Federalism and Participatory Democracy

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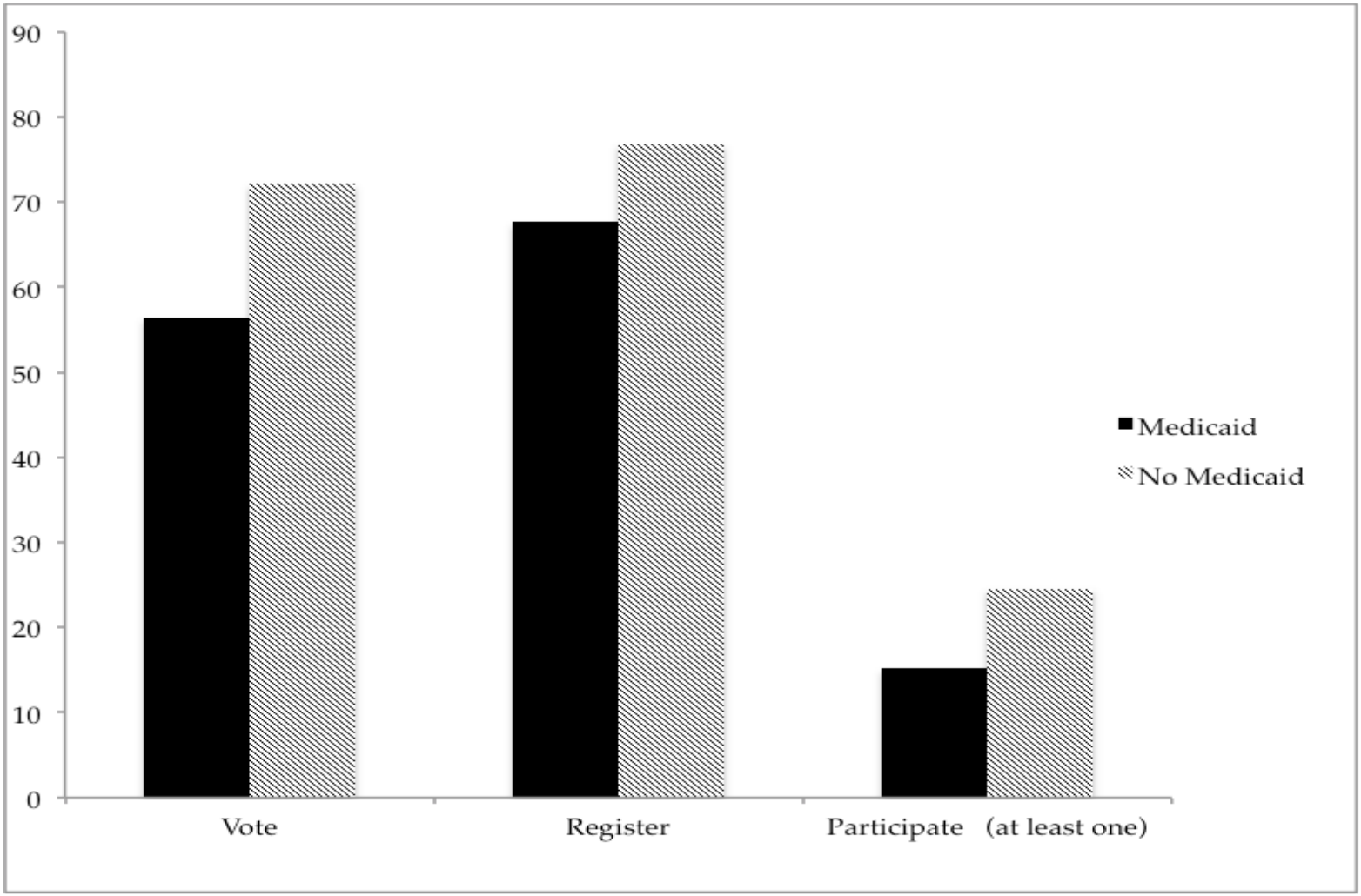
FRAGMENTED DEMOCRACY

Medicaid, Federalism, and Unequal Politics

JAMILA MICHENER

Medicaid Utilization & Political Behavior



Standard Regression	• **Outcomes:** vote, register, participate • **Controls**: age, education, employment, income, sex, race, nativity, TANF, civic attitudes, church attendance, health • **Main Predictor**: Medicaid (parent or child)
Expanded Models	• **Variables**: Drug and Alcohol dependence, depression, incarceration, number of kids, marital status
Matching (Coarsened Exact)	• **Variables**: Age, Education, Race, Marital Status Income
Seemingly Unrelated Regression	• **Variables**: medication use, emergency room visits, drug and alcohol dependence, federally supported community health centers, number of for profit hospitals, proportion of state residents receiving Medicaid.

Terrie

“My name is Terrie and I have a 16-year-old son, he’ll be 17 soon. I have traveled a lot so the difference between state to state with Medicaid and what it offers and the programs and how consistent they are; I have a lot of experience with that. Being in [Medicaid] 17 years, you know, it has just been a whirlwind with keeping [my son] safe and healthy.”

Terrie

“Ohio is the easiest, they care about their people.”

“California, their process is probably faster, but there are so many people and it’s so rapid that it is out of control.”

“In Georgia, there are limitations in everything that they offer…you can only go to this doctor on this day at this time.”

Terrie

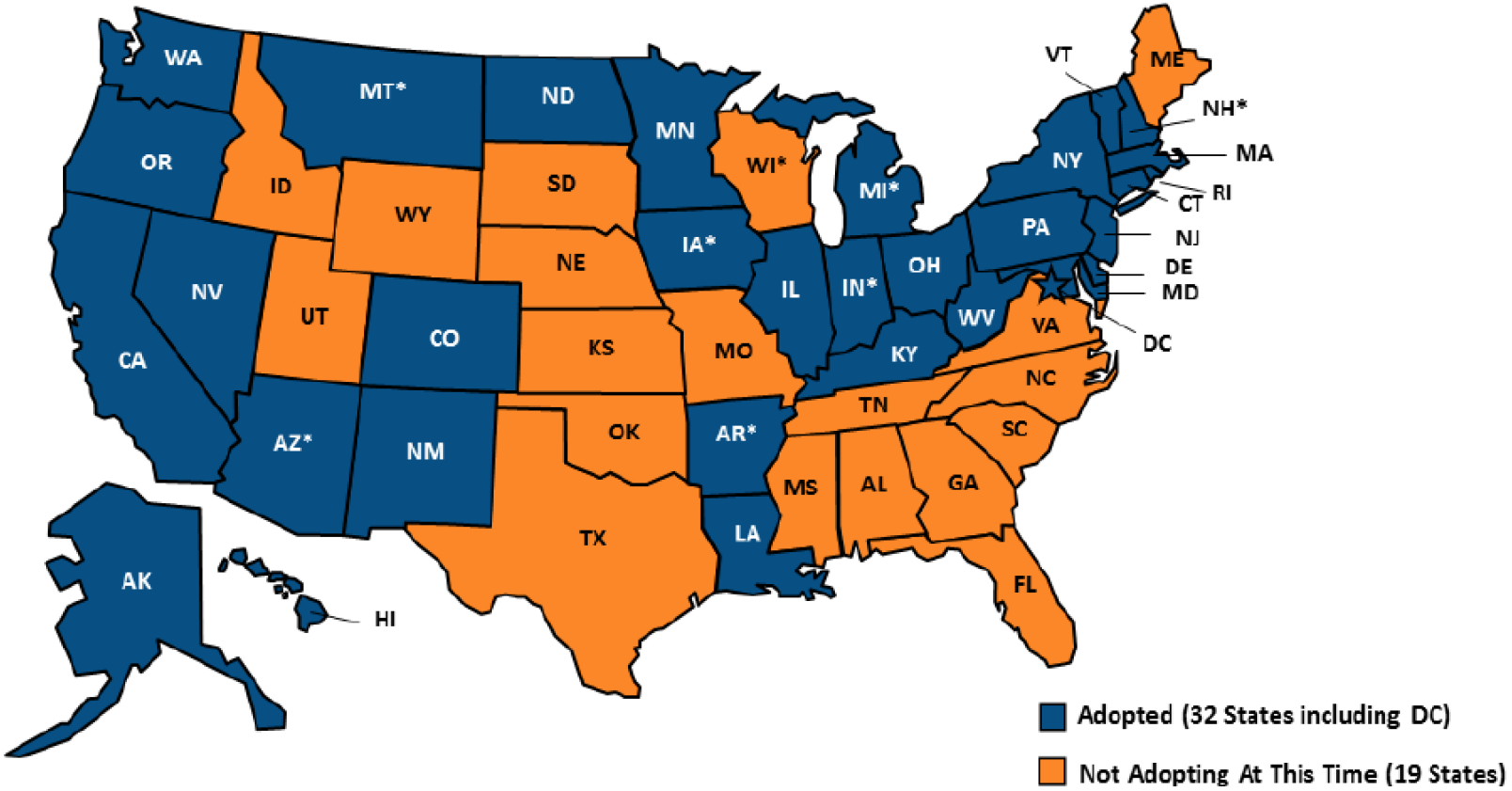
“When I knew I was going to meet you, I got upset a little bit thinking about it, because I’ve got a lot to say about Medicaid. Like for instance, my grandmother was here from Chicago just this past week. She went to the doctor and to the hospital. We got some prescriptions we needed to fill for her. So we go to the pharmacy and we can’t fill this prescription because Medicaid is non-transferable state to state...and her prescription was a $190, so we really had to find $190 for her prescription. That was amazing…and for something that’s provided by the government…you’re limiting the use of something meant to make people better.”

It's Political

"If it was about helping people, you would say yes, let my state be more productive and healthy so that we do not have people losing their lives [and] so that they can be productive citizens."

"White noise is the people that choose to say well, if they give it to me, they give it to me, if they don't, they don't…white noise also means that you feel like in your world, you have no say, no say in the process if you don't agree with what is going on in Medicaid. It's demeaning, you know, the process…I have never seen anyone really stand up about Medicaid…I don't know why we don't fight."

Medicaid + Federalism



Federalism & Democracy

“No one can travel the length and breadth of the United States without the conviction of its inexpugnable variety. East and West, South and North, its regions are real and different, and

each has problems real and different too. The temptation is profound to insist that here, if ever, is the classic place for a federal experiment...This kind of argument is familiar in a hundred forms. I believe that, more than any other philosophic pattern, it is responsible for the malaise of American

democracy.” -Harold Laski, 1939

Federalism & Democracy

Federalism as Boon

- Prevent concentration of power (Federalist No. 51)
- Multiplies points of citizen influence (Ostrom et al.1961)
- Incentivizes engagement of local constituents (Anton 1989)
- Threat of exit disciplines local government (Tiebout 1956; Hirschman 1970)

Federalism as Bust

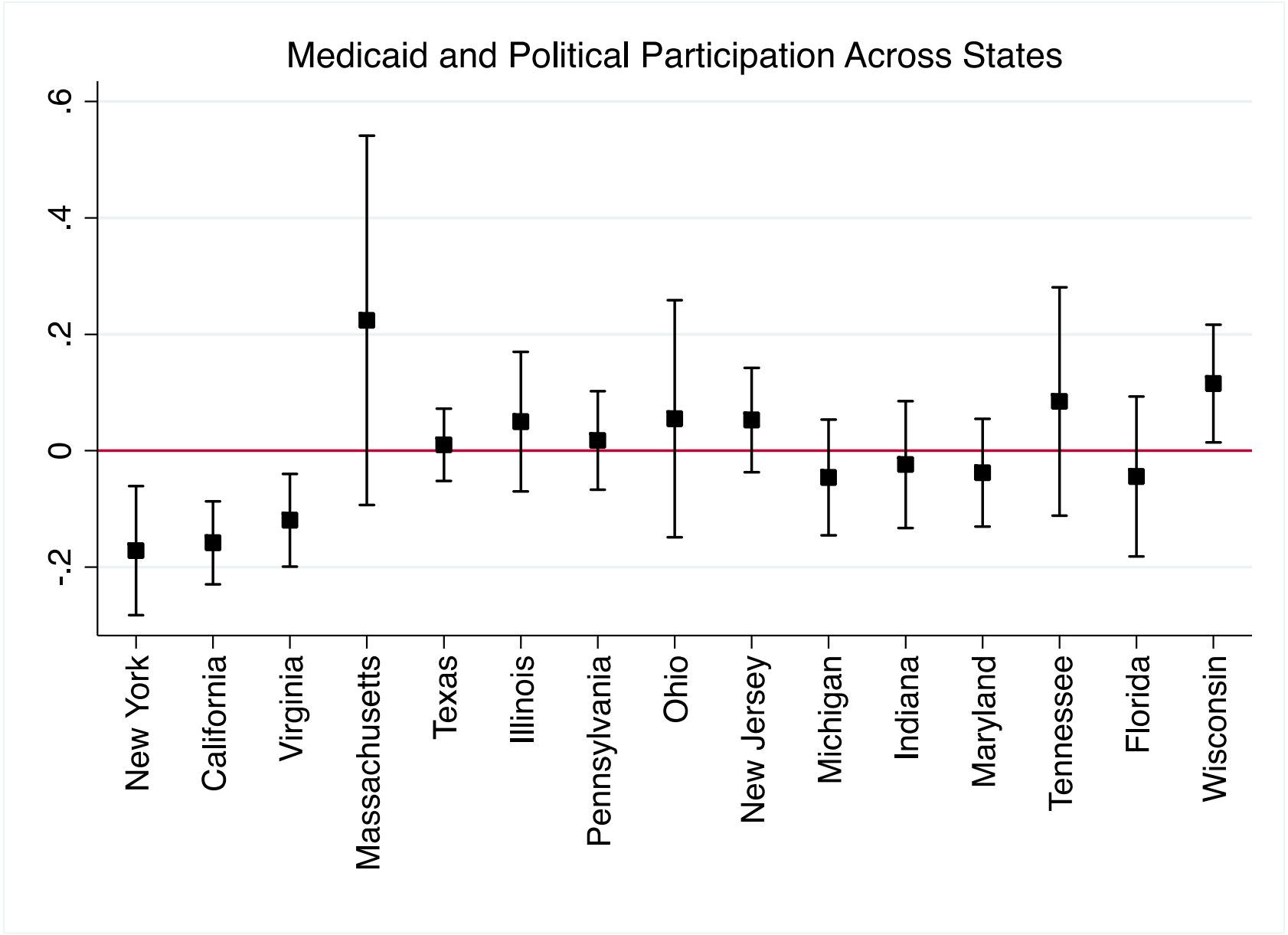
- Fragments parties, interests groups & electorate (Robertson 2014)
- Weakens labor unions
- Venue selection favors powerful (Miller 2008)
- Undergirds racism (Riker 1964; Brown 2003; Lieberman and Lapinski 2001)

Coming Up Short?

“empirical analysis of how federalism actually structures political

activity on the ground, whether it produces the ends it is alleged to encourage, or even whether those ends are, in fact, essential to the advancement of democratic values

-Lisa Miller (2013)


Medicaid and Political Participation Across States
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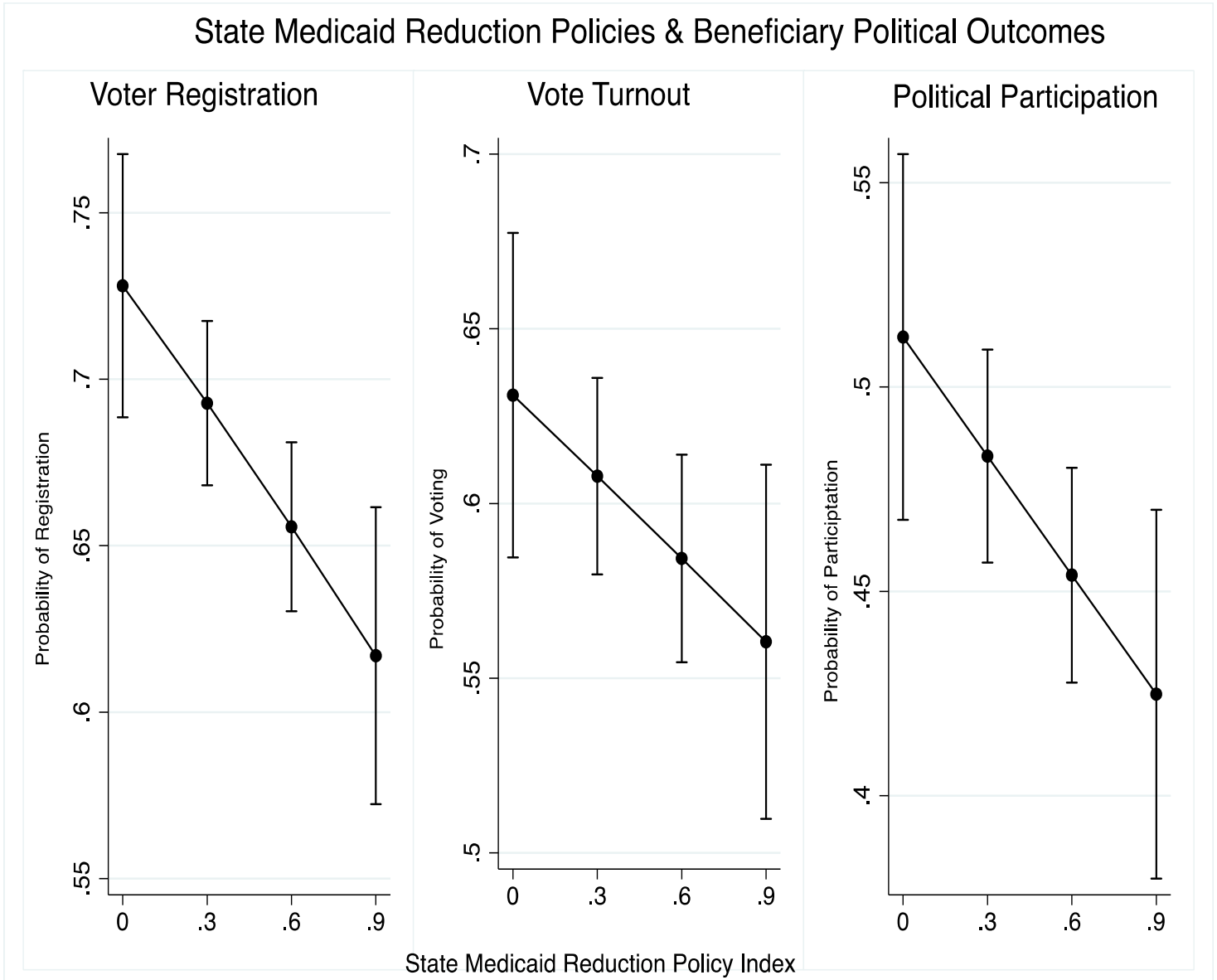
.2
.4
.6
New York
California
Virginia
Massachusetts
Texas
Illinois
Pennsylvania
Ohio
New Jersey
Michigan
Indiana
Maryland
Tennessee
Florida
Wisconsin


State Medicaid Reduction Policies & Beneficiary Political Outcomes
Voter Registration
Vote Turnout
Political Participation
Probability of Registration
Probability of Voting
Probabilty of Participtation
.55
.6
.65
.7
.75
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.6
.65
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State Medicaid Reduction Policy Index

Federalism "All the Way Down"

- Counties: administrative fair hearings shaped by county characteristics
- Cities: Medicaid-to-politics link shaped by local contextual factors
- Not the end of story…

Not All Bad…

Policy Advocates Leveraged Federalism

- Relied heavily on examples from other states & localities
- Multiple entry points provided additional opportunities
- Networks of advocates honed political expertise by navigating divergent political contexts, then came together stronger

But faced very difficult challenges

- Shirking from reps at every level
- Frequent exit of beneficiary advocates
- Challenges incorporating actual beneficiaries

Conclusion?

“American federalism was born in ambiguity, it institutionalizes ambiguity in our form of government, and changes in it tend

to be ambiguous too” –Martha Derthick

Federalism through lens of Political (In)equality

"Any account of federalism must begin with the values it serves" –Heather Gerken

"federalism is not a value in itself. Like any other set of institutions, it must be evaluated in terms of its consequences for other, more fundamental values and principles"

–Roger Simeon

"The relation of the states to the federal government is the cardinal question of our constitutional system. [It cannot be settled by] one generation, because it is a question of growth, and every successive stage of our political and economic development gives it a new aspect, makes it a new question." —Woodrow Wilson

Thank You!

Qualitative Interviews

- 61 semi-structured interviews (13 states)
- 45 beneficiaries
- 16 stakeholders (advocates, public benefits attorney's, bureaucrats)
- 82% Women
- 42% African-American
- 16% Latino

Coarsened Exact Matching

- CEM is a mutli-step process that unfolds as follows:
- (1) temporarily coarsen X (i.e. recode it so as to assume fewer values)
- (2) perform exact matching on the coarsened X by sorting observations into strata each with unique values of C(X) (3) eliminate any stratum missing either treatment or control variables
- (4) Pass on original uncoarsened variables, except those omitted as per step #3
- (5) Analyze original data using stratum derived from step#2 as weights in the analysis.

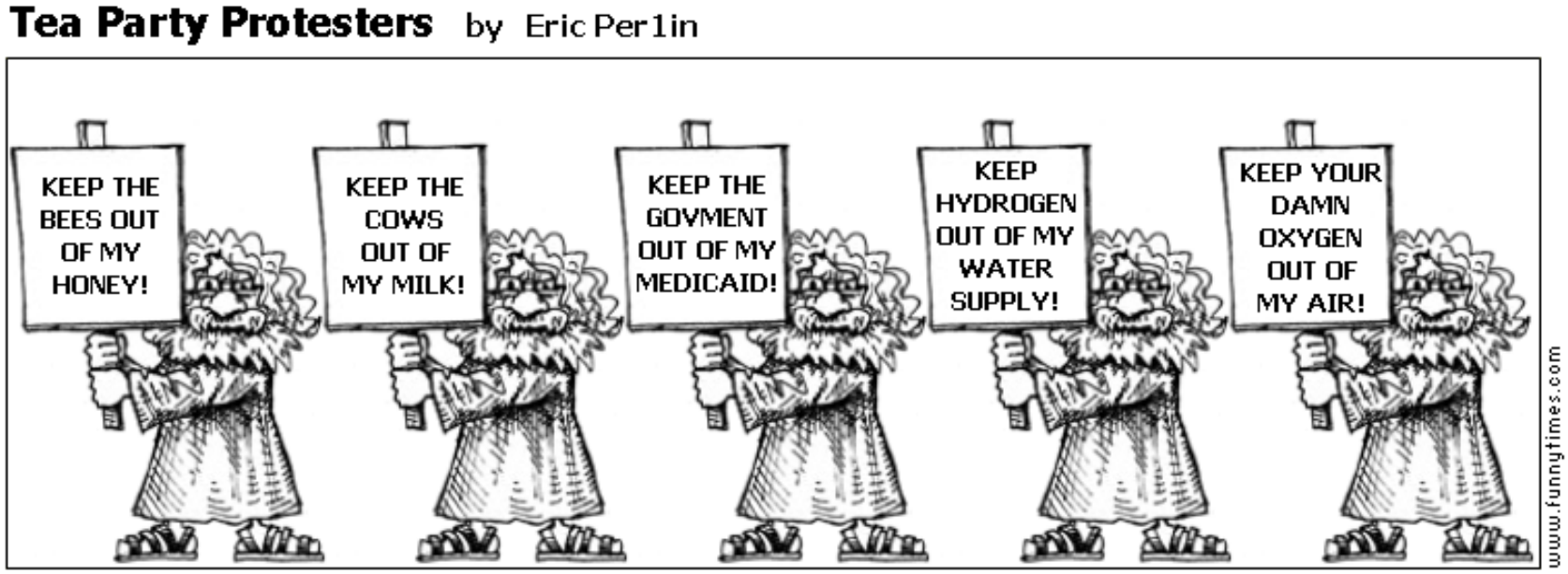
Model Results

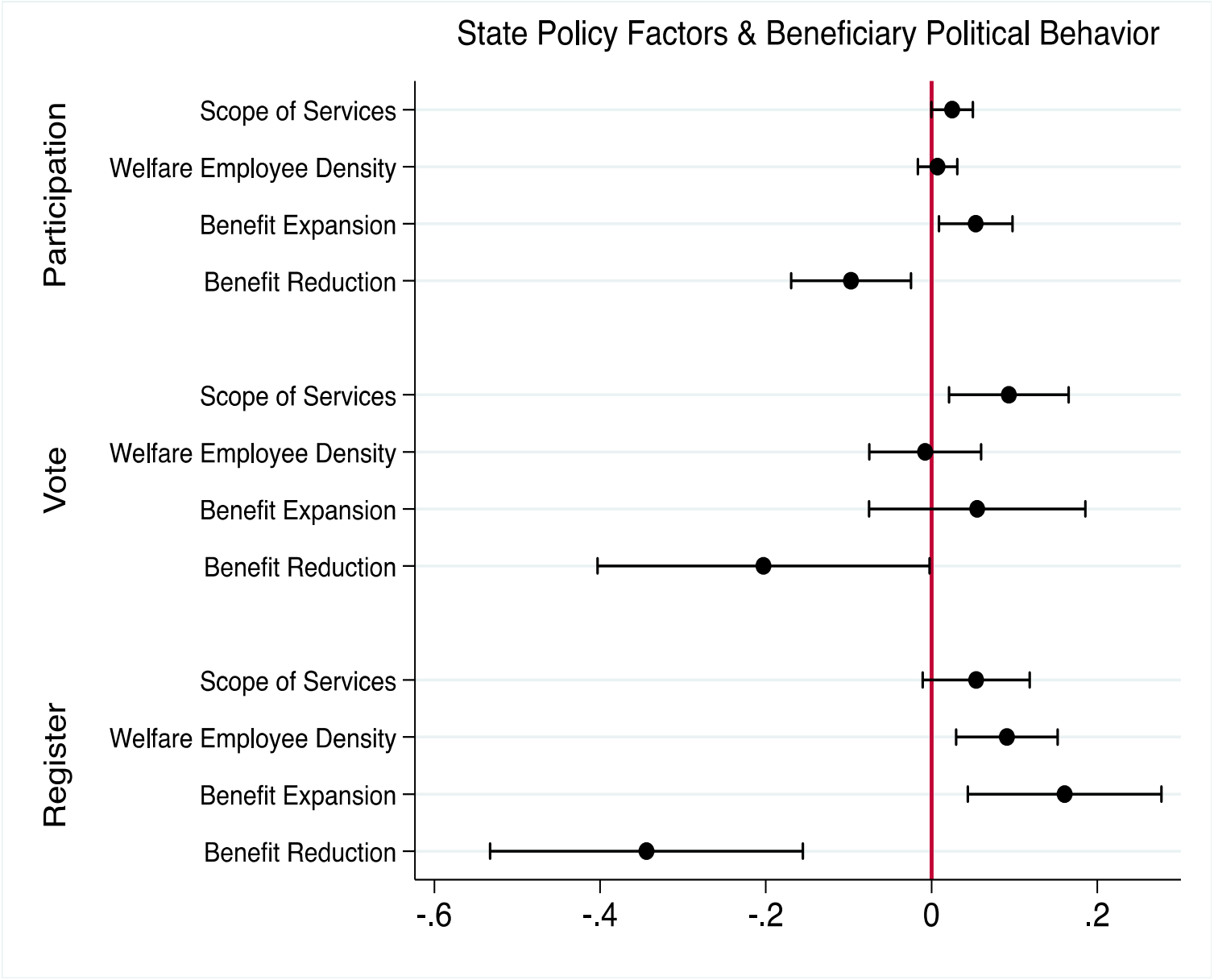
	Basic	Expanded	Matched	Seemingly Unrelated
Vote	**-.10**** (.05)	**-.12**** (.05)	**-.07*** (.04)	**-.37**** (.14)
Register	**-.12**** (.04)	**-.17**** (.05)	**-.09**** (.04)	**-.34**** (.13)
Participation	**-.06**** (.02)	**-.07**** (.02)	**-.03**** (.01)	**-.39*** **(.12)**
N	7,113	6,155	6,563	4,426

The Case of Medicaid

Difficult to generate predictions about it's political effects:

- Politically vulnerable (but also politically resilient)
- Means tested & stigmatized (but also popular)
- Vilified by some conservatives (but not all)




State Policy Factors & Beneficiary Political Behavior
Participation
Scope of Services
Welfare Employee Density
Benefit Expansion
Benefit Reduction
Vote
Scope of Services
Welfare Employee Density
Benefit Expansion
Benefit Reduction
Register
Scope of Services
Welfare Employee Density
Benefit Expansion
Benefit Reduction
-.6
-.4
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