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Note on an August 1, 2016 Fortune.com article discussing my research

Unfortunately, an August 1, 2016 article on Fortune.com entitled “Why Trumponomics Makes Sense to Americans” could lead readers to take incorrect lessons from my research.

Most important, let me state clearly that my research provides no reason to think that Americans would see the economic policies of Donald Trump “as a better choice” than those of Hillary Clinton, nor does it imply that “there won’t be much support” among Americans for tax policies that address economic inequality.

A correct reading of my research yields two lessons relevant to the presidential election that are quite different from what the article may have suggested to readers.

First, I found evidence suggesting that most Americans judge tax policy based on an idea (going back to at least 1776) that the taxes someone pays should correspond to the benefit that person gets from what the government does. This idea is different from what most modern economists assume in their research (which was my academic point). But, this idea is consistent with the expressed opinions on taxes of, for example, both Barack Obama and Mitt Romney, so this result has no partisan implications.

Second, a large share of Americans resist offsetting inequality due to pure luck. This, too, is contrary to what economic theorists typically assume, but this result is consistent with Americans’ strong support for offsetting inequality due to a “rigged system,” as both parties’ current presidential nominees have emphasized.

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