Religion, Sexuality Politics, and the Transformation of Latin American Electorates*

Amy Erica Smith[†]and Taylor C. Boas[‡]

August 23, 2020

Abstract

Right-wing candidates have rallied against same-sex marriage, abortion, and "gender ideology" in several recent Latin American elections, drawing strong support from socially conservative voters. Yet in other parts of the region, these issues are largely irrelevant to voting decisions. Drawing on theories explaining partisan shifts in the United States, we argue that elite debates on sexuality politics create conditions for electoral realignment in Latin America. When politicians take polarized positions on newly salient "culture war" issues, masses shift their voting behavior. Using a conjoint experiment in Brazil, Chile, and Peru and region-wide multilevel analysis of the AmericasBarometer and Latinobarómetro, we demonstrate that the rising salience of sexuality politics creates new electoral cleavages in terms of issue attitudes and religion. Whereas scholarship in the United States posits the centrality of partisanship, our findings indicate that sexuality politics prompts realignments even in weak party systems.

1 Introduction

In January 2018, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights ruled that Costa Rica was obligated to legalize same-sex marriage, immediately transforming the dynamics of the country's ongoing presidential election campaign. While most candidates equivocated in their response to the Court's ruling, the two who staked out the clearest positions for and against same-sex marriage, former cabinet minister Carlos Alvarado and opposition deputy Fabricio Alvarado, went from single-digit standings to become the top two finishers in the first-round vote (Zúñiga Ramírez, 2018). Views on sexuality politics emerged as a major electoral cleavage. In a post-electoral survey that inquired about the reasons for one's presidential vote, the biggest gap between supporters of the two candidates was in the percentage who voted "to defend the traditional values of Costa Rica": 54% for Fabricio Alvarado and 9% for Carlos Alvarado (Alfaro Redondo et al., 2018).

Religion also played new roles in the election. Nine days after the court ruling, the Catholic Bishops Conference of Costa Rica and the Costa Rican Evangelical Alliance Federation issued a joint statement supporting "the family founded on the marriage between a man and a woman" and calling on citizens to meditate on their presidential votes before God (Arroyo, 2018). Such stances might have pushed both conservative Catholics and evangelicals into the arms of Fabricio Alvarado, an evangelical pastor. However, in the second round campaign, media attention to ostensibly anti-Catholic statements from an evangelical ally of Fabricio Alvarado inhibited an inter-religious alliance (Alfaro Redondo et al., 2018). On election day, religious affiliations and attitudes were among the strongest correlates of vote choice: Catholics comprised 60% of voters for Carlos Alvarado, but only 30% of those supporting Fabricio Alvarado.

The example of Costa Rica's 2018 election raises an important general question: how and when do new electoral cleavages emerge in developing democracies, and why do we see

them in some places but not others? Throughout Latin America, issues such as same-sex marriage, abortion, and the treatment of gender and sexuality in public school curricula are transforming political battles between left and right in a way that seemed unthinkable just a decade ago. Simultaneously, electoral gaps have emerged between religious groups, sometimes between evangelicals and Catholics and sometimes along religious-secular lines. Yet these changes are not uniform across the region, nor have they proceeded gradually over time in a pattern that might be attributable to demographic changes such as the growth of evangelicalism or the religiously unaffiliated. Some countries have largely avoided religious cleavages and battles over sexuality politics, with electoral competition still centering on traditional materialist issues such as redistribution or law and order. In others, like Costa Rica, new cleavages seem to burst onto the scene in a spectacular, discontinuous fashion.

We argue that the emergence of new cleavages around sexuality politics and religion are attributable not to gradual demographic changes like the growth of evangelicalism or human development and post-modernization (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005) but rather to the specific actions of political elites, often in alliance with progressive social movements beyond median public opinion. Sometimes issues of sexuality and the family are thrust onto the political agenda as the result of a prominent judicial decision, such as the Colombian Supreme Court's legalization of same-sex marriage in 2013 or the IACHR decision bearing on Costa Rica in 2018. In other instances, these issues arise thanks to alliances between social movements and legislators, as with Mexico City's decriminalization of abortion in 2007 or the attempt to do so in Argentina in 2018 (Daby and Moseley, Forthcoming). Once elites and movements have placed these issues on the agenda, the public responds, and vote choice becomes tied to attitudes on sexuality politics (e.g., Rennó, 2020). Religion enters the story not only because it affects issue attitudes but also because it influences vote choice in myriad other ways, such as discussion within congregations and political messages from the pulpit. Because different sexuality politics issues are salient in different religious communities, voters

sometimes realign along a Christian–secular cleavage, while at other times they realign along an evangelical–Catholic one.

Our analysis draws on multiple data sources and methodologies: a conjoint survey experiment in Brazil, Chile, and Peru; panel data on newspaper coverage of same-sex marriage and abortion across the region; and multi-level analysis of seven waves of the AmericasBarometer and Latinobarómetro surveys between 2004 and 2019. First, we show that when the issue stances of hypothetical candidates are experimentally manipulated, voter-candidate agreement on abortion policy has a comparable or greater effect on vote intention than agreement on crime policy or the role of the state in the economy. Next, we show that as newspaper coverage of abortion or same-sex marriage/civil unions increases, typically in response to a legislative proposal or judicial decision, issue attitudes and religion or religiosity become more predictive of left-right voting decisions.

Our findings contrast with and help explain prior work on this topic, which has generally found that positions on sexuality politics weakly predict voting behavior in Latin America (Carlin, Singer and Zechmeister, 2015a; Zechmeister and Corral, 2013) and that religion's correlation with vote choice varies from one election to another (Boas and Smith, 2015). We show that Latin American voters' stances on sexuality politics do sometimes have a large effect on their voting behavior, but only under certain conditions: when candidates stake out opposing positions and when heightened media coverage makes these issues salient. Similarly, religious citizens become religious conservatives at the ballot box when sexuality politics issues arrive on the agenda. Thus, sexuality politics debates at the elite level catalyze the growth of the new religious right.

Our arguments also speak to a large literature explaining political polarization in the United States. Scholars show that American polarization on culture war issues began among political, religious, and social movement elites before subsequently spreading to the masses. We argue that the process by which Latin American electorates sort themselves according

3

to sexuality politics attitudes and religion resembles patterns found in the US. However, there is a key difference in culture war polarization between the two regions. In the US, strong partisanship in the context of the two-party system is a glue that helps bind together attitudes on sexuality politics and religion. In Latin America, by contrast, sorting of the electorate has occurred despite low levels of mass partisanship and multiparty systems. Thus, our research suggests that the rise of sexuality politics issues on the policy agenda can lead to electoral realignments even in the absence of strong partisan social identities.

2   Theory

What explains the growing importance of sexuality politics issues and religion in some Latin American elections? One prominent hypothesis is that the explosive growth of evangelicalism and Pentecostalism is driving these changes (Corrales, 2017, 2020; Costa, Marcantonio Junior and Castro, 2018). Superficially, the hypothesis is plausible. First, the timing seems right: the percentage of Latin Americans adhering to evangelicalism and Pentecostalism has grown five-fold since 1970 (Pew Research Center, 2014), coinciding with the rise of sexuality politics issues on political agendas. Second, like their counterparts around the world, Latin America's evangelicals and Pentecostals adopt conservative stances in theological terms, adhering to strict doctrinal interpretations that would seem to dovetail with conservative politics (Robbins, 2004). Third, the obvious but often implicit analogy to evangelicalism and Pentecostalism in the United States primes many observers to expect a natural linkage between these religious traditions and culture war politics. Finally, there is evidence of a similar relationship in Sub-Saharan Africa, where the growth of Pentecostalism and charismatic Christianity has boosted the salience of LGTBQ policy issues in many countries (Grossman, 2015).

On further scrutiny, though, the hypothesis starts to look less plausible. Prior to the

4

2000s, the growth of evangelicalism and Pentecostalism did not automatically translate into right-wing voting or produce a broader societal cleavage over sexuality politics. Evangelicals and Pentecostals have played a prominent role in the electoral politics of some Latin American countries since the 1980s (Freston, 2008), yet a review found little evidence of a consistent linkage between evangelicalism and the ideology of vote choice as recently as 2012 (Boas and Smith, 2015). Social forces in evangelical churches may tend to induce cohesion in vote choice, in both Latin America and the United States (Smith, 2019; Wald, Owen and Hill, 1990), but those choices have not been uniformly rightist in Latin America. The same is true of issue attitudes. Latin American evangelicals and Pentecostals have tended to take substantially more liberal positions than their American counterparts on many policy issues, ranging from social welfare to the environment (McAdams and Lance, 2013; Smith and Veldman, 2020). Those relatively progressive political stances may, in part, find their roots in the historically lower- and working-class constituency of evangelicalism and Pentecostalism in Latin America (Martin, 1990; Smilde, 2007). The broader comparative literature also suggests that analogies to the United States may be misleading; U.S. evangelicals are substantially more politically conservative even than their counterparts in other wealthy English-speaking democracies (Bean, 2014; Malloy, 2017).

A second hypothesis relates to human development and modernization. While classic modernization theory believed that economic and social development would bring about a "death of religion" (Norris and Inglehart, 2011, p.3), more recent "post-modernization" arguments envision growing culture war conflict, as a secular push for progressive policies on sexuality and the family prompts a backlash from the remaining social and religious conservatives (Gaskins, Golder and Siegel, 2013; Inglehart and Welzel, 2005). As a consequence, scholars predict that human development will widen cleavages between religious conservatives and secular voters and intensify battles over sexuality politics issues. The human development perspective would argue that the growth of evangelicalism does not automati-

cally produce cultural conflict; rather, it does so only when it coincides with rising human development and a growing push for policy liberalization.

The human development perspective does offer an important insight: there can be no conflict over issues that are not yet on the political agenda, and liberalizing efforts on sexuality politics issues have gone furthest in the wealthier countries of Latin America. The fact that we see major conflict on abortion and LGBTQ rights in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Costa Rica, but not in Guatemala, Paraguay, and Venezuela, is largely consistent with the general predictions of these arguments.

Yet there are reasons to believe that the effect of abortion and same-sex marriage attitudes on voting behavior should not simply follow a time trend or correlate with levels of economic development across countries. First, even if the sexuality politics cleavage writ large becomes increasingly salient with economic development, particular policy issues within this broader cluster come and go from the political agenda. In Peru, a series of same-sex civil unions bills were introduced in Congress between 2013–2016, but none were successful. More recently, conflict between progressives and social conservatives has centered on the treatment of gender in school curricula. In Argentina, attention to same-sex marriage spiked in 2010 as legislators were debating its legalization, but the salience of this issue declined significantly after the policy passed. The more recent sexuality politics battleground in Argentina was the effort to legalize first trimester abortion in 2018, an issue that had previously been seen as politically untouchable before feminist groups mobilized in favor of the reform (Daby and Moseley, Forthcoming). As abortion, same-sex marriage, and related issues rise and fall on the political agenda, the degree to which they influence voting behavior should fluctuate as well, rather than increasing steadily with economic development.

Beyond the timing of policy battles, issue attitudes are more likely to influence voting behavior when candidates differentiate themselves on those issues. If an issue has become salient due to media coverage or social movement pressure, but major candidates strategi-

cally ignore it or adopt similar positions to one another, public attitudes on this issue are unlikely to affect voting behavior. In Latin America, leftist and rightist candidates reliably stake out opposing positions on economic redistribution and crime and security, but they have not consistently done so with sexuality politics. In the Appendix, we analyze data from the Comparative Manifestos Project to show that party programs in the region vary little in their position on "traditional morality" issues such as divorce, abortion, and the separation of church and state, and they often ignore these issues entirely. In part, the lack of differentiation on sexuality politics may be due to left-wing parties' ambivalence on these issues (Friedman, 2009), born out of a desire to prioritize redistribution and a pragmatic recognition of the socially conservative attitudes held by many voters of lower socioeconomic status.

In emphasizing the importance of issue salience and candidate position-taking, we shift the theoretical focus from gradual demographic change to the specific actors who place sexuality politics on the agenda—including political and judicial elites and the social movements that seek to influence them. In the United States, ideological polarization and electoral realignment around culture war issues began with political, religious, and social movement elites, followed by a similar transformation at the mass level in the 1990s and 2000s (Abramowitz and Saunders, 1998, 2008; Fiorina, Abrams and Pope, 2005; Hetherington, 2001; Hunter, 1992; Layman and Carsey, 2002; Layman and Green, 2006; Levendusky, 2009a,b). In recent decades, elites have been leading a similar process of realignment in Latin America by placing issues on the agenda that activate new cleavages. Though Latin American political elites have generally hewed to the right on economic matters and questions of democracy (Stevens, Bishin and Barr, 2006), they hold more progressive attitudes than the general public on same-sex marriage, abortion, and related issues (Boas and Smith, 2019; Corral González, 2013). Progressive policy initiatives have most often responded to the efforts of organized feminist and LGBTQ movements (Daby and Moseley, Forthcoming;

Díez, 2015; Encarnación, 2016; Htun, 2003) rather than widespread public demand for policy change, and they have often been met with lukewarm support or even outright opposition among the broader public. When wedge issues transform the political agenda in such a fashion, candidates are more likely to stake out opposing positions, and those that remain neutral may risk electoral decline (Chhibber, 1999), as in Costa Rica's 2018 election.

When sexuality politics rises in salience and candidates stake out opposing positions on these issues, religious communities intensify individual-level realignments. As in the United States (Putnam and Campbell, 2012), abortion and same-sex marriage are the two major issues that most strongly cleave the Latin American electorate along religious lines.[1] In the Appendix, we show that religious attendance strongly depresses support for same-sex marriage and abortion in Latin America. By contrast, religious attendance and Protestant (versus Catholic) affiliation are associated with progressive—not conservative—positions on economic redistribution and crime. Hence, when sexuality politics remains a latent cleavage, religious affiliation and church attendance may actually push Latin Americans to the left in their vote choices. However, when sexuality politics becomes salient, we expect that religious citizens will crystallize as a conservative electoral base.

We also argue that different issues should produce different religious cleavages. Recent work on Brazil finds that views on homosexuality and gender uniquely differentiate evangelicals from Catholics, while both religiously devout Catholics and evangelicals adopt conservative positions on abortion (Smith, 2019). In the Appendix, we show that a Catholic–evangelical gap in abortion attitudes is entirely explained by differences in church attendance, yet a similar gap in views on same-sex marriage persists, even after accounting for religiosity. As a result, policy debates over abortion should produce an electoral cleavage on the

---

[1]Abortion and same-sex marriage are just the two most prominent issues from a universe of potential issues we could investigate. Other issues that cleave the electorate by religion include related policies such as school-based sex education and anti-LGBT bullying campaigns in schools, as well as policies on churches' rights and responsibilities.

basis of religiosity (i.e., church attendance), while debates on same-sex marriage will trigger realignments between Catholics and evangelicals.

If religion influenced voting behavior simply via its effect on sexuality politics attitudes, it might be a relatively unimportant part of the story, located far back in the "funnel of causality" from demographics to vote choice (Campbell et al., 1964). However, we expect that when sexuality politics issues increase in salience, religion will influence voters' decisions in multiple ways, beyond the effect that is mediated by issue attitudes. First, religious groups constitute communities where social pressure often leads to high levels of political cohesion, as churches orient vote choice through social and identity-based processes (Djupe and Gilbert, 2009; Smith, 2019; Wald, Owen and Hill, 1988, 1990). Even church members who are personally unconvinced on the issues may end up voting with their fellow congregants. Second, religious leaders may deliberately work to strengthen the linkage between policy attitudes and vote choice through active campaigning or more subtle, less overtly partisan messages during sermons or in the course of other interactions with church members.

Based on the discussion above, we formulate and test the following hypotheses:

H1a. When sexuality politics issues are more salient, views on these issues will be more strongly linked to vote choice.

H1b. When candidates stake out opposing positions on sexuality politics issues, views on these issues will be more strongly linked to vote choice.

H2a. When sexuality politics issues are more salient, both religiosity and evangelical religious affiliation will be more strongly linked to vote choice.

Our theoretical discussion also implies that when candidates adopt different positions on sexuality politics, both religiosity and evangelical religious affiliation will be more strongly linked to vote choice (*H2b*), though we do not test this particular hypothesis, due to our lack of a comprehensive measure of candidates' campaign platforms and the impossibility of experimentally manipulating religion or religiosity.

9

3   Empirical Analysis

To test our hypotheses, we combine two distinct research designs: a candidate-choice conjoint experiment conducted via an online survey in Brazil, Chile, and Peru, and multilevel analysis of voting behavior in multiple waves of the AmericasBarometer and Latinobarómetro surveys, conditioning on coverage of same-sex marriage and abortion in major newspapers during the period surrounding the election. These two research designs complement one another in several ways. The conjoint experiment, which we use to test H1b, allows for a causal interpretation of the effect of candidate issue stance on vote intention in a hypothetical election in three countries. The multilevel analysis, which we use to test H1a and H2a, shifts to a real-world context and expands the scope of our analysis to multiple years of elections in 15 countries.

3.1   Conjoint Experiment

3.1.1   Research Design

The candidate-choice conjoint experiment was embedded in online surveys that were fielded in Brazil, Chile, and Peru from May 7–22, 2019.[2] Respondents were recruited via Facebook advertisements, a common approach to convenience sampling for online surveys in comparative politics (Boas, Christenson and Glick, 2020). To ensure a diverse sample, advertisements were targeted to Facebook users in distinct strata of age, sex, and region in each country. The valid N for each survey was 1817 respondents in Brazil, 3732 in Chile, and 3698 in Peru.[3]

    The conjoint experiment presented subjects with a choice between two hypothetical can-

---

[2]These three countries are the focus of a separate book project for which the conjoint experiment was designed. Despite having substantial evangelical populations, Brazil, Chile, and Peru differ in terms of evangelicals' involvement and success with electoral politics, the outcome that the book project seeks to explain.

[3]Samples were larger in Chile and Peru because the surveys sought to recruit enough evangelical Christians to allow for subgroup analysis in each country, and evangelicals were a larger share of the sample in Brazil.

didates for Congress and asked them which one they would vote for. Subjects read the following introductory text (the name of the office varied across countries) and then were presented with a table of candidate attributes, with the value of each attribute for each candidate randomly chosen from among the two options. As is standard in conjoint experiments, each profile was randomized independently of the other, so while the two profiles could differ in every attribute, as shown below, they almost always involved some common traits.

> Imagine that the legislative elections were this coming Sunday and that you were deciding between two candidates for federal deputy / deputy / congressperson with the following characteristics. Which candidate would you vote for?

<table>
<tr><td><u>**Candidate A**</u></td><td><u>**Candidate B**</u></td></tr>
<tr><td>**Sex:** Male</td><td>**Sex:** Female</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Age:** 39 years</td><td>**Age:** 56 years</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Education:** Completed college</td><td>**Education:** Completed high school</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Occupation:** Businessman/woman</td><td>**Occupation:** Merchant</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Political Experience:** Has been mayor</td><td>**Political Experience:** No prior office</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Religion:** Evangelical</td><td>**Religion:** Catholic</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Abortion policy:** Maintain current laws</td><td>**Abortion policy:** Complete ban</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Economic policy:** Stimulate private enterprise</td><td>**Economic policy:** Increase state participation</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Crime policy:** More prisons and tougher penalties</td><td>**Crime policy:** Social development to prevent crime</td></tr>
</table>

To prevent anchoring biases while still allowing for a logical presentation of items, the three policy positions were randomly shown either first or last, and within the policy and non-policy block, the order of items was fully randomized. To increase statistical power, the conjoint experiment was repeated three times for each respondent, with a new random draw of candidate characteristics each time.

Since the main purpose of the conjoint experiment was to examine voting behavior for Catholic versus evangelical candidates, the policy positions were constrained to those that an evangelical representative might reasonably take. On economic and crime policy, evangelical issue positions span the ideological spectrum, so progressive and conservative stances are both plausible. By contrast, few evangelical politicians publicly advocate for liberalizing abortion laws, so the leftmost plausible position on this issue is to maintain the status quo, which is roughly similar across countries. All three allow therapeutic abortion; Chile and Brazil permit abortion in cases of rape or fetal inviability (in Brazil, only due to anencephaly); and Chile also allows it in cases of incest (Marcus-Delgado, 2019). Since laws on same-sex partnerships differ more dramatically across countries—Brazil allows same-sex marriage, Chile allows civil unions, and Peru permits neither—this issue was not included in the conjoint experiment.

Prior to the conjoint experiment, and separated from it by a block of questions about party identification and vote in previous elections, respondents were asked for their own issue positions on abortion, economic, and crime policy. The text of the questions read: "Which of the following options best represents your position on abortion / the economy / crime?" Choices included the same two positions that the candidates could adopt; for abortion, respondents were also offered the option of legalization, in order to span the full range of policy positions.

12

3.1.2 Specification and Results

The analysis of the conjoint experiment examines the effect of candidates taking the same position as respondents on abortion, crime, and the economy. For abortion, where candidate issue positions were restricted, respondents who favor full legalization are treated as agreeing with candidates who want to maintain current laws. Since candidate positions are fully randomized, agreement or disagreement on each issue is independent of all other characteristics of the candidate as well as the respondent. Hence, a simple ordinary least squares (OLS) regression of vote choice on indicators for policy agreement provides unbiased estimates of the causal effect for each issue. Specifically, for respondent i, candidate profile j (1 or 2), and choice task k (1, 2, or 3), we estimate the following regression:

$$Vote_{ijk} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 AgreeAbortion_{ijk} + \beta_2 AgreeEconomy_{ijk} + \beta_3 AgreeCrime_{ijk} + \epsilon_{ijk}$$

The unit of analysis is the candidate profile, six of which were evaluated by each respondent (three choices among two profiles). Hence, the valid N for each regression is six times the number of respondents: 10,902 for Brazil, 22,392 for Chile, and 22,188 for Peru. $Vote$ takes on the value of 1 if the candidate's profile was chosen, and 0 if it was not. Since ϵ_{ijk} will be correlated within choice tasks (if one candidate is chosen, the opponent is not) as well as respondents, standard errors are clustered on the respondent i, following Hainmueller, Hopkins and Yamamoto (2014).

Results from the conjoint experiment offer strong support for H1b: when we experimentally induce variation in the issue positions of hypothetical candidates, voter-candidate agreement on abortion has large effects on voting behavior (Figure 1). Averaging across all other candidate characteristics and issue positions, agreeing on abortion raises the probability of supporting the candidate by 21 percentage points in Brazil, 25 percentage points in Chile, and 16 percentage points in Peru. These effects are of similar magnitude to voter-candidate

13

Figure 1: Effects of Policy Agreement on Vote Choice: Conjoint Experiment
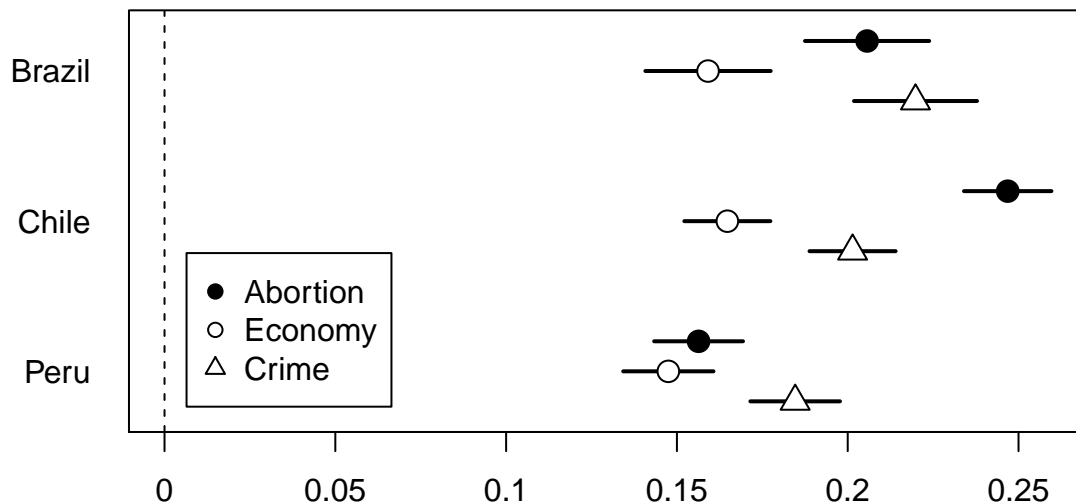
Dependent variable is an indicator for voting for the candidate; independent variables are indicators for policy agreement on each issue. Icons give point estimates and lines give two-sided 95 percent confidence intervals. Standard errors are clustered on the respondent.

agreement on the economy or crime. As shown in the Appendix, we obtain slightly smaller coefficient estimates (though they support similar conclusions) when we limit the sample to respondents who favor current laws or a full abortion ban. Thus, part of what drives our results is that proponents of full legalization prefer the lesser of two evils, a candidate who favors the status quo. We expect we would obtain even larger effects for agreement on abortion if these voters could choose a candidate who matched their issue position.

The conjoint experiment has the advantage of allowing for a causal interpretation of the effect of voter-candidate agreement on each policy issue. Moreover, presenting candidate profiles with a variety of different characteristics and randomizing the order in which the issue stances appear makes the choice task more realistic, disguises the purpose of the experiment, and enhances external validity when compared to vignette experiments that manipulate only a single characteristic of the politician.

However, conjoint experiments still present a fictionalized scenario in which voters are

asked to choose candidates absent all other influences on voting behavior, including partisanship, clientelism, campaigns, and—importantly for our study—church-based social influence. In such contexts, effects of the experimental stimuli on voting behavior are often unrealistically large and unreplicable in the real world (Boas, Hidalgo and Melo, 2019). Hence, to gauge whether sexuality politics issue positions correlate with voting behavior in actual elections, and to assess the role of religion, we turn to an observational analysis of survey data.

3.2 Multilevel Analysis

3.2.1 Public Opinion Data

Our multilevel analysis integrates contextual measures of issue salience with public opinion data in order to examine the extent to which context modifies the relationship between a series of individual level variables and voting behavior. Our first source of public opinion data is the 2012, 2014, 2016–17, and 2018–19 waves of the AmericasBarometer by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), all of which inquired about respondents' support for therapeutic abortion as well as same-sex marriage.[4] The former is measured via a yes/no question: "Do you believe that the interruption of pregnancy, or an abortion, is justified with the life of the mother is in danger?" The latter is measured via the question "How strongly do you approve or disapprove of same-sex couples having the right to marry," with responses on a 10-point Likert scale from strongly disapprove (1) to strongly approve (10). We recode abortion views as a dichotomous measure indicating support for abortion rights, and same-sex marriage views on a 0 to 1 scale. For both recoded variables, higher numbers indicate approval, or the more liberal policy position.

We also examine the 2004, 2007, and 2015 waves of the Latinobarómetro. These surveys

---

[4]Attitudes toward same-sex marriage, but not therapeutic abortion, were also asked in the 2010 wave, which we may incorporate in future analysis.

have the advantage of including a broader and more sensitive measure of abortion attitudes, on the same 1–10 Likert scale as the AmericasBarometer question about same-sex marriage. The question reads: "Please use this card to tell me whether you think abortion can always be justified, never be justified, or somewhere in between." Higher values indicate stronger agreement with abortion. Among these waves of the Latinobarómetro, support for same-sex marriage was asked only in 2015.[5] The question reads: "Do you strongly agree (1), agree (2), disagree (3) or strongly disagree (4) with the following statements? Marriage between people of the same sex."[6] Once again, both variables are recoded to run from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating the more liberal position.

In both analyses, we incorporate a measure of religious affiliation, recoded as Catholic, evangelical/Pentecostal, no religion, and other religion. Three of the four rounds of the AmericasBarometer (2012, 2016–17, and 2018–19) also included a measure of church attendance, which we recode to run from 0 ("never or almost never") to 1 ("more than once a week").[7] The Latinobarómetro did not include a measure of church attendance.

To control for potentially confounded ideological and policy views, as well as to get a sense of the relative magnitude of various attitudes in shaping vote choice, we included a number of other attitudinal measures. All of these variables are recoded to run from 0 to 1. In the AmericasBarometer analysis, we control for economic views using the only relevant question that is present in all four survey waves: support for "strong government efforts" to "reduce inequality," originally measured on a 7-point scale. In some models, we also include a dichotomous indicator of support for tough-on-crime policies ("fighting crime by increasing punishment").[8] Finally, in both the Latinobarómetro and AmericasBarometer analysis, we

---

[5]The question was also asked in 2010, when abortion attitudes were not measured; we plan to incorporate this wave in future analysis.

[6]In Spanish, "*las siguientes afirmaciones*"; we recognize that the attitude stimulus is not a statement.

[7]The Colombia survey included this measure in 2014, but omitted it in 2018.

[8]This variable is missing in six countries in the 2018/19 round, and from Argentina and Uruguay in 2016/17.

included indicator variables for those placing themselves on the left or the right ends of the 1–10 (AmericasBarometer) or 0–10 (Latinobarómetro) ideological scales. Given high and non-random rates of non-reporting of ideology (Ames and Smith, 2010; Zechmeister and Corral, 2013), we include respondents with missing values on these questions, coding them as 0 on our "leftist" and "rightist" dummy variables. Finally, both sets of analyses incorporate relevant demographic variables potentially confounded with religion and policy attitudes, including gender, household wealth, education, and age. In the AmericasBarometer, we also control for ethnic identification and size of place of residence.

Our dependent variable across these analyses is the ideological direction of vote choice. The underlying measure from the AmericasBarometer analysis involves a question about respondents' vote in the last presidential election (the first round in the case of majority runoff systems). In the Latinobarómetro, by contrast, our key survey question is prospective, hypothetical, and party- rather than candidate-focused: "If there were elections this Sunday, what party would you vote for?" Both questions involve spontaneous responses. Across all countries and waves of each survey, 57% of AmericasBarometer respondents and 47% of Latinobarómetro respondents name a candidate or party in response to this question.

To generate a dependent variable that can be compared across countries, we transform vote for specific candidates/parties into a 1–10 measure of the ideology of vote choice by merging in left-right estimates for each candidate/party, following Carlin, Singer and Zechmeister (2015b). For this purpose, we use the Parliamentary Elites in Latin America (PELA) surveys from each country, in which respondents (who are themselves legislators) are asked to place major politicians and parties on a 1–10 left–right scale. [9] In the AmericasBarometer analysis, our values are drawn from the PELA wave most proximate to the specific election

---

[9]Carlin, Singer and Zechmeister (2015b) rely on 0–20 expert-coded ideology measures from Wiesehomeier and Benoit (2009), with slight updating for a few candidates and parties. They use PELA-derived measures like ours as a robustness check, noting a high correlation between the two sets of scores. Given the extensive changes in many Latin American party systems since the Wiesehomeier and Benoit (2009) analysis, we opt to use the PELA surveys, which offer more contemporaneous measures.

mentioned in the AmericasBarometer survey question. We use the mean ideological rating of the politician, if available; otherwise we use party ratings.[10] In the Latinobarómetro analysis, we use the party-based ideology estimates, drawn from the PELA wave closest to the Latinobarómetro survey year. For Latinobarómetro Brazil, we substitute similar ideological estimates (based on an identical 1–10 scale) from the Brazilian Legislative Surveys, which ask legislators about a larger number of parties. Details about a few difficult-to-score cases are discussed in the Appendix.

3.2.2   Contextual Measures

We integrate the public opinion data with contextual measures of the salience of abortion and same-sex marriage by country-year, based on the frequency with which these issues are mentioned in news coverage, following Grossman (2015). Using the Factiva database, we identified the major newspaper with the most complete full-text coverage for each Latin American country; in almost all cases this is plausibly the "newspaper of record." To measure coverage of each issue, we ran full-text searches on "aborto" within each country and on the following terms for same-sex marriage:

- Spanish: "matrimonio gay" OR "matrimonio igualitario" OR "matrimonio homo*" OR "matrimonio entre personas del mismo sexo" OR "union* civil*"

- Portuguese: "casamento gay" OR "casamento igualitario" OR "casamento homo*" OR "casamento entre pessoas do mesmo sexo" OR "uniao civil" OR "unioes civis"

Since the legislative debate on same-sex partnership in some countries concerns civil unions rather than marriage, we included terms measuring this concept as well. Newspapers vary in the amount of coverage they devote to any given topic, and the Factiva database also has more complete coverage of some publications in recent years, so we standardize coverage

---

[10]In instances where both are available, personal and party ratings are correlated at 0.94.

of abortion and same-sex marriage by the number of stories about politics, measured via a full-text search on the term "politica."

For the Dominican Republic, which is not covered in Factiva, we were able to use the search function on Diario Libre's website to obtain annual counts of coverage of abortion and politics. The site's search engine did not accept Boolean search terms, so we were unable to obtain counts for same-sex marriage. For El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua, Factiva has no full-text newspaper coverage, and we were unable to obtain data elsewhere.[11]

The resulting raw measures, ranging from 0 to 0.173 for abortion and 0 to 0.116 for same-sex marriage, represent the ratio of the number of stories on each issue to the total number of stories about politics. Figures 2 and 3 summarize these measures for each of the 15 countries for which we have data. The major spikes in coverage are readily identifiable as corresponding to periods of high salience for abortion or same-sex marriage, typically because of a proposed or actual policy change, as summarized in 1.

Table 1: Identifying Peaks in Coverage of Sexuality Politics Issues

Country	Abortion Peak	Same-Sex Marriage Peak
Argentina	2018 legalization bill	2010 legalization
Bolivia		2011 legalization bill
Brazil	2010 election	2013 legalization
Chile	2017 liberalization	2017 legalization bill
Colombia		2013 legalization
Costa Rica		2018 IAHCR ruling
Ecuador		2019 legalization
Mexico	2007 decriminalization (Mexico City)	2010 legalization (Mexico City), 2016 legalization proposal (national)
Peru		2013–16 civil unions bills
Uruguay	2012 legalization	2013 legalization

Countries with no identifiable peaks for these issues during the period of coverage also serve to validate the measure. For abortion, all countries with low and steady levels of

---

[11]Another source, Nexis Uni, has full text coverage of El Salvador's La Prensa Gráfica from 2017–2019, but this period does not overlap with any elections covered by the AmericasBarometer surveys.

Figure 2: Abortion as a Share of Political Coverage in Main Newspaper, 2002–2019
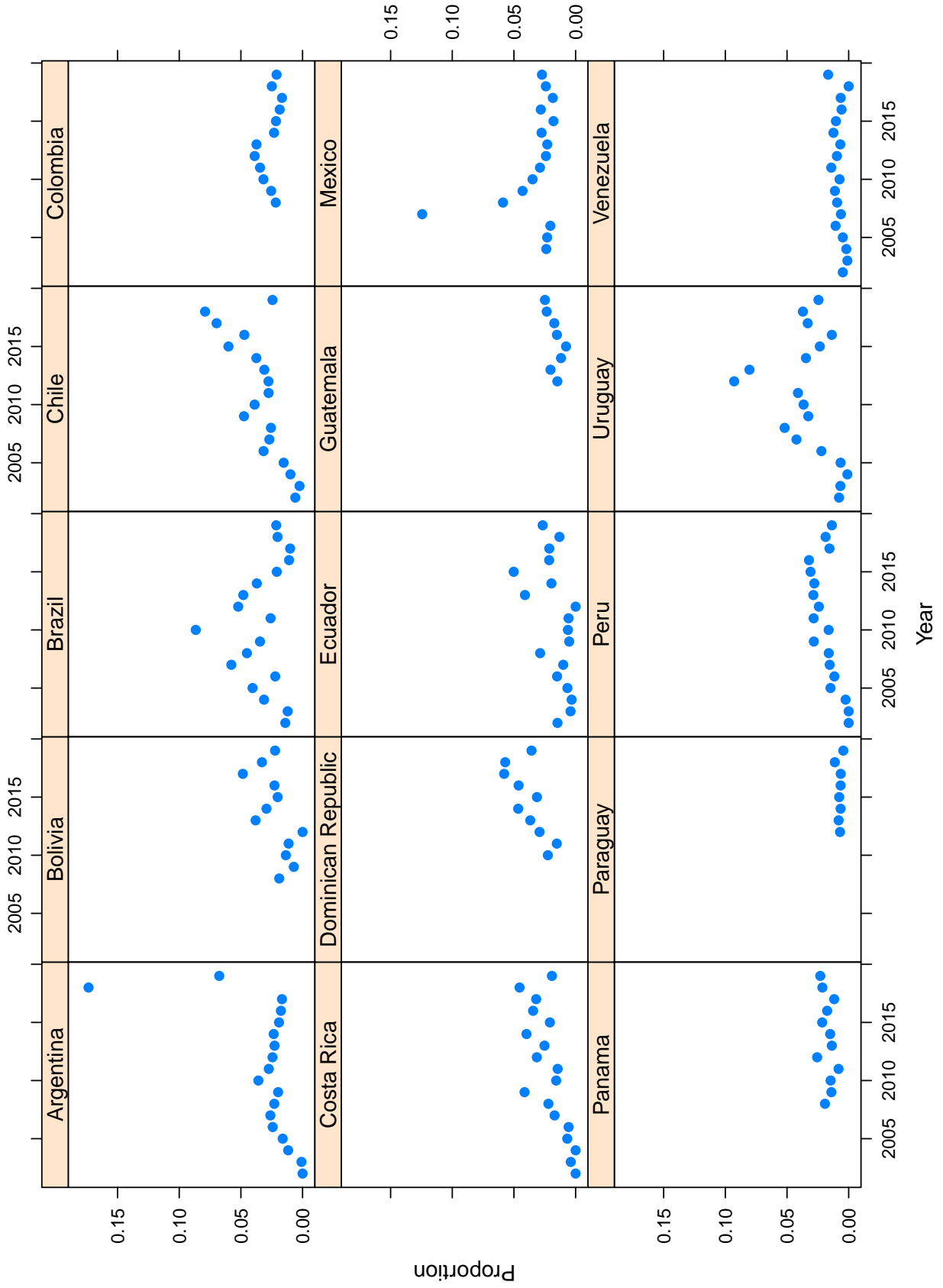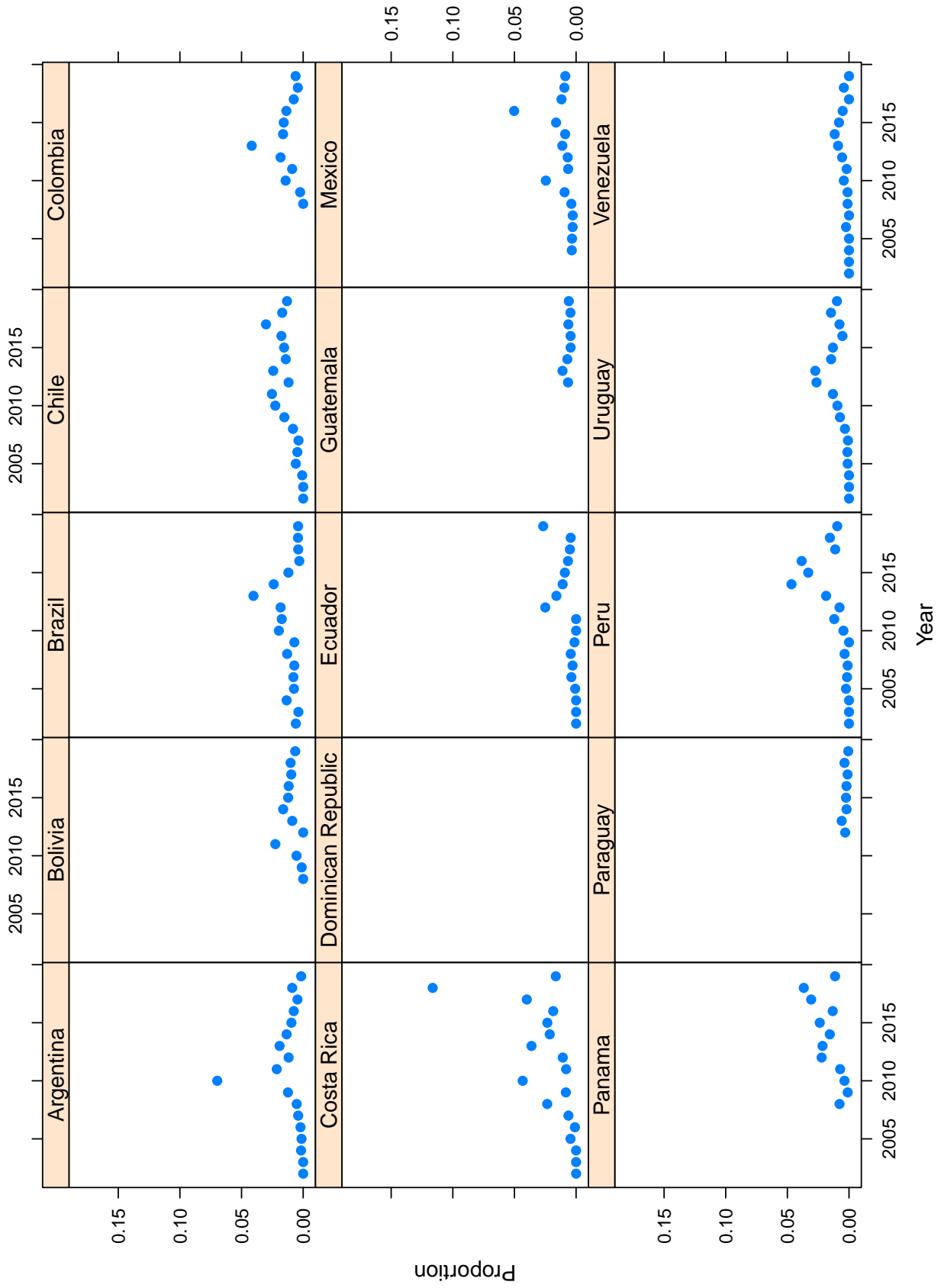
Figure 3: Same-Sex Marriage as a Share of Political Coverage in Main Newspaper, 2002–2019

coverage experienced no legislative change or proposed change during the period of coverage, and in most of them, abortion is either totally prohibited or allowed only to save the life of the mother (Marcus-Delgado, 2019). Likewise, the three countries with consistently low levels of same-sex marriage coverage, Guatemala, Paraguay, and Venezuela, have seen little progress on LGBTQ rights. In these countries, abortion or same-sex marriage are largely off the political agenda, a fact that is reflected in the absence of newspaper coverage.

For a contextual measure of salience to use in our regressions, we averaged the news coverage ratios from the year of the election in question and the previous year in order to develop a smoothed estimate of the salience of these sexuality politics topics in the lead-up to each real or hypothetical political contest.[12] Since the AmericasBarometer asks about vote in prior elections, these contextual measures are lagged to the time of the election, whereas for the Latinobarómetro they are tied to the survey year. We then rescaled the proportions to run from 0 to 1 and transformed them by taking their square roots. The square root transformation accounts for the skew of the raw ratio, readily observable in the form of dramatic peaks in certain countries and years.[13] The final resulting contextual variables run from 0 to 1, with means relatively close to the scale midpoints.

Tables 2 and 3 summarize the countries, elections, and survey waves for which we have valid measures of news coverage, as well as the share of respondents from each wave voting for candidates or parties for whom we lack a valid measure of ideology. For most countries listed, we are able to use all four AmericasBarometer waves. For the Dominican Republic and Paraguay, we drop the 2012 wave; for Guatemala, we also omit 2014. On average, candidates for whom we lack ideology measures garnered only 1.0% of the vote. The only case where this figure rises above 5% is Chile's 2013 election, which featured an unusual

---

[12]For the analysis of Mexico in the 2004 Latinobarómetro, we use only the year of the hypothetical election since our news coverage data for that country start in 2004.

[13]A logarithmic transformation works less well for dealing with the skewed distribution because it creates extreme variation among values close to zero.

number of outsider or small-party candidates.

Due to the limited coverage of the Factiva database, our measure of news coverage is somewhat sparser in earlier years, affecting the scope of the Latinobarómetro analysis. For Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela, we are able to use all three waves.[14] For Brazil, we omit 2004, due to an apparent coding error with the vote choice variable.[15] For Bolivia, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Panama, and Paraguay, we use only the 2015 wave. As with the AmericasBarometer analysis, we have no contextual data at all for El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Honduras.

3.2.3 Specification and Results

To begin, in Table 4 we assess the non-contingent role of sexuality politics views and religion in shaping the ideology of vote choice. This analysis mirrors similar analyses for prior periods (Boas and Smith, 2015; Carlin, Singer and Zechmeister, 2015a; Zechmeister and Corral, 2013). Here, we utilize only the AmericasBarometer, which offers a broader range of relevant control variables than the Latinobarómetro. Since all variables are standardized to run from 0 to 1, coefficients are directly comparable. As the dependent variable runs from 1 to 10 and is approximately normally distributed, with a mean of 5.7, all our analysis uses standard multilevel linear models—a modeling choice that also facilitates interpretation of effects directly from regression results. We include controls for tough-on-crime attitudes and church attendance in separate models, given the reduced numbers of survey country-years incorporating these variables.

The analysis indicates that, on average across the region, views on same-sex marriage predict voting behavior in recent elections when controlling for ideological self-identification—a

---

[14]Mexico dropped out of the 2015 regression due to a missing socio-economic status variable in the 2015 file. We plan to generate a valid measure for this country-year in future analyses.

[15]In the 2004 Latinobarómetro for Brazil, the PT and PMDB, two popular parties, are never mentioned in response to the vote question, whereas the PDT, which never gets more than 2% of responses in other years, receives 15.7%.

contrast with earlier results reported by Carlin, Singer and Zechmeister (2015*a*, p.364). However, consistent with those prior results, support for therapeutic abortion is uncorrelated with the ideology of vote choice. In comparative terms, the impact of same-sex marriage attitudes across the range of the variable is slightly less than a quarter of the effect of going from identifying as a leftist to identifying as a rightist. Moreover, it is about half the size of the effect of economic attitudes, across the range of that independent variable, but double the magnitude of crime-related attitudes.

In general, religion and other demographic variables—even social class—are weaker predictors of the ideology of vote choice than are attitudinal variables.[16] Consistent with earlier analyses (Boas and Smith, 2015; Carlin, Singer and Zechmeister, 2015*a*), on average across the region we find no Catholic-evangelical cleavage in vote choice (in one of the three models, evangelicals/Pentecostals are very slightly to the *left* of Catholics). However, the non-religious do vote substantially to the left of both Catholics and evangelicals, and church attendance pushes vote choice slightly to the right. The strongest demographic predictors of voting behavior are social class and identification as indigenous (versus white), but taken as a whole, religious variables come in a close second. A person who self-identifies as non-religious and never attends church is predicted to choose a candidate about 0.26 notches to the left of a Catholic or evangelical who attends church more than weekly. By comparison, a person at the bottom of our wealth scale is predicted to choose a candidate 0.33–0.35 notches to the left of a person at the top of that scale.

Our key hypotheses relate to how context modifies the role of sexuality politics attitudes and religion in shaping vote choice. Tables 5 and 6 show these results in the AmericasBarometer and Latinobarómetro, respectively. All control variables from the previous analysis are incorporated in the AmericasBarometer analysis but are not shown in Table 5. Note that

---

[16]For reasons of space, we do not show the coefficients for indicator variables for age bracket; age is broadly statistically insignificant in the analysis.

the Latinobarómetro models incorporating same-sex marriage attitudes are only available for twelve country-years (all in 2015), and that church attendance is only available in the AmericasBarometer (and only for three of the four waves of that study). Given the lack of appropriate combinations of religious variables and other measures in the Latinobarómetro data, we assess only H1a (in which the individual-level characteristic of interest is attitudinal) in Table 6.

These results provide strong initial confirmation of H1a and H2a: the impacts of both sexuality politics attitudes and religion on vote choice are strongly contingent on news coverage. The only exception is the Latinobarómetro model incorporating same-sex marriage views, where the number of elections is small. In periods when abortion and same-sex marriage are highly salient, the magnitude of the effects of abortion and same-sex marriage attitudes appears to exceed that of economic views from Table 4 and to nearly to rival the effect of ideological identification as rightist versus leftist. In addition, in line with our expectations, abortion coverage strongly modifies the impact of religiosity (measured by church attendance), while same-sex marriage coverage modifies the impact of evangelical versus Catholic identification.

Figures 4 and 5 show how news coverage of abortion moderates the effect of issue attitudes on vote choice. Both plots show that when this issue is highly salient in national politics, abortion attitudes predict vote choice. The effect is substantially stronger in the Latinobarómetro, perhaps because that study's measure of abortion attitudes is finer-grained and better covers the range of possible views. In the Latinobarómetro study, at the high end of abortion coverage, the impact of abortion attitudes rivals the gap between rightists and centrists. In the AmericasBarometer analysis, we also find a counterintuitive result: in times and places where abortion is not widely discussed, people who support therapeutic abortion tend to vote for rightist candidates. This result may be due to nuances in abortion views (therapeutic abortion is a relatively limited right) and differences among types of right-wing

Figure 4: Vote Choice as a Function of Abortion Attitudes and Coverage, AmericasBarometer
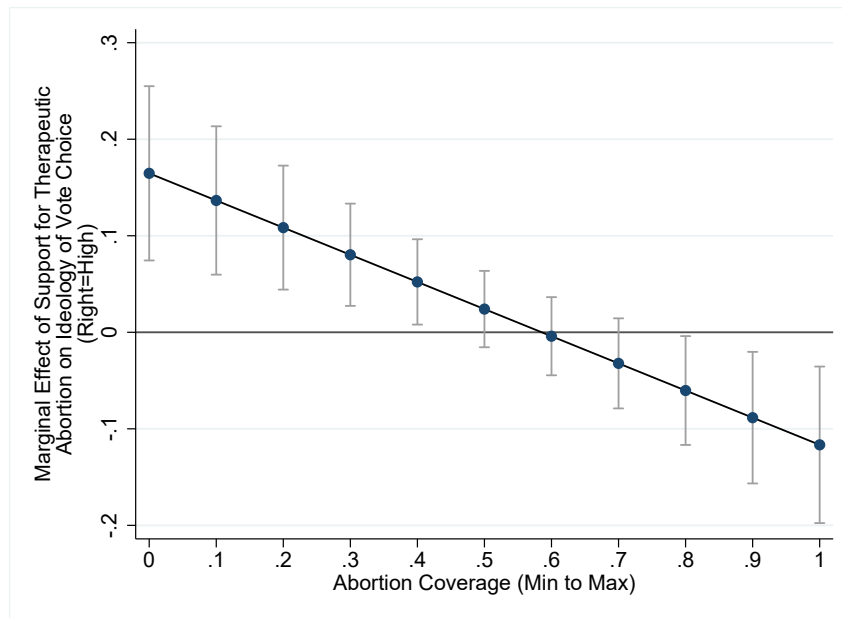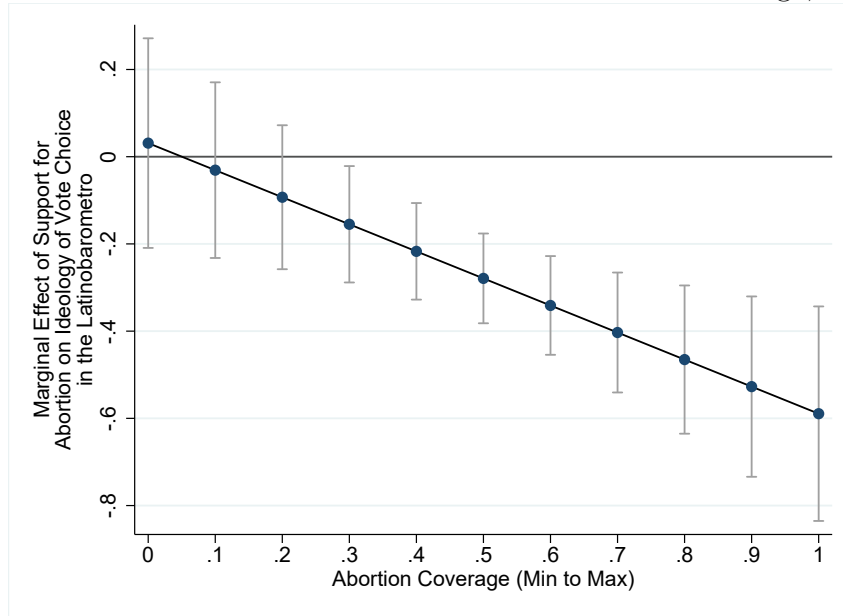

Source: AmericasBarometer 2012–2019. 95% confidence intervals shown; estimates based on full multivariate model.

candidates (some neoliberals may be more willing to endorse therapeutic abortion than populist leftists). Alternatively, it could mean that, in contexts where abortion is not on the political or news agenda, the kinds of people who support this limited abortion right are more likely to support rightist candidates for reasons other than their abortion views.

Figures 6 and 7 similarly show how the effect of same-sex marriage attitudes on the ideology of vote choice varies with news coverage of this issue. The interactive effect is quite strong in the AmericasBarometer, but far from statistically or substantively significant in the Latinobarómetro (recall, once again, that our second-level N is quite low). In the AmericasBarometer, in times and places in which same-sex marriage is on the agenda, same-sex marriage attitudes are predicted to matter more than economic views, and nearly as much as ideological identification.

Finally, Figures 8 and 9 examine the interaction between news coverage of each issue and two different measures of religion: evangelical versus Catholic identification and church

Figure 5: Vote Choice as a Function of Abortion Attitudes and Coverage, Latinobarómetro

Source: Latinobarómetro 2004, 2007, and 2015. 95% confidence intervals shown; estimates based on full multivariate model.

Figure 6: Vote Choice as a Function of Same-Sex Marriage Attitudes and Coverage, AmericasBarometer

Source: AmericasBarometer 2012–2019. 95% confidence intervals shown; estimates based on full multivariate model.

Figure 7: Vote Choice as a Function of Same-Sex Marriage Attitudes and Coverage, Latino-barómetro

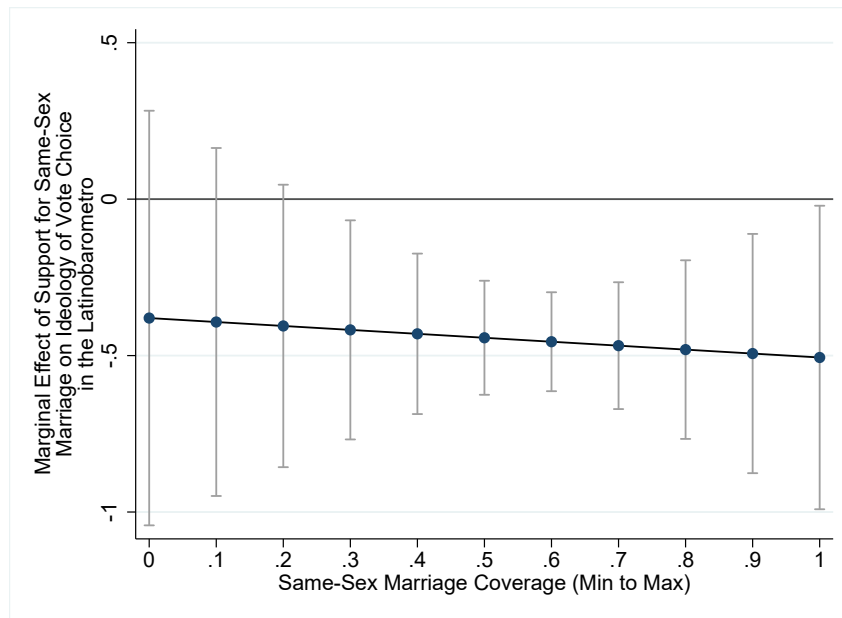attendance. The figures show that when abortion and same-sex marriage are in the news a great deal, religious cleavages emerge. As we suspected, abortion coverage tends to shape the cleavage between religious and secular citizens (as measured by church attendance), while same-sex marriage coverage tends to shape the cleavage between evangelicals and Catholics, but not religious versus secular citizens.

4   Discussion and Conclusion

Over the past several decades, a number of Latin American countries have witnessed dramatic and often unexpected changes to their policies regarding abortion, LGTBQ rights, and other issues related to gender and sexuality (Díez, 2015; Encarnación, 2016; Marcus-Delgado, 2019). On same-sex partnerships, some Latin American countries have been regional or even global leaders: Argentina was the tenth country in the world and the second in the Americas

Figure 8: Vote Choice as a Function of Abortion Coverage and Religion

Source: AmericasBarometer 2012–2019. 95% confidence intervals shown; estimates based on full multivariate model.

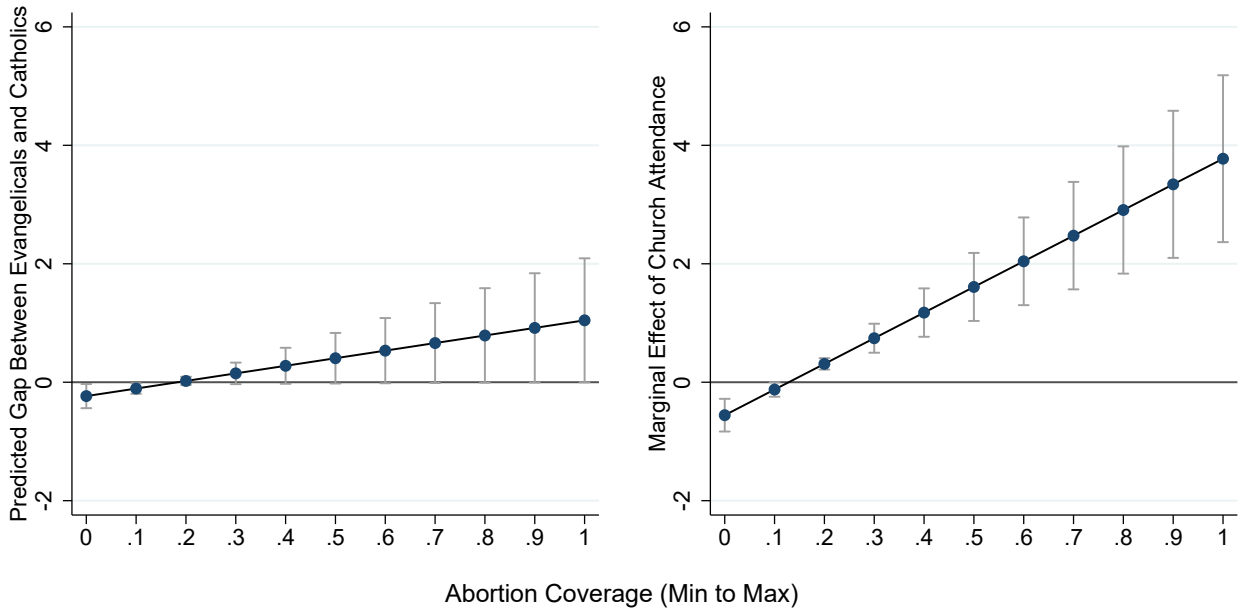Figure 9: Vote Choice as a Function of Same-Sex Marriage Coverage and Religion
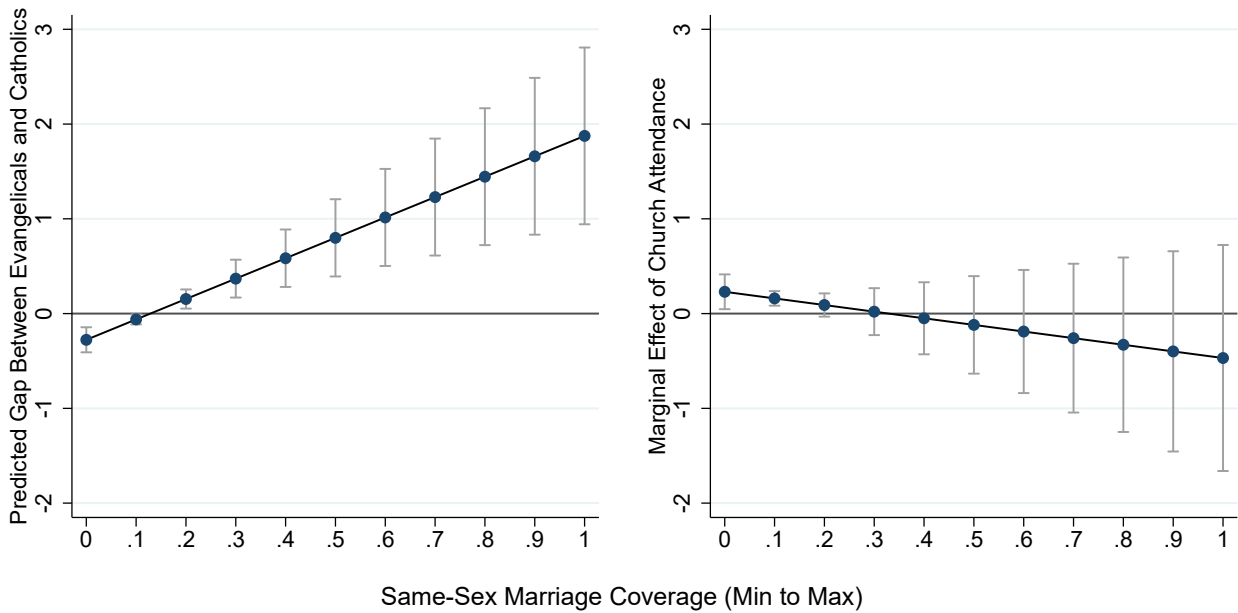
Source: AmericasBarometer 2012–2019. 95% confidence intervals shown; estimates based on full multivariate model.

(after Canada) to legalize same-sex marriage when it did so in 2010. Changes to abortion legislation have been more limited and more hesitant, but there has also been a wave of reform since 2007, when Mexico City first decriminalized the procedure. Some of these changes or attempted reforms have come through legislation, while others have resulted from judicial decisions. Especially in the latter case, policy change has often taken place before there is widespread public support. Brazil's high court legalized same-sex marriage in 2013, approximately three years before a majority of the public approved of the change; the equivalent decision by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2015 happened three years after public opinion shifted in favor of same-sex marriage.

Latin America's wave of sexuality politics reforms has had clear effects on public opinion and policy throughout the region. On the one hand, there is evidence that progressive policy change can shift public opinion towards support for those policies after the fact. Following a variety of LGBTQ rights reforms in the 1990s and 2000s, more educated voters become more supportive of same-sex marriage and LGBTQ candidates running for office. Maia, Chiu and Desposato (2020) argue that there is no backlash to these policy changes, since attitude polarization—measured as the distance from mean public opinion in a country—did not increase.

Yet if policy changes have a tendency to reduce attitude polarization and boost support for progressive reforms, they can also paradoxically increase *electoral* polarization around these issues by activating cleavages that were previously latent. Prior to the 2010s, differing attitudes on abortion or same-sex marriage had little repercussion in terms of voting behavior because these issues were largely absent from the political agenda and because candidates did not stake out opposing positions. As policy changes on gender and sexuality have been proposed or implemented, these issues have increased in salience, and they have started to become major topics of debate during electoral campaigns. Even if public opinion is becoming more supportive and less polarized in the aggregate, the differences that do remain

30

now matter more for voters' decisions at the polls.

We argue that the increasing media salience of and electoral contestation around sexuality politics in some countries of Latin America is prompting electoral realignments. In a region where materialist issues such as economic redistribution and crime control used to be the major drivers of voting behavior, opinions on gender and sexuality are emerging as a new cleavage that influences decisions on election day. These changes are also shifting the implications of religion for voting behavior in the region. In an era in which materialist issues dominated the agenda, Latin America's evangelical Christians tended to vote to the left, thanks to their lower-class social origins. But at times and in places where sexuality politics has risen in prominence, this religious minority has shifted to join a rightist bloc. Where abortion is on the agenda, evangelicals are joined by their Catholic brethren, with both traditions voting more conservatively than the non-religious. Hence, the rise of sexuality politics is prompting the consolidation of a new Christian right—the support base for candidates such as Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil—even as it may be shifting public opinion toward support for more liberal policies, on average.

Our argument about the emergence of new issue cleavages in Latin America has important implications for the literature on ideological polarization and electoral realignment in the United States. In the U.S. context, partisan sorting or realignment by issue attitudes has been a central driver of polarization. Sometimes citizens changed their attitudes to match their partisanship, while other times they switched parties to match their attitudes on high profile issues highlighted in the media, such as abortion (Carmines and Stimson, 1980; Carsey and Layman, 2006; Dancey and Goren, 2010). As the Republican Party became publicly identified with conservative religiosity, partisan sorting also skyrocketed along religious lines, and partisanship and religious affiliation became mutually endogenous (Campbell et al., 2018; Margolis, 2018; Putnam and Campbell, 2012). The growing overlap among social identities as well as social influence within increasingly homogeneous groups (among

them religious communities) intensified partisan and ideological polarization (Klar, 2014; Levendusky, Druckman and McLain, 2016; Mason, 2018; Mason and Wronski, 2018). Between 1992 and 2012, sexuality politics attitudes, partisanship, and religion became tightly correlated in a mutually reinforcing package, with issue positions simultaneously shaped by and responding to religious and partisan identities (Goren and Chapp, 2017).

Though there are clear parallels between the processes of sorting in Latin America and the United States, partisanship constitutes a key difference between the two regions. In the U.S. realignment process, party identification serves as the glue that binds together issue attitudes, religion, and vote choice. By contrast, in the Latin American context, the binding power of partisanship may be closer to that of Scotch tape. Party systems vary greatly across Latin America, but they are universally younger and more fragmented than in the US (Levitsky et al., 2016; Mainwaring, 2018). Levels of party identification are substantially lower, parties have weaker brands, and partisanship is more fickle (Lupu, 2016; Samuels and Zucco, 2018). Yet even in this seemingly adverse context, we find that elite priming of sexuality politics issues can trigger electoral realignments. In countries like Brazil, social conservatives may flit from one party label to the next, while their emerging tendency to support right-wing candidates remains constant.

Table 2: Elections, AmericasBarometer Waves, and Reported Vote for Missing Candidates

Country	Election	Wave	Missing	Country	Election	Wave	Missing
Argentina	2011	2012	0.0%	Ecuador	2009	2012	2.0%
Argentina	2011	2014	0.0%	Ecuador	2013	2014	0.4%
Argentina	2015	2017	1.8%	Ecuador	2013	2016	0.0%
Argentina	2015	2019	3.3%	Ecuador	2017	2019	0.4%
Bolivia	2009	2012	0.6%	Guatemala	2015	2017	2.8%
Bolivia	2009	2014	0.3%	Guatemala	2015	2019	3.4%
Bolivia	2014	2017	0.6%	Mexico	2006	2012	0.4%
Bolivia	2014	2019	0.1%	Mexico	2012	2014	1.0%
Brazil	2010	2012	0.4%	Mexico	2012	2017	0.8%
Brazil	2010	2014	0.1%	Mexico	2018	2019	2.2%
Brazil	2014	2017	0.0%	Panama	2009	2012	0.0%
Brazil	2018	2019	3.7%	Panama	2009	2014	0.0%
Chile	2009	2012	0.0%	Panama	2014	2017	0.0%
Chile	2013	2014	7.8%	Panama	2014	2018	0.0%
Chile	2013	2017	8.3%	Paraguay	2013	2014	2.3%
Chile	2017	2019	0.3%	Paraguay	2013	2016	1.5%
Colombia	2010	2012	0.0%	Paraguay	2018	2019	0.3%
Colombia	2010	2014	0.0%	Peru	2011	2012	0.0%
Colombia	2014	2016	0.0%	Peru	2011	2014	0.0%
Colombia	2018	2018	0.0%	Peru	2016	2017	4.2%
Costa Rica	2010	2012	0.0%	Peru	2016	2019	1.7%
Costa Rica	2014	2014	0.0%	Uruguay	2009	2012	0.0%
Costa Rica	2014	2016	0.0%	Uruguay	2009	2014	0.0%
Costa Rica	2018	2018	2.0%	Uruguay	2014	2017	0.2%
Dom. Rep.	2012	2014	2.5%	Uruguay	2014	2019	0.4%
Dom. Rep.	2016	2016	1.1%	Venezuela	2006	2012	0.0%
Dom. Rep.	2016	2019	0.9%	Venezuela	2013	2014	0.9%
				Venezuela	2013	2016	0.4%

Elections listed are those for which we have valid measures of news coverage; there are none for El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua. The "Missing" column gives the total reported vote share from each AmericasBarometer wave for those candidates for whom we lack estimates of ideological position.

Table 3: Latinobarómetro Waves and Reported Vote for Missing Parties

Country	Wave	Missing	Country	Wave	Missing
Argentina	2004	3.1%	Ecuador	2004	1.1%
Argentina	2007	1.4%	Ecuador	2007	0.2%
Argentina	2015	2.6%	Ecuador	2015	0.2%
Bolivia	2015	4.8%	Guatemala	2015	0.0%
Brazil	2007	0.0%	Mexico	2007	0.4%
Brazil	2015	0.2%	Mexico	2015	0.0%
Chile	2004	0.2%	Panama	2015	0.0%
Chile	2007	0.4%	Paraguay	2015	0.3%
Chile	2015	2.3%	Peru	2004	1.8%
Colombia	2015	0.5%	Peru	2007	0.0%
Costa Rica	2004	0.0%	Peru	2015	0.0%
Costa Rica	2007	1.0%	Uruguay	2004	0.0%
Costa Rica	2015	0.0%	Uruguay	2007	0.0%
Dom. Rep.	2015	0.1%	Uruguay	2015	0.0%
			Venezuela	2004	0.2%
			Venezuela	2007	3.0%
			Venezuela	2015	0.6%

Latinobarómetro waves listed are those for which we have valid measures of news coverage; there are none for El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua. The "Missing" column gives the total reported vote share from each Latinobarómetro wave for those parties for which we lack estimates of ideological position.

Table 4: Determinants of Ideology of Presidential Vote Choice, 2012–2019

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Support for Therapeutic Abortion	0.010	0.017	0.009
	(0.018)	(0.021)	(0.021)
Support for Same-Sex Marriage	-0.250*	-0.193*	-0.202*
	(0.026)	(0.030)	(0.029)
Reduce Inequality	-0.498*	-0.501*	-0.412*
	(0.031)	(0.035)	(0.035)
Tough on Crime		0.110*	
		(0.022)	
Leftist	-0.523*	-0.479*	-0.433*
	(0.021)	(0.025)	(0.024)
Rightist	0.588*	0.570*	0.459*
	(0.021)	(0.024)	(0.024)
Church Attendance			0.102*
			(0.033)
Protestant/Evangelical	-0.032	-0.059*	-0.043
	(0.023)	(0.026)	(0.026)
No Religion	-0.228*	-0.226*	-0.176*
	(0.030)	(0.037)	(0.037)
Other Religion	-0.055	-0.055	-0.073
	(0.052)	(0.057)	(0.055)
Female	0.063*	0.085*	0.062*
	(0.017)	(0.020)	(0.020)
Mestizo	-0.110*	-0.108*	-0.114*
	(0.023)	(0.027)	(0.026)
Indigenous	-0.294*	-0.303*	-0.331*
	(0.041)	(0.046)	(0.048)
Black	-0.141*	-0.125*	-0.136*
	(0.042)	(0.050)	(0.048)
Mulatto	-0.098*	-0.040	-0.117*
	(0.042)	(0.050)	(0.047)
Other Ethnicity	-0.161*	-0.175*	-0.126*
	(0.043)	(0.049)	(0.048)
Household Wealth	0.345*	0.346*	0.330*
	(0.050)	(0.057)	(0.058)
Education Level	0.066	0.056	0.068
	(0.040)	(0.047)	(0.047)
Size of Locality	0.122*	0.112*	0.053
	(0.026)	(0.030)	(0.029)
Observations	45936	34247	30885

Standard errors in parentheses. $*p < .05$. Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP.
Results from hierarchical models controlling for age and year.

Table 5: Contextual Determinants of Ideology of Presidential Vote Choice, AmericasBarometer

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Individual			
Support for Therapeutic Abortion	0.165*	0.010	0.026
	(0.046)	(0.020)	(0.023)
Support for Same-Sex Marriage	-0.043	-0.271*	-0.212*
	(0.060)	(0.028)	(0.031)
Protestant/Evangelical	-0.051*	-0.374*	-0.074*
	(0.026)	(0.065)	(0.029)
No Religion	-0.296*		-0.214*
	(0.032)		(0.039)
Other Religion	-0.109		-0.148*
	(0.057)		(0.060)
Church Attendance			-0.183*
			(0.090)
Cross-Level			
Support for Abortion × Abortion Coverage	-0.281*		
	(0.078)		
Support for SS Marriage × SSM Coverage	-0.517*		
	(0.131)		
Protestant/Evangelical × Abortion Coverage		0.206	
		(0.114)	
Protestant/Evangelical × SSM Coverage		0.622*	
		(0.144)	
Church Attendance × Abortion Coverage			0.636*
			(0.155)
Church Attendance × SSM Coverage			-0.137
			(0.192)
Contextual			
Abortion Coverage	-1.131	-1.405*	-2.012
	(0.720)	(0.687)	(1.151)
SSM Coverage	1.518	1.251	2.225
	(0.935)	(0.893)	(1.467)
Observations	34,841	34,841	23,879

Standard errors in parentheses. $*p < .05$. Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP; see text for discussion of estimates of news coverage. All controls from Table 1, plus age and year fixed effects included in analysis.

Table 6: Contextual Determinants of Ideology of Presidential Vote Choice, Latinobarómetro

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Support for Abortion	-0.259*	0.031	-0.203*	-0.241*
	(0.046)	(0.123)	(0.071)	(0.080)
Abortion Coverage		0.183		
		(0.669)		
Support for Abortion × Abortion Coverage		-0.621*		
		(0.225)		
Support for SS Marriage			-0.190*	-0.380
			(0.078)	(0.338)
SSM Coverage				0.594*
				(0.193)
Support for SS Marriage × SSM Coverage				-0.126
				(0.563)
Leftist	-0.961*	-1.051*	-1.050*	-1.276*
	(0.032)	(0.038)	(0.054)	(0.059)
Rightist	0.770*	0.727*	0.821*	0.907*
	(0.031)	(0.036)	(0.050)	(0.056)
Protestant/Evangelical	-0.030	-0.044	0.007	-0.117
	(0.034)	(0.042)	(0.052)	(0.061)
No Religion	-0.279*	-0.296*	-0.220*	-0.479*
	(0.045)	(0.050)	(0.068)	(0.075)
Other Religion	-0.014	-0.079	-0.156	-0.499*
	(0.089)	(0.102)	(0.140)	(0.160)
Female	0.137*	0.101*	0.069	0.035
	(0.025)	(0.029)	(0.041)	(0.046)
Household Wealth	0.312*	0.407*	0.309*	0.221
	(0.069)	(0.080)	(0.108)	(0.115)
Education Level	-0.027	0.110	0.112	0.050
	(0.055)	(0.064)	(0.090)	(0.101)
Observations	23,145	14,440	7,522	5,729

Standard errors in parentheses. $*p < .05$. Source: Latinobarometro.

Results from hierarchical models.

References

Abramowitz, Alan I. and Kyle L. Saunders. 1998. "Ideological Realignment in the U.S. Electorate." *Journal of Politics* 60(3):634–52.

Abramowitz, Alan I. and Kyle L. Saunders. 2008. "Is Polarization a Myth?" *Journal of Politics* 70(2):542–55.

Alfaro Redondo, Ronald, Felipe Alpízar Rodríguez, María José Cascante and Jesús Guzmán Castillo. 2018. "Informe de resultados del estudio de opinión sociopolítica." Centro de Investigación y Estudios Políticos, Universidad de Costa Rica.

Ames, Barry and Amy Erica Smith. 2010. "Knowing Left from Right: Ideological Identification in Brazil, 2002-2006." *Journal of Politics in Latin America* 2(3):3–38.

Arroyo, Franklin. 2018. "TSE condena a Conferencia Episcopal y a Alianza Evangélica por amenazar ejercicio libre del voto." *La Teja* . March 6.

Bean, Lydia. 2014. *The Politics of Evangelical Identity: Local Churches and Partisan Divides in the United States and Canada.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Boas, Taylor C. and Amy Erica Smith. 2015. Religion and the Latin American Voter. In *The Latin American Voter*, ed. Ryan E. Carlin, Matthew Singer and Elizabeth Zechmeister. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press pp. 99—-121.

Boas, Taylor C. and Amy Erica Smith. 2019. "Looks Like Me, Thinks Like Me: Descriptive Representation and Opinion Congruence in Brazil." *Latin American Research Review* 54(2):310–328.

Boas, Taylor C., Dino P. Christenson and David M. Glick. 2020. "Recruiting Large Online Samples in the United States and India: Facebook, Mechanical Turk, and Qualtrics." *Political Science Research and Methods* 8:232–250.

Boas, Taylor C., F. Daniel Hidalgo and Marcus André Melo. 2019. "Norms versus Action: Why Voters Fail to Sanction Malfeasance in Brazil." *American Journal of Political Science* 63(2):385–400.

Campbell, Angus, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller and Donald E. Stokes. 1964. *The American Voter.* New York: John Wiley.

Campbell, David E., Geoffrey C. Layman, John C. Green and Nathanael G. Sumaktoyo. 2018. "Putting Politics First: The Impact of Politics on American Religious and Secular Orientations." *American Journal of Political Science* 62(3):551–65.

Carlin, Ryan E., Matthew M. Singer and Elizabeth J. Zechmeister. 2015*a*. Conclusion. In *The Latin American Voter: Pursuing Representation and Accountability in Challenging Contexts*, ed. Ryan E. Carlin, Matthew M. Singer and Elizabeth J. Zechmeister. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press pp. 346–369.

Carlin, Ryan E., Matthew M. Singer and Elizabeth J. Zechmeister, eds. 2015*b*. *The Latin American Voter: Pursuing Representation and Accountability in Challenging Contexts.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Carmines, Edward G. and James A. Stimson. 1980. "The Two Faces of Issue Voting." *American Political Science Review* 74(1):78–91.

Carsey, Thomas M. and Geoffrey C. Layman. 2006. "Changing Sides or Changing Minds? Party Identification and Policy Preferences in the American Electorate." *American Journal of Political Science* 50(2):464–77.

Chhibber, Pradeep K. 1999. *Democracy without Associations: Transformation of the Party System and Social Cleavages in India.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Corral González, Margarita. 2013. "Uneven Representation? Analysis of Democratic Responsiveness in Latin America." Ph.D. dissertation, Vanderbilt University.

Corrales, Javier. 2017. "Understanding the Uneven Spread of LGBT Rights in Latin America and the Caribbean, 1999–2013." *Journal of Research in Gender Studies* 7(1):52–82.

Corrales, Javier. 2020. The Expansion of LGBT Rights in Latin America and the Backlash. In *The Oxford Handbook of Global LGBT and Sexual Diversity Politics*, ed. Michael J. Bosia, Sandra M. McEvoy and Momin Rahman. New York: Oxford University Press.

Costa, Francisco, Angelo Marcantonio Junior and Rudi Rocha de Castro. 2018. "Stop Suffering! Economic Downturns and Pentecostal Upsurge." FGV EPGE Economics Working Papers (Ensaios Economicos da EPGE) 804.

Daby, Mariela and Mason Moseley. Forthcoming. "Feminist Mobilization and the Abortion Debate in Latin America: Lessons from Argentina." *Politics & Gender* .

Dancey, Logan and Paul Goren. 2010. "Party Identification, Issue Attitudes, and the Dynamics of Political Debate." *American Journal of Political Science* 54(3):689–99.

Djupe, Paul A. and Christopher P. Gilbert. 2009. *The Political Influence of Churches.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Díez, Jordi. 2015. *The Politics of Gay Marriage in Latin America: Argentina, Chile, and Mexico.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Encarnación, Omar Guillermo. 2016. *Out in the Periphery: Latin America's Gay Rights Revolution.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Fiorina, Morris P., Samuel J. Abrams and Jeremy C. Pope. 2005. *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America.* New York: Pearson Education, Inc.

Freston, Paul. 2008. *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Latin America.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Friedman, Elisabeth Jay. 2009. "Gender, Sexuality and the Latin American Left: Testing the Transformation." *Third World Quarterly* 30(2):415–433.

Gaskins, Ben, Matt Golder and David A. Siegel. 2013. "Religious Participation, Social Conservatism, and Human Development." *Journal of Politics* 75(4):1125–1141.

Goren, Paul and Christopher Chapp. 2017. "Moral Power: How Public Opinion on Culture War Issues Shapes Partisan Predispositions and Religious Orientations." *American Political Science Review* 111(1):110–28.

Grossman, Guy. 2015. "Renewalist Christianity and the Political Saliency of LGBTs: Theory and Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa." *Journal of Politics* 77(2):337–351.

Hainmueller, Jens, Daniel J. Hopkins and Teppei Yamamoto. 2014. "Causal Inference in Conjoint Analysis: Understanding Multidimensional Choices via Stated Preference Experiments." *Political Analysis* 22(1):1–30.

Hetherington, Marc J. 2001. "Resurgent Mass Partisanship: The Role of Elite Polarization." *American Political Science Review* 95(3):619–31.

Htun, Mala Nani. 2003. *Sex and the State: Abortion, Divorce, and the Family Under Latin American Dictatorships and Democracies.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Hunter, James Davison. 1992. *Culture Wars: The Struggle To Control The Family, Art, Education, Law, And Politics In America.* New York: Basic Books.

Inglehart, Ronald and Christian Welzel. 2005. *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Klar, Samara. 2014. "Partisanship in a Social Setting." *American Journal of Political Science* 58(3):687–704.

Layman, Geoffrey C. and John C. Green. 2006. "Wars and Rumours of Wars: The Contexts of Cultural Conflict in American Political Behaviour." *British Journal of Political Science* 36(1):61–89.

Layman, Geoffrey C. and Thomas M. Carsey. 2002. "Party Polarization and 'Conflict Extension' in the American Electorate." *American Journal of Political Science* 46(4):786–802.

Levendusky, Matthew S. 2009*a*. "The Microfoundations of Mass Polarization." *Political Analysis* 17(2):162–76.

Levendusky, Matthew S. 2009*b*. *The Partisan Sort: How Liberals Became Democrats and Conservatives Became Republicans.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Levendusky, Matthew S., James N. Druckman and Audrey McLain. 2016. "How Group Discussions Create Strong Attitudes and Strong Partisans." *Research & Politics* 3(2).

Levitsky, Steven, James Loxton, Brandon Van Dyck and Jorge I. Domínguez, eds. 2016. *Challenges of Party-Building in Latin America.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Lupu, Noam. 2016. *Party Brands in Crisis: Partisanship, Brand Dilution, and the Breakdown of Political Parties in Latin America.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Maia, Lucas de Abreu, Albert Chiu and Scott Desposato. 2020. "Persuaded by Policy: Public Opinion Responses to Granting LGBT Rights in Latin America." Social Science Research Network working paper 3535833, https://ssrn.com/abstract=3535833.

Mainwaring, Scott, ed. 2018. *Party Systems in Latin America: Institutionalization, Decay, and Collapse.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Malloy, Jonathan. 2017. "Political Opportunity Structures, Evangelical Christians and Morality Politics in Canada, Australia and New Zealand." *Australian Journal of Political Science* 52(3):402–18.

Marcus-Delgado, Jane. 2019. *The Politics of Abortion in Latin America: Public Debates, Private Lives.* Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Margolis, Michele F. 2018. *From Politics to the Pews: How Partisanship and the Political Environment Shape Religious Identity.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Martin, David. 1990. *Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Mason, Lilliana. 2018. *Uncivil Agreement: How Politics Became Our Identity.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mason, Lilliana and Julie Wronski. 2018. "One Tribe to Bind Them All: How Our Social Group Attachments Strengthen Partisanship." *Political Psychology* 39(S1):257–77.

McAdams, Erin S. and Justin Earl Lance. 2013. "Religion's Impact on the Divergent Political Attitudes of Evangelical Protestants in the United States and Brazil." *Politics and Religion* 6(3):483–511.

Norris, Pippa and Ronald Inglehart. 2011. *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics worldwide.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Pew Research Center. 2014. "Religion in Latin America: Widespread Change in a Historically Catholic Region.".

Putnam, Robert D. and David E. Campbell. 2012. *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us.* New York: Simon and Schuster.

Rennó, Lucio R. 2020. "The Bolsonaro Voter: Issue Positions and Vote Choice in the 2018 Brazilian Presidential Elections." *Latin American Politics and Society* pp. 1–23.

Robbins, Joel. 2004. "The Globalization of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33:117–43.

Samuels, David J. and Cesar Zucco. 2018. *Partisans, Antipartisans, and Nonpartisans: Voting Behavior in Brazil.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Smilde, David. 2007. *Reason to Believe: Cultural Agency in Latin American Evangelicalism.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Smith, Amy Erica. 2019. *Religion and Brazilian democracy: Mobilizing the people of God.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Smith, Amy Erica and Robin Globus Veldman. 2020. "Evangelical Environmentalists? Evidence from Brazil." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 59(2):341–59.

Stevens, Daniel, Benjamin G. Bishin and Robert R. Barr. 2006. "Authoritarian Attitudes, Democracy, and Policy Preferences among Latin American Elites." *American Journal of Political Science* 50(3):606–620.

Wald, Kenneth D., Dennis E. Owen and Samuel S. Hill. 1988. "Churches as Political Communities." *American Political Science Review* 82(2):531–48.

Wald, Kenneth D., Dennis E. Owen and Samuel S. Hill. 1990. "Political Cohesion in Churches." *Journal of Politics* 52(1):197–215.

Wiesehomeier, Nina and Kenneth Benoit. 2009. "Presidents, Parties, and Policy Competition." *Journal of Politics* 71(4):1435–1447.

Zechmeister, Elizabeth J. and Margarita Corral. 2013. "Individual and Contextual Constraints on Ideological Labels in Latin America." *Comparative Political Studies* 46(6):675–701.

Zúñiga Ramírez, César. 2018. Costa Rica: el Poder Evangélico en una Democracia Estable. In *Evangélicos y poder en América Latina*, ed. José Luis Pérez Guadalupe and Sebastian Grundberger. Lima: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung/Instituto de Estudios Social Cristianos pp. 247–282.

Appendix:

Religion, Sexuality Politics, and the Transformation of Latin American Electorates

Amy Erica Smith and Taylor Boas

August 23, 2020

1 Sexuality Politics vs. Other Issues in Campaigns

In the main text, we note that leftist and rightist candidates reliably stake out opposing positions on economic redistribution and crime and security, but they have not consistently done so with sexuality politics. Figure 1 summarizes data from the Comparative Manifestos Project on party programs in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Mexico from 1988–2018.[1] While there is a lot of variation in stance on the welfare state, and a moderate amount on law and order, parties in these countries have rarely adopted contrasting positions—or even said much at all—about issues of "traditional morality," including divorce, abortion, and the separation of church and state. Forty-four percent of programs say nothing about these issues, versus 8% that ignore law and order and only 1% that say nothing about the welfare state.

2 Gaps in Key Issue Attitudes, by Religion

Below we present results from a series of multivariate models of four issue attitudes from the AmericasBarometer data. Measurement of these attitudes—support for reducing inequality, getting tough on crime, same-sex marriage, and therapeutic abortion—is discussed in the main text. In addition to controlling for religious affiliation and church attendance, these models also include controls for gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, education, size of place of residence, age, and year (a time-trend, with '1' = the 2012 wave, and '4' = the 2018/19 wave). Models of same-sex marriage and economic views are estimated using OLS, while models of abortion and crime views are estimated using logistic regression.

Appendix Table 1 shows the independent effects of church attendance and religious affiliation on each of the four attitudes. To assess in greater detail how religious groups' attitudes

---

[1]We omit Mexican party programs prior to 1988, as well as those from Bolivia in 2009 and 2014 and Uruguay in 2014, in order to analyze a similar time period for a common set of countries. No other Latin American countries are covered in the 2019b release of the Manifesto Project Dataset.

Figure 1: Issue Dimensions in Party Programs, 1988–2018
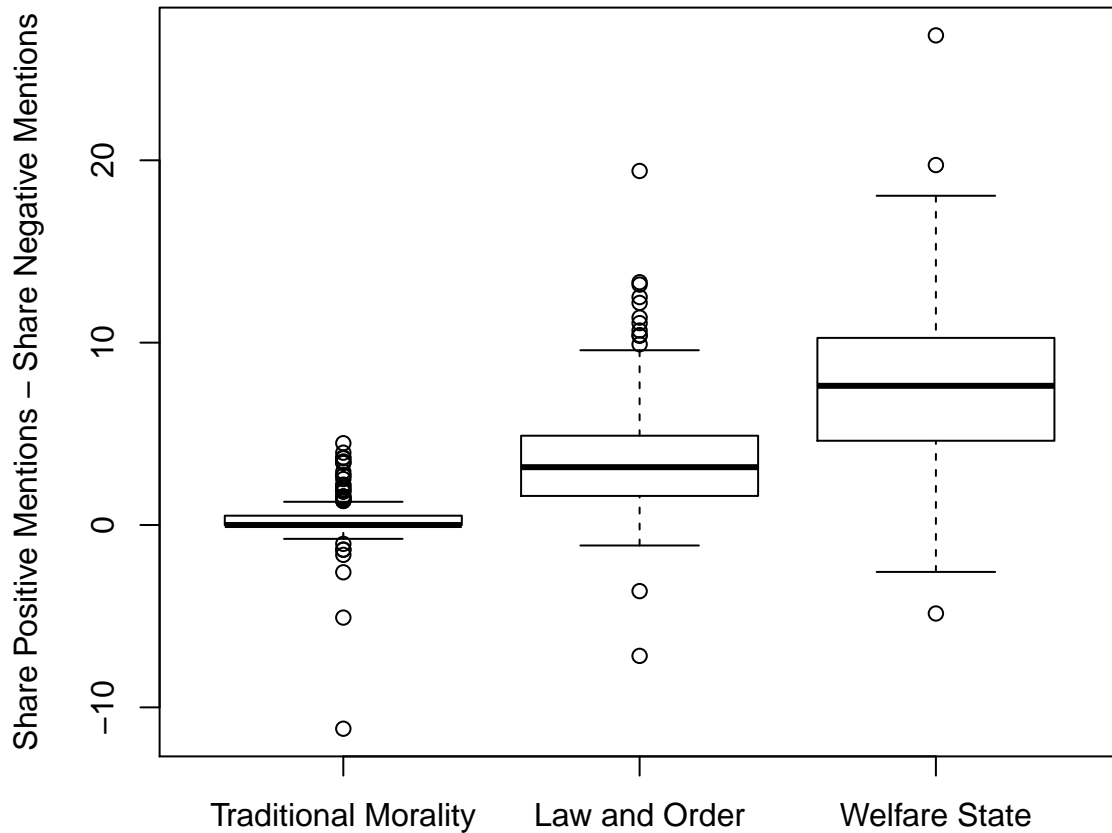
Data are drawn from the Comparative Manifestos Project for all party programs from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Mexico, 1988–2018.

vary across the range of church attendance, Appendix Figures 2, 3, 4, and 5 show the predicted values of the various dependent variable, based on models in which religious affiliation and church attendance are interacted with each other.[2] Interactive analysis is particularly important because of the very large differences between Catholics and evangelicals in church attendance. Only ten percent of Catholics report attending church more than once a week and another 28 percent weekly, while 41 percent of evangelicals/Protestants report attending church more than weekly, and another 27 percent weekly.

On economic redistribution and crime, religious variables are actually associated with

---

[2]Confidence intervals in the figures are suppressed for the sake of legibility.

somewhat more progressive views. Support for state action to reduce inequality is uncorrelated with church attendance, but Protestants and evangelicals hold very slightly more progressive views than do Catholics. The interactive results in Figure 2 confirm that the church attendance is uncorrelated with attitudes among either religious group. Turning to crime attitudes, we find larger religious effects. Both church attendance and Protestant (versus Catholic) religious affiliation reduce the likelihood a respondent would say that the state needed to get tougher on crime. As Figure 3 shows, the negative effect of church attendance is found within all three religious groups, and evangelicals are significantly more progressive than Catholics across the range of church attendance.

Considering the two sexuality politics attitudes, by contrast, religious variables are associated with more conservative views. First, Table 1 shows that church attendance substantially depresses both support for same-sex marriage and support for therapeutic abortion. In addition, in the non-interactive results, Protestant and evangelicals are significantly more conservative than Catholics on both issues. However, the interactive analysis confirms that, once we take into account more fully the differences in church attendance between Catholics and Protestants, there is a large inter-affiliation gap in same-sex marriage attitudes, and no inter-affiliation gap in abortion attitudes. At the high end of church attendance, the predicted probability of Catholics supporting therapeutic abortion is 0.55 and the predicted probability of Protestants doing so is 0.53; this difference is far from statistically significant. By contrast, among those attending church more than weekly, the predicted value of support for same-sex marriage is 0.24 among Catholics and 0.15 among Protestants. Gaps by religious affiliation are largest among those who say they never attend church: Protestant non-attenders rate same-sex marriage a 0.29, Catholics a 0.46, and those with no religion a 0.52. Still, the pattern of religious gaps is such that a Catholic who attends church more than weekly is almost as liberal on same-sex marriage as a Protestant who never attends church.

4

Table 1: Determinants of Issue Attitudes, AmericasBarometer

|	Reduce Inequality	"Mano Dura" Support	Support for SSM	Abortion Support
Church Attendance	-0.004	-0.462*	-0.210*	-0.522*
	(0.005)	(0.044)	(0.007)	(0.044)
Protestant/Evangelical	0.017*	-0.174*	-0.115*	-0.081*
	(0.004)	(0.035)	(0.006)	(0.034)
No Religion	0.036*	-0.375*	0.066*	0.233*
	(0.006)	(0.053)	(0.009)	(0.051)
Other Religion	0.021*	-0.337*	-0.022	0.129
	(0.009)	(0.072)	(0.012)	(0.069)
Female	-0.004	0.086*	0.096*	0.048
	(0.003)	(0.025)	(0.004)	(0.026)
Mestizo	0.007	0.008	-0.072*	0.026
	(0.004)	(0.033)	(0.006)	(0.034)
Indigenous	-0.013	-0.395*	-0.041*	0.203*
	(0.007)	(0.061)	(0.010)	(0.058)
Black	0.021*	-0.024	-0.030*	0.046
	(0.008)	(0.066)	(0.012)	(0.064)
Mulatto	0.027*	-0.156*	0.017	0.223*
	(0.007)	(0.063)	(0.011)	(0.062)
Other	-0.043*	-0.312*	-0.079*	-0.131*
	(0.008)	(0.061)	(0.010)	(0.060)
Household Wealth	0.015	-0.394*	0.230*	0.549*
	(0.009)	(0.074)	(0.012)	(0.071)
Education Level	0.036*	-0.742*	0.047*	0.703*
	(0.007)	(0.060)	(0.010)	(0.060)
Size of Locality	0.006	-0.127*	-0.031*	-0.062
	(0.005)	(0.046)	(0.008)	(0.041)
Age 26-35	0.006	-0.139*	-0.061*	0.080
	(0.005)	(0.042)	(0.008)	(0.043)
36-45	0.005	-0.190*	-0.086*	0.227*
	(0.005)	(0.043)	(0.008)	(0.044)
46-55	0.002	-0.306*	-0.103*	0.176*
	(0.005)	(0.046)	(0.008)	(0.047)
56-65	0.003	-0.330*	-0.124*	0.127*
	(0.006)	(0.051)	(0.009)	(0.053)
66+	-0.007	-0.395*	-0.156*	0.041
	(0.007)	(0.056)	(0.010)	(0.056)
Time Trend	-0.040*	0.316*	0.006*	0.062*
	(0.002)	(0.013)	(0.002)	(0.013)
Constant	0.811*	1.111*	0.351*	-0.377*
	(0.011)	(0.087)	(0.015)	(0.089)
Observations	34081	28954	27005	26795

Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < .05$

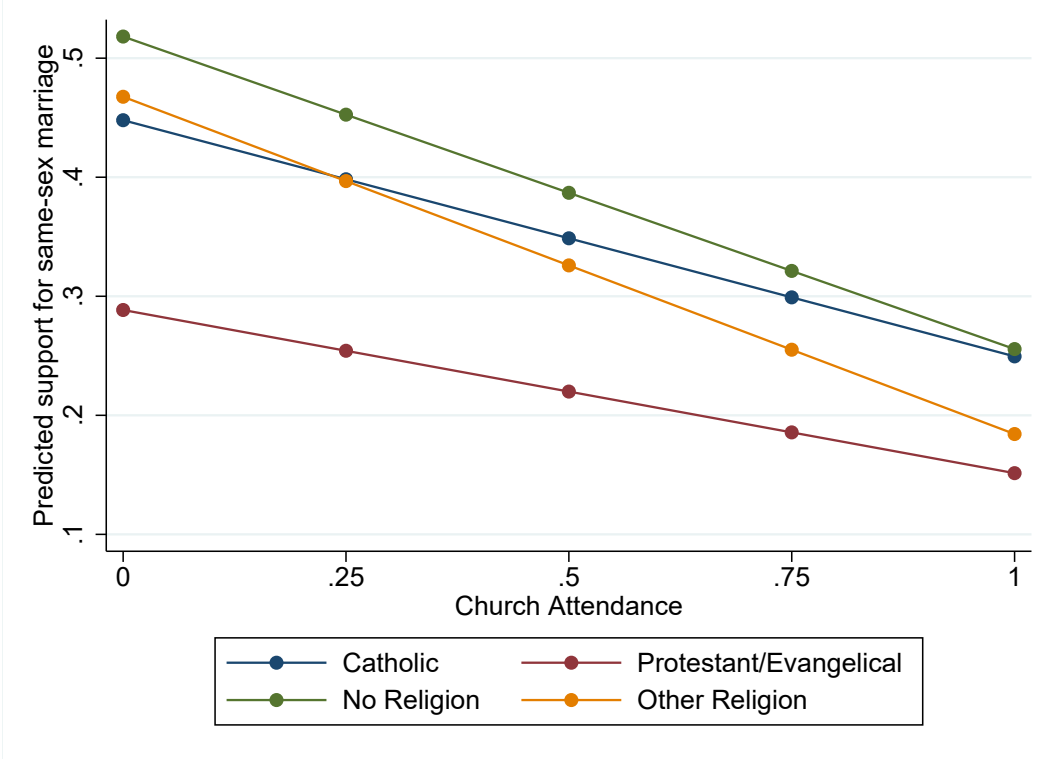Figure 2: Support for Economic Redistribution, by Religious Affiliation and Attendance
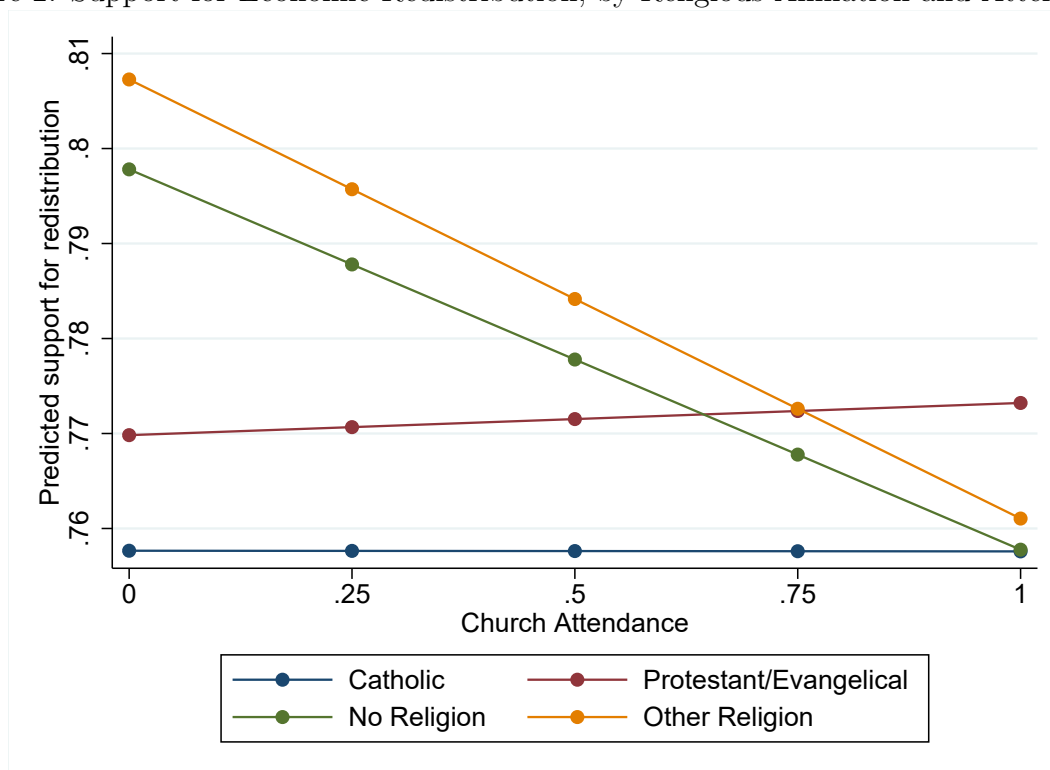
Source: Americasbarometer 2012–2018/19. Estimates based on full multivariate model.

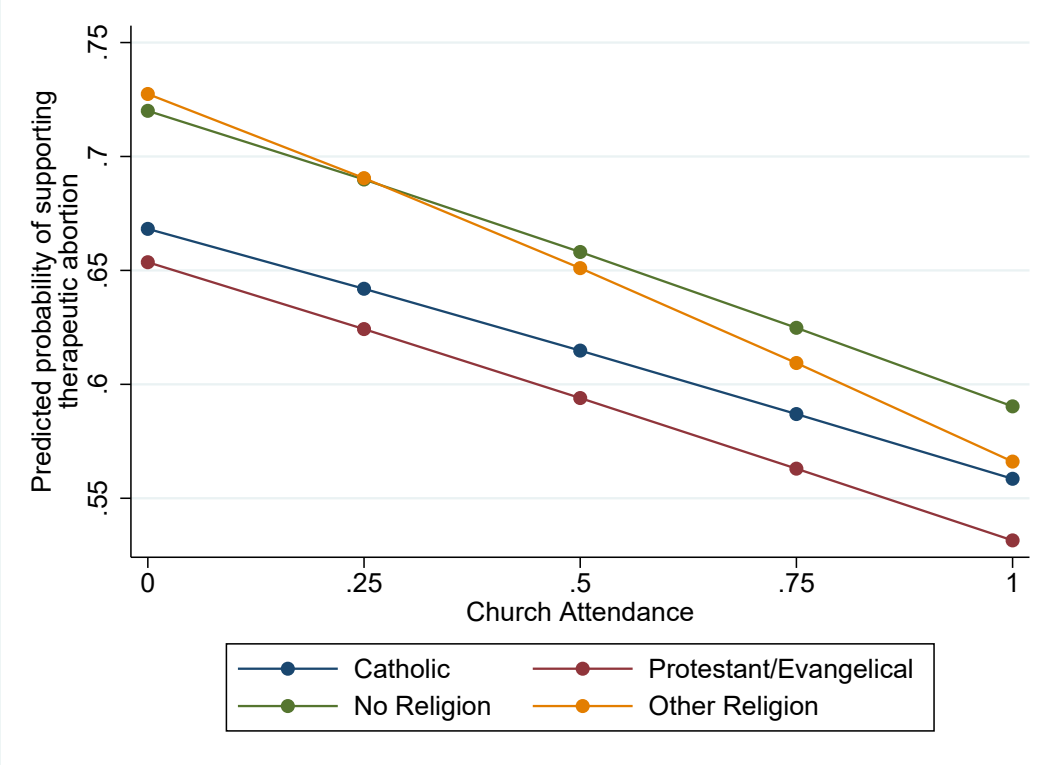Figure 3: Support for "Mano Dura" Approach to Crime, by Religious Affiliation and Attendance
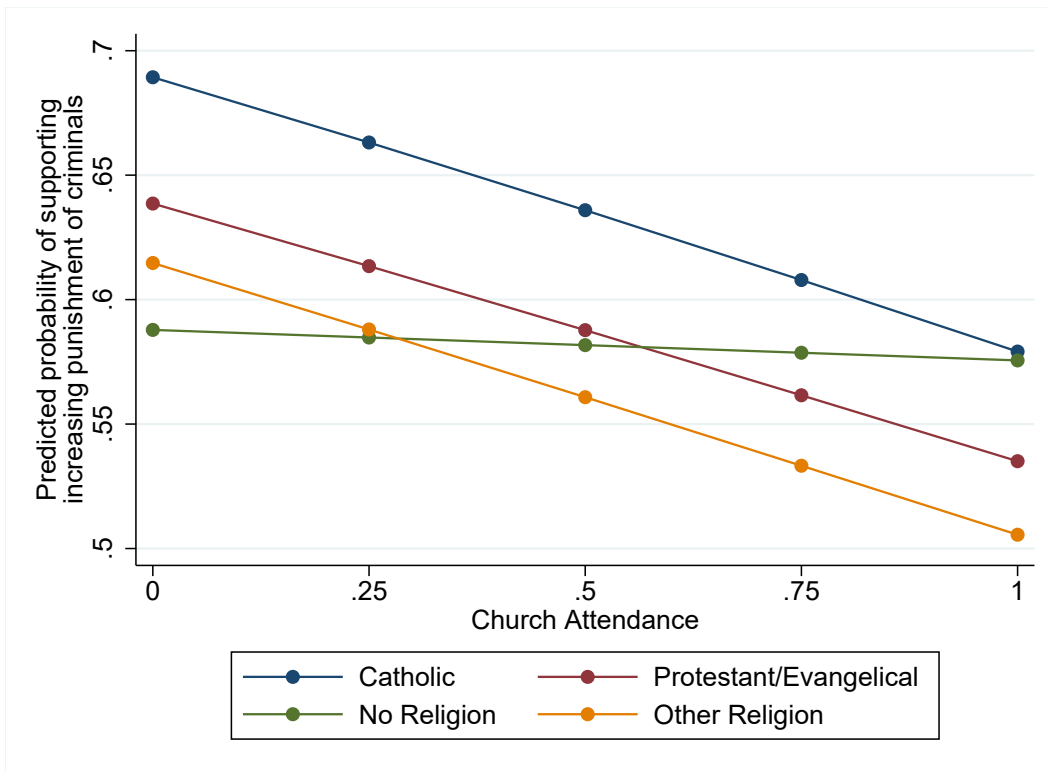
Source: Americasbarometer 2012–2018/19. Estimates based on full multivariate model.

Figure 4: Support for Same Sex Marriage, by Religious Affiliation and Attendance

Figure 5: Support for Therapeutic Abortion, by Religious Affiliation and Attendance


Source: Americasbarometer 2012–2018/19. Estimates based on full multivariate model.

3 Conjoint Experiment Results with Strict Agreement on Abortion

In the online surveys, respondents were allowed to choose among three positions on abortion—legalization, the status quo, or a full abortion ban—but in the conjoint experiment, candidate positions were only randomized between the latter two options. Hence, in the analysis presented in the main text, those who favor legalized abortion are treated as agreeing with candidates who support the status who. When we analyze the conjoint experiment only for the subset of respondents who could perfectly match candidate positions—that is, those who favor the status quo or a full abortion ban—we obtain slightly smaller coefficient estimates for abortion, as shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Effects of Strict Policy Agreement on Vote Choice: Conjoint Experiment
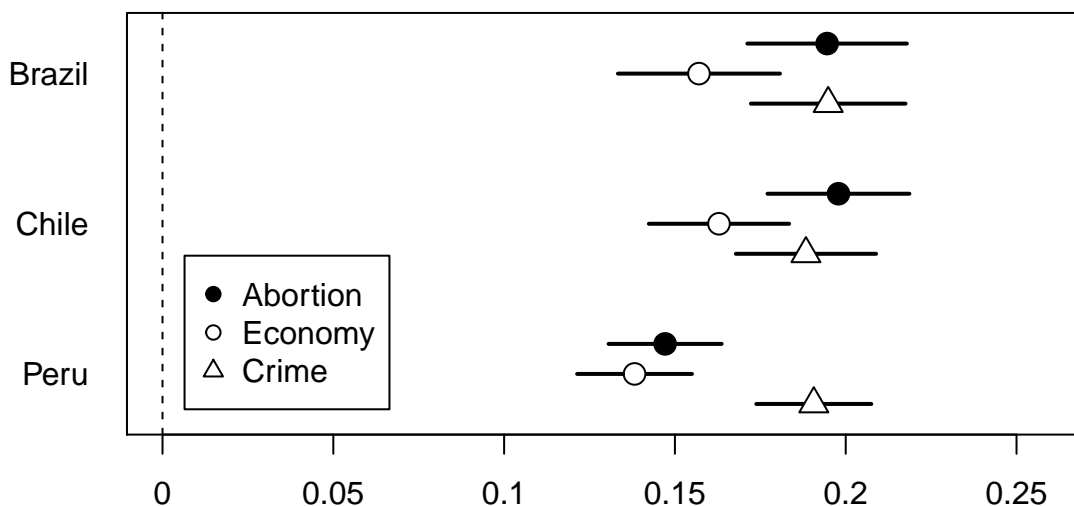
Dependent variable is an indicator for voting for the candidate; independent variables are indicators for policy agreement on each issue. Icons give point estimates and lines give two-sided 95 percent confidence intervals. Standard errors are clustered on the respondent. The sample is limited to respondents who support the status quo on abortion or a full abortion ban, both of which were positions that candidate profiles could take on.

4 Coding Ideology of Presidential Candidates

The straightforward decision rules summarized in the main text sufficed for assigning an ideology score to the majority of presidential candidates. In some cases, scores did not exist for candidates who had changed parties or run as independents, so we used their most recent party or coalition for which we had a score, as summarized below:

- Sergio Masa (Argentina 2015, United for a New Alternative): assigned the score of the Justicialist Party, which he left in 2013

- Jair Bolsonaro (Brazil 2018, Social Liberal Party): assigned the score of the Social Christian Party, which he left in 2018

- Marco Enríquez-Ominami (Chile 2009, Independent): assigned the score of the Socialist Party, which he left in 2009

- José Antonio Kast (Chile 2017, Independent): assigned the score of the Independent Democracy Union, which he left in 2016

- Juan Diego Castro Fernández (Costa Rica 2018, National Integration Party): assigned the score of the National Liberation Party, which he left in 2014

- Verónika Mendoza (Peru 2016, Broad Front): assigned the score of Peru Wins, the coalition with which she was elected to Congress in 2011

- Pedro Pablo Kuczynski (Peru 2016, Peruvians for Change): assigned the score of Alliance for the Great Change, the coalition with which he ran for president in 2011

The only major candidate (with greater than 5% vote share according to the Americas-Barometer surveys) that could not be scored via this approach was Beatriz Sánchez of the Broad Front in Chile's 2017 election. None of the coalition's small component parties had

ever been scored, and Sánchez had no history as a politician and hence no former party. We assigned her the mean ideological self-placement of those who voted for her and have the highest level of interest in politics. This results in a score of 2.9, placing her to the left of every candidate in that election except the Communist candidate, which seems plausible.