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## PARTY CLEAVAGES AND WELFARE EFFORT IN THE AMERICAN STATES

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**A**ttempts to determine the impact of party control on state welfare policy have produced mixed and inconclusive results, in part due to our inability to account for variations in the state partisan environments. I used CBS/New York Times surveys combined over the period 1976–88 to offer a detailed examination of the state party systems, resulting in a description of the dominant social group partisan cleavage in each state. This information is then used to examine the impact of party control on state welfare benefits. The findings show that the coalitional bases of the parties vary in important ways, both within and across the states. These differences in the state party systems have an important influence on the relationship between party control and state welfare effort. Specifically, party control has a significantly greater impact in states where partisan divisions reflect class-based New Deal-type coalitions. When examined in the context of state partisan environments, party control has a much greater impact on state welfare effort than has been suggested by previous studies.

**O**ne of the most enduring goals of state politics scholars has been to understand the impact of political parties on policy outputs. The vast amount of research in this area is without doubt related directly to the extreme importance of this issue to our understanding of the U.S. governmental framework. If political parties, as the most prominent institutions linking citizens to the machinery of government, do not help produce policy-relevant responses, then we must question their theorized importance as linkage mechanisms and facilitators of representative democracy.

The large body of research generated to answer this question has produced decidedly mixed results. Initial failures may perhaps be described as a failure of theory, with an emphasis on interparty competition showing very little positive impact on policy outputs (Dawson and Robinson 1963; Dye 1966). Theory in this area has evolved, however, to the point where we now have a much better defined expectation of when parties may or may not matter. Rather than the level of interparty competition, or even which party is in control of government, Jennings (1979) theorized that it is differences in the constituency bases of party support that determine whether party control matters. Implicit in Jennings' theory is that parties are not likely to base their policy strategies on the preferences of the general public but, rather, on the preferences of those groups that provide the core support for the party. In Petrocik's (1981) terminology, the state party-policy linkage is dependent on the "social group bias" of the party coalitions.

Jennings' work represents a significant step in the evolution of theory linking political parties to policy outputs in the American states. Specifically, it leads to a more precise specification of the theoretical role of parties as intermediaries in state politics, one that focuses explicitly on the social group support coalitions of the parties. Our ability to examine this theory, however, has not evolved to the same degree. A significant stumbling block has been our inability to

present a more rigorous specification of when we may expect to find policy-relevant differences between the parties.<sup>1</sup> Even Jennings' analysis was based on largely impressionistic evidence from only a handful of states. The unfortunate result is that while our theory has evolved, we are still left with largely mixed results regarding the impact of political parties on state policy.

I shall address this problem by systematically describing the party coalitions in each state. This information is then used to examine the party-policy linkage in a way that is much more consistent with the development of theory in this area. Analyzing the impact of political parties on state policy allows for the combination of two important aspects of party theory. First, I address a central tenet of party theory, that political parties in the United States are constituent organizations that organize social conflict into broad coalitions. In this view, parties are aggregates of social interests linking the mass public to the instruments of government (Burnham 1975). The coalitional bases of the parties are expected to be an important influence on the political behavior of individual partisans, party elites and, ultimately, public policy.

Focusing on the states allows for the incorporation of another fundamental aspect of the U.S. party system into the analyses. American state political coalitions have evolved in environments that vary tremendously in terms of social demography and political attitudes. Because of their nonhierarchical nature, parties and party systems at the state level have been shaped by their individual state constituencies and elites. The result is that rather than one all-encompassing party system, we have instead a national party system that is related to, but also distinct from, a set of 50 different state party systems. Each system reflects that fact that we are really a country of many different terrains in which the political landscapes can vary tremendously. Given the different ethnic and social make-up of state popula-

tions (Jewell and Olson 1988), as well as substantial differences in values, public opinion, and political culture (Elazar 1984, Wright, Erikson, and McIver 1985), state party systems should exhibit important differences in party coalitions. To appreciate the impact of political parties and party control on public policy, it is therefore imperative that we examine the nature of the party coalitions in the states.

## PARTY COALITIONS AND CLEAVAGES IN THE AMERICAN STATES

### Describing the State Party Coalitions

To describe the social group bases of the party coalitions, survey data are needed for the party identification and relevant social group characteristics of individuals in each state. The lack of such data has been a major obstacle in our efforts to determine the impact of political parties on public policy outputs in ways that are commensurate with the development of our theories. To facilitate these descriptions, I use CBS News/*New York Times* national polls, which, when aggregated for the years 1976–88 encompass over 170,000 respondents. These data are then disaggregated by state and treated like state samples.<sup>2</sup> The result is a set of 48 representative state samples that are large enough to provide reliable estimates of the group characteristics of the party coalitions in each state.

Race, religion, gender, education, income, labor union membership, and place of residence are the social and demographic characteristics that we have traditionally come to speak of when we discuss the national party coalitions. Accordingly, the following social demographic group traits are used to describe the party coalitions: place of residence (rural and urban), gender, education (college degree versus not), race (black and white), religion (Protestant, Catholic, Jewish), union membership, and income (high and low).<sup>3</sup>

The next step in the analysis is to measure the relative contribution of each group to the party coalitions. Unfortunately, this is not an easy task. Recent efforts by Stanley, Bionco, and Niemi (1986) and Erikson, Lancaster, and Romero (1989) take one possible approach and use multivariate logit to measure the group bases of the national coalitions (party and voting coalitions, respectively) in terms of the probability that a group member will align with either party. This type of analysis allows one to estimate, for example, the probability that someone who is Catholic will identify with the Democratic party, holding each of the other group traits of that individual constant. While this method sheds considerable light on which group characteristics may or may not promote party identification, they are less help when we describe the party coalitions themselves.

The main problem arises in the interpretation of probabilities as measures of the group contribution to the party coalition. These probability coefficients do

not actually measure the group contribution to the party coalitions; rather, they constitute a model of the impact of group characteristics on party identification. This is a very important conceptual distinction. To rely on probabilities as descriptions of the party coalitions can be misleading because it fails to account for a very important point of variation in state populations. When we discuss party coalitions we need to know how group characteristics incline an individual toward a particular partisanship, *and* we need to know the relative *size* of each group in the state populations.

This distinction is important when viewed from the perspective of state party elites seeking to identify and mobilize group support at election time. To illustrate, let us look at the impact of race on party identification in Mississippi and Iowa. In each state, being black has a statistically significant impact on the likelihood of an individual being a Democrat, when all other group characteristics are controlled in a logit equation. This is just as we would expect and is consistent with the studies already cited. With regard to the party *coalitions*, however, we see that this information tells us little about the potential importance of blacks, as a group, to the Democratic party coalitions in each state. To appreciate the differing importance of blacks to the state Democratic parties, we must also consider the large difference in the proportion of blacks in the populations of these states (1% in Iowa vs. 35% in Mississippi). Given these differences, blacks will constitute a significantly greater proportion of the Democratic coalition in Mississippi than in Iowa. The result is that we may expect Democratic party elites in Mississippi to be much more attuned to the concerns of the black portion of their coalition than their counterparts in Iowa, because it is much more likely that their electoral futures will depend on this group. Thus, to describe the relevant social group bases of party coalitions, we need to know not only the inclination of the social groups to align with one party over the other (tapped by multivariate models of group identification with the parties) but also the sizes of these groups. As illustrated, this conceptual distinction has important implications for the relative size of each group in the party coalitions, and, ultimately, in the politics and policies of the states.

To account for these important social group variations in state populations I employ a variation on a technique developed by Robert Axelrod in his analyses of party voting coalitions in presidential elections (Axelrod 1972, 1986). This technique is quite straightforward, and is particularly useful because it yields figures for the social group make-up of the party coalitions that account for the general partisan inclination of each group as well as the size of each group in the population. Specifically, this technique produces figures for the percentage contribution of each group to the total party coalition based on the size of the group, its loyalty to the party, and the total number of party identifiers. The result is a formula that simplifies to

TABLE 1

## Social Group Basis of the Party Coalitions Percentage Contribution of Group to Party Coalition, Selected States

State and Party	Sociodemographic Groups											
	Rural	Urban	Female	College	White	Black	Prot.	Catholic	Jewish	Union	IncLow	IncHigh
Alabama												
Dem	33	14	58	7	68	31	73	4	0	10	27	12
Rep	19	24	55	15	86	11	69	6	0	6	18	24
Vermont												
Dem	72	0	55	17	98	0	30	45	0	9	34	12
Rep	69	0	54	24	94	0	55	18	0	0	18	20
Illinois												
Dem	21	29	59	11	69	27	45	30	3	17	15	20
Rep	24	12	54	19	94	3	54	20	0	10	11	28
Arkansas												
Dem	48	7	58	9	83	16	72	5	0	8	26	13
Rep	46	5	58	9	89	10	71	4	0	3	23	15

$$\text{percentage contribution} = \frac{\text{no. of group in party}}{\text{total in party}}$$

Thus the percentage that any group comprises of the total party coalition is a function of the number of Democrats in any particular social group divided by the total number of Democrats. In other words, this represents the percentage of the Democratic coalition with a given group characteristic. Table 1 shows the percentage contribution of each group to the Democratic and Republican party coalitions in four selected states.<sup>4</sup>

In examining Table 1, we see that in Alabama the Democratic party receives prominent contributions from individuals living in rural areas (33%), whites (68%), blacks (31%), women (58%), Protestants (73%), and those with lower incomes (27%). Smaller contributions are made by the urban (14%), college-educated (7%), Catholic (4%), union (10%) and high-income (12%) groups. The Republican party, on the other hand, is comprised primarily of white (86%), Protestant (69%), urban (24%), and, interestingly, both income groups (higher 24%, lower 18%). Thus while both parties can claim contributions from all groups, there are differences in the percent contribution of each group to the two parties.<sup>5</sup> For now, it is important to gain an understanding from Table 1 that social groups do make differential contributions to the parties, both within and across the states. Comparing the Democratic party coalitions of Alabama and Vermont, for example, we find the Vermont Democratic coalition comprised of a much greater percentage of Catholics and whites and a much smaller percentage of blacks and Protestants. These differences should have important consequences for the politics and policies of these two states. Moreover, an extensive examination of the 48 states in this study reveals substantial variation in the contribution of each group to the parties across all the states. Thus the Republican and Democratic parties in the states do aggregate social groups in different ways, result-

ing in distinctive coalitional configurations. The social group bases of the party coalitions do vary, both within and across the states.

### Describing the State Party Cleavages

The history of the national party systems leads us to expect the Democratic and Republican parties to be associated more closely with some group interests than others. In addition, differences in the sociodemographic group populations across the states are likely to result in different patterns of social group-party cleavages. Indeed, these observations have been the driving force behind the evolution of theory concerning the party-policy linkage. The major point is that given differences in the social group bases of the parties, the cleavages that define the party system in each state are likely to vary in meaningful ways. These differences are important for setting the political context in the states and thus for explaining variations in the influence of political parties on public policy.

To determine the dominant social group partisan cleavage in each state, we turn once again to the group contribution figures in Table 1. By looking down the columns for each group variable in each state, we see the differences in group support for each party. In doing so, we see that this measure of group contribution has another advantage. The percentage of the coalition figures leads to a simple yet intuitive measure of the bias in support that each group gives to one party over the other. These bias figures, shown for each state in Table 2, are simply the percent contribution of each group to the Republican party subtracted from that of the Democratic party. The result is an indicator of which groups tend to give differential support to one party over the other and the magnitude of this difference. Beginning again with Alabama, we see that the Democratic party benefits profoundly (relative to the Republican party)

**TABLE 2**

**Basis in Group Support for State Party Coalitions**

State	Sociodemographic Groups											
	Rural	Urban	Female	College	White	Black	Prot.	Catholic	Jewish	Union	Income	
											Low	High
Alabama	14	-10	3	-8	-18	20	4	-2	0	4	9	-12
Arizona	6	3	6	-11	-12	4	-19	20	2	9	7	-12
Arkansas	2	2	0	0	-6	6	1	1	0	5	3	-2
California	2	5	8	-8	-20	13	-9	8	3	8	7	-10
Colorado	-1	6	7	-5	-8	0	-16	18	1	7	3	-5
Connecticut	0	0	7	-7	-6	6	-23	19	1	7	4	-11
Delaware	2	-3	9	-5	-21	20	-7	7	1	9	10	-11
Florida	2	0	4	-9	-20	18	2	-3	3	4	9	-10
Georgia	7	-3	4	-8	-23	24	7	-5	0	2	10	-9
Idaho	-7	2	6	0	-1	-2	-15	13	0	5	7	-7
Illinois	-3	17	5	-8	-25	24	-9q	10	3	7	4	-8
Indiana	2	1	-1	-10	-12	10	-7	6	1	6	5	-7
Iowa	0	1	5	-5	-4	0	-11	17	0	10	4	-4
Kansas	-3	9	-2	-9	-9	8	-7	9	0	8	2	-2
Kentucky	0	-3	2	-3	-3	2	-3	5	0	0	-2	-4
Louisiana	9	-5	4	-8	-18	19	2	3	0	3	10	-15
Maine	2	1	9	-5	-2	0	-38	27	0	7	6	-9
Maryland	-3	8	5	-5	-23	22	-9	8	5	3	5	-7
Massachusetts	-4	2	4	-7	0	1	-27	29	2	7	6	-6
Michigan	-2	9	4	-8	-22	22	-7	8	1	10	6	-8
Minnesota	0	3	3	-7	-3	2	-12	16	0	9	7	-8
Mississippi	7	-3	-4	-8	-33	32	6	1	0	2	23	-13
Missouri	0	9	3	-6	-13	13	-7	5	0	4	4	-6
Montana	5	-4	1	-5	-3	0	-21	22	0	8	11	-10
Nebraska	-13	12	-4	-3	-6	6	-14	18	1	8	3	-4
Nevada	0	0	3	-4	-10	10	-7	8	3	7	7	-11
New Hampshire	-6	-1	13	-4	-2	2	-34	24	0	5	8	-6
New Jersey	1	6	6	-5	-21	19	-10	11	3	6	5	-9
New Mexico	1	1	12	-5	-10	1	-27	17	0	7	4	-11
New York	2	20	7	1	-23	19	-9	4	7	6	4	-5
North Carolina	5	-3	-1	0	-28	28	1	-1	0	0	7	-4
North Dakota	2	-4	12	-9	-1	-2	-12	10	0	4	2	-4
Ohio	-2	8	6	-8	-12	11	-13	12	1	8	4	-8
Oklahoma	12	-6	4	-8	-12	10	-1	-1	0	2	11	-9
Oregon	0	2	2	-7	-3	1	-10	8	0	5	2	-4
Pennsylvania	-3	12	3	-5	-12	12	-15	15	3	7	4	-4
Rhode Island	-6	11	0	-4	2	-1	-27	22	1	5	5	-6
South Carolina	16	-6	-1	-9	-41	39	-1	-2	0	0	15	-14
South Dakota	9	0	6	-6	-1	0	-16	15	0	4	5	-3
Tennessee	1	2	3	-3	-21	21	-4	-1	0	6	5	-6
Texas	7	-5	3	-13	-22	15	-3	6	0	5	10	-15
Utah	-2	0	3	-12	-6	3	-14	10	0	7	7	-6
Vermont	3	0	1	-7	4	0	-25	27	0	9	16	-8
Virginia	6	-5	0	-7	-25	25	-1	-1	1	3	4	-6
Washington	0	5	2	-7	-6	4	-9	7	1	8	3	-8
West Virginia	2	1	-3	-5	0	1	-4	4	0	3	1	-3
Wisconsin	-4	10	3	-5	-10	9	-14	9	0	6	4	-9
Wyoming	18	3	4	-3	-4	1	1	5	0	6	6	-1

Note: Cell entries represent the percent group contribution to the Democratic party minus the percent group contribution to the Republican party.

from black (20), rural (14), and lower-income (9) group support. The Republican party receives substantial differential support from the white (-18), higher-income (-12), urban (-10), and college-educated (-8) groups. Clearly, however, the highest levels of differential party support come from the racial groups.

Table 2 also shows that the pattern of partisan support is very different in Vermont. Completely gone is the differential support of the racial groups. Instead, we see a prominent role for religion (Protestant -25, Catholic 27), as well as the class-related group characteristics of income (low, 16; high, -8), college education (-7), and union membership (9).

Finally, if we turn to a state with a large, diverse population such as Illinois, we see yet a different pattern of group-party bias. Indeed, this picture represents what we have come to expect from the Democratic party as a coalition of minorities and the Republican party as a more homogeneous constituency. Specifically, the Democrats receive preferred support from the black (24), urban (17), Catholic (10), union (7), female (5), lower-income (4), and Jewish groups (3), while the Republican party benefits from the white (-25), Protestant (-9), college-educated (-8), and higher-income groups (-8).

Taken together, these bias figures represent the dominant social group partisan cleavage in each of the three states. In other words, these are the differences in the social group bases of the parties, the aspects of group support that differentiate one party coalition from another. The Alabama party cleavage is an example of what I call (for reasons that will be more apparent later) the *southern partisan cleavage*. In this party system, race plays the fundamental role in differentiating the support coalitions of the two parties. Indeed, while we see evidence of a rural-urban split, as well as differential support regarding income and education, race is without a doubt the single most important biasing factor in the group support for the parties in this cleavage.

Vermont illustrates the second prominent party cleavage, the *New Deal party cleavage*. The pattern of partisan support in these states is very similar to the national New Deal party alignment. The most prominent group-party bias exists among the two large religious groups, with Catholics and Protestants giving differential support to the Democratic and Republican parties, respectively. Next we see that the other familiar New Deal group characteristics of lower income and union membership also benefit the Democrats, whereas the Republicans receive biased support from the higher-income and college-educated groups. Once again, this is all very consistent with the more class-based New Deal party system.

Finally, we see that Illinois illustrates the third major type of party cleavage in the states. In many ways this cleavage is a combination of the previous two-party cleavages and is illustrative of the evolution of the national party system. Unlike the New Deal class-based cleavage, race is a prominent factor here. In addition, we see that the group characteristics of religion, union membership, income, and education are also important. Finally, we see the addition of a substantial urban bias toward the Democratic party. Interestingly, this is not accompanied by a similar rural bias toward the Republicans. As a result of the strong racial and New Deal-type characteristics of this party system, reflecting changes in the partisan structure of the national New Deal alignment, I have termed this cleavage the *post-New Deal cleavage*.

Examining the party coalitions in each state reveals that these three cleavage structures depict, to varying degrees, the prevailing party cleavage in 44 of the 48 state party systems examined here. In addition, there

are four states (Arkansas, Kentucky, West Virginia, and Wyoming) in which there does not appear to be any discernable party cleavage. Looking at Arkansas, for example, there is a very slight bias in the two racial groups, with the remainder of the group bias figures being almost completely negligible. While one might be tempted to place Arkansas in the southern party cleavage, particularly given its proximity to the other states in this cleavage, the lack of any dominant pattern in group-party bias suggests that this is inappropriate.

States are listed in Table 3 according to their dominant party cleavage. Groups are listed under party bias categories according to the mean level of bias in each respective cleavage. Thus, in the Southern cleavage states, the two racial groups show the largest mean party bias, with the other groups following accordingly. States were categorized into party cleavages according to a careful examination of patterns in their group-party bias characteristics.<sup>6</sup>

It is important to note that these state party cleavages reflect the patterns of social group-party bias that have become the topic of much recent discussion regarding changes in *national* politics and the national party system. In particular, we see the varied importance of class and race as fundamental characteristics in the three types of state party cleavages. Race, for example, is by far the most important distinguishing feature of the southern party cleavage; it completely dominates the minimal role of class in the party politics of this region.

The group-party bias in the New Deal cleavage states indicates that the more class-based, New Deal party system is far from dead, at least in terms of social group alignments to the Republican and Democratic parties. Indeed, there are more states with this type of party cleavage than either of the other two cleavages. Regardless of whether the New Deal alignment adequately represents the dominant cleavage in the national party system, it appears to continue to do so for a substantial number of states. Thus, despite evidence of the rise of race and the decline of class as the basis of conflict in the national arena (Carmines and Stimson 1981; Huckfeldt and Kohfeld 1989), New Deal party system characteristics still dominate the cleavage structure in these states.

In many ways the states in the post-New Deal cleavage combine the characteristics of the first two cleavages, most notably with regard to race and class as dominant characteristics of party bias. An examination of the states listed under this cleavage reveals that in each state, class-related characteristics are important, but that race is also a dominant characteristic. In comparison with the southern cleavage, however, note that race is not necessarily the dominant characteristic of the state populations as a whole. This set of states conforms very strongly to recent evidence on the changing nature of the national party alignment. Carmines and Stimson (1981) have demonstrated that the evolution of party differences on racial issues has resulted in the emergence of this set of issues as a dominant force in American



sentation and public policy. Here representation refers to the relationship between party control and public policy, as conditioned by the dominant partisan cleavage in the state. Thus I am exploring how the differences across party cleavages affect the impact of Democratic party control on state welfare effort.

In generating specific hypotheses about the conditional influence of partisan cleavage differences on the party control–policy linkage, I turn first to the class-based New Deal cleavage states. If party control has an impact on state welfare policy, it should be working most prominently in these states. In addition to strong coalitional differences in income, education, and labor union support, a pronounced ethno-religious dichotomy also exists, mirroring that found in the national New Deal party system. This strong religious differential is important, because Catholics, whether Democratic, Independent, or Republican are generally more likely to support the traditional New Deal social reforms of government intervention, government support of employment, and income equalization than their Protestant counterparts (Greeley 1978, 284). Indeed, Greeley argues that despite the rise of the social issue agenda (abortion, in particular), Catholics are likely to stay with the Democratic party, so long as the party continues in its basic stands regarding social and economic welfare (*ibid.*, 292). The result is a party cleavage containing an important culture-class nexus in which welfare-related programs are both necessary and seen as an appropriate part of governmental activity. Once again, then, if Democratic party control does make a difference, we should expect to find it at its strongest in the New Deal cleavage states.

With regard to the other cleavages, there is certainly no reason to expect a negative effect for Democratic party control. Thus I am not suggesting that the relationship between party control and welfare effort is positive only in the New Deal states. Rather, I hypothesize that this relationship is positive, but significantly weaker in the non-New Deal cleavage states. Indeed, such a finding may well explain the rather lackluster relationship generally found between party control and state welfare effort. If the impact of party control on welfare effort is relatively meager in states where class is not a dominant aspect of the party cleavage, then the effect of these states may overwhelm even the stronger relationship between party control and policy in the New Deal states. The specific hypotheses, then, are that while the relationship between party control and welfare effort will still be positive in the southern and post-New Deal cleavage states, it will be significantly less powerful than in the New Deal states.

## Data

The variables used to test these hypotheses are relatively straightforward and should be familiar to students of the party-policy debate. While several indicators of policy benefits toward the poor have been

used as dependent variables, I use the policy measure suggested by Albritton (1990), namely, the ratio of indigenously raised state and local government Aid for Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) spending to total state personal income.<sup>7</sup>

Democratic party control is measured as an index consisting of three dichotomous indicators: whether the governor is a Democrat, whether the state House of Representatives is controlled by the Democratic party (1 if Democrats hold a majority of seats, 0 otherwise), and a similar measure of Democratic control in the state Senate. These three indicators are then used to create an index of Democratic party control running from 1 to 4. Specifically, states are scored 1 if Republicans control all three branches of government, 2 if Republicans control any two branches, 3 if Democrats control any two branches, and 4 if Democrats control all three branches.

In addition to party control, I expect that a variety of other aspects of the state political and economic environments will affect variations in state welfare benefits. Once again, these reflect some of the most prominent alternative explanations found in the literature. To control for variations in the states' ability to provide benefits to the less fortunate, I use a variation of the common measure of personal income per capita.<sup>8</sup> In addition, I include an indicator of the relative size of the welfare-receiving population: the percentage of the state population receiving AFDC benefits. While Plotnik and Winters (1990) found a negative relationship between this measure and the benefits given to each individual recipient, I expect that a larger percentage of recipients should be positively related to overall levels of welfare spending.

In addition to these characteristics of state populations, I include a measure designed to tap the overall liberalism of the state political environments. Specifically, I account for the general liberalism of the state party elites, using a measure developed by Erikson, Wright, and McIver (1989, 1993). This measure is a composite of the following four separate indicators of the ideological preferences of Democratic and Republican state elites, which are combined into a comprehensive measure of state elite ideology: congressional candidate conservatism-liberalism, state legislator conservatism-liberalism, local party chairmen conservatism-liberalism, and national convention delegate conservatism-liberalism.<sup>9</sup> Erikson, Wright, and McIver (1993) have found the liberalism of party elites to be a potent force in state politics, from responding to public opinion to influencing public policy. The expectation here is that greater party elite liberalism will be related to more generous welfare effort.

Finally, I attempt to account for one other rival explanation, the potential effects of a population's attitude toward welfare recipients—in particular, black welfare recipients. Wright (1977) reported, for example, that racial prejudice had a substantial effect on attitudes toward welfare spending independent of other measures of liberalism. In an attempt to tap this important potential influence on state welfare policy,



I include a variable for the percentage of the states' population that is black.

### Analysis

To examine these hypotheses, a pooled cross section (or panel) design is used, with data for the years 1976–85. Pooling cross sections of states over time has several advantages, two of the most important being an increased number of cases and the ability to generalize results across both the states and time.<sup>10</sup>

Unfortunately, these advantages often come with a cost. Because the design pools the same sets of units (states) over time, pooled cross-sectional models are prone to two important violations of the ordinary least squares model. Specifically, the disturbances are likely to be both nonconstant between units (heteroscedastic) and correlated over time (autoregressive). Using ordinary least squares to estimate pooled cross-sectional data is therefore likely to result in inefficient coefficients that have severely inefficient standard errors, thereby running the risk of giving a false impression of accuracy. To overcome these problems, I adopt a cross-sectionally heteroscedastic and time-wise autoregressive model for estimation (Kmenta 1986, 618–21). In this model, data are subjected to a double transformation, one to remove heteroscedasticity and the other to remove autocorrelation. The final model is then reestimated using ordinary least squares and results in consistent estimators and disturbances that are nonautoregressive and homoscedastic.<sup>11</sup>

Does Democratic party control have an impact on state welfare effort, and is this effect conditioned by the state partisan environment? The evidence is presented in Table 4. Note first that the familiar variables of state income and percentage of welfare recipients both exert a strong influence on state welfare effort. In addition, party elite liberalism also has the expected effect. As state elites are more liberal, welfare effort is greater. Finally, the control for the percentage of the states' population that is black also has a significant independent effect. As the black portion of the state population increases, welfare effort is diminished. Note that this is the case even with a dummy variable controlling for the South.

Our primary concern, however is the impact of party control on state welfare effort, and, more specifically, whether this relationship is conditioned by the social group-partisan cleavage in the states. The coefficients for the party control and interaction variables tell the complete story and show it is important to account for differences in the state partisan environments when examining the impact of party control. Specifically, the slope for party control in the New Deal states (.00039) is significantly greater than in either the southern (slope calculated as .00039 – .00032 = .00007) or the post-New Deal (slope calculated as .00039 – .00035 = .00004) states. This pattern illustrates the main hypothesis, and it does so in striking fashion. Recall that the conditional slopes are interpreted as shifts from the baseline slope of party

**TABLE 4**

**State Welfare Effort by Democratic Party Control and State Party Cleavage**

VARIABLES	MODEL ESTIMATES
Recipients as % of population	.11079** (.00618)
State wealth	.44006** (.08795)
Party elite liberalism	.000837** (.00009)
Percent black	–.00006** (.000014)
Southern cleavage dummy	.00161* (.00075)
Post–New Deal cleavage dummy	.00115* (.00047)
Party control	.00039** (.00012)
Southern party control interaction <sup>a</sup>	–.00032* (.00019)
Post–New Deal party control interaction <sup>b</sup>	–.00035* (.00017)
Adjusted R <sub>2</sub>	.903
N	420

Note: Table entries are unstandardized regression coefficients, estimated with a dual transformation to remove heteroscedasticity and autocorrelation and then reestimated using ordinary least squares. Standard errors are in parentheses. The dependent variable, state welfare effort, is measured as the ratio of indigenously raised state and local AFDC spending to total state personal income.

<sup>a</sup> 1 if state is in southern cleavage, 0 otherwise.

<sup>b</sup> 1 if state is in post–New Deal cleavage, 0 otherwise.

\*  $p \leq .05$ .

\*\*  $p \leq .01$ .

control in the New Deal states. That is, they represent the difference in the magnitudes of the impact of party control on welfare effort in the New Deal versus southern and post–New Deal states respectively. These coefficients indicate, therefore, that while the impact of party control in welfare effort is positive within all three cleavages, the slopes for the southern and post–New Deal cleavage states shift significantly downward from the New Deal cleavage baseline. Indeed, the coefficients shift to virtually zero and indicate that the impact of party control on state welfare effort is roughly 5.5 stronger in the New Deal states than in the southern cleavage states and an even more impressive 9.5 times greater than in the post–New Deal cleavage states. Differences in the nature of the state party coalitions have a significant influence on the relationship between party control and state welfare effort, the relationship being much stronger in New Deal cleavage states and much flatter or less responsive in both the southern and post–New Deal states.

Overall, then, I find strong evidence for the influence of party cleavage differences on the nature of

policy representation in the states. Moreover, these effects stand out even when controlling for important rival forces, be they political (party elite ideology), economic (state income), or structural (percentage of recipient population). Party control has a clear impact on state welfare effort, and this effect is strongest where we would expect to see it the most—in states where the social group–partisan conflict is organized along class-related lines.

## CONCLUSION

The evolution of theory on the impact of political parties on state policy outputs has led us to look toward the support coalitions of the parties themselves to understand when this linkage may be present. I have described the coalitional bases of the state party systems and the dominant patterns of partisan cleavage that result from these coalitional foundations. These investigations indicate that the social group bases of party support vary in important ways, both within and across the states.

Using this information, I find support for the conditional influence of party control on state welfare policy. Democratic party control of government matters where theory tells we should expect it to matter the most, in party systems where the dominant cleavage of social group support for the parties is drawn along class-related lines. Comparisons of class-based states with non-class-based states confirm these conclusions, showing significant differences in the impact of party control on welfare effort across these groups of states.

The literature on linkages between party control and public policy in the American states is replete with mixed and inconclusive results. By examining this linkage in the context of the state partisan environments, the findings reported here present conclusive evidence that political parties have an important influence on state policy outputs.

In addition, these findings should lead us to look once again to variations in the states to help us understand the general role of political parties in American politics. The New Deal party system may no longer be dominant at the national level, but neither has it completely disappeared from the political landscape. Importantly, the presence of this more class-based party system is not merely descriptive but also has important implications for our understanding of the role that political parties play in transmitting the preferences of partisan groups into public policy. In this important sense, variations in the social group support for the political parties add another dimension to our understanding of party control of government and the process of policy representation in the states. Whether the “party’s over” (Broder 1972) at the national level or whether it has “just begun” (Sabato 1988), party systems do vary across the states. These differences are an important influence on the place of political parties in American politics.

## Notes

I would like to thank Jerry Wright, Chuck Smith, Leroy Rieselbach, Ted Carmines, Jim Garand, and Jeffrey Stonecash for their help and comments on this project.

1. For interesting approaches to this problem, see Dye 1984; Garand 1985.

2. A report on the reliability and validity of these data for the years 1976–82 can be found in Wright, Erikson, and McIver 1985. The original data set has been updated to encompass the years 1976–88, resulting in a national sample of over 170,000 respondents and state samples ranging from 348 (Wyoming) to almost 16,000 (California). Alaska and Hawaii are excluded from the sampling framework.

3. Low and high income are defined as follows: 1 = low income (<10,000), 0 = else; 1 = high income (> 40,000), 0 = else. In the initial analysis, dummy variables for age were also included to account for the potential impact of younger and older social group membership on partisanship. These variables were dropped from the analysis to ease interpretation because they did little to differentiate one party from another. In addition, several other groups come to mind as being important for differentiating the support coalitions of the parties, particularly hispanics and religious fundamentalists. Unfortunately, questions asking about these group characteristics were not included in a sufficient number of surveys to warrant their inclusion here.

4. For reasons of space consideration, only the 4 states used as examples in the text are included in Table 2. The analyses were done, of course, for each of the 48 states in this study and will be summarized later in the analysis.

5. As a result of overlapping group membership, the group contribution figures do not sum to 100%. This allows for the fact that individuals have multiple group characteristics. While this may seem an inconvenience, it is not necessarily a disadvantage, especially when we consider that the party coalitions are often *defined* as coalitions of diverse, overlapping minorities. Thus, the fact that individuals do have multiple and overlapping groups traits helps make this an accurate description of the group bases of the party coalitions. Note that while an individual may get counted more than once (due to multiple group traits and thus resulting in total coalitional percentages exceeding 100%, group characteristics do not.

6. To help confirm placement of states in each cleavage category, a scoring system was developed. Cleavage scores were calculated by taking the absolute value of each group bias figure and then taking the mean of the relevant absolute value bias figures for each cleavage. Absolute values were taken to account for negativity in the Republican party bias figures, and means were taken to account for differences in the number of groups in the three party cleavages. In the southern cleavage, for example, the cleavage scores were calculated by taking the mean of the absolute values for the black, low-income, rural, white, high-income, college, and urban group bias data as follows:

$$\text{Cleavage 1} = (\text{ABSblack} + \text{ABSincomelow} + \text{ABSrural} + \text{ABSwhite} + \text{ABSincomehigh} + \text{ABScollege} + \text{ABSurban})/7.$$

Scores for cleavage 2 and cleavage 3 were derived in a similar fashion:

$$\text{Cleavage 2} = (\text{ABSscath} + \text{ABSunion} + \text{ABSincomelow} + \text{ABSfemale} + \text{ABSprot} + \text{ABSincomehigh} + \text{ABScollege})/7$$

$$\text{Cleavage 3} = (\text{ABSblack} + \text{ABSscath} + \text{ABSurban} + \text{ABSunion} + \text{ABSincomelow} + \text{ABSfemale} + \text{ABSjewish} + \text{ABSwhite} + \text{ABSprot} + \text{ABSincomehigh} + \text{ABScollege})/11.$$

In most cases the process of cleavage categorization was reasonably clear, with states exhibiting biased group party support strongly consistent with one of the dominant cleavages. In a few states, however, the patterns of group bias were not so clear, falling on the border between two cleavages. In these instances, additional information was used to

place the state into one party system over the other. In Connecticut, for example, there are strong class-related bias figures, consistent with the New Deal cleavage. In addition, however, there is also a moderate racial bias, suggesting that Connecticut may also be placed in the post-New Deal cleavage. Further examination of the party coalitions shows that in post-New Deal states the average level of racial group bias is +15 for blacks toward the Democratic party and -17 for whites toward the Republican party. This is far greater than the +6 and -6 bias figures shown for the racial groups in Connecticut. In addition, the demographic data for Connecticut show that the black group comprises only 5.5% of the total state population. Once again, this is well below the average (10.9%) for the post-New Deal states. Thus, while there is some evidence of racial cleavage in Connecticut, it is the dominant overall pattern of bias in each state that determines under which cleavage a state party system is categorized. In Connecticut, this pattern is much more consistent with the New Deal cleavage.

7. Perhaps the most commonly used indicator of state welfare effort is AFDC expenditures per capita. Albritton argues persuasively that this measure is not entirely adequate because persons with larger incomes are able to make larger contributions while at the same time retaining larger net incomes. Recognizing convention, however, I performed all analyses with both dependent variables, the results being largely similar. All expenditure and income variables used in these analyses are expressed in constant 1982 dollars.

8. Because the dependent variable—ratio of AFDC spending to total personal income—includes a state-level income component in its denominator, I modify the familiar per-capita-income independent variable by expressing it in terms of national aggregate per capita income. This measure, identical to that used in a recent analysis by Hill and Leighley (1992), remains an expression of the comparative wealth of the states, while avoiding problems of extreme similarity between the dependent and independent variables.

9. Scores for party elite ideology are derived from four earlier studies of different groups of activists: congressional candidate conservatism-liberalism (Wright and Berkman 1986), state legislator conservatism-liberalism (Uslaner and Weber 1977), local party chairmen conservatism-liberalism (Cotter et al. 1984), and national convention delegate conservatism-liberalism (Miller and Jennings 1987).

10. The number of cases for the regression analysis is 420—42 states multiplied by 10 time points. The number of states is reduced to 42 because of the original exclusion of Alaska, Hawaii, and Nebraska. Nevada is excluded because measures for party elite liberalism were not available. Finally, the interactive model excludes those states that do not conform to one of the three dominant cleavages (Arkansas, Kentucky, West Virginia, and Wyoming).

11. A recent article by Beck and his colleagues (1993) addresses problems associated with panel data in which the number of units is greater than the number of time points. They discuss problems associated with one particular means of dealing with these problems—Park's (1967) method of feasible generalized least squares as discussed by Kmenta (1986, 622–25). The method used here, also discussed by Kmenta (pp. 618–21) is different from the Parks method, and provides coefficients and standard errors that are not tainted by serial correlation or heteroscedasticity.

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