Evangelicalism, Conservative Parties and Voting Behavior in Latin America *

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Abstract

To come

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1 Introduction

In many democracies around the world, a candidate's group membership is an important factor in voting behavior. All else equal, voters should be more likely to favor a politician with whom they share a salient identity, such as religion, ethnicity, social class, or gender (Boas, 2014; McDermott, 2009). Expectations of identity voting are particularly strong for members of politically-underrepresented minority groups, for whom descriptive representation may translate into tangible policy gains (Boas and Smith, Forthcoming). In the context of inter-group competition, a candidate's group membership may also influence the voting behavior of out-group members, who should be less likely to support them (Boas, 2014; Brewer, 1979; Nicholson, 2012; Samuels and Zucco Jr, 2014).

While group identity often matters for the vote, the salience of a particular identity and the cohesiveness of the corresponding social group may vary dramatically across countries, with implications for voting behavior. For example, Muslims are a similarly-sized, politically underrepresented minority in both India and Israel, but the Shia-Sunni divide is more salient in the former, whereas Muslims as a whole—and indeed, Arabs more broadly—are particularly aggrieved in the latter. All else equal, one would expect status as a Muslim to more readily win in-group votes in Israel, whereas subgroup membership in Shia versus Sunni sects might be more important in India.

While group membership is an important factor in voting behavior, underrepresented minorities often seek more than descriptive representation; they may have specific policy goals as well. In some societies, out-group politicians may share these goals, generating conflicting incentives for minority voters. For example, in a U.S. election featuring an African-American incumbent, a strong white conservative challenger, and a somewhat weaker Latino challenger, one would have reduced expectations of in-group identity voting among the Latino electorate, who might prioritize their shared policy interests in affirmative action and support the black candidate who is better positioned to defend them.

The present paper explores these potentially conflicting influences on voting behavior—group

identity, subgroup identity, and policy preferences—focusing on the case of evangelical Christians in Latin America. Specifically, I examine the degree to which evangelical voters support evangelical candidates for legislative office in Brazil, Chile, and Peru, three of South America's four most heavily evangelical countries. Evangelicals are an underrepresented and historically aggrieved minority in each country, leading to an expectation of in-group identity voting. Yet in recent years, as values issues such as abortion and same-sex marriage have come to the fore, evangelicals' policy priorities have come to coincide strongly with those of non-evangelical candidates from mainstream right-wing parties, which might reduce the in-group voting effect. Moreover, competition among different evangelical churches, which is particularly strong in Brazil, may mean that subgroup identity voting is stronger than pan-evangelical identity voting.

The paper, part of a larger book project on evangelicals and electoral politics in Latin America, explores the competing influences on evangelical voting behavior using both survey data and electoral results. First, using survey vignette experiments conducted in each country during recent general election campaigns, I show that evangelicals in each country are more likely to favor a generic candidate for Congress when that candidate is identified as an evangelical Christian. Next, I turn to an ecological analysis of vote for actual candidates for Congress. While there is a positive correlation in each country between evangelical share of the population and vote for evangelical candidates, it is strongest in Brazil, where mainstream conservative parties are weak, and weakest in Chile, where Catholic politicians from mainstream Right parties have been outspoken proponents of a socially conservative agenda. Hence, there is evidence that policy voting can substitute for identity voting. Finally, I argue that in Brazil, the group identity voting effect is likely driven by subgroup identity voting, as there is a particularly strong relationship between membership in politically ambitious Pentecostal churches and vote share for their candidates.

2 Theory and Hypotheses

2.1 Disaggregating Religion: Social Identity and Interest Groups

How might a candidate's religion affect voting behavior? To answer this question, one must first disaggregate the concept of religion into specific dimensions that are relevant for voters' preferences among politicians. In this paper, I conceive of religion primarily in two distinct ways—as a social identity and as an interest group (McClendon and Riedl, 2018). Both have implications for a voter's decision to vote for or against an evangelical candidate.

Organized religion is by definition a social identity, binding people together in a shared community of believers. Religions define in-groups by specifying the criteria for belonging: the rituals and practices one must participate in, the theology one must subscribe to, and, in the case of ethno-religions such as traditional Judaism, the line of descent that determines membership. Collective worship, coming of age ceremonies, religious marriages, and the celebration of holidays all serve to reinforce group membership on a regular basis. Religion as a group identity is so powerful that it can persist long after religious practice or belief has declined. In Wave 6 of the World Values Survey, 51% of those who never attend services, 47% of those who never pray, and 30% of those who do not believe in God nonetheless listed a religious affiliation rather than saying that they had none.

While religion is inherently a group identity, it is not automatically a politically salient one. Communities of believers that are free to practice their faith without impediment or any sense of threat to their way of life may have little motivation to mix religion and politics. Others may find themselves entering into conflict with rival religious groups, persecuted by the state, subject to discrimination in broader society, or unable to live according to the tenets of their faith. Shared grievances, especially those that derive from minority status, tend to make religious identity more politically salient. Theology can also militate for or against political involvement. Pentecostal Christian denominations that embrace premillennial theology conceive of the world as a "waiting room" for the afterlife and view politics as a pointless distraction from the principal task

of evangelization. By contrast, the postmillennial theology common among neo-Pentecostal denominations tasks Christians with building the "Kingdom of God on earth" prior to the second coming—a charge that implies righting the wrongs of the world, often through political action (Pérez Guadalupe and Grundberger, 2018; Campos, 2010; Carvalho, 2015; Ortiz R., 2012).

When a religious group identity is politically salient, it naturally gives rise to a second dimension of the concept of religion: that of an interest group. Faith communities whose theology tasks them with righting the wrongs of the world have preferences for particular policies—those that contribute to fighting poverty, ending war, preventing abortion, or whatever their causes may be. Groups that suffer persecution or harassment have an even more fundamental interest in laws that ensure religious freedom and protect their right to practice their faith. When religious communities act as interest groups, they seek to pursue their preferred policies through lobbying, public demonstrations, placing their own members in office, and any number of other tactics.

Conceiving of religion as both a social identity and an interest group offers insight into the likely affects of a candidate's religion on voting behavior. Prior research has found that, all else equal, voters tend to favor candidates who share an ascriptive identity with them, including race, gender, occupation, and religion. Social identity theory predicts in-group voting of this sort thanks to the psychic benefit that it provides and the intrinsic sense of attachment to members of one's "team." Yet a candidate's ascriptive identity can also serve as a heuristic, offering voters who do not know them well some insight into their likely policy positions. To the extent that a religious community is organized as an interest group with a clear set of policy preferences, co-religion should signal to in-group members that a candidate is prepared to defend causes that they presumably share.

Group identities often exist at multiple levels of abstraction—a member of the Assemblies of God is also a Pentecostal, a Protestant, and a Christian—so the effect of co-religion on in-group voting behavior should depend on the strength of intra-group cleavages. Where the major divide in society is between Christians and Muslims, religion at the highest level of abstraction is likely to define relevant social identities and interest groups. Elsewhere, Catholic versus Protestant, Pentecostal versus Mainline Protestant, or even divisions among particular Pentecostal churches might

be more relevant. Hence, for a particular religious identity, stronger in-group voting effects are to be expected when subgroup cleavages are less salient.

2.2 Evangelicalism and Voting Behavior in Latin America

Evangelical Christians constitute a growing yet also diverse religious minority in Latin America. In this paper, I use the term "evangelical" in the same way that *evangélico* is commonly used in Spanish and Portuguese—to denote Protestant Christians of any sort, regardless of denomination. Region-wide, around 20% of Latin Americans classify themselves as Protestant (Boas and Smith, 2015; Pew Research Center, 2014). The majority of these identify with or belong to Pentecostal denominations, whose theology and practice emphasize mystical gifts of the Holy Spirit such as speaking in tongues and faith healing. Yet Latin American evangelicalism is also internally diverse, whether one speaks of Pentecostal churches or Mainline Protestant ones. In the 2014 Pew survey on Religion in Latin America, the average effective number of Protestant denominations was 6.1 across the 18 countries of Latin America.[1] Moreover, some large denominations, such as the Assemblies of God in Brazil, are internally divided into several distinct factions.

In some Latin American countries, evangelicals' weight within the population has translated into a powerful presence in elected office. As a consequence, there has been growing interest in the question of how evangelicals vote, especially when co-religionists are on the ballot. During Brazil's 2014 presidential campaign, when evangelical candidate Marina Silva led the polls for much of the race, newsweekly Época highlighted "The Power of the Evangelical Vote" in a cover story on her rise. Likewise, international media coverage of the 2018 presidential elections in Costa Rica, which featured an evangelical candidate in the runoff, paid substantial attention to the question of evangelicals' likely voting behavior.

Academic research on the evangelicals' voting behavior in Latin America suggest that evangel-

[1] This number is an underestimate, since Pew uses residual categories to group together smaller denominations.

ical voters do indeed tend to vote for evangelical candidates. Most studies have focused on the case of Brazil, which combines good survey data and a number of evangelical candidates for president or governor over the years. In 2002, evangelicals were more likely than Catholics to support co-religionist Anthony Garotinho for president, but their voting behavior was indistinguishable in 2006, when no evangelical was on the ballot (Bohn, 2004, 2007). In 2010 and 2014, evangelicals were more likely than those of other faiths to support Marina Silva for president (Smith, Forthcoming). Likewise, Pentecostal evangelicals were more likely than Catholics to vote for Francisco Rossi in the runoff for governor of São Paulo in 1994 (Gaskill, 2002). Moving beyond the Brazilian case, Boas and Smith (2015) conduct a pooled analysis of presidential elections in five countries, showing that evangelicals are significantly more likely than Catholics to vote for an evangelical candidate when one is on the ballot.

Existing studies of evangelical voting behavior offer important insights, but they also have their limitations. Prior research on this question has used observational data, meaning that causal interpretations require strong modeling assumptions. Moreover, to the extent that one believes these assumptions, existing studies have been designed to estimate the effect of a voter's religion on support for specific candidates rather than the effect of a candidate's evangelicalism on the voting behavior of fellow believers. It is certainly suggestive that Brazilian evangelicals voted differently from those of other faiths when an evangelical candidate is on the ballot and were indistinguishable from other voters when one was not. Yet we cannot say for certain whether it was Anthony Garotinho and Marina Silva's religion—as opposed to their charisma, status as outsiders, policy proposals, or some other characteristic—that explains why evangelical voters were disproportionately likely to support them.

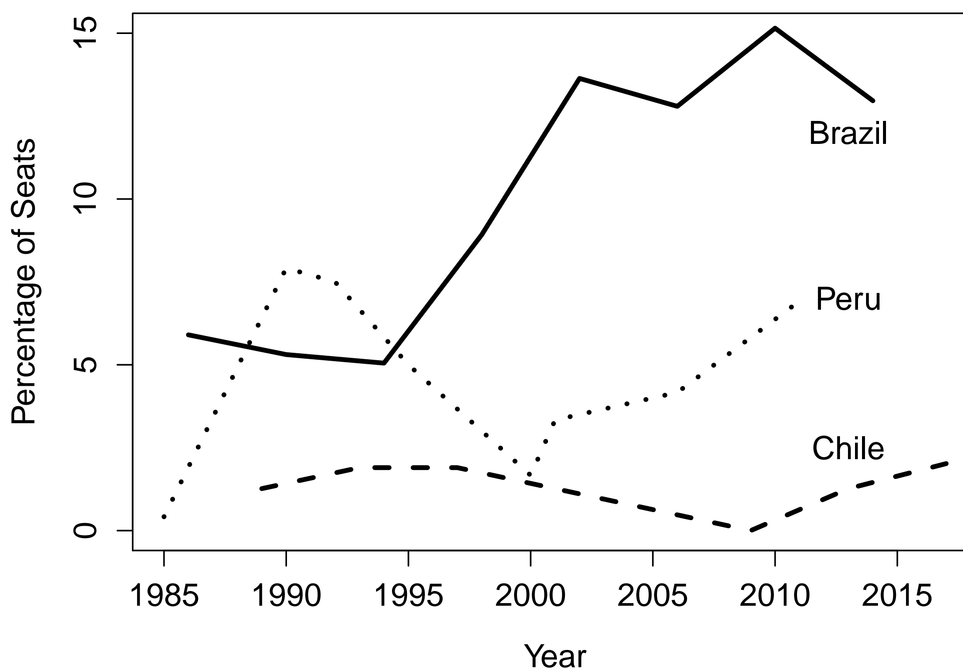
To get at the effect of a candidate's evangelicalism on voting behavior, I adopt two different strategies than have been employed in prior research. First, I draw on survey experiments asking about vote intention for a hypothetical candidate in an upcoming legislative election, randomly varying whether the candidate is described as being an evangelical Christian. By employing a treatment that only affects the candidate's religion, while keeping all other aspects the same, we

can be certain that any differences in vote intention between treatment and control groups is a consequence of the hypothetical candidate's evangelicalism.

Survey experiments based on hypothetical vignettes have limitations in terms of external validity, so I also conduct an ecological analysis of the relationship between evangelical share of the population and vote for evangelical candidates across two or more elections in each country. By shifting to the legislative level and averaging across elections, I move away from the "proper name problem" (Przeworski and Teune, 1970) that arises when trying to draw inferences from voting behavior in a small number of presidential elections with specific evangelical candidates. If we find a robust relationship between evangelical share of the population and support for hundreds of evangelical candidates who vary in terms of party affiliation, gender, political experience, and so on, we can be more certain that the relationship is a function of what these candidates and voters do have in common—their religion.

In terms of country cases, the analysis examines Brazil, Peru, and Chile, which are the focus on the broader book project of which this paper is part. Together with Bolivia, these three countries have the largest evangelical shares of the population in South America—31% in Brazil, 21% in Chile, and 16% in Peru according to the 2016–17 AmericasBarometer. Yet there are substantial cross-national differences in terms of evangelicals' involvement and success with legislative politics, as highlighted in Figure 1. While Brazilian evangelicals have maintained a steady and growing legislative presence since the transition to democracy, Chile has had, on average, only two evangelical representatives in Congress. Peru represents an intermediate case; evangelicals gained a significant legislative presence in 1990, on the coattails of Alberto Fujimori, but experienced mixed results in subsequent elections. While there are myriad potential reasons for these cross-national differences in evangelical representation—and I argue elsewhere that differences in the politicization of evangelical identity, affecting the decision to contest elections in the first place, are a key component (Boas, 2018)—cross-national differences in voting behavior are a potential piece of the puzzle.

Figure 1: Legislative Seat Shares for Evangelicals



2.3 In-Group Identity Voting

Historically, evangelicals were an aggrieved religious minority in Latin America. The region's first post-independence constitutions generally established Roman Catholicism as the official state-sanctioned religion and forbade the public practice of any other. Constitutional guarantees of the freedom to worship, secular marriage and civil registries, and other basic rights for religious minorities were achieved only political battles in which incipient evangelical communities aligned with Liberals and Radicals. Even after de jure gains in religious freedom, informal harassment by authorities continued for years in many countries, well into the twentieth century. Until recent decades, to the extent that evangelicals got involved in politics, it was principally to defend religious freedom and legal equality with the Catholic Church.

Evangelicals' history status as an aggrieved minority has contributed to a well established group identity in Brazil, Chile, and Peru, despite denominational difference among churches. In the 2010, 2012, and 2014 AmericasBarometer surveys, evangelicals in these three countries almost always had significantly higher levels of confidence in "the evangelical church"—which does not exist as

a unified entity—than Catholics did in the Catholic Church.[2]

Yet if a history of discrimination has contributed to a shared sense of evangelical identity in all three countries, Brazil, Chile, and Peru also vary in the cohesion of the evangelical community as a whole and the electoral efforts of individual churches. Though Peru and Chile differ in terms of evangelicals' electoral ambitions—much more extensive in the former than the latter—major efforts in both cases have been inter-denominational. Since the 1980s, Peru has seen multiple efforts, most unsuccessful, to form interdenominational evangelical political parties (López Rodríguez, 2004). The most successful of these efforts, National Restoration, ran 62 evangelical candidates for Congress in 2006, drawn from at least 37 different churches, with no more than 7 from any single church. Evangelical party-building efforts in Chile in the 1990s and in 2017—all of them unsuccessful—have also been interdenominational. Likewise, a supra-partisan effort to promote a slate of socially conservative evangelicals for Congress in 2017 featured 14 candidates affiliated with 12 distinct churches.

In contrast, specific Pentecostal churches have been the protagonists of evangelicals' electoral efforts in Brazil. The Assemblies of God (AD), Brazil's largest evangelical denomination, promoted a slate of candidates in the 1986 constituent assembly election and successfully elected 14 of them, nearly double the size of the next largest church contingent. It has continued this practice in more recent elections, publishing an official list of church-sponsored candidates in its magazine in 2010, for example. The Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (IURD) has been even more electorally ambitious. It takes a census of church members prior to each election, identifies specific church-affiliated candidates to run in each district, provides institutional support for their campaigns via sermons and church-owned media, and carefully instructs church members on how to vote (Machado, 2006; Oro, 2006). Several scholars report observing the IURD's promotion of individual candidates during fieldwork (Gaskill, 2002; Smith, Forthcoming). In a survey of evangelicals conducted in Rio de Janeiro in 1994, 95% of IURD members who voted for an evangelical

[2]Only in Peru in 2014 are the estimates not significantly different from one another.

deputy chose a candidate from their own church (Fernandes et al., 1998, 126).

Moreover, evangelical political parties in Brazil have been sponsored by individual churches, in contrast to the inter-denominational efforts in Chile and Peru. The Brazilian Republican Party, established in 2005, is essentially the party of the IURD (Cerqueira do Nascimento, 2017), while efforts from 2014–2017 to organize the Christian Republican Party, though ultimately unsuccessful, were spearheaded by AD.

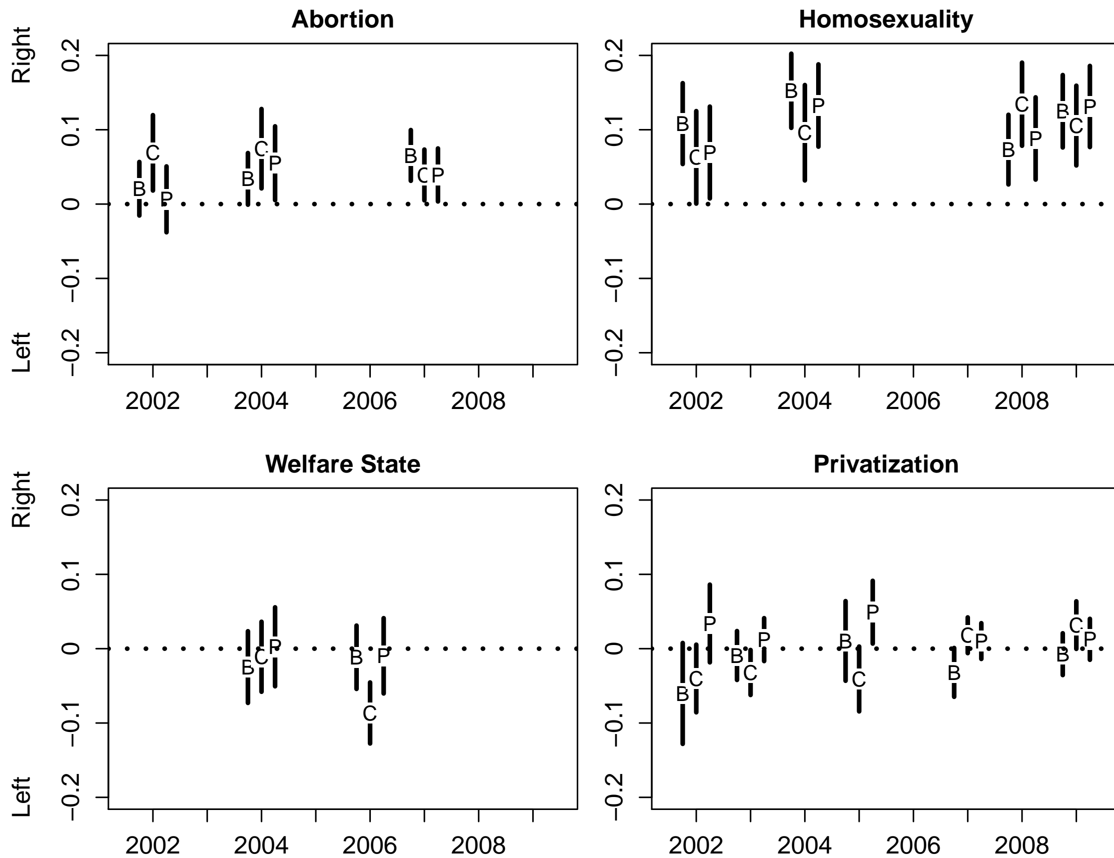
Given evangelicals' common group identity and shared interests in Brazil, Chile, and Peru, I hypothesize that a candidate's evangelicalism is likely to win votes among co-religionists in each country. However, due to the electoral efforts of individual Pentecostal churches in Brazil, interdenominational cleavages should be more salient in the latter country, which ought to dilute the degree to which merely being evangelical can win votes. Hence, I hypothesize that co-religion at a broad level will have a smaller effect on in-group voting behavior in Brazil than in Chile and Peru. I also hypothesize that in Brazil, identity voting effects will be stronger among members and candidates from specific evangelical churches—particularly the IURD—than they will be for evangelicals as a whole. I have no such expectation in Chile and Peru, though I am unable to test the hypothesis in these latter cases, due to data limitations.

2.4 Out-Group Policy Voting

In recent decades, the political agenda in most Latin American countries has shifted in a way that potentially brings evangelicals more into line with mainstream right-wing parties dominated by Catholic politicians. Major battles regarding legal equality with the Catholic Church were largely settled by the 2000s. Meanwhile, issues of abortion and LGBTQ rights—the latter scarcely even discussed in most countries through the 1990s—have gained a central place on the political agenda.

While evangelicals are routinely seen as being on the right in Latin American politics, this characterization is primarily accurate with respect to values issues, not those issues of redistribution and market reform that dominated the region's politics in the 1980s and 1990s. On the latter

Figure 2: Evangelical versus Non-Evangelical Issue Positions



NOTE: Letters give mean differences between issue positions of evangelicals and non-evangelicals in each country (B = Brazil, C = Chile, P = Peru), and lines indicate 95% confidence intervals. Each item is rescaled 0–1, with higher numbers corresponding to the right-wing position. Data are from the Latinobarómetro surveys.

issues, evangelicals tend toward the center or even the left of the political spectrum, in keeping with their relatively modest socioeconomic status in most countries. Figure 2 uses data from Latinobarómetro surveys in the 2000s to examine whether evangelicals stand out in terms of their attitudes toward toward abortion, homosexuality, the welfare state, and privatization. All items are rescaled 0–1, with higher numbers corresponding to the right-wing position; the Figure plots mean differences between evangelicals and non-evangelicals. On attitudes toward abortion and homosexuality, evangelicals are always to the right of non-evangelicals; more often than not, the difference is statistically significant. On economic issues, however, evangelicals are almost always indistinguishable from those of other religious beliefs.

The rise of values issues on the political agenda, combined with the completion of market reform and the resolution of most major evangelical-Catholic conflicts, means that evangelicals are potentially well-represented in present-day politics by mainstream right-wing parties defending socially conservative policy positions. As relative newcomers to electoral politics in most countries, evangelical politicians may not be as firmly established as conservative Catholics, who are probably more likely to be incumbents, occupy positions of leadership in Congress, and belong to parties (and potentially families) that dominate national politics. To the extent that evangelical voters are motivated by values issues, they might opt for non-evangelical politicians from mainstream Right parties over evangelical candidates, thus reducing the magnitude of the in-group identity voting effect.

Chile, Peru, and Brazil differ significantly in the degree to which non-evangelical, mainstream right-wing parties offer an attractive alternative for defending socially conservative issue positions. In Brazil, given evangelicals' longstanding presence in Congress, they have been at the forefront of battles over values issues ever since the 1987–88 Constituent Assembly (Boas, 2018). The major right-wing party during most of the post-1985 period, the Democrats (or Liberal Front Party prior to 2007), is more closely associated with economic liberalism than social conservatism. Other right-wing parties that have surpassed it in recent elections are either similarly inclined toward economic liberalism (the Progressive Party) or closely associated with evangelicals (the Brazilian Republican Party and the Party of the Republic). Hence, I do not expect that voting for mainstream right-wing parties such as the Democrats will serve as a substitute for evangelical identity voting in Brazil.

Chile lies at the other extreme. Its two major right-wing parties, National Renewal (RN) and the Independent Democratic Union (UDI), have strong conservative Catholic contingents—especially UDI, many of whose leaders belong to conservative Catholic societies such as Opus Dei. Catholic legislators from mainstream Right parties have long led the battle on values issues; Hernán Larraín of UDI sponsored a bill to increase criminal penalties for illegal abortions that was only narrowly defeated in 1998 (Blofield, 2006). In this context, conservative Catholics have sought and received

explicit support from evangelicals. In the 2017 presidential election, a number of evangelical leaders and politicians, including the party-in-formation United in Faith, endorsed former UDI senator and far-right independent candidate José Antonio Kast. In Chile, therefore, I expect that some evangelicals will support non-evangelical candidates from UDI, reducing the in-group identity voting effect. I also expect that evangelical support for UDI will be stronger in more recent elections, as values issues have risen to the fore.

The question of evangelical support for established right-wing parties in Peru is more complex. Given Peru's fragmented party system, the most prominent socially conservative Catholic politicians are not concentrated in a single or even a few parties. For example, Rafael Rey, an Opus Dei member, leads his own party, National Renewal; Martha Chávez, also an Opus Dei member, has been a *fujimorista* her whole political career. Luis Solari, another prominent Catholic conservative, belongs to Possible Peru, which also includes prominent champions of LGBTQ rights and is not normally considered right-wing or socially conservative. The Popular Christian Party (PPC), the longstanding party most closely associated with social conservatism, has declined substantially since the 1990s; it has contested recent elections only via alliances, holds no seats in the current Congress, and is associated with an unpopular political establishment that many evangelical outsiders run against. I do not expect evangelical support for alliances involving the PPC.

Fujimorismo, despite its recent splits and crises, is arguably the best-organized party in Peru that defends socially conservative policy positions. I do expect evangelical support for non-evangelical *fujimorista* candidates, though any such correlation would be more readily attributable to the longstanding alliance between Fujimori and evangelicals—dating back to 1990—than to policy positions its legislators have adopted in recent battles over values issues.

3 Survey Experiments

As a first approach to testing hypotheses regarding in-group identity voting effects, I rely on survey vignette experiments. These online experiments were conducted during the 2–4 weeks prior

to recent general elections—November 17, 2013 in Chile, October 5, 2014 in Brazil, and April 10, 2016 in Peru. To recruit respondents, I used advertisements on Facebook, a common approach for online surveys in comparative politics (Boas, Christenson and Glick, Forthcoming). Advertisements targeted all adult Facebook users living in the corresponding country, and they offered a chance to win an iPad in exchange for participating in a 10-minute university survey. To avoid conditioning effects and encourage the broadest possible opt-in sample, advertisements said nothing about politics, and the online consent forms referred to a research study on "Peruvian public opinion," "how people think about Chilean current events" or "what Brazilians think about certain everyday issues."

Each survey included a question that described a generic, hypothetical candidate for Congress, including party affiliation and basic demographic details that are made public by the electoral authority in each country, and asked about the respondent's likelihood of voting for a similar candidate. Those in the treatment condition were also told that the candidate was a member of an evangelical church. The specific text used in each country is summarized in Table 1, with the additional text for the treatment condition in bold type:

Aside from religion, the description of the hypothetical candidate was as generic as possible so as to avoid priming any additional associations. The candidate's name was chosen from among the most common given names and surnames of real candidates in each election (while verifying that no real candidate had the same full name). The surnames are of Spanish or Portuguese origin, which avoids triggering any heuristics associated with racial or ethnic minorities. For Chile, the fictional candidate's electoral coalition was randomized between the major left- and right-wing alliances, both of which sponsor a handful of evangelical candidates. For Brazil, I chose a large centrist party, which should not convey any strong ideological leaning. For Peru, I opted for a candidate from a new party, which is very common. Other biographical details, such as sex, age, occupation, and education level, are the median or modal values of all candidates in that election.

Each survey included a second, orthogonal experiment that sought to prime evangelicals' association with prior authoritarian regimes (Pinochet, Fujimori, and the Brazilian military regime);

Table 1: **Text of Vignette Experiments**

Chile	**Brazil**	**Peru**
Suppose that Alejandro Pérez is running for Congress for the [Alliance for Chile/New Majority]. He is 35 years old, a businessman, **and a member of an evangelical church.**	Suppose that José Carlos da Silva is running for Congress for the PMDB. He is 48 years old, married, has finished high school, **and is a member of an evangelical church.**	Suppose that Luis García is running for Congress on the list of a new political party. He is a 49-year-old businessman who has completed university and has never held elected office. **He is a member of an evangelical church.**

How likely are you to vote for a person like this?

Not at all o o o o o o o Very

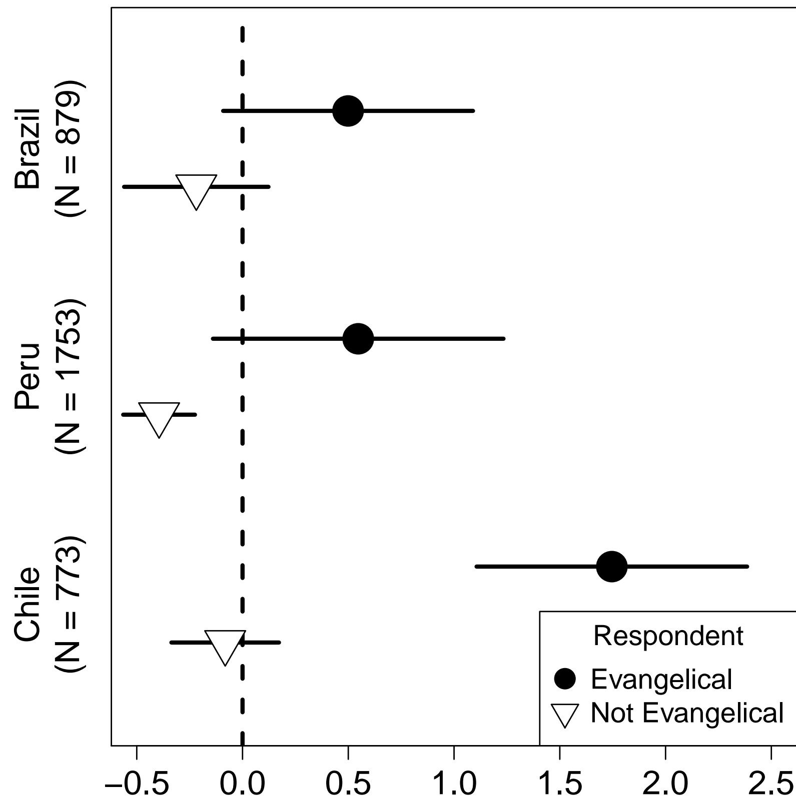
NOTE: Text in bold type was provided only in the treatment condition.

this treatment was administered via the question immediately prior to the candidate vignette. I analyze the results of this intervention elsewhere for the Chilean case (Boas, 2016). To maximize statistical power, the present analysis includes respondents who were in either the control or the treatment condition of this priming experiment. I obtain similar results to those presented below when examining only those in the control condition, though estimates are less precise given the reduced sample size.

To estimate treatment effects, I take the simple mean difference in vote intention between treatment and control groups, presenting separate estimates for evangelical respondents and non-evangelical respondents. These estimates are summarized in Figure 3.

The results of these survey experiments offer support for the hypothesis that a candidate's evangelicalism boosts support among co-religionists in all three countries. For Chile, we obtain the strongest evidence of evangelical identity voting: here, a candidate's evangelicalism boosts intended vote by a statistically significant 1.75 points on a 7-point scale. As expected, effects are smallest in Brazil (though statistically indistinguishable from those in Peru), where the salience

Figure 3: Effect of Candidate Evangelicalism on Vote Intention



NOTE: Icons give point estimates and lines indicate 95% confidence intervals. Dependent variable, likelihood of voting for a candidate with a similar profile, is measured on a 1–7 Likert scale.

of subgroup identity is expected to reduce the magnitude of any broad-level identity voting effect. For both Brazil and Peru, the estimated effect is about 0.5 points on a seven-point scale, and it falls short of conventional levels of statistical significance. In the Peruvian case, a candidate's evangelicalism also has a small and statistically significant negative effect on the vote intention of non-evangelical respondents.

While survey vignette experiments excel at internal validity, they also have limitations. Intended vote in a hypothetical scenario primarily offers insight into how respondents might act if they were freed of all of the normal influences on voting behavior, including clientelism, partisanship, and tradeoffs among different dimensions of the candidate choice set (Boas, Hidalgo and Melo,

Forthcoming). In a referendum on a single hypothetical candidate, respondents are not asked to consider any alternatives. In a real election, a Chilean evangelical voter might still prefer a co-religionist, all else equal, but ultimately opt for a socially conservative Catholic with years of legislative experience over an evangelical newcomer. Moreover, hypotheses about subgroup identity voting in the Brazilian case involve too much of a micro-level a phenomenon to test via standard survey experiments, since members of any one evangelical church are such a small share of the population.

4 Ecological Analysis

To boost external validity, and to test additional hypotheses about subgroup identity voting in Brazil and evangelical support for mainstream right-wing parties in all three countries, I turn to an ecological analysis, focusing on the relationship between evangelical share of the population and vote share for evangelical candidates. Ecological analysis requires, first and foremost, a list of evangelical candidates—data that are not typically gathered by electoral authorities. In Peru and Chile, drawing on a variety of secondary sources, I have built a database of evangelical candidates for national legislative office from the 1980s to the present. In Brazil, where there are many more legislative candidates overall, and where evangelicals have a much stronger presence in electoral politics, the only reliable lists are of candidates who served in legislative office, not those who ran.

In an effort to identify all evangelicals, and not just those who are most public about their faith, I pool all available lists, counting a candidate as evangelical if he of she is ever identified as such. In Brazil, my data sources include surveys of all legislators by the lower chamber's Centro de Documentação e Informação (CEDI), which identify a number of evangelicals—typically from the more politically moderate, historical Protestant denominations—that do not appear in public lists of the "evangelical caucus."[3]

[3]CEDI data were generously shared by Simoni Junior, Moreira Dardaque and Malta Mingardi

In all three countries, I assume that evangelical politicians are evangelical throughout their entire careers, except for a few prominent cases of known conversions.[4] Hence, a candidate identified as evangelical in 1990 who also ran in 2010 (or vice versa) is counted as evangelical in both elections, even if she did not appear in the list of evangelical politicians in both years. For Brazil, this decision rule means that my database of evangelicals does include election losers as long as they served in office (typically via election, though some served as substitutes for list-mates who took leaves of absence) at some point in their political careers.

In each country, I conduct the analysis using all legislative elections for which vote totals for each candidate are publicly available at the municipal level (the *município* in Brazil, the *comuna* in Chile, and the *distrito* in Peru), which is the lowest level of aggregation that can be readily matched to census data. These are the elections of 1998–2010 in Brazil, 1989–2017 in Chile, and 2006 and 2011 in Peru. Municipal-level results are also available for Brazil in 2014 and Peru in 2016, but I am still finalizing my lists of evangelical candidates in these elections. For simplicity and comparability across countries, I consider only lower-house elections in Brazil and Chile (Peru is unicameral). The dependent variable is municipal-level vote share for all evangelical candidates who ran in the corresponding electoral district in that election. Municipalities in electoral districts with no evangelical candidates are dropped from the analysis.

My measurement approach for the dependent variable necessarily produces a number of near-zeroes in places where the only evangelical candidates were also-rans—i.e., those who belonged to unpopular parties, had few campaign resources, or appeared on the ballot but may not have campaigned at all. A large number of near-zeroes would tend to weaken the correlation between

(2016).

[4]For example, Mercedes Cabanillas, a former president of the Peruvian Congress, converted to evangelicalism in 1992; see http://protestantedigital.com/internacional/19403/Peru_la_Presidenta_del_Congreso_Mercedes_Cabanillas_declara_ser_evangelica.

evangelical share of the population and vote share for evangelical candidates. Moreover, the issue is of differential severity across countries. In Chile, with low district magnitude (especially prior to 2017) and a more consolidated party system, there are few extremely weak candidates of this sort. There are many such candidates in Brazil and Peru, though in the former case, nearly all would be excluded from the database of evangelical politicians by virtue of its being limited to those that have held office at some point in their careers.

I seek to deal with the issue of excessively weak candidates in two ways. First, all models include electoral district-by-election fixed effects, which would account for evangelical candidates on the ballot in that district being unusually weak (or strong). Second, as a robustness check for the analysis of Brazil, future versions of this analysis will also identify evangelical candidates as those who declare their occupation as "priest or member of a religious order or sect" or use religious titles such as "Pastor" or "Bishop" in their names on the electronic ballot (Boas, 2014). Given Vatican prohibitions on Catholic priests running for office, nearly all such candidates are evangelical. Though this approach would primarily identify clergy, not lay evangelicals, it would not automatically exclude the weaker also-ran candidates, thus making the analysis more comparable, in some respects, to that of Peru.

To measure evangelical share of the municipal population, as well as a variety of demographic control variables, I use the most recent available census in each country that asked about religion: 2010 in Brazil, 2007 in Peru, and 2002 in Chile. Chile's 2012 census also inquired about religion, but micro-level data have been embargoed due to irregularities in census administration. Religion is a slow-moving demographic variable—in Chile, percent evangelical at the *comuna* level in 1992 and 2002 are correlated at 0.98—so I doubt that more recent data, if they were available, would make much difference. In future versions of this analysis, I plan to use data from Brazil's 2000 census and Chile's 1992 census for analysis of the earlier elections. All census figures are calculated based on the 18-and-over population or as close to it as possible.

To test hypotheses regarding evangelical support for mainstream right-wing parties, I use as an alternate dependent variable the municipal-level vote share for the PFL/DEM in Brazil; UDI in

Chile; and the electoral coalitions of *fujimorismo* (Alliance for the Future and Force 2011) and the PPC (National Unity and Alliance for the Great Change) in Peru. I subtract off any votes for evangelical candidates on these lists.

To examine the relationship between evangelical share of the population and vote for evangelical candidates or mainstream right-wing parties, I estimate Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regressions.[5] All models include electoral district-by-election fixed effects, as described above. In addition, I present a version of each model that includes a number of census-derived control variables that could affect support for evangelical candidates and right-wing parties: municipal population (logged), median age, percent male, percent high school graduates (college in Chile), percent unemployed, percent living with an unmarried partner, and percent with no religion.

Given the long time series of Chilean elections and the hypothesis that evangelical support for UDI will be stronger in more recent years, I divide the analysis of Chile into distinct time periods. The first, from 1989–2001, is a time when evangelical political mobilization focused on gaining legal equality with the Catholic Church via the Religious Worship Law, which passed in 1999. The second, from 2005–2013, covers a period in which values issues started to become more prominent on the political agenda, beginning with conflict over the morning-after pill in the early 2000s (Vivanco Martínez, 2008). I estimate a third model for 2017, given the shift to a new electoral system and the comparatively intense evangelical mobilization around values issues in that election (Boas, 2018).

Given the differences in how candidate religion is measured and communicated to voters in the survey experiment versus real life, I have different expectations for the size of in-group identity voting effects in Brazil. In the survey experiment, a hypothetical candidate identified as evangelical is *only* evangelical; respondents have no way of knowing whether he is a member of IURD, AD, or some other denomination. Hence, the survey experiment measures only the evangelical identity

[5]Future versions of this analysis will include specifications better suited to ecological analysis and will use standard errors clustered at the municipal level.

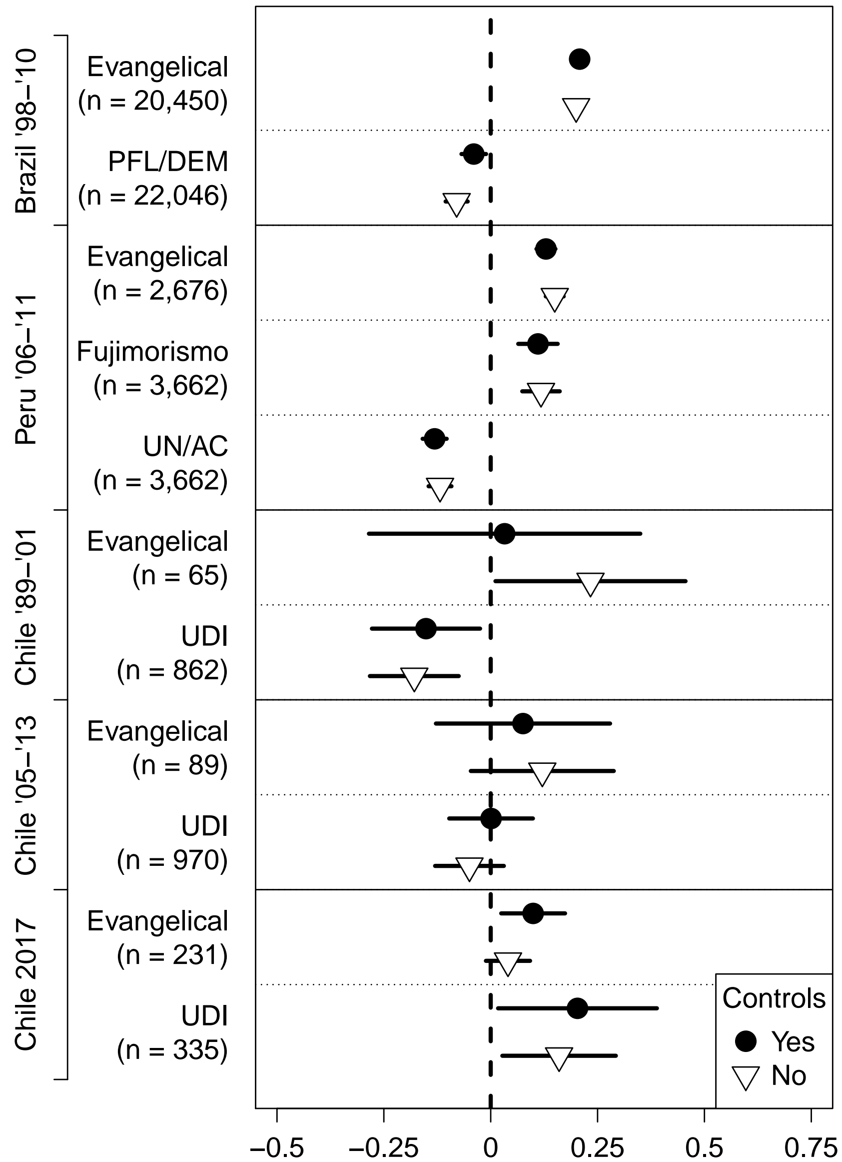
voting effect, not those corresponding to subgroup identities. In real life, a evangelical candidate also belongs to a particular church and may be readily identifiable as such by other members of that denomination. Thus, in the ecological analysis, any evangelical identity voting effect includes those that correspond to subgroup identities such as AD and IURD. As a result, I expect that the relationship between evangelical share of the population and vote for evangelical candidates will be strongest in Brazil.

The results of these regressions are summarized in Figure 4. The strongest relationship between evangelical share of the voting age population and vote for evangelical candidates is indeed found in Brazil, where mainstream right-wing parties are unlikely to successfully vie for evangelical support. Here, each additional percentage point evangelical (controlling for covariates) is associated with a 0.21 percentage point increase in vote share for evangelical candidates. In Peru, where evangelicals have historically been close to *fujimorismo*, there is a somewhat weaker relationship, at 0.13 percentage points; the difference vis-a-vis Brazil is statistically significant.

Finally, we find the weakest relationship between evangelical population and vote for evangelical candidates in Chile, where mainstream right-wing parties should present an attractive alternative, at least in recent elections. Estimates for Chile are much less precise than in Chile or Brazil, given the smaller number of evangelical candidates and municipalities per electoral district (especially prior to 2017); the latter means that fixed effects account for much more of the variation in vote share. For the 1989–2001 and 2005–2013 periods, there is no significant relationship between evangelical share of the population and vote share for evangelical candidates after controlling for covariates, and the point estimates are smaller than in the other countries. For the 2017 election, each additional percentage point evangelical is associated with 0.1 additional percentage points of vote share for evangelical candidates, significantly less than in Brazil.

The ecological regressions also support country-specific hypotheses concerning vote for mainstream right-wing parties. As expected, there is no positive relationship between evangelical share of the voting age population and vote for the PFL/DEM in Brazil or the electoral coalitions of the PPC in Peru; the relationship is actually negative and significant in both cases. This makes

Figure 4: Evangelical Population and Support for Evangelical Candidates or Right-Wing Parties: Ecological Regressions



NOTE: Icons give point estimates from an OLS regression of municipal-level vote share for evangelical candidates/right-wing parties on percent evangelical, plus a series of demographic controls in selected models. All models include electoral district-by-election fixed effects. Lines indicate 95% confidence intervals.

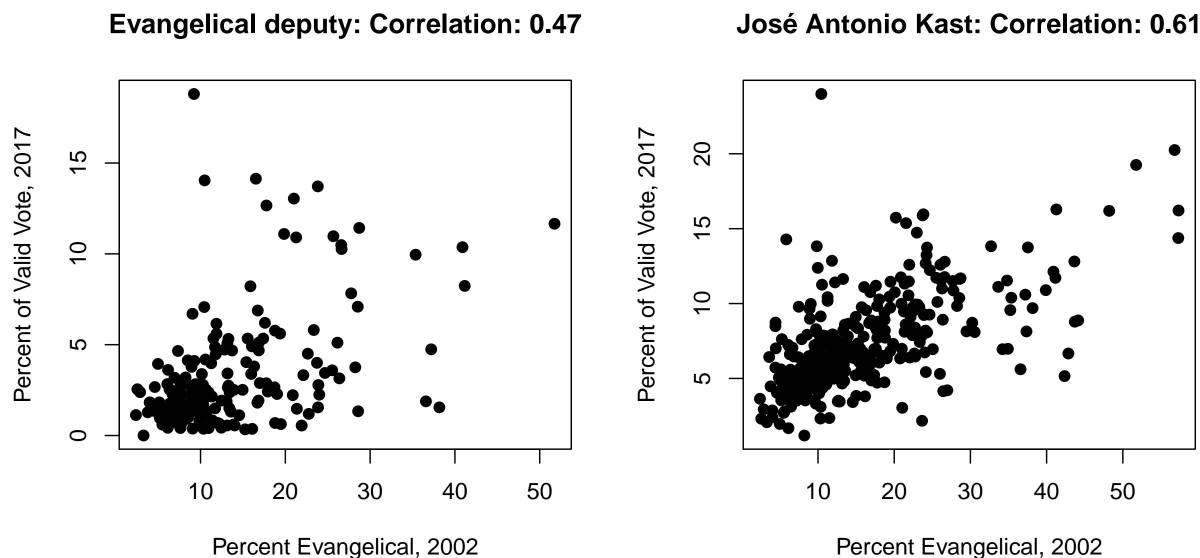
sense, given that other (primarily evangelical) parties carry the mantle of social conservatism in Brazil and that the PPC was a weak and relatively unpopular member of its coalitions in 2006 and 2011. There is a significant positive relationship between evangelical population and vote for non-evangelical *fujimorista* candidates in Peru, though it is hard to say whether this support is driven by social conservatism versus historical commitments or expectations of clientelistic benefits.

For Chile, I had hypothesized that UDI would win evangelical support, given its prominent socially conservative policy stance, and that the relationship would be stronger in more recent elections, as values issues rise to the fore. In fact, we see a shift from a significant negative relationship between evangelical population and vote for UDI, from 1989–2001, to a null relationship from 2005 to 2013 and a significant positive relationship in the most recent election. This makes sense, given that UDI is not only a socially conservative party but also one dominated by devout Catholics and strongly committed to economic liberalism. Prior to the 2000s, evangelicals' more moderate stances on economic policy and history of conflict with the Catholic Church may have disincentivized voting for UDI, especially before there was any sense of threat over liberalization on values issues.[6] By 2017, following the liberalization of abortion laws, legalization of civil unions, and pending legislation on same-sex marriage and gender identity, one would expect UDI to be a more more attractive option for evangelical voters.

The lack of a positive relationship between evangelical population and support for UDI prior to 2017 underscores that voting for the mainstream right cannot explain evangelical candidates' historical weakness in Chile. Rather, a lingering apoliticism and rejection of worldly affairs—the historical attitude of many Pentecostal denominations (Boas, 2018)—likely explains the weak evidence of evangelical identity voting in most Chilean elections. In 2017, a string of defeats in battles over values legislation promoted many evangelical leaders to abandon the traditionally

[6]Indeed, RN is the more popular right-wing party for evangelical candidates; few run with UDI. In interviews, many evangelical politicians underscore that UDI is less attractive because of its staunch economic liberalism and/or association with Catholicism.

Figure 5: Vote for Evangelical Candidates Versus José Antonio Kast: Ecological Correlations

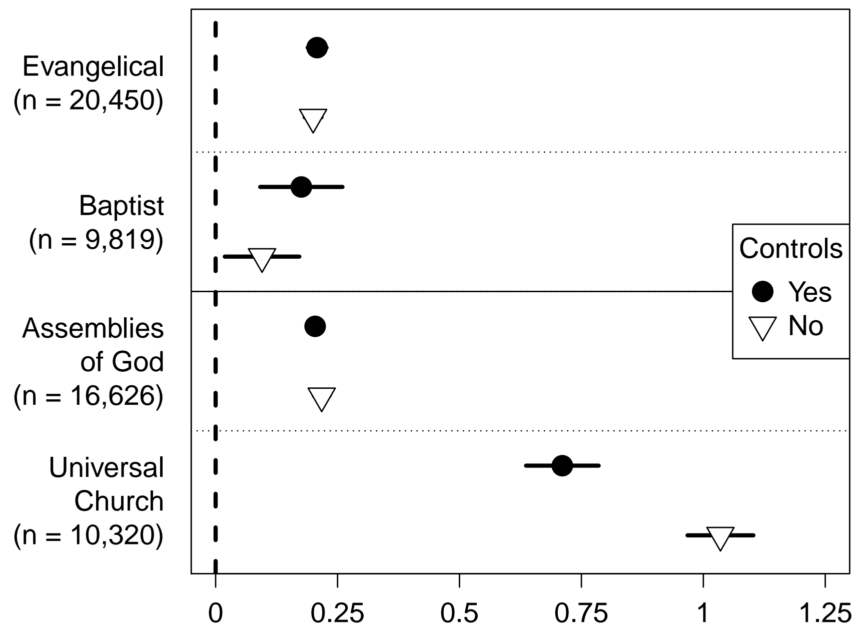


apolitical stance and contest the election with gusto. Here, there is evidence that support for non-evangelical candidates from UDI may have limited evangelicals' electoral success. Historically, the presence of an electorally viable mainstream socially conservative party seems not to have inhibited evangelical identity voting in Chile; going forward, it seems likely to do so.

Further evidence that evangelicals have been willing to vote for socially conservative Catholics in recent elections can be found in the pattern of support for former UDI senator and far-right independent presidential candidate José Antonio Kast in 2017. Figure 5 shows how evangelical share of the population correlates with vote share for evangelical congressional candidates and for Kast. While there is a positive relationship with support for evangelical candidates, it is even stronger when one examines support for Kast. This is not an apples-to-apples comparison; there was no evangelical option in the presidential race, and we cannot say how evangelicals might have voted if there were. Nonetheless, the results clearly suggest that efforts to mobilize evangelical support for a socially conservative Catholic candidate in 2017 were successful.

Finally, I turn to the hypothesis that subgroup identity voting in Brazil will be even stronger than evangelical identity voting, given that evangelicals' most prominent electoral initiatives have

Figure 6: Church Membership and Support for Church-Affiliated Candidates in Brazil: Ecological Regressions



NOTE: Icons give point estimates from an OLS regression of municipal-level vote share for church-affiliated candidates on percentage of the adult population belong to that church, plus a series of demographic controls in selected models. All models include electoral district-by-election fixed effects. Lines indicate 95% confidence intervals. The "Evangelical" estimate from Figure 4 is included for comparison.

been organized by individual churches. Brazil's 2010 census provides a highly detailed measure of religion, recording specific denominations of Christian churches. In my database of Brazilian evangelical politicians from 1998–2010, specific church membership is identified for 83% of candidacies. The most common are AD (32%), Baptist (20%), and IURD (16%); all other churches have less than 7%. I thus estimate versions of the ecological models that examine the relationship between percent AD, Baptist, or IURD and vote share for candidates of the corresponding church. I expect the strongest relationship for the IURD, which has been most ambitious in promoting its candidates to church members, and the weakest for Baptists, who, as a historical Protestant denomination, have been more reluctant to engage in overt politicking (Gaskill, 2002).

The results of these church-specific ecological regressions are reported in Figure 6. For pur-

poses of comparison, the top line of the figure reproduces the estimate for all evangelicals, from Figure 4. There is evidence of subgroup identity voting for all three churches; moreover, the relative magnitude of coefficient estimates is consistent with expectations. For Baptists and AD, each additional percentage point of the population affiliated with the church is associated with an additional 0.18–0.20 percentage points of vote for its candidates. These estimates are statistically indistinguishable from the figure for evangelicals as a whole (0.21 percentage points), though the estimate for Baptists from the model without controls is significantly smaller. Finally, I obtain a much larger estimate for the IURD: in the model with controls, each additional percentage point of church membership is associated with 0.71 additional percentage points of vote for IURD-affiliated candidates. Since these three churches collectively account for over two-thirds of evangelical candidacies from 1998–2010, the results suggest that much of evangelical identity voting in Brazil actually consists of subgroup identity voting.

5 Conclusion and Extensions

The survey experiments and ecological regressions examined in this paper offer evidence that evangelicals in Latin America engage in both identity voting and policy voting. All else equal, a co-religionist candidate is more likely to win support from evangelical voters than one whose religion is not specified. Yet in real elections where voters choose among specific options, all else may not be equal. An evangelical candidate, who is more likely to be a newcomer to the electoral scene, may square off against a socially conservative Catholic who enjoys all the benefits of incumbency, elite status, and membership in or even leadership of a mainstream party. During the 1980s–1990s, when major issues of religious freedom were still unresolved and the Latin American right primarily stood for market reform and structural adjustment, lower-class evangelical voters may have been reluctant to cast a vote for an out-group politician. As values issues have become more prominent on the political agenda, socially conservative evangelicals and Catholic politicians from mainstream right-wing parties have become more aligned in their policy positions, making out-

group voting more likely. The ecological analysis of Chile suggests that evangelical attitudes toward the country's most conservative, Catholic-dominated party have actually changed direction over time, with evangelicals less likely to support UDI candidates in the 1990s and more likely to do so in 2017.

To gain greater leverage on the causal effect of co-religion versus socially conservative policy positions and how these effects vary across countries, I am planning to conduct online conjoint experiments in Brazil, Chile, and Peru during the Spring of 2019.[7] The experiment will ask respondents to choose between two candidates with randomly varying attributes, including religion (Catholic versus evangelical) and position on abortion (maintain existing laws versus full abortion ban). Abortion is heavily restricted in all three countries—Peru only allows for therapeutic abortion, while Chile and Brazil also permit exceptions in the cases of rape, incest, and fetal inviability—so favoring existing laws is still a fairly conservative position, and some religious politicians do adopt this stance. The conjoint experiment will also vary several other candidate attributes–sex, age, education, occupation, political experience, and positions on crime and the economy. The full text of the question is reproduced in 2.

The conjoint experiment will offer several advantages over the survey vignette experiments and will likely replace them in future versions of this paper. First, and most importantly, the conjoint format allows for comparison of the independent effect of social conservative policy positions and co-religion on evangelicals' candidate preferences. It also allows estimating interactive effects, such as whether evangelical voters favor a more socially conservative Catholic over an evangelical candidate who supports current abortion laws. Second, asking voters to choose between two hypothetical candidates with a variety of different attributes is more realistic than asking them to render an opinion on a single candidate in isolation. The conjoint experiment thus offers an improvement over survey vignettes in terms of external validity. Third, the research design and hypotheses will

[7]The study is in the final stages of IRB review and surveys should be ready to launch sometime in April.

be pre-registered, which was not the case for the survey vignettes.

Table 2: Planned Conjoint Experiment Question

Imagine that the legislative elections were this Sunday and that you were deciding between two candidates for deputy, with the following profiles: *[randomize each pair of attributes]*

	Candidate A	**Candidate B**
Sex	Male	Female
Age	39	56
Education	Completed college	Completed high school
Occupation	Businessman	Merchant
Political Experience	Currently in office	No prior office
Religion	Evangelical	Catholic
Position on abortion	Maintain current laws	Full abortion ban
Position on economy	Stimulate private enterprise	Increase state participation
Position on crime	More incarceration and increased penalties	Social development to prevent crime

Which candidate would you be more likely to vote for?

(1) Candidate A (2) Candidate B

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