

Divided by Income? Policy Preferences of the Rich and Poor within the Democratic and Republican Parties

Michael Auslen
Department of Political Science
Columbia University
michael.auslen@columbia.edu

Justin H. Phillips
Department of Political Science
Columbia University
jhp2121@columbia.edu

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Abstract

Research consistently demonstrates that differences between the policy preferences of high- and low-income individuals are surprisingly small, at least at the aggregate level. We depart from this work by considering the size of income-based differences in opinion *within* political parties. To do so, we use responses to 144 policy-specific questions in the 2010-2020 Cooperative Election Study (CES). Our effort demonstrates that differences in opinion among the rich and poor tend to be larger within the parties than in the overall population. Interestingly, these gaps are largest among Democrats. We find that these larger gaps persist even after accounting for the party's racial and ethnic diversity. Furthermore, among Democrats, class-based gaps in opinion are larger than the gaps we observe among other potential intraparty cleavages, such as age, gender, and religiosity. Our results suggest important implications for the growing literature on representational inequality.

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Any discussion of the state of public opinion in the United States would almost certainly highlight two well-documented findings. The first is that Americans are sorted along party lines. These days, an individual's partisan self-identification is often the best predictor of the political opinions she holds and the choices she makes in the voting booth (McCarty 2019; Erikson and Tedin 2019). Indeed, Democrats and Republicans increasingly find themselves on opposite sides of salient political debates (Fiorina 2017). A second key finding is that political differences by class (at least when class is measured by income) are surprisingly modest. Despite having seemingly divergent economic interests and despite growing economic inequality, the policy preferences of high- and low-income survey respondents are strongly correlated (Bartels 2008; Soroka and Wlezien 2008; Enns 2015). Recent analyses indicate that these groups tend to agree in policy debates much more often than they disagree (Branham, Soroka, and Wlezien 2017; Maks-Solomon and Rigby 2019; Lax, Phillips, and Zelizer 2019).

Together these findings make it clear that measures of economic class, such as income, take a back seat to partisanship as a driving force in American politics, at least at the aggregate level. Our aim here is not to challenge this claim. Rather, we contend that a next step is to look inside political parties, foregrounding the intersection of partisanship and income in scholarly inquiry. It is possible that income differences in intraparty politics are systematically obscured in analyses of surveys, exit polls, and political behaviors that combine all individuals, regardless of political affiliation. Similarly, intraparty conflict may be masked in situations in which partisanship becomes a particularly meaningful consideration, such as casting a ballot in general elections and roll call voting in legislatures.

Here we depart from existing work and begin to look for intraparty conflict between the rich and poor. Specifically, we ask to what extent do the policy preferences of relatively high- and

low-income individuals differ *within* the Democratic and Republican parties? Are these differences in opinion larger and more common in one party than the other? How do they compare to those observed in the full population? Are there certain policies or issue domains for which intraparty income polarization is particularly high?

As we show below (via a toy example), the absence of meaningful opinion differences by income in the general population, does not mean that there is also widespread policy agreement by income within each party. Indeed, it seems plausible to us that large opinion gaps may be especially prevalent among Democrats. Studies of the party system have increasingly moved away from unified theories, focusing instead on asymmetries between the parties and the implications of these asymmetries for campaigns, elections, and governing. A key finding to emerge from this work is that the Democratic Party can best be thought of as a heterogeneous coalition of interest groups and, because of this, Democrats tend to exhibit less ideological consistency (Mayer 1996; Grossman and Hopkins 2016). While work in this tradition has helped motivate our inquiry, we believe that we are the first to focus on potential partisan asymmetries in class polarization.

Understanding these asymmetries also has implications for the booming literature on representational inequality. Growing evidence demonstrates that lawmakers prioritize partisan considerations, particularly voting the “party line” and the opinions of their copartisan constituents, when deciding how to vote on key bills (Kastellec et al. 2015; Maks-Solomon and Rigby 2019; Lax, Phillips, and Zelizer 2019). This means that a first step in the study of how well (or how badly) low-income Americans are represented in government is knowing whether and on what issues each party is divided by income. Armed with this knowledge, one can then focus on areas of intraparty disagreement (if they exist) and document whether the preferences of the rich or poor are more likely to prevail across a variety of venues, not simply legislative roll call voting, but also

in shaping the party line. While this second step is beyond the scope of what we can reasonably do here, our analyses provide important new insights that can help guide such inquiries. As Enns and Wlezien (2011, p. 5) write, “before we can understand who gets represented, we must first understand group differences in policy preferences.”

For our analyses, we rely on six large national opinion surveys, conducted from 2010 through 2020 as part of the Cooperative Election Study (CES). Collectively, these surveys contain 294 questions that ask respondents whether they support or oppose specific public policies. These policies cover a range of issue domains and vary widely in terms of salience. Using these questions, we create measures of opinion difference (“opinion gaps”) by income for the full population and for our two partisan subgroups of interest—self-identified Democrats and Republicans. All of our measures of opinion gaps are created using bootstrapped samples. While our key comparisons focus on opinion differences between the top and bottom income deciles, we also consider differences between the top and middle. Furthermore, we compare the size of opinion gaps by income to the size of opinion gaps for other potential intraparty cleavages, such as race, age, gender, and education.

We consistently find that opinion gaps between those with high and low incomes are greatest among Democrats. The gap in policy support between rich and poor is ten percentage points or higher for Democrats in a majority of survey questions. For Republicans and the full sample (which includes independents) similarly-sized differences in opinion exist for only 24 percent and 21 percent of survey questions, respectively. Importantly, the much higher levels of income-based differences in opinion among Democrats is not driven by just one or two issue domains. We also show that the party’s larger opinion differences are present even after controlling for race, suggesting that they cannot be explained by Democrats’ higher levels of racial and ethnic diversity alone.

Indeed, among Democrats we observe that opinion gaps by income are larger than the gaps we observe for any other potential cleavage. Our findings suggest that analyses which focus exclusively on aggregate polarization are missing the largest income differences in public opinion.

That being said, there are important nuances to these results—it is not the case that opinion differences between the top- and bottom-income deciles are always largest among Democrats. For instance, the most dramatic examples of intraparty opinion gaps in our dataset occur among Republicans on a handful of obviously redistributive debates, such as progressive taxation, the minimum wage, and “Medicare for All.” For Democrats, we observe the largest opinion gaps on social issues and foreign policy. As these examples illustrate, we find that the Democratic and Republican parties tend to experience large differences in opinion on different sets of issues.

While we uncover overlooked evidence of income-based differences in public opinion, we also take care to properly contextualize these results. Among each partisan group, for example, the rich and poor are rarely on opposite sides of a policy debate. In this way, most of the differences in opinion that we observe are best thought of as differences in the degree of policy support among party-class subgroups, rather than as polarization or substantive disagreement. Such differences are not without potential consequences for representation, however. Many empirical studies of responsiveness have relied upon differences in preference intensity across groups to untangle whether and why different types of constituents have a greater impact on roll-call voting and lawmaking (cf., Bartels 2008; Gilens 2012).

Literature Review

We begin by briefly reviewing two literatures that motivate and inform our efforts here.

Class Polarization

One might reasonably expect the rich and poor to hold contrasting positions on a variety of salient public policy matters. Theoretical work, for example, frequently stresses that objective political interests should vary across income groups (Meltzer and Richard 1981). Class-based conflict, however, does not appear to play a central role in contemporary American politics. This is true despite the fact that wealth disparities and economic inequality have grown substantially since the 1970s.

Using national surveys, a number of recent studies have found that the overall correlation between the policy preferences of low- and high-income survey respondents is quite strong (Soroka and Wlezien 2008; Gilens 2012, 2015; Gilens and Page 2014; Enns 2015; Maks-Solomon and Rigby 2019; Lax, Phillips, and Zelizer 2019). The most detailed of these analyses is that of Branham, Soroka, and Wlezien (2017). Using the impressive dataset compiled by Gilens, they investigate differences across income groups in support for 1,779 policies over a 22-year period (1981-2002). The correlation they uncover between the preferences of the top and bottom income deciles is a whopping 0.84, and they find that majorities of these two groups prefer the same policy over 80% of the time. This tendency towards policy agreement across income groups is so strong that it has complicated empirical efforts to evaluate whether the rich have a greater influence than the poor or middle classes on government policymaking.¹

Of course, the tendency toward agreement does not mean that class or income are unimportant considerations in American politics. In many policy debates, there are substantial gaps between the mean opinion of low- and high-income individuals. Lower-income survey respondents,

¹For example, because of these high correlations, Gilens (2015) focuses much of his empirical analysis on the subset of policies for which there is at least 10-percentage-point gap between the preferences of the top and bottom income deciles or the top and middle deciles.

for instance, are usually more likely to support redistributive government programs, progressive taxation, isolationist foreign policies, and conservative positions on social issues (Erikson and Tedin 2019). Historically, income has also been an important predictor of partisan attachments and voting behavior, with lower-income individuals being somewhat more likely to affiliate with the Democratic Party and to vote for its candidates (Stonecash 2000; Bartels 2008). Still, efforts to unearth large class-based differences in American politics have (for the most part) come up short.

Partisan Polarization

While economic class does not appear to be a major cleavage in American politics, partisanship certainly does. For some time, scholars and observers of politics have noted that the American public is increasingly polarized along party lines (Abramowitz and Saunders 2005; Ba-fumi and Shapiro 2009; McCarty 2019). Evidence suggests that this polarization has been on the rise since the 1990s and that it is likely driven by partisan sorting (Fiorina and Abrams 2008; Lev-endusky 2009; Fiorina 2017). Sorting occurs when voters either switch their partisan affiliation to be more consistent with their ideology and policy beliefs or when they shift their ideology and policy beliefs to be consistent with their partisanship.

One clear manifestation of these trends is the large and growing correlation between an individual's partisanship and the policy positions that she holds. For instance, Lax, Phillips and Zelizer (2019) found that the mean state-level difference in opinion between self-identified Democrats and Republicans is approximately 38 percentage points, and that they disagree on policy 62% of the time. On average, these partisan divisions are between 3 and 4 times as great as state-level divisions by income.

The strength of partisanship seems to override other potential considerations (including

class-based considerations) when voters cast ballots and when lawmakers cast roll call votes. Scholars argue that one's partisan affiliation is a deeply held identity (Campbell 1960; Palmquist, Green, and Schickler 2002; Achen and Bartels 2016). Indeed, it is often the best predictor the choices individuals make in the voting booth (McCarty 2019; Erikson and Tedin 2019). Partisan antipathy even structures people's social interactions with one another outside of political contexts (Mason 2015; Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes 2012; Iyengar and Westwood 2015). Similarly, the behavior of political elites is increasingly divided along party lines (McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2016). Mounting evidence shows that elected officials vote the party line on key issues, even if that means ignoring constituent opinion (Krimmel, Lax, and Phillips 2016; Lax, Phillips, and Zelizer 2019).

Looking within Parties

Given that partisanship seems to overwhelm so much else at the aggregate level, we believe that it is worth looking under the hood of each political party. Are there internal divisions that are later masked by party loyalty? If there are significant intraparty disagreements between the rich and poor and one group systematically prevails when it comes to setting the party line, this could have important downstream implications for representational inequality.

Absent income-based policy disagreement at the aggregate level, divisions may still persist within the parties. Consider, for example, some policy that Democrats generally favor and Republicans generally oppose. If the rich are more likely than the poor to take the party-line position (or vice versa), then one could see considerable gaps in opinion within the parties but very little in the public overall. If 60% of rich Democrats 45% of poor Democrats support the policy, there would be a 15-point disagreement by income among Democrats. Likewise, if 40% of rich Republicans

and 55% of poor Republicans support the policy, the opinion gap is also 15 points. But aggregating across the two parties (assuming they each constitute half of the public), there would be zero disagreement between rich and poor. By focusing on the aggregate-level, these divides would be hidden from view in most analyses.

If intra-party differences exist, we expect that they are more likely to be present in the Democratic Party. The recent literature on asymmetric parties argues that the Democratic and Republican parties are not “interchangeable in their composition, objectives, and behavior” (Grossman and Hopkins 2016, p. 13). In particular, scholars have written that the Democratic Party is a coalition of heterogeneous interest groups (akin to a large legislative and electoral logroll), while the Republican Party is much more homogeneous and ideological (Galvin 2010). Democrats are thus more divided than Republicans both ideologically and in their opinions across a range of cultural, foreign policy, and economic matters (Mayer 1996; Grossman and Hopkins 2016; Rosenfeld 2018). Indeed, there are important factions or interests at the core of the Democratic coalition that are likely to differentially reflect the desires of low- and high-income partisans. Two interests that most immediately come to mind are blue collar labor (who tend to be lower-income) and environmentalists (who tend to be higher-income). We can see this particular divide in survey data that asks whether respondents would support protecting the environment, even if it means losing some jobs. Among high-income Democrats, 56% agreed with this statement, while just 31% of low-income Democrats did (CCES Common Content, 2013).

An implication of the asymmetric parties literature is that we might expect greater disagreement between the rich and poor in the Democratic Party. While (to the best of our knowledge) this has not been fully evaluated in any published studies, two recent articles from the representational inequality literature provide some preliminary, though inconsistent, insights. Maks-Solomon and

Rigby (2019), while silent on which party has the largest income-based preference gaps, find evidence that the opinions of rich and poor Republicans are most likely to differ on economic issues while class-based differences are most apparent among Democrats on social issues.² Contrary to the implication of the asymmetric parties literature, Lax, Phillips, and Zelizer (2019) find modest evidence that the rich and poor Democrats are actually more likely to share opinions than are rich and poor Republicans. It is important to note, however, that neither of the aforementioned studies centers its analyses around intraparty differences in opinion. As such, the relevant findings are incidental to the authors' main analyses and not explored in the sort of detail that we do below.

In light of the possibility for class-based policy disagreement to contribute to representational inequality in the parties—especially among Democrats—an important first step is answering the basic empirical question of whether intraparty differences between the rich and poor exist in the first place.

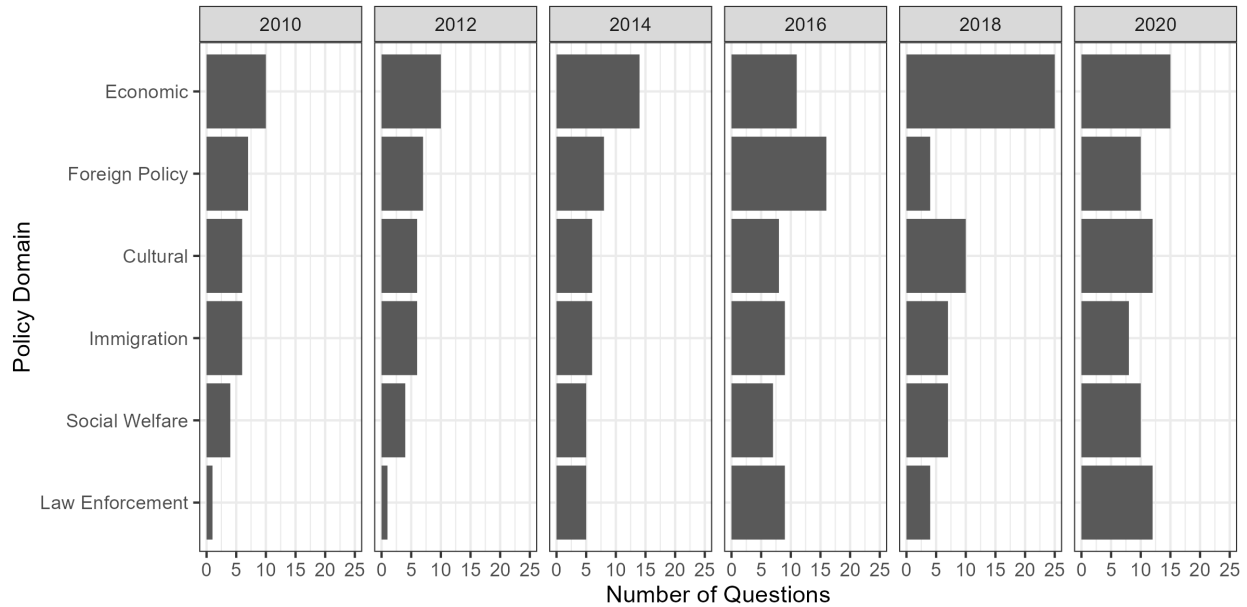
Survey Data

The survey data that we use throughout this manuscript are from the 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, and 2020 Cooperative Election Studies (CES, formerly CCES). CES data are ideal for our investigation for two reasons. First, respondents are asked many policy-specific questions across a range of domains. The diversity of questions enables us to identify aggregate patterns and see whether these hold across domains. Second, each CES survey has a large number of respondents (the average per survey is 59,267). This allows us to confidently estimate opinion within partisan-class subgroups, which would not be possible using a standard-size national poll.

Across the six surveys used here, we have identified 294 policy questions, which we cat-

²The scope of the Maks-Solomon and Rigby analysis is more modest than our analyses here. Their conclusions are based on survey data of 11 economic issues and 7 social issues.

Figure 1: Policy Question Topics in the CES by Year.



Note: This plot reports the numbers of questions that we classify into each policy domain from the full 2010-2020 CES series of 294 issue questions.

egorize into six domains: economic, foreign, cultural, immigration, social welfare, and law enforcement. Figure 1 shows the number of policy questions by domain for each survey year, while Table 1 provides examples of a few of the issues that fall into each. A complete list of survey questions can be found in Appendix A. The vast majority of these policy questions ask respondents for a binary answer—e.g., “Do you support or oppose cutting the corporate income tax rate from 39 percent to 21 percent?” In a few cases, participants were given several potential answers to a question. When possible, we convert responses into a binary or series of binary responses; if doing so is not feasible, we exclude the question from our analyses. We coded all questions so that 1 is always support for a given policy and 0 is always opposition.

In order not to give undue weight to questions that are asked repeatedly, we include duplicated questions only once in our main analyses. For these questions, we use responses from the

Table 1: Sample Issues by Policy Domain

Topic	Issues
Law enforcement	gun control; policing; mandatory minimums; state law enforcement spending
Immigration	border controls; DACA; refugees; travel ban; sanctuary cities
Cultural	abortion; LGBTQ rights; Supreme Court nominations
Economic	taxes; trade and tariffs; environmental policy; climate change; debt ceiling; farm bill; highway funding
Social welfare	health care; education; affirmative action; state education, welfare, and health spending
Foreign policy	military and security; response to ISIS; UN; foreign economic sanctions

most recent survey year. This leaves us with 144 unique questions. For the number of questions by issue domain, see the second column of Table 2.

Measuring Opinion Gaps

We are primarily interested in what we refer to as the *opinion gap* between relatively high- and low-income people. We define this measure as the absolute value of the difference in mean policy support between respondents in the top and bottom income deciles. To estimate this measure for Republicans on issue i , for instance, we use the following formula:

$$OpinionGap_i = |Support_i^{R,rich} - Support_i^{R,poor}|$$

We create question-specific measures of this gap for the full sample and for two partisan subgroups—self-identified Democrats and self-identified Republicans. Because we measure the opinion gaps as absolute values, they always take a value between 0 and 1, where higher numbers indicate greater disagreement between affluent and low-income respondents.

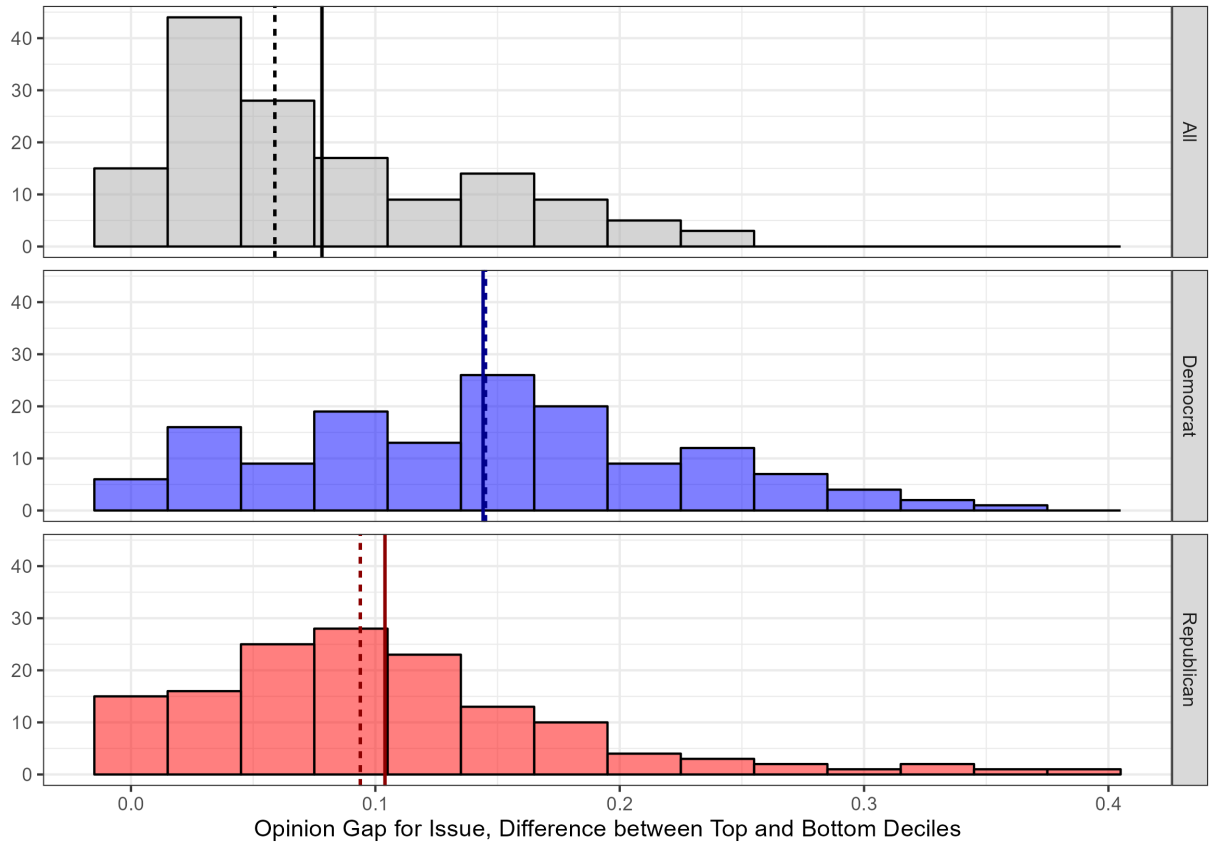
In calculating opinion gaps, we use self-reported family income available in the CES. Because the CES reports income in ranges, we take all members of the most extreme income groups and then sample at random from less-extreme income groups until our top and bottom deciles each constitute 10% of the sample. For example, the bottom decile for 2020 includes all 3,676 respondents with incomes less than \$10,000 and a random sample of 2,424 from the 4,639 respondents with incomes between \$10,000 and \$19,999, for a total of 6,100 respondents.³ We define the top and bottom income deciles at the level of the overall sample, so individuals are not reassigned to deciles based on the distribution of income within the Republican and Democratic parties. This means that in one party in a given year, there may be more members of the top decile than the bottom decile, or vice versa. In Appendix B, we define the top and bottom income deciles within each party (instead of in the full population), and our results are unchanged.

Our approach presents two potential problems: first, our analyses may be sensitive to which respondents are assigned to the top and bottom income deciles. Second, by simply comparing mean opinions of subgroups of the CES, we cannot estimate a standard error for our main variables of interest. We address both issues by using bootstrapping. Rather than presenting a single estimate from the full dataset, we instead present the median of a sampling distribution simulated using 1,000 bootstrapped samples of the CES. Each time we re-sample the dataset, we also re-assign top and bottom income deciles. This results in more stable estimates of all of our quantities of interest.

Finally, some might wonder about our decision to use income deciles to distinguish between “rich” and “poor” respondents as opposed to some other threshold such as quintiles, quartiles, or terciles. We opt for deciles in order to capture potentially meaningful differences in income

³Likewise, the top decile in 2020 includes all 1,431 respondents with incomes above \$150,000, plus a sample of 2,129 of the 3,560 respondents with incomes between \$120,000 and \$149,999. On average, each decile includes 6,067 people.

Figure 2: Income Gaps across Issues by Party



Note: Histogram shows the distribution of within-party opinion gaps for each issue. Solid line indicates the income-based opinion gap for the mean issue; dashed line indicates median issue opinion gap.

(and, ultimately, some arbitrary threshold needs to be selected). Furthermore, this threshold has been used elsewhere in the literature (cf., Gilens 2012). That being said, in Appendix B we present results using different thresholds. As we increase the size of income groups (e.g., go from using deciles to terciles) the size of the opinion gap predictably becomes smaller. Nevertheless, our main results hold even as the magnitude of opinion differences shrinks.

Results

Opinion Gaps by Income in the Parties

We first consider the size of income-based opinion gaps across the 144 unique policy questions in our dataset. Figure 2 is a histogram displaying the distribution of these gaps among all respondents (including independents), those who self-identify as Democrats, and those who self-identify as Republicans. We exclude partisan leaners from the party-group analyses, although the results look nearly identical if we include leaners with their respective parties (see Appendix B). The x-axis displays the size of opinion gaps, while the y-axis is the number of policy questions. The solid vertical line in each panel is the mean opinion gap for each group across all issues; the dashed line is the median.

The figure shows that both Democrats and Republicans tend to have larger opinion gaps than does the full sample of respondents. Across all policy questions, the mean gap in opinion between the affluent and poor in the full sample is 7.8 percentage points. Among Republicans the size of this gap rises to 10.4 points and among Democrats to a much higher 14.4 points. Tests of statistical significance show that the opinion gaps within each partisan subgroup are significantly larger, at the 99-percent level, than the gap among the full population and that this gap is significantly larger among Democrats than Republicans.⁴ While we do not have the space here to explore temporal dynamics in the size of opinion gaps, in Appendix G we consider whether the size of these gaps has changed over the 11-year span of our dataset.

Table 2 goes beyond these aggregate numbers and summarizes opinion gaps by issue do-

⁴Of the four partisan subgroups we analyze, high-income Democrats most frequently take the position consistent with their partisanship, doing so 77% of the time. By comparison, rich Republicans hold ideologically consistent views 64% of the time, low-income Democrats do 65% of the time, and low-income Republicans 56% of the time. In Appendix F we present data on consistency.

main. The first column identifies the relevant domain, the second reports the number of unique survey questions within each, and the third displays our measure of opinion gaps. In the remaining columns we make use of this measure to further understand the scope and substantive importance of intraparty differences in opinion.

We begin by considering the results in Column 3. Here we see that the larger income-based opinion gaps among partisan subgroups (shown above in Figure 2) persist across all or nearly all policy domains. In each of the six domains we analyze, the opinion gap among Democrats is larger than what we observe in the full population. This is also true for Republicans, with the exception of foreign policy. It is also worth noting that, with only one exception, Democrats have the largest average opinion gaps across all domains. The exception is Republicans in the social welfare domain, where the opinion gap is 3.2 percentage points larger than the Democratic gap.

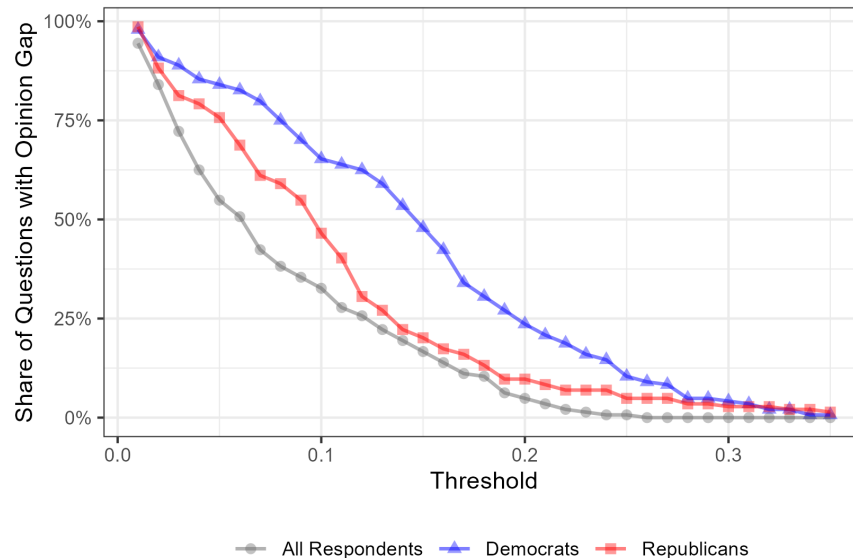
The fourth column presents the share of policy questions for which the difference of opinion between high- and low-income respondents is greater than zero at the 95-percent level of statistical significance. Perhaps unsurprisingly (given the large number of survey respondents per question), we find that, in all groups, opinion gaps tend to be statistically meaningful for the vast policy questions.

Of course, merely looking at whether opinion gaps are statistically different from zero does not tell us a great deal about their size or meaningfulness. To do this, we borrow a standard used by Gilens (2012). In his work on representational inequality, Gilens focuses much of his analysis on instances in which the opinion gap between the top and bottom deciles is greater than 10 percentage points, assuming that gaps of this size represent substantively important differences of opinion. This assumption seems reasonable to us, and we follow his lead in the fifth column. Here, we report the percentage of policy questions by domain for which the opinion gap is greater

Table 2: Opinion Gaps by Issue Domain and Party

Policy Domain	Number of Unique Issues	Average Opinion Gap	Opinion Gap Statistically Significant	Opinion Gap Greater than 10 pts.	10 pt. Gap + Disagreement on Policy
All Respondents					
Law enforcement	16	0.041	62.5%	6.2%	0%
Immigration	22	0.054	86.4%	18.2%	0%
Cultural	18	0.069	88.9%	33.3%	11.1%
Economic	45	0.075	88.9%	31.1%	4.4%
Social welfare	20	0.106	100%	40%	15%
Foreign policy	23	0.116	87%	60.9%	21.7%
Total	144	0.078	86.8%	32.6%	8.3%
Democrats					
Law enforcement	16	0.139	100%	62.5%	6.2%
Immigration	22	0.131	90.9%	68.2%	9.1%
Cultural	18	0.158	94.4%	72.2%	11.1%
Economic	45	0.138	86.7%	66.7%	15.6%
Social welfare	20	0.123	100%	50%	5%
Foreign policy	23	0.179	87%	69.6%	26.1%
Total	144	0.144	91.7%	65.3%	13.2%
Republicans					
Law enforcement	16	0.086	81.2%	37.5%	6.2%
Immigration	22	0.067	59.1%	22.7%	0%
Cultural	18	0.096	77.8%	44.4%	0%
Economic	45	0.121	88.9%	60%	13.3%
Social welfare	20	0.155	85%	75%	15%
Foreign policy	23	0.079	73.9%	26.1%	0%
Total	144	0.104	79.2%	46.5%	6.9%

Figure 3: Meaningful Opinion Gaps at Various Thresholds



Note: This plot reports the share of issues for which the opinion gap between high- and low-income respondents is at least as great as the corresponding threshold, plotted on the x-axis.

than 10 points. For ease of exposition we refer to these as “substantively important gaps.”

Again, we uncover evidence that there are larger gaps within the political parties than among the full population. For the full population, we observe a 10-point opinion gap for only 33% of the issues. Among Republicans this number rises to 47% and among Democrats it jumps to 65%. Indeed, Democrats seem to have uniquely large opinion gaps, experiencing substantively important gaps on a supermajority of all survey questions (nearly double the rate for the full sample). In all domains, Democrats experience substantively important gaps on a majority of questions. Among Republicans and among the full population, meanwhile, there are no policy domains in which the difference between affluent and low-income opinion is greater than 10 points on a majority of survey questions.

One potential concern about these results is that they may be sensitive to the 10-point threshold we borrow from Gilens. Figure 3 plots the share of issues on which each party has a

substantively important gap when we vary this threshold. For all thresholds below 25 percentage points, we find that Democrats are more polarized by income across a greater number of issues than either Republicans or the full sample. Once we arrive at this high threshold, there are very few observations—that is, opinion gaps rarely exceed 25 points in any of our three groups of interest. Republicans exhibit meaningful gaps on more issues than the full sample until the threshold reaches 0.12. At this point, Republicans’ opinion differences look similar to the public overall.

In the last column, we take the issues that meet Gilens’ 10-point standard and ask whether rich and poor respondents are on opposite sides of the 50-percent threshold (i.e., does the majority of each group prefer a different policy?).⁵ We report the policies that meet these criteria as a share of all policies. Using this measure, we find that majorities of the rich and poor rarely disagree in this way. Indeed, our result is consistent with research in the literature on representational inequality. That being said, we do find that this sort of disagreement is most common among Democrats—present for 13.2% of the issues in our sample. For the full sample we observe these meaningful disagreements on 8.3% of issues and among Republicans on 6.9% of issues.

Overall the income-based differences in opinion shown in Table 2 are not huge—they certainly pale in comparison to the partisan opinion polarization that is commonplace in contemporary American politics. In that sense, our results are broadly consistent with the existing literature on the role of class in public opinion. However, we make a novel observation: that these differences *within* parties are in fact larger than those differences in the full population. This is especially true among Democrats, who, on almost every measure we employ, exhibit greater income-based opinion gaps than either the full population or Republicans. Similarly, on many of the measures

⁵Alternatively, we could simply identify all issues for which rich and poor opinion lies on opposite sides of the 50% threshold (ignoring the size of the opinion gap). The problem with doing so is that an issue supported by 51% of the rich, but only 49% of the poor would be counted as a disagreement. We, however, are reluctant to imbue this small difference in opinion with much meaning.

Table 3: Correlation of Polarization Levels by Policy Domain

Policy Domain	Correlation (Rep.-Dem.)	Correlation (Rep.-All)	Correlation (Dem.-All)
Law enforcement	-0.722	0.062	0.535
Immigration	-0.124	0.561	0.672
Cultural	-0.172	0.672	0.564
Economic	-0.349	0.663	0.437
Social welfare	-0.146	0.839	0.353
Foreign policy	0.063	0.543	0.839
Total	-0.171	0.634	0.553

employed here, Republicans exhibit greater income-based differences than the full population.⁶

In general, the opinion differences in Table 2 are probably best thought of as differences in preference intensity, as they infrequently rise to the level of substantive disagreement on policy. Differences in intensity, though, are not irrelevant; indeed, they have been shown to matter in studies substantive representation (cf., Bartels 2008; Gilens 2012; Rigby and Wright 2013). The extent to which the intraparty income-based differences uncovered above are large or concerning are probably in the eye of the beholder. That being said, these differences in opinion are larger than other potential intraparty cleavages, as we will show below in Table 5).

While our analyses thus far present strong evidence that Democrats are the group most divided by income, we cannot yet say whether partisan groups experience opinion gaps on the same issues. Table 3 enables us to do so. Here we present the correlation between the parties' opinion gaps across issues. The unit of analysis is individual questions, and correlations are calculated within policy domains. A positive correlation suggests that two groups have large gaps on the same issues, while a negative correlation suggests they have large gaps on different issues.

⁶We also consider the expectation, from Gelman et al. (2008), that partisan divides in part stem from Democrats living in richer states. In Appendix D, we show that opinion gaps look similar for partisans living in the 25 states with the highest median household income and those with the lowest. The opinion gap for Republicans in the richest states is 0.115, compared to 0.106 in poor states; for both rich-state and poor-state Democrats, it is 0.144.

Starting with column 2, we find that the correlation between the two parties' opinion gaps is consistently negative, indicating that Republicans are more divided by income on different issues from Democrats. The exception is foreign policy, for which the correlation is nearly zero. Consistently, the correlation between each party's opinion gaps and those of the full sample are positive.

Looking Issue by Issue

While Democrats have relatively large income-based differences in policy support across all six issue areas, two domains—economic and social welfare—stand out among Republicans (see Table 2). In these two domains, the opinion gap between low- and high-income respondents is, on average, 62% larger than those in the other four. When we look more closely at specific survey questions in these two domains, we find that Republicans have especially large opinion gaps on redistributive policy questions related to progressive taxation, the minimum wage, and government support for health care programs. Indeed, the issue that is most polarizing for either party in our dataset is Republicans on whether the age of eligibility for Medicare should be lowered to 50, for which there is a 38-point gap in support between the rich and poor. “Medicare for All” has the second-largest opinion gap for Republicans, with a 35-point gap. When it comes to these two issues in particular, small majorities of low-income Republicans support the liberal position, while large majorities of their high-income counterparts are opposed

What is happening here? While our results are insufficient to provide a complete answer, they are consistent with several possible explanations. One is that on a modest set of truly redistributive policy debates, low-income Republicans seem to be more influenced by their economic than partisan interests. Alternatively, it may be that because Republican elites tend to downplay issues of redistribution in favor of cultural issues, their voters are more polarized on these policy

areas. (Though it may be the case that Republican leaders downplay redistributive issues *because* these issues divide the party.)

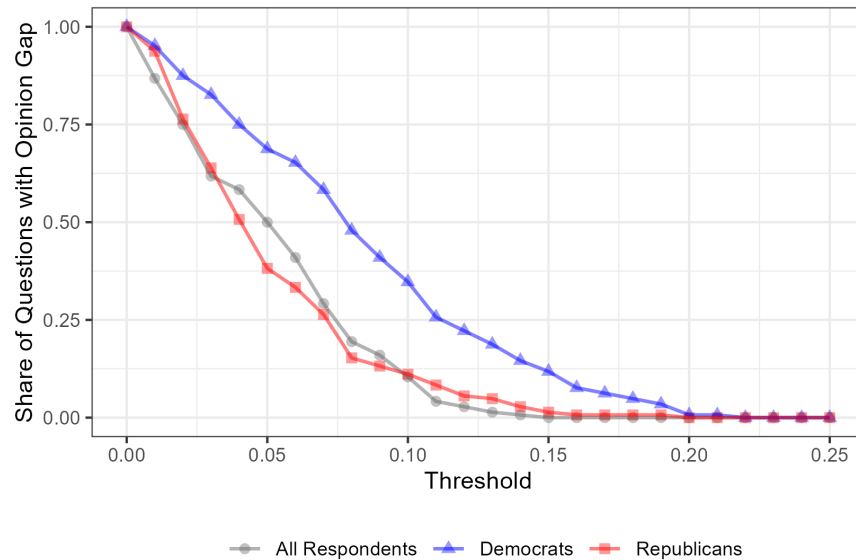
For Democrats, there is no obvious (at least to us) pattern among the set of policy questions that are most polarizing. Some are social issues while others are about immigration, foreign policy, the environment, or progressive taxation. Likewise, Democrats are sometimes most polarized on low-salience issues such as sending aid to countries affected by ISIS and repeal of the “Clean Power Plant Rules”, but other times on high-salience issues such as law enforcement spending and repealing the Affordable Care Act. We do not have space here to present estimates of opinion gaps for all 144 survey questions; however, in Appendix C we report opinion by party and income for each issue.

Preference Gaps Between The Rich and Middle-Income

While we have thus far focused our analyses on opinion differences between the rich and poor, it is fair to ask whether our results hold if we instead consider the gaps between high- and middle-income respondents. To address this question, we generate estimates of middle-income opinion for each survey question using a similar bootstrapping method as previously described, this time focusing on respondents whose incomes are in the 45th- to 55th-percentile range.

Although preference gaps between the rich and middle-income groups are smaller than for the rich and poor, we find that such gaps do exist. We find an average opinion gap of 8 percentage points for Democrats, compared to 5-point gaps for Republicans and the full sample of respondents. Among Democrats, we further find that there are substantively meaningful gaps of greater than 10 points (again, following the standard from Gilens (2012)) on 19% of issues. Republicans and the full sample have similarly sized gaps on just 5% and 2% of issues, respectively. This latter

Figure 4: Meaningful Opinion Gaps at Various Thresholds (Top vs. Middle Income Groups)



Note: This plot reports the share of issues for which the opinion gap between high- and middle-income respondents is at least as great as the corresponding threshold, plotted on the x-axis.

finding is best summarized in Figure 4 which shows, across a range of relevant thresholds, the share of issues for which each partisan group (and the full sample) has a statistically significant opinion gap.

These general findings again are not specific to one set of issues. We provide a more detailed summary of opinion gaps between top- and middle-decile respondents in the appendix.

Does Racial & Ethnic Diversity Explain Large Opinion Gaps Among Democrats?

Thus far, our analyses repeatedly reveal that income-based difference in policy support are higher among Democrats than among Republicans or the full population. How might we account for this? Here we consider one plausible explanation—the relative racial and ethnic diversity of the Democratic Party. Specifically, because Blacks and Latinos are both more likely to be lower income and to be Democrats, the differences in opinion we observe among self-identified

Table 4: Opinion Gaps by Issue Domain, Controlling for Race

	Policy Domain	Number of Questions	Average Opinion Gap	Opinion Difference Statistically Significant	Opinion Gap Greater than 10 pts.
All Respondents	Law enforcement	16	0.041	81.2%	0%
	Immigration	22	0.054	77.3%	18.2%
	Cultural	18	0.057	77.8%	16.7%
	Economic	45	0.068	84.4%	28.9%
	Social welfare	20	0.087	95%	35%
	Foreign policy	23	0.098	87%	56.5%
	Total	144	0.069	84%	27.8%
Democrats	Law enforcement	16	0.093	100%	50%
	Immigration	22	0.104	100%	50%
	Cultural	18	0.104	94.4%	44.4%
	Economic	45	0.098	77.8%	48.9%
	Social welfare	20	0.099	90%	35%
	Foreign policy	23	0.129	87%	60.9%
	Total	144	0.104	88.9%	48.6%
Republicans	Law enforcement	16	0.072	75%	18.8%
	Immigration	22	0.056	63.6%	13.6%
	Cultural	18	0.080	61.1%	33.3%
	Economic	45	0.114	84.4%	57.8%
	Social welfare	20	0.139	90%	55%
	Foreign policy	23	0.072	69.6%	21.7%
	Total	144	0.093	75.7%	37.5%

Democrats may simply reflect differences in opinion by race.

To test this possibility, we repeat our main analyses, but add a control for race. Using our sample of high- and low-income respondents, we regress opinion on a indicator variables for high-income and race (Black, Latino, Asian, white, or other), separately for each of our 144 issues. Table 4 reports results, where the opinion gap is the absolute value of the coefficient on the high-income variable.⁷

As in the main analysis, opinion gaps are larger in both parties than for the public as a

⁷Our main measure of opinion gaps above are equivalent to using the coefficient from a linear regression of opinion on high-income without any controls; our approach in this section closely mirrors that analysis.

whole. Although the magnitude of income-based differences in opinion are smaller after accounting for race, Democrats continue to have larger opinion gaps than Republicans across four of six policy domains. On average, Democrats have an opinion gap of 10.4 points even after controlling for race, and they exhibit substantively meaningful gaps on nearly half of all issues. Republicans, meanwhile have an average gap of 9.3 points, and exhibit substantively meaningful disagreement on more than one-third of issues.

An alternative way to examine the role of race in shaping disagreements between rich and poor is to focus on particular racial subsets of the population. In Appendix I we replicate our earlier analyses, this time using only survey respondents who self-identified as white. We focus only on white respondents (rather than conducting separate analyses for Black and Latino respondents) because even with a large survey such as the CES, it is difficult to find enough Latino Republicans in the bottom income decile and Black Republicans in both the top and bottom income deciles for a robust analysis. We find that white Democrats still have larger income-based opinion gaps than either white Republicans or the full population of white respondents. (The average opinion gap among Democrats shrinks by only 1.6 percentage points—from 14.4 points in the diverse sample to 12.8 points, and the average gap among Republicans shrinks to 9.7 points.)

Collectively, these results make it clear that the Democratic Party's higher levels of racial and ethnic diversity only account for some of the party's high income-based opinion gaps. Indeed, these gaps persist and continue to be much larger than the opinion gaps in the total population—and slightly larger than those for Republicans—even when we control for race or limit our analyses to white survey respondents.

Comparing Income to Other Cleavages

Our central question asks whether the parties are internally divided between rich and poor. While we have shown that these divisions exist and that they are, on average, largest among Democrats, we have yet to identify whether these gaps are large in relation to other dimensions that might divide copartisans. In this section, we answer this question by comparing income-based gaps with those based on other cleavages that divide the American public.

To do so, we first selected seven cleavages that may predict policy opinions. Within each cleavage, we then identified comparisons that could be made between two groups using the CES data and computed opinion gaps on all 144 policy questions in our dataset using the same procedure discussed above for income-based gaps. This allowed us to produce opinion gap estimates for each issue and policy domain across 12 distinct comparisons:

- *Income*: Top vs. bottom deciles; top vs. middle deciles
- *Race*: Black vs. white; Black vs. Latino; Latino vs. white
- *Sex*: Male vs. female
- *Education*: College degree vs. high school diploma; high school diploma vs. no high school
- *Age*: 65 and over vs. under 30
- *Religion*: Weekly church attendance vs. never attend; born-again vs. not born-again
- *Geography*: Urban vs. rural

Table 5 summarizes these results. Each cell reports the opinion gap for a group within each party in the stated policy domain. For clarity, we bold our main quantity of interest: the top-

Table 5: Within-Party Opinion Gaps across Cleavages

Cleavage	Policy Domains							
	All	Foreign policy	Social welfare	Economic	Cultural	Immig.	Law enf.	
All Respondents	Religion: Church Attendance	0.15	0.10	0.16	0.15	0.26	0.14	0.14
	Religion: Born Again	0.14	0.09	0.12	0.13	0.22	0.15	0.13
	Age: 65+ vs. Under 30	0.14	0.13	0.13	0.12	0.13	0.20	0.13
	Race: White vs. Black	0.13	0.11	0.17	0.10	0.11	0.17	0.12
	Urban vs. Rural	0.13	0.10	0.13	0.12	0.14	0.17	0.12
	Race: White vs. Latino	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.07	0.07	0.15	0.06
	Class: Top vs. Bottom	0.08	0.12	0.11	0.08	0.07	0.05	0.04
	Education: College vs. H.S.	0.07	0.07	0.06	0.07	0.08	0.09	0.07
	Sex	0.06	0.05	0.05	0.06	0.07	0.07	0.08
	Race: Black vs. Latino	0.06	0.05	0.09	0.04	0.05	0.05	0.07
	Class: Top vs. Middle	0.05	0.06	0.04	0.05	0.07	0.04	0.04
	Education: H.S. vs. No H.S.	0.04	0.05	0.05	0.04	0.04	0.03	0.02
	Democrats	Class: Top vs. Bottom	0.14	0.18	0.12	0.14	0.16	0.13
Religion: Born Again		0.11	0.10	0.09	0.11	0.17	0.11	0.11
Religion: Church Attendance		0.11	0.08	0.10	0.10	0.18	0.09	0.10
Race: White vs. Black		0.10	0.11	0.10	0.11	0.12	0.09	0.07
Education: College vs. H.S.		0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.10	0.10	0.10
Race: White vs. Latino		0.09	0.12	0.09	0.09	0.10	0.07	0.08
Age: 65+ vs. Under 30		0.09	0.12	0.09	0.09	0.05	0.07	0.12
Class: Top vs. Middle		0.08	0.10	0.08	0.08	0.09	0.08	0.07
Education: H.S. vs. No H.S.		0.05	0.06	0.05	0.05	0.07	0.05	0.05
Race: Black vs. Latino		0.04	0.04	0.05	0.04	0.03	0.06	0.03
Sex		0.04	0.05	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.05
Urban vs. Rural		0.02	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Republicans		Age: 65+ vs. Under 30	0.16	0.12	0.16	0.15	0.16	0.22
	Race: White vs. Black	0.13	0.11	0.17	0.11	0.10	0.14	0.13
	Class: Top vs. Bottom	0.10	0.08	0.16	0.12	0.10	0.07	0.09
	Race: White vs. Latino	0.08	0.09	0.09	0.06	0.07	0.13	0.07
	Race: Black vs. Latino	0.07	0.09	0.10	0.07	0.05	0.06	0.08
	Sex	0.06	0.04	0.05	0.07	0.06	0.05	0.09
	Religion: Church Attendance	0.05	0.04	0.05	0.03	0.14	0.05	0.03
	Urban vs. Rural	0.05	0.04	0.06	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05
	Class: Top vs. Middle	0.05	0.05	0.06	0.06	0.05	0.03	0.04
	Education: H.S. vs. No H.S.	0.05	0.03	0.07	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.04
	Education: College vs. H.S.	0.04	0.03	0.05	0.05	0.04	0.04	0.03
	Religion: Born Again	0.04	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.11	0.02	0.03

vs. bottom-decile income opinion gap. Looking across all respondents, income gaps fall near the median in terms of magnitude for the set of all 144 issues. However, among Democrats, income is

the largest cleavage for all policy domains except Immigration, where it falls just behind religion. Among Republicans, income is the third-largest cleavage, behind race and age.⁸

If we increase the size of the groups considered high- and low-income (e.g., using terciles instead of deciles), the magnitude of opinion gaps decrease (see Appendix B). Even still, the gap among Democrats for all issues using terciles is 0.09, making it more significant than all cleavages other than religion and the white-Black racial divide, on par with other racial and education gaps. Among Republicans, the gap is 0.07, similar in magnitude to that of the Black vs. Latino racial gap. Among all respondents, the gap falls to 0.06, similar to the opinion gap between men and women and the Black vs. Latino racial gap.

Conclusion

We have considered the intersection of partisanship and income by exploring the extent which the policy preferences of the rich and poor diverge within the Democratic and Republican parties. To do so we have relied upon responses to over 140 unique policy questions from the Cooperative Election Study covering a number of important and salient issue domains. The results of our inquiry contribute to the growing literature on class and public opinion as well as work on party asymmetries. They also highlight new avenues for inquiry into representational inequality.

First, we uncover evidence that differences in opinion by income tend to be larger within the parties than in the overall population. This finding has been missed in the literature on class and public opinion and, we think, represents an important new result. Although these opinion gaps most often reflect differences in preference intensity (rather than disagreement on policy), they are persistent across policy domains. While our findings certainly do not show that class is more

⁸These differences are statistically significant. In Appendix C, we plot these estimates with 95% confidence intervals produced by bootstrapping.

meaningful than party, they suggest that some existing work may have gone too far in downplaying income's role in shaping public opinion. Indeed, we demonstrate that preferences within the parties are more divided by income than almost any other cleavage.

Still, it is important to note that rich and poor co-partisans are rarely on opposite sides of an issue, even when preference gaps are greater than 10 points. That being said, the income-based differences in preferences uncovered here are descriptively interesting and potentially substantively important. They also suggest that existing analyses that focus only on opinion differences by income in the overall population may be missing the largest differences in American public opinion—those found within the Democratic Party.

Second, our results consistently show that the Democratic Party has larger discrepancies between the policy preferences of the rich and poor than does the Republican Party. The differences between the preferences of high- and low-income Democrats average more than 14 percentage points across all issue domains and are greater than 10 points on 65% of all survey questions, more than the opinion gaps for any other cleavage, including race, religiosity, age, and income. By comparison, the average preference gap for Republicans is 10 percentage points, and just 47% of issues exhibit a 10-point gap or greater.

This finding suggests that existing analyses that focus only on opinion gaps by income in the overall population may be missing the largest differences in American public opinion—those found within the Democratic Party. Our finding of larger opinion gaps among Democrats is consistent with a core claim of the asymmetric parties literature: that the Democratic Party represents a broad coalition of groups with various interests and policy preferences, and therefore is less ideologically cohesive (Grossman and Hopkins 2016). To the best of our knowledge, work in this tradition, however, has not focused on potential divisions by class or income among Democrats.

Importantly, we also show that while the Democratic Party's racial heterogeneity contributes to its large income-based opinion gaps, this diversity only explains some of the differences with Republicans.

Finally, our results collectively suggest a future direction for inquiries into representational inequality. Existing efforts to understand the role of class in democratic representation have focused on the link between public opinion and roll call voting or government policy (e.g., Bartels 2008; Gilens 2012; Soroka and Wlezien 2008). Part of the challenge such efforts have encountered is that elected officials seemingly set policy in a way that is consistent with the party line, even if that entails ignoring public opinion (Lax, Phillips, and Zelizer 2019). This raises a fundamental question about political representation that existing scholarship has as yet been unable to answer: Do the rich play an outsized role in deciding the party line? Though we do not tackle that question here, our evidence suggests that opinion gaps are large enough within the parties, particularly among Democrats, to warrant deeper examination.

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Supplementary Materials for **Divided by Income? Policy Preferences of the Rich and Poor within the Democratic and Republican Parties**

Appendix A All Issues by Policy Domain and Ideology

Our primary dataset includes 144 specific policy questions, drawn from the 2010–2020 Cooperative Election Studies (CES). To produce this sample of questions, we first identified all policy-specific questions in the CES over these years and then categorized them into one of six policy domains: Cultural, Economic, Foreign Policy, Immigration, Law Enforcement, and Social Welfare. For questions asked in multiple surveys, we kept the most recent year in which the question was asked.

The table below lists the questions we used, by policy domain, and includes the full text of the question in the survey.

Issue	CCES Year	Question Text	Ideology
Cultural Issues			
abortion: 20thweek	2020	On the topic of abortion, do you support or oppose each of the following proposals? Prohibit all abortions after the 20th week of pregnancy.	Conservative
abortion: choice	2020	On the topic of abortion, do you support or oppose each of the following proposals? Always allow a woman to obtain an abortion as a matter of choice.	Liberal
abortion: federalfunding	2020	On the topic of abortion, do you support or oppose each of the following proposals? Prohibit the expenditure of funds authorized or appropriated by federal law for any abortion.	Conservative
abortion: hospitals	2020	On the topic of abortion, do you support or oppose each of the following proposals? Prohibit states from requiring that abortions be performed only at hospitals (not clinics).	Liberal
abortion: illegal	2020	On the topic of abortion, do you support or oppose each of the following proposals? Make abortions illegal in all circumstances.	Conservative
abortion: insurance	2020	On the topic of abortion, do you support or oppose each of the following proposals? Allow employers to decline coverage of abortions in insurance plans.	Conservative
abortion: nopublicfunds	2018	If your state put the following questions for a vote on the ballot, would you vote FOR or AGAINST? Prohibit public funds from being spent on abortions, except when the health of the mother is in danger or in cases of rape or incest.	Conservative
abortion: onlyifneeded	2012	Which one of the opinions on this page best agrees with your view on abortion? The law should permit abortion for reasons other than rape, incest, or danger to the womans life, but only after the need for the abortion has been clearly established.	Conservative
abortion: rapeincestorlife	2020	On the topic of abortion, do you support or oppose each of the following proposals? Permit abortion only in the case of rape, incest, or when the woman's life is in danger.	Conservative
economy: equalpay	2020	Over the past two years, Congress voted on many issues. Do you support each of the following proposals? Require equal pay for women and men who are doing similar jobs and have similar qualifications.	Liberal
lgbt: bandiscrimination	2020	Over the past two years, Congress voted on many issues. Do you support each of the following proposals? Amend federal laws to prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation.	Liberal

(continued)

Issue	CCES Year	Question Text	Ideology
lgbt: bantransmilitary	2020	For each of the following tell us whether you support or oppose these decisions. Ban transgender people in the military.	Conservative
lgbt: dontaskdonttell	2012	Congress Considered many important bills over the past two years. For each of the following tell us whether you support or oppose the legislation in principle: End Dont Ask, Dont Tell. Would allow gays to serve openly in the armed services.	Liberal
lgbt: gaymarriage	2016	Do you favor or oppose allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally?	Liberal
supremecourt: barrett	2020	Do you support or oppose confirming Amy Coney Barrett to become a Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States?	Conservative
supremecourt: gorsuch	2018	Over the past two years, Congress voted on many issues. If you were in Congress would you have voted FOR or AGAINST each of the following? Appoint Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court of the United States.	Conservative
supremecourt: kavanaugh	2020	Over the past two years, Congress voted on many issues. Do you support or oppose each of the following proposals? Confirm Brett Kavanaugh to become a Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States.	Conservative
supremecourt: merrickgarland	2016	Congress considers many issues. If you were in Congress would you vote FOR or AGAINST each of the following? Approve the nomination of Merrick Garland to the Supreme Court of the United States.	Liberal
Economic Issues			
agriculture: farmbill	2014	Congress considered many important bills over the past two years. For each of the following tell us whether you support or oppose the legislation in principle: Agriculture Bill - Ends price supports for corn, wheat, sugar and other agricultural products. Creates a federally subsidized crop insurance program. Reauthorizes the food stamp program, but cuts 10% of the program's funding.	Conservative
budget: firstcutdefense	2016	The federal budget deficit is approximately \$1 trillion this year. If the Congress were to balance the budget it would have to consider cutting defense spending, cutting domestic spending (such as Medicare and Social Security), or raising taxes to cover the deficit. Please rank the options below from what would you most prefer that Congress do to what you would least prefer they do: Cut Defense Spending first.	Liberal

(continued)

Issue	CCES Year	Question Text	Ideology
budget: firstcutdomestic	2016	The federal budget deficit is approximately \$1 trillion this year. If the Congress were to balance the budget it would have to consider cutting defense spending, cutting domestic spending (such as Medicare and Social Security), or raising taxes to cover the deficit. Please rank the options below from what would you most prefer that Congress do to what you would least prefer they do: Cut Domestic Spending first.	Conservative
budget: firstraisetaxes	2016	The federal budget deficit is approximately \$1 trillion this year. If the Congress were to balance the budget it would have to consider cutting defense spending, cutting domestic spending (such as Medicare and Social Security), or raising taxes to cover the deficit. Please rank the options below from what would you most prefer that Congress do to what you would least prefer they do: Raise Taxes first.	Liberal
budget: highwayfundingact	2016	Congress considers many issues. If you were in Congress would you vote FOR or AGAINST each of the following? Highway and Transportation Funding Act - Authorizes \$305 Billion to repair and expand highways, bridges, and transit over the next 5 years.	Liberal
budget: ryanplan	2014	For each proposal indicate whether you support or oppose it: Ryan Budget - Budget plan would cut Medicare and Medicaid by 42%. Would reduce debt by 16% by 2020.	Conservative
budget: simpsonbowlesplan	2014	For each proposal indicate whether you support or oppose it: Simpson-Bowles Budget Plan - Plan would make 15% cuts across the board in Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and Defense, as well as other programs. Eliminate many tax breaks for individuals and corporations. Would reduce debt by 21% by 2020.	Conservative
covid: caresact	2020	During the past year, Congress considered two pieces of legislation to address the economic crisis. Do you support or oppose each of these proposals? In March, the CARES Act proposed to spend \$2 trillion in emergency and health care assistance for individuals, families, and businesses, including up to \$1,200 per individual and \$500 per child.	Liberal

(continued)

Issue	CCES Year	Question Text	Ideology
covid: heroesact	2020	During the past year, Congress considered two pieces of legislation to address the economic crisis. Do you support or oppose each of these proposals? In May, the HEROES ACT proposed to spend an additional \$3 trillion, including \$1 trillion for state and local governments and hospitals, spend \$200 billion in hazard pay for essential workers, and give households an additional \$1,200 to \$6,000.	Liberal
economicpolicy: cutregulation	2018	President Trump has issued many orders over the first two years of his presidency. For each of the following tell us whether you support or oppose the order in principle: Requires that with each new regulation enacted, two must be cut. Any new costs created by new regulations must be matched with eliminations.	Conservative
economicpolicy: debtceiling	2014	For each proposal indicate whether you support or oppose it: Debt Ceiling - Allow the U.S. government to borrow funds as needed to meet spending obligations and avoid default on U.S. government bonds.	Liberal
economicpolicy: repealdoddfrank	2018	The Financial CHOICE Act repeals government authority under the Dodd-Frank Act to step in if a bank is near collapse. Gives the President the power to fire the directors of the Federal Housing Finance Agency and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Reduces restrictions on the amount of risk that smaller banks can take in lending. Do you support or oppose the Financial CHOICE Act?	Conservative
economy: raiseminimumwage	2018	If your state put the following questions for a vote on the ballot, would you vote FOR or AGAINST? Raise the state minimum wage to \$12 an hour.	Liberal
economy: raiseminimumwage_15	2020	Over the past two years, Congress voted on many issues. Do you support each of the following proposals? Raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour.	Liberal
environment: keystonepipeline	2018	President Trump has issued many orders over the first year of his presidency. Do you support or oppose each of the following decisions? Allow the construction of the Keystone XL pipeline.	Conservative
environment: lowerfuelefficiency	2018	Do you support or oppose each of the following proposals? Lower the required fuel efficiency for the average automobile from 35 mpg to 25 mpg.	Conservative
environment: moreenforcement	2020	Do you support or oppose each of the following proposals? Strengthen the Environmental Protection Agency enforcement of the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act even if it costs U.S. jobs.	Liberal
environment: parisagreement	2020	For each of the following tell us whether you support or oppose these decisions. Withdraw the United States from the Paris Climate Agreement.	Conservative

(continued)

Issue	CCES Year	Question Text	Ideology
environment: protectoverjobs	2012	Some people think it is important to protect the environment even if it costs some jobs or otherwise reduces our standard of living. Other people think that protecting the environment is not as important as maintaining jobs and our standard of living. Which is closer to the way you feel, or haven't you thought much about this?	Liberal
environment: raisefuelefficiency	2020	Do you support or oppose each of the following proposals? Raise the average fuel efficiency for all cars and trucks in the US from 40 miles per gallon to 54.5 miles per gallon by 2025.	Liberal
environment: regulateco2	2020	Do you support or oppose each of the following proposals? Give the Environmental Protection Agency power to regulate Carbon Dioxide emissions.	Liberal
environment: repealcleanpowerplant	2020	For each of the following tell us whether you support or oppose these decisions. Repeal the Clean Power Plant Rules (the Clean Power Plant rules would require power plants to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 32 percent by 2030).	Conservative
environment: requirerenewables	2020	Do you support or oppose each of the following proposals? Require that each state use a minimum amount of renewable fuels (wind, solar, and hydroelectric) in the generation of electricity even if electricity prices increase a little.	Liberal
environment: strengthencleanairact	2014	Do you support or oppose each of the following proposals? Environmental Protection Agency strengthening enforcement of the Clean Air Act even if it costs U.S. jobs.	Liberal
spending: increasestatetransportation	2020	State legislatures must make choices when making spending decisions on important state programs. How would you like your legislature to spend money on each of the five areas below? Transportation/Infrastructure.	Liberal
taxes: cutcorporate	2018	Congress considered many changes in tax law over the past two years. Do you support or oppose each of the following? Cut the Corporate Income Tax rate from 39 percent to 21 percent.	Conservative
taxes: cutincometax_over500000	2018	Congress considered many changes in tax law over the past two years. Do you support or oppose each of the following? Reduce the income tax rate for households earning more than \$500,000 by 3 percent (from 40% to 37%).	Conservative
taxes: cutincometax_under500000	2018	Congress considered many changes in tax law over the past two years. Do you support or oppose each of the following? Reduce the income tax rate for households earning less than \$500,000 by 3%.	Conservative

(continued)

Issue	CCES Year	Question Text	Ideology
taxes: extendbushtaxcutbelow200000	2014	For each proposal indicate whether you support or oppose it: The Middle Class Tax Cut Act - Would extend Bush era tax cuts for incomes below \$200,000. Would increase the budget deficit by an estimated \$250 billion.	Conservative
taxes: extendbushtaxcutforall	2014	For each proposal indicate whether you support or oppose it: The Tax Hike Prevention Act- Would extend Bush era tax cuts for all individuals, regardless of income. Would increase the budget deficit by an estimated \$405 billion.	Conservative
taxes: incometax_wealthy	2018	If your state put the following questions for a vote on the ballot, would you vote FOR or AGAINST? Increase taxes on incomes that exceed \$1 million by 4 percent to pay for schools and roads.	Liberal
taxes: limitsalt	2018	Congress considered many changes in tax law over the past two years. Do you support or oppose each of the following? Limit the amount of state and local taxes that can be deducted to \$10,000 (previously there was no limit).	Conservative
taxes: prohibitincometax	2018	If your state put the following questions for a vote on the ballot, would you vote FOR or AGAINST? Eliminate and prohibit all income taxes in your state.	Conservative
taxes: raisestandarddeduction	2018	Congress considered many changes in tax law over the past two years. Do you support or oppose each of the following? Increase the standard deduction on federal income taxes from \$12,000 to to \$25,000.	Conservative
taxes: reducemortgagededuction	2018	Congress considered many changes in tax law over the past two years. Do you support or oppose each of the following? Reduce the mortgage interest deduction. Allow people to deduct the interest on no more than \$500,000 of mortgage debt. The previous limit was \$1 million.	Conservative
taxes: salestax_schools	2018	If your state put the following questions for a vote on the ballot, would you vote FOR or AGAINST? Increase the sales tax by one percent to pay for schools and roads.	Liberal
taxes: trumpcuts	2018	Would you support or oppose a tax bill that does all of the following? Cuts the Corporate Income Tax rate from 39 percent to 21 percent. Reduces the mortgage interest deduction from \$1 million to \$500,000.Caps the amount of state and local tax that can be deducted to \$10,000 (previously there was no limit).Increases the standard deduction from \$12,000 to \$25,000.Cuts income tax rates for all income groups by 3 percent.	Conservative

(continued)

Issue	CCES Year	Question Text	Ideology
trade: chinatariffs	2018	On the issue of trade, do you support or oppose the following proposed tariffs? \$50 billion worth of tariffs on goods imported from China.	Conservative
trade: chinatariffs200b	2020	On the issue of trade, do you support or oppose the following proposed tariffs? Tariffs on \$200 billion worth of goods imported from China.	Conservative
trade: europetariffs	2020	On the issue of trade, do you support or oppose the following proposed tariffs? Increase tariffs on European aircraft and agricultural products.	Conservative
trade: steeltariffs_all	2020	On the issue of trade, do you support or oppose the following proposed tariffs? 25% tariffs on all imported steel and 10% on imported aluminum, INCLUDING from Canada and Mexico.	Conservative
trade: steeltariffs_limited	2020	On the issue of trade, do you support or oppose the following proposed tariffs? 25% tariffs on all imported steel and 10% on imported aluminum, EXCEPT from Canada and Mexico.	Conservative
trade: tpp	2016	Congress considers many issues. If you were in Congress would you vote FOR or AGAINST each of the following? Trans-Pacific Partnership Act - Free trade agreement among 12 Pacific nations (Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and the US).	Liberal
trade: uskoreafreetrade	2014	Congress considered many important bills over the past two years. For each of the following tell us whether you support or oppose the legislation in principle: U.S. Korea Free Trade Agreement - Would remove tariffs on imports and exports between South Korea and the U.S.	Conservative
trade: withdrawtpp	2020	For each of the following tell us whether you support or oppose these decisions. Withdraw the United States from the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement, a free trade agreement that included the U.S., Japan, China, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Chile, and others.	Conservative
Foreign Policy Issues			
foreignpolicy: assassinatesoleimani	2020	For each of the following tell us whether you support or oppose these decisions. Assassination of Iranian General Qasem Soleimani.	Conservative
foreignpolicy: endirannucleardeal	2020	For each of the following tell us whether you support or oppose these decisions. Withdraw the United States from the Iran Nuclear Accord and reimpose sanctions on Iran.	Conservative

(continued)

Issue	CCES Year	Question Text	Ideology
foreignpolicy: iransanctions	2016	Congress considers many issues. If you were in Congress would you vote FOR or AGAINST each of the following? Iran Sanctions Act - Imposes new sanctions on Iran, if Iran does not agree to reduce its nuclear program by June 30.	Conservative
foreignpolicy: isisnoflyzone	2016	As you may know, there are on-going conflicts in Syria and Iraq led by the organization Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (or ISIS). What do you think the United States should do in response to ISIS? (Check all that apply): Enforce a no-fly zone.	Liberal
foreignpolicy: isisnoncombatstaff	2016	As you may know, there are on-going conflicts in Syria and Iraq led by the organization Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (or ISIS). What do you think the United States should do in response to ISIS? (Check all that apply): Send military support staff (non-combat).	Liberal
foreignpolicy: isisnotgetinvolved	2016	As you may know, there are on-going conflicts in Syria and Iraq led by the organization Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (or ISIS). What do you think the United States should do in response to ISIS? (Check all that apply): Do not get involved.	Conservative
foreignpolicy: isisprovidearms	2016	As you may know, there are on-going conflicts in Syria and Iraq led by the organization Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (or ISIS). What do you think the United States should do in response to ISIS? (Check all that apply): Provide arms to those opposing ISIS.	Liberal
foreignpolicy: isissendaid	2016	As you may know, there are on-going conflicts in Syria and Iraq led by the organization Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (or ISIS). What do you think the United States should do in response to ISIS? (Check all that apply): Send food, medicine and other aid to countries affected.	Liberal
foreignpolicy: isissendforce	2016	As you may know, there are on-going conflicts in Syria and Iraq led by the organization Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (or ISIS). What do you think the United States should do in response to ISIS? (Check all that apply): Send significant force to fight ISIS.	Conservative
foreignpolicy: isisusedrones	2016	As you may know, there are on-going conflicts in Syria and Iraq led by the organization Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (or ISIS). What do you think the United States should do in response to ISIS? (Check all that apply): Use drones and aircraft to bomb ISIS troops.	Conservative

(continued)

Issue	CCES Year	Question Text	Ideology
foreignpolicy: jerusalem	2018	Over the past two years, Congress voted on many issues. If you were in Congress would you have voted FOR or AGAINST each of the following? Impose sanctions on countries and firms doing business with North Korea. Increase President's authority to impose sanctions if North Korea violates U.N. Security Council resolutions regarding that country.	Conservative
foreignpolicy: northkoreasanctions	2018	Over the past two years, Congress voted on many issues. If you were in Congress would you have voted FOR or AGAINST each of the following? Impose sanctions on countries and firms doing business with North Korea. Increase President's authority to impose sanctions if North Korea violates U.N. Security Council resolutions regarding that country.	Conservative
foreignpolicy: russiasanctions	2018	Over the past two years, Congress voted on many issues. If you were in Congress would you have voted FOR or AGAINST each of the following? Require that the President get approval from Congress to ease any existing sanctions on Russia.	Liberal
military: destroyterroristcamp	2020	Would you approve of the use of U.S. military troops in order to... ? (Please check all that apply): Destroy a terrorist camp.	Conservative
military: ensureoilsupply	2020	Would you approve of the use of U.S. military troops in order to... ? (Please check all that apply): Ensure the supply of oil.	Conservative
military: helpun	2020	Would you approve of the use of U.S. military troops in order to... ? (Please check all that apply): Help the United Nations uphold international law.	Liberal
military: intervenegenocidecivilwar	2020	Would you approve of the use of U.S. military troops in order to... ? (Please check all that apply): Intervene in a region where there is genocide or a civil war.	Liberal
military: noneofthese	2020	Would you approve of the use of U.S. military troops in order to... ? (Please check all that apply): None of the above.	Conservative
military: protectallies	2020	Would you approve of the use of U.S. military troops in order to... ? (Please check all that apply): Protect American allies under attack by foreign nations.	Liberal
military: spreaddemocracy	2020	Would you approve of the use of U.S. military troops in order to... ? (Please check all that apply): Assist the spread of democracy.	Conservative
military: withdrawnorthernisrael	2020	For each of the following tell us whether you support or oppose these decisions. Withdraw troops from Kurdish-controlled region of northern Syria on the border with Turkey.	Conservative

(continued)

Issue	CCES Year	Question Text	Ideology
nationalsecurity: usafreedomact	2016	Congress considers many issues. If you were in Congress would you vote FOR or AGAINST each of the following? USA Freedom Act - Ends the US government's phone surveillance database program. Allows individual phone companies to keep such databases, and allows the government to access those records if there is reasonable suspicion an individual is connected to a terrorist organization.	Liberal
natsec: nsaphonesurveillance	2014	Congress considered many important bills over the past two years. For each of the following tell us whether you support or oppose the legislation in principle: NSA Phone Surveillance - Would block funding of the National Security Agency's program that gathers details of every phone call made by or to a U.S. phone unless the records were part of a specific investigation.	Liberal
Immigration Issues			
immigration: borderpatrol	2020	What do you think the U.S. government should do about immigration? Do you support or oppose each of the following? Increase the number of border patrols on the US-Mexican border.	Conservative
immigration: borderwall	2020	What do you think the U.S. government should do about immigration? Do you support or oppose each of the following? Increase spending on border security by \$25 billion, including building a wall between the U.S. and Mexico.	Conservative
immigration: borderwallemergency	2020	For each of the following tell us whether you support or oppose these decisions. Declare a national emergency to permit construction of border wall with Mexico.	Conservative
immigration: compromise	2018	What do you think the U.S. government should do about immigration? Do you support or oppose each of the following? Grant legal status to DACA children, spend \$25 billion to build the border wall, and reduce legal immigration by eliminating the visa lottery and ending family-based migration.	Conservative
immigration: daca	2018	What do you think the U.S. government should do about immigration? Do you support or oppose each of the following? Provide legal status to children of immigrants who are already in the United States and were brought to the United States by their parents. Provide these children the option of citizenship in 10 years if they meet citizenship requirements and commit no crimes (DACA).	Liberal

(continued)

Issue	CCES Year	Question Text	Ideology
immigration: defundsanctuarycities	2020	What do you think the U.S. government should do about immigration? Do you support or oppose each of the following? Withhold federal funds from any local police department that does not report to the federal government anyone they identify as an illegal immigrant.	Conservative
immigration: denychildrencitizenship	2012	What do you think the U.S. government should do about immigration? Select all that apply: Deny automatic citizenship to American-born children of illegal immigrants.	Conservative
immigration: deport	2016	What do you think the U.S. government should do about immigration? Select all that apply: Identify and deport illegal immigrants.	Conservative
immigration: dreamers	2020	Over the past two years, Congress voted on many issues. Do you support or oppose each of the following proposals? Provide permanent resident status to children of immigrants who were brought to the United States by their parents (also known as Dreamers). Provide these immigrants a pathway to citizenship if they meet the citizenship requirements and commit no crimes.	Liberal
immigration: endfamilybased	2020	What do you think the U.S. government should do about immigration? Do you support or oppose each of the following? Reduce legal immigration by 50 percent over the next 10 years by eliminating the visa lottery and ending family-based migration.	Conservative
immigration: finebusinesses	2016	What do you think the U.S. government should do about immigration? Select all that apply: Fine U.S. businesses that hire illegal immigrants.	Conservative
immigration: grantstatusdiploma	2016	What do you think the U.S. government should do about immigration? Select all that apply: Grant legal status to people who were brought to the US illegally as children, but who have graduated from a U.S. high school.	Liberal
immigration: grantstatusworkers	2020	What do you think the U.S. government should do about immigration? Do you support or oppose each of the following? Grant legal status to all illegal immigrants who have held jobs and paid taxes for at least 3 years, and not been convicted of any felony crimes.	Liberal
immigration: hospitalsandschools	2012	What do you think the U.S. government should do about immigration? Select all that apply: Prohibit illegal immigrants from using emergency hospital care and public schools.	Conservative

(continued)

Issue	CCES Year	Question Text	Ideology
immigration: imprisonreentry	2018	What do you think the U.S. government should do about immigration? Do you support or oppose each of the following? Send to prison any person who has been deported from the United States and reenters the United States.	Conservative
immigration: increaseworkvisas	2016	What do you think the U.S. government should do about immigration? Select all that apply: Increase the number of visas for overseas workers to work in the U.S.	Liberal
immigration: muslimban	2016	What do you think the U.S. government should do about immigration? Select all that apply: Ban Muslims from immigrating to the U.S.	Conservative
immigration: noneofthese	2016	What do you think the U.S. government should do about immigration? Select all that apply: None of these.	Liberal
immigration: nosyrianrefugees	2016	What do you think the U.S. government should do about immigration? Select all that apply: Admit no refugees from Syria.	Conservative
immigration: policequestioning	2014	What do you think the U.S. government should do about immigration? Select all that apply: Allow police to question anyone they think may be in the country illegally.	Conservative
immigration: travelban	2018	President Trump has issued many orders over the first two years of his presidency. For each of the following tell us whether you support or oppose the order in principle: Ban immigrants from Iran, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen, Syria and Libya from coming to the United States for 90 days. Permanently prohibits Syrian refugees from entering country.	Conservative
immigration: usbasedasylum	2020	For each of the following tell us whether you support or oppose the se decisions. Suspend a program that allows migrants to remain in the US while their asylum cases were being decided.	Conservative
Law Enforcement Issues			
criminaljustice: banchokeholds	2020	Do you support or oppose each of the following proposals? Ban the use of choke holds by police.	Liberal
criminaljustice: decreasepolice	2020	Do you support or oppose each of the following proposals? Decrease the number of police on the street by 10 percent, and increase funding for other public services.	Liberal

(continued)

Issue	CCES Year	Question Text	Ideology
criminaljustice: felonthreestrikes	2016	Do you support or oppose each of the following proposals? Increase prison sentences for felons who have already committed two or more serious or violent crimes.	Conservative
criminaljustice: increasepolice	2020	Do you support or oppose each of the following proposals? Increase the number of police on the street by 10 percent, even if it means fewer funds for other public services.	Conservative
criminaljustice: mandatoryminimumsdrugs	2020	Do you support or oppose each of the following proposals? Eliminate mandatory minimum sentences for non-violent drug offenders.	Liberal
criminaljustice: policebodycameras	2020	Do you support or oppose each of the following proposals? Require police officers to wear body cameras that record all of their activities while on duty.	Liberal
criminaljustice: policemilitaryweapons	2020	Do you support or oppose each of the following proposals? End the Department of Defense program that sends surplus military weapons and equipment to police departments.	Liberal
criminaljustice: policeregistry	2020	Do you support or oppose each of the following proposals? Create a national registry of police who have been investigated for or disciplined for misconduct.	Liberal
criminaljustice: suepolice	2020	Do you support or oppose each of the following proposals? Allow individuals or their families to sue a police officer for damages if the officer is found to have "recklessly disregarded" the individual's rights.	Liberal
guncontrol: assaultban	2020	On the issue of gun regulation, do you support or oppose each of the following proposals? Ban assault rifles.	Liberal
guncontrol: backgroundchecks	2018	On the issue of gun regulation, are you for or against each of the following proposals? Background checks for all sales, including at gun shows and over the Internet.	Liberal
guncontrol: easierpermits	2020	On the issue of gun regulation, do you support or oppose each of the following proposals? Make it easier for people to obtain concealed-carry permit.	Conservative
guncontrol: magazineban	2014	On the issue of gun regulation, are you for or against each of the following proposals? Ban high-capacity magazines for guns (more than 20 bullets).	Liberal
guncontrol: morestrict	2012	In general, do you feel that the laws covering the sale of firearms should be... More Strict, Less Strict, Kept As They Are.	Liberal

(continued)

Issue	CCES Year	Question Text	Ideology
guncontrol: publishnames	2020	On the issue of gun regulation, are you for or against each of the following proposals? Prohibit state and local governments from publishing the names and addresses of all gun owners.	Conservative
spending: increasestatelawenforcement	2020	State legislatures must make choices when making spending decisions on important state programs. How would you like your legislature to spend money on each of the five areas below? Law Enforcement.	Conservative
Social Welfare Issues			
economy: foodstampjob	2020	For each of the following tell us whether you support or oppose these decisions. Require able-bodied adults 18 to 49 years of age who do not have dependents to have a job in order to receive food stamps.	Conservative
economy: jobretraining	2016	Congress considers many issues. If you were in Congress would you vote FOR or AGAINST each of the following? Trade Adjustment Assistance Act - Provides education assistance and retraining to workers who have lost their jobs as a result of foreign trade.	Liberal
education: repealnclb	2016	Congress considers many issues. If you were in Congress would you vote FOR or AGAINST each of the following? Education Reform - Repeals the No Child Left Behind Act, which required testing of all students and penalized schools that fell below federal standards. Allows states to identify and improve poor performing schools.	Liberal
healthcare: acaindividualmandate	2020	Thinking now about health care policy, would you support or oppose each of the following proposals? Restore the Affordable Care Act's mandate that all individuals be required to purchase health insurance.	Liberal
healthcare: birthcontrolinsurance	2012	Congress Considered many important bills over the past two years. For each of the following tell us whether you support or oppose the legislation in principle: Birth Control Exemption. A Bill to let employers and insurers refuse to cover birth control and other health services that violate their religious beliefs.	Conservative
healthcare: importprescriptiondrugs	2020	Thinking now about health care policy, would you support or oppose each of the following proposals? Allow states to import prescription drugs from other countries.	Liberal

(continued)

Issue	CCES Year	Question Text	Ideology
healthcare: insurancereligiosexemption	2014	Congress considered many important bills over the past two years. For each of the following tell us whether you support or oppose the legislation in principle: Birth Control Exemption - A Bill to let employers and insurers refuse to cover birth control and other health services that violate their religious beliefs.	Conservative
healthcare: medicaidexpansion	2014	Should your state refuse to implement the expansion of health care for poor people, even if it costs the state federal Medicaid funds?	Conservative
healthcare: medicarecostreform	2016	Congress considers many issues. If you were in Congress would you vote FOR or AGAINST each of the following? Medicare Accountability and Cost Reform Act - Shifts Medicare from fee-for-service to pay-for-performance. Ties Medicare payments to doctors to quality of care measures. Requires higher premiums for seniors who make more than \$134,000. Renews the Children Health Insurance Program (CHIP).	Liberal
healthcare: medicareforall	2020	Thinking now about health care policy, would you support or oppose each of the following proposals? Expand Medicare to a single comprehensive public health care coverage program that would cover all Americans.	Liberal
healthcare: medicarelowerage	2020	Thinking now about health care policy, would you support or oppose each of the following proposals? Lower the eligibility age for Medicare from 65 to 50.	Liberal
healthcare: negotiatedrugprices	2020	Thinking now about health care policy, would you support or oppose each of the following proposals? Allow the government to negotiate with drug companies to get a lower price on prescription drugs that would apply to both Medicare and private insurance. Maximum negotiated price could not exceed 120% of the average prices in 6 other countries.	Liberal
healthcare: repealaca	2020	Thinking now about health care policy, would you support or oppose each of the following proposals? Repeal the entire Affordable Care Act.	Conservative
healthcare: repealaca_partial1	2018	Thinking now about health care policy, would you support or oppose each of the following proposals? Repeal only the part of the Affordable Care Act that requires that most individuals have health insurance and that larger employers cover their employees.	Conservative

(continued)

Issue	CCES Year	Question Text	Ideology
healthcare: repealaca_partial2	2018	Thinking now about health care policy, would you support or oppose each of the following proposals? Partially repeal the Affordable Care Act. This would (1) repeal individual and employer mandates, (2) cut Medicaid payments by 25 percent, and (3) reduce taxes on expensive health plans, known as Cadillac health plans.	Conservative
healthcare: voteforaca	2014	Would you have voted for the Affordable Care Act if you were in Congress in 2010?	Liberal
race: affirmativeaction	2014	Affirmative action programs give preference to racial minorities in employment and college admissions in order to correct for past discrimination. Do you support or oppose affirmative action?	Liberal
spending: increasestateeducation	2020	State legislatures must make choices when making spending decisions on important state programs. How would you like your legislature to spend money on each of the five areas below? Education.	Liberal
spending: increasestatehealthcare	2020	State legislatures must make choices when making spending decisions on important state programs. How would you like your legislature to spend money on each of the five areas below? Health Care.	Liberal
spending: increasestatewelfare	2020	State legislatures must make choices when making spending decisions on important state programs. How would you like your legislature to spend money on each of the five areas below? Welfare.	Liberal

Appendix B Sensitivity to Measurement Decisions

In order to produce our main results, we made a series of decisions that may, in theory, affect our conclusions. In this appendix, we consider these decisions and show that our main results are robust to them. As in the main text of the paper, all results come from bootstrapping where class is assigned in each sample.

Size of Income Groups: First, we examine the implications of our decision to use income *deciles*, as opposed to some other threshold. In Table A2, we show the average opinion gap when our main results involve comparing groups of different sizes—the 5th, 10th, 20th, 25th, and 33rd percentiles of income. Unsurprisingly, as more respondents are included in each income group, the average opinion gap decreases. However, we note that our main conclusions withstand this variation. The income-based opinion gaps within the parties are larger than among all respondents and Democrats exhibit greater gaps than Republicans in each specification.

Including Partisan Leaners: In our main results, we exclude independents who self-identify as partisan “leaners”. In Table A3, we show that this decision does not affect our main results. Our main results are very similar whether we include or exclude leaners from the analysis.

Defining Income Groups within the Parties: One possible confounder may be that members of one party are systematically richer than those in another. This might produce lopsided comparisons between a relatively large high-income group and small low-income group for one party and the reverse in the other. We show that this does not affect our main results by identifying income deciles *within* the parties. These results are reported in Table A4.

Issue Selection: In the main results, we include each policy question only once, even if it appears in several years of the CES. We do so to avoid some frequently asked issues overwhelming other less-frequent questions in the results. However, an alternative perspective might consider that these repeated questions are especially salient and important, and should be included as frequently as they appear in the survey data. In Table A5, we show results where all questions are included in all years that they are asked in the survey. These results confirm our main results, and suggest that they are not an artifact of this decision.

Table A2: Opinion Gaps Varying Income Thresholds

		Percentile Thresholds for Income Groups				
		5	10	20	25	33
All Respondents	Policy Domain					
	Cultural	0.088	0.075	0.064	0.061	0.058
	Economic	0.097	0.085	0.068	0.061	0.058
	Foreign policy	0.114	0.097	0.078	0.070	0.067
	Immigration	0.083	0.064	0.049	0.045	0.042
	Law enforcement	0.079	0.071	0.064	0.059	0.058
	Social welfare	0.070	0.062	0.051	0.047	0.045
All Issues	0.091	0.078	0.064	0.058	0.055	
Democrats	Cultural	0.167	0.145	0.111	0.103	0.097
	Economic	0.157	0.131	0.100	0.090	0.085
	Foreign policy	0.188	0.160	0.129	0.115	0.108
	Immigration	0.188	0.166	0.125	0.112	0.105
	Law enforcement	0.148	0.129	0.108	0.098	0.092
	Social welfare	0.162	0.140	0.106	0.096	0.089
	All Issues	0.167	0.144	0.112	0.100	0.094
Republicans	Cultural	0.117	0.109	0.095	0.089	0.086
	Economic	0.124	0.102	0.083	0.075	0.072
	Foreign policy	0.145	0.122	0.098	0.088	0.085
	Immigration	0.087	0.067	0.056	0.051	0.049
	Law enforcement	0.138	0.113	0.095	0.086	0.083
	Social welfare	0.112	0.103	0.082	0.073	0.069
	All Issues	0.121	0.102	0.084	0.076	0.073

Note: Results show the average income-based opinion gap when the size of income groups vary (i.e., the threshold to be included in the top and bottom income groups).

Table A3: Main Results with Partisan Leaners

Policy Domain	Number of Unique Issues	Average Opinion Gap	Opinion Difference Statistically Significant	Opinion Gap Greater than 10 pts.	10 pt. Gap + Disagreement on Outcome
Democrats					
Law enforcement	16	0.131	100%	62.5%	6.2%
Immigration	22	0.127	100%	68.2%	0%
Cultural	18	0.152	94.4%	72.2%	5.6%
Economic	45	0.139	88.9%	68.9%	13.3%
Social welfare	20	0.119	95%	60%	0%
Foreign policy	23	0.170	95.7%	73.9%	26.1%
Total	144	0.140	94.4%	68.1%	9.7%
Republicans					
Law enforcement	16	0.090	93.8%	37.5%	6.2%
Immigration	22	0.066	68.2%	18.2%	9.1%
Cultural	18	0.101	83.3%	50%	0%
Economic	45	0.130	88.9%	64.4%	17.8%
Social welfare	20	0.158	85%	75%	20%
Foreign policy	23	0.077	78.3%	26.1%	0%
Total	144	0.108	83.3%	47.9%	10.4%

Note: This table reports our main results where partisan groups include independents who indicate that they “lean” toward one party or another.

Table A4: Main Results, Income Groups Defined within Party

Policy Domain	Number of Unique Issues	Average Opinion Gap	Opinion Difference Statistically Significant	Opinion Gap Greater than 10 pts.	10 pt. Gap + Disagreement on Outcome
Democrats					
Law enforcement	16	0.137	100%	62.5%	6.2%
Immigration	22	0.131	90.9%	68.2%	9.1%
Cultural	18	0.159	100%	72.2%	11.1%
Economic	45	0.138	84.4%	68.9%	15.6%
Social welfare	20	0.123	95%	50%	5%
Foreign policy	23	0.179	87%	73.9%	26.1%
Total	144	0.144	91%	66.7%	13.2%
Republicans					
Law enforcement	16	0.079	81.2%	25%	6.2%
Immigration	22	0.063	72.7%	18.2%	0%
Cultural	18	0.085	77.8%	38.9%	0%
Economic	45	0.115	86.7%	51.1%	15.6%
Social welfare	20	0.140	85%	60%	15%
Foreign policy	23	0.069	69.6%	21.7%	0%
Total	144	0.096	79.9%	38.2%	7.6%

Note: This table reports our main results where income deciles are determined *within* parties.

Table A5: Main Results, Issues in All Years

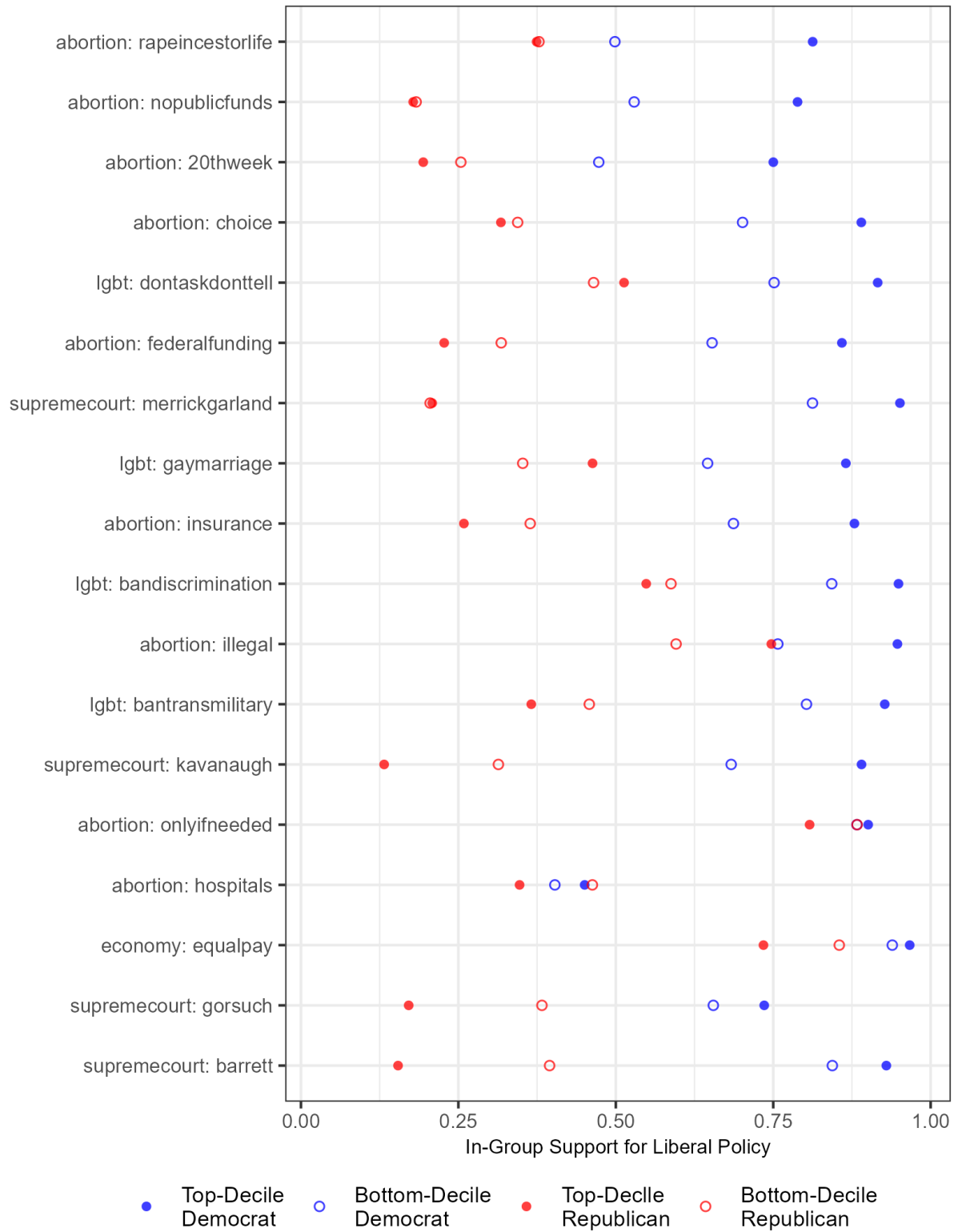
Policy Domain	Number of Questions	Average Opinion Gap	Opinion Difference Statistically Significant	Opinion Gap Greater than 10 pts.	10 pt. Gap+ Disagreement on Outcome
All Respondents					
Law enforcement	32	0.035	68.8%	3.1%	0%
Immigration	42	0.065	83.3%	21.4%	2.4%
Cultural	48	0.073	87.5%	31.2%	12.5%
Economic	85	0.080	85.9%	34.1%	8.8%
Social welfare	37	0.096	89.2%	37.8%	10.8%
Foreign policy	52	0.113	92.3%	53.8%	9.6%
Total	296	0.080	85.5%	32.4%	7.9%
Democrats					
Law enforcement	32	0.120	96.9%	56.2%	6.2%
Immigration	42	0.125	92.9%	66.7%	7.1%
Cultural	48	0.182	95.8%	85.4%	16.7%
Economic	85	0.129	89.4%	64.7%	11.8%
Social welfare	37	0.124	91.9%	54.1%	5.4%
Foreign policy	52	0.155	94.2%	65.4%	28.8%
Total	296	0.140	92.9%	66.2%	13.5%
Republicans					
Law enforcement	32	0.076	81.2%	34.4%	3.1%
Immigration	42	0.083	78.6%	28.6%	0%
Cultural	48	0.076	72.9%	25%	0%
Economic	85	0.138	89.4%	67.1%	21.2%
Social welfare	37	0.160	89.2%	75.7%	16.2%
Foreign policy	52	0.083	75%	38.5%	0%
Total	296	0.107	81.8%	47.3%	8.4%

Note: This table reports our main results where issues are included in every year that they appear in the CES, rather than dropping repeat questions in earlier years.

Appendix C Issue Opinion by Party and Income

The figures that follow report the share of partisans in the high- and low-income groups that support each policy question. Point estimates are produced from the CES as described in the main text. Issues are recoded so that support for the liberal position is reported (following the procedure described in Appendix H). Questions are organized by policy domain, and are sorted by the difference between the within-party opinion gaps (i.e., issues on the top of each figure are those for which Democrats are more divided by income than Republicans, and those on the bottom are issues where Democrats are more divided than Republicans).

Figure A1: Policy Support by Party and Income: Cultural Issues



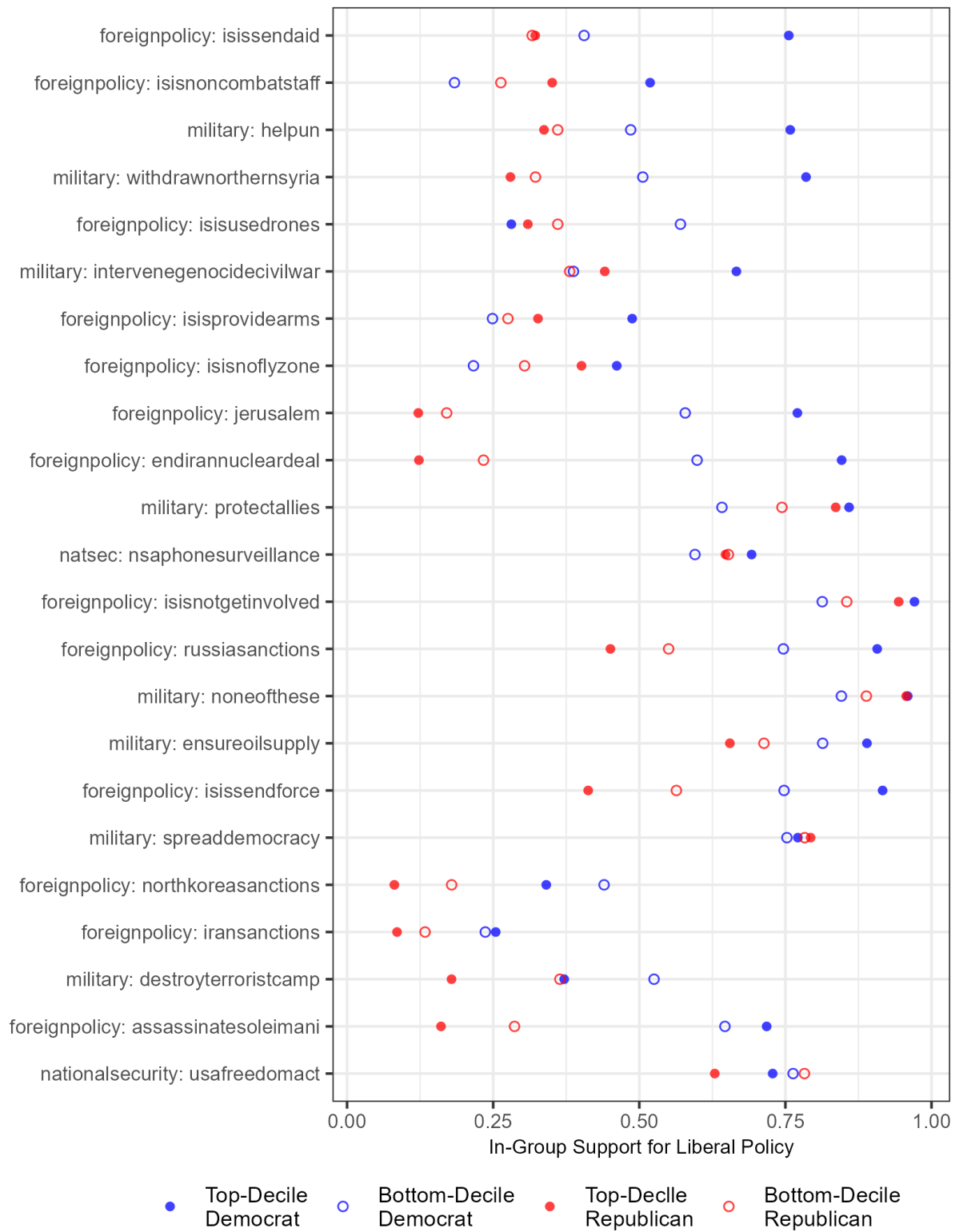
Note: Plot reports policy support for listed issues among high- and low-income partisans.

Figure A2: Policy Support by Party and Income: Economic Issues



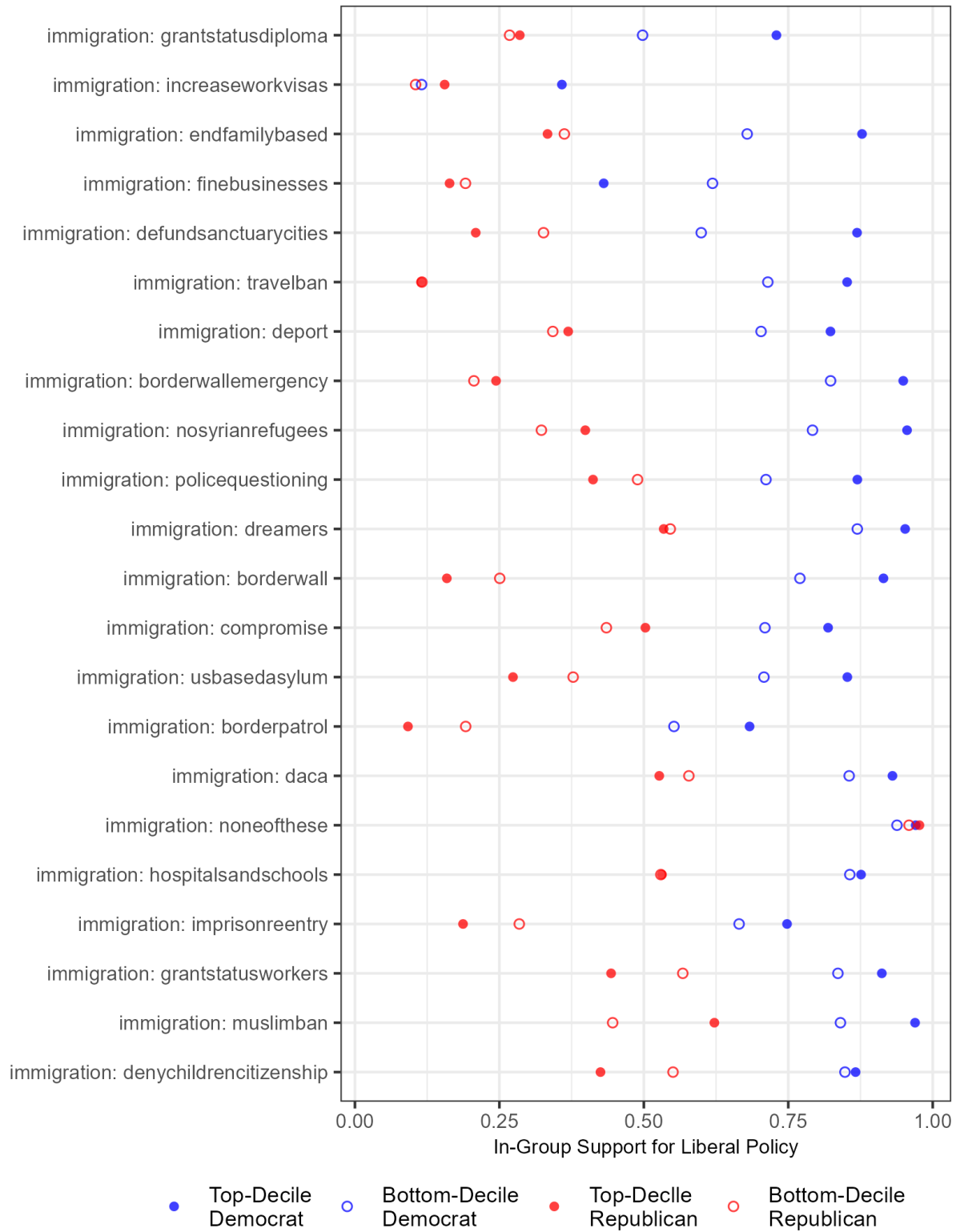
Note: Plot reports policy support for listed issues among high- and low-income partisans.

Figure A3: Policy Support by Party and Income: Foreign Policy Issues



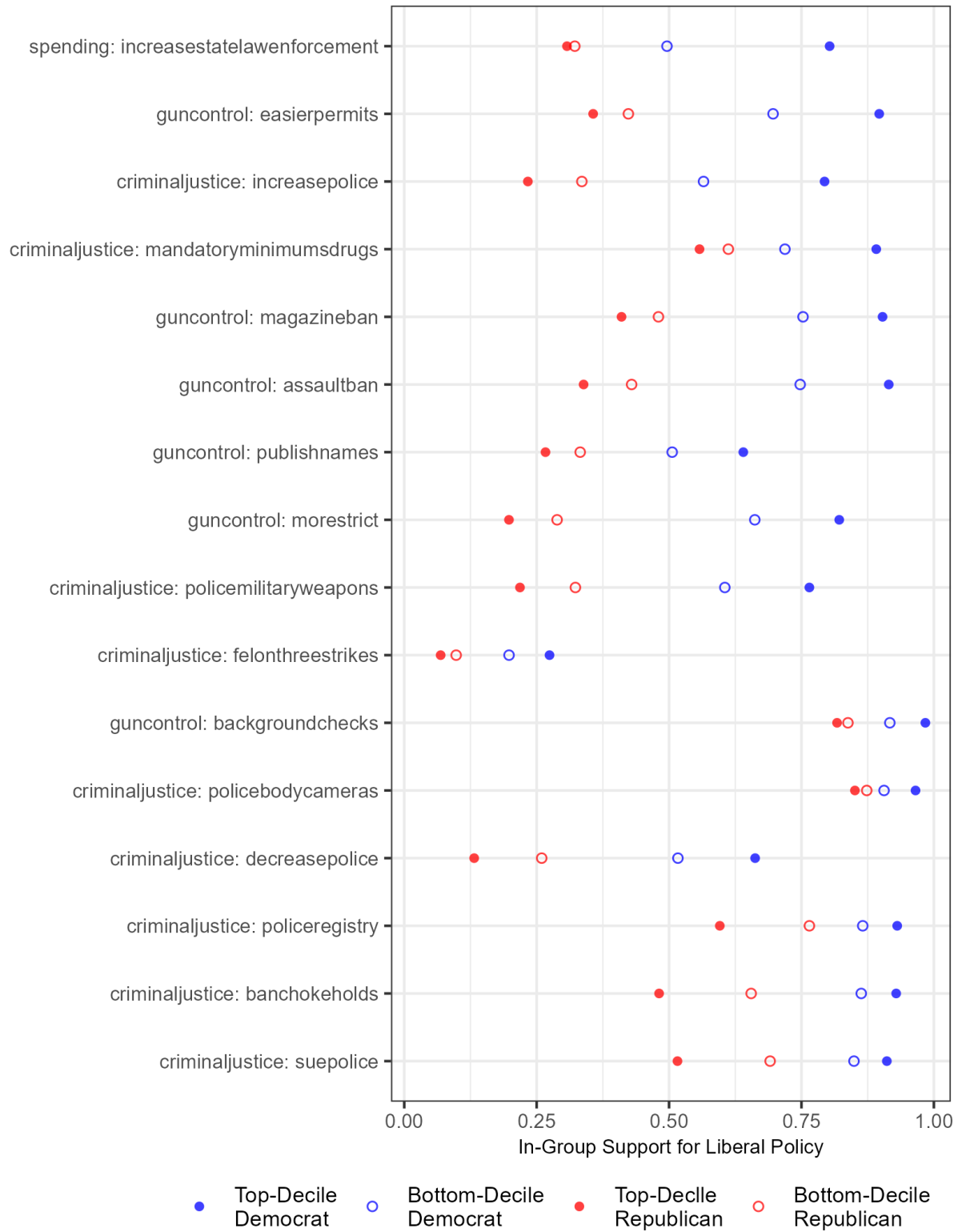
Note: Plot reports policy support for listed issues among high- and low-income partisans.

Figure A4: Policy Support by Party and Income: Immigration Issues



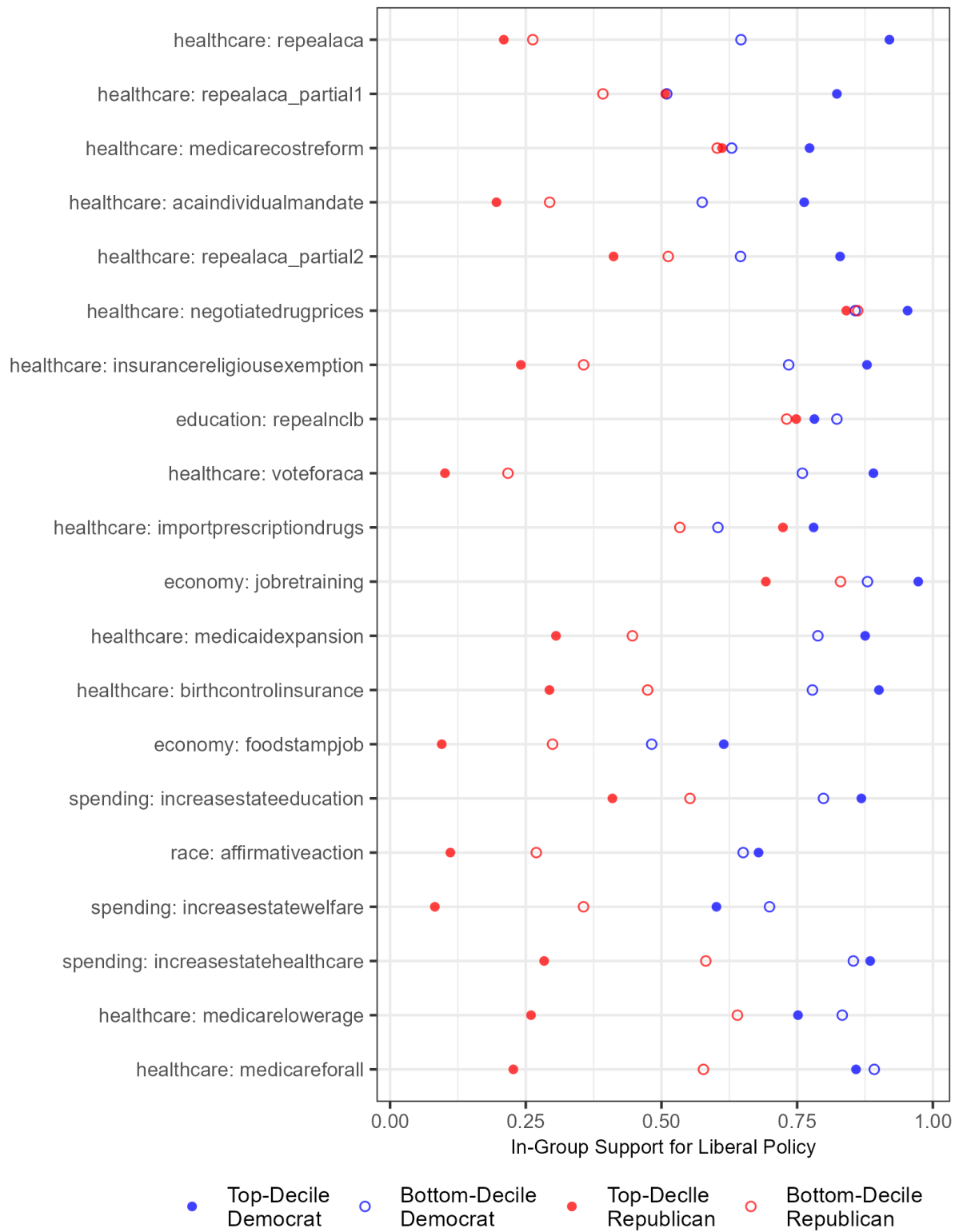
Note: Plot reports policy support for listed issues among high- and low-income partisans.

Figure A5: Policy Support by Party and Income: Law Enforcement Issues



Note: Plot reports policy support for listed issues among high- and low-income partisans.

Figure A6: Policy Support by Party and Income: Social Welfare Issues



Note: Plot reports policy support for listed issues among high- and low-income partisans.

Appendix D Evaluating Rich State vs. Poor State Hypothesis

One possible concern is that asymmetries between the Republican and Democratic parties are driven in part by where they choose to live. For example, Democrats tend to live in richer states with larger income gaps and Republicans in poorer ones with smaller gaps (Gelman, et al., 2008). In Table A6, we compare opinion gaps among Democrats and Republicans in the 25 richest states with those in the 25 poorest. We define states based on median household income.

The table suggests that the differences between Republicans' and Democrats' income-based opinion gaps are relatively consistent when looking at both subsets of states. The average opinion gap among Democrats is identical in both groups. Although rich-state Republicans exhibit slightly higher income-based opinion gaps than those in poorer states, they do not rise to the level of Democrats.

Table A6: Comparing Class Divides across High- and Low-Income States

Policy Domain	Number of Unique Issues	Average Opinion Gap	Opinion Difference Statistically Significant	Opinion Gap Greater than 10 pts.	10 pt. Gap + Disagreement on Policy
Dem.: Poor state					
Cultural	18	0.169	88.9%	77.8%	16.7%
Economic	45	0.138	82.2%	68.9%	8.9%
Law enforcement	16	0.148	100%	62.5%	12.5%
Social welfare	20	0.113	85%	45%	10%
Foreign policy	23	0.173	91.3%	73.9%	21.7%
Immigration	22	0.128	90.9%	63.6%	0%
Total	144	0.144	88.2%	66%	11.1%
Dem.: Rich state					
Cultural	18	0.145	94.4%	66.7%	5.6%
Economic	45	0.138	80%	68.9%	11.1%
Law enforcement	16	0.122	100%	56.2%	0%
Social welfare	20	0.133	95%	60%	0%
Foreign policy	23	0.187	82.6%	69.6%	30.4%
Immigration	22	0.134	90.9%	68.2%	4.5%
Total	144	0.144	88.2%	66%	9.7%
Rep.: Poor state					
Cultural	18	0.100	77.8%	44.4%	0%
Economic	45	0.117	82.2%	51.1%	13.3%
Law enforcement	16	0.086	75%	31.2%	6.2%
Social welfare	20	0.160	80%	70%	25%
Foreign policy	23	0.079	52.2%	30.4%	0%
Immigration	22	0.082	54.5%	36.4%	9.1%
Total	144	0.106	71.5%	45.1%	9.7%
Rep.: Rich state					
Cultural	18	0.113	72.2%	61.1%	0%
Economic	45	0.133	84.4%	57.8%	15.6%
Law enforcement	16	0.102	75%	43.8%	6.2%
Social welfare	20	0.156	85%	70%	15%
Foreign policy	23	0.089	60.9%	34.8%	0%
Immigration	22	0.075	59.1%	31.8%	0%
Total	144	0.115	74.3%	50.7%	7.6%

Note: Table reports how opinion gaps vary in high- and low-income states

Appendix E Comparing across Cleavages

We find that within parties, policy disagreements across the class divide are larger than across other social cleavages. Figure A7 plots the estimates of these disagreements for each of our policy domains. It also shows a measure of uncertainty of these estimates: the 95% interval from 1,000 bootstrapped samples. These uncertainty estimates reinforce that the relatively large opinion gaps we see on class are significantly larger than on other cleavages within the parties.

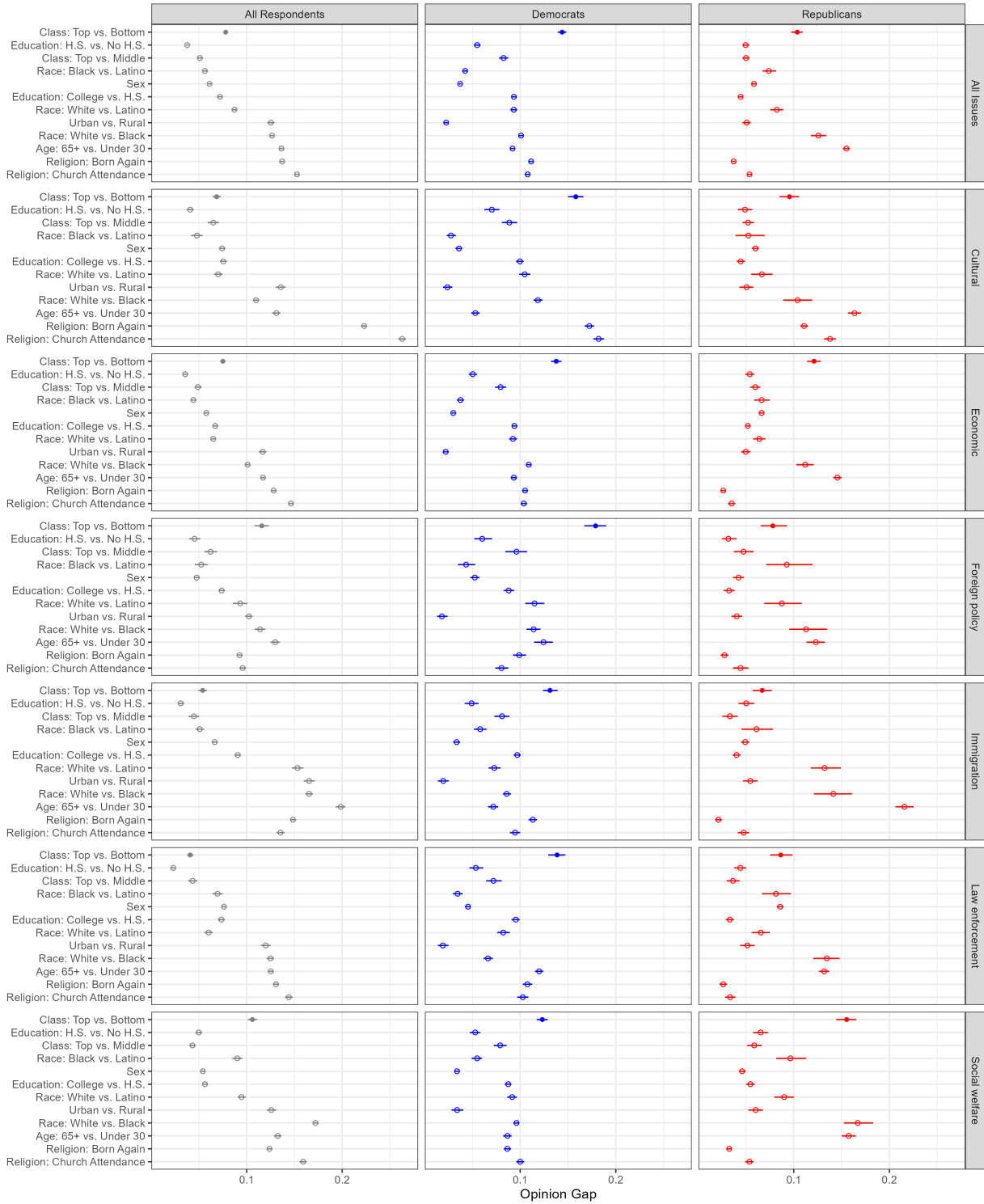


Figure A7: Within-Party Cleavages with Standard Errors

Note: Point estimates reflect the average opinion gap across the listed cleavage within each partisan group. Error bars cover 95% of estimates from 1,000 bootstrapped samples.

Appendix F 90-50 Preference Gaps

Class has the potential to shape policy preferences across income levels, not merely among the richest and poorest individuals. For example, Gilens (2012) found disagreement on some issues between the 90th and 50th income percentiles, as well as the 90th and 10th. Here, in table A7 we consider preference gaps between the top decile and a middle-income decile in the two parties. We construct our middle income deciles using the same bootstrap-and-sample procedure described in the main text of the manuscript. However, rather than extracting the top 10% and bottom 10%, we extract the top 10% and the 10% of respondents clustered between the 45th and 55th percentiles of the income distribution.

Although the overall level of class-based disagreement is predictably lower between rich and middle-income respondents, we still find that Democrats have reliably more class-based disagreement than Republicans or the full set of respondents, across issues. For all six policy domains, the average size of the class gap and the share of issues with any statistically significant class gap or a substantively meaningful class gap are largest for Democrats.

Table A7: Opinion Gaps by Issue Domain and Party (Top-Middle Income Groups)

Policy Domain	Number of Unique Issues	Average Class Gap	Opinion Difference Statistically Significant	Class Gap Greater than 10 pts.	Class Disagreement on Policy
All Respondents					
Law enforcement	16	0.044	75%	0%	6.2%
Immigration	22	0.045	81.8%	0%	9.1%
Cultural	18	0.065	88.9%	11.1%	5.6%
Economic	45	0.049	73.3%	2.2%	4.4%
Social welfare	20	0.043	60%	0%	0%
Foreign policy	23	0.062	73.9%	0%	13%
Total	144	0.051	75%	2.1%	6.2%
Democrats					
Law enforcement	16	0.072	81.2%	18.8%	0%
Immigration	22	0.081	95.5%	9.1%	0%
Cultural	18	0.089	88.9%	22.2%	0%
Economic	45	0.080	84.4%	15.6%	2.2%
Social welfare	20	0.079	85%	25%	0%
Foreign policy	23	0.096	87%	26.1%	0%
Total	144	0.083	86.8%	18.8%	0.7%
Republicans					
Law enforcement	16	0.036	56.2%	0%	0%
Immigration	22	0.033	40.9%	0%	0%
Cultural	18	0.052	72.2%	5.6%	0%
Economic	45	0.060	77.8%	11.1%	2.2%
Social welfare	20	0.059	70%	5%	0%
Foreign policy	23	0.048	52.2%	0%	0%
Total	144	0.050	63.9%	4.9%	0.7%

Note: Table reports income-based opinion gaps for top- and middle-decile partisans.

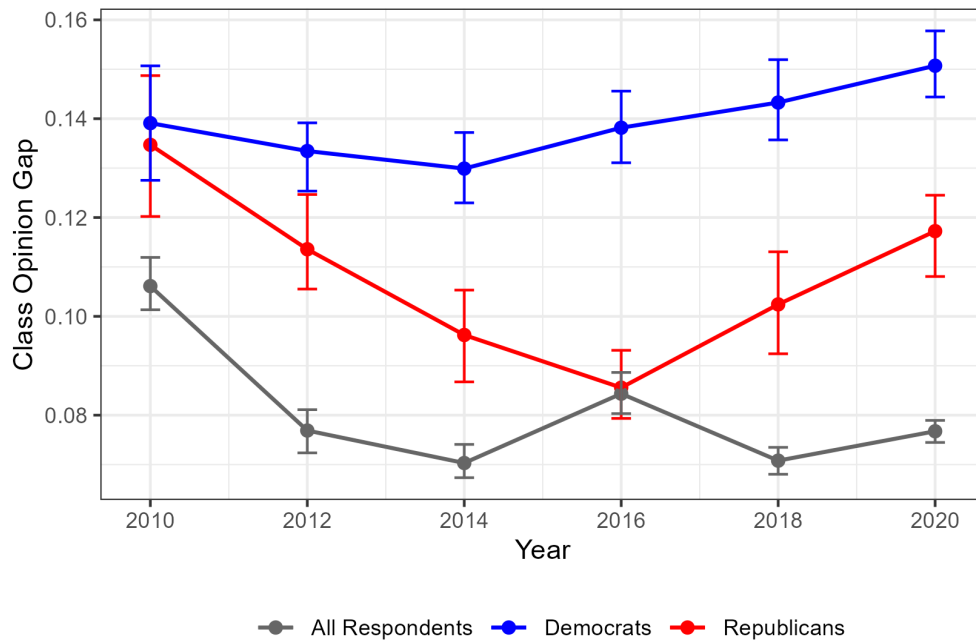
Appendix G Opinion Gaps over Time

The top panel of Figure A8 reports, for each CES survey, the mean opinion gap by partisan group, as well as the corresponding 95-percent confidence intervals. Three patterns immediately stand out. First, the Democrats consistently have the largest class-based differences in opinion across the full time series. The only exception to this is in 2010, where there is virtually no difference between the parties (though this is one of the years for which we have the fewest survey questions). Second, the size of the opinion gap for Democrats has remained quite stable, ranging from a low of about 13 percentage points in 2014 to a high of about 15 points in 2020. There is less stability among the full sample and among Republicans. Finally, these within year comparisons indicate that Republicans, while having smaller opinion gaps than Democrats, tend to have larger gaps than the full population.

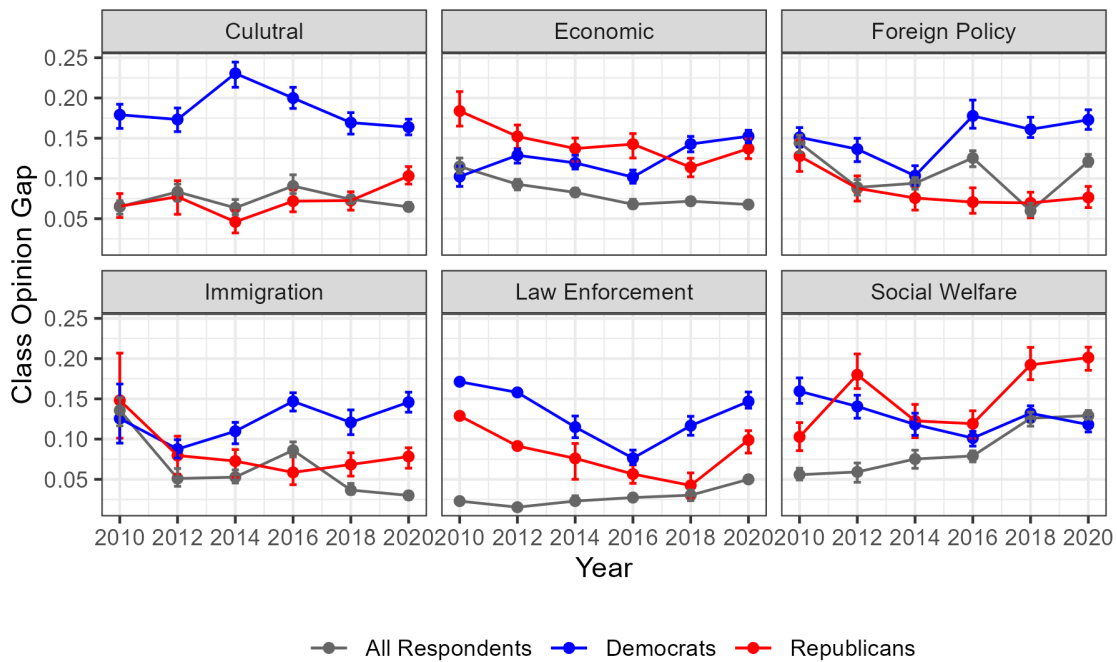
Figure A8's bottom panel divides the over-time analysis into our six policy domains. This more granular look again reveals that the aggregate results are not driven by just one or two domains or by one or two survey years. Here we can see that Democrats consistently have larger opinion gaps in the domains of cultural, foreign, immigration and law enforcement policy. While not part of the core conclusions of this manuscript, it is interesting to note that Republicans appear to have grown increasingly class-polarized on social welfare issues over time, consistent with our finding above that they are more class-polarized on redistributive issues generally. Of course, all of these temporal findings have a key limitation: because the questions asked on the CES change from year to year, reflecting the issues of the day, we cannot consider the same set of policies over time.¹ This means that the year-over-year variation we observe in Figure A8 may be due in part to changing issues, as well as changing attitudes.

¹A subset of issues are included in several years; however, these are not a representative sample of all issues asked in the CES and skew toward hot-button issues (e.g., abortion and the Affordable Care Act) and long-languishing foreign conflicts.

Figure A8: Class Opinion Gaps over Time, 2010–2020



(a) Opinion Gaps Over Time: All Repeated Issues



(b) Opinion Gaps Over Time: By Policy Domain

Note: Plots report the temporal dynamics of class-based opinion gaps by looking only at the issues included in each year’s version of the CES. Error bars indicate 95% confidence intervals.

Appendix H Ideological Consistency by Party and Class

In this appendix, we consider the ideological underpinnings of differences in opinion by class. How often do high- and low-income Democrats (Republicans) take the liberal (conservative) position?

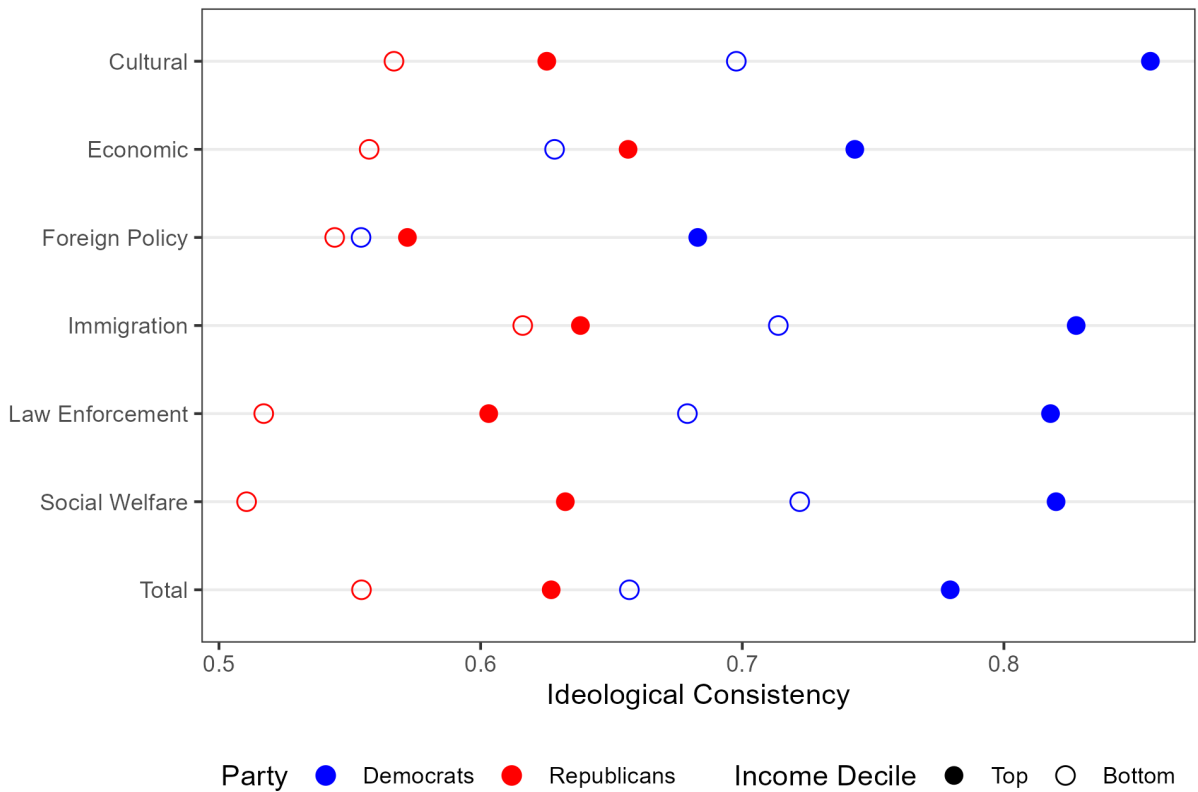
To do so, we find the correlation between the policy questions and self-identified ideology in the CCES (with -1 corresponding to liberal identifiers, 1 corresponding to conservative identifiers, and 0 corresponding to moderates). We consider all issues where the correlation is positive to be conservative, and those where the correlation is negative to be liberal. We manually reviewed the ideological codings to ensure face validity. A full listing of issues' ideological coding is in Appendix A.

Using our 1,000 bootstrapped samples, we then compute for each respondent the frequency with which they take the ideological position *consistent* with their partisanship (liberal for Democrats and conservative for Republicans). Figure A9 reports this ideological consistency by party and class for each of our six policy domains and the full set of 144 questions. Across all domains, rich Democrats are the group that is by far the most likely to hold views consistent with their ideology. Indeed, high-income Democrats take the liberal position on 77% of all policy debates. By comparison, rich Republicans hold ideologically consistent views only 64% of the time, low-income Democrats do 65% of the time, and low-income Republicans 56% of the time.

In Figure A9, the class-based opinion gaps in each party are also evident. Although Democrats are more ideologically consistent across most policy domains, the distance between the high- and low-income points are evident here (these correspond to the class gaps reported in the main text of the paper).

Table A8 shows how class and partisan differences in opinion vary ideologically across issue domains. It reports the largest class-based opinion gaps within each party based on the ideological positioning of the issues. For example, the top-left corner shows the six issues for which rich Democrats are more conservative than poor Democrats.

Figure A9: Ideological Consistency by Party and Class



Note: Points denote the frequency with which respondents take the ideological position consistent with their party (the liberal position for Democrats and the conservative position for Republicans), averaged overall members of that party-class group. Greater consistency indicates that members of a party-class group more frequently hold the ideological position in line with their party.

Table A8: Top 10 Largest Opinion Gaps by Ideology

	Top decile more conservative than bottom decile	Top decile more liberal than bottom decile
Democrats	foreignpolicy: isisusedrones	foreignpolicy: isissendaid
	immigration: finebusinesses	environment: repealcleanpowerplant
	budget: simpsonbowlesplan	foreignpolicy: isisnoncombatstaff
	agriculture: farmbill	abortion: rapeincestorlife
	military: destroyterroristcamp	healthcare: repealaca_partial1
taxes: raisestandarddeduction	spending: increasestatelawenforcement	
		military: withdrawnorthern_syria
		military: intervenegenocidecivilwar
		abortion: 20thweek
		healthcare: repealaca
Republicans	healthcare: medicarelowerage	healthcare: importprescriptiondrugs
	healthcare: medicareforall	immigration: muslimban
	economy: raiseminimumwage_15	abortion: illegal
	economy: raiseminimumwage	trade: steeltariffs_all
	spending: increasestatehealthcare	trade: uskoreafretrade
	taxes: incometax_wealthy	healthcare: repealaca_partial1
	spending: increasestatewelfare	lgbt: gaymarriage
	budget: ryanplan	foreignpolicy: isisnoflyzone
	covid: heroesact	
	supremecourt: barrett	

Note: These issues are those with the top 10 largest opinion gaps by party and issue ideology.

Appendix I Opinion Gaps among White Respondents

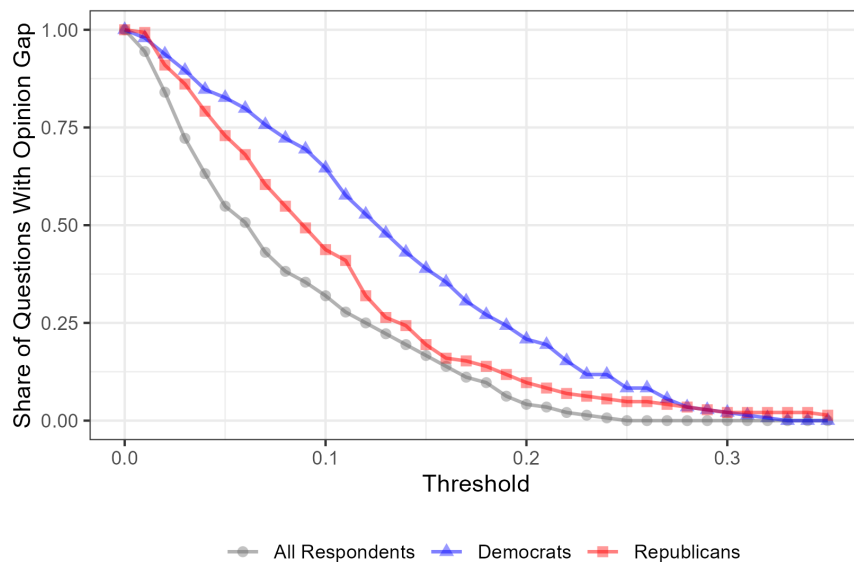
This appendix includes results from an alternative exploration into whether Democrats' large opinion gaps are explained by racial diversity in the party. Here, we replicate our main results, focusing only on white respondents; they are largely similar to those reported in the main text of the paper.

Table A9: Class Gaps by Issue Domain and Party (White Respondents Only)

Policy Domain	Number of Unique Issues	Average Opinion Gap	Opinion Difference Statistically Significant	Opinion Gap Greater than 10 pts.	10 pt. Gap + Disagreement on Outcome
All Respondents					
Law enforcement	16	0.041	62.5%	6.2%	0%
Immigration	22	0.054	86.4%	18.2%	0%
Cultural	18	0.069	83.3%	33.3%	11.1%
Economic	45	0.075	86.7%	31.1%	4.4%
Social welfare	20	0.106	100%	40%	15%
Foreign policy	23	0.116	87%	56.5%	21.7%
Total	144	0.078	85.4%	31.9%	8.3%
Democrats					
Law enforcement	16	0.118	93.8%	68.8%	0%
Immigration	22	0.144	95.5%	68.2%	4.5%
Cultural	18	0.133	94.4%	66.7%	0%
Economic	45	0.127	80%	68.9%	13.3%
Social welfare	20	0.125	95%	50%	5%
Foreign policy	23	0.151	87%	60.9%	13%
Total	144	0.133	88.9%	64.6%	7.6%
Republicans					
Law enforcement	16	0.088	87.5%	31.2%	12.5%
Immigration	22	0.066	68.2%	22.7%	4.5%
Cultural	18	0.099	77.8%	50%	0%
Economic	45	0.123	88.9%	60%	17.8%
Social welfare	20	0.151	90%	65%	15%
Foreign policy	23	0.071	73.9%	17.4%	0%
Total	144	0.103	81.9%	43.8%	9.7%

Note: Column 3 reports the size of the average class gap for issues in the listed policy domain. Columns 4-6 report the share of issues for which the listed standard is satisfied.

Figure A10: Meaningful Class Gaps at Various Thresholds (White respondents only)



Note: This plot reports the share of issues for which the opinion gap between high- and low-income white respondents is as great as the corresponding threshold, plotted on the x-axis. We only count issues for which the opinion gap is statistically significant at the 95% level.