Appendices for

Income, Preferences, and the Dynamics of Policy Responsiveness

APPENDIX A: Variables and Coding Used in Measures of Policy Preferences

1-11) We are faced with many problems in this country, none of which can be solved easily or inexpensively. I'm going to name some of these problems, and for each one I'd like you to tell me whether you think we're spending too much money on it, too little money, or about the right amount. Are we spending too much money, too little money, or about the right amount on…

1) The military, armaments and defense?
2) Foreign aid?
3) Solving the problems of big cities?
4) Halting the rising crime rate?
5) Dealing with drug addiction?
6) Improving the Nation's education system?
7) Improving and protecting the environment?
8) Welfare?
9) Improving and protecting the nation's health?
10) Improving the conditions of Blacks?
11) Space exploration?

All government spending questions with the exception of the "military, armaments, and defense" question were coded as 1 for "too little spending" and 0 for "too much spending." In-keeping with Stimson's (1999) coding of responses to defense spending items, the GSS's "military armaments, and defense" question was coded such that support for more spending represents greater conservatism, i.e. 1 for "too much spending" and 0 for "too little spending." "Don't know," "About the right amount of spending," and "refused to answer" responses were coded as "0" in all cases. We exclude the space exploration item from our scale.

APPENDIX B: Policy Preferences at the Individual Level

While the analyses in this paper require an aggregate, dynamic approach, we are cognizant that macro-level analyses imply a particular notion of how policy preferences in different income groups are structured. While there is abundant evidence, here and elsewhere (see e.g. Soroka and Wleizen 2008), that the policy preferences of different income groups, in the aggregate, move similarly over time, strictly macro-level analyses cannot address questions regarding the structure of preferences within each cohort. At the individual-level, in other words, is the structure of public opinion similar across income cohorts? Do richer and poorer respondents organize their responses in broadly similar ways, or are their important class differences in the nature of responses to the GSS' spending items that may not be seen at the aggregate level? Evidence that the structure of preferences at the individual-level is similar across income quartiles—and, by extension, that citizens in each of the income groups are approaching these survey questions in broadly similar ways—can serve as a validation that our aggregate measure of policy preferences is capable of being used to make comparisons in the dynamics of policy preferences across income cohorts.

While this question has been explored in other contexts and deserves further research, we take two simple approaches to understanding whether there are major differences in the structure of preferences across income cohorts that may have implications for the validity of our macro-level findings. In both cases, the data indicate that socioeconomic differences in the structure of survey responses to questions about distributive and redistributive policies are quite modest.

First, we analyze the factor structure of survey responses to the GSS spending items. The important issue here is whether the factor loadings—which issues are associated with one another, and the relate strength of those associations—is constant across income groups. We wish to see, in other words, whether the unidimensional structure on which we have based our issue scale is an equally valid representation of the structure of preferences across income cohorts (Table B1). We find that the dimensional structure on these issues is similar for each income quartile—the issues that load (and the relative weight of those loadings) on the dominant factor, as well as the proportion of variance explained by this factor, is broadly consistent across all income groups. There are some differences—richer respondents, for example, seem marginally more able to associate preferences on foreign aid and military spending with preferences for domestic distributive and redistributive policies, but these

differences are small and, of particular importance here, the similarities are strongest with respect to domestic spending items. To the extent that a global orientation structures responses to these survey items in the aggregate, it also does so in very similar ways across all income quartiles.

Second, given that there is considerable individual-level heterogeneity in preferences in all four income groups, we wish to see if the predictors of individual-level preferences are broadly constant across income groups. After controlling for income, in other words, do the demographic and contextual factors that predict liberalism or conservatism on this dimension among poorer respondents predict the same for richer respondents? Here, we estimate an ordinary least squares model of our 10-issue individual-level *Mood* proxy index, as a function of various social, political, and demographic variables (e.g. race, gender, religion, education and partisanship). The model estimates are reported in Table B2. Although there is some evidence of differences between how richer (and by extension, more educated and politically knowledgeable) and poorer citizens approach these questions (ideological self-identification, for example, is more strongly predictive of preferences on this dimension among the rich), we find that the individual-level social, political, and demographic characteristics are similarly predictive in terms of sign and the magnitude of predicted effects for all income groups. While this certainly deserves a more nuanced and sophisticated analysis, the data indicate that citizens in all income groups seem to approach these questions in similar ways.

These two analyses provide some important support for our strategy of disaggregating our *Mood*-proxy index by income quartiles. Taken together, they are strongly suggestive that individuals across all income cohorts analyzed approach the GSS survey items in a broadly similar fashion. Moreover, the data suggest that the basic structure of attitude systems is substantially similar across income groups.

Table B1: Factor loadings of issues used to comprise 10-issue measure of Liberalism, by Income Quartile, 1974-2004.

	Wealthiest	Upper Middle	Lower Middle	Poorest
Problems of Blacks	.58	.53	.51	.47
Problems of Big Cities	.53	.51	.48	.50
Health Care	.47	.45	.46	.46
Improving the Nation's Education System	.44	.45	.45	.46
Drug Addiction	.42	.43	.43	.45
Environmental Protection	.42	.42	.42	.45
Welfare	.42	.33	.34	.31
Protection from Crime	.32	.38	.40	.47
Military, Armaments, and Defense	.25	.19	.13	.08
Foreign Aid	.17	.13	.13	.07
Space Exploration	-.16	-.08	-.05	-.00
Eigenvalue (Factor 1)	1.77	1.62	1.59	1.61

Notes: Entries are principal-axis factor loadings for the single-factor solution. When multiple factors are permitted, no other factor has an Eigenvalue of greater than .70, nor explains more than 17% of the 11-issue variance not explained by Factor 1.

Table B2: Predictors of Policy Liberalism (10-issue index) by Quartile, 1974-2004.

	Wealthiest	Upper Middle	Lower Middle	Poorest
Partisanship	-.28 *	-.18 *	-.20 *	-.16 *
	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)
Ideology	-.63 *	-.45 *	-.30 *	-.19 *
	(.04)	(.03)	(.03)	(.03)
Southern White	.03	-.10	-.03	-.26 *
	(.12)	(.10)	(.10)	(.10)
Black	2.25 *	2.21 *	1.92 *	1.49 *
	(.16)	(.14)	(.13)	(.11)
Female	.50 *	.47 *	.36 *	.33 *
	(.08)	(.08)	(.08)	(.08)
Urban	.06	.15	.20 *	.40 *
	(.11)	(.10)	(.10)	(.09)
Rural	-.33 *	-.54 *	-.15	-.28 *
	(.14)	(.11)	(.11)	(.10)
Age	-.02 *	-.03 *	-.03 *	-.04 *
	(.003)	(.003)	(.002)	(.002)
Jewish	.74 *	1.19 *	1.41 *	.46
	(.22)	(.29)	(.38)	(.41)
Catholic	-.05	.29	.37 *	.16
	(.11)	(.11)	(.12)	(.13)
Baptist	-.06	-.03	-.09	.04
	(.17)	(.16)	(.14)	(.13)
Methodist	-.24	-.05	.06	.11
	(.15)	(.15)	(.16)	(.15)
Presbyterian	-.02	.08	-.12	.02
	(.18)	(.21)	(.23)	(.24)
Secular	-.48 *	.14	.36 *	.16
	(.17)	(.16)	(.16)	(.17)
Religious Fundamentalist	-.17	-.08	.08	.18
	(.16)	(.15)	(.14)	(.13)
Education (years)	.13 *	.08 *	.10 *	.09 *
	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.01)
Constant	3.81 *	4.05 *	3.60 *	3.81 *
	(.30)	(.29)	(.30)	(.28)
R^2	.22	.16	.17	.19
SEE	2.85	2.89	2.84	2.80
N	5162	5746	5347	5480

Notes: Robust Standard Errors are in Parentheses. * p<.05 (one-tailed tests).