

**What happens to social cleavages when restored democracies consolidate?
Social cleavages and political preferences in Chile, 1995-2009¹**

by

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Abstract: There is abundant research on how social cleavages shape political preferences in developed countries with consolidated democracies, but we know less about this topic for restored democracies embarked in consolidation processes. Taking contemporary Chile as a case of a restored and consolidating democracy, we examine with Latinobarometer survey data from 1995 to 2009 the evolution of social cleavages as shapers of political preferences (measured with a left-right self-placement scale). We find a general process of dealignment indicated by the decreasing effect of gender, class, and religious cleavages between 1995 and 2009. Attitudes toward democracy, which reflect positions in favor or against the Pinochet regime, also show a decreasing effect across time. These findings suggest that the thesis about the decline of social cleavages in advanced democracies may also shed light on newer, consolidating democracies, yet with particularities given the latter's recent authoritarian past.

Introduction

In 1989 Chileans elected their national political authorities by popular vote, ending the seventeen-year long military dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet and honoring the country's pedigree as one of the most robust democracies in Latin America. As Chilean democracy consolidated in the following years and elections were celebrated according to constitutional rule, scholars started to address pressing questions. To what extent did social cleavages shape the political preferences of Chileans in the new democratic context? Did the

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cleavages that prevail before the authoritarian period reactivate or were they replaced by new cleavages? How did cleavages evolve as democracy consolidated and deep socioeconomic modernization ensued?

Past research provided essentially two answers to these questions. One was developed by Valenzuela and Scully (Scully 1992; Valenzuela and Scully 1997; Valenzuela, Scully and Somma 2007). Inspired by Lipset and Rokkan's (1967) sociological model of party systems, they argued that political preferences in post-authoritarian Chile - including voting choices and ideological positions in a left-right scale – were essentially shaped by traditional religious and class cleavages. These cleavages were not new - they had structured political conflict in Chile since mid-nineteenth century (religion) and early twentieth century (class). It seemed that the authoritarian regime of Pinochet, despite its dramatic impact on Chilean society, had been unable to fade away previous fault-lines. Valenzuela and Scully supported their claims with a cross-sectional survey which showed a positive association between religiosity and social class on the one hand, and rightist political preferences on the other one (Valenzuela, Scully and Somma 2007). Additionally, they supported the claim that the Pinochet period had not dramatically redrawn the political landscape by showing with ecological data a strong continuity of voting patterns before and after the dictatorship, (Valenzuela and Scully 1997).

Scholars such as Tironi and Agüero (Tironi y Agüero 1999; Tironi, Agüero and Valenzuela 2001) and Torcal and Mainwaring (2003) provided a different answer. They claimed that a new division between those who supported the Pinochet regime and those who opposed it had displaced traditional cleavages like class or religion. This division, which was epitomized by the 1988 plebiscite (in which Pinochet was voted out and the path for re-democratization opened), would shape the new political landscape and have an enduring impact on electoral preferences, with those supporting Pinochet favoring the center-right coalition (Alianza por Chile) and those opposing him favoring the center-left coalition (Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia). Several studies based on cross-sectional survey data supported this claim (Agüero et al. 1998; Alvarez and Katz 2009; Ortega Frei 2003; Tironi, Agüero and Valenzuela 2001).

In this paper we examine the role of social cleavages in shaping Chilean's political preferences (measured as self-identification in a left-right political scale). We contribute to the debate in four ways. First, by exploring a case of relatively recent democratic consolidation we expand social cleavage theories, which mostly focus on cases with uninterrupted democratic rule since World War II. Specifically, we innovate by bringing to the fore a new division – that between supporters and opponents of the previous authoritarian regime –

which has not been explored in uninterrupted democracies. We show that this division is important (although less so as time goes on) for understanding the political preferences of Chileans. We also suggest that it may shed light on the politics of nations that did *not* go through recent authoritarian experiences. We also look at the more traditional class, religion, gender, and age cleavages.

Second, by using yearly data for a fourteen-year period (1995-2009) we present a truly longitudinal study of the evolution of Chilean cleavages. This is an improvement over past studies, which typically use cross-sectional surveys and therefore cannot assess whether the strength of cleavages increase or decrease across time (exceptions are Torcal and Mainwaring [2003] who analyze data on two time points, and Raymond and Feltch [2012] who consider four time points). In any event, it is hard to address the question of the evolution of cleavages by comparing results from different surveys using different variables and different model specifications, as has been the case so far. We move forward this debate because we use a single dataset (the Latinobarometer survey) containing comparable samples and questionnaires and the same model specification across time.

Third, the longitudinal character of our study allows testing the widespread hypothesis about the generalized decline of social cleavages. Many scholars defend this claim for Western Europe and North America, but we know less about its validity for middle-income nations with recent democratic transitions. Furthermore, we adopt the suggestion of the issue evolution perspective (Carmines and Stimson 1989) that the strength of cleavages may vary in different directions according to the issues opportunistically activated by political elites. Thus, in our analysis we do not assume linear patterns of evolution but rather look at cleavage strength year after year.

Fourth, our study takes into account the simple fact that not all people in Chile express a preference on the dependent variable of our empirical analysis, namely, the left-right ideological self-placement scale. There is a significant portion of the population that resists identifying with this ideological dimension, and that portion cannot be considered a random sample of the general population. As we will show later, several individual traits distinguish those who express a left-right position from those who don't. Therefore, any statistical model trying to explain the determinants of Chileans' ideological preferences may obtain biased estimates if it does not take into account the selection bias contained in the observed data (Achen, 1986, Winship and Mare, 1992). In this paper we employ the well-known Heckman selection model (Heckman, 1979). This allows us to simultaneously estimate individual's propensity to express any ideological preference as well as their position on the scale.

We believe that Chile is an interesting case for expanding the debate about the role of social cleavages on political preferences because it shares both commonalities and differences with many of the Western countries in which such debate has focused so far. Commonalities include a tradition of continental-style multiparty systems with deep roots in society – which places Chile as an outlier within Latin America (Dix 1989; Scully 1995). Yet Chile departs from the developed West – and becomes closer to its neighbors and to some extent post-communist European countries - in its more recent authoritarian experience and the challenges it faces for consolidating democracy.

Social cleavages and political preferences

One of the most enduring debates in political sociology and political science revolves around the impact of social cleavages on citizen's political preferences. That is, to what extent structural traits like gender, class, religion or ethnicity shape electoral choices and political ideologies? We discuss five cleavages or divisions (the distinction between both is presented when needed) that may help us understanding the Chilean case.

Class and political preferences

The interest in how class shapes political preferences dates at least from the last decades of the nineteenth century. Socialist party leaders reasoned that since the working classes were a majority of the electorate and should unanimously vote for left-wing parties, elections provided a sure way of accessing political power (Przeworski and Sprague 1988). Classic post-war electoral studies showed that in most industrial societies, and especially in Britain and Scandinavia, the working class tended to support socialist, communist, and/or social democratic parties while the middle and upper classes supported liberal and conservative parties (Lipset 1960).

Economic self-interest was the most prominent mechanism posited for explaining this association. Workers benefited from leftist policies addressing redistribution and equality and promoting a generous welfare state, while middle and upper classes benefited from right-wing policies oriented to maintaining the status quo. As the Columbia school suggested, the association could also be explained by socialization experiences within family and friendship networks that were homogeneous regarding class (Lazarsfeld, et al. 1954; Dalton 2002; J.

Evans 2004; Manza, Brooks and Sauder 2005; Knutsen 2007; G. Evans 1999 and 2000; Manza, Hout and Brooks 1995).

Yet as Lipset early noted (1960), the relationship between class and political preferences was not automatic. Status inconsistency, lack of communication and cohesion, vertical social mobility, or cross-class patron-client ties could all move lower-class people to support the right and better-off people to support the left. Likewise, the relationship may not be stable across time. Since the late 1960s a growing chorus of scholars, equipped with long series of survey data and new class measures and statistical techniques, showed that the impact of class on political preferences was decreasing, especially in countries where such impact had been traditionally strong (Clark and Lipset 2001).

There were many explanations for the presumed decline of class voting. Some emphasized social-structural trends. For instance, the *embourgeoisement* thesis stated that systematic increases in the living standard of the working class weakened their leftist outlooks. Also, the decline of labor unions and increasing occupational mobility could have weakened the working class networks that sustained class-based appeals. Inglehart (1977, 1990) claimed that higher levels of education and cognitive sophistication created a more reflexive electorate which was less swayed by political messages pre-packaged to his or her class. Other explanations focused on the convergence of leftist and rightist parties toward common goals and subsequent party strategies. For instance, the reduction of the blue collar sector diminished the class appeals of leftist parties and moved them to capture the vote of the middle classes by broadening their platforms. And conservative parties, by accepting the redistributive implications of welfare states, ended up being more palatable to the low and working classes. The same could also result from the collapse of the Soviet Union and the expansion of capitalist ideology to unprecedented levels in the Western world (Dalton 2002:153; J. Evans 2004:56; Manza, Brooks and Sauder 2005:215).

Other scholars disputed the assertion of a decline of class voting by showing that the association between class and vote did not decrease in important cases such as the United States (Manza and Brooks 1999), Britain (Heath, Jowell and Curtice, cited in Knutsen 2007:464) and post-communist societies (Evans 1999; also Evans 2000). They showed that in many countries class continues powerfully shaping political preferences even after including extensive controls in statistical models (Evans 2000).

Chile has traditionally been understood as a case of relatively strong class cleavages, at least within Latin America (Dix 1989; Mainwaring and Torcal 2003; Roberts 2002). And as shown above, some research suggests this should be the case for the post-authoritarian period

that started in 1990 (Valenzuela, Scully and Somma 2007). Yet the issue has not been settled because we lack a comprehensive exploration of the evolution of such cleavage across time. Below we provide such exploration

Religion and political preferences

Religion can shape political preferences in two main ways: through religious identity (e. g. Catholic, Protestant, or non-religious) and through religiosity levels (Manza and Brooks 1999). Regarding the former, members with certain religious identities may believe that a given political party, candidate or platform furthers their interests, values or beliefs to a greater extent than other ones, thus supporting them disproportionately. Thus in Europe, where confessional parties are common, Catholics have rightist preferences while Protestants have leftist preferences (Dalton 2002:157). Conservative parties, while not explicitly confessional, often address moral issues which are vital to some voters, which therefore support them (Norris and Inglehart 2004:199). In fact the link between religious identity and political preferences is often mediated by attitudes towards “moral” issues such as abortion, homosexuality, euthanasia, contraception, divorce or values regarding childrearing.

These associations are not universal though. In the United States, which lacks confessional parties, the alignment is the opposite, with Catholics and Jews traditionally voting Democrat while Protestants – especially Evangelicals – voting Republican (Esmer and Patterson 2007; Lazarsfeld et al. 1948). Likewise, Latin America’s enduring tradition of association between Catholicism and rightist views was challenged during the 1960s and 1970s, when the Catholic Church leaned to the left by supporting movements that defended human rights against the authoritarian regimes of the time (Norris and Inglehart 2004:199).

The level of religiosity – as indicated by the intensity of religious feelings, beliefs, or behaviors – can also shape political preferences. While this dimension has been less studied than religious identities, it may have stronger effects than the latter on voting choices (Esmer and Patterson 2007:492). Thus, in their encompassing study of industrial and post-industrial societies, Norris and Inglehart (2004:203) found that after extensive statistical controls more frequent worship is associated with right ideological self-placement, and that the effect was stronger than that of class. Church attendance, the most commonly used indicator of religiosity, is often seen as a strong determinant of rightist positions because it allows the reinforcement of religious beliefs and group identities within conservative networks (Manza and Wright 2003).

As with class, during the last decades many scholars asserted that religious cleavages were declining in Western countries. For instance, Norris and Inglehart (2004:208) showed that the relationship between religiosity and rightist positions weakened in the last two decades in most industrial and postindustrial societies. The main cause of the decline of religious cleavages would be the process of secularization, reflected in the fall of church attendance and religious identification and beliefs. By breaking the ties between religious organizations and increasing sectors of the population, secularization would prevent political preferences to be guided by religious cues and concerns. This was accompanied by a weakening of the authority of religious organizations in society in general and by increases in education and critical skills, which reduced the extent to which religious leaders could influence people's political orientations (Dalton 2002:161; Esmer and Pettersson 2007:499; Gill 2001; Manza and Wright 2003). Others claimed that increasing rates of religious switching and religious intermarriage could also sever the links between religion and politics (Manza, Brooks and Sauder 2005:215; Manza and Brooks 1999).

Other scholars, however, suggested that while secularization could weaken the influence of religion on society and politics in general, it may not reduce such influence *among those who remain religious* – in fact, it may increase it as a counter-reaction to a secularizing environment (Manza and Wright 2003). This is consistent with Norris and Inglehart's (2004:22) finding of a 15% gap of rightist self-placements between churchgoers and the rest in postindustrial nations. Additionally, while political differences *among* denominations may decrease as a result of secularization, new divisions with political consequences may emerge *within* them – such as that between “religious traditionalists, who believe in the literal truth of the Bible, and religious modernizers, who adopt a context-bound interpretation” (Manza and Wright 2003:300).

As noted at the onset of the paper, there is no agreement in Chile about the strength of religious cleavages or their evolution across time (but see Raymond and Feltch 2012 for an excellent contribution). We examine the effect of religious identities on political preferences across time, thus contributing from a new setting (Chile) to the debate about the presumed decline of religious cleavages.

Gender and political preferences

The gender cleavage has been less studied than the religion and class cleavages, partially due to the belief that it was less consequential than the latter (Redding et al.

2010:502). During the first decades of the twentieth century, when women gained the right to vote in industrial nations, some speculated this would cause a dramatic reshape of the party system. Yet different from working class parties or religious parties, women's parties barely existed and never gained electoral salience. Moreover, women ended up voting not very different from their husbands (Manza and Brooks 1998:1238; Lazarsfeld et al. 1948; Kaufmann and Petrocik 1999). Still, the post-war studies in voting behavior identified a "traditional gender gap" according to which women had more rightist views and electoral preferences than men. This gap was attributed to traditional gender roles – the type of social change promoted by the left could threaten the stability women needed for child bearing and child caring. Other explanations focused on women's lack of ties to labor unions and their higher levels of religiosity (Inglehart and Norris 2000:441).

During the 1980s it became evident that the "traditional gender gap" was weakening in postindustrial societies, with men and women becoming more similar to each other regarding their political preferences (Inglehart and Norris 2000). The gender gap was also weak in post-communist Eastern European nations, a finding that "likely reflects the tendency for shared household characteristics to provide the basis of political choices (Evans 2006:263).

Even more crucial, recent research discovered a realignment process leading to a "new gender gap", according to which women have more leftist political views and electoral preferences than men. This new gap appeared at different times in different countries. It did so early, in the 1960s, in the United States (Brooks and Manza 1999). According to Inglehart and Norris (2000) – but not to Evans (2006) – post-communist countries are still shaped by the traditional gender gap.

Several changes may explain the new gender gap in postindustrial nations. Women's massive incorporation to the labor market, especially in full time jobs, links them to labor unions and makes them aware of gender inequalities in the workplace despite similar credentials and skills between men and women. Both things promote leftists views. Also, higher educational opportunities predispose women towards liberal views on issues advocated by the left such as reproductive choice, sexual harassment in the workplace, and equal opportunities (Inglehart and Norris 2000). Additionally, higher divorce rates in recent decades not only allow women to develop political positions independent from that of men, but also make them more vulnerable to poverty. Poverty creates a fertile soil for leftist appeals toward redistribution and the expansion of social spending. Finally, the women's movement and the expansion of feminist consciousness from the 1960s onwards also instilled a critical view of

the status quo which was more consistent with leftist or liberal positions (Manza, Brooks and Sauder 2005:215).

What about Chile? According to Inglehart and Norris's (2000:449) analysis of the World Values Survey, during the 1990s Chile still exhibited the traditional gender gap. Yet these authors did not include statistical controls in their calculations, and Chile's economic growth and social modernization in the 2000s may have put it on the track of post-industrial countries where the new gender gap was identified. Other studies found small differences in political preferences between men and women, yet the disparity of surveys, variables, and model specification used in them prevent reaching solid conclusions about the evolution of this cleavage. Our study will provide systematic results on this respect.

Age and political preferences

While there is an extensive literature about the relations between age and electoral turnout (Bartels 2008 for a review), the effect of age on political preferences remains less studied than the class, religion, and gender cleavages. Classic books on electoral research such as *The American Voter* or *The People's Choice* barely emphasized age differences (Campbell et al. 1980:493-98; Lazarsfeld et al. 1948:21-25), and age is not among the four social cleavages analyzed in Manza and Brooks's (1999) groundbreaking study. Having said that, there are two main approaches for exploring the impact of age on political preferences - life-cycle and political generations.

The life-cycle (or aging) approach assumes that people go through different stages across their life-span (e. g. adolescence, young adulthood, maturity, and old age). These stages are associated to specific values, beliefs and interests (Mortimer and Shanahan 2003) which in turn shape political preferences (Lipset 1963:279). For instance, because younger people usually have more liberal views on issues such as abortion, homosexuality, and divorce, they should be more attracted than older people by parties with socially liberal platforms (which is often the case for new-left parties). Likewise, because younger people are usually less religious than the elderly, they should prefer candidates, parties and platforms with a secular bent, which often (but not always) are located in the left side of the spectrum. Yet predictions may differ when it comes to material interests. By being more interested in comprehensive social security and health programs older people may favor leftist appeals, which are generally oriented toward the expansion of state functions and expenditures (Fischer 2008:505-8; Lipset 1963:285).

The life-cycle approach suggests additional reasons why older people should have more conservative political positions compared to younger people. Because older people had more time for accumulating material goods and wealth they may feel more threatened by parties advocating social change. Also, they may idealize the past and want to protect it from dramatic changes, and may become more authoritarian as they age (Lazarsfeld et al. 1948:23-4; Campbell et al. 1980: 166; Berelson et al. 1954:91-2; Goerres 2008:286; Johnston 1992:100). All this should make them more reluctant to hold leftist preferences than younger people.

The other approach for exploring the relations between age and political preferences is the political generations approach, originally developed by Karl Mannheim. The idea is that individuals who were born in the same time period experience the same historical and political context during their formative years (i. e. adolescence and young adulthood). Due to people's extreme permeability to contextual influences during such stages, individuals from the same generation would bear a common imprint that should condition their political preferences across their lives. As the context of the formative stages varies across time, different generations will end up having different political preferences (Goerres 2008; Johnston 1992; Lipset 1963:279-282). For instance, Americans that grew during Roosevelt's New Deal era should be especially concerned with redistributive issues - thereby voting disproportionately for Democrats. And baby boomers, by having grown in a context of economic prosperity, should vote for parties emphasizing post-material goals to a greater extent than their parents (Inglehart 1977; Rattinger 1992:233-4 and Goerres 2008:289 for similar examples). Similar arguments have been made for non-Western regions. Evans (2006:262) suggests that in post-communist Eastern Europe, age groups may vary in their political preferences to a greater extent than in the West. This is because younger cohorts are better prepared to take advantage of the new opportunities promoted by the transition to capitalism than older cohorts.

Consistent with the international literature, studies of Chilean political preferences typically include age as a control variable but spend little effort in theoretical interpretation (e. g. Torcal and Mainwaring 2003:64; Toro 2007 for an exception). Two reasons may explain this situation. Since an increasing proportion of Chilean youngsters have no political attachments it becomes difficult to identify age differences. Also, the elective affinity suggested by the life-cycle hypothesis between being young and being leftist may be precluded in post-authoritarian Chile because the center-left coalition represents the political status quo (it was in power between 1990 and 2010), therefore becoming less attractive to

young people. Through a longitudinal analysis of the net association between age and political preferences in Chile, we hope to shed some light on this point.

Attitudes toward the authoritarian regime: a new divide?

Finally, we focus on the authoritarian-democratic division (we prefer not to use the term “cleavage” because this division does not meet Brooks and Manza’s [1999] canonical conditions; see also Valenzuela [1995] on this point). There is abundant research on the determinants of people’s attitudes toward democracy and authoritarianism (starting with Almond and Verba’s 1963 classic), but we know less about how such attitudes shape political preferences. When democracy is restored in societies that underwent an authoritarian period, the political preferences of the population may be shaped by their positions toward the previous authoritarian regime (be it in favor or against it). Authoritarian regimes may leave a powerful legacy that colors the discussion of extant political issues. This is more likely to be the case if such regime was enduring, highly repressive, made structural political and/or economic reforms that created winners and losers, and created bitter resentment in some population sectors yet relief in other ones.

These four features apply to Pinochet’s regime. It lasted seventeen years - more than most other Latin American dictatorships of the time. It involved the torture and assassination of thousands of regime opponents. It radically liberalized the economy, benefiting private business sectors and imposing harsh socioeconomic costs on workers and the popular classes. In 1980 it sanctioned a hard-to-reform constitution with enduring consequences up to this day. Finally, for all these reasons, Pinochet’s dictatorship was traumatic for some sectors of the population (those repressed or damaged in their life conditions) yet it was experienced as a relief for others (those threatened by the radical reforms carried out by the socialist president Allende, who was overthrown by Pinochet’s coup in 1973).

If the attitudes (in favor or against) a previous authoritarian regime (such as Pinochet’s) are to shape people’s political preferences when democracy is restored, they must be able to connect the regime to specific political positions and its opposition to other, divergent positions. This is facilitated by the fact that authoritarianisms (as well as totalitarianisms) often have relatively neat rightist or leftist orientations (as exemplified by the contrast of Hitler’s and Stalin’s rule respectively). Once democracy is restored, those that supported the authoritarian regime will prefer, or identify themselves, with the political

ideology of such regime. Likewise, those that opposed the regime will identify themselves with the opposite ideology.

In the Chilean case, there is no doubt that Pinochet was on the right of the political spectrum. He presented himself as saving the country from the Marxist left of Socialist president Allende. He carried out typically rightist policies - free market reforms that benefited the upper classes and iron-handed policies on ordinary crime and regime opponents. It is no wonder that supporters of the regime should prefer the right in the post-authoritarian context. Conversely, those opposed to Pinochet should identify themselves with the left because Pinochet fought Marxism, Socialism, and leftism in general (even though he was Commander in Chief of the Army during Allende's government).

Given this historical background it is no surprise that a rich debate emerged during the nineties about the effect of the Pinochet years over the alignment of the recovering party system. As mentioned above this debate was relatively two-sided. On the one hand, some scholars (Scully 1992; Valenzuela and Scully 1997; Valenzuela, Scully and Somma 2007) argued that political preferences in post-authoritarian Chile was still organized around the traditional religious and class cleavages, which themselves could be tracked down to mid-nineteenth century (religion) and early twentieth century (class). In other words, despite the organization of the opposition to the military regime into a single front (*Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia*) and the incentives of the binomial electoral system, these scholars argued and found empirical support for the notion that political preferences still were conditioned by religious denomination and class membership.

On the other camp, some scholars (Tironi y Agüero 1999; Tironi, Agüero y Valenzuela 2001, and Torcal and Mainwaring (2003) argued that the new division between supporters and opponents of the Pinochet regime realigned the basis political competition. Instead of relying on the traditional cleavages of class and religion, the new “support/reject the military regime” criterion emerged as the most relevant division over which citizens organized their political preferences. Several studies based on cross-sectional survey data supported this claim (Agüero et al. 1998; Alvarez y Katz 2009; Ortega Frei 2003; Tironi, Agüero y Valenzuela 2001).

Instead of adopting one of these positions and rejecting the other one, in this paper we will model survey respondents' ideological preferences as a function of both traditional cleavage indicators (religious identification and socioeconomic indicators, among others), as well as attitudinal indicators of regime preferences. Given the longitudinal nature of the data we will be able to examine whether both type of political divisions have competed or

complemented each other between the years 1995 and 2009. We will do so by using comparable surveys, variables, and models.

Finally, it is important to note that the authoritarian-democratic divide, at least in the way we treat it here, is absent from studies about the consolidated democracies of Western Europe and North America simply because they do not have a recent authoritarian past. Interestingly, it does not appear to be a relevant shaper of political positions in post-communist Eastern European nations despite their decades of authoritarian or totalitarian rule (Evans 2006).

Data and methods

Our empirical analysis employs Chilean survey data from the Latinobarometer survey project. The surveys cover the period between 1995 and 2009, with a survey conducted every year with the exception of 1999. This data set, despite its own limitations and problems, represents one of the very few data sources that enable a genuinely longitudinal analysis of political preferences in Chile, as well as in many Latin American countries.² In the following we describe the variables and measures we employ in our analysis:

Dependent variable.

We measure the political preferences of Chileans with a question of self-placement in a scale ranging from 0 (left) to 10 (right). The left-right (or political) scale is widely used in political behavior research because it provides a usable shorthand for people's orientation "toward a society's political leaders, ideologies and parties" (Mair 2007:207; also Miller and Niemi 2002). Prior research shows that Chileans consistently order their political parties along the scale and that it represents a meaningful construct for a large majority of the population (Fontaine, 1995). The political scale has also been previously used in research on social cleavages and it is strongly correlated to voting choices not only internationally (Inglehart and Norris 2000:448; Mair 2007:218-9) but also in Chile (Mainwaring and Torcal 2003). Measures of party identification or electoral preferences would also be useful, but their high proportions of missing cases (Morales, 2010) hinder multivariate analysis.

Despite the above, using the left-right scale also entails some problems. The most important one is that a sizeable, and increasing, proportion of the population refuses to locate themselves on the scale. Figure 1 shows the evolution of the proportion of the population who

² The Latinobarometer survey is produced by Latinobarómetro Corporation. The data and abundant methodological information can be downloaded from the project's website: www.latinobarometro.org.

mentions any position on the ideological scale between 1995 and 2009. It can be seen that after the year of 1997, when this proportion peaked to 84% (according to the weighted data) it decreased to a record low of 63% in 2003. Thereafter the proportion of identifiers has remained around 70%. This proportion is not only intolerably high to simply ignore, but, as we will demonstrate empirically, there are important differences between the population that mentions any position on the scale and the population that does not. Needless to say, this constitutes a classical selection problem where the sample we observe is not a random sample of the entire sample. To address this problem we employ a Heckman selection model (Heckman, 1979) and estimate simultaneously individual's propensity to express any ideological preference as well as the position they prefer on the scale.

Independent variables

For measuring the democracy-authoritarian divide we use the following question: "With which of the following statements do you agree most? a) Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government, b) In certain situations, an authoritarian government can be preferable or c) For people like me, it does not matter whether we have a democratic or a non-democratic regime". Scholars such as Hunneus and Maldonado (2003) and Valenzuela et al. (2007) have convincingly argued that in Chile answers to this question reflect people's attitudes (in favor or against) the Pinochet regime rather than abstract appraisals about regime types. Therefore, those who prefer democracy favor the democratic regime inaugurated in 1990, and those who prefer authoritarianism favor the previous authoritarian regime. For our regression model we create two dummy variable that indicates the authoritarian (alternative b) and indifference choice (alternative c), with the last one also including the "Don't Know" responses.

To measure the class cleavage we employ two indicators of an individual's socioeconomic position, namely, level of education and a household goods index. The available measure of respondents' educational level has 8 categories that range from illiterate to complete university degree. We treat this variable as a continuous predictor. The second variable is an additive index that counts the number of goods that each survey respondent reports to posses or has in his/her household.³ If available we would have preferred to employ a measure of household income, but that variables is not measured in the Latinobarometer surveys. To validate this measure we compared this index with a household income variable

³ The goods included in the index are television, refrigerator, computer, washing machine, landline phone, car, second house and hot water. This index has a Cronbach alpha of .72

using June-July, 2010 survey of the Centro de Estudios Pùblicos. Using this data it is possible to recreate the exact same measure we propose here. It turns out that both variable are fairly highly correlated with Pearson $r=0.62$. Therefore, while the household goods index does not capture directly the level of income of each respondent's household, we employ it as a proxy given their relatively high correlation.

The other measures we employ to capture the different cleavages are fairly standard, namely, respondent's gender (dummy for male), age (which we divided into five age group dummies), and religious denomination (which is captured with four dummies: Catholics, Evangelicals, no religion, and a residual "others" category).

Lastly, in order to avoid any potential identification problems in our Heckman regression model, we include as an exclusive predictor of the selection equation a four-point interest in politics variable. This variable is assumed to affect only respondent's propensity to locate on any position on the left-right scale but not what position they prefer. Exploratory analyses confirmed that the association between interest in politics and respondent's left-right position is significant. However, this last association is much smaller than that between interest in politics and respondent's propensity to locate on the scale.⁴

Results

To evaluate the effect of the different cleavage divisions over Chileans ideological preferences we conduct two sets of analysis. First, we model respondent's propensity to mention a left-right position and their preferred position using the entire Latinobarometer pooled data set. Given some missing variables during a few applications, this accounts to a total of 11 annual surveys conducted between 1995 and 2009.⁵ In this model we incorporate all the independent variables mentioned in the last section, as well as year specific dummy variables. These last variables are included in order to absorb the specific events and circumstances that took place during the application of the surveys. The parameters from this model indicate the average effect of each variable for the entire period between 1995 and 2009. Second, we apply this same model specification, with the exception of the survey-year dummy variables, to each survey separately. Then we plot the parameter estimates in order to

⁴ Using the pooled data with all available years the correlation between interest in politics and respondent's position on the scale is -.12, while the respective correlation with the propensity to locate on the scale is 0.32. In any case, adding interest in politics into the outcome equation does not produce any meaningful change in the estimates.

⁵ To be more exact, we have available data for the years 1996, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2007 and 2009.

capture the evolution of the association between the different cleavage variables and respondents' ideological preferences.

Results from the pooled model are shown in Table 1. While our substantive interest is concentrated in the outcome equation (which predicts respondents' position on the ideological scale) the selection equation (which predicts respondent's chance to mention any position on the scale) contains some interesting patterns worth mentioning. In the first place, with the only exception of the "others" religion dummy variable, all coefficients are statistically significant at a 99% level of confidence or higher. Moreover, almost all effects are positive. Being a male, having a higher level of education, a higher household goods index score, being Catholic or Evangelical (as opposed to non-religious), mentioning that an authoritarian government can be preferable (as opposed to choosing the "democracy is preferable" option) and, most important of all, a higher level of interest in politics, increases significantly respondent's chance of locating themselves on the left-right scale. The effect of age is also positive and the magnitude of the parameter for each older group increases up to the last group of respondents of 66 years or older. The coefficient of this last group is also positive and significant though.

The outcome equation also contains many significant estimates. With the exception of the gender dummy variable, all coefficients are positive, which indicates an increase towards a more right-wing position. We highlight some of the most interesting patterns.

First, the age group variable is not only positive and significant, but the magnitude of the coefficient grows monotonically as the groups grow older. While belonging to the 26-35 years old groups, as opposed to the 18-25 years group, is associated with an increase 0.17 points of the scale, the effect more than doubles up to almost half a point (0.43) among those belonging to the oldest group.

Both of our socioeconomic variables also have positive and significant effects for the 1995-2009 period. A unit increase of the 8-point education scale is associated with an increase of 0.12 of the political scale. This implies that the difference between those with the lowest and highest educational level is around three-quarters of a point of the left-right scale (0.80). The results from the household goods index, which was coded with a range from zero to one, indicate that the difference between someone on the bottom and top of the scale are tantamount to almost 1 entire point of the dependent variable (0.97).

The three religious denomination variables also indicate that self-identifying as a Catholic, Evangelical protestant or other religion, as opposed to not identifying with any religion, is associated with an increase on the location of the left-right scale. The estimates for

Evangelicals and Catholics are particularly pronounced, leading a positive change equivalent to almost three-quarters of a point of the scale.

Lastly, the two dummy variables reflecting attitudes towards democracy also increase respondent's location on the left-right scale, with the effect being of dramatic proportions for those who mentioned that an authoritarian government can be preferable. Authoritarian preferences, as opposed to democratic preferences under all circumstances, locate respondents, on average, almost two additional points towards the right pole.

These effects for the entire 1995-2009 period clearly demonstrate that several social and political divisions have significant effects skewing Chileans ideological preferences. We claim that these results provide simultaneous support for both the classical sociological notion that emphasizes the role of traditional cleavages, particularly social class and religious denomination, and for the "constructionist" approach that emphasizes the relevance of political cleavages - and in Chile in particular, about the relevance of the division between supporters and opponents to the military dictatorship. Moreover, the Chilean case seems to reinforce the issue evolution perspective (Carmines & Stimson, 1986) which argues that alternative social and political divisions do not necessary substitute, but can complement each other.

While the pooled model provides valuable information, it also hides important levels of heterogeneity in the effect of cleavage divisions across the time span we have been able to incorporate in the analysis. To highlight this variability and make visible some important temporal patterns, we estimated separately for each survey the same model specification shown in Table 1 (though excluding the survey dummy variables). We show the results in Figures 2 through 6. Each figure plots the parameter estimates of the specified independent variables along with their 95% confidence intervals and adds a local fit curve that makes the temporal patterns more interpretable.

The results for gender (dummy for males) are shown in Figure 2. For most years the estimate is negative, but only significant for years 1996, 1997, and marginally, for 2003. More importantly, the local fit curve indicates that the size of the effect is decreasing progressively up to the point where it is very near from zero during the last application of the available data.

With two partial exceptions the results from the age groups shown on Figure 3, indicate a very high degree of stability of the effect of this variable through the years. The generally flat local fit curves make this pattern visible. The exceptions to the general pattern are the recent increase in right-wing positions among members of the 46-55 years old group, and the slightly negative slope of the curve of the oldest age group.

The results from these plots also confirm that older age groups have a more pronounced skew to favor more right-wing positions. The effects are not consistently significant year after year, but most of the cases with significant effects are concentrated among the two oldest age groups. It is not possible to assert whether these are cohort effects or life cycle effects, but in further research why will address this issue.

The evolution of the socioeconomic indicators is shown on Figure 4. Here one can observe a simultaneous recent increase in the magnitude of the effect of the household goods index accompanied with a sharp decrease in the effect of education. The decrease of the effect of education has been systematic from 2003 up to the most recent survey, with the exception of the 2007 survey that registers a very small recovery. The increase of the effect of the household goods index is more recent though has been much accentuated, leading during the 2009 measure to the largest estimate from the entire series.

Figure 5 shows the results for the religious denomination variables. We can observe again a reduction in the effect of a cleavage variable. For example, being Catholic is systematically associated with a more right-wing position on the left-right scale, but this divergence has been decreasing during the last three available surveys up to the point of having a non-significant effect during the 2009 survey, something that only occurs one more time in 1995. Among Evangelicals, one can observe a slight decrease in the magnitude of the positive coefficients between 1996 and 2003, and thereafter estimates remain stable and significant. Results among the residual “others” religion category also show a reduction in the size of the coefficients.

Finally, the coefficients of both dummy variables of attitudes towards democracy are captured in Figure 6. We can observe in both cases a spectacular and constant decrease in the size of the coefficients starting around the year 2001. Although the “authoritarian government can be preferable” option remains highly significant during all available years, it is also true that the size of the coefficient in the last survey is just about half of its size in the 2001 survey. The “don’t care about government” option remains positive, but is statistically indistinguishable from zero during the last survey.

In sum, with the only exception of the household good index that shows a strong increase of its effect during the last three surveys, there is a systematic reduction in the effect of multiple cleavage variables, most notably education, religious denomination, and regime preferences of respondents. We believe it is too early to make definitive claims, but the evidence seems to indicate that Chilean society is experiencing a generalized de-alignment of the social and political basis of ideological preferences.

Conclusions

Now it is more than half a century since political sociologists and political scientists started exploring seriously when, how, and to what extent social cleavages shape the political preferences of citizens. Because most of such research focuses on highly developed nations with long and uninterrupted democratic trajectories, we are concerned by what happens to social cleavages in newly restored democracies undergoing a process of regime consolidation. We address this issue for Chile, a country with a relatively solid democratic tradition for Latin American standards that nonetheless suffered from a harsh and long dictatorship between 1973 and 1990. Using Latinobarometer survey data between 1995 and 2009, we explore the effect of social cleavages in Chilean's political preferences as democracy consolidated and became "the only game in town" (Di Palma year).

Past research on this issue for Chile revolved around the debate between the role of social cleavages (e. g. class and religion) *vis-à-vis* the role of political divisions (such as attitudes in favor or against the Pinochet regime). Yet because such research was based on cross-sectional data for one or at most two years (Raymond and Feltch 1012 for a notable exception), up to now we did not know whether the effect of cleavages changed across time (and if so, how). Using yearly Latinobarometer surveys for the 1995-2009 period, we show that the consolidation of Chilean democracy was accompanied by a generalized process of dealignment regarding class (at least when measured with the respondent's education level), religious, and gender cleavages. This is consistent with scholarship that also found a general erosion of social cleavages in developed democracies since the 1960s. We also show that the effect of the division between those favoring and those opposing democracy dwindled too. Interestingly, our household goods index goes against this pattern and becomes more important as a predictor of political preferences from 2004 onwards.

At this point we can merely speculate about the reasons behind cleavage decline. Here we offer some preliminary thoughts as a way of paving future research. First, a general explanation – plausible for all cleavages – is that the two coalitions that dominated the political landscape since the restoration of democracy in 1990 (the Concertación and the Alianza) moved to a political center, therefore becoming increasingly similar in their programmatic appeals. For instance, despite their center-left discourse, the Concertación governments did not reform the bases of the neoliberal model inherited from the Pinochet dictatorship, failed to incorporate organized civil society in policy decisions, did not fear repressing disruptive leftist protests, and could not reduce Chile's alarming socioeconomic

inequalities. And the Alianza, both when acting as political opposition (1990-2009) and as government (2010 to this day), built bridges with popular sectors (specially its more right-wing party, the UDI) and middle classes, and attempted to distance itself from the Pinochet regime. This alleged simultaneous move to the center may have eroded the clarity of the cues that both coalitions sent to the citizenship, allowing groups with traditionally fixed commitments to develop more flexible political preferences.

A second explanatory process is related to the dramatic increase in educational levels and general cognitive sophistication, buttressed by the expansion of internet in ways that allow obtaining, processing, and diffusing new political information. This may have created a public less attracted by group appeals (be them religious, socioeconomic, or of any other type) and more prone to define its political preferences on the basis of personalized criteria that defy group memberships.

Besides these general explanations, one might think about specific factors behind the decline of each cleavage. For instance, the decline of the class cleavage (at least when measured by education levels) may have resulted from the increasing economic prosperity of Chileans during the 1990s and 2000s – especially among the popular and middle classes. Such prosperity could have eroded any vestige of class consciousness that survived Pinochet's rule and the sustained weakening of labor unions. Additionally, the dramatic increase in consumption levels and the proliferation of credit cards may reflect an embourgeoisement process comparable to the one that took place in post-war European working classes – a process that for some scholars triggered the decline of class voting in that region.

This argument, however, cannot account for the increase in the effect of the household goods index since 2004. How can we make sense of this finding? Perhaps the consolidation by that time of the multimillionaire businessman and Harvard PhD Sebastián Piñera as the strongest presidential candidate for the Alianza, moved the upper classes (among whom Piñera is “one of their flock”) to the right and the lower classes - by reaction - to the left, therefore restoring the “natural” class alignment. Nonetheless, a comprehensive assessment of the class cleavage will require more refined measures (e. g. those based on occupational categories) as well as analytic methods that allow exploring the changes in specific classes (*à la* Manza and Brooks 1999).

The decline of the religious cleavage could eventually be explained by the secularization of Chilean society. Secularization was expressed above all in the dramatic increase of people without religious identities (which went from 8.6% in 1995 to 15.0% in 2009), and more tangentially in the drop of confidence in the church (with the percentage of

those having “a lot of confidence” going from 46.5% in 1995 to 25.5% in 2009; findings from work in progress by the authors). According to the literature discussed above, secularization is supposed to weaken the political appeals spread in pulpits and religious circles more generally. And party leaders, intuiting that the importance of religion is declining, may find it unnecessary (and even detrimental) to pepper with references to religion the messages to their constituents. The attenuation of religious cues in political messages may have allowed Chileans with different religious identities to build their political preferences with greater flexibility as time went by.

A counter-hypothesis, however, claims that secularization increases religious cleavages because it leaves only “hardcore” believers with religious identities and motivates reactive religiosity. Yet this process may have been obstructed in Chile by the declining confidence in the church (Catholic or otherwise), which could have predisposed hardcore believers to be less receptive to religious guidance in extra-religious domains (e. g. politics). Beyond these speculations, the religious factor merits more research – for instance by including indicators of public and private religiosity that cut across religious denominations, and by considering attitudes on moral issues (e. g. abortion, homosexuality, contraception) that have strong religious overtones and could mediate the relationship between religious identities and political preferences.

The decline of the gender cleavage may be partially explained by socio-demographic trends. For instance, the increase in the rate of female labor participation (which grew by 45% between 1990 and 2010⁶) may have provided many women with first-hand experiences of gender occupational segregation, creating a fertile ground for leftist appeals. The combination of increasing female labor participation with rising divorce rates⁷, declining fertility rates (Donoso n/d), and female educational expansion, may have shaken traditional gender roles and promoted liberal values to the extent that Chilean women ended up with political preferences very similar to that of men. Beyond socio-demographic factors, salient leftists female leaders, most prominently former President Michelle Bachelet (a Socialist militant), may have attracted many women to the leftist pole, also contributing to the closure of the “traditional gender gap” in recent years.

⁶ The figures of economically active women as a percentage of all women above 15 are as follows: 29.9% in 1990, 34.2% in 1995, 38.0% in 2000, 40.6% in 2005, and 43.4% in 2010. Data taken from ECLAC’s Social Indicators Database: <http://websie.eclac.cl/sisgen/ConsultaIntegrada.asp?IdAplicacion=1>

⁷ See: http://www.registrocivil.cl/Estadisticas_enfoque/estadisticas_enfoque_1.html

Finally, the dramatic decline in the effect of attitudes toward democracy (and indirectly the Pinochet regime) makes sense in light of recent political developments in Chile. The consolidation of democracy in the 1990s, signed by the disappearance of the danger of an authoritarian reversal and the frenzy predicaments of the political class about the virtues of democracy, displaced the debate about the merits and demerits of the authoritarian legacy (which by now is essentially confined to the discussion of the electoral deadlocks put in place by the 1980 Constitution and its binominal system). Pinochet's retirement from political life in 1998 and subsequent death in 2006 also contributed to diminish the salience of such debate. This was also helped by the public emergence of new, more pressing issues regarding the economy, social policies, the environment, and the rights of sexual and ethnic minorities among other ones. This shift in priorities possibly relaxed the links between the authoritarian regime and political preferences – now “left” and “right” meant new things besides regime attitudes. Quite likely demography also contributed to the waning relevance of this political division. As time passed, older cohorts that lived throughout the authoritarian period and even the Allende years were replaced by younger cohorts that grew in democratic times, and for which the authoritarian period is too vague a reminiscence for structuring their political preferences.

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Tables and Figures

	Selection Eq.	Outcome Eq.
Intercept	-0.722 *** (0.0781)	2.1168 *** (0.1426)
Male	0.1258 *** (0.0264)	-0.1552 *** (0.0465)
26-35 years	0.1293 *** (0.04)	0.1688 ** (0.0703)
36-45 years	0.1224 *** (0.0408)	0.2284 *** (0.0723)
46-55 years	0.1725 *** (0.045)	0.2608 *** (0.0787)
56-65 years	0.2123 *** (0.0499)	0.3519 *** (0.0874)
66 years or more	0.1224 ** (0.0516)	0.4292 *** (0.0943)
Education	0.0742 *** (0.0101)	0.115 *** (0.0181)
Goods Index	0.1806 *** (0.0671)	0.9711 *** (0.1194)
Other religion	0.0427 (0.0628)	0.3313 *** (0.1116)
Evangelical	0.1387 *** (0.0518)	0.7086 *** (0.0959)
Catholic	0.1674 *** (0.0401)	0.7641 *** (0.0711)
Don't care about gov. type / Dk	-0.1912 *** (0.0294)	0.5919 *** (0.0586)
Authoritarian gov. can be preferable	0.1724 *** (0.039)	1.9056 *** (0.0625)
Interest in Politics	0.5357 *** (0.0175)	- -
Sigma		2.3149
Rho		0.6033
N obs / N censored		12900 / 3047

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

Note: Model includes year effects for each survey.

Table 1: Heckman selection model for left-right ideological scale (pooled data).

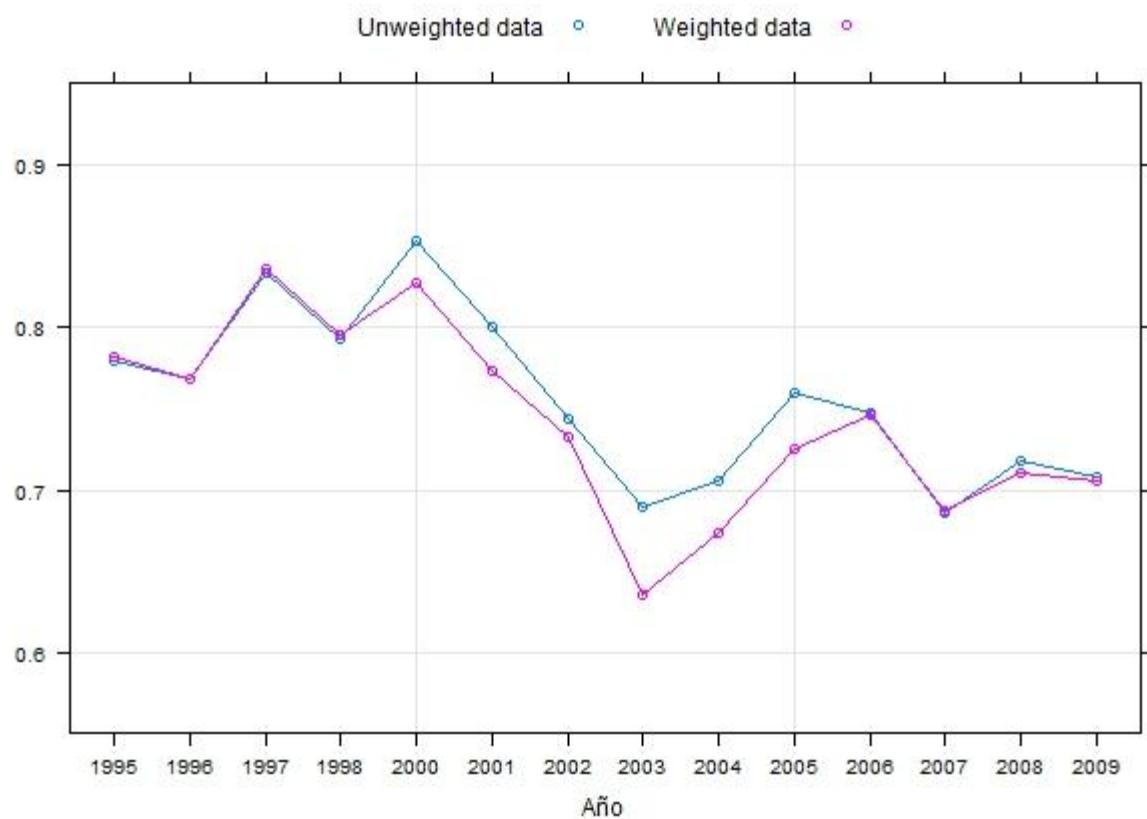


Figure 1: Proportion of the Population that Identifies with Left-Right Scale.

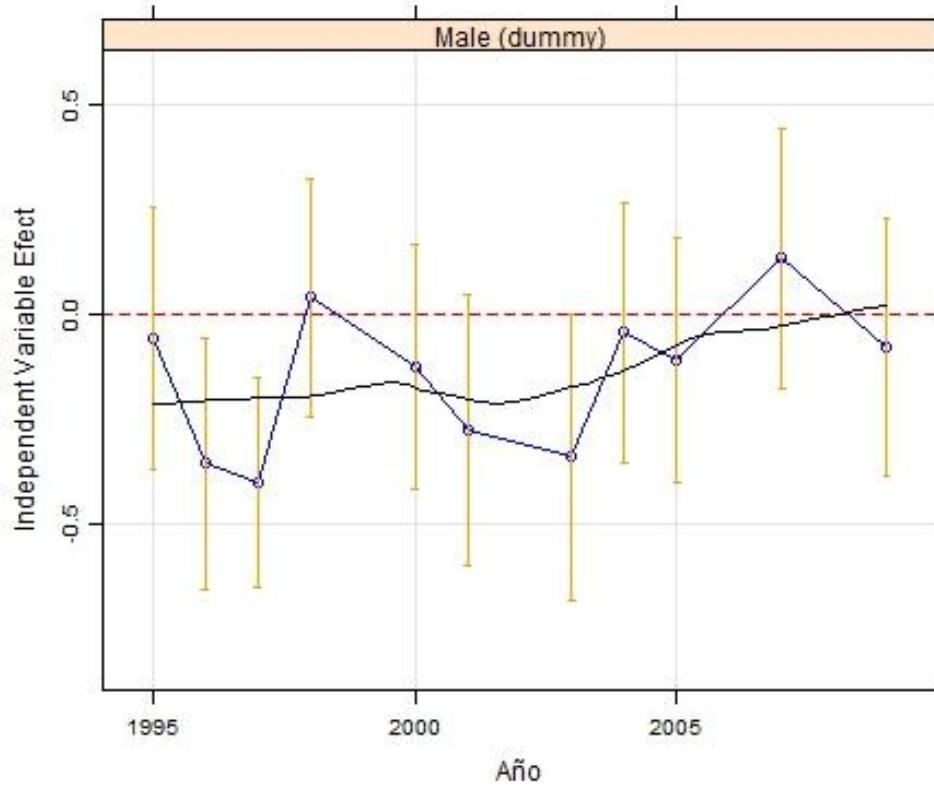


Figure 2: Evolution of male dummy coefficient from Heckman selection model applied to each available year of Latinobarometer data.

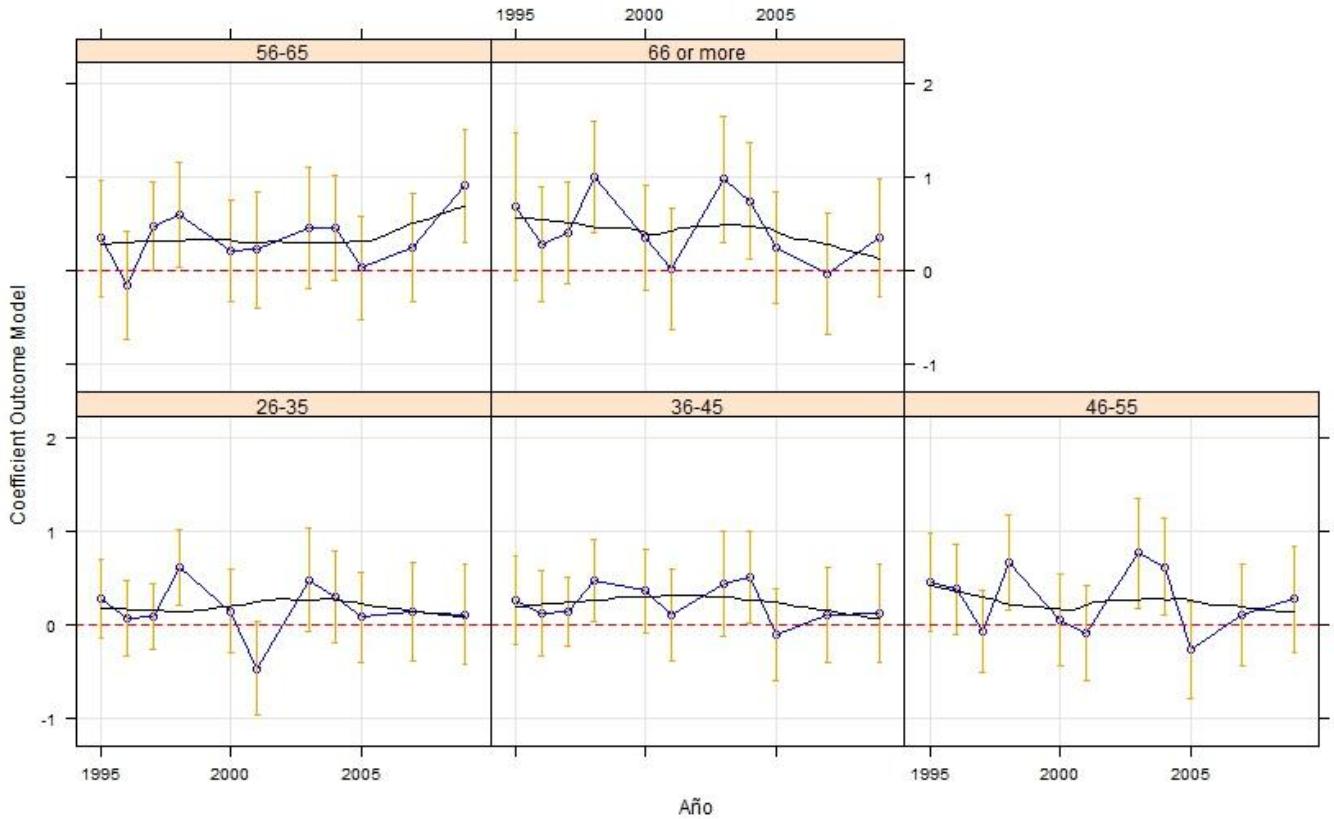


Figure 3: Evolution of age group coefficients from Heckman selection model applied to each available year of Latinobarometer data.

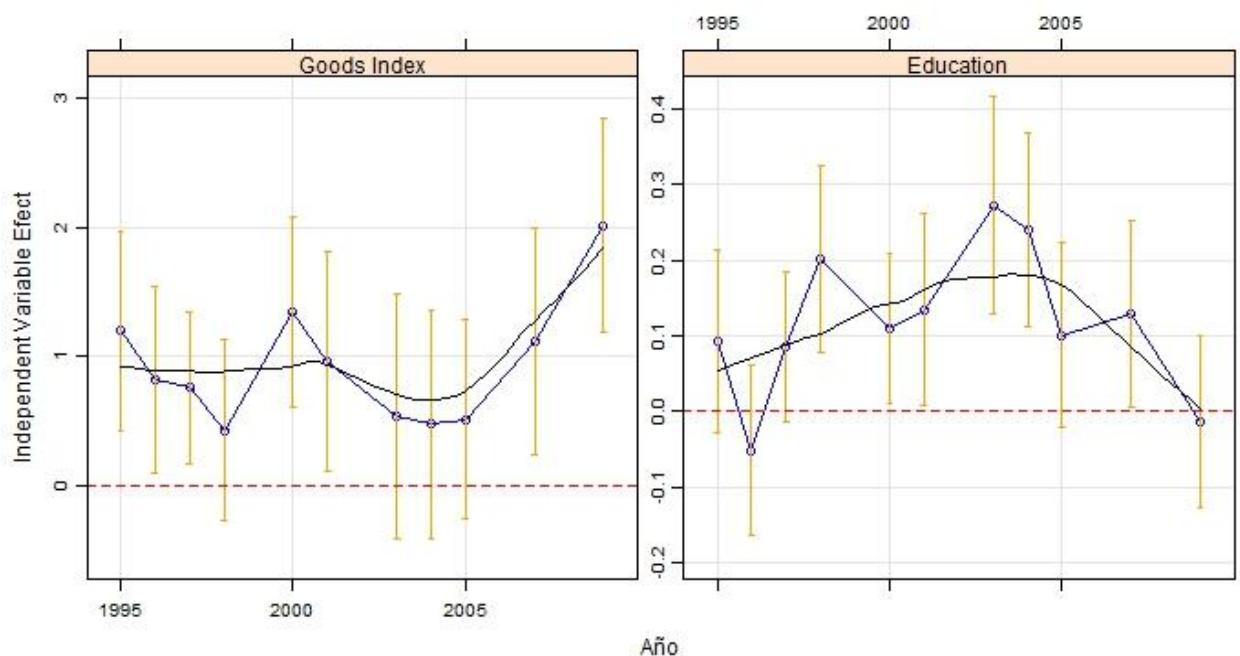


Figure 4: Evolution of socioeconomic coefficients from Heckman selection model applied to each available year of Latinobarometer data.

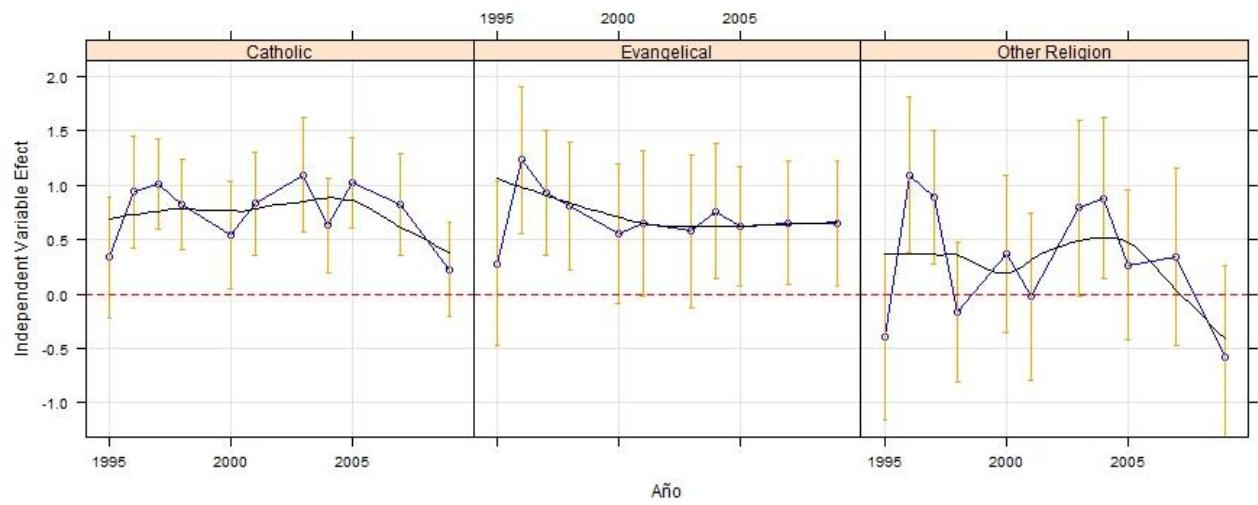


Figure 5: Evolution of religious group coefficients from Heckman selection model applied to each available year of Latinobarometer data.

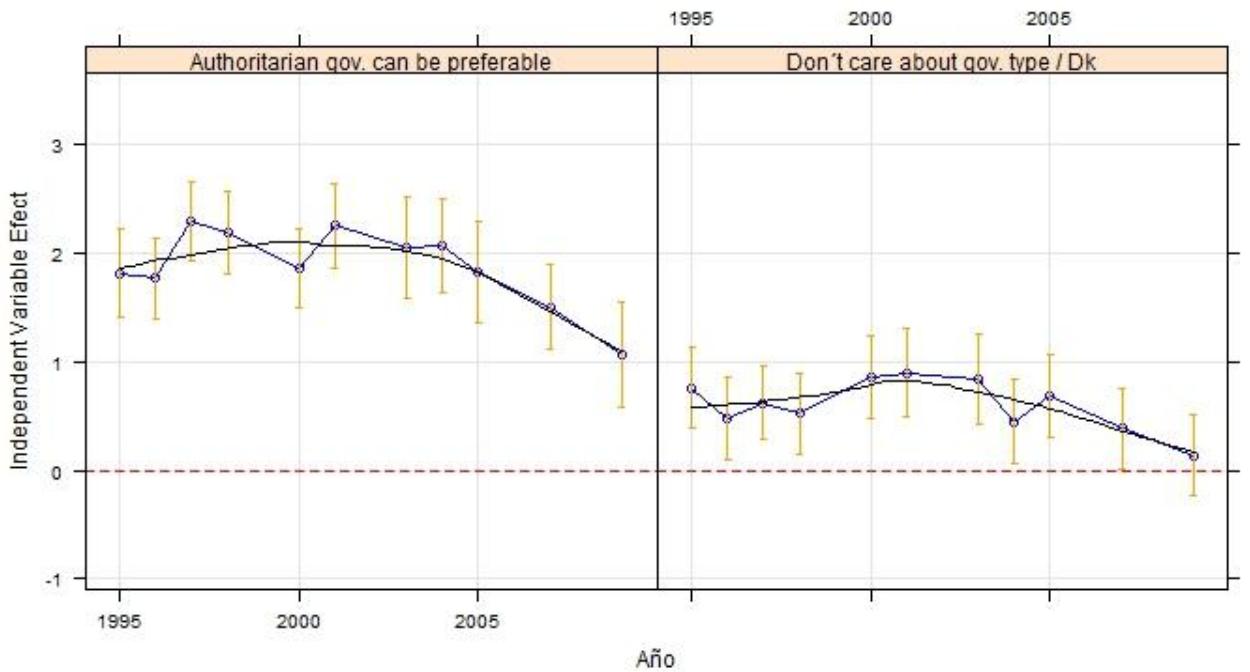


Figure 6: Evolution of attitudes towards regime coefficients from Heckman selection model applied to each available year of Latinobarometer data.