

Communism as the Second Coming

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Research questions

- How does religion affect attitudes?
- What is the link between Orthodoxy and communism?
- Our argument: (1) deep-rooted ideological differences between Orthodoxy/Catholicism and Protestantism responsible for differences in attitudes today and (2) Orthodoxy provided a useful condition for the growth of communist regimes

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Catholicism, Orthodoxy and the state

- Split between Orthodoxy/Catholicism in 1054, but differences even earlier
- Western Christianity: individualistic, Church independent but closely involved in worldly affairs
- Eastern Christian Church subordinate to the state, unable to acquire the same wealth
- Byzantine monarchs (rather than Church), deciding on ecclesiastical matters (including heresy and schism)

Theological differences

- Western Christianity: rationality, scholasticism, theology studied in medieval universities
- Roman law and philosophy important (St. Thomas Aquinas: the existence of God can be proven)
- Eastern Christianity: less emphasis on law and reason
- Emphasized mystical, experiential and ascetic phenomena, God is beyond *rational* grasping
- Stronger emphasis on tradition and communitarian values; less questioning of authority and less innovation

Religion and communism

- Church going incompatible with communism
- Clergy (Orthodox and other) jailed, killed, forced to accept a secular life, forced to become informants of the Secret Service
- Communists enlisted Orthodox Church as a government supporter in exchange for some ecclesiastical activity (Romania)
- Orthodox values compatible with communism:
communitarianism; discouraging of contractual obligations, legal based exchanges, creativity, innovation and the flow of new ideas

Individual-level data

- World Values Survey (1995-2014)
- Life in Transition Survey 2010
- Pew Global Attitudes Fall 2009 Survey

Satisfaction with life and political institutions

- WVS: Life satisfaction, number of children, ideal number of children, social capital (from membership in voluntary organizations), voting in national elections, opinion of new vs. old ideas
- LiTS: Life satisfaction, number of children, size of household, trust in institutions, preference for job safety vs. promotion/higher pay

Opinions about government and authority (WVS)

- Self-position on a left-right scale (1 left, 10 right); belief in the importance of democracy
- Opinion about private vs. state ownership of business; opinion about government responsibility; respect for authority
- Opinion about wealth accumulation (on a scale of 1: 'People can only get rich at the expense of others' to 10: 'Wealth can grow so that there is enough for everyone')

Independent variables

- Dummies for the respondent's self-reported religious affiliation: Eastern Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Protestantism (all other religions/non-religious omitted category)
- Demographics, socio-economic status, education, parental education, whether the respondent or any members of his/her family were members of the communist party and whether the respondent resides in an urban locality
- Country dummies (WVS/Pew); sub-national region dummies (LiTS)

Cross-country data

- Dependent variables: (1) the average number of protests in all transition countries between 1985-1989 and (2) the average number of protests in all transition countries between 1985-1989/1987-1991 for the Former Soviet Union and the Baltics (Bruszt et al 2010)
- Independent variables: share of population which is Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant; log per capita GDP in 1973 and 1990; religious fractionalization; reliability of the religion data

Regressions - WVS

- For respondent i in country c and survey wave t

$$\text{Attitude}_{ict} = \alpha_{ict} + \beta_1 \text{Orthodox}_{ict} + \beta_2 \text{Catholic}_{ict} + \beta_3 \text{Protestant}_{ict} + \mathbf{X}_{ict} \beta_4 + \gamma_c + \text{SurveyWave}_t + \gamma_c * \text{SurveyWave}_t + \epsilon_{ict}$$

- Standard errors clustered at country level; survey wave dummies, country dummies, interaction survey wave*country dummies, survey weights

Regressions - LiTS

- For respondent i in sub-national region r and country c

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Attitude}_{irc} = & \alpha_{irc} + \beta_1 \text{Orthodox}_{irc} + \beta_2 \text{Catholic}_{irc} + \beta_3 \text{Protestant}_{irc} + \\ & + \mathbf{X}_{irc} \beta_4 + \gamma_{rc} + \epsilon_{irc} \end{aligned}$$

- Standard errors clustered at the level of sub-national regions; dummies at the level of sub-national regions, survey weights

Regressions - cross-country data

- For country c

$$Protests_c = \alpha_c + \beta_1 Orthodox_c + \beta_2 (Catholic + Protestant)_c + \mathbf{X}_c \beta_3 + \epsilon_c$$

Satisfaction with life and political institutions (WVS)

	(1) Happiness	(2) Children	(3) Ideal nr children	(4) Social capital	(5) Vote natl elections	(6) New vs. old ideas
orthodox	-0.015 (0.039)	-0.151*** (0.041)	-0.012 (0.052)	0.002 (0.002)	-0.022 (0.076)	-0.244** (0.091)
catholic	0.086** (0.034)	-0.005 (0.025)	0.059 (0.036)	0.017*** (0.003)	0.074** (0.028)	-0.010 (0.062)
protestant	0.110*** (0.030)	-0.001 (0.029)	-0.020 (0.037)	0.028*** (0.004)	0.083*** (0.025)	-0.051 (0.065)
Country dummies	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Country/wave dummies	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wave dummies	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
R-sq	0.283	0.407	0.252	0.220	0.243	0.178
Number of observations	166868	166779	63690	118646	53937	48649

Satisfaction with life and political institutions (LiTS)

	(1) Happiness	(2) Children in hh	(3) Size of hh	(4) Trust institutions	(5) Prefer safe job
orthodox	0.009 (0.069)	-0.112** (0.051)	-0.226** (0.088)	0.001 (0.067)	0.056*** (0.014)
catholic	0.189*** (0.064)	-0.003 (0.031)	-0.038 (0.044)	0.065** (0.032)	0.024 (0.017)
protestant	0.303*** (0.078)	0.026 (0.027)	-0.003 (0.043)	0.109*** (0.031)	0.014 (0.014)
Region dummies	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
R-sq	0.400	0.264	0.435	0.277	0.141
Number of observations	26766	26769	26769	26535	24956

Opinions about government and authority (WVS)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Pol pref left right	Imp. democracy	Govt own.	Govt resp.	Respect for authority	Getting rich
orthodox	0.004 (0.080)	0.029 (0.076)	0.122** (0.056)	0.162** (0.071)	0.090*** (0.032)	-0.062 (0.084)
catholic	0.427*** (0.052)	0.069* (0.041)	-0.154*** (0.045)	-0.088** (0.044)	0.049*** (0.013)	0.062* (0.036)
protestant	0.331*** (0.060)	0.148*** (0.051)	-0.219*** (0.050)	-0.149*** (0.049)	0.060*** (0.019)	0.091** (0.036)
Country dummies	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country/wave dummies	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wave dummies	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
R-sq	0.107	0.091	0.102	0.116	0.193	0.081
Number of observations	128108	99054	157213	165123	162527	131584

Orthodoxy and belief that transition has benefited politicians (Pew)

	(1)
	Transition has benefited politicians
orthodox	-0.009 (0.043)
catholic	0.069** (0.031)
protestant	0.132*** (0.041)
Region dummies	✓
R-sq	0.058
Number of obs	6675

Protests: cross-country regressions

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Avg. ev. 85-89	Avg. ev. 85-89	Avg. ev. 85-89	Avg ev. 85-89/87-91	Avg ev. 85-89/87-91	Avg ev. 85-89/87-91
Share Eastern Orthodox	36.226* (17.707)	24.955** (10.708)	25.536** (11.117)	39.544** (17.827)	29.779** (13.669)	30.606** (13.825)
Log GDP/cap 1973	-26.637* (13.001)	-20.365* (10.490)	-20.943* (10.577)	-22.596 (13.536)	-16.484 (11.561)	-17.305 (11.291)
Share Cath + Prot	60.425** (22.040)	53.099** (19.828)	55.470** (20.861)	56.726** (22.483)	49.437** (20.242)	52.806** (20.588)
Religious fract		-32.230 (28.888)	-33.310 (29.753)		-36.671 (32.412)	-38.204 (32.574)
Data reliability			-3.916 (7.661)			-5.562 (8.212)
Observations	25	24	24	25	24	24
R ²	0.306	0.424	0.433	0.274	0.343	0.360

Conclusion

- Deep-rooted ideological differences between Orthodoxy, and Catholicism and Protestantism, affect attitudes and values in large parts of Europe today
- Totalitarian governments suppressed religious activities but preserved those aspects of Orthodox religion which were helpful for advancing the communist doctrine
- Berdyaev: “the social system of communism ... can be wholly reconciled with (Orthodox) Christianity, more so, in any case, than the capitalist system”