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On Earth As It Is In Heaven? Toward a History of Catholicism and Universal Basic Income

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On Earth as it is in Heaven?
Toward a History of Catholicism
and UBI



PRESENTER:
**Brendan
Heaney**

BACKGROUND

Despite a long history of Catholicism interacting with Universal Basic Income (UBI) proposals, there exists no cohesive history of their relationship.

Examining a broader history, fear of secular solutions to poverty and a historic emphasis on property rights kept Catholics from embracing the idea. UBI movements was typically combined with movements calling for an “end to private property of land,” which was firmly opposed by Catholic leaders. Examining the relationship not only helps achieve a better understanding of Basic Income, but also gives a better understanding of how Catholic Thought develops.

METHODS

- 1. Reviewed the history of Basic Income from a religious angle
- 2. Evaluated several historical elections with Georgist and pro-UBI candidates to see if Catholics had special opposition to them
- 3. Examined current trends in Catholic support to see why UBI is no longer strongly opposed.

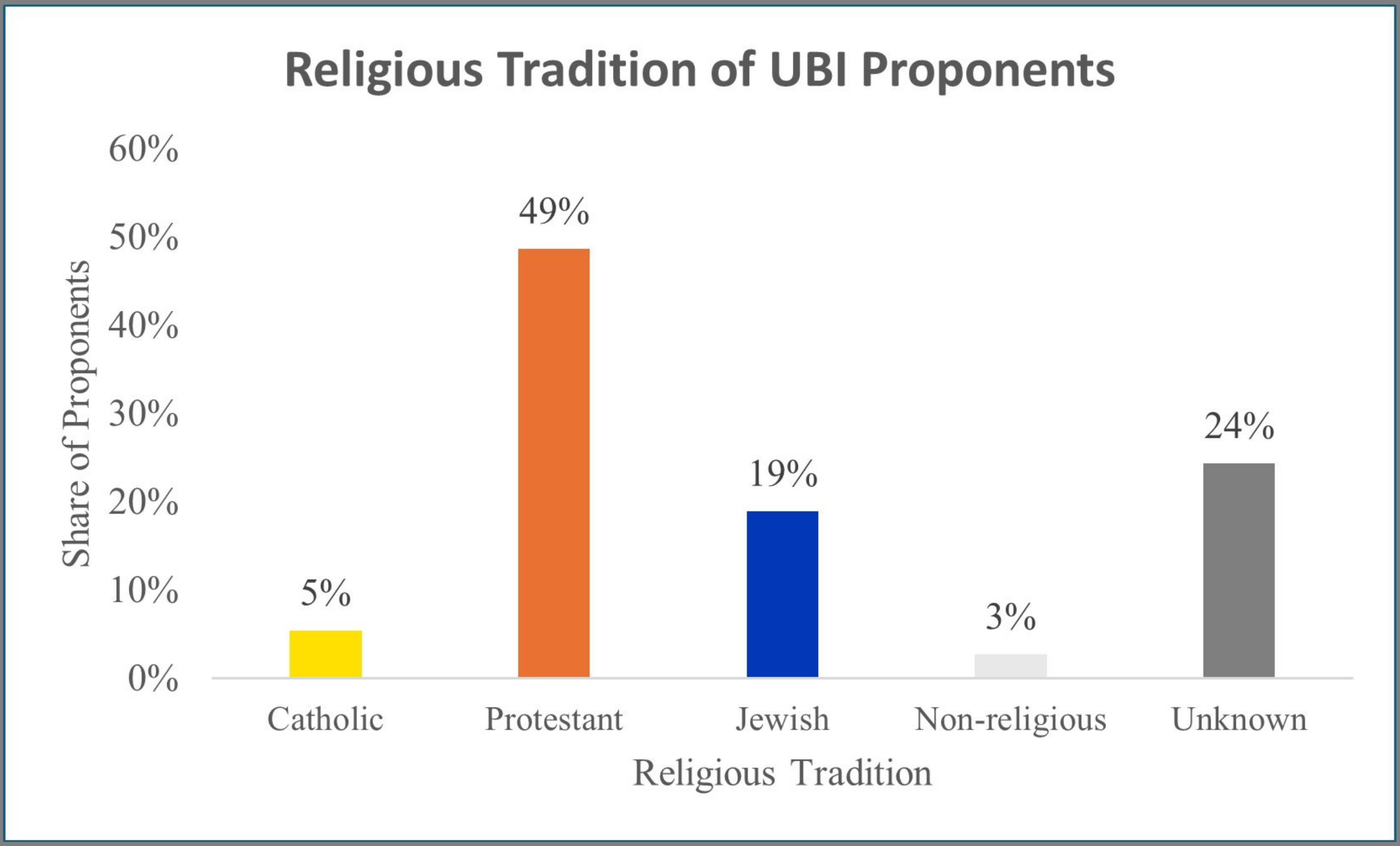
EARLY HISTORY

Catholic Tradition has always placed a strong emphasis on aid to the poor, but moved in a very separate direction from protestant counterparts. Starting with Thomas Aquinas, Catholicism has placed a heavy emphasis on property rights. The formative period of Catholic Social Thought was the Gilded Age, where Pope Leo XIII wrote the Rerum Novarum encyclical to give a guideline for action in the economy while preserving property rights.



In the past, strong support for property
rights kept Catholics from endorsing
Basic Income proposals.

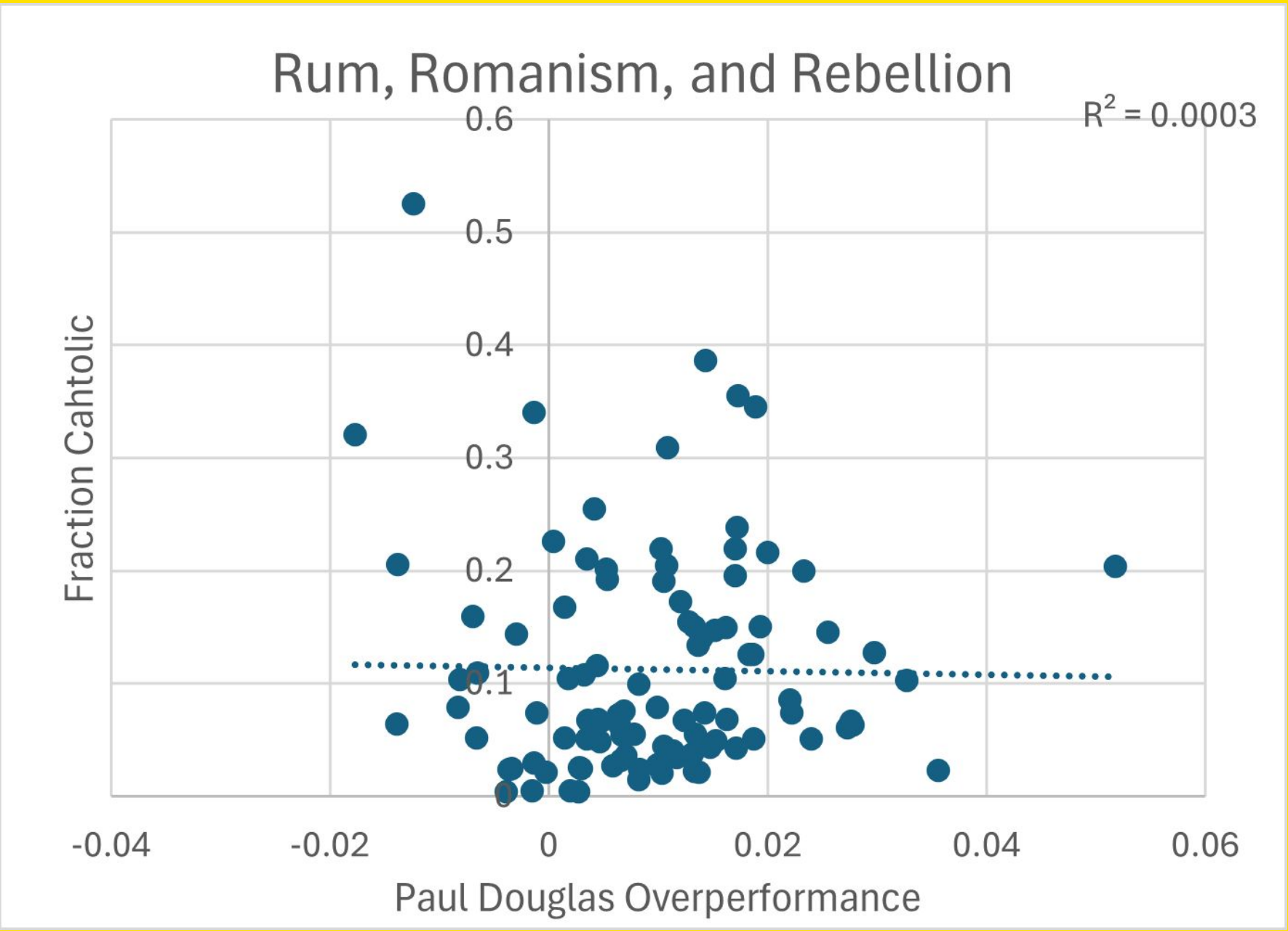
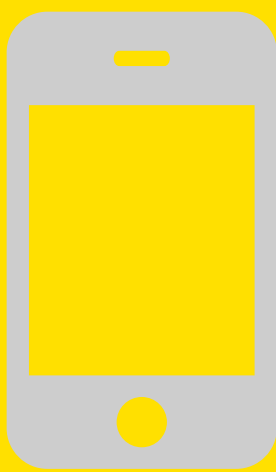
That’s changing.



Individuals mentioned in Phillipe van
Parijs’ History of Basic Income

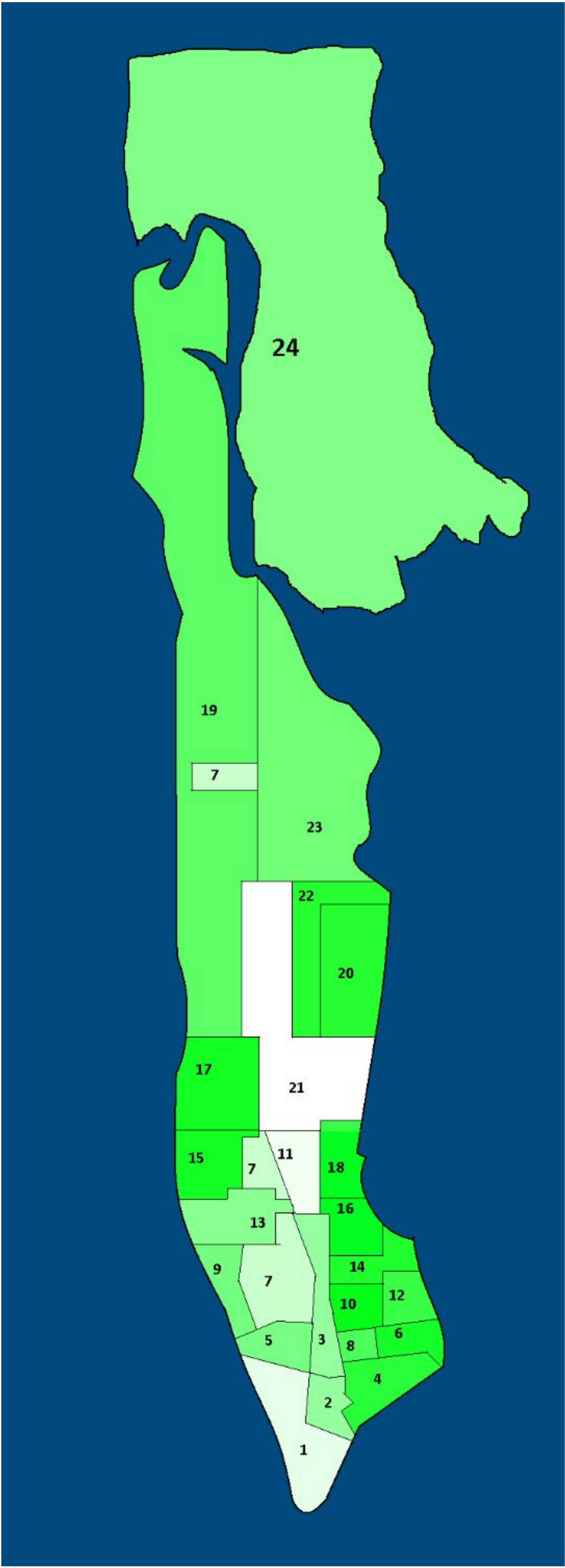
1948 Illinois Senate, Catholics
did not dislike the Georgist
candidate.

Take a picture to
download the working
paper



GILDED AGE HISTORY

Re-Examining the history of Georgism, a pro-UBI movement, from a religious framework can help to understand the sources of support and opposition. Henry George was attacked by the head of the church in New York, Archbishop McCloskey, and one of his supporters, Father McGlynn, was barred from speaking in favor of him, later excommunicated, and was reinstated years later. McGlynn defended his doctrine, and it was declared not heretical. Father McGlynn has been nearly forgotten. In his day, he commanded a national audience wherever he went and had tens of thousands of congregants at his church. By looking at this election and others, it seems Catholic immigrant-heavy areas gave George much of his margin. Many lay Catholics supported him, against their clergy.



Henry George, UBI proponent’s, vote share in 1886 NYC election. White is 10%, dark green is 41%
All references can be accessed at the QR code