

Chapter 1

Group Opinion and the Study of Representation

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WE CELEBRATE THE principle of one person, one vote. Even though we have learned in recent years that counting ballots is not as straightforward as we might have thought, procedural equality remains an important standard in modern democracies. On election day, we expect all votes to count equally. Of course, we are not interested only in whether our votes count. We care about which parties and candidates win. We also care about what happens afterward, that is, what elected officials actually do once in office. Just because my vote is counted and my preference is heard—and even the fact that my party or candidate won—does not mean that representatives follow my ideal policy position. In fact, citizens in a democracy should rarely expect policy to match their specific policy preferences. This partly reflects institutional features that lead some votes to be weighted more than others—for example, in the United States, the electoral college, gerrymandered house districts, and the structurally malapportioned Senate. However, even where political equality exists and all votes—or voices—count the same, a more fundamental aspect of democracy ensures that policy will not align with many citizens' preferences. If people's preferences differ, after all, actual policy simply cannot satisfy everyone.

In theory, politicians represent populations, whether districts, cities, states, or countries. Were politicians to give everyone equal weight, they would represent the distribution of the preferences of their constituents. It is common in the social sciences to theorize that, if all voters count

equally, politicians will place policy at the median voter. In so doing, politicians would not choose the preferred positions of those on the left or the right. Policy representation would be unequal, and the degree of inequality would depend on the variation in underlying preferences—the more preferences vary, the greater the potential for policy to match some groups' interests but not others'. The point is not that other voters do not count, which they do, but that only one position can win. When we consider *policy outputs*, inequality in representation is inescapable.¹ The pertinent question before us is not whether unequal representation exists; rather, we want to know who gets represented. This is the central question that the chapters in this book seek to answer.

Despite the emphasis often placed on the median voter (for example, Downs 1957), it may be that some people's policy preferences, particularly the rich, matter more than others'. After all, they not only vote, they also participate in other ways, such as volunteering time and donating money to campaigns (Verba and Nie 1972; Verba, Nie, and Kim 1978; Nagel 1987; Brady, Verba, and Schlozman 1995). Thus, there is reason—if the supply of policy matches the expressed demand—to suppose that the wealthy have more impact on the policymaking process.² Some research supports the suspicion. David Weakliem, Robert Andersen, and Anthony Heath (2005) hint at a connection between the preferences of the wealthy and policy outcomes in their analysis of income inequality across countries. Focusing on the United States, Martin Gilens (2005) and Larry Bartels (2008) provide evidence for unequal policy responsiveness favoring the rich. Bartels considers general roll-call voting behavior (and abortion roll calls) in the U.S. Senate and demonstrates that they best reflect the ideological self-identification of high-income citizens. Gilens examines a wide range of policy decisions and shows that, though there tends to be a bias toward the status quo, when the rich prefer policies different from ones that the poor or those in the middle prefer, policy change corresponds most with the preferences of the rich. Other research comports with what Bartels and Gilens show; specifically, Lawrence Jacobs and Benjamin Page (2005) demonstrate that business leaders exert more influence than the general public on foreign policy decision makers.

The possibility that politicians are more likely to take their cues from the rich has not escaped the attention of scholars of economic inequality. Jacobs and Theda Skocpol observe that "Public officials . . . are much more responsive to the privileged than to average citizens and the less affluent" (2005, 1). This conclusion holds important implications for distributional outcomes. In the United States, more than three decades of prolific economic expansion at the top of the income distribution has produced levels of income inequality not seen since the Gilded Age (Danziger and Gottschalk 1995; Ryscavage 1999; Piketty and Saez 2006,

2007; Bartels 2008; Hungerford 2008; Kelly 2009). Perhaps the government's failure to offer policies designed to stem rising inequality reflects the importance that policymakers place on the preferences of the wealthy.

Another line of scholarship emphasizes the importance of being organized, which includes more than just being rich (for example, Truman 1951; Schattschneider 1960; Dahl 1961; Olson 1965; Walker 1991; Baumgartner and Leech 1998; Lowery and Brasher 2004). Interest groups can mobilize issue publics (Kollman 1998), provide relevant information to policymakers (Burstein and Hirsh 2007), and help fund campaigns (Wright 2003). Thus, politicians face numerous incentives to represent the expressed interests of organized groups. These include business interests to be sure, but also labor and numerous others in society, including racial, religious, and partisan groups. For issues salient to these groups, we might expect policies to reflect the preferences of the strongest and most organized groups or parties.

Do politicians follow the middle? The wealthy? The organized? Although we expect policy to reflect some citizens' interests at the expense of others, we have conflicting expectations about who gets represented. Regardless of our expectations, of fundamental importance is whether and to what extent preferences differ across groups. As we have noted, to the extent that preferences vary, all groups cannot have their preferences represented in policy, and the more variation the greater the disparity. Importantly, the converse also is true—where preferences are identical, actual policy will align with everyone's interests. By representing one group's opinions, policymakers will, by definition, represent the preferences of all groups. Thus, to understand who gets represented, we need to understand when and how preferences differ across groups.³

In the next section, we offer a brief overview of the ways in which scholars expect the opinions of certain prominent groups to differ in the United States. We then present an array of evidence showing that classic assumptions about group preferences often do not hold. This contrast—between expectations in the literature and the available data—motivates the studies of group opinion and group representation in the rest of the volume.

On Differences in Preferences

There are good reasons to expect preferences to differ along group lines in the United States. Most theories of group opinion stress objective interests. Prominent economic models of redistribution (such as Meltzer and Richard 1981; Bénabou 2000) assume that preferences for redistribution vary across income groups. Indeed, it would not be surprising if, based on their respective economic situations, the highest, middle, and

lowest income groups have different levels of support for government spending and taxes. Income differences may also correlate with other group divisions, such as education level. Thus the opinions of low- (or high-) income groups may correspond with the opinions of low- (or high-) education groups.⁴ Additionally, we might expect other aspects of group-based objective interest that extend beyond financial considerations. For example, African Americans may show a greater interest than whites, on average, in expanding civil rights.

Information and knowledge can also matter. Varying abilities to connect self-interest to policy preferences may produce nuanced patterns of group differences in opinion. Evidence suggests those who pay more attention to politics are better able to connect vote choice or policy preference to their self-interest than those who are uninterested in or unclear about policy options (Althaus 1998; Bartels 1996; Gilens 2001). Thus, we might find group differences more pronounced between the politically informed members of different groups. Similarly, because the wealthy tend to be the most politically informed, we might expect their attitudes to most closely reflect their economic self-interest.⁵

For similar reasons, we might expect group opinion to change differently over time. Group interest could lead different groups to update their opinions in distinct ways. For example, as economic inequality has increased, we might expect support for redistributive policies, such as welfare or taxing the rich to polarize as the poor increasingly support more redistribution and the wealthy support less. Similarly, as policy moves in a liberal (or a conservative) direction we might expect polarization along partisan lines, as Democratic support for the policy increases (or decreases) and Republican support for the policy decreases (or increases). Information and knowledge may also influence patterns of opinion change (see, for example, Converse 1990; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Zaller 1992). Even if groups do not update their policy opinions according to their own self-interest, it would not be surprising if different amounts of information and information sources led to differences in how the politically aware and unaware update their opinions.⁶

To summarize, there are strong reasons to believe that group preferences differ and shift differently over time. Yet, emerging empirical evidence shows that such heterogeneity is not pervasive. Building on previous research (Citrin and Green 1990; Sears and Funk 1991), Stuart Soroka and Christopher Wlezien (2008) and Page and Jacobs (2009) show that policy preferences across income groups are often similar.⁷ Furthermore, recent research shows that over-time similarity, that is, parallel publics, also appears to be the norm (Page and Shapiro 1992; Soroka and Wlezien 2008; Ura and Ellis 2008; Enns and Kellstedt 2008; Kelly and Enns 2010).⁸ This evidence suggests that patterns of group opinion may be more com-

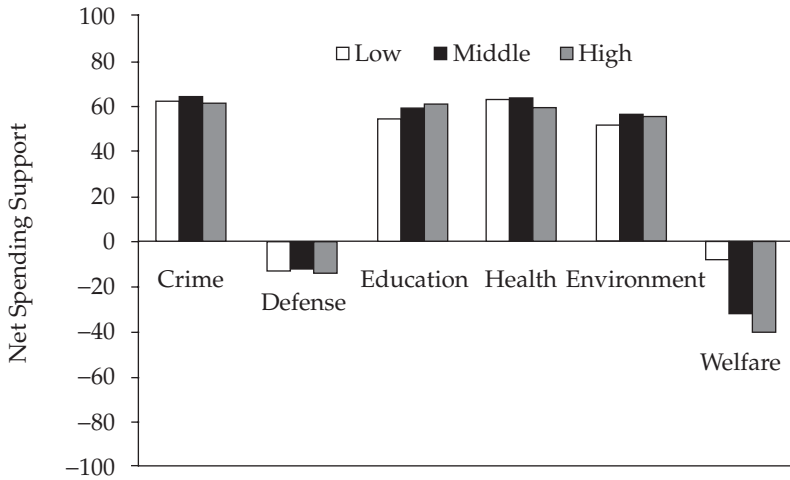
plicated than previously thought. To this end, the following analysis considers responses to a variety of survey questions over an extended period of time. The analysis reinforces the conclusion that before we can understand who gets represented, we must first understand group differences in policy preferences.

Preferences for Government Spending and Taxes

We begin with preferences for government spending in specific policy domains. These items are especially useful for our purposes. Data are available on a regular basis for an extended time, and preferences in most of these domains have been shown to affect both budgetary policy and actual spending (Wlezien 1996, 2004; Soroka and Wlezien 2010). Our data are based on the following question, included regularly in the General Social Survey (GSS) and elsewhere: “Do you think the government is spending too much, too little or about the right amount on [health care]?” Respondents are asked consistently about spending in other categories besides health care in the GSS in almost every year from 1973 to 1994 and subsequently in even-numbered years. Using responses to these questions, where question wording is identical over time and across domains, allows us to assess whether and to what extent differences are truly systematic and not unique to particular times and domains. We focus here on defense, the major social domains (welfare, health, and education), the environment, and crime.⁹

From the responses, we generate a standard summary measure of “net support” for spending in each domain across years. The measure is the percentage of people who think we are spending “too little” less the percentage of those who think we are spending “too much” in each domain.¹⁰ With this measure, we can assess whether one group wants more spending than another.¹¹ We calculate net support separately for the highest, middle, and lowest income terciles based on the income levels reported in the GSS.¹² Figure 1.1 plots the mean level of net support, from 1973 to 2008, for each income group across the six policy domains.¹³

In figure 1.1, we see relatively little heterogeneity in preferences across income levels in all domains but welfare. The difference in means between high- and low-income citizens is five points on average for the nonwelfare domains, and none of these differences are even close to being statistically significant. Focusing on the top and bottom deciles—instead of terciles—of the income distribution has little effect (Gilens 2009). These similarities challenge conventional wisdom. As Pablo Beramendi and Christopher Anderson note, “Insofar as politics is about ‘who gets what,’ the distribution of income becomes an important factor shaping the preferences of voters, parties, and politicians” (2008, 5). At least for government spending on defense, health care, education, the envi-

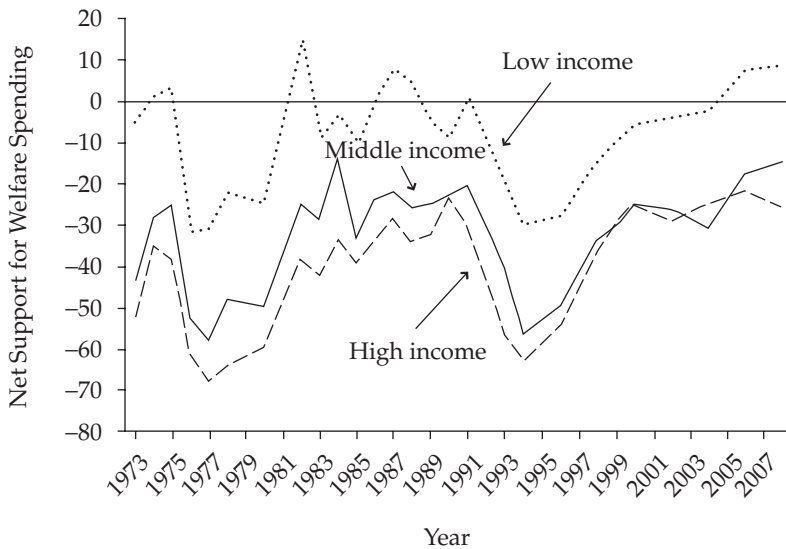
Figure 1.1 Net Spending Support for Different Programs, by Income Level

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from the General Social Surveys (Davis, Smith, and Marsden 1973–2008).

ronment, and crime, income does not appear to shape the preferences of citizens.¹⁴

Things are different for the welfare domain, where the high- and low-income means differ by more than thirty points. The differences across income levels are not symmetrical, however; the mean preference for people with middling incomes is much more like that for those with upper incomes. This pattern has important implications where representation is concerned (Soroka and Wlezien 2008). We already have noted the theoretical bases for representing the middle- or upper-income groups. Given the similarity in welfare preferences, if politicians follow the welfare preferences of those in the middle, they, to a large extent, would represent the preferences of upper-income earners; likewise, in representing the preferences of those with upper incomes, politicians would effectively represent the preferences of those in the middle. The welfare spending preferences of the middle and upper terciles are not identical, however, and it is important to determine what these differences mean for policy. It may be, after all, that what seems to be a small difference in preferences makes a big difference for policy. What is clear is that the welfare spending preferences of the lowest income group are least likely to be represented—not only is there a relatively large differ-

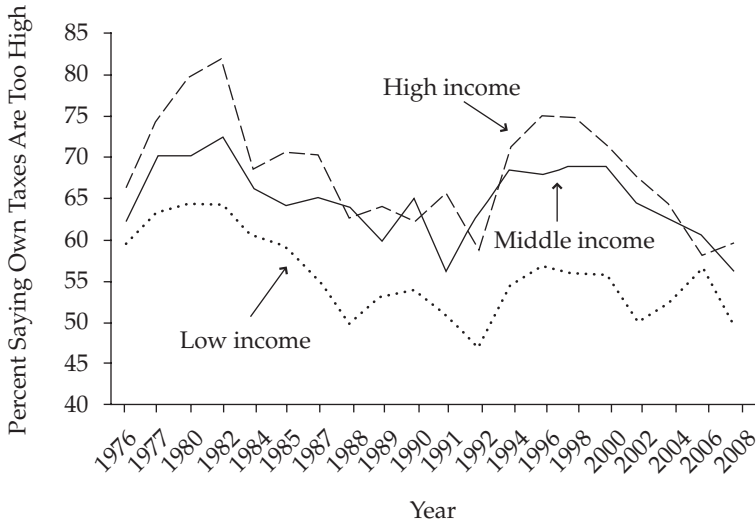
Figure 1.2 Net Support for Welfare Spending, by Income Level, 1973 to 2008



Source: Authors' calculations based on data from the General Social Surveys (Davis, Smith, and Marsden 1973–2008).

ence between their preferences and those of the middle and upper terciles, there is also little theoretical basis for representing the poor vis-à-vis the rest of the income distribution.

Spending preferences across income groups also largely track one another over time. That is, the similarities and differences that we see in figure 1.1 tend to hold over time. In effect, there is substantial parallelism in preference change—“parallel publics” in Benjamin Page and Robert Shapiro’s words (1992). Welfare spending preferences in figure 1.2 exemplify the pattern. This parallelism tells us a lot about the dynamics of public preferences over time—namely, that people tend to respond to many of the same things in similar ways (Page and Shapiro 1992; Wlezien 1995; Enns 2006; Soroka and Wlezien 2008; Enns and Kellstedt 2008; Ura and Ellis 2008; Kelly and Enns 2010). The parallelism also carries implications for representation—in responding to the preferences of one group, politicians at least to some extent would follow the changes in preferences of the others. This may allow politicians to gain support from all groups even if preference levels differ across groups. Preference change is not perfectly parallel across groups, however. Of special note

Figure 1.3 Tax Preferences, by Income Level, 1976 to 2008

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from the General Social Surveys (Davis, Smith, and Marsden 1973–2008).

in figure 1.2 is that welfare preferences for middle- and high-income groups appear to have converged over time; by the end of the series, there is little difference whatsoever. As discussed, this convergence has important implications for policy; as the series converge, whether one represents the preferences of those with middling or upper incomes makes no real difference.

Next, we consider opinions about taxes. The GSS regularly asks respondents the question, “Do you consider the amount of federal income tax which you have to pay as too high, about right, or too low?” Figure 1.3 plots the percentages saying “too high” between 1976 and 2008. By comparison with spending preferences on welfare (and other domains), these data show less parallelism over time. This is fairly predictable, because tax rates have fluctuated unevenly over time, increasing for some groups—especially high-income citizens—in some periods, for example, the 1990s, and decreasing in other periods, for example, the 1980s and the 2000s. The pattern across income groups still is quite similar to what we observe for welfare: significant differences between the preferences for lower-income respondents and the rest of the distribution. On average, about 68 percent of people in the upper tercile think their taxes are too high, versus 56 percent of those in the lower tercile. Among middle-

income people, 65 percent think so, revealing a similar asymmetry to what we saw on welfare spending. Notice that the differences for tax preferences are just one-half the size of those for welfare. Furthermore, much as we saw for welfare spending, the differences that we do observe between the middle- and high-income groups have largely disappeared.

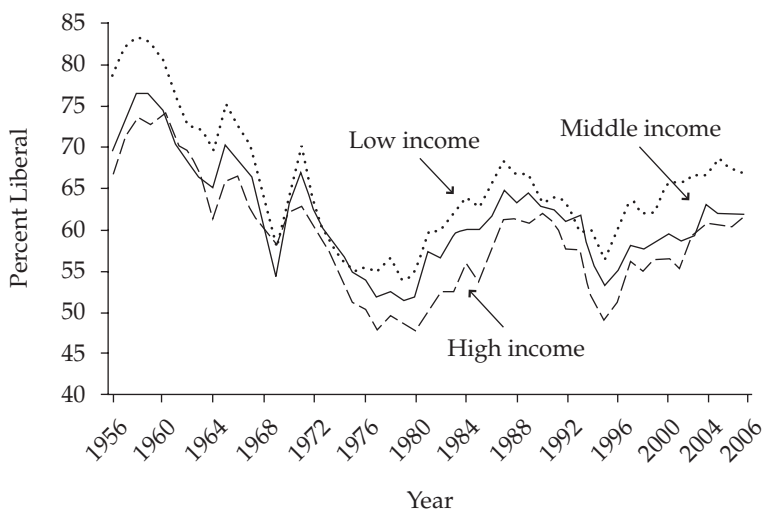
Our analysis of spending and tax preferences reveals a high level of similarity across income groups. Differences are limited to taxes and one spending program—welfare—and, when they exist, are mostly between the poor on the one hand and middle- and high-income groups on the other. Differences simply are not as pervasive as one might expect.

Policy Mood

Although spending and taxing are much of what the federal government does, policy involves more than that. This is the main point of Gilens's (2009) recent analysis. Gilens analyzes 1,784 survey questions that were asked between 1981 and 2002. Looking at preferences among the tenth and ninetieth percentiles of the income distribution, he finds large differences in preferences for specific policies, such as whether to increase government regulation of the oil industry, approve the abortion pill RU-486, apply term limits for welfare recipients, or support development aid to the former Soviet Union (Gilens 2009, table 2).¹⁵

James Stimson provides another way to assess group differences across issues (1999, 2004; Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson 2002). He averages across hundreds of political survey questions to create an over-time measure of the public's policy mood. This measure, which captures the public's support for more or less government, shows whether and how opinion differs generally across the various specific issues. The measure is of special interest because policy outputs in all branches of government have been shown to be influenced by changes in the public's mood (Stimson, MacKuen, and Erikson 1995; Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson 2002). We begin by generating Stimson's policy mood by income level. We use every question in Stimson's mood index for which individual-level data are available to estimate the policy mood of the lowest quintile, the highest quintile, and the middle 60 percent of respondents. Relying on the General Social Surveys, the American National Election Study, and data from the Roper Center, we were able to obtain individual-level data for seventy-five question items that Stimson had used. More than 60 percent of these were asked at least fourteen times. In total, our series includes 1,019 survey questions.¹⁶

Figure 1.4 presents Stimson's policy mood by income from 1956 to 2006.¹⁷ Here we can see that the highest income level shows the most conservative opinions in virtually every year. The lowest income level,

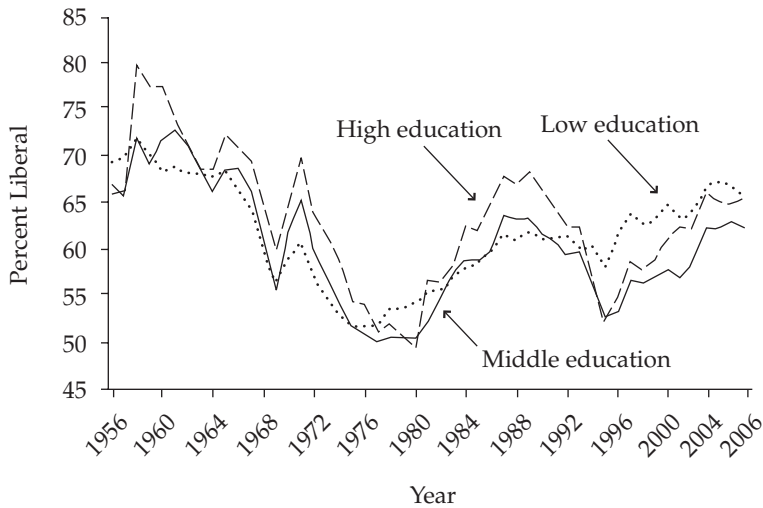
Figure 1.4 Stimson's Policy Mood, by Income Level, 1956 to 2006

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from the General Social Surveys (Davis, Smith, and Marsden 1972–2008), American National Election Studies (Sapiro, Rosenstone, and the National Election Studies 2004), and the iPoll Databank (Roper Center Public Opinion Archives, various years).

in contrast, is consistently most liberal. Still, the opinions of the different groups appear to be quite close, and they also track together over time. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) shows that income groups account for only 12.3 percent of the total variance of the three series. By contrast, 84.3 percent of the variance of mood across income groups and time is a function of parallel movement over time. The public's policy mood thus differs only modestly across income groups—of course the differences may matter for policy. Interestingly, for the middle and upper terciles, the differences that we do observe have declined in recent years. This is as we saw for welfare spending and taxes.

Ultimately, how income level influences policy preferences is not straightforward. Conclusions vary depending on which policies are analyzed, the period of analysis, and whether the measure of public opinion is policy-specific or global. How we understand representation of different income groups will necessarily also depend on these factors.

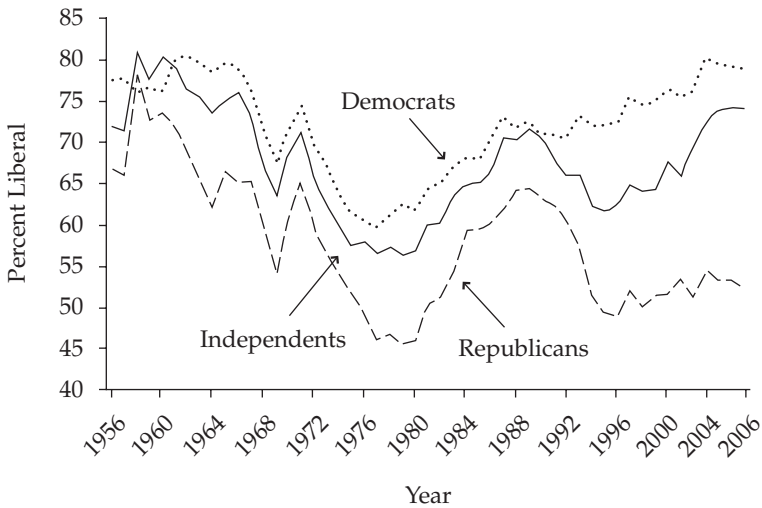
As discussed, we also are interested in other divisions and whether and how they matter for politics and policy. One important division is education. To consider its effects, figure 1.5 plots policy mood by education level.¹⁸ Peter Enns and Paul Kellstedt (2008) show that from 1972 to

Figure 1.5 Stimson's Policy Mood, by Education Level, 1956 to 2006

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from the General Social Surveys (Davis, Smith, and Marsden 1972–2008), American National Election Studies (Sapiro, Rosenstone, and the National Election Studies 2004), and the iPoll Databank (Roper Center Public Opinion Archives, various years).

2004, different information groups typically updated their policy mood synchronously in response to changing economic conditions. Here, we extend the period of their analysis and observe a similar result. Notice first that for most of the period, the highest education group displays the most liberal opinions. This is in contrast with the finding in figure 1.4 that the highest income group consistently showed the most conservative preferences. Although income and education level are highly correlated in the United States, they do not produce the same policy preferences. There is less systematic difference in opinion for the middle and lower education groups, as the latter drifts much more liberally beginning in the late 1970s. Even though differences across the groups are not the same at all points in time, a high level of over-time parallelism between the three series remains—more than 87 percent of the variance across education groups and time is a function of parallel over-time movement. People with quite different education levels respond to new information in much the same way.¹⁹

Party identification is another important cleavage. To provide a general summary of how much it matters, we generate policy mood separately for Republicans, independents, and Democrats.²⁰ These are plot-

Figure 1.6 Stimson's Policy Mood, by Party Identification, 1956 to 2006

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from the General Social Surveys (Davis, Smith, and Marsden 1972–2008), American National Election Studies (Sapiro, Rosenstone, and the National Election Studies 2004), and the iPoll Databank (Roper Center Public Opinion Archives, various years).

ted in figure 1.6, which shows much larger cross-sectional differences than those for education and income. Two additional patterns are particularly striking in this figure. First, during most of the last fifty years, independents' policy mood is closer to that of Democrats. Thus, if politicians follow the median voter model and represent those in the middle, Democrats would benefit more often than Republicans.²¹ Second, the opinions of Democrats and Republicans polarize in the later part of the series, particularly through the 1990s (also see DiMaggio, Evans, and Bryson 1996; Evans 2003; Hetherington 2009).²² Although some recent accounts of polarizing public opinion focus on George W. Bush's presidency (Jacobson 2006), our analysis suggests that polarization occurred during the Clinton years and simply persisted through the Bush years (also see Bafumi and Shapiro 2009). This polarization may have had important consequences for opinion representation; indeed, it may have encouraged more extreme policies.

Opinion About Race

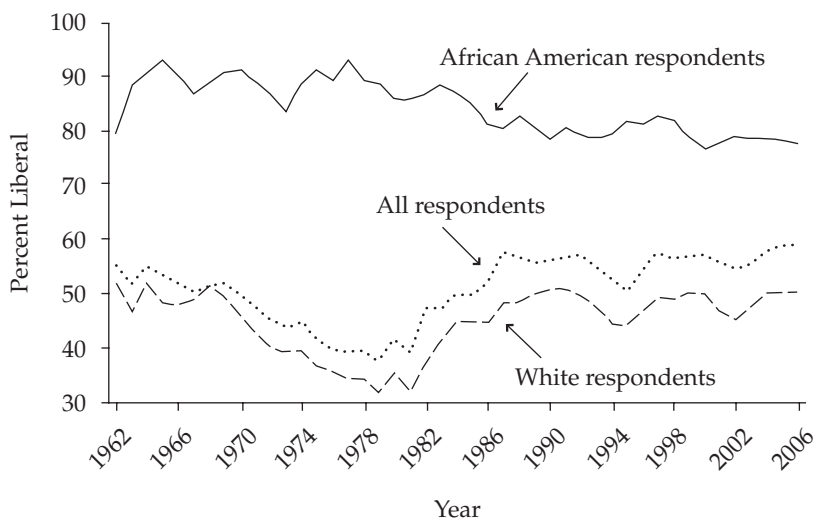
Race offers another basis for group differences. Existing research finds important differences across racial groups and important policy implica-

tions (Griffin and Newman 2007, 2008). Here, we seek to provide a picture of what these differences look like over time. Our starting point is Kellstedt's work on racial policy preferences (2000, 2003). Kellstedt finds that responses to survey questions on a variety of racial policies, such as busing, integration, and affirmative action move together over time in meaningful ways—the public's racial policy liberalism ebbs and flows over time. For our analyses, we disaggregate by race, looking at the over-time racial policy liberalism of white and African American respondents. The strategy parallels our analysis of Stimson's policy mood. We use the General Social Surveys, the American National Election Studies, and the Roper Center to identify all questions in Kellstedt's racial policy index for which individual-level data are available. Twelve such survey questions have each been asked nine times or more. We combine these to formulate an index of racial policy preferences from 1962 to 2006 and display the scores for the general public as well as African American and white respondents in figure 1.7.

First, we focus on the racial liberalism of all respondents. As expected, the series corresponds closely with Kellstedt's. We observe a minor dip in the public's racial liberalism around 1963, followed by a larger dip in the late 1960s, and then an even more sustained drop in racial liberalism until around 1980. The public then becomes more racially liberal until the early 1990s.²³ Not surprisingly, white respondents, who make up the overwhelming majority of survey responses, track closely with the aggregate series. It is also not surprising that the racial policy preferences of African Americans are much more liberal than white respondents. What is surprising, however, is that African American and white respondents do not appear to respond to the same messages in the same way—while whites have become more liberal, African Americans have become less so. The lack of parallelism is distinct from the patterns we observed above with income and education groups. These differences also contrast with previous analyses of the over-time policy preferences of different racial groups (Page and Shapiro 1992; Kellstedt 2003). The differences in white and African American racial policy preferences, both cross-sectionally and over time, indicate that unequal representation could exist—aligning policy with either white or African American preferences would mean not aligning policy with the other group's preferences.²⁴

Understanding Group Opinions

The foregoing analyses illustrate the complexity of group opinions. Differences can be meaningful across groups, but we cannot simply assume that they exist. Across income levels, for instance, preferences often do not differ. These results indicate that either (1) there is little difference in self-interest across income groups in many domains or (2) people do not

Figure 1.7 Kellstedt's Racial Policy Liberalism, by Race, 1962 to 2006

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from the General Social Surveys (Davis, Smith, and Marsden 1972–2008), American National Election Studies (Sapiro, Rosenstone, and the National Election Studies 2004), and the iPoll Databank (Roper Center Public Opinion Archives, various years).

realize their interests. Either way, there is little difference for policymakers to represent. Additionally, when differences do emerge, as on welfare spending and taxes, the differences are largely between the middle and the rich on one hand and the poor on the other. Even these differences are dwarfed by the powerful changes we observe over time that affect income groups similarly. Differences across other groups are significant, including race and partisanship.²⁵ African Americans and whites hold very different positions on racial policy issues and have done so for a long time, though the difference has declined slightly. Partisans also have different positions, and these seem to have widened dramatically in recent years. Winning and losing politically matters a great deal for race and party. If we want to understand whose preferences best match policy, we need to understand how and why groups differ in their opinions. This is the focus of the first half of this book.

On the Representation of Difference

In addition to assessing differences in preferences, we want to know whether differences ultimately matter for policy. Is there inequality in

representation? Do policymakers follow partisans or those middling independent voters? Do they follow the rich? The highly educated? The white majority?

Research on the representation of public opinion almost exclusively presumes that policymakers represent the “average” person (for reviews of the literature, see Burstein 2003; Brooks 2006; Manza and Cook 2002; Weakliem 2003; Soroka and Wlezien 2007). This is as one would expect were there perfect equality, where each person had equal power in the political process. As we have discussed, even where there is perfect political equality—and politicians represent the median person—not everyone would be equally represented in policy, unless of course our preferences were identical. To the extent that preferences differ, therefore, inequality in policy outputs is an unavoidable fact of democratic political life (Soroka and Wlezien 2008). We also have discussed that there is reason to think that citizens are not politically equal. Those who vote may matter more than those who do not, and this can have powerful implications for representation (Griffin and Newman 2005; McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006). Even all voters may not be equal, however, and politicians may privilege some voices over others, such as the wealthy or the organized.

Yet, for some groups, such as the poor, there is little theoretical basis for politicians to privilege their interests. They are not like the median voter or, obviously, those with upper incomes. They also are not organized (Schlozman and Tierney 1986).²⁶ We do not expect politicians to pay special attention to them. To find that the rich, those in the middle, or the organized are better represented than the poor would not startle or challenge us to revise our theories. In fact, this is what democratic theories predict. The question of theoretical interest is whether the rich command more attention than those in the middle. To find that the rich are better represented than the median person or voter would constitute important information about the functioning of representative democracy. It also would suggest that some of our theories are too Pollyannaish. The median person or voter just would not be as powerful as some models would predict. The representation of different groups is the focus of the second half of the book.

The Book

This book emerged from a conference we organized at Cornell University in 2008. In many ways, the final product differs from what we first had in mind. Our original focus was on the extent of differences and similarities (both cross-sectionally and over time) in public preferences between groups and what explains such patterns of similarity and difference. To address these questions, we invited many of the top scholars

of public preferences and its representation in policy to the conference “Homogeneity and Heterogeneity in Public Opinion.” What emerged was a conference not only on what explains similarities and differences in opinion but also on whether and how these differences (or the lack of) matter for representation. We discovered that no real consensus exists on how different groups influence policy. Not only were there debates about differences between groups, there were also serious disagreements about whether these differences matter. In essence, despite vast advances in research on public opinion and representation, the conference made clear that we do not yet have a good answer to the question of who gets represented, hence the title of this book.

The book is in two parts: the first about group preferences for policy and the second about representation of group interests. The first part of this volume—chapters 2 through 5—extend the analysis presented thus far, looking closely at policy preferences among income, education, racial, and partisan groups. The second part—chapters 6 through 11—shows that when the differences and similarities of group opinion are taken seriously, our understanding of representation and who gets represented advances greatly.

Chapter 2 examines policy preferences across racial and ethnic groups. We have already seen evidence that policy preferences can differ across racial groups in important ways. Marisa Abrajano and Keith T. Poole’s “Assessing the Ethnic and Racial Diversity of American Public Opinion” develops a survey “matching” technique to provide a comprehensive assessment of ethnic and racial group political opinion. They show how this methodology can become an important tool for those who study group opinion. Its utility is borne out in their analysis, which shows that racial group opinions, particularly support for government and redistribution, do not necessarily align with the expectations of scholars or pundits.

The next two chapters in the section offer two new perspectives on partisan polarization in the electorate. The preceding analysis showed that in recent years, differences in the policy preferences of Democrats and Republicans dwarf the differences across income and education groups. In chapter 3, “United We Divide? Education, Income, and Heterogeneity in Mass Partisan Polarization,” Christopher Ellis and Joseph Daniel Ura examine the evolving role of issues and show that, although education and income groups seem to update their opinions in parallel, an important interaction effect between the two can occur. They demonstrate that polarization has reflected different things for different people—“economic” issues for those with more education and low incomes and “cultural” issues for those with less education and relatively high incomes. Chapter 4, David A. Hopkins and Laura Stoker’s “The Political Geography of Party Resurgence,” moves things forward further still, fo-

ocusing on the evolving strength and structure of partisanship across states. This focus on geographic heterogeneity offers an important contrast to the aggregate data. Studies of partisanship at the national level will miss important state-level factors. For example, we learn that since the 1970s the effect of party affiliation on vote choice has become more uniform across states, and considerations other than party now are less likely to influence electoral outcomes. These changes not only influence elections but also the incentives (or the lack thereof) for candidates to represent broad electoral coalitions.

The section ends with chapter 5, Katherine Cramer Walsh's "Get Government Out of It: Heterogeneity of Government Skepticism and Its Connection to Economic Interests and Policy Preferences." Walsh uses "listening investigations"—a form of citizen interviewing—to assess how policy preferences and attitudes toward government vary across society. These show that even when different social groups appear to have similar policy preferences, the underlying structure of these preferences can be radically different. Thus, the analysis offers an important reminder that even when surveys show similarities across groups, important group variation can still exist. Equally important, the chapter's focus on opinions about health-care policy offers a timely look at the reasons that different groups resist the expansion of government services.

The second half of the book focuses on policy representation. James N. Druckman and Lawrence R. Jacobs begin, in chapter 6, with an assessment of the Reagan administration's responsiveness to the preferences of different groups in different policy areas. Their chapter, "Segmented Representation: The Reagan White House and Disproportionate Responsiveness," builds on the lessons of the first half of the book by taking the complexity of group opinion seriously. They show that from the perspective of the president, different groups' opinions matter differently for different policy areas. In other words, in their analysis, whose views President Reagan represented depended on the issue, the group, and the administration's coalition-building strategy.

The next four chapters telescope in on differences in representation across income groups. We have seen that in contrast to conventional wisdom, we cannot assume that different income groups hold different policy preferences. These chapters take this finding to heart. In chapter 7, "Whose Statehouse Democracy? Policy Responsiveness to Poor Versus Rich Constituents in Poor Versus Rich States," Elizabeth Rigby and Gerald C. Wright turn to state-level representation. They explore differences in the opinions across income groups in the American states and the representation of these opinions in policy. The next three chapters examine representation at the federal level. In chapter 8, Yosef Bhatti and Robert S. Erikson's "How Poorly Are the Poor Represented in the U.S. Senate?"

reconsiders Bartels's analysis of Senate roll-call voting and demonstrates that how one measures opinion matters for the results one gets. The next two pieces switch from Senate votes to actual policy outcomes. Chapter 9, Martin Gilens's "Policy Consequences of Representational Inequality," provides compelling evidence of an upper-income bias in representation across various issues. In chapter 10, "Inequality in Policy Responsiveness?" Christopher Wlezien and Stuart N. Soroka, by contrast, show that politicians' responsiveness to opinion change over time is surprisingly equal. Together, these chapters significantly refine our understanding of the relationship between income level and representation in the United States.

Wesley Hussey and John Zaller conclude the section with chapter 11, "Who Do Parties Represent?" In it, they examine how party affiliation structures congressional responsiveness to constituency opinion and how this relationship has evolved over time. We learn that the study of representation must take into account more than just public opinion; the authors show that the party in charge consistently matters more than constituent preferences.

James A. Stimson has the last word. In his concluding essay, chapter 12, "The Issues in Representation," he summarizes and expands on thoughts that he offered during the closing session of the conference. His comments (and banter with John Zaller) during that session served as important inspiration for the title and the structure of this book. We really cannot thank Stimson and Zaller enough, though we have tried, and Jim's chapter couldn't be a more perfect ending to this volume. His chapter also opens new doors, suggesting how virtually equal representation can propagate inequality over time.

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Notes

1. Our interest in the congruence (or lack thereof) between policy outputs and constituent preferences has theoretical roots in Hannah Pitkin's notion of substantive representation (Pitkin 1967). The focus on opinion-policy con-

gruence is also of particular relevance for understanding the extent to which different social outcomes reflect different groups' ability to see their ideal policies enacted. Of course, a lack of congruence between policy outputs and opinion does not preclude other types of representation, such as descriptive representation (Pitkin 1967).

2. Additionally, politicians tend to be richer than the median voter, so a politician representing the interests of the rich would likely be representing his or her own self-interest.
3. Of course, even when the preferences across groups are the same, we want to know whose preferences policymakers represent. Knowing who politicians pay attention to tells us why there is representation and where policy is likely to go should differences in preferences emerge.
4. To the extent that this is true, unequal representation favoring the rich may not always be a bad thing. This is not to say that it would not make any difference, of course.
5. Certainly, self-interest—economic or otherwise—does not tell the whole story of group preferences. We know, for example, that many high-income individuals support redistribution. For these individuals, socialization or values might better predict policy preferences than economic self-interest. Thus, group opinion differences might result from common socialization experiences that members of groups are likely to experience. For example, group cleavages might coincide with regional differences, such as North and South or urban and rural, or cleavages might correspond to political values, which often begin, and are reinforced, through family and group socialization (Lazersfeld, Berelson, and McPhee 1944; Campbell et al. 1960). There simply are many good reasons to think that group opinions sometimes reflect group interest and that unequal representation would have important distributional consequences.
6. For a different perspective on political awareness and opinion updating, see Enns and Kellstedt (2008).
7. Some early literature also notes patterns of homogeneity in preferences across groups. Angus Campbell and Homer C. Cooper's study of group attitudes in the 1954 congressional election concludes, "Most groups do not have an integrated pattern of political attitudes that distinguishes them from other groups. Many groups react in an individual way to specific issues but broad patterns of response are found only in the most homogeneous and sophisticated groups" (1956, 106).
8. A similar pattern also holds cross-nationally (Soroka and Wlezien 2010).
9. Results for other areas, including cities, foreign aid, space, and transportation, present a similar story. Much of the same is true for Canada. These results are available on request.
10. In theory this measure captures both the direction and the magnitude of the preference for policy change. In practice, the measure has little utility as an indicator of the "direction" of preferences—whether the public wants more or less spending—at particular times. One problem is that question wording can fundamentally alter expressed support for policy (see, for example, Weaver, Shapiro, and Jacobs 1995 on differential support for "assistance to

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the poor” and “welfare”). We cannot assume from responses to any particular survey question that the public “supports” or “opposes” a particular policy. For additional concerns with treating survey marginals as an indicator of the direction of preferences, see Soroka and Wlezien (2010, 70–71, and this volume).

11. We can also evaluate whether support increases or decreases over time. We take advantage of this possibility in subsequent analyses.
12. Using terciles from the GSS has the advantage of keeping our three categories equal in size—that is, the number of respondents in each category is the same, and no one category is more (or less) susceptible to measurement error. For income categories, and others, the total sample size is just over 1,100 on average. Approximately 5 percent of respondents do not answer the income question, leaving an average *N* of about 1,050, or 350 in each income category. Given that the income distribution reported to the GSS always is lower than what we see in census data, we also calculated using terciles from the U.S. Census Bureau. This makes virtually no difference to any of the results—specifically, using the census distribution slightly expands the range of differences. To determine preferences by income tercile, we begin with preferences aggregated by whatever income response categories exist in the individual-level survey file. We then collapse these into income terciles. When survey response categories overlap two income terciles, the respondents in this category are assigned the mean score (in the category) and allocated to the two income terciles proportionally, based on where the tercile division lies.
13. The levels of net support move roughly in parallel across income groups, so the observed differences and similarities in figure 1.1 are approximately the same at each time point (see also Soroka and Wlezien, this volume).
14. This does not mean that there is little heterogeneity in spending preferences. Soroka and Wlezien (2008) show that dividing respondents by education generates larger differences on average. The gaps in spending preferences typically are greater still across categories of party identification.
15. Although Gilens (2009, table 2) finds more differences than similarities, some interesting similarities emerge between the highest and lowest income deciles, such as support for job training for welfare recipients, child care for welfare recipients, and work requirements for welfare recipients (see also Gilens, chapter 9, this volume).
16. Because Stimson’s policy mood aggregates across hundreds of survey questions, the margin of error associated with each estimate is much smaller than had we relied on a single survey. Thus, we are comfortable analyzing smaller income subgroups than our earlier analysis (that is, income quintiles instead of terciles). Of course, income group categories offered in surveys do not always correspond exactly with income quintiles. Coding was done to ensure that for each survey, the number of respondents in the high- or low-income category never exceeded 30 percent. For the overwhelming majority of surveys, however, the percentage of respondents in the high or low category is roughly equivalent to or less than 20 percent.
17. Following Stimson (1999, 2004), we calculate the percent liberal divided by the percent liberal plus the percent conservative. We used Stimson’s (W_{cal})

dyad ratios algorithm to generate the mood indices. For all respondents, our measure of mood is highly correlated with Stimson's (Pearson's $r = 0.85$). See Kelly and Enns (2010) for an additional discussion of this measure.

18. Education levels correspond with upper and lower quintiles and then the middle 60 percent. Percentiles were calculated for each year. As with our categorization of income groups, the high and low categories never exceeded 30 percent and often fell below 20 percent.
19. The pattern also holds for specific policy domains (see Soroka and Wlezien 2008).
20. When surveys asked about degrees of partisanship, we coded strong Democrats and weak Democrats as Democrats, strong Republicans and weak Republicans as Republicans, and independents and independents who lean toward one party or the other as independents.
21. Of course, not all theories of voting predict that politicians will move to the middle (see, for example, Rabinowitz and Macdonald 1989).
22. As we would expect, an analysis of variance shows much more heterogeneity across partisan groups than for income or education groups. Partisan affiliation explains 45.7 percent of the total variance in preferences across the three partisan groups and 43.5 percent of the variance reflects common movement over time.
23. Kellstedt's series begins in 1950. However, not enough individual-level data are available for the early years, so we cannot begin our series until 1962. Consistent with the visual similarities reported for all respondents, our racial policy series correlates with Kellstedt's updated series at $r = 0.68$. This correlation actually understates the similarity between the series because we have more variability in the first few years of our survey as there are fewer questions with individual-level data available. The correlation between our measure and Kellstedt's measure jumps to $r = 0.80$ if we begin the comparison in 1966 rather than in 1962.
24. The figure also shows that the potential for policy to match one group's preferences more than others' varies over time and that this potential has declined in recent years.
25. Of course, this is true for other groups too, including gender (Box-Steffensmeier, De Boef, and Lin 2004; Clarke et al. 2004; Eichenberg 2003; Shapiro and Mahajan 1986).
26. This does not preclude significant mobilization (Piven and Cloward 1978).

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