2014

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, I will argue that individual preferences toward religion have a significant relationship with an individual's level of support for welfare spending. Specifically, this research finds that as religiosity increases support for welfare spending decreases. This assessment is reached through Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regressions using the World Values Survey (WVS). Furthermore it looks to address the potential for a temporal pattern that results from these preferences. The objective of this work is to not only establish the relationship between these two individual preferences but to also illustrate the implication they may have on federal policy toward welfare spending across Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) nations. Lastly, by engaging in a case between Norway and Sweden, I hope to uncover some national level characteristics that may significantly influence individual preferences.

Introduction

One of the major traits consistently seen throughout the modern post-industrialized world is the existence of government funded social support and welfare programs. These programs are designed to benefit the poor and less fortunate, typically while taxing the wealthiest portions of the population at higher rates. Among the nations that fit the description of a post-industrialized democracy, there exists a great deal of variation in the degree to which these nations choose to fund these programs. This disparity is in addition to the fact that there are also major differences in the individual level of support for welfare programs seen throughout all of these countries. What this variance represents is one of the more interesting questions concerning political economy at the cross-national level. Understanding this variance in individual level support for welfare spending is extremely relevant for modern society.

With Portugal spending $4,380 per inhabitant while Germany and Luxembourg spending $9,363 and $17,870 respectively, the potential for social and economic impacts as a result of these programs becomes clear (Eurostat, 2013). This disparity is further exemplified by the welfare spending patterns seen in the United States and France. The U.S. spends 16.3 % of its annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on these programs, while France spends 29.7 % of its annual GDP. This disparity is further highlighted by the significant difference at the individual level of support seen in public opinion polls throughout each of these nations. Countries like Japan, Norway and Greece see over 25 % of the population showing high levels of support for these programs, while nations like Sweden and France are below 10 % (Eurostat, 2013). Ultimately, a great deal of debate exists concerning why some individuals choose to support welfare programs, while others do not. This research seeks to enhance our understanding of the roots of support for welfare programs. I investigate this phenomenon at the individual level focusing on developed democracies. To develop hypotheses, I draw on several bodies of literature. This includes national factors such as diversity and a nation's current economic status as well as individual level factors such as political partisanship, education and religiosity.

Literature Review

Religiosity and Welfare Spending

One aspect of the literature is the relationship between religiosity and welfare spending. Religiosity commonly refers to and individuals level of religious participation and attendance at religious services. This more recently addressed issue has generated debate concerning the relationship between these two concepts. What is interesting about this area of study is the distinctly divergent viewpoints. Gill and Lundsgaarde (2004) argue that due to the historically charitable work of churches, religiosity has seen a gradual decline as governments adopt broader welfare programs. Essentially they make the case that increased welfare spending leads to individual secularization. They illustrate that over long periods of time welfare spending has functionally replaced religion and has subsequently caused individuals to leave the church or become secular.

A second study conducted by Scheve and Stasavage (2006) present the counter argument. They hold the viewpoint that "individuals who are religious are predicted to prefer lower levels of social insurance" (Scheve & Stasavage, 2006, p. 255). Like Gill and Lundsgaarde, they argue the welfare and social insurance programs are social alternatives to one another, ultimately serving the same purpose. With this purpose being one of social support

and safety for individuals when they are in times of hardship. However, they illustrate the point that religion and welfare can be seen as psychological equivalents to one another. What this relationship functionally results in is religious individuals seeking support from the church versus government social insurance programs in times of hardship. Others address the concept of religion as a form of social insurance as well (Dehejia et al., 2005). These studies serve as interesting parallels to one another, with Gill and Lundsgaarde (2004) claiming welfare has replaced religion as part of the process of industrialization and democratization and Scheve and Stasavage (2006) arguing that religious individuals seek to replace welfare spending with a religious practice. Lastly, the Gill and Lundsgaarde (2004) stance is somewhat supported by a study conducted by Daniel Hungerman (2005). He looks at whether or not churches are able to serve as an effective alternative to welfare. He does this by looking at the impact of the 1996 welfare reform legislation in the U.S., finding that churches can serve as an effective alternative.

This relatively new field of study, focused on the relationship between religiosity and welfare support relies heavily upon psychological research to support this proposed relationship. Specifically, Scheve and Stasavage (2006) make the case that religion functions as a social buffer against "uncontrollable external forces" (p. 257); such as job loss or health issues. They argue that members of a religious community will view adverse life events differently, due to the fact that they are going to be insulated to a greater degree by religion (Pargament, 1997, pp. 303, 307). This relationship between these two concepts has been supported by a number of psychologically focused studies (Smith, McCullough, & Poll, 2003, p. 626).

Scheve and Stasavage (2006) along with Gill and Lundsgaarde (2004) rely on this relationship that has been proposed by the psychological community. However, where their research must be expanded upon is in the presumed relationship between these two concepts.

Gaps in the Religiosity and Welfare Support Literature

As noted above, Scheve and Stasavage (2006) argue that "religion and welfare state spending are substitute mechanisms the insure individuals against adverse life events" (p. 255). Effectively this means that individuals have a derived benefit from being religious that in times of hardship is equated to their derived benefit from social insurance programs. Scheve and Stasavage (2006) demonstrate that this relationship exists and is present at an individual level cross-nationally. Yet, what their research does not address is the potential for a temporal relationship between religiosity and support for welfare. This paper is going forward from their research, which addressed the question; does a high level of religiosity at an individual level result in lower levels of support for welfare spending? In this paper, I hypothesize that these two will be highly correlated and will show a similar pattern over time at a cross-national level illustrating a temporal relationship between individual levels of religiosity and support for welfare spending. I expect to see that higher levels of religion will result in lower levels of support for welfare spending. I further predict that over time religiosity will be associated with lower levels of support for welfare and subsequently lower levels of spending.

Ultimately, there are a number of very clear competing schools of thought that need to be addressed. The research conducted concerning religiosity supports the need for further investigation, especially due to the fact that no study had addressed the possibility of a temporal component in this story. Scheve and Stasavage (2006) clearly illustrate that these concepts are highly correlated, providing a strong basis from which to begin research, but

again they did not address time as a component. By addressing this gap in the research, I expect to find higher individual levels of religiosity are highly correlated with lower levels of welfare spending and slower rates of growth in welfare spending over time. The possibility of lower levels of support for welfare spending and growth in social programs clearly should have significant impact on any given society.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Argument's Basis and Hypotheses

While this study will seek to expand upon the existing literature, there are a number of concepts that have been established by prior work that provide a framework for this research. Scheve and Stasavage (2006) established the concept that religion and welfare support provide a similar psychological good that is rooted in an individual's desire for stability. This is due to the fact that religion can be used as a type of psychological coping mechanism for hardships that can be financially addressed by welfare programs (Scheve & Stasavage, 2006, p. 263; Pargament, 1997, p. 307). These studies reference and illustrate an individual's inability to make the distinction between whether or not something is relevant to their life allowing these two very different resources to function as substitutes.

This relationship between these two concepts illustrates how religious individuals typically use religion to replace the need for welfare programs. What this leads to is individuals lacking the ability to psychologically separate "psychic benefits" (Scheve & Stasavage, 2006, p. 264); from monetary ones. The concept that individuals' view monetary and psychic benefits as separate is further support by existing research. Typically, what is seen is that even in countries with highly religious populations, individuals on average give no more than two % of their income to the church (Hungerman, 2005; Chen & Lind, 2005; Dehjia et al., 2005). This illustrates a clear psychological disconnect between the individuals perceived financial contribution and their actual contribution. Highly religious citizens live with the perception that their donations constitute monetary amounts sufficient to be considered a "direct substitution"; eliminating the need for welfare spending (Scheve & Stasavage, 2001, p. 262). However, as was illustrated when comparing the per capita welfare spending rates of Portugal, Luxembourg, France and the United States as a percent of GDP, the private contributions of individual citizens to religious institutions cannot possibly overcome the disparity in welfare spending as a percent of GDP or per capita. This is due in large part to the sheer volume of investment that goes into welfare spending programs annually in most of these nations. The two percent of an individual's income that is donated annually cannot possibly overcome this disparity in the many different levels of federal spending on welfare.

Therefore, what these arguments do is establish a clear basis for considering religion as the primary individual level factor for whether or not an individual supports welfare spending. Bearing these facts and arguments in mind, what individual level factors account for the variance in cross-national level support for welfare spending? The hypotheses and the variables that will be tested are as follows.

Aggregate Hypotheses and Analysis

The hypotheses used in the research will parallel some of the existing research outlined in the literature review. The hypotheses one and two below (See Figure 1.2; Figure 1.3) address the primary focus of this research, which is religiosity and will serve as the primary individual level hypotheses for this research.

Extensive social welfare programs and high taxes are less likely to be supported by nations that attend religious services with greater frequency (World Values Survey [WVS] #F028).

Extensive social welfare programs and high taxes are less likely to be supported by nations who self identify as highly religious (WVS #V187)

The starting point for this research and data collection was the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development website and their database. From the OECD, the national level welfare spending data was collected. For more effective cross-national comparison, multiple forms of data were collected. First, the data concerning welfare spending as a percent of GDP was collected and then welfare spending per capita was collected. While both measures are effective, the welfare spending as a percent of GDP is the measurement most commonly seen throughout the literature (See Figure 1.1).

The primary source of data for this research is the World Values Survey, specifically the 1981-2004 waves and the more recent 2005-2009 waves. Multiple waves were used throughout this research in order to address the potential for temporal change. Hypotheses one and two both focus on religion. Four addresses the concept of attending religious services, while five is concerned with whether or not an individual describes himself or herself as religious. While this may seem redundant, based on the idea that people who attend religious services would logically describe themselves as religious. However, the WVS question used in hypothesis five reads "Independently of whether you go to church or not, would you say you are religious?" (World Values Survey, v187). The deliberate exclusion of church attendance in the structuring of this question causes it to more directly address the concept of a religious identity versus religious participation. These two WVS questions are the focus of the individual level research going forward. They will serve as the primary independent variables at the individual level.

Going forward with these sources and information sets, an initial round of simple graphs have been created to test whether or not any immediate patterns emerge concerning each of the hypotheses. While some of these graphs do have the same patterns as what was expected, more complex individual level analysis will need to be used to more effectively answer the hypotheses and address the individual level focus of this research. All of the graphs and analyses are taking place at a broad aggregate level and illustrate the patterns that exist in the literature. This national level analysis is necessary due to the fact that will help effectively frame the necessary control variables for the individual level. Bearing these concepts and objectives in mind, what can be learned from the initial scatter plots of these hypotheses?

The two hypotheses focus on different measures of religiosity. Number 1, again, focuses on an individual's rate of attendance of religious services (See Figure 1.2; Figure 1.3). The percentages used in this measurement were the percent of a nation's population who stated in the WVS that they attend church or religious services one or more times per week. The reason that this rate of frequency was selected is due to the fact that these nations and their participation in religious services would broadly qualify as highly religious by most people's standards. While these measurements are simple assessment against the aggregate level of spending, the presumed negative correlation stated in the hypothesis is clearly upheld by the linear regression in Figure 1.2. There is a slightly positive trend in Figure 1.3. However, this may be due in large part to a number of outliers appearing to skew the trend in that direction. Specifically, Italy, Poland and South Korea can be seen as outliers. Ultimately, these

initial aggregate level models help to frame the individual level analysis and provide a basis for the controls that will be implemented going forward.

Individual Level Data

While the national level aggregate analysis is useful in order to frame the discussion of this topic and illustrate that this is a non-spurious relationship, the primary focus of this paper is on the relationship between individual's level of religiosity and support for welfare spending. As previously shown in figure four concerning religious attendance, there is a strong basis for this hypothesis.

In this section, I present the individual level data and analysis. The evidence collected and presented is consistent with my argument and the previously mentioned hypotheses concerning religiosity. Restated they are as follows. Individuals who express higher individual levels of religiosity will be significantly less likely to support welfare spending. Secondly, individuals who express higher individual levels of attendance at religious services will be significantly less likely to support welfare spending. This section will examine these hypotheses and the associated correlations in greater detail. This will be accomplished by showing that these correlations not only exist but also hold consistent when controls for other determinants are applied. The resulting regression models, with and without the control variables, I predict will illustrate a robust relationship between individual levels of religiosity, religious attendance and support for welfare spending. This evidence will be based off of the World Values Survey data collected from 21 OECD post-industrialized democracies. These nations are Australia, Canada, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Great Britain, and the United States.

The primary dependent variable addresses the concept of welfare spending as a means of wealth redistribution. The World Values Survey question reads, "Many things may be desirable, but not all of them are essential characteristics of democracy. Please tell me for each of the following things how essential you think it is as a characteristic of democracy… Governments tax the rich and subsidize the poor" (WVS, V152 in Wave 5). Respondents answered this question on a scale of one to ten with one being not an essential characteristic of democracy and ten being an essential characteristic of democracy. This question serves as the fundamental measure of support for welfare spending in this research. It addresses the structure of welfare programs and the fact that they commonly serve as a means to redistribute wealth and care for the poor in most western democracies. Furthermore, the fact that the question addresses whether or not welfare is an essential characteristic of democracy further serves to facilitate analysis of the nations included in this research.

The second dependent variable focuses on the concept of support for improper or wasteful welfare spending and is based off of WVS responses. This is from WVS question V198 which reads, "Please tell me for each of the following statements whether you think it can always be justified, never be justified or something in between. Justifiable: claiming government benefits to which you are not entitled" (WVS, V198 in Wave 5). Respondents were to answer this question on a scale of one to ten with ten being always justifiable. This question serves as the accurate measure of how an individual's level of religiosity affects their support for claiming improper government benefits. I would suspect that individuals who have higher individual levels of religiosity will be less likely to support the claiming improper government benefits. This is due to two primary factors the previously outlined in

the literature. First is the psychological equivalence between religion and welfare established by Scheve and Stasavage (2006). The second is the morality doctrines espoused by most religious denominations. This ideology is centered on high levels of morality, which results in the perception that those who claim benefits from the government do so in a fraudulent manner. What this second dependent variable does is illustrate another perspective on what I would suspect is ultimately the same pattern, that as individual religiosity increases support for welfare spending decreases.

The independent variables used in this analysis are taken from the WVS and are the primary measurements of religiosity. The first focuses on the importance of religion to the individual, it reads, "For each of the following aspects, indicate how important it is in your life. Would you say it is: religion" (WVS, V9 in Wave 5). Respondents were given choices on a scale of one to four with one being very important and four being not at all important. This variable was labeled religiosity in the regression tables. The second variable focusing on the rate at which an individual attends religious services reads, "Apart from weddings, funerals and christenings, about how often do you attend religious services these days?" (WVS, V186 in Wave 5). Respondents were given choices on a scale of one to seven, with one being more than once a week and seven being never to practically never. This variable was labeled religious attendance. The reason for the use of both of these variables is the fact that they both can serve as effective, yet different, measurements of religiosity.

Controls

Based off of the concepts outlined in the literature concerning support for welfare spending and discussed in the aggregate level analysis, a number of control variables were utilized. These variables helped strengthen what was already a strong negative correlation between the different measures of religiosity and support for welfare spending. The controls that are included below are taken from the existing literature and the aggregate level factors addressed earlier. The controls being utilized in this research are:

Political Alignment is a control variable that ranges between 1 and 10 with 1 indicating those who are highly liberal and 10 being highly conservative. This is a highly effective control due to the fact that those lefts leaning parties and right leaning parties have extensively established their typical attitudes toward welfare spending. Furthermore, since individuals tend to vote along party lines on both economic and social issues, if an individual supports conservative social policies in accordance with their religion then economic ideology should logically follow. It is because of this pattern that I have included this variable in my regressions.

Interest In Politics had respondents assess their interest level on a scale of 1 to 4 with 1 being very interested and 4 being not at all interested. The question read, "How interested would you say you are in politics?" (WVS V95 in Wave 5). The objective of this question and the reason for including it as a control in this study is that it can serve as a measurement for an individual's knowledge of a subject. For this study the scale was inverted causing 4 to be those who responded as very interested.

Size of Town categories WVS survey respondents based off of the population of the town or city in which they live. This is a control that has not been addressed by the existing literature (Scheve & Stasavage, 2006, p. 281). Previous researchers have suggested that it be addressed as a dichotomous variable however the WVS provides the opportunity for a more accurate assessment. While this variable was not a part of the original literature, it is

very useful in the fact that population density may affect how an individual views welfare spending. Respondents were grouped on a scale of 1 to 8 with 1 being those living in towns of less than 2,000 and 8 being cities larger than 500,000.

Social Class is addressed in the WVS as a subjective measure on a scale of 1 to 5 in which one is high and 5 is lower. This variable is an effective gauge of not only where individuals believe that they fall economically, but could by itself be a very predictive variable for support of welfare spending. Therefore, in order to isolate that religiosity is a relevant variable, social class must be addressed as a control. This control was not inverted.

Education is addressed in the question, "What is the highest educational level that you have attained?" and is measured on a scale of 1 through 8, with 8 being University with a degree or higher. Education serves two functions as a control variable. First it is an effective measure of an individual's long-term earning potential and is a further indicator of social class. Secondly, those who receive higher levels of education are typically assumed to have a deeper understanding of social and welfare spending that may impact their opinion on this subject.

Results and Analysis

With the necessary variables and controls established, the results begin to take shape. The first dependent variable focused on the relationship between individual levels of religiosity and welfare as a redistributive policy. This measurement does present a significant problem due to the fact that there is a very low response rate when compared with the other variables and most other World Values Survey questions. When looking at the Ordinary Least Squares regression coefficients (OLS), the correlation is negative when paired with the independent variable of religious attendance. However, this is a fairly weak negative relationship in one and slightly positive in the other with a high probability of error in Table 2.1. Table 2.2 presents a much stronger negative relationship (See Table 2.1; Table 2.2). When the dependent variable of supporting welfare at the cost of taxing the rich is paired with either independent variable, education appears to be a more significant factor than religiosity or religious attendance. This is arguably due to an extremely low response rate among respondents to the WVS on this specific question prior to wave five. Among the nations included for this research, only 3560 individuals responded to this question and only 930 individuals among the people surveyed responded to both of the primary questions in this regression analysis. Furthermore, all of those respondents were from Japan.

However, these issues do not in any way discredit the rest of the research. Japan has a number of notable differences from the other post-industrialized nations being considered. Most notably, Christianity accounts for only 2 % of Japan's religious population (CIA, World Factbook, Japan). Conversely, Shintoism and Buddhism account for 83.9 % and 71.4 % of the nation's population, respectively (CIA, World Factbook, Japan). Together, these two religious groups account for well over one hundred percent because a large portion of the Japanese population identifies as both and actively participates in both of these religions (CIA, World Factbook, Japan). In light of this, religious participation in Japan is unique both in the religions that are commonly represented, but also in the total number of religions individual Japanese citizens associate themselves with. These differences clearly illustrate that Japan is an interesting case that should be viewed as separate from the rest of this analysis.

Therefore, the first regression model lends little support to my hypothesis and does not

have any broader implications to the other nations included in this research. Conversely, the second model lends some minor support to my hypothesis and could be strengthened by a higher rate of response among the surveyed. This assertion is based off of the findings seen when analyzing the second dependent variable, which concerned claiming improper welfare benefits.

The results for the controls in both cases are largely consistent with what was expected for the second dependent variable. Those individuals who are more educated or of a higher social class were less supportive of welfare spending regardless of religiosity. The same can be said of those individuals who self identified as being more conservative. This analysis across my individual level analysis largely mirrors the initial aggregate information outlined previously. All individual level regression models include all of the previously established controls. Tables 2.3 and 2.4 again report the OLS coefficients for both of the independent variables on the dependent variable of claiming improper government benefits being justifiable. Both of these models illustrate very strong negative correlations with confidence intervals well above 95 %. Even with the inclusion of the controls, the findings are still highly significant negative correlations with high levels of confidence. Due to the fact that social class and education were highly correlated in a positive direction, only education was included. Therefore, Tables 2.1 through 2.4 included the education variable. In the first set of tables with the controls including education, none of the control variables have a coefficient above 0.001. In Table 2.2, none of the controls showed any statistical significance and religious importance showed a strong negative correlation among the twenty thousand plus observations. Table 2.2 registered education with a P value of 0.001 when compared with the independent variable of religious attendance. Ultimately, the second set of models show a strong negative relationship between an individual's level of religiosity and their support for claiming improper government benefits among those living in developed democracies. Individuals who are more religious are particularly unlikely to support welfare spending and even more unlikely to support individuals claiming benefits that they are not entitled to. This shows that among religious individuals the lack of support for welfare may be in part due to the perception that corruption exists in the welfare system and that a few, if not many of the people claiming government benefits, are doing so illegally. This information lends a great deal of support toward my hypothesis.

When comparing these two variables, it is interesting that despite the fact that they are different approaches to the same issue conceptually, the statistical support varies. The first regression model presents results that are inconclusive. The ambiguity and lack of support from this regression could be a result of the extremely low response rate in comparison to the second regression model. With only 3560 respondents across all waves, only 930 answered all the necessary questions for this study. It is quite possible that high probability rate for education is a result of a smaller sample size. However, these hypotheses are still supported by the second hypothesis to such a degree as to overcome the ambiguity of the first hypothesis. Having shown that religiosity and support for welfare abuse have a strong negative correlation, the temporal component of this research must be addressed.

Temporal Analysis

The focus of my research now shifts toward the potential for the existence of a temporal pattern. What I would suspect is that in nations where secularization is occurring, the percentage of individuals that support welfare spending will be increasing. A pattern of

secularization should then either be accompanied by or followed by an increase in the support for welfare spending at the individual level. If supported this portion of my hypothesis has clear implications on welfare spending rates within any given nation going forward as religiosity and demographics begin to change.

In order to address this potential pattern I will be using the same World Values Survey questions and responses from the individual level analysis. Since countries are surveyed during different years, responses will be grouped by wave. For this analysis, the three most recent waves were used. These waves included wave 3, which was from 1994-98, wave 4, which took place from 1999-2003, and wave 5, which was collected from 2004 through 2008. The first wave was excluded from this temporal analysis due to the fact that the WVS did not ask the question concerning religiosity. In order to address the potential for a temporal change, four different types of analysis were done with the WVS survey responses.

The first dependent variable addresses the concept of welfare spending as a means of wealth redistribution and is the same as the regression analysis in the previous section. The WVS question again reads, "Many things may be desirable, but not all of them are essential characteristics of democracy. Please tell me for each of the following things how essential you think it is as a characteristic of democracy…Governments tax the rich and subsidize the poor" (WVS, V152 in Wave 5). Respondents answered this question on a scale of one to ten with one being not an essential characteristic of democracy and ten being an essential characteristic of democracy. However, problems arise with this variable again due to very limited response rate. Prior to the fifth wave of analysis, this question was only asked in Japan during the year 2000. Since it was only asked one time, a temporal pattern does not exist. However, there is a related question, which focuses on what a country should do. The question reads, "Which type of society this country you think this country SHOULD aim to be in the future…First statement: A society with extensive social welfare, but high taxes or Second statement: A society where taxes are low and individuals take responsibility for themselves" (WVS, E067 in Wave 4). Respondents were given a five point scale with one being the first statement in favor of welfare spending as a social goal, while five was related to strong support for statement number two. While this question was only asked in Japan, the majority of individuals voiced some degree of support for statement one. 11.3 % of respondents answered with a one compared to 7.0 % providing that answer for statement two. At the same time, 37.7 % of people gave a two in response to statement one. This adds to a total of 49 % of those surveyed in Japan that felt that their country should strive toward the ideal of more extensive social welfare, even at the expense of high taxes.

When the above-mentioned original dependent variable was asked again during the fifth wave in Japan in 2005, strong support for the welfare state persisted. During this year, 36.5 % of all individuals gave an eight or higher on a ten-point scale, stating that welfare subsidies and high taxation were an essential characteristic of democracy. Furthermore, during this time frame 75.6 % of respondents voiced some degree of support. Lastly, the percentage of those who expressed that religion was rather or very important to them declined from 22.3 % to 19.5 %. While this piece of temporal analysis lacks a common variable and a large number of respondents from different nations, it does lend some support. In 2000, the majority of Japanese citizens surveyed supported this ideal and in 2005, even more respondents supported welfare spending. During this same time frame, religiosity decreased in Japan. This development lends some degree of support to my original hypothesis. While these measurements may not be ideal, the support is still there and relevant. Going forward with

the other variable focused on religious morality, I would suspect to see a similar pattern.

The types of analysis included were based off of the question used for the second dependent variable, "Please tell me for each of the following statements whether you think it can always be justified, never be justified, or something in between: claiming government benefits to which you are not entitled" (WVS V198 in Wave 5). Respondents rate their support for claiming improper government benefits on a scale from one to ten, with one being never justifiable and ten being always justifiable. This version of the dependent variable again should see significantly lower rates of support from religious individuals. Again, this assertion is based off of what most religious doctrines teach regarding morality. For this research, respondents were grouped in the following ways.

% of Support, those respondents that answered the previous question with a 6 or higher on the scale of 1–10. This assessment measures those individuals who collectively show at least some signs of support for welfare spending.

% Opposed measures, the individuals who oppose the idea of welfare spending, leading these individuals providing a response of a 4 or lower to the previous question. Grouping these respondents provides a clear measure of the population that is against welfare spending. I would expect to see nations with an increasing rate of response in this category to those with higher rates of religiosity and lower rates of welfare spending.

With these temporal assessments established, the subsequent results provide an interesting range of results. When analyzing the developed democracies in this study as a collective group, each of the assessments seems to support the hypothesis for temporal change. Again, this second dependent variable serves as a measure of how an individual's level of religiosity affects their likelihood of approving of claiming improper government benefits and ultimately, the system as a whole. Between waves 3 and 4, very little changed in the way of religiosity. Those who individually expressed that they were religious dropped by only 0.5 % from 21.8 % to 21.3 %. This resulted in very little change in support for welfare spending and in the percent support measure; there was no change at all (See Figure 3.1). However, the following time from between waves 4 and 5 sees a 1.6 % drop among respondents in religious importance and subsequently, more significant transitions in support for welfare spending. This trend is further supported by a gradual decrease in opposition across all three waves (See Figure 3.2). However, this trend is not as strong or seemingly as contingent on the drop in religiosity when looking at individual nations, but it is still present.

Ultimately, when looking at the nations on a collective basis, there is a clear temporal pattern, as individual religiosity decreases, support for claiming improper welfare benefits increases. This illustrates that among religious communities, there is strong opposition to claiming improper benefits from the government. Additionally, this dependent variable suggests that as individuals become increasingly secularized, they become more supportive of the welfare state, possibly due to a decreased perception of fraud within the system as previously mentioned.

A number of individual nations lend similarly strong support to the expected temporal pattern. Specifically, Norway exemplifies this expected pattern. In 1990, 15.2 % of Norwegian survey respondents stated they were religious. This number drops to 10.5 % by 2008 and as a result the percentage of individuals expressing support for welfare abuse increases from 1.5 % to 5.4 % (See Figure 3.3). At the same time individuals opposing welfare drops from 96 % to 89.2 %, a decrease of 6.8 % (See Figure 3.4).

Ultimately, the inconsistency that occurs during this temporal analysis of these na-

tions and their individual respondents raises a number of questions. This is especially true when considering the robust individual level support that has been previously discussed and the fact that collectively, there is a notable temporal pattern. In order to address this inconsistency, I will engage in a case study using Sweden and Norway. Sweden lacks any temporal pattern concerning a relationship between individual religiosity and support for claiming improper welfare benefits. This may be due in part to an almost constant level of religiosity and religious attendance. While at the same time their close neighbor, Norway, illustrates the strongest temporal pattern between these two variables. The objective of this type of case study analysis is to find a clear distinguishing factor that is the logical source of the variation concerning public opinion on welfare spending, despite the similarities of these two countries.

CASE STUDY

The starting point for this case study will be to establish that there are extensive similarities between Sweden and Norway. The commonly held attributes of these countries will enable me to separate certain characteristics from the ones that may be causally related to welfare spending. This will ultimately make it easier to uncover the variable or variables that drive the variation in support for welfare spending.

When comparing Norway and Sweden, there are a number of very clear similarities that emerge. These nations are relatively small both in land area and in population. Even though Sweden has about 190 % the population of Norway (Norway has a population of just over 5.1 million, while Sweden has a population of 9.7 million), their GDPs are very similarly proportioned (See Table 4.1). Norway had a GDP of 282.2 billion in 2013, while Sweden's was 522 billion, or about 185 % of the latter's. Sweden and Norway both have extremely high rates of urbanization with 85 % and 79 %, respectively. Lastly, another similarity arises in the fact that both of these nations are largely similar on religious grounds.

Sweden and Norway both have their own national branch of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Furthermore, in each of these countries the Church of Norway and the Church of Sweden are by far the most common religious denomination. In Norway, the Church of Norway accounts for 82.1 % of the nation's religious denomination. While in Sweden, the Church of Sweden makes up 87 % of the religious population. Both of these churches were also established in the early sixteenth century following the Protestant Reformation. However, one clear distinction exists between these two churches. An amendment to the Norwegian constitution in 2012 effectively severed all ties between their federal government and the previously affiliated Church of Norway or State Church, as it was commonly called (Johnson, Library of Congress, 2012). While Sweden's federal government is no longer affiliated with the Church of Sweden, following a similar political move to that of Norway, the fact that Norway made this political and institutional change so recently may reflect a more recent shift in their views on religion. Norway may be undergoing a more radical cliff shift in their views toward religion, a trend than is reflected in the temporal analysis.

This factor of state affiliation may lead religious individuals to be more steadfast in their beliefs, religiously, socially and politically. Subsequently, this contributes to reduced support for welfare spending. These facts and statistics illustrate the clear similarities and differences that exist between these two nations beyond their regional proximity and shared border. However, the time frame for this shift does not fully explain what may drive the differences in individual support for welfare spending and the subsequent temporal pattern that exists.

The relationship to immigration and ethnic diversity is another noteworthy difference between these two nations. In 2012, Sweden saw an estimated increase of 74,672 refugees in comparison to less than half of that for Norway (CIA, World Factbook, Norway and Sweden). This may contribute to around a five percent greater degree of diversity. In Norway, those who identify as ethnically Norwegian make up over 94 % of the total population, which is over 5 % higher than ethnic Swedes in Sweden (CIA, World Factbook, Sweden). These factors play directly into the research carried out by Goodhart (2004) as well as Hero and Tolbert (1996).

However, there are a number of very clear differences between the two that may further explain their disparity in support for welfare spending. First off, despite their proportional similarity in population and GDP, Norway's GDP is almost fifteen thousand dollars higher than that of Sweden. This leads to a surplus of 13.1 % in Norway versus a deficit of 2 % versus GDP in Sweden (CIA World Factbook, Norway). Furthermore, Norway is able to spend 20.5 % of its total GDP on welfare in comparison to almost 7 % more in Sweden. However, what is surprising is that despite that 7 % difference, Norway spends almost a thousand dollars more per capita on welfare than Sweden (CIA, World Factbook, Norway and Sweden). This may be due in part to a remarkably low unemployment rate of 3.6 % (CIA, World Factbook, Norway). This is exceptionally low and may allow them to maintain economic growth to a greater degree than their neighbors. These factors illustrate that even minor economic differences can have a significant impact at the federal level, which can lead to notable temporal changes in growth and support.

Additional religious distinction between these two countries that may explain their variation in support for welfare spending emerges when looking at some of the other patterns of religiosity. Between 1990 and 2006, Norway saw an almost 8 % decrease in the self-assessment of the religiosity measure previously used in this research. This period was also associated with a 0.6 % decrease in religious attendance. During this same time period, Sweden experienced a 2 % increase in their religiosity, while simultaneously undergoing a 1 % decrease in religious attendance (CIA, World Factbook, Sweden). Ultimately, this shows an inconsistent religious trend in Sweden that makes it difficult to assess any temporal relationship between individual religiosity and support for welfare spending.

When these limited differences in religious institutions and behaviors are paired with the clear variation in economic factors, specifically welfare spending per capita and GDP per capita, it becomes clear why Sweden lacks any distinct trends. Sweden has a larger population that consistently experiences greater fluctuation in its composition. At the same time, it appears as though its predominant religion is institutionalized to a greater degree than what is seen in Norway. Furthermore, this illustrates the potential impact that the individual nation's starting GDP, population, welfare spending and other economic factors can have on the influence of religiosity on welfare spending. This fact would be especially true when considering potential temporal patterns.

CONCLUSION

In this research, I have argued that the existing literature, despite its recent shift in focus toward addressing religiosity, fails to engage with the variables of religiosity and religious attendance to the extent that it should. Specifically, the prior literature fails to acknowledge the potential for a temporal pattern. My research addresses this concept. I argue that if an individual has a high level of religiosity or engages in a higher rate of religious attendance,

then this individual would be less supportive of welfare spending. This assertion is increasingly accurate when considering the claiming of improper welfare benefits. Furthermore, nations with higher rates of highly religious individuals will see slower rates of growth for their federal welfare programs due to a lack of support.

My empirical evidence clearly establishes this relationship between high levels of individual religiosity and welfare spending, especially when viewing this concept from the perspective of religious morality. The regression models previously discussed lend robust support for this aspect of the hypothesis. Furthermore, my analysis, which addresses the temporal component of this research, illustrates that as a collective these nations exhibit a decrease in religiosity and an associated increase in support for welfare spending over time. However, when viewed as individual nations, this relationship does not appear as strong. This may be due to the potential role initial economic conditions play in this system. In other words, the impact that religiosity has on this temporal relationship in any given individual country may be framed by the existing economic patterns. Another factor that may have played a role in these temporal patterns is the fact that some of these nations did not undergo a change in their measure of religiosity.

However, this research is somewhat limited by the existing large N data on the subjects of religiosity and support for welfare spending collected by the WVS. Future analysis of this relationship would benefit significantly from the use of a long-term panel survey. This would serve to eliminate the issues I encountered with dependent variable, which only had valid responses in Japan. Additionally, questions focused on an individual's perception of welfare would significantly enhance the understanding of religiosity's impact on support for welfare spending. A panel survey would provide clear continuity and would allow one to see clear transition in an individual's opinions. This survey would need to assess multiple measures of religiosity in addition to multiple measures of welfare spending. This type of long-term study paired with the existing information on welfare spending per capita and as a percent of GDP, would be the most effective measures of the influence of individual levels of religiosity on support for welfare spending and its potential temporal impacts.

Furthermore, the concept of religiosity and what effectively causes individuals to be more religious and attend services varies. Future surveys and research should consider the many factors that lead to religious participation. This addition along with question concerning an individual's perception of welfare would improve upon my research and the existing literature. These concepts for potential future research would overcome many of the barriers that I encountered during my research, while increasing the accuracy with which researchers can address the relationship between these two concepts.

Ultimately, this research illustrates that there is a strong relationship between individual levels of religiosity and support for welfare, especially on the basis of a moral argument. My research goes on to support the potential for a temporal relationship between these two concepts and federal levels of welfare spending. In other words, there are long-term implications that can come out of this research. Specifically, it can serve to inform the leadership of post–industrialized western democracies on how easy or difficult it may or may not be for them to pass different types of welfare policies.

Figures and Tables
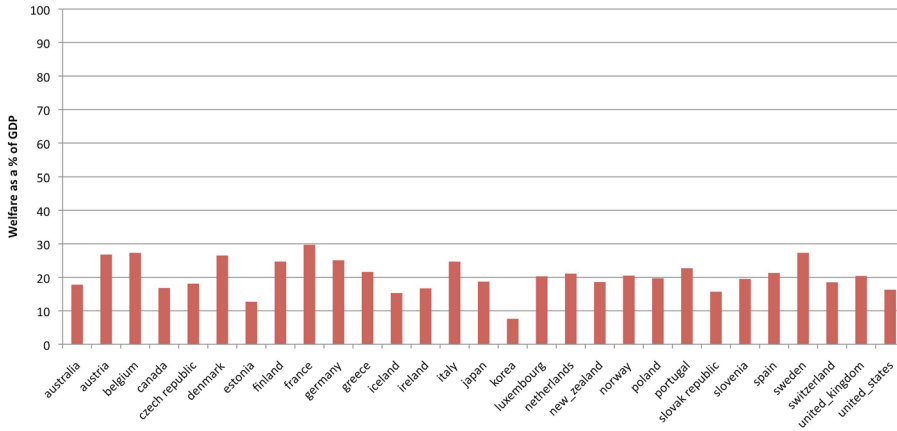### Figure 1.1

Welfare Expenditure as a % of GDP 2007

Figure 1.2

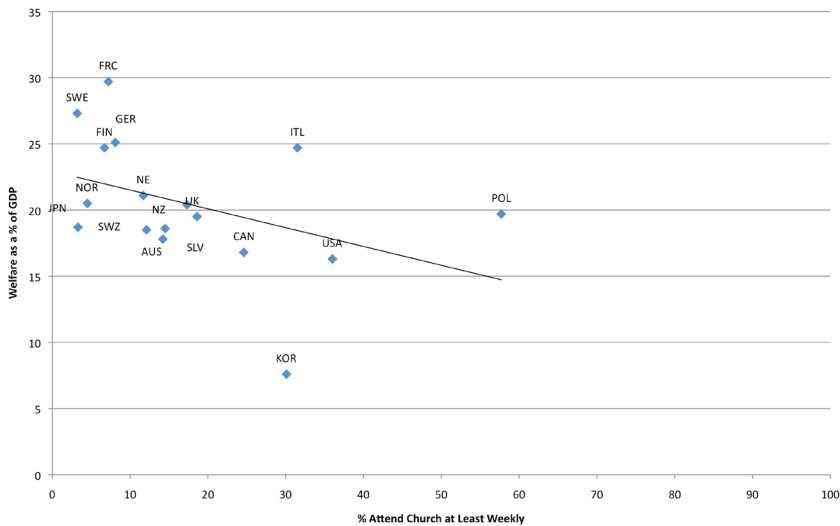**Religious Attendance v. Welfare Expenditure as a % of GDP**

Figure 1.3

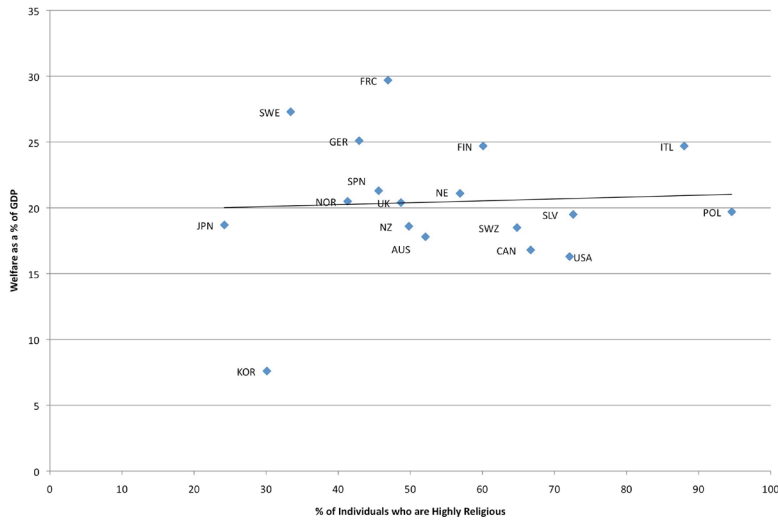
Religious Individuals v. Welfare Expenditure as a % of GDP

Table 2.1: Both IVs with Support for Welfare Spending with Taxing the Rich (Low Response Rate)

	Religiosity			Religious Attendance		
	Coefficient	Standard Error	P>[t]	Coefficient	Standard Error	P>[t]
Welfare over Low Taxes	0.0235	0.0439	0.592	-0.0443	0.0176	0.802
Size of Town	0.3088	0.0191	0.106	0.0285	0.0191	0.137
Education	-0.0001	0.0184	0.992	-0.0004	0.0184	0.980
Interest in Politics	0.1161	0.0467	0.013	0.1228	0.0467	0.009
Political Alignment	-0.0741	0.0245	0.003	-0.0671	0.0248	0.007
N	930			924		

Table 2.2: Both IVs with Claiming Government Benefits Justifiable

	Religiosity			Religious Attendance		
	Coefficient	Standard Error	P>[t]	Coefficient	Standard Error	P>[t]
Government Benefits Justifiable	-0.0932	0.0122	0.0	-0.0287	0.0051	0.0
Size of Town	0.0274	0.0053	0.0	0.0274	0.0053	0.0
Education	-0.0232	0.0059	0.0	-0.0198	0.0059	0.001
Interest in Politics	-0.1457	0.0136	0.0	-0.1471	0.0136	0.0
Political Alignment	-0.0317	0.0062	0.0	-0.0322	0.0062	0.0
N	26225			26232		

Table 2.3: Both DVs with Religiosity

	Welfare over Low Taxes			Government Benefits Justifiable		
	Coefficient	Standard Error	P>[t]	Coefficient	Standard Error	P>[t]
Religiosity	0.0235	0.0439	0.592	-0.0932	0.0122	0.0
Size of Town	0.0308	00191	0.106	0.0274	0.0053	0.0
Education	-0.0001	0.0184	0.992	-0.0232	0.0059	0.0
Interest in Politics	0.1161	0.0467	0.013	-0.1457	0.0136	0.0
Political Alignment	-0.0741	0.0245	0.003	-0.0317	0.0062	0.0
N	930			26225		

Table 2.4: Both DVs with Religious Attendance

	Welfare over Low Taxes			Government Benefits Justifiable		
	Coefficient	Standard Error	P>[t]	Coefficient	Standard Error	P>[t]
Religious Attendance	-0.0044	0.0176	0.802	-0.0287	0.0051	0.0
Size of Town	0.0285	0.0191	0.137	0.0274	0.0053	0.0
Education	-0.0004	0.0184	0.980	-0.0198	0.0059	0.001
Interest in Politics	0.1228	0.0467	0.009	-0.1471	0.0136	0.0
Political Alignment	-0.0671	0.0247	0.007	-0.0322	0.0062	0.0
N	924			26232		

Table 2.5: Both DVs and Both IVs

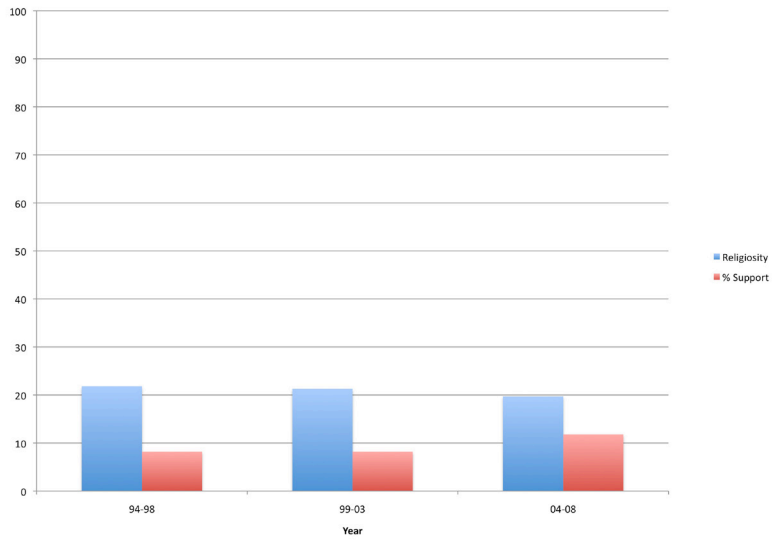|	Religiosity			Religious Attendance		
	Coefficient	Standard Error	P>[t]	Coefficient	Standard Error	P>[t]
Welfare over Low Taxes	0.02357	0.0439	0.592	-0.0044	0.0176	0.802
Government Benefits Justifiable	-0.0932	0.0122	0.0	-0.0287	0.0051	0.0

Figure 3.1: Combine International Temporal Support for DV#2

Figure 3.2: Combine International Temporal Opposition for DV#2
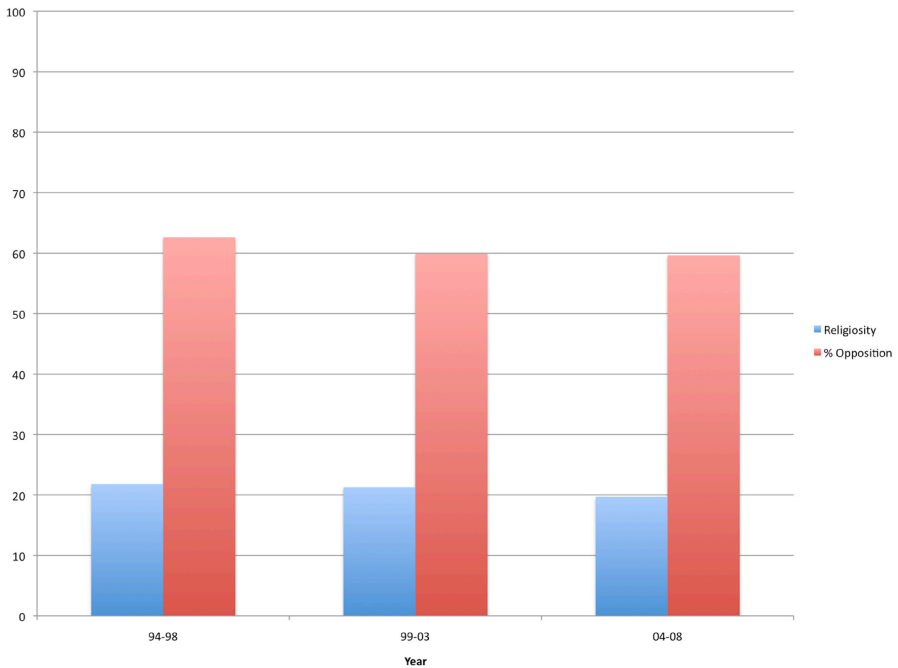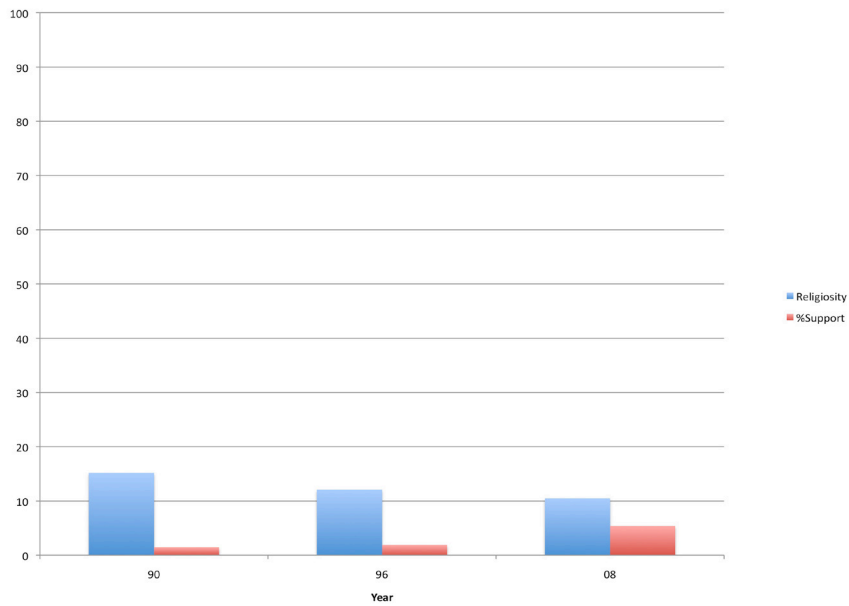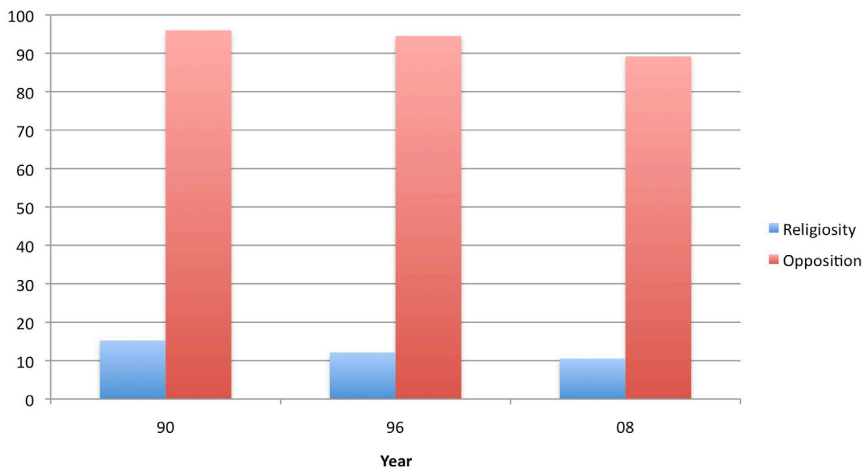
Figure 3.3: Norway Temporal Levels of Support for DV#2

Figure 3.4: Norway Temporal Levels of Opposition for DV#2

Table 4.1: Case Study Comparison
Case Study Comparison

	Norway	Sweden
Population	5,147,792	9,723,809
Land Area	323,802 sq. km	450,295
Religiosity 1990	40.3%	27.2%
Religiosity 2006	32.7%	29.4
Religious Attendance 1990	5.1%	4.2%
Religious Attendance 2006-08	4.5%	3.2%
Denomination	82.1% Lutheran	87% Lutheran
Total GDP	282.2 billion	522 billion
GDP Per Capita	55,400	40,900
Taxes and Revenue	56.8% of GDP	51.4%
Budget Surplus/ Deficit	13.1% of GDP	-2% of GDP
Welfare Spending as % GDP	20.5%	27.3%
Welfare Spending Per Capita	11,435.2	10,517.9
Unemployment	3.6%	8.1%
Urbanization	79%	85%
Diversity	94.4% Norwegian	89.3% Swedish
Refugees and Internally Displaced	30023	74672

Religiosity measured with WVS respondents who answered that religion was: Rather Important or Very Important. Religious Attendance measured WVS respondents who said they attend church at least once a week.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

This research was part of a senior thesis and I would like to thank Dr. Jennifer Fitzgerald for serving as my thesis advisor and helping me through the thesis writing process. I would also like to thank Dr. Scott Adler for directing the honors thesis program.

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