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The Power of Religious Organizations in Human Decision Processes: Analyzing Voting Behavior

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Abstract

In Switzerland, two key church institutions – the Conference of Swiss Bishops (CSB) and the Federation of Protestant Churches (FPC) – make public recommendations on how to vote for certain referenda. We leverage this unique situation to directly measure religious organizations' power to shape human decision making. We employ an objective measure of voters' commitment to their religious organization to determine whether they are more likely to vote in line with this organization's recommendations. We find that voting recommendations do indeed matter, implying that even in a secularized world, religion plays a crucial role in voting decisions.

Political Science Classification: voting behavior, evaluation, religion.

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Behavioral scientists from another planet would notice immediately the semiotic resemblance between animal submissive behavior on the one hand and human obeisance to religious and civil authority on the other.

(Wilson 1998, p. 283)

If you do not support my temple, your crops will not grow!

(Boulding 1989, p. 222)

I.   INTRODUCTION

The human mind tends to be attracted to religion because it offers hope and assurance, brings certainty to life, and helps individuals to make sense of their world (Wilson 1998). Not only does religion cater to humans' strong desire for immortality, it provides a compensatory sense of control in uncontrollable situations (Stark and Bainbridge 1987). Religion can also be seen as a medium for promoting success and offering comfort, particularly when the situation is especially significant and other techniques have proven unsuccessful (Pinker 2009). As a result, the "predisposition to religious beliefs is the most complex and powerful force in the human mind and in all probability an ineradicable part of human nature" (Wilson 2004, p. 169).

Because religious beliefs and practices shape human habits and therefore culture, they also play a key role in power; that is, the ability to get what one wants or achieve common ends (Boulding 1952). Churches are thus crucial in the process of socialization (Johnston and Figa 1988), and the earliest civilizations relied on a priesthood that integrated persuasive power with spiritual threats (Boulding 1989). Even today, despite the secularization of (political) power, church organizations can have a substantial impact on human attitudes and behavior, exerting a social force that affects the lives of many. Nevertheless, in the face of contemporary secularization, today's religious organizations rely more on persuasion to exercise political power than on spiritual threats, which makes their power to shape human decisions very difficult to measure directly; particularly, as regards the actual political decision process (Boulding 1989).

The political process in Switzerland offers a unique natural setting to investigate how church organizations influence actual voting behavior. In most other settings it is extremely difficult to determine which policy issues affect religious preferences, especially when such issues have no direct effect on questions of faith. In Switzerland, the largest church institutions (Conference of Swiss Bishops, CSB and Federation of Protestant Churches, FPC)[1], actually

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[1] „Conférence des Evêques suisses"/"Schweizer Bischofkonferenz" and „Fédération des Eglises protestantes de Suisse"/"Schweizerischer Evangelischer Kirchenbund" in French/German.

offer voting recommendations for certain referenda that clearly reveal specific policy preferences to their congregation. Referenda themselves present voters with dichotomous choices and the results indicate what is preferred by the majority, representing a preference ranking against the status quo (Schneider et al. 1981; Frey 1994; Stadelmann et al. 2013). We can therefore use these data to measure both the behavioral impact of church organizations' official declarations and voters' objective commitment to these recommendations in referendum decisions.

Specifically, because voting decisions do not take place in a vacuum, *if* these church institutions are powerful and religious affiliations do in fact matter for real voting decisions, Catholics will tend to vote in line with CSB recommendations while Protestants will follow FPC recommendations. As Swiss cantons differ in the proportions of Protestants and Catholics (see Figure A1), we can use these cantonal differences to explore religious commitment and the corresponding (emotional) attachment to a religious organization in actual voting situation. Our study thus contributes to the empirical literature on power, which has long struggled with quantifying and measuring the power variable[2]. In particular, we are able to explore how social power or integrative power shapes human choices. It should be noted that religious organizations may not only be powerful in influencing actual voting behavior, but they also take into account the preferences of their religious group when providing a recommendation. Such a reflection of the preferences of their group members cannot be empirically isolated from the power of influencing choices.

Because a church's recommendation signals the importance of a referendum for that congregation, we can use any divergence in religious group preferences over different policy proposals to identify the extent to which these proposals matter to each group. Specifically, our identification strategy permits us to identify the effect of variations in church institutions' voting recommendations on voting behavior of Protestants and Catholics within the cantons. As a secularized western European country, Switzerland is characterized by heterogeneity of religious denomination at the cantonal level but is still dominated by the two major Christian factions. We therefore focus on situations in which Catholic and Protestant representatives take different positions while holding constant the cultural differences based on religion (e.g., Christian versus Muslims), as well as other factors. We achieve such constancy by analyzing a single nation rather than a cross-section of countries and using cantonal fixed effects. The validity of our assumptions is supported by the empirical evidence indicating no differential

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[2] See, e.g., Russell (1938), Galbraith (1983), and Boulding (1989) for important contributions on power.

cultural effects in the estimations of different samples for different language groups in Switzerland. Results indicate that divergent religious preferences play a considerable role in congregational voting decisions.

Admittedly, the differences between Catholics and Protestants identified for Switzerland are rather subtle; however, such differences can be expected to have even larger effects in less secularized countries. The Swiss case study is particularly useful in that Swiss cantons have different proportions of Catholics and Protestants, with some known for a strong Protestant tradition (Geneva) and others as Catholic strongholds (Fribourg and Lucerne), a division that provoked Switzerland's last civil war ("Sonderbundskrieg").

The article proceeds as follows: the next section provides the theoretical background, section III describes the data, setting, and identification strategy; and section IV reports the empirical results. Section V concludes the paper.

II.   THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Humans have an innate desire to belong to or form social relationships and develop mutual caring commitments, bonding in groups that from an evolutionary perspective allows a better chance of surviving environmental threats (Lawrence and Nohria 2002). Society has therefore built institutions that reinforce group-oriented behavior, and religious organizations can be seen as "social enterprises" aimed at creating, maintaining, and supplying religion to group members (Stark and Finke 2000). These institutions not only introduce conventions that enhance identification but develop rituals linked to (symbolic) images of solidarity and commitment. Through their emotional impact, such symbols can enhance (emotional) attachment to the organization. In fact, religious organizations rely on both obedience and surrender of the self via commitment (Wilson 2004).

Religion is thus a uniquely human trait aimed at subordinating immediate self-interest in favor of group interest in order to attain long-term genetic gains (Wilson 2004). In fact, evolutionary psychology emphasizes that belonging to a powerful group united by common beliefs and purpose increases the probability that group members' genes will be transmitted to the next generation. Thus, the groups' goals and strategies are subordinated (Wilson 1998). Even on an individual level, religious commitment is rooted in social support and reinforcement (Stark and Finke 2000). For example, in reviewing important historical figures, Boulding (1989) notes that founders of important religions, including Buddha, Jesus, and Muhammad – and on a smaller scale, Martin Luther, John Wesley, or Joseph Smith – had a far

greater societal impact than figures like Julius Caesar, Napoleon, or John D. Rockefeller. Even the increase in scientific knowledge has not led to a substantial crisis of religious belief.

In general, religions can be seen as cultural systems (Stark and Bainbridge 1987), driven by laws and customs (Pinker 2009), which shape how people conform to societies' laws (Torgler 2006). Religion has been shown to have an impact on countries' social-transfer spending (Lindert 1994) and small religious differences matter for important social phenomena (e.g. Schaltegger and Torgler 2013 for suicides). Analogously, churches can be seen as organizations that provide spiritual products and attract people for diverse reasons such as a desire for sociability, respectability, emotional security, and acceptability; child socialization; a desire for spiritual help and instruction; or the wish for salvation. Affiliation with a religious organization may thus be the product of tradition or habituation, may be related to personal struggle, or may serve as a way of understanding one's own place in life and society. In this latter capacity, it helps the individual to deal with conflicts and enhances the illusion of control over one's life (Hood, Hill, and Spilka 2009, p. 143). Religious organizations (like other organizations) also provide social opportunities – not only human companionship, leisure, and recreation – but even the potential to achieve leadership positions (Stark and Bainbridge 1987). Indeed, Wilson (2004) stresses that "[i]n the midst of the chaotic and potentially disorienting experiences each person undergoes daily, religion classifies him [sic], provides him with unquestioned membership in a group claiming great powers, and by this means gives him a driving purpose in life compatible to his self-interest. His strength is the strength of the group, his guide the sacred covenant" (p. 188).

Most particularly, religious organizations have developed a monopoly as intermediaries in the granting of immortality, as middlemen between ordinary people and the gods. Because most humans do not consider themselves very successful at communicating with divine beings, they "must turn to intermediaries who either talk to gods themselves, or are in touch with other persons who do" (Stark and Bainbridge 1987, p. 98). Religious organizations, being less vulnerable and more independent of change than other social agencies, affect such communication using religious images based on particular laws and procedures (Boulding 1961). Historically, such organizations have also mediated between citizens and the state, which has placed them in a better position to achieve an effective monopoly via the suppression of competing religions. In addition, the state benefits from religion when a prosperous citizenry allows it to extract greater rewards in the citizen-state exchange relationship. In this case, religion mediates between the state and citizenry while also acting as an agent for both parties, which gives it a crucial role in shaping civilization's course (Stark and Bainbridge 1987).

At times, religious organizations actively engage in the political process by opposing the government. Such engagement is explored by Johnston and Figa (1988) in their comparative study of the church's function in Poland as opposition to the repression of Solidarity (Solidarność), in Franco's Spain as part of the anti-Francoist movement, and in Central and South America (particularly Nicaragua) in mobilizing large sectors of rural and urban poor. When religious organizations consider citizens' well-being and act in line with their stated ethos, it enhances people's trust over time.

Religious organizations rely on internalized organizational values such as attachment and loyalty for their survival, which results in automated "group minded" processes. That is, group members who feel attached or close to the organization require no external stimuli to make decisions in line with its objectives (Simon 1997). Durkheim therefore defines religion as "a unified system of beliefs and practices […] which unite into a single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them" (cited in Stark and Bainbridge 1987, p. 103). By producing stable social relationships among organizational members, religious organizations have a direct impact on society (Stark and Bainbridge 1987), one that is particularly relevant in voting situations. Simon (1986), for example, claims that to "predict how a voter, even a voter motivated solely by concern for his or her economic well-being, will vote requires much more than assuming utility maximization […] In any model of voting behavior that has any prospect of predicting behavior, almost all the action will lie in these auxiliary assumptions about attention and belief that define the decision maker's frame" (p. S217). The distinction between the citizen's and the church's goals becomes shallower. With a voting recommendation the church organizations actively communicate their system of values in the political process. Several years ago the economist Iannaoccone (1998) pointed out that "[a]lthough beliefs lie at the core of every religion, economists have yet to say much about the formation of beliefs, religious or otherwise, nor have they given much attention to the process by which religions seek to shape people's beliefs and values" (p. 1491).[3]

Trust in a religious organization benefits individuals by allowing them to solve complex problems with simple rules. In fact, previous research shows that voters follow a simple voting heuristic when relying on the advice of trusted representatives (Stadelmann and Torgler 2012). In this case, voting behavior is seemingly habitual and driven by general rules of thumb, which could indicate that when voters must process a great deal of information, their thinking is driven

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[3] Höhener and Schaltegger (2012) provide a recent review of the literature on the economics of religion (in German).

by satisficing. That is, the time pressure involved in evaluating complex information on a referendum day can increase their willingness to accept recommendations from those they trust. At the same time, loyalty and thus (emotional) ties reduce the willingness to question suggestions by such trusted representatives as the CSB or FPC in Switzerland, leading to the enforcement of organizational value schemes through identification and the acceptance of recommendations as guides for actions.

In modern democracies, information is provided by politicians, interest groups, the government, and/or professional information gatherers (Schneider and Naumann 1982; Eichenberger and Serna 1996). In Switzerland, citizens are also assisted in their voting decisions by the government (Feld and Kirchgässner 2000; Benz and Stutzer 2004). Because both the CSB and the FPC are considered authorities with long histories and traditions (cf. next section), neither should encounter any difficulty convincing followers that their recommendations when issued are sound and their representatives knowledgeable and trustworthy in the policy matter at stake. Indeed, the fact that churches only provide voting recommendations for a limited number of referenda accentuates their selectiveness when choosing to raise their voices. Such selectiveness, however, suggests that they are concerned with being listened to and acknowledged as experts on their topics of interest. An analysis of situations in which these two religious institutions disagree, therefore, should shed valuable light on how church organizations influence the citizens of their religious denomination. In particular, as expressed in the following proposition, we expect that voters will be more likely to follow the recommendations of the group to which they belong or feel attached: *Citizens are more likely to follow the preferences of their religious organization (denomination agency) and give more weight to this organization's voting recommendations.*

III.   DATA AND IDENTIFICATION

According to the 2010 Swiss census, Catholics or Protestants represent approximately 70% of the population, with Muslims numbering under 5% and Jews below 1%, although the share of people without a religious denomination has increased over time (from approx. 7% in 1990 to approx. 20% in 2010, a change we account for). Switzerland has 26 cantons (constituencies) and we analyze the actual voting behavior of Catholic and Protestant constituents at the cantonal level. Cantons have different religious traditions with Catholic strongholds like Fribourg and Lucerne; and Protestant centers like Zurich or Geneva (Calvinist). Hence the proportion of each denomination in each canton varies substantially.

Although we are not able to measure the intensity of religious activities at the cantonal level for the two groups (e.g., church attendance), Switzerland has a church tax for Protestants and Catholics. Thus, people actually pay to have a Christian religion which can be seen as an indicator of denominational preference or at least a passive commitment to the religious organization, regardless of whether the voter attends church services.

Because the political preferences of religious groups are not always transparent, it is often unclear which referenda are important to particular denominations. It is even more difficult to identify different preferences between different denominations (e.g., between Christian groups like Catholics and Protestants). To address these challenges, we take advantage of the most interesting aspect of our setting: the fact that both the CSB (Conference of Swiss Bishops) and the FPC (Federation of Protestant Churches) publicly issue voting recommendations. As neither is obliged to do so, each issues a recommendation only when it is important to have a voice on the topic or when the recommendation will not raise too much controversy within its own denomination. The CBS, established in 1863, currently has 12 members: the bishops of the six Swiss dioceses and their four auxiliary bishops, plus the abbots from the two territorial abbeys of St. Maurice (Switzerland's French-speaking region) and Einsiedeln (its German-speaking region). The CSB defines itself as a "transparent instrument servicing the Swiss church and thus all Catholics in Switzerland" (http://www.bischoefe.ch). The FPC, which comprises the 24 Protestant cantonal churches, the Protestant-Methodist Church, and the Église Évangélique Libre de Genève, was established in 1920 and represents 2.4 million Protestants. Like the CSB, it also deals with political and economic matters (http://www.sek-feps.ch/).

In our research context, the voting recommendations of these two organizations serve as external identifications to detect relevant policy issues for each religious group. Because church organizations make recommendations on a limited number of referenda, each is a strong indication to the voters that the church representatives wish to have a voice in political matters. Hence, a recommendation issued by the CSB is likely to identify Catholic preferences while one issued by the FPC pinpoints those of Protestants. For our identification strategy to be valid, however, we must limit our observations to a total of 17 referenda (see Table 1 for an overview) for which both organizations (the CSB and the FPC) issued voting recommendations.[4] In 13 of these cases, despite the large set of issues covered, both religious organizations made the same voting recommendation. However, in four referenda the recommendations differed, allowing

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[4] Appendix Table A1 provides the original text in the national languages, as well as additional information on referenda for which only one religious group stated a preference.

us to exploit a relatively large dataset for a difference-in-difference setting focusing on religious preferences with 26 cantons and 17 referenda/interventions. Such a data set is therefore very valuable as many policy interventions usually rely on only one case. In addition, we have 26 cantons with differences in the share of Catholics and Protestants. We use all these referenda to probe for differences between Catholic and Protestant voting patterns through variations in preferences. Such differentiation also allows us to determine whether religious preferences matter in the voting decision process over the different cantons where the shares of Catholics and Protestants vary considerably (Figure A1).

Although the cantons vary in the composition of religious groups, the composition itself is clearly exogenous to any individual referenda presented on a national level. Moreover, cantonal differences in the share of the two major religions has changed little over the last 100 years, providing us with a good identification strategy for our setting (Angrist and Pischke 2009). Nevertheless, we do take into account cantonal circumstances by controlling for cantonal fixed effects. For example, although Geneva has a strong Protestant tradition and history, Catholics in the canton have a relative majority (approx. 39% Catholics, 17% Protestants, and 23% with no religious denomination as of 2000).

Our setting aims to explain the cantonal "yes" share of votes in referenda where the FPC and CBS issue voting recommendations. Voting recommendations of both religious organizations may either be "yes" or "no". To make the interpretation of the results meaningful and simplify the empirical strategy, we need to standardize the cantonal "yes" share as follows: when the CSB recommends a "no" vote, we take the cantonal "yes" vote, but when it recommends a "yes" vote, we take the inverse cantonal "yes" share (1 – the "yes" share). Without such standardization, we would not know what to expect when the proportion of Catholics is larger and the religious preferences of CSB and FPC differ or are the same. Once the variable is standardized, however, we know what to expect if religion matters: If religious preferences translate into real voting decisions, Catholics will vote according to CSB preferences and Protestants will do so in line with FPC preferences. Performing the standardization, therefore, clearly distinguishes "different religious preferences" from the "same religious preferences", i.e. that Protestants prefer a "yes" vote while Catholics prefer a "no" in the former case while Protestants prefer a "no" vote and Catholics also prefer a "no" vote in the latter.

The descriptive statistics for all variables are given in Appendix Table A2. In Table 1, we identify whether Christian groups have the same revealed preferences or not (i.e., whether or not both the CSB and the FPC issued the same voting recommendation).

Table 1: Referenda with clear Catholic and Protestant preferences

Topic of referendum	Date	% yes in population	Catholic preference	Protestant preference
Initiative on immigration control	24-Sep-00	36.2	Reject	Reject
Changes in the Swiss penal code on abortion	2-Jun-02	72.2	Reject	Accept
Initiative to stop the abuse of asylum rights	24-Nov-02	49.9	Reject	Reject
Federal enactment on naturalization and simplified naturalization of young second -generation foreigners	26-Sep-04	43.2	Accept	Accept
Federal enactment on the naturalization of third-generation foreigners	26-Sep-04	48.4	Accept	Accept
Federal enactment on the compensation for army servicemen, the civil service, and the civil protection service	26-Sep-04	55.5	Accept	Accept
Federal enactment on stem cell research	28-Nov-04	66.4	Reject	Accept
Federal enactment on the civil union of same sex couples	5-Jun-05	58.0	Reject	Accept
Federal enactment on the extension of the free movement of persons agreement to new EU members	25-Sep-05	56.0	Accept	Accept
Federal enactment on opening hours of shops in centres with a high traffic frequency	27-Nov-05	50.6	Reject	Reject
Federal law on foreigners	24-Sep-06	68.0	Reject	Reject
Changes to the federal law on asylum rights	24-Sep-06	67.8	Reject	Reject
Initiative on democratic naturalizations	1-Jun-08	36.3	Reject	Reject
Initiative against the construction of minarets	29-Nov-09	57.5	Reject	Reject
Constitutional article on human research	7-Mar-10	77.2	Accept	Accept
Initiative on the deportation of criminal foreigners	28-Nov-10	52.9	Reject	Reject
Counterproposal to the initiative on the deportation of criminal foreigners	28-Nov-10	44.5	Reject	Accept

Notes: We consider preferences of religious groups to be different when the CSB and FPC issue different voting recommendations. Detailed descriptions are provided in the supplementary tables.

Given the data structure, the setting we analyze is the following: Different preferences of religious organizations for specific policies can be directly observed and are known ahead of the referendum. The share of religious congregations varies across the cantons and is naturally independent of the specific referendum outcome. We use the share of Catholics[5] and interact it with the identifier for "different religious preferences" to explain the yes-share in a referendum. This approach translates into the following estimation equation:

(1)   *(Yes Share)$_{ir}$* $=\ \alpha + \beta_1$*(Share of Catholics)$_i$* +

β_2**(Share of Catholics)$_i$*(Different religious preferences)$_r$** +

β_3*(Different religious preferences)$_r$ + $X_{ir}\gamma + \phi_i + \varepsilon_{ir}$*

where *(Yes Share)$_{ir}$* indicates the (standardized) share of yes votes in a canton *i* in referendum *r*. *(Share of Catholics)$_i$* is the share of Catholics in canton *i* and *(Different religious*

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[5] As additional measures for robustness tests and refinements we also employ an indicator variable for whether the share of Catholics is larger than the share of Protestants, an indicator variable for whether Catholics form an absolute majority in the canton, and the number of Catholics over the number of Protestants. All measures lead to similar results.

preferences)$_r$ stands for different religious preferences of the CSB and the FPC, i.e. the CSB recommends a "no" vote while the FPC recommends a "yes" vote. If religious preferences matter for voting decisions, we expect $\beta_2 < 0$. As both interaction variables are exogenous to the cantonal "yes" share of a specific referendum, the interaction term gives us the causal effect of an increase in the share of Catholics when the CSB recommends no and the FPC recommends yes. Any variable not included in the analysis could only be characterized as omitted if it would influence the interaction term directly. We control for such potential influences by including a set of additional control variables X_{ir} (in particular the share of people without a religious denomination and the voter turnout) as well as canton fixed effects ϕ_i to capture cantonal constant factors such as cultural traits (conservatism). Because differences between Christian religious organizations are subtle, a significant coefficient β_2 is likely to be a conservative estimate for the influence of religious beliefs in real voting situations.

Figure 1: The effect of different Christian religious preferences on voting decisions
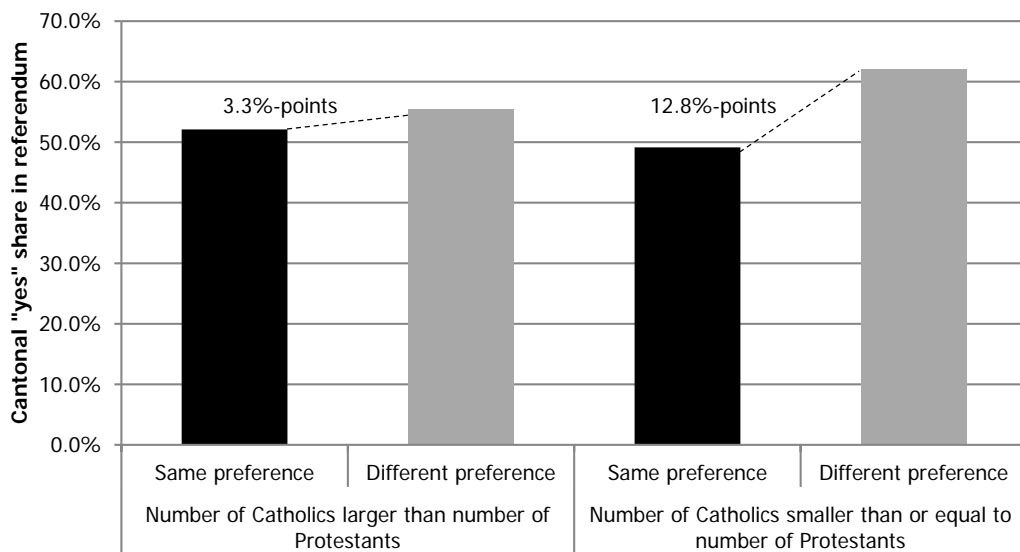
	(1) *Same preference*	(2) *Different preference*	(3) *Difference*
(1) Number of Catholics larger than number of Protestants	0.521*** (0.011)	0.554*** (0.013)	0.033* (0.017)
(2) Number of Catholics smaller than or equal to number of Protestants	0.491*** (0.014)	0.620*** (0.02)	0.128*** (0.024)
	0.030* (0.017)	-0.065*** (0.024)	**-0.095*** (0.030)**

Notes: Values represent the standardized "yes" share (when CSB recommends a "no" vote) of constituents voting in the referenda. We consider preferences of religious groups to be different when the CSB and FPC issue different voting recommendations. Standard error estimates are given in parentheses. ***, **, and * indicate a mean significance level of below 1%, between 1 and 5%, and between 5 and 10%, respectively.

IV.   EMPIRICAL RESULTS OF OUR EXPERIMENT

Baseline results

Figure 1 and the accompanying table outline the findings with a standard difference-in-difference setting and serve as a central motivating outcome of our research.

The bars show the cantonal "yes" share. The black bars capture referenda where both religious organization, CSB and FPC, formulate the same policy preferences while the grey bars indicate referenda where preferences are different. The corresponding numbers are given in column (1) and (2) respectively. In row (1) the share of Catholics in the respective canton is larger than the share of Protestants, whereas in row (2), the share of Catholics is smaller or equal to the share of Protestants. The results are in line with our expectations that if the number of Catholics within a canton is larger than the number of Protestants but the recommendations of CSB and FPC are the same, 52.1% of constituents on average will vote "yes." When the CSB and FPC recommendations are the same but Protestants outnumber Catholics around 49.1% of constituents will vote "yes", a difference of 3.0 percentage points that is only marginally significant at the 10% level.[6] In other words, when the religious preferences of the two religious institutions are the same, both sets of constituents vote similarly as also indicated by the two black bars in the figure. Importantly, however, when the preferences diverge, i.e. the Protestant religious organization recommends a "yes" vote while the Catholic one recommends a "no" vote, the cantonal "yes" share is 55.4% in cantons with more Catholics than Protestants but substantially higher, 62.0%, in cantons with more Protestants than Catholics. Moreover, whereas the "yes" share increases by 12.8 percentage points in cantons with more Protestants, it grows by only 3.3 percentage points when Catholic constituents outnumber Protestants. The difference-in-difference is (12.8–3.3=) 9.5 percentage points. These findings indicate that divergent religious preferences play a substantial role in congregational voting decisions. Hence, even in a secularized world, the voting recommendations made by these two major religious organizations matter and religion continues to play a crucial role in voting decisions on various policy topics which the churches consider important.

Table 2 confirms the previous results using the share of Catholics in a constituency in an OLS estimation (equation 1). For each specification, we report robust standard errors clustered

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[6] Significance would even disappear when other variables or canton fixed effects were included.

by constituency.[7] The interaction term identifies the effect of differences in religious preferences on the share of "yes" votes when the share of Catholics increases.

Table 2: The Effect of Different Religious Preferences on Constituent Referenda Choices

	Explaining the standardized share of constituents voting "yes"				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Share of Catholics	0.0930	-0.0445	-0.0420	-0.0631	-0.1047
	(0.0665)	(0.0651)	(0.0618)	(0.0611)	(0.2869)
Share of Catholics * Different religious preferences	-0.2770***	-0.2751***	-0.2716***	-0.2708***	-0.2693***
	(0.0973)	(0.0970)	(0.0981)	(0.0980)	(0.0979)
Different religious preferences	0.2067***	0.2044***	0.1920***	0.1913***	0.1897***
	(0.0560)	(0.0558)	(0.0562)	(0.0560)	(0.0557)
Share of people without religious affiliation		-0.5332***	-0.5985***	-0.8372***	-0.6977***
		(0.1257)	(0.1272)	(0.1282)	(0.1552)
Initiative			-0.0414***	-0.0406***	-0.0372***
			(0.0055)	(0.0053)	(0.0053)
Turnout			0.2497***	0.2582***	0.2318***
			(0.0631)	(0.0636)	(0.0632)
Population density				2.8e-05***	-6.8e-04***
				(9.0e-06)	(2.6e-04)
GDP per capita				-2.0e-07	-2.4e-06**
				(5.2e-07)	(1.0e-06)
Intercept	0.4638***	0.6086***	0.5075***	0.5459***	1.0160***
	(0.0368)	(0.0419)	(0.0492)	(0.0503)	(0.1998)
Cantonal fixed effects	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES
Adj. R2	0.0659	0.1147	0.1463	0.1588	0.2409
n. Obs.	442	442	442	442	442

Notes: The dependent variable is the standardized "yes" share (when the CBS recommends a "no" vote) of constituents voting in the referenda. We consider preferences of religious groups to be different when the CSB and FPC issue different voting recommendations. Robust clustered standard error estimates for cantons (constituencies) are reported throughout the table. ***, **, and * indicate a mean significance level of below 1%, between 1 and 5%, and between 5 and 10%, respectively.

In specification (1), we include three independent variables: the share of Catholics; whether the CSB and FPC voting recommendations differ; and the interaction term between these two, which identifies the direct effect of preference differences between the two Christian groups on the "yes" share in a canton. The negative and highly statistically significant interaction term indicates that if the share of Catholics increases at the same time that the CSB recommends a "no" vote, the cantonal "yes" share decreases markedly. This outcome is precisely what we would expect if religion is relevant to actual decision making: if there are more Catholics in a constituency, the "yes" share in the referendum is lower when the CSB recommends a "no" vote but the FPC endorses a "yes" vote. Because the setting is linear, the size of this effect can be interpreted directly. Specifically, if the share of Catholics in a canton is 10 percentage points higher and the CSB and FPC recommendations differ, then the "yes"

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[7] Observations are clustered by constituency in recognition of the likelihood that observations in the same constituency are not independent. Without clustering, the significance levels are even higher.

share in the canton will be (10%*0.2770=) 2.77 percentage points lower than in a canton with the lower proportion of Catholics (ignoring the insignificant base effect of the Catholic share). Thus, on policy topics where church organizations try to exercise power, over one fourth of actual voting behavior can be explained by the leverage provided by a higher share of the respective congregation.

In specification (2), we include the proportion of a canton's population with no religious affiliation. In Switzerland the share of people in this category has almost doubled between 2000 and 2010. The cantonal "yes" share in a specific national referendum is clearly exogenous to the share of a specific religious congregation and to differences in religious preferences. Consequently, the interaction term causally identifies whether religious preferences matter for various policy decisions as long as potential omitted variables do not influence the interaction term directly. We control for group size of people without religious affiliations to ensure that our estimated effects are not dependent on this variable. The interaction effect between the share of Catholics and different CSB and FPC preferences, however, remains negative, statistically significant, and of a similar size. Apparently, therefore, differences in religious preferences still matter even after we control for the share of those citizens without religious denomination.

In specification (3), we control for turnout and citizen initiatives, which are usually rejected (meaning we expect a reduced "yes" share in the constituency for initiatives). As shown by the negative coefficient for initiatives, they receive indeed a lower "yes" share independent of religious preferences while referenda with a higher turnout receive a higher "yes" share. Again, the interaction term between the share of Catholics and religious preferences remains negative, highly significant, and similar in size to earlier estimates. Finally, in specification (4) and (5), we take into account district characteristics such as population density and GDP per capita, as well as cantonal fixed effects. Cantonal fixed effects are supposed to capture cantonal traits such as a liberal or conservative culture and traditions which are unlikely to change within the timeframe of our analysis. Once again, these inclusions have no effect on the interaction term. If there are more Catholics in a constituency and the CSB recommends "no" while the FPC recommends a "yes", the actual cantonal "yes" share decreases substantially. This is similar to our results from earlier estimations, i.e. for an increase in the share of Catholics by 10 percentage points the "yes" share decreases by around 2.7 percentage points.

Table 3: Robustnes tests

	Explaining the standardized share of constituents voting "yes"							
	(1)	*(2)*	*(3)*	*(4)*	*(5)*	*(6)*	*(7)*	*(8)*
Share of Catholics	0.0551 (0.0428)	-0.1733 (0.3685)	0.1368 (0.1144)	-0.5342 (0.7401)				
Share of Catholics * Different religious preferences	-0.3027*** (0.0679)	-0.3028*** (0.0660)	-0.4866*** (0.1113)	-0.4792*** (0.1086)				
Share of Catholics > Protestants					-0.0021 (0.0268)	-0.0637*** (0.0122)		
Share of Catholics > Protestants * Different religious preferences					-0.0947** (0.0490)	-0.0940** (0.0488)		
Absolute majority of Catholics							-0.0191 (0.0272)	-0.0349*** (0.0114)
Absolute majority of Catholics * Different religious preferences							-0.1015** (0.0466)	-0.1001** (0.0468)
Different religious preferences	0.1625*** (0.0390)	0.1482*** (0.0383)	0.4737*** (0.0516)	0.4583*** (0.0482)	0.1267*** (0.0393)	0.1148*** (0.0390)	0.1132*** (0.0338)	0.1010*** (0.0337)
Share of people without religious affiliation	-0.3108*** (0.0772)	-0.8586*** (0.2159)	-0.1647 (0.1451)	-0.2579 (0.3685)	-0.4151*** (0.0980)	-0.5891*** (0.1490)	-0.5037*** (0.1218)	-0.6796*** (0.1656)
Initiative		-0.0444*** (0.0052)		-0.0142 (0.0118)		-0.0360*** (0.0055)		-0.0374*** (0.0053)
Turnout		0.3484*** (0.0582)		-0.0143 (0.1081)		0.2355*** (0.0633)		0.2396*** (0.0643)
Population density		-0.0010*** (3.3e-04)		-4.1e-04*** (1.5e-04)		-7.4e-04*** (2.5e-04)		-6.7e-04** (2.6e-04)
GDP per capita		-2.1e-06* (1.2e-06)		-8.9e-06* (5.4e-06)		-2.3e-06*** (8.7e-07)		-2.3e-06** (1.0e-06)
Intercept	0.5639*** (0.0327)	1.1617*** (0.2386)	0.3576*** (0.0748)	1.2687** (0.6026)	0.5709*** (0.0262)	1.0540*** (0.1160)	0.5907*** (0.0243)	0.9559*** (0.1245)
Cantonal fixed effects	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES
Sample restriction	Non-latin cantons	Non-latin cantons	Latin cantons	Latin cantons	-	-	-	-
Adj. R2	0.070	0.1763	0.3359	0.3917	0.0962	0.2342	0.1081	0.2363
n. Obs.	323	323	119	119	442	442	442	442

Notes: The dependent variable is the standardized "yes" share (when the CSB recommends a "no" vote) of constituents voting in the referenda. We consider preferences of religious groups to be different when the CSB and FPC issue different voting recommendations. Robust clustered standard error estimates for cantons (constituencies) are reported throughout the table. ***, **, and * indicate a mean significance level of below 1%, between 1 and 5%, and between 5 and 10%, respectively.

Robustness and Refinements

Recognizing that several issues in Switzerland are decided along language lines, we first split the sample into two different language groups in Table 3, although doing so has no effect on the two religious organizations' influence. Nevertheless, in specifications (1) and (2), we analyze non-Latin (German speaking) constituencies – including Protestant centers like Zurich, Catholic centers like Lucerne, and smaller cantons – while in specifications (3) and (4), we focus on Latin (French- and Italian-speaking) constituencies, including Geneva (Calvinist) and Fribourg (Catholic). Specification (2) and (4) include a full set of control variables and cantonal fixed effects. The interaction term between the share of Catholics and differences in the religious organizations' recommendations is always highly significant and negative. Thus, cultural differences induced by language seemingly have no influence on the effect we identify; that is, the power of religious organizations in shaping voter behavior.

In specifications (5) to (8), we examine the changes in our independent variable how religious differences are measured within a constituency. Because we expect that a greater cantonal share of Catholics will produce the same outcomes as in the previous estimates, we use a dummy variable for Catholic majority that is equal to 1 when the proportion of Catholics is larger than that of Protestants. The results are exactly as expected: in specifications (5) and (6), the interaction term is negative and significant. It is also worth noting that this estimate is actually the same as in Table 2 but with additional controls and robust clustered standard errors included. In specifications (7) and (8), which directly assess whether there is an absolute majority of Catholics in a constituency, we again observe the familiar pattern: religious organizations do indeed have the power to influence voting decisions to an important extent. If the CSB recommends a "no" vote while the FPC recommends the opposite, cantons with an absolute majority have an approximately 10.0 percentage points lower "yes" share in the respective referendum.

We next carry out two refinements. First, in specifications (1) and (2) of Table 4, we change the independent variable to represent the relative number of Catholics over the number of Protestants (i.e., number of Catholics divided by number of Protestants). This refinement may offer important evidence that the results are not simply driven by the number of Catholics or Protestants but rather by how these numbers relate to each other. It could be, for example, that both numbers are decreasing at the same time, indicating that there are more individuals with no religious affiliation or some who have changed their religion. Again, however, our results remain stable. In particular, we observe a negative and highly significant interaction

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term, indicating that when there are relatively more Catholics than Protestants, constituents tend to vote "no" relatively more often when Catholics preferences are "no" while Protestant preferences are "yes". This result holds true even for specification (2), which incorporates additional controls and cantonal fixed effects.

Table 4: Refinements

	Explaining the standardized share of constituents voting "yes"		Explaining the share of constituents voting "yes"			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Catholics/Protestants	-0.0016 (0.0023)	-0.0067*** (0.0025)	-5.0e-04 (9.9e-04)	0.0025 (0.0239)	0.0035 (0.0218)	0.0025 (0.0237)
Catholics/Protestants * Different religious preferences	-0.0127*** (0.0038)	-0.0125*** (0.0038)				
Different religious preferences	0.1175*** (0.0319)	0.1051*** (0.0316)				
Catholics/Protestants * "Yes" recommendation by CSB			0.0047*** (0.0017)	0.0050*** (0.0019)		0.0048* (0.0027)
"Yes" recommendation by CSB			0.0678*** (0.0124)	-0.1328*** (0.0198)		-0.1324*** (0.0219)
Catholics/Protestants * CSB indifference					-0.0026 (0.0026)	-1.7e-04 (0.0034)
CSB indifference			-0.0138 (0.0148)	-0.1839*** (0.0135)	-0.1027*** (0.0091)	-0.1832*** (0.0183)
Share of people without religious affiliation	-0.4721*** (0.1179)	-0.6436*** (0.1370)	0.3412*** (0.0468)	-1.3014** (0.5218)	-0.4690 (0.3838)	-1.3017** (0.5201)
Initiative		-0.0371*** (0.0053)		-0.2532*** (0.0104)	-0.2093*** (0.0109)	-0.2532*** (0.0104)
Turnout		0.2367*** (0.0627)		0.0828 (0.0924)	0.0559 (0.0821)	0.0828 (0.0923)
Population density		-6.8e-04*** (2.6e-04)		5.3e-04 (7.0e-04)	5.3e-04 (5.3e-04)	5.3e-04 (7.0e-04)
GDP per capita		-2.3e-06** (9.2e-07)		1.8e-06 (2.3e-06)	3.7e-06** (1.6e-06)	1.8e-06 (2.3e-06)
Intercept	0.5840*** (0.0253)	0.9669*** (0.1205)	0.3699*** (0.0134)	0.5166** (0.2509)	0.2157 (0.1975)	0.5154** (0.2467)
Cantonal fixed effects	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
Sample restriction	-	-	Indifferent position by CSB or FPC	Indifferent position by CSB or FPC	Indifferent position by CSB or FPC	Indifferent position by CSB or FPC
Adj. R2	0.1095	0.2377	0.1256	0.6537	0.6034	0.6537
n. Obs.	442	442	234	234	234	234

Notes: In columns (1) and (2), the dependent variable is the standardized "yes" share (when the CSB recommends a "no" vote) of constituents voting in the referenda. In columns (3) to (6), either the CSB or the FPC issues no recommendation, so the dependent variable is the (unstandardized) "yes" share of constituents voting in the referenda. We consider preferences of religious groups to be different when the CSB and FPC issue different voting recommendations. Robust clustered standard error estimates for cantons (constituencies) are reported throughout the table. ***, **, and * indicate a mean significance level of below 1%, between 1 and 5%, and between 5 and 10%, respectively.

Next, in specifications (3) to (6) we change the sample, which until now has consisted of both religious organizations and their clearly stated preferences. There were, however, also nine additional referenda between 2000 and 2010 for which only one of the two organizations actively offered a recommendation while the other did not. The unwillingness to make a public

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statement could suggest either similar or opposite preferences and allows speculation that the organization was less keen to actively guide the voters.

For this case, obviously, we do not need to standardize the "yes" share in a consistency. Rather, we expect that if the CSB issues a voting recommendation while the FPC does not, the former should have more influence in cantons where the number of Catholics is relatively higher than the number of Protestants. In both specification (3) and in specification (4), this is indeed the case. To interpret the interaction terms correctly, we also control for when the CSB offers no voting recommendation (CSB indifference), which, if the number of Catholics is relatively higher than the number of Protestants, we expect to have no influence on voting even when the relative number of Catholics to Protestants increases. Again, this is exactly the result observed in specification (5): the interaction effect between Catholics/Protestants and CSB indifference is insignificant.

Finally, in specification (6), we test both interaction terms simultaneously in the expectation that the absence of a CSB voting recommendation will have no influence, but an increase in the relative number of Catholics at the same time that the CSB recommends a "yes" vote will have some effect. The result is as expected: if the CSB suggests a "yes" vote and the relative number of Catholics increases, the "yes" share in the constituency also increases. However, if the CSB shows indifference (i.e., makes no recommendation), an increase in the relative number of Catholics has no effect.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Religious organizations can influence not only religious beliefs, understanding, and norms, but also decisions in the political arena. In fact, our study provides strong support for the proposition that church organizations have the power to influence specific voting decisions which are of consequence to them and to their congregations. Specifically, our results indicate that citizens are more likely to follow the preferences of their religious organization and attribute more importance to voting recommendations from their denomination agency, meaning that church organizations' recommendations can have direct societal consequences as voting decisions translate into real policies. Religious thus matters to a significant extent even in secularized societies and in particular for those decisions which the churches consider of central importance.

The major strength of our research setting is that it enables us to directly isolate and measure the level of a church organizations' power and thus avoid the difficulties inherent in

measuring the influence wielded through other channels like published materials, education, and persuasion. Specifically, organizational preferences are revealed through active referenda recommendations and the behavioral consequences on constituents and policy outcomes are measured as voting behavior. Our study thus makes a valuable contribution to the power literature, which has struggled in its attempts to quantify the power of churches. It also sheds new light on the behavioral implications of the social or integrative power of loyalty and identification. The latter particularly suggests that a useful goal for future research would be to provide a better (empirical) understanding of how integrative power emerges and how its positive aspects can be nourished and its dark side reduced through informal and formal institutions.

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Figure A1: Proportion of Protestants in the Different Swiss Cantons (in 2000)

Legend:
- (.427237,.6806185]
- (.2784868,.427237]
- (.1236316,.2784868]
- [.0588436,.1236316]
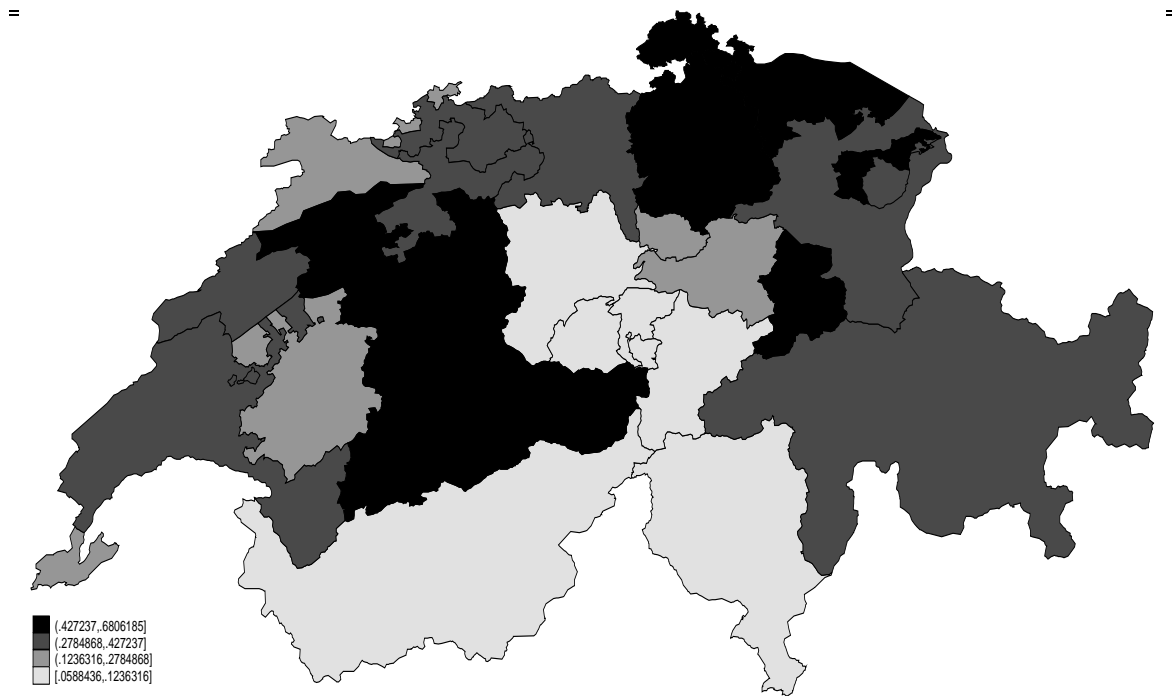
Notes: The map shows indicates the fraction of Protestants in the population. Darker colors indicate a higher fraction of Protestants.

Table A1: Swiss Referenda by religious group (detailed in the national languages)

Topic of the original referendum	Date	% "yes" (referendum type)	Catholic preference	Protestant preference
Volksinitiative «für eine Regelung der Zuwanderung» Initiative populaire «Pour une réglementation de l'immigration» Iniziativa popolare «Per una regolamentazione dell'immigrazione»	24.09.00	36.2 initiative	Reject	Reject
Bundesbeschluss über die Aufhebung der Genehmigungspflicht für die Errichtung von Bistümern Arrêté fédéral portant abrogation de la disposition constitutionnelle soumettant l'érection des évêchés à l'approbation Decreto federale concernente la soppressione dell'obbligo d'approvazione per l'istituzione di diocesi	10.06.01	64.2 obligatory	Accept	indifferent position
Schweizerisches Strafgesetzbuch (Schwangerschaftsabbruch, Fristenregelung) Modification du code pénal suisse (Interruption de grossesse) Modifica del Codice penale svizzero (Interruzione della gravidanza)	02.06.02	72.2 facultative	Reject	Accept
Volksinitiative «Für Mutter und Kind - für den Schutz des ungeborenen Kindes und für die Hilfe an seine Mutter in Not» Initiative populaire «Pour la mère et l'enfant» Iniziativa popolare «per madre e bambino»	02.06.02	18.3 initiative	indifferent position	Reject
Volksinitiative «Überschüssige Goldreserven in den AHV-Fonds» Initiative populaire «pour le versement au fonds AVS des réserves d'or excédentaires de la Banque nationale suisse (Initiative sur l'or) Iniziativa popolare «Per destinare le riserve d'oro eccedentarie della Banca nazionale svizzera al Fondo AVS» (Iniziativa sull'oro)	22.09.02	46.4 initiative	Reject	indifferent position
Gold für AHV, Kantone und Stiftung (Gegenvorschlag zur Goldinitiative) Contre-projet «L'or à l'AVS, aux cantons et à la Fondation» Controprogetto «L'oro all'AVS, ai Cantoni e alla Fondazione»	22.09.02	46.4 initiative (cp)	Accept	indifferent position
Volksinitiative «Gegen Asylrechtsmissbrauch» Initiative populaire «contre les abus dans le droit d'asile» Iniziativa popolare «contro gli abusi in materia di asilo»	24.11.02	49.9 initiative	Reject	Reject
Volksinitiative «Gleiche Rechte für Behinderte» Initiative populaire «Droits égaux pour les personnes handicapées» Iniziativa popolare «Parità di diritti per i disabili»	18.05.03	37.7 initiative	Accept	indifferent position
Bundesbeschluss über die ordentliche Einbürgerung Arrêté fédéral sur la naturalisation ordinaire Decreto federale sulla naturalizzazione ordinaria	26.09.04	43.2 obligatory	Accept	Accept
Bundesbeschluss über den Bürgerrechtserwerb von Ausländerinnen und Ausländern der dritten Generation Arrêté fédéral sur l'acquisition de la nationalité par les étrangers de la troisième génération Decreto federale sull'acquisto della cittadinanza degli stranieri della terza generazione	26.09.04	48.4 obligatory	Accept	Accept
Bundesgesetz über die Erwerbsersatzordnung für Dienstleistende in Armee, Zivildienst und Zivilschutz (Erwerbsersatzgesetz, EOG) Modification de la loi fédérale sur le régime des allocations pour perte de gain en faveur des personnes servant dans l'armée, dans le service civil ou dans la protection civile Modifica della legge federale sulle indennità di perdita di guadagno in caso di servizio militare, servizio civile o servizio di protezione civile	26.09.04	55.5 facultative	Accept	Accept
Bundesgesetz über die Forschung an embryonalen Stammzellen Loi fédérale relative à la recherche sur les cellules souches embryonnaires Legge federale concernente la ricerca sugli embrioni soprannumerari e le cellule staminali embrionali	28.11.04	66.4 facultative	Reject	Accept
Bundesbeschluss über die Genehmigung und die Umsetzung der bilateralen Abkommen zwischen der Schweiz und der EU über die Assoziierung an Schengen und Dublin Arrêté fédéral portant approbation et mise en oeuvre des accords bilatéraux d'association à l'Espace Schengen et à l'Espace Dublin Decreto federale che approva e traspone nel diritto svizzero gli accordi bilaterali con l'UE per l'associazione della Svizzera alla normativa di Schengen e Dublino	05.06.05	54.6 facultative	indifferent position	Accept
Bundesgesetz über die eingetragene Partnerschaft gleichgeschlechtlicher Paare (PartG) Loi fédérale sur le partenariat enregistré entre personnes du même sexe (Lpart)	05.06.05	58 facultative	Reject	Accept

Legge federale sull'unione domestica registrata di coppie omosessuali (LUD)				
Bundesbeschluss über die Ausdehnung des Personenfreizügigkeitsabkommens auf die neuen EU-Staaten und über die Revision der flankierenden Massnahmen Arrêté fédéral portant approbation sur la libre circulation des personnes Decreto federale che approva e traspone nel diritto svizzero relativo all'estensione dell'Accordo sulla libera circolazione delle persone	25.09.05	56 facultative	Accept	Accept
Arbeitsgesetz (Ladenöffnungszeiten) Loi fédérale sur le travail dans l'industrie, l'artisanat et le commerce (Loi sur le travail) Legge federale sul lavoro nell'industria, nell'artigianato e nel commercio (Legge sul lavoro)	27.11.05	50.6 facultative	Reject	Reject
Bundesgesetz über die Ausländerinnen und Ausländer Loi fédérale sur les étrangers (LEtr) Legge federale sugli stranieri (LStr)	24.09.06	68 facultative	Reject	Reject
Änderung des Asylgesetzes Modification de la loi sur l'asile (LAsi) Modifica della legge sull'asilo (LAsi)	24.09.06	67.8 facultative	Reject	Reject
Bundesgesetz über die Zusammenarbeit mit den Staaten Osteuropas Loi fédérale sur la coopération avec les Etats d'Europe de l'Est Legge federale sulla cooperazione con gli Stati dell'Europa dell'Est	26.11.06	53.4 facultative	indifferent position	Accept
Volksinitiative «Für demokratische Einbürgerungen» Initiative populaire «Pour des naturalisations démocratiques» Iniziativa popolare «Per naturalizzazioni democratiche»	01.06.08	36.3 initiative	Reject	Reject
Volksinitiative «für eine vernünftige Hanf-Politik mit wirksamem Jugendschutz» Initiative populaire «Pour une politique raisonnable en matière de chanvre protégeant efficacement la jeunesse» Iniziativa popolare «per una politica della canapa che sia ragionevole e che protegga efficacemente i giovani»	30.11.08	36.8 initiative	Reject	indifferent position
Volksinitiative «Gegen den Bau von Minaretten» Initiative populaire «Contre la construction de minarets» Iniziativa popolare «Contro l'edificazione di minareti»	29.11.09	57.5 initiative	Reject	Reject
Verfassungsartikel über die Forschung am Menschen Arrêté fédéral relatif à un article constitutionnel concernant la recherche sur l'être humain Decreto federale su un articolo costituzionale concernente la ricerca sull'essere umano	07.03.10	77.2 obligatory	Accept	Accept
Bundesbeschluss über die Volksinitiative «Für die Ausschaffung krimineller Ausländer (Ausschaffungsinitiative)» Arrêté fédéral relatif à l'initiative populaire «Pour le renvoi des étrangers criminels (Initiative sur le renvoi)» Decreto federale concernente l'iniziativa popolare «Per l'espulsione degli stranieri che commettono reati (Iniziativa espulsione)»	28.11.10	52.9 initiative	Reject	Reject
Bundesbeschluss über die Aus- und Wegweisung krimineller Ausländerinnen und Ausländer im Rahmen der Bundesverfassung (Gegenentwurf) Arrêté fédéral concernant le contre-projet «Expulsion et renvoi des criminels étrangers dans le respect de la Constitution» (contre-projet) Decreto federale concernente l'espulsione e l'allontanamento, nel rispetto della Costituzione federale, degli stranieri che commettono reati (controprogetto)	28.11.10	44.5 initiative (cp)	Reject	Accept
Volksinitiative «Für den Schutz vor Waffengewalt» Initiative populaire «Pour la protection face à la violence des armes» Iniziativa popolare «Per la protezione dalla violenza perpetrata con le armi»	13.02.11	43.7 initiative	indifferent position	Accept

Table A2: Data description and sources

		Mean	SD
Constituency accepts referendum	Indicator variable: Constituency (canton) accepts the referendum. Federal Statisical Office and Swissvotes Database.	0.5387	0.1498
Share of Catholics	Share of Catholics in constituency. Federal Statisical Office.	0.4984	0.2106
Different religious preference	Indicator variable: CSB and FPC issued different voting recommendations. Swiss Parliamentary Services.	0.2500	0.4335
Share of people without religious affiliation	Share of people without religious affiliation (or people not stating their religion) in constituency. Federal Statisical Office.	0.1409	0.0821
Initiative	Indicator variable: Referendum is an initiative. Federal Statisical Office.	0.2500	0.4335
Turnout	Number of valid votes in constituency divided by number of eligible voters. Federal Statisical Office.	0.4929	0.0795
Population density	Population Density. Federal Statisical Office.	469.5	974.2
GDP per capita	GDP per capita of constituency. Federal Statisical Office.	57460.0	21259.7

Notes: Unweighted descriptive statistics. Data sources indicated next to variable description.