The Strengthening Bias Towards the Wealthy in Politics: Understanding Forty Years of Influence from the Wealthy and the Educated

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Abstract

The influence of the affluent, particularly for the Republican party, is clearly visible today. We can see it in enacted policy, in bill creation, in staffing resources, and even the party platforms. But this has not always been the case. I show that the influence of affluence was much weaker in the 1970s and 1980s by introducing and analyzing a new dataset spanning four and a half decades of Congressional action and district demographics. The long time span of this data helps disentangle the independent impacts of education and income in politics. Although these two variables are highly correlated, the correlation is not perfect. With sufficient data, it is possible to isolate the impact of each. By doing so, I show the following: (1) the less wealthy used to be more influential than the affluent, (2) Republicans are more responsive to the affluent than Democrats in the modern era, (3a) omitting education from a model of the influence of affluence can artificially diminish the apparent importance of wealth, and (3b) the overall effect of education and income is best captured through a socioeconomic measure that shows a more consistent increase in the power of the privileged. The modern era not only features greater economic inequality, the evidence indicates that this has occurred along with higher political inequality in Congress.

1 INTRODUCTION

When does social status matter for political representation? The Declaration of Independence holds that all men are created equal," but does this mean that all men (and women) should be equal in political representation? One prominent theorist, Robert Dahl, encapsulated a common answer: yes, governments ought to be responsive to the interests of all citizens, considered as political equals (Dahl 1971:1). That is, citizens should be represented equally, regardless of socioeconomic status. Yet the evidence to date indicates that economic status matters. For the past decade or more, economic privilege translates directly to privilege in a wide variety of political outcomes. This fact begs the following two questions. (1) How far back does the influence of affluence go? The evidence we have is almost entirely modern, and common knowledge would dictate that economic inequality matters much more today than it has in the past. (2) Do Republicans have a stronger response to income inequality? At least one scholar shows that Republican party platforms cater more to the interests of the rich, but does this translate into how members of Congress behave? In the process of answering these questions, I untangle the confounding influence of education. The data I test my theories on covers four decades and thousands of members of Congress. This large quantity of data allows the impact of income and education to be isolated despite their high levels of collinearity. Thus, I find that social status, as determined by education and income, matters more today than it did in previous decades. I also find that the social status matters more for Republicans than it does for Democrats.

In order to find answers to these questions, I collected a novel dataset that reflects the amount and success of legislative activity in Congress from 1970 through today, then connects it with socioeconomic characteristics of their constituents. This

creates a historical profile of how members of Congress have represented different constituencies. The dataset includes legislative, personal and professional information for members of Congress, and political and demographic characteristics from 1972-2014. It connects how legislatively active members of Congress are based on the affluence of their districts, as well as other demographic district characteristics such as district education. The depth and breadth reveals not just the history of affluence, but also the history of the influence of education on legislation, and the differences between Republicans and Democrats.

For question 1, the data clearly show that the influence of affluence is a recent phenomenon. Oddly, it shows that legislators from affluent districts are producing less legislation in the 2010s than they did in the 2000s. It is also clear that influence of affluence actually reversed itself in the 1970s. That is, affluence led to less legislation. This is in line with results published by Gilens on policy responsiveness to affluence in the 1960s. The oddities of the 2010s results are explained in the next section of the paper, which deals with education and overall socioeconomic status. The result is that the influence of socioeconomic status overall has substantially increased over the past 4 decades.

For question 2, I show that the influence of affluence and education for the past forty years comes primarily through Republican members of Congress. This difference is best revealed through the combined socioeconomic impact of district education and wealth. Republicans are substantially more likely to push more legislation in districts containing high socioeconomic status residents than are Democrats.

Additionally, I show that education levels artificially distort the importance of affluence. Legislator activity is influenced by educational characteristics of their constituents in addition to the well established economic link. Education consistently

has the opposite effect of income on legislative success, yet is highly correlated with income. Thus, when education is included in a model with income, it reduces the effect of income. However, education contributes to political power in its own right, not just through increased earnings potential. Education increases knowledge of resources and individuals in the political system and can be expected to lead to greater political power.

Excluding education from the model is a classic case of omitted variable bias. When a variable of relevance, such as education, is omitted from a model and is also highly correlated with an included variable, such as income, the influence of income can be artificially distorted. This is particularly true when the independent impact education opposes the impact of income. Specifically, when two correlated variables have opposing impacts, omitting one will reduce the observed impact of the other but not its actual impact. Thus, omitting education artificially reduces the observed impact of income. Including it reveals the changing impacts of education and income in politics.

Analyzing both education and income in one model leads to the insight that education mattered more in the 1970s, and wealth matters more today. But the combined impact of education and income is also theoretically relevant to any discussion of how socioeconomics impacts politics. These two socioeconomic characteristics can easily be combined into an overall socioeconomic status indicator that improves the explanatory power of the model. When I rerun the results from questions (1) and (2), I find that the combined indicator shows a consistently increasing power on the part of the socioeconomically privileged. Thus, while income and education alone each have their own stories, I show that those who are both highly educated and wealthy, particularly amongst Republicans, have become increasingly politically

powerful through the legislative success of their representatives.

2 EXAMINING the HISTORICAL INFLUENCE of AFFLUENCE

For three decades, scholars studying the politics of class focused on political engagement. A wealth of evidence showed that, by and large, the wealthy were more engaged in the political process. They knew more, were more likely to contact their representatives, were more likely to donate (McLeod and Perse 1994, Verba and Nie 1972, Schlozman et al 2012). But the policy impact of this participation remained obscure.

Then, over the course of the past decade, political science gained the tools necessary to manipulate and analyze the larger datasets that could reveal the political impact of the wealthy. This was timely, because skyrocketing economic inequality implied that the wealthy should also be gaining political power. These studies resulted in clear evidence of political bias towards the wealthy across a host of political outcomes. When the preferences of the poor and the rich diverge, policy reflects the preferences of the wealthy, particularly in safe districts with high inequality (Gilens 2012, Ellis 2013). Senators are more responsive to the ideological and policy preferences of the rich (Bartels 2008). On foreign policy, most branches of government do not respond to the will of all constituents, instead focusing on the preferences of experts, business, and labor leaders (Jacobs and Page 2005). The exception is the House, which has a history of being the most responsive branch of government to the will of the people. Without question, the rich are better represented than the poor. Looking at policy promises instead of policy outcomes, we can see the bias

towards the rich in state party platforms (Rigby and Wright 2013). From policy promises to policy outcomes, the influence of the affluent is evident.

This line of research generally validates the connection between preferences of constituents and the actions of their representatives. Whether the measure is policy preferences or overall ideology, the votes by legislators tend to reflect the preferences of their constituents, particularly in the House (Brunner et al 2013, Erikson et al 1993, Rocca and Highton 2004). The connection is not always perfect as Dahl's ideals demand. These exceptions tend to generate interest, but even the studies that show that the rich are more influential in policy show that this a matter of degree instead of kind. The preferences of all people of all income levels are highly correlated with each other, and the preferences of the poor are reflected in policy even though the connection is stronger for the rich (Gilens and Page 2014). Legislators tend to be more extreme on issues than their constituents (Bafumi and Herron 2010) but this can coexist with a correlation between the policy preferences of constituents and their representatives. On foreign policy, the House as a whole votes in a manner that is tied to the preferences of the public (Jacobs and Page 2005). For the Senate, which tends to be less closely tied to constituents than the House, Senators reflect the preferences of registered voters, albeit worse than they reflect donor preferences (Barber 2016). The tie between preferences of the poor or middle class and policy is the strongest for social policy (Gilens 2012). Overall, the predominance of evidence indicates that legislators tend to reflect the preferences of their constituents.

Even more clear than the link between policy preferences and policy outcomes is the rising economic inequality in the United States. The past two decades have featured a clear and dramatic spike in the level of economic inequality. The wealthy, particularly the top 1%, are earning over 20% of the country's income for the first

time since 1930. Between the end of World War II and the beginning of Reagan's administration, the top 1% earned on average around 11% of the country's income (Saez 2015). Meanwhile the poor have sunk into deeper poverty (Schlozman et al 2012: 73).[1] The United States started tracking individual incomes when it instituted a progressive income tax in 1913. The level of income inequality today is equal to or worse than the most unequal and precarious era in the 1900s: just prior to the Great Depression.

While the representation of constituents through policy, the bias towards the wealthy, and skyrocketing inequality have been well established, the historical basis of the influence of the affluents has remained largely obscure. The studies on ideology and policy preferences rely on methods and data that have only recently become available. The computation of ideological scores relies on computers that are vastly more powerful to day than they were two decades ago (Poole 2005). Data on the policy votes of members of Congress started to appear as a result of the ability to tie them to ideological scores. This incentivized polling that intentionally connects voter policy preferences to legislator behavior. Thus, data that uncovers the influence of the affluent in politics is a largely modern phenomenon.

There are strong suggestions that the political power of the wealthy should have increased along with their economic power. Campaigns have become increasingly expensive, increasing the value of those who donate. Since those who donate are generally wealthy, and the wealthy donate more, the relative value of the rich donors increases along with the increase in campaign costs. The composition of the legislative body has switched from being plurality farmer to plurality lawyer over

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[1]This depth of poverty is obscured by the poverty line. Although the percent of the population below the poverty line has not increased dramatically, the number of those below the poverty line who live in deep poverty has increased.

the past century (Carnes 2013). There are suggestions that the wealthy have become increasingly insular, and as the legislative body is primarily drawn from the wealthy, they may have reduced visibility into the lives and needs of others. From the comparative perspective, more economically unequal societies tend to also be less politically equal (Rosset et al 2013). Although the increased economic power of the rich should track with increased political power, the empirical evidence has not yet been demonstrated systematically.

The only investigation to date into policy responsiveness from a historical perspective in the United States focuses primarily on overall policy responsiveness, but also indicates that responsiveness to the poor may have been stronger in the past. Gilens (2012) covers four years of the 1960s, then almost all years between 1981 and 2006,showing that overall policy responsiveness has increased for both the rich and the poor. There is also some indication that in the 1960s, policy responsiveness for the rich was dramatically reduced or nonexistent. This four year time period does not have statistically significant results. The focus of my work is on determining if earlier time periods were in fact significantly and substantially less responsive to the rich.

The increased power of the wealthy, for which we have both theoretical arguments and limited empirical evidence, should be particularly strong for Republicans. Republicans took on the interests of the business class starting in the 1920s, and Democrats shifted towards the working class under Franklin Roosevelt (Ansolabehere et al 2006). But the strength of these loyalties was diluted by racial issues. Democrats in the South had divided loyalties between representing more of the rich white elites than their northern colleagues and the working class ideology of northern Democrats. As the racial dimension subsided, southern Democrats

disappeared and left the business class interests to the Republicans. Thus, the tie between Republicans and the interests of the wealthy has become stronger over the past five decades, and Republicans should mirror this by representing the wealthy more effectively. Republicans also generally capture the votes of the wealthy when we examine votes on a district by district basis (McCarty et al 2006). Republicans have generally been shown to be more responsive to the wealthy (Brunner et al 2013, Ellis 2013) Intriguingly, while they used to capture the votes of the college educated, Democrats now win the educated (CITE). Thus, between ideology and the wealth of their base, Republicans should be more responsive than Democrats to the influence of the rich. This connection should be weaker prior to Reagan's presidency.

The dataset I introduce is well suited to testing the historical bias toward the rich for Democrats and Republicans alike. But wealth does not occur in a vacuum, and the timeframe and detail included allows me to untangle the confounding influence of other demographic factors. It is evident that income is tied to education, race, and gender in ways that are sometimes surprising. Including them without sufficient historical context and flexibility can lead to conflicting and messy results. Analyzing each on its own has been the standard, and has produced many useful results. The measure used in this paper, legislative activity, is drawn from studies of African-American representation (Rocca and Sanchez 2010, Griffin and Keane 2009, Tate 2003). The historical detail and depth of the data used here lets me uncover patterns between education, income, and political outcomes, as well as find the power of using a combined socioeconomic measure that unites education and income.

Unlike income, race, and gender, education does not have a strong line of scholarly study. It is so closely tied to income, which has been rightly viewed as

the predominant driver of political outcomes in the modern era, that it seems to have been dismissed as inconsequential. Not many studies include it in their models, and when they do it is rarely analyzed in any detail. In the two studies that trace historical inequality and political outcomes, McCarty et al (2006) includes education but does not analyze it, and Gilens (2012) focuses solely on income. Including it in my models produce results that are not surprising, but have not been examined yet. As noted earlier, Republicans have lost many educated voters. This could imply that they have ceased to be responsive to the educated as well, and this is precisely what I find. As the responsiveness of Republicans to the wealthy has increased, their responsiveness to the educated has decreased. That is, Republicans are more successful in legislation for richer districts, and less successful in educated districts.

3   THEORY and QUESTIONS

This new dataset allows me to test three theories based on the idea that time, partisanship, and education impact the influence of the affluent.

Time should impact the influence of the affluent. Economic inequality has been skyrocketing over the past three decades. As the rich control an ever larger share of our country's wealth, we expect them to increase their political power. This leads to the first hypothesis:

HYPOTHESIS 1: The influence of affluence is higher today than it was prior to 1990, so legislators from richer districts will be more successful in creating legislation.

Since the time of Roosevelt, crystallizing under Reagan, the Republican party has been viewed as the party of the upper middle class and business interests.

Democrats have come to represent the interests of the working class. Thus, as the wealthy become more powerful, the legislators who represent their interests should be correspondingly more successful in Congress. Hypothesis 2 reflects this theory:

HYPOTHESIS 2: Republicans are more likely than Democrats to respond to increasing economic inequality by increasing their legislative productivity.

As I show in the process of testing hypotheses 1 and 2, district education levels counter the effect of district wealth, yet are highly correlated. They can be combined to create a measure of overall socioeconomic privilege. Including either on their own, or together, fails to completely capture the effect of education and income.

HYPOTHESIS 3: Education is a confounding factor in a model the focuses on affluence, yet is deeply intertwined with income. Creating a measure based on education and income combined will create a more effective model.

Evidence that supports each hypothesis and the argument that time and ideology impact the affluence of influence. Socioeconomic status more strongly accounts for legislative success than does affluence alone. I address each hypothesis in turn in the remainder of this paper and untangle the disparate effects of socioeconomic status, education, and income.

4 DATA

A dataset that covers decades of political outcomes is necessary to test these hypotheses. The one introduced here traces records of legislative activity and demographic data from 1972-2014. It uses the House of Representatives alone, which offers 435 observations per year of a wide variety of rich and poor districts. Of the various branches, the House is also the most closely tied to the preferences of constituents. The connection between legislative behavior and constituent opinion tends to be the strongest in reelection years (Kuklinski 1978, Canes-Wrone and Schotts 2004), and the House offers the most frequent election cycles of the various branches of government. The House also has the smallest constituencies of the federal government, averaging around 750,000 people per district. The goal is to tie legislative activity to constituent characteristics, which are both tied to constituent preferences, and uncover a key mechanism behind the policy biases that favor the rich.

The fundamental assumption behind this study is that a legislator from a wealthy district will tend to represent the preferences of the rich more effectively than a legislator from a poor district. This assumption is supported both by existing studies and a simple text analysis of bill titles presented in the next section. As discussed in an earlier section, legislator behavior is closely tied to constituent preferences. The preferences of the wealthy have consistent differences from the preferences of the poor (Gillens 2013, Bartels 2008, Ansolabehere et al 2004). Thus, if legislators from rich districts are more effective than those from poor districts, we will observe a bias toward the preferences of the wealthy. Note that this could be amplifying a general bias towards the wealthy in all policy proposed, but as long as that bias is no stronger in poor districts than rich districts, disproportionate

legislative success will result in a policy bias toward the wealthy.

The primary measure of this dataset is legislator activity. Legislation is the way we get most major policy changes. This measure identifies one mechanism that connects the biased policy promises from party platforms to biased policy outcomes. It is far from the only such mechanism, but is the only one that can be quantified using existing digitized repositories. In the end, it yields over 10,000 observations across 40 years and 73 variables. I use seven of these variables in the current study: district income, college education, black population and party affiliation, using seniority, conservativeness, and race of the member of Congress as controls.

Legislative activity will trace the historical trend of political bias for the wealthy reflect constituent preference, and examine the mechanism connecting policy promises to policy outcomes. But why would legislators from wealthy districts have more success in legislation in the first place? The answer lies between which bills are supported by the entire House and which bills the sponsoring legislator decides to focus on. Bias toward the wealthy can come from many mechanisms. The general bias towards the rich implies that bills sponsored by the rich will more often reflect preferences of the rich and be more popular for all representatives. A second mechanism is that the wealthy are more likely to vote. After all, politicians are likely to pay more attention to the preferences of the groups who support them. But it is also true that the wealthy demand more legislative activity than the poor (Harden 2015, Griffin and Flavin 2007). Legislators from rich districts devote more staffing resources to policy instead of constituent services or communication. They also tend to communicate more about policy related matters (Foster-Molina 2016). Legislators from poor districts tend to sacrifice focusing on policy to focus on con-

stituent service matters. A third mechanism is that legislators from poor districts, at least in the modern era, should be less successful in legislation simply due to focusing on non-policy activities. What this dataset can answer is if this legislative bias toward the wealthy existed in the past as well.

I collected data from multiple sources covering legislative activity, legislator characteristics, Congressional session information, district political characteristics, and district demographics.[2]

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[2]Data was not available for committee membership, unemployment, recent arrivals in some years.

Table 1: Dataset Variables

legislative activity	legislator characteristics	Congressional session characteristics	district political characteristics	district demographics
sponsored	dwnom1	maj party	cook scores	median income
passed house	dwnom2	maj percent		mean income
enacted	partisan extremity	Dem seats		% over income $x k
cosponsored	committees	Rep seats		gini
% successful	party ID			socioeconomic
	# of committees			% unemployed
	powerful coms			% not employed
	committee chair			% BA degrees
	ranking member			% HS degrees
	days served			% white, black
	% days served			% asian, multi
	state and district			% not hispanic white
	icpsr ID			% not hispanic white, black
	govtrack ID			% old
	name			median age
	age			% ex aliens
	gender			% foreign
	hispanic			% recent arrival
	black			% abroad
				total populations

I drew this information from a variety of sources. Census data for the 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s comes from a government website. Census data for the 1970s comes

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from the ICPSR, and the data for the 1980s comes from https://www.nhgis.org/. I currently have censuses for the 93rd, 98th, 106th, 109th, 110th, 111th, 112th, and 113th Congresses. Thus, my analysis for the 1970s draws entirely upon data from the 1970 census. The natural consequence of this is that my estimates are less precise for later part of that decade. The analysis for the 1990s draws on the data from the 2000 census for 1990s districts[3] Again, my estimates are less precise for the earlier part of the 1990s. The main effect of this is to increase the size of the error bars, but the general direction of the results is consistent. The census data for the 2000s and 2010s are updated almost every year, and therefore all of my demographic estimates should have the same level of precision for the last 13 years of my analysis.

The legislator activity and characteristics data come from govtrack.us, an open source website that scrapes the government legislation pages regularly and produces various .xml and .json files for every bill introduced and every member of Congress since the first Congress met in 1789. Everything but committee data is available for our entire history. These are available for the 109th through 113th Congresses. I augment these data with nominate ideology scores from Keith Poole's website. I found district partisanship from Cook scores, available for the 109th to 113th Congresses, and created by myself from census district vote data for the 1970s. Legislator minority identification comes from the people.house.gov, and is hand coded for each Congressional session.

The primary dependent variable throughout this analysis is the number of bills sponsored by a legislator that end up passing the House. I refer to this as the amount of successful legislation. The results are consistent with a variety of other measures, including the percentage of sponsored legislation that was successful and

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[3]there is some issue with districts for the 103rd Congress as a result, but they are not substantial.

the probability that any given bill passes based on who sponsored the bill. Results for the amount of legislation that was successfully enacted into law produces weaker results that are in the same direction as the results presented here, with larger standard errors. This is to be expected; I speculate that if the ideology of the Senate and president were included in the analysis, the results would be stronger. A separate process seems to occur for the total amount of legislation put forward by a legislator, successful or not. See the appendix for a summary of these results.

The primary independent variable is district wealth, measured as the percent of a legislator's district that earned over $75,000 per household per year in 2016 dollars. This captures the percent of the district that is wealthy. The cutoff for this is not always perfectly %75,000, as the value changes according to inflation and the income brackets used by the census. It is always in the range of $65,000-$75,000, and always falls above the median income of the nation at the time. The results are consistent across a variety of wealth measures. The secondary independent variable is district education, which is measured as the percent of the district with at least a bachelor's degree. All parts of the analyses separate Republicans from Democrats because the ideologies of each party should create different kinds of responses across economic and educational levels. I do not control for the majority party in Congress because majority party and time are too strongly interwoven. Democrats controlled the House for all of the 1970s, and Republicans controlled the House for most of the 1990s and 2000s. Controlling for this would be impossible to distinguish from the time period involved. I discuss the differences between majority parties in the analysis. Finally I control for a variety of other variables, including race, seniority, and ideology. I only include those variables that are consistently available for the entire period. This requires omitting potentially important variables such as district

partisanship and committee leadership. The results are generally consistent when these variables are included in the available years, as noted in the appendix.

5   INFLUENCE OF AFFLUENCE over TIME

Hypothesis 1 claims that rising economic inequality post 1980 should be reflected in stronger influence of affluence. Gilens (2012) shows that the importance of income steadily increased from the Johnson administration in the 1960s, the Reagan administration in the 1980s, the Clinton administration in the 1990s, and George W. Bush's administration in the 2000s. The results shown below measuring legislative success are stronger, and will get stronger as the model improves throughout this paper. Gilens showed non-significant negative coefficients for the preferences of the wealthy in the 1960s, while for legislative activity I find stronger indications for a negative effect of income. This is clearer for Democrats. That is, Democrats were possibly more successful legislatively when they hailed from poorer districts in the 1970s.

For the initial analysis, I omit education as a covariate in order to align with the existing studies. This model serves as a building block towards a stronger model, and as such it is the weakest fit to the data. When education is included, the model will improve both in fit and in the insights it gives into the changing importance of class. The model improves again when socioeconomic status is used in place of education and income.

Most of this analysis focuses on a time trend of income coefficients. To demonstrate the model that produces these coefficients, I start with legislative success in two Congresses. Table 2 shows the results of a regression for the legislative success.[4]

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[4]Recall that this is the number of bills a member of Congress sponsors and the House votes to

I look at the 109th Congress, which met from 2005-2006 and had a Republican majority, as well as the 93rd Congress which met from 1972-74 with a Democratic majority. Note that I cannot include black members of Congress for Republicans because there have never been more than two black Republicans in the House, which results in too little variation for the estimation procedure.

Table 2: Successful Legislation by Partisanship, 93rd and 109th Congresses

	93rd Republicans	109th Republicans	93rd Democrats	109th Democrats
(Intercept)	-0.56	0.37	-0.31	-0.12
	(0.19)	(0.83)	(0.34)	(0.79)
% over $75k	-0.01	0.01	-0.02	-0.01
	(0.39)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.27)
% college	NA	NA	NA	NA
% black pop	-0.01	-0.00	-0.01	-0.02*
	(0.65)	(0.93)	(0.45)	(0.03)
black MC	NA	NA	-0.68	0.61
			(0.16)	(0.22)
conservativeness	0.25	-0.10	-1.16*	-0.62
	(0.75)	(0.83)	(0.02)	(0.52)
seniority	0.08*	0.08***	0.16***	-0.01
	(0.02)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.82)

The impact of income varies substantially, but at no point passes the $p < 0.05$ threshold. The expected results, that wealth should generally be correlated with more legislative success, is marginally upheld for Republicans in the 2000s (the 109th Congress). The coefficient is not significant at the $p < 0.05$ threshold, but does pass the looser test of $p < 0.10$. That is, for the 109th Congress, Republicans from rich districts were possibly more successful with legislation than were Republicans from poorer districts. As shown in Figure 1, this generally holds for Republicans in Congress post 1990. The effect is consistently around the same magnitude, and the significance just below $p = 0.10$. Due to the benefit of additional observations, ag-

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gregating all of the Republicans in Republican controlled Congresses together results in a positive and significant coefficient for wealth. Indeed, with 1,880 observations, the p-value for wealth is $p = 0.004$.

Consistent with the hypothesis that wealth has become more important, the coefficient for wealth is negative for both parties in the 93rd Congress. The result is close to the traditional significance level for Democrats. Here, however, the results are less consistently significant than they were for Republicans in the modern era. Only one grouping of Congresses results in a statistically significant negative coefficient. When the first two Congresses, 93 and 94, are combined, the coefficient for wealth is negative with $p = 0.045$. However, because there is no clear theoretical reason to aggregate the first two Congresses but not the rest of the 1970s, this is not a strong results.[5] At best, I can say that given this model is plausible that the less wealthy were better represented than the wealthy in the early 1970s.

The question then is whether these results are part of a general trend, or if they are anomalies. In order to compare all Congresses, the following graphs summarize the effect of wealth for every Congress in the dataset. The coefficient size is plotted for each Congress, and the vertical bars show the 95% confidence interval around the coefficient estimate. When the entirety of a confidence interval is above zero, we can be confident that wealthy districts were represented by more successful legislators. When it is below zero, the poor and middle class received better legislative representation.

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[5]There are a few model specifications that create statistically significant coefficients, but most specifications feature coefficients just above $p = 0.05$. For example, including employment variables or excluding seniority consistently produces statistically significant coefficients for wealth. Interacting district race and the race of the member of Congress increases the size of the errors. Including education creates both a better model and statistically significant results across almost all model specifications. In these more accurate models, the increasing influence of affluence becomes undeniable.

Figure 1: Effect of district wealth on legislative success: Democrats vs Republicans

(a) Democrats: Wealth, education omitted from model

(b) Republicans: Wealth, education omitted from model
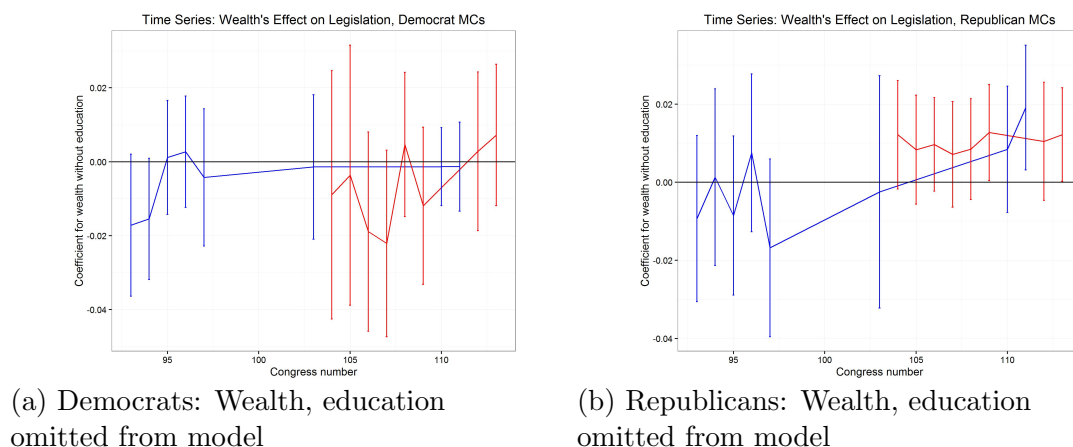
The visuals are also separated by party in two ways. The left graph focus on Democrats, while the right graph shows the results for Republicans alone. This separation is due to the fact that Republicans and Democrats should be expected to be more sympathetic to the business and working classes, respectively. In addition, the lines are color coded to indicate the majority party in Congress. This is particularly important, because when Democrats are in power the vast majority of legislation is created by Democrats. The same holds for Republicans. Thus, we can expect the coefficients for Republicans to be amplified by Republican controlled Congresses. Blue lines indicate that the session of Congress had a Democratic majority, while red lines indicate a Republican majority. Note that there were only 3 Democratic majorities for the modern era, and no Republican majorities for the 1970s. Thus, the interpretation of majority control is confounded by its close association with time.

The graphs in Figure 1 indicate that income has had an increasing impact on legislative output for Republicans. The effect is far less clear for Democrats, although the trend is more positive than negative. For Republicans, in the right

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hand graph, all but one coefficient was at or below zero in the first half of the time period, and all were above zero in the second half. Thus, there are indications that the middle class and poor class were best represented before 1990, while the upper class was best represented after 1990.

These results are consistent with the existing literature, both for modern and historical eras. As shown by these models and many other scholars, there is a clear bias towards the wealthy in the modern era. This bias is particularly strong for Republicans. There is an apparent increase in the power of wealthy districts, but the results are not strong. It also appears as if wealthy districts received less representation through legislation before 1990, but again, the results are not consistently significant.

Like most models of the influence of affluence, this model does not include citizen education. I will show that the reduces the strength of the models presented here.ar from being a confounding and inconsequential variable, education has clear statistical and substantive importance as a covariate. When the model includes education as a covariate, the results become much stronger from a statistical perspective. Substantively, we can trace the rising importance of the wealthy for Republican politicians, and the declining importance of the educated.

6   EDUCATION and OMITTED VARIABLE BIAS

The key to understanding the impact of education is to understand its independent impact on legislation while controlling for the impact of income. This is complicated by the strong correlation between income and education. The solution I present to this correlation is fourfold: (1) understanding why Democrats would prefer to represent the educated elite while Republicans prefer to represent people whose wealth

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comes from business, (2) showing how the variation within education and income can be exploited to determine the independent impacts of each, (3) demonstrating the impact these preferences have in legislative success by comparing models that include and exclude education, and (4) using Akaike's information criterion to demonstrate that the best fitting models include both education and income.

Education, income, and race are three of the most important consistently recognized characteristics for many life outcomes, from health to longevity to marriage.[6] They are known to impact political participation in a variety of ways, and in isolation each has been related to various political outcomes. This is the first study draws on the variation inherent to forty years of data on 435 districts. This variation allows the impact of each to be separated from party influences.

As shown in Figure 2, education and income are highly correlated with each other. Education is measured as the percent of the district with college degrees, while income is measured as the percent of the district that is wealthy. This is one of the strongest correlations to exist in demographic data, as is natural. Education, after all, determines employment which determines income. Income determines the education of one's children. Overall drive and ambition is tied to both educational attainment and income. With so many mechanisms driving this correlation, the two variables are tied together in a way that few other characteristics are. This is especially true at the district level, as education aggregated across over half a million people per district will necessarily remove some of the variation.

If education and income had the same kind of impact on politics, income could be treated as a proxy for education without issues. But this is not likely to be the case. While Republicans tend to win the votes of the wealthy, Democrats are

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[6]Gender has a similar level of importance, but is not included here because districts do not have as much variation in gender distributions as they do for race, income, and education.
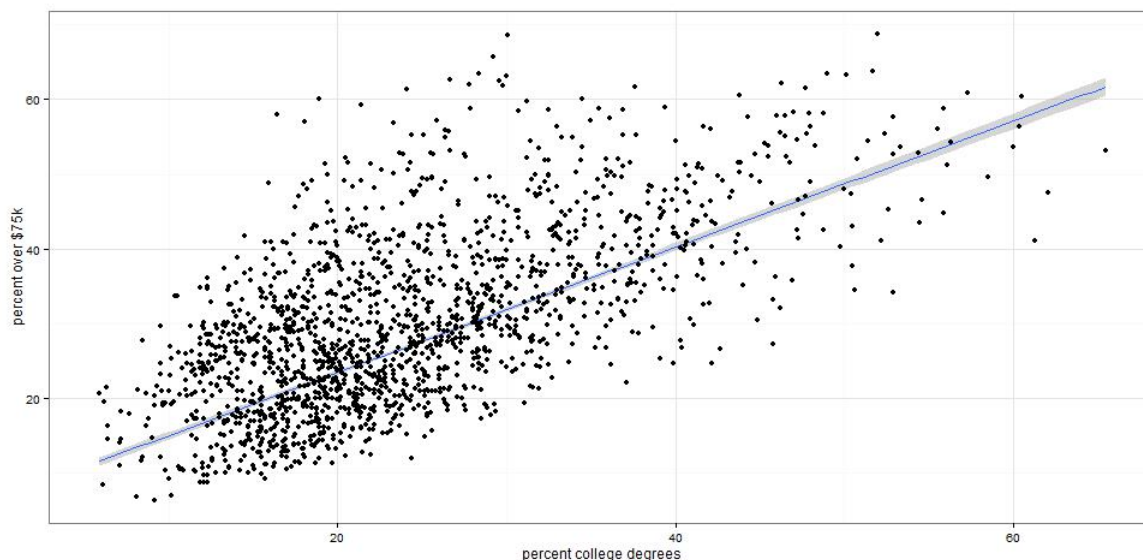
Figure 2: Collinear relationship between education and income

known as the party of ivy league intellectuals. Republicans are thought to be more responsive to economic interests of the rich, while Democrats are more responsive to the intellectual elite. Despite the strong correlation, Democrats should respond to the highly educated more than Republicans. This would imply that Republicans should prioritize the wealthy over the educated. For example, in 2006 20% of Ohio's 8th district and Tennessee's 3rd district had a college degree. Both were represented by Republicans. Because Ohio's 8th district earned an average of $9,000 more than Tennessee's district, and had 6% more wealthy residents, we would expect Ohio's representative to be more successful than Tennessee's. We see exactly this, with seven successful bills in Ohio's district compared to Tennessee's single successful bill. Here, we see an example of a Republican from a median income district who passes more bills than a Republican from an equivalently educated but poorer district. Wealth was tied to better success.

It is also possible for education to correlated with less success in legislation even

as wealth is tied to more. This is exemplified by comparing Ohio's 8th district to New York 28th's equivalently wealthy but better educated district. Despite the higher education and a representative of the same party, New York's 28th district saw 4 fewer bills passed than Ohio's 8th district. Comparing three districts, Tennessee 3rd versus Ohio 8th versus New York 28th, we can see a place where wealth was tied to more legislative success, and education was tied to less. Thus, it is both theoretically and practically possible for education to cause less success in legislation, while wealth causes more.

The high correlation and potentially opposing effects between education and income creates a perfect scenario for omitted variable bias to be substantively meaningful. Omitting education from a model can artificially diminish the impact of income and increase its variance. The effect depends on the magnitude of education's coefficient and how it is tied to wealth. Table 3 clearly demonstrates the magnitude of this bias. It shows the results for Republicans presented in Table 2 compared against the model that includes education.

Akaike's Information Criterion (AIC) is included in these reported results to give an indication of how well the various models fit. This is more effective than reporting the R^2 score because it accounts for the number of variables being fitted in the model. Lower AIC scores imply better fitting models. AIC works best when comparing different models against the same data source. Adding education to the model improves the model fit for both Congresses, but particularly for the 93rd Congress which met in the early 1970s. From a statistical point of view, the models improved by adding a variable. This implies that education is a strong independent predictor of legislative success.

For both Congresses selected as examples, the coefficient for wealth increases

Table 3: Successful Legislation: Education Comparisons

	93rd Republicans omit education	93rd Republicans with education	109th Republicans omit education	109th Republicans with education
(Intercept)	-0.56	-0.79	0.37	0.01
	(0.19)	(0.05)	(0.83)	(0.97)
% over $75k	-0.01	-0.06***	0.01	0.03*
	(0.39)	(0.00)	(0.08)	(0.03)
% college	—-	0.12***	—-	-0.02
		(0.00)		(0.12)
% black pop	-0.01	-0.01	-0.00	-0.00
	(0.65)	(0.60)	(0.93)	(0.98)
black MC	—-	—-	—-	—-
conservativeness	0.25	0.16	-0.10	-0.00
	(0.75)	(0.83)	(0.83)	(0.98)
seniority	0.08*	0.08*	0.08***	0.08***
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.00)
AIC	418	405	891	890

Notes: Negative binomial regressions, p-values in parentheses.
Republicans 93rd: $n = 195$, Republicans 109th: $n = 237$,
Democrats 93rd: $n = 253$, Democrats 109th: $n = 207$.
$^*p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$,$^{***}p < 0.001$

by several orders magnitude when education is included. The confidence intervals shrink dramatically. Both updated models have wealth coefficients with p-values well below the $p < 0.05$ threshold. Additionally, as theorized, education has a negative relationship to legislative success. This is statistically significant for the 93rd Congress, but with a p-value of 0.12 the 109th Congress coefficient is not. From a statistical perspective, the AIC, larger coefficient sizes, and smaller variances all demonstrate that a model with education fits the data better than a model that omits education.

7 EDUCATION and AFFLUENCE

In addition to be statistically more powerful, this new model reveals the changing
influence of education and income over the past forty years. Figure 3 traces the
coefficients estimated for both education and wealth levels, for both Democrats and
Republicans, across all forty years.[7]. As before, the Democrats are on the left side
and Republicans one the right. The coefficients for wealth, now estimated from
a model that controls for income, are in the top two graphs. The coefficients for
education are shown in the bottom two panels.

Figure 3 indicates why the coefficients change so drastically for the 93rd
Congress. This Congress features by far the strongest diverging impacts of edu-
cation and income. The initial model had a small negative coefficient for wealth
with a large variance. This was driven by the large negative impact of wealth inde-
pendent of education, but due to collinearity was mitigated by the strongly positive
impact of education. Overall, we see a much stronger time trend for income. We
also see larger coefficients, and smaller variances. This supports the AIC score's
indication that this model fits the data better.

There is an expectation that income had always driven more legislation. There
have been some indications that this might not be the case in the 1960s, 70s, and
80s. Gilens shows a non-significant negative response between the 50th and 90th
percentiles of education. That is, between the middle class and the upper class, the
opinions of the middle class might have been more represented through policy (2012:
202). In the initial model in this paper, the negative effects of wealth are slightly
stronger than the results reported by Gilens, but still not traditionally statistically
significant. Without accounting for the influence of education, the results have been

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[7]The model for each Congress is the same as that reported in Table 3

Figure 3: Effect of district wealth on legislative success: Democrats vs Republicans
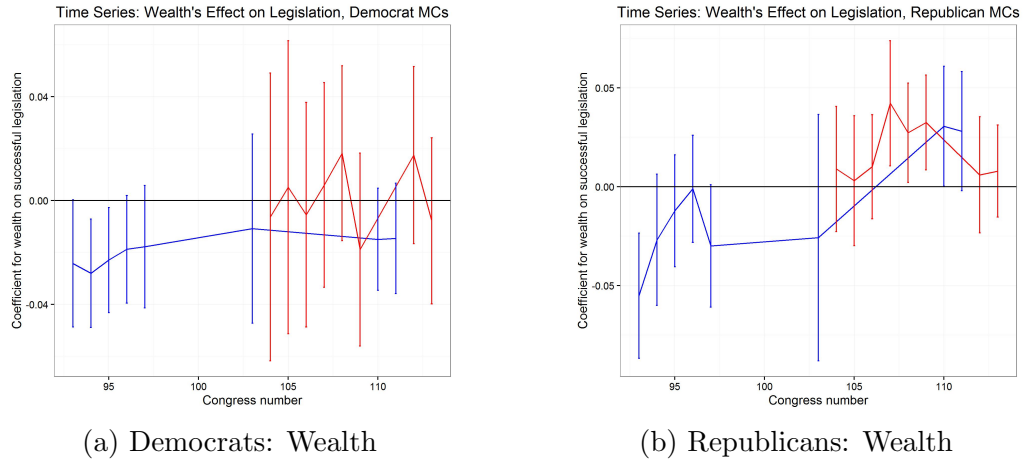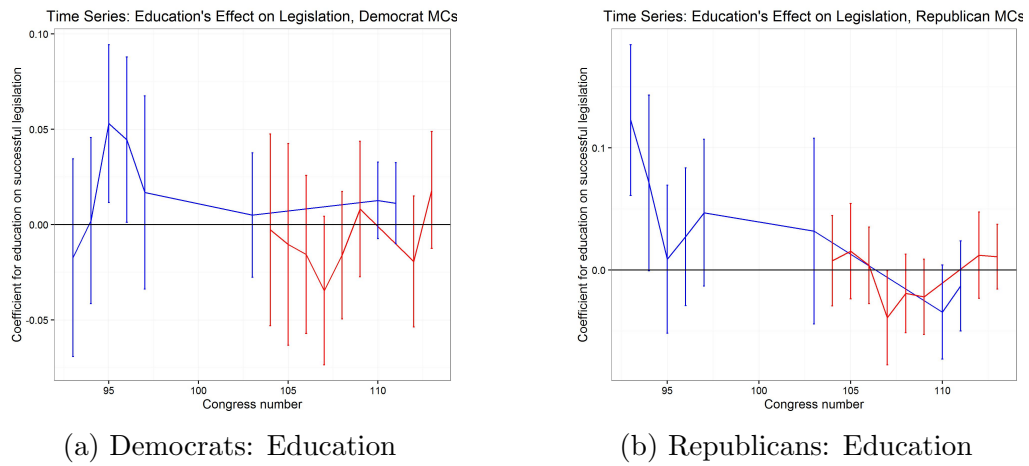

(a) Democrats: Wealth

(b) Republicans: Wealth

Figure 4: Effect of district education on legislative success: Democrats vs Republicans

(a) Democrats: Education

(b) Republicans: Education

weak. With a more sophisticated model, it becomes clear that there are times and areas of the political arena where it pays to have less money.

Figure 3 strongly bolsters the weak evidence from recent studies that wealth used to be negatively correlated with political outcomes. This was demonstrably true for both Democrats and Republicans before 1990. The positive correlation between wealth and legislative success did not appear until after 1990, and exists primarily for Republicans. Education, intriguingly, has a strongly opposing effect to income. As seen in Figure 4, as the impact of education diminishes the impact of wealth increases. This suggests that there is a relationship between legislative behavior and the demographics of the base constituencies of Republicans. As Republicans have gained wealthy voters, Republican representatives are more successful in wealthy districts. As Republicans have lost educated voters, they are less successful in educated districts.

Education's effect for Democrats is not quite as distinctive. The coefficient for education almost always mirrors the effect of income, but Democrats appear to have undergone less of a change in responsiveness to education and income. Instead of reversing their response to education over time, they have simply moderated it toward zero. Whereas there was once a legislative bias for districts with low wealth relative to their education levels, Democrats now have no apparent bias towards or away from wealthy constituents.

For both Democrats and Republicans, the time trends are apparent. Legislative bias for wealthy districts has gone up, and legislative bias for educated districts has diminished. What remains unclear is whether this trend is statistically significant. Table 4 uses Models 2, 3, and 4 to show that the time trend is not just positive for income, it is statistically significant. The models are presented in order

of decreasing fit. Model 1, which uses a combined socioeconomic measure instead of income or education alone, has the best fit according to the AIC score.

These models features a number of interactions, including one triple interaction. To ensure clarity, the equation behind Model 2 is as follows:

successful legislation = wealth* MC party * year + education * year +

wealth* MC party + wealth * year + MC party * year +

wealth + education + year + MC party + majority party +

MC conservativeness + MC seniority + percent black population

As described in Table 4, this equation changes mildly for Models 1, 3, and 4.

Table 4: Successful Legislation, All Years and Parties with Triple Interaction

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
(Intercept)	3.73***	3.69***	4.00***	5.98***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
% high SES	-0.05*			
	(0.03)			
% high SES*Republicans	0.15***			
	(0.00)			
% high SES*year	0.00*			
	(0.03)			
% high SES*year*Republicans	-0.00***			
	(0.00)			
% over \$75k		-0.09*	-0.05	-0.11**
		(0.02)	(0.08)	(0.00)
% over \$75k*Republicans		0.06	0.07	0.08
		(0.25)	(0.13)	(0.10)
% over \$75k*year		0.01*	0.00	0.01**
		(0.02)	(0.07)	(0.01)
% over \$75k*year*Republicans		-0.01	-0.00	-0.01
		(0.20)	(0.11)	(0.07)
% college		0.13**		0.10*
		(0.01)		(0.03)
year*% college		-0.01**		-0.01*
		(0.01)		(0.05)
year	-0.04***	-0.03***	-0.04***	-0.05***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Republicans	-14.69***	-12.68***	-12.79***	-13.94***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
year*Republicans	0.14***	0.13***	0.13***	0.14***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Republican majority	0.04***	-0.36***	-0.31***	-0.41***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
conservativeness	-0.34**	-0.32**	-0.33**	
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	
seniority	0.09***	0.09***	0.09***	
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	
% black pop	-0.01***	-0.01***	-0.01***	
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	
AIC	21899	21902	21915	22750

Note: Negative binomial regressions, p-values in parentheses.

Republicans: $n = 3585$. Democrats: $n = 3855$.

$^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$,$^{***}p < 0.001$

The earlier graphs and regression results allow the data to be interpreted and analyzed but do not harness the power of the full dataset. The regressions always dealt with one Congress at a time, even when the results were plotted in sequence for all Congresses. Nor were some variables of interest, such as time, incorporated into a statistical model. The benefit of Table 4 is the precision of the estimates and the inclusion of time and the differences between the parties. The downside to that they are difficult to interpret thanks to the multiple interaction terms included.[8] For example, it is clear from the visuals that income had a negative correlation to legislative success in the 1970s and a positive one after 1990. In the full model this can be inferred by combining the % over $75k results with those for % over 75k*wealth, but it is far easier to see in the graphics. The effect of party and education are similarly obscured in the full models. The visuals are based regressions run separately by year and party, which is a more efficient way to interpret interaction terms with discrete variables.

Models 2, 3, and 4 all show that the impact of income has increased over time because the coefficient for % over $75k*year is positive and statistically significant. They also show that the impact of educational levels on legislative success has diminished over time. Thus, the time trends evident in the graphs for Republicans are not due to random fluctuations in the data. The effect of wealth has in fact been increasing.

Models 2 and 3 affirms that the model fit improves when education is included. Model 3 omits education. Just as we saw for the example Congresses in Table 3, including education results in a lower AIC score, larger coefficients, and smaller vari-

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[8]Theoretically, education should also incorporate a triple interaction term of education, year, and party. Unfortunately, this is not possible from a technical perspective because it introduces too many variables. The results are consistent across every other specification, so it is safe to assume that the results would be consistent if the triple interaction involving education were included.

ances. Thus the improvement of the model holds for the entire forty-two years, not just the two Congresses shown as examples. Model 4 demonstrates the importance of the racial composition of the district, as well as the overall ideology and seniority of the representative. The model improves when these three variables are included as controls, but the coefficients for education, wealth, party, and year do not change substantially. That is, the impact of wealth is not being funneled through the independent influences of race, ideology, or experience. District wealth is important in its own right, as is district education.

Five conclusions can be drawn from the results presented so far.

1. The relevance of district wealth has been increasing, particularly for Republicans. This corresponds with the findings presented by Gilens that describe a possible positive trend in the influence of the affluent on policy. It is also tied to the fact that Republicans have been gaining the votes of the wealthy in this time period. Similarly, the relevance of education to legislation has been diminishing at the same time that educated voters stopped favoring Republicans.

2. Education improves the model in statistical terms: the models fit the data better when education is included.

3. Education improves insights gained from the model. From a qualitative perspective, the overall strong positive influence of wealth is apparent, not just the fact that the wealthy have become more powerful over time.[9] This was not as strongly apparent when education was omitted from the model.

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[9]The difference here is that wealth could become more important while still not creating more success than seen for the less wealthy.

4. So long as education and wealth have opposing influences on politics, omitting educational characteristics will artificially reduce the importance of wealth.

5. Education used to be more important than wealth in legislative success. The results here are only for the political outcomes seen in legislation. A logical inference is that this may hold for policy outcomes as well. That is, the perception that wealth has always been important may come from the fact that education is tied to wealth and education drove political outcomes. Whatever influence the affluent had came through their tendency to be more educated. The elite may have been influential in the 1970s because they were educated, not because they were wealthy.

Oddly, the graphs in Figure 3 show that the impact of wealth for Republicans has mildly decreased over the past decade. This counters the expectation that the influence of the affluent has steadily increaseed throughout the past twenty years. Yet even looking at wealth alone in Figure 1, which omits the influence of education, shows a flat trend for the past two decades for Republicans. I focus on Republicans not just due to the stronger coefficients, but also because they are the party that controls most legislation in the modern era. But neither model yet incorporates the combined impact of education and wealth.

8 A COMBINED MEASURE: SOCIOECONOMICS

It may not be true that wealth alone has become more important, but that overall privilege through both wealth and education has become more powerful. If the impact of education is diminishing more slowly than the impact of wealth, then education and income together will be tied to more legislative success over time.

Testing this idea requires creating a new variable that combines educational levels and income levels into one variables that captures the shared impact of both. Excluding education from the model ensures that the income variable is capturing some amount of the effect that is due to education. But income with education omitted only captures education through the effect of collinearity. It does not use all the information that can be brought out of the data because it excludes the independent explanatory power of educational levels.

Factor analysis provides an effective method of capturing the combined effect of income and education, ensuring that the explanatory power of both variables is incorporated into the model. One factor explains the vast majority of the variation in between income and education. The resulting factor is high for the following districts: those that are highly educated but moderately wealthy, those that are very wealthy but moderately wealthy, and those that have both middling-high education and wealth levels. This factor is scaled to be in the same range as the original percent wealthy and percent educated variables: they all run from 0-100. Doing this allows the coefficients for wealth, education, and socioeconomic status to be compared against each other.

Model 1 in Table 4 provides a summary of the results for the purposes of showing the model fit and statistical significance of the variables. Each coefficient is also statistically significant. Model 1 improves the fit of Model 2 according to the AIC score, so using socioeconomic status improves how well the model fits the data.

Figure 5 shows the substantive implications of this model. It depicts the time trends involved and the magnitude of the effect. Because all variables are statistically significant in Model 1 of Table 4, we can believe the trends and effects shown in the graph. As might be expected, the size of the socioeconomic coefficient

Figure 5: Effect of Socioeconomic Privilege on Legislative Success

(a) Democrats: SES

(b) Republicans: SES
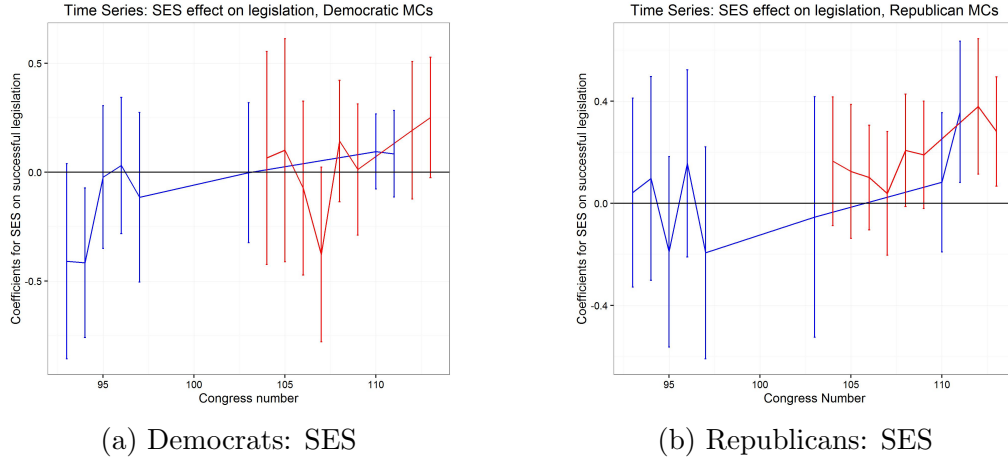
is in between the coefficients for wealth and education. More importantly, there is a clearly positive time trend. That is, the influence of socioeconomic privilege has consistently increased over the past forty-two years.

Over the past decade, representatives from districts with large socioeconomically privileged populations have consistently created more successful legislation. This is true for both Democrats and Republicans in Congress. The time trend is the strongest for Democrats, but the effect is stronger for Republicans in the past decade.

Income and education combine to cause increased socioeconomic inequality in Congress. Bills from privileged districts are disproportionately successful. This connects the privilege seen for in policy promises and policy outcomes to the mechanism of legislation. But what does this mean for the kinds of bills that are being enacted? Figure 6 shows two word clouds that describe the kinds of bills passed in the 113th Congress, which met between 2012 and 2014. Both show the differences between the descriptions of successful bills passed by legislators from privileged and not privileged districts. Due to the text analysis process involved, the words in the

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bill descriptions have been shortened in many cases. This ensures that bill descriptions with the words transportation, transport, transported, and/or transporting are all categorized under the text "transport" because they are all talking about some kind of transportation process.

Low sociocioeconomic areas tend to talk about security, floods, insurance, and transportation. Bills from districts with high socioeconomic status talk about the coast, energy, jobs and grants. This graphic is entirely descriptive, but shows the kinds of differences we would expect between bills that would favor the privileged or the not privileged. It connects amount of successful legislation to the kinds of policies passed by that legislation.

Because there are more commonalities between bills than differences, Figure 7 shows the most common words between the rich and poor. Note that the word bubble for Democrats is much smaller than that for Republicans. This is the results of Republican majority in the 113th Congress. Democrats had many fewer successful bills than Republicans. Both discuss broad concepts like purpose, amendments, unity, and the state.

The main conclusion of this section is that the past forty years have seen the influence of education and wealth skyrocket for both Democrats and Republicans. Even if wealth on its own has not seen a consistent increase in influence over legislation, wealth combined with educational levels has. The remaining question is whether Republicans respond more strongly to privilege than Democrats. Comparing the magnitude of the coefficients in Figure 5, it is clear that legislation from privileged districts is more successful for Republicans than Democrats, but is this difference statistically significant?

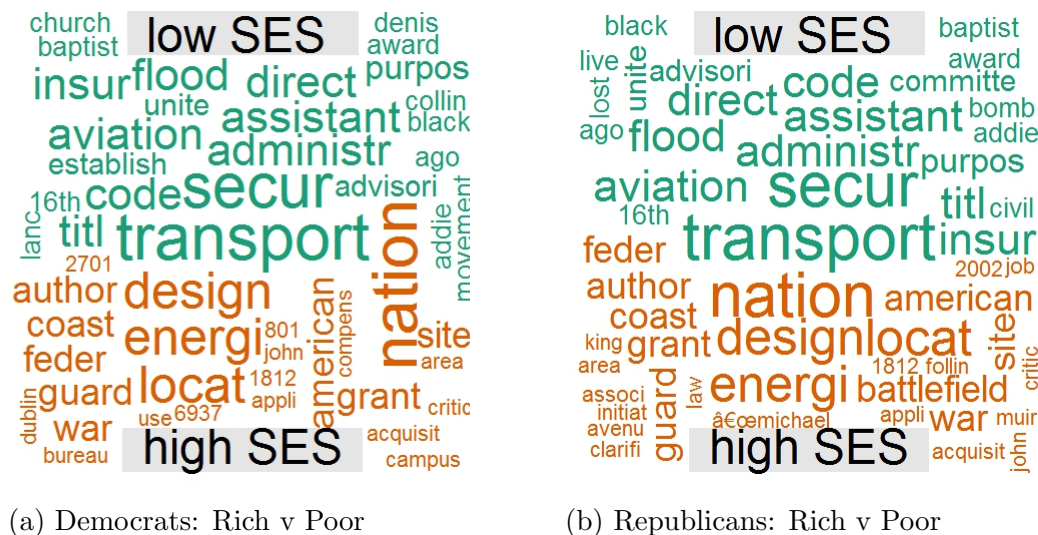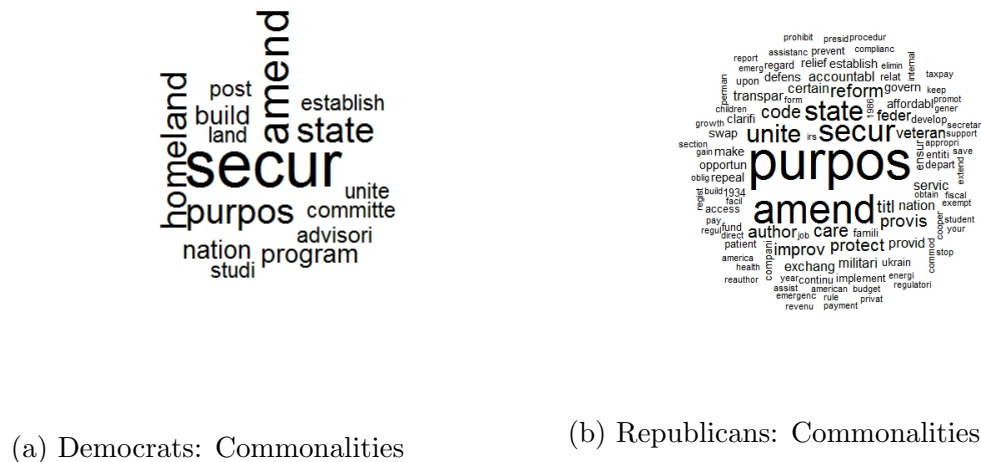Figure 6: Comparing Successful Bills from Privileged or Not Privileged Districts

(a) Democrats: Rich v Poor

(b) Republicans: Rich v Poor

Figure 7: The Commonalities Between Privileged and Not Privileged Districts

(a) Democrats: Commonalities

(b) Republicans: Commonalities

9 PARTISANSHIP and SOCIOECONOMICS

This section tests Hypothesis 2, whether Republicans and Democrats behave differently in response to socioeconomically privileged districts. The expectation is that Republicans should be more responsive to the socioeconomically privileged than Democrats. In order to determine whether there is a significant difference, I use an interaction term between socioeconomic levels and party. This shows whether the magnitude of the effect of income is significantly different between Republicans and Democrats. The excluded variable is Democrats, so a positive interaction term indicates that Republicans are more responsive to socioeconomic status relative to Democrats.

It is clear from Model 1 in Table 4 that the overall answer is yes. The coefficient for % high SES*Republicans is positive and strongly significant. Thus, across all forty years, Republicans tend to be more successful in creating policy when they represent socioeconomically privileged districts. But this strength of this bias varies over time.

Figure 8 graphs the coefficient for this interaction term for each Congress. Because these regressions are run for each Congress without creating separate datasets for Republicans and Democrats, the model used is a minor modification of those already presented in Table 2.

successful legislation = socioeconomic*party MC + socioeconomic +

party MC + % black + black MC + conservativeness + seniority

Using the same model for both parties allows the interaction term between the district's socioeconomic status and the legislator's party affiliation to be estimated for each Congress. If the interaction is statistically significant and positive, then Republicans are more influenced by socioeconomic status than are Democrats. This

is what we see happening in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Time Series of the difference between Republicans and Democrats for the effect of socioeconomic status on bill passage
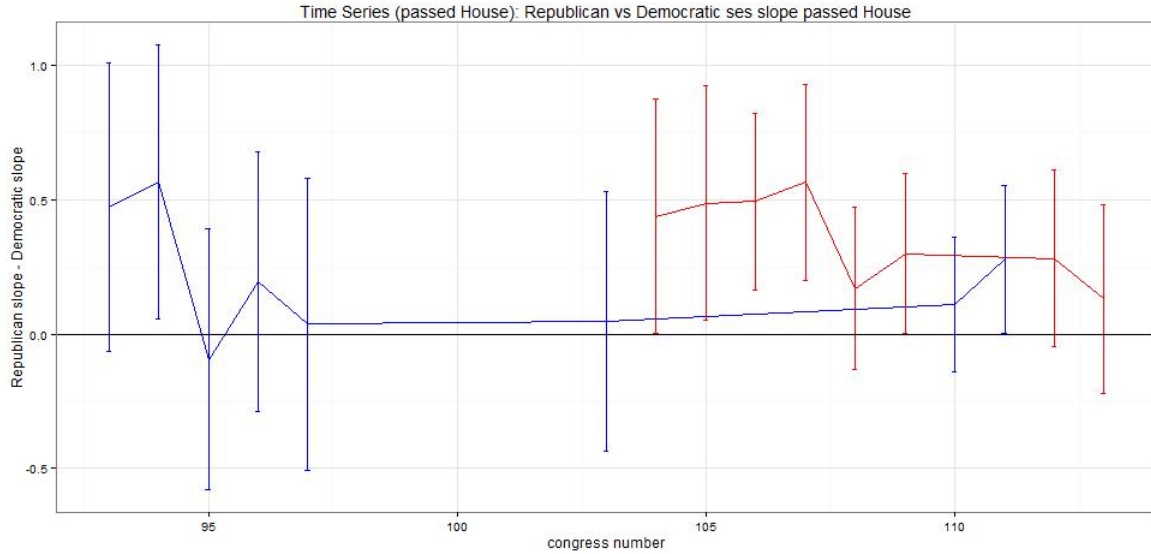
Republicans are almost always more legislatively successful in districts with high levels of socioeconomic privilege. The effect is statistically significant for all Congresses combined, and is very often statistically significant for individual years. Republicans are the most disproportionately biased toward the wealthy in the 1990s, for the 102nd through 107th Congresses. That is, Republicans favor the socioeconomically privileged more than do Democrats for most years, especially in Republican controlled Congresses. Thus, my second hypothesis that there is a difference between Republicans and Democrats is confirmed. Clearly, the socioeconomic privilege of a district affects the behavior of its representative, particularly for Republicans.

10   POTENTIAL CAUSES of POLITICAL PRIVILEGE

The last section of this paper will provide a tentative explanation for the changing importance of education, income, and overall socioeconomic status, with a focus on Republicans. We know that Republicans have lost votes from the highly educated over the past forty years as they gain votes from the wealthy. I will argue that as the wealthy became the base of the party, wealthy districts produced more mainstream and moderate legislators. These more moderate legislators find it easier to navigate the legislative process, and therefore produce more successful bills.

Table 5: Legislator Conservativeness by District Demographics

	Democrats (p-val)	Republicans (p-val)
% over $75k	-0.003 (0.00)***	-0.003 (0.00)***
% Bachelors	-0.002 (0.00)***	0.012 (0.00)***
log % black population	-0.002 (0.00)***	0.003 (0.00)***

Note: Linear regression, p-values in parenthesis.
Republicans: $n = 3585$. Democrats: $n = 3855$.
$^*p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$,$^{***}p < 0.001$

As background information, legislator ideology is strongly tied to district demographic characteristics. Table 5 shows the strength of this effect. The dependent variable here is the ideology of legislators, as measured by DW-Nominate scores. The more conservative a legislator, the closer his or her ideological score is to 1. The more liberal legislators have ideological scores close to -1. Thus, a positive coefficient indicates a tie between the district demographic and conservativeness, and a negative coefficient indicates a tie to liberality.

Overall, wealth districts tend to have more liberal legislators. For Republicans,

educated districts tend to be represented by more liberal legislators. Intriguingly, higher black populations in Democratic districts tend to have more conservative Democratic representatives once income and education are controlled for.

Figures 9 and 10 show the changing impacts of district education and wealth on a representative's ideology over time. Recall that Republicans lost votes from the highly educated as they gained votes from the wealthy. It appears that as the wealthy became a stronger part of the Republican base, Republican representatives of wealthy districts became more liberal. Because Republicans are always overall conservative, this translates to more moderate representatives in wealthy districts instead of liberal Republican legislators in wealthy districts. This provides another potential explanation for why the wealthy are more influential for Republican legislators when it comes to legislative success. The effect may be channeled through wealthy districts producing moderate legislators. Moderate legislators are closer in ideology to the median voter in the House, which is theorized to make them more successful. It may be successful by virtue of being moderateness instead of by virtue of the wealth of their district.

Educated voters, on the other hand, have ceased to be a core constituency for Republicans. This change has happened along with a shift in the ideology of the Republican party against increased funding for public schools and increased rhetoric against the ivory tower. This could indicate that educated districts with Republican representatives are at the fringes of the Republican ideology instead of part of the mainstream. These representatives would be more extreme in ideology, and correspondingly less successful in the legislative process.

Thus, a potential cause of the increasing importance of wealth in legislation may be through how sympathetic the ideological platform of each party is to the

Figure 9: Impact of Wealth on Ideology, Democrats and Republicans
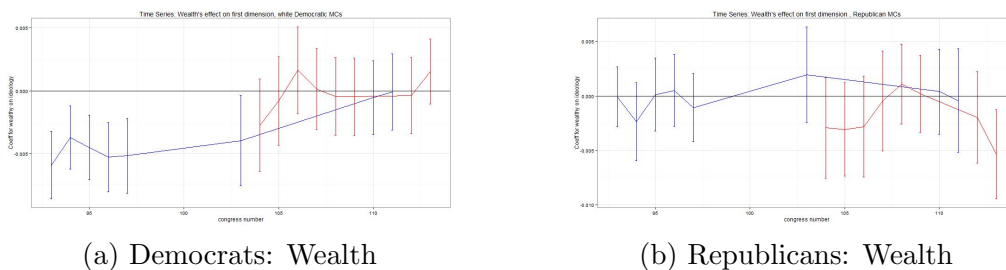
(a) Democrats: Wealth

(b) Republicans: Wealth

Figure 10: Impact of Education on Ideology, Democrats and Republicans
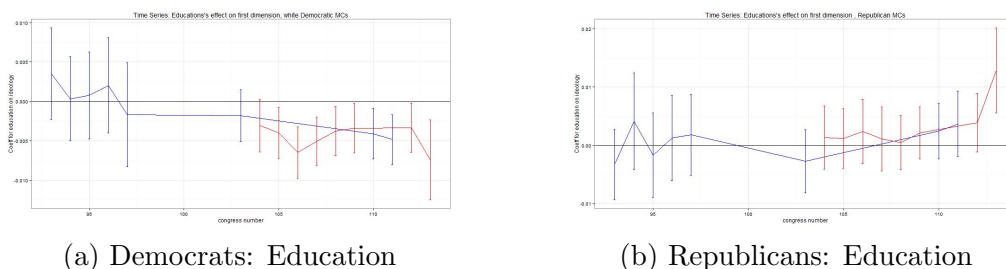
(a) Democrats: Education

(b) Republicans: Education

wealthy.

11   CONCLUSION

It is clear that those with socioeconomic privilege are disproportionately influential in the political arena. I find that this influence is consistent for the modern period, after 1990, but that the effect of privilege for the 1970s is more complex and often reversed. The impact of education is a critical part of this influence of affluence in legislation. I also show that Republicans are more affected by the socioeconomic status of their districts. Finally, I show a potential explanation via the impact of district socioeconomics on legislator ideology.

12 APPENDIX

Table A1: Successful Legislation by Partisanship, 93rd and 109th Congresses

	93rd Republicans	109th Republicans	93rd Democrats	109th Democrats
(Intercept)	-0.79	0.01	-0.51	-0.12
	(0.05)	(0.97)	(0.16)	(0.78)
% over $75k	-0.06***	0.03*	-0.02*	-0.02
	(0.00)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.31)
% college	0.12***	-0.02	0.03	0.01
	(0.00)	(0.12)	(0.21)	(0.65)
% black pop	-0.01	-0.00	-0.00	-0.02*
	(0.60)	(0.99)	(0.51)	(0.03)
black MC			-0.68	0.59
			(0.15)	(0.23)
conservativeness	0.16	-0.00	-1.22*	-0.59
	(0.83)	(0.98)	(0.02)	(0.54)
seniority	0.08*	0.08***	0.16***	-0.00
	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.80)
AIC	405	890	908	429

Notes: Negative binomial regressions, p-values in parentheses.
Republicans 93rd: $n = 195$, Republicans 109th: $n = 237$,
Democrats 93rd: $n = 253$, Democrats 109th: $n = 207$.
$^*p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$

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