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Whose Statehouse Democracy?: Policy Responsiveness to Poor vs. Rich Constituents in Poor vs. Rich States

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Chapter 7

Whose Statehouse Democracy? Policy Responsiveness to
Poor versus Rich Constituents in Poor versus Rich States *

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INTRODUCTION

Policymaking in a representative democracy requires elected officials to align their policy priorities and choices with the preferences of their constituents. Efforts to test this normative assumption have often identified a strong relationship between average public opinion (or changes in average public opinion) and the political behavior of elected representatives (Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson 2002; Erikson and Wright 1980, 2005; Erikson, Wright, and McIver 1993; Miller and Stokes 1963). Yet, since these studies tend to measure opinion in the aggregate, they do not test another normative foundation of representation: equality of political representation even in the face of differences in resources and other forms of power among constituents (Dahl 1971; Walzer 1983). In other words, most studies fail to ask whether elected officials are as responsive to the opinions of the disadvantaged as to those of the advantaged. The chapters in this book redress this imbalance.

In a society with high rates of income inequality, such as the United States, it is reasonable to be concerned that power imbalances in the economic domain will reproduce themselves within the policymaking process (Jacobs and Skocpol 2005). Recent research has fueled this concern by identifying patterns of differential responsiveness that show the opinions of the wealthy matter more than the opinions of the poor (Bartels 2008; Gilens 2005). For example, Bartels' analysis (2008) of roll call voting in the U.S. Senate suggests greater senatorial responsiveness to wealthier constituents while the policy preferences of the poorest income groups' are seemingly ignored. Similarly, Gilens (2005; this volume) has found little correlation between the policy preferences of low income voters and the policies Congress enacts. These authors also show that policy is more responsive to those with high incomes than those in the middle, which is important given the theoretical primacy of the median voter (also see Enns and Wlezien, this volume). If substantiated by further research, these findings pose serious normative challenge to the legitimacy of democracy in this country—at least to the extent that it rests on notions of political equality.

In this chapter, we extend this line of inquiry to the state-level—asking whether the differential responsiveness documented at the federal level is mirrored in state politics, as well as whether the level of

differential responsiveness varies among states. Despite their important status in American politics, the role of states is often ignored by researchers examining national survey data. The tendency is to treat individual behavior solely as a function of attitudinal and socioeconomic variables, often with little regard to the impact of social or political context. In fact, efforts to account for the geographic location of these individuals most often consist of fixed-effects models to absorb the acknowledged variation across states.

We believe an important part of the story of American politics is lost by ignoring (or absorbing) the varied political contexts of the states in which citizens make decisions. In particular, the differences in both wealth and ideology across states have the potential to structure the class-basis of political behavior in ways that influence responsiveness and political equality. In fact, the *APSA Task Force on Inequality* highlighted the potential for our system of federalism to “accept and accommodate economic and political inequalities within the separate states rather than challenge these disparities by establishing national uniform standards” (Bartels, Hecla, Hero, and Jacobs 2005, p. 128). Additionally, Gelman and colleagues (2007; 2008) identified a key role for state-level income in structuring individual-level vote choice in two distinct areas. First, as expected, in wealthier states, individuals were more likely to vote for the Democratic presidential candidate. But, more surprising, in wealthier states an individual’s income had little effect on their vote choice. The opposite was found in poor states in which individual-level income predicted vote choice much more reliably. Asking “What’s the Matter with Connecticut?” these authors concluded that an individual’s income matters more in poor states (Gelman, Shor, Bafumi, and Park 2007). Here, we ask whether this translates into different levels of responsiveness to rich versus poor constituents across rich versus poor states.

In this chapter we use data from a large national survey to estimate income-based differences in policy priorities—first averaged across states and then situating income groups within their distinct state contexts. Next, we examine the degree to which state policy choices align with the policy preferences of different income groups, as well as whether this varies between rich and poor states. As a result, we are able to address the degree to which patterns of differential responsiveness found at the national level play out in state politics, as well as identify any variation in these patterns across rich and poor states.

BACKGROUND

Policy Preferences across Income Groups

Although material resources, as well as reliance on distinct types of governmental assistance, vary substantially between the rich and poor (Hacker 2002), there is reason to question the assumption that the rich and poor want totally different things from government. For example, Erikson and Bhatti (this volume) question Bartels' (2008) finding of differential responsiveness due to the similarity in ideological self-identification across income groups.¹ And both Ura and Ellis (2008) and Soroka and Wlezien (2008; this volume), using the General Social Survey, found a great deal of similarity in preferences for increasing or decreasing spending across income groups. This led Soroka and Wlezien (2008) to conclude that this congruence of average opinion across socio-economic groups places a healthy limit on the representation inequality that can occur, since even if the poor are totally ignored by their elected officials, they will still get what they want—to the degree that their preferences and interests overlap with those groups that are better represented in the political system.² Bartels (2008) shows a similar congruence in opinion on the estate tax. Gilens (2005) acknowledged the same reality by restricting his analysis to only those policy issues on which the poor and rich disagree.

Despite these findings of opinion congruence, at least as many studies have identified significant differences in the policy preferences of different income groups. Notably, Gilens (2009) addressed the discrepancy between his findings of persistent differences in opinion across income groups with Soroka and Wlezien's (2008) finding of congruence. Through a series of replications and comparisons, he illustrated that the discrepancy is not due to the time period of study, differences in income group definitions (cut-points), or the different modeling strategy each paper employed. Instead, he showed that the difference in findings is due to differences in the range and type of policies considered—differences are much greater for foreign policy, health care reform, and social/moral policy issues.

¹ This critique does not extend to Bartels' (2008) policy-specific tests of differential responsiveness.

² In domains where they found differences across income groups, these were mostly between upper and middle income citizens on the one hand and the poor on the other (also see Enns and Wlezien, this volume).

While acknowledging the very real difference in opinion between the rich and the poor in many areas, assessing the substantive significance of this difference is less clear. Plainly, income-based opinion differences do not represent stark class cleavages in which the vast majority of the poor prefer one policy and the vast majority of the rich oppose the same proposal. Yet there are reasons not to dismiss these moderate-sized income differences too quickly. Page (2009) noted that studies dividing the electorate into a handful (usually three) of income groups are probably touching “only the tip of a very large iceberg [since] the ‘rich’ citizens in a standard sample survey are not very rich” (p. 150). As a result of the rapid growth in income inequality driven by a few Americans at the very top of the income distribution, it is possible that the phenomenon of differential responsiveness to the wealthy is contained among a much more elite group than captured in these types of analyses of national survey data. In fact, Winters and Page (2008) argued that because the top tenth-of-one-percent of wealth holders (less than half a million people) hold such concentrated wealth and power, they may have a dramatically disproportionate influence on American politics—so much so that they could be considered an oligarchy.

Income-group Differences across Policy Issues

Across studies identifying income-group differences in opinion (using a variety of data sources and analytic methods), a consistent pattern emerges. Specifically, wealthier individuals are *less* likely to support more liberal redistributive or spending programs (e.g., increased spending for schools, reduced differences between rich and poor), but are *more* likely to take liberal stands on social or moral issues (e.g., abortion, stem cell research, gay rights; Ansolabehere, Rodden, and Snyder 2006; Bartels 2008; Flavin 2009; Gilens 2005, 2009). Based on the consistent finding that voters of all income groups prioritize economic issues over social issues when casting their votes (Ansolabehere et al. 2006; Bartels 2008; Gelman et al. 2008), many authors ignore this cross-cutting pattern of policy liberalism. Yet, others have argued that this secondary dimension of social issues still exerts an impact on political behavior (Frank 2004). Without resolving this debate, we can infer that these cross-cutting policy preferences may help explain why we see so little differentiation in self-identified ideology between the rich and the poor

(see for example Erikson and Bhatti, this volume) at the same time that we find substantial differences in their specific policy preferences (Gilens 2009, this volume).

Why State Wealth May Matter

As discussed earlier, Gelman and colleagues (2007, 2008) have identified a key role for state-level income in structuring individual-level political behavior. Here, we ask whether this translates into different levels of responsiveness to richer versus poorer constituents across richer versus poorer states. State wealth may impact policy responsiveness in two distinct ways. First, it may alter the magnitude of differences in opinion across income groups. If individual-level income does not predict vote choice in a wealthy state like Connecticut, it is also likely that low and high income residents of that state may hold similar policy preferences (at least on average). In this context, even highly skewed representation of only the very rich would produce policies congruent with the interests of all income groups. (This is well argued and illustrated in Soroka and Wlezien 2008; this volume; Erikson and Bhatti this volume; and Ura and Ellis 2008.) Conversely, if individual-level income strongly predicts presidential voting patterns in poorer states, such as Mississippi, then we can deduce that low versus high income residents of Mississippi hold distinct policy preferences as well—opening the door for the potential of unequal policy responsiveness. Alternatively, state wealth may not impact the preference gap between rich and poor, but instead it could structure the process of representation in ways that heighten or lessen differential responsiveness. For example, in poorer states, income-differences may be a more salient cleavage in state politics—serving to sort winners and losers of policy debates along income lines. A third possibility, of course, is that differential policy responsiveness varies across states because states vary on both income-based differences in opinion and income-based differences in representation.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Do income-groups vary in economic and social policy preferences? If so, how big are the differences?
2. Does the magnitude of income-group differences in policy preferences vary with aggregate state income? In other words, does income predict policy liberalism more strongly in wealthy versus poor states?
3. Are state-level policy outcomes aligned with the interests of the wealthy more than the poor? Is this true for both economic and social policies? Is this true in both rich and poor states?

DATA & MEASUREMENT

To estimate opinion across income groups, we took advantage of a recent national survey that captures campaign dynamics prior to each presidential election. The National Annenberg Election Survey (see Romer et al. 2006), which first collected data from 58,373 respondents during the 2000 presidential election, used a similar methodology for the 2004 election (gathering data from 81,422 respondents). The data collected include a large number of survey respondents from the 48 continental states, with all but five states having at least 500 respondents across the two survey years.³ The limitation of these Annenberg survey data is that respondents were interviewed across a series of rolling, cross-sectional surveys in which different sets of (somewhat overlapping) questions were asked of each cross-section. To generate measures of policy preferences across these surveys, we pooled the cross-sectional surveys for 2000 into one dataset and the cross-sectional surveys from 2004 into a second dataset. For each of the two pooled datasets we identified the common policy items in each survey. These included 30 items from the 2000 surveys and 28 items from the 2004 surveys—all asking about respondents' own position on policy issues across a range of policy areas: economic issues, health and social welfare issues, social/moral issues, energy and environment, campaign finance, and legal and ethical issues. Yet, since all respondents were not asked all questions, we imputed the missing data using imputation by multiple chained equations

³ Those five states are: Wyoming (N=307), Delaware (N=344), North Dakota (N=358), South Dakota (N=421), and Vermont (N=437).

(see Royston 2005), which predicts survey participants' responses based on their preferences among items they were asked.

Table 1 around here

As a result of this imputation, which maximized similarities in responses across items, these data are best suited to capturing a latent construct (e.g., social policy liberalism) rather than precise views on a particular issue (i.e., the death penalty or abortion). Therefore, for each dataset, we factor analyzed subsets of items in order to generate two measures: economic policy liberalism and social policy liberalism for each survey (for a total of four scales). The specific items for each scale are shown in Table 1. For the 2000 dataset, economic policy liberalism was generated from seven items relating to tax policy, health care, and social welfare programs. Similarly, we factor analyzed six items tapping social policy issues such as abortion, the death penalty, gay rights, and school prayer. For the 2004 dataset, we used six economic policy items similar to the ones asked in 2000 plus an item asking about funding for K–12 education. We estimated social policy liberalism using six other items from the 2004 survey that captured views on gay marriage and gun control as well as similar aspects of the abortion and stem cell issues asked about in the 2000 survey.

All four factor models explained the vast majority of the variance among items (at least 97 percent of the variation) in the first factor (eigenvalues ranged from 1.58 to 3.22, with eigenvalues for the second factors remaining below .50).⁴ Table 2 presents descriptive statistics for the economic and social measures of policy liberalism in 2000 and 2004 for both the individual level of analysis and the state level. Although all four measures are standardized ($M=0$, $sd=1$), we still find different distributions among the measures at each level. In particular, at the individual-level, we find a greater range of opinions on economic policy issues than on social policy issues. Yet, when considering averages among the states, we find more variation in social policy issues than in economic policy issues.

Table 2 about here

⁴ These strong loadings likely represent a good deal of coherence among respondents' economic or social policy views, though they are likely biased upward due to our missing data imputation strategy that maximized the similarity among the items and also because of our focus on a small number of items for each sub-scale.

To reliably estimate the policy liberalism of different income groups across states, we needed to collapse the nine-category income variable used by the Annenberg survey into fewer categories. In order to retain large sample sizes within each state, we divided the full sample into three groups: low (those with family incomes less than \$35,000), middle (family incomes between \$35,000 and \$75,000), and high (above \$75,000).⁵ We used these income cut-points to estimate the average policy liberalism of low, middle, and high income residents of each state. Table 2 also includes descriptive statistics on each of the four opinion measures by sample income terciles.

The other data we employ in this chapter are measures of state policy outcomes on economic and social policy policies. As much as possible, we identified policy indicators that aligned with the Annenberg Survey items that we used to generate each scale. We began by drawing policy indicators from the Sorens, Muedini, and Ruger (2008) dataset, which provided statistics on state minimum wage policies, an index capturing strength of state mandates for health insurance companies to provide coverage (for the economic policy scale), a gun control index, an abortion restriction index, and a dummy variable indicating whether the state has the death penalty (for the social policy scale). Additional data indicators were also gathered, including: eligibility for health care and welfare programs, corporate and capital gains taxes, spending on education (for the economic policy scale), whether the state prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation, and whether the state requires or allows public schools to set aside time for silent reflection or prayer (for the social policy scale). Table 3 lists the specific policy indicators and their sources, the year they were measured, and descriptive statistics.

From these data, we generated two policy scores—one for economic issues and one for social issues—by factor analyzing each subset of policy indicators. As shown in Table 3, the seven economic policy indicators loaded onto one factor, which explained 76 percent of the variance among them (eigenvalue 1.77). This scale ranges from -1.57 in South Dakota to 2.15 in New Jersey. The five social policy indicators loaded onto a single factor as well, which explained 90 percent of the variance

⁵ We also re-estimated all models using a more relative measure of low, middle, and high income groups. For these measures we varied the income cut-points for each state in order to best balance the population into thirds within each state. Use of this relative measurement of income groups did not substantively change our findings.

(eigenvalue 1.49). This scale ranges from -1.05 in Indiana to 1.48 in Vermont. We will use these policy measures later in the chapter to examine differential policy responsiveness to constituents of different income groups, across richer and poorer states.

Table 3 about here

FINDINGS

Income-group Differences in Policy Liberalism

Before examining income differences in our scaled measures of economic and social policy liberalism, we looked at the income differences in the raw data (before imputing estimates for missing data) used to generate the scales. Table 1 also presents a comparison of responses for individuals reporting household incomes of less than \$10,000, as well as for those reporting incomes above \$150,000. Specifically, we calculated the percentage of each income group selecting the most liberal response category for each policy issue. These two groups differed significantly on every item used in our subscales, although the degree of difference varied substantially (illustrated by the range of F statistics for the one-way analysis of variance across the nine income groups used in the Annenberg survey). Among the items from the 2000 survey, the largest difference by income was seen for the item assessing support for government efforts to reduce income differences between the rich and poor (supported by 69 percent of those in lowest income group but only 26 percent of those in the highest income group). Similarly, those in families with incomes of less than \$10,000 a year were also much more likely to express support for providing health care to the uninsured (80 percent versus 61 percent of the wealthiest group) but were less likely to oppose school prayer (27 percent opposing versus 59 percent). Similarly in the 2004 survey, the largest income group differences were seen for the item on reducing income differences (with 48 percent of the lowest income group strongly supporting this action versus 27 percent of the group with the highest income), followed by differences in support for a ban on all abortions (opposed by 42 percent among poorest versus 60 percent among wealthiest).

Yet, for both surveys, we also identified issues with small (although still significant) differences among the income groups. In 2000, the smallest difference was for the item assessing support for

allowing gays in the military (favored by 56 percent of the lowest income group versus 66 percent of those in the highest income group), followed by the items relating to the inheritance/estate tax, for which the wealthy were more likely to support repeal (75 percent supporting repeal versus 63 percent of poor). In the 2004 survey, the inheritance tax item also identified a small income-group difference (with 65 percent of the lowest income group favoring elimination of the tax versus 70 percent of the highest income group), followed by the item on banning late-term abortions (favored by approximately 38 percent of both groups).

Next we compared differences in our constructed policy liberalism scales, which include measures with large as well as small variation across income groups. For a means of comparison, we also included a standardized ($M=0$, $sd=1$) measure of respondents' self-reported ideology alongside the economic and social policy liberalism measures for each survey year. Table 4 presents the mean on each scale across the nine income categories captured in the Annenberg survey, which range from less than \$10,000 to more than \$150,000.

Table 4 about here

We find higher levels of self-identified liberalism among the low income respondents, although as noted by Erikson and Bhatti (this volume) in their analysis of these same data, the income differences are quite small (poorest group averaged .09 versus .00 for wealthiest group in 2000; and .05 versus .00 in 2004). Although these differences were statistically significant ($F = 8.94$ in 2000, 4.90 in 2004), they represent less than a tenth of a standard deviation difference in ideology. In contrast, in both 2000 and 2004 we find larger differences in our two measures of policy liberalism, which were generated from respondents' stated policy preferences rather than from their self-identification as a liberal, moderate, or conservative. As expected, the most pronounced income differences are on economic policy issues, for which the low income groups is more liberal than are higher income respondents. Economic liberalism among each income group ranged from .31 (lowest income) to -.30 (highest) in 2000 ($F=217.26$) and from .17 (lowest) to -.16 (highest) in 2004 ($F=91.60$). Also consistent with Gilens (2005) and Ansolabehere, Rodden, and Snyder (2006), we find the low incomes are associated with more

conservative views on social policy issues, for which our measure of liberalism ranges from -.19 (lowest income group) to .27 (highest income group) in 2000 ($F=107.33$) and from -.06 (lowest) to .20 (highest) in 2004 ($F=66.14$). In terms of standard deviation units, these differences range from .26 (social issues in 2004) to .61 (economic issues in 2000) of a standard deviation.

Figure 1 about here

Another way to consider the magnitude of these differences is to compare the gap in opinion between income groups with another well-established gap in opinion: differences between Democrats and Republicans. Figure 1 presents the absolute differences in opinion between the two partisan groups versus the absolute difference in opinion between those with the lowest versus highest incomes. We see that the partisan gap in opinion is larger for both types of policy liberalism and across the two survey years. Yet, the income gap nearly reaches the partisan gap for the two 2000 measures, while is about half the magnitude for the 2004 measures. We attribute the disparity between the survey years simply to the different policy issues focused on in each year. Since we do not know which set of items better captures the “true” magnitude of income group differences, we ran parallel analyses on each set of opinion measures and drew conclusions from results consistent across the two sets of constructed opinion scales. But, across the two survey years, we see again that the magnitude of the income gap in economic issues is somewhat more substantial than the income gap in social issues.

Income Differences in Opinion across States

As shown in Table 2, the distribution of economic and social policy liberalism takes a different form when examining the individual- versus state-level values. At the individual-level, more variation is seen in economic policy issues (range from -5.03 to 1.86 and -5.70 to 2.77) versus social issues (range from -2.05 to 1.33 and -2.99 to 2.31). The range of state averages is (as expected) much smaller than the range among individuals in the dataset. Yet, what is most notable is that the variation in opinion across states is larger for social issues (ranging from -.43 to .44 and -.43 to .40) than for economic policy issues (-.23 to .22 and -.26 to .21). In fact, the standard deviation in states’ average social policy liberalism is twice that of their economic policy liberalism. This state-level convergence of opinion on social policies

across income groups is also seen in high correlations (.81 and .87 for 2000 and 2004 respectively) between the social policy liberalism of the poor versus the rich. These correlation coefficients are smaller for the state-level economic policy liberalism measures (.38 for 2000 and .63 for 2004).⁶

In the next section we examine variation in the income-opinion relationship between wealthy and poor states. In particular, we are interested in describing the relationship examined in Gelman et al. (2008), in which individual-level income is much more predictive of presidential vote choice in poor states than in wealthy states. We expect that state-level income may also structure the relationship between individual income and policy liberalism that, in turn, influences vote choice. In order to examine the impact of individual-level income, state-average income, and the interaction between an individual's income and the wealth of his or her state, we estimated multi-level models in which individuals (Level 1) are nested within states (Level 2). Since our goal is to identify the distribution of opinion across income groups in different states, rather than to explain the sources of this variation, we do not include other "control" variables that are expected to underlie the income-opinion gradient (i.e. race). Instead, we simply regressed individual-level opinion on individual-level income at Level-1 in a random-intercept, varying slope model in which state-level income is used to explain both (a) the state-level intercept (capturing the average policy liberalism in the state) and (b) the slope of the individual income measure (capturing whether the slope is steeper or flatter in wealthier states). The model estimated follows:

$$Y_{Opinion} = b_{0j} + B_{1j} * (Individual\ Income)_{ij} + r$$

$$b_{0j} = y_{00} + y_{01j} * (State\ Income) + u_{0j}$$

$$B_{1j} = y_{10} + y_{11j} * (State\ Income) + u_{1j}$$

Figure 2 about here

⁶ Another way to consider the clustering of opinion within states is to compare the proportion of total variance (in this case, the sum of squared error) explained by the respondents' states of residence. We find that the state of residence accounts for about one percent of the variation in economic policy liberalism, but three percent of the variation in social policy liberalism. Although these values of explained variance are small, it is worth noting that a categorical variable capturing whether the respondent is a Democrat, Republican, or Independent explains only ten percent of the variation in policy liberalism. Therefore, we conclude that state of residence explains about one-tenth of what party identification explains for economic policy liberalism, while it explains three times that (or three-tenths of party identification) for social policy liberalism. Finally, we consider the proportion of variance explained by individual-level income, which accounts for about three percent of the variance of the economic policy liberalism scores, and only one percent of the variance for the other three policy measures.

We present the results of these four multi-level models: each regressing one of the two policy liberalism scales for either 2000 or 2004 on the measures of individual-level and state-level income in Figure 2. Again, we present these parallel models in order to assess the robustness of our findings when economic and social issues are captured using different survey items; and we draw our conclusions from the findings that are consistent across the two sets of measures. Here we plot predicted levels of policy liberalism by individual-level income, state-level income, and the cross-level interaction of these two income measures. These values are predicted for a prototypical poor state (in which state-level income is set two standard deviations below the mean—most closely matching state wealth among Annenberg survey respondents in West Virginia, approximately \$30,000). In addition, we predict values in a state in which wealth is two standard deviations above the mean—most closely matching state wealth in Maryland, approximately \$45,000).

The top two boxes present findings for multi-level models estimated for economic policy liberalism. Here we find little difference in economic policy liberalism among the very poor living in poorer versus wealthier states (the intercept), although within poor states, the slope that predicts decreasing economic policy liberalism as income increases is much steeper than in wealthier states. While this pattern is somewhat stronger in the 2000 data, the overall pattern is consistent with the findings of Gelman and colleagues (2007, 2008) that the income-vote gradient is steeper in poorer states, paired with Ansolabehere et al.'s (2006) and Bartels' (2008) findings that economic issues are most predictive of individuals' vote choices. We find a different pattern for social policy liberalism—presented in the bottom two boxes. For these policy issues, state wealth plays a bigger role in shaping the income-opinion gradient. First of all, the level of social policy liberalism is significantly higher in wealthier states than in poorer states across-the-board (illustrated by the gap between the two lines). Second, the positive relationship between an individual's income and her social policy liberalism is much stronger in wealthy states than in poorer states (where levels of social policy liberalism are lower overall and quite consistent across income groups). Comparing these findings across policy areas, we find that in wealthier states there is more disagreement between income groups on social policy issues. In contrast, in poorer states,

they disagree more on economic policy issues. These patterns likely confound efforts to estimate differential responsiveness to each income group or to measure the magnitude of differences in opinion across income groups.

Policy Responsiveness

We now turn our attention to examining the congruence between our measures of state policy liberalism—on both economic and social policy issues—and the policy liberalism of low, middle and high income constituents. Our normative expectation of equal responsiveness across groups with different resources assumes similar-sized groups of constituents. For example, if a state has a lot of well-to-do residents, under the notion of equal political representation (one person, one vote) we would expect that the interests of those who are better off (who make up a large proportion of that state's electorate) would be weighed more heavily than that of others. This type of differential responsiveness across income groups does not challenge the norm of political equality among individuals in the same way that differential responsiveness to the rich would if they made up an equal-sized or smaller group in the state.

To account for these differences, we construct weighted measures of public opinion by multiplying each group's mean opinion by the proportion of the respondents in the state that fall within that income group. This is the same approach used by others (e.g., Bartels 2008; Clinton 2006) to decompose the average ideology effect into population segments. We regressed state policy liberalism on all three weighted-opinion measures at the same time. In addition, we included two additional variables capturing the proportion of the state population that we classified as poor and the proportion classified as rich.⁷ From each model we got three coefficients (one for each measure of opinion) that represent measures of how responsive the state policies would be to an entire constituency made up of each income group (or to a single constituent in each of the three income groups). If policymakers are only responsive to the state's mean ideology then there should be no (or at least little) difference in these coefficients across the three weighted opinion measures since responsiveness to each group is simply a function of

⁷ These variables were included to provide each of the three income groups their own intercept, which is an important amendment to this modeling strategy used by Bartels (2008) as demonstrated by Erikson and Bhatti (this volume).

responsiveness to the state constituency (consistent with the notion of procedural equality in which each citizen's opinion receives equal weight; Beitz 1990). However, if the coefficient for one group is substantially larger than the others, then policy is more responsive to its interests.

Economic Policy Responsiveness. Table 5 presents models for states' economic policies predicted by first the 2000 (top panel) and then the 2004 (bottom panel) measures of economic policy liberalism. In 2000 (top panel), Model 1 establishes the expected relationship between the average economic policy liberalism in the state and the actual economic policies the state has enacted. Not surprisingly (Erikson et al. 1993), this coefficient is significant, large, and explains a majority (53 percent) of the variance in states' economic policy liberalism. In Model 2, we controlled for state wealth in order to clarify the relationship between individual-level income differences and differences across wealthy and poorer states. This reduces the coefficient slightly, as well as explains an additional eight percent variance in state policy. Models 3 and 4 test whether this aggregate relationship differs in poorer states (24 states with mean incomes below the state median: \$35,000) versus states with higher mean incomes. We continued to control for state wealth since it is a significant predictor of states' policy liberalism, which likely has independent effects on policy beyond its role in structuring group size and opinion. We find a larger relationship between aggregate opinion and states' economic policies in wealthier states, which is nearly twice the size of the coefficient for the poorer states. Similarly, this model employing aggregate opinion explains much more of the variance in wealthy states ($R^2=.67$) than it does in poorer states ($R^2=.30$). This indicates that differential responsiveness to income groups is much of greater importance in the poorer states. Models 5 through 8 repeat these four models but substitute the three weighted measures of income-group opinion for aggregate opinion. Across the models, we find greater responsiveness to the preferences of those with higher (6.36) and then middle (6.98) incomes compared with the lowest income group (1.62). This pattern of findings suggests an under-representation of the poor, rather than the heightened responsiveness to the wealthy described by Bartels (2008). In fact, after controlling for state wealth, we find more responsiveness to the preferences of those in the middle (8.78), followed by the high income group (4.43), and very little responsiveness to the poor (.51).

Next (Models 7 and 8) we divided the sample of states into two groups: poorer and wealthier states in order to assess whether responsiveness patterns vary by state wealth. Since this approach leaves us with small sample sizes ($N=24$ each), we acknowledge that these results are suggestive and more helpful for identifying general patterns than specific dynamics. Yet, even with the small sample size, we identified a clear income gradient in responsiveness in the poor states: for the low (1.39), middle (7.77) and high (9.59) income groups. In contrast, we find no significant gradient among wealthier states. Of course, our earlier analyses indicated that in wealthier states, the income groups hold similar economic policy preferences—at least compared with the size of income-group differences in poor states. And so there is less variability across the group-specific income measures than found in poor states.

Another way to assess the substantive differences in responsiveness in wealthy versus poorer states is to compare the R^2 from the models employing the aggregate opinion measure (state mean) versus the income-specific opinion measures weighted for each income group. In poorer states, we see a big jump in the R^2 from .36 in Model 3 when the relationship between state policy and average opinion is estimated. This R^2 nearly doubles to .66 once we allow for differential responsiveness across income groups. In contrast, in wealthier states, the disaggregated opinion measures do little to explain additional variance (raising the R^2 only .02 from .67 to .69.).

The bottom panel of Table 5 presents parallel models that use the same measure of state economic policy but substitute the aggregate and income-group-specific income measures generated from the 2004 Annenberg survey. Although these measures are based on somewhat different issue items and had smaller magnitudes of income-group differences in economic policy issues, the findings are remarkably similar. In addition, we find a similar effect of disaggregating opinion by income-group, which provides more explanation of variance among poorer states (r^2 increased from .30 to .52) than in wealthier states (in which r^2 increased from .64 to .72).

Of course, these findings rely on small sample sizes ($N=24$) and so we are limited in our ability to adequately judge the substantive significance of both significant and non-significant findings. Therefore, we rely more on the general pattern of coefficients across all these models examining responsiveness on

economic policy issues. We present the relevant coefficients in Figure 3. The top panel presents the coefficients for each income group across all states (N=48), both before and after controlling for state wealth. Here we see a consistent gradient in which the interests of the poor are under-represented—with state policy aligning with the preferences of the middle and high income residents. The bottom panel presents the coefficients from the model estimated on the subsets of poorer and wealthier states. Poorer states mirror the overall findings—which is not surprising since those states had the largest income group differences—providing an opportunity for capturing the differential responsiveness that does occur. In the wealthier states, the contrast was not significant, but only differed in form for the 2000 economic policy measure. To sum up our findings for economic policy liberalism, these data suggest that states' economic policies are less responsive to the preferences of the poor than to either middle or high income constituents. This is most pronounced in poorer states. In wealthier states we find a similar, but less consistent, pattern of differential responsiveness, which is likely limited by the smaller income gap in economic policy preferences in wealthier states—suggesting that any lack of (significant) differential responsiveness on economic issues in wealthy states stems more from the “natural limit” on political inequality described by Soroka and Wlezien (2008) in which income-group opinion differences are too small to produce substantial representational inequality even if policymakers only represent the rich.

Social Policy Responsiveness. Table 6 now considers state policy responsiveness on social policy issues, with models estimated using 2000 opinion measures in the top panel and 2004 opinion measures in the bottom panel. Beginning with the 2000 estimates, Models 1 through 4 establish the expected relationship between aggregate opinion and states' social policy choices, which is positive, significant, and explains a large proportion of the variance. When considering aggregate responsiveness in poor versus rich states, we find quite similar relationships. For example, the variance explained in the poorer states ($R^2 = .48$) was nearly as large as that in the wealthier states ($R^2 = .61$). This finding contrasts with the opinion-policy relationship identified for economic issues in which poor states exhibited a much weaker congruence than did wealthier states.

Models 5 through 8 use the 2000 data to replicate these models for the income-group-specific measures of opinion in order to test our expectation of differential responsiveness. We find evidence of an income gradient in which the coefficient for each group increases as income increases: low (.78), middle (4.26) and high (6.32). Yet, adding these disaggregated opinion measures does little to explain additional variance (raising R^2 by only .03), and the opinion measures are only marginally significant. When examining social policy responsiveness in poor versus rich states, we find no significant coefficients although the pattern of coefficients indicates greater responsiveness to high income constituents in poor states and to low income constituents in rich states. The non-significance of these findings may be due to the very small sample size, although the limited substantive significance is illustrated by the small increase in R^2 , which rises from .48 to .59 in poor states and from .61 to .65 in wealthier states. Thus, using either metric, these models provide little evidence of substantial differential responsiveness on social issues.

The bottom panel of Table 6 presents findings from models using the 2004 measures of social policy liberalism. Unlike the results from the models using 2000 data, Model 5 identifies significant differential responsiveness in which states' social policy choices align most closely with the preferences of those with higher incomes (13.01), as well somewhat less to the preferences of the low income group (5.61), with the middle income group's opinions (-3.20) being those overlooked on social policy issues. This is a very different pattern of differential responsiveness than the one seen for economic policy issues, although once we divide the sample into poor and wealthy states we realize that it is only found among wealthy states. In wealthier states—the states where the income groups varied the most on social policy preferences—we found the distinct pattern of states' social policies being most closely aligned with the preferences of the higher income tercile (17.44), followed by the preferences of the lowest income group (10.62), with the least responsiveness to the middle income group (-10.03). Yet, in poor states, we find a pattern of skewed responsiveness in which social policy is more responsive to the higher income group with little relative responsiveness to the preferences held by those with lower incomes: low (.89), middle (2.50), and high (12.80).

Figure 4 about here

We present these findings in Figure 4. The top panel presents the findings for social policy responsiveness across the 48 states. Here we see the difference in results across the two waves of the Annenberg survey data. We do not know whether this stems from differences in measurement across the two surveys or whether it illustrates a valid change in the income-opinion relationship between the two survey years. Suggesting that this difference is not driven only by some change in the survey (an assumption reinforced by the similarity of earlier findings) we note the more parallel findings across survey years once the sample is broken down into poor versus wealthy state sub-samples. The bottom panel of Figure 4 illustrates the distinct patterns in poor states (for which the under-representation of the poor is more consistent with the findings for economic policy responsiveness) compared with wealthier states, which exhibit heightened responsiveness to the poor on social policy issues. What remains distinct across the 2000 and 2004 results is the degree to which the social policy preferences of middle and high income constituents are reflected in state policy. Greater responsiveness to the middle income is seen using the 2000 measures, while heightened responsiveness to those with higher incomes is most pronounced in the 2004 data. This may reflect the greater inclusion of issues such as gay marriage and stem cell research onto the agenda between these two elections, although without conducting issue-specific analysis we can not test this possibility.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we situated the question of differential responsiveness of elected officials to the policy opinions of wealthy and poor constituents within the state context. In many ways, our findings echo work focusing on national-level patterns of representation, which identify much greater responsiveness to the wealthy than to the poor. Specifically, we found more responsiveness to those with higher (versus lower) incomes across our social policy and economic policy opinion measures in both 2000 and 2004. Differing from previous research, we found policymakers to represented the interests of those with middle and high incomes fairly equally, and much more so than the poorer group, with one

exception: the 2004 social policy measure, in which state policies aligned with the higher income interests of the, followed by the low income, then the middle income group.

Further, by taking into consideration differences in state context—in particular state wealth—we identified variation in representation dynamics across states. In particular, we distinguished between the potential for differential responsiveness and its actualization. In poor states, it is economic issues that divide the opinions of the rich and poor, with much greater agreement on social policy issues across the classes. Therefore, in poor states, policies focused on economic issues contain the greatest potential for representational inequality. In contrast the general congruence in social policy preferences in these same states places a healthy limit to any inequality in responsiveness that can occur (as argued in Soroka and Wlezien 2008; this volume). So even though we find greater responsiveness to the top income group across both opinion measures in poor states, we expect this differential responsiveness to translate into greater representational inequality on economic issues for which the income groups hold more disparate preferences.

In contrast, in wealthier states, the primary income divide is on social policy issues—with more agreement on economic policy issues across income groups. This may help explain the absence of significant differences in responsiveness on economic issues among the wealthier states. Yet, even for social policy issues in which differences are more pronounced, we found substantial responsiveness to the low income group (in 2000) and jointly for the high and low income groups (in 2004), suggesting that in wealthy states, when income groups do differ in opinion, the poor are no less likely to get what they want out of the policymaking process—and may even get better representation. This finding suggests that the distinct patterns of representation in poor versus wealthy states stems from more than just differences in the distribution of opinion across income groups.

Figure 5 about here

Combining these findings, as shown in Figure 5, we see the most unequal representation across income groups within poor states on economic policymaking. Yet, our findings do not explain why this would occur. We did consider one potential explanation: that the poor states are simply the Southern

states. Given the differences in state wealth, as well as generally lower levels of redistributive policy among Southern states, this did seem plausible. Yet, we soon noticed that among the 24 “poorer states” in our analysis, only seven are Southern. And actually the 24 “richer states” include four Southern states (FL, GA, TX, and VA). Further, when we divided the sample by region and re-estimated the responsiveness models, we found a distinct (although non-significant with a sample size of 11) pattern of responsiveness in Southern states in which the poor may actually be better represented.

A number of other state-level factors may explain these patterns (e.g., the strength of union membership, open vs. closed shop rules, and the presence of an enhanced minimum wage law). But, a more straightforward explanation may be simple self interest. Context changes the character of calculations one makes in deciding whether to support different policies. For the poor, state wealth is unlikely to shift the incentives to support redistribution—since the poor are likely to benefit rather than pay for redistributive policies. In contrast, wealthier citizens are more likely to face different costs (in level of taxation) and benefits (in terms of a healthy and educated citizenry) to redistribution in wealthy versus poorer states. In rich states, a large portion of the population can share in the paying for benefits and so the tradeoff of a stronger populace for modestly higher taxes may seem like a good idea. However, in a poor state there are more needy people and fewer rich folks to pay for the benefits they desire. It should not surprise us that, facing a more costly tradeoff for the same stronger populace, the rich in poor states oppose such policies. Since many of the policies in our economic policy measures are paid for by the states, it seems reasonable that the context of state wealth should play a role in self-interested citizens’ preferences for policy (which are likely to be conditional by beliefs about who would pay for those policies).

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Table 1: Policy Issue Items Used to Generate Economic and Social Liberalism Scales

	Raw N	Range	Liberal Position (pre-imput)		
			<\$10K	>\$150K	F
Economic Policy Liberalism (2000)					
Inheritance tax should be cut (Q113a & Q113b)	18,292	0 1	63%	75%	14.79
Should spend on health care for uninsured (Q111b)	55,549	0 3	80%	61%	100.93
Should spend on Medicare (Q111g)	24,501	0 3	81%	57%	60.09
Favor universal health care for children (Q91d)	29,084	0 1	91%	76%	54.29
Should spend on Medicaid (Q111h)	24,317	0 3	73%	47%	67.93
Should reduce income differences (Q136e)	23,758	0 1	69%	26%	156.76
Should spend on aid to mothers with young children (Q111e)	24,055	0 3	66%	43%	46.54
Social Policy Liberalism (2000)					
Favor restricting abortion (Q91b & Q38c)	54,876	0 1	58%	78%	84.93
Should ban abortion (Q136a)	24,010	0 1	66%	88%	68.07
Favor death penalty (Q268b)	29,496	0 1	35%	25%	26.67
Favor gays in the military (Q268c)	27,955	0 1	56%	66%	6.67
Should stop job discrimination against gays (Q110a)	54,767	0 3	52%	37%	15.28
Should allow school prayer (Q136d)	24,139	0 1	27%	59%	96.81
Economic Policy Liberalism (2004)					
Favor Eliminating Estate Tax (Q48 & Q74 & Q75)	13,637	0 1	65%	70%	3.14
Favor Spending More on Health Insurance (Q38)	19,662	0 3	86%	65%	48.92
Favor Health Insurance for Children (Q62 & Q77)	19,569	0 1	92%	75%	36.31
Favor Health Insurance for Workers (Q63 & Q78)	18,650	0 1	83%	65%	41.81
Favor Assistance to schools (Q35)	28,317	0 3	79%	67%	21.98
Should reduce income differences (Q22)	35,149	0 3	48%	27%	110.58
Social Policy Liberalism (2004)					
Favor banning all abortions (Q20)	56,919	0 3	42%	60%	101.22
Favor banning all late-term abortions (Q25 & Q26)	22,040	0 3	38%	38%	4.77
Favor stem cell funding (Q65 & Q66 & Q83 & Q84)	16,076	0 1	67%	77%	8.88
Favor marriage ammendment (Q17)	55,717	0 3	43%	45%	18.10
Favor allowing same sex marriage (Q656 & Q 657)	17,052	0 3	18%	27%	37.28
Favor gun control (Q32)	31,281	0 3	69%	62%	13.57

Note: Descriptive statistics from datasets prior to imputing for missing values. Income group responses indicate the percent of each income group selecting the most liberal response option for each item. F statistics drawn from one-way ANOVA tests across all nine income categories. F statistics for each question are significant at $p < .05$

Table 2. Economic and Social Policy Liberalism

	Individual-Level					State-Level				
	N	Mean	sd	Min	Max	N	Mean	sd	Min	Max
All Respondents										
Economic (2000)	59,266	0.00	1.00	-5.03	1.86	48	-0.02	0.11	-0.23	0.22
Economic (2004)	72,682	0.00	1.00	-5.70	2.77	48	-0.01	0.10	-0.26	0.21
Social (2000)	59,266	0.00	1.00	-2.05	1.33	48	-0.03	0.21	-0.43	0.44
Social (2004)	72,682	0.00	1.00	-2.99	2.31	48	-0.02	0.19	-0.43	0.40
Low Income: <\$35,000										
Economic (2000)	23,992	0.18	0.89	-5.03	1.79	48	0.15	0.13	-0.17	0.42
Economic (2004)	24,130	0.11	0.90	-5.41	2.60	48	0.11	0.09	-0.10	0.25
Social (2000)	23,992	-0.11	1.00	-2.03	1.27	48	-0.10	0.19	-0.47	0.36
Social (2004)	24,130	-0.08	0.99	-2.93	2.31	48	-0.07	0.15	-0.36	0.21
Middle Income										
Economic (2000)	22,491	-0.07	1.03	-5.03	1.71	48	-0.10	0.14	-0.51	0.25
Economic (2004)	26,992	0.00	1.00	-5.70	2.77	48	-0.02	0.12	-0.30	0.21
Social (2000)	22,491	0.01	1.01	-2.03	1.28	48	-0.03	0.25	-0.45	0.50
Social (2004)	26,992	-0.02	1.01	-2.99	2.16	48	-0.03	0.20	-0.43	0.43
High Income: >\$75,000										
Economic (2000)	12,783	-0.22	1.10	-5.03	1.86	48	-0.25	0.18	-0.72	0.16
Economic (2004)	21,560	-0.12	1.08	-5.59	2.38	48	-0.14	0.18	-0.60	0.30
Social (2000)	12,783	0.19	0.95	-2.05	1.33	48	0.11	0.22	-0.27	0.49
Social (2004)	21,560	0.12	0.99	-2.78	2.22	48	0.03	0.25	-0.60	0.61

Table 3. Policy Indicators used to Estimate States' Economic and Social Policy Liberalism

	Data Source	Year	Mean	sd	Range		Factor Loading	Eigen-value	Prop of Variance
Economic Policy Indicators									
Eligibility for SCHIP, percent of FPL	(1)	2006	229	62	140	400	0.54		
Capital Gains Tax Rate	(2)	2003	4.78	2.86	0.00	9.35	0.45		
Corporate Income Tax Rate	(2)	2003	6.56	2.65	0.00	9.99	0.61		
Minimum Wage	(3)	2006	\$5.68	\$0.83	\$5.15	\$7.63	0.54		
Per Pupil Expenditures in K-12	(4)	2006	\$9,075	\$2,016	\$5,437	\$14,884	0.67		
Income Eligibility for TANF/Welfare	(5)	2006	\$751	\$307	\$269	\$1,590	0.22		
Health Insurance Mandates Index	(3)	2006	0.45	0.11	0.21	0.68	0.34		
<i>Economic Policy Score</i>			<i>0.00</i>	<i>0.86</i>	<i>-1.57</i>	<i>2.15</i>		<i>1.77</i>	<i>0.76</i>
Social Policy Indicators									
Gun Control Index	(3)	2006	-0.05	2.92	-2.50	8.77	0.40		
Abortion Index	(3)	2006	0.10	1.85	-3.53	3.08	-0.73		
Has Death Penalty	(3)	2006	0.79	0.41	0.00	1.00	-0.25		
No Discrimination for Sexual Orientation	(6)	2008	0.38	0.49	0.00	1.00	0.79		
Requires (2) or Allows (1) School Prayer	(7)	2008	0.98	0.76	0.00	2.00	-0.34		
<i>Social Policy Score</i>			<i>0.00</i>	<i>0.86</i>	<i>-1.05</i>	<i>1.48</i>		<i>1.49</i>	<i>0.90</i>

Notes: $N=48$. Data sources: (1) Kaiser Family Foundation, www.statehealthfacts.org; (2) Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, (2003), "Who Pays: A Distributional Analysis of the Tax System in all 50 States, www.itepnet.org; (3) Soren, Muedini and Ruger (2008), "State and Local Public Policies in the United States," www.statepolicyindex.com; (4) Education Week, Quality Counts 2008 Report, www.edweek.org; (5) Urban Institute, "Welfare Rules Database," www.urban.org; (6) Human Rights Watch, (2008), "Employment Discrimination Laws," ; (7) Education Commission of the States (2008), "School Prayer, Moments of Silence and other State Policies toward Religion," www.ecs.org.

Table 4. Income Differences in Ideology versus Policy Liberalism Scores

	2000 Annenberg Survey				2004 Annenberg Survey			
	N	Self-ID Liberalism	Econ. Policy Liberalism	Social Policy Liberalism	N	Self-ID Liberalism	Econ. Policy Liberalism	Social Policy Liberalism
Less than \$10K	3,958	0.09	0.31	-0.19	3,728	0.05	0.17	-0.06
\$10K-\$15K	3,924	0.09	0.25	-0.17	3,939	0.02	0.16	-0.12
\$15-25K	7,434	0.03	0.17	-0.10	7,515	0.01	0.11	-0.09
\$25-35K	8,676	0.02	0.10	-0.05	8,948	0.00	0.07	-0.06
\$35-50K	11,216	0.01	-0.02	-0.01	12,560	-0.03	0.03	-0.04
\$50-75K	11,275	-0.03	-0.11	0.03	14,432	-0.04	-0.03	-0.01
\$75-100K	6,277	0.00	-0.19	0.13	9,605	-0.02	-0.09	0.07
\$100-150K	4,018	0.02	-0.22	0.21	7,138	0.00	-0.15	0.12
More than \$150K	2,488	0.00	-0.30	0.27	4,817	0.00	-0.16	0.20
F		8.94	217.26	107.33		4.90	91.60	66.14

Notes: All three measures of liberalism are standardized scores with M=0 and sd=1.

Table 5. Economic Policy Responsiveness to Different Income Groups

Economic Policy Liberalism (2000)								
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	All States		Poor	Rich	All States		Poor	Rich
Opinion: Avg	5.62 **	4.49 **	3.22 **	5.62 **				
	(0.78)	(0.80)	(1.05)	(1.20)				
State Wealth		0.79 **	0.88	1.19 *		4.26	-1.74	8.94
		(0.26)	(0.56)	(0.53)		(3.09)	(3.36)	(7.09)
Opinion: Low					1.62	0.51	1.39	5.09
					(1.90)	(2.05)	(2.17)	(5.31)
Opinion: Middle					6.98 **	8.78 **	7.77 *	7.44
					(2.12)	(2.47)	(3.14)	(5.04)
Opinion: High					6.36 **	4.43 +	9.59 **	1.64
					(2.21)	(2.60)	(3.25)	(5.70)
% Low Income					-2.84	11.61	-19.69	26.31
					(4.02)	(11.20)	(14.20)	(24.20)
% High Income					0.70	-8.35	-6.29	-16.37
					(4.11)	(7.72)	(8.98)	(18.00)
Constant	0.12	-3.88 **	-4.30	-6.10 *	1.44	-23.32	18.60	-51.22
	(0.09)	(1.30)	(2.67)	(2.79)	(2.49)	(18.10)	(20.90)	(40.50)
Observations	48	48	24	24	48	48	24	24
R-squared	0.53	0.61	0.36	0.67	0.65	0.67	0.66	0.69

Economic Policy Liberalism (2004)								
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	All States		Poor	Rich	All States		Poor	Rich
Opinion: Avg	6.17 **	4.81 **	3.23 *	6.24 **				
	(0.94)	(0.96)	(1.24)	(1.44)				
State Wealth		0.83	0.81	1.28 *		4.86 +	1.93	7.96
		(0.27)	(0.59)	(0.54)		(2.44)	(2.74)	(6.70)
Opinion: Low					-3.84	-4.65	-2.68	-3.18
					(3.23)	(3.14)	(3.30)	(8.19)
Opinion: Middle					8.86 **	8.88 **	8.40 *	10.36
					(3.10)	(3.00)	(3.04)	(8.35)
Opinion: High					7.82 **	8.60 **	7.49 +	6.84
					(2.80)	(2.73)	(4.09)	(5.96)
% Low Income					1.54	17.73 +	-4.71	33.66
					(4.18)	(9.07)	(11.70)	(22.30)
% High Income					4.87	-5.45	-15.63	-7.13
					(4.04)	(6.48)	(9.11)	(16.80)
Constant	0.06	-4.15 **	-4.03	-6.64 *	-1.29	-29.43 *	-3.94	-50.79
	(0.09)	(1.36)	(2.81)	(2.87)	(2.51)	(14.30)	(16.90)	(38.10)
Observations	48	48	24	24	48	48	24	24
R-squared	0.49	0.58	0.30	0.64	0.63	0.67	0.52	0.72

Notes: N=48 states, excluding Alaska and Hawaii. Coefficients from OLS regression models. Group opinion measures are weighted for the proportion of each group within each state. ** p<.01, * p<.05, + p<.10

Table 6. Social Policy Responsiveness to Different Income Groups

Social Policy Liberalism (2000)

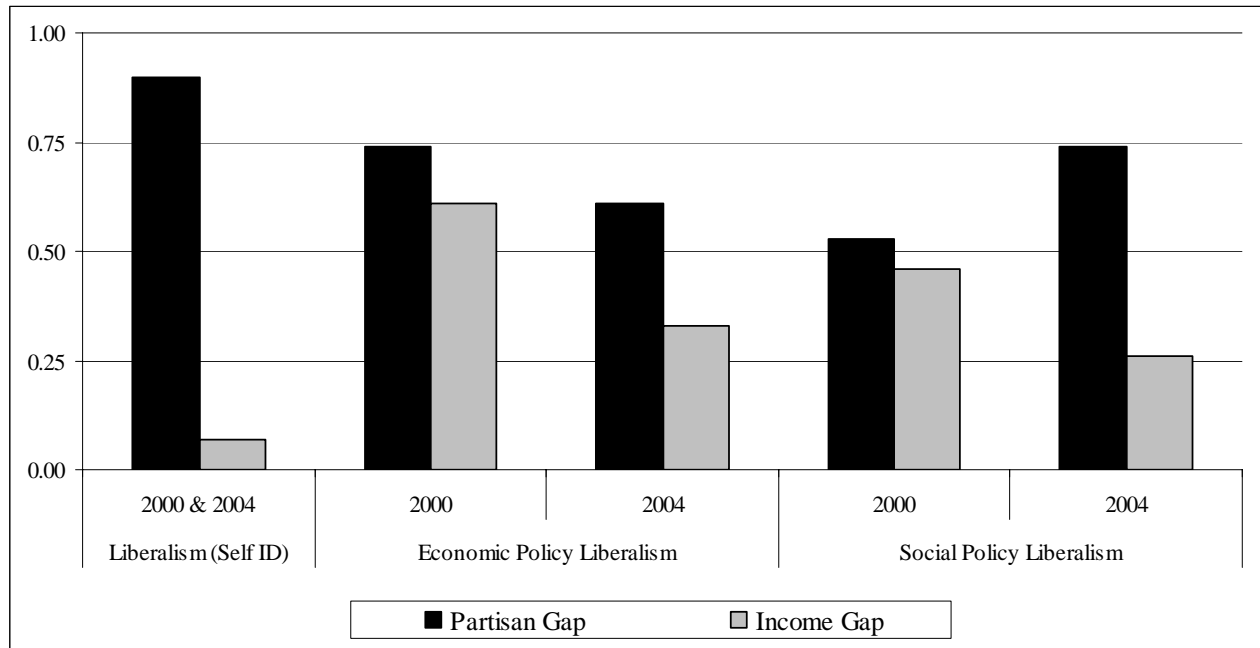
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	All States		Poor	Rich	All States		Poor	Rich
Opinion: Avg	3.09 **	3.51 **	3.47 **	3.79 **				
	(0.39)	(0.55)	(0.80)	(0.79)				
State Wealth		-0.36	-1.05	0.21		-2.40	-1.21	2.45
		(0.33)	(0.73)	(0.51)		(2.67)	(3.23)	(7.73)
Opinion: Low					0.78	0.75	-2.12	11.56 +
					(2.42)	(2.43)	(2.98)	(5.89)
Opinion: Middle					4.26 +	4.57 *	5.52	-0.59
					(2.20)	(2.23)	(3.49)	(4.28)
Opinion: High					6.32 +	6.34 +	8.33	-0.38
					(3.68)	(3.69)	(7.46)	(5.19)
% Low Income					0.49	-7.25	-7.73	6.88
					(5.16)	(10.10)	(14.20)	(27.50)
% High Income					-2.21	2.82	-6.34	-1.82
					(5.13)	(7.60)	(12.60)	(16.50)
Constant	0.09	1.93	5.23	-1.15	0.20	14.02	10.17	-14.37
	(0.08)	(1.70)	(3.51)	(2.66)	(3.03)	(15.70)	(19.70)	(45.40)
Observations	48	48	24	24	48	48	24	24
R-squared	0.58	0.59	0.48	0.61	0.61	0.62	0.59	0.65

Social Policy Liberalism (2004)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	All States		Poor	Rich	All States		Poor	Rich
Opinion: Avg	3.49 **	3.92 **	4.37 **	3.79 **				
	(0.42)	(0.59)	(0.85)	(0.88)				
State Wealth		-0.34	-0.76	0.34		-0.11	1.06	-0.07
		(0.32)	(0.64)	(0.53)		(2.46)	(2.94)	(6.08)
Opinion: Low					5.61 +	5.61 +	0.89	10.62 +
					(2.90)	(2.93)	(4.41)	(5.78)
Opinion: Middle					-3.20	-3.20	2.50	-10.03
					(3.30)	(3.35)	(5.00)	(5.94)
Opinion: High					13.01 **	13.03 **	12.80 *	17.44 *
					(3.93)	(4.00)	(5.97)	(6.51)
% Low Income					0.13	-0.24	5.58	-6.98
					(4.12)	(9.16)	(13.00)	(20.60)
% High Income					-3.70	-3.48	-7.83	-7.76
					(4.06)	(6.47)	(10.20)	(15.60)
Constant	0.08	1.78	3.90	-1.87	0.73	1.37	-5.84	4.55
	(0.08)	(1.64)	(3.10)	(2.78)	(2.44)	(14.50)	(18.40)	(34.70)
Observations	48	48	24	24	48	48	24	24
R-squared	0.60	0.61	0.56	0.56	0.66	0.66	0.62	0.69

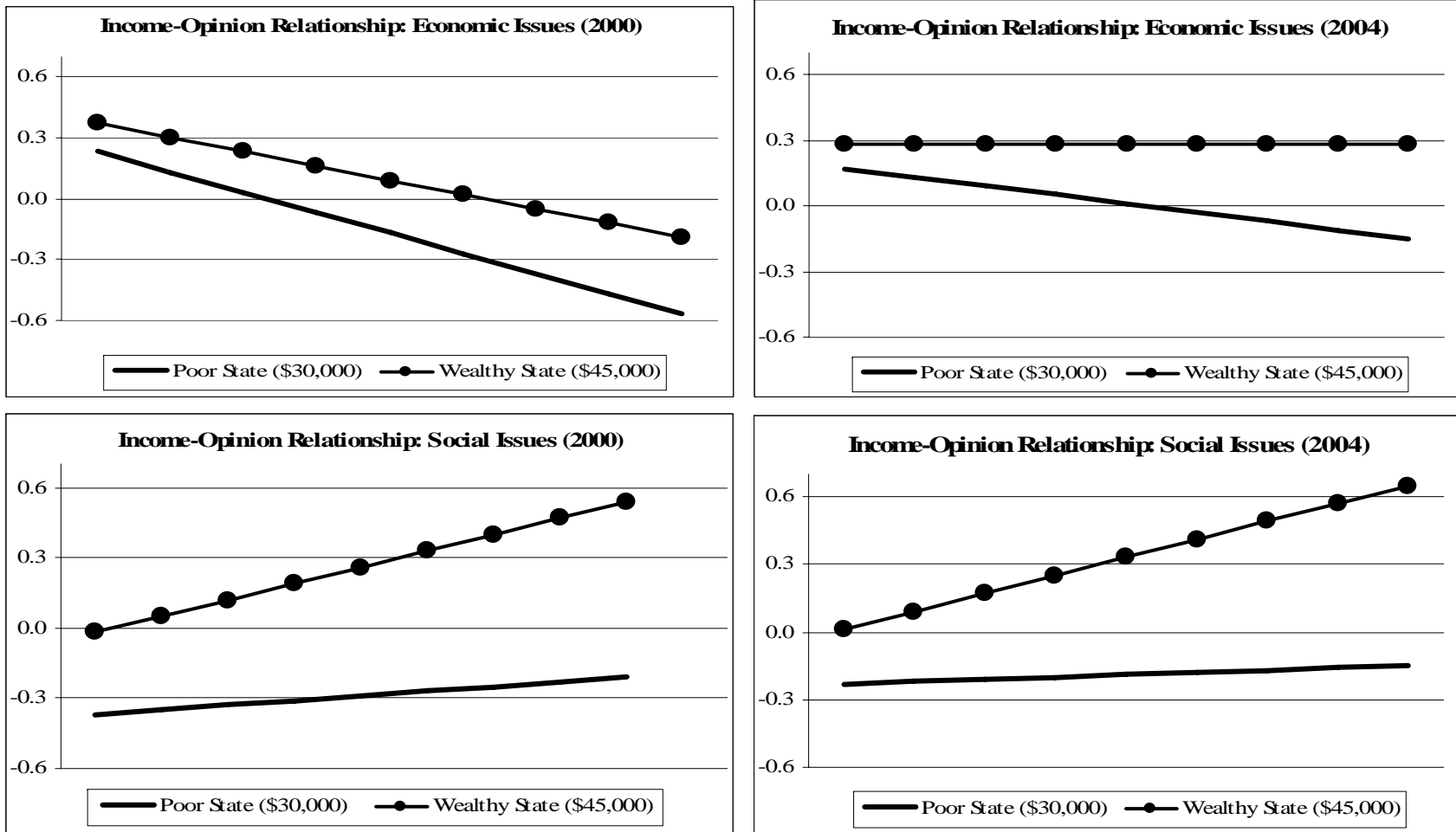
Notes: N=48 states, excluding Alaska and Hawaii. Coefficients from OLS regression models. Group opinion measures are weighted for the proportion of each group within each state. ** p<.01, * p<.05, + p<.10

Figure 1. Comparison of Partisan versus Income Gap in Policy Liberalism



Note: Bars represent the absolute value of the difference in liberalism scores for Democrats versus Republicans (Partisan Gap) and those with the lowest (less than \$10,000) and highest (more than \$150,000) incomes (Income Gap).

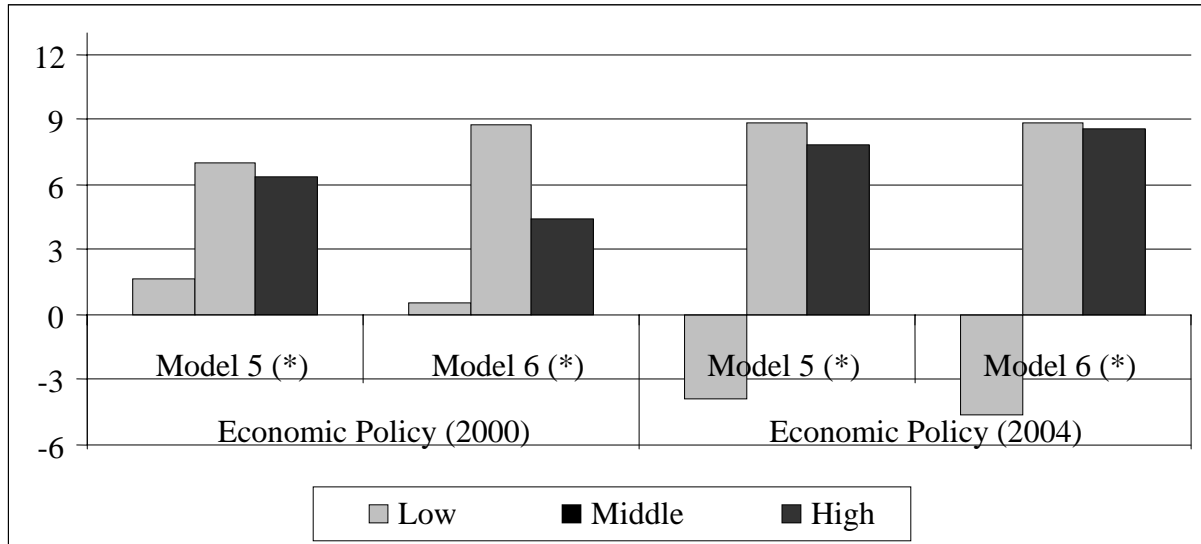
Figure 2. Income-Opinion Relationship across Poor and Wealthy States



Notes: Lines represent the predicted policy liberalism for each income group, ranging from <\$10,000 (very left) to \$150,000+ (very right) estimated from multi-level models in which the intercept is estimated as a function of average state income and the slope is estimated as a function of both individual-level income (at level 1) and state-level income (as a cross-level interaction). Thick solid line present predicted means for a poor state, such as West Virginia that is two standard deviations below the mean state income (from Annenberg data), while the thinner line with dots presents predicted means for wealthier states, such as Maryland whose average state wealth was two standard deviations above the mean.

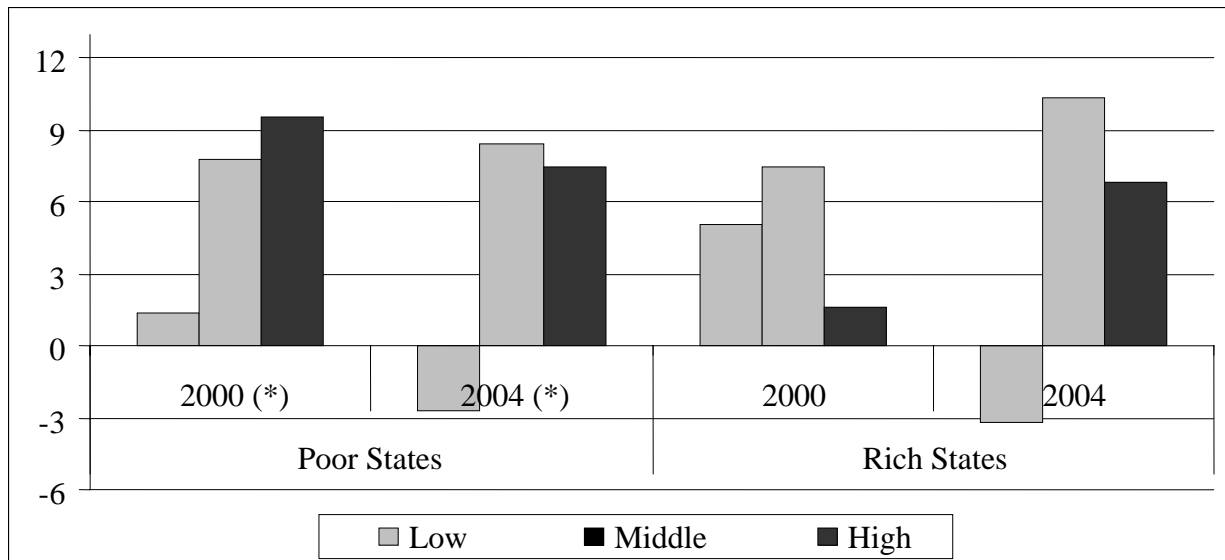
Figure 3. State Economic Policy Responsiveness to Different Income Groups

Panel A: All States



Notes: N=48 states. Bars represent coefficients for each group's policy liberalism from Model 5 (no controls) and Model 6 (controlling for state wealth). * = $p < .05$, + = $p < .10$.

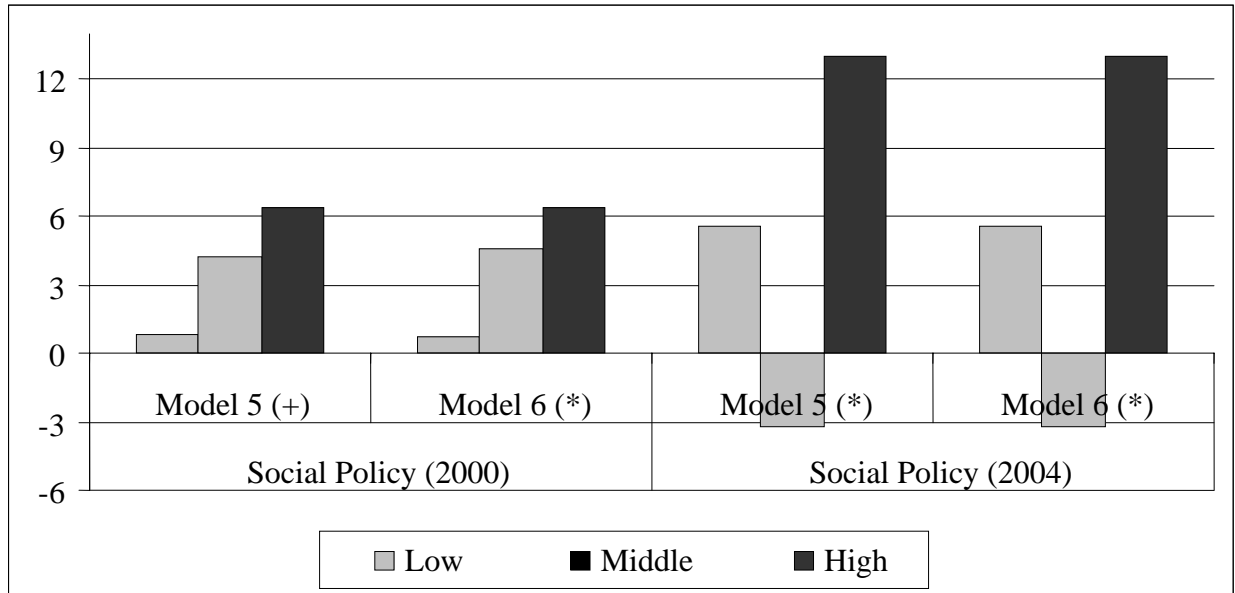
Panel B: Comparing Poor States and Rich States



Notes: N=24 poor states and 24 wealthy states. Bars represent coefficients for each group's policy liberalism from Model 7 (poor states) and Model 8 (rich states) controlling for state wealth. * = $p < .05$, + = $p < .10$.

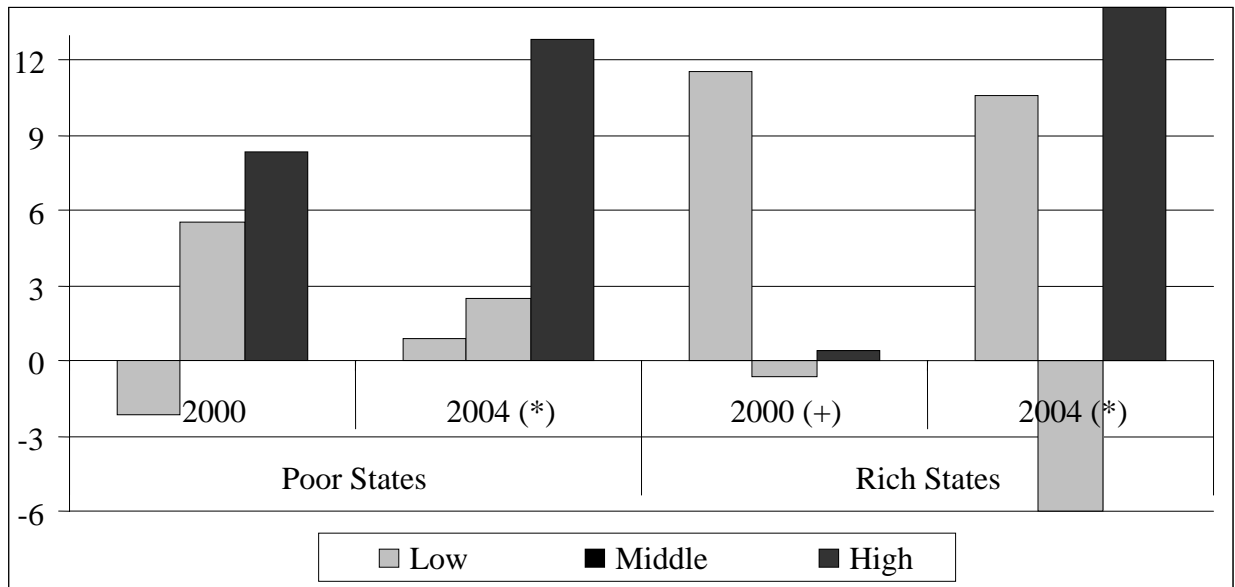
Figure 4. State Social Policy Responsiveness to Different Income Groups

Panel A: All States



Notes: N=48 states. Bars represent coefficients for each group's policy liberalism from Model 5 (no controls) and Model 6 (controlling for state wealth). * = $p < .05$, + = $p < .10$.

Panel B: Comparing Poor States and Rich States



Notes: N=24 poor states and 24 wealthy states. Bars represent coefficients for each group's policy liberalism from Model 7 (poor states) and Model 8 (rich states) controlling for state wealth. * = $p < .05$, + = $p < .10$.

Figure 5. Summary of Findings

	More Balanced Responsiveness	More Skewed Responsiveness
Smaller Income Differences	<i>Healthy Limit: Economic Policymaking in Rich States</i>	<i>Healthy Limit: Social Policymaking in Poor States</i>
Larger Income Differences	<i>No Evidence of Unequal Representation: Social Policymaking in Rich States</i>	<i>Evidence of Unequal Representation: Economic Policymaking in Poor States</i>