Appendix 1: Issue Codes for the Salience Measures

The "most important issue" question generated valid responses from 55,663 individuals across the 39 elections in which it was asked. These individuals gave 1322 unique responses to these open ended questions. We exclude from the analysis all individuals who did not answer the question. We then generate 58 general issue codes that bridge differences in phrasing across the various surveys and then combine those issue codes into the general issue codes presented in Table 1 and Figure 1. The validity of the analysis in Table 3 is dependent only on the first issue category because we combine the various alternatives.

Economic Performance and Management: The economy (general responses), unemployment, inflation, growth/recession, wages, industrial policy, poverty/inequality, class. ***Social Policy***: welfare, education policy, health policy, old age/pensions, gender rights, housing, support for disabilities, transportation, civil liberties, youth, other general social issues. ***Foreign Policy/Defense/Terrorism***: Defense spending, terrorism, the war in Iraq, civil war, globailization, aid, regional integration (e.g. the EU), foreign policy. ***Corruption/Government Competence***: Budget deficit, corruption, scandals, trustworthy politicians, democratic reform, the incumbent's competence, riots and protests. ***Crime***: Any mention of a type of crime (kidnapping, murder, violence, drugs). ***Immigration/Emigration***: Immigration policy, rights of citizens abroad, refugees, asylum, cultural clashes with new citizens. ***Environment***: Climate change and global warming, pollution, energy sources, general mentions of the environment. ***Taxes***: Any forms of taxes that does not reference agriculture or support for industry. ***Agriculture***: Farming, agricultural support, region/center politics. ***Social Values***: National values/culture, abortion, religion, euthanasia, family, children, homosexuality. ***Ethnicity***: Domestic ethnic tensions. ***Other Specific Issues***: Natural disasters, partisan conflict, other

country-specific issues. ***Other Generic Issues***: “Other”. ***No Issue***: “None” or discussion of politicians’ personalities.

Appendix 2: Question Wordings

Age: [B2001] Age in years (1) 18-29 years, (2) 30-39 years, (3) 40-49 years, (4) 50 and above. If we drop Kyrgyzstan and instead use age in years, the substantive results do not change.

Female: [B2002] Gender of respondent (0) male, (1), female

Education: [B2003] Education of the respondent. (0) none, (1) incomplete primary, (2) primary completed, (3) incomplete secondary, (4) secondary completed, (5) post-secondary trade/vocational school, (6) incomplete undergraduate, (7) complete university

Respondent Unemployed: [B2010] (1) currently unemployed, (0) not unemployed.

Employed in the Public Sector: [B2013] (1) public sector, (0) mixed, private, not in workforce.

Employed in a Mixed Sector: [B2013] (1) mixed sector, (0) public, private, or not in workforce.

Income: [B2020] Total household income (0) lowest income quintile, (1) second income quintile, (2) third income quintile, (3) income quintile, (4) highest income quintile

Urban: [B2030] (0) rural area/ village, (1) small or medium size town, (2) suburbs or large town or city, (3) large town or city.

Human Rights Are Respected: [B3043] How much respect is there for individual freedom and human rights nowadays in (country)? Do you feel there is a lot of respect for individual freedom, some respect, not much respect, or no respect at all? (3) a lot of respect for individual freedom, (2) some respect, (1) not much respect, (0) no respect at all.

Corruption is Pervasive: [B3043] How widespread do you think corruption such as bribe taking is amongst politicians in [country]: (3) very widespread, (2) quite widespread, (1) not very widespread, (0) it hardly happens at all?

Respondent Belongs to a Union: [B2005] (1) belongs to a union, (0) does not.

Appendix 3: Analysis of Variance of the Economy's Stated Importance

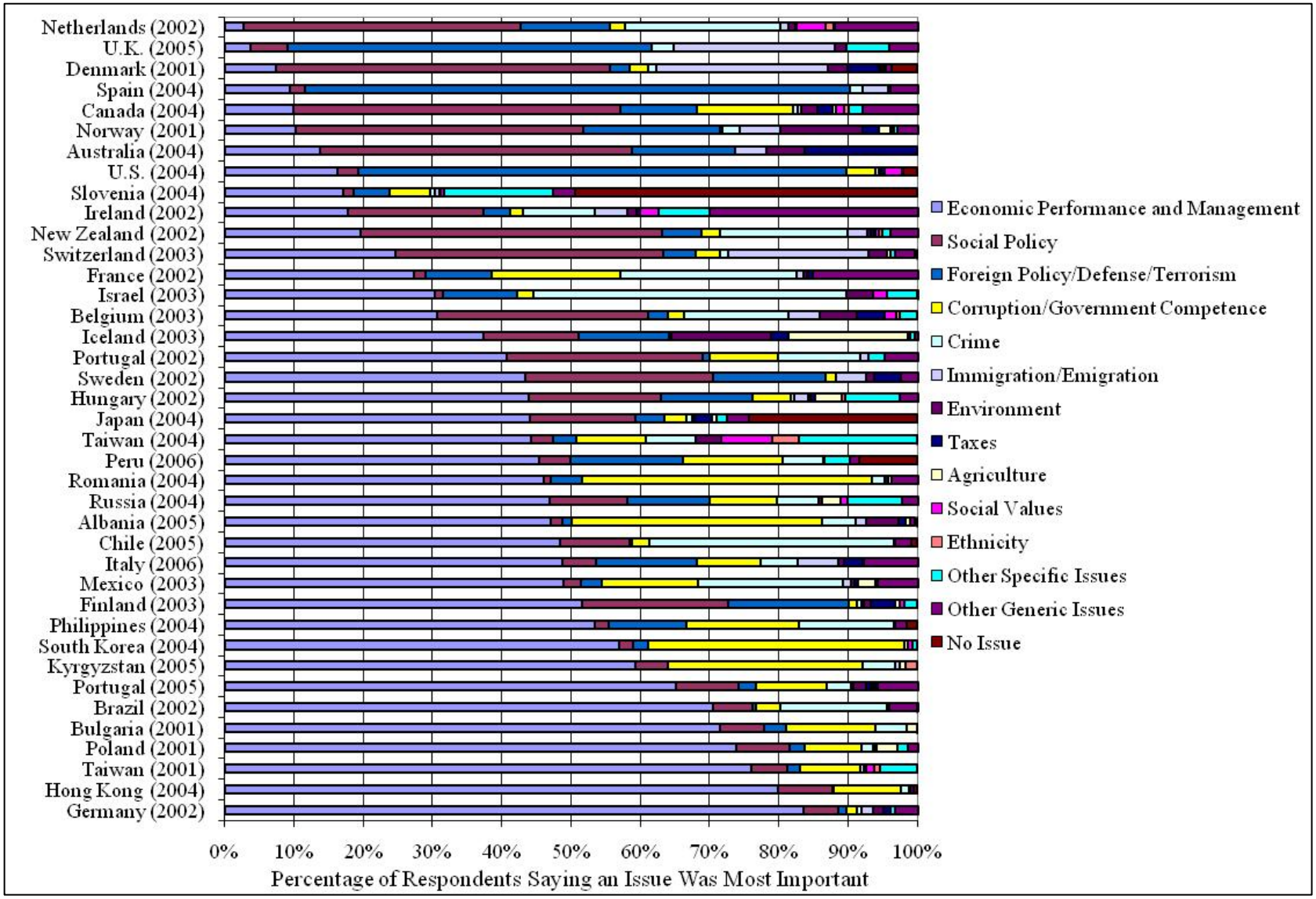
The economy's perceived importance varies both across countries and within them. An analysis of variance shows that approximately 60 percent of the variance within this sample is attributable to contextual differences across elections and 40 percent of the variance is individual-specific. These rations are the same if we focus on the 39 countries that are included in Figure 1 or if we look only at the 32 countries on which we have the full set of individual-level predictors in table 3.

ANOVA of Whether Economy is Important

	Cases in Table 3		Cases in Figure 1	
	β	(SE)	β	(SE)
Intercept	-0.548*	(0.206)	-0.560**	(0.198)
Country-Level Variance	1.395***		1.520***	
Individual-Level variance	0.997***		0.997***	
N Individuals	32531		55663	
N Countries	32		39	
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001				

Appendix 4: The Effect of Economic Performance Under Different Salience Conditions

In Table 2, we model the effect of economic performance on government approval and show that the effect of economic variables is mediated by the economy's perceived importance. The significant interaction terms in Table 2 confirm that the economy has a significant modifying effect on economic performance as voters evaluate the government. Moreover, we argue that inflation and unemployment are only significant when the voter says the economy is personally important. This insight is confirmed in the below table, which presents the coefficients and standard errors associated with the three macro-economic variables when the dummy variable for the economy's salience takes the values of 0 and 1.

	Voter Does NOT Say the Economy Is Important		Voter Says the Economy Is Important	
	β	(SE)	β	(SE)
Per Capita GDP Growth	0.244***	(0.062)	0.270***	(0.063)
Inflation	-0.101	(0.064)	-0.130*	(0.065)
Unemployment Rate	-0.033	(0.027)	-0.048*	(0.027)
Generated from Table 2, Column 2, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001				

Appendix 5: Figure with the data in Table 2