
Article:
Evans, J orcid.org/0000-0001-8335-9630 and Tonge, J (2018) Partisan and religious drivers of moral conservatism: Same-sex marriage and abortion in Northern Ireland. Party Politics, 24 (4). pp. 335-346. ISSN 1354-0688

Partisan and religious drivers of moral conservatism: same-sex marriage and abortion in Northern Ireland

Jocelyn Evans (University of Leeds) and Jonathan Tonge (University of Liverpool)

Abstract

This article assesses the importance of religious affiliation, observance, faith and party choice in categorising attitudes to two of the most important contemporary moral and ethical issues: same-sex marriage and abortion. Whilst religious conditioning of moral attitudes has long been seen as important, this article goes beyond analyses grounded in religiosity to explore whether support for particular political parties – and the cues received from those parties on moral questions – may counter or reinforce messages from the churches. Drawing upon new data from the extensive survey of public opinion in the 2015 Northern Ireland election study, the article analyses the salience of religious, party choice and demographic variables in determining attitudes towards two key social issues. Same-sex marriage and abortion (other than in very exceptional abortion cases) are both still banned in Northern Ireland, but the moral and religious conservatism underpinning prohibition has come under increasing challenge, especially in respect of same-sex marriage. The extent to which political messages compete with religious ones may influence attitudes to the moral issues of the moment.

Keywords

Same-sex marriage, abortion, political parties, Northern Ireland, religion, faith

Introduction

The issues of same-sex marriage and abortion have created political divisions in many countries in recent times. Although momentum towards the legalisation of same-sex marriage is considerable (it was outlawed globally until the twenty-first century) only 22 of the world's 195 countries permit such unions (Pew Research Center 2015). Legal positions on abortion vary considerably, with just over 60 per cent of countries operating a legal framework described as permissive (Center for Reproductive Rights 2015).

This article assesses what is most significant – political parties, religious affiliation, depth of religious belief, or non-political and non-religious items, such as education, gender or age – in indicating attitudes towards moral issue? The theoretical and empirical case for the attitudinal influence of religion, using a range of religious belief and practice measures, is well documented in

the literature, yet it is far less the case that the issue of party choice has been considered in addition to religious variables. In some cases, this omission may be a derivative of the reluctance of political parties to take strong stances on moral issues, preferring to leave matters to individual consciences rather than become embroiled in sensitive and divisive arenas. The lack of consideration of party influences is nonetheless surprising, given that the potential capacity of political parties to offer messages at odds with those emanating from the churches is considerable, in an era of greater western secularism and increased social liberalism on moral issues. The question begged is, to which messages are voters more receptive?

Northern Ireland provides an ideal test case to examine the intersection between political partisanship and religious propensity. Socially and religiously conservative since its foundation in 1921, the polity still contains strong religious sentiment among Protestants and Catholics. It provides an example of a confessional political system and holds overwhelmingly religiously derived support bases for its political parties. Yet, as its ethno-national and ethno-religious conflicts subside, Northern Ireland is far from immune from the forces of secularism, and controversies over same-sex marriage and abortion have become increasingly prominent. Same-sex marriage remains illegal even though legislation permitting such unions was passed for England, Wales and Scotland in 2014 and the historically religiously and socially conservative Republic of Ireland enacted a similar law in 2015. When abortion was legalised elsewhere in the UK in 1967, this provision was not extended to Northern Ireland, where it is permitted only where the mother's life is endangered, or there is a serious and permanent risk to her health. Gay, lesbian, bisexual and 'pro-choice' women's groups have claimed that the concept of 'parity of esteem' enshrined in the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, Northern Ireland's 'peace deal', is extendable to considerations beyond the equal status of the dominant Unionist and Nationalist ethno-national blocs. Several attempts to introduce legislation permitting same-sex marriage have been blocked by Unionist members of the Northern Ireland Assembly and substantial public demonstrations in favour of change have been held. Legal

challenges to the ban are looming. Abortion has been the subject of increasing contestation between pro- and anti-abortion groups in recent years.

In order to test the importance of 'party versus God' in shaping attitudes to same-sex marriage and abortion, we draw upon new evidence from the 2015 Northern Ireland General Election study. We use data from that study to assess how attitudes to same-sex marriage and abortion are sorted by party identification, religious affiliation, religiosity and depth of religious belief, in addition to possible demographic indicators. Conceptually we aim to shed new light on church versus party debates, using new empirical material, with resonance for the many countries experiencing tensions between religious sentiment and secular outlooks in shaping marriage and abortion laws.

Partisanship, religion and moral issues

The impact of religious belonging upon social and moral conservatism has been subject to considerable research. Greater conservatism amongst the religious has been noted in a succession of studies through the decades (e.g. Morgan and Meier 1980; Bean 1999; Bruce 2013) with the same studies also noting how religious affiliation often conditions political attitudes and moral choices. There is a long-standing literature associating religious faith with social conservatism (e.g. Wald et al. 1990; Malka et al. 2012). Party identification and choice may derive in part from religious affiliation across a wide variety of polities (e.g. Tilley 2015; van der Brug and Hobolt 2009; Wald and Calhoun-Brown 2014). Parties may offer strident or latent positions on moral issues. Their attitudes to these issues may be influenced by a number of political and religious forces and raises the question of whether political parties shape or follow public opinion. There may be differences according to the salience and longevity of the issues concerned.

Religious organisations, as non-vote seekers, are less likely to change stances on the basis of popularity, although they are vulnerable to followers exercising the exit option if offering

standpoints which appear increasingly unpalatable. Although the extent of religious influence naturally varies across countries and contexts, there are a number of ways in which churches influence political standpoints. These include rules of conduct, ranging from religious texts to church-made laws, decrees from church leaders, community activity and exhortations from local clergy (Djupe and Gilber 2009).

Whilst much church activity may not be overtly party political – church demands for support for a particular political organisation are very rare – the effect may be more subtle and subliminal. Churches tend to encourage political participation and urge followers to note the stances of political parties. They may facilitate inter-party debates, allowing parishioners to cross-examine political representatives on the extent to which their parties adhere to church decrees. Political actors may thus come under pressure to take their political cues from this nexus of church and politics. As an example, a study of 21 Protestant congregations in the United States found them to operate as essentially political communities, in which the depth of religious fundamentalism within each contributed substantially to the extent of political conservatism displayed by adherents (Wald et al. 1988). Roman Catholic communities may also operate as political groupings. Norrander and Wilcox (1999) found the quantity of Catholic residents to be a highly significant variable in terms of attitudes to abortion within state legislatures in the United States, with Catholic communities, encouraged by their religious leaders, mounting considerable opposition to 'pro-choice' campaigns. Huckfelt et al.'s (1993) analysis of stances on abortion also found Catholic density important, arguing that the rigidity of Catholic opposition created unified parishes which acted as significant political collectives, often at variance to the attitudes of non-Catholic neighbourhoods of similar social status. Similarly Minkenberg (2002) found strong correlations between religiously observant Catholic countries, Christian Democrat parties and substantial restrictions upon the availability of abortion. Olson et al.'s (2006) examination of public opinion in the United States on same-sex marriage found that religious variables were more important than demographic indicators in terms of attitudes on the issue, with non-Protestants much more likely to back same-sex unions. However, Olson et al.'s

models did not control for party identification, only for broad ideological outlook (conservative, moderate, or liberal).

One might assume in response that, in western democracies at least, diminished (Christian) religious sentiment might reduce both the extent of church affiliations and their importance on moral questions. However, it should also be noted that secularization is only 'a tendency, not an iron law' (Norris and Inglehart 2011: 5). Moreover, there is variation in the extent of diminution of religious observation and in respect of the ebbing linkages between religion and voting choices. As such there is still considerable scope for religion to matter and for parties influenced by the religious affiliations of their adherents to offer political choices cognisant of the support base.

Religion, politics and moral issues in Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland offers a very useful testing ground for the respective saliences of party, church and faith in shaping attitudes to moral questions. Here, debates over the near-total ban on abortion have been juxtaposed with the assumption of a broad, religiously-derived cross-party, cross-community consensus that there is no great local desire to introduce major liberalisation of the prohibitive law. Same-sex marriage has seen sharp debate recently, but only appeared on the political radar in Northern Ireland with the arrival of devolved government in 1999. UK-wide law, passed at Westminster, allowed civil partnerships and Northern Ireland hosted the first in the UK, on 17 December 2005. The Northern Ireland Assembly holds legislative control on same-sex marriage and abortion and party contests on these issues are evident. Any party favouring liberalisation of the current laws is engaged in a process of detaching electors from the positions taken by their church, given the uniformity of opposition among Northern Ireland's Christian denominations.

Party choice in Northern Ireland is influenced by a combination of national identification (overwhelmingly British, Irish or Northern Irish); ideological affiliation (Unionist or Nationalist); and religious background; Protestant or Catholic, with the constituency proportions of these two

religions dominating levels of voting for Unionist and Nationalist parties (Tonge and Evans 2010, 2015; Evans and Tonge 2013). We wish to examine whether this is combination replicated in terms of stances on salient social and moral questions. Are these (relatively) new arenas of contestation entirely distinct from the traditional divide between (mainly) Protestant British Unionists and (mainly) Catholic Irish Nationalists, or do some aspects of the moral debate map onto long-held divisions? Are longstanding communal rivalries replicated or cross-cut by the party politics of the 'moral agenda' – the divisive issues of same-sex marriage and abortion? In tackling these questions, we examine the stances of political parties, churches and electors on same-sex marriage and abortion.

In the Northern Ireland context, where Protestants remain (just) in the majority and where religious identification remains important, there is a strong possibility of such identification – whether Protestant or Catholic - acting as a significant variable in attitudes on moral and political questions. Hayes and Dowds (2015) demonstrate how religious identification and religious practice are both influential variables in terms of attitudes to same-sex marriage in Northern Ireland. Although not immune from wider processes of secularization, Northern Ireland is a religious society in terms of belief. In the 2015 Northern Ireland General Election survey used in the subsequent analysis, only eight per cent of adults declare themselves of no religion. Religious self-labelling is far from diminished: 91 per cent of the population identify as Protestant or Catholic, whereas in some other archetypal pillarized democracies, such as the Netherlands, religious identity has long diminished in extent, as well as political and indeed spiritual import (Houtman and Mascini 2002; van der Eijk and Niemöller 1987).

If congregations slavishly adhered to the strictures of their churches, there would be virtually no support for the legalisation of same-sex marriage or abortion (other than in the most extreme circumstances) with backing for change probably confined to the small section of Northern Ireland's population eschewing religious identification. The main Protestant churches in Ireland all

oppose same-sex marriage. The largest denomination, the Church of Ireland insisted, after the 2015 vote in support of same-sex marriage in the Republic of Ireland, that the Church 'defines marriage as between a man and a woman and the referendum result does not alter this' (Church of Ireland 2015). The second-largest denomination, the Presbyterian Church, wrote to all Northern Ireland's MPs prior to the UK Parliament's introduction of same-sex marriage urging 'strong support for the retention of the present legal definition of marriage' and expressing fears that liberalisation elsewhere in the UK would increase pressure for change in Northern Ireland (Presbyterian Church in Ireland 2015). The head of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland declared that he felt a sense of 'bereavement' after the vote in favour of same-sex marriage in the Irish Republic (*Irish Times*, 2 June 2015) whilst the President of Ireland's Methodist Church asserted that 'the referendum result is not compatible with what the Methodist Church in Ireland recognises as the basis of Christian marriage … no minister has the authority to conduct the marriage of same sex partners' (Methodist Church in Ireland 2015). On abortion, the Presbyterian Church insists upon the 'sanctity of human life' which 'begins at conception' and declares its 'opposition to abortion on demand' (Presbyterian Church in Ireland 2015). The Church of Ireland 'opposes abortion in principle' other than in cases of 'strict and undeniable medical necessity' (Anglican Communion News Service 2015) and the Roman Catholic Church has consistently condemned abortion (Saunders 2015).

Whilst the authority of the Roman Catholic Church has been in considerable decline in the Irish Republic in recent decades (e.g. Inglis 1998), a view seemingly confirmed by the substantial referendum backing for same-sex marriage, the decline of the Church and its Protestant counterparts in Northern Ireland has attracted less attention. Religious identification remains very extensive, inculcated from birth, with the 2015 election study indicating that only 4.5 per cent of the population were brought up of no religion.

An alternative possible explanation of religious influence beyond denominational affiliation is that it is not identification with a particular religion *per se* that matters in shaping attitudes on the

moral issues under investigation. After all, the vast bulk of Northern Ireland's population identify with a religion, but even in this region, more resistant to the secularism evident in other Christian countries in Western Europe, less than half attend church regularly. 45 per cent claimed regular attendance in 2007 (Ashworth and Farthing 2007: 10) with the 2015 election study suggesting a lower figure of 37 per cent. Conceivably, attitudes on moral issues may be shaped more by actual attendance at church, to hear strictures on moral issues from the pulpit, or by the depth of personal religious faith, rather than via what may be nominal claimed religious affiliation bereft of significant commitment. In terms of religion, believing, belonging and attending may all be important in shaping attitudes. Believing, i.e. the faith variable, may influence attitudes on issues such as abortion. A person with a strong faith in God may be disposed towards the view that this Supreme Being is the instigator of life and as such, abortion infringes upon the award of that life. Equally, someone with a strong evangelical faith and a literal interpretation of the Bible might contend that the creationist story of Adam and Eve provided grounds for support only for heterosexual unions. Obviously these attitudes as derivatives of personal faith may be reinforced by aspects of belonging, including regular church attendance and organised religious observance, but there is a growing body of work which suggests the possibility of an independent depth-of-faith effect conditioning attitudes, beyond formal religious ritual (Greeley 1995; Whitehead 2010; Hayes and Dowds 2015).

Political party influences on moral issues

The fusion between theology and politics has been substantial within the confessional political system in Northern Ireland and some of the parties have offered uncompromising views on moral concerns. The current largest party in the Northern Ireland Assembly, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) was formed by a cleric, the Reverend Ian Paisley, in 1971 and was dominated for decades by members of his ultra-conservative Free Presbyterian Church. The Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), the largest force in Northern Ireland politics from the 1920s until the early 2000s, was formally aligned to an overtly religious and exclusively Protestant organisation, the Orange Order, until 2005. Both the DUP and UUP contained a number of prominent elected representatives who

were also ministers of religion and fostered a religiously conservative culture, in which adherence to the principles of Protestantism informed the political Unionism on which the parties were based. Within nationalist politics, however, the onset of the Troubles at the end of the 1960s saw the displacement of the Nationalist Party, influenced by Catholic clerics, replaced by the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) and Sinn Féin (SF). Both parties claim to reject religious influences, although their support bases are almost exclusively Catholic.

Whilst there has been considerable intra-bloc fluctuation in party fortunes in recent times, there is still significant brand loyalty towards political parties in the region and voters may take attitudinal cues from their political leaders. As vote maximisers, parties monitor shifts in attitudes. Even the DUP, despite its religiously fundamentalist history, has been obliged towards pragmatic compromise. As one example, the DUP opposed the opening of amenities, such as public parks, on Sundays, believing it to be a breach of the Sabbath. Yet under pressure from its electoral base which included far less devout working-class followers, the party quietly dropped its opposition, initially accepting local referendums and then abandoning its non-acceptance of Sunday opening (Southern 2005).

The capacity of parties to shape public preferences is considerable. Yet as Slothuus (2010) points out, even the most capable parties, with loyal adherents, need to offer views to which followers must attach some sympathy. Thus parties need to be cognisant of shifts in public opinion. Since the arrival of same-sex marriage upon the political agenda, forced by pressure groups and an increased focus upon non-conflict issues, parties have been obliged to offer responses. Abortion has been an issue of much longer standing, but debate has tended to be suppressed by an assumption of a societal and party political consensus for little change. This may owe something to the under-representation of women in Northern Ireland politics. A lack of presence adversely afflicts women's interests in other political institutions in the UK (Lovenduski and Norris 2003) but is most acute in the Northern Ireland Assembly and on local councils in the region (Galligan 2013). The under-

representation of women owes much to the embedded systems of patriarchy and masculinity which have dominated social and political life in Northern Ireland and are only slowly being eroded (Ashe 2007; Braniff and Whiting 2015; Galligan 2006; Ward 2006).

Although it has been claimed that 'morality issues are really on the periphery of politics in the UK' (Engeli et al. 2012: 4) they are embedded within the Northern Ireland polity. That there have not been strong party political rivalries over such issues until recently is because of the pervasiveness of the territorial conflict which dominated party agendas. Yet there is significant variation between some of Northern Ireland's parties on the issues of same-sex marriage and abortion amid growing debate. Arguments around such issues featured prominently in the 2015 general election campaign (Tonge and Evans 2015) and again in the 2016 Assembly election. The DUP strongly opposes same-sex marriage and has used a Petition of Concern to block its attempted introduction in the Northern Ireland Assembly on five occasions since 2013. In November 2015 the Assembly voted in favour of same-sex marriage for the first time, by 53 votes to 52. This represented a shift: the Assembly had rejected same-sex marriage by 49 votes to 47 in the previous vote, in April 2015 and more decisively repudiated change in previous votes. However, any vote in the Assembly can be made subject to a Petition of Concern if 30 or more members demand (the DUP has held 38 seats since 2011) in which case cross-community support is required for a measure, under the mutual vetoes which form part of Northern Ireland's consociational framework. A weighted majority of 60 per cent of Assembly members voting on a measure, with 40 per cent support from each of the Unionist and Nationalist bloc votes, is then required for legislative approval. Given that only four of the 53 Unionist members who voted in November 2015 indicated assent to same-sex marriage (7.5 per cent) it appears that the 40 per cent cross-community support requirement remains insurmountable.

The DUP's stance reflects the views of its members, two-thirds of whom believe that 'homosexuality is wrong', and the party's view on this is longstanding (Tonge et al. 2014: 155). During the early 1980s, the DUP, under Paisley's Protestant fundamentalist leadership, played a

prominent role in the 'Save Ulster from Sodomy' campaign, an unsuccessful attempt to prevent the legalisation of homosexuality (Northern Ireland was the last part of the UK to decriminalise, in 1982). In 2015, the DUP offered support to a Christian bakery which lost a court case over its refusal to bake a cake bearing a pro-gay marriage message. The DUP advocates the introduction of a conscience clause, arguing that 'some equality legislation, passed with the intention of protecting religious minorities, is having an adverse effect on those with religious belief' (Givan 2014: 1). The DUP Health Minister from 2011 to 2014, Edwin Poots, banned blood donations from gay people (Coulter 2012). Poots' successor, Jim Wells, resigned in 2015 after reportedly alleging that the children of same sex marriages were more vulnerable to abuse (Alexander and Farrell 2015). Whilst the UUP offers its representatives a free vote on the issue, the party leader, Mike Nesbitt, does not support same-sex marriage, even though he has cautioned his party that they may be 'on the wrong side of history' in opposing change (Nesbitt 2015).

Whilst Northern Ireland's two main unionist parties oppose same-sex marriage, the region's two main nationalist parties support legislative change, despite having Catholic support bases encouraged by their Church to oppose such marriages. The SDLP leadership has made clear its backing for same-sex marriage, although not all its elected representatives have always been convinced: five of the party's 14 Assembly members were absent from the vote on the issue in 2015. Sinn Féin has linked support for gay and lesbian causes to the problems faced by the Nationalist minority in Northern Ireland. Thus the party's 'Policy for Lesbian, Gay and Bi-Sexual Equality,' document describes how 'republicans are only too well aware of what it means to be treated as second-class citizens. Our politics are the results of decades of resistance to marginalisation and discrimination' (Sinn Féin 2013: 1). Sinn Féin's support for same sex marriage appears to unify the party, which campaigned in favour of change in the referendum in Ireland in 2015, when voters approved reform by 62 per cent to 38 per cent. In the 2015 Westminster election, Sinn Féin listed 'supporting the right of the lesbian, gay and bisexual people to marriage equality' as a priority (Sinn Féin 2015: 13).

There is thus a clear division between unionist and nationalist parties on same-sex marriage. Divisions are less clear-cut, however, on abortion. Both of the main unionist parties oppose any extension of the 1967 Abortion Act operative in England and Wales to Northern Ireland. In their opposition to abortion, they are joined by the SDLP, strongly anti-abortion and whose party leader from 2011 to 2015 made it clear he would not countenance change even in cases of lethal foetal abnormality or rape (BBC Northern Ireland, 20 February 2015). Sinn Féin supports abortion rights in those circumstances but policy is ambiguous in other cases and the party is far from resoundingly 'pro-choice'. Sinn Féin's policy appears to reject a major liberalisation of abortion laws. The Party is supportive of the Northern Ireland Assembly being the determining legislature on the issue. Even modest party shifts on abortion have been subject to vigorous debate at the Sinn Féin ard-fheis (annual conference) and yielded rare public criticism of the party's support for abortion rights from party members, even though that support is only partial (*The Irish Catholic*, 23 October 2013).

Given the importance of politics and religion within Northern Ireland, for the reasons discussed above, there are strong grounds for expecting that party affiliation, religious practice and personal faith will influence positions on same-sex marriage and abortion. In the models which follow, we test the independent effects of each of these, along with standard demographic controls, to understand more fully if each has a significant role in determining these moral conservative attitudes.

Data and models

We model position on the two moral issues using the 2015 Northern Ireland election study. Using a probability based sampling frame across 100 randomly selected wards in the 18 Northern Ireland Westminster constituencies, this study collected a sample of 1,810 registered electors in a face-to-face CAPI survey between 8 May and 24 June 2015.[1] Profiles of the full survey and analytical samples are available in Table A1 in the Appendix.

We use simple binary logit models to contrast collapsed 'agree' and 'disagree' categories coded from the original five-point Likert items which asked respondents whether they (strongly) agreed or (strongly) disagreed with the statements 'Gay marriage should be made legal in Northern Ireland' and 'Abortion should be made legal in Northern Ireland'. Ordered logit models, preferable to maximise information in the dependent variable as well as ease of interpretation, could not be run, due to substantial violation of the proportionate odds assumption (Long, 1997: 145). Full multinomial logit or partial proportionate odds models (Peterson and Harrell 1990) retain information, but both result in a lack of analytical clarity or parsimony. Given our substantive interest in the contrast, principally, between agreement and disagreement, we consequently collapse the 'strongly agree' and 'agree' categories together and do likewise regarding the 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' to dichotomize our dependent variables. The original question included a 'neither-nor' category, which for analytical simplicity we have chosen to collapse together with the 'agree' category, to provide the baseline to our 'disagree' contrast. In a traditionally religiously conservative society such as Northern Ireland, we assume that indifference towards the legalisation of items currently prohibited represents a shift away from the morally conservative status quo.

Because we wish to include party support, including a 'no party' baseline category, as one of our explanatory variables, as well as looking at possible differences between the two communities in overall support for the two issues, we need to run separate models for Protestant and Catholic respondents. We consequently present four models, corresponding to the two issues by each community. We include three demographic controls which we also expect to drive position on moral issues: age, gender and education. Having tested age using a categorical coding for evidence of excessive non-linearity, which was not found, we include this at the interval level. Gender is coded 1 for female. We expect both age and gender to manifest significant relationships with the dependent variables of support for, or opposition to, the legalisation of same-sex marriage and abortion. Increasing age may be linked to greater resistance to legislative change (Sherkat et al., 2011). The political socialisation of older people took place not only when same-sex marriage was banned, but a

homosexual act constituted a criminal offence. Women may conceivably hold different attitudes to men and some have been vocal on the abortion issue in Northern Ireland, but on both sides of the argument (e.g. Murray 2015). Similarly, we control for education level, categorising by no qualification, intermediate (G/CSE and 'O' Level), secondary, and higher education as the baseline, expecting that higher education will manifest greater liberalism on moral issues (Stubager 2008).

There are three principal explanatory variables to test, namely party identification or support, frequency of religious practice, and level of faith. Party support is coded from a variable asking respondents to which, if any, of the relevant Northern Irish parties they felt closest. We code for the four main political parties – DUP and UUP for Protestants, SDLP and SF for Catholics – and 'no party', and use DUP and SF respectively as the baseline. For church attendance, we trichotomise a standard ordinal measure of church attendance, distinguishing between those who attend religious services more than once a month (practising) – the baseline– those attending more than once a year (irregular practising), and less frequent attendance (non-practising). Lastly, having highlighted the potential importance of religious faith, as distinct from ritual, we code the self-reported strength of that faith from a six-point ordinal scale, varying from 'I don't believe in God' to 'I know God really exists and have no doubt', into a binary variable coded 1 for 'believer', which includes the strongest faith response (see Tables A2 and A3 in the Appendix for more detailed codings and the original responses). Both church attendance and faith codings lose some information, but more complex codings which were tested did not add substantive explanatory value to the models. (Tables A2 and A3 in the Appendix provide the bivariate cross-tabulations of each explanatory variable by the two dependent variables across the full sample.)

Analysis

Table 1 here

Tables 1 and 2 present the four logistic regression models, coded 1 for disagreement with the policy statements supporting liberalisation of the law. Looking first at the control variables, the age effects are generally consistent with expectations in three of the four models, in that older respondents, socialised in an era in which the legalisation of same-sex marriage and abortion were not even debated as issues in Northern Ireland, are more opposed to both. The effect on same-sex marriage for both communities is substantially stronger than on abortion, and notably, there is an absence of an age effect on abortion for Catholics. Similarly for gender, women are less likely to oppose same-sex marriage than men, and Protestant women are less likely to oppose abortion, but again, for Catholic respondents, the difference is negligible. Clear educational effects are absent in both communities, with only intermediate education manifesting less opposition than the highly qualified among Protestants, and the 'no qualification' group significantly more opposed for Catholics. Whilst the latter contrast is in line with most sociological research into education and tolerance, the former contrast is not, it being expected that the most highly educated strata of Northern Irish society could possess more liberal values. It ought also to be noted, however, that educated Protestantism yields the political class which has long offered morally conservative policies. The lack of significant educational difference between higher and secondary qualifications across both issues is therefore perhaps not surprising.

We turn now to our three potential explanatory variables. We include these simultaneously in the model, as tolerance tests revealed no evidence of excessive multicollinearity. Looking first at party support, for both issues there is a strong contrast between the Protestant and Catholic dynamics. For the Protestant community, the key difference lies between party supporters and those not politically aligned. While on both issues the UUP parameter effect is negative, relative to the DUP, it is not significant. UUP and DUP supporters are more opposed to abortion rights, and towards same-sex marriage, than non-aligned Protestants. For Catholic respondents, a different dynamic pertains – here, Sinn Féin supporters are closer to non-aligned Catholics than to the SDLP.

Sinn Féin's backers are thus more in tune with the broader Catholic population; it is SDLP supporters who stand rather aloof. The SDLP is clearly supportive of same-sex marriage as a party, but its elected representatives and support base are more lukewarm than official policy might indicate. All five Assembly votes on the matter have been met with some SDLP abstention, on occasion, as in 2013, amounting to more than one-third of the party's Assembly representatives, whereas Sinn Féin's MLAs have usually voted *en masse* in favour. On abortion as well, the 'Green' Catholic conservatism of the SDLP's base, always in competition with the party's socialist leanings, is more apparent. Controlling for religious variables, SDLP supporters are more likely to oppose legalisation than Sinn Fein supporters. Overall, party support matters on moral issues, but the cues which the party supply on each side of the sectarian divide differ.

Looking now at the church attendance effects in Table 1, one contrast again lies between churches. For Catholics, church attendance ostensibly has no significant independent effect on the attitude to same-sex marriage or abortion. For Protestants, however, there is a contrast between the practising and irregularly practising group, with the latter more supportive of a change to the existing prohibitions. Interestingly, the non-practising group does not reach significance, however. Personal faith plays an important role in one's position on both issues. Across both communities, the respondents who believe unequivocally in God are consistently less supportive of more permissive legislation on both issues. Given we control for personal faith, it can be assumed that church attendance effects may be linked to organisational cues. For Protestants, the churches' message clearly matters, and is in the same direction as the DUP's.

Table 2 here

Of course, personal faith may also be picking up the practising versus non-practising contrast. Indeed, as Table 2 shows, if we exclude the personal faith variable, a difference in attitudes appears according to which issue is being considered. For abortion, the position of the church does matter for Catholics, if less strongly than for Protestants. However, on same-sex marriage, the

'absence' of faith control makes no difference to the Catholic position. The lack of a church effect here is independent of faith. If party support is excluded (not shown), there is no similar change in the church attendance parameters. It is impossible in cross-sectional data to unpick the potential endogeneity of faith and religious practice. Nonetheless, the presence of a Protestant religious practice effect for abortion while faith is included suggests an organised religion influence conspicuously defined, whereas the practice and faith variables overlap for Catholics.

It is clear from these models that personal faith matters irrespective of church, regularity of practice or party support. However, to understand the effect of the other two explanatory variables across the two communities, it is worthwhile calculating the predicted probabilities for each category from the full model, holding other variables constant. Figures 1 and 2 below report the point estimates and 95 per cent confidence intervals.

Figures 1 and 2 here

On the same-sex marriage question, it is evident that overall Catholic respondents are more supportive of its legalisation than Protestants (lower values in the graph indicating lower probability of disagreeing with legalisation of the issue). In terms of party support, SF supporters are over 10 percentage points less likely than SDLP supporters to oppose same-sex marriage. Nonetheless, SDLP opposition is below 30 per cent probability. Among Protestants, as per the model, DUP supporters are the most likely to oppose, although, strikingly given the uniform opposition of the party's elected representatives in the Northern Ireland legislature, DUP supporters' opposition only registers just under 50 per cent probability. On church attendance, while the Protestant versus Catholic differential is still visible, the pattern of support is similar, but with substantial overlap in confidence intervals. On the question of abortion, party support among Catholics shows the clearer difference between the SDLP – on balance, more ambivalent – and Sinn Féin. There is clear overlap in

confidence intervals from the non-aligned. Again, among Protestants, DUP supporters are least supportive, but similarly to the SDLP's backers, placed around the 40 per cent mark. There is a similar difference in church attendance, where irregularly practising respondents are just over 10 percentage points less likely to oppose abortion rights than their devout colleagues. For Catholics, there is no evidence of effect – again, due to the close link to personal faith.

Conclusions

We have explored the effects of party identification, religious affiliation, religious observance and faith, arguing that it is necessary to consider the impact of party politics as well as religious conditioning in analysing attitudes to moral issues. Without claiming direct causality, we argue that party effects must be considered alongside religious belonging and believing and demography in understanding which categories lie on either side of the debates on same-sex marriage and abortion. Political partisanship and 'doing God' need to be considered in conjunction with each other and alongside demographic variables to show the independent effects of each. We suggest that the tests we deploy here in the Northern Ireland context ought to be replicated more universally, even allowing that the issues of same-sex marriage and abortion are particularly vexatious in the Northern Irish case. Potentially, our findings have resonance further afield in showing that messages from political parties which strongly conflict with those from churches *may* influence attitudes to moral questions. Whilst religious 'belonging and believing' may dilute party messages, they may not always block them – as our findings regarding Catholics and their political parties in Northern Ireland have indicated.

Our demographic findings show that older people are more hostile to same-sex marriage, a relatively recent (compared to some countries) item on the political agenda, whereas differences are less pronounced across generations on abortion, a longer-standing issue. Whilst abortion is sometimes regarded as a 'woman's issue' and obviously may affect women deeply, significant

gender effects are found instead on same-sex marriage, more favoured by women than men. On abortion, religious considerations outweigh gender.

In terms of the party versus religion 'contest', we have found some evidence of asymmetrical effects across the two issues. Party stances appear more substantial on attitudes to same-sex marriage; church attendance less so, at least whilst controlling for personal faith. Given the antipathy to same-sex marriage offered by all the churches, the willingness of Catholics to 'defy' their church and follow their party cue – Sinn Féin's Catholic support base offers clear backing for such unions – may be seen as of considerable importance in the tussle for a more secular society. However, this effect is negated by the party effects on the Unionist side, where party supporters, particularly those of the DUP, reinforce the hostility of Protestant churches to same-sex unions. Thus the battle over same-sex marriage perhaps deepens an existing Orange-Green faultline evident on other issues: many unionists oppose change; many Nationalists favour reform, although SDLP supporters are more divided and religious believers are less likely to favour same-sex marriage.

On abortion, party effect is a little smaller for Protestants, with DUP support offering a small political cue. The party effect for Catholics again stems from the SDLP's conservatism relative to Sinn Féin and those with no party affiliation. On this subject, a key attitudinal driver is faith and, behaviourally, religious activity. Regular churchgoers are likely to conform to the messages from their church. Those with strong faith may have strong views on abortion anyway, due to a belief in God as the ultimate creator of life from conception.

Why the lesser effect of party influence, particularly for Catholics, on abortion than on the same-sex marriage issue? It may be that views on abortion are long-term, affective feelings, whilst same-sex marriage is a much more recent, short-term policy issue which draws upon similar value sets, but is not so inextricably linked to those deeper values and thus can be mobilised in different directions by political parties. On abortion, the oppositional message from the Church has been long and consistent and it may be more difficult for any party to over-ride the decisions of individuals,

sometimes taken long ago, to accept - or reject – church messages in what is still a religiously conditioned society. Church opposition to abortion pre-dates the formation of the DUP, SDLP and, in terms of the party as a credible modern electoral force, Sinn Féin, so oppositional views were well-entrenched long prior to the advent of political organisations capable of eliciting shifts in opinion if they desired. Only Sinn Féin desires policy shift, but even its position on abortion offers the party's support base a more ambiguous cue than is the case on same-sex marriage, which may further strengthen the church message relative to that of party and is itself perhaps reflective of a continuing caution over moving too far on the issue. Political parties tend to emphasise that abortion is a 'free vote' conscience issue; same-sex marriage has become more of a political issue. Northern Ireland is a polity in which religion and political choices are seen as intertwined, but the picture needs nuancing on salient moral issues in the way we have attempted to show.

There is one final important possibility that we must consider, that, while it could be that party identification influences attitudes, it is possible that attitudes influence party identification. If Catholics support Sinn Féin, rather than the SDLP, because of its stance on same-sex marriage then the conclusions that the authors draw should be somewhat different. Cross-sectional data such as these do not allow us to examine such endogeneity. However, the electoral context of our survey indicates that this is less likely. Our surveys show few switchers from the SDLP to Sinn Féin or from the UUP to DUP at the last two general elections – the big switches having been made in 1997, 2001 and 2005, before same-sex marriage and abortion assumed large salience, which renders it unlikely that those issues were determinants of major voting shifts. Moreover, little choice is available between the DUP and UUP in terms of their stances. We acknowledge that new voters could conceivably base their party choice on party stances on moral issues, given that younger nationalists are the most liberal of all on these questions and amid the rising importance of 'moral' issues as older constitutional questions fade in salience. Regardless, what we have shown is that, across the electorate, what political parties say on moral questions may influence voters, even within polities which retain strong alternative religious influences on those questions.

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge with grateful thanks funding from the Economic and Social Research Council, award reference ES/L007320/1, for the Northern Ireland 2015 General Election Study.

References

Alexander, Steven and Nevin Farrell (2015) 'DUP minister Jim Wells quits after gay abuse comments controversy', http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/politics/dup-minister-jim-wells-quits-after-gay-abuse-comments-controversy-31173893.html (accessed 27 October 2015).

Anglican Communion News Service (2015) 'Church of Ireland opposes abortion, acknowledges "exceptional cases", http://www.anglicannews.org/news/2013/06/church-of-ireland-opposes-abortion,-acknowledges-exceptional-cases.aspx (accessed 17 October 2015).

Ashe, Fidelma (2007) 'Gendering Ethno-Nationalist Conflict in Northern Ireland: A comparative analysis of nationalist women's political protests', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 30.5, 766-786.

Ashworth, Jacinta, and Ian Farthing (2007) *Churchgoing in the UK*, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/03_04_07_tearfundchurch.pdf (accessed 8 November 2015).

BBC Northern Ireland (20 February 2015) 'Alasdair McDonnell foetus comments criticised by Dr Samina Dornan', http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-31549339, (accessed 19 August 2015).

Bean, Clive (1999) 'The forgotten cleavage: Religion and politics in Australia', *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 32.3, 551-68.

Braniff, Mairé and Sophie Ann Whiting (2015) 'There's Just No Point Having a Token Woman', *Parliamentary Affairs*, advance online access.

Bruce, Steve (2013) *Politics and Religion in the United Kingdom*, Cambridge: Polity.

Center for Reproductive Rights (2015) 'The Worlds Abortion Laws 2015', http://worldabortionlaws.com/questions.html, accessed 16 October 2015.

Church of Ireland (2015) 'A Statement from the Archbishops and Bishops of the Church of Ireland Following the Result of the Marriage Referendum', http://ireland.anglican.org/news/5705 (accessed 12 October 2015).

Coulter, Paul, (2015) 'Edwin Poots criticised over African blood donation remark', http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-18497159 (accessed 25 October 2015).

Djupe, Paul and Christopher Gilbert (2009) 'Introduction: A Theory of Religious Influence on Political Behaviour', in Djupe, Paul and Christopher Gilbert (eds.) *The Political Influence of Churches*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1-20.

Engeli, Isabelle, Christoffer Green-Pedersen and Lars Thorup Larsen, 'Introduction', in Engeli, Isabelle, Christoffer Green-Pedersen and Lars Thorup Larsen (eds.) (2012) *Morality Politics in Western Europe*: *Parties, Agendas and Policy Choices*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Evans, Geoff, and de Nan Dirk de Graaf (2013) *Political choice matters: Explaining the strength of class and religious cleavages in cross-national perspective*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Evans, Jocelyn, and Jonathan Tonge (2013) 'Catholic, Irish and Nationalist: evaluating the importance of ethno-national and ethno-religious variables in determining nationalist political allegiance in Northern Ireland', *Nations and Nationalism,* 19:2, 357-375.

Galligan, Yvonne (2013) 'Gender and politics in Northern Ireland: the representation gap revisited', *Irish Political Studies*, 28.3, 413-433.

Galligan, Yvonne (2006) 'Women in Northern Ireland's Politics: feminising an "armed patriarchy", in Sawer, Marian, Tremblay, Manon and Trimble, Linda (eds.) *Representing Women in Parliament*, London: Routledge, 204-220.

Givan, Paul (2014) *Consultation on the Northern Ireland Freedom of Conscience Amendment Bill*, Belfast: DUP, available at http://devydup.com/images/uploads/publications/Freedom_of_Conscience_Consultation_Document_Final.pdf

Greeley, Andrew (1995) *Religion as Poetry*, New Brunswick: Transaction.

Hayes, Bernadette, and John Nagle (2015) 'Ethnonationalism and attitudes towards gay and lesbian rights in Northern Ireland', *Nations and Nationalism*, advanced online access.

Hayes, Bernadette, and Lizanne Dowds (2015) 'Religion and Attitudes Towards Gay Rights in Northern Ireland: The God Gap Revisited', in Brunn. S.D. (ed.) The Changing World Religion Map: Sacred Places, Identities, Practices and Politics, New York: Springer, 3321-40.

Houtman, Dick, and Peter Mascini (2002) 'Why Do Churches Become Empty, While New Age Grows? Secularization and Religious Change in the Netherlands', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 41.3, 455-473.

Huckfeldt, Robert, Eric Plutzer, and John Sprague (1993) 'Alternative Contexts of Political Behavior: Churches, Neighborhoods and Individuals', *Journal of Politics*, 55.2, 365-381.

Inglis, Tom (1998) *Moral monopoly: The rise and fall of the Catholic Church in modern Ireland*, Dublin: University College Dublin Press.

Irish Times, 2 June 2015, 'Catholic Church "bereavement" after same-sex vote', http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/catholic-church-bereavement-after-same-sex-marriage-vote-1.2234500 (accessed 13 October 2015).

Long, John Scott (1997) Regression Models for Categorical and Limited Dependent Variables, Thousand Oaks (CA): Sage.

Lovenduski, Joni, and Pippa Norris (2003) 'Westminster Women: the Politics of Presence', *Political Studies*, 51.1, 84-102.

Malka, Ariel, Yphtach Lelkes, Sanjay Srivastava, Adam Cohen and Dale Miller, (2012) 'The Association of Religiosity and Political Conservatism: The Role of Political Engagement', *Political Psychology*, 33.2, 275-99.

Methodist Church in Ireland (2015) 'Methodist President's Response to Equal Marriage Referendum', http://www.irishmethodist.org/news/25-may-2015/methodist-presidents-response-equal-marriage-referendum (accessed 14 October 2015).

Minkenberg, Michael. (2002) 'Religion and Public Policy: Institutional, Cultural and Political Impact on the Shaping of Abortion Policies in Western Democracies', *Comparative Political Studies*, 35.2, 221-247.

Morgan, David, and Kenneth Meier (1980) 'The effect of religion on referendum voting', *Social Science Quarterly*, 61.1, 144-48.

Murray, Gemma, 'Bernie Smyth hopes pro-life clinic can replace Marie Stopes', http://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/health/bernie-smyth-hopes-pro-life-clinic-can-replace-marie-stopes-1-7011185 (accessed 6 November 2015).

Nesbitt, Mike (2015) Speech to Ulster Unionist Party conference, http://uup.org/news/3870/Speech-by-Party-Leader-Mike-Nesbitt-MLA-at-UUP15#.Vj85vbfhDrc (accessed 8 November 2015).

Norrander, Barbara, and Clive Wilcox (1999) 'Public Opinion and Policymaking in the States: The Case of Post-Roe Abortion Policy', *Policy Studies Journal*, 27.4, 207-22.

Norris, Pippa, and Ronald Inglehart (2011) *Sacred and Secular. Religion and Politics Worldwide*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Olson, Laura, Wendy Cadge, and James Harrison (2006) 'Religion and Public Opinion about Same-Sex Marriage', *Social Science Quarterly*, 87.2, 340-360.

Peterson, Bercedis and Frank Harrell (1990) 'Partial Proportional Odds Models for Ordinal Response Variables', *Applied Statistics* 39:2, 205-217.

Pew Research Center (2015) 'Gay Marriage Around the World', http://www.pewforum.org/2015/06/26/gay-marriage-around-the-world-2013/, accessed 16 October 2015.

Presbyterian Church in Ireland (2015) 'Presbyterians make clear their opposition to same-sex marriage' https://www.presbyterianireland.org/News/Article/2013-(1)/Presbyterians-Make-Clear-Their-Opposition-To-Same?feed=cfd8e3f5-88c6-46c8-9f48-6f31a698b9b7 (accessed 12 October 2015).

Presbyterian Church in Ireland (2015) 'Presbyterians call for Pro Life Abortion Policy with stringent safeguards for exceptional cases', https://www.presbyterianireland.org/News/Article/2013-(1)/Presbyterians-Call-for-Pro-Life-Abortion-Policy-wi?feed=cfd8e3f5-88c6-46c8-9f48-6f31a698b9b7 (accessed 14 October 2015).

Saunders, Fr. William (2015) 'Church Has Always Condemned Abortion', http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/resources/abortion/catholic-teaching/the-catholic-church-and-abortion/ (accessed 19 October 2015).

Sherkat, Darren, Melissa Powell-Williams, Gregory Maddox, and Kylan de Vries (2011) 'Religion, politics and support for same-sex marriage in the United States, 1988-2008', *Social Science Research*, 40.1, 167-180.

Sinn Féin (2013) *Moving On: A Policy for Lesbian, Gay and Bi-Sexual Equality*, Dublin: Sinn Féin.

Sinn Féin (2015) *2015 Westminster Election Manifesto: Equality Not Austerity*, Belfast: Sinn Féin.

Slothuus, Rune (2010) 'When can Political Parties Lead Public Opinion? Evidence from a Natural Experiment', *Political Communication*, 27.2, 158-177.

Southern, Neil (2005) 'Ian Paisley and evangelical Democratic Unionists: An analysis of the role of evangelical Protestantism within the Democratic Unionist Party', *Irish Political Studies*, 20.2, 127-145.

Stubager, Rune (2008) "Education effects on authoritarian–libertarian values: a question of socialization", *The British Journal of Sociology* 59.2, 327-350.

The Irish Catholic, 23 October 2015, 'Letter: Sinn Féin and abortion', http://www.irishcatholic.ie/article/sinn-f%C3%A9in-and-abortion, (accessed 19 August 2015).

Tilley, James (2015) '"We don't do God": Religion and Party Choice in Britain', *British Journal of Political Science*, 54.4, 907-927.

Tonge, Jonathan and Jocelyn Evans (2010) 'Northern Ireland: Unionism loses more leaders', *Parliamentary Affairs*, 63.4, 742-59.

Tonge, Jonathan and Jocelyn Evans (2015) Another Communal Headcount: the Election in Northern Ireland', in Geddes, Andrew and Jonathan Tonge (eds.) *Britain Votes 2015*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 117-132.

Tonge, Jonathan, Mairé Braniff, Thomas Hennessey, James White McAuley and Sophie Ann Whiting (2014) *The Democratic Unionist Party: From Protest to Power*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Van der Brug, Wouter, and Sara Hobolt (2009) 'Religion and Party Choice in Western Europe', *West European Politics*, 32.6, 1266-1283.

van der Eijk, Cees, and Kees Niemöller (1987) 'Electoral Alignments in the Netherlands', *Electoral Studies*, 6.1, 17-30.

Wald, Kenneth, Dennis Owen, and Samuel Hill (1988) 'Churches as Political Communities', *American Political Science Review*, 82.2, 531-548.

Wald, Kenneth, Dennis Owen and Samuel Hill (1990) 'Political Cohesion in Churches', *Journal of Politics*, 52.1, 197-215.

Wald, Kenneth, and Allison Calhoun-Brown (2014) *Religion and Politics in the United States*, New York: Rowman and Littlefield.

Ward, Rachel (2006) *Women, Unionism and Loyalism in Northern Ireland*, Dublin: Irish Academic Press.

Whitehead, Andrew, (2010) 'Sacred Rites and Civil Rights: Religion's Effect on Attitudes Toward Same-Sex Unions and the Perceived Cause of Homosexuality', *Social Science Quarterly*, 91.1, 63-79.

Notes

[1] Full details can be found at http://reshare.ukdataservice.ac.uk/851957/

Table 1 Demographic, party and religious identification, church attendance and religious faith effects on attitudes to same-sex marriage and abortion (dependent variable coded (Strongly) Agree with legalisation + Neither Agree/Disagree [0]; (Strongly) Disagree [1])

	SAME-SEX MARRIAGE				**ABORTION**			
	Catholic		**Protestant**		**Catholic**		**Protestant**	
	B	s.e.	B	s.e.	B	s.e.	B	s.e.
Female	-.924**	.296	-.778***	.217	-.018	.215	-.567**	.203
Age	.038***	.013	.062***	.008	.010	.008	.026***	.007
Higher qualification	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Secondary qualification	.147	.484	-.531	.343	.256	.329	-.218	.317
Intermediate qualification	.153	.436	-.801*	.319	.275	.310	-.610*	.299
No qualification	1.649***	.467	-.053	.331	1.02**	.375	.134	.306
DUP			-	-			-	-
UUP			-.287	.326			-.257	.302
SF	-	-			-	-		
SDLP	1.063**	.375			.639*	.296		
No party	.505	.315	-.742**		.218	.230	-.575**	.302
Practising	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Irregular practising	-.282	.365	-.578*	.279	-.280	.265	-.607*	.260
Non-practising	.174	.399	-.188	.294	-.360	.296	-.422	.124
Believer	.738*	.298	.923***	.227	.826***	.225	.914***	.274
Intercept	-3.361***	.852	-1.843**	.662	-1.964**	.616	-.750	.624
Model chi-square	141.42*** (10df)		221.37*** (10df)		67.64*** (10df)		123.41*** (10df)	
Pseudo-R^2	.29		.29		.11		.17	
N	507		569		507		569	

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table 2 Regression coefficients for religious practice with personal faith variable excluded

	SAME-SEX MARRIAGE				ABORTION			
	Catholic		Protestant		Catholic		Protestant	
[…]								
Practising	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Irregular practising	-.507	.352	-.817**	.270	-.529*	.253	-.857**	.251
Non-practising	-.035	.386	-.564*	.274	-.540†	.289	-.778**	.257
Believer								
[…]								
N	507		569		507		569	

† p < 0.1 , * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Figure 1 Predicted probability plots of party support and church attendance on disagreement with same-sex marriage by religion (95% confidence intervals)

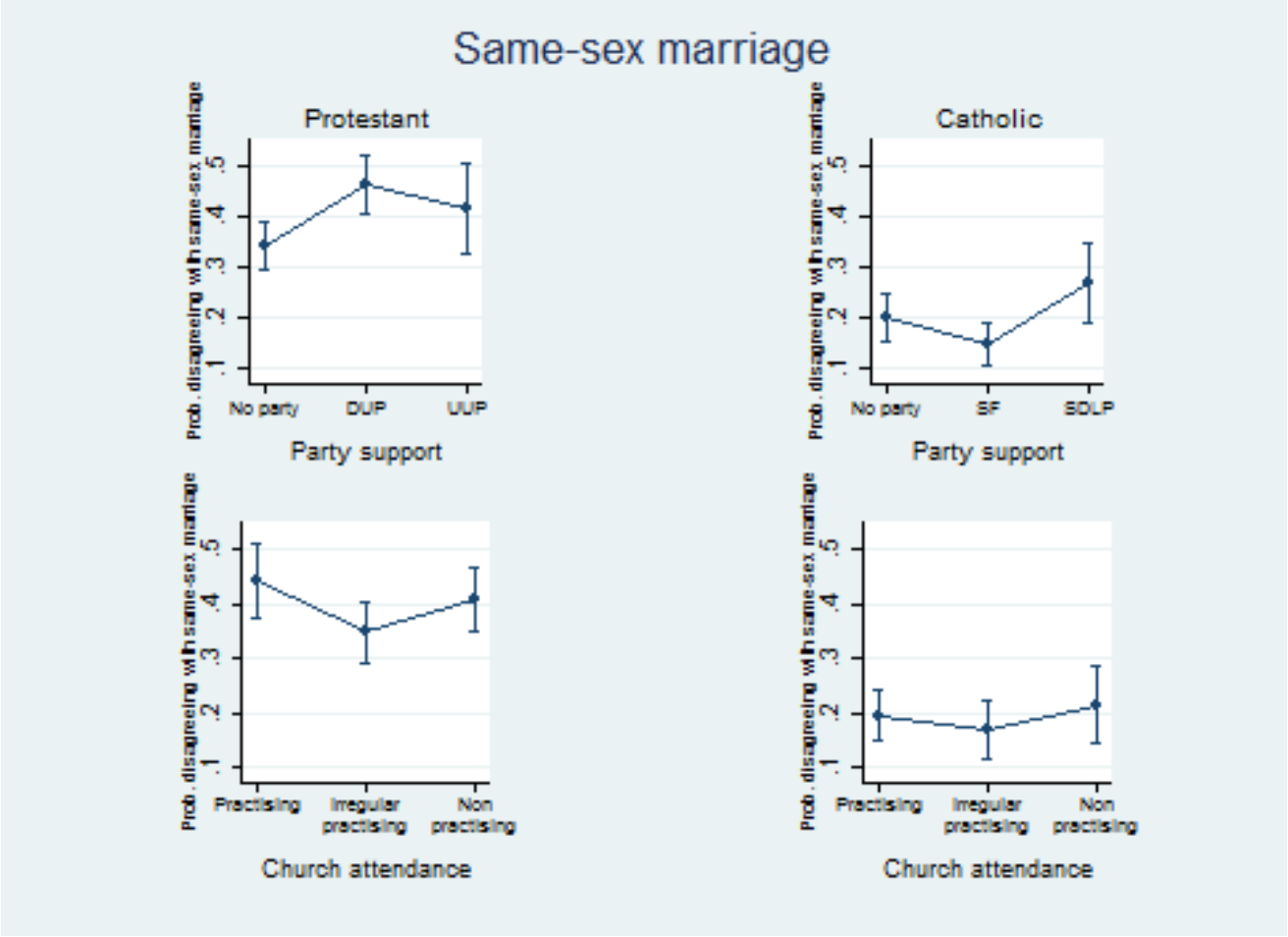
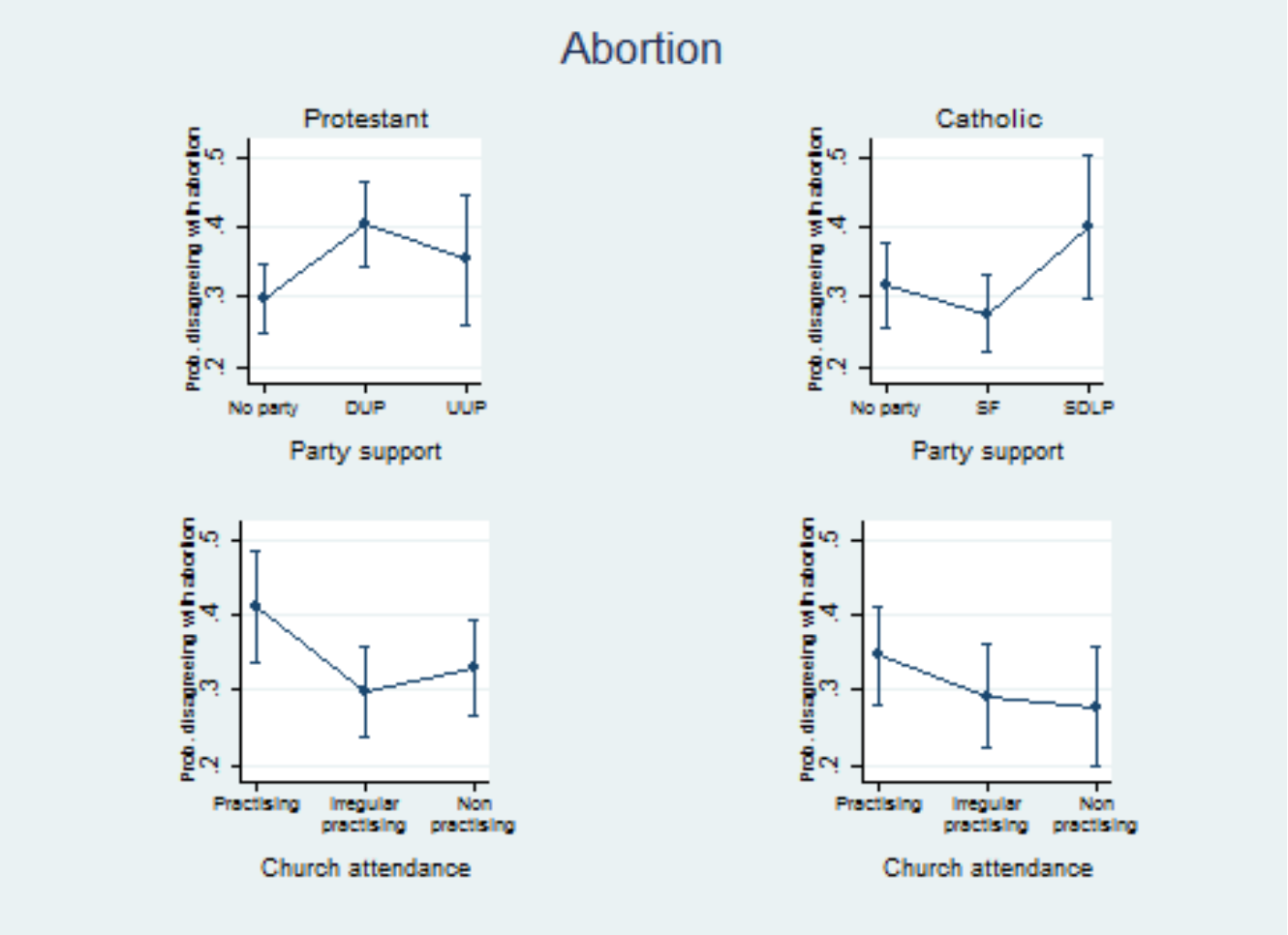


Figure 2 Predicted probability plots of party support and church attendance on disagreement with abortion by religion (95% confidence intervals)



Appendix

Table A1 Full survey and analytical sample profiles

	Full sample	Catholic model sample	Protestant model sample
Female	52.2	51.8	51.7
Age (mean)	47.3	46.4	50.6
Education			
Higher qualification	19.6	16.5	16.3
Secondary qualification	27.2	32.1	26.5
Intermediate qualification	30.3	30.9	28.4
No qualification	22.8	20.6	28.8
Party identification			
DUP	16.0	-	36.6
UUP	6.4	-	14.9
SF	16.6	44.7	-
SDLP	6.2	15.0	-
No party	54.7	40.3	48.5
Religious attendance			
Practising	29.6	37.1	29.1
Irregular practising	31.4	34.4	34.3
Non-practising	39.1	28.5	36.6
Faith - believer	40.2	36.8	52.2

Note: original question codings for party identification, religious attendance and faith at the end of the appendix.

Table A2 “Gay marriage should be made legal in Northern Ireland” (%)

	Roman Catholic	Protestant	No Religion	Attend church once a week or more	Attend church 2 or 3 times a month	Attend church once a month	Attend church several times per year	Attend church less frequently than several times per year	Never attend church	Atheist (1)	Agnostic (2-5)	Believer (6)	DUP support	UUP support	SDLP support	Sinn Féin support
Strongly Agree	26.6	25.9	36.9	11.5	22.0	30.6	31.7	31.2	31.5	42.9	28.2	22.0	18.9	15.4	21.0	25.4
Agree	39.9	14.9	30.9	20.2	23.9	26.6	30.1	28.4	28.1	27.3	31.9	19.3	12.7	19.2	35.0	51.1
Neither Agree/ Disagree	11.5	14.8	13.4	9.1	16.9	11.6	12.9	13.8	12.3	15.6	14.9	10.9	13.9	12.5	10.0	7.8
Disagree	10.2	12.2	4.0	15.2	11.0	11.0	11.5	9.1	5.0	5.2	9.1	12.3	13.9	18.3	16.0	7.1
Strongly Disagree	10.0	24.5	7.4	37.9	21.2	16.2	10.1	11.3	15.4	3.9	10.0	30.0	35.5	27.9	14.0	7.1
Don’t know	1.9	6.9	6.0	6.2	4.7	4.1	3.7	5.0	6.9	3.9	5.5	4.5	4.6	6.7	4.0	1.5
Refused	0.0	0.7	1.3	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	1.3	0.8	1.3	0.5	1.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
N	629	811	149	243	255	173	356	298	260	77	972	706	259	104	100	268

Source: 2015 Northern Ireland General Election survey

Note: original question codings for party identification, religious attendance and faith at the end of the appendix.

Table A3 “Abortion should be made legal in Northern Ireland” (%)

	Roman Catholic	Protestant	No Religion	Attend church once a week or more	Attend church 2 or 3 times a month	Attend church once a month	Attend church several times per year	Attend church less frequently than several times per year	Never attend church	Atheist (1)	Agnostic (2-5)	Believer (6)	DUP support	UUP support	SDLP support	Sinn Féin support
Strongly Agree	16.2	27.9	32.9	5.8	16.5	31.2	28.7	27.9	29.6	41.6	28.0	14.7	23.2	16.4	11.0	14.6
Agree	23.4	19.2	24.2	16.5	18.8	15.0	25.6	22.9	25.4	20.8	25.7	16.2	17.0	24.0	21.0	29.9
Neither Agree/ Disagree	23.5	13.1	12.8	17.7	20.0	19.7	14.6	17.1	16.2	11.7	17.1	17.4	10.4	15.4	23.0	25.8
Disagree	16.2	10.4	8.7	18.1	13.7	13.9	12.1	10.6	7.3	13.0	10.5	14.2	11.2	17.3	20.0	14.6
Strongly Disagree	15.6	20.7	8.1	34.6	23.1	15.6	12.6	13.3	10.4	6.5	9.9	30.2	32.1	21.2	18.0	12.7
Don’t know	4.9	8.4	11.4	7.0	7.8	4.1	6.5	7.3	10.8	5.2	8.4	6.7	6.2	4.8	7.0	2.6
Refused	0.2	0.4	2.0	0.4	0.0	0.6	0.0	1.0	0.4	1.3	0.4	0.7	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0
N	629	811	149	243	255	173	356	398	260	77	972	706	259	104	100	268

Source: 2015 Northern Ireland General Election survey

Note: original question codings for party identification, religious attendance and faith at the end of the appendix

Original question codings for key explanatory variables

Faith

"Which of these statements comes closest to expressing what you believe about God?"

1 'I don't believe in God'

2 'I don't know whether there is a God and I don't believe there is any way to find out'

3 'I don't believe in a personal God but I believe in a Higher Power of some kind'

4 'I find myself believing in God some of the time but not at others'

5 'Whilst I have doubts I feel that I do believe in God'

6 'I know God really exists and have no doubts'.

Party identification / support

C9 "Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a supporter of any one political party?"

[If NO to C9] C10 "Do you think of yourself as a little closer to one party than to others?"

[If YES to C9 or C10] C11"Which party?" [closed list of Northern Ireland parties]

Religious attendance

"Apart from special occasions such as weddings, funerals, baptisms and so on, how often nowadays do you attend services or meetings connected with your religion?"

1 Once a week or more

2 2 or 3 times a month

3 Once a month

4 Several times a year

5 Less frequently

6 Never

7 Don't have a religion