty (Marks and Kamins 1988; Swann and Ely 1984), importance (Borgida and Howard-Pitney 1983), and accessibility (Bassili and Fletcher 1991). The impact of attitudes on perceptions of others' attitudes, attitudes toward other objects, and other cognitions is stronger for attitudes of greater extremity (Allison and Messick 1988), certainty (Bennett and Harrell 1975), importance (Clore and Baldridge 1968; Krosnick 1988a, 1990), and accessibility (Fazio, Powell, and Herr 1983; Fazio, Powell, and Williams 1989). Finally, the impact of attitudes on behavior is positively associated with extremity (Fazio and Zanna 1978; Petersen and Dutton 1975), certainty (Davidson *et al.* 1985; Sample and Warland 1973), importance (Jaccard and Becker 1985; Schuman and Presser 1981), and accessibility (Fazio *et al.* 1982; Fazio, Powell, and Williams 1989).

As previously mentioned, research is neither as abundant nor as diverse concerning the potential consequences of ambivalence. This literature is not covered in its entirety here (see Chapter 2 for a more thorough review). Rather, only the literature that focuses on consequences of ambivalence that can be explored using the present data are revisited. While studies have focused on ambivalence about social welfare (Feldman and Zaller 1992; Steenbergen and Brewer 2000; Jacoby 2002), they have not looked at its consequences. Previous studies suggest that ambivalent attitudes exert less impact on evaluations of political leaders than do non-ambivalent attitudes (McGraw, Hasecke, and Conger 2003). Research has also suggested that the effect a person's policy preferences

(gay rights) has on his or her evaluations of political leaders and institutions is moderated by ambivalence surrounding their policy preference (Craig *et al.* 2005). Therefore, we might expect the same relationship concerning social welfare policy preferences.

Policy preferences are often related to evaluations of political candidates (Aldrich, Sullivan, and Borgida 1989; Miller and Shanks 1996). While policy preferences may be related to institutional evaluations (i.e., Congress, Supreme Court, etc.), research has focused primarily on the relationship between preferences and political candidates (incumbents and challengers). This makes sense because it certainly requires more political sophistication and perhaps issue saliency to make the linkage between policy preferences and the role Congress or the courts play. It probably depends on the issue. For instance, people may be more aware of the role Congress and the courts are playing in the gay rights issue because of media coverage focused on gay marriage. For social welfare policy preferences, the link with evaluations of George W. Bush is most likely stronger than that with institutional evaluations. People are probably more aware of what Bush thinks about welfare than they are aware of the role of Congress and the courts. Also, congressional job approval probably depends, at least in part upon an awareness of the parties' positions on these issues and of the partisan makeup on Congress. There are no measures in these data to test this proposition.

We should expect that the mediating effect of ambivalence is contingent on the relationship between preferences and evaluations. If social welfare policy preferences are not strongly related to evaluations of Congress or the Supreme Court, we should not expect ambivalence to matter. Based on these ideas, this chapter tests the hypothesis asserted in Chapter 2 that suggested social welfare ambivalence policy weakens the

relationship between social welfare policy preferences and evaluations of candidates. While the test is also conducted for Congress and the Supreme Court too, no significant relationship is expected.

We might also expect the mediating effect of ambivalence to vary across groups. Since the findings in Chapter 5 indicated that the prevalence of ambivalence varied by ideology, gender, and race, where conservatives, males, and whites were more ambivalent than their respective counterparts, the mediating effect may be stronger for members of these groups as well. If attitude extremity is consequential, ambivalence extremity (higher or lower ambivalence scores) may also be consequential. The mediating effect of ambivalence may be stronger or weaker based on extremity. Because the evidence indicates that conservatives, males, and whites are more ambivalent, the intuitive expectation is that ambivalence would have more effect for members of these groups when compared to their respective counterparts. Hence, this chapter examines this possibility.

Before moving to the analyses, the models and tests of the mediating effect of ambivalence on the relationship between policy preferences and evaluations of candidates and institutions are clarified. Tests for the variance of this mediating effect across ideology, gender, and race are clarified as well.

Model and Test Specification

To determine whether social welfare ambivalence affects the relationship between a person's policy preferences and his or her evaluations of political leaders and institutions, several models are built that estimate the effects of social welfare policy preferences, social welfare ambivalence, and the interaction between them on evaluations of George W. Bush, the U.S. Congress, and the Supreme Court. All of the variables are coded in the

intuitive direction. Higher values represent better evaluations, more ambivalence, and support for increased social welfare spending. In all of these models, a significant positive interaction term (policy preference * ambivalence) indicates that ambivalence *weakens* the relationship between social welfare preferences and assessments of George W. Bush, the U.S. Congress, and the Supreme Court respectively.

Also, another set of models is estimated because the evidence presented in Chapter 5 indicated that conservatives, males, and whites are more likely to be ambivalent. Because there is not an expected mediating effect of ambivalence concerning evaluations of Congress and the Supreme Court, models are only estimated for evaluations of Bush. The models are the same as those above except dummy variables are introduced for each group to test for differing mediating effects. The model for ideology introduces a dummy for conservative (4-7 on a 7-point indicator) and for moderate (5 on a 7-point indicator-making liberal 1-3 the reference category). The gender model introduces a dummy for male, and the race model, a dummy for white. The dummy in each is interacted with the interaction term for policy preference and social welfare ambivalence creating a three-way interaction (policy preference * ambivalence * dummy variable). There are three separate models to test each interaction to avoid excessive multicollinearity. A significant three-way interaction term indicates that the mediating effects of ambivalence on the relationship between social welfare preferences and evaluations of George W. Bush vary for each respective group.

Results

First, the results in Table 6-1 suggest that social welfare policy preferences are related to evaluations of Bush. As support for increased spending on programs increases support for Bush decreases. This is not the case regarding evaluations of Congress or the

Supreme Court. Again, if policy preferences are not related to these evaluations we should not expect ambivalence to be important.

Table 6-1 Correlation Matrix of Social Welfare Policy Preferences and Evaluations of Bush, Congress, and the Supreme Court

	<u>Policy Preference</u>	<u>Bush Evaluation</u>	<u>Congress Evaluation</u>	<u>Supreme Court Evaluation</u>
Policy Preference	1.00	--	--	--
Bush Evaluation	-0.22*	1.00	--	--
Congress Evaluation	-0.06	0.38*	1.00	--
Supreme Court Evaluation	0.02	0.18	0.35*	1.00

Note: Data are from 2004 *Florida Voter* survey. Table entries are Kendall's Tau τ_b correlation coefficients. 2-tailed test * $p \leq 0.05$. Missing values were replaced using multiple imputation.

Results for the first set of models are in Table 6-2, and they confirm this expectation. There is not a relationship between ambivalence, policy preferences, and evaluations of Congress or evaluations of the Supreme Court, but there is a significant mediating relationship in the model predicting evaluations of Bush. The puzzling thing is that it is not in the expected direction. The negative coefficient indicates that the relationship between policy preference and these evaluations is stronger for those who are ambivalent. This finding is contrary to previous findings focused on the mediating effect of ambivalence (see Craig *et al.* 2005). Theoretically, there is no reason for this finding. Perhaps, it is an anomaly, or there may be something particular and unique about the relationship between social welfare ambivalence and evaluations of Bush.²

² In a quest to understand this result, various control variables were introduced to see how they altered the relationship. The really interesting thing here is why it seems to vary for evaluations of Bush. It seems that party identification is such a strong predictor of evaluations of Bush that it soaks up so much of the variance in the predictive models that the small mediating effect ambivalence appears to have on the influence of policy preferences vanishes. This finding suggests that *The American Voter* (Campbell *et al.*

Table 6-2 The Mediating Effect of Social Welfare Ambivalence on Evaluations

	George <u>W. Bush</u>	U.S. <u>Congress</u>	Supreme <u>Court</u>
Policy Preference	-0.31* (0.05)	-0.08 (0.05)	0.04 (0.05)
Social Welfare Ambivalence	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Policy Preference* Social Welfare Ambivalence	-0.01* (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
-2 log likelihood	959.36	1169.95	1196.21
Nagelkerke Pseudo R ²	0.09	0.01	0.00
N	607	607	607

Note: Data are from 2004 *Florida Voter* survey. Table entries are ordered-logit estimates. 2-tailed test * $p \leq 0.05$. Standard errors are in parentheses. Missing values were replaced using multiple imputation.

The next set of models estimate the potentially varying mediating effect across ideology, gender and race. First, the dummy variable for conservative is reliable suggesting that conservatives have more positive evaluations of George W. Bush (not surprising). Next, the results from the first model (Table 6-3) provide evidence of variance across ideology when it comes to the mediating effect of ambivalence on the relationship between policy preference and evaluations of Bush. The findings suggest that the mediating effect of ambivalence on the relationship between policy preference and evaluations of Bush is stronger for self-identified conservatives. As ambivalence increases, the link between policy preferences and evaluations of Bush is weaker for conservatives as opposed to liberals.

1960) got it right in their famed *funnel of causality* when they suggested that policy preferences stem from party identification and that their effect on vote choice is driven by party identification. Vote choice and candidate evaluations are certainly related, and it appears that party identification is also driving the relationship between policy preferences, ambivalence about social welfare, and evaluations of George W. Bush.

Table 6-3 The Mediating Effect of Social Welfare Ambivalence across Ideology

	<u>Coefficient</u>	<u>S.E.</u>	<u>95 % Confidence Interval</u>	
Policy Preference	-0.35	0.05	-0.45	-0.25
Social Welfare Ambivalence	-0.00	0.01	-0.02	0.02
Dummy for Conservative	1.34	0.20	0.96	1.72
Dummy for Moderate	0.31	0.21	-0.10	0.72
Policy Preference* Social Welfare Ambivalence	-0.01	0.00	-0.02	-0.01
Policy Preference* Social Welfare Ambivalence*Conservative	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.02
-2 log likelihood	1238.46			
Nagelkerke Pseudo R ²	0.04			
N	607			

Note: Data are from 2004 *Florida Voter* survey. Table entries are ordered-logit estimates. Missing values were replaced using multiple imputation.

Concerning gender, the model offers modest evidence of a varying effect across gender (Table 6-4), but in the opposite direction as the effect for conservatives. The three-way interaction does not reach traditional standards of significance ($p \leq 0.05$), but the relationship is not completely absent as can be observed in the 95% confidence interval. Zero is barely bounded in the interval. So, with slightly less confidence, the findings indicate that the mediating effect of ambivalence on the relationship between policy preference and evaluations of Bush is weaker for males. As ambivalence increases, female's evaluations of Bush are impacted more than they are for males. Their evaluations are likely to worsen.

Finally, for race, there are significant interactive effects (see Table 6-5) that are consistent with those in the ideology model. Because the two-way interaction becomes positive, the negative interaction term suggests that the mediating effect of ambivalence

Table 6-4 The Mediating Effect of Social Welfare Ambivalence across Gender

	<u>Coefficient</u>	<u>S.E.</u>	<u>95 % Confidence Interval</u>	
Policy Preference	-0.31	0.05	-0.41	-0.22
Social Welfare Ambivalence	0.00	0.01	-0.01	0.02
Dummy for Male	0.14	0.13	-0.12	0.41
Policy Preference* Social Welfare Ambivalence	-0.01	0.00	-0.01	0.00
Policy Preference* Social Welfare Ambivalence*Male	-0.00	0.00	-0.01	0.00
-2 log likelihood	1132.41			
Nagelkerke Pseudo R ²	0.10			
N	607			

Note: Data are from 2004 *Florida Voter* survey. Table entries are ordered-logit estimates. Missing values were replaced using multiple imputation.

on the relationship between policy preference and evaluations of Bush is stronger for whites as opposed to others. In fact, the two-way interaction is not significant indicating that there is no mediating effect for non-whites, so the effect certainly appears to be stronger for whites.

Summary

This chapter focused on the political consequences of social welfare ambivalence. Specifically, the relationship between ambivalence about social welfare, policy preference regarding social welfare, and evaluations of George W. Bush, the U.S. Congress, and the Supreme Court was explored. The findings indicate that there is a mediating effect of ambivalence on the relationship between policy preference and evaluations of Bush, but not in the expected direction. As for Congress and the Supreme Court, there is no relationship. Further, that where this mediating effect does exist

Table 6-5 The Mediating Effect of Social Welfare Ambivalence across Race

	<u>Coefficient</u>	<u>S.E.</u>	<u>95 % Confidence Interval</u>	
Policy Preference	-0.29	0.05	-0.39	-0.20
Social Welfare Ambivalence	0.00	0.01	-0.02	0.01
Dummy for White	0.66	0.23	0.21	1.12
Policy Preference* Social Welfare Ambivalence	0.01	0.01	-0.01	0.03
Policy Preference* Social Welfare Ambivalence*White	-0.02	0.01	-0.04	0.00
-2 log likelihood	1063.04			
Nagelkerke Pseudo R ²	0.11			
N	607			

Note: Data are from 2004 *Florida Voter* survey. Table entries are ordered-logit estimates. Missing values were replaced using multiple imputation.

(evaluations of Bush); it is strongest for conservatives and whites as opposed to liberals and blacks.

The next and final chapter in this study summarizes all of the findings contained in this study. These findings are discussed in light of how they inform our understanding of ambivalence, real world practitioners, and our understanding of politics in the United States today.

CHAPTER 7
SOCIAL WELFARE AMBIVALENCE: WHAT DO WE KNOW, WHERE DO WE GO,
AND WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN FOR POLITICS

This study has been organized around the *conceptualization, measurement, prevalence, sources* and *consequences* of ambivalence about social welfare policy. Accordingly, this concluding chapter is also so arranged. The questions addressed here were as follows: 1) Among the previous approaches to measuring ambivalence using survey indicators, which has the highest validity? 2) How prevalent is ambivalence surrounding social welfare policy and does the prevalence vary by group? 3) What are the potential sources of such ambivalence? 4) Who is more likely to be ambivalent and why? 5) What is the relationship between ambivalence about social welfare, policy preferences, and evaluations of political candidates and institutions? The chapter summarizes the findings regarding the associated hypotheses posited in Chapter 2. After discussing the findings of each respectively, potential jumping off points and future questions are offered. Then, this chapter and study concludes with some final comments regarding how these findings speak to our understanding of ambivalence, to real world practitioners, and to our understanding of politics in the United States today.

Conceptualization and Measurement of Social Welfare Ambivalence

Loose conceptualizations of ambivalence in political science research have led to less than optimal measurement strategies (Chapters 1, 2, 3). Accordingly, this study offered a fresh approach to measuring ambivalence about social welfare policy that is adapted from earlier work (Craig, Kane, and Martinez 2002; Craig *et al.* 2005). A

comparison of construct validity between this approach and other strategies confirms **H₃**. Between the indirect and direct approaches to measuring ambivalence, the relationship between the above sources of conflict and social welfare ambivalence is strongest for indirect measures that gauge positive and negative evaluations separately.

Out of all of the options explored here, it appears that asking respondents to separately rate their positive and negative evaluations of social welfare policy is the best way to measure ambivalence. Clearly, as a result of the empirical results presented here, further questions are raised concerning the differences between direct and indirect ambivalence. The direct measures may be capturing a generally “unsure” feeling which is what people commonly think ambivalence to be. The present study suggested that ambivalence is a standard attribute of attitudes and it is different than a subjective experience. With this in mind, this study revisited some of the theoretical puzzles of earlier research with a fresh approach.

Prevalence of Social Welfare Ambivalence

The descriptive statistics contained in Chapter 3 laid the empirical foundation for the rest of the study. The findings suggested that many are ambivalent across a range of social welfare issues, including government spending on medical insurance, assistance for the homeless, education, programs to improve the standard of living for poor Americans, providing jobs for citizens, child care programs, and finally, retirement benefits. If we accept the validity of the measure used here, ambivalence, at least at some level, is fairly common.

The findings also suggest that the prevalence of ambivalence varies by group (Chapter 5) providing support to the following hypotheses: **H₄** Liberals are less ambivalent about social welfare policy than conservatives, **H₅** Females are less

ambivalent about social welfare policy than males, and **H₆** African Americans are less ambivalent about social welfare policy than whites. The prevalence of ambivalence generally and across groups poses so many questions that they can not all be listed here. But here are a few examples: Is the prevalence of ambivalence consistent over time? Have the group differences been consistent over time? How does public discourse affect the prevalence of ambivalence? And, does discourse have uniform effects on ambivalence across groups?

The Sources of Social Welfare Ambivalence

The evidence presented here suggests that social welfare ambivalence is rooted in cognition and affect (Chapters 3 and 4). Specifically, ambivalence is rooted in the conflict of egalitarian and individualist values (cognitive conflict), mixed feelings about the perceived beneficiaries (black people and poor people) (affective conflict), and conflict between these values and feelings (cognitive-affective conflict). This is perhaps the most convincing evidence in the study. Measures of these concepts consistently and reliably predict ambivalence regardless of what new controls are introduced to the models. Thus, **H₁** Cognitive, cognitive-affective, and affective conflict are positively related to ambivalence about social welfare.

Further exploration into differences across ideology, gender, and race with regards to the sources of social welfare ambivalence indicates that these differences help explain differences in social welfare ambivalence across groups. Affective and cognitive-affective conflict explain the variance across ideology, cognitive conflict across gender, and the data do not offer an explanation of why blacks are more ambivalent than whites. The findings do indicate that there are value differences and differences concerning how blacks feel about the perceived beneficiaries of social welfare, but this variation does not

account for the variation in ambivalence while it does for self-identified ideology and gender. Thus, partial support is provided to **H₇** The variation in ambivalence across groups is a result of variation in the sources of such ambivalence across groups.

This study also offered a new theoretical contribution in demonstrating that as the personal importance people place on their values increases relative to other values ambivalence decreases (Chapter 4). This has not been previously empirically demonstrated with regards to social welfare or any other attitude object. The findings also indicate that the personal importance individuals place on egalitarianism and individualism varies across ideology, gender, and race but this does not account for the differences in ambivalence across race. On the other hand, the evidence in Chapters 3 and 4 does suggest that this is an important predictor of ambivalence providing support to **H₂** As individuals place more importance on one value as opposed to another they are less likely to be ambivalent about social welfare.

The lack of results with regards to why African Americans seem to be so “un-ambivalent” is a very interesting non-finding. The best answer, without the data, to this question is that the welfare culture differs across race. While many more whites are on welfare than blacks, the proportion of blacks on welfare is probably higher. Therefore, it is more likely that blacks have either personally benefited or know someone that has benefited from social welfare programs, and as a result, may have more positive feelings about such programs. Perhaps, controlling for whether or not one has received personal benefits from social welfare or know someone that has would be beneficial. In-depth interviews with blacks would also be useful as an information gathering strategy prior to building survey indicators.

While the difference across race could not be accounted for, the evidence is fairly convincing that cognitive conflict, affective conflict, and cognitive-affective in the form of values and feelings about the beneficiaries are all sources of social welfare ambivalence. It may also be fruitful to consider whether and how various aspects of value hierarchies or attitude structure affect ambivalence on public policy issues. The interesting question that these results pose is, “what are the cognitive and affective sources of ambivalence across other policy areas?” Most studies in political science look only to cognitive sources of ambivalence. Perhaps, framing the sources this way can open up new theoretical development.

The Consequences of Social Welfare Ambivalence

Chapter 6 focused on the political consequences of social welfare ambivalence. Specifically, the relationship between ambivalence about social welfare, social welfare policy preferences, and evaluations of George W. Bush, the U.S. Congress, and the Supreme Court was explored. The idea here was that ambivalence potentially mediates the relationship between social welfare policy preferences and evaluations of candidates and institutions. The findings indicate that this seems to be the case for evaluations of George Bush, but not for evaluations of Congress and the Supreme Court. This is as expected, but the problem is that the relationship is in the opposite of the hypothesized direction. It was asserted that **H₈** Ambivalence about social welfare policy weakens the relationship between social welfare policy preferences and evaluations of candidates, and the evidence here suggests that it actually strengthens the relationship. This is puzzling and clearly requires further investigation.

The evidence also suggests that the mediating effects of ambivalence vary across ideology, gender, and race when it comes to evaluating Bush, but not in a uniform way.

The results suggest that the mediating effect of ambivalence is stronger for conservatives and whites than liberals and conservatives respectively. But on the other hand, the data indicate that it is weaker for males than females, but this difference is statistically modest at best. Overall, the findings lend support to **H₉**, The mediating effect of ambivalence about social welfare is stronger for conservatives, men, and whites. While these findings begin to chip away at the unanswered questions about the effects of ambivalence on behavior, the ice has just been broken. The effects of ambivalence in general and about social welfare specifically on things like vote choice, participation, and issue priorities are just a few questions that are yet to be resolved.

Concluding Comments

This study started by suggesting that public opinion about social welfare policy has been divided since the advent of large scale social programs in the New Deal. It concludes by addressing this question. Are Americans as evenly divided about social welfare as polls from the last 50 years have suggested? If the Florida sample used here is representative of the country as a whole, the answer to this question is a resounding no. Rather, many Americans are, in fact, *ambivalent*, about such policies. Simply, questions about the appropriate breadth of the social safety net, which have helped to define political cleavages in the United States since the 1930's, remain difficult ones even today.

So what does this all mean for our understanding of ambivalence, for real world practitioners, and for our understanding of politics in the United States today? Perhaps the biggest contribution this study makes to our understanding of ambivalence is an empirical one rather than a theoretical one. Theory has suggested that people simultaneously have inconsistency both cognitively and affectively, but the measures in large-sample surveys have been lacking. As a result, the evidence to support the theory

has been mixed and weak at best. The data here suggest that typical measures of attitudes about social welfare are deficient. As described in earlier chapters, peoples attitudes are made up of a range of considerations and measures that force respondents to choose one side or the other are not always accurate. If we use a uni-polar scale to represent concepts that are not uni-polar and build models to predict this scale, the predicted effects of the independent variables can not be trusted. Many models of attitudes about social welfare in the literature include values as an independent variable. The problem is that these models do not account for the effect conflicting values may have on attitudes about social welfare because typical measure of the dependent variable do not permit such estimation. When it comes to attitudes about social welfare, the same can be said for conflicting feelings about the perceived beneficiaries.

Further, theory has suggested that conflicting values and feelings about the beneficiaries stimulates ambivalence, but the evidence has been weak also. Here, the measure fits the appropriate conceptualization and the theories are supported with strong evidence in the process. Perhaps the argument could also be made that this is the theoretical contribution here. The findings contribute to the idea that ambivalence should be strictly defined as the simultaneous possession of positive and negative evaluations. While some political scientists using large sample surveys have been flexible with their conceptualization of ambivalence, the psychology literature has not treated it the same. Psychology's conception of ambivalence is consistent with that strict definition. The strong empirical evidence of the sources of ambivalence presented here suggests that political science should take a cue from psychology. The measure was designed based on this strict conceptualization, and as a result, theory was supported.

While this indirect measure performs well, it is not practical, and therefore, has limited application in the real world practice of polling and strategizing for campaigns. It is just too cumbersome. It requires two questions for every one item. On the other hand, this evidence does strongly suggest that we need to find a practical way to measure what seems to be empirical reality. If we believe the model, it suggests that many experience ambivalence rooted in cognition and affect. This being the case, it is imperative for real-world practitioners and researchers to find an effective and cost-efficient way of capturing such phenomena using surveys. For practitioners, it could improve the precision of their strategies, and for researchers, it could improve the accuracy of inferences.

If candidates and campaigns send messages that prime competing values among voters, and these values structure attitudes about social welfare (Feldman 1988; Feldman and Zaller 1992; McCann 1997; Feldman and Steenbergen 2001; Goren 2001; also see Gilens 1995), they may be unknowingly (or perhaps knowingly) stimulating ambivalence surrounding this issue. Research has suggested that public opinion influences decision-makers (Bailey and Brady 1998; Miller and Stokes 1963; Page and Shapiro 1983; Wright, Erikson, and McIver 1987) and parties and leaders often follow public opinion polls (Geer 1991). This being the case, it seems imperative that these decision-makers have accurate assessments of public opinion since, presumably, they at least in some way seek to represent their constituency on social welfare, among other issues. Indicators currently used by real-world practitioners treat attitudes as a uni-polar concept. Simply, they only traditionally capture importance, intensity, extremity and certainty.

It is ironic that candidates may help to stimulate ambivalence, and then use polls as a factor in their decision-making process. These polls do not account for the very ambivalence that they may have helped to create. Potentially, respondents are ending up in “don’t know”, “moderate”, or “neutral” response categories when they are actually ambivalent. These are the most logical responses for them to choose. If candidates plan to include public opinion in their decision-making calculus, it seems that they would be interested in knowing whether the public is ambivalent, unaware, truly neutral, or moderate. Aware that their messages in combination with other messages (opponents, media, social networks, etc.) may help to create ambivalence, and that there are more adequate measures of ambivalence and attitudes in general, new campaign strategies could be devised that account for such effects. Would it not provide a competitive edge if a candidate were aware that many are ambivalent about the major issues surrounding the election? If a poll that does not account for ambivalence suggested that the public was roughly divided on a given issue with 20% being moderate, while another survey that did account for ambivalence suggested that of that 20% around 10% are ambivalent, this information is useful. The candidate would potentially have more leeway when it came time to take a policy position. Real world practitioners are relying on marginal distributions that may be misleading.

Regardless of the potential usefulness for candidates of polls that capture ambivalence, the evidence presented in this study clearly suggests that traditional indicators are missing an important attribute of attitudes. The idea that people were willing to answer a telephone and tell somebody that they had *extremely* positive feelings and *extremely* negative feelings about the same thing is just amazing. Further, they were

willing to do so just a few minutes apart. It was more than just a few people that did so. And it was not just about some policies. In fact, when it came to how people felt about ensuring that every citizen has adequate medical insurance 26 people (4.3 %) gave a score of 4 and 4 for extremely positive and extremely negative feelings. For providing programs to help homeless people (14 people, 2.3 percent), ensuring that every child has access to a good education (41 people, 6.8 %), and providing programs that improve the standard of living of poor Americans (13 people, 2.1 percent). As for seeing to it that everyone who wants a job has one (23 people, 3.8 percent), providing childcare programs to assist working parents (26 people, 4.3 percent), and ensuring that the retirement benefits that citizens have built up over the years are protected (44 people, 7.2 percent).

At first these percentages may seem small, but considering these estimates only count those with the highest ambivalence score possible, it is quite astonishing. Further, more than half of the sample on many of the issues gave responses that were at least moderately conflicted. And yet, we continue to use data from surveys such as the American National Election Studies and the General Social Survey that ask about social welfare (all of these specific issues) and respondents are forced to go one way or another or they are stuck in the middle. It seems that we are missing the boat.

In conclusion, this widespread ambivalence speaks volumes about what goes on in American politics and elections today. The people that simultaneously choose extremely positive and extremely negative as a response toward a host of social welfare items are the same people that candidates are trying to court by taking positions on issues such as social welfare. How can they effectively gauge what their constituents want without a measure that represents their “true” opinion? Perhaps the more startling implication is

that these are the people who help to decide on representation concerning social welfare policy for the public as a whole, and for everything else as well. People that want their cake and to eat it too.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

My name is Jason Gainous. I was born in Lakeland, Florida, in 1971 where I attended Cleveland Court Elementary, Southwest Junior High, and Lakeland High School. After graduating, I went to Brevard Community College, Orange Coast College, Mesa College, San Francisco State University, and Indian River Community College before receiving a B.A. in political science from Florida Atlantic University. Then I went on to get my M.A. in political science from the University of Florida. I have been married to Sherry Gainous for 8 years and we just had our first daughter, Bella Gray Gainous.