

Support for Ethical Consumerism and Welfare States in the Global Economy: Complements or Substitutes?

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Abstract

This paper explores attitudes about alternative paths to promoting labor and social standards in the global political economy: public welfare states protecting workers and social standards through policy and regulation, versus private 'red consumerism' protecting standards through consumer buying-power and corporate social responsibility (CSR). Scholarly debate has emerged over whether these public and private realms reinforce or undermine one another, but has lacked empirical traction to systematically judge such relationships. This paper provides such traction by analyzing European public opinion towards welfare redistribution and towards using consumer power to protect labor and social standards. It matches public opinion data on attitudes towards such issues to measures of existing public and private social protection. The analysis of public opinion suggests that red consumerism is more popular in settings with already-generous public protection, including strong social-policy programs and labor regulation. But the tendency of trade competition and other economic risks to spur a citizen's support for welfare-state redistribution is diminished where CSR activity and ethical consumerism have stronger footholds. While 'red' ethical consumerism and CSR activities may be facilitated by generous existing social policies, they might well erode citizen support for those policies.

Protecting social and labor standards has long been the province of public, hard-law regulations in redistributive welfare states, including the tax code, social services and transfers, and employment regulations. Increasingly, however, protecting social and labor standards has involved soft-law private regulation, including corporate social responsibility (CSR) policies and ethical consumer movements supporting them. The welfare state regulations and private regulations have largely been analyzed as separate realms of social protection, with distinct politics underlying each, and with distinct possibilities for pursuing equity and efficiency.

Yet, the two realms of regulation likely affect one another. The increasing use and popularity of private regulation and consumer movements coincide with a period of strong political and economic pressure towards retrenchment of welfare states and labor regulations. Such patterns raise not only the question of whether private or public regulations are most effective in protecting labor and social standards, but also of whether public and private regulations undermine or undergird one another.

Scholarly attention to this latter question may be modest, but it does yield clearly competing answers. The minimal dialogue between the literatures on welfare states and on private regulation suggest a first, default view, that the public and private realms of social provision are separate enough, with distinct enough politics, that they have no substantial effects for one another. Other literature,

however, suggests strong interaction between public and private protection, with contributions yielding opposite conclusions. One view is that the public and private realms of social provision are substitutes, where development of the one can undermine development of the other. Here, the declining political fortunes and/or effectiveness of hard-law public provisions are no coincidence but instead have provoked development of private regulation. Whichever interventions are the most effective, the governmental and non-governmental realms are thought to be imperfect substitutes that compete for scarce political resources or provide incentives to narrowly focus on the one intervention that hollow-out the other (Cutler et al., 1999; Reich 2008; Kinderman 2012). A final view, however, suggests that public and private protection are complements that can mutually reinforce one another, as private initiatives sensitize actors to accept and create spill-overs to support public regulation, or vice versa (Campbell, 2007; Gjørberg, 2009b, 2011; Midttun et al., 2006). These three, competing views constitute genuine controversy over the relationship between public and private paths to social protection.

An important problem is that this controversy has taken place on very modest empirical foundations, not least because it is hard to find data and even harder to find analytical methods to gauge how different kinds of interventions influence one another politically (Brejning, 2012). An important question for political-economic governance is therefore left unanswered: Are private regulations and

consumer movements in tension or harmony with public welfare and labor regulations?

This paper reports multi-country survey research that provides leverage to answer this question. A 2010 Eurobarometer survey of 27 European Union polities includes questions on support for welfare states, but also questions about the willingness of respondents to pay substantially more to protect labor rights and high social standards. We interpret such willingness to be a measure of a kind of ethical consumerism that we call 'red consumerism', where consumers pay a premium for products made in socially responsible and labor-friendly ways. Interpreted as such, the survey questions gauge citizen-voter opinions, worker attitudes, and consumer tastes that are political bases of both public and of private protection of labor and social standards at home and abroad. Such data allow judgment of whether economic risks like unemployment affect support for government redistribution differently among respondents who support red consumerism than among those who do not – and vice versa, whether economic risks affect support for red consumerism differently among those respondents more vs. less supportive of welfare redistribution. Linking the survey data to national-level measures of government policies promoting labor and social standards allows judgment of whether such protection affect support for red consumerism. And linking to measures of CSR regulation and activity clarifies whether actual private regulatory activity – including not only patterns of support for red consumerism but also CSR-related firm and NGO activity – alters support for welfare-state redistribution.

The findings are two-fold. On the one hand, *ex ante* policies and regulations protecting labor standards do not appear to undermine the red-consumer willingness to pay more to protect labor and social standards. Both individual commitments to welfare states and national-level measures of governmental protection are associated with individual willingness to use consumer power to protect standards, net of individual and national-level controls. On the other hand, willingness to use one's consumer power to protect social standards, and living in national settings where CSR and private regulations are most developed, tend to diminish support for welfare-state redistribution. And more strongly, that same red-consumer willingness tends to undermine the degree to which respondents facing economic risks like unemployment or poverty support welfare-state redistribution to address such risks.

These patterns suggest that existing governmental policies are complementary to and foster development of red consumerism, while CSR activity and red consumerism may in turn substitute for further welfare-state redistribution. Maintaining generous welfare states and other governmental measures may prime citizens to be more willing to develop private regulations and fair-trade consumerism. But the deepening of such private regulation, and more widespread red consumerism that is part of it, may soften support for continued welfare-state redistribution.

1. Are CSR consumerism and welfare-state redistribution linked?

Both public welfare-state regulation and private CSR consumerism are subjects of substantial literatures, but these speak surprisingly little to one another. Literatures on European social policy and labor-standards regulation include few contributions exploring how private CSR developments might shape or be shaped by public policy. This likely reflects a presumption that politics of social policy are not causally related enough to those of private regulation or ethical consumerism to warrant attention. Meanwhile, the CSR and private-regulation literature explores many features of ethical consumerism, including red consumerism – articulating how and why the latter might crucially underpin the effectiveness of private governance (Bartley, 2009; Esben-shade, 2004). That literature identifies conditions shaping consumer movements, sensitivity to labeling, and willingness to steer purchases to protect social standards (Bucic et al., 2012; Öberseder et al., 2013). A few studies have also considered how national policy making affects CSR activity, though focused more on the environmental realm (Prakash and Potoski, 2014) or on the role of broad colonial history, statism, or policies steering private-regulatory activity (Campbell, 2007; Fransen, 2013; Steurer, 2010). Most such work ignores the interaction between governmental social protection and ethical consumerism – again betraying an assumption that private regulation has not strongly influenced, or been influenced by, public-policy regulation.

Important exceptions in these literatures, however, have explored connections between private and public protection of labor and social standards, and present an important unresolved controversy. First, public and private realms of labor and social protection may be substitutes, where development of the one can undermine development of the other. Regardless of which interventions are the most effective, the governmental and non-governmental realms might compete for scarce political resources or provide incentives to narrowly focus on the one intervention, such that the development of private regulation can hollow-out public regulation, or vice versa (Cutler et al., 1999; Kinderman, 2012; Kinderman and Lutter, 2016; Reich, 2008). On the other hand, public and private protection may be complements that can mutually reinforce one another, as private initiatives sensitize actors to accept and create spill-overs to support public regulation, or vice versa (Börzel et al., 2012; Gjølborg, 2009b, 2011; Midttun et al., 2006).

Clarifying which of these views holds for the politics of labor standards has been difficult, however. As the Introduction to this Special Issue has emphasized, the problem is partly that the scholarship has lacked systematic focus on the interrelationship between the public and private, even about the direction of the interrelationship between the public and the private: about identifying, *ceteris paribus*, whether developments in the public regulatory politics influence the character or effectiveness of private regulation, and/or whether public regulation influences private

regulation. Another problem, also discussed elsewhere in the Special Issue, is that the empirical evidence on the inter-relationship has been modest, because of difficulty in measuring the key features of public and of private labor regulation, and because persuasive methods have not been found to gauge how different kinds of interventions influence one another politically (Brejning, 2012). This problem gets partly remedied through multi-country large-N empirical work on public and private connections (Jackson and Apostolakou, 2010; Kinderman and Lutter, 2016), but such attention has so far not been extended to issues of labor-related ethical consumerism and welfare states.

A public opinion approach and argument

One way to get more empirical purchase on these issues is to focus on public opinion: to analyze support for one realm as a function of what is done and what is preferred about the other. Some studies have usefully explored such issues in CSR generally, usually in single-country surveys on aspects of CSR and private regulation and of state intervention (Bartley et al., 2015; Maniates, 2001; Micheletti, 2003; cf. Stolle et al., 2005; Willis and Schor, 2012). For our particular focus on labor-related ethical consumerism and welfare states, we can follow this line of inquiry, because multi-country surveys exist that ask questions about important manifestations of public interventions (e.g. welfare redistribution) and private interventions (e.g. willingness to favor producers protecting labor and social standards). These questions allow exploration of the extent to which such public and private interventions are complements or substitutes, by disentangling the two directions of putative causation. We can consider how existing social-policies and commitments play-out in shaping ethical consumerism; and we can separately consider how existing private interventions and commitments (such as ethical consumerism) shape support for public protection. The degrees of freedom offered by such data allow better identification of such relationships through controlling for individual and country-level confounding factors.

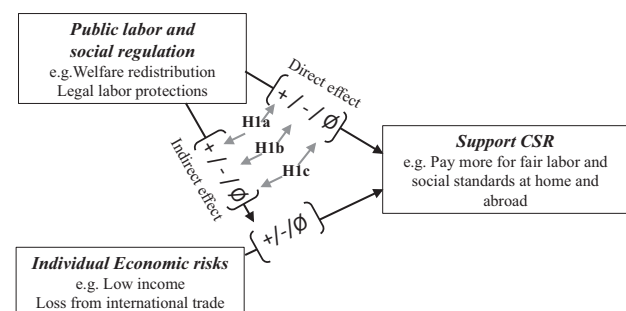
Such a focus is promising, despite important shortcomings in public opinion data. With the limited subset of public and private regulations about which the public are surveyed, there is a gap between what respondents express and what citizens do as consumers, workers and voters. Scholars have debated, for instance, whether attitudes towards public policies protecting labor or social standards matter or proxy for what happens in actual policy, given the complicated aggregation of interests in politics. With respect to surveyed attitudes towards ethical consumerism, such as willingness to make purchases to protect labor standards, what respondents profess may differ from what they actually buy or how regulation actually evolves (Auger and Devinney, 2007; Hiscox and Smyth, 2006). Moreover, many factors other than consumer preferences drive businesses to pursue private regulation and CSR (Seidman, 2007). Such shortcomings should be limited, however. Public opinion on social policies appear to affect downstream policy outputs

in industrialized democracies (Brooks and Manza, 2008). Consumers are key stakeholders underlying private rules for labor standards (Esbenshade, 2004; Micheletti and Stolle, 2004). And the gap between surveyed tastes and actual behavior may entail survey respondents overstating their ethical stance, but need not bias cross-sectional patterns of who takes which stance.

In any event, the competing views on the relationship between public and private regulation, discussed above, suggest testable hypotheses relevant to public opinion surveys. These include hypotheses on how *ex ante* public regulatory provisions can influence support for CSR or ethical consumerism, and on how *ex ante* private regulatory activity can influence support for public labor and social regulations.

Figure 1 graphically captures competing hypotheses with respect to the way existing public regulations might influence support for CSR ethical consumerism. On the one hand, citizens in settings with more generous governmental measures and with strong commitments to such measures should be, *ceteris paribus*, more willing to spend more to protect labor rights and standards than those in weaker public-policy measures and holding weaker commitments to governmental protection (Hypothesis (H)1a). This complementarity might show-up in direct and positive effects of citizen commitments to and actual policies – including welfare policies, aid disbursement, and labor regulations – upon willingness to pay to protect social standards. In Figure 1 this is captured by the direct positive relationship H1a. Such a pattern would parallel findings that social-benefit provision emboldens citizens to use other policies, including those relevant at home and abroad (Noël and Thérien, 2002), and can be norm-shaping among citizens and social actors in their reform agendas (Haverland, 2007; Koster and Kaminska, 2012). Just as likely, however, complementarity may show-up in indirect effects of such policies and commitments, where living in countries with generous welfare states or being more committed to government protection enhance rather than diminish the effects of demographic or economic characteristics on a respondent's willingness to pay to protect social standards. This is captured in Figure 1 by the indirect relationship of H1a, where public regulation moderates positively the influence of economic risks on support for CSR.

Figure 1. Hypotheses 1a, 1b and 1c on how public regulations might influence support for CSR ethical consumerism.



On the other hand, commitments to and provision of generous welfare policy might diminish red consumerism (Hypothesis 1b in Figure 1). Citizens more committed to welfare-state redistribution or living in settings with more generous labor and social policies may be less inclined, all other things equal, to pay more to protect such standards. If a substitution pattern can be expected to exist, however, we suspect that it is more likely indirect, where stronger public commitments and conditions may change the calculus of how voters think about public versus private routes to addressing risk. Hence, stronger public conditions or attitudes might, all other things equal, diminish the extent to which individual income or economic conditions spur red consumerism. A third possibility, of course, is that the offsetting implications of such commitments are modest enough, or cancel one another out enough, as to leave red consumerism unaffected (Hypothesis 1c in Figure 1).

Equally important is the opposite direction of causality: how *ex ante* CSR and ethical-consumer commitments might influence support for governmental protection of social and labor standards. Again, we anticipate three possibilities, captured graphically in Figure 2. *Ex ante* CSR conditions and consumerism might, *ceteris paribus*, spur support for governmental interventions (Hypothesis 2a in Figure 2).¹ For instance, such consumerism and private regulations can have a sensitizing and educating influence on citizen attitudes – making them more likely to care about protecting social standards. If so, then those citizens willing to pay for labor and social standards and living amid more developed CSR regulations might be more supportive of public regulations like welfare-state redistribution. And indirect positive influence is also possible, where exposure to economic risks fostering support for welfare-state redistribution – risks associated with low income, loss from international trade, etc. – can be expected to have stronger positive effects on support for redistribution among individuals supporting red consumerism or living in settings where private regulation flourishes.

On the other hand, living in more developed CSR settings or readiness to pay a consumer premium to raise social standards might actually diminish one's support for governmental provisions like welfare-state redistribution (H2b in Figure 2). More developed CSR and red consumerism might

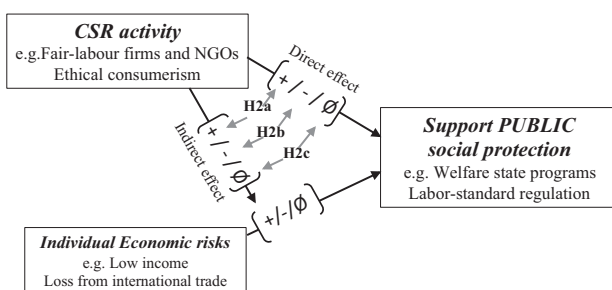
directly be seen to obviate the need for public protection. More likely, in our estimation, red consumerism and CSR conditions might affect public protection through the indirect route, diminishing the link between individual economic risk and support for public protection. Even if individuals most supportive of red consumerism are most likely to be most supportive of public interventions protecting labor and social conditions, living in developed CSR settings and embracing red consumerism might well diminish the tendencies of such individuals to look to public welfare protection when they face economic risks like poverty or low education. Hence, commitments to and strong CSR settings might diminish the propensity of at-risk respondents to spur support for welfare-state redistribution. Such a dynamic would resemble the way national welfare and employment institutions alter the way individual risks influence citizen support for government social protection (Jordan, 2013), and the way European citizens think about their own welfare states in the shadow of existing and possibly stronger EU-level social policy integration (Burgoon, 2009; Obinger et al., 2005). Such indirect substitution effects are extra plausible given that media activity by some NGOs supporting ethical consumerism encourage individuals as consumers to think about their purchases as political acts – encouraging trade-offs should citizens believe CSR and private activity to be a strong alternative to public policies.

A final possibility with respect to how CSR and ethical consumerism might affect support for welfare redistribution is that the offsetting tendencies highlighted in Hypotheses 2a and 2b might cancel one another out or be very modest. If so, a flourishing CSR climate or red consumerism would have no substantial effects, directly or indirectly, on support for welfare-state redistribution (Hypothesis 2c in Figure 2). We have no strong theoretical reasons to expect, *a priori*, that one or other of the above expectations trump the others – an issue we therefore treat as an empirical one.

2. Do red consumerism and redistribution reinforce or undermine one another?

We analyze multi-country public opinion surveys that allow us to measure individual-level commitments to private and public interventions to protect labor and social standards: for the former, the willingness of respondents to spend more to protect labor and social standards; for the latter, support for government redistribution and for welfare spending. These provide significant leverage to test the above six Hypotheses (Hypotheses 1a through 2c). We consider how each attitudinal measure is directly affected by national-level measures of governmental and non-governmental protection of labor and social standards. And we also consider how existing governmental and non-governmental interventions might indirectly affect each measure of respondent attitudes – that is, diminish or intensify the degree to which individual-level demographic or economic risks affect support for redistribution or willingness to pay to protect labor.

Figure 2. Hypotheses 2a, 2b and 2c on how CSR activity might influence support for public labor and social protection.



Dependent variables: pay to protect labor and support redistribution

To pursue such study, we analyse a survey of respondents in 27 member-states of the European Union: Eurobarometer 74.1, carried out in late 2010.² We focus on this particular survey because it is the only one with substantial coverage across a broad cross section of respondents and polities, and that also asks questions about important aspects of governmental and non-governmental protection of labor and social standards. In particular, the survey includes a question about red consumerism, asking respondents (QD3.1): 'Would you be prepared to pay more for products or services from companies that respect labor rights and apply high social standards?' (Answers ranging from 1 to 4, 1 = 'No, I am not prepared to pay more'; 2 = 'Yes, I would pay up to 10% more'; and 3 = 'Yes I would pay more than 10% more'; and 4 = 'Don't know'). Given the survey's wording of this and adjacent questions about domestic social policy, we presume that respondents answer this question by considering protection of social and labor standards generally, in one's own country and abroad. We focus on a binary recoding of these answers, *Pay to protect labor*: 1 = willingness to either up to 10% more or more than 10% more; and 0 = unwillingness to pay more; the other answers treated as missing. As can be seen by the Appendix Table A1, roughly 30 per cent of the 27-country sample is willing to pay substantially more to protect labor rights or high social standards.

The survey also includes a classically worded question (QA 14.3) about redistribution, whether respondents agree that 'Government should ensure that the wealth of the country is redistributed in a fair way to all citizens' (answers ranging from 1–5, totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree, totally disagree, and don't know). We consider both a categorical and binary recoding of answers (the categorical ranging from 1–4, from least-to-most supportive of redistribution; and a binary version ranging from 0, tending or totally disagreeing that government should redistribute, and 1, tending or totally agreeing with redistribution).³

An important test of whether governmental and non-governmental commitments are in tension or harmony involves how *Pay to protect labor* and *Support redistribution* are related to national-level measures of either governmental or non-governmental labor and social standards. We want to know how a respondent's subjective commitments to an important private intervention, *Pay to protect labor*, relates to existing policies towards trade, welfare-state, aid, and labor regulation. And we want to know how subjective commitment to an important governmental intervention, *Support redistribution*, relates to existing non-governmental conditions like the development of CSR activity and NGO activity.

Country-level governmental protection

To gauge national welfare-state redistribution, we focus on *Total social expenditures*, spending on social-policy transfers

and services (including health, old-age, family, unemployment, and housing benefits) as a percentage of national GDP (averages between 2005 and 2009).⁴ To roughly gauge a country's generosity in protecting international standards we consider *Aid Disbursements*, total spending on multilateral and bilateral humanitarian and development assistance, as a share of GDP (taking national 2005–09 averages). To gauge actual protection of home labor standards, we use a measure with the broadest coverage in terms of provisions and countries: *Index of Labor Standards*, measuring a country's ratification of ILO conventions protecting freedom-of-association and discrimination, and against child labor, forced labor and discrimination (Bazillier, 2008).⁵

Country-level Non-governmental protection

To measure non-governmental activity to protect labor standards we face more difficulty, given the many manifestations of such protection and the paucity of systematic measures of them. We rely on three measures of non-state civil society activities, and of corporate social responsibility and codes of conduct in a country. We consider a useful general measure of a country's richness of CSR activity, what we will call *CSR setting*, based on Gjølborg's (2009a, 2009b) measure with respect to nine CSR initiatives.⁶ But this measure does not limit its focus to labor-standard protection and in any event has only modest country-coverage. So we also focus on measures of our own data-gathering and coding, of the number of firms and of NGOs that have explicitly committed themselves to protecting labor standards at home and abroad (Burgoon and Fransen, 2017).⁷ *Fair-labor firms* is a country's weighted proportion of manufacturing firms that have adopted at least one of the several formal (and sometimes competing) private standards in the regulation of labor rights in their home operations and their global supply chains.⁸ *Fair-labor NGO* is the weighted number of civil society organizations with a substantial agenda focused on labor standard protection in both domestic and foreign settings, coded using the Yearbook of International Organization's accounting of civil-society organizations (CSOs).⁹ These include CSOs focused on labor justice, social justice, human rights, economic development, sustainable development, children and women's rights (at work), fair trade, anti-corporate movements, progressive consumerism, and progressive business regulation advocacy, including trade union organizations active in international advocacy. The three measures are positively (and significantly) correlated with one another (Appendix Figure A1 shows the positive relationship between fair-labor firms and fair-labor NGO measures).

Controls

We consider individual-level and country-level controls in our estimations. *Income* is based on a respondent's estimate (QA35) of his or her own household's ability to make ends meet, ranging from 1 (very difficult) to 6 (very easily).

Table 1. Pay to protect labor and Support redistribution as, respectively, functions of governmental and nongovernmental provisions

	DV: Pay to protect labor ^a			DV: Support redistribution ^b			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
<i>Pay to protect labor</i>				0.062 (0.045)	0.153*** (0.059)	0.093 (0.156)	0.095 (0.152)
<i>Pay for environment</i>	3.829*** (0.047)	3.827*** (0.047)	3.846*** (0.048)				
<i>Support redistribution</i>	0.107* (0.061)	0.112* (0.061)	0.110* (0.063)				
<i>Income</i>	0.160*** (0.019)	0.159*** (0.019)	0.162*** (0.019)	-0.231*** (0.019)	-0.169*** (0.025)	-0.222*** (0.023)	-0.213*** (0.022)
<i>Manual worker</i>	-0.251*** (0.072)	-0.252*** (0.072)	-0.258*** (0.074)	0.420*** (0.073)	0.417*** (0.103)	0.520*** (0.095)	0.479*** (0.087)
<i>Employed</i>	0.124** (0.053)	0.127** (0.052)	0.143*** (0.054)	-0.283*** (0.051)	-0.211*** (0.068)	-0.280*** (0.064)	-0.272*** (0.059)
<i>Benefit from trade</i>	0.201*** (0.024)	0.199*** (0.024)	0.210*** (0.025)	-0.093*** (0.024)	-0.094*** (0.032)	-0.092*** (0.030)	-0.071*** (0.028)
<i>Educated</i>	0.128** (0.055)	0.124** (0.055)	0.111** (0.056)	-0.124** (0.059)	-0.006 (0.073)	-0.059 (0.072)	-0.064 (0.066)
<i>Female</i>	-0.003 (0.043)	-0.002 (0.043)	-0.003 (0.044)	0.203*** (0.042)	0.243*** (0.056)	0.269*** (0.052)	0.239*** (0.048)
<i>Age</i>	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.002 (0.001)	0.002* (0.001)	0.002 (0.002)	0.003* (0.002)	0.002 (0.002)
<i>GDP per capita</i>	0.006*** (0.002)	0.000 (0.003)	0.005*** (0.002)	-0.001 (0.003)	-0.016** (0.007)	0.008 (0.007)	-0.004 (0.003)
<i>Social expenditures</i>	0.028* (0.014)						
<i>Aid disbursed</i>		1.217*** (0.372)					
<i>Index of labor standards</i>			1.404** (0.579)				
<i>CSR setting</i>					-0.038** (0.015)		
<i>Fair-labor firms</i>						-116.3*** (36.07)	
<i>Fair-labor NGOs</i>							-9.803 (7.841)
<i>Constant</i>	-4.97*** (0.316)	-4.25*** (0.224)	-5.49*** (0.468)	3.199*** (0.313)	4.605*** (0.781)	2.481*** (0.351)	3.202*** (0.448)
<i>Observations</i>	20,823	20,823	19,951	20,962	12,092	20,962	20,962
<i>Number of groups</i>	27	27	26	27	14	27	27
<i>Chi-square</i>	6767	6776	6554	327.5	142.8	216.3	219.8
<i>Log likelihood</i>	-7486	-7483	-7158	-7910	-4435	-5117	-5939

Notes: ^aModels (1)–(3): DV Pay more to protect labor (0–1). Multi-level, random-intercept logit coefficients (maximum likelihood estimation) with robust standard errors (in parentheses) (unstructured co-variances);

^bModels (4)–(7): DV is Support Redistribution (0–1). Multi-level, random-intercept logit coefficients (maximum likelihood estimation) with robust standard errors (in parentheses) (unstructured co-variances).

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

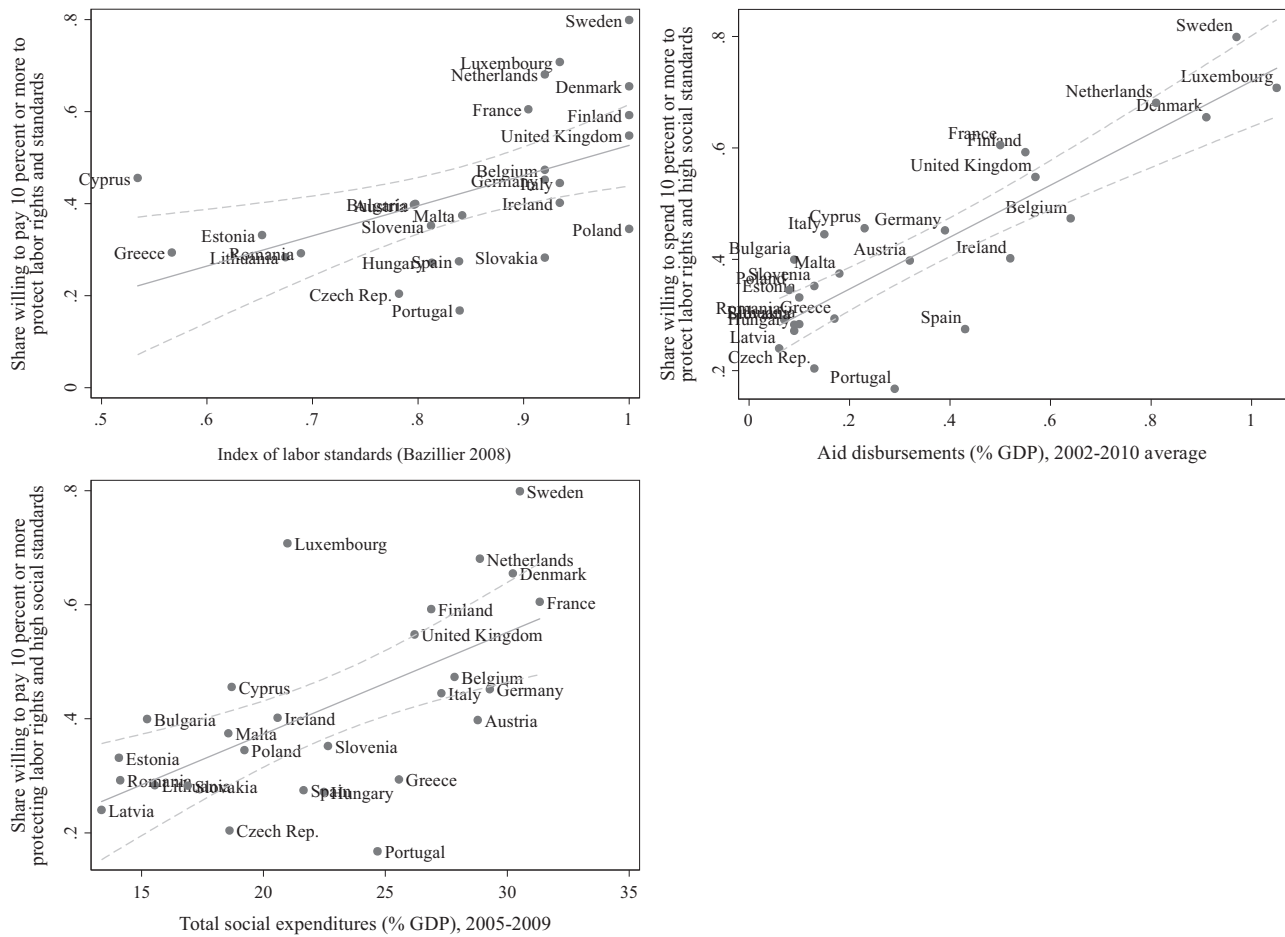
Educated is a binary variable of having higher than a secondary high-school education. *Manual worker* is having an occupation in which a respondent has an occupation where he or she works manually in or outside an office. *Employed* is having a paid job as opposed to being unemployed or non-employed. *Benefit from trade* is a respondent's subjective judgment of whether he or she benefits from international trade. *Age* is respondent age. *Female* is female gender. And for estimates of *Pay to protect labor* we control for *Pay to protect environment*, assessing willingness to pay 10 per cent or more to protect the environment, to allow us

to distinguish red consumerism from a general willingness to 'do good' through consumer power. Finally, we considered national-level controls relevant to actual and supported protection of labor rights and social standards. Most important of these is *GDP per capita*, general wealth in 2010.¹⁰

Estimation approach

To explore the six hypotheses, we fit separate models of *Pay to protect labor* and of *Support for redistribution* among the 27 countries, addressing both individual and country-

Figure 3. Willingness to pay more for labor standards, and governmental measures.



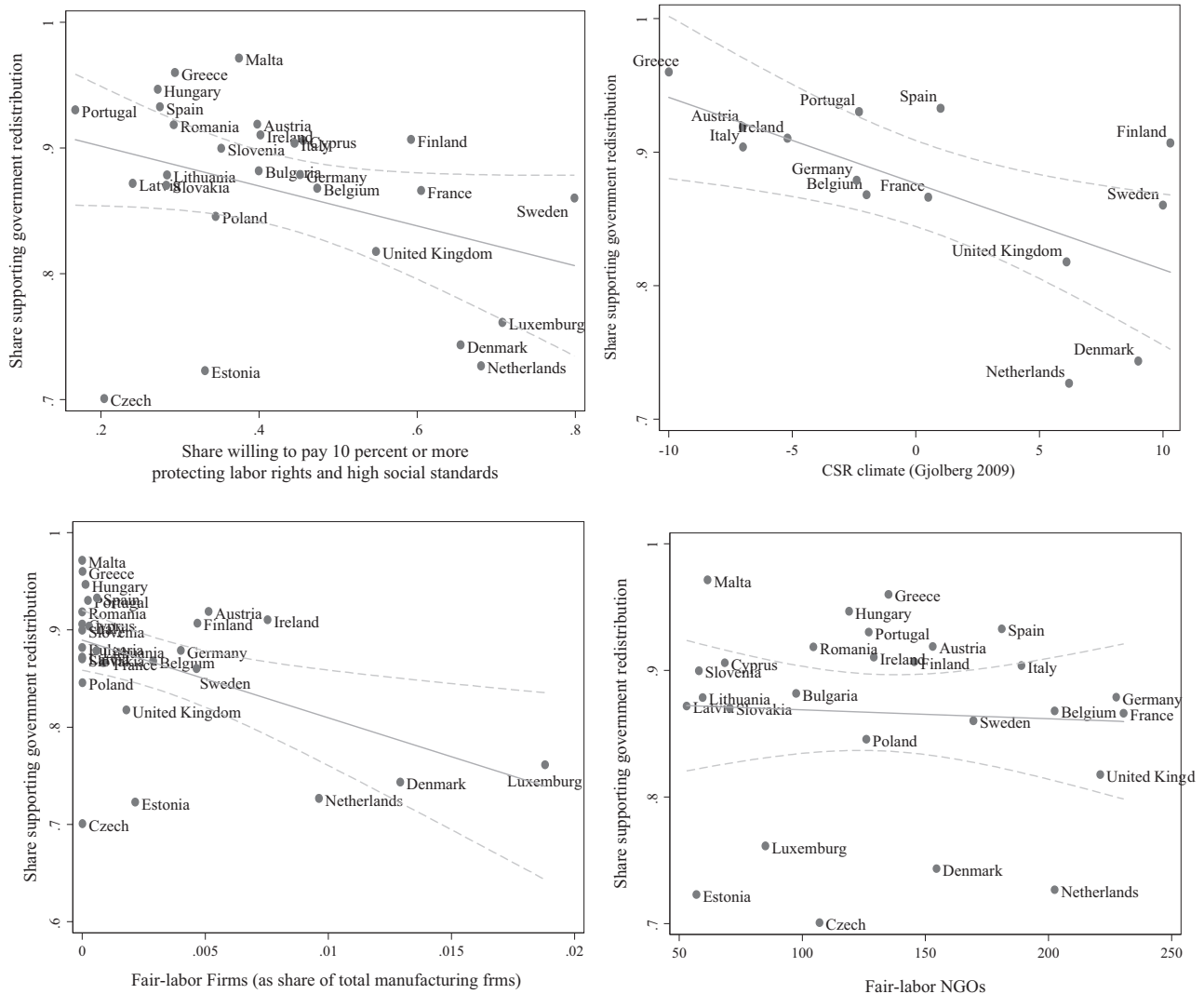
level variation in public and private regulatory activity. Ignoring the multilevel nature of such data violates the assumption of independent errors and can underestimate standard errors associated with contextual variables (Steenbergen and Jones, 2002). Therefore, we fit random-intercept maximum-likelihood models grouped by country, with nationally-varying intercepts, and distinctly estimated variances and co-variances. The baseline models focus on the binary measures of *Pay to protect labor* and *Support for redistribution*, such that the coefficients are multi-level logit models.

In these models we are interested in both the *direct* and *indirect* ways in which governmental commitments and conditions might influence *Pay to protect labor*, and how private commitments and conditions might influence *Support redistribution*. The tests involve two general specifications. First, we want to know how *Pay to protect labor*, subjective commitments to an important private intervention, is a function of a respondent's *Support redistribution* and of existing public measures (*Total social expenditures*, *Index of Labor standards*, and *Aid disbursements*). Second, we want to know how *Support redistribution*, commitment to an important public intervention, is a function of commitments to *Pay to*

protect labor, and of national private conditions (*CSR Setting*, *NGO regulatory climate*, *Total non-profit personnel*). These country-level parameters are estimated in separate models due to limited degrees-of-freedom for country-variables of interest. Such specifications, of course, will partly reflect – indeed they allow explicit exploration of – the possibility of reverse-causation in the relationships between attitudes towards welfare redistribution and towards red consumerism.

Very importantly, we also explore possible indirect complementarity or substitution. This is possible by adding relevant interaction terms to the above models. In gauging *Support redistribution*, for example, we can gauge whether existing national-level features of private-regulatory commitments and interventions might diminish or intensify the degree to which individual-level demographic or economic features affect a respondent's support for welfare redistribution. And in gauging *Pay to protect labor*, we gauge whether existing governmental measures or welfare commitments might diminish or intensify the degree to which individual demographic or economic characteristics affect willingness to pay more for higher labor and social standards. We report the most important specifications as baseline models but

Figure 4. Support for government redistribution and non-governmental measures.



explore many alternatives in the sensitivity and robustness tests.

3. Direct effects of governmental and non-governmental protection

Table 1 summarizes the direct, un-moderated relationships. The first three models summarize estimations of *Pay to protect labor* as functions of *Support for redistribution*, of country-level governmental social and labor protection, and of the controls. The last four models summarize the converse, estimations of *Support for redistribution* as functions of individual-level *Pay to protect labor*, country-level CSR conditions, and of controls. With respect to the controls, the two sets of estimations are identical, except that estimates of *Pay to protect labor* also control for *Pay more for environment*, a measure that is not further relevant to *Support redistribution*. What is immediately clear is the striking difference in the individual and aggregate politics and economics of

supporting red consumerism compared to welfare-state redistribution.

In models 1–3, the strongest predictor of *Pay to protect labor*, of willingness to pay 10 per cent or more to protect labor or social standards, is willingness to pay comparably more to protect the environment. This high correlation between red and green-consumerism may reflect affirmation bias in a survey instrument where the questions are asked together, but it likely also reflects substantive affinity between different kinds of ethical consumerism. The remaining controls suggest that well-to-do respondents are most willing to pay more for a social goal – a pattern found in other studies. In particular, those with higher incomes, a job and higher education are more likely to *Pay to protect labor*. And those in manual worker occupations, capturing risk of lower income, are less likely to be red consumers. Those judging themselves to *Benefit from trade* are also more likely to *Pay to protect* than those expecting trade to be problematic. This likely captures an income effect, but also suggests

Table 2. Willingness to pay more for labor standards, and public governance

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<i>Income</i>	0.087* (0.046)	0.346*** (0.126)	0.171*** (0.030)	0.231*** (0.078)
<i>Support redistribution</i>	-0.249 (0.211)	0.110* (0.063)	0.112* (0.061)	0.108* (0.061)
<i>Benefit from trade</i>	0.201*** (0.024)	0.210*** (0.025)	0.199*** (0.024)	0.201*** (0.024)
<i>Income × Support redistribution</i>	0.087* (0.049)			
<i>Labor standards index</i>		2.172*** (0.784)		
<i>Income × Labor standards index</i>		-0.215 (0.146)		
<i>Aid disbursed</i>			1.355*** (0.459)	
<i>Income × Aid disbursed</i>			-0.033 (0.064)	
<i>Social expenditures</i>				0.039** (0.019)
<i>Income × Social expenditures</i>				-0.003 (0.003)
<i>Constant</i>	-4.216*** (0.288)	-6.150*** (0.652)	-4.299*** (0.241)	-5.230*** (0.425)
<i>Observations</i>	20,823	19,951	20,823	20,823
<i>Number of groups</i>	27	26	27	27
<i>Chi square</i>	6757	6555	6777	6767
<i>Log likelihood</i>	-7486	-7156	-7483	-7485

Notes: DV *Pay more to protect labor* (0–1). Multi-level, random-intercept logit coefficients (maximum likelihood estimation) with robust standard errors (in parentheses). All estimates include all controls for education, age, manual work, gender, support environmental ethical consumerism, and GDP per capita (results not shown, very similar to Table 1, models 1–3).

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

that embrace of free trade helps foster a willingness to use consumer power to protect standards. Furthermore, the country-level *GDP per capita* is a significant positive predictor of being willing to *Pay to protect labor*. The broad income-related factors appear central, here, while demographics like age and gender are not.

The governmental policy measures perform in the direction of complementarity. We see a marginally significant positive correlation between *Support redistribution* and *Pay to protect labor*. This pattern withstands controlling for factors that plausibly underlie selection effects or tendency to be both a red welfare-state supporter and red consumer. But it is still plausible that some unmeasured source of omitted variable bias is at work, here. From this point of view, the four aggregate measures of governmental interventions to support labor and social standards are more relevant. And there we also see a portrait of complementarity. Existing generosity of welfare-state redistribution, captured by *Social expenditures*, modestly significantly spurs individual *Pay to protect labor*. A polity's use of policies to fight poverty abroad, captured by *Aid disbursed*, is highly positively related to *Pay to protect labor*. And a country's own legal and regulatory protection of labor rights and standards, *Index of labor standards*, also significantly spurs individual red consumerism. These patterns turn out to closely

resemble those that show up in the descriptive-statistical averages in Figure 3. Here we see the positive relationships between the share of respondents willing to pay more for strong labor and social standards on the one hand, and the various faces of public interventions on the other.

The remaining four models paint a very different portrait, one where income, trade and other economic risks tend to enhance rather than diminish support for welfare-state redistribution. These patterns mirror those found in countless other studies of welfare redistribution. Income, education and employment all tend to entail lower income and employment risk that in turn reduce likelihood of needing, and increase the likelihood of having to pay for, government redistribution (Reeskens and Van Oorschot, 2013). And being a manual worker has the converse effect (Reeskens and Van Oorschot, 2013; Svallfors, 1997). Importantly, those who *Benefit from trade* are less likely to support government redistribution, a pattern likely reflecting a well-studied dynamic of welfare compensation in the face of risks of globalization (Cameron, 1978). Finally, demographically, women and older respondents are at the margin more supportive of redistribution.

Here, the effects of non-governmental commitments and conditions play out differently as well. *Support for redistribution* correlates positively with the willingness to pay 10 per

cent or more protecting labor and social standards. But this effect is significant only when the sample excludes Central and East European member states. Most importantly, the country-level measures of private regulatory activity have less consistent implications for support for redistribution than do governmental measures for red consumerism. All of the non-governmental conditions are negative rather than positive in their correlation with *Support redistribution*, and the Gjølborg index of CSR regulatory activity as well as the *Fair-labor firms* measure are negatively correlated with support for redistribution. These patterns again affirm the descriptive-statistic portrait of country averages for *Support redistribution* and the public policy measures – here captured in Figure 4.

4. Indirect effects: complementarity in one direction, substitution in the other

Tables 2 and 3 show the results of the indirect effects, perhaps a stronger test of complementarity or substitution in how citizens view governmental and non-governmental measures to protect labor and social standards. Table 2 focuses on how governmental commitments and conditions interact with the strongest individual-level predictor of *Pay*

to protect labor: subjective income. The models in columns 1–5 are virtually the same as the baseline models 1–4 from Table 1, except that here we add the interaction term between *Income* and governmental commitments or actual governmental protection: model 1 with individual-level *Support redistribution*; model 2 with *Social expenditure*; model 3 with *Aid disbursement*; and model 4 with *Index of labor standards*. Across these models, commitments and conditions related to governmental protection of labor standards and rights do not in any way diminish the degree to which wealthier respondents are willing to spend 10 per cent or more to protect labor rights and high social standards. In fact, the one significant result is between *Income* and *Support redistribution*, and the positive interaction suggests that being more supportive of government redistribution tends to actually increase the marginal effect of income on *Pay to protect labor*. This pattern suggests complementarity (H1a) or no effect (H1c).

Table T3, finally summarizes estimates of whether non-governmental commitments alter the tendency of individual-level economic risks to spur *Support redistribution*. The answer, here, tilts towards ‘yes,’ in the direction of substitution rather the complementarity – supporting Hypothesis

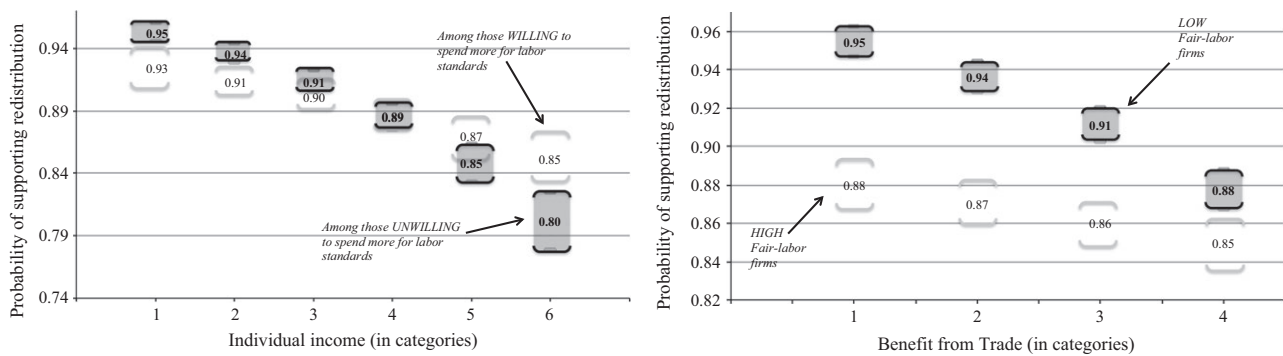
Table 3. Support for redistribution and private governance of Labor

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
<i>Pay to protect labor</i>	−0.587*** (0.147)	0.031 (0.134)	0.064 (0.067)	−0.61 (0.067)	−0.024 (0.064)	0.061 (0.067)
<i>Income</i>	−0.302*** (0.024)	−0.231*** (0.019)	−0.274*** (0.033)	−0.29*** (0.019)	−0.235*** (0.033)	−0.231*** (0.029)
<i>Benefit from trade</i>	−0.093*** (0.024)	−0.099*** (0.031)	−0.093*** (0.024)	−0.124*** (0.030)	−0.094*** (0.024)	−0.101*** (0.026)
<i>Income</i> × <i>Pay to protect labor</i>	0.159*** (0.034)					
<i>Benefit from trade</i> × <i>Pay to protect labor</i>		0.012 (0.053)				
<i>Fair-labor Firms</i>			−175.17** (50.18)	−142.3** (36.68)		
<i>Income</i> × <i>Fair-labor Firms</i>			12.658** (6.112)			
<i>Benefit from trade</i> × <i>Fair-labor Firms</i>				9.128*** (3.382)		
<i>Fair-labor NGOs</i>					12.031 (8.859)	−12.533 (7.767)
<i>Income</i> × <i>Fair-labor NGOs</i>					0.466 (0.831)	
<i>Benefit from trade</i> × <i>Fair-labor NGOs</i>						0.971 (0.727)
Constant	3.484*** (0.321)	3.211*** (0.317)	3.189*** (0.313)	2.546*** (0.351)	2.849*** (0.335)	2.852*** (0.335)
Observations	20,962	20,962	20,962	20,962	20,962	20,962
Number of groups	27	27	27	27	27	27
Chi square	343.7	327.5	331.0	334.7	334.8	144.8
Log-likelihood	−7899	−7910	−7908	−7905	−7871	−4434

Notes: DV is *Support Redistribution* (0–1). Multi-level, random-intercept logit coefficients (maximum likelihood estimation) with robust standard errors (in parentheses). All estimates include all controls for education, age, manual work, gender, and GDP per capita (results not shown, very similar to Table One, models 4–7).

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

Figure 5. Support for government redistribution as function of individual income and 'benefiting from trade'.



2b. The first two models focus on how individual-level willingness to pay more to protect labor alters the way income (model 1) and benefitting-from-trade (model 2) affect *Support redistribution*. We see here that red consumerism *diminishes* a respondent's tendency to respond to income risk with support for redistribution, a pattern repeated with respect to manual work, education and employment as well (results not shown but available upon request). Model 2 shows, however, that this moderation effect is in the direction of substitution (H2b) but is not statistically-significant for international trade risk (losing or winning from trade). This means that at least some key sources of economic risk – low income, having low education, being a manual worker, and not being employed – more strongly spur support for redistribution among those less inclined to pay more to protect labor and social standards. Considering the interaction between *Pay to protect labor* and other measures of economic risks – particularly low education, manual work and employment – are statistically significant and in line with the results for income (results not shown but available upon request).

Models 3–6, respectively consider the dynamics involving measures of country-level CSR activity. The models focus on the measures of *Fair-labor firms* (models 3 and 4) and of *Fair-labor NGOs* (models 5 and 6). The models are not unanimous, but in direction and significance suggest that those in settings with more extensive CSR activity are less likely to respond to their economic risks with support for government redistribution than are those in less extensive CSR activity. Models 3 and 4 show that *Fair-labor firms* do indeed moderately diminish, the tendency of higher income and trade beneficiaries to be less supportive of government redistribution than are poorer respondents (model 3) and those who believe that trade makes them worse off (model 4). The pattern does not apply, however, to *Fair-labor NGOs*, where we see that the interactions with both income and trade are statistically insignificant. The results for the Gjølborg measure, though not shown, are significant in line with the results for *Fair-labor firms*. Altogether, such patterns suggest that individuals may be less likely to respond to their economic risks with support for welfare redistribution when they are more embracing of ethical consumerism or live in settings with many *Fair-labor firms*.

Figure 5 visualizes the substantive size of these patterns. The left-hand panel, based on Table 3's model 1, shows how variation in income affects support for redistribution in ways that differ between those supporting and those not supporting red consumerism. The left-hand panel shows the predicted support for redistribution across income levels of respondents willing to spend substantially more to protect standards (the lighter-colored brackets) and among those not willing to do so (darker-colored brackets and the predicted mean probability of supporting redistribution). As is clear, income has a stronger negative effect on support for government redistribution among those not embracing red consumerism.

The right-hand panel in Figure 5, based on Table 3's model 4, shows the subjective benefit from international trade affects respondent support for redistribution at low levels of *Fair-labor firms* (the 10th percentile in the sample distribution) and at high levels of of *Fair-labor firms* (the 90th percentile in the sample distribution). The panel's two schedules show that respondents believing themselves to benefit from trade are less likely to support redistribution than are those who believe themselves to be hurt by trade. But this effect is stronger in settings where there are fewer *Fair-labor firms* (the shaded schedule) than in settings where there are many *Fair-labor firms* (the un-shaded schedule).

5. Conclusion

This paper has sought to shed light on contemporary regulation of social and labor standards in an age of proliferating public and private interventions among nation states. It has asked whether an important manifestation of non-governmental engagement, consumer willingness to pay more to protect labor and social standards, is in harmony or tension with an important manifestation of governmental engagement, support for welfare-state redistribution. The answer to emerge from our public-opinion analysis is two-fold: that existing governmental provisions tend not to suppress red consumerism, but that existing red consumerism, and perhaps also non-governmental regulatory development, might dampen support for welfare-state redistribution.

Since citizen attitudes ought to strongly shape democratic politics, the patterns revealed here should show-up in

politics and policies surrounding both private and public protection. Yet future research should explore whether this is actually the case. It should consider, in particular, how the positions of individual citizens, analyzed above, get aggregated by and infuse the bargaining of social actors and political parties. Future studies should also explore whether such aggregation yields downstream changes in policy and regulation, in line with the patterns articulated here. Second, studies may further investigate how patterns of interactions may change over time, for instance examining whether the two-way-interactions identified here may gain in strength as CSR activities and private regulations proliferate (Kinderman and Lutter, 2016). Finally, future research should consider the interaction of the many other manifestations of public and private labor regulation. It is certainly plausible that the patterns revealed here differ from those involving more downstream aspects or different manifestations of governmental or non-governmental regulation. In short, we remain cautious about whether the mix of substitution and complementarity found here holds for other manifestations of public and private regulatory forms, in the actions of citizens as well as policy makers.

However, if the patterns found here do hold true, then this research brings important news on the future of public regulation and private regulation that manifest 'Social Europe' and global promotion of labor standards. That future may entail a dialectic in government-provided social protection, where established welfare states and public labor-protection render citizens prone to embrace private regulation, including red consumerism, while this latter consumerism and development of CSR activity in turn soften support for welfare-state redistribution. Such a dialectic will be cause for hope for some and concern for others who care about future social protection: hope among champions of private regulation to address economic risks in the global economy, that established social policies and public protection need not stand in the way of new private initiatives; and concern among those trying to sustain established social-welfare policies and government-mandated protection, that CSR and ethical consumerism might erode those protections.

Notes

1. Burgoon and Fransen (2017) explores such arguments in more detail, including possible implications for support for public assistance to developing countries.
2. The timing of the survey, during macroeconomic downturn of the crisis, can certainly be expected to influence the salience of and willingness to improve social and labor standards with public and ethical consumerism. But we do not expect this to introduce bias in a particular direction for exploration of the Hypotheses.
3. See Appendix 1 for summary statistics.
4. We also consider measures of welfare-state generosity, including net replacement rates of unemployment, pension, and disability programs (from Scruggs, updated in Van Vliet and Camida, 2012).
5. In robustness checks we consider Botero et al.'s (2004) labor-market regulation of working-time, dismissal protection, and representation; and Mosley's (2011) measure of labor rights. Both cover fewer countries than the Bazillier (2008) data.

6. Dow Jones Sustainability Index, FTSE4Good and 'Global 100 Most Sustainable Corporations' list; membership in UN Global Compact and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development; sustainable reporting practices via KPMG Sustainability Reporting Survey and the Global Reporting Initiative; ISO14001 certification schemes.
7. In robustness tests, we consider age-of-CSR Association, Kinderman's age of a country's formal establishment of a corporate responsibility association.
8. The codes whose adoption are most important for European firms' protection of labor standards are including Better Cotton Initiative, Business Social Compliance Initiative, Electronics Industry Citizenship Coalition, the national chapters of the Ethical Trading Initiative(s), Fair Labor Association (FLA), the national chapters of the Fair-trade Labeling Organization (FLO), Fair Wear Foundation, Fair Flowers Fair Plants, Flower Label Programme, Goodweave, Initiative Clause Sociale, the International Council for the Toy Industries CARE Process, Made-By, Rainforest Alliance, Social Accountability International's Corporate Involvement Programme and Utz Certified. See Burgoon and Fransen (2017) for coding details.
9. See Burgoon and Fransen (2017) for coding details.
10. We considered many others, which are less consistently significant across estimations, such as unemployment, GDP-growth, inequality, welfare-state spending or redistribution.

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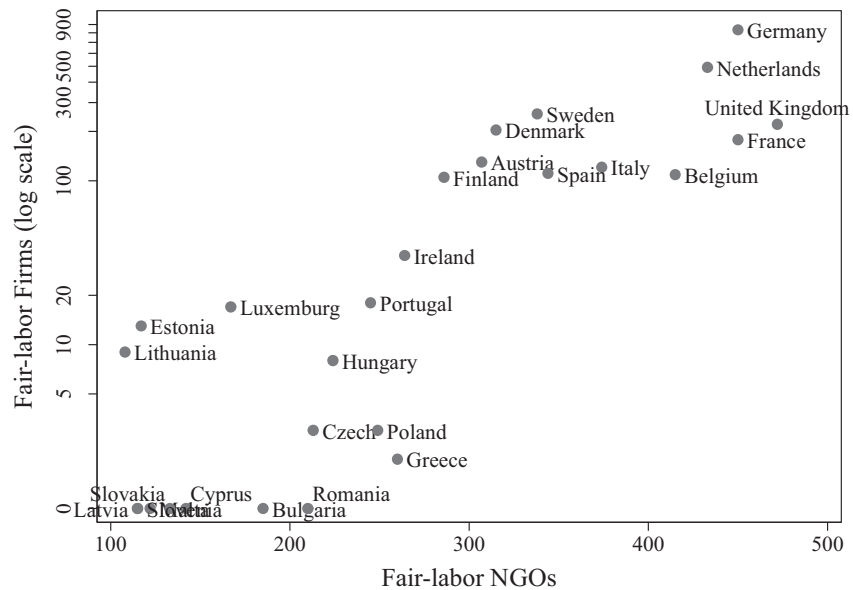
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Appendix

Table A1. Summary statistics (Eurobarometer 74.1)

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Support redistribution	25788	0.866	0.341	0	1
Pay to protect labor	25788	0.698	0.310	0	1
Income categories	25788	3.698	1.300	1	6
Fair-labor Firms	25788	0.005	0.017	0	.04
Labor-related NGOs	25788	137.637	57.336	53	230.5
Soc. expend. (%gdp)	25788	23.021	5.703	13.4	31.3
Manual worker	25788	0.123	0.328	0	1
Employed	25788	0.470	0.499	0	1
Highly educated	25379	0.724	0.447	0	1
Female	25788	0.548	0.498	0	1
Age	25788	48.037	18.143	15	95
GDP per capita	25788	96.087	35.783	44	271

Figure A1. CSR-related Fair-labor Firms and NGOs.



Sources: Yearbook of IGOs/NGOs (2003, 2014); own calculations (see Burgoon and Franssen 2017, forthcoming)