

When the Church Votes Left
The Electoral Consequences of Progressive Religion

by

Guadalupe Tuñón

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Political Science

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Thad Dunning, Chair

Professor Ernesto Dal Bó

Professor Alison Post

Fall 2019

When the Church Votes Left
The Electoral Consequences of Progressive Religion

Copyright 2019
by
Guadalupe Tuñón

Abstract

When the Church Votes Left
The Electoral Consequences of Progressive Religion

by

Guadalupe Tuñón

Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Thad Dunning, Chair

This dissertation explores how religious teachings about economic injustice and the moral obligation to address the economic and political roots of poverty shape religion's influence on political competition. At least since Marx, religion has been thought to decrease electoral support for left parties and undercut redistribution. Yet following Weber, scholars have also documented religious denominations' distinct perspectives about the economic sphere and the ways in which these views shape individuals' beliefs and behavior. I examine the effect of religious teachings on the electoral fortunes of left-wing political parties, specifically. While some religious denominations encourage believers to embrace affluence and view poverty as a consequence of individual effort (or lack thereof), others emphasize poverty's injustice and advocate structural changes to alleviate this economic hardship. I focus on the political influence of the latter—which I refer to as *progressive religion*—and study its effects on the organizational development, electoral support, and policy priorities of left-wing political parties.

I argue that progressive religion can provide critical organizational and electoral resources to left-wing political parties. When progressive religious leaders underscore the injustice of poverty and foster support for economic redistribution among their parishioners, they create a group of religious voters whose economic preferences align with those of left-wing political parties. Moreover, the emphasis on addressing poverty through structural reforms in society encourages parishioners to actively engage in social and political movements that prioritize these goals. In addition to their predisposition to support the economic policies that left-wing political parties champion, pious voters are thus also likely to become active and organized members of the left. Their support allows left parties to complement and extend their territorial presence by relying on an array of lay organizations. Hence, progressive religion provides the left with important resources in the electoral arena.

Yet the support of progressive religion does not come without consequences for left parties' policy platform. While pious voters share the left's preferences about economic

redistribution and other reforms to reduce economic inequality, they are conservative with respect to social issues such as abortion and gay marriage. When these voters support left parties, they bring their socially conservative preferences to bear on the parties' policy agenda and oppose any effort to embrace non-conservative positions on these social issues. As a result, left parties that cultivate the support of progressive religion will adopt socially conservative positions.

I support these claims using a multi-method research strategy that combines qualitative, quantitative, and quasi-experimental evidence from the Catholic Church in Brazil. I first combine a historical analysis of Catholic social doctrine with a study of Brazilian diocesan publications to document variation in Catholic teachings on economic issues, particularly with respect to the roots of poverty and the need to address the economic inequality it engenders in the political realm. I then test my argument using original archival data and drawing on a natural experiment in Brazil following the transition to the papacy of Pope John Paul II in 1978. Leveraging plausibly as-if random variation in bishop vacancies that led some Brazilian dioceses to be overseen by progressive bishops while exposing others to conservative bishops appointed by Pope John Paul II, I study the effect of progressive bishops on religious involvement in progressive economic causes as well as the electoral success of the left-wing Workers' Party (PT). I find that the Catholic Church was significantly more likely to support progressive economic causes in dioceses led by economically progressive bishops and that the left enjoyed a remarkable electoral advantage in these areas. The party's stronger performance can be partly explained by its access to religious networks that allowed it to develop an organizational structure, particularly in areas where the party lacked an existing base of electoral support. However, the electoral benefits of progressive religion came at the cost of marginalizing the political demands of the party's feminist faction, thereby decreasing the PT's adoption of gender policies at odds with religious teachings.

Substantively, these findings contribute to the growing body of evidence that religious teachings shape religion's effect on political behavior. They also suggest that religion can serve as a critical source of support for economically progressive political and social movements. Moreover, this study contributes to our understanding of the broader policy considerations that left-wing parties face. My analysis suggests that socially progressive policy positions are not universally constitutive of left parties. Instead, left parties' reliance on partners to build their national infrastructure can lead them to strategically select a social policy position in order to capitalize on the organizational reach of existing social institutions. The recent decline in rates of industrialization and weakening of labor unions across both the developing and developed world has forced the left to seek new sources of organizational support in order to maintain its political relevance. The mobilizational capacity of religious organizations, particularly in the developing world, makes them an attractive partner for left parties to accomplish this goal.

To my grandmother, Blanca Rosa Pipo de Calvosa

Contents

Contents	ii
List of Figures	iv
List of Tables	v
1 The Puzzle of Progressive Religion	1
1.1 Progressive Religion and Left-Wing Parties	4
1.2 Research Design	5
1.3 Contributions	6
1.4 Plan of the Dissertation	8
2 Progressive Religious Leaders and Left-Wing Parties	10
2.1 Defining Progressive Religious Leaders	11
2.2 How Religious Leaders Shape Religion's Influence	13
2.3 Prayer Stones: Progressive Religion and the Left	18
2.4 Implications	22
2.5 Summary	23
3 Progressives & Conservatives Within the Catholic Church	24
3.1 A Short History of Catholic Social Thought	24
3.2 Progressives and Conservatives Within the Church	31
3.3 The Catholic Church in Brazil	33
3.4 Variation within the Catholic Church in Brazil	43
Appendices	46
3.A Identifying political documents distributed by the Brazilian dioceses in the BPG collection	46
4 An Empirical Approach to the Study of Progressive Religion	48
4.1 Defining the Unit of Analysis	49
4.2 Measurement	51

4.3	Identification	52
4.4	Research Design	54
4.5	Estimation	61
5	From the Parish to the Party: How Progressive Clergy Can Help the Left	65
5.1	The <i>Abertura</i> and the Workers' Party	66
5.2	Spreading the Gospel or Social Justice?	68
5.3	Progressive Bishops and the Workers' Party	72
5.4	A Case Study of the Diocese of Bom Jesus da Lapa	81
5.5	Summary	89
6	When the Church Votes Left: Progressive Religion and Social Conservatism	91
6.1	The PT and Abortion at the National Level	93
6.2	PT Legislators' Positions on Issues of Gender Justice	97
6.3	Progressive Bishops and Social Conservatism	101
6.4	Summary	103
7	Conclusion	105
7.1	Summary of the Argument	105
7.2	Theoretical Contributions and Implications	106
7.3	The Future of Progressive Religion and the Left	111
	Bibliography	112

List of Figures

2.1	Classification of Religious Movements	13
2.2	Response to Poverty	16
3.1	Capitalism as a Social Sin	37
3.2	Rural Inequality	38
3.3	Urban Inequality	39
3.4	Political Participation as a Catholic Mandate	40
3.5	Against Vote Buying	41
3.6	Encouraging Unionization	42
3.7	Covers of Political Booklets Produced by the Brazilian Dioceses	43
3.8	Illustration of the Classification of Religious Leaders	44
4.1	Proportion of Sitting Bishops Over the Age of Seventy-Five	53
4.1	Brazilian Diocese and Archdioceses, October 1978	56
4.2	Date of Retirement Vacancies and John Paul II Bishop Replacements	58
4.3	Date of Retirement Vacancies and John Paul II Bishop Replacements, by Type of Exit	59
4.4	Strength of the Instrument	60
4.5	Prelate Age in October 1978, by type of Ecclesiastical Circumscription	61
4.1	Correlation Between the Timing of Bishop Vacancies and Pre-Treatment Diocese Characteristics	64
5.1	Geographic Location of Bom Jesus da Lapa	83
6.1	Distribution of the PT's Gender and Sexuality Issue Positions	99
6.2	Distribution of Gender and Sexuality Issue Positions by Party	101

List of Tables

3.A.1 Themes in the Diocesan Documents in the BPG Collection	47
4.1 Retirement Vacancies and Bishop Replacements by John Paul II	59
5.1 Progressive Bishops' Involvement in the Landless Movement (1986)	70
5.2 Effect of Progressive Bishops on New Parish Creation (1977-1989)	72
5.1 Effect of Progressive Bishops on Party Offices (1985-1987)	75
5.2 Effect of Progressive Bishops on Vote Share for the PT (1989)	76
5.3 Effect of Progressive Bishops on Electoral Returns (1989), HTE by Urban-Rural	78
5.4 Effect of Progressive Bishops on Vote Share for the PT (1989), HTE by Religious Welfare Provision	80
6.1 Effects of Progressive Bishops on Women's Police Offices (2004)	104

Chapter 1

The Puzzle of Progressive Religion

On September 21, 2017, just a few days before Argentina's legislative elections, a group of priests spoke out against the center-right party *Cambiamos*, which occupied the presidency. The priests, who live and preach in one of Argentina's poorest neighborhoods, refer to themselves as the Group of Priests for the Option for the Poor (*Grupo de Curas en la Opción por los Pobres*, COPP) and actively condemned the Cambiamos government for ignoring the needs of the country's most vulnerable.¹ Yet the priests' statement did more than simply denounce increases in poverty and unemployment; in clear and direct language, the priests called on all responsible Catholics to vote against Cambiamos. In a letter posted on their Facebook page the priests declared, "Letting the poor die of hunger, helplessness or indifference is a sin. So is voting for a government that oppresses the poor."²

While perhaps the most outspoken in their criticism of the current government, these priests are by no means alone. They are part of a larger movement within Argentina's Catholic Church that has committed itself to serving and protecting the country's most marginalized.³ Referred to as slum priests (*curas villeros*), these Catholic leaders work to provide spiritual and material support to their parishioners in the harsh conditions of Argentina's poorest neighborhoods. Their work in these areas has been recognized and celebrated by a number of leaders within the Catholic hierarchy, including Pope Francis, who just a month after this statement, rewarded their work by selecting two priests from the group to become auxiliary bishops in two of the country's largest dioceses.⁴ In Francis's

¹Infobae (2017b); Perfil (2017); Página 12 (2017).

²The original Spanish text read: "Matar de hambre, desamparo o indiferencia al pobre es un pecado. Votar un gobierno que asfixia a los pobres, creemos que también lo es."

³Premat (2010)

⁴Infobae (2017a); La Nación (2017); <https://radiomaria.org.ar/actualidad/dos-curas-villeros-fueron-nombrados-obispos-auxiliares-papa-francisco/>.

view, slum priests “fulfill core tenets of Catholicism.”⁵

These events challenge the prevailing view in the social sciences that religion is a barrier to the success of left-wing political parties. Socialist and labor parties are traditionally characterized as secular organizations that develop in response to a class-based economic cleavage.⁶ To the extent that religion is acknowledged as relevant for party politics, it is thought to undermine class politics and reduce these parties’ political support.

Arguments about the ways in which religion reduces support for left-wing parties point to the role of political and religious entrepreneurs who politicize a second issue-dimension that crosscuts class divisions. When poor religious voters prioritize issues on this second dimension over their own redistributive preferences, they may support political parties that share their preferred view on those issues even if doing so goes against their material preferences.⁷ This was the case in 19th and 20th century Europe, for example, when fierce state-church conflicts politicized Catholicism and led to the emergence of catch-all Christian Democratic parties that competed with parties on the left for the support of poor Catholics.⁸ More recently, Frank’s classic question, “What’s the matter with Kansas?” highlights this latter phenomenon in the United States, where Republicans cultivate the support of the religious right with socially conservative policies, thus leading religious voters to support economic platforms that are less redistributive than they might otherwise prefer.⁹

Scholars have also noted the conservative influence of religious welfare provision, which may serve as a substitute for state initiatives to provide citizens with distributive benefits. The provision of private welfare by religious organizations allows conservative parties to advance platforms of limited state redistribution while incurring minimal backlash from economically marginalized voters.¹⁰ Thachil highlights this phenomenon in India, where the Hindu nationalist *Bharatiya Janata Party* (BJP) leverages its connections with Hindu religious organizations to attract the support of poor voters through the provision of local public goods.¹¹

Other studies of religion’s conservative bias focus on the role of religious teachings in shaping beliefs about the roots of wealth, poverty, and the degree to which individuals are responsible for their own fate. When religious teachings link economic success to hard work and poverty with laziness, poor pious voters will be less likely to embrace economic policies that advocate higher levels of redistribution.¹² Such arguments draw on Weber’s

⁵Al Jazeera (2014).

⁶Lipset Seymour (1963); Lipset and Rokkan (1967); Bartolini (2007).

⁷Roemer (1998); De la O and Rodden (2008); Gallego and Rodden (2016).

⁸Kalyvas (1996).

⁹Frank (2007).

¹⁰Thachil (2014*b*); Huber and Stanig (2011). See also Cammett and Issar (2010); Cammett and MacLean (2014). Religion may also act as a substitute for the welfare state by offering *spiritual* insurance against adversity (Scheve and Stasavage, 2006*b,a*).

¹¹Thachil (2014*a,b*).

¹²Benabou and Tirole (2006).

observation regarding the role of Calvinism in the emergence of industrial capitalism.¹³ McClendon and Riedl (2019) find suggestive evidence of this phenomenon in sub-Saharan Africa, where exposure to contemporary Pentecostal sermons leads individuals to focus their political attention on individual rather than structural reform.

Yet, many religious doctrines contain elements that align with the redistributive policies of the left. In particular, various religious traditions profess strong concern for the poor, a critical view of inequality and an obligation for the rich to support the less fortunate. For example, Islamic scripture underscores the importance of economic protections for the poor, promoting economic equity and mandating that society provide for the less fortunate.¹⁴ Similar directives exist in Christian doctrine; despite variation across different Christian denominations, the postulate that the community has a moral responsibility to support the poor is a central message of the Bible.¹⁵

Doctrinal support for the poor at times translates into believers' support for progressive economic policies in the political sphere. Public opinion research on voters in the UK shows that religious individuals are more likely to support economically progressive policies than their atheist counterparts.¹⁶ In the US, individuals' redistributive preferences vary across religious denominations; while Protestants prefer less redistribution compared to atheists, the opposite holds for Catholics and Jews.¹⁷

Religious leaders have often encouraged this economic progressivism. During the middle decades of the 20th century, for example, Catholic priests in many Latin American countries actively promoted the causes of the poor.¹⁸ More recently, Christian, Jewish, and Muslim religious leaders in the United States have come together to redefine a "moral" left focused on issues such as economic redistribution, the welfare of the poor, and health insurance.¹⁹ Revived by Rev. William Barber and Rev. Liz Theoharis, Martin Luther King Jr's "Poor People's Campaign" seeks to shift attention to inequality and provoke substantive political change. While less studied, progressive religious currents coexist with their better-understood conservative counterparts.

As this study demonstrates, progressive religious leaders have not only convinced their followers to prioritize the wellbeing of the poor, they have also actively boosted the organizational strength and electoral fortunes of left-wing parties. In Argentina, for example, a divided left stood little chance of winning the 2019 presidential elections. It was Pope Francis who convinced leaders of the Peronist party to unite in order to make a electoral victory possible.²⁰ The Peronist's campaign also enjoyed the grassroots support of the

¹³Weber (2002).

¹⁴Davis and Robinson (2006); Pepinsky and Welborne (2011).

¹⁵Kahl (2005).

¹⁶Birdwell and Littler (2012).

¹⁷Hart (1996); Alesina and Giuliano (2009).

¹⁸Mainwaring (1986); Mainwaring and Wilde (1989); Gill (1998); Philpott (2007); Trejo (2009).

¹⁹See *The Atlantic* (2013) and *The New York Times* (2017) for recent coverage of the movement.

²⁰*Financial Times* (2019a).

slum priest movement described in the introduction.²¹

The political engagement of economically progressive religious leaders—henceforth, ‘progressives’—inspires a number of questions about the political influence of religion. Does exposure to progressive religion increase voters’ support for left-wing parties? What are the mechanisms that explain progressive leaders’ political influence? And what are the broader policy consequences of these leaders’ political engagement? In this dissertation, I draw on existing research from political economy, religion and politics, as well as insights from the literature on gender and politics to consider the ways in which progressive religion, and in particular the progressive religious leaders such as the Argentinian *slum priests* described above, can affect the objectives and electoral fortunes of left-wing parties.

1.1 Progressive Religion and Left-Wing Parties

I argue that progressive religion can provide important organizational and electoral resources to left-wing political parties. Progressive religious leaders play a critical role in this process. When religious leaders employ doctrinal teachings to underscore the injustice of poverty and foster support for economic redistribution among their parishioners, they create a group of religious voters whose economic preferences align with those of left-wing political parties. Moreover, their emphasis on addressing poverty through structural reforms in society encourages parishioners to engage with left parties, since it is these political organizations that are in a critical position to develop and implement such reforms. The support and active engagement of these religious voters allows left parties to complement and extend their territorial presence by relying on the extensive infrastructure of religious organizations. Hence, progressive religion provides the left with important resources in the electoral arena.

However, these electoral benefits have conservative consequences for left parties’ positions on social policies. While pious voters share the left’s preferences about economic redistribution and other reforms to reduce economic inequality, they are conservative with respect to social issues such as abortion and gay marriage. When these voters support left parties, they bring their socially conservative preferences to bear on the parties’ policy agenda and oppose any effort to embrace non-conservative positions on these social issues. As a result, left parties that cultivate the support of progressive religion will adopt socially conservative positions. When the constituency of pious voters is sufficiently large, the left will embrace these conservative social positions in order to gain the support of this important fraction of the electorate. Hence, the electoral benefits of progressive religion come at the cost of marginalizing the political demands of socially progressive groups within the electorate, particularly feminist factions look to the left to support socially progressive gender policies.

²¹Financial Times (2019b).

My argument hinges on the role of religious leaders in conveying either progressive or conservative interpretation of religious teachings to their congregations and, in so doing, shaping congregants' political beliefs and preferences. Yet identifying the political influence of particular doctrinal interpretations is challenging, as it is difficult to isolate the effect of progressive and conservative leaders from other elements of religion that likely also have implications in the political arena. In the following section I describe the empirical setting where I test this argument and the novel strategies I employ to identify the political influence of progressive religion.

1.2 Research Design

To study the effects of progressive religion, I focus on the connections between the Catholic Church and the Workers' Party (*Partido dos Trabalhadores*, PT) in Brazil. The advantages of focusing on the Catholic Church are both substantive and methodological. The widespread presence of Catholics throughout the world makes the study of Catholic leaders' influence particularly pertinent. In 2010, Catholics comprised roughly 50% of all Christians worldwide and 16% of the global population. Catholics represented at least 20% of the total population in four of the six major regions of the world, including Europe, Latin America, North America, and Sub-Saharan Africa. Understanding the effect of progressive Catholicism on politics thus speaks to religious and political dynamics on a global scale—particularly at a time when the Church is being led by a progressive pope.

The hierarchical structure of the Catholic Church makes it a hard test for the study of intra-denominational variation in progressive and conservative interpretations of religious teachings. As compared to other religions, the formal rules and traditions that characterize Catholicism make it a comparatively rigid organization. In such a setting, one might expect custom and protocol to limit the degree to which individual leaders can shape the religious teachings conveyed to their parishioners. To the extent that conservative and progressive interpretations coexist within Catholicism, similar variation is likely to exist in less rigid religious organizations.

The Catholic Church also provides important methodological opportunities for social science research. In particular, the presence of both progressive and conservative religious leaders within the same religious denomination provides meaningful variation that is necessary for effective comparative analysis. For example, the Argentine slum priests described in the introduction represent an influential progressive tradition in the Catholic Church that is linked to liberation theology. However, other groups in the Church hold more conservative views about the roots of poverty and do not believe it is the Church's responsibility to advocate structural changes to address poverty in this world. Comparisons within a single religious denomination are especially helpful for my analysis, as they control for the considerable impact of other factors that vary across denominations. For example, whereas both organizational and doctrinal differences distinguish Protestants and

Jews, studying the effects of progressive leadership within a denomination isolates the political effects of these progressive leaders while holding other dimensions constant.

My analysis of the Brazilian case focuses specifically on the period following the 1978 papal transition from progressive Pope Paul VI to conservative Pope John Paul II. Once appointed, John Paul II exercised his authority over bishop selection to systematically replace progressive Catholic bishops with conservative appointments. Although the papal transition I examine occurred in 1978, while Brazil was still under a military dictatorship, the country underwent a gradual political opening between 1979 to 1985. During this period, the dictatorship's intelligence service (the *Serviço Nacional de Informações*, SNI) remained active and collected detailed information about the Church and nascent political parties. I collected previously unexplored data from this archive about the presence of Catholic lay organizations, the expansion of local branches of political parties throughout the country, as well as a contemporary categorization of Catholic leaders as either progressive or conservative.

Studying Brazil has several additional advantages. For one, the country has one of the largest Catholic populations in the world. Moreover, by focusing on subnational comparisons across Catholic dioceses in a single country, the national political and social context is held constant. This allows me to investigate how one particular left party responds to local variation in religious leadership, overcoming the potential challenges that would arise from comparing different left parties within or across countries.

I focus specifically on the effect of exposure to progressive and conservative Catholic bishops on the organizational growth and electoral success of Brazil's left-wing Workers' Party (PT). Founded in 1980, the PT was one of the earliest supporters of democratization and became an important contender in subsequent electoral contests. While the core of the PT's political identity and electoral support originated in the Brazilian labor movement, the party also came to rely on the support of the Catholic laity.

I utilize a variety of research strategies in my analysis, including a natural experiment, qualitative and quantitative analysis of original archival data from a variety of sources, as well as an in-depth case study analyzing previously unexplored archival reports.

1.3 Contributions

My research makes four key contributions. First, I contribute to a long tradition in the social sciences of studying the impact of religious ideas in society. At least since Durkheim and Weber, modern social science has focused on the social and political impacts of denominational differences, such as the comparison between Catholics and Protestants. However, variation in the interpretation of religious teachings *within a single denomination* may also shape the religious content that parishioners are exposed to and have significant political consequences.²² These intra-denominational differences are not exclusive

²²Stepan (2000); Philpott (2007).

to Catholicism; they can develop in any number of religious traditions, from Judaism to Islam.²³ As I show, focusing on the study of religious leadership and their interpretations of teachings within a single religious denomination has methodological advantages over looking at differences across denominations: whereas both organizational and doctrinal differences distinguish Protestants and Catholics, in my research I hold constant the organizational structures of the Catholic Church and isolate the political effects of changes in local religious leadership due to papal transitions. Despite extensive scholarship about the influence of religion on political outcomes, there is little causal evidence in support of this relationship.²⁴ In this dissertation, I provide what is, to the best of my knowledge, some of the first causal evidence of the political consequences of progressive religious leaders.

Second, I provide crucial evidence of the ways in which distinct interpretations of religious teachings can alter a given religious denomination's effect in the political arena. I highlight the co-existence of different readings of Catholic social doctrine and demonstrate the ways in which these divergent understandings of Catholic teachings exercise distinct effects in the political arena. The emphasis on intra-denominational variation in religious teachings also underscores the importance of the leaders of these denominations in exposing parishioners to particular religious ideas. Within a given denomination, religious leaders are uniquely positioned to disseminate particular interpretations of shared teachings. I highlight the importance of religious leaders in shaping the religious experience of their congregants and determining the religious teachings to which these congregants are exposed. In doing so, I identify a concrete channel through which religious ideas can influence the political behavior of the laity.

Third, I highlight the costs of the policy concessions political parties must incur to obtain the support of progressive religious voters. These costs are particularly relevant to the socially progressive faction of left-wing parties.²⁵ As I demonstrate, the left's decision to embrace the support of progressive religious leaders affects not only the party's electoral success, but also the types of policies it develops and the voters who are likely to benefit from this strategy.

Fourth, my work speaks to the literature studying gender and politics—particularly related to female political representation and family law. Existing research argues that religion has a profound influence on public policies related to these issues.²⁶ Yet there is little consensus about the specific elements of religion that matter for policy. For example, is it the importance of a particular religious denomination or the level of institutional-

²³On doctrinal interpretations in Judaism see [Sharkansky \(1996\)](#); on Islam, [Davis and Robinson \(2006\)](#); [Pepinsky and Welborne \(2011\)](#).

²⁴See [Grzymala-Busse \(2012\)](#).

²⁵In this respect, my argument shares common ground with existing research about the dilemmas faced by European parties when evaluating the political incorporation of Muslims in Europe ([Dancygier, 2017](#)). However, my argument differs in that economically progressive religious groups are incorporated into party coalitions due to shared programmatic policy preferences, rather than via appeals based on ethnicity or kinship. As a result, the left's efforts to attract religious voters strengthens—rather than undermines—class-based politics.

²⁶[Htun \(2003\)](#); [Htun and Power \(2006\)](#); [Htun and Weldon \(2010\)](#).

ization of the relationship between religion and the state? Moreover, while these studies tend to focus primarily on religious teachings on social issues, they fail to consider how religious ideas about other issues, such as economics, may shape the political alliances of religious leaders and the ways in which these alliances influence the political representation of women and policies related to women's rights.

Finally, I contribute to the understanding of the political influence of the Roman Catholic Church specifically by identifying one of the channels through which pontiffs can influence domestic politics. By drawing attention to the crucial role of bishops in mediating the relationship of the Vatican with the faithful, as well as the top-down system that determines bishop appointments, I highlight the process through which popes exercise their religious influence on national religious leaderships, establish its relevance for electoral politics, and propose a method of study that can be applied across countries and pontificates. Recent scholarship underscores how deep divisions in doctrinal interpretation are at times reflected in the political affiliation of religious leaders, and places the Catholic Church among the most politically divided religious denominations.²⁷ In such a divided church, bishop appointments can be decisive in establishing the church's influence on domestic politics.

1.4 Plan of the Dissertation

In Chapter 2, I develop a classification of religious leaders and lay out my argument about the relationship between progressive religion and left-wing parties. I support the argument using a multi-method research strategy that combines original archival data from Brazil as well as qualitative, quantitative, and quasi-experimental evidence from the Catholic Church in Brazil.

In Chapter 3, I introduce progressive Catholicism, first from a historical perspective and then by focusing on the particular manifestation of the progressive Catholic Church in Brazil. I identify the particular strand of Catholicism that was present in Brazil during Vatican II and until the 1980s and use an original archival collection of diocesan pamphlets and booklets to establish the progressive character of these religious leaders. I conclude by describing the conservative faction of the Church, as well as its increasing influence after John Paul II was appointed pope in 1978.

In Chapter 4, I introduce an novel natural experiment based on the 1978 papal transition from progressive Pope Paul VI to conservative John Paul II, and the latter's crackdown on progressive bishops in Brazil. I describe and validate the research design based on the natural experiment, which serves as the basis for a large portion of the empirical evidence I present in the following chapters.

Chapter 5 presents the main empirical findings of the study. It begins by exploring the divergent activities of progressive and conservative bishops in their respective dioceses,

²⁷Hersh and Malina (2017); Hagopian (2009).

providing key evidence in support of their distinct responses to poverty and economic inequality. The evidence leverages historical information on the organizational structure of the Catholic Church, as well as archival data from Brazil's National Intelligence Service (NIS) which operated during Brazil's dictatorship and during the country's transition to democracy. I then probe the effect of progressive bishops on the organizational presence of the PT and the party's electoral support in the congressional elections held following Brazil's transition to democracy. I provide evidence that progressive bishops improved the electoral performance of the PT and allowed the party to extend and strengthen its organizational presence. Finally, through a case study of the diocese of Bom Jesus da Lapa, I document the activities of the progressive clergy and detail the ways in which they incorporated progressive teachings about the appropriate response to poverty into daily religious events and provided the PT with access to Catholic networks and organizational structures.

In Chapter 6, I examine the consequences of progressive religion on the PT's policy priorities. First, I trace the history of the party's positions and actions towards the legalization of abortion to show how its Catholic constituency prevented the party from making concessions to its feminist faction. Second, I analyze a 1994 survey of all Brazilian legislators preferences toward gender policies to document the moderation of PT politicians with regards to gender policies at odds with Catholic teachings. While overall legislators from the PT were to the left of those from other parties with respect to gender issues, their positions on gender policies in tension with religious teachings are indistinguishable from those of legislators from other parties. I conclude by extending the natural experiment from employed in Chapter 5 and showing that municipalities in dioceses led by progressive Catholic bishops were also less likely to implement public policies at odds with religious doctrine.

Finally Chapter 7 discusses the main findings of the dissertation and considers their broader theoretical implications. I conclude by discussing the future of progressive religion and left-wing parties.

Chapter 2

Progressive Religious Leaders and Left-Wing Parties

In this chapter, I present an analytical framework for understanding how progressive religion can influence politics, as well as the link between religion and the electoral fortunes of left-wing parties. In particular, I argue that the presence of religious leaders with an economically progressive interpretation of religious teachings can be beneficial for parties on the left, but that reaping these benefits requires avoiding social policies that may alienate these leaders and their congregants. When the religious are economically progressive but socially conservative, their inclusion in the left's coalition requires the left to embrace social conservatism.

My argument underscores an indirect path through which religion can shape social policy. In the settings I describe, economically progressive religious leaders are capable of shaping social policy simply by making religious voters an attractive constituency for the left. When economically progressive religious voters are also socially conservative, their presence can provide left parties with sufficient incentives to avoid policy positions that religious leaders oppose, even without the direct intervention of these leaders in social policy discussions.

In the remainder of the chapter, I outline the key differences between progressive and conservative religious teachings. I then describe the channels through which leaders can convey these teachings to their congregations and how this can influence believers' worldview generally and political outlook, specifically. Finally, I describe the ways in which progressive religious leaders' influence on their congregants can translate into electoral support for left-wing political parties, as well as the implications for the policies that these parties embrace.

2.1 Defining Progressive Religious Leaders

Religious teachings about poverty and the role of religion in the political sphere stem from the content of a particular religious denomination's sacred doctrine. As a result, religious leaders often share a common understanding of the source of poverty, as well as what the target of religious action should be. In Judaism, for example, inequality is generally framed as a social concern that merits engagement in political action.¹ This is reflected in the economic progressivism of most Jewish leaders in the United States.²

However, religious denominations are often multivocal—different interpretations of a shared religious doctrine exist in most denominations.³ Indeed, differences in beliefs about the roots of poverty and the role of religion in addressing it may manifest as distinct religious movements within a single denomination. For example, although most Catholic leaders in Latin America acknowledge the injustice of abject poverty and express concern about economic inequality, leaders linked to liberation theology and the preferential option for the poor highlight this issue as a central concern of the Catholic Church. Moreover, while this latter group of Catholic leaders frames economic inequality as a social injustice that should be remedied through political action, other Catholic leaders emphasize religious activities oriented towards spiritual salvation. The existence of multiple movements within a single denomination is not exclusive to Catholicism and has developed in a wide array of religious traditions.⁴ These movements play a critical role in shaping the religious experience to which believers are exposed.

While religious movements consist of a bundle of different elements—including rituals and practices, ideational content, organizational resources, etc—my study centers on the doctrinal interpretations that vary across these religious movements.⁵ In particular, I focus on the distinct understandings of religious doctrine that movements within a denomination espouse and the critical role of leaders in exposing the laity to these perspectives.⁶ After all, it is religious leaders who make sacred texts and holy traditions accessible and interpret their content for their followers.

To distinguish leaders of *progressive* religious movements from their conservative counterparts, I develop a classification based on two dimensions. The first dimension focuses on religious movements' conception of the sources of poverty. It builds on work about the religious roots of the welfare state in Europe that argues that a society's contem-

¹Cox and Jones (2012).

²Djupe and Sokhey (2003); Hersh and Malina (2017).

³Stepan (2000); Philpott (2007); Grzymała-Busse (2015); Grzymała-Busse (2016).

⁴On variation within Judaism, see Sharkansky (1996); within Islam, see Davis and Robinson (2006); Pepinsky and Welborne (2011).

⁵In seeking to “unbundle” religion, I join other efforts to isolate the effect of its individual components (McClendon and Riedl, 2015, 2019).

⁶In doing so, I build on previous work that acknowledges the importance of distinct religious movements, rather than relying only on the content of official theological doctrine. Laitin (1986); Wittenberg (2006); McClendon and Riedl (2019).

porary response to poor relief depends on religion's perception of poverty as either one's "individual fate" or "individual fault."⁷ I thus distinguish religious movements depending on the extent to which they perceive poverty as the result of unfair social and economic institutions (individual's fate) or a consequence of individual effort or motivation (individual's fault). This distinction is illustrated along the x-axis of Figure 2.1. Movements that view poverty as a social responsibility are placed on the left side of the figure, while those that consider individuals to be responsible for their own material conditions are located on the right. Crucially, these views have important consequences for whether or not poverty is thought to be deserving of social redress.

The second dimension concerns the target of religious action with respect to poverty, in particular whether the focus is on other-worldly salvation or activities to address economic hardship in this world.⁸ This distinction is illustrated along the y-axis of Figure 2.1. While a focus on this world suggests a religious mandate to actively engage in action to address the roots of poverty, religion is thought to have no such role when the focus is on other-worldly salvation.

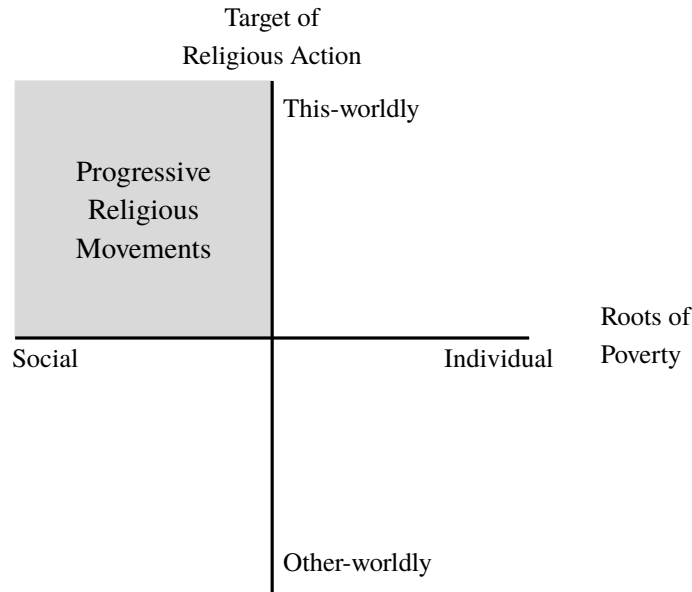
I define progressive religious movements as those that conceive of poverty as reflecting structural problems stemming from social and political institutions and believe that religion should play an active role in addressing these problems in *this* world. Figure 2.1 provides an illustration of this definition. By focusing on poverty's structural roots, progressive movements frame it as a collective problem. In this view, economic inequality is not the result of differences in individual effort but rather reflects the systematic and institutionalized marginalization of the poor. Together, the belief that poverty is a structural problem and the idea that religion should actively address it, motivate religious leaders to favor economic redistribution. In contrast, I consider religious movements to be conservative if they conceive of religious action as oriented towards other-worldly pursuits and/or believe that poverty is a reflection of individual responsibility.

Leaders of progressive religious movements can be important advocates of economic redistribution as a means to address poverty and inequality. Their beliefs about poverty's unjust roots in society and the religious responsibility to improve the material conditions in this world may shape the nature of their influence within religious communities and particularly on the perceived connection between religious beliefs and political efforts to mitigate poverty through redistribution. In the next section, I focus on the different ways in which these leaders' influence can manifest in practice.

⁷Kahl (2005, 2009). It is also close to recent work by McClendon and Riedl (2019), who classify the content of religious sermons according to the extent to which they portray earthly problems as a consequence of "the character or intrinsic motivations of individuals" versus "the institutions and extrinsic incentives in which people are embedded."

⁸In his study of three religious congregations in the US, Wood (1994) distinguishes between congregations that are "this-worldly" and aim to "change the world" from those focused on "other-worldly individual salvation."

Figure 2.1: Classification of Religious Movements



The figure shows the location of progressive religious movements in the top left corner. They conceive of poverty as a social problem and believe that religion should play an active role in addressing it in this world. Movements that conceive of religious action as oriented towards other-worldly pursuits and/or believe that poverty is a reflection of individual responsibility are classified as conservative.

2.2 How Religious Leaders Shape Religion’s Influence

How do differences in religious leaders’ interpretation of doctrine matter for their congregations? In this section, I argue that the presence of progressive or conservative leaders has important consequences for congregants’ religious experience. First, and perhaps most straightforward, religious leaders with distinct doctrinal interpretations will promote different content in the religious services they oversee—progressives will emphasize religious teachings that align with their beliefs, as will conservatives. Second, these religious leaders differ in their organizational responses to poverty—the extent to which they emphasize religious services versus lay activities, as well as the types of lay activities they encourage. In what follows, I detail these differences and highlight the ways in which they shape religion’s influence on their congregations.

How Religious Leaders Shape their Congregations' Religious Experience

Shaping Religious Content Religious leaders have numerous channels at their disposal to convey religious teachings to their congregants. Through weekly sermons, written addresses, and pamphlets, leaders make religious texts and traditions accessible and link religious teachings to parishioners' lives. In Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, listening to sermons is one of the main elements of lay religious experience and practice.⁹ Written materials are also an important means of conveying religious teachings to parishioners; leaders across religious denominations often communicate with their congregations through open letters and even online writings.¹⁰

Crucially, even in the most hierarchical religious denominations, leaders have the capacity to shape the content of these communications. Leaders' identity—whether they are members of progressive or conservative movements—is thus critical in determining the messages conveyed to their congregants. When these leaders are progressive, they will deliver sermons and publish written materials that frame poverty as a structural issue and condemn economic inequality as unjust and immoral. They can also underscore the importance of religious activism in the political sphere to tackle this problem.

Moreover, religious leaders' communications with their congregants are accompanied by religion's moral weight and legitimacy. Religious doctrine is sacred and, as such, is unfalsifiable and irrefutable.¹¹ When religious leaders communicate religious teachings to their congregants, the content of their message is imbued with the sacred status that only religion can provide.

The teachings religious leaders communicate to their congregants can thus shape moral commitments and influence political action.¹² Repeated exposure to sermons and other types of religious communication can mold the worldview through which parishioners approach daily challenges and understand their social environment.¹³ As a result, they can affect how congregants evaluate political issues and participate in politics.¹⁴

Through their sermons and other communications, religious leaders can shape congregants' views about the sources of poverty and the appropriate strategies to mitigate it. When progressive religious leaders emphasize that poverty is rooted in structural social problems that religious organizations should take an active role to combat, congregants will be more likely to view poverty and economic inequality as a social concern that should

⁹On the role of sermons as part of the religious experience across denominations, see [Hirschkind \(2001\)](#). On the effects of sermons on political participation, see [McClendon and Riedl \(2015, 2019\)](#).

¹⁰On online writings from Islamic clerics, see [Nielsen \(2017\)](#). Within Catholicism, pastoral letters are open letters from a bishop to laity of a diocese. For a collection of the pastoral letters of the US bishops, see [Nolan and Carey \(1998\)](#). Alternatively, religious leaders can also produce other materials, such as voter guides ([Wilcox and Sigelman, 2001](#)).

¹¹[Grzymala-Busse \(2016\)](#).

¹²[Bellah et al. \(1985\)](#).

¹³[Djupe and Gilbert \(2008\)](#); [McClendon and Riedl \(2015, 2019\)](#); [McClendon \(2019\)](#).

¹⁴[McClendon and Riedl \(2019\)](#); [McClendon \(2019\)](#).

be addressed in the political arena. Through exposure to the messages of progressive religious leaders, then, congregants come to see redistribution as an appropriate strategy to alleviate the poverty and economic inequality.

Institutional Responses to Poverty In addition to communicating religious teachings, religious leaders are responsible for overseeing their religious communities. This requires defining their organizations' priorities, including the provision of religious services, social services, and the promotion of lay initiatives.¹⁵ Religious leaders' doctrinal interpretations can also mold these decisions. Their views on the source of poverty and the target of political action can have important consequences with respect to their efforts to address poverty, in particular.

What are the potential responses to poverty available to religious leaders? Figure 2.2 summarizes the array of options by considering the two dimensions introduced in the previous section. Both differences in beliefs about the roots of poverty (represented along the x-axis) and different views about the target of religious action (y-axis) determine the responses of religious leaders. As a result, leaders from different movements will vary with respect to their beliefs about how to appropriately address poverty among their congregations.

When poverty is understood as having social roots—the result of structural conditions—the poor are conceived of as deserving and taking actions towards their betterment is considered to be fair and moral. On the opposite end of the x-axis, poverty is seen as reflecting individual's actions (or lack of effort) and being poor is considered the fault of the individual and does not merit an active intervention on the part of religious communities. These views interact with those along the y-axis about the target of religious action—whether it should be geared towards changes in this world or the afterlife—to define religious leaders' response to poverty.

Progressive religious leaders believe poverty is a social issue that should be addressed in this world. As a result, they will encourage engagement in activities to alleviate poverty, such as the formation of lay associations whose primary goal is to improve congregants' material conditions. In addition to this activism at the local level, leaders are also likely to promote involvement in broader movements that advocate social and economic justice, as well as encourage congregants' political awareness and participation. This response to poverty through social and political activism is unique to progressive leaders and is located in the upper-left quadrant of Figure 2.2.

Those who see poverty as a social issue but believe religious organizations should prioritize other-worldly pursuits, located in lower-left corner of Figure 2.2, will instead encourage congregants to focus on salvation. This implies emphasizing a spiritual engagement in religion and encouraging congregants to accept the burden of poverty because it will be rewarded in the afterlife. To the extent that any material help is provided to the poor, it will also be functionally about salvation. For example, the rich may be encour-

¹⁵See e.g. [Esparza Ochoa \(2012\)](#).

Figure 2.2: Response to Poverty



The figure illustrates a typology of responses to poverty depending on clergy’s views on the roots of poverty as well as their understanding of the target of religious action.

aged to provide charity towards the poor, because being charitable is linked to other-worldly salvation.¹⁶ A historical example of this perspective is the emphasis within the Catholic Church on almsgiving: “giving to the poor from one’s affluence is a moral duty, which, however, cannot be called for by the poor as a right.”¹⁷

When religious leaders perceive poverty as a consequence of individuals’ actions, they will gear their responses toward the behaviors and effort of these individuals. These leaders are located in the upper right quadrant of Figure 2.2. They believe poverty reflects’ individuals actions and also believe that the target of religious action should be in this world. As a result, their response to poverty is focused on self-improvement, often through participation in self-help initiatives. Religious leaders from most contemporary Pentecostal movements in the developing world maintain this approach, encouraging their congregants to participate in programs to fight addiction, volunteer in prisons to work towards the individual betterment of convicts, etc. Finally, in the lower right corner of Figure 2.2, religious leaders from movements that believe poverty is the fault of individuals and prioritize other-worldly religious action will focus on salvation over efforts to aid individuals

¹⁶Charity and redistribution through the state are substitutes for one another—state-led welfare provision crowds-out the charitable support the poor receive from religious organizations (Hungerman, 2005; Gruber and Hungerman, 2007).

¹⁷ Fösser cited in Kahl (2005).

in this world. In doing so, they stress the importance of individual spirituality.

My focus on the Catholic Church following Vatican II implies I only observe religious leaders on the left side of Figure 2.2. While the leaders I study may vary to some degree across the x-axis, their main differences are with respect to the y-axis. However, I would expect the comparison between progressive leaders and any of the other three types of leaders to follow a similar logic. It is the combination of both dimensions—their beliefs about the sources of poverty and the nature of religious actions—that makes progressive religious leaders unique.

Beliefs about the sources of poverty and the role of religion in addressing congregants' material destitution thus shape the religious teachings that these leaders emphasize as well as their preferred response to poverty. In what follows, I argue that these approaches determine religion's influence on their congregations.

Religious Experience Can Shape Congregants' Political Outlook

Does variation in the religious experience of congregants affect their political attitudes and behavior? Through the content of religious teachings, their emphasis on religious intensity, and their encouragement of different forms of lay organization, religious leaders can have an important impact on their communities. I argue that the influence of progressive religious leaders differs substantively from that of their conservative counterparts.

Conservative Religious Leaders Despite the differences between the three types of conservative religious leaders described in the previous section, all bear elements linking them to the arguments about religion's conservative bias described in the introduction.

To begin, the three sets of religious teachings they advance can shape individuals' beliefs in ways that reduce preferences for economic redistribution. Teachings that attribute the responsibility of poverty to the individual, for example, present economic inequality as a fair consequence of individual effort. In contrast, teachings that frame poverty as a social concern encourage congregants to perceive inequality as unfair. However, their view of religious action as focused on the afterlife and the promise of other-worldly rewards for the poor because of their burden in this world can also reduce beliefs about the need to redistribute income in this world.

The emphasis on spiritual endeavors that accompanies a focus on the afterlife can also shape individual demand for redistribution through an alternative channel. Spirituality can serve as a substitute to social insurance, providing a buffer against adverse events.¹⁸ As a result, the emphasis on spirituality that conservative religious leaders espouse can also reduce congregants' demand for redistribution.

Finally, when conservative religious leaders provide an avenue for in-group redistribution through religious welfare, they may simultaneously reduce demand for state welfare.¹⁹

¹⁸Scheve and Stasavage (2006*b,a*); Dehejia, DeLeire and Luttmer (2007); Chen (2010).

¹⁹Huber and Stanig (2011).

Many types of religious welfare provision—such as religious schools, hospitals, and shelters for the homeless—is sticky. It requires infrastructure that takes time to build and is not under the control of an individual religious leader. As such, its effect on the demand for economic redistribution may be independent of the current leader. However, some types of religious welfare are under the control of religious leaders and thus may depend on the type of leader in power at a given time. Examples of this more malleable welfare includes services such as soup kitchens, the distribution of food and clothes, and the provision of one-off workshops to develop vocational skills such as sewing, woodworking, etc.

Progressive Religious Leaders How does the influence of progressive religious leaders differ from that of their conservative counterparts? First, exposure to the religious teachings that progressives advance can encourage congregants to favor redistribution. This is because the view of poverty as a social responsibility and the emphasis on taking religious action in this world reinforces the belief that poverty is unfair and underscores the moral mandate to address it. Since state-led income redistribution is an important channel to do so, exposure to progressive religious teachings can increase individual demand for it.

Second, by incentivizing community organizing and participation in movements for social justice, progressive religious leaders can encourage the formation of lay organizations and movements that favor economic redistribution. Participation in these types of organizations can also reinforce the effect of progressive religious teachings by increasing exposure to such ideas.²⁰ Moreover, the practice of identifying problems in congregants' communities and developing solutions to resolve them can also help build organizing and leadership skills that are crucial for political participation.

This section highlights important differences in how progressive and conservative religious leaders engage with their congregations and shape their potential political influence. While the influence of conservative religious leaders maps onto theories of conservative bias that others have highlighted, I argue that progressive religious leaders can exert an alternative influence on their congregants that transforms these religious communities into a potentially valuable constituency for parties favoring income redistribution. I further explore the political influence of this influence in the next section.

2.3 Prayer Stones: Progressive Religion and the Left

Can the influence of progressive religious leaders on their congregations translate into organizational and/or electoral support for left-wing parties? If so, when will this occur, and with what consequences?

Historically, industrialization and the rise of labor unions led to the formation of left-wing parties to counter the interests of landed and industrial elites in the political arena. Today, even if formal sector unionization is low or has declined sharply in some countries,

²⁰McClendon (2019).

the affinity between left-wing parties and the organized working class continues to define many party systems in both the developing and developed world. In addition to facilitating collective action in the workplace, unions play an important role in educating and mobilizing their members in the political arena, ensuring their political organization around their class identity.²¹ As such, I define left-wing parties as those parties with a “core-constituency” comprised of organized workers and whose political platform prioritizes economic redistribution.

What are the strategies these left parties can employ to win elections? In this section, I describe the two main routes to electoral victory most often highlighted in political economy models of electoral competition.²² I begin by describing the strategies available to the left when religious organizations are led by conservative leaders. I then explain how the party’s calculus with respect to these options changes when the religious organizations are instead in the hands of a progressive.

Left-Party Strategies when Religion is Led by Conservatives

Courting the Middle Class Through Economic Moderation Perhaps the most straightforward option available to left parties is to court the electoral support of the middle class. When electoral politics is defined over a single economic policy dimension, moving to the right on economic issues will allow the left to gain the support of a larger share of the electorate. The main strategy available to left parties in order to win elections is to moderate their policy platforms by reducing the level of redistribution they propose.²³ While a potentially successful path for left parties to obtain an electoral majority, moderating on the economic policy dimension is nevertheless a costly strategy. Pursuing this strategy implies compromising on the issue that left parties’ core constituency prioritizes the most—economic redistribution—and may thus also reduce support the constituency’s support for these parties.²⁴

Courting the Middle Class with Progressive Social Policies To avoid the potentially high costs of economic moderation, left-wing parties can also opt to politicize a second, social policy dimension and incorporate a progressive stance on social issues into their policy platform to woo socially progressive voters in the electorate.²⁵ This social policy dimension can include a variety of issues, ranging from those related to the separation of church and state to gender policy such as the legalization of abortion, gay marriage, etc. In many countries, socially progressive, middle-class voters constitute an important block

²¹Olson (1965); Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995).

²²In ethnically divided societies, parties can also consider politicizing ethnic identity. See e.g. Shayo (2009).

²³Downs (1957); Przeworski and Sprague (1986).

²⁴Przeworski and Sprague (1986).

²⁵Roemer (1998); De la O and Rodden (2008).

within the electorate and thus have the potential to become an important constituency for left parties.

Gaining the support of socially progressive voters will be an attractive strategy for left parties if it reduces the amount of economic moderation required for these parties to gain an electoral majority. That is, the left will embrace socially progressive policies if the economic moderation necessary to win an electoral majority when politicizing social issues is less than the moderation required to win a majority when these issues are not politicized. The left will court social progressives when the portion of middle-class voters that can be attracted by adopting a progressive stance on social issues is larger than the voters it stands to lose from doing so.

If a nontrivial portion of its constituency is socially conservative, the left might be concerned about the costs of politicizing the social policy dimension and taking a progressive stance on these issues. Typically, however, social conservatives include a large number of religious individuals.²⁶ When religious leaders are conservative, these religious voters are unlikely to support the left, regardless of whether or not the party politicizes social issues—the conservative bias of religion reduces the extent to which these voters prefer economic redistribution and thus makes them less likely to support the left-wing party. In this scenario, the costs of a socially progressive policy stance are low; the left will politicize social issues in order to minimize the economic moderation required to win an electoral majority.

Left-Party Strategies when Religion is Led by Progressives

How does the presence of progressive religious leaders alter the electoral calculation of left-wing parties? When these leaders are progressive, religious voters have the potential to become an important component of left parties' redistributive coalition. This new group of potential supporters has important consequences for the left's efforts to form an electoral majority. In what follows, I argue that the presence of progressive economic leaders can dramatically reshape the left's electoral coalition and policy platform.

Courting the Middle Class with Economic Moderation

When religious organizations are led by progressive—rather than conservative—leaders, religious voters can reduce the costs of left-wing parties to court the middle class with economic moderation. This is because progressive religious leaders increase the size of the redistributive coalition in the electorate. The larger the portion of voters who favor redistribution, the less moderation is required for the left to obtain an electoral majority.

²⁶This can be because religious teachings are socially conservative or because the social policies preferred by social progressives are anti-clerical and imply the elimination of privileges of the religious organization.

Courting the Middle Class with Progressive Social Policies

The effect of progressive religious leaders on the left's strategy of courting the middle class with progressive social policies is, comparatively, more complex. The impact progressive religious leaders can have with respect to this strategy depends crucially on the extent to which the demands of social progressives are in tension with the social policies preferred by religious voters who support economic redistribution. When the latter also espouse progressive views on social issues, the left's decision to politicize the social policy dimension and adopt a progressive stance on these issues should be relatively straightforward.

In practice, however, the combination of progressive positions on economic and social issues is rare among pious voters. In most religious denominations, even the most economically progressive leaders still hold conservative positions on a range of social issues. In Catholicism, for example, the promotion of religious social values focuses on the preservation of the traditional family through the prohibition of divorce, abortion, and contraception, as well as opposition to same-sex marriage.²⁷ When economically progressive congregants also espouse socially conservative preferences, the decision of left-wing parties to adopt a socially progressive policy stance risks alienating this critical group of voters.

Left parties are thus faced with a choice: politicize the social policy dimension and court socially progressive voters or refuse to advance these policies and instead pursue the support of economically progressive religious voters. In contexts where religion is economically progressive and socially conservative, the left will evaluate this tradeoff based on the size of each respective group of voters—the economically progressive religious and social progressives—and will select a policy platform that satisfies the largest of the two groups. When economically progressive religious voters outnumber social progressives, the left will decline to take a progressive stance on the social dimension.

Left parties' strategic decision *not* to politicize social issues due to the presence of economically progressive religion implies that different types of religious leaders—and the size of their following of believers—can shape the strategy left parties pursue in the electoral arena. In the standard conservative account, religion's conservative bias reduces the extent to which pious voters prefer economic redistribution and thus makes them less likely to support left-wing parties. In this setting, left-wing parties opt to politicize social issues in order to obtain an electoral majority while minimizing economic moderation. This strategy is preferable to the costly economic moderation required to gain the support of the middle class without politicizing a second policy dimension.

Yet when religious leaders are economically progressive, the costs of economic moderation are much lower; the presence of pious voters who favor economic redistribution increases the size of the redistributive constituency in the electorate and thus reduces the amount of moderation—if any—on the economic dimension that is necessary to obtain an

²⁷To be sure, there are rich debates within Catholicism about the justification of prohibiting abortion and contraception. However, the church hierarchy has not recognized (and has regularly condemned) dissident positions on reproductive health (Htun and Weldon, 2018).

electoral victory. If the number of religious voters in the electorate is large enough, the left will decline to politicize social policies and will instead court middle class voters as necessary through moderation on the economic dimension. The presence of either progressive or conservative religious leaders as well as the size of their following thus play a direct role in determining the type of strategy that left parties pursue in the electoral arena.

2.4 Implications

Religious Leaders and Religious Services Progressive and conservative religious leaders emphasize different religious teachings. As a result, I expect these religious leaders to govern their communities differently. In particular, I expect conservative leaders to increase the provision of spiritual services. In contrast, progressive religious leaders will encourage lay activism and social justice.

Progressive Economics Lead to Social Conservatism The main implication of my argument is that relying on progressive religion can improve the electoral fortunes of left parties, but often requires these parties to maintain a conservative position on social issues. The more religion becomes a force for economic redistribution, the more leverage religious voters will have within left parties' coalition to veto policy positions that are at odds with religious doctrine. As a result, in cases when the presence of progressive religious leaders effectively improves the electoral performance of the left, we should expect the party to focus on class politics but relegate socially progressive issues.

Reaching Unorganized Workers Where will the support of progressive religion be most valuable to left parties? In many countries, organized workers comprise only a fraction of the broader population of poor voters. The remainder are non-unionized workers who fall outside of left parties' organizational network and are thus less likely to develop a class identity focused on economic redistribution.²⁸ For example, students of Latin America underscore the challenges that the growth of the informal economy poses to class-based political parties and the ways in which it complicates the electoral success of left-wing parties specifically.²⁹ Developing strategies to effectively court the unorganized poor is thus a central concern of left-wing parties.

As the portion of unorganized workers who are religious goes up, the presence of progressive religious leaders becomes more valuable for left parties. This is due to the fact that these voters are harder to reach for unions and thus the influence of religion on their political behavior may be larger. When religious leaders are conservative, these voters

²⁸Olson (1965); Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995).

²⁹Roberts (2002); Kaufman (2009). The challenge of recruiting the unorganized poor is not new to left parties; historical studies of left-wing parties have highlighted the difficulty of winning the votes of non-unionized workers (including those in the countryside) and working-class women outside of the formal labor market (see e.g. Przeworski and Sprague (1986); Inglehart and Norris (2000)).

are unlikely to support left parties. When religious leaders are progressive, however, they can provide left parties with important organizational benefits. For example, when organized workers have little presence in the countryside, access to religious networks and the lay associations that progressive religious leaders promote can facilitate party building in geographic areas in which it is otherwise costly.³⁰ These religious networks can aid left parties in building a national party infrastructure and expanding their organizational reach across regions, particularly in rural areas where the lack of labor unions makes party building particularly challenging.

2.5 Summary

I argue that the presence of progressive religious leaders fundamentally alters the standard account of the relationship between religion and politics. By increasing both the demand for redistribution and the organizational resources available to religious voters, progressive religious leaders can transform this group into a powerful constituency of left-wing parties. However, whenever religious voters also have a strong preference in favor of conservative social policies, their incorporation into the left's coalition comes at the cost of protecting the conservative *status quo* on these social issues. The losers are the social progressives whose demands on social issues are ignored.

³⁰Cammett and Luong (2014).

Chapter 3

Progressives & Conservatives Within the Catholic Church

In this chapter, I describe two distinct interpretations of Catholic social doctrine—the set of religious teachings on matters of human dignity and common good in society that address oppression, the role of the state, social organization, concern for social justice, and issues of wealth distribution. I begin by discussing the traditional understanding of poverty within the Catholic Church. It then traces the development of progressive Catholicism from the end of the 19th century through the 20th, as well as highlighting the actions of progressive Catholic leaders who rose to prominence alongside this progressivism. In the process, the chapter also describes the role of conservative leaders during the period—from their failures to stem progressive influences in the Second Vatican Council to their reemergence as the dominant faction after the appointment of Pope John Paul II. Finally, the chapter outlines how these ideas and factions were manifested in Brazil in particular, laying out the empirical variation that I explore in the following chapters.

3.1 A Short History of Catholic Social Thought

Discussions about poverty and charity are an integral component of Catholic social teachings. Compared to other religious traditions, an individual's work ethic is far less important in Catholicism. Indeed, poverty is not the consequence of individual effort but rather a social responsibility—relatives, friends, employers and the church are expected to care for the poor.¹

The traditional Catholic response to poverty is focused on other-worldly rewards, placing it in the bottom portion of Figures 2.1 and 2.2 in Chapter 2. As early as the Council of Trent (1545-1563), Catholic theologians conceptualized poverty as a divine state that

¹Kahl (2005).

brought individuals closer to God and increased the likelihood of salvation.² In this respect, poverty is considered a “state of grace”—the poor are blessed in the eyes of the Church and it is their acceptance of material destitution that will ultimately lead to their salvation. The Church’s focus on salvation also encourages the wealthy to participate in charity—almsgiving is promoted as an act of poor relief that leads to one’s salvation. The rich are believed to have received wealth, power, and property so that they can perform charity to the poor.

Two features of this Catholic view of poor relief are at odds with secular redistribution via state channels. First, it is explicitly the decision to give to the less fortunate that is considered benevolent. Charity should thus arise from sincere compassion, rather than in response to legal mandates from the state. Second, though the rich have a moral duty to do good works and provide aid to the poor, this does not imply that the poor are entitled to claim relief.

It wasn’t until Europe’s industrial revolution in the 19th century that questions of social inequality in the modern age forced the Church to reevaluate its positions with respect to poverty. In this section, I describe the evolution of Catholic social thought, from *Rerum Novarum*—the first papal document to address labor and capital, issued in 1891—to the Second Vatican Council that began in 1962 (colloquially referred to as Vatican II). I then describe how this reinterpretation of Catholic social teachings gave rise to a progressive movement within the Church that spanned the globe, from Europe to the Americas.

Progressive Catholicism

The Development of Catholic Social Teaching In 1891, Pope Leo XIII issued the encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, in which he addressed the social instability and labor conflict that emerged in Europe at the turn of the 20th century. Titled “Of the New Things, Rights and Duties of Capital and Labor,” it was the Church’s first official response to the social instability and labor conflict that arose in the wake of industrialization. The encyclical touched upon the plight of the urban poor and condemned unfettered capitalism. In response to the misery of the working class, the encyclical advocated the organization of labor unions and the right to collective bargaining. It marked the first time that the Church recognized unions as a legitimate social movement.

While *Rerum Novarum* rejected socialism and reaffirmed the importance of private property rights, it nevertheless acknowledged the role of the state in promoting social justice and argued that the free operation of market forces should be tempered by moral considerations. In perhaps one of the best-known passages of the encyclical, Pope Leo XIII states:

Let the working man and the employer make free agreements, and in particular let them agree freely as to the wages; nevertheless, there underlies a dictate

²Kahl (2005).

of natural justice more imperious and ancient than any bargain between man and man, namely, that wages ought not to be insufficient to support a frugal and well-behaved wage-earner. If through necessity or fear of a worse evil the workman accept harder conditions because an employer or contractor will afford him no better, he is made the victim of force and injustice.

Forty years after *Rerum Novarum*, and well into the Great Depression, Pope Pius XI expanded on these themes in *Quadragesimo Anno*. He reiterated the defense of private property rights and collective bargaining but also reiterated the contention that unfettered capitalism will not lead to a just society. While the encyclical introduced the concept of “subsidiarity”—the idea that decisions should be made at the lowest level possible and the centralization of decision making should therefore be avoided—, it acknowledged the need for state interventions to mediate conflicts between labor and capital when local negotiations failed. The Catholic Church thus delineated a distinctive position for itself that fell between free-market capitalism on the right and statist socialism on the left.

In the 1960s, Pope John XXIII further expanded official Church doctrine on social issues. His first encyclical, *Mater et Magistra* (1961), as well as some passages in his second, *Pacem in Terris* (1963), supported a strengthening of workers’ rights and an increase in the power of labor unions. The encyclicals also called on the Catholic Church to address with the suffering and injustice of contemporary society. *Pacem in Terris* stated this directive most explicitly when it described the Church’s duty to ‘scrutinize the signs of the times,’ suggesting that the Church should pay close attention to contemporary events and interpret them through the lens of the Gospel and other Catholic teachings.³ Nonetheless, it was Pope John XXIII’s opening of the Second Vatican Council—the most important event in the Church since the Reformation—that had the largest impact on the Church’s social teachings.

The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) In 1962, Pope John XXIII officially inaugurated the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, known colloquially as Vatican II. The Council lasted for three years and embraced a series of reforms—both major and minor—that reshaped the Catholic Church’s approach to engaging with the modern world. These reforms included the replacement of the traditional Latin mass with a vernacular version, an enhanced role for bishops within the Church, and an increased tolerance of other religious faiths.⁴

Vatican II continued the previous encyclicals’ emphasis on social injustice and economic inequality, yet went significantly further in outlining the causes of these problems and identifying clear prescriptions to alleviate them. Nowhere was this more evident than in *Gaudium et Spes*, one of the two pastoral constitutions produced during Vatican II. Building on *Rerum Novarum*, it prioritized concerns about workers and marginalized sec-

³Horn (2015).

⁴Wilde (2007, 2004); Vásquez and Peterson (2016).

tors of society.⁵ It went beyond the mandates of prior documents, advocating the direct participation of labor unions and other delegative bodies in the shaping of economic and social conditions.⁶ In so doing, the pastoral constitution advocated expanding the role of unions and other worker organizations in order to level the playing field between capital and labor.

In addition to addressing the plight of factory workers, *Gaudium et Spes* also denounced the injustices facing the rural poor in the developing world. It elaborated a structural critique of landholding inequality that blamed rural landowners and economic elites for the proliferation of rural poverty. Perhaps most strikingly, it went as far as advocating agrarian reform, a contentious policy with broad relevance across much of the developing world when Vatican II occurred. It stated:

In many underdeveloped regions there are large or even extensive rural estates which are only slightly cultivated or lie completely idle for the sake of profit, while the majority of the people either are without land or have only very small fields, and, on the other hand, it is evidently urgent to increase the productivity of the fields. (...) Indeed, insufficiently cultivated estates should be distributed to those who can make these lands fruitful.⁷

Shortly after the conclusion of Vatican II, Pope Paul VI issued an encyclical titled *Populorum Progressio* that highlighted and reinforced many of these themes.⁸ The encyclical emphasized the historical role of the Church in providing social welfare. However, it went on to advocate a larger role for the Church, and Catholics more generally, in contributing to society's development through the promotion of economic redistribution:

But these efforts, (...) are not enough. (...) It involves building a human community where men can live truly human lives (...). On the part of the rich man, it calls for great generosity, willing sacrifice and diligent effort. (...) Is he prepared to support, at his own expense, projects and undertakings designed to help the needy? Is he prepared to pay higher taxes so that public authorities may expand their efforts in the work of development?⁹

Moreover, Paul VI stressed the role of government officials in taxing the rich to promote the development of the poor, as well as the responsibility of both lay Catholics and the hierarchy in improving the social order:

Government leaders, your task is to draw your communities into closer ties of solidarity with all men, and to convince them that they must accept the

⁵Horn (2015).

⁶Horn (2015).

⁷Pope Paul VI (1965).

⁸Pope Paul VI (1967).

⁹Pope Paul VI (1967).

necessary taxes on their luxuries and their wasteful expenditures in order to promote the development of nations and the preservation of peace. (...) [L]ay people must consider it their task to improve the temporal order. While the hierarchy has the role of teaching and authoritatively interpreting the moral laws and precepts that apply in this matter, the laity have the duty of using their own initiative and taking action in this area (...). They must try to infuse a Christian spirit into people's mental outlook and daily behavior, into the laws and structures of the civil community. Changes must be made; present conditions must be improved.¹⁰

Progressive themes addressing social issues have long occupied the leaders of the Catholic Church. However, Vatican II brought these concerns to the forefront of Catholic social teachings and expanded the Church's role in addressing the social and economic needs of society. The changes in the interpretation of Catholic social teachings introduced during the Council had important consequences for pastoral practices and increased the Church's political commitment to the poor.

Progressive Catholic Movements Across the Catholic world, progressive Catholic movements developed in tandem with the major theological and doctrinal events of the period. In Western Europe, the first wave of progressive Catholicism took place after World War II, between 1944 and 1954.¹¹ The largest national movements occurred in France and Belgium, where priests sought to reconnect the Church with a largely unreceptive population that was wary of the Church.¹² This perception was particularly present among the working class, which was heavily integrated into Marxist political parties. The largest national movements occurred in France and Belgium, where priests sought to reconnect the Church with a largely unreceptive audience, particularly among the working classes, which were heavily involved in Marxist political parties.¹³ To engage with these sectors of society, leaders of the French Church began to develop a theology of social justice, referred to as Catholic Action, and many priests joined workers on the assembly line and construction sites (a movement later called "worker-priests"). Some members of the clergy became politically active and participated in demonstrations against war and racism, as well as protests in favor of workers' rights and housing for the poor. While the Vatican ordered the priests to discontinue these non-clerical activities in the 1950s, in 1965 Paul VI changed course and formally approved the worker-priest movement.¹⁴ By the time of the Council, the French Catholic Church was one of the most progressive.¹⁵

¹⁰Pope Paul VI (1967).

¹¹Horn (2015).

¹²Wilde et al. (2010).

¹³Wilde et al. (2010).

¹⁴Horn (2015).

¹⁵Martina (1988).

Progressive Catholic movements gained momentum across Western Europe in the years following Vatican II. The worker-priest movement continued to thrive and grew considerably.¹⁶ Radical priest associations sprung up throughout the region, as did the now renowned ecclesiastical base communities—small neighborhood groups that meet to reflect upon scripture and apply its lessons in their daily lives. Progressive Catholics were also active in the burgeoning student movements throughout Europe. Catholic trade unions, along with their worker-priest counterparts, played an important role in mobilizing the working class and advocating radical action to promote economic and social justice.¹⁷ Their prominent and outspoken position in the political sphere was unprecedented and drew heavily on the teachings of Vatican II.

The growth of progressive Catholicism followed a relatively similar trajectory in the United States. Prior to Vatican II, a small but vocal group of worker-priests appeared in working-class communities at the turn of the 20th century in response to industrialization and the publication of the papal encyclical *Rerum Novarum*.¹⁸ These progressive priests found a voice among the large populations of Catholic immigrants confronting the harsh reality of factory work in the country's industrialized cities. In many cases, they were deeply involved in the early formation of labor unions.¹⁹

In the 1960s, Vatican II energized these progressive Catholic movements in the United States, strengthening their cause and expanding their scope. Among their most notable achievements following the Council was progressive priests' support for César Chávez and the United Farm Workers in the fight to improve working conditions and wages for agricultural workers in California's Central Valley.²⁰ Drawing on Catholic social teachings and personal connections with agricultural workers, support initially began at the parish level under the guidance of Father Victor Salandini. These early efforts eventually gained the support of the Catholic hierarchy more broadly.²¹ Catholic priests, parishioners, nuns, and bishops were key sources of support for the United Farm Workers' cause.²²

In Latin America, the events of Vatican II had a similarly galvanizing effect on progressive Catholic movements. Although many national churches in the region were already concerned with economic inequality and social injustice prior to Vatican II, the Council provided the context for a broader discussion about the role of bishops in attending to the social and economic needs of their communities. Among the faction of progressive bishops participating in the Council, it was those from Latin Americans that most embraced the Church's role in social justice.²³ For example, Latin American bishops were instrumental

¹⁶Horn (2016).

¹⁷Horn (2016).

¹⁸Sullivan (2014). Three of the most prominent worker-priests in the United States were John Ryan, Peter Dietz, Francis Haas, and George Higgins (Gribble, 2006).

¹⁹Revitte (1997); Heineman (2010); Abell (1949).

²⁰Curran (2010).

²¹Prouty (2008).

²²Prouty (2008); León (2007).

²³Wilde et al. (2010).

in the crafting of a document known as the *Pact of the Catacombs* during the Vatican II meetings. Although not an official document of Vatican II, it was inspired by the conversations during the Council and served to cement the participating bishops' commitment to social justice. In it, the bishops pledged to prioritize "the apostolic and pastoral service of workers and labor groups and those who are economically weak and disadvantaged" as well as to provide support so that "those responsible for our governments, and our public services establish and enforce the laws, social structures, and institutions that are necessary for justice and equality." This text would directly influence the development of the new progressive movements that flourished in the following years.²⁴

Latin American bishops' commitment to social justice grew stronger after Vatican II. In 1968, they convened the Latin American Episcopal Council (*Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano* - CELAM) in Colombia to discuss how to apply the teachings of Vatican II in the region.²⁵ They denounced unjust social structures and supported profound economic reforms. Concretely, the conference called for the "the formation of national communities that reflect a global organization, where all of the peoples but more especially the lower classes have, by means of territorial and functional structures, an active and receptive, creative and decisive participation in the construction of a new society."²⁶

Two years after the conclusion of the CELAM conference, Peruvian priest Gustavo Gutiérrez published his seminal work *Una teología de la liberación*, launching what became known as liberation theology.²⁷ Liberation theology echoed calls for the transformation of unjust economic and social structures and encouraged Catholics to liberate themselves from this injustice through concrete political action. It advocated reform of both Christianity and society. With respect to the former, it emphasized engaging with theology from the perspective of the oppressed. Liberation theologians, therefore, framed their teachings around the issues that affected the poor. Active involvement in the daily lives and struggles of the poor was considered a necessary precondition for practicing liberation theology. In addition, it also emphasized the moral imperative to translate religious ideas and mandates into actionable political and social institutions; theology must relate to real world political and economic challenges in order to meaningfully reflect on the status quo.²⁸

The emphasis on relating theology to the lived experience of Catholics led to the development of new types of Catholic organizations. The most prominent of these grassroots organizations were the Ecclesial Base Communities (*Comunidades Eclesiais de Base* - CEBs) established by priests or nuns with the support of bishops.²⁹ Yet it was the laity who led the day-to-day activities in the CEBs, particularly in rural areas where many parishes

²⁴Bingemer (2016).

²⁵Gill (1998, 17-46).

²⁶Vásquez and Peterson (2016).

²⁷Gutiérrez (1971).

²⁸Petrella (2016).

²⁹For a detailed analysis of CEBs, see Levine (2014); Smith (1991).

lacked permanent priests.³⁰ With the help of periodic training from priests and other Church leaders, lay participants in the CEBs learned to relate Catholic teachings to current events and local issues.³¹

Most of the activity in the CEBs occurred in weekly meetings in which members discussed a particular event or problem they faced as a community and drew on biblical passages to understand its causes and consequences.³² Often, these conversations led to concrete actions to address the problem in question, be it a local issue such as the creation of soup kitchens or childcare centers, or larger issues such as land reform. In countries experiencing widespread civil war, such as Nicaragua and El Salvador in the 1970s and 1980s, CEBs took on an even more active role in engaging with social and political concerns. In such contexts, where instability and violence against civilians was widespread, local CEBs occasionally established links with revolutionary movements.³³ Although most members of the CEBs abstained from violence and found alternative ways of supporting civilians threatened by the unrest, some members joined the revolutionary movements directly.

Taken together, the events of Vatican II and the CELAM conference spurred critical shifts in the theological focus and daily practice of Catholicism in Latin America. The CEBs represent one of the many concrete manifestations of these changes. Equally, if not more important, was the Church hierarchy's condemnation of the "institutionalized violence" of poverty. Going beyond traditional views of sin as a personal transgression, the Latin American bishops emphasized the idea of a "social sin," which referred to oppressive political and economic structures.³⁴ Moreover, they stressed the need to transform these structures in order to achieve the peace and social justice that Catholic doctrine demanded and reaffirmed the Church's responsibility to nurture this transformation.

While the narrative in this section might suggest a linear evolution of the Catholic Church in a progressive direction, the reality was more complex. Indeed, a significant portion of Catholic bishops, priests, and believers resisted the changes described above.³⁵ I describe this conservative faction—as well as its conflict with progressives—in the next section.

3.2 Progressives and Conservatives Within the Church

Councils such as Vatican II are rare events in the Roman Catholic Church. Only the Pope can call a council, and they have occurred, on average, less than once every century. During a council, all of the bishops, cardinals, heads of religious orders, and theologians of the Church discuss relevant issues, draft statements on those issues, and eventually vote on

³⁰Vásquez and Peterson (2016).

³¹Levine (2014).

³²Vásquez and Peterson (2016).

³³Vásquez and Peterson (2016).

³⁴Vásquez and Peterson (2016).

³⁵Wilde (2007).

whether to ratify the statements. Far from engendering unanimous agreement, reforms and resolutions passed in the Council generally divide the bishops.³⁶

During Vatican II, the old guard within the Church—concentrated in the powerful *Roman Curia* but also present throughout the hierarchy—resisted many of the proposed reforms because they perceived them as too much of a rupture with the past. In an effort to mollify these conservative elements and reduce divisions within the hierarchy, Paul VI strongly encouraged the progressive majority to compromise and accept modifications to the final documents of the Council.³⁷ While this increased support among conservative bishops, it led to documents with ambiguous and sometimes contradictory language. Nevertheless, progressives accepted these compromises because they saw the Council as the beginning of a broader period of reform. The documents published at the conclusion of Vatican II were thought to be the first step in a longer conversation.

Following the conclusion of the Council, the Church was divided into two camps. The conservatives interpreted Council documents in a way that maintained continuity with existing Catholic teachings and traditions. Progressives, inspired by their discussions and proclamations during the Council, instead proposed interpretations that were more in line with the revolutionary spirit of the 1960s.³⁸ While conservatives represented an important faction within the hierarchy, progressives dominated many of the seminaries, religious orders, Catholic universities, and diocesan bureaucracies throughout the Church. Progressive Catholic movements flourished.

Yet the golden years of progressive Catholicism ended abruptly in 1978, when Pope Paul VI died unexpectedly. When the papacy becomes vacant, members of the College of Cardinals are called to the Vatican to select the next pope through a series of secret votes that continue until more than two thirds of the body agrees on a candidate.³⁹ While the content of these votes and the discussions surrounding them are secret, the process of pope selection is almost certainly a contentious one in which the perspectives of different factions within the Catholic hierarchy are in tension. In the wake of Paul VI's death, the members of the College were able to agree on Pope John Paul I. Yet his pontificate was brief—he died just one month after assuming the papacy. The College of Cardinals then selected Pope John Paul II in 1978. This choice was a clear victory for conservatives within the hierarchy; John Paul II maintained a traditional understanding of Catholic social teachings and had little tolerance for progressive interpretations. As early as June 1983, the official Soviet news agency *Tass* declared that, in comparison with his predecessors, “the present head of the Catholic Church has taken a much more conservative and rigid position vis-a-vis the socialist world.”⁴⁰

³⁶Wilde (2007).

³⁷Reese, Thomas (2016).

³⁸Horn (2015).

³⁹In the contemporary period, the College of Cardinals is composed entirely of high-ranking and influential bishops who have been selected to be cardinals.

⁴⁰Hanson (1987, p.12).

During his papacy, John Paul II began a process of “Catholic restoration” that discouraged progressive movements within the Church. Indeed, curbing progressive activity by the Church was one of his top priorities and he regularly disciplined the priests, bishops, and cardinals who opposed his views. John Paul II made loyalty to papal teaching the litmus test for episcopal appointments and reined in dissenting theologians, removing or silencing priests who questioned papal teaching. Topics that were postponed during Vatican II were abruptly closed to further discussion.

3.3 The Catholic Church in Brazil

The struggle between Catholic factions was echoed in the Brazilian hierarchy, an empirical setting where the struggle between progressives and conservatives was pronounced and where the study of this conflict can shed light on the political consequences of progressive Catholic leadership. Throughout the 20th century, the country’s Catholic Church experienced first a growth in the presence of progressive bishops, priests, and other clergy. Beginning in earnest following the conclusion of Vatican II, this progressive movement was actively discouraged after John Paul II became pope in 1978. The following section describes the growth of progressivism in Brazil and the tensions that developed with conservative clergy in greater detail.

Progressive Catholicism in Brazil

The Brazilian Church’s progressive roots hail from before Vatican II.⁴¹ The movement was fostered by the Brazilian National Bishops Conference (*Conferência Nacional dos Bispos do Brasil*—CNBB), which was founded in 1952 with strong support from the Vatican.⁴² Between 1955 and 1964, the CNBB was the most important advocate of progressivism within the Brazilian Church.

In the early 1960s, the CNBB issued several progressive documents and official statements, including a number of plans that called for major socioeconomic reforms. In 1962, for example, it criticized the “social imbalances produced by the egotism and profit promoted by economic liberalism.”⁴³ In 1963, the CNBB issued a document that supported land reform and stated that all people deserve access to land.⁴⁴

It was during this same period that the first religious base communities (Comunidades Eclesiais de Base - CEBs) were established in Brazil. The earliest communities were cre-

⁴¹Lowy (2000); Mainwaring (1987).

⁴²It was one of the first national episcopal conferences in the world and the first in Latin America (Mainwaring, 1987).

⁴³Cited in Mainwaring (1986, 123-124).

⁴⁴There were, of course, several bishops that opposed land reform. Two bishops, Geraldo de Proença Sigaud and Antônio de Castro Mayer participated in the publishing of a book that condemned agrarian reform and advocated instead to maintain a state of “harmonious inequality” (Antoine, 1973).

ated in 1963 in response to a concern about the shortage of priests and a growing interest in themes such as community and social justice.⁴⁵ In rural areas, progressive priests realized it was impossible to visit their entire geographical region on a given Sunday, so they began to encourage the peasants to hold a religious ceremony without them. While CEBs were initially concentrated in rural areas under the guidance of progressive bishops, they were embraced by the broader hierarchy after the CELAM conference in 1968.⁴⁶

These initial progressive currents in the Brazilian Church provided a fertile backdrop for the themes of Vatican II and the CELAM conference to take hold. For example, it was in the wake of these key shifts in Catholic thought that Brazilian bishops as a collective decided to publicly criticize the country's military dictatorship. CEBs and other Catholic lay organizations also proliferated following these international events. In local parishes and dioceses, an increasing number of pastoral actors became concerned with the plight of the poor and the fight for social justice.

As CEBS grew in popularity, they never lost their connection to the institutional Church. They were created by "pastoral agents"—priests, nuns, bishops and lay people commissioned by the Church.⁴⁷ Most dioceses provided training sessions for CEB leaders, members of the clergy visited on a regular basis, and the materials used in the CEBs were produced by the dioceses or other Church institutions. The focus of most of the activity in the CEBs was religious and revolved around prayer, reading the Bible and other religious materials, discussing the social and political implications of the Catholic faith, and engaging with the issues that dominated members' daily lives.⁴⁸

Some bishops sought to develop ecclesiastical organizations that could go beyond the CEBs' limited political role and that had a regional, or even national, character. They supported the creation of other Catholic organizations in the early 1970s, including the Pastoral Land Commission (CPT), the Workers' Pastoral Commission (CPO), and the Indigenous Missionary Council (CIMI). The CPT and CIMI were created by Catholic clergy in the Amazon region, though both organizations acquired a national identity within a short period of time.⁴⁹ Officially created in 1975, the CPT quickly became active in many dioceses in the Northeast and expanded to other parts of the country by the end of the decade. The CPT played a leading role in defending the legal rights of peasants, documenting violations of human rights, developing religious publications intended explicitly for the peasantry, and encouraging peasants to organize to protect their land. CIMI was created in April, 1972 to help missionaries practice effective pastoral work with indigenous populations.⁵⁰ Its work ranged from defending the legal rights of the indigenous to holding

⁴⁵For an analysis of the origins of CEBs in Brazil, see [de Carvalho Azevedo \(1986\)](#).

⁴⁶[Mainwaring \(1987\)](#).

⁴⁷[Mainwaring \(1987\)](#).

⁴⁸As described by [Bruneau \(1979\)](#), the average CEB in Brazil was less political than many analysts have suggested. However, many people acquired a rudimentary political consciousness in CEBs and, in the most politicized parts of the country, they also participated in social movements.

⁴⁹[Mainwaring \(1987\)](#).

⁵⁰[Mainwaring \(1987\)](#).

workshops for the missionaries. While all of these organizations nurtured a specifically Catholic identity, they were more involved in political work than the CEBs.

What types of religious teachings were progressive priests advancing in these organizations? And how did progressive priests and bishops shape the experience of religion at the local level? Given the crucial role of religious sermons in conveying religious teachings at the local level, it would be ideal to have transcriptions of local sermons in order to place Brazil's progressive Catholic leaders on the two dimensional classification introduced in Chapter 2. Unfortunately, these sermons have been lost to history; primary sources containing the content of Catholic sermons do not exist today. To answer these questions, it is thus necessary to look to other sources.

In the next sub-section, I propose an alternative strategy to assess the ideas advanced by progressive religious leaders in Brazil through a study of the diocesan publications that were distributed among parishioners. I examine publications from across Brazil's dioceses between 1966 and 1986 to gain insight into the ways in which progressive Catholic leaders understood the roots of poverty and economic inequality in Brazil, as well as their role in actively alleviating this poverty by encouraging parishioners to engage in political activities in support of economic redistribution.

Studying Progressive Catholicism through Diocesan Publications

The primary material I analyze in this sub-section comes from the "Brazil's Popular Groups" (BPG) collection in the Library of Congress.⁵¹ In an effort to document Brazilian social movements, the Library of Congress's overseas office in Rio de Janeiro has collected publications by civic and political organizations since 1966. The first set of documents in the BPG collection covers the period from 1966 to 1986 and includes brochures, pamphlets, posters, newsletters and reports.⁵² While it does not contain the universe of Church publications from Brazil's many dioceses, there is no reason to believe that the Library of Congress privileged the collection of certain types of Church documents over others. The collection remains the most complete source of regional Catholic publications available to date and provides unique insight into the content of progressive Catholic thought at the local level.

This section examines the publications within the BPG collection that were produced by members of the Catholic clergy or lay leaders at the diocese level and referenced politics.⁵³ Importantly, the analysis in this section is not meant to provide an exhaustive account of all publications from Brazil's dioceses. Rather, its goal is to broadly characterize the types of written materials that were distributed and the ways in which these materials discussed the economic and political realities that parishioners faced. The analysis

⁵¹Library of Congress (1986).

⁵²Later collections cover the period from 1987 to 1989 and from 1990 to 1992, with annual sets thereafter.

⁵³Section 3.A in the Appendix details the process to select these sources and provides a brief description of them.

illustrates the ways in which Catholic teachings, as conveyed through the BPG publications, map onto the two dimensions highlighted in the classification of religious leaders in Chapter 2.

Through these pamphlets and other documents, the clergy emphasized the structural causes of economic inequality and poverty and encouraged political action to address these issues. The publications share an emphasis on the two elements that characterize progressive religious teachings: an understanding of poverty as unjust and rooted in economic and social structures, as well as the belief that religious individuals have a moral mandate to actively engage in the political sphere as a means to mitigate this poverty.

All of the publications emphasize the Church's role as society's moral compass and believe it is the clergy's responsibility to guide parishioners' understanding of and participation in the political sphere. A booklet containing a pastoral letter written by Jose D'Angelo Neto, Archbishop of Pouso Alegre, sums up this belief: "As part of its evangelizing mission, the Church has an obligation to address the country's social and political problems due to their moral dimension."⁵⁴ A booklet from the Archdiocese of Pouso Alegre similarly states:

It is our role, as a Church, to form the consciences of men. (...) Faith must guide all our activities, including those in politics. It is not the Church that should govern the city, the state and the country. But it is the duty of the Church to denounce the injustices and errors that are hindering the life of the people.⁵⁵

Poverty as a Social Sin

One of the central themes in the BPG publications is the idea that poverty is rooted in Brazil's economic and political institutions. These institutions are framed as engendering economic inequality that is unjust and unfair: through no fault of their own, individuals are subject to institutions that systematically disadvantage them. Poverty's structural origins are thus conceived of as a *social sin*, a term used to refer to the institutional roots of their injustice. Indeed, 44% of the publications reference this concept. As one publication explains,

In the Church, back when the priests conducted Mass in Latin, it was thought that what was important was to live in peace with God. (...) Only the concept of personal sin was discussed and the concept of social sin was ignored.

Today, a good Catholic knows that there are also sins against the community and society, and even against humanity. For example, polluting is a sin against

⁵⁴ Archdiocese of Pouso Alegre (1982).

⁵⁵ Archdiocese of Vitória (1977).

Figure 3.1: Capitalism as a Social Sin



A cartoon published by the diocese of Tubarão in which a business man presents 'capitalism' to a member of the clergy, who denounces this offering as a 'social sin'.⁵⁸

the community; paying the minimum wage to a family is a sin against society; and dropping an atomic bomb is a sin against humanity.⁵⁶

The concept of a social sin is also evident in the cartoons that illustrate most publications. For example, the cartoon in Figure 3.3 shows a Catholic bishop reminding a smiling, wealthy man that capitalism is a “social sin.” Other publications express a similar sentiment. For example, one states that “There is no common good where people are marginalized”⁵⁷ and includes a quote from *Populorum Progressio*, the encyclical written by progressive Pope Paul VI: “It is illicit to increase the wealth of the rich and the power of the strong by solidifying the misery of the poor and increasing the slavery of the oppressed.” These statements directly oppose the idea that profiting at the cost of others’ wellbeing is acceptable behavior.

The view of poverty as a social sin is often accompanied by descriptions of the concrete issues that affect the lives of the Brazilian people. The publications include lengthy discussions of particular social and economic ills, such as inequality, the minimum wage, agrarian reform, and unemployment.⁵⁹ They seek to educate parishioners about these social issues, discussing them in accessible language, employing recognizable (often biblical) metaphors, and using short, rhetorical dialogues. They also incorporate cartoons and drawings that illustrate and reinforce the textual descriptions.

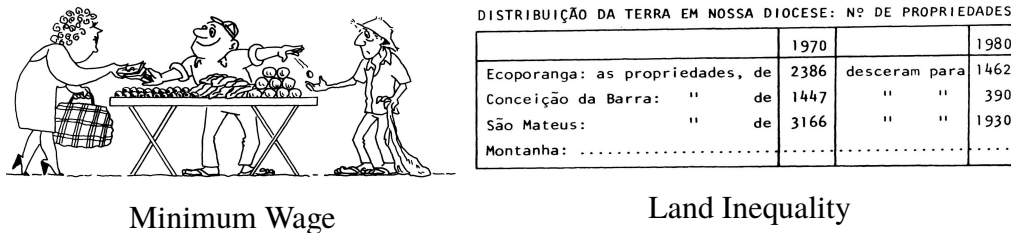
In depicting Brazil’s deep-seated economic inequality, the publications stress the complex social relationships and structural dynamics in which this inequality is rooted. For example, the cartoon in the left panel of Figure 3.2 displays the economic hardship that rural farmers face. While the urban merchant pays the farmer a single coin for his produce,

⁵⁶Diocese of Tubarão (1986, p.14).

⁵⁷Archdiocese of Vitória (1977, p.20).

⁵⁹The most discussed issue is inequality (56% of the publications), followed by the minimum wage (44%), agrarian reform (35%), and unemployment (19%).

Figure 3.2: Rural Inequality



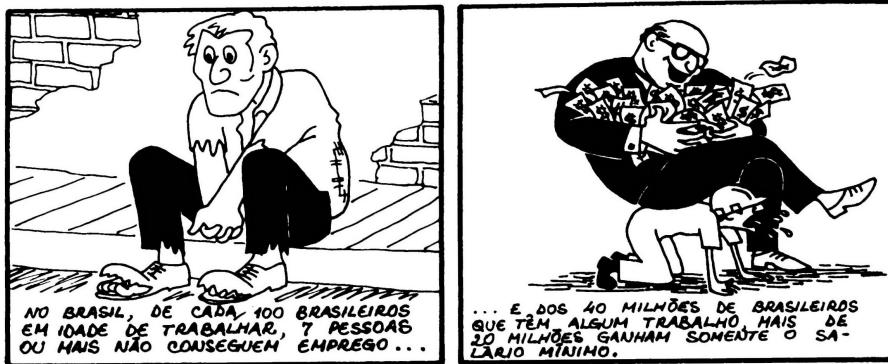
The figure shows supporting material from a publication in the [Diocese of São Mateus \(1982, p.5\)](#) depicting social problems in the countryside. In the cartoon on the left, a rural worker is paid little money for his produce, which is sold at market for considerably higher prices. The panel on the right depicts a table titled ‘Distribution of land in our Diocese - Number of properties’ which lists the municipalities in the diocese and the number of properties in each for 1970 and 1980. It shows that land concentration increased in all municipalities.

he receives a bundle of cash for the sale of these same products. The cartoon illustrates the difficulty that farmers face in obtaining a fair price for the fruits of their labor, as well as their lower economic status as compared to the urban customers who purchase their products. The table on the right panel of the Figure describes the distribution of property in the diocese of São Mateus, where the pamphlet was published. It lists the number of properties in three municipalities for the years 1970 and 1980 and shows that the concentration of land increased in each, implying that Brazil’s economic inequality is a direct consequence of its unjust social and economic institutions.

Other publications highlight similar issues of economic inequality in urban settings. For example, Figure 3.3 displays a cartoon from a booklet published in the Archdiocese of Vitória. The first part of the cartoon, displayed in the left panel of the figure, depicts a poor man sitting on the curb. The caption below states that many adults are unable to find gainful employment. A second cartoon, directly following the first, links the idea of poverty with the themes of economic inequality and injustice. It is displayed in the right panel of Figure 3.3 and depicts a worker being squashed under the weight of a businessman with his arms full of money. The caption complements the previous one, stating that most workers who can find work earn only the minimum wage.

Throughout the publications, the theme of economic inequality and the hardship it imposes is abundantly clear. Yet the publications go beyond simply illustrating the misery of Brazil’s poor: they also underscore the complex social and structural dynamics that lead to this poverty. In doing so, they emphasize the idea that inequality is rooted in a collective—rather than individual—failure.

Figure 3.3: Urban Inequality



The figure shows a section of a cartoon published by the [Archdiocese of Vitória](#) (1978, p.9). In the left panel, the cartoon denounces unemployment. It shows a impoverished person sitting on the street and states: “In Brazil, out of every one hundred working-age individuals, seven or more cannot find a job...” In the panel on the right, the theme turns to wage inequality. A very wealthy businessman sits on the back of an exhausted worker. The caption states: “... and out of the forty-million Brazilians that have a job, more than twenty million earn only the minimum wage.”

Political Participation as a Moral Mandate

In addition to highlighting the structural sources of economic inequality, the publications also define the strategies through which parishioners can mitigate this issue. They encourage parishioners to combat economic and social injustices through political channels. This political engagement is often linked explicitly to fulfilling a moral mandate stemming from Catholic teachings. As one of the publications explained,

Catholic faith pushes us to practice and demand justice in all aspects of life. (...) It is the duty of every Catholic to be political, that is, to organize and to work together to seek the common good.⁶⁰

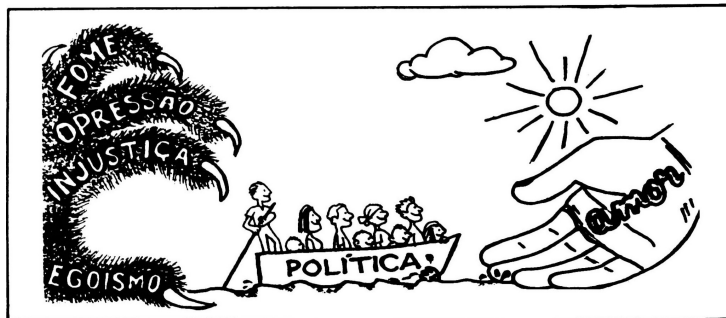
Catholics were encouraged to actively participate in the political process in order to pursue the common good for themselves and society more broadly.⁶¹ Crucially, the pamphlets describe political participation as a moral responsibility based on the Catholic man-

⁶⁰Diocese of Tubarão (1986, 17)

⁶¹The booklets also address more concrete political themes, combining religious interpretation with political and electoral education. For example, two themes that are widely covered in the booklets are the importance of Brazil’s then ongoing democratic transition, which offered citizens the ability to participate in the political process, and basic information about the Brazilian political system—from the separation of powers and the different levels of government to details about the process of registering to vote. Fifty percent of the booklets engage in a discussion of the democratic transition; sixty-two percent discuss the Brazilian political and/or electoral systems.

date to love thy neighbor.⁶² A cartoon from one of the booklets, depicted in Figure 3.4, aptly illustrates this association. The cartoon shows a group of Brazilians fleeing a threatening hand representing social ills such as hunger and oppression. The group makes its escape on the “boat of politics,” towards a welcoming hand with the word “love” on its palm. In the booklet, the cartoon is accompanied by the phrase, “participating in politics is a way of loving thy neighbor.”⁶³ The emphasis on taking concrete political action to address injustice is a clear example of a progressive reading of Catholic teachings. A publication from the Diocese of Piracicaba further supports the idea that Catholics are morally obliged to participate in politics: “Every Christian is called to engage in politics, work for the common good and for the poor and the oppressed in particular. This is one of the facets of love, Jesus’s most important mandate.”⁶⁴

Figure 3.4: Political Participation as a Catholic Mandate



The cartoon—which comes from a booklet produced by the [Archdiocese of Belo Horizonte](#) (1978, p.6)—shows a group of people escaping from the threatening hand of social problems such as hunger, oppression, injustice, and selfishness towards the inviting hand of love. The boat that allows them to escape these social problems is named ‘politics’.

The Church publications also describe the types of political participation that the clergy felt was most appropriate for parishioners to exercise. They emphasize the need for Catholics to vote responsibly, based on an evaluation of parties’ platforms, and to join associations and unions that extend political participation beyond the act of casting a ballot. Indeed, roughly half of the publications directly address the issue of clientelism and outline why Catholics should not engage in it. Figure 3.5, from a publication in the Diocese of Tubarão, depicts a politician offering two workers money and saying, “Fifty-thousand cruzeiros for your vote.” In response, the workers declare, “Good consciousness

⁶²A study of the booklets produced by the dioceses around the 1978 election reaches the same conclusion: “There is absolute unanimity in placing political participation within the Catholic tenet of loving thy neighbor” (Guilhon-Albuquerque, 1980, p.70).

⁶³[Archdiocese of Belo Horizonte](#) (1978, p.6).

⁶⁴[Diocese of Piracicaba](#) (1986).

Figure 3.5: Against Vote Buying



The cartoon comes from a publication of the [Diocese of Tubarão](#) (1986, p.34) and depicts a politician trying to buy the votes of two workers. He offers “fifty-thousand cruzeiros for your vote,” but the workers reject the offer, answering that “good consciousness has no price.”

has no price.”⁶⁵ A different publication, from Nova Iguaçu, instructed parishioners,

Resist the offer of personal or community favors if its intent is to buy your vote. (...) A responsible voter who is conscious of her personal dignity rejects this type of political candidate. (...) They are enemies of democracy and of the people.⁶⁶

The cartoon rejects the practice of receiving gifts in exchange for political support and instead encourages Catholics to do their duty and “vote responsibly.” Engaging in politics meant educating oneself about different political parties and voting based on their merits, not accepting bribes from politicians that the Church believed to be corrupt and detrimental to democracy.

In addition to voting responsibly, a majority of the publications also encouraged parishioners to create, join, and participate in neighborhood and class-based organizations.⁶⁷ The Church viewed these organizations as forums through which citizens could educate themselves, learn from one another, and build on their shared experiences. For example, a publication from the Diocese of Florianópolis explained,

A good political conscience is more easily formed through the study and debates that occur within organized groups. That is why it is really important for Catholics to create and join discussion groups in their neighborhoods and their parishes.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ [Diocese of Tubarão](#) (1986, p.13).

⁶⁶ [Diocese of Nova Iguaçu](#) (1976, p.36)

⁶⁷ Sixty-two percent of the booklets engaged in a lengthy discussion of this subject.

⁶⁸ [Archdiocese of Florianópolis](#) (1982, p.10).

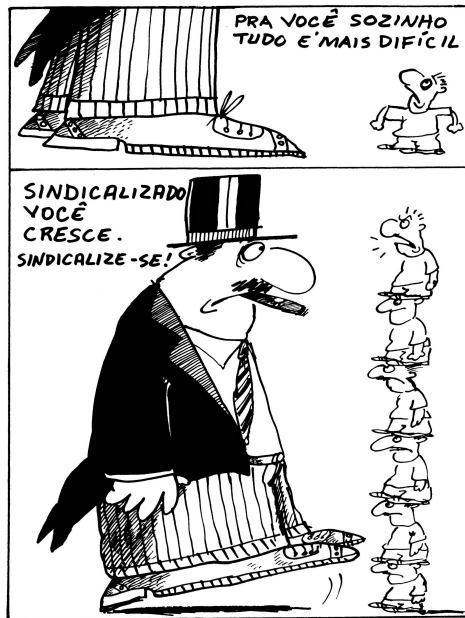


Figure 3.6: Encouraging Unionization
 The cartoon comes from a booklet from [Archdiocese of Rio de Janeiro](#) (1982, p.29) that encouraged Catholics to form associations and join unions. In the top panel, a worker and businessman stand side by side to highlight their difference in power—the worker can only see the businessman’s feet. The panel is accompanied by a caption that states: “when you are alone, everything is harder.” In the bottom panel, the businessman is now faced with a group of workers standing one on top of the other, thus matching the businessman’s height. The caption reads: “when you are in a union, you become taller. Unionize!”

In the Church’s eyes, participating in these organizations was a form of political education. Unions, neighborhood associations, and women’s groups created shared spaces for parishioners to learn about economic and social issues that pertained to their lives and discuss the best political strategies to address these issues.

Moreover, the Church also understood these groups to be one of the few tools that the poor had to exert meaningful change in society. Figure 3.6 illustrates this belief. In the top panel, a small worker is shown next to the oversized shoe of a businessman. The accompanying caption reads, “when you are alone, everything is hard.” In the bottom panel, the businessman is shown in his entirety and now stands eye to eye with a worker supported by other workers below him. The caption states, “when you are in a union, you become taller. Unionize!” The cartoon is meant to illustrate the power of workers’ collective action and the need for them to unite together in order to stand up to corporate interests. Progressive clergy often stressed the need to organize and join social and economic organizations. These organizations were viewed as important voices for the poor and progressives thus worked to encourage their creation and growth.

Overall, the pamphlets stress the need for political action to address the structural roots of poverty and economic inequality. Figure 3.7 displays three of the publication covers to further illustrate this point. The cover farthest to the left is partitioned into two images. On the left-hand side, the inner chamber of Brazil’s Congress is depicted. On the right-hand side, people are shown participating in a popular display of democracy. In the cover in the middle, workers are seen marching with a banner stating “The strength of the people” and holding other signs in support of women’s rights, rural unions, and workers more generally. Finally, the cover on the right shows a man casting his ballot. A list of social problems is displayed on his head (unemployment, housing, crime, etc) and the title of the cover states

Figure 3.7: Covers of Political Booklets Produced by the Brazilian Dioceses



The figure shows the covers of three political booklets produced and distributed among parishioners. The cover on the left is from the Diocese of Ji-Paraná and is titled “Christians and Politics.” The booklet in the center, “The Strength of the People,” was produced by the diocese of São Mateus. The cover on the right is from “What can I do?” a booklet produced by Rio de Janeiro.

“What can I do?” The covers underscore the importance of political participation and the act of collectively organizing as workers, citizens, and voters.

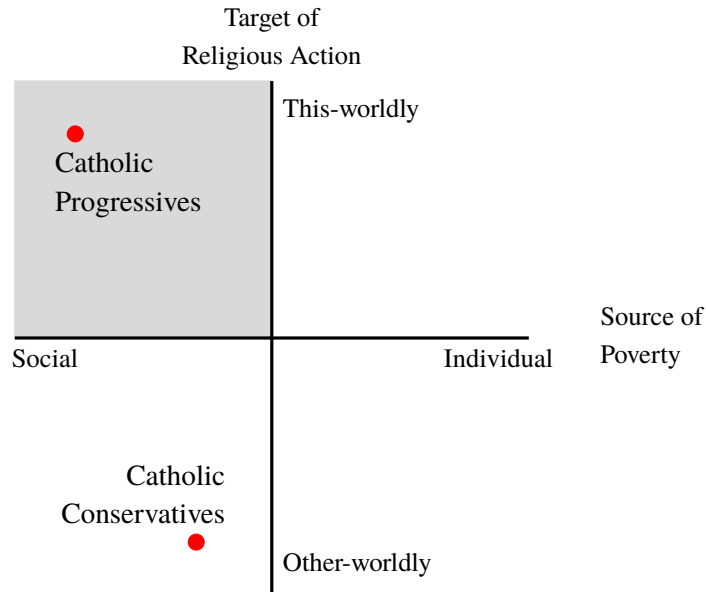
3.4 Variation within the Catholic Church in Brazil

In this section, I explore the ways in which the ideas expressed in these pamphlets map on to the classification of Brazil’s progressive Catholicism. Specifically, I evaluate the ideas contained in these publications with respect to the two dimensions identified in Chapter 2. I also discuss the impact of John Paul II’s appointment on the balance between conservatives and progressives within the Church, and characterize the position of conservative priests and bishops on the role of the Church in politics.

Brazil’s progressive bishops and priests perceived poverty and inequality as rooted in institutionalized injustice—a *social sin*.⁶⁹ They also conceived of religious activities as focused on addressing poverty in this world. Indeed, they thought the Church played a crucial role in educating parishioners about social and economic conditions and encouraged a diverse array of political participation, ranging from the act of voting to organizing into labor unions in order to protest unfair and unjust economic practices. Combined, these beliefs about the sources of poverty and the belief that political engagement is necessary to address it place these leaders squarely in the upper-left quadrant of Figure 3.8.

⁶⁹For a study of the evolution of Brazilian bishops’ economic thought, see [Fuser \(1987\)](#).

Figure 3.8: Illustration of the Classification of Religious Leaders



Yet in Brazil, as in the rest of the Catholic world, progressive Catholic leaders coexisted with conservatives. Moreover, John Paul II's crackdown on progressives in Latin America had a pronounced impact on the Brazilian Church. In an address to the Latin American Episcopate in Puebla, Mexico in 1979, John Paul II discouraged a vision of the Church that prioritized an active role in the fight against economic inequality and condemned documents prepared by the Latin American National Churches that interpreted the Church's social mission in this light. For example, he stated:

In the abundant documentation with which you have prepared this Conference, especially in the contributions of many Churches, a certain uneasiness is at times noticed with regard to the very interpretation of the nature and mission of the Church. Allusion is made, for instance, to the separation that some set up between the Church and the Kingdom of God. *The Kingdom of God is emptied of its full content and is understood in a rather secularist sense: it is interpreted as being reached not by faith and membership in the Church but by the mere changing of structures and social and political involvement, and as being present wherever there is a certain type of involvement and activity for justice. (...) [I]t is wrong to state that political, economic and social liberation coincides with salvation in Jesus Christ.*⁷⁰

He also expressly worked to curb progressivism in the Brazilian Church. During a ceremony to ordain priests in Brazil in 1980, he emphasized priests' role as spiritual leaders,

⁷⁰Pope John Paul II (1979) [Emphasis my own].

explicitly reminding attendees that they were not “doctors or social workers, (...) politicians or trade unionists”.⁷¹

Conservatives in the Brazilian hierarchy embraced the shift in the Vatican’s message following the selection of John Paul II as Pope. They emphasized that, as a religious institution, the Church should refrain from political involvement.⁷² For example, in 1983, Eugênio Salles, Archbishop of Rio de Janeiro and one of the most outspoken members of the conservative movement in Brazil, argued that the Church should cease its political role and instead “take care of its own affairs.”⁷³ Along with liberation theology, CEBs, the CPT, and CIMI were objects of attack from conservative Church leaders, who were “concerned about their excessive political involvement and about an absence of spirituality and religious preparation.”⁷⁴

I place this conservative faction of the Catholic Church in the bottom left corner of 3.8. Their efforts to restrict the Church’s political activism, as well as their emphasis on the need to focus on spirituality, locate them towards the bottom of the y-axis. Moreover, although they still view poverty as the result of social structures rather than individual effort, they do so to a lesser extent than progressives. This places them to the right of the x-axis when compared to the stance of the progressive faction within the Church. The co-existence of progressive and conservative clergy within Brazil’s hierarchy provides empirical variation that permits an analysis of progressive religion’s political influence. The next chapter discusses the empirical strategy I employ to explore this relationship.

⁷¹The complete homily is available at the [Vatican’s website](#). Several years later, he repeated this point almost verbatim in an address to Salvadoran priests (Twomey, 2006).

⁷²Mainwaring (1987).

⁷³*Journal do Brasil*, July 7, 1983 cited in Mainwaring (1987).

⁷⁴Mainwaring (1987).

Appendix

3.A Identifying political documents distributed by the Brazilian dioceses in the BPG collection

To identify the *political* documents produced by the dioceses, I first examined all the documents related to the church in the BPG collection and identified those produced by the Catholic Church at the diocese level. The eighty-five documents that met this requirement were then categorized based on their thematic content. As illustrated in Table 3.A.1, roughly 20% of the booklets produced and distributed by the Brazilian dioceses focused on political themes.⁷⁵ While they span the period between 1977 and 1986, they are concentrated around 1982 and 1986, both electoral years.

The sixteen documents oriented around politics were published in fourteen distinct dioceses. Notably, thirteen of the total were produced in diocese with a bishop appointed before John Paul II's papacy. The structure of the documents varies substantially.⁷⁶ The majority of the documents (five of the sixteen) are written in an informal language that makes them accessible to a broader audience. Similarly, twelve out of the sixteen publications contain cartoons or drawings that illustrate their political message and complement their written content.⁷⁷

⁷⁵Diocese of Ji-Paraná (1986); Diocese of Nova Iguaçu (1976); Archdiocese of Vitória (1977); Diocese of São Mateus (1982); Archdiocese of Pouso Alegre (1982); Archdiocese of Florianópolis (1982); Archdiocese of Belo Horizonte (1978); Archdiocese of Vitória (1978); Archdiocese of Rio de Janeiro (1982); Diocese of Tubarão (1986); Diocese of Guarulhos (1982); Diocese of Balsas (1985); Archdiocese of São Paulo (1982); Diocese of Piracicaba (1986).

⁷⁶While all are booklets of some form, only three were formally printed by a publisher. In total, the documents average thirty-three pages. There is, however, a large amount of variation in their overall length; the shortest document is only five pages, while the longest is sixty-one.

⁷⁷Of these, eleven contain a set of questions to either encourage individual reflection or guide discussions in small-groups. An additional document does not have any illustrations, but does include a set of discussion questions.

Table 3.A.1: Themes in the Diocesan Documents in the BPG Collection

Theme	Number of Documents	Percentage of Documents
Economic Issues	24	29%
Politics	16	19%
Diocesan News / Periodicals	15	18%
Catholicism	10	12%
Diocesan Administration	13	16%
Human Rights	3	4%
Family and Health	2	2%

The table shows the distribution of theme in the booklets produced by the Brazilian dioceses that are part of the PGB archive. Almost 20% of these booklets were focused on politics and elections.

Chapter 4

An Empirical Approach to the Study of Progressive Religion

To study the political influence of progressive religion, I focus on empirical variation in the presence of progressive or conservative leaders within Brazil's Catholic Church. This variation hinges on the death of progressive Pope Paul VI and the selection of conservative Pope John Paul II as his successor. While John Paul II's conservative beliefs about the role of Catholic leaders in addressing economic inequality differed from his predecessor's progressive perspective, such papal differences rarely influence domestic politics directly. Instead, popes rely on the appointment of bishops who share their worldview in order to advance their preferences in the domestic sphere. In this chapter, I show that John Paul II's strategy to curtail the progressive influence within the Brazilian Church involved the gradual replacement of Brazil's bishops. While some Catholic dioceses retained their progressive bishops and priests, others were assigned conservative bishops appointed by John Paul II. The co-existence of the two types of bishops provides the empirical variation that undergirds this study.

In comparing the effects of progressive and conservative Catholic bishops, I employ a within-denominational approach to the study of religion's political influence. Doing so has a number of methodological advantages over comparisons across denominations. For example, studying Protestant and Catholic leaders is difficult because their leadership is only one of a host of dimensions that vary across the two denominations. Distinctions in their organizational structure and religious doctrine, to name only two important differences, may also have important effects on their distinct political influence. With so much variation across the two denominations, it is impossible to suss out the effect of religious leaders specifically. When one can characterize leaders as belonging to different movements within a single denomination, a focus on the contrasting influence of different types of leaders allows us to study the political impact of their religious teachings and the specific messages that they convey to their followers. Studying different religious leaders within a single denomination enables me to isolate their influence while holding other elements of

religion constant.

Yet even when comparing religious leaders within a single denomination, three major issues make studying the influence of religious leaders particularly challenging: the definition of the relevant unit of analysis; the measurement of religious actors' beliefs about poverty and the role of the Church in society; and the selection process that matches particular types of leaders to particular communities, which may be influenced by unmeasured variables that could confound inferences about the political impact of leaders. The first issue, concerning the appropriate unit of analysis, relates to the difficulty of defining the population that is under the influence of a given leader. After all, it is not uncommon for localities to be exposed to the influence of multiple religious leaders. Alternatively, the influence of a given leader may extend beyond the borders of a particular locality. Both of these issues make it difficult to define the limits of a given leader's potential influence.

A second issue regards the classification of religious leaders.¹ Characterizing leaders' beliefs based on their observed behavior may lead to erroneous conclusions, since certain contexts offer more opportunities for leaders to behave in ways that make their beliefs easier to infer. Moreover, biographical accounts often concentrate on a handful of the most visible leaders within a denomination and contain little to no information about less prominent individuals. Both of these concerns complicate the systematic classification of religious leaders as progressive or conservative.

The third challenge to studying the influence of religious leaders is that of causal identification. Even within a particular denomination, a simple comparison of places led by a progressive versus a conservative leader may suffer from confounding. This would be the case if leaders selected where they practiced based on the characteristics of the surrounding locality. For example, conservative leaders might prioritize spreading the gospel in wealthier communities, while progressive leaders might instead be more likely to focus their energies in poor communities. If this were the case, comparing support for left parties between these poor and wealthy areas would lead to the false conclusion that progressive leaders increase support for these parties, when in fact these poor localities are more likely to vote for the left, independently of their religious leaders.

In this chapter, I describe the ways in which a focus on the Catholic Church in Brazil, specifically during the papacy of John Paul II, allows me to address these three concerns. Building on this discussion, I then introduce my research design, which is the framework for the main empirical analysis of the dissertation.

4.1 Defining the Unit of Analysis

I address concerns about defining the appropriate unit of analysis by studying the Catholic Church, which is divided into administrative districts overseen by an autonomous bishop.

¹Philpott (2007) highlights this challenge in his study of the influence of political theologies on democratization and violence.

The exclusive authority that bishops exercise within these administrative districts, or dioceses, makes it possible to isolate the consequences of bishop leadership.

Dioceses are the basic administrative unit within the Catholic Church. They are exhaustive and mutually exclusive geographical areas akin to states or provinces.² While the pope exercises ultimate authority over Catholics throughout the world, he entrusts his leadership to a bishop in each diocese. Within their respective diocese, bishops maintain all executive, legislative, and judicial ecclesiastical power, control religious policy, and are responsible for teaching, governing, and sanctifying the faithful.³ They control the creation of new parishes in their diocese and have complete power over the assignment of priests to parishes.⁴ Bishops are also responsible for the authentic teaching of the Catholic faith, the proper and regular celebration of all acts of devotion, and the fostering of the vocation of priesthood and religious life.⁵

Dioceses that are especially important and prestigious, usually those in large metropolitan areas, are elevated to the status of archdioceses. The bishops that oversee these dioceses are called archbishops. Archdioceses are the “head” diocese of a territorial grouping of several dioceses, referred to as an ecclesiastical province.⁶ Despite their unique designation, archbishops only have immediate jurisdiction over their own diocese and do not exercise direct authority over other bishops.⁷ Since the reforms of Vatican II, the Church has also encouraged the formation of episcopal conferences in which all bishops in a country meet to discuss issues of national importance. However, bishops exercise ultimate authority over their dioceses—they have the authority to articulate positions that contradict those of their national episcopal conferences.⁸

The territorial division into dioceses, paired with bishops’ autonomy within them, make it possible to isolate the consequences of bishop leadership. This religious leader can appoint priests, write pastoral letters that are read in all of the parishes in his diocese, prepare pamphlets similar to those studied in Chapter 3, ensure priests’ pastoral content and activities conform to his beliefs, and shape the training of new priests. The sitting

²Code of Canon Law (1983, 368-430). Areas that have yet to achieve formal diocesan status are classified as territorial prelatures. These units are led by prelates, whose duties, obligations, and jurisdiction are essentially equivalent to those of a bishop. Similar to bishops, their authority is subject only to the authority of the Holy See (Knight, 1995, 735). Scholars studying the Catholic Church generally group territorial prelatures in the same category as dioceses (Wilde, 2007; Wilde et al., 2010). I follow this practice, referring to ecclesiastical prelatures as “dioceses.”

³Code of Canon Law (1983, 391).

⁴The parish is the territorial subdivision of the diocese. For a description of the role of priests within the Church, see e.g. Dondeyne (1964).

⁵Woywod (1918).

⁶The purpose of these provinces is to foster cooperation and shared pastoral action in a region.

⁷Code of Canon Law (1983, 434). The metropolitan archbishop’s main duties are to ensure other dioceses in the ecclesiastical province promote the Catholic faith and maintain ecclesiastical discipline, as well as to meet with the other bishops in a provincial council to discuss matters of regional importance Code of Canon Law (1983, 464).

⁸See e.g. Hanson (1987, p.61); Bruneau (1974).

bishop will use these faculties to shape his diocese to his liking.

4.2 Measurement

To overcome the measurement challenge, I leverage the fact that the sitting pope in the Catholic Church enjoys complete discretion over the selection of bishops to fill vacant dioceses. This results in the appointment of bishops whose views on religious teachings align with the ideas and objectives of the pope.⁹ Discretion over the appointment of bishops is perhaps the most direct channel through which popes can influence the Catholic teachings that local clergy convey to their parishioners.¹⁰

When a bishop vacates his seat, the apostolic nuncio—an ecclesiastical diplomat (the Vatican's equivalent of an ambassador) who is appointed by the pope—starts an extensive investigation into potential candidates to fill the vacant position. The candidates' backgrounds are researched in detail through questionnaires sent from the nuncio to priests and members of the laity.¹¹ The nuncio's inquiries tend to focus on the candidates' views about the relationship between the Church and society.¹² The nuncio then produces a secret and non-binding list of three candidates (*a terna*) and sends it, along with a summary of his investigation, to the Congregation for Bishops in Rome. The Congregation reviews the material and presents a recommendation to the pope. It is then the pope's prerogative to select his preferred candidate to fill the vacancy. Importantly, while the nuncio and the Congregation can make recommendations, the pope is not required to heed their suggestions. The ultimate authority to appoint bishops rests solely with the pope.¹³

Classifying bishops based on the pope who appointed them builds on previous research on the Catholic Church in Latin America. In his study of the Church's reaction to dictatorships throughout the region, Gill (1998) measures bishop's receptivity to reforms adopted in Vatican II by arguing that bishops appointed during the tenure of the Church's two most progressive popes—John XXIII and Paul VI—would be more open to implement the reforms than bishops appointed under more conservative pontiffs. Hale (2015) employs a similar strategy, arguing that the Vatican systematically replaced retiring Mexican bishops with individuals who adhered to an orthodox and conservative social stance following the 1978 transition to the papacy of John Paul II. He creates an indicator of whether Mexican bishops were appointed after the transition to John Paul II's papacy as a measure of their

⁹Della Cava (1993). The centralization of Church power with respect to the appointment of bishops began in the sixteenth century and spread on a country-by-country basis. The following three centuries marked a gradual increase in the papacy's authority, culminating in the 1917 Code of Canon Law that legalized and confirmed the papal right to appoint all bishops (Woywod, 1918). This authority was reaffirmed in the documents of Vatican II (1965).

¹⁰Reese (1989).

¹¹Vital (2012). These questionnaires arrive in sealed envelopes that state in Latin that their contents should remain secret under threat of excommunication.

¹²Hanson (1987, 54).

¹³Reese (1989, 1992); Byrnes (2014).

religious conservatism. Similar to Gill and Hale, I classify progressive and conservative bishops based on the type of pope who appointed them, allowing me to overcome the measurement concerns described above.

4.3 Identification

The third challenge to studying the influence of religious leaders is that of identification, specifically that a comparison of progressive and conservative bishops may suffer from confounding. For example, the pope's prerogative to appoint bishops of his choosing might lead to the preferential placement of progressive bishops in poorer areas that are more receptive to a message favoring economic redistribution.

To overcome this selection concern, I develop an empirical strategy based on the timing of bishop retirement and/or death. Bishops were appointed for life until 1966, when a decree introduced by Paul VI established a system of strongly encouraged resignations at the age of seventy-five:

[Bishops are] “earnestly requested of their own free will to tender their resignation from office no later than at the completion of their 75th year of age.”¹⁴

This age limit became established practice and was incorporated into the 1983 Code of Canon Law:¹⁵

“A bishop who has completed his seventy-fifth year is asked to voluntarily submit his resignation to the pope”¹⁶

The adoption of this practice allowed Paul VI to reshape the church by replacing bishops who were already over seventy-five at the time of the decree. Figure 4.1 illustrates this rapid replacement of bishops above this age limit, as well as the evolution of this process over time. The figure leverages data on all bishops in the Catholic Church since 1950 to track the annual proportion of bishops over the age of seventy-five.¹⁷ Following the initial announcement of the new retirement age in 1966, the proportion of bishops over the age of seventy-five dropped by more than half, from just over 0.1 to nearly zero. The proportion remained low during the initial period of John Paul II's papacy. This suggests that John Paul II took advantage of the rule to increase the presence of conservatives within the Church. Notably, a similar effort to replace eligible bishops did not occur following the 2005 transition to the papacy of Pope Benedict, who shared John Paul II's conservative views about the role of the Church in society.

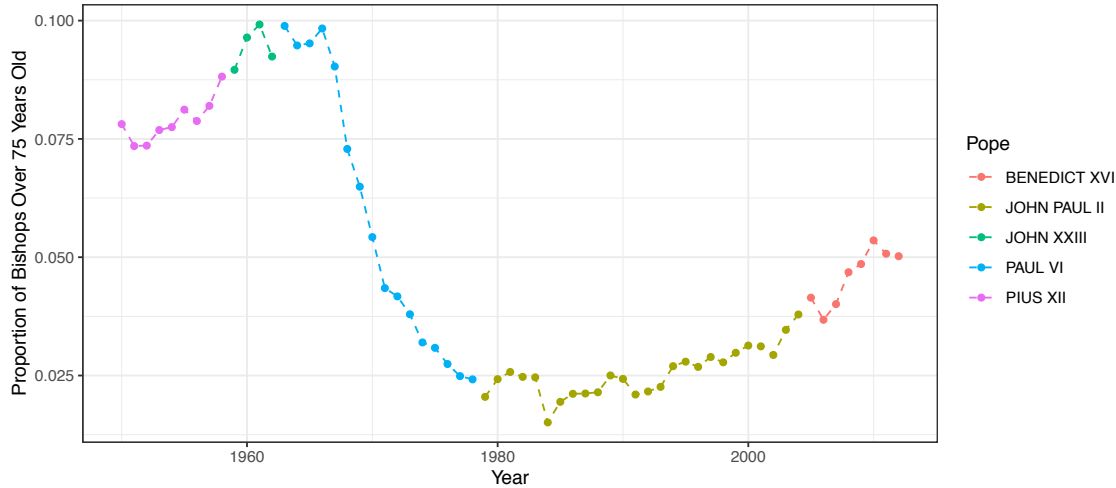
¹⁴Pope Paul VI (1966).

¹⁵Beal, Coriden and Green (2000).

¹⁶Code of Canon Law (1983, 401).

¹⁷This includes a total of 10,330 bishops. Data on all bishops, including their date of birth, was web-scraped from the website of the Catholic Hierarchy Organization, an institution that publishes data from the Catholic Church's *Annuario Pontificio* (Cheney, Accessed October 2019).

Figure 4.1: Proportion of Sitting Bishops Over the Age of Seventy-Five



The figure shows the yearly proportion of sitting bishops over the age of seventy-five in the second half of the twentieth century.

The administrative rule granting bishops a stable tenure in office until their seventy-fifth birthday provides exogenous variation in the timing of bishop vacancies across different dioceses. Since the timing of sitting bishops’ seventy-fifth birthday varies throughout the tenure of a given pope, the replacement of bishops is staggered. At a given point in time, only a subset of bishops appointed by previous popes will have reached retirement age. This allows for a comparison of dioceses where the rule generated a vacancy—and thus allowed John Paul II to appoint a conservative bishop—versus those dioceses where the sitting bishop maintained his tenure in office.

We might be concerned that popes can manipulate the retirement rule by strategically appointing younger bishops in particular types of dioceses. However, there are two reasons why this type of confounding is not a concern. First, since popes are appointed for life, both the length of their tenure and that of their successor is unknown. Second, the sitting pontiff cannot anticipate the leanings of the following pope because his successor is not chosen until the office is vacant (once the sitting pope has left his office, usually upon his death). To be sure, popes may seek to *always* appoint young bishops in order to extend their legacy. Yet uncertainty regarding the leanings of their successor, as well as the length of pontifical tenure, prevents popes from making a more sophisticated calculation.

The retirement rule ensures that popes cannot selectively replace those bishops whose religious teachings do not align with their own. As a result, popes can only gradually replace the bishops appointed by their predecessors. The as-if random variation in the timing of bishop vacancies provides exogenous variation in the pope’s ability to replace bishops.

The empirical strategy of this study thus leverages several features of the Catholic

Church to overcome the challenges involved in assessing the impact of progressive religion. First, the territorial organization of the Catholic Church grants bishops a large degree of autonomy within the dioceses they oversee and allows for a subnational comparison of dioceses governed by a progressive, versus a conservative, bishop. Second, the top-down procedure of bishop appointments is an instrument through which popes can empower different factions within national churches. It is thus possible to overcome the measurement challenge by classifying bishops as progressive or conservative based on the pope by whom they were appointed. Third, the tenure rule granting bishops stability in office until the age of seventy-five provides exogenous variation in the date of their replacement. In the next section, I further flesh out these features and describe the research design I employ to study the political influence of progressive religious leaders.

4.4 Research Design

To study the political influence of religious leaders, I focus on Brazilian Catholic bishops in the decades following the 1978 transition from the progressive papacy of Paul VI to the conservative papacy of John Paul II. While the 1978 transition had important consequences for the direction of the Catholic Church across the world, its impact was most notable in Latin America.¹⁸ Popes John XXIII and Paul VI led the Catholic Church through two decades of progressivism (1958 to 1978) that included Vatican II and the CELAM conference. The appointment of John Paul II in 1978 ended this progressive period and began a process of “restoration” within the Church.¹⁹

Since popes appoint bishops based on, among other factors, whether or not the latter’s views about the role of the Church in society align with their own, the transition from a series of progressive popes to the pontificate of John Paul II marked a shift from the appointment of progressive to conservative bishops in Brazil. This shift allows for a comparison of political outcomes in dioceses headed by bishops appointed before John Paul II (progressive bishops) with dioceses headed by bishops appointed by John Paul II directly (conservative bishops).

I exploit the timing of bishop vacancies in Brazil to identify the effect of Church leadership on the electoral influence of the Catholic Church. To overcome the challenges described in the previous section related to the study of progressive religion’s political influence, I propose an empirical strategy based on the timing of bishop retirement and/or death. Bishops’ exclusive authority and autonomy within their dioceses make it possible to isolate their influence on their parishioners. Moreover, while bishops were appointed for life until 1966, a decree introduced by Paul VI established a system of strongly encour-

¹⁸See, for example, [Mainwaring \(1986\)](#).

¹⁹The description of the years after 1978 as a period of restoration was advanced by Pope Benedict, then John Paul II’s right hand as Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith ([Ratzinger and Messori, 1985](#), 30). Throughout his reign, John Paul II’s main goal was to restore order, authority, and ideological uniformity throughout the Church.

aged resignations at the age of seventy-five. The timing of bishops' seventy-fifth birthday or death (whichever comes first) thus offers as-if random variation in bishop vacancies. Background characteristics of the dioceses themselves, including the political leanings of their parishioners, should therefore be unrelated to whether or not they were exposed to a progressive or conservative bishop during John Paul II's tenure as Pope. Since the timing of these vacancies depends on bishops' age, whether or not a diocese receives a new bishop is a function of the age of the sitting bishop when John Paul II took office in 1978.

Reconstructing Catholic Dioceses in Brazil

Bishops' autonomy within their dioceses and archdioceses makes them the relevant unit of analysis when studying the Catholic Church.²⁰ These districts are also the level at which official Catholic data is reported. However, changes in the boundaries of dioceses over time pose make it difficult to identify the relevant units across different historical periods and link them to more recent electoral data. To reconstruct the boundaries of Brazil's dioceses when Pope John Paul II took office in 1978, I combined information from the 1977 and 1981 editions of the *Brazilian Catholic Yearbook*.²¹ Each edition of the *Yearbook* lists the municipalities within each diocese in the year of its publication. I merged this information with historical maps of Brazilian municipalities from the same period to determine the municipalities within each diocese and produce a shapefile of the diocesan borders in 1978.²²

Figure 4.1 illustrates the resulting map of the Catholic dioceses in Brazil in 1978, when John Paul II became pope. The 189 dioceses are marked in shades of blue based on the year in which their bishop was eligible for replacement, in accordance with the retirement rule described above. The thirty-two archdioceses are denoted in orange. The boundaries of these dioceses and archdioceses define the limits of a given bishop or archbishop's absolute authority within Brazil. Parishioners in a particular diocese were exposed only to the religious teachings and spiritual guidance approved by the bishop in that diocese (as was the case for those residing in archdioceses).

John Paul II's Conservative Restoration in Brazil

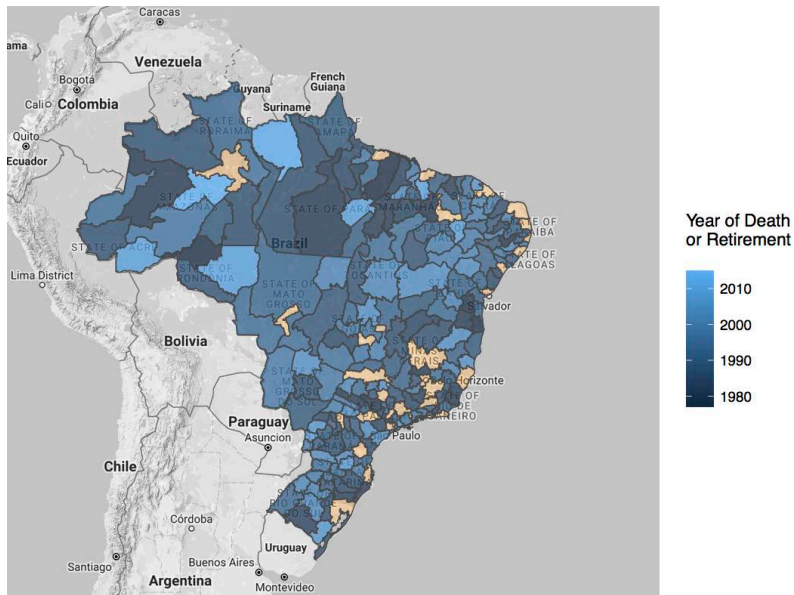
John Paul II's appointment in 1978 was a watershed moment within the Catholic Church. While Popes John XXIII and Paul VI supported progressives within the Church, the transition to the pontificate of John Paul II marked a conservative shift in the papacy and initiated

²⁰Bruneau (1974); Trejo (2000); Esparza Ochoa (2012).

²¹CERIS (1977, 1981).

²²Historical shapefiles for the Brazilian municipalities were obtained from *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística*. Since many municipal borders changed between the late 1970s and the late 1980s—when most of the administrative and electoral outcomes I examine in the next chapters were measured—I overlaid the map onto municipal shapefiles from subsequent years to track changes in the municipalities included in the dioceses over time.

Figure 4.1: Brazilian Diocese and Archdioceses, October 1978



The figure shows the geographic borders of Brazil’s dioceses and archdioceses as of October 1978, when John Paul II became pope. Dioceses are colored in blue, where the shade of blue indicates the year in which the sitting bishop could be replaced due to his retirement or death. Archdioceses are marked in orange.

an explicit effort to curb the influence of progressives in the Church hierarchy. Scholars and journalists studying the Church in Latin America during this period were quick to take note of this change. For example, in her book on the growing tensions between progressive Catholic movements in Latin America and the Vatican following the 1978 transition, [Lernoux \(1989\)](#) argues that “[John Paul II challenged] local churches that work with the poor” and attempted to reduce the influence of progressive bishops through “the appointment of conservative bishops and the emphasis on orthodoxy.”²³ Indeed, the “election of John Paul II to the papacy strengthened the traditional clergy in Latin America. (...) The most visible aspect of this conservative shift was the appointment of new bishops.”²⁴

Nowhere was the strategy to check Catholic progressivism more evident than Brazil. The Catholic Church in Brazil during the late 1960s and 1970s had one of the largest and strongest progressive factions in Latin America.²⁵ Once John Paul II was appointed, however, he quickly turned his attention to curbing progressives’ power in Brazil. He did so

²³John Paul II’s crackdown on progressivism within the Church was also documented in other regions of the world. For example, before the John Paul II’s second visit to Poland in June 1983, the official Soviet news agency *Tass* declared that, in comparison with his predecessors, “the present head of the Catholic Church has taken a much more conservative and rigid position vis-a-vis the socialist world” ([Hanson, 1987](#), p.12).

²⁴ [Betances \(2007, 55\)](#).

²⁵[Adriance \(1985\)](#); [Bruneau \(1974\)](#); [Mainwaring \(1986\)](#); [Mainwaring and Wilde \(1989\)](#).

through a variety of different channels, including reforms to the country's seminaries and other institutions to promote conservative teachings.²⁶ The appointment of conservative bishops represented a particularly critical component of John Paul II's strategy to decrease the influence of progressives in the Brazilian church.²⁷ In 1988, the *New York Times* reported how, having failed to bring the Brazilian church into line, the Pope was "quietly using his authority to name new cardinals and bishops as a way of reasserting Vatican control over Brazil's powerful and outspoken Roman Catholic hierarchy." John Paul II's new appointees were "clergymen who unquestioningly accept Rome's authority and share the Pope's interpretation of church doctrine" and would "lead the church in the direction he thinks it ought to go".²⁸

Evidence of John Paul II's explicit efforts to install conservative bishops in previously progressive dioceses suggests that appointment during his tenure as pope can serve to distinguish conservative bishops from their progressive counterparts.²⁹ This is particularly true in Brazil, a country that figured prominently in John Paul II's conservative restoration within the Church.

Compliance with the Tenure Rule

Although bishops are expected to retire at the age of seventy-five, vacancies do not always depend on their death or retirement. For example, a bishop's tenure in office can be extended beyond his seventy-fifth birthday if the pope does not accept his resignation when it is presented. The pope can also appoint a bishop to a higher office before his retirement date in order to generate a vacancy. Finally, bishops can choose to resign before they reach the age of seventy-five.

How closely do bishop vacancies and replacements follow the retirement rule? To answer this question, I obtained data on bishops' date of birth, death, and appointment, as well as data on the reasons for their replacement.³⁰ Figure 4.2 shows the relationship between the expected vacancy date (due to death or turning seventy-five) for bishops appointed prior to John Paul II's papacy and the date that John Paul II actually replaced them. Observations lying on the diagonal followed the retirement rule closely—John Paul II's appointments coincided with the expected vacancy date. Observations above the line in-

²⁶Clery (1997, 261).

²⁷Alves Barbosa (2007); Lowy (2000). As part of this strategy, John Paul II's Apostolic Nuncio began to work on bishop nominations in direct consultation with the conservative faction of the Brazilian Church (Alves Barbosa, 2007).

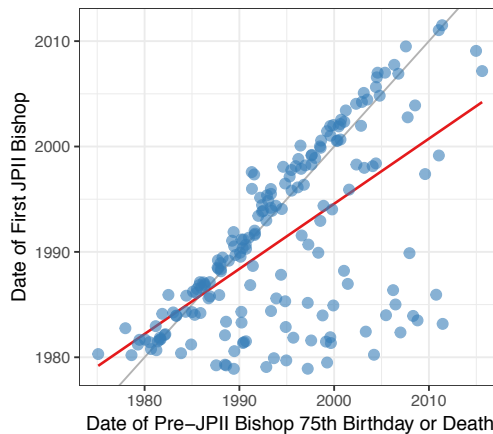
²⁸The *New York Times* (1988).

²⁹Prior to the 1978 transition, Popes John XXIII and Paul VI oversaw a period of progressivity within the Church, which is described in detail in Chapter 3.

³⁰I webscraped this data from the website of the Catholic Hierarchy Organization, which publishes data from the Catholic Church's *Annuario Pontificio* (Cheney, Accessed October 2019). To supplement and corroborate the data published online, I cross-checked all data on bishop appointments with the official announcement letters sent to bishops by the Catholic Nuncio. I obtained these primary sources from the archive of the Brazilian National Bishops' Conference (CNBB - *Conferência Nacional dos Bispos do Brasil*).

dicare dioceses in which the sitting bishop was replaced after his seventy-fifth birthday. In these cases, John Paul II delayed selecting a new bishop after the sitting bishop presented his resignation. The small number of observations of this type suggests that John Paul II generally replaced bishops as soon as vacancies occurred. Finally, observations below the diagonal line are dioceses in which the sitting bishop was replaced before the date predicted by the retirement rule, either because the bishop resigned before reaching retirement age or because he was appointed to an alternative office. The bivariate correlation between the two measures is 0.63. Overall, the figure shows that the year of a bishop’s death or seventy-fifth birthday—henceforth “retirement vacancy”—is a strong predictor of a John Paul II appointment.

Figure 4.2: Date of Retirement Vacancies and John Paul II Bishop Replacements

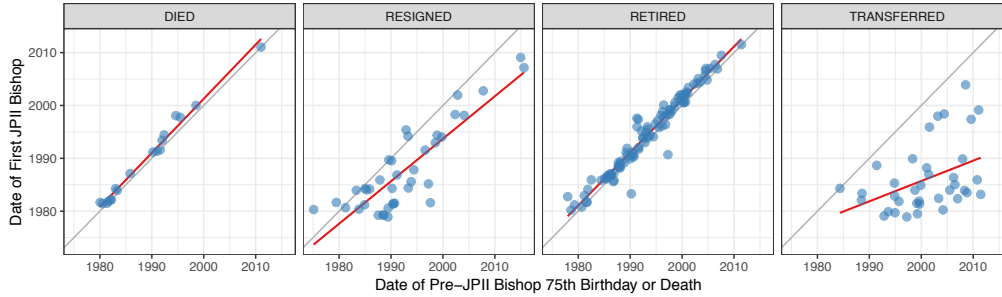


The figure shows the relationship between the year the sitting bishop’s vacancy was expected to occur due to the retirement rule (x-axis) and the date when the bishop was actually replaced (y-axis). The expected date of the vacancy following the retirement rule is the date of his seventy-fifth birthday or his death (whichever occurs first).

Figure 4.3 extends the bivariate plot, disaggregating it by the reason that motivated the vacancy. It shows that bishop replacements due to death or retirement followed the retirement rule closely; non-compliance is due to early resignation (22% of bishops’ exit from office) and transfers (18.6%). Early resignations tend to occur just a few years before the expected retirement vacancies, a pattern that is perhaps suggestive of bishops falling terminally ill and resigning due to their sickness.

Table 4.1 extends the analysis in Figure 4.2. It regresses the year a diocese (or archdiocese) received its first bishop appointed by John Paul II on the year the previous bishop was scheduled to retire. The first model includes both archdioceses and dioceses, while the second focuses exclusively on the latter. In both cases, the bivariate relationship is

Figure 4.3: Date of Retirement Vacancies and John Paul II Bishop Replacements, by Type of Exit



The plots show the relationship between the year the sitting bishop’s vacancy was expected to occur due to the retirement rule (x-axis) and the date when the bishop was actually replaced (y-axis) as a result of the various events that can trigger the exit of a bishop.

Table 4.1: Retirement Vacancies and Bishop Replacements by John Paul II

	Dioceses Archdioceses	Dioceses Only
(Intercept)	2186.70*** (423.45)	2203.33*** (468.33)
Year of Retirement Vacancy	0.63*** (0.06)	0.62*** (0.06)
Num. obs.	221	189
Archdioceses	X	
F-Statistic	115	115

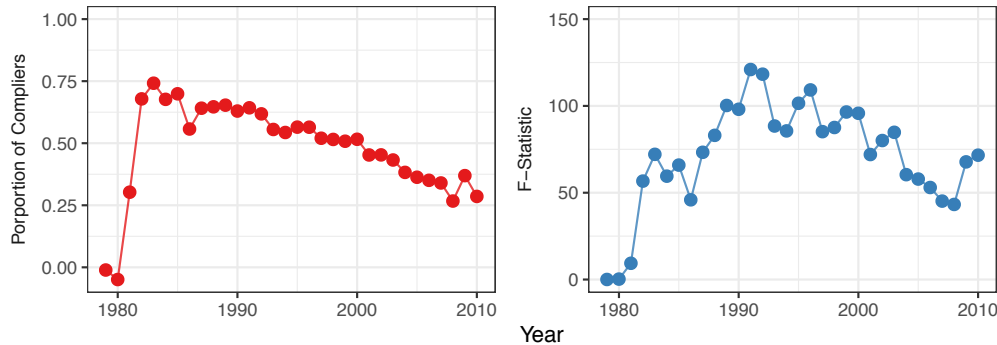
*** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1

The table evaluates the extent to which the timing of bishops’ retirement vacancies predicts the timing of bishop replacement. The dependent variable is the year the first John Paul II bishop is appointed.

high—0.63 when including archdioceses and dioceses and 0.62 when considering only dioceses. The F-test of this simple regression is 115 in both cases. These results provide additional evidence that the year a bishop (or archbishop) died or reached retirement age is a strong instrument for the year a diocese (or archdiocese) received its first John Paul II appointee.

Are there temporal patterns to compliance with the tenure rule? Figure 4.4 shows the results from a regression of a dummy indicating whether or not the sitting bishop

Figure 4.4: Strength of the Instrument



The plot on the left shows the proportion of compliers for each year between 1978 and 2010. The second column reports the F-statistic from a regression of a dummy indicating whether the sitting bishop in 1978 was replaced by the relevant year on a second dummy variable indicating whether the district had been “assigned” to a retirement vacancy before that year.

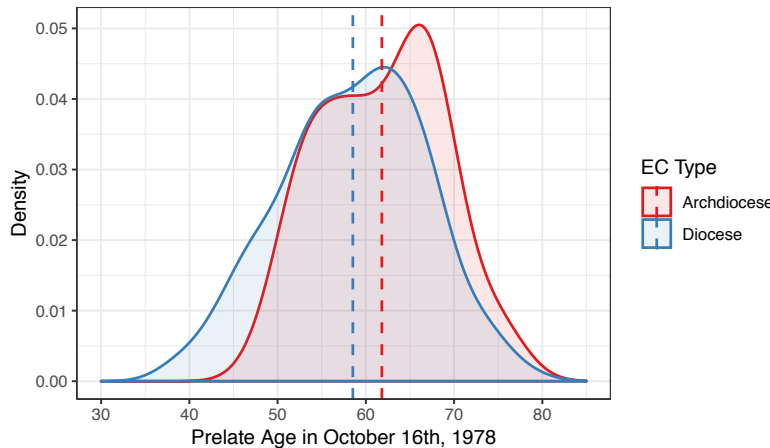
in 1978 was replaced in a given year on a second dummy variable indicating whether the diocese was “assigned” to a retirement vacancy before that year. The left panel of the figure shows the main estimates from those regressions—the proportion of compliers. The panel on the right reports the F-statistics from those regressions. Both confirm the strength of retirement vacancies in this dichotomous form as a predictor of John Paul II appointments. After three years of low compliance—likely due to the administrative tasks associated with a papal transition—the vacancy rule is a strong predictor of whether or not the sitting bishop in October 1978 was replaced by a bishop appointed by John Paul II.³¹

Finally, Figure 4.5 suggests one caveat related to the comparison of places in which bishops were appointed by John Paul II to those places that kept their progressive bishops. A simple comparison of the age distribution of the sitting bishops and archbishops in October, 1978, when John Paul II became pope, shows that bishops were generally younger than archbishops. As mentioned in Section 4.1, archdioceses are dioceses with a higher status, in general due to their size or historical significance. They also tend to be located in cities.³² Since the timing of retirement vacancies is a function of the age of the sitting bishop, ignoring these differences and comparing all appointments made during the papacy of John Paul II with those made prior could introduce bias. In particular, because archbishops are generally older than bishops, archdioceses are assigned to a retirement vacancy earlier than dioceses. As a result, the group of dioceses and archdioceses in which John Paul II could make a conservative appointment due to the retirement rule includes

³¹Note that these first years with low compliance reveal a pattern similar to the global trend after John Paul II’s appointment, described in Figure 4.1.

³²Studies of the Catholic Church generally recommend distinguishing archbishops from bishops, partly for these reasons [Wilde \(2007, 2004\)](#).

Figure 4.5: Prelate Age in October 1978, by type of Ecclesiastical Circumscription



The figure shows the age distribution for sitting bishops and archbishops when John Paul II became pope in October, 1978.

a larger proportion of archdioceses than the group where progressives remained in office. This is a problem for inference given that, by definition, archdioceses are more likely to contain urban districts that exhibit a political behavior that is generally distinct from that of more rural districts. To address this concern, I propose a twofold strategy. In the main analysis, I include only dioceses and exclude archdioceses entirely. I then present the analysis including archdiocese, but weight dioceses and archdioceses by the inverse of their respective probability of assignment to a retirement vacancy.³³

Overall, the evidence presented in this section confirms high compliance with the tenure rule after the 1978 transition. While John Paul II systematically used bishop appointments to transform the Brazilian Catholic Church and curb the influence of progressives in the hierarchy, the institutional rules governing bishops' tenure and replacement restricted the extent to which he could do so. In sum, the vacancy rule is a good predictor of whether or not John Paul II replaced the bishop governing a given diocese in 1978.

4.5 Estimation

In the analysis in the following chapters, I use the retirement vacancy variable as a variable that “assigns” dioceses to a conservative or progressive bishop during John Paul II’s papacy and assess its effect on outcomes using both intent-to-treat analysis—where I regress those outcomes on the retirement vacancy variable—and instrumental-variables analysis, where retirement vacancies serves as an instrument for bishop replacement. I present a

³³These are inverse probability weighted (IPW) regressions.

series of cross-sectional analyses looking at social, religious, and political outcomes. The first stage of the instrumental variables analysis is:

$$\text{PreJPIIbishop}_{it} = \gamma + \lambda \text{NoVacancy}_{it} + \mu_i \quad (4.1)$$

where the unit of analysis is the diocese, i , which is also the level at which the treatment is assigned.³⁴ The instrument— NoVacancy_{it} —takes a value of 1 if there was no bishop vacancy (the sitting bishop in 1978 was alive and younger than 75) in diocese i before year t , where t is the year in which the outcome of interest was measured. $\text{PreJPIIbishop}_{it}$ is an indicator of whether the the sitting bishop in 1978 in diocese i was indeed still in office in year t .

In the analysis, I focus on the complier average causal effect (CACE), that is, the effect in those dioceses where the sitting bishop in 1978 is alive, younger than 75, and still in office.³⁵ To measure these effects, I estimate the following two-stage model:

$$Y_{it} = \alpha + \beta \widehat{\text{PreJPIIbishop}}_{it} + \epsilon_i \quad (4.2)$$

where $\widehat{\text{PreJPIIbishop}}_{it}$ are the predicted values from the first-stage regression in Equation 4.1 and Y_{it} is an outcome vector for diocese i measured in year t .

The instrumental variables approach requires that the instrument is assigned as-if randomly and is correlated with the endogenous regressor, as well as that the instrument has no effect on the outcomes of interest other than through the presence of a progressive bishop (i.e. exclusion restriction). Evidence in support of the first two assumptions is provided above. Finally, the exclusion restriction requires the lack of a bishop vacancy to influence outcomes only through the presence of a progressive bishop within a given diocese. This assumption is highly plausible in this context, as the absence of a vacancy has no real influence in the diocese other than through the continued stability in office of the sitting bishop in 1978.

Validating the Research Design

A final question relates to validating the claim of as-if random variation in the timing when bishops and archbishops are replaced. I now turn to verifying that the timing of replacement, as determined by the retirement rule, is not correlated with other characteristics of dioceses or archdioceses. The map in Figure 4.1 provided an initial evaluation of this assumption by illustrating the geographic distribution of the year in which dioceses became

³⁴Municipalities are nested within dioceses. When data is reported at the municipal level, I aggregate it to match the diocese boundaries.

³⁵Although the description of the results focuses on the complier average causal effects, I also report the intention-to-treat effects—that is, the effect of the treatment assignment variable, NoVacancy —in all cases.

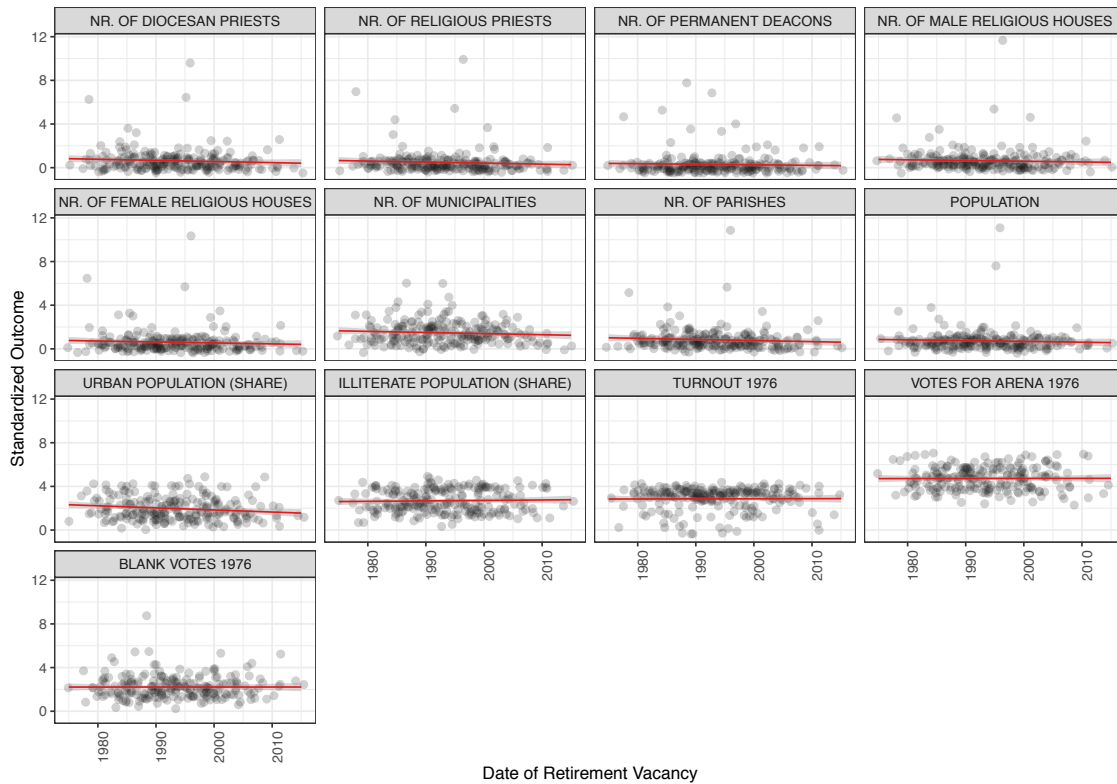
vacant, either due to the death or retirement of the sitting bishop. Dioceses shaded in a darker blue experienced earlier retirement vacancies than those in lighter shades. Crucially, the timing of replacements is evenly distributed throughout the country, with no clustering in a particular region.

Finally, Figure 4.1 shows the bivariate correlation between the year that a retirement vacancy occurred and a host of observable diocesan characteristics that are potentially relevant to the study of religion and left-wing parties. The analysis includes religious characteristics (number of priests, deacons, religious houses, municipalities, and parishes), socioeconomic indicators (size of the population, share of the population that is urban, and literacy), and political characteristics (turnout, blank votes, and vote share in the 1976 elections).³⁶ I find no trend suggesting that dioceses with earlier retirement vacancies are systematically different from those with vacancies in later periods. Together with the geographic distribution described above, this exercise supports the validity of the as-if random variation in bishops' replacement.

This chapter outlines the empirical approach I employ to study the political influence of religious leaders. It highlights the main empirical challenges to my analysis, as well as the strategies I develop to address them. The critical role of bishops in shaping the religious experience in their dioceses, their mandatory retirement at the age of seventy-five, as well as John Paul II's efforts to fill subsequent vacancies with conservative bishops during his papacy, provide as-if random variation in the presence of progressive and conservative bishops across Brazilian dioceses. These features of the Catholic Church and the 1978 papal transition allows me to isolate the effect of exposure to progressive versus conservative bishops. In the next chapters, I turn to an empirical analysis of the political impact of this exposure in Brazil.

³⁶Data for the outcomes comes from the Brazilian Catholic Yearbook for 1977 (CERIS, 1977), Ipeadata, and the *Tribunal Superior Eleitoral* - TSE.

Figure 4.1: Correlation Between the Timing of Bishop Vacancies and Pre-Treatment Diocese Characteristics



The figure shows the correlation between the year of a diocese's retirement vacancy and a host of diocese characteristics, none of which are statistically significant.

Chapter 5

From the Parish to the Party: How Progressive Clergy Can Help the Left

In the empirical portion of this dissertation, I study the influence of the progressive Catholic clergy on Brazilian politics, focusing specifically on the relationship between progressive bishops and the left-wing Workers' Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores, PT). While many left-wing parties rely heavily on the support of workers and labor unions, religious organizations may also provide important sources of support when their leaders are economically progressive—when they believe that the sources of poverty are rooted in structural injustices and that it is the responsibility of religion to advocate reforms to address this poverty. In this chapter, I explore the role of progressive Catholic bishops in fomenting the growth of the PT in Brazil and probe the channels through which these bishops aided the party.

After I briefly describe Brazil's transition to democracy in Section 5.1, Section 5.2 explores the divergent activities of progressive and conservative bishops in their respective dioceses, providing key evidence in support of their divergent responses to poverty and economic inequality. The section leverages historical information on the organizational structure of the Catholic Church, as well as archival data from Brazil's National Intelligence Service (NIS) during the dictatorship and democratic transition.

Section 5.3 then probes the effect of progressive bishops on the organizational presence of the PT and the party's electoral support in the congressional elections held following Brazil's transition to democracy. It provides important evidence that progressive bishops improved the electoral performance of the PT and allowed the party to build and strengthen its organizational presence. Leveraging the NIS archives, Section 5.4 presents an in-depth case study of the progressive Diocese of Bom Jesus da Lapa. It describes the activities of the progressive clergy, detailing the ways in which they incorporated progressive teachings about the appropriate response to poverty into daily religious events and provided the PT with access to Catholic networks and organizational structures.

5.1 The *Abertura* and the Workers' Party

Brazil's military dictatorship ruled the country from 1964 to 1985.¹ When it assumed power, the military's priorities included rooting out the threat of communism and improving the country's economic stability, both of which were seen as problems stemming from the political left generally and communism specifically. Following the coup d'état that deposed President João Goulart, the military enacted wide-ranging changes to the political system that curtailed citizens' civil liberties and political rights, granted the president the power to remove elected officials, and targeted the political left with harassment and imprisonment.²

Despite sustained repression, the political left and labor unions were a key source of dissent throughout the dictatorship. In the regime's initial years, the military abolished all political parties and established indirect elections for the president.³ In the same period, the regime adopted new labor laws that banned strikes, reduced wages, and systematically purged leftist leaders from the labor movement.⁴ Yet elements of both the left and the labor movement continued to organize against the regime. Indeed, many of these elements eventually formed part of the PT, the left-wing political party that is the focus of this dissertation.⁵

By the mid 1970s, the military sought to exit the political arena and transition to civilian rule. General Ernesto Geisel oversaw the *abertura*, a gradual opening of the political regime and return to democracy that lasted from 1979 to 1985. The *abertura* was a period of elite-led political liberalization in which opposition parties were allowed to operate freely, political prisoners were granted amnesty, and direct elections were reinstated.⁶

One of the key political actors founded during this democratic opening was the PT. Established in 1979, the party developed out of Brazil's union movement and many of its founders and most prominent political figures hailed from the rank and file of labor unions. The PT also enjoyed significant support from the traditional political left in Brazil, which was persecuted and marginalized during the early years of the dictatorship, as well as the country's burgeoning feminist movement. Building on its roots in the left and the union movement, the party espoused a redistributive economic platform that prioritized

¹Scholars have pointed to a number of economic and political crises that spurred the military's intervention in 1964, including the failure to successfully "deepen" Import Substitution Industrialization (O'Donnell, 1973), skyrocketing inflation and a balance-of-payments crisis (Skidmore, 1977), and the growing involvement of the military in politics due to the perception that only the military could reestablish political, civil, and economic order (Stepan, 2000).

²Pereira (1998).

³The dictatorship fostered the creation of two new parties, the pro-regime ARENA (*Aliança Renovadora Nacional*) and the opposition party, MDB (*Movimento Democrático Brasileiro*). These parties remained the two major players in Brazil's Congress until 1979, when the dictatorship opted to dissolve both (Kinzo, 1988).

⁴Fontes and Corrêa (2018).

⁵Keck (1992).

⁶Keck (1992).

the construction of a socialist society.⁷ While it moved away from traditional socialism in the 1990s and early 2000s, it remained economically progressive and never abandoned its emphasis on redistribution.⁸

In the years following its formation, the PT remained a political outsider that struggled to compete in the tightly controlled political arena fostered under the dictatorship. In the 1982 elections, for example, it obtained only 8 seats of 479 in the Chamber of Deputies and none in the Senate.⁹ Yet the party maintained its relevance through other channels, continuing to oppose military rule via organized opposition and protest.¹⁰ Paradoxically, it was the party's opposition to the regime that both constrained its electoral growth during the decline of the dictatorship and sustained its political and social identity.¹¹ Nevertheless, the party's electoral fortunes improved gradually throughout the period and more rapidly after the transition to democracy was completed in 1985. The PT received the second largest share of votes in each of the presidential elections leading up to 2002, when its candidate Luiz Ignacio Lula da Silva won the presidency through a run-off election against the center-right candidate José Serra.

The growth in political opposition to the dictatorship also coincided with mobilization among leaders of the Catholic Church and Catholic lay organizations. Initially, many within the Catholic hierarchy in Brazil accepted the military dictatorship.¹² By the late 1970s, however, a growing number of progressive bishops began to speak out against the regime.¹³ As Catholic lay organizations proliferated across the country and many of their leaders also became activists in other popular and political organizations, including the labor movement and the PT.¹⁴ Bishops and priests often actively encouraged this activity and provided important protections to individuals who spoke out against the regime.¹⁵

Progressive sectors of the Catholic clergy and lay organizations thus played an important role in Brazil's *abertura*, by encouraging the formation of popular organizations in civil society and also by supporting political parties—the PT in particular—in the electoral arena. Indeed, the support of the Catholic clergy and lay organizations only became more critical as democratization progressed and politics became more open and competitive, particularly for the PT.

After twenty years of limited access to politics, the left suddenly had an opportunity to openly compete for electoral office. Moreover, in a context in which workers comprised a

⁷Keck (1992, 2010); Samuels (2004).

⁸Samuels (2004).

⁹Keck (1992).

¹⁰One such example of this strategy was the 1980 labor strike, led by future president Luiz Inácio *Lula* da Silva, which included roughly 250,000 workers and was the first major labor strike since the dictatorship began in 1964 (Lowy, 1987).

¹¹Keck (1992).

¹²Antoine (1973).

¹³Antoine (1973).

¹⁴Keck (1992); Mainwaring (1986, 1987).

¹⁵Antoine (1973); Mainwaring (1986, 1987).

much smaller share of the electorate than in other, more industrialized countries, the support of Catholic organizations was particularly attractive.¹⁶ A critical question to explore is thus the role of progressive Catholic leaders in shaping the organizational structure and electoral support of the left-wing PT both during the *abertura* and following the transition to democracy. That is the focus of the remainder of this chapter.

5.2 Spreading the Gospel or Social Justice?

Do conservative and progressive religious leaders' distinct views about how to address poverty lead them to engage in different types of activities within their dioceses? Although both progressive and conservative religious leaders conceptualize poverty as a social sin, they perceive their role in addressing this issue in fundamentally opposing ways. Progressives believe in addressing the suffering of this world by advocating for social change and economic justice. In contrast, conservatives believe the appropriate response to poverty is emphasizing spiritual salvation and promoting religious activities geared toward the poor. I argue that these opposing perceptions about religion's responsibility in the face of poverty generate distinct observable behaviors across progressive and conservative leaders.

In a visit to Brazil in 1980, conservative Pope John Paul II illustrated the tension between these two approaches to poverty when he expressed his admiration for the Brazilian Church's—then dominated by progressive bishops—efforts to aid the poor, but told the bishops that in “their zeal for promoting social progress they were neglecting the need to spread the Gospel.” He went on to remind the bishops that their principal job was evangelizing, claiming that before his trip “he had received a large number of letters from Brazilians expressing hunger for God. We can't ignore this. We cannot fail to give [the people] the spiritual resources they are seeking from us. In the face of all this, catechism is urgent. I can admire those zealous pastors who respond this urgency by making catechism a real first priority.”¹⁷

John Paul II's comments underscore the difference between conservative and progressive leaders' responses to poverty. His message to Brazilian bishops, and particularly the progressives among them, called for a shift toward a conservative understanding of the Church's responsibility to the poor that focused on the catechism and other acts religiosity. The message also suggests that progressive and conservative activities correspond closely with the classification outlined in Chapter 2: progressive leaders encourage social activism and mobilization, while conservatives instead respond to poverty by emphasizing spirituality and religious activities.

In this section, I provide an empirical test of the ways in which progressive and conservative leaders address poverty. I examine two outcomes in particular that reflect their expected responses. To assess whether or not bishops encourage activism in favor of social justice, I analyze the participation of Catholic bishops in movements on behalf of landless

¹⁶Keck (1992).

¹⁷The New York Times (1980).

workers. To detect the provision of spiritual and religious services, I study the creation of new parishes within dioceses.

Mobilizing Landless Peasants in the Countryside

To test whether or not progressive leaders encouraged the laity to engage in social mobilization and other activities to address poverty, I focus on bishops' support for landless workers in the Brazilian countryside. Intelligence dossiers prepared during the military dictatorship in the early 1980s describe the Catholic clergy, and progressives in particular, as educating parishioners about their rights to own land and encouraging landless rural workers to organize and demand this right from landowners and the state.¹⁸ If progressive clergy indeed saw it as their responsibility to address the social and economic conditions that lead to poverty, they should have systematically supported rural workers and encouraged the formation of lay organizations in favor of land redistribution and other reforms to improve the economic wellbeing of the rural poor.

Data I take advantage of a newly declassified archive containing documents from Brazil's military dictatorship to explore whether or not progressive clergy did indeed promote the mobilization of rural workers. The archive contains intelligence dossiers from the National Information Service (NIS, *Serviço Nacional de Informações*). The NIS was created in 1964 to supervise and coordinate intelligence activities both in Brazil and abroad.¹⁹ It was comprised of a central agency and twelve regional agencies throughout Brazil, which allowed it to collect detailed information from across the entire country.²⁰

Recently made available to the public, the archival NIS documents provide new insight into the military dictatorship's efforts to catalog and control a variety of social actors in Brazil. Among other things, they include detailed reports of the Catholic clergy's political activities. Many of these NIS reports carefully document the statements and activities of Catholic bishops and priests in an effort to identify whether or not they supported left-wing political and social movements. Notably, the NIS continued to collect information about the activities of the Catholic Church during the *abertura* and until the first direct, democratic elections took place in 1989.

To test whether or not the progressive clergy was more likely to encourage the mobilization and organization of rural workers than their conservative counterparts, I leverage an intelligence dossier from 1986 that includes a list of the bishops and priests involved in the movements supporting landless peasants.²¹ After distinguishing between bishops and priests in the 1986 report and excluding the latter, I create a binary indicator of whether

¹⁸[Serviço Nacional de Informações \(1987\)](#).

¹⁹The NIS responded exclusively to the president and the National Security Council (*Conselho de Segurança Nacional*).

²⁰The regional offices were located in Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Rio Grande do Sul, Pernambuco, Pará, Amazonas, Mato Grosso do Sul, Paraná, Minas Gerais, Bahia, Ceará, and Goiás.

²¹[Serviço Nacional de Informações \(1987\)](#).

Table 5.1: Progressive Bishops' Involvement in the Landless Movement (1986)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Panel A: CACE				
Pre-JPII bishop	0.28*** (0.08)	0.31*** (0.08)	0.23*** (0.07)	0.24*** (0.09)
Panel B: ITT				
No vacancy	0.16*** (0.04)	0.17*** (0.04)	0.14*** (0.04)	0.14*** (0.05)
Control group mean	0.17	0.16	0.17	0.16
Num. obs.	221	189	221	189
State FE			✓	✓

***p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, *p < 0.1

Note: In all models, the unit of observation is the diocese. The dependent variable is a binary indicator of whether or not a bishop supported the landless movement. All specifications are estimated using ordinary least squares (ITT) and two-stage least squares (CACE). Standard errors are adjusted for heteroskedasticity between treatment and control groups. Panel A reports CACE estimates; Panel B reports ITT estimates. Models 1 and 3 include archdioceses and use IPW to account for differences in the probability of treatment assignment across dioceses and archdioceses.

or not the bishop in a given diocese was reported as involved in the landless movement. This serves as the dependent variable.

Results I use an instrumental variables approach to test whether the sitting bishop in 1978—i.e. those appointed by progressive popes—were more likely to be involved in the political mobilization of landless peasants. Table 5.1 reports the results. Panel A reports the CACE estimates, and for comparison Panel B reports the ITT estimates. The absence of a retirement vacancy is used to instrument for the leadership of a bishop appointed prior to John Paul II's papacy. Models 1 and 2 include no controls, while models 3 and 4 include state fixed effects.

Overall, Table 5.1 provides strong evidence that “Pre-JPII bishops”—bishops appointed by progressive popes, prior to 1978—were more likely to mobilize landless rural workers. The CACE estimates in Panel A document that in the study group as a whole, bishops appointed prior to John Paul II's papacy were 28 percentage points more likely to be reported as involved in rural mobilization, relative to the control group mean of 17 percent. This effect is statistically significant at the 1% level. The effect is similar for the full study group and the group that excludes archdioceses. This evidence aligns with the theoretical expectations described in Chapter 2 about how progressive religious leaders respond to poverty.

I provide a qualitative description of how progressive priests and bishops engaged with the landless movements in the case study in Section 5.4.

Spreading the Gospel through the Creation of New Parishes

Did conservative members of the Catholic clergy prioritize spiritual salvation and religious activities to address poverty in this world? To explore the way in which conservatives respond to poverty, I study the effect of conservative bishops on the religious organization in their dioceses. I examine changes in an outcome that bishops have complete control over: the creation of new parishes. Within dioceses, parishes are the basic unit through which religious services are provided to the laity.²² The parish encompasses a geographic area and the population within its boundaries is served by a pastoral team, led by a priest. Bishops are in charge of creating and eliminating parishes, as well as assigning priests to lead them. If conservative bishops prioritize spiritual salvation, they should create more parishes in their dioceses than their progressive counterparts.

Data To measure changes in the organization of dioceses in Brazil over time, I collected parish-level information from the Brazilian Catholic Yearbook for the years 1977 and 1989.²³ I then record the number of new parishes that were created during this time period. These are the dependent variables in the analysis described below.

Results Table 5.2 reports the results of the analysis using parish creation as the outcome. The first column looks at the effect of progressive bishops—those appointed before John Paul II—on the total number of parishes created between 1977 and 1989. The second column excludes archdioceses from the analysis and looks only at dioceses. In all models, the presence of a progressive bishop had a negative effect on the creation of new parishes. These results indicate that, compared to progressives, conservative bishops prioritize bringing the Church closer to parishioners by emphasizing spiritual practice. Specifically, bishops created parishes in their dioceses to facilitate access to the spiritual components of the church, including weekly sermons, catechism, and communion. This evidence supports the theory developed previously that conservative religious leaders emphasize spiritual activities and religiosity, rather than mobilization in favor of economic and social justice.

Together, the results described in this section provide evidence to support the theoretical distinctions I develop between progressive and conservative religious leaders. Progressive bishops' support for the landless peasant movement underscores their emphasis on organizing in the political and social sphere to fight economic injustice and poverty. In contrast, conservative bishops prioritize strengthening parishioners' ties to the Church and the spiritual resources it provides. They do so by increasing the number of parishes within

²²Code of Canon Law (1983, 515-518); Esparza Ochoa (2012).

²³CERIS (1977, 1989).

Table 5.2: Effect of Progressive Bishops on New Parish Creation (1977-1989)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Panel A: CACE				
Pre-JPII Bishop	-1.234** (0.282)	-1.137** (0.248)	-1.103** (0.197)	-1.098** (0.193)
Panel B: ITT				
No vacancy	-0.697** (0.292)	-0.689** (0.259)	-0.579** (0.201)	-0.690** (0.192)
Control group mean	1.527	1.788	1.527	1.788
N	221	189	221	189
State FE			✓	✓

***p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, *p < 0.1

Note: In all models, the unit of observation is the diocese. The dependent variable is the total number of new parishes created between 1977 and 1989. All specifications are estimated using ordinary least squares (ITT) and two-stage least squares (CACE). Standard errors are adjusted for heteroskedasticity between treatment and control groups. Panel A reports CACE estimates; Panel B reports ITT estimates. Models 1 and 3 include archdioceses and use IPW to account for differences in the probability of treatment assignment across dioceses and archdioceses.

their dioceses to make religious sermons and other activities more accessible. Analysis of the activities that progressive and conservative bishops emphasize in their dioceses provides strong evidence of their divergent responses to poverty.

What effects did these distinct activities have in the political arena? Did progressives' focus on social and economic justice carry over into support for left-wing political parties, and in particular the PT? The following section explores the political influence of the Catholic clergy and in particular its relationship with the PT.

5.3 Progressive Bishops and the Workers' Party

The findings in the previous section highlight important differences between progressive and conservative religious leaders' behaviour towards the most economically vulnerable in society. Conservative bishops in Brazil invested in building new parishes, increasing the provision of religious services, and encouraging piety. Scholars have argued that this emphasis on spirituality is one of the ways through which religion can reduce demand for redistribution and, as a result, increase support for right-wing political parties. When spirituality substitutes for the benefits provided through the welfare state, pious individuals may demand less redistribution than those who are not religious and thus will be more

likely to favor right-wing parties.²⁴ Yet these expectations do not align with the activities that progressive leaders advocate among their congregants, in particular raising awareness about the injustice of poverty and encouraging the poor to mobilize and demand better conditions. In this section, I explore whether progressives' focus on alleviating economic inequality, and poverty generally, can transform religion's conservative bias into support for left-wing parties.

To explore the relationship between progressive religion and left-wing parties, I first look at the effect that progressive religious leaders have on party building. The analysis of progressive bishops' support for the landless movement in Section 5.2 provides evidence that progressives were more likely than conservatives to encourage structural changes to fight economic economic injustice. If progressives also supported the PT due to its redistributive economic platform, or if the PT was able to channel progressives' support of economically progressive movements towards party building, the party should have a stronger organizational presence in dioceses led by progressive bishops than in those overseen by conservatives.

Second, I look at the effect of progressive religious leaders on the left's electoral performance. Beyond party organization, did the presence of progressive bishops benefit the PT? If so, where was their presence most beneficial for the party? Given that the PT relies heavily on the labor movement and industrial workers for its support, I expect the party to benefit more from progressive religion in places where labor is weaker and there is less industrial employment. After analyzing the effect of progressive bishops on the PT's vote share in the aggregate, I then probe whether the effects of progressive religious leaders are concentrated in places where the PT's natural constituency is smaller.

Finally, I explore whether or not the presence of religious welfare provision moderates the effects of progressive religion. Existing scholarship on religion's conservative bias suggests that religious welfare serves as a substitute for the welfare state and thus reduces demand for state-led redistribution.²⁵ If this is true, than welfare provision through the Catholic Church should attenuate any positive influence the PT obtains from progressive religion. I test whether the Church's role in social service provision to the poor shapes the effect of progressive bishops on the PT's electoral support.

Party Building

As a first probe into the ways in which progressive Catholic bishops influenced the PT, I analyze the effect of these bishops on the PT's territorial organization, specifically the creation of party branches at the municipal level in the 1980s.

Data Determining Brazilian parties' local organizational presence in the 1980s is challenging. The National Electoral Court (TSE) only began compiling official records of

²⁴Scheve and Stasavage (2006a,b).

²⁵Huber and Stanig (2011).

parties' structure at the local level in 2010 and most parties began documenting their local branches around the same period. While the PT began doing so slightly earlier, its records only date back to 2001.²⁶

The recently declassified NIS documents, described in Section 5.2, provide a new source of information about the PT's municipal branches. In an effort to document the territorial organization of all parties participating in the 1985 congressional election, the regional offices of the NIS recorded the presence of party branches in the states under their jurisdiction. I retrieved these reports from the NIS archive and created a unique dataset of party offices in the 1980s. The reports were at the state level but recorded the presence of party offices by municipality, as officially reported by Brazil's Regional Electoral Courts (TREs). I then recorded the number of municipal party offices in each diocese and archdiocese. Since different regional offices reported the information at different times between 1985 and 1987, the data is from 1985 for dioceses in some regions and 1986 or 1987 for dioceses in others. To account for this issue, I include fixed effects for each region in all models. Moreover, the estimation of effects from within-region variation has the additional advantage of accounting for the fact that the PT had a more extensive organization in particular regions (south and southeast of the country).

Results Table 5.1 tests whether or not the PT was more likely to increase its organizational presence in dioceses under the leadership of a progressive bishop. Panel A reports CACE estimates, while Panel B reports the ITT effects. The table provides evidence that the support of progressive bishops facilitates the local organization of the party, but only in dioceses. Indeed, the model in column 1—which includes both dioceses and archdioceses—finds a positive, but small effect that is statistically indistinguishable from zero. When archdioceses are excluded, as in the model displayed in column 2, the presence of a progressive bishop increases the number of the PT's municipal branches in a given diocese; progressive bishops allow the party to create two additional party offices, relative to the control group mean of 6 party offices per diocese.

These results underscore the potential benefits of allying with progressive bishops, and progressive religious leaders more generally, when a political party relies heavily on the support of workers and members of the labor movement who are highly concentrated in cities.²⁷ While left-wing parties such as the PT may be well positioned to compete in urban areas that fall within the country's archdioceses, they may be less successful in rural settings in which there are few union members to rely on for support. Faced with

²⁶A widely used alternative indicator of party organization at the local level relies on whether or not a party fielded at least one candidate for city council (*vereador*). This is a good measure of a party's organizational presence because, in order to field a city council candidate, the electoral court must officially recognize that a party has established at least a provisional municipal-level office (*comissão provisória*) a minimum of one year prior to the election (Samuels and Zucco, 2015). However, the earliest data on local council candidates is for 1996.

²⁷Keck (1992) argues that this was the case for the PT in Brazil.

Table 5.1: Effect of Progressive Bishops on Party Offices (1985-1987)

	(1)	(2)
Panel A: CACE		
Pre-JPII bishop	0.26 (1.00)	1.94* (1.03)
Panel B: ITT		
No vacancy	0.16 (0.61)	1.09* (0.63)
Control group mean	6.563	5.841
N	221	189
Region FE	✓	✓

***p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, *p < 0.1

Note: In all models, the unit of observation is the diocese. The dependent variable is the number of municipal-level branches of the PT. All specifications are estimated using ordinary least squares (ITT) and two-stage least squares (CACE). Standard errors are adjusted for heteroskedasticity between treatment and control groups. Panel A reports CACE estimates; Panel B reports ITT estimates. Model 1 includes archdioceses and uses IPW to account for differences in the probability of treatment assignment across dioceses and archdioceses.

such a challenge, the reach of religious organizations in rural locales may be particularly attractive for left parties.

The results described above suggest that progressive bishops facilitated the establishment of the PT’s local branches, particularly in less industrialized areas where the party could rely less on organized labor. Did progressive bishops also boost the electoral fortunes of the PT? I explore this question in the following section.

Electoral Returns

This section explores the influence of progressive clergy on electoral support for the PT. Through their focus on poverty as an economic injustice, progressive priests and bishops underscore not only the sources of this social ill, but also the need to address it through political and social activism. After all, one of the defining components of progressive religious leaders is the belief that poverty should be addressed through structural changes in society. Yet while Section 5.2 provided evidence that progressive bishops were more likely than their conservative counterparts to endorse efforts to address poverty—for example by promoting the landless peasant movement—the ways in which this support translates into the electoral arena remain unknown. The following analysis explores whether such advocacy increases the vote share of the PT.

Table 5.2: Effect of Progressive Bishops on Vote Share for the PT (1989)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Panel A: CACE				
Pre-JPII bishop	0.018* (0.011)	0.017* (0.011)	0.022** (0.011)	0.030** (0.012)
Panel B: ITT				
No vacancy	0.016* (0.010)	0.017* (0.010)	0.027* (0.014)	0.029** (0.014)
Control group mean	0.156	0.156	0.151	0.151
N	221	221	189	189
State FE		✓		✓

***p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, *p < 0.1

Note: In all models, the unit of observation is the diocese. The dependent variable is the vote share of the PT in the 1989 Presidential elections. All specifications are estimated using ordinary least squares (ITT) and two-stage least squares (CACE). Standard errors are adjusted for heteroskedasticity between treatment and control groups. Panel A reports CACE estimates; Panel B reports ITT estimates. Models 1 and 2 include archdioceses and use IPW to account for differences in the probability of treatment assignment across dioceses and archdioceses.

Data The main outcome of interest is the vote share of the PT in the 1989 presidential election. I obtained municipal level electoral returns from the Institute for Applied Economic Research (*Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada* - IPEA).

Results Table 5.2 tests whether the presence of a progressive bishop increased the vote share of the PT. Across all models, it shows that the presence of a progressive bishop increased the vote share of the PT by between 1.7 and 3 percentage points, compared to a control group mean of 15.6% of the vote. This represents between an 11 and 19 percent increase. Crucially, the effect is larger in the models that exclude archdioceses, suggesting once again that the positive effect of progressive religion is concentrated outside of Brazil's more urban regions (archdioceses include the largest urban cities in Brazil). In the next section I further explore the territorial variation in progressive bishops' positive effect on vote share for the PT.

The Urban-Rural Divide and Progressive Religion

The results in Table 5.2 suggest the effect of progressive bishops may be concentrated in less urban dioceses. These results are in line with the theoretical prediction that religion can be a particularly useful vehicle for the left in contexts where its core constituency is

weak. For labor-based parties in developing countries, such as the PT in Brazil, rural districts present the biggest obstacle to their electoral success. Although rural unions may exist alongside those representing urban manufacturing workers, they are almost never as prevalent. Moreover, in the Brazilian context specifically, it was the progressive clergy in the Catholic Church that actively sought to organize rural workers in the countryside. Thus, one might expect the electoral benefits of progressive bishops to be especially concentrated in more rural dioceses, where labor unions were comparatively weaker. In this subsection, I explore whether the electoral benefits of progressive religion were indeed concentrated in the countryside.

Data I obtained municipal level data on Brazil's urban and rural population in 1970 from the Institute for Applied Economic Research (*Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada* - IPEA). The data was collected in the 1970 census. I aggregated the municipal data to the diocese level in order to calculate the rural share of the population in each diocese.²⁸ I then coded a diocese as rural if the rural share of its population was above the median of all dioceses.

Results Table 5.3 shows the results of the analysis. The models in columns 1 and 2 include both dioceses and archdioceses, while those in 3 and 4 exclude archdioceses. The results differ considerably between these two sets of models. Models 1 and 2 suggest the PT performed better in urban settings—its vote share in rural areas was between 1.9 and 2.5 percentage points lower than in areas with a rural population below the median. Moreover, the presence of progressive bishops had no effect on the vote share of the PT in predominantly urban areas—the coefficients are small and statistically indistinguishable from zero. However, progressive bishops have a large effect in places with a rural population above the median. The positive effect is large, leading to an increase of between 3.6 and 4.3 percentage points as compared to the control group mean of 15.6. This more than compensates for the PT's poorer performance in rural areas overall, increasing the party's vote share by between 1.7 and 1.8%. Ultimately, the PT performed best in urban areas *and* in rural areas led by a progressive bishop. It received the least amount of electoral support in rural areas where the party could not rely on the aid of progressive religion.

Religious Welfare Provision and Progressive Religion

During the 20th century, the Catholic Church was the primary social service provider in Brazil and received substantial state funding to carry out its programs and services. In 1968, for example, 1,100 of Brazil's 2,854 private hospitals were run by the Church, and

²⁸The 1970 census records the share of the municipal population that was rural. To aggregate this to the level of the diocese, I combined the rural population of all municipalities in a given diocese to calculate the share of the total population in that diocese that was rural.

Table 5.3: Effect of Progressive Bishops on Electoral Returns (1989), HTE by Urban-Rural

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Panel A: CACE				
Pre-JPII bishop	-0.013 (0.023)	-0.004 (0.018)	-0.002 (0.025)	0.011 (0.021)
Rural	-0.019 (0.019)	-0.025* (0.013)	-0.006 (0.018)	-0.001 (0.013)
Pre-JPII bishop x Rural	0.036* (0.016)	0.043** (0.020)	0.031 (0.034)	0.038 (0.026)
Panel B: ITT				
No vacancy	-0.008 (0.015)	-0.003 (0.012)	-0.001 (0.015)	0.006 (0.014)
Rural	-0.017 (0.018)	-0.025* (0.013)	-0.004 (0.016)	-0.002 (0.013)
No vacancy x Rural	0.023* (0.014)	0.029** (0.014)	0.019 (0.022)	0.026 (0.017)
Control group mean	0.156	0.156	0.151	0.151
N	221	221	189	189
State FE		✓		✓

***p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, *p < 0.1

Note: In all models, the unit of observation is the diocese. The dependent variable is the vote share of the PT in the 1989 Presidential elections. All specifications are estimated using ordinary least squares (ITT) and two-stage least squares (CACE). Standard errors are adjusted for heteroskedasticity between treatment and control groups. Panel A reports CACE estimates; Panel B reports ITT estimates. Models 1 and 2 include archdioceses and use IPW to account for differences in the probability of treatment assignment across dioceses and archdioceses.

religious orders were responsible for 150,000 of the country's 285,000 hospital beds.²⁹ In the 1970s, approximately ten percent of Brazil's population directly benefited from the Church's social action.³⁰ In many cases, these church-led social services were the only available and a majority—61.6% in 1970—received state funding, either from the national, state, or municipal governments.³¹ Backed by state subsidies, the Church served as a primary social service provider to the poor.

How does the presence of religious welfare provision moderate the effect of progressive religion? A subset of theories about religion's conservative bias highlight how religious welfare provision can substitute for state welfare by reducing demand economic redistribution.³² These theories have potentially important implications for the relationship between the presence of progressive religious leaders and support for the left; if parishioners have access to religious welfare outside of the state, they may be less receptive to progressives' call to address economic injustice through structural reforms such as state-led redistribution.³³ Moreover, in the short term, religious welfare provision is sticky—Catholic schools, and hospitals don't disappear from one day to the next just because there is a progressive bishop. Hence, we might expect the presence of religious welfare to attenuate the positive effect of progressive leaders on the left party's vote share. This section explores the degree to which religious welfare moderates the positive effect of a progressive bishop on the PT's electoral support.

Data To explore this relationship, I collected information on welfare provision by the Catholic Church from *Recursos Sociais da Igreja no Brasil*, a complete census of Catholic welfare in Brazil conducted by the Church between 1974 and 1975. The data for each ecclesiastical region was published separately, culminating in a total of thirteen publications.³⁴ Since the full collection is not housed in a single place, I located all available publications from archives and libraries across Brazil, the US, and Germany and put together an original dataset of Church welfare provision.³⁵ The dataset covers all of Brazil with the exception of the “South I” region, which corresponds to the state of São Paulo.³⁶

The Church welfare dataset contains detailed information on all services provided by the Church at the local level, including the type—education, health, shelter, etc—and the municipality in which the service was offered. To explore the impact of religious welfare

²⁹The number of government-led hospitals paled in comparison, with only 416 in operation in 1963 (Serbin, 1992).

³⁰Serbin (1992).

³¹Serbin (1992).

³²Huber and Stanig (2011). Hungerman (2005) shows that demand for church welfare increases when the supply of government welfare goes down.

³³Thachil (2014a,b).

³⁴An ecclesiastical region is a formally organised geographical group of dioceses. For a discussion of the Church's internal organization, see Chapter 4. The general descriptive statistics resulting from the census were published in CERIS (1975g).

³⁵I obtained this detailed local-level data from CERIS (1974a,e,f,d,b,c, 1975d,e,f,b,c,a).

³⁶I was, unfortunately, unable to locate this publication.

Table 5.4: Effect of Progressive Bishops on Vote Share for the PT (1989), HTE by Religious Welfare Provision

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Panel A: CACE				
Pre-JPII bishop	0.037 (0.027)	0.047** (0.022)	0.054** (0.026)	0.064*** (0.021)
High RWP	0.017 (0.021)	0.014 (0.018)	0.011 (0.019)	-0.006 (0.019)
Pre-JPII bishop x High RWP	-0.063* (0.037)	-0.058** (0.029)	-0.073** (0.036)	-0.056** (0.027)
Panel B: ITT				
No vacancy	0.023 (0.017)	0.031** (0.015)	0.034** (0.016)	0.043*** (0.013)
High RWP	0.014 (0.019)	0.013 (0.017)	0.010 (0.018)	-0.003 (0.018)
No vacancy x High RWP	-0.041* (0.024)	-0.038** (0.019)	-0.047** (0.023)	-0.036** (0.018)
Control group mean	0.158	0.158	0.150	0.150
N	192	192	165	165
State FE		✓		✓

***p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, *p < 0.1

Note: In all models, the unit of observation is the diocese. The dependent variable is the vote share of the PT in the 1989 Presidential elections. All specifications are estimated using ordinary least squares (ITT) and two-stage least squares (CACE). Standard errors are adjusted for heteroskedasticity between treatment and control groups. Panel A reports CACE estimates; Panel B reports ITT estimates. Models 1 and 2 include archdioceses and use IPW to archdioceses use IPW to account for differences in the probability of treatment assignment across dioceses and archdioceses. The analysis excludes the dioceses in the state of São Paulo, since data on Catholic welfare provision in this region could not be located.

on the relationship between progressive bishops' and the PT's electoral support, I constructed a variable, "high religious welfare provision" (High RWP). I first tallied the total number of religious welfare services offered within each diocese. I then coded High RWP as 1 if the number of religious welfare services offered in a diocese was above the median of those offered across all dioceses.

Results Table 5.4 tests whether the effect of a progressive bishop on the PT's vote share is moderated by high levels of religious welfare provision. It provides strong evidence

that progressive bishops have positive and large effects on the PT's electoral support in dioceses where the Catholic Church is not an important welfare provider. However, in dioceses where the Church is a major source of welfare, progressive bishops have a large *negative* effects on support for the PT.

These findings suggest that progressive religious leaders are better able to mobilize congregants in contexts where the Church is not itself providing welfare services. In places where religious welfare provision is high, in contrast, progressive religion's support hurts the electoral fortunes of left-wing parties. This finding may be driven by the fact that the beneficiaries of religious welfare are averse to modifying this club good and embracing a universal system.

In the next section, I describe the relationship between the clergy and the PT in Bom Jesus da Lapa, a dioceses under the leadership of a progressive bishop. The case study echoes many of the results described in the quantitative analysis presented above, complementing these findings with an in-depth account of progressive clergy's activities and highlighting the ways in which the PT benefited as a result.

5.4 A Case Study of the Diocese of Bom Jesus da Lapa

This section examines the collaboration that took place between clergy in progressive dioceses and Brazil's left-wing Workers' Party between 1980 and 1989 in the diocese of Bom Jesus da Lapa. The diocese selected for the case study was chosen based on three criteria. The selection was first restricted to the northeast of Brazil, a region in which the expansion of a labor-based political party was particularly challenging due to its small urban population and the lowest level of industrialization in the country. Studying the growth of the Workers' Party in this context makes it possible to capture the variety of potential resources that a progressive religious organization could offer a labor-based party. Second, dioceses were only included if their bishop was classified as a progressive at least once by the NIS between the period 1978 and 1990. Finally, dioceses were only included if their bishops remained in office during the entire period from the appointment of John Paul II in 1978 to the year 1990. This decision is to ensure that the study accurately captures the dynamics of the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Workers' Party in progressive dioceses, rather than in those where the progressive bishop was at some point replaced with a conservative. These restrictions yielded a total of sixteen dioceses, among which Bom Jesus da Lapa was randomly selected.

Existing accounts of the relationship between the church and the PT focus on a limited number of cases, often the most important dioceses in the country. These accounts fail to provide evidence of how this partnership developed in dioceses in the periphery. The description of the relationship between the clergy and the left in Bom Jesus da Lapa draws on the archive containing all the intelligence dossiers produced by the National Information Service (NIS) during the Brazilian dictatorship and the democratic transition.³⁷ Due to its

³⁷The NIS's focus of the NIS on matters that threaten national security introduces a bias towards reporting

broad territorial coverage, the archive offers a unique opportunity to access detailed information about the activities of both clergy and political parties throughout Brazil, including dioceses in the periphery.

The diocese of Bom Jesus da Lapa is located in the northeast of Brazil, a region whose dioceses are disproportionately rural and that has the largest concentration of progressive bishops in the country, due to appointment priorities of progressive Popes. Crucially, Bom Jesus da Lapa's bishop, José Nicomedes Grossi, was in office until 1990. Narrowing the analysis to a diocese that remained under a progressive bishop for the entire period allows me to identify the types of activities that took place in progressive dioceses and describe the evolution of the relationship between Catholic clergy and the left-wing Workers Party over time. Analysis of the relationship highlights the ways in which the clergy facilitated the Worker's Party's organizational development in the diocese and played a key role in the party's growth. To select the archival material to construct the case study, all of the NIS produced between 1978 and 1990 that contained either the name of the diocese or its bishop in either the title or the brief description of the dossier were selected.³⁸

Diocese Characteristics Bom Jesus da Lapa is located in the northeastern region of Brazil, in the State of Bahia (see Figure 5.1 for the location of the diocese). Similar to other rural dioceses in Brazil's northeast, the economy in Bom Jesus da Lapa is predominantly agrarian, relying heavily on the cultivation of sugar.³⁹ During the country's military dictatorship and the process of gradual democratization, the diocese experienced a severe economic crisis due to years of drought that led to crop shortfalls and paralyzed sugarcane refining facilities throughout the region. The duration and depth of the economic crisis threatened the livelihood of workers in the agrarian economy and led to high rates of poverty and landlessness.

The economic crisis was exacerbated by the weak presence of the state in the region. A 1985 report from the NIS stressed the inability of the state's regional authorities to support rural families and workers in four municipalities located in the diocese.⁴⁰ The same

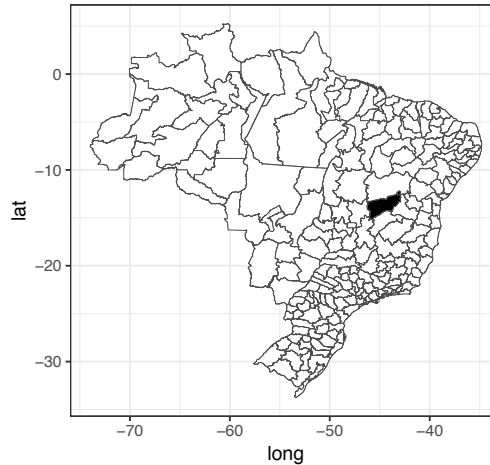
the progressive activities of the church that the regime could find threatening. Thus, while this archive is a particularly rich source to study progressive dioceses, its usefulness to learn about conservative district is limited. The activities of moderate and conservative bishops often went unreported.

³⁸This search retrieved a total of eighty-one reports that were then individually reviewed to identify the subset with information relevant to the case study. Thirteen reports spanning the period from 1980 to 1989 form the basis of the study. Seventy percent of the dossiers were produced by the regional office of the NIS in Bahia, which closely followed events in the diocese and frequently led missions to collect information about the area. The remaining thirty percent were produced by the central office of the NIS, which both received information from the regional office and also conducted independent investigations.

³⁹The share of the population that is rural in Bom Jesus da Lapa is above the median share across all dioceses. The diocese is thus classified as rural in the analysis in Section 5.3.

⁴⁰[Serviço Nacional de Informações \(1985c\)](#). The municipalities mentioned in the report are Carinhanha, Coribe, Correntina, and Santa Maria da Vitória.

Figure 5.1: Geographic Location of Bom Jesus da Lapa



The figure shows the borders of each Brazilian diocese. The diocese of Bom Jesus da Lapa is shaded in black.

report highlighted a lack of running water, electricity, medical services, and educational opportunities throughout the region, as well as the failure of the government organization in charge of agrarian reform (INCRA) to effectively redistribute land to the poor.

While the Church's organizational presence was greater than the state's, it paled in comparison to the Church's reach in other regions of the country. In 1977 there were sixteen thousand inhabitants per priest in the region, compared to nine thousand per priest in Brazil overall.⁴¹ The Church's presence in Bom Jesus da Lapa was particularly weak, with fifteen priests to serve more than twenty-one thousand square miles and a ratio of roughly thirty-three thousand inhabitants per priest. The 1975 census of Catholic welfare provision reveals that the ability of the Church to provide welfare in the diocese was also limited: religious welfare consisted of three shelters, three centers providing basic medical services, four soup kitchens, and five groups offering basic skills training for adults.⁴² Most of these welfare services were concentrated in the city of Bom Jesus da Lapa.

Progressive Clergy in Bom Jesus da Lapa NIS reports from 1978 classify most of the region's bishops as progressive and highlight the progressive religious activity in the area. Bom Jesus da Lapa was no exception. Jose Nicomendes Grossi was appointed as bishop in 1962 at the time that the diocese was created. The NIS first flagged Bishop Grossi as a progressive member of the Church in a 1985 report that summarized the findings

⁴¹CERIS (1977). The regional statistic corresponds to Northeast III, the division in which the Catholic Church formally includes the dioceses of Bom Jesus da Lapa.

⁴²CERIS (1975f). The number of services provided that the Church provides in Bom Jesus da Lapa is below the median number of services provided across all dioceses. It is thus classified as having low religious welfare services in the analysis in Section 5.3.

of a special mission (*Operação Monzondol*) in the region aimed at recruiting informants and collaborators, identifying the activities of left-wing parties, assessing the prevalence of land conflicts, and documenting progressive activity more generally.⁴³ In addition to Grossi, a majority of the priests in the diocese were also identified as progressives.⁴⁴

What did the activities of these progressive clergymen look like in Bom Jesus da Lapa? And how did they engage agrarian workers in the diocese? Dossiers that the NIS wrote about the Church between 1980 and 1989 illustrate that, under the leadership of its progressive bishop and priests, the Catholic clergy explicitly worked to raise awareness about economic injustices and inform rural workers of their political rights, participated in the organization of rural unions, and occasionally supported groups of landless workers who were occupying private land as part of their demands for agrarian reform. Indeed, the dire economic context and absence of the state defined the relationship between the Catholic church and lay communities in the region, motivating already sympathetic clergy to engage workers in social and political activities in favor of the political left generally and the Workers' Party in particular.

Political Themes in the Parish A key channel through which members of the progressive clergy engaged their parishioners was the incorporation of political themes into religious events in the diocese. Bishop Grossi's message to parishioners during the commemoration of the diocese's patron saint in 1982 provides a clear example of this phenomenon. According to a report from the NIS, the Bishop "gave an inflammatory sermon in which he highlighted themes such as land inequality, rural unionization, and political participation. He called on the faithful to take part in diocesan events over the course of the next two days that were organized to address themes such as unionization and political education in preparation for the upcoming elections."⁴⁵

Progressive clergy once again incorporated political messages and events into their religious activities in 1988, when the diocese hosted the *Romaria da Terra*, or land pilgrimage.⁴⁶ NIS reports describing the event in 1988 suggest that individuals with links to parishes in the diocese discussed themes such as social discrimination, unemployment, lack of schools in the region, and violence in both the countryside and urban areas.⁴⁷ The clergy in Bom Jesus da Lapa strove to mitigate the poverty and hardship that parishioners in the region faced. Bishop Grossi and many of the priests serving in the diocese actively connected the economic crisis and the hardships it engendered with political issues, incorporating political themes into the church-led land pilgrimage.

⁴³ *Serviço Nacional de Informações* (1985c, 1987, 1988b,c,a, 1989).

⁴⁴ *Serviço Nacional de Informações* (1985b). Notably, many of these progressive priests hailed from outside of Brazil, primarily from Poland and Italy.

⁴⁵ *Serviço Nacional de Informações* (1982).

⁴⁶ The pilgrimage is a three day event held annually at the beginning of July. It brings together catholic rural workers from across the diocese.

⁴⁷ *Serviço Nacional de Informações* (1988d).

Importantly, reports from the NIS underscore the variety of strategies that the Church employed to reach rural parishioners. One key example was the establishment of a church-led radio station in 1982.⁴⁸ An NIS dossier from 1989 documents the explicitly political and left-wing content of the station, declaring that “the Diocese of Bom Jesus da Lapa is the owner of Radio Bom Jesus da Lapa, a station that defends the ideas of Liberation Theology.”⁴⁹ The Church’s media presence was particularly valuable in a diocese with no other radio stations and only two local newspapers.

More generally, church agents paid particular attention to the design of communication strategies that were accessible to all parishioners. One of the most common techniques used in Church events was a narration accompanied by short skits to illustrate the narration and make it more relatable to participants.⁵⁰ Handouts and booklets were written in simple language and included drawings and cartoons depicting everyday activities.

Organizing the Unorganized In addition to integrating political issues into religious events and promoting their dissemination throughout the diocese, the Church also worked to create relationships between parishioners and pro-poor lay organizations. These linkages thus engaged individuals in new movements that nevertheless maintained a close connection with Catholic leaders.

Perhaps one of the clearest efforts to engage individuals beyond the Church itself was the creation of a regional pastoral commission to aid landless workers in their struggle for legal access to land.⁵¹ In 1975, Brazilian bishops founded the National Pastoral Land Commission, also known as the CPT. The creation of the organization occurred at the behest of the progressive clergy, who sought an end to the widespread violence of landowners and the state against the rural poor. At the national level, the CPT offered legal services, encouraged the creation of rural unions, denounced the use of violence against the poor, and offered courses on issues ranging from faith to politics.⁵² In a 1980 report describing the CPT’s activities, the NIS claimed:

The CPT is positioning itself between the government and the poor to try to solve—through the generation of pressures and tensions—the land conflict that exists in the area and to improve the lives of the poor. The CPT’s continued efforts to advise the rural poor about their rights and unite them together suggests that the land conflict may worsen. Land squatters have the support of the clergy.⁵³

⁴⁸ *Serviço Nacional de Informações* (1982, 1985b).

⁴⁹ *Serviço Nacional de Informações* (1989).

⁵⁰ *Serviço Nacional de Informações* (1988c).

⁵¹ A pastoral commission is an executive body within the Church whose express purpose is the assessment of parishioners’ needs and the development and implementation of programs to meet these needs. The commission works in cooperation with local parishes to improve the cohesion and direction of pastoral activities.

⁵² *Serviço Nacional de Informações* (1980a).

⁵³ *Serviço Nacional de Informações* (1980b).

In order to strengthen the CPT's presence and effectiveness in Brazil's northeast, local bishops created a *regional* branch of the organization. A number of bishops, including Bishop Grossi in Bom Jesus da Lapa, also established their own local CPT offices in 1977.⁵⁴ In fact, a military dossier referenced Bom Jesus da Lapa as having one of the strongest and most well organized CPT branches in the country.⁵⁵

In Bom Jesus da Lapa, the creation of a local CPT office had two broad ramifications. First, it effectively expressed the national organization at the local level, connecting both priests and parishioners in the diocese to a broader political movement within the Church. Second, it facilitated the education of rural workers in the diocese about the roots of their economic hardship and its injustice and provided information about their political rights and the channels through which they could affect change.

In addition to creating a local branch of the CPT, the Catholic Church in Bom Jesus da Lapa also worked in tandem with non-religious organizations in the diocese to support rural workers and the poor more generally. For example, members of the progressive clergy in the Municipality of Carinhanha helped to found the Association of Domestic Workers, which successfully organized domestic maids throughout the city.⁵⁶ Efforts to organize rural workers into the Rural Workers' Union were similarly dynamic. For example, a dossier from 1981 reported that four priests in the parish of Santa Maria da Vitória were actively organizing and advising the local branch of the Rural Workers' Union."⁵⁷

Internal Church documents obtained from the archive of the CPT clearly illustrate the high priority assigned to the unionization of rural parishioners. A survey of over 1,000 participants conducted during the 1988 land pilgrimage revealed that only 30% of participants were unionized, while 50% reported participating in previous versions of the pilgrimage. A report summarizing the survey's findings described these results with concern: "these numbers deserve some reflection. If more than 50% of individuals interviewed declared participating in similar events in previous years, how is it that only 30% are unionized?"⁵⁸ The expectation that regular participants in the pilgrimage would join workers' unions suggests that event organizers explicitly endorsed unionization.

The Church's explicit support of the CPT and other progressive organizations in Bom Jesus da Lapa illustrates religious leaders' attempts to organize the poor and encourage their mobilization into politically oriented associations. While these efforts were at times manifested in the creation of local branches of national religious organizations, as was the case with the creation of the regional branch of the CPT, in other instances they were expressed as explicit support for non-religious organizations, such as the Rural Workers' Union. Moreover, NIS reports from the period suggest that religious leaders not only encouraged parishioners to participate in these organizations, but often also assumed key

⁵⁴Serviço Nacional de Informações (1980a).

⁵⁵Serviço Nacional de Informações (1988b).

⁵⁶Serviço Nacional de Informações (1985b). The report concluded that organizing domestic workers allowed the church to have "an informant in every home."

⁵⁷Serviço Nacional de Informações (1981).

⁵⁸Comissão Pastoral da Terra (1988).

leadership positions within them. Ultimately, these activities reflected a belief that it was the Church's responsibility to intercede on behalf of the poor and actively support organizations with similar objectives. As Bishop Grossi stated in a 1988 interview, "if it were not for the energetic intervention of the church, life would be worse for the small peasants. Politicians, in their overwhelming majority, prefer to side with the rich. They don't want to confront landowners because they fear losing votes or popularity."

Efforts to extend the reach of progressive organizations were not always successful, however. In the few localities where conservative priests rebuffed the progressive perspective that predominated in the diocese, the connection between the clergy and pro-poor organizations failed to develop. In some instances, this even allowed for the emergence of conservative religious organizations. In the municipality of Carinhanha, for example, conservative sectors of the church composed primarily from the middle and upper classes, organized the local chapter of the conservative Catholic organization Tradition, Family, and Property (TFP, *Tradição, Família e Propriedade*).⁵⁹

Building the Party from the Parish The clergy's participation in these organizations also facilitated the development of linkages between the Church and the political left. Although the CPT and the Rural Workers' Union were not explicitly partisan, the participation of the Church in these organizations allowed religious leaders to come into close contact with members of various left-wing political parties. A report from 1987 aptly describes the points of contact that developed between the Church and political parties, as well as the concern these relationships engendered within the dictatorship's NIS. It states,

The mobilization of the 'progressive' clergy in favor of the 'landless' aroused the attention and interest of ideological organizations and political parties. These entities, sensing the opportunity to profit from the work of the clergy in the countryside, began to wield the same 'banners' that the clergy defended, (...) with the ultimate goal of incorporating members into their organizations.⁶⁰

The PT was one of the main organizations with which the Church developed a relationship through mutual participation in progressive organizations. The party's explicit support of the CPT generated a clear platform for collaboration with members of the clergy.⁶¹ Moreover, like the Church, the PT was also an active organizer of the Rural Workers' Union. In a report from the diocese in 1985, NIS agents stated: "The Workers' Party (...) seeks to control spaces that represent workers both in the capital and the interior of the country (...). However, the Workers' Party is most active in the branches of the Rural Workers' Union."⁶² The joint support of and participation in the Union provided

⁵⁹Serviço Nacional de Informações (1985b).

⁶⁰Serviço Nacional de Informações (1987).

⁶¹Serviço Nacional de Informações (1980a).

⁶²Serviço Nacional de Informações (1985a).

another opportunity for members of both the clergy and the Workers' Party to engage one another and develop a relationship. Indeed, NIS reports often cited the progressive clergy and members of the PT as the leaders of local chapters of the CPT.⁶³ In addition, the clergy's efforts to encourage rural parishioners to join the Rural Workers' Union meant, in practice, that the church was promoting individuals' participation in one of the PT's most important sources of political recruitment.

Moreover, left-wing parties relied heavily on progressive clergymen to develop contacts within local branches of the Rural Workers' Union. Where this support was absent, left-wing politicians generally failed to make inroads in the region. In the municipality of Paratinga, for example, the parish priest was conservative and did not allow any political organizing in his parish. As a result, the local branch of the Union was coopted by the local mayor, rather than developing linkages with the left-wing parties. The mayor was a member of the right-wing *Partido Democrático Social* (PDS), which was linked to the dictatorship.⁶⁴

Finally, both the PT and the Church actively engaged in efforts to support the land invasions in Bom Jesus da Lapa.⁶⁵ Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, landless peasants mobilized to occupy unused, private property throughout rural Brazil. While NIS reports between 1985 and 1986 describe the northeastern region of the country as a hotbed of land conflict, by 1988 the frequency of these disputes was much lower and the illegal occupation of land was limited to isolated events.⁶⁶ When such conflicts did occur, however, the Church and the Workers' Party in Bom Jesus da Lapa worked in tandem to provide information and organizational tools to the landless peasants occupying unused land. Indeed, NIS dossiers report several cases of land conflict in the diocese, most of which were led by the clergy, the Workers' Party, and the Rural Workers' Union.⁶⁷

A Labor Party in the Countryside The discussion above highlights the various channels through which the Catholic Church actively developed linkages with the Workers' Party in the Brazilian countryside and facilitated the party's organizational growth in the region. How did a mostly urban, labor-based party such as the Workers' Party end up collaborating with the Catholic Church in the Brazilian countryside? And, most importantly, how was the party able to leverage its relationship with the Church to facilitate party building? NIS reports from 1985 suggest that, while the collaboration with the Church directly benefited the party's political goals in the State of Bahia, it was not the original strategy that the party pursued to expand its organizational presence or electoral support.

⁶³*Serviço Nacional de Informações* (1985b, 1988c). The reports specifically cite the municipalities of Bom Jesus da Lapa, Canápolis, Cocos, Correntina, and Santa Maria da Vitória. The Brazilian Communist Party (PC do B) is also often mentioned as collaborating with the Church and the Workers' Party.

⁶⁴*Serviço Nacional de Informações* (1988c).

⁶⁵*Serviço Nacional de Informações* (1987).

⁶⁶*Serviço Nacional de Informações* (1985c, 1986, 1988c).

⁶⁷See, for example, *Serviço Nacional de Informações* (1988c).

Initially, the PT tried to build a political base by leveraging the organizational strength of unions in urban areas. However, the party was unable to infiltrate the unions' leadership and also failed to convince the sitting leaders to assist in party building efforts.⁶⁸ Faced with this failure, the PT shifted its approach to focus on the Rural Workers' Union, which already enjoyed the support of the Catholic clergy. While influential in the Union, the Church lacked the political leadership that is generally required to organize a labor movement. Collaboration with the Workers' Party provided an opportunity to combine the respective strengths of both the Church and the party, mixing the organizational resources of the former with latter's political acumen and leadership.⁶⁹

This collaboration benefited the PT's political goals in the region. Participation in the Rural Workers' Union and the CPT allowed the party to build an organizational structure in a rural area that would otherwise have represented a comparatively unfriendly environment for a labor-based political party. It allowed the still relatively small PT—founded only five years earlier, in 1980—to successfully elect several candidates to local city councils in the 1985 and 1988 elections. The alliance between the Workers' Party and the Catholic Church in Bom Jesus da Lapa thus allowed the former to extend its political reach in the region.

5.5 Summary

The case of Bom Jesus da Lapa provides important context to complement the findings of the previous sections. It highlights the mechanisms through which progressive bishops encouraged their parishioners to mobilize around issues of economic justice, and how that mobilization facilitated the expansion of the PT in a diocese without a large base of industrial workers on which the labor-based party could capitalize. Progressives play an important role in shaping the social, political, and religious initiatives in their dioceses.

These dynamics are not limited to Bom Jesus da Lapa. Across Brazil, I find strong empirical evidence that progressive and conservative bishops advocate different types of responses to poverty in their respective dioceses; while the former encourage activism to alter the structural roots of economic inequality, the latter emphasize religious activities such as the catechism and church attendance to help parishioners come to terms with their economic hardship. These divergent priorities appear to have a wide-ranging impact on both political and social outcomes.

Perhaps most strikingly, progressive bishops and their emphasis on social activism improve the electoral fortunes of the PT, the most successful left-wing and labor-based party in Brazil since its transition to democracy 1985. Overall, progressive bishops improved the PT's electoral performance by roughly 2%, particularly in rural dioceses where the party likely lacked a sizeable constituency of unionized workers. They did this through at least two channels. First, progressive bishops facilitated the expansion of the PT by aiding

⁶⁸Serviço Nacional de Informações (1985a).

⁶⁹Serviço Nacional de Informações (1985a).

in the creation of local party branches in their dioceses. Second, these bishops encouraged the organization of rural peasants and, in so doing, brought them into contact with PT activists. However, the influence of progressive bishops was limited in places where the Church had a significant role in the provision of welfare—where believers could rely on the Church for social services, these bishops had a negative effect on vote share for the PT. Ultimately, progressive bishops allowed the PT to gain the support of religious voters throughout their dioceses and provided the party with key resources and opportunities to expand its base of support beyond its traditional urban strongholds.

Chapter 6

When the Church Votes Left: Progressive Religion and Social Conservatism

Does the support of progressive religion shape left-wing parties' positions on social issues? In Chapter 5, I provided evidence that economically progressive bishops encouraged their parishioners to support the Workers' Party (PT) due to the party's sustained efforts to alleviate economic inequality. These bishops provided the party with important electoral support in their dioceses and facilitated the party's expansion into previously uncharted areas of the country.

However, improving the material lives of the poor is not the only issue that matters to progressive Catholics. In addition to the belief that poverty is unjust and merits reform, progressives also prioritize a bundle of social issues such as policies about the division between the Church and the state and those related to sexuality and gender. As [Kalyvas \(1996\)](#) stresses in his account of the rise of Christian Democracy in Europe, the public attack on religious education was a decisive element driving the electoral participation of the Church. Similarly, churches across the world have expressed opposition to the legalization of abortion and same-sex marriage and often seek to extract commitments from politicians during the electoral cycle not to support such policies.¹

In this chapter, I study the consequences of progressive religion on the types of social policies that the PT championed in the political arena. A broad literature in comparative politics studies religious influence on politics, particularly the ways in which religions shape social policy. They highlight a number of paths through which this may occur. For example, religious organizations can mobilize their flock in favor of specific policy initiatives and pressure politicians to support their preferred positions on these issues. Alternatively, religious organizations may form coalitions with political parties or politicians, exchanging religious support for policy concessions.² Finally, religious organizations may enjoy direct access to politics because of their moral authority, which in turn allows them to

¹See, for example, [Htun \(2003\)](#); [Grzymała-Busse \(2015\)](#).

²[Kalyvas \(1996\)](#); [Warner \(2000\)](#); [Donovan \(2003\)](#); [Htun \(2003\)](#).

influence social policies and align these policies with religious teachings.³ While scholars generally agree that religion has an important effect on social policy, there is disagreement with respect to the particular channels of religion's influence.⁴

In this dissertation, I highlight an additional path through which *progressive* religion can shape social policies. Through its ability to mobilize believers around economic issues, progressive religion increases the constituency of religious voters that support left-wing economic platforms. When these voters become activists and candidates within left parties, they become an important constituency of economically progressive, but socially conservative voters in the party. Their electoral weight and political activism can generate conflict within left parties, who must reconcile these voters' preferences on social issues with those of more socially progressive groups, such as feminists. The presence of both socially progressive and conservative groups within left parties reduces these parties' ability to sustain a policy position that challenges the socially conservative status quo. As the size of the religious constituency within the left grows larger relative to the group of social progressives, the left will become increasingly less responsive to the demands of this latter group.

I present evidence for this argument through an analysis of the tensions between the feminist movement and the progressive Catholic Church within the PT. While the Church supported a subset of policies geared towards the empowerment and economic betterment of women, several of the policies that feminists advocated—most notably the legalization of abortion—were at odds with religious doctrine. I explore these tensions, as well as the PT's response to them, through a multi-method approach that combines process tracing, a descriptive-comparative analysis of Brazilian legislators, and quantitative analysis extending the natural experiment in Chapter 5. In the following section, I trace the struggle over abortion policy at the national level from Brazil's transition to democracy in 1985 until the present, particularly with respect to whether or not the PT embraced abortion in its party platform and supported bills seeking its legalization. I show that feminists fought to make abortion a priority in the party and part of the party line but, that the party leadership was not willing to advance this issue if it came at the cost of the Church's support.

The marginalization of feminist demands within the PT is particularly notable, given that Brazil's feminist movement is considered the largest, most radical, and most successful in Latin America.⁵ Moreover, the movement represented an important source of support for the PT in its early years and particularly during the democratic transition.⁶ Among its many policy goals, the movement prioritized the legalization of abortion and, as discussed in the remainder of this chapter, actively pressured the PT to adopt this policy position. Yet notwithstanding the movement's comparatively large presence and influence among women in the electorate, its positions on issues such as abortion were consistently sidelined

³Grzymała-Busse (2015).

⁴Htun and Weldon (2018).

⁵Alvarez (1990); Haas (2001).

⁶Haas (2001).

and the PT declined to embrace the progressive stance that the movement advocated.

To provide further evidence that the PT maintained a socially progressive stance on only a subset of gender issues, I leverage a survey of Brazilian legislators conducted in 1994. The analysis compares the policy positions of PT legislators to those of the legislature as a whole. Crucially, I show important differences in legislators' positions across different types of gender issues. While the positions of PT legislators on nondoctrinal issues—those that are unrelated to Catholic doctrine—are cohesive and to the left of those of the legislative body as a whole, their positions on doctrinal issues are heterogeneous and do not significantly differ from the distribution of positions within the legislature overall.⁷

While the analysis of the 1994 legislator survey shows heterogeneity among the positions of PT legislators regarding doctrinal social issues, it does not speak to the origins of those differences. To provide evidence that this heterogeneity is at least partly explained by the influence of progressive Catholicism within the party, the last section extends the natural experiment in Chapter 5 to show that socially conservative stances are more prevalent in dioceses led by progressive bishops. This evidence is consistent with my argument about the policy implications of progressive religion: in dioceses in which a progressive bishop remained in office and was not replaced with a conservative by John Paul II, the PT relied on the support of progressive religion and thus embraced social policies that aligned with Catholic teachings. The result was an increase in the PT's electoral success in these dioceses, but at the cost of the party's willingness to embrace the progressive social demands of the country's feminist movement.

6.1 The PT and Abortion at the National Level

This section traces the struggle over abortion policy between two key political actors to illustrate the tension within the PT over this issue: the pro-choice feminist movement and the socially conservative Catholic Church. With few exceptions, abortion is illegal in Brazil and the women who seek out the procedure, as well as the doctors who provide it, are subject to criminal prosecution.⁸ Abortion legislation has long posed a challenge for the PT. Throughout the PT's history, pro-choice feminists have repeatedly lobbied and pressured the party to liberalize women's reproductive rights and important sectors within the party—including a number of prominent party leaders—have expressed support for reforms to existing abortion law.

⁷The classification of gender issues as doctrinal or nondoctrinal draws on [Htun and Weldon \(2010, 2018\)](#).

⁸Abortion is legal in Brazil only in cases of rape, when necessary to save a woman's life, or when the fetus suffers from anencephaly—a fatal congenital brain disorder. Women and girls who terminate pregnancies under any other circumstances face up to three years in prison. Media reports suggest that more than 300 abortion-related criminal cases were registered against women by the courts in 2017, many reported by health professionals after the women went to medical facilities in need of post-abortion care.

In contrast, the Catholic Church has consistently and vocally objected to any attempts to alter legislation prohibiting on abortion. The Church's opposition stems from the emphasis in Catholic doctrine on the sanctity of human life; the issue is non-negotiable for Church leaders and, as a result, pious voters.⁹ Indeed, encouraging parishioners to support a party with a political platform that favors the legalization of abortion is out of the question for Catholic leaders, regardless of whether they are economically progressive or conservative. Without the encouragement of progressive clergy and in the face a political party that supports liberalizing abortion policy, pious voters will shift their allegiance to a different party, even if this alternative promises less redistribution than the amount pious voters actually prefer.¹⁰

The conflict over abortion policy between the Church and pro-choice women's movements illustrates the challenges the PT faces and the ways in which the party has sought to navigate the tension between these actors in the public sphere and the electoral arena. Despite pressure from feminists to liberalize abortion law and periodically enjoying the political capital to do so, the threat of losing the Church's electoral support prevented the party from embracing this position and limited the influence of those who championed pro-choice policy stances within the party. In what follows, I trace the conflict between the Church and the pro-choice women's movement across three major periods of the PT's participation in politics: during the *abertura* when Brazil gradually transitioned from a military dictatorship to a democracy (prior to 1985), during the democratic period when the PT was in the opposition (1985 to 2002), and when the PT controlled the presidency (2003 to 2018). While the political context changed significantly across these three periods, the strategic deference that the PT displayed toward the Catholic Church and at the expense of the feminist movement remained the consistent outcome.

Abortion during the *Abertura*

During the military dictatorship, the pro-choice women's movement quickly singled out the PT as a potential ally in the political arena with the power to liberalize existing abortion law. Feminist movements had previously made little headway in building a coalition to this effect. Seeking a channel to voice their demands, and in response to the gradual opening of the military dictatorship, leaders of the feminist movements that championed women's reproductive rights sought to join or align themselves with the country's political left in order to gain access to the institutional spaces that these parties provided.¹¹ Many of the most active members of the women's movement joined the ranks of the PT.

As a party that pitched itself as a vehicle for the democratic representation of the people, the PT was in a unique position to gain the support of the women's movement and other groups in society who were not represented in the party system prior to the dicta-

⁹Grzymala-Busse (2016).

¹⁰Roemer (1998).

¹¹Keck and Sikkink (2014); Machado and Maciel (2017); Haas (2001).

torship.¹² Similarly, the party's formation in direct opposition to the dictatorship and its active participation in social movements during the transition period lent it credibility with members of the women's movement who otherwise had little experience with formal political parties.¹³ In its initial years, the PT welcomed the support of Brazil's feminists. After all, this group provided an activism and engagement that broadened the party's political base beyond the confines of the labor movement. Women, and feminists in particular, thus played a central role in the party's early development. Indeed, many local PT offices were originally led by members of the feminist movement.¹⁴

Although the decriminalization of abortion was an important goal of Brazil's women's movement during this period, the PT initially declined to incorporate this position into its party platform. For a party with a high level of internal cohesion and a well developed party platform at the national level, this was no small oversight. Rather than publicly support decriminalization, the PT's prioritized regulating abortions within the existing legal framework, a far cry from feminist's demands.¹⁵

Abortion in Democratic Brazil

In the aftermath of Brazil's transition to democracy, abortion first assumed an important role in the lead up to the presidential elections in 1994. In that year, pressure from the women's movement came to a head and, in response, the PT's leadership incorporated decriminalization into the party's platform. The PT was the only party to take such a progressive stance on the issue of abortion during that election cycle.¹⁶ After years without progress on the issue, feminists both within and outside of the party saw this as a major step forward.¹⁷ It appeared as though the advent of electoral politics would usher in a unprecedented feminist influence within the PT.

Yet this excitement was short lived; the outcry among Catholic voters was quick and direct. Shortly after the party announced its support for the decriminalization of abortion, bishops and other members of the Catholic hierarchy made it clear that taking such a stance would cost the party the electoral support of the Catholic laity. Under this pressure, the PT recanted and removed any mention of abortion from its program.¹⁸ Faced with the choice of placating the demands of the country's feminists or preserving the support of economically progressive Catholic voters, the PT opted for the latter.

Following the confrontation in 1994, the PT attempted to maintain a delicate balance between appeasing a vocal women's movement advocating in favor of women's reproduc-

¹²Haas (2001); Macaulay (2004).

¹³Haas (2001).

¹⁴Macaulay (2004).

¹⁵Macaulay (2004).

¹⁶Folha de São Paulo (1994). It is worth underscoring that the PT called only for the decriminalization of abortion, not its legalization.

¹⁷Haas (2001).

¹⁸Haas (2001).

tive rights and the socially conservative Catholic Church. In the immediate aftermath of the 1994 election, this meant reverting to the party's previous tactic of upholding the existing legal framework surrounding abortion without advocating significant changes to the status quo. In lieu of liberalizing abortion policy, the PT leaned on other types of women's issues, primarily centered around women's economic empowerment.¹⁹

The PT in the Presidency

The PT's victory in the 2003 presidential election increased the demands of pro-choice women's movements who hoped an abortion bill with the support of the executive would have a higher chance of becoming law. These demands renewed the struggle to satisfy the demands of the women's movement without crossing the Catholic hierarchy and the laity. In 2003, President Lula appointed Maria José de Oliveira Araújo, a prominent pro-choice activist, as the Special Secretary for Women in the Ministry of Health.²⁰ Just one year later, in 2004, the Ministry announced a concentrated effort to implement a national policy to address domestic and sexual violence and the consequences of illegal abortion, as well as efforts to support the provision of legal abortion services.²¹ In that same year, the federal government organized a national conference in which pro-choice organizations participated in the crafting of the National Policy Plan for Women.²² Among other things, the document called for a "review of legislation dealing with abortion."²³ Based on the National Policy Plan for Women and other documents developed in the Ministry of Health, a bill was presented to the legislature to decriminalize abortion in 2005. Lula had informally approved this policy development, so women's groups expected the bill to enjoy the support of the executive branch. Once again, however, electoral considerations led Lula and the PT to refrain from pushing for the liberalization of abortion law.

As soon as the bill arrived in Congress, it faced a number of interrelated obstacles. First, it was eclipsed by a corruption scandal that undermined Lula's popularity in the lead up to the 2006 presidential and congressional elections. Lula's reduced support in the electorate made him reluctant to support the pro-choice bill, which gained widespread attention and generated strong opposition in the public sphere.²⁴ In response to his drop in popularity, Lula sought the support of Brazil's bishops to, as they had in the past, bolster the PT's electoral standing.²⁵ The bishops, for their part, launched their own effort to dissuade the executive from backing the abortion legislation pending in Congress.²⁶ Ul-

¹⁹Haas (2001).

²⁰Ribas (2016, p. 32).

²¹Ribas (2016, p. 33).

²²Ribas (2016).

²³Ribas (2016).

²⁴Correa (2010).

²⁵Correa (2010).

²⁶Ribas (2016).

timately, Lula opted against supporting the bill to liberalize abortion and it failed to gain enough support to become law.

Following this failed attempt at reform, the PT became even less willing to challenge the policy priorities of the Catholic Church. In response to political pressure in 2009, the Secretary for Human Rights removed the commitment to decriminalize abortion from the Third National Human Rights Plan.²⁷ This act withdrew the PT's last commitment, albeit tepid, to liberalize existing abortion laws. The party would not, going forward, make any additional effort to satisfy the demands of the country's pro-choice movement. Facing consistent backlash from the Church following any attempt to appease feminist policy demands about abortion, the party opted to prioritize the support of its religious constituency.²⁸

In the 2010 election campaign, abortion was once again on the agenda. The PT's presidential candidate, Dilma Rousseff, supported legalizing abortion throughout her political career but pledged in her "Open Letter to the People of God" not to take measures to legalize abortion if she were elected.²⁹ She honored this pledge during her two terms as president (2011-2014 and 2015-2016). The same occurred in 2018, when the PT's presidential candidate, Fernando Haddad, met with Catholic leadership and agreed to a list of five policies that the Church demanded, including once again an explicit commitment not to legalize abortion.³⁰

Ultimately, the support of progressive religion had important implications for the PT's choice to support legislation to liberalize of abortion. Since its founding to the present, the party has consistently failed to embrace socially progressive positions regarding women's reproductive rights. While the party periodically demonstrated a willingness to address feminists demands, it also chose to ignore these demands when faced with their potential electoral costs. In 2006, the lack of executive support destroyed the only concrete chance at a law to modify existing legislation. Ultimately, even when the PT had the political power to pass the bill, threats from the Catholic Church led party leadership and the executive branch to refrain from pushing the law through the legislature. In the next section, I explore the position of PT legislators with respect to abortion and other gender policies in more detail.

6.2 PT Legislators' Positions on Issues of Gender Justice

This section explores differences in PT legislators' positions on gender issues, demonstrating that members of the party hold particularly heterogeneous positions on the subset of gender issues related to religious doctrine. To completely capture the positions of party

²⁷Correa (2010).

²⁸Ribas (2016).

²⁹Folha de São Paulo (2010).

³⁰O'Globo (2018). The other issues in the list included addressing the increasing violence, defending democracy, strengthening institutions to fight corruption, and protecting the environment.

leaders across different gender issues, we would ideally examine all the stances of all PT candidates running for elected office. However, information about losing candidates' preferences is generally not available. As a result, the present analysis is limited to the positions of PT legislators in Brazil's 49th Congress.

The present analysis relies on a 1989 survey conducted by the *Centro Feminista de Estudos e Assessoria* (CFEMEA), a Brazilian nongovernmental organization that lobbies in favor of feminist issues.³¹ The survey includes questions pertaining to legislators' attitudes toward labor market regulation, abortion rights, and gay rights, as well as laws to address sexual harassment and violence against women. Out of the 610 members of the 49th Brazilian Congress, 252 completed the survey—an overall response rate of 41.3 percent.³² Survey response rates varied by party, with left-wing legislators responding at higher rates. The response rate among PT legislators was 84% (31 out of 37), twice as large as the response rate for the legislature as a whole. Overall, the high response rate among members of the PT suggests that survey responses should be representative of those for all PT legislators.³³

Legislators Positions on Doctrinal vs. Nondoctrinal Issues

To analyze PT legislators' policy preferences, I classified questions in the 1989 survey based on whether or not they pertained to doctrinal or nondoctrinal issues.³⁴ An issue is considered doctrinal if it touches upon the core tenets of religious doctrine. The CFEMEA survey includes a set of questions about the legality of abortion, funding for abortion and contraceptives, and the legality of same-sex civil unions, all of which concern religious doctrine. Questions concerning nondoctrinal issues include those about maternity leave, the labor rights of domestic workers, and gender equality in the workplace. After the questions corresponding to each issue area were identified, legislators' responses were combined into an index by taking the mean of all answers to doctrinal and nondoctrinal questions, respectively.³⁵

Figure 6.1 compares PT legislators' positions on doctrinal and nondoctrinal gender issues with the positions of the legislative body overall. The panel on the left shows the density of legislators' positions towards issues related to religious doctrine and the panel on

³¹Centro Feminista de Estudos e Assessoria (1993). The analysis builds on previous research that analyzed a CFEMEA survey conducted in 1999 to study the determinants of legislators' positions towards gender issues (Htun and Power, 2006).

³²In total, 34 senators and 218 federal deputies.

³³In contrast, the response rate for the legislative body generally is likely biased to the left due to low response rates among legislators from other parties. The differences in response rates across parties are similar to those found by Htun and Power (2006) in their analysis of the survey conducted in Brazil's 51st legislature.

³⁴Htun and Weldon (2010, 2018).

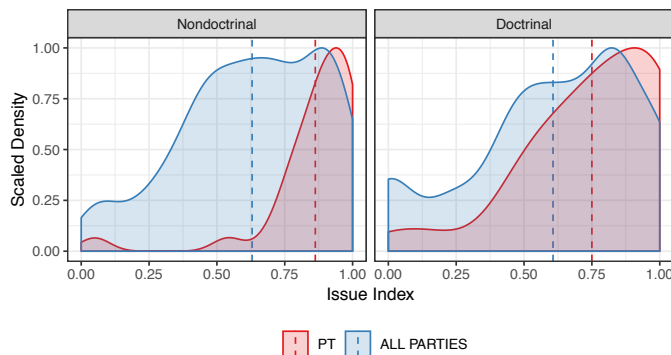
³⁵I follow existing work on the measurement of issue positions, which recommends averaging survey items on the same broadly defined issue area to reduce measurement error and reveal issue preferences that are well structured and stable. See Ansolabehere, Rodden and Snyder (2008).

the right shows the density of legislators’ policy positions on nondoctrinal issues. In both, the distribution in blue represents the policy positions of all legislators who responded to the survey, while the distribution in red is limited to members of the PT.

The distribution of PT legislators’ positions on nondoctrinal issues is considerably different from that of the broader legislative assembly—on average, PT legislators are more supportive of issues such as maternity leave and protections for domestic workers. Their positions on these issues also tend to be relatively uniform ($sd = 0.18$). To formally test whether the distribution of positions from PT legislators is statistically distinguishable from that of the body as a whole, I perform a two sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov (KS) test. The KS test is a nonparametric test that calculates the empirical cumulative distribution function that characterizes each sample and tests the null hypothesis that they are drawn from the same distribution. The KS test comparing the positions of PT legislators on nondoctrinal issues to those of the entire assembly results in a p-value smaller than 0.01, rejecting the null hypothesis that both samples come from the same distribution.

In contrast, the distribution of PT legislators’ preferences regarding doctrinal issues is more difficult to distinguish from the positions held in the legislative assembly more generally. Although on average PT legislators hold more progressive positions about issues such as same-sex civil unions and public funding for abortion, the distribution of their responses is more dispersed than for nondoctrinal issues ($sd = 0.25$) and more closely resembles the distribution of responses from all legislators who completed the survey. The p-value from the KS test comparing the distribution of the positions of PT legislators and those of the entire assembly is 0.07.

Figure 6.1: Distribution of the PT’s Gender and Sexuality Issue Positions



The figure shows the density of the doctrinal and nondoctrinal issue positions of the PT (red) compared to the distribution of positions for the entire legislature (blue). Vertical dashed lines show the mean of each distribution. Higher values indicate more socially progressive positions.

Legislators' Positions on Doctrinal Issues When Considering Class vs. Status Policies

Among left-wing parties, such as the PT, we might expect differences between doctrinal and nondoctrinal policy issues to be less pronounced when these issues also concern economic redistribution. Figure 6.2 further disaggregates doctrinal and nondoctrinal gender issues based on whether they correspond to class or status policies and compares the responses of PT legislators with those of the legislature more generally. The conceptual distinction between these two types of policies hinges on whether they advance the legal position of women as a gender or involve a form of redistribution across social classes of women.³⁶ Examples of the former include policies prohibiting gender discrimination in the workplace and gender quotas in elected office, both of which elevate women's legal status before the law. The common identifying element of these policies is that they seek to remedy affronts to women's status with respect to men. In contrast, class policies promote equal access to resources among women of different social classes. Examples of such policies include publicly mandated maternity leave and government funding for contraceptives and abortion (when it is legal).

With respect to nondoctrinal issues, both class and status policies follow a pattern similar to the one described above. PT legislators are more progressive on average and hold disproportionately more progressive positions than respondents from other parties. The p-values of the KS tests confirm these differences: 0.01 for nondoctrinal class issues and 0.04 for nondoctrinal status issues.

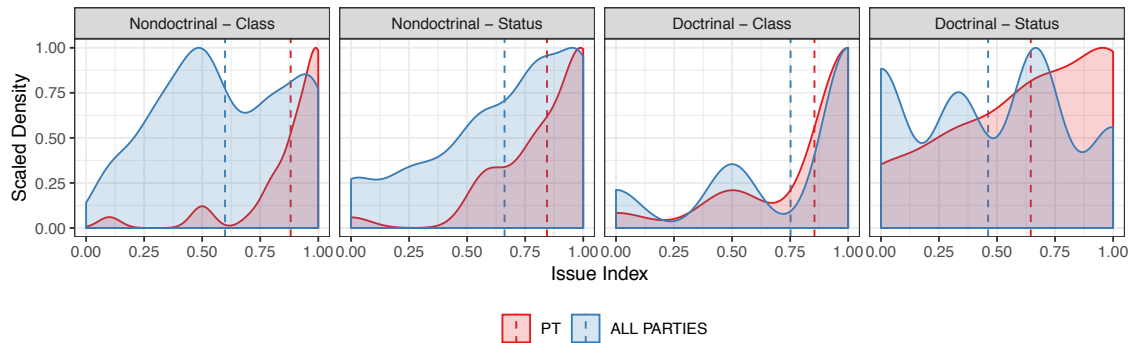
Do issues related to economic redistribution mitigate the differences between PT legislators' policy positions on doctrinal and nondoctrinal issues? The third panel in Figure 6.2 displays the distribution of PT legislators' positions on class issues related to religious doctrine, specifically the provision of public funding for contraceptives and abortion when it is legal. It shows that PT legislators do indeed hold progressive positions on these issues, despite the issues' doctrinal character. However, a comparison with the responses from the entire 49th legislature reveals widespread agreement around these issues among legislators broadly. In fact, the KS test confirms the similarity between the positions of the PT and those of the legislature more generally, resulting in a p-value of 0.69 that fails to reject the null that PT positions come from the same distribution as those of other legislators.

Finally, the fourth panel in Figure 6.2 shows the distribution of legislators' policy positions regarding status issues that are also related to religious doctrine. These issues include the legality of abortion and same-sex civil unions. While the distribution of PT legislators' positions on these issues is left-skewed, PT legislators are considerably less progressive on this domain than for all other types of issues. Indeed, a large portion of PT legislators hold conservative positions on these issues. Similar to the issues pertaining to class and doctrine, the distribution of PT responses is indistinguishable from that of all members of the legislature, with a p-value from the KS test of 0.16. This is particularly striking when

³⁶This discussion follows from the classification developed by [Htun and Weldon \(2018\)](#).

one considers that the distribution of responses among the legislature is relatively evenly distributed among conservative and progressive policy positions.

Figure 6.2: Distribution of Gender and Sexuality Issue Positions by Party



The figure shows the density of the positions of the PT around the four types of issues (red) compared to the distribution of positions for the entire legislature (blue). The vertical dashed lines show the mean of each distribution. Higher values indicate more socially progressive positions.

Overall, the analysis in this section confirms that the PT holds less progressive policy positions on issues related to religious doctrine—positions that are often indistinguishable from those of the legislature as a whole. While the party’s commitment to economic redistribution and minority rights also encompasses issues of gender justice, this commitment is mitigated when these issues relate to religious doctrine.

6.3 Progressive Bishops and Social Conservatism

The previous sections demonstrate that, despite pressure from a variety of social movements and other religious organizations to adopt policies that contradict the interests of the Catholic Church, the threat of losing the support of Catholic voters prevented the PT from embracing these policies in a sustained manner. Moreover, Section 6.2 highlighted the nuanced variation in PT legislators’ positions on social issues. While these legislators held relatively homogeneous positions on gender issues that were not at odds with Catholic doctrine, their positions with respect to issues that challenged the Church’s teachings and interests could vary significantly.

Yet this evidence has some limitations as a test of my argument. While it suggests that the PT was responsive to Catholic concerns regarding social issues, it does not provide evidence that the incentives to concede to these religious preferences were indeed greater in areas where the party had stronger Catholic roots due to the influence of progressive Catholicism. To test this proposition, I turn to a subnational analysis of social policy that relies on the research design described in Chapter 4 and employed in Chapter 5.

Providing empirical evidence of the PT's moderation on social policies at the subnational level would require measuring local party leaders' stated positions on these policies. While data to do this is not available, I test an implication of that argument—that dioceses with progressive bishops will be less likely to enact policies that face the disapproval of the Catholic Church. It follows from this logic that, in places where the party lacks the support of the Catholic Church, it should be more likely to heed and support the policy demands of feminists and other socially progressive constituents.

To test this claim, I turn to one of the PT's efforts to combat gender violence—the *Delegacias Especializadas no Atendimento à Mulher* (DEAMs).³⁷ The DEAMs are women's police stations, separate entities within the police department charged with processing and investigating cases of violence against women.³⁸ Their inception in the 1980s was driven by Brazil's feminist movement; as the political space in Brazil opened leading up to its return to democracy in 1985, feminist organizations demanded the state do more to recognize and address the violence women faced in the country. The first DEAM was established in 1985 in the city of São Paulo based on the recommendations of these organizations at the local level.³⁹ After its creation, additional stations were opened in the following years and quickly spread throughout the country. By 2009, there were over 500 DEAMs in operation across Brazil.⁴⁰

The expansion of DEAMs is informative because the Church hierarchy was against these organizations. On the one hand, domestic violence was seen as irrelevant to the struggle for economic liberation. On the other hand, Catholic leaders feared that the DEAMs would encourage women to report their husbands for violent behavior and eventually lead to divorce.⁴¹

As a branch of the civil police, DEAMs are formally under the jurisdiction of each individual state government. As a result, there is significant spatial variation with respect to the number of DEAMs across Brazilian states.⁴² Moreover, although state governments have formal authority over the creation of new DEAMs, they rely on partnerships with municipal governments to provide trained professionals, financial support, and often the physical space where the DEAMs are housed.⁴³ Municipal governments thus play a key role in the establishment of these women's police stations.

Data To look at the effect of progressive bishops on municipal policy towards domestic violence, I collected data on DEAM presence in 2004.⁴⁴ I recorded the number of DEAMs

³⁷Policies to address violence against women were one of the most common gender policies adopted by the PT at the local level (Macaulay, 2004).

³⁸Santos (2004).

³⁹Nelson (1996).

⁴⁰*Pesquisa de Informações Básicas Municipais* (2009).

⁴¹Serbin (2006).

⁴²Santos (2004, p. 30).

⁴³IBAM - Instituto Brasileiro de Administração Municipal (2015).

⁴⁴I selected this year due to data availability.

in each diocese and the share of municipalities in a diocese that have a DEAM. Finally, at the municipal level, I constructed an indicator of whether each municipality had a DEAM.

Results Table 6.1 reports the results for the analysis. For all models, I find that DEAM presence is lower in dioceses led by a progressive bishop. The CACE estimates in panel A indicate that progressive leadership decreased the number of DEAMs by about 0.4 relative to the control group average of 0.6 DEAMs per diocese (model 1), and the share of municipalities in the diocese that have a DEAM by about 4 percentage points relative to the control group average of 5 percentage points. Finally, the presence of a progressive bishop also decreases the proportion of municipalities that report having a DEAM within their territory by about 3.3 percentage points (model 3).

Overall, this evidence suggests that progressive bishops supported the PT's progressive economic position—swinging voters in the party's favor—but maintained conservative positions about social issues. The party, recognizing that the support of progressive religion was crucial to its electoral support, gave Catholics ample power to influence which issues reached the party's platform. The result was an overall increase in electoral support for the PT at the cost of diminishing the voice of social progressives, and feminists in particular, within the party.

6.4 Summary

This chapter highlights an important consequence of the electoral benefits that progressive religion offers to left parties. While the presence of progressive religious leaders provides left-wing parties with a large and organized constituency, relying on these voters ties the left's hands regarding social issues and forces the party to adopt socially conservative policy positions. This argument has two important implications. First, it describes a channel through which progressive religion can shape social policy, even in the absence of a formal coalition between religious organizations and the left. As long as the social policies at stake are issues that religious voters care about, the threat of losing these voters can be enough to motivate the left to avoid taking a progressive stance.

Second, left-wing parties' reliance on the support of progressive religious leaders also increases their incentives to protect the interests of organized religion. Far from the anti-clerical tradition of left-wing parties in continental Europe, the presence of progressive religion can create incentives for left-wing parties to protect religious organizations. Indeed, in 2008, PT President Lula signed a Concordat with the Catholic Church which included, among other provisions, a section allowing the Church to carry out Catholic religious instruction in public schools. The Concordat is widely considered to benefit the Church over other religious denominations.⁴⁵ Hence, in addition to creating a new constituency of pro-redistributive voters and bolstering the left's electoral fortunes, progressive religion also

⁴⁵See e.g. [Diniz, Lionço and Carrião \(2010\)](#); [Cunha \(2013\)](#).

Table 6.1: Effects of Progressive Bishops on Women’s Police Offices (2004)

	Nr. of DEAMS	Share of Municipalities with a DEAM	Municipality has a DEAM
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Panel A: CACE			
Pre-JPII bishop	-0.393** (0.209)	-0.040* (0.022)	-0.033* (0.017)
Panel B: ITT			
No vacancy	-0.210** (0.178)	-0.021* (0.011)	-0.016* (0.008)
Control Mean	0.607	0.058	0.078
N	191	191	4553
State FE	X	X	X

***p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, *p < 0.1

Note: In models 1-2, the unit of observation is the diocese. For model 3, the unit of observation is the municipality. The dependent variable for each model is described in the first row. All specifications are estimated using ordinary least squares (ITT) and two-stage least squares (CACE). Standard errors are adjusted for heteroskedasticity between treatment and control groups. Panel A reports CACE estimates; Panel B reports ITT estimates. Models 1 and 3 include archdioceses and use IPW to account for differences in the probability of treatment assignment across dioceses and archdioceses. In model 4, standard errors are also clustered at the diocese level.

provides new channels for religious organizations to expand and protect their influence on the social issues that they prioritize.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

7.1 Summary of the Argument

Religion has long been thought to engender conservatism in the political arena. At least since Marx, scholars and pundits have underscored this conservative bias, claiming that religiosity decreases electoral support for left parties and undercuts redistribution. Yet scholars have also documented religious denominations' distinct perspectives about the economic sphere and the ways in which these views shape individuals' beliefs and behavior.¹ Recent scholarship has argued that variation in the understanding of poverty across religious denominations had a long-lasting impact on state policies to relieve poverty in the 19th and 20th centuries.² In this study, I explore how religious teachings about economic injustice and the need to address the economic and political roots of poverty shape political competition.

I examine the effect of religious teachings on the electoral fortunes of left-wing political parties, specifically. While some religious denominations encourage believers to embrace affluence and view poverty as a consequence of individual effort (or lack thereof), others emphasize the injustice of poverty and advocate structural changes to alleviate this economic hardship. I focus on the political influence of the latter—which I refer to as *progressive* religion—and study its effects on the organizational development, electoral support, and policy priorities of left-wing political parties.

I argue that progressive religion can provide critical organizational and electoral resources to left-wing political parties. When progressive religious leaders underscore the injustice of poverty and foster support for economic redistribution among their parishioners, they create a group of religious voters whose economic preferences align with those of left-wing political parties. Moreover, the emphasis on addressing poverty through structural reforms in society encourages parishioners to actively engage in social and political movements that prioritize these goals. In addition to their predisposition to support

¹Weber (2002).

²Kahl (2005).

the economic policies that left-wing political parties champion, pious voters are thus also likely to become active and organized members of the left. Beyond being highly mobilized and politically informed, these voters also allow left parties to complement and extend their territorial presence through an array of lay organizations. Hence, progressive religion provides the left with important resources in the electoral arena.

Yet the support of progressive religion does not come without consequences for left parties' policy agenda and electoral constituency. While pious voters share the left's preferences about economic redistribution and other reforms to reduce economic inequality, they are conservative with respect to social issues such as abortion and gay marriage. When these voters support left parties, they bring their socially conservative preferences to bear on the parties' policy agenda and oppose any effort to embrace non-conservative policy positions on social issues. As a result, left parties that cultivate the support of progressive religion will adopt socially conservative positions when forced to take a stand on these issues. Doing so discourages socially progressive activists from supporting the left and marginalizes those activists who were already members of left parties.

7.2 Theoretical Contributions and Implications

This study makes several contributions to existing theories of religion's political influence. First, and most importantly, it stresses the role of *progressive* religion in shaping electoral competition. While scholars have long highlighted religion's conservative effect in politics, I suggest that progressive religion may exercise an important role in improving the electoral fortunes of left-wing parties. This alternative form of influence suggests a need to reevaluate the assumption that religion necessarily exerts a conservative effect on political competition, a common assumption in the literature. As I demonstrate, the content of religious teachings can crucially shape religion's influence in the electoral arena.

In addition to highlighting the electoral importance of progressive religion, this study also makes several other contributions to our understanding of the relationship between religion and politics. In the remainder of this section, I discuss these insights under three main headings: the political influence of religious teachings, progressive religion and the left's social conservatism, and the political influence of the Catholic Church.

The Political Influence of Religious Teachings

This study brings a new perspective to the study of religion and the political influence of religious teachings. It underscores the importance and dynamism of these teachings in driving religion's influence in the electoral arena. While long thought to be politically relevant, studies of the consequences of religious teachings often conceptualize them as static reflections of sacred doctrine that are uniform within a given denomination.³ Moreover,

³This is despite many scholars have highlighted the multivocal nature of religious doctrine. See e.g. Stepan (2000).

most scholarship focuses on a single dimension of these teachings, rather than considering them as a whole.⁴ I challenge both of these assumptions, emphasizing the diversity of interpretations of religious teachings within denominations and highlighting the importance of teachings about the economy in shaping religion's influence on social policies.

Political consequences of within-denomination variation in religious teachings A long line of research in the social sciences has studied the impact of religious teachings on political and social institutions. Building on Durkheim and Weber's classic studies, much of this scholarship emphasizes the effect of different denominations' teachings on social structures and political dynamics.⁵ Yet, differences in religious teachings are not exclusively found across denominations. Within a single denomination, interpretations of a shared body of teachings often coexist.⁶ These interpretations crucially shape the religious experience to which the laity is exposed in practice.⁷

This study provides crucial evidence of the ways in which distinct interpretations of religious teachings can alter the effect of a given religious denomination in the political arena. While scholars have recently highlighted the multivocal nature of most denominations, little research systematically explores how distinct interpretations of religious teachings within a given denomination shapes the nature of religion's political influence.⁸ In this study, I highlight the co-existence of different readings of Catholic social doctrine and demonstrate the ways in which these divergent understandings of Catholic teachings exercise distinct effects in the political arena.

The emphasis on intra-denominational variation in religious teachings also underscores the importance of the leaders of these denominations in exposing parishioners to particular religious ideas. Within a given denomination, religious leaders are uniquely positioned to disseminate particular interpretations of shared teachings. Similar to other authority figures, they shape the beliefs and opinions of their followers. As the official voice of organized religion, these leaders play a critical role in interpreting shared religious teachings and conveying these interpretations to their followers. I highlight the importance of religious leaders in shaping the religious experience of their congregants and determining the religious teachings to which these congregants are exposed. In doing so, I identify a concrete channel through which religious ideas can influence the political behavior of the laity.

Acknowledging the multidimensional nature of religious teachings This study also highlights the multi-dimensional nature of religious teachings and underscores the impor-

⁴Weber (2002); Kahl (2005); McClendon and Riedl (2015, 2019).

⁵Weber (2002); Kahl (2005).

⁶This variation is well documented in many religious traditions, including Judaism, Islam, and Catholicism (Sharkansky, 1996; Davis and Robinson, 2006; Pepinsky and Welborne, 2011).

⁷Laitin (1986); Wittenberg (2006); McClendon and Riedl (2019).

⁸For a discussion of the multivocal nature of religion, see Stepan (2000); Philpott (2007); Grzymala-Busse (2015); Grzymala-Busse (2016).

tance of considering all facets of these teachings to understand their political influence. Studies about the influence of religious ideas focus on either economic tenets *or* social directives. Scholarship inspired by Weber's seminal work on the Protestant ethic stresses the importance of religious teachings about economic issues and explores their electoral consequences, but ignores the content of these teachings that relates to social issues.⁹ Similarly, research studying religion's impact on social policy often draws attention to the conservative stance of religious teachings on these issues, while ignoring the economic dimension of these teachings.¹⁰

In this study, I consider both the economic and social dimensions of religious teachings to understand the influence of religion in the electoral arena. In practice, religious teachings address both economic and social issues in tandem; it is impossible to isolate one dimension from the other. Moreover, these dimensions often also define the policies over which parties compete in the electoral arena. Studying the electoral effect of a religious denomination's social directives in isolation ignores the content related to economic issues (or vice versa) and may, as a consequence, mischaracterize religion's electoral and policy influence.¹¹ As I show in the study of progressive Catholicism in Brazil, the effect of one dimension is not independent from the other. The effect of religious teachings about economic concerns is contingent on the religious content related to social issues.

Progressive Religion and the Left's Social Conservatism

My argument about left-wing political parties also sheds light on our understanding of these parties' political identity and allies in the electoral arena. Contrary to classic theories about left-wing anti-clericalism, my findings suggest that left parties are not universally socially progressive. Moreover, and in line with recent scholarship on gender policies, a shared interest in redistribution between left-wing parties and religious organizations has consequences for the types of policies the party supported relating to women's rights. Hence, left parties' relationship with progressive religion has important implications for its identity more generally, as well as for the ability of feminists to extract policy concessions from these parties.

Anti-clerical Left-Wing Parties? I contribute to our understanding of the broader policy platform that left-wing parties embrace, beyond their pro-redistributive economic stance. In particular, this dissertation sheds light on the social policy positions of parties on the economic left and when these parties are likely to embrace progressive positions on social issues. Most research about the left's social policy positions is based on the emergence of socialist and communist parties in continental Europe during the 19th century.¹² In that

⁹Weber (2002); Kahl (2005); Benabou and Tirole (2006).

¹⁰See e.g., Grzymała-Busse (2015); Htun (2003); Htun and Weldon (2018).

¹¹See also Hagopian (2009).

¹²Przeworski and Sprague (1986); Roemer (1998).

context, the role of socialist elements within labor generated a natural affinity between left parties and anti-clericalism, driving the former to embrace socially progressive policies.¹³

Yet the analysis of the Workers' Party (PT) presented here suggests that anti-clerical policy positions are not universally constitutive of left parties. Beyond the specific gender policies discussed in Chapter 6, the PT's social conservatism served to protect the institutional strength of the Catholic Church. Nowhere was this more evident than with respect to Catholic instruction in public schools. Religious education is a critical channel for the Church to insulate its authority from change and transmit its influence from one generation to the next.¹⁴ The Catholic Church therefore has a large interest in maintaining religious education in public schools. Notably, the PT has played an important role in reinforcing this privilege. In 2008, for example, then President Lula signed a Concordat with the Catholic Church that included a section allowing the Church to carry out Catholic religious instruction in public schools.¹⁵

The PT's embrace of conservative social policies represents an alternative policy platform for left parties, distinct from the canonical experiences in continental Europe. In settings where anti-clerical socialism is not a dominant force in the electoral arena, left-wing parties stand to receive fewer benefits from adopting a progressive social policy agenda. Moreover, if the organizational presence of the labor movement is also limited, the need for partners to build a national party can lead the left to choose a social policy position that allows it to capitalize on the organizational reach of existing social institutions that have clear preferences around these issues. The recent decline in rates of industrialization and weakening of labor unions across both the developing and developed world has forced the left to seek new sources of organizational support in order to maintain its political relevance. The mobilizational capacity of religious organizations, particularly in the developing world, makes them an attractive partner for left parties to accomplish this goal.

Implications for Feminist Movements and Gender Policies This study also speaks to the literature about gender and politics—particularly related to female political representation and family law. Existing research argues that religion has a profound influence on public policies related to these issues.¹⁶ These studies tend to limit their focus to religious teachings on social issues and fail to consider how religious ideas about other topics, such

¹³This took place before the left turn in Catholic social doctrine. In fact, as the Church's positions on economic issues became more progressive, left-wing parties sought to build alliances with Christian Democrats. For an analysis of the case of Italy see [Ergas \(1982\)](#).

¹⁴As [Grzymała-Busse \(2015, 31\)](#) details in her analysis of religion's moral authority, "Controlling education is certainly one way to generate widespread identities and norms with which church attempts to influence politics will resonate. It is no coincidence that churches and their secular opponents have fought for centuries over formal and informal education, and the right to inculcate their own values in the public."

¹⁵Although the text opened the door for other denominations to do so as well, it was generally perceived as containing provisions that disproportionately benefited the Catholic Church. Part of the commitments to approve the bill was that a similar bill conceding these benefits to other denominations would also become law. However, that additional bill was not passed by either legislative chamber.

¹⁶See e.g., [Htun \(2003\)](#); [Htun and Power \(2006\)](#); [Htun and Weldon \(2010\)](#).

as economics, can shape the electoral incentives of left-wing parties. Yet these economic positions can have wide-ranging effects in the political arena. As I show, they have the potential to influence women's political representation and shape the content of policies related to women's rights.

My argument echoes recent work that conceptualizes gender issues as a set of policies that follow different political logics.¹⁷ The social conservatism induced by progressive religion does not apply to all gender policies, but rather only to those that are in conflict with religious teachings.¹⁸ For gender issues around which no such conflict exists—such as parental leave, public funding for childcare, etc—the left can remain a champion of progressive social policies. This occurred with respect to the PT in Brazil; despite the party's conservatism regarding the gender policies I study in Chapter 6, it made important progress on issues such as gender quotas, conditional cash transfers targeting women, childcare policies, and the formalization of domestic workers. When left-wing parties receive crucial support from economically progressive religious movements, they will be more responsive to feminist demands on issues that are unrelated to religious doctrine.

The Political Influence of the Roman Catholic Church

The empirical portion of this dissertation focuses on the Catholic Church. As a result, the analysis I present also has important implications for our understanding of the political influence of this denomination in particular.

First, I identify one of the channels through which pontiffs can influence domestic politics. By drawing attention to the crucial role of bishops in mediating the relationship between the Vatican and the faithful, as well as the top-down system that determines bishop appointments, I highlight the process through which popes exercise their religious influence on national churches. Recent scholarship underscores how deep divisions in the interpretation of religious teachings can be reflected in the political affiliation of religious leaders and places the Catholic Church among the most politically divided religious denominations.¹⁹ When these divisions exist, bishop appointments can be decisive in establishing the Church's influence on domestic politics. This helps explain the importance that Pope Francis has assigned to the appointment of bishops that share his views on Catholic teachings, and sheds light on the potential consequences of his papacy in different national contexts.

Finally, I make an important methodological contribution to the study of the political impact of the Catholic Church. The original design I propose to study the effects of distinct factions within Catholicism can be applied across countries and pontificates. Whenever there occurs a transition between popes with different views about Catholic teachings (and as long as the retirement rule remains in place), a research design such as the one employed

¹⁷Sanbonmatsu (2002); Htun and Weldon (2018).

¹⁸Htun and Weldon (2018) refer to the subset of gender issues for which this is the case as *doctrinal issues*.

¹⁹Hersh and Malina (2017); Hagopian (2009).

in the empirical analysis of Chapters 5 and 6 can be employed to identify the effect of exposure to the different religious teachings that local bishops advance.

7.3 The Future of Progressive Religion and the Left

Can progressive religion remain a source of support for left-wing parties? Despite earlier assessments that modernization would lead to secularization, religion remains an important social force. This is particularly true in developing countries, where a majority of citizens embrace organized religion. Within Catholicism, the appointment of Pope Francis has renewed the strength of progressive Catholicism. The impulse given by Francis to Catholic factions such as the *curas vileros* in the introduction of the dissertation may increase Catholics' support for redistribution, as well as their organization around redistributive issues.

Yet there are also a number of obstacles to the sustained affinity between left-wing parties and progressive religion. A decrease in religiosity, already well documented in the developed world, would weaken the left's attraction to progressive religion and the religious voters under its influence. The growing strength of progressive social movements poses an additional challenge, as these movements exert increasing pressure on left parties to adopt socially progressive policy positions that explicitly contradict the teachings of progressive religion. The mobilization of feminists around issues such as the legality of abortion throughout Latin America is just one manifestation of this challenge and the cross-pressures that the left faces in the electoral arena.

Finally, the exponential growth of evangelical Christianity in Latin America also raises questions about whether, going forward, religion's influence in the region will shift towards a more conservative bias on economic issues.²⁰ While there is some variation in economic teachings within evangelical groups, most espouse conservative views of this issue. Across the region, evangelical organizations—which often include large populations of low-income voters—have supported right-wing parties. This is despite attempts by parties on the left to attract the support of evangelicals.²¹ If this trend continues, evangelicals may once again solidify religion's traditional influence as a key source of support for economically conservative political parties.

²⁰On the rise of evangelical Christianity and their political participation see Boas (2013); Boas and Smith (2015); Smith (2016, 2019).

²¹For the 2019 Presidential elections, the Argentine Peronist party sought evangelical support through the creation of Christian Peronist groups such as the *Frente Justicialista Cristiano* (*La Izquierda Diario*, 2019). In Brazil, the PT recently expanded its efforts to attract the evangelical vote (*Folha de São Paulo*, 2020).

Bibliography

- Abell, Aaron I. 1949. "Origins of Catholic Social Reform in the United States: Ideological Aspects." *The Review of Politics* 11(3):294–309.
- Adriance, Madeleine. 1985. "Opting for the poor: a social-historical analysis of the changing Brazilian catholic church." *Sociological Analysis* 46(2):131–146.
- Al Jazeera. 2014. "Pope Francis defends slum priests." *Accessed: 2017-11-23* .
URL: <http://aje.me/1ikihld>
- Alesina, Alberto F and Paola Giuliano. 2009. "Preferences for Redistribution." *National Bureau of Economic Research* .
- Alvarez, Sonia E. 1990. *Engendering Democracy in Brazil: Women's Movements in Transition Politics*. Princeton University Press.
- Alves Barbosa, Imerson. 2007. *A Esquerda Católica na Formação do PT*. Universidade Estadual Paulista (UNESP).
- Ansolabehere, Stephen, Jonathan Rodden and James M Snyder. 2008. "The strength of issues: Using multiple measures to gauge preference stability, ideological constraint, and issue voting." *American Political Science Review* 102(2):215–232.
- Antoine, Charles. 1973. *Church and power in Brazil*. Orbis Books.
- Archdiocese of Belo Horizonte. 1978. "Votar E Participar: Cartilha Sobre As Eleições." *Brazil's Popular Groups Archive at the Library of Congress* .
- Archdiocese of Florianópolis. 1982. "Igreja, Política e Fé." *Brazil's Popular Groups Archive at the Library of Congress* .
- Archdiocese of Pouso Alegre. 1982. "Documento Orientações Sobre O Dever Cristão de Votar." *Brazil's Popular Groups Archive at the Library of Congress* .
- Archdiocese of Rio de Janeiro. 1982. "O Que Eu Posso Fazer?" *Brazil's Popular Groups Archive at the Library of Congress* .

- Archdiocese of São Paulo. 1982. "Sujeitos da História." *Brazil's Popular Groups Archive at the Library of Congress* .
- Archdiocese of Vitória. 1977. "Exigências Cristãs De Uma Ordem Política Versão Popular." *Brazil's Popular Groups Archive at the Library of Congress* .
- Archdiocese of Vitória. 1978. "Bate-Papo Sobre Política Caderno 2. Edições Paulinas." *Brazil's Popular Groups Archive at the Library of Congress* .
- Bartolini, Stefano. 2007. *The political mobilization of the European left, 1860-1980: The class cleavage*. Cambridge University Press.
- Beal, John P, James A Coriden and Thomas Joseph Green. 2000. *New Commentary on the Code of Canon Law*. Paulist Press.
- Bellah, Robert N, Richard Madsen, William M Sullivan, Ann Swidler and Steven M Tipton. 1985. *Habits of the heart: Individualism and commitment in American life*. University of California Press Berkeley.
- Benabou, Roland and Jean Tirole. 2006. "Belief in a just world and redistributive politics." *The Quarterly journal of economics* 121(2):699–746.
- Betances, Emelio. 2007. *The Catholic Church and power politics in Latin America: The Dominican case in comparative perspective*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Bingemer, Maria Clara. 2016. *Latin American Theology: Roots and Branches*. Orbis Books.
- Birdwell, Jonathan and Mark Littler. 2012. "Why Those Who Do God Do Good: Faithful Citizens." *London: Demos* .
- Boas, Taylor and Amy Erica Smith. 2015. "Religion and the Latin American voter." *The Latin American Voter* pp. 99–121.
- Boas, Taylor C. 2013. "Serving God and Man: Evangelical Christianity and Electoral Politics in Latin America." *Prepared for presentation at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, IL, August* .
- Bruneau, Thomas C. 1974. *The political transformation of the Brazilian Catholic Church*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bruneau, Thomas C. 1979. "Basic Christian communities in Latin America: Their nature and significance (especially in Brazil)." *Churches and politics in Latin America* pp. 225–37.
- Byrnes, Timothy A. 2014. *Catholic Bishops in American Politics*. Princeton University Press.

- Cammett, Melani and Lauren M MacLean. 2014. *The Politics of Non-State Social Welfare*. Cornell University Press.
- Cammett, Melani and Pauline Jones Luong. 2014. "Is there an Islamist political advantage?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 17:187–206.
- Cammett, Melani and Sukriti Issar. 2010. "Bricks and mortar clientelism: sectarianism and the logics of welfare allocation in Lebanon." *World Politics* 62(3):381–421.
- Centro Feminista de Estudos e Assessoria. 1993. *Direitos da Mulher: O que Pensam os Parlamentares*. CFEMEA.
- CERIS. 1974a. *Pesquisa "Recursos Sociais da Igreja no Brasil," Regional Extremo Oeste*. Centro de Estatística Religiosa e Investigações Sociais.
- CERIS. 1974b. *Pesquisa "Recursos Sociais da Igreja no Brasil," Regional Norte I*. Centro de Estatística Religiosa e Investigações Sociais.
- CERIS. 1974c. *Pesquisa "Recursos Sociais da Igreja no Brasil," Regional Norte II*. Centro de Estatística Religiosa e Investigações Sociais.
- CERIS. 1974d. *Pesquisa "Recursos Sociais da Igreja no Brasil," Regional Sul*. Centro de Estatística Religiosa e Investigações Sociais.
- CERIS. 1974e. *Pesquisa "Recursos Sociais da Igreja no Brasil," Regional Sul II*. Centro de Estatística Religiosa e Investigações Sociais.
- CERIS. 1974f. *Pesquisa "Recursos Sociais da Igreja no Brasil," Regional Sul III*. Centro de Estatística Religiosa e Investigações Sociais.
- CERIS. 1975a. *Pesquisa "Recursos Sociais da Igreja no Brasil," Regionais Centro e Centro Oeste*. Centro de Estatística Religiosa e Investigações Sociais.
- CERIS. 1975b. *Pesquisa "Recursos Sociais da Igreja no Brasil," Regional Leste I*. Centro de Estatística Religiosa e Investigações Sociais.
- CERIS. 1975c. *Pesquisa "Recursos Sociais da Igreja no Brasil," Regional Leste II*. Centro de Estatística Religiosa e Investigações Sociais.
- CERIS. 1975d. *Pesquisa "Recursos Sociais da Igreja no Brasil," Regional Nordeste I*. Centro de Estatística Religiosa e Investigações Sociais.
- CERIS. 1975e. *Pesquisa "Recursos Sociais da Igreja no Brasil," Regional Nordeste II*. Centro de Estatística Religiosa e Investigações Sociais.
- CERIS. 1975f. *Pesquisa "Recursos Sociais da Igreja no Brasil," Regional Nordeste III*. Centro de Estatística Religiosa e Investigações Sociais.

- CERIS. 1975g. *Recursos Sociais da Igreja no Brasil*. Centro de Estatística Religiosa e Investigações Sociais.
- CERIS. 1977. *Anuário Católico do Brasil*, v.5. Centro de Estatística Religiosa e Investigações Sociais. Petrópolis: Editora Vozes.
- CERIS. 1981. *Anuário Católico do Brasil*, v.5. Centro de Estatística Religiosa e Investigações Sociais. Petrópolis: Editora Vozes.
- CERIS. 1989. *Anuário Católico do Brasil*, v.7. Centro de Estatística Religiosa e Investigações Sociais. Petrópolis: Editora Vozes.
- Chen, Daniel L. 2010. "Club Goods and Group Identity: Evidence from Islamic Resurgence during the Indonesian Financial Crisis." *Journal of Political Economy* 118(2):300.
- Cheney, David M. Accessed October 2019. *Hierarchy of the Catholic Church, Catholic-Hierarchy*. Available at www.catholic-hierarchy.org.
- Cleary, Edward L. 1997. "The Brazilian Catholic Church and Church-State Relations: Nation-Building." *Journal of Church and State* pp. 253–272.
- Code of Canon Law. 1983. *Codex Iuris Canonici. English Translation*. Libreria Editrice Vaticana.
- Comissão Pastoral da Terra. 1988. "TA-0186-0009-Dados Estatísticos Sobre a XI Romaria da Terra de Bom Jesus da Lapa." *Centro de Documentação Dom Tomás Balduino*.
- Correa, Sonia. 2010. "Brazil: One of the abortion front lines." *Reproductive Health Matters* 18(36):111–117.
- Cox, Daniel and Robert P Jones. 2012. "Chosen for What? Jewish Values in 2012." *Public Religion Research Institute*.
- Cunha, Luiz Antônio. 2013. "O Sistema Nacional de Educação e o ensino religioso nas escolas públicas." *Educação & Sociedade* 34(124).
- Curran, Charles E. 2010. *The Social Mission of the US Catholic Church: A Theological Perspective*. Georgetown University Press.
- Dancygier, Rafaela M. 2017. *Dilemmas of Inclusion: Muslims in European Politics*. Princeton University Press.
- Davis, Nancy J and Robert V Robinson. 2006. "The Egalitarian Face of Islamic Orthodoxy: Support for Islamic Law and Economic Justice in Seven Muslim-Majority Nations." *American Sociological Review* 71(2):167–190.

- de Carvalho Azevedo, Marcello. 1986. *Comunidades eclesiais de base e inculturação da fé: a realidade das CEBs e sua tematização teórica, na perspectiva de uma evangelização inculturada*. Vol. 19 Edições Loyola.
- De la O, Ana L and Jonathan A Rodden. 2008. "Does Religion Distract the Poor?" *Comparative Political Studies* 41(4/5):437–476.
- Dehejia, Rajeev, Thomas DeLeire and Erzo FP Luttmer. 2007. "Insuring Consumption and Happiness through Religious Organizations." *Journal of Public Economics* 91(1):259–279.
- Della Cava, Ralph. 1993. "Financing the faith: The case of Roman Catholicism." *Journal of Church and State* 35(1):37–59.
- Diniz, Debora, Tatiana Lionço and Vanessa Carrião. 2010. *Laicidade e ensino religioso no Brasil*. Unesco, Representação no Brasil.
- Diocese of Balsas. 1985. "Momento Nacional: O Movimento de Educação de Base-MEB." *Brazil's Popular Groups Archive at the Library of Congress* .
- Diocese of Guarulhos. 1982. "Nosso Assunto é Política." *Brazil's Popular Groups Archive at the Library of Congress* .
- Diocese of Ji-Paraná. 1986. "Os Cristãos E A Política." *Brazil's Popular Groups Archive at the Library of Congress* .
- Diocese of Nova Iguaçu. 1976. "Conscientização E Participação Democrática A Propósito de Eleições." *Brazil's Popular Groups Archive at the Library of Congress* .
- Diocese of Piracicaba. 1986. "Cartilha De Orientação Política." *Brazil's Popular Groups Archive at the Library of Congress* .
- Diocese of São Mateus. 1982. "A Força Do Povo: Roteiros De Reflexão." *Brazil's Popular Groups Archive at the Library of Congress* .
- Diocese of Tubarão. 1986. "Igreja e Participação Na Sociedade I: Cartilha de Educação Política." *Brazil's Popular Groups Archive at the Library of Congress* .
- Djupe, Paul A and Anand E Sokhey. 2003. "American rabbis in the 2000 elections." *Journal for the scientific study of religion* 42(4):563–576.
- Djupe, Paul A and Christopher P Gilbert. 2008. *The political influence of churches*. Cambridge University Press.
- Dondeyne, Albert. 1964. *Priest and Layman*. Sheed and Ward.

- Donovan, Mark. 2003. "The Italian state: no longer Catholic, no longer Christian." *West European Politics* 26(1):95–116.
- Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An economic theory of democracy*. New York.
- Ergas, Yasmine. 1982. "1968-79. Feminism and the Italian Party System: Women's Politics in a Decade of Turmoil." *Comparative Politics* 14(3):253–279.
- Esparza Ochoa, Juan C. 2012. *An Empirical Measurement of the Option for the Poor*. PhD thesis. University of Texas at Austin.
- Financial Times. 2019a. "Argentina's opposition reunited with Pope's blessing." *Accessed: 2019-10-14* .
URL: <https://tinyurl.com/yxmeovp5>
- Financial Times. 2019b. "Poverty, priests and politics: why Peronism is back in Argentina." *Accessed: 2019-10-14* .
URL: <https://tinyurl.com/y68lpoe3>
- Folha de São Paulo. 1994. "Lula explica proposta do PT para aborto." *Accessed: 2019-10-14* .
URL: <https://tinyurl.com/upbvboa>
- Folha de São Paulo. 2010. "Dilma nega defender aborto e diz que opinião de bispo não é uma posição da CNBB." *Accessed: 2019-10-14* .
URL: <https://tinyurl.com/tovjff9>
- Folha de São Paulo. 2020. "A pedido de Lula, PT cria núcleos evangélicos nos estados para buscar apoio na base religiosa." *Accessed: 2020-01-05* .
URL: <https://tinyurl.com/yxymkga8>
- Fontes, Paulo and Larissa R. Corrêa. 2018. "Labor and Dictatorship in Brazil: A Historiographical Review." *International Labor and Working-Class History* 93.
- Frank, Thomas. 2007. *What's the Matter with Kansas?: How Conservatives Won the Heart of America*. Metropolitan Books.
- Fuser, Cláudia Maria. 1987. *A economia dos bispos: o pensamento econômico da Conferência Nacional dos Bispos do Brasil*. Editora Bial.
- Gallego, Aina and Jonathan Rodden. 2016. "The Weight of Issues: Cross-Pressured Voters in the United States." *Working Paper* .
- Gill, Anthony. 1998. *Rendering unto Caesar: the Catholic Church and the state in Latin America*. University of Chicago Press.

- Gribble, Richard. 2006. *An Archbishop for the People: The Life of Edward J. Hanna*. Paulist Press.
- Gruber, Jonathan and Daniel M Hungerman. 2007. "Faith-Based Charity and Crowd-Out During the Great Depression." *Journal of Public Economics* 91(5-6):1043–1069.
- Grzymala-Busse, Anna. 2012. "Why Comparative Politics Should Take Religion (More) Seriously." *Annual Review of Political Science* 15:421–442.
- Grzymała-Busse, Anna. 2015. *Nations under God: How Churches Use Moral Authority to Influence Policy*. Princeton University Press.
- Grzymala-Busse, Anna. 2016. "The Difficulty with Doctrine: How Religion Can Influence Politics." *Government and Opposition* 51(2):327.
- Guilhon-Albuquerque, José A. 1980. "Fé em Deus e Pé na Terra." *Cadernos do CEAS* (65):66–72.
- Gutiérrez, Gustavo. 1971. *Hacia una teología de la liberación*. Indo-American Press Service.
- Haas, Liesl. 2001. Changing the System from Within? Feminist Participation in the Brazilian Workers' Party. In *Radical Women in Latin America: Left and Right*, ed. Victoria González and Karen Kampwirth. pp. 249–71.
- Hagopian, Frances. 2009. "Social justice, moral values, or institutional interests? Church responses to the democratic challenge in Latin America." *Religious Pluralism, Democracy, and the Catholic Church in Latin America* pp. 257–332.
- Hale, Christopher W. 2015. "Religious Institutions and Civic Engagement: A Test of Religion's Impact on Political Activism in Mexico." *Comparative Politics* 47(2):211–230.
- Hanson, Eric O. 1987. *The Catholic Church in world politics*. Princeton University Press.
- Hart, Stephen. 1996. *What does the Lord require?: How American Christians think about economic justice*. Rutgers University Press.
- Heineman, Kenneth J. 2010. *Catholic New Deal: Religion and Reform in Depression Pittsburgh*. Penn State Press.
- Hersh, Eitan D and Gabrielle Malina. 2017. "Partisan Pastor: The Politics of 130,000 American Religious Leaders." *Working Paper* .
- Hirschkind, Charles. 2001. "The Ethics of Listening: Cassette-Sermon Audition in Contemporary Egypt." *American Ethnologist* 28(3):623–649.

- Horn, Gerd-Rainer. 2015. *The spirit of Vatican II: Western European progressive Catholicism in the long sixties*. Oxford University Press, USA.
- Horn, Gerd-Rainer. 2016. "European Left Catholicism in the Long Sixties: Fact or Fiction?" *Histoire Politique* (3):155–166.
- Htun, Mala. 2003. *Sex and the state: abortion, divorce, and the family under Latin American dictatorships and democracies*. Cambridge University Press.
- Htun, Mala and S Laurel Weldon. 2010. "When Do Governments Promote Women's Rights? A Framework for the Comparative Analysis of Sex Equality Policy." *Perspectives on Politics* 8(1):207–216.
- Htun, Mala and S Laurel Weldon. 2018. *The Logics of Gender Justice: State Action on Women's Rights Around the World*. Cambridge University Press.
- Htun, Mala and Timothy J Power. 2006. "Gender, parties, and support for equal rights in the Brazilian Congress." *Latin American Politics and Society* 48(4):83–104.
- Huber, John D and Piero Stanig. 2011. "Church-State Separation and Redistribution." *Journal of Public Economics* 95(7):828–836.
- Hungerman, Daniel M. 2005. "Are Church and State Substitutes? Evidence from the 1996 Welfare Reform." *Journal of Public Economics* 89(11):2245–2267.
- IBAM - Instituto Brasileiro de Administração Municipal. 2015. *Democracia e Gênero: Implementação de Políticas Públicas para Mulheres*. IBAM.
- Infobae. 2017a. "El Papa nombró obispos a dos curas villeros." Accessed: 2017-11-23 .
URL: <https://tinyurl.com/y7v2ræ3y>
- Infobae. 2017b. "Sorpresiva carta de curas kirchneristas: "Un cristiano no puede darle el voto a un gobierno como este"." Accessed: 2017-11-23 .
URL: <https://tinyurl.com/ycsearud>
- Inglehart, Ronald and Pippa Norris. 2000. "The developmental theory of the gender gap: Women's and men's voting behavior in global perspective." *International Political Science Review* 21(4):441–463.
- Kahl, Sigrun. 2005. "The religious roots of modern poverty policy: Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed Protestant traditions compared." *European Journal of Sociology* .
- Kahl, Sigrun. 2009. Religious doctrines and poor relief: a different causal pathway. In *Religion, class coalitions, and welfare states*. Cambridge University Press Nueva York.
- Kalyvas, Stathis N. 1996. *The Rise of Christian Democracy in Europe*. Cornell University Press.

- Kaufman, Robert R. 2009. "The political effects of inequality in Latin America: some inconvenient facts." *Comparative Politics* 41(3):359–379.
- Keck, Margaret E. 1992. *The workers' party and democratization in Brazil*. Yale University Press New Haven.
- Keck, Margaret E. 2010. "PT-A lógica da diferença: o Partido dos Trabalhadores na construção da democracia brasileira."
- Keck, Margaret E and Kathryn Sikkink. 2014. *Activists beyond borders: Advocacy networks in international politics*. Cornell University Press.
- Kinzo, Maria D'Alva G. 1988. Elections under the Two-Party System: Electoral Trends 1966–78. In *Legal Opposition Politics under Authoritarian Rule in Brazil*. Springer. pp. 55–75.
- Knight, Kevin. 1995. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. New Advent.
- La Izquierda Diario. 2019. "Los celestes del Frente Justicialista Cristiano apoyan la fórmula Fernández-Fernández." Accessed: 2020-01-05 .
URL: <https://tinyurl.com/y3526ms7>
- La Nación. 2017. "Otra señal de Francisco a los pobres: designó obispos a dos curas villeros." Accessed: 2017-11-23 .
URL: <https://tinyurl.com/y7v2ræ3y>
- Laitin, David D. 1986. *Hegemony and culture: Politics and change among the Yoruba*. University of Chicago Press.
- León, Luis D. 2007. "Cesar Chavez in American religious politics: Mapping the new global spiritual line." *American Quarterly* 59(3):857–881.
- Lernoux, Penny. 1989. *People of God: The Struggle for World Catholicism*. Viking Adult.
- Levine, Daniel H. 2014. *Religion and Politics in Latin America: The Catholic Church in Venezuela & Colombia*. Princeton University Press.
- Library of Congress. 1986. "Brazil's Popular Groups: 1966-1986." *Brazil's Popular Groups: a Collection of Materials Issued by Socio-Political, Religious, Labor and a Minority Grass-roots Organizations* .
- Lipset Seymour, M. 1963. *Political Man*. Anchor Books New York:.
- Lipset, Seymour M and Stein Rokkan. 1967. *Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments: an Introduction*. Free Press.

- Lowy, Michael. 1987. "A new type of party: the Brazilian PT." *Latin American Perspectives* 14(4):453–464.
- Lowy, Michael. 2000. *A guerra dos deuses: Religiao e política na América Latina*. Petrópolis, RJ: Vozes.
- Macaulay, Fiona. 2004. "La Política de Género en el Gobierno del PT." *América Latina Hoy* pp. 101–120.
- Machado, Marta Rodriguez De Assis and Debora Alves Maciel. 2017. "The Battle Over Abortion Rights in Brazil's State Arenas, 1995-2006." *Health and human rights* 19(1):119.
- Mainwaring, Scott. 1986. *The Catholic Church and Politics in Brazil, 1916-1985*. Stanford University Press.
- Mainwaring, Scott. 1987. *Grassroots Catholic Groups and Politics in Brazil, 1964-1985*. Number 98 University of Notre Dame, Helen Kellogg Institute for International Studies.
- Mainwaring, Scott and Alexander Wilde. 1989. *The Progressive Church in Latin America*. Number 27 (8) University of Notre Dame Press,.
- Martina, Giacomo. 1988. "The historical context in which the idea of a new ecumenical council was born." *Vatican II. Assessment and Perspectives. Twenty-Five Years After (1962-1987)* pp. 3–73.
- McClendon, Gwyneth. 2019. Religious Communication and the Effects of Priming. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*.
- McClendon, Gwyneth H and Rachel Beatty Riedl. 2019. *From Pews to Politics: Religious Sermons and Political Participation in Africa*. Cambridge University Press.
- McClendon, Gwyneth and Rachel Riedl. 2015. "Religion As A Stimulant of Political Participation: Evidence from an Experiment in Nairobi, Kenya." *Journal of Politics* 77(4).
- Nelson, Sara. 1996. "Constructing and Negotiating Gender in Women's Police Stations in Brazil." *Latin American Perspectives* 23(1):131–148.
- Nielsen, Richard A. 2017. *Deadly clerics: Blocked ambition and the paths to jihad*. Cambridge University Press.
- Nolan, Hugh Joseph and Patrick W Carey. 1998. *Pastoral Letters of the United States Catholic Bishops*. Vol. 6 USCCB Publishing.

- O'Donnell, Guillermo A. 1973. *Modernization and bureaucratic-authoritarianism: Studies in South American politics*. Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, University of California.
- O'Globo. 2018. "Haddad entregará carta de compromiso para atraer evangélicos." *Accessed: 2019-10-14* .
URL: <https://tinyurl.com/wu56cl4>
- Olson, Mancur. 1965. *The Logic of Collective Action*. Harvard University Press.
- Página 12. 2017. "El pecado de elegir Cambiemos." *Accessed: 2017-11-23* .
URL: <http://bit.ly/2xsdAEa>
- Pepinsky, Thomas B and Bozena C Welborne. 2011. "Piety and redistributive preferences in the Muslim world." *Political Research Quarterly* 64(3):491–505.
- Pereira, Anthony W. 1998. "Persecution and farce: The origins and transformation of Brazil's political trials, 1964–1979." *Latin American Research Review* 33(1):43–66.
- Perfil. 2017. "Para los curas K, "un cristiano no puede votar a un Gobierno como este"." *Accessed: 2017-11-23* .
URL: <https://tinyurl.com/y7dk3hgh>
- Petrella, Iván. 2016. The Intellectual Roots of Liberation Theology. In *The Cambridge History of Religions in Latin America*, ed. Virginia Garrard-Burnett, Paul Freston and Stephen C Dove. Cambridge University Press.
- Philpott, Daniel. 2007. "Explaining the political ambivalence of religion." *American Political Science Review* 101(3):505–525.
- Pope John Paul II. 1979. "Address of His Holiness Pope John Paul II to the Latin American Episcopate." *Address to the Third General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate in Puebla, Mexico* .
- Pope Paul VI. 1965. *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the modern world: Gaudium et spes*. Pauline Books & Media.
- Pope Paul VI. 1966. "Ecclesiae Sanctae".
- Pope Paul VI. 1967. "Populorum progressio." *Encyclical of Pope Paul VI on the Development of the Peoples. March 26, 1967* .
- Premat, Silvina. 2010. *Curas villeros: de Mugica al padre Pepe; historias de lucha y esperanza*. Sudamericana.
- Prouty, Marco G. 2008. *César Chávez, the Catholic Bishops, and the Farmworkers' Struggle for Social Justice*. University of Arizona Press.

- Przeworski, Adam and John Sprague. 1986. *Paper Stones: A History of Electoral Socialism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ratzinger, Joseph and Vittorio Messori. 1985. *The Ratzinger Report: An exclusive interview on the State of the Church*. Ignatius Press.
- Reese, Thomas. 2016. "The Catholic story, conservative vs. progressive." *Accessed: 2019-11-23*.
URL: <https://tinyurl.com/vds288k>
- Reese, Thomas J. 1989. *Archbishop: Inside the power structure of the American Catholic Church*. Harper & Row.
- Reese, Thomas J. 1992. *A Flock of Shepherds: The National Conference of Catholic Bishops*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Revitte, John L. 1997. "Infighting in the UAW: The 1946 Election and the Ascendancy of Walter Reuther."
- Ribas, Maria Fernanda Barreto. 2016. *Gender policy in the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies: Institutional contexts and the forces affecting processes and outcomes*. PhD thesis: Birkbeck, University of London.
- Roberts, Kenneth M. 2002. "Social inequalities without class cleavages in Latin America's neoliberal era." *Studies in Comparative international development* 36(4):3–33.
- Roemer, John E. 1998. "Why the Poor do Not Expropriate the Rich: an Old Argument in New Garb." *Journal of Public Economics* .
- Samuels, David. 2004. "From socialism to social democracy: Party organization and the transformation of the workers' party in Brazil." *Comparative Political Studies* 37(9):999–1024.
- Samuels, David and Cesar Zucco. 2015. "Crafting Mass Partisanship at the Grass Roots." *British Journal of Political Science* 45(4):755.
- Sanbonmatsu, Kira. 2002. "Gender Stereotypes and Vote Choice." *American Journal of Political Science* pp. 20–34.
- Santos, Cecília MacDowell. 2004. "En-Gendering the Police: Women's Police Stations and Feminism in São Paulo." *Latin American Research Review* 39(3):29–55.
- Scheve, Kenneth and David Stasavage. 2006a. "The political economy of religion and social insurance in the United States, 1910–1939." *Studies in American Political Development* 20(2):132–159.

- Scheve, Kenneth and David Stasavage. 2006b. "Religion and Preferences for Social Insurance." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 1(3):255–286.
- Serbin, Ken. 1992. *State Subsidization of Catholic Institutions in Brazil, 1930-1964*. Helen Kellogg Institute for International Studies, University of Notre Dame.
- Serbin, Kenneth P. 2006. *Needs of the Heart: a Social and Cultural History of Brazil's Clergy and Seminaries*. University of Notre Dame Press.
- Serviço Nacional de Informações. 1980a. "PPP-80000899." *Arquivo Nacional do Brasil* .
- Serviço Nacional de Informações. 1980b. "PPP-80001162." *Arquivo Nacional do Brasil* .
- Serviço Nacional de Informações. 1981. "AAA-81016533." *Arquivo Nacional do Brasil* .
- Serviço Nacional de Informações. 1982. "AAA-82026563." *Arquivo Nacional do Brasil* .
- Serviço Nacional de Informações. 1985a. "PPP-85007586." *Arquivo Nacional do Brasil* .
- Serviço Nacional de Informações. 1985b. "PPP-85007941." *Arquivo Nacional do Brasil* .
- Serviço Nacional de Informações. 1985c. "PPP-85008015." *Arquivo Nacional do Brasil* .
- Serviço Nacional de Informações. 1986. "PPP-86008847." *Arquivo Nacional do Brasil* .
- Serviço Nacional de Informações. 1987. "AAA-87060700." *Arquivo Nacional do Brasil* .
- Serviço Nacional de Informações. 1988a. "AAA-88066572." *Arquivo Nacional do Brasil* .
- Serviço Nacional de Informações. 1988b. "PPP-88010035." *Arquivo Nacional do Brasil* .
- Serviço Nacional de Informações. 1988c. "PPP-88010169." *Arquivo Nacional do Brasil* .
- Serviço Nacional de Informações. 1988d. "PPP-88010178." *Arquivo Nacional do Brasil* .
- Serviço Nacional de Informações. 1989. "PPP-89010387." *Arquivo Nacional do Brasil* .
- Sharkansky, Ira. 1996. *Rituals of Conflict: Religion, Politics, and Public Policy in Israel*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Shayo, Moses. 2009. "A model of social identity with an application to political economy: Nation, class, and redistribution." *American Political science review* 103(02):147–174.
- Skidmore, Thomas E. 1977. "The politics of economic stabilization in postwar Latin America." *Authoritarianism and corporatism in Latin America* pp. 149–90.
- Smith, Amy Erica. 2016. "When Clergy are Threatened: Catholic and Protestant Leaders and Political Activism in Brazil." *Politics and Religion* 9(3):431–455.

- Smith, Amy Erica. 2019. *Religion and Brazilian democracy: Mobilizing the people of God*. Cambridge University Press.
- Smith, Christian. 1991. *The emergence of liberation theology: Radical religion and social movement theory*. University of Chicago Press.
- Stepan, Alfred C. 2000. "Religion, Democracy, and the 'Twin Tolerations'." *Journal of Democracy* 11(4):37–57.
- Sullivan, PJ. 2014. *Catholic Labor Priests in the United States: A 20th Century Story of Solidarity*. Pacem in Terris Press, Washington DC.
- Thachil, Tariq. 2014a. "Elite Parties and Poor Voters: Theory and Evidence from India." *American Political Science Review* 108(2):454–477.
- Thachil, Tariq. 2014b. *Elite Parties, Poor Voters: How Social Services Win Votes in India*. Cambridge University Press.
- The Atlantic. 2013. "The Rise of the Christian Left in America." Accessed: 2017-07-24 .
URL: <https://tinyurl.com/y8lmvuhv>
- The New York Times. 1980. "Pontiff Cautions Brazil's Bishops To Stress Gospel." Accessed: 2019-10-14 .
URL: <https://nyti.ms/1Pwuwvc>
- The New York Times. 1988. "Pope Shifts Brazilian Church to Right." Accessed: 2017-05-19 .
URL: <https://tinyurl.com/y9gl5p2h>
- The New York Times. 2017. "Religious Liberals Sat Out of Politics for 40 Years. Now They Want in the Game." Accessed: 2017-07-24 .
URL: <https://nyti.ms/2t5CxR6>
- Trejo, Guillermo. 2000. "Anthony Gill, Rendering unto Caesar. The Catholic Church and the State in Latin America." *Política y gobierno* 7(2):495–499.
- Trejo, Guillermo. 2009. "Religious Competition and Ethnic Mobilization in Latin America: Why the Catholic Church Promotes Indigenous Movements in Mexico." *American Political Science Review* 103(3):323–342.
- Twomey, Gerald S. 2006. "Pope John Paul II and the Preferential Option for the Poor." *J. Cath. Leg. Stud.* 45:321.
- Vásquez, Manuel A. and Anna L. Peterson. 2016. Progressive Catholicism in Latin America: Sources and Its Evolution from Vatican II to Pope Francis. In *The Cambridge History of Religions in Latin America*, ed. Virginia Garrard-Burnett, Paul Freston and Stephen C Dove. Cambridge University Press pp. 372–397.

- Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman and Henry E Brady. 1995. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Harvard University Press.
- Vital, José das D. 2012. *Como se faz um bispo: segundo o alto eo baixo clero*. Civilização Brasileira.
- Warner, Carolyn M. 2000. *Confessions of an Interest Group: the Catholic Church and Political Parties in Europe*. Princeton University Press.
- Weber, Max. 2002. *The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism and other writings*. Penguin.
- Wilcox, Clyde and Lee Sigelman. 2001. "Political mobilization in the pews: Religious contacting and electoral turnout." *Social Science Quarterly* 82(3):524–535.
- Wilde, Melissa J. 2004. "How Culture Mattered at Vatican II: Collegiality Trumps Authority in the Council's Social Movement Organizations." *American Sociological Review* 69(4):576–602.
- Wilde, Melissa J. 2007. *Vatican II: A Sociological Analysis of Religious Change*. Princeton University Press.
- Wilde, Melissa J, Kristin Geraty, Shelley L Nelson and Emily A Bowman. 2010. "Religious Economy or Organizational Field? Predicting Bishops' Votes at the Second Vatican Council." *American Sociological Review* 75(4):586–606.
- Wittenberg, Jason. 2006. *Crucibles of political loyalty: Church institutions and electoral continuity in Hungary*. Cambridge University Press.
- Wood, Richard L. 1994. "Faith in action: Religious resources for political success in three congregations." *Sociology of Religion* 55(4):397–417.
- Woywod, Stanislaus. 1918. *The New Canon Law: A Commentary and Summary of the New Code of Canon Law*. JF Wagner.