

POLS 205

Political Science as a Social Science

Examples of Theory-Building in Political Science

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Red State, Blue State, Rich State, Poor State, Gelman et al (2007)

What is the research question?

What is the dependent variable?

What is the unit of analysis?

What are the key independent variables?

What are the hypotheses and alternatives?

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What is going on?

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Assuming aggregate correlations tell us about individual correlations is a *fallacy*, or frequently misleading practice

Individual level correlations can be very different from the aggregate (“ecological”) correlations

Note: this is the original meaning of ecology, a collection of individuals, not the modern environmental usage

Recognition of the ecological fallacy in the early 1950s changed course of social science towards individual level surveys

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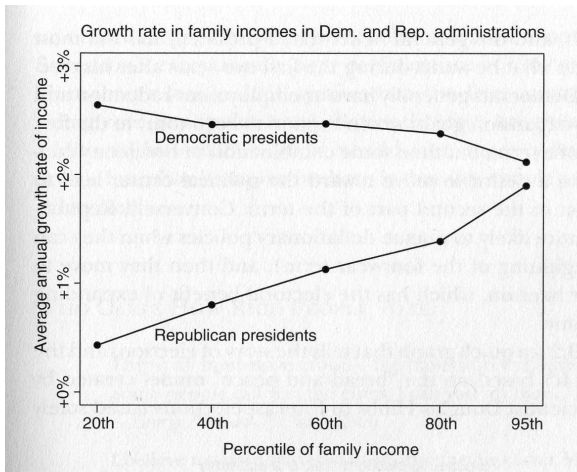
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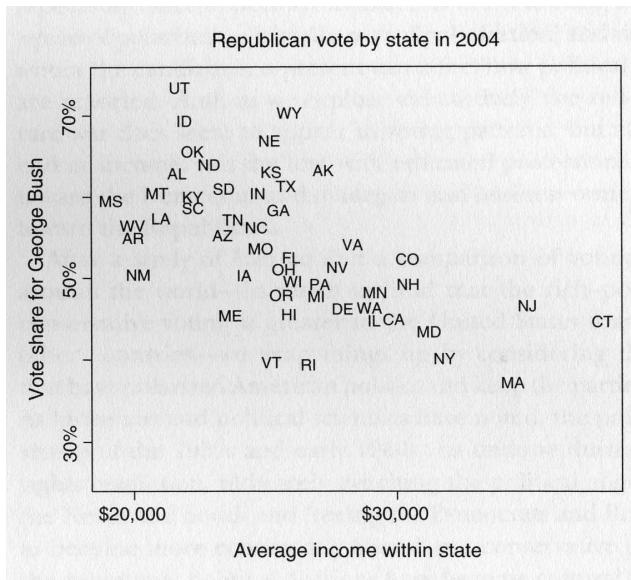
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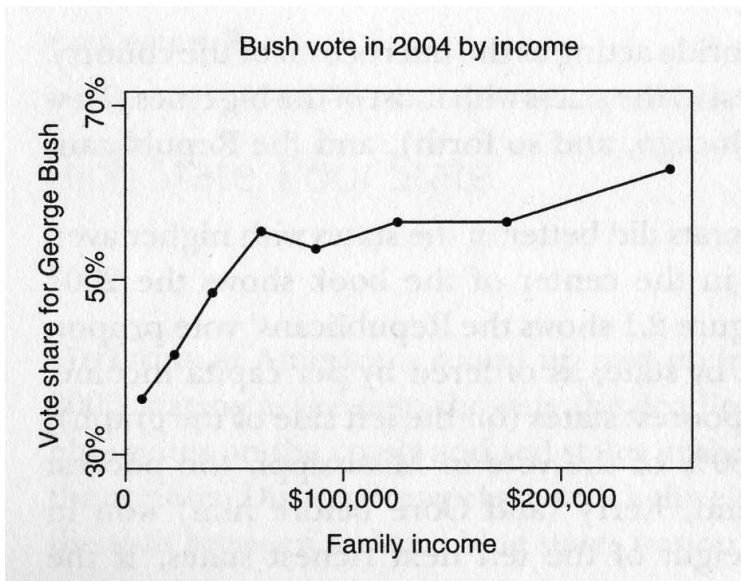
Does this finding contradict rational materialist voting?

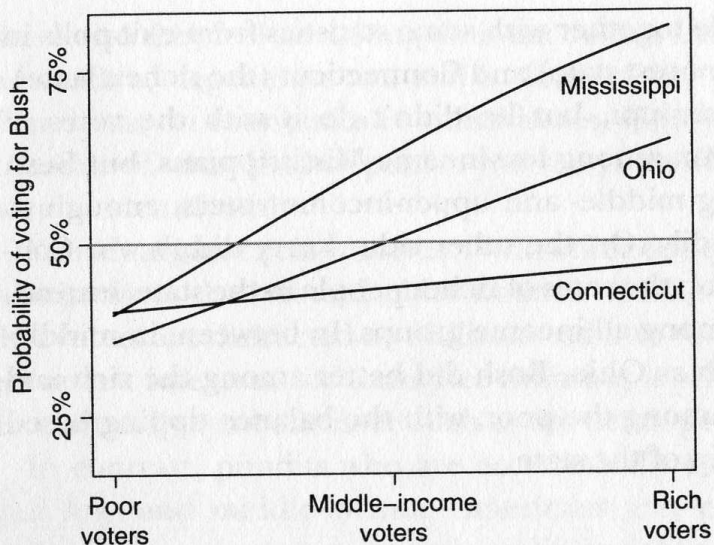
What's the matter with Kansas? Nothing!

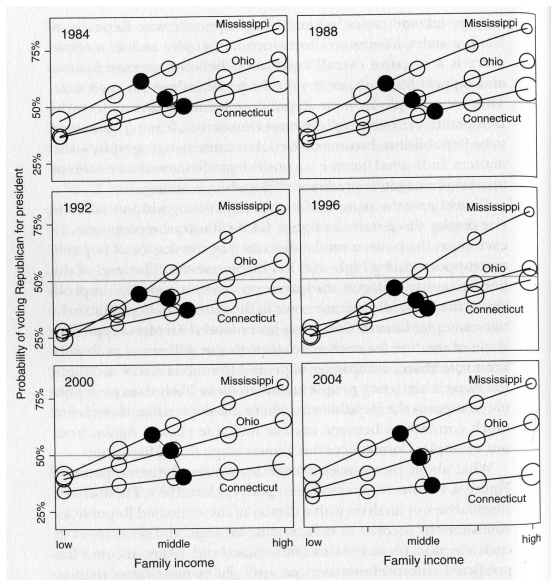
Frank has committed the ecological fallacy.
To show that Kansans vote irrationally, we need individual level data.

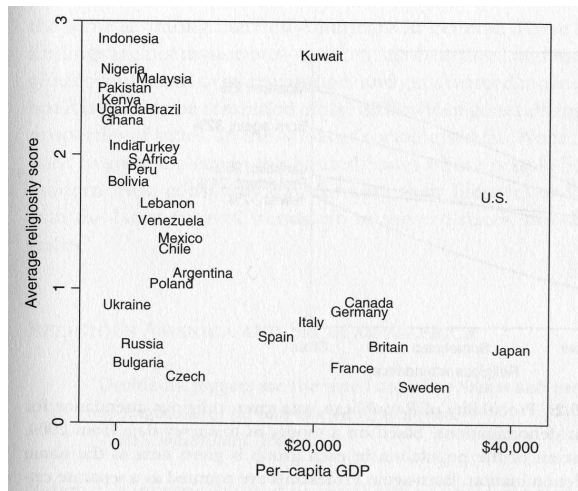


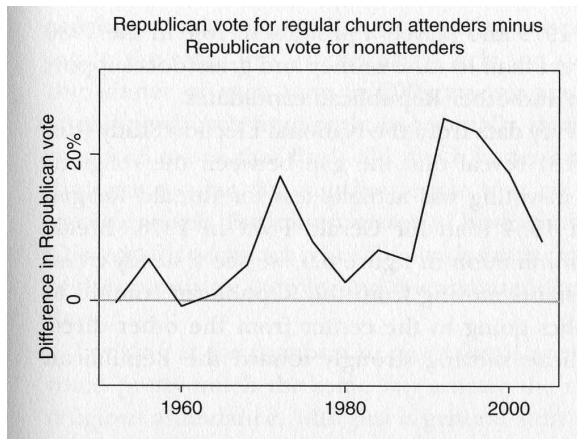


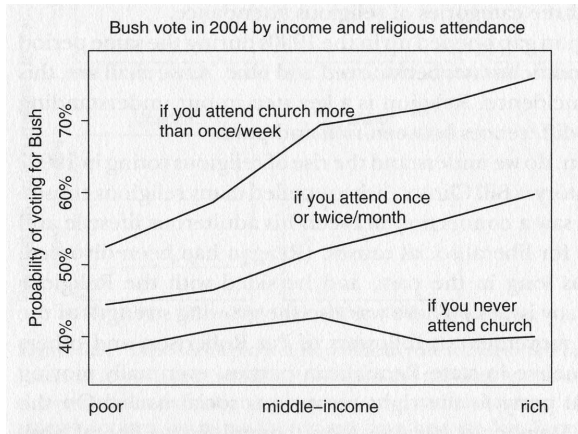


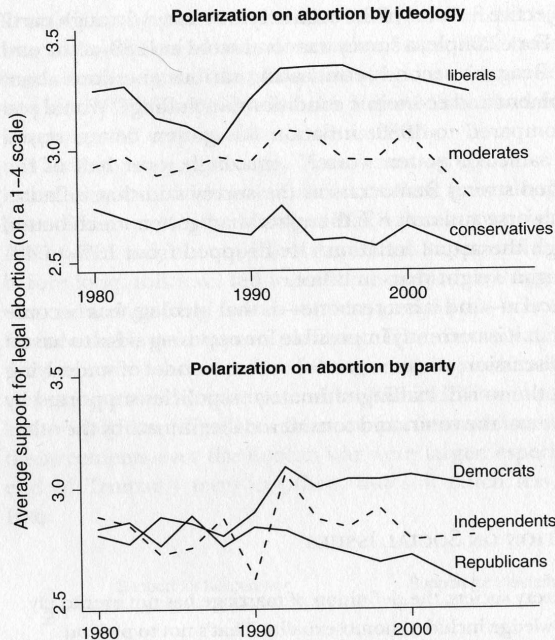


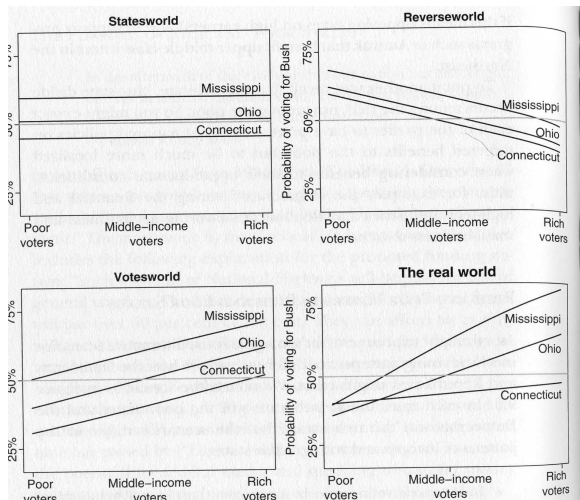


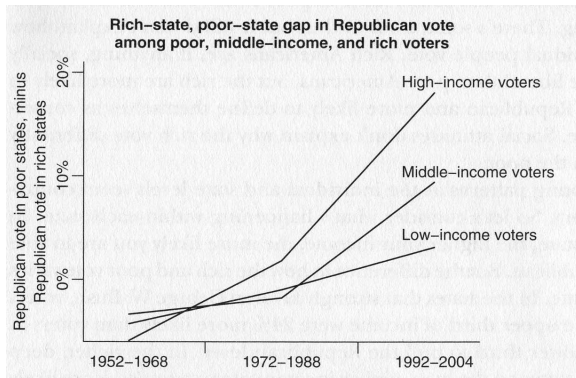


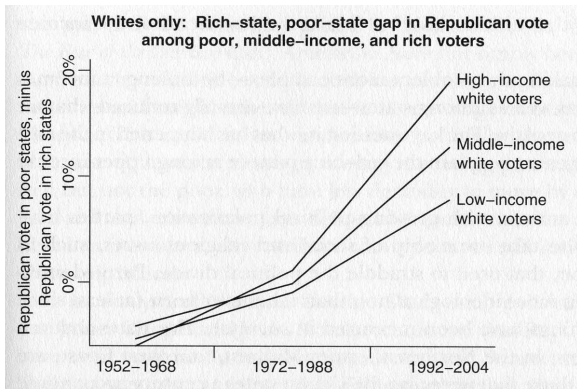


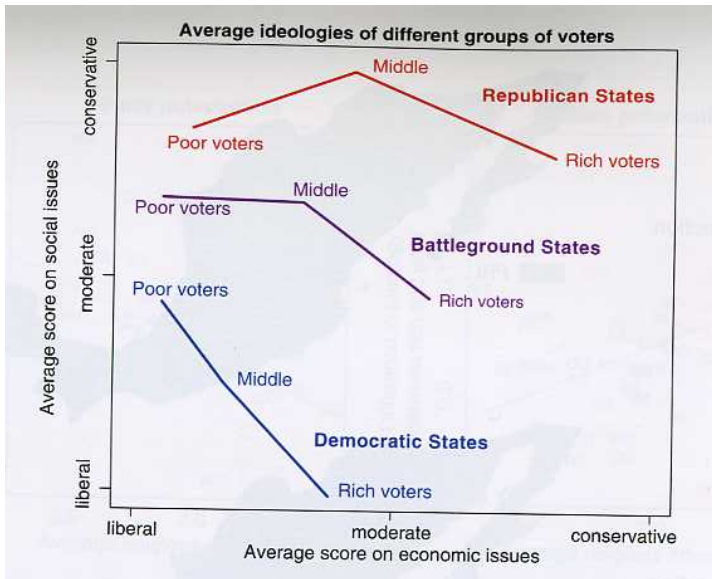












Keynesian Politics: The Political Sources of Economic Policy Choices,
Peter Gourevitch (1989) (2007)

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