

INCOME INEQUALITY AND RELIGION: BELIEFS, DISAGREEMENTS, AND POLITICS

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ABSTRACT

Adam Layton Long: Income Inequality and Religion: Beliefs, Disagreements, and Politics
(Under the Direction of Ted Mouw)

This dissertation presents three papers addressing the intersection of income inequality and religion, focusing on beliefs, disagreements, and politics.

The first paper addresses how religion influences beliefs about income inequality around the world. The literature on stratification beliefs predicts a negative relationship between religion and the desire for governmental redistribution. A common explanation for this relationship portrays the church and state as substitute goods: religious involvement provides insurance against adverse events, making government programs and spending less necessary and desired. However, focusing solely on redistribution leaves unanswered the question of how religion influences beliefs about income inequality itself. If being highly religious or belonging to a particular religious group associates with support for an increase in income disparity—and not simply for an decrease in redistribution—then there is more to the theoretical story. This paper expands the conversation on religion and inequality by digging beneath the concept of “substitute goods” to address the specific question, “How does religion influence beliefs about income inequality around the world?” It presents multilevel mixed-effects linear regression models based on the World Values Survey/European Values Survey (WVS/EVS) demonstrating that support for income inequality correlates with being highly religious and with the interaction of being highly religious and identifying with a religious tradition whose core teaching addresses stratification.

The second paper addresses the effect of religiosity on the amount of disagreement over income inequality within religious traditions around the world. Expectations that religion in the modern world would recede into private spheres of personal concern have not come to pass. Rather, contemporary religion continues to fuel disagreement over issues of major concern in the public realm. Prior research indicates that disagreement about public issues such as inequality intensifies within highly religious groups in the U.S. This paper presents heteroskedastic ordered probit regression models based on the World Values Survey/European Values Survey (WVS/EVS) to address the question, “What is the effect of religiosity on the amount of disagreement over income inequality within religious traditions around the world?” Including controls for nonreligious factors known to shape beliefs about this topic, the models provide evidence for the hypothesis that disagreement about income inequality intensifies within highly religious groups around the world. This empirical finding prompts the following theoretical insight: Far from producing consensus, high religiosity intensifies variation in beliefs about income inequality, pushing people toward divergent perspectives on this public issue. This is true for all religious groups around the world, but especially for Catholics, Protestants, and those who claim no religious affiliation. This helps to explain why identification with specific religious traditions does not produce uniform beliefs about economic stratification.

The third paper addresses the effects of income and religiosity on support for involving religion in politics. Deprivation theory, which views religion mainly as a compensator for resources and opportunities, predicts higher religiosity among poorer people. Conversely, relative power theory, which views religion mainly as a mechanism of power, predicts higher religiosity among richer people. Recent research advocating the latter approach demonstrates correlations between higher economic status and religiosity—but fails to provide evidence that

religion in these cases acts as a mechanism of power. To discover if religion provides a mechanism of power for the wealthy, this paper adopts the definition of secularization as declining religious authority in realms such as politics. It addresses the question, “What are the effects of income and religiosity on support for involving religion in politics?” Its ordered logistic regression models based on the World Values Survey/European Values Survey (WVS/EVS) provide solid evidence for the hypothesis that having a higher income correlates with less support for involving religion in politics and minimal evidence for the hypothesis that having a higher income and being highly religious correlates with more support for involving religion in politics. In the main, deprivation theory provides more accurate predictions of the relationship between income and support for involving religion in politics when defining secularization as declining religious authority.

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CHAPTER 1

THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON WORLDWIDE INCOME INEQUALITY BELIEFS

Introduction

Over the past two centuries, average incomes around the world have risen dramatically due to industrialization. However, this growth has occurred unevenly, with some nations benefitting much more than others (Firebaugh 2003). Inequality has been on the rise both *within* nations and—removing China from the calculations—*between* nations as well (Sala-i-Martin 2002, Firebaugh 2003, Mahler and McKeever 2009). While attempts to explain these upward trends often focus on globalization and growth (see Appendix 1.A), the conversation about income inequality encompasses more than pure economics. Social norms play a “crucial role” in both legitimating and challenging inequality levels (Kluegel and Smith 1981, Fong 2001, Krugman 2002, Piketty and Saez 2003, Bullock 2005:2). Because of this, a comprehensive approach to economic inequality will address how the income distribution among world citizens reflects the influence of social norms (Benabou and Tirole 2006, McCall and Percheski 2010). Studying these social norms requires discovering perceptions and judgments of income inequality, economic opportunity, and governmental redistribution (Aalberg 2003, McCall 2013). What do people around the world think about rising income inequality?

Prior research indicates that understanding beliefs about income inequality involves addressing six major factors. The literature review below explores the ways that inequality beliefs reflect 1) normative judgments, 2) stratification systems, 3) political orders, 4) economic

conditions, 5) social norms, and 6) religious traditions. Much of the research on this final factor predicts a negative relationship between stratification beliefs and religion. Importantly, this body of work usually focuses on opinions about governmental redistribution (Gill and Lundsgaarde 2004, Chen and Lind 2005, Hungerman 2005, Benabou and Tirole 2006, Scheve and Stasavage 2006, Chen and Lind 2007, Gruber and Hungerman 2007, Akkoyunlu, Neustadt, and Zweifel 2008, Pepinsky and Welborne 2010, Guillaud 2011, Stegmüller et al. 2011). This approach often conceptualizes church and state—religion and redistribution—as “substitute goods” and attempts to explain the influence of religion on preferences for redistribution through this specific causal mechanism. Because religious involvement provides insurance against adverse life events, people of faith often view governmental redistribution and programs as less necessary and desired (Chen and Lind 2005, Scheve and Stasavage 2006, Chen and Lind 2007, Pepinsky and Welborne 2010, Guillaud 2011, Stegmüller et al. 2011). As the “substitute good” of religiosity increases, so the demand for redistribution decreases. However, focusing solely on redistribution leaves unanswered the question of how religion influences beliefs about income inequality itself—an issue that is separable from redistribution (McCall 2013). If being highly religious or belonging to a particular religious group is associated with desire for an increase in income disparity—and not simply for an decrease in redistribution—then there is more to the theoretical story than the church and state acting as substitute goods.

This project expands the conversation on religion and inequality by digging beneath the concept of “substitute goods” to address the specific question, “How does religion influence beliefs about income inequality around the world?” A review of the literature on the relationship between religion and beliefs about income inequality suggests the following three hypotheses: Support for income inequality correlates with 1) being in a religious majority, 2) being highly

religious, and 3) identifying with religious traditions whose core teachings address stratification. This paper tests these three hypotheses as well as a novel proposal derived from the methods section that follows: 4) Support for income inequality correlates with the interaction between religious intensity and religious identity. To test these hypotheses, this paper presents multilevel mixed-effects linear regression models using the World Values Survey/European Values Survey (WVS/EVS), the only ongoing research project designed to capture the values and beliefs of a majority of the world's population (Inglehart 2008). Also included are Gini indexes from the Standardized World Income Inequality Database (SWIID), measures of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Government Expenditures (as percentage of GDP) from the World Bank International Comparison Program, and information about countries' religious composition from The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. Including controls for nonreligious factors known to shape beliefs about income inequality, the models provide evidence for the hypotheses that support for income inequality correlates with being highly religious and with the interaction of being highly religious and identifying with a religious tradition whose core teaching addresses stratification.

Theory

Prior research indicates that beliefs about income inequality reflect normative judgments, stratification systems, political orders, economic conditions, social norms, religious commitments, and religious traditions. The discussion below describes these six factors and presents hypotheses that follow from them.

1) Inequality beliefs reflect normative judgments.

When studying people's beliefs about income inequality, it can be helpful to specify how one defines beliefs and how one describes inequality. When it comes to beliefs, Aalberg (2003)

differentiates between perceptions, ideals, attitudes. Perceptions about income inequality contain no normative judgment; they simply register how much income inequality people perceive in society. On the other hand, ideals represent the amount of income inequality that people think society should have, and attitudes represent judgments about the best policies to achieve those ideals. Whereas ideals evolve slowly, both perceptions and attitudes change more rapidly. In the main, people's perceptions of income inequality prove quite accurate and have been shown to influence their ideals (Aalberg 2003). The beliefs discussed in this paper reflect the category of ideals: how much income inequality people think society ought to have.

People's beliefs about the widening distribution can either challenge current social arrangements (Kluegel and Smith 1981, McCall 2013) or legitimate them (Lerner 1980, Kluegel and Smith 1986, Bobo 1987, Fleishman 1988, Svallfors 1993, Krugman 2002, Piketty and Saez 2003, Bullock 2005, Malahy, Rubinlicht, and Kaiser 2009, Seider 2010, Kocer and van de Werfhorst 2012). McCall (2013) encourages viewing such beliefs as being interdependent with beliefs about economic opportunity and governmental redistribution. Following her lead, this paper discusses beliefs about inequality, opportunity, and distribution together, noting differences when appropriate. In this vein, it is vital to identify the methodological issues involved in capturing inequality beliefs: "[T]he way in which we measure the desire to reduce inequality produces different patterns of response across the surveys" (Bjorklund and Freeman 2010). Recognizing that slightly different questions can produce vastly different answers—especially on this topic—reinforces the importance of running a tight methodological ship.

2) Inequality beliefs reflect stratification systems.

In the main, beliefs about economic inequality are highly correlated with one's position in the stratification system (Svallfors 1993). Indeed, a major strand of research identifies self-

interest as a the major determinant of beliefs about income inequality (Arikan 2013). Those who benefit least from unequal economic arrangements are the most likely to support egalitarian principles. For example, women, the elderly, the unemployed, and the poor—those who typically occupy more fragile positions in the stratification system—report more concern about income inequality and more support for redistribution than do men, younger people, the employed, and the affluent (Ravallion and Lokshin 2000, Alesina and La Ferrara, 2001 Aalberg 2003, Arikan 2013).

Because one's position in the income distribution is highly correlated with education level, it might be expected that those with advanced learning express less concern about income inequality. Indeed some researchers find that achieving higher educational status promotes a more favorable opinion of large wage and wealth disparities (Kocer and van de Werfhorst 2012). The exception to this trend involves those who experience multiple forms of oppression simultaneously, such as African American women (but not men) in the United States (Kane and Kyyro 2001). On the other hand, higher education might be expected to unmask the social mechanisms that cause poverty and reproduce inequality (Aalberg 2003) thereby cultivating “tolerant” values and sensitizing learners to the call for more redistribution (Kocer and van de Werfhorst 2012). While this may be true in some cases, educational “interventions” designed to sensitize privileged groups to poverty and homelessness can increase knowledge while failing to alter the legitimizing frames used to justify economic disparity (Seider 2010). Furthermore, educational attainment does not uniformly translate into economic mobility: “Growing up in a state with widespread economic inequality increases educational attainment for high income children and lowers it for low income children” (Mayer 2001:1).

Given the high correlation between the current stratification system and beliefs about income inequality, it might be expected that those who have most to gain from generous redistributive policies would form political coalitions to achieve more egalitarian societies. As it turns out, researchers find very little evidence of this strategy in action (Lind 2005). The Prospect of Upward Mobility (POUM) thesis explains that “the poor do not support high levels of redistribution because they hope that they, or their offspring, will make it up the income ladder” (Benabou and Ok 2001:447). In this view, self-interest is still the dominant force shaping beliefs about inequality. However, adding the concept of mobility projects self-interest into the future (Hirschman and Rothchild 1973, Ravallion and Lokshin 2000). Indeed, the perception of an even playing field with fair opportunities for advancement dampens concern about income inequality (Alesina and La Ferrara 2001, Clark 2003, Senik 2005), an outlook often reproduced from generation to generation (Piketty 1995).

To address how inequality beliefs reflect stratification systems, the models in this paper control for sex, age, marital status, education, and income. The expectation is that being female, older, single, less educated, and poorer will dampen support for income inequality.

3) Inequality beliefs reflect political orders.

In addition to reflecting current and projected stratification systems, beliefs about income inequality also reflect governmental regime types (Alesina and Fuchs-Schendeln 2007). At the broadest level, the “nature of the social contract shapes people’s beliefs” and vice versa (Benabou and Tirole 2006:702). Indeed, “There is a strong correlation between these beliefs and actual levels of redistribution (ibid). Much of the research into this trend compares and contrasts Europe’s more extensive welfare states with the relatively laissez-faire public policy of the US (ibid). In the main, people in the West “have a strong preference for equality and are concerned

about the worst off in society,” with the overall trend moving toward egalitarianism (Aalberg 2003:196). Differences in ideals, however, arise from public perceptions of income inequality: “On average, the public perceives approximately the same level of inequality as the official figures stated was present in their country. There was a very strong positive relationship between how people perceive occupational differences and what they believe would be the ideal difference” (ibid.: 198). This pattern produces a continuum from English-speaking democracies, which tolerate higher levels of inequality, to Scandinavian and formerly communist nations, which promote stronger levels of egalitarianism, with the remainder of Western Europe falling in between (Aalberg 2003, Jaeger 2009).

As one might expect, some evidence complicates this rudimentary understanding. For example, the basic picture of the US portrays a society accepting large economic disparity tracing back to the nation’s British institutional origins, strong religious diversity, historic immigration patterns, distaste for government intervention, and the ideals of equality and meritocracy (Glazer 2003). However, Klugel and Smith (1986:6) report “inconsistency, fluctuation, and seeming contradiction in the attitudes towards inequality and related policy found in the American public,” a situation created by a failure to integrate a dominant ideology justifying income inequality with growing cultural liberalism. And a more recent study by Mcall (2013:137) reports that “Americans are not satisfied with existing levels of income inequality, and their concerns have intensified since the 1980s” due to concerns with restricted economic opportunities. In another English-speaking democracy, Great Britain’s history of strong class boundaries can actually sensitize people to economic inequality—even if they identify as economically conservative (Evans 1997).

Evidence complicating the basic picture of post-Communist states must also be acknowledged. This basic picture portrays the egalitarian influence of Soviet control as quite durable (Suhrccke 2001, Alesina and Fuchs-Schendeln 2007). However, Eastern European societies exhibit “considerable ideological inconsistency,” supporting minimum and maximum income policies while simultaneously demonstrating an increased desire for social stratification and inequality (Alwin, Gorney, and Khakhulina 1995). Such inconsistency becomes observable within other European nations, such as Russian and Estonia (Ravallion and Lokshin 2000, Stephenson 2000), and between nations outside of Europe, such as Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan (Junisbai 2010). Thus, while the overall pattern ranging from inegalitarian English-speaking democracies to egalitarian Scandinavian and post-Communist nations remains accurate, it is important to acknowledge deviations from the dominant trend.

To address how inequality beliefs reflect political orders, the models in this paper control for government expenses. The expectation is that living in a nation with low government spending will dampen support for income inequality.

4) Inequality beliefs reflect economic conditions.

In the past, social transfers of wealth and income were rare with the exception of modest “poor relief.” “Today, all democratic countries have well-developed welfare states albeit of different sizes” (Lind 2005:2). Around the world, the desire for redistribution decreases as the Gross Domestic Product (GDP)—a measure of prosperity—increases (Dallinger 2010). Conversely, nations with low economic development show strong support for redistribution—even among citizens with higher incomes (Dion and Birchfield 2010). While the prosperity of a nation shapes beliefs about income inequality, the amount of economic inequality within the nation also matters. In Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

countries during the 1980s and 1990s, market inequality grew, but so did redistribution (Kenworthy and Pontusson 2005).

The median-voter model, an early account of the relationship between redistribution and inequality, suggests that redistribution in nations with higher income inequality “is a function of the distance between the income of the median voter and the average income of all voters” (Meltzer and Richard 1981, Kenworthy and Pontusson 2005:456). As with most models, the evidence for this approach is mixed. For example, positive evidence found in Europe (Fineraas 2009) and Latin America (Cramer and Kauffman 2010) meets with arguments that little empirical support exists among OECD countries (Kenworthy and McCall 2008). An alternative approach explains higher redistribution in nations with higher income inequality with recourse to social movement mobilization by unions and leftist political parties (Bradley et al. 2003, Kenworthy and Pontusson 2005).

The basic picture that nations with higher income inequality have higher levels of demand for redistribution comes with some caveats. For example, within country inequality influences opinions about redistribution more in Europe than in the US, where personal income level is more of a factor (Pittau, Massari, and Zelli 2013). Indeed, the rise in economic divergence in the United States has intensified the desire for less income inequality (McCall 2013). However, such opinions about income inequality do not translate directly into the desire for more governmental redistribution. Proposals among US citizens for achieving economic equity without redistribution include injecting more democracy directly into work environments, expanding educational opportunities, and reducing market inequality (Wright 2010, Wolff 2012, McCall 2013). Overall, the amount of economic inequality in a society has informational values for its citizens, which can prompt social limits to redistribution (Corneo and Gruner 2000).

To address how inequality beliefs reflect economic conditions, the models in this paper control for income inequality and economic development. The expectation is that living in a nation with high income inequality and low economic development will dampen support for income inequality.

5) Inequality beliefs reflect social norms.

Beyond concrete economic indicators such as GDP, Gini coefficients, and government spending, social norms also influence beliefs about income inequality. Acknowledging that people tend to be reciprocal beings who hold “strong principles of equity” makes it difficult to explain inequality beliefs entirely in terms of stratification position and self-interest (Fong 2001:242). Importantly, the influence of social norms on inequality beliefs moves in both directions. On one hand, “beliefs about economic... disparity, upward mobility, and achievement play a crucial role in legitimizing inequality” (Bullock 2005:2). But beliefs can also challenge economic arrangements, motivating the desire for social change and advocating specific strategies of action (Kluegel and Smith 1981). In the US, social norms played a major role in the maintenance of egalitarian arrangements achieved during and after World War II (Krguman 2002, Piketty and Saez 2003) as well as the recent surge in incomes at the very top of the distribution (McCall and Percheski 2010).

In general, “left and right political outlooks are consistent and strong predictors of support for social policies” involving redistribution (Arikan 2013). Being moderate, inclusive, risk averse, and altruistic associate with a dislike of economic disparity (Alesina and La Ferrara 2001, Suhrcke 2001, Biancotti and D’Alessio 2007) while racism (in the US) and xenophobia (in Europe) decreases the likelihood redistribution (Lee, Roemer, and Straeten 2006). At the same time, the relationship between social norms and inequality beliefs becomes complicated by the

fact that few people hold highly developed accounts of economic inequality and strategies for addressing it. Instead, most people rely on core ideological commitments to justify disparate distributions of income and wealth (Kluegel and Smith 1986, Bobo 1987, Fleishman 1988). For example, a belief in “individualism” can promote the ideas “that opportunity for economic advancement is widely available, that economic outcomes are determined by individual efforts and talents (or their lack), and that in general economic inequality is fair” (Kluegel and Smith 1986:37).

A major legitimizing frame, Just World Beliefs, consists of the “notion that people get what they deserve and deserve what they get” (Malahy, Rubinlicht, and Kaiser 2009:370, Lerner 1980). Greater acceptance of Just World Beliefs aligns with greater perceptions of inequality as “fair, inevitable, and immutable” (Smith 1985). As one’s income increases over time, so do the odds of holding Just World Beliefs (Malahy, Rubinlicht, and Kaiser 2009). At the same time, a number of factors provide counterpressure to Just World Beliefs. Indeed, the relationship between income and Just World Beliefs is not entirely static. Having a sense of political efficacy—the notion that one’s collective participation in the political process can influence outcomes—weakens the link between Just World Beliefs and the legitimization of income inequality (Beierlein et al. 2011). In addition, such core ideological commitments often face challenges from social movements, providing counterpressure to the majority view. This push and pull between competing approaches can lead researchers to find views on economic inequality to be ambivalent and inconsistent over time (McCall and Kenworthy 2009, McCall 2013).

6) Inequality beliefs reflect religious traditions.

As argued above, the construction and maintenance of income distributions around the world involves more than pure economics. Social norms play an important role in creating these unequal social arrangements. An important source of norms that motivate and justify social action is culture in general—and religion in specific (Smith 2003, Vaisey 2009). While much religion focuses on interaction with divine entities (Stark and Finke 2000) or conjecture about superempirical realities (Smith 2003), many faith expressions emphasize concrete, tangible events and situations (Casanova 1994). Indeed religious faith directly influences the differential distribution of resources—both cultural and material—between different groups of people (Keister 2003, 2008, 2011). “Religion affects economic outcomes mainly by fostering religious beliefs that influence individual traits such as honesty, work ethic, thrift, and openness to strangers” (McCleary and Barro 2006:771). A major way that religion influences economic distributions is through its effect on inequality beliefs. Internationally, different forms of religion shape different preferences for redistribution—which in turn shape actual levels of redistribution (Guiso, Sapienza, and Zingales 2003).

When attempting to discern the influence of religion on beliefs about inequality around the world, it is important to recognize that one faith often predominates within each nation, making every citizen either a religious majority or minority. Indeed religious inequity sits at the intersection of faith and self-interest, two issues that are theoretically central to this study. Prior research demonstrates support for the “underdog thesis,” that minority groups with lower socioeconomic status support more egalitarian principles than their majority counterparts (Robinson and Bell 1978). Using data collected in the United States, Hunt (2002) argues that this same egalitarian impulse based on self-interest also applies to religious minorities. Being in a religious minority predicts resistance to dominant ideologies that promote individualistic

explanations of poverty and income inequality. Thus accounting for religious majority/minority inequity addresses the possibility that the relationship between religion and inequality beliefs may depend as much on a religious group's numerical strength within a society as the identity of that religious group across societies.

Hypothesis 1: Support for income inequality correlates with being in a religious majority.

Further evidence suggests that religion can intensify conflicts over issues of equality, driving people on both sides of the debate further apart (Emerson and Smith 2001). Indeed the literature on the relationship between religion and stratification beliefs demonstrates that religious intensity and identity correlate with conflicting outcomes. For example, religion can be shown to have no influence on attitudes about economic justice (Curry, Koch, and Chalfant 2010), increase the willingness to pay for income redistribution (Neustadt 2011), or increase opposition to redistribution (Chen and Lind 2005, Lind 2005). Furthermore different aspects of religion can have different impacts on inequality beliefs. For example, religious beliefs can drive support for governmental responsibility in achieving social welfare while religious behaviors, such as attendance, dampen such concern (Arikan 2013, Pittau, Massari, and Zelli 2013). Of course, it is not simply beliefs and behaviors that matters for views on income inequality but also the intensity of a person's engagement with religion. For example, Perkins (1983:206) argues that "social conformity may be a common element of religious identification that lowers concern for social equality, while the actual faith, if highly internalized, reverses this relationship in part."

In spite of these conflicting results, a major strand of empirical research suggests that religion can uniformly dampen concern for equality, whether the issue is race, gender, sexual orientation, or economics (Feagin 1975, Emerson, Smith, and Sikkink 1999, Hinojosa and Park 2004, Edgell and Tranby 2007, Andersen and Fetner 2008, Eitle and Steffens 2009, Seguino

2011, Taylor and Merino 2011). Indeed, three different but related approaches predict “a negative relationship between religiousness and income redistribution” (Akkoyunlu, Neustadt, and Zweifel 2008:24). First, collective cultural beliefs—such as doctrines about rewards in the afterlife—can encourage individual industriousness and dampen desire for government intervention (Benabou and Tirole 2006). Second, expanding governmental welfare spending crowds out church-based charity, which can make religion seem less necessary (Gill and Lundsgaarde 2004, Hungerman 2005, Gruber and Hungerman 2007). Third, religious involvement provides insurance against adverse life events, making governmental programs less necessary and desired (Scheve and Stasavage 2006, Guillaud 2011, StegmueLLer et al. 2011). From this “new political economy of religion” perspective, people of faith tend to view redistribution negatively because their religious beliefs, behaviors, and belonging provide psychological and material insurance against adverse life events, such as rapid drops in income (Chen and Lind 2005, Chen and Lind 2007, Pepinsky and Welborne 2010). Even though such believers might embrace religious teachings endorsing personal acts of charity, they do not desire the government to get involved in this process.

In these theories, church and state—religion and redistribution—are conceptualized as “substitute goods.” Thus, the explanation for the negative association between religion and egalitarianism necessarily focuses on redistribution. However, by measuring only attitudes about redistribution—and not addressing beliefs about income inequality—the rest of the story may be going untold. Perhaps the negative association between religion and egalitarianism is not simply a function of material tradeoffs. Perhaps religion shapes moral judgments about income inequality itself. If religion negatively associates with beliefs about income inequality—and not just

governmental redistribution—then there may be more to the story than the state and the church (or mosque or synagogue or temple) acting as “substitute goods.”

Given that a preponderance of research predicts a negative relationship between religious intensity and the desire for governmental redistribution, this paper anticipates a similar relationship between religious intensity and beliefs about income inequality. The following hypothesis intends to demonstrate that beliefs about redistribution are similar to but separable from beliefs about income inequality.

Hypothesis 2: Support for income inequality correlates with being highly religious.

Different religious traditions promote different teachings and utilize different frames, and this is certainly true in how they address economic norms. Investigating how religion influences inequality beliefs includes reviewing the basic teachings of the major traditions and how each addresses poverty and income inequality. The following section reviews the major religious traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam (Smith 1991). Of course, the “lived religion” (Hall 1997) of the masses do not map neatly onto the teachings of gurus, bishops, and imams, and there exists as much diversity within religious groups as between them. For example, modernist believers in European and Israel are more economically individualistic than their religiously orthodox counterparts, believing that “individuals are responsible for their own success or failure and that the solution to poverty and unemployment is greater effort by the poor and jobless themselves, not government aid or private charity” (Davis and Robinson 1999, 2001:23). Nonetheless, it can be helpful to frame the basic contours of the world’s major religious traditions, linking major doctrines and practices to ideas about income inequality. As will be evident in what follows, researchers concerned with the influence of religion on inequality beliefs have focused more attention on Muslims and Christians than on believers from

other religious traditions. In almost every case, the influence of religious identity on beliefs about income inequality proves contradictory.

Hinduism invites people to seek liberation (*moksha*) from human finitude and achieve union of the self (*Atman*) with the Godhead (*Brahman*). Individuals souls (*jivas*) migrate through a sequence of bodies through a process of reincarnation (*samsara*) based on the moral law of cause and effect (*karma*). Indeed karma shapes society's hereditary stratification system (*caste*), sorting people into five groups: priests and scholars (*Brahmins*), rulers and soldiers (*Kshatriyas*), professionals and merchants (*Vaisyas*), laborers and servants (*Sudras*), and the outcastes or untouchables (*Harijans*). Throughout Hindu history, many groups have observed strict separation of the castes while others have advocated for equal treatment and interaction across lines of stratification. Evidence of this divergence appears in the research on Hindu stratification practices and beliefs. In a study of college students, over half of respondents rated the *caste* system as intolerable; but upper-*caste* Brahmins showed the greatest toleration (Kuppuswamy 1956). Indeed, the argument can be made that "religious bonding" among Hindus is based more strongly on caste than income level (Stroope 2012:499). Conversely, another study demonstrates that Brahmins exhibited less rigidity and more support than other groups for reforming the *caste* system (Rath 1960). Such egalitarian impulses have been documented within Hindu temples themselves, which have historically "served redistributive and developmental functions that seem coextensive with those of the political system" (Appadurai and Breckenridge 1976). Despite this conflicting evidence, the *caste* system of Hinduism still demonstrates the strongest connections between religious dogma and social stratification in all the major world religions.

Originating in a Hindu context, Buddhism teaches Four Noble Truths: 1) that life is suffering (*dukkha*), 2) which is caused by desire (*tanha*), 3) and can be cured by being released

from desire, 4) through the Eightfold Path: right views, right intent, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. Over the course of multiple, reincarnated lifetimes shaped by the law of *karma*, this path can lead to *nirvana*, life's goal of extinguishing the bounded self and the subsequent suffering caused by desire. In terms of social stratification, Buddhism does not observe the *caste* system of Hinduism. On one hand Buddhism recommends compassion towards everyone trapped in the illusion of suffering caused by personal desire (Armstrong 2010). On the other hand, Buddhism teaches that all of life's suffering—including the suffering caused by unequal economic arrangements—is merely an illusion stemming from the perception of individuated selves. Clearly, concerns with stratification prove less central to Buddhism than to Hinduism.

Originating in a Jewish context, Christianity identifies Jesus of Nazareth as the anointed one (*Messiah* or *Christ*) who establishes God's kingdom by saving people from sin through his crucifixion and resurrection. The three broad branches of Christianity originated in disputes over authority, with a split between Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism occurring in 1054 c.e., and a split between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism beginning in 1517 c.e. One sociological theory links the rapid rise of Christianity in the ancient, pagan world to the boundary-crossing behavior of Christians involving stratification, especially regarding gender and slavery (Stark 1997). Another links rising economic disparities between Catholics and Protestants in modernizing Europe to the capitalist-friendly ethic of Protestantism (Weber 2002).

Both Catholics and Protestants express high levels of resistance to governmental redistribution (Guiso, Sapienza, and Zingales 2003) especially when contrasted with secular individuals (Stegmueller et al. 2011). While some researchers identify Protestants as the more resistant group (Benabou and Tirole 2006), others portray Catholics as more resistant (Guillaud

2011). Of course, introducing additional factors into the analysis complicates this picture. For example, being Catholic “reduces the propensity towards redistribution of the leftists whereas it increases the propensity of the right wing” (Pittau, Massari, and Zelli 2013: 575). While some argue that “Christian traditions, as understood by ordinary Americans, work in favor of aspirations for equality and community in the economic realm, at least as much as against them” (Hart 1996:vii), others see a different picture. One portrayal of this ambivalent relationship situates religious groups along a continuum from those who contribute to economic inequality to those who promote economic equality (Davidson and Pyle 1999). In this view, the majority of religiously engaged people fall toward the side that contributes to economic inequality, leaving a minority to promote economic equality.

Also from the Abrahamic tradition, Islam, meaning submission or surrender, endorses Five Pillars: 1) *Shahadah*: the confession that there is no god but God (*Allah*), and Muhammad is His Prophet; 2) *Salah*: prayers said at five times throughout the day, 3) *Zakat*: charity or almsgiving to those in need, 4) *Sawm*: the observance of the month of Ramadan with fasting; and 5) *Hajj*: at least one pilgrimage to Mecca, the holy city of Islam. Islamic law (*shariah*), originating with its holy book (*Quran*) and a collection of Muhammad’s sayings and traditions (*hadith*), teaches that “a society’s health requires that material goods be widely and appropriately distributed” and calls for the breaking of “the barriers of economic caste” in order to reduce enormously “the injustices of special interest groups” (Smith 1991: 249-250).

All around the world, “socioeconomic inequality is lower in societies with proportionally larger Muslim populations” (Fish 2011: 256). One possible explanation for this situation is Moral Cosmology Theory, which suggests that Muslims who adhere more closely to Islamic orthodoxy are “disposed towards economic communitarianism, whereby the state should provide for the

poor, reduce inequality, and meet community needs via economic intervention (Davis and Robinson 2006:167). A study of the divergent economic trajectories of two post-Communist, majority-Muslim states—growing Kazakhstan and stagnating Kyrgyzstan—provides further evidence for the argument that more egalitarian attitudes associate with higher levels of Islamic orthodoxy (Junisbai 2010). However, the Islamic Redistribution Thesis is not without its detractors. Pepinsky and Welborne (2010: 491) reject the idea that “piety has a systematic impact on the redistributive preferences among Muslims,” arguing conversely that “higher levels of religiosity correspond to lower support for government efforts to minimize income inequality.” According to these critics, the choice by Davis and Robinson to define piety as support for the implementation of Islamic law required dropping half of the Muslims in their sample because they were not asked the question on *shariah*. Pepinsky and Welborne conclude that “These findings provide little evidence to suggest that either scriptural or organizational factors unique to Islam create distinct economic policy preferences among pious Muslims, demonstrating that arguments derived from Christians in advanced industrial economies are largely appropriate in the Muslim world” (Pepinsky and Welborne 2010: 491).

Whereas previous research has often focused on the relationship between stratification beliefs and individual religious traditions (e.g., Islam) or similar religious denominations (e.g., Catholics vs. Protestants), this study addresses the world’s major traditions side by side. In summary, dogmas related to stratification from the world’s four major religious traditions form a continuum from essential and specific to peripheral and general. First, Hindu teaching presents the most explicit explanation for social stratification: inequality arises from the karmic results of past actions. The *caste* system is a core feature of Hindu society. Second, Islamic teaching presents a specific response to income inequality: one of its Five Pillars requires almsgiving to

those in need. While the Muslim world encompasses widely divergent interpretations of this instruction, the centrality of the topic remains salient for this study. Third, Buddhist teaching generally recommends compassion but also teaches that all suffering—including the suffering that results from one's position in the stratification system—is illusory. While many forms of Buddhism teach that the law of *karma* governs the process of reincarnation, the Buddha explicitly rejected the *caste* system. Finally, Christian scriptures endorse caring for the poor; however, such injunctions have never been identified by either ecumenical councils or widespread consensus as essential doctrines. Furthermore, Jesus of Nazareth reportedly claimed that his followers would always have poor people with them (Mark 14:7, Matthew 26:11). It is expected that support for income inequality will decrease along this continuum of centrality and specificity—from Hindus to Muslims to Buddhists to Christians. Further theoretical discussion of this basic approach appears in the Findings section below.

Hypothesis 3: Support for income inequality correlates with identifying with religious traditions whose core teachings address stratification.

Hypotheses

In summary, beliefs about income inequality reflect six major factors: normative judgments, stratification systems, political orders, economic conditions, social norms, and religious traditions. In order to isolate the relationship between inequality beliefs and religion, it is important to control for both individual and structural factors known to influence inequality beliefs. It is expected that one's position in the stratification system will influence beliefs about income inequality. For example, being female, older, single, less educated, and poorer will dampen support for income inequality. Structural factors that might dampen support for income inequality include living in a nation with high income inequality, low economic development,

and low government spending. Once these factors are addressed, three basic hypotheses emerge from the literature review: Support for income inequality correlates with 1) being in a religious majority, 2) being highly religious, and 3) identifying with religious traditions whose core teachings address stratification. This paper tests these three hypotheses as well as a novel proposal derived from the findings section that follows: 4) Support for income inequality correlates with the interaction between religious intensity and religious identity.

Methods

Data

In order to test these hypotheses, this study utilizes the the World Values Survey/European Values Survey (WVS/EVS), the only ongoing research project designed to capture the values and beliefs of a majority of the world's population (Inglehart 2008). Collected on all six continents by leading social scientists from each of the 97 societies studied, the WVS/EVS includes representational national samples of at least 1,000 people from each society, reflecting the opinions of 88 percent of the globe's inhabitants. Using random probability samples (where possible), local field organizations conduct face-to-face interviews through standardized questionnaires translated into the local language under the supervision of academic researchers and a principal investigator at the behest of the Stockholm-based non-profit World Values Survey Association (WVSA). In total, the five waves of the WVS/EVS constitutes 334,000 unique respondents (25,000 from 20 countries during Wave 1 in 1981-1984; 61,000 from 42 countries during Wave 2 in 1989-1993; 75,000 from 52 countries during Wave 3 in 1994-1998; 96,000 from 67 countries during Wave 4 in 1999-2004; and 77,000 from 54 countries during Wave 5 in 2005-2008). This paper employs the last three waves of the

combined WVS/EVS, as these waves include measures of the dependent variable and other theoretically important factors.

In addition to the WVS/EVS dataset, this study utilizes three additional sources of information. First, the Standardized World Income Inequality Database (SWIID) provides Gini indexes compiled using a custom missing-data algorithm to standardize the U.N. University World Income Inequality Database (WIID) with reference to the Luxembourg Income Study. The SWIID “provides comparable Gini indices of gross and net income inequality for 153 countries for as many years as possible from 1960 to the present, along with estimates of uncertainty in these statistics” (Solt 2009). Second, the World Bank International Comparison Program Database (WBICPD) database provides measures of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2013 international dollars calculated using Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) rates based on data files from the World Bank National Accounts and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) National Accounts. The World Bank International Comparison Program also provides measures of Government Expenses as a Percentage of GDP based on information from International Monetary Fund (IMF) Government Finance Statistics Yearbook, World Bank estimates, and OECD estimates. Third, the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life provides “comprehensive demographic estimates of the size and distribution of eight major religious groups in the 232 countries and territories for which the United Nations Population Division provides general population estimates as of 2010” based on the analysis of 2,500 data sources, “including censuses, demographic surveys, general population surveys and other studies” (Hackett and Grim 2012:51).

Measures

The *dependent variable* for this study is an indicator of beliefs about income inequality measured on a ten-point scale. The WVS/EVS survey question reads: “Now I’d like you to tell me your views on various issues. How would you place your views on this scale? 1 means you agree completely with the statement on the left; 10 means you agree completely with the statement on the right; and if your views fall somewhere in between, you can choose any number in between. Sentences: Incomes should be made more equal (1) vs. We need larger income differences as incentives (10).” This indicator serves as an appropriate dependent variable for this study because it captures beliefs about income inequality and not just government redistribution. Strictly speaking, this indicator is a categorical measure. However, having a broad ten-point scale makes it possible to treat this dependent variable as continuous, as in the models below.

The *independent variables* for this study include three religious indicators: inequity, intensity, and identity. The first independent variable based on data from the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life indicates whether or not each respondent is in a religious majority. This dichotomous variable, which is based on the six religious groups employed in this study, signals that respondents DO identify with the majority religious groups in their societies. Second, the WVS/EVS measure of religiosity derives from asking respondents to rate the importance of religion in their life using the following categorical scale: very important, rather important, not very important, and not at all important. In this study, religious intensity appears as a dichotomous measure, contrasting those from the “very important” category with all other respondents from the three remaining categories (reference). Using a dichotomous religiosity variable produces a more manageable number of groups when creating interaction terms with the

third religious indicator: religious group. The WVS/EVS indicator for religious identity includes the nominal categories of Catholic, Protestant (reference), Orthodox, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Other Religious Group, and No Religious Group.

The *control variables* for this study include both personal and structural factors that have been identified in the literature as influencing beliefs about inequality. First, control variables from the WVS/EVS that reflect personal position in the stratification system include 1) sex, a dichotomous variable measured as female and male (reference); 2) age, a continuous variable measured in years; 3) marital status, a nominal variable treated dichotomously with the categories of always single or ever married (i.e., married, divorced, and widowed) (reference); 4) education, a categorical variable measured on an eight-point scale (including incomplete and complete training at the elementary, technical/vocational, university preparatory and university levels), which is treated as continuous in the following models; and 5) income, a categorical variable reflecting the wage gradient within nations measured on a ten-point scale from lowest to highest, which is treated as continuous in the following model. Second, control variables reflecting structural factors that can influence beliefs about inequality include 1) income inequality, a continuous variable from the SWIID measured by a Gini index ranging from 0 (complete equality) to 100 (complete inequality); 2) economic development, a continuous variable from the WBIPCD measured by GDP per capita PPP (purchasing power parity) in thousands of current international dollars; and 3) government expenses, a continuous variable from the WBIPCD measuring regime spending as a percentage of GDP. These three structural control variables were assigned to respondents by country in the year nearest to each wave of the WVS/EVS.

Analysis

To address the relationship between religion and beliefs about income inequality, this paper presents four multilevel mixed-effects linear regression models derived using the `xtmixed` command in Stata. Utilizing multilevel models accounts for the possibility that being nested in a particular milieu might influence the outcome of the model. The effects are “mixed” because the intercept is allowed to vary (or be random) across groups, in this case country. The random effects parameters include the constant (i.e., the sample mean of the independent variable), the standard deviation of the residual (i.e., the average deviation from that constant in the sample), and the standard deviation of the constant (i.e., the average deviation from the constant at the country level). Allowing the constant to vary by country accounts for the possibility that the average deviation from the sample mean might be different from one country to the next.

The theoretical assumption behind this choice of model acknowledges the importance of accounting for regional, cultural, and/or political differences in how people express inequality beliefs. Such beliefs might show the influence of different values and situations in Indonesia or Pakistan or the United Kingdom. The Likelihood Ratio tests that accompany each model suggest that the differences between the mixed effects models and regular linear regression models prove significant. As an additional test of the model assumptions, similar findings result from ordered logistic regressions that include dummy variables from the sample’s eighty-two countries. Using the mixed effects model allows for theoretically important variation across countries without the unwieldiness of such a large number of the dummy variables. Furthermore, obtaining similar results from ordered logistic regressions and mixed effects regressions confirmed the decision to treat the ten-point ordinal independent variable as continuous.

Findings

Sample

This study's sample of 180,817 respondents from 82 countries derives from the third, fourth and fifth waves of the WVS/EVS (see Appendix 1.B). As it turns out, the first wave contains no measures of this study's dependent variable, and the second wave does not adequately cover measures of income, a theoretically important variable for this project. Once variables from the SWIID, WBICPD, and the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life were added to the three remaining waves of the WVS/EVS, it was possible to use listwise deletion to remove cases with missing data. Ten percent of the sample with missing data on the dependent variable was removed, and additional 21 percent was removed due to missing data on all other items. As listwise deletion has been shown to be methodologically sound (Allison 2001), using this process to select a sample with 79 percent of respondents having the required dependent variable was deemed suitable.

TABLE 1.1 ABOUT HERE

Descriptives

Table 1.1 presents simple descriptive statistics for this study's dependent, independent, and control variables. It is helpful to conceptualize the dependent variable as support for greater income inequality. Thus, higher scores on the ten-point scale—and positive coefficients in the regression models—indicates the call for widening income distributions. The mean of 5.87 on this ten-point scale suggests that on average people would rather use income inequality as an incentive than make wages more equal. The actual distribution of the dependent variable appears in Figure 1.1, showing peaks at the extremes and middle of the scale. Importantly, the mode of

15.48 percent of respondents selected ten—the highest possible indication of the desire for using income inequality as an incentive—and the next largest category of 13.31 percent selected eight.

FIGURE 1.1 ABOUT HERE

The independent variables measure three religious factors: 1) inequity, 2) intensity, and 3) identity. First, when it comes to numerical inequity, about a three quarters of the sample are religious majorities who observe the majority faith in their countries. As demonstrated in Table 1.2, 92 percent of Christians, 87 percent of Muslims, and 75 percent of Hindus share their faith with a majority of their countries' populations, while 57 percent of Buddhists, and 77 percent of religious “nones,” and 100 percent of other religious groups represent religious minorities.

Second, the measure of religious intensity indicates that 45 percent of respondents rate religion as very important, 25 percent as rather important, 18 percent as not very important, and 12 percent as not at all important. Having such a large “Very Important” category anchoring a highly skewed distribution of religiosity makes it possible to use the other three categories as a single reference group in the regressions that follow. Third, the sample divides into six religious traditions. While slightly more than half of respondents identify as Christians, a fifth are Muslims, and another fifth are religious “nones.” Hindus, Buddhists, and people of other religions each represent between two and three percent of the sample.

Lastly, the list of control variables demonstrates that a little over half the sample is female, the average age is 41 (with a range of 15 to 99), and about a quarter of respondents have never been married. Combining those who have incomplete and complete training at each of the eight educational levels divides the sample roughly into quarters: 1) elementary, 2) vocational, 3) university prep, and 4) university training. The ten-point income scale, which has a mean of 4.63 and a standard deviation of 2.43, reflects a standardized scale of incomes as measured in local

currencies. Finally, three indicators reveal widely differing levels of income inequality, economic development, and regime spending around the world: 1) Gini Indexes ranging from 21.88 to 64.80 with a mean of 37.32; 2) GDP per capita PPP (purchasing power parity) in thousands of current international dollars ranging from .72 to 55.81 with a mean of 12.13; and government expenses as a percentage of GDP ranging from 5.30 to 98.00 with a mean of 24.79.

Before investigating the regression models below, it proves instructive to explore the relationships between the religious independent variables. Table 1.2 presents the cross tabulation of religious groups by religious status. In this worldwide sample, a clear preponderance of Christians (92 percent), Muslims (75 percent), and Hindus (75 percent) live as religious majorities within their countries. Alternatively, all those practicing “other” religions (100 percent) and a preponderance of religious “nones” (77 percent) and Buddhists (57 percent) live as religious minorities.

TABLE 1.2 ABOUT HERE

Table 1.3 presents the cross tabulation of religious identity by religious intensity, with cells containing the frequencies and percentages of respondents falling into each category. Reading the table from top to bottom, a pattern emerges in the way that Christians, Muslims, Hindus, and “other” religions rate the importance of religion. In the main, all four groups have majorities rating religion as very important, with decreasing percentages in each of the lower categories. Muslims stand out for having 79 percent of respondents rating religion as very important. The trend among Buddhists is similar, with the caveat that the majority of Buddhists rate religion as somewhat—rather than very—important. As expected, the pattern among religious “nones” reverses the overall trend: most religious “nones” rate religion as not at all important, with decreasing percentages in each of the higher categories.

TABLE 1.3 ABOUT HERE

Table 1.3 also presents means and standard deviations for beliefs about income inequality within each cross tabulated group. Reading the table once again from top to bottom, a similar pattern emerges among religious groups. Just as in the main, increasing percentages of Christians, Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists rated religion as having increasingly higher importance, so increasing percentages of these groups have increasingly higher mean values on the dependent variable. These increasing means indicate rising support for using income inequality as an economic incentive. Within these religious groups, it is increasingly likely to rate religion as very important AND to demonstrate greater support for using income inequality as an incentive. Again, the trend among religious “others” demonstrates more fluctuation, and the pattern among religious “nones” reverses the main trend—with the caveat that those who rate religion as not at all important have the lowest mean score within this group. Reading Table 1.3 from left to right among those who rate religion as very important reveals mean scores that increase along the following trajectory: Hindus (5.28), religious “nones” (5.50), religious “others” (5.65), Christians (6.03), Muslims (6.16), and Buddhists (6.77). The basic trends in this table suggest that the relationship between religious intensity and religious identity should prove helpful in explaining the relationship between religion and beliefs about income inequality. Thus interaction terms between religiosity and religious tradition appear in the models below.

Models

Table 1.4 presents four multilevel mixed-effects linear regression models predicting support for using income inequality as an economic incentive. Each model reports a constant term of approximately six with standard deviations of slightly less than one. The random effects parameters for the standard deviations of the residuals indicate that distances from the constant

term at the country level (N=82) have a mean of approximately 2.8 in each model. Once again, the Likelihood Ratio Tests confirm the significance of using mixed-effects models as contrasted with regular linear regression analyses.

TABLE 1.4 ABOUT HERE

In the first column, Model 1 with only three religious independent variables demonstrates few significant relationships at the $p < .01$ level. Only Catholics, the Orthodox, and Muslims express less support for incentivizing income inequality than do Protestants. Adding the controls in Model 2 alters this situation. In this model—and in the full model—the controls operate as expected, with the caveat that income inequality, as measured by the Gini Index, presents no significant relationship. Expressing less support for incentivizing income inequality associates with being female, older, single, less educated, and poorer as well as living in nations with higher development and with higher government spending relative to GDP.

The major finding in Model 2 is that religious inequity and intensity demonstrate a significant relationship with income inequality beliefs at the $p < .01$ or $.001$ levels. Being a religious majority associates with an increase of $.064$ on the ten-point scale of support for incentivizing income inequality. And rating religion as very important as compared with rather/not very/not at all important associates with an increase of $.084$ on the same scale. Thus, in this model, being a religious majority and being highly religious associate with lower concern for income equality. These findings constitute statistically significant evidence for Hypotheses 1 and 2, that support for income inequality correlates with being in a religious majority and being highly religious. Concerning religious identity, only Catholics, the Orthodox, and religious “nones” express less support for incentivizing income inequality than do Protestants.

Adding interaction terms between religious intensity and religious identity in Models 3 and 4 somewhat alters this basic picture. It is vital to recognize how the addition of interaction terms in Models 3 and 4 alters the interpretation of intensity and identity variables from Models 1 and 2. As before, the reference category remains Protestants. However, the religious intensity variable in Models 3 and 4 now describes only Protestants who *are* highly religious as compared with Protestants who *are not* highly religious. And each religious identity variable now describes only those who *are not* highly religious as compared to Protestants who *are not* highly religious. The newly added interaction terms describe the association of being highly religious in each tradition as compared to those who *are not* highly religious in the same tradition. To make interpretation simpler, Table 1.5 reports for each religious tradition the *combined* interaction terms for those who *are* highly religious. These combined coefficients for highly religious adherents of each tradition make for comparisons with adherents of the same tradition who are *not* highly religious. They derive from adding the baseline intensity among the reference group, highly religious Protestants, with the interaction term for each religious tradition. For example, the first combined coefficient listed in Table 1.5 indicates a .095 decrease in incentivizing income inequality among Catholics who *are* highly religious as compared with Catholics who are *not* highly religious in the model without control variables. The statistical significance of each combined coefficient reported in Table 1.6 is calculated from an F-test using matrix algebra obtained from the `lincom` command in Stata.

TABLE 1.5 ABOUT HERE

On one hand, religious majority status demonstrates no significant relationship with income inequality beliefs in the final two models. Thus, the confirming evidence from Model 2 for Hypothesis 1—that support for income inequality correlates with being a religious majority—

drops from Models 3 and 4 with the addition of the interaction terms. Likewise, the religious intensity variables in Models 3 and 4 demonstrate no significant relationship within the Protestant reference category between rating religion as very important and support for incentivizing income inequality. Thus these models report no significant difference in incentivizing income inequality between Protestants who *are* highly religious and Protestants who *are not*.

None of the models presents unambiguous evidence for Hypothesis 3, that support for income inequality correlates with the centrality of a religion's teaching about stratification. While Catholics, the Orthodox, and religious "nones" express less support for incentivizing income inequality than do Protestants in Model 1, it is Catholics, the Orthodox, and religious "nones" who do so in Model 2. With the addition of interaction terms in Model 3, Catholics, the Orthodox, Muslims, Hindus, and religious "others" who are not highly religious all express less support for incentivizing income inequality as compared with Protestants who are not highly religious. Interestingly, the results in this model for Muslims and Hindus who are not highly religious reverse the expectations of Hypothesis 3. The same finding holds true in Model 4, where the Orthodox, Muslims, and Hindus who are not highly religious express less support for incentivizing income inequality as compared with Protestants who are not highly religious. These results are generally inconsistent with Hypothesis 3 and do not constitute clear evidence that religious identity *in and of itself* influences beliefs about income inequality in the pattern expected. This finding presents the opportunity to deepen the investigation by addressing the interaction terms between religious identity and religious intensity.

The major finding of this regression analysis appears in Table 1.5, involving the combined coefficients of the interaction between rating religion as very important and religious

tradition. Models 3 and 4 demonstrate evidence for the pattern expected in Hypothesis 3: that support for income inequality correlates with the centrality of a religion's teaching about stratification—but only among the highly religious. Thus the evidence for Hypothesis 4 proceeds along the pattern expected in Hypothesis 3. Among those who are not highly religious in Models 3 and 4, no significant difference at the .01 level can be detected when comparing Protestants with Catholics, Buddhists, or religious “nones” concerning support for income inequality. At only 2.1 percent of the sample, the number of Buddhists may be too small to demonstrate a significant difference from being Protestant. Furthermore, the category of religious “other” most likely contains too much diversity to be analytically useful in this specific situation. Given these caveats, the relationships that remain provide evidence for Hypothesis 4, that support for income inequality correlates with the interaction between religious intensity and religious identity. And this relationship proceeds along the pattern expected in Hypothesis 3: that support for income inequality correlates with the centrality of a religion's teaching about stratification.

The combined coefficients of the interaction terms in Model 3 are not radically altered by the addition of the control variables in Model 4. In the full model, support for incentivizing income inequality among highly religious Catholics and Orthodox do not differ significantly from Catholics and Orthodox who are not highly religious. However, on the ten-point scale of support for incentivizing income inequality, being a highly religious Muslim associates with an increase of .273, being a highly religious Hindu associates with an increase of .573, and being highly religious but claiming no religious tradition associates with a decrease of -.144. This pattern of decreasing support for incentivizing income inequality among the highly religious—from Hindus to Muslims to Christians to religious “nones”—constitutes empirical support for the

pattern anticipated by Hypothesis 3 with the inclusion of the interaction terms proposed in Hypothesis 4.

Discussion

Evidence for the first hypothesis, that being a religious majority correlates with increased support for income inequality, appears only in Model 2. The explanatory power of the interaction terms in Models 3 and 4 renders religious majority status of no consequence in these models. Importantly the paucity of support does not constitute proof that no relationship exists between religious status and beliefs about inequality (Hunt 2002). Rather, this particular variable shows no significant relationships in the models constructed for this study.

The second hypothesis, that high religiosity can intensify support for income inequality, receives confirmation in Model 2 and partial confirmation in Models 3 and 4. This central empirical finding prompts the following theoretical insight: There is more to the story linking religion with stratification beliefs than the church and state—religion and redistribution—acting as “substitute goods” (Gill and Lundsgaarde 2004, Chen and Lind 2005, Hungerman 2005, Benabou and Tirole 2006, Scheve and Stasavage 2006, Chen and Lind 2007, Gruber and Hungerman 2007, Pepinsky and Welborne 2010, Guillaud 2011, Stegmueller et al. 2011). By focusing on beliefs about income inequality—and not just redistribution—this paper demonstrates that any dampening effect of religion on egalitarian impulses may derive not just from a distaste for government spending, but from the perceived value of income inequality itself.

The third hypothesis, that support for income inequality correlates with the centrality of a religion’s teaching about stratification, receives mixed support in the models above. Model 1 demonstrates no confirmation for this relationship, and Model 2 demonstrates only minimal

confirmation. Among those who are not highly religious, the anticipated direction of the relationship changes directions on the coefficients that remain significant in Models 3 and 4. As mentioned above, the pattern expected in Hypothesis 3 does indeed appear, but only when the interaction terms are included in the models. Why might that be? Why does being highly religious influence the association of religious tradition with support for income inequality?

The most striking support for income inequality appears among highly religious Hindus. Being in this category correlates with an increase of .526 on the ten-point scale measuring support for income inequality as compared with highly religious Protestants. While Hinduism represents an immense diversity of spiritual beliefs and cultural practices, the *caste* system constitutes the strongest integration of religion and stratification in any of the world's major religions. Of course many Hindus work tirelessly to improve the lot of lower *caste* people and reform the *caste* system itself. Indeed the political shifts toward liberal democracy in postcolonial India that have taken aim at the social rigidity of the *caste* system may be influencing Hindu stratification beliefs in a more egalitarian direction (Nussbaum 2007). That being said, the historic thrust of Hinduism centers on the transmigration of souls based on the law of cause-and-effect, which determines the stratification system. And those Hindus who report the highest levels of personal investment in this religious tradition also report the highest levels of support for income inequality.

After highly religious Hindus, the next highest level of support for income inequality occurs among highly religious Muslims. What might account for greater increase in support for income inequality among highly religious Muslims as compared with their less religious counterparts than among the next category—highly religious Christians as compared to their less religious counterparts? In comparing and contrasting majority Muslim societies with other

societies around the world, Steven Fish (2011) speculates that majority Muslim societies contain lower levels of class inequality because Islamic scriptures provide much more specific directives for assisting the poor than do other religions, especially Christianity (2011:221). In this view, the specificity of the Islamic command to donate 2.5 percent of one's income as an act of almsgiving produces more egalitarianism than the more abstract New Testament teaching to "give up all one has for the poor" (ibid.). Thus the impulse towards universal compassion is translated into concrete action. While admittedly speculative, this method of considering the content and centrality of religious teachings appears to illuminate the pattern of opinions about income inequality arising in this study. Being both highly religious and identified with a particular religious tradition is likely to be associated with prioritizing the core teachings of one's faith.

Given Fish's finding that majority Muslim societies exhibit *lower* levels of class inequality than do majority Christian societies, it might seem surprising that highly religious Christians express *similarly* egalitarian opinions about income inequality as compared with their less religious counterparts than highly religious Muslims express as compared to their less religious counterparts. However, it must be remembered that this study controls for majority religious status. Furthermore, charity and equality are not synonymous. An instruction to help the poor is not the same as an instruction to change the basic structures of society that cause particular groups to be impoverished. The ability to separate personal charity from structural equality aligns with the above mentioned finding by Pepinsky and Welborne (2010: 491) concerning Muslims: "higher levels of religiosity correspond to lower support for government efforts to minimize income inequality." Thus highly religious Muslims may be quite comfortable agreeing that income inequality should be used as an economic incentive all the while anticipating that they themselves will be contributing to charitable causes.

Even though focusing on the content and centrality of religious teaching appears to offer one explanation for the pattern of beliefs about income inequality among the different religious traditions, this study does not claim airtight empirical evidence for this relationship. Once again, the world's major religious traditions contain immense diversity within them. Differences abound between Shaiva, Vaishnava, and Shakti Hindus; Mayayana, Theravada, and Vajrayana Buddhists; Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant Christians; and Sunni and Shia Muslims. Such diversity invites a warning about religious speculation:

“In sum, we cannot say with certainty whether there is something about Islam itself that explains the relatively low level of class inequality found in the Muslim world. *It is possible that Muslims place an unusually high premium on avoiding gross inequalities in wealth and income.* Whether or not social practices are rooted in scriptural traditions is difficult to determine, but our discussion provides some speculative ideas that connect the two” (Fish 2011:227, emphasis added).

This study speaks directly to the possibility that Muslims place an unusually high premium on avoiding gross inequalities in wealth and income. The findings above suggest that they do not. But that does not mean that the importance of charitable giving in Islamic teaching has no influence on attitudes about income inequality.

The survey question for the dependent variable in this study invites respondents to rate their agreement between the contrasting statements that “Incomes should be made more equal” and “We need larger income differences as incentives.” It might seem logical that highly religious Muslims who ostensibly value Islamic teachings on *zakat* or almsgiving would desire incomes to be made more equal. However, it might also be that almsgiving among highly religious Muslims associates with the values of economic growth and incentive. Indeed, “*zakat*

in Arabic carries the connotation of ‘a payment on property in order to purify it and, hence, cause for it to be blessed and multiply.’” (Bonner 2003:18). In explaining why highly religious Muslims demonstrate stronger support for incentivizing income inequality than all other groups besides highly religious Hindus, it can be helpful to recall that the very term for almsgiving in Arabic involves the concepts of purified, multiplied property. This observation does not imply that Muslims give to charity for selfish reasons with no concern for those in need. Rather, understanding the possible connections between the survey’s use of the term “incentive” and a notion of *zakat* that involves purified, multiplied property can prove illuminating.

Beyond the first two religious traditions, highly religious Buddhists fall in the sequence predicted by Hypothesis 3: lower support for income inequality than among Muslims but higher support than among Christians. Stratification plays a more central role in the core teachings of Buddhism than in Christianity. For example, the first Noble Truth—that life is suffering—arose directly from the Buddha’s observation of poverty, as well as sickness and death. To be clear, this is not to say that the Christian scriptures and church pronouncements neglect poverty and inequality. Rather, it is simply to observe that such teachings never prompted a First Noble Truth or defined a Third Pillar or appeared in a creedal statement. No specific beliefs or practices concerning stratification have ever been defined as core tenets of Christian faith by ecumenical councils (in the case of Roman Catholics and the Eastern Orthodox) or in universally accepted interpretations of the Christian Bible (among Protestants). In Table 1.5, the full model’s combined coefficients for Catholics and the Orthodox do not differ significantly from the combined coefficient for Protestants. Thus, there is no significant difference in support for incentivizing income inequality between those who *are* highly religious and those who *are not* highly religious in each of the three Christian traditions.

Finally, highly religious “others” express *more* support for income inequality than their less religious counterparts, and highly religious “nones” express much *less* support than their less religious counterparts. The “other” category most likely contains too much religious diversity to be analytically useful in this situation. However, more than one in ten religious “nones” consider religion to be very important. Claiming no religion drastically lowers the probability that this group shares any central teachings about stratification. As predicted by Hypothesis 3, this group expresses the least comparative support for income inequality among the highly religious.

In summary, the final hypothesis, that the interaction between religious intensity and religious identity increases support for income inequality, receives solid support in Models 3 and 4. And both models confirm the pattern predicted in the third hypothesis, that support for income inequality correlates with the centrality of a religion’s teaching about stratification.

Conclusion

Review

Prior research indicates that beliefs about income inequality reflect normative judgments, stratification systems, political orders, economic conditions, social norms, and religious traditions. This paper presents multilevel mixed-effects linear regression models based on the World Values Survey/European Values Survey (WVS/EVS) to address the question, “How does religion influence beliefs about income inequality?” Including controls for nonreligious factors known to shape beliefs about income inequality, the models provide evidence for the hypotheses that support for income inequality correlates with being highly religious and with the interaction of being highly religious and identifying with a religious tradition whose core teaching addresses stratification. These empirical findings prompt the following theoretical insight: There is more to

the story linking religion with stratification beliefs than the church and state—religion and redistribution—acting as “substitute goods” (Gill and Lundsgaarde 2004, Chen and Lind 2005, Hungerman 2005, Benabou and Tirole 2006, Scheve and Stasavage 2006, Chen and Lind 2007, Gruber and Hungerman 2007, Pepinsky and Welborne 2010, Guillaud 2011, Stegmueller et al. 2011). By focusing on beliefs about income inequality—and not just redistribution—this paper demonstrates that any dampening effect of religion on egalitarian impulses may derive not just from a distaste for government spending, but from the perceived value of income inequality itself. And the perceived value of income inequality appears to reflect the core teachings of religious traditions, especially among their most ardent adherents.

Limitations

The main limitation of this study is that it utilizes cross-sectional data. Thus it becomes difficult to claim that the three religious independent variables “cause” people to hold particular beliefs about income inequality. It is possible that holding such economic opinions causes people to live in nations where they are religious minorities, rate their faiths as very important, and identify with specific religious groups. It could be that the causal pathway is reciprocal, flowing from religion to beliefs about income inequality and from such beliefs back to religion. It could also be that a third, unknown factor influences both peoples’ religious faith and beliefs about income inequality. That being said, a strong argument can be made that because 1) most religious people are socialized into their faiths from the earliest childhood (Smith and Denton 2005), and 2) religions often present moral teachings on economic issues (Guiso, Sapienza, and Zingales 2003, McCleary and Barro 2006), it is completely in the realm of possibility that the primary causal direction extends from religion to beliefs about income inequality. Such a relationship would fit nicely with the evidence presented in this study.

Recommendations

Future research on the relationship between religion and beliefs about income inequality could address the issue of causality by utilizing panel data and experimental design. In so doing, it would be important to remember the theoretical distinction between studying opinions about governmental redistribution—often through the lens of the church and state acting as “substitute goods”—and investigating beliefs about income inequality. Researchers should also consider the interaction of religiosity and religious identity when studying beliefs about income inequality and other aspects of stratification. It is possible that the influence of religion on these beliefs may not become apparent until researchers account for the interaction of religious intensity and religious identity. Finally, more research is needed on the *divergence* between the influence of religious identity and the influence of religious identity interacted with religious intensity. Why is it that the pattern expected among religious traditions appears only among those who are highly religious? One promising avenue of research would investigate not just mean scores on items measuring beliefs about income inequality—as in this paper—but also on the variance in such observations.

Table 1.1. Descriptive Statistics for Dependent, Independent, and Control Variables (N = 180,817)

	Freq.	Mean/Prop.	SD	Min.	Max.
<i>Dependent Variable</i>					
Income Inequality Beliefs	180,817	5.87	2.99	1	10
<i>Independent Variables</i>					
Religious Status	180,817	.26	.44	0	1
Majority (Ref.)	134,240	74.2%			
Minority	46,577	25.8%			
Religious Importance	180,817	1.96	1.05	1	4
Very Important	81,795	45.2%			
Rather Important (Ref.)	44,946	24.9%			
Not Very Important (Ref.)	33,211	18.4%			
Not at All Important (Ref.)	20,865	11.5%			
Religious Group	180,817	3.70	2.51	1	8
Catholic (Ref.)	46,700	25.8%			
Protestant	26,957	14.9%			
Orthodox	23,432	13.0%			
Muslim	36,407	20.1%			
Hindu	4,506	2.5%			
Buddhist	3,873	2.1%			
Other	4,551	2.5%			
None	33,550	18.6%			
<i>Control Variables</i>					
Sex	180,817	1.51	.500	1	2
Male (Ref.)	88,156	48.8%			
Female	92,661	51.3%			
Age	180,817	41.17	16.04	15	99
Marital Status	180,817	1.88	.59	1	3
Single	43,399	24.0%			
Married (Ref.)	115,847	64.1%			
Separated/Divorced/Widowed (Ref.)	21,571	11.9%			
Education	180,817	4.49	2.29	1	8
Incomplete Elementary	21,832	12.1%			
Complete Elementary	26,001	14.4%			
Incomplete Vocational	14,483	8.0%			
Complete Vocational	32,554	18.0%			
Incomplete University Prep	16,177	9.0%			
Complete University Prep	30,581	16.9%			
Incomplete University	12,717	7.0%			
Complete University	26,472	14.6%			

(continued)

Table 1.1. *(continued)*

	Freq.	Mean/Prop.	SD	Min.	Max.
Income	180,817	4.63	2.43	1	10
Lower Step	17,847	9.9%			
Second Step	22,822	12.6%			
Third Step	25,099	13.9%			
Fourth Step	26,475	14.6%			
Fifth Step	26,578	14.7%			
Sixth Step	19,978	11.1%			
Seventh Step	16,401	9.1%			
Eighth Step	11,839	6.6%			
Ninths Step	7,242	4.0%			
Tenths Step	6,536	3.6%			
GINI Index	180,817	37.32	9.61	21.88	64.80
GDP (in Thousands)	180,817	12.13	11.38	.72	55.81
Government Expenses (% of GDP)	180,817	24.79	10.60	5.30	98.00

Source: World Values Survey/European Values Survey (Wave 3: 1994-1998, Wave 4: 1999- 2004, Wave 5: 2005-2008); Standardized World Income Inequality Database (SWIID); World Bank International Comparison Program Database (WBICPD); The Pew Forum on Religion in Public Life

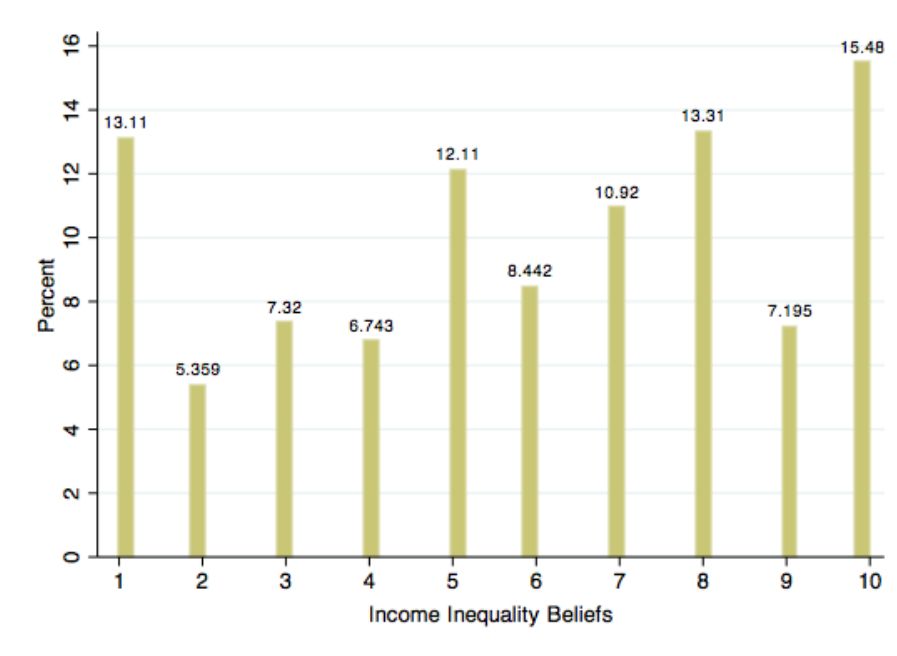


Figure 1.1. Histogram of Income Inequality Beliefs Ranging from (1) “Incomes should be made more equal,” to (10) “We need larger income differences as incentives.”

Table 1.2. Cross Tabulation of Religious Groups by Religious Status (N = 180,817)

	Majority Status		Minority Status		Total	
	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.
Catholic	43,828	93.85	2,872	6.15	46,700	100.00
Protestant	23,097	85.68	3,860	14.32	26,957	100.00
Orthodox	22,672	96.76	760	3.24	23,432	100.00
Muslim	31,609	86.82	4,798	13.18	36,407	100.00
Hindu	3,358	74.52	1,148	25.48	4,506	100.00
Buddhist	1,660	42.86	2,213	57.14	3,873	100.00
Other	445	8.25	4,947	91.75	5,392	100.00
None	7,571	22.57	25,979	77.43	33,550	100.00
All	134,240	74.24	46,577	25.76	180,817	100.00

Source: World Values Survey/European Values Survey (Wave 3: 1994-1998, Wave 4: 1999- 2004, Wave 5: 2005-2008); The Pew Forum on Religion in Public Life

Table 1.3. Mean and Standard Deviations of Income Inequality Beliefs (Range 1 – 10) by Cross Tabulation of Religious Groups and Importance of Religion (N = 180,817)

	Catholic	Protestant	Orthodox	Muslim	Hindu	Buddhist	Other	None	All
Religion Very Important									
Freq.	20,983	13,102	8,151	28,633	2,588	1,296	2,841	3,537	81,795
Per.	44.93	48.60	34.79	78.65	57.43	33.46	62.43	10.54	45.24
Mean	6.01	6.05	6.00	6.16	5.28	6.77	5.65	5.50	6.03
SD	3.14	3.00	3.04	3.13	3.62	2.38	3.11	3.17	3.12
Freq.	15,452	6,345	8,799	5,444	1,171	1,457	1,058	5,102	44,946
Religion Rather Important									
Per.	33.09	23.54	37.55	14.95	25.99	37.62	23.25	15.21	24.86
Mean	5.76	5.53	6.02	5.44	4.44	6.55	5.45	5.88	5.74
SD	2.91	2.71	2.93	2.97	3.51	2.33	2.93	2.96	2.92
Freq.	7,876	5,318	4,978	1,756	540	866	462	11,370	33,211
Religion Not Very Important									
Per.	16.87	19.73	21.24	4.82	11.98	22.36	10.15	33.89	18.37
Mean	5.74	5.45	6.09	5.44	4.15	6.22	5.86	5.92	5.78
SD	2.83	2.51	2.86	2.89	3.25	2.46	2.65	2.77	2.78
Freq.	2,389	2,192	1,504	574	207	254	190	13,541	20,865
Religion Not at All Important									
Per.	5.12	8.13	6.42	1.58	4.59	6.56	4.17	40.36	11.54
Mean	5.51	5.4	6.05	4.87	4.15	6.27	5.67	5.69	5.63
SD	2.94	2.73	2.96	3.01	3.25	2.48	3.2	2.88	2.9
Freq.	46,700	26,957	23,432	36,407	4,506	3,873	4,551	33,550	180,817
Total									
Per.	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Mean	5.86	5.76	6.03	6.00	4.88	6.53	5.63	5.78	5.87
SD	3.01	2.84	2.95	3.11	3.56	2.40	3.03	2.89	2.99

Source: World Values Survey/European Values Survey (Wave 3: 1994-1998, Wave 4: 1999- 2004, Wave 5: 2005-2008)

Table 1.4. Coefficients from Multilevel Mixed-Effects Linear Regression Predicting Support for Incentivising Income Inequality with Religious and Control Variables (N = 180,817)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
<i>Religious Variables</i>				
Inequity: Majority vs. Minority (Ref.)	.050* (.024)	.064** (.024)	.041 (.024)	.055* (.024)
Intensity: Very vs. Rather/Not Very/Not at All (Ref.)	-.020 (.017)	.084*** (.017)	-.012 (.039)	.047 (.039)
Identity: Protestant (Ref.)				
Catholic	-.062** (.027)	-.070*** (.027)	-.027 (.036)	-.060* (.036)
Orthodox	-.183*** (.038)	-.126*** (.038)	-.162*** (.046)	-.140*** (.046)
Muslim	-.087** (.039)	.011 (.039)	-.216*** (.053)	-.151*** (.053)
Hindu	-.035 (.070)	-.012 (.069)	-.371*** (.092)	-.360*** (.092)
Buddhist	-.055 (.071)	.011 (.070)	-.055 (.078)	.002 (.077)
Other	-.071 (.048)	-.017 (.048)	-.168** (.075)	-.142* (.074)
None	-.033 (.033)	-.074** (.032)	-.003 (.039)	-.071* (.038)
Interactions: Very Important x Protestant (Ref.)				
Very Important x Catholic			-.083* (.047)	-.037 (.046)
Very Important x Orthodox			-.061 (.056)	.010 (.056)
Very Important x Muslim			.171*** (.055)	.226*** (.055)
Very Important x Hindu			.501*** (.095)	.526*** (.094)
Very Important x Buddhist			.036 (.111)	.005 (.110)
Very Important x Other			.131 (.090)	.182** (.089)
Very Important x None			-.262*** (.064)	-.191*** (.063)
<i>Control Variables</i>				
Female vs. Male (Ref.)		-.158*** (.013)		-.156*** (.013)
Age (in Years)		-.004*** (.001)		-.004*** (.001)
Single vs. Ever Married (Ref.)		-.085*** (.018)		-.082*** (.018)
Education (8 Pt. Scale)		.107*** (.003)		.107*** (.003)
Income (10 Pt. Scale)		.105*** (.003)		.105*** (.003)

(continued)

Table 1.4. *(continued)*

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
GINI Index (100 Pt. Scale)		.010 (.005)		.010* (.005)
GDP (in Thousands)		-.010*** (.002)		-.010*** (.002)
Government Expenses (% of GDP)		-.025*** (.003)		-.025*** (.003)
<i>Constant</i>	5.956*** (.105)	5.717*** (.250)	5.821*** (.108)	5.548*** (.252)
<i>Random-Effects Parameters</i>				
Country (N = 82)				
Standard Deviation of Constant	.910	.827	.907	.822
Standard Deviation of Residual	2.842	2.812	2.841	2.811
Likelihood Ratio Test vs. Linear Regression	Chi ² (01) = 16404.00 Prob >= Chi ² = .000	Chi ² (01) = 14517.27P rob >= Chi ² = .000	Chi ² (01) = 16022.75 Prob >= Chi ² = .000	Chi ² (01) = 14074.14 Prob >= Chi ² = .000

Source: World Values Survey/European Values Survey (Wave 3: 1994-1998, Wave 4: 1999- 2004, Wave 5: 2005-2008); Standardized World Income Inequality Database (SWIID); World Bank International Comparison Program Database (WBICPD); The Pew Forum on Religion in Public Life

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed tests)

Table 1.5. Combined Coefficients from Multilevel Mixed-Effects Linear Regression Predicting Support for Incentivising Income Inequality for the Very Religious (N = 180,817)

	Baseline Intensity	+	Intensity x Tradition	=	Combined Coefficient
<i>Model 3: Without Controls</i>					
Catholic	-.012	+	-.083*	=	-.095**
Protestant	-.012	+	—	=	-.012
Orthodox	-.012	+	-.061	=	-.073
Muslim	-.012	+	.171***	=	.159***
Hindu	-.012	+	.501***	=	.489***
Buddhist	-.012	+	.036	=	.024
Other	-.012	+	.131	=	.119
None	-.012	+	-.262***	=	-.274***
<i>Model 4: With Controls</i>					
Catholic	.047	+	-.037	=	.010
Protestant	.047	+	—	=	.047
Orthodox	.047	+	.010	=	.057
Muslim	.047	+	.226***	=	.273***
Hindu	.047	+	.526***	=	.573***
Buddhist	.047	+	.005	=	.052
Other	.047	+	.182**	=	.229**
None	.047	+	-.191***	=	-.144**

Source: World Values Survey/European Values Survey (Wave 3: 1994-1998, Wave 4: 1999- 2004, Wave 5: 2005-2008); Standardized World Income Inequality Database (SWIID); World Bank International Comparison Program Database (WBICPD); The Pew Forum on Religion in Public Life

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed tests)

APPENDIX 1.A

Measuring Economic Inequality

Before discussing how religion influences beliefs about income inequality, it is important to have a firm grasp on the empirical situation about which people are offering their opinions. The following section discusses the methodological issues involved in accurately assessing the trends in income inequality and describes the current contours of such inequality around the world.

Discerning trends in the geography of income inequality depends greatly on how it is measured (Milanovic 2007). Researchers must decide 1) how to quantify differences and 2) which units of analysis to compare. Common methods for estimating economic inequality include 1) income shares (“e.g., the percentage of total income held by the top quartile of the income distribution”), 2) percentile ratios (“e.g. the ratio of income at the ninetieth percentile to that at the tenth percentile, the 90/10 ratio”), and 3) summary statistics (“e.g. the Gini, Theil, Atkinson, and Robin Hood indexes, the coefficient of variation, Shorrocks’s coefficient”) (McCall and Percheski 2010). While it is possible to calculate summary statistics that account for both poverty and inequality (Atkinson and Brandolini 2010), much of the literature relies on well known indicators, such as the Gini index. Using these measures, researchers track inequality levels within countries, between countries, and around the world.

A methodological concern when calculating levels of inequality between nations involves the ways that different measures produce different outcomes. One common method for calculating between-country inequality, whether weighted by population or not, measures the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the market value of a country’s goods and services during a specific time period, in purchasing power parity (PPP), a single currency calculation that

captures the ability to purchase the same goods and services in different countries. An alternative method contrasts estimates of national incomes using current rates of currency exchange. This approach routinely produces higher estimates of economic inequality than those based on PPP (Sutcliffe 2002, Dorwick and Akmal 2005), which may thus be underestimating the extent of the situation.

Before the Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century, poverty was mainly a function of production. Today, vast disparities in income around the globe are a function not of production but of distribution (Firebaugh 2003). Whereas economic inequality used to be predominantly a matter of class, it is now mainly determined by location: up to eighty percent of current global income inequality can be attributed to differences between countries (Schultz 1998, Goesling 2001, Milanovic 2002, Firebaugh 2003, Milanovic 2011).

Between-country inequality can be compared using both population-unweighted and population-weighted measures (Clark 2001, Sutcliffe 2004, Milanovic 2007). When unweighted average incomes between countries are compared, the upward trend in inequality charted since the early nineteenth century continues to rise (Milanovic 2007). Average incomes in rich nations continue to outpace average incomes in poorer nations. However, accounting for differences in population size reveals a different trend. When country income averages are weighted by population, the upward trend in global income inequality which worsened at the beginning of the 19th century began to decline beginning after World War II (Bourguignon and Morrisson 2002). This reversal and its subsequent stabilization continue largely due to the rapid industrialization and economic growth in China and India, two Asian nations with large and growing populations (Milanovic 2002, Sala-i-Martin 2002). Importantly, when China is removed from the calculation,

the trend in population-weighted between-country inequality continues to rise (Schultz 1998, Wade 2004).

While entire countries can be contrasted, so individuals can be compared with others living within their own countries or with everyone around the world. The current level of global inequality among world citizens is about 0.65 as measured by the Gini index (a summary statistic of inequality ranging from 0 when everyone has the same income to 1 when only one person has all the income) (Sutcliffe 2003, 2004). This measure combines the effects of within-country and between-country inequality, providing a snapshot of the global situation (Choitikanich, Valenzuela, and Rao 1997, Clark 2001, Milanovic 2007). If current trends continue, this indicator will increase as those at the extremes of wealth and poverty grow farther apart while those in the middle converge (Sutcliffe 2003).

The rise in both population-unweighted between-country inequality and population-weighted between-country inequality (calculated without China) has been accompanied by another trend: the overall rise of inequality within nations (Sala-i-Martin 2002, Firebaugh 2003, Mahler and McKeever 2009). Broadly speaking, economic inequality is 1) higher in Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean, 2) intermediate in the Middle East, North Africa, South Asia, East Asia, and the Pacific, and 3) lower in the developed countries and the former Soviet bloc nations (Mahler and McKeever 2009).

In the 2000s, within-country inequality did decline somewhat in OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) nations known for their higher levels, including Chile, Mexico, Greece, Turkey, and Hungary (OECD 2011). Forces that countervail the upward trend of within-country economic inequality include unionization, centralization of wage bargaining, public-sector employment, affirmative action, and marginal taxation (Pontusson,

Reuda, and Way 2002). However, within-country inequality rose in other nations which already had high income inequality, such as Israel and the United States, rising even faster in nations usually regarded as having low income inequality, such as Germany, Denmark, and Sweden (OECD 2011). In terms of overall inequality levels, the modest declines within some nations have not been sufficient to balance the rises in many others: “The conclusion is that world inequality measured in plausible ways is probably rising, despite China’s and India’s fast growth” (Wade 2004).

Acknowledging Globalization and Growth

Between the steps of 1) charting the overall trends in global income inequality above and 2) discussing the role of social norms in legitimating this situation below, it is helpful to acknowledge the material dynamics that influence the world’s current economic distribution. Surveying the literature on globalization and growth—two major factors in the debate over income inequality trends around the world—thwarts the temptation to focus on either pure economics or social norms, but not both. Avoiding the false dichotomy between base and superstructure provides a fuller picture of the sociological realities of global income inequality. Furthermore, the extent of globalization and economic development in societies may be related to social norms concerning income inequality.

As defined by economists, globalization “encompasses declining barriers to trade, migration, capital flows, foreign direct investment (FDI), and technological transfers (O’Rourke 2001). Some see the process of globalization as reducing both absolute poverty and income inequality around the world (Bhalla 2002, Sala-i-Martin 2002, Dollar and Kraay 2004, Firebaugh and Goesling 2004, Bussmann, de Soya, Oneal 2005, Dollar 2005). In line with this view, globalization has acted as the prime mover in reducing the number of extremely poor people in

the world by 375 million people and “reversing the 200-year trend toward higher inequality” (Dollar 2005:145).

Others, however, dispute the idea that globalization has reduced levels of economic inequality. From one perspective, the theoretical difficulty in defining globalization makes it impossible to render any judgment on the connections between globalization and economic inequality (Sutcliffe 2004). Because the definition is elusive, the relationship—either positive or negative—cannot be demonstrated with any methodological certainty. A more direct claim is that the arguments made by neoliberal proponents of globalization do not align with current evidence on economic inequality: “Clearly the proposition”—that “the allegedly positive trends in poverty and inequality have been driven by rising integration of poorer countries into the world economy”—“is not well supported at the world level if we agree that globalization has been rising while poverty and income inequality have not been falling (Wade 2004). In this view, globalization can be defined but not directly linked to increasingly egalitarian economic arrangements.

A third step beyond 1) questioning the ability to determine a relationship between globalization and economic inequality and 2) disputing the evidence that globalization reduces economic inequality is 3) claiming that globalization actually increases economic inequality. Rather than make blanket claims about this proposed increase, researchers carefully emphasize how trends change over time and how the type of inequality matters. During the 19th century, globalization increased economic inequality in the rich New World while decreasing it the less rich Old World (O’Rourke 2001). Now it appears that “globalization is not strongly related in either direction to income inequality in the developed world but fairly strongly related to a more inegalitarian distribution in the developing world (Mahler and McKeever 2009). A more direct

argument suggests that while between-country inequality has begun to converge due to late industrialization patterns, globalization has actually exacerbated within-country inequality (Clark 2011).

Much of the globalization discussion centers on the role that inequality plays in promoting economic growth. Kuznets (1955) portrayed the relationship between industrial development and economic inequality as an inverted U-shape, in which increasing economic development causes inequality to expand initially, but then peak, level off, and finally drop. New industrial jobs initially provide a much higher level of income for a portion of the population; but eventually development expands widely enough that fewer and fewer are left behind. Critics of this model note that its mechanistic relationship fails to account for those factors that influence growth and inequality independently (Lundberg and Squire 2003). From this perspective, it is theoretically possible to increase economic growth without increasing inequality.

In attempting to clarify the relationship between economic growth and economic inequality, researchers routinely question the causal direction. Does increasing economic growth spur economic inequality? Or does increasing economic inequality spur economic growth? In general, inequality influences economic growth through causal mechanisms that are both direct (i.e., savings) and indirect (i.e., income redistribution, social conflict, political instability, and democracy) (Thorbecke and Charumilind 2002). Several studies focus mainly on what happens at the upper end of the income distribution. In times of high economic growth, inequality increases mainly at the very top, widening the distance between the very rich and the rest of the top decile (Roine, Vlachos, and Waldenstrom 2009). Such economic inequality at the very top has in turn been linked with subsequent economic growth (Voitchovsky 2005, Andrews, Jencks, and Leigh 2010). According to Martin Feldstein, increasing incomes at the top of a distribution

proves desirable because it satisfies the Pareto principle: “a change is good if it makes someone better off without making anyone else worse off” (Feldstein 1999:34). In this approach, additional income at the top of the distribution is good as long as it takes nothing from those at the bottom.

Others take issue with this common sense view (Milanovic 2007), arguing that within-nation income inequality can itself slow economic growth (Alesina and Perotti 1994; Keefer and Knack 2002). Widening economic inequality at the bottom signals the approach of decreasing economic growth (Voitchovsky 2005). Furthermore, a study of 12 developed nations estimates that the modest growth that follows widening economic inequality at the top takes 13 years to trickle down, that is 13 years for “the benefits of increased GDP growth [to] outweigh [the] cost of getting a smaller share of the economic output” among the bottom nine deciles (Andrews, Jencks, and Leigh 2010). When all factors are considered, the fiscal and political instability that results from increasing economic inequality impedes economic growth; but the redistribution of wealth may actually spur economic growth by easing social tensions and fostering a more conducive sociopolitical climate (Alesina and Perotti 1994).

Research indicates that economic inequality is “Janus-faced” in that it “creates incentives for people to move from lower-rewarding activities to higher-rewarding activities” while simultaneously producing “differences in living standards that can lead some into poverty and social exclusion (Bjorklund and Freeman 2010). Christopher Jencks (2002:64) concludes that “the social consequences of economic inequality are sometimes negative, sometimes neutral, but seldom—as far as I can discover—positive. The case for inequality seems to rest entirely on the claim that it promotes efficiency, and the evidence for that claim is thin.”

APPENDIX 1.B

Country-Years: Albania (1998), Albania (2002), Argentina (1995), Argentina (1999), Armenia (1997), Australia (1995), Australia (2005), Austria (1999), Azerbaijan (1997), Bangladesh (1996), Bangladesh (2002), Belarus (1996), Belarus (2000), Belgium (1999), Bosnia and Herzegovina (1998), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2001), Brazil (1997), Brazil (2006), Bulgaria (1997), Bulgaria (1999), Bulgaria (2006), Burkina Faso (2007), Canada (2000), Canada (2006), Chile (1996), Chile (2000), Chile (2006), China (2001), China (2007), Colombia (1998), Croatia (1999), Cyprus (2006), Czech Republic (1998), Czech Republic (1999), Dominican Republic (1996), Egypt (2000), Egypt (2008), El Salvador (1999), Estonia (1996), Estonia (1999), Ethiopia (2007), Finland (1996), Finland (2000), Finland (2005), France (1999), France (2006), Georgia (1996), Georgia (2009), Germany (1997), Germany (2006), Ghana (2007), Guatemala (2004), Hong Kong (2005), Iceland (1999), India (1995), India (2001), India (2006), Indonesia (2001), Indonesia (2006), Iran (2000), Iran (2007), Ireland (1999), Italy (1999), Italy (2005), Japan (2000), Japan (2005), Jordan (2001), Kyrgyzstan (2003), Latvia (1996), Lithuania (1997), Lithuania (1999), Luxembourg (1999), Macedonia (1998), Macedonia (2001), Malaysia (2006), Mali (2007), Mexico (1996), Mexico (2000), Mexico (2005), Moldova (1996), Moldova (2002), Moldova (2006), Morocco (2001), Morocco (2007), Netherlands (1999), Netherlands (2006), New Zealand (1998), New Zealand (2004), Nigeria (1995), Nigeria (2000), Northern Ireland (1999), Norway (1996), Norway (2007), Pakistan (1997), Pakistan (2001), Peru (1996), Peru (2001), Peru (2006), Philippines (2001), Poland (1997), Poland (1999), Poland (2005), Romania (1998), Romania (1999), Romania (2005), Russian Federation (1995), Russian Federation (1999), Russian Federation (2006), Rwanda (2007), Serbia and Montenegro (1996), Serbia and Montenegro (2001), Serbia (2006), Singapore (2002), Slovakia (1998), Slovenia (1999),

Slovenia (2005), South Africa (1996), South Africa (2001), South Africa (2006), South Korea (1996), South Korea (2001), South Korea (2005), Spain (1995), Spain (2000), Spain (2007), Sweden (1996), Sweden (2006), Switzerland (1996), Switzerland (2007), Thailand (2007), Trinidad and Tobago (2006), Turkey (1996), Turkey (2001), Turkey (2007), Uganda (2001), Ukraine (1996), Ukraine (1999), Ukraine (2006), United Kingdom (1999), United Kingdom (2005), United States (1995), United States (1999), United States (2006), Uruguay (1996), Uruguay (2006), Venezuela (1996), Venezuela (2000), Zambia (2007).

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CHAPTER 2

RELIGIOSITY AND DISAGREEMENT ABOUT INCOME INEQUALITY

Introduction

In attempting to understand the role of religion in the modern world, sociologists often highlight how religion becomes “privatized” or placed “in a compartmentalized sphere” that provides personal support but no longer challenges “the dominance of [the] values in society at large” (Bellah et al. 1985:224). Such privatization relegates religion to being “a haven in a heartless world” that does more to care for the world’s “casualties than to challenge its assumptions” (ibid.). While classical theories of secularization predict the comprehensive privatization of religion (Berger 1969, Martin 1978, Bell 1996), religious belief and practice have not receded from the public sphere as expected (Casanova 1994, Regnerus and Smith 1998, Wood 2002). To employ a distinction made by Mills (1959), religion exceeds its privatized role as merely an antidote for “personal troubles” to become a deprivatized means for addressing “public issues.”

Far from producing consensus on such issues, deprivatized religion fuels disagreement over dominant social norms and practices. A major arena of this contention involves the public issue of social inequality—especially in the areas of race and ethnicity, gender, and economics. For example, religion serves as a motivator and resource for African-Americans participating in the U.S. Civil Rights movement (Harris 1994, Andrews 2004), Hispanic Protestants fighting the disenfranchisement of Spanish-origin populations (Hunt 2001), Brazilian Catholics advocating

for agrarian reform (Adrianse 1994), and both *Vodoun* practitioners (Bourguignon 1985) and Rastafarians (Simpson 1985) resisting the ongoing effects of colonialism in the Caribbean. In the case of gender inequality, women who utilize religious resources and motivation to resist patriarchal beliefs (Ozark 1996) and sustain involvement in social reform activism (Faver 2000) include the U.S. Catholic nuns who organize more effectively than their priestly counterparts (Stalp and Winders 2000) and Indonesian Muslim women who form small groups for political activism (Rinaldo 2008). At times, these examples of deprivatized resistance to inequality involve disagreement between religious activists and secular authorities. At other times, the division exists within the religious groups themselves. This division within religious groups becomes especially apparent when the debate turns to economic inequality.

Examples of the disagreement within religious groups over income inequality include debates among U.S. Christians about the criteria for deserving charity (Robinson 2009), the relative importance of wealth disparity (Lindsay 2007), and the reasons for and solutions to poverty (Gay 1991, Hart 1996, Wuthnow 1998). Also in the U.S. context, Emerson and Smith (2001) investigate how religion influences the ways that people account for the economic disparities between whites and African Americans using either individualistic accounts (focused on personal ability and motivation) or structural accounts (focused on education and discrimination). They find that whites are more likely than African Americans to hold individualistic accounts, but white conservative Protestants are more likely than other whites to do so. In contrast, African Americans are more likely to hold structural accounts, but African American conservative Protestants are more likely than other African Americans to do so. Thus, disagreement within religious groups over income inequality can intensify the debate already occurring in the larger public sphere. That religion sparks disagreement over economic

inequality in particular proves interesting given the classic Marxian conceptualization of religion as an opiate designed to quell economic concern among workers, not fuel polarization (Marx 1978).

Understanding how religion spurs this unexpected disagreement begins with asking what is known about religion and beliefs about income inequality. As discussed in Paper 1 of this dissertation, beliefs about income inequality reflect the influence of stratification systems, political orders, economic conditions, social norms, and religious traditions. In the main, support for income inequality weakens among those occupying vulnerable positions in the stratification system (e.g., female, older, single, less educated, and poorer) and living in nations with high income inequality, low economic development, and low government spending. When it comes to religion, the models in Paper 1 provide evidence that religiosity correlates with increased support for income inequality among Muslims and Hindus, but not necessarily other groups. While it is important to understand how religious intensity and identity associate with specific beliefs about income inequality, it is also instructive to address the amount of variation and disagreement about income inequality within different religious groups. Focusing only on mean scores documenting the support of income inequality can mask the high levels of disagreement *within* different religious communities. Among highly religious groups, there may be evidence for either strong consensus or strong disagreement on the issue of income inequality.

This paper addresses these possibilities by asking, “What is the effect of religiosity on the amount of disagreement over income inequality within religious traditions around the world?” Knowing the answer to this question can elucidate the debate over income inequality on at least two levels. At the broadest level, it is vital to understand what shapes the widespread disagreement in society at large over the public issue of income inequality. What factors fuel the

ongoing contention over the stratification systems around the world? Omitting religion from the explanation ignores a factor that influences the majority of the world's population. Religion can certainly bind groups together, working as a social adhesive to produce community and even uniformity. At other times, religion can fuel contention with secular authorities and within the different traditions themselves. At the level of those traditions, it would be helpful to know how much disagreement exists within religious groups and what might account for that. Without this knowledge, any analysis of the influence of religion on beliefs about income inequality would remain incomplete at best and misleading at worst. Ignoring the variation within religious groups can mask the deep rifts, schisms, and fault lines that divide religious people over this highly contentious public issue. Being able to demonstrate that religiosity intensifies disagreement within religious groups over income inequality becomes an argument for including religion as a factor in any explanation of how this issue divides people in society at large.

As it turns out, the literature contains little research addressing the influence of religion on the *amount* of disagreement in the debate over income inequality. Most of the sources addressing religion and beliefs about income inequality correlate specific religious factors such as attendance or denomination with particular opinions about income inequality. While this research documents the differences in average opinion levels across groups, it does not explain how much divergence on the public issue of income inequality arises due to religious factors. A notable exception to this trend is a paper by Davidson and Pyle (1999) that includes the extra step of theorizing the amount of within-group polarization in this debate. According to Davidson and Pyle, polarization over income inequality within religious groups forms a continuum from those who support inequality to those who support equality. In their approach, support ranges from taking direct action to affirming basic opinions, such as the notion that larger income

differences are needed as incentives. They predict that the majority of religious people support income inequality by endorsing political agendas, aligning with movements, and taking actions that directly or indirectly widen income gaps. On the other side of their continuum, a minority of religious people support income equality through activities such as political action, community organizing, and financial investment that lessens income gaps. According to this hypothesis, the distribution peaks toward the first side, indicating that the bulk of religious groups support inequality, and has a long tail toward the other side, indicating that a tapering minority of religious groups support equality.

The logic behind their argument is that the amount and pattern of divergence in the debate over income inequality results from the influence of both nonreligious and religious factors. Specifically, Davidson and Pyle argue that their distribution results from 1) the self-interest of clergy and laity who benefit from income inequality and 2) the widespread attraction of “good fortune” theology that links godliness with material wellbeing. They argue that material self-interest is necessary but not sufficient to explain the distribution because a majority of clerics and lay people do not benefit from the stratification system. While self-interest cannot be excluded from the explanation, something more is required to explain the proposed pattern of disagreement over income inequality among religious people. Davidson and Pyle propose that this “something more” is specifically religious, namely “good fortune” theology. This teaching suggests that material success indicates a special relationship with God. While admitting that nonreligious people can be rich, “good fortune” teachers assert or imply that devout adherents should expect material wealth as a sign of God’s sovereign choice or their own faithfulness. Maintaining large and visible differences between rich and poor provides a tangible mechanism for rating one’s relative closeness to the divine, which is by definition superempirical (Smith

2003). Such doctrine intentionally or unintentionally dampens widespread support for income equality because it requires wealth differentials to distinguish the godly from ungodly.

According to Davidson and Pyle, the alternative to “good fortune” theology is “social justice” theology,” which characterizes the poor as innocent victims of corporate greed and wealth disparity. In their view, such teaching remains popular among only a minority of religious people because it shifts the focus from securing personal benefits to prioritizing the oppressed.

As a specific prediction for the pattern of religiously fueled divergence in support for income inequality, the approach taken by Davidson and Pyle provides a helpful sensitizing concept for the discussion that follows. This proposal suggests a testable approach to understanding the influence of religion on the amount and pattern of disagreement over income inequality. At the same time, the Davidson and Pyle article has three major limitations. First, their discussion provides a strictly theoretical approach to this issue without empirical validation. However, it is possible to demonstrate their basic approach using regression analysis with comprehensive data, such as the World Values Survey/European Values Survey. Second, their discussion focuses only on U.S. Christianity without reference to religion in the global context. Widening the scope of investigation to include religious populations around the world would help clarify the applicability of theories developed for U.S. Christianity to other locations and religions. Third their reliance on “good fortune” theology to explain the pattern of disagreement over income inequality may be accurate but limited. Perhaps other religious factors contribute to the proposed pattern of disagreement over income inequality within religious communities. For example, some religious groups may desire greater income differentials not as a sign of their spiritual status but as a means for following religious commands to assist the needy. From this perspective, religiously inspired almsgiving requires the existence of poor people to be the

recipients of charity. In this scenario, the issue is not spiritual status but ritual observance. Because “good fortune” theology may not be the only religious factor at work, it may be more helpful simply to account for how seriously people take their religion—regardless of their theology. Accounting for religiosity itself then becomes the central task—regardless of the intervening theological mechanisms. Even if Davidson and Pyle are correct about “good fortune” and “social justice” theologies, the major question remains, “Just how seriously do religious people take these spiritual values?” Higher religiosity on either side of the debate would result in even more variation in beliefs about income inequality, intensifying the polarization. Putting these insights together raises the following questions: “Is it possible to verify empirically the pattern of beliefs supporting income inequality among religious people suggested by Davidson and Pyle? And if so, does this pattern extend beyond the context in which it was developed, namely the United States? Furthermore, what religious factors account for the proposed divergence in support for income inequality?”

In order to address these questions, this paper first frames the issue with a literature review on the following theme: *Disagreement about public issues such as income inequality intensifies within highly religious groups in the U.S.* Evidence for this argument builds in five steps, with each new section adding a piece to the overall picture. Once the theoretical groundwork has been laid, this paper presents three heteroskedastic ordered probit models based on the World Values Survey/European Values Survey (WVS/EVS), the only ongoing research project designed to capture the values and beliefs of a majority of the world’s population (Inglehart 2008), with additional data from the Standardized World Income Inequality Database (SWIID) and the World Bank International Comparison Program. Including controls for nonreligious factors known to shape beliefs about income inequality, the models provide

evidence for the hypothesis that *disagreement about income inequality intensifies within highly religious groups around the world*. The international scope of the data evaluated in these models makes it possible to test theories developed to explain trends in U.S. religion in a much wider context. These empirical findings prompt the following theoretical insight: Far from producing consensus, high religiosity intensifies variation in beliefs about income inequality, pushing people toward divergent perspectives on this public issue. This is true for all religious groups around the world, but especially for Catholics, Protestants, and religious “nones,” which happen to be the most prevalent religious traditions in the U.S. This helps to explain why identification with specific religious traditions does not produce uniform beliefs about economic stratification.

Theory

This paper addresses the question, “What is the effect of religiosity on the amount of disagreement over income inequality within religious traditions around the world?” It attempts to determine if the basic picture is one of consensus or dissensus, convergence or divergence, agreement or disagreement. The literature review that follows frames this topic with the following statement: *Disagreement about public issues such as income inequality intensifies within highly religious groups in the U.S.* Evidence for this argument builds in five steps, with each new section adding a piece to the overall picture. Once the theoretical groundwork has been laid, findings from Paper 1 relevant to this discussion are reviewed. Finally a testable hypothesis appears at the end of this section, inviting reflection on how the findings from Paper 1 influence the application of the argument built throughout the literature review.

1. Disagreement about public issues intensifies within religious groups.

In one of the enduring metaphors in the sociology of religion, Karl Marx (1978:54) characterizes religion as a sedative narcotic: “Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the sentiment of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people.” In this vision, people who are alienated by their inability to escape the the historical churn of class struggle dull the pain of existence through recourse to supernatural stories and ritualistic behaviors. Rather than sparking outrage over unjust economic arrangements, religion in this formulation acts as a private compensator for public inequality. Rather than polarizing public opinion, religion sedates the faithful. Indeed, understanding religion as a social phenomenon in the contemporary world often requires discerning the differences between private troubles and public issues.

The classic statement on these differences between private troubles and public issues appears in the work of C. Wright Mills (1959:8):

Perhaps the most fruitful distinction with which the sociological imagination works is between ‘the personal troubles of milieu’ and ‘the public issues of social structure’.... *Troubles* occur within the character of the individual and within the range of his immediate relations with others; they have to do with his self and with those limited areas of social life of which he is directly and personally aware.... *Issues* have to do with matters that transcend these local environments of the individual and the range of his inner life. They have to do with the organization of many such milieux into the institutions of an historical society as a whole, with the ways in which various milieux overlap and interpenetrate to form the larger structure of social and historical life. An issue is a public matter....

Applying this conceptual framework to the topic of religion enables one to distinguish between privatized and deprivatized religion. The former is faith that addresses mainly personal troubles, as in Marx’s formulation referenced above. Privatized religion need not be solipsistic and may be shared within congregations or other forms of spiritual community. Nonetheless, the content of privatized religion remains confined to the sphere of personal troubles, such as one’s ritual purity or mystical experience. Alternatively, deprivatized religion is faith that addresses public issues. It

evaluates and at times influences institutions, structures, and other matters that range beyond personal belief, behavior, and belonging.

Though classical theories of secularization often predict the increasing privatization of religion (Berger 1969, Martin 1978, Bell 1996), such theories have not garnered empirical validation. In the U.S. context, “a significant minority of Americans resist individual-level privatization. They want religious to speak to political and social issues, and act accordingly” (Regnerus and Smith 1998:1347). Of course, this trend is not limited to the United States. Casanova (1994:5) argues that “we are witnessing the ‘deprivatization’ of religion in the modern world.... [R]eligious traditions throughout the world are refusing to accept the marginal and privatized role which theories of modernity as well as theories of secularization had reserved for them.” Instead, deprivatized religion becomes a means of either endorsing or resisting dominant social norms and behavioral trends.

Religious adherents who swim against the tide of such norms and trends widen the range possible reactions to dominant cultural patterns. Religiously fueled alternatives diversify the range of possible reactions to public issues. This swimming against the tide of cultural norms can happen within religious groups themselves. For example, the basic unit of religious gathering in the U.S.—Christian congregations—focus mainly on worship, religious training, and artistic expression rather than political activism, social service, or charitable volunteering (Chaves 2004). Although the majority of U.S. congregations have adopted an institutional division of labor that removes them from the front lines of political action, it is important to recognize that this arrangement is not inherent in religious organizations: “[R]eligious culture in general does not necessarily enable or inhibit democratic political organizing. Rather, certain forms of religious culture—like certain forms of any culture—enable such participation, and other forms

of religious culture constrain it” (Wood 2002:161). Congregations whose members exhibit high religious salience and strong concern for progressive political agendas such as economic justice do exist, but they are “institutionally fragile and difficult to sustain” because members often eschew methods of proselytism practiced by more conservative but growing groups (Wellman 2002:184). Coming from a more progressive religious perspective, these “Liberal religionists are challenged to sustain themselves in a context that foregoes metaphysical certainties” (ibid: 197). The same skepticism they aim at dominant social norms involving inequality and injustice can also mute the unencumbered embrace of the beliefs and practices of their own faith traditions.

The institutional fragility of such congregations opens the opportunity for alternative forms of organizing, such as social movements. While the religion practiced within congregations may not often focus on deprivatized resistance that diversifies beliefs about public issues, religious social movements often do just that: “Religion *can* help to keep everything in its place. But it can *also* turn the world upside-down... [and] mobilize, promote, and abet *social movements*—organized efforts of challenger groups to promote or resist social change through disruptive means” (Smith 1996b:1). These religious social movements can provide cultural tools such as transcendent motivation, organizational resources, shared identity, social and geographic positioning, privileged legitimacy, and institutional self-interest to activists desiring to effect social change beyond their own cultural enclaves (ibid.). Recognizing that moral commitments derived from religious sources—and not simply rational calculations about movement outcomes—animate such activism helps one detect the entrance of religion into the public sphere (Smith 1996a).

2. *Disagreement about public issues SUCH AS INEQUALITY intensifies within religious groups.*

When religion does enter the public sphere, general consensus within highly religious populations might be expected. For example, it would be logical to anticipate general consensus among highly religious Muslims on the merits of *zakat*, one of the Five Pillars of Islam which commands adherents to donate 2.5 percent of their income to those in need. At the same time, the deprivatization of religion can *widen* the range of beliefs about dominant cultural norms and practices. And when dominant cultural norms and practices involve public issues such as race, ethnicity, and gender, religion-fueled resistance often provides alternative approaches to the issue of inequality. For example, during the Civil Rights movement in the U.S., both leaders and participants accessed organizational and psychological resources from religious faith in combating the dominant racial ideology (Harris 1994, Andrews 2004). Likewise the growing number of Hispanic Protestants in the United States “represents a revival of popular religion, a longstanding form of cultural resistance among disenfranchised Spanish-origin populations throughout the Americas” (Hunt 2001:139). Beyond the borders of the United States and the boundaries of Protestantism, deprivatized religious resistance appears in Brazilian Catholic base ecclesial communities advocating for agrarian reform (Adriance 1994), Haitian practices of *Vodoun* providing “covert forms of aggression in a society in which overt forms are relatively rare” (Bourguignon 1985:294), and Caribbean Rastafarianism offering “the acquisition of status for blacks in colonial societies” (Simpson 1985). Developing such personal religious agency involves activities that can be brought to bear on the larger world: “gaining voice, negotiating place and space, and flexible alignment” (Leming 2007:73).

The same levels of disagreement found within religious groups concerning racial and ethnic inequality can also be found within them concerning gender inequality. While women do not engage in religious participation at higher rates than men, they do report higher levels of

spiritual piety (Sullins 2006). While some propose that this gendered difference results from women's preferences for taking fewer risks, others have demonstrated that this is not the case (Miller 2000, Freese 2004, Roth and Kroll 2007). Recognizing that women's religious piety is not based on risk aversion can help clarify how women call upon religious resources to resist dominant cultural norms. For example, women have been shown to resist the patriarchal beliefs and practices pervading many faiths through a process of cognitive restructuring (Ozark 1996). At the lay level, such strategies of action enable women to sustain involvement in social service and social reform activism (Faver 2000). At the institutional level, much of the attention focuses on the activism of male clergy, such as the social justice work of Roman Catholic bishops (Burns 1992). However, Catholic nuns are able to foster greater levels of activism than Catholic priests because they face less resistance from ecclesial authorities (Stalp and Winders 2000). Beyond the context of U.S. Christianity, Indonesian women form Muslim groups that become "incubators for [their] diverse political activism" (Rinaldo 2008). In these international examples, religion provides women with more than personal practice and individual meaning; it animates their public resistance to patriarchalism and other perceived injustices.

3. Disagreement about public issues such as INCOME inequality intensifies within religious groups.

At times the disagreement within religious groups concerning racial, ethnic, and gender inequality also extends to the topic of income inequality. As "God and mammon" are often portrayed as opposite realms—one private and one public, one sacred and one secular—income inequality becomes a particularly rich arena for demonstrating the influence of deprivatized religion. For example, Emerson and Smith (2001) find that in the case of economic attitudes among U.S. conservative Protestants, religious salience produces an intensifying effect on

commonly held opinions. At issue is how people account for the economic disparities between whites and African Americans using either individualistic accounts (focused on personal ability and motivation) or structural accounts (focused on education and discrimination). Whites are more likely than African Americans to hold individualistic accounts of racial economic inequality. However, white conservative Protestants are more likely than other whites to hold such accounts. In contrast, African Americans are more likely to hold structural accounts of racial economic inequality. However, African American conservative Protestants are more likely than other African Americans to hold such accounts. This specific case of racial attitudes illustrates how religion can intensify the divergence of opinions about economic inequality. At the same time the opinions studied by Emerson and Smith focus on explanations for income inequality, whether individual or structural. The question being asked is, “What accounts for the disparity in incomes?” A further step would be to study opinions about the levels of—not simply the explanations for—income inequality. How fair is the current state of affairs? Do respondents think that society needs more or less equality? And does sharing a religious faith make it more or less likely to find common ground on these issues?

In describing the differences between conservatives and liberals, Hall (1997:41) claims that “in order to understand how Christian activists end up with different social and political ideologies, one should pay close attention to differences in their religious orientations.” Such differences in religious orientation can profoundly shape the debates around poverty and economic inequality. In the U.S. context, arguments about the causes of poverty reveal a conservative-liberal continuum that differentiates between the undeserving poor and the deserving poor (Robinson 2009). In a study of elite Evangelicals, many of the interviewees justified their wealth with explanations of their own generosity, but few talked about income

inequality itself (Lindsay 2007). In a parallel finding, many Catholics and Mainline Christians reported a personal connection between church involvement and volunteering to address community problems while many conservative Protestants discouraged such “this-worldly” activity (Wilson and Janoski 1995). These findings suggest that many people operate with strong consistency between their theological and economic ideologies.

However, the left/right divide that often distinguishes religious denominations is known to cut right through them (Wuthnow 1989). For example, the same debates concerning biblical inerrancy that once divided freer thinking mainline Protestants from more literal minded conservative Protestants in the U.S. can now be found within these groups. However, such divergences are not limited to religious issues. Indeed, the divergence between theological conservatism and liberalism does not always map neatly onto the divergence between economic conservatism and liberalism (Pyle 1993). For example, religious conservatives think about the poor more often than do liberals, but they expect the church and not the government to address the issue (Wuthnow 1998). At the same time, debates over capitalism within U.S.

Evangelicalism sort this group into the left, which focuses on structural powers, and the right, which advocates for a limited welfare state (Gay 1991). It is possible for this divergence to arise because it is possible for people to hold conservative theological beliefs and promote a left-leaning economic agenda (Hart 1996). This finding warns against the assumption that particular forms of religion necessarily produce consensus on public issues involving economics. This is because “Economic and cultural politics run on separate tracks, and the relationship of each to religion needs to be understood separately” (ibid.: xv). Among Christians in the U.S., Hart found that “religious traditionalism does *not* lead to economic conservatism” and that “no religious variables except denominational group predict economic views” (ibid.: xix). According to this

study, Catholics and religious “nones” are the most economically liberal, followed by African-American Protestants and White Protestants, with mainline denominations being the most conservative (ibid.:156). Such findings suggest that research on economic opinions should account for the influence of denomination. At the same time, looking at denomination in isolation from its interaction with other religious factors—such as salience—may tell only part of the story.

In summary, the deprivatization of religion occurs as people utilize the toolkit (Swidler 1986) of religious faith to address matters of public importance, such as income inequality. At times, people operate with consistent ideologies, approaching both religion and economics from either a liberal or a conservative perspective. At other times, people may be liberal in one arena and conservative in the other. This phenomenon can become an engine for producing dissensus rather than consensus among religious groups. Beyond discussions of the liberal/conservative continuum among religious believers, researchers are keen to demonstrate the differences between different religious denominations and sects. Participating in a particular religious subculture can profoundly shape one’s strategies of action for addressing public issues (Smith 1998), such as economics. At the same time, differences in outlook and action can arise not only between religious subcultures but within them. This raises the question of what other religious factors fuel complexity and instigate contentiousness within religious groups.

4. Disagreement about public issues such as income inequality intensifies within HIGHLY religious groups.

Paper 1 of this dissertation investigates the relationship between beliefs about income inequality and a number of religious factors, including inequity, intensity, and identity. That paper presents arguments and evidence for including the independent variables of being in a

religious majority, having high religiosity, and identifying with specific religious traditions. For example, the “underdog thesis”—that minority groups with lower socioeconomic status support more egalitarian principles than their majority counterparts (Robinson and Bell 1978)—has been shown to apply to religious minorities (Hunt 2002). This paper argues that these same independent variables can be applied not only to beliefs about inequality but also to the variation in those beliefs. What is the rationale for this assertion? Is it possible to demonstrate that the religious variables applied to beliefs about income inequality also apply to other issues of economic stratification? One answer involves showing how these religious factors associate with levels of financial generosity within different traditions, denominations, and movements. While one must not conflate charitable giving with stratification beliefs, the following conversation furthers the rationale for including the specified religious factors by demonstrating that they can indeed be helpful in explaining differences in how religious groups address income inequality.

Much of the research on charitable giving originates in the U.S., and findings vary greatly depending on how the groups are classified and compared. In terms of giving *directly* to those in need, Catholics demonstrate more generosity toward poor families than do Jews and Liberal Protestants, who both give more than all other Protestants (Will and Cochran 1995). However, in terms of giving *indirectly* to poverty-related organizations, being in a group other than Christian predicts the highest levels of support (Regnerus, Smith, and Sikkink 1998). In a similar finding, Jews make larger donations and give more frequently to organizations that help people in need than do Christians and people claiming no religion (Ottoni-Wilhelm 2010). Among Christians, those who participate in theologically conservative subcultures give slightly more to such relief organizations than do liberal Protestants and practicing Catholics (Regnerus, Smith, and Sikkink

1998, Brooks 2006). Thus, different religious traditions can associate with different deprivatized responses to the public issue income inequality.

In addition to charting differences in economic opinions and practices by participation in religious subcultures, it is important to account for the salience of religion itself. Vaidyanathan, Hill, and Smith (2011:450) contradict the literature that identifies “a significant relationship between political conservatism and greater financial giving to charitable causes.” Instead they find that “it is less the effect of ideology than of active participation in religious, political, and community organizations that explains Americans’ financial giving to religious and nonreligious organizations” (ibid.). However, it may not be the case that higher religious salience universally inspires greater participation in building and funding the public good. For example, in the U.S. context, increasing religious salience appears to increase contributions to public goods among Protestants but decrease such contributions among Catholics, who also expect others to contribute less (Benjamin, Choi and Fisher 2010). Thus it is possible to demonstrate that the religious factors identified as independent variables in Paper 1 apply to a number of issues involving economic stratification. When it comes specifically to disagreements about the public issue of income inequality within religious groups, it is appropriate to consider the influence of religious identity, intensity, and inequity.

5. Disagreement about public issues such as income inequality intensifies within highly religious groups IN THE U.S.

In theorizing the influence of religion on beliefs about income inequality, it could be imagined that such beliefs form an even distribution across the spectrum of possibilities, with each option reflecting equal representation. However, at least one approach to the topic suggests that this is not the case. An attempt by U.S. sociologists to chart the contours of the relationship

between deprivatized religion and beliefs about income inequality situates religious adherents along a continuum from those who support economic inequality on one side to those who support economic equality on the other (Davidson and Pyle 1999).

This approach conceptualizes support for economic inequality very broadly to include endorsement of political agendas, (e.g., wealth-producing tax cuts), alignment with movements (e.g., the right-leaning Christian Coalition), and the taking of direct action (e.g., opposing grassroots organizations that represent the interests of working people). Support for the specific belief addressed in this paper—that larger income differences are needed as incentives—certainly falls into this definition. At times, such support for economic inequality may find either indirect or direct backing from theological sources. For example, some Christians may favor tax arrangements that benefit the wealthy at the expense of state welfare spending because they emphasize Bible passages endorsing hard work, personal responsibility, and voluntary charity. Such Christians may not directly advocate for increasing income inequality, but their political action may work to increase it nonetheless. Alternatively, other Christians who embrace prosperity gospel teachings may view wealth as a sign of God's favor and therefore call for greater income differentials as a way of identifying the blessed. Such Christians would actively seek ways to increase the economic distance between themselves and those who do not embrace prosperity gospel teachings. In this way, income inequality is framed as a necessary metric, an arena of evidence for supporting religious dogma.

On the other side of the continuum lie those who support economic equality through such means as political action (e.g., calling for economic justice), community organizing (e.g., sponsoring social concerns programs), and financial investment (e.g., hiring full-time staff for social ministry). As before, such support for economic equality may find either indirect or direct

backing from theological sources. For example, some Christians may favor increased welfare state spending at the expense of tax arrangements that benefit the wealthy because they emphasize Bible passages encouraging communities to support vulnerable populations, such as widows and orphans. Such Christians may focus on helping the poor without addressing the larger issue of income inequality, but their political action may work to decrease it nonetheless. Alternatively, other Christians who embrace biblical teachings on self-denial may view poverty—not riches—as a sign of God’s favor and therefore call for decreasing income differentials as a way of reshaping society to reflect God’s intentions. Such Christians would actively seek ways to decrease the economic distance between themselves and others by calling everyone to a life of economic austerity. In this way, income inequality is framed as a societal sin, an opportunity for repentance and change.

According to Davidson and Pyle, most religious people in the U.S. fall between the extremes of either completely supporting inequality or completely supporting equality. According to their hypothesis, the distribution peaks toward the first side, indicating that the bulk of religious groups support and perpetuate inequality, and has a long tail toward the other side, indicating that a tapering minority of religious groups support and perpetuate equality. This skewed distribution purportedly results from a combination of interests and values among both clergy and laity. On one hand, material self-interest can hinder both ministers and parishioners from challenging inequitable economic arrangements. The many who benefit from income inequality have little reason to challenge social norms concerning economic stratification. On the other hand, the majority of both church leaders and churchgoers gravitate toward “good fortune” theology as opposed to “social justice” theology. This religious majority highly values a central tenet of American public religion: that godliness results in blessing, which often includes

material wellbeing. In this understanding, “good fortune” theology ranges from Calvinist interpretations of Christian scriptures, which emphasize God’s sovereignty, to the health and wealth gospel of prosperity teachers, which emphasizes human faith. This stands in contrast to the minority who espouse “social justice” theology by valorizing the poor as innocent victims of corporate greed and demonizing wealth disparity as the worst of societal sins. Once again, this illustrates how religious traditions using the same cultural resources, such as scriptures and liturgies, can nonetheless produce widely divergent approaches to the public issue of income inequality. Indeed, this theory addresses not simply the content of beliefs about income inequality, but also to the distribution of those beliefs in religious populations. Without empirical support, however, their thesis remains unverified. This raises the question, “Is it possible to empirically verify the pattern of beliefs about income inequality among religious people suggested by Davidson and Pyle?” Of course, investigating this question raises the issue of whether a theory designed to explain religion phenomena in the United States also applies in other contexts.

Although a number of the studies discussed above report on deprivatized religion around the world (Bourguignon 1985, Simpson 1985, Adriance 1994, Cassanova 1994, Smith 1996a, Smith 1996b, Leming 2007, Rinaldo 2008), the main threads of this theoretical discussion tie directly to the United States. Indeed the pattern proposed by Davidson and Pyle refers specifically to the U.S. context. This raises the question of how applicable theories addressing U.S. Christianity are to other religious traditions around the world—especially as they relate to the diversity of beliefs about income inequality. As discussed in Paper 1, a particular example of this dilemma involves the low levels of income inequality within majority Muslim populations (Fish 2011). Specifically Pepinsky and Welborne (2010: 491) reject a proposal by Davis and

Robinson (2006) that “piety has a systematic impact on the redistributive preferences among Muslims.” Conversely they propose that “higher levels of religiosity correspond to lower support for government efforts to minimize income inequality” (ibid). According to these critics, Davis and Robinson’s faulty methodology produces dubious conclusions. The choice to define piety as support for the implementation of Islamic law required dropping half of the Muslims in the sample. Pepinsky and Welborne conclude that “These findings provide little evidence to suggest that either scriptural or organizational factors unique to Islam create distinct economic policy preferences among pious Muslims, demonstrating that arguments derived from Christians in advanced industrial economies are largely appropriate in the Muslim world” (Pepinsky and Welborne 2010: 491).

This evidence suggests that applying theories about variation in beliefs about income inequality within religious traditions in the U.S. to other parts of the world should not be dismissed out of hand. At the same time, methodological rigor requires investigating each empirical case to determine whether genuine religious differences—both between and within traditions—shape the ways that such theories play out in actuality. Thus the question raised above, “Is it possible to empirically verify the pattern of beliefs about income inequality among religious people suggested by Davidson and Pyle?” prompts a related inquiry: “If so, does this pattern extend beyond the context in which it was developed, namely the United States?” The next step in addressing these two items requires a discussion of hypotheses to be tested.

Hypothesis

As discussed in Paper 1 of this dissertation, beliefs about income inequality reflect the influence of a number of factors, such as stratification systems, political orders, economic conditions, social norms, and religious traditions. In the main, one’s position in the stratification

system influences beliefs about income inequality. For example, being female, older, single, less educated, and poorer will dampen support for income inequality. At the same time, structural factors, such as living in nations with high income inequality, low economic development, and low government spending, can also dampen support for income inequality. Accounting for these control factors, the models in Paper 1 provide evidence that support for income inequality correlates with the interaction of being highly religious and identifying with either Islam or Hinduism, traditions whose core teachings address stratification.

This paper expands the conversation on religion and beliefs about income inequality by addressing the *variation* in those beliefs. The literature review above provides evidence that *disagreement about public issues such as income inequality intensifies within highly religious groups in the U.S.* One theory intended to explain the variation in the relationship between religion and beliefs about income inequality in the United States situates religious adherents along a continuum from those who support economic inequality on one side to those who support economic equality on the other (Davidson and Pyle 1999). According to this approach, the distribution peaks toward the first side, indicating that the bulk of religious groups support and perpetuate inequality, and has a long tail toward the other side, indicating that a tapering minority of religious groups support and perpetuate equality. Employing this theory as a sensitizing concept, this paper investigates the question, “What is the effect of religiosity on the amount of disagreement over income inequality within religious traditions around the world?” The analysis that follows tests the empirical validity of the pattern expected by Davidson and Pyle and determines if it also appears outside of the U.S. It is important to explore the *variation* in beliefs about income inequality within religious groups because understanding this public issue might involve than equating certain religious factors with particular opinions. Perhaps

disagreement over income inequality widens within groups, producing dissensus rather than consensus among highly religious people who share the same religious tradition.

In order to extend the conversation begun in Paper 1, the models presented below include the same control variables as well as the same measures of religious inequity, intensity, and identity to explore the variation in beliefs about income inequality among religious people. The proposal by Davidson and Pyle concerning the pattern of variation in beliefs about income inequality among religious people was developed within the U.S. context, where approximately 95 percent of the population claims to be either Christian—mainly Catholic and Protestant—or religious “none” (Hackett and Grim 2012). This raises the question of whether the expected pattern in variation occurs within other religious traditions. Paper 1 demonstrates that theory derived mainly from studies of U.S. religion applied to the issue of income inequality benefits from the inclusion of interaction terms between religious intensity and religious identity. Thus it is expected that *disagreement about income inequality intensifies within highly religious groups around the world*. By testing this hypothesis using international data, it becomes possible to compare findings within religious traditions prevalent in the U.S. to those that are prevalent elsewhere in the world.

Methods

Data

In order to test these hypotheses, this study utilizes the World Values Survey/European Values Survey (WVS/EVS), the only ongoing research project designed to capture the values and beliefs of a majority of the world’s population (Inglehart 2008). Collected on all six continents by leading social scientists from each of the 97 societies studied, the WVS/EVS

includes representational national samples of at least 1,000 people from each society, reflecting the opinions of 88 percent of the globe's inhabitants. Using random probability samples (where possible), local field organizations conduct face-to-face interviews through standardized questionnaires translated into the local language under the supervision of academic researchers and a principal investigator at the behest of the Stockholm-based non-profit World Values Survey Association (WVSA). In total, the five waves of the WVS/EVS constitutes 334,000 unique respondents (25,000 from 20 countries during Wave 1 in 1981-1984; 61,000 from 42 countries during Wave 2 in 1989-1993; 75,000 from 52 countries during Wave 3 in 1994-1998; 96,000 from 67 countries during Wave 4 in 1999-2004; and 77,000 from 54 countries during Wave 5 in 2005-2008). This paper employs the last three waves of the combined WVS/EVS, as these waves include measures of the dependent variable and other theoretically important factors.

In addition to the WVS/EVS dataset, this study utilizes three additional sources of information. First, the Standardized World Income Inequality Database (SWIID) provides Gini indexes compiled using a custom missing-data algorithm to standardize the U.N. University World Income Inequality Database (WIID) with reference to the Luxembourg Income Study. The SWIID “provides comparable Gini indices of gross and net income inequality for 153 countries for as many years as possible from 1960 to the present, along with estimates of uncertainty in these statistics” (Solt 2009). Second, the World Bank International Comparison Program Database (WBICPD) database provides measures of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2013 international dollars calculated using Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) rates based on data files from the World Bank National Accounts and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) National Accounts. The World Bank International Comparison Program also provides measures of Government Expenses as a Percentage of GDP based on information

from International Monetary Fund (IMF) Government Finance Statistics Yearbook, World Bank estimates, and OECD estimates. Third, the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life provides “comprehensive demographic estimates of the size and distribution of eight major religious groups in the 232 countries and territories for which the United Nations Population Division provides general population estimates as of 2010” based on the analysis of 2,500 data sources, “including censuses, demographic surveys, general population surveys and other studies” (Hackett and Grim 2012:51).

Measures

The *dependent variable* for this study is an indicator of beliefs about income inequality measured on a ten-point scale. The WVS/EVS survey question reads: “Now I’d like you to tell me your views on various issues. How would you place your views on this scale? 1 means you agree completely with the statement on the left; 10 means you agree completely with the statement on the right; and if your views fall somewhere in between, you can choose any number in between. Sentences: Incomes should be made more equal (1) vs. We need larger income differences as incentives (10).” This ordinal indicator serves as an appropriate dependent variable for this study because it captures beliefs about income inequality using a scale that works well with the analysis and models described below.

The *independent variables* for this study include three religious indicators: inequity, intensity, and identity. The first independent variable based on data from the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life indicates whether or not each respondent is in a religious majority. This dichotomous variable, which is based on the six religious groups employed in this study, signals that respondents DO identify with the majority religious groups in their societies. Second, the WVS/EVS measure of religiosity derives from asking respondents to rate the importance of

religion in their life using the following categorical scale: very important, rather important, not very important, and not at all important. In this study, religious intensity appears as a dichotomous measure, contrasting those from the “very important” category with all other respondents from the three remaining categories (reference). Using a dichotomous religiosity variable produces a more manageable number of groups when creating interaction terms with the third religious indicator: religious group. The WVS/EVS indicator for religious identity includes the nominal categories of Catholic, Protestant (reference), Orthodox, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Other Religious Group, and No Religious Group.

The *control variables* for this study include both personal and structural factors that have been identified in the literature as influencing beliefs about inequality. First, control variables from the WVS/EVS that reflect personal position in the stratification system include 1) sex, a dichotomous variable measured as female and male (reference); 2) age, a continuous variable measured in years; 3) marital status, a nominal variable treated dichotomously with the categories of always single or ever married (i.e., married, divorced, and widowed) (reference); 4) education, a categorical variable measured on an eight-point scale (including incomplete and complete training at the elementary, technical/vocational, university preparatory and university levels), which is treated as continuous in the following models; and 5) income, a categorical variable reflecting the wage gradient within nations measured on a ten-point scale from lowest to highest, which is treated as continuous in the following model. Second, control variables reflecting structural factors that can influence beliefs about inequality include 1) income inequality, a continuous variable from the SWIID measured by a Gini index ranging from 0 (complete equality) to 100 (complete inequality); 2) economic development, a continuous variable from the WBIPCD measured by GDP per capita PPP (purchasing power parity) in

thousands of current international dollars; and 3) government expenses, a continuous variable from the WBIPCD measuring regime spending as a percentage of GDP. These three structural control variables were assigned to respondents by country in the year nearest to each wave of the WVS/EVS.

Analysis

To address the relationship between religion and the variation in beliefs about income inequality, this paper presents three heteroskedastic ordered probit regression models derived using the `oglm` command in Stata. Ordered probit models attempt to assess continuous latent variables—which cannot be measured directly—by observing ordinal variables that have been measured. In this case, the latent variable is belief about income inequality, and the observed variable is the response on the ten-point scale measuring support for incentivizing such inequality. The wording of the WVS/EVS question limits responses to ten categories, producing nine “cut points” that divide these categories. Employing ordered probit models usually requires the assumption that responses are distributed normally with the first cut point set to -1 and the variance set to 1. However, relaxing the assumption of a normal distribution by setting the first cut point to -1 and the second cut point to 0 without defining the variance allows the model to estimate the influence of theoretically important independent variables on both the mean *and* the variance of the dependent variable. Because the scale is arbitrary, fixing the size of one category does not affect the substantive results. The resulting heteroskedastic ordered probit model proves useful when the variance of the latent variable becomes substantively interesting (e.g., Mouw and Sobel 2001).

The heteroskedastic ordered probit models in this paper present the variance as Ln Sigma , or the natural log of the variance. Exponentiating the variance allows the standard deviation of

the variance to remain positive (as it would be impossible for this value to be negative). It also allows the signs of Ln Sigma to report useful information to those reading the tables. A *negative* sign on the log variance of an independent variable indicates that this measure correlates with a *decrease* in the variance of the dependent variable. And a *positive* sign on the log variance of an independent variable indicates that this measure correlates with an *increase* in the variance of the dependent variable. Importantly, a positive sign signals that more respondents fall into the extreme categories of the dependent variable. In the case of this paper, a positive sign on the log variance of an independent variable indicates that this measure correlates with respondents choosing options closer to either 1 or 10 rather than the middle of the scale of support for incentivizing income inequality.

Findings

Sample

This study's sample of 180,817 respondents from 82 countries derives from the third, fourth and fifth waves of the WVS/EVS (see Appendix 2.A). As it turns out, the first wave contains no measures of this study's dependent variable, and the second wave does not adequately cover measures of income, a theoretically important variable for this project. Once variables from the SWIID, WBICPD, and the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life were added to the three remaining waves of the WVS/EVS, it was possible to use listwise deletion to remove cases with missing data. Ten percent of the sample with missing data on the dependent variable was removed, and additional 21 percent was removed due to missing data on all other items. As listwise deletion has been shown to be methodologically sound (Allison 2001), using

this process to select a sample with 79 percent of respondents having the required dependent variable was deemed suitable.

TABLE 2.1 ABOUT HERE

Descriptives

Table 2.1 presents simple descriptive statistics for this study's dependent, independent, and control variables. It is helpful to conceptualize the dependent variable as support for greater income inequality. Thus, higher scores on the ten-point scale—and positive coefficients in the regression models—indicate the call for widening income distributions. The mean of 5.87 on this ten-point scale suggests that on average people would rather use income inequality as an incentive than make wages more equal. The actual distribution of the dependent variable appears in Figure 2.1, showing peaks at the extremes and middle of the scale. Importantly, the mode of 15.48 percent of respondents selected ten—the highest possible indication of the desire for using income inequality as an incentive—and the next largest category of 13.31 percent selected eight. Notably the distribution in Figure 2.1 does not reflect the distribution predicted by Davidson and Pyle. While the histogram does show peaks towards the right side, indicating support for income inequality, other peaks occur at both the opposite end and in the middle of the distribution. Though the Davidson and Pyle prediction does not accurately describe the entire sample, the possibility remains that it does describe the distribution of the dependent variable within different religious traditions.

FIGURE 2.1 ABOUT HERE

Figure 2.2 presents the same distribution of beliefs about income inequality by religious tradition. The flattest distribution—signaling the least amount of variation—occurs among religious “nones.” Interestingly, the Buddhist distribution most closely aligns with the prediction

made by Davidson and Pyle: a peak toward support for inequality with a long tail tapering toward more egalitarian beliefs. This basic pattern reverses among Hindus, with a mode of 1 on the ten-point scale in support for income inequality followed by a flat distribution leading toward a short peak of 10. The other five distributions, including Christians, Muslims, and Other religions, approximate the shape predicted by Davidson and Pyle of having a peak toward support for income inequality with a long tail toward more egalitarian beliefs—with one notable exception. At the end of the long tail toward egalitarian beliefs, there is another peak at the very end of the spectrum. Respondents in these religious traditions report beliefs at the extremes of the dependent variable. Comparing and contrasting these simple histograms highlight the importance of measuring how religious variables associate with variance in beliefs about income inequality. Once again, increases in variance indicate that more respondents fall toward the extremes of the distribution.

FIGURE 2.2 ABOUT HERE

The independent variables measure three religious factors: 1) inequity, 2) intensity, and 3) identity. First, when it comes to numerical inequity, about three quarters of the sample are religious majorities who observe the majority faith in their countries. As demonstrated in Table 2.2, 92 percent of Christians, 87 percent of Muslims, and 75 percent of Hindus share their faith with a majority of their countries' populations, while 57 percent of Buddhists, and 77 percent of religious "nones," and 100 percent of other religious groups represent religious minorities.

Second, the measure of religious intensity indicates that 45 percent of respondents rate religion as very important, 25 percent as rather important, 18 percent as not very important, and 12 percent as not at all important. Having such a large "Very Important" category anchoring a highly skewed distribution of religiosity makes it possible to use the other three categories as a

single reference group in the regressions that follow. Third, the sample divides into six religious traditions. While slightly more than half of respondents identify as Christians, a fifth are Muslims, and another fifth are religious “nones.” Hindus, Buddhists, and people of other religions each represent between two and three percent of the sample.

Lastly, the list of control variables demonstrates that a little over half the sample is female, the average age is 41 (with a range of 15 to 99), and about a quarter of respondents have never been married. Combining those who have incomplete and complete training at each of the eight educational levels divides the sample roughly into quarters: 1) elementary, 2) vocational, 3) university prep, and 4) university training. The ten-point income scale, which has a mean of 4.63 and a standard deviation of 2.43, reflects a standardized scale of incomes as measured in local currencies. Finally, three indicators reveal widely differing levels of income inequality, economic development, and regime spending around the world: 1) Gini Indexes ranging from 21.88 to 64.80 with a mean of 37.32; 2) GDP per capita PPP (purchasing power parity) in thousands of current international dollars ranging from .72 to 55.81 with a mean of 12.13; and government expenses as a percentage of GDP ranging from 5.30 to 98.00 with a mean of 24.79.

Before investigating the regression models below, it proves instructive to explore the relationships between the religious independent variables. Table 2.2 presents the cross tabulation of religious groups by religious status. In this worldwide sample, a clear preponderance of Christians (92 percent), Muslims (75 percent), and Hindus (75 percent) live as religious majorities within their countries. Alternatively, all those practicing “other” religions (100 percent) and a preponderance of religious “nones” (77 percent) and Buddhists (57 percent) live as religious minorities.

TABLE 2.2 ABOUT HERE

Table 2.3 presents the cross tabulation of religious identity by religious intensity, with cells containing the frequencies and percentages of respondents falling into each category. Reading the table from top to bottom, a pattern emerges in the way that Christians, Muslims, Hindus, and “other” religions rate the importance of religion. In the main, all four groups have majorities rating religion as very important, with decreasing percentages in each of the lower categories. Muslims stand out for having 79 percent of respondents rating religion as very important. The trend among Buddhists is similar, with the caveat that the majority of Buddhists rate religion as somewhat—rather than very—important. As expected, the pattern among religious “nones” reverses the overall trend: most religious “nones” rate religion as not at all important, with decreasing percentages in each of the higher categories.

TABLE 2.3 ABOUT HERE

Table 2.3 also presents means for beliefs about income inequality within each cross tabulated group. Reading the table once again from top to bottom, a similar pattern emerges among religious groups. Just as in the main, increasing percentages of Christians, Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists rated religion as having increasingly higher importance, so increasing percentages of these groups have increasingly higher mean values on the dependent variable. These increasing means indicate rising support for using income inequality as an economic incentive. Within these religious groups, it is increasingly likely to rate religion as very important AND to demonstrate greater support for using income inequality as an incentive. Again, the trend among religious “others” demonstrates more fluctuation, and the pattern among religious “nones” reverses the main trend—with the caveat that those who rate religion as not at all important have the lowest mean score within this group. Reading Table 2.3 from left to right among those who rate religion as very important reveals mean scores that increase along the

following trajectory: Hindus (5.28), religious “nones” (5.50), religious “others” (5.65), Christians (6.03), Muslims (6.16), and Buddhists (6.77). The basic trends in this table suggest that the relationship between religious intensity and religious identity should prove helpful in explaining the relationship between religion and beliefs about income inequality. Thus interaction terms between religiosity and religious tradition appear in the models below.

In addition to the means, Table 2.3 reports standard deviations for beliefs about income inequality within each cross tabulated group. These measures range from 3.62 for Hindus who rate religion as very important to 2.48 for Buddhists who rate religion as not at all important. The aggregate standard deviations for each religious tradition decrease along the following pattern: Hindu (3.56), Muslim (3.11), Other (3.03), Catholic (3.01), Orthodox (2.95), None (2.89), Protestant (2.84), and Buddhist (2.40). Reading the table from top to bottom in each column reveals trends in the standard deviation running from the most religious to the least religious within each tradition. In all but two traditions, the standard deviations decrease from the very religious to the rather religious to the not very religious before changing directions and increasing among the not at all religious. The two groups bucking this trend are Hindus (whose not very religious and not at all religious have the same standard deviation) and Buddhists (who exhibit a U-shaped pattern in standard deviation).

Most importantly for the substantive interest of this paper, reading across the table among the very religious of each tradition reveals the following pattern in standard deviations: Hindu (3.62), None (3.17), Catholic (3.14), Muslim (3.13), Other (3.11), Orthodox (3.04), Protestant (3.00), Buddhist (2.38). This trend provides the context for the models discussed below. At the same time, simply modeling the standard deviation as continuous would be improper because the dependent variable for this analysis is an ordinal measure. For example, a slight change in the

wording of an ordinal survey question can greatly influence how respondents select the arbitrary categories of the scale. Thus, other methods are needed to address the variation in beliefs about income inequality within highly religious groups.

Models

Table 2.4 presents three heteroskedastic ordered probit models predicting support for using income inequality as an economic incentive. Before interpreting the specific coefficients in each model, the basic findings in this table can be compared with findings from two other approaches. First, the heteroskedastic models in Table 2.4 allow the variances to differ. For comparison, Table 2.5 (Appendix 2.B) presents the same set of models as regular ordered probit regressions without the assumption of heteroskedasticity. In the main, the two sets of models differ slightly from one another, with variations in the intensity—but no changes in the signs—of mean coefficients. The only other difference is that majority religious status proves significant in all three models in Table 2.5. A likelihood ratio test comparing the models in Tables 2.4 and 2.5 reports zero probability of being greater than the χ^2 equal to 4552.40 with 16 degrees of freedom. This finding indicates that the heteroskedastic models obtain a better fit with the data than do the regular ordered probit models.

The second comparison with the findings presented in Table 2.4 involves the multilevel models discussed in Paper 1 of this dissertation. Given that Stata 12 does not support multilevel modeling for heteroskedastic ordered probit regressions, the models for this paper do not allow the constant terms to vary across countries. This methodological departure results in Table 2.4 reporting a different number of significant relationships compared with Paper 1. Religious inequity remains significant in a single model in Paper 1 but insignificant in any model in this study. Religious intensity remains significant in a single model in Paper 1 but significant in all

models in this study. Religious tradition remains significant in three or four cases in each model of Paper 1 but significant in four to six cases in each model of this study. The interaction of religious intensity and religious tradition remains significant in three cases of the final model in Paper 1 but significant in four cases in the final model of this study. Finally, the control variable of Gini Index remains insignificant in Paper 1 but significant in this study. As the substantive interest of this paper centers on the variance of the independent variables and not primarily on their means, these differences are apparent but not problematic.

TABLE 2.4 ABOUT HERE

As reported in Table 2.4, Model 1 contains only measures of religious inequity, intensity, and identity; Model 2 adds control variables; and Model 3 adds interaction terms between religious identity and religious intensity. In the final two models, the control variables operate as expected. Expressing less support for incentivizing income inequality associates with being female, older, single, less educated, and poorer as well as living in nations with greater economic inequality, higher development, and larger government spending relative to GDP. In all three of these models, the mean for religious inequity remains insignificant. Thus, being in a religious majority does not correlate with supporting income inequality in these models. When it comes to religious intensity, the mean of .158 in Model 1 dips to .125 with the addition of the control variables in Model 2, but both remain positive coefficients.

The pattern of coefficients for the means of religious identity in Model 1 changes noticeably in Models 2 and 3, with some insignificant relationships becoming significant and several coefficients changing signs. However, the basic trend identified in Model 2 continues in Model 3 with some intensification. The basic pattern among different religious traditions in the full model involves all groups demonstrating greater support for incentivizing income inequality

as compared with Protestants—except for Hindus and Muslims, who report less support. As expected from the findings in Paper 1, this basic trend reverses among respondents in these groups who rate religion as very important. As compared with highly religious Protestants, the highly religious in other traditions demonstrate about the same or less support for incentivizing income inequality—except for Hindus and Muslims, who report more support.

Establishing that the means reflect the basic pattern predicted in Paper 1 moves the discussion toward the substantive interest of this paper: the log variances of the religious independent variables. As explained above, a negative sign on Ln Sigma denotes a narrowing of the variance on the ten-point scale measuring support for incentivizing income inequality, and a positive sign denotes a widening of the variance on this scale. When it comes to religion, the log variance decreases among religious majorities in all three models, narrowing the distribution around the mean. Conversely, the log variance increases among the highly religious in Models 1 and 2, widening the distribution around the mean. Notably, the log variance for religious inequity is about -.050 in each model as compared with .181 for religious intensity. This suggests that, in the partial models, the widening effect of religiosity proves more powerful than the narrowing effect of religious majority status.

Model 2 reports the log variances for religious traditions with control variables but without interaction terms. Compared with Protestants, the log variances on the ten-point scale of support for incentivizing income inequality increases among all but one religious tradition, Buddhism. The largest log variance in this model occurs among Hindus, signaling that this group falls toward the extremes of the ten-point scale of support for income inequality in this partial model. Compared to Protestants in this model, the distribution around the average reported

support for income inequality is much wider for Hindus, somewhat wider for Catholics, the Orthodox, and Muslims, and somewhat narrower for Buddhists.

Introducing the interaction terms in the full model adds a level of complexity to the analysis. As before, a negative sign on Ln Sigma denotes a narrowing of the variance on the ten-point scale measuring support for incentivizing income inequality, and a positive sign denotes a widening of the variance on this scale. At the same time, the interaction terms between religious intensity and religious identity require careful interpretation. In Model 3, the log variance for each religious tradition now reports the variation for adherents who are *not* highly religious in that tradition as compared with Protestants who are also *not* highly religious. The same basic pattern among religious traditions for the full population reported in Model 2 of Table 2.4 also appears among those who are not highly religious in Model 3. As before, the largest log variance occurs among Hindus who are not highly religious. The Ln Sigma of .770 for this group constitutes the largest log variance reported in any of the models. At the other extreme in this model, the log variance for Buddhists is -.107. Compared with Protestants who are not very religious, the log variances for the remaining not-very-religious groups decrease along the following lines: Muslims (.228), the Orthodox (.218), Catholics (.185), Other (.185), and None (.128).

Because Protestants occupy the reference category in Model 3, introducing the interaction term causes the variation among *highly* religious Protestants to appear as the log variance for religious intensity. And the variation among each highly religious non-Protestant group derives from adding the baseline log variance of intensity with the log variance reported in each corresponding interaction term. To make interpretation simpler, Table 2.6 reports for each religious tradition the *combined* log variances for those who are highly religious. These

combined log variances for very religious adherents of each tradition make for comparisons with adherents of the same tradition who are *not* very religious. For example, the log variance of .194 for Catholics in Table 2.6 indicates the increase in variance among Catholics who *are* highly religious as compared with Catholics who are *not* highly religious. The statistical significance of each combined log variance reported in Table 2.6 is calculated from an F-test using matrix algebra obtained from the `lincom` command in Stata.

TABLE 2.6 ABOUT HERE

The main empirical finding of this paper appears in the final column of Table 2.6, which reports the log variances for the interaction between religious identity and high religious intensity. Without exception, the combined log variances among the highly religious within all religious traditions are positive. This signals that there is greater variation in beliefs about income inequality among the highly religious in all eight religious traditions. This serves as empirical evidence for the hypothesis that *disagreement about income inequality intensifies within highly religious groups around the world*. The highest log variances occur among highly religious Protestants (.262), religious “nones” (.241), and Catholics (.194), the three traditions that constitute approximately 95 percent of the U.S. population (Hackett and Grim 2012). Among highly religious adherents of Islam, Hinduism, and Other religions, the log variances are positive but not as large as the three groups that dominate the U.S. landscape.

Discussion

This paper investigates the question, “What is the effect of religiosity on the amount of disagreement over income inequality within religious traditions around the world?” Should one expect more or less variation in such economic opinions among people who are religious minorities, highly religious, or identified with specific religious traditions? This line of inquiry is

important because it addresses the deprivatization of religion, a phenomenon that continues to expand around the world (Casanova 1994). Understanding religion sociologically should include a thoroughgoing account of what happens when faith speaks not only to “personal troubles” but addresses “public issues” as well (Mills 1959). The substantive focus of this paper targets the variation found within religious groups—especially highly religious ones—in beliefs about the public issue of income inequality. It is one thing to demonstrate that religious factors correlate with specific beliefs about income inequality, as in Paper 1. It is an additional step to explore the ideological divergence within religious groups. Such findings help protect against the inaccurate assumption that religious faith necessarily produces socially monolithic populations.

The literature review above presents evidence that *disagreement about public issues such as income inequality intensifies within highly religious groups in the U.S.* This paper makes a contribution to the research on deprivatized religion beyond the borders of the U.S.

(Bourguignon 1985, Simpson 1985, Adriance 1994, Cassanova 1994, Smith 1996a, Smith 1996b, Leming 2007, Rinaldo 2008) by testing the relationship of religion to the variation in beliefs about income inequality in the global context. Toward that goal, it takes as a starting point the prediction by Davidson and Pyle (1999) that situates religious adherents along a continuum from those who support economic inequality on one side to those who support economic equality on the other. According to their hypothesis, the distribution peaks toward the first side, indicating that the bulk of religious groups support inequality, and has a long tail toward the other side, indicating that a tapering minority of religious groups support equality.

The histograms in Figure 2.2 demonstrate that this expected pattern appears only among Buddhists, and a basic reversal of this pattern occurs among Hindus. The vast majority of religious respondents, who fall into the other categories, approximate the pattern predicted by

Davidson and Pyle—with the added feature of a spike in respondents at the most egalitarian position on the scale. Thus the Davidson and Pyle approach correctly predicts the peak toward support for income inequality but fails to anticipate the slight uptick at the egalitarian end of the scale. While it might be assumed that this results from the tendency of all respondents to choose extreme responses to opinion questions, the peaked pattern among religious populations can be compared to the much flatter distribution among religions “nones.” Once again, it is important to remember that the dependent variable for this paper is ordinal, meaning that a slight change in the wording of the survey question could greatly influence how respondents select the arbitrary categories of the scale. This indicates a need for further investigation into the variation in beliefs about income inequality among religious groups provided by regression models.

The heteroskedastic ordered probit models in Table 2.4 provide a methodologically sound means for testing the hypothesis that *disagreement about income inequality intensifies within highly religious groups around the world*. These models relax the assumption of a standard normal distribution for the variance of the dependent variable, producing a better fit with the data than the standard ordered probit models. The hypothesis arising from the literature review and discussion of Paper 1 of this dissertation address the variance of beliefs about income inequality within groups having a number of different religious attributes.

When it comes to religious *inequity*, all three models presented in Table 2.4 support the idea that greater variation in beliefs about income inequality exist among groups that are religious minorities. To provide continuity between these models and the models in Paper 1, the variable for religious inequity measures the effect of being in a religious *majority*. Because the variable is dichotomous, one can calculate the effect of being in a religious minority by simply reversing the sign on the variance for being in a religious majority. Thus, higher variance in

beliefs about income inequality arises among religious minority groups. This finding aligns with the concept that deprivatized religion widens the range of options for resisting dominant public trends. As discussed in Paper 1, the “underdog thesis”—that minority groups with lower socioeconomic status support more egalitarian principles than their majority counterparts (Robinson and Bell 1978)—has been shown to apply to religious minorities (Hunt 2002). In the models for this paper, none of the mean coefficients for religious inequity prove significant. This suggests that being in a religious minority demonstrates a stronger association with the *variation* in beliefs about income inequality than with the specific beliefs themselves.

When it comes to religious *intensity*, the first two partial models in Table 2.4 provide support for the notion that greater variation in beliefs about income inequality exists among groups that are highly religious. This finding corresponds with other research demonstrating that religious salience produces an intensifying effect on commonly held opinions, such as in the case of economic attitudes among U.S. conservative Protestants (Emerson and Smith 2001). Rather than producing ideological convergence, high religiosity increases the variation in beliefs about income inequality. The association between such variation and religious intensity is about three times stronger than with religious inequity. Thus being highly religious correlates with much more variation in beliefs about income inequality than does being in a religious minority. However, these partial models do not account for the interaction of religious intensity and identity. Thus a more accurate picture of the variation in beliefs about income inequality among highly religious groups requires further analysis.

When it comes to religious *identity*, the same basic pattern among religious traditions in the full population also appears among those who are not highly religious. That is, only among Buddhists is the log variance of beliefs about income inequality less than for Protestants. The log

variances for the remaining traditions increase along the following pattern: religious “nones,” Catholics, religious “others,” the Orthodox, Muslims, and Hindus. Paper 1 reports only one significant relationship between religious identity and mean coefficients for beliefs about income inequality in the full model containing interaction terms between religious intensity and identity. In contrast the models presented in this paper report significant relationships for most of the means and all of the log variances for religious identity without interaction terms. This situation likely arises from the methodological differences between Paper 1 and this study. Perhaps the significant correlations reported in the heteroskedastic ordered probit models introduced above would drop from multilevel mixed-effects linear regressions with the assumption of heteroskedasticity. As it turns out, this procedure is not available in Stata 12. Be that as it may, the inclusion of interaction terms in the final hypothesis does produce findings comparable to Paper 1.

When it comes to the *interaction between religious intensity and religious identity*, the full model presented in Table 2.4 provides strong support for this paper’s central argument—that *disagreement about income inequality intensifies within highly religious groups around the world*. This finding is further clarified in Table 2.6, which reports the combined log variances for beliefs about income inequality among highly religious adherents of the eight religious traditions addressed in this paper. Catholics, Protestants, and religions “nones” constitute approximately 95 percent of the U.S. population (Hackett and Grim 2012). The highly religious among these groups exhibit greater variation in beliefs about income inequality than among the highly religious in all other religious traditions. This includes the highly religious Orthodox, who represent a more eastern variety of Christian faith than that prevalent in the U.S. Importantly, this finding is not limited to the U.S. context. Catholics, Protestants, and religious “nones” all around

the world demonstrate this relationship. Such empirical evidence raises the possibility that sociological theories developed to explain religion in the U.S. context may indeed apply to other geographic areas.

Conclusion

Review

Prior research indicates that disagreement about public issues such as income inequality intensifies within highly religious groups in the U.S. This paper presents heteroskedastic ordered probit regression models based on the World Values Survey/European Values Survey (WVS/EVS) to address the question, “What is the effect of religiosity on the amount of disagreement over income inequality within religious traditions around the world?” Including controls for nonreligious factors known to shape beliefs about income inequality, the models provide evidence for the hypothesis that *disagreement about income inequality intensifies within highly religious groups around the world*. This empirical finding prompts the following theoretical insight: Far from producing consensus, high religiosity intensifies variation in beliefs about income inequality, pushing people toward divergent perspectives on this public issue. This is true for all religious groups around the world, but especially for Catholics, Protestants, and religious “nones.” This helps to explain why identification with specific religious traditions does not produce uniform beliefs about economic stratification.

Limitations

The main limitation of this study is that it utilizes cross-sectional data. Thus it becomes difficult to claim that the religious independent variables “cause” increased variation in beliefs about income inequality. Though it seems unlikely, the reverse may be true. Perhaps

experiencing greater variation in such economic opinions causes people to become religious minorities, be highly religious, or identify with specific religious traditions. Perhaps the causal pathway is reciprocal, flowing from religion to variation in beliefs about income inequality and from such variation back to religion. Perhaps a third, unknown factor influences both peoples' religious faith and the variation in beliefs about income inequality. That being said, a strong argument can be made that because 1) most religious people are socialized into their faiths from the earliest childhood (Smith and Denton 2005), and 2) religions often present moral teachings on economic issues (Guiso, Sapienza, and Zingales 2003, McCleary and Barro 2006), it is completely in the realm of possibility that the primary causal direction extends from religion to variation in beliefs about income inequality. Furthermore, the literature reviewed above indicates that deprivatized religion fuels variation in people's responses to public issues. The evidence does not suggest that variation in beliefs about income inequality incites a flurry of religious switching.

Recommendations

Future research on the relationship between religion and the variation in beliefs about income inequality could address the issue of causality by utilizing panel data and experimental design. In so doing, it would be important to remember that theories generated to explain religious phenomena in the U.S. need not to be dismissed out of hand. Rather they need to be evaluated empirically. In the case of this paper, a theory designed to address U.S. religion proved a helpful sensitizing concept. Accounting for the divergence from the expected results required introducing interaction terms into the models. Thus, researchers should also consider the interaction of religiosity and religious identity when studying variation in beliefs about income inequality and other aspects of stratification. It is possible that the influence of religion on such

variation may not become apparent until researchers account for the interaction of religious intensity and religious identity. Finally, those who are interested in framing income inequality as a social problem (Wilkinson and Pickett 2010) should remember that religion is not monolithic in its relationship with this topic. In spite of any dominant trends, it is possible to identify enclaves of religiously fueled resistance to the issue of income inequality.

Davidson and Pyle suggest that a majority of religious adherents support income inequality due to the combined effect of 1) the self-interest on the part of clergy and laity who benefit from the stratification system and 2) the widespread attraction of “good fortune” theology, which links spiritual blessing with material wellbeing. While this paper demonstrates the polarization in beliefs about income inequality among the highly religious around the world, it cannot directly address why being high religiosity might cause this divergence. Perhaps the same dynamic proposed by Davidson and Pyle for U.S. Christianity also extends to other geographic and religious contexts. Future research could very well determine the validity of this claim. Perhaps the effects of self-interest and “good fortune” theology are not limited to U.S. Christianity.

Table 2.1. Descriptive Statistics for Dependent, Independent, and Control Variables (N = 180,817)

	Freq.	Mean/Prop.	SD	Min.	Max.
<i>Dependent Variable</i>					
Income Inequality Beliefs	180,817	5.87	2.99	1	10
<i>Independent Variables</i>					
Religious Status	180,817	.26	.44	0	1
Majority (Ref.)	134,240	74.2%			
Minority	46,577	25.8%			
Religious Importance	180,817	1.96	1.05	1	4
Very Important	81,795	45.2%			
Rather Important (Ref.)	44,946	24.9%			
Not Very Important (Ref.)	33,211	18.4%			
Not at All Important (Ref.)	20,865	11.5%			
Religious Group	180,817	3.70	2.51	1	8
Catholic (Ref.)	46,700	25.8%			
Protestant	26,957	14.9%			
Orthodox	23,432	13.0%			
Muslim	36,407	20.1%			
Hindu	4,506	2.5%			
Buddhist	3,873	2.1%			
Other	4,551	2.5%			
None	33,550	18.6%			
<i>Control Variables</i>					
Sex	180,817	1.51	.500	1	2
Male (Ref.)	88,156	48.8%			
Female	92,661	51.3%			
Age	180,817	41.17	16.04	15	99
Marital Status	180,817	1.88	.59	1	3
Single	43,399	24.0%			
Married (Ref.)	115,847	64.1%			
Separated/Divorced/Widowed (Ref.)	21,571	11.9%			
Education	180,817	4.49	2.29	1	8
Incomplete Elementary	21,832	12.1%			
Complete Elementary	26,001	14.4%			
Incomplete Vocational	14,483	8.0%			
Complete Vocational	32,554	18.0%			
Incomplete University Prep	16,177	9.0%			
Complete University Prep	30,581	16.9%			
Incomplete University	12,717	7.0%			
Complete University	26,472	14.6%			

(continued)

Table 2.1. *(continued)*

	Freq.	Mean/Prop.	SD	Min.	Max.
Income	180,817	4.63	2.43	1	10
Lower Step	17,847	9.9%			
Second Step	22,822	12.6%			
Third Step	25,099	13.9%			
Fourth Step	26,475	14.6%			
Fifth Step	26,578	14.7%			
Sixth Step	19,978	11.1%			
Seventh Step	16,401	9.1%			
Eighth Step	11,839	6.6%			
Ninths Step	7,242	4.0%			
Tenths Step	6,536	3.6%			
GINI Index	180,817	37.32	9.61	21.88	64.80
GDP (in Thousands)	180,817	12.13	11.38	.72	55.81
Government Expenses (% of GDP)	180,817	24.79	10.60	5.30	98.00

Source: World Values Survey/European Values Survey (Wave 3: 1994-1998, Wave 4: 1999- 2004, Wave 5: 2005-2008); Standardized World Income Inequality Database (SWIID); World Bank International Comparison Program Database (WBICPD); The Pew Forum on Religion in Public Life

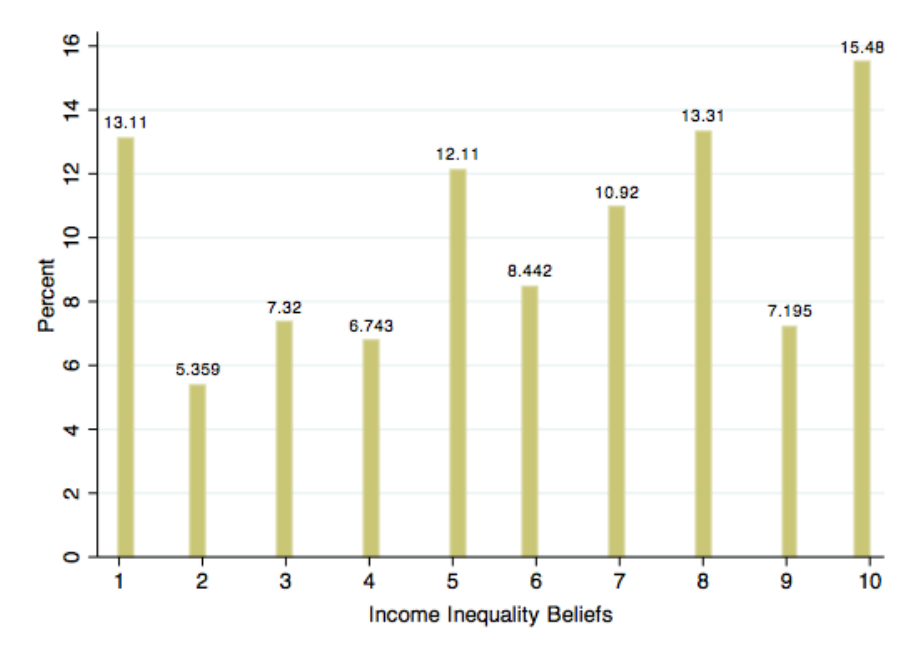


Figure 2.1. Histogram of Income Inequality Beliefs Ranging from (1) “Incomes should be made more equal.” to (10) “We need larger income differences as incentives.”

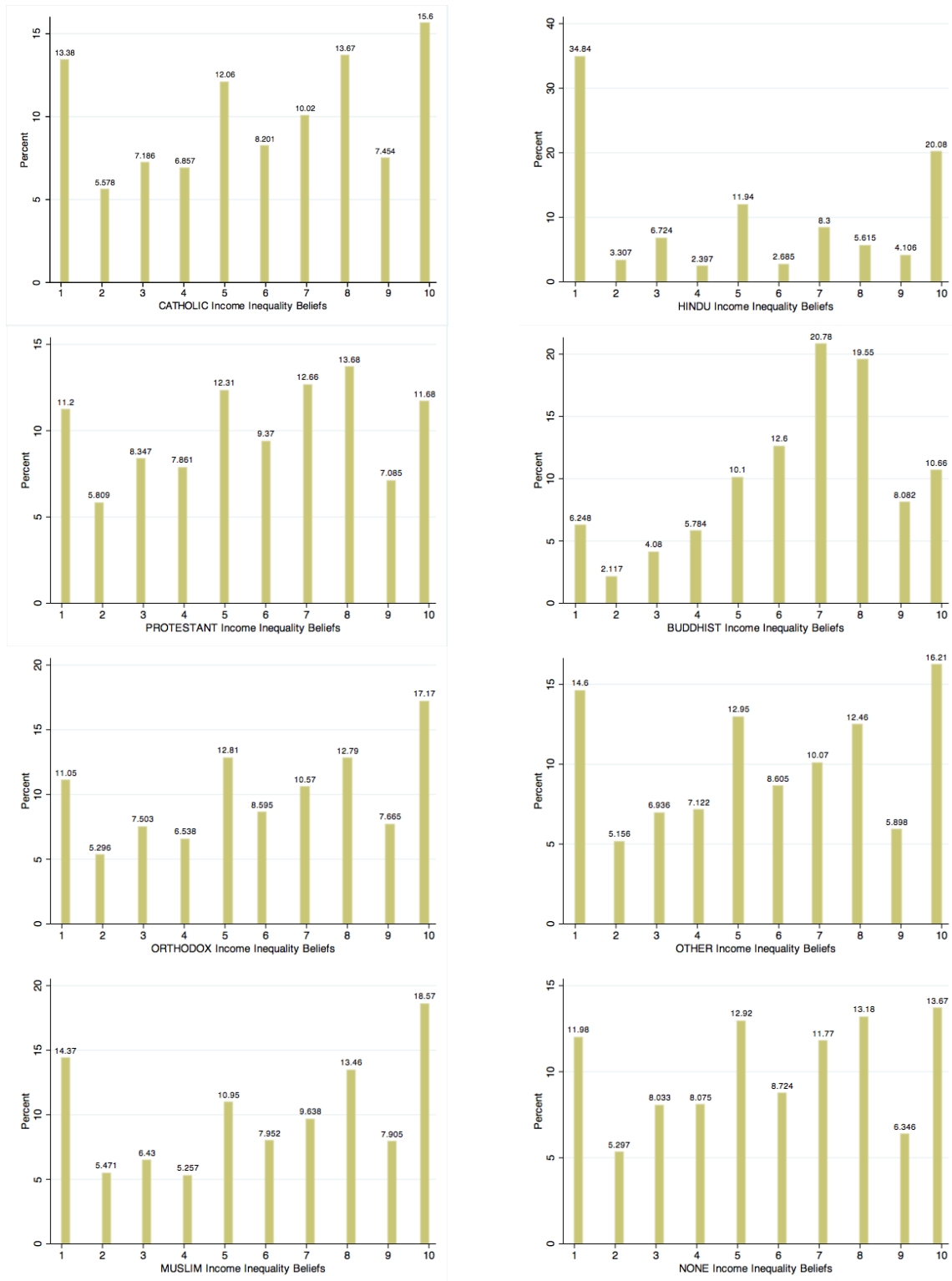


Figure 2.2. Histograms of Income Inequality Beliefs Ranging from (1) “Incomes should be made more equal.” to (10) “We need larger income differences as incentives.” by Religious Tradition

Table 2.2. Cross Tabulation of Religious Groups by Religious Status (N = 180,817)

	Majority Status		Minority Status		Total	
	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.
Catholic	43,828	93.85	2,872	6.15	46,700	100.00
Protestant	23,097	85.68	3,860	14.32	26,957	100.00
Orthodox	22,672	96.76	760	3.24	23,432	100.00
Muslim	31,609	86.82	4,798	13.18	36,407	100.00
Hindu	3,358	74.52	1,148	25.48	4,506	100.00
Buddhist	1,660	42.86	2,213	57.14	3,873	100.00
Other	445	8.25	4,947	91.75	5,392	100.00
None	7,571	22.57	25,979	77.43	33,550	100.00
All	134,240	74.24	46,577	25.76	180,817	100.00

Source: World Values Survey/European Values Survey (Wave 3: 1994-1998, Wave 4: 1999- 2004, Wave 5: 2005-2008); The Pew Forum on Religion in Public Life

Table 2.3. Mean and Standard Deviations of Income Inequality Beliefs (Range 1 – 10) by Cross Tabulation of Religious Traditions and Importance of Religion (N = 180,817)

	Catholic	Protestant	Orthodox	Muslim	Hindu	Buddhist	Other	None	All
Religion Very Important	Freq. 20,983	13,102	8,151	28,633	2,588	1,296	2,841	3,537	81,795
	Per. 44.93	48.60	34.79	78.65	57.43	33.46	62.43	10.54	45.24
	Mean 6.01	6.05	6.00	6.16	5.28	6.77	5.65	5.50	6.03
	SD 3.14	3.00	3.04	3.13	3.62	2.38	3.11	3.17	3.12
Religion Rather Important	Freq. 15,452	6,345	8,799	5,444	1,171	1,457	1,058	5,102	44,946
	Per. 33.09	23.54	37.55	14.95	25.99	37.62	23.25	15.21	24.86
	Mean 5.76	5.53	6.02	5.44	4.44	6.55	5.45	5.88	5.74
	SD 2.91	2.71	2.93	2.97	3.51	2.33	2.93	2.96	2.92
Religion Not Very Important	Freq. 7,876	5,318	4,978	1,756	540	866	462	11,370	33,211
	Per. 16.87	19.73	21.24	4.82	11.98	22.36	10.15	33.89	18.37
	Mean 5.74	5.45	6.09	5.44	4.15	6.22	5.86	5.92	5.78
	SD 2.83	2.51	2.86	2.89	3.25	2.46	2.65	2.77	2.78
Religion Not at All Important	Freq. 2,389	2,192	1,504	574	207	254	190	13,541	20,865
	Per. 5.12	8.13	6.42	1.58	4.59	6.56	4.17	40.36	11.54
	Mean 5.51	5.4	6.05	4.87	4.15	6.27	5.67	5.69	5.63
	SD 2.94	2.73	2.96	3.01	3.25	2.48	3.20	2.88	2.9
Total	Freq. 46,700	26,957	23,432	36,407	4,506	3,873	4,551	33,550	180,817
	Per. 100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
	Mean 5.86	5.76	6.03	6.00	4.88	6.53	5.63	5.78	5.87
	SD 3.01	2.84	2.95	3.11	3.56	2.40	3.03	2.89	2.99

Source: World Values Survey/European Values Survey (Wave 3: 1994-1998, Wave 4: 1999- 2004, Wave 5: 2005-2008)

Table 2.4. Coefficients and Log Variance from Heteroskedastic Ordered Probit Regression Predicting Support for Incentivizing Income Inequality with Religious and Control Variables (N = 180,817)

	<u>Model 1</u>		<u>Model 2</u>		<u>Model 3</u>	
	Coefficient	Ln Sigma	Coefficient	Ln Sigma	Coefficient	Ln Sigma
<i>Religious Variables</i>						
Inequity: Majority vs. Minority (Ref.)	-.006 (.009)	-.045*** (.007)	.015 (.009)	-.057*** (.007)	-.001 (.007)	-.047*** (.007)
Intensity: Very vs. Rather/Not Very/Not at All (Ref.)	.158*** (.007)	.181*** (.005)	.125*** (.007)	.181*** (.005)	.109*** (.015)	.262*** (.011)
Identity: Protestant (Ref.)						
Catholic	.067*** (.009)	.147*** (.007)	.032*** (.009)	.154*** (.007)	.033** (.011)	.185*** (.009)
Orthodox	.168*** (.010)	.151*** (.008)	.027* (.011)	.155*** (.008)	.042** (.014)	.218*** (.010)
Muslim	.071*** (.010)	.159*** (.007)	-.057*** (.011)	.172*** (.007)	-.254*** (.017)	.228*** (.012)
Hindu	-.519*** (.034)	.640*** (.019)	-.727*** (.035)	.678*** (.019)	-1.020*** (.055)	.770*** (.029)
Buddhist	.282*** (.016)	-.199*** (.015)	.220*** (.016)	-.194*** (.015)	.225*** (.021)	-.107*** (.018)
Other	-.001 (.020)	.099*** (.015)	.004 (.020)	.103*** (.015)	-.014 (.031)	.185*** (.023)
None	.085*** (.011)	.102*** (.009)	.028* (.011)	.093*** (.009)	.028* (.012)	.128*** (.010)
Interactions: Very Important x Protestant (Ref.)						
Very Important x Catholic					-.006 (.019)	-.068*** (.014)
Very Important x Orthodox					-.078*** (.023)	-.173*** (.016)
Very Important x Muslim					.273*** (.022)	-.112*** (.016)
Very Important x Hindu					.520*** (.073)	-.192*** (.039)
Very Important x Buddhist					-.031 (.035)	-.228*** (.030)
Very Important x Other					.007 (.040)	-.142*** (.028)
Very Important x None					-.267*** (.030)	-.021 (.020)

(continued)

Table 2.4. (continued)

	<u>Model 1</u>		<u>Model 2</u>		<u>Model 3</u>	
	Coefficient	Ln Sigma	Coefficient	Ln Sigma	Coefficient	Ln Sigma
<i>Control Variables</i>						
Female vs. Male (Ref.)			-.061*** (.006)		-.064*** (.006)	
Age (in Years)			-.002*** (.000)		-.002*** (.000)	
Single vs. Ever Married (Ref.)			-.033*** (.008)		-.031*** (.008)	
Education (8 Pt. Scale)			.045*** (.001)		.047*** (.002)	
Income (10 Pt. Scale)			.038*** (.001)		.040*** (.001)	
GINI Index (100 Pt. Scale)			-.002*** (.000)		-.002*** (.000)	
GDP (in Thousands)			-.012*** (.000)		-.013*** (.000)	
Government Expenses (% of GDP)			-.006*** (.000)		-.006*** (.000)	

Source: World Values Survey/European Values Survey (Wave 3: 1994-1998, Wave 4: 1999-2004, Wave 5: 2005-2008); Standardized World Income Inequality Database (SWIID); World Bank International Comparison Program Database (WBICPD); The Pew Forum on Religion in Public Life

Model 1 Cuts: 1 = -1.206*** (.015); 2 = -.935*** (.014); 3 = -.639*** (.012); 4 = -.406*** (.011); 5 = -.030** (.011); 6 = .221*** (.011); 7 = .554*** (.011); 8 = 1.021*** (.013); 9 = 1.343*** (.015)

Model 2 Cuts: 1 = -1.397*** (.028); 2 = -1.124*** (.028); 3 = -.825*** (.027); 4 = -.587*** (.027); 5 = -.205*** (.026); 6 = .050 (.026); 7 = .388*** (.027); 8 = .862*** (.028); 9 = 1.188*** (.028)

Model 3 Cuts: 1 = -1.478*** (.031); 2 = -1.193*** (.030); 3 = -.879*** (.029); 4 = -.631*** (.028); 5 = -.232*** (.028); 6 = .034 (.028); 7 = .388*** (.028); 8 = .883*** (.029); 9 = 1.224*** (.031)

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed tests)

Table 2.6. Log Variances from Ordered Probit Regression Predicting Support for Incentivizing Income Inequality for the Very Religious (N = 180,817)

	Baseline Intensity	+	Intensity x Tradition	=	Combined Ln Sigma
Catholic	.262***	+	-.068***	=	.194***
Protestant	.262***	+	—	=	.262***
Orthodox	.262***	+	-.173***	=	.089
Muslim	.262***	+	-.112***	=	.150***
Hindu	.262***	+	-.192***	=	.070***
Buddhist	.262***	+	-.228***	=	.034*
Other	.262***	+	-.142***	=	.120**
None	.262***	+	-.021	=	.241***

Source: World Values Survey/European Values Survey (Wave 3: 1994-1998, Wave 4: 1999- 2004, Wave 5: 2005-2008); Standardized World Income Inequality Database (SWIID); World Bank International Comparison Program Database (WBICPD); The Pew Forum on Religion in Public Life

Note: * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed tests)

APPENDIX 2.A

Country-Years: Albania (1998), Albania (2002), Argentina (1995), Argentina (1999), Armenia (1997), Australia (1995), Australia (2005), Austria (1999), Azerbaijan (1997), Bangladesh (1996), Bangladesh (2002), Belarus (1996), Belarus (2000), Belgium (1999), Bosnia and Herzegovina (1998), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2001), Brazil (1997), Brazil (2006), Bulgaria (1997), Bulgaria (1999), Bulgaria (2006), Burkina Faso (2007), Canada (2000), Canada (2006), Chile (1996), Chile (2000), Chile (2006), China (2001), China (2007), Colombia (1998), Croatia (1999), Cyprus (2006), Czech Republic (1998), Czech Republic (1999), Dominican Republic (1996), Egypt (2000), Egypt (2008), El Salvador (1999), Estonia (1996), Estonia (1999), Ethiopia (2007), Finland (1996), Finland (2000), Finland (2005), France (1999), France (2006), Georgia (1996), Georgia (2009), Germany (1997), Germany (2006), Ghana (2007), Guatemala (2004), Hong Kong (2005), Iceland (1999), India (1995), India (2001), India (2006), Indonesia (2001), Indonesia (2006), Iran (2000), Iran (2007), Ireland (1999), Italy (1999), Italy (2005), Japan (2000), Japan (2005), Jordan (2001), Kyrgyzstan (2003), Latvia (1996), Lithuania (1997), Lithuania (1999), Luxembourg (1999), Macedonia (1998), Macedonia (2001), Malaysia (2006), Mali (2007), Mexico (1996), Mexico (2000), Mexico (2005), Moldova (1996), Moldova (2002), Moldova (2006), Morocco (2001), Morocco (2007), Netherlands (1999), Netherlands (2006), New Zealand (1998), New Zealand (2004), Nigeria (1995), Nigeria (2000), Northern Ireland (1999), Norway (1996), Norway (2007), Pakistan (1997), Pakistan (2001), Peru (1996), Peru (2001), Peru (2006), Philippines (2001), Poland (1997), Poland (1999), Poland (2005), Romania (1998), Romania (1999), Romania (2005), Russian Federation (1995), Russian Federation (1999), Russian Federation (2006), Rwanda (2007), Serbia and Montenegro (1996), Serbia and Montenegro (2001), Serbia (2006), Singapore (2002), Slovakia (1998), Slovenia (1999),

Slovenia (2005), South Africa (1996), South Africa (2001), South Africa (2006), South Korea (1996), South Korea (2001), South Korea (2005), Spain (1995), Spain (2000), Spain (2007), Sweden (1996), Sweden (2006), Switzerland (1996), Switzerland (2007), Thailand (2007), Trinidad and Tobago (2006), Turkey (1996), Turkey (2001), Turkey (2007), Uganda (2001), Ukraine (1996), Ukraine (1999), Ukraine (2006), United Kingdom (1999), United Kingdom (2005), United States (1995), United States (1999), United States (2006), Uruguay (1996), Uruguay (2006), Venezuela (1996), Venezuela (2000), Zambia (2007).

APPENDIX 2.B

Table 2.5. Coefficients from Ordered Probit Regression Predicting Support for Incentivizing Income Inequality with Religious and Control Variables (N = 180,817)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<i>Religious Variables</i>			
Inequity: Majority vs. Minority (Ref.)	-.032*** (.007)	-.024** (.007)	-.038*** (.008)
Intensity: Very vs. Rather/Not Very/Not at All (Ref.)	.124*** (.005)	.104*** (.006)	.087*** (.013)
Identity: Protestant (Ref.)			
Catholic	.049*** (.008)	.030*** (.008)	.033** (.011)
Orthodox	.127*** (.009)	.026* (.010)	.043*** (.013)
Muslim	.060*** (.008)	-.032*** (.009)	-.201*** (.015)
Hindu	-.316*** (.017)	-.455*** (.018)	-.649*** (.027)
Buddhist	.224*** (.018)	.179*** (.018)	.174*** (.023)
Other	-.034* (.016)	-.026 (.017)	-.039 (.026)
None	.039*** (.010)	-.002 (.010)	.005 (.012)
Interactions: Very Important x Protestant (Ref.)			
Very Important x Catholic			-.009 (.016)
Very Important x Orthodox			-.067*** (.019)
Very Important x Muslim			.217*** (.019)
Very Important x Hindu			.324*** (.035)
Very Important x Buddhist			-.010 (.037)
Very Important x Other			.005 (.032)
Very Important x None			-.222*** (.022)

(continued)

Table 2.5. *(continued)*

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<i>Control Variables</i>			
Female vs. Male (Ref.)		-.048*** (.005)	-.048*** (.005)
Age (in Years)		-.002*** (.000)	-.001*** (.000)
Single vs. Ever Married (Ref.)		-.027*** (.007)	-.024*** (.007)
Education (8 Pt. Scale)		.038*** (.001)	.039*** (.001)
Income (10 Pt. Scale)		.033*** (.001)	.032*** (.001)
GINI Index (100 Pt. Scale)		-.002*** (.000)	-.002*** (.000)
GDP (in Thousands)		-.010*** (.000)	-.010*** (.000)
Government Expenses (% of GDP)		-.004*** (.000)	-.004*** (.000)

Source: World Values Survey/European Values Survey (Wave 3: 1994-1998, Wave 4: 1999-2004, Wave 5: 2005-2008); Standardized World Income Inequality Database (SWIID); World Bank International Comparison Program Database (WBICPD); The Pew Forum on Religion in Public Life

Model 1 Cuts: 1 = -1.049*** (.010); 2 = -.825*** (.010); 3 = -.576*** (.010); 4 = -.379*** (.010); 5 = -.059*** (.010); 6 = .154*** (.010); 7 = .437*** (.010); 8 = .829*** (.010); 9 = 1.097*** (.010)

Model 2 Cuts: 1 = -1.181*** (.023); 2 = -.954*** (.023); 3 = -.702*** (.023); 4 = -.500*** (.023); 5 = -.174*** (.023); 6 = .043 (.023); 7 = .331*** (.023); 8 = .730*** (.023); 9 = 1.002*** (.023)

Model 3 Cuts: 1 = -1.209*** (.024); 2 = -.981*** (.023); 3 = -.728*** (.023); 4 = -.526*** (.023); 5 = -.199*** (.023); 6 = .018 (.023); 7 = .306*** (.023); 8 = .706*** (.023); 9 = .978*** (.024)

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed tests)

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CHAPTER 3

INCOME INEQUALITY AND THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGION IN POLITICS

Introduction

Generations of sociologists have observed that religious traditions and institutions both reflect and reproduce the stratification system (Pope, Peterson, and Demerath 1942, Pope 1948, Weber 1958, Smith and Faris 2005, Keister 2003, 2008, 2011, Davidson and Pyle 2011). Given the durable connections between religion and stratification, one may wonder how levels of religiosity vary across the spectrum of socioeconomic status. Do the rich or the poor exhibit more religious belief, belonging, and behavior? Recent papers by Solt, Habel, and Grant (2011) and Ballarino and Vezzoni (2012) provide a framework for addressing this question. The prediction that poorer people will express higher religiosity derives from what Solt, Habel, and Grant call deprivation theory and what Ballarino and Vezzoni name *opium of the people* theory. In this approach, the higher religiosity of the lower classes acts as a spiritual compensator for material inequality. Alternatively, the prediction that wealthier people will express higher religiosity derives from what Solt, Habel, and Grant call relative power theory and what Ballarino and Vezzoni name *instrumentum regni* theory. This perspective anticipates higher religiosity among the wealthy, who use religion as a mechanism of social control. These two theories provide opposite predictions about the distribution of religiosity in the stratification system. Is one accurate and the other inaccurate? Could they both be helpful—but in different

ways? Answering these questions requires understanding the basic contours of these two opposing approaches.

The main stream of sociological theory predicting higher religiosity among poorer people centers on the process of secularization (Berger 1969, Martin 1978, Bell 1996). In an updated version of this classic theory, Norris and Inglehart (2011:53) link secularization directly to national development and social stratification: “[T]he erosion of religious values, beliefs, and practices is shaped by long-term changes in existential security, a process linked with human development and socioeconomic equality, and with each society’s cultural legacy and religious traditions... The modernization process reduces the threats to survival that are common in developing societies, especially among the poorest strata; and this enhanced sense of security lessens the need for the reassurance religion provides.” In their view, religion acts as a compensator for existential security, defined as the “extent to which survival is secure enough that it can be taken for granted” (ibid.:4). In contrast, “the process of secularization—a systematic erosion of religious practices, values, and beliefs—has occurred most clearly among the most prosperous social sectors living in affluent and secure postindustrial nations” (ibid.: 5). Both Solt, Habel, and Grant and Ballarino and Vezzoni identify the approach taken by Norris and Inglehart as including their respective definitions of deprivation theory and *opium of the people* theory. The basic prediction that higher religiosity exists among poorer people has solid empirical backing, which lends credence to the conceptualization of religion as a compensator (Clark and Lelkes 2005, Scheve and Stasavage 2006, Ruiter and van Tubergen 2009, Hirschle 2010, Barber 2012, Elgin et al. 2013).

Alternatively, Ballarino and Vezzoni (2012) contrast the *opium of the people* approach taken by Norris and Inglehart with the *instrumentum regni* theory of German Marxist

philosopher Ernst Bloch. Rather than acting as a compensator, religion in this view serves as an “instrument of rule” wielded by the upper classes. This approach anticipates higher religiosity among upper—not lower—classes because religion functions as an “essential component of their power” and a means “to legitimate social inequality ideologically and to repress rightful conflicted waged by the ruled classes” (Ballarino and Vezzoni 2012:315). In their study of weekly Mass attendance from 1968 to 2006 among Roman Catholics in Italy, Ballarino and Vezzoni find that the upper class “exhibits consistently more religious behavior than the intermediate and lower ones,” which they interpret as evidence for the *instrumentum regni* hypothesis that “religion supports and legitimates existing patterns of social inequality, so that it is in the interest of the higher social strata to be more religious” (idid.: 332). Solt, Habel, and Grant arrive at much the same conclusion, contrasting what they call deprivation theory with relative power theory. While acknowledging the basic logic of Norris and Inglehart’s deprivation theory, the authors claim that it does not provide a complete explanation for their analysis of twelve religious indicators in populations around the world. Instead, they advance the relative power theory: “Religion’s ability to serve as a mechanism of social control for the rich... is considerably more important. For the wealthy, greater inequality both increases their attraction to religion and enhances their power to disseminate religious beliefs among the rest of the population” (2011:447).

The empirical evidence for the *instrumentum regni* hypothesis presented by Ballarino and Vezzoni and the relative power theory proposed by Solt, Habel, and Grant appear to demonstrate higher rates of religious belief, behavior, and belonging among the upper classes and the wealthy in their samples. At the same time, the crucial claim in their basic argument is that such findings constitute evidence that these groups use religion as a means of power.

However, it cannot be stressed too strongly that *nothing in their statistical methodology actually tests this claim*. Neither the church attendance figures in the Ballarino and Vezzoni article nor the religious factors in the Solt, Habel, and Grant paper address the issue of religion as an instrument of power. Rather, these researchers simply demonstrate correlations between wealth and factors such as self-identifying as religious, rating religion and God as important, gaining comfort from religion, attending religious services, praying, and believing in God, an afterlife, heaven, hell, sin, and the soul. This failure to demonstrate a connection between higher income and the use of religion as a mechanism of power creates an opportunity to expand this particular debate on religion and stratification. What is required is a theory of secularization that focuses directly on the issue of power.

In his widely cited article, Chaves (1994) provides just such a theory: “Secularization is best understood not as the decline of religion, but as the declining scope of religious authority” (ibid.: 750). In this view, “Secularization at the societal level may be understood as the declining capacity of religious elites to exercise authority over other institutional spheres” (ibid.:757). Crucially for this argument, this declining capacity involves laicization, a “process of differentiation whereby political, educational, scientific, and other institutions gain autonomy from the religious institutions of a society. The result of this process is that religion becomes just one institutional sphere among others, enjoying no necessary primary status” (ibid.:757). Integrating the quotes above, the differentiation of *religious* and *political* spheres provides a specific example of the decline of religious authority. This approach to secularization presents a framework to test the application of both deprivation theory and relative power theory. According to deprivation theory, increasing secularization among the wealthy would be signaled by the desire for greater differentiation of the religious and the political spheres. In this view,

having a higher income would correlate with less support for involving religion in politics. Conversely, relative power theory predicts decreasing secularization among the wealthy as signaled by the desire for greater integration of the religious and political spheres. In this view, having a higher income *and* being highly religious correlates would correlate with more support for involving religion in politics.

This paper presents ordered logistic regression models based on the World Values Survey/European Values Survey (WVS/EVS) to adjudicate this debate by asking the question, “What are the effects of income and religiosity on support for involving religion in politics?” The dependent variables for this study measure opinions about three different but related facets of religious and political autonomy. They include opinions about 1) minimum levels of religiosity among public office holders, 2) strong levels of religiosity among public office holders, and 3) the influence of religious leaders on how people vote. Providing three different dependent variables allows this analysis to address several different ways that the religious and political spheres might be either integrated or differentiated. The two independent variables for this study, religiosity and income, speak directly to the theoretical issues surfaced in both deprivation theory and relative power theory. Furthermore, the models discussed below include interaction terms between religiosity and income, making it possible to isolate the association of income and support for involving religion in politics among those who are very religious. Demonstrating that higher income does indeed correlate with greater support for involving religion in politics among those who are highly religious would constitute evidence of religion being viewed as an *instrumentum regini*.

Unlike other recent studies advocating relative power theory, this paper directly tests the connections between between religiosity and income in a specific realm of power, namely

politics. To frame this discussion properly, the literature review below unpacks three basic ideas: 1) Deprivation theory predicts *increasing* secularization among the wealthy; 2) Relative power theory predicts *decreasing* secularization among the wealthy; and 3) Defining secularization in terms of *power* provides a way to test both deprivation theory and relative power theory. This discussion prompts two competing hypotheses: 1) Having a higher income correlates with less support for involving religion in politics; and 2) Having a higher income and being highly religious correlates with more support for involving religion in politics. The models presented below provides solid evidence for the first hypothesis and minimal evidence for the second. In the main, deprivation theory provides more accurate predictions of the relationship between income and support for involving religion in politics when defining secularization as declining religious authority.

Theory

Generations of sociologists have demonstrated that religion is both stratified and stratifying: “Religion, despite the close association of its institutions with the class structure, is neither simply a product nor a cause, a sanction nor an enemy, of social stratification. It may be either or both, as it has been in various societies at various times” (Pope 1948:91). Evidence for this interdependence of religion and stratification ranges from religious preferences (Weber 1978) and sacred values (Weber 1958) to the composition of religious institutions (Pope, Peterson, and Demerath 1942). Religious congregations (Burdick 1996), movements (Hatch 1989), and traditions (Lindsay 2007) that resist such stratified segregation can benefit from social diversity, at time achieving goals more effectively than their more stratified competitors. However, the durability of the social divisions among religious groups generally remains intact.

For example, a study of privilege, power, and prestige among adherents of U.S. denominations finds very little mobility among religious groups (Davidson and Pyle 2011), an arrangement which appears to be calcifying rather than relaxing (Smith and Faris 2005). One mapping of religious stratification in the U.S. sorts denominations into four categories: 1) Upper (i.e., Episcopal, Jewish, Presbyterian, and Unitarian Universalist), 2) Upper Middle (i.e., Hindu, United Church of Christ, Methodist, Mormon, Catholic, Lutheran), 3) Lower Middle (i.e., None, Church of Christ, Seventh-day Adventist, Assembly of God, Baptist, and Buddhist), and 4) Lower (i.e., Muslim, Church of God, and Jehovah's Witnesses) (Pyle and Davidson 2011). Importantly, nearly identical patterns of stratification among religious groups appear around the world (Heaton, James, and Oheneba-Sakyi 2009).

Explanations for this stratification of religious institutions range from material accounts, such as differentials in the ownership of the means of production along religious lines Ireland (Cohen 1994), to more ideological approaches, such as the role played by Pentecostal prosperity teachings in displays of wealth in Zambia (Haynes 2012). Regardless of the causes, patterns that become ingrained can emerge as self-perpetuating systems, with religion reproducing stratification both directly (by shaping asset accumulation, social network expansion, and opportunity structures) and indirectly (by influencing educational attainment, fertility rates, and female labor force participation) (Keister 2003, 2008, 2011). Even congregations that attempt to address directly the social consequences of intensifying economic differentials often perpetuate the very patterns they intend to remedy. For example, higher-income members of U.S. Christian churches receive a disproportionate share of civic-skill training and practice—even in churches with programs specifically designed to teach civic skills to lower-income members (Schwadel

2002). Such congregational socioeconomic reproduction begins early in the life course, including socialization practices that particularly disadvantage low-income youth (Snell 2011).

Given these durable connections between religion and stratification, one may wonder how levels of religiosity vary across the spectrum of socioeconomic status. It could be that those who are poorer exhibit more religious belief, belonging, and behavior. Alternatively, those who are wealthier may express more religious commitment, participation, and engagement. Papers by Solt, Habel, and Grant (2011) and Ballarino and Vezzoni (2012) provide a framework for testing these two basic predictions. Whereas Solt, Habel, and Grant focus mainly on wealth, Ballarino and Vezzoni focus mainly on class. Nonetheless, the two projects identify the same hypotheses, using different terms to discuss them. The prediction that poorer people will express higher religiosity derives from what Solt, Habel, and Grant call deprivation theory and what Ballarino and Vezzoni name *opium of the people* theory. The prediction that wealthier people will express higher religiosity derives from what Solt, Habel, and Grant call relative power theory and what Ballarino and Vezzoni name *instrumentum regni* theory.

Tracing back to Karl Marx's conception of religion as the *opium of the people*, deprivation theory anticipates higher religiosity among poorer people because of their greater need for comfort in the face of limited opportunities and greater uncertainties. According to Marx (1978:54), "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the sentiment of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people." In this approach, alienated workers unable to escape the the historical churn of class struggle dull the pain of existence through recourse to supernatural stories and ritualistic behaviors. The higher religiosity of the lower classes acts as a spiritual compensator for material inequality. In contrast, relative power theory anticipates higher religiosity among the wealthy, who use religion as a mechanism

of social control. This approach echoes Ernst Bloch's view of religion as an *instrumentum regni* wielded by the upper classes, who use it as an "essential component of their power" and a means "to legitimate social inequality ideologically and to repress rightful conflicted waged by the ruled classes" (Ballarino and Vezzoni 2012: 315). Accordingly, "religion supports and legitimates existing patterns of social inequality, so that it is in the interest of the higher social strata to be more religious" (ibid.: 332). In the first theory, religion acts as a *compensator*, prompting higher religiosity among poorer people who use faith as a substitute for security. In the second theory, religion acts as a *mechanism*, prompting higher religiosity among wealthier people who use faith as an extension of power. The following sections of this literature review unpack these two predictions of religiosity in the stratification system and suggest a framework for testing their relative merits.

Deprivation theory predicts increasing secularization among the wealthy.

The main stream of sociological theory predicting higher religiosity among poorer people centers on the process of secularization. The traditional secularization thesis anticipates the retreat of religion from public life as an inevitable consequence of Modernity's expansion (Berger 1969, Martin 1978, Bell 1996). In an updated version of this basic theory, Norris and Inglehart (2011:53) attempt to identify the actual mechanism behind this "inevitable" consequence. Utilizing four waves of the World Values Survey, they link secularization directly to national development and social stratification:

"[T]he erosion of religious values, beliefs, and practices is shaped by long-term changes in existential security, a process linked with human development and socioeconomic equality, and with each society's cultural legacy and religious traditions... The modernization process reduces the threats to survival that are common in developing societies, especially among the poorest strata; and this enhanced sense of security lessens the need for the reassurance religion provides."

Both Solt, Habel, and Grant and Ballarino and Vezzoni identify the approach taken by Norris and Inglehart as including their respective definitions of deprivation theory and *opium of the people* theory. According to Norris and Inglehart, religion acts as a compensator for existential security, defined as the “extent to which survival is secure enough that it can be taken for granted” (ibid.:4). In contrast, existential *insecurity* involves “feelings of vulnerability to physical, societal, and personal risks,” which “are a key factor driving religiosity” (ibid.: 4-5). Norris and Inglehart argue that people who come of age in societies that provide fewer resources and opportunities to meet the wide range of human needs lack existential security. As a result, such people are purportedly attracted more strongly to religion than those living in more developed, more egalitarian nations. Specifically religion persists “most strongly among vulnerable populations, especially in poorer nations and failed states” (Norris and Inglehart 2011:i). In contrast, “the process of secularization—a systematic erosion of religious practices, values, and beliefs—has occurred most clearly among the most prosperous social sectors living in affluent and secure postindustrial nations” (ibid.: 5). Thus, this approach to secularization accurately predicts differences in religiosity both within and between societies. Within societies, higher religiosity is predicted among poorer people, who have less access to existential security. Between societies, higher religiosity is predicted among less developed nations, which provide less existential security.

One of the main evidences recommending Norris and Inglehart’s theory is its ability to account for exceptions to the predictions made by other theories of secularization. For example, secularization theories that link decreasing religiosity to the general process of modernization have a difficult time explaining the high levels of religiosity reported in the United States, a highly developed Western nation. Similarly, secularization theories that link decreasing

religiosity to low levels of competition between religious groups have a difficult time explaining the high levels of religiosity reported in Poland, where the Roman Catholic Church has a virtual monopoly on the religious market (Chaves and Gorski 2001). Norris and Inglehart suggest that the answer lies with the levels of inequality within these societies. According to them, religion persists in more developed nations *that also exhibit high levels of inequality*. High levels of inequality result in low levels of existential security across the board—even among the wealthy, who remain aware of how far they have to fall. Thus, the preponderance of religious belief and practice in a society links to the level of stratification within that society. Those societies that exhibit smaller gaps in inequality will simultaneously exhibit lower levels of religiosity. And empirically, this turns out to be the case (Zuckerman 2008, Gaskings, Golder, and Siegel 2011, Norris and Inglehart 2011).

Other studies back up this focus on existential security, demonstrating that religiosity in general (Barber 2012) and religious attendance in particular (Ruiter and van Tubergen 2009) link to both personal and societal insecurities. This leads some theorists to describe religion as a type of insurance that acts as a buffer against stressful life events, such as unemployment and marital separation (Clark and Lelkes 2005). This may explain why nations with higher levels of religiosity also exhibit lower levels of welfare spending by the state (Scheve and Stasavage 2006). Perhaps religion and welfare state spending act as substitute mechanisms of social insurance against adverse life events (*ibid*). In this view, societies with higher levels of religiosity will simultaneously exhibit higher levels of income inequality because of the decreased demand by the populous for government services (Elgin et al. 2013). People in more religious societies prefer to address social needs through voluntary charitable giving rather than through state spending, leading to lower taxes, lower public spending, lower economic

redistribution, and in the end higher inequality levels (ibid). In contrast, the high rates of consumption among people living in more affluent but equal societies have been shown to erode the significance of religious activities, contexts, and symbols for mediating social action (Hirschle 2010). In this view, secularization results from the material consumption practices of those with higher existential security. Thus, the approach taken by Norris and Inglehart receives empirical support both in their own models predicting religiosity with measures of existential security and in other research projects on similar topics. The basic prediction that higher religiosity exists among poorer people has solid empirical backing, which lends credence to the conceptualization of religion as a compensator.

Relative power theory predicts decreasing secularization among the wealthy.

While it is difficult to dispute the correlation between high levels of religiosity and high levels of inequality within societies, not everyone remains convinced that existential security provides the causal mechanism linking the two (Smith 2006). Evidence pointing away from the Norris and Inglehart view of existential security as a compensator includes the faster rates of secularization occurring among the extremely poor than among other income brackets in the U.S.(Putnam and Campbell 2010). In this modern society with relatively high levels of both religiosity and income inequality, those with the least access to existential security should exhibit the highest levels of religiosity, not the fastest rates of secularization. In another example, having a lower income predicts lower rates of church attendance among white U.S. Catholics (Schwadel, McCarthy, and Nelsen 2009). Conversely, even in highly secularized Great Britain, Davie (1990) finds that groups higher on the social ladder demonstrate more inclination toward religious belief and practice than lower ones. These results are precisely the opposite of what would be expected if religion acts mainly as a form of existential insurance in the face of

minimal welfare state spending. The evidence that religion acts as a compensator producing higher religiosity among poorer people is not without exceptions. Religion may at times serve as the *opium of the people*, but not always.

Ballarino and Vezzoni (2012) contrast the *opium of the people* approach taken by Norris and Inglehart with the *instrumentum regni* theory of German Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch. Rather than acting as a compensator, religion in this view serves as an “instrument of rule” wielded by the upper classes.

“Being doped is a pleasure you pay for. There was always opium there for the people.... If the Church had not always stood so watchfully behind the ruling powers, there would not have been such attacks against everything it stood for.... Whenever it was a question of keeping the serfs, and then the paid slaves down, the dope-dealers came unfailingly to the help of the oppressors” (Bloch 2009:47)

This *instrumentum regni* theory anticipates higher persistence of religious belief and participation among upper—not lower—classes because religion functions as an “essential component of their power” and a means “to legitimate social inequality ideologically and to repress rightful conflicted waged by the ruled classes” (Ballarino and Vezzoni 2012:315). In their study of weekly Mass attendance from 1968 to 2006 among Roman Catholics in Italy, Ballarino and Vezzoni find evidence for an overall process of secularization in the declining religious observance among all classes. However, they also find that the upper class “exhibits consistently more religious behavior than the intermediate and lower ones,” which they interpret as evidence for the *instrumentum regni* hypothesis that “religion supports and legitimates existing patterns of social inequality, so that it is in the interest of the higher social strata to be more religious” (idid.: 332).

Using data from the World Values Survey, Solt, Habel, and Grant (2011:447) arrive at much the same conclusion based on their “multilevel analysis of countries around the world over

two decades and a time-series analysis of the United states over a half-century” looking at religiosity and inequality. These researchers contrast the *opium of the people* and *instrumentum regni* hypotheses, calling them deprivation theory and relative power theory. In their view of deprivation theory, “religion should be seen primarily as a comfort to those suffering economic deprivation and social marginality. Religion provides reassurance that despite current or future hardships, a higher power will provide, if not in this life, then in the next” (ibid.:448). With specific reference to the work of Norris and Inglehart, this team explains that deprivation theory predicts greater religiosity among the poorer members of society because greater economic inequality increases their vulnerability. While acknowledging the logic of this theory, the authors claim that it does not provide a complete explanation for their data analysis. Instead, they advance the relative power theory:

“Religion’s ability to serve as a mechanism of social control for the rich, we contend, is considerably more important. For the wealthy, greater inequality both increases their attraction to religion and enhances their power to disseminate religious beliefs among the rest of the population” (ibid.).

To demonstrate this approach, Solt, Habel, and Grant present hierarchical models predicting religiosity, as measured by the following twelve indicators: self-identifying as religious, rating religion and God as important, gaining comfort from religion, attending religious services, praying, and believing in God, an afterlife, heaven, hell, sin, and the soul. They find that “Economic inequality is estimated to powerfully increase religiosity and to do so regardless of income. The competing hypothesis provided by deprivation theory that inequality increases religiosity among the poor but decreases it among the rich is not supported for any aspect of religiosity considered” (ibid.: 457).

At first glance, the *instrumentum regni* hypothesis identified by Balllarino and Vezzoni and the relative power theory proposed by Solt, Habel, and Grant appear to have some merit.

Their empirical evidence demonstrates higher rates of religious belief, behavior, and belonging among the upper classes and the wealthy in their samples. At the same time, the crucial claim in their basic argument is that such findings constitute evidence that these groups use religion as a means of power. However, it cannot be stressed too strongly that nothing in their statistical methodology actually tests this claim. Neither the church attendance figures in the Ballarino and Vezzoni article nor the twelve religious factors in the Solt, Habel, and Grant paper address the issue of religion as an instrument of power. Rather, these researchers simply demonstrate correlations between higher religiosity and higher class and wealth.

Of course, it is possible that this observed relationship does not involve power at all. One alternative involves the widespread attraction of “good fortune” theology, which links religious observance with material wellbeing (Davidson and Pyle 1999). According to this teaching, material success indicates a special relationship with the divine. While admitting that nonreligious people can be rich, “good fortune” teachers assert or imply that devout adherents should expect material wealth as a sign of God’s sovereign choice or their own faithfulness. It is possible that the attraction of religion among the wealthy results from ideological agreement with doctrines that characterize their position in the stratification system as being providentially endorsed. In this scenario, religion may ideologically legitimize the stratification system without necessarily being an instrument of power.

Even if power does play a role explaining religiosity among the wealthy, it could be that the causality runs in the opposite direction from the one proposed by deprivation theory. If religious factors such as congregational participation provide a means for poorer people to experience mobility, then one might expect an influx of religious persons into the ranks of the wealthy. For example, Wuthnow (2002) finds that “membership in a religious congregation is

generally associated quite strongly and positively with status-bridging social capital, as measured by questions about having friends who represent various kinds of elite power or influence.”

Poorer people who develop weak ties (Granovetter 1973) with elites through congregational participation may increase their opportunity for mobility. For example, a study of Evangelical elites in the U.S. demonstrates how a group that once occupied the “disadvantaged ranks of the stratification system” now includes a sizable number of elites who “have gained access to powerful social institutions” and express their political agendas through voting (Lindsay 2007:208). Crucially, the papers by Solt, Habel, and Grant and Ballarino and Vezzoni discussed above do not test these possibilities. In fact, they do not directly address the issue of power at all. *Defining secularization in terms of power provides a way to test both deprivation theory and relative power theory.*

To summarize the argument so far, deprivation theory and relative power theory predict opposite findings concerning religiosity and stratification. Deprivation theory predicts *lower* rates of religiosity among the wealthy, who experience little attraction to compensators for material wellbeing. A widely cited version of this approach links lower religiosity among the wealthy specifically to secularization. Alternatively, relative power theory predicts *higher* rates of religiosity among the wealthy, who utilize religion as a means of power. However, the research on relative power theory does not actually test issues of power, only correlations between religiosity and class or wealth. The first approach is rooted in theories of secularization; the second in discussions of power. One way to address these contradictions is to adopt an analytical framework that involves both secularization and power.

In an article cited over five hundred times (Google Scholar), Chaves (1994) provides just such a framework with his reformulation of secularization theory: “Secularization is best

understood not as the decline of religion, but as the declining scope of religious authority” (ibid.: 750). In this view, a religious authority “attempts to enforce its order and reach its ends by controlling the access of individuals to some desired goods, where the legitimation of that control includes some supernatural component, however weak” (ibid.: 755-756). Crucially for this application, “Secularization at the societal level may be understood as the declining capacity of religious elites to exercise authority over other institutional spheres” (ibid.:757). And what causes their capacity to decline? Chaves argues that secularization involves laicization, a “process of differentiation whereby political, educational, scientific, and other institutions gain autonomy from the religious institutions of a society. The result of this process is that religion becomes just one institutional sphere among others, enjoying no necessary primary status” (ibid.:757). According to this view, the differentiation of religious and political spheres signals the decline of religious authority and thus secularization. To rephrase the statement above, secularization at the societal level includes the declining capacity of *religious* elites to exercise authority over *political* spheres. This approach to secularization provides a framework to test the application of both deprivation theory and relative power theory. Doing so first requires asking what is known about the current levels of differentiation between religious and political spheres.

Some evidence suggests that secularization at the societal level—defined as the declining capacity of religious elites to exercise authority over political spheres—is proceeding apace. Even in the United States, with its exceptionally high rates of religiosity for being a Western democracy, both cultural values and social structures can hinder the influence of religion on politics. According to one study, “American political religion plays a ‘prophetic’ role of social critic in the United States,” but a culture of individualism, the fragmentation of religious organizations, and the separation of governmental powers “make the translation of religious

belief unlikely to result in major changes in public policy” (Jelen 2006). A study of U.S. presidential elections comes to a similar conclusion, thwarting the conventional wisdom predicting increased political mobilization among conservative Protestants in the U.S. between 1960 and 1992—the heyday of religious right groups such as the Moral Majority (Manza and Brooks 1997). Beyond the borders of the U.S., a study of Indonesian politics provides evidence contradicting the assumption that religion plays an important role in explaining voting behavior in the predominantly Muslim nation (Liddle and Mujani 2007). Such findings would be expected where religious authority was declining and secularization was increasing, a situation predicted by deprivation theory.

At the same time, a host of researchers continue to find strong empirical support for the notion that the religious and political spheres are not fully differentiated (Wuthnow 1991, Turmudi 1995, Williams 1996, Philpott 2009). For example, religious beliefs continue to exert influence over political actions (Jones-Correa and Leal 2001, Froese and Bader 2008, Starks and Robinson 2009). Even in rapidly secularizing Europe, evidence suggests that such religion plays an important role in shaping voting behavior (Kottler-Berkowitz 2001, Botterman and Hooghe 2012). In its “double function,” religion may act either as a “world-maintaining” force that legitimates injustice or a “world-shaking” force that challenges power and privilege (Berger 1967, Solle 1984, Billings and Scott 1994). Importantly, this “world-shaking” function often plays out in the political sphere: “While religion often has integrating functions within social groups, in pluralistic societies the political impact of religion is often divisive and contentious” (Williams 1996). It might be that religion operates as such an effective threat to social and political order precisely because it appeals to a higher authority than the state (Bruce 2003). Translating religious commitments into effective political action requires that religious

organizations “provide an adequate cultural foundation for motivating and sustaining political participation” by engaging participant commitment, offering resources for interpreting the political world, and balancing conflict with compromise and negotiation (Wood 1999). At the same time, it is not only the “world-shaking” aspect of religion that seeps into the political sphere. Bellah’s (1988:104) exploration of civil religion in the U.S. provides a classic case of the “world-maintaining” overlap between the religious and political spheres in the Western World: “What we have, then, from the earliest years of the republic is a collection of beliefs, symbols, and rituals with respect to sacred things and institutionalized in a collectivity. This religion—there seems no other word for it—while not antithetical to and indeed sharing much in common with Christianity, was neither sectarian nor in any specific sense Christian.” Indeed, research updating Bellah’s original conception demonstrates how the state can use civil religion to quell political dissent (Cristi 2001).

Given such evidence for the uneven and incomplete differentiation of religious and political spheres, one may wonder if the pace of secularization around the world increasing or decreasing. Toft, Philipott, and Shah (2011:9) argue that “a dramatic and worldwide increase in the political influence of religion has occurred in roughly the past forty years” which is “driven by religious people’s desire for freedom.” Accounting for the “wildly different politics of religious actors” involves two distinct factors: 1) “the set of ideas that a religious community holds about political authority and justice” and 2) “the mutual independence of religious authority and political authority” (ibid.: 9-10). This second factor, which roughly corresponds to the view of secularization proposed by Chaves, varies around the world. Specifically, as income inequality increases within societies, so does the preference for more involvement by religious leaders in politics (Muller 2009). This trend can form a feedback loop whereby economic

inequality drives the integration of religion and politics, which in turn fuels the expansion of economic inequality:

“[R]eligion in and of itself does not appear to be capable of creating a lasting foundation for persistent inequality. This foundation can only be created by *a combination of religious authority and leadership and some form of secular power*. Religion enables aggrandizers in their pursuits, but does not guarantee their success. Wealth and other forms of social power still matter” (Aldenderfer 2010, emphasis added).

The overall story is that “religion’s influence on politics has a history: three centuries of decline, then a comeback” (Toft, Philipott, and Shah:11). This resurgence appears even in the limited context of U.S. presidential election history. For example, religious factors appear to exert little influence over U.S. presidential elections in the 1980s, but both religious and moral factors “outweighed all other ideological components” in the 1992 election (Hammond, Shibley, and Solow 1994:277).

In the midst of this global resurgence, religion can serve as a powerful resource for high status people wishing to express their values and preferences through political action (Swartz 1996). Of course, the voting behaviors of people with high religiosity and high socioeconomic status do not always legitimate governmental power (Cheal 1978, Morgan and Meier 1980). In fact, the dimension of class can outweigh the influence of religiosity on support for particular forms of government, with low socioeconomic status prompting low support for democracy over authoritarianism (Patterson 2004). That being said, religion does often play a role in convincing people with low socioeconomic status to vote against their self-interest. For example, a study of international voting behavior notes how the issue of “moral values” disrupts the anticipated relationship between earning lower incomes and supporting left candidates by prompting the religious poor to vote in ways that reflect their moral commitments rather than—and often in contradiction to—their economic self-interest (De La O and Rodden 2008). Furthermore, a study

of voting behavior during the 2000 U.S. presidential election notes how both theologically conservative and theologically liberal groups in lower-SES regions supported the candidate on the right, thwarting the notion that only conservative Protestants vote against their own economic self-interests (Zullo 2010). At times, religion provides an opportunity for both rich and poor voters to form political coalitions favoring low taxes and limited redistribution—an arrangement that works against the economic interests of the secular poor (Huber and Stranig 2011). Such findings would be expected where religious authority was increasing and secularization was decreasing, a situation predicted by deprivation theory.

Hypotheses

To summarize the argument so far, deprivation theory and relative power theory predict opposite levels of religiosity among those at the top of the stratification system. Deprivation theory predicts *increasing* secularization among the wealthy, who experience little attraction to compensators for material wellbeing. Alternatively, relative power theory predicts *decreasing* secularization among the wealthy, who utilize religion as a means of power. However, the research on relative power theory does not actually test issues of power, only correlations between class and religiosity. Defining secularization as declining religious authority provides a framework to test both deprivation theory and relative power theory. In this framework, secularization includes the differentiation of the religious and political spheres. Some evidence suggests that these spheres continue to differentiate, which supports deprivation theory. Other evidence suggests that this process is reversing—and that people with high status continue to use religion as a means of power—which supports relative power theory. If relative deprivation theory is correct, it is expected that having a higher income would associate with less support for involving religion in politics. And if relative power theory is correct, it is expected that having a

higher income *and* being highly religious would associate with more support for involving religion in politics. This leads to the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Having a higher income correlates with less support for involving religion in politics.

Hypothesis 2: Having a higher income *and* being highly religious correlates with more support for involving religion in politics.

Methods

Data

In order to test these hypotheses, this study utilizes the the World Values Survey/European Values Survey (WVS/EVS), the only ongoing research project designed to capture the values and beliefs of a majority of the world's population (Inglehart 2008). Collected on all six continents by leading social scientists from each of the 97 societies studied, the WVS/EVS includes representational national samples of at least 1,000 people from each society, reflecting the opinions of 88 percent of the globe's inhabitants. Using random probability samples (where possible), local field organizations conduct face-to-face interviews through standardized questionnaires translated into the local language under the supervision of academic researchers and a principal investigator at the behest of the Stockholm-based non-profit World Values Survey Association (WVSA). In total, the five waves of the WVS/EVS constitutes 334,000 unique respondents (25,000 from 20 countries during Wave 1 in 1981-1984; 61,000 from 42 countries during Wave 2 in 1989-1993; 75,000 from 52 countries during Wave 3 in 1994-1998; 96,000 from 67 countries during Wave 4 in 1999-2004; and 77,000 from 54 countries during Wave 5 in 2005-2008). This paper employs the last two waves of the combined

WVS/EVS, as these waves include measures of the dependent variables and other theoretically important factors.

In addition to the WVS/EVS dataset, this study utilizes three additional sources of information. First, the Standardized World Income Inequality Database (SWIID) provides Gini indexes compiled using a custom missing-data algorithm to standardize the U.N. University World Income Inequality Database (WIID) with reference to the Luxembourg Income Study. The SWIID “provides comparable Gini indices of gross and net income inequality for 153 countries for as many years as possible from 1960 to the present, along with estimates of uncertainty in these statistics” (Solt 2009). Second, the World Bank International Comparison Program Database (WBICPD) database provides measures of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2013 international dollars calculated using Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) rates based on data files from the World Bank National Accounts and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) National Accounts. The World Bank International Comparison Program also provides measures of Government Expenses as a Percentage of GDP based on information from International Monetary Fund (IMF) Government Finance Statistics Yearbook, World Bank estimates, and OECD estimates. Third, the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life provides “comprehensive demographic estimates of the size and distribution of eight major religious groups in the 232 countries and territories for which the United Nations Population Division provides general population estimates as of 2010” based on the analysis of 2,500 data sources, “including censuses, demographic surveys, general population surveys and other studies” (Hackett and Grim 2012:51).

Measures

The *dependent variables* for this study comprise three categorical measures capturing opinions about the involvement of religion in politics. The WVS/EVS survey question for each item reads: “How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?” Forced responses to each of these three measures fall into the following categories: Agree strongly, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Disagree strongly. The three statements include 1) Politicians who do not believe in God are unfit for public office; 2) It would be better for [this country] if more people with strong religious beliefs held public office; and 3) Religious leaders should not influence how people vote in elections. Indicating support for the involvement of religion in politics involves agreeing with the first two statements and disagreeing with the third. To make comparisons easier, the third item is reversed coded and changed from a negative to a positive statement. Thus, *disagreement* with the statement “Religious leaders should *not* influence how people vote in elections” now indicates *agreement* with the statement “Religious leaders *should* influence how people vote in elections.” This change makes it easier to compare results in the regression models that follow.

Overall, these ordinal indicators serve as appropriate dependent variables for this study because they capture three different but related facets of supporting the increased influence of religion in politics. The first variable measures opinions about the unfitness of atheists for public office. This variable addresses a baseline for involving religion in politics. Agreeing that atheists are unfit for public office registers the desire for elected and appointed officials to have at least a minimum commitment to religious faith. At the same time, this variable does not directly address opinions about highly religious people holding political office. Thankfully, the second independent variable does just that. The wording of this item provides a step beyond public

officials maintaining minimum religious commitments to their holding strong religious beliefs. While the first two dependent variables address the religious commitments of public officials—at the lowest and highest degrees—the third registers support for the influence of religious leaders on the political process. With this measure, the discussion turns directly to the issue of laicization—the secular autonomy of the political sphere and its differentiation from the religious sphere. Desiring greater influence from religious leaders on the voting process registers support for increasing the overlap of these realms. Noticeably, the intensity and specificity of these variables heighten from the first to the third. The set begins by measuring minimum support for involving religion in politics and ends with a direct measure of support for a concrete example of laicization. Thus, it will be important to notice the strength of the coefficients from one variable to the next. Agreement with the third variable registers stronger support for involving religion in politics than the second, which registers stronger support than the first.

The *independent variables* for this study include an indicator of income, an indicator of religiosity, and an interaction term of the two. The WVS/EVS measure of income consists of a categorical variable reflecting the wage gradient within nations measured on a ten-point scale from lowest to highest. To make quantitative comparisons possible, respondents were asked to indicate their household wages, salaries, pensions and other incomes using country-specific scales based on local currencies. In the models that follow, income is treated as continuous. The WVS/EVS measure of religiosity derives from asking respondents to rate the importance of religion in their life using the following categorical scale: very important, rather important, not very important, and not at all important. In this study, religiosity appears as a dichotomous measure, contrasting those from the “very important” category with all other respondents from the three remaining categories (reference).

The interaction term between income and religiosity derives simply from multiplying the two independent variables together. Including this interaction term proves vital to the arguments being addressed in this paper because it isolates the association between income and support for involving religion in politics among those who are highly religious. Simply testing religiosity and income separately does not demonstrate that the highly religious view religion as a means of power, the claim presented by relative power theory. Only by including the interaction term can the comparison between those who are very religious and those who are not be made. Even if deprivation theory is correct in predicting a negative association between higher income and lower support for involving religion in politics in the general population, it might still be the case that higher income does associate with greater support for involving religion in politics among those who are highly religious. This would constitute evidence that those who are both wealthy and highly religious view religion as a means of power.

The *control variables* for this study include both religious, demographic, and structural factors that may influence support for involving politics in religion. Control variables measuring religion include minority status, attendance, and tradition. Based on data from the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, the first religious control variable indicates whether or not each respondent is in a religious minority. This dichotomous variable, which is based on the following six religious traditions, signals that respondents identify with a minority religious group in their societies. Controlling for minority status addresses the possibility that adherents who do not practice the majority religion may wish to limit its influence in politics. Based on the WVS/EVS, the second religious control variable indicates religious tradition, including the nominal categories of Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Other religion, and No religion (reference). Controlling for religious tradition accounts for the fact that such groups can

themselves be highly stratified, as discussed above. Furthermore, the teachings and values of different traditions may include varying approaches to involving religion in politics, regardless of wealth boundaries. Also based on the WVS/EVS, the third religious control variable indicates the frequency of attendance at religious services based on the following scale: Never, Monthly, More than monthly, Weekly, and More than weekly. Controlling for attendance acknowledges that greater participation in a local religious community may increase one's desire to see religious faith influence the broader public community.

In addition to these religious control variables, the models discussed below also include both demographic and structural controls. The demographic control variables from the WVS/EVS include 1) sex, a dichotomous variable measured as female and male (reference); 2) age, a continuous variable measured in years; 3) marital status, a nominal variable treated dichotomously with the categories of always single or ever married (i.e., married, divorced, and widowed) (reference); 4) education, a categorical variable measured on an eight-point scale (including incomplete and complete training at the elementary, technical/vocational, university preparatory and university levels), which is treated as continuous in the following models. Including controls for demographic variables such as sex, age, marital status, and education address the possibility that one's position in the stratification system may influence opinions on involving religion in politics. For example, according to deprivation theory, being highly educated should decrease one's desire for involving religion in politics; relative power theory predicts the opposite. Finally, the structural control variables include 1) income inequality, a continuous variable from the SWIID measured by a Gini index ranging from 0 (complete equality) to 100 (complete inequality); 2) economic development, a continuous variable from the WBIPCD measured by GDP per capita PPP (purchasing power parity) in thousands of current

international dollars; and 3) government expenses, a continuous variable from the WBIPCD measuring regime spending as a percentage of GDP. These three structural control variables were assigned to respondents by country in the year nearest to each wave of the WVS/EVS. Including structural control variables for income inequality, economic development, government expenses, and post-Soviet status acknowledges the influence of social milieu on political opinions. For example, deprivation theory predicts greater support for involving religion in politics in nations with high inequality, low development, and low government spending. In such situations, religion purportedly acts as a strong spiritual compensator for weak material conditions. As religion was totally absent from political life in former Soviet states, it also becomes important to control for post-Soviet status. The influence of this history may continue to exert influence over contemporary opinions about involving religion in politics.

Analysis

To address the relationship between religion and beliefs about income inequality, this paper presents six multilevel mixed effects ordered logistic regression models derived using the *meologit* command in Stata. Utilizing multilevel models accounts for the possibility that being nested in a particular milieu might influence the outcome of the model. The theoretical assumption behind this choice acknowledges the importance of accounting for regional and cultural differences in how people express beliefs about including religion in politics. Using the mixed effects model allows for theoretically important variation across countries without the unwieldiness of such a large number of the dummy variables. The models' effects are "mixed" because the intercept is allowed to vary (or be random) across groups, in this case country. Utilizing ordered logistic regression methods accounts for the ordinal nature of all three dependent variables. Each of these dependent variables is modeled twice, once partially and once

fully with interaction terms. Including interaction terms between religiosity and income isolates the influence of income specifically among those who are highly religious and those who are not.

Findings

Sample

This study's sample of 184,164 respondents from 93 countries derives from the fourth and fifth waves of the WVS/EVS (see Appendix 3). As it turns out, only the final two waves contain measures of this study's dependent variables. Once variables from the SWIID, WBICPD, and the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life were added to these waves of the WVS/EVS, it became necessary to address the issue of missing data. While 65 percent of cases have no missing values, 81 percent have only one missing value, and 94 percent have only two missing values. Imputation by chained equations (ICE) provides the solution to this issue (Royston and White 2011). In this technique, "imputed values are generated from a series of univariate models, in which a single variable is imputed based on a group of variables" (Institute of Digital Education and Research). Using the ice command in Stata, values were generated using chained equations appropriate for the type of variable (e.g., linear regression for continuous variables). The resulting dataset contains five iterations for all respondents in the final two waves of the WVS/EVS, providing a solid basis for the following analysis of support for religion in politics.

TABLE 3.1 ABOUT HERE

Descriptives

Table 3.1 presents simple descriptive statistics for this study's dependent, independent, and control variables. It is helpful to conceptualize the dependent variables as registering support for involving religion in politics. Thus, higher scores on each five-point scale—and positive

coefficients in the regression models—indicates the desire for more integration of these spheres. The mean of 3.02 on the five-point scale for the first dependent variable indicates that on average people harbor prejudice against nonbelievers as proper candidates for public office. The similar mean of 3.08 on the same scale for the second dependent variable indicates the same level of support for having strongly religious people hold public office. The mean of 2.15 on the same scale for the third dependent variable indicates a lower average level of support for having religious leaders become influential in the voting process. Decreasing standard deviations of 1.40, 1.28, and 1.11 show a narrowing of the variation around the average responses to these items. The independent variables for this paper include both religiosity and income. The measure of religiosity indicates that 46 percent of respondents rate religion as very important, 22 percent as rather important, 17 percent as not very important, and 11 percent as not at all important. Having such a large “Very Important” category anchoring a highly skewed distribution of religiosity makes it possible to use the other three categories as a single reference group in the regressions that follow. The second independent variable of income divides into 10 steps, reflecting a standardized scale of incomes based on measurements in local currencies. About two-thirds of the sample fall into the bottom half of the 10-point scale of incomes, and about one-third fall into the top half.

TABLE 3.1 ABOUT HERE

The remainder of Table 3.1 provides information on the religious, demographics, and structural controls. When it comes to religious status, about a three quarters of the sample are religious majorities who observe the majority faith in their countries. The sample divides into six religious traditions. While just less than half of respondents identify as Christians, about a quarter Muslims, and another fifth are religious “nones.” Hindus, Buddhists, and people of other

religions each represent between two and four percent of the sample. About a quarter of respondents never attend religious gatherings, about a third attend less than monthly, about a tenth attend monthly, about a fifth attend weekly, and about a seventh attend more than weekly. Demographically, the list of control variables demonstrates that a little over half the sample is male and the average age is 42 (with a range of 15 to 101). Combining those who have incomplete and complete training at each of the eight educational levels divides the sample into elementary at 30 percent, vocational at 24 percent, university prep at 26 percent, and university training at 20 percent. Income inequality measured by the Gini Indexes ranges from 9.05 to 64.80 with a mean of 22.39. Economic development measured by GDP per capita PPP (purchasing power parity) in thousands of current international dollars ranges from .72 to 55.81 with a mean of 12.00. Finally, only 8 percent of the respondents reside in a post-Soviet.

TABLE 3.2 ABOUT HERE

Table 3.2 presents the cross tabulation of the independent variables, religiosity and income, with cells containing the frequencies and percentages of respondents falling into each category. The N of 156,605 represents the number of respondents in the sample having both variables. Reading across the rows from left to right, the trend within each income level shows an increase in frequency from not at all religious to very religious. The only exception to this trend occurs in the ninth and tenth income levels, in which the not very religious outweigh the rather religious. However, even at these income levels, the largest category remains very religious.

Models

TABLE 3.3 ABOUT HERE

Table 3.3 presents six multilevel mixed effects ordered logistic models predicting support for involving religion in politics. Because the final dataset contains five iterations of imputed data, the six models derive from running statistical analyses on each of the five iterations. Thus the coefficients reported in Table 3.3 derive from averaging the coefficients from the five iterations, and the standard errors derive from averaging the variances and adding the variance of the means (Rubin 1987, Mouw et al 2014). Under each dependent variable heading appear two columns, one reporting a partial model and one reporting a full model with an interaction term between religiosity and income. While each positive coefficient indicates the increased log odds of being in the next higher category in the five-step ordinal scales measuring support for involving religion in politics, negative coefficients indicate the decreased log odds of being in the next higher category. The final coefficient reported in each column reports the estimated variance of the random effect for the nested category of country.

Across all six models the control variables operate mainly as expected. Lower support for involving religion in politics correlates with being in a religious minority and attending religious gatherings less frequently. Being in any religious tradition correlates with more support for involving religion in politics as compared with the nonreligious. The only exceptions to this trend involve a handful of nonsignificant coefficients. As compared with the nonreligious, the highest support for involving religion in politics occurs among Muslims in the first four models and among Hindus in the last two. In general, less support for involving religion in politics correlates with being female, younger, less educated, and living in a nation with higher economic inequality and lower economic development. Residing in a post-Soviet nation associates with higher support for involving religion in politics in the single model with a significant relationship for this variable (e.g., the partial model for the second dependent variable).

Turning to the independent variables, the interpretation of the coefficients for religiosity requires comparing the “very” religious to the other three categories of “rather,” “not very,” “and not at all.” As compared to these three categories, the correlation between high religiosity and support for involving religion in politics is positive and strong in the first four models. Again the first two models register such support at the minimum level of wanting public office holders to express at least a minimum religious commitment. When the question changes to include support for strongly religious people holding public office, the coefficients remain positive and increase somewhat in intensity. In the final two models, the correlation between religiosity and support for having religious leaders influence voting weakens considerably, with the sign changing to negative in the final model. Thus, the association between religiosity and support for involving religion in politics moves from strong and positive in the first four models to weak and positive in the penultimate model and negative in the final model. As the type of support shifts from wanting public officials to express a minimum religious commitment to wanting religious leaders to influence voting, support decreases notably.

The interpretation of income in the partial models remains quite straightforward. In the first and third models, an increase of one step on the ten-point scale of incomes associates with a lower chance of being in the next higher category in support of involving religion in politics. In the fifth model, the relationship is not significant. Thus having a higher income associates with less support for wanting public office holders to express a minimum and even strong religious commitment. However, the relationship between income and desiring that religious leaders influence voting is not significant. Adding the interaction terms in the full models for each of the three dependent variables adds a level of complexity to the analysis. With the inclusion of these interactions, the coefficients for income represent the association of income and support for

involving religion in politics for those who are not very religious. In all three of the full models, having a higher income associates with less support for involving religion in politics among those who are not very religious. In contrast, the interaction terms indicate the change in log odds of the association between having a higher income and support for involving religion in politics among those who are highly religious as compared to those who are not.

TABLE 3.4 ABOUT HERE

To make interpretation simpler, Table 3.4 presents the combined coefficients for the interaction between religiosity and income found in Table 3.3. These combined coefficients derive from adding the baseline log odds for income among those who are not highly religious to the interaction term between high religiosity and income. The statistical significance of each combined coefficient reported in Table 3.4 is calculated using a *t*-test, in which *t* equals the sum of the coefficients divided by the square root of the sum of the variances and covariance of the coefficients. According to the combined coefficients reported in Table 3.4, the increase in the association between income and support for involving religion in politics for those who are very religious as compared to those who are not is small and negative in the first two cases but small and positive in the third. Thus, in the first two models with interaction terms, being both both richer and more religious associates with *less* support for involving religion in politics. However, this relationship reverses in the third model with interaction terms, demonstrating that being both richer and more religious associates with *more* support for religion in politics.

Discussion

This paper investigates the question, “What are the effects of income and religiosity on support for involving religion in politics?” Two separate theories in the sociological literature on religion and stratification make divergent predictions in answer to this question. In general,

deprivation theory and relative power theory predict opposite levels of religiosity among those at the top of the stratification system. Deprivation theory predicts increasing secularization among the wealthy, who experience little attraction to compensators for material wellbeing.

Alternatively, relative power theory predicts decreasing secularization among the wealthy, who utilize religion as a means of power. One problem with recent research used as evidence for relative power theory is that it does not actually test issues of power, only correlations between religiosity and class or wealth.

One way to address this issue is to adopt a framework that defines secularization as declining religious authority. In this approach, a specific example of secularization involves the differentiation of the religious and political spheres. Some evidence suggests that these spheres continue to differentiate, which supports deprivation theory. Other evidence suggests that this process is reversing—and that people with high status continue to use religion as a means of power—which supports relative power theory. If relative deprivation theory is correct, it is expected that having a higher income would associate with less support for involving religion in politics. And if relative power theory is correct, it is expected that having a higher income and being highly religious would associate with more support for involving religion in politics. The ordered logistic models presented in Table 3.3 provide evidence that can adjudicate between these two approaches.

The three dependent variables modeled in Table 3.3 provide increasingly specific ways to gauge support for involving religion in politics. The first dependent variable, which addresses the fitness of those who do not believe in God for public office, identifies a baseline for this discussion. How do people feel about their office holders having at least a minimum commitment to religious faith? The widespread bias against atheists holding public office

apparent in the first two models—which are based on worldwide data—aligns with similar findings from the United States (Edgell, Gerteis, and Hartmann 2006). The second dependent variable moves the discussion to the other end of the spectrum: How much support do people express for having candidates with *strong* religious beliefs serving in public office? The final item provides the most direct measure of opinions about the differentiation of religious and political spheres. It asks whether or not religious leaders should influence voting, a central activity of the democratic process. This question provides a direct test of Chaves’s definition of secularization at the societal level, namely “the declining capacity of religious elites to exercise authority over other institutional spheres” (Chaves 1994:757).

Whereas Chaves defines secularization more narrowly as declining religious authority, Norris and Inglehart (2011:53) define secularization more broadly as the “erosion of religious values, beliefs, and practices.” This approach updates traditional approaches to secularization by focusing on the causal mechanism of existential security. In this view, those with less access to the goods and opportunities that provide personal and social wellbeing are expected to exhibit higher levels of religiosity. The predictions made by the deprivation theory of Norris and Inglehart receive support in the models discussed above—even using the narrower definition of secularization as declining religious authority. In all six models, the larger structural issues of lower inequality and higher development associate with decreased support for involving religion in politics. And in general, having higher income and educational levels associates with less support. The only exceptions to this trend appear in the second and third sets of models, which indicate no significant relationship between support for involving religion in politics and 1) both having a higher income and being very religious in the full model for the second dependent variable and 2) having a higher income in the partial model for the third dependent variable.

Even when secularization is defined more narrowly as the declining of religious authority, the prediction of deprivation theory concerning the relationship between income and support for involving religion in politics holds among both those who are not very religious and those who are. In the main, the models discussed above present evidence for the first hypothesis of this paper, that having a higher income correlates with less support for involving religion in politics.

In contrast to deprivation theory, relative power theory predicts that having a higher income will correlate with more support for involving religion in politics. Recent research on this topic claims that wealthier people are attracted to religion as a means of power (Solt, Habel, and Grant 2011; Ballarino and Vezzoni 2012). Whereas these analyses do not test this claim directly, this paper does so at three different levels of intensity: 1) opinions about minimum levels of religiosity among public office holders, 2) opinions about strong levels of religiosity among public office holders, and 3) opinions about the influence of religious leaders on how people vote.

The basic claim that having a higher income correlates with more support for involving religion in politics is not supported. However, by introducing interaction terms into the analysis, this paper makes it possible to discern differences in the relationship between income and support for involving religion in politics among those who are highly religious and those who are not. It might be that the basic prediction of deprivation theory holds among those who are *not* highly religious—but the predictions of relative power theory hold among those who *are* highly religious. That is to say, the secularization predicted by deprivation theory may be proceeding among people with higher incomes. At the same, it might also be true that people who are both wealthy and highly religious view religion as an *instrumentum regni*, a means of rule. That might

explain why some wealthy people are still highly religious and why secularization has not proceeded faster among those who are wealthy. Thus, demonstrating that being *both* wealthier *and* more religious associates with greater support for involving religion in politics would constitute empirical evidence for relative power theory.

Whereas consistent confirmation for deprivation theory appears in all six models, only a single interaction term constitutes evidence for relative power theory. While all three interaction terms in Table 3.4 are small, the first two are negative, and the third is positive. Thus the second hypothesis of this paper—that having a higher income *and* being highly religious correlates with more support for involving religion in politics—finds corroboration in only one of three full models. While this paper demonstrates evidence for both deprivation theory and relative power theory, evidence for the former is consistent and strong while evidence for the latter is scant and weak. That being said, the evidence for relative power theory appears in the full model measuring support for the influence of religious leaders on voting. As discussed earlier, the intensity and specificity of the dependent variables measuring support for involving religion in politics heighten from the first to the third. Agreement with the third dependent variable registers stronger support for involving religion in politics than the second, which registers stronger support than the first. Among the three dependent variables, wanting religious leaders to influence voting constitutes the clearest possibility of wielding religion as an instrument of rule. And only in this specific situation does any evidence for relative power theory appear. The rest of the evidence consistently supports the alternative, deprivation theory.

Conclusion

Review

Deprivation theory and relative power theory predict opposite levels of religiosity among those at the top of the stratification system. Deprivation theory predicts increasing secularization among the wealthy, who experience little attraction to compensators for material wellbeing. Alternatively, relative power theory predicts decreasing secularization among the wealthy, who utilize religion as a means of power. However, the research on relative power theory does not actually test issues of power, only correlations between class and religiosity. Defining secularization as declining religious authority provides a framework to test both deprivation theory and relative power theory. In this framework, secularization includes the differentiation of the religious and political spheres. If relative deprivation theory is correct, it is expected that having a higher income would associate with less support for involving religion in politics. And if relative power theory is correct, it is expected that having a higher income and being highly religious would associate with more support for involving religion in politics. This paper presents multilevel mixed effects ordered logistic regression models based on the World Values Survey/European Values Survey (WVS/EVS) to adjudicate this debate by asking the question, “What are the effects of income and religiosity on support for involving religion in politics?” While this paper demonstrates evidence for both deprivation theory and relative power theory, evidence for the former is consistent and strong while evidence for the latter is scant and weak. In the main, deprivation theory provides more accurate predictions of the relationship between income and support for involving religion in politics—even in the more limited case of defining secularization as declining religious authority.

Limitations

Any study using cross-sectional data invites criticisms of causal claims. That being said, the core of this paper does not include making causal arguments. In this particular case, it is

sufficient to demonstrate correlations, associations, and relationships. This paper does not attempt to prove that being highly religious or highly compensated causes people to support the involvement of religion in politics. Rather, the theoretical argument between deprivation theory and relative power theory simply predict different levels of such support among people with varying levels of religiosity and wealth. Using cross-sectional data certainly limits the scope of this paper to weighing in on that argument.

Recommendations

As appropriate as the dependent variables for this study are, other research might discover even better measures and methods for testing the relative merits of deprivation theory and relative power theory. For example, survey questions could be designed to capture opinions about the use of religion as a means of rule. Furthermore, the evidence for higher levels of religious belief and activity presented by Solt, Habel, and Grant (2011) and Ballarino and Vezzoni (2012) still stand. Future research might uncover a better explanation for it—an explanation that does not simply assume that the rich use religion as a means of rule.

Table 3.1. Descriptive Statistics for Dependent, Independent, and Control Variables (N = 184,164)

	Freq.	Mean/Prop.	SD	Min.	Max.
<i>Dependent Variables</i>					
Atheists Are Unfit for Public Office	150,808	3.02	1.40	1	5
Disagree Strongly	24,460	16.2%			
Disagree	40,443	26.8%			
Neither Disagree nor Agree	25,791	17.1%			
Agree	27,652	18.3%			
Agree Strongly	32,462	21.5%			
Strongly Religious Should Hold Public Office	146,818	3.08	1.28	1	5
Disagree Strongly	18,391	12.5%			
Disagree	35,686	24.3%			
Neither Disagree nor Agree	32,813	22.3%			
Agree	36,209	24.7%			
Agree Strongly	23,719	16.2%			
Religious Leaders Should Influence Voting	150,481	2.15	1.11	1	5
Disagree Strongly	48,682	32.4%			
Disagree	58,538	38.9%			
Neither Disagree nor Agree	20,372	13.5%			
Agree	17,445	11.6%			
Agree Strongly	5,444	3.6%			
<i>Independent Variables</i>					
Religiosity	177,051	3.07	1.06	1	4
Not at All Important (Ref.)	20,457	11.6%			
Not Very Important (Ref.)	31,223	17.6%			
Rather Important (Ref.)	40,216	22.7%			
Very Important (Ref.)	85,155	48.10%			
Income	162,713	4.59	2.36	1	10
Lowest Income (Ref.)	15,788	9.7%			
Second Step	19,657	12.1%			
Third Step	23,501	14.4%			
Fourth Step	23,422	14.4%			
Fifth Step	26,060	16.0%			
Sixth Step	18,707	11.5%			
Seventh Step	14,859	9.1%			
Eighth Step	9,835	6.0%			
Ninth Step	5,776	3.5%			
Highest Income	5,108	3.1%			
<i>Control Variables</i>					
Religious Status	150,481	.27	.44	0	1
Majority (Ref.)	134,183	72.9%			
Minority	49,981	27.1%			

(continued)

Table 3.1. *(continued)*

	Freq.	Mean/Prop.	SD	Min.	Max.
Religious Tradition	180,766	3.81	2.51	1	8
Catholic	44,599	24.7%			
Protestant	25,698	14.2%			
Orthodox	18,217	10.1%			
Muslim	42,915	23.7%			
Hindu	3,885	2.1%			
Buddhist	4,583	2.5%			
Other	6,979	3.9%			
None (Ref.)	33,890	18.7%			
Religious Attendance	176,400	2.70	1.39	1	5
Never (Ref.)	40,603	23.0%			
Less than Monthly	57,707	32.7%			
Monthly	18,974	10.8%			
Weekly	32,944	18.7%			
More than Weekly	26,172	14.8%			
Sex	184,020	.50		0	1
Female	88,288	48.0%			
Male (Ref.)	95,732	52.0%			
Age	183,664	41.26	16.40	15	101
Education	182,700	4.36	2.32	1	8
Incomplete Elementary (Ref.)	26,110	14.3%			
Complete Elementary	28,512	15.6%			
Incomplete Vocational	14,536	8.0%			
Complete Vocational	28,347	15.5%			
Incomplete University Prep	16,713	9.1%			
Complete University Prep	31,468	17.2%			
Incomplete University	12,768	7.0%			
Complete University	24,246	13.3%			
GINI Index	182,662	36.77	9.05	22.39	64.80
GDP (in Thousands)	180,212	13.46	12.00	.72	55.81
Postsoviet State	184,164	.08	.27	0	1
Yes	169,498	92.0%			
No (Ref.)	14,666	8.0%			

Source: World Values Survey/European Values Survey (Wave 4: 1999- 2004, Wave 5: 2005-2008); Standardized World Income Inequality Database (SWIID); World Bank International Comparison Program Database (WBICPD); The Pew Forum on Religion in Public Life

Table 3.2. Cross Tabulation of Income by Religiosity (N = 156,605)

	Not at All Religious	Not Very Religious	Rather Religious	Very Religious	Total
Lowest Income	1,467 10.06%	2,006 13.76%	3,165 21.71%	7,938 54.46%	14,576 100.00%
Second Income	1,793 9.83%	2,546 13.96%	4,072 22.33%	9,828 53.88%	18,239 100.00%
Third Income	2,396 10.61%	3,638 16.12%	5,056 22.40%	11,484 50.87%	22,574 100.00%
Fourth Income	2,518 11.05%	3,872 17.00%	5,096 22.37%	11,293 49.58%	22,779 100.00%
Fifth Income	2,744 10.78%	4,493 17.65%	5,719 22.47%	12,495 49.09%	25,451 100.00%
Sixth Income	2,110 11.57%	3,440 18.87%	4,163 22.83%	8,520 46.73%	18,233 100.00%
Seventh Income	1,816 12.48%	2,848 19.58%	3,311 22.76%	6,571 45.17%	14,546 100.00%
Eighth Income	1,247 12.97%	1,949 20.27%	2,308 24.00%	4,111 42.76%	9,615 100.00%
Ninth Income	899 15.99%	1,320 23.48%	1,310 23.31%	2,092 37.22%	5,621 100.00%
Highest Income	891 17.92%	1,353 27.22%	1,218 24.50%	1,509 30.36%	4,971 100.00%
Total	17,881 11.42%	27,465 17.54%	35,418 22.62%	75,841 48.43%	156,605 100.00%

Source: World Values Survey/European Values Survey (Wave 4: 1999- 2004, Wave 5: 2005-2008)

Table 3.3. Coefficients from Ordered Logistic Regressions Predicting Support for Involving Religion in Politics
(N = 184,164)

	Atheists Are Unfit for Public Office		Strongly Religious Should Hold Public Office		Religious Leaders Should Influence Voting	
Religiosity: Very vs. Rather/ Not Very/Not at All (Ref.)	.711*** (.018)	.683*** (.014)	.783*** (.004)	.776*** (.008)	.093*** (.005)	-.021*** (.019)
Income (10 pt. Scale)	-.037*** (.002)	-.039*** (.005)	-.029*** (.002)	-.029*** (.002)	.000 (.001)	-.009*** (.001)
Income x Very Religious		.007** (.003)		.004 (.003)		.022*** (.003)
Religious Minority vs. Majority (Ref.)	-.039 (.048)	-.067** (.023)	-.108*** (.027)	-.127*** (.033)	-.101* (.041)	-.101*** (.011)
Religious Attendance: Never (Ref.)						
Less than Monthly	.377*** (.021)	.392*** (.016)	.462*** (.012)	.469*** (.018)	.234*** (.005)	.230*** (.005)
Less than Weekly	.619*** (.017)	.644*** (.016)	.829*** (.015)	.842*** (.027)	.382*** (.007)	.372*** (.013)
Weekly	.688*** (.012)	.711*** (.017)	.964*** (.013)	.969*** (.026)	.447*** (.007)	.437*** (.008)
More than Weekly	.799*** (.017)	.821*** (.022)	1.095*** (.014)	1.110*** (.033)	.477*** (.014)	.473*** (.017)
Religious Tradition: None (Ref.)						
Catholic	.241*** (.062)	.202*** (.051)	.396*** (.018)	.337*** (.040)	.139** (.043)	.137*** (.012)
Protestant	.415*** (.036)	.378*** (.037)	.551*** (.048)	.533*** (.051)	.150** (.046)	.165*** (.018)
Orthodox	.563*** (.075)	.506*** (.042)	.550*** (.109)	.541*** (.090)	.057 (.036)	.010 (.083)
Muslim	.905*** (.186)	.894*** (.179)	.579*** (.048)	.627*** (.036)	.216*** (.051)	.188*** (.021)
Hindu	.329*** (.067)	.311*** (.046)	.051 (.131)	.142 (.135)	.249*** (.055)	.242*** (.042)
Buddhist	.493** (.153)	.616*** (.038)	.327*** (.092)	.405*** (.077)	.199*** (.026)	.236*** (.062)
Other	.475*** (.056)	.489*** (.046)	.422*** (.015)	.409*** (.028)	.149*** (.019)	.142*** (.023)
Female vs. Male (Ref.)	-.080*** (.005)	-.080*** (.005)	-.106*** (.002)	-.105*** (.001)	-.063*** (.003)	-.064*** (.003)
Age (in Years)	.003*** (.000)	.003*** (.000)	.002*** (.000)	.002*** (.000)	-.002*** (.000)	-.002*** (.000)
Education (8-pt. Scale)	-.058*** (.004)	-.056*** (.005)	-.075*** (.002)	-.076*** (.002)	-.053*** (.002)	-.054*** (.001)

(continued)

Table 3.3. *(continued)*

	Atheists Are Unfit for Public Office		Strongly Religious Should Hold Public Office		Religious Leaders Should Influence Voting	
GINI Index (100 Pt. Scale)	.017** (.006)	.018*** (.005)	.023*** (.003)	.025*** (.004)	.013*** (.003)	.014*** (.003)
GDP (in Thousands)	-.031*** (.007)	-.030*** (.002)	-.024*** (.006)	-.030*** (.007)	-.002 (.002)	-.001 (.002)
Post-Soviet vs. Non-Soviet (Ref.)	-.266 (.431)	.122 (.182)	.336*** (.084)	-.112 (.426)	.091 (.230)	.291 (.433)
Cut 1	-1.089*** (.266)	-.981*** (.281)	-1.026*** (.111)	-.986*** (.231)	-.264** (.091)	-.271* (.106)
Cut 2	.684** (.265)	.789** (.277)	.753*** (.112)	.794*** (.230)	1.474*** (.091)	1.466*** (.106)
Cut 3	1.650*** (.262)	1.755*** (.274)	1.984*** (.113)	2.026*** (.229)	2.308*** (.093)	2.300*** (.106)
Cut 4	2.893*** (.262)	2.999*** (.278)	3.623*** (.113)	3.663*** (.228)	3.890*** (.096)	3.883*** (.112)
<i>Random Effects</i>						
Country (N = 93)	.225*** (.049)	.242*** (.036)	.170* (.075)	.201*** (.049)	.056*** (.010)	.075*** (.013)

Source: World Values Survey/European Values Survey (Wave 4: 1999- 2004, Wave 5: 2005-2008); Standardized World Income Inequality Database (SWIID); World Bank International Comparison Program Database (WBICPD); The Pew Forum on Religion in Public Life

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed tests)

Table 3.4. Combined Coefficients from Ordered Logistic Regression Predicting Support for Involving Religion in Politics for the Very Religious (N = 184,164)

	Baseline Income	+	Religiosity x Income	=	Combined Coefficients
Atheists Are Unfit for Public Office	-.039***	+	.007***	=	-.032***
Strongly Religious Should Hold Public Office	-.029***	+	.004	=	-.025***
Religious Leaders Should Influence Voting	-.009**	+	.022***	=	.013***

Source: World Values Survey/European Values Survey (Wave 3: 1994-1998, Wave 4: 1999- 2004, Wave 5: 2005-2008); Standardized World Income Inequality Database (SWIID); World Bank International Comparison Program Database (WBICPD); The Pew Forum on Religion in Public Life *Note:* * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed tests)

APPENDIX 3

Country-Years: Albania (2002), Algeria (2002), Andorra (2005), Argentina (1999), Argentina (2006), Australia (2005), Austria (1999), Bangladesh (2002), Belarus (2000), Belgium (1999), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2001), Brazil (2006), Bulgaria (1999), Bulgaria (2006), Burkina Faso (2007), Canada (2000), Canada (2006), Chile (2000), Chile (2006), China (2001), China (2007), Colombia (2005), Croatia (1999), Cyprus (2006), Czech Republic (1999), Denmark (1999), Egypt (2000), Egypt (2008), Estonia (1999), Ethiopia (2007), Finland (2000), Finland (2005), France (1999), France (2006), Georgia (2009), Germany (1999), Germany (2006), Ghana (2007), Great Britain (1999), Greece (1999), Guatemala (2004), Hong Kong (2005), Hungary (1999), Iceland (1999), India (2001), India (2006), Indonesia (2001), Indonesia (2006), Iran (2000), Iran (2007), Iraq (2004), Iraq (2006), Ireland (1999), Israel (2001), Italy (1999), Italy (2005), Japan (2000), Japan (2005), Jordan (2001), Jordan (2007), Kyrgyzstan (2003), Latvia (1999), Lithuania (1999), Luxembourg (1999), Macedonia (2001), Malaysia (2006), Mali (2007), Malta (1999), Mexico (2000), Mexico (2005), Moldova (2002), Moldova (2006), Morocco (2001), Morocco (2007), Netherlands (1999), Netherlands (2006), New Zealand (2004), Nigeria (2000), Northern Ireland (1999), Norway (2007), Pakistan (2001), Peru (2001), Peru (2006), Philippines (2001), Poland (1999), Poland (2005), Portugal (1999), Puerto Rico (2001), Romania (1999), Romania (2005), Russian Federation (1999), Russian Federation (2006), Rwanda (2007), Saudi Arabia (2003), Serbia (2006), Serbia and Montenegro (2001), Singapore (2002), Slovakia (1999), Slovenia (1999), Slovenia (2005), South Africa (2001), South Africa (2006), South Korea (2001), South Korea (2005), Spain (1999), Spain (2000), Spain (2007), Sweden (1999), Sweden (2006), Switzerland (2007), Taiwan (2006), Tanzania (2001), Thailand (2007), Trinidad and Tobago (2006), Turkey (2001), Turkey (2007), Uganda

(2001), Ukraine (1999), Ukraine (2006), Uruguay (2006), United Kingdom (2005), United States (1999), United States (2006), Venezuela (2000), Viet Nam (2001), Viet Nam (2006), Zambia (2007), Zimbabwe (2001)

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