Bureaucratic Capacity and Class Voting: Evidence from Across the World and the United States.

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Abstract

Why does income influence vote choice sometimes and not others? We argue that class voting is more likely to occur where states can tax the income and assets of the wealthy. In low bureaucratic capacity states, the rich have less of an incentive to participate in electoral politics and politicians are unlikely to campaign on anti-redistributive platforms, leading to a convergence in the partisan preferences of the rich and the poor. Using survey data, we show that countries with greater fiscal capacity have higher rates of class voting. We also explore sub-national variation in class voting in the United States in the mid-1930s, when revenue collection and party systems were less national. We show that across American states, class influenced political preferences in states with greater fiscal capacity.

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Historically, the wealthy opposed democracy because they believed that, if granted the vote, the poor majority would demand redistribution at the ballot box. In reality, contemporary democracies rarely resemble the tyranny of the poor feared by elites. Consequently, social scientists have extensively debated the relationship between democracy, inequality, and redistribution. This paper explores class voting, a key component of several theories of redistribution and argues that income is more likely to predict vote choice if the relatively wealthy face a credible threat of taxation by the state.[1] Tax-and-transfer models assume that politicians have the wherewithal to use taxation to "soak the rich" (Romer 1975, Meltzer & Richard 1981). However, contemporary democracies vary greatly in the state's capacity to locate and effectively tax the income and assets of the wealthy, with implications for voting behavior and party politics.

The structural conditions constraining the *credible* appeals politicians' can make to voters are central to our argument. Vote-seeking politicians often campaign on promises to reduce poverty and provide public goods, however, the relatively wealthy must take politicians' distributive policies more seriously where they can be taxed by the state. If those whose taxes could fund redistribution have more of an incentive to participate in electoral politics, politicians are more likely to contest elections on platforms opposing redistribution. Therefore, in states with high fiscal capacity, the rich and poor are more likely to support different political parties.

Although scholars have noticed that tax capacity may shape redistributive politics, no prior work has considered the implications of variation in tax capacity for class voting. Alesina & Glaeser (2004) raise and then dismiss the possibility that the efficacy of the tax collection system can account for less redistribution in the U.S. than in Europe. They also observe that workable tax collection systems may account for variation in the size of government between the developed and developing world, but do not spell out the effect of these differences in tax capacity for redistributive politics. Becker & Mulligan (2003) argue that improvements in the efficiency of tax

[1] We define class voting as voting for redistribution by the poor and for limited taxation by the rich. This definition is distinct from class voting as defined in research on support for European left wing parties by members of the industrial working class (e.g. Przeworski & Sprague (1986) and Evans (2000).)

collection increase the size of government. Although their model contains taxpayers and beneficiaries, they treat the political process translating preferences into policy as a "black box." When scholars have developed theories hinging on the method by which redistribution occurs, they've emphasized attributes, such as ethnicity or region, that allow policymakers to discriminate between the beneficiaries of tax revenue rather than its sources (Fernandez & Levy 2008, Huber & Ting 2013, Huber 2014). [2]

In one sense, it is unsurprising there is no previous work on how variation in tax-raising capacity influences class voting. Most theories of redistributive politics were created referring to places where such capacity can be assumed to exist. Yet, the state's ability to tax the wealthy plays an important role in related research concerning the conditions under which elites will support democratic politics. Owners of mobile assets are in a better position to bargain for policy concessions and have less to fear from redistribution under democracy (Bates & Lien 1985, Boix 2003). Focusing, as we do, on state capacity Soifer (2013), argues that democratic transitions pose less of a redistributive threat to the rich in weak states. Moreover, as Dunning (2008) argues, elites may be less opposed to democracy where natural resource rents mitigate redistributive demands. We argue that, just as the potential tax exposure of the rich may influence their attitude towards democracy, bureaucratic capacity affects their participation in democratic politics with consequences for the party system as a whole.

We first show that fiscal capacity affects class voting cross-nationally. We estimate differences in the partisan preferences of the rich and the poor using survey data from 60 countries and several sources from 2000 to 2010. We find more class voting in countries where the state has a greater capacity to tax the wealthy. Because ethnic cleavages are frequently an alternative to class cleavages, we demonstrate that variation in inequality along ethnic lines cannot account for our findings. Because the creation tax-raising institutions and elite-based political parties may pre-date democratic

[2]Huber (2014) presents a model of class and ethnic voting in which government revenue is a windfall not dependent upon taxing the wealthy. However, in his model politicians from a winning party based on class or ethnicity cannot discriminate between rich and poor supporters when dispersing government revenue.

politics, we also show that our results are robust to limiting our sample to only new democracies.

While sub-national studies allow us to hold constant important social and institutional factors, these shared conditions homogenize local party systems within countries (Cox 1987, Caramani 2004, Chhibber & Kollman 2004). Therefore, a sub-national study of the effect of bureaucratic capacity on class voting requires a less nationalized party system. We explore sub-national variation in class voting in the United States in the 1930s. Although the scholars have attributed contemporary variation in class voting at the state level to inequality, culture, or religion, we study the 1930s because states raised a greater proportion of tax revenue (McCarty, Poole & Rosenthal 2016, Gelman, Kenworthy & Su 2010, Frank 2007, Fiorina, Abrams & Pope 2005). The New Deal Era was a key point in the evolution of a nationalized party system (Schattschneider 1960, Stokes 1967). The expansion of the federal government shortly after the period we study increased the importance voters and politicians placed on representation at the national level (Milkis 1993, Chhibber & Kollman 2004).

We use early opinion polls to study the relationship between bureaucratic capacity and class voting in the U.S. in the 1930s (AIPO 1937, Berinsky, Powell, Schickler & Yohai 2011). Our primary measure of bureaucratic capacity is the proportion of state revenue derived from direct taxes, which are levied contingent upon a taxpayer's social and economic attributes (Atkinson 1977). We find greater divergence in the vote choices of rich and poor voters in states that could tax their citizens. Similar to the cross-national analysis, we control for the effects of race and race-based inequality and find that fiscal capacity remains robust in these models.

By emphasizing the link between bureaucratic capacity and class voting, this paper contributes to the literature on redistributive politics by providing an additional mechanism accounting for the weak relationship between democracy and redistribution. Although political scientists have written extensively on the relationship between income and voting behavior, most of this work assumes that governments raise revenue by taxing income and assets. Research on why people may not vote their economic interests takes two broad approaches differing from ours. First, some scholars

explain the effect of beliefs and social identification on preferences for redistribution (Alesina & La Ferrara 2005, Scheve & Stasavage 2006, Alesina & Glaeser 2004, Shayo 2009). Our argument is more consistent with a second approach which emphasizes how party competition interacts with institutions and heterogeneous preferences on a noneconomic dimension to constrain vote choice. In these accounts, election-seeking politicians may create cross-class coalitions leaving voters without a party that offers their preferred policy on both redistribution and some other dimension (Roemer 1998). Consequently, institutions creating an incentive to politicians to "bundle" redistribution with noneconomic issues, will attenuate the relationship between income and voting (De La O & Rodden 2008, Huber & Stanig 2009, Vernby & Finseraas 2010). We argue that, where the state's tax-raising capacity is low, political competition will lead politicians to emphasize issues other than redistribution across class lines.

Besides contributing to research on class voting, this paper also has implications for arguments about accountability in rentier states. The literature on the resource curse suggests that nontax revenue produces poor governance because, absent taxation, citizens are uninformed or politically disengaged (e.g. Ross (2004)). Our argument suggests a different mechanism linking resource rents and accountability. As the wealthy can more easily demand accountability, poor governance may arise in rentier states because politicians have little incentive to stress fiscal stewardship to members citizens best placed to demand political accountability

1 Explaining Class Voting

Canonical models of redistribution in democracies predict that inequality will shape fiscal policy, with tax rates set to the preferences of the median voter (Romer 1975, Meltzer & Richard 1981). These models assume that people vote based on their income with the relatively wealthy voting for candidates opposing taxation. Redistribution entails the collection of progressive taxes, particularly direct taxes. Theories of redistributive politics and the accounts of income and voting

behavior built upon them assume the prior existence of a tax collection system that can extract taxes from the wealthy for redistribution. Contemporary democracies, however, vary greatly in the degree to which the state can be expected to tax income and assets.

We argue that bureaucratic capacity affects the relationship between income and voting because politicians are unlikely to emphasize fiscal policy in electoral campaigns where the tax exposure of the rich is low. Electoral competition is key to our argument. Bureaucratic capacity shapes the participation and preferences of the rich – those who might expect to fund redistribution through their taxes – and the basis of the appeals politicians make to all voters.

To see how bureaucratic capacity affects the income-vote relationship, consider how it shapes the incentives of the relatively wealthy to participate in electoral politics. Although the poor are possible recipients of redistributive social policy in all contexts, the wealthy are not always taxpayers funding redistribution. Therefore, where the relatively do not face the possibility of taxation, they are less likely to participate in electoral politics. For example, Kasara & Suryanarayan (2015) show that income is negatively correlated with turnout in states with low fiscal capacity. The electoral incentives of the rich are important because parties representing them have structural advantages regardless of fiscal capacity. High-income voters face fewer structural impediments to voting and increasing the cognitive, and material cost of voting dampens the turnout of the poor (Jusko & Shively 2005, Gallego 2009, Nevitte, Blais, Gidengil & Nadeau 2009). Moreover, parties representing the wealthy have more resources with which to contest elections.

A state's bureaucratic capacity has implications for how politicians contest elections. Because the rich participate at lower rates where fiscal capacity is low, politicians compete for the votes of a relatively poor electorate and parties campaigning on anti-redistributive platforms will have less success at the ballot box. Instead, politicians may compete for the votes of the poor majority by distributing government resources on bases other than class or by emphasizing noneconomic issues. Although we argue that a politics premised on fiscal policy and class-based voting are more likely in high fiscal capacity states, we make no predictions regarding which non-class social

cleavages are likely to become politically salient where fiscal capacity is low or about the types of political mobilization that politicians will use in these contexts. Like Keefer & Vlaicu (2008), our argument emphasizes how the credibility of politicians' policy proposals influences the electoral coalitions they create. But while Keefer & Vlaicu (2008) focus on how political parties substitute the credibility of political patrons for their lack of credibility on programmatic grounds, we emphasize that the structural constraints politicians face due to low fiscal capacity make redistributive platforms, in particular, less credible.

Because right wing parties that protect the income of the wealthy are the oldest parties in many democratic countries, it may seem odd to imagine their existence emerging from politicians' strategic choices. However, in many countries, particularly those in post-colonial and post-communist contexts, democratization preceded the creation of political parties representing the wealthy. In these places, we should not assume that right-wing opposing redistribution parties exist.[3] In Africa in the immediate post-colonial period left-leaning academics searched in vain for a class basis for politics (Sandbrook 1977, Sklar 1979). Our argument suggests that the absence of parties offering anti-redistributive platforms is a consequence of these states' inability to impose direct taxes on the wealthy.

2 Class Voting Across the World

Our measure of class voting is the degree to which the political preferences of the richest and poorest people diverge. We measure class voting in 60 countries from 1996 to 2010 using survey data from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES), the Global Barometer Project, the World Values Survey (WVS) and the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP).[4] In the analysis that follows our main outcome of interest is the electoral distance in voting preferences

[3] In post-communist contexts although communist parties rather than elite parties are the dominant type of old regime successor parties, class voting appears to be influenced by the type of communist rule and the noneconomic cleavage. See Evans (2006) for a review of the literature on political cleavages in post-communist countries.

[4] Table 5 in the Appendix shows the countries and surveys covered.

between the top and bottom quintile. The electoral distance between the voting preferences of two groups (m and n) is:

$$Electoral\ Distance_{mn} = \sqrt{\frac{1}{2}\sum_{p=1}^{P}(V_m^p - V_n^p)^2} \tag{1}$$

where there are P parties, and V_m^p is the proportion of members of group m who support party p. *Electoral Distance* is lowest when members of each group support all parties at equal rates. In the analysis that follows our main outcome of interest is the electoral distance in voting preferences between the top and bottom quintile. Because some theories of redistributive politics emphasize the political alignment of the middle class, we also use a measure of voting polarization that includes groups other than the richest and poorest (Iversen & Soskice 2006, Lupu & Pontusson 2011).[5]

We measure respondents' relative socioeconomic status within a country using asset ownership (Filmer & Pritchett 2001, Montgomery, Gragnolati, Burke & Paredes 2000). We constructed a *Wealth Index*, which is the first principal component of a principal components analysis of assets by country and used it to place respondents into quintiles.[6] Figure 1 shows how *Electoral Distance* varies cross-nationally.

[Figure 1 about here]

[5]We use a modified version of the polarization statistic developed by Esteban & Ray (1994) to characterize income distributions. Other scholars have used variants of the Esteban-Ray polarization statistic to measure ideological, ethnic, and political polarization (Montalvo & Reynal-Querol 2005, Clark 2009, Desmet, Weber & Ortuño Ortín 2009, Huber 2012). Because we measure the degree to which political preferences diverge by quintile, *Voting Polarization* is defined as:

$$Voting\ Polarization = 4\sum_{m=1}^{5}\sum_{n=1}^{5} s_m s_n^2\ Electoral\ Distance_{mn} \tag{2}$$

where s_m is the proportion of the population in quintile m, s_n is the proportion of the population in quintile n and *Electoral Distance* between quintiles m and n is defined in Equation 1.

[6]The assets used in each survey round are: Latinobarometer (TV, refrigerator, own home, computer, washing machine, telephone, mobile telephone, car, second home, drinking water, hot water, sewage system, bathroom with shower, electricity), Afrobarometer (TV, radio, bicycle, motorbike, and car), and LAPOP (telephone, refrigerator, landline telephone, cellular telephone, vehicle/car, washing machine, microwave oven, motorcycle, indoor plumbing, indoor bathroom, computer, flat panel TV, internet).

Most outcomes used to measure bureaucratic capacity are partly the result of current government policy and bureaucratic capacity may exist even though it is unused by policymakers. We use four standard measures of bureaucratic capacity which, to varying degrees, reflect both the potential capability of the state and current policy choices (Hendrix 2010). First, we use a measure of *Bureaucratic Quality* developed by the Political Risk Services Group (PRSG). *Bureaucratic Quality* ranges from one to five and takes on a higher value in countries where the bureaucracy can govern autonomously and if there are established mechanisms for training and staffing the civil service. Second, we use a measure of *Government Effectiveness* based on experts perceptions of the quality of public services collected by researchers at the World Bank (Kaufmann, Kraay & Mastruzzi 2010). Third, we measure the potential tax exposure of the rich using the share of government revenue from direct taxes (*Direct Tax/Revenue*). Although fiscal capacity directly affects the potential tax exposure of the rich, the share of revenue from direct taxation captures *both* long-term investments in tax-raising infrastructure and current fiscal policy. Finally, following the literature on civil conflict, we use GDP per capita as a measure of state capacity (Fearon & Laitin 2003, Hendrix 2010).

Social and political institutions other than bureaucratic capacity shape class voting. We control for whether a country has proportional representation (PR) in all regressions.[7] In proportional electoral systems, a greater number of social and economic groups may be represented by a distinct political party. Because compulsory voting may increase politicians' incentives to campaign on redistributive platforms, we include a dummy variable for the cases in which the government strictly enforces compulsory voting laws (Panagopoulos 2008, Boveda 2013).

Institutions that constrain politicians' responsiveness to voters limit the potential tax exposure of the rich. Several theoretical accounts of democratization focus on how elites prevent democ-

[7] *PR* is measured using a dummy variable. By this definition, countries have a proportional representation electoral system if candidates are elected based on the percent of votes received by their party or if our sources describe the country as having a PR electoral system. Data on electoral laws come from the CSES surveys and Beck, Clarke, Groff, Keefer & Walsh (2001).

racy because it leads to more redistribution (Boix 2003, Acemoglu & Robinson 2006). Because electoral competition has varying effects on policy choice, we control for the quality of a country's democracy using its *Polity Score* (Marshall, Gurr & Jaggers 2013). We also exclude from the analysis any country with a *Polity Score* of -4 or less.

Our measure of polarization places people into quintiles by country, but the relative well-being of the richest and poorest people is greater in places with more income inequality. Therefore, voting polarization may be higher in unequal countries. We control for inequality using Gini coefficients estimated from household surveys and using gross income, i.e. income before taxes and transfers from Milanovic (2013).[8]

Issues other than redistribution from the rich to the poor may be politically salient for reasons unrelated to a state's tax-raising capacity. Therefore, we control for two other aspects of politics that may reduce the political importance of redistribution. First, we control for ethnic diversity as measured by Fearon (2003) because ethnic voting is frequently an alternative to class voting. Second, citizens may be more likely to focus on the provision of public security than redistribution where political violence occurs (Wilkinson 2004). Although there are data sources that track election-related violence, they cover primarily developing countries. Therefore, we control for the importance of political violence using the *Homicide Rate*.[9]

Our main outcome variable is the *Electoral Distance* in vote choice between respondents in the top and bottom quintiles in each country-survey j. We estimate the following model

$$Electoral\ Distance_j = \delta + \gamma_1 Bureaucratic\ Quality_j + \gamma_2 PR_j + \gamma_3 Concurrent_j + \gamma_4 Compulsory_j$$
$$+\gamma_5 Polity_j + \gamma_6 Gini_j + \gamma_7 Homicide_j + \gamma_8 Ethnic\ Fractionalization_j + e_j$$

Table 1 presents results of FGLS regressions on *Electoral Distance*. The weights for the er-

[8]We use gross rather than net income to measure inequality because Gini coefficients constructed using net income are likely to capture a state's tax capacity and current redistributive policy (Milanovic 2000).

[9]The *Homicide Rate* is defined as the number of intentional homicides per 100,000 persons in the population from 2003 to 2008. These data come from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. The homicide rate is estimated using data from public health surveys and not police reports because intentional homicide is underreported.

ror correction standard errors from country-level bootstrap simulations.[10] All continuous variables were rescaled to have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 0.5 to make it easier to compare continuous and binary variables. Table 1 shows that the partisan preferences of people in the top and bottom quintiles in each country (*Electoral Distance*) differ more when bureaucratic capacity is high. Although our four measures of state capacity (*Bureaucratic Quality*, *Government Effectiveness*, *Direct Tax/Revenue*, and *Log. GDP per capita*) differ, they have roughly the same substantive effect on *Electoral Distance*. A standard deviation increase in our capacity measures is associated with an increase in *Electoral Distances* of between 0.14 to 0.2 standard deviations. Measuring *Voting Polarization* using the preferences of people in all five quintiles, rather than preferences of those in the top and the bottom quintile, we find a smaller substantive effect of bureaucratic capacity on income-based voting.[11]

[Table 1 about here]

The partisan preferences of the rich and the poor may diverge because voters care about some other trait, such as ethnicity, that is unevenly distributed along class lines (e.g. Huber & Suryanarayan (2016)). Our argument allows for the possibility that ethnicity and class may overlap as we expect social cleavages other than class to become politicized in places with little bureaucratic capacity. Politicians mobilizing voters along ethnic lines often emphasize voters distributive concerns. Therefore, even where ethnicity and class overlap significantly, we would expect to see greater voting polarization by income where the state can tax the wealthy. However, to explore the possibility that overlapping class and ethnic cleavages drive voting polarization in some of our cases, we control for inequality between members of different ethnic groups as measured by Baldwin & Huber (2010). Table 2 shows that voting polarization by income is not affected by *Between Group Inequality*, and the effect of our bureaucratic capacity variables is largely the same when we control for inequality across ethnic lines.

[10] We used a 1000 samples of 100 observations each to create measures of *Electoral Distance* to generate standard errors for the sampling distribution.

[11] See Table 6 in the Appendix.

We study voting polarization across countries with varying degrees of democratic responsiveness. We expected voting polarization to be greatest where elections are consequential for policy-making. However, democratic quality – as measured by a country's *Polity Score* – does not affect voting polarization by income. When we use a stricter threshold for what counts as a democracy, our findings are substantively the same.[12]

[Table 2 about here]

One concern might be that our results are being driven by distinctions between old and new democracies in the dataset. In older democracies, state-building often went together with limited franchise expansion, with wealthy elites investing in tax institutions to defer the threat of mass democratization or where democratization resulted from elite-bargaining (Ansell & Samuels 2014, Mares & Queralt 2015). In these cases, parties representing the interests of wealthy landowners and capitalist elites were organized before democratization raising concerns about endogeneity. A harder test of our argument would be in new democracies where we observe variations in state capacity but few organized parties representing the relatively wealthy exist. In Table 3 we show that our results are robust to restricting the sample to only states created after 1900.

[Table 3 about here]

3 Class Voting in the United States in the 1930s

In this section, we examine class-based voting in the American states in the 1930s, when federal government redistribution was more limited leading to a closer relationship between state party systems and fiscal capacity (Chhibber & Kollman 2004). We measure the divergence of political preferences along class lines in the U.S. using a combined dataset of 21 nationwide Gallup Polls

[12]Table 7 in the Appendix shows the regressions in Table 7 including countries with a minimum *Polity Score* of 0 instead of -4.

conducted in 1936 and 1937 comprising approximately 60,000 respondents. Surveys conducted by Gallup before the 1950s used a quota-controlled sampling method to impose demographic controls on their samples. Pollsters interviewed predetermined proportions of people from specific demographic groups. State sample sizes were chosen to match state voting patterns in the previous three presidential elections. Within regions and cities, respondents were selected using quotas based on age, sex and socio-economic. Apart from these quotas, enumerators could draw respondents from anywhere in the community.

While the polls have significant flaws, they are valuable because they offer the only means to study public opinion in this critical period (Verba & Schlozman 1977, Erikson & Tedin 1981, Page & Shapiro 1982, Berinsky et al. 2011). There are two potential sources of bias in the sample. Surveyors' attempts to represent specific groups rather than the population introduce the first potential source of bias. The second source of bias arises because interviewers were given discretion in selecting respondents who met the assigned demographic quotas (Berinsky 2006). These surveys oversample the educated and likely voters while undersampling women, Southerners, and African Americans. Quota-sampling is less problematic for our purposes because the over-sampling of likely voters and under-sampling of uneducated and poor respondents is likely to underestimate class differences in political preferences, making our sample a harder test of the theoretical claims of this paper.

To construct the *Electoral Distance* variable, we use a respondent's retrospective vote choice in the 1936 Presidential Election. Respondents were asked, "For whom (or for which presidential candidate) did you vote in the November [1936] election?" Respondents were placed in four socioeconomic categories: On Relief, Poor/Poor Plus, Average and Average Plus. These four categories were used in every survey by Gallup in 1936 and 1937. We regrouped respondents into three categories by combining On Relief and Poor/Poor Plus into a single low-income group and used these three groups to create the voting polarization measures. We do this because the distinction between poor and on-relief respondents in this period is somewhat arbitrary.The Federal

Emergency Relied Act implemented in 1933 provided federal grants to states to meet their relief needs. As Hopkins (1999) notes, while FERA money supported direct and work relief, states were slow to accept and roll out relief, resulting in state-wide variation in people "On Relief".[13] Also, recipients were not means-tested and were eligible for relief if they could provide evidence of unemployment. Taken together, we believe it is unclear whether the share of the population "On Relief" reflects poverty or a state's efficacy in dealing with unemployment. Figure 2 shows how *Electoral Distance* varies across states.

[Figure 2 about here]

We use a state's fiscal capacity to measure the potential tax exposure of the rich. Fiscal capacity is measured as the proportion of state revenue coming from direct taxation.[14] We also use a measure of the percentage of total revenue derived from taxes of any kind (*Tax/Revenue*) to allow for the possibility that states opt to rely on taxation, but can more easily tax their citizens indirectly because of their economic structure. Though direct taxes are more difficult to collect, taxation of any kind is an indicator of the degree to which state governments draw on local resources as opposed to nontax revenues, such as federal grants, during this period (Sylla, Legler & Wallis 2006).

Table 4 shows that the political preferences of rich and poor voters diverged in states where the government was primarily funded through taxation. As predicted, Models 1 and 2 show a positive and significant coefficients for both *Direct Tax/Revenue* and *Tax/Revenue*.

[Table 4 about here]

Theories of class voting suggest that political mobilization by the working class and inequality increase demand for redistribution. The industrial working class was a core constituency for

[13] FERA's successor, the Civil Works Administration which was created in 1934, while more successful than FERA, was still criticized for the arbitrariness of its implementation (Hopkins 1999).

[14] In 1932, direct taxes include dates on property, businesses, income, and sometimes a special inheritance (Sylla, Legler & Wallis 2006).

left-wing parties. Authors studying the New Deal Era legislation and labor movements have emphasized the highly contentious role of labor in redistributive politics before and during the Civil Rights Movement (Lichtenstein 1930, Brinkley 2011). Because demand for redistribution may be higher in states with high concentrations of industrial workers, we include the proportion of the workforce engaged in manufacturing in 1930 in all regressions. We control for inequality using the Gini coefficient in Table 4, Models 3-5.[15] Contrary to expectation, neither inequality nor the percent of the workforce in manufacturing predict divergent political preferences along class lines.

As in other countries, race has shapped the politics of redistribution in the United States. According to Key (1949) the defining feature of politics in the South was the status and potential voting power of African Americans. Race shaped policymakers' support for and enforcement of redistributive policies across the states (Farhang & Katznelson 2005, Lieberman & Lapinski 2001). White people are more prejudiced and more hostile to redistribution where slaves were, and African Americans are large percentages of the population (Glaser 1994, Acharya, Blackwell & Sen 2014).

We account for the likely effect of race on class voting by white respondents in four ways. First, all regressions control for whether a state is in the *Deep South* as defined by Key (1949). Second, we control for the proportion of a state's population who are black.[16] As Table 4 shows, the *Deep South* indicator has a negative and significant coefficient suggesting that the South, which in this period was a one-party system, had low levels of class voting. The coefficient on the $\%$ *Black* variable is not significant, but this is unsurprising given this variable's high correlation with our indicator for the South.

It may be the case that controlling for the racial composition of a state does not fully account for the impact racial differences have on preferences for redistribution and class voting. As in the cross-national part of the paper, we control for between-group inequality.[17] Alesina & Glaeser

[15]Data on inequality come from Frank (2014).

[16]The 11 states in Key's seminal book on southern politics include Virginia, Alabama, Tennessee, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, Louisiana, Arkansas, North Carolina, Mississippi and Texas.

[17]We measured *Between Group Inequality* using total family income in 1950 for whites and blacks only using the U.S. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) (Ruggles, Trent, Genadek, Goeken, Schroeder & Sobek 2010).

(2004) argue that the coincidence of black racial difference and poverty drove opposition to redistribution in the U.S. Even controlling a state's location in the Deep South and for the share of the population who are black, we find that *Between Group Inequality* reduces class voting (Table 4, Model 4). Finally, does Southern exceptionalism account for our findings? Mickey (2008) describes the South as an enclave of authoritarian rule with the Democratic party dominating the political landscape using white-only primaries. In Table 4, Model 5 we include only a sub-sample of Northern States. The coefficient of the *Direct Tax/Revenue* variable is larger in magnitude if only Northern states are included as is the negative coefficient on *Between Group Inequality*.

In the U.S., we are constrained by the class categories chosen by Gallup, but our findings are robust to alternative ways of measuring class voting and political preferences. As in the cross-national section, our results are substantively unchanged if we use *Voting Polarization* across all three income classes rather than *Electoral Distance* as our outcome.[18] In Table 4 we placed people classified by surveyors as "Poor" and those categorized as "On Relief," into the same income category, and our results are the same when we separate those two categories.[19] Finally, respondents may have partisan preferences that are not reflected in their stated vote choice because of strategic voting. We created the *Electoral Distance* measure using party affiliation for about 3,000 respondents. To capture party affiliation respondents were asked "Do you regard yourself as a Republican, Democrat, or a Socialist?" Measuring electoral distance in party affiliation rather than vote choice we find that fiscal capacity and *Electoral Distance* are positively correlated.[20]

Although this date occurs after the survey, the 1930 sample census includes no measure of total family income, only one of educational attainment. Though not ideal, this measure is justifiable because racial inequality changes little over time.

[18] See Table 8 in the Appendix.

[19] See Table 9 in the Appendix.

[20] See Table 10 in the Appendix.

4 Conclusion

We have argued that the political preferences of the rich and poor diverge as a state's capacity to raise revenues through taxation increases. A central feature of our argument is that the credibility of politicians' campaign promises to tax the wealthy affects the likelihood that politicians will offer voters platforms allowing them to simply vote their economic interests on redistribution. While parties often have a range of strategies they can use to attract low income voters, they are more constrained in how they can use tax policy to attract wealthy voters. Where fiscal capacity is high, rich voters must take the threat of redistribution seriously and are more motivated to participate in politics and more likely to respond favorably to right-wing economic platforms. Bureaucratic capacity increases the likelihood that parties use anti-redistributionist platforms to appeal to the relatively wealthy. Therefore, without a credible threat of taxation, we are unlikely to see class voting. Our explanation contributes a novel mechanism for why democratic politics is associated with greater redistribution in some places and not others and also potentially provides insights on where we might observe non-economic political appeals.

Using both contemporary cross-national data and subnational public opinion data from the United States in the 1930s we show how bureaucratic capacity shapes class voting in both these spheres. Our cross-national and U.S. findings are robust to multiple measures of how preferences diverge by class. Ethnic diversity is a key alternative explanation for the degree of class voting. Ethnicity influences preferences for redistribution both directly, through peoples' willingness to support redistribution to ethnic others, and indirectly, through its effect on how politicians create coalitions to win elections. Therefore, in both the U.S. and cross-nationally, we include a measure of ethnic composition. Because likely beneficiaries of redistribution may be concentrated in one ethnic group, we show that our results are robust to including a measure of economic inequality between ethnic groups.

Our findings show that racial inequality in the US state is negatively correlated with class

voting, even in the North. While there exists a rich body of work on the effects of racial composition on both racial attitudes and voting behavior at the local level, no work has yet studied how racial disparities in income shape class voting (Key 1949, Bledsoe, Welch, Sigelman & Combs 1995, Carsey 1995).[21] A natural extension to this paper would be to explore how changes in racial inequality have affected class voting since the 1930s.

We have focused on a state's capacity to raise taxes, but it is only one of several factors driving the potential tax exposure of the rich. We would expect changes in both asset mobility and resource windfalls to erode the connection between income and voting over time. For example, Roberts (2002) offers evidence that the 1982 debt crisis increased the importance of capital and eroded class voting in Latin American countries. Exploring the link between these constraints to revenue generation and class voting presents one fruitful avenue for research.

[21] Though Gay (2006) shows that African Americans have more hostile attitudes towards Latinos in neighborhoods where Latinos are better off.

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A Figures & Tables

Figure 1: Electoral Distance Across the World

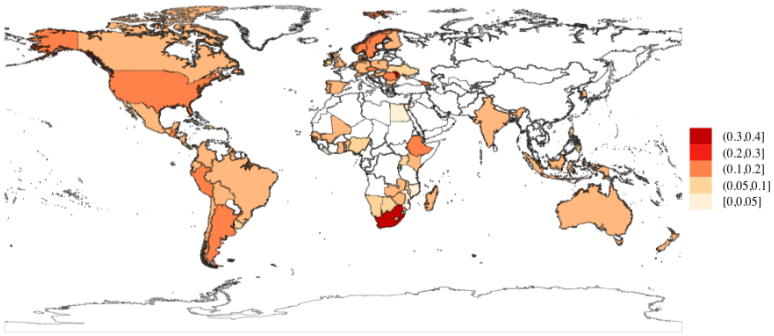

Figure 2: Electoral Distance in the U.S.

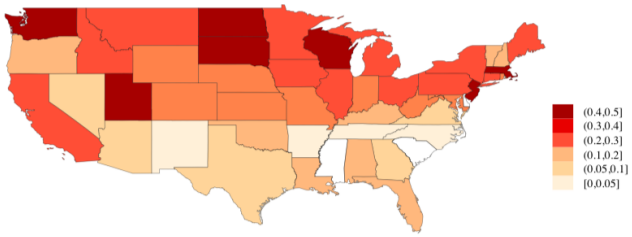

Table 1: Electoral Distance in Vote Choice – World

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Bureaucratic Quality	0.28**			
	(0.11)			
Government Effectiveness		0.39***		
		(0.13)		
Direct Tax/Revenue			0.38**	
			(0.16)	
Log. GDP per capita				0.29*
				(0.15)
PR	-0.18	-0.21	-0.11	-0.23
	(0.13)	(0.12)	(0.15)	(0.14)
Compulsory Voting	0.12	0.065	-0.49	0.071
	(0.14)	(0.15)	(0.31)	(0.14)
Concurrent Elections	-0.15	-0.12	-0.064	-0.16
	(0.10)	(0.089)	(0.15)	(0.096)
Polity	-0.068	-0.11	-0.14	-0.050
	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.16)	(0.10)
Gini (Gross)	-0.24**	-0.23*	-0.25*	-0.27**
	(0.11)	(0.12)	(0.13)	(0.12)
Homicide Rate	0.12	0.17	0.21*	0.11
	(0.13)	(0.14)	(0.12)	(0.15)
Ethnic Fractionalization	-0.087	-0.064	-0.25**	-0.029
	(0.11)	(0.10)	(0.12)	(0.12)
Constant	0.19*	0.19*	0.21	0.23*
	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.14)	(0.12)
N	163	159	93	167
Countries	58	59	42	60

Continuous variables are standardized to have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 0.5 * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Standard errors clustered by country in parentheses.

Table 2: Electoral Distance in Vote Choice – Controlling for BGI

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Bureaucratic Quality	0.22			
	(0.18)			
Government Effectiveness		0.29*		
		(0.17)		
Direct Tax/Revenue			0.47**	
			(0.21)	
Log. GDP per capita				0.38**
				(0.16)
Between Group Inequality	0.28*	0.21	0.18	0.16
	(0.16)	(0.19)	(0.23)	(0.18)
PR	-0.064	-0.13	-0.017	-0.13
	(0.15)	(0.17)	(0.19)	(0.16)
Compulsory Voting	-0.38**	-0.42**	-0.78*	-0.35**
	(0.18)	(0.18)	(0.44)	(0.17)
Concurrent Elections	0.093	0.098	0.11	0.075
	(0.17)	(0.15)	(0.23)	(0.14)
Polity	0.34*	0.34*	0.074	0.25
	(0.19)	(0.19)	(0.28)	(0.16)
Gini (Gross)	-0.28*	-0.32*	-0.27	-0.29*
	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.18)	(0.15)
Homicide Rate	0.19	0.24	0.24	0.21
	(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.16)	(0.15)
Ethnic Fractionalization	-0.18	-0.14	-0.33	0.0066
	(0.18)	(0.17)	(0.23)	(0.16)
Constant	0.077	0.088	0.096	0.12
	(0.17)	(0.20)	(0.23)	(0.19)
N	60	60	42	63
Countries	38	38	29	40

Continuous variables are standardized to have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 0.5 * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Standard errors clustered by country in parentheses.

Table 3: Electoral Distance in Vote Choice – New Countries

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Bureaucratic Quality	0.17			
	(0.16)			
Government Effectiveness		0.45**		
		(0.18)		
Direct Tax/Revenue			0.29*	
			(0.15)	
Log. GDP per capita				0.30*
				(0.17)
PR	0.015	-0.047	0.065	-0.035
	(0.14)	(0.11)	(0.25)	(0.12)
Compulsory Voting	0.24	0.26	-0.22	0.27
	(0.28)	(0.29)	(0.30)	(0.27)
Concurrent Elections	-0.16	-0.19	-0.24	-0.23
	(0.15)	(0.13)	(0.39)	(0.14)
Polity	-0.041	-0.22	-0.29	-0.15
	(0.17)	(0.18)	(0.23)	(0.15)
Gini (Gross)	-0.36**	-0.37**	-0.32*	-0.36**
	(0.15)	(0.16)	(0.18)	(0.14)
Homicide Rate	0.42	0.53***	0.48**	0.42*
	(0.26)	(0.18)	(0.21)	(0.22)
Ethnic Fractionalization	-0.11	-0.064	-0.27*	-0.028
	(0.13)	(0.11)	(0.16)	(0.13)
Constant	-0.0058	0.040	0.15	0.10
	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.24)	(0.14)
N	70	68	47	74
Countries	34	35	26	36

Continuous variables are standardized to have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 0.5 * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Standard errors clustered by country in parentheses.

Table 4: Electoral Distance in Vote Choice – U.S.

	(1) *All*	(2) *All*	(3) *All*	(4) *All*	(5) *North*
Direct Tax/Revenue	0.10**		0.11**	0.11**	0.15***
	(0.01)		(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)
Tax/Revenue		0.09**			
		(0.03)			
Gini			-0.02	-0.02	-0.02
			(0.68)	(0.72)	(0.76)
Between Group Inequality				-0.14*	-0.18*
				(0.09)	(0.06)
Deep South	-0.17**	-0.16**	-0.17**	-0.14*	
	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.07)	
% Black	-0.06	-0.07	-0.05	0.03	-0.05
	(0.41)	(0.36)	(0.49)	(0.73)	(0.66)
% Manufacturing Employment	0.01	0.01	0.02	-0.01	-0.02
	(0.90)	(0.87)	(0.75)	(0.88)	(0.64)
Constant	0.28***	0.28***	0.28***	0.27***	0.25***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
N	46	46	46	46	37
R^2	0.48	0.45	0.48	0.52	0.38

Continuous variables are standardized to have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 0.5 * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Standard errors clustered by country in parentheses.

A Supporting Information

Table 5: Countries and Surveys

Country	CSES	WVS	LP	LB	AB	Country	CSES	WVS	LP	LB	AB
Argentina			X	X		Republic of Korea	X				
Australia	X	X				Lesotho					X
Benin					X	Liberia					X
Bolivia			X	X		Lithuania	X				
Botswana					X	Madagascar					X
Brazil	X	X	X	X		Malawi					X
Bulgaria	X	X				Malaysia		X			
Canada	X	X				Mali		X			X
Cape Verde					X	Mexico	X	X	X	X	
Chile		X	X	X		Moldova		X			
Colombia			X	X		Mozambique					X
Costa Rica			X	X		Namibia					X
Cyprus		X				Netherlands	X				
Czech Republic	X					New Zealand	X				
Denmark	X					Nicaragua			X	X	
Dominican Republic			X	X		Nigeria					X
Ecuador			X	X		Norway	X	X			
Egypt		X				Panama			X	X	
El Salvador			X	X		Peru	X		X	X	
Ethiopia		X				Philippines	X				
Finland	X					Poland	X	X			
France	X	X				Portugal	X				
Georgia		X				Romania	X	X			
Germany	X	X				Senegal					X
Ghana		X			X	Slovenia	X	X			
Guatemala			X	X		South Africa					X
Guyana			X			Spain	X				
Haiti			X			Sweden	X	X			
Honduras			X	X		Switzerland	X				
Hungary	X					Trinidad and Tobago	X	X	X		
India		X				Uganda					X
Indonesia		X				Ukraine	X				
Ireland	X					United Kingdom	X	X			
Israel	X					United States	X	X			
Italy		X				Uruguay			X	X	
Jamaica			X			Venezuela			X		
Japan	X					Zambia		X			X
Kenya					X	Zimbabwe					X

Notes: CSES = Comparative Studies of Electoral Systems, WVS = World Values Survey, LP = Latin American Public Opinion Project, LB = Latinobarometer, AB = Afrobarometer.

Table 6: Voting Polarization – World

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Bureaucratic Quality	0.15			
	(0.10)			
Government Effectiveness		0.28**		
		(0.13)		
Direct Tax/Revenue			0.28*	
			(0.16)	
Log. GDP per capita				0.13
				(0.14)
PR	-0.23*	-0.27**	-0.092	-0.24*
	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.13)	(0.14)
Compulsory Voting	0.042	0.0083	-0.53*	0.018
	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.30)	(0.13)
Concurrent Elections	-0.19*	-0.17*	-0.15	-0.19*
	(0.11)	(0.10)	(0.17)	(0.11)
Polity	-0.047	-0.095	-0.069	-0.024
	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.17)	(0.11)
Gini (Gross)	-0.30***	-0.31***	-0.34**	-0.33***
	(0.10)	(0.11)	(0.13)	(0.10)
Homicide Rate	0.071	0.12	0.15	0.065
	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.12)	(0.12)
Ethnic Fractionalization	-0.11	-0.082	-0.10	-0.082
	(0.10)	(0.099)	(0.13)	(0.10)
Constant	0.25**	0.27***	0.22*	0.26**
	(0.10)	(0.097)	(0.13)	(0.12)
N	165	161	94	169
Countries	58	60	42	60

Continuous variables are standardized to have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 0.5 * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Standard errors clustered by country in parentheses.

Table 7: Electoral Distance in Vote Choice – Altering the Threshold for Democracies

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Bureaucratic Quality	0.58**			
	(0.26)			
Government Effectiveness		0.63***		
		(0.20)		
Direct Tax/Revenue			0.44**	
			(0.19)	
Log. GDP per capita				0.69***
				(0.22)
PR	-0.022	-0.16	-0.064	0.042
	(0.30)	(0.31)	(0.37)	(0.29)
Compulsory Voting	0.17	0.098	-0.55	0.021
	(0.17)	(0.14)	(0.32)	(0.15)
Concurrent Elections	-0.049	0.11	-0.086	-0.083
	(0.22)	(0.23)	(0.27)	(0.21)
Polity	0.016	0.0048	-0.037	0.045
	(0.16)	(0.14)	(0.20)	(0.17)
Gini (Gross)	-0.059	-0.29	-0.065	-0.14
	(0.22)	(0.23)	(0.28)	(0.22)
Homicide Rate	0.10	0.28	0.013	0.13
	(0.15)	(0.18)	(0.19)	(0.17)
Ethnic Fractionalization	0.10	0.19	-0.045	0.19
	(0.16)	(0.15)	(0.14)	(0.16)
Constant	-0.078	-0.038	0.12	-0.12
	(0.26)	(0.27)	(0.33)	(0.27)
N	75	71	50	75
Countries	29	29	21	29

Continuous variables are standardized to have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 0.5 * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Standard errors clustered by country in parentheses.

Table 8: Voting Polarization – U.S.

	(1) *All*	(2) *All*	(3) *All*	(4) *All*	(5) *North*
Direct Tax/Revenue	0.06**		0.06**	0.06**	0.08**
	(0.01)		(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)
Tax/Revenue		0.05*			
		(0.05)			
Gini			-0.01	-0.01	-0.01
			(0.75)	(0.79)	(0.86)
Between Group Inequality				-0.08*	-0.10*
				(0.09)	(0.07)
Deep South	-0.08**	-0.08*	-0.09**	-0.07	
	(0.04)	(0.07)	(0.04)	(0.12)	
% Black	-0.04	-0.04	-0.04	0.01	-0.04
	(0.29)	(0.28)	(0.35)	(0.90)	(0.63)
% Manufacturing Employment	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.00
	(0.40)	(0.36)	(0.38)	(0.69)	(0.96)
Constant	0.16***	0.16***	0.16***	0.15***	0.14***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
N	46	46	46	46	37
R^2	0.50	0.47	0.50	0.54	0.40

Continuous variables are standardized to have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 0.5 * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Standard errors clustered by country in parentheses.

Table 9: Electoral Distance in Vote Choice – U.S. – Four Groups

	(1) *All*	(2) *All*	(3) *All*	(4) *All*	(5) *North*
Direct Tax/Revenue	0.09**		0.11**	0.11**	0.13**
	(0.04)		(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)
Tax/Revenue		0.09*			
		(0.06)			
Gini			-0.04	-0.04	-0.02
			(0.51)	(0.54)	(0.73)
Between Group Inequality				-0.24***	-0.25**
				(0.01)	(0.02)
Deep South	-0.19**	-0.18**	-0.20**	-0.14*	
	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.09)	
% Black	-0.09	-0.10	-0.08	0.06	-0.02
	(0.24)	(0.20)	(0.33)	(0.52)	(0.86)
% Manufacturing Employment	0.05	0.04	0.06	0.03	0.01
	(0.31)	(0.36)	(0.23)	(0.62)	(0.83)
Constant	0.40***	0.40***	0.41***	0.39***	0.37***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
N	46	46	46	46	37
R^2	0.53	0.52	0.53	0.61	0.38

Continuous variables are standardized to have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 0.5 * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Standard errors clustered by country in parentheses.

Table 10: Electoral Distance in Partisanship – U.S.

	(1) *All*	(2) *All*	(3) *All*	(4) *All*	(5) *North*
Direct Tax/Revenue	0.08*		0.12**	0.12**	0.16**
	(0.08)		(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.01)
Tax/Revenue		0.10**			
		(0.03)			
Gini			-0.08	-0.09	-0.12
			(0.17)	(0.18)	(0.12)
Between Group Inequality				-0.03	-0.04
				(0.75)	(0.70)
Deep South	-0.06	-0.04	-0.07	-0.07	
	(0.47)	(0.61)	(0.35)	(0.41)	
% Black	-0.11	-0.13*	-0.10	-0.08	-0.06
	(0.12)	(0.07)	(0.18)	(0.40)	(0.67)
% Manufacturing Employment	-0.03	-0.05	0.01	0.00	0.01
	(0.48)	(0.28)	(0.92)	(0.99)	(0.93)
Constant	0.29***	0.28***	0.29***	0.29***	0.29***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
N	47	47	47	47	37
R^2	0.28	0.32	0.31	0.32	0.22

Continuous variables are standardized to have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 0.5 * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Standard errors clustered by country in parentheses.