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The Word of God Comes into the Voting Booth.

A Comparative Study of Political Participation in Central and Eastern Europe

According to the English version of the *Pravda* newspaper, the Russian Orthodox Church is the largest importer of spirits and cigarettes countrywide. Due to its tax-free status, granted by successive post-Soviet governments, the Orthodox Church became a lucrative "corporation", facilitating the sale of "non-Orthodox" goods. The same newspaper appreciates that the future may also bring a monopoly over wine imports. Across the ocean, American political scientists research the significant potential of churches in creating democratic behavior and civic skills. They report that Christian congregations in the United States are veritable creators of democratic attitudes and civic skills. In this paper, I address the following question: how to reconcile vodka with voting? The focus of my research is the effect of church participation on political participation in Central and East Europe.

Central and Eastern Europe has been under scholars' lenses for more than a decade now, but the focus tends to fall on either of two preferred sub regions: Central Europe (comprising Poland, the Czech and Slovak republics, Hungary and Slovenia) or Russia and its former republics. Cross-sub-regions studies are harder to come by, and Romania, Bulgaria and Albania are under-represented (Tucker, 2002). My research compares religious determinants of political participation across 10 countries:

Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Russia, Bulgaria, Albania, Romania and the three Baltic republics, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Indeed, Central Europe, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet republics share more differences than similarities. Language patterns, ethnicities, forms of government and social and political pasts differ. Their histories include a wide range of political entities from Imperial Russia, to independent Romanian pre-state organizations, to Ottoman dominated Bulgaria and to the Austrian Hungarian monarchy. As difficult as comparisons across Central and Eastern Europe may be, at least three commonalities justify the effort. First, all the countries in the region have a communist past. Second, all the countries were part of imperial powers. Third, democratization has been undertaken in each and every country. Pre-communist and communist pasts are relevant factors in explaining democratic outcomes (Ekiert, 1991).

According to the majority of “international assessors of democracy”, Central Europe consists of consolidated market economies and democracies, while Eastern Europe, Russia and the former Soviet Republics are still in transition (Freedom House, USAID). What causes differences in performance? Comparative studies are specifically design to answer these types of question, and this is what I attempt in this paper. I explore whether religious denominations and church attendance patterns influence political participation, and thus influence the creation of a democratic political culture. More specifically, I test two alternative hypotheses. First, along the lines of Max Weber's Protestant Ethics, I ask whether particular denominations affect patterns of political participation in similar ways across countries. This hypothesis is labeled the "essentialist" hypothesis. Second, I assert the importance of every country's social, cultural and

religious context, and assess the impact of religious participation measures on political participation country by country. I name this latter hypothesis "contextual".

The structure of the paper is as follows. First, I will explain the relationship that I see between religion, transitions to democracy and political participation. I assert that, because of the popularity of religion and high rates of church attendance across Central and Eastern Europe, learning and developing civic skills in religious arenas is a possibility. Second, I will introduce the Civic Volunteerism Model developed by Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995) as a framework for studying determinants of political participation. In this section I explain why the CVM model is not very helpful in studying religious determinants of political participation in Central and Eastern Europe, and present a more contextual model (Wood, 1999). In the third section, I perform data analysis for 10 countries, and I assess the impact of religious participation on measures of political involvement. Fourth, I draw the conclusions of this study, and discuss its explanatory power and inherent limitations.

1. Constitutions, voting booths and altars

The connection between transitions to democracy, church involvement and political participation is not obvious. Transitions to democracy imply both institutional choices and the response of the population to these new institutions. Institutional choices are easier and more controllable processes than the rooting of these institutions. As an illustrative example, Taagepera (2003) analyzes the process of choosing electoral rules for democracies in transition, and he concludes that, after reinventing the wheel, every country ends up with a variation of an already extant system. The previous example

illustrates the fact that institutional choices have a limited range of variation, while the correlative process of rooting them in the national post-authoritarian context can have endless outcomes. Lijphart(1996), Diamond, Linz and Lipset (1995), Mainwarring (1992, 1997) are just a few authors that researched transitions from an institutional point of view.

In consolidated democracies, the response of the population reflects aspects of democratic political culture such as political participation and behaviors. Successful transitions need political participation, and political participation in transitional countries requires mobilization and recruitment effort, due to the lack of democratic political culture hindered by an authoritarian regime. Among mobilizing factors, religion and churches can mobilize citizens politically, and thus contribute to the creation of both a consolidated democracy and democratic culture. The question remains. Do they mobilize? And, if so, to what extent and to what purpose?

Democratic regimes depend on political participation for their validation and for the mere functioning of the regime. In addition to the heavy accent placed on participation per se, democracy also requires particular forms of political participation: voting (Duch, 1993) and the open discussion of the polity's problems (Barnes, 2001). It also requires party identification, a form of political engagement that is often a close precursor of participation. In addition, political participation is usually measured by degree of involvement in political issues, ranging from voting to participation in protests and identification with a political party. However, these measurements do not speak by themselves about civic skills. Are the people participating because they feel empowered and have already developed civic skills, or are they merely recruited by a powerful agent?

This question gives rise to a discussion of civil society. In established democracies, civil society is one of the main political mobilizers (Verba et al. 1995). What is its role in democratizing countries?

Civil society is a necessary complement for democracy. Building on DeTocqueville's observations of 19th century American voluntary associations, civil society comprises all the participatory aspects of the society that are not specifically political and are outside the state sphere. It is the key concept that characterizes current discourses on democratization. People outside of government getting together and solving problems is the necessary attribute of every consolidating democracy. Expanding on DeTocqueville's observations, Robert Putnam (1993, 2000) developed the concept of social capital, as the most useful resource that a good civil society has, and hence revived the term.

Civil society is usually connected with associationalism (Kaldor and Vejvoda, 1997). Multiple non-governmental organizations that determine split loyalties and overlapping identities are at the base of American pluralism. However, Cohen and Arato (1994) qualify the term, and ask what is the probability of seeing multiple groups in Central and Eastern Europe as compared to cases of consolidated democracies. Carothers (1999) explains that foreign imported associations, or associational ideas do not grow roots in Central and Eastern Europe because there is no tradition for them. In addition, Kaldor and Vajvoda (1997) explain that civil society is a more familiar term for some countries in Central and Eastern Europe (Hungary, Slovakia and, in the late 80s, Poland becomes the epitome of civil society through the Solidarity movement) while the rest are not familiar with the concept. Ekiert (1991) also asserts that the breakdown of the

communist regime created a dramatic decrease in popularity and authority of both state and civil society, and resulted in apathy.

Even if Putnam is offering fairly detailed recipes for a flourishing civil society that will benefit the democratic polity, different countries follow these recipes differently, according to their respective historical, social and cultural contexts. It is thus important to focus on the effect on civic skills and political participation from those organizations that actually seem to fare better after the breakdown of the communist regime in terms of popularity and participation rates.

I chose to analyze the role of the church in affecting political participation because it is the only institution that is trusted in Central and Eastern Europe by the population. According to Mishler and Rose (1997), disappointments caused by democratic transition creates political malaise, observable in decreasing rates of turnout among other things. The church and the army however, continue to be highly trusted institutions. Additionally, people actually participate in religious activities more than any other political or social events (Mishler and Rose, 1997). There are differences within Central and Eastern Europe, but overall the rate of church attendance is higher than any other participatory activity.

Furthermore, the role of the church as a segment of civil society that can manufacture civic skills is significant from an ethical point of view. According to Barnes (2001), there are few political institutions that have been left uncompromised by the communist regime. For example, trade unions represent part of the communist inheritance. High rates of participation in trade unions after 1989 are to be understood by their quasi-mandatory membership status.

The triad democratization-participation-church reflects an ongoing debate about political culture and political participation that will be the last point of this section. Does democracy require democratic political culture, or is it that democratic political culture is created by the democratic regime? Is church participation the link or the deterrent for successful creation of political culture and democracy? Almond and Verba (1963) and Inglehart (1990) are advocates of the first approach. Democratic political culture manifested as civic beliefs and participatory acts conditions democratic development. This is a culturalist thesis that asserts the necessary priority of democratic values before democratization occurs. Following this thesis, the countries in Central and Eastern Europe have fairly bleak prospects for democratic consolidation, due to their communist experience: "One of the worst legacies of authoritarian rule is the lingering de-politicization of the population, where political involvement was confined to obligatory channels (and thus discredited) or else forbidden" (Barnes, 2001: 99). Even after the communist regime breaks down, people's perception of mandatory meaningless political participation can be a lingering influence. The second argument is clearly developed in Muller and Seligson (1994). They turn the culturalist thesis on its head when they state that civic beliefs are not the prerequisite of a democratic regime, but rather, they are created and developed by a democratic regime. They clearly maintain that, at least in the case of interpersonal trust, the regime can be the creator of this quality.

There is no final agreement between the two camps, and much research is conducted along both lines. I believe that the two models are complementary rather than mutually exclusive. Democratic regimes need democratic values in order to consolidate, and, in turn, they reproduce democratic values themselves. In other words, every

institution emerges from a cultural context but continually affects the context as well. I maintain that civil society can be the main agent of creating democratic attitudes and behaviors. Instead of focusing on the effect of civil society as a whole on political participation per se, I take a more pragmatic approach and focus on the effect of churches, as the most "populated" area of civil society in Central and Eastern Europe.

2. The Civic Volunteerism Model revisited

The literature on determinants of political participation emphasizes resources. Citizens with more resources tend to participate more. Socio-economic status (SES) is the primary determinant of political participation: higher income, a better social status, and more education all lead to increased participation. SES, as developed by Verba, Nie and Kim (1978) however, does not tell the full story. Their base line is indeed the socio-economic status model, and, while they identify the potential of engagement and recruitment, they do not fully specify them. The role of civil society needs to be addressed. The Civic Volunteerism Model (CVM), developed by Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995) allows us to account for the mobilizing role of the civil society. The CVM asserts that tangible resources are not the only predictors of political participation. Political engagement and civic skills also increase political participation. Engagement is constituted by those positive beliefs and attitudes towards democracy coupled with feelings of personal political empowerment and efficacy. Civic skills are practices and experiences that familiarize individuals with the political game, and its rules of play. Writing a petition, organizing a campaign, even voting makes more sense if it is practiced. The authors show that participation in non-political organizations, such as

unions, voluntary organizations, churches and the workplace, creates a familiarity with the ways organizations function and give the individual a feeling of efficacy, while rutinizing her in the structures of organizational functioning.

Specifically in the case of churches, Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995) explain that they have the benefit of eliminating resource driven inequalities apparent in the American system. Racial minorities especially, find the church an empowering arena. To be sure, the authors warn that not all churches have the same impact on creating civic skills. Protestant churches, for example, are better at empowering citizens since they are focused on more discussion and participatory practices. The Catholic Church, on the other hand, is not such an effective civic skills builder, due to its strictly hierarchical organization. Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995) do not explain in detail the effect of a particular religion/denomination on its political potential.

I find one major problem with the CVM model, which lies in the authors' inability to deal with the limitations of the model imposed by the internal culture of the church. Richard Wood (1999) asserts the causal autonomy of culture and states that the internal political culture of the church is formed from its cultural strategy and its cultural base. He argues that political science and social movement literatures do not address the critical issue of church's internal structure in both limiting and affecting its effect on civic skills building.

The cultural base of a church represents those segments of participants' cultural terrain that the church appeals to, those common unifying traits of the population that offers the legitimizing base for the church's actions. The cultural strategy indicates what part of community life the organization will draw upon. These two factors lead to the

formation of an internal political culture, made up of shared assumptions, perceptions and symbols that facilitate the understanding of the surrounding world. The political culture affects the projection of social power and the ability to shape the public realm.

Wood (1999) details the challenges that churches face in their formation and preservation of internal political culture. Wood's approach is designed for the pluralist religious space existing in the United States. His announced goal was to determine the effectiveness of church participation in the representation of minorities. So part of his analysis will not apply to cases of dominant religion or even state religion. The overall framework, though, is useful. Cultural base and cultural strategy carry meaning when applied outside the North-American context.

Wood's model can be used to amend the Civic Volunteerism Model. Verba et al. (1995) discuss the difference between Catholic and Protestant churches in assisting the citizens to develop civic skills. Because of the hierarchical structure of the Catholic Church, these skills are not so easily acquired, in comparison to Protestant Churches. Wood (1999) develops a more general and useful way to conceptualize and study the different influence of different denomination on political attitudes, beliefs and behaviors.

The CVM holds the assumption that initial religious motivations are converted into civic skills. This assumption underlines the presence of two consecutive conversions. First, the religious motivations that prompt a person to go to the church are converted into a process of learning civic skills. Second, once these civic skills are learnt, they are subsequently converted into political participation. Wood's analysis addresses the institutional aspect of these assumptions: initial religious motivations are converted into civic skills and then into political participation in accordance with the internal political

culture of the church. In addition to this aspect, there is also an individual volitional aspect, namely the intention of the individual to perform this series of conversions.

In the next section, I analyze the impact of religious participatory actions on political participation. I make a distinction between various denominations and countries, in order to control for the variation imposed by each church's internal political culture. The two alternative hypotheses are the following. First, there is the denominational hypothesis: individual denominations have the same uniform impact on political participation, independent of the context. Second, there is the contextual hypothesis: churches function differently depending on their contexts, and so one can see within denomination variation.

3. Data analysis.

The data set used for this analysis is the Central and Eastern Eurobarometer from 1991. The size of the multi national sample is fairly large, allowing for within country analysis on samples of 1000 respondents. The Eurobarometer belongs to a long tradition of public opinion researching in Europe, analyzing attitudes and information towards the European Union. However, more information than strict community-related is available.

The CVM model will be tested for the major denominations and their corresponding churches in Central and Eastern Europe: Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox and Muslim. In so doing, I undertake an exploratory research and assess the impact of church on political participation by country and church. The decision to test the model by both country and church has two important advantages. First, it allows one to distinguish patterns of political participation influenced by religious variables. For instance, perhaps

Catholic nations have the same religious and political participation mechanisms. Huntington affirms that democracy and capitalism, in other words a successful civilization, will only go as far as Catholicism and Protestantism go, which would not extend to Muslim countries, and perhaps to Orthodox countries. Second, it may not be religion per se that has an influence, but rather the relationship between the state and the church that determines the effect on political participation.

The operationalization of concepts is always a difficult process. To measure the effect of church on political participation, I use denomination and church attendance. Denomination and church attendance are overlapping in some respect. In some cases, choosing to identify yourself with a particular denomination is already a proof of more religiosity, even if you do not actively participate in the church. Church attendance however is only one possible measure of church involvement. While using church attendance as the only measure of church involvement is a limitation, one can argue that, at least for Catholic and Orthodox churches in Central and Eastern Europe, church attendance is a "sufficient" indicator, since these churches do not have the extent of access and community oriented activities that Protestant churches do.

For the political participation measures I have chosen three variables: intention to vote in the incoming elections, political discussion and political persuasion. The intention to vote measures electoral participation and can fluctuate according to the time until next elections in each country. Intention to vote is a different measuremnt of electoral participation than the question asking whether the individual voted in the last election. I claim that intention to vote is nonetheless a useful indicator, not only because of lacking another measurement, but also becaue of the timing of conducting these surveys. This

data was collected in 1991 and electoral enthusiasm was still somewhat at a peak, due to the still recent liberating experiences of 1989. Hence, intention to vote is considered an appropriate proxy for electoral participation. Political discussion measures frequency of political discussion with friends. The variable was made into a dichotomous variable (discuss politics, or do not). Political persuasion complements the political discussion question and asks whether the respondent ever persuades people to change their political views.

The intention to vote measure is a proxy for electoral participation. In other words, if church participation is positively correlated with intention to vote, then we see a recruitment effort from the church. Recruitment indeed increases political participation but in a merely instrumental way, without building democratic political culture. Political discussion and persuasion are considered a proxy for civic skills. Traditionally, political discussion is used as a measure of engagement, while persuasion approximates political campaigning. In the context of this research however, discussion and persuasion can measure civic skills, since I am only testing the importance of religious determinants of political participation. If going to church increases discussion and persuasion, then something more than recruitment is taking place. If religious participation is correlated with political discussion, persuasion, and electoral participation, then the church is a creator of civic skills. Table 1 presents the distribution of denominations by country.

Table 1. Religious denomination by country

Country/religion	Protestant	Catholic	Orthodox	Muslim	None	Other
Poland	0%	93.8%	0%	0%	3.4%	2.8%
Czecholsovakia	2.8%	48.2%	.3%	0%	43.8%	4.9%
Hungary	15.4%	45.5%	0%	0%	36.2%	2.9%
Russia	.3%	0%	38.2%	2.5%	48.9%	10.1%
Romania	4.4%	3.9%	87.8%	0%	.6%	3.3%
Albania	0%	8.3%	20.7%	65%	.7%	5.3%
Bulgaria	2.3%	1.1%	49.1%	9.7%	34.8%	3%
Estonia	19.2%	.7%	13.4%	0%	61.5%	1.7%
Latvia	7.5%	16.2%	19.3%	.1%	37.7%	12.4%
Lithuania	.5%	65.5%	4.9%	0%	23.6%	3.0%

Three pieces of significant information can be taken from this table. First, the area comprises countries with one dominant religion like in Romania, Bulgaria and Russia, coming close to one denomination in Poland, and countries with split religious spaces, like in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Albania and the Baltic republics. Religious homogeneity and heterogeneity may be one contextual variable that influences the effect of church attendance on political participation. Second, in the countries with one majoritarian religion, the minority can be either other denominations, like in Romania, or atheists like in Bulgaria and Russia. Third, and related to the previous point, the number of atheists varies from country to country. Romania and Poland have the smallest number of atheists .6% and 3.4% respectively, while Estonia, Russia, Czechoslovakia and

Hungary have the most. The number of atheists is an interesting question in and of itself: after the religious repression undertaken by the communist regimes, one would expect a return to religion. According to Huntington (1996) the crash of communism bring *la revanche de Dieu*, while Inglehart and Baker (2000) also find that in Central and Eastern Europe people come back to religion, especially in its participatory aspect. The argument is that postmaterialist societies have privatized religion, and church attendance decreased, while people in Central and Eastern Europe rediscover the religious phenomenon. Correlatively, patterns of church attendance are significant in determining the degree of secularization of each country. Tables 2 and 3 present distributions of church attendance, country by country and by religion denomination.

Table 2. Church attendance by country

Country/church attendance	**n/a**	**Several/week**	**1/week**	**Several/year**	**1/year**	**Never**	**Dk**
Poland	3.1%	5.5%	54.9%	27.9%	5.5%	2.9%	.2%
Czechoslovakia	45.6%	3.8%	11.4%	15.4%	13.9%	6.8%	3%
Hungary	37.4%	2.7%	10.4%	20.6%	15.8%	13.1%	.1%
Russia	57.5%	.6%	2.7%	15.4%	15.8%	7.2%	.8%
Romania	0%	2.4%	14%	53.2%	24.5%	5.8%	.1%
Albania	1.4%	3.7%	11.3%	24.9%	15.6%	37.1%	13%
Bulgaria	36.9%	1.8%	2.8%	23.6%	11.8%	22%	1%
Estonia	64.8%	.3%	2.1%	16.1%	12.5%	3.6%	.6%
Latvia	44.4%	.5%	4.0%	25.4%	17.9%	7.1%	.6%
Lithuania	26.1%	1.9%	16.0%	39.2%	13.9%	2.4%	.5%

Table 3. Religion and church attendance

Religion/church attendance	Several/week	1/week	Several/year	1/year	Never	Dk
Protestant	2.1%	12.1%	40.6%	30.2%	14.6%	.4%
Catholic	4.8%	32.3%	36.4%	16.8%	8.2%	1.2%
Orthodox	1.4%	9.6%	46.1%	26.4%	15.5%	.7%
Muslim	5.1%	8%	22.8%	20.9%	38.7%	3.8%

Overall, Catholic people go to church the most often, followed by Protestants and then by Orthodox. The discipline in the canonic rules of the Catholic Church, and its internal political culture is visible in this result: discipline and organization are key values. However, table 2 shows that the discipline in church attendance specific to the Catholic Church is mainly respected in Poland, the country with the least number of atheists as well. The same is true about Romania in the Orthodox camp: the least number of atheists and the most church attendance. These two tables thus suggest that every national context determines rates of church attendance, the same denomination being able to attract many or few confidants to their services.

Different patterns of church attendance and different rates of atheism make one question the validity of arguments such as "Eastern Europe sees a revival of religious enthusiasm". A question arises: what triggers these different religious behaviors? Gautier (1997, 1998) argues that churches that have been actively anti-communist and represented a locus of true civil society resistance are more popular after 1989. The theory stands for Poland, in which the Catholic Church has been a true mobilizer of the

resistance. However, Romania is an outlier, since the Romanian Orthodox Church has been a collaborator of the communist regime, and yet it displays very high rates of religiosity and church attendance.

Different patterns of church attendance and different rates of identification with religion confirm the initial fear that comparisons are not easy to come by in Central and Eastern Europe.

To assess the importance of religious variables on political participation I used logistic regression. While I am grounding my analysis on the CVM, I do not perform a testing of this model. Rather, I build my own model, drawing inspiration from the CVM. This technique allows measuring the effect of church attendance on measures of political participation, while controlling for other independent variables. Table 4 indicates the results of logit models; the indicators shown are the unstandardized b coefficients, their respective standard errors, and the level of significance. For every model, three SES independent variables are included, for control purposes: gender, education and age. Income was not included since it is not a valid measurement in Central and Eastern Europe, because of sudden and frequent changes in currency and additional sources of income than declared by respondents. Although not reported, the three SES indicators are more often than not significant, especially in the case of political discussion and persuasion. Their effect is in the expected direction: older, more educated males tend to be more politically participatory.

Table 4. Church attendance effect within denominational groups (cross country)

Denomination/action	Intention to vote	Political discussion	Political persuasion
Orthodox	**.611** .105 *.000*	**-.286** .075 *.000*	**-.841** .073 *.000*
Catholic	-.002 .068 .981	-.086 .059 .144	**.268** .062 *.000*
Protestant	**.540** .178 *.002*	.119 .129 .359	-.131 .132 .323
Muslim	**1.190** .220 *.000*	.198 .134 .140	-.198 .135 .143

The results for church attendance are puzzling. For Orthodox, Protestant and Muslim confidants, going to church has a positive impact on intention to vote. A first confirmation for CVM seems to be here. Catholic church-goers also seem to persuade more. However, except for Orthodox believers, going to church does not make a difference for affecting political discussion or persuasion. This is not surprising though. As noted above, the degree of difference between countries is so high that uniformities are worrisome and not differences. The intention to vote patterns is explicable through both mobilization and recruitment. Mobilization equals an effort from the church to politically engage confidants by empowering them and teaching them civic skills. Recruitment illustrates a mere effect of increase in intentions to vote, bypassing the more substantive political learning process.

The negative correlations between Orthodox Church attendance and political discussion and political persuasion are startling. Orthodox people that go to church intend to vote more, so they participate more, but also tend to discuss and persuade less. The negative significant correlations suggest a potential recruitment effect by the Orthodox

Churches, without actually leading to political engagement. A more instrumental view of politics may be advocated here.

However, as noted above, national context seems to matter in terms of patterns of religious participation, and so this contextual effect may become apparent in a plotting of the same results but in a country by country analysis. Tables 5 and 6 are also logit models analyzing every country. I listed the Orthodox countries separately since the previous table singularizes them in terms of the effect of church attendance on political participation.

Table 5. Church attendance effect on political participation by country and religion (non-Orthodox countries)

Country	Denomination	Intention to vote	Political discussion	Political persuasion
Poland N=1000	Catholic	**.983** .280 *.000*	.420 .308 .173	.302 .280 .281
Hungary N=987	Catholic	.288 .212 .173	-.102 .218 .639	.094 .205 .647
Hungary	Protestant	.114 .362 .752	.314 .373 .400	.319 .354 .367
Czechoslovakia N=1076	Catholic	.278 .263 .291	.135 .198 .495	.040 .204 .844
Czechoslovakia	Protestant	1.048 1.015 .302	.452 .794 .570	.510 .891 .567

Table 6. Church attendance effect on political participation by country and religion (Orthodox countries)

Country	Denomination	Intention to vote	Political discussion	Political persuasion
Russia N=975	Orthodox	-.390 .261 .135	-.113 .218 .604	-.396 .235 .091
Romania N=1000	Orthodox	**.656** .353 *.063*	**-.549** .171 *.001*	**-.661** .159 *.000*
Bulgaria N=989	Orthodox	.004 .332 .990	-.043 .209 .835	-.101 .230 .661
Bulgaria N=989	Muslim	-.795 1.030 .440	.038 .663 .954	-.454 .575 .430
Albania N=1000	Orthodox	.388 .514 .451	.267 .296 .367	-.017 .288 .954
Albania	Muslim	**.586** .268 *.029*	.233 .171 .173	**.420** .171 *.014*
Estonia N=999	Orthodox	-.396 .438 .366	**.953** .390 *.014*	.172 .354 .626
Estonia N=999	Protestant	.387 .462 .403	-.108 .310 .728	-.005 .307 .986
Latvia N=999	Orthodox	-.207 .420 .622	-.206 .302 .496	-.091 .306 .765
Latvia	Catholic	-.787 .604 .192	**.895** .335 *.007*	-.220 .391 .573
Latvia	Protestant	-18.938 7378.692 .998	**-1.150** .507 *.023*	-.207 .543 .703
Lithuania N=1000	Orthodox	1.035 .909 .255	-.672 .679 .322	.183 .628 .771
Lithuania	Catholic	-.282 .367 .441	.039 .210 .852	.082 .232 .722

Table 5 indicates that the positive correlation between Catholic church going and increased intentions to vote remains significant only in Poland. Hungary and Czechoslovakia do not show any correlation between church attendance and any measures of political participation. However Poland has the lowest number of atheists

(3.1%) compared to high such numbers for Czechoslovakia (45.6%) and Hungary (37.4%) respectively. In addition, 54.9% of the Poles go to church once a week, the highest rate of church attendance. An explanation for these results may thus be that the effect of church attendance on political participation increases with a homogenous highly religious social context. One may also note the importance of the Catholic Church in opposing communist regimes, and hence its major role played in the construction of democracy. Not even in Poland though, are they any correlations with political discussion and political persuasion, being impossible to distinguish between recruitment and mobilization. In the case of Hungary and Czechoslovakia I also tested the correlation between people identifying themselves as religious and atheists, in order to refine the results. Results show that Catholics and Protestants in Hungary intend to vote more than atheists. In neither country though, attending religious services does not impact political participation measures.

Table 6 shows that for the Orthodox countries the evidence is even more mixed. First, there is the difference between Romania and Russia, both religiously homogenous countries and Orthodox. In Russia there is no significant effect of church going on any of the measures of political participation. However, negative signs showed up for all three dependent variables. In Romania, Orthodox church-goers intend to vote more but discuss and persuade less than Orthodox non-church-goers. Again, the different degrees of atheism in the two countries, like in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary seem to play a role. Russia has more than 60% atheists while Romania has almost none. This only decreases the absolute numbers of church attenders, but also demonstrates the role of the church in these societies, and their respective rates of popularity. In Russia however,

irrespective of church attendance patterns, people that choose to identify themselves as Orthodox tend to vote more than atheists.

In the other countries that contain Orthodox majorities or minorities the situation differs from case to case. In Bulgaria, going to church as either Orthodox or Muslim does not have any significant impact on political participation. Muslim, either church going or non church going, intend to vote more, but discuss and persuade less than either Orthodox or atheists. However, attending church services does not make a difference.

Albania is similar from a denominational point of view to Bulgaria, but with reversed majorities: in Albania the majority is Muslim and the minority is Orthodox. For Muslims, church going is an empowering experience that leads believers to vote more and persuade more.

I placed the Baltic states in the analysis at this point, since they were the only other countries that had an Orthodox minority. For the Baltic States, Orthodox Church attendance is correlated negatively with all three measures of political participation. This finding is explicable through the status of Orthodox people in the Baltic republics: they are the former Soviet conquerors, and being Orthodox is usually associated with being Russian. After 1989 the status of Russians has been very vague and insecure in the Baltic Republic, they are denied citizenship. So abstention from politics is the wise and logical thing to do.

However, if one splits the Baltic republics and analyzes them separately, different patterns emerge. In Estonia for instance, Orthodox church-goers discuss more than Orthodox non church-goers. This result suggests the Estonian Orthodox Church is a political arena serving the interests of the disenfranchised Russians living in Estonia. In

Latvia, for Catholics, church going prompts them to discuss more, while for Protestants it is the opposite effect. In Lithuania, no effect is discernable.

In conclusion, this analysis shows that essentialist cultural arguments fail to explain the effects of religious determinants on political participation in Central and Eastern Europe. Irrespective of denomination, every national context determines a specific mechanism in which religious variables may affect political participation. These religious variables can impact political behavior through either recruiting or mobilization. Both effects are recorded for all denominations. Although Orthodox and Muslim churches are considered detrimental to democratization, the results clearly contradict these fears. Orthodoxy and Muslim faith can be both arenas of political discussion and civic skill learning (like in Estonia and Albania) and mere recruiters (like in Romania). The most potent explanatory variables for the effect of church attendance on political participation, however, is each national context, including history, religiosity, patterns of church attendance and homogeneity of denominations.

4. Conclusion

In this paper I assessed the impact of church attendance on political participation for ten countries in Central and Eastern Europe. As there is a lack of true comparative research in the region, I assembled most of the countries constituting the former Soviet satellites. Despite the high degree of variation between cases, I was able to extract some common patterns.

The theoretical apparatus employed builds on Verba et al.'s (1995) Civic Volunteerism Model. The church is an arena in which individual learn civic skills that

they consequently use in the political arena. I further develop the CVM model by specifying the presence of an internal political culture within each church that is affected by the church's external and internal context, which in turn affects and limits its effect on political participation.

The data indicates that, in opposition to Huntington and Inglehart, religious participation patterns in Central and Eastern Europe are not uniformly on the rise. The rediscovery of God after five decades of secularism does not occur with the same enthusiasm in all the countries, and not even within the same denominations. There are more and less religious Orthodox and Catholic countries, and more religiously participatory Catholic and Orthodox countries. These essentialist arguments do not seem to stand in this case.

Some evidence for the CVM model is found. Churchgoers seem to be more politically engaged in some cases. However, these cases are not clustered along denominational lines. In some cases, Orthodox confidants are more participatory than Catholics (Estonia). Even Muslim believers in Albania seem to fit into the Civic Volunteerism Model. The churches' potential in teaching civic skills varies from country to country, which suggests the importance of context. Several contextual features may play a role in affecting the influence of each church's ability in influencing political behavior. First, the status of the church as majority or minority seems to be important. The Orthodox Church in Estonia is an arena for political mobilization of the Orthodox/Russian minorities. Second, the degree of religiosity of the population, measured here by the number of atheists, also affects any church's mobilizing ability. For example, in highly religious Poland the Catholic Church has more such mobilization

power than in the more atheist Hungary or Czechoslovakia. Third, the relationship between state and church seems to be important, as emphasized in the Romanian case. The Romanian Orthodox Church recruits people to go vote, either as a civic duty, or, as shown elsewhere, because of a clear party preference, while in fact discouraging discussion and persuasion. The Romanian Orthodox Church has a very tight connection with the state, and the two are like an individisible unit.

In conclusion, the findings of my research strongly support the importance of context. Churches act differently in different circumstances, and their effect on the society and the furthering of democratization is correspondingly different. Policy initiatives that clearly indicate a preference for the separation of state and church may not apply without nuances.

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