The Relationship between Income Level and Attitudes Towards Abortion

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Introduction

- The majority of existing research overwhelmingly focuses on the role that religion and political party play in shaping abortion attitudes, with 43% of studies focused on religion and only 26% on education and income (Adamczyk, Kim, and Dillon, 2020)

- Current studies show a strong positive association between income and attitude towards abortion, especially in relation to education and employment status (Jozkowski,;et al. 2018; Smith and Son, 2013; Pew Research 2024)

- The criminalization of abortion has the largest negative effect on low-income women, with ¾ of people seeking abortion identifying as low-income (Jones, Jerman, Onda, 2014)

Research Questions

- Are higher incomes associated with increased support for abortion?

- Is this relationship affected when the reason for abortion is because the patient is low-income and cannot afford more children? How does shared income identity affect a respondent's attitude towards abortion?

- Does this association change when considering potential cultural explanatory variables (i.e., sex, race, age, party identification, religion, and education)?

Methods

Sample
- This study used a sample (n= 2,585) from the General Survey Study (GSS), which uses in-person data collection and web self-administered questionnaires to monitor changes in social characteristics and attitudes in the Untied States of adult household populations.

Measures
- Income level was measured by "Family income in 1972-2006 surveys in constant dollars." This study collapsed the variable into 4 possible categories, each reflecting an economic class range (e.g., Low-income=Under $1000-$11990, and High-Income= $150,000- $999,999).

- A variable measuring support for abortion (for any reason) was constructed by asking "Please tell me whether or not you think it should be possible for a pregnant woman to obtain a legal abortion if. . . if the woman wants it for any reason." This variable was coded dichotomously.

- A variable measuring support for abortion (for low income) was constructed by asking "Please tell me whether or not you think it should be possible for a pregnant woman to obtain a legal abortion if the family has a very low income and cannot afford any more children." This variable was coded dichotomously.

Results

Bivariate
- Chi-squared test of Independence showed support for abortion (for any reason and for low-income) were both **significantly different** among income groups (*Any Reason*: $\chi^2 =37.7$, p = 0.000) (*Low Income*: $\chi^2 =48.8$, p= 0.000)

- Based on Post Hoc tests, every income group was significantly different from the other three groups.

Multivariate:

Logistic Regression Results for a.) Abortion for Any Reason and b.) Abortion for Low-Income (Accounting for sex, race, age, party id, religion, and education)

Independent Variable	Dependent Variables: Attitudes towards Abortion	
Income	For Any Reason	For Low-Income
1. Low-Med	1. OR=1.58,p=0.002	1. OR=1.75, p=0.00
2. Med-High	2. OR=1.53, p=0.004	2. OR=1.48, p=0.008
3. High	3. OR=2.43, p=0.000	3. OR=2.25, p=0.000

- A logistic regression revealed that Low-Middle, Middle-High, and High Income had **significantly different attitudes towards abortion for any reason and abortions for low-income** than low-income respondents.

- Even when accounting for potential confounding variables (sex, race, age, party id, religion, and education), Low-Middle, and High income **remained significantly associated** with attitude towards abortion for any reason and abortion for low income.

- While, religion, party id, education, and race also have significant associations with abortion attitude, income remains independently significant for both variables.

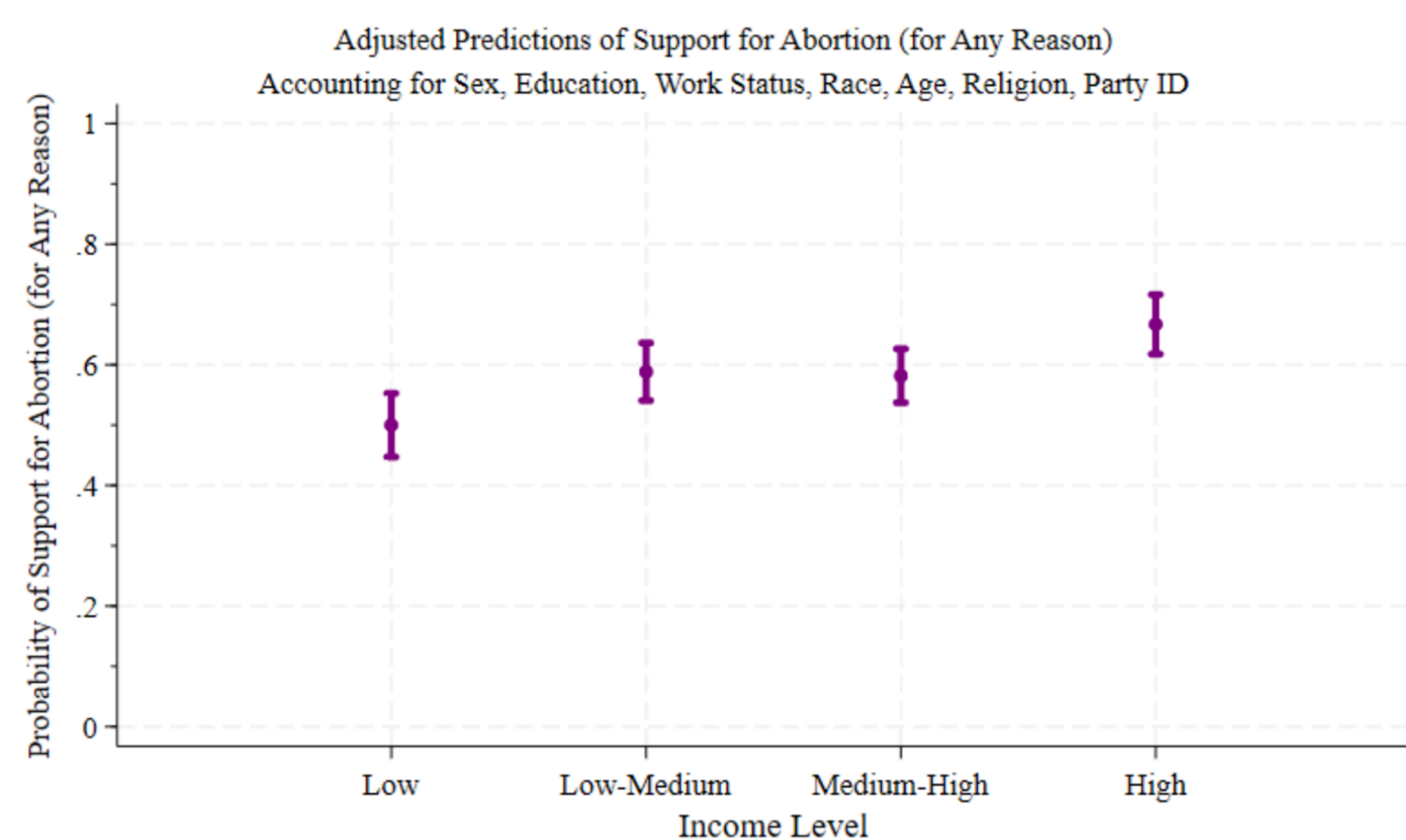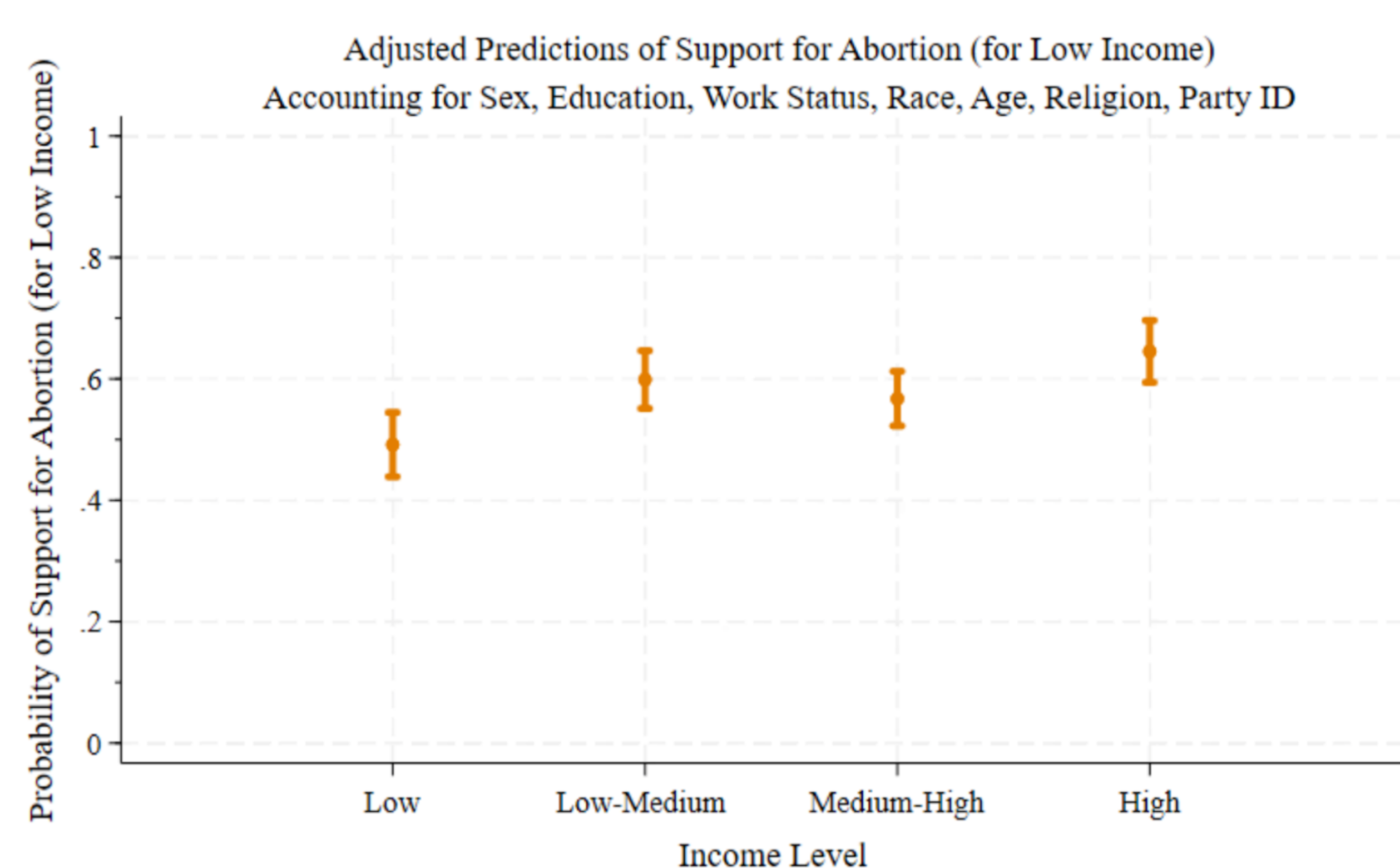**Figure 1:** Predicted Probabilities for Support for Abortion (for Any Reason) by Income Level

Adjusted Predictions of Support for Abortion (for Any Reason) Accounting for Sex, Education, Work Status, Race, Age, Religion, Party ID

Figure 2: Predicted Probabilities for Support for Abortion (for Low-Income) by Income Level

Adjusted Predictions of Support for Abortion (for Low Income) Accounting for Sex, Education, Work Status, Race, Age, Religion, Party ID

Discussion

- As income level increases, respondents are more likely to support abortion (for any reason) or abortion (for low income).

- This study supports other researchers' findings that education and party identification matter but also demonstrates that income remains a significant independent predictor of attitude towards abortions.

- The reason for abortion being low-income did not significantly change attitudes towards abortion across income levels.

- Further research should be done to determine whether other reasons for abortion (e.g. Is not married, does not want children, health is endangered, or is a result of rape) effects attitude across income levels.

References

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