

Rich state, poor state, red state, blue state: who's voting for whom in Presidential elections?

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One of the more glaring differences between the two groups is income. The average per capita income in the Blue states was \$27,899 in 1998, versus \$23,722 for the Red states, per the Bureau of Economic Analysis. Of the top 10 metropolitan areas with the highest per capita income, eight were from Blue states; the other two were from the highly contested state of Florida. Similarly, eight of the top 10 metro areas with the lowest income levels were from Red states. — Todd Wasserman, 2002

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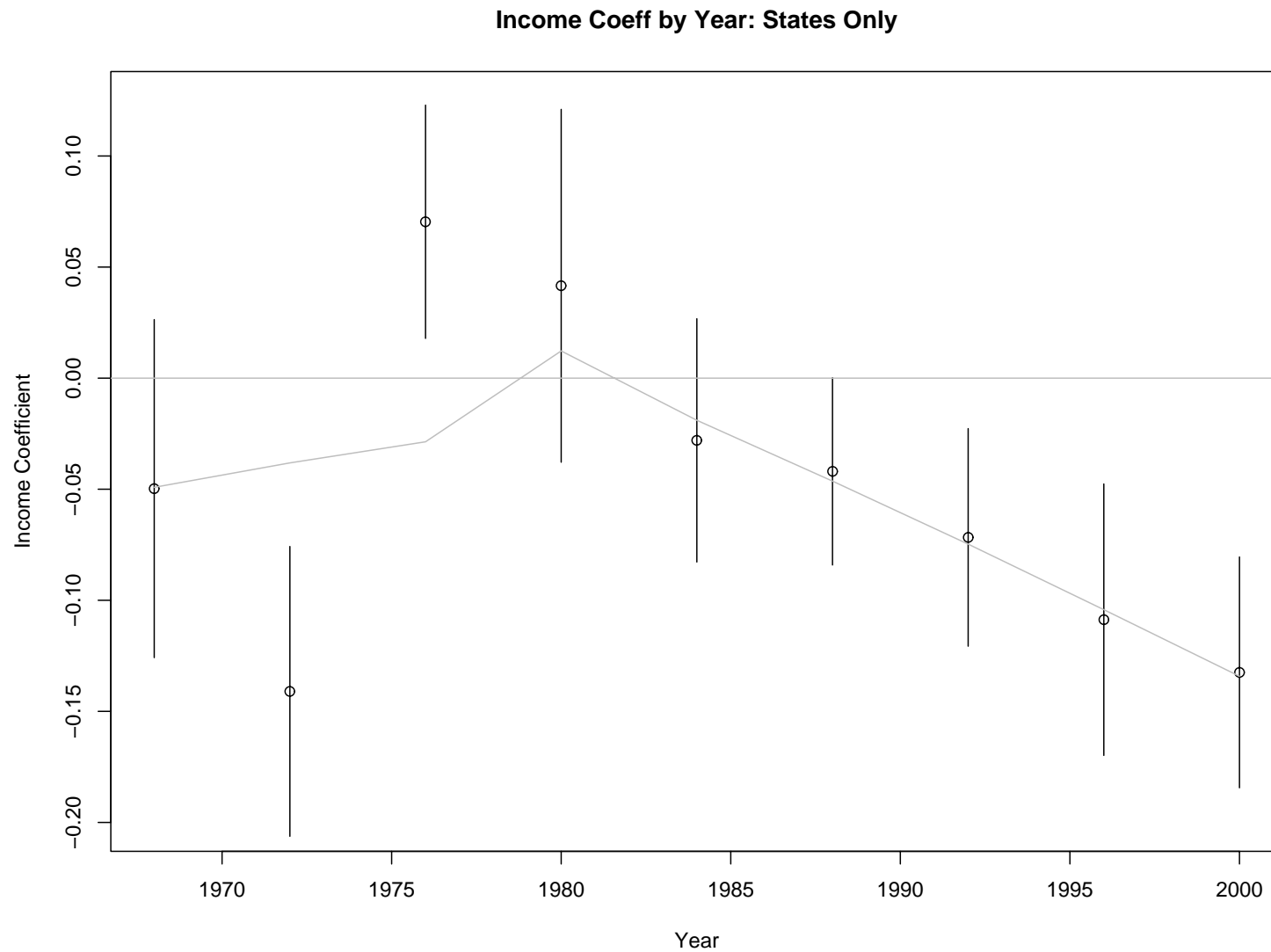
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Richer states now support the Democrats: a recent trend



The false ecological inference

(Some) Journalists' Reasoning:

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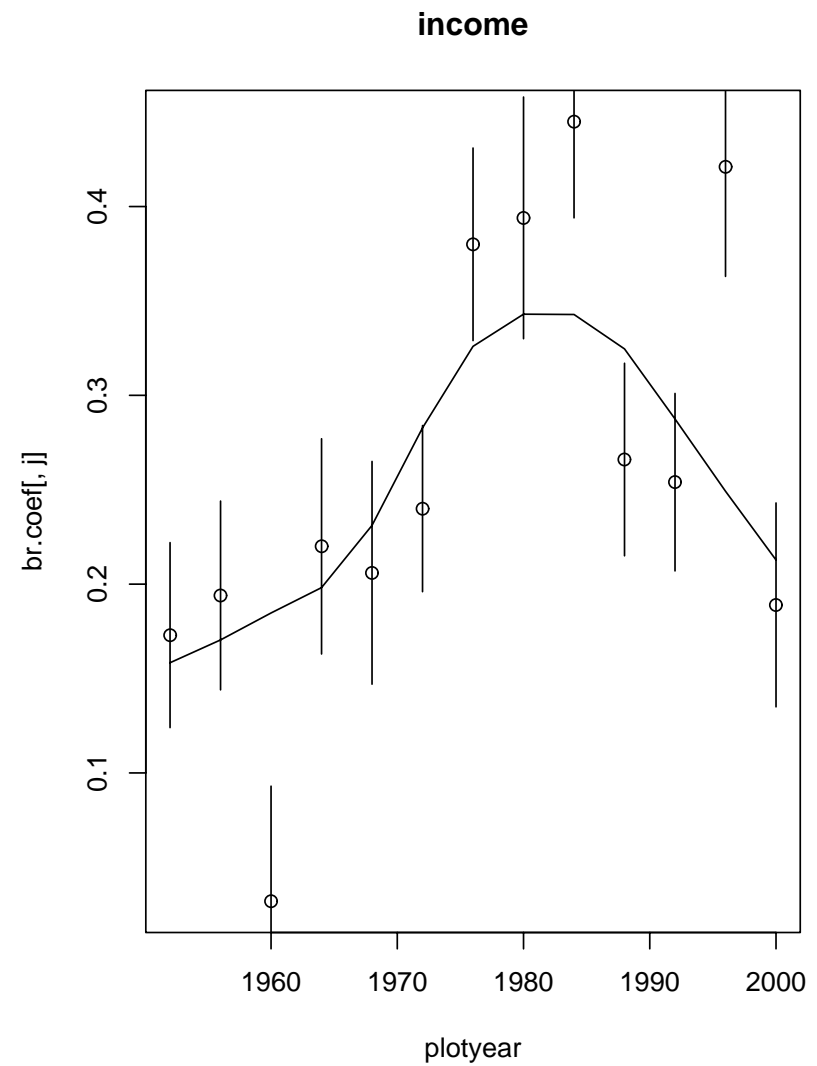
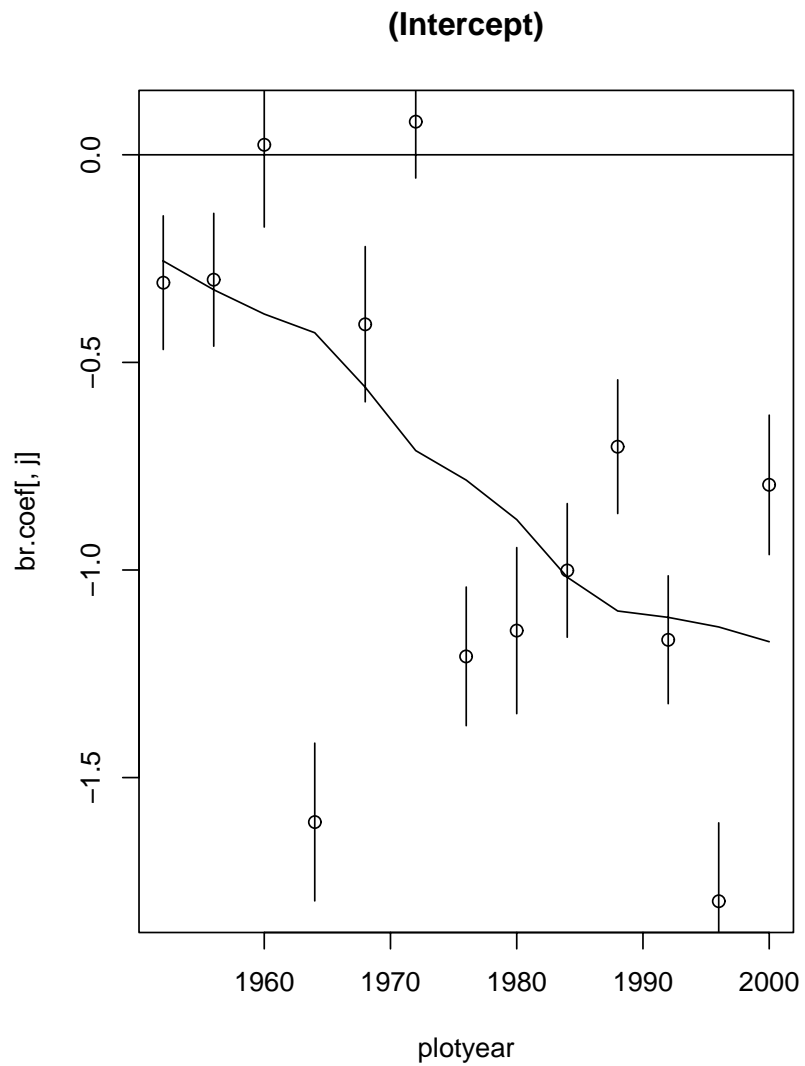
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But that reasoning isn't right. Looking at the individual level ...

Richer voters continue to support the Republicans



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 - ★ “Red” and “blue” states are not that different from each other
 - ★ Not much discussion of income and voting

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 - ★ To what extent do higher-income states (or counties) support the Democratic presidential candidates?
- Data
 - ★ Use NES in each year since 1960, along with election results and Census information on state and county incomes
 - ★ Income on 1–5 scale based on quantiles for the U.S. in any given year

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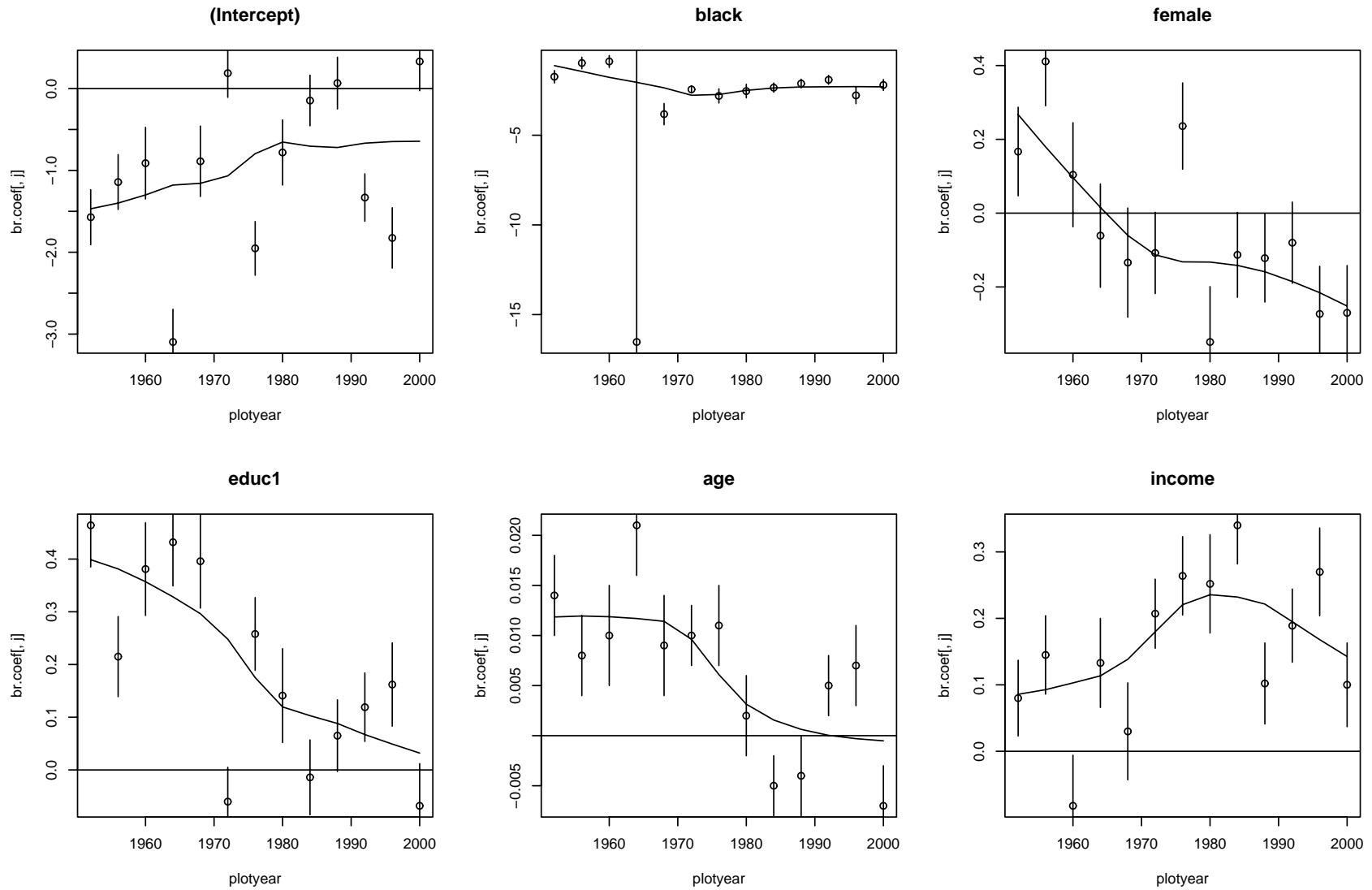
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 - ★ First analysis is of more interest: goal is to see how richer and poorer voters differ

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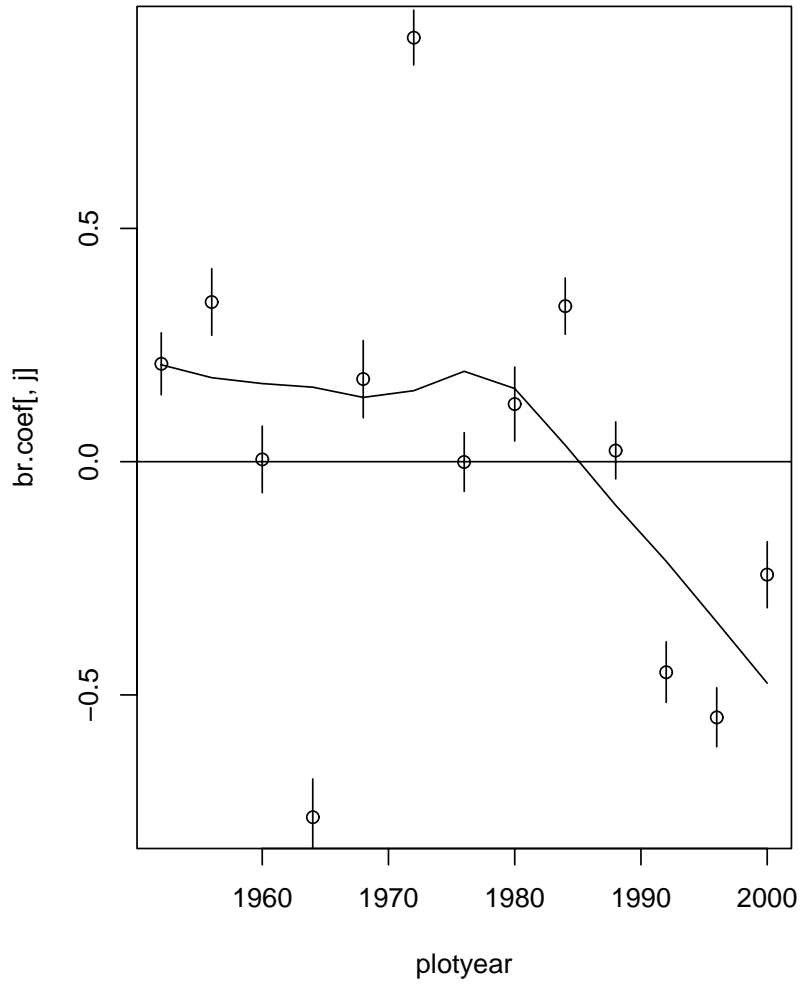
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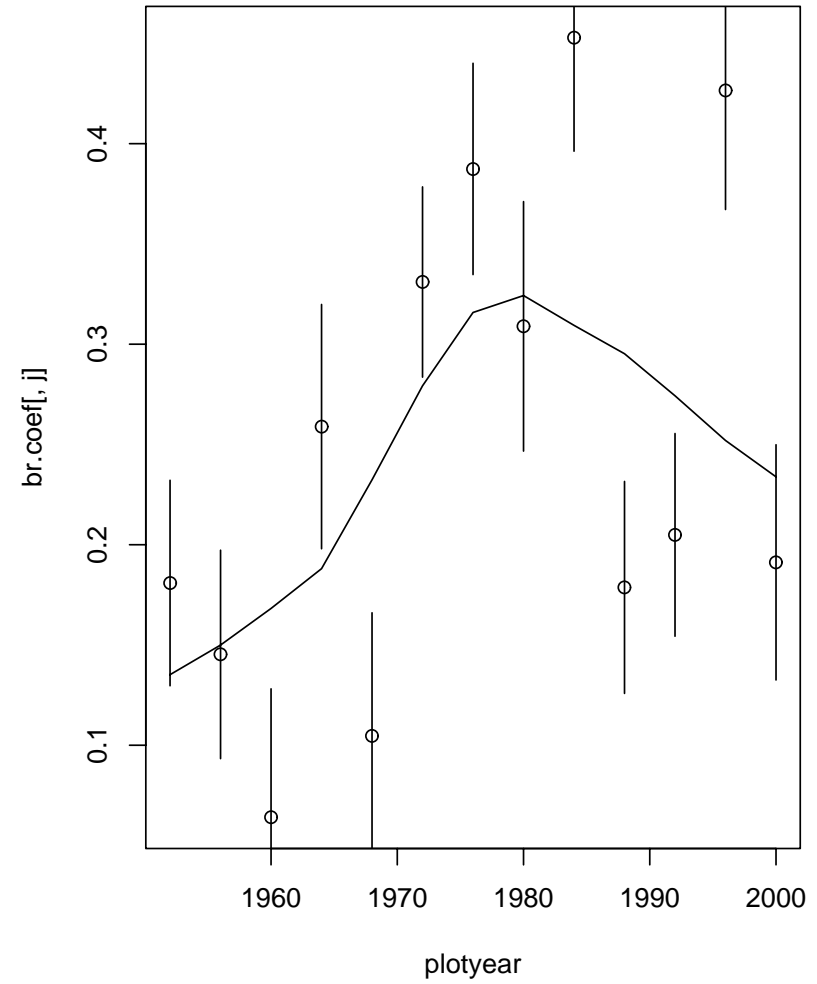
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- We played around with other models; not much evidence for varying slopes

Analysis of individuals within states

beta.0.adj



beta.income



Analysis of state and county averages in each election

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 - ★ Multilevel analyses with counties nested within states

Effects of county incomes within states

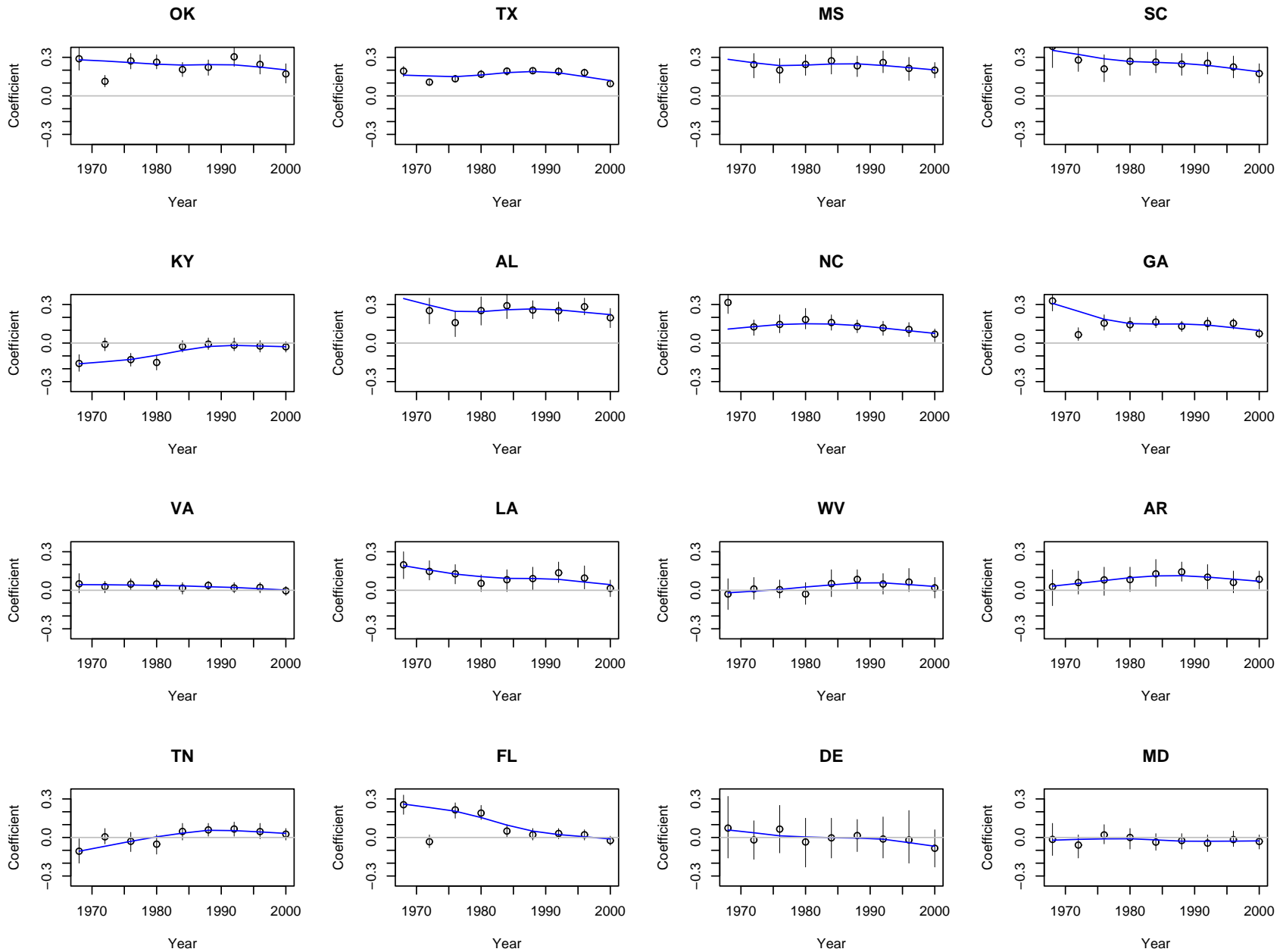
In deep-red states such as OK, TX, MS, etc., the richer counties support the Republicans, poorer counties support the Democrats: a very strong *reverse* “red-blue effect.”

Now let’s look at the states nearest major media: NY, MD, VA, CA: these particular states showed a slight positive “red-blue effect.” In these states, the richer counties supported the Democrats.

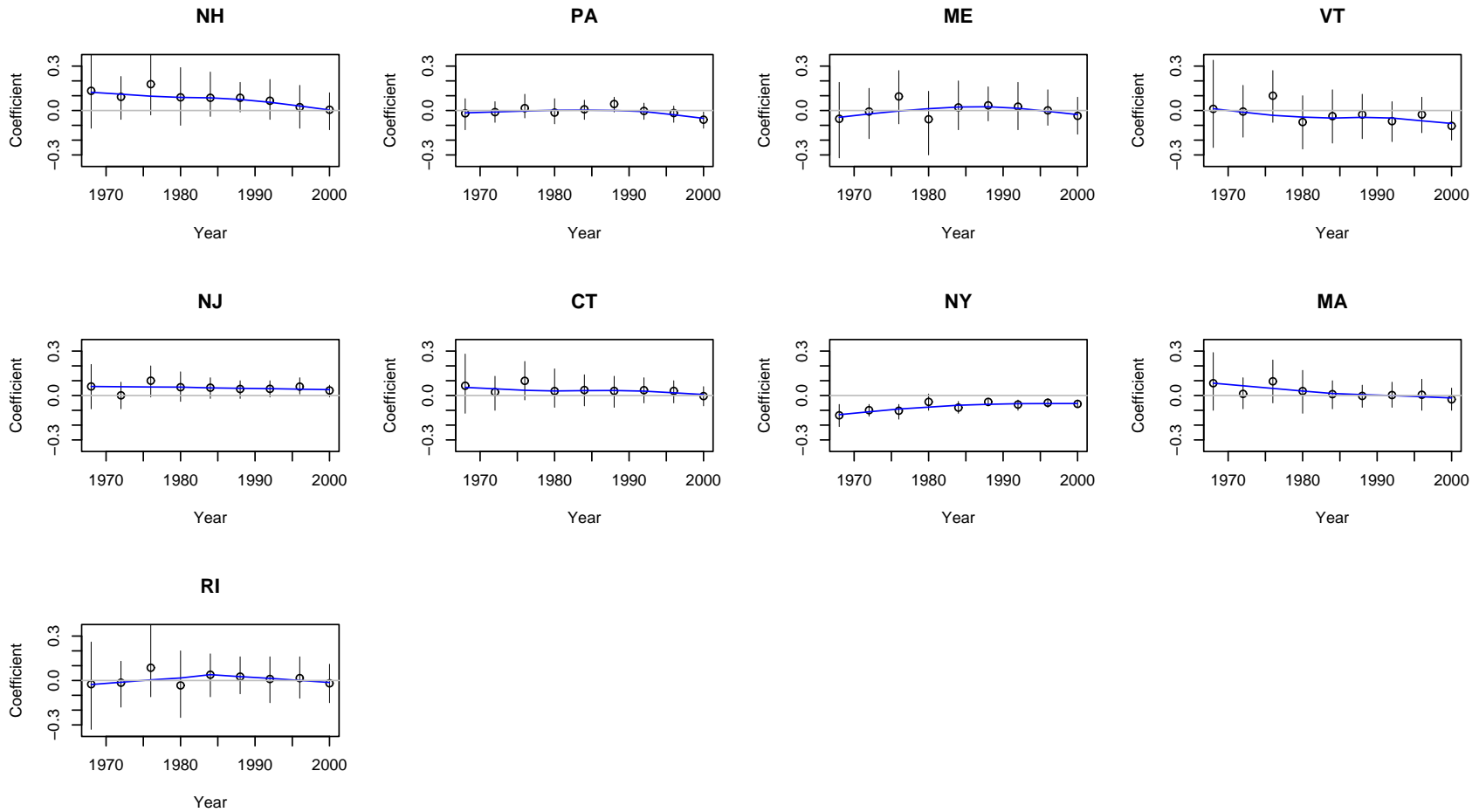
Thus, amusingly, the journalists noticed a pattern (richer counties supporting the Democrats) that is concentrated in the states where the journalists live! if they had gone out to Oklahoma, etc., they would have noticed an opposite pattern.

Next: the graphs . . .

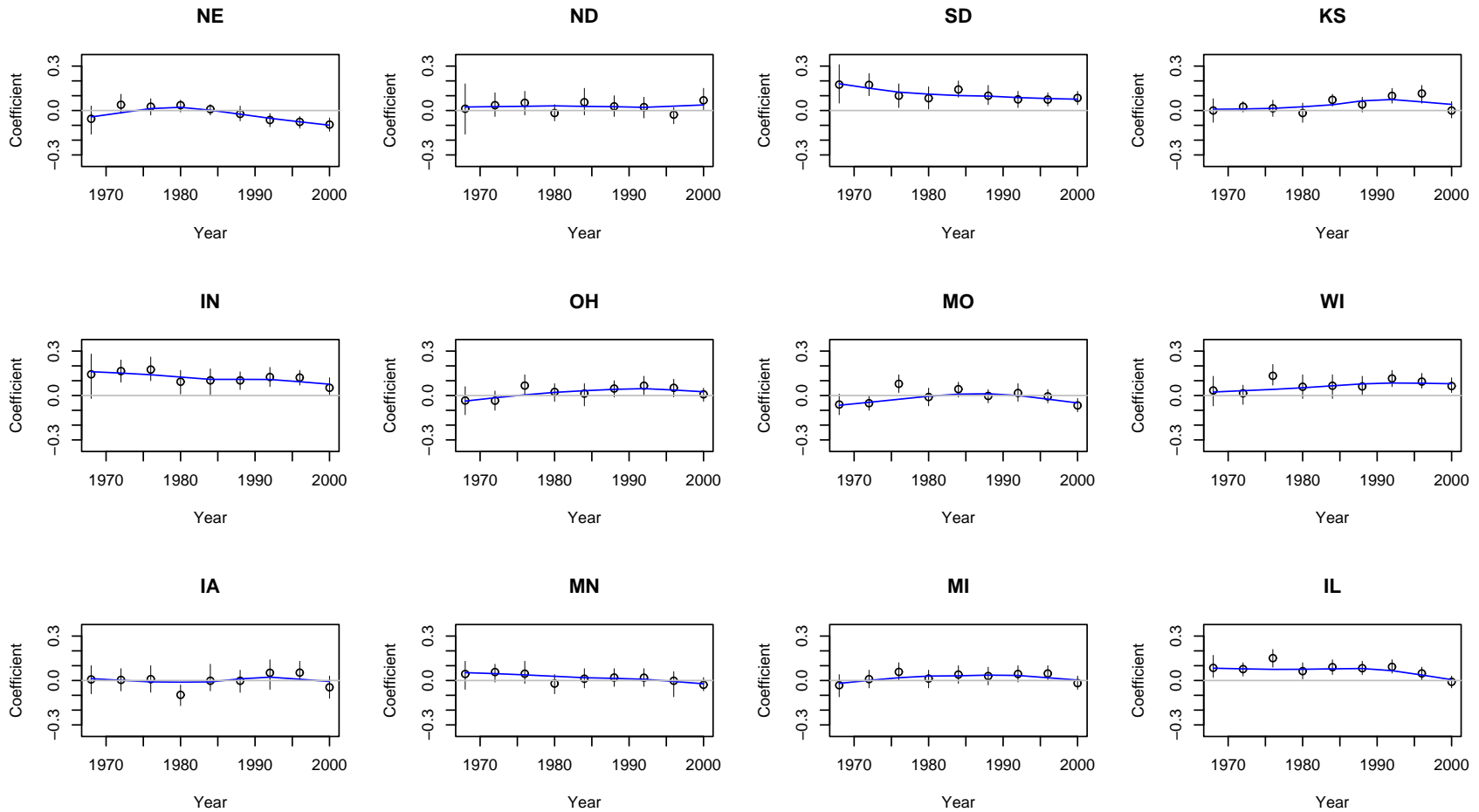
Effects of county incomes within states: South



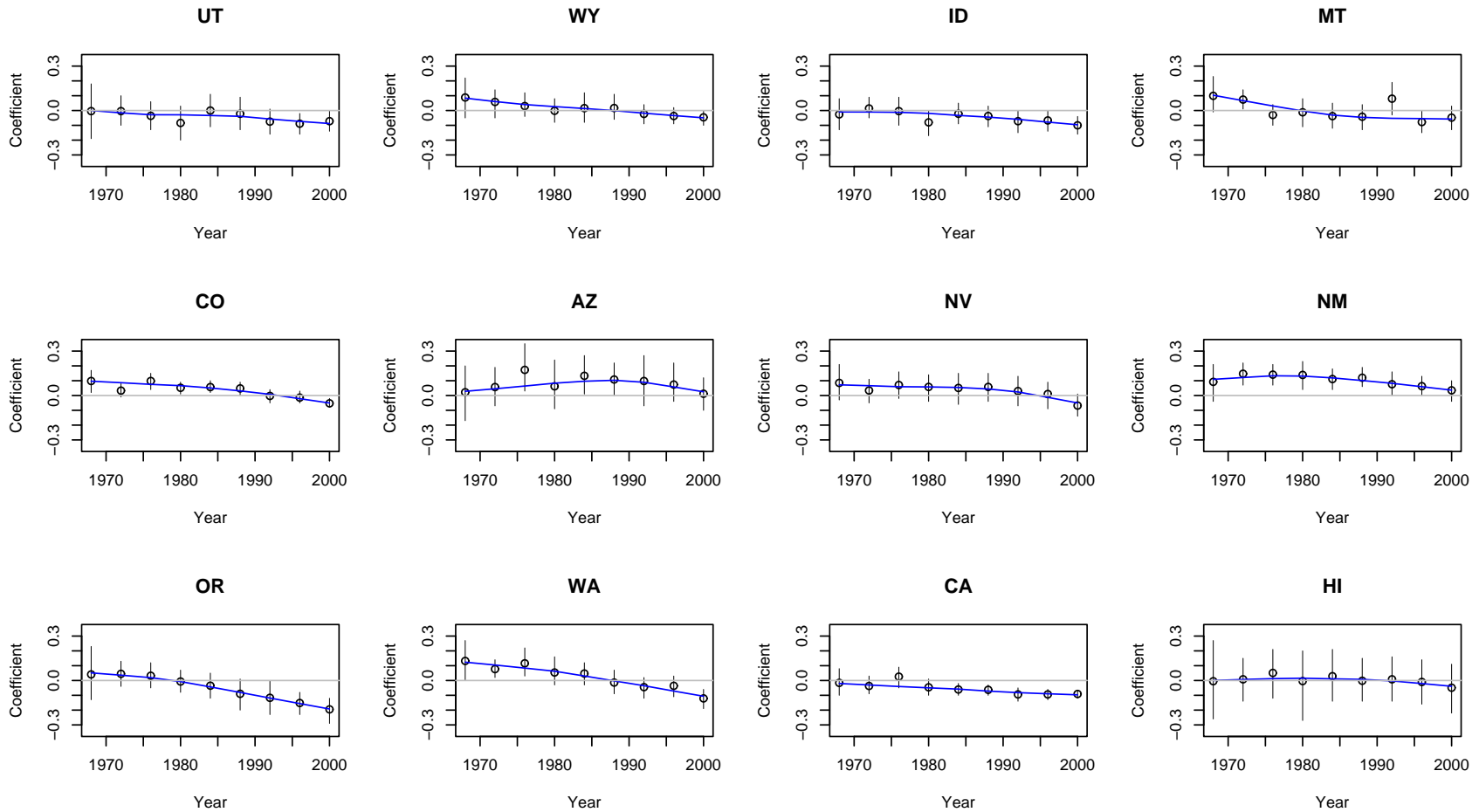
Effects of county incomes within states: Northeast



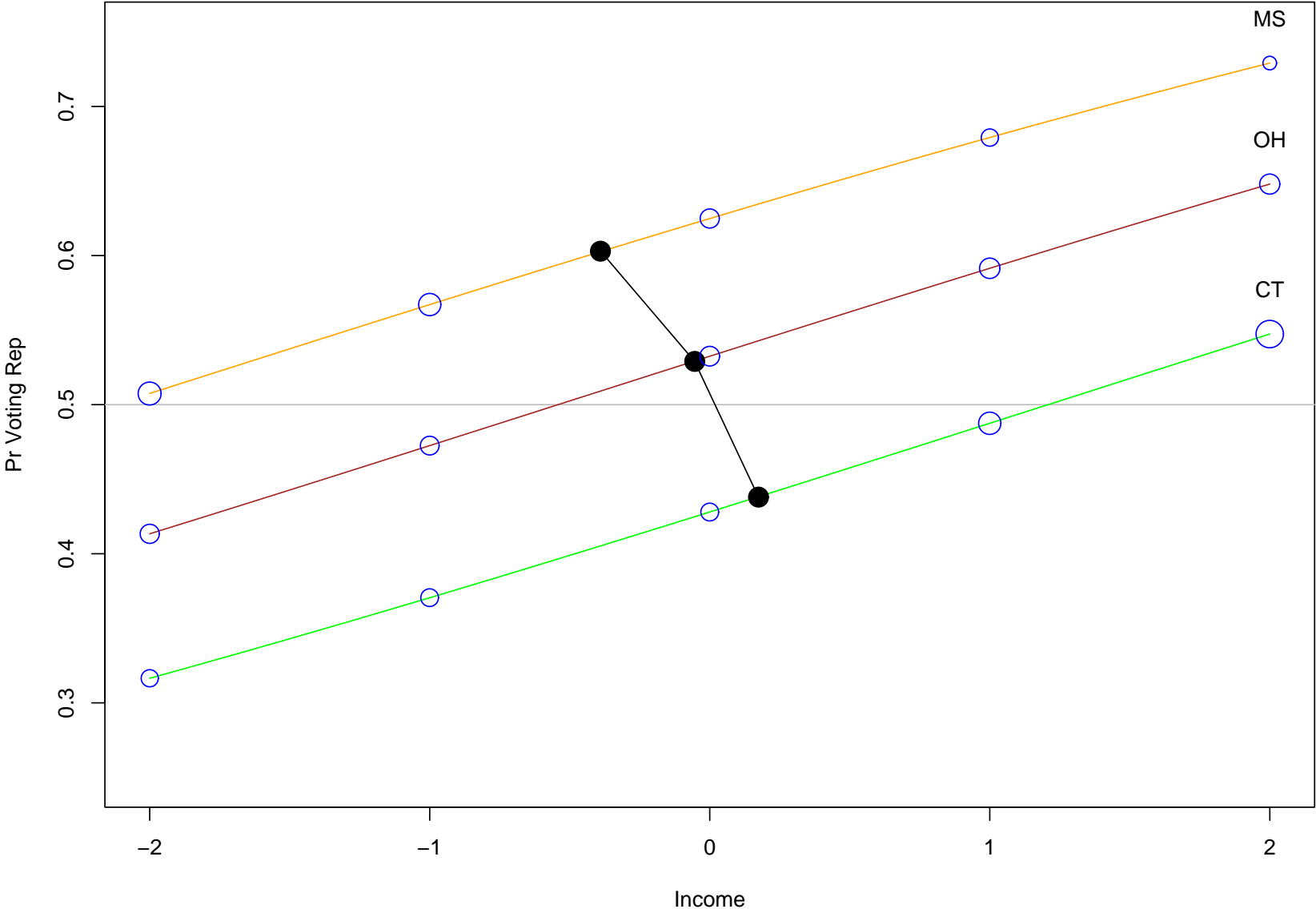
Effects of county incomes within states: Midwest



Effects of county incomes within states: West



Putting it all together: predictive effects of income within and between states



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- The journalists are on to something real, in that states’ preferences can *not* simply be explained as aggregations of the rich and poor voters within each state

Everybody wants to be a regular guy

I come from Huntington, a small farming community in Indiana. I had an upbringing like many in my generation—a life built around family, public school, Little League, basketball and church on Sunday. My brother and I shared a room in our two-bedroom house. — Dan Quayle, 1992

Clinton displays almost every trope of blackness: single-parent household, born poor, working-class, saxophone-playing, McDonald's-and-junk-food-loving boy from Arkansas. — Toni Morrison, 1998

(These are examples of social issues that are separate from income and vary geographically.)

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- Using the superplot to display patterns within and between states