Affluence & Influence  
Economic Inequality and Political Power in America  

Martin Gilens  
Department of Politics  
Princeton University
\[ \text{prob}(Y_i = 1) = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-z_i}} \]

where

\[ Z_i = \alpha + \beta \ln \left( \frac{\% \text{favor}_i}{1 - \% \text{favor}_i} \right) \]
Predicted probability of change

Percent favoring change

High Income: 90th pctl
b = .53 (.06)

Middle Income: 50th pctl
b = .41 (.05)

Low Income: 10th pctl
b = .34 (.05)
When Low vs. High Income Preferences Diverge

Low Income
\[ b = 0.09 (0.09) \]

High Income
\[ b = 0.54 (0.10) \]
When Low and High Income Preferences Diverge

- Low Income: \( b = 0.09 \) (0.09)
- High Income: \( b = 0.54 \) (0.10)

When Middle and High Income Preferences Diverge

- Low Income: \( b = 0.13 \) (0.14)
- High Income: \( b = 0.58 \) (0.19)
Preference/Policy Link when Preferences Across Income Levels Diverge

Income Percentiles

Logistic Coefficient
## Preference/Policy Link by Year in Presidential Election Cycle

*When preferences across income levels diverge*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>10&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; income percentile</th>
<th>50&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; income percentile</th>
<th>90&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; income percentile</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-election years</td>
<td>-.02 (.14)</td>
<td>.02 (.14)</td>
<td>.44 (.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congressional election yrs</td>
<td>-.16 (.22)</td>
<td>.25 (.20)</td>
<td>.30 (.23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presidential election yrs</td>
<td>.54 (.25)</td>
<td>.63 (.24)</td>
<td>1.10 (.35)</td>
</tr>
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Figures for 90<sup>th</sup> percentile are average of analyses for 10<sup>th</sup> v. 90<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> v. 90<sup>th</sup> percentiles.
Preference/Policy Link by Income by President

When preferences across income levels diverge

Difference between Bush and all others is sig. at p<.05 for all percentiles; difference between Clinton and Johnson is sig. at p<.05 for the 90th percentile.
## Johnson Administration Policies

### Popular Policies
- Medicare
- Head Start
- Federal aid to education
- Increase in minimum wage
- Voting Rights Act

### Unpopular Policies
- Increased spending on cities
- Increased housing aid
- Looser immigration laws
- Vietnam income tax surcharge
- Vietnam escalation
Predictors of presidential approval during July / August of first year in office
Broadly Popular G.W. Bush Administration Policies

- No Child Left Behind
- Medicare drug benefit
- Faith based initiative
- Compromise on stem cell funding
- Income tax cuts and estate tax repeal
- Afghan and Iraq wars
- War on terror
Systematic Influences on Policy Responsiveness

- Gridlock
- Change in presidential partisan regime
- Majority party seat advantage
Preference/Policy Link by Income by Gridlock

When preferences across income levels diverge
Preference/Policy Link by Number of Congresses since Presidential Party Change

*When preferences across income levels diverge*
Preference/Policy Link by Income by Majority Party Seat Advantage in the US Senate

*When preferences across income levels diverge*
“There is no precedent in any modern White House for what is going on in this one: a complete lack of a policy apparatus. What you've got is everything -- and I mean everything -- being run by the political arm. It's the reign of the Mayberry Machiavellis.”

John Dilulio
## Preference/Policy Link Under GW Bush

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<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>10th</td>
<td>50th</td>
<td>90th</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>All policies</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2001/02</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>.91 (.19)</td>
<td>.90 (.18)</td>
<td>1.01 (.19)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005/06</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>.09 (.28)</td>
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<td><strong>Excluding defense &amp; terrorism</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>193</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005/06</td>
<td></td>
<td>147</td>
<td>-.03 (.31)</td>
<td>-.07 (.32)</td>
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Takeaways

- Representational inequality is enormous (and has increased over time?)
- Political circumstances matter
- Parties act as policy maximizers
Political Behaviors by Income

**Turnout**

- Graph showing turnout percentage increasing with income.

**Working in a Political Campaign**

- Graph showing proportion of people working in political campaigns.

**Average Political Donation**

- Graph depicting average political donation amounts by income bracket.
Percent of Proposed Policy Changes Adopted

- 1981
- 1993
- 2001
Size of Majority Party Seat Advantage, 1960-2004

House

Senate
Distribution of preference gap between 10th and 90th income percentiles

- Under 5%: 34%
- Between 5% and 10%: 26%
- Over 10%: 41%
- Over 15%: 21%
- Over 20%: 8%
Percent Agree:

"Public officials don't care much what people like me think"

- Low Income Respondents (under $10,000)
  - 60%
- Middle-Income Respondents ($35,000-$65,000)
  - 60%
- High-Income Respondents (over $100,000)
  - 29%