PART ONE

Philosophical, Attitudinal, and Religious Foundations

2 The Structure and Dynamics of Public Opinion

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There are a number of sweeping cross-national and cross-time studies of public opinion. These studies interpret the contours of opinion change somewhat differently, but their findings converge on a central point: public opinion in advanced industrial countries is moving leftward. Unprecedented economic and physical security, rising levels of formal education, and declining religiosity have transformed opinion landscapes right across the advanced industrial world.[1] People are less preoccupied with economics and law and order, turning instead to such post-material considerations as leisure time, free speech, political influence, and urban aesthetics.[2] People are less tolerant of authority, more tolerant of diversity, and substantially more likely to support gay rights, abortion, euthanasia, and environmentalism.[3]

General leftward shifts in public opinion, however, have not been reflected in voting choices. Comparative studies of party platforms and governing coalitions indicate that right-wing parties are receiving as many votes, winning as many seats, and participating in government as often as they used to.[4] Left-wing parties have not cashed in on the tide of public opinion that has swung in their favour, and right-wing parties have not fallen apart. What explains the apparent discrepancy between the dominant accounts of opinion change and the robust electoral showing of right-wing parties?

This chapter argues that the electoral struggles of the political left, and the longevity of the political right, stem in part from a fundamental asymmetry at the elite level between the left and the right in the ways that individuals organize their opinions about multiple issues. Each individual holds opinions about more than one issue. In other words, public opinion is multidimensional. There is not one dimension

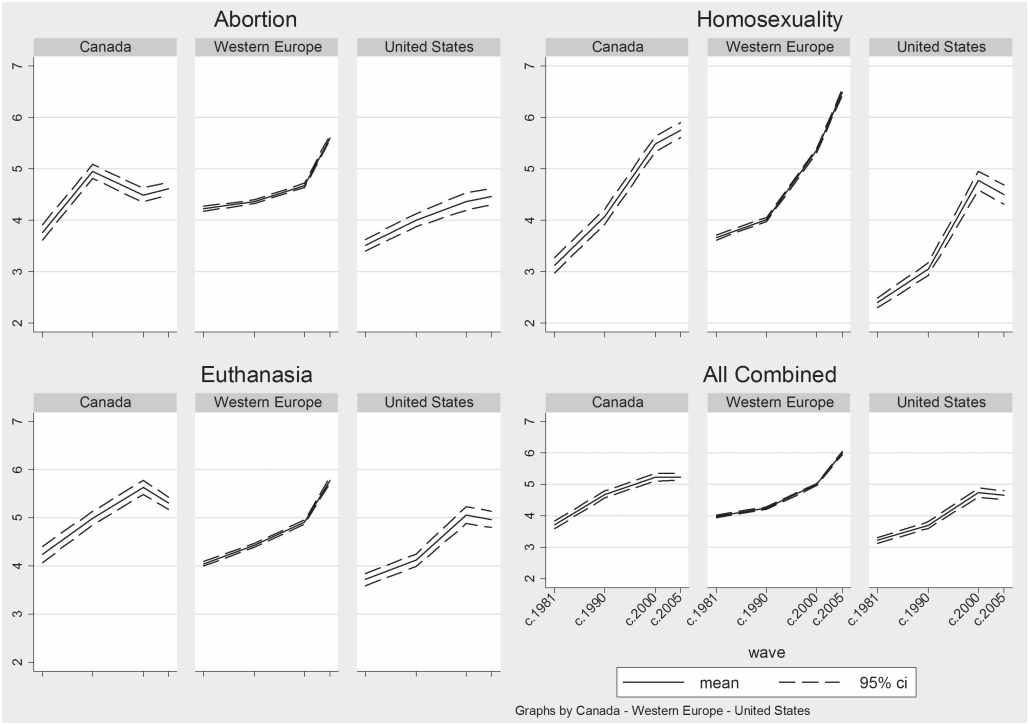
of opinions that matters, but many dimensions. From this standpoint, there is nothing about the trajectory of opinion change at the aggregate level that tells us anything about the connections between opinions at the individual level. Outside of the political elite, most citizens hold "mixed opinions" – they hold right-wing opinions about some issues and left-wing opinions about others. However, political elites, particularly on the left, are more likely to combine their moral and economic positions into a coherent set of political viewpoints. Whatever advantage the left gains from the popularity of its positions on individual issues, it loses to the laws of probability when combining them.

Evidence of Opinion Change

Public opinion in Canada and other Western countries has changed considerably on a number of issues over the past quarter century. Notably, opinions about euthanasia, abortion, and especially homosexuality changed drastically throughout the 1980s and 1990s, with citizens not just in Canada, but in the United States and Western Europe as well, expressing increasing levels of support for women's rights to abortion and for the rights of gays of lesbians. Respondents in each wave of the World Values Survey were asked to indicate their opinions about abortion, homosexuality, and euthanasia on scales that range from 1 (never justifiable) to 10 (always justifiable). Thus, higher positions on this scale indicate increasingly favourable views about these three subjects. Figure 2.1 plots in cross-time perspective the average positions of Canadians, Western Europeans, and Americans on each of these survey items. In all three cases and on all three issues, the results indicate that publics became increasingly more supportive across time. The results are particularly pronounced on the issue of homosexuality. In 1981, 51 per cent of Canadian respondents expressed the view that homosexuality was "never justifiable." By 2005, just 20 per cent of Canadians shared that opinion. The results are no less pronounced in Europe (47% to 16%) or the United States (65% to 33%). Certainly, there may be short-term fluctuations in opinions about these issues, and there is no guarantee that any of these cross-time trends will continue. Even so, public opinion on so-called moral issues, and particularly homosexuality, has moved sharply leftward over the past quarter-century.

Less impressive, but notable nonetheless, is the shift in economic outlooks. Compared to 1990, Canadians in 2006 were less supportive of private industry, more supportive of income equality, and

Figure 2.1. Changing Opinions about Abortion, Homosexuality, and Euthanasia, 1981–2005

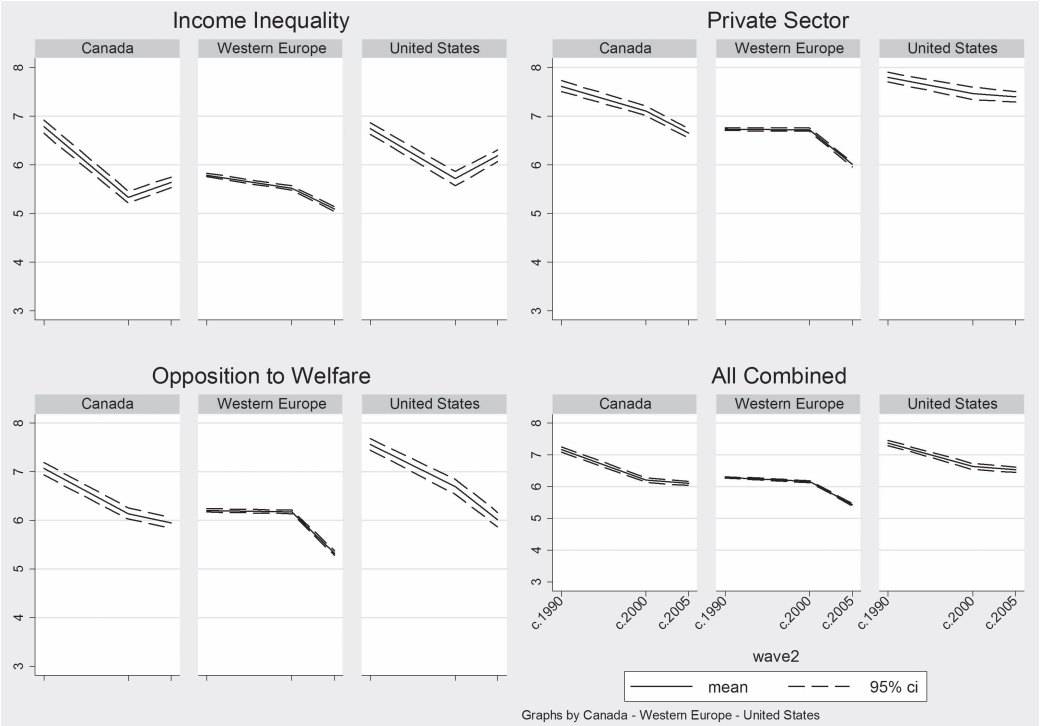


Source: World Values Survey (1981–2006)

substantially less likely to agree that people should look after themselves, rather than have the government do it.[5] These opinions are also plotted on ten-point scales in the World Values Survey. The mean positions of Canadians, Western Europeans, and Americans in 1990, 2000, and 2005 are summarized in figure 2.2. Lower scores indicate increasingly left-leaning positions, and higher scores indicate the opposite. Thus, the trajectories in figure 2.2 are invariably leftward. To be sure, the effect is modest compared to moral values, and Canada is still a fiscally conservative country, all things considered. Even so, the magnitude of cross-time change is not insignificant. In 1990, 21 per cent of Canadians felt strongly that incentives for individual effort should be increased at the expense of income equality. By 2005, only 5 per cent of Canadians expressed this same view. In 1990, 30 per cent of Canadians felt strongly that private ownership of business and industry should be increased. That figure fell to less than 12 per cent by 2005. And in 1990, 30 per cent of Canadians thought that people, rather than government, should take more responsibility for themselves. Fifteen years later, that figure had dropped to less than 7 per cent. Simply, Canada is a less conservative country today than it used to be. In this respect, Canadians are not unlike their counterparts in the United States and Western Europe.

Many scholars attribute these shifts to underlying structural shifts in the economy, including generational changes in public opinion, which stem from long-term socioeconomic transformations from an agrarian, to a manufacturing, to a service economy.[6] These modernization theories assign a great deal of importance to the role of the economy in shaping the broader environment of mass opinion. The shift from a manufacturing to a service economy, for example, generated an increasing demand for skills associated with university education. A university education, in turn, is associated with increasingly left-wing opinions about a range of issues, especially so-called moral issues like homosexuality and abortion. Even so, underlying structural changes explain only a part of the value change story. Indeed, opinions about these issues have changed among citizens in all educational categories, and cross-time change in levels of education account for only some of the cross-time change in opinions about homosexuality (about 12%) and abortion (about 67%). The role of social movements, certainly, cannot be discounted in these numbers. Whatever the precise mechanisms driving these trends, there is no question that opinions about controversial moral and economic issues have undergone a profound shift

Figure 2.2. Changing Opinions about Income Inequality, the Private Sector, and Government Welfare, 1981–2005



Source: World Values Survey (1981–2006)

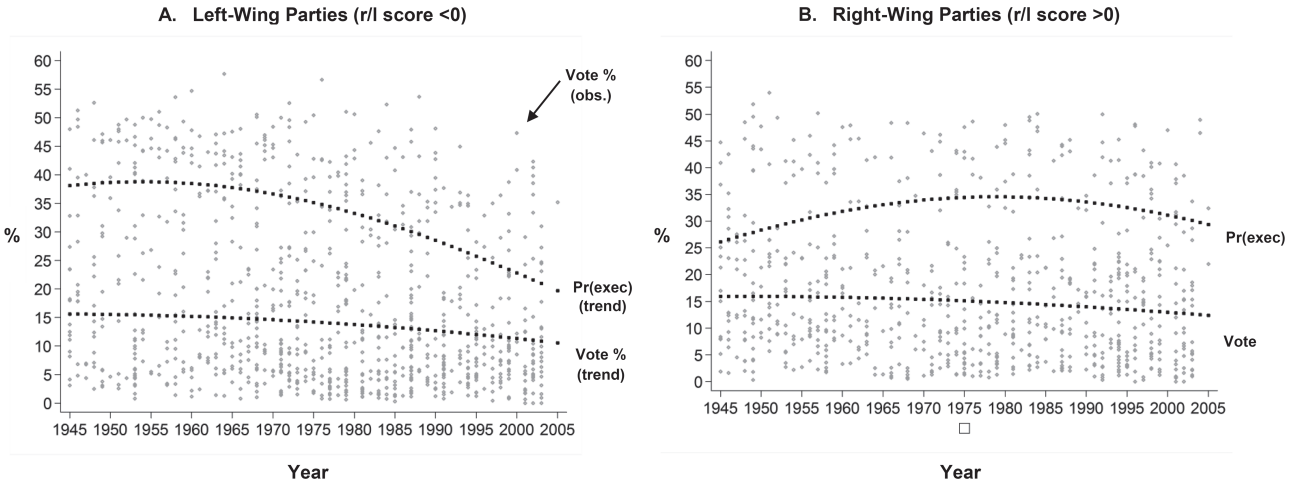
over the past three decades. Surely, this has translated into heighted electoral success for left-wing parties. Or has it?

Left-Wing and Right-Wing Electoral Performance

Figure 2.3 plots the election results for left-wing and right-wing political parties in national parliamentary elections in nineteen Western democratic countries between 1945 and 2005. The left-right scores of these parties are assigned by the Comparative Manifesto Research Project (CMRP), a systematic content analysis of party election platforms in democratic countries since 1945. In the CMRP, party platforms are quantified in left/right terms according to coding criteria that classify, line by line, the percentage of a party election platform that is devoted to supporting left-wing and right-wing positions on a range of issues. As Budge and Klingemann explain, "The [left/right] scale generally opposes emphases on peaceful internationalism, welfare and government intervention on the left, to emphases on strong defense, free enterprise and traditional morality on the right."[7] In this scale, the proportion of left-wing phrases is subtracted from the proportion of right-wing phrases. Thus, higher values suggest increasingly right-wing platforms, and lower values suggest increasingly left-wing platforms.

Parties with generally left-wing scores are plotted in figure 2.3A and parties with generally right-wing scores are plotted in figure 2.3B. In both cases, the year of the election is reflected along the horizontal axis, and the proportion of the popular vote that each party received is plotted along the vertical axis. The points in the graphs therefore correspond to the percentage of the popular vote that each individual political party received in a national election during that year. The two trend lines in the graph represent separate measures of electoral success.[8] The top trend line is the estimated probability that any given left-wing or right-wing political party occupied a position in their national executive at some point after the election of that year and before the next election (i.e., whether the election got the party into office), and the bottom trend line depicts the estimated average share of the popular vote that political parties received during elections in that year. Together, these estimates provide a two-pronged measure of party success. On this point, notice that results in the figures indicate that right-wing parties are performing at least as well as their counterparts on the left. Indeed, the top trend line declines for parties on the left and not for parties on the right. If anything, left-wing political parties have become

Figure 2.3. Vote Share and Executive Power for Left-Wing and Right-Wing Parties, 1945–2005



Sources: Data from Budge and Klingemann (2001); Klingemann et al. (2006); Müller and Strøm (2000); EJPR Political Data Yearbooks
Notes:

1 Cross-national coverage includes Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States. Iceland and New Zealand are missing on Pr(exec).
2 Right-Left (r/l score) outlined by Budge and Klingemann (2001, 22).
3 A party is coded 1 on executive if it held a formal position in the Cabinet (White House in United States) at any point between one election (t_0) and the next election at (t_1).
4 The data are grouped on party (panel) and election date (time).

less likely to govern and right-wing parties *more* likely to govern. Even so, the magnitude of this difference does not achieve conventional levels of statistical significance.

This general pattern certainly reinforces the anecdotal evidence. In Canada, the New Democratic Party (NDP) performed abysmally in three successive elections between 1993 and 2000, setting a new record in the process for the party's worst election result since its founding in 1932 (as the CCF). Denmark, Sweden, and Switzerland are now governed by right-wing parties, and, if not for a peculiarity of the electoral system, Norway would be as well. Between 1998 and 2001, the leading left-wing parties in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark all experienced among their poorest electoral showing in nearly eighty years.[9] The far-right Swiss People's Party (SVP) is now the dominant electoral force in Switzerland, far outstripping its main left-wing opponent, the Social Democrats (SPS).

Where stories of right-wing success are not as obvious, they rarely seem far from the surface. In Belgium, the green parties AGALEV and ECOLO were crushed in the 2003 election; by contrast, the extreme right Vlaams Bloc has increased its share of the popular vote in all but one election since 1978. Republicans presidents have occupied the White House for twenty of the past thirty years. Even so, George W. Bush was the first Republican in nearly a half-century to preside while his party controlled majorities in both house of Congress. In Austria, the left-wing Austrian Social Democratic Party (SPO) was excluded from Cabinet after the 1999 election (and again after the 2002 election) for the first time since 1966 and only the second time since 1945. The SPO was replaced in Cabinet by the far-right Freedom Party (FPO). In general, established right-wing political parties are holding their own against their longstanding left-wing rivals. And new-right authoritarian parties are outperforming their new-left ecological counterparts in all but a handful of countries.

Left/Right Asymmetry

A number of reasons could account for the paradox between the standard account of a leftward shift in mass opinion and the observed reality of no such shift in voter preferences. Certainly, one possibility is that issue opinions simply do not matter that much in affecting vote choice. Indeed, an extensive literature suggests that the role of issue positions is vote choice is minimal.[10] "Many citizens," Converse argues, "… do

not have meaningful beliefs, even on issues that have formed the basis for intense political controversy among elites, for substantial periods of time."[11]

But even among citizens who do possess meaningful opinions about the issues, few of them actually organize their opinions in such a way that they would be able to project these preferences onto the political landscape. The overwhelming majority of people hold left-wing opinions about some issues and right-wing positions about other issues. As a result, they have to choose in the ballot box between their preferences about different issues. When voters with left-wing economic positions and right-wing moral positions cast a vote for a left-wing party, they bring with them into that party's support base a set of moral issues that are wholly at odds with the party's positions.[12] The constrained choice environment of party competition limits the extent to which voters are able to express their policy preferences in a ballot box. As we shall see, this may be particularly the case for citizens with left-wing preferences, as there seems to be a mass-elite dichotomy on the political left when it comes to the way that leftists bundle together their preferences about multiple issues.

Theory and Hypotheses

Opinions about multiple issues are bound into bundles by underlying influences that affect simultaneously the preferences of individuals about more than one issue. A prominent approach to studying opinion clusters in political science has involved specifying in advance how citizens *should* organize their opinions and then searching for explanations to account for the failure of many citizens to organize their opinions in these particular ways. Converse, for example, argues that levels of government taxation and spending were "logically" connected. Thus, he reasons, the opinions of citizens who supported lower taxes and higher spending were correspondingly illogical. For Converse, these kinds of opinions were effectively meaningless, beyond a reflection of unsophistication and political disinterest.[13]

The argument proposed here, however, is different. Rather than assuming a natural connection between opinions about multiple issues, the argument here is that there is no natural, logical, or normative connection between opinions about any two issues. In this scenario, there would be no way to predict people's opinion about one issue on the basis of knowledge about their opinion on any other issue. Or, to put it

another way, there would be no "constraint" between issues.[14] This analytical question is quite different from the one that Converse set out to address some half century ago. In Converse's case, there were reasons to expect that people should organize their preferences about issues into coherent bundles, and the interesting analytical question was why so many people failed to do so. In the current analysis, however, this logic is turned upside down. The underlying assumption is that there is no a priori reason to expect that people should organize their preferences about issues into coherent bundles, and the analytical question is why so many people *do make these connections across issue domains*. This is more than a difference of style. It changes altogether the empirical endeavour.

The core argument proposed here is that opinion clusters form when underlying predispositions interact with social sources of information to affect simultaneously the opinions of individuals about more than one issue. Economic insecurity, for example, is an underlying influence that generates for many citizens left-wing opinions about social welfare and, at least in certain information environments, right-wing opinions about immigration.[15] An abstract commitment to equality, similarly, generates left-wing opinions about wealth redistribution, and it also moves leftward opinions about gays and lesbians, women, and immigrants. These kinds of connections between general predispositions and specific policy issues are not made naturally or inevitably by citizens.[16] Rather, they arise when people are exposed to arguments that couch an issue position in terms of a big idea that they are predisposed to accept. From this standpoint, it is not just information that matters, and it is not just predisposition; rather, it is the interaction of the two.

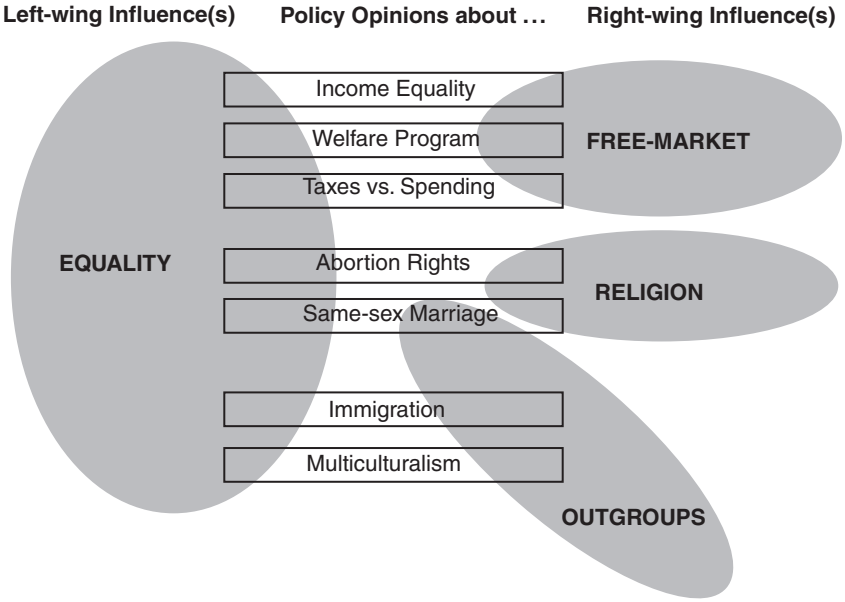
A broad commitment to equality is a well-known influence on the political left.[17] But what about the political right? Indeed, just because a commitment to equality underlies left-wing positions about a range of issues, it is a fundamental mistake to suppose that it is simply the opposite of equality, or inequality, that underlies right-wing positions on these issues. Conservatives do not wake up in the morning and ask, "How can I promote human inequality today?" By contrast, right-wing opinions stem from altogether different commitments to religion, economic growth, and majority social, racial, or ethnic groups. Taken together, the underlying sources that constrain right-wing opinions are qualitatively different from those that constrain left-wing opinions. Left-wingers and right-wingers think about policy in terms of different big ideas, and these big ideas, in turn, apply to more than one issue.

People who think about issues from the standpoint of altogether different big ideas are not only likely to disagree in their opinions about those issues, they are also likely to disagree regarding how those issues fit together logically with other issues in the political environment.

Figure 2.4 outlines some of the prominent sources of left-wing and right-wing opinions on seven broad policy domains: income equality, welfare programs, taxes vs government spending, abortion rights, same-sex marriage, and multiculturalism. These issues figure prominently in conventional understanding of left/right disagreement. In virtually all studies of the political left, an underlying commitment to equality turns out to underlie – for politically engaged segments of the electorate – left-wing positions about each of these issues. A commitment to equality affects opinions about wealth redistribution, welfare programs, women's rights, gay and lesbian rights, immigration, and cultural diversity. On the political right, a commitment to free-market materialism generates right-wing opinions about income equality and taxes vs spending. A commitment to religion typically generates right-wing opinions about abortion and gay rights. And out-group intolerance is associated with negative opinions about people who are different, including, typically, gays, lesbians, racial minorities, and immigrants.

However, when it comes to each of these sources of right-wing opinion, notice the range of opinions that each of these influences does not affect. Free-market materialism is not associated with increasingly right-wing opinions about abortion rights, same-sex marriage, immigration, or multiculturalism. Religion is not associated with right-wing opinions about income equality, welfare programs, immigration, or multiculturalism. And out-group intolerance is not associated with right-wing opinions about economics and abortion, even though it does affect opinions about same-sex marriage, because those who dislike people who are different from themselves tend to dislike gays and lesbians, as well as immigrants and racial minorities.[18] It is worth emphasizing that the argument proposed here is not that right-wingers are materialistic, religious, and intolerant. Indeed, the main point is that materialistic conservatives are no more likely than others to be religious or intolerant; religious conservatives are no more likely to be materialistic or intolerant; and intolerant conservatives are no more likely to be materialistic or religious. Taken together, we have theoretical reasons to expect that the single key source of left-wing opinions – namely, equality – affects a range of issues different from each of the

Figure 2.4. Left/Right Predispositions and Policy Preferences about the Economy, Morality, and Diversity



key sources of right-wing opinions: free-market materialism, religion, and out-group intolerance.

Observable Implications

The observable implications of this core argument have previously been tested against the patterns of activist preferences within Canadian political parties, as well as in the patterns of party policy in cross-national perspective.[19] In both cases, the evidence is consistent with the expectation that preferences about economic and social policy are bound more tightly by those on the political left than by those on the political right. The following analysis extends the implications of this argument to the patterns of public opinion in twenty democratic countries, as well as Northern Ireland: Austria, Belgium, Britain, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the

United States. In the population as a whole, across all of these countries, there is a clear connection between the left/right self-placement of survey respondents on the one hand, and their opinions about the economy and social morality. Yet, knowing that opinions about these issues are all connected to the left/right continuum is not the same as knowing whether these opinions are connected to each other. Indeed, there is little evidence of a connection in the population as a whole between opinions on the economic and moral dimensions.

The lack of a connection in the population as a whole between opinions about economics and morality is not surprising. First, many citizens lack meaningful opinions about issues. When interviewers ask these respondents about policy issues in the course of a public opinion survey, many respondents are simply "answering a question" rather than "revealing a preference."[20] In other words, many respondents have no fixed preference on the issue that the question is asking about, but they answer the question anyway for the sake of satisfying the interviewer's request for an answer. Second, there are numerous sources of influence that bear down on the opinions of each individual. For example, some citizens support redistributive economic policies because they are poor and would stand to gain financially from welfare policies. Many of these citizens also support heighted restrictions on immigration, in part because they perceive immigrants as competitors for wages and housing at the bottom of the socioeconomic hierarchy.[21] Other citizens, however, express support for wealth redistribution out of an abstract commitment to equality. Their commitment to wealth redistribution stems not from economic self-interest or financial insecurity, but from an ideological commitment to the secular-egalitarian principles that lie at the core of left-wing ideology. This commitment to equality, far from underlying right-wing opinions about immigration, has precisely the opposite effect – it generates left-wing opinions about immigration. Thus, two common sources of left-wing economic opinions, financial insecurity and egalitarianism, generate altogether opposing positions when it comes to immigration. It is hardly surprising, then, that left-wing opinions about the economy are not associated, in the population at large, one way or the other, with left-wing opinions about immigration or morality.

Despite the lack of a connection between economic and social positions at the mass level, there are nonetheless reasons to expect connections between these issues among the political elite, at least among those who are simultaneously politically engaged and on the left.

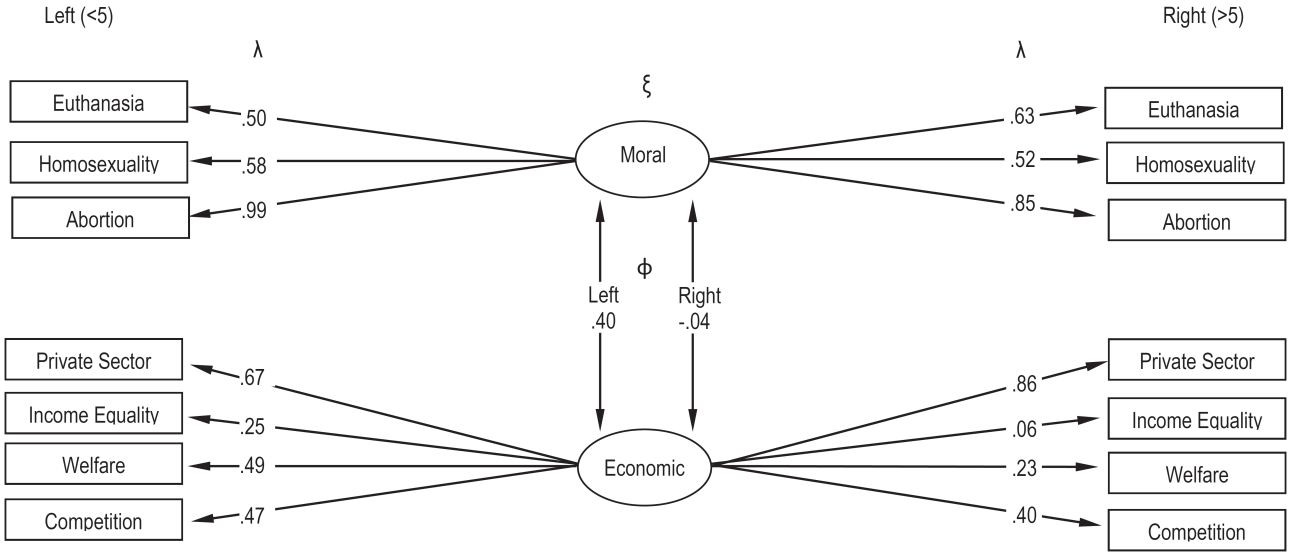
Politically engaged left-wingers, in particular, are anomalous in an important respect: they are affluent and well educated, yet they still support income equality and wealth redistribution. Income does not at all predict market outlooks among the most highly engaged left-wingers. More generally, politically engaged citizens tend to be more ideologically oriented than are the ideologically "naive" citizens who are typical of the electorate as a whole. Ideology motivates political interest, and political interest, in turn, can reinforce and shape ideology. As the argument outlined above suggests, the dominant ideological commitment on the left – equality – applies with equal facility to economic, social, and immigration issues. By contrast, the big ideas on the right – free-market materialism, religion, and out-group intolerance – do not apply individually to the full range of these issues. Thus, the expectation is that politically engaged left-wingers will bundle together their economic, social, and immigration positions, but politically engaged right-wingers will not.

Evidence

Figure 2.5 summarizes the results of formalizing these hypotheses by specifying latent variable structural equation models and then fitting these models to politically engaged Canadians on the left and the right. The summary statistics for the model of the whole are underneath the figures.[22] The most interesting results stem, first, from the connection between the observed variables (the variables represented by rectangles) and the underlying latent variables (the variables represented by circles), and second, from the relationships between the latent variables themselves. In the first case, notice that the two latent variables – "economic opinions" and "moral opinions" – have three and four indicators, respectively. Opinions about euthanasia, homosexuality, and abortion load strongly on "moral opinions," and opinions about the private sector, income equality, welfare, and competition load (somewhat less strongly) on "economic opinions." The numbers atop the arrows connecting the latent and observed variables are the standardized factor loadings (i.e., correlation coefficients). Standardized factor loadings closer to 1 indicate a stronger connection between the latent variable and the observed opinion. Standardized factor loadings closer to 0 indicate little connection.

For those on the left, economic opinions correlate with moral opinions ($r = .40$, $p < .001$). Thus, the results for those on the left are consistent

Figure 2.5. The Structure of Moral and Economic Opinions for Politically Interested Leftists and Rightists in Canada



Source: World Values Survey (Canada) (2000 and 2005)
Notes:
1 Results are standardized solutions from confirmatory factor analysis, using maximum likelihood estimation.
2 Number of observations = 413 for Left; 1055 for Right.
3 Analysis confined to politically interested respondents, defined as those with at least some interest in politics (> 2 on a 1–4 scale of political interest).

with the central expectations. There is a connection among politically engaged leftists between their opinions about economics and morality. The results are different, however, for those on the right. Like their counterparts on the left, their opinions about income equality, the private sector, the welfare state, and competition are connected to one another via general economic orientations. And "moral opinions" link answers to questions about abortion, homosexuality, and euthanasia. Yet there is no connection between these different kinds of right-wing opinions. Indeed, the correlation between economic and moral opinions is actually negative ($r = –.04$, $p = .310$). There is, in other words, no unifying latent structure that connects moral and economic opinions for those on the right. There is an economic right and a moral right.

The evidence in the comparative case is not at all different from the Canadian evidence. Like Canadians, respondents in the United States and Western Europe tend to organize their opinions about these issues in clear bundles of moral and economic opinions, but they do not, on the whole, bind together into a single coherent bundle their opinions about moral and economic issues. For most people, moral and economic issues are separate domains of consideration. The exception, again, is among politically engaged left-wingers. Indeed, by repeating the above analysis on the comparative data, the correlation between the social and economic opinions of engaged left-wingers is significant and positive ($r = .20$, $p < .001$). By contrast, the correlation is negative for the population as a whole ($r = -.06$, $p < .001$), and it is non-existent for those who are politically engaged and on the right ($r = .00$). This comparative evidence is consistent with the patterns of public opinion in Canada. Simply, activists on the political left often think about economic and moral issues as if they belong to a single domain of consideration; activists on the right, and citizens in general, do not.

Implications

Left-wing coherence at the elite level has consequences for left-wing parties. Left-wing parties are constrained by the preferences of their activists from adopting non-left-of-centre positions on economic, social, or even immigration issues. Cuts to social welfare, restrictions on abortion, and anti-immigrant positions are all outright unacceptable to sizeable proportions of left-wing activists. Nonetheless, many citizens in the electorate hold left-wing positions on economic issues and right-wing positions on social issues; likewise, many hold left-wing

positions on social morality and right-wing positions about the economy. As a result, many of the citizens who agree with left-wing parties on economic issues disagree with left-wing parties on social issues, and many who agree with left-wing parties on social issues disagree with left-wing parties on economic issues. What left-wing parties gain in the popularity of their positions on individual policy dimensions they lose to the probability calculus of combining together in their policy platforms issue dimensions, which are independent of each other in the electorate as a whole. There are many people who agree with left-wing parties on one dimension; there are few who agree with left-wing parties on multiple dimensions.

The situation is somewhat different for parties on the right. In this case, there are no connections among the right-wing elite when it comes to opinions about economic and moral issues. Many economic conservatives accord little importance to social issues; many social conservatives accord little weight to economic issues. As a result, right-wing parties in many contexts enjoy a greater degree of freedom than their counterparts on the left when it comes to manoeuvring strategically on economic and social issues. Even in circumstances where fiscal and social conservatives have to work together – such as Single Member Plurality (SMP) electoral systems, which reward parties for the number of constituencies that they win, rather than for their overall share of the popular vote, and where vote splitting therefore has particularly catastrophic effects for the electoral prospects of parties – the tension between economic and moral conservatives may generate centralizing pressures in the party as a whole. Presumably, fiscal conservatives do not want to lose electoral support by adopting non-mainstream positions on social issues of which they care little, and social conservatives are unlikely to risk losing voters by taking extreme positions on economic issues of which they care little. It is possible, over time, that the pull of partisanship in multidimensional right-wing parties may bring into alignment the social opinions of fiscal conservatives and the economic opinions of social conservatives. All things being equal, however, the pull of ideologues in multidimensional right-wing parties is unlikely to match the pull of ideologues in a multidimensional left-wing party.

Conclusion

Citizens in Canada, the United States, and Western Europe are more likely today than perhaps at any point in recent history to agree with

left-wing political parties on two key dimensions of political disagreement: the economic dimension and the moral dimension. Even so, the leftward shift in public opinion over the past quarter-century has not been accompanied by a corresponding improvement in the electoral prospects of left-wing parties. Simply, left-wing parties are doing no better today, and they may even be doing worse, than they used to. In the face of mass opinion change, right-wing parties have proven to be remarkably resilient, both in their level of support in the electorate and in their ability to form and lead governments.

This chapter has proposed a straightforward explanation that leaves little reason to expect that left-wing gains in mass opinion on economic and moral issues would translate into corresponding gains at the ballot box. Elites on the left – and indeed political parties on the left – bundle their positions on economic and moral issues into a coherent left-wing package.[23] But this packaging of political preferences is not typical of the public as a whole. It is not typical, even, of political activists as a whole. Rather, it is a peculiarity of elites and near-elites on the political left. Left-wing parties present a coherent ideological front to a fragmented electorate. Many of the voters who agree with left-wing parties on the economic dimension disagree with them on social issues. And many who agree with left-wing parties on the social issues disagree with them on the economic dimension. Indeed, there are far more people who agree with the left on one of these dimensions than who agree on both dimensions. It is the multidimensionalism of public opinion at the individual level that is consequential for understanding the behaviour of individuals in a ballot box.

Multidimensionality, of course, affect the right no less than the left. On the right, however, there is far less consensus at the elite level about the connection between economic and moral issues. Indeed, right-wing elites appear to be as divided as the public as a whole when it comes to economic and moral issues. Fiscal conservatives are not social conservatives, and social conservatives are not fiscal conservatives. Thus, where the divisions on the left cut between the masses and the elite, the divisions on the right cut between social conservatives, on the one hand, and fiscal conservatives on the other. To be sure, one consequence of this asymmetry is that right-wing parties are more vulnerable than their left-wing counterparts to fragmentation. Social conservatives and fiscal conservatives are natural allies because of their common opposition to various facets of the left, but they are uneasy allies as a result of their lack of agreement on social and economic issues. This alliance works, provided that economic conservatives do not accord a high

degree of salience to their moral opinions, and moral conservatives to their economic opinions. Another consequence, however, is that the lines of disagreement on the right are more likely to play themselves out before an election, when elites craft policy positions, rather than during elections, when elites present their policies to the electorate. This disagreement at the elite level may well generate centralizing pressures that simply do not exist at the elite level on the left. Fiscal conservatives are likely to push for moderate positions on the social dimension; social conservative for moderate positions on the economic dimension. From this standpoint, the electoral prospects of the left and right look somewhat different from the big picture of cross-time opinion change might suggest. The patterns of public opinion at the aggregate level tell us very little about the patterns of opinion at the individual level. And individuals, not aggregates, cast ballots.

NOTES

1 David Apter, *The Politics of Modernization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965); Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting* (New York: Basic Books, 1973); Samuel Huntington, "Postindustrial Politics: How Benign Will It Be?," *Comparative Politics* 6, no. 2 (1974): 163–91.

2 Ronald Inglehart, "The Silent Revolution in Europe: Intergenerational Change in Post-Industrial Societies," *American Political Science Review* 65, no. 4 (1971): 991–1017; Inglehart, *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in 43 Societies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

3 Scott Flanagan, "Changing Values in Advanced Industrial Societies," *Comparative Political Studies* 14 (1982): 403–44; Flanagan, "Changing Values in Advanced Industrial Societies: Towards a Resolution of the Values Debate," *American Political Science Review* 81 (1987): 1303–19; Neil Nevitte, *The Decline of Deference: Canadian Value-Change in Cross-National Perspective* (Peterborough: Broadview, 1996); Scott Flanagan and Aie-Rie Lee, "The New Politics, Culture Wars, and the Authoritarian-Libertarian Value Cleavage in Advanced Industrial Democracies," *Comparative Political Studies* 36 (2003): 235–70.

4 Ian Budge and Hans-Dieter Klingemann, *Mapping Policy Preferences: Estimates for Parties, Electors, and Governments 1945–1998* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Hans-Dieter Klingemann, Andrea Volkens, Judith

Bara, Ian Budge, and Michael McDonald, *Mapping Policy Preferences II: Estimates for Parties, Electors, and Governments in Eastern Europe, European Union, and OECD 1990–2003* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Wolfgang Müller and Kaare Strøm, *Coalition Governments in Western Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

5 These questions were not asked in earlier waves of the World Values Survey. There is also a question-wording change in the question about individual vs government responsibility. In 1990, the World Values Survey asked respondents to indicate their preferences on a ten-point scale, ranging from "Individuals should take more responsibility for providing for themselves," at the low extreme, to "The state should take more responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided for" at the high extreme. In 2000, the equivalent question in the WVS asked respondents to compare, on the same metric, "The government should take more responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided for," at the low end, to "People should take more responsibility to provide for themselves," at the high end. The change in the question wording, and the reversed non-random coding metric in which respondents often mistakenly treat "5" as the middle category, makes it difficult to compare the answers to this particular question across time.

6 Inglehart, *Modernization and Postmodernization*; Huntington, "Postindustrial Politics."

7 Budge and Klingemann, *Mapping Policy Preferences*, 21.

8 In both cases, the trend lines were estimated using random-effects regression suitable for cross-sectional time-series data. Even so, more technical models, and more detailed data, would be needed to examine more accurately the probability that these results occurred by chance alone.

9 Anders Widfeldt, "Sweden," *European Journal of Political Research* 42 (2003): 1091–1101; Torii Aalberg, "Norway," *European Journal of Political Research* 41 (2002): 1047–56; Lars Bille, "Denmark," *European Journal of Political Research* 41 (2002): 941–6.

10 Donald Green, Bradley Palmquist, and Eric Schickler, *Partisan Hearts and Minds: Political Parties the Social Identities of Voters* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

11 Phillip Converse, "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics," in *Ideology and Discontent*, ed. David Apter (New York: Free Press, 1964), 254.

12 The necessity of this choice has the effect of suppressing the magnitudes of the coefficients for issue positions in models predicting vote choice.

13 Converse, "Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics," 24–7.

14 Ibid., 257.

15 Herbert Blumer, "Race Prejudice as a Sense of Group Threat," *Pacific Sociological Review* 1, no. 1 (1958): 3–7; Lauren McLaren, "Anti-Immigrant Prejudice in Europe: Contact, Threat Perception and Preferences for the Exclusion of Migrants," *Social Forces* 81, no. 3 (2003): 909–36.

16 Jennifer Hochschild, *What's Fair? American Beliefs about Distributive Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981).

17 Norberto Bobbio, *Left and Right: The Significance of Political Distinction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Alain Noel and Jean-Philippe Therien, *Left and Right in Global Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

18 There is some reason to expect a possible connection between free-market support and animosity toward immigration. One possibility is that free-market support represents in some cases the veiled racism of sophisticated respondents. That is, some respondents may not express explicitly xenophobic comments because of social desirability pressures, but they may nonetheless manifest their prejudice more discreetly by opposing government benefits that disproportionately target citizens from different ethnic or racial backgrounds. Yet one problem with this line of argument in background analysis is that free-market support is not at all associated with animosity toward gays and lesbians. If some free-market supporters are, in effect, "closeted bigots," then we would expect to find some relationship between right-wing opinions about the free market and right-wing opinions about gays and lesbians. The evidence from background analyses, however, suggests no such relationship.

A second possibility is that free-market supporters oppose immigration because they believe – as many Europeans do – that immigrants draw disproportionately from the welfare state. In other words, free-market supporters do not oppose the welfare state because they dislike immigrants, but they oppose immigration because they dislike the welfare state. Further analysis suggests that the latter of these explanations is more accurate in the European case. The background analysis in this case was conducted by predicting opinions about immigration using an ordinal probit model that included among the covariates the answers of respondents to the following question: "Most people who come to live here work and pay taxes. They also use health and welfare services. On balance, do you think people who come here take out more than they put in or put in more than they take out?" Supporters and opponents of the free market are about equally likely to answer that immigrants "take out more than they put in." The view that immigrants draw heavily from the welfare state is in turn associated with considerably less favourable opinions about immigration.

Yet when an additional item is added to the model to tap the interaction between free-market support, on the one hand, and opinions about welfare usage among immigrants, on the other, an analysis of the interaction effect indicates that the statistical relationship between opinions about immigrants' welfare usage and opinions about immigration is conditional on higher levels of free-market support. That is, the view that immigrants draw heavily on the welfare state underlies opposition to immigration only among those who oppose the welfare state in the first place. Thus, the link between free-market support and right-leaning opinions about immigration may well be conditional on the extent to which immigrants draw – or are perceived by free-market supporters to draw – more heavily than other citizens on welfare state resources.

19 Christopher Cochrane, "The Asymmetrical Structure of Left/Right Disagreement: Left-Wing Coherence and Right-Wing Fragmentation in Comparative Party Policy," *Party Politics* 19, no. 1 (2013): 104–21.

20 John R. Zaller, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

21 McLaren, "Anti-Immigrant Prejudice in Europe."

22 These statistics appear to indicate that the models predict more effectively the structure of opinion among politically engaged left-wingers than among politically engaged right-wingers, which is consistent with the hypotheses that this chapter puts forward. In CFA, a lower and less significant Chi-square statistic (^{2}) is a sign of better model fit. Even so, the Chi-square test statistic is also affected by the number of observations in the model, and there are more observations on the right than there are on the left. Thus, comparing these figures of model fit is not an appropriate way to compare the left and the right.

23 Cochrane, "Left-Wing Coherence and Right-Wing Fragmentation."