When and for Whom Moral Proximity Matters: Measuring the Economic and Moral Distances between Citizens and Candidates, and Their Effects on Voting

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Abstract

Substantively, this paper seeks to refine what we know about the weights placed by voters on House candidates' moral and economic preferences. Which voters value the moral and social positions of candidates more than or as much as candidate economic preferences? Results suggest that the traditional dominance ascribed to voters' economic concerns is misplaced. So that the economic and moral ideologies of candidates and voters can be directly compared, their preferences must be assessed on the same scale. Herein lies this paper's methodological contribution. 20+ question across the 2004 ANES and NPAT adequately paralleled one another so as to make candidate and citizen responses directly comparable after some coding adjustments. Factor analysis of the merged dataset allows positioning of candidate and citizen ideal points along the same dimensions, making it possible to measure a representative's ideological *proximity* to her constituents as opposed to their ideological correlation. Such capabilities (i) permit investigating the representativeness of legislative outcomes, and (ii) provide some means of validating the assumptions of otherwise theoretic majority rule solution concepts such as the uncovered set and strong point.

1 Introduction

In the middle of an intense Democratic primary, then-presidential-hopeful Barack Obama explained to donors at a San Francisco fundraiser that "bitter" working-class voters from small Midwestern towns "cling to guns and religion or antipathy to people who aren't like them [...] as a way to explain their frustrations." After days of punishing media coverage Obama's poll numbers were down slightly, but not as much as his rival Hillary Clinton might have hoped (Alter 2008). The political ramifications of Obama's remarks, however, are not as interesting as this, more fundamental question: Was Obama right? Are certain segments of the public chiefly concerned with these sorts of social and moral considerations? If so, Obama and other politicians up for

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(re)election would do well to ask the next logical question: Do voters bring those moral concerns with them to the polls?

Most models of voting assume that voters care primarily about economic issues including taxation, income redistribution, public good provision, unemployment, and growth (Ansolabehere, Rodden and Snyder 2006; Mueller 2003; Myerson 1995; Persson and Guido 2000). A supposition arising logically from this line of thought holds that wealthier voters prefer lower tax rates and less redistribution while voters not so well-off favor relatively higher tax rates and greater government attempts at redistribution. The Republican Party, then, with its emphasis on market processes and minimal government interference, is the favorite of affluent voters. Low-income and labor interests, conversely, support the Democratic Party. Economic-inspired voting suggests a straightforward story; one that many find ever-less convincing.

Some political observers have begun arguing for the inclusion of non-economic consideration in models of voting behavior. They account for the apparent schism between America's "red" and "blue" states with reference to an ongoing "culture war" (Ansolabehere, Rodden and Snyder 2006, 97). At the heart of this conflict are struggles over gay rights, the definition of marriage, the proper role of religion in public affairs, the sanctity and definition of life, and so on. Such social and moral concerns have, according to this account, overshadowed traditional voter emphasis on personal economic security and macroeconomic prosperity (e.g., Brooks 2001; Frank 2004; Green et al. 1996; Greenberg 2004; Hunter 1991; Shogan 2002; Walsh 2000; Wattenberg 1995; Williams 1997).

If voters are increasingly bringing non-economic issues to bear in the ballot box, public policy stands to change radically. The reasons are well summarized by Ansolabehere et al. (2006). Were voters to be principally occupied with economic issues, the dimensions along which political parties and candidates competed would remain at one. The median voter, earning a median wage, would demand some level of income redistribution and elected officials would have to oblige (Meltzer and Richard 1981; Roberts 1977; Romer 1975). If, however, the number of dimensions on which voters evaluated political candidates ballooned to two or more, then the amount of economic redistribution demanded by voters and provided by government officials would be drastically reduced as political candidates scramble to compete for votes across a host of issues (Hacker and Pierson 2005; Lee and Roemer 2005; Roemer 1998). The dimensionality of voting—the criteria on which voters base their

party and candidate loyalties—ought to be of interest to political and policy scholars alike, as well as politicians and the citizens who keep them in or out of office.

Using novel methodology and data, I can test for which voters moral and economic considerations matter, and how much they matter. As I will show, a House candidate's moral ideology is at least as important as her economic ideology in determining the average American's vote. Rural voters, wealthy voters, and highly-educated voters place special emphasis on the moral proximity of their House candidates. Moreover, voters evaluate candidates from different parties differently: Republican candidates benefit disproportionately from proximity to voters' moral preference, whereas Democrats benefit more from proximity to voters' economic preferences.

2 Past Predictions and New Hypotheses

Arguing for the importance of moral issues are Frank (2004) and Shapiro (2005). In his *Whats the Matter with Kansas?*, Frank observes that low-income, rural Americans consistently vote for Republican candidates who aim to enact economic policies that undercut the economic interests of low-income, rural Americans. Shapiro witnesses and documents the reverse phenomenon in Whats the Matter with Central Park West? Wealthy voters in urban areas of Massachusetts and New York overwhelmingly back Democratic candidates who, more than Republican candidates, want to tax their wealth. Why vote against their economic interests? Frank (2004) posits that Republicans win over their underprivileged, country supporters by appealing to their opinions on gun ownership, gay marriage, and abortion. Shapiro (2005) hypothesizes that Democratic candidates do the same in their interactions with well-heeled city elites.

Bartels (2006) and Ansolabehere et al. (2006) position themselves opposite Frank and Shapiro. Bartels, directly challenging Frank's (2004) argument in his "What's the Matter with 'What's the Matter with Kansas?"', finds that low-income, rural support of Republicans is largely confined to the South where Democratic support remains artificially high as a legacy of the Jim Crow era. And while social issues have increased in importance among well-educated whites, moral considerations are nowhere near outweighing economic consideration at the voting booth among any subpopulation. Most damning to Frank's argument, Bartels shows that working-class whites view themselves as closer to Democrats, not Republicans, on social issues. Ansolabehere et al.

arrive at similar conclusions in their article "Purple America." Both moral and economic issues have grown in importance, and they pull voters in conflicting directions. Moral issues do prompt citizens to vote against their economic interests, but economic policy issues continue to dominate moral issues in voting.

This paper seeks to refine what we know about the relative weights of economic and moral voting. Even if Bartels (2006) and Ansolabehere et al. (2006) are accurate in placing economic concerns at the forefront of most voters' minds, surely there are some people in the voting population who value the moral and social positions of candidates more than or as much as candidate economic preferences. This paper specifically examines this possibility by controlling for the (i) partisan affiliation of House candidates, (ii) a voter's gender, (iii) whether a voter lives in a rural or urban area, as well as a voter's (iv) household income and (v) level of education. Each will be addressed in turn.

2.1 Candidate party

Running under one or another party ticket may color how voters evaluate you. That is, voters do not treat all House candidates alike. Instead, specific concerns come to the fore when considering a candidate of one party that recede when considering a candidate of the other party. The heavy emphasis placed by Republicans on issues like abortion, gay marriage, gun rights, and the like combined with the public's well documented association of the GOP with "family" values and morality (Hayes 2005, 913) suggests that voters may weight moral issues more heavily when appraising a Republican candidate than when appraising a Democratic one. The modern Democratic Party, conversely, was born of an alliance on economic reform between disparate social groups during the Great Depression (Key 1959). Their focus on wealth redistribution may cause people to factor the financial benefits and costs of Democratic support more prominently in their decisions than when considering a Republican candidate.

2.2 Voter gender

A voter's gender is not expected to matter a great deal in determining whether which if either of the two dimensions men and women weight more heavily when choosing between candidates. If an argument had to be made, the most plausible might ground itself in dominant social stereotypes of

gender. Men think themselves the breadwinners in a family; women, the conscience. Accordingly, men will be preoccupied with economic concerns, women with moral ones (e.g., Risman and Ferguson 2005). Again, such self-conceptions are by no means given. But if they are amply pervasive, there may be a marked difference in the motivations behind male and female votes.

2.3 Voter location

Frank (2004), Shapiro (2005), and other culture war advocates have generated considerable traction for their theories by focusing on the rural-urban divide. Rural voters are not familiar with happy kinds of change. Change for people living outside of America's metropolises tends to be associated with job outsourcing and economic downturn. And so, as Obama suggested, these people favor what they know and base their vote on issues they think they can control. They cannot control the whims of global consumer demand. They may have better luck with topics such as whether the government can kill killers and whether a man can legally wed another man. Change for city dwellers, on the other hand, is a recurring truth. Diverse-looking neighbors, ethnic restaurants, and the curious habits of recent transplants are old hat. Besides, their cosmopolitan social outlooks are primarily in service of more pressing matters: social climbing and economic wellbeing. Cities are economic hubs and their denizens are economic animals. Rural voters are more driven by moral concerns than are their urban dwelling counterparts.

2.4 Voter income

The two remaining demographic variables are the more interesting of the bunch, and the hypotheses surrounding them the most controversial. Voters with little income have better things to worry about than who's marrying whom. Economic concerns will drive their vote choice. The rich, however, can afford to debate such non-economic matters. That they can does not mean they will. Putting moral concerns before economic concerns may cost affluent voters more in taxes, but what is another few points in your marginal tax burden when you are earning in the top one or two quintiles?

2.5 Voter education

So it goes with education. Those voters with an education, like those with money, will be largely concerned with moral issues. People who go through college are socialized to be inquisitive and tolerant: Characteristics that are essential to a fruitful course of higher learning. Voters who go on to achieve advanced degrees must internalize these qualities with even more fervor. The eighteen plus years of schooling it takes to earn a Masters has its toll. The economic benefits, though real, are not all someone with an MA, JD, or PhD receives from her academic pursuits. These people identify themselves by their education first and their earning potential second. When they vote, they cast their ballots to reflect the qualities that they see as central to their personality—their education. And education, as previously mentioned, begets tolerance for contradictory and unusual viewpoints. Those without much of a formal education are not doomed to intolerance. There is no good reason to believe that such voters will be swayed more by economic or moral concerns, except that those without degrees have fewer economic opportunities and thus may be more attentive to candidates' economic preferences. Much of this effect, however, will likely be addressed when controlling for household income.

3 Data and Methods

To determine the respective weights placed by voters on a candidates moral and economic preferences, it would be useful to know how close those preferences are to those held by individual voters. Do voters cast a ballot in favor of candidates with close economic preferences and ignore their moral outlook as suggested by Bartels (2006) and Ansolabehere et al. (2006)? Or do voters demand that the candidates they back share their moral convictions as posited by Frank (2004) and Shapiro (2005)? Unfortunately, albeit for good reasons, social scientists often conceptually separate elected office holders from the citizens they represent. Political science surveys reflect this separation insofar as office holders and seekers are asked questions largely different from those posed to "ordinary" members of the American public. So that the economic and moral ideologies of the candidates and voters can be directly compared, their ideologies must be assessed on the same scale (Achen 1978).

We need to reorient political candidates among the general population. They are citizens, after

all. Where do their economic and moral views fit relative to those held by the people they represent? This question can be answered by first combining the results of two surveys—one administered to candidates for the U.S. House and one administered to their constituents. Responses to comparable survey items are then factor analyzed. The results of that analysis allow for the plotting of respondents' positions along the resulting political dimensions. All that remains is to regress the distances (unit-less) separating voters' and candidates' ideal points against the dependent variable—whether or not that voter did or did not vote for that candidate.

This paper draws its data from the 2004 American National Election Study (ANES) and Project Vote Smarts National Political Awareness Test (NPAT) from that same year. The ANES is used because it meets two criteria: Respondents identify the candidate for whom they voted in the 2004 House election, and there exist a number of ANES questions that are easily aligned with questions from the 2004 NPAT survey, which is one of the few surveys of political candidates.[1] As has been the case every election year since 1948, ANES interviewers conduct pre- and post-election surveys with a nationally representative sample of adults. Longstanding questions about political affiliation and ideological outlook accompany queries pertinent to the politics of the day. Whereas the ANES strives to "provide researchers with a view of the political world through the eyes of ordinary citizens,"[2] the NPAT poses relevant questions to political candidates; just about all of them. Any candidates appearing on the ballot for presidential, congressional, gubernatorial, and state legislative offices is administered the NPAT, which dates back to 1992.

Because of the differential in policy familiarity presumably separating political candidates from the general citizenry, a cursory reading of the ANES and NPAT questionnaires makes them seem largely incompatible. The division of labor in a modern republic, as it is predominantly conceived, lends support to this conventional wisdom. Legislators devise and enact legislation. Applicants for the position ought to know something about the trade and so Project Vote Smart quizzes them on specific, often esoteric matters of public policy. Citizens not seeking office, however, have a much simpler—though not necessarily simple—charge: Vote for the candidate that you want passing legislation on your behalf. Citizen opinion is sought as it relates to general topics, not specific

[1] In 2006 the NPAT was renamed the Political Courage Test (PCT), though there is a remarkable amount of continuity between the questions asked on the two surveys. The many virtues of the NPAT are well summarized by Erikson and Wright (1997) and Ansolabehere et al. (2001).

[2] See the ANES website: ¡http://www.electionstudies.org/overview/overview.htm¿.

policies regulating those topics. There is, however, some overlap. And fortunately for researchers, that overlap is recognized by the crafters of opinion surveys.

Miller and Stokes (1963, 47) long ago observed that legislators and lay citizens generally conceive of policies in terms of "broad evaluative dimensions." And, given sufficient salience, otherwise uninterested members of the public can demonstrate reasonable fluency in a given policy area. Nineteen questions across the 2004 ANES and NPAT adequately paralleled one another so as to make candidate and citizen responses directly comparable after some coding adjustments. In combining the two surveys, the coding of the responses can only be as fine as the coarsest scale on which those responses were initially measured. The majority of useable questions on the NPAT provide for a dichotomous reply. For reasons that will soon be clear, all responses were coded as dichotomous, with a score of one indicating a stereotypical "liberal" response and a score of zero indicating a stereotypical "conservative" response.

Questions about government spending were the least difficult to make comparable. For example, ANES respondents were asked, "Should federal spending on welfare programs be increased, decreased, or kept about the same?" In addition to those responses, respondents could choose "cut out entirely" or they could abstain from taking a position. Meanwhile, the NPAT asked political candidates to "Indicate what federal funding levels [they] support for welfare." Their answers were self-reported[3] on a six point scale ranging from "greatly increase" to "eliminate entirely." Responses from either survey indicating support for increased federal spending on welfare were assigned a value of one. All other responses were coded zero. Twenty-two of the 1,212 ANES respondents left this question unanswered, as did forty-nine of the 766 NPAT respondents.

Not all of the NPAT questions lent themselves to such straightforward recoding schemes. The construction of a typical NPAT question followed this pattern: "Indicate whether you support [given policy]," followed by a box which the respondent could mark with an 'x' or leave blank. An 'x' indicated agreement with the policy. A blank could mean opposition to the policy, or the candidate might have refrained from answering the question. Sometimes there were ways to eliminate this uncertainty. For example, candidates were asked to "Indicate whether [they] want to eliminate

[3]It is possible that candidates had someone from their staff fill out their copy of the NPAT. It is reasonable to expect that staff members tasked with this responsibility would answer with great fidelity (or lose their jobs). For representatives, their public positions on issues trump their personal preferences. We care about what they will do in office as a representative, not how they feel in their heart of hearts. This argument will be discussed in greater detail momentarily.

the use of the death penalty for federal crimes." 236 respondents left an 'x', which were recoded as ones. The remaining 530 left nothing. Had this been the only question on the subject, those 530 blanks would have been interpreted as signifying support of the death penalty and coded as ones. The rationale behind this approach holds that any candidate who really opposes the death penalty (or at least wants voters to believe she does) will indicate as much. Because the death penalty is currently an option in federal criminal cases, not advocating for its repeal is effectively supporting its continued use. Fortunately, this particular question was immediately followed by its logical counterpart: "Indicate whether you support the use of the death penalty for federal crimes." Combining responses to these two questions allowed for abstentions to be recorded as blanks in the dataset, affording a bit of nuance to the data.

The nineteen topics on which ANES and NPAT questions could be made comparable and the coding schemes for those questions are detailed in the Appendix of this paper. It would be preferable to have candidate and citizen respondents answer exactly the same questions. Such surveys do not exist. But the questions from which the combined ANES-NPAT dataset was born are remarkably similar; so much so that factor analysis of that dataset enables candidates and citizens to be positioned *along the same dimensions* that underlie the recoded survey questions. Table 1 displays initial factor analysis results.

Only sixteen of the possible nineteen variables were used in this round of factor analysis.[4] From those sixteen variables, two dominant factors emerged.[5] The first and more prominent factor (eigenvalue of 5.3354) might be thought of as an economic dimension, signifying the level of support an individual has for government spending and government intervention in economic affairs. Variables that load highly onto this dimension include support for or opposition to federal funding of childcare, welfare, schools, and international aid. The second factor (eigenvalue of 1.8790) relates to moral matters, portending an individual's tolerance for homosexual rights, abortion, and

[4]Support for or opposition to increased federal funding of law enforcement was excluded because responses could not be confidently coded as "liberal" (1) or "conservative" (0). Liberals may be more comfortable with an increase as they are generally more comfortable with federal government action than are conservatives. Conservatives, conversely, may interpret increased federal law enforcement as supportive of the Patriot Act, of which liberals tended to be wary. The same logic motivated the exclusion of responses to questions about taxation of the poor. Liberals may ground support for a decrease in the poor's tax burden in their support for progressive tax structures. Conservatives may also want the impoverished of America to pay less in taxes, but only because they think everyone should pay less in taxes. Finally, the diversity of responses available to ANES and NPAT respondents on questions about government provision of healthcare made for potentially untrustworthy recoding.

[5]A third, very weak factor (eigenvalue of 1.1950) seems to gauge support for affirmative action and discrimination policies, which are incorporated to some degree in the first two dimensions.

Table 1: Variable Loadings on the Economic and Moral Dimensions[†]

Economic Dimension ($\lambda = 5.3354$)		Moral Dimension ($\lambda = 1.8790$)	
Variable	Factor Loading[‡]	Variable	Factor Loading[‡]
childcare funding	0.8050	gay marriage	0.8453
welfare funding	0.7424	abortion access	0.8019
school funding	0.7004	abortion funding	0.6350
foreign aid	0.5646	gay job discrimination	0.5166
wealthy tax burden	0.4678	death penalty	0.3063
gun purchases	0.4490	welfare funding	0.2655
death penalty	0.3318	immigration	0.2615
science funding	0.2978	school vouchers	0.2540
transportation funding	0.2469	foreign aid	0.2439
abortion funding	0.2395	wealthy tax burden	0.1846
gay job discrimination	0.2348	childcare funding	0.1712
gay marriage	0.1768	science funding	0.1686
abortion access	0.1510	school funding	0.1513
school vouchers	0.0435	transportation funding	$^{-}$0.0539
affirmative action	0.0143	affirmative action	$^{-}$0.0395
immigration	0.0130	gun purchases	0.0178

[†]Dimensions calculated simultaneously; [‡]factor loadings have been rotated.
Factor analysis based on tetrachoric correlation of the sixteen listed variables.

the like. Variables that load highly onto this dimension include support for or opposition to gay marriage, access to abortion, government funding of abortions, and inclusion of sexual orientation in anti-discrimination laws.

Results were nearly identical for tetrachoric, polychoric, and standard factor analyses. The most divergent results—those produced by tetrachoric and standard factor analyses—correlated at 94 percent. To facilitate easier discussion and plotting of liberal and conservative positions along the two dominant dimensions, the dichotomous coding of variables described earlier was maintained and the results of tetrachoric factor analysis were used and are displayed in Table 1. Were individual respondent's positions along the two dimensions calculated using the loadings determined in this initial analysis, the factors would be assumed orthogonal. Though entirely possible, there is no reason to make this assumption.

Instead, respondents' positions along the two dimensions can be calculated by first retaining the variables deemed relevant to each factor in the original analysis (those variables with high factor loadings), after which tetrachoric factor analysis is reapplied on each set of retained variables

independently. So that an economic and moral score can be calculated for every respondent, missing variables were imputed using all available data (not just data on those variables retained for the second round of factor analysis) before the second round of factor analysis. The process is outlined below, and the results of step four from below are summarized in Table 2:

- Step 1: factor analyze all variables (allow for missing data)
- Step 2: retain variables with high factor loadings[6]
- Step 3: impute data using all variables
- Step 4: factor analyze each set of retained variables (factor loadings calculated for economic and moral dimensions independently; no more missing data)
- Step 5: predict economic and moral scores for each respondent

Table 2: Refined Variable Loadings on the Economic and Moral Dimensions[†]

Economic Dimension ($\lambda = 2.7427$)		Moral Dimension ($\lambda = 2.2267$)	
Variable	Factor Loading[‡]	Variable	Factor Loading[‡]
school funding	0.8058	abortion access	0.8250
childcare funding	0.7907	gay marriage	0.7687
wealthy tax burden	0.6519	abortion funding	0.6483
welfare funding	0.5517	gay job discrimination	0.5962
foreign aid	0.4246	death penalty	0.2405

[†]Each dimension calculated independently of the other; [‡]factor loadings have been rotated. Factor analysis based on tetrachoric correlation of the five variables associated with each factor.

Economic and moral scores were predicted for every respondent of the ANES and NPAT such that the mean score for each dimension is zero and the standard deviation of scores for each dimension is one. Scores for the economic dimension range from 0.8484 (most liberal) to $^{-}1.3527$ (most conservative). A liberal in this case believes the wealthy should pay more in taxes and wants the federal government to spend more on foreign aid, public schools, welfare, and childcare for welfare recipients. A conservative believes the wealthy should pay less than or about the same in

[6]As seen in Table 1, each factor had four variables with factor loadings above the standard 0.5 threshold. To allow for greater variation in predicted factor scores, the fifth highest loading variable from each factor was included in the second round of factor analysis. For the economic dimension, this fifth variable measured opinion on tax burdens for the wealthy. For the moral dimension, the fifth variables measured support for or opposition to the death penalty.

taxes and wants the federal government to decrease or maintain spending in the aforementioned policy areas.

Scores for the moral dimension range from 1.3162 (most liberal) to $^{-}0.9300$ (most conservative). A liberal in this case believes that the death penalty should be outlawed, that abortion should always be legal, that public funds ought to be allowed to fund abortions and organizations that perform abortions, that homosexuals should be allowed to wed, and that sexual orientation should be included in federal anti-discrimination laws. A conservative supports the continued use of the death penalty and believes that legal restrictions should be placed on a woman's access to abortion, that public funds ought not fund abortions and organizations that perform abortions, that homosexuals should not be allowed to wed, and that sexual orientation should not be included in federal anti-discrimination laws.

These scores, though unit-less, allow us to measure the ideological *proximity* of would-be officeholders and their potential constituents on economic and moral dimensions. This measure of a legislator's representativeness is an improvement over previous measures, which rely on correlation coefficients. The distance between a representative and constituents on important factors, if properly used, can be a powerful tool for researchers investigating how well and in what areas elected officials embody the will of their constituents. This paper, however, is concerned with the role the distance between candidate and constituent ideology plays in the voting booth.

Do voters care more about the economic proximity or the moral proximity of candidates when casting their ballots? Or more importantly, which voters care more about the economic proximity of candidates and which care more about the moral proximity of candidates? Ansolabehere et al. (2006, 106) attempt to determine the relative weight of the two dimensions by regressing voters' economic and moral policy preferences against voters' reported probability of voting for the Republican presidential candidate. This paper's methodology improves upon Ansolabehere and company's approach in several ways.

First, this paper regresses the economic and moral distance between candidates and voters on whether a voter actually cast a ballot for the candidate in question or for a rival candidate. Because Ansolabehere et al. use pre-election data, they cannot be certain that their respondents are going to vote at all, let alone for the candidate they indicate on the survey. Second, this paper examines votes for or against 165 congressional House candidates from districts across twenty-six

states rather than the probability of votes for a single candidate for president. The analysis in this paper could easily be extended to include candidates for senate and president, offering an even wider lens through which to examine the question at hand. Third, Ansolabehere et al. do not control for anything but year in their regression.[7] This paper introduces and controls for several variables, one of which turns out to be of extreme importance. Finally, and most importantly, this paper takes into account the economic and moral positions of the candidates and places them *on the same scale* as it does the voters.

4 Findings

Three models are initially tested. Table 3 summarizes the results. In all three logistic regressions, independent variables are regressed against the dichotomous vote, which records whether or not an ANES respondent voted for the Republican House candidate from their district ($vote = 1$) or for the Democratic candidate ($vote = 0$). The independent variables of interest area voter's economic distance and moral distance to the Republican candidate (*rep econ dist* and *rep moral dist*) as well as a voter's economic distance and moral distance to the Democratic candidate (*dem econ dist* and *dem moral dist*). All four are interval variables equal the absolute value of the voter's economic/moral score minus the given candidate's economic/moral score. The average distance between a voter's economic ideal point and the economic ideal point for a candidate from her district is 0.9091 units, with a minimum distance of zero units, a maximum distance of 2.2011 units, and a standard deviation of 0.7083 units. The average distance between a voter's moral ideal point and the moral ideal point for a candidate from her district is 0.8928 units, with a minimum distance or zero units, a maximum distance of 2.2462 units, and a standard deviation of 0.6958 units.

The remaining variables serve as controls. *Party convergence* equals one if the voter and candidate are of the same party (Republican) and zero if they are of different parties (i.e., the voter is a Democrat). A voter is considered a member of a party if she strongly identifies with, weakly identifies with, or leans toward that particular party. Sex equals one if the voter is a female and zero if a male. Urban equals one if the voter is from an urban area and zero if from a rural or

[7] Ansolabehere et al. (2006, 106) mention a slew of variables that they argue are important to the analysis, but for which they do not control. No explanation is given. Year fixed-effects, however, are included.

Table 3: Logistic Regression on Vote for Republican Candidate

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
rep econ distance	−0.2289	−0.1805	0.3569
rep moral distance	−1.0757***	−0.8379**	−0.7906*
dem econ distance	0.8905**	0.4056	0.9926
dem moral distance	0.6673**	0.1518	−0.2106
party congruence		3.1040***	3.8303***
gender			0.5970
urban			−2.1705**
household income			−0.0238
education			0.3749
constant	−0.1691	−1.0959	−1.4758
pseudo R^2	0.2218	0.4530	0.5177
n	152	152	142

* p <0.10; ** p <0.05; *** p <0.01

non-urban area. *Education* and *household income* are ordinal variables, the first with four possible categories and the second with five. Respondents can be classified as having fewer than twelve years of formal education, having twelve or more years of education but no degree beyond a high school diploma, having a two- or four-year college degree (AA, BA, etc.), or having an advanced degree. In terms of income, respondents are grouped according to the 2004 income quintile into which their household fell.[8]

The first model mimics that used by Ansolabehere et al. (2006) in that it controls for no variables besides the economic and moral standings of the voter (relative to the two major candidates, in the case of this paper). Model two adds *party convergence* as a control, and Model three controls for all six additional variables. Between Model one and Model three, there is a sizeable jump in the pseudo R^2 from 0.2218 to 0.5177.

4.1 Candidate party

The variables of interest are, as previously indicated, the economic and moral distances between a voter and the candidates. Model one from Table 3 will serve as the basis for our initial analysis,

[8]Data is available from the 2004 Annual Demographic Survey, a joint venture of the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Bureau of the Census. First quintile: $0–$18,499. Second quintile: $18,500–$34,737. Third quintile: $34,738–$54,330. Fourth quintile: $54,331–$88,029. Fifth quintile: $88,030 and greater.

with the second and third models serving to check the signs and relative magnitudes of Model one's coefficients. Unsurprisingly, *party congruence* is the single best predictor of a citizen's vote. There is a fair bit of variation in the coefficients for the Democratic distance variables across models, but the general trend is clear: The greater the divide between a voter's preferences and a Democratic candidate's preferences, the more likely the voter is to support the Republican. Coefficients for *rep econ distance* and *rep moral distance* are largely static across the three models. And in all three models, the distance separating a voter's moral preferences from a Republican candidate's moral preferences is a statistically significant predictor of electoral support. The closer a Republican House candidate is to a voter, the more likely that voter is to cast her ballot for the Republican candidate, especially when the candidate and voter are proximal on moral preferences.

Table 3 offers preliminary evidence that voters evaluate House candidates from different parties differently—the dimensions along which a voter assesses a Republican are not necessarily the same dimensions along which a voter assesses a Democrat. The coefficient for *rep econ distance* ($= {}^{-}0.2289$) is considerably smaller in magnitude than the coefficient for *rep moral distance* ($= {}^{-}1.0757$). A Wald test confirms that the influence of *rep moral distance* on vote is statistically different from and greater than the influence of rep econ distance ($\chi^2 = 4.09$; p-value $= 0.0430$). Conversely, a Wald test of *dem econ distance* ($= 0.8095$) and *dem moral distance* ($= 0.6773$) suggests that the effects of the two variables on vote may well be the same ($\chi^2 = 0.08$; p-value $= 0.7830$). A voter's moral proximity to Republican candidates appears to dominate economic proximity, while moral and economic proximity to Democratic candidates appear to be equally important in determining electoral decisions. Both findings go against the dominant story told by Bartels (2006) and Ansolabehere et al. (2006), who conclude that voters' economic policy preferences dominate moral preferences in voting.

Further deviations from the prevailing narrative will be elucidated momentarily, but it would be prudent to lend additional statistical support to this introductory finding. The results presented in Table 3 were calculated using data on all House districts for which (i) there exists ANES data on voters, and (ii) there exists relevant NPAT information on candidates from both major parties. 152 observations encompassing 23 races across 14 states met this criteria. The differences with which voters approach candidates of different parties can be seen in finer detail by increasing our number of observations, which we can accomplish by relaxing the second criterion. Extending analysis to

all those districts for which there exists NPAT data on the House Republican candidate gives us 283 observations encompassing 42 races across 20 states. Table 4 presents these results. Extending analysis to all those districts for which there exists NPAT data on the House Democratic candidate gives us 322 observations encompassing 60 races across 23 states. Table 5 presents these results.

Table 4: Logistic Regression on Vote for Republican Candidate

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
economic distance	−0.6183***	−0.4722**	−0.5618**
moral distance	−1.1768***	−0.9636***	−0.9272***
party congruence		2.6776***	2.8356***
gender			0.1704
urban			−0.9927**
household income			−0.1096
education			0.2191
constant	1.3087***	−0.2787	0.3744
pseudo R^2	0.1476	0.3626	0.3949
n	283	283	255

* p <0.10; ** p <0.05; *** p <0.01

Table 5: Logistic Regression on Vote for Democratic Candidate

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
economic distance	−1.2682***	−0.9164**	−0.9173***
moral distance	−0.6395***	−0.3436	−0.3169
party congruence		3.057***	3.4064***
gender			−0.3651
urban			0.4137
household income			0.0421
education			−0.2142
constant	1.3589***	−0.7268**	−0.7640
pseudo R^2	0.1213	0.4295	0.4349
n	322	322	291

* p <0.10; ** p <0.05; *** p <0.01

The directions and relative magnitudes of the coefficients of interest are static across our new models. Moreover, the signs and relative magnitudes of the pertinent coefficients in Tables 4 and 5 align nicely with the corresponding coefficients from Table 3. The variables for economic and

moral distance in Table 4 should be compared to *rep econ distance* and *rep moral distance* from Table 3. The variables for economic and moral distance in Table 5 should be compared to *dem econ distance* and *dem moral distance* from Table 3.[9] Model one from Tables 4 and 5 will serve as the basis for the remained of this paper's analysis. Given the stability of the coefficients across models and tables, interpretation of the data remains largely unchanged regardless of which model we use. Still, that interpretation warrants elaboration.

Because the coefficients were generated by a logistic regression, their substantive implications are not entirely clear. Figure 1 will aid interpretation. First, look at the solid line punctuated by diamonds. When looking at this line, the horizontal axis represents the distance between a voter's and a congressional candidate's economic ideal points. When this distance is zero—when a voter and a candidate share the same economic preferences—the probability that the voter will vote for the candidate is approximately 57.90% if the candidate is a Republican and 68.47% if the candidate is a Democrat, holding all else constant. When the distance separating the voter's and candidate's economic ideal points increases to 2.5 units (which is about 2.25 standard deviations above the average distance of 0.9091 units), the probability that the voter will vote for the candidate drops to 22.67% if the candidate is a Republican and 8.36% if the candidate is a Democrat, holding all else constant.

Now look at the dashed line punctuated by squares. When looking at this line, the horizontal axis represents the distance between a voter's and a congressional candidate's moral ideal points. When this distance is zero—when a voter and a candidate share the same moral preferences—the probability that the voter will vote for the candidate is approximately 66.49% if the candidate is a Republican and 62.56% if the candidate is a Democrat, holding all else constant. When the distance separating the voter's and candidate's economic ideal points increases to 2.5 units (which is about 2.31 standard deviation above the average distance of 0.8928 units), the probability that the voter will vote for the candidate drops to 9.48% if the candidate is a Republican and 2.52% if the candidate is a Democrat, holding all else constant.

The notion of elasticity allows for even easier interpretation. Take the leftmost half of Figure 1, which displays the probability of voting for a Republican candidate given that candidate's economic

[9]The two key variables reverse direction between Tables 3 and 5. This change is appropriate given the change in dependent variable from electoral support of Republicans to electoral support of Democrats.

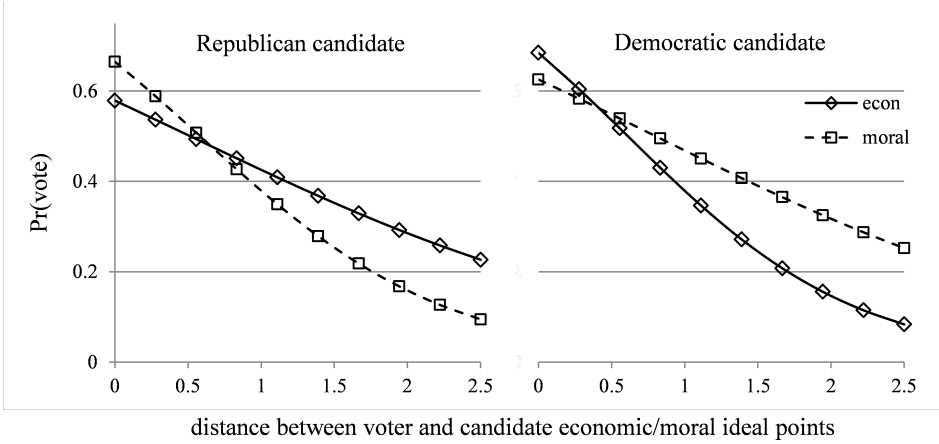

Figure 1: Accounting for candidate party

and moral proximity to a voter. The average slope of the moral (dashed) line is -0.2281 whereas the average slope of the economic (solid) line is -0.1409.[10] The moral line is significantly steeper than the economic line. Put differently, when evaluating a Republican House candidate, the moral proximity of the candidate is inelastic relative to the economic proximity of the candidate. A Republican candidate can increase her likelihood of capturing an individual's vote by approximately 22.81% by moving one unit closer to that voter's moral ideal point.[11] The payoff of moving one unit closer to the voter's economic ideal point is a comparatively meager 14.09% increase in probability of electoral support. Moral proximity to a voter yields higher dividends for Republican candidates than does economic proximity, and moral distance imposes a higher cost to Republican candidates than does economic distance. A Wald test lends statistical backing to the hypothesis that voters weight moral proximity to Republican candidates more heavily than economic proximity ($\chi^2 = 4.60$; p-value = 0.032).

Democratic candidates face the opposite incentives. Electoral gain from moral proximity to voters is a relatively elastic commodity compared to gains from economic proximity. A Democratic candidate can increase her chance of capturing an individual's vote by approximately 24.05% by moving one unit closer to that voter's economic ideal point. The payoff of moving one unit closer

[10]The slope at any given proximity varies. For ease of explication, the average slope will be used to determine the relative elasticity of economic and moral preferences.

[11]It is perfectly reasonable to frame this statement from the contrary perspective. A Republican candidate *decreases* her likelihood of capturing and individual's vote by approximately 22.81% by moving one unit *away* from that voter's moral ideal point.

to the voter's moral ideal point is a comparatively paltry 14.93% increase in probability of electoral support. A Wald test lends statistical backing to the hypothesis that voters weight economic proximity to Democratic candidates more heavily than moral proximity ($\chi^2 = 5.05$; p-value = 0.0246).

Although both are important in determining vote choice, economic considerations do not necessarily "dominate" moral considerations as suggested in earlier research (Ansolabehere, Rodden and Snyder 2006; Bartels 2006, 109), at least not when voters asses Republican candidates. Quite the contrary. Extreme moral proximity to voters buys Republican candidates more electoral fidelity than extreme economic proximity, and loss of moral proximity costs them more than does loss of economic proximity. Moral proximity between voter and Republican candidate is a statistically significant variable in all models, and its substantive effect on the Republican support is always larger than that of economic proximity. When evaluating Democratic candidates, the story reads closer to the prevailing model. Extreme economic proximity to voters buys Democratic candidates more electoral fidelity than extreme moral proximity, and loss of economic proximity costs them more than does loss of moral proximity. Although moral proximity is statistically and substantively significant in our base model of Democratic support, it losses statistical significance as controls are added.

For the average voter, then, the relative consequence of economic and moral considerations depends in part on the candidate. What about voter characteristics? Frank (2004) argues that low-income Americans living in rural parts of the country will be preoccupied with moral issues. Shapiro (2005) points out that the opposite is often true—wealthy urbanites vote Democratic against their economic interests but in agreement with their moral outlook. This paper at the outset identified slightly different hypotheses. To recap: male and female voters will be equally swayed by economic and moral issues; rural voters will be swayed by moral issues while urban voters will swayed by economic issues; wealthy voters will be swayed by moral issues while underprivileged voters will be swayed by economic issues; and well-educated voters will be swayed by moral issues while less-educated voters will be swayed by moral issues. Each hypothesis will be examined in turn

4.2 Voter gender

Because we now have evidence that voters assess Republican and Democratic House candidates differently, twice as many graphs are required to understand the influence other variables have on the relative importance of moral and economic dimensions of the vote. For example, the left-half of Figure 2 shows the substantive interpretation of the logistic regressions from model one of Tables 4 and 5 when sex is held constant and equal to male. The right-half shows the results of those regressions for female voters. The top half of Figure 2 shows the results for Republican candidates, while the bottom half depicts the findings for Democratic candidates. Individual quadrants, then, show the intersection of these voter and candidate characteristics. For example, the bottom right quadrant shows the relative elasticity of economic and moral proximity for female voters evaluating Democratic candidates.

To speed discussion and further aid comprehension, the graphs in which we cannot confidently differentiate between economic and moral proximity as they influence electoral support are displayed in fainter ink than are those graphs whose contents, when subjected to a Wald test, meet traditional levels of statistical significance. In Figure 2, both quadrants on the left side are fainter than the quadrants on the right side. Wald tests reveal that we cannot confidently reject the possibility that the two curves within each right quadrant are equal to one another. Men may be as swayed by economic proximity to a candidate as they are by moral proximity. Even though the coefficients for *economic distance* and *moral distance* are statistically significant in explaining a male's electoral support of a candidate, they are not statistically distinguishable. Interpretation of this and the remaining figures will focus on bold quadrants.

With an average slope of $^{-}0.2170$, moral considerations are appreciably more inelastic for women when evaluating Republican candidates than are economic considerations (slope = $^{-}0.0967$). Moving one unit closer to a female voter's moral ideal point would increase a Republican candidate's probability of capturing that voter's support by roughly 21.70%. A similar move toward her economic ideal point would only net a 9.67% increase in probability of electoral support. Per unit change, female voters rate moral proximity to a Republican candidate at more than twice the value of economic proximity.

Not so when female voters appraise a Democratic candidate. In these circumstances, moral

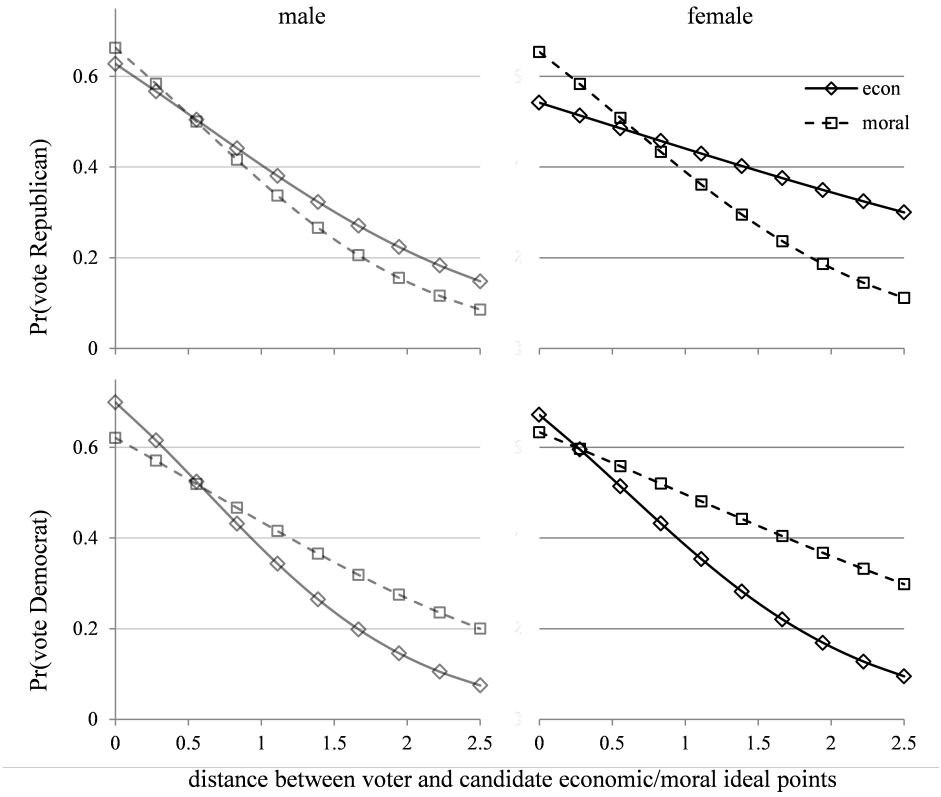

Figure 2: Accounting for voter gender

proximity to a candidate is relatively elastic. Each unit increase in moral proximity generates less increase in the probability of electoral support (approximately 13.41%) than does each unit increase in economic proximity (23.01%). Per unit change, female voters rate economic proximity to a Democratic candidate at about 1.72 times the value of moral proximity.

4.3 Voter place

Figure 3 illustrates the influence of place on a voter's weighting of economic and moral preferences. Wald tests indicate that rural voters value their economic and moral proximity to a Republican candidate equally. So it goes for rural voters when assessing Democratic congressional candidates.

Traditional levels of statistical significance for Wald tests, however, do lend credence to the position that urban voters weigh economic and moral proximity to candidates differently. When urban voters appraise a Republican candidate, moral proximity to a candidate is relatively inelastic. Each unit increase in moral proximity generates a 23.79% increase in the probability of electoral

support, while a one unit increase in economic proximity yields a 14.85% increase in probability. Per unit change, urban voters rate moral proximity to a Republican candidate at about 1.60 times the value of economic proximity.

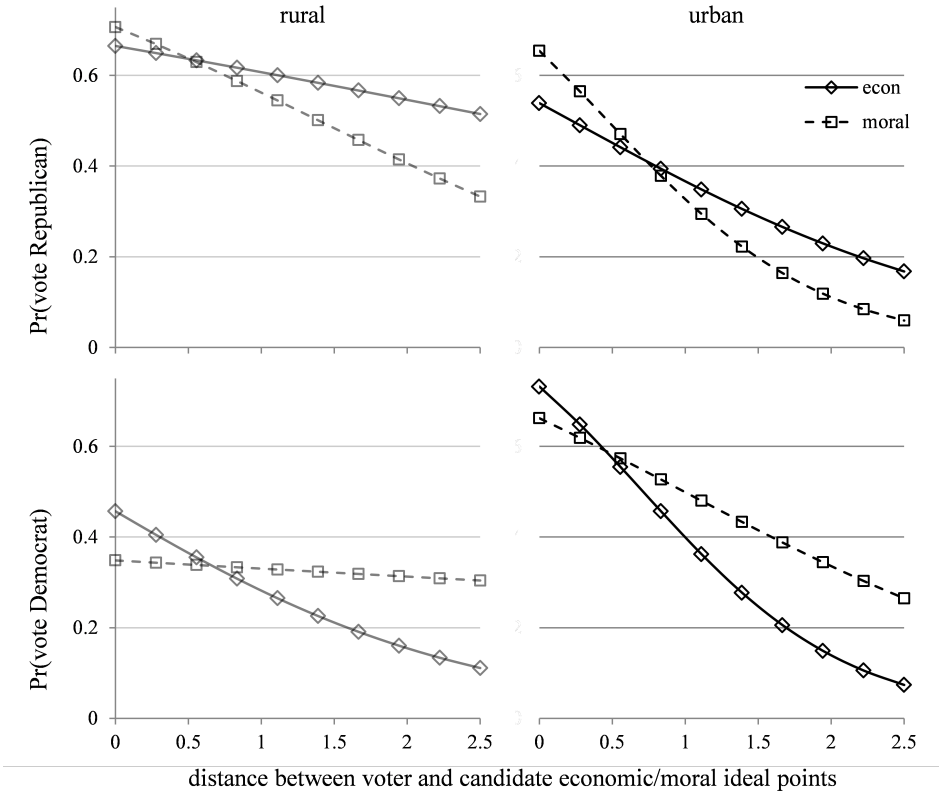

Figure 3: Accounting for voter place

Conversely, moral proximity to a Democratic candidate is relatively elastic for urban voters. Each unit increase in moral proximity generates a 15.89% increase in the probability of electoral support, while a one unit increase in economic proximity yields a 26.33% increase in probability. Per unit change, urban voters rate economic proximity to a Democratic candidate at about 1.66 times the value of moral proximity.

4.4 Voter income

In Figure 4, our attention turns to the role of income in determining a voter's economic and moral weights. Low and high income voters seem to value economic and moral proximity to House candidates equally, except when evaluating Republican candidates. The moral proximity of the

Republican candidate is relatively inelastic for voters among the top forty percent of wage earners. Each unit increase in moral proximity generates a 24.33% increase in the probability of electoral support, while a one unit increase in economic proximity yields a 13.82% increase in probability. Per unit change, voters in the top two income quintiles rate moral proximity to a Republican candidate at about 1.76 times the value of economic proximity.

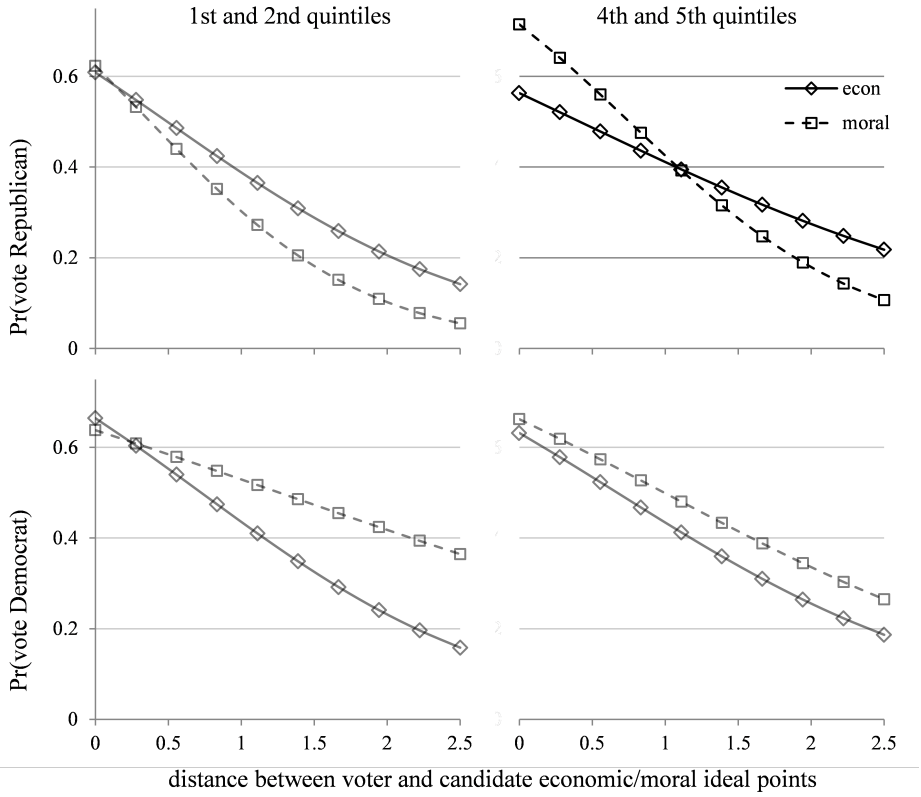

Figure 4: Accounting for voter income

Republican candidate moral preferences are even more important for the top twenty percent of wage earning households than they are for the top forty percent, as Figure 5 shows. Relative to a Republican candidate's economic preferences, the moral preferences of a candidate count for a great deal at close distances and a great deal less at large distances. Indeed, the statistical significance of the *economic distance* coefficient in this case reveals that economic consideration may approach perfect elasticity (slope = 0) for high income earners. That would mean that increasing or decreasing economic proximity to wealthy voters would yield no meaningful electoral gains or losses for Republican candidates. The coefficient as calculated is 0.2062, which implies that wealthy

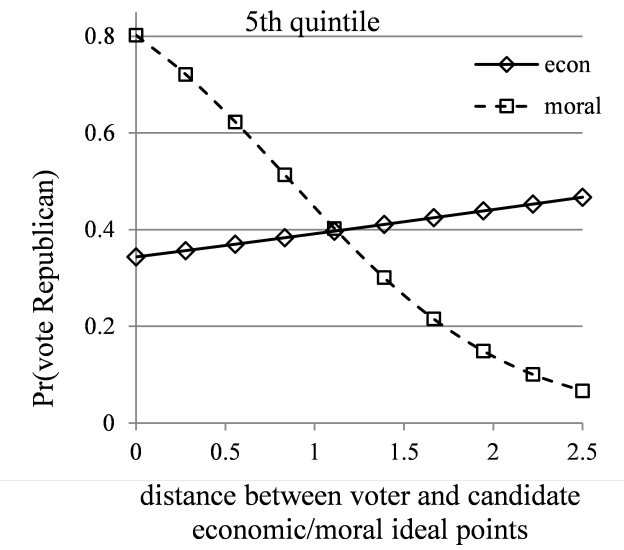

Figure 5: Accounting for top incomes

voters grow to like Republican candidates as they move farther from their economic ideal points. This makes no theoretical sense; but, as already stated, the coefficient could, according to a Wald test, very well be zero.

Moral proximity of the Republican candidate, however, is remarkably inelastic for top wage earners. Each unit increase in moral proximity generates a 29.41% increase in the probability of electoral support, while a one unit increase in economic proximity yields a 4.94% increase in probability. Per unit change, voters in the top income quintile rate moral proximity to a Republican candidate at about at an impressive 5.95 times the value of economic proximity.

4.5 Voter education

Lastly is schooling. Moral proximity is relatively inelastic for highly educated voters when evaluating a Republican candidate. Each unit increase in moral proximity generates a 29.07% increase in the probability of electoral support, while a one unit increase in economic proximity yields a 13.39% increase in probability. Per unit change, well-educated voters rate moral proximity to a Republican candidates at a noteworthy 2.17 times the value of economic proximity.

Economic proximity is relatively inelastic for less-educated voters when evaluating a Democratic candidate. Each unit increase in moral proximity generates a 10.87% increase in the probability

of electoral support, while a one unit increase in economic proximity yields a 24.10% increase in probability. Per unit change, voters without much formal schooling rate economic proximity to Democratic candidates at a striking 2.22 times the value of moral proximity.

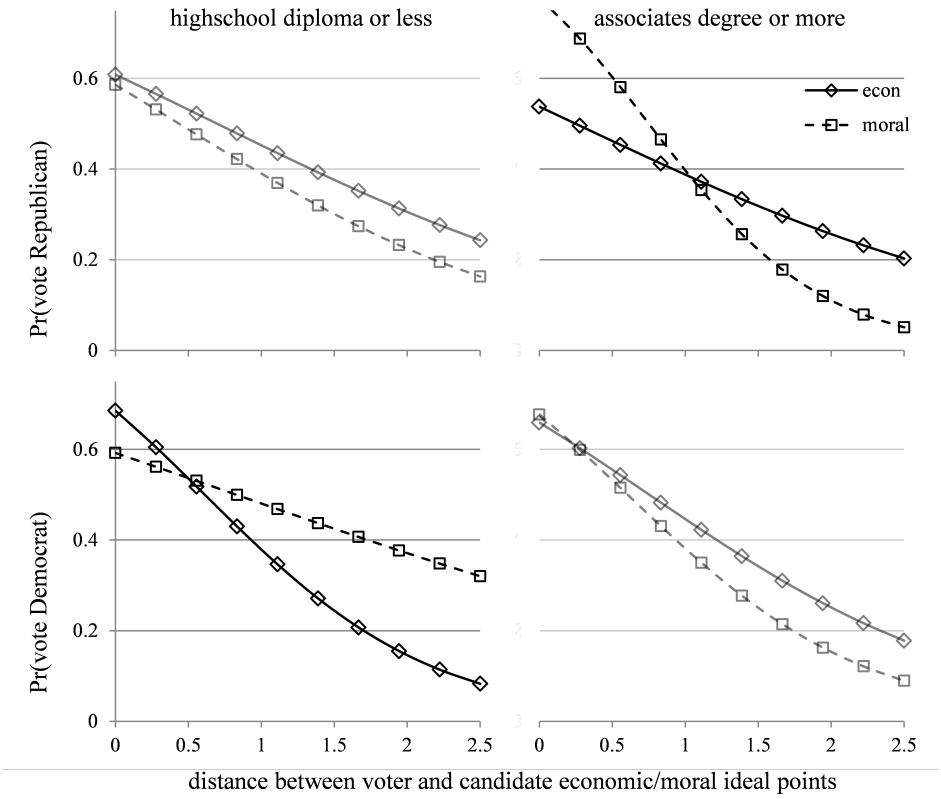

Figure 6: Accounting for voter education

5 Implications and Conclusions

Methodologically, this paper has demonstrated the feasibility of directly comparing candidate and constituent opinion on specific policies and across broad political dimensions. Currently, such a research design requires great effort on the part of the investigator. Slightly different questions from vastly different surveys must be identified as comparable and the responses to those questions must be made so. Hopefully, the potential worth of surveys administered to both candidates and constituents has been made clear. The ability to directly compare citizen and legislator ideal points means that it is possible to measure a representative's ideological *proximity* to her constituents as opposed to their ideological correlation.

Such capabilities also open the door to investigating the representativeness of legislative *outcomes*. Many researchers have advocated moving beyond the study of legislator representativeness to measuring the representativeness of legislatures and the policies they pass, but few have made the attempt (Eulau and Karps 1977; Eulau and Prewitt 1973). We have the long had the tools to predict legislative outcomes along multiple dimensions: Theoretical solution concepts such as the uncovered set (Bianco et al. 2006, 2008; Kam et al. 2010; McKelvey 1976, 1986), the strong point (Feld, Grofman and Godfrey 2009; Feld et al. 1987; Schofield, Grofman and Feld 1988), and the largest consistent set (Chwe 1994) can be used to determine where policies will fall based on legislators' economic and moral ideal points. In this paper, I have shown it is possible to plot constituent ideal points on the exact same dimensions as we do legislators. Doing so, we could plug median constituent ideal points into the aforementioned solution concepts to predict legislative outcomes as if legislators perfectly represented her district's median constituent. The amount of overlap between this prediction and the predicted legislative outcome using legislators' actual ideal points will show how representative the legislature is as a functioning body.

The findings of this paper go a long way in validating the assumptions that underlay the aforementioned solution concepts. For example, as it is currently calculated, the uncovered set and strong point assume that voter payoffs are uniform across economic and social dimensions. A one unit increase in economic distance from a voter's ideal point hurts that voter as much as a one unit increase in moral distance, as much as a one unit increase in any combination of the two. This paper shows that many voters do value economic and social policy equally in voting, a notion illustrated in Figure 7. In Figure 7, a candidate's distance from the voter's economic ideal point (measured along the vertical axis) generates as much disutility as a candidate's distance from the voter's moral ideal point (measured along the horizontal axis). The result is a circular preference ring.

Figure 8, on the other hand, illustrates the Bartels (2006) and Ansolabehere et al. (2006) conceptualization of voting. A candidate's distance from the voter's economic ideal point counts for more than a candidate's distance from the voter's moral ideal point. The result is a horizontally elliptical preference ring. Again, this paper suggests that the model illustrated in Figure 8 is accurate for certain subsets of the voting population. A third model favoring moral proximity—represented graphically as a vertically elliptical preference ring—also follows from this paper's

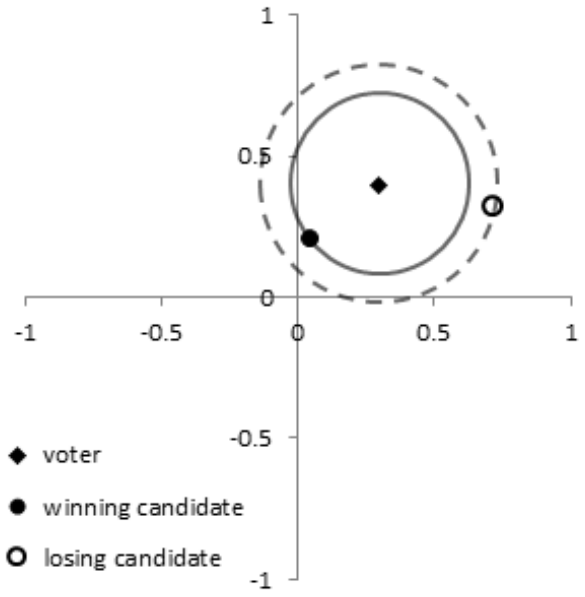

Figure 7: Standard spatial model

findings. No one of these models captures the nuance of actual House elections. There is a long way to go, but understanding when and how to weight voter's economic and moral predilections is a necessary first step toward studying the representativeness of legislators and legislative out.[12]

Substantively, this paper has demonstrated that voters do consider the social and moral policy preferences of the candidates for the U.S. House. Economic affect does not have the overarching dominance over moral affect as the prevailing academic literature suggests. There are conditions when economic preferences carry the day, and there are conditions when moral preferences matter disproportionately. And much of the time, economic and moral distances to a congressional candidate are weighted more or less equally by voters.

To summarize: Influencing all subsequent findings is the discovery that voters evaluate Republican and Democratic House candidates differently. When confronted with a Republican candidate, moral proximity of the candidate is inelastic relative to economic proximity. When confronted with a Democratic candidate, economic proximity is inelastic relative to moral proximity. This pattern holds for female voters and urban voters. The most patent discrepancies in the relative elasticities of economic and moral preferences are found among very wealthy voters and highly educated vot-

[12]It should be noted, however, that this paper cannot conclude whether or not the relationship between economic and moral dimensions is orthogonal, as it is illustrated in Figures 7 and 8.

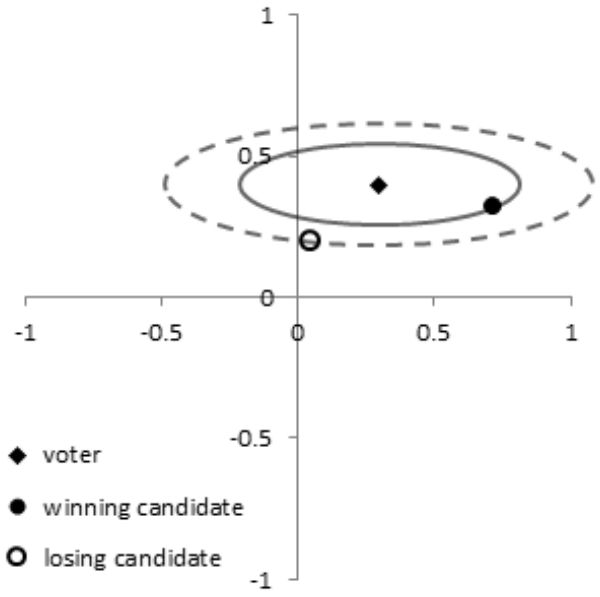

Figure 8: Prevailing model

ers evaluating Republican candidates, and among poorly educated voters appraising Democratic candidates. Males seem to value economic and moral proximity to candidates equally, as do rural voters.

The statistically robust conclusion that certain voters reward and punish House candidates for their moral policy stances is an important one, both for its practical implications and because it challenges the dominant story on these matters as told by Bartels (2006) and Ansolabehere et al. (2006). When voters pull closed the voting booth curtain, their minds may be—depending on a host of demographic factors—as much or more preoccupied with moral concerns as they are economic ones.

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