Comparative Political Studies

**Does Religion Distract the Poor?: Income and Issue Voting
Around the World**
Ana L. De La O and Jonathan A. Rodden

The online version of this article can be found at:

Published by:
$\text{\$}$SAGE Publications

Additional services and information for *Comparative Political Studies* can be found at:

Email Alerts: http://cps.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts

Subscriptions: http://cps.sagepub.com/subscriptions

Reprints: http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav

Permissions: http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav

Citations (this article cites 12 articles hosted on the
SAGE Journals Online and HighWire Press platforms):
http://cps.sagepub.com/cgi/content/refs/41/4-5/437

Does Religion Distract the Poor?

Income and Issue Voting Around the World

Ana L. De La O
Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut
Jonathan A. Rodden
Stanford University, California

This article asks whether religion undermines the negative relationship between income and left voting that is assumed in standard political economy models of democracy. Analysis of cross-country survey data reveals that this correlation disappears among religious individuals in countries that use proportional representation. This is the case in large part because there is a moral values dimension that has a correlation with income that is equal in magnitude but has the opposite sign as the economic dimension, and the votes of the religious are better explained by their positions on moral than economic issues, especially in countries with multiparty systems. The authors conclude by discussing implications for theories of redistribution.

Keywords: religion; issue voting; electoral choice; moral values; income

The rich everywhere are few, and the poor numerous . . . where the poor rule, that is a democracy.

Aristotle, The Politics, Book 3, chapter 8 (Aristotle, 1992)

Religious suffering is, at one and the same time, the expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people.

Karl Marx,
Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, 1844 (Marx, 1970)

Aristotle's view of democracy is perhaps the most basic building block of political economy theories of elections. From Downs (1957) to Persson and Tabellini (2003), the starting point for thinking about electoral politics is often a one-dimensional spatial model in which the policy space is about taxation and redistribution and voters' preferences are driven primarily by their place in the income spectrum. According to this view, the overall level of redistribution should be a function of the underlying level of income inequality (Meltzer & Richard, 1981; Romer, 1975), and because Aristotle's statement about the right skew of the income distribution is correct, the poor masses in unequal societies should vote for parties of the left that promise confiscatory levels of taxation and redistribution (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2006; Boix, 2003).

Indeed, the expansion of the franchise to the poor in the early 20th century was followed by a period of increasing progressive taxation and expanding welfare benefits in Europe (Lindert, 2004), but the worst fears of expropriation turned out to be unfounded. Moreover, a large number of empirical studies have turned up scant evidence of a relationship between the position of the median voter in the income distribution and the extent of redistribution, and some highly unequal democracies undertake very little redistribution.[1]

Many explanations have been offered for this puzzle, but at least since Marx and Engels, one of the most prominent is that poor people do not naturally come to understand their economic self-interest in progressive taxation and redistribution. In fact, political entrepreneurs may be able to mobilize them more easily around other issues such as moral values or group identities such as religion or race, causing the equilibrium amount of redistribution to decrease as parties seek votes by taking positions on these other issues (Lee & Roemer, 2005; Roemer, 1998).

Indeed, a robust yet undertheorized negative cross–country relationship between religiosity—measured with church attendance and belief in God— and the size of the welfare state (Gill & Lundsgaarde, 2004; Scheve & Stasavage, 2006) has motivated a recent renaissance in theories about religion, voting, and party platforms. At least since Lipset and Rokkan (1967), political scientists and sociologists have recognized that confessional affiliation and religiosity are surprisingly powerful and stable predictors of voting behavior in Western Europe and the Americas—even in very secular societies—whereas the importance of economic class continues to decline (Dalton, 2006; Lijphart, 1971). Very recently, media pundits have focused on a so-called culture war in the United States, in which a moral values

issue dimension is said to have surpassed the importance of the traditional economic issue dimension (e.g., Brooks, 2001). Many of the contributors to this literature come from a Marxian perspective and have breathed new life into the notion that preferences on the moral values issue dimension have a disproportionate pull on the poorest, least educated voters (Frank, 2004). In other words, although the votes of the wealthy are thought to be consistent with their economic self-interest, because of their attachment to religion and traditional moral values, those of the poor are not.

These classic and contemporary debates imply basic questions that are amenable to cross-country survey research. How tight is the link between income and voting behavior across countries? More precisely, is electoral competition in most democracies generally about one economic issue dimension on which preferences can be inferred from income? Or does the importance of religion, moral values, or some other issue dimension consistently rival or even swamp that of the economic-redistributive dimension? If so, how do preferences on these other issue dimensions correlate with income? Finally, do the poor—especially the religious poor—place greater weight on noneconomic issue preferences than the wealthy, as hypothesized by some Marxian thinkers?

We begin by reviewing and expanding on the theories linking religion, income, voting, and redistribution. One possibility is that religious individuals vote for the right simply because they are more conservative on the economic issue dimension (Scheve & Stasavage, 2006). Thus, if democracies with a higher density of religious voters demonstrate lower levels of redistribution, it is because the platforms of political parties converge on a more economically conservative median voter.

Second, the prevailing Marxist argument is formalized by Roemer (1998), who presents a model in which the economic–redistributive issue dimension is bundled together with a dimension related to moral values and the role of organized religion. This model has a range of empirically plausible equilibria in which morally conservative poor voters are sufficiently unlikely to vote for the party of the left that it moderates its platform in search of votes from relatively wealthy secular voters. Thus, the presence of a salient second dimension puts downward pressure on the equilibrium tax rate, providing another potential explanation for the negative correlation between religiosity—perhaps a proxy for the salience of this second dimension—and redistribution in the cross-country data.

The remainder of the article examines these potential links between religion, income, preferences, and voting with individual-level data. We start with the observation that the relationship between individual income and

vote choice has been rather weak and nonlinear in advanced industrial coun-tries since 1970. The first three income quartiles are indistinguishable from one another in their propensity to vote for the left, but left voting drops off dramatically among the top quartile. In contrast, church attendance has a clear, linear (negative) impact on left voting. Furthermore, we find strong evidence of an interactive impact of income and church attendance on vote choice that is consistent with the Marxian perspective. Whether we use pooled data from the Eurobarometer (various years) since 1970 or a larger sample of wealthy countries from the 1990s covered by the World Values Survey, we find that the effect of income on vote choice is barely discern-able among those who attend church every week, whereas it is quite large among those who never go to church. Moreover, the impressive relationship between church attendance and voting against the parties of the left is driven disproportionately by the poor. However, we also discover that these rela-tionships are primarily driven by the large presence in our sample of countries in continental Europe that use proportional representation.

Next, we move beyond the simple analysis of income and religion and approach the data in a way that is more consistent with the theory literature on multiple issue dimensions. We introduce issue scales based on factor analysis of large numbers of questions from the World Values Survey, showing that although income is correlated with more conservative eco-nomic preferences, wealthy leftists and poor conservatives are surprisingly common. Furthermore, the moral values dimension creates a clear cross-cutting cleavage, displaying the same slope as the economic dimension but the opposite sign in its relationship with income: Although the poor are sig-nificantly more liberal on the economic dimension, they are similarly more conservative on the moral values dimension. Meanwhile, those who attend church are dramatically more conservative on the noneconomic issue dimension, but only moderately so on the economic issue dimension.

Next, we explore the impact of issue preferences on voting and break this down among the 2×2 matrix of wealthy, poor, religious, and secular individuals, with a goal of explaining why the religious—especially the religious poor—vote the way they do. For all income groups, the main story is that the religious vote for the right in large part because of their prefer-ences on the moral values issue dimension, but among the poor, a very small part of the religion effect is driven by the relative economic conserv-ativeness of churchgoers, which lends at least some credence to the Scheve-Statstavege (2006) perspective. These results also show that in general, moral values push individuals in the opposite direction from their economic preferences, especially among the churchgoers. To the extent that the larger

impact of income on voting among secular versus religious voters can be traced to issue preferences, it is due to the relative importance of the economic issue dimension among the secular. However, the relatively leftist preferences of the wealthy on the moral values dimension actually nudge them toward parties of the left, partially offsetting the impact of their relative economic conservativeness.

The section on religion, income, and voting also sheds light on cross-country differences that are worthy of further study. We find that the moral values issue dimension has a large impact on the vote in many countries with multiparty systems, even surpassing the economic issue dimension in countries with large Catholic populations where proportional representation facilitates Christian Democratic parties.

The individual-level analysis undertaken in this article does not allow us to explain cross-country or diachronic differences in welfare expenditures or redistribution, but it does provide clear indications about the assumptions and modeling strategies that are most likely to yield successful explanations. The more speculative final section explores income, religion, and policy preferences implications for theories of redistribution. We conclude with an intriguing post hoc conjecture inspired by our results: Conflicted voters in majoritarian countries with two-party systems must often choose between their moral and economic preferences when voting, whereas proportional representation reduces the barriers to entry for hybrid political parties that take leftist positions on one issue dimension and rightist positions on the other.

Theoretical Perspectives on Religion as Opium

If income and religion matter for aggregate policy outcomes in ways that can be addressed through positive political theory, it is in the way they shape preferences on issue dimensions and, in turn, the way the distribution of voters' preferences on these issue dimensions shapes the incentives of parties when setting their platforms. The main objective of this article is to provide a firmer footing for such theories by establishing the micro foundations that are often assumed rather than researched: basic facts about the impact of issue preferences on vote choice in democracies. In particular, we are interested in the relative impact of economic and what we call "moral values" preferences, with an eye toward improving existing models that posit links between inequality, religion, and redistribution. A related article by Huber and Stanig (2007) seeks to explain cross-country differences in

the extent to which the poor choose parties of the right. Our approach is distinct in that we use issue scales to focus primarily on intergroup differences within countries that serve as building blocks for theories of redistribution.

One such theory suggests that there is one overriding economic issue dimension and that churchgoers simply have more conservative preferences on this dimension. If so, this might explain in a rather straightforward way why religious countries provide less social insurance and do less to redistribute income. Scheve and Stasavage (2006) present a model in which religious individuals prefer lower levels of risk sharing and redistribution because they derive psychic benefits from religion that serve as a substitute for the welfare state in buffering individuals against adverse life events. If religion is an opiate, it operates directly on economic preferences. An alternative with the same empirical prediction would be that religious individuals prefer smaller government with less ability to redistribute income because big government is perceived as a threat to the power and prestige of the church or because the church is a competitor with the state in realms such as schooling or charitable activities. Lee and Roemer (2005) describe a similar possibility and refer to it as the "moral puritanism effect." In either case, within countries, the empirical expectation is that more religious individuals have significantly different preferences than secular individuals on the economic issue dimension, and this difference is a powerful predictor of differences in their vote choices.

Another possibility is that although church attendance and religiosity are in decline in much of Europe, such variables are mere proxies for the presence of a second moral values issue dimension that has broader resonance and sufficiently strong weight in voters' evaluation of parties and candidates that voters—especially the poor—ignore their economic preferences when voting. In contrast to the Scheve-Stasavage (2006) model, the religious poor are indistinguishable from the secular poor in their preferences on the economic–redistributive dimension, but a sufficient percentage of them care deeply enough about the noneconomic issue dimension that they vote for the right in spite of their material interests. Of course the converse may be true among the secular wealthy for whom progressive moral values are highly salient: They may vote for the left in spite of their economic interests.

One informal interpretation of the Marxian argument is that there is an asymmetry whereby the wealthy—perhaps because of loss aversion (e.g., Tversky & Kahneman, 1991)—base their votes primarily on their economic interests, whereas the moral values dimension is more salient among the poor. This is essentially the logic of Thomas Frank's (2004) recent American best seller, *What's the Matter with Kansas*?

Following a slightly different Marxian analytical approach that relies on the distraction of the poor, Roemer (1998) presents a model with two issues (tax policy and religion) and two parties with policy preferences (one representing primarily voters who are poor and anticlerical and the other representing the rich and proclerical). According to Roemer's setup, "it is important to understand that these parties are not *Downsian*—neither wishes to maximize the probability of winning the election *per se*, but rather to maximize its constituents' expected welfare" (p. 401).

In the tradition of Meltzer and Richard (1981), income is perfectly correlated with preferences on the economic dimension. Preferences on the religious dimension are correlated with those on the first dimension, but only weakly so. That is, the rich are more conservative on the religious dimension, but there are large numbers of wealthy moral liberals and poor moral conservatives. Roemer's (1998) analysis shows that if the median religious voter is wealthier than the rest of the population, the equilibrium level of redistribution will be less than that preferred by the median voter. The idea is that as long as there are some poor voters for whom religion is highly salient, the left party will have incentives to abandon these voters in search of some secular rich voters, which moves the tax policy outcome away from the poor constituency's ideal point. In fact, Roemer explores equilibria in which as the salience of religion increases, the tax rate proposed by the left can fall "possibly even to zero." In this story, the religious opiate works not by altering the preferences of the poor over redistribution but by distracting them from their material interests.

The remainder of this article attempts to ascertain whether any of these Marxian perspectives is consistent with individual-level data on voting. The following section examines the impact of income and religion on voting, in which we find that a simple version of the distraction hypothesis holds up rather well, at least in continental Europe. Then we introduce issue scales to explore why this is the case.

Religion, Income, and Voting

It is well known that measures of religiosity and church attendance are far better predictors of vote choice in advanced industrial democracies than income or proxies for class affiliation (Dalton, 2006). Before trying to understand why this is the case, it is useful to establish two additional stylized facts that have not been emphasized in the literature thus far. First, the relationship between income and voting is weaker than assumed in

workhorse political economy models. Second, the impacts of income and religion on voting are clearly conditional on one another.

Throughout the article, we rely primarily on two data sets. The best source for consistent time-series data on income, religion, and vote choice over a long period of time are the Eurobarometers, starting in the early 1970s. We also use the World Values Survey (various years), which allows us not only to expand the number of countries, but more important, to supplement data on religion, income, and vote choice with a rich array of questions on preferences related to moral values and economic policy later in the article. We start with the blunt indicator of voting behavior used in nearly all of the comparative literature. We generate a dummy variable for left voting that codes all parties of the left as 1—primarily Communist, Socialist, Social Democratic, and Labor—and all parties of the right and center as 0. This is an unsatisfactory approach in many respects—especially because we are interested in multiple issue dimensions and the expert coding on which we rely seems to privilege the economic issue dimension. We improve on it below, but for present purposes, this is the best way to attain some semblance of cross-national comparability. Moreover, it is analytically useful in that it treats all countries as if voters' choices were constrained to a simple binary choice between left and right, as implicitly assumed in the distraction theories explored above.[2]

Figures 1a and 1b are drawn from the Eurobarometer pooled data set. We are able to include France, Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Denmark, Great Britain, and Spain from 1970 until 1992. These figures represent scatterplots of average left voting by the top and lower income quartiles and by people who attend church very frequently or never, respectively. We compare these averages against a 45-degree line that indicates a hypothetical world in which the top and lower income quartiles in Figure 1a—or weekly church goers versus those who never attend in 1b—voted identically for the left. All years that fall below the line indicate a higher average of left voting among the lowest income quartile (Figure 1a) or church goers (Figure 1b). Correspondingly, years above the line indicate a higher average of left voting among the wealthy (Figure 1a) or secular people (Figure 1b). These graphs show that differences in income are surprisingly bad predictors of average voting for the left, as all years fall quite close to the 45-degree line. In contrast, church attendance clearly affects the average of left voting in the expected direction: Religious people are simply unlikely to vote for the left.[3]

Figures 2a and 2b are boxplots of average left voting by income group. Figure 2a is drawn from the Eurobarometers, which characterize respondents
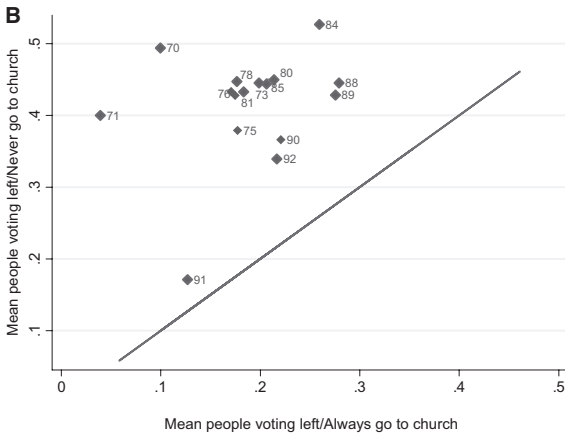
Figure 1a
Income and Left Voting
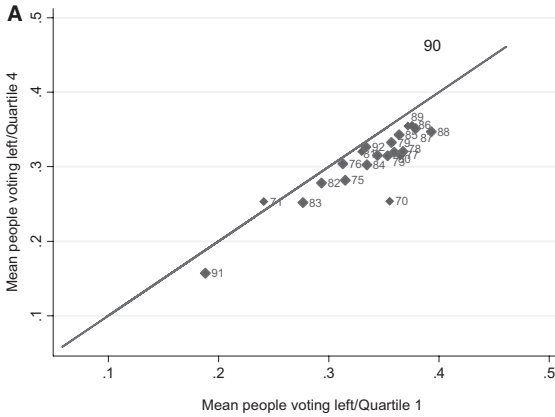
Source: Eurobarometer (various years).
Note: All observations below the 45-degree line are years in which on average, the poor voted more for the left than the rich did. Observations close to the line suggest that poor and rich voted similarly for the left.

Figure 1b
Church Attendance and Left Voting

Note: All observations above the 45-degree line are years in which respondents who never go to church voted on average more for the left than people who go to church every week.
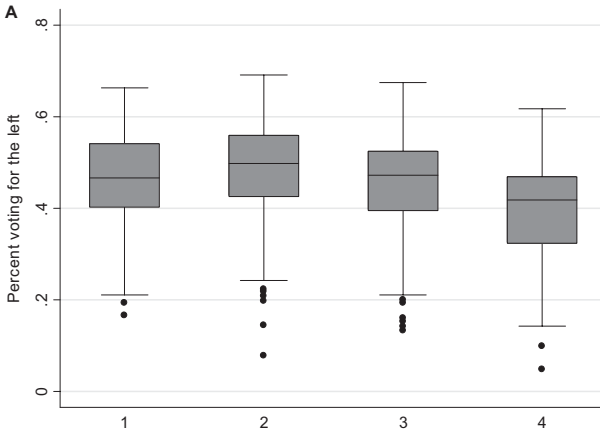Source: Eurobarometer (various years).

by income quartiles and pools over all countries and years, though very similar plots can be obtained by year and individual country. Figure 2b is drawn from the advanced industrial countries covered by the second wave of the World Values Survey, which provides data on income deciles. We pool over all countries, though again, the story is consistent within countries. The countries included are France, Britain, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium, Spain, Ireland, United States, Canada, Japan, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Austria. These graphs show that on average, there is no difference between poor and middle-class voters, both of whom vote for parties of the left with a probability of around .5. In fact, it is rather striking that slightly less than half of European voters in the first income quartile vote for the left over more than two decades and the average is not far above .5 for the first two deciles in the World Values Study. Although income always has a substantively small but statistically significant impact on voting in probit models using either survey—even when the typical battery of control variables is introduced—these graphs show that the relationship is driven almost entirely by the wealthiest quartile. Even still, according to both surveys, on average well over 40% of the wealthiest individuals vote for parties of the left.

The familiar Marxian perspective is that religion dampens the natural association between income and voting. Both surveys include several highly correlated variables tapping into religiosity. Here, we use one simple, comparable, and powerful variable that has been used in other studies—frequency of church attendance—though other variables yield very similar results.

In the first column of Table 1, using the advanced industrial countries in the World Values Survey, we present the results of a probit model with standard errors clustered by country, where the left dummy is the dependent variable and the independent variables are income, church attendance, and their multiplicative interaction. Following the cross-national literature on vote choice, we include controls for union membership, status as unemployed, race, and age category (all dummy variables), as well as years of formal education, the size of the respondent's city, and a matrix of country dummies. We have also estimated models with a broader range of control variables and obtained nearly identical results but do not report them because missing data shrink the number of observations in those models. Instead of reporting coefficients, we report the dF/dx, which can be interpreted as the change in the probability of voting for the left associated with a unit change in the independent variable.

The results appear to be consistent with the Marxian story about religion. The easiest way to understand the result is the top panel of Figure 3, which

Figure 2a
Average Percentage of Population Voting for Parties of the Left by
Income Quartile, Europe, 1970-1992

Source: Eurobarometer (various years).

Figure 2b
Average Percentage of Population Voting for Parties of the Left by
Income Decile, Industrialized Countries Circa 1990
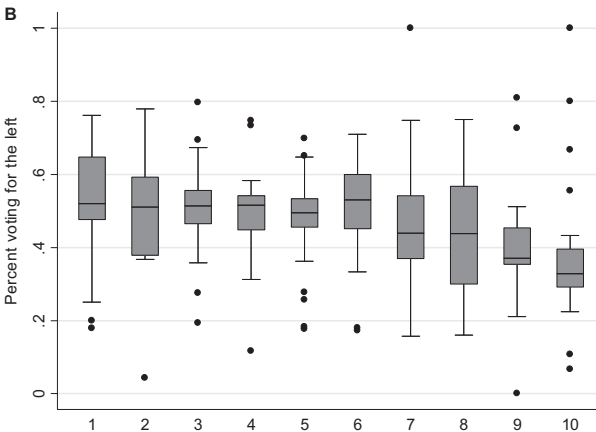
Source: World Values Survey (various years).

Table 1
Income, Religion, and Votes for the Left in Industrialized Countries

	All Industrialized Countries		Countries with Proportional Electoral Rules		Countries with Majoritarian Electoral Rules	
	dF/dx	Robust Standard Error	dF/dx	Robust Standard Error	dF/dx	Robust Standard Error
Income decile	–0.03	0.01**	–0.04	0.004**	–0.02	0.02
Church attendance	–0.08	0.01*	–0.09	0.01**	–0.02	0.02
Income × Church Attendance	0.004	0.00**	0.005	0.001**	–0.001	0.003
Union member	0.18	0.02**	0.18	0.03**	0.13	0.05*
Unemployed	0.05	0.02*	0.05	0.03*	0.01	0.03
White	–0.30	0.05**	–0.06	0.01**	–0.30	0.07**
Age 18 to 24	–0.02	0.03	–0.04	0.03	0.04	0.03
Age 35 to 44	–0.01	0.01	–0.01	0.01	-0.01	0.04
Age 45 to 54	–0.09	0.02**	–0.10	0.01**	–0.05	0.05
Age 55 to 64	–0.11	0.03**	–0.11	0.02**	–0.07	0.07
Age 65 plus	–0.16	0.03**	–0.18	0.01**	–0.11	0.07
Education	–0.01	0.01**	–0.01	0.01*	–0.01	0.01
Size of city	0.01	0.004**	0.01	0.01*	0.01	0.01
Observations	12,999		9,548		4,236	
Pseudo R^2	0.11		0.11		0.08	

Note: Coefficients for country dummies not reported; Standard errors clustered by country.
Source: World Values Survey (various years).
*$p < .05$. **$p < .001$.

reports predicted probabilities of voting for the left at low (1st and 2nd deciles) and high (9th and 10th deciles) values of income and low (*never*) and high (*weekly*) values of church attendance, as well as the differences in predicted probabilities between the groups. It shows that the difference between low and high income groups is negligible among the religious and much more pronounced among the secular. It also drives home the importance of church attendance in predicting the vote. Those who attend church every week vote for the left with very low probability regardless of income, and those who never attend are very likely to vote for the left, especially the poor. Moreover, the impact of religion is larger among the poor, which may go a long way toward explaining the surprisingly low rates of left voting among the poor displayed in Figures 2a and 2b.[4]

Figure 3
Predicted Probability of Voting for the Left

		Church every week	Never church	Difference
Full Sample (Table 1, first column)	**Low Income**	0.34	0.69	0.35
	High income	0.29	0.52	0.23
	Difference	0.05	0.17	
PR countries only (Table 1, second column)	**Low Income**	0.26	0.68	0.42
	High income	0.20	0.47	0.27
	Difference	0.06	0.21	
Major-itarian countries only (Table 1, third column)	**Low Income**	0.59	0.69	0.10
	High income	0.50	0.61	0.11
	Difference	0.09	0.08	

There are reasons for skepticism about models that pool over such a diverse range of countries. We have conducted the same analysis for each country individually, pooling across several subsamples to ascertain whether the results vary substantially across countries. First, we are concerned that the impact of church attendance and income might vary across countries according to the historically dominant Christian denominations in our sample. We have also explored robustness checks using individual confessional indicators, but as Kahl (2007) points out, "religious behavioral requirements over time evolve into secular social values and norms" (p. 4), and so throughout the article, we are most concerned about broader cross-national differences according to denomination.

We divide our sample into countries with a historical tradition of Catholicism (France, Italy, Belgium, and Spain), Lutheranism (Denmark, Norway, and Sweden), Reformed Protestantism (United Kingdom and United States), and

the coexistence of Protestantism with an influential Catholic presence (Germany, Netherlands, and Canada). We do not have the space to show the results here, but they are quite similar within each of these groups, with the exception of the United States and the United Kingdom, where church attendance and income both have a significant impact on vote choice in the expected direction, but there is no evidence of an interactive effect.

However, this anomaly reflects a more substantial cross-country difference that leaps out when examining the country-by-country results: the interactive relationship is quite strong in all of the countries of continental Europe that used proportional representation during this period (Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Austria, Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, and Italy) and nonexistent in those using majoritarian electoral rules with small electoral districts (United States, United Kingdom, Canada, France, and Japan). The second and third columns of Figure 1 display the results of separate models that pool over only the proportional and majoritarian countries, respectively. Correspondingly, the second and third panels of Figure 3 display the predicted probabilities of left voting derived from these models. The main result is clearly driven by the proportional representation (PR) systems. In the majoritarian systems, on the other hand, low-income groups are somewhat more likely to vote for the left, but this difference is the same for religious and secular individuals. Moreover, secular individuals are a bit more likely to vote for the left, and this difference does not vary with income.

A careful exploration of this difference across institutional types is beyond the scope of this article. However, the results do hint at a proposition that we elaborate further below. Voters in systems with single-member electoral districts generally face a choice between two viable parties at the district level, and in practice, as Roemer's (1998) model assumes, the party of the economic right is often the party that appeals to more religious voters as well. In the proportional systems of continental Europe, on the other hand, a greater diversity of parties creates the possibility that a party of the economic right, for instance, can craft platforms that appeal to secular voters, or that left-wing economic platforms can be combined with platforms that appeal to religious voters. Thus, the greater differentiation in left voting by income and especially religiosity demonstrated in Figure 3 under proportional representation is likely a reflection of the differentiation in party platforms on multiple issue dimensions under proportional representation.

To see this more clearly, it is useful to move beyond the blunt dummy variable for left voting and conduct separate multinomial logit analysis for each country, where income, church attendance, and their multiplicative

interaction are the independent variables.[5] We are able to do this more successfully with the pooled Eurobarometer data than with the World Values Survey because we have many more observations for each country, reducing the problem of sparsely populated cells, especially for some of the smaller parties and in countries where relatively few people attend church. This is also a useful robustness check, because although the World Values survey allows examination of a single election in each country, the Eurobarometer provides data for all elections since 1970. We include all parties that received at least 5% of the vote over the entire period.

Figure 4 plots the predicted probabilities of voting for each party by income quartile, with separate predictions for the secular (those never attending church) and the religious (those attending church every week). The Eurobarometer only provides us with two systems using single-member districts (the United Kingdom and France), whereas the rest use proportional representation. Above all, this presentation makes it clear what is driving the results for PR systems above. In each of the PR systems, there is a Socialist, Social Democratic, or Communist party that receives little support among the religious at any income level but has strong support among the secular poor—in many cases approaching a predicted probability of .5—with this support sloping steeply downward as income increases. In other words, these parties have carved a niche among the secular poor. In several countries, among the secular, although the support for the mainstream leftist party falls with income, there are other secular parties whose support rises with income—for instance, the Liberals and Democrats '66 in the Netherlands or the Socialists People's Party in Denmark. Perhaps the most striking aspect of the graphs of PR countries (Denmark excepted) is the dominance of Christian parties among churchgoers—the predicted probabilities are .7 or greater—and the very poor performance of these parties among the secular. Moreover, in Belgium and Italy, the support for these parties of the right actually slopes downward as secular voters become wealthier.

This kind of differentiation—most notably the very different income slopes for the same party among religious versus secular individuals—is difficult to imagine in a majoritarian country such as Great Britain, where there is insufficient partisan diversity to allow the unbundling of issue dimensions. In Great Britain, the income slopes for Labour and the Conservatives are nearly identical for religious and secular individuals. The only difference is that the baseline predicted probability for the Conservatives shifts down and that for Labour shifts up, each by around 10% of the vote, when moving from religious to secular individuals. As in the model pooling over five majoritarian systems above, income and religiosity help predict voting behavior but not their multiplicative interaction.

Figure 4
Predicted Probability of Voting for Various Parties by Income and
Religiosity Based on Multinominal Logit
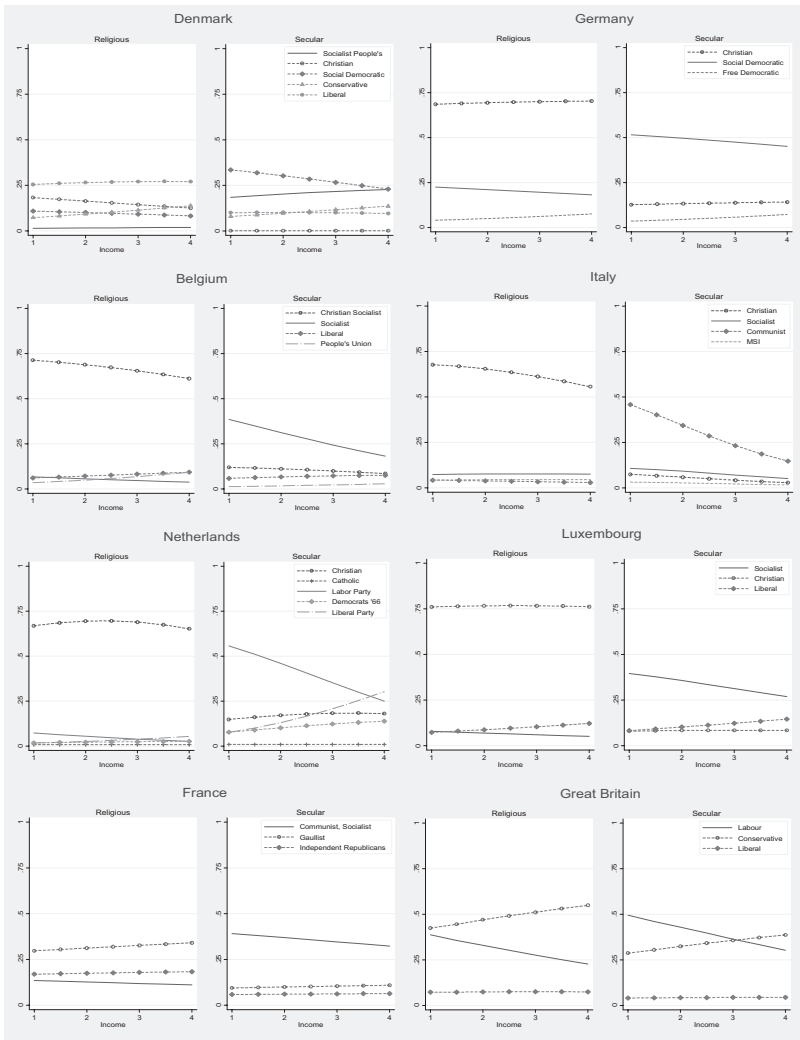
Income, Religion, and Policy Preferences

To sort through the possible explanations for the impact of religion and income on voting, it is necessary to measure individuals' policy preferences on both an economic and noneconomic issue dimension rather than assuming that religion and income are good proxies for some underlying preferences. This is a step generally not taken in the literature. Much of the comparative literature builds from a sociological tradition that sidesteps the political economy questions motivating this analysis, focusing on cleavages as defined by group membership rather than issue preferences. While making note of the stubborn impact of religious affiliation, the key preoccupation in this literature is with the decline of class voting. More recently, a great deal of attention has been given to voting based on values or issues that are thought to be replacing social class, but in nearly every study, the issues in question are a shifting menagerie of attitudes on issues as diverse as environmentalism, gender, and nuclear power, alternatively referred to as a "new politics" or "post materialism" dimension. Preferences on these issues are often combined into a single index, the impact of which is compared over time with variables capturing membership in class and religious groups (see, e.g., Dalton, 2006; Dalton, Flanagan, Beck, & Alt, 1984).[6]

Meanwhile, survey researchers in American politics, under the influence of Converse (1964) and Campbell, Miller, Converse, and Stokes (1960), have largely stayed away from the notion of issue voting altogether, opting instead for a preoccupation with partisan identification, which is thought to be more stable and coherent than issue positions. Yet a body of research including Achen (1975) and Ansolabehere, Rodden, and Snyder (2007) shows that voters' issue preferences appear to be incoherent and unstable largely because of measurement error. Correcting for measurement error by constructing issue scales from multiple survey responses yields issue scores for individuals that are as stable and coherent as party identification. Although this does not allow one to sort out the undoubtedly complex causal chain running between issue preferences, party identification, and vote choice, it allows us to shed some light on the relative impact of different issue dimensions on vote choice and contrast these impacts across different groups. Moving beyond the postmaterialism focus of most comparative survey research, our approach is to use standardized issue scales to directly contrast the impact of economic and moral values on vote choice as well as the relationship between income, religion, and issue preferences.

We use the second wave of the World Values Survey, which contains a large number of useful questions for 16 advanced industrial countries. Our

first step was to recode all policy-related attitude questions—as well as "feeling thermometers" and the like—so that answers are coded consistently on a scale from left to right. Second, we selected 8 questions that are clearly tapping into the economic–redistributive issue dimension and 17 questions that are clearly tapping into a dimension related to traditional versus progressive moral values (see Appendix).[7] We then imputed a small number of missing values and conducted factor analysis (by country), generating preference scores for each respondent. These were then standardized to have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1. Hereafter, we refer to these scores as "economic" and "moral values" issue preferences.[8] As noted above, the classic political economy literature on electoral politics and redistribution (e.g., Meltzer & Richard, 1981) assumes that there is a single issue dimension on which preferences are perfectly correlated with income (high-income individuals prefer right-wing policies). Roemer (1998) makes a similar assumption about income but envisions a second dimension with a positive but weaker correlation.

Figure 5a suggests a very different starting point for theories of redistribution. The respondent's income decile is represented on the horizontal axis, and the issue scores for the economic and moral values dimensions are displayed on the vertical axis. Using all the respondents from the advanced industrial countries contained in the World Values Survey, Figure 5a presents fitted regression lines for economic and moral values preferences using solid and dotted lines, respectively. As one would expect, wealthier individuals are more conservative on the economic dimension, but the slope is surprisingly flat. Moving all the way from the 1st to the 10th decile is associated with less than a standard deviation increase in economic conservativeness.[9] Furthermore, the moral values dimension has almost an identical slope in the opposite direction. Wealthier individuals are significantly more liberal than the poor on the moral values dimension.

Such graphs call into question the starting point of traditional political economy models of income redistribution. An individual's place in the income spectrum is a rather poor predictor of his or her preferences over redistribution.[10] Moreover, income is just as highly correlated with a noneconomic dimension, and the correlation is in the opposite direction. If the impact of income on the vote travels though preferences and voters put equal weight on both dimensions, we should expect income to have no discernable impact on the vote. However, if voters place greater weight on economic issues, we would expect to find the weak impact of income reported above.

Figure 5a
Income and Issue Preferences
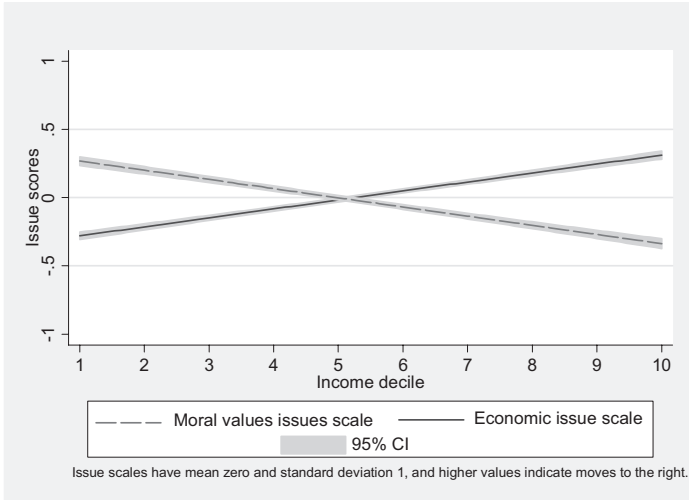
Source: World Values Survey (various years).

Figure 5b
Church Attendance and Issue Preferences
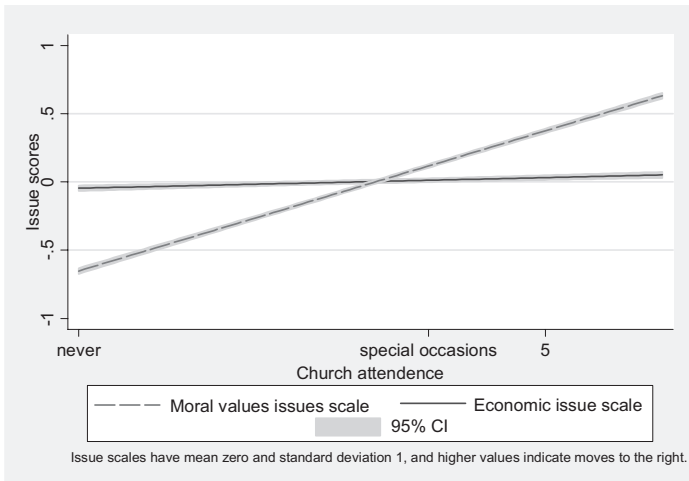
Source: World Values Survey (various years).

Figure 5b displays the relationship between church attendance and issue preferences. As one might expect, those who attend church frequently are considerably more conservative on the moral values dimension than those who do not. A move from occasional church attendance on holidays to attendance once per week is associated with an entire standard deviation increase in moral conservativeness. In contrast, greater church attendance has a miniscule, though statistically significant, impact on economic conservativeness. This graph suggests that if religion's impact on vote choices runs through preferences, the noneconomic issue dimension likely dominates, which is more consistent with the distraction arguments than the Scheve-Stasavage (2006) perspective.

We have estimated the models graphed in Figure 5a and 5b with the same control variables used in the previous section and have looked for cross-country differences. In this case, the coefficients are remarkably similar across countries. We find very little difference between countries with Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed Protestant, or mixed religious traditions.[11] And now that we are examining preferences rather than voting behavior, we see absolutely no difference between countries using majoritarian and proportional electoral rules.

Figures 5a and 5b suggest that the assumptions of Roemer (1998) may not be the best starting point for a comparative theory of religion and multidimensional politics. In each country, preferences on the two issue dimensions are uncorrelated with one another,[12] and the noneconomic dimension has the opposite correlation with income as the economic dimension. Moreover, Roemer's most interesting results rely on the median religious voter being wealthier than the rest of the population. If we use our Moral Values Issue Scale to define the noneconomic dimension in 14 out of 16 countries, the median income of moral conservatives (defined as those to the right of the mean on the Moral Values Issue Scale) is lower than the median income of moral liberals (those with preferences to the left of the mean on the Moral Values Issue Scale). Moreover, if we simply look at those with above and below average levels of church attendance, we see that the median religious voter is generally slightly poorer than or indistinguishable from the median secular voter.[13]

Now that we have some sense of how income and religious groups differ in their preferences, the next step is to examine how these preferences affect the vote. Again, we start with a binary "left vote" dependent variable and then move to multinomial logit. The advantage of the probit analysis is that it allows us to get an overall sense of the relative importance of the two issue scales in predicting the vote, whereas the advantage of multinomial logit is

that it facilitates a more nuanced look at the role of issue preferences in multiparty systems. The simplest type of probit analysis, reported in the first column of Table 2, includes the issue scales, control variables, and country dummies (not reported), and again, the standard errors are clustered by country. The fit of the model is better with the issue scales than in the models above with the income and church attendance variables, and the issue scales are good predictors of vote choice. Again, we report the dF/dx to facilitate interpretation. Moving from a country's average economic issue position (0), to a position 1 standard deviation above (more conservative than) the mean implies a 16% reduction in the probability of voting for the left. A similar move on the moral values dimension implies a 12% reduction in the probability of voting for the left. More analysis lies ahead, but once again, the standard political economy model of voting does not stand up very well. Not only does the second dimension exhibit a negative correlation with income, but it also clearly has a powerful impact on the vote.

We are concerned about possible cross-country differences and have examined country-by-country coefficients pooled by religious grouping and electoral rules. First, as in Table 1, the second and third columns of Table 2 present separate models for countries using proportional and majoritarian electoral systems. In proportional systems with a greater diversity of political parties, the coefficient for the Moral Values Issue Scale is identical to that of the Economic Issue Scale. In majoritarian countries, the coefficient for the Economic Issue Scale is more than twice that of the moral values dimension. Recall that in the analysis above, the substantive impact of church attendance was also much smaller in the majoritarian countries than in those using proportional representation.

But again, the best way to understand this is to conduct country-by-country multinomial logit of vote choice, where the independent variables are the two issue scales and the same control variables used in the models above. Instead of presenting the standardized coefficients, Figure 6 presents the change in the predicted probability of voting for each major party (represented by different numeric labels) in a given country caused by an increase of 1 standard deviation in the respective issue scales. Recall that in each country, the scales have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1. To avoid too much information on the graphs, we only include parties favored by more than 5% of the respondents. T1 refers to the Economic Issue Scale, and T2 refers to the Moral Values Issue Scale. An increase in T1 implies a move toward the economic right, and an increase in T2 implies a move toward moral conservatism. The farther away a party's label is from zero on one of the horizontal lines, the larger the change in predicted probability that a respondent votes for that party associated with a 1 standard deviation change in the Issue Scale.

Table 2
Issue Preferences and Left Voting in Industrialized Countries

	All industrialized countries		Countries with proportional electoral rules		Countries with majoritarian electoral rules		All industrialized countries		Countries with proportional electoral rules		Countries with majoritarian electoral rules	
	dF/dx	Robust Standard Error	dF/dx	Robust Standard Error	dF/dx	Robust Standard Error	dF/dx	Robust Standard Error	dF/dx	Robust Standard Error	dF/dx	Robust Standard Error
Economic Issue Scale	-0.16	0.02**	-0.16	0.02**	-0.14	0.03**						
Moral Values Issue Scale	-0.12	0.02**	-0.15	0.02**	-0.06	0.02**						
Economic Issue Scale × High Income × Frequently Attend Church							-0.13	0.03**	-0.14	0.04**	-0.14	0.04**
Economic Issue Scale × High Income × Never Attend Church							-0.22	0.04**	-0.23	0.05**	-0.19	0.05**
Economic Issue Scale × Low Income × Frequently Attend Church							-0.11	0.03**	-0.15	0.03**	-0.07	0.03*
Economic Issue Scale × Low Income × Never attend church							-0.16	0.03**	-0.16	0.04**	-0.12	0.03**
Economic Issue Scale × Residual Category							-0.16	0.02**	-0.17	0.02**	-0.14	0.02**
Moral Values Issue Scale × High Income × Frequently Attend Church							-0.16	0.03**	-0.17	0.03**	-0.14	0.06*
Moral Values Issue Scale × High Income × Never Attend Church							-0.12	0.02**	-0.14	0.02**	-0.06	0.03*
Moral Values Issue Scale × Low Income × Frequently Attend Church							-0.17	0.03**	-0.17	0.04**	-0.14	0.03**

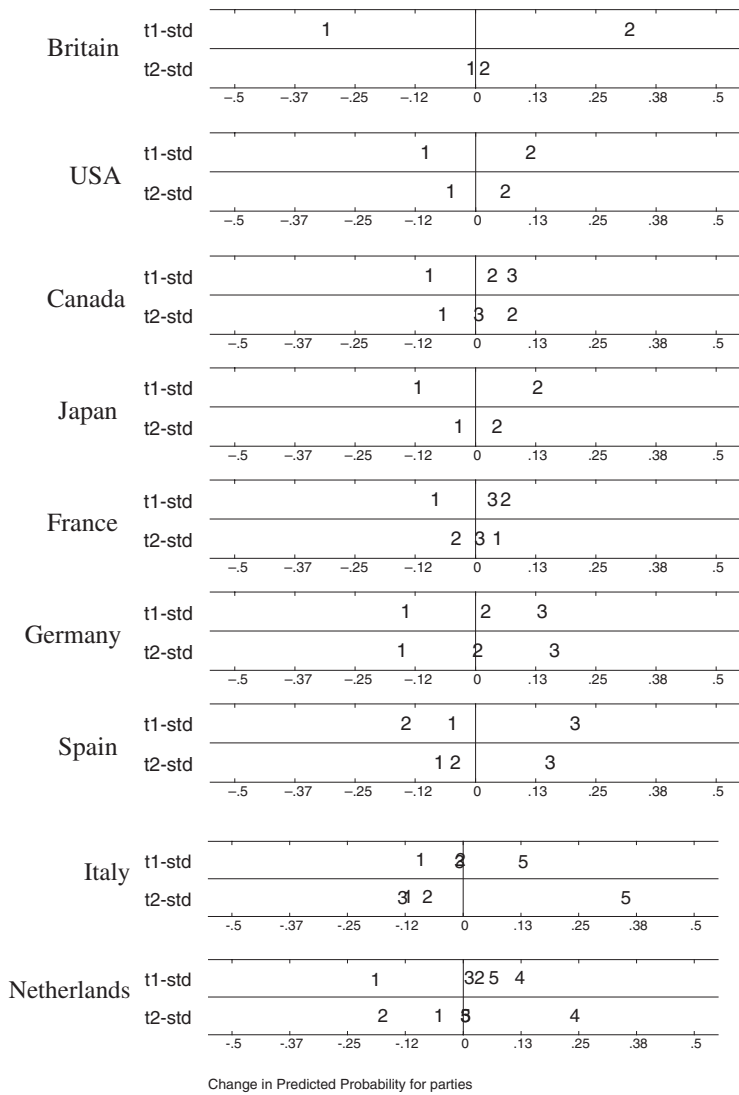*(continued)*

Table 2 (continued)

	All industrialized countries		Countries with proportional electoral rules		Countries with majoritarian electoral rules		All industrialized countries		Countries with proportional electoral rules		Countries with majoritarian electoral rules	
	dF/dx	Robust Standard Error	dF/dx	Robust Standard Error	dF/dx	Robust Standard Error	dF/dx	Robust Standard Error	dF/dx	Robust Standard Error	dF/dx	Robust Standard Error
Moral Values Issue Scale × Low Income × Never Attend Church							−0.06	0.03*	−0.08	0.04*	0.01	0.02
Moral Values Issue Scale × Residual Category							−0.11	0.02**	−0.14	0.02**	−0.06	0.02**
High Income × Frequently Attend Church							−0.04	0.03	−0.08	0.02**	0.05	0.04
High Income × Never Attend Church							−0.0003	0.01	−0.01	0.02	0.03	0.02
Low Income × Frequently Attend Church							−0.03	0.07	−0.12	0.03**	0.15	0.03**
Low Income × Never Attend Church							0.12	0.02**	0.13	0.02**	0.09	0.05
Union	0.11	0.02**	0.11	0.03**	0.09	0.04*	0.13	0.02**	0.12	0.03**	0.11	0.06
Unemployed	0.05	0.03	0.07	0.03	−0.01	0.02	0.04	0.02	0.05	0.03*	0.002	0.03
White	−0.25	0.07**			−0.25	0.10*	−0.29	0.05			−0.29	0.07**
Age 18 to 24	−0.02	0.02	−0.03	0.02	0.03	0.04	−0.02	0.02	−0.04	0.03	0.03	0.03
Age 35 to 44	−0.01	0.01	−0.02	0.01	−0.01	0.03	−0.01	0.01	−0.003	0.01	−0.01	0.03
Age 45 to 54	−0.07	0.02**	−0.08	0.02**	−0.04	0.04	−0.06	0.02**	−0.07	0.02**	−0.03	0.04
Age 55 to 64	−0.06	0.02*	−0.08	0.02**	−0.02	0.05	−0.05	0.03*	−0.05	0.03	−0.03	0.05
Age 65 plus	−0.09	0.03**	−0.10	0.03**	−0.05	0.05	−0.08	0.03	−0.09	0.03*	−0.06	0.05
Education	−0.02	0.01**	−0.02	0.01**	−0.01	0.01	−0.02	0.005**	−0.02	0.01**	−0.01	0.01
Size of city	0.01	0.004**	0.01	0.005*	0.01	0.006	0.01	0.004**	0.01	0.005*	0.01	0.004*
Observations	15,332		10,470		4,862		12,999		8,795		4,249	
Pseudo R^2	0.16		0.18		0.12		0.18		0.19		0.13	

Note: Coefficients for country dummies not reported; Standard errors clustered by country.

Source: World Values Survey (various years).

*$p < .05$. **$p < .001$.

459

Figure 6
Changes in Predicted Probabilities of Voting for Various Parties
Associated with a 1 Standard Deviation Move to the right on the
Economic Issue Scale (T1) and the Moral Values Issue Scale (T2)

Change in Predicted Probability for parties

(continued)

Figure 6 (continued)

Change in Predicted Probability for parties
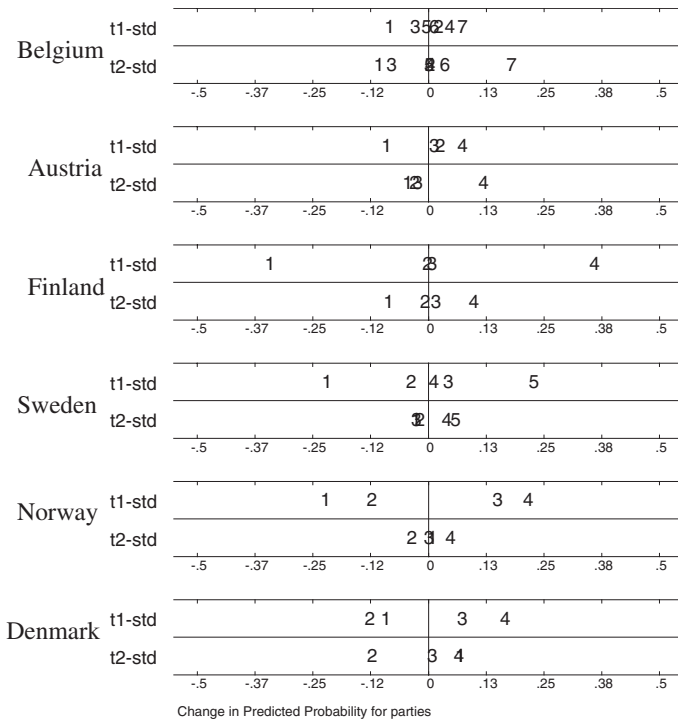
Note: The party codes are presented as they appear in the World Value Survey (1995-1997) codebook and are as follows: BRITAIN: 1-Labour, 2-Conservative; United States: 1-Democrat, 2-Republican; Canada: 1-New Democratic Party, 2-Liberal, 3-Progressive Conservative; Japan: 1-Japan Socialist, 2-Liberal Democratic; France: 1-Socialist, 2-Ecologist Movement, 3-Republican; Germany: 1-Social Democrats, 2-Free Democrats, 3-Christian Democrats; Spain: 1-United Left, 2-Socialist, 3-Popular Party; Italy: 1-Communist, 2-Socialist, 3-Green, 4-Social Democrats, 5-Christian Democrats: Netherlands: 1-Labor, 2-Democrats 66, 3-Center Democrats (Right Wing), 4-Christian Democrats, 5-Liberals; Belgium: 1-Socialist Party (Flemish), 2-Party for Freedom and Progress, 3- Ecologist (Flemish), 4-Ecologist (Walloon), 5-Socialist Party (Walloon), 6-Christian Socialist (Walloon), 7- Catholic people's party (Flemish); Austria: 1-Socialist, 2-Freedom Party, 3-Greens, 4-People's Party; Finland: 1-Social Democratic, 2-Greens, 3-Center, 4-Conservative (National Coalition); Sweden: 1-Social Democratic Labor, 2-Green, 3-People's Party, 4-Center, 5-Conservative (Moderate Coalition); Norway: 1-Labor, 2-Socialist, 3-Progressive, 4-Conservative; Denmark: 1-Social Democrats, 2-Socialist People's Party, 3-Conservative People's Party, 4-Liberal.

If parties bundle the economic and moral issues in Roemer's sense, we would expect to see that parties of the left are on the left side of 0 for both issue scales. That is, individuals with leftist preferences on both dimensions would be more likely to vote for the leftist party. In a pure two-party context, the party of the right would occupy the mirror opposite spot on the other side of 0 on both issue scales. If the economic dimension dominates in the decision-making of most voters in a two-party context, as suggested by the probit for majoritarian countries in Table 2, we would expect to see a larger gap between the left and right parties on the economic dimension—indicating a larger impact of the first dimension on vote choice. This is exactly what we see in the first group of countries in Figure 6: the United Kingdom, United States, Canada, and Japan. The impact of the first dimension is significantly larger than the impact of the second dimension, but the impact of the second dimension is also significantly different from 0. It is difficult to know what this means—it could be that parties face incentives to offer more distinctive platforms on economic policy, or it could mean that voters simply care more about economic policies. But this group of countries has one important thing in common: They have institutional environments—above all small electoral districts—that put downward pressure on the number of political parties. Looking only at Great Britain and its majoritarian, single-member-district colonies, it would be tempting to conclude that economic preferences are much better predictors of vote choice than preferences on moral values.

However, the moral values dimension begins to look more important in the remaining countries, where more permissive forms of proportional representation allow voters to choose from a wider range of parties. First, in every country that has a Christian or Christian Democratic party, the moral values dimension dominates in explaining the probability of voting for it. This is reminiscent of the religiosity effect in Figure 4. In some cases, the impact of economic preferences on the probability of voting for these parties is indistinguishable from 0. At the same time, the probability of voting for a secular party of the right is best explained by economic preferences.

Likewise, the economic dimension often dominates in explaining the votes for Social Democrats, Socialists, and Labor parties. In fact, in some cases, the impact of the second dimension is not significantly different from 0 for these parties. An exception is Germany, where the impact of the second dimension on the probability of voting for the Social Democratic Party is roughly the same as that of the first dimension. The same is true for the Flemish Socialists in Belgium. The Italian case is also interesting: The economic dimension has no impact on the probability of voting for the

Socialists (whose positions were rather arguably center–right on the economic dimension during this period), whereas it does have a larger impact for the Communists.

The center parties are also interesting. As one might expect, the impacts of both issue dimensions are smaller than for other parties (see, e.g., the Free Democrats in Germany), and they generally appear in the center of Figure 6. There are often asymmetries, though, suggesting that these parties are taking centrist positions on one dimension but attracting voters to the right (or left) of center on other dimensions. The results also suggest that there is even a class of parties for whom the predicted probability of receiving a respondent's vote goes up as the respondent becomes more economically progressive and more morally conservative (and vice versa). Such parties on both sides of the 0 point can be seen in the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria, and Denmark.[14]

Finally, one can get a rough sense of the overall importance of the two issue dimensions in different countries by observing the spread of the party codes around 0 for each dimension. The spread is clearly greater for the economic issue dimension in the majoritarian countries, even though two of them—the United States and Canada—demonstrate very high rates of church attendance. Among the multiparty PR systems, the first dimension is also clearly a better predictor of vote choice in the rather secular Lutheran countries of Northern Europe. In fact, when we pool only the Lutheran countries and estimate a simple probit model for left voting like those in Table 2, the coefficient for the Economic Issue Scale is much larger than that for the Moral Values Scale. With the exceptions of Spain, the spread around 0 is generally larger for the second dimension in the PR countries with long traditions of Catholicism. Indeed, when we pool over the Catholic countries and re-estimate the simple probit model, we find that the coefficient for the Moral Values Issue Scale is slightly larger than that for the economic dimension.

In sum, country-by-country probit analysis revealed that both of the issue scales help predict vote choice in every country analyzed here. However, voters appear to place greater weight on economic issues in countries with majoritarian electoral rules. In countries with proportional representation, voters in societies with large Catholic populations place greater weight on moral values issues.

The next step in our analysis is to ask whether the weight placed on economic versus moral issues varies with income and church attendance. A simple version of the Marxian argument states that the poor—especially the religious poor—do not pay attention to their economic preferences when

voting, whereas the wealthy ignore the moral values dimension and vote based on their (conservative) economic preferences. Because there are too few observations for many of the smaller parties and we want to facilitate interpretation of the results, we return to the simpler indicator variable for left voting and the probit analysis of Table 2, interacting the issue scales with indicators of church attendance and income. Although we can obtain similar results by interacting the issue scales with the continuous income and religion variables, the easiest way to interpret the results is to generate dummies for low (1st and 2nd decile) and high (9th and 10th decile) income, and low (*never or very rarely*) and high (*every week or more*) church attendance, and interact each of these four indicators with each of the issue scales. We also interact each issue scale with an indicator for the residual category—voters who are in the middle of the income distribution and/or demonstrate moderate levels of church attendance—in other words, all of those who are not in one of the four extreme corners of a 3×3 matrix of low, medium, and high levels of income and church attendance. The model also controls for the impact of the income and church attendance categories themselves, along with the control variables used in the other models and a matrix of country dummies. The results from a model that pools over all of the wealthy industrialized countries are presented in the fourth column of Table 2. The dF/dx for the interaction terms can be interpreted directly as the increase in the probability of voting for the left associated with a 1 standard deviation move to the right on the economic and moral values scale for each group.

The results are somewhat consistent with a version of the Marxian distraction argument. First, consider the secular wealthy, for whom the economic issues coefficient is almost twice as large as the moral values coefficient. Contrast this with the religious poor, for whom the moral values coefficient is larger than the economic issues coefficient (though the difference is not statistically significant). The impact of economic preferences on vote choice is twice as large for the secular wealthy as for the religious poor. In fact, the estimates suggest that the secular wealthy place more weight on economic preferences than any other group does. More generally, the wealthy appear to place slightly more weight on economic issues than do the poor, but this difference is marginally significant and falls away when we examine some smaller subsamples of countries. However, religiosity appears to make a bigger difference that is quite robust across specifications: Those who do not attend church place greater weight on economic issues and less weight on moral issues than those who do. It is particularly striking to note the impact of the issue scales on vote choice among the secular

poor. Although they are not noticeably different from other groups on the coefficient for their economic preferences, the coefficient on the Moral Values Issue Scale is quite small relative to other groups.

We have also conducted separate analysis according to religious tradition and electoral rules, and the latter are presented in the last two columns of Table 2. The basic intergroup comparisons described in the paragraph above hold for both the PR and majoritarian countries. The main difference is that, as described above, the impact of the moral values dimension is smaller overall than in the proportional representation countries. The basic pattern of intergroup differences also does not change when we estimate separate models for each religious grouping.[15]

Although some of these intergroup differences in weights are not necessarily large, to understand the implications for voting, it is necessary to multiply these weights by the intergroup differences in means hinted at by Figures 5a and 5b. The next step in our analysis is to estimate how much of the differences in voting behavior across the rows and columns of the 2×2 matrix of income and church attendance presented in Figure 3 can be explained with issue preferences and compare the explanatory power of the two issue dimensions in accounting for these intergroup differences. In Figure 7, we simply multiply the mean issue preference for each group by the coefficient for that group from Table 2. These products are presented in italics. We also present in bold the difference between these products for each group and issue dimension, which can be interpreted as the intergroup difference predicted by the model for each issue dimension. In the far-right column and bottom row, we report the raw intergroup differences in left voting. By looking at the last two columns and last three rows, one can get a sense for the extent to which issue preferences account for intergroup differences in voting.

Starting at the bottom left, first let us consider the (statistically insignificant) five percentage point gap in left voting between rich and poor religious people. The model suggests that religious people are pulled in two directions. Relative to the religious wealthy, differences in preferences on the economic dimension do push the religious poor toward a greater likelihood of voting for the left. The predicted difference is around 4%. However, the relative moral conservativeness of the religious poor creates an offsetting push away from the left. Next, consider the significant 15-point gap between rich and poor secular respondents. Much of it (9 points) would seem to be accounted for by the relatively leftist preferences of the poor on the economic dimension. When we combine differences in preferences with the weights on those preferences, we see that the economic issue dimension drives a slightly larger wedge between the rich and the poor among the secular than it does among

Figure 7
Using Issue Preferences to Account for Cross-Group
Differences in Voting Behavior

		Church every week	Never church	Difference predicted by the model	Actual difference in left voting between groups
Low income	Economic	0.013	0.047	**0.034**	0.34
	Moral	-0.162	0.022	**0.184**	
High income	Economic	-0.027	-0.044	**-0.017**	0.24
	Moral	-0.092	0.083	**0.175**	
Difference predicted by the model	Economic	**0.041**	**0.091**		
	Moral	**-0.070**	**-0.061**		
Actual difference in left voting between groups		0.05	0.15		

the religious. However, the relative moral progressiveness of the wealthy actually pushes them toward the left even among the secular.

Once we combine the conditional coefficients with the mean differences, in our sample there is no overwhelming evidence for the type of argument laid out by Thomas Frank (2004) in *What's the Matter with Kansas?* That is, we see no striking asymmetry by which the poor alone are distracted by moral values. Although preferences on the moral values dimension do push the religious—especially the religious poor—strongly to the right, they also create a strong push to the left among the secular rich—in fact, a stronger push than that of the secular poor. For the secular poor and the religious wealthy, both issue dimensions push in the same direction. The conflicted voters are the religious poor and the secular wealthy, where the signs for the two issue scales are in opposite directions. If anything, one might argue that moral values pull the religious poor a bit further from "voting their economic preferences" than they do the secular wealthy, but this difference is rather small and does not hold up in some subgroups of countries.

Next, let us consider the much more substantial differences between secular and religious respondents: 34 percentage points separate the poor, and 24 percentage points separate the wealthy. Perhaps it is not surprising that a very large portion of these differences (around 18% in both cases) can be

explained by the relative moral conservativeness of churchgoers. The impact of the economic issue dimension is minimal by comparison. It does not shed any light on the differences separating religious and secular wealthy people. There is, however, a faint hint of the Scheve-Stasavage (2006) effect among the poor, for whom the economic issue dimension pushes churchgoers gently to the right. However, this difference is quite fragile and falls apart in several of the countries.

We conducted the same exercise for both proportional representation and majoritarian systems, as well as for each religious grouping. We do not have the space to report all of the results, but in spite of some of the cross-country differences highlighted above, the predicted intergroup differences are remarkably similar across countries. In every case, for both the secular and the religious alike, the cross-cutting cleavage depicted in Figure 5a translates into a situation where relative to the rich, the poor are pulled toward the parties of the left by their economic preferences but toward the right by their moral values preferences. Only among the secular do the economic preferences win out, and not by much. And in every country, the difference between churchgoers and nonchurchgoers is driven almost exclusively by moral values preferences. The only noteworthy difference is that, in keeping with the much greater differences between religious and secular voters in proportional than in majoritarian systems (see Figure 3), the moral values dimension predicts a somewhat sharper distinction between these groups in proportional than in majoritarian systems.

In sum, the issue scales may tell an interesting story about the rather weak correlation between income and vote choice depicted in Figures 1 and 2, because the two issue dimensions pull both rich and poor voters in opposite directions. Moreover, in every country, it is primarily the moral values dimension rather than the economic dimension that pulls religious voters away from the left.

However, it should be stressed that the issue scales do not completely explain intergroup differences. On the contrary, there is a difference between the voting behaviors of the rich and the poor that cannot be attributed to issue preferences, which after all largely cancel one another out. Moreover, there is still a substantial difference between churchgoers and nonchurchgoers that cannot be accounted for with the issue scales, especially among the poor. Our more disaggregated analyses reveal that the Moral Values Issue Scale does in fact account for most of the intergroup differences among the majoritarian systems and the protestant PR countries, but a larger gap opens up for the Catholic and mixed countries, perhaps indicating that voting for religious parties has to do with something beyond issue preferences in these countries.

Implications

This article was motivated in part by what Peter Lindert (2004) called "the Robin Hood paradox": the fact that democracies with highly unequal income distributions conduct less redistribution than would be expected from a simple median voter model. Another motivation is an intriguing negative cross-country correlation between religiosity and redistribution. Setting aside some of the many plausible explanations, we have used issue scales drawn from cross-national survey data to address variants of the Marxian argument that religion undermines the natural relationship between income and voting, either by altering preferences over redistribution or by creating a second issue dimension that distracts the poor from their material interests. Although we stop far short of offering a new model of redistribution, our results suggest assumptions and approaches that might be fruitful.

First of all, Aristotle's intuitive assumption about income, preferences, and voting does not fit as comfortably with individual-level data as one might expect, and the micro foundations for workhorse models in political economy are surprisingly weak. Although the correlations are in the expected direction, poor people vote for parties of the right in surprisingly large numbers, and many of them have rather conservative preferences on economic issues. Likewise, large numbers of very wealthy individuals vote for the left and have left-wing preferences on economic issues.

Second, the main contribution of the article is to show that there is a second moral values issue dimension with an equal and opposite income correlation as the economic dimension, and in many countries—especially those with proportional electoral systems and large Catholic populations—this dimension has at least as large an impact on vote choice as the economic dimension. Although the relative impact of issue preferences on voting behavior varies considerably across countries, when we put together differences in preferences across groups and the conditional coefficients for those groups from voting equations, we end up with predicted intergroup differences that are quite stable in a wide variety of industrialized countries. Instead of the unambiguous affinity for right-wing parties that one might expect from higher income groups, we see that they are pulled in opposite directions by their preferences on moral and economic issues. The same is true of low-income voters, whose natural affinity for the left is partially undone by their preferences on the moral values issue. This helps explain why the impact of income on voting is so tenuous, especially among the religious.

Third, we are able to provide evidence in a debate about why it is that religious voters are so much less likely to vote for the left than secular voters. In most of the industrialized countries we analyzed, the difference between the voting behavior of secular and religious individuals can be attributed to large differences in preferences on the moral values issue dimension, and little, if any, of the difference can be attributed to differences in preferences on economic issues.

There is considerable evidence that theorists such as Roemer (1998) are on the right track by trying to model the tax transfers system as a policy that emerges from the platforms of parties competing in a two-dimensional issue space where a salient moral values or religious dimension has potential to interfere with the equilibrium position on the economic dimension. The biggest disadvantage of the rather atheoretical exercise conducted in this article is that we have treated party platforms as a black box. For instance, if preferences on one dimension do a better job predicting voting behavior than those on another, we do not know whether this is because voters do not care about that second dimension or because the parties' platforms are far apart on the first dimension and have converged to the point where the vote is a coin flip on the second dimension. For this reason, the cross-national differences implied by our results should be viewed with caution. Preferences of voters in multiple dimensions must be linked up, both theoretically and empirically, with platform choices of politicians.

However, some of our within-country results are quite robust, and they suggest a revised starting point for such a model. Although Roemer (1998) assumes that preferences on the two dimensions are positively correlated with income, in every single one of our countries, the issue scales had opposite correlations with income, and they never exhibited a positive correlation with one another. Moreover, the United States is a curious outlier with its positive correlation between income and religiosity.

Perhaps even more important, our findings suggest that such models pay greater attention to incentives created by electoral institutions. Roemer's (1998) model assumes a strict, American-style, two-party system that is extremely rare in practice.[16] Poor, morally conservative (or xenophobic) voters are forced to make a choice between their economic and moral (immigration) preferences. Yet if there are low entry costs for parties in the presence of these two salient dimensions, it is easy to envision a model of party formation and platform choice where as long as there are more than two parties, economic and noneconomic issues need not be bundled together by the parties, and there will be hybrid parties that take liberal positions on the economic dimension and conservative positions on the moral values dimension and vice versa.[17]

In the United States, the Republicans adopt positions to the right of the Democrats on both issue dimensions, and voters with morally liberal but economically conservative preferences (or vice versa) are forced to choose which preference dimension is more important to them. But faced with the menu of choices available in the Netherlands, Germany, and the Scandinavian countries, for example, voters need not choose one preference dimension on which to base their vote. Our data analysis reveals that liberal parties sometimes offer a choice for morally moderate but economically conservative voters, and Christian democratic parties appeal to voters with right-leaning preferences on moral issues but relatively centrist preferences on economic issues.

In spite of all the talk about a culture war, this study shows that economic preferences are far better predictors of vote choice in the United States than moral values preferences (see Ansolabehere, Rodden, & Snyder, 2006). Yet the opposite seems to be true in several relatively religious European countries with multiparty systems. Our analysis does not allow us to draw conclusions, but perhaps this is because the electoral system creates incentives for parties to carve out hybrid platforms that absolve conflicted voters of the need to suppress their preferences on the less salient dimension. The literature offers no theory about why the economic dimension would be a better predictor of vote choice in countries where barriers to partisan entry generate "forced choice" (Huber & Stanig, 2007), but the evidence presented above for the United Kingdom, United States, Canada, Japan, and France suggest that this is the case. This is an interesting avenue for further inquiry. In fact, given that the two issue dimensions are uncorrelated in all of the countries studied here, the literature still needs to explain why parties should be forced to bundle moral and economic issues at all, even when there are strong barriers to entry for political parties.

All of this might have implications for the next generation of theories of redistribution. If proportional representation absolves parties of the need to bundle economic and noneconomic issues together, it is not clear why a salient moral values (or immigration or European Union) dimension should suppress redistribution. Something like Roemer's distraction logic seems most plausible in countries such as the United States, Canada, and Australia, where moral values are highly salient for a segment of the population and where single-member districts hold down the number of parties and encourage them to bundle issues. Perhaps multidimensional politics have something to do with the fact that countries with majoritarian electoral rules appear to have smaller welfare states (see, e.g., Persson & Tabellini, 2003).

In conclusion, although our findings shed light on some very old questions about income, religion, and issue voting, we hope they will be most useful as building blocks for further theoretical and empirical work on redistribution.

Appendix
Questions Used in Factor Analysis for Construction of Issue Scales

Economic Scale:

V86. Imagine two secretaries, of the same age, doing practically the same job. One finds out that the other earns considerably more than she does. The better paid secretary, however, is quicker, more efficient, and more reliable at her job. In your opinion, is it fair or not fair that one secretary is paid more than the other?

1. Fair
2. Not fair
3. Don't know

V87. There is a lot of discussion about how business and industry should be managed.

Which of these four statements comes closest to your opinion?

1. The employees should own the business and should select the managers.
2. The owners and the employees should participate in the selection of managers.
3. The government should be the owner and appoint the managers.
4. The owners should run their business or appoint the managers.

Now I'd like you to tell me your views on various issues. How would you place your views on this scale? 1 means you agree completely with the statement on the left; 10 means you agree completely with the statement on the right; and if your views fall somewhere in between, you can choose any number in between.

V125. Incomes should be made more equal.	We need larger income differences as incentives for individual effort.
V126. Private ownership of business and industry should be increased.	Government ownership of business and industry should be increased.
V127. The government should ensure that everyone is provided for.	People should take more take more responsibility to provide for themselves.
V128. Competition is good. It stimulates people to work hard and develop new ideas.	Competition is harmful. It brings out the worst in people.

(continued)

Appendix (continued)

I am going to name a number of organizations. For each one, could you tell me how much confidence you have in them: Is it a great deal of confidence, quite a lot of confidence, not very much confidence or none at all?

	Great	Quite	Not Very	Not at all	Don't Know
V140. Labor unions					
V146. Major companies	1	2	3	4	9

Moral Values Scale:

Here is a list of qualities that children can be encouraged to learn at home. Which, if any, do you consider to be especially important? Please choose up to five.

V22. Religious faith	Mentioned 1	Not Mentioned 2

On this list are various groups of people. Could you please sort out any that you would not like to have as neighbors?

V60. Homosexuals	Mentioned 1	Not Mentioned 2

V61. When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women?

Agree	Neither	Disagree
1	2	3

V92. If someone says a child needs a home with both a father and a mother to grow up happily, would you tend to agree or disagree?

1. Tend to agree   2. Tend to disagree

V93. Do you think that a woman has to have children in order to be fulfilled or is this not necessary?

1. Needs children   2. Not necessary

V94. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "Marriage is an out-dated institution"

1. Agree   2. Disagree

V95. If someone said that individuals should have the chance to enjoy complete sexual freedom without being restricted, would you tend to agree or disagree?

1. Tend to agree   2. Neither/it depends   3. Tend to disagree

V96. If a woman wants to have a child as a single parent but she doesn't want to have a stable relationship with a man, do you approve or disapprove?

1. Approve   2. Depends   3. Disapprove

People talk about the changing roles of men and women today. For each of the following statements I read out, can you tell me how much you agree with each. Do you agree strongly, agree, disagree, or disagree strongly?

(continued)

Appendix (continued)

V98. A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work.

V99. Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay.

I am going to name a number of organizations. For each one, could you tell me how much confidence you have in them: Is it a great deal of confidence, quite a lot of confidence, not very much confidence or none at all?

V135. The churches

V167. I'd like to ask you about some groups that some people feel are threatening to the social and political order in this society. Would you please select from the following list the one group or organization that you like least?

5. Homosexuals   Mentioned 1   Not Mentioned 2

V178. Here are two statements that people sometimes make when discussing good and evil. Which one comes closest to your own point of view?

A. There are absolutely clear guidelines about what is good and evil. These always apply to everyone, whatever the circumstances.

B. There can never be absolutely clear guidelines about what is good and evil. What is good and evil depends entirely on the circumstances at the time.

1. Agree with statement A   0. otherwise

Please tell me for each of the following statements whether you think it can always be justified, never be justified, or something in between, using this card.

V197. Homosexuality   Never   Justifiable   Always justifiable
V198. Prostitution   1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 / 7 / 8 / 9 / 10
V200. Divorce
V201. Euthanasia—ending the life of the incurably sick
V202. Suicide

Notes

1. Although casting doubt on the median voter mechanism, unlike scores of previous studies, Milanovic (2000) finds a positive cross-country relationship between initial inequality in factor income and redistribution through cash transfers, but this is largely driven by pensions that are best understood as deferred income.

2. Both surveys ask respondents which party they would vote for if a national election were held tomorrow.

3. We replicated these graphs using the Eurobarometer (various years) Trends data set to increase our number of years—though sacrificing some comparability on the income variable—and found a very similar pattern.

4. Given the shape of Figure 2, we have also estimated models that allow the impact of income to be nonlinear, but the substantive interpretation of such models is nearly identical to that in Figure 3.

5. We also include year dummies for each election. Unfortunately, the coverage of the demographic control variables varies greatly across countries and elections, so we do not include them in the models. However, including the available control variables on a country-by-country basis does not alter the results. Note that dropping the control variables also does not have any impact on the results in the World Values Survey (various years) analysis.

6. Also see Kitschelt (1994), who proposes a "libertarian versus communitarian" dimension in Europe.

7. Unfortunately, some good questions (e.g., on abortion) were inconsistent or contained missing values. Our inclusion of questions was primarily driven by consistency and completeness of coverage. One of the advantages of our approach is that the inclusion or exclusion of specific questions has nearly no impact on the results. Of course measurement error is a greater concern for the economic than the moral values dimension because the former includes 8 questions and the latter 17. However, Ansolabehere, Rodden, and Snyder (2007) show that the difference in measurement error between 8 and 17 questions is trivial.

8. We also conducted exploratory factor analysis for each country, including nearly all policy-relevant opinion or attitude questions in the World Values Survey (various years), and discovered that an economic and moral values dimension emerged as the first and second dimension in nearly every country. We have also constructed various postmaterialism scores based on the prevailing literature and find that these are far less powerful than our moral values dimension in vote equations in every country, and they are often statistically insignificant. We know of no other study that directly contrasts the impact of a "moral values" versus "new politics" cleavage. It appears that the second dimension in most wealthy countries is not new at all, and the description of Lipset and Rokkan (1967) of a "cosmopolitan" versus "traditionalist" cleavage is as apt today as it was then.

9. Note that there is no evidence of the type of nonlinearity seen in the boxplots of income and voting behavior.

10. For those who are skeptical about issue scales, consider a single question with response ranging from 1 = *incomes should be made more equal* to 10 = *income inequality should be maintained as incentive for hard work*. Moving all the way from the 1st to the 10th income decile is associated with a move of fewer than 2 points to the right in preferences over redistribution.

11. Specifically, the correlation between income and economic preferences is slightly smaller in the Lutheran countries than elsewhere, and in the reformed Protestant countries, the relationship between church attendance and economic preferences loses significance, whereas that between income and moral values preferences is slightly stronger than elsewhere.

12. In no country does the correlation exceed .12.

13. There are four exceptions in which religious respondents were slightly wealthier than the secular: France, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United States. On the correlation between income and church attendance in the United States, see Gruber (2006).

14. This is also true of majoritarian France, though it should be noted that survey respondents were not primed with any differentiation between parliamentary and first-round or second-round presidential elections. The first round of French presidential elections generates strong competition from multiple parties, creating conditions that facilitate hybrid platforms. In the 1990s, it appears that the Socialists were attracting votes of economic leftists and those with center–right preferences on the moral values dimension.

15. The only exception is that in the Lutheran and Catholic countries, the difference between religious and secular groups on the economic dimension loses significance.

16. Recent work (Roemer & Van der Straeten, 2004) extends to three parties, but the basic logic is the same as the two-party model.

17. See Schofield and Sened (2002) for a model of this type.

References

Acemoglu, D., & Robinson, J. A. (2006). *Economic origins of dictatorship and democracy*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Achen, C. H. (1975). Mass political attitudes and the survey response. *The American Political Science Review*, *69*, 1218-1231.

Ansolabehere, S., Rodden, J., & Snyder, J. M., Jr. (2006). Purple America. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, *20*(2), 97-118.

Ansolabehere, S., Rodden, J., & Snyder, J. M., Jr. (2007). *Issue voting and measurement error*. Unpublished paper, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Aristotle. (1992). *The politics* (T. A. Sinclair, Trans.). London: Penguin Books.

Boix, C. (2003). *Democracy and redistribution*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Brooks, D. (2001, December). One nation, slightly divisible. *Atlantic Monthly*, *288*(5), 53-65.

Campbell, A., Miller, W., Converse, P., & Stokes, D. (1960). *The American voter*. New York: John Wiley.

Converse, P. (1964). The nature of belief systems in mass publics. In D. Apter (Ed.), *Ideology and discontent* (pp. 206-261). New York: Free Press.

Dalton, R. J. (2006). *Citizen politics: Public opinion and political parties in advanced industrial democracies*. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press.

Dalton, R. J., Flanagan, S. C., Beck, P. A., & Alt, J. (1984). *Electoral change in advanced industrial democracies: Realignment or dealignment?* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Downs, A. (1957). *An economic theory of democracy*. New York: HarperCollins.

Frank, T. (2004). *What's the matter with Kansas? How conservatives won the heart of America*. New York: Metropolitan Books.

Eurobarometer. (various years). *Eurobarometer survey*. Retrieved February 6, 2008, from http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/cocoon/ICPSR/SERIES/00026.xml

Gill, A., & Lundsgaarde, E. (2004). State welfare spending and religiosity: A cross-national analysis. *Rationality and Society, 16*(4), 399-436.

Gruber, J. (2006). *Religious market structure, religious participation, and outcomes: Is religion good for you?* (Working Paper No. 11377). Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.

Huber, J., & Stanig, P. (2007). *Why do the poor support right-wing parties? A cross-national analysis*. Unpublished paper, Columbia University, New York.

Kahl, S. (2007, October). *Saving the poor: How religion shapes welfare-to-work policy in Europe and the United States*. Paper presented at the Comparative Politics Workshop, Yale University, New Haven, CT.

Kitschelt, H. (1994). *The transformation of European social democracy*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Meltzer, H. A., & Richard, S. (1981). A rational theory of the size of government. *Journal of Political Economy*, *89*(5), 914-927.

Milanovic, B. (2000). The median-voter hypothesis, income inequality, and income redistribution: An empirical test with the required data. *European Journal of Political Economy, 16*, 367-410.

Lee, W., & Roemer, J. (2005). *Values and politics in the U.S.: An equilibrium analysis of the 2004 election* (Working Paper 2005-08). University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Department of Economics.

Lijphart, A. (1971). Class voting and religious voting in the European democracies: A preliminary report. *Acta Politica, 6*, 158-171.

Lindert, P. (2004). *Growing public: Social spending and economic growth since the eighteenth century*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Lipset, S. M., & Rokkan, S. (1967). *Party systems and voter alignments: Cross-national perspectives*. New York: Free Press.

Marx, Karl. (1970). *Critique of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Right'* (A. Jolin & J. O'Malley, Trans.). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Persson, T., & Tabellini, G. E. (2003). *The economic effects of constitutions*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Roemer, J. (1998). Why the poor do not expropriate the rich: An old argument in new garb. *Journal of Public Economics, 70*, 399-424.

Roemer, J., & Van der Straeten, K. (2004). *The political economy of xenophobia and distribution: The case of Denmark*. Unpublished paper, Yale University, New Haven, CT.

Romer, T. (1975). Individual welfare, majority voting, and the properties of a linear income tax. *Journal of Public Economics, 4*,163-185.

Scheve, K., & Stasavage, D. (2006). Religion and preferences for social insurance. *Quarterly Journal of Political Science, 1*(3), 255-286.

Schofield, N., & Sened, I. (2002). Local Nash equilibrium in multiparty politics. *Annals of Operations Research, 109*, 193-211.

Tversky, A., & Kahneman, D. (1991). Loss aversion in riskless choice: A reference-dependent model. *Quarterly Journal of Economics, 104*(4), 1039-1061.

World Values Survey. (various years). *World Values Survey*. Retrieved February 6, 2008, from http://www.worldvaluessurvey.com/

Ana L. De La O is an assistant professor of political science at Yale University. Her current research interests include politics of poverty alleviation, public goods provision, and clientelism, as well as the causes and consequences of electoral institutions.

Jonathan A. Rodden is an associate professor of political science at Stanford University. His current research interests include federalism, fiscal and political decentralization, political geography, and the origins and impacts of electoral institutions. He recently published a book titled *Hamilton's Paradox: The Promise and Peril of Fiscal Federalism* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), which was awarded the Gregory Leubbert Prize for best book in comparative politics. He is currently working on a series of articles and a book project exploring the interaction of economic and political geography with electoral institutions.