

The effect of religiosity: Comparison of voting for radical right-wing parties in Western and Eastern Europe

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Abstract

The vast amount of literature singled out many factors (both individual and contextual) that help explain voting for the radical right-wing parties (RWP). Contrary to most of the literature that focuses on economic marginalization, hardship, and aggregate economic indicators, this paper aims at exploring the contextual factors that contribute to the importance of individual cultural and religious attitudes in predicting voting for RWP. Previous research found conflicting findings on the effect of religiosity. We assume that is partly because the category the RWP is too broadly defined. Our goal would be to make a distinction between radical right parties based on nativist rhetoric which are populist and those that are not. This way we will try to investigate which aspect of RWP ideology is attractive for religious voters.

Several additional factors will also be considered. *First*, we expect that the effect of individual levels of religiousness and religious attendance on voting patterns will be moderated by the existence of strong minority parties, especially minority parties with different religious affiliation. *Second*, we assume that the effect of religiousness will be more pronounced in the context of the higher level of ethnic (religious) fractionalization and aggregate intake of immigrants. *Finally*, religiousness will be moderated by the existence of a moderate Christian party (vaccine effect). The cultural explanations outlined above will be controlled for economic explanations and tested using multilevel models on Comparative Study of Electoral Systems data for all European countries in the dataset.

Keywords: right-wing parties, voting behavior, religiosity

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Introduction

The scholarly work about radical right parties and their rise, especially in Europe, has literary flooded political science in the past ten years or so. It has been and continues to be without any doubt, one of the most popular topics among political scientists. That popularity resulted in numerous articles and books, which hugely expanded our knowledge about the phenomena. Mudde even stated that because of this we know nowadays more about this small family of parties than about Christian and Social Democratic parties, even though the later ones are still the pillars of incumbency and opposition in almost all European countries (Mudde, 2010).

In this sea of research, many factors have been singled out that make a citizen more likely to be a radical right voter, or a country a better ground for the seed of radical right ideas. As for the voters themselves, we know a lot about the typical radical right voter. He is usually male (Givens, 2004), young (Kitschelt & McGann, 1997), with lower or middle education (Betz, 1994). Additionally, these people have usually negative attitudes towards immigrants (Van Der Brug, Fennema, & Tillie, 2000), higher levels of political distrust and euro-skepticism (Werts, Scheepers, & Lubbers, 2013) and general dissatisfaction with representative democracy (Rico et al. 2017) accompanied with a personal perception of the decline of society (Elchardus and Spruyt, 2016). As for the political and societal context on the country level, previous research suggested that immigration and unemployment rate, among others, are most important contextual factors in explaining the rise of the extreme right vote (Arzheimer, 2009).

Majority of evidence to support the claims mentioned above come from studies about Western Europe (Arzheimer, 2009; Mudde, 2013; Rydgren, 2007; Van Der Brug et al., 2000). Following the big electoral successes of radical right parties in Eastern Europe, there is also a growing number of studies about the phenomenon in the region (Koev, 2015; Minkenberg, 2002; Pirro, 2014). However, the gap is still apparent. Additionally, all of the mentioned studies dig deep into radical right in Central and Eastern Europe, but we still lack comprehensive comparisons between two sides of the former Iron curtain, and explanation of different or similar patterns of voting behavior in this respect. One of the aims of this research is to try to fill that recognized gap partly.

When it comes to voting for the radical right, several articles noticed that “the impact of voter’s religious attachment, involvement, and attitudes on his or her propensity to vote for the party of the radical right has received relatively little attention” (Arzheimer & Carter, 2009, p. 985). The theory and empirical evidence on the relationship between religiosity and voting for the radical right have been rather confusing thus far. On the one side, it was argued that religiosity would lead to a decrease in the likelihood of voting for the radical right (Lubbers & Scheepers, 2000). The main reason lies in the assumption that “religious people are integrated in religious communities that are likely to vote for Christian party; this makes them more likely to vote for traditional Christian parties, rather than RRPs” (Immerzeel, Jaspers, & Lubbers, 2013, p. 946). On the other side, one of the key items on the agenda of radical right parties is to “warn of European civilization’s destruction at the hands of non-Christian elites” (Montgomery & Winter, 2015, p. 380). This can make people feel religiously threatened by others, which could contribute to them opting to vote for the radical right (Raiya, Pargament, Mahoney, & Stein, 2008). In their seminal work on the topic, Arzheimer and Carter back in 2009 found some evidence to support the positive relationship between the two in some Western countries but argued that religious voters would become available to radical right appeals as time passes (2009).

A closer read of the literature points towards two conclusions about the inability to reach a scientific consensus on the relationship between religiousness and voting. First, and more obvious, is the general lack of uniformity across the measurements employed for the independent side of the equation. Along these lines, religiousness has been operationalized to represent different parts of the concept, from general spirituality, religious devotion, and belief, to active participation (church attendance) and embeddedness in the religious community. Recognizing such problems several authors employed different approaches to account for this variability from utilizing different measures independently, to modeling them in the latent framework of structural equation modeling (Mughan & Paxton, 2006).

The other side of the coin seems to be more problematic and consequential. What’s seems to confound the results is a very wide webcast that identifies right-wing parties, often conflating and confusing populist right-wing parties there as well. This is problematic as we theoretically build the argument to explain the appeal of extreme right-wing parties for religious voters, but the analyses are not careful enough to isolate the potential confounding effect of populist ideology as well.

Eastern Europe is to some extent neglected in these types of studies. For the topic of this study, East European countries differ from the Western part of the continent in several important ways. Because of their recent past and a long period of Communism, these countries do not have a long tradition of conservative Christian parties, like in the West. In that regard, at least contextually, East Europe eludes being explained by the “vaccine effect” of religious voters clustering and supporting nominally Christian parties. However, religion still plays an important role, as “some are motivated primarily to defend traditional and religious values against secular cosmopolitanism” (Marks et al. 2006, p. 161). In other words, if there are no moderate conservative Christian options, these voters have to opt out for other options close to their personal beliefs and values. Here, extreme right-wing options appear to be the best fitting option.

While anti-immigrant attitudes play a crucial role in a radical right vote in Western Europe, this topic has been present but not that salient in the agenda of their ideological comrades in East. More importantly for these parties has been the clash with ethnic minorities. Radical right parties in Eastern Europe in the mobilization used a strong anti-minorities agenda (Pirro, 2014). The goal of this article is to analyze cultural background and perceived cultural threat from migrants, through the prism of voting for radical right parties, rather than perceiving migrants as problems for countries economy (ex. stealing jobs, working for lower salaries, etc.), which is also widely present in everyday discourse about the topic.

All of this leads us to our research question – *what role cultural and religious factors have in predicting vote for radical right parties?* Additionally, we are interested in exploring how is that moderated by the ethnic (religious) fractionalizations in these societies, especially in the situations where strong or influential minority party is present in political competition.

The article proceeds as follows. First, through the previous research findings in the field, we look at theoretical propositions about the relationship between religion and radical right vote. From that, we devise our hypothesis. After that, data, methods, and analysis are presented, which is followed by a discussion of our results.

Theoretical framework

In this section, we first try to provide a definition of radical right parties, the way these parties will be conceptualized in this paper. After that, we go into a typology of RRP and try to stress differences among parties belonging to this broad family. This will be followed by examining the role religion could have in mobilizing voters for radical right parties out of which we will devise our hypothesis.

A lot has been written about right-wing extremism. This term is widely accepted among scholars from all over the world, but “there is no consensus on the exact definition of the term” (Mudde, 1996, p. 283). The radical right wing often emerged in organizations that were a bit problematic to define, and usually were something between a political party and movement in the society (Gunther & Diamond, 2003), which probably has to do with these groups, for a long period of time (especially right after the World War II), being perceived as Nazis and associated with that type of ideas (Rydgren, 2005). “But from the early 1980s on, an unexpected third wave of right-wing extremist party activity swept over the continent” (Arzheimer, 2009, p. 259). Radical right-wing parties became a reality and in some cases important actors in the country’s political life. Their influence, since the start of that third way, has not decreased up to nowadays. On the contrary, some would say.

There is a certain consensus among scholars that what unites these parties into one family is ideology, with three common characteristics – nativism, populism and authoritarianism (Mudde, 2007). Rydgren writes that these parties “share a fundamental core of ethnic-nationalist xenophobia (based on the so-called ‘ethnopluralist doctrine’) and anti-political-establishment populism” (Rydgren, 2008, p. 738). Nowadays, particularly in Western Europe, these parties are best known by their strong anti-immigrant attitudes, which has become one of the central features of the whole party family (Arzheimer, 2009; Lubbers & Scheepers, 2000; Van Der Brug et al., 2000). These parties have proclaimed themselves as issue owners when it comes to (anti) immigration policies, and it is not rare that they are perceived exactly that way by the voters.

However, radical right parties, even though similar to each other, are not a group that is completely homogenous (Koev, 2015). Mudde goes that far to claim that it is arguably the most

heterogeneous party family (Mudde, 1996). The way these parties articulate key aspects of their ideology (nativism, authoritarianism, and populism) can be very distinctive (Pirro, 2014).

Nativism is a policy or an attitude which actively promotes the interest of native inhabitants in one country against interests of other groups. In the perspective of nativists, public goods are usually conceptualized as a “zero-sum game between majority and minority ethnic interests” (Koev, 2015, p. 650). The individuals who share these attitudes are usually frightened that their dominant culture in the society is threatened by different groups and perceive “the other” as the enemy and sometimes even a survival threat (Betz, 2004).

One of the ways to defend from this *rising threat to society* is to have strict laws and punishments from wrongdoers, who are, in the perception of nativists, usually individuals from different groups (Rydgren, 2008). This is a mechanism through which nativism and authoritarianism are connected in the message of radical-right parties. They appeal to the voters by presenting a threat from others and “strictly ordered society in which infringements of authority are to be punished severely” (Mudde, 2007) as a solution.

A populist element in the mindset of the radical-right voter has more to do with political elites, than with other people. Populist voters usually have strong anti-establishment attitudes (Inglehart & Norris, 2016). They perceive elites to be alienated from *the real people*. Populist parties tend to mobilize support on the basis of stories about the clash in society between *the pure people* and *the corrupt elite* (Mudde, 2007).

In this article, we want to explore further which part of this common right-wing extremism ideology appeals most to the religious voters. Previous findings have been inconclusive, and our assumption is that has to do with authors do not differentiate clearly between these elements of right-wing extremist ideology. “Church attending Christians, for instance, might be less likely to hold populist (elite challenging) values but more likely to hold authoritarian (strong law and order) preferences” (Montgomery & Winter, 2015).

Having in mind the above mentioned, we would expect that religious voters will genuinely care about interests of their group and that the threat posed by migrants will be perceived as much more important than threat from the alienated political elite in the country. That is why we assume that appeal of radical-right parties that lean more towards nativism will

be more attractive to religious voters than those radical-right parties that base their ideology more on populism. Meaning that we would expect the *effect of religiosity to be more pronounced in voting for nativist than for populist radical right parties.*

Several things also need to be carefully considered and taken into account. Here we proceed with looking at the different effect two religious dimensions (beliefs and practices) can have on RRP voting and the effect other minority (especially religious minority) parties have in the mechanism. We also consider how religious voters are potentially affected by the increase of immigrants. We use this to devise additional hypothesis about the relationship between religion and radical right voting.

Religiosity – practices and beliefs

Religiosity can have two dimensions that need to be taken into account when talking about the effect on vote choice: religious practices and beliefs. While there are not many studies, which try to connect religiosity and voting (and particularly voting for radical right), make this distinction, some argued that these two dimensions could have a different effect on RRP voting (Immerzeel et al., 2013).

Previous research showed more alienated people, individuals who are living in *atomized* societies, without meaningful connections with others, are more likely to be voters of radical-right parties (Rydgren, 2008). The reason is that RRP usually appeals to these voters through nationalist or populist agenda, promoting the ideas of “*us versus them*” (others, such as migrants and/or elite). This way they provide a sense of security through belonging to a broader group for those that are socially alienated (Fontana, Sidler, & Hardmeier, 2006). Citizens who practice religion, meaning that they attend religious service, have this sense of social integration as members of the religious community. Additionally, these religious communities usually (directly or indirectly) promote ideas and norms most closely connected with the Christian party, rather than any other (Lubbers & Scheepers, 2000). This is what Arzheimer and Carter call *encapsulating* effect of religion on party choice (2009). These two reasons lead us to assume that those *individuals who are more religiously integrated, meaning those who practice religion through attending church service and interacting with others, will be less likely to vote for radical-right parties.*

On the other side, religious beliefs can have a more subtle relation with vote choice. First of all, religious extremists are almost natural voters of radical right parties (Camus, 2013). However, these individuals cannot be found in churches, at religious services, because they have a more extreme position about theological literature and teachings (Raiya et al., 2008). The more orthodox people are, literature shows, the more likely they are to feel threats from the presence of other religion. In the European context, orthodox people tend to find the presence of Muslims as dangerous for their group, neighborhood, city or whole society/country (Immerzeel et al., 2013).

Aside from more extreme religious individuals, those that do not attend religious service, but have religious beliefs tend to be more influenced by those groups or persons which are not accepting traditional teachings of, for example, church (Scheepers, Gijssberts, & Hello, 2002). This way, especially with the increase of migrants, who are usually coming from different religious groups, they will feel religiously threatened. Also, the religious individuals are more likely to develop a “closed-belief system” (Arzheimer & Carter, 2009) often closely connected with ethnocentrism. This will make them more likely to develop anti-immigrant attitudes, which are, as previously stated, one of the key predictors in explaining vote for radical-right.

Given all the above mentioned, and having in mind the increasing “pressure” from migrants, we would expect *religiosity, or religiousness, to be positively related to radical-right vote, and to have a stronger effect than religious practice.*

We proceed with looking at other, contextual, factors that could affect the relationship between religiosity and voting for radical right parties: aggregate intake of migrants and the presence of meaningful minority party that represents a group(s) with different religious affiliation.

Contextual factors

In this section, we discuss contextual factor that could contribute to explaining variation in support for radical right parties across Europe. First, we take a look at the most usual suspect when it comes to explaining radical right vote – immigration. More precisely, the aggregate intake of migrants per country. After that, we will take a look at the role of other parties in the system, particularly minority parties that represent individuals who have a different religious affiliation.

Immigration has become the most important issue on the agenda of radical right parties (Van Der Brug et al., 2000). This has been a feature that connects into this broad family all the radical right parties that had electoral successes from the early 1980s, in the so-called third-way of “right-wing extremist party activity” (Arzheimer, 2009, p. 259). Arguably, radical right parties own a lot of their success to migration issues.

It is hard to say whether radical right parties made immigration a salient issue, or the immigration issue salience led to the success of radical right parties who are often perceived as the owners of the issue (Bale et al., 2010). However, from one country to another we see that radical right parties are averaging around 10 percent of vote share across Europe nowadays (Stockemer, 2016), with an increasing trend of support. Bohman and Hjerm explain this with the fact that peoples’ attitudes towards migrants have become more negative, that migrants’ ethnicity plays a role and that all of this led to increasing polarization in European societies (Bohman & Hjerm, 2016).

Previous research has shown that citizens are not automatically against accepting migrants, but that opposition to this idea becomes higher with “with higher proportions of resident migrants and higher levels of immigration” (Coenders, Lubbers, & Scheepers, 2008). The classic example is Sweden, where accepting migrants, mostly from Syria, was seen as hugely popular policy in the beginning and RRP had the least success compared to all Western countries in Europe (Rydgren, 2002). However, this *Swedish exceptionalism* when it comes to RRP support changed at some point, and some argued that one of the reasons is that they accepted “too many migrants” (Widfeldt, 2017).

Having all that in mind, here we hypothesize that *higher level of migrants in the country will serve as a good predictor of higher vote share of radical right parties in that country.*

Given that so much of the scholarly work has already been written into investigating the relationship between migration policies and support for radical right parties, and given that numerous studies found support for the claim that anti-immigrant attitudes increase likelihood of voting for radical right, this will be something like a *control hypothesis*, as nothing novel or exciting will be to find just one more evidence to support it.

What could be more relevant for our research question and our main research goal – investigating the relationship between religiosity and voting for the radical right, is the presence of a meaningful minority party in the system. “Successful ethnic minority parties heighten the salience of ethnic-nationalist divisions within a state, creating electoral demand for parties of the populist right” (Koev, 2015, p. 649).

The role of other parties, particularly minority parties, has been to some extent neglected topic in radical-right literature. Scarce previous research has suggested that effect of minority parties will be particularly pronounced in post-communist Europe, where immigration is not that much of a salient issue as in Western Europe, but ethnonational divisions (Kitschelt, 1995; Veugelers & Magnan, 2005).

There are several reasons why we would expect minority party to have an effect of vote share of radical right parties. First, the mere presence of one group, that is usually marked as “others” by a dominant group, usually is not enough to make the radical-right movement strong enough. “It becomes far easier for RWP parties to characterize a minority ethnic group as a legitimate threat to national virtues once this group has acquired a unified political voice and appears to have the means to achieve at least some of its goals” (Koev, 2015, p. 651). The more serious the “threat” from others become, the more likely is counter-mobilization against them and the existing threat.

The literature on the effect of radical right parties, or other smaller parties, on mainstream parties is voluminous (Abou-Chadi, 2016; Pardos-Prado, 2015), but we know far less on the effect of smaller parties on the strategy of the radical right. As has been shown smaller parties, especially after the initial electoral successes, tend to make specific topic very salient in public discourse (Abou-Chadi, 2016; Wagner & Meyer, 2017).

The two above mentioned reasons lead us to assume that the *presence of a meaningful minority party in the system will increase the likelihood of voting for the radical right party*. These parties will increase perceived cultural threat, as well as the salience of that issue, and make religious voters (Christian religious voters) more likely to diverge from their traditional choice (Christian Democratic parties) and vote for radical right party.

Data and methods

Data used in this study comes from CSES Module 4 Full Release (2018) subsetting for a sample of European countries. The study includes 23 countries and 25 samples totaling 38700 respondents (Greece, Latvia, and Romania supplying two samples). In the initial stages, we excluded two parliamentary samples from Greece and Latvia and decided to retain more recent datasets for this analysis. Additionally, we excluded a presidential sample from Romania and decided to retain the sample from the study that refers to Parliamentary elections in Romania. Furthermore, in the coding process, we decided no party in Iceland and Portugal fit the description of a radical right-wing party, so these two countries were excluded from the analysis as well.

Our dependent variable is support for radical right-wing parties, coded as a binary variable, with “1 – voted for RRW” and “0 – else.”

For the independent variables, following the above-described theory, we decided to distinguish two dimensions of religion: attendance and religiousness. Attendance is measured as attendance at religious ceremonies other than weddings and funerals, on a scale from 1 to 6. Level of religiousness is measured on a scale from 1 to 4, where higher values represent higher levels of religiousness.

On an individual level we control for age, dummy for gender (male), income, education, ideology (left-right self-positioning on an 11-point scale) and satisfaction with democracy, measured on a 4 point scale, with higher numbers representing lower levels of satisfaction. We also include a dummy for Christian religiosity individuals, given that the analysis refers to Europe, and that we expect to see the most pronounced effect in this group.

As for the contextual factors, we include the net level of migration averaged for a 5 year period per 1000 inhabitants. We coded all countries in the analysis on a dummy variable “minority” indicating if there is a meaningful minority party present in the political system.

On a country level, we control for GDP per capita growth in the election year. This measured is scaled to values from 0 to 1 to ease the interpretation.

For the table with parties coded as radical right as well as for the more detailed explanation of variable coding, please look at the appendix.

Analysis

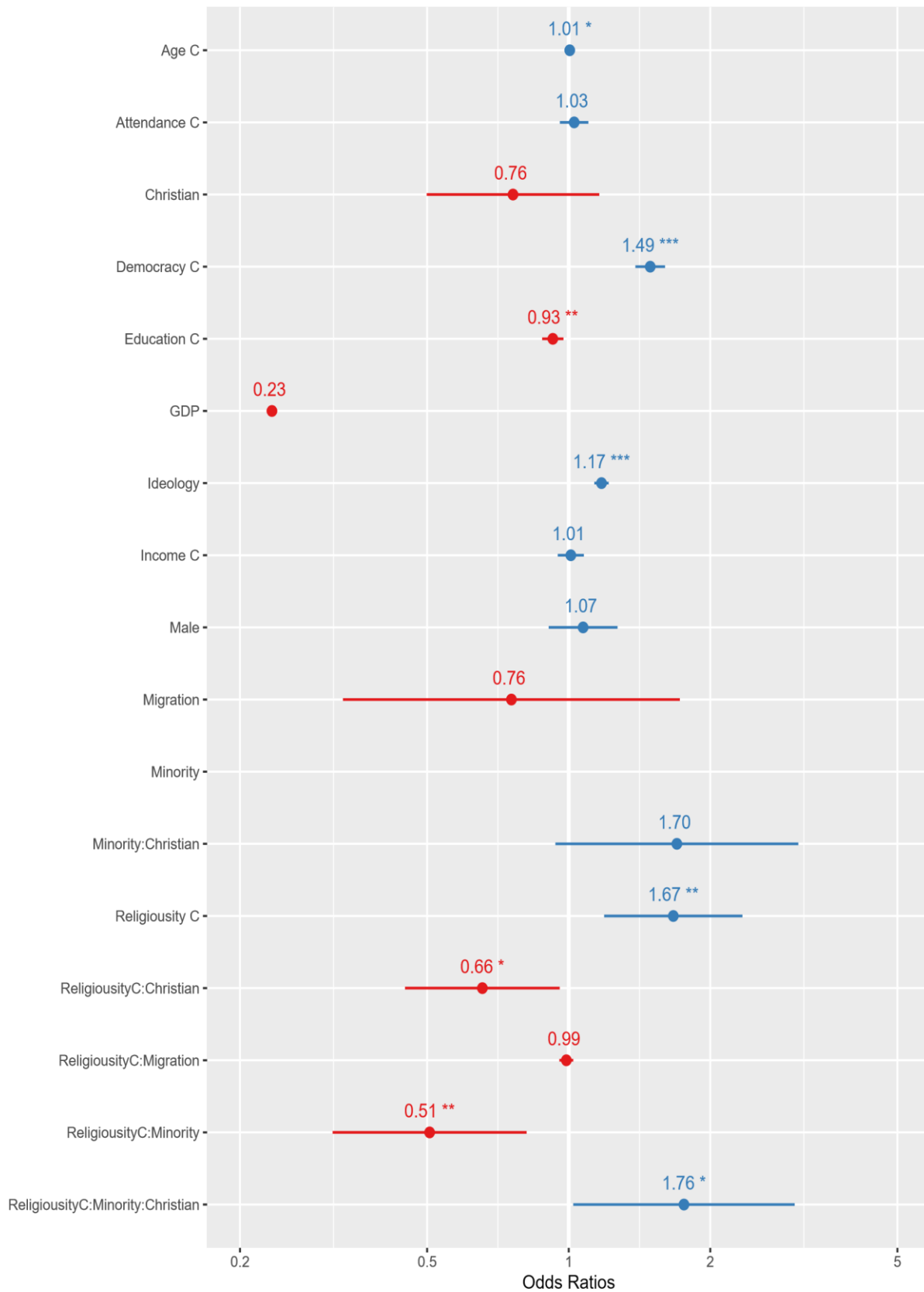
The modeling procedure started by fitting a baseline model with a varying intercept on a dummy variable which limited our choice to multilevel logistic regression setting. The ICC of the model was 0.89, so we concluded that apart from theoretical reasons there were also statistical reasons to model the vote choice in a multilevel setting. To test the proposed hypotheses, we specified a model that included several predictors on level 1 and three predictors on level 2. Furthermore, as our hypotheses outline a moderation effect of context (existence of minority parties) several two and three-way interactions were specified.

The model initially failed to converge with a relatively small max. gradient of 0.03, but after re-computing with Hessian with Richardson extrapolation, as suggested with R manual on fitting MLM models, convergence was successful. The results are presented in the following table and graph.

Table 1: Multilevel logistic regression on voting for RRW parties

	<i>Dependent variable:</i> RRW Party Vote
Male	0.070 (0.086)
Income	0.010 (0.033)
Education	-0.078*** (0.027)
Age	0.005** (0.003)
Attendance	0.027 (0.036)
Religiosity	0.512*** (0.173)
Minority	3.205 (2.579)
Christian	-0.273 (0.216)
Ideology	0.161*** (0.018)
Democracy	0.399*** (0.037)
Migration	-0.281 (0.421)
GDP	-1.453 (11.306)
Religiosity*Minority	-0.681*** (0.242)
Religiosity*Christian	-0.423** (0.193)
Minority*Christian	0.530* (0.303)
Religiosity*Migration	-0.012 (0.017)
Religiosity*Minority*Christian	0.564** (0.277)
Constant	-4.549 (2.997)
Observations	8,804
Log Likelihood	-1,961.458
Akaike Inf. Crit.	3,960.916
Bayesian Inf. Crit.	4,095.493
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Figure 1: Multilevel logistic regression on voting for RRW parties



The results indicate that (logarithm of the odds in the table, exponentiated odds ratios in the graph.) higher education has a negative effect on voting for RRP, that right-wing ideology and dissatisfaction with the way democracy operates increase the likelihood of casting a vote for RRP. As far as our variables of interest, religiosity increases the likelihood of casting a vote for RRP by 0.5*** (se = 0.17). However, as our hypothesis is not as simple as a single relationship, we fitted a three-way interaction between religiosity, minority party and Christian denomination. The three-way interaction is significant and relatively strong, indicating that the effect of religiosity on voting for RRP parties is increased by 0.56** (se = 0.27) when there are strong minority parties in the political system if the respondents are of a Christian denomination. These findings confirm our initial expectations that the presence of a minority party increases the salience of intragroup differences and leads to a higher relevance of religiosity when it comes to explaining support for RRP.

In odds ratios terms presented in the model, higher levels of religiosity increase the chance of voting for a right-wing party by 76%. That likelihood rises to 2.94, meaning that religious people that are Christians are three times more likely to vote for a RRP in a system with a minority party.

We proceed with a further discussion of our results, hypotheses, and possibilities for the following research steps.

Discussion

In this article, we tried to examine the relationship between religion and radical right support in Europe.

In the analysis that we conducted we find evidence to support several of our hypotheses.

First of all, we see that religion affects voting for radical right parties in Europe. Additionally, we see that effect is captured through religiousness (religious beliefs) which has a strong statistically significant coefficient, rather than religious practice (church attendance). This goes in line with our assumption that we cannot expect individuals who practice religion to be more prone to voting for radical right parties.

We see that the number of migrants is not a statistically significant predictor of RRWP vote in our model. While immigration is key issues on the agenda of radical right parties, previous research suggests that the effect is hard to capture by a mere presence, or a number of immigrants, or foreign-born citizens (Stockemer, 2016). Instead, the effect should be analyzed through anti-immigrant attitudes (Bohman & Hjerm, 2016). Unfortunately, this dataset did not allow us to control for anti-immigrant attitudes of citizens. However, that was not the main goal of our analysis.

For the mere presence of the minority party in the system, we did not find any effect on voting for radical right parties. However, when we interact this variable with religiosity for Christian people, we see that effect is positive and statistically significant. This goes in line with our hypothesized relationship that presence of meaningful minority party will be perceived by religious voters as threat, which will make them more likely voters of radical right parties. As our analysis refers to European countries, we expected the effect for Christian religious voters.

We have also argued that it would be reasonable to assume that the effect of religion will be more pronounced for radical right parties that ideologically lean more towards nativism, compared to those radical right parties that lean towards populism. After coding the radical right parties into two groups, and using a nominal variable as the dependent variable, with three categories, our model failed to converge. Future steps need to include research design that would allow us to test this assumption.

Additionally, in the following steps, our goal is to look at the differences between Western and Eastern Europe. Given the different nature of issues that radical right parties have on their agenda in two regions, as well as some contextual differences between countries from two sides of former Iron curtain, we would expect to observe differences in the effect of religion on support for the radical right.

It is up for the future analysis to try to find evidence for these hypotheses and to make a more rigorous test of the ones that we highlighted in the text.

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Appendix

Variable description

Dependent variable: Radical right-wing parties coded as 1, else 0.

Table 2: Radical Right Wing Party in Europe

Country	Party	Election year
Austria	Freedom Party Austria	2013
Austria	Stronach Party	2013
Bulgaria	Attack Party	2014
Czech Republic	The Dawn of Direct Democracy	2013
Finland	True Fins Party	2015
France	Front Nacional	2012
Germany	Alternative for Germany	2013
Germany	National Democratic Party	2013
United Kingdom	UK Independence Party	2015
Greece	Golden Dawn	2015
Greece	The Independence Greek	2015
Ireland	Soldiers of Destiny	2011
Latvia	National Alliance (For Fatherland and Freedom)	2014
Montenegro	Democratic Front	2012
Norway	Progress Party	2013
Poland	Law and Justice	2012
Romania	Peoples Party	2012
Serbia	Radical Party	2012
Serbia	Dveri	2012
Slovakia	Kotleba	2016
Slovakia	Slovak National Party	2016
Slovakia	We Are Family	2016
Slovenia	Slovenian National Party	2011
Sweden	Sweden Democrats	2014
Switzerland	Swiss Peoples Party	2011
Switzerland	Ticino	2011
Switzerland	Geneva Citizens Movement	2011
Turkey	National Movement Party	2015

Independent variables:

Age: continuous variable. Variable was group mean centered.

Male: dummy - male (1), female (0).

Income: Household income five percentile categories (1-5). Higher numbers represent higher percentile. Variable was group mean centered.

Education: Education was measured on a 1 to 8 scale. Higher numbers represent higher education. Variable was group mean centered.

Attendance: Attendance of religious ceremonies (other than weddings and funerals), measured on a scale of 1 to 6. Variable was group mean centered.

Religiousness: Level of religiousness measured on a scale from 1 to 4. Higher numbers represent higher religiousness. Variable was group mean centered.

Christian: dummy – Christian (1), else (0).

Ideology: Left-right ideological affiliation from 0 to 10 – self-placement.

Democracy: Satisfaction with democracy measured on a 4-point scale. Higher numbers represent lower satisfaction with democracy. Variable was group mean centered. *Minority:* Level 2 dummy variable indicating whether there is a meaningful minority party in the country.

Migration: Net level of migration averaged for a 5-year period (2010-2015) per 1000 inhabitants. Negative numbers represent negative migration (more people leaving the country than arriving on a yearly basis).

GDP: GDP per capita growth in the year of the election. Scaled to values from 0 to 1.