

The Contours of Left-Right Disagreement in Western European and Anglo-American Democracies: Right-Wing Fragmentation and Left-Wing Coherence in Comparative Perspective*

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***Abstract:** This paper explores the fragmentation of the political right and the coherence of the political left on three dimensions of left-right disagreement in twenty-one Western European and Anglo-American countries. Drawing on expert survey data from Benoit and Laver (2006), the analysis indicates that party positions on wealth redistribution, immigration and social liberalism are organized coherently among parties on the left, but not among parties on the right. The second stage of the analysis turns to individual-level public opinion data from the European Social Survey. The results of this analysis indicate that left-right opinions are not organized coherently in the population as a whole. The final section of the paper offers explanations for right-wing fragmentation, left-wing coherence, and the disconnect that exists between the organization of party policies, on the one hand, and the patterns of public opinion on the other.*

The fragmentation of the political right altered the patterns of electoral competition in many countries throughout the 1990s (Cochrane & Nevitte, 2007; Rydgren, 2005; Laycock, 2002; Schain, Zolberg, & Hossay, 2002; Betz & Immerfall, 1998; Karapin, 1998; Kitschelt & McGann, 1997; Ignazi, 1992). In Canada, this fragmentation occurred with the emergence of the populist Reform party and their successor, the Canadian Alliance. In Europe, traditional right-wing parties from Finland to Greece were flanked on the far-right by the rise of political parties whose populist anti-immigration appeals made considerable electoral headway in a number of countries. And “new right” parties also appeared in the 1990s in Australia and New Zealand (Johnson, 1998; Miller, 1998). Despite the positioning of these new parties on the political right, their patterns of social support are peculiar. In several countries, these parties draw heavily from segments of the population—young people, blue-collar workers, and those with lower levels of formal education and religiosity—who are traditionally supporters of left-wing, rather than right-wing, parties (Ivarsflaten 2005, 474-478; McGann & Kitschelt 2005, 154-157; Lubbers, Gusberts, & Scheepers 2002, 347, 364; Kitschelt & McGann 1995, 75-76).¹ In these contexts,

* Paper prepared for the 80th Annual Conference of the Canadian Political Science Association, Vancouver, BC (June 6th, 2008).

new right parties are as much of a threat to the traditional support bases of parties on the center and the left. The standard spatial model of party competition across a single left-right dimension has failed to capture the effects of new right parties on the dynamics of partisan competition.

This paper examines the patterns of public opinion and party competition in Anglo-American and Western European countries on three dimensions of left-right disagreement: wealth redistribution, immigration, and gay rights. The analysis is divided into three parts. The first stage draws on Benoit and Laver's (2006) survey of experts about the policy positioning of political parties. The results of this analysis indicate that party policies on the economic, social and immigration dimensions are organized coherently across parties on the left, but not across parties on the right. The second part of the analysis turns to public opinion data from the European Social Survey (R Jowell and the Central Co-ordinating Team, 2007). The results of this analysis indicate that many citizens bundle their opinions about wealth redistribution, immigration and gay rights in ways that oppose directly the patterns of party competition on these issues. And the third part of the analysis addresses two questions: Why are right-wing parties more diversified than left-wing parties when it comes to their positioning on the economic, immigration and social dimensions? And why is there a scarcity of political parties who couple support for wealth redistribution with opposition to gay rights and immigration? In short, the mystery is not simply why right-wing parties are fragmented, but why left-wing parties are not.

I. Theory

There are three theoretical assumptions that may be helpful for explaining left-wing coherence and right-wing fragmentation. First, public opinion is multidimensional. On the aggregate, the opinions that are associated with left-right self-placement across the advanced industrial world are, at best, loosely connected to one another (Cochrane & Nevitte, 2008, 10-11). Support for wealth redistribution is unconnected to opinions about abortion, gay rights, and immigration. And even where left-right opinions are connected, the nature of the relationship is often multifaceted. Animosity toward gays and lesbians, for instance, correlates strongly with

opposition to abortion. And opinions about gays and lesbians are related as well to opinions about immigrants. But opinions about immigrants are weakly if at all related to opinions about abortion. These patterns of relationships are not counter-intuitive. On the one hand, there is nothing about religiosity that drives anti-immigrant animosity, even though religiosity is powerfully connected to opinions about homosexuality and abortion. And there is nothing about out-group hostility that affects opinions about abortion, even though it affects opinions about gays and lesbians and immigrants. In short, there are influences on public opinion that can generate a nexus of opinion dimensions for an individual or a group, but these opinions are nonetheless conceptualized as belonging to different dimensions.²

A second postulate is that a single opinion can have more than one cause, and a single cause can affect more than one opinion. Thus, two individuals may share the same opinion for entirely different reasons, and the same individual may hold two or more opinions for precisely the same reason. Consider the example from above. Two individuals may express animosity toward gays and lesbians. For one of these individuals, their opinion about gays and lesbians is derived from a general animosity toward people who are different from themselves. And for the other individual, their opinion about gays and lesbians is rooted in their devotion to religious precepts that proscribe homosexuality. Thus, two individuals share the same opinion but for different reasons. Yet, religion and out-group animosity affect more than one opinion. The first individual holds hostile opinions about immigrants that are derived from the same source as their opinions about gays and lesbians: out-group animosity. And the second individual holds opinions about homosexuality and abortion that are similarly derived from a single source: religion. In this case, then, two individuals agree in their opinion about gays and lesbians, but disagree in their opinions about abortion and immigration.

The third assumption is that political parties are groups of individuals who are subject to the same kinds of influences that apply throughout the population more generally. From an analytical distance, it seems reasonable to suppose that the interests of political parties are intimately associated with vote seeking and electoral success (Downs 1965). Upon closer inspection, however, this intuition is less obvious. A political party is a conglomeration of leaders, activists, strategists and donors with shared and opposing objectives about the purpose and direction of the party. If interests, beliefs and predispositions influence the opinions of

voters in the electorate, then it seems reasonable to suppose that these influences bear down on the opinions of party activists as well. From this vantage point, political parties do not look like singular actors navigating strategically in an environment of inter-party competition. Indeed, it is problematic to suppose that the interests of actors within a party are unconditionally welded to the electoral success of the party itself. Partisan activists are unlikely to support “strategic moves” by their political party that include abandoning the range of policy positions that these activists advocate. As Kitschelt (1994, 207) explains: “Once parties are viewed as miniature political systems with contending actors, electoral strategies may make sense when they would not if parties were unitary actors. Party organization and internal politics affect a party’s effort to seek votes as well as its strategic view of office seeking and coalition building with other parties”. Party competition is a multi-level game involving the opinion dynamics of the population, internal party politics, and the positioning and manoeuvring of partisan competitors.

Taken together, these assumptions generate an image of an opinion universe where multiple dimensions intersect in unique ways for different individuals and groups. The conceptualization of public opinion as multidimensional has standalone implications for the standard spatial model of party competition.³ Yet, as the remainder of the paper argues, these assumptions combine to shed insight on the coherence of left-wing parties, the fragmentation of right-wing parties, and the disconnect that exists between voters and parties when it comes to the organization of opinions and policies about wealth redistribution, immigration, and social morality.

II. Data and Methodology

The first part of the analysis draws on Benoit and Laver’s (2006) survey of experts about the policy positions of political parties. Benoit and Laver (2006) surveyed a total of 1031 political scientists and national political experts from Western European and Anglo-American countries. Each expert was asked to locate the positions of the political parties in their country on a common battery of policy dimensions. These data are useful in research designs where it is

necessary to treat the policies of a political party as potentially different than the opinions of the party's supporters in the electorate (see also Lau, Andersen, & Redlawsk 2008). The current analysis focuses in particular on party positions in 21 countries along three dimensions of left-right disagreement: "taxes versus spending", "immigration" and "social liberalism".⁴ The research strategy is comparative in order to disentangle the broader trends in party positioning from the strategic patterns of competition and social alliances that prevail from time to time in individual countries (Kitschelt & McGann 1995; Gourevitch 1986).⁵

The second part of the analysis turns to individual-level survey evidence from the European Social Survey. The European Social Survey is a biennial survey, beginning in 2002, which gauges the beliefs and socioeconomic circumstances of representative national samples of European publics. The downside of using data from the European Social Survey is that it excludes from this stage of the analysis the four non-European countries: Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States.⁶ Even so, the benefits of the European Social Survey outweigh these costs. These surveys measure a standard battery of socio-demographic information, including age, sex, religiosity, occupation, income, and years of formal education. The surveys also include questions that gauge respondents' opinions about wealth redistribution, gay rights, and immigration by people of a different race.⁷ In short, the European Social Survey covers the full range of variables that are critically important for testing the main arguments of this paper.

A complicating factor to consider, however, is that the policy positions of political parties in the expert surveys are measured somewhat differently than are the beliefs of respondents in the European Social Survey. On the one hand, expert assessments of party positions are relative and context specific. A party's position on any given dimension is in part a comparison of that party to the other parties in the country.⁸ Individual self-placement on the left-right continuum is similarly relative. Citizens appear to locate themselves in left-right space by comparing their own opinions to the opinions of their co-nationals. Figure 1, for example, summarizes the distributions of parties and voters across the left-right continuum. The dots along the x-axes correspond to the assessments of experts about the positioning of each party. And the line in the figures represents the percentage of individuals who identify at each point along the left-right continuum. Thus, the first finding in Figure 1 is that the positioning of political parties is relative and contextual. There is some evidence of leftward and rightward skews (e.g., Germany and

Portugal, respectively), but the parties in each country are by and large distributed symmetrically to the left and right of the political center. Indeed, individual self-placement is also symmetrical. Despite cross-national differences in the left-right values of national publics (Nevitte & Gibbins, 1990, 48), respondents in each country tend to spread in similar ways across the left-right spectrum. Notice that in 17 of the 21 countries, the mean (μ) position of respondents is within a half-point of center on the eleven-point scale of left-right. In this respect, the expert assessments of parties share a syndrome with the left-right self-placements of individuals: the judgments involve reference points that vary across countries. The standard of measurement is similar (Cochrane & Nevitte 2008, 5-6), but the “targets” are different (Benoit and Laver 2006, 93).

Figure 1 Here

On the other hand, the beliefs of individuals are absolute; not relative. The European Social Survey asks respondents for their thoughts about wealth redistribution, immigration, and gay rights. The survey does not ask respondents to compare their own positions on these issues to the median voter in their country. Balancing individual-level opinions on a scale with party positions is therefore tantamount to comparing the absolute opinions of citizens to the relative positions of parties. Indeed, the evidence in Section IV suggests that individuals are not distributed symmetrically in their opinions about wealth redistribution and gay rights. The challenge, therefore, is to treat likes alike by comparing the relative positions of parties to the relative opinions of individuals.

The analysis addresses this challenge in two ways. First, multinomial logistic (MNL) regression models are specified to predict individual-level opinions about each of the dependent variables of interest: income equality, immigration, and gay rights.⁹ One hypothesis is that socioeconomic influences pull opinions about these issues into bundles that are altogether different than the patterns of party competition. Thus, each model includes the following covariates: age, sex, income, formal education, religiosity, ethnic minority status, unemployment, union membership, and occupation. The models also include a measure of abstract egalitarianism. And dichotomous country variables are included to control for potentially unspecified cross-national differences. Finally, the individual observations from the pooled samples in the models are weighted to offset the uneven probabilities of selection that

arise, first, from survey design effects and, second, from the discrepancies between the sizes of national samples and the sizes of national populations.¹⁰

The second part of the strategy turns to *CLARIFY* simulations of the regression parameters by taking 10 000 random draws of the point estimates of these parameters from each of the samples (King, Tomz, & Wittenberg, 2000). This approach transforms the MNL estimates into the more intuitive language of (predicted) probabilities. And the simulations make it possible to compare the probability of a particular opinion among individuals in different demographic groups to the probability of that opinion when all variables are set at their mean level (i.e., the “average citizen”). It is therefore possible to plot in multidimensional space the orbit of different groups around the median European voter. Taken together, this approach facilitates an examination of the relative positions of voters and the relative positions of parties.

III. The Organization of Party Policies

Political parties are distributed somewhat unevenly across the immigration and social liberalism dimensions. About sixty percent of the parties are to the left of the center (i.e., <10.5) on each of these dimensions. On the economic dimension, however, the parties divide symmetrically to the left and right of the centre. There are 81 parties on the economic left (53%); 72 parties on the economic right (47%).¹¹ Nevertheless, party policies on the economic, social and immigration dimensions are firmly intertwined. The correlations (Pearson’s r) between positions on the economic dimension and positions on the social and immigration dimensions are .59 and .73, respectively. The correlation between party policies on the immigration and social dimensions is even stronger: .82. These relationships can be illustrated in another way: moving ten points to the right on the economic dimension is associated, on average, with a seven point increase in social conservatism and an eight point increase in anti-immigration. Similarly, there is a nine point increase in social conservatism that accompanies each ten points rightward on the immigration dimension.¹²

A closer inspection of party policies, however, reveals that the strength of the linkages between these dimensions varies systematically across the political spectrum. Figure 2.A plots the positions of parties on the economic (x-axis) and immigration (y-axis) dimensions. Political parties that combine their policy positions into “left-left” packages are in the bottom-left

quadrant of the plane; parties with “right-right” packages are in the top-right quadrant. Thus, the axis of “left-right” disagreement runs diagonally from the bottom-left to the top-right corner in the graph. Linear (OLS) regression estimates of the magnitudes of the relationships are provided underneath the Figure.¹³ Notice how the positions of political parties—the dots in the graph—appear to trend diagonally from the bottom-left to the upper-right. The OLS estimates confirm this observation: the line of best fit begins at 2.4 on the y-axis when tax/spend is at one (i.e., $1.53 + 1(.878) = 2.4$), and it slopes upward to 19.1 on the y-axis when tax/spend is at twenty (i.e., $1.53 + 20(.878) = 19.1$). Yet, note as well that the parties on the economic left are clustered together, and the parties on the economic right are comparatively dispersed. As positioning on the economic dimension moves from left to right, the distance between the points in the graph increases substantially. The interpretation is straightforward. Immigration and economic policies are bundled tightly by parties on the left. But the immigration policies of political parties on the economic right are spread more evenly across the left-right continuum.¹⁴

Figure 2.A Here

The results summarized in Figure 2.B reflect a more pronounced version of the same pattern. Party positions on the economic dimension are summarized along the x-axis, and the y-axis corresponds to policy positions on the social liberalism dimension. Notice, first, that the regression line runs from the southwest to the northeast quadrant: the line begins at 3.1 on the social liberalism scale when tax/spend is at one (i.e., $2.36 + 1(.721) = 3.081$), and it ends at 16.8 on the social liberalism scale when tax/spend is at twenty (i.e., $2.36 + 20(.721) = 16.78$). In this case, however, the discrepancy between the coherence of the economic left, on the one hand, and the fragmentation of the economic right, on the other, is even more striking. Notice how the left-wing parties are huddled together in the bottom left quadrant. Compare this cluster of left-wing parties to their counterparts on the economic right: the social policies of right-wing parties are strewn across the left-right continuum. Indeed, of the twenty-eight parties on the far economic right (i.e., ≥ 15), forty percent of them are to the left of center in their social policies. By comparison, not one of the thirty parties on the far economic left (i.e., ≤ 5) is to the right of center in its social policies. There is, in short, a clear left-left pattern, but there is no right-right

pattern. More formally, the magnitude of the relationship between the economic and social dimensions declines as economic policies move from left to right.

Figure 2.B Here

To this point, one plausible explanation for the fragmentation of the right is that there are, in effect, two rights: an economic right and a non-economic right. Parties on the economic right adopt right-wing positions on taxation and spending; parties on the non-economic right take up right-wing positions on social liberalism and immigration. A direct implication of this line of argument is that measuring the fragmentation of economically conservative parties by looking separately at their positions on the social and immigration dimensions is tantamount to double-counting: right-wing parties are not twice fragmented in their social and immigration policies, but singularly fragmented between an economic and a non-economic right.

The evidence in Figure 2.C provides little support for this line of reasoning. Figure 2.C plots the positioning of political parties on the immigration and social dimensions. On the whole, the connection between policies on the immigration and social dimension is very strong. The trajectory of the regression line slopes upward from left to right: it begins at 2.0 on the social dimension when immigration policy is at one (i.e., $1.163 + 1(.878) = 2.04$), and it ends at 18.7 on the social dimension when immigration policy is at twenty (i.e., $1.163 + 20(.878) = 18.7$). Indeed, the variation on the immigration dimension explains 66% of the variation on the social dimension. Even so, the magnitude of the relationship is not distributed evenly across the left-right continuum. The results indicate a great deal of left-wing coherence. Notice the cluster of parties in the bottom-left corner of the graphic. Of the 32 political parties on the far pro-immigrant left (i.e., ≤ 5), 100 percent are to the left of the center on the social dimension. And of the 44 parties on the far social left (i.e., ≤ 5), all but one of these parties (98%) are to the left of center on the immigration dimension.

Figure 2.C Here

The distribution of parties on the right, however, is more spread out. A clear implication is that there is no single “non-economic” right. But there is a caveat. Far-right anti-immigration

parties are socially conservative, but socially conservative parties are not opposed to immigration. Of the 27 political parties on the far anti-immigrant right (i.e., ≥ 15), all but three (89%) of these parties are to the right of center in their social policies. By contrast, 13 of the 43 political parties (30%) on the far social right are actually to the *left* of center in their immigration policies. In short, the fragmentation of the right is somewhat uneven. There appears to be little about social conservatism that generates opposition to immigration, but something about opposition to immigration that generates social conservatism. There is an unrequited relationship, it seems, between the anti-immigrant right and the socially conservative right.

Taken together, the results of these analyses indicate that party policies on the economic, immigration and social dimensions are organized coherently among parties on the left, but not among parties on the right. These findings differ in a few ways from the kinds of expectations that seem to arise from at least one prevailing account of left-right competition in advanced industrial countries. Notably, the “new-left/old-left” and “new-right/old-right” dichotomies are not supported by these findings.¹⁵ There is little evidence of a distinction between an “economic left”, on the one hand, and a “social left” on the other. The political parties that are on the economic left are simultaneously on the immigration and social lefts. Indeed, there are 30 political parties on the far economic left (i.e., ≤ 5); 100 percent of these parties are simultaneously to the left of center on the immigration and social dimensions. In effect, there is only one left on these issues; not two. The evidence for a distinction between the “economic” and “non-economic” right is similarly tenuous, but for precisely the opposite reason: there appear to be three rights, rather than two rights. There is an economic right, a social right, and an anti-immigrant right. As a result, the political parties that occupy the “right-wing” on a single-dimensional left-right continuum are in fact scattered, in multiple dimensions, across the political landscape. Even so, a clear question remains. What explains the paucity of political parties in the upper left quadrant of each graphic? In other words, why are there no political parties who couple strong support for wealth redistribution with opposition to either social liberalism or immigration?¹⁶ As the findings from the next stage of the analysis indicate, the answer to this question does not apparently involve the patterns of public opinion about wealth redistribution, immigration and gay rights.

IV. The Organization of Public Opinion

The issue of gay and lesbian rights is by and large a settled one for most Europeans. About 77 percent of Western Europeans agree or agree strongly that gays and lesbians should be free to live as they wish; 12 percent are indifferent and 11 percent disagree. Support for income equality is similarly robust: 68 percent support the prospect of governments taking measures to reduce income differences, 15 percent are indifferent, and 17 percent disagree. There is less agreement, however, when it comes to the numbers of immigrants that people want coming to their countries: 12 percent want “none”, 35 percent want “few”, and a further 42 and 12 percent want “some” and “many”, respectively. These results raise a practical question: how does mild support for abstract issues like gay rights and income equality translate into patterns of opinion about the concrete policy debates on the political frontiers of advanced industrial countries? 43 percent of Europeans “agree”, but do not “agree strongly”, that gays and lesbians should be free to live as they wish. 45 percent “agree”, but not “strongly”, that their government should take measures to reduce income differences. And 35 percent are okay with “a few” immigrants in their country, but not with “some” or “many”. The opinions of citizens in relation to the median voter, rather than absolute and abstract opinions, may well provide a more reliable indication of the patterns of support and opposition for the kinds of issues around which political disagreements actually revolve.

A second matter to consider is the bundling of individual opinions. On this front, the evidence indicates that the patterns of public opinion are quite different than the patterns of party competition. At the individual level, the correlation (Spearman’s ρ) between the economic and immigration dimensions is slightly negative: $-.03$. To the extent that there is any relationship at the aggregate level, higher support for income equality is somewhat more likely to accompany lower support for immigration.¹⁷ The relationship between support for income equality and the rights of gays or lesbians is positive, $.06$, but also very weak. The findings are somewhat different when it comes to opinions about gay rights and immigration. In this case, the notion of an underlying animosity toward out-groups is supported by the moderate relationship, $.2$, between opposition to immigration, on the one hand, and animosity toward gays and lesbians on the other. Nonetheless, these summary statistics indicate quite clearly that sizable segments of the population hold bundles of opinions that do not align with the packages of policy positions

that parties present to electorates. A part of the explanation for this discrepancy, as the remainder of this section shows, is that socioeconomic influences run perpendicular, rather than parallel, to the left-right axes of party competition.

Figure 3.A summarizes the simulated estimates from the multinomial logistic regression models predicting opinions about wealth redistribution and immigration. There are four matters of interpretation to consider. First, the x-axis corresponds to the predicted probability of not supporting wealth redistribution: $1 - \text{Pr}(\text{support})$. The metric on the y-axis is the probability of supporting restrictive immigration: $\text{Pr}(\text{few}) + \text{Pr}(\text{none})$. In other words, the probability of supporting income equality decreases as positioning on the x-axis moves from the left to the right. And the probability of supporting restrictive immigration increases as positioning on the y-axis moves from the bottom to the top. Thus, the line of left-right disagreement runs diagonally from the bottom-left to the top-right corner of the graph. Second, the x and y-axes are centered on the “median voter”. The position of the “median voter”, in this case, is the predicted probability on each dimension when all of the variables in the model are set at their mean level. Thus, the median voter in two-dimensional space is positioned precisely in the center of the graphic. Third, the points on the graphic correspond to the predicted probabilities on each dimension for individuals in different socioeconomic groups, when all of the other variables in the model are set at their mean level.¹⁸ For example: when holding all other variables constant at their mean level, there is a 27 percent probability that ethnic minorities will not support wealth redistribution, and a 34 percent probability that they will support restrictive immigration. Finally, three of the socioeconomic variables are continuous and have quasi-normal distributions: age, income and years of formal education. In these cases, the positioning of respondents at the fifth and ninety-fifth percentiles of each variable are plotted on the graph (e.g., “poor” and “rich”).

Figure 3.A Here

The first observation in Figure 3.A is that the points on the graph appear to follow a pattern that runs from the top-left quadrant to the bottom-right quadrant of the plane. Notice, for instance, that respondents with very low levels of formal education are the most likely to oppose immigration. Yet, these respondents are to the left of center in their level of support for wealth

redistribution. In short, the effect of lower education pushes opinions on the economic and immigration dimensions into “left-right” bundles, rather than “left-left” or “right-right” bundles. The same pattern emerges among blue-collar workers. Equipment operators, trades workers, and unskilled manual labourers (i.e., “elementary”) are all more likely to oppose immigration, but they are also more likely to support wealth redistribution. Professionals, by contrast, are the least likely to oppose immigration. But professionals express among the lowest level of support for income equality. Similarly, senior officials and wealthy respondents are slightly to the left of center in their opinions about immigration; they are the furthest to the right of center in their opinions about wealth redistribution. Overall, these findings are not counterintuitive. Individuals at the lower echelons of the socio-economic hierarchy have to compete with recent immigrants for jobs, wages and housing (McLaren 2003, 915-916; Lubbers & Scheepers 2000, 65-67; Taylor & Moghaddam 1994, ch.3). These respondents also express higher levels of out-group animosity more generally (Nunn, Crocket, & Williams 1978), they are economically insecure (Cochrane & Nevitte 2007), and they stand to gain most directly from increased wealth redistribution.

In sum, the results summarized in Figure 3.A indicate that socioeconomic influences pull the opinions of citizens into domains of opinion-space that are virtually unoccupied by political parties. The results of the earlier analysis (Figure 2.A) indicate that there is a shortage of political parties that combine strong support for wealth redistribution with opposition to immigration. Yet, large swaths of the electorate are subject to influences that generate precisely this combination of opinions. Indeed, ethnic minority is the only demographic group in the model that winds up in the lower left-quadrant of the graphic. Recall that this is the opinion-space where all of the left-wing parties are clustered. Thus, the currents of socioeconomic and ideological influences on these opinions appear to flow in different directions. Socioeconomic influences run from the northwest to the southeast; ideological influences from the southwest to the northeast.

The relative influences of socioeconomic characteristics on opinions about income equality and gay rights are plotted in Figure 3.B. A clear finding in Figure 3.B is that the majority of respondents in all socioeconomic groups express at least some support for the idea that gays and lesbians should be free to live as they wish. The metric on the y-axis runs from about a .05 probability of not supporting gay rights, on the low end, to about a .33 probability on

the high end. Indeed, the median voter has only a 19 percent probability of not supporting the rights of gays and lesbians. Even so, there are clear differences between socioeconomic groups in their positioning along the income equality and gay rights dimensions. In two cases, religion and gender, the patterns of opinion follow the axis of left-right disagreement. Women and secular respondents are somewhat more likely than is the median voter to express support for income equality and gay rights. By contrast, men and highly religious respondents are to the right of center on both of these dimensions. Indeed, highly religious respondents are positioned well to the right of center on the gay rights dimension in particular. As a result of these patterns, female and secular respondents are in the bottom “left-left” quadrant; male and religious respondents are in the upper “right-right” quadrant.

Figure 3.B Here

The pattern of left-right disagreement appears to break down, however, when it comes to the influences of ethnicity, age, income, occupation, and formal education. A second finding in Figure 3.B is that these influences tend to pull opinions into “right-left” and “left-right” bundles, rather than into “right-right” or “left-left” bundles. Notice that ethnic minorities, for instance, are positioned well to the right on the gay rights dimension, but notably to the left on the economic dimension. Likewise, older respondents and those with lower levels of formal education are in the top-right quadrant, along with equipment operators, trades workers, unskilled blue collar workers, the unemployed, and the poor.¹⁹ By contrast, well-educated, professional and younger respondents—positioned in the bottom-right quadrant—express lower support for income equality and higher support for gays and lesbians. Thus, a third finding is that socially conservative religious respondents tend toward the right on the economic dimension, but the bulk of the economic right is comprised of groups that are on the left on the gay rights dimension. In other words, religious conservatives tend to be economic conservatives, but economic conservatives do not tend to be religious conservatives. From the standpoint of a single left-right dichotomy, then, the influence of socioeconomic variables on the intersection of opinions on the economic and gay rights dimensions is by and large fragmentary. Indeed, these influences generate clusters of opinions that are quite different than the packaging of party policies on these issues (see Figure 2.B).

What about the relationship between the immigration and gay rights dimensions? Figure 3.C compares the effects of socioeconomic variables on the opinions of respondents about both of these issues. One expectation is that opinions about immigration and gay rights are linked together by an underlying animosity toward out-groups in general. That is, respondents who dislike people who are different from themselves will simultaneously hold hostile opinions about immigration and gay rights (Nunn, Crocket and Williams 1978). The evidence in Figure 3.C provides some support for this line of conjecture. Notice, in this case, that the points on the plane appear to trend from the lower-left to the upper-right quadrant. Young, professional and well-educated respondents are more supportive of gay rights and immigration; older, less educated and blue-collar respondents are less supportive of gay rights and immigration. For these groups, a single left-right continuum captures the contours of disagreement on both dimensions. Even so, there are two clear outliers in Figure 3.C. Notably, ethnic minorities express among the lowest levels of opposition to immigration, but these respondents also express low support for gay and lesbian rights. And religious respondents are less supportive of gay rights, but they are no more hostile toward immigration. The positioning of religious respondents on the immigration dimension suggests that it is something other than out-group animosity that drives their opposition to gay rights. Indeed, opinions about immigration correlate (Spearman's ρ) much more strongly with opinions about gay rights among secular respondents (.27) than they do among religious respondents (.10). Otherwise tolerant religious citizens are nonetheless prone to express opposition to gay rights. And in the absence of religion, out-group animosity continues to weaken support for gay rights. Thus, the strongest opponents of immigration tend to oppose gay rights, but the strongest opponents of gay rights do not necessarily oppose immigration.

Figure 3.C Here

In sum, the comparatively crisp edges of left-right competition at the party-level fade away at the individual-level. What remains is a blurred image of multiple distinctive opinion dimensions swirling together in unique ways for different individuals and groups. There are even important caveats to the seemingly straightforward link between opinions about immigrants, on the one hand, and opinions about gays and lesbians on the other. Religiosity

generates opposition to gay and lesbian rights, but it does not affect opinions about immigration. Higher levels of religiosity are also associated with economically conservative positions, but the bulk of the economic right is comprised of citizens who are at the upper echelons of the socioeconomic hierarchy. And these individuals are left-leaning in their opinions about gay rights and immigration. By contrast, poor, less-educated and blue-collar respondents hold the opposite bundle of opinions: to the left on the economy, and to the right on immigration and gay rights. As a result, these latter respondents occupy in multidimensional space a stretch of ideational terrain for which there is little party representation. Indeed, the complexity of public opinion raises a question: if public opinion is scattered throughout multidimensional space, then why is there so little partisan representation for certain combinations of opinions?

V. Conclusions: Mass-Elite Distinctions in the Origins and Organization of Left-Right Opinions

This analysis began by asking a question: what explains the policy fragmentation of right-wing parties and the policy coherence of parties on the left? The paper outlined three theoretical assumptions about the contours of public opinion that may well contribute to answering this question. The first of these assumptions is that public opinion is multidimensional. Opinion fragmentation is an observable implication of multidimensionality: opinions are fragmented because they belong to different dimensions. A second assumption, however, is that a single cause often affects more than one opinion, and the same opinion often has many different causes. There are two implications that stem from this line of reasoning. On the one hand, there are factors that generate a nexus of opinion dimensions by influencing simultaneously more than one opinion. And on the other hand, different people often hold the same opinion for entirely different reasons. Thus, individuals can share the same opinion on one issue, but hold altogether different “bundles” of opinions about a range of issues. The third assumption is that party insiders are subject to the same kinds of influences that apply throughout the population more generally. Values, beliefs, predispositions and interests influence the opinions of citizens; they influence the opinions of party activists as well. From this theoretical vantage point, the fragmentation of economic, social and immigration policies among right-wing parties is not especially surprising.

The results in Section IV indicate that religion often underlies socially conservative positions. Religiosity does not increase the probability of opposing immigration. Out-group intolerance, however, increases the probability of opposing immigration, and it dampens support for the rights of gays and lesbians. Thus, the strongest opponents of gay rights are somewhat less likely than are other citizens to oppose immigration, even though the strongest opponents of immigration are often hostile in their opinions about gays and lesbians. Although highly religious respondents and those with high levels of out-group intolerance oppose, for different reasons, the rights of gays and lesbians, they do not agree in their opinions about immigrants and immigration. Indeed, recall from Section III that socially conservative parties are not necessarily opposed to immigration, but far-right anti-immigration parties are almost invariably conservative in their social policies. In this respect, the packaging of individual-level opinions about gay rights and immigration is reflected in the fragmented social and immigration policies of parties on the political right.

The findings are similar when it comes to the relationship between the economic right, on the one hand, and the socially conservative and anti-immigrant rights on the other. Religiosity, of course, affects more than one opinion. But high socioeconomic status affects more than one opinion too. Highly religious citizens are somewhat less supportive of government-led wealth redistribution and they are very conservative in their social outlooks. By comparison, respondents with high levels of socioeconomic status are even further to the right on the economic dimension, but they are the furthest to the left in their opinions about immigration and gay rights. The evidence on this front is consistent with theoretical expectations. In short, religious conservatives are typically to the right on the economic dimension, but economic conservatives are not typically to the right on the social dimension.

This finding has direct practical implications for parties on the economic right. A party that adopts fiscally conservative policy positions is likely to appeal on this dimension to prospective supporters who are entirely opposed to one another on the social dimension: socially conservative citizens with high religiosity, and socially liberal citizens with high socioeconomic status. The opinion dynamics in the population are therefore reflected, first, in the fragmentation between the economic and social policies of parties on the political right (Figure 2.B). And they are reflected, second, in the divisions between the socially and fiscally conservative factions within the support bases of individual right-wing parties (Rayside, 2008; Cochrane & Nevitte,

2007b; Flanagan, 2007, 13). From the standpoint of the opinion dynamics in the population, the fragmentation of the political right is not surprising: right-wing positions on immigration, social issues and the economy are derived from altogether different sources.

Nevertheless, this line of explanation leaves unanswered the second part of the question: what explains the coherence of left-wing parties? In particular, why are there no political parties that couple strong support for wealth redistribution with opposition to gay rights and immigration? Indeed, recall from Section III that there is a remarkable amount of coherence across advanced industrial countries in the policy positions of parties on the left: all of the political parties on the far economic left are simultaneously to the left of center on the immigration and social dimensions. Yet, in Section IV, the individual-level public opinion evidence indicates that the strongest supporters of wealth redistribution—poor people, blue-collar workers, and those with low levels of formal education—tend toward the far right in their opinions about gay rights and immigration. In effect, the second part of the central question is itself two-sided: why are there so few socially conservative or anti-immigrant parties that adopt far-left positions on the economic dimension? And why are there no parties on the far-economic left that take up right-wing positions on the immigration or social dimension?

A part of the answer to this question is that the influences of socioeconomic deprivation break down at the level of party policy. The patterns of political engagement, especially at the elite levels, are not evenly distributed across the socioeconomic hierarchy (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995; Porter, 1965). From this perspective, reconsider the evidence in Section IV. The results from this stage of the analysis indicated that left-wing opinions about the economy are associated with right-wing opinions about immigration and gay rights. But the association between these opinions does not flow directly or logically from one opinion to the next. Rather, it emerges indirectly from a shared underlying origin: low socioeconomic status. Respondents with low levels of formal education are considerably poorer and more economically insecure than are their counterparts with higher levels of formal education. Economic insecurity generates support for wealth redistribution and anti-immigrant animosity. And low levels of formal education are associated with higher levels of out-group intolerance. But while many socioeconomically vulnerable supporters of income equality are drawn to the cause of anti-immigration, it does not follow that the affluent and engaged activists in far-right anti-immigration parties are drawn to the cause of income equality. The same applies for socially

conservative activists. In short, there is no reason to expect that affluent citizens who oppose immigration and gay rights will therefore support wealth redistribution.

What does this imply for the elites in left-wing parties? A direct and self-evident implication is that the elites on the economic left are not drawn by financial insecurity to support higher levels of wealth-redistribution. Their support for income equality is rooted in a deep commitment to equality; a commitment that transcends their own financial self-interest. But this commitment to equality is also associated with significantly increased support for immigration and gay rights. Relative to the median voter, strong egalitarians are less likely to oppose income equality (-6.3%), immigration (-8.5%), and gay rights (-4.2%).²⁰ Indeed, this effect is considerably more pronounced at the elite level. Thus, affluent citizens who continue to support wealth redistribution, despite their own socioeconomic circumstances, are also to the left in their opinions about gay rights and immigration.²¹ In this respect, the policy coherence of left-wing parties across the advanced industrial world reflects the coherent opinion bundles of affluent and engaged left-wingers in the population as a whole. Outside of the left-wing elite, however, opinions about immigration, gay rights and income equality are not organized into a coherent bundle (Cochrane and Nevitte 2008). Even at the elite-level more generally, there is one left on these issues, and three rights.

Taken together, the results of this analysis suggest that the challenges facing parties on the right are quite different than the challenges confronting parties on the left. The problem for right-wing parties, paradoxically, is not that there is so little overlap between right-wing opinions on different dimensions, but rather that there is just enough overlap on these dimensions to generate serious divisions within right-wing parties. That is, right-wing policies on one dimension systematically appeal to citizens that disagree on other dimensions. Opposition to issues like gay rights appeals to citizens with high religiosity. And these policies appeal to citizens with low tolerance for out-groups. But these two groups of citizens part company in their opinions about immigration. Similarly, fiscally conservative parties appeal to both religious conservatives and affluent citizens, but these groups disagree quite profoundly in their positions on social issues. In short, the linkages between anti-immigration, social conservatism and free-market support are manifold and asymmetrical. There is an unbounded multidimensional cluster of opinions on the right, but there is no right-wing triangle of opinions: right-wing opinions do not intersect on any single dimension. There are different underlying causes of right-wing

opinions on different dimensions, and the fragmentation of these opinions persists at the mass and elite levels.

The challenge for parties on the left is very different. In this case, the divisions between those with left-wing positions on different dimensions are not especially strong at the elite level. Nonetheless, there is a discrepancy between left-wing elites, on the one hand, and the supporters of different left-wing positions in the electorate on the other. Individuals with high socioeconomic status who continue to support wealth redistribution are overwhelmingly more likely to support left-wing positions on social issues and immigration. For these respondents, a profound commitment to equality translates into a consistent pattern of concern for disadvantaged segments of the population. Yet, sizable segments of the population that are drawn to left-wing economic policies are considerably less likely to support gay rights and, especially, immigration. Conversely, individuals with high socioeconomic status are drawn to left-wing parties on social issues and immigration, but they are often repelled by left-wing positions on wealth redistribution. Thus, support for wealth redistribution at the elite level is associated with a bundle of opinions that is quite different than the patterns of public opinion in the electorate as a whole.

In sum, the lines of division on the right cut between separate opinion dimensions; the lines of division on the left truncate the elite, on the one hand, from the masses on the other.

¹ The Canadian case is unique insofar as new right voters in Canada were considerably more religious, rather than less religious. Although, the immigration issue was not pronounced in Canada, the divisions on the right over issues like gay rights and abortion figured prominently in explaining the values divide in the 2000 election between supporters of Canada's two right-wing parties, the Progressive Conservatives and Canadian Alliance (Blais, et al. 2002, 112). Indeed, exploiting these issues was a mainstay of the Liberal Party's election strategy against the Alliance (Marzolini 2001, 272-3; Chretien 2007, 284). And after the Alliance and Progressive Conservative parties united in 2004 under the banner of the Conservative Party, a concern with the divisiveness of social issues figured into the campaign strategy of the new party as well. As a Conservative Party strategist and political scientist noted of his party leader's policy announcements in the 2006 election campaign:

Stephen [Harper]'s first announcement was a promise to hold a vote in the House of Commons on whether or not to introduce legislation to repeal same-sex marriage. Many observers said he was shooting himself in the foot, but it was an intelligent tactic to dispose of the issue early, rather than late in the campaign when large numbers of voters make up their minds" (Flanagan 2007, 233).

Political parties do not reserve announcements of their "winning issues" for times when voters are not paying attention. Thus, it seems reasonable to suppose that Conservative strategists were less than enthusiastic about contesting the election on social issues. Even so, the issue of same-sex marriage was not an easy one for the centrist Liberal Party either. Indeed, no party was more divided than the Liberals in terms of the voting patterns of MPs in the House of Commons on the third reading of the Civil Marriage Act in 2005 (Hansard, June 28th, 2005).

² Religion is an obvious example, but partisanship appears to exert a similar effect in the United States (Goren 2005; Achen 2002), and a somewhat weaker but nonetheless notable effect in other countries (Blais, et al. 2002, ch.8; Pierce 1981).

³ Take, for instance, the notion of political parties competing with one another to occupy the "opinion-space" that maximizes the electoral performance of the party. In one variant of this scenario, the electorate is normally distributed across a single dimension and two political parties compete with one another to occupy the opinion-space of the "median voter". In a multi-party system, smaller parties may manoeuvre to the right or the left in order to occupy opinion-space that has been vacated by their larger, median vote-seeking competitors (Downs 1965). Now consider that the representation of multiple opinions along a single dimension (e.g., a left-right or liberty-equality continuum) has an effect on the probability distribution that is nearly the opposite of its effect in multidimensional space. As more and more independent variables are added together, the probability distribution clusters in the center in one-dimensional space as it scatters away from the center in multidimensional space.

The reasoning behind these opposing trends is straightforward. Assume that opinions X and Y are both measured on eleven point scales ranging from 0 to 10. The probability of being at any point in two dimensional space ($XY_{x,y}$) is simply the product of two probabilities ($X_x * Y_y$). Thus, a 40% probability of being at X_5 and a 40% probability of being at Y_5 translates into a 16% probability of being at X_5 and Y_5 simultaneously, assuming that X and Y are independent: $Pr(XY_{5,5}) = Pr(X_5) * Pr(Y_5) = .4 * .4 = .16$. As more dimensions are added, the range of opinion-space expands and the probability of being at any given point declines exponentially. Thus, $Pr(XYZ_{5,5,5}) = Pr(X_5) * Pr(Y_5) * Pr(Z_5) = .4 * .4 * .4 = .064$. However, when X and Y are combined in single-dimensional space to form continuum XY (e.g., $XY = X/2 + Y/2$), the equation is altogether different. In this case, the probability of being at point j on the XY continuum is the sum of the products of the probabilities of all possible combinations of X and Y whose sum divided by 2 is equal to j. Since there are eleven combinations of X and Y whose sum divided by two is equal to 5, and only one possible combination that is equal to 0 or 10, the effects of combining two

independent opinions in single dimensional space is to systematically increase the distribution at the center and to decrease the distributions at the extremes. If a third dimension were added, there is still only one combination whose sum divided by three is equal to 0 or 10 (i.e., $0 + 0 + 0$ and $10 + 10 + 10$), but there are now 84 combinations whose sum divided by 3 is equal to 5. As more dimensions are added, the size of the center decreases in multidimensional space and increases in single dimensional space.

⁴ The experts were asked for each dimension to position the political parties in their country on a twenty-point scale ranging from 1 to 20. The placement criteria on the “taxes versus spending” dimension compares “promotes raising taxes to increase public services (1)”, on the one hand, to “promotes cutting public services to cut taxes (20)”, on the other. A second economic policy question asked about support for market regulation, but this dimension was not measured in several Western European and Anglo-American countries. Experts were asked to position parties on the immigration dimension between “favours policies designed to help asylum seekers and immigrants integrate into [country name] society (1),” versus “favours policies designed to help asylum seekers and immigrants return to their country of origin (20)”. And the social liberalism dimension is bounded between “favours liberal policies on matters such as abortion, homosexuality and euthanasia (1),” at one extreme, and “opposes liberal policies on matters such as abortion, homosexuality, and euthanasia (20),” at the other extreme. The survey also includes a question about the “left-right” positioning of political parties in all of the countries except France. Thus, the data on left-right positioning for parties in France is derived from Lubbers’ (2004) survey of experts about the positioning of political parties in Western Europe. All in all, party placement on the taxes vs. spending, immigration and social liberalism dimensions explain 93% of the variance in the left-right positioning of 143 political parties across 21 countries.

⁵ The twenty-one countries included in the core of analysis include: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Britain, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States. The rationale behind the case selection is to include as many countries as possible without introducing to the analysis countries whose party systems revolve around altogether different issues than those addressed in this paper. For this reason, the case selection does not extend to Eastern European countries, even though expert survey and public opinion data are available for these countries from Benoit and Laver (2006) and the European Social Survey, respectively.

⁶ Cochrane and Nevitte (2008) provide an analysis of public opinion in these non-European countries by drawing on data from the 2006 wave of the World Values Survey. The results of this analysis indicate, first, that the drivers of left-right self-placement are substantively similar across the advanced industrial world. And second, that the patterns of relationships between opinions about homosexuality, abortion, immigration and wealth redistribution are the same throughout Europe, as well as in Australia, Canada and New Zealand. American respondents are somewhat exceptional insofar as there is a weak correlation in the United States between opinions about wealth redistribution and social conservatism. One possible explanation for the distinctiveness of respondents in the United States is the influence of partisanship on opinions. Studies consistently underscore the influence of partisan affiliations on the opinions (Goren 2005), information sources (Zaller 1992), and social networks (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1987; Finifter 1974) of Americans. And evidence from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES 2007) suggests that Americans exhibit among the highest levels of partisan identification; even though these partisan loyalties are split between only two political parties. Thus, the high levels of partisan identification and the small number of parties in the United States may well pull together into fewer bundles the opinions of Americans about a wide range of subjects. Even so, it is important not to overstate the extent of the American exception. There is a very weak correlation between economic and social opinions in the United States, and it is not at all clear that this correlation is a long-standing one, or that it is evenly distributed across the liberal-conservative continuum.

⁷ The framing of the immigration question is particularly important. The tone of anti-immigrant rhetoric in Europe is not directed against immigrants per se, but against immigrants from different ethnic groups; Muslims most especially.

⁸ One consequence of relativity is that the Democratic Party in the United States (Score/2 = 3.55) is positioned more closely to the Canadian NDP (2.45) on its left than to the Canadian Liberal Party (5.55) on its right. In absolute terms, by contrast, the Democratic Party is arguably to the right, rather than to the left, of the Liberal Party. Even so, evidence from the Comparative Manifesto Research Project (Klingemann, et al. 2006; Budge, et al. 2001) suggests that the election platforms of the Democratic Party have been consistently to the “left” of Liberal Party platforms since at least 1948. A better example in the Canadian case may well be that the Canadian Alliance was positioned to the right of the American Republican Party on the economic, immigration and social liberalism dimensions.

⁹ MNL models are specified because the dependent variables do not meet, even approximately, the central assumptions of ordinal logistic regression models. A battery of diagnostic tests confirms these violations, but the violations of ordinal assumptions are readily apparent from the MNL results: some of the independent variables, particularly the controls for country, have the effect of increasing the probability of both supporting and opposing income equality, gay rights and immigration. In order to meet the central assumption of the MNL model, however, the income equality and gay rights variables are transformed from their original five categories into three categories (i.e., from strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree and strongly disagree, to agree, neither agree nor disagree, and disagree). A central assumption of the MNL model, the irrelevance of independent alternatives (IIA), requires that no two categories of the dependent variables serve as approximate substitutes for one another (Long and Freese 2006, 243-246). From the standpoint of MNL, the problem with the original coding of the gay rights and income equality variables is straightforward: “strongly agree” and “agree” are very close substitutes for one another, and so are “disagree” and “strongly disagree”. The evidence suggests that transforming these dependent variables into fewer categories is the most prudent strategy. Additionally, Italy is also missing in these models. The question about abstract egalitarianism was not asked of Italian respondents.

¹⁰ The survey design weights are provided by the principal investigators from each country, following the protocols of the European Social Survey. These protocols are available from the survey’s website: <http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/>. Population weights are also provided in the European Social Survey, but these weights were re-estimated in the current analysis after merging data from three separate waves of the survey. Following the weighting protocols of the European Social Survey, these population weights were developed as follows:

National Population \geq 15 years old
National Sample * 10000

Information on national populations of 15+ year olds is available from *Eurostat*.

¹¹ Notably, the mean positions of parties on these dimensions are all very similar: 9.6 on immigration, 10.1 on the economy, and 9.7 on social liberalism. Student’s T-tests indicate that these means are statistically indistinguishable. In other words, the medians are different, but the means are the same. The implication of this finding is that there are fewer political parties on the social and anti-immigrant right, but that these parties tend to be more extreme in their positions than their counterparts on the social and pro-immigrant left.

¹² The errors of these estimates are provided beneath the Figures that appear later in this section.

¹³ Estimates are provided for the y-intercept (a), slope (b), standard error (se), statistical significance (t), and the percentage of explained variance (R^2). For samples of this size, a t-value of 1.98 indicates a statistically significant relationship at the 95 percent level; a t-value of 3.35 indicates a statistically significant relationship at the 99.9 percent level. The Chi-Square of the Breusch-Pagan/Cook-Weisberg test for heteroskedasticity gauges the extent to which the deviation of points from the slope varies across levels of x or y (i.e., the pattern of the residuals). A statistically significant result indicates that the observations deviate to different extents at different points along the regression line (i.e., that the error is heterogeneous).

¹⁴ The same pattern persists if the x and y axes are reversed. In this case, however, the non-linearity is even clearer. There is a very strong relationship between economic and immigration policies for parties on the left, but not for parties on the right.

¹⁵ Kitschelt and Hellemans (1990) use the term “new left” as a proxy for environmentalist parties. But others use the term more broadly to represent a distinction between the “economic left” and the “social left”. It is the latter use of the term that is being addressed in this stage of the argument.

¹⁶ Intuitively, it may seem that a part of the explanation stems from the potential measurement issue that was addressed earlier in the paper. If the positioning of political parties is relative and contextual, then a right and a left can exist without a center, but a center cannot exist without a right and a left. In a move from a three party system to a two party system, for instance, the party in the center becomes the party on the left if the party to its left disappears. Conversely, the party on the left in a two party system becomes the party of the center in a three party system if it is flanked on its far left by a new party. In this case, then, the absence of parties from the upper left quadrant is conceivably an artefact of the presence of left-wing parties in the lower left quadrant. Indeed, there is no connection at all, from the centre-rightward, between economic policies, on the one hand, and social and immigration policies on the other. Thus, if not for the left-wing parties in the bottom left-quadrant, it is conceivable that the top left-quadrant would be filled with the political parties that currently occupy the “center” on one dimension and the “right” on another. Even so, this measurement issue does not address the central question: why are there no political parties that couple the strongest support for wealth redistribution with a relatively right-wing position on either the immigration or social dimension?

¹⁷ The tests of statistical significance invariably confirm that all of the individual-level coefficients are highly significant (i.e., $p < .001$). But with approximately 80 000 observations, tests of statistical significance are no proxy for subjective assessments of substantive significance.

¹⁸ For the battery of dichotomous occupational categories, the values of all of the other occupational categories are set to zero when the value of any one occupational category is set to one.

¹⁹ It is worth noting that unskilled blue-collar workers, the unemployed, and the poor are in the top-right quadrant, but only barely. The effects of these characteristics on individual opinions about gay rights are highly significant statistically. But the magnitude of these effects is rather insignificant substantively.

²⁰ See Appendix for the *CLARIFY* estimates.

²¹ Indeed, higher support for income equality among respondents with the lowest levels of socioeconomic status is associated with increased levels of support for restrictive immigration: from 52

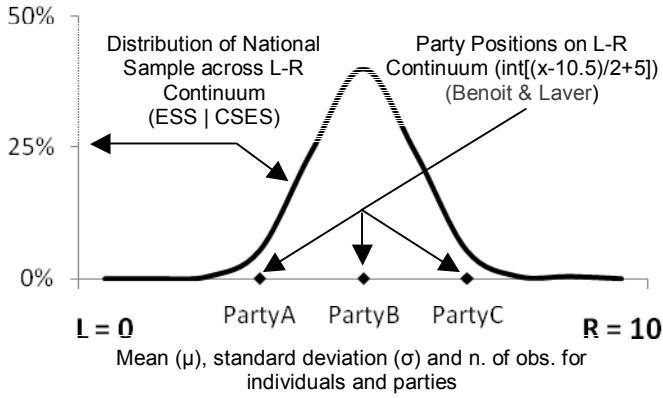
percent among those who oppose income equality, to 67 percent among those who support it. Yet, higher support for income equality among respondents with the highest levels of socioeconomic status is associated with substantially decreased support for restrictive immigration: from 47 percent among those who oppose income equality, to 24 percent among those who support it. In this model, the index of socioeconomic status was developed from the following equation:

$$\left[\frac{\text{income} - 1}{11} + \frac{\text{educyrs}}{25} \right] * 5$$

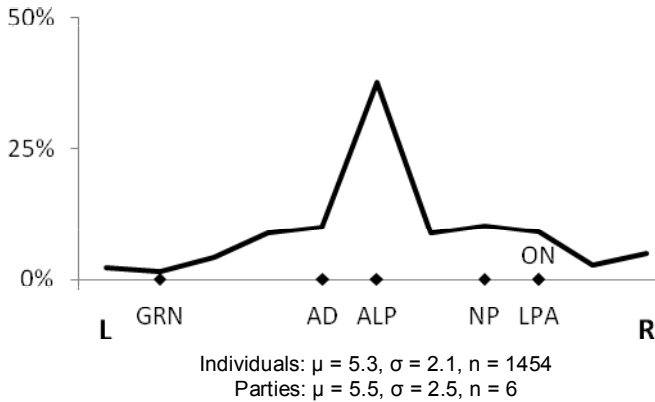
These estimates are based on clarify simulations from the same MNL models and data discussed in section II of this paper. The income and education variables are combined into a single index of socioeconomic status. A variable which measures opinions about equality in general is replaced by two independent variables: one that captures opinions about income equality, and another to detect the interaction of socioeconomic status and income equality (i.e., income equality multiplied by the index of socioeconomic status). The discussion compares the effects of support for income equality on opinions about immigration and gay rights for respondents in the 10th and 90th percentiles of socioeconomic status. Full results and diagnostics are available upon request.

Figure 1: The Positions of Parties and Populations on the Left-Right Continuum

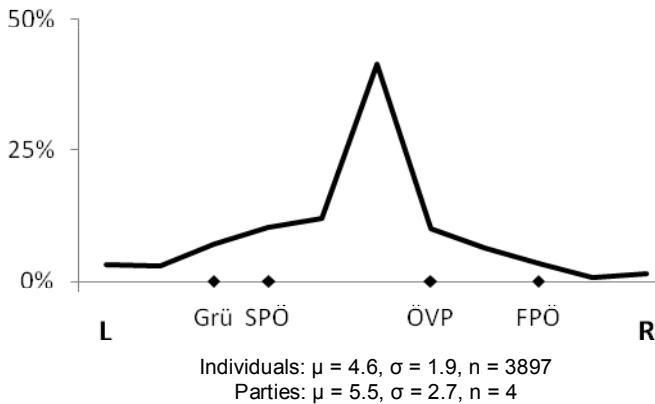
-1. Legend



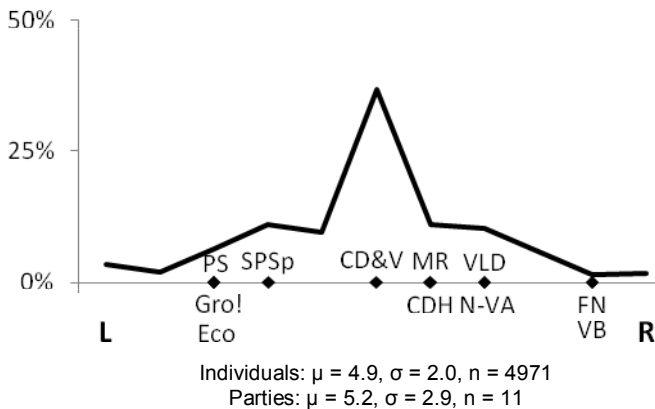
A. Australia*



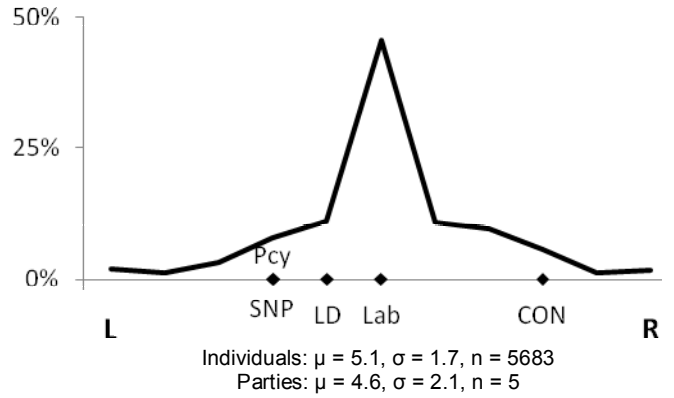
B. Austria



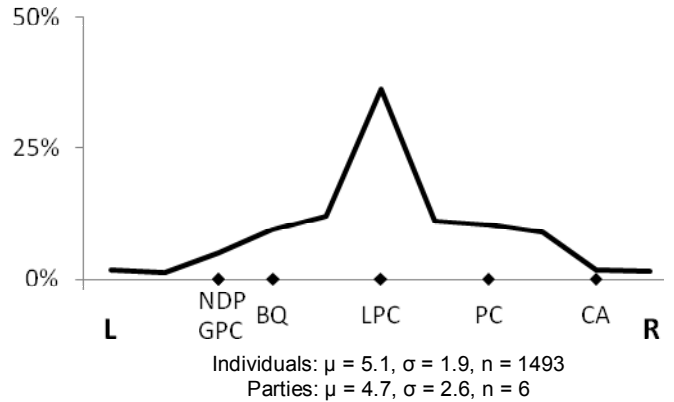
C. Belgium



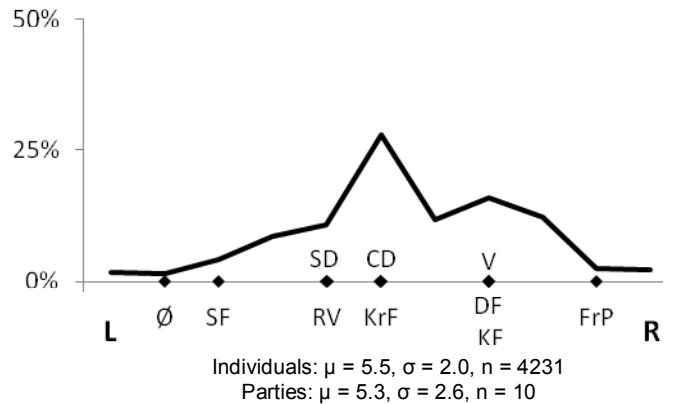
D. Britain



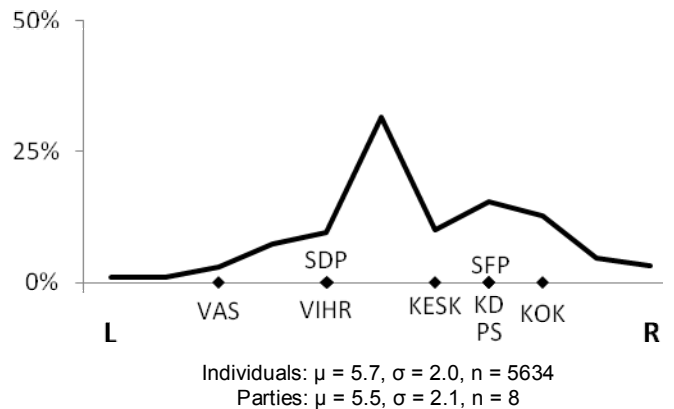
E. Canada*



F. Denmark

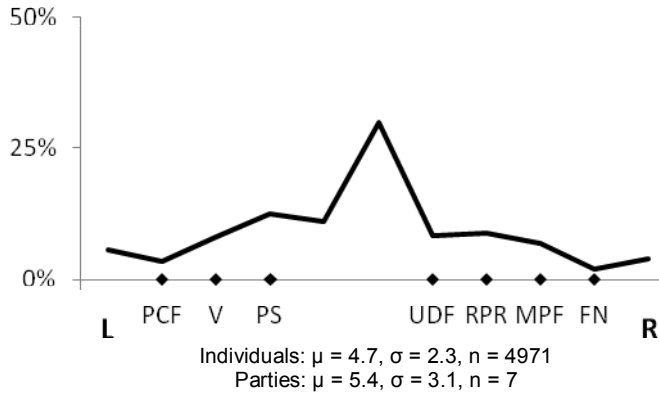


G. Finland

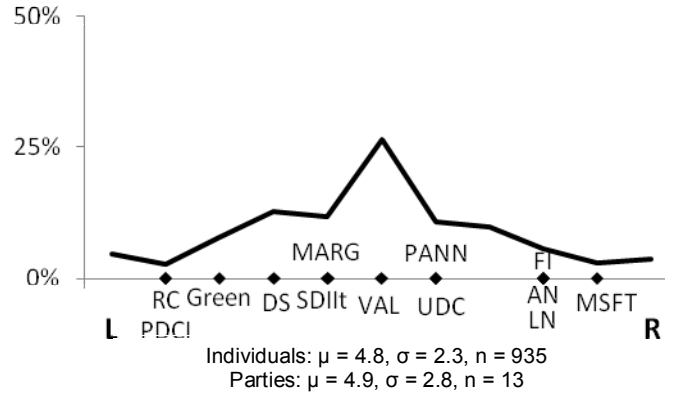


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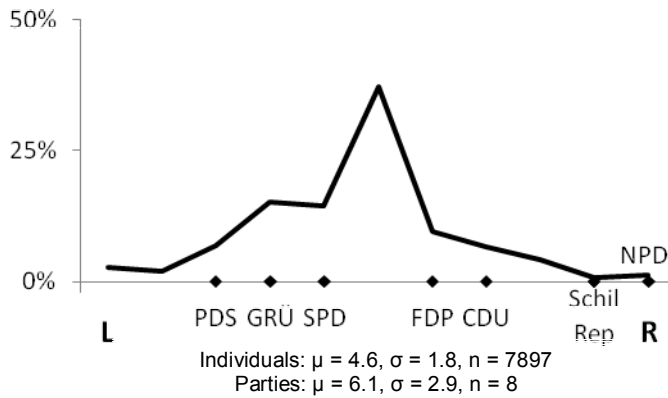
H. France**



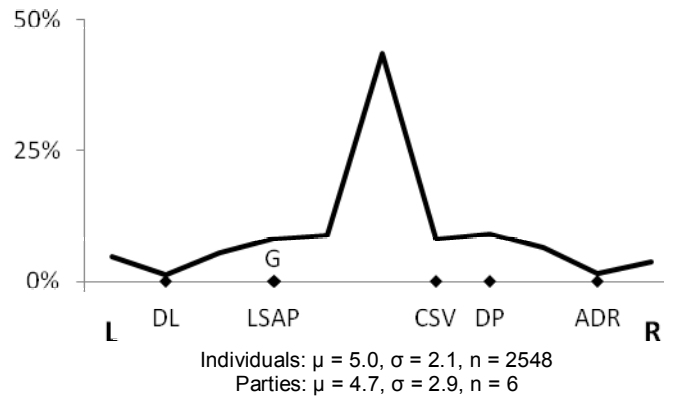
L. Italy



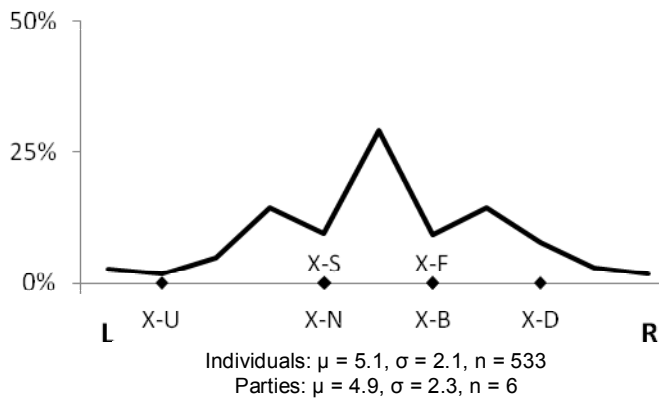
I. Germany



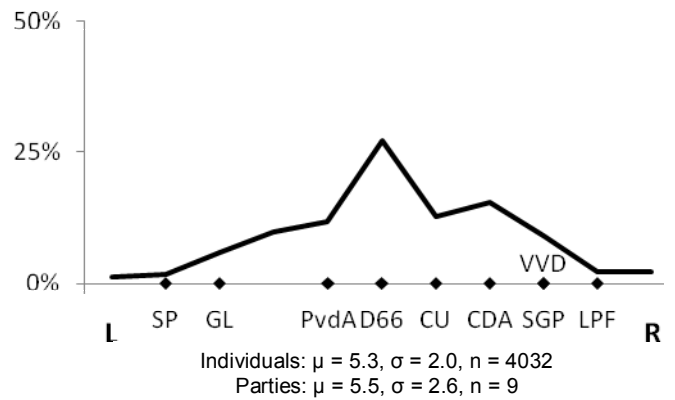
M. Luxembourg



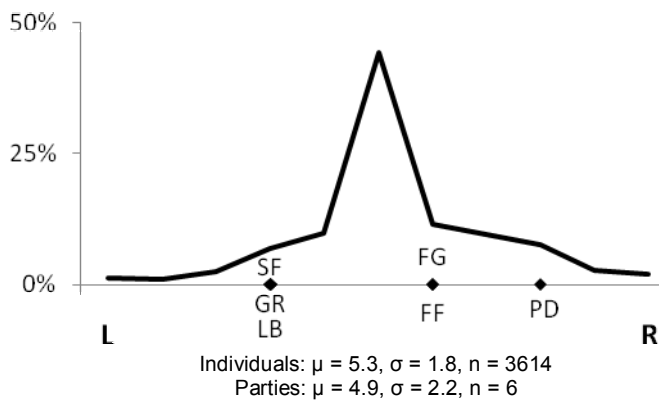
J. Iceland



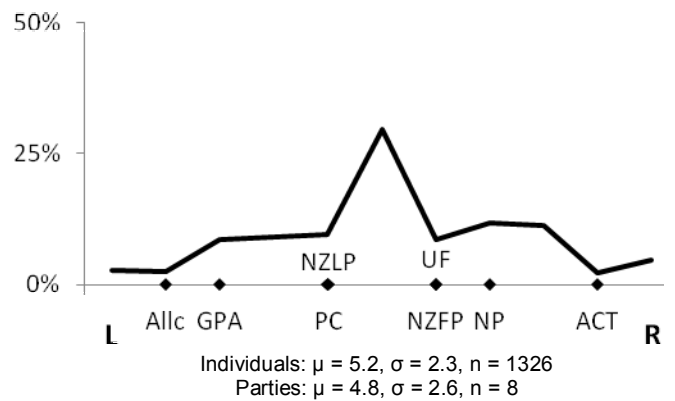
N. Netherlands



K. Ireland

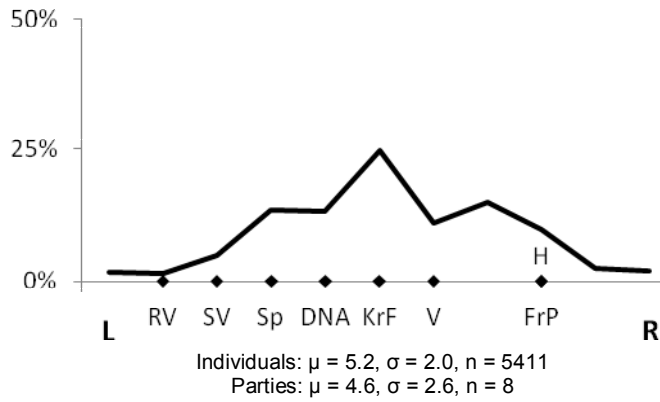


O. New Zealand*

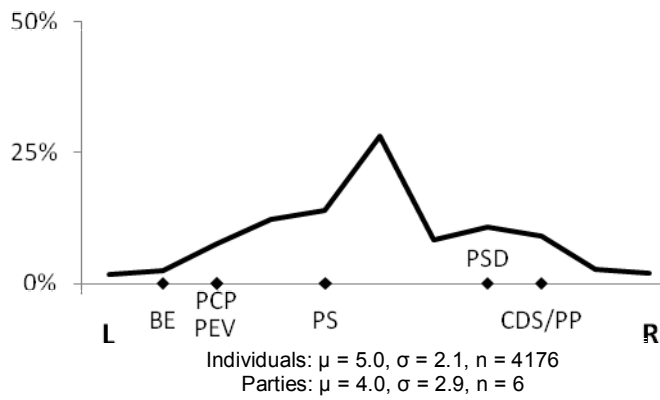


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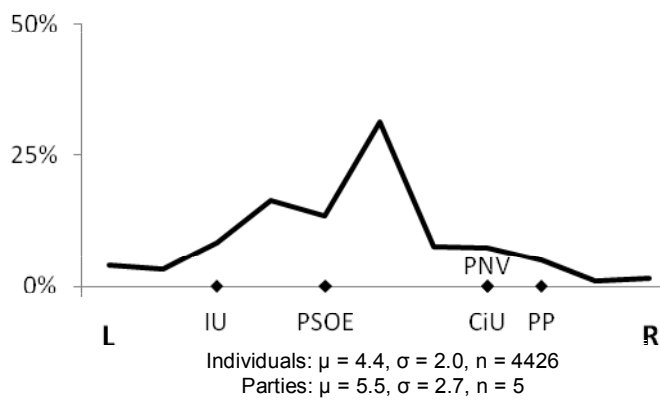
P. Norway



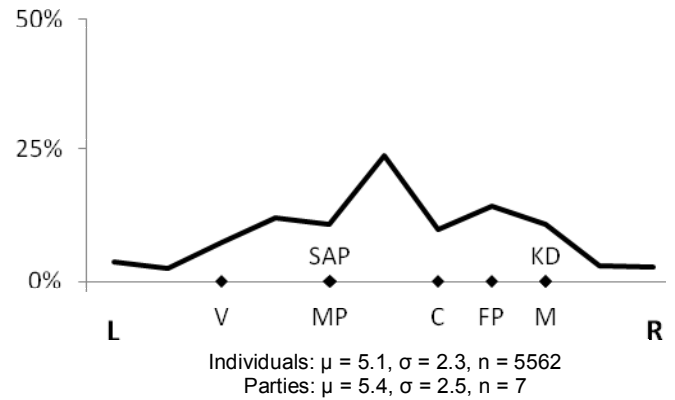
Q. Portugal



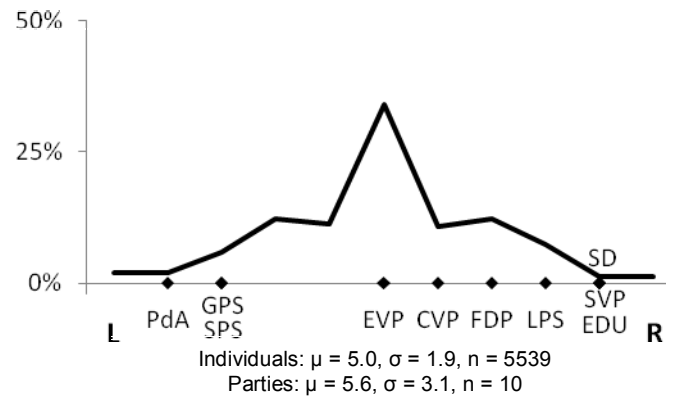
R. Spain



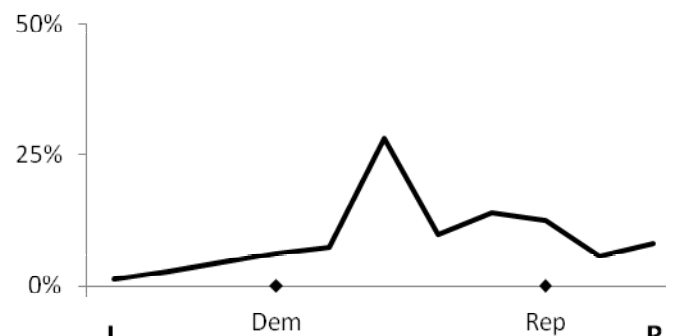
S. Sweden



T. Switzerland



U. United States*

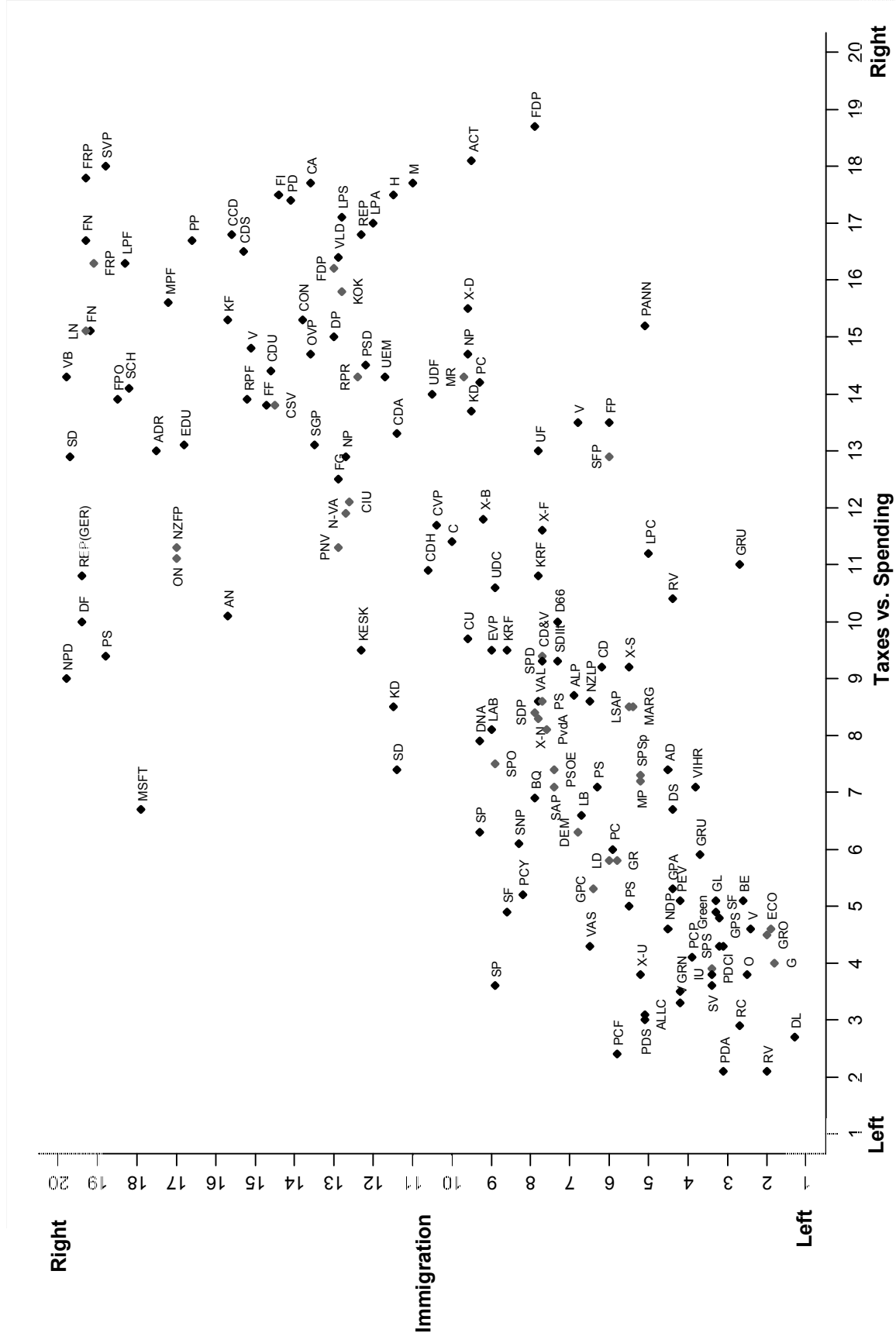


* Individual-Level data are from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES).

** Left-Right positioning of political parties in France is from Lubbers (2004).

Sources: European Social Survey 2002, 2004, 2006, Benoit & Laver 2006, Lubbers 2004, Comparative Study of Electoral Systems 2nd Module 2007

Figure 2.A: Party Policy Positions on the Economic and Immigration Dimensions in Two-Dimensional Space

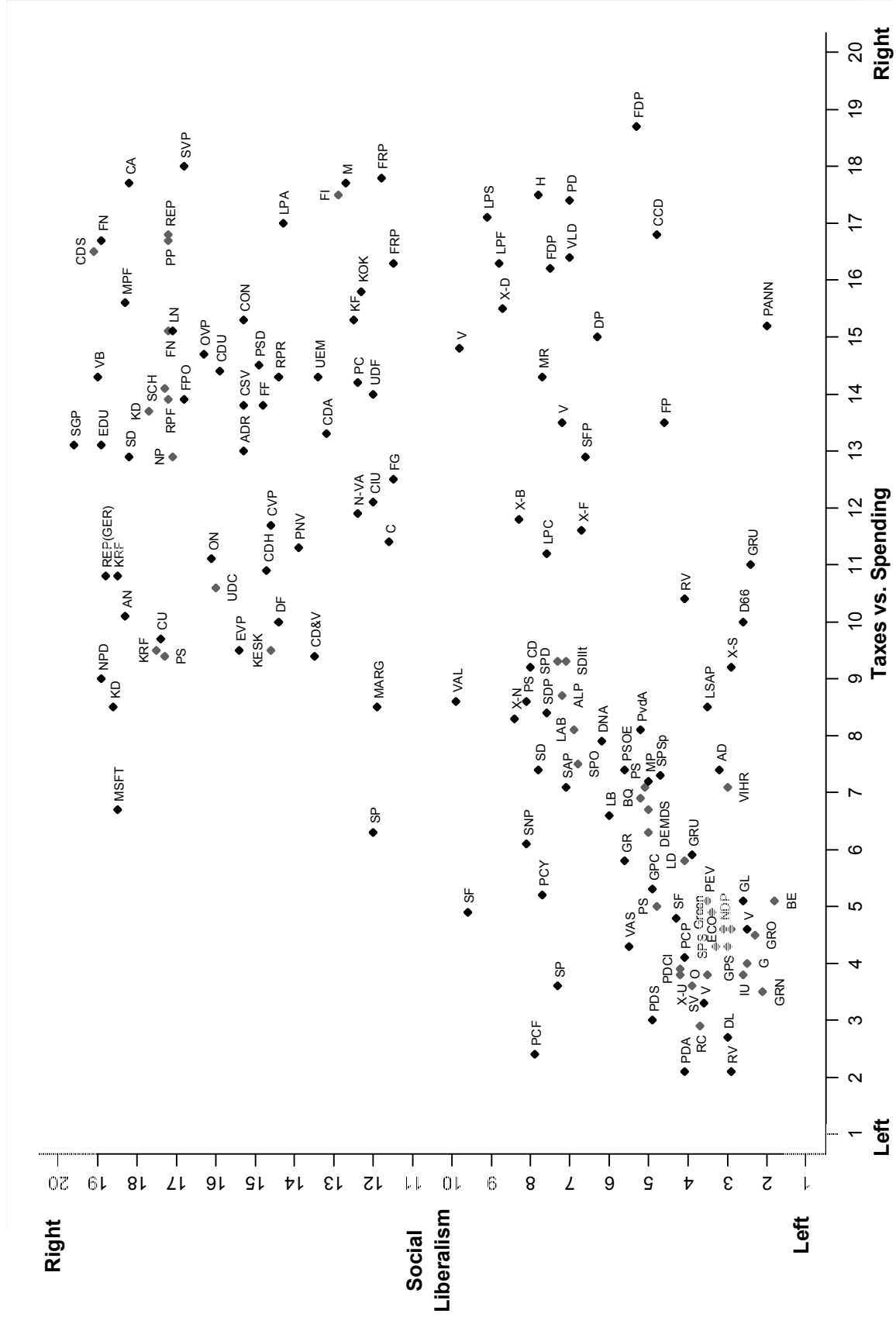


OLS Estimates & Diagnostics:

obs. = 153, a = 1.527, b = .878, se = .052, t = 16.92, Adj. R² = .51
 Breusch-Pagan/Cook-Weisberg $\chi^2 = 9.45$ (p < .01)

Source: Benoit & Laver 2006

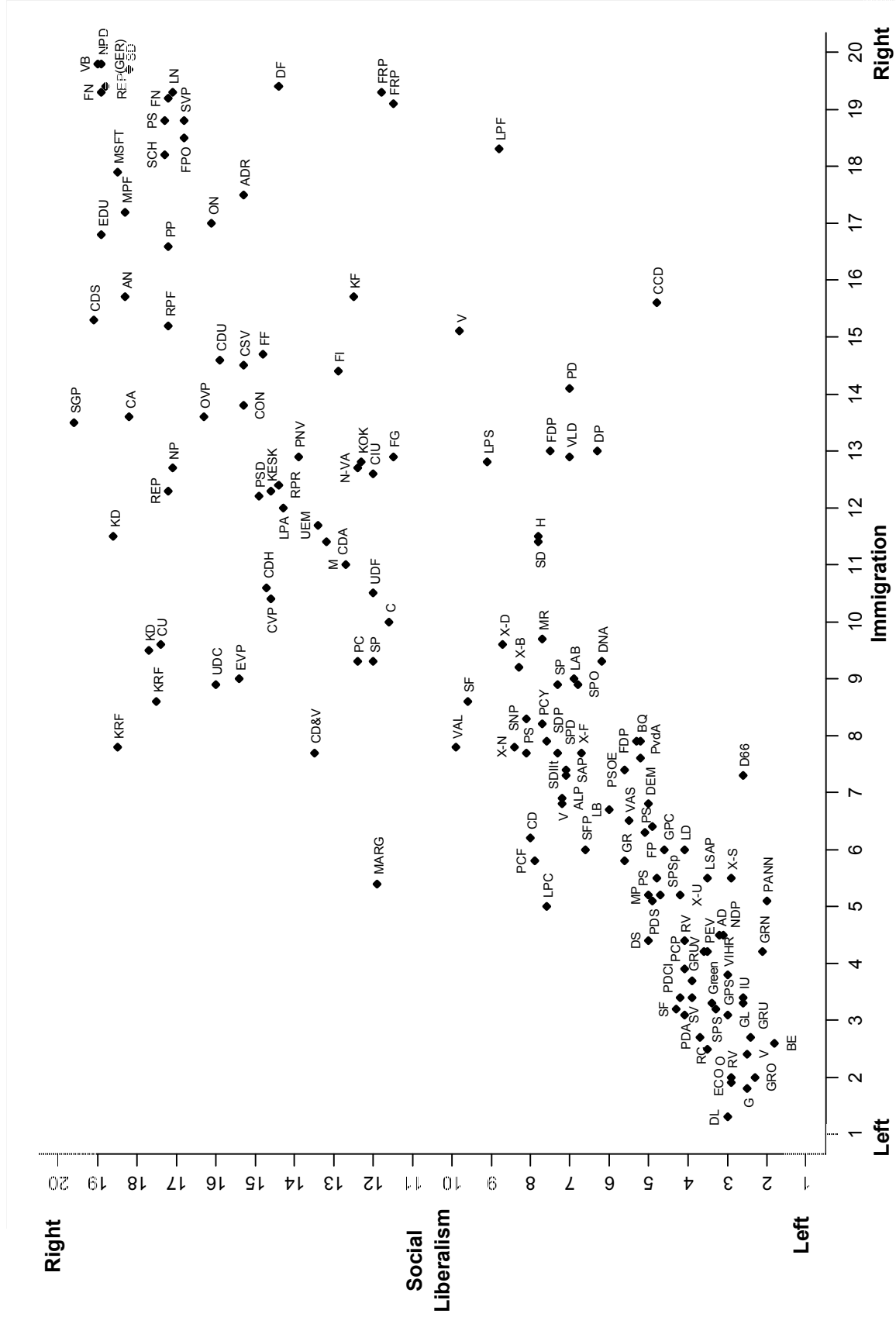
Figure 2.B: Party Policy Positions on the Economic and Social Liberalism Dimensions in Two-Dimensional Space



OLS Estimates & Diagnostics:
 obs. = 145, a = 2.356, b = .721, se = .082, t = 8.82, Adj. R² = .35
 Breusch-Pagan/Cook-Weisberg $\chi^2 = 10.34$ (p < .01)
 Note: New Zealand Missing on Social Liberalism

Source: Benoit & Laver 2006

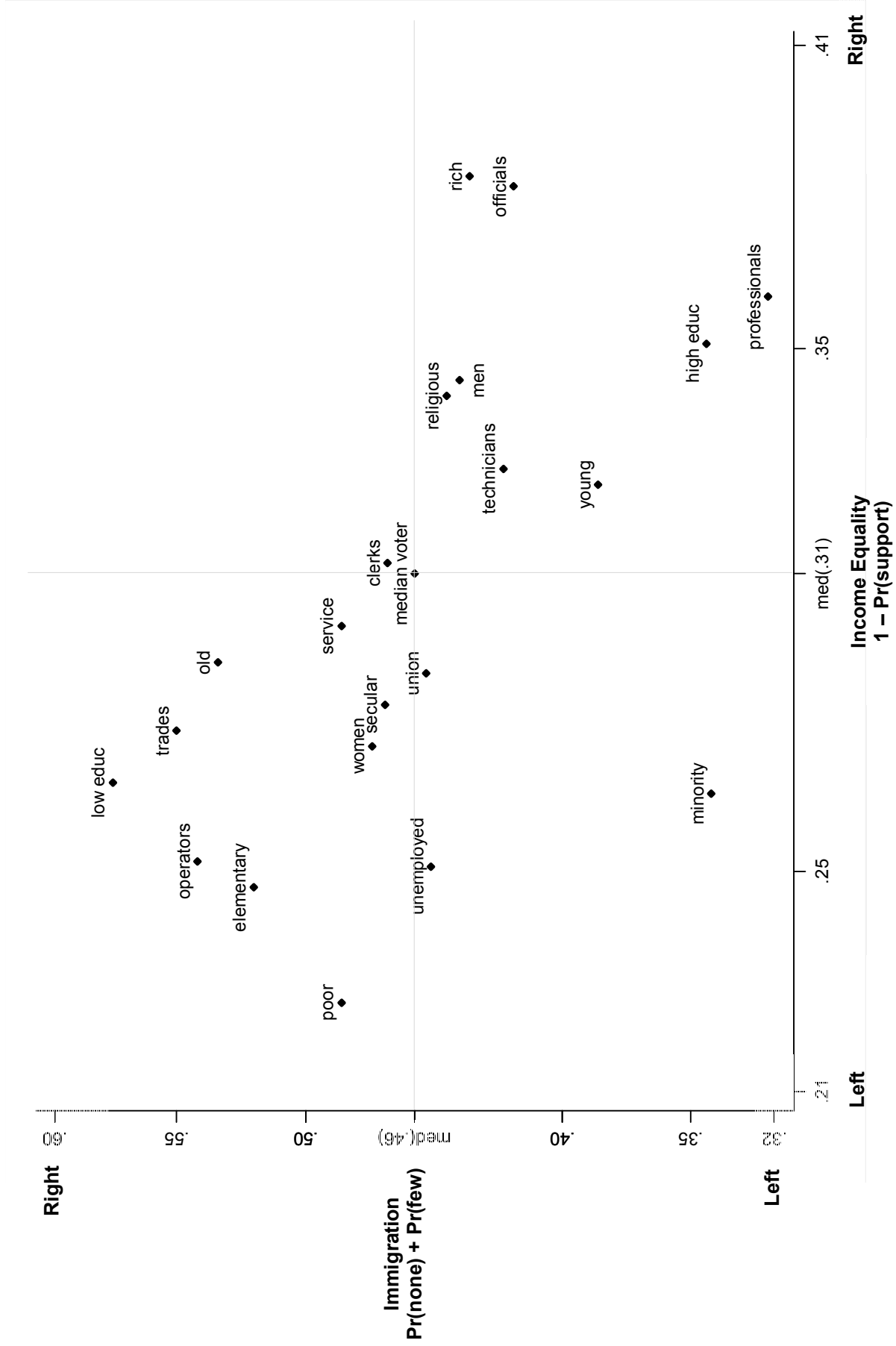
Figure 2.C: Party Policy Positions on the Immigration and Social Liberalism Dimensions in Two-Dimensional Space



OLS Estimates & Diagnostics:
 obs. = 145, a = 1.163, b = .878, se = .052, t = 16.92, Adj. R² = .66
 Breusch-Pagan/Cook-Weisberg X² = 9.45 (p < .01)
 Note: New Zealand Missing on Social Liberalism

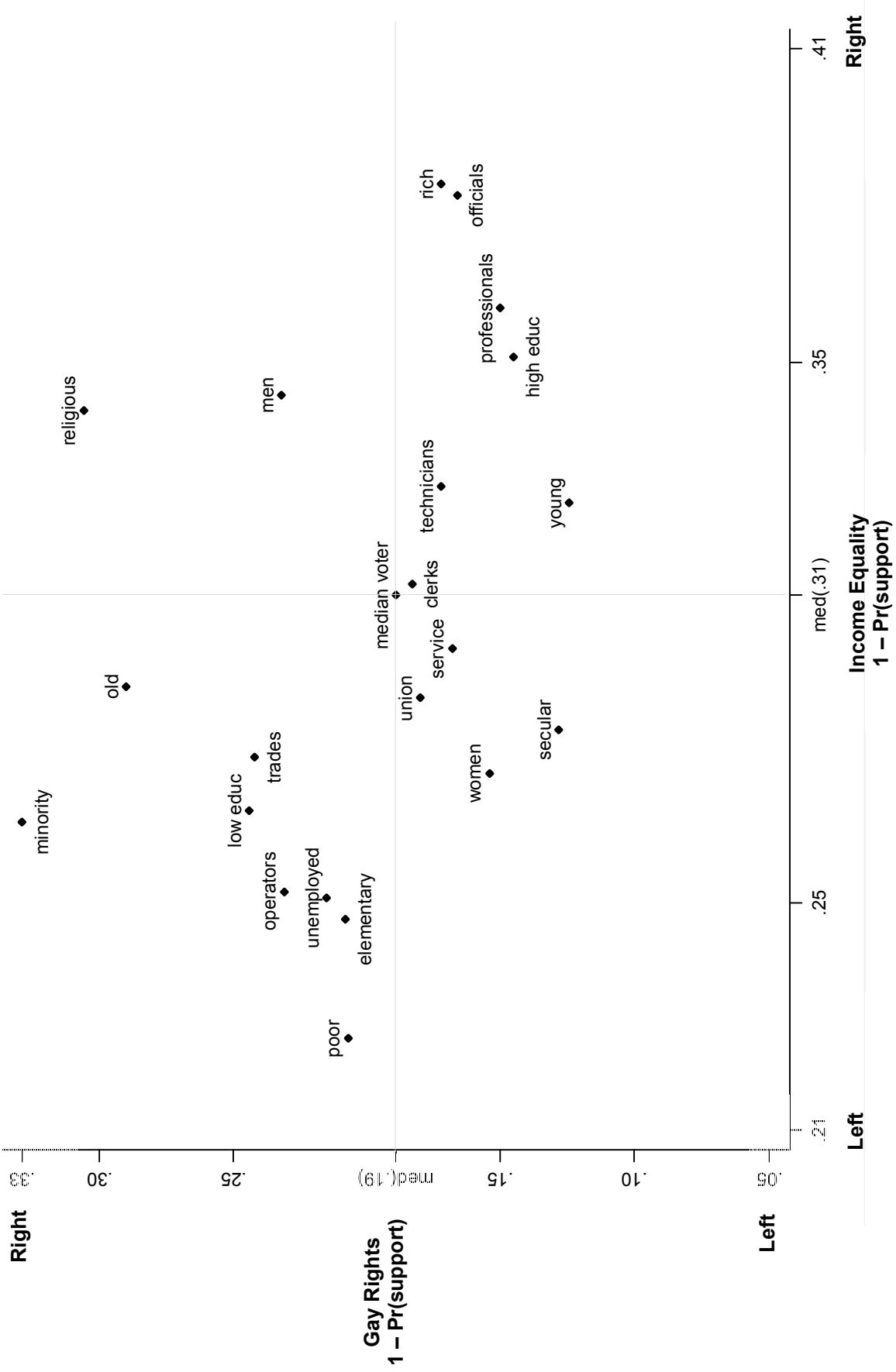
Source: Benoit & Laver 2006

Figure 3.A: Socioeconomic Status and Opinions about Income Equality and Immigration:
Clarify Simulations (MNL Regression)



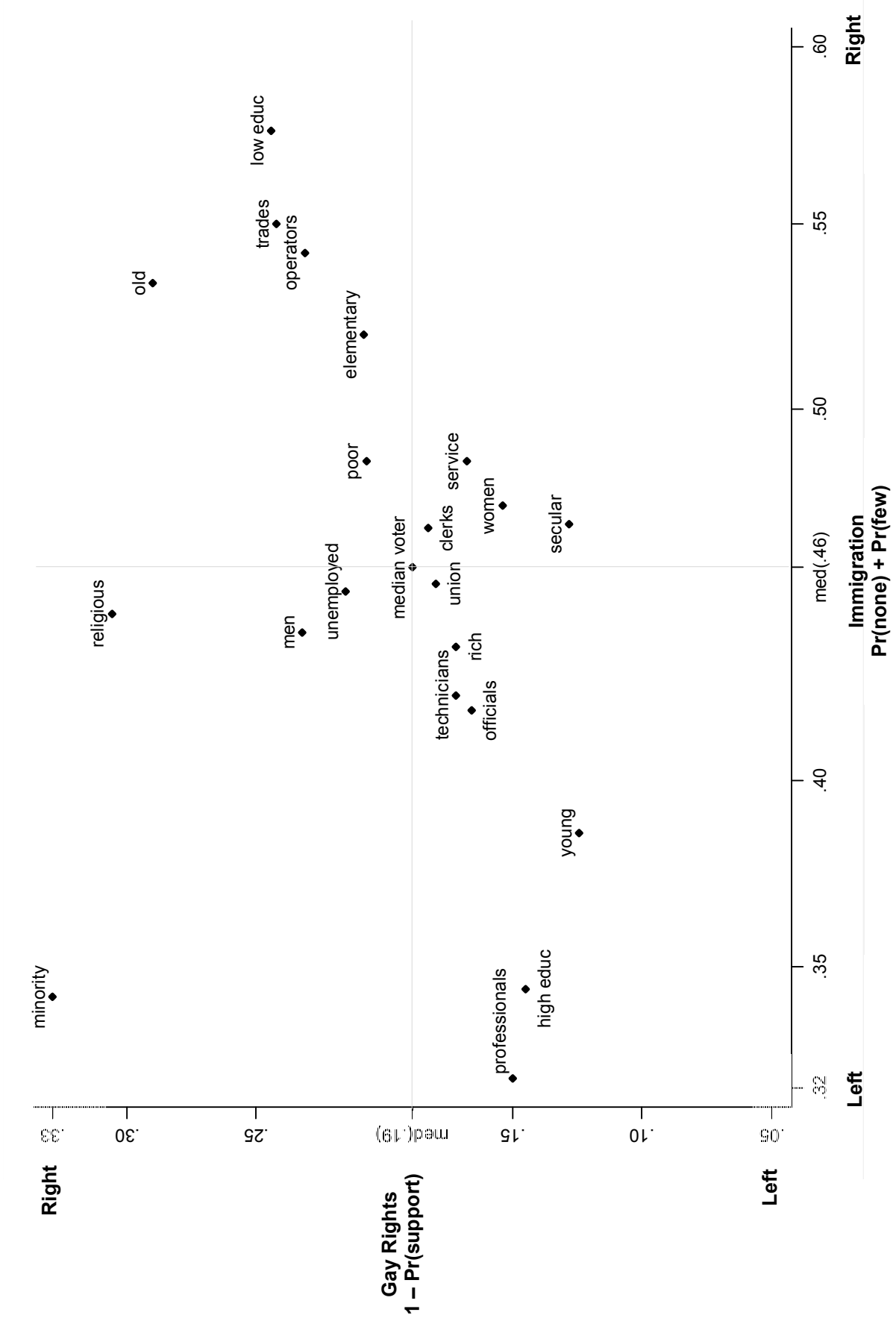
Source: European Social Survey 2002, 2004 and 2006

Figure 3.B: Socioeconomic Status and Opinions about Income Equality and the Rights of Gays and Lesbians:
Clarify Simulations (MNL Regression)



Source: European Social Survey 2002, 2004 and 2006

Figure 3.C: Socioeconomic Status and Opinions about Immigration and the Rights of Gays and Lesbians:
Clarify Simulations (MNL Regression)



Source: European Social Survey 2002, 2004 and 2006

Appendix: CLARIFY Estimates and Confidence Intervals (MNL Regression)

A. Income Equality: "...please say to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.....the government should take measures to reduce differences in come levels."

	Pr(agree)	low ci	high ci	Pr(neither)	low ci	high ci	Pr(oppose)	low ci	high ci
men	0.656	0.65	0.663	0.159	0.154	0.164	0.185	0.179	0.19
women	0.725	0.72	0.731	0.15	0.145	0.154	0.124	0.12	0.129
young	0.677	0.668	0.685	0.178	0.171	0.184	0.146	0.14	0.152
old	0.709	0.7	0.718	0.132	0.126	0.139	0.158	0.151	0.165
minority	0.735	0.716	0.754	0.15	0.136	0.165	0.115	0.102	0.128
secular	0.718	0.71	0.725	0.143	0.138	0.149	0.139	0.134	0.144
religious	0.659	0.649	0.669	0.171	0.163	0.179	0.17	0.162	0.177
poor	0.775	0.767	0.783	0.129	0.123	0.136	0.096	0.091	0.101
rich	0.617	0.608	0.625	0.173	0.167	0.179	0.21	0.203	0.218
low education	0.733	0.723	0.742	0.148	0.141	0.156	0.119	0.113	0.125
high education	0.649	0.639	0.659	0.16	0.152	0.168	0.191	0.183	0.199
union	0.712	0.707	0.717	0.148	0.144	0.152	0.14	0.136	0.144
unemployed	0.749	0.732	0.765	0.131	0.119	0.144	0.12	0.108	0.133
senior officials	0.619	0.604	0.634	0.158	0.147	0.17	0.223	0.211	0.235
professionals	0.64	0.627	0.653	0.18	0.17	0.191	0.18	0.17	0.19
technicians	0.674	0.663	0.684	0.162	0.154	0.17	0.165	0.157	0.172
clerks	0.691	0.678	0.703	0.153	0.145	0.163	0.156	0.146	0.165
service workers	0.704	0.692	0.715	0.147	0.138	0.155	0.15	0.141	0.159
trades workers	0.722	0.711	0.733	0.153	0.145	0.162	0.124	0.117	0.132
operators	0.748	0.733	0.763	0.124	0.113	0.135	0.128	0.117	0.139
elementary	0.753	0.74	0.765	0.132	0.123	0.142	0.115	0.106	0.124
egalitarians	0.756	0.75	0.761	0.124	0.12	0.129	0.12	0.116	0.125
median voter	0.693	0.689	0.698	0.155	0.152	0.158	0.152	0.148	0.155

n: 54421
pseudo R2: .08

Notes: (1) Reference Category for occupation is "do not work"; (2) MNL estimates available upon request; (3) CI at 95%; (4) See text for discussion of the CLARIFY simulations.

Source: European Social Survey, 2002, 2004 & 2006

Continued...

...continued (Appendix)

B. Immigration: "...to what extent do you think [country] should allow people of ...different race or ethnic group from most [country] people...to come and live here?"

	Pr(none)	low ci	high ci	Pr(a few)	low ci	high ci	Pr(some)	low ci	high ci	Pr(many)	low ci	high ci
men	0.083	0.079	0.087	0.357	0.35	0.363	0.468	0.461	0.474	0.092	0.089	0.096
women	0.103	0.099	0.108	0.371	0.365	0.378	0.444	0.437	0.45	0.082	0.078	0.085
young	0.069	0.065	0.073	0.317	0.308	0.325	0.48	0.471	0.489	0.134	0.127	0.141
old	0.124	0.117	0.13	0.41	0.4	0.42	0.415	0.405	0.424	0.052	0.048	0.056
minority	0.066	0.057	0.077	0.276	0.256	0.296	0.533	0.51	0.554	0.125	0.113	0.14
secular	0.117	0.112	0.123	0.352	0.344	0.36	0.439	0.431	0.448	0.091	0.087	0.096
religious	0.067	0.063	0.072	0.378	0.368	0.388	0.474	0.464	0.485	0.08	0.075	0.085
poor	0.117	0.11	0.124	0.369	0.36	0.379	0.427	0.417	0.437	0.086	0.081	0.092
rich	0.077	0.073	0.081	0.359	0.351	0.367	0.477	0.469	0.486	0.087	0.082	0.091
low education	0.147	0.139	0.156	0.428	0.418	0.439	0.374	0.364	0.384	0.05	0.047	0.054
high education	0.055	0.051	0.059	0.289	0.28	0.298	0.517	0.507	0.528	0.139	0.132	0.147
union	0.089	0.085	0.092	0.364	0.359	0.369	0.458	0.452	0.463	0.09	0.087	0.093
unemployed	0.124	0.113	0.136	0.327	0.309	0.345	0.451	0.433	0.469	0.098	0.088	0.108
senior officials	0.091	0.083	0.1	0.328	0.314	0.343	0.465	0.449	0.48	0.116	0.106	0.126
professionals	0.045	0.04	0.052	0.275	0.263	0.288	0.537	0.524	0.551	0.142	0.133	0.151
technicians	0.075	0.069	0.081	0.348	0.338	0.359	0.482	0.471	0.493	0.095	0.089	0.101
clerks	0.083	0.076	0.09	0.385	0.373	0.398	0.465	0.452	0.478	0.067	0.061	0.073
service workers	0.099	0.092	0.106	0.387	0.375	0.399	0.428	0.416	0.44	0.086	0.079	0.093
trades workers	0.133	0.125	0.142	0.417	0.405	0.429	0.389	0.377	0.401	0.061	0.055	0.066
operators	0.14	0.129	0.152	0.402	0.385	0.419	0.397	0.38	0.414	0.061	0.053	0.069
elementary	0.136	0.127	0.146	0.384	0.37	0.398	0.404	0.39	0.419	0.075	0.068	0.083
egalitarians	0.073	0.069	0.076	0.299	0.293	0.305	0.483	0.476	0.49	0.145	0.14	0.15
median voter	0.093	0.09	0.096	0.3644	0.36	0.369	0.456	0.451	0.461	0.087	0.084	0.09

n: 54029
pseudo R2: .07

Notes: (1) Reference Category for occupation is "do not work"; (2) MNL estimates available upon request; (3) CI at 95%; (4) See text for discussion of the CLARIFY simulations.

Source: European Social Survey, 2002, 2004 & 2006

Continued...

...continued (Appendix)

Rights of Gays and Lesbians: "...to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements....gay men and lesbians should be free to live their own life as they wish."

	Pr(agree)	low ci	high ci	Pr(neither)	low ci	high ci	Pr(disagree)	low ci	high ci
men	0.768	0.763	0.774	0.122	0.118	0.126	0.110	0.106	0.114
women	0.846	0.841	0.850	0.089	0.085	0.092	0.066	0.063	0.069
young	0.876	0.870	0.881	0.074	0.070	0.078	0.051	0.048	0.054
old	0.710	0.700	0.719	0.146	0.139	0.154	0.143	0.136	0.151
minority	0.671	0.650	0.691	0.147	0.132	0.163	0.182	0.166	0.199
secular	0.872	0.867	0.877	0.077	0.073	0.081	0.051	0.048	0.054
religious	0.694	0.684	0.704	0.147	0.140	0.155	0.158	0.150	0.167
poor	0.793	0.787	0.800	0.112	0.107	0.117	0.095	0.090	0.099
rich	0.828	0.822	0.834	0.097	0.092	0.101	0.075	0.071	0.080
low education	0.756	0.746	0.765	0.124	0.117	0.131	0.120	0.113	0.127
high education	0.855	0.848	0.861	0.086	0.081	0.091	0.059	0.055	0.063
union	0.820	0.816	0.824	0.100	0.097	0.103	0.080	0.077	0.083
unemployed	0.785	0.770	0.800	0.107	0.096	0.118	0.108	0.097	0.119
senior officials	0.834	0.823	0.845	0.089	0.082	0.098	0.076	0.069	0.084
professionals	0.850	0.841	0.860	0.085	0.078	0.093	0.064	0.058	0.071
technicians	0.828	0.820	0.836	0.097	0.091	0.103	0.075	0.070	0.081
clerks	0.817	0.807	0.827	0.112	0.104	0.120	0.071	0.065	0.078
service workers	0.832	0.823	0.841	0.091	0.084	0.098	0.077	0.071	0.083
trades workers	0.758	0.748	0.769	0.136	0.128	0.144	0.106	0.099	0.113
operators	0.769	0.755	0.783	0.120	0.110	0.131	0.111	0.102	0.121
elementary	0.792	0.781	0.803	0.103	0.095	0.111	0.105	0.097	0.114
egalitarians	0.853	0.848	0.857	0.080	0.076	0.083	0.068	0.064	0.071
median voter	0.811	0.807	0.815	0.104	0.102	0.107	0.085	0.082	0.087

n: 54387
pseudo R2: .08

Notes: (1) Reference Category for occupation is "do not work"; (2) MNL estimates available upon request; (3) CI at 95%; (4) See text for discussion of the CLARIFY simulations.

Source: European Social Survey, 2002, 2004 & 2006

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