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Religious Diversification Reduces the Number of Religious Parties Over Time

Christopher D. Raymond
Lecturer in Politics
Queen's University Belfast
C.Raymond@qub.ac.uk

School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy, and Politics
Queen's University Belfast
25 University Square
Belfast
BT7 1NN

Abstract

Despite secularisation, there is growing recognition that some religious parties continue to influence elections and the formation of policy in several countries. But what explains why religious parties persist in some countries but not others? This study tests an argument holding that religious diversification promotes political cooperation and therefore reduces the number of religious parties. Using a data set of religious parties across advanced industrial democracies between 1945 and 2011, this paper analyses this argument and finds that religious diversity puts downward pressure on the number of religious parties over time.

Key Words

Religious parties; religious diversity; religious cleavages

Author Biography

Christopher D. Raymond is Lecturer in Politics at Queen's University Belfast. Much of his research examines the impact of religion and other social cleavages on party systems and voting behaviour. His studies have appeared in *Party Politics*, *Electoral Studies*, and the *International Political Science Review*, among others.

There is growing recognition that in the countries where they exist, religious parties and politicians often have important effects on policy making and elections. The presence or absence of religious parties has significant consequences for the degree to which religious cleavages shape the issue agenda (Engeli, Green-Pedersen, and Thorup, 2012) and influence voting behaviour (Langsæther, 2019). Despite considerable secularisation in some contexts, religious parties continue to influence policy outcomes on questions of morality (Fink, 2008; Budde et al., 2018; Euchner, 2019).

While more scholarly attention has been given in recent years to studying the continued impact that religious parties have on the politics of countries in which they compete, less is known about why religious parties feature in some countries but not others. While most of the religious parties that contested the first elections following the resumption of democratic politics in the aftermath of the Second World War remain significant players, some have collapsed and disappeared. In a few countries where religious parties did not originally contest elections, religious parties have since emerged. In some countries, multiple religious parties compete to attract the religious vote; in other cases, religious parties are absent, leaving religious voters to be represented by secular parties.

What explains this variation in the number of religious parties—across countries and over time? In contrast to other literature which implies that social diversity leads to the fragmentation of party systems (Amorim Neto and Cox, 1997; Clark and Golder, 2006; Rashkova, 2014), one argument holds that while religion may be divisive in some contexts, religious diversity creates incentives that compel religious groups to cooperate with one another in pursuit of shared policy goals. This cooperation, in turn, puts downward pressure on the number of religious parties, leading to a negative relationship between religious diversity and the number of religious parties

(Raymond, 2019). If correct, this argument implies that religious parties have disappeared in response to religious diversification, and that those religious parties that have emerged over the last few decades will be found only in the most religiously homogeneous countries.

While such extrapolations are plausible, they are limited by the fact that the relationship between religious diversity and the number of religious parties has been studied cross-sectionally. The lack of a temporal component to previous research designs limits our confidence in concluding that the relationships seen in recent elections apply to earlier periods. Thus, before we can accept these conclusions, further evidence showing that this relationship holds over time is needed. To this end, this paper seeks to determine whether religious diversification indeed reduces the number of religious parties. Using a data set of elections in more than forty advanced industrial democracies between 1945 and 2011, I estimate the impact of religious diversity on the number of religious parties over time.

The next section discusses the theory behind this argument to explain why religious diversification might reduce the number of religious parties. The section following that outlines the research strategy used to determine whether religious diversification reduces the number of religious parties, followed by a section discussing the results of the empirical analysis. A final section concludes with a discussion of the implications of the findings for future research.

Religious Markets and Religious Politics

The prediction that religious diversity will be negatively associated with the number of religious parties draws from the ‘supply side’ or religious market-based theory of religiosity (Berger, 1963; Stark and Iannaccone, 1994; Iannaccone, Finke, and Stark, 1997; Iannaccone, 1998). To understand variation in religiosity, this supply-side perspective focuses on the

competition among religious groups. Like firms in other markets, religious groups compete in a market for adherents. Without adherents practicing their faith and traditions, the organisation of the religious group will cease to function, and without an organisation, the religion will dissolve. Accordingly, religious groups compete to attract adherents in the way that businesses seek to attract customers, offering the most benefits that meet the spiritual (and related social and material) needs of religious consumers. The competitiveness of religious markets is reflected in the level of religious diversity: the most competitive markets are those in which several religious groups attract sizeable shares of the population, while the least competitive markets are those least-diverse contexts in which most people adhere to one religion (Finke and Stark, 1988; Stark and Finke, 2002).

The competition for religious adherents has consequences for how religious groups participate in politics (see Gill, 1998, 2005; Raymond, 2016). Because people can change their religious affiliations and identities (unlike fixed identities rooted in ethnicity, etc.)—whether from one religion to another, from one congregation to another within the denomination, or from religious to non-religious—religious groups must prioritise the competition for adherents over other activities, such as funding and organising political parties. In other words, when resource constraints force them to choose, religious groups will choose to invest in competing to attract and maintain adherents over spending resources on politics—because the ability to retain adherents is essential to the survival of the religious group’s organisation, and ultimately the religion itself. While religious groups do not cease to care about or engage in politics when resources are tight, resource constraints may force them to participate in politics differently by cutting costs and spending capital more efficiently.

One would expect the resource stinginess of religious groups to vary in response to the

competitiveness of the religious market. In religiously homogeneous contexts where they face no competition, religious groups will be freest to expend resources in support of political parties representing their religious group (see Gill, 2005: 21-22). In more diverse contexts where competition for religious adherents is most intense, religious groups face tighter constraints on their resources, and thus will have fewer resources to spend organising and supporting religious parties. Instead of forming or supporting parties representing their preferences exclusively, religious groups in diverse contexts have incentives to cooperate with one another to support a single party representing their shared interests. The parties representing policies preferred by two or more religious groups cooperating politically will often be secular rather than religious parties given that disagreements over questions of religion among the participating religious groups might undermine their ability to cooperate (see Gill, 2017: 38-39). For these reasons, this argument leads to the prediction that religious diversification will increase the competitiveness of the religious market, which will in turn put pressure on religious groups to abandon support for religious parties and reduce the number of religious parties over time.

While religious groups in both religiously homogeneous and diverse contexts may be equally likely to be concerned with and to participate in politics, the argument above leads us to expect that religious parties will tend not to compete in religiously diverse contexts absent an electoral system that is sufficiently permissive to make the party electorally viable (i.e. when the likely benefits of supporting a religious party are worth the costs). Absent proportional representation, we would expect to observe religious groups in very competitive religious markets cooperating as part of a ‘coalition of the religious’ (Putnam and Campbell, 2010: 376-377, 417-418) in support of a party (often secular rather than explicitly religious) representing several religious groups’ shared policy concerns.

This is not to deny that some religious groups choose to support religious parties, even in religiously diverse contexts. This has long been the case in the Netherlands, where several religious parties have contested elections and drawn significant vote and seat shares (aided by the highly proportional electoral system used in Dutch elections). But even here we have seen that religious diversification (due not only to the growing non-religious share but also the growth of other religions like Islam) compel religious parties to drop out and/or merge. The most visible example of this can be seen with the merger of the Catholic People's Party with two Protestant parties (the Anti-Revolutionary Party and the Christian Historical Union) into a single party (Christian Democratic Appeal) as the market share of Protestants declined relative to that of Catholics in the 1970s. More recently, further declines in Protestant market share compelled two smaller religious parties representing socially conservative Protestants—the Reformed Political League and the Reformatory Political—to merge and form the Christian Union in 2000. Other religious parties like the Political Party of Radicals and the Evangelical People's Party merged with secular parties (joining the GreenLeft) or dropped out of the scene altogether (as was the case with several smaller Catholic parties).

We also might expect to observe that religious diversity leads to fewer religious parties given the research showing that religious diversity produces cooperation among religious groups in other aspects outside of politics. Like firms in other markets (van de Ven, 1976), religious groups often cooperate on matters not directly related to the competition for adherents but on which religious groups share interests (Miller, 2002). We can see evidence of such cooperation across religious lines in response to competition in the religious market when looking at Christian denominational schools (Wagner, 1997), the provision of the delivery of social services (Helbling, 1995: 303-304), engaging in social activism on international issues (e.g. poverty in the

developing world and nuclear weapons: see Watling, 2001: 98-99), and addressing social ills in the community (like poverty, drug use, teen pregnancy, and family abuse: see Tamney and Johnson, 1990; McRoberts, 1999). As an extension of cooperation across religious-group lines in other aspects of life, we might expect religious groups in diverse contexts to cooperate politically in ways that lead to the abandonment of religious parties.

This supply-side approach must be differentiated from the ‘demand-side’ approach focusing on the impact of secularisation on politics that is more often applied to understand the impact of religion in advanced industrial democracies (Bruce, 2002; Norris and Inglehart, 2004). According to this secularisation perspective, religious parties in most advanced industrial societies have become less viable as voters’ ‘demand’ for religion has decreased (i.e. as participation in and affiliation with religion has declined), leading to a weakening of the effects of religion on voting behaviour and dwindling vote shares for religious parties representing religious groups’ interests and values (see Franklin et al., 1992; Best, 2011). While the secularisation approach’s predictions overlap with those of the supply-side approach when decreasing affiliation with religion results in a more competitive religious market (i.e. where religious groups compete for adherents against a population that is increasingly non-religious), the two arguments diverge in an important way. While secularisation arguments predict that the number of religious parties will decline as the non-religious population increases, the supply-side argument predicts that the number of religious parties will only decrease in response to secularisation when the growing non-religious share of the population results in higher levels of religious diversity (over and above the levels of diversity due to more fragmented competition among religious groups).

Though few studies have focused directly on estimating the impact of religion *per se* on

the number of parties, there is some evidence that religious diversity puts downward pressure on the number of religious parties. While some research focusing on a restricted sample of largely Catholic countries finds evidence suggesting that religious diversity is associated with more parties (Mantilla, 2019), other research examining a cross-national sample of recent elections shows that religious diversity is robustly associated with fewer religious parties (Raymond, 2019). One study of party entry and exit in Canada finds that while religious diversity increases the likelihood of new-party entry, it also increases the likelihood of party exit (Ferris and Voia, 2018). Given the disagreement in some of the findings above, further research is clearly needed to resolve the debate. In particular, given the limitations of the research designs above—with those cross-national studies discussed above limited by the fact that they are cross-sectional, while the study analysing the number of parties over time focuses on only one country—additional analysis is needed to determine what impact religious diversity has on the number of religious parties over time.

Further analysis examining the number of religious parties over time is particularly needed given the possibility that the conditions giving rise to the formation of religious parties in earlier periods may not be the same as those in the recent elections in which we observe a negative association between religious diversity and the number of religious parties. This is particularly important for religious parties, which tend to be more successful in developing stable institutional structures due to the clear, strong social roots these parties tend to feature (Bolleyer, 2013). Because they tend to institutionalise more successfully than other parties, the institutionalisation of religious parties poses particular problems for drawing inferences about the impact of religious diversity on the number of religious parties. If parties persist beyond the original conditions that gave rise to their founding and initial success, then it could be that the

negative association between religious diversity and the number of religious parties seen in recent elections does not reflect the impact that religious diversity exerted when religious parties first emerged. Rather than exerting a negative effect on the number of religious parties as suggested by recent studies, the effects of religious diversity on the formation of religious parties may have been nil—or even positive. Absent further analysis of religious parties cross-nationally and over time, the conclusion that religious diversity is negatively associated with the number of religious parties will remain in doubt.

Data and Methods

To determine whether religious diversity is associated with the number of religious parties over time, I examine a data set of elections between 1945 and 2011 in 46 countries. The list of countries and parties can be found in the Appendix. While this list of countries is mostly restricted to advanced industrial democracies due to availability of the dependent variable, the analysis nonetheless allows us to test whether the argument developed above applies to religious parties over time across several established democracies.

The dependent variable is the number of religious parties competing in the election. The key challenge to measuring the number of religious parties is defining what constitutes a religious party. Owing to past failures to acknowledge the role religion continues to play in party politics (Rosenblum, 2003), recent research has sought to identify and classify all the different types of religiously oriented parties (Ozzano and Cavatorta, 2013; Ozzano, 2013). However, because formal religious affiliations and appellations might alienate voters belonging to other groups (Gill, 2017: 38-39), we must distinguish between religiously oriented parties with secular identities, organisation, and missions that might be capable of producing political

cooperation across religious-group lines and religious parties explicitly formed to represent a particular religious group and its interests. Accordingly, I focus exclusively on parties that are explicitly religious in mission and focus—i.e. parties meeting von Beyme’s (1985) definition of ‘Christian Democratic’, as well as comparable parties representing other religious groups in non-majority-Christian countries—when counting the number of ‘religious’ parties, and do not include parties that are better classified as belonging to another party family. If the argument laid out above is correct, then explicitly religious parties should be less likely to compete as religious diversity increases—in which secular parties appealing across religious-group lines will be more likely to appear instead.

To ensure that this definition is applied consistently across cases, parties are treated as religious using the time-invariant classification of party families in the Comparative Manifesto Project (herein CMP: Volkens et al., 2018). Parties are grouped by the CMP into one of the party families using the criteria set out by von Beyme (1985),¹ coding parties that could potentially be grouped into multiple categories according to the family that best describes their primary affiliation.² The CMP data are well suited for this project because they are available for

¹ One alteration is made to the CMP coding: the CMP codes the Liberal Party of Switzerland as a religious party, but the analysis below excludes this from the number of religious parties. While most would treat this party as belonging to the liberal family, the results are not affected by treating this party as religious.

² This has the effect of potentially undercounting parties in countries like Italy, where several parties on both the right and left have affiliations with religious and/or Christian Democratic movements (Giorgi, 2013) but are coded by the CMP as belonging to other party families. Because Italy scores low on the religious diversity scale—where the supply-side argument

many parties in elections across the entire period studied here. To this list I also include parties not coded by the CMP which list the religious group represented by the party in its name in recognition of the fact that doing so sends an important signal to voters—both those belonging and not belonging to the group in question—about the party’s values and goals. Because counting the total number of religious parties is not possible due to missing data on smaller parties in many countries’ reported election returns (with the smallest parties often grouped together as one residual ‘other’ category), I count the number of religious parties finishing among the top ten vote-winning parties. To demonstrate the robustness of the findings, I also examine a measure of the dependent variable using data from ParlGov (Döring and Manow, 2019). The ParlGov data have the advantage that they include all parties winning at least one per cent of the vote; however, they have the disadvantage that data are available for fewer countries than is the case with the CMP data.

Religious diversity is measured as the effective number of religious groups (logged to account for right skew). The effective number of parties is measured using the formula:

$$1/\sum g_i^2,$$

where g is the proportion of the population belonging to group i . Higher values represent more religiously diverse electorates. Data are taken from the World Religion Project (Maoz and Henderson, 2013). The advantage of the World Religion Project data over other measures of religious diversity is that the World Religion Project data vary over time in five-year intervals.³

predicts that multiple religious parties will emerge—the fact that the number of religious parties may be under-counted works against the likelihood of finding a statistically significant negative relationship between religious diversity and the number of religious parties.

³ The World Religion Project data are also preferable to other measures of religious diversity

To fill in missing years, I use linear interpolation. While the theory laid out above predicts that religious parties will respond to increased competition in the religious market from both religious and secular groups, some may view the effects of secularisation as completely independent of religious diversity. To demonstrate the robustness of the findings including the non-religious category in the measure of religious diversity, I also estimate a model in which religious diversity is calculated after excluding the non-religious share of the population.

I include several control variables to account for alternative explanations of the number of religious parties. Given that most parties' institutional structures outlast any one election, the most important predictor is likely to be the number of religious parties in the previous election.⁴

because they divide countries' populations into many groups. After combining some religious groups, the measure of religious diversity used here is broken down according to 31 different categories, differentiating both among and within major religious groups (Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Jews; Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox Christians, etc.). The results are robust to models using an alternative data source to measure diversity over time—the Religious Characteristics of States Dataset Project (Brown and James, 2019).

⁴ The degree to which the number of religious parties in one election serves as a useful gauge of the number of religious parties in subsequent elections may vary depending on the predictability of the results: parties may be more likely to enter races where the previous election's results were more volatile (and thus where their chances of attracting significant vote shares may be greater, or at the least where the predictability of failure is lower). To account for this possibility, I re-estimated the models presented in Table 2 after including a variable measuring the level of electoral volatility indicated in the previous election using data from Powell and Tucker (2013) and Emanuele (2015). Electoral volatility fails to predict the number of religious parties, while

This possibility is accounted for by including lagged values of each dependent variable.

Several variables measure differences in electoral systems affecting the viability of religious parties. The most important of these is the average district magnitude: because multiparty systems are more likely to emerge at higher district magnitudes (Amorim Neto and Cox, 1997; Clark and Golder, 2006; Rashkova, 2014), we might expect that religious parties will be more likely to emerge in countries with higher district magnitudes. To account for the possibility that the negative effects of religious diversity might be attenuated at higher levels of district magnitude, I include an interaction between religious diversity and district magnitude. Dummy variables are also included for two-round majority and mixed-member parallel or proportional systems to account for the fact these electoral systems similarly foster the development of multiparty systems (Cox, 1997), and so might be expected to feature more religious parties than electoral systems electing representatives in single-member districts according to the plurality rule. Data measuring electoral system properties are taken from Bormann and Golder (2013).

I include two additional variables controlling for the impact of other political institutions on the viability of religious parties. Recognising that third parties with bases of support that are localised in particular devolved units may be able to compete successfully with the two largest parties in federal elections (Gaines, 1999; Chhibber and Kollman, 2004), I include a dummy variable measuring countries with federal systems to account for the possibility that religious parties may be more likely to emerge in these countries than in unitary systems. Because religious parties (like all parties) are easier to organise in freer democracies than in more authoritarian settings, I include the Polity (Marshall and Jaggers, 2019) measure of democracy.

the estimated effects of religious diversity are little changed.

I also include several variables to account for rival explanations rooted in other social processes. Because parties of religious defence—which emerged around the turn of the twentieth century in several countries (Kalyvas, 1996)—tended not to emerge in countries where there was a national state church (Ertman, 2009), I include a variable coded one for countries which had an established religion in 1900, and zero otherwise. Data for this variable are taken from McCleary (2017). To account for the possibility that a reduction in the number of religious parties results not from diversification of the religious market but instead to secularisation of the electorate (which makes religious parties less electorally viable than they would be in more religious electorates), I include the non-religious proportion of the population using data from the World Religion Project (Maoz and Henderson, 2013). Because religious parties (like all parties) may be more likely to form in more populous countries (Anckar, 2000), I include countries' (logged) populations as a predictor using data from the World Bank (2019). Finally, because religious parties might be less likely to form in ethnically diverse countries—where issues of ethnicity might overshadow religious issues, and thus undercut support for religious parties—I include the (logged) effective number of ethnic groups in each country using data from Alesina et al. (2003).⁵ Summary statistics can be found in Table 1.

Table 1 about here

I estimate five models. Models 1-3 and 5 estimate the effect of religious diversity on the number of religious parties based on the CMP coding of religious parties (with model 2 using the measure of religious diversity excluding the non-religious), while model 4 uses the ParlGov coding of religious parties. Because the dependent variables are count measures, I use Poisson

⁵ The results presented here are nearly identical to those using the measure of ethnic diversity developed by Fearon (2003).

regression to estimate models 1, 3, and 4; to demonstrate that the results using Poisson regression are not biased by over-dispersion in the dependent variable, I estimate model 2 using negative binomial regression. To account for the fact that countries appear multiple times in the data set, standard errors are clustered by country. To demonstrate the robustness of this approach in dealing with the time-series cross-sectional structure of the data, model 5 is estimated using random-effects Poisson regression.

Results

Table 2 presents the estimated effects of each variable on the number of religious parties contesting elections. As one might expect, the number of religious parties in the previous election is positively and significantly associated with the number of religious parties in the present election. This suggests there is considerable continuity in the number of religious parties from one election to the next because parties' organisations often persist long after the initial conditions that gave rise to their formation subside.

Table 2 about here

Over and above the impact of organisational continuity, the results also show that the partial effect of religious diversity in each model is negative, suggesting that higher levels of religious diversity lead to fewer religious parties contesting elections. Even though the best predictor of the number of religious parties in any one election is the number of religious parties in the previous election, the partial effects of religious diversity nonetheless remain statistically significant. The fact that both measures of religious diversity (i.e. whether we include the non-religious in the calculation of diversity or not) are negatively associated with the number of religious parties suggests that the negative effect of religious diversity is not due to secularisation

but instead genuinely reflects the impact of religious market competition. While we see some evidence to suggest that the negative impact of religious diversity on the number of religious parties is softened by higher district magnitudes in model 3 using the ParlGov definition of religious parties (as implied by the positive and statistically significant coefficient for the interaction), this interaction effect is not significant in any of the other models, which suggests that the effect of religious diversity is largely independent of the effect of district magnitude.

To visualise the substantive effects of religious diversity more clearly, I estimate the predicted number of religious parties at different levels of religious diversity using the results in model 1. The predicted number of religious parties plotted across the range of religious diversity can be seen in Figure 1. The predicted values seen in Figure 1 simulate countries in which there were one, two, or no religious parties in the previous election. (All other variables are held to their median values.)

Figure 1 about here

Figure 1 shows that religiously homogeneous countries (those at the lowest levels of religious diversity) in which no religious parties competed in the previous election, the predicted number of religious parties exceeds zero. This suggests that religious parties may emerge in religiously homogeneous countries in which these parties are absent—as was the case with the emergence of the Christian Democrats in Sweden in 1964. At the highest levels of diversity, however, the predicted number of religious parties tends to decrease with religious diversity, approaching a predicted value of zero.

Figure 1 also shows that in countries with low levels of diversity, the predicted number of parties tends to be higher if religious parties contested the previous election. Countries with low levels of religious diversity in which one party contested the previous election tend to feature one

party in subsequent elections, while countries in which two parties contested the previous election tend to feature two parties in the following election. However, the predicted number of religious parties declines with increases in religious diversity even in countries where one or more religious parties competed in the previous election. In countries with the highest observed levels of religious diversity where two religious parties contested the previous election, the predicted number of religious parties is significantly less than one. This demonstrates that while religious parties tend to be durable and contest election after election in some countries, religious parties are not immune from the impact of religious markets and tend to withdraw from competition in the most religiously diverse contexts.

Discussion and Conclusion

Recognising that religious parties remain significant actors shaping political debates in the parliaments and elections of some countries but not others, this study sought to explain why some religious parties have persisted (or why new religious parties have entered the system) while others have disbanded. Drawing on arguments rooted in an understanding of religious markets and the consequences that competition for religious adherents can have on how religious groups engage in politics, this study examined the impact of religious diversity on the number of religious parties over time in several countries. The analysis showed that religious diversification was associated with reductions in the number of religious parties. This suggests that increases in the level of religious diversity—reflecting an increase in competition among religious groups for religious adherents—reduce the resources groups must spend in support of political parties appealing exclusively to their group and its interests. With fewer resources to spend in politics, religious diversity incentivises cooperation across religious lines to maximise

groups' voting power and ability to influence policy, which leads them to abandon religious parties in favour of secular parties representing their shared interests.

The results have important implications for the literature on religious cleavages. In demonstrating that the impact of religious diversity on the number of religious parties seen in previous research focusing on a sample of recent elections (Raymond, 2019) applies over time, the results reinforce the argument that religious diversity reduces party system fragmentation overall (Raymond, 2016). The results suggest that an important part of the reason why religious diversity reduces party system fragmentation may be due to the reduction in the number of (religious) parties, which in turn reduces the fragmentation of the vote. While this conclusion seems plausible based on the analysis above, additional research is needed to determine whether this is indeed the case, or whether religious diversity affects the behaviour of voters as well, including those offered the choice of supporting a religious party. Additionally, because the analysis here is mostly restricted to advanced industrial democracies, further research will be needed to confirm that the conclusions reached here apply equally well to countries in other regions. In any event, these results add to a growing body of literature arguing that the effects of religious diversity on party systems differ from those of other measures of social diversity.

These findings also have important implications for understanding contemporary (and future) party politics. Namely, they help us to understand variation in the number (or perhaps increasingly the absence) of religious parties among advanced industrial democracies. In particular, the results presented here help us to understand why religious diversity tends not to be conducive to the presence and survival of religious parties and why religious parties tend to be found in countries with the lowest levels of religious diversity. While religious markets in some countries have diversified considerably over the last few decades, making religious parties harder

to sustain in those contexts, not all countries have seen significant diversification of their religious markets. This helps to explain why religious parties like those in Greece, Luxembourg, and Norway continue to thrive and to shape party politics and policy.

In other cases where significant religious diversification has occurred, the analysis above leads us to predict that at least some of the religious parties which have persisted in Western and Eastern Europe until now may disappear in the coming years. With continued diversification of the electorate due to secularisation, many religious parties appealing primarily to religious groups may succumb to the changing environment that leaves them with fewer voters to draw upon in elections. But just as important to secularisation is the growth of other religions that results from immigration. As the voting power of religious groups traditionally affiliated with a particular religious party continues to dwindle (whether due to secularisation or increased competition from other religious groups), the results seen here lead us to expect that religious parties in increasingly diverse contexts will withdraw from the scene. Whether this withdrawal takes the form of mergers with other parties sharing similar policy preferences (see Bolleyer, 2013: 107-110) or wholesale retreat from party politics, the analysis above predicts that religious diversification will result in fewer religious parties because religious groups recognising their declining voting power will seek to cooperate with other groups ensure whatever policy influence they can.

An important task for future research will be to document—and wherever possible, anticipate—the nature of this cooperation among religious (and in some cases, non-religious) groups. There is reason to expect that the disappearance of religious parties will lead to cooperation between religious groups and secular conservative parties, as was the case in France with the displacement of the *Mouvement Républicain Populaire* by secular conservative parties.

While there may be other instances of cooperation between religious groups and parties of the left similar to the Political Party of Radicals and Evangelical People's Party joining GreenLeft in the Netherlands, it remains to be seen whether cases such as this are becoming more common or if they remain rare occurrences. Although earlier studies found that Christian voters were socialised in ways that prevented them from supporting radical right populist parties (Arzheimer and Carter, 2009), there is evidence that religious groups in some countries may be willing to side with these parties, as seen with the *Lega (Nord)* in the case of Italy (Ozzano, 2019).

Determining which type of coordination will be most likely to occur in the wake of further collapse of religious parties due to religious diversification will have important implications for understanding the consequences that the disappearance of religious parties will have for party politics in the future.

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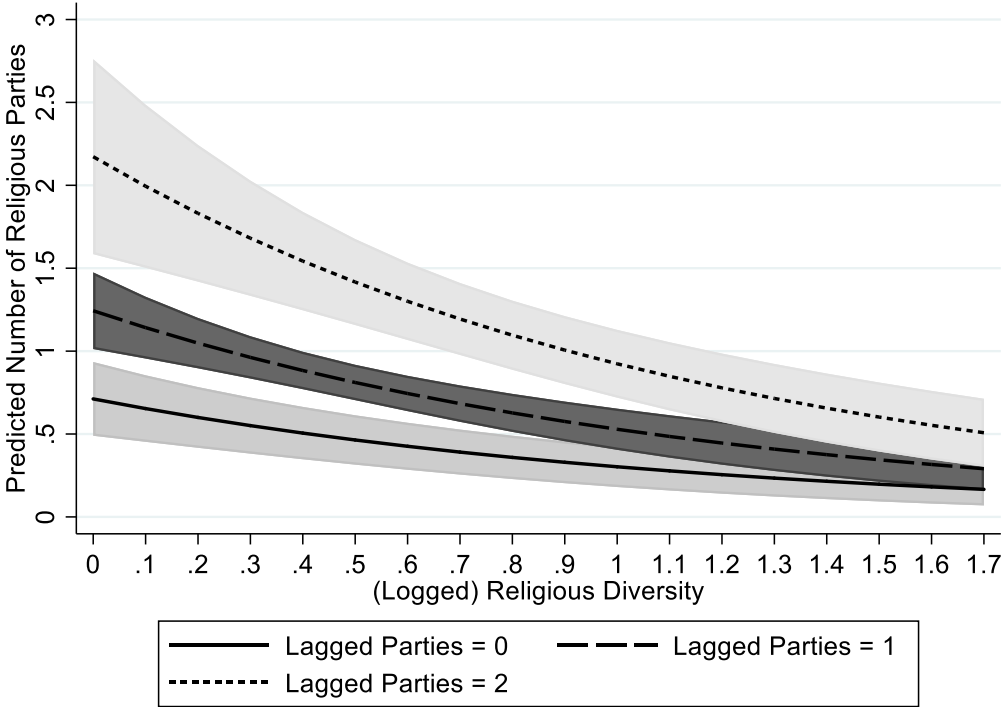
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Figure 1: The Predicted Number of Religious Parties Contesting Elections



Note: lines represent the predicted number of religious parties while areas shaded in grey represent 90% confidence intervals.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Mean	S.D.	Min.	Max.
Number of Parties (CMP)	0.86	0.98	0	6
Number of Parties (ParlGov)	0.82	0.87	0	5
Religious Diversity	0.66	0.48	0.02	1.74
Religious Diversity (Excluding the Non-Religious)	0.53	0.46	0.00	1.62
Mean District Magnitude	1.61	1.47	0	6.11
Two-Round Majority Systems	0.02	0.15	0	1
Mixed-Member Systems	0.11	0.31	0	1
Federal Systems	0.25	0.43	0	1
Democracy	9.23	1.68	-5	10
State Support for Religion In 1900	0.52	0.50	0	1
Share that is Non-Religious	0.10	0.11	0	0.76
Population	16.32	1.42	12.62	19.55
Ethnic Diversity	0.35	0.32	0.00	1.25

Table 2: Regression Models of the Number of Religious Parties Contesting Elections, 1945-2011

Variables	Model				
	1	2	3	4	5
Religious Diversity	-1.02 (0.33)**	-1.00 (0.33)**		-1.36 (0.37)**	-1.03 (0.30)**
Religious Diversity (Excluding the Non-Religious)			-1.07 (0.34)**		
Lagged Dependent Variable	0.56 (0.14)**	0.60 (0.13)**	0.55 (0.14)**	0.57 (0.10)**	0.55 (0.07)**
Mean District Magnitude	0.08 (0.08)	0.08 (0.08)	0.08 (0.08)	-0.03 (0.15)	0.04 (0.11)
Diversity × District Magnitude	0.09 (0.12)	0.07 (0.12)	0.10 (0.14)	0.26 (0.12)*	0.19 (0.12)
Two-Round Majority Systems	0.32 (0.27)	0.33 (0.27)	0.14 (0.28)	0.95 (0.34)**	0.34 (0.56)
Mixed-Member Systems	0.64 (0.25)**	0.61 (0.24)*	0.58 (0.25)*	0.42 (0.31)	0.64 (0.26)*
Federal Systems	0.34 (0.18)+	0.35 (0.18)*	0.31 (0.19)	0.50 (0.21)*	0.26 (0.23)
Democracy	0.06 (0.03)+	0.06 (0.03)*	0.05 (0.03)	0.23 (0.10)*	0.08 (0.04)+
State Support for Religion in 1900	-0.05 (0.17)	0.02 (0.17)	-0.10 (0.17)	0.01 (0.17)	-0.05 (0.19)
Share that is Non-Religious	0.54 (0.56)	0.62 (0.54)	0.20 (0.58)	1.24 (0.41)**	0.53 (0.64)
Population	-0.07 (0.07)	0.07 (0.07)	-0.08 (0.07)	-0.05 (0.06)	-0.06 (0.06)
Ethnic Diversity	0.12 (0.22)	0.12 (0.22)	0.09 (0.22)	0.11 (0.25)	-0.01 (0.28)
Constant	-0.22 (1.27)	0.33 (1.26)	0.10 (1.25)	-2.07 (1.40)	-0.42 (1.23)
McFadden's R ²	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.26	
Dependent Variable	CMP	CMP	CMP	ParlGov	CMP
n (Countries)	46	46	46	40	46
n (Total)	534	534	534	471	534

+ p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, two-tailed tests. Entries are regression coefficients (standard errors). Models 1, 3, and 4 are estimated using Poisson regression with standard errors clustered by country, model 2 is estimated using negative binomial regression, and model 5 is estimated using random-effects Poisson regression.

Appendix: List of Countries, Years, and Parties Included in the CMP Data

Countries (Years)	Parties
Albania (1992-2009)	N/A
Armenia (1995-2007)	N/A
Australia (1946-2010)	N/A
Austria (1949-2008)	Austrian People's Party
Belgium (1946-2010)	Christian Social Party/Humanist Democratic Centre; Christian People's Party/Christian Democratic and Flemish
Bulgaria (1991-2009)	Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria; Bulgarian Christian Coalition; Blue Coalition
Canada (1949-2011)	Christian Heritage Party
Croatia (1992-2011)	N/A
Cyprus (1985-2011)	N/A
Czechoslovakia (1990-1992)	Christian Democratic Movement; Christian and Democratic Union
Czech Republic (1996-2010)	Christian and Democratic Union - Czech People's Party; Tradition, Responsibility, Prosperity 09
Denmark (1947-2011)	Christian People's Party
Estonia (1992-2011)	N/A
Finland (1948-2011)	Finnish Christian League
France (1946-2007)	Popular Republican Movement; Reformers' Movement; Centre, Democracy and Progress
Georgia (2004-2008)	Christian Democratic Party
Germany (1949-2009)	Christian Democratic Union (including the Christian Social Union); Centre Party
Greece (1946-2009)	Centre Union; New Democracy; Political Spring; Christian Democracy
Hungary (1990-2010)	Hungarian Democratic Forum; Christian Democratic People's Party; Centre Party-Christian Democratic People's Party
Iceland (1946-2009)	N/A
Ireland (1948-2011)	Fine Gael
Israel (1949-2009)	United Religious Front/Religious Torah Front; National Religious Party/Mafdal; Shas; Union of Israel; Agudat Israel Workers; Movement for Israel's Tradition; United Torah Judaism
Italy (1948-2008)	Christian Democracy; Italian Popular Party; Pact of National Rebirth; Christian Democratic Centre— United Christian Democrats; White Flower/Union of Christian and Centre Democrats
Japan (1946-2009)	(New) Clean Government Party (Komeito)
Latvia (1993-2011)	Latvia's First Party; Christian Democratic Union
Lithuania (1992-2008)	Lithuanian Christian Democratic Party; Lithuanian Christian Democratic Party Coalition; Christian

Luxembourg (1954-2009)	Conservative Social Union
Macedonia (1994-2011)	Christian Social People's Party Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation— Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity; Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization— People's Party
Malta (1966-2008)	N/A
Mexico (2000-2009)	N/A
Moldova (1998-2010)	N/A
Netherlands (1946-2010)	Catholic People's Party; Anti-Revolutionary Party; Christian Historical Union; Christian Democratic Appeal; Reformed Political Party; Protestant Union; Catholic National Party; Reformed Political League; Democratic Socialists '70; Reformatory Political Federation; Christian Union
New Zealand (1946-2011)	Christian Heritage Party; Christian Coalition
Norway (1949-2009)	Christian Democratic Party
Poland (1991-2011)	Catholic Electoral Action; Centre Citizens' Alliance; Electoral Action 'Solidarity'; National Christian Bloc for Poland; League of Polish Families
Portugal (1976-2011)	Social Democratic Centre Party/People's Party; Christian Democratic
Romania (1990-2008)	Christian Democratic National Peasants' Party; Democratic Convention of Romania; Democratic Liberal Party
Serbia (2007-2008)	N/A
Slovakia (1994-2010)	Christian Democratic Movement; Slovak Democratic Coalition; Slovak Democratic and Christian Union
Slovenia (1992-2011)	Slovene Christian Democrats; Slovenian People's Party; New Slovenia—Christian People's Party
South Korea (1960-2008)	N/A
Spain (1977-2011)	Democratic and Social Centre
Sri Lanka (1952-2010)	Sri Lanka Muslim Congress
Sweden (1948-2010)	Christian Democrats/Christian Democratic Unity
Switzerland (1947-2011)	Conservative/Christian People's Party; Evangelical People's Party
Turkey (1961-2011)	N/A
Ukraine (1994-2007)	N/A
United Kingdom (1945-2010)	N/A
United States (1946-2010)	N/A
